

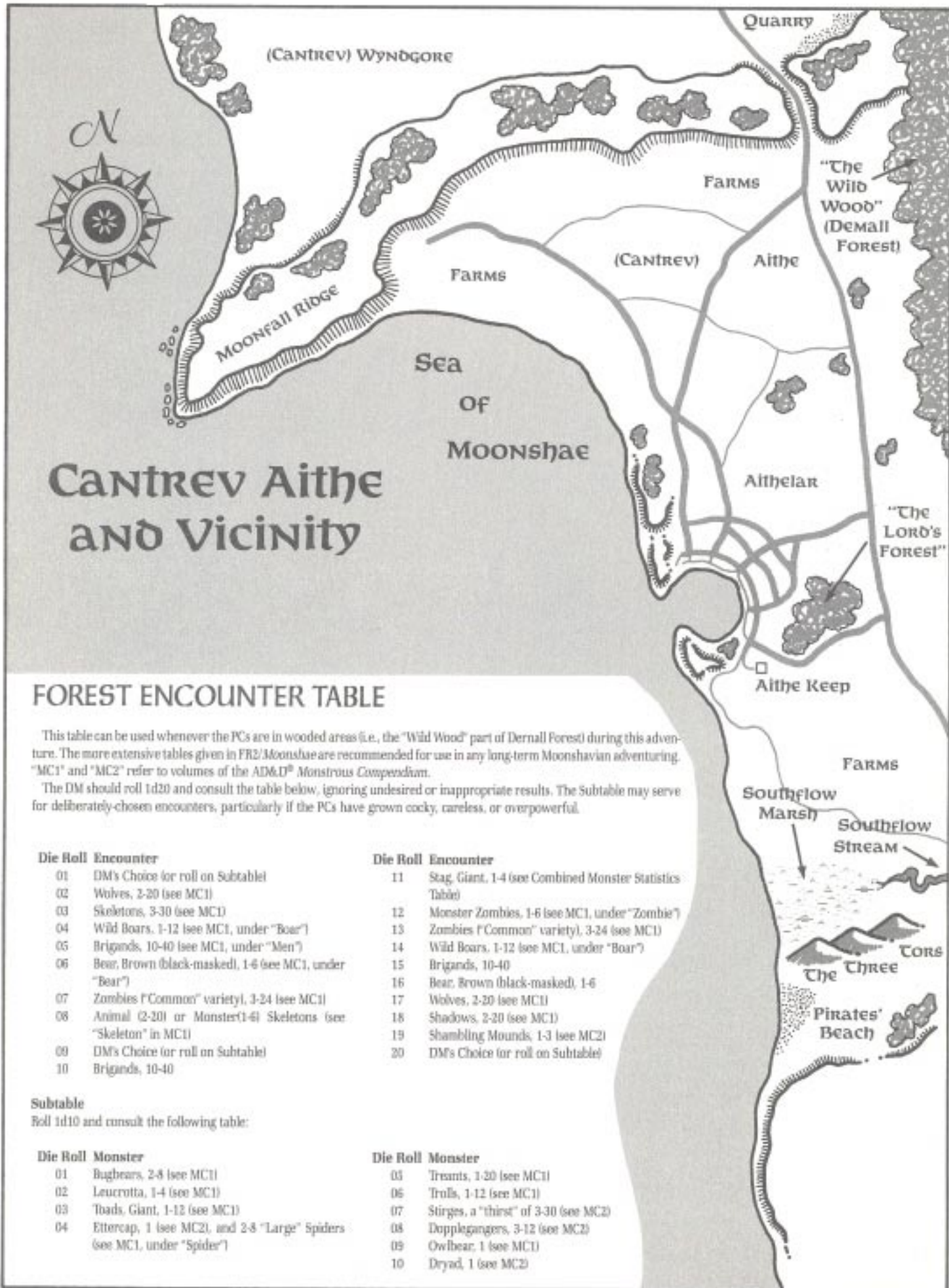
FORGOTTEN REALMS[™]

Official Game Adventure

Halls of the High King

by Ed Greenwood





Cantrev Aithe and Vicinity

FOREST ENCOUNTER TABLE

This table can be used whenever the PCs are in wooded areas (i.e., the "Wild Wood" part of Demall Forest) during this adventure. The more extensive tables given in FR2/Moonshae are recommended for use in any long-term Moonshavian adventuring. "MC1" and "MC2" refer to volumes of the AD&D® *Monstrous Compendium*.

The DM should roll 1d20 and consult the table below, ignoring undesired or inappropriate results. The Subtable may serve for deliberately-chosen encounters, particularly if the PCs have grown cocky, careless, or overpowerful.

Die Roll Encounter

- 01 DM's Choice (or roll on Subtable)
- 02 Wolves, 2-20 (see MC1)
- 03 Skeletons, 3-30 (see MC1)
- 04 Wild Boars, 1-12 (see MC1, under "Boar")
- 05 Brigands, 10-40 (see MC1, under "Men")
- 06 Bear, Brown (black-masked), 1-6 (see MC1, under "Bear")
- 07 Zombies ("Common" variety), 3-24 (see MC1)
- 08 Animal (2-20) or Monster(1-6) Skeletons (see "Skeleton" in MC1)
- 09 DM's Choice (or roll on Subtable)
- 10 Brigands, 10-40

Die Roll Encounter

- 11 Stag, Giant, 1-4 (see Combined Monster Statistics Table)
- 12 Monster Zombies, 1-6 (see MC1, under "Zombie")
- 13 Zombies ("Common" variety), 3-24 (see MC1)
- 14 Wild Boars, 1-12 (see MC1, under "Boar")
- 15 Brigands, 10-40
- 16 Bear, Brown (black-masked), 1-6
- 17 Wolves, 2-20 (see MC1)
- 18 Shadows, 2-20 (see MC1)
- 19 Shambling Mounds, 1-3 (see MC2)
- 20 DM's Choice (or roll on Subtable)

Subtable

Roll 1d10 and consult the following table:

Die Roll Monster

- 01 Bugbears, 2-8 (see MC1)
- 02 Leucrotta, 1-4 (see MC1)
- 03 Thads, Giant, 1-12 (see MC1)
- 04 Eitrecap, 1 (see MC2), and 2-8 "Large" Spiders (see MC1, under "Spider")

Die Roll Monster

- 03 Treants, 1-20 (see MC1)
- 06 Trolls, 1-12 (see MC1)
- 07 Stirges, a "thirst" of 3-30 (see MC2)
- 08 Doppelgangers, 3-12 (see MC2)
- 09 Owlbear, 1 (see MC1)
- 10 Dryad, 1 (see MC2)

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Dedication

To the memory of Eva French, who fought her battles with laughter,
whatever the odds-and won all the important ones anyway.

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Distributed to the book trade by Random House, Inc., and in Canada by Random House of Canada, Ltd. Distributed to the toy and hobby trade by regional distributors. Distributed in the United Kingdom by TSR Ltd.

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ISBN 0-88038-881-1

INTRODUCTION

Our land is beautiful, the life it gives us good. How could it be otherwise? The land is the Goddess.

But the Goddess serves the Balance, and as goodness grows in power, so must evil have its day. Wherefore all who live in the Moonshaes have felt the bite of evil as it rises again and again to threaten us.

What can vanquish it, for a time? The forces of good. And what are they? They have a thousand faces and a thousand names. We call them—heroes.

-Andabbar Meihklann, Bard of the Snows
Folk Lore Year of the Hunting Hawk

The adventure you hold in your hands, *Halls of the High King*, takes place on the Moonshae Isles, in The Sea of Swords west of The Sword Coast of Faerun, the largest continent of The Forgotten Realms. The Time of Troubles (detailed in the recent "Avatar" novels and modules) is past, and Tristan Kendrick remains High King of the Ffolk, enthroned in Caer Callidyr.

Tristan defeated a great evil, the Beast, and brought to the Moonshaes a greater period of peace, good harvests, and joy than had been known for years. Yet, as always, evil recovered swiftly, to return in strength to the Moonshaes.

First came a great chaos in both nature and the magical arts, a disruption of the Balance unheard of in the histories of even the eldest peoples amongst the elves and dwarves of Faerun. It brought less strife to the Moonshaes than it did to mainland Faerun—but in its wake there arose unease and tension. Nothing was as it had been, nothing could now be trusted; a time of unsettling changes and lurking danger had returned to the Realms.

In the Moonshaes, a new evil arose. Priests fled the chaos on the mainland and came to the Moonshaes to rebuild their strength. Dark, evil priests they were, who walked wilderness ways raising undead and hiring large, powerful bands of brigands to fight the druids and others who loved the land and were led by a Dark Druid—a man of great evil, whose aims remained hidden, but whose dark deeds set the land to rearming. Ffolk began again to fear

night and the stranger and the unseen.

Bards and sages alike sighed and warned. But they, like the other Ffolk, looked to the sharpness of their swords, and to the High King for leadership. It was a time, again, for heroes...

Before Play

To fully enjoy this adventure, the DM should have some familiarity with the Moonshae Isles. These are described in the "Moonshae Trilogy" of novels and FR2/Moonshae, a Realms sourcebook by Doug Niles. Knowledge of the Forgotten Realms as a whole and, in particular, the god Bane, will be useful as well. It is also essential that the DM have access to the AD&D® 2nd Edition rulebooks.

It is recommended that the DM have access to the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ boxed campaign set and the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Adventures hardcover rulebook. If this adventure is to be used as part of an ongoing campaign set in the Realms, module *N4/Treasure Hunt*, the sourcebook *FR1/Waterdeep and the North*, and the third volume of the *Monstrous Compendium* should be acquired as reference material.

An adventure of this scope requires the DM to roleplay many Non-Player Characters (NPCs) colorfully, to bring the action to life around the Player Characters (PCs). Enthusiastically acting the roles of a few strong NPCs (developed beforehand), each with his own speech, manners, and habits, can help the novice DM carry this adventure without having to fill in a lot of the endless details that adorn any adventure spanning a large area and a lot of beings.

The DM should read through the entire module before play begins, particularly the appendices, in order to locate pertinent information, to decide upon changes that may be necessary to accommodate a particular campaign, and to sufficiently prepare to challenge the players during the adventure.

Gray-screened text in this module highlights reference lore (for ease of DM use during play) and should *not* be read to the players.

The appendices contain descriptions of monsters, spells, magic items, and suggested adventures that can be used in many other adventures. The DM needs to examine these suggestions to determine if they will conflict with the balance of his campaign and will, therefore, need to be replaced or modified.

If this adventure is not being used within a FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting, the DM should refer to *FR2-Moonshae* and any books on Celtic lore and times acquired in local libraries. These sources can aid in establishing a Celtic ambience for the campaign kingdom to be used as the adventure setting or will help create the DM's own version of the Moonshaes.

No pre-generated PCs have been provided in this module; it is suggested that existing characters from an ongoing AD&D campaign be used. Players will better enjoy untangling the mysteries of the Moonshaes if they can do it with familiar characters. The DM must modify the adventure, and will have a harder time surprising the players, if any of the PCs are residents or natives of the Moonshaes. The adventure should begin on the mainland, although it could be altered to start (less believably) on one isle with the party sailing to another isle.

This adventure is designed for a party of at least six—preferably eight or even ten—player characters, of most character classes. At least half of the party should be of 6th level or higher. Weaker or more powerful parties can easily be accommodated, however.

The DM will have opportunities to provide PCs with aid from Harpers and the mage Flamsterd throughout the adventure, and the presence of certain monsters (such as *Iyachtu Xvim*) should depend on the strength of the party. In this way, the adventure can be tailored to challenge the PCs without swiftly destroying them. But to do this, a DM *must* read and modify the adventure as necessary before play begins.

As you open this adventure to start play in the *Halls of the High King*, please bear in mind the words of wise old Elminster: "Why do any of us get up in the morning? Why, for the joy and fun the day might bring us, if we're awake to see it! Up, then, and find ye-fun!"

Chapter 1: The Adventure Begins

To Set Sail with Swords

This adventure can begin in any port city on the Sword Coast of the Realms (Waterdeep or Baldur's Gate are obvious choices). It is suggested the adventure begin when the PCs are restless, low on funds, or need to relocate quickly to avoid enemies, the authorities, or a heavy tax.

The PCs are approached by a short, fat, richly dressed merchant. "Your pardon, sirs," he says in a quiet, determined voice. "Could your services be had for hire? I am Panthras, of Panthras Procuring, and I'd like to do business with you."

Panthras has shrewd eyes set in a weather-beaten face. He is a street-smart, retired caravan master.

Panthras: AC 2 (*bracers of defense*); MV 12; F 10; hp 79; THAC0 11; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon; S 16 (+1 on dmg.), D 14, C 16, I 15, W 17, Ch 14; ML 15; AL NG.

Panthras is armed with a long sword (1d8 dmg.), five throwing daggers (1d4 dmg each), and several magical defenses (see below), any or all of which he will use if the PCs are foolish enough to tangle with him. He is not interested in battling the PCs, however, but in hiring them. He will ask to meet the PCs somewhere private of their choosing—or, if they've no place to offer, in a back room of The Blunt Axe tavern.

Panthras will initially offer the PCs 30 gp and four *potions of healing* each to perform "a guard mission" for him. He will reveal more and, if necessary, offer up to 3,000 gp as he bargains.

Panthras needs a band of adventurers who command some magic and as much experience as possible to see a shipboard cargo of his safe to its destination. The cargo consists of sixty tarred and sealed wooden crates, each containing twenty new long swords of the finest make. The swords must reach the Cantrev of Aithe in Callidyrr, a kingdom on the Moonshae Isles. (If the PCs ask, Aithe lies on the western coast of the island of Alaron, northwest of Doncastle, where a cape —Moonfall

Ridge-juts out into the sea west of Dernal Forest.)

The PCs' mission, if they accept, will be to deliver the swords safely to the local lord, Haembar "Hawkenhound" Cauldyth. Panthras also produces a contract for the PCs to sign. It specifies how many swords the PCs are being hired to "...see safely into the hands of Lord Cauldyth of Aithe, or his successor in the lordship of Cantrev Aithe, to the best of their honor and abilities."

It is a standard Sword Coast contract, which Panthras will post with the rulers of the city. Any PC who has lived or traveled in the North or the Sword Coast lands will know that it merely prevents the unscrupulous from making off with a valuable cargo and selling it in the next port. All merchant guilds, companies, and rulers receive bundles of such contracts to prevent such deceit.

Panthras will turn away from the PCs for a moment, saying, "There is more. Read this, please." He produces a *portable hole* and draws from it a sealed parchment, slipping the hole back into the breast pocket from whence he drew it. Before proffering the parchment, he hesitantly adds, "I must warn you: once you've unsealed this document, I cannot allow you to withdraw from the mission and live; this is a matter of state security. Consider your actions carefully, then. Upon my honor, the document contains no alteration in your agreed task."

The parchment is sealed with a wolf's head: the Lone Wolf of the Kendrick family. If the PCs open it, they will read:

To those who accept the bond of Panthras and with it the swordguard mission to Aithe:

My thanks and my debt. Dark days have come to the Moonshae Isles again, and we are in need of the strong and the valiant. Be it known that I personally shall award four thousand pieces of gold, above and beyond your pay, to each adventurer in your band who comes to Caer Callidyrr and asks for it, assuming the blades arrive safely in the hands of the Lord of Aithe. I will offer more,

at that time, to those among you who will give us substantial aid against the foes that beset us in the Moonshaes—dark men skulking behind witless pawns who may try to seize that which you guard.

Bring this letter to me in Caer Callidyrr, and accept the thanks, welcome, and hospitality of:

Iristan Kendrick
High King of the Ffolk

If any PCs attack Panthras during the encounter, or if they try to renounce their part in the agreement to his face after the document has been unsealed, the merchant's most powerful defense will act.

The mage Flamsterd, who has been eavesdropping invisibly on the negotiations, concealed against magical detection by his own personal magics, will cast a *forget* spell on the PCs. If hostilities erupt and he deems it necessary, a *time stop* will be cast first, after which he will remove the High King's letter and move all PC weapons, magic items, scrolls, potions, and the like into a pile in the center of the gathering.

In brief, Flamsterd is a powerful archmage (Wizard, 21st Level) who carries whatever magic items and spells a DM wishes to give him. He is a gentle man, firm but polite, with a kindly manner, but he has learned that the best response to those who attack him or thwart his will is a quick and heavy-handed magical attack. (He can ask the corpses questions later and apologize to the remains if he's made a mistake.)

Flamsterd is an eminent sage, his major field of expertise being the history, lore, and works of written magic. His minor interests include the history of human settlement and deeds in northwestern Faerun, and of the Ffolk of the Moonshaes in particular.

Flamsterd's eyes flash and his voice grows stern when he deems it necessary, and although he seems quick to anger, he has iron self-control. He will often act more angry than he really is in order to cow opponents or lure them into revealing their true attitudes or foolish battle strategies.

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He is armed with a *dagger +2*, *longtooth* and also with six *darts of paralyzation*. These +1 darts cause their victim to save vs. paralyzation or be paralyzed for 1 turn. They do not automatically return to the thrower, but neither do they lose their magic if they miss a target.

Flamsterd appears as a slim, distinguished-looking, long-bearded man of average height. His long, predominantly white beard, which still has some strands of black left, is often tucked into his belt or drawn up and flung over one shoulder to keep it out of the dirt. He customarily wears plain gray robes and (only when traveling outside his home) a red cloak. These continuously curl and flap around him, seemingly of their own volition, due to the cloak's power to emit a sudden *gust of wind* once every second round, at Flamsterd's will. This handy piece of magic serves to extinguish or dramatically heighten campfires where he appears, deflect arrows or other missiles, and so on.

Flamsterd is famous and well-thought of around the Isles, by Llewyr, dwarves, halflings and Ffolk alike. His appearances are news, and his kindnesses (such as magically rescuing livestock or people, mending broken fences or roofs that leak, repairing bridges and clearing spring ice to prevent floods) are legendary. A *teleport ring*, which he is never without, allows him to appear and depart suddenly and silently. Like his colleagues Khelben Arunsun and Elminster, Flamsterd is a friend to the Harpers and shares their aims of protecting the land, the weak and needy who dwell in it, and upholding honesty, fair dealing, and peace.

Flamsterd may appear from time to time during this adventure as desired. Long-term campaign play in the Moonshaes will require a DM to detail Flamsterd's spells, possessions, abode, and activities more extensively.

Flamsterd: AC -2 (plain robes plus a *cloak of protection +5*, a *ring of protection +3*, and his Dex bonus); MV 12; W 21; hp 49; THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon; S 14, D 18, C 15, I 18, W 17, Ch 16; ML 15; AL NG).

If the PCs accept the mission, Panthras will produce his *portable hole* and

make the payment agreed upon-on the spot. He will tell the PCs to report to the caravel *Mermaid Sword* at the docks three mornings hence (or whatever time the DM desires in order to allow the PCs to fully rest, heal and regain spells and gear or to have another, short adventure). After bidding the PCs good day, he leaves. If any PC rushes after him or tries to follow him "on the sly," they will find that he has vanished. (In reality, Flamsterd has cast *invisibility* on the merchant and they both *teleport* away.)

If the PCs refuse the bargain and elect to go their own way, they will see Panthras seeking out adventurers wherever they go in the days that follow. If they get down on their luck, he will reappear and try them again, even finding his way into dungeons they've gotten lost in or prisons they've been incarcerated in (offering, of course, to free them if they accept his job offer). Flamsterd will accompany Panthras as an invisible protector at all times. Oddly enough, PC attacks on Panthras will not diminish his enthusiasm to try to hire them.

If the PCs still seem reluctant to undertake the mission, introduce the next event.

A Visitor by Night

Whenever two or more PCs are together, after dark, a pale blue radiance will suddenly spring into being nearby, growing rapidly brighter. It expands as a whirling, pulsing ball to become the ghostly image of an upright, detached human hand, which turns to point into the darkness and fades away.

If the PCs look where the hand is pointing, they see a slim, distinguished-looking man, wearing gray robes and a red cloak that seem to swirl and shift by themselves, as if disturbed by an unseen, unfelt wind. The man's white beard is so long that he's tucked it into his belt to avoid treading on it. A few hairs as black as a raven's remain around his lower lip, among their snow-white brothers. The man regards them gravely, and says, "Well met. I come in peace, to speak of war and danger"

It is the wizard Flamsterd who has ap-

peared via his *teleport ring* and created the hand. If the PCs don't look where the hand is pointing, Flamsterd will clear his throat loudly to get their attention. If that doesn't work, he will simply walk right in among the PCs, stepping on anyone who's sleeping.

Flamsterd slowly looks around at all of the PCs present, and says, "I understand you are adventurers." He will wait for a reply, but whether or not one is given, will continue: "My land has need of adventurers. I am come from the Moonshae Isles, that men hereabouts sometimes call the "jewels on the hilts of The Sea of Swords." My fair land has faced evil aplenty in recent years, and its folk are weary and sick of death and blood-magic and blades. A new evil has come to our shores; evil never grows tired. I need you, and others like you, to fight this evil. Are you willing?"

Flamsterd will quietly and politely answer PC queries. He will not bluster and cannot be pressured into bargains or admissions. He will say that the evil of which he speaks consists of ". . . brigands, undead, and darker creatures, all of them guided and goaded on by priests of the god Bane, The Lord of Tyranny."

If PCs ask for payment for aiding the Moonshaes, Flamsterd will reply that the High King has already offered them "coins, and more." (If the PCs did not read the letter that Panthras bore, Flamsterd will produce it now, offering it without the state security warning Panthras was obligated to offer.)

Flamsterd will tell the PCs he can offer them his friendship, aid at times when they are in the Moonshaes, and magical tutelage in a single spell of their choosing, when the evil is defeated. If any PCs are Harpers, Flamsterd will call on them as Harpers to do their duty and aid the Moonshaes, invoking the names of any powerful Harpers that may be known to the PCs.

If the PCs seem willing, Flamsterd will tell them to report to the *Mermaid Sword*, a caravel owned by the High King, at a particular dock three mornings hence. (Once again, the time period can be adjusted to suit the DM's purposes.)

If the PCs are unwilling, Flamsterd will shake his head sorrowfully, and

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sigh. "I see no heroes here," he will announce. "Indeed, none of you can even strike true with a blade!" With these words, the wizard will vanish, using his ring to *teleport* away. If Flamsterd is attacked at any time during this encounter, he will utter these words and vanish.

Flamsterd has enacted a powerful *steel curse*, once widely used in the North. This type of curse prevents a victim from successfully attacking with any bladed weapon, from a bill to a belt-knife-and all PCs present at Flamsterd's visit are affected!! Attempts to use bladed weapons as clubs, or to strike them against walls, trees, and other immobile targets, will cause the blade to shatter into tiny shards with no damage to wielder or target (magical weapons also affected) at every attempt. Bladed weapons are simply useless to the cursed beings until a number of months equal to the level of the caster (in Flamsterd's case, 21 months) have passed, or until the curse is lifted. A *steel curse* can be lifted instantly by the caster or by the application of a *remove curse* by a wizard of fourteenth level or greater on each and every affected being. Flamsterd will lift it if the PCs undertake the mission. *Remove curse* spells cast by lesser wizards, and *dispel magic* spells, will have no effect.

One last method of tumbling reluctant PCs into the adventure is to have them run afoul of enemies or the authorities in a dockside area and start a chase, with the PCs fleeing from a trap or overwhelming force. Their flight leads them to the water, where a caravel, the *Mermaid Sword*, is just casting off. The captain waves the PCs aboard, face alight. "Are you the promised ones?," she cries. "Come on, then! We sail before the day's three breaths older!"

The Mermaid Sword

The PCs' first glimpse of the *Mermaid Sword* reveals a two-masted wooden ship of beautiful, slim lines. Its bow rises into a figurehead of a mermaid thrusting a long sword ahead of her (the bowsprit). Its stern rises into an ele-



vated captain's deck with a long steering oar used for navigating rocky straits where sudden turns may be needed. (The *Sword* carries a spare oar plus three spare sails and a spare mast.)

The *Mermaid Sword* is 70' long and 20' wide, carries up to 160 tons of cargo, and requires a minimum crew of fourteen skilled sailors to handle. Her customary crew numbers 32. Its Base Move/Hour is 4, its Emergency Move 5, and its Seaworthiness, due to careful construction and magical treatments, is a stout 74%.

During shipboard combat situations, the DM should consult the ship deck-plan maps.

The *Mermaid Sword* is as good as a Moonshavian merchant caravel gets. Flying under the Kendrick family banner, the Lone Wolf (a snarling gray wolf's head with red eyes, on a white field; the head snarls face-on to the viewer), the ship has two sky-blue square canvas sails and a brown double-thickness "storm sail" for the mainmast. Its crew are all expert sailors, who know The Sea of Swords between Neverwinter, Amn, and the Moonshaes well.

The ship is armed with two light sea-ballistae, mounted on pivots on the raised decks fore and aft. These giant crossbows are sturdily built and treated to resist fire and damp. Each requires a crew of one strong person to

load the ballista, crank the windlass up tight, aim and fire the weapon, and then repeat the process. The ballistae fire a normal, all-metal, or grappling (line-trailing) spear up to 2,000 yards (modified more or less by wind direction) at THAC0 16.

A sea-ballista fires once every 2 rounds; two additional strong crew operating each ballista can raise that rate of fire to once every round. No additional gains are possible.

Ballista-bolts do damage as follows: normal spears do 2d4, all-metal bolts and normal heavy horse lances do 2d6, a normal javelin deals 1d6, and 1d4 +1 is caused by an improvised missile (polearm, 10' pole, or metal rod).

A grappling-bolt is always metal and has a massive reinforced shank to which a greased line is attached. When fired, a grappling-bolt always wobbles in flight, traveling a maximum effective (striking and holding) distance of 1,000 yards. Whenever a grappling-bolt is fired, there is a 2 in 6 chance the attached line will break. Enemy action or high seas have a 3 in 6 chance per round thereafter of snapping any grappling line(s). Iceworm-grease on the line (made principally in Uttersea and Luskan) allows it to uncoil easily and does not readily ignite.

Grappled ships can be drawn together by a distance of twice the width of the larger ship every round, if the crew of one ship desires it, and at least 6

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crew members haul on the line. If a single grappling line is used to tow, the 3 in 6 chance of breakage per round remains.

Fire-ballistae are more dangerous to the user than to the target and are little used in the North. Calishite, Lantannan, and Halruaan vessels commonly use such incendiaries, and vessels of Tharsult, the Tashalar, and Amn sometimes employ them; they are not detailed here.

The *Sword's* captain, Veldyrina Flaenitarr, and her second, Arenthor, know about the PCs' mission and their cargo. In fact, the PCs receive free passage and food from the captain, who has been paid extra to carry them. The *Sword* is also carrying textiles from Calishite (primarily silks), spiced cheeses and wine from Amn, and brass locks and hinges from Waterdeep and Baldur's Gate. In addition, there are a number of paying passengers aboard. One of these is a fat merchant, accompanying his precious stocks of carved ivory, scents, and liqueurs. There are three lovely and lively young ladies who are ostensibly visiting relatives in the Moonshaes, but who are actually thieves (statistics left to the DM) intending to sell gems they've stolen in Amn. They will, of course, attempt to steal what they can on the Isles, or from PCs on the voyage.

The last passenger is a strange, beak-nosed, furtive man (who doesn't seem to wash much) named Hessalo Avrein. He's returning to the Moonshaes with rare seeds and plants he's been collecting on the mainland for the gardens and farms of Snowdown. His search was by royal order and he carries a royal letter identifying him. He also has a suspicious box full of dirt, seeds packed in small packages of damp cloth, and a few (buried) bones.

Hessalo is a Cult agent and a necromancer. His defenses will prevent PCs from reading his mind or alignment (see "Dripping Fingers", page 8).

Any PC who gets Hessalo's locked box open will be attacked by two crawling claws.

Crawling Claws (2): AC 7; MV 9 (scuttling on fingertips); HD (FRA)1/2; hp 4 (each); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg. 1d4 to

armored beings, 1d6 to unarmored; ML 20; AL N; MC3. These animated skeletal human hands can leap up to 15'.

Each of the passengers has a small cabin under the foredeck. The PCs share a large suite of cabins next to the captain's cabin, under the aft deck.

The current crew of the *Mermaid Sword* consists of 10 human males, 14 human females, 6 half-elven males, and the captain and her second.

Treat all the men as warriors. They come from the Sword Coast; their names include Belarn, Coryn, Deldar, and Iniph. They are AC8 due to Dex and partial leather armor; MV 12; F2s; hp 16 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (scimitars, 1d8 dmg; clubs, 1d6 dmg; daggers, 1d4 dmg, skilled at throwing); S 16 (+1 on dmg.), D 15, C 16, I 14, W 13, Ch 13; ML 14; AL NG.

The females are identical except they are AC7 and have 14 hp each. They also come from the Sword Coast, and their names include Cairyssa, Endelene, Filfaera, Ilmrene, and Jalassyn.

The half-elves come from the mainland North and from the realm of Corwell in the Moonshaes (of Llewyr blood). They are AC7 due to Dex and partial leather armor; MV 12; F3s; hp 25 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (long swords, 1d8 dmg; daggers, 1d4 dmg; javelins, 1d6 dmg, 7 javelins each); S 15, D 16, C 14, I 15, W 13, Ch 14; ML 14; AL NG. Their names are Corl, Donthas, Elendan, Ilvren, Niraen, and Talastin.

The captain's second (her "first mate") is Arenthor, a human male fighter. He is AC8 due to leather armor; MV 12; F4; hp 36; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (battle axe, 1d8 dmg; harpoon, 2d4 dmg; dagger, 1d4 dmg); S 15, D 16, C 14, I 15, W 13, Ch 14; ML 15; AL NG. He is grim, brutish-looking, and fiercely loyal to his captain (and lady), Veldyrina.

Veldyrina Flaenitarr, a former pirate born in Neverwinter, is a muscular, rugged-looking blonde with dark brown eyes and a wary nature. She is AC 2 (*bracers of defense*); MV 12; F5; hp 29; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (see below); S 14, D 14, C 14, I 16, W 15, Ch 14; ML 16; AL CG (formerly CN). Veldyrina is armed with a *scimitar* +2 (1d8 + 2 dmg), wears a *necklace of mis-*

siles with only a few globes left (DM's option), and has twelve *potions of extra-healing*. She and the half-elves are naturally resistant to poisons (+1 on all saves).

The Voyage

The *Mermaid Sword* sets out on a day of favorable winds and mist patches, tacking in and out of these until the coast is lost to view astern. PCs who stay on deck to watch the surrounding seas will see a large, dark ship that seems to be following (or chasing?) the *Sword*, but it will soon fall astern also.

The weather on the voyage is up to the DM. It is suggested the weather be fairly clement and encounters with monsters of the deep few. Once a day, the DM should consult the "Aquatic Encounter Table." Change results that might hamper the pace and enjoyment of play to "no encounter" or a distant ship sighting.

The average sailing time to the easternmost Moonshaes, aided by the current, is 8 days from Waterdeep, 10 or 11 days when returning). Increase trip time for very bad weather or for starting points distant from Waterdeep.

The "Dark Sails" encounter below is intended as a warm-up. If the pirates win, a storm will occur two days later (to allow the PCs an escape attempt). Whatever the outcome of the affair, the "Dripping Fingers" encounter will follow on the fifth or sixth night of the trip. (see page 8).

Dark Sails Bring Death

On the second day of the voyage, a lookout in the rigging yells, "Sail!" and points south. Soon, the dark, tattered sails of a single vessel can be seen drawing near, traveling swiftly on a collision course with the *Mermaid Sword*.

The crew all come up on deck to look. "Pirates?," the second asks, staring hard-eyed at the tattered sails.

"It looks like the Ghost Ship!," says one of the crew. Arenthor snorts, and looks to Veldyrina, at the helm. At her nod, he orders, "Weapons! Rig for battle!" The crew obey with efficient speed. (If any

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PC asks about The Ghost Ship, one of the crew will impart most of the information in the screened box below.)

As the crew scurries about, mist begins to rise around the approaching vessel, gathering with a unnatural swiftness, until the ship is lost in gray obscurity. Everyone topside on the *Sword* stares into the mist, watching and listening intently. Veldyrina holds the wheel steady, head to one side to hear better. Arenthor silently gestures for the crew to crouch low, waiting.

One of the enduring legends of the Sword Coast is the tale of The Ghost Ship. Abandoned long ago by its crew, it can be seen sailing itself anywhere north of The Nelanther. Experienced captains suspect that most Ghost Ship sightings are usually pirate vessels, but all who will testify to actually seeing The Ghost Ship swear otherwise.

The Ghost Ship's crew all vanished at sea. It is thought they were taken by sea monsters, undead from the depths, or even aerial attackers; some may have been lost overboard in drunken brawls, a sea-fight, or had all mysteriously gone mad and killed each other. No one has ever reported seeing blood, corpses, or signs of any struggle on the ship, which is said to be a large galleon.

Many different ports are given by various sailors as the proper origins of The Ghost Ship, but no one identity is more popular than the others. The Ghost Ship is said to bring misfortune to those that see it-although some veteran sailors like to boast of how many times they've seen it over the years and take pride in their "Long Counts"

The Ghost Ship is said to sail The Sea of Swords still, eerily silent as its tattered sails, trailing free-whipping lines, propel it on random courses. Its endless voyage often brings it into treacherous waters, where it has been seen sailing amongst the rocks during storms. However, these dangerous passages have never resulted in the grounding, being driven ashore, or sinking of the ominous vessel.

The Ghost Ship shows no lights and is covered with "sea-tyne" (the many barnacles, marine worms, sea molds, and types of wave-weed that attach themselves to the hulls of ships that are not

well cared-for or that have seen long voyages without time for careening). The Ship is said to have no crew aboard, but allegedly contains a full and rich cargo. Any being who boards her, however, is said to die within the year, finding a watery grave.

Suddenly Veldyrina curses and puts the helm over so hard that the *Sword* heels and rocks sharply. Everyone scrambles to keep from falling. Out of the mists glides the mystery ship, a large galleon of sleek lines, its dark hull marked with scratches and sea-tyne. It passes alongside the *Sword* away; Veldyrina's skill has only just saved her ship from being rammed. So close do the two ships pass that the ghostly derelict grates loudly along the *Sword's* side.

The apparent "derelict" is indeed a pirate ship, guided on a collision course with the *Sword* by a minimal on-deck crew concealed by *mass invisibility*. Three of the pirates, concealed by individual *invisibility* spells and endowed with temporary flight powers through *fly* spells, will use the close passing of the two vessels to fly to key deck areas of the *Sword*, hoping to remain undetected.

The on-deck pirates will wait to see if any PCs try to board the "ghost ship". If none do, they will successfully hurl eight or more grappling lines at the *Sword*, snaring her at the last possible moment and spinning both ships around. (A grappling hook that hits a character does 1d6 damage, and it has a 3 in 6 chance of *stunning* and incapacitating the struck being for the following round. Grappling lines can each take 7 points of damage from successful attacks before being severed.)

The pirates that have flown to various parts of the *Sword* will then launch crossbow bolts against the captain and crew (as well as any PCs) on deck. The bulk of the pirates are waiting below decks on their vessel. They will wipe out individual boarders who may be checking below, then swarm up to the attack when they feel the grapples take hold.

Mist will continue to enshroud the pirate vessel throughout the conflict. All PC missile attacks at targets in or on it will be made at a -3 penalty.

The twenty-one pirates are all human male fighters and are AC 7 (studded leather armor); MV 12; F3s; hp 22 (each); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; S 15, D 14, C 14, I 12, W 12, Ch 12; ML 14; AL NE; MU. They are armed with light crossbows and each carries 21 quarrels (1d4 dmg). The bows can be fired once per round to a maximum range of 180 yards; the first strike causes 2-5 rounds of sleep due to poisoned tips (save vs. *poison* to avoid effects entirely). The pirates also wield throwing axes (1d6 dmg), scimitars (1d8 dmg), and daggers (1d4 dmg).

This scurvy lot of cutthroats is led by "The Wave Witch." She is a short, slim, rather ugly Calishite sorceress from Volothamp named Nymra Elpurtann, and she has been a pirate captain for four seasons. She wears purple robes and has long, straight, glossy black hair.

Nymra: AC 2 (*bracers of defense*); MV 12; W9; hp 26; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon; S 13, D 14, C 16, I 18, W 15, Ch 12; ML 16; AL NE. Around her neck she wears a steel gorget, on which are mounted a *brooch of shielding* (at her throat) and a hidden pouch (at the back of her neck; see below).

She has the following spells: *color spray*, *charm person*, *magic missile* x2 (each spell will produce five missiles, each doing 2-5 damage), *invisibility*, *spectral hand*, *web*, *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt*, *vampiric touch*, *Evard's black tentacles*, *polymorph self* (the Witch will use this to escape if she has to, turning herself into a large sea creature), *teleport* (the Witch's other escape route).

The Wave Witch also wields a *blast scepter* (9 charges left; detailed in the "New Magic Items" appendix) and a *dagger* +2. She goes into the battle protected by the "chill shield" version of the *fire shield* spell and has been busily using *invisibility*, *fly*, and *mist magic* (see the "New Spells" appendix) spells to launch the pirate attack. The Wave Witch casts all of these spells from prepared scrolls, one for each planned attack on a voyage. Left on the "in-use" scroll thrust into her belt are the spells *affect normal fires*, *change self*, *charm person*, *magic missile*, *ESP* and *dispel magic*.

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If hard-pressed, the Witch will abandon her ship and crew. But she will stalk the PCs throughout the adventure to gain her revenge, attacking them when they are weakest and when she can get away again easily.

The Witch's *mist magic* has cloaked her ship (she will remain in its concealment throughout the encounter), and she employs a *wizard eye* to oversee and coordinate the pirate attack. She is quick-witted, cunning, and has a long memory for names, faces, and injuries or insults done to her.

By the Witch's orders, a minimum crew of twenty pirates remain below decks as a reserve. If the battle seems nearly won, she will call them up to charge and clinch the victory. If the fight goes against the pirates, the reserve will be ordered to man the sails to get away, cutting the grappling lines so that the pirate ship can make its escape. The pirate ship (not mapped here; use the *Sword* map if the PCs go aboard) is larger than the *Mermaid Sword*, but is in sorry shape and will soon sink if not repaired.

The passengers aboard the *Sword* (except for the PCs, who can do as they wish) will hide during the fight. If the pirates win, Hessalo Avrein will have vanished, using his magic to hide on the underside of the ship in sea creature form. He will remain so hidden until he brings about the "Dripping Fingers" encounter, which he will do even if the pirates are in charge of the ship.

If the crew of the *Sword* are victorious, Veldyrina will give out her healing potions to wounded crew members and any PCs who have fought to save the ship. If the PCs played a large part in the victory, she will be grateful, promising them one free passage to anywhere along the Sword Coast from The Nelanthor to Fireshear.

The pirates carry no more than 1-5 sp and 1-10 cp each, but all have locked strongboxes beneath their bunks. Each strongbox contains d100 sp, d100 x2 gp, and 1-12 other valuables (of the DM's choice; gems, carved statuettes, jeweled weapons, and treasure maps are recommended).

The Wave Witch hides her personal treasure in a *Leomund's secret chest*. The tiny replica is carried in the pouch

that hangs from the back of the steel gorget around her neck; it is hidden under her long hair.

In the chest are sixteen stoppered and sealed steel vials, each containing a *portion of extra-healing*. There are also nine bone tubes, which contain the following spells: *affect normal fires*, *change self*, *charm person*, *magic missile*, *ESP*, *invisibility* x3, *mist magic*, *dispel magic*, *fly* x3, *wizard eye*.

Also in the chest are the Witch's traveling spellbooks, which will contain all the spells listed above plus others of the DM's choice; the Witch also has a full set of spellbooks buried in a cellar on Mintarn.

A xorn, which has been attracted to the chest while wandering in the Deep Ethereal, will come through into the Realms if PCs examine the chest. The creature will attack anyone having lots of metal (coins) or who tries to stop the xorn from reaching such substances. If the fight goes against it, it will retreat, smashing through the hull of the ship (which will then rapidly begin to sink!) if the PCs are still at sea, or through the nearest stone, if they are ashore.

Xorn: AC -2; MV 9; HD 7+7; hp 48; THAC0 13; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3 x3 (claws), 6. 24 bite; ML 16; AL N; MC2.

If The Pirates Win

If the pirates are victorious, they will seize the ship as a prize, manacle surviving PCs and crew as slaves, and sail on towards the PCs' intended destination, making for a beach on the wild coast south of Cantrev Aithe. There they plan to careen and repair their own ship and refit the captured *Sword*. On the way, the DM should allow the PCs to get free in a storm, and have a chance at overpowering the pirates. If the PCs fail, allow them another escape attempt in the Strait of Alaron, somewhere north of Llewellyn).

If the PCs manage to overpower the pirates during the storm, Hessalo, the Cult agent, will wait until the pirates have all been dealt with before he reappears to instigate the following encounter.

DRIPPING FINGERS

It is a moonlit night, and the *Sword* is running westwards towards the unseen Moonshaes, through gentle seas. The DM should start this encounter whenever there is at least one PC on deck. Suddenly the night sounds are broken by a startled cry!

A sailor who had come up onto the aft deck (to check the fishing lines that the *Sword* drags behind it each night) reels back and falls heavily to the main deck below. Arenthor is at the helm; he whirls around, sword flashing out. "Ho!" he roars. "To arms! We're under attack!"

At least six crewmen will respond, reaching the helm within two rounds. Arenthor will by then be fighting desperately against eight or more glistening, manlike things that have climbed up the fishing lines and over the rail: lacedons!

Lacedons (16): AC6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 15 (each); THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3 x2 (claws), 1-6 (bite); ML 12; AL CE; MC1 (under "Ghoul").

These lacedons will attack hungrily and are immune to *sleep* and *charm* attacks. Their touch can cause 1d6 +2 rounds of paralyzation in any victim touched. Each PC or sailor must save vs. *paralyzation* to avoid this effect when touched. Note that these lacedons can swim and walk on dry land at the same rate; they are not confined to water.

These undead attackers have been summoned aboard the ship by an undercover agent of The Risen Cult of Bane, the "leaf-collector" Hessalo Avrein. In reality a necromancer (7th level wizard specializing in necromancy) named Thazstar Rhiynn, "Hessalo" has been on the mainland gathering both rare spell components for his own use and wealth for the Cult. In fact, the bottom of his box contains no fewer than seventeen rough, uncut rubies of unusually large size (each worth 6,000 gp in its present state). PCs who have no special experience with gemcutting or mining will only have a 65% chance of recognizing one of these stones as something valuable; those with such experience will recognize them readily.

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The lacedons will not attack the necromancer, who will hide in his cabin during the fight. The Cult wizard didn't expect to be lucky enough to attract the lacedons. He had barred his cabin door from within before casting his *call undead* spell (detailed in the "New Spells" appendix), hoping that something useful would be within range. The hungry lacedons, which often escort Sword Coast shipping, awaiting burials at sea, drunken crew falling overboard, or someone deciding to bathe or check on noises from the underside of the hull (caused by the helpful lacedons), responded. He hopes the lacedons can weaken the crew, and especially the PCs, so that the cargo of swords bound for Aithe can be seized once it is ashore. (Hessalo knows that an attack is planned, but not how or when.)

If Hessalo's lacedons can gain control of the ship, so much the better. He can navigate the waters around the southeastern Moonshaes well enough to have the undead run the ship aground on a secluded beach south of Cantrev Aithe.

Thazstar Rhiynn ("Hessalo"): AC 7 (dex bonus); MV 12; W7; hp 23; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon; S 15, D 17, C 14, I 18, W 15, Ch 12; ML 16; AL LE.

Hessalo wears simple breeches and tunic and is armed only with a belt dagger. During this trip, he has relied upon memorized spells (and travel scrolls, which he used up on the mainland). His spellbooks are hidden under a certain tree near the road, outside the gates of Aithelar.

Hessalo's full roster of spells (in his spellbooks) is up to the DM. His presently-memorized spells are: *armor*, *charm person*, *magic missile* (the spell will create four missiles of 2-5 hp damage each), *spider climb*, *ESP*, *invisibility*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *revenge*, *polymorph self*. If the PCs are able to disrupt or turn the lacedons automatically, Hessalo will cast *revenge* on seven of the surviving ones, rendering them immune to one turning/disruption attempt each. The spell is detailed in the *Forgotten Realms™ Adventures* hard-cover sourcebook.

Hessalo has no magic items or scrolls, and is not looking for a fight. Note that the crawling claws that guard his box



will attack anyone opening it or reaching into it except him.

Hessalo's box and cover story are described above; he will use his spells to try and avoid detection and interrogation. He will lie low, pretending no connection with the attack at all. If questioned, he will answer reasonably, professing innocence, but will seize the first private opportunity to use his *invisibility* or *polymorph* spells to hide until landfall. If he is found out and pressed in the extreme (his life is threatened), he will reveal the names of the High Hands of the Cult, the ranks, garb, and courtesies of the Cult (the DM should consult Appendix 2 for this information), their general plan to seize control of the Moonshaes as a kingdom for the god Bane, and their present goal to slay the High King; that he is to contact a butcher in Aithe named Duskerell Thimbottle, or failing that, a woodcarver in town named Kantivel Chonn, to report his return and the fate of the swords. A message as to where he should go and whom he should meet next will then be relayed back to him by one of these contacts.

Hessalo does not know the present whereabouts or daily doings of any Cult member. He does know of several caves and meeting places somewhere in deep Dernall Forest, but couldn't find any of them without a guide. He also knows that the Cult has an underground temple somewhere in the Moonshaes that is

reached by "greeting the black hand" (that is, touching a floating black hand image placed in different locations by Cult magic) and being magically *teleported* to the temple. He was once told that if he wished to contact the Cult in Corwell, he should seek out "Darkhorn Castle."

The PCs should prevail in this encounter. The lacedons will seize whatever crew they can (to dine upon later), concentrating on the dead, who will, of course, offer less resistance once ten or more of them have been destroyed. The PCs will have to help with the sails if the crew's strength has been too weakened by the encounter.

Chapter 2: Danger In Aithe

This chapter begins as the PCs make landfall on the Moonshaes—either on the beach, as captives of the pirates or the Cult wizard and his lacedons, or in the harbor of Aithelar, having survived the voyage in freedom.

The Beach

The pirates or the Cult wizard will run the *Mermaid Sword* aground on the beach, and imprison the PCs in their cabin (which will tilt dramatically as the ship is careened). Allow the PCs to try and fight their way out. If they fail, or decide to wait until dark, night will come, and there will be a sudden flash of light, a roar, and the ship will be flung into the air. It will sail out over the dark waters, borne by (Flamsterd's) magic, carrying the PCs and any of the crew that have survived, but not the pirates or Thazstar/"Hessalo."

The ship will come down into the waves in the darkness, but within sight of glimmering shore-beacons: the guiding lamps of the tiny harbor of Aithelar, sole port of Cantrev Aithe.

ASHORE AT AITHELAR

Aithelar's tiny, shallow harbor has no jutting wharfs. Its docks skirt the shores of the small bay in a rough horseshoe. To one side are crowded numerous ramshackle fishing-boats, moored around a precarious network of sagging rope- and-plank walkways slung from post to post above the waves. Open coracles big enough for three people (at most) drift slowly in half-circles on their mooring-lines. A row of sheds line the docks, the roof of each draped with drying fishing-nets. The smells of fish, tar, and rotting seaweed are strong in the air.

An old man with a hand-lamp gets up from his seat on a piling and calmly signals the *Sword* to an empty berth, Old sailors and youths alike appear from every corner and alley as the ship's lines are thrown out. The old man looks up and nods at the crew in recognition.

"Cargo?," he asks.

"For the Keep," is the reply, before any of the PCs can say anything. "Ten

carts."

The man nods and turns to signal this. "Time for tankards?," he asks, as the ship is made fast.

"Aye, later. We must wait so the Lord needn't."

Open wagons, pulled by oxen, rumble onto the rough planks of the dock, and everyone hustles to load them; the old man with the lamp watches the loads being secured as closely and carefully as the crew do. There are no attacks or attempts at theft.

Aithelar's streets generally climb a gentle slope upwards to open pasture land. To the right of where the *Sword* is moored, a broad street curves and climbs towards a ridge, where sits Aithe Keep: the PCs' destination.

"Wagons ready," the old man says. "Guard them as ye will."

The harbor folk melt back to their sheds, boats, and alleyway games, leaving the ten loaded carts in the care of the PCs. Each cart is led by a drover armed with a whip at the head of its team of two oxen. They stand waiting for the PCs to form up whatever escort is desired, as the crew of the *Sword* take their leave of the PCs.

Drovers(10): AC 10; MV 12; F1s; hp 7 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (20' long drovers' whip: 1d4 + 1 plus victim Strength Check or knock-down); S 15, D 14, C 16, I 13, W 14, Ch 14; ML 12; AL NG). Their names include Brannan, Corm, and Feldar; use these for anyone who yells to a friend or whom the PCs question later.

AMBUSH IN THE HIGH STREET

The trip from harbor to Keep is short, but whenever it is undertaken, the convoy of carts will be attacked.

Huge wagons, heavily loaded with logs and pulled by teams of six draft horses each, creak out of side-streets to block the path of the carts, in front and behind. If any PCs try to stop these wagons, they will be ridden down. As soon as the log-wagons are across the road, their teamsters will quickly unhitch the horses and hurry them away.

The DM should consult the Aithelar map provided (inside back cover). The

blocking wagons come out of Whitefish Alley and Finn's Alley. The moment the way is blocked, archers will begin firing (automatic initiative) at the PCs and cart drovers. Archer fire will come from the rooftops of buildings "A," "B," "C," and "D" (4 archers on each, firing from behind the PCs with an attack bonus of +3 in their initial round of firing) and from upper windows in buildings "E," "F," "G," and "H" (2 in each, firing from in front of the PCs, with an initial-round attack bonus of + 1). These archers have practised in the street with padded-head shafts in the past and know the ground thoroughly, including alleys to flee by. After the initial round, their advantage is lost, except against any PC who freezes in position and does nothing!

The buildings are all timber and stucco structures with shops at the street level and an overhanging floors/attics above. All have peaked roofs fitted with platforms for gardens and laundry-drying, and the rooftop archers kneel on these. Stairs reach the roofs of these buildings only from inside the houses (at the back of each shop), but stairs reach the upper floors both inside and outside, behind each building.

Archers (24): AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; F2s; hp 16 each; THAC0 19 (specialization allows + 1 to hit, rising to + 2 when less than 60 feet from the target, and gives +2 on all archery damage rolls); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (long bow/42 sheaf arrows each, 1d8 dmg; short sword, 1d6 dmg); S 14, D 14, C 16, I 12, W 12, Ch 13; ML 14; AL NE.

They will concentrate their fire first on the drovers (PCs will have great difficulty moving the carts without them) and then on any PCs readying spells or missile weapons of their own. The fire from behind the PCs is heaviest.

After the PCs react (i.e., launch a counterattack), thugs will boil up out of the side alleys to try and seize the crated blades. They seem to know which crates contain blades and which hold the textiles and other cargo from the *Sword*. If the PCs stay with the carts, the archers will calmly make pin-cushions of the oxen and drovers, and then try to do the same to the PCs. The thugs will not emerge from the alleys

Chapter 2: Danger In Aithe

until the PCs move or have all fallen.

Seven thugs come out of Brokentorc Alley, twelve out of Rope End Lane, and eight out of Eel Street. They will fight PCs as necessary, but primarily attempt to hustle sword crates away all the while. They are not stupid enough to group together and draw concentrated PC spell attacks.

Another twelve thugs crouch behind each log wagon. Both groups are aided by a priest of Bane. Some of these thugs will attack any PCs seeking to reach the archers from behind, and the others wait to catch any PCs trying to escape from the ambush.

Thugs (63-51 here and 12 waiting down Eel Street; see below): AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; T2s; hp 16 each; THAC0 20 (+ 1 to hit due to thug fighting training, plus strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (club, 1d6 dmg); S 17 (+ 1 to hit and damage), D 13, C 17, I 11, W 10, Ch 11; ML 13; AL NE.

The Cult has hired these toughs from the ranks of "The Broken Ring," a recently-established guild of thieves and smugglers who carry on much unofficial trade between kingdoms of the Northmen and the Ffolk as well as the pirates coming up from The Nelanther.

The Broken Ring is based, surprisingly, on Snowdown. Its members pose as fishermen, woodcutters, and peddlers; most are fighters or thieves of 1st through 5th level. It is currently a hundred and twenty "hands" strong plus a dozen or so aged, youthful, or crippled "eyes" (spies and lookouts).

The Ring depends on good communications to avoid detection and to arrange for successful ambushes. It is led by Thauntiver, a neutral evil, 6th-level priest of Mask, who fled to Snowdown when the thieves he ran with in Luskan fell afoul of the High Captains—and were quietly eliminated. He poses as a boatbuilder in the tiny fishing village of Dhunrune, on the small bay across the water from and about midway between Kingsbay and Horstall.

Thauntiver has spent most of his time so far healing injured Ring members and slowly building ties with the pirates of The Nelanther. The Ring is working, and working well, but has as yet made little more money than it has spent.

Desperate for cash to continue its operations, Thauntiver has seized on the Cult's approach as a chance to make money—and thin the ranks of the Ring of the slow and the stupid (i.e., the thugs).

Exaggerating the size and powers of the Ring, particularly on the topics of magic and poisons (to discourage treachery by the Cult), Thauntiver was forced to send the bulk of his able "hands" to Aithelar to meet the Cult's demands. He and his most powerful lieutenants remained behind in Snowdown and their other watchstations, Horstall and Kythyss. They have sent two youths (1st level thieves armed only with daggers) to watch what happens and take no part. These "eyes" are unknown to the Cult and are there to watch for treachery. If the PCs slay many of the Ring's "hands," they will report back to Thauntiver, who will then make hunting down the PCs (anywhere on the Moonshaes or the Sword Coast) a long-term vendetta. Robbing individual PCs will be made an initiation rite for 4th level or higher thieves seeking to join the Ring; Thauntiver is nothing if not thorough.

The thugs have been ordered to obey Cult priests absolutely and will do so! They have too little experience to do otherwise.

The two Cult priests are Irmutar and Rathkuul. They are mainlanders, clergy of Bane who lost their temples in the devastation of the Fall of the Gods. Recently arrived in the Moonshaes, and following rumors, they found the Cult and asked if they could join. They will be accepted on the condition they "prove themselves" by performing well in the ambush. The two are friends and will not attack or trick each other (at least not until they are well established in the Cult). They will, however, fight vigorously and tenaciously until they reach their last six hit points. They have no magic items except their holy symbols and a *potion of flying* each, which they have been instructed to use *only* if they need to escape. They know very little about the Cult, except that in Aithelar they can contact a butcher named Duskerell Thimbottle or a woodcarver named Kantivel Chonn for direc-

tions and to pass on messages. (See "Tarrying in Aithelar" for more about these Cult contacts.)

Rathkuul and Irmutar: AC 4 (splint mail); MV 12; P9s (they have no ceremonial robes or masks); hp 67 (Rathkuul) and 62 (Irmutar); THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (mace, 1d6 + 1 dmg); S 15, D 14, C 17, I 15, W 18, Ch 16; ML 17; AL LE.

Both have the same spells memorized: *cure light wounds* x5, *sanctuary*, *flame blade*, *heat metal*, *hold person* x2, *spiritual hammer*, *cause blindness* x2, *dispel magic* x2, *pyrotechnics*, *cause serious wounds* x2, and *mystic lash*. (The DM should consult the "New Spells" appendix for details of the *mystic lash* spell before running the street attack encounter; it will be the main offensive weapon of the two priests.) Just before the attack, the priests will both cast *spell immunity* on themselves, protecting against *fireball* spells.

The Broken Ring thugs man six carts of their own, which are waiting down Eel Street at "I" with two drivers each. Archers at "J" and "K" will fire at any PCs who charge the wagons in an attempt to prevent the thugs from loading the crates. The carts contain twelve spare quivers of 21 arrows each. If the PCs make a stand around their carts when first attacked, these quivers will be rushed to the rooftop archers at a prearranged signal; any archer emptying a quiver will kick or toss it off the roof behind him. Youths hired for the afternoon will go for replacements on the run, wearing a red cloth tied around their left arms to prevent any archers or thugs mistakenly attacking them.

The thugs' carts, when loaded, will rumble straight towards the Wild Wood, taking as many sword crates as they can. Retreating Broken Ring members will follow the carts as a rear-guard. If PCs follow the carts and thugs into the Wood, they will soon find themselves under attack by dozens of skeletons and zombies; the cart-track bends around an old burial pit and hidden Cult priests have used *call undead* and *animate dead* spells freely to call up a substantial undead blocking force.

If the carts can't get away, the Broken Ring thugs will break and flee in all di-

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rections, abandoning them. The clerics Rashkuul and Irmutar will also abandon the fight, using their *potions of flying* to seek out caves they've been shown. The Cult will not attack PCs rescuing the carts or exploring into the woods unless the PCs are foolish enough to stay in the woods after nightfall, whereupon undead will attack (literally by the dozen) until the PCs are slain or retreat.

While the PCs are fighting their ambushers on High Street, the *Sword* is under attack, too-and aflame, thanks to fire arrows shot into the decks and rigging. The crew is unable to fight the fires because they are too busy defending themselves against the blades of 30 thugs. The archers (14) who fired the ship remain on rooftops near the waterfront, waiting to repel any rescue attempts by returning PCs or local troops from the Keep. (No troops will come.) Statistics for the waterfront archers match those of their colleagues involved in the High Street ambush.

FLAGONS AND AN AUDIENCE

Regardless of the outcome of the street attack, the PCs should eventually have an audience in the towering, sombre stony bulk of Aithe Keep with Haembar "Hawkenhound" Cauldyth, Lord of Aithe.

If they take the swords—or word of what has happened—straight to Aithe Keep after the ambush, they will be granted an immediate audience and the hospitality of the Keep (unless they act openly hostile). If the PCs avoid Aithe Keep but stay in Aithelar for a day or more after the street attack, an honor guard of forty men-at-arms (F1s), accompanied by the cleric Ansyble (see below), will show up to escort them to an audience!

Lord Cauldyth is a stout, mustachioed, once mighty man of about fifty winters, whose brawn is going to fat. He wears a rich tunic, and bears a long sword scabbarded at his hip. Upon the PCs' arrival, he wordlessly scoops up heavily chased metal flagons from a side table, pours them full from a sparkling row of crystal decanters, and of-

fers one to each PC, taking the last for himself.

If any PC refuses a drink, Lord Cauldyth will calmly nod, say gently, "Lady Chauntea, may this return of dew enrich thee," and dash the flagon's contents onto the floor.

Lord Cauldyth: AC 8 (unarmored, dex bonus; in battle, he is AC0, using heavy field plate but no shield); MV 12; F8; hp 81; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg by weapon (two-handed sword, 1d10 dmg, +1 to hit and +2 on damage due to specialization; long sword, 1d8 dmg; warhammer, 1d4 +1 dmg; dagger, 1d4 dmg); S 16 (+1 on damage), D 16, C 18, I 14, W 15, Ch 16; ML 18; AL LG.

Cauldyth is an intelligent, upright warrior whose love for his land and people is passionate. He will thank the PCs for undertaking to guard the swords (whatever the outcome of their journey thus far), and will politely, but not probingly, ask the PCs their names, occupations, and aims. He will freely suggest good hunting and fishing spots, sights worth seeing, and notable craftsmen or merchants up and down the lands of the Ffolk. Whether asked about local troubles or not, he will tell the PCs the following about the newest foes to menace the Moonshaes:

"There are priests, evil men, working hereabouts—even in Aithe, Goddess take them; they keep in hiding in the Wild Wood, where my men cannot meet them blade to mace and force them to stand and fight! These serpents serve the Dark God, Bane, and they're gathering enough strength to challenge all who rule these lands, even as the Northmen did, and take our lands one by one, over the years. All over Gwynneth and Alaron and, I've heard, even in the kingdoms of the Northmen, these foul priests are rising.

"It started with brigands, brigands who were organized and well-informed, and backed by these priests who fed them, hid them, and healed them when we came hunting.

"Then came the beasts, wild creatures the like of which we've never seen nor fought since the times of our grand-sires. We'd scarce hunted down the worst of those when undead rose to the attack—even our friends who'd fallen

fighting the monsters only nights before! So many of these gruesome 'grave-sends' still walk that the land itself seems to crawl and shiver some nights.

"Wild magic came next. We heard of druids slain and their groves despoiled, local lords and farmers twisted or slain by fell magic, and more undead rising from it all to dance the tune of these new lords of the land, these skulkers in the dark, black-robed priests who proudly call themselves The Risen Cult, harrying the hard-working farm folk and busy merchant alike with...."

Cauldyth's voice will rise in anger throughout this speech. He will break off at this point and recover his composure enough to politely answer any PC queries or comments. He will add, looking at the PCs, "The Goddess of old had horns and teeth and even disease to fight for her, to keep the balance. This 'Lady Chauntea,' who is our goddess now, is gentler. She needs adventurers to fight for her, even more than the Earth Mother needed those led by Tristan, now our High King. I need you; Aithe needs you; all the Moonshaes need you. Will you stand with us?" He smiles. "I cannot promise victory, or even survival—but one way or t'other, bards will sing of you."

Whatever the PCs say, Cauldyth will offer the hospitality of his home and healing to PCs who need it. If any PCs were slain, wounded, or captured since they left the Sword Coast, he will suggest revenge. If the thugs managed to get away from the ambush with any swords, he will suggest an attempt to recover them. If the PCs express a desire for adventure, travel, or worship, or accept his offer of healing, Cauldyth will propose they attempt the rescue of three kidnapped local priests of Chauntea by finding the local temple of the Risen Cult, thought to be hidden near Aithe.

All of these goals point to a PC expedition into the Wild Wood, an especially old and overgrown part of the vast Dernall Wood located just outside Aithelar.

If the PCs protest that they are too few, Cauldyth will simply spread his hands and say, "There is no one else to fight for us. My sword will ride with you, if you'll have me, and that of my

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youngest daughter; my eldest must remain to hold and rule Aithe. The three of us were not enough to bear arms into the forest, but now that you've come, all of us together may prevail-if we can strike to the heart of this evil before its many arms can reach out to drag us down."

Cauldyth's youngest daughter is Rhiara, a dark-haired, impish beauty of fleet feet and much mischief.

Rhiara: AC 3 (chain mail and dex bonus in combat; otherwise, AC8, velvet gowns or AC6, the simple leathers of a traveling minstrel); MV 12; B3; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (long sword, 1d8 dmg; sling/26 stones, 1d4 dmg each; dagger, 1d4 dmg); S 14, D 16, C 13, I 16, W 14, Ch 16; ML 16; AL NG.

At all times, she tries to have both her first-level wizard spells memorized. She favors *magic missile* and *spider climb*, but has a spell book that also contains *affect normal fires*, *comprehend languages*, *jump*, *mending*, *read magic*, and *unseen servant*.

Rhiara can behave politely and solemnly if need be, but prefers to dance, flirt, and hear tales of adventure. (If she thinks the tellers pompous, she often parodies them later in devastating caricature.) She desperately wants to impress her father, do something important, and have an adventure or two-she will accompany the PCs eagerly, given the slightest chance.

Brwynella, the eldest sister, is quieter and more prim, the perfect young high-born lady. She will avoid adventure, but can aid the PCs in Aithe if the DM deems it fitting or desirable. She also tries to keep a full roster of magic memorized. She has access to all the spells her sister does, plus *alter self*, *bind*, *continual light*, *detect evil*, *ESP*, *invisibility*, *locate object*, *web*, and *wizard lock*. Brwynella usually carries three *magic missile* spells, *ESP*, and *invisibility*. She serves her father as spying eyes and ears around Aithelar.

Brwynella: AC 8 (robes and dex bonus); MV 12; W4; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (dagger, 1d4 dmg); S 13, D 16, C 11, I 17, W 15, CH 15; ML 14; AL LG.

Whether the PCs accept their aid or

not, Lord Cauldyth and his daughters will be charming hosts during a feast for the PCs, at which they can meet bards and important local folk. Of course, there will be Risen Cult agents or informants among the guests, but they will not reveal themselves or launch any attacks.

PCs in need of healing or other aid will be taken to the surviving local priests of the Goddess, who will reiterate Lord Cauldyth's plea for aid. They will heal the PCs without charge or obligation (the Lord has promised their services and will make offerings to Chauntea to pay for what the priests do). However, if the PCs have agreed to try rescuing their brethren, the priests will *give* each PC a *potion of extra-healing* (restores 3d8 + 3 lost hit points) in a securely stoppered steel vial.

The surviving priests of Chauntea in Aithe are Lhoreth, Ansyble, and Ethuan. They are presently living in Aithe Keep for their own protection, but insist on walking about Aithelar and the nearby farms each day to help and visit with the faithful. They are well-liked, kindly, decent fellows. They have several *cure light wounds*, *dispel magic*, *neutralize poison*, and *remove curse* spell scrolls locked in a chest and will use these freely to aid the PCs and the good folk of Aithe.

Lhoreth: AC 10 (robes); MV 12; P4; hp 21; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (mace, 1d6 + 1 dmg); S 14, D 14, C 15, I 16, W 18, CH 15; ML 15; AL NG. Lhoreth is the eldest, wisest, and most trusted of the three priests. His spells are usually: *cure light wounds* x2, *protection from evil*, *know alignment*, *spirital hammer*.

Ansyble: AC 10 (robes); MV 12; P3; hp 19; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (flail, 1d6 + 1 dmg); S 15, D 13, C 13, I 14, W 16, CH 13; ML 14; AL LG. Ansyble is known for his sharp tongue and is considered a youthful, zealous firebrand. He will eagerly join in any part of an adventure that he can get involved in. His spells are usually: *command*, *cure light wounds*, *hold person*.

Ethuan: AC 8 (robes and dex bonus); MV 12; P2; hp 14; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (mace: 1d6 + 1); S 14, D 16, C 14, I 16, W 17, CH 16; ML 14; AL LG. He is quiet and with-

drawn and is often ignored or unnoticed. He is a diligent observer who misses nothing; he has a careful memory. He can know two first-level magics at a time and usually carries two *cure light wounds* spells.

Lord Cauldyth, the Chauntean priests, and many of the folk of Aithe (rumors about the valiant newcomers have swept Aithelar) are eager for the PCs to sally forth and lay the Cult low, but they will agree to any delay for rest and recuperation the PCs deem necessary.

DM Note: If the PCs are too weak to be victorious in this adventure, Lord Cauldyth and Rhiara may join the party or turn up as surprise reinforcements when the PCs are hurting and in a bad spot. Cauldyth will most generally come thundering along to the rescue in his old and battered armor astride a mighty charger. He will plunge into battle with gusto, bellowing war-cries ("For Aithe and freedom!", "For the Goddess!", and "Cauldyth is upon you!" seem to be favorites). Rhiara is quieter in battle, but just as ruthless.

Tarrying In Aithelar

PCs who do not go to Aithe Keep immediately, or choose to take rooms elsewhere, will readily find or be directed to the local inn, the Silver Boar, or to the Seaview House, a boarding house run by "Mother" Myritauna Shelaun. This kindly, buxom woman (a neutral good, first level fighter with 8 hp) charges 1 sp a night per person, all meals, laundry, and mending included (no drinks available). Stabling is available from a neighbor, Lugh Hrynn, at 1 cp per beast per night.

The *Silver Boar* charges 3 sp a night per person, noonfeast and eveningfeast included (drinks extra). This does not include laundry, but does include stabling. It is a large, rambling, friendly place run by a retired warrior named Thendulryn Dhraun, a native of Tethyr. Thendulryn is a burly, scarred man who is pleasant but speaks seldom. He always wears a short sword, dagger, and a *ring of the ram* (a relic of his adventuring days, with 6 charges left; it is his chief defense against unruly guests). Using the ring, Thendulryn has acquired a reputation for "magical

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powers" among local folk.

If the PCs stay in Aithelar for a time, they will probably hear local tales and history and these rumors:

- The Shadow Hunt has been seen again! This ghostly, silent stampede of wildly galloping stags appears in Dernall Forest only once or twice in a decade, always on moonlit nights-and always heralding tumult or disaster! It Lsome nine or ten nights ago. (The Shadow Hunt is not the same as was seen north of Aithe, along the edge of the Forest, and as far south as Malar's widely feared, deadly "Ghost hunt of Shee," detailed in Appendix 3. Any PCs confusing the two will be set straight by local Ffolk.
- The *Lost Harp of Belshareen* has been found! No one knows who found it, or where, but its haunting music has been heard deep in Dernall Forest-and identified as *The Lost Harp* by no less than four Llewyr.

Belshareen was a maid of the Ffolk who wed a lord of the Llewyr some four hundred summers ago. They lived long and happily together, and when she died, her sorrowing husband set sail for Evermeet, leaving the magical harp he had crafted for her behind upon her grave, somewhere on the Isles. The harp is said to have the power to fan flames, fell trees, part water, and shatter walls, and the one who plays it can fly, walk unseen, walk upon the waves, and pass through stone-among other things.

The true powers and whereabouts of the harp are left to the DM, and are not part of this adventure. *The Lost Harp* is not in the hands of either the Risen Cult or the Harpers.

- Tairn o' the Keen Eye, master archer of Cantrev Borune, has slain a great skeletal stag with his arrows. Its eyes burned with red fires, and its hooves dripped the blood of the hunters it had trampled. Tairn slew it with silver arrows as it broke the spines and skulls of the horses in his traveling party, on the road near the hamlet

of Lammarach, north of Ogden. "Undeath is rising in the land," he told drinkers in *The Two-Headed Bull* tavern in Lammarach. "Beware, all! Darkness is coming again!"

- A funeral pyre of the Northmen—a burial ship, set afloat while aflame and bearing the body of a king or lesser lord or chieftain, his weapons, and personal trophies to a resting place "'tween fire and water," was seen burning in the Sea of Moonshae some twelve nights ago. When its flames sank for the last time, a great dragon was seen wheeling above the ship, illuminated by the craft's flickering, glowing embers. The dragon roared, in deep sorrow, witnesses all agree, and flew away northwards after the flames were quenched by the cold sea. No king or lord of the Northmen is known to have perished recently.
- Old Taunn, a netmender of Aithelar, has breathed his last. He was buried at sea yestereve. Xmn is said to be the last of The Company of the Red Sword, an adventuring group that retired to the Moonshaes some forty-six summers ago when the Sword Coast lands (particularly Tethyr) grew too hot for their comfort. The Company hid a great treasure—gold, gems, carved ivory and jade statuettes, pearls, and magic, too!—somewhere on the Isles and never touched a copper piece of it as one by one they grew old and died. No one knows the horde's resting-place now, but local lore has always held it to be somewhere underground near Aithelar.

Taunn never spoke of the treasure during his gray years, despite the prodding of his greedy co-workers. But on his deathbed he muttered, "The princess'll never wear her armor now!" These words are thought to apply to a winged suit of magical field plate armor of exquisite design, silver-plated and chased into flattering curves, made for a princess of the Lantanna almost ninety years ago. The armor gave the wearer the

power of flight, reflected back many spells (including *magic missiles*, and had gauntlets that could hurl balls of flame in battle! The Company stole the armor with the princess in it; neither she nor the armor were seen again.

Some Ffolk believe the princess herself, one Lhysstyliir, still dwells somewhere on the Moonshaes, aged and bearing another name. Some even say she will come to fight for the Isles in a time of great need, wielding the awesome powers of her armor. The Lantanna have no princesses now; their noble families long ago renounced their titles and opened the ranks of their governing Council to all citizens.

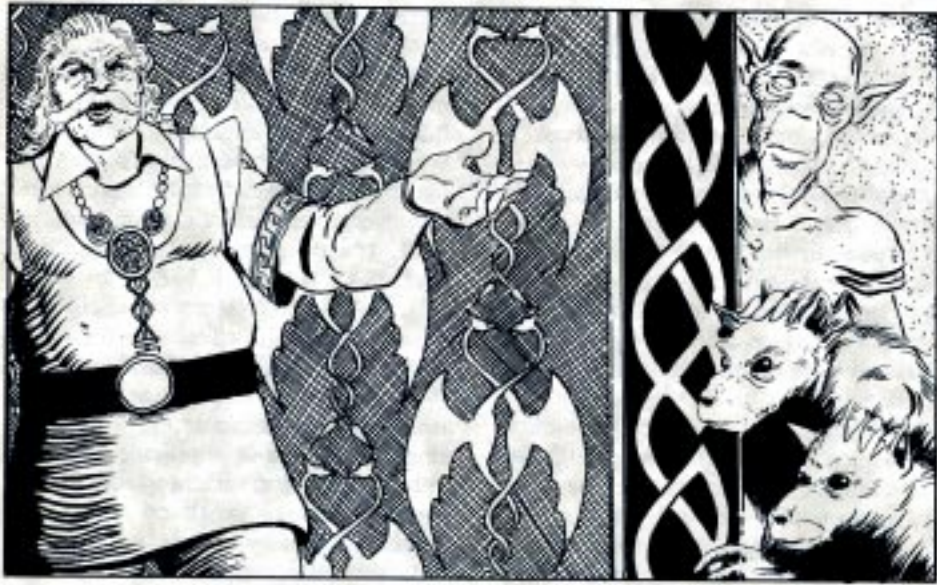
The DM can build these snippets of news into side adventures, if desired, or use them to give atmosphere to PC tavern visits. They are not further detailed in these pages.

If the PCs tarry overmuch in Aithe, townfolk will begin to ask when they'll "set right what is wrong;" first of each other, within earshot of PCs, and later directly questioning PCs. If the PCs stay twenty nights or more without setting forth into the Wild Wood, the townfolk will begin to avoid them, murmur "cowards" in the streets and taverns when the PCs are near, and generally grow tired of seeing the PCs in Aithelar.

If the PCs stay in town more than six nights, they will face three attacks, on different nights. The first will be an attempt to steal their gear by nine wererats. Then four doppelgangers, hired by a priest in black robes, will try to capture isolated PCs for questioning and eventual sale into slavery, taking their places in the party. Finally, 16 Cult-hired thugs will set wherever the PCs are sleeping afire, waiting with crossbows for any PCs who awaken to emerge.

Wererats (9): AC 6; MV 12; HD 3 + 1; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (each: short sword: 1d6, dagger: 1d4); ML 11; AL LE; MC1. This pack of wererats dwells in the sewers under Aithelar. The town's sewers reach as high up as the dungeons of Aithe Keep and open at their upper ends into Der-

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nall Forest, where they take in several creeks. These creeks flush the sewers at low tide. The wererats are wise enough to restrict attacks to lone peddlers, merchants, outlaw bands, and visitors. If they were ever to become a clear danger to the folk of Aithe, the rats know that the locals would call on aid from elsewhere to hunt the lycanthropes down. They see the PCs as good, hearty meals, and a rare chance to gain some good gear and weapons. They will try to attack stealthily while the PCs are asleep.

Dopplegangers (4): AC 5; MV 19; HD 4; hp 21 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; ML 13; AL N; MC2. These clever, careful predators make a living around and about Llewellyn and Kythys by ambushing and impersonating bands of travelers, sometimes inside inns. They habitually roam the Dernall Forest in between “big kills,” surviving by using their shapeshifting powers to trap and slay small game. The creatures were recently confronted there by a black-robed priest wearing the black hand of Bane, who demonstrated powerful magic in holding them at bay, before hiring them to capture certain people in Aithe (namely the PCs).

Thugs (16): AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; T2s; hp 16 each; THAC0 20 (+ 1 to hit due to thug fighting training, plus additional strength bonus); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (club, 1d6 dmg); S 17 (+ 1 “to hit” and damage), D 13, C 17, I 11, W 10,

Ch 11; ML 13; AL NE.

The thugs were hired by the Cult from ports around Alaron, Gwynneth, and the Sword Coast. They are independent thieves, mainly sailors thrown off their ships for drunken brawling, harming fellow crewmen, or stealing. They receive 10 cp per week and will get 1 gp each per PC confirmed slain or captured (they are to report to Duskerell, below). Their names include Andurl, Blaeth, Commor, Indarn, and Tarkh.

If the PCs discover the Cult’s contacts in Aithelar and seek them out, they are the butcher Duskerell Thimbottle (a neutral evil human male third level fighter of 17 ST and 27 hp), and the woodcarver Kantivel Chonn (a lawful evil second level human male thief of 10 hp, who has a rack of sleep-poisoned woodcarving knives and gouges).

These two are acquainted with each other, but know very little about the actual workings and strength of the Cult. They have orders to talk to and aid those who display the Black Hand symbol of Bane and to take orders from the priests Mustivel and Daermac, who dwell somewhere in the Wild Wood. Written messages and items for the Cult can be left in a hole at the foot of a certain large dead tree near the edge of the Wild Wood, or at Toad Pond deeper in the forest.

Ducking Out Of The Adventure

Whether the PCs agree to explore the Wild Wood or not, no ship will be immediately available for them to sail elsewhere. The *Sword* may never sail again; if it can be rescued and repaired, weeks of rebuilding will be necessary. If the PCs try to defend it while the crew rebuilds, refusing to go adventuring, the next encounter will happen anyway, at night, on the docks.

If the PCs steal or hire one of the ramshackle local fishing-boats, and sail away, a storm will rise (the work of Chauntea?—any hired crew will think and say so), and drive the craft ashore near Aithe, wrecking it and thrusting the PCs into the Wild Wood.

BANDITS ARE OUR BANE

While exploring the Wild Wood or travelling anywhere overland, the PCs will be set upon by bandits in another ambush. This lot are 30 strong and are led by a 6th-level fighter, Halardas Murr (THAC0 15, 40 hp, otherwise the same as his men). They will hurl spears from thickets and overhanging tree branches and then leap down or out to attack. They will have thin cords strung across the trail in front of the area of their attack to trip horses (automatic spill of rider, 1d4 falling damage, triple that for the mount).

Rogues (30): AC 7 (leather armor and dex bonus); MV 12; T2s; hp 12 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (broad sword, 2d4 dmg; 3 spears each, 1d6 dmg per spear); S 15, D 15, C 13, I 12, W 11, Ch 10; ML 13; AL NE.

These fellows know only that a man in black robes approached their forest encampment some nights ago and hired them for 1 gp each, per slain PC.

INTO THE WILD WOOD

Dernall Forest is vast and deep and old, rising like a great, green wall behind the coastal farms. Shrubs cloak its verges, rising into tall, well-spaced trees, devoid of lower branches where foresters have cut kindling. For a short way in, trails and stumps tell of the tak-

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ing of firewood and timber-carefully and lightly, a tree here and a tree there, never brutally-cut clearings or groups of stumps all in one place.

As the PCs go deeper into the forest, the trees grow taller and the berry bushes and thickets of thin saplings disappear. Darkness gathers overhead as the leaves of the tall old trees meet in a concealing canopy. Dead leaves lie damp and silent underfoot; fallen logs lie moss-covered and rotten here and there. Faint trails can be seen winding among the ridges and hollows.

PCs with woodcraft experience (those of woodland races or born in woodlands, those who are Foresters if the campaign uses secondary skills, and those with Direction Sense and Herbalism non-weapon proficiencies, in campaigns employing proficiencies) will be able to find several readily useful things in the forest as they travel.

These include hidden drinking water that wells up in rock crevices marked by particular ferns and mosses; and the spoor of boars, bears, deer, and smaller woodland creatures. PCs used to woodlands will also sense that something is not right in the Wild Wood; its creatures are too few—and too silent. The Wood seems to be listening and waiting around them.

The DM should use the “Forest Encounter Table” provided (inside front cover) as the PCs explore the Wild Wood, checking for encounters roughly once an hour by day and twice an hour (once every turn if traveling) after dark. The rise and fall of the land, the thick stands of trees, and the general dimness make mapping next to impossible, although a diligent party could keep a rough “trails cross like this” map. Birds call here and there in the forest, never close to the PCs—but the birdsong will die away utterly when the PCs encounter any creature. After dark, far-off wolf howls will be heard, plus rustlings in the underbrush and the occasional hoot of an owl.

If the PCs follow trails, they will end up on the “right” trail automatically. If they deliberately choose to avoid trails, lead them around in a circle until they reach a recognizable spot—and let the PCs decide what to do then for themselves. (If they are stubborn, they may

go around in circles all day!)

Whenever a trail the PCs are on forks, the DM should make a secret Intelligence check for any character leading the way or involved in a discussion of which way to go. If the check succeeds, the PC notices a marking low down on a tree, stump or stone: scratches in the shape of two circles, one above the other. (If a PC states that they are looking for such a sign at any junction, that check will automatically succeed in daylight, and be rolled at - 3 in darkness.)

The circles are a Harper trail-mark, marking a trail that passes through Derrnall Forest from one side to the other (a journey of some six days, if one doesn't get lost, and can swim or ford the river without losing much time). The Harper trail links several sacred groves along its way through the forest. Two of these groves, Atalantar's Grove and Thithero's Grove (now known as “Dark Grove,” for reasons the PCs will soon discover) lie on the PCs' side (the west side) of the river.

Band Aid

If the PCs are in danger of being wiped out at any time during their exploration of the Wild Wood, provide a rescue party to prevent the adventure ending prematurely. Such a “band of aid” will be Harpers, two human male rangers and a human female mage, as follows:

Elryn Tharr: AC 4 (leather armor and dex bonus); MV 12; R8; hp 60; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg by spell or weapon (long sword, 1d8 dmg; broad sword, 2d4 dmg; nine darts, 1d3 dmg each; also proficient with a club); S 15, D 18, C 18, I 14, W 16, Ch 16; ML 18; AL CG. He carries one *speak with animals* spell and four *potions of healing*, which he will freely use on PCs.

Douglar Hyuukhaun “o' the Rivers”: AC 2 (*bracers of defense*); MV 12; R6; hp 49; THAC0 15; #AT 2 (fights with two weapons, no attack penalties); Dmg by weapon (long sword, 1d8 dmg; short sword, 1d6 dmg; also carries sling/bullets, 69 carried, 1d4 + 1 dmg each; mace, 1d6 +1 dmg); S 16 (+ 1 on all damage rolls), D 15, C 16, I 14, W 14, Ch 15; ML 17; AL CG. He carries a brass *horn of Valhalla* (works once in 7 days,

brings 2d4 F1 berserkers of 6 hp and one F3 of 18 hp, all AC4 and armed with battle axe and spear, to serve for 6 turns or until slain) and two *elixirs of health*.

Mairae Ulzander “o' the Winters”: AC 6 (robes and dex bonus); MV 12; W12; hp 50; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (dagger, 1d4 dmg; quarter-staff, 1d6 dmg, seven darts, 1d3 dmg each); S 14, D 18, C 16, I 18, W 14, Ch 15; ML 17; AL NG. Mairae's spells are: *magic missile* x4 (five missiles/spell, 1d4 + 1 dmg each), *continual light*, *ESP*, *invisibility*, *web*, *dispel magic* x2, *lightning bolt*, *vampiric touch*, *dimension door*, *minor creation*, *polymorph other*, *remove curse*, *feeblemind*, *hold monster*, *telekinesis*, *wall of stone*, and *starharp* (used by many Harper mages, detailed in “New Spells”). She carries a *hand harp*, which she will give to the PCs with instructions for its use (see Appendix 4).

All three of these Harpers will eagerly help the PCs.

THE WAYHOUSE

Whatever trails the PCs take in the Wild Wood, they will eventually come to a barren, rocky hill, rising out of the trees. The hill is covered with sparse clumps of grass, banks of moss, and wildflowers; a few toppled saplings adorn its flanks. Its top is crowned by an old, half-ruined, empty cabin, an abandoned wayhouse. The party should find this feature near nightfall or at any time when they plan or are forced to spend the night in the woods.

PCs who examine the ramshackle wooden hut will find evidence of past fights and murders, specifically old bloodstains on the stone hearth, human bones, and broken, rusted weapons. In one inside corner of the hut is an open pit dug out of the earth and stones. In it lies a human skeleton, sprawled atop the corner of an open wooden crate. In the crate (most of which is buried in loose dirt) can be seen many coins and several large, gleaming gems: four rubies and a sapphire.

In reality, the “wayhouse” is a monstrous trap run by several monsters working together. The crate is the bait.

The first monster, a doppelganger,

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lies motionless atop the cabin roof, its form blended to match the shingles. It is AC 5; MV 9; HD 4; hp 29; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; ML 13; AL N; MC2.

The doppelganger will wait until night falls, the party camps, or the PCs start to leave, whereupon it will slip down from the roof of the cabin, in the guise of a party member, and try to attack the weakest isolated PC it can find. It will shift shape to resemble various PCs (or NPC allies) and employ any PC weapons it has gained, taking advantage of the confusion it creates.

DM Note: try to run this encounter so as to create a sense of mystery and disorganization among the party. The doppelganger doesn't want to get killed and will try to trick PCs into attacking each other, seizing any magic items that it can to use against them. If pressed, the doppelganger will try to get to the stone hearth inside the cabin, where the wayhouse's other monstrous "hosts" may join the fray.

There are actually three monsters working the trap from inside the wayhouse. The first, a mimic (located in the hearth), will fight openly as soon as the doppelganger raises the alarm—hopefully after dark, amid sleeping PCs. A second mimic forms part of one wall and will take no part in any initial battles. This mimic will remain absolutely still and make no attacks until the PCs decide to sleep in the cabin or during any battle fought within the cabin (and only when it has a chance to attack a PC by stealth from behind).

The mimics are AC 7; MV 3; HD 8; hp 60 each; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12 (plus glue); ML 15; AL N; MC2.

The "gems" found in the crate are actually rare, highly intelligent monsters, the 'master minds' behind this alliance of menacing creatures. They are greater peltasts (detailed in Appendix 3 of this adventure) resting atop 162 gold pieces, 34 silver pieces, and 12 copper pieces (treasure collected from previous victims).

If PCs dig around in the loose earth of the pit, they will discover a charnel pit of jumbled, recently buried human bones under the crate, entangled with rotting leather harness (armor, belts, and scabbards), rusting scraps of mail, crushed helms, and two bright, un-

rusted daggers. These weapons are both *daggers* +2.

The greater peltasts make no obvious attacks or movements, and are AC 3; MV 4; HD 2 + 6; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg special; ML 14; AL N; FA1. If PCs take these "gems" as treasure, the peltasts will begin to work against them magically. They will use *monster summoning* (use the "Forest Encounter Table" provided in this adventure) to plague the PCs until the gems are lost or destroyed, *slow* on any PC actually in contact with a "gem," and strong *suggestion* attacks (the means by which the wayhouse monster alliance is forced to work).

The PCs will also be stalked by a second doppelganger (identical statistically to the first). This creature was out hunting when the PCs initially arrived at the wayhouse, returned only after the PCs had gone, and will sense and follow any "gems" (greater peltasts) carried by the PCs, bringing with it any greater peltasts that may have been left behind.

THE DARK GROVE

Deeper in the Wild Wood (after the wayhouse encounter, regardless of what direction the party takes), the PCs will run into deadfalls, pitfalls, and spring-nooses hidden in or near the trails.

To begin the encounter, the DM should secretly roll 1d4 for each round of travel after the wayhouse and consult the following table:

Die Roll	Trap Encountered
1	No trap
2	Deadfall (see below)
3	Spring-noose (see below)
4	No trap

The effects of these traps follow and can be used for any such traps encountered in campaign play.

Deadfall: A large tree limb or rock balanced in a crotch between two high tree branches, or an entire tree sawed through at its base, is pulled rapidly down atop the victim by means of thin, waxed wires linking the falling object to a trigger (usually a tangle or circle of

wire) that is walked on or through by the victim. The wires have been rendered *invisible* by a secret process that mixes *dust of disappearance* with the wax; this effect lasts 2d10 days).

Falling objects attack at THAC0 5. Any attack that misses success by only 1 point is considered a *glancing blow* and does 1d4 + 1 damage. A direct hit does 3d6 to 5d6 damage, depending on the size and nature of the falling object, and *stuns* the victim (no voluntary activities possible) for the following round.

While the trap trigger wires are *invisible* (making any "find and remove trap" detection attempts by thieves virtually impossible), a successful Dexterity check will allow any victim to partially dodge the falling object, taking only half damage if he is struck.

Spring-Noose: These thin, *invisible* waxed wires (as in the "deadfall" trap above) are set to snap tight when jostled or knocked off their feeble holding hooks, yanking anything they entrap up into the air as a rock on the other end of the line descends from the tree from which the noose is hung.

The nooses are hung randomly at head/throat level or at foot/ankle level along the path. The victim must make a Strength Check, Dexterity Check, and Intelligence Check. If *any* of these fail, the noose catches the character around the throat (1-3 on a d6) or a leg (4-6 on a d6). Characters so ensnared drop whatever they are carrying (unless a further Strength Check is successful), are pulled into the air, and suffer 1d4 + 2 damage. Every round thereafter, they will suffer 1d4 constriction damage plus 3 hp/round strangulation damage if the noose is around the character's throat.

The wires are AC5 and must suffer 7 hp of damage in any one spot before being cut. Note that they conduct heat and lightning to all beings in contact with them!

These traps can be fitted with noise-makers to raise an alarm. In this case, the falling weights of the deadfalls and spring-nooses are festooned with scraps of metal, which clatter loudly as the weight falls.

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These traps serve to weaken intruders and to warn Cultists of their presence—for the PCs are approaching the local temple of Bane!

If the PCs press on, they will soon reach the temple, a simple altar in the midst of a despoiled grove. If they decide to turn back, bonebats (detailed in Appendix 3) will appear, flying raggedly through the trees as if injured, trying to lead the PCs into the grove. (Retreating PCs will also run into many, many traps until they turn around again!)

PCs will know when they have reached the grove; there is a tension in the air, and the forest around feels and looks different. The trail enters a dark, dim area of duskwood trees. Their black trunks grow straight and very close together, like some sort of natural palisade.

The duskwoods stand in a great ring surrounding an open glade. A second trail enters the glade on its far side. The glade contains a black stone boulder that has been roughly squared and has a black hand engraved in the top: the Hand of Bane.

The entire grove was perverted to the worship of Bane almost a dozen years ago (before the coming of the Cult). Its powers now serve the priests and faithful of Bane—not the priests of Chauntea or other good beings.

DM Note: Refer to Appendix 7 for the powers of groves before running this encounter. This grove has all basic grove properties plus Minor Powers 1 through 8 and Major Powers 5, 9, and 10. It also has one additional power: undead are rendered immune to all turning or disruption effects while within its borders. Destroying the altar (it must be shattered) will immediately rob the grove of one Major Power, at random.

The glade at the heart of the grove is ringed by 16 guardian skeletons, under the control of the Cult priests. There are three Cult priests here, praying to Bane for guidance as they keep watch over a cage of oak and brass containing the kidnapped priests of Chauntea. The cage has metal crossbars in it, with collars attached. The captives' necks are encircled by these collars, forcing them to stand (or hang) upright at all times; their hands are manacled to the bars on

either side of their heads. The collars and manacles are not locked, but can only be unfastened from behind. The cage is not locked either, but can only be opened when tipped on its side; door catches set in the cage floor can then be unfastened. Both these actions are impossible for any imprisoned within.

There are also ten bonebats in the grove. The priests, warned of intruders by the disturbance of their traps, will send the undead bats to engage the PCs; they, in turn, will prepare their spells. They will also use a vial of *dream dust* (which causes sleep) to render the clerics of Chauntea unconscious for 3d4 turns. Five empty suits of field plate armor lie neatly arranged on the turf in the glade, ready for use in the *doom of Bane* spell process—which the priests, if victorious, will cast on any slain PCs.

When the PCs reach the glade, the skeletons will attack immediately. The priests will begin hurling spells while standing in front of the cage—so that any retaliatory PC missile or spell attacks endanger the priests of Chauntea, too!

If the PCs seem close to victory, the priests will threaten to slay their captives unless the PCs surrender. This is a ruse; PCs who surrender will be attacked. If the PCs ignore the threat and continue attacking, the Cult priests will not spare the time or trouble to kill their captives, but will try to escape. They will conduct a fighting retreat together down the other trail leaving the grove or they will use their potions and sneak out.

The Cult priests are Angthrul, Mastramm, and Nanthiir, all human males of cold and ruthless cruelty. Each has a *potion of invisibility*. Angthrul also has a *black hand*, and Mastramm has a *mace of darkness*.

Angthrul, Mastramm, and Nanthiir: AC 4 (dex bonus, greater *vestments of power*—note the special powers of these garments in Appendix 4); MV 12; P9s; hp 66 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (mace, 1d6 + 1 dmg); S 15, D 17, C 17, I 15, W 18, Ch 16; ML 17; AL LE.

All three have the same spells memorized: *cure light wounds* x5, *sanctuary*, *flame blade*, *heat metal*, *hold person* x2,

spiritual hammer, *cause blindness* x2, *dispel magic* x2, *pyrotechnics*, *cause serious wounds* x2, *doom of Bane*, *mystic lash*. (The DM should consult the “New Spells” appendix for details of the last two spells before running the encounter.)

The other creatures aiding the Cult priests in the glade are:

Bonebats (10): AC 7; MV 3, F1 18 (C); HD 4; hp 26 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; ML special; AL NE; FA1.

Guardian skeletons (16): AC 7; MV 12; HD 4; hp 30 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short swords); ML special (treat as 20); AL N; MC1 (modified by Cult magic to statistics given here).

High Harvestmaster Haern (PB, 54 hp), Plot Tender Anduar (P6, 47 hp) and Senior Rivin (P5, 32 hp) the faithful of Chauntea, are peaceful men, exhausted by their ordeal. None have any spells left, except Haern, who retains three *cure light wounds* spells. They will be grateful for their rescue, Haern eagerly healing the PCs if necessary, but they are too weak and gentle in nature to be of aid in a fight. If queried about their captors, the Chauntean priests will only know that the Cultists took orders from other priests of Bane, based somewhere in Gwynneth, near Myrloch Vale.

Whither On?

If the PCs surrender, they will be caged, sleep-drugged with poisonous vapors to prevent plotting or fighting, and taken to Dultann, in Gwynneth.

If the PCs prevail and manage to interrogate any surviving Cultists (or use *speak with dead*, if necessary), they will be directed to the same place: Dultann, a small village on the eastern edge of Myrloch Vale, in Gwynneth. It is home to the priests' superiors, Anphrantul and Oishannan.

If the PCs are unsure what to do next, or want to head elsewhere, the DM should use a “guestfire” (see Appendix 1) to give the PCs a chance to talk with some local Harpers, who will urge them to go to Dultann. Any PC allies or tutors will urge the same thing—and if the PCs require priestly aid, going to Dultann is the price!

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Over Sea, Over Realm

The PCs travel to Gwynneth, either as captives or by any means they can (probably hiring a boat, with Harper-provided coins if necessary).

If the PCs are captives, a Harper attack (use the “band of aid,” detailed in the last chapter, aided by the arrows of several unseen Llewyr) will free the PCs from the thugs. The Harpers will then leave the PCs. They will give directions if the PCs ask the way to Dultann, and they will leave a *handharp* as a gift, with instructions for its use. This item is detailed in Appendix 4.

As the PCs travel overland to Dultann, the DM should use the encounter tables provided in FR2/*Moonshae* or modify the Forest Encounter Table given here to challenge them. The PCs should also run into (or see from afar) the following signs of the Cult’s growing evil:

- A marauding pack of wolves, goaded into an attacking frenzy by a dozen bonebats, who bite, claw, and “ride” the wolves from the air above. The wolves savage livestock, wild animals, and people alike.
- Skeletons and zombies wandering about, terrorizing farming Ffolk.
- Priests of Bane slaying unicorns, whipping villagers and priests of other faiths for sport.
- Shee riding by night, attacking PCs and others (see Appendix 3).

DULTANN

Dultann is really only a commonly-owned pond, a woodcarver’s shop, and a tavern (*Dultann’s Beard*) clustered amidst a few local sheep farms on the rising eastern edge of land that drops down into Myrloch Vale north of Synnor. It is not mapped here, nor are its inhabitants (simple farming Ffolk) detailed. They include the tavernmaster, Paedrac Rollstone; the woodcarver, Storn macAthhan; a horse-tamer, Dulith Griffonmane, the farmers Tuthtæn Rilyn and Anarsk Stranton, and others.

In Dultann the PCs will sense fear among the locals; tales of dark deeds and darker beasts that serve the “Dark Druid and of the evil priests of “The One We Never Name” (Bane) abound.

The villagers—especially if the PCs buy drinks for all and spend an evening listening at the *Beard*—will speak of the haunted ruins of Darkhorn Castle an unholy altar, “The Horns,” atop a bare tor nearby, and an old watch-tower that men enter but are never seen to leave. They believe that the evil priests who serve Bane can hear the god’s name spoken and will be attracted to Dultann, to slay “blasphemers”, if they hear it overmuch.

The places the villagers mention are nearby and can easily be found following the villagers’ directions (no area map is provided). The most important of them, the ruins atop Darkhorn Hill, are detailed below.

The Horns is a deserted and disused altar of Malar. If the PCs move, lift, or shatter it, they will find a long-forgotten *long sword* +2 in a hollow in the stone beneath the altar and a bone tube, yellowed with age, containing a scroll of two *raise dead* spells.

The old watch-tower is an empty shell. Its floor shows the ash-scars of recent fires; in its cellar can be found bootmarks, damp spots, and newly-made wooden stairs, all speaking of recent use. When encountered, the place is deserted. (It is actually a base of the bandits, detailed below, but they are not there when the PCs arrive. The bandits’ blades are the reason earlier investigators entered the old place but never again emerged.)

Bandits, Bandits Everywhere

Whatever the PCs decide to do, they will be set upon by bandits in another ambush. These 26 rogues are AC 7 (leather armor and dex bonus); MV 12; T2s; hp 12 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (broad sword, 2d4 dmg; heavy crossbow/ 30 quarrels each, 1d4 + 1 dmg); S 15, D 16, C 13, I 12, W 11, Ch 10; ML 13; AL NE.

They are led by Gordeirn Mathchan: AC0 (field plate and dex bonus); MV 12; F5; hp 44; THAC0 16 (weapon specialization and his strength bonus combine to give Gordeirn a + 2 bonus on all attack and damage rolls); #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg by weapon (broad sword, 2d4

dmg; long sword, 1d8 dmg; 3 daggers, 1d4 dmg each); S 17 (+ 1 on attack and damage rolls, as noted above), D 16, C17, I 13, W 12, Ch 16; ML 14; AL LE. Gordeirn is also armed with a *black hand* (detailed in Appendix 4).

The bandits are worshippers of Bane and servants of the Cult. Cult priests pay them and reward them individually with wine-and-ladies vacations in The Nelanther. In return, the bandits’ raids gather wealth and goods for the Cult. All treasure is taken to the bandits’ main lair, the ruined Darkhorn Castle, and stored in an undead-guarded tomb there.

The bandits will try to attack the PCs on a wooded section of road, firing from the concealment of the trees. They will try to snatch valuables from the PCs during battle —magic items, spellbooks, and the like—and run off to where they have horses waiting. If the PCs are mounted, the bandits will try to unseat them and steal the mounts, too! If the PCs prevail, surviving bandits will try to flee to Darkhorn Hill.

DARKHORN CASTLE

Far from homes still inhabited by men rises the grassy old burial mound of Darkhorn Hill, crowned by the ring of tumbled stones that was once Darkhorn Castle. This long-abandoned ruin was once the abode of an early lord of the Ffolk, who perished in battle with the Llewyr as he strove to carve out a realm among them. His proud kingdom vanished within years of his death, and the Llewyr used magic and monstrous allies to hurl down the walls of the Castle. It is not a safe place to venture; though long dead, Lord Melvair Darkhorn and his knights are said to still walk the castle wards.

PCs exploring the ruins or pursuing bandits up the steep, grassy road through its gates will find that there is nothing left of the Castle to shelter or hide anyone nor is there anything there of interest. Just within the gate, to the right, a round opening in the stone floor can be seen in the angle of what is left of the gate walls. This pit holds a

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broad, worn circular stone stair curving down into dark, unseen depths.

The DM should consult the Darkhorn Cellars map. Bandits will flee down here.

The Cellars

The stair ends in a large open chamber, dimly lit by daylight above. Once a Storage Cellar, this room still contains a dusty, rotting stack of crates. The bandits have found these crates to contain only mildewed, ruined bolts of cloth, and rotten wickerwork. They have cunningly added a row of obviously new crates, nailed shut and containing only stones, in front of the old crates, and devised a deadfall trap to endanger intruders investigating the crates.

The deadfall trap is triggered by *invisible* wires (concealed in the manner described in the last chapter, under "The Dark Grove"), that bring two man-sized stone blocks down atop anyone disturbing the crates.

Find traps spells and thieflly attempts should find the trigger-wire attachments to the crates; otherwise, an Intelligence Check at a +3 penalty must be successful to find anything amiss with the crates. The falling stone blocks at-

tack all creatures within 10' of any crate, at THAC0 5. Any attack that misses success by only 1 point is a *glancing blow* doing 1d8 damage. A direct hit does 5d6 damage and renders beings struck unconscious for 2-5 rounds.

A corridor opening out of the Cellar leads down past four storage chambers to two burial crypts, before ending in a well chamber. All of these chambers have plain stone doors, the well chamber's door having firing-slits in it so that defenders within can defy attackers coming down into the cellars. The bandits will scurry to the well chamber. By the time the PCs reach them, all of these doors will be locked.

The first on the north side of the corridor opens into a chamber whose roof has been breached by a collapse of the castle above. Most of the room is filled with a slide of fallen earth and stone. The bandits have hung a rope ladder here for an emergency exit, but tied it up to a ceiling-hook with ropes to prevent its use as an unauthorized entrance. These ropes reach the ground in the southeast corner of the room; jerking on them will bring the rope ladder tumbling down within reach. The west wall of the room serves the bandits as a kitchen. They have brought barrels of fish, olives, wrapped cheeses,

circular bread loaves, beer, pickles, and the like here. A long wooden table, firewood and cauldrons cluster around a crude stone hearth that the bandits have dug out of the rockfall. The room is deserted.

The next door on the north side of the corridor and the first two doors on the south side of the hall are empty storage chambers.

The third door on the south side of the corridor opens into the south burial crypt, a room whose thick air is heavy with spices, and whose stone walls are lined with stacked stone coffins. Each coffin contains a shrouded, skeletal corpse (not undead) and is without treasure. In the center of the room is a heap of well-used weapons which the bandits have seized from victims. There are 35 daggers, 14 knives, 4 short swords, 6 long swords, 2 broad swords, 8 spears, 3 hand axes, a halberd, 4 clubs, 21 staves, 5 footmans' maces, and 3 javelins. They are mixed up with various scabbards, weapon-belts, straps, and sheaths.

One of the coffins here has been emptied of its former contents and filled with the bandits' present treasure: 475 gp, 344 sp, 689 cp, three emeralds (each worth 5,000 gp), and a blue sapphire of the same size and cut as the emeralds (actually a greater peltast: AC 3; MV 4; HD 2 + 6; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg special; ML 14; AL N; FA1). This menace (see appendix 3) will use its *monster summoning* (use the Forest Encounter Table), *slow*, and strong *suggestion* attacks, to hinder the PCs until it is destroyed or discarded.

The third door on the north side of the corridor opens into the north burial chamber. It is identical to the other burial chamber, only without the weapons (and containing no treasure coffins). As its door opens, two ettin skeletons, placed here as guardians by Cult priests (the bandits know they must never open the door to this crypt and why) will charge out, attacking all living things in the cellars until destroyed.

Ettin skeletons: AC 6; MV 12; HD 6; hp 45 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (two-handed sword, 1d10 dmg, each skeleton wields one in each hand without penalty, only using one to attack per round); ML special (treat as 20,

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will not leave the cellars); AL N; MC1 (under "Skeleton").

The well chamber contains a deep, narrow well (a man-sized creature can't fall down it) yielding drinkable water and a small locked chest (Gordeirn has the key in one of his boots). Both water and chest can be raised from the well via the well's bucket. The chest is wrapped in water-proofed skins and attached to the bottom of the bucket. The chest holds two *potions of extra-healing* and Gordeirn's current spending money: 22 gp, 18 sp, and 35 cp.

Any surviving bandits will flee to this room, spiking the door shut behind them. (The door will take 74 hp of damage before shattering). Some will defend the chamber via firing-holes in the door while the rest try to slip away, one by one, out a crawl-passage.

This passage leaves the well chamber in the NW corner, where a large stone block lifts out from the wall. The passage runs upwards through Darkhorn Hill to emerge in a pile of fallen stones outside of the Castle. Any spell cast in the passage could cause a cave-in (DM's option-refer to the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* for cave-in rules).

An area of hollow-sounding floor stones can be found in the southeast corner of the room. These stones can be lifted to reveal a shaft down into the Undertomb (see below), unknown territory to the bandits. If any PCs enter the well chamber carrying a *handharp*, it will begin to chime and play by itself, its music growing louder and more exultant as this area is approached.

The bandits will slip away and flee through the passage while the rear-guard holds off the PCs. This rearguard consists of at least four bandits (if no bandits reach the Castle, these four will be here anyway, their statistics identical to those given for the band earlier), and two Cult priests: Anphrantul and Oishannan.

The priests will employ their spells and the *blast scepter* (see below) through the firing holes, while the bandits fire crossbow bolts and thrust spears. Guard-weapons left ready in the room are a battle axe (1d8 dmg), 8 spears (1d6 dmg), and six light crossbows (quarrels do 1d4 damage each); if there are at least six bandits in the

room, all six bows can be fired once and re-loaded within a single round. There are three quivers containing 21 crossbow bolts each in the room as well.

Anphrantul: AC 3 (dex bonus, lesser *vestments of power-see* Appendix 4); MV 12; P6; hp 44; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (mace, 1d6 + 1 dmg); S 15, D 18, C 14, I 14, W 18, Ch 15; ML 17; AL LE. His spells are *cure light wounds x3*, *flame blade*, *heat metal*, *hold person*, *cause blindness*, and *dispel magic*. He wields a *blast scepter* having only 7 charges left (detailed in Appendix 4.)

Oishannan: AC 6 (dex bonus, lesser *vestments of power*); MV 12; P5; hp 37; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type (mace, see below); S 14, D 15, C 15, I 14, W 18, Ch 14; ML 16; AL LE. His spells are *cure light wounds x5*, *heat metal x2*, *hold person x2*, and *dispel magic x2*. He wields a *mace of darkness*.

News

The DM should contrive to have at least one bandit survive the PC attack. If the PCs take no prisoners, provide them with a badly-wounded bandit found on the Hill when they are leaving. He will gasp out interesting things until they are listening and then freely answer questions.

The PCs should learn that the "Dark Druid," leader of the Risen Cult, plans to despoil the sacred groves of the Goddess, one at a time, until Chauntea's power to aid her priests and control the creatures of the land to her service are ended, rendering the Goddess powerless to stop the Risen Cult. From their orders, the Cult servants of Darkhorn know that the Dark Druid is on his way to Gwynneth, and will pass them by closely, perhaps even spending a night on Darkhorn Hill. Obviously, he is on his way to Myrloch Vale, to the Great Grove of Gwynneth.

This survivor will also mumble something about "great power...down below," referring to the Undertomb. If questioned about this, he will reveal that "death and great power" wait below the well chamber; the Cult priests of Darkhorn have never dared to go below because something "even the Dark Druid himself fears" is waiting there.

The Undertomb

Anyone exploring the well chamber carefully will find the loose stones in the southeast corner. If these are lifted aside, a dark shaft is revealed, descending into solid rock. The air is chill but breathable, and there is a faint amber glow from below.

If the PCs have a *handharp* with them, it will play by itself, louder and more excitedly, as it is brought closer to the shaft.

The shaft descends 80 feet through rock, with carved handholds in its sides allowing easy climbing. It leads into a long, low-hall, carved out of solid rock. Two rows of large stone coffins flank a central open pathway, their tops carved into effigies of armored Ffolk of both sexes. (Each contains only dust and crumbling bones.) There are 28 coffins in all. This area is lit by a permanent amber *continual light*, emanating from where it was cast on the ceiling, long ago.

At the far end of the tomb is a closed, arched stone door, engraved with the design of a crown. (Any *handharp* present will play more loudly if the door is approached.) If the stone door is opened, ancient cables will pull a mallet to strike an unseen gong in the room beyond the door, which will shatter with a dull, booming crash.

As the shards of the gong clatter to the floor, a coffin near the shaft, at the entrance to the Hall (and probably behind the PCs at this point) will suddenly grate aside, shifted from below by an alerted wight. (The coffin rests on a stone block attached to a pivot and a pulley, and can be easily opened from the room beneath, like a door. The undead emerges from a hidden, otherwise empty chamber beneath the coffin to attack the intruding PCs.)

The wight is AC 5; MV 12; HD 4 +3; hp 19; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 plus *energy drain*; ML special (treat as 20, not the usual 14); AL LE; MC1.

It is armed with a *blast scepter* of 26 charges, which it will use with full knowledge and skill.

While in the tomb the wight cannot be turned or disrupted, but becomes vulnerable to both effects if it climbs

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the shaft; it will pursue intruders until destroyed. Its mind is quite gone, but it was once a warrior set to guard the tomb and fanatically maintains its duty even in undeath.

The inner chamber of the Undertomb is a simple, unadorned room carved out of solid rock. It contains a raised stone dais, its edges carved into three steps leading up to a large stone coffin. This inner room is lit by a *continual light* emanating from within the coffin and spilling out under its lid. If the PCs are carrying a *handharp*, its music will grow louder as they enter the room.

The lid of this coffin is worked into a magnificent image of an armored human woman wearing a crown. If the lid is shifted, the *continual light* suddenly goes out and any *handharp* music will abruptly cease! The PCs will be left in darkness, but there is nothing to attack or endanger them.

Inside the coffin is dust; the body within has crumbled completely away. In the dust, at one end of the coffin, lies a black object shaped like the letter "C," which is about seven inches across. It is a *torc of power*, once worn by the corpse, and is described below.

DM Note: This item is described here rather than in Appendix 4 because it should probably not appear in play at all unless the PCs will face Xvim directly in the next chapter. The torc can be used by PCs to temporarily drive Xvim out of the Realms (gaining themselves a permanent, long-term foe in the process!). If the PCs are too weak to face Xvim, and the DM decides not to have the Godson appear in this adventure, the torc should be replaced by a lesser treasure, such as a *rod of flailing* or a *rod of resurrection*.

A *torc of power* appears as a large ring with a gap in it and is made of obsidian. Like other torcs, it is worn around the neck as a collar. It crackles with energy whenever touched by a living being, doing the wielder and all within 20' 1-2 points of electrical damage per round in which it is worn or wielded. It may be held in one hand and swung like a weapon; successful attack rolls, made at a +2 bonus, are required to hit opponents with it.

Its touch stuns any living being except the wielder for 2d4 rounds (save halves duration of stunning). Stunned creatures are reeling, unable to cast spells, think coherently or take any deliberate action, and suffer a 4-point Armor Class reduction.

As a physical weapon, the torc does 1 point of physical damage to any creature struck, plus the 1-2 points of electrical damage already noted. The torc cannot be broken by any known means and can pierce stone, armor, and other hard materials. Any attack or combination of attacks dealing it more than 40 points of damage in a single round will cause the torc to instantly shift to another (random) plane. Any being(s) touching the torc at this time must save versus spells or accompany the torc to the new plane (trip conditions as below).

The touch of a torc stuns any creature not native to the Prime Material Plane for only 1d4 rounds. If the touch occurs on the Prime Material, the being must save versus Breath Weapon at -5 or be instantly shifted back to its plane of origin. This involuntary trip is safe and instantaneous, as is the actual arrival in the new plane, but the surroundings may not be. The being is sent to a random location on its original plane unless the torc-wielder concentrates on a specific known locale (to which the being will always be sent).

A *torc of power* reflects any electrical discharges or magical effects back to their origin. The bearer or wielder of the torc suffers no damage, but any being(s) at or near the origin of the electrical attack face full normal attack damage.

DM Note: This item was designed for use against the "Godson" in the event he appears during the adventure. It is not intended for constant use against any and all opponents encountered by the PCs; hence it rather high potential to inflict hurt upon its wearer/wielder. It can and should be carried along by the PCs (carried in a pack or a sack). The DM can allow a Harper to identify the torc later in the adventure and the PCs should be (gently) prodded into taking it with them—"they may need it later...."

THE CULT STRIKES BACK

Whatever the PCs decide to do after emerging from Darkhorn Castle, they will be found and attacked by a Cult "hit squad," tipped off by Cult informants in Dultann or escaped Cultists from Darkhorn. If the Cultists can catch the PCs encamped, or low on spells and hit points after a day of adventuring, they will; but they won't bother with ambushes or stalking, preferring a bold, all-out attack that will (they believe) bring them inevitable victory.

This squad consists of 16 men-at-arms, 2 war captains, 4 underpriests, and 2 priests of power.

The warriors are AC 4 (splint mail); MV 12; F2s; hp 16 each; THAC0 19 (weapon specialization allows them +1 to hit with long swords); #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg by weapon (long sword, 1d8 +2 dmg due to specialization; 2 daggers each, 1d4 dmg); S 14, D 14, C 15, I 12, W 13, Ch 12; ML 14; AL LE.

The war captains, who will try to engage the strongest PCs, are AC 1 (full plate armor); MV 12; F6s; hp 56 each; THAC0 15 (specialization allows them +1 to hit with long swords, and strength bonuses give them a further +1); #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg by weapon +1 due to strength (long sword, 1d8 dmg, +2 on damage due to specialization; 2 daggers each, 1d4 dmg); S 17, D 14, C 17, I 14, W 16, Ch 16; ML 16; AL LE.

The underpriests are AC 5 (brigandine armor and shields); MV 12; P2s; hp 14 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (mace, 1d6 + 1 dmg; warhammer, 1d4 + 1 dmg); S 15, D 14, C 15, I 14, W 17, Ch 11; ML 13; AL LE. They both carry two first level spells: *cure light wounds* x4, in both cases.

The squad is led by Durnhas Ilmicoll and Savarchann Thongmeir, roving priests of the Cult, cruel "enforcers" who crush determined resistance to the Cult in eastern Gwynneth with their spells or with hired swords and poison. If questioned by the PCs, they can reveal all of the information given in Appendix 2 (as much as the DM wants players to learn).

Chapter 3: Against The Dark Druid

Durnhas: AC 1 (full plate armor); MV 12; P6; hp 46; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (mace, 1d6 + 1 dmg; warhammer, 1d4 + 1 dmg); S 15, D 14, C 15, I 16, W 18, Ch 15; ML 16; AL LE. His spells are: *cure light wounds* x5, *flame blade*, *heat metal*, *holdperson* x2, *cause blindness*, and *dispel magic* x2. He is armed with a *mace of darkness*.

Savarchann: AC 0 (full plate armor and dex bonus); MV 12; P6; hp 45; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (mace, 1d6 + 1 dmg; warhammer, 1d4 + 1 dmg); S 15, D 15, C 14, I 14, W 18, Ch 14; ML 15; AL LE. His spells are: *cure light wounds* x5, *heat metal* x2, *hold person* x3, *cause blindness*, and *dispel magic* x2. He also wields a *mace of darkness*.

No Aid Unneeded in War

After the PCs' battle with the Cult squad, a large band of Harpers will arrive to help, heal or even raise PCs, as necessary. If the PCs seem doomed to lose the battle, this aid should arrive as a rescue, driving the Cult agents away.

The Harpers can explain more of the Risen Cult's background and probable plans, if questioned. As soon as the PCs are ready to travel, a beautiful, raven-haired lady among them will ask the PCs to come with her. (If they refuse, she will use a *rod of rulership* to ensure the PCs' obedience.)

The lady will lead the PCs to a hilltop crowned with very old standing stones, surrounded by a glowing ring of magical radiance. (Any living creature who touches this *ring of warding force* will be *repelled* for one round, and will suffer 4d4 energy damage per contact.)

Opening a gap in the ring with a wave of her hand, she motions the PCs to enter, smiles, and then turns into a dragon and flies away.

If the PCs dare to venture inside the ring, they will find a *rod of resurrection*, twelve *potions of healing*, and a scroll containing two *heal* spells, a *restoration* spell, a *regeneration* spell, two *remove curse* spells, and three *dispel magic* spells, lying on the turf between the stones.

If any of these items are touched, a *magic mouth* will appear on the nearest standing stone, and say, "These are for your needs, heroes, as you answer our

needs in this dark time. We look for your help now in the Great Grove!"

Allow any PC who has met Flamsterd an Intelligence Check. Success will mean that they recognize the voice as one they've heard before—a wizard's voice, perhaps? Leave it to the players to think of Flamsterd; confirm it if they do. Flamsterd will remain out of sight for the rest of the PCs' adventuring on the Moonshaes, unreachable by the PCs, except through the beautiful lady.

The lady, Shaleen, is a weredragon (see Appendix 3) in Flamsterd's service. She will keep an eye on the PCs from time to time and will rescue any who are captured by the Cult or who take a fall to what might result in their death at any time while in the Moonshaes.

The Guardians of The Grove

The Harpers will identify the "Great Grove" in Flamsterd's message as the old and powerful grove of the Goddess at the heart of Myrloch Vale. The Harpers know of an ancient, hidden tunnel (obviously known to the Cult, too!) allowing passage from the woods near Dultann down into the Vale. They will take the PCs as far as the tunnel entrance. Then, forewarned by a *sending*, they will turn back to fight an approaching band of Cult hireswords, urging the PCs to travel as fast as possible.

The PCs will find the tunnel surprisingly free of guardians, though the black bodies of dead giant spiders, all with their legs curled beneath them, warn that it has not always been so safe.

If the PCs decide to go elsewhere, have them stray into an old *gate* that *teleports* all of them to the grove anyway.

Whenever or however the PCs approach the Great Grove (if flying or *teleporting*, the magic will be redirected and force them down), they will soon arrive at its verges, where a large ring of proud young oaks rises above swampy fenlands. Facing the PCs as they approach are eight firbolg guardians reinforced by a swarm of bonebats. These guardians are to keep all

creatures away from the grove until the Dark Druid's work is done; they will attack the PCs immediately and quite fiercely.

Within the glade beyond the oak trees, a low, evil chanting can be heard, punctuated by screams of agony (animal and human) and accompanying roars of approval.

Firbolgs (8): AC 2; MV 15; HD 13 + 7; hp 86 each; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 (two-handed swords, used one-handed) + 7 (strength bonus); ML special (consider as 20, due to Cult magical control); AL NE (modified by Cult influence); MC2, under "Giantkin."

Bonebats (20): AC 7; MV 3, F1 18 (C); HD 4; hp 27 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; ML special; AL NE; FA1.

A Darkness upon The Land

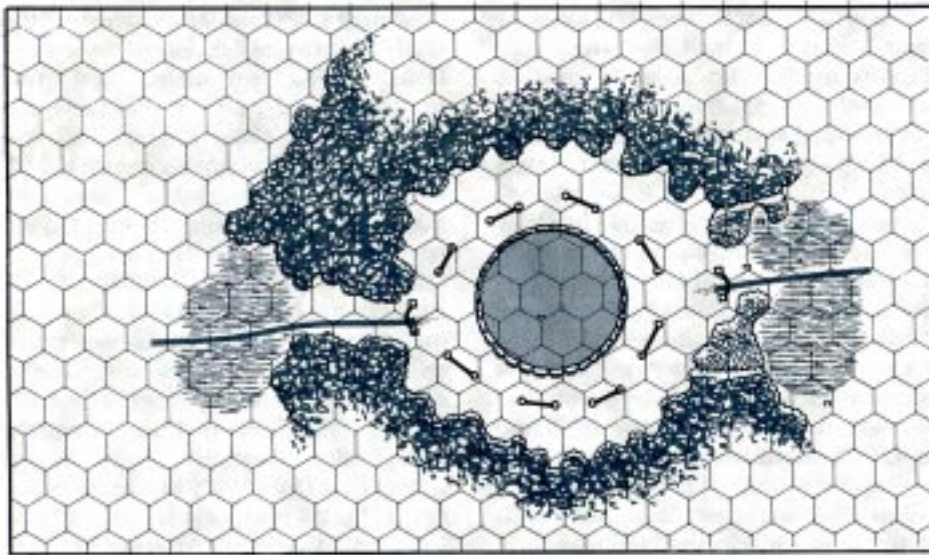
If the PCs defeat the grove guardians, they will arrive in the open center of the grove (its glade) in time to witness the scene below.

If it becomes apparent the PCs will lose the battle, there will be a sudden roll of drums. At this signal, the remaining firbolgs will turn from the fray and tear up the oak trees bodily, hurling them aside to reveal the grove's central glade to the PCs. They will then step aside in a chorus of deep, coarse laughter and await further orders from the priests within the grove.

In the glade, the PCs can see the Dark Druid *levitating* in midair above the Moonwell of Chauntea, his arms raised in triumph. Beneath him, the Moonwell's waters are covered by a dark circle of curling mists, expanding outwards to the water's edges as the PCs watch. Seven black-robed priests of the Cult bow to the Druid. He laughs coldly, and vanishes, *teleporting* away. (The DM should refer to Appendix 2 for details of the so-called "Dark Druid" and to Appendix 5 for the effects of a *moonveil* spell.)

Each of the priests then turns outwards, holding a torch. In unison, the torches burst suddenly into spontaneous flame, and the priests begin torching the trees and lush foliage of the grove.

Chapter 3: Against The Dark Draïd



The Great Grove

■ = Marsh 🌳 = Trees
 ⌒ = Arch (stone)
 ⌒-⌒ = Trilithon (stone)

1. MOONWELL
 2. FIRBOLG GUARDBLAINS
 3. TREES FLATTENED BY FIRBOLGS

As the flames rise up all around, the priests will attack the PCs. Any remaining firbolgs and bonebats will be silently commanded to attack the PCs as well.

These priests are Loalander, Baermyth, Aduin, Maernror, Hargryn, Ulast, and Perrorn. They are all AC 3 (dex bonus plus lesser *vestments of power*); MV 12; P6; hp 41 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (mace, 1d6 + 1 dmg); S 15, D 18, C 14, I 14, W 18, Ch 15; ML 17; AL LE. Their spells are: *cure light wounds* x5, *flame blade*, *heat metal*, x3 *holdperson*, *cause blindness*, and *dispel magic* x2. They all wield *maces of darkness*.

If the PCs are too weak to win, local Llewyr and Harper aid will arrive again, to rescue the PCs and to take and interrogate a Cult captive. (If the PCs win, the Harpers will appear with a captive and hail them.)

The Harpers are accompanied by a distraught druid, Owaen Mystwood. He urges everyone to lay aside their weapons. "Please," he cries, "the grove! We must restore the well and give life back to the land! That is how heroes measure their lives in the end, by the fire when they're old: in jobs well done!"

The Harpers nod in agreement and leap to fight the fires ravaging the oaks.

Owaen will call on the PCs to do so too. "The Moonwell must wait," he says mournfully, "for one who has the time-and the power-to break what has been done here. You must win us that time!"

"Aye, but what is the Cult up to, now?," one of the Harpers is heard to growl. Then he looks at the captive and turns to the PCs.

"Question him, will you?," he asks softly. "We all need to know where to run next. We who harp will fight these fires-you must fight the Cult!"

If the PCs handle the questioning properly, the captive will tell them the Cult's plan to make the Moonshaes the personal realm of the Returned Lord, Bane himself, and that, even as he speaks, the greatest of the Cult are striking at Caer Callidyrr itself, at the High King! The High King's blood, "the lifeblood of the most mighty of the land," is needed for the ritual to summon Bane to the Realms. A very old spell known to the clergy of Bane, the *stone walk*, will enable Cult priests to reach the innermost Halls of the High King; the captive doesn't know its specifics. (They are given in Appendix 5 for DM reference.)

Shocked Harpers tell the PCs that there is no time to lose; they must get to

Caer Callidyrr at once! And the Harpers know a way.

The Cloven Stone

The Harpers hurry the PCs south, stumbling across the soggy, drenching fens until the ground rises again. In the midst of some thickets on this higher ground rises another ancient standing stone-this one split in half from top to bottom and forced apart with the passing years until one can step between the two halves.

"The Cloven Stone," one Harper says, "is your only way now; waste no time. It will take you to The Bald Crown, a hill-top just south of Caer Callidyrr. From there, you're on your own. Beware—the Cult will doubtless be waiting for you!"

"Between the stones, all of you," another Harper says quietly. "Touch each other, too, until everyone is linked to everyone else." (Use the "Band Aid" statistics given in the previous chapter if Harper character details are necessary. The Harper dialogue given here can be given in answer to PC queries, but has been set down as a monologue in case the PCs don't make any!)

The Cloven Stone is an old *gate* linking the Great Grove with the High King's castle. The Harpers won't explain this unless asked, but will hustle the PCs into position. Then one Harper will stand facing the PCs with a harp in his hands, start it playing a haunting tune, and release it. The harp will hang in midair and play on, by itself, as the man stretches out his hands to touch both halves of The Cloven Stone at once. The Harper will look at the PCs, as strange blue-white flames begin to envelope his body. "You must fight for us, heroes!" he says in a tight, pain-wracked voice, looking into their eyes as the flames rise and his flesh begins to blacken. White mists rise from the stones around the PCs, blotting out their view of the dying Harper and the Vale. When the man's voice comes again, it is a horrible, rattling whisper, and his darkening eyes are like two glittering sword points. "Do not fail us!" he gasps as he is consumed and the white mists cover everything.

Chapter 4: The Halls of the High King

UPON THE BARE HILL

The PCs arrive on the hilltop, and are instantly attacked by a ring of twenty waiting Cult-hired archers, placed around the hill's flanks within 30 feet of the top to prevent any last-ditch aid from "meddling mages" of the Moonshaes. (The Cult knows of the old *gate*.)

The archers are AC 8 (leather armor); MV 12; F2s; hp 16 each; THAC0 19 (specialization gives the archers + 1 to hit, +2 if less than 60 feet from the target, and gives them +2 on archery damage); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (long bow/42 sheaf arrows, 1d8 dmg; short sword, 1d6 dmg); S 14, D 14, C 17, I 11, W 11, Ch 14; ML 14; AL NE.

The archers will get a "free shot" at the appearing PCs (the white mists of the gate are only in the PCs' minds but cloud their vision for half a round). Each archer also has arrows ready in the turf in front of them; they fire a second point-blank shot before even the fleetest of charging PCs can reach them. If the PCs are foolish enough to stay and fight, the archers will fire indiscriminately into the melee.

If the PCs break through the ring and run towards the castle, visible across a grassy valley on a hill to the north, the archers will fire volleys after them, firing for two rounds, then running for two rounds, and firing again. It will take the PCs at least twelve rounds of hard running to get out of range.

If the PCs are too weak to defeat the archers, a gigantic, enraged dragon (the weredragon, Shaleen—see the previous chapter and Appendix 3 for her dragonform statistics) will swoop out of the sky to rout the archers, who flee screaming in all directions.

THE GATES OF CAER CALLIDYRR

The PCs may be low on hit points and spells and forced to rely on scrolls and potions gained earlier. Haste rules the day; they must press on! (If for any reason they do not, they will find death and devastation in the throne room, High King Tristan and his Cult captors gone. Only the black hand will remain.

If the PCs avoid it, it will chase them, gating a PC to the temple with each touch, to face Xvim in the forechamber. The ritual has been completed—see below.)

Merchants and shepherds alike will stare as the PCs sprint past, and make remarks. ("It must be *that* time o' year again."/"Look, m'dear—these must be actors-or mayhap a band of guards the King's got in training!"/Lift those feet, then! Come on! Ye'll outrun a stag yet!")

When the puffing PCs finally reach them, Caer Callidyr's open gates are strongly guarded by eight soldiers who are unaware that anything out of the ordinary is going on inside. The Cult forces are already gathering in the castle but have not, in fact, attacked yet. The PCs will have to produce the original letter from the High King to get inside, or force their entry with arms and magic.

The guards are AC 2 (field plate armor); MV 12; F3s; hp 25 each; THAC0 18 (weapon specialization allows them + 1 to hit, rising to +2 when less than 60 feet from the target, and gives them + 2 on all archery damage rolls); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (light crossbow/33 quarrels, 1d4 dmg; halberd, 1d10 dmg); S 14, D 14, C 15, I 14, W 12, Ch 14; ML 14; AL LG.

It will take 4 rounds for the guards to swing the gates closed—assuming no one is fighting in the space through which the gates have to swing. The guards will not try to close the gate until at least four of their number have fallen to the PCs (by which time it may be too late). If the PCs are in the way of the closing gate, allow them Strength Checks to hold it open; build up the drama, but let them prevail even if the rolled Checks fail.

TO SAVE THE KING!

The DM should consult the partial Caer Callidyr interior map and consider the reactions of guards and folk of the court, located in the castle, to the sudden conflict. Use figures or markers (coins or buttons) to show the locations of everyone as the battle rages.

The High King's ornate, high-backed

throne stands on a raised dais in the center of the room, corridors approaching it from three sides. Ten suits of armor of the past High Kings are arranged behind the throne, in gleaming ranks along the back wall between two doors leading to the private royal rooms. The High King, Tristan, is seated on the throne, somewhat amazed at the confused, menacing scene unfolding before him.

Racing into the throne room, the PCs encounter 15 Cult priests and wizards. These minions recognize the danger the PCs present to their plan and will immediately launch their attack. *Mystic lash* spells fly out to fell courtiers. A *flaming sphere* rolls towards the PCs. As they avoid it (allow a Dexterity Check at + 3), it thunders down the corridor they came in by, trailing screams and the billowing smoke of tapestries blazing away to nothingness. A Cult wizard suddenly transforms a stone font back into its proper shapes: six armored orcs, standing together. One orc falls limply to the ground, obviously dead, but the other five leap towards the High King's throne. On the other side of the throne room, a stone bench suddenly becomes another nine orcs.

(The wizard has been *polymorphing* orcs for a while, using a special item that allows successively polymorphed objects or creatures to be combined into larger objects; he is now using *dispel magic* to return them to their proper forms.)

Bards around the High King's throne drop their harps and pipes and rise up to defend the High King. Some should fall to Cult spells immediately.

Tristan leaps up on the throne as he is attacked. On the wall behind his throne, the *Sword of Cymrych Hugh*, a long sword +4, hums, brightly flashes into a glowing radiance, and flies through the air into Tristan's outstretched hand.

The High King has already drawn his dagger; as the sword comes into his waiting hand, he hurls the dagger hard across the room to strike one of the shields that hangs on the nearby wall. The shield clangs loudly and drops to the ground with a terrific crash. At the sound (a pre-arranged signal), guards are heard shouting in the distance and

Chapter 4: The Halls of the High King

the rapid thunder of booted feet echoes through the surrounding halls. Courtiers run, screaming. And, as usual, the PCs are caught in the middle.

The twelve priests are all AC 4 (dex bonus, greater *vestments of power* – note the special powers of these garments listed in Appendix 4); MV 12; P9s; hp 66 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (mace, 1d6 + 1 dmg); S 15, D 17, C 17, I 15, W 18, Ch 16; ML 17; AL LE.

Their spells are: *cause light wounds*, *cure light wounds* x5, *flame blade*, *heat metal* x2, *hold person* x2, *spiritual hammer*, *cause blindness*, *dispel magic*, x2, *pyrotechnics*, *cause serious wounds* x2, *doom of Bane*, and *mystic lash*. The DM should consult the “New Spells” appendix for details of the last two spells.

As the fighting begins, the priests will spring a long-prepared trap. They will, with one voice, speak a command word that will activate the empty suits of armor (which stand equipped with weapons) behind the throne. These suits of armor have been previously enchanted and will now animate to become battle horrors fighting for the Cult.

Battle Horrors (10): AC 2; MV 12, Fl 12 (A); HD 4 + 12; hp 33 each; THAC0 12; #AT 1 + spell use; Dmg 1- 4 or by weapon or by spell; ML special (treat as 20); AL LE; FA1.

The first physical blow striking any battle horror causes it to *dimension door* 10' away, to (if possible) counter-attack from behind.

These battle horrors attack with the long swords, one-handed bastard swords, or battle axes they carry (all for 1d8 dmg). They will also attack barehanded (1d4) if disarmed or will use their *magic missiles* (two 2-5 hp missiles every three rounds, range 70 yards). Each horror can also *blink* continuously for up to 1 turn's duration; it cannot stop, however, and then resume blinking.

The priests avoid harming the High King himself (if possible). They will use the orcs to keep Tristan engaged while clearing the Halls of the folk of the court. Their aim is to seize the High King alive and get him away via a *gate* (see below).

The three Cult wizards, Rhammos, Thaundyl, and Zelos, are AC 0 (robes,

dex bonus, and *rings of protection* +4, +2 on saving throws); MV 12; W7s; hp 27 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (2 sleep-poisoned daggers each, 1d4 dmg); S 13, D 18, C 13, I 18, W 15, Ch 15; ML 15; AL LE.

Their spells are: *magic missile* x3 (each spell creates four 2-5 hp dmg missiles), *spider climb*, *blindness* (range 100 yards, save negates, otherwise lasts until *dispel magic* is used; victim attacks at -4 and opponents are +4 to hit victim), *invisibility*, *web*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *wall of fire*.

The orcs (14) are AC 6 (studded leather armor and shields); MV 9; HD 1; hp 8 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (scimitar, 1d8 dmg); ML 12; AL LE; MC1.

High King, Tristan: AC 6 (light clothing and dex bonus); MV 12; R12; hp 95; THAC0 9; #AT 3/2 rounds; Dmg by weapon (long sword, 1d8 +4 dmg); S 17 (+ 1 on all attack and damage rolls), D 18, C 17, I 16, W 14, Ch 18; ML 18; AL NG. (Thankfully, his queen, Robyn, is elsewhere during the attack.)

The guards (14, arriving on the fifth round of combat) are AC 2 (field plate armor); MV 12; F3s; hp 25 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (long sword, 1d8 dmg; dagger, 1d4 dmg; halberd, 1d10 dmg); S 14, D 14, C 15, I 14, W 12, Ch 14; ML 14; AL LG. Any PC not clearly defending the High King may mistakenly be attacked by the arriving guards, who will fight *to the death* for their king.

The five bards are Harpers, but have brought neither magic items nor weapons into the presence of their king. They are AC 6 (light clothing and dex bonus); MV 12; B4s; hp 22 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 +1 (barehanded plus strength bonus; proficient in the use of long swords, spears, and daggers—they will try to grab any weapons they can, as soon as they can); S 17 (+ 1 to hit and on damage), D 18, C 16, I 16, W 15, Ch 16; ML 16; AL LG. Their spells are: *magic missile* x2 (2 missiles per spell) and *invisibility*.

The bards can reach and snatch up two nearby low benches and hit with these at - 1 on attacks (due to the cumbersome weight of the stone benches). They can do 2d4 dmg for a blow and 3d4 plus knockdown if a bench is

hurled.

The courtiers are unarmed first level fighters of 5 hp each, THAC0 20—and terrified beyond being very useful. They will scream and run a lot, fighting blindly only when someone bars their path. If one comes within reach of a “missile,” be it a fallen weapon, wall-shield, or the like, there is a 2 in 6 chance that they will scoop it up and throw it at an orc or black-robed priest.

THE CULT NEEDS A HAND

If the Cult seems to be losing, its priests will begin to flee, running to a man-sized, disembodied black human hand that drifts down out of the highest shadows of the vaulted ceiling to hang in mid-air near the throne. Any priest who touches the hand will vanish in mid-step!

The priests are escaping via a *gate* which teleports them away to the House of the Black Hand temple.

If the Cult members succeed in abducting the High King, they will take him with them through this *gate*, to perform their deadly ritual in the temple.

DEATH LET LOOSE

If the PCs lose the fight, flee, or don't pursue the priests immediately, the Cult worshippers will complete their ritual, using a high-ranking noble instead of Tristan, if they haven't managed to capture the High King.

Regardless of who is sacrificed, Bane will not appear. Instead, “the Godson” Iyachtu Xvim, (the son of Bane, detailed in Appendix 2) will be summoned to the spot, either confronting the PCs in the forechamber of the temple, or emerging from the black hand *gate* to attack them in the High King's ruined throne room.

Xvim will provide high-level PCs with a tough battle. If the PCs are mid-level, Xvim should not appear unless the PCs possess the *torc of power*. Ostensibly an ally of the priests, Xvim is really working for himself, intending the Moonshaes to be his own, and not Bane's.

Chapter 5: The House of the Black Hand

At some point, regardless of whether they are winning or losing the battle for the High King, the PCs will notice the disembodied black human hand, shiny-skinned and long-fingered, floating down from the shadows. As described, any priest who flees PC attacks will run towards the hand, and those who touch it will vanish in mid-step! It will, thereafter, point, menace, and feint attacks to lure the party to it.

The hand triggers and floats above an invisible *gate*. Anyone "touching" the hand (which is an illusion) will be *teleported* instantly to the entry hall of the House of the Black Hand.

Entry Hall

The entry hall is a long, dark stone hallway, somewhere underground. Its walls, roof, and floor are made of stone and is illuminated by the faint red light of *faerie fire* radiances occurring at regular intervals down the corridor. The hallway ends in one direction at an ancient, immense, and quite unbreachable cave-in. In the other, it runs on for some seven hundred paces until it reaches a heavy, black iron door. If any fleeing priests preceded the PCs through the entry *gate*, they will flee towards and, if they reach it, through this door, not stopping to fight.

The unlocked, enspelled door bears the symbol of the black hand. Any creature of good alignment who touches it will suffer 2d4 electrical damage per contact (or round of continued contact).

Ominously, the *faerie fires* illuminating this hallway emanate from the shields of numerous motionless men in black plate armor that line both sides of the subterranean entry hall! These fully armored sentinels (70 in all), stand at attention, a pair every twenty paces, with visors down, shields up, and hands on the hilts of their long swords. They are really battle horrors (see the "Monsters of the Moonshaes" appendix of this adventure, under "Helmed Horror"). These monsters will remain motionless unless touched, attacked, or magic is used in the hallway, whereupon the nearest pair will attack. (Note that every discharge of magic will activate another pair of horrors.)

Battle Horrors (70): AC 2; MV 12, Fl 12 (A); HD 4 + 12; hp 33 (each); THAC0 12; #AT 1 + spell use; Dmg 1-4 or by weapon; ML special; AL LE; FA1.

The first physical strike against any battle horror causes it to *dimension door* 10' away, to (if possible) counter-attack its attacker from behind.

Activated battle horrors attack with their long swords (1d8 damage) or bare-handed (1d4 dmg) if disarmed, and with their *magic missiles* (two 2-5 hp missiles every three rounds, range 70 yards). Each horror can also *blink* continuously for up to 1 turn; it cannot stop and then resume blinking.

Forechamber

Beyond the black iron door is a fifty-foot square stone room, with a 20' ceiling. It is lit by a faint red *faerie fire* radiance emanating from the floor. Ten-foot wide corridors enter the room in the center each wall, through plain, doorless openings.

Floating silently in the center of the room is a glowing, flickering sphere of light. It flies towards the PCs as they enter the room, and hisses, "Lay down your weapons, faithful ones, or face the anger of The Black Lord! Only those who bear gifts and come unarmed may pass beyond this place!"

If any PC attacks the sphere, or seeks to leave the room without laying down a weapon (the guardian will accept a "leaving" of only one weapon each), it will attack.

The glowing guardian is a nyth (detailed in the "Monsters of the Moonshaes" appendix of this adventure), which will twist and turn to avoid counterattacks, using its *magic missile* powers. It will retreat into invisibility only if hard-pressed and seeks to destroy or disable all intruders, pursuing the PCs invisibly if they charge past or seriously harm it.

Nyth: AC 1; MV Fl 18 (A); HD 7; hp 50; THAC0 13; #AT 1 ; Dmg 1-4 + lone *magic missile* every second round; ML 17; AL LE; FA1.

Whatever happens in the room, the intruding PCs will be secretly scryed for alignment by a hidden guard cleric in the nearby armory. All magical items

on their persons will begin to radiate a blue *faerie fire* glow, which lasts until dispelled or for 3 turns, whichever occurs first.

The first ten feet of every corridor leading out of the forechamber is a pit trap, controlled mechanically from the armory by the guard cleric. People falling in will plunge down 30' (3d6 damage) into a bone-strewn, stone-lined pit.

Each pit is home to seven ju-ju zombies, who will attack any living arrivals.

Ju-ju zombies: AC 6; MV 9; HD 3 + 12; hp 46 (each); THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; ML special; AL N (evil), MC1.

The zombies will pursue intruders by climbing up the walls of their pits into the corridor (they can climb walls readily; 92% chance of success). They will pursue any beings not bearing holy symbols of Bane (black hands) as far as the ends of any of the corridors, as well as throughout the forechamber and entry hall. They turn as spectres; refer to the *Monstrous Compendium #1* for their many immunities.

The corridor leading left out of the forechamber travels sixty feet to a blank wall, with an iron door on either side of the final ten-foot section of hallway. Each door bears a black cast-iron inlay over a foot tall: the Black Hand of Bane.

The inlays radiate magic, but are harmless; in darkness they glow faintly, red. (If the PCs go this way, the DM should consult the entries for the Armory and the Pantry & Kitchen.)

The right-hand corridor leading out of the forechamber runs sixty feet to a dead end, with two iron doors set in the walls of the final ten-foot section. Both doors and the end ten foot section bear the glowing inlays of the Black Hand. Neither of the doors is locked or trapped. (If the PCs go this way, consult the entries for the Dungeon and Guest-Chambers.)

The central corridor running from the forechamber proceeds sixty feet to its end. There are three doors located at the end of this hallway (see the map of the House of the Black Hand in the map section), each door bearing the glowing inlays of the Black Hand. (If the PCs go this way, the DM should consult the entries for the Meeting Room, the Audience Chamber, and the Crypt.)

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Armory

The left-hand door at the end of the left-hand corridor leads to the armory, a chamber containing an alarm gong and racks of sleep-poisoned black iron maces (28) and warhammers (46); the first three strikes of each weapon force a target to make a saving throw against poison, or suffer 2-5 rounds of drugged slumber, effective immediately).

The weapons are guarded by eight black-robed priests of Bane. All are AC 10; MV 12; P2; hp 15 (each); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon; S 10, D 14, C 13, I 12, W 18, Ch 13; ML 13; AL LE. Each has two cure *light wounds* spells, two *cause light wounds* spells, and a "sleep-mace" (1d6 + 1 damage, plus sleep poison; save to avoid).

Beyond the priest guards is their corn-ramder, the duty guard cleric, Eristyn. He uses and defends a *scrying crystal*. This is a clear crystal sphere which has been enspelled to view the forechamber only. Alignment auras can be clearly seen about any creatures

viewed through the sphere. This scrutiny also causes magic items to glow with a blue radiance for 3 turns. The crystal will lose its powers permanently if taken more than 333' away from the forechamber.

Inside the armory room, a bonebat (AC 7; MV 3, Fl 18 (C); HD 4; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; ML special; AL NE; FA1) perches unseen over the door. It will swoop down to ruin any one PC spellcasting attempt and then flap down the corridor towards the audience chamber to raise the alarm.

Eristyn is a 5th level Hooded Menace. He wears *bracers of defense* AC2 and is armed with a *mace of darkness* (described in the "New Magic Items" appendix of this adventure).

His spells are: *command*, *cause light wounds* (1d8 dmg), *cure light wounds*, *aid* (+ 1 to attacks and saves, 1d8 "extra" hp; lasts 6 rounds) x2, *withdraw*, and *cause blindness*. His holy symbol (the Hand of Bane) will burn any good-aligned character for 1d4 damage, whenever touched. A key (to the upperpriests' dormer) hangs on a chain

around his neck.

If the armory door is opened, Eristyn will immediately ring the alarm gong on the wall above him with the mace he will have in-hand. He will then cast *aid* (casting time: 5) from behind the eight guard clerics. All of the priests in the armory will attack all intruders without hesitation, and they will fight to the death. Note that the *scrying crystal's* presence prevents anyone in the armory from being surprised by intruders.

If the PCs overpower and forcibly question any of these priests, they will reveal that this place is The House of the Black Hand, an underground temple of Bane on the island of Amarune, somewhere off the east coast of the kingdom of Gnarlhelm, on Alaron. The temple has forty-two clergy and is ruled by High Priest Mathlas the Grim, who holds the rank of "Masked Death." He reports in turn to the High Hands of The Risen Cult of Bane, who are led by the Dread Scourge, Gauntather.

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Pantry & Kitchen

The right-hand door at the end of the left-hand corridor leads into a long, crowded stone room crammed with crates, sacks, and barrels of foodstuffs. Food smells mingle strongly in the air—the vapors and clatters of cooking-fires waft from the kitchen beyond.

These rooms contain cleavers, skewers, platters and tureens, pots of boiling water, red-hot fire-spits, and other weapons (such as pots of pepper!), all of which will be used by the inhabitants to attack the PCs.

A direct hit from flung pepper or another strong spice “stuns” a character for 1 round (uncontrollable sneezing, temporary blindness, no attacks can be launched, armor class penalty of +2) and does 1 hp of damage. A direct hit from boiling water or soup does 1d4 damage, and incapacitates a character for 2 rounds.

This room is home to six long-haired, sweating human women, wearing as little as possible for comfort while working in the heat of the kitchens. The women all wear neck-manacles from which chains run to cuffs on their wrists. From the back of each manacle projects a ring.

All appearances to the contrary, these are not slaves. They are skilled and highly-paid cooks and “escorts.” The neck-manacles are enspelled to prevent *charm*, *sleep*, and *hold* attacks. The wrist chains prevent easy removal of the manacles, but can also be detached from the neck-rings in an instant by the girls, giving them a length of chain that can be used as a lashing weapon.

The girls are named Aleene, Bhaerdyl, Coryll, Jhalatha, Pyradene, and Trystree, all originally from Luskan and devout followers of Bane.

Cooks (6): AC 8; MV 12; F1 ; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 16, C 15, I 14, W 12, Ch 16; ML 16; AL LE. A blow of their chains does 1d6 + 2 hp damage or can strangle for 2d4 suffocation damage per round (Strength Check to break free).

The everyday use of these chains is to carry hot cauldrons at a safe distance; two or more of the cooks clip their chains to the handles of the hot pot, pull

the chains taut, and then lift their burden, carrying it between them so that any splashes or spills will not harm them, and so they can quickly and easily carry a far greater weight than one of them could alone. PCs seeking weapons or a means of moving things like the cooks will find that the manacles have simple hooked catches and can be readily removed.

At the back of the kitchen is a large wooden “cool tub” for cooling the cooks, various vegetables, and bottled drinkables amidst the kitchen heat. The cooks will seek to drown intruders in this by holding them underwater.

A successful attack roll by a girl in the vicinity of the tub, or a failed Strength Check by a PC already being strangled with a chain, will enable one of the cooks to dump a PC into the tub. Immersion does 1-2 points of damage per round, and drowning will occur in 7 rounds. To break free, a PC must make two successful Check rolls per round of 15 or higher—i.e., to overcome the strength of the girl holding the PC under. The same rules apply to cooks dumped into the tub by PCs. The tub has a capacity of three man-sized beings at a time.

A delicious chicken-liver stew is ready in the kitchen when the PCs arrive.

DUNGEON

The left-hand door of the right-hand corridor leading from the forechamber opens into a dungeon: a dark, foul-smelling 30' by 60' chamber fitted with many manacles and strewn with many slumped human skeletons. There are also even rot grub-infested, rotting corpses.

Rot Grubs (6 per body): AC 9; MV 1; HD less than 1/2; hp 1 (each); THAC0 Nil; #AT 1; Dmg special; ML 5; AL Nil; MC2.

Nothing of value is to be found here, but an iron golem stands ready by the door to attack anyone trying to leave.

Iron Golem: AC 3; MV 6; HD 18; hp 80; THAC0 Nil; #AT 1 + poison gas; Dmg 4-40; ML 20; AL N; MC1.

It breathes out poison gas on the second round of combat and every 7

rounds thereafter. The gas of this golem causes a deep sleep in those failing their save, the sleep lasting 3-12 rounds regardless of attacks or attempts to rouse the victim.

The golem is flanked by two helmed horror jailers who will use maces (1d6 + 1 dmg.) to beat intruders senseless, and lock them in manacles.

Helmed Horrors (2): AC 2; MV 12, Fl 12 (A); HD 4 + 12; hp 45 (each); THAC0 12; #AT 1 + spell use; Dmg 1-4 or by weapon; ML special; AL LE; FA1.

There is an alarm-gong on the ceiling which the golem will ring if anything gets past it. On the golem's shoulder sits a bonebat (AC 7; MV 3, Fl 18 (C); HD 4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; ML special; AL NE; FA1) which will flap away down the corridor to sound the alarm if anything untoward (PCs or prisoners escaping or defeating the guards) occurs in the dungeon.

Intruders appearing via the *oubliette-teleport* (see below) will arrive at the back of the room. The rear thirty feet of the room is filled with a reddish mist—actually a nishruu (detailed in Appendix 3).

Nishruu: AC 10; MV 6; HD 9; hp 69; THAC0 12; #AT 0; Dmg Nil (absorbs all magic within it); ML 16; AL CN; FA1. It is trapped by some mysterious magical means, and can't move.

None of the monsters (except the rot grubs) here will attack or delay any creature wearing a visible holy symbol (black hand) of Bane.

Guest Chambers

The right-hand door at the end of the right-hand corridor from the forechamber leads into yet another hallway sporting three identical, unlocked wooden doors. Each of these opens into an identical well-furnished chamber containing a canopied four-poster double bed, a table with three chairs, a mirror, a cedar-chest, and a (constantly) magically-heated iron bath. Each room is lighted by a magical *glowing globe* floating in midair: a luminous glass globe that floats always above and just behind the shoulder of the person who last touched it, unless specifically released and commanded, whereupon it

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will float motionless. The "owner," if within 40' of such a globe, can will it to go dark or brighten to blinding intensity (a brief flash, whose blinding effects last for 1-6 rounds).

Atop each bed-canopy lies a silent bonebat (AC 7; MV 3, FI 18 (C); HD 4; hp 21 (each); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; ML special; AL NE; FA1). These spies will avoid combat unless discovered and will not deliberately reveal themselves. Each room also contains a chamberpot and a ewer of cool, clear (drinkable) drinking water.

Meeting Room

The left-hand door at the end of the central corridor is unlocked and leads into a elegant, wood-panelled 20' x 40' room containing a wall-slate (chalkboard), a massive wooden table, and, drawn up around it, twelve heavy, spire-carved wooden chairs.

This meeting room is lit by a floating *glowing globe* (described under Guest-Chambers above). A large, brass-bound wooden chest sits in the far corner of the room.

The chest is unlocked and radiates magic. Anyone opening it will find it empty, but will also be instantly *teleported* into the dungeon; this is one of the "oubliette" traps of the temple.

The underside of the huge, beautifully-polished table conceals a foot-long, tapered stick of wood (a wand) resting in two holes bored in adjacent cross-struts of the table's legs. The "wand" radiates magic due to a wizard's practice session, but is not, in fact, a magic item and has no powers.

Crypt

The right-hand door opening off of the central corridor is unlocked, and leads to a dark, silent 30' x 60' chamber. Two guardian battle horrors in full black plate armor stand just within the door, their swords crossed to bar entry (to anyone not willing to crawl under the blades).

They will do nothing unless attacked. The first physical strike against them causes them to *dimension door* 10' away, whereupon they will fight all in-

truders until destroyed.

Battle Horrors (2): AC 2; MV 12, FI 12 (A); HD 4 + 12; hp 33 (each); THAC0 12; #AT 1 + spell use; Dmg 1-4 or by weapon (long swords, 1d8 dmg); ML special; AL LE; FA1.

Beyond the horrors are two rows of closed stone coffins. Each contains the mouldering remains of a cleric of Bane who perished while faithfully serving the Lord of Tyranny.

All of the entombed were laid to rest with a staff of office. Most are plain, non-magical black staves surmounted with carved ivory skulls; the ivory worth perhaps 4 sp apiece. Inquisitive PCs will find nothing else of interest or value about the bodies. The vestments that the corpses wear are too badly decayed to serve for long as adequate disguises.

The third coffin opened, however, contains a haunt, appearing as a translucent gray image of a cruelly beautiful male priest in grand robes.

Haunt: AC 0 (or possessed victim's); MV 6 (or as victim); HD 5; hp 27 (or as victim); THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg; drains 2 Dex points; ML 16; AL CN; MC2.

The unturnable haunt will attack a PC intruder who appears magically powerful (each strike drains 2 Dex points, possesses victim at 0 Dex). This particular undead is the restless spirit of the priest Thandalos "The Falcon," who scouted the Moonshaes for The Risen Cult, but in the end turned from the worship of Bane towards the beauty of the Goddess (Chauntea). Thandalos became CN, lost the favor of Bane (granting of spells), and was casually destroyed by Mathlas the Grim, once his friend.

If the haunt of Thandalos possesses a PC, it will force the PC to immediately attack the inhabitants of the audience chamber. If it wins its way through the chamber, it will head straight for the High Holy Place, where it intends to slay Mathlas (its task). It will gesture for other PCs to accompany it, will not attack them except to defend the body it controls, and will cooperate readily if they aid it in reaching Mathlas.

Audience Chamber

The central door at the end of the central corridor contains Bane's own *symbol of death*. It will flash into visibility only as the door is touched. Its effects are cumulative: a PC touching the door must save against all three effects each time the *symbol* is activated.

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

The door opens into an audience chamber containing a raised stone dais on which stands a chair carved of black stone. The back of the chair rises up twenty feet above the seat and is fashioned into a black hand. It is a *seat of Bane* (see "New Magic Items" appendix, under "Seat of Bane").

A large gong hangs in a frame to one side of the *seat*. Perched atop it is a watchful bonebat (AC 7; MV 3, FI 18 (C); HD 4; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; ML special; AL NE; FA1). The gong is used to sound an alarm or to summon underpriests from the dining hall, accessed through a door on the left of the room, and the priests' quarters, through a door on the right side of the room.

Seated in the chair is Nothchul, Striking Hand (7th level priest) of Bane. Nothchul will instantly cause an *anti-magic ray* to come from the palm of the hand high above him (the back of the chair), one of the powers of the chair of audience. Nothchul will use all the powers of the seat against PCs.

Nothchul is on duty as the temporal voice and judgement of Bane and is armed with a *rod of terror* (17 charges). The use of 1 charge turns Nothchul into "an illusion of darkest horror;" all within 30' must save vs. rods or be struck motionless with terror (see DMG for further details). This "frozen" state precludes speech, physical movements, or spellcasting and lasts until the being is physically struck or a *dispel magic* is used. Victims can be affected repeatedly.

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Nothchul will also hurl the mace in his lap to strike the alarm gong the instant the PCS attack; he will then use the rod and his spells to defend himself, as clerics swarm in from the two side doors.

Behind the *seat* is a plain black iron door, leading on into the Inner Ward of the temple.

Nothchul's spells (including bonus spells for 18 WIS) are: *bless*, *cause light wounds*, *cure light wounds*, *protection from good*, *cause fear*, *aid*, *flame blade* (1d4 +4 damage), *heat metal*, *know alignment*, *silence 15' radius*, *animate dead*, *call lightning* (inside the temple, this always works for clerics of Bane, regardless of the weather outside) x2, *free action*, and *protection from lightning*.

Nothchul has two *dispel magic* scrolls in belt tubes. The touch of his holy symbol (the Hand of Bane) and its chain will burn any good-aligned character for 1d4 damage. A key to the upperpriests' dormer hangs on another chain around his neck.

When Nothchul sounds the alarm, twelve priests will come from the left-hand door while seven emerge from the right. These black-robed underpriests are AC 10; MV 12; P3; hp 15 (each); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon; S 12, D 14, C 13, I 13, W 18, Ch 14; ML 14; AL LE. All have the following spells: *cause light wounds* x3, *cure light wounds*, and *hold person* x3 (lasts 6 rounds). They will hurl their *hold person* spells at any intruders before using their maces to attack (1d6 + 1 damage).

Dining Hall

The left-hand door out of the audience chamber leads to the dining hall, a large (60' x 100') chamber with a high ceiling. It is lit by *continual light*. High amid the dusty beams that hold its stone ceiling aloft are eleven bonebats, who will swoop down to attack all intruders.

Bonebats (11): AC 7; MV 3, Fl 18 (C); HD 4; hp 29 (each); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; ML special; AL NE; FA1.

The room contains a huge wall tapestry of the Hand of Bane, several eight-foot-high brass braziers for the burning

of incense, a raised lectern for the reading of prayers (its front is a whipping frame, with many well-used, blood-stained whips hung to dry), and rows of eating tables with benches. There is a "high table" for the upperpriests.

Large metal trays stand in ornate racks near the lectern. They are used in one of the disgusting rituals of the worship of Bane: captured good-aligned creatures are stripped, lashed to the frame, branded with the Hand of Bane, and then whipped senseless. The blood from the torture is collected in these trays and used in sauces and wine by the priests, who also watch the torment.

When the PCs enter, this room will be full of priests, all eating and watching one (female) priest whipping a helpless slave.

Priests (20): AC 10; MV 12; P3; hp 15 (each); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon; S 15, D 14, C 14, I 14, W 14, Ch 15; ML 15; AL LE.

All have the following spells: *cause light wounds* x2, *cure light wounds* x2, and *hold person* (lasts 6 rounds). They will hurl their *hold person* spells at any intruders and then attack with their maces.

The priestess engaged in the torment is armed with a mace (1d6 + 1 dmg), a warhammer (1d4 + 1 dmg), and a whip (1d2 dmg). She is Orlphara, the only female priest in the temple and widely resented among the lower clergy, who fear her cold cruelty. Most believe she has risen to her present position only by shamelessly courting Mathlas.

Orlphara is AC 7; MV 12; P6; hp 39; THAC0 18 (unadjusted); #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon; S 17, D 17, C 14, I 14, W 18, Ch 15; ML 16; AL LE. She receives a + 1 to hit and on damage and +4 on saves versus mind spells. She will use the following spells: *cause light wounds* x2, *cure light wounds* x2, *sanctuary*, *aid* x2, *flame blade* (1d4 +4 dmg.), *hold person*, *know alignment*, *call lightning* (always works in temple) x2, and *dispel magic*.

For her own protection against rivals in the clergy, Orlphara always wears a *ring of spell turning*; A *potion of extra-healing* and a *potion of gaseous form* are in steel vials in her belt.

Her holy symbol (the Hand of Bane) and its chain will burn any good-aligned character for 1d4 damage,

whenever touched. She has a key to the upperpriests' dormer on a second chain around her neck.

Orlphara will attack intruders fearlessly, but her overriding objective will be to survive and escape to warn her beloved Mathlas, by assuming gaseous form if need be. Yet another alarm-gong hangs on the side of the lectern; four underpriests will leap to ring it when the PCs enter.

If Nothchul raises the alarm from the audience chamber, a dozen priests will respond from here, along with the bonebats. The other priests will continue eating and watching the whipping until the PCs intrude upon the dining room activities. If the PCs prevent Nothchul's audience chamber alarm from sounding or manage to stop the door from opening, there will be 32 underpriests here instead of just 20.

Clerical Living Quarters

The right-hand door out of the audience chamber leads into a 70'- long corridor, lined by doors every twenty feet with a door at the end. Each opens into a 10' x 40' dormer, simply furnished with triple-tiered bunks and clothes chests. Priestly vestments hang on pole-racks across the back of each room. Each of these rooms is empty of inhabitants; none of the rooms contains any treasure except the last (farthest from the audience chamber) room on the right, which is the dormer used by the upperpriests.

The door to the upperpriests' dormer, unlike those of the other dormer rooms, is locked. Inside, it is sumptuously furnished with rugs, fur coverlets, canopied fourposters, and a sideboard crammed with crystal wine decanters (all nearly full!). In the top drawer of the sideboard, atop folded, ornate vestments, is a *mace of darkness*.

Adjacent to the sideboard is a large, iron-bound chest, which radiates faint magic but will not detect for traps. Opening its locked lid will briefly reveal an empty interior before all living beings within 5' of the chest are *teleported* into the dungeon. The chest

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The Isle of AMARUNE

⚓ = anchorage ⚡ = wrecked boat ~ = trail

1. MERROW POND (tower; "back door" of House of the Black Hand)
2. Ruins
3. ORCS w/hidden coracles
4. ROLLING MEADOWLAND
5. Wild woodlands (use FOREST ENCOUNTER Table)
6. Beach
7. Fallen Stone Bridge

itself is an "oubliette" trap, designed to send thieves instantly to the dungeon.

A loose stone under one of the beds lifts to reveal a hollowed-out niche containing a bag of 66 platinum pieces.

If one of the canopy bed headboards is examined carefully, tiny hinges will be found. If the headboard is swung aside, a pivoting stone door set in the stone block wall behind the headboard is revealed. This door opens into a secret passage.

Just inside the passage, the PCs will encounter a slim elven maiden in diaphanous robes sitting atop a stout, iron-bound chest. Oddly, she appears to be gazing longingly away up the passage before her. She will not turn unless a PC touches or passes her, whereupon her long fangs, pasty white face, and huge, hairy claws will be revealed!

The "maiden" is a lesser guardian: AC 1; MV 9; HD 8; hp 60; THAC0 12; #AT 3 + breathes fire; Dmg 1-6 (bite), 1-12 x2 (claws); ML 16; AL N (evil); MC2. Detailed fully in the *Monstrous Compendium 2*, the guardian is immune to *charm, hold, sleep, fear,* and *poly-*

morph magics and cannot be harmed by non-magical weapons and magic weapons of +1 or no bonus. The creature is able to speak and understand all languages and can breathe fire thrice daily to a distance of 40' (no fire first 10', cone begins 10' around and expands to 30', does 5-30 hp damage, save for half damage). Its XP Value is 4,000.

The chest the guardian is guarding contains 750 gp and a wooden box containing eight stainless-steel vials. Each vial holds a *potion of extra-healing* (restores 3d8 + 3 hp). The chest also contains a rolled-up scroll. On it are two *raise dead* spells, a *regenerate* spell, a *restoration* spell, and two *heal* spells.

The passage winds and rises for a long way through stones and dirt, is infested with (harmless) centipedes and spiders, and reaching the surface within the tumbled, ruined pinnacle: a stone tower. The "sky" around the tower is a murky greenish-brown, lightening almost to blue overhead, and seems to flow-like water.

Amarune

The temple lies beneath the wooded surface of the tiny, rocky isle of Amarune, off the coast of eastern Gnarlhelm, near the mouth of Crystalskull Fjord. On a map of the Moonshaes, this fjord is the potato-shaped, landlocked bay due north of Highrock. Amarune is the lone island northeast of its mouth—a good sail north of Highrock, and southeast from Sunderstaad.

The ruined tower, once a wizard's abode, now stands at the bottom of a pond, in a magically-maintained "air bubble" created by The Risen Cult. It functions as the hidden "back way out" of the temple, known only to the upperpriests.

A dispel magic will collapse the air cavity into millions of tiny air-bubbles, which will rise rapidly to the surface in a blinding cloud. This collapse will, of course, force beings who cannot breathe water to swim for the surface, retreat back down the tunnel (the waters won't enter the passage), or perish.

The surface of the pond is eighty feet above the base of the tower. The top of the tower is only twenty feet from the surface (seven feet of that distance being the upper part of the air cavity).

A being cannot "swim" in the air. To avoid falling, someone wishing to reach the surface of the pond must be raised up out of the air cavity—by a pole, ladder, or other aid-to its boundary with the water, which can easily and tracelessly passed. Once through the boundary, swimming can begin.

The crumbling sides of what is left of the tower are very dangerous: anyone climbing down its sides must make a Dexterity Check each round of the four required or fall for 3d6 damage, amid by a slide of dislodged rubble.

The pond is almost a quarter mile in length, has a muddy, tree-littered bottom (treasure may lie concealed here, to aid PCs in need), and is home to three freshwater merrow.

Merrow (aquatic ogres): AC 4; MV 6, SW 12; HD 4 +4; hp: 37, 36, 31, 28; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (military forks, 1d8 dmg, +2 to hit Strength bonus). If rendered weaponless, the merrow are: #AT 3: 1-6/1-6/2-8; ML 12; AL CE; MC1.

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The military fork wielded by the largest ogre radiates magic—not because it is a magic weapon, but because a *wand of wonder* is concealed in a hollow in its shaft. This magic item can be reached by unsealing and removing a wooden plug under the fork's brass butt-cap.

The merrow, brought here by the Cult, will not harm swimmers bearing the holy symbol or sign of Bane or wearing Cult robes. These ogres have been taught to fear the spells wielded by the priests, who slay the monsters painfully if molested, but provide them with food (slaves) if allowed to pass unmolested.

The pond rests amid tree-cloaked ruins. They are all that remains of an ancient town of fishermen and miners, long abandoned by all except occasional shipwrecked sailors and pirates putting in for repairs or to hide treasure. (The temple of Bane was created some time ago by enlarging certain of the worked-out mines.)

The ruins have their own dangers, such as foraging orc patrols, evil human warriors, and beholders floating here and there. These wandering inhabitants were brought here by the Cult to serve as guardians. Their ranks were recently swelled by a crew of shipwrecked pirates, whose numbers have diminished to only a few due to skirmishes with the guardians.

Pirates (11) and Warriors (14): AC 7; MV 12; F3s; hp 22 (each); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (mainly scimitars, 1-8 dmg, hand axes, 1-6 dmg, and daggers, 1-4 dmg); S 15, D 14, C 14, I 12, W 13, Ch 13; ML 14; AL NE, MC1.

DM Note: adjust the numbers and strength of these inhabitants to match PC capabilities the PCs. Amarune has two harbors, a large, seaward one at the edge of the ruins, full of the useless remains of vessels wrecked long ago, and a hidden, landward one. In the second harbor, a dozen orcs are diligently guarding a hidden coracle, which the PCs must capture intact if they wish to leave the island by any of the usual methods.

Orcs (14 per patrol): AC 6 (studded leather and shield); MV 9; HD 1; 8 hp (each); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon: broad sword, 2d4 dmg, or battleaxe, 1d8 dmg—all are armed with

both; ML 12; AL LE; MC1.

The “beholder” guardians are actually gas spores (AC9; MV 3; HD less than 1/2; 1 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; explosion doing 6d6 (3d6 if save vs. wands successful) to all within 20'; ML 8; AL N; detailed under “Fungus” in MC2).

If desired, one “eye tyrant” might be a real beholder (body AC: 0, eyestalks: 2, eyes: 7; MV Fl 3 (B); HD 7; 49 hp; THAC0 11; #AT 1 + eleven eye effects; Dmg: 2-8; ML 18; AL LE; MC1), wounded in battle and hiding here among the gas spores to recover and learn just what is going on that might be turned to advantage.

Inner Ward Corridor

The black, iron door behind the *seat of Bane* in the audience chamber is unlocked and untrapped. It opens into a 90'-long stone-lined corridor which leads on into the Inner Ward of the temple. The corridor ends at another plain black iron door, which is lit by a faint red *faerie fire* radiance.

In mid-air 70 down the corridor floats a black, human-sized *hand of Bane*. As it is approached, a mouth will appear in its palm and say, “Speak to the glory of Bane, if you would pass!”

The hand is an illusion. If it is attacked, or any being passes by or through it without uttering a password, the hand will point at the intruders, and then vanish. The entire corridor will then be filled with a blade barrier! It does 8d8 damage to all in the passage (roll damage for each character separately). A successful save vs. spells allows a PC to flee to either end of the passage with only 2d4 damage. Acceptable passwords are “Mathlas,” “Tyranny triumphant,” “BaneLord,” and “Death,” though the PCs have no way outside blind luck of discovering and uttering any of these; of the temple clergy present, only Mathlas, Nothchul, Orphara, and Erlistyn know them.

A *dispel magic* spell will destroy the hand without invoking the *blade barrier*.

The door at the far end of this corridor is entrapped with a *glyph of warding*, which looks like an upside-down capital “T,” its long stem transfixing a

circle. This glyph is called “Alghund” and its discharge, triggered by touching or opening the door, causes all non-evil characters to be paralyzed for 2-8 turns (save vs. spells to avoid). If its presence is suspected, *dispel magic* will destroy it harmlessly.

The Sanctum

Beyond the door is a vaulted chamber crowded with pillars: the sanctum. From this chamber, three corridors lead off in the same fashion as from the forechamber—one from the right wall, one from the left wall, and one from the back wall.

As the sanctum door is opened, three bonebats will flap forward to the attack from the shoulders of three black-robed priests of Bane within the sanctum. Behind them is a halfbreed yuan-ti (snake head, scaled snake torso and tail, and human arms and shoulders) named Ssaernduum. This yuan-ti was once an adventuring companion of Mathlas and is now a respected assassin and guard of The Risen Cult.

Bonebats (3): AC 7; MV 3, Fl 18 (C); HD 4; hp 16 (each); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; ML special; AL NE; FA1).

Priests of Bane—Uthlas, Mannym, and Ilist: AC 10; MV 12; P3; hp 21; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon (“sleep-mace,” (1d6 + 1 damage, plus sleep poison; save vs. poison to avoid 2-5 rounds drugged sleep); S 14, D 14, C 14, I 13, W 15, ch 13; ML 14; AL LE).

Each has the following spells: *cause light wounds* x2, *cure light wounds* x2, *sanctuary*, *flame blade* (1d4 +4), *aid* x2 and *hold person* x2.

Ssaernduum: AC0; MV 9; HD 8; 55 hp; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg: 1-10 bite, 1-4/rd. tail constriction, and by weapon (two-handed bastard sword, 2d4 dmg); SA spell use; ML 14; AL CE; MC1).

Ssaernduum gains +1 on all Dexterity-based saving throws, has an XP Value of 3,000, and wears a *greenstone amulet* and a *ring of spell turning*.

Ssaernduum's genius has been bent on the art of magic from an early age as it grew under the tutelage of yuan-ti priests of Sseth the Great Snake, god of intelligent snakes. (Sseth, a giant magic-using winged snake, is worshipped deep

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in the jungles of Chult by yuan-ti and is little heard of elsewhere in the Realms.) Ssaernduum is adept both in prayer and in the arts of researching and casting wizards' spells; it presently commands spells of both types.

When encountered, Ssaernduum has the following wizard spells: *magic missile* (3 missiles per spell, 2-5 dmg each) x3, *wall of fog*, *flaming sphere* (lasts 6 rounds), *spectral hand* (60 yard range, lasts 12 rounds), *lightning bolt*, *vampiric touch* (drains 3d6 hp).

Ssaernduum's clerical spells are: *command*, *cure light wounds* x2, *heat metal*, *produce flame*, *silence 15' radius*, *call lightning*, and *pyrotechnics*.

The yuan-ti will flee towards the gate chamber (see below) if hard-pressed. If the PCs retreat from battle, Ssaernduum will try to keep the bodies of any fallen humans for later consumption.

The corridor exiting the left-hand wall of this room runs thirty feet away to a locked black iron door. The door bears Bane's own *symbol of death* ("New Spells" appendix). Beyond it lies the temple vault.

The corridor exiting the right-hand wall also runs thirty feet away to an identical black iron door. This door is also locked and protected with Bane's *symbol of death*. It leads to the gate chamber.

The central corridor exiting the room is the "Holy Approach" corridor.

Temple Vault

This room is a 40'-square chamber sealed all over with a thick mortar of lead mixed with gorgon's blood and various other secret magical ingredients. This interior coating makes this chamber impervious to magical scrying, *teleportation*, and so on. Anyone trying to teleport in will flicker and then reappear in the place from which they tried to teleport. They will also suffer 3d6 damage and will be stunned for 2-5 rounds (reeling and unable to think coherently or to deliberately act in any fashion).

Inside this otherwise bare room are three chests and another halfbreed yuan-ti, Tdzsambaerl. This creature is sworn, upon pain of death, to defend the treasure stored here.

Tdzsambaerl looks like Ssaernduum, with a snake head, scaled snake torso and tail, and human arms and shoulders.

Tdzsambaerl: AC0; MV 9; HD 7; 51 hp; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg: 1-10 bite, 1-&d. tail constriction, and by weapon (two-handed sword, 1d10 dmg); ML 14; AL CE; MC1.

Like Ssaernduum, Tdzsambaerl gains a +1 bonus on Dexterity-based saving throws. He also wears a *greenstone amulet* and a *ring of spell turning* it has a spare scimitar leaning unscabbarded against one of the chests. Tdzsambaerl has an XP Value of 975.

Not expecting to ever have to fight anything, Tdzsambaerl will hiss and spit curses all the time it fights the PCs, defaming them, Bane, the Cult, and the world in general. The yuan-ti will not leave the room unless reduced to 4 hp or less, whereupon it will try and flee for its life.

The treasure it guards consists of the three stout, unlocked wooden chests, the yuan-ti's own weapons (non-magical), and a canvas sack lying on the floor behind the chests.

One chest contains 1,000 sp. The second contains 1,000 gp.

The third contains a coffer holding 40 bloodstones (each worth 50 gp), another coffer containing 36 moonstones (all worth 50 gp each), a small brass box containing two apple-green chryso-prase stones (each worth 70 gp), a small wooden box containing a jade pendant, worth 2,000 gp; and a leather sack. Inside the sack is a silver chalice set with six blue sapphires around the lip (worth 7,000 gp).

The sack on the floor holds 4 electrum pieces and 32 copper pieces.

Gate Chambers

The door opens into a 40'-square stone chamber. A circle of black slate is inlaid in the center of the floor. Two glowing globes hover high in the air on either side of the circle.

This is a *gate*, connecting the temple with a nondescript house on a back street of Voonlar, a village near Zhentil Keep in the Dragonreach region of the Realms, far inland to the east of the Moonshaes. The gate functions in both

directions, but only for someone bearing a holy symbol of Bane (or anyone touching such a being). It will also work if someone stands upon the circle and casts a *gate* spell or a similar magic; otherwise, it will not function.

There is also a chair in the room. Sitting on it is a black-haired, black-eyed, black-masked man in gray robes adorned with the Hand of Bane on either breast. Two bonebats perch above him on the back of the chair. They will swoop to the attack immediately, as the man retreats behind the chair, casting spells.

Bonebats: AC 7; MV 3, Fl 18 (C); HD 4; hp 26, 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; ML special; AL NE; FA1.

The priest casts *spell immunity* on himself twice as he moves (see below). He will retreat towards a corner of the room.

The floor in front of his chair (in a 10' diameter sphere, which is indistinguishable from the rest of the floor) is actually an "oubliette" *teleport* to the dungeon; anyone charging at the man will instantly find themselves in the dungeon. The priest avoids this *teleport* at first, but will deliberately step into it if hard-pressed by the PCs. He will try to escape from the temple later, by either the passage exiting the upperpriests' dormer or by getting back to this room's *gate*, reasoning that if intruders get this far, all must be lost!

This diligent guardian of the *gate* is the high priest of The House of the Black Hand, Mathlas the Grim.

Mathlas: AC 8; MV 12; P9; hp 49; THAC0 16 (unadjusted); #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon; S 17, D 16, C 14, I 14, W 18, Ch 15; ML 16; AL LE. He is +1 to hit and damage and +4 on saves versus mind spells. He is masked to denote his rank of Masked Death.

Mathlas has the following spells: *cause light wounds*, *cure light wounds* x3, *sanctuary*, *aid*, *flame blade*, *hold person*, *produce flame*, *silence 15' radius*, *call lightning* x2, *dispel magic*, *cure serious wounds*, *spell immunity* x2 (against *magic missile* and *lightning bolt*), and *mystic lash* (detailed in the "New Spells" appendix).

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The Masked Death's enspelled mask gives him *true seeing*, which will work for any wearer, but its temporary magic will fail in 2d4 days. His soft gray robes are "lesser" *vestments of power* (LE aligned, dedicated to Bane, and unusable by good characters, whom they will poison; save each round of contact or take 2-12 hp damage). While he is wearing them, they give Mathlas a +3 Armor Class bonus (for an AC of 5) and a +4 bonus to all saving throws. He is also protected against certain spells; the DM should check the "New Magic Items" appendix for further details on these vestments.

Mathlas is armed with a *rod of flailing*, which becomes a 1d6 + 4 damage footman's mace on command, able to strike at +3 to hit with both ends in a round—either both on one target, or on two targets standing side by side. Expenditure of 1 charge (the rod has 9 left) allows a +4 bonus to saving throws and on AC for a period of one turn. With the rod's bonus, Mathlas can raise his AC to 1.

When encountered, Mathlas will be

protected by a previously cast *protection from fire* spell, giving him complete protection from all heat or fire damage until 108 points of such damage have been absorbed or 9 turns have passed, whichever occurs first.

Mathlas has the key to this room around his neck, together with a key to the upperpriests' dormer and his holy symbol.

Voonlar

At its Voonlar end, almost halfway across Faerun, the *gate* comes out in a windowless, unfurnished upper room guarded by nine ju-ju zombies (AC 6; MV 9; HD 3 + 12; hp 36 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; ML special; AL N (evil), MC1). There are also two bonebats (AC 7; MV 3, Fl 18 (C); HD 4; hp 19 (each); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; ML special; AL NE; FA1) in the room, waiting to serve as messengers or give warnings.

Watching through a slot in the door to this room is a 7th level Zhentarim wizard, Salander.

Salander: AC 6; MV 12; W7; hp 27; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or

weapon; S 13, D 18, C 13, I 18, W 15, Ch 15; ML 15; AL LE.

His spells are: *magic missile* x3 (four 2-5 hp missiles/spell), *spider climb*, *blindness*, *invisibility*, *web*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, and *Evard's black tentacles*.

This last spell has a 30-yard range, can cover 210 square feet and lasts 7 hours. It creates 1d4 + 7 tentacles, each AC4 and 10' long with 7 hp. Salander will cast it over the entire *gate* room and the entry of his watchroom.

Salander is a wispy-bearded, handsome blond man with sharp, alert eyes. He has sleep-poisoned darts, a dagger, and a *potion of gaseous form*. He has proven too ambitious and deceitful to be trusted thus far with any sensitive Zhentarim information. In other words, he knows nothing beyond his orders and can identify no one other than those with whom he works directly. He is not even graced with the *teleport ring* commonly worn by Zhentarim mages of 7th level or greater.

His orders are to aid the gate guardians, allow a bonebat to get out a win-

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dow in the watchroom to report to Zhentil Keep if things go badly, and, if hard pressed, escape by means of his potion. He is then to report to the grizzled old innkeeper, Ralagas Therim, at the Blushing Beauty inn, just inside the southern gates of Zhentil Keep.

Salander was once an apprentice of the evil archmage Olorim "the Old" at The Citadel of the Raven. The young wizard later served the Zhentarim as a caravan guard in the Stonelands and then became part of the Darkhold garrison. Deeply mistrusted by Sememon of the Zhentarim, Salander is resentful, ruthless in battle, and eager to prove his worth.

Ralagas Therim is a (largely) retired old thief who wears a *ring of spell storing*. It holds four spells: *flame strike* (6d8; save halves), *hold person*, *heal*, and *invisibility*. The old thief also has a sleep-poisoned short sword, several hidden daggers and a beholder listening overhead, its eyestalks coming down through tiny trap-doors!

Ralagas Therim: AC 8; MV 12; T11; hp 51; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (short sword, 1-6 dmg + sleep poison; 3 daggers, 1-4 dmg); S 14, D 16, C 14, I 13, W 16, Ch 14; ML 14; AL LE.

The beholder is Uluae, a youngster who takes a vicious delight in killing, using *cause serious wounds* and *flesh to stone* as well as the *anti-magic ray*.

After Uluae's victim's are "stoned," eleven thugs will approach the newly petrified victim and topple and shatter the "statue," killing the victim.

Beholder: body AC: 0, eyestalks: 2, eyes: 7; MV Fl 3 (B); HD 7; 45 hp; THAC0 11; #AT 1 + eleven magical eye effects; Dmg: 2-8; ML 18; AL LE; MC1.

Thugs (11): AC 7; MV 12; T2s; hp 9 (each); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon (clubs, 1-6 dmg and daggers, 1-4 dmg); S 14, D 17, C 16, I 12, W 13, Ch 12; ML 14; AL NE.

The *gate's* Voonlar terminus was recently established by Dread Scourge Gauntather of the Cult, who has received magical aid from Manshoon of the Zhentarim in return for gold and promises of future service. Manshoon is uneasy about the increasing power and independence of Fzoul and his fellow priests, and is trying to establish The Risen Cult as a replacement (clan-

destinely, of course).

If Fzoul ever defies the rest of the Zhentarim openly, Manshoon will call on the Cult to destroy Fzoul's adherents, and take their place in the Zhentarim. The beholders are aiding this plan minimally, maneuvering to get an agent to handle a hostile Fzoul for them, if the need should ever arise.

Mathlas guards the Moonshaes end of the *gate* as much to prevent unauthorized Zhentarim visits (or treachery from within The Risen Cult) as to protect it from intruders; Cult leaders are wary of the Zhentarim gaining control of them or overrunning the Moonshaes and preventing their plans for the coming of Bane. So far, however, Manshoon has shown no signs of any such intent.

Voonlar appears as a pleasant, sleepy farming town, dominated by prosperous farms and the local temple to Chauntea. Beneath the surface, it is a tense watchpost of Zhentil Keep, who presently control it and consider it a "city" where their future subjects will settle, strengthening Zhentil Keep's influence in the Dalelands.

Voonlar is comprised of a temple to Bane founded by the Zhentarim, shrines to Tempus and Lathander, two good inns (The Three Elves at the east end of town, on the main road, and The Whistling Wizard, on the main road at the southwest end of town) and a tavern (The White Stag). It is also the site of the headquarters and warehouses of the Shiel (caravan) Trading Company. A map of this town appears in module FRC2, *Curse of the Azure Bonds*.

Holy Approach Corridor

The central corridor leading from the sanctum runs ninety feet to an open archway, in which floats a black hand. As it is approached, a mouth will appear in its palm and say, "Speak to the glory of Bane, if you would pass!" (In all respects the hand, and the *blade barrier*, are identical to those encountered in the inner ward corridor.

The High Holy Place

Beyond the archway is the high holy place of the temple, a dark chamber walled, floored, and roofed in glistening black marble, smooth-polished and slick underfoot. It is 70'x70', the entry arch opening in the center of one wall. It is imbued with a crawling sensation of lurking, watching evil, it was personally consecrated, long ago, by Lord Bane himself. Within this sanctuary, the priests whisper and Bane listens to all that is said.

The room is empty except for a circular marble altar, rising three feet above the surrounding floor. It is located twenty feet from the far wall, facing and in line with the entry arch.

Above the altar floats a huge black hand. It stands 6' high and is made of obsidian. It will hang motionless unless a good-aligned character enters the chamber, whereupon it will turn slowly to point at the nearest good-aligned character. The hand will attack any good-aligned being approaching within 60' of the altar. This *Holy Hand of Bane* is detailed in the "New Magic Items" appendix.

Within the high holy place, all priests turn undead as if 1st level. Spells cast by non-servants of Bane produce the minimum possible effects and all spells cast by servants of Bane have maximum possible effects. Evil creatures attack at +1; servants of Bane with an additional +3 bonus.

Destroying the altar will require substantial physical damage, plus seven *dispel magic* spells and three *limited wishes* (or a full *wish*).

Appendix I: Harping by Firelight

This section tells of traveling custom and courtesy in the Moonshaes. It will aid the DM in providing both color and atmosphere to Moonshavian adventures as well as provide golden opportunities for feeding PCs new ideas (such as the rumors found in Appendix 8) that point to further adventures.

The Moonshaes remain islands of mystery, covered by extensive wilderness, stalked by dangerous monsters aplenty, and blessed with a rugged natural beauty, all of which feed the rich and intermingled legends of the Llewyr, the Ffolk, the Northmen, and the halflings and dwarves. All have their fireside tales and, for the needs of simple survival in the Moonshaes, all share such tales with travelers they camp with at night in an ironclad custom of mutual safety.

Simply put, anyone whose campfire a traveler approaches at night is duty bound to share their camp—its facilities, food, and companionship—in return for the shared food and companionship of the traveler. Those who share the fireside are honor bound not to raise blade against each other until after they have parted in the morning mists, even if they are sworn enemies or there is a blood feud between their families.

The “guestfire” or “wayfire” is a merry place except in the coldest and dampest weather. All travelers are welcome, hot mead or cider kept for them by the fire, sometimes with stew or hot herbed and buttered potatoes cooking among the coals. Everyone who knows a tale, recent news, local legends or lore, or a song contributes it. By tradition, the owner of the fire commands the converse; but, by courtesy, any bard present will lead the talk. Most guestfires are warm, cozy meeting places, that can be heard from afar by their singing and harping.

Guestfires generally attract the attention of local beasts (boars, in particular, seem partial to direct musical criticism) as well as those Moonshavians who are not bound by their honor-thieves, brigands, firbolgs, and the like. Therefore, experienced travelers around an open wayfire in the wilds keep their weapons close to hand and watchful eyes on the surrounding darkness.



At any wayfire, jokes are told, current news passed around, songs sung and lore retold—and the DM can feed PCs pertinent game information. A wayfire is the best place to learn of nearby sages, swordsmiths, and trouble; one might also receive a lecture on what went wrong at that dragon’s lair, from some old coot in tattered robes who just happens to be Flamsterd or Khelben Arunsun wandering about incognito.

Far more often to be met with around a wayfire than such worthies as Flamsterd or Khelben are local hunters and land-sergeants watching over the hunting preserves of their local lord. These rangers travel without uniform and keep their eyes open for brigands and poachers. Wandering druids also frequent wayfires as they travel about the land, tending it and watching for changes in the Balance.

Most importantly, bards and all manner of other folk who are Harpers (or allied to their cause) travel about the lands, keeping constant watch on the doings of war and greed, collecting lo-

cal lore for its own sake and as the stuff around which to build new ballads. It is rare to find a wayfire without at least one aspiring bard, although greater bards are always seem too few to go around in the Isles.

The wise traveler in the Moonshaes keeps eyes and ears open at wayfires and joins wayfire on every night that opportunity permits—for it is said, most truly, that the wise adventurer lives longer and retires richer.

During this adventure, the DM should use wayfires to feed current rumors to the PCs (see Appendix 8) as well as to help them figure out what evil is afoot in the Moonshaes. Most Ffolk may not know of the Cult by name or that its members worship Bane, but many suspect that the growing brigand and undead attacks are linked to the “cruel priests who wear the black hand,” men who serve or are led by a mysterious, evil “Dark Druid.”

Appendix 2: The Risen Cult of Bane

The chief foes of PCs in this adventure are the members of the mysterious, evil Risen Cult of Bane.

Most Ffolk believe the Black Lord was destroyed in The Time of Troubles, yet his priests still receive spells in answer to their prayers, so perhaps Bane exists still. It may be, however, that Cyric (or another power) has chosen to fulfill the needs of the faithful of Bane for his own purposes, and that Bane has been forever destroyed. Such mysteries are presently beyond the knowledge of mortals of Faerun.

What is certain is that Gauntather, "the Dark Druid," believes that Bane still exists; he is determined to make the Moonshaes a home for The Lord of Tyranny, a suitable kingdom to which the priests Gauntather leads can summon their Dread Lord.

The Cult of Bane established on the Moonshaes by Gauntather and his colleagues is described here. The always cruel and rapacious worshippers of Bane have reacted to the widespread news of Bane's destruction with frenzied bids for power and wild raids of destruction and plunder.

Cult Membership

Priests of Bane are lawful evil, serving Bane in an endless, grasping struggle for supremacy over each other (within the church hierarchy) and over the Realms at large. They ally themselves with powerful beings of like alignment, like beholders, and train or create servant creatures such as baneguards, crawling claws, curst, and netherbirds (see FRE1, *Shadowdale* and *Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 3).

Priests of Bane have traditionally worked with fell magic, breeding, and dangerous training programs to develop powerful evil creatures to serve Bane. These include banelar, lawful evil nagas with heightened magical abilities, and many rarer, less successful horrors. The priests who now form the backbone of the Risen Cult have developed their own servant creatures. These menaces may be met in this adventure (see Appendix 3).

In the Risen Cult, halflings, elves, and goblinkin (orcs and all related races) are

tolerated as lay members or even underpriests, but never given information or positions of importance. Humans dominate, and most Banites are male, although there is no prejudice against female clergy. Except among the "High Hands of Bane" (Gauntather and his immediate cronies, the leaders of the Cult), there is a prejudice against wizards, as opposed to priests, in the service of Bane. Most wizards outside the High Hands, regardless of level, treated as underpriests, or, if personally powerful, ranked just above underpriests.

Cult Garb

Priests of the Risen Cult of Bane favor black robes, although all forms of garb are acceptable. The "high clergy," priests of 7th level and greater, tend to wear magical vestments (see Appendix 4), but even the lowliest priest of Bane will bear a holy symbol: The Hand of Bane, usually made of black obsidian and worn on a steel chain. These evil objects do any good-aligned being 1d4 points of damage per contact and look like long-fingered human hands, palm open with fingers and thumb together pointing upwards.

Gathered priests of Bane can be distinguished by their differing robes. Underpriests (first through third level) wear plain, hooded black robes without any adornment. Full clergy (fourth through sixth level) wear robes with flared collars and sleeves, often adorned with a black silk border embroidered with a row of tiny Hands of Bane. High clergy wear robes with increasingly ornate embroidery and decoration, often with belts and/or trim of purple and deep red hue. Such robes tend to have high, spiked, stand-up collars that rise above the wearer's head and are almost always augmented with magical alignment-specific powers, which make them harmful to non-lawful evil beings.

On occasions of high ritual, priests of Bane bear staves denoting their ranks. A priest of Bane who receives honored burial is always buried with a staff of the correct rank. In general, the staff of a priest of Bane is non-magical and

purely ceremonial in function, often used to bear lit braziers in procession to a place of worship.

The staves of first-level priests and supplicants not yet admitted to the clergy are simple black wooden staves, without ornamentation. Priests of 2nd through 4th level bear plain black staves capped with carved ivory skulls. The staff of a fifth level priest of Bane is shod and capped with silver and bears a carved ivory skull as large as a human fist. A sixth level priest of Bane has an identical staff, except that the skull is carved with two curving horns rising from its brows.

Seventh level and higher priests of Bane have ceremonial staves adorned with real human skulls, gems (especially amber and red gems, notably rubies) and chased silver ornamentation. Staves of higher level priests tend to be individualized, marked with runes and depictions of deeds of great service. By tradition, only priests of 9th level or greater are allowed to enspell their staves; in practise, The Risen Cult has not had the time and manpower to spare for such fripperies. Instead, magical items can be found in the hands of priests of all levels, should an occasion demand it, and the staves born by all priests (save Gauntather) are non-magical.

The High Hands

The Risen Cult is led by Gauntather, who, before The Time of Troubles, was a wandering adventurer-priest of Bane active in the Vilhon Reach. His title then was "Dread Scourge;" this is still employed as flattery by followers today, though he now uses the formal title "Most Holy Hand of Bane." Among Ffolk of the Moonshaes, he is feared as "the Dark Druid" for his fell work against druids and their groves. He is not a druid.

Gauntather is a 20th level LE priest of Bane. His above-average statistics are STR 16, INT 18, WIS 19, and CHA 18. He may have whatever spells and items the DM wishes. It is recommended that he not face the PCs directly in this adventure, but escape-with most of the other High Hands-to serve as a long-

Appendix 2: The Risen Cult of Bane

term foe, determined to exact revenge on those who thwarted his plans for the Moonshaes.

Gauntather journeyed to Waterdeep during The Time of Troubles to share Bane's triumph—and fled to the Moonshaes when Bane fell. At that time, Gauntather brought only a few lesser priests and other worshippers of Bane (thieves, warriors, and worse). The growth and achievements of the Risen Cult in the short time since he founded it are a tribute to his astute generalship and personal charisma.

Gauntather is served by six fellow High Hands:

- Cauldyth (no relation to the Lord of Aithe) is a rotund, fairly short, lazy-looking 15th level cleric of Bane. He is a master spy and actor who often works in the disguise of a merchant or money-lender to learn what he can for the Cult. His spells are deadly, and his only weakness is a driving determination to exact revenge on other creatures for every single jest or coldness, imagined or real, shown him, no matter how slight. If a man laughs at the fat, lazy merchant's dropping of a coin, something will happen to that man; sooner rather than later.

- Halamather is a LE 19th level wizard (no specialty), a longtime friend to Gauntather and an active creator of juju zombies (and worse creatures) to serve the Cult.

- Thabbys is a LE 16th level necromancer who delights in her unnatural researches and is happy to serve the Cult so long as the Cult provides her with the materials and opportunities she needs to further her mastery of undeath. The *Lords of Darkness* game accessory may be used to detail Thabbys' powers and servitor creatures. Bonebats serve her as messengers (see Appendix 3).

- Tirostar is a LE specialty priest of Bane, who uses the title "Dark Imperceptor." He is 17th level and a master of poisons and intrigue.

- Vlakkados is a LE cleric of Bane, a soft-voiced and gentle 14th level cleric skilled at torture and interrogation. Tall, very thin, and ill-looking, he often passes himself off as a beggar or a pilgrim of another god (usually Ilmater) when, in service to the Cult, he must go



where Banites are not welcome.

- Yontryl Amatar is a breathtakingly beautiful half-elven maiden, a LE 12th level thief who has loved, lived with, and served Gauntather for many years, stealing to support him and herself as she now steals to support the Cult. Agile and acrobatic, she has a taste for both watching and participating in good fights, but little love for torture. She enjoys pranks, but is wise enough not to play them on any Cult priests.

Cult Magic

Risen Priests of Bane will employ all magic that they acquire and can use, notably *rods of terror*. The cooperation of wizards with clerics under Gauntather makes the Risen Cult, of necessity, part of the "Transformed" sect, although Gauntather thinks of himself as Orthodox.; he firmly believes in the supremacy of priests (such as himself) in the service of Bane, both as the status quo and as the right and natural way of things. Few specialty priests of Bane (as described in the *Forgotten Realms* *Adventures* sourcebook) serve under Gauntather. For those few who do, however, their alignment and credo bars them from the use and development of spells in the following spheres: Animal, Astral, Charm, Plant, Protection, Sun (except reversed effects) and Weather. "Standard" priests of Bane can use spells of all spheres.

Priests of Bane employ or have developed many rare or unique spells. Those particular to the Risen Cult include magics detailed in Appendix 5.

Cult Etiquette

In private, the priests of the Risen Cult employ the full formality of the long-established clergy of Bane found in the central lands of Faerun. This includes bowing, kneeling to or kissing the boots of superiors, and following hierarchy of titles:

1st level	Watchful Brother
2nd level	Deadly Adept
3rd level	Trusted Servant
4th level	Willing Whip
5th level	Hooded Menace
6th level	Black Fang
7th level	Striking Hand
8th level	Vigilant Talon
9th level	Masked Death
10th level	Dark Doom
11th level	Higher Doom
12th level and up	Deep Mystery

A priest of 12th level or greater speaking to a priest who outranks him in the hierarchy or who is of greater level will address him as "Deeper Mystery." Not doing so is usually regarded as a deliberate insult.

A priest speaking to another priest will always use only the other's title, unless two priests of the same rank are

Appendix 2: The Risen Cult of Bane

present and the situation makes confusion possible, whereupon a surname will usually be added to the end of the rank. When speaking in the presence of non-worshippers of Bane, priests customarily address each other as "Brother Faithful" unless speaking to one who far outranks them, in which case they will use the term "Dread Brother" in respect.

Eavesdropping PCs should rarely be able to learn priests' names or much in the way of personal details; the protocol of the priesthood is specifically designed and intended to prevent such information from getting out.

Priests of Bane pride themselves on cold, decisive thinking, speech, and action. Cutting authority and sarcasm are valued over shouting or uncontrolled behavior; two priests arguing to the death may appear as softly polite gentlemen debating over some minor point--right up to the last moments that one (or perhaps both) of them remain alive.

Cult Belief

To serve Bane fully is to do one's utmost to bring strife, destruction, and hatred upon the intelligent beings of the world. This must be done under clear duress, for the tyranny of The Black Lord is his most important characteristic. Priests of Bane therefore delight in cruelty and mayhem--although domination is preferred to debauched torture, and discord to stability under the church's iron rule.

For the Risen Cult, at present, to serve Bane best is to follow the dictates of the great and successful Gauntather, for he has risen, dark and capable, amid the desperate chaos and confusion of the Fall of the Gods wherein Bane himself was said to have perished. If Gauntather speaks of working mysteriously and covertly for now, Gauntather is to be obeyed. If Gauntather says that wizards are true servants of Bane, to be obeyed as any ranking priest and to be trusted as far as one trusts any other servant of Bane, so be it--for now. Gauntather speaks for Bane and seems favored by him. Defy him at your peril. Hear his words and tremble, bow down

before his boots, and step not against the passage of his shadow.

As it has always been said before the Black Altars, "They who cross the Dark One meet his Doom earlier and more harshly than those who foolishly worship other gods, and inevitably fall before the faithful."

Cult Rituals

Details of the formal worship activities of Bane are both mysterious and largely too disgusting to the non-faithful to be described here, but they are known to involve priests gathering in large, dark chambers, caverns, or (by night) in ruins, lit only by moonlight, flickering braziers and torches, and magical *faerie fire* radiances. The place of worship is dominated by a floating black hand, or an (empty) black throne, before which lies a plain stone or obsidian block: the Black Altar.

Services involve rolling drums, chanting, and sometimes singing. Spells are sometimes cast in unison or with some priests aiding others. Other occasional practises are known to include sacrificial deaths and whipping (either as punishment of sinning faithful, or of captives, as recreation or for some mystical, magical purpose).

Banite rituals are described by observers as "revolting" and "terrifying." It is unlikely that the rituals of the Risen Cult are any more tolerable to the non-faithful.

The Godson

Details of the avatar of Xvim, who may appear in this adventure, are given here.

XVIM (Demipower)

AL: LE. Symbol: A pair of glowing green eyes on a black field.

Iyachtu Xvim, the "Godson," is the son of Bane. For long years he has traveled the Realms enacting his father's will. Xvim's mother is unknown but thought to be a creature of great evil from another plane.

Xvim has brown-black, scaled skin, stands twelve feet tall, and has luminous green eyes (with 90' infravision).

His great clawed hands are formidable weapons, but he prefers to use the *scimitar of souls* in battle (see Appendix 4). Xvim can cause his body to grow or shrink by 50% of its normal size.

Xvim usually wears the illusory form of a darkly handsome man in his middle years, of average height. The vain, savage son of Bane exults in slaying and destruction. He can create *darkness*, 15' radius about himself at will, can use *true seeing* at will, and once in every 12 turns can *plane shift* himself safely between his native plane of Acheron and the Realms. Xvim's control over this power is poor; he seldom arrives in a desired locale on the other plane. When furiously angry, he sometimes *shifts* unintentionally. If Xvim ever ends up in a plane that is not Acheron or the Prime Material Plane containing the Realms, he can *shift* back towards either of the two named planes, one plane at a time, at the stated rate. Xvim does not like such extraplanar travel and seldom undertakes it willingly. The DM should note that no *truename*, *glyph*, or *symbol* magics have any effect on Xvim (except to attract his attention). He can hear any of his names spoken anywhere in Faerun as well as the next nine words spoken by the speaker, along with the speaker's voice-likeness, distance, and direction; he usually ignores the ceaseless babble this creates in his mind.

All sorts of weapons can affect Xvim. The touch of silver burns Xvim for 2-12 points of damage (if a silver weapon, add this to the normal weapon damage). If slain, Xvim is forever destroyed. However, since it is not his intention to die anytime soon, and he has no real scruples regarding cowardice or bravery, Xvim will immediately *plane shift* if it appears a battle if going against him. **Xvim:** AC -2; MV 12; HD 15; hp 96; THAC0 6; #AT 2; Dmg (note Str bonuses to be added) 9-12/9-12 or by weapon; MR 20%; SZ L; S 22 (+4, +10), D 20, C 20, I 17, W 16, Ch 17; SA, spells as W5 and P4; SD, regenerates 1 hp at the end of every 7 rounds.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Flock
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5-7)
TREASURE:	Nil (may be guardians)
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	2-8
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	3, Fl 18 (C)
HIT DICE:	4
THACO:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5'-6')
MORALE:	Special
XP VALUE:	975

Bonebats are undead bats that serve as messengers, guardians, and battle allies to evil priests and wizards and to powerful undead (such as liches, archliches, and vampires). They appear as skeletal bats with dark, empty eyesockets and attack in eerie silence, never emitting cries. Some (known as "battlebats") possess strange skeletal appendages as described below.

Combat: Bonebats have a chilling bite that does 2-8 damage to all creatures except other undead, who suffer only its 1-3 hp physical effects. A bonebat's bite also paralyzes all creatures except elves for 3-8 (1d6 + 2) rounds, unless a successful save versus paralyzation is made. Bonebats themselves are immune to all forms of paralysis.

Bonebats are turned as ghouls and always attack fearlessly, only withdrawing when brought to 3 hp or less. They will, however, fight to their destruction if ordered to do so by their creator or undead master. Bonebats have 120' infravision, and can see invisible creatures and objects within 60 feet. They never sleep and are never surprised.

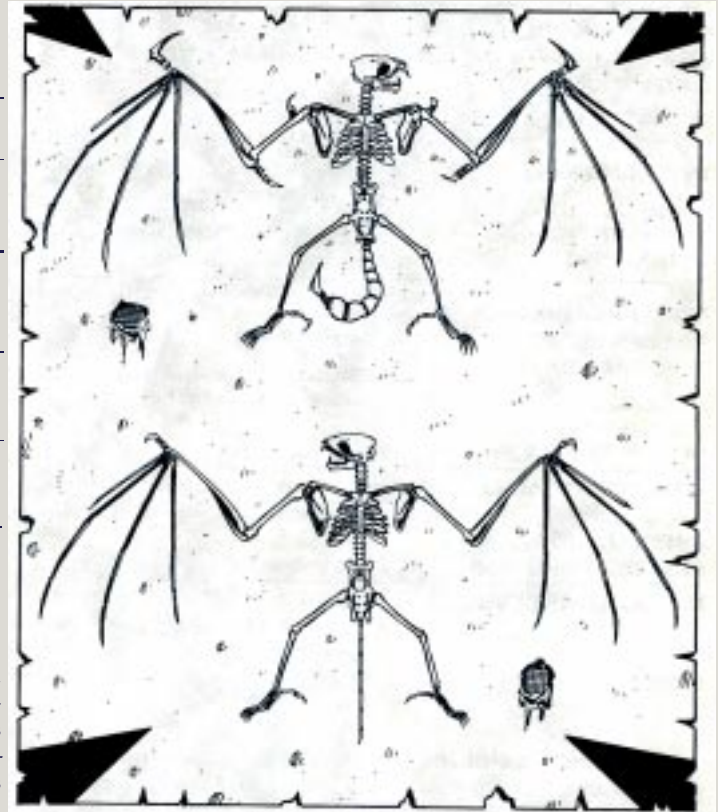
Bonebats are immune to sleep, charm and hold spells and may be mentally controlled or influenced only by their creator or a powerful undead (with access to the right spells and a lot of practise time). Once one being controls a bonebat, no other being may ever control it—even if the controlling being is slain or absent. Typical commands are simple—"attack (specified target)," "cease," "come," "stay," "wait (here)," and "fetch (specified object)"—but obedience and loyalty are absolute.

Like skeletons, bonebats suffer normal damage from fire and blunt weapons, but only half damage from piercing or edged weapons. Holy water has no effect on bonebats.

Habitat/Society: Bonebats are most frequently encountered in the lairs of their masters—ruins, caverns, tombs, or evil temples. They prefer darkness, but light does not harm them. Bonebats may be encountered anywhere if their creator sends them forth or is slain.

Requiring no food or water, bonebats are often shut into closets, coffins, or chests to serve as guardians, attacking thieves and other beings who open or enter their hiding-place.

Bonebats can carry single objects of up to 3 lbs. in weight that they can get a good grip on and often fetch keys, wands, and the like for their masters. Bonebats cannot trigger magic items, but



are sometimes fitted with wired-on amulets or other protective devices to strengthen them as guardians.

Ecology: Bonebats are not thought to ever occur naturally, but the secrets of their making have been known in the Realms for a very long time, and many are now found "in the wild." Bonebats slay living bats whenever they encounter them.

Bonebats seem to enjoy killing. Indeed, if uncontrolled they will, from time to time, go on "killing flights." During such flights, they will fight all creatures of their own size or smaller that they encounter until they have killed at least twice. Bonebats never fight other bonebats, even if ordered to do so.

Bonebats are usually constructed by evil priests and wizards working together. An intact giant bat skeleton, or a skeleton assembled from the bones of several bats, is required. *Nulathoe's ninemen* (a fifth level wizard spell detailed in the *DM's Sourcebook* of the boxed FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Campaign Set) is cast on the skeleton. In the case of a bonebat, it additionally links the skeletal wing bones with an invisible membrane of force to allow flight. *Fly*, *detect invisibility*, *infravision*, and *animate dead* spells complete the process. Further spells may be necessary to train the bonebat to serve as an obedient aide, but the spells listed here must be cast within two rounds of each other, and in the order given, or the process will fail.

Battlebat

Battlebats are bonebats, into which other bones—usually claws, talons, stings, or spurs—have been grafted.

Battlebats are in all regards identical to bonebats except that they turn as wights, gain 1 hit die, are Armor Class 8, have two or three additional attacks (typically 1d4 claw-rakes or 2-5 hp damage sting-jabs, either of which may be temporarily tipped with poison by a battlebat's controller), and fly at only 15/round (Class D). Their XP Value is 1,400 each.



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Special
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14) or greater (affected by intelligence of creator)
TREASURE:	V (magic weapons) possible
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1-20
ARMOR CLASS:	As armor (usually 2)
MOVEMENT:	12, Fl 12 (A)
HIT DICE:	4 + 1 per level of creator
THAC0:	12
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 plus special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By weapon type, or 1-4 (ramming or weaponless blow)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Special
SIZE:	Usually M (S to L possible: size of armor)
MORALE:	Special
XP VALUE:	2,000

Often found as guardians, these sinister automatons usually appear as warriors completely clad in plate mail. A horror is merely animated, empty armor, linked by magical forces. The secret process of creating a helmed horror (so far known only to priests of Bane) results in silent, intelligent, wholly evil guardians, capable of independent reasoning.

Combat: Helmed horrors can use all weapons allowed to fighters (for normal damage) and employ all magic items that do not need verbal commands or contact with living flesh or organs to function (ointments and potions, etc.). They may break off combat if their orders permit. Horrors cannot cast spells or conduct magical research.

Helmed horrors are not undead or summoned creatures and cannot be turned. Horrors can see *invisible creatures and objects* up to 120 feet away and have infravision effective to the same range. The senses of a horror permeate its entire form; a “dehelmed” horror can fight on.

Portions of a horror’s body that are separated from the main “body” suit of armor cease to move and cannot fight. If brought back into contact with a horror, they will reattach. A horror can never do this for itself; that is, collect lost pieces after a battle and hold them for reattachment. A horror “heals” lost hit points as a living, resting human does, restoring linking energies and mangled armor.

Helmed horrors retain their stature through magical *levitation*. Thus, they can “walk” on air or above surfaces, or function without any legs at all (some horrors are only waist-up torsos). This levitation allows flight at the movement rate given in their statistics, but does not allow riders. A falling horror is always protected as if by a *feather fall* spell. Horrors can carry up to up to 200 lbs of living or non-living matter when “on foot,” but only 100 lbs of non-living matter if “flying.”

A helmed horror is fearless and cannot be mentally controlled or influenced by magical or other means that work on the mind or senses. A horror can be contacted by means of ESP or similar spells, but it cannot be affected by illusions or enchantment/charm magics (such as *hold person*, *sleep* or *suggestion*).

Any mental contact with a horror allows the horror to read the

current surface thoughts and emotions of the being contacting it, despite any defenses or evasions. This ability has allowed horrors to anticipate treachery and attacks and always allows them to unerringly judge the sincerity of an encountered creature.

Magic missile spells cast at a horror serve to “heal” it of any damage by restoring its bonding energy. Excess hit points are not gained by a horror, but instead are always reflected back 100% at the caster.

Habitat/Society: Created to have iron-strong loyalty, helmed horrors are seldom self-willed wanderers. Instead, they serve as guardians long after the death of their creators or masters, tirelessly manning posts in crumbling ruins, tombs, or forgotten tunnels. Some have been known to avenge a slain creator, following orders instilled in them. Some revenant horrors have traveled across the Realms to fulfill their duty.

In some cases, however, the orders of a horror allow it autonomy in the absence of commands, or are simply silent on the subject of a Horror’s freedom. If not specifically commanded to cease existence at the death or behest of their creator, horrors will continue operating until destroyed.

Some horrors have been encountered as bandits or adventurers. At least one horror, Aragus, leads a small caravan company operating out of Waterdeep. It communicates by writing, gestures, and (with its underlings) a tapping code. Other horrors have been found in groups, wandering the wilderlands or exploring old ruins. Horrors never seem to willingly fight other horrors.

Ecology: The process of creating helmed horrors remains secret, but is known to require a priest of at least 7th level, some assistance from a wizard, and physical, non-magical and non-aligned armor of any sort, to serve as the body of the horror.

The creator of a horror instills in it a set of orders or commands that govern its freedom, behavior, and limitations. These vary considerably from horror to horror, making some merely mechanical guards while others seem to be mute but fully functional, intelligent beings. The orders of a specific horror cannot be changed once given. Dangerous loopholes in a Horror’s orders may bring its loyalty to its creator, or another designated master, into serious jeopardy; instilling orders in a horror is a task as delicate as wording a wish spell.

Preceding its orders, a horror can be made immune to the effects of three specific spells when created (typically *fireball*, *heat metal*, and *lightning bolt*). These spells must be named by the creator (who need not be able to cast them or have access to them), and cannot be changed thereafter. A Horror’s orders can never increase its spell immunity beyond three specific magics and their equivalent magic item effects.

Horrors do not sleep, eat, or speak, and cannot feel pain. They are ideal guardians, for their loyalty is total and devoid of ambition or emotion. If commanded by a being possessing natural or magical *telepathy*, they can communicate, and a garrison of horrors can be coordinated into a well-organized fighting band.

Battle Horrors

A few modified helmed horrors with limited magical powers have been encountered. These “battle horrors” are identical in appearance to helmed horrors, but have the following magical powers: *dimension door* up to 60 yards distant, once per day, *blink* for up to 1 turn, once per day (a horror cannot cease blinking and start again, even if it has not used a full turn), and cast magic missile. A horror can unleash two 2-5 hp *magic missiles* every three rounds with a range of 70 yards. Battle horrors have a typical XP Value of 4,000.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Magic
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	10
MOVEMENT:	6
HIT DICE:	9
THAC0:	12
NO. OF ATTACKS:	0
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Nil
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Absorbs Magic
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	See below
SIZE:	L (12-foot-diameter sphere)
MORALE:	Champion (16)
XP VALUE:	2,000

These weird creatures are believed to come from an alternate Prime Material Plane. Known to sages of old as "Eaters-of-Magic," they feed on magical energy and are greatly feared for the damage they can do.

Nishruu appear as silent, amorphous bodies of red, breathable mist, lacking visible organs or features. Nishruu glow, pulsing regularly as they drift about, and can seep through finger-width cracks. They will always move towards the greatest concentration of magic within 60 feet.

Combat: Aside from their effects on magic, nishruu do no damage to objects or beings. Fire and physical attacks affect them normally; hits are automatic if an attacker is enveloped by a nishruu. Cold does half damage, but magical fire and cold cannot form within a nishruu. If magical fire or cold contacts a nishruu from outside its body area, it is absorbed harmlessly after dealing one round of damage.

Nishruu ignore physical attacks, moving fearlessly and relentlessly towards sources of magic. Mind-control spells and illusions do not affect nishruu.

Any spell cast at a nishruu will be absorbed by it, having no effect except to give the creature life energy, equal in hit points to the damage the spell normally does. A non-damaging spell gives a nishruu extra hp equal to its spell level.

Chargeable magic items are drained of 1-4 charges on contact with a nishruu; if contact is continuous, the drain occurs again at the end of every second round. Non-chargeable magic items have their powers negated for 1-4 rounds after contact; if used when in contact with a nishruu, potions and scrolls suffer a delay of 1-4 rounds after contact ceases in taking effect).

Artifacts become non-operational at all times while in contact with a nishruu and for 1 round after contact with a nishruu ceases.

Spellcasters of all classes who are enveloped by a nishruu lose one memorized spell (determine randomly) at first contact and one per round of contact thereafter. Each time a loss occurs, the spellcaster must save vs. Breath Weapon or be feebleminded.

Habitat/Society: Nishruu are solitary creatures, not native to this Prime Material Plane. Unlike the related hakeashar (detailed in module FRE1, Shadowdale), they cannot voluntarily transfer magical spells or charges to another being. Salt, both rock salt



and sea salt, is deadly poisonous to nishruu: a handful of flung salt typically does a nishruu 2d10 damage. Salt can therefore be used to confine or herd such creatures, for they will not willingly come into contact with it.

Ecology: Nishruu feed on magic, drifting endlessly and relentlessly about in seemingly aimless searchings for it. These creatures can actually detect the presence of magical energy within 600 feet or so, and will always move towards the most powerful, plentiful, or nearest source of magical energy. No upward limit for energy absorption is known, nor is a nishruu known to have starved from lack of magic. Most sages believe that sunlight and moisture may also sustain these beings.

When a nishruu is slain, its body will dissipate, losing luminosity and hue and appearing to sink into the ground. Any magic item within its body area when it is slain, or any magic weapon slaying it, even if no longer within the "body," will receive a magical bonus of 1d6 additional charges or a "second use" in the case of "one-shot" items (such as arrows and scrolls). Potions, memorized spells, artifacts, and items that do not have charges will not be augmented. If a nishruu is released, it will prove a menace to all magic-using beings of the Realms until destroyed. It will drift along after those who released it, hoping they will lead it to one source of magic after another.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	High (13-14)
TREASURE:	Any possible (as guardian), otherwise nil
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	1
MOVEMENT:	Fl 18 (A)
HIT DICE:	7
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	44%
SIZE:	S (2'-4' diameter)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17)
XP VALUE:	4,000

Often mistaken for the eerie will-o-wisp, the nyth is a rare predator of the northern forests of the Realms. It appears as a glowing sphere of light, which it can alter in hue and intensity just as its more famous relative does. Nyth speak and usually know the Common speech; they can also communicate in the "flickering light" language of will-o-wisps.

Combat: Nyth fly silently about by means of natural levitation, hunting birds, rodents, large insects, and other small creatures they can slay. On sunny days they often drift with the sun behind them, unseen against the glare until they can pounce.

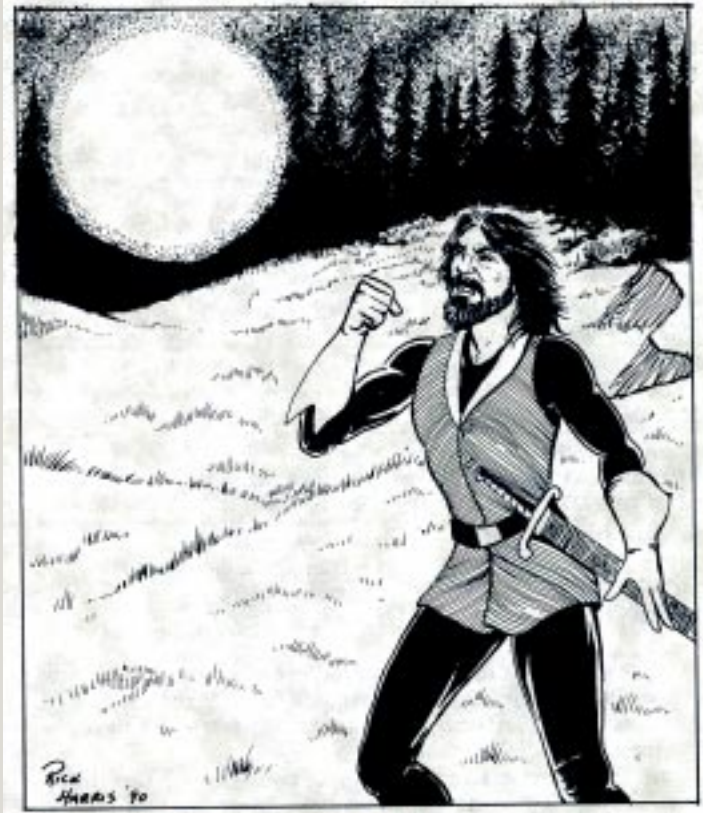
Nyth bite prey that they hit, but their major weapon is a naturally-generated magic missile, a single missile identical to that created by the first level wizard spell. A nyth can fire this (1d4 + 1 damage) 1 once every second round.

Against large and powerful opponents, nyth dodge to avoid attacks, using their intelligence to discern spellcasters and magic items and concentrate on foiling such attacks. Nyth will also try conversation to lead hostile beings astray into nearby pitfalls, swamps, traps (if serving as a guardian) and the like. Like will-o-wisps, nyth are able to blank out the glow of their radiance entirely (for 2-8 rounds at a time) in order to steal away from an encounter or to approach prey. During this time, they can be seen only by those able to see invisible creatures. A nyth who fires a *magic missile* does so with a bright pulsing, appearing and remaining visible for the entire round.

Nyth can be hit by any sort of weapon. Fire, electricity, and other raw energy discharges of any sort aid rather than harm a nyth. The hit points of damage normally done by such attacks are gained by the nyth as excess hit points, permanent until lost to further attacks. Thus, nyth cannot be harmed by *fireballs*, *lightning bolts*, and similar magics. The only exception to this drinking of energy attacks is the *magic missile* spell. Nyth do not benefit by *magic missiles* cast at them, because their peculiar nature reflects such attacks 100% back upon the caster or magic item wielder.

Nyth do not heal with rest and often seek out wayfarers' fires and forest blazes to replenish their essence.

In addition to their natural magic resistance, the uniquely chaotic, multi-layer minds of nyth are immune to all enchantment/charm spells and magical effects.



Habitat/Society: Nyth are always found as solitary, wandering hunters, without a territory or lair. They do have favorite hunting spots and often drift in desolate areas or ruins where their radiance will not attract the attention of foes.

Nyth have never been observed to fight will-o-wisps or each other. In the wild, they keep to themselves, reproducing by splitting into two nyth when reaching a certain size. (This is a spectacular process of firework-like bursts of light and harmful discharges of *magic missiles* in random directions). Some villagers in northern lands call nyth "wildfire" and believe them to be fell spirits or the work of evil magic. Most of the Realms' inhabitants merely avoid them and are in turn avoided.

The powers of nyth make them ideal guardians, and the swift flight, temporary invisibility, and wary avoidance of wild nyth make these guardians the only nyth that most folk ever see. Nyth tend to be very lonely. Acceptance by other creatures, and the designation of a particular room, cavern, crypt, crossroads, bridge, or other feature) as the nyth's "home," delight nyth. If given clear instructions and regular food (including fire or other energy, not merely live prey), a nyth will take pride in defending their home against specified intruders; will take on all comers with wit and ready powers, retreating only if faced with certain destruction.

Nyth can communicate telepathically with most creatures and may speak any language common to beings with which they have frequent contact.

Ecology: Nyth prey on small creatures of the woodlands and coasts, birds in particular, and go their solitary ways without much altering the lands in which they dwell. No specific magical use has yet been found for their essence, but wizards are confident that it will prove useful in devising fire- and *magic missile* related spells and magic items.



	Peltast	Greater Peltast
CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land	Any land
FREQUENCY:	Very rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any	Any
DIET:	Special	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)	Exceptional (15-16)
TREASURE:	Nil	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral	Neutral
NO. APPEARING:	1	3
ARMOR CLASS:	7	3
MOVEMENT:	4	4
HIT DICE:	1 + 6	2 + 6
THAC0:	19	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	See below	See below
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	See below	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to poison and crushing attacks	Immune to poison and crushing attacks
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	7%	33%
SIZE:	T (under 2' long unless stretched very thin)	T (amorphous)
MORALE:	Steady (12)	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	65	975

A peltast is an amorphous creature without visible organs or limbs, about the size of three human fists in volume. Its skin has a textured, mottled brown hue resembling worn but sturdy leather. A peltast can change its shape to exactly match a leather item and come into close contact with humans.

Peltasts live in symbiosis with humans and all goblin-kind races. Elves and dwarves do not seem right for its needs and are used only as carriers to a more suitable host creature.

A peltast can change shape in two rounds to resemble any leather item. Seeking to contact the skin of a suitable creature, a peltast will take the form of clothing or gear (such as a leather boot, belt, thong, wristband, strap, glove, or cap). If a peltast sees such an item dropped, it swiftly moves and changes form so as to be mistaken for the dropped item. A peltast feels and weighs like leather, though it does not have the odor usually associated with tanned leather, and does not breathe, give off heat, or make any sound. Peltasts do not use or radiate magic.

Combat: When contacting flesh, a peltast exudes a liquid which is an anesthetic and tissue softener. There is only a 1% chance that the host creature will feel something amiss and notice this attack.

The peltast is skilled in surgery, using its liquid with pinpoint precision to open a small wound in the host and dissolving the skin in a small, hidden area. Through this contact, it "feeds" on its victim, absorbing blood-borne nutrients (1 hp) every day. A healthy host may never notice the slight weakness this causes nor fall ill from the peltast's feeding (as a rested host regenerates 1 hp each night).

A peltast's body is resilient. It is unaffected by crushing blows or attacks by blunt weapons and gains +1 on all saving throws vs. fire. All edged-weapon attacks do normal damage.

A peltast's skin can sense vibrations, smell with acute sensitivity, and see up to 60' with both infravision and normal vision. Its

many tiny, flat eyes can be concealed entirely or revealed through slits when in use.

Habitat/Society: Peltasts apparently live for more than sixty years and are asexual, reproducing by dividing into two smaller, identical creatures (which grow as fast as the food supply permits.) A peltast will never fight another peltast, nor willingly join a host already carrying one. Peltasts can somehow always sense each other from up to 40' away.

If two or more peltasts end up on the same host, they take turns draining nutrients, the "senior" peltast (the one that arrived first, even if only by moments) going first. As soon as opportunity permits, the "junior" peltast will transfer to another host.

Peltasts prefer to drain victims from such areas as the outside of the wrist, the scalp under the hair, and the outside tip of an elbow. If the peltast is removed, there is never any telltale peeling, pulling, or traces of blood or fluid.

Peltasts move by creeping, worm-like, along a surface. They can stick to walls and ceilings (solid, non-living surfaces only), even if these are wet or oily. This ability will not bear the weight of a host creature and the peltast will be torn free.

Ecology: A peltast will leave a diseased host, but while attached it neutralizes any poisons introduced into the host's bloodstream, feeding on the venom itself. The slight inherent magic resistance of a peltast is extended to its host; if the host has any magic resistance, the effects are cumulative.

A peltast has an interest in keeping its host alive. Should the host be reduced to 2 hp or less and still live, the peltast will inject 3-6 hp of energy back into the host. It can do this only once a day.

A peltast exudes waste materials from itself whenever immersed in water, thus staining and poisoning the water; anyone drinking it must save vs. poison at +2 or become nauseated for 2-8 rounds and be unable to attack or defend).

Greater Peltast

These rare creatures resemble translucent rock crystals instead of leather. Hard to the touch and about the size of a human fist, greater peltasts are able to alter their internal hue and the shape of their bodies. No organs or structures are visible within the body of a greater peltast.

Over the centuries these intelligent beasts have learned to shape themselves into exact semblances of faceted gems, valued by many creatures. They often hide among real gemstones.

Greater peltasts can be seen feeding; that is, the blood they ingest is visible within their bodies. They also grow visibly upon draining more than 3 hit points of nutrients. A greater peltast can typically drain up to 12 hit points, half of which are added to its personal hp total for 1 day. Greater peltasts, therefore, prefer to feed on sleeping, dead, or disabled creatures, using their magical powers to "fetch" more meals.

Unlike the common peltast, a greater peltast has magical powers. Once per round, it can use one of the following abilities, radiated silently: *monster summoning VI* (employed to call hostile creatures against its carrier until a good meal opportunity develops), a powerful telepathic *suggestion* (-1 on target saving throws) used to influence both summoned creatures and other beings around them, and slow on any being touching or carrying the greater peltast.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any/any
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary (always mounted)
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Highly (13-14)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	(mounted) 24, Fl 18 (C)
HIT DICE:	9
THACO:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1 or 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2d8 + 2/2d6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Death wail, Trample (mount)
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (but always mounted, on an L)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17)
XP VALUE:	7,000

The rare undead "Banshee Rider" is seen only at night, always appearing as an eyeless, glowing white elven maiden with long, streaming white hair. Clad in ornate plate armor, she rides a long-maned, eyeless horse and attacks beings she encounters with the lance she bears. The shee slays those she can catch.

Rider and mount can both see (with 90' infravision) despite their empty, dark eyesockets. They will turn towards and chase most creatures they encounter (ignoring a target on a 2 in 6 chance).

Combat: The translucent shee will never dismount from her shadow horse, cannot be unhorsed, and will try to ride down any beings who stand in her path. Unless they move with her to continue combat, the Shee will attack a creature only once before galloping on into the night. The strike of a shee's shadowy, insubstantial lance does 2d8 + 2 damage and causes a 1-point Strength loss (strength so lost will return in an hour). Such losses are cumulative. A shee's lance cannot be grasped, nor can it impale, catch on anything, or be turned aside by shield or armor.

If a lance attack misses, or the Shee is attacking another being, the shadow horse will trample opponents. Anyone so trampled is flung to the ground (fragile carried items may have to make saving throws) and suffers 2d6 points damage. The horse is not related to the undead being known as a shadow, despite its name, and is AC0 and THAC0 11. Some bards and sages believe it is not a separate creature at all, but part of the shee.

Shee may be struck by any sort of weapons and do not exude magical *fear*. Their touch is said to be cold, but not magically chilling. Shee are considered as "Special" when priests attempt to turn them; a successful turning merely causes the shee to avoid attacking the priest and gallop towards another target.

Like other undead, shee are immune to *sleep*, *hold*, *charm* and related spells and magical effects. Shee cannot be commanded by other undead or by any known magic and are immune to illusions, hypnotic effects, and other forms of mental influence. Shee regenerate 1 lost hit point per turn.

Any successful attack on a shee will cause her to vanish. As she fades away, she will scream. Beings within 60' of her disappearance must save vs. death magic or perish.

A "vanishing" shee is actually slowly shifting to another random locale on the same plane. This transfer requires an entire round to complete. In both places, while "vanishing," a shee can



be readily attacked and is AC7.

A shee only vanishes when struck; it cannot travel about at will by this means, but must otherwise gallop. Shee are known to usually head towards the maximum number of targets nearby, but it is not known if they can control their teleports to arrive in specific lands, or deliberately gallop in certain directions-if they have any concept of locations or destinations as living creatures do.

Undead are unaffected by the wail of a shee, but all other shee attacks will affect them, and shee often attack undead. Shee seem immune to special undead abilities and attacks. If a shee is not attacked, she will gallop away after attacking every being present once, and will not wail.

Habitat/Society: Shee seem to gallop continuously in dark regions, hunting living beings to attack. They have been encountered at sea, galloping across the sky low over the waves.

Some sages of the Realms believe that shee are the creations of the god Bhaal, Lord of Murder (a process continued by Cyric, The Dark Sun) or by Malar, who creates shee as his 'Ghost Hunt.' Shee are always solitary and no instances have ever been reported of one shee attacking another. Two or even three shee may appear in the same area at once, typically galloping in the air low across a huge battlefield and attacking combatants of both (or all) sides indiscriminately.

Ecology: A shee's appearances seem related to disasters or important events. Shee may be attracted to great gatherings or outpourings of magical energy.

A being that has been struck (but not killed) by a shee or her mount gives off a faint, pearly luminescence in darkness. This is known as "The Mark of the Shee," and those who bear it are regarded with great respect by intelligent beings native to the Moonshaes. A marked creature will not be attacked by common bandits, villagers, and the like; lesser undead the Realms over will avoid attacking a marked creature. This condition is permanent, unless removed by a *limited wish* (*dispel magic* will not suffice).

Weredragon



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land, usually urban, civilized human-settled areas
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (15-16)
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic, neutral or good
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	1 (base)
MOVEMENT:	9, Fl 30 (C), Jp 3
HIT DICE:	13 (base)
THACO:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	Human: 1 (hand, weapon, or special); Dragon: 3 (claws/bite) or special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	Human: 1-6 barehanded or by weapon type; Dragon: 1-6/1-6/4-24
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Special
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Variable
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Variable
SIZE:	M (human) or H (24' base)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17 base)
XP VALUE:	Variable

Weredragons, as many folk tales attest, are beautiful human women transformed into dragons—or, more accurately, a race of dragonkind that can assume female human form whenever desired. Weredragons usually live among men, revealing their dragon forms only in times of personal peril or great crisis.

In human form, a weredragon appears as a healthy human female about twenty to thirty years of age, with a charisma of 16 or more. In dragon form, a weredragon is slim and splendid, usually iridescent blue and silver in hue, and resembles a copper dragon in shape. In either form, a weredragon possesses 90' infravision, hastrue seeing up to 14' away, and can use tongues at will, all from birth. A weredragon retains her full knowledge and awareness in either form, and most are consummate actors, so that humans are usually unaware of the weredragon's true nature.

Combat: Weredragons strike quickly and mercilessly with their razor-sharp claws and tend to sing joyously as they fight (although they can be silent if noise would endanger allies or the success of their own attack). In human form, weredragons prefer to use slashing edged weapons. In either form, a weredragon can employ her spells and special abilities, although use of her breath

weapon will force an accompanying change in form.

A change from one form to another takes a short time: one round from human to dragon form, and two rounds for dragon to human form. During this transformation, a weredragon cannot move (except to fall) and can only employ spells or her breath weapon; other actions and attacks are impossible. Such a shape-change rends all known bonds, prisons, clothing, and other confinements, without harm to the weredragon. There is no known limit to the number of times a weredragon may change form in a given time, nor is there any known magical means of preventing the change in form.

Breath Weapon/special abilities: A weredragon only has one breath weapon: a cloud of supercharged, arcing gas 30' long, 20' wide, and 20' high. Creatures caught in the gas must save vs. breath weapon to escape with half damage, or suffer the cloud's full electrical effects.

A weredragon casts spells and wields her magical abilities at 9th level, plus her combat modifier.

From birth, a weredragon can cast *light* and *darkness*, 15' radius (once each every 6 turns) and is immune to electrical attacks. As they age, weredragons gain the following additional powers: Young, *feather fall* twice a day; Juvenile, *blink* twice a day; Young Adult, *protection from normal missiles* once a day; Adult, *teleport* once a day; Mature Adult, *heal* once a day; Old, *wall of force* twice a day; Very Old, *reverse gravity* once a day; Wyrms, *polymorph any object* twice per day; Great Wyrms, *plane shift* once per day. In all cases, a weredragon can affect other beings with the benefits or effects of these powers by touch.

Habitat/Society: Weredragons tend not to consort with others of their own kind and prefer dwelling in cities or courts to wilderness solitude. They delight in beguiling evil and rapacious men in human form, taking them as suitors or husbands, and then slaying them while in dragon form. In this way, many a weredragon has amassed great treasure. Unlike most other dragons, however, weredragons delight in the gaining of treasure, not in having it. Weredragons often serve good mages, Harpers, and groups and individuals with similar aims or opportunities to preserve, renew, and protect the land. Much of the history of weredragons as a race remains mysterious.

Ecology: Weredragons are fertile in both human and dragon form. They are always female, and their offspring are always other weredragons. Their name is a misnomer; their genetic condition is not the lycanthropy that afflicts other "were-" creatures. A weredragon cannot be "cured" of her abilities nor transmit them to other creatures by bite or any means.

Weredragons can eat all plant and animal life and are immune to all natural venoms and toxins.

Age	Body Lgt.(')	nil Lgt.0	Armor Class	Breath	Spells Wizard/Magic		XP Value
				Weapon	Priest	Resistance	
1	1-5	1-4	4	2d6+1	Nil	Nil	1,400
2	5-14	4-12	3	4d6 +2	Nil	Nil	2,000
3	14-23	12- 21	2	6d6+3	Nil	Nil	4,000
4	3-32	21-28	1	8d6 +4	1/0	Nil	6,000
5	32-41	28- 36	0	10d6 + 5	2/0	0%	9,000
6	41-50	36-45	-1	12d6 + 6	3	15%	10,000
7	50-59	45-54	-2	14d6 + 7	3 1/0	20%	11,000
8	59-68	54-62	-3	16d6 + 8	3 2/1	25%	12,000
9	68-77	62-70	-4	18d6 + 9	3 3/2	30%	14,000
10	77-86	70-78	-5	20d6 + 10	3 3 1/3	35%	16,000
11	86-95	78-85	-6	22d6 + 11	3 3 2/3 2	40%	17,000
12	95-104	85-94	-7	24d6 + 12	3 3 2 1/3 3	45%	18,000

Appendix 4: New Magic Items

Major magic items appearing for the first time in this adventure are detailed here. "Base" sale prices (Gold Piece Values) are given for each item as a guide to DMs if PCs want (or are forced) to sell an item. Magic items are not openly for sale in the Moonshaes, or anywhere else in the Realms; only beings in extremis part with magic for cash!

Black Hand

Experience Point Value: 4,500

Gold Piece Value: 50,000

The making of these fell items remains a secret of the priesthood of Bane, who have used them for over a century. A very few *black hands* have fallen into the hands of outsiders as booty, but no one outside the Dark Clergy has ever admitted to successfully duplicating such a weapon. Such an admission would almost certainly spell the doom of the claimant at the hands of Banites the Realms over, but the clergy of both Talos and Ternpus are known to have attempted crafting such gloves for their own priesthoods—so far unsuccessfully.

Worn by high-ranking priests of Bane, *black hands* are slip-on, elbow-length gloves crafted of flexible black metal mesh or very fine chainmail; they glow with an eerie dark radiance. They are usually left-hand gloves, and a being wears only one *black hand* (not one on each hand). A *hand* wearer can therefore wield a weapon as well as the glove, although a successful attack roll is required to deliver any of the *hand's* touch effects.

A *black hand* absorbs all spells (and equivalent monster natural powers and magic item effects) of third level and less, regardless of class or origin. Such attacks will simply not affect the wearer or any items carried or worn by him, regardless of the wearer's actions (or even if dead or unconscious). Area-effect spells are not negated or diverted; they simply do not affect the glove wearer. Additional beings and their gear cannot be protected by the touch of the *hand*, nor does its protection extend to a being merely carrying it: it must be worn, in contact with the skin, to function at all. Its passive pro-

tection has no known "absorption capacity" limit.

A *black hand* can also be used actively. Its touch can drain magic items of 1-4 charges, per touch or round of continuous contact, if the wearer wills. Each grasped magic item gains a saving throw against Magical Fire to avoid being drained and must save anew for each contact. Magic items that do not use charges are rendered dormant and useless for 1d4 rounds.

Magic item powers are not known to harm *hands*. A *black hand* has an Armor Class of -4 and 22 hit points. Its mesh resists piercing or cutting by even the keenest blades.

If the wearer wills, a *black hand's* touch can instead *paralyze* living beings, who are allowed normal saving throws to successfully resist. If failed, they are paralyzed for 2-5 turns. Any attack on a being so paralyzed will automatically hit, but breaks the paralysis instantly.

Undead can also be paralyzed by the *hand's* touch. *Hand* wearers roll turning attempts, as clerics of the same level, if not themselves clerics. If the result is a "T," 2-5 turn paralysis occurs. If the result is "D," the paralysis is permanent—until an attack ends it, or magic is used to dispel it.

Black hands can be directed to release absorbed magical energy through a touch attack. The electrical energy discharge affects only the being touched (penetrating armor and conducting along weapons and the like, but not harming nearby beings). A saving throw versus poison is allowed. If successful, a victim suffers 2-12 damage; if failed, 1d4 hit points of the damage of each *hand* contact is permanent, at the DM's option. No saving throw will allow all damage to be avoided. This power can be used only four times in any day. If a touch attempt misses, the energy is not discharged and wasted; a discharge occurs only if an attack succeeds.

Blast Scepter

Experience Point Value: 4,000

Gold Piece Value: 45,000

These rare, ancient devices are one of the more unpleasant legacies of lost

Netheril, the realm of sorcerers whose glory was swallowed long ago by the Great Desert, Anauroch. Most take the form of wand-size metal rods, with ornamented knobs at both ends. Netherese scepters are usable by all intelligent beings able to hold one. These items use charges, typically having 5-60 (5d12) when found. Few, if any, know the secrets of recharging them.

They are controlled by silent will of the bearer. If more than two beings grasp such a scepter at once, it will not function at all until only one being is touching it again. Learning to wield the powers of a *scepter* takes at least 1 turn per power, although one can master the first power desired, if it is one that the learner has just seen in operation, in 2-5 rounds.

A *blast scepter* can:

- absorb all electrical attacks (e.g., natural and magical lightning) and all heat attacks without harm to the bearer (no charge cost).
- automatically reflect the blast force of all explosions away from the bearer. This "flashback" prevents the bearer being knocked over or moved, but is not a shield against debris and missiles. This power (which expends no charges), coupled with the preceding one, enables the bearer of such a scepter to suffer only flame damage from a *fireball*, by absorbing both the heat and blast effects. The damage dealt by the *fireball* is thereby halved, *even before any saving throws apply*.
- by touch (successful attack roll required) deal 1d4 damage and *stun* (as the spell *power word, stun*) the target creature for 1 round (save vs. spells at -4 to avoid the *stun* effect; damage inescapable). This power can be used only once per round. Cost: 1 charge.
- once per round, at a cost of 2 charges, the *scepter* can *blast* opponents with a soundless shock wave. This operates in a cone, up to 30 feet distant from the item, and 20 feet wide at its furthest extent. Creatures struck suffer 2-12 points of damage (no save) and must save vs. spells or be knocked off their feet. If this occurs, target spellcasting is ruined; any fragile held or carried items must save vs. "crushing blow."
- once per day, *powerstrike* any one opponent. This power drains 5 charges

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and can only be willed to occur when the *scepter* is touching an opponent (i.e., after a successful "to hit" roll has been made, the *scepter* wielder can decide to forego the 1d4 damage and stunning noted above, and instead *power-strike* for 5d6 damage. Targets are allowed a saving throw vs. spell for half damage.

Handharp

Experience Point Value: 2,000
Gold Piece Value: 16,000

This rarity is a favored item of traveling Harpers, who are believed to have devised it in long-ago days. A *handharp* is a crescent-shaped wooden instrument about the size of a man's hand, strung with magical metal strings.

Its powers can be employed by anyone able to play a tune. When it is played, four small blue globes of light (equal in effects to the first level wizard spell *dancing lights*) come into being around the *harp*. These globes may be mentally directed by the harp player, as a wizard directs his *dancing lights*, without full concentration.

Undead suffer damage and attack roll penalties of -2 within 10' of a playing *handharp*. Saving throws against all life-energy draining, paralyzing, and related natural spells and powers (such as a *chill touch* spell) attacks are made at +2. Creatures within 10' of a playing *handharp* cannot be *charmed*, and *charmed* creatures who venture within 10' of a playing *handharp* will be dazed (treat as the effects of a *power word, stun*) as long as they remain in the *handharp's* area of effect. All of these powers can be used as often as desired and do not drain the item.

A *handharp* has one additional power, which can be used only once per day, though all of the *handharp's* magic is exhausted for 1 turn after this use. The bearer of a *handharp* can, by plucking a certain string and singing a particular note simultaneously, will the *handharp* to *dimension door* him or her up to 90' away. This power will take along all carried and worn items, but not another living creature.

Such travel is instant, but subject to the same dangers that the spell has: if

the intended destination is improperly described or not concentrated upon, mid-air appearances and falling damage are possible. Note that a *handharp* bearer can mentally state (aloud to the DM) any visible destination (e.g., "under the apple tree, over there") without giving its coordinates in distance and direction and still arrive safely.

In the hands of a bard, a *handharp's* area of effect doubles to 20' distant, and it can be made to *dimension door* the bard up to 180' away.

Holy Hand of Bane

Experience Point Value: 8,000
Gold Piece Value: Nil (uncontrollable and thus non-saleable)

Only a few of these deadly items exist, guarding the innermost altars of evil temples dedicated to the god Bane. Fashioned of obsidian, *holy hands* are immense, standing 6' high when upright,

A *holy hand* floats motionless, *levitating*, unless any good-aligned being enters the chamber it guards. Thereupon it will turn slowly to point at the nearest good-aligned character, attacking if any such being advances to within 60' of the guarded altar. A *holy hand* can sense the alignment and whereabouts of all beings in its temple precisely and will pursue intruders throughout the temple if activated by their intrusion into its guarded area.

A *holy hand* is AC1, MV 15 (A), THAC0 11, HD 9, and always has 66 hit points. It can be struck by all sorts of physical weapons and suffers their normal damage. Fire and electricity of any sort cannot affect a *hand*, nor can it be mentally influenced or controlled.

A *holy hand* attacks once per round, smiting for 4-24 damage or grasping and crushing for 2-12 damage, plus 5-30 per round thereafter. (Determine which attack form it uses randomly.)

A *holy hand* is animated, constructed, and powered by magic. All magical items, weapons, and spell discharges or magic item effects coming into contact with it will be utterly absorbed. Magical attacks dealing a *hand* over 40 points of "damage" in a single round will actually heal any damage to it, by the amount of the excess points over 40 (the rest of the

energy is stored by the hand for motive power). When a *hand* is destroyed, the magical energy escapes harmlessly, not in an explosion or in any form that can be tapped or fed upon by others.

Magic items contacting a *hand* are completely drained of magic, un-restorable by any means short of a *wish*. Artifacts are *plane shifted* away at random, leaving their bearers behind (unless the DM desires to drag the poor hero along!). A *dispel magic* directed against a *hand* is absorbed without damaging the *hand* or lessening its levitation abilities, but does act as a 1 round slow.

Mace of Darkness

Experience Point Value: 1,000
Gold Piece Value: 9,000

These weapons are used by many evil priests and warriors in the Realms. Always aligned (a priest of Bane, for example, would wield a Lawful evil mace), these all-metal, fearsomely-spiked +2 weapons deal 1d8 points damage to creatures of all sizes.

The bearer of a *mace of darkness* can cause it, when grasped and so ordered, to create *darkness*, 15' radius for 1 or 2 rounds, as desired. This darkness is centered on, and moves with, the mace head. Once ended, it cannot be reinvoked until 2 rounds have passed.

A *mace of darkness* will emit a snarling noise whenever it strikes a good-aligned creature (it cannot be magically confused as to the alignment). If a being of any alignment other than the *mace's* own attempts to wield it or grasp it, they will suffer 2-8 points of electrical damage per contact or round of contact.

The Scimitar of Souls

(Artifact-Unique item)

The favored weapon of the evil Iyachtu Xvim, this infamous weapon is a giant +3 *scimitar* that drains 2 life energy levels whenever it strikes a living opponent (no saving throw). The truth of its origin is lost in conflicting legends; it is known to be much heavier than most humans can comfortably use in battle (weighing about thirty pounds)

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and is of lawful evil alignment. Creatures of other alignments who touch the *scimitar* will feel a sickening, wrenching pain (-1 on attack rolls and Dexterity ability score while in contact with the weapon). Further, they will suffer a loss of 1d4 hit points per contact (or per round of continuous contact) if they are of any evil alignment, or a loss of 1d12 hp if they are not.

Seat of Bane

Experience Point Value: 6,000

Gold Piece Value: 160,000

These cumbersome items of ancient design and make are found in only a few temples of Bane. A *Seat of Bane*, or "chair of audience," is carved of black stone. Its back rises up twenty feet above the seat, and is fashioned into a black hand. Senior priests of the temple clergy customarily sit in such a chair when serving as the temporal voice and judgement of Bane, guarding the farthest point into the temple that non-clergy are allowed to reach. A *Seat of Bane* radiates magic, but neither has charges nor can it be exhausted by any known means.

A *Seat of Bane* allows any single being on its seat to employ *ESP* with a 90-yard range, by silent act of will. This power of the chair can be used continuously and in combination with other functions of the chair.

In any single round, a *Seat of Bane* can create or maintain any one of the following powers:

- an invisible, cylindrical *wall of force* surrounding the chair, open at top and bottom;
- an anti-magic ray emanating from the palm of the hand (the back of the chair, above the head of the being seated in the chair), with the same effects, range, and 90-degree arc as the ray generated by a beholder's central eye;
- *true seeing*, 120' range, conferred upon the being sitting in the Seat (lasting as long as desired, so long as the being remains on the *Seat*);
- *know alignment*, 10-yard range, conferred upon the being sitting in the *Seat* (for as long as desired, so long as the being remains on the *Seat*);
- a *wall of fire* of normal effect (ex-

cept that it cannot give off "waves of heat" damage) with red and black flames springing up in front of the chair, ten feet across and as far away from the foot of the chair, outwards in a straight path, as the sitter desires up to a maximum distance of 100' (and the sitter can be damaged by the flames if he or she falls into them);

- *fire resistance* (identical in effect to that conferred by a *ring of fire resistance*) protects the sitter;
- the sitter is empowered to *speak with dead* (as the spell, as if cast by a 9th level cleric), regardless of class, alignment, or level. This ability can be used in addition to the spell of the same name, if the sitter is a cleric, but it does not affect the spell's performance, nor can a cleric of higher level than 9th impose his better performance through the chair's power, to augment it.

A *Seat of Bane* can switch instantly from one power to another, but can only ever have one power operating at a time (except for its *ESP*). Each power functions for at least 1 round, once activated.

Once enchanted, a *Seat of Bane* cannot be tipped or moved without unleashing a 6d6 *fireball* in all directions. This fireball will do no harm to the chair, which is immune to fire and electrical attacks, whatever their origin.

If one's campaign uses SPELLJAMMER" rules and settings, a *Seat of Bane* will function as a Minor Helm. It is as difficult to destroy as other Minor Helms (i.e., treat it as an artifact for purposes of PCs destroying it).

Any evil being who can fit on the seat can use the powers of a *Seat of Bane*, but it will not function in any way for characters of neutral or good alignments, although contact with it does them no damage. If more than one evil character is vying for control of a *Seat*, the one occupying the largest part of the actual seat of the chair wields its powers.

Vestments of Power

Priests of many faiths in the Realms possess ceremonial robes. Almost 25% of all seventh level or higher priests encountered in their homes, temples, or holy places will have access to magical robes. In most cases, these will be vest-

ments of power. Appearing only as unusually fine religious garments of the style, fabric, and hue normal to the faith, these robes possess magical powers as detailed below and may be worn and used in conjunction with other protective devices and magic items.

Lesser Vestments

Experience Point Value: 1,800

Gold Piece Value: 18,000

The wearer receives a +3 Armor Class bonus, and a +4 bonus to all saving throws, while wearing the *vestments*. No attack or damage bonuses are gained. The *vestments* also provide the wearer with protection equivalent to the third level wizard spell *protection from normal missiles*, the first level wizard spell *feather fall* and a ring of *fire resistance*.

Greater Vestments

Experience Point Value: 3,000

Gold Piece Value: 30,000

These robes provide all the powers and protections of lesser vestments and two additional powers, both usable three times in any one-day period. These powers are *true seeing* and *dimension door*. The former power is equivalent to the fifth level priest spell (no ointment is required), while the latter power is equal in efficacy to the fourth level wizard spell, as if cast by a tenth level wizard (the one-round recovery period is retained).

Greater vestments possess a secret command word. If spoken when the robes are touched but not worn, the robes will become invisible, and levitate in place, not moving unless physically snatched from their waiting location. The command word must be spoken backwards within 60 feet of their present location (they may have been moved from their original location by any number of disturbances) to make them reappear and cease their levitation. Levitation and invisibility can continue for centuries if not commanded to cease. Note that the protective powers of a *greater vestment* do not function while it is invisible and levitating.

Appendix 5: New Spells

WIZARD SPELLS

Second Level

Mist Magic

(Evocation)

Range: 70 yards
Components: V,S,M
Duration: 1d4 turns + 1 round/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: sphere; 20'-radius
+ 10'/level
Saving Throw: None

This spell creates concealing mists, akin to the first level wizard spell *wall of fog*. Unlike that simpler spell, magic mists can either move as chosen by the caster at a maximum rate of 20'/round, or stay motionless (despite winds) for 1 round/level of the caster, or move with the caster. Mist is left behind at the caster's last solid corporeal location if the caster uses such spells as *blink*, *dimension door*, or *teleport*. The movement cannot be changed once chosen. Mist control does not prevent other action or spell casting.

The mist created is thick and concealing, obscuring even infravision beyond two feet. The mist is also extremely wet, dousing normal campfires or smaller flames and extinguishing larger normal fires in 2-5 rounds (this destroys the mists). Many wizards use this spell to put out house and forest fires.

All fire-based attacks entering, passing through, or cast within the mists lose 2 points from each die of damage.

Items in the mist receive +3 saving throw bonuses against fire-based attacks, but damage done is unchanged. The mists can be affected by *hold vapor* and destroyed by *dispel magic*. Duration of the mists is halved by strong winds.

Third Level

Call Undead

(Necromancy)

Range: sphere, 100 yards/level radius
Components: V,S,M
Duration: Instantaneous
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell allows a wizard to summon any undead of 6 hit dice or less within spell range, but does not give the caster any control over them. A wizard may use this spell to bring hidden undead out where they can be dealt with by companions or the wizard's own spells, or bring down an undead attack on foes or captors. The *call* does not allow the undead to unerringly locate the caller.

Lesser undead within range when the spell is cast immediately move at full normal rate towards the caster. Note that this range extends above and below the caster. Greater undead may accompany them, but are not compelled to do so. This spell is effective through water, solid stone, and all non-magical barriers, but is not effective from one plane to another.

This spell may be used to bring back previously turned undead, forcing another turning attempt. Its material component is a piece of bone from any creature.

Fourth Level

Flamsterd's Flamestrike

(Evocation)

Range: 10 yards/level
Components: V,S,M
Duration: 1 round (once activated)
Casting Time: 4 (1 round if "set")
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: 1/2

This specialized fire spell can be used both as a direct attack and as a guardian trap. In either case, it affects one creature only, flames appearing in a roaring spiral around the victim. The *flamestrike* does 1d12 + 1 hit points of dam-

age per level of the caster and is a menace to clothing, carried items, and other flammable materials adjacent to the victim (item saving throws required). Unlike a fireball, it does not explode outwards to affect all beings in an area.

Flamsterd's flamestrike ruins any ongoing spellcasting on the part of the victim and endangers any unprotected accoutrements, even when the victim is magically protected against fire.

When used as a trap, a *flamestrike* must be cast on a small piece of metal (typically a piece of copper) and a series of specific triggering conditions (equivalent to those of a *magic mouth* spell) uttered. The trap is then "set" to activate when the conditions are met. It can be magically detected as a trap only if the detector is specifically considering an action that would trigger it.

The conditions typically involve disturbing the coin or piece of metal, and the *flamestrike* can wait indefinitely until the conditions are fulfilled. The conditions cannot involve anything involving detection of actions at a distance; that is, casting a specific spell or entering an area, if the coin is not disturbed by doing so, etc. If a *dispel magic* is cast on the coin before it is disturbed or any other of the preset conditions are fulfilled, the spell will be dispersed without taking effect. If one or more beings fulfill the conditions of a "set" *flamestrike*, the first one to do so is affected; if they do so simultaneously, the spell still affects only one being (determine randomly).

The material components are a pinch of saltpeter, filings or a small piece of any metal, a piece of phosphorous, and a pinch of ashes.

Sixth Level

Starharp

(Alteration, Necromancy)

Range: 0
Components: V,S,M
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 6
Area of Effect: 2'/level diameter
sphere
Saving Throw: None

This powerful spell is customarily

Appendix 5: New Spells

known only by Harpers, in particular, the traveling bards among them. It creates a blue-white, glowing image of a harp, floating in the air above the caster's head. The harp plays by itself, echoing and elaborating on whatever tune the caster sang or hummed during the casting, and emits little "stars" of twinkling radiance as it does so.

All creatures within the harp's area of effect (a sphere centered on the harp, which moves with the caster) are instantly freed from any existing natural or magical pain, nausea, *charms*, *holds*, *fear*, *stunning*, and any effects of a *repulsion* spell. These effects will not return after the *starharp* fades away. In addition, the caster may concentrate on any one being within range during spellcasting, and that being will be magically cured of 2-8 hp of damage as soon as the harp appears. (If no being is chosen, this healing power is lost; it cannot be saved for later. Neither can this spell be used to give healthy beings additional, "extra" hit points.)

This spell cannot be disrupted by attacks against the caster or the harp image. Magical *darkness* of any sort cannot form or persist within the *starharp's* area of effect.

Once the spell is cast, the creator of a *starharp* is free to fight, sleep, cast spells, and engage in other activities without affecting the *starharp*. If the caster is slain, the harp continues to function, but turns blood-red, its tune becoming sad. The spells material components are a tear from the caster and a tiny carved harp of wood, bone, or ivory.

PRIEST SPELLS

Fourth Level

The Doom of Bane

(Necromancy)

Sphere: Necromantic
Range: Touch
Components: V,S,M
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 round
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell transforms the corpse or partial remains of a single upright bipedal creature of any race into the animate force of a helmed horror (as described in Appendix 3). The horror rises from the remains 3 rounds after spellcasting is complete, entering its armor. If armor is not present, the horror dissipates, and the spell is wasted.

The caster or another being must wear the armor as the horror enters it, a process described as "unbearably chilling;" this often causes the armor wearer to faint. The horror gains its knowledge of how to fill the armor, and something of its independent reasoning, from the armor-wearer (who need not be of the proper class to use armor). Once the horror has entered, the armor may be taken off; within 1 turn it will animate as a fully-functional horror. (Details of the commands and immunities a horror may be given are in Appendix 3.)

The carrion need not be whole and is consumed in the casting, but it must be the remains of a creature that was of evil alignment for at least part of its life, or the spell will have no effect. The *doom* destroys the remains forever, preventing resurrection, animation as undead, *speak with dead*, and similar activities from affecting them. A helmed horror is not regarded as an undead creature, however, because it cannot be turned, affected, or dispelled by holy beings or things; it only resembles undeath in its creation and functions. It terrifies simple folk the same way!

The material components of this spell are a pinch of bone powder or bone shard of any origin, a pinch of dust, and a fairly complete, non-magical and non-aligned suit of metal armor, which will serve as the "body" of the horror.

Fifth Level

Mystic Lash

(Evocation)

Sphere: Combat
Range: 10 yd/level
Components: V,S,M
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: Special

Casting this spell brings into being a long whip of ghostly, glowing red force, emanating from the cleric's hand. With this "lash of lightning," the caster can attack once per round, at +3 to hit. Whenever the *lash* strikes a being, the caster can release it to attack that being repeatedly, fighting on its own until the spell expires. The caster can then engage in spellcasting or other activities without ending the spell.

A *mystic lash* does 2d8 hit points electrical damage per strike (save for half damage, rounding up). The strike of the lash also has a magical effect. If the lash is directly wielded by its caster, that cleric chooses the effect by effort of will. If the lash is fighting by itself, the effect is chosen at random (roll 1d6). The following effects are possible:

1. Struck victim is *stunned* (effects as a *Power Word, Stun*) for that and the following round.
2. Struck victim *forgets* any one spell or command word held in memory (if none, treat as result above).
3. Struck victim is wracked with *pain*, takes an additional 1d4 points damage, and any held weapons or other items are dropped.
4. Struck victim *paralyzed*: paralysis lasts until successful save against paralyzation is made; allow 1 save per round, but victim will always fail the first save attempt.
5. Any one metal item or weapon carried or worn by the victim is *vaporized* (instantly and irrevocably disintegrated, in a blue cloud of arcing electricity). Victim suffers an additional 2d4 damage.
6. Struck victim is hurled away; the lash entwines the being in a helix of lightning, and the being is propelled helplessly 1d4x10 yards in a straight line away from the caster, taking an additional 2d6 impact damage when arriving at the new location (or, if in mid-air, falling damage instead). No damage is suffered from the entwining lash.

A *mystic lash* can be destroyed instantly by *dispel magic*, but cannot be affected or guarded against as though it was a purely electrical attack. Its material components are the cleric's holy symbol and a piece of amber.

Appendix 5: New Spells

Seventh Level

Moonveil

(Abjuration, Alteration)

Sphere: Elemental (Water)

Range: Touch

Components: V,S,M

Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 9 rounds

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None

This complicated evil ritual to magically veil Moonwells was recently rediscovered and developed by certain priests of Bane. Moonwells are precious pools of clear water found in the Moonshae Isles, sacred to the Goddess (Chauntea). The few sages and priests who have heard of the dark work of The Risen Cult of Bane believe that this ritual could be modified to seal other existing gates, color pools, and other means of passing between planes or contacting deities.

A *moonveil* spell is a long ritual involving chanting, dancing about the entire circumference or shore of a Moonwell, and the sacrifice of one living creature per round. The caster may have up to seven assistants active in carrying out the ritual. If successful, the spell causes a Moonwell—as well as any holy water or *sweet water* that is within 90' of the caster at any time during the ritual—to lose its properties. The Moonwell may be magically purified again, but the other magical waters mentioned are ruined forever.

A “veiled” Moonwell is covered by an opaque black carpet of curling mist, even in full sunlight. This veil blocks all beneficial effects of the Moonwell (detailed in the “Sacred Groves & Moonwells” appendix of this adventure). It also lessens the local influence of the Goddess, preventing Her from awakening or, if already active, accurately directing her land-dwelling Children, The Unicorn and The Pack, against evil.

Contact with the black mist forces items to make saving throws against acid and living beings to save versus poison, both with a - 2 penalty, or suffer 3-12 hit points of corrosive damage



per round of contact. If a being dives, falls, or is otherwise immersed in the pool, 6-24 damage automatically applies for each round of contact, and the victim must save against poison for each round or be *blinded*. Such blindness lasts for 1- 4 turns after the being was last in contact with the mist or water.

All spells of sixth level or less directed against the black mist or the well are reflected back 100%, for full effects, on the caster. The black mist cannot be separated into smaller portions nor can any of it be taken away from the well; the magic generates it continuously from the pool itself.

A *moonveil* can be destroyed by a specially-cast variant of the *sunray* spell; no other means of destroying a *moonveil* has yet been found. It cannot be reversed or negated by will of the caster.

The material components of this spell are a piece of burned bone from any creature native to the Moonshaes, the blood of one living creature per round of the ritual (each creature must be slain during the ritual), a pinch of dung, a pinch of ashes, a dried snakeskin, and

a small vial of liquid poison, of any sort.

Stone Walk

(Alteration, Necromancy)

Sphere: Elemental (Earth)

Range: Special

Components: V,S,M

Duration: Special

Casting Time: 1 round (plus preparatory rituals and journeying)

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: None

This spell is one of the oldest secrets of several evil priesthoods in the Realms and is used to link far-flung temples or sacred areas for important and emergency journeys. A *stone walk* is a special form of teleportation that circumvents all known magical barriers and safeguards against teleportation, including gorgon's blood, *proof against teleportation* spells, and so on.

A *stone walk* is somewhat akin to the wizard's *gemjump* spell, but does not

Appendix 5: New Spells

use roguestones. It involves two stony areas large enough to stand on. Both must be prepared with a secret ritual involving crushed gems before the spell itself is first cast.

Once the *stone walk* is cast, a being can pass instantly and unerringly from one stone to the other by standing on one and speaking a secret password, set during the casting. The two "ends" of the teleportation must be on the same plane of existence, but may be any distance apart. The trip itself is always instantaneous and safe; the destination may be endangered by guardian creatures, traps, flooding, and the like, but the traveler will always arrive at the other end—blocking the stone with solid matter merely causes the traveler to arrive at a nearby open, floored space.

One trip (one way) per level of the caster may be made, taking the caster or another being and all carried or worn items, accoutrements, and non-living items, of up to 100 lbs. in additional weight. Living creatures who touch the caster may be transported too, along with 100 lbs. of gear each, but each creature uses up one "trip." Non-living material of more than 100 lbs. weight will be simply left behind, and cannot *walk* without the touch (and accompaniment) of a living creature. Usually, only a single priest makes a trip; the "extra" capacity of the spell is left for subsequent trips. Note that the password cannot be changed until the spell is exhausted and a new one cast to replace it.

If too many creatures try to come on a *walk*, the spell is exhausted. The caster or first being will be taken, and then whatever other creatures the magic can accommodate: extra creatures and all non-living material (including clothing, weapons, and gear) are left behind.

The material components of this spell include a paste with which each "end" of the *walk* is outlined. For each end, this paste requires four crushed rubies, of at least 5,000 gp value each. The ends must be personally prepared by the caster of the *stone walk*, within 444 days of the casting of the spell. The ritual of preparation involves bathing, a thorough washing of the stony areas selected, and their outlining with the paste, while the caster whispers the fu-

ture password.

The caster may travel between the two ends by any means desired, and may cast the *stone walk* immediately after the second end is prepared.

The spell itself requires (and consumes) a piece of spidersilk at least a foot in length, two intact diamonds (5,000 gp value or greater), a handful of earth, and a wing-feather of any flying bird.

Death Symbol

(Conjuration/Summoning)

Sphere: Guardian

Range: Touch

Components: V,S,M

Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 3

Area of Effect: Special

Saving Throw: Neg.

The Risen Cult of Bane uses a special symbol created long ago with the direct assistance of the god Bane. In all respects, this symbol is employed in the same way as other symbols (see page 236 of the *Players' Handbook*), requiring various ingredients for its making.

Unlike other symbols, the *death symbol of Bane* is permanent—or at least, it lasts for one discharge per creature whose blood (only three drops of each creature's blood is required) is used in its making. Most symbols involve the sacrifices of at least thirty creatures, whose blood is mixed into a paste with ground black opal and diamond dust (valued at no less than 5,000 gp each). The symbol is drawn with this paste.

A symbol of death vanishes, once cast, and glows only when activated. It cannot be activated by any creature bearing a holy symbol of Bane. Typically, it is cast on a door or portal and is activated when an unacceptable creature touches the door or attempts to pass through the portal. If so set, it explodes (see below) and the surface it is on is destroyed. Its effects are as follows:

- Death: Any being within 10' of the symbol must save vs. death magic or be slain (any character touching the symbol itself, even if using a weapon or tool to do so, saves at - 1).

- Chilling: Any being within 20' must save vs. *paralyzation* or suffer a chilling *withering*, which causes a 1-12 hit point loss; there is a 30% chance that 1 hit point of such damage will be permanently lost.

- Pain: Any being within 40' must save vs. *breath weapon* or be wracked by fierce stabbing pains for 2-20 rounds. These cause -2 penalties to a victim's attack rolls as well as a - 1 penalty on Dexterity ability scores.

These effects are cumulative. A creature touching a symbol-guarded door or area will have to save against all three effects each time the symbol is activated by any of the creatures whose blood was used in its creation.

If a *symbol of death* is cast upon a surface that is broken open before the symbol is exhausted (usually in an attempt to destroy or bypass the symbol), the symbol's magical energy is instantly released in an explosion. This *energy blast* does 3-24 hit points damage to all creatures within 10', 2-16 to all within 11-20', 1-8 to all within 21-30', and 1d4 to all within 31-40'.

Appendix 6: Campaign Adventuring

This section presents ideas for long-term adventuring in the Moonshaes. Also, FR2, Moonshaes Realms sourcebook is a useful source of adventure ideas, as well as an essential reference to the Moonshaes setting.

Adventure Threads

Appendix 8 at the end of this module provides “building blocks” a DM can readily use to devise new adventures. These “threads” can be spun into many adventures.

This module only begins the PCs’ confrontation with The Risen Cult of Bane. Cult survivors will see the PCs as deadly enemies; the struggle between the PCs and the Cult will continue wherever in the Realms the PCs go. The Risen Cult sees itself as a renewal of the true worship of Bane, and will rapidly spread across Faerun.

Few Risen Cult leaders named in Appendix 2 confront the PCs directly in this adventure. They will lead revenge attacks on surviving PCs after the events described here, regardless of how well or poorly the PCs did against the Cult. The Cult would love to make the PCs *charmed*, expendable “dirty work” slaves, carrying out raids, thefts, and killings to enrich the Cult. The Cult also wants all PC treasure.

New Possibilities

More adventures include:

- Badly ravaged by disease, human bandit raids, and magical attacks launched by evil wizards seeking to claim isolated vales for their own domains, the Llewyr begin actively attacking human travellers in the woods. The Risen Cult is also attacking the Llewyr, in a bid to try to weaken all other inhabitants of the Isles. The Llewyr are aided by a few powerful warrior-elves from Evermeet, who command spells and magical weapons both rare and strange.

- An old barrow is discovered in rural Callidyr by farmers felling trees. A vampire escapes and is at large!

The barrow seems to contain a whole host of undead—wights, spectres, skeletons, zombies, and more. They emerge

from the barrow, slaughtering any locals who stand against them, and spread out across the countryside. They must be found and destroyed!

- A charismatic new war leader (perhaps a shaman having natural magical powers) arises among the Northmen and leads them to war against the Ffolk. Human pirates who use the Moonshaes as a base from time to time take advantage of the confusion of the war to carve out tiny, well-armed kingdoms for themselves in Snowdown, what remains of Flamsterd, and along Corwell’s southern coast. Swords rule the land, and famine, aided by a harsh winter, strikes down Ffolk who can no longer work their farms.

In such lawless times, Harpers and druids call on all adventurers they can find, to carry out rescue missions or strikes against specific foes. Just getting food shipments in from Waterdeep, Mintarn, and Baldu’s Gate will be major achievements and battles. A long period of campaign play can focus on the PCs’ part in setting human civilization on the Isles back on its feet, perhaps with elven aid. PCs could become minor nobility, with lands of their own to retire to. (These lands would be constantly menaced by this or that evil, of course.)

Land of Mist & Mystery

In addition to major plots, the Moonshaes afford a DM plenty of opportunities to use phantom warriors, wailing elven women, and uncontrolled “wild” magic for atmosphere amid the mists of the wilderlands; a variety of short “incidents” are possible too. For instance, whenever a PC casts a *dispel magic*, some part of the surroundings—a stone floor underfoot or a nearby boulder, for instance—affected by the spell will begin to transform back into its rightful shape: a black (or blue, or green, or...) dragon, furious at its imprisonment and anxious to retaliate, who will immediately attack the PCs!

If the PCs simply aren’t powerful enough to hold their own against the dragon, the DM can frighten them for a few rounds of desperate combat (perhaps forcing them to use up the powers of magic items they may have) and then

have the archmage and eminent sage Flamsterd show up, his long beard tucked into his belt or drawn up and flung over one shoulder, his grey robes and red cloak continuously curling and flapping of their own volition about him, and his eyes flashing. He will *teleport* the unwilling dragon elsewhere (to another plane, perhaps, or into a busy urban area somewhere in Thay) with a spectacular spell unknown to the PCs. After saving the PCs, he will shake his head sadly at their foolishness and depart as suddenly as he appeared.

Flamsterd’s appearance will, of course, be big news around the Isles. Any local who witnesses it will immediately recognize the famous sage. If no witnesses are present and the PCs describe the wizard to anyone, Flamsterd will be recognized by his description and the news will spread. The battle with the dragon could uncover buried treasure, or a map or clue leading to another adventure.

How Adventurers Are Regarded

In the Moonshaes today, wandering hireswords tend to be regarded as inferior brethren by the Northmen, dangerous men (who must be handled carefully and perhaps duped to work to the advantage of the People) by the beleaguered Llewyr, and as “outlanders” among the Ffolk.

How individual Ffolk view outlanders depends on their personal experiences and station in life. To farmers, outlanders are simply trouble: brigands and thieves who imperil their families, belongings, stock, and crops. They are to be gotten rid of as quickly as possible, treated with distant politeness if they are civil and too strong to defy or trick, and to be ganged up on (with the aid of neighbors) if they seem to hang around the vicinity.

To local lords and warriors, outlanders are competition. If they abide by local laws and keep the peace, they are regarded with respect—but regarded watchfully, all the time. There’s no telling what sort of trouble might erupt if

Appendix 6: Campaign Adventuring

these foreign swordswingers suddenly ran amok. News from the Sword Coast of valiant deeds or gross villainy travels fairly well to the Moonshaes, so previous deeds and reputation carried by an individual or band will color the reception they get. Heroes can at least be fully accepted by the warriors of the Ffolk as one of their own. War and its arts are widely understood among all races of the Moonshaes and those who fight well, and not against their hosts, will in general be well thought of.

In all cases, the more magic and the more possible thievery or deceit that outlanders reveal, the more suspicious Ffolk will be towards them—the more they will be watched. Many wizards make their homes on the Isles, but tend to keep to themselves in towers or on country estates, not throwing their powers around overtly. Those who do so, don't keep friends or good common regard, and may even be forcibly evicted by local lords.

In all cases, the DM should consider the circumstances when considering NPC reactions to PC actions. The Ffolk have a deep love for the land (and the Goddess who is the land) and won't be angry at someone who uses magic, magic items, quick violence, or even thieving skills in the defense of local Ffolk or of the land.

Honest Jobs For Adventurers

There are times when every adventurer is down on his or her luck, or when cash is needed and there are no great treasures just lying around to be won. In short, there are times when adventurers must (gasp) *work* to feed themselves.

In the often dangerous Moonshaes, local lords are always looking to beef up their soldiery, or to hire patrols to keep the monsters down in the wilderland forests. This is ready money (not good money, but enough to live on) for warriors, but thieves and wizards are less welcome in such service. The pay tends to be something along the lines of 2 cp, one meal per day and board if one is stationed in fortifications, meals and pay both doubled in times of open warfare.

Private guard duty is even more essen-

tial and usually pays marginally better (say, 3 cp a day plus room and board). It tends to be more dangerous, and has less job security. If a thief gets past you, you're likely to get fired, even if the miscreant is caught by another guard. Employer suspicion tends to be high; most miserly merchants have a paranoid suspicion of all people who are anywhere around them!

More mercenary, single-task duties are also available, and these tend to pay more highly than daily employment. Wizards in Corwell and other places often need someone to bring them fresh wyvern blood and haven't the time to spare themselves to go and fetch it (PCs should be careful to check out who is hiring them; some powerful wizards tend to be slow in paying hirelings and, if pressed, have been known to conveniently forget earlier bargains and view the insistent hirelings as sources of various fresh substances).

A being may hire adventurers to steal or recover something from, or merely pillage the belongings of, a rival—or to murder someone. In the Moonshaes, it's often easier to hire outlanders to do such things—if they're caught, it's much easier to swear you had nothing to do with the whole affair.

The most common one-shot available employment for adventurers (except as farmhands, at harvest time) is as shipguards against piracy aboard Moonshavian vessels running to and from Mintarn and the Sword Coast ports. The Sword Coast doesn't bear its name for nothing, and The Nelander are all too close for comfort. The DM can use pirate encounters included in this adventure, or devise his own. In every Moonshavian port tavern one may hear a dozen colorful "narrow-escape-from-the-pirates" tales.

Steading

Much of the Moonshaes, particularly its vast woodlands, is little visited by men. There is always a claim on land, however, and PCs would do well to seek permission from the local druids before felling any trees or face attacks from druids and disapproving Harpers as well as the usual woodland beasts.

Mountain stronghold sites are usually

imperilled by giants and other monsters and already claimed or occupied by dwarves.

Nevertheless, the Moonshaes possess abundant wilderlands where the strong can carve out realms for themselves. Eager adventurers are reminded that founding a kingdom can take a lifetime or more, and is never safe or easy.

Hunting Grounds

The *Moonshae* sourcebook explores some colorful locales in the Moonshaes that may tempt the visiting adventurer. Here are two more.

- High up on the ice-clad cliffs of the Jotenhammer Range of mountains in southern Norland (known as the Eilyr Dyr to the elves, and the Westlook Peaks to the Ffolk) lie many old, rich gem-mines. In the wars of decades past, most of the miners fled or were slain. Northmen (and a few daring adventurers of the Ffolk) exploring the mines recently have fought fell creatures there.

Recently, many blue and white dragons have been seen flying above the mountains. Some sages believe they breed (or lair) in the area.

- In the dense forests of northern Gwynneth, lies a hidden vale. Once an elfven refuge, it is now home to a band of wizards who slew the Llewyr. These evil mages have powerful magical guardians, some of them invisible, that walk among the Ffolk in disguise to hunt and destroy any who find their home and tell others of it.

Some believe the wizards are in hiding from powerful enemies on the Sword Coast mainland, or that they are allied with the Hosttower Arcane of Luskan. Others whisper that they are Zhen-tarim, or even an outpost of The Red Wizards of Thay. Still others hold that the vale is the site of an exclusive school of wizardry that has shown no sign of emerging to dominate the Isles—and if left alone, will probably remain in seclusion. Everyone seems to agree, in whispers around tavern hearth-fires late at night, that the vale does contain a *lot* of magic. No one speaks too loudly of such things, or claims much detailed personal knowledge—talkative folk have a habit of disappearing.

Appendix 7: Sacred Groves & Moonwells

Groves sacred to the Goddess are found all over the Isles. "The Goddess" is Chauntea, worshipped in the place of her predecessor, the Earthmother, in the Moonshaes.

Simply put, a grove sacred to the Goddess is any wooded place where druids who worship the Goddess regularly gather to worship her. Such a place is always beautiful, although its beauty may be wild and rugged. The most sacred groves contain Moonwells, pools of clear water with special magical properties, through which the Goddess can manifest her power. With the passing of the Earthmother, Chauntea slowly assumed her place, revitalizing the Moonwells after some months.

Across the Realms, deities such as Silvanus, Mielikki, Eldath and Selune (among humans), Rillifane Rallathil and Solonar Thelandira (among the elves), and Baervan Wildwanderer (among the gnomes) are worshipped in such groves. Many of these groves acquired their magical properties as a result of godly power or the gathered magic of prolonged veneration.

Sacred groves may, therefore, be found wherever in the Realms there are woodlands, from the cold alpine forests north of Sundabar to the jungle thickets of Mhair, Land of Monsters.

In choosing places for founding a grove, or in ranking the desirability of one grove over another, stands of old trees deep in extensive woodlands far from large habitations are prized over younger-growth forest locales close to settlements or roads. A grove containing a clearing is prized over one without a natural glade. A glade that contains a "dancing meadow" of grass or moss is more highly valued than a clearing with a dirt or littered floor created by the fall of a giant tree or by the axes of men or dwarves. A grove containing a pool or spring is regarded more highly than one that has none.

The boundaries of a grove can usually be identified by a ring of moss or mushrooms about the outermost trees; these trees are usually larger and older than other nearby trees. In the great groves of the Moonshaes (those containing Moonwells), stone entry arches mark the limits of the sacred ground.

Godly visits or continual use in worship

of at least 12 years are required to create a grove where none has been before.

If a grove is despoiled (its trees burned or cut down, its waters fouled, or its ground dug up), one or more of its powers may be lost. Roll a d6 for each grove power; a result of 1 means that the power is lost forever, and a result of 2 means that it will not function for 2d4 x10 (20-80) days.

If a grove loses all of its powers at once, even if some are only lost "temporarily," the magic of the place is shattered and will not return until faithful worshippers have continued to worship there for at least 10 years. The magic will also return to the grove upon direct visitation by the venerated god.

When magic returns to a ruined grove by continued veneration, it begins to manifest itself upon the spring equinox of the eleventh year, when 1-2 powers return. At this time, certain herbs used by druids appear in the grove, and rare mosses will also flourish. Trees that grow slowly, such as oaks and shadowtops, will experience a seven-year spurt of astonishingly quick growth at this time. If the grove sees continued use as a place of worship, 1-2 additional powers will return each spring equinox thereafter.

A grove gains new powers that it has not previously possessed only upon direct divine visitation and will or when a full moon occurs on the night before or after the spring (vernal) equinox. Festivals are customarily celebrated at groves when such conjunctions are anticipated, in hopes of learning of the new power immediately.

Priests of deities venerated in a grove can always feel the presence of a particular power and will, therefore, know what each power possessed by the grove is within 3 rounds of entering the grove. Other worshippers of a deity may feel a magical or mystical presence in a grove, but will either have to guess at what a grove's powers are or be instructed by a priest who knows the grove.

Once a venerated place exhibits even a single power, it becomes a *minor grove* and immediately acquires the basic grove properties listed below. A grove that has at least seven minor powers is a *major grove* and gains a major power immediately upon acquiring

the seventh minor power.

Additional powers are gained only by divine will or full moon-vernal equinox conjunctions, so long as the grove remains a place of worship to the same (or allied) gods. Whenever a power is gained, roll to see if it is major or minor (even/odd), and then select which power is manifested. Grove powers may be determined randomly or chosen by the DM. The latter method of selection is strongly recommended.

Grove Properties

These basic conditions are possessed by all groves and function therein at all times, regardless of the intent or powers of any non-divine creatures present in the grove.

- Priests of the god(s) venerated in a grove may successfully *call lightning* within the grove. No other beings may cast or cause any magical lightning to operate in the grove, or pass into or out of it.

- All *charms* of any sort are broken, nor can they be successfully established, on creatures within a grove.

- *Dig* spells never work in any part of a sacred grove.

- *Entangle* spells never work in any part of a sacred grove. (*Snares* spells will work normally.)

- All creatures within a grove are rendered immune to magical *fear* while they are within the grove.

- Magical *fire* of any sort will not ignite, enter, persist, or aid normal fires in a grove.

- A natural *pass without trace* effect (without a tell-tale magical trail) affects faithful worshippers of a deity to whom the grove is sacred, as well as beings of alignments and causes favored at the time by the deity, while these individuals are within the boundaries of the grove. The effect does not work for unwelcome intruders.

Minor Grove Powers

Minor groves may have one, some, or all of the following powers:

1. Priests of a deity to whom the grove

Appendix 7: Sacred Groves & Moonwells

is sacred who sleep in the grove overnight may receive a sign or message from the deity in their dreams, often a warning image or scenes of a desired task to be performed.

2. Water (if present) or dew gathered in the glade at the heart of the grove is equivalent to sweet water. An amount equal to one potion, per gatherer, may be gathered overnight (double that amount if the light of a full moon touches water in the glade).

3. Beings of alignments or causes allied to those of the deities worshipped there may heal wounds at double the normal rate if they remain in the grove and rest. Healing spells operate for full possible effect (unless the being to be healed fails a Wisdom Check).

4. All divination magics used by worshippers of, or beings of alignments or causes allied to those of, the grove's deities operate at full possible chances of success or duration or efficacy when cast in the grove.

5. Any priest of the deity or deities venerated in the grove can cause winds and the noises that plants make in breezes (such as rustling leaves) to fall still and be silent within the grove in 3 segments time. Such silence is caused by act of will and can be held for up to 1 turn if the priest concentrates on maintaining the effect. This is not a *silence* spell; the speech and movements of creatures and the sounds they cause (such as snapping twigs) are not masked. The priest must be within the grove to enact this power.

6. Any worshipper of the deity or deities venerated in the grove can cause a *faerie fire* radiance to come into being within the grove, centered around his or her location. One round of concentration is required to create the light, which will last for 1 turn per level of the character. This magic cannot be called up by the same being twice in the same day (or night). The radiance can be bright enough to read by or fainter; once set, its intensity cannot be altered.

A priest of the deity or deities venerated in the grove can create a *faerie fire* radiance whose intensity can be controlled, from dampened out completely to bright (not blinding), and which can be moved about within the grove at will. Only the priest can control the *fa-*

erie fire, which will end abruptly if the priest leaves the grove or is slain. It will otherwise last for 2 turns per level of the priest or until ended by the priest's will. A priest need not use a spell to call up such a radiance, but cannot end it and call it up again any more than a non-priest can. If a priest uses a *faerie fire* spell in a sacred grove, its duration is trebled to 12 rounds/level.

7. Any worshipper of the deity or deities venerated in a grove can cause any stones found in the grove to speak, as in a *stone tell* spell. No such spell is necessary, but the stones will only answer questions for three rounds (the DM should time questions and answers for three actual minutes, ending abruptly when the time is up). This power can only be used once per day, regardless of how many characters try it. The power will not affect stones carried or flung into the grove during the previous or present day.

A priest employing a *stone tell* spell in the usual way in a grove will find that it lasts for double the usual time.

8. Any wizard employing a *protection from normal missiles* spell within a grove will find that the magic, regardless of the caster's intent, expands—visibly, as a very faint, shimmering nimbus—to encircle the entire grove. All creatures in the grove are protected, from each other (i.e., from all missiles launched within the grove) and from all attacks launched from outside the grove. The protection is as the spell normally offers, but its duration is doubled.

9. Any worshipper of the deity or deities venerated in a grove may *control temperature* within the grove, altering it by up to 30 degrees. The entire grove is affected. Note that this helps lightly-clad travellers survive in freezing winter weather, although a priest will have to "still winds" (see above) by concentration to make conditions in a grove truly comfortable in a howling blizzard.

If the temperature of the surroundings is very different, mist will form along the boundaries of the grove, concealing those inside it (unless strong winds blow steadily to clear the mist away). Note that things can be chilled or frozen by a cooling alteration and dried

out, melted or cooked on rocks by a warmer change, but the change in heat alone will never cause objects to ignite. The duration of the change is 1 turn/level of the character.

10. Lycanthropes who enter or are forced into a grove revert to their human (or, at least, non-animal) forms. In the case of true lycanthropes, this forced change takes 2 rounds and lasts for 1 turn thereafter. In the case of creatures infected by lycanthropy, the change lasts until they leave the grove. They are not cured (unless other magics are applied to them to bring about a cure), but are prevented from bloodlust and their killing form, regardless of phases of the moon or other influences.

Many groves have as temporary inhabitants frightened lycanthropes who stay in the grove until they perish of hunger or thirst or are driven to leave by hunger and thirst. Such individuals are usually grateful to anyone who cures them, but if desperate, may prove dangerous opponents if refused food or drink by those entering the grove. Most are lonely and clinging only precariously to sanity. They may prove a colorful source of local lore, treasure tales, and gossip (usually quite dated).

Major Grove Powers

Major groves possess all the powers of a minor grove and may have one or more of the following additional powers:

1. Priests within the grove who worship a deity to whom the grove is sacred may cast all spells of the Plant sphere (within the grove, or from the grove into the surroundings) for double duration and/or range.

2. A *tree* spell cast in the glade of a major grove allows the caster to undergo the normal effects or (if willed by the caster) vanish beneath the earth, as a wizard's *imprisonment* spell causes victims to vanish.

Unlike the wizard spell, the imprisoned priest may release him- or herself whenever desired, reappearing at the exact spot at which the spell was cast. The caster is not in suspended animation while entombed and can rest, pray, and perform other activities not requir-

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ing much room. Eating, breathing, and other body functions cease, and there is no time limit on the stay beneath the earth. In addition, the magic allows the priest to hear sounds on the surface just as though he or she were still standing in the glade. (This leaves the entombed priest vulnerable to some spoken spells.)

A great danger of this effect is that priests often forget their worldly cares and remain in prayer beneath a grove forever. No creature other than the caster, living or dead, can be carried beneath the earth by such a spell.

3. Priests of a deity to whom the grove is sacred who sleep in the grove overnight may receive an additional spell from the deity if their deeds, present aims, or prayers please the deity.

This may be an "extra" spell beyond the number or level of spells that the character can normally carry, an additional spell beyond what the character had time to pray for, a substitute spell replacing what the character asked for, or simply a spell of double normal effects. (The choices of whether such a boon should be granted, and of what form it should take, are always up to the deity—i.e., the DM).

4. A deity's power may manifest phantom images, sometimes called "shades" within the glade. These are not monsters of any sort, and cannot attack, be touched, or be magically controlled. These shadowy images pass on wordless messages or warnings to characters in the grove. Worshippers of the deity may question such images as if they were casting a *Speak with Dead* spell, without any such spell (or even magical ability) being necessary. The answers may be vague, incomplete, or misleading as the deity (or DM) desires.

5. Undead cannot enter the grove without falling under the control of the deity to whom the grove is sacred. If the deity desires, both greater and lesser undead entering the grove may be utterly destroyed; they may be forced to perform some service or refrain from certain actions. This control does not continue beyond the boundary of the grove. Note that some deities may use this power to gather undead guardians in a grove, preventing its use by non-worshippers.

This power extends upward above the grove to treetop height. It does not allow mortal priests automatic control of such undead; they may gain such control only by the use of the usual spells—which will fail utterly if the deity does not wish such control to be established.

6. The deity's power allows *monster summoning* in varying degrees of power to occur spontaneously, or by will of worshippers, in the grove, without such spells actually being cast. Specific conditions (i.e., a full moon or calling only particular types and numbers of creatures) must be met in order for this power to be wielded.

If any being casts or launches a *monster summoning* spell in the grove, the deity can control the type and number of creatures that appear, overriding the caster's wishes.

7. A magic item that has and uses charges may be endowed with 1 to 4 additional charges by will of the deity, if it lies overnight in the grove. The object may or may not emit a radiance while being so recharged, and the deity may bestow charges without the knowledge of the item's owner. Said deity may also choose to ignore the prayers and entreaties of a being who knows of this power of the grove and seeks to gain from it. An item will never acquire properties it has not possessed before in this way.

8. An unknown item that is brought into a grove and left overnight may be *identified* by any being who worships (or is of the right alignment and an allied faith to) the deity venerated in the grove.

No spell or magical ability is necessary; the being merely handles the item for at least 1 unbroken turn and receives mental images and a whispering internal "revelation" about the item. If the item has harmful effects, these are *not* visited upon the handler, but no information beyond a danger warning will be gained.

9. Any priest of a deity venerated in a grove may *dimension door* from place to place within the grove once every 7 turns. This power is enacted by will (no spell is necessary), but cannot carry the priest beyond the boundaries of the grove.

10. Any priest of a deity venerated in a grove may *know alignment* of other creatures within the grove merely by concentration. The priest must be able to see the creature continuously and can only discern the alignment of one creature per round. This knowledge does not require that a spell be cast and is infallible, penetrating even concealing magics, but will only work if the target creature remains in the grove for the entire round of concentration.

Non-priest worshippers of a deity venerated in a grove may also try to use this power of the grove, but must make two successful Intelligence Checks whenever they try it and concentrate for two rounds. If one or both fail, no alignment is discerned (a false alignment is not determined).

Other Grove Powers

Groves have other powers not detailed here. The DM is free to devise new powers, but all such should be in keeping with a god's aims and portfolio.

Great Groves

In the Moonshaes, a special sort of major grove can be found. These are the "Great Groves" which contain Moonwells. A Great Grove will survive the destruction of the forest around it if the Moonwell remains clear and intact, for the grove's powers are generated and renewed through the Moonwell itself.

A Moonwell is a pool of clean, clear water that is usually fairly large. Around it, in the midst of most Great Groves, is a large circular glade encircled by standing stones. These (like Stonehenge) stand in upright pairs, each pair supporting a crossbar or lintel stone, held together by mortise and tenon joints (stony knobs on the uprights fitting into cavities on the lintels) and the great weight of the stones.

The stones are all of great age and are rumored to have special powers known only to druids. If this is the case, these powers have been forgotten or kept secret by the oldest and most powerful druids. Legends in the Moonshaes speak of stones moving to fight for a

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druid within the grove, like gigantic galeb duhr. The legends may be true, for the massive stones are known to answer the *stone tell* inquiries of any priest as though they were intelligent, wise, and extremely observant. More than one Northman raider has been found at dawn in a grove whose druids he had slain, crushed as if by some great weight. The surrounding standing stones looked as if they had never moved and would not answer *stone tell* inquiries about the dead man.

Outside these trilithons is a circle of trees, usually old oaks with incredibly thick trunks. Their branches are so thickly entwined overhead that they block out the full moon and rise above the glade to join in a leafy canopy, broken only by a small central circular opening. (All plants in a Great Grove retain their leaves and growing vigor through all the seasons, not falling dormant in winter.)

Unlike Stonehenge, the trilithons stand in a circle, not a horseshoe. Grassy avenues aligned to the sunrise and sunset enter a Great Grove through stone arches and run away from the grove arrow-straight for some distance. More minor entrances and exits exist merely as twisting paths between the trees.

In areas controlled by the Ffolk, no trees in a Great Grove may be cut, nor any plant life tended or pruned by anyone save a druid; no bird or animal entering or within a Great Grove may be harmed. It is unlawful to fish in a Moonwell or foul its waters in any way, even by the throwing of a stone. Only druids are normally allowed to touch a Moonwell directly, and it is considered rude indeed to attempt to use any major power of a Great Grove without the assistance or permission of any druid present at the time.

Great Groves are always tended (and guarded) by at least two druids, one of whom will be of 6th level or greater. These guardians may be in the shapes of birds or animals when encountered, for part of their tending of the grove requires them to examine the tunnels of burrowing animals and the nests of flying or climbing creatures.

The care of every Moonwell is entrusted to a druid of not less than 12th



level, who will be present, cleansing the well while intoning prayers to the Goddess, at least 70% of the time. This "Steward of the Grove" (sometimes called the "Watcher over the Grove") will always be accompanied by two guardian druids and, if not actually present, within range to be summoned magically. Watchers who for any reason cannot be "on call" will be temporarily assisted by another druid of equal power (level).

Great Groves have all of the minor grove powers listed above and most major powers. Assume all 10 major powers hold sway unless the Grove has been despoiled or harmed in the previous year; from 1-3 powers may have been lost if this is the case. A Grove affected by a *moonveil* spell will lose all of its powers while the spell is actually in place and permanently lose 1-2 powers a year until the *veil* is removed.

Destroying a Moonwell

Only a special ritual, a *moonveil* spell, or long years of neglect (that allow pollution of the waters to a similar degree) can destroy a Moonwell's powers.

A ritual is a deliberate fouling of the well waters by over a dozen types of creatures native to the land. These creatures are slain while in contact with the well waters and must include at least two of the races that have dwelt in the Moonshaes the longest: Llewyr (elves), dwarves, and halflings. The creatures must all die within one day of either a full or a new moon and the Goddess must be reviled by someone in contact with the well waters (using at least two of her names) during the night of the moon chosen.

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Moonwell Powers

Moonlight or spellcasting may temporarily turn the normally-clear waters of a Moonwell milky in hue, but will not affect its powers. A Moonwell gives off a faint pearly- white or silvery-blue radiance from time to time. This is especially visible at night and almost always occurs when magic is used in contact with, or to affect, the waters of the Moonwell.

- A druid (or other cleric of Chauntea) can recharge a magic item by dipping it in the waters of the Moonwell under the light of a full moon and casting a *shillelagh* spell on the item while it is immersed. The waters will instantly bestow 1-6 charges (determine randomly) and a temporary (2-5 round) silvery moonglow radiance upon the item. A given item can only be recharged once a month by this method, and each druid can only call on the Moonwell's powers in this way once a month.

- Druids (and other clerics of Chauntea) who cast a *reflecting pool* spell on a Moonwell will find that its duration is 1 turn/level and the chance of success for all detection spells is 25%, not 5%. Casting time, planar scrying limits, and fuzziness of the image precluding the reading of most script is unchanged from the spell's normal properties.

- A druid can, by will, confer *spell immunity* upon a single being who is in contact with the Moonwell. No spell need be cast, and the druid need not have directly experienced the particular spell being guarded against. Protection lasts for 8 hours, but when one being is so protected, no one can call on this power of the Moonwell again until six hours have passed.

- A handful of Moonwell water, taken from the well within the last 6 turns, can act as a *neutralize poison* on any one being touched by it. The being must save vs. poison; if the save fails, the water did not work. (Note that this allows characters who have already failed a save against poison a second saving throw.)

- A handful of Moonwell water, when splashed or drunk by a being, may act as a *cure disease*. The being

must save vs. spell; if successful, the water is effective in the round after contact. If the save fails, the water has no effect and is wasted.

- A handful of Moonwell water, when drunk directly from the Moonwell by means of a being's cupped hands, acts as a *potion of healing*, restoring 2d4 +2 points of damage. This power can affect any being only once a day. However, if the being has acted in a way that threatens the natural Balance in the month prior to the drinking, the water actually sickens him, inflicting 1d8 points of damage. (Actions that endanger the Balance include slaying wildlife without putting the meat and skin to good use, chopping down living trees for any reason, and attacking peaceful beings.)

Animals of the Isles who are injured or sick often seek out a Moonwell and lap its waters. Druids will never bar any woodland creature from a Moonwell (a custom that has enabled a few shape-changed beings to reach Moonwells they would otherwise have been barred from). The water affects animals and birds as it does intelligent beings.

All creatures who die in contact with a clean Moonwell are quickly dissolved by the water, bones and all. The Moonwell absorbs and neutralizes any diseases, infections, parasites, or poisons carried by such creatures.

- All metal that comes into contact with a Moonwell instantly begins to corrode. Coins will last from 2-5 rounds before being useless as currency; shields, armor and weapons lose half their strength within two rounds of contact and crumble into nothingness in 3-12 rounds. Magic weapons are allowed saving throws against acid to avoid being affected (any pluses inherent in a weapon being added to the save as a bonus). Such corrosion ceases the moment the items are removed from the Moonwell; any water left on them stops acting the moment contact with the well is lost.

In rare instances, non-weapon metal items are unaffected by a Moonwell; this happens 17% of the time. Metal is unaffected by a Moonwell if a *shillelagh* spell is cast while they are immersed, thus enabling druids to recharge metal

items (see above) without destroying them at the same time.

- The waters of a Moonwell sometimes cure infectious (not true) lycanthropy. Infected creatures who come into contact with a well must make a Constitution Check and an Intelligence Check. If both succeed, the lycanthropy is forever cured. If only one succeeds, the being (already forced out of beast-form by entry into the grove), will not change back for 2-12 days, regardless of the inducements or influences which may be brought to bear.

A lycanthrope able to reach the waters of a Moonwell can try again and again (one try per phase of the moon, roughly once a month) until a cure is successful. Lycanthropes who approach a Great Grove in beast form will be allowed in by the druids; if they charge into the grove fast enough, they should be able to reach the Moonwell itself before the change of form (forced by the magic of the grove, 2 rounds) is complete. The guardian druids may or may not be in position to block access to the waters.

In non-beast form, a lycanthrope will typically have to give good reason for approaching the Moonwell (lycanthropy is a good and proper reason) and must agree to do a service for the Goddess. The lycanthrope is then stripped, any and all weapons removed, and allowed to approach the Moonwell under druidic guard. If a lycanthrope is of evil alignment and/or has spells memorized, the druids will not allow approach unless the being casts all his spells (harmlessly, to get rid of them) and asks again to be allowed access.

Other Moonwell powers will have to be derived by the DM to cover specific spells, items, and situations involving combinations of powers used by characters of particular faiths, alignments, classes and levels. Moonwells act to maintain the Balance; in an age of widespread violence, this involves healing and curing (particularly disease and poison) as much as possible.

Appendix 8: Current Moonshae Rumors

Use these rumors (which can be expanded into side-adventures) whenever PCs question locals or eavesdrop on gossip. Select specific rumors to influence PCs at critical points in the adventure; otherwise, roll 1d10 to choose rumors randomly.

01. A talking doe has been born in Blythe. A local farmer, one Coln Baerannon, found the youngling in his woodlot when he heard a dry voice complaining about the damp. The deer speaks the common tongue and seems quick-witted; it has already learned several rhymes and jokes (taught to it by Baerannon) and some choice curses (learned inadvertently).

One of the sorcerers of Caer Callidyr is said to be on his way to Blythe to see the doe (and perhaps try to purchase it). In the meantime, Baerannon has fended off two attempted thefts and a claim of ownership from a greedy traveling mage, one Thostigar Ulmhen, whose spells failed him when a charging stag surprised him and introduced him precipitously to a mud-wallow.

DM's Note: The deer is the result of a *reincarnation* spell and is a former adventuring eighth level wizard, Sharess Prasthranna of Waterdeep, who arrived in the Moonshaes recently and ran afoul of the Cult. She was rescued by a friend she had made among the Harpers, since slain by the cult, and retains some knowledge of the cult and the Moonshaes. She will relate these to those she befriends as speech and memories return to her. A *wish* spell will be necessary to return Sharess to her original form and class, but a *limited wish* is enough to allow her to study and use most spells not requiring material components. She can *read magic* in any case, but is not large or strong enough to serve as a mount or pack animal. She is AC7, MV 24, 1 attack (bite) for 1-2 dmg, THAC0 19, has 14 hit points, and saves as a W4.

If the PCs rescue Sharess, she will be both grateful and afraid of going her way alone in the Moonshaes, for fear of Cult attacks. She will join the PC party if offered a place, and will otherwise ask them to protect her until she can take ship out of the Moonshaes. If well treated, Sharess can become a staunch ally or a (NPC) party member.

02. The Banshee Rider has appeared again, many times, all over the isles. The ghostly apparition of an armored Llewyr (elven) maiden has been seen often down the years since men first came to the Moonshaes, and is known by many names: the Moon-Maiden, the Shee, the Doombringer, and Anhaern Rhyllgallohyr (thought by most bards to be her proper name, in life). Mothers warn their children not to wander outdoors at night, for fear of seeing the eerily silent, floating rider of the Shadow Horse. She slays those she can catch, and even the sight of her is said to bring bad luck.

The Rider has only been seen in many places the same night, or in the space of a few nights, when some great doom hangs over the Moonshaes—when a High King is threatened or dying, or when evil magic or natural disasters are imminent. Ffolk everywhere are fearful. What will the Shee bring this time?

DM's Note: The Shee is described in Appendix 3 of this adventure. The DM can use her in an encounter once each night that the PCs are active outdoors. A Shee can attack PC foes when the PCs are in dire straits.

03. Piracy has become very bad near Moray, westernmost land of the Ffolk. Except for ships sailing in convoys, or under escort by warships, few (if any) are the single merchant ships that survive a voyage to that port.

Something is seriously amiss; uncouth Moray fishermen calling at Storaad and other nearby ports seem to have misshapen heads, dark lumps on their brows, upper arms, and chests, and a strange manner, at times furtive, at times normal (gruff and belligerent) or distracted and dazed.

DM's Note: It is recommended that the DM save this rumor for future adventuring and steer the PCs away from Moray during this adventure. Their opponents seem anxious that PCs not head that way and will launch attacks and diversions to head them off if they try.

04. The Walking Stones have been sighted again! A shepherd returning home late one moonlit night from market at Llewellyn, in Callidyr, took a short route home over the rolling fields, and saw the Stones moving near the brook that marked the end of his own

fields. They “stood against the moon like black teeth and seemed to be sailing” above a thick drift of white mist that clung to the ground where no mist usually gathered. The terrified shepherd fled back to the High King’s Road.

The Stones have also been seen recently north of Ogden and in eastern Gwynneth. Dark times must be coming for stars have been seen falling from the cold north sky.

DM's Note: Both the Llewyr (elves) and the Ffolk have old legends about tall standing stones or menhirs that loom up out of the mists in open country, late at night, and only when there are mists about. Travelers who see them usually flee headlong, for they look menacing and are accompanied by the sound of wailing, unearthly voices. It is not known if they are illusions, a local species of galeb duhr (or something more sinister), or if the occasional travelers who vanish on such nights fall afoul of bandits, natural hazards such as mist-enshrouded bogs and ravines. Perhaps some of these unfortunates meet with some horrible fate connected with the stones. The stones are not spoken about freely, and almost all Ffolk think their sighting to be ill luck or a warning of bad happenings to come.

The DM can use a Walking Stone encounter for local atmosphere when the PCs are traveling or encamped in the wilderlands, or employ it as an attack. In the latter case, the Walking Stones could be full-size galeb duhr, who are aided by servant kobolds (including at least one shaman who has mastered spells that can call up and control the cloaking mist).

05. The Black Dwarf has struck again! A merchant’s camp in fields just outside Pengram was raided—its guards slain, its wagons plundered and set ablaze, and its horses cut loose and driven wild. The notorious outlaw leader left his usual mark: a black axe painted on a yellow field, on a battered old warshield hung on a spear in the center of the burning camp.

The price on the Black Dwarf’s head is already 600 gold coins, dead or alive—and there is talk that it will rise, if he is not found by the time next month is out! The lords of Snowdown have talked about a general mustering of the

Appendix 8: Current Moonshae Rumors

militia before, to scour the countryside for this menace, and it is said in Caer Westphall that the militia will now bewhelmed and given a month to find the Black Dwarf. If they fail, the King has spoken of hiring adventurers from other lands, perhaps from great Waterdeep itself!

DM's Note: The Black Dwarf is a wily, rapacious chaotic evil dwarven female, a 13th level warrior who commands a band of 32 pirates. All have grown tired of fleeing Waterdeep's naval vessels across the waves and have decided to live high on the bounty the Moonshaes can afford them for awhile. The pirates retain their small ship, *The Black Knife*, and use it to slip about the Isles. They will generally anchor in marshes and isolated coves, using small boats to go ashore. The PCs could encounter them anywhere about the Isles.

The Black Dwarf is armed with an *axe of flying*, a +3 weapon that can allow anyone holding it to fly whenever it is grasped and ordered. It allows a total flight time of 2 turns/day. Her crew, many of whom are chaotic neutral, not evil, includes no less than four wizards (ranging in levels from 1-6) and two priests of Tempus (4th and 5th level). The Lord of Battles seems quite content to endlessly heal the wounds of The Black Knives, so long as they continue to raid and fight. The Black Dwarfs real name is unknown, but the everyday names of her crew include Kriss and Leor of Ahmegar, Kathae Thunderbae and Mykal (the wizards), Andror and Mikae (the priests), and Jhulae (an agile human female warrior of biting wit and short temper).

The Black Knives carry treasure of mixed coinage totalling over 6,000 gp. The rest of their loot, including all objects d'art that someone might recognize, are buried in various caches in remote coastal locations all over the eastern Moonshaes, particularly along the "Korinn Run" (the Korinn Archipelago). If the Black Knives flee from the PCs, their ship will dash down the Run, stopping in numerous little-known coves, anchorages, and channels, to hastily load these various caches onboard.

06. Some evil wizards from Calimshan are roaming the Isles, seizing the wealth and lands of certain folk to get

supplies of certain herbs and other unknown things they need for their magical researches. Those who defy them, or have what they want, get turned into dragons, forever!

DM's Note: This rumor is false. Various Folk in Callidyrr, Gwynneth, and Snowdown happened to witness similar scenes at about the same time, and their news has grown with the telling, acquiring villains (and reasons for their actions) along the way.

In reality, one observer caught a glimpse of a weredragon working with the Harpers change into dragon form in the woods near Snowdown. Another saw the same thing near Horsa, and a third saw an evil wizard of minor power (Belistar, a would-be apprentice of Flamsterd, whom that mage threw out long ago) use a *create darkenbeast* spell (detailed in the *Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. #3, under "Darkenbeast") on a cow. Their tales were taken up in the inns, combined with old local tales of witches who fly as black falcons (The Simbul, when visiting the Moonshaes), and similar transformations, and have become the current darkest fear of evil at work in the land.

Belistar is a bitter and cunning wanderer, who lurks in the woods of the Isles, preying on travelers. He is a CE wizard of 7th level, who will use multiple created darkenbeasts to attack encamped PCs by night. He is armed with his spells and with a *wand of paralysis* (only 6 charges left).

07. In far-off Rmmish, on The Sea of Fallen Stars, a new type of dragon has been discovered! A mage in the port city of Alaghon, Orlevan Blackshammer, is thought to have perished when the dragon destroyed his home, an ornate houseboat in Alaghon Harbor.

The hitherto unknown type of dragon was a large and terrible wyrm of cinnamon brown hue, with a long, prehensile tail, that breathed forked lightning. Its spells are known to include *reverse gravity* and some sort of monster summoning magic—it spat living creatures around the harbor. Those that survived their landings attacked bystanders without hesitation, rapidly thinning a huge crowd of watching citizens.

The dragon, evidently summoned or released by Orlevan, coiled its tail about

his houseboat, lifted it into the air, and blasted it with both spells and its breath until the boat was reduced to mere ashes drifting on the wind. Then the dragon beat its great batlike wings and flew northeast out over The Sea of Fallen Stars, where it was lost to view.

Sages and alchemists alike are very eager to examine this "Cinammon Dragon" (or others of its kind), to determine its nature, and what uses can be made of its body parts and abilities.

DM's Note: If this rumor is introduced into play, it should be followed by a rash of similar sightings around the Moonshaes.

The true nature of this "Cinammon Dragon"—new dragon type, magical disguise, assumed shape used by another sort of creature (such as an evil human mage), or whatever—is up to the DM. Scares of this sort are becoming more common in the Realms as communications improve. They make the lives of adventurers even more exciting; adventurers can never relax and never know the truth about encountered menaces—except the hard way. In turn, adventurers are always hearing of likely treasure locations and often learn important particulars of monsters from the gossip.

08. Helbareim "The Storm Wind" Alanasker, High Suihk (ruler) of Ormpar on The Shining Sea, is searching for a daring thief. The criminal recently stole a great quantity of carefully-guarded spices (including the city's entire reserves of costly, highly-prized saffron), several magical blades that had lain hidden in various secret storage niches around the Suihk's palace, and the Suihk's daughter, the magically-skilled beauty Alabhansree Alanasker, Chansreena (princess) of the city. Helbareim is said to most suspect Veldyn "the Fingers" Uruin of Telflamm, Torm of the Knights of Myth Drannor, and Hoond of Shussel, "Despoiler of Tombs." His entire court seems to agree that the thief can only be from the North, and known Ormparian agents in Waterdeep have begun actively soliciting information in the City of Splendors and up and down the Sword Coast. Talk in the Sword Coast ports hints that the thief may have taken ship to Mintarn—or the Moonshae Isles.

Appendix 8: Current Moonshae Rumors

DM's Note: The theft did occur, as reported. The identity of the thief, the whereabouts of the loot (and the precise type and number of magical swords seized), and the relationship of Alabhransree to the thief are all up to the DM. The Chasreena could be the thief's beloved, a willing accomplice or equal partner in the thefts, a helpless captive, or even be the thief herself, having hired or enchanted lesser creatures to serve her.

If campaign play is to linger in the Moonshaes for a time, it is suggested that the thief arrive to dwell in hiding.

Perhaps the thief is a pirate from The Nelanther (Pirate Isles), Cairak Redbeard. The beloved of Alabhransree, Cairak can easily dispose of the saffron slowly, up and down the Sword Coast, to see the maximum return on it. He would gain a snug harbor at Eiresse, a tiny pirate cove near the southwestern tip of Corwell. Eiresse faces the eastern capes of the isle of Flamsterd, and Alabhransree has made it her base.

The Chasreena has leaped at the chance to escape her father's strict, almost tyrannical rule; he treated her as a commodity, to be married off coldly to whomever would best serve his needs.

Assuming an illusory disguise, the Chasreena takes the name of Cymra Shanbadhe (after an extinct local family of intermarried Llewyr and Ffolk). "The Lady In Silver," as the Ffolk call her, uses her wealth and magic to build a tower stronghold befitting a wizardess. Uninvited visitors will find it well furnished with traps and magical guardians. (Alabhransree is partial to "teeter-totter" floor sections that dump the unwary down twisting natural sink-hole shafts into the cold sea beneath, where giant coldwater octopi lair.)

Alabhransree's true powers and treasure should be adjusted to provide PCs with a stiff challenge. Cairak's strength and the relationship between the two are also left for the PCs to discover. PCs who tread incautiously could well end up with Alabhransree, Cairak, and the Suihk all as their enemies, with greedy pirate rivals of Cairak and self-interested thieves from the Sword Coast cities hounding the PCs almost as much as the Suihk's agents.

Regardless of whether Cairak is the thief or not, the three thieves suspected by the Suihk—Veldyn Uruin, Torm, and

Hoond—will be looking for the real thief. After all, if one is considered guilty, one might as well get the benefit of having the loot. These three could provide more entertaining "social" contacts for the PCs in the future.

09. Velsharoon, sometimes called "the Vaunted," (though not to his face), the renegade archmage of Thay, and one of the most powerful archmages currently active in the Realms, has a hunting gone.

A certain magical process discovered in a very old ruin, somewhere in The Plains of Purple Dust, north of Raurin, requires a potion containing the blood of adventurers—so Velsharoon is seeking adventurers. It is whispered in Soorenar (where Velsharoon has one of his abodes, the Tower Terrible) that the magical process that the archmage is interested in gives the successful follower demi-godhood and attendant great powers!

Velsharoon's many enemies (notably the ruling Red Wizards and the archmages Halder of Delzimmer, Omm Hlandrar of Halruaa, The Simbul of Aglarond, and Elminster of Shadowdale) are said to be concerned for the safety and stability of the Realms (and their own persons) if Velsharoon achieves his goal.

DM's Note: This is one of those nasty rumors that whisper the worst—and is right. There is a process by which a great wizard can achieve demi-godhood (besides the famous one of serving the Goddess of Magic faithfully). It is a process set down long ago by the god Tales, who uses up demigods the way some marching soldiers wear out boots.

Velsharoon is well on the way to achieving his powers, but it is up to the DM (considering both game balance in the campaign and the favored playing style and interests of the players) if the mage ever achieves demi-godhood or not. Perhaps if the PCs themselves reach lofty levels, Velsharoon could achieve the powers he seeks and emerge as a powerful foe.

Velsharoon is powerful enough at present! He is a 29th level wizard specializing in necromancy, having developed many unique spells that allow him to control liches and vampires in his service, use many undead powers (including

gaseous form, energy drain, chill touch and flight) while still alive, and so on.

Despite his great powers, Velsharoon does not like to fight opponents directly. He prefers to remain hidden, employing undead, summoned servant creatures, and mercenary agents to do his work.

10. Strange creatures have appeared in the Dragonreach and the Sword Coast North, including monsters never before seen in the Realms. They seem to originate in the Border Forest and the Lurkwood; the steady stream of beasts hints that magical sources of the creatures are hidden there. Too many beasts have emerged to have found food in the woods, and many beings familiar with the forests have never known such creatures there.

The strange creatures are said to include flying undead and flying troll-like creatures, some kind of silent predators that resemble clouds of smoke, and intelligent, two-headed snakes who have tentacles and magical abilities.

DM's Note: This rumor is true; some wizards and/or priests have begun seeking greater personal power by opening permanent *gates* linking the Realms with other planes and are *summoning* monsters through the gates as fast as they can. Some of the monsters are intelligent enough to work together and may soon turn on the foolish magical dabblers to seize control of the *gates* themselves.

The monsters can be new types that the DM wishes to introduce into play or standard AD&D® monsters whose appearances have been changed by the DM or that have not appeared in the campaign before. This can remain as a long-term, lurking menace far from the PCs as they adventure in the Moonshaes or it can arrive in the Moonshaes overnight, with another *gate* being opened in some remote wooded location or in a *veiled* Moonwell. Local sages, Harpers, even Flamsterd, if the DM wants the PCs to search for him, could tell the PCs how to close the *gates*. Note that an influx of monsters should make certain Moonshavian creatures (such as the Nyth and the Shee, both detailed in Appendix 3 of this adventure) appear more often.

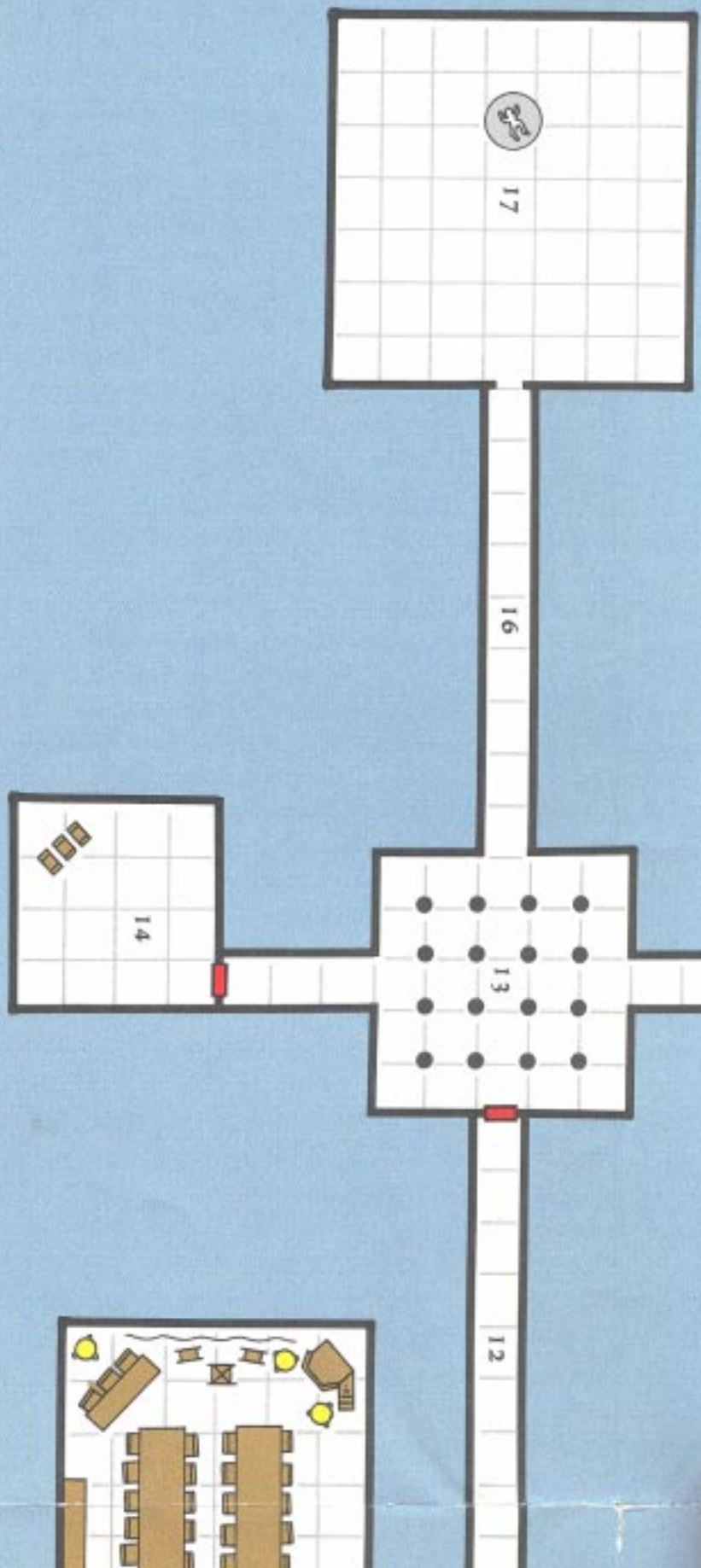
The House of the Black Hand

1. Entry hall
2. Forechamber (shaded floor areas are pit traps)
3. Armory
4. Pantry and kitchen
5. DUNGEON (large marked area is Nisrruu; Iron Golem and helmeted horrors also shown)
6. Guest-chambers
7. Meeting room
8. Crypt
9. Audience chamber (seat of Bane and Gong shown)
10. Dining hall (tables, sibeobards, lectern, high table, braziers, and racks shown)
11. Clerical living quarters
12. Inner Ward corridor
13. The Sanctum (pillars shown)
14. Temple vault (chests shown)
15. Gate chamber (circle of slate shown; also Mathias' chair, route of retreat, and teleport area)
16. Holy Approach corridor
17. The High Holy Place (body on altar-bais shown)

1 square = 10'

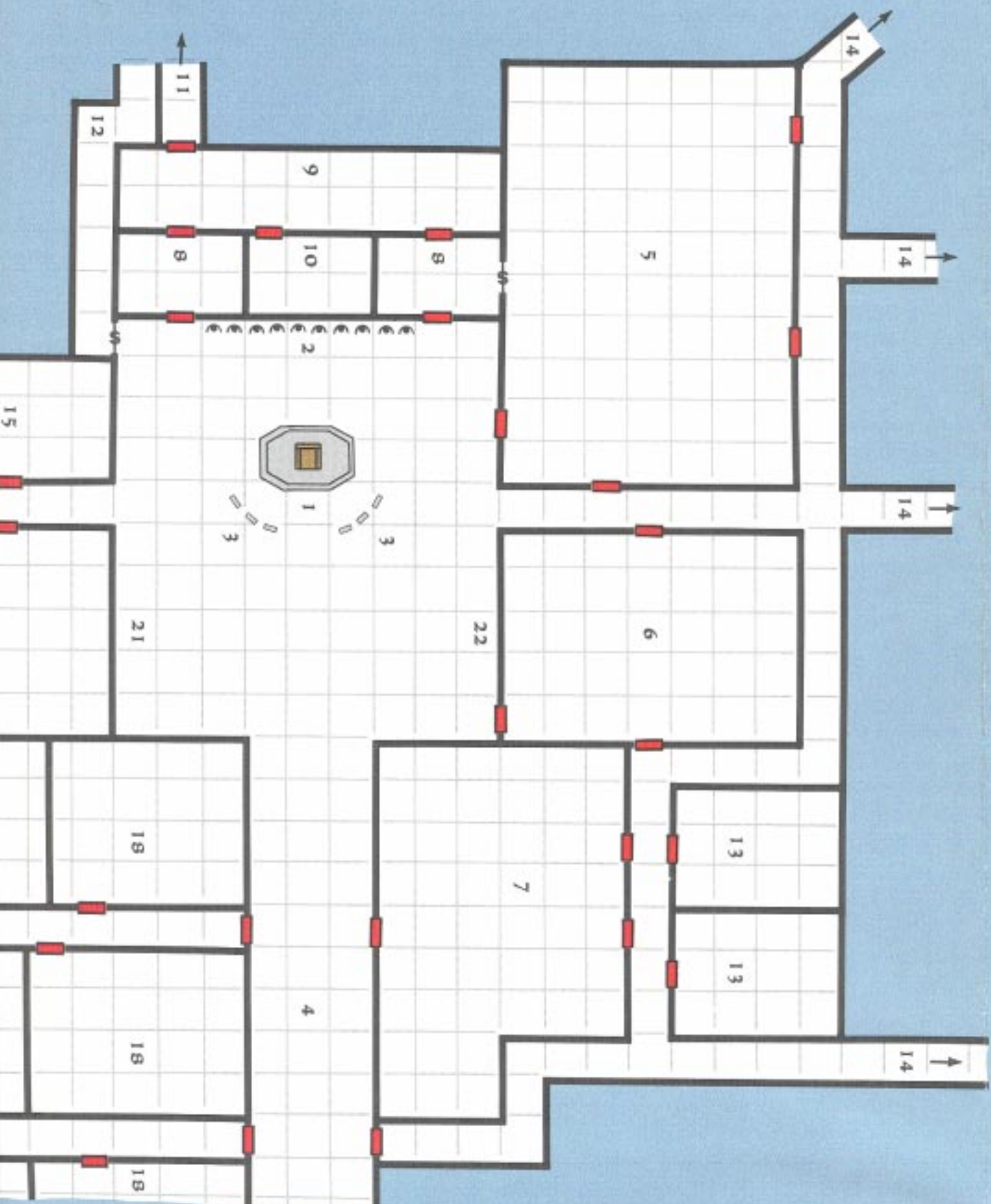


Partial interior map of Caer Callibyrn



CH

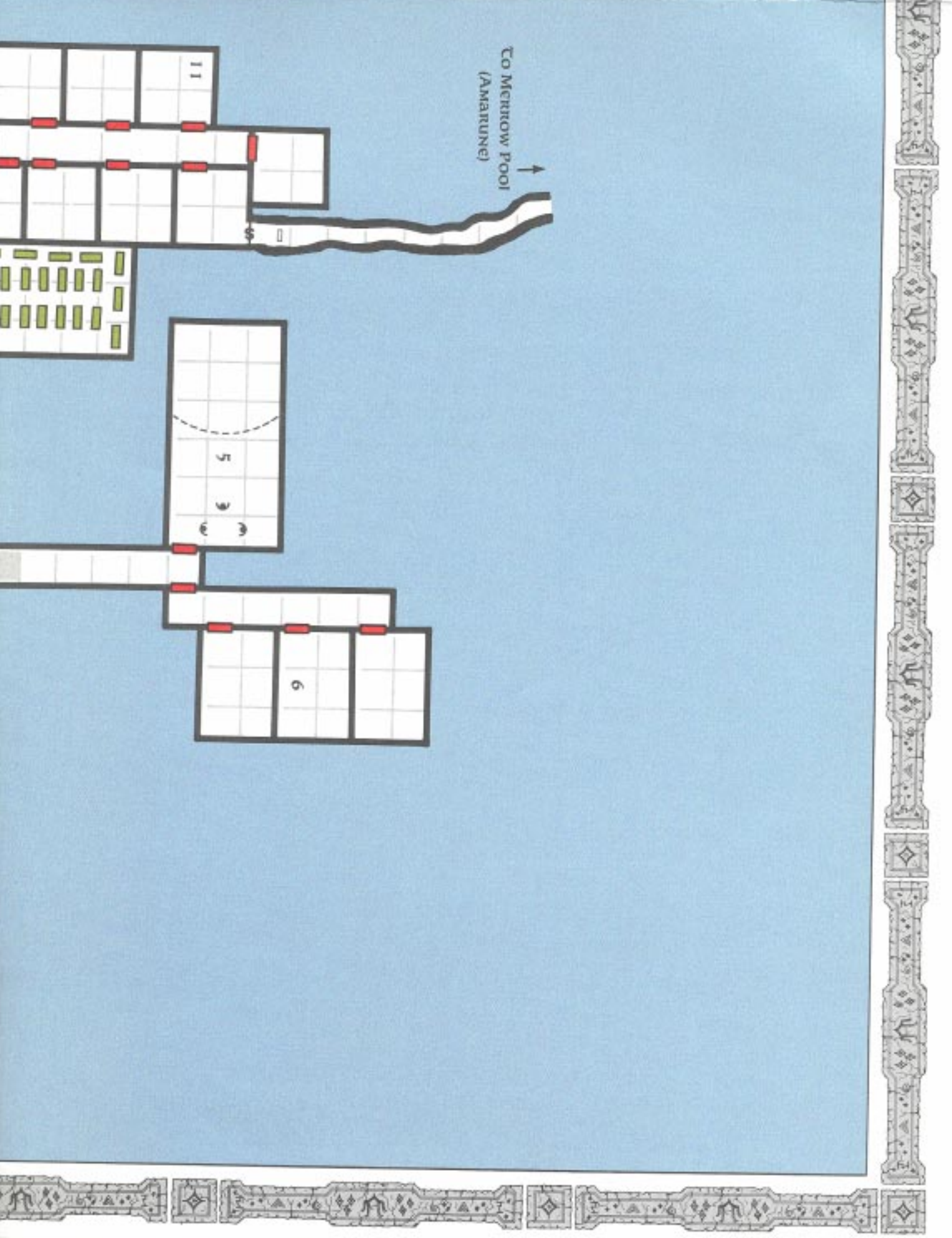
Partial interior map of Caer Callibyrn





1. Throne of the High King (on raised dais; initial location for Cristian)
2. Suits of armor (10) of former high kings; priest animates these as helmed horrors.
3. Stone benches (barbs grab these as weapons)
4. Grand Corridor. PCs enter here; Cull priests send a *flaming sphere* down it, slaying the guards positioned at each door down the corridor. Guards arrive by this corridor later, in response to Cristian's alarm.
5. Banquet Hall
6. Audience Chamber
7. Kitchens
8. Guardrooms. Guards here are not to leave posts; they admit only Cristian or Robryn, or someone with them or who knows the password.
9. Robing Room
10. Private Audience Chamber
11. Royal Apartments
12. "The Royal Run" (secret passage)
13. Pantries
14. Servants' Quarters and Service Entrance
15. Waiting Room for audience with the High King
16. Jakes (men's washroom)
17. Cantrev Lords' Conference Chamber
18. Guest Apartments
19. Ladies' Robing Room
20. Ladies' Jakes
21. Font (*polymorphed orcs*)
22. Bench (*polymorphed orcs*)
23. Commoners' Court

1 square = 10'



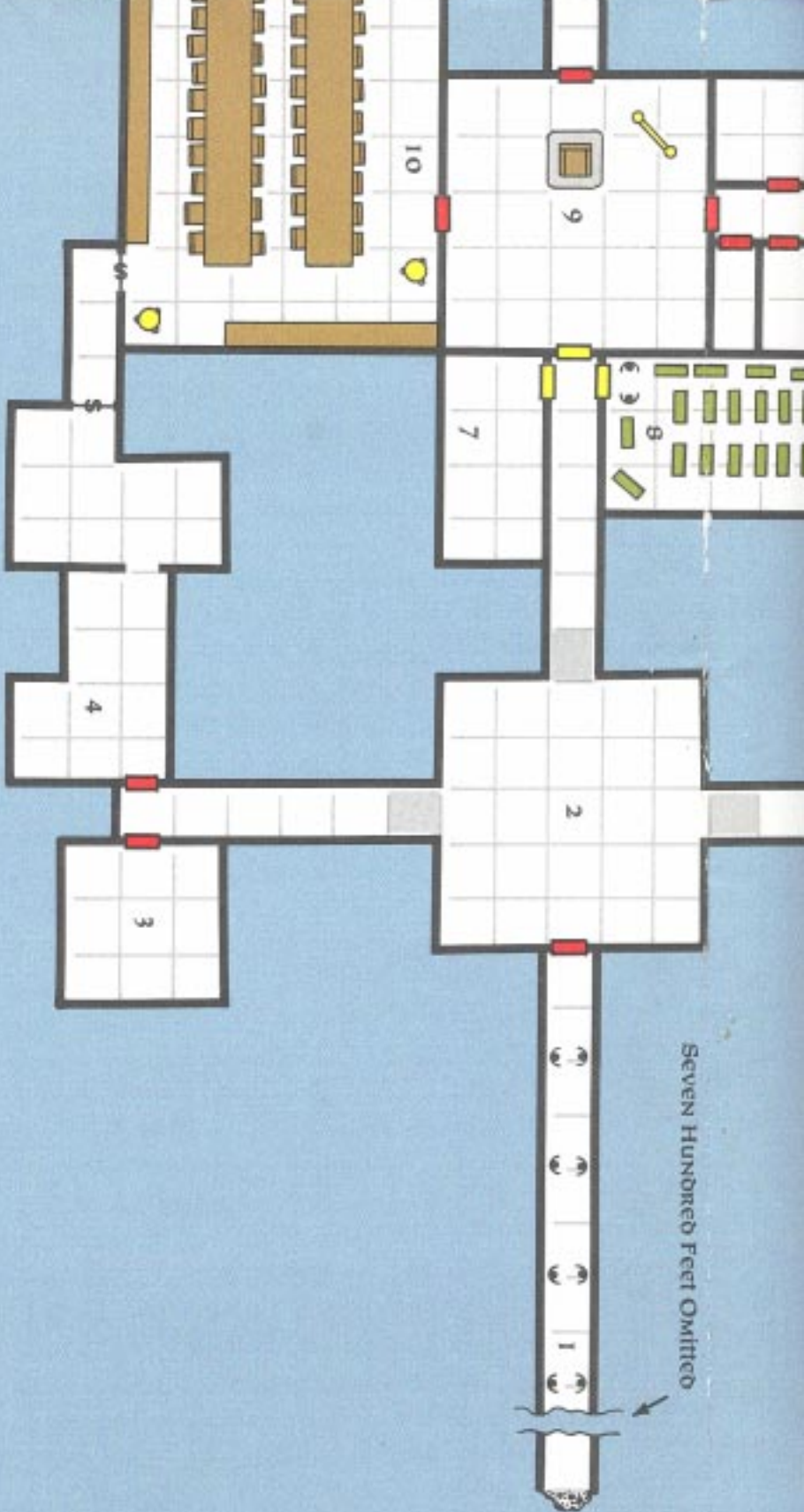
To Merrow Pool
(Amarune)

11

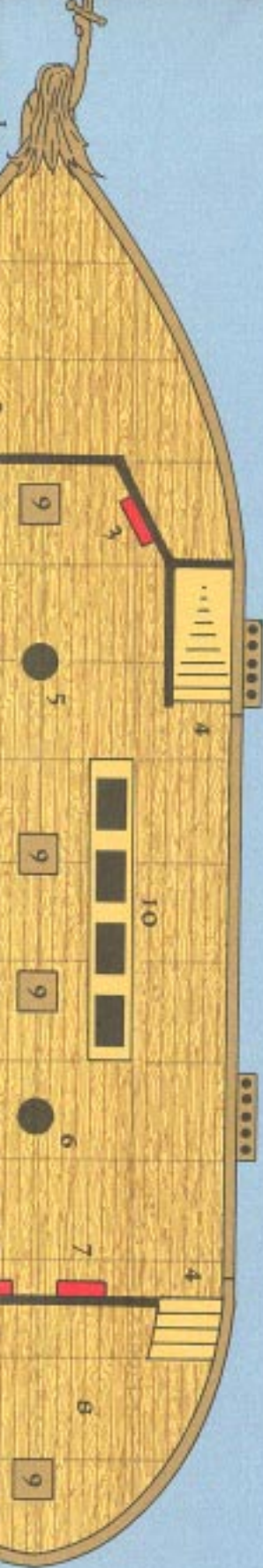
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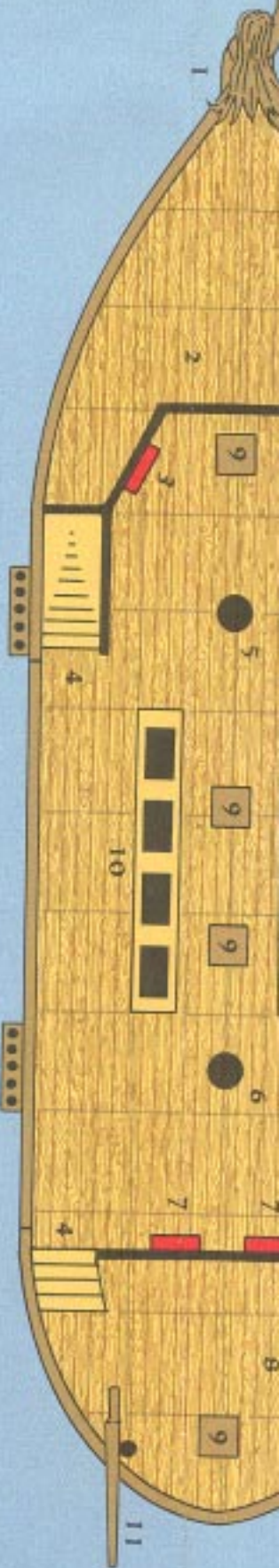
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Seven Hundred Feet Omitted



The Mermaid Sword

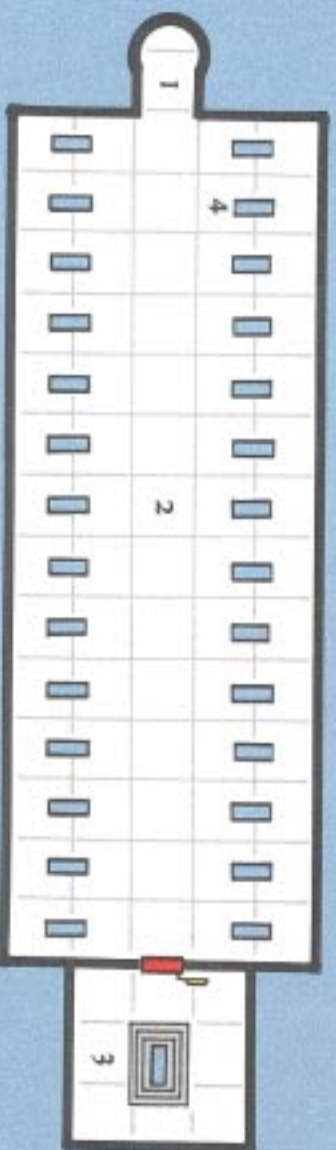




- 1. Bowsprit (mermaid holding sword)
- 2. Foredeck
- 3. Doors to passenger cabins
- 4. Stairs
- 5. Foremast (main)
- 6. Mizzenmast (mizzen)
- 7. Doors to crew and officers' cabins
- 8. Captain's Deck (wheel deck)
- 9. Deck hatches (to decks below)
- 10. Deck storage (sails, cordage)
- 11. Steering oar

1 square = 5'

Darkhorn Castle: The Undertomb



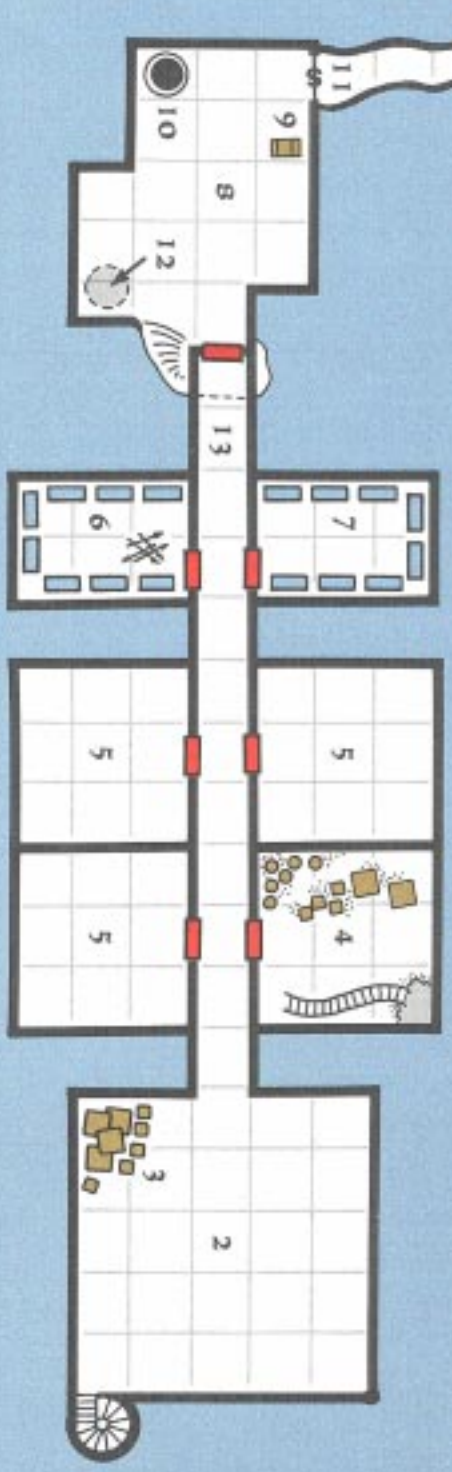
- 1. Entry shaft from Well Chamber of Cellars (10' diameter, 90' drop, handholds)
- 2. Hall (amber light, 28 coffins)
- 3. Inner Chamber (coffin on bays, warning gong on door)
- 4. Coffins (stairs, entrance to secret vault (lair of wight))

1 square = 10'



↑ To Surface
(Rockpile)

The Cellars of Darkhorn Castle



1. Stair from surface
2. Storage cellar
3. Crates (beafall trap)
4. Storage chamber/kitchen (note rope ladder)
5. Empty storage chambers
6. South burial chamber (weapons at A, treasure coffin at B)
7. North burial chamber (2 elfin skeletons)
8. Well chamber
9. Banolt's chest
10. Well (potable water)
11. Crawl passage
12. Loose stones (shaft to Undertomb)
13. Over-corridor firing bay

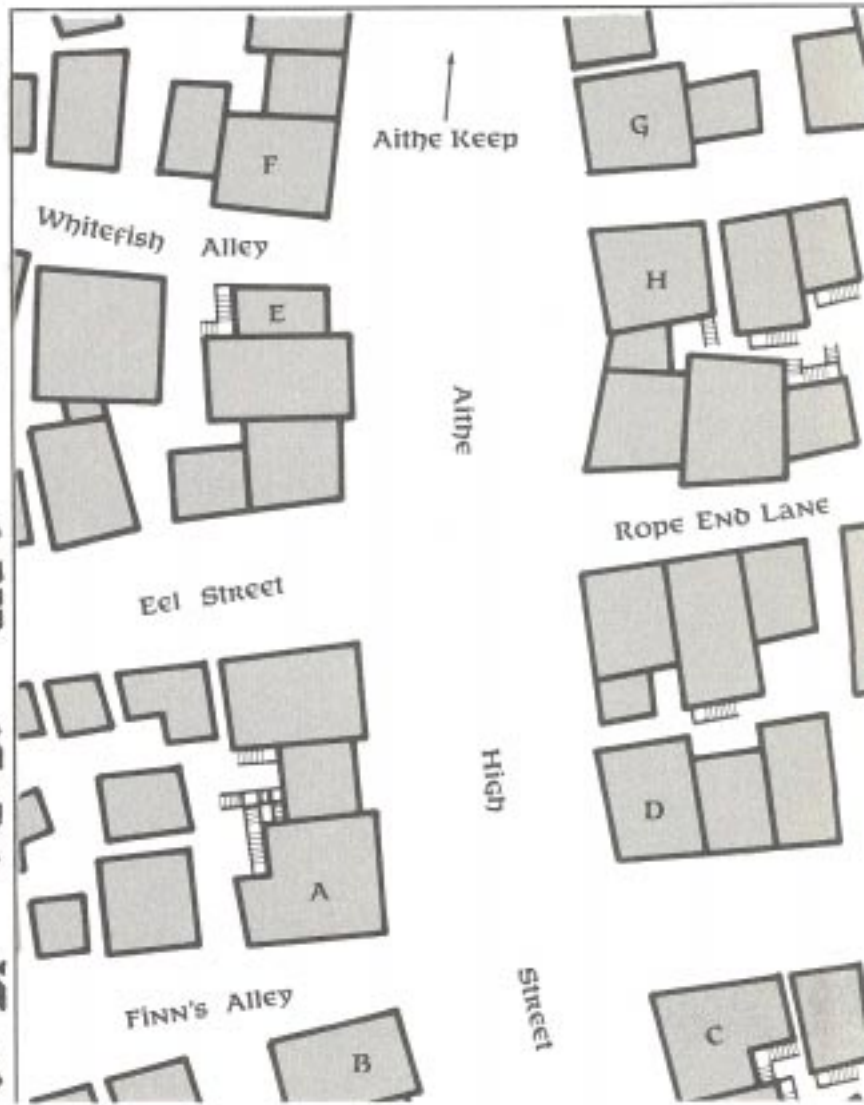
1 square = 10'

Aithelar



Key:

- 1 Seaview House (rooming house)
- 2 Aithe Pool (bathing, drinking, watering mounts and stock)
- 3 The Silver Boar (INN)
- 4 Arnuth's Stables
- 5 Rynthul The Armorer
- 6 The White Bull (Tavern, fine dining)
- 7 Maern The Moneychanger (Lends and banks, Too)



AQUATIC ENCOUNTER TABLE

The DM can employ this table at any time during sea-crossings in this adventure. For extensive waterborne adventuring in and around the Moonshaes, the tables given in FR2/ *Moonshae* are recommended. "MC1" and "MC2" refer to volumes of the AD&D® *Monstrous Compendium*.

The DM should roll 1d12 and consult the following table, ignoring undesirable or inappropriate results.

Die Roll Encounter

- | | |
|----|---|
| 01 | Pirates: 1 ship with a crew of 20-50 (see MC1, under "Men") |
| 02 | Flotsam (floating debris from a shipwreck, including possible treasure) |
| 03 | Lacedons, 2-24 (see MC1, under "Ghoul") |
| 04 | Blackfins, 1-6 (coldwater marine species of Giant Gar; see MC2 under "Fish, Giant") |
| 05 | Lacedons, 2-24 |
| 06 | Saltwater Scraggs, 1-8 (see MC1, under "Troll") |
| 07 | Sea Lions, 3-12 (see MC2) |

Die Roll Encounter

- | | |
|----|---|
| 08 | Ship Sighting—sail on horizon (or <i>dancing lights</i> signals, if at night) |
| 09 | Lacedons, 2-24 |
| 10 | Sharks, 3-12 (see MC2), including "winged" (wide-finned) species that leap and glide <i>over</i> the lower decks of passing ships to hunt! |
| 11 | Snake, "Sea-sting" (coldwater marine species of Spitting Snake, with Sw 12 and same poison; see MC1, under "Snake"; some have swallowed treasure—rings and gems—lodged within their bodies) |
| 12 | DM's Choice (or roll again on this table) |

COMBINED MONSTER STATISTICS TABLE

Some vital statistics of monsters featured in this adventure are presented here for handy reference during play. It is recommended that the DM refer to the *Monstrous Compendium* for full monster descriptions. Appendix 3 of this module details new monsters introduced in these adventures. (The *Source* for a new monster introduced in this module is given as "FA1"). Monsters altered from their norms when they appear in the adventure are marked with asterisks.

Human monsters (archers, bandits, druids, guards, Harpers, pirates, and thugs) are not detailed on this table. They should be specially prepared by the DM beforehand, with attention to their equipment/treasure.

Name	AC	HD	AT	THAC0	Damage	MV	Source
Bear, Brown	6	5+5	3	15	1-6x2/1-8	12	MC1
Beholder	0/2/7	45-75 hp	1	11-5	2-8 + magic	Fl 3(B)	MC1
Blackfin* (= Gar)	3	8	1	12	5-20 + swallow	Sw 30	MC2("Fish, Giant")
Boar, Wild	7	3+3	1	17	3-12	15	MC1
Bonebat	7	4	1	17	2-8	3, Fl 18(C)	FA1
Bugbear	5	3+1	1	17	weapon or 2-8	9	MC1
Carrion Crawler	3/7	3+1	8	17	1-2 + paralysis	12	MC1
Centipede, Giant	9	2hp	1	20	1 + paralysis	15	MC1
Crawling Claw	7	2-4hp	1	20	1-4 or 1-6	9	MC3
Darkenbeast	4	5+5	1 or 3	19	1-4x2, 3-12	18	MC3
Doppleganger	5	4	1	15	1-12	9	MC2
Dryad	9	2	1	16	1-4(dagger) + charm	12	MC2
Ettercap	6	3	3	15	1-3x2, 1-8 + poison	12	MC2
Firbolg *	2	13+7	1	9	1-10(wpn.) + 7(Str.)	15	MC2("Giantkin")
Galeb Duhr	-2	10	2	11	4-24	6	MC2
Gas Spore	9	1hp	1	20	6-36 blast	3	MC2("Fungus")
Guardian Daemon,							
Lesser	1	8	3	12	1-6, 1-12x2	9	MC2
Haunt	0	5	1	15	possession	6	MC2
Helmed Horror	2	4 + 1/creator lvl.	1	12	wpn. + special	12, Fl 12(A)	FA1
Kobold	7	1-4hp	1	20	1-4 or wpn. (1-6)	6	MC1
Lacedon	6	2	3	19	1-3x2, 1-6 + paralysis	Sw9	MC1("Ghoul")
Leucrotta	4	6+1	1	13	3-18	18	MC2
Merrow	4	4+4	3 or 1(wpn.)	15	1-6x2, 2-8	6, Sw 12	MC1("Ogre")
Mimic, Cmn.	7	7-8	1	13	3-12 + glue	3	MC2
Nishruu	10	9	Nil	12	Eats magic	6	FA1
Nyth	1	7	1	13	1-4 + spell	Fl 18(A)	FA1
Orc	6	1	1	19	1-8	9	MC1
Owlbear	5	5+2	3	15	1-6x2/2-12 + hug	12	MC1
Peltast	7	1+6	1	19	Special: symbiotic	4	FA1
Peltast, Greater	3	2+6	1	17	Symbiotic + spells	4	FA1
Rot Grub	9	1hp	1	Nil	Kills: 1-3 turns	1	MC2
Scrag, Saltwater	2	6+12	3	13	1-4x2, 9-16	3,Sw12	MC1("Troll")
Sea Lion	5/3	6	3	13	1-6x2, 2-12	Sw18	MC2
Shadow	7	3+3	1	17	2-5 + 1-pt. Str drain	12	MC1
Shambling Mound	0	8-11	2	13-9	2-16x2, suffocation	6	MC2
Shark	6	3-8	1	17-13	2-5 or 2-8 or 3-12	Sw24	MC2
Shee	0	9	1	11	2-16 +2	24, Fl 18(C)	FA1
Skeleton	7	1	1	19	1-6	12	MC1
Skeleton, Animal	8	1-1	1	20	1-4	6	MC1("Skeleton")
Skeleton, Guardian*	7	4	1	19	1-6	12	MC1 (see FA1, Chapter 2)
Skeleton, Monster*	6	6	1	15	1-10	12	MC1 ("Skeleton")
Spider, Large	8	1+1	1	19	1 + poison	6, Wb 15	MC1 ("Spider")
Spider, Giant	4	4+4	1	17	1-8 + poison	3, Wb 12	MC1 ("Spider")
Stag, Giant	7	5	1or2	15	1-4x2 or 4-16	21	FA1
Stirge	8	1+1	1	17	1-3 + blood drain	3, Fl 18(C)	MC2
Treant	0	7-12	2	13-9	2-16 or 3-18 or 4-24	12	MC1
Troll	4	6+6	3	13	5-8x2, 2-12	12	MC1
Weredragon	1(base)	13(base)			Attacks vary with form	9, Fl 30(C)	MC1
Wererat	6	3+1	1	17	by weapon	12	MC1("Lycanthrope")
Wight	5	4+3	1	12	1-4 + drains 1 level	12	MC1
Wolf	7	2+2	1	19	2-5	18	MC1
Xorn	-2	7+7	4	13	1-3x3, 6-24	9, Burrow 9	MC2
Yuan-ti*	4/0	6-9	2	15-11	Wpn + bite + spells	12, slither 9	MC1
Zombie	8	2	1	19	1-8 (strike last)	6	MC1
Zombie, Ju-Ju	6	3+12	1	15	3-12	9	MC1("Zombie")
Zombie, Monster	6	6	1	15	4-16	9	MC1("Zombie")



Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®



Official Game Adventure

Halls of the High King

by Ed Greenwood

Someone in the misty, wooded Moonshaes Isles needs hundreds of brand-new swords taken under guard from Sword Coast smiths to a certain place on the Isles.

The swords are needed so badly, and their safe arrival is considered so unlikely, that someone is willing to pay adventurers a lot of gold—someone fairly important.

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United Kingdom

ISBN 0-88038-881-1



\$8.95