

BERNARD YEE



Betrayal at Krondor

THE OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE

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Betrayal at Kronador

The Official Strategy Guide

Bernard Vee

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The Official Strategy Guide

Bernard Yee

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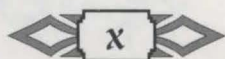
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Preface



I sat in front of a big 21-inch Sony Multiscan monitor for hours. I had the ultimate game setup—SoundBlaster 16/WaveBlaster plugged into Bose Roommate Speakers, an IBM PS/ValuePoint Pentium system. All that computing power on my desktop—just to play Dynamix's *Riftwar: Betrayal at Krondor*. For the second time.

Betrayal at Krondor essentially uses a three-dimensional polygon engine, like today's flight simulators. Although more than playable on a 486, my IBM's sheer processing power made running *Krondor* silky smooth and fast, even on the finest detail setting. The big monitor (as big as the television set in my Manhattan apartment!) made it feel like I was watching television. And the WaveBlaster's wavetable sounds gave the soundtrack a life beyond the meager capacity of yesterday's FM synthesis boards.

I have been playing computer role-playing games for a long, long time—back to the first games, like *Temple of Apshai* on my TRS-80 Model 1 with 16K of RAM, the game loaded off a cassette deck. Now I review games for magazines like *PC Magazine*, *PC Entertainment*, *Compu!*, and *Electronic Entertainment*. I have cowritten a book on a jet fighter simulator, reviewed other sims and strategy games, and have loved many of them. Origin System's *Wing Commander* and LucasArt's *X-Wing* have stolen away precious hours of productivity, but I don't consider those hours lost.

I have always been a fan of computer role-playing games. And CRPGs have always been written by programmers. But the industry is “converging”—forms of electronic entertainment are blending, so that elements of passive experiences, like movies, are being used in interactive experiences, like games. So artists are beginning to get involved—not programmers (who are artists in their own right) but writers—storytellers, if you will. Raymond E. Feist is a storyteller, spending time on the *New York Times* Bestseller List, and creator of Midkemia, the world illustrated in his series of fantasy novels beginning with *Magician*. John Cutter at Dynamix took the world of Midkemia and gave it computerized life. This was Dynamix’s first role-playing game, and when I started playing, I was blown away.

There was a story. A real story. Not “go kill the big bad wizard at the top of his black tower” (although you do need to kill the bad wizard at the end of the game); not “go find the magic sword,” not “go build up your characters *ad nauseum*.” Like Ray’s novels, there was political intrigue, danger, treachery, unexpected friends, and fearsome enemies. Pages of prose that, while not up to Ray’s level, were far superior to standard computer game fare. In that way, *Betrayal at Krondor* reminded me of an old favorite game—the text-only adventure, *Zork: The Great Underground Empire*. And you were the hero. *Betrayal at Krondor* immersed me not in a game, but in a story. There was the main plot line, related side plots, and unrelated side plots. The world was huge and populated by characters with personality. I’ve played many CRPGs and *Betrayal at Krondor* may be the best CRPG ever. It is the first game that used real story elements as the first thought, not as an afterthought.

When I proposed a book on the game to Roger Stewart at Prima Publishing, he happily agreed. But when I sat down to play the game again, I was daunted. The first time around, it took me more than 70 hours to savor the game from start to finish. This time would be faster, but I realized that Midkemia was a huge world. No book could cover every nook and cranny of the world. Players should take the time and really explore the world. Walk around. I did, the second time around, and really enjoyed myself. Like a good second read of a familiar book.

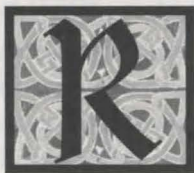
The third time I played the game through, I flipped open my Texas Instruments Windows 486 notebook. I wrote, chapter by chapter, this game book as I played the game itself. And without the copious materials

provided by John Cutter and Dynamix, I would have worn my fingers away to little stumps. I thought that readers would get a kick out of reading the prose of the game put together to form a story. Each game book chapter begins with the complete story of that chapter in the game, beginning to end. The fictional travails of our heroes don't include everything they could do, but only what they had to do to reach a successful conclusion to the chapter. I played each chapter carefully, taking it with me on the road on the TI laptop—which played the game almost as smoothly as my desktop 486. I took a lot of notes.

And it's all in your hands, a kind of Michelin Guide to Midkemia, or at least, Midkemia some 10 years after Ray's novel *A Darkness at Sethanon*. An old Chinese curse goes, "may you live in interesting times." Well, the times are indeed interesting in *Riftwar: Betrayal at Krondor*. Enjoy.

Introduction

Introduction and Tactics



Riftwar places you in the huge fictional world of Midkemia, populated with myths and characters by Raymond E. Feist. Several general strategic and combat hints will make your stay in Midkemia a more pleasant one. After all, information is your best weapon. Be forewarned. ...

The game begins as Owyn stumbles on Seigneur Locklear, a knight of the Kingdom, and Gorath. Gorath foils the assassin Haseth's attack and kills him, and Locklear reveals that he needs to bring Gorath—a *moredhel* (cousin to the elves) and long-time enemy of the Kingdom—to the Prince of Krondor, the second-most powerful noble in the Kingdom. Your goal is to escort Gorath to Krondor. However, because this is a game, you can choose to wander almost anywhere in the world, strengthening your characters and accumulating items.

General Hints

Haseth's corpse is in the immediate area. Use the mouse to left-click on the corpse to loot the body (no qualms, now—looting bodies is standard behavior in *Riftwar*). Left-click on each item you find and hold down the mouse button while dragging the object to one of the three character portraits, or *icons*, then release the mouse button. Check every body you come across or kill for gold, food, weapons,

armor, and miscellaneous magical items. The standard Kingdom armor and broadsword are the least effective items available, so be on the watch for better equipment. To examine items more carefully, left-click on the character to access the inventory screen, and right-click on the item to get more information on the particular item. Be especially careful of poisoned or spoiled rations—check all rations you pick up by right-clicking on the food package. Keep a good supply of rope and food handy.

Resting will replenish your strength and energy, but resting outside will never allow you to fully recover all your Health and Stamina points. You need to book time in an Inn (or use Restoratives) to completely recover from injuries. Not all inns are the same, however; inns in the Northlands are frequented by pickpockets, whereas inns near Krondor (and the Blue Wheel Tavern run by Sumani in LaMut) are sure to be quite a bit more secure. And, unless everyone in your party is cut down, your characters don't die: they're put in a near-death condition that can be cured only by prolonged rest or cure from a temple. You can hasten your recovery by using a Powder Bag and Restoratives.

Similarly, all "monsters," or hostile creatures, have Health and Stamina points too. (See Table 1 at the end of this introduction for a point-wise summary of each non-player character's endowments). These endowments can be affected by healing spells that enemy spellcasters might invent.

Combat

Combat is a popular tourist attraction in Midkemia. James, Locklear, two Seigneurs (or knights in the Kingdom) Owyn and Pug, two spellcasters a bit quicker than Gorath, a mooredhel warrior, and Patrus, another spellcaster, will get the opportunity to act first. If you see a group of hostiles ahead, left-click on them to surprise them, use any SCMs (or special case modifiers, such as Clerical Oilcloth) on weapons and armor, then rush forward. Here is a list of possible modifiers in *Riftwar: Betrayal at Krondor*:

Blade SCMs

Blade SCMs will, when used on a character's blade, allow it to do extra damage until the end of a combat in which the weapon is used.

- ◀▶ **Althifain's Icer** Frosted/1.5 times damage
- ◀▶ **Clerical Oilcloth** Enhanced #1/2 times damage
- ◀▶ **Killian's Root Oil** Enhanced #2/1.5 times damage (see Armor SCMs)
- ◀▶ **Naphtha** Steelfired/2 times damage
- ◀▶ **Silverthorn** Poisoned/+10 points of damage/causes poison condition

Armor SCMs

Armor SCMs will, when applied to a character's armor, provide immunity to a particular blade SCM until the end of a combat in which the armor is damaged. This immunity covers only the extra damage that a blade SCM causes. The normal damage of the sword still applies.

- ◀▶ **Dragon Stone** Immunity from Steelfire damage
- ◀▶ **Flame Root Oil** Immunity from Frost damage
- ◀▶ **Sarigsbane** Immunity from Enhanced (#1 and #2) damage
- ◀▶ **Silverthorn Anti-Venom** Immunity from Poison damage
- ◀▶ **Killian's Root Oil** Immunity from Enhanced #2 damage (see weapon SCMs)

Modifiers

Modifiers will cause an increase in a particular skill or ability for 8 hours. You can make this last through several combats if you're quick.

- ◀▶ **Dalatail Milk** Increases Defense value by 25 points
- ◀▶ **Fadamor's Formula** Increases Strength value by 10 points
- ◀▶ **Lewton's Concentrate** Increases Spellcasting accuracy by 30 points
- ◀▶ **Redweed Brew** Increases Melee accuracy by 20 points
- ◀▶ **Truesight Tea** Increases Crossbow accuracy by 25 points (see Calculating Combat)

Miscellaneous

- ◀» **Restoratives** Restoratives add 10 to 15 Health points to an injured character, depending on how badly hurt the character is; if near death, more restoratives are needed to regain health.
- ◀» **Steelfire Spell** Using this spell is just like using Naphtha.
- ◀» **Infinity Pool** Allows any spell to be cast at 1.5 times the cost. With this item a player can increase a spell's potency beyond its normal limit.

If, in battle, you charge your enemy, your character can only thrust, which is more accurate but inflicts less damage than is achieved by swinging your weapon. Once you are next to a character (but not diagonally adjacent) you can swing or thrust your weapon. Depending on the various modifiers, your skill, and your opponent's Defense rating, you may score a big hit or grab air.

Calculating Combat

Combat is calculated as follows:

Number Needed to Hit:

- = attacker's *To Hit with Sword* percent value or *To Hit with Crossbow* percent value
- defender's *Defense rating*

Note: The Number Needed to Hit is never less than 2 or greater than 98.

To Hit with Sword value

- = character's Sword Accuracy skill or Sword percent, modified by condition of character
- + accuracy of weapon, modified by condition of weapon
- + Racial modifier
- + Bless modifier

To Hit with Crossbow value

- = character's Crossbow Accuracy skill or Crossbow percent, modified by condition of character

- + accuracy of the crossbow, modified by the condition of the crossbow
- $[2 * (\text{range from target} - 1)]$
- + accuracy of the arrow

Defense rating

- = (Defense skill of character or Defense percent, modified by condition of character) / 4
- + Bless modifier

The attacker hits if:

the randomly generated Number Needed to Hit falls between 1 and 100

Note: Parrying will add 20 to the random number.

Damage Done:

- = attacker's Damage with Sword value or Damage with Crossbow value
- * defender's Shielding expressed as a percentage
- * any Weaknesses (1.5) or Resistances (0.5) of the defender

Damage with Sword value

- = character Strength score, modified by condition of character
- + Sword Damage rating (either Swing Damage or Thrust Damage), modified by condition of weapon
- + SCM adjustment (this takes into account both the attacker's weapon and the defender's armor)

Damage with Crossbow value

- = Crossbow Damage rating
- + Arrow Damage rating

Shielding

- = (Defense skill of character, modified by condition of character) / 4
- + Armor rating, modified by condition of armor
- + Racial modifier

Note: This number is then subtracted from 100, to give the Shielding value.

Spells

Spellcasting is an important component of combat, and at the beginning of the game you'll rely on the spell *Despair Thy Eyes*, which blinds most opponents. Use it liberally if need be. The most useful spells are *Skin of the Dragon*, which makes your character virtually invulnerable; *Evil Seek*, a sort of smart bomb that strikes all evil-types on the screen; and *Fetters of Rime*, which paralyzes opponents. Black Slayers and Nighthawks will be frustrated by *Final Rest*, which prevents them from coming back to life, and Wind Elementals can be killed only by *Strength Drain* (and the *Idol of Lassur*, but that's a cursed item...). Your accuracy is determined your character's casting rating (casting percent) which will improve with practice.

Conversely, a group of enemy spellcasters can instantly wipe out your party if they get the drop on you. Casters (like Owyn or a more-dhel witch) can't cast spells with someone badgering them, so if you are next to a caster (but not diagonally adjacent) he or she will not be able to cast a spell. When facing casters, use *Locklear*, *Gorath*, *James*, and even *Pug* and *Patrus* to stop the spellcasters from casting spells. Items that summon monsters, like *Eliaem's Heart*, can be useful in this regard.

Traps

Traps abound in Midkemia. Many consist of two poles, and sometimes flame launchers. Press **G** when entering a trap situation to turn on the movement grid. If you walk between poles your character will suffer some serious damage; similarly, if you walk in front of the launchers, more than your eyebrows will be singed. Whenever there is a launcher there will be crystals—clear crystals and solid crystals. If you push a clear crystal in front of a launcher, the launcher will fire a bolt that passes through the clear crystal—most likely striking a pole and deactivating that portion of the trap (like the spell *Black Nimbus*). The solid crystals can be used to form a barrier to the launcher's fire. By using your characters to push the crystals around you can negotiate a safe passage through the trap. Of course, you can cast *Skin of the Dragon* on one character and march him through the trap-laden field with gleeful abandon. You can also use this time to rest—press **R** for each character and they will slowly recover health and stamina.

Chests (but not *moredhel* lockchests) can also be trapped. There are far fewer trapped chests in the beginning of the game, but later it pays to cast *Scent of Sarig* before opening any chests. Remember: keep the lockpicks in the possession of the character with the highest lockpicking skill!

Skills

Skills are important as well. When you're looking at the Inventory screen you can click on your portrait to get to the Skills screen. If you click on the gemstone next to a particular skill, that skill will be actively "practiced" during the journey. The more skills you highlight, the slower your skill development through the course of the game. Although *Stealth* is an important skill for all characters, you may simply choose to endow *Locklear* and *Gorath* with *Weaponcraft* and *Armorcraft* skills, *Owyn* and *Pug* with *Spellcasting* skill, *Gorath* and *James* with *Lockpicking* skill, and so on.

Final Hints

Save your game often, especially before big combats and before opening trapped chests. There is no time limit on finishing quests, so take your time and talk to the people in *Midkemia*. Examine the world carefully—abandoned houses, bushes, hollow stumps, and even graves can be hiding places for valuable items. Refer to your overhead map often, and when you get the brass spyglass, use it as often as possible to see what containers are hidden in the area.

If you need to store items (such as during *Lord Lyton's* quest), store them in a *moredhel* lockchest. Salvage items and sell them for a quick profit. But mostly, enjoy *Midkemia* and its inhabitants—it may be the most fun you'll have on your computer.

Table 1 Monster/Non-player Character Attributes

Moredhel Archer		Servitor of Lims-Kragma	
<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>	<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	25-40	Health	160-160
Stamina	20-35	Stamina	100-100
Speed	3-5	Speed	2-2
Strength	13-20	Strength	75-75
Crossbow (%)	45-65	Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	35-55	Sword (%)	95-95
Cast (%)	0-0	Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	30-50	Defense (%)	80-80
Retreat	4-7	Retreat	0-0

Nighthawk		Rime Giant	
<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>	<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	25-50	Health	70-85
Stamina	20-40	Stamina	50-70
Speed	3-5	Speed	2-4
Strength	14-27	Strength	50-65
Crossbow (%)	50-65	Crossbow (%)	65-75
Sword (%)	35-70	Sword (%)	65-75
Cast (%)	0-0	Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	35-50	Defense (%)	45-60
Retreat	5-7	Retreat	3-5

Moredhel Fighter

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	25-45
Stamina	15-35
Speed	3-5
Strength	12-23
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	40-60
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	30-50
Retreat	2-5

Sentinel Ogre

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	45-60
Stamina	40-55
Speed	2-4
Strength	30-45
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	45-60
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	45-55
Retreat	3-5

Rogue

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	20-40
Stamina	15-35
Speed	3-5
Strength	13-20
Crossbow (%)	40-65
Sword (%)	30-60
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	30-50
Retreat	4-6

Brak Nurr

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	85-110
Stamina	70-90
Speed	0-0
Strength	35-45
Crossbow (%)	50-60
Sword (%)	45-54
Cast (%)	70-85
Defense (%)	35-45
Retreat	0-0

Tor Giant

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	60-80
Stamina	50-70
Speed	2-3
Strength	40-55
Crossbow (%)	60-75
Sword (%)	50-85
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	45-60
Retreat	2-5

Pantathian

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	60-80
Stamina	50-70
Speed	4-6
Strength	20-30
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	50-75
Cast (%)	75-95
Defense (%)	50-70
Retreat	2-8

Rogue Mage		Panth-Tiandin	
<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>	<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	25-40	Health	60-80
Stamina	15-35	Stamina	40-60
Speed	3-4	Speed	3-5
Strength	10-18	Strength	25-35
Crossbow (%)	0-0	Crossbow (%)	65-90
Sword (%)	30-55	Sword (%)	55-90
Cast (%)	65-85	Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	35-60	Defense (%)	50-65
Retreat	4-6	Retreat	3-6

Highland Ogre		Deep Giant	
<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>	<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	45-60	Health	60-80
Stamina	45-65	Stamina	50-70
Speed	3-4	Speed	2-3
Strength	25-35	Strength	45-60
Crossbow (%)	0-0	Crossbow (%)	55-65
Sword (%)	45-60	Sword (%)	60-75
Cast (%)	70-85	Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	40-55	Defense (%)	50-65
Retreat	5-5	Retreat	3-5

Moredhel Caster		Giant Scorpion	
<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>	<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	20-40	Health	20-40
Stamina	10-30	Stamina	15-30
Speed	3-5	Speed	4-5
Strength	10-18	Strength	18-28
Crossbow (%)	0-0	Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	35-55	Sword (%)	40-65
Cast (%)	70-90	Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	35-60	Defense (%)	40-50
Retreat	3-6	Retreat	2-4

Black Slayer

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	35-50
Stamina	25-45
Speed	2-4
Strength	14-27
Crossbow (%)	45-60
Sword (%)	35-65
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	30-50
Retreat	0-1

Bulldrake Wyvern

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	40-60
Stamina	30-50
Speed	2-3
Strength	25-35
Crossbow (%)	70-80
Sword (%)	55-75
Cast (%)	70-90
Defense (%)	45-60
Retreat	2-5

Spellweaver (Moredhel)

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	40-60
Stamina	60-80
Speed	3-5
Strength	15-25
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	75-85
Cast (%)	95-100
Defense (%)	55-75
Retreat	1-4

Grandsire Wyvern

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	40-60
Stamina	30-50
Speed	2-3
Strength	25-30
Crossbow (%)	70-85
Sword (%)	55-65
Cast (%)	60-90
Defense (%)	45-60
Retreat	2-5

Cave Giant

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	65-85
Stamina	45-65
Speed	3-4
Strength	30-40
Crossbow (%)	65-75
Sword (%)	65-75
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	50-65
Retreat	3-5

Dread

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	130-140
Stamina	90-95
Speed	5-5
Strength	50-60
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	80-90
Cast (%)	95-100
Defense (%)	70-80
Retreat	0-0

Rusalka

Endowment	Low-High Value of Endowment
Health	25-45
Stamina	15-30
Speed	2-4
Strength	10-20
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	30-50
Cast (%)	60-80
Defense (%)	35-50
Retreat	0-0

Shade

Endowment	Low-High Value of Endowment
Health	30-50
Stamina	20-40
Speed	3-5
Strength	18-25
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	40-70
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	30-50
Retreat	0-0

Hatchling Wyvern

Endowment	Low-High Value of Endowment
Health	40-60
Stamina	30-50
Speed	3-3
Strength	20-30
Crossbow (%)	70-80
Sword (%)	45-60
Cast (%)	60-90
Defense (%)	40-55
Retreat	3-6

Giant Spider

Endowment	Low-High Value of Endowment
Health	25-40
Stamina	15-35
Speed	2-3
Strength	15-25
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	55-70
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	35-50
Retreat	3-6

Witch Hag

Endowment	Low-High Value of Endowment
Health	25-35
Stamina	15-25
Speed	2-4
Strength	10-15
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	30-50
Cast (%)	85-95
Defense (%)	35-55
Retreat	5-7

Goblin

Endowment	Low-High Value of Endowment
Health	30-45
Stamina	25-35
Speed	4-5
Strength	18-25
Crossbow (%)	45-60
Sword (%)	45-75
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	55-65
Retreat	5-8

Nethermander

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	90-100
Stamina	70-80
Speed	2-3
Strength	50-60
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	75-85
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	75-95
Retreat	0-2

Makala

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	100-100
Stamina	80-80
Speed	7-7
Strength	40-40
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	100-100
Cast (%)	100-100
Defense (%)	80-80
Retreat	0-0

Dog (Beasthound)

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	25-45
Stamina	20-40
Speed	5-6
Strength	25-35
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	45-70
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	30-40
Retreat	3-5

Troll

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	45-65
Stamina	50-70
Speed	4-5
Strength	25-35
Crossbow (%)	75-85
Sword (%)	65-75
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	50-60
Retreat	2-5

Wind Elemental

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	25-45
Stamina	20-50
Speed	6-8
Strength	15-30
Crossbow (%)	0-0
Sword (%)	55-74
Cast (%)	70-80
Defense (%)	60-80
Retreat	0-0

Quegian

<u>Endowment</u>	<u>Low-High Value of Endowment</u>
Health	20-35
Stamina	15-30
Speed	2-4
Strength	13-24
Crossbow (%)	35-65
Sword (%)	45-75
Cast (%)	0-0
Defense (%)	30-45
Retreat	3-8

Synopsis



Riftwar: Betrayal at Krondor takes place some ten years after the events in Raymond Feist's novel *A Darkness at Sethanon*, the fourth book in the *Riftwar* series. To fully appreciate the story as it unfolds in *Riftwar*, you must become acquainted with the chronicled history of the Riftwar in Midkemia, and the figures that dominate this period—Pug and Tomas.

Sword and Spell

Pug was an orphan boy, barely into his teens who worked in the kitchen of Castle Crydee, located in the westernmost duchy of the Kingdom, near the Endless Sea. The Kingdom sat on the northern border of the Empire of Kesh. Pug proved to be a somewhat lackluster kitchen boy, and one day was caught in a rainstorm while gathering shellfish in tidal pools. There he was rescued from an encounter with a wild animal by Kulgan, a magician and member of Duke Borric's court. Pug became fast friends with the old wizard. Even then, Kulgan saw that Pug had latent magical ability.

Tomas, too, was a kitchen boy, a tall one with blue eyes and sandy hair. Whereas Pug was treated as something of an outsider by the other kitchen boys, Tomas was respected as their unofficial leader. Pug and Tomas were inseparable friends. Pug only halfheartedly wished to be apprenticed to the swordmaster, but there was no doubt where Tomas's heroic ambitions lay. And since Martin, the Duke's solitary huntmaster and tracker, and loved by both Pug and Tomas, was not taking any apprentices that year, both boys hoped to be chosen by Fannon, the swordmaster.

Duke Borric and his two sons, Princes Lyam and Arutha, presided over the ceremony at which the court children were to be chosen by the craftmasters. Whereas Tomas's martial ability earned him the honor of being first chosen by the swordmaster, Pug's future remained unclear—he was not chosen by any craftmaster. But before Borric dismissed the crowd, Kulgan stood and chose Pug to be his apprentice. Pug was thus rescued from the ignominious distinction of being unchosen; instead he found himself apprenticed to the craft of magic, a craft he had never found even remotely interesting.

While Tomas excelled at his training, Kulgan grew puzzled over Pug's lack of magical progress. While exhibiting great skill at times, Pug seemed incapable of tapping into those inner energies needed to harness magic. Kulgan decided a little diversion might help clear the frustrated young man's mind, and therefore sent Pug horseback riding with Duke Borric's beautiful but haughty daughter, the Princess Carline. Despite Pug's unabashed infatuation for Carline, she treated Pug as little more than a servant. Carline's attitude changed, however, when she and Pug were attacked by trolls far from the castle. In desperation, Pug recreated in his mind's eye one of Kulgan's scrolls, and instinctively cast a powerful spell to drown the short, broad creatures in a stream. Carline and Pug became fast friends, and Kulgan began to realize that Pug's magical abilities were drastically different from those of most magicians. Pug gained the titled of Squire, and Carline began to return his affection; all was well, for a short time.

The Empire of the Tsuruanni

One day Pug and Tomas saw a shipwreck, and ran to investigate. It was indeed a shipwreck, and the ship one of alien design. Its dead crew wore bright blue armor, a design never seen before in the Kingdom. A sealed parchment was not all the boys brought back to the court; they found a survivor of the wreck. The ship was swept out to sea, but fears and doubts about the new visitor remained. These fears were confirmed when Borric's cleric, Father Tully, established a mind link with the dying man and discovered he was a soldier from the Empire of the Tsuranuanni, traveling to Midkemia through a rift magically bridging the two worlds. And while reading the parchment, Kulgan opened

another rift to the Tsurani homeworld, which was closed with Pug's aid. The Tsurani wielded greater magic than any known in the Kingdom. That was enough to persuade Borric to send word to the elf Queen, Aglaranna, for her counsel. She brought news that unknown parties had been traveling near Elvandar, eluding elven trackers by seemingly disappearing into thin air. Borric decided to take his cause to Prince Erland at Krondor, many leagues to the east and south. The Prince commanded the Armies of the West, second only to the King in Rillanon. Kulgan and Fannon were going, too—and, of course, so were Pug and Tomas.

The way south was uneventful at first, but the expedition was set upon and ambushed by the Brotherhood of the Dark Path, the *moredhel*—brothers to the elves in body but warlike and rapacious in spirit. The *moredhel* had accepted the ways of the Valheru, their former masters, a godlike race that had warred with the gods of Midkemia for supremacy in the dim past. The elves had rejected the Dark Path and sought only to live with nature. Borric and his company tried in vain to escape the *moredhel*; just as it seemed they were cornered, Dolgan, chief of the Grey Towers dwarven clan, intervened. The axes of the dwarves cut a path through the *moredhel* raiders. Borric learned that the *moredhel* had been driven out of their lands by the Tsurani's growing presence. They agreed to take a shortcut to Krondor through the Mac Mordain Cadall, the ancient abandoned dwarven mine.

Deep in the mine, the company was attacked by wraiths, undead spirits whose touch drained life from the living. While fending off the spirits with sword, spell, and torch, Tomas was separated from the group and fled into the darkened tunnels with a wraith in pursuit. Pug thought his childhood friend to be lost. When the group emerged from the mines on the other side of the mountain range, Dolgan went back into the mines to search for Tomas, while Borric pushed on to Krondor.

Dolgan found Tomas, and together they encountered a huge, ancient golden dragon named Rhuagh. Rhuagh had been charged by a great wizard, Macros, to greet Dolgan and Tomas near the time of the dragon's death and bestow gifts upon the two adventurers. Dragons were the steeds of the Valheru, or the Dragon Lords, and Rhuagh was one of great power and magic. After the dragon died, Dolgan recovered Tholin's Hammer, a great dwarven artifact and

weapon, while Tomas donned a suit of golden armor and took a great golden sword, emblazoned with the symbol of a great dragon. Tomas, unable to catch up to Pug and his comrades and cut off from returning to Crydee by the harsh winter, stayed with the dwarves instead.

Borric and the others took a ship to Krondor, but found themselves diverted by storm to Sorcerer's Isle, the legendary home of the feared Macros. They encountered a hermit who gave Kulgan a staff, and exchanged simple pleasantries. As they returned to their ship, they realized that the hermit was Macros, who left them a message that they would meet again. It was decided after reaching Krondor that Borric would go to King Rodric in Rillanon with their tidings. Erland would not marshal his armies without first conferring with the king, much to Arutha's dismay.

The four-week journey to Salador was uneventful; the company planned to take a ship from there to Rillanon. When they arrived, Duke Kerus of Salador informed the company of King Rodric's growing mental imbalance, and of the division between Rodric and Erland, spurred on by Borric's machiavellian cousin Guy, the Duke of Bas-Tyra who had Rodric's ear. Borric sailed warily into Rillanon. Although the King met with Borric and heard his news, he refused to act before his advisor Guy du Bas-Tyra arrived. But the Tsurani invasion had already begun, and was beaten back only by Lyam's forces from Crydee. Rodric had no choice but to give Borric command of the Krondor armies to defend the Kingdom.

Pug found himself in the war camps of Borric, where Kulgan discovered that the Tsurani were invading because of their homeland's scarcity of metal. In the midst of battle, Pug leapt at a black-robed man to disarm him, but it was not a weapon the Tsurani sorcerer was using—it was a rift device. Pug vanished from Midkemia and found himself in Kelewan, the world of the Tsuruanni. Meanwhile, Tomas's prowess at arms was becoming legendary among the dwarves; his armor and weapon were undoubtedly enchanted, and during battle Tomas began feeling a strange elation, along with visions of the ancient owner of his arms—Ashen-Shugar, the mightiest of the Valheru.

The Sword and the Magician

Battle swept Tomas and Dolgan to Elvandar, while the Tsurani lay siege to the forces at Crydee. After repulsing repeated attacks, Arutha was surprised when the Tsurani assaulting his castle withdrew, called home as a result of political maneuverings on the Tsurani home world. The bulk of the Tsurani attack, however, continued for four more years, during which Pug became a Tsurani slave, and made friends with Laurie, another Midkemian prisoner. Pug and Laurie were soon taken in by House Shinzawai to teach Lord Kamatsu and his sons Hokanu and Kasumi about the Kingdom. Pug fell in love with a slave girl named Katala, but was claimed by Fumitu, a Great One, for the Assembly of Magicians. Great Ones were held above the law in Tsurani society, and were both feared and respected. Fumitu saw Pug's latent ability for magic and sponsored Pug's training in the Greater Path, the kind of magic practiced in Kelewan. Pug learned that Kingdom magicians practiced the Lesser Path, and that Greater Path magic had been lost to them long ago.

Meanwhile, the elves began to fear Tomas's fighting rage—they recognized his spirit as being possessed by the Valheru, the elves' ancient masters. Queen Aglaranna sought to use her spellweavers to temper Tomas's possession by the godlike warring race with human qualities of compassion and love. And, caught between her fear of Tomas and her hope that he could help save Elvandar in the face of the Tsurani invasion, Aglaranna began to fall in love with Tomas.

Tomas's visions took on greater clarity. He realized that he was the spirit of Ashen-Shugar reincarnate, Ruler of the Eagle's Reaches, and that he alone could oppose Draken-Korin, a Valheru known as the Lord of the Tigers, in his mad plot to destroy the gods of Midkemia. The Valheru struggled against the Midkemian gods during the Chaos Wars. As the Tsurani war raged on, the combat fed the Dragon Lord's growing bloodlust. With the help of Macros the Black, the elves managed to repel a powerful assault by Tsurani soldiers and Great Ones.

Pug, a universe away, began his change as well, starting the rigorous program that would make him the undisputed master of magic in two worlds. Given a new name, Milamber, Pug survived the final test, in which he saw how Kelewan was a haven for beings fleeing the Enemy—the Valheru—and how magicians saved Kelewan from a rogue star on a

collision course with Kelewan by creating the first rift. Pug became friends with Hochopepa, another Great One, who explained that while the Lesser Path was like a talent or skill, the Greater Path was an art, suited for scholars. Much of the Greater Path was lost during the time when the Enemy caused the beings to flee to Kelewan.

Arutha discovered that more Tsurani forces were coming to Midkemia, and decided to head to Krondor to ask for more aid from Prince Erland. Amos Trask, former swashbuckler and pirate, reluctantly agreed to captain a ship through the Straits of Darkness in order to get to Krondor as quickly as possible, and Arutha asked that Martin, his father's huntmaster, come along as well. On the journey, Amos confirmed his suspicion that the enigmatic Martin was really the bastard son of Borric, and half-brother to Lyam and Arutha. Martin swore Amos to secrecy, but soon the group had more to worry about. As they entered the port of Krondor, they saw the banner of Guy du Bas-Tyra. Erland was thrown into a cell by Guy, who had taken over Krondor. When Arutha's presence was discovered by Guy's men, including thief Jocko Radburn, they were forced to hide with the aid of the Mockers, the Thieves' Guild in Krondor.

The Upright Man, the Mockers' leader, sent a young pickpocket named Jimmy the Hand to Arutha's aid, and they all escaped to a Mocker hideout. Arutha learned that the Upright Man was seeking to smuggle Princess Anita, Prince Erland's daughter, out of Krondor, while Guy looked to solidify his power by marrying Erland's daughter. While in hiding, Arutha and Jimmy became friends, and Arutha became enamored of the young Princess. They realized that if Guy attempted to take the throne, Borric would have no choice but to wage war against Guy and Rodric. With the Mockers' help, Arutha secured another ship and escaped Krondor with Anita, leaving his rapier behind with Jimmy. When they arrived at Crydee, Martin sped off to Elvandar, only to discover that Tomas's spirit had been almost completely consumed by the warlike and cruel Valheru. Although pushed to the edge of madness, Tomas somehow reclaimed his humanity, and Aglaranna's love.

Strife at Home

Arutha returned to Crydee, burdened by the need to mediate internal strife among the Kingdom's nobles, while Pug continued his studies of the Greater Path, and the creation of rifts. Hocho sought to involve Pug in the Empire's political affairs. Pug learned that the Warlord was expected to announce the success of his recent offensive. Pug was reluctant at first, but then agreed to go. Pug also planned to face his former masters and claim Katala as his wife. When he returned, Pug discovered that Katala had borne him a young son, and that Kamatsu and Laurie were planning a secret mission to bring a peace proposal to the Kingdom on behalf of the Emperor and other political forces that wanted to end the Riftwar. Pug lent his support to this peace initiative.

Laurie and Kasumi slipped through the rift back to Midkemia with the peace offering. With Jimmy the Hand's help, Laurie and Kasumi presented their cause to Rodric, who had come to Krondor. But Rodric was quite mad, and Laurie and Kasumi decided to flee before they were put to death as spies. One of the king's remaining faithful advisers told them of Erland's death, and bid the two find Borric, who was now the rightful heir to the throne. Meanwhile, the new Tsurani offensive tore through the Kingdom, and the two emissaries found Borric on his deathbed, wounded in the new fighting. The burden fell upon Lyam to consider waging civil war by taking the throne when he knew the rightful heir was Martin.

Pug attended the Imperial Games, a gladiatorial contest in which the losers lost their lives. The Tsurani Warlord—architect of the Riftwar—presided over the bloody contest. Shaken, Pug watched as prisoners from the Kingdom defied the Warlord's game. When they were bound and tied for execution, Pug lost his temper and confronted the Warlord. Tapping on his inner reserves of strength, Pug effortlessly cast aside the Warlord's magicians and leveled the Imperial Arena. Pug and his family fled for Midkemia, as the Warlord's forces demanded his death. Pug traveled through the rift, only to discover that Borric lay close to death, and that turmoil was also visiting the Kingdom. In the end, Borric adopted Pug into his family and acknowledged Martin as his eldest son before he died.

In an astounding turn of events, King Rodric came to his senses long enough to see the Tsurani threat to his kingdom, and with his army drove the Tsurani back to their rift. Rodric was mortally injured, but named Lyam as heir to the throne. Despite the fact that Lyam was not Borric's eldest son, Lyam accepted the role as heir and, with Pug's help, the Emperor's offer of peace. A meeting between Lyam and the Emperor was arranged, but with Macros's intervention the Empire's delegation was attacked in apparent treachery, and made to retreat through the rift. According to Macros, the rift had to be destroyed and not reopened for a time, as it attracted the attention of a powerful, malevolent force. Many Tsurani remained on Midkemia, and when given freedom became a loyal garrison in LaMut. Martin renounced his claim to the throne and became Duke of Crydee and Arutha Prince of Krondor, while Pug and Kulgan began work on an academy of magic at Stardock. Lyam proclaimed Guy du Bas-Tyra an outlaw and banished him from the Kingdom, and peace was restored for a year.

The Coming of Murmandamus

Peace would not last, however. A powerful *moredhel* and the Pantathian snake people had dark plans, backed by a nameless, evil force. He would claim Sar-Sargoth, the ancient fortress in the Northlands, at his own. But in that year of peace, Arutha and Anita were engaged to be married.

Also during that time, the young thief Jimmy the Hand spied a Nighthawk on the rooftops of Krondor. Nighthawks were assassins with almost supernatural skills, and were members of the Guild of Death. A loose roof tile exposed Jimmy to the assassin, and the two fought. Jimmy killed the Nighthawk, but two other men took the corpse away. Jimmy fled to the Mockers' hideout, to report the sighting to the Upright Man. But before he arrived Jimmy realized that the assassin's target was the Prince of Krondor, Arutha, who had been traveling through the city late that evening; he decided first to get word to Arutha, and then to report to the Upright Man. But once again Jimmy was interrupted, ordered on a thieving mission by Laughing Jack, another Mocker, before he could report back to the Upright Man. Before long Jack turned on Jimmy, but was killed. Jimmy recovered an ebony hawk necklace from Jack's corpse.

Jimmy stole back onto the palace grounds, and told Arutha what had happened. They decided to set a trap at an inn for the emissaries of the Temple of Lims-Kragma, the death goddess, who oversaw the Nighthawks, while Jimmy reported back to the Upright Man. Arutha succeeded in capturing a Nighthawk unharmed, but who nevertheless began to die. Arutha ordered his cleric to revive him, and also summoned the priestess of the temple. The priestess did not know why these assassins were sent forth, and attempted to interrogate the dying prisoner by mystical means. The Nighthawk called on Murmandamus, and died, but the priestess called his spirit back. The assassin revealed himself to be not human, but *moredhel*. The Nighthawk became a Black Slayer through supernatural power, and attacked the assembled group. The Black Slayer could not be felled, but Father Nathan, Arutha's advisor and priest of Sung, the goddess of purity, used his powers to destroy the undead creature. The cleric revealed that the source of the Black Slayer's power was not Lims-Kragma, but another force, alien and evil. Arutha decided that it was time to meet the Upright Man. Jimmy would be the messenger.

Blindfolded and led to the Upright Man, Arutha demanded the guild master's help in locating the Nighthawks. The Upright Man agreed to help him, and discharged Jimmy from the Mockers to help Arutha. The Upright Man revealed himself to be Jimmy's father, unbeknownst to Jimmy, and returned Arutha's gold in exchange for a noble title for his son. Jimmy became Squire James, and the Prince awaited the Upright Man's report.

Information came soon enough, and Arutha led an attack on the Nighthawks' hideout in Krondor. All died, despite efforts to keep the prisoners alive. Then all the corpses began their transformation Black Slayers. Jimmy set fire to the building, and the Black Slayers burned.

Confident that the menace had been eliminated, Arutha's wedding plans continued.

Silverthorn

Squire James met young Squire Locklear, the son of the Baron of Land's End, amidst the preparations for the wedding, and the two became fast friends. While Lyam and Arutha were receiving the visiting

nobles, including Pug, Jimmy swore he saw Laughing Jack—supposedly dead—in the crowd. Alarmed and uneasy, Arutha tightened security. Despite the extra precautions, Jimmy saw fit to examine the rooftops himself during the ceremony and discovered the undead Jack waiting to fire a crossbow at the Prince. Jimmy attacked Jack, spoiling his aim, but the crossbow bolt grazed Anita. Jimmy and Jack both fell off the roof, but were saved by Pug. Although the wound was not serious, the bolt was stained with a rare poison known as Silverthorn. Jack revealed that he had sold his soul to Murmandamus, a dark and monstrosly evil power seeking Arutha's death to fulfill a prophecy—Murmandamus's rise to power must be marked by the death of Arutha, the Lord of the West. The dark power tried to reclaim Jack, but one of Lims-Kragma's priests called on the death goddess to take Jack's soul in exchange for his information. Arutha vowed to go to the Abbey of Ishap in Sarth to learn more about the poison Silverthorn.

Murmandamus's agents, the *moredhel* and the Pantathian snake men, attacked Arutha and his men on the way to the abbey, but were repulsed by the magic of the monks who lived there. Arutha learned of the prophecy that called for his death, and also learned that Silverthorn had elvish roots. Two of Arutha's trusted advisers were sent to Stardock to inform the magicians, while Arutha—protected against Murmandamus's mystical attacks by Ishap's magic—traveled on to Elvandar. Pug repelled more attacks by Murmandamus's forces, and learned through Rogen, a blind seer, and a young girl with telepathic powers named Gamina, that an ancient evil was behind Murmandamus, and that evil spoke in an ancient Tsurani tongue. Pug, who would later adopt Gamina, had no choice but to go back to the Assembly of Magicians in Kelewan, and report.

Aglaranna and the elves told Arutha that the antidote to Silverthorn must be made from the Silverthorn plant, which grew only around the shores of Lake Moraelin, deep in *moredhel* lands. The Black Lake was an ancient Valheru place, but Arutha was undeterred. Arutha learned that in ages past the *moredhel* rallied around a hypnotic leader of great power named Murmandamus, who sought to emulate the Valheru but was killed in a battle eradicating the *glamredhel*, an extinct and warlike elven people. Despite the certainty that Murmandamus's most fell servants would be waiting for Arutha at Moraelin, Arutha pressed on.

A Sort of Homecoming

Pug returned to Kelewan, with two friends, to search for answers behind the dark power. He learned from his former servants that the Emperor still ruled, and that there was a new Warlord, as ambitious and rapacious as the Warlord cast down in shame by Pug's power. Pug transported himself to Kamatsu's estate and was greeted warily, as he had been stripped *in absentia* of all status, following his apparent treachery at the meeting between Lyam and the Emperor during the Riftwar. Pug explained all events past, including the fact that Macros deemed the rift too dangerous to exist any longer, and Lord Kamatsu offered his help. Pug met his old friend Hochopepa, and sought his guidance. But Pug was ambushed by the new Warlord's Imperial Guard, and was taken prisoner by mystic forces.

Pug awoke and found his magic bound by enchantment. Tortured by the Warlord's men, Pug managed to cast a Lesser Path spell—something thought impossible for a Greater Path magician—and freed himself. The Emperor came in with Kamatsu, and Pug explained the threat to both worlds. The Emperor was sympathetic, and concerned; he granted Pug leave to learn more about the threat, which Pug suspected to be the Enemy, the Valheru. Pug went forth to seek out the Watchers, a reference to an ancient people who knew of Kelewan's history with the Enemy.

With the guidance of Tomas, Arutha found another, forgotten entrance to Moraelin, avoiding the *moredhel* patrols that covered the area. While the shores of the Black Lake revealed no antidote, they saw an ancient building, and soon decided to enter. Jimmy the thief volunteered, and found Silverthorn, but realized the building was a trap. Leaving as carefully as he entered, Jimmy reported back to Arutha. They turned their attention to a nearby cave, where they discovered stairs leading to tunnels long undisturbed. They had wandered into a former hall of the Valheru. Finding nothing, they realized that they had explored every area but the Black Lake itself. A quick dip in the frigid water, and the party recovered enough Silverthorn for a cure. Fighting their way past *moredhel* and bandits, they fled to Elvandar with Black Slayers on their heels. The elven spellweavers and Tomas met the Black Slayers, killing them quickly with their mystical strength.

Meanwhile, Pug traveled north out of the Empire into the Kelewan Northlands, where he met the Thun—centaur-like creatures who guided him to the Watchers, living among the ice. The Watchers were revealed to be the eldar, a nation of elves long thought to have perished with their Valheru masters. The eldar kept much of the knowledge thought lost with the Valheru, and guarded against their return. Pug agreed to stay among them to learn their arts, in order to help stand against the Valheru.

Anita was cured, and the marriage took place with great celebration. Although peace was had throughout the land, but Murmandamus was only set back, not defeated. Conjuring a magical gate, Murmandamus and his Pantathian priests retreated to an unknown place, awaiting their next opportunity to kill Arutha.

Treachery

In the following year, during a festival in which Arutha's twin sons were presented, Jimmy received word from the Mockers that the Nighthawks had returned. Suspecting their hideout to be in the sewers, Jimmy and Arutha sought to confirm their fears. While scouting about, Jimmy saw a counterfeit Arutha, an agent of the Nighthawks headed for a sewer entrance to the castle. After killing a Nighthawk, Jimmy raced back to the castle to warn the others. He was too late, as the two Aruthas were engaged in combat. The false one was beaten, and Arutha prepared for another attack on the Nighthawks' outpost.

This attack was considerably less successful than the previous one, a year ago; many Nighthawks escaped. Arutha declared martial law and rounded up various suspects in his now-obsessive search for the Nighthawks. While enlisting the help of the priests of Lims-Kragma to uncover the Nighthawks, Arutha was attacked and seemingly killed by the assassin. Only a few knew that he staged his own death to buy time and lull Murmandamus into acting on the ancient prophesy of his rise to power.

Tomas stirred in Elvandar. The Valheru essence that resided in him brought him to Pug, who had returned from the eldar with new knowledge and great power. Pug had summoned Tomas to tell him that the Enemy was rousing, the Valheru spirits who were seeking to return to

power. They agreed to seek out the Oracle of the Aal, which stood dimensions away. Tomas agreed, calling up his ancient powers to summon a dragon steed capable of traveling through time and space. Ryath came in answer to his call, and despite her wariness at being under the Valheru's command, lent her aid in thanks for Tomas's friendship with Rhuagh. They traveled to an ancient world, where Aal was thought to reside. They found the Oracle, who seemed to be a madwoman. Pug entered her mind and discovered that her race was old and wise, compared even to the Valheru. Pug promised that he would give them safe haven on Midkemia if they would help them; she agreed, reluctantly. She told Pug who he needed to seek to help fight the menace of the Enemy. Once again, his path would cross with that of Macros the Black.

Martin traveled to Elvandar with Baru, a hillsman and fearsome fighter who killed Murmandamus's lieutenant while escaping from the Black Lake with Arutha. He learned that Tomas was missing, and arrived in time to witness a Returning; a moredhel had renounced the Dark Path and was returning to the elven fold. Meanwhile, Jimmy and Locklear began to suspect that machinations were unfolding back at the castle. Jimmy saw Arutha's body in the funeral procession, and, realizing that the man being buried could not be the true Prince, raced off and booked passage on a boat to Sarth. There, Jimmy and Locklear waited by a roadside until three riders came by. Jimmy recognized the three to be Laurie and Roald—Arutha's comrades—and Arutha himself, who had faked his death after the assassin's attack. Armed with the magic talisman from the Abbey of Ishap, Arutha hoped to elude Murmandamus's magic for long enough to foil the dark elf's plans. Arutha and his men were forced to take Jimmy and Locklear along.

The Dragon Lord's Return

Tomas and Pug sat on Ryath's back as the magnificent dragon sped towards Sorcerer's Isle. Ryath took wing to hunt while Tomas and Pug looked for signs of the wizard. Pug went into Macros's study to learn what he could about Macros' knowledge of the Enemy. Macros had left a note for Pug, telling him that if Pug was reading the note, Macros

was dead or imprisoned. To confirm this, Pug resolved to go to the Halls of the Dead in the City of the Dead Gods. The city was built, Tomas explained, to house the many gods created by Ishap who did not survive the battle against the Valheru. In the Halls of the Dead, Pug and Tomas gained an audience with the death goddess herself. Lims-Kragma told them that Macros was not yet dead, and that he was in a place beyond her power. Pug knew the only such place to be the City Forever, a place existing outside time.

Arutha and company met Martin and Baru in Ylith, and all set out north, towards Sar-Sargoth. They heard word of Black Slayers and enemy movements that seemed to indicate another gathering of forces under Murmandamus's banner. Indeed, Nighthawks and moredhel were watching them, although Jimmy learned that there was to be a payment of gold to engineers to help prepare a castle siege. After dispatching the moredhel and preventing the payment from reaching the engineers, Arutha and his comrades continued on to join Murmandamus's forces, disguised as mercenaries. But Arutha stumbled onto Armengar, an ancient city-fortress, sister to Sar-Sargoth. The twin cities were built by the slaves of the Valheru with knowledge pilaged across the dimensions, in imitation of the halls of the Dragon Lords. It was now populated by men, who stood in defiance of the moredhel—and to Arutha's shock, they were lead by Guy, the dispossessed Duke of Bas-Tyra. Arutha learned that Guy was not the evil traitor he was made out to be, but a great leader who had come down on the losing side of a political battle, a man capable of honor. Arutha confided in Guy, and Guy revealed that he sought to bring Armengar into the Kingdom, to fortify it against the goblins and moredhel. Arutha agreed to send messages back to King Lyam, and, as they prepared to defend the city, Murmandamus's army marched on the fortress.

Tomas and Pug arrived at City Forever with Ryath. After defeating the guardians left by the Enemy, they found Macros but were in turn trapped by the same snare that kept Macros prisoner. They were sent back through time. But, with Pug's help, Macros managed to break free of the time trap. Macros then revealed Tomas's heritage. Ashen-Shugar learned compassion through his link to Tomas, and he stood against Drakin-Korin when the Lord of the Tigers created the

Lifestone—a weapon that would destroy all life connected to Midkemia. Because the gods were tied to that life, they too would be destroyed, and the Valheru would win the Chaos War. Ashen-Shugar killed Draken-Korin, having learned to love Midkemia. The Lifestone was hidden in Sethanon, an ancient city, and Murmandamus would be driving towards it. The Enemy was not a single being, but the combined will of the former Valheru, cast into another dimension by the victorious gods of Midkemia at the end of the Chaos Wars.

War

The siege of Armengar began. While the siege engines preoccupied the defenders, Murmandamus used his magic to transport his attackers inside the city, killing Locklear's young lover, among many others. Although they held the castle for a month, the moredhel host wore down the defenders to such a point that there were not enough men to defend all the walls. Guy ordered the city evacuated, having planned for this eventuality by filling the city with explosive naphtha. The fleeing populace met with the reinforcements Martin had brought. Arutha did not understand, though, why Murmandamus's army was moving towards Highcastle; the only possible goal seemed to be Sethanon, a place without any strategic value, or so it seemed to the Prince of Kronдор. They went on to Highcastle and Sethanon, to prepare against the coming storm.

Pug, Macros, and Tomas flew to Sethanon as well, to meet Murmandamus. It was now clear that Murmandamus wanted bloodshed and death to reawaken the Lifestone, and that he cared only to bring the Valheru back to Midkemia. Sethanon's defenses did not hold, and Murmandamus entered the city. Tsurani forces, sent from the Emperor, helped control the battle while Arutha confronted Murmandamus. When Arutha killed the moredhel, it was revealed that he was no elf, but a Pantathian, one of a race of serpent people dedicated to bringing their Valheru masters back to Midkemia. Macros and Pug closed the rift by which the Valheru tried to return, but one spirit—Draken-Korin—won past the two magicians and was stopped by Tomas.

Tomas fought to keep Draken-Korin from the Lifestone. Beaten to the point of death, Draken-Korin fell on the Lifestone and tried to activate it. Tomas pierced the Valheru with his sword, lodging the Valheru blade in the Lifestone. Pug, Macros, and the Tsurani magicians sealed the rift, which had been partially opened by the Lifestone.

All celebrated the triumph, as Guy was brought back into the Kingdom. Ryath, severely injured, was healed and became the receptacle for the Oracle of the Aal's spirit and the guardian of the Lifestone. Family and spirits were mended, and Tomas lost much of his Valheru power, as his brethren were now shut off from their world. Sethanon and the Lifestone were isolated, the stone's secrets kept from all but the most powerful and trusted in the Kingdom. The moredhel retreated back to their homeland, unsatisfied at the disappearance of their leader. Ten years of bickering and clan disputes brought forth a moredhel chieftan named Delekhan; he united by force or loyalty even those moredhel who had tired of battle under the standard of Murmandamus.

New Darkness

Jimmy and Locklear became Seigneurs, and Locklear served under Baron Moyiet in the Northlands. During a patrol, Locklear and his men caught and killed a moredhel band pursuing a lone figure. It was no man they pursued, but another moredhel, who claimed he had a message for the Prince of Krondor. Locklear took it upon himself to personally escort this moredhel, named Gorath and claiming to be a moredhel leader, to the Prince. Many dangers would stand in the way of this unlikely duo. This is where our story begins, with the threat of war looming again in the north.

Chapter 1

Into A Dark Night



lood-soaked rags collected at the boy's feet. One by one, he tended the wincing soldier's purple wounds, stitched, salved, bandaged, did what little he could in the leaping golden halo of firelight. Fortunately for his roadside patient, he could do more than most. Fingers slick with alum ointment, he worked fervently to tie off a catgut cord, then brushed the injury with a light touch that to the untrained eye would seem only a friendly pat—others would recognize the telltale hand gesture as a magical ward against infection.

"Done," Owyn sighed, wiping his hands on a rust-colored cloth. "No guarantees, though. The stitches may hold all the way to LaMut. Then again, push too hard and you could be bleeding like a stuck pig on Midsummers" Owyn was a young son of a minor noble in Tiburn, making his way home. Much to his father's dismay, Owyn showed an early interest in magic, and his studies included some of the healing techniques taught by the Priests of Sung. When Owyn happened upon a tall elf in chains, led by a wounded human knight, he offered his help. The knight turned out to be none other than Seigneur Locklear from Prince Arutha's court—one of the Kingdom men to stand beside Arutha during the siege of Armengengar, years ago.

"You did—fine," Seigneur Locklear replied, smiling approval before rolling down his sleeve. "It'll scar, but it's good for a noble's reputation. Lets the Kingdom folk know he isn't resting on his laurels and it impresses the ladies. I'll be sure to look you up in Tiburn if ever I need stitching up again." The boy accepted the compliment with a humble nod while he packed away the rest of his medical supplies, his thoughts

focused instead on the third man who slumped in the shadows across from them. Despite the manacles that bound the stranger's hands and the distance that separated them, the boy felt dreadfully exposed, his avenues of escape limited should Locklear's elf-looking prisoner decide to liberate himself. "What did he do?" Owyn whispered, jerking his head towards the man.

"Gorath? Let's just say that he had the disadvantage of being at the wrong place at the wrong time," Locklear said cautiously. He snatched a greenish apple out of his knapsack, offering one to Owyn. "I have to take him to Krondor."

"Did he kill someone?" Owyn asked.

"No."

"He attacked you."

The Seigneur wiped apple juice from his mouth, shook his head. "No, no, not exactly."

"Well, who cut you up, then?"

Before Locklear could reply, Gorath leapt forward, his chains writhing between his wrists like metallic vipers. Something was happening! Owyn cringed as he scrambled through a bedlam of shuffling feet, and impish flames, like tiny hot blossoms, touched his skin as above him steel clashed against steel. Abruptly, a careless kick folded him in two. "Get out from underfoot!" Gorath shouted. "Assassin in the camp!"

The moredhel warrior seized the assassin. "Do not struggle so, Haseth. Be glad I am in a forgiving mood," Gorath hissed, crushing his opponent's windpipe in his grasp. "The goddess of death will treat you with more mercy." When Gorath turned away from the fallen assassin, Locklear walked up to the corpse and frowned. "He may have valuables," Locklear said, finally. "We might want to look him over."

The trio collected some food, and a few lockpicks from the fallen moredhel assassin. Looking thoughtful, Locklear smiled slightly. "I have a friend in Krondor who's shown me how to use these—though I'm no match for him. They might prove useful anyway."

Gorath seemed distant, and paid no attention to Locklear as he rifled through Haseth's belongings. Although the moredhel warrior didn't appear grieved about killing the assassin that had followed them from the Northlands, his eyes had a baleful look that fell somewhere between hatred and rage. Several times he glanced back at the corpse

that lay behind them in the dust, his thoughts unguessable from his expression.

Owyn noticed Gorath's discomfort. "Do you wish to bury him? We could do that."

"It is not our way. I am simply somewhat disturbed that he should come after me. He was ... a kinsman. There are other things that trouble me as well." Gorath looked intently at Locklear. "Delekhan's assistants are slow but not altogether stupid. Another like Haseth and you'll only have my corpse to drag before your Prince Arutha."

The son of the Baron of Land's End rubbed his mustache anxiously, looking at the corpse of the *moredhel* assassin. "Sorry, you don't get off that easy. As long as you are under my command you are forbidden to die, *moredhel*. I've gone to far too much trouble keeping you alive to bury you now." Opening his satchel, Locklear produced a silver key and brusquely whirled Gorath around. "It's time that we took the chains off of you. It'll be far easier for you to defend yourself if your hands are free to swing a sword again."

Owyn's mouth fell open, and he waved his staff at Locklear, as if the Seigneur had taken leave of his senses. "You're not just going to set him free, are you? I thought you said he was your prisoner." Locklear paid little attention to the young would-be magician. "He is my prisoner, Owyn, but the circumstances are terribly complicated. Even if he chose to sneak off, he'd be lucky to make it to the next town alive. This is the third such assassin we've run into since we left the Northlands and I have a feeling that more will be waiting for us. He will be much safer with me and I with him."

"As the boy would be," said Gorath, as he rubbed his wrists, then loosened the sword in his sheath. It seemed that nobody was paying attention to Owyn's worries. "If he were to whisper the wrong word in the wrong ear, he could easily be the death of us." Owyn began to feel slightly ill at ease after Gorath's remark—two armed warriors were looking at him strangely, and his few cantrips would do little to stop these fearsome-looking men. "Me? Who am I going to talk to? I'm not even heading in the same direction."

Noticing the boy's discomfort, Locklear came over to Owyn's side and placed a gauntleted hand on his shoulder. "It wouldn't be a matter of who you talked to, Owyn. There will be ears listening for word of a *moredhel* traveling with a noble. Damnation. I should have thought

about this when you entered camp. ... For the time being, you're my ward. Once we arrive safely at the palace, you'll be free to go your own way." Owyn's heart leapt at the prospect of going to the Prince's court at Krondor, but he felt the tug of his other duties; he had tarried too long in Locklear's camp already. "But I have pressing business in Tiburn ..." he said, somewhat weakly and without conviction.

Locklear's face grew stern. "This is not a subject of debate! We must get to Krondor. My mission is of critical importance and I don't have time to improvise an easy solution. The only other possible option would be to slit your throat and leave you dying. I have absolutely no desire to do that. Do you understand?" Owyn was convinced—Locklear was not a man to be trifled with. At least Prince Arutha could send a note back with Owyn explaining to his father that his son had been detained on royal business. Owyn sat back down. "Yes. So, can you at least tell me why I'm being kidnapped?"

Locklear laughed, almost an innocent boy's laugh. "Please, a Seigneur of Arutha's court does not kidnap people. I prefer to think of this as ... a detour. Do we have a deal?" Owyn was now completely resigned to his fate, and decided to make the best of it. "I don't seem to have a choice, now do I?" said Owyn, smiling weakly. Locklear slapped Owyn on the back. "That's the spirit. Time to hightail south before Delekhan's assassins catch our scent again. They'll likely come looking when Haseth doesn't return from his mission."



Owyn pointed to a box by the road. "It appears to be a chest—but it seems to have a special lock on it." Rough in its construction, the chest showed the marks of unsuccessful attempts to force it open. "A faerie chest," said Gorath. "They are wordlocked, and only the proper combination can open the chest. As you can see, the writing is *moredhel*." Gorath stooped over and thumbed the wheels on the lock, and the chest opened. Inside was a suit of Kingdom armor and sword. "*Moredhel* often keep supplies in such boxes, knowing that the boxes will not be opened by any but the *moredhel*."

Their trip south towards Krondor had brought other unexpected surprises. Traps were set in the road for unwary travelers, but Owyn was able to avoid the two mystically charged poles. Locklear looked concerned about the foiled trap nonetheless. "This took some time for them to assemble. I thought perhaps the assassins that had attacked us

thus far had followed us through the Inclindel, but there are too many of them, even to chase a renegade like Gorath. Delekhan has to be calling on spies already placed within the Kingdom.” Gorath shook his head. “But Delekhan sits in Sar-Sargoth. Word of my escape could only have traveled as we have come ...”

Locklear’s voice rose, interrupting the moredhel. “The fact that we have been attacked this far south suggests otherwise.” Sensing that the two were already at odds, Owyn sought to defuse their tension. “I have never been a witness to it, but I have heard of a talent called mind speech. Very few magicians have it, but the ability allows men to communicate over very long distances. Perhaps Delekhan might have hired such help.”

Regarding the boy with amused respect, Gorath nodded. “It is ... possible. Delekhan was very interested in gathering up those of my tribe gifted with any of the ability.” Locklear seemed convinced too.” And if he has the capacity, then undoubtedly he will use it. So we have a choice: we continue straight south or we try to find this magician. If we take the war to him, we might stand a better chance of getting to Krondor alive. But first we should find our way to LaMut—there may be news there that would be of interest to a Seigneur, a moredhel, and a boy traveling to Krondor.”



LaMut was a large town, and Locklear decided it would be wise to go in for supplies. In many ways, the town looked like something created by an alcoholic on a binge; rude dwarven shacks smashed up against delicate elven shops while weird Tsurani taverns grew from a press of Kingdom-style dwellings. A sign outside the city gate summed it up well: All who visit LaMut, are equal for in LaMut all are equally queer.

The garrison was the logical first place to visit. The LaMut garrison consisted of many Tsurani soldiers, stranded after the Riftwar; they soon became the most feared and loyal force under Prince Arutha, and were entrusted with security at the Prince’s wedding to Anita some 10 years ago. If LaMut was not safe, then few places in the Kingdom could be considered a haven. They would sleep soundly here.

The fortress was impressive. Sitting high on a hill overlooking LaMut, the military outpost had been constructed to head off a possible moredhel assault on the western border of the Kingdom. They

followed a road that snaked through town and up the rocky hill on which the garrison sat. After speaking with the sentries at the gate, they were lead under the fortress's massive iron portcullis. Captain Belford stood as they entered the guardroom. "It's good to see you once again, Locklear," he said, extending his hand.

"I share that sentiment. What news have you? How is Earl Kasumi?" Locklear asked, as the men shook hands. Earl Kasumi was one of the Tsurani commanders stranded in Midkemia after the Riftwar. Granted freedom and a command of the LaMut garrison by King Lyam, the Tsurani warriors under Earl Kasumi became one of the most feared, and fiercely loyal fighting units in the Kingdom.

They sat on hard wooden chairs as Belford replied. "He's well, but he's off taking care of some business with a few new guards come through the rift from Kelewan. As for the rest of us, we're looking for a group of Tsurani grey warriors who slipped through the rift just before it closed." Locklear looked puzzled. "King Lyam and Emperor Ichindar granted grey warriors freedom and new status, I thought."

"Yes, but the agreement doesn't allow for nationalization of stolen goods. It seems they may have absconded with a valuable ruby from Makala's entourage," said Belford.

"Makala? The Tsurani Great One?" Owyn asked in disbelief and awe. Belford smiled. "Yes. He has been talking to Prince Arutha about establishing a permanent rift to encourage trade between the Kingdom and Kelewan. He's really throwing his weight around trying to get his ruby back. If you should happen to come across it, bring it back here—he's offering a reward!" They thanked him for the information and left.

Despite his plans to stop at Fletcher's Post, Locklear wandered into the Blue Wheel Inn. The inn, like LaMut, was part Tsurani, part Kingdom in decor. Locklear caught sight of a dwarf staring at him. The dwarf drew on his pipe, and languid smoke plumed from the old codger's mouth as he studied Locklear, Owyn, and Gorath, each in turn. Although he had long ago lost the use of his left eye to a more-dhel swordstroke, his right eye still burned brightly beneath his bushy eyebrows.

"Being as a dwarf ne'er forgets as much as his own name, I ken recognize a strapping young man before me who last I saw was a boy."

Bowing slightly, Locklear addressed the dwarf. "No slight intended, but I fear I don't recall the occasion."

The dwarf sighed. "As like the rest of your human kin ... none among you can remember much past a week. If not for we canny dwarves you would have forgotten that you have a Kingdom at all! Fetched you out of a cellar along with a score o' womenfolk at the Battle of Sethanon! Don'tcha remember me, Locky?"

The Seigneur's eyes widened in recognition. "Dubal An Loch, of course! Glad to see you! I hadn't recognized you without the eye patch."

"What's a dwarf to do? I won this scratch fair an' square and I'll be a dragon's mother before I'll cover it up again. Shouldn't have done so in the first place. Now I just sit here to jabber with that loon of a Tsurani bartender and 'ave me a few beers. Not much to do with the Mac Mordain Cadall all collapsed. A Brak Nurr has been seen down there. They'll be offering a hefty reward for its slaying I'll wager you if tradition holds, too. Something of a challenge as they are fierce beasties, even by dwarven standards." Dubal An Loch drew deeply on his pipe again.

"Reward, eh," said Locklear with a grin. "Maybe we'll check in with your cousins in the Mac Mordain Cadall." Locklear wanted to give the rest of the inn the impression that the three travelers were no more than adventurous wanderers, but even then his thoughts turned to Krondor. Dubal sized up young Owyn. "P'raps ye better talk to the bar-keep Sumani, here; he might give you a few fightin' points," sneered the dwarf, pointing his pipe at Owyn. "Perhaps you are right, Dubal," said Owyn in crisp retort, "but I doubt we have the luxury of walking the hallways of the Mac Mordain Cadall this week." Locklear nodded in agreement. "Maybe some other time, you old dwarf—but with my luck, some knight will have already claimed your reward!"

Locklear made his way over to the tavern keeper, who touched a gnarled fist to his forehead and then to his heart, before speaking somberly. "Honor to your houses. Be welcome to the Blue Wheel Inn. May you find the drinks to your liking and the company of our patrons pleasurable. If there is anything that my servants or I may do, you need only ask Sumani."

Locklear returned an awkward bow. "Ah ... honors to your house as well, Sumani. ... Am I correct in believing this to be a drinking

establishment?" Sumani's eyes betrayed a flicker of amusement. "So it is. We serve many of your Midkemian drinks as well as a few from the Tsuranuanni Empire as well. Perhaps I might interest you in a cup of chocha?"

The tavern began to feel like home to Locklear. "You wouldn't happen to have any Keshian ale about, would you?" The Tsurani was quick to answer his guest. "I shall see some delivered to you at once. Is there anything else I can do to put you at ease here?"

"Dubal here said that there's more to you than meets the eye," said Locklear. Sumani shuffled closer, pitching his voice so as not to disturb others that were drinking in the tavern. "I was not always a tavern keeper. As a soldier serving House Shinzawai under Earl Kasumi, I was trapped here when the rift gate was closed at the end of the Riftwar. It was our belief that we would never see our families in Tsuranuanni or the green skies of Kelewan again. Since we were given our freedom by your King, I decided to content myself with opening a tavern here where my garrison now serves. Despite my ... modest achievements for Earl Kasumi, I grew tired of fighting after the Riftwar."

"We were up at the garrison earlier and they told us that a group of grey warriors stole a ruby of some importance. Are the grey warriors some kind of special armed force on Kelewan?" Locklear asked quietly. A slow fire seemed to burn behind Sumani's brown eyes. "Special, yes, but not in the way you imagine. The grey warriors are men without honor, men whose houses have been destroyed by an opponent house. Such men must live off the land until they die, although I have heard that Mara of the Acoma has accepted many such men into her estate. Others have learned they may be granted freedom if they can reach the Kingdom. Many die trying."

"Where would such men go once they got here?"

"Away from LaMut, wherever they might go. Although the members of the garrison here are bound by Kingdom law, many of the soldiers still live by Tsurani custom as I do. It is not easy to fight our feelings about the grey ones. If indeed these grey warriors have stolen rubies, I suggest you seek out Keifer Alescook in Loriel, a gem merchant whose name I have heard on many occasions in a disreputable context."

"I get the feeling this ruby theft isn't an isolated incident," Locklear said to Sumani quietly, over another mug of Keshian ale. Sumani scowled as he dried a glass. "You listen to my words. This is the sixth

such theft in the past year. Twice, gems have been stolen near the Assembly of Magicians from Great One Makala's entourage. That would be no simple feat to accomplish, even for a master thief. Whoever it is that is responsible, he must fear little if he doesn't fear the wrath of a Great One. I would take care following this thief, friend. I sense he is very dangerous."



The three unlikely travelers left LaMut the next morning, and stopped outside the town. Locklear turned to the others. "My bump of trouble says we should look into this gem theft. Traveling to Loriel may throw our moredhel trackers off our scent, and all these coincidences—Gorath, the gem thefts—may be more than just coincidences." While Owyn did not look pleased at the extended detour, Gorath's expression betrayed no feeling.

The road to Loriel was long, but the monotony was broken when Gorath stopped. "Someone approaches."

Locklear smiled. Although the approaching man seemed half a hand shorter for the passage of 11 years, his halting stride was still as personal to him as his signature. Ages past Issac had suffered his limp proudly, worn it like an injury sustained on a field of battle and for that he had gained the respect and admiration of Krondor's young squires, Locklear among them. His tragic expulsion from Arutha's court had been a blow to them all.

"If mine eyes are not deceived, there's a ghost before me. Squire Locky! You're wearing your years well, old friend, despite the grey in your locks. ..." Locklear clapped his old friend on the back, raising a small cloud of dust. "Scoundrel, I would have thought you strung up for impersonating a Duke by now! How are you, Issac?! It's been since Arutha's wedding, hasn't it?"

Issac looked sad for a moment, then brightened. "The very day. You should have heard the fit Master of Ceremonies deLacy threw when he found out I wasn't the Count of Dorgin's son. I daresay he would have tossed me over the palace walls himself if he hadn't been busy with the details of the blessed event. I've kept busy since then, spent the last few years on the road doing odd jobs along the border. So, what brings a member of Krondor's court so far afield with such unusual company?"

Without missing a beat, Locklear lied convincingly. "Sad, sad duty. King Lyam's heir has drowned, and the elves wished to send a messenger

along to Rillanon to express their sorrow to the Kingdom. As I was in Elvandar when the word arrived, I agreed to accompany Thorgath here as far as Malac's Cross. Listen, Issac," said Locklear quietly. "Do you know of anyone in this area that seems to have unusual skills? Someone who seems like they know your thoughts?"

Issac's attention seemed elsewhere, despite the unusual question. "No ... for a fact I can't say that I have, but a certain pokiir player that I lost a great deal of money to in Eggley comes to mind. Name of Devon, I believe. It took me quite a while to make up the funds I lost during a single night playing against him. He very nearly took every sovereign I'd made in a month's time." Locklear nodded slowly. The gem dealer in Loriel would come first, but Eggley would not prove to be a difficult detour.



After avoiding two *moredhel* ambushes lying in wait for travelers on the main road, Locklear and the others soon saw the road sign for Loriel, a small town clustered along a small, dirt road. Several children were playing in the road and nearby field, and the knight from Krondor strode up to them. "Little squires," said Locklear, "I'm looking for Keifer Alescook." In unison, the children pointed to a house just down the road.

A thin little man greeted them at the door. "I'm Keifer Alescook. Have you come to buy or sell some gems?" he questioned in a frail voice. Locklear moved closer to the door. "We're looking for a ruby that may have been stolen by a group of grey warriors. Have you purchased any gemstones from such men?" Alescook looked at Locklear, then at the tall brooding *moredhel* who stood behind him.

"I don't know what you're talking about," the man said. "I don't buy stolen merchandise. You might try talking to a fellow I ran into north of Hawk's Hollow about it. Name's Issac, if I recall." The man looked about nervously. "I'm ... er ... not open for business right now. You'll have to come back later." Before Locklear could say another word, Keifer had closed the door. "He won't go anywhere," Locklear said reassuringly. "But I think we need to catch up to Issac."

Gorath agreed. "He worked a great deception against your Prince once; it could be that he has no love for Arutha now." Locklear seemed offended, but restrained himself. Gorath was not only an excellent swordsman, he also showed an element of—wisdom? "No, not Issac. A

scoundrel he might be, but no traitor." Gorath shrugged. "It should be easy to find him. He left no secret as to his movements."

They found Issac, who had camped near the roadside back towards Hawk's Hollow. "Issac!," called Locklear. "We were on our way to Eggley, to see this 'Devon' character. But I must ask you, did you by any chance purchase a ruby from Keifer Alescook in Lorient? He told us he sold it to someone named Issac and the description he gave us sounded like you."

Issac looked nonplussed. "Why? You want to buy it from me? It's not like it's the only ruby in the world, you know."

"The ruby he sold you was stolen from a Tsurani magician who was passing through LaMut. The garrison would like the stone back. We were hoping we could talk you into at least returning it to Keifer to get your money back," said Locklear, now a bit suspicious of his former friend as well. It had been many years since they were both squires during Arutha's wedding, and those years had changed many men, including Locklear.

Issac shook his head. "I'm sorry to hear about your dilemma, but I had no idea the stone was stolen when I paid Keifer's price and I have my own little problem. I need the stone so I can pay off a sword crafter so I can get my blade repaired."

"Can't you pay him with gold?"

"He specifically barter in gems and the ruby will cover my costs plus a little more. I should have enough left over to eat for a month or more."

Locklear thought for a moment. "What if we can repair your sword for you?"

"What, here? In the middle of the road?"

Locklear tried to put the former squire at ease. "Since I don't have a workshop, I don't see that we can do it anywhere else." Issac looked uncertain. "Well ... I suppose. My blade is fairly expensive and I'd hate to see it further damaged. It's conceivable you could do more harm than good, so unless you're really skilled at weaponcraft ... do you really think you're that good?"

An image of Dubal came unbidden into Locklear's mind, and the Seigneur laughed. "Good enough. Your blade?"

"Please be careful, I paid quite a bit for it." Issac drew out a longsword, finely made but notched in several areas along the blade.

Taking out his whetstone, Locklear worked on the blade carefully. Soon the blade was repaired—not perfect, but still very, very sharp.

Issac admired Locklear's skill. "Well, I have to say this, you appear to know what you're doing. It looks much better than it did. And it will hold the edge?"

Locklear waved the blade, and the metal glinted from the sun's rays. "You could cut up the whole of Delekhan's moss-rangers and it'd still be sharp for a month after."

"Well ... it looks as if you've come through on your end of the bargain. Remind me to give you the ruby before you leave." The four shared a meal by the fire, before sleeping for the night. Not trusting Issac, Gorath insisted on staying up for the night watch. Issac did not seem offended by the silent *moredhel*. "Suit yourself," he said, before turning his back on the embers and falling fast asleep.

When Issac and Locklear's group had parted ways, the Seigneur dropped his guard and allowed concern to furrow his brow. "I wanted to investigate this Devon person before, but I wasn't sure we'd have the time to take a detour. Now that Issac seems to know more than he's telling us, I think a visit to Eggleby is definitely in order."



Outside the town of Eggleby, Gorath scouted ahead and spied four figures huddling near a tree. They did not notice Gorath, and were talking among themselves. Locklear looked only slightly concerned at the news. "Probably just rogues out for a stroll; we should just avoid them." Gorath disagreed. "They were speaking *moredhel*."

The three agreed to flank the waiting group and try to turn the trap back on the trappers, and Owyn soon found himself and the others facing off against a *moredhel* spellcaster and three warriors. Narrowly avoiding a blast of mystic frost, Gorath leapt at the spellcaster, blade flashing. Locklear dueled with another *moredhel*, while Owyn used his arts to blind another dark brother. But one *moredhel*, left unoccupied and seeing Owyn's mystic abilities, made the young son of the Count of Tiburn his intended victim. Owyn parried some of the blows with his staff, but the *moredhel* had already scored minor strikes to Owyn's chest when a blade exploded out of the throat of the enraged *moredhel*. Gorath stood over the warm corpse, and threw a gold ring inset with red enamel to Owyn. "A Ring of Prandur," gasped Owyn, his curiosity about magic calming him after his almost fatal encounter

with a moredhel highwayman. The Ring was capable of providing magical light—much less clumsy than torches. Locklear was pocketing some gold, and vials containing a green liquid. “Restoratives,” said the Seigneur. “We may need it after more encounters like this.”

Owyn looked forward to the bustle of an inn, but Eggley was a ghost town. Many of the houses looked recently deserted, and the only signs of life seemed to be a light in the window of the tavern. A lone mercenary sat inside the inn. “What can I do for you today?” he grumbled.

Locklear looked around the empty common room. “I do believe this is the loneliest tavern I’ve ever visited. Where is everyone?”

The mercenary laughed, a hard sound. “Everyone is elsewhere. With the exception of myself and a handful of boarders that have wandered in from off the road, there’s not been another soul in town since the festival.”

“Everyone? Why? What happened here?”

“Come the eighth hour of last evening, a cloaked gentleman entered through that same door and took a seat. He ordered a joint of beef, a loaf of bread, and a mug of ale. I remember these things because I had ordered the same. Soon as he finished his meal he went to the tavern keeper and tossed down fifty gold sovereigns, turned round, and was gone by the door. Before the first of those coins stopped their spinning on the counter, the rest of the people in the tavern rushed out after him. The keeper didn’t even latch the door.”

“Some sort of deal?” Locklear was puzzled.

“Nope, some sort of damn local ritual. It seems I arrived in the middle of a ceremony called the Festival of the Stranger. Traditionally the elders of the town would gather in the tavern and draw lots and the one with the longest lot was dubbed the Stranger. On the first night of the festival, the Stranger comes around and offers members of the town fake sovereigns—called them nimptos—and then the citizens of the town leave to sleep in the fields. I wasn’t aware of what was going on. ...”

Locklear shook his head. “And they’re supposed to stay in the fields?”

“Ah no, no. The next morning, the Stranger is to circle the village three times while swinging a strand of hemp over his head. When he is done, he cuts a length from the rope and sets it on the road to let the people know that they can come back. They then know that the goddess

Silban is looking with good fortune on their township and that she won't strike their fields dead. If the strand is not placed, however, it means that she is displeased and any citizen that attempts to return to town will be struck dead."

Owyn began to piece together the event that left Eggley deserted. "Was the Stranger killed by Silban?"

The mercenary snorted again. "No, not by Silban but by a man named the Collector to whom he owed money, and who didn't know about the town's tradition. It didn't matter to the citizens of Eggley, though. They still chose to see it as a sign from Silban and they haven't returned since, think the place is cursed and won't return until the curse is lifted. They've relocated in Tanneurs, Hawk's Hollow, and a few in Malac's Cross. They all believe they've done the right thing and have given me permission to do whatever I wanted here. Out of respect for them, I've decided to keep the old town name of Eggley."

Locklear scoffed. "I don't know. It seems people would have to be pretty thick to believe all of that."

The mercenary cast his gaze towards Locklear. "Would they? Would you have the nerve to spit on a shrine of Ishap?"

"No ... I guess I see your point," muttered a chastened Locklear.

The mercenary folded his arms across his chest. "Everyone has their beliefs. Many people in these villages were farmers at one time, and it is difficult for them to simply turn their backs on the goddess of nature. They require her blessing before they can go on to new lives. You should remember that before you judge something to be ignorant. Now as the new tavern keeper, what can I do for you?"

"Which god did you say this Festival of the Stranger was in celebration of?" Gorath asked. The mercenary looked into his mug. "The fertility goddess—Bringer of Harvests, the Earth Mother, Silban. Pick a name. They all mean the same thing. She's the wench to whom ma and pa ugly pray to have little runt ugly and enough wheat to eat through the winter. Can't say I have much use for her."

Locklear knew that men of arms had little time for the harvest, but being from Land's End, he had many close friends—farmers—who owed their lives to Silban. "Is there a temple of hers nearby?"

"Straight west of Eggley, then north at the crossroads. Big white building with the columns, smells like a whore's bedchamber. Hard to miss." Locklear ignored the insult, and tried to change the topic. "Now

I think of it, a man we know told us he lost at pokiir to someone called Devon here in Eggley. Would you be he?"

The man looked up at Locklear, eyes clear and steady. "Depends on why you're asking, now doesn't it? If you're interested in playing a hand or two, then I might say I'm the same man. If, however, your friend decided to send round a few bravos to collect what I rightfully won from him ..." Devon's features tightened as he regarded Locklear and the moredhel standing next to him; the third, slight figure carrying a staff was no relief either.

Locklear waved self-deprecatingly and laughed, trying to put Devon at ease. "What's yours is yours as far as I'm concerned. I was just wondering how good a player you were. Issac said that you had an unusual talent for it."

Devon looked genuinely surprised. "Issac? Issac said I had an unusual talent for it? Now if that's not the pot calling the kettle black, I've never heard it at all. While we were playing, it was as if that scuff knew every thought I had in my head. Every time he would fold he'd just look over at his elven friends with a big smile."

Locklear's mouth started to drop. "Elven friends? Like Thorgath here?" Devon's gaze returned to his mug, and Owyn noticed that his left hand, which had slipped under the table, returned to view. "They could have been brothers by the look of them. Yeah, they looked kinda like your friend, but they damn sure weren't elves. They were wearing the clothes of Delekhan's moss-troopers. Moredhel. No doubt about it." The three hurriedly excused themselves, and gathered outside. Gorath's eyes showed only a hint of satisfaction. Locklear was chastened. "Well, Issac has some explaining to do now. First, however, we should visit the Temple of Silban and tell them what's happened. Perhaps we can receive the Earth Goddess's blessing."



The Priestess had been glad to receive news of the festival; soon, the Collector would be brought in to "speak" with the Priestess, and that unfortunate soul would taste a goddess's displeasure. And Gorath had no problem finding Issac, although this time, Issac spotted Locklear approaching. "Though I be no master cipher, you haven't been gone long enough for a journey to Rillanon. What has you so quickly on the road to Hawk's Hollow?"

The Seigneur's eyes burned brightly, and Owyn noticed that both Locklear and Gorath had loosened their swords. "We met your pokiir-playing friend in Eggley and he told us a bit about the match he played with you. He told us about the elven friends that came along with you, but as you pointed out before, elves rarely come out of Elvandar and would be very unlikely to be traveling from town to town playing pokiir. Talk, Issac. Why are you working for the moredhel, Issac? What are they doing in the Kingdom?"

Issac looked nervously at Gorath and Locklear. Locklear's martial skills were well known even when the two men were squires under deLacy years ago. Issac would fare better armed with a willow branch, blindfolded, against a Tsurani Strike Force. "I don't seem to be the only one keeping company with them, Seigneur," he said, somewhat shakily.

Locklear was unimpressed with Issac's powers of deduction. "I'm not in a mood to be trifled with, Issac. Talk!"

"Seeing as how they've seen fit to dismiss me, I can't see it will hurt matters. They're operating out of a barn near Yellow Mule, south of Sarth. I found an old farmer there who wasn't particular about who rented his land and harbored loyalty to neither his lord nor to the Prince. A moredhel named Nago moved in there and has been using it as a base of operations to hire Quegian mercenaries."

"Nago," whispered Gorath, his eyes defocusing for a moment.

"Makes sense," said Locklear. "Mercenaries would be able to move in the Kingdom without being noticed. What are they planning?" Issac shook his head. "I made it a policy not to know. Knowledge has a tendency to shorten your life, especially when you're working with lunatics. Think what you like, but this was purely a business transaction. They paid me and I made the pick-ups and drop-offs to the moredhel lockchests. That was all I did for them."

Gorath looked at Issac, and spoke in an even, cold tone. "Tell us what you know. I want answers, Issac."

"It would be like nailing the lid shut on my own coffin. They're already looking to silence me. They've got assassins combing the mountains. ..." Obviously, Issac preferred to face these two men rather than Nago's hired killers. "Give us what we want to know and we will try to clear a way south for you," offered Locklear, without a hint of compassion; this was now business, the business of the Kingdom. Issac

was suspicious. "Why help me? Aren't you afraid I'll turn around and tell the moredhel where you are?"

"You've already taken care of that problem yourself. They might invite you down for a friendly chat with the leader who will forgive all, give you a hearty slap on the back, then lop your head off. Kill the spies. It's always the first step in an invasion." Locklear felt cold, the same coldness that came on him in a darkened bedroom in Armengar, where he saw his first love killed by Murmandamus's forces.

Issac began to panic. "Invasion? Don't be absurd! The Northlands are in a state of civil war. They would be completely incapable of making an organized assault."

Locklear spat on the ground. "Why the efforts to hire the Quegians? Why so many moredhel assassins placed inside the Kingdom? You're smarter than that, Issac. Just give us the information and I'll see to it that none of this is ever mentioned to the Prince. You said this Nago fellow was using a barn as a base of operations. What could we expect if we run across him?"

Issac shivered. "Trouble. He's a magician, well armed, and was carrying enough gold in sovereigns to hire several dozen Quegian mercenaries for months. Rowe nearly fainted when Nago handed over a pouch with four hundred golden sovereigns—"

"Rowe?"

Issac continued, speaking quickly. "The old man who owns the barn. If Nago is half as ruthless as I suspect, he'll have killed the old fellow by now, if he hasn't hired him, but I couldn't be certain."

Gorath stepped towards Issac. "What were your last orders before Nago released you?"

"I released myself. I had the feeling I was coming to the end of my usefulness to the moredhel and I made my plans accordingly. When they asked me to pick up a ruby from Keifer Alescook and deliver it to a specific moredhel lockchest, I realized they were planning to take care of two problems at the same time. The moredhel courier would be an assassin. They had planned to kill me and, at the same time, erase any evidence as to whom the ruby had been delivered."

Locklear turned away from Issac, his mind already on Nago. "Issac, your continued assistance to the moredhel will not be looked on favorably by the Prince, who will do more to you than we have. Head south,

Issac, and stay out of harm's way. A storm is brewing, and no matter who survives, you can be sure they will not view you with much sympathy."



Locklear led Owyn and Gorath back to LaMut to return the ruby before searching for Nago. Sumani was as gracious as before, and they soon made their way back to the garrison. Captain Belford greeted them with a smile. "What brings you back here?" he asked cordially. Locklear drew out the ruby they had discovered. Holding it out for Belford to see, the gemstone caught a shaft of sunlight, splashing the walls with a thousand shards of twinkling red light. "Makala's ruby," breathed an awestruck Captain Belford. "Are you returning it?" In response, Locklear handed the ruby to Captain Belford. "I'm glad you found this," the captain said, placing the gemstone into a small, velvet-lined box. "It will be good to get Makala off my back. I've sent so many men out looking for this blasted thing there's hardly anyone left in the garrison!" He retrieved a pouch from a locked chest in the corner of the room. "Here you are, 100 gold sovereigns. Thank you, gents!"

Locklear put the pouch in his pack and they left. "And now, to pay back a farmer we've never met," smiled Locklear coldly.

The road south led past Sarth, where the famous Abbey of Ishap guarded a trove of tomes and books, second only to Stardock. They came upon a farmer traveling the same road. A quizzical look appeared on the farmer's face as Locklear motioned to him.

"This is a bad time to travel, gentlemen," said the farmer. "I hope for your good health that you have found shelter against the coming tempest."

Locklear looked surprised. "Tempest?"

The farmer smiled warmly. "Surely you have heard. The learned monks of Sarth have predicted a terrible storm is coming this way and I would hate to think of anyone caught out in it. Why, a man could catch his death of the fevers. If you would like, you may ride it out in my barn."

Locklear was careful to play the role of a road-weary traveler, slightly suspicious but eager to find a warm place to spend the night. "And what profit would you turn in this enterprise?"

The farmer's smile broadened. "Ten golden sovereigns, a reasonable sum, and guard over my cows. You and the boy can sleep in the hay loft of my barn, but I don't take in elves."

"Twenty gold pieces, the elf stays with us, and we each get a hard roll for breakfast."

The farmer shook his head. "Twenty-four gold and the lot of you milk cows the next morning. That's the offer. Take it or leave it."

Locklear laughed. "Deal. Where is this barn of yours?"

"Past the Temple of Sung, just on your left. You can't miss it."

Locklear shook the farmer's hand. "Thank you, friend ...?"

The farmer continued smiling. "Rowe. My name is Rowe."



Gorath, Locklear, and Owyn carefully made their way towards the barn, far off the road. As sunlight waned, they agreed to attack the *moredhel* they had watched coming to and from the farmhouse. Gorath counted only four *moredhel*, including the magician, whom he recognized.

The door splintered under Gorath's blow. "Nago," he thundered, "step forth and meet your doom!" The *moredhel* who had kept watch fell forward with an quarrel in his throat, while the others scrambled to retrieve their weapons. One, however, stood quickly and gestured. Flames flickered up his sword. "Nago," whispered Owyn. Nago stopped, and looked puzzled for a moment, then clutched his eyes. "Insolent pup, what have you done?" screamed the *moredhel* spell-caster, before his jaw was broken by Owyn's swinging staff. After watching their leader felled by a wisp of a boy, the other surviving *moredhel* fled, and Locklear felt it wise to leave to scene as quickly as possible as well. Gorath bent over, and slit the throat of the unconscious Nago. Blood ran into the hay and dirt, while Locklear and the others stole away into the night.



After a fitful night, Owyn's heart lightened. They were very close to Krondor now, and after a few hours of traveling, the roadbed began to slope towards the sea, leading eventually through a pair of iron gates and into the majestic seat of the principality. "Krondor," Locklear said with a sigh that seemed to indicate both relief and concern. "If assassins have been sent against us, it seems a safe bet they'll be lying in wait for us between here and the palace. What's your guess, Gorath? Do we go in now or not?"

"We have no choice. I must speak to Arutha."

Gulls wheeled in the skies over the capital of the Western Realm, weaving daring circles about the parapets of the palace, narrowly avoiding the Prince's standards fluttering in the salty breeze. Below, the city folk of Krondor took little notice of the majestic display as they hurried about their own affairs. The gates were surrounded by a milling crowd, however, and it appeared that construction was under-way. "Not wise to press through a crowd to the front gates," muttered Locklear. "I know another way."



Much to Gorath's dismay, they found themselves in the sewers of Krondor. A young boy sprang from the shadows and called a challenge to Locklear. "Who be you and what would you in the Thieves' Highway?"

Locklear stood firm. "I be Seigneur Locklear and I do whatever I will in the Prince's sewers! If you're half as intelligent as you seem then I would advise you step out of our way."

The young boy looked unimpressed. "Well, I'm Limm and fast with a blade I am. Step any further and I'll do you, I will!"

Locklear looked gravely at the young thief, who was no doubt a member of the Mockers—the Thieves' Guild in Krondor. "The only thing you will do, my young friend, is die an unfortunate death on the point of my sword. I used to fence with Jimmy the Hand and I'm a faster blade than he. Do you still wish to cross me?"

Limm stopped, and looked uncertain. "Jimmy the Hand? He's a legend, sire. Next you'll be telling me you've lain with the Empress Lakeisha of Kesh ... I'd advise you to be nice like, however, cause I got five blokes waiting a little on down to make sure nothing happens to me, see. I don't suppose you've come on behalf of Seigneur James, have you?"

"Seigneur James? Then you don't ... well, perhaps we have."

Limm regained some of his brashness. "All right then, I'll be off now as I've got business with the Upright Man. You'll have to come and tell me some more of your fables about Jimmy the Hand." The boy grinned suddenly at Locklear. "If you're half as intelligent as you seem," he said mockingly, "you'll have no trouble with the traps we've set down here." With that the boy vanished. If he hadn't been listening for the footsteps, Locklear doubted that he could ever have heard them.

They traveled the sewers warily, as Locklear was unsure of the route Jimmy the Hand had shown him, long ago, to the palace entrance. In the meantime another surprise was in store for them, when they spied two men, dressed in black, each with a hawk emblazoned across his chest. "Nighthawks!" whispered Locklear. Owyn's heart froze with fear. "The Guild of Assassins? Here?" The boy swallowed hard. "Aye," said Locklear gravely. "Gorath, we must strike quickly, and when they fall we must cut their hearts out, else they come back as Black Slayers, defying even the will of Lims-Kragma."

This time they were lucky—the two Nighthawks exhibited none of their legendary extrasensory abilities, and were quickly felled by Gorath's savage attack and the Locklear's swordsmanship. Soon, both hearts were torn out and set to the torch.

Someone whistled.

Locklear spun around, fearing that they had left themselves open to attack by yet another band of Nighthawks. To his great surprise, however, a familiar friend stepped from the shadows.

"By the twelve gods, Locklear—your hair!"

"It's just like you, Jimmy. I haven't seen you in seven months, then I rescue you from a band of Nighthawks and the first thing you want to talk about is my bloody hair. What's going on around here? The front gate is smashed and there are Nighthawks loose in the sewers ..."

"Not Nighthawks. Impostors. Someone has been trying to convince Prince Arutha that the Guild of Death has reestablished operations here in Krondor and is using the sewers as their hideout, hoping that the Lancers will come down and clean out the place. In doing so, I think whoever is running the game hopes that the Lancers will root out the Mockers while they're at it."

"What, take out the Guild of Thieves? Doesn't seem likely from all the things you've told me from your days as a Mocker."

Jimmy nodded agreement. "More to the point, we know now that a few of the Nighthawks escaped to Romney when we smashed them up after that business with Princess Anita. They certainly won't dare tread Krondor's streets for a while yet. I'd been tracking around down here trying to find out more when I ran into those fellows. So, why have you come back to Krondor, Locky? I thought you were going to be gone another four months or so."

Locklear sighed deeply. "I've got bad news from the Northlands. Looks like the Dark Brothers are stirring again. They've raised Murmandamus's battle standard over Sar-Sargoth and there's a moredhel army gathering to attack the Kingdom. This moredhel used to be one of their clan chieftains, something of a hero during the Riftwar against the Tsurani, too. I thought Prince Arutha would be interested in talking to him."

James looked concerned. "I don't like this, Locky. The moredhel stirring again in the north and someone mimicking the Guild of Death. My bump of trouble says that things are going to get far worse before they get better. I assume since you're down here that you're trying to get into the palace the way I showed you a few years ago?"

"Yes, I was thinking I would have to pry off the grate somehow, but if you have the key, it would save me a great deal of trouble."

"Still on me. It's all yours. I can find my own way into the palace. I'm going to creep around a little while longer down here and see if I can unravel this particular mystery."

"Suit yourself. I, for one, am anxious to get out of this hole. Come see me at breakfast tomorrow after I've spoken to Prince Arutha!"

With James's directions, Locklear soon found a grate covering the entrance to a chamber and shaft leading up to the palace. The Royal Key of Krondor turned in the lock with a click and the grate swung open. Eager to leave the thick stench of excrement behind them, Locklear and the others hastened to a ladder affixed to the far wall of the chamber. Locklear led the way up the slimy rungs of the ladder. Behind him, Gorath and Owyn reluctantly did likewise, gagging on the noxious vapors in the shaft.

"This is nothing," Locklear grunted, shoving upwards against another grating. "All the windows in the palace are open right now. You ought to smell it in the winter."

Darkness surrounded them as they slithered out of the sewers and into a hallway, their only light provided by the faint flicker of distant firelight. Ten yards beyond them the hall joined with an elaborate colonnade stretching in either direction.

"Somehow I hadn't pictured my first visit to Krondor like this," Owyn sighed, falling resignedly into step behind Gorath and the Seigneur. "What, you didn't like the romantic tour?" Locklear chuckled. "Not many people get to see that way into the palace."

Drawing up short, Locklear's features brightened as he observed a pair of approaching figures lost in conversation. Self-conscious of his bedraggled condition, he straightened his uniform and cleared his throat loudly.

"Greetings, Prince Arutha and Master Magician Pug!"

One of the pair, a lanky, dark-haired man, ran to meet Locklear in the main corridor. Apparently, Locklear had arrived just in time to catch Prince Arutha, Pug, and others as they headed towards the meeting hall. Arutha laughed at Locklear's muddled state, a rare and surprisingly mirthful sound. "As glad as I am at the sight of you safely home again, Locklear, I can't say that my nose is as well pleased. I thought we had broken you and Seigneur James of clambering round in the sewers."

Locklear bowed low with only a hint of exaggerated pomp. "You know the way of old habits, Highness. We encountered a bit of trouble with the guards at the gates and so I chose a more expedient, although somewhat more disagreeable, path. It came to a happy end, however. James told us to send word that he is well and would see you in the morning."

Arutha laughed again, reminded of the countless times Jimmy the Hand had skulked about in the alleys and hidden niches of Krondor, protecting the Prince's life. "Incurable sewer rats, the both of you. I shall have to order that each of you be accompanied by a score of washing maidens to keep you presentable enough for court; you know Pug, of course, and this is Makala, from the Tsuranuanni Assembly of Magicians. Locklear looked at Pug, and was struck by the faint resemblance between the Master magician and Owyn. Makala was dressed in a heavy black robe, his craggy face surrounded by a thick white beard. Welcome home, Locky." Arutha hugged the Seigneur, much to the dismay of some of the Prince's protocol officials, and to the amusement of Pug.

Locklear returned the warm embrace and greeted the Master Magician as well. "Thank you. As happy as I am to be here, I'm afraid I come with bad news from the Northlands." Arutha's face turned dark and stern. The Northlands had brought harm to the Kingdom and those close to Arutha, dubbed the "Lord of the West" by Murmandamus, the crazed moredhel leader, 10 years ago. Arutha folded his arms across his chest. "I expected as much. With the

Nighthawks prowling my streets above and below, it can only mean that the moredhel are up to their old mischief. What can you tell me?"

The young Seigneur hesitated. With all the injuries suffered by Arutha at the hands of the Dark Brotherhood, Locklear was reluctant to introduce Gorath, despite the fact that he had grown to admire—and almost trust—his new comrade. "Actually, I have brought along a guest who can explain far better than I. My prince, this is Gorath, chieftain of the Ardanien Clan."

As Gorath stepped forward and removed his cloak, a figure behind a massive pillar stepped forth and drew a bow, the arrow tipped with a poison familiar to Arutha and his wife, Anita. But Pug's mystic senses were up to the task. "Assassin!" he cried. "Get down!" A bolt of energy intercepted the poisoned shaft in midflight, and continued on to the skulking moredhel assassin. Striking the archer midchest, the moredhel crumpled. Arutha stood, transfixed in disbelief.

Chapter 1 Walkthrough

Owyn, Gorath, and Locklear begin north of LaMut and south of Yabon. Your foes in Chapter 1 are limited to moredhel warriors in the beginning (with blue capes); you will meet at least two moredhel spellcasters (clad in yellow capes), and Quegian pirates and false Nighthawks (they do not rise and become Black Slayers after being killed), who nonetheless are tough opponents. Followers of the Midkemia God of Hunting, Guiswa, and ordinary rogues hide in the sewers below Krondor.

Side Quests

There are several side quests in Chapter 1; because there is no time limit on bringing Gorath to Krondor, gamers should complete these quests and build up their characters.

Your first stop, despite the detour, should be Yabon. Visit Brother Jeremy to undertake the Surveyor's Quest. Head south towards Hawk's Hollow, and stop in at LaMut to trigger the Grey Warriors Quest.

Before reaching the east-west road that leads to Hawk's Hollow and Lorient, pay a visit to the Mac Mordain Cadall to hunt the Brak -Nurr.

Make your way to Lorient, and meet Issac. He'll give you a hint to find Devon in Eggley. Follow the Superstitions Quest in Eggley, and return the ruby to LaMut. After confronting Issac with his deception, he will also give you information about the Telepath Quest. Head towards Sarth, kill Nago, and go to Krondor. The gates aren't working, so go through the sewers. Find James, get his key, and climb out of the muck to an audience with Prince Arutha.

The following side quests are in Chapter 1:

- ◀▶ The Grey Warriors Quest
- ◀▶ The Brak Nurr Quest
- ◀▶ The Surveyor's Quest
- ◀▶ The Superstitions Quest
- ◀▶ The Telepath Quest

The Grey Warriors Quest

When you visit the garrison at LaMut, you will be informed that the garrison has been looking for a group of Tsurani grey warriors who slipped through the rift shortly before its closure due to political infighting in the Empire. Although an agreement made between King Lyam I and Emperor Ichindar grants grey warriors (like the Japanese *ronin*, or dispossessed warriors without a house affiliation) free status in the Kingdom, it does not allow for the nationalization of stolen goods. If you can find and return a ruby (of excessively poor quality) reportedly stolen from Great One Makala's entourage when he last passed through, the garrison will see to it that you are paid out an equal amount of gold.

Hints and Clues

If you have spoken to the man at the garrison, Sumani will tell you the grey warriors are men whose lords have been shamed and destroyed. They are forced to live off the land, although the Lady of the Acoma

has been noted for taking grey warriors into her House. He will indicate they will not stay near LaMut because they sometimes encounter difficulties with members of Earl Kasumi's garrison. If they are indeed renegade, there is a good possibility they have tried to sell the stolen gems to the gems dealer, Keifer Alescook, in Lorient.

Obstacles

Aside from the roadside encounters, a spellcaster lurks in a trap on the main road between Lorient and Hawk's Hollow, where a path branches off and returns to the main road around a hill. After Owyn casts his favorite spell, Despair Thy Eyes, have Gorath engage the spellcaster by walking between the sets of red poles and green poles with the more-dhel spellcaster—restoratives and gold are to be found on the body of your fallen foe.



Figure 1-1. Keifer Alescook's house in Lorient

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

The Garrison

First you must speak to the men at the LaMut garrison and learn about the theft of the rubies, then talk to Sumani about the grey warriors.

The Gem Dealer

You must make the long journey to Lorient and speak to Keifer Alescook, who will deny he buys stolen gems, although he recently sold a pair of rubies to a “gimp-legged fellow by the name of Issac.” (This turns on Issac’s *stolen gems* keyword.) He will comment that Issac purchased the rubies with a strange-looking pin, or brooch, that looked kind of elven, maybe more elven.

Issac

Issac is at the center of several plots in Chapter 1. Return to Issac, who hangs around the main road just north of Hawk’s Hollow where the road turns. If you click on Issac’s *stolen gems* keyword, he will say that he understands the situation but that it really isn’t his problem where the gems came from in the first place. He had no idea they were stolen when he bought them and he has someone else who has offered him “a good deal more than the ruby is really worth.” He says he might be willing to part with it, however, if you can repair his sword. (You will, at this point, be prompted to agree/disagree. If you agree and the PC’s Weaponcraft skill is *more* than 45%, then Issac will hand over the ruby. If you agree and the Player Character’s (PC) Weaponcraft skill is *less* than 45%, then Issac will say the sword doesn’t appear to be in any better condition but he will hold onto the gems if you still want to make the trade.)

If you ask Issac about mind readers in the area, he will direct you to Devon in Eggle, whom Issac claims has extrasensory powers manifested during a game of pokir.

Reward for Solving the Quest

If you return the ruby to the garrison, you will be rewarded with an amount of gold equal to the value of the ruby (This should be a fairly small amount of money.) You are equally rewarded in that you'll have touched the tip of the subplot about Makala's secret payments to the Delekhan.

The Brak Nurr Quest

A Brak Nurr has been plaguing the dwarves in Mac Mordain Cadall. Go find it and kill it for a reward of gold from the pesky dwarf, Naddur Ban Dok. With Owyn's Despair Thy Eyes, the rock monster should not prove a difficult foe, although it takes a licking before it goes down—which raises the question, why was it so hard for the dwarves to kill?

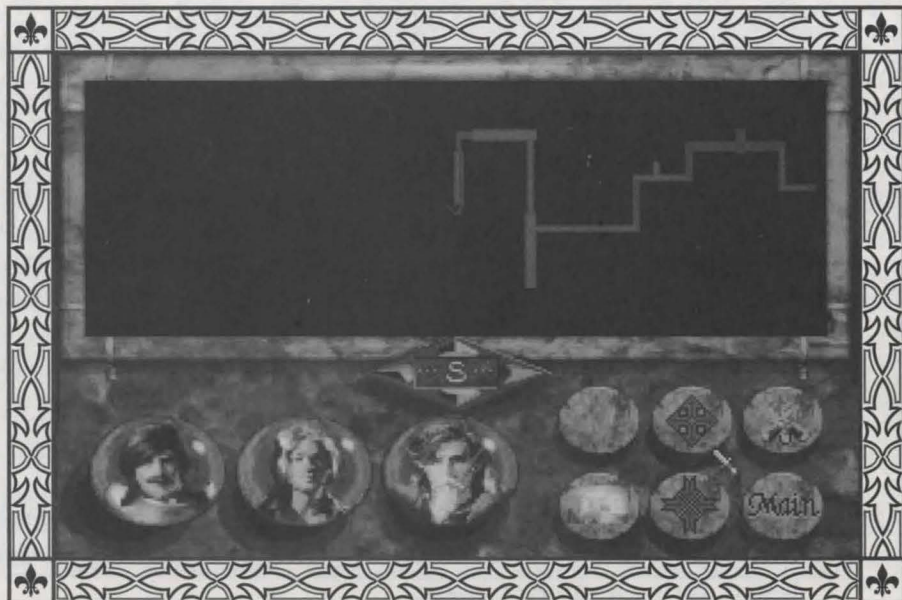


Figure 1-2. Map of entry into the Brak Nurr cavern

While you're in the Brak Nurr cavern, look at the other side—the Brak Nurr has sealed off the tunnel to the rest of Mac Mordain Cadall, including Rhuagh's room and the Kobold Pit. Because the dwarves are busy re-excavating the mess, Owyn and the gang won't be able to get through until a later chapter. The rest of the tunnels and rooms in the mine holds various rogues to kill and loot.

The Surveyor's Quest

Brother Jeremy, who lives in a house on a path leading south off the main road north and east of Yabon, has accepted a commission on behalf of a traveling merchant to do a survey of all the mercantile drop boxes in the area—why else did you think all those nonmoredhel chests were lying around? While going over his list, Brother Jeremy realizes he has one more box listed than he has inventoried. He offers to give our heroes a copy of Thiful's *Bird Migrations* (which raises the player's skill levels) if they can find out what's in the box, located near the Six Sisters, a formation of hills to the west of Hawk's Hollow.



Figure 1-3. Brother Jeremy's house

Some rogues stand in the way, claiming the chest is theirs. And the box is trapped, so be sure to use the spell Scent of Sarig. Return to Brother Jeremy to get your reward. These rogues are in the employ of Lucan, a thief who lives in Hawk's Hollow. Visit him to give your lock-picking skills a boost.

Obstacles

Some of Lucan's partners in crime (rogues) are heading to pick up some of the loot stashed away in their safebox. They will not welcome anyone prying into their stuff. If you kill the rogues, you'll discover a Spynote on one of the bodies.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

All you need to do to complete this quest is find the box and open it. Keep whatever you find.



Figure 1-4. Cast the spell Scent of Sarig at the mysterious chest



Figure 1-5. Visiting Lucan in the thief's den

Getting Your Reward

To complete this quest, all you need do is return to Jeremy and talk to him. He will hand over Thiful's *Bird Migrations* if you have completed the quest.

The Superstitions Quest

A mercenary, Devon, is now the lone inhabitant of Eggleby. When a local carpenter was murdered while performing a ceremony honoring the goddess of harvests, Silban, the citizens of the town fled their homes, fearing that a curse from Silban would fall upon them if they stayed. A visit to the Priestess in the nearby Temple of Silban will reveal that no such curse is forthcoming, and that the murderer should be brought to justice. You are to bring a message to the murderer in Tanneurs that the Priestess "wishes" to see him.

Issac tells you that Devon might be the dream sender in the area, coordinating attacks for Delekhan. Make your way to Lorient, and meet Devon. When asked about Issac, Devon will tell you the truth—Issac is the one with seemingly telepathic powers, and that Issac beat the pants off Devon at pokiir. And Issac was traveling with elves—or so they appeared to Devon.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

All you need do to solve the quest is (1) speak to the Priestess at the Temple of Silban twice, to get the mission to drop a message off with the franklin, and to the Collector, (2) talk to “Snake Eyes” Spitzer in Tom’s Tavern in Tanneurs, and (3) spend the night at Tom’s Tavern and bump into the Collector. The Collector will automatically be sent to the temple, where justice will be done. Beware, because if you spend the night at the tavern you might be robbed.

Although the prices are sky-high in Tanneurs (and in the rejuvenated Eggley after the Collector is brought to justice), be sure to stock up on food for the long treks to and from the Temple of Silban.



Figure 1-6. Talking to Issac

Rumors and Hints

The Stranger

If you have spoken to Devon in The Stranger Tavern in Eggley, you'll learn about the "curse" that has been rumored to have befallen the town. Devon will suggest that perhaps the High Priestess will know something more about it. He will also teach you some sword skills if you cue him with his keyword, a game.

Temple of Silban

After speaking to Devon, you should head to the Temple of Silban, where an acolyte will tell what she knows about the Festival of the Stranger, and will suggest that if the Stranger were murdered, then none of the citizens will return to Eggley out of fear of the goddess Silban. She will indicate that there is no curse on the town, and if they arrange to catch the murderer, her masters would certainly see fit to reward them in some way. In addition, the temple needs to pass a message to the local franklin, who has been afraid to come to the temple because of the maniacs loitering around outside.



Figure 1-7. The Temple of Silban

Tom's Tavern

If you click on a background man in Tom's Tavern, you'll overhear part of a conversation about those "fools from Eggley"; mention will be made of someone who came through recently, looking for Stellan "regarding his unpaid debts."

Effects before the Quest Is Solved

"Snake Eyes" Spitzer (in Tom's Tavern)

An inveterate gambler, Spitzer indicates that he would gamble with you, but that he "isn't so certain that other guests staying in the back room would appreciate his spending money, as he owed them money." He will then relate that he thinks the Collector (as everyone knows him) was responsible for killing Stellan in Eggley. After the Collector has been "sent" to the High Priestess, Spitzer will play dice with you.

Spending the Night (in Tom's Tavern)

If you should decide to spend the night in Tom's Tavern, and if you have spoken to Spitzer *and* the acolyte at the Temple of Silban, then the player tells the Collector you're owed money by one of the acolytes at the Temple of Silban and that you need the bill collected. Later you can collect your reward from the Temple of Silban.

Obstacles

This is a fairly tough quest to complete. The Temple of Silban is located at the second fork on the main road heading northwest of Eggley, almost directly due east of Hawk's Hollow. Head north from Eggley, and the road turns west (the farm at the corner of the main road, with the smaller paths branching off from the main road, is the franklin's home—deliver the Priestess's message and get a reward). Follow that road, and when it forks north and west, take the north road. It is surrounded by three Quegian pirates, who must be killed before you can enter the temple. Check at the temple to make sure you are cured of any possible condition.

You will run into a *moredhel* spellcaster and three warriors shoot fire poisoned quarrels on the road north of Eggley. If they surprise you, the spellcaster will use the *Fetters of Rime* spell to freeze one of your party. The spellcaster carries a Ring of Prandur and Restoratives.

Reward for Solving the Quest

If you return to the Temple of Silban after having redirected the Collector there, you'll find that the Collector has been taken into the custody of the goddess for the murder of a faithful servant. The priestesses will then give you Herbal Packs and Restoratives. Thereafter, the priestesses will be too busy with their "trial" of the murderer to speak to the player.

The Telepath Quest

Second only to his brother Narab, Nago is among Delekhan's most trusted advisers. As such, it was only natural when he was selected to travel south to Questor's View to arrange for the hire of Venturier of Lan, a slaver, and also to arrange for the ship, the *Foamspinner*, that would carry Makala's magicians to the Sunset Islands. Nago was also a natural choice because he was gifted with the talent of dream sending, giving him a distinct advantage should negotiations turn sour and require new orders from Delekhan. When word arrives from the Northlands of Gorath's escape from death, Nago is cunning enough to realize that Gorath would not be seeking refuge in Elvandar, but instead would be looking to contact the Prince of Krondor himself. With assistance from Issac, he locates the perfect place to lay a trap for Gorath at Yellow Mule, renting out Rowe's barn. Taking advantage of the contacts available, Nago orders his men to empty the *moredhel* lock chests of their crucial contents and fill them with falsified documents indicating that a major attack will be waiting for them south of Tanneurs.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

The number of moredhel warriors and Quegian mercenaries killed is irrelevant; you must hunt down and kill Nago (moredhel magic user) to put an end to the assassination attempts inside the Kingdom. Without his dream sendings, they are at a loss to know where and when Gorath will move (and frankly, without an employer, they won't care). Once Nago is slain, the ambushes planned for Gorath will end.

Rumors and Hints

Deception

If you chance upon Rowe heading towards Questor's View, he will tell you to visit his wife in Yellow Mule, a small "bend in the road" before Krondor (it should be a bit suspicious that he seems to know where you are headed). He will conscientiously warn you that there's a big storm brewing out over the Bitter Sea, so that you should hurry south, taking shelter in his barn if necessary.

Issac also performs a bit of deception, having been hired to drop off the ruby. He tells Locklear that his moredhel employers are operating out of a barn near Yellow Mule. Nago, a powerful spellcaster, has been hiring Quegian mercenaries, and Issac was making drop-offs to the moredhel wordlocked chests. He gives passwords for chests in that area: *shadow*, *candle*, *spider*, *key*, and says the last is carved into a headstone near LaMut. Issac also tells you about Rowe, the man who owns the barn.

Old Buddy Devon

If you should ask Devon about *moredhel* (keyword), he will indicate that he seems to recall having seen quite a clump of elves or moredhel passing through Eggley "a week or more ago," heading south. Nago directed ten of his only moredhel warriors in the area to take turns walking through Eggley and Tanneurs, then circling back through the trees, swapping clothing and partners and repeating the cycle to create the illusion of several clumps of elves or moredhel moving south. Devon also comments that with all of them moving south, it seemed strange none of them stopped in for a drink.

South of Eggley

If you wander around “off road” in the game tile immediately to the south of Eggley, there should be a trigger somewhere that checks your Scouting skill. If your Scouting skill is over 50 percent, you should trigger a dialogue “event” through which you’ll find a suit of very damaged Elven Armor (50 percent or less) and what look like footprints. You’ll see from “tracks” in the dirt that a band of elven people (judging by the length of the feet) moved down the road from Eggley and then veered off, stopped for a while here, and then skirted to the west of the road back towards Eggley.

West of Eggley

Similarly if you wander around “off road” in the game tile immediately to the west of Eggley, there is another trigger that checks your scouting skill. If your scouting skill is over 50 percent, you’ll see from “tracks” in the dirt that it appears that a band of elves approached from the south off-road, stopped for a while here, and then headed east towards Eggley on the road.

Brother Marc

If cued by the keyword *the road south*, Brother Marc, who can be found in a corn field south of the junction to south will reply that it is safe enough, although he’s seen enough Quegian mercenaries moving up and down it for the past few weeks that if laid “head to foot” he could practically walk from one point of the Straits of Darkness to the other. If asked about the *bad weather* (more keywords) predicted by Rowe, he will say that none of his brethren have said a word of it, although he had no doubt it is possible. About *Yellow Mule* he will say that he doesn’t usually travel that far south, but has often heard that people can get a room with the old widowed man named Rowe who lives there. If asked about *dream sendings*, Brother Marc will note that he has had strange dreams recently and will note that Gorath bears a strong resemblance to someone he has seen in his dreams, but isn’t sure why that is. He is further surprised at how strong the sendings are, suggesting that the sender is not far away.

Effects Dependent on the Quest

Assassins

There are a number of attacks scheduled in Chapters 1 and 2 that are “connected” to the completion of this quest. If you complete the quest, then these assassinations are shut off as the dream communications between Nago and his charges are halted. Otherwise, these attacks will occur as slated.

The Temple of Sung

Although they are uncertain what the cause of it is, the healers of this Temple all report that they’ve lost a great deal of sleep recently because of a round of bad dreams, suspected to have come from bad rations recently brought from the south. (The bad dreams are, of course, very intense as the priests are only a few miles away from where Nago is sending out his commands.) Until such time as Nago is slain, they will not be able to help you in any way, and will apologize profusely that they cannot do more until they’ve solved their sleeping problems. After Nago is slain, they can return to the Temple of Sung for healing and Owyn will receive a spell, Hocho’s Haven.

Nago’s Tactics

About halfway between Sarth and Krondor lies Rowe’s barn and Nago. A tough opponent and as crafty a field commander as Delekhan has under his command, Nago has ordered a spellcaster and two moredhel warriors on the road to Sarth just south of your party’s encounter with Rowe, to lie in wait for Gorath. The spellcaster has a few useful items, like a Powder Bag (which stuns victims), Herbal Packs, a two-handed sword, and a moredhel brooch. A small band of Quegian mercenaries also lies in wait for Gorath (and you) as well.

Nago and his three moredhel lackeys can be very tough if you don’t engage Nago and prevent him from casting his various offensive spells. Owyn is the person to send against Nago, since he has great mobility and Nago, if given the choice between hand-to-hand combat and getting clear to toss spells, will try to get some daylight between you and his spell-casting self.



Figure 1-8. Rowe's barn, where Nago lies in wait

Reward For Solving The Quest

The rewards for solving this quest are not material; instead, it makes the world a little bit easier on you in Chapter 2. Because this is not a quest that is assigned to you by someone, but rather a quest you assign yourself, there isn't really a place to pick up a reward. But you'll not have as many assassins after you, and the Temple of Sung will be a place that can heal you of a near-death or other trauma condition. If you kill Nago, you should get an Althafain's Icer, gold, and a spynote warning of a false attack to the south of Tanneurs. The road south to Krondor from Nago's barn has several bands of Quegian pirates about, including one large band of two moredhel and three pirates at the crossroads just north of Krondor.

The Thieves' Highway Quest: The Sewers below Krondor

This is not so much a quest as the last obstacle between you and an audience with Prince Arutha. The party should make their way to Krondor after all the Chapter 1 quests are finished, then click on the area below the castle and town to get to the sewer entrance. Nighthawks and deranged worshippers of Guiswa, the Midkemian God of the Hunt, await, in sufficient quantity to make the going difficult. There are also several pits, so traveling by the overhead map is not advised. Make sure you have rope, and left-click on the pit to use the rope and swing over the pits.

You will meet Limm, a young Mocker, at the entrance to the sewers. Don't worry about him until later in the game. First, find Seigneur James, whose former life as the young thief Jimmy the Hand gives him intimate knowledge of the sewers. He is in the northwestern-most area of the sewers, and will give you the key to open the only working grate in the sewers in the northeastern section. James will tell you about the return of the false Nighthawks (they don't rise after you kill them) to the sewers below Krondor, and learns from Locklear about the more-dhel banding together in the North. Both friends are concerned that another war, like the one Murmandamus led 10 years ago, is brewing (see Figure 1-9).

There are many ladders up to the palace, but almost all the locks on the grates have been broken in an attempt by the false Nighthawks to pick them. Click on the locks to see if they are broken; the only working entrance is in the northeastern area of the sewers (see Figure 1-10). The chapter ends as Locklear brings Gorath to Prince Arutha.

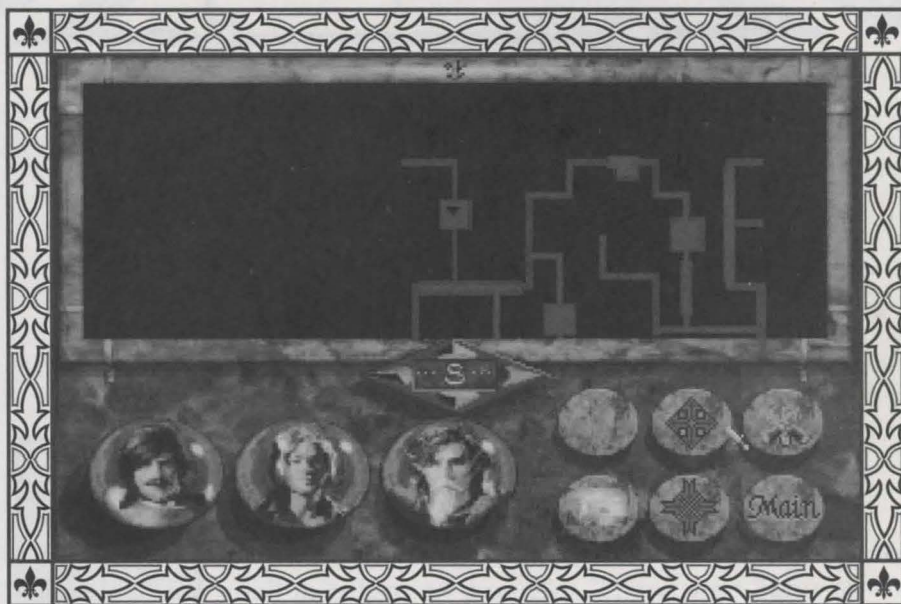


Figure 1-9. Locklear and James

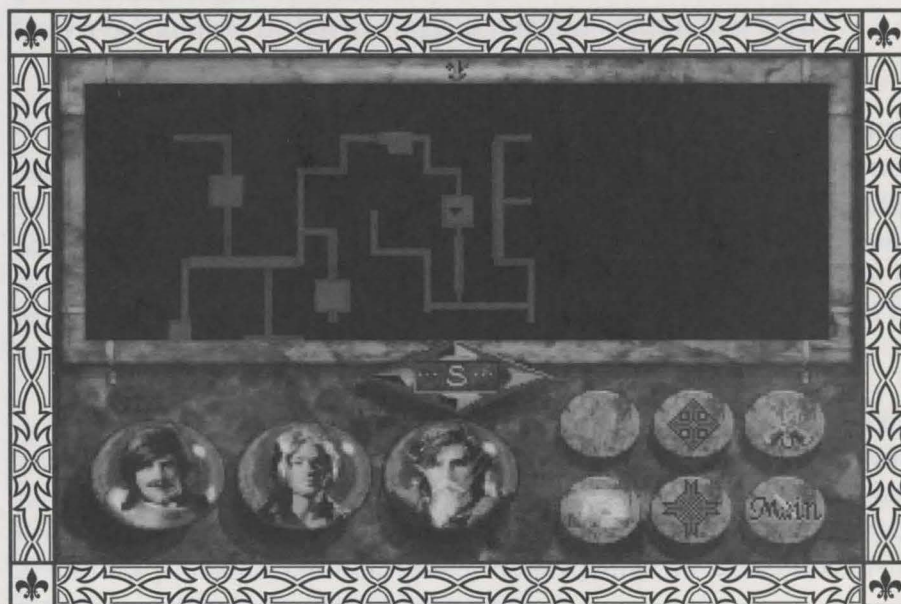


Figure 1-10. The way out of the sewers

Chapter 2

Shadow of the Nighthawks



whisper led him through madness. He stumbled forward with unfamiliar feet much too small to belong to a warrior. There were lights on the hills around him, fires, voices shouting through a thundering of hoof beats. He reached for his sword and then remembered that he hadn't a sword that night. He had only been a boy of twelve Midsummers. Only a boy and yet he led the ragged remains of his father's tribe.

Who leads the moredhel?, the whispering voice insisted in his head.

I must see more.

Years. A river of men coursed together in a bleeding tide and he was amidst them. Screams rang out. A howling figure was silhouetted against the moon and brandished a bloody sword aloft. The wolfish figure screamed words of wrath and damnation as he cleaved his way through his moredhel brothers. He was Delekhan, former general of Murmandamus, leader of the unified tribes of the Northlands, and he was the enemy. ...

Gorath!

The memory detonated into a million fading thoughts, each fleeing after the faint echoes of a weak whisper. Before him now there was a new image, the face of a fair young girl whose pale blue eyes watched him with weary interest. There were others, too, all seated like himself around a polished council table, all studying, all dissecting. And Gorath was the object of their scrutiny.

"I cannot find the truth, my Prince," the tired girl whispered finally, quietly. "His mind is ... chaotic. I find images but I cannot hold them long enough to understand." Narrowing his dark eyes, Prince Arutha glared at Gorath. "He hides his thoughts?" "Nay, my lord," Pug quickly interceded for his exhausted daughter, "Gorath is *moredhel*. Even with Gamina's exceptional talent for sensing thoughts, his mind may have many innate psychic defenses. I may need to send for one of my advanced students."

"No need to disturb studies, Master Magician Pug. The *moredhel* speaks truly." Council members exchanged surprised glances, then turned their attention to the aged magician seated next to Pug. Lowering his eyes, the man made a dismissive gesture. "Forgive me, I do not mean to presume, but I have looked into his mind as well," Makala continued. "War in the Kingdom would have many wide-ranging effects, the least of which could lead to a disruption of trade between our two worlds. My Emperor of Tsuranuanni would be most displeased if our rift-making secrets were seized by barbarians in warfare."

Gorath glowered at the Tsurani magician, and shouting in response. "Trading agreements notwithstanding, the *moredhel* watch your borders, Nighthawks spy on your imperial cousins, and before the snows there shall be an army come to the Kingdom! Heed my words, Prince of Krondor! You must prepare your troops!"

Anger flashed in Arutha's eyes as he rose to his feet. "What I must or must not do will not be dictated by a dissident *moredhel*! If not for Locklear's good faith in you, I'd have had your head on a pole and paraded up and down the low quarters of Krondor the minute I saw you!"

Gorath, too, was capable of outrage. "What evidence? I bear the humiliation of betraying my vow as a *moredhel* and the indignity of surrendering to a sworn enemy. ..."

Sensing the conflict between the two leaders, Pug sought to intervene. Larger issues were at risk here than the ego of a Prince and a *moredhel* clan chieftan. "Why betray Delekhan to the Kingdom of the Isles? Of what benefit to you is it to snare him?"

The *moredhel* returned a slow glance towards Pug. "He is leader in name only. However bitter a draught Delekhan may be for your kith

and kin to drink, magician, his rule is black poison in the gullets of me and mine. Already he enslaves my cousins and rapes the land."

Arutha began to feel a twinge, a ray of truth in the moredhel's passion. He would be unwise to completely disregard what Gorath was telling him. "Where would you have me send my troops? If indeed he intends a strike against one of our northern-most possessions, which castle shall I garrison for the attack? Highcastle? Ironpass? Northwarden? If I am to fight a war, by my teeth tell me where would you have me fight it!"

"Would that I could tell you! Delekhan holds in good confidence only a handful of cowering dogs and, among them, only a few are privy to his war plans. His private councils are restricted to choice individuals, his adviser Narab, his mistress Liallan, his son Moraedul and—Nighthawks!"

"He keeps foul company, that leader of yours."

Gorath considered his plight for a moment. "Your Highness, if you give me leave, I believe I can find the evidence of Delekhan's intent. I will need someone to accompany me to Romney and supplies for my journey and a small parcel of gold."

"In Romney? What do you think you can find in a provincial river town in the heart of the Kingdom?" Arutha was genuinely puzzled. Gorath explained to the Prince. "I aim to catch a bird in flight. Of late, Delekhan has emptied a good deal of his treasury to revive the service of the Nighthawks. In exchange he has demanded tactical information about Kingdom holdings."

Pug was concerned about Delekhan's use of Nighthawks. "He's turned the Guild of Assassins into a guild of spies?" Gorath shook his head. "Only for a time. Although the payments have been left in various hidden locales, the messengers were always sent to a rendezvous in Romney. If I go there, I may be able to intercept information concerning a forthcoming attack. Would such evidence suffice?"

Arutha folded his hands together and paused for a moment. "Perhaps. Damn me but I don't trust you, Gorath. How do I know that this isn't a plot of yours? We can weigh the evidence to our hearts' content and your cousins could be slitting the throats of my serfs as we sit dawdling. I have been tolerant while I listened to your vague speculations based on incidental half-heard conversations, but how am I to

believe what you say? What evidence have you laid before this council to prove what Delekhan intends to do?"

Gorath's voice became cold and clear, and those in the room unfamiliar with the moreldhel accent shivered. "Bloody his nose, Prince of Krondor. Blunt his swords and the unified tribes will cast him down in wrath. Let him cross your northern border, however, and ten other clans will join their strength to his and the legacy of Murmandamus will be but a spark next to his glory."

Arutha looked up at the moreldhel, his dark visage knotted with frustration and doubt. "Go to Romney, but you will provide for yourself. If this is part of some secret moreldhel scheme, I'll not look the fool before the world. Pug, unroll the map for me."

The scroll smelled of dust.

Scrawled in chicken scratches and spider tracks, tiny lines staggered across the moth-eaten paper, indicating the paths that were the major roads within the Kingdom. Pointer in hand, Arutha bent over the map and pointed to a large black dot. "We are here in Krondor. At dawn tomorrow you will leave through the main gate and rendezvous with your escort, Seigneur James. I know you might have preferred Locklear's company, but he has business elsewhere. You will head to Romney. Providing one of Delekhan's assassins doesn't slit your throat first, you should reach the Ursine Ford within the month. In Romney you will join a special detachment of King Lyam's soldiers staying at the Black Sheep Tavern. They may be of service to you."

Nodding, Gorath took in Arutha's advice, listening studiously as the Prince reviewed the details. "If you find the evidence, I will act only when James has conveyed the information to me. Is that clear? Only when I receive James's word. Until then, I wait."

"Understood," Gorath replied.

"Good," Arutha replied, slapping the surface of the table with his palm. Looking around the council chamber, he noted the wearied expressions of all who sat around the map. "Why don't you let Gamina and Makala show you around Krondor? I have a few things I need to consider alone." Reading the offer as a polite dismissal, the worn council members began to file out the door, most glad to be on their feet again following the grueling session. As Pug passed by, however, Arutha snagged his sleeve and drew him back to the table. "If you

don't mind, I would have your council, cousin Pug." "Certainly," Pug replied, resuming his seat. "I am all attention."

Arutha slumped in the wooden chair. "As I see it, Delekhan could invade the Kingdom at only two points: Highcastle, and Northwarden. Northwarden seems unlikely. Once breached by the *moredhel*, its defenses would be impossible to reconstruct and he would have to retreat 300 miles back to Sar-Sargoth ... they wouldn't have a good fall-back position from there." Pug looked at the map. "That leaves Highcastle."

Arutha nodded. "Which is a viable alternative, but neither target seems to have an obvious goal. I know you're no field strategist and you hate to become involved in state matters, but I should like you to delay your return to your home at Stardock for a while. I feel ... ill at ease."

The magician smiled, trying to reassure Arutha. Even his test atop the tower, years ago in Kelewan, seemed trivial compared to the duties of state. "You are not alone in that. I too have sensed something unusual in the air, but I won't ascribe it to anything as dire as magic. More likely we suffer from bad soup."

Arutha laughed, a good sound. "Feelings aside, I will call up the militia reserves from Malac's Cross, Darkmoor, and Lyton and join them to a detachment of the Krondorian Lancers just outside of the Dimwood. James will send word to me there."

Pug's eyes focused on the map, on Sethanon. "And the garrison?"

"It will remain in place. I have considered the option of a full push south and it seems unlikely, but I will give Delekhan nothing. Our agreement remains. Now we wait. May the gods help Gorath if he betrays us to the *moredhel*."



James met Gorath in Gorath's cell-like room, before the sun arose. The room was guarded by two Krondorian Lancers, and locked from the outside. Dismissing the two guards, James turned the key and slowly swung open the door. Gorath was sitting on the bed, staring out the small window, looking north. Without looking at James, Gorath spoke. "Greetings, Jimmy the Hand. I have heard much about you from Seigneur Locklear."

"Enough pleasantries, *moredhel*. There's been a change in plans. We will not take the main gate this morning." Gorath looked suspicious.

"What are your plans, then?" he asked warily. Jimmy was unarmed, or so it seemed, but Gorath had felt uncomfortable since he arrived at the palace of his people's greatest enemy. "Nothing dire, Gorath," smiled James. "We are leaving by the sewers. Less attention that way." Gorath's eyes squinted for a moment, but he nodded. "I am ready to go." When Gorath stood, James realized that he was already armed and armored. "Well, then ... I have a few things to pick up from Locklear, and we shall be off."

The sewers reeked, and James moved quickly through the maze of tunnels. A shadow approached. James watched tensely as the darkened figure emerged from a murky corner and moved towards them.

"It took you two long enough," chirped the stranger—Owyn—with sarcastic sincerity. "I was beginning to think the Mockers had you bagged up again, Seigneur James. Is everything all right?"

James looked amused and annoyed at once. "Squire, suppose I ignore the fact that this trip is a state secret to which you are not supposed to be privy, *and* that we are hurrying out of the sewers instead of leaving by the main gate at the proper time. How did you find out we were coming?" Owyn looked unapologetic. "Well, after Seigneur Locklear dumped me off after we got here and told me I could go home, I got bored and decided to check out Krondor. Unfortunately, there's nothing much interesting going on here, so I decided I'd go back to the palace. I tried to pay Gorath a visit last night, but discovered that the guards had been doubled with orders that no one could see him. I might have fallen for it if I hadn't heard someone snoring in his cell."

"Gorath doesn't snore, I take it," said James, now almost laughing.

Heartened by James' lightened tone, Owyn continued. "Not a sound. When I realized that something was up, I went to find Locklear and discovered he was mysteriously absent, despite a tray of food delivered to his door just moments after I arrived. Finally, I came down here and talked to Limm who told me you had been down here earlier this morning. At that point, I realized Arutha meant to slip Gorath out of Krondor for some reason."

"Are you sure you're not a thief by profession? You think unnervingly like a Mocker I used to know," said James, now laughing openly. Indeed, aside from some resemblance to Pug, Owyn reminded James of himself.

"So, are we ready?" asked Owyn, briskly. We should probably get moving. Where are we going, anyway?"

Gorath interrupted. "You cannot accompany us, Owyn. Our mission is much too important." James flashed Gorath a stern look. "Quiet, moredhel! I'll handle this."

Owyn was not unprepared for this reaction. "But I could jeopardize your mission! Who knows who might take me captive between here and Tiburn? If I go back to Krondor now, I might accidentally talk to someone. Besides, I'm from the eastern part of the Kingdom. I know the area and I might be able to help."

James let out a long sigh. "For better or worse, you seem determined to hitch your fate to catastrophe. But if you want to get yourself killed at a tender young age, who am I to gainsay you? I used to pull the same stunts when Arutha wished to pull out of Krondor. All right, squire, you can come along, but these are the rules. One, I am in charge and you do whatever I say without question. Two, under no circumstances do you reveal anything about Gorath or our mission to anyone. If someone asks, we'll stick with what Locklear suggested—Gorath is an elf. Third and last, you don't wander off on your own. I don't care if you're watering the trees, you ask me first. Is all that clear?"

Owyn nodded his head vigorously. "Absolutely, whatever you say." James scowled. "Stop smiling. You're going to earn your keep. I know I'm going to regret this, but let's get moving. We have a long way to go and no time to get there."

They made their way out of the reeking blackness to the sewer door.



The three left Krondor quickly and headed towards Romney. The landscape flattened, and slowly the trees began to thin. They passed Darkmoor, and decided to make for Malac's Cross.

Five dark-robed figures leapt out of the underbrush at Gorath. "Nighthawks!" cried James as he drew his sword. Owyn found himself cornered by a menacing figure, and saw Gorath and James occupied with four other assassins. Drawing the Horn of Algon Kokoon that Owyn found in an empty house in Iggley to his lips, Owyn blew with all the strength in his lungs. No sound. Owyn raised his staff to parry the Nighthawk's slashing blade, then stood transfixed as he watched the Nighthawk pulled back. Two beasthounds, summoned by the Horn,

tore the Nighthawk's throat out. Owyn raised his staff and cast a spell at another Nighthawk, blinding him. The assassin fell, clutching at his eyes, and Gorath ran him through. The other Nighthawks fled.

James leaned on his sword, breathing heavily. "We should find a place to rest in Malac's Cross. But be wary—if the Nighthawks are afoot, traveling will be dangerous."

Malac's Cross was a tumultuous town grown fat on the prosperity of centuries. Exotic geegaws overflowed the storefront windows, each a mere fraction of the wealth that coursed daily through the busy trading town. Over it all loomed the impressive bulk of the Abbey of Ishap, a temple nearly as ancient as the Kingdom of the Isles itself. Leaving the shadow of the Abbey, the three ducked into a tavern for a cold drink and a quick meal. Ivan Skaald, the young barkeeper, proved to be quite a source of local gossip. A quick meal turned into a long dinner.

As they left the tavern, James spotted someone in a crowd heading for a small lecture hall. Bribing the guard with some gold sovereigns, James then motioned his companions to follow. "We may find this interesting," James whispered.

Waving smoke from his face, Owyn was surprised by the number of young nobles seated in the lecture hall, most looking as if they would rather be drinking ale in the tavern across the street. Despite that, they made friendly company as they offered up seats to James and his companions.

"All rise for Guy of Rillanon, First Adviser to the Throne of the Kingdom of the Isles," a page announced from the rear of the room. After an uncomfortably long wait, a pair of men dressed in purple tabards advanced to the foot of the rude stage and took up station, their faces stern and watchful. Close behind them was a man dressed all in black, from tunic to trousers to the patch over his left eye. Mounting the stage between his escorts, he looked out on the assemblage as if they were all his soldiers in the field. Seeing James, a smile touched the First Adviser's face. "It seems I'm not the only First Adviser here, James of Krondor," Guy said, motioning for everyone to take their seats. "I am surprised Prince Arutha could spare your company." James shrugged and covered with a quick lie that seemed to satisfy all in the room, as anxious as the rest for the lecture to begin.

Hours passed. After a lengthy discussion of the battles at Deep Taunton and the siege of the Shamata garrison, the First Adviser finished his lecture and dismissed his boggled students, stepping down from the podium to speak with James. A grave look was upon Guy's face as he grasped the Seigneur's shoulder. "You are lucky, most of the men in this room don't know Arutha," Guy whispered, glancing at Owyn. "If they did, none of them would believe you had been sent to Romney to fetch this puny little squire. I'm also curious to know why you are traveling in the company of a Dark Brother." Seeing the fire burning in the adviser's good eye, James realized the old man was asking the questions in deadly earnest and that his two escorts were standing close for reasons other than show. "I'll not have Arutha betrayed."

Waiting until the rest of the students had been shunted out the door, James quickly began to explain the situation, allowing Gorath to fill in the details which he only partially knew. When he mentioned the Nighthawks and Romney, the First Adviser nodded. "Prince Arutha is right to send you to Romney," Guy said. "There's a group of Kingdom men there. I had Duke de Sevigny send them a few months ago when we heard about the guild troubles brewing there. We had suspicions the Guild of Death was involved." Grabbing up his cloak, the First Adviser nodded to his escorts to check the streets. "If anyone in the Kingdom can find the Nighthawks, it will be those men from Bas-Tyra. They've been of great help in the cause of the Kingdom over the past few years. I'll warn you, however, that they've made quite a few enemies along the way. Watch your step between here and the Black Sheep Tavern." Once the guards had indicated that the road was clear, Guy was gone and the building's watchman shuffled them outside.

They decided to stop in the Queen's Row Inn for some warmth and food to shake off the cool evening. No sooner did they sit down than an aged crone hobbled up to James, waving her cane. "Wherever did you get those clothes, Lysle? Must have snatched them off a Marquis somewhere! You're getting a mite bit bolder, aren't you?"

Gorath smiled, while James looked embarrassed. "I am afraid you have me mistaken for someone else. My name is James—"

"James, is it? Ha-ho, of course it is! And I'm not your gran Petrumh either, I take it. You're masquerading again! This isn't like that time you ran about Malac's Cross for a month begging and chewing up

soap, is it? Oh, but you made some fine sovereigns with that act! With all that foam coming out of your mouth, a body would think you had the creeping mongus and they'd pay a pretty coin just to have you away from them! You've always been a wily one, Lysle. Did you pinch any bread for me?"

James looked indignant. "Why can't you buy your own bread?"

Petrumh snorted. "Who pissed in your pot, eh? You know perfectly well that I haven't had nothing since Jack died ... unless ... what are you doing with an elf, boy! Don't you know they bring bad luck?! They're the ones what killed Jack and are stirring up all that trouble in Sethanon! What's got into your head? Have you run mad?"

"What trouble in Sethanon are you referring to, madam?"

The old woman regarded James for a moment. "You're ... you really aren't Lysle, are you then? But you're his mirror image, you are. How could this be? It's some kind of faerie evil, isn't it? That's what it is! Some kind of faerie magic and you finally come for me! Took Lysle's form!"

"We aren't brothers of the dark path, madam. Please, trust us. Perhaps I may bear some resemblance to this Lysle character you're talking about, but we're just ordinary folk. I would like to talk to Lysle, however. He sounds like ... like he might be a relative."

Petrumh relaxed. "Hmm. I guess you don't look like evil faeries ... leastways, none I've ever heard of. So, Lysle might be your brother?"

"I don't know. I never knew my father and my mother never mentioned a twin, but when I was taken captive in Krondor a few of the men who were guarding me kept asking about places I'd never been to and about people I'd never met. At first I wanted to dismiss what they were saying, but then I got to thinking about some of the events that happened before the Battle of Sethanon. Someone tried to slip in a double for Prince Arutha. Maybe the moreldhel are repeating their old strategies."

Petrumh was uninterested in the history lesson. "This may all be so, but I haven't had a bite to eat in days. Do you think you could spare something for me?" James rummaged in his pack and gave her some rations. "Last I saw of him, he was heading towards Lyton. Said something about wanting to meet some gentlemen there. More than likely he'll be staying away from the main roads. Try as he might, he does have a tendency to get into trouble now and again."

James turned to Gorath. "A double. Would that we had time to investigate this further." Gorath agreed. "There is trickery abroad, I feel it, James. But Romney still is many miles away."



They continued heading east. James led the other two on a lightly traveled path, passing an abandoned barn and farm house. James squinted at the road sign, letters barely visible. "Have you ever heard of a grey dragon, Gorath?" James asked with a wry grin turning up the corners of his mouth. Gorath shook his head. "No, why?"

"Because that's what may be at the end of the road," James replied. "Feeling brave? We can go have a closer look." Chiseled from dark stone, the statue of the dragon was rendered with frightful realism, its burning gaze surely as malicious in stone as it had been in life. Most impressive of all were the yellowed teeth and claws, stained red at the tips to simulate the blood of an unfortunate victim.

Owyn walked up to the dragon. The statue was large. Gorath circled the base, admiring the sinuous curve of the dragon's back, the whole covered with beveled scales. Rounding the tail of the creature, he called for Owyn to come and have a look, but was startled by the dawning apprehension in the boy's blue eyes.

"Something is wrong?" Gorath asked. Owyn gasped, as if to say something, then motioned at the statue before collapsing to the ground.

In his mind's eye, Owyn was in a large chamber. A huge dragon lay coiled before him, regarding the young sorcerer with a huge, luminous eye. "Greetings, Owyn," rumbled a voice deep in the boy's mind. *Where am I*, Owyn thought.

"While your body is lying safe, still, and silent in a cove near Malac's Cross, your mind has journeyed elsewhere ... here. Your arrival has been expected. I am pleased to have you as my honored guest, Owyn Beleforte of Tiburn." Owyn was still reeling from the sight of the dragon. "Me?"

"At journey's end you shall not be as you are nor may you turn back the way you have come. The times ahead of you will be filled with hardship and many times you will believe yourself far less significant than you truly are. In the days to come, you may stand at a critical juncture between Rythar and Mythar and if that comes to pass you should know this: a time comes for all things to die."

"What does that mean? Who are Rythar and Mythar?"

The dragon opened its mouth as if to yawn. "I can explain no more, as you now understand your world. In years and in wisdom you will come to me again, and a great destiny will be upon you by then. You will be ready for the fullness of truth on that distant day. Until such time, you may consult me on other matters."

Owyn regained some of his composure. This was potent magic, indeed, and it fascinated the boy. "Tales say that dragons know their own destinies, but I had not heard that they knew the destinies of others."

"I am no dragon though I wear a dragon's skin. I am the Oracle of the Aal and I am the last of my race. I am ancient, older than dwarf or elf, older than dragons and older than the Valheru who were their masters. Stars that at my birth flamed with violent power have long grown cold, expired as even the stars themselves must one day die. All these things I have seen and farther yet I see into the things that might be."

"You can see the future?"

"I can glimpse things that may be. Such was the gift given to all those of my race."

Owyn whispered his question. "A moredhel travels with us named Gorath. Is he what he says he is? Can we trust him?"

Oracles were not fond of giving straightforward answers, and the Oracle of the Aal was no exception. "He is not what he names himself to be, though even he may not know the lie in his heart. He will be a strong ally unto you and I believe he may even be a great champion to the kin who now curse his name. A great destiny awaits him should he have the courage to renounce his pain." With that answer, Owyn felt dizzy. The chamber spun around him and he found himself staring up at the darkened ceiling cloaked in shadow.

Owyn opened his eyes and saw James and Gorath peering down on him. "What happened?" asked James.

"Nothing," said Owyn. "There's magic here, but ..." Unwilling to talk, Owyn remained silent as they took hasty leave of the grey dragon.



They reached the town of Lyton by nightfall, and headed directly for The Wayside, a tavern with a reputation for hearty ale. After dinner Owyn retired to their room to rest, where Gorath sat with him. Returning to the common room, James looked for company. He found

a man eager to accept an offer of fellowship, and who told a number of tales about his work for Lord Lyton. Unsure what in the man's manner inspired his trust, James nonetheless responded likewise, telling him a few of the details of their trip to Romney, although omitting the specifics about Gorath's part in things.

"Ah me! I don't envy you that," the man said, waving his hands. "I'd not be heading anywhere near the river, not for no amount of silver. Not me."

"Why is that?" James asked.

"Awful troubles there. The Guild of the Romney and the Riverpullers Guild are as good as at war. If you ask me, some bloke down Silden way is trying to stir up things. I've heard he's even got a few sneaks what are posing as members of other guilds, even carrying forged guild seals. Saw a group of them with Max Feeber, that greedy bastard out west of here."

When the man excused himself to go answer nature's call, James pondered for a moment the things he had learned. While it seemed wildly improbable that the events that were going on around them were somehow connected, he had seen the plots of Murmandamus and those circumstances had left him cynical of coincidence. It made him none the more comfortable that he was now escorting a former ally of that *moredhel* monster. When the man returned James excused himself and headed for another corner of the tavern, where men were laughing. "It's a cold night, gentlemen," he said, "and your laughter draws me. May I buy you a drink and join you for a tale or two?" The men looked at each other nervously. "Please," James urged, understanding why the men might be nervous. "Well okay," said one. "I was just tellin' the fellas about old Glover. Paid 150 sovereigns for a dead man's hand—thought it was a 'glory hand' or some wizard thing. Figured he could sell it for big money, I guess." James and the others laughed. "Fools are born all the time, friend," he said. *Plots within plots*, James thought. The web may be even larger than Gorath and Arutha imagined.



The road north towards Romney was uncommonly dangerous. Wraithlike images of young women roamed the banks at night—*Rusalki*, the undead spirits of drowned women. Gorath and James carefully stayed clear of the shore, and the cold and slippery grip of

the revenants. Owyn wished he had studied more of the tomes at Lims-Kragma as he stole by the wraiths lingering near the shore.

A man walked up to them before they reached the bridge to Romney. Behind him was a large group of armed soldiers, though they were no Kingdom soldiers. "I'm Mitchel Waylander," the man said, eying the three suspiciously. "Do you have a Glazer's guild seal? I'll have to see one before I can let you across the bridge. We're still cleaning up after the guild war and we have to make sure that no unfavorites show up. It's just a formality until we can get things settled down here again."

"Guild war? What do you mean?" asked James.

"There was an uprising here. Lasted for several months. The Riverpullers Guild took charge of the other labor guilds and surrounded Romney. The crafts guilds tried to fight their way out and it seemed a losing battle until the King's men came up from Bas-Tyra. They managed to pacify the Riverpullers' leader. The Duke of Romney's kept it from getting worse, but I can't guarantee how much longer he'll be able. It will probably be a while, though, before we open up the roads to the general populace."

"Can the townspeople come and go at will?" James looked at the armed group, and thought little of their chances to win their way across, even with Owyn's arts.

"We've restricted visitors from the outside, not imprisoned the citizens. Any townspeople can come and go at leisure."

"I assume the same may be said of your guests? May the men of the King's company come out and play? We have business with them."

"I would be happy to help you but I'm not entirely certain I would know how to contact them. They are hard to get into one place and I'm not sure that I've met their leader. They are a rather untrusting pack of men." Waylander looked uneasy at the mention of the King's company.

"They would have to be. When you're tracking assassins, you have to be craftier and a little less moral than your prey. So, where would I go to get one of these seals?"

"It's not that easy. There's a group near Silden that's been petitioning for membership for some time now. But they're an unruly bunch and can't find anyone to sponsor them."

"But if I present a seal you will step aside with no questions asked?" The Mocker already had ideas.

"Well, not with no questions asked, but it would show that someone from a guild was vouching for you."

"Enough, reeve. We will come back. In the interim, please deliver a message to the King's men from Bas-Tyra that three men will be here soon to visit with them concerning a nocturnal bird that kills at night. They will understand what the message means." James spun around and left, leaving Waylander looking very, very concerned.



They arrived in the small town near Sethanon several hours after dark, and decided to seek the shelter of the Six Toe Tavern. They found the owner, a comely woman sitting in the corner, looking forlorn. James sat down across from her. "Hello there, may I buy—"

"I can't open up the shop!" she interrupted, looking up with tired eyes. "I don't care how much you have to offer or who you are. I can't go in there again. ..." James put out his hands to stop her from going on. "I was offering, miss, to buy you a drink."

"Oh ... oh, sorry. I was thinking you were stopping in to buy something from my store across the road. Since my father's death I've had to run these two places, the tavern here and the goods store across the way. You know, I've had folks in here, four a week by last count, all offering money for a sword made by a hermit up north. Fool that I am, I sent the word out, but that was before things started happening in my store. I've closed up things for a bit since then."

"Closed your store? Why? What sorts of things were going on in there?"

"You'll think I'm foolish ... *I think I'm foolish.*"

"Tell me and I'll listen. If I laugh once, even once, you may upend a cask of ale over my head."

The woman laughed. "You'll pay for the cask if you do ... all right then. I'll tell you. I'm Nia, and across the way is my shop, Nia's Goods. In the past few weeks, I've seen a man prowling about in my shop."

James smiled. "That's easy enough. Between my companions and myself, we can get rid of your prowler by dinner time tomorrow." Nia squinted at James. "Can you now? You run through ghosts as easy as that, poleax poltergeists in your spare time?"

"Ghosts? This prowler of yours is a ghost?"

Nia shook her head. "I told you you wouldn't believe me. I'll put it to you though. If you can find a way to put the ghost in my shop to rest, then I'll reopen my shop and give you the Galon Griefmaker that I bought from the hermit. Simple as that."

"Well, we'll see what we can do." James excused himself, and returned to Owyn and Gorath. "There are evil things afoot here. I don't know exactly why, but I think Feeber may be able to answer some questions for us—for Waylander and Nia."



They had found Max Feeber's barn and house just east of town the next morning, and in addition to Glazer's seals, Owyn found a moldering burial shroud. Feeber was in his field, where James accosted him. "Do you often make it a habit to go digging in graveyards?"

Feeber was a youngish-looking man, and was surprised at James's sudden appearance. "What do you mean?"

"I mean, that the three of us found a burial cloth and we think that you have something to do with all the evil going on around here. You've been desecrating graves, haven't you?"

"You broke into my house! I'll tell the constable about this!"

"If he were still living in town I might feel threatened, but I rather imagine you've already managed to scare him off. Now talk, or I'm going to have a cozy little chat with a friend of mine named Nivek—Prince Arutha's tax collector. Nice fellow. I think the two of you will get along marvelously."

The threat was taken quite seriously. "One grave! One grave only, I dug up. I don't remember the fellow's name now, but he used to own the Six Toe Tavern before Nia took over the shop. I thought that maybe I could scare her into moving out and selling to me but she's too darn stubborn."

"What did you do with the corpse?"

"No corpse about him! He was down to his skeleton. I tried to rebury him but I never found one of his hands. It's bound to be near the graveyard. I think I may have dropped it when I was near old Hershel's house. ..."

"What else?"

"That's it. That's all I know! Honest. Dug him up and then I reburied him."

"We'll need to find that hand then, and bury it. No thanks to you. Good-bye, sir, and I would advise that you stay away from the Six Toe Tavern from now on. I doubt you'll be warmly greeted."

Hershel's house was easy to find; the building was an old way-station for messengers traveling across the land. The man at the door greeted James with a strange look. "What were you lookin' for behind my house a week or so back?" James looked surprised. "I have done no such thing," he said defensively. "Perhaps you have mistaken me for someone else."

"No matter, I suppose," the man grumbled, his manner losing conviction. "I got some other things to do, so if you'll excuse me. And don't be wandering around on my land again, hear?" The door slammed, leaving James with an open mouth and more questions. "Seems that my double was skulking about," he commented to the others. "I don't know if this has anything to do with the hand, but it seems that a conversation I overheard in Lyton might lead us to someone who does know."

Back at Lyton, James discreetly asked where Glover could be found. Soon, they were standing in front of an unassuming house. James knocked, and the door opened. The man answering the door flew into a rage! "YOU!" he shouted, pointing at James. "That hand you sold me was totally WORTHLESS! It wasn't a glory hand at all!"

James took a step back. "I'm afraid you have mistaken me for someone else, I really have no idea what you are talking about. But did you say something about a hand? We'll buy it back from you."

"I tossed that worthless thing into the dried-up well at Lyton. One hundred and fifty sovereigns! That's how much I paid for it. You're telling me you'll give me my money back if I retrieve it for you?"

"Er, yes," stammered James.

The man looked at them suspiciously, then threatened to have them strung up if they weren't around when he returned, and left. He returned with a small burlap bag. Placing it on the table with a thunk, he turned to James. "Here's your hand, now give me back my gold." "I didn't take your gold, so let's call this a 'sale,' shall we?" said James. "Call it whatever you like—where's my bloody money?" the man belted. James dug money from his pouch and dropped it on the table. The man scooped it up greedily and demanded they stay until he had a chance to count it all.

After finding Jared Lycrow's headstone, they reburied the hand in the graveyard near Sethanon. The hauntings stopped and, as Nia promised, she gave them a Galon Griefmaker, a formidable weapon. While fingering the blade, James was lost in thoughts of a father he never knew. Duty to the Prince, however, left him little time to investigate his own mysterious past. "On to Romney," he said, showing the others the seal he had nicked from Feeber's barn.



They met again with Waylander at the bridge to Romney, and James flashed his seal. Mitchel looked dubiously at the little item, but they simply pushed past the indecisive reeve and his men.

Known as the City of Guilds, Romney was a large town, and Owyn felt safe among the crowds enjoying the brisk evening. He was splashing some cold water from the well on his face and arms, when Gorath and James broke into a sprint, heading for the Black Sheep Tavern.

Owyn ran to catch up, and now he heard the screaming, too. James bit back the impulse to vomit as he pushed past the woman who had opened the door. Kingdom soldiers lay scattered about the room, each lying in a pool of blood. Nowhere did there appear to be anyone untouched by murderous hands.

Chapter 2 Walkthrough

Roads are considerably more dangerous in Chapter 2, with Nighthawks, Rusalki, and rogue spellcasters about. You first meet a large group of Nighthawks between Malac's Cross and Darkmoor. You can avoid them by traveling along the southern mountain range. Visit the Oracle of the Aal near Malac's Cross. In Malac's Cross, you'll meet Petrumh, who will turn on Ivan Skaald's Double keyword. Talk to Ivan and return to the barn in Darkmoor to meet Lysle. Make your way towards Lyton and return six sets of Kingdom armor to Lord Lyton, and travel to Sethanon to start the Scooby Doo Quest. Nia's shop is haunted, and if you visit Max Feeber's barn and house, you'll discover why. You should also pick up a Glazer's seal from Feeber's barn, east of Sethanon.

Go back to Lyton and buy back the hand from Glover. Rebury the hand in Jared's grave near Sethanon, and Nia will give you a Galon Griefmaker. Head towards Silden. As you enter Silden, you will be attacked by Quegian pirates, who throw "diseased battle mulch" (yech!) at you—you can easily kill them, but you will be infected. Take the Mist Devil to the Temple of Eortis for a cure. In exchange, you will need to put the three groups of Rusalka to rest on the road north towards Romney. Be sure to purchase the Skin of the Dragon spell from the magic shop in Silden—with it, you can bypass traps and render yourself invulnerable to physical and magical attacks.

Stop off and visit the psychic Haphra, reject her prophecy, and kill the Rusalki behind her home.

Enter Romney, and click on the tavern to end the chapter.

The word is still out in Chapter 2 for Gorath's head, so there will be more assassin attacks, but in this chapter they will be much more organized and deadly. If you choose to visit the areas around LaMut or Eggley in Chapter 2, these places should actually be one of the deadliest zones to enter (figuring that the *moredhel* there have had the longest to prepare because they were the first ones "hit"). Sumani will mention that the LaMut garrison has declared the area under martial law until such time that the *moredhel* terrorists are found and put down.

The imposition of martial law in the area will make any traveling at night a real nightmare. Several members of the LaMut garrison will be "patrolling" the roads after dark (*a` la* ambush style). You'll be given the option of (1) trying to talk your way out of it or (2) fighting the guards. If the character trying to do the fast talking/haggling has a Haggle skill less than 45% they will fail in their attempt and be forced into the combat. If they *do* talk their way out of it, they will be allowed to pass without combat.

Chapter 2 Quests

☞ The Fealty Quest

☞ The Rusalka Quest

☞ Scooby Doo Quest

The Fealty Quest

Lord Lyton (of the village of Lyton) previously was sworn to the fealty of Earl Presser of Romney, but when he died his holdings were bestowed on his half-brother, an Earl Presser in Malac's Cross. Unfortunately, Lord Lyton has been required to comply with the standards of the Western Realm, standards far higher than those demanded by his former lord in the Eastern Realm. To avoid losing his lands or being hauled into the high court, Lyton must now equip twelve knights (rather than six) and send them to Malac's Cross.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

This quest will be solved when either the tax collectors have collected a total of 1800 sovereigns for Lord Lyton or when you have provided Lord Lyton with six suits of Kingdom armor. Once the quest is solved it will also put a stop to the Lyton "thievers."

Effects before the Quest Is Solved

Tax Collectors

A series of guards will have been posted along the roads in and out of Lyton (using the Quegian Mercenary icon) as Lord Lyton's tax collectors. If the characters try to cross a designated boundary line then they will be asked to (1) pay a sum of 300 gold sovereigns, (2) turn back, or (3) refuse and fight. If the players pay the sum they will be allowed to pass and the trigger will reset itself to trigger itself again until the quest has been solved. If you pick the Turn Back option then nothing happens, leaving you helpless outside of Lyton. The third option, refusing and fighting, will lead to a combat with at least five guards who will run away if badly wounded. If a squad of tax collectors is killed, another band of them will appear in their place in 34 hours.

Lord Lyton's House

Chapter 1 If you visit Lord Lyton's house in Chapter 1, you'll be informed that the Lord is too busy meeting with a reeve sent from Earl Presser to be bothered with a visit.

Chapter 2 The most direct way to deal with the situation is to get to Lord Lyton's estates by sneaking through the fields. If you bring him six full suits of Kingdom armor (he will take the six suits in the best condition, even if it means taking it off your characters' backs!) then he will be satisfied and give you a note with the answers to the word-locked chests in the area.

Reward for Solving the Quest

The primary reward for solving the Fealty Quest is a Virtue Key and a very valuable Spynote that will have the answers to moredhel word-locks in the area, compiled by Brother Jeremy. You'll get a secondary reward, in that you'll no longer be hassled on the road by Lord Lyton's tax collectors.

The Rusalki Quest

One of the rogues working for the Crawler has betrayed his master (yes, that's right, he's a rogue rogue) and stolen one of his magical items. Using an Eliaem's Heart to protect his flank as he escapes northward, he disturbs a number of Rusalki who are now wreaking havoc on the citizens living along the Romney river. If you visit the Temple of Eortis, you'll be informed of this terror and asked to solve this problem.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

You'll need to travel up the course of the Romney river and put all the summoned Rusalki to rest by defeating them in combat. Once this has been done, you can return to the Temple of Eortis in Silden to reap your reward.

Effects before the Quest Is Solved: Night of the Living Rusalki

Thanks to a clever travelling rogue's abilities, the Rusalki in this area have been hemmed in by a confinement spell that restrains their activities during the day; but they have nearly total control of the area by night. As a result, the local inns make enormous profits from people wishing to take shelter during the night and the innkeeper has hired Crenard (a rogue) to protect his "livelyhood." Crenard will leave you alone so long as you stay away from the Rusalki "haunts" that line the river. If you approach the haunts at night, however, Crenard and two Quegian mercenary companions will attack you. (The leader of the party will trigger an interparty comment that the mercenaries appear to be guarding something, and that perhaps it would be a wise idea if they were left alone until they know more about what they are doing.) If you talk to one of the "extras" in the *River Pilot's Folly* they will learn that Crenard was apparently hired to watch something near the river and that no should attempt to go near the river "lest they get three feet of steel through their gut."

Haphra the Mystic

If you visit Haphra on the main road north of Sloop, she will offer her standard services of (1) reading your future, (2) telling rumors, or (3) speaking to the dead. Of these options, only one relates to the quest (the first one). If you choose the first option, then you'll get a prediction followed by a choice to either accept the prediction or reject it.

If You Accept Her Prediction If you accept the prediction, then the mystic will take your money and the session is over and the exterior event is ignored.

If You Reject Her Prediction If you reject the prediction, then the mystic looks wild-eyed and confused to have company. She will ask any visitors to leave at that point and will reject any new attempts to visit her. Her husband knocks Haphra down, and asks you to kill the spirit that has been possessing his wife. When you leave the house and take a few steps you'll trigger a text message in which Owyn will notice that a

Rusalka materialized as your party fled the house of the mystic. If you choose to follow, it will trigger a combat with the “possessing” spirit and the Rusalka can be “slain” and put to rest. If you return to the house, the mystic will then express her eternal gratitude, give a true reading, and explain how it was that the Rusalka came to possess her and will award you with two vials of Restoratives. It will also say that her particular quest is finished and she will not appear in successive chapters. You should suspect something strange is going on when you first encounter the Shade outside Haphra’s house.

Rusalki o’Rama

Rusalki are wandering freely in the area on the North Trail, north of Silden, and will approach and attack you. The house in this area is abandoned. To solve this particular phase, all you have to do is kill all the Rusalki here.

Reward for Solving the Quest If you find and solve all three instances of Rusalki hauntings along the Romney and then return to the Temple of Eortis, you’ll discover that you can be healed of any disease or other condition. This has already been built into the Priestess of Eortis Beyla’s dialogue.

The Scooby Doo Quest

Thanks to the land-greedy, former franklin Max Feeber, the ghost of Jared Lycrow has been summoned back from the Halls of Lims-Kragma to haunt Nia’s Goods, although Nia doesn’t recognize her father in his rather decomposed form. As any reasonable corpse will tell you, they only wish to have all their body parts in one place, but thanks to a bumbled attempt on Max’s part to frighten Nia away from the shop, Jared’s hand has made a significant migration from where it began. After Max accidentally dropped Jared’s hand behind the old way station (still maintained by Hershel), the hand was picked up by Lysle Rigger, who mistook the hand for a *glory hand*. Hershel witnessed Lysle Rigger poking about (thus explaining why he will recognize James in Chapter 2) but didn’t think anything of it at the time.

Meanwhile, Lysle headed off for Lyton because he had heard that the Crawler had put out a request for glory hands, to be used by the thief-magicians in his employ, and Rigger wanted to find out more about the Crawler's activities for the Upright Man. Unfortunately for Glover, the magical thief recognized the substitution and thoroughly chastised the overseer for his ignorance, telling him that he had paid for a worthless item. Angered, he took the skeletal hand and chucked it into the Lyton well. Nia will ask the players to intervene on her behalf and bring the hauntings in Nia's Goods to an end.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

Players will need to get the hand back, dig up Jared's grave in Sethanon's graveyard, return the hand, and rebury the body.

Effects before the Quest Is Solved

1. **Nia's shop (Chapters 1-3):** Nia's Goods will remain closed until the quest is solved.
2. **Glover's wrath and James's relative:** If the players follow this trail of clues they can get the skeletal hand:
 - ◀ Talk to Nia and discover the quest.
 - ◀ Find the burial cloth (and the Glazer's Guild seal) in Max Feeber's house and barn (Figure 2-1) and then speak to him in the field next to his house. He will confess to having pulled the caper to scare Nia away from her shop and tell you that he thinks he dropped "part of the corpse" behind the old runner's relay station, Hershel's house (Figure 2-2).
 - ◀ In Chapter 1 Hershel isn't of much help and he will only offer the players something cool to drink. In Chapter 2, however, Hershel will mistake James for Lysle Rigger and ask him what he had done since the last time he passed through on his way to Lyton.



Figure 2-1. Feeber's barn west of Lyton, towards Sethanon



Figure 2-2. Hershel's house

- ◀ Talking and giving food to Gran Petrunh in the inn at Malac's Cross will turn on a *double* keyword for Ivan Skaald in Malac's Cross. Go to the barn in Darkmoor after talking to Ivan about double and talk to Lysle.
- ◀ If you click on one of the men in The Wayside Tavern in Lyton, regardless of chapter, he will mention the story about the skeletal hand/glory hand swap up and that apparently Glover lost a great deal of money.
- ◀ If you haven't spoken to Nia and the man in The Wayside, then Glover won't answer the door to his house (Figure 2-3). If you have spoken with Nia and the man, however, Glover will tell you he no longer has the funds he needs to pay for glory hands, thanks to the fraudulent hand dumped on him by Lysle Rigger. If you offer to recompense him for the 150 gold sovereigns that he lost, then he will fish the hand out of the well.
- ◀ Return to the graveyard near Sethanon, find Jared's grave (Figure 2-4), and rebury the hand.



Figure 2-3. Glover in Lyton



Figure 2-4. Jared's grave

Reward for Solving the Quest

Once Jared's hand has been laid to rest, you can return to the Six Toe Tavern and talk to Nia. She'll tell you to run across the street to Nia's Goods, and that she'll pop over in a few seconds to open it up for you. Nia will give you a Galon Griefmaker. The shop will stay open now!

Miscellaneous Notes for Chapter 2

- ↩ You meet Abuk, a Zen master of lockpicking, on the road east of Lyton (Figure 2-5). Pay him 80 sovereigns to increase the party's lockpicking skill, a worthwhile investment.
- ↩ South of Lyton, on the south branch of the fork in the road, is Flarr's farm. Flarr is a retired sorcerer, and his well will restore all Life points to the party for a paltry 25 sovereigns (Figure 2-6).



Figure 2-5. Meeting Abuk on the road east of Lyton



Figure 2-6. Flarr's healing well

- ◀» Nighthawks lie in wait until the moredhel assassins with Nago are killed. A Spynote there will refer to their being hired and to Gorath and Owyn's visit to Krondor, so the note is very recent.
- ◀» On the road marked "North Trail" north of Silden, the local inn, the River Boat's Folly, has taken advantage of the outbreak of Rusalki by jacking up their inn prices. Crenard is their hired thug, and you will encounter him on the road where a path branches off to the west, leading to the inn. There are several wordlock chests in this area as well.
- ◀» Visit the brewery in Sloop; you will have to return here in Chapter 3.
- ◀» A very large contingent of Quegian mercenaries will be waiting just before the bridge in Romney. If you give Mitchel Waylander the Glazers Guild seal, the Quegians will allow you and the others to enter Romney.
- ◀» Visit the Oracle of the Aal, who is south of the Temple of Lims-Kragma. Look in the bushes for a dragon's stone (Figure 2-7). The players can return here to learn more from the oracle as they uncover more of Delekhan's plots.



Figure 2-7. The dragon's stone

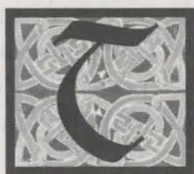
- ✦ The Temple of Lims-Kragma lies on the main road between Malac's Cross and Lyton (Figure 2-8). Lims-Kragma is one of the gods who give the most potent blessing to weapons and armor. Do not search the house to the south—it will infect you with a plague.



Figure 2-8. Temple of Lims-Kragma

Chapter 3

The Spyglass and the Spider



he coppery smell of burning flesh filled the night air. Embers leapt from the funeral pyre into the growing dusk and joined the winking points of light that would later become a blaze of crystalline stars. Around the flames villagers gathered in dark clots, their faces overwritten with blank, unreadable expressions. Like moths to a candle they drifted near and mourned and thought and sniffed. They had come to watch the flames feed.

Gorath's fathomless green eyes glinted in the firelight as he turned and gazed at Owyn, who shifted uncomfortably at his side. "There can be no uneasier sleep than that of a warrior murdered in his cups," Gorath said, his voice only slightly louder than the spitting hiss of scorched bone. "They nipped at the heels of the Nighthawks, be certain of that."

"So you think we're getting close?" Owyn asked.

Gorath began to speak, but the words died on his lips as his eyes locked with the burning gaze of Seigneur James.

"I've had it with your mysterious half-answers, *moredhell*! Now, for the sake of your continued good health, I want to hear some explanations fast—why were you here in Romney 6 months before you made your appearance at the Inclindel Pass?" The fearsome snarl on James's face was met by Gorath's own cool gaze.

"The only explanation, Seigneur, is that you are mistaken. I have never been south of the Thunderhell." Gorath's eyes narrowed as he waited for James's response.

"While we carried the dead from the Black Sheep Tavern, the barkeep informed me that a man answering to your description and the name of Gorath called on three unwholesomes dressed in black, all of whom wore the trademark silver rings of the Nighthawks. It seems that this moredhel paid a sizeable sum of money to those Nighthawks before departing, enough perhaps to arrange the death of a company of the King's soldiers?"

While Gorath was stronger, James was quick, and the moredhel had no desire to see his mission to Romney end with a sword at his throat. "He may well have paid a King's ransom, but I know nothing of it. I realize it may mean little to you but Gorath is a passing common name in the Northlands and oft as not you Kingdom folk have mistaken me for an elf! The barkeep was likely deceived by enemies of mine. If I had cause to mislead you or your Prince, I could have found a far less convoluted means of confusing the royal sanity. Look elsewhere for your enemies, James. While we may not be friends, I mean you no harm."

The seigneur looked taken aback for a moment, but trouble and doubt still knit his brow. "I shall look where I wish until you are no longer my responsibility. We may not be able to strike at the Nighthawk stronghold, but if we can locate it, we may still be able to get inside and find the information Prince Arutha needs."

The time had come for more constructive pursuits, Gorath thought. "The Nighthawks will shun Romney for a time. However bold they may be at night, they flee when dawn breaks." James agreed. "No one walks without leaving footprints and these men are no different. However skilled they may be at assassination, they have never been any good at covering their tracks. Let me see those things you found in the tavern." Gorath produced two shiny objects from the folds of his dusty cape. "They are here."

In the moredhel's hands were a spyglass and a silvery-looking spider. James examined them carefully. "Good. Those are our footprints. Of all the items we found on the dead men, these two seem conspicuously out of place and may be related in some way to our elusive murderers. We begin our hunt for the Nighthawks with a spider and a spyglass."

James, Gorath, and Owyn returned to the tavern and motioned across the room to a figure cleaning up the blood and broken serving

ware. The boy walked over to join them. He stood before them, eyes downcast. "I'm Jason—are you going to take me away?" he asked without raising his head.

James took the boy gently by the shoulders. "Why would we want to do that?"

"Because when I broke things, master always told me that someone would come and take me away someplace bad and dark, where they would never feed me and I'd never see the light of day. I knew when all those people got killed in here that someone would come for me and take me to the bad place." The sight of the piteous boy moved even Gorath. "You don't have anything to be afraid of, Jason. You didn't kill those men. It's not your fault," said the *moredhel*.

Gorath's words did not comfort the boy, who was on the verge of tears. "Master says anybody that stays under our roof is our *respon* ... *respono* ... responsibility, and I was here when they were killed! That means it was my fault."

James's voice dropped to a whisper. "Then you saw the murders?"

"No, but they come in and told me to leave or they'd hurt me real bad. They didn't tell me what they were going to do." James nodded. "What did the men who told you to leave look like?"

"They were big and they had birds on their chests, like eagles. And they smelled funny, like sometimes the sailors from Kesh smell like. Like flowers."

James looked at Gorath. "Hawks on their chests. That at least confirms the Nighthawks' involvement. Do you know anything about a spider made of silver or a brass spyglass that one of the men that were killed might have carried? It's very important. Think hard."

The boy's eyes focused for a moment, and his features brightened. "I ... I don't know anything about the spider, but I remember that one of the King's men had a brass tube with little pieces of glass in the ends of it and I could see things that were far away with it. He said that he and one of the other men had brought it back from Silden."

"Did he say where in Silden he got it?"

"No, just in Silden."

James looked intently at Jason. "Can you think of anything else? Did anyone else come into the Black Sheep before the murderers?"

"A carrying man brought in some wine from the Upside Down Keg in Sloop for the soldiers. Told me it was sent special, but besides that, I can't think of anything. ..."

James sighed. "Thanks, Jason. We may be back later to ask you more questions, so don't go anywhere." When the boy returned to his duties, James turned to Owyn and Gorath. "Seems we have an appointment with the brewer in Sloop and the wharves of Silden."



Owyn stopped on the road and peered through the spyglass while James looked at the setting sun. The brewery in Sloop would still be open when they arrived, thought James. "This is a magic device," exclaimed Owyn, obviously excited. "It allows you to find chests, even caches hidden by the underbrush!" Gorath thought for a moment and said, "That would be useful—since the moredhel often leave supplies in wordlocked chests in areas they intend to ... pass through."

The air became still for a moment, and Gorath stiffened. A branch cracked behind them, and Gorath turned just in time to see three Nighthawks emerge from the woods. Hearing the moredhel cry out, James wheeled around, Galon Griefmaker unsheathed. Gorath was already locked in combat with the first Nighthawk, and Owyn quickly cast a spell to shield Gorath from physical injury. The Nighthawks had been concerned with Gorath, but when they saw Owyn cast a spell, one immediately charged the young magician. Owyn's eyes widened at the sight of a wounded Nighthawk bearing down on him—he had already been hurt by James's flashing blade.

"Owyn!" James cried out, barely parrying a savage thrust from one Nighthawk.

Owyn ducked under a sword swing from the wounded Nighthawk and swung his staff to strike the charging assassin. The blow lifted the Nighthawk off his feet, and Owyn's staff came down on the assassin's skull, which exploded in a spray of blood. It seemed Owyn's adventures had made him quite capable of handling himself, if need be. Gorath's assailant had fallen, and soon the last Nighthawk fell with two quarrels in his back. The three hurried to Sloop, to find shelter from the night.



James could smell alcohol.

Pushing the door of the shop open, he was met by a sharp-faced fellow who was carrying a wooden keg. Quickly dumping it with a pile of other casks, he wiped his hands on a towel, then extended his hand. "Welcome to the Upturned Keg. Best brewery this side of the Romney. Would you care to sample some of our stock? We make a dandy apple wine. ..."

"I'm sure you do, but no thank you," James said. "We have other business with you. Have you recently sent a special delivery to the Black Sheep Tavern in Romney?"

The man nodded. "Yes. A man here in town named Mitchel Waylander came in and made the purchase order himself. Paid with rubies." Recognizing the name of the leader of the Glazers Guild of Romney, James arched an eyebrow. "Was there anything unusual about the order?"

"I'll say," the man replied. Moving to a small bin, he pulled out a handful of a substance that looked like tabac, letting it sift between his fingers back into the bin. "He asked that I add this to the kegs—it's called black tarweed."

"A poison?" James asked.

"No," said the man, looking offended. "It's a cheat used by the less scrupulous tavern keepers. Handful of this dissolved in your ale, and whoever drinks it will think they're dying of thirst. Gets worse the more you drink."

Gorath spat. "It is often done in the north," he said. "A man will drink until he is no longer capable, either for lack of gold or wit."

"And an excellent way to make certain that someone is incapable of fighting back," James said with disgust. "The Nighthawks aren't what they used to be." Alarmed, the brew master seemed to pale. "Nighthawks? What have they to do with this?" Omitting most of the details, James told what they had already learned of the murder. Horrified, the man shook his head. "I assure you, this has never once happened in association with the Keg. If you would like, I will get you something to drink. I guarantee that it has not been laced with the black tarweed."

The fight with the Nighthawks had drained Owyn physically. He drew up a stool and reached for a mug of ale. When Gorath moved to stop him, Owyn flashed him a stern look. "After what happened, I don't care if this is laced with black tarweed or Silverthorn. A drink I

need, and a drink I will have." James laughed. "You are ready for Arutha's court, I think," he said. "You'd liven things up."



Mitchel Waylander's house was at the other end of the small town of Sloop. They had arrived just in time to see five figures skulking about. James put his hand out to stop the others. "Nighthawks," he whispered as Owyn rolled his eyes. Gorath counted the shadowy figures. "Five. Do we stop them?" James nodded. "If the Nighthawks are interested in Waylander, so are we."

The first Nighthawk fell with a quarrel through his neck, and another ran, clutching his eyes, into the point of Gorath's blade. The remaining three were demoralized by the surprise attack, and fell without much of a fight. After searching their bodies for anything of interest, James knocked cautiously on the door.

A few tense moments later the door creaked and swung open. From the darkened room a figure emerged and James gripped his sword tighter, prepared for anything. Although Mitchel Waylander wasn't one of his favorite people, he was a bit relieved to see his familiar face—and Mitchel seemed a bit relieved to see them.

"Glad to see you. I don't know who sent you, but I'm very thankful for your help." Waylander's face was as pale as the moon.

"Let's just say that anyone on the business end of a Nighthawk sword is of interest to me these days. It's not like them to send multiple assassins unless the target is considered a danger to the guild." James had not entirely released the grip on his sword.

"But I'm a merchant! I don't know anything about the Guild of Assassins!" Waylander looked openly panicked now.

"You wouldn't necessarily have to know anything about them. You might have witnessed something they preferred left unseen; perhaps they think you've wronged them in some way. Where were you the night the King's men from the Bas-Tyra regiment were assassinated?"

"What?! I hadn't heard ... Gods, they were good men! If it hadn't been for them, we never would have broken the Riverpullers' siege at Romney. How did they die?" James judged Mitchel's response to be genuine and relaxed a bit.

"Nighthawks set upon them in the Black Sheep Tavern. Killed every last man. The only thing I found strange was that there were so few signs of resistance. I was told by the boy who tends the bar a few casks

of Keshian ale were delivered the night before, but the Bas-Tyra men are very disciplined men. Does it seem reasonable to you that a detachment of men trailing the Nighthawks would get drunk in the town where they suspect the Guild of Assassins have their headquarters?

"It does sound a bit odd. ..."

"It sounded odd to me as well, so I decided the ale had been tainted in some way. I thought if I found the man who sent the ale, I might be on the trail of the Nighthawks. Then I visited the tavern here in town and I discovered something very disturbing. The arrangements for the ale delivery were made here and the barkeep was instructed to add a significant amount of tarweed to the mixture, a mixture that while not poisonous, induces the drinker to become excessively thirsty, ensuring that he will continue to drink until quite drunk. But that was not the shocking information. You see, it seems the local chief reeve of a prestigious guild arranged for the delivery of the ale ... Mitchel Waylander."

Waylander held his hands out and cried in protest. "I never made that order! I would have been in Romney when the arrangement was made. I couldn't have made that order!"

"I realize that as well. The Nighthawks have gone to extreme trouble to implicate you and that tells me they want revenge for something. The men that were sent here to kill you would undoubtedly have planted the final evidence on your corpse. So, what could you have done to them?"

"Truly, I don't know!"

"Do you know anything about a silver spider or a brass spyglass?" asked Gorath, standing behind James. The moredhel had not sheathed his blood-covered sword, which was obviously causing some distress to the guild leader. James nudged Gorath, and the moredhel walked calmly over to a fallen Nighthawk, kneeled and cleaned his blade carefully on the clothing of the dead assassin, and sheathed his sword. He stood up slowly.

"A brass spyglass? Oh dear gods! But that man couldn't have been a Nighthawk—he was so ... so regal looking."

"What did you do to this man? Is the spyglass involved?"

"There's a place north of Romney known as Prank's Stone. When people approach it, they often discover that items on their person disappear. A business partner and I discovered where the disappeared

items go to and we sell what we find. Anyway, one night I was drinking in Prank's Stone—the town—and I saw this man. He had a marvelous brass spyglass on him. My guild was having difficulties at the time and I was low on cash, so I decided to make the spyglass my own. I noticed he was paying attention to a rather fetching barmaid and I arranged that a note be sent to his table, telling him to meet her near the Prank's Stone. The spyglass became ours."

"If the man you snatched the spyglass from learned what happened, I could see how he would want revenge. Where did you sell it?"

"I don't sell the items. My partner does and we split the profits. I don't know anything about him other than that he is a native of Silden. We decided early on that we would share only our booty, so that if one of us was caught the other would be safe."

"Then it seems we have business in Silden. Lay low. It may be the only thing that keeps you alive, Mitchel. The Nighthawks are not men that should be angered."



They returned to the tavern in Silden. It seems that they had slain all the Nighthawks left behind to complete their unfinished business. James motioned to a man across the room, who walked over to join them. He stood before them, eyebrows arched inquiringly. He was dressed in the colorful fashion of Kesh.

"*Sah, enconsi?* I am Joftaz, humble owner of this establishment."

"As the keeper of a tavern, I imagine you get quite a bit of traffic through here, lots of people wanting to buy or sell items that were—shall we say—indiscriminately acquired? Who would I speak to if my interests lay in that direction?"

"Any who walk the streets. Silden is not known for its reputable patronage, as you no doubt have heard. Why would this interest you?" His face was unreadable, a master merchant—or thief.

James leaned towards Joftaz. "I need to find out about the possible purchase of two very special items that might have been picked up here in Silden. I'm looking for whoever might have sold them."

Joftaz smiled, revealing yellowed teeth. "If an item is sold in Silden then I am the only man that you should speak to. Any other transactions are done the Silden way."

"Very well, Joftaz. I need to find out what you may know about either a brass spyglass or a silver spider. I would be willing to pay in gold."

Joftaz looked alarmed for a moment, then smiled. "You will pay, most undoubtedly for that information, but I am not interested in your Kingdom coins. If it were gold I could come up with the sum I want myself. No, what I require is the assistance of a thief."

James stood up. "Why do you think I would be of any help?"

"I live in a city of thieves. I have spent my life knowing how to sense them and I know most assuredly that you have a thief's instincts. This is the bargain. I will tell you about the silver spiders that I sell on occasion, and you will find a bag of powder that was stolen by the Crawler. It has most likely been taken to his house near here. The house is locked and I suspect that the pouch will be hidden away in a chest or cabinet or such."

"Any thief could do that for you. Why would we be especially qualified for this?"

"Because all the thieves in this place—they all are the hands and eyes of the Crawler. To be working for me, that would be death for them."

James's Mocker instincts took over—instincts for self-preservation. "Why? What's in this powder bag?"

"I have made my offer. The information for the pouch. Do we have a deal?"

They needed the information. Prince Arutha needed the information. James had no choice. "My bump of trouble is telling me that I shouldn't be agreeing to this, but you have a deal, Joftaz. I'll get your pouch. A straight exchange, the information for the item."

"Consider it a deal then. I will wait for you here in the Anchorhead until you return with the item." Joftaz smiled faintly.

"We will be back. Do not leave this place." James led the other two out of the tavern, bewildered expressions on their faces.



Gorath watched the docks.

Behind him, James stood with his ear pressed against the door of the house, listened for the stirring of the Crawler or his men, but heard only the thumping of his own heart. The door was locked and as he reached inside his pack to search for his keys and picklocks, he saw a very small, very straight crack in the trim beside the door. Smiling at the old Mocker's trick, he pressed his thumb against the trim and pushed down.

The wood slid away, revealing a small brass key! Removing it from its hiding place, he jammed it into the brass lock, whispering his thanks to the old Mocker who had first taught him the trick. Within, the house was dim, but not so dark that James couldn't navigate. Creeping stealthily, he investigated the whole of the three-room house, noting anything that looked out of the ordinary. Near the fireplace he saw what appeared to be a chest, but dismissed it as suspect, its location tagging it as a trap for less clever thieves. On the far wall, he eyed a row of five colorfully lacquered pots, each spilling over with a tangle of violet-colored tondill horns. Many times in Krondor, he had heard the Princess Anita lamenting that the flowers were nearly impossible to grow in the salty soil of the coastal regions and required nearly constant sunlight. Located as they were at the rear of this house, however, they would undoubtedly receive very little light at all.

Smiling, he upturned each of the pots until, at last, he discovered the hidden powder bag and made a mental note to thank the princess for her relentless efforts to civilize him. Clutching his find triumphantly, he hurried outside to rejoin his very nervous-looking traveling companions. Jimmy the Hand was still alive and well ...



James was flush with the thrill of victory. Part of him would always be a Mocker, and that part had served him, Arutha, and the Kingdom well. While Owyn wandered into a stop that sold magic items, he and Gorath returned to the tavern. "Well, Joftaz," said James, "It seems that today Banath has smiled on the both of us. I have what you want, and you apparently know what I need to know. The pouch in exchange for the story. That was the deal. I want to hear a story about a silver spider."

Joftaz was pleased. "Yes, Banath has gifted you most certainly. I wouldn't have thought anyone wily enough to defeat the Crawler, but if the Happy Prankster has given you the knack then I'll help you as best I can. Now—the silver spider is a rare item, so I remember when I get one and am most assuredly pleased when I can turn a profit from one. They are heartily sought here in the Kingdom. It's been several months since last I sold one. They are devices you can apply to a knife or arrow to poison them."

James felt his anger rise, but held it in check. "Can you describe the last man who bought one?"

"Oh, aye, I can describe him. Stoop-backed, crass, hard-bartering fellow. He was wearing a black cloak and a bird—an eagle—was blazed across his chest." Joftaz was chewing on a piece of stale bread.

"You mean a hawk? A golden hawk?" asked Gorath.

"I have lived the greater part of my days here in Silden. It might have been a hawk or it could have been a gull. All I know is that I lost a great deal that day between him and a trader called Abuk, who brought in some sailor's trinkets that he appropriated from Prank's Stone. As for the man with the bird on his chest, the last I heard of him he was asking to buy passage on a ship called the *Mocker's Folly* bound for Krondor."

"A Nighthawk bound for Krondor? Where could I find the ship's captain?"

"Krondor, I suspect. The ship isn't scheduled to return here for several months."

"What about the brass spyglass? Would you know anything about that?" asked James.

"As I told you before, sailor's trinkets are common here in Silden. If it is a special glass you covet, I would urge you to seek out the trader Abuk. I could only hope to make five, perhaps ten gold sovereigns from such items. Not really worth my time bothering with them. I believe he is traveling to Silden on a, uh, professional matter."

James wrapped his cloak around him. "You may find that bothering with silver spiders may have cost you more than you imagined, Joftaz. If I find that any of the Prince's family have died of poisoning when I return there, you'll have a great deal more to worry about than turning a profit."



Owyn had spent the better part of the group's funds with the magician in his shop in Silden. James looked unamused, but thought better of it. Owyn's arts would be very helpful if they encountered more Nighthawks or worse, Black Slayers.



They found Abuk returning from Lyton. He greeted James quickly. "Abuk, master of locks at your service. How may I be of assistance?"

"It appears that you are master of more than locks. What do you know of the Prank's Stone north of Romney?" asked James.

Abuk looked concerned—he was outnumbered. “A tongue wags loose in Silden, I see. Are my enterprises to be silenced?”

“I am interested only in a brass spyglass that you sold to Joftaz in Silden. Tell me about it and I may choose to forget about your other thefts. How did you come by it?”

“A year and twenty ago, I bought a box in Silden from a trader. He told me it would bring me great fortune, but I didn’t believe him, wishing only for a strong chest to hold my things. We haggled and at last I purchased it for ten sovereigns, a price that the seller seemed positively glad to receive. I too was pleased with the exchange, but soon began to wonder at the nature of what I had purchased. The chest was possessed of cajunlo.”

“Cajunlo? What does that mean?”

“It was a box of trickery, of magic. Objects would appear in the box, things that I had not placed there. Then one day I met a man from Romney and he told me of the true nature of my chest. When things were lost in a certain place, they came to my box and we could sell those items. We decided of course that we would never tell each other more about ourselves, so that our business would be safe should one of us come to harm.”

“And you two would split the profits of whatever appeared in the box. I take it that the brass spyglass was one of the items he arranged for you to find?”

“Yes.”

Gorath leaned over and whispered to James. “He knows nothing. We should head north, towards Prank’s Stone and see if we can find this hard-bartering Nighthawk.” James agreed, and they quickly took their leave of Abuk.



The road north unwound before them like an endless ribbon. Soon, Owyn was whistling. Suddenly aware that their traveling companion had grown irrepressibly cheerful over the last few miles, James turned and favored the squire with searching stare. “Why the sudden lift in spirits, boy?”

“Unless I’m mistaken, we’re heading towards my uncle Corvallis’s estates in Cavall Keep, assuming we keep heading this way. We are going in that direction, aren’t we?”

"Yes, it seems we have a Nighthawk to catch in flight." By Owyn's suggestion, they paid a visit to Cavall Keep, and learned that the keep itself had burned down in a recent fire. Count Corvallis was staying in the town, and was a busy man, but the suggestion that Nighthawks were operating in the area made him stop and speak to Owyn and his strange-looking friends. They were directed to the Temple of Kahooli, the god of vengeance, north of Kenting Rush.



James sniffed the air.

While for the better part of the last hour he had been trying to piece together the details of the murder at the Black Sheep Tavern, something else had begun nagging at him, elusive as the names of all the Mockers he'd once known. It was only after a few minutes of consideration that he realized what it was that was distracting him.

"Do you smell anything odd?" he asked Gorath. Struck by the oddity of smelling jasmine in the open, he could spot no natural flora that could account for the scent. But while searching, he thought he spotted someone moving down the road towards them ... a dark, handsome man who stopped and looked at the three travelers, covered with dust from the road.

"What brings visitors here to Kenting Rush? There is little here to warrant visitors from the Bitter Sea, and if that weren't enough, it seems we have guests as well from Elvandar. Welcome. I am Navon du Sandau."

James found himself feeling uncertain, and spoke hesitantly. "This may sound a strange question, but a moment ago I thought I smelled flowers ... jasmine, to be exact. Does it grow near here?"

"You have a keen nose. I deal in perfumes, spices, as well as a number of other imported goods. I've just returned from a lengthy trip into Kesh and I am afraid the scent clings a bit to the clothes."

"But you've only just come up the road. I've been smelling it for some while," added Owyn.

"I am told the scent carries. There is a bit of a wind today. So, as you are travelers in the area and dealing with the natives can sometimes be difficult, is there any way I can be of some assistance to you?"

James shook his head apologetically. "Actually, I ... well ... no. When I first saw you, it occurred to me to ask you something, but whatever it was has utterly slipped my mind at the moment. Would it bother

you if I came and asked you about it later? We have a few things we need to be attending to elsewhere."

"Go on then, I have a few things to do myself," said Navon as he walked on towards his house.



Gorath stopped at a well, and found the well cover locked. James examined the little lock. "I think it opens with a Virtue Key." He looked at Gorath, who shrugged. "You mean like this?" asked a voice behind the two of them. They turned around, and to James's surprise, Owyn held up a small, elaborate key, once used to ensure the fidelity of wives. "Where ... ?" asked James.

"Well, I saw it in one of the shops we stopped in. It was too expensive, so I decided to ... ahh ... borrow it. Thought it might be useful." Owyn looked embarrassed. "But how?" asked an amused Gorath. Owyn looked at the moreldhel for a moment, and the key disappeared from his hand. Reaching into his pocket, Owyn produced the key. Laughing, James unlocked the well and fished a chess piece—a knight—from the well. "Taking Owyn's example, we should hold on to this. Someone went to great pains to hide this, and we may find it useful."



They were escorted to the lector's chambers in the Temple of Kahooli, just north of Kenting Rush.

Seated behind a large mahogany desk was a man of middle years, the hair greying at his temples, and swept back from a wide tanned forehead. Without standing he motioned for them to take seats. "I have very little time this morning," the lector said. "Please make whatever request you have as directly as possible."

"That suits me fine," James said. "We're looking for a band of murderers. They killed a squad of men sent from Bas-Tyra on the First Advisor's orders to investigate the possible activities of Nighthawks in Romney. The idea occurred to me while we were standing in the meditation chambers that the Temple of Kahooli might know something of it."

"I am listening," the lector replied gravely.

"When I was studying under Father Timothy in the Temple of Astalon in Krondor," James said, "I learned quite a bit about the various temples and their gods. As I recall, Kahooli is the god of revenge."

"Justice," the lector snapped. "Not revenge. If one is innocent, he has nothing to fear from the Howler after Fugitives. If one has violated the wise strictures of our gods and eluded punishment, however, we are the hounds that bay at his heels. There is no place one can run that we cannot sniff them out." James nodded. "A well-known fact. But it is also well known that the Temple of Kahooli hires assassins on occasion to do the sniffing."

"If you imply that we hired the Guild of Assassins to kill the men in Bas-Tyra, it is not so. We have had no dealing with the Hawks of the Night for several months. It may well be that we have common cause at the moment." The priest stopped for a moment as if considering something, then continued slowly. "They have become churlish. They no longer follow the codes of piety which we lay out for the behavior of our faithful and they have not paid a tithe in too long. We wish to separate them from our ranks, but ... no protectors of the faith will challenge them."

James leaned across the desk. "I want the Nighthawks, lector. Tell me the name of the man who leads them and where he may be found and we both can profit from an end to them."

The lector laughed a dark, rumbling laugh that had nothing of humor in it. "I wish that it were that easy. Kahooli, how I wish. But when the Nighthawks swore their oath to the temple, they required of us a holy oath—to Kahooli himself—that their identities never be revealed to any that were not of the temple itself. You would have to be at least protectors of the faith before I could even think of revealing the name you seek."

"I see." James sat back in his chair, his eyes brooding. "How would we become protectors?"

"You would have to study with the prelate, who lives nearby, and learn the Codes of Piety," the lector said, a little smile tugging at the corner of his mouth. "Though I will warn you, his house is well protected. There are many who do perceive us as the dispensers of revenge and attempt to save themselves by doing away with us. I will say this—if you return to the temple, having performed even one of the acts of piety that the prelate teaches you, I think I can see to it that you are made protectors of the faith."

"And you will tell us where to find these Nighthawks?" James asked. The priest smiled. "Most certainly."

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The prelate was most helpful, directing the three to leave their rations in a nearby barn, and fast for a day and a half. Finally, weak from hunger, they returned to the temple, stumbling.

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Cursing oaths that seemed far from appropriate within the hallowed temple walls, Owyn followed the priest robed in light grey. Behind him, James and Gorath seemed similarly pained, but all made it well enough to the lector's study. Pushing their way into the oak paneled room, they took their seats and waited. In a few moments, the lector arrived, arrayed in his dark robes of office. Looking at all their faces, he nodded with a certain grim satisfaction. "You have chosen the mortification of the flesh," he said. "An admirable act of piety. It is enough."

James nodded. "Good. Then tell us about the Guild of Assassins."

"In a moment." Stepping back to the door, he whispered to the priest who waited outside. Footsteps hurried off into the distance. "Haestan will bring food for you. You will be of little use against Navon and his band without your strength."

James sat forward in his chair. "Navon?"

"Navon du Sandau," the lector said, emphasizing each syllable. "He lives here in Kenting Rush, posing as a traveling merchant. That gives him the excuse he needs to cover the strange visitors he has from time to time. He leads the Nighthawks, but the time has come for the end of the Guild of Assassins."

"Agreed," James said, wobbling to his feet. "We appreciate your help."

"Wait." The lector gazed levelly at them. "As Kahooli has come to your aid, as protectors of the faith, you must now aid us. It is your responsibility now to slay him. His is excommunicated from the Temple of Kahooli. His life is forfeit."

"You didn't mention this in the bargain before," James said. "Shall we be expecting other demands from you later?" The priest shook his head. "Only this. You may do as you please thereafter, though I would warn you always to tread carefully from this day forth when dealing with Kahooli. You are now, in our eyes, the arm of the Tireless Pursuer."



They rested for another two days, gaining their strength while keeping an eye on Navon. On the third day, James approached Navon. "On behalf of the Temple of Kahooli, I inform you that you are now excommunicate. They have formally renounced their ties to the Guild of Assassins and will announce the identities of all who belong to it. The Nighthawks are finished, Navon. Despite their request that I murder you, I will let you live if you tell me where I can find the *moredhel* communiqués concerning the attack."

The Nighthawk snarled. "A lie, Seigneur, and you know it. You'll have my guts for killing those men in Romney whether I tell you or not. Since you first arrived looking for Nighthawks, I've been watching you. For years I've heard tales about Jimmy the Hand from the men who survived your Nighthawk purges in Krondor. They told very impressive tales about you. Now it's time to see if you can match a true Nighthawk in combat."

Navon ripped off his tunic. Beneath he wore the familiar uniform of the Guild of Assassins, a golden hawk emblazoned on a black gambeson. "Ordinarily, I don't dress so heavily," he said with a grin, drawing a formidable weapon, "but you interrupted some business I was going to take care of."

The sheer ferocity of Navon's attack drove Gorath and James back. Owyn stood clear of the conflict, and then decided to intervene. His spell surrounded James like an insubstantial mist. Navon feinted, seeing James disoriented for a moment, then made to drive his sword through the seigneur's stomach. All three combatants watched in disbelief as the sword was turned aside! James pressed his attack without regard to his personal safety, being protected by an enchantment that traced its roots back to the days of the Dragon Lords themselves. Navon fell. He never had a chance.

Navon was armored with a suit of Dragon Plate, perhaps the finest armor made in Midkemia. Gorath waved the Great sword, a blade inspired by Tsurani weapons seen during the Riftwar. Owyn set aside quarrels that tingled to the touch—a sure sign of enchantment—and found a piece of paper wrapped around a hard stone. It turned out to be a sparkling diamond. The note revealed the secret entrance to Navon's hideout, behind a waterfall.

"I know where his hideout is!" exclaimed Owyn. "It's an old entrance to Cavall Run, the tunnels underneath my uncle's old keep! It's behind the waterfall south of Cavall Keep."

"And this," smiled James, "must be the key."



The entrance behind the waterfall was a grotto, where a chess board stood with one missing piece—a knight. When James placed the piece on the board, a door swung open. "What was that spell you used back there with Navon," asked James. Owyn smiled. "It's called Skin of the Dragon. It seems to have made its way here from the Tsurani Assembly of Magicians. Very potent."

After dispatching the Nighthawk guards, Owyn thumbed through a book called the *Abbot's Journal* that described a sword of elvish origin, the Guarda Revanche. "It seems that they were looking for information on an old and magical weapon," said Owyn. Gorath looked concerned when he heard the name Guarda Revanche, and spoke slowly. "If Navon did not have it on his person, it is unlikely they found it. It probably is kept somewhere near Elvandar, if it exists at all."

They found their way to a room securely locked. Navon's key turned easily, and they burst into Navon's inner sanctum. James bent over and unlocked a chest near a desk covered with papers.

Spiders scurried out of the opened chest.

Careful to avoid the tiny silver menaces, James snatched a fresh-looking scroll out of the box and unrolled it on the floor. As his dark eyes darted across the scroll, his lips moved in a recitation of places, names, figures, and dates.

"Northwarden," James whispered. "The attack will come at Northwarden very soon. But ... this is all wrong."

"What is it?" Gorath asked, also bending to see the scroll.

"These figures. If Delekhan takes a force this small to Northwarden, he hasn't a hope of taking the castle. Far too few soldiers. Baron Gabot will maul him unless Delekhan can bring something more serious to bear. What could the moreldhel have?"

"Maybe the Nighthawks have infiltrated the castle." Owyn said. "Why else would they be so helpful to the moreldhel unless their own necks were on the line, too?"

Paling, James suddenly snatched an ink horn from his pack and began to scribble an addendum to the Nighthawk note. "It is very

important that this note reach Arutha. Although you were not told this, he has stationed an army outside of the Dimwood to await my word about the attack,” James said, finishing his note. Fixing his gaze sternly on Gorath, he handed it over. “I want you to make sure that it gets there. I’m going to have to trust you.”

Owyn gaped. “But what about ...”

“I’ve got to go to Northwarden. If there are Nighthawks in Baron Gabot’s castle, we stand a good chance of losing it in an attack. I have to ensure that doesn’t happen. Remember, Arutha is outside the Dimwood forest near Sethanon. When the two of you give him the note, tell him there’s a party at Mother’s.”

“What?” Owyn sputtered.

“Just do it. I haven’t got time to explain. Good luck, the both of you.” In a moment the Seigneur was gone, his shadow chasing after him down the long dark tunnel.



An hour later, Owyn yawned cavernously, his vision growing dimmer with each step taken further down the road. Next to him, Gorath trudged without complaint, his eyes fixed on the dusty cow track. “Enough, enough.” Owyn murmured. “I think my legs are going to crumble. We can’t reach Arutha tonight. Let’s stop for a while.”

“Quiet,” Gorath hissed, seizing Owyn by the arm. Beneath his hood, his feral eyes glowed like blood-tinged emeralds. “Someone’s near.”

Abruptly, patches of darkness detached themselves from the woods, moving through the pale moonlight to huddle on the road bed. In the shadows, arrow points gleamed, aligned in deadly sights, quivered ... a voice rang out.

“As much as I would enjoy delivering your carcass to Delekhan I will reserve the pleasure of your execution for him. Do not move, Gorath. You are completely surrounded.”

Chapter 3 Walkthrough

James, Owyn, and Gorath must discover who killed the Kingdom soldiers at the Black Sheep Tavern. Talk to the Duke of Romney in the building on the left to finish the Guild War Quest by bringing a message to Arlie Steelsoul, who lives in a house south of Sloop. Also talk to

Jason, the tavern boy, to find out who brought the ale that intoxicated the soldiers before they were butchered. Use the spyglass to see what containers (chests, hollow trees, buildings, etc.) are in the area. The spider can be used to poison edged weapons such as swords and crossbow bolts.

Arlie Steelsoul's house is unapproachable by the main road. If you use the path, Arlie's right-hand man will tell you to leave his meal in the box in the field. There are two ways to get by this puzzle: leave poisoned rations, or go off the path and approach the house by the side; if you try the side route, you'll have to solve a trap. Either way, Arlie will be impressed by your chutzpah, and agree to help the Duke of Romney. Arlie will also give you a gift.

Before you return to the Duke to collect your reward, you will want to stop by the brewery in Sloop to find out who ordered the tainted ale. Visit Mitchel Waylander's house to interrupt a Nighthawk ambush. Head to Silden and talk to Joftaz in the tavern, who will send you on a mission to the other building in Silden—the Crawler's house, no less! Return to Joftaz and listen to what he has to say. Stock up on spells in the magic shop in Silden, especially Skin of the Dragon. Head back to Abuk, east of Lyton, and talk to him about the spider and the spyglass.

There is a "dreamlike" house just south of Romney on the path near the Nameless Hideaway Inn on the main road. Just behind this house is a chest with the spell Fetters of Rime (see Figure 3-2), which freezes victims, causing paralysis and damage.

Your clues point north, towards Prank's Stone and beyond. The road north will be blocked by men involved in the guild strife; do not admit to loyalties to anyone, or they will attack your party. Between Prank's Stone and Cavall Keep is the Temple of Banath. It is surrounded by rogues who tell you to drop anything metal on your person—do not! Go talk to Count Corvallis in Cavall Keep, his daughter Ugyne, and head east and slightly south. Use the spyglass and open one of the chests Corvallis left for the priests of Kahooli about Navon du Sandau. Talk again to the Count and his daughter. Head north and meet Navon in Kenting Rush. He is obviously the Nighthawk behind the murders, but you need evidence. Open the well in Kenting Rush with your Virtue Key and retrieve the chess piece.

There are two ways of exposing Navon: you could go to the Temple of Kahooli and talk to the priest, and then go to the nearby prelate's



Figure 3-1. Obtaining a lightning staff

house to learn how to become a member of the sect of Kahooli, thereby learning who is behind the Nighthawks. You'll have to starve (fast) for a while, then return to the Temple and talk to the priest again.

On the other hand, you could trap Navon in his own lie. Go to the waterfall entrance to Cavall Run, south of Cavall Keep. The path to the waterfall is just north of where the road from Prank's Stone turns north. There are a number of Nighthawks and Black Slayers who have the ability to rise after they are slain. Recover the *Abbot's Journal* about the Guarda Revanche. After talking to Ugyne about the sword, talk to Navon, who will tell you he has the *Abbot's Journal*, lent to him by Ugyne.

Either way, combat ensues. Kill Navon, who has a host of goodies on his person, including a Great sword and a suit of Dragon Plate armor. He also has a key that will open the last door in Cavall Run. In Kenting Rush, Shoral the wizard will give you a lightning staff (answer yes, then no, to his questions; Figure 3-1). The Temple of Kahooli is a good place to "bless" items, giving the maximum 15 percent blessing.



Figure 3-2. The Fetters of Rime chest

Return to Cavall Run and open the last door with Navon's key. Opening the chest behind the door automatically triggers the end of chapter.

Chapter 3 Quests

- ↔ The Guild War Quest
- ↔ The Nighthawks Quest
- ↔ The Family Heritage Quest
- ↔ The Piety Quest

The Guild War Quest

When Mitchel Waylander sets a Machiavellian plot in motion to remove his chief political rival from power (the chief reeve of the Riverpullers), he little suspects that he will ignite a powder keg that will nearly reduce Romney to ashes and will disrupt trade on the river for 3 years. While working with the Crawler on a plan to dismantle the Riverpullers Guild, Mitchel Waylander is infuriated when a group of rogues disguised as Nighthawks bungles an attempt on the chief reeve's life and very nearly implicates the Glazers Guild in the process. Despite Mitchel's guarded advice to handle the affair locally, the Duke of Romney decides the affair is too important and calls on Guy du Bas-Tyra, the First Advisor to the king, for advice on the matter. While awaiting the First Advisor's response, the Crawler becomes critical of Mitchel's cautious behavior and decides to goad his business partner by raiding shipments of the Riverpullers Guild. Unable to pay the prices now demanded by the Riverpullers Guild to ship goods, Mitchel Waylander has no choice but to deal with the Crawler's newly formed Guild of Romney, in the process convincing several other guilds to come with him. Angered by the attempt to undercut their business, the riverpullers openly attack the Guild of Romney on the river, citing a "grant of exclusive trade" (which in reality doesn't exist but is made up in an act of desperation to restore calm).

Guilds immediately line up on either side of the conflict, with both sides hiring mercenaries, rogues, and other freebooters to come to their aid and plunging Romney into a state of civil war. When a team of no-nonsense investigators arrives from Bas-Tyra at the First Advisor's request, they discover they are utterly incapable of resolving the matter without calling in a full company of men from Rillanon. Fearing the suspected Nighthawks will use the uproar to erase their tracks, the King's men decide on an expedient, if not downright unscrupulous, plan and secretly eliminate the head of the Riverpullers Guild (using a silver spider bought from Abuk). For a time things seem to settle down, but when Navon du Sandau's men arrive in Romney to seek the brass spyglass (see "The Family Heritage Subquest," below, for more details) they are very displeased to discover that an assassination attempt has been bungled and blamed on them (bad for their reputation). Having learned from their own sources of Mitchel Waylander's

probable involvement with the failed “Nighthawk” assassination, they give him an ultimatum. Either produce the brass spyglass or suffer the consequences. Mitchel fails to appear as ordered and the Nighthawks ride south to the town of Sloop and order a cask of Keshian ale to be tainted with black tarweed (a root that makes the drinker insatiably thirsty), asking that it be delivered to the Black Sheep Tavern—courtesy of Mitchel Waylander. When the King’s men fall victim to the effects of the ale, the Nighthawks slip in and easily dispatch the investigators, and then sit back to watch as the ring of suspicion closes around Mitchel Waylander.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

This quest was so expansive it required its own chapter, “The Spider and the Spyglass.” This quest unifies a series of other, smaller quests that involve “restoring order” to a region torn apart by factional warfare.

Effects before the Quest Is Solved

Outrageous Prices

In shops/taverns/inns along the Romney river, the prices have been jacked up horrendously due to increased transportation fees charged by the Riverpullers Guild for transporting goods through the trapped trade routes that have been established all the way from Romney to Silden.

Chief Reeve of the Ironmongers Guild

If you talk to the Duke of Romney, he will send you on a mission to persuade Arlie to enter negotiations to pacify the guild uprising. Although never called it to his face, he is often referred to as Arlie “Steelsoul” and is one of the major backers behind Mitchel Waylander, the Glazers Guild, and most importantly the Guild of Romney. Unlike Mitchel, however, Arlie has been wise enough to distrust his allies and has bought several of the magical traps made available to him by the Crawler’s men. The traps surround his house (south of Sloop, with the

signpost “KEEP OUT!”; Figure 3-3). You can’t approach his house from any angle without triggering these traps. You can either defuse the traps or try to deal with his guard, Podrich, who walks post inside the perimeter. If you approach the house, Podrich will ask if you have brought food for the reeve’s dinner; if you reply *yes* (and have any kind of rations) then he will ask you to put the food in a box in the field, and will inform you that he will see to it that the reeve gets his meal. If the rations that have been tossed to him have been poisoned and you return the next day, your party is allowed to click on the house itself. (If the rations were not poisoned and you return the next day, Podrich will simply reiterate that he is to get the master’s food.) Inside you will be allowed to speak to Arlie and his quest is considered solved. The quest may also be solved by walking off the path, surviving the magical trap, and clicking on the house in the usual manner.

The point of this particular quest is to get access to Arlie and carry a message to him from the Duke of Romney. If you have spoken to the Duke of Romney by the time you visit with Arlie, then the reeve will say he will comply with the Duke’s wishes and will offhandedly offer *Chapel’s Rmur and Whepuns* to you as a symbol of his great admiration for your skills.



Figure 3-3. Arlie Steelsoul’s not-so-friendly house

Caught!

Annoyed by the inability of the local authorities inability to pin Mitchel Waylander with the murder of the Bas-Tyra men and with his failure to produce the spyglass, the Nighthawks follow him to Sloop and lie in wait for him to emerge from his house (Figure 3-4). If you find him here, you'll find yourself being ambushed by six Nighthawks. Once the Nighthawks are killed, Mitchel Waylander will emerge from the house to talk to your party. He will promise to report the whole truth of the matter to the Duke of Romney and to the Glazers Guild.

Reward for Solving the Quest

If you solve all four of the miniquests and speaks with the Duke of Romney, the Duke will reward you with 300 gold sovereigns and a Key of Virtue.



Figure 3-4. Nighthawks lying in wait for Mitchel Waylander

The Nighthawks Quest

Although the primary purpose of this quest is to confirm the location of the attack against the Kingdom, it will require you to do a little digging into the twisted past of Count Corvallis and Navon du Sandau. Again, this is a quest that can be achieved in two ways. Either you can sift through the information presented below and “unmask” Navon du Sandau, or you can accomplish the same thing by winning the Piety Quest. Winning the Piety Quest will trigger Navon du Sandau’s *excommunicate* keyword and winning the Nighthawks Quest will trigger his *Guarda Revanche* keyword. Either keyword will be followed by a brief dialogue and by combat with Navon. If you kill Navon, you can take his cellar key, which is needed to open the door behind which the secret message is hidden. You can win this quest by turning on the appropriate chain of keywords.

Misdirections

The Moneylenders

If you have the Spynote from Abuk’s chest (Figure 3-5) and enter the Moneylenders’ hall at Cavall Keep, you can ask them about the deposit indicated on the accountant’s roll. (The moneylender will indicate that the note has no name or date on it, information needed to make an exact match with their records. He will suggest that the size of the deposit would indicate a man of position, although it could also have been made by a merchant of some kind.) Inquiring at the Moneylenders’ hall about the roll will turn on Count Corvallis’s *finances* keyword.

The Town House at Night

If you try to speak to Count Corvallis in his town house after dark, you will find that the servants answer the door. They will explain that Ugyne has gone to bed and that her father often disappears after dark. They speculate that master Corvallis might be out surveying his land but suggest it would be advisable to stay away from the old keep, because the master pays men to keep people away.



Figure 3-5. Retrieving the Spynote from Abuk's chest

Hint: The Irritation of Count Corvallis

If you ask Count Corvallis about the *Temple of Kahooli* (keyword) after visiting the temple, he won't be able to remember any of their Codes of Piety, but will remark that as he is a cautious man, he usually sends them a tithe so that he may be left alone. He will note with irritation that he hopes the tithe collectors are able to find his tithe this year, as they forgot which box he had placed it in the previous year.

The Family Heritage Sub-quest

Count Corvallis has a dark past—he had his bastard son Neville murdered because he was quite a bad seed. Unfortunately, Neville did not die in the accident in Cavall Run, but returned disguised as Navon du Sandau. He has been “courting” his half-sister Ugyne to get information about Cavall Run (which he is using as a base of operations) and other secrets, such as the powerful sword that once belonged to the

family. The Count is much displeased at the attention Ugyne is receiving from Navon, although he does not yet realize who Navon is. Completing this quest allows you to finish the Nighthawk Quest without completing the Piety Quest.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

Getting the Suitor Cleaned

Find the Spynote hidden in the chest east of Cavall Keep (Figure 3-6) and read it. It will turn on two keywords, but the quest-relevant keyword is Count Corvallis's *Navon* keyword.

Speaking to the Count

By speaking to the count about Navon, you'll learn that Navon pesters his daughter continually about the old legends of the keep and Cavall Run. There were a number of unpleasant things the Count wished to forget about the place, namely the death of his wife about a year before the fire.



Figure 3-6. A useful Spynote

O' Daughter, Sount of Knowledge

Ugyne wanders around near the abandoned house outside of Cavall Keep. If asked about the unpleasant events that the Count wishes to forget, she will say there were a number of unhappy things that happened in connection with the keep, but that that's no reason to hold Navon du Sandau to blame for sharing her interest in the family legends. She will say that she thinks the real reason he hates Navon is that his last name is that of the workman who was responsible for Neville's death. This in turn will activate her keywords—*family legends* and *unpleasant past*—and Owyn will ask what family legend in particular Navon seemed to be interested in, as there are quite a few. Ugyne will reply that he seemed most interested in the legend of the Guarda Revanche, and this in turn will activate her keyword, sword. She will tell them that it was a legend about a very powerful sword that was supposedly in her family but vanished well over 300 years ago. She says that she loaned a book to Navon called the *Abbot's Journal*, and that it had the tale in it as well.

Breaking and Entering

At some point you'll need to gain access to Cavall Run by using the chess piece from the well in Kenting Rush on the waterfall entrance, which is off the main road on a path south of Cavall Keep (Figure 3-7). There is a trap on the road to the waterfall, and the Black Slayer with three Nighthawks north of Cavall Keep should give you an idea of what you will be facing in Cavall Run. Look in the trees around the waterfall entrance for a few goodies, some rope, a Ring of Prandur, and a Ring of the Golden Way.

After you've massacred your way through the spinners, Black Slayers, and Nighthawks in Cavall Run, you'll be confronted by the last of Navon's merry little band trying to swallow a sprig of Silverthorn poison. James will ascertain that the leader of the Nighthawks must be elsewhere and that he undoubtedly will have the key. It will then be just a matter of finding out who that might be. You'll find a fairly important piece of evidence there in a chest—the *Abbot's Journal* (Figure 3-8), which talks about the glamredhel weapon, the Guarda Revanche.

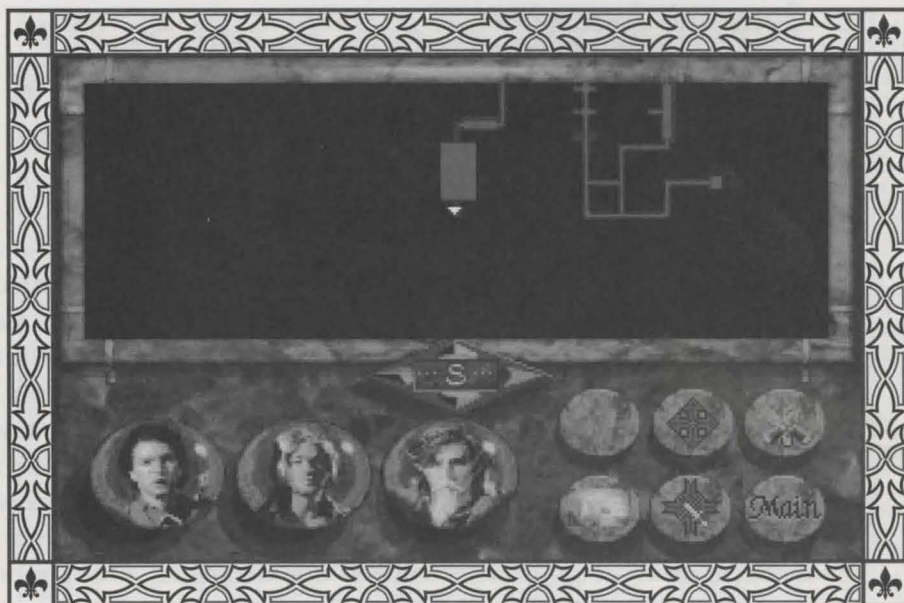


Figure 3-7. The entrance from Cavall Run

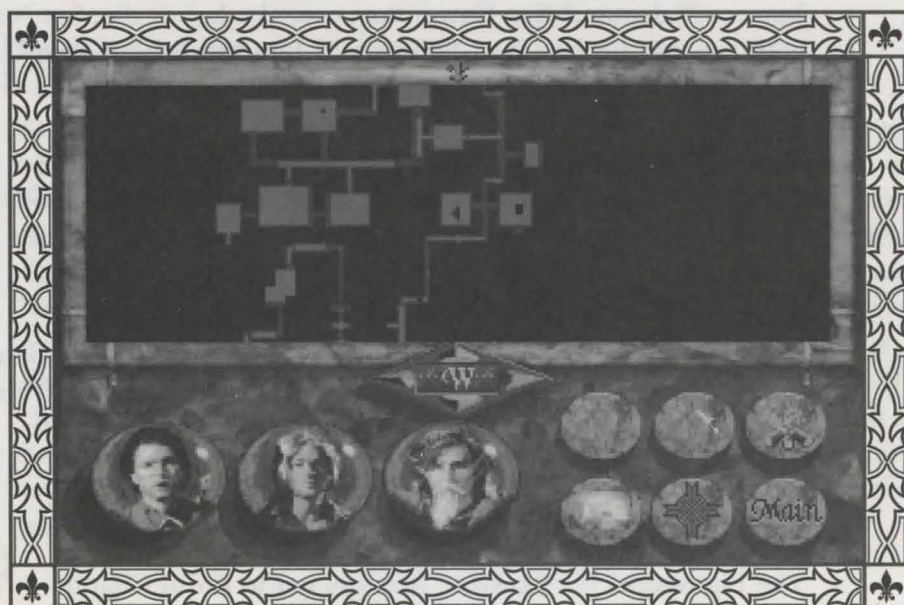


Figure 3-8. Find the Abbott's Journal here

Sons and Assassins

If you decide to follow up Ugyne's comments, cue Navon with the keywords *Count Corvallis* and *his name*. He will say that he has no relation to the fellow who rigged the wine cellars and he is deeply sorry that the Count can't seem to get past an ill coincidence. This in turn will trigger his keyword about *the accident* and James will catch on to the fact that it sounds as if Navon is accusing the Count of rigging the accident in the wine cellar, but Navon will say that the idea is ridiculous. If Ugyne's *sword* keyword has been triggered as well as Navon's *the accident* keyword, and if Navon has the *Abbot's Journal* from Cavall Run, then Navon will have a *Guarda Revanche* keyword. If you click on Navon's *Guarda Revanche* keyword, James asks Navon if he can have back Ugyne's book on the Guarda Revanche. Navon will say that he unfortunately left it at home. James will ask if Navon is absolutely certain that he hasn't given it away to someone else, and Navon will say that he keeps it in a safe place where it won't be damaged. Now James has the damning evidence and tells Navon that he knows that Navon is in fact Neville and that they have destroying his lair. James will ask how Navon got mixed up with the Nighthawks and you'll get the bad guy story. James will demand that Navon turn over the key or die, but Navon will counter that he has died before and James will have to *take* the key from him. Trigger combat with Navon du Sandau. Get the cellar key from his warm corpse.

This is a particularly sick and twisted subplot involving a ruthless bastard trying to seduce his half-sister for revenge on his father—Navon is a sort of evil Martin Longbow.

No More Secrets

Using the cellar key, James will then be able to open the locked door in the Nighthawks' lair/Cavall Run. Clicking on the box in this room (Figure 3-9) will trigger the end of Chapter 3.

The Reward

The big reward is, of course, that you get to finish Chapter 3. The secondary reward is that the *Abbot's Journal* is a fairly significant clue that will allow you to start asking questions about the fabled Guarda Revanche.

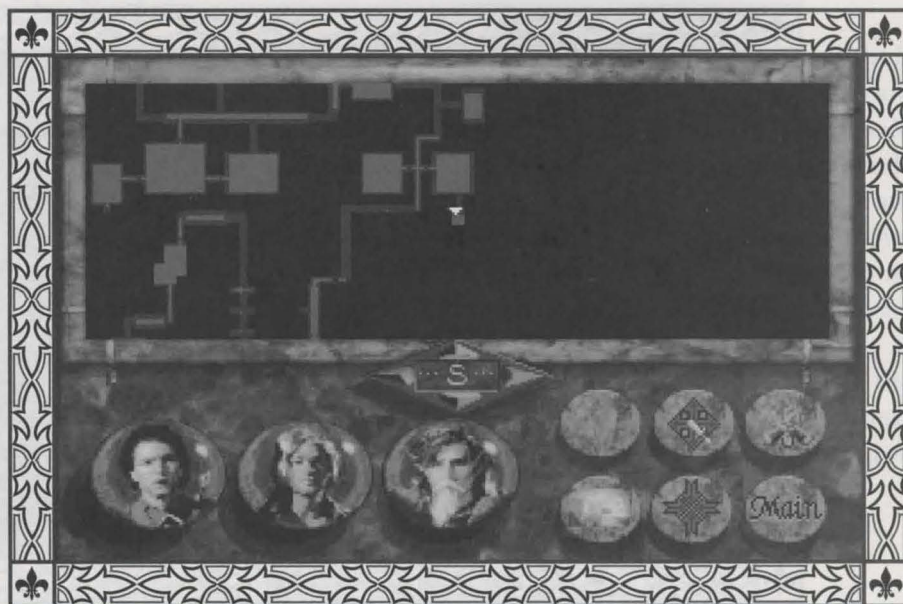


Figure 3-9. Navon's Hidden Plans

The Piety Quest

At the Temple of Kahooli, the Warrior God of Vengeance, players will be informed by the priests they have common cause. Before, when the Nighthawks first contacted the *moredhel* in the days of the Great Rising, the Nighthawks were pious in their reverence to the Temple of Kahooli and paid what respects were due to the god. The new Nighthawks have spurned the temple, however, disliking the temple's orders of piety (a strict code of conduct expected from *all* followers of Kahooli). The priests will tell you who leads the Nighthawks, if all the characters adhere to at least one of the acts of piety prescribed by Kahooli, but it will be up to the players to decide what this act of piety will be. He will instruct the players that if they wish to know more, they may visit the prelate who lives nearby (Figure 3-10).



Figure 3-10. Visiting the eager prelate

Rumors and Hints

Speaking to Navon

If you speak to the priests of Kahooli, it will turn on Navon du Sandau's *Kahooli* keyword. Navon seems to have some grudge against the priests, but his argument against them sounds reasonable. If asked about the *Code of Piety* (triggered by the *Kahooli* keyword) he will be able to quote only one of the codes and won't remember either of the others.

At the Flying Sow in Prank's Stone

If you click on one of the background characters, you'll "overhear" a man moaning about the "accursed bastard sons of Kahooli and their codes of piety! What in Tith's name does the mortification of the flesh mean anyway but some sorry sod's got to starve himself down to tooth and bone, give up wenching and drinking?"

The Prelate

The prelate will be more than happy to discuss his religious beliefs with you but will insist on a series of donations. For the first donation of 50 gold sovereigns, he will explain about the god Kahooli himself, the first article of the Codes of Piety asked of temple followers (Article I: *Subjugation of the Will*—Temple faithful must renounce all previous ties to king and country. This, of course, is a fairly good clue that Count Corvallis could not be a Nighthawk; Article II: *Mortification of the Flesh*—Faithful must renounce all appetites of the flesh to purify themselves for the intervention of Kahooli's will; Article III: *Wed to Service*—This last code is observed by those who are going to enter the priesthood of Kahooli or are to be anointed as defenders of the temple.) The Nighthawks observe this ritual but are considered too fanatical to be acknowledged by the temple.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

Of the three acts of piety that are ordered by the priests, the only one you'll be able to do is fast—all three of you will return to the temple in the Starving condition, with no food in any of the party inventory slots. The priest will then reward you for your outstanding gesture of piety to the god.

Reward for Solving the Quest

The priest will tell you that Navon du Sandau leads the Nighthawks (turning on Navon's *excommunicate* keyword) and asks you to kill this offender of the faith. The priest will also bless James's and Gorath's swords for free.

Miscellaneous Notes

- ↔ The Well at Kenting Rush: You can't open it without a Virtue Key. If you *do* have a Virtue Key, you'll find the chess piece.

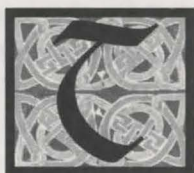
- ↩ Prank's Stone: If you get too close to the Prank's Stone (the stone, not the town) you'll lose some keys and other possessions. Stay away!
- ↩ Outside the Temple of Banath: Rogues will stop you and demand that you "strip off all metals, for metal is base and offensive to our god and he who approaches with metal on his person shall be struck dead by the will of the god." This, of course, is a blatant lie. Banath not only has no objection to metal, but a positive *affinity* for it. The priests in the temple do not attempt to dissuade this activity, however, as Banath is a mischievous god and is the patron of thieves, con artists, and the like. Anything dropped in this game tile will be considered "stolen" by these rogues.
- ↩ The prelate of Kahooli is hated by many because he is the head of a temple dedicated to revenge, but more often than not his god has gotten a bad rap. As a result, he has hired rogues to guard him; they won't let anyone through until they have spoken to the authorities at the temple.
- ↩ A small band of trolls will be wandering around south of Cavall Keep, because they have been turned out of their caverns by the awakening giant spiders. They will charge and attack you.
- ↩ A band of rogues, members of the Riverpullers Guild, are heading south in a very bad mood. They are found north of Romney, before the bridge. Having learned from a runner about the mess in Romney, they are heading down to join the fight. If you try to approach them, you'll be asked if you support Mitchel or Ian (both answers being equally bad; it's a trick question). Either answer will trigger a combat with six or more rogues.
- ↩ The Scam Man: If you knock on the door to this house, the Scam Man will offer to turn any rubies you have into diamonds. Of course, if you do give him rubies, he will hand over diamonds that are worth less than the ruby given to him. Afterwards, the Scam Man won't open up his door to you.
- ↩ Having awakened from their deep hibernation, the giant spiders that "guard" the entrance to the Nighthawk caves are on the prowl. They are hungry for fresh food, and move into the area south of the town of Cavall Keep, where the ruins of the keep

are located. If you talk to the local franklin, he reveals that he has heard strange things, and will mention it's probably the spinners out of hibernation. He's hoping that Count Corvallis's men, who patrol the four virgates to the west, will catch the spiders before they become entrenched in the area.

- ◀ Count Corvallis has hired a small group of men to patrol his lands. If you've spoken to the local franklin, then James will shout to the patrollers that spinners have been reported on the next virgate over and that you've come to help root them out (shutting off any ambush attacks by rogues in this zone).
- ◀ Don't forget to con the con man wizard in Kenting Rush out of a very useful lightning staff (which, like the spell Skyfire, can only be used outside).
- ◀ Spend all your gold before Chapter 4, because you will lose any coins when you are taken prisoner and brought to ... well, that would be telling. Only James, who shows up again in Chapter 5, will have any gold left over from Chapter 3. Silden's magic shop is a good place to stock up on spells. Blessing Navon's Great sword and the party's armor is a good idea as well. Make sure Gorath keeps the spyglass and any other items you might deem necessary, because James will not join Owyn and Gorath in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Escape from the Northlands



he war drums had begun at dawn.

Narab stalked the corridors of the ancient fortress, carrying a witchlight to illuminate his way. As he approached the doors to the Great Hall, two *moredhel* guards dressed in full battle regalia stepped aside. They made no sound as he whisked past or blinked at the sight of him.

"Greetings, Narab," a cold voice called from the throne. "It has been long since I have seen your face in Sar-Sargoth. Have you grown bolder or more the fool?" Narab knelt at the base of the throne and kissed Delekhan's foot. "That is for you to decide. If my words are not to your liking, then my life is yours."

"It is already mine." Delekhan's wolfish eyes blazed in the darkness. "Speak," he commanded.

"I have just returned from a journey into the Kingdom. I bring a prize."

"I have no interest in valueless baubles. ..." Delekhan's mind seemed already to wander.

"This is no bauble," Narab said, "and I think you will find it is of great value." The pride grew in his voice.

"And would it have a name, this thing?" Delekhan fixed Narab with a stare.

Narab returned his lord's glare. "Yes, my lord. Its name is *Gorath*!" Narab awaited his leader's praise, awaited the words that would restore his place in *moredhel* favor and rescind the order of death on his head. Perhaps he would even have a place among the new lords—

Delekhan lunged from his throne, his razor-edged gauntlet tilling a bloody furrow across Narab's face. "You've wrecked everything, you dog!" Delekhan bellowed.

"But ... I have brought back the enemy of the Northlands!" Narab sputtered, blood dripping from his torn lips. "With Gorath captive we can proceed with our—"

Delekhan's eyes blazed in fury. "You—know—nothing!" Narab retreated, suddenly aware that his efforts were wasted, that his oath of loyalty meant nothing to his hateful lord. Resolutely he suppressed his pain as the moredhel leader thundered towards the doors. "And what of my life?" Narab whispered.

Halting, Delekhan turned and hissed, "It is forfeit!"

Narab stood alone in the throne room of Sar-Sargoth for a moment. While Delekhan was not to be taken lightly, neither was Narab. He turned and walked past the guards with thoughts of murder.



Owyn didn't want to be awake.

Perhaps it was the drugs they had given him or the endless walking that he'd done in the past month and a half. All he could think about now was sleep, that restful nonexistence that interrupted the beatings and the mauling and the exhaustion. He just wanted to sleep but that irritating jangle wouldn't let him. Where was it coming from?

"Gorath?" Owyn asked. "Are you there?"

Suddenly the jangling grew louder, this time accompanied by a creak and a flood of torchlight. Out of the glowing corona lumbered the largest moredhel he had yet seen. "I see my assistants have been overzealous in their efforts to sedate you! It is proper to tremble when you are addressed by Delekhan, leader of the unified tribes of the Northlands!" The voice seemed to thunder from above. "We found this among your things, Kingdom dog. Tell me where you were going with it!"

Owyn looked at the outstretched hand of the moredhel leader. It held the scroll taken from Navon's inner sanctum. "We weren't taking it anywhere. We just picked up everything we could carry and ran. We needed gold."

"A lie! The seal that the Nighthawks use for our messages was broken. The new writing at the bottom of the page confirms your guilt. What does Gabot's Folly mean? Who are Arthur and Jimmy the Hand?"

Owyn's head rolled weakly on his shoulders. "I really have no idea. Someone else must have beaten us to it and opened the scroll before we got there. We took what we found and left before we got nabbed. Do you want us to cut you in on the booty?"

Delekhan bellowed. "What I want is information! Your companion Gorath damns you as certainly as your lies do. Until he betrayed his own, he was second in power only to me. He shall die for his disloyalty."

Owyn could not answer. Sleep. He needed to sleep a little, close his eyes. "Since you choose to remain silent," Delekhan snarled, "I shall have your tongue and feed it to the rats. Take back your message, spy. It will do you little good in your grave." With that Delekhan stalked over to Gorath's limp form, leaving Owyn alone momentarily.

Still rattled by his interrogation, Owyn tried to collect his thoughts. Thankfully, his wits had provided lies as needed, but only narrowly had he avoided the impulse to tell everything he knew. It was almost as if he were being prodded, coerced, bewitched . . .

Magic?

Astonished he had been unaware of it at the time, the boy looked again at the warrior who now loomed over Gorath. At first he believed Delekhan was incanting a spell, one perhaps intended to coerce the truth from his victim, but after a few moments it became clear the warlord was conversing with his barely conscious prisoner.

"No!" Gorath croaked, shaking his head.

"... plans ... unfulfilled," Delekhan whispered finally. Abruptly he struck. Gorath's head snapped back, but no sound escaped his lips.

It was too much to absorb. Even if the events unfurling before him weren't openly damning, Owyn had seen enough to keep him swimming in a sea of doubts, all of them centering on the loyalty of his friend and traveling companion. Worse still, he had to deliver the message to Prince Arutha outside the Dimwood and he would need Gorath's help to do it. Desperately he wished he had time to sort things out, but time was the one thing he didn't have.

"Enjoy your deaths. I know I shall." Delekhan's rough voice snatched Owyn out of his thoughts, directed his attention to where the moreldhel stood in the doorway gesturing to someone in the dungeon corridor. A monolithic door swung into place and once again the room was a land of shadows.



Experimentally, Owyn struck the bars of his cage, knowing full well the structure was too solid to yield. But even as his hand came away from the metal, the bars began a keening vibration, the iron harmonies evocative of distant temple bells. Someone was working magic ... and it wasn't him.

Owyn wasted no time when the prison door swung open. Time enough later to debate who it was that had set them free and for what reason; at the moment he had no thought but to find the means to get himself and Gorath out of the darkened cell alive. Hurrying to Gorath, he found him already free of his iron manacles, and allowed the *moredhel* to lean against his shoulder as they limped together through the heavy dungeon door.

"What about the guard?" Owyn whispered, allowing Gorath to stand once more on his own. Gorath lifted his head and spoke, his speech still slurred by the drugs that had been forced on him. "Keep moving," he said, "no one is there."

They found themselves in a wide chamber with passages leading in three directions. As they moved forward in the darkness, Owyn slipped and fell unceremoniously on his backside. Gorath helped him up, and both were standing before they saw the dead *moredhel* guard, throat slit ear to ear, stiffening in a pool of his own blood. Owyn picked up a fallen torch and set it ablaze with a word, throwing light into the far corners of the chamber. They were in a guard room of some sort; dank, with bas-reliefs of twisted and powerful *moredhel* figures lining the walls near the ceiling. Gorath walked over to two lockers and forced them open. "Owyn! Our belongings are here, it seems," he said, rummaging through the miscellaneous items. "But the guards seem to have taken our gold."

"I don't care about gold," Owyn said, "I'm just happy we've got our weapons and armor back." Stopping for a moment, Owyn smiled. "You at least received better treatment when you were among my people at Krondor." Gorath regarded Owyn for a moment, then laughed quietly. "Yes, the food was better, certainly. But now you know how it feels to be in the house of your enemy."

They surprised a lone witch hag in the dark corridor. Gorath took her by the throat and soon had her talking—the lack of guards, it seemed, was because they had been diverted outside to confront Narab's men. "It seems Narab was not content to give his head to

Delekhan. This may work to our advantage," said Gorath. "The countryside will be in chaos." Owyn smiled grimly. "If we make it out of here. Do you know the way out?" "Of course," grunted Gorath as he ran his sword through the throat of the still-struggling witch hag. "But we need a key, a special key to unlock the doors. Let us begin our search."



Gorath seemed at home in the alien fortress, built long ago by former slaves of the Valheru who had used their master's plundered knowledge. He surprised a group of witches and moredhel guards in the eastern branch of the maze. Owyn quickly cast a spell, igniting the witch's clothing and singeing the moredhel around her, and the sheer ferocity of Gorath's attack routed the moredhel. Gorath already had a formidable reputation among his people, and the sight of the enraged former moredhel chieftain with a spellcaster at his side was fearsome indeed. While Gorath bent to open a worklocked chest, Owyn examined another, and recoiled instantly. "It's trapped," Owyn whispered.

Gorath set to work disarming the trap; his skills had certainly improved during his travels with Jimmy the Hand. The chest opened with a groan, revealing a naphtha explosive device and a scroll. Reading it, Owyn grew excited. "This will be useful, Gorath," said the boy in a whisper.

"As will this," said Gorath, holding up a shiny metal key topped with a skull. "An Interdictor Key. This will open the doors between here and the first floor of this hole." Owyn looked shocked. "You mean there's another floor?"

"Yes," smiled Gorath, carefully oiling his sword, "and it's not far now." The moredhel's sense of direction did not fail them—he brought them to a stairwell leading to an exit. For a moment Gorath listened intently, eyes narrowed. He then turned to his companion. "It is possible that Delekhan has posted guards at the top of this stairwell. If so, we may die before we draw weapons." Owyn tried to look unconcerned. "We'll die for sure if we don't go up, is how I see it. Die in a dungeon or die fighting for our lives. I'd at least like to think I was trying something." Gorath smiled. "At times you are not the boy you pretend to be." With that, Gorath stole up the stairs.

Guards sat in the room above the stairwell, bickering in harsh tones. "They're arguing about Narab," whispered Gorath. "If we strike

quickly, we can overwhelm them." Owyn nodded. "I've been waiting to try something—let's go to it."

The moredhel guards were surprised when Gorath and Owyn burst into the room. Owyn stood tall, with his staff raised above his head as a glowing star of energy materialized before him. Pointing his staff at the first moredhel, the star shot forth and struck the stunned guard in the chest. Owyn pointed at the next guard, and the star followed, striking down the second guard. The star moved from guard to guard, weakening in intensity but leaving battered foes in its wake.

Gorath had stopped in shock only for a split second, and proceeded to wade into the group of moredhel wounded, easily finishing the carnage Owyn had begun. When Gorath looked up, he saw Owyn leaning heavily on his staff. "That ... took a lot of effort. Let me rest," he panted.

"A potent enchantment, Owyn," said Gorath, as he twisted open a vial of green liquid. "Drink these restoratives. This should help you recover." Owyn gulped the liquid down and felt strength return to his limbs. "How far is the exit?" he asked weakly.

Gorath looked down the far corridor. "Not far now. I doubt there are many guards left here. We should try to move quickly." Owyn put his weight on his staff, and stood upright. "I'm ready," he said, taking a deep breath. Gorath looked around, and picked up two fur cloaks and boots from fallen moredhel guards. "We'll need these," he said, throwing the hood over his well-known visage. Owyn gratefully wrapped himself in the warm fur.

Gorath and Owyn soon stumbled out of the dungeon and ran for the road. Looking back, Owyn saw the fortress. Despite a frosty wind swirling around the moredhel stronghold of Sar-Sargoth, no snow or ice formed on its ancient battlements. Instead, there was only a lonely howl that whispered between a thousand pikes fanning out in every direction from the fortress, each graced with a decapitated head. Owyn was still staring when he ran into Gorath's back.

"What ... ?" exclaimed Owyn. Gorath was examining an entire corpse that had been mounted atop a pike. "This is Gidir." Gorath shook his head. "He was a spellcaster from my clan. And a friend." Gorath hoisted his body down, and found a note and a single, scratched emerald in a pouch kept close to the old moredhel's cold body. "If I read this correctly, we can use the emerald to help us,"

Gorath whispered as he set the note afire. "Nalar's Rib is nearby—it seems that Gidir discovered its purpose—the call upon the Lord of the Void."

Owyn didn't understand, so Gorath continued. "The Lord of the Void can be called upon to strike down traitors to the *moredhel* tribes." Owyn looked worried. "Does that mean you, Narab, or Delekhan?" Gorath thought for a moment. "I don't know. But with the patrols here, I doubt we can afford not to try. Nalar was no advocate of following the ways of the ancient ones, for sure. Nalar's Rib is just south of here. This emerald may be what we need to call upon its powers."

They had taken a few steps on the road when they realized they were not alone. Owyn's pulse quickened as he saw the lone figure approach; but when it became apparent that they were not being attacked, he relaxed a bit, squinting slightly in an attempt to see who was joining them. A voice called out to them. "Our dungeons were not to your liking? I was beginning to believe Delekhan had slain you. He will be infuriated that you escaped."

"Delekhan's once-proud consort," spat Gorath. "You sound eminently pleased at that prospect. Why this charade, Liallan? You can't believe in Delekhan any more than I, and yet you support his cause. You command a respectable tribe and have almost as much power—"

"Almost? Do you forget who engineered your escape from Sar-Sargoth all those months ago? Who do you think directed Delekhan's rats into the snow plains while Obkhar's family scrambled to safety? That was my doing. If not for my help, the Six would surely have crushed your tribes from the Green Heart." Liallan was a tempting figure, an alien beauty that mesmerized Owyn. She commanded power.

Gorath nodded. "Were you responsible for our escape?"

"No, I had nothing to do with your escape this time. Whatever you may have done, you have achieved on your own. Your first escape served my purposes, but your continued survival is as nothing to me. It neither threatens nor advances my cause."

"Then you will help me again?" asked Gorath, cautiously.

"I will consider my efforts an investment against the future of the Northlands, Gorath. They will gain me little now, but perhaps later your help may be useful. I will alert my spies to whatever your needs may be. To be honest, I don't believe you will achieve much beyond

your own survival, but even that may prove to be a boon to me. I will tell you that Delekhan has called for Narab's head." She smiled, her lips parting to reveal perfect, white teeth.

"I know, but why? If not for Narab, I would still be loose in the Kingdom." Gorath lowered his voice and looked around.

Liallan shook her head. "I do not know what fires burn in his mind, but they smoke like madness to me. Narab has called on his clan to surround us, though they can be little threat to us here. The Six will crush them hopelessly. All they can do is restrict us for a time."

"Is there no way past his clan?" asked Gorath.

The moreldhel woman shook her head, snowflakes flying from her long hair. "Not unless you know how to bring down the dark god's wrath from Nalar's Rib, I can't imagine a way until the Six arrive." Gorath took a moment to absorb this information, then spoke. "Whence did Delekhan's magicians come? They were spoken of in Harlech before first I left the Northlands. Do they advise?"

Liallan's voice dropped to a conspiratorial whisper. "And more. They scheme into the night with him, meetings to which even I am no longer privy. They are the ones who recommended the extermination of your tribe. They speak of the low born as if their lives are without value. It is as if they live for the sake of intrigue. Little else seems to matter to them."

"When they buy their wine, what coins do they use?"

"None. They carry only gems, rubies of low quality. They toss them about as if they were as common as seeds."

Gorath looked at Owyn, whose eyes widened at the implications. "They abide in Sar-Sargoth?" asked Gorath.

"When they are with Delekhan. At the moment they have gone south with Moraelf to Harlech. I believe they mean to round up others of your tribe who have been reluctant to join Delekhan's throng."

"Then we have more pressing business with Prince Arutha. I must stop Delekhan, whatever the cost. I am afraid of the consequences of Delekhan's alliance with the Six."

"Tread carefully," said Liallan. "Perhaps all our schemes will bear fruit." She turned and disappeared into the whirling snow.



Gorath managed to skirt the traps and guards around Nalar's Rib and, under the cover of night, stole up to the small stone obelisk.

Gorath carried the emerald carefully to the stone slab. When he was still several steps away the gemstone began to feel very warm in his hand, and by the time he reached the slab the emerald was crackling and shooting small sparks as from a piece of struck flint. It was all he could do not to drop it in the snow.

Fighting the pain, which grew in intensity with every inch, Gorath jammed the emerald into the notch atop the stone, even as moredhel guards raced towards him, alerted by the light from Nalar's Rib.

A blast of energy slammed him and Owyn to the ground. Shielding their eyes from the flood of swirling light now emanating from the slab, they watched it gleam and pulse with blasts of energy greater than a lightning storm.

It stopped as suddenly as it began, and they climbed to their feet, still shaking, trying to regain their scrambled senses. The hard-running guards had been felled to the ground, and quivered as Lims-Kragma took them.

Gorath brushed the snow from his armor and gestured towards the fallen soldiers. "I suspect that there shall be many bodies like that in the area. Let us make haste towards Armengar, where there may be some still sympathetic to my cause. It would be wise to avoid Harlech, where the Six and Moraelf may be gathering, so we'll travel well off the road." Owyn nodded, still numb from the magical display only moments before.

The countryside was interrupted only by the bodies of moredhel caught by the power of Nalar's Rib. Stopping to gather rations, Gorath and Owyn carefully crept towards the once proud sister fortress to Sar-Sargoth, destroyed in the last war between Murmandamus and the Kingdom. Gorath stopped from time to time to examine the bushes, which provided both food and restoratives. Owyn marvelled at the natural resources of the Northlands, and thanked Ishap that the moredhel had not unified as one nation like the Kingdom or the Empire of Kesh.



Armengar. A funereal pall hung over the broken stone walls of Armengar as a thick, oily smoke rose from dark cracks in ground. Scavengers thrived in the ruins, living on the dead like mushrooms sprouting from the decayed wood of an old, dead tree. Only slowly would the moredhel reclaim their city and restore its ancient name—Sar-Isbandia.

Gorath walked towards a worn building, and Owyn cautiously followed. "The Giant's Broth," said Gorath. "We shall find some drink here, I would guess." Even as they walked in eyes turned to regard the new company, but quickly returned to their mugs. From the look of them, they were mercenaries or other men whose business was their own. Owyn felt safer than he had in weeks.

Gorath watched a figure in the corner of the tavern, and after a moment's pause the man walked slowly towards their table. "Drink what you can," he said, "for Delekhan will have the rivers running piss and chickens laying dust for us once this is at an end. There is nothing to be gained in this campaign, but the sparks in his eyes have blinded him. Damn the Six! Damn those magicians that lead us to death and imprison us all."

Gorath lowered his gaze. "I see that you have little wish to keep your head attached to your shoulders, Irmelyn. Your tongue wags and you spill your thoughts for all to see. Drink makes you a fool."

The moredhel snorted. "What the drink makes me is only of concern to me and the tavern keeper. Leave me be, yellowtail. ..." Gorath raised his eyes and met Irmelyn's inebriated gaze. "I suggest you consider advice from one who has suffered Delekhan's wrath and lived to tell the tale. I take it that some acquaintances of yours have been detained by Delekhan's magicians?" he asked, coldly.

Irmelyn settled in a chair. "What of it? Nothing's to be done. The Six have thrown Obkhar to Venutrier the slaver and his dogs, and tomorrow they'll come round and hurry the lot of us to our deaths."

Gorath pondered the news carefully. "I propose we help one another rather than work against. What could you offer in exchange for Obkhar's release from the naphtha mines?"

The moredhel commander narrowed his eyes with a hidden soberness. "If you can manage that, I can get you half the boy's weight in gold or the equivalent thereof. Obkhar's tribe alone would willingly pay such a ransom."

Obkhar stood against Delekhan, and freeing another enemy of the self-proclaimed moredhel leader meant another ally for Gorath. "Then get you hence and gather those fees and we will see what may be engineered. We will meet you again in this tavern when we have achieved Obkhar's release." Irmelyn nodded, and returned to his corner. Gorath leaned over to Owyn. "The naphtha mines are nearby. I think

that Obkhar's release will do our cause some good. Any mischief against Delekhan can only hinder his plans." Owyn nodded. "We should be off, then."



Gorath picked his way through the underbrush while the roar of a waterfall filled Owyn's ears. "If my nose does not mislead, we must be nearing the naphtha caves of which Irmelyn spoke. You must do what I say if we are to get Obkhar out of these caves alive."

Owyn was having his doubts, in the dark and the cold. "Why are we even doing this? Why don't we simply head south?"

"Obkhar is a name familiar to me and I believe his freedom may serve a purpose. Kin to me in irritation, he has pricked Delekhan's ire many times. We may depend on him to avenge himself upon his captor."

Owyn nodded. "You're hoping that he's as much a bother to Delekhan as Narab then ... so what will we need to do?"

"Venutrier of Lan operates in this locale and is known as a trader of slaves. I will offer you into slavery."

Owyn's eyes widened. "You're going to what?!"

Gorath smiled. "Do not alarm yourself overmuch. Venutrier will doubtless say he has no need for a scrawny young boy in his naphtha caves and will insist I see his operations. When we have entered the caves, undoubtedly the both of us will be taken captive."

Owyn remained unconvinced. "This is your brilliant plan? We just got away from Delekhan in Sar-Sargoth and you want us to be taken captive again?"

"We do have a way out, you know. As you may detect by the stench of this river that runs hard by, the naphtha mixes with it from an underground river that runs through the caves—it has since the day Guy du Bas-Tyra torched Armengar. I know this because I have had words with others once held captive by Venutrier. Once we are ready to leave, we dive in the underground river and will emerge somewhere downstream."

"No one has ever died doing this?" asked Owyn, skeptically.

"I have met none that have," said Gorath solemnly. "Come, we have business to attend to."



A figure lurched from the mines.

The man had black hair, cropped short over his expansive forehead, where a dark birthmark curled from his hairline to just below his left eye. He was huge, a mass of fat and muscle. Venutrier looked them over, then nodded to Gorath. "You're trespassing on private property, *moredhel*." His voice seemed to bubble from his cavernous throat. "This area is restricted for commerce, not loitering."

Gorath adopted a business-like air. "But I am very interested in your commerce, sir, "and that is the very reason I sought you out." He pushed Owyn forward. "I wish to sell you the boy." Owyn promptly cried out—not in despair but because, unseen by Venutrier, Gorath had jabbed him sharply in the back.

Venutrier snorted derisively. "What? Pah, pitiful! He bawls like a calf! We'd have to feed him a herd to get enough meat on his bones. He's weak, probably diseased. Doesn't look as if he's eaten in weeks."

Gorath waved off the slaver's complaints. "His looks are deceptive. Single handedly he slew my partner with a kitchen knife and he broke my mate's arm. He will grow into an even stronger man."

Venutrier eyed the boy carefully. "Impressive, but he sounds like trouble. We'd have to watch him every minute to keep him from escaping."

Owyn began to play his role, letting fear—which was not entirely fabricated—seep into his voice. "I'm not getting sold to anybody!"

"A mercenary is of little good if he is easily overcome, don't you think? Break his will and he will be invaluable to you." Gorath looked Venutrier in the eye, as the slaver examined Gorath.

The slaver shook his head. "He looks noble and I don't want bounty hunters sent from the Kingdom looking into my business."

"He was a chamber boy of no importance. You'll have no trouble with him."

"Of no importance?!" Owyn began to take genuine offense.

Venutrier thought for a moment. "A hundred and fifty sovereigns, take it or leave it. But before we clap hands on this, would you care to view our operations here?"

Gorath stroked his beard. "An intriguing notion ... if it would not trouble you, sir."

Venutrier smiled, revealing rotten teeth. "No trouble at all. My guards will escort you."

At a gesture from Venutrier, moredhel surrounded them. Chuckling to himself, Venutrier looked the pair of them over as if they were oxen bought at market, examining first Owyn and then Gorath with greater interest. "Too easy," he said with a sigh. "What kind of fool do you take me for? The boy is of no use, Gorath, but *you* are a prime slave indeed. You will enjoy your new life below." Seized by a myriad of hands, they were dragged to the mouth of the cavern and thrown in.



For an eternity it seemed they stumbled down steps. They had wandered in the mines for some time before taking a group of goblin overseers by surprise. In the ensuing battle Venutrier found out how severely he had underestimated the talents of Gorath and Owyn, and soon Gorath was delicately picking the lock on a chest hidden down a blind corridor while Owyn rummaged through Venutrier's belongings and those of a goblin burnt to a cinder by his magic. Gorath held up three masks. "These should help us with the fumes, I think. Now we need to find Obkhar."

After walking down a dark tunnel, Gorath halted. Staring at Owyn intently, he waited for the boy to explain himself. "You tapped me on the shoulder. You wished to speak to me?" Gorath rumbled.

"No," a voice answered behind them. "I did." They wheeled around to face a tall, gaunt-faced moredhel. "Obkhar," whispered Gorath.

"I had at first thought myself deluded, but I see I am not. How is it that you are here? I heard that your head had been spitted on a stake outside Sar-Sargoth."

Gorath folded his arms across his chest. "Not all who live in the Northlands bend to Delekhan's will. And not all who rebel die. Providence would have it that he posted a guard outside my cell who was a close cousin and sympathetic to my situation. He bought time for my escape."

Obkhar shook his head, as if suddenly saddened. "So your cousin's head now hangs in your stead. You have a grave responsibility on your shoulders."

"All the more reason to see an end to Delekhan's reign, Obkhar! He shall pay his blood for mine; for each offense against my kin, I will redouble it against his flesh. I will allow him no quarter, give him no mercy, stay no blow against him for all he has done to our people. I should think you would agree, Obkhar!"

Fire brimmed in Obkhar's eyes. "On the graves of all he has slain, I swear that my cause is yours, Gorath! However I may aid you, you need only ask. But all this talk is fruitless. We must first escape this place or there shall be nothing left to avenge."

Gorath agreed. "I have been told by some who were taken captive here before that there is a river that runs underground and mixes with the Isbandi river."

Obkhar pointed down the tunnel. "I have seen it with my own eyes, but its fumes may rob the strength from a man. On occasion I have seen some of Venutrier's men wearing masks made of bone and cloth. If we three had them, I believe we could make the escape."

Gorath produced a mask from his pack. "It is providence, then, that we have already obtained them. Take this one and make good your escape."

The three raced down the tunnel, and the roaring grew steadily louder. They stood at the edge of the naphtha-tainted water, their heads swimming. One by one, they jumped into the river, hoping that soon they would feel the outside air.



Owyn's eyelids flickered open and he made out Gorath's form standing over him, although it was shrouded and somehow unreal, like a dream. But he knew it wasn't a dream, he knew he had survived his trip through the water cave, and with the realization he was alive he managed to whisper hoarsely, "If you EVER put us through that again, I will invent a cantrip whose sole purpose"—his voice rose to a shout—"is to cause you to fall desperately in love with a warthog—may the two of you live happily ever after!"

Gorath smiled, unusual for the normally saturnine moredhel, water still dripping from his hair. "I'm glad your sense of humor has returned. When you surfaced near the river bank and did not breathe, I was afraid you were lost." Owyn stood slowly and painfully. Gorath helped him with his pack and soon they were ready to leave.



Irmelyn met them in the tavern in the shadow of Armengar. "Obkhar arrived here shortly before you and described a pair—a human boy and Gorath of the Ardanien. I was going to keep the reward for myself, but he insisted you deserved it."

Gorath nodded. "He is as reputable as I have heard. It could also be that he wished to save you your life."

Irmelyn looked tired as he dropped a pouch on the table. "Save your blade for someone more deserving. I will pay your fee. Two hundred in gold and not a royal more of it."

"Food in our bellies and beds to rest on, an acceptable exchange for a man's life. I would ask one more thing of you, and then we will be gone from this place. Would you know where we could find a certain witch woman known as Cullich?"

Irmelyn's lips curled in disdain. "I have heard word of her, yes. Fled south of Caern and west of the fork that leads to Wyke. Probably down there healing up Delekhan's dogs."

"I wouldn't know. Our business is at an end, Irmelyn. Good fortune and health to you." Gorath did not bother to count his gold, and seemed distracted. He looked at Owyn. "Cullich may be able to get past the guards at the bridge before the mountain pass. We need to find her."

They made their way to a small cottage far off the road. To Owyn's amazement, Gorath pushed the door open and walked in without hesitation. Inside, the cottage felt more house than home. Empty, save for shards of broken crockery in one corner and a few rudely made stools for sitting, the witch's home was nearly as cold as the winds that howled outside.

Gorath looked at the woman sitting in a corner by the fireplace, arcane talismans arrayed around the embers. "Your husband has at last returned."

Owyn's mouth dropped.



She rose, sinuous and powerful. "Husband? How so? Clan leader? By what right? In time past you held all those titles with dignity and honor. Around you, the Clan Ardanien was curled like a golden dragon, ready to rise up at your word and crush whatever lay in your path. Where is that dragon now? Why does it sleep?"

Gorath's voice contained a hint of sadness. "Cullich ... is that all you dream of beneath your strange stars? A dead past? What value in all Murmandamus's speeches did we gain but to learn that we are weak? What spirit did we discover in defeat except that we corrupt from within? The time has come to blunt our blades and look to our own, to put down the monsters that we have become."

Her voice rose like the wind outside. "What destiny would you choose for the moredhel, Gorath? Should we bend our heads to the earth once more, enslave ourselves to the will of the eledhel who live in Elvandar much as we trembled beneath the Valheru in black centuries past? Their Queen Aglaranna will not accept us back into the fold as family, but instead as slaves. You've seen our brethren that have returned to them. What are they but gelded bulls in elven servitude?"

"I know not whether they rejoice or weep under their midnight stars, but their children grow to great ages, they trade freely under the Kingdom sun. We must fight for so little as a loaf of bread and kill our cousins lest they steal our children from their dreaming. It is time we became more than savages."

Cullich regarded her husband carefully. "Why have you come here, Gorath? Surely not to debate a love that between us is dead."

"No ... I need your help but for a short time longer and then I will be away and leave you to your own. So much I ask from my former wife. You may then be free to do as you see fit." Gorath's open plea surprised the witch. "In the name of one I loved once, I listen and I will do what I can. Speak, Gorath."

"Where are Delekhan's forces now?"

Cullich looked out her frosted window. "Delekhan masses on the Kingdom's borders, the banners of the Clans Krieda, Dargelas, and Oeirdu flutter on the fields near Raglam," she said, reciting the names like a battle hymn. "I would seek no passage south through the Teeth that leads by the Kingdom fortresses of Northwarden or Highcastle; doubtless Narab shall be at their head."

Gorath smiled. "Narab has turned on the old wolf. Sar-Sargoth is—or was—encircled by his clan. He shall not trouble us."

"Nonetheless, the armies are gathering and you will find none among them friends. Neither may you pass across the Great Northern Mountains through Moraelin. Moraelf works with the Six to ensure that none of the former clans of the Green Heart may escape through the fringes of Elvandar."

Gorath roared. His responsibility to his clan could not be forgotten. "May Lims-Kragma feast on his soul! He believes if we cannot run, we will join his accursed march?!"

"Again, your only means of escape lies along the Inclindel. For whatever reason, the Six have allowed the snows to lift. Perhaps they are otherwise occupied focusing their magics."

"Who are these Six who now serve Delekhan, from what clan do they arise? Perhaps their loyalties may be reversed."

"They are mighty in their arts, husband, far beyond even my powers. They claim the ancient title of Spellweavers, though they are vastly different from those of our magical cousins in Elvandar. Some suspect they hail from the serpent people, but long it has been since I touched the mind of those folk in the Northlands." Gorath looked greatly disturbed at this news. "If we are to slip undetected through the Inclindel, we may require your skills of illusion. One such as you summoned when I first escaped Delekhan's men."

"You know not what you ask. That spell was great in its fashioning and left of my power nothing for a month! I cannot follow where you go, for I believe yours is a coward's path!"

Owyn fidgeted. Unable to pick meanings out of the harsh-sounding *moredhel* tongue, he nonetheless understood the tone of the conversation between Gorath and the strange *moredhel* woman. Whatever they were saying, they weren't in agreement.

"She will speak with you," Gorath snapped, his face flushed with rage as he stalked to the window. "Listen to what she says."

"But how will I understand what she's saying?" Owyn said. "I don't know *moredhel*."

"*Weyoda aldeweynn*," Cullich whispered. Gliding to his side, she gently took his hand and began to stroke it. "*Weyoda aldeweynn, Owynna ... you will understand.*"



It seemed days had passed.

"What happened?" Owyn shook his head and was shocked to find himself lying on the ground. Above him, Gorath and Cullich watched intensely as he regained consciousness.

"What kind of spell did you cast on me?" Owyn shook his head.

"What you have been taught is special," Cullich replied, helping Owyn to his feet. "You will now understand all I speak to you and you will also find your skills as a spellcrafter are much greater than they were before. Walk around a bit. My husband and I have more to discuss."

Gorath was unsatisfied. "If we should encounter Moraelf and the Six, I should like to be better prepared to meet them."

Cullich smiled. "There is a spell I crafted once that I may also teach the boy. It is an illusion that bends the perceptions of those nearby in such a way that they cannot see you as you truly are. Instead, you are seen as a resident of the area you wish to enter. It has been specifically tailored for the town of Harlech, perhaps of use to you when you deal with Moraelf. If you have 800 silver pennies, or an equal sum in gold with which I might buy silver, I may teach it to Owyn."

"You would charge us for this?" Gorath was surprised.

"I would be within my rights to do so. I require silver because it is needed for the fashioning of the spell. Do you have the coin?" She seemed unconcerned by Gorath's dismay.

Gorath tossed a pouch of coins on the wooden table. "The money is yours. Do what must be done."

"Very well. Owyn, please come here for a moment."

Owyn looked warily at the woman. He understood her to be a powerful spellcaster in her own way, although the *moredhel* mind was different from any he had studied. "I'm not going to end up unconscious on the floor again, am I?"

She smiled, surprisingly warmly. "You shall remain on your feet throughout. We shall begin."

Time passed. His head swimming with the details of the spell, Owyn repeated the cantrip line by line back to Cullich. When she seemed satisfied he had learned all its details, she nodded. "You have learned well," she said. "Go and rest for a few moments."

Gorath looked out the window at the waning moon. "We must leave, Cullich. Perhaps Moraelf will give us information that we do not already have. Take care, wife. Be certain that if Delekhan falls, you are not crushed."

Cullich watched the two figures disappear into the night, their tracks covered by the wind-driven snow.



They had been huddling under a tree on the outskirts of Harlech for an hour. To Owyn the town looked much like any other, except for the bands of *moredhel* soldiers and goblin mercenaries wandering the streets, some in military formation and others less organized. Gorath pointed at a small house. "They are coming and going from there," he

whispered. "I wager that Moraaulf is there. Those field lieutenants were inside for at least an hour, and they look none too happy about what they just heard." The moredhel looked at Owyn, who had been gathering his strength. "Are you ready?"

"Yes," sighed Owyn, letting out a long, slow breath that materialized in the cold air as a light mist. Owyn sat on the ground and began a slow chant as Gorath felt the air tingle and shimmer around him. Owyn looked up. "That's it."

Gorath looked at the young magician. "But we haven't changed." Owyn smiled. The nature of magic was mysterious to nonmagicians, and often to magicians as well. "You forget that the spell was tailored to those in the town of Harlech, not us. They will see us as moredhel. But the spell will last only a couple of hours at most. We should hurry."

The milling soldiers paid Gorath and Owyn little attention, but Owyn felt completely naked. He silently hoped that no one could see the anxiety he was sure was scrawled across his face as Gorath knocked on the wooden door. They were greeted by a uniformed moredhel who stared at Owyn for a moment before ushering them inside. After leading them into a back room, the guard presented them to Moraaulf.

The moredhel commander looked up briefly at Gorath and turned his attention back to the pile of maps on the table. "What have you? Make it brief."

Gorath's tone balanced curiously between sarcasm and respect. "Sar-Sargoth has been besieged. Lord Narab and an unknown number of confidants freed dissidents trapped in the dungeons and fled north. Delekhan requests that you and the remaining members of the Six lend immediate assistance."

Moraaulf slammed both fists onto the table. "Madness! I have my troops in position, ready to march and our target is only a week's march from here. If we leave now, we will not be in position when the time comes for the final strike! Surely Delekhan doesn't intend to divert us into the snow plains to chase a handful of cowards?!"

Gorath's eyes showed no emotion. "The intentions of your father are unknown to me. I merely bring his message. Further, he requests progress reports on your activities."

"If he were not my father, I would slit his impertinent throat! What does he wish to know?"

Gorath continued. "The guards at the Inclindel Bridge have turned back goods stolen from the Kingdom. We need the password for the day to authorize the movement of the goods across the bridge."

"Where do you go with them?" Moraedulf looked interested in Gorath's news.

"With us, back to the mustering at Sar-Sargoth. The supplies are desperately needed there. Many hungry soldiers to feed."

The moredhel commander snorted. "My soldiers are hungrier. You have new orders. You are to stop in Harlech with the shipment before proceeding north. We shall take what is needed."

Gorath looked at Moraedulf and allowed the corners of his mouth to turn up in a slight smile. "I don't believe Delekhan will be too pleased."

"Delekhan be damned!" roared Moraedulf. "If he likes, he may come here and retrieve the goods himself, but I will take them! Tell the men at the bridge you are a Serpentslayer. I shall expect supplies immediately."

Gorath bowed. "Your will, Lord Moraedulf."

They had left the town of Harlech behind them. Owyn was still shaken from their excursion into the moredhel camp. "Nice family," he said lightly to Gorath, who did not respond.



The moredhel moss-troopers guarding the bridge greeted them with icy stares as they approached. "No one shall pass this point without word from Moraedulf," threatened one of the guards. "Do you know the password?"

Gorath nodded. "Serpentslayers," he said, looking the moredhel guard straight in the eye. "And that comes from Moraedulf himself. Shall I report that you will not allow us to pass?"

The guard regarded Gorath for a moment, then waved to the other troopers to part. Gorath walked onto the bridge without looking back. As Owyn passed the last guard before the bridge, the moredhel looked at him keenly. He shouted to the guards on the other side of the bridge. Owyn assumed it was instructions to let them pass until Gorath broke into a sprint, sword drawn. "Someone recognized me!" he shouted.

Owyn stood back and raised his staff. A swirling orange ball of fire appeared before him, making the air shimmer around him. It blazed

forward like a comet, striking the goblin mercenary in the chest and exploding. Gorath leapt through the smoke and beheaded a blinded moredhel, and Owyn ran towards the other goblin mercenaries, still reeling from the explosion. Owyn struck one with his staff, and ran after Gorath through the Inclindel Pass.

A man approached them. Still breathing heavily from their fight, Owyn barely managed to wave a greeting at the Kingdom soldier who lumbered towards them.

"Boy, you're just about the luckiest whore's son I've ever laid eyes on. If we hadn't heard the commotion down the pass, I think those goblins would have been having noble stew about now. Nearly took out your friend here until I seen him fighting at your side. Now I don't know what you think you're doing in the Northlands with these moredhel—"

Owyn leaned on his staff, face reddened with exertion. "It is very important that you take us to Prince Arutha."

"What?! The cold's gotten to you, boy. What makes you think I'm going to take time off from my duties and trot your behind down to Krondor?"

Owyn noticed the company of Kingdom soldiers milling behind their commander, murmuring and pointing at Gorath. Owyn did his best to adopt a royal tone. "Prince Arutha isn't in Krondor. He's likely still stationed with his Krondorian Lancers just outside of the Dimwood near Sethanon. We need you to escort us to his camp."

The commander, Finn, looked dubiously at Owyn and Gorath. "Why would he be there? And why would he want to see a boy and a moredhel?"

Owyn was beginning to run out of patience. They had more success with the moredhel than Kingdom men! "The Prince sent us to spy on them, all right? They'd never suspect a scrawny nineteen year old boy and a moredhel, so ... that's why he sent us. We have information about a planned attack on the Kingdom and it's vital we get this information to him."

Finn's eyes narrowed. "How do I know you're telling the truth?"

Owyn lost his temper. "You don't, but if you don't take us and the moredhel overrun Northwarden, do you really think you're going to be able to sleep at night?" Gorath was standing behind Owyn now, while the boy was raising his staff. The collected soldiers took a step back, fearing some mystic display.

Finn considered the boy's claim for a moment. "I'll grant you one thing. If you're a gambler, you sure don't bid low. Come on, let's get moving. The Dimwood's hell and back from here and the Prince won't want to be kept waiting. Let's move."

The marched as if the moredhel armies were behind them. In a matter of days, they had reached Dimwood.



They sat inside Arutha's tent, the Prince listening intently to Gorath's words. Maps of the north country were laid out on the table, and Gorath brought a gauntleted finger down on a marker representing Armengar. "We evaded capture and were intercepted by your guards in the Inclindel Pass. The journey here took several days, but we moved with great haste as our message was vital."

Arutha looked at the moredhel discontentedly. "Very interesting tale, but how do I know a word of it is true? How can I believe that this scroll you have given me is the genuine article and not a forgery trumped up by Delekhan? I was very explicit with you before, Gorath. I refuse to act until I have word from Seigneur James!" Owyn sighed. He had traveled far to bring a message to the Prince, but now ... suddenly a glimmer of hope sprang in the boy's eyes. He leapt up from his chair, startling everyone in the tent.

"He told us to give you a message, but it's ... odd, sire."

Arutha leaned forward. "What exactly did he say?"

"He said to tell you that there's a party at mother's."

The Prince clapped his hands together. "... and a good time will be had by all. Gods, Laurie and Jimmy used that phrase years ago! All's right then! James has just saved the pair of you your necks and me a good portion of grief. Now I must settle down to the matter of finding out what Delekhan is thinking. If this report is correct then the best force he could muster would number at the most two thousand warriors, a pitiful spit in the eye for a castle assault."

Gorath looked at Arutha. "You believe he has something else in mind."

Arutha nodded vigorously. "Undoubtedly. As James indicated in his brief note, it would take some spectacular strategy on Delekhan's part to take the castle, and honestly, he has never displayed that kind of wit. We faced him before when he was still a field captain for Murmandamus.

Wherever he is going he will no doubt hit fast and run for high ground. Now we have to establish where that high ground is.”

Owyn was relieved. “Shall we accompany you to Northwarden?”

Arutha considered Owyn’s request. “No. I have a much more important task for you, though I doubt you will find it as exciting. I need you to return to Krondor immediately. Inform Master Magician Pug of the situation. Considering his tactics, I have a feeling Delekhan may have a few surprises in store for us. If that bastard brings anything magical to bear I want to know what it is and how to counteract it. You leave immediately.”

Chapter 4 Walkthrough

Gorath and Owyn begin Chapter 4 in the dungeons of Sar-Sargoth, with the formidable task of escaping the Northlands. Gorath must call in a few favors and find the dissident moredhel leader who opposes Delekhan’s war plans.

The dungeons consist of two levels, and bands of witches, spellcasters, goblins, and moredhel hinder your progress. The main chamber has two chests that contain your belongings, although the guards have divided up the gold. You should head north from the main room and get the Guildis Thorn Key from the northern branch of rooms, then head east. In one room you’ll find two chests (Figure 4-1). In the wordlocked chest is the Interdictor Key, and in the other, trapped chest is the very useful spell Evil Seek. Why the moredhel keep such a powerful spell that can be used against them is beyond me but, as the Tsurani say, don’t look a gift needra in the mouth.

There are many pits in the dungeons, so travel carefully and be careful when turning corners. Bands of ogres, moredhel, goblins, and witches make combat frequent but not too difficult. You may want to store some gear in a few wordlocked chests like the one near the stairs from the lower level to the exit level, and gather items from fallen foes to sell at the shop above. While money is not of primary importance, it will come in handy. A few of the guards have Dragon Plate armor, the best available for now. Feel free to make a few scavenging runs. Many of the chests are trapped, so be sure to keep your Scent of Sarig spell up and about.

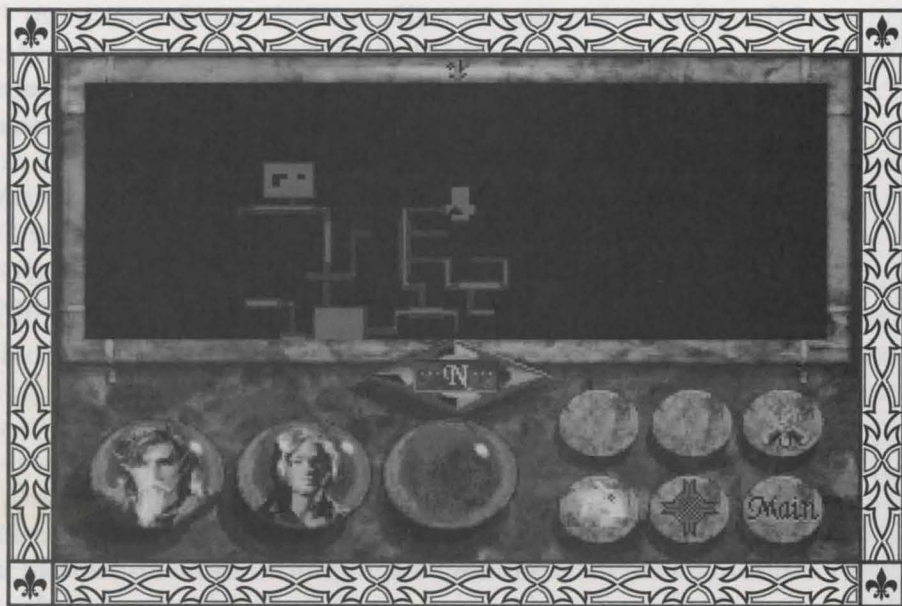


Figure 4-1. Chests in the dungeons of Sar-Sargoth

Find the exit on the upper level (Figure 4-2). Outside the dungeon, examine the body on the stake. Recover the emerald and read the note. Then discard the note, but do not sell the emerald. Head south and talk to Liallan, who will fill you in on a few things, including Nalar's Rib. Head west and south to find the rib, using the spyglass (Figures 4-3 and 4-4). You will have to bypass a trap and get through a few combats before reaching Nalar's Rib, but once you see the short stone obelisk, click on it to invoke the Lord of the Void. After you use the emerald, the power in the rib kills the moreldhel surrounding Sar-Sargoth. If you don't use the rib, travel will be very difficult.

Head to Armengar, taking care to avoid Harlech. Find the Temple of Guiswa off the road south of Harlech (Figure 4-5), a good place to spend your money blessing your arms and armor. Find some naphtha in the pits for an added kick to Gorath's sword (move the mouse around until you see the "Enter" message). In the Giant's Broth Tavern talk to Irmelyn and agree to rescue Obkhar, a dissident leader. The

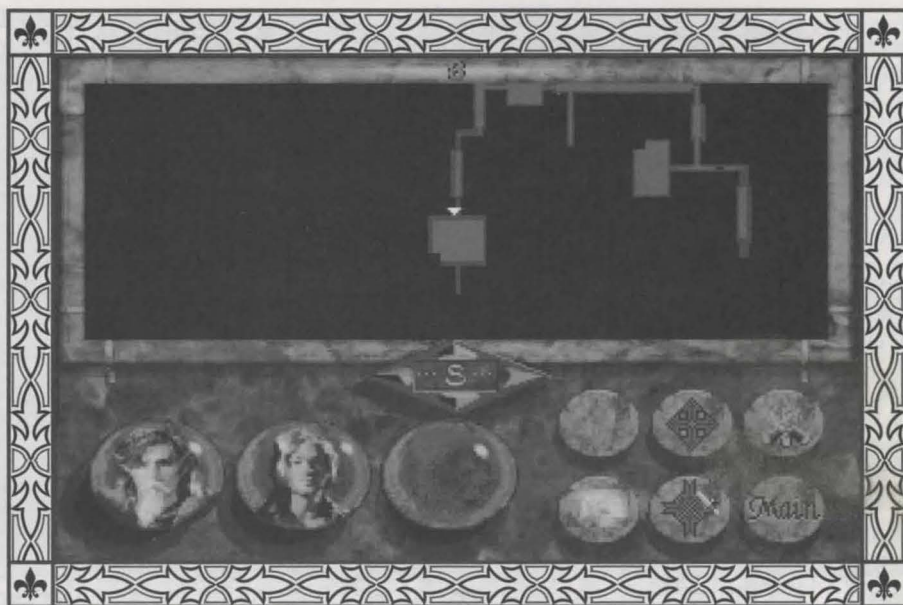


Figure 4-2. Exit from the dungeons of Sar-Sargoth



Figure 4-3. Heading south to find Nalar's rib

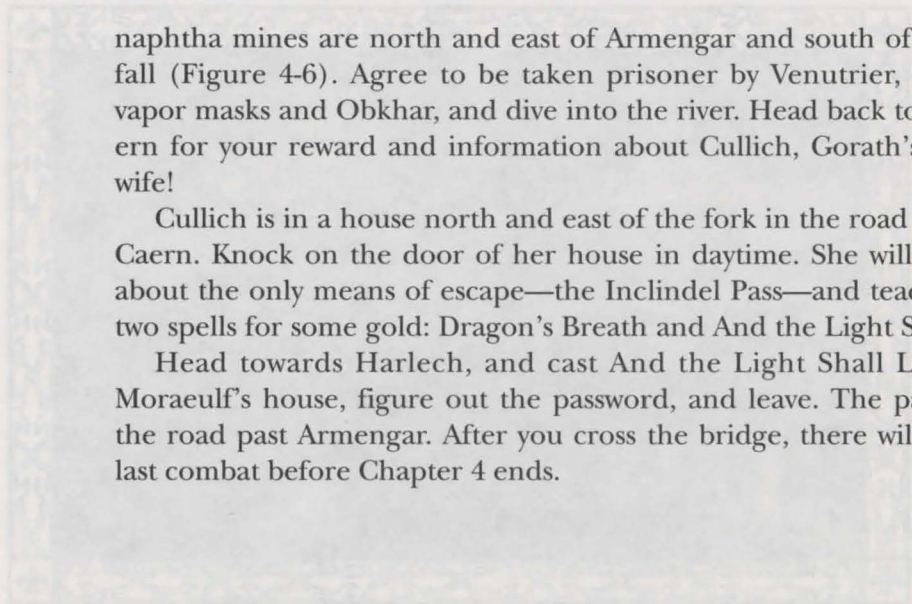


Figure 4-4. Nalar's rib

naphtha mines are north and east of Armengar and south of a waterfall (Figure 4-6). Agree to be taken prisoner by Venutrier, find the vapor masks and Obkhar, and dive into the river. Head back to the tavern for your reward and information about Cullich, Gorath's former wife!

Cullich is in a house north and east of the fork in the road south of Caern. Knock on the door of her house in daytime. She will tell you about the only means of escape—the Inclindel Pass—and teach Owyn two spells for some gold: Dragon’s Breath and And the Light Shall Lie.

Head towards Harlech, and cast And the Light Shall Lie. Find Moraelf's house, figure out the password, and leave. The pass is on the road past Armengar. After you cross the bridge, there will be one last combat before Chapter 4 ends.

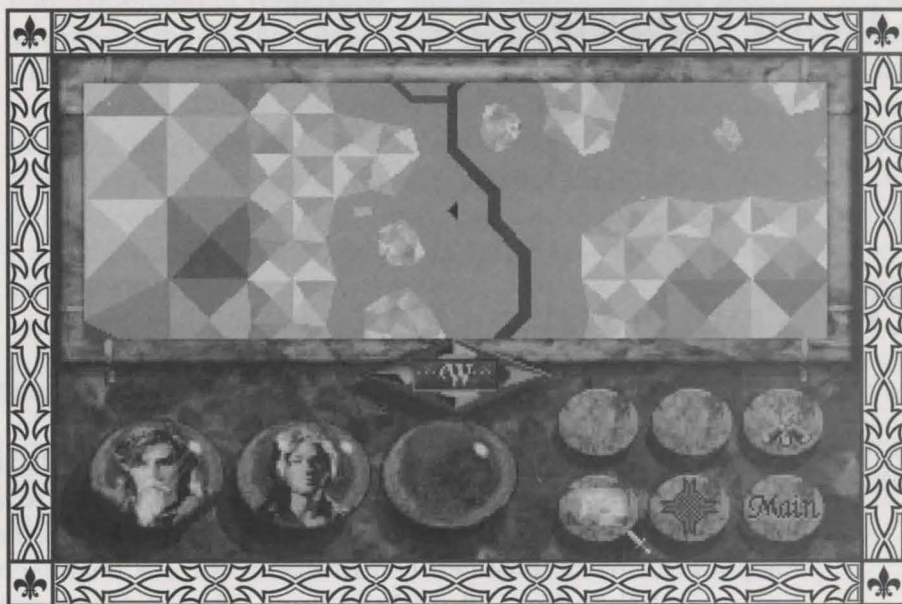


Figure 4-5. The Temple of Guiswa

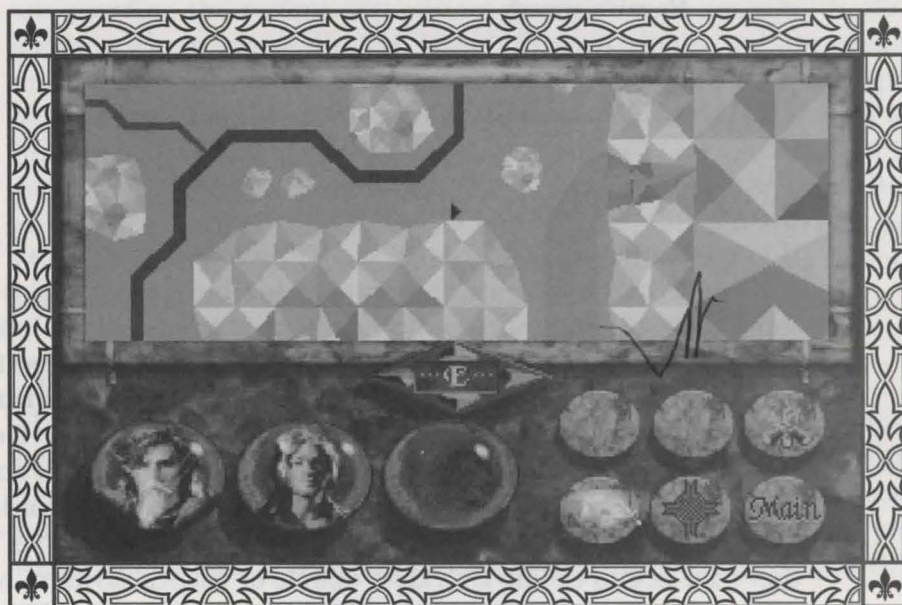


Figure 4-6. The naphtha mines

Chapter 4 Quests

- ◀ The Wrath of Narab Quest
- ◀ The Escape from the Northlands Quest
- ◀ A Pleasant Chat Quest

The Wrath of Narab Quest

Stripped of his command (and replaced by Moraeulf), banished, and branded by a sentence of execution, Narab has revoked all his oaths of loyalty to Delekhan. Aware that for the first time in months the High Warlord isn't protected by "the Six," Narab has decided to show his new disfavor publicly and, at the same time, hopes to strip Delekhan of his powerful tribal alliances. Unfortunately for our characters, Narab has encircled Sar-Sargoth with an army of *moredhel* warriors and witches with orders to kill anyone or *anything* emerging from Sar-Sargoth. Liallan can advise them, however, that there may be a way to slip past Narab's guards ...

Hints and Clues

Speaking to Liallan

If cued by the keyword *Narab*, she will tell you that Narab has surrounded Sar-Sargoth with some of his most cunning personal supporters, although she doubts he will be able to hold out long if "the Six" become involved. She will say the only way to arrange for your escape from Sar-Sargoth would be for you to invoke an old trick that Murmandamus first used when he took the throne before Delekhan. He somehow called on the powers of Nalar, the Dark God, and killed all who dared to oppose him. Triggered by her *Narab* Keyword, Liallan will respond to "*THE SIX*" Keyword and tell you that "the Six" is what they have begun calling Delekhan's circle of magical advisers, although she has no respect for any of them except their leader, who seems to

have command of remarkable mental powers. She will indicate that at last report the Six had gone south with Delekhan's son, Moraedulf, to force the tribes of the Green Heart to join in the attack on Northwarden. When Gorath asks how, Liallan replies that Delekhan has ordered the Six to find a way to ensure that the elves will be watching their northern border if any of Gorath's tribes try to cross over the Great Northern Mountains into Elvandar. If you've read the Spynote from the impaled body, cue her with the keyword *Nalar's Rib*. She will say it is a strange stone located about a quarter of a day's walk straight south of Sar-Sargoth.

The Spynote and the Emerald

The Spynote is waiting to be discovered on a body hanging outside of Sar-Sargoth; it tells you that you'll need to use the emerald (also discovered on the body) to "invoke the will of Nalar."

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

The effect of this quest is to strike dead all the moredhel warriors who are guarding the eastern and western boundaries of Sar-Sargoth, thus allowing you to escape through Nalar's lines. To do this, all you need is to have the emerald in your possession when you trigger the dialogue at the large stone slab, otherwise known as Nalar's Rib. You'll then be prompted (yes/no) to say whether you want to place the emerald in the notch on top of Nalar's Rib. If you say yes, then the moredhel guards will be killed, making travel much easier; you can also loot the bodies for food, restoratives, and perhaps season tickets to the famous moredhel soccer matches in the Northlands.

What's in the Way

The players are surrounded on all sides by moredhel warriors, with ogre mages bringing up the far eastern, southern, and western borders. Combat is several "layers" thick in any direction except directly south from Sar-Sargoth, and even venturing in this direction you should encounter at least three combats before reaching Nalar's Rib.

Reward for Solving the Quest

The reward for solving this quest is twofold. The first, most obvious advantage is that the players can head south to escape from the Northlands. The second is that they can pick off supplies from more-dhel slain by invoking the Dark God.

The Escape from the Northlands Quest

Concerned that dissidents may try to cross through the Inclindel, Moraedulf has posted a heavy guard at the Inclindel Bridge. They have been instructed to kill anyone that doesn't know the proper password. To escape the Northlands, you'll have to find a way to speak to Moraedulf to learn the current password so that you can slip south. (You could fight past the guards on the north side, but it's very tough going.)

A Pleasant Chat: A Subquest

If you talk to Irmelyn in the Giant's Broth Tavern in Armengar, he will offer to find out how to reach Cullich if you will find a way to free Obkhar, who is being held captive by Venutrier of Lan. Obkhar was captured by Moraedulf, then sold to Venutrier as a workman for the naphtha mines. All you have to do is find the three vapor masks that are in the box in the naphtha caves (Figure 4-7), find Obkhar (Figure 4-8), kill the goblins and jump in the river to escape (Figure 4-9). Owyn passes out while swimming the Isbandi. When he "wakes up," he is with Gorath again on the shores of the river. If you then returns to Irmelyn and tell him that Obkhar is planning his escape, he will give you a reward and "tell" you where you can find Cullich.

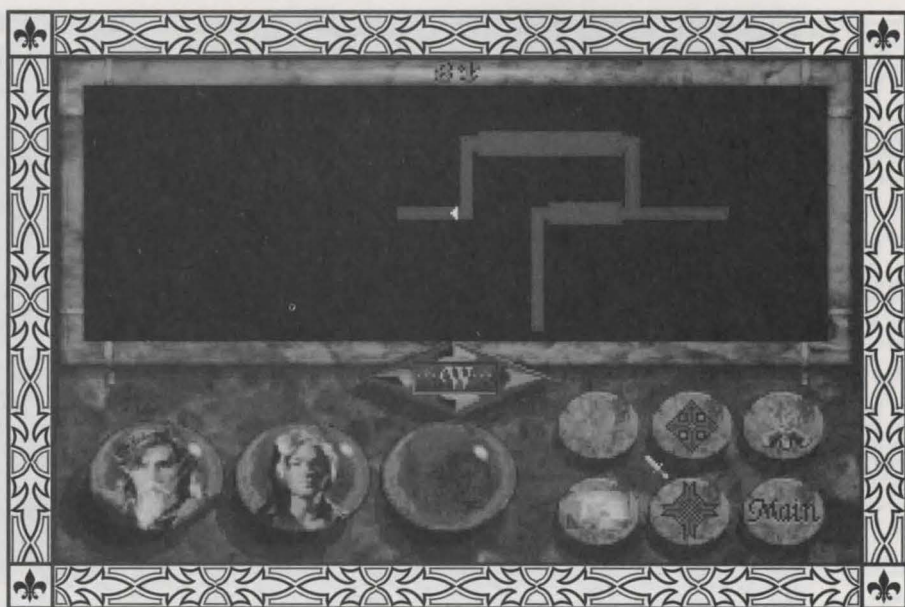


Figure 4-7. Finding the vapor masks

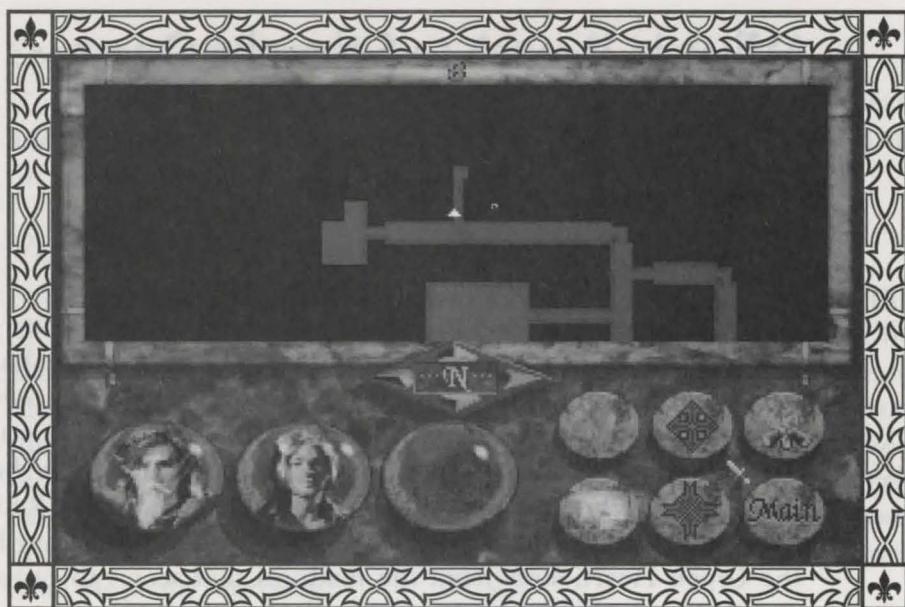


Figure 4-8. Liberating Obkhar

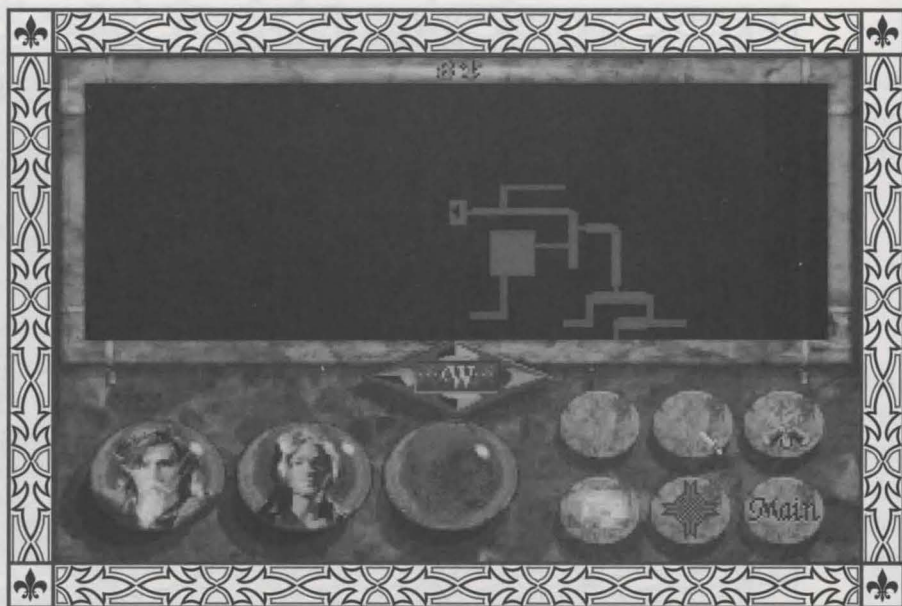


Figure 4-9. Swimming the river to freedom

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

A Pleasant Chat

Finish the Pleasant Chat Quest.

My Dear Wife

Find Cullich off the road to the east, south of Caern (Figure 4-10). If you speak to Cullich about Moraedulf, she will say that she has a spell you can use on him called *And the Light Shall Lie*. She has used it on a few occasions to help sneak others of the Green Heart out of the Northlands and says that she will so use it herself, although she has no intention "... of participating in that pathetic ceremony of Returning." Gorath feels otherwise, saying "It is time we returned to our home in the Green Heart, away from the madness that seems to radiate from the throne of Sar-Sargoth."



Figure 4-10. Gorath's wife, Cullich

Speaking to Moraeulf

If you cast *And the Light Shall Lie* on yourself before entering Harlech and try to speak to Moraeulf, and then ask him about the passwords for Inclindel, he will tell you the current password (Figure 4-11).

Visiting the Bridge

If you click on Moraeulf's keyword (*password*) when you visit the bridge, then your party will "know" the proper password and be allowed across. Unfortunately, once you get across the bridge one of the guards will recognize Gorath and there will be a small combat on the other side of the bridge. (If you *don't* know the password then there is an endless combat here—unless you've freed Obkhar, in which case after a tough combat, Owyn and Gorath can win their way across. Presumably, Obkhar's freedom has drawn *moredhel* loyal to him away from Moraeulf's forces.)



Figure 4-11. Moraeculf's House

Speaking to Finn

Just a few steps away from the combat on the bridge, the players will encounter Finn, who has a “few buddies” to help hold off the other moredhel guarding the bridge. (Since the Inclindel “de-frosted” he decided to bring an expeditionary force to check out what was happening on the moredhel side of things.) Speaking to him triggers the end of the Chapter 4 sequence (the Arutha dialog follows automatically).

Reward for Solving the Quest

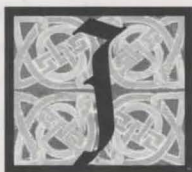
You finish Chapter 4!

Miscellaneous Notes

- ↔ The bridge to the east is heavily guarded and is impassible during Chapter 4 (monster guards—giants and goblin warriors—are near the bridges). When the monsters just come into view, it will trigger an interparty comment between Gorath and Owyn to the effect, “I recognize some of those men and they wear the colors of Delekhan’s personal tribe. We will not be able to cross this bridge,” etc., etc. You won’t be able to advance any further forward towards any exit other than the Inclindel Pass in Chapter 4.
- ↔ There are bushes on the road to Armengar that can be picked for rations or restoratives. Stock up, and do not be bashful about using them during combat.
- ↔ Near Armengar, Gorath will say that the Isbandi River has had a foul smell for 10 years because the river joins an underground river that runs through the old naphtha caves at Armengar.
- ↔ Moraelf’s “headquarters” has been set up in the town of Harlech. The town is swarming with moredhel and any attempt to pass through the town proper (the town and the road adjacent to it) without having And the Light Shall Lie in effect will result in heavy combat. The only reasonable way through this game tile is to stay east, off the road, and slip through the hills to the east. The combats immediately outside of his headquarters will be impossible to win. Moraelf will be guarded by moredhel warriors, ogre mages, and goblin warriors.

Chapter 5

When Rivers Run Blood



James's breath emerged from his lips as a frosty white cloud.

Below him, Seigneur Locklear negotiated scrub brush as he worked his way up the winding mountain path. He cursed expansively as a thorn bush caught in the chinks of his leg guards and he paused to throw his friend an exasperated frown. James smiled, then turned to look out over the snowy peaks that marked the boundary of *moredhel* territory.

Five hours after arriving at Northwarden, Baron Gabot had called both him and Locklear into his meeting room. While worried about James's story of *Nighthawks*, he was far more concerned that his magical adviser had not reported back from investigating possible *moredhel* activity. With a large band of the Dark Brothers approaching his castle, he feared that the old magician might have fallen into enemy hands, and so, reluctantly, he had asked the two Seigneurs to finish Patrus's job.

Locklear arrived puffing, his face wreathed in mist. "I thought I was going to have to carry you up," James said, grinning. "You shouldn't have stayed up all night with that serving girl."

A grin spread across Locklear's damp face. "I didn't expect to have to get up at the crack of dawn." He plucked a twig from his armor. "Mountain climbing and armor do not mix."

Suddenly, the two Seigneurs wheeled to the sound of a horrible mewling. A man in a thick, ivory-colored robe was waving a staff, while

a moredhel hung, suspended in the air, desperately trying to claw his way out of the magical net.

"... and if it weren't bad enough I had to chase you, you made me get rocks in my best shoes! I'm blistered! Do you know how mad I get when my feet hurt? I get river bottom, mud-sucking, badger-whacked mad ..."

The two seigneurs looked at each other, shrugged, and sheathed their swords. Locklear cleared his throat. "Excuse us. ..."

The wizard glanced sideways at the two puzzled figures, then returned his attention to the moredhel. "Go away. I'm busy right now agitatin' this here moredhel."

Locklear began to laugh. James stepped forward towards the magician. The wizened figure was surely Patrus, the sorcerer who lived at Northwarden and served as Baron Gabot's unofficial adviser, much as Kulgan once did for Borric in Castle Crydee. It was an unusual arrangement, but sorcerers often proved to be effective advisers in matters of the unseen.

"Begging your pardon, but I am Seigneur James, and this"—he gestured to his friend, now doubled over with laughter—"is Seigneur Locklear. We have been sent by the Baron Gabot to find you. You are his magical adviser, aren't you?"

The old man snorted. "Just Patrus, please. I don't cotton to titles much. Glad to meet you. I've just been out trying to get some information about these moredhel. They've been gettin' too close to the castle and it was makin' my tongue itch. A man can't eat respectably that-aways."

James gaped at the moredhel suspended 10 feet above the ground. "Have you ... learned anything about the attack?"

Patrus's brows furrowed. "Only that there's six companies of 'em out creepin' in the woods somewhere but I don't know exactly where yet. I think they've got their own magicians, too."

James's eyes widened. "Magicians?! The Baron will be sorry to hear that, I'll wager. We need to return to the castle. Which way would be quickest?"

"Northwarden? Oh, well, it's THATAWAY." Patrus swung his staff towards the north, and the hapless moredhel flew through the air over an embankment. Patrus shrugged, and the three began their hike towards the castle.

They found themselves face to face with an advance party. A moredhel spellcaster stood, with a witch hag, behind three goblin mercenaries. Frost lined the sword of one mercenary, while orange flames danced on the edge of another's.

Locklear gulped as he charged forward, hoping to distract the mercenaries so that James could engage the spellcasters, and the feint worked. Locklear ran one goblin through before he was struck from behind. An icy blast knocked him to the ground as much as the force of the blow, and he turned in time to see a huge goblin raising a sword. Locklear barely parried the blow, and rolled to his left in time to avoid the next.

The smell of ozone filled the air. Locklear watched as a flash of lightning struck his assailant. The goblin stood rigid, caught in the electrical outburst. The scent of burning hair drifted past Locklear, and the goblin stood, singed and teetering, as Locklear ran his Great sword through its stomach.

Locklear rose to his feet. The moredhel spellcaster had been stunned and paralyzed, and James stood over the bodies of two goblin mercenaries, one of whom had been singed by Patrus's lightning. The moredhel spellcaster shook off the effects of Patrus's Fetters of Rime enchantment, and a cascade of light erupted from his hand. Now, Patrus was frozen in place. Locklear leapt forward, ignoring the numbness and pain shooting through his right arm, and ran the moredhel through. Locklear fell to the ground, gasping, before James came and helped him up. "Looks like we're going to have to be careful on our way to the castle, Locky," smiled James. Locklear stood up, leaning on his sword as Patrus shook off the effects of the moredhel spell. "That was too close, Jimmy," he agreed, noticing that James was bruised and battered as well. "Let's see if Patrus needs some help."

Hearing this, the wizard shook his staff at the two warriors. "Now don't go lookin' after me, thank ye. Let's be back to the castle before more of these magicians makes my life harder than it is with the two of you!" James and Locklear smiled, and started to hike well off the main road.

Baron Gabot was waiting for them. "It seems our time for preparations is at an end. Two of my field captains were found dead in areas through which a moredhel strike force would likely come. That leaves me with one garrison company and two field companies operating

under green commanders. That does not make for an advantage in a siege."

"What of Duke Martin?" James asked, "I know he was visiting here."

"He's already in the field with my rangers. I want you two to work with him to find ways to slow down or stop the oncoming enemy companies. Our scouts have estimated the moreldhel have fielded about fifteen hundred men."

Locklear was puzzled. The castle should be safe with so few moreldhel preparing a siege. "You have three hundred men here and a castle! It's far more than you need to stop that many soldiers."

Gabot shook his head and sighed. "If there are Nighthawks that have infiltrated my troops, we will likely lose more than field captains before this is all over. We have to assume for the moment that the moreldhel know something that we don't. If we can stop even half their number, I imagine we can defuse whatever plan it is they have. So, any questions before you begin?"

James thought for a moment. "Where can we find Duke Martin? Is he in the castle somewhere?"

"I asked him to stay relatively close to the castle, so that my guards could find him in an emergency. You will have to search for him yourself. While you are at it, perhaps you can also find what has become of our minstrel, Tamney."

Locklear nodded. "He may have quit the castle. Minstrels are not noted for their staying power through great battles."

Gabot agreed. "It will lower morale should he remain absent. I want you to find him and bring him back, even if you bring him back in chains with a rucksack tied over his head. With the battle close at hand, I want nothing to divide the men."

James bowed. "We'll be off, then; I think we can handle our assignment."

Gabot had picked up some reports given to him by a squire. "Excellent. I shall be glad to see you and Locklear in action. Patrus, you stay with them and help them in any way you can. You are far more familiar with the area than any of the rest of my men."

They met Duke Martin—or rather, the Duke found them—south of the road where James and Locklear had met Patrus. A lean and weathered figure, Martin had the look not of a Duke, but of a hunter who spent his days in the forest.

"How's my princely brother Arutha?" Martin said, hugging James. Such an open display of affection was rare for the Duke, who had not seen Jimmy the Hand in a number of years.

"Fine, when I last saw him. He's outside of the Dimwood with a small force, waiting for my messengers to reach him. What are you doing so far from Crydee anyway? Briana have you hunting rabbits for the ducal stew?"

A faint smile crossed Martin's lips. "No, but soon we four will be hunting far larger game than that. Seems this small wrinkle developing in the Northlands is about to become a Kingdom problem if what Locklear told me was correct. I'm just glad to have you two here to lend a hand."

"Is King Lyam going to join the party?" asked Locklear.

"Doubtful. This engagement isn't serious enough to warrant bringing the King into it and he's got his hands full enough with the Keshian Empire. Seems one of our Kingdom ships accidentally mistook an imperial frigate for a pirate ship and sank it, along with all hands. Naturally, Lord Hazra-Khan is having a conniption. We'll have to fight Northwarden's battle on our own."

James rolled his eyes in mock despair. "What can we do?"

"I have most of Baron Gabot's rangers out checking up on enemy movements, so I'll need you three to give me a hand with various missions. I was just planning a little fun ... Patrus, how's your moredhel?"

Patrus smiled. "Which 'un you talkin' about, Duke? The one I got under my bed or the one what makes me breakfast in the morning?"

Martin laughed. "Amazing. Jimmy, is it just me or does Patrus remind you of a certain Admiral we both know?"

James looked at the old magician. "I think he and Amos Trask would either love each other or hang one another from a gibbet ... I think the Duke meant, how well do you speak moredhel, Patrus?"

Patrus waved his staff at James, and the Seigneur felt the hair on the back of his neck stand. "I knew perfect well what he was a' sayin', you court rat. I can read it, but don't ask me to pronounce any of that dog-howlin' yewhaw."

Martin nodded. "You won't have to for what I have in mind. There are some boxes near here that have moredhel plates on them. I want you to crack the codes on them. I imagine those boxes are filled with rations for the moredhel once they begin the siege, but I doubt they'll

suspect we've tampered with them. If there are any rations, find a way to poison them, then replace them in the boxes. Come back and find me once you're done."

James looked around to get his bearings. "I think we can handle that order. You stay out of harm's way as well, Duke. Arutha wouldn't forgive me if you were shot down by some goblin archer! Farewell!"



The chests were hidden behind a hill, and Patrus easily opened the wordlocks. They unwrapped the rations and Patrus dripped Coltari Poison from a wineskin. After rewrapping the food, Patrus resealed the chests. With that their mission was accomplished and they returned to Martin.



"All is well, Martin," said James, "We've poisoned the food in all the moredhel lockchests we could find. There weren't many of them out there."

"You probably found the majority of them, so I wouldn't worry about it. I have something else I need you to do. There was a minstrel that the Baron employed here at Northwarden by the name of Tamney. When we got word that the moredhel were beginning to move down from Raglam to Northwarden Pass, he packed his things and disappeared in the middle of the night. The Baron insists he be brought back."

"The Baron mentioned this Tamney to us as well, but why is it so imperative he come back? Surely, the men might feel a little betrayed, but is their morale that shaky?"

Martin looked concerned. "The Baron sent word a short while ago that a Nighthawk was discovered within the confines of the castle this morning. There's evidence there may be others. Naturally word has spread and the men are edgy about the whole matter. It doesn't help matters that Tamney was never administered an oath of loyalty."

James nodded. "And it's possible he was connected with the Nighthawks. I understand."

"Find him and get him back to Northwarden if you can, but don't let him know you're suspicious. He might bolt. One of Gabot's scouts has told me there may be goblin activity in the north, so hurry back when you're finished. I may need your help."

They made their preparations to leave, and waved to Martin in farewell. "Well, since it's unlikely this Tamney headed towards the moredhel in the north," said James to Locklear, "I think we should visit Dencamp on the Teeth." They disappeared into the forest.



They stopped at the outskirts of the town and noticed a small company of moredhel and goblin mercenaries passing through the small street. Following James's lead they crept towards the tavern and began to mingle with the patrons.

James began talking to a quiet, amiable fellow who was missing three of the fingers of his left hand. He smiled as James and Locklear told stories of their childhood together in Krondor. When at last they began a story about the minstrel Laurie who had become the Duke of Salador, the man nodded, but he interrupted when they claimed he was the best minstrel that ever lived.

"I imagine this Duke of yours was quite talented," the man said. "But a short while ago, a jongleur played here, the match of which I've never heard." Immediately Locklear and James exchanged a meaningful look, then turned back to the man. "What did this minstrel look like?" James asked.

"Young, attractive. Rather tall as I recall," the man said. "Have you seen him before?" James nodded. "If it's who I'm thinking of, then yes. Do you happen to know what became of him?"

"No, for certain, but he was asking about for a place to put down for the night. Someone told him that a franklin nearby sometimes leaves his barn open for travelers. He might have gone there." Making a mental note of all the man had said, James began to rise from the table when the man tugged at his sleeve. "Another thing. The man told him that the door to the barn sticks quite a bit and that he might not be able to get the door open. Takes quite a strong man to get it to work sometimes." "I'll keep that in mind," James said. "Have a good day."

When they emerged from the tavern, it seemed that the moredhel had moved on. Patrus pointed towards a small shop a few buildings away, and James and Locklear followed. "It's the Grumbling Magician," said Patrus. "Old Slaris runs the place, a friend of mine. Wait out here."

Patrus reappeared with a sparkling pendant around his neck and tossed a vial of yellow liquid to James. "This," smiled the old magician, "might be useful."

"What is it?" asked Locklear. James uncorked the vial and took a deep breath. "Fadamor's Formula, if I'm not mistaken. Makes you strong as an ogre." They began walking to the barn, off the main road. Locklear pushed on the door of the barn, but it refused to budge. Despite the absence of any visible locks the wooden door remained securely closed, no matter how hard the group pushed.

"Enough of this," said James, who then drank from the vial of yellow liquid. Finally, after a great deal of struggling and innumerable grunted curses, the rusted hinges screeched and gave way! They cautiously entered the old barn, and when their eyes adjusted to the light they saw a figure huddling in a corner, clutching a small dirk and a travel sack.

"I didn't expect to see ... I didn't think anyone would ... uh ..." the minstrel stammered.

Patrus snorted, then spat. "Come after ya? Pah! I shoulda' known it. You come a' prancin' into Northwarden with that little twanging box of yours and you sing a blue streak about honor and glory, but when it comes down to it, you ain't got the picture. Instead you got this yella streak—ya never stand and eyeball your problems face to face, ya let other folks run you around. One day somebody's gonna run your life right off a cliff."

Tamney began to whine. "I'm the one telling me to leave Northwarden. Me. That's Tamney the Minstrel's decision, not someone else's. I'm making the decision to live."

Patrus waved his hand at the minstrel. "The moredhel done run you off an' they ain't even got here yet. They done a better job on you than any Duke or Baron would. I'd not be in a castle with a coward like you anyway."

"That isn't fair. I'm a minstrel! What good would I be ... I don't know how to use a sword, I don't know how to heal wounds or direct a battle. I'd just be in the way. What good would I be? I'm just one ... insignificant ... man."

Locklear stepped forward. "Not so insignificant, Tamney. Before I went to serve in Krondor, my father used to advise me: when you have earned your title, make sure your minstrel is well paid. I hadn't a clue

what that meant until I saw the battles at Armengar and Highcastle and Sethanon and others since. When men sit and listen to songs about great battles, they remember that men like themselves have faced terrible dangers and emerged alive and that gives them hope. Sometimes that's the only thing that an army needs."

Tamney sat down, dropping his bag. "But why do they all have to depend on me? Why did fate arrange it that I was the minstrel who happened to be at Northwarden?"

James looked down on the minstrel and spoke softly. "We aren't going to force you to go, Tamney. It's your life, your decision. If you choose to leave ... that's your own business."

Tamney thought for a moment. "Could I request a favor of you before I make a final decision?"

James nodded. "Anything, if it will set your feet back on the road to Northwarden." Tamney pointed to the north. "There is a cave not too far from here that is known as the Diviner's Halls. Within, there are several small stones—called pattern stones by geomancers—which can foretell a man's future. If you return with one, I will make my decision."

Patrus sighed. "Geomancy! Shoulda figured you'd go in for that hocus pocus ... just another way for somethin' else to make your hard decisions for you!" James waved a hand at the magician. "Quiet, Patrus. We will see what we can do, Tamney."



They found the caves easily, and took by surprise the few *moredhel* who had taken refuge there before the siege. Patrus nosed around the large cavern and picked up two stones with a spiral pattern. Throwing them into Locklear's sagging pack, he muttered a curse and left the caves, stepping over the fallen *moredhel*.



Tamney was waiting for them at the barn. "Did you go to the Diviner's Halls? Did you bring back the pattern stones?"

Patrus grunted and handed Tamney the stones. "Don't get yourself into a tizz, Tamney. We got your silly rocks ... Now, are you walkin' back to Northwarden or are we draggin' you?"

Tamney stared at the stones intently. "I will walk back myself after I've studied the rocks. Tell Baron Gabot that I will be there soon. I think he will be rather more relieved than you might imagine."

"Oh? And why is that?" asked James.

"Before I left the castle, I had it in mind not to leave until I had at least made some provisions that I could survive. Even assuming I slipped out of the castle without notice, there was still the issue of how I would pay my way until I reached a safe haven. So, after a bit of investigation, I found the treasury. It was guarded by a fellow named Corbi, whose tryst with a certain girl by the name of Thea I have had the vicarious pleasure of orchestrating over the past several months. Once I had convinced him that she was awaiting him, it was a simple matter of slipping inside and grabbing up a pouch."

Locklear sighed. "It's not as if the Baron's never missed a few golden sovereigns. I think he's involved with other things at the moment."

"Exactly what I was thinking, but it seems that what I picked up in the dark was worth rather more than a few dozen sovereigns. I'd think diamonds would be worth several hundred more. ... Once I realized what I'd done, I became terrified of going back." Tamney looked embarrassed.

"I can see why, but when the Baron told us to come and get you, he made no mention of missing money. It's entirely possible that no one has noticed the missing funds as yet. You can take them back to him," said James.

"I can't. Even if I return them, the Baron will be aware that Corbi left his post open for me to plunder. Though I can't say I've behaved much like a friend to him, I don't wish to betray him twice with the same crime. Actually, I have something of an admission to make. He's the reason why I asked you to retrieve the geomancy stones for me. They aren't worth much, even to a gem dealer, but they can be used to make an attractive stone for a wedding band."

"For Corbi. Of course. So you've been considering returning all this time, but you wanted to wait until you could cover all possibilities," said Locklear. Patrus had had enough of the conversation and was now inspecting the rest of the barn.

"All but one. I was wondering if you would take the pouch of diamonds and hold on to it until after the battle is over. That way, no one gets hurt and we can all do what we need to do. Tell him you took them off a dead Nighthawk or something."

James smiled grimly. "When you go back to the castle, it's possible they'll search you, since your behavior has been a little odd. I'll take the diamonds, but I'll worry about how I'll tell him later. My only concern is that you return immediately. We have other things we need to be doing for Duke Martin."

"Done. I'll see you all back at the castle," said the minstrel, picking up his bag.

James looked at Tamney. "Don't be too happy about this, Tamney. You and I have a big score to settle. Don't get yourself killed on the way back."



They found Martin sending off a few trackers to the southwest. "I'm beginning to yearn for the days when we were running the billets in Krondor for Master deLacy. I haven't had this much exercise in a long time," sighed James. "So, where are these goblins you told us about?"

"What about Tamney? Did you find him?"

"Yes, though it took a little extra work to get him heading back to Northwarden. He promised dutifully he would return and I believe he will. We had a long talk," said James.

"I can see now why Arutha values you so much. I personally wouldn't have believed it possible. But, as things stand, we still have a long row to hoe, as they say. A goblin company of archers has already moved into the pass. If they get a foothold, they may be impossible to root out once the moreldhel roll in. We need to find out what their deployment is going to be when the battle begins."

Locklear sighed. "Okay, so we grab their leader and give him the hot poker treatment in the dungeon under Northwarden. Tell us where to find him and he's yours."

Martin shook his head. "No good. As soon as they discover he's missing, they'll change their tactics. No, what I need is the big plan and I'll be willing to bet that it's still in Raglam."

"How many scouts has the Baron lent you?" asked James, a glint in his eye.

"I have about twenty men out at the moment. Why?"

"Then you won't miss the three of us much. We're going to Raglam and we'll find a way to get that plan for you."

Martin looked incredulously at the former Mocker. "You plan to march through a company of goblin archers to the city where the

moredhel are massing, walk right up to the leader of the enemy and say, 'Excuse me, may I just borrow your war plans, please?'"

James tilted his head. "As I recall, I sneaked the future Duke of Crydee, Prince and Princess, and the Admiral of the Western Fleet out of Krondor while it was under siege of Jocko Radburn and Guy du Bas-Tyra. I think I can snatch a silly piece of paper."

Martin realized that he'd get nowhere with James. "I think if Prince Arutha didn't want to make you the Duke of Krondor someday, he would probably have you killed as a madman. All right then, get me that paper but be careful. I'll be waiting for you."



A band of goblins milled in the roadway.

James stared hard at the leader of the goblin band that faced them. At his side, Locklear counted heads, silently calculating the combined worth of the mercenary force.

"What do you think, Locky?" James muttered.

"Whatever Delekhan's game is, he's paying for it," Locklear replied grimly. "Goblin mercenaries charge small fortunes for their services, and by my guess there's at least ... a thousand sovereigns' worth of them here. I don't think they'll attack us unless they think we're getting too close. We might be able to negotiate a change of contract."

"Pah," Patrus spat. "Dark Brothers are Dark Brothers. They're just mean spirited, period."

Stepping out from the ranks of the enemy, a tall, pale-complected goblin drew his sword and pointed it at James. He glared at him with black eyes, and spoke the Kingdom tongue with some difficulty. "You speak price of passage," he said. "Deirgun hear speaking of you and tell to Gulla. Gulla consider and say price of our changing contracts is being thousands of two sovereigns."

"Thousands of two?" James repeated. "You mean two thousand sovereigns?"

Gulla nodded. "If you pay, we shall let you pass and will fight for Gabot Baron in this battle. If you come closer and not pay we kill you. You give us thousands of two?"

James produced the required amount, threw it at the feet of the goblin, and waited for it to be collected by the scrambling mercenaries. "You promised passage," James said.

"Yes," the goblin replied. "We not fight, nor shall any of our company you meet. Tell them you paid your way at Gulla's command. We will fight for your Baron."

As the goblin leader moved away, Locklear chuckled as he whispered in James's ear. "Imagine the look on Baron Gabot's face when that lot marches up to Northwarden and announces they're fighting on his side. He'll have a fit!" James smiled back. "Well, looks like we're going to have some explaining to do when we don't bring back those diamonds."

"You didn't," said Locklear.

James smiled. "Too bad we won't be there to see it."

The three traveled through the forest towards Raglam, and came upon siege towers—readied for a castle assault. James crept around the towers, which were as yet unoccupied. A few minutes later, he returned, holding two elven crossbows. "They won't be needing these, and I thought we could put them to good use. They discarded their Tsurani-made heavy crossbows; the elven weapons felt lighter and delivered their bolts with unmatched accuracy.

"Look," whispered Patrus. A catapult stood under a light covering of snow, making the weapon seem like part of the wintry landscape. They gaped in wonderment at the heavy wooden catapult. They walked around the weapon and studied it from every angle, spending extra time looking at the firing and trigger mechanisms. On the whole it appeared to be in good condition, although one of the torsion gears had broken.

"Moredhel must a' built this toad-throwin' toy to annoy the Baron. They'd never get it up the pass 'fore old grump buckets shot 'em down!"

"Perhaps, but it's of no use to them now unless someone fixed it in order to lob stones at Raglam," said Locklear while inspecting the device.

James thought for a moment. "That's peculiar, now that you mention it. Tell me, Locky, if you were just going to leave something like this lying around in a field, even if you didn't have it working, would you leave it pointed at your home?"

"What are you getting at?"

"The only reason this thing won't function is because one of the torsion gears is broken, not something all that complicated to fix. Now

suppose the gear didn't break of its own accord. Gorath told me that many of the moredhel clans had reservations about fighting under the old battle colors of Murmandamus. Now if you were one of those clans and wanted a backup plan in case you wanted to back out of the strike, it would simply be a matter of installing a replacement gear ..."

"... and pulling the release lever! It even has a payload in the basket! Of course, assuming we could find the part ourselves, we could stir up some trouble. Maybe find a way to get to the plans Duke Martin needs in the confusion."

James nodded. "Perhaps, but we'll need to find a replacement catapult part first. I doubt there is one lying about here somewhere, but let's check around." They searched the area for half an hour, hoping to discover a replacement part for the broken gear. When it didn't materialize, they picked up their packs and prepared to leave.



The town of Raglam looked peaceful as dusk approached. Patrus insisted on exploring the town on his own. James and Locklear approached the moredhel tavern.

"So you really think we can just walk right in without attracting unwanted attention?" asked Locklear.

"It's a trick I learned many years ago," replied James in a whisper, "everyone will accept the simplest solution to any dilemma." He reached for the door.

Locklear wasn't convinced. "This is highly irregular."

"Look at it this way," James continued. "We either have a legitimate reason to be here or we're completely insane and are walking right into the middle of enemy territory. That doesn't make a lick of sense, so everyone inside will assume the first is true. Now try to act like you belong here."

The moredhel approached them.

Apparently satisfied with their story about being mercenaries from Queg, the moredhel told them he was a trader who made frequent trips to several of the towns located near the border between the Kingdom and the Northlands, explaining his command of their language. "What can you tell of the push south?" asked James.

"Word has it that Captain Kroldech received his final orders for the move against Northwarden. Futile. With our numbers, we have no hope of surviving the march to it and then breaching the walls. This

Kingdom baron will crush us utterly unless the engineer has come up with something."

Trying not to be too interested, James prodded the moredhel further. "Segersen?" The moredhel stared at them strangely. "I had heard he was killed in a Quegian battle near Palanque."

"I wouldn't know," James recovered casually. "I've not been on foot for eight years or more. I've been working in a press gang." "Mmm," the moredhel replied. "Well, it's all a moot point at the moment anyway. Kroldech has locked himself into his commandeered command post to work on the battle plans for a goblin offensive and the engineer just sits in his house drawing up designs. Hopefully the Kingdom won't elect to retaliate after this madness is over with."

They thanked him for the information he was able to provide and casually strolled back to a spot near the tavern door.

Locklear waved James over as they stepped outside the tavern. Locklear hesitated before the door. "Kroldech," he snarled, rubbing his finger across three red marks above the door frame.

"What does that mean?" asked James. "Captain Kroldech. He is a moredhel leader who has a reputation for setting up residence in empty dwellings."

"What are the three red marks over the door?" asked James

"Those are equal in number to the original inhabitants he murdered to ensure the emptiness of the structure. The rumors of his savagery have spread as far south as Krondor." Fearing an exchange would draw unwanted attention from other moredhel nearby, and realizing the futility of a confrontation they left.

Meanwhile Patrus was examining a tent city set out in the town square. An old moredhel answered their call. Despite the unusual group he found before him, he allowed them into his tent.

He spoke to them in the Kingdom tongue. "Were things you wear taken by combat? Or do they represent true loyalties?" James spoke quickly, "We are from the Kingdom, but we bow down before only two powers: gold and silver." The moredhel was either satisfied with this answer, or he was too tired to care. He motioned for them to sit down.

After a short conversation, they found out that he had come to Raglam to die. Too old to travel with the rest of his clan, and not willing to stay alone in Raglam, he had resolved to wander off into the forest and let his life slip away like the wind in the trees.

Though he hated the moredhel race, the conversation made Patrus sort of sad. He was glad when they left.

James was peering through the windows of some houses when he gestured to Locklear. "This must be the engineer's house," he said, looking at a deskful of schematics.

A strange old moredhel answered the door. He glared at Patrus suspiciously with upraised eyebrows, "Yes!? Did Eron the Minstrel send you to sing for me?"

Patrus stammered, "uh, yes."

"Well, come in then!" the moredhel said, ushering them all inside. "I am very busy but I work much better with music playing. Helps me think!"

"And what manner of work do you do?" asked Patrus. The moredhel scowled. "Are you here to sing or ask questions? There's a lute over in the corner—use it."

Patrus played poorly. Fortunately, what Patrus played was exactly what the old moredhel wanted to hear. He grumbled something about being able to "play better," but it seemed to make him happy; soon he was telling them all about his work.

"I had been working on a catapult for Captain Kroldech, but the dragon lover refused to pay me when I finished it. So I fixed him ... removed a critical gear and now he can't get it to work at all." The old moredhel cackled, then continued with a sly smile. "I finally had it moved to a spot within range of his house, and loaded it up with a magical poison. One of these days I'm going to retrieve that gear and you can say goodbye to Captain Kroldech then, I can assure you."

"Where did you hide this gear?" inquired James innocently.

"Hid it in a box by the bridge. Now shut up and let me concentrate." Despite the poor quality of the music being played, it seemed to soothe the old moredhel, because before long they heard a soft clunk, and looking up they realized it was the sound of his head dropping onto the wooden table. Moving quietly so as not to disturb him, they left.



Patrus took a deep breath.

Holding the catapult part they had found, and using some makeshift tools, he knelt before the machine and set to work. It took nearly two hours to install the part, and although Patrus wasn't

positive the machine would work at all, he stepped back to admire his handiwork.

James placed a hand on the wooden monster. It was a marvel of moredhel engineering and although short on artistic value—something that marked a difference between the moredhel and their elven cousins—it showed signs of precision craftsmanship. “I’m not an engineer, but I think that should work,” he said, motioning to the others to join him. Together, they stood before the strange wooden creature, its one arm poised, ready to fling its special cargo into the sleepy moredhel town of Raglam.

“Shall we give it a try?” Locklear asked. The others nodded, and Locklear let the payload fly into the night air. They hurried back to town to see the results of their labor.



The door was ajar.

Locklear tried to enter the small house, but something seemed to be blocking the door. He pushed a little harder and reluctantly the door edged open a little further. Peering into the darkened room, they made out the form of a male moredhel on the floor behind the door. Kroldech’s body was curled into a fetal position and he appeared to be clutching at his throat.

“The engineer knew his business quite well,” Locklear said. “That catapult load seems to have been very effective. Search the room, quickly.” After several minutes of intense examination James called out, “I think I’ve found something.”

Behind a wooden writing desk in the corner was a Sword of Lims-Kragma, a small pouch with 150 gold coins, and a set of company orders. This would put a kink in the moredhel attack plans!



“We got the plans for you, Martin. Too bad you didn’t come with us, though, we had quite a bit of fun.”

Martin shook his head at James. “Won’t be much time for that very soon. My gut instinct tells me they’ll begin the assault in the next few days. Before we go back to the castle, there’s something I would like you three to check out for me. I got this mysterious note saying a company of moredhel illusionists has slipped behind Northwarden. I thought Patrus would know how best to deal with them.”

"Just like those pointy-eared lily munchers to go stealin' my ideas! Baron Gabot had me workin' on somethin' like that but I never could get the kinks out ... I knew my tongue was itchin' for some reason. But if we run across them, I got sumthin' that'll fix their hindquarters in a bat's fart." Patrus grunted.

"Whoever wrote the note doesn't specify where they are, so if you three would just take a swing southwest and see what you can find. Once you're done, come back and we'll all head to the castle together."



Patrus suddenly stopped on the road heading southwest. Locklear and James had walked on a ways before realizing the magician wasn't with them. They turned to find him staring off into the bushes with a comical, questioning look. "Somethin' ain't right about things here," Patrus said, turning in a slow circle. "Ain't what they appears to be at all. An if'n a thing ain't what it looks like, that means it's wearin' some kind o' mask."

"What are you babbling on about?" Locklear asked.

"The invisible magicians, you donkey!" Patrus shot back. Almost imperceptibly, his lips began to move. Silently forming words long forgotten, his lips moved faster, in response to a rhythm only he could know. Then he gave voice to the words and they tumbled from his throat, louder and louder until he was nearly shouting.

James saw a strange shimmering in the air. He rubbed his eyes, and there before him was a huddled pack of *moredhel* spellcasters!

Patrus was still slightly dazed from his effort in countering the *moredhel* spell of invisibility, so James took the initiative and plunged in among the surprised magicians. He ran his sword through one and battered another backwards with his shield when he was struck by a blinding light and sent reeling. Locklear was wrestling with two other spellcasters when Patrus shouted. A ball of energy moved from one *moredhel* to the next, leaving the entire group of spellcasters wounded or dead. Patrus collapsed as James and Locklear moved in to finish off the battered illusionists.

Patrus rested under a tree for a few moments when Locklear brought him a few scrolls and a pendant from the fallen *moredhel*. "An infinity pool," said Patrus. "This I can use!"

They helped a limping Patrus back to Martin. "Scratch one group of moredhel magicians. We found them, Duke," said the old magician.

"Good. I want you three to hurry ahead to the castle. They've already turned back one assault today and I think the Baron can use your help right now. I need to find out what's happened to one of our scouts that's gone missing. I'll be along as soon as I can."



The portcullis creaked.

An ashen-faced soldier trembled as he labored at the monolithic peg wheel, his back arched backwards, taut as a bowstring, as he hauled the iron gate upwards. With a jerk of his head, he signaled James and his companions to hurry inside.

Within, a handful of soldiers hurried to various tasks on the battlements and panicked captains attempted to rally the survivors of the day's fighting.

"Something's wrong," James muttered, observing the disarray. "What's happened?"

"Baron Gabot's been murdered, that's what's happened!" a nearby soldier shouted, glancing up from where he worked feverishly at unplugging a keg of oil. "We found a bloody nest of Nighthawks in our midst! They murdered the Baron's staff and three of the captains before we cornered 'em in a storeroom."

"Torch those corpses immediately," James ordered. "They might be Black Slayers. Where is Duke Martin?"

"Don't know. You're the closest thing we have to nobility at the moment. Guess that puts you in command, Seigneur."

James said nothing as lightning split the sky.

Half-dead soldiers tramped past, their eyes hollow with exhaustion as they traded places with equally worn men brought from the dining hall-turned-infirmiry. Few men still possessed clothing unstained by blood.

Sombered by the turn of events, James eyed the horizon for any sign of help. In all likelihood, the moredhel would attempt to breach the wall today and there was little he could do about it. Nighthawk treachery had silenced their cannons and too many men had fallen in four days of heavy fighting.

"Attack!" a voice screamed in the stillness. "We're under attack! Men on the south face!"

James cast a fuming curse into the sunrise. He might die, but he would send as many moredhel as he could reach into the halls of the Death Goddess before he would go down ...

Jimmy the Hand became a blur of motion on the castle wall. Brandishing the Sword of Lims-Kragma and weaving around moredhel warriors, his attention was only momentarily distracted by the flashes of lightning Patrus was calling down on the helms of unfortunate goblin mercenaries. A huge moredhel warrior charged James, and he was forced to thrust the point of his sword through the Dark Brother's stomach. The moredhel collapsed, and James found himself sinking to the ground, unprepared for the sudden weight of the corpse. He couldn't pull his sword out of the moredhel's belly, and as he felt the fighter's warm blood spread over him he lay, momentarily helpless.

An axe rose, and another moredhel warrior lunged towards the pinned-down Seigneur. James tried to raise the fallen moredhel's shield to ward off the blow, but the newcomer's foot came down on the corpse's shield arm. For a moment their eyes locked.

An expression of surprise crossed the Dark Brother's face. A crossbow bolt burst from the moss-trooper's neck and he dropped the ax, clutching futilely of the bolt. As life dimmed in his horrified eyes he toppled backwards into a wooden balustrade. With an ear-splitting shriek the railing sundered into flying splinters, tumbling after the moredhel's flailing feet as he fell.

Almost too dazed to breathe, James at last pushed aside the fallen warrior and crawled to the edge. Peering down, he saw a crumpled heap of armor far below, splashed in gore and a spreading stain of red. Close by, a grim-looking figure lowered his crossbow and tilted up his shaggy dark head to favor the Seigneur with a rare smile.

Arutha!

James called down to the Prince of Krondor. "I was beginning to believe you were going to miss all the fun!"

Arutha glanced quickly around the courtyard. His forces were routing the moredhel. "Delekhan would think me impolite if I didn't attend his little party. How are the men?"

James shook his head. "Very bad. Of the original garrison of four hundred and fifteen men, two hundred and twenty-seven are dead, thirty-five are mortally wounded, and the rest have dysentery or are too exhausted to wield a sword. Your arrival came none too soon. No discourtesies intended, Prince, but why did you wait so long in coming?"

Arutha smiled. "We made all haste, nearly to the point of calamity! Your well-meaning messengers ran into trouble and nearly didn't win free. Consequently we didn't receive your word until it was nearly too late to respond. We were lucky to arrive as soon as we did."

"The *moredhel* are in retreat?"

The Prince nodded. "What few of them remain. My scouts think there may have been up to at least six companies in the hills."

"About that. Since they didn't have the decency to attack all at once, we couldn't tell."

Arutha looked towards the gate of Northwarden. "If our trackers are to be believed, four of those companies slipped out a week ago while the other two kept your forces pinned down. The rest apparently turned southwest."

"Sounds like they mean to strike at Highcastle," said James.

"Undoubtedly. Since their leader has mimicked many of the moves that his predecessor *Murmandamus* made, it stands to reason he'll make the same mistakes. As a precaution, I split my forces and diverted half of them to Highcastle. As soon as we're finished cleaning up here, I'll take the rest of our companies to engage him there."

"Well then, give me a moment to get down from my perch," smiled James, "and I'll round up *Patrus* and *Locklear*. *Delekhan* will have quite a surprise for him when he reaches Highcastle."

Chapter 5 Walkthrough

James and *Locklear* find the mage *Patrus*, and the three of them must conduct a few covert missions for Duke Martin to aid in the coming siege. Head towards Northwarden to talk to the Baron. There are three tough combats just north on the road where you begin—multiple spellcasters and goblins with enchanted blades make surprise and/or liberal use of the *Evil Seek* spell necessary. You will gain the *Black Nimbus* spell, money, and elven armor—upgrade your Kingdom armor immediately.

After talking to *Gabot* and finding Martin near the fork in the road (Figure 5-1), use the *Eyes of Ishap* spell to find the three chests with rations. Your mission is to poison the rations with *Coltari Poison* (available in the shop at Northwarden). Take the food and leave one poisoned ration in each wordlocked chest. Return to Martin.



Figure 5-1. Duke Martin

Martin sends you off to retrieve Tamney the Minstrel. Head towards Dencamp, and go into the bar and talk to the locals. Tamney has just passed through, and is shacking up in the barn in town. There is a magic shop in town, so invest in Fadamor's Formula, which will give you the strength you need to open the stubborn barn door. Tamney will send you off for Pattern Stones, which are in caves north of town, before he'll agree to return. The caves are small, with a few moredhel warriors and beasthounds using them as a staging area for the siege. Bring the stones back to Tamney, who agrees to return to Northwarden and gives you four valuable diamonds. Sell them at the magic shop, pick up a few things, but make sure you keep at least 2,000 gold sovereigns.

Martin will send you off to retrieve the moredhel's attack plans. This will require heading towards Raglam and buying off the goblin mercenaries for 2,000 gold sovereigns. When you cross into the Northlands, the landscape will be covered with siege towers. Pick up valuable armor and elven crossbows here. A catapult will be just off the road as you head to Raglam; examine it and discover that you need a

missing piece. Follow the road to the bridge, where you'll discover a few chests. Some are trapped, so use the Scent of Sarig spell. Open them all, and one will contain the needed gear. Return to the catapult, repair it, and launch its payload. Return to Raglam and click on Kroldech's house—the plans, some gold, and a Sword of Lims-Kragma await!

The final quest requires traveling southwest from the fork in the road where you talk to Martin. Off the road is a house and a well; six *moredhel* spellcasters are hidden here, waiting for the attack. Kill them, loot the bodies, and return to the castle.

The numerous combats in this chapter—mercenaries, giants, and other tough bad guys—mean you should be liberal in using weapon modifiers, such as Killian's Root Oil, as well as combat/spellcasting enhancers.

Chapter 5 Quests

- ◀▶ The Let Them Eat Cake Quest
- ◀▶ The Come Home, Tamney! Quest
- ◀▶ The We Pay More Quest
- ◀▶ The Deadly Scrap Pile Quest
- ◀▶ The Hidden Quest

The Let Them Eat Cake Quest

Duke Martin's scouts have discovered *moredhel* lockchests in the area, all containing rations for the approaching troops. Because the *moredhel* don't expect Kingdom men to read their language (but Patrus knows how!), they won't expect them to open up the boxes and poison their rations. Duke Martin, truly a crafty old devil will tell James, Locklear, and Patrus to see if they can find some *Coltari* Poison somewhere and then poison the rations in all the lockchests in the area. Use the *Eyes of Ishap* spell to find three chests next to each other not far west and north from where you meet Martin (Figure 5-2).



Figure 5-2. Poisoning the moredhel rations

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

I Drank What?!

If you explore the bodies in the area you'll find poisoned rations or enough Coltari Poison to poison all of the rations in the moredhel lockchests. The shop at Northwarden sells poison as well.

Words to the Wise

After you've cracked the codes on all three moredhel lockchests, use the Coltari Poison on the rations. Note: To "poison" each box, it is only necessary that one of the bags of rations be poisoned per box. When the lockchests have been poisoned, the quest is completed.

Reward for Solving the Quest

If you wish, hold on to some of the rations or boosters from the *moredhel* lock chests. This also turns on Duke Martin's *Tamney* keyword.

The Come Home, Tamney! Quest

Baron Gabot is infuriated when he learns that Tamney the Minstrel has left his post at Northwarden and demands that the players find out where he has wandered off to and bring him back immediately. He also suspects that Tamney may have something to do with the possible Nighthawk infiltration in Northwarden. When you catch up with Duke Martin, you'll be sent off to find Tamney and send him back to the castle.

Hints and Clues

Bar Talk

If you pop into the "text" tavern in Dencamp-on-the-Teeth, someone in the bar will mention that a minstrel entertained there a few hours ago, and that they thought they saw him heading toward the old barn. They'll advise you that Tamney probably isn't in the barn because its lock tends to stick, making it almost impossible to get into at this time of year unless the person were very strong.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

Find Tamney

Tamney is running as fast as he can, but he is running into a bit of trouble because all these soldiers seem to be getting in his way. He's gotten as far as the barn in Dencamp-on-the-Teeth and has "jimmied" the lock. If your Strength value is below 40, you'll be unable to open the door. If you've increased your Strength value, temporarily or otherwise, then you can pull open the door and find a very surprised Tamney. The magic shop in town sells Fadamor's Formula for a quick pick-me-up.

Satisfy the Coward

Tamney will agree to return to Northwarden, but only if you fetch him a Pattern Stone so that he can read his future.

Find the Stones

If you explore the caves just northeast of Dencamp (Figure 5-3), along the path and near the house, you'll find the pattern stones (Figure 5-4; the room to the northwest has the chest with the stones).

Romanticizing the Stone

If you give the pattern stones to Tamney, he will agree to return to Northwarden.



Figure 5-3. Exploring the cave northeast of Dencamp

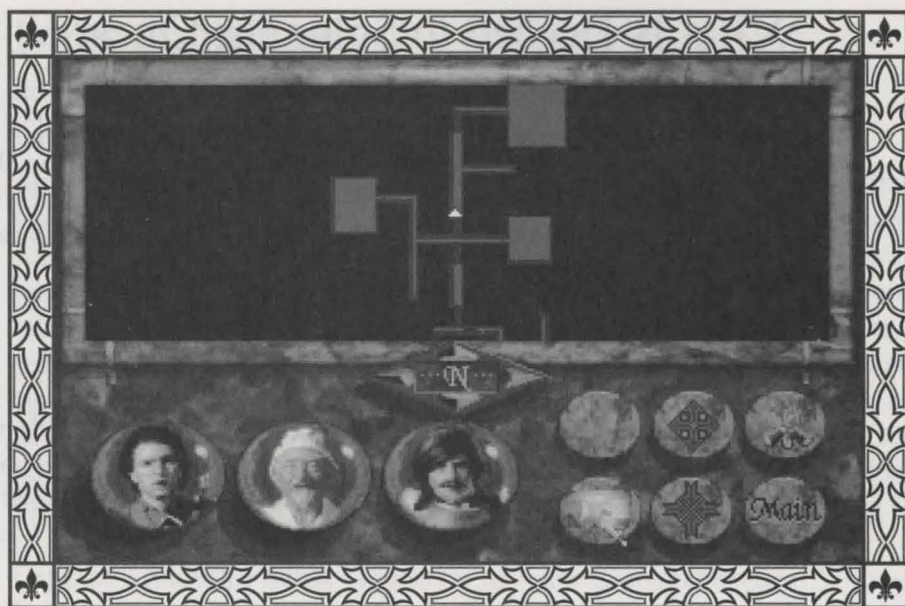


Figure 5-4. Finding the pattern stones

Reward for Solving the Quest

When Tamney agrees to return to Northwarden, he'll give you a pouch that he had indiscreetly snatched to fund his escape from Northwarden. There are four diamonds worth 1,425 gold pieces each in the pouch. Save at least 2,000 sovereigns for a later quest in this chapter. Return to Duke Martin and select his *goblin* keyword.

The We Pay More Quest

A large group of goblin mercenaries has decided to start the assault early and are waiting at the Northlands border on the bridge towards Raglam. When you approach, one of the goblins will shout at you to leave, fight, or "pay up more than their *moredhel* masters in Harlech have paid!," laughing all the while.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

If you choose to leave, nothing happens but you won't be able to move forward without retriggering the event; if you move forward, a very difficult combat will be initiated and you will lose; if you pay up the 2,000 gold pieces (most likely gained by solving the Come Home, Tamney! Quest) then the quest is solved, the goblins will not attack, and they will allow you to pass by.

Reward for Solving the Quest

If you decide to embark on the We Pay More Quest, this will give Tamney a chance to get back to Northwarden in one piece, although considerably poorer. You will also activate Martin's keyword for the Deadly Scrap Pile Quest.

The Deadly Scrap Pile Quest

Having come North at the suggestion of Duke Martin, James, Patrus, and Locklear decide they must head towards Raglam, where it is rumored the final battle force will make its last preparations before moving on Northwarden. They hope to bribe someone into handing over Delekhan's battle plans.

Meanwhile, initially unaware of Delekhan's designs on Northwarden, the field commander for the Dragon's Maw company orders a catapult and siege engines delivered to Raglam for battle staging. However, some moredhel are not entirely pleased about the apparently suicidal siege; therefore someone arranges that the catapult be pointed towards the moredhel commander's headquarters so that a mutiny may be staged, if necessary. Although the catapult is stripped of its critical gearing mechanism, it is *not* stripped of its special ballistic payload—an enchanted payload that will induce mayhem within its targeted zone of control. Raglam is directly in its line of fire ...

Hints and Clues

Chatting up the Locals at Raglam's Hobble

Although a few *moredhel* along the way will recognize you for what you are, and attack accordingly, the locals of the tavern in Raglam, Raglam's Hobble, won't find you threatening and will think you're probably Quegian mercenaries hired by Narab's brother, Nago. If you talk to any of the "backgrounders," they will say the town is in quite a stir because Captain Kroldech has gotten the final orders for the move against Northwarden. "Damn pathetic odds, if you ask me, but as long as Delekhan keeps paying, I'll let them do the worrying for me. I'd still like to get a look at those orders, but Kroldech won't open up his door now unless the whole town starts coming down around his ears."

Captain Kroldech's house If you try to enter Captain Kroldech's house in Raglam *before* the quest is complete, the door will not be opened, even though you'll learn that these are indeed Captain Kroldech's quarters.

The Engineer: A Subquest Never referred to by any name other than "the engineer," this eccentric old *moredhel* insists on being sung to while he designs his engines of destruction, most of which even Delekhan has found too "inspired" to use. If you knock on the door to his house (Figure 5-5), he will ask if you have been sent by Eron the Minstrel to entertain him for the evening. If you reply "yes" then he will invite you in to play while he draws out his latest plans. (If you say "no," then he will scowl and shout "Then why are you annoying me!" and slam the door.) If your Barding skill is too high then the engineer will kick you out and tell you to come back when you've "learned to play properly." (You may have to get *drunk* in Raglam's Hobble, enough to score a low Barding roll.) If your Barding skill is low enough, then the engineer will listen to the horrid noise with pleasure as he talks about his designs. He will explain about the catapult being disassembled and its curious payload. He reveals his dislike for Kroldech, and tells you that the catapult is aimed at Kroldech's command post. He also tells you that the missing part is hidden in some supply chests by the bridge outside of town.

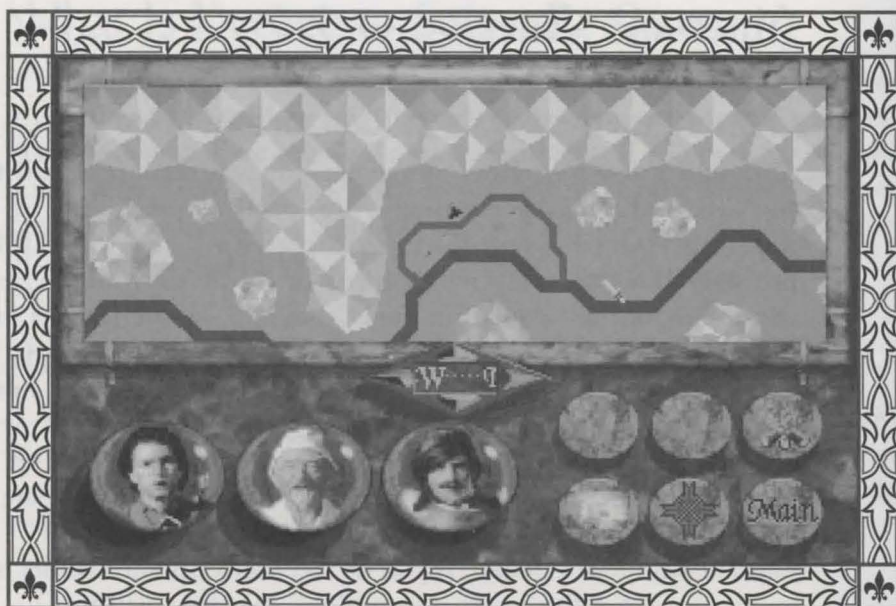


Figure 5-5. Entertaining the engineer

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

Find the Part

You'll need to find the catapult part that has been left in the box by the bridge. The box is trapped, and will be heavily guarded by witches and moreldhel warriors (Figure 5-6).

Fix the Catapult

You must return to the catapult and use the catapult part to repair it. At this point you can fire the catapult (yes/no). The catapult is surrounded by a trap—remember that you can move diagonally, and that deactivated trap poles also serve as barriers to the fireball launchers.

Steal the Company's Orders

Go to Captain Kroldech's afterward and get the company's orders (Figure 5-7).

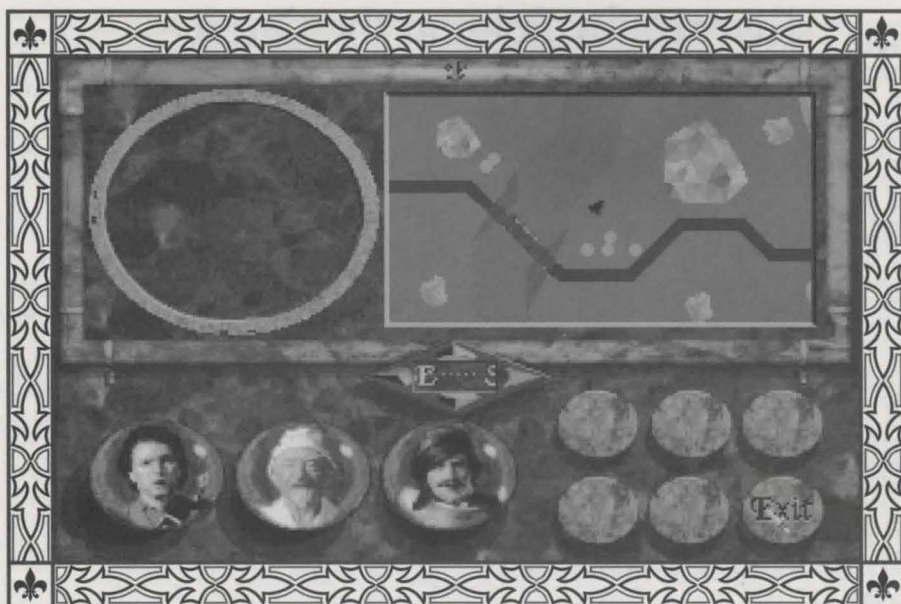


Figure 5-6. Finding the catapult part



Figure 5-7. Finding the moredhel battle plans

Reward for Solving the Quest

When you find Captain Kroldech murdered in his house, you will find some gold and a Sword of Lims-Kragma.

The Hidden Quest

A company of moredhel illusionists towards the southwest are hidden near a house off the road, and are awaiting the attack against Northwarden. Unfortunately, like all armies, they are forced to endure the standard “hurry up and wait” routine and as a result are beginning to get a little “trigger happy.”

Hints and Clues

Damn Nasty Bees

If you walks off the path towards the well and the quest has not been started via Martin’s *illusionist* keyword, a randomly selected person in your party will feel a sharp, sudden stab, doing 5 points of damage to each time they run across one of the invisible damage (dialogue-style) triggers.

Duke Martin

After the task in the Northlands is completed (getting the plans for the Southern Arrow company), Duke Martin will say he has been warned about an illusionist. He will ask Patrus if there is a spell that can detect them and Patrus assures him that he will be able to root them out.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

I See You

When you approach the house off the road, the enemy army will be “revealed” and a combat is triggered with six moredhel Magic Users (Figure 5-8).



Figure 5-8. Patrus unveils the invisible Magic Users

Kill 'Em

Once all the moredhel Magic Users are killed, the quest is solved.

Reward for Solving the Quest

You should find a *Nightfingers* scroll, a *Wrath of Killian* scroll, and an infinity pool, among other things.

Special Note

The quests *We Pay More*, *Come Home, Tamney!*, *Let Them Eat Cake*, *The Hidden*, and *Deadly Scrap Pile* are all related under the general plot of *Defending Northwarden*. Finishing all quests and returning to the Baron triggers the end of the Chapter 5 sequence, when you speak to Duke Martin and learn that the Baron Gabot has been killed.

Chapter 6

Betrayal



ug concentrated on the storm.

Whitecaps curled on the face of the Bitter Sea as lightning slashed down from a darkening sky. Far off, ships leapt in the troughs of grey waves, struggling desperately against winds that threatened to shear them into ragged scraps. Fishermen and frenzied ship masters busied themselves along Krondor's docks as they raced to batten down hatches and prevent unsecured goods from pitching into the churning seas. Planks and hammers and ropes were scattered everywhere, but among the workers not a soul dared utter a word.

Wrongness. Pug sensed it as clearly as he smelled the salt in the air blowing in through the window of his chamber, and felt the window ledge under his hand. What had begun three days ago as a seemingly weak summer squall was intensifying into a threshing eye of violence. Within hours it would make landfall, doubtless damaging the livelihoods of many coastal towns, Krondor among them.

Perhaps it can be tamed, Pug thought, his face twisting into a frown. More of a Lesser Path affair but it should be simple enough Even as he extended his hand the image of another storm formed in his mind unbidden, a terrifying storm that had raged over his head as he came into the greatness of his power in a far distant Empire called Tsuranuanni, a storm that had tested his right to be a member of the alien Assembly of Magicians, a storm that had rent open the heavens and forever set him apart from other mortal men.

Energy leapt from Pug's outstretched fingers into the heart of the storm, exploding within it a glorious rainbow pattern that illuminated

the clouds in a throbbing, elemental display. Greenish bands of color danced in the sky as the wind began to abate, the torrential rains quickly softening to a mild patter as blue blasts of energy moved between sea and sky. Gently the ocean stilled of its own accord.

Satisfied the threat was reduced, Pug discontinued the spell with a slicing gesture and stepped back to watch the lessening storm's progress. The sight eased his mind and allowed him time to mull over a series of issues, not the least of which was the ruined vacation that he, his wife Katala, and daughter Gamina had intended on making in Krondor, but like a lodestone to metal he found his thoughts returning again and again to recollections of the Empire ...

"To shriek his cadence on skeleton drums ..." said Pug aloud, lost in thought.

A ruby light shimmered, but Pug had felt the working of magic before the rift began to materialize. A black-robed man stepped through, holding a staff. "For thunder's spite we'll raise our call though down shall crumble Empire all." Makala raised his hand in greeting. "A Tsurani poet. I believe he was House Omechan."

"House Minwanabi, reign of the fifty-third Light of Heaven," corrected the magician from Stardock. "Is there something you need to see me about, Makala? I am busy."

The black-robed man raised himself up. "Busy? You've been behaving like a needra bull with a burr in his bit! I came to ask what has Pug of Stardock so distracted that he cannot find time to meet with his fellow magicians? Has his reputation so inflated that a member of the Tsurani Assembly is no longer worthy of his attention?"

Pug smiled. "I am sorry. Perhaps you are right, I've just been very preoccupied. I find myself obsessed with this storm. All week I've felt it building over the Bitter Sea and all the while I have suspected there is more to it than is immediately perceptible. It doesn't feel natural. Have you seen its like?" Pug's gaze returned to his window, as if focusing on something far away.

Makala returned Pug's smile, showing small, white teeth. "I have seen its match in destruction. As I recall, you created far more havoc in Tsuranuanni when you disrupted my Emperor's Imperial Games. Several city blocks destroyed, countless lives lost, the Warlord cast down in dishonor ..."

The barb irritated Pug. He had done what he did, what he had to do, that day he called on powers buried deep within himself. "I had a feeling you didn't summon a rift door to chastise me about my lack of attention. What is this about, Makala?"

Makala took a few steps towards Pug's desk, then turned away. "Your loyalties, Pug. While you claim loyalty to the Empire, you live your life under the influence of a Midkemian King and took to wife a Thuril highlander. Your judgment is suspect!"

Pug stiffened. "From the day I left the Empire, my judgment and my loyalties ceased to be the concern of the Assembly of Magicians. I do what I see as best for all concerned."

Makala scratched his white beard. "I see. Then, to that end is any act justifiable?"

"If it serves the common good, yes."

"Even if it violates an individual's rights?" asked Makala.

Pug's annoyance was clearly visible now, and few would risk annoying the greatest magician on two worlds. "What do you wish me to say, Makala? You lead me as if I were one of your needra cows, but I am in no mood for games. State your business."

Makala's face grew hard. "Very well. Your daughter Gamina has blossomed into a remarkable young woman. She is beautiful, gracious, and an honor to your house. Unfortunately, she is also a girl with remarkable powers. Your love for your daughter has led you into a grievous miscarriage of your duties! Why have you let her live?"

Tsurani custom allowed only men to walk the Greater Path, something Pug disagreed with—like many Tsurani customs. "My estimation of a person's magical talents is not determined by their sex, Makala, and I refuse to murder my child to appease a barbaric tenet of the Assembly! They have no authority in Midkemia!"

Makala spoke softly, but his words were steely and cold. "In this instance, I believe they will choose to ignore the geography. At this juncture, the Assembly is troubled—surrounded by anti-traditionalists who embrace your Midkemian values, led in large part by Mara of the Acoma." His gaze turned to the window, and the far horizon. "Open defiance by you as our most notable member could weaken our position within the Empire and that is something we cannot afford! We would be forced to make you publicly comply."

Makala turned back, and adopted a kindly air. "Although I am equally wary of female abomination, I have no desire to see your daughter dead. I have acted on your behalf and placed her in exile until such time as we can agree upon her ultimate fate."

Pug exploded. "Why didn't you consult me? Where have you sent her!"

Makala sensed he was testing the limits of Pug's restraint. Even as he spoke, he began to open the rift gate back to Kelewan. "Seek her if you wish, but it will avail you little. Your further interference will likely ensure that the Assembly will carry out its order of death. They will be unable to kill her, however, if they cannot find her. It would be to your advantage to leave her be."

"I will not content myself to sit here while the Assembly debates the value of my daughter's life! I shall find her—and then you and your brethren can expect my visit!"

"You embark on a dangerous road but it is yours to take. Farewell then, Pug." After Makala stepped through the gate, Pug gestured towards the stone wall. A burst of flame ran up the wall to the ceiling, only to extinguish itself, leaving words traced by fire flickering on the stone: *Book of Macros*.



Katala's face bore a hint of concern, but she knew her husband's power protected him from almost any conceivable danger. "The meditation tower being one of the first places I thought of looking. I went there as soon as I discovered that neither he nor my daughter appeared for breakfast that morning. There I found the message that he had burnt into the wall." Gorath and Owyn looked at each other.

"The *Book of Macros* ... what do you think the message means?" asked Owyn.

"I thought for a while that he intended for us to contact the magician named Macros, but that would be impossible even for Pug to accomplish. Macros left Midkemia long ago and all he left behind were his writings," said Katala.

"And presumably this *Book of Macros* would be among the books he left behind," replied Gorath.

Katala shook her head. "Perhaps, but I cannot be certain. The library that Macros left on Sorcerer's Isle was vast and it took us the better part of a year to move the bulk of it to the Academy at Stardock.

Since that time, some of the volumes have been lent out to various scribes so that they can be catalogued and transcribed."

"Then the book could be anywhere—a new approach. Before he disappeared, did you note anything unusual that he may have said or done?" asked the moredhel.

"As I said earlier he had seemed agitated for some time, but yes, there was something. About a month ago we were walking in the gardens outside the palace, just the two of us enjoying the day when he suddenly halted us near a sewer grate. When I asked him what was wrong, he said, 'Not all of the sheep are in our fold.'"

Owyn looked puzzled. "Sheep? Forgive me, Lady, but your husband can be infuriatingly cryptic."

"Not ordinarily, no, only when things are on his mind. But come, I must head towards Stardock and look for evidence of this *Book of Macros* there. Where shall you two go?"

Owyn sat down, a picture of frustration. "I'm not certain where to start, really. It's rather like looking for a grain of sand in the ocean—"

Gorath, smiling, interrupted his young companion. "We go below into the sewers under Krondor, Owyn, and my good Lady. I believe we shepherds have an errant flock of sheep to find."



They had climbed back down into the sewers. Owyn sighed as they moved towards the entrance. Flotsam and debris was strewn all over the tunnels, and the smell that had taken days to wash out when they first traveled through, seemed much less pungent now.

"Are you sure you know—" began Owyn, only to be silenced by Gorath's sharp look.

A figure moved in the tunnel.

Seemingly having appeared from nowhere, a young boy halted them before they could move any further ahead.

It was Limm, and he looked angry. "You're in Mocker territory. I'd advise you turn about and leave before I'm forced to do you a good bit of harm."

Gorath looked at the boy. "Please, if you could just answer a few questions for us, then we will be out of here."

"Questions? The only thing as concerns me is getting the mess from the storm taken care of and getting us all back on our feet. Ordinarily we don't object to a storm now and then—cleans the smell out, if you

know what I mean. But this storm, it did us a piece all right. Water come in from the seas and washed a score of us into the ocean, destroyed our headquarters, and ruined our plan to take care of a little local problem. And we almost had him." Limm looked down the north tunnel.

"Him? Who did you almost have?" asked Owyn.

"The Crawler, that's who, not that it concerns you anyway. Once he had the Upright Man out of his way, I guess he decided it was time to come round and claim his prize. We had other ideas, of course. We had a handy little trap all baited for him, one such like he couldn't refuse. Would have had him scurrying back to the Sunset Isles or wherever else in the seven lower hells he came from. Unfortunately the weather didn't cooperate with our little plan."

"Are any of your Mockers magicians?" asked Gorath, glancing at Owyn.

"No, at least none that admits it freely. Sooner cut a magician's throat than let him among us, but if truth be known we would have welcomed one these past few months. Some of the Crawler's men are magic types." The prejudice against magicians ran deep.

"Are they? Any of them left down here?" asked Owyn.

"Who's to say? We're still picking through our own dead, much less worried about which of them were still here. Large portions of the sewers are collapsed. There's even word that when a portion of the sea wall collapsed, it opened a new stairwell to a lower level of the sewers."

"I think it's time we left, Owyn," whispered Gorath.

"Do what you like, pointy ears, just get out of the sewers afore someone decides to make a meat pie out of you."

Owyn headed towards the exit, pulling a suddenly scowling Gorath with him. "Believe me, I have no burning desire to stay down here. I for one will be quite happy if I never see the underside of Krondor again. Goodbye, Limm, and good luck."



They finally left the sewers behind them and looked on the city of Krondor. Gorath said, "It seems that the Crawler's men have made their play. They killed the Upright Man, and now the Mockers are seeking revenge. I was hoping to learn something from them, but now open warfare between the Crawler and the Mockers should seal many loose lips."

"Speaking of lips," said Owyn, "that trip through the sewers had made me quite thirsty. Let's go to the tavern and buy a drink and stock up on some provisions before we begin our search for Pug." Gorath smiled. He too, could use a warm fire and a mug of Keshian ale. Sitting unnoticed in the corner of a tavern was an appealing thought.



The tax collector looked ill.

Nivek sat in a corner in the tavern. Slumped on his bench, he gazed into open space, his monocle fogged and his features slackened. Seeing Owyn, he seemed to pale somewhat. "Please state your business quickly and quietly. I'm ... incapacitated ... just now."

Owyn carried his ale over to Nivek's table, who blanched at the sight of alcohol. "I'm sorry to interrupt your hangover, sir, but it's very important that we speak to you. Have you seen or spoken to Pug of Stardock in the past few days? He's disappeared from the palace and we're trying to find out where he might have gone or done before he left."

"It could be that he and I dressed in the Princess Anita's finest gowns and danced with skeletons on the docks, but I don't remember a single detail of last evening. I had a bit too much drink, I believe ... and I'm regretting it bitterly at this moment."

Owyn looked at the man, and thought that this was no regular hangover. Had he been drugged? "Surely you might remember the events when you entered the bar?"

"Nothing. Not a moment ... mind's as blank as a slate ... I don't even remember where it is I mislaid my keys." Nivek's hands rubbed his temples as the tax collector's eyes rolled back into his skull.

Nivek was always a good source of information, according to Locklear and James. "Maybe if you found your keys, you'll recall last night's events."

"That is a respectable theory, young friend, but as I am in no condition to move I cannot test your hypothesis," muttered the tax collector.

Owyn leaned over and whispered in Nivek's ear. "Tell me what they look like. If we run across them, we'll bring them back to you and maybe then you'll remember."

"Not much to distinguish them from other keys ... one has my name etched upon it ... that is all. Good luck." He put his head on his arms and closed his eyes.

They had no sooner left Krondor when they spied a dead man among the bushes. Moving closer to look, they saw that the corpse's head had been crushed by a massive weapon like a mace. Rummaging through the dead man's pockets, Gorath pulled out a gleaming key. On it was engraved a single name—Nivek.



The tax collector still looked ill.

"So, have you found the key that will unlock my past?" asked Nivek.

"If you mean, have we found your key, the answer is yes. I have it here in my pack, but it might be advisable for you to consult a solicitor for advice," said Owyn.

"A solicitor? Why? Where were my keys?" Nivek was roused out of his stupor by the mention of solicitors.

"We found them on a dead man. He was just outside of Krondor. It looked as though the side of his head had been bashed in with a large, blunt weapon. Was he an enemy of yours?"

"If you're suggesting that in my stupor I killed someone, you've lost your senses. I'm not violent when I'm drunk, and in fact I tend to fall unconscious after even a few tankards of ale. I am starting to recall a few things about my ... episode ... shall we call it? I remember a man who came into the Rainbow Parrot and offered me a drink and then it seems I followed him somewhere ... outside of town, perhaps?" Nivek's eyes clouded over.

"Where you killed him," said Gorath quietly.

"No, where he ... he offered me more to drink ... and then he took me someplace else, or did his friend take me there? And then after that, everything's still a blank."

"So these strangers got you drunk and stole your key. Does your house key open any locks other than the one to your house?"

"Yes, it opens the locks to my correspondent's office in Eggley. The Prince had my keys made especially so I could have access to any of the Kingdom treasury offices."

Owyn thought for a moment. "Mind if we borrow this key for a while? I want to test a theory."

"Be my guest. Anything to help my own cause. I'd really like to get this cleared up." Nivek looked despondent.

"We'll do what we can. Thanks."



Outside Krondor, Owyn looked north and west. "It looks like the dead man had plans left unfulfilled, by bad luck or treachery. He went to great pains to get this key, and we should investigate Nivek's office. It may have something to do with the Crawler or Delekhan." Gorath nodded, and they soon managed to find quick and safe passage to Eggley with a merchant caravan.



The office in Eggley belonged to Stellan, who had been killed by the Collector during the Festival of Silban. It was securely locked up. Thankful the key worked, Owyn pushed the door open.

Inside they found a variety of objects, including an assortment of papers and ledgers, a writing table, and a small bed. Bending over to examine the papers more carefully, Owyn saw they were tax records of some kind. He also found several notes that had been signed by Stellan. "Search this room carefully," commanded Gorath. "We may find something we can use."

"This will help us get into the mines under Sarth," said Owyn, holding up a parchment. "It contains an enchantment that should reveal the mine entrance to us, as well as a map through the mine tunnels to the library."

Gorath's eyes lit. "Where they have many books ..."



The road to Sarth proved to be uneventful. Many travelers journeyed to Sarth because of its famous library, and Owyn and Gorath lost themselves among the scholars, magicians, and priests making the trip. A short distance before Sarth, Brother Marc hove into view. Still wielding a hoe in his hammy fists, he gestured to Owyn with it.

"I would advise you to stay well clear of Sarth. Our Brother Dominic has fallen ill with Quegian fever."

The fever was well known to Owyn, who had some skill as a healer. "Why didn't anyone treat the fever before it became serious?"

"None of us knew he was infected until this morning. When he woke this morning he reported to the brotherhood's herbalist that he was experiencing dizziness."

Owyn nodded. "It's one of the early signs of the fever, but I wouldn't be overly concerned. Quegian fever is rarely fatal in adults."

"It's not the fever's primary effects that concern me. As keeper of the gates, Brother Dominic is the greatest wielder of the magical arts among us. Should he begin to hallucinate, he may lose his capacity to discern between real and imagined threats. He might view other members of the brotherhood as enemies or perhaps he will see a threat in the outside world. We know from Pug of Stardock that things of this nature can occur when magicians fall ill." Brother Marc looked concerned.

"No one can break his fever?" asked Gorath.

"I am sure the herbalist will do what he can, but our best hope resides in Brother Dominic's iron will. Until such time as his fever breaks, the Abbey of Ishap at Sarth will be a fearfully dangerous place and I would advise against going any closer. Was there something you needed from the abbey?"

"We need to get into the library," sighed Owyn. "We'll try our best to find a solution, but we have another important matter to attend to and very little time. What happens if Brother Dominic begins to hallucinate?"

"I cannot say with any certitude. My assumption is that he will activate the mystic defenses. If that occurs, there may be no access to the abbey at all."

"At least it doesn't sound as if he'll pose a life-threatening situation. If we come across anything I think could be of help, I promise we'll return as soon as we can. In exchange, do us a favor and stay out of Dominic's path until this problem is solved. Goodbye, brother." Owyn and Gorath followed the map's directions to the hidden entrance, which seemed to be a wall of rock. Their vision shimmered, and an old, sturdy door appeared. Prying the door open, Owyn peered into the darkness and saw a rough staircase leading down through the rock.

Lighting a torch, they made their way through the blackness of the old mine through cobwebs and the sound of dripping water. Gorath led the way, careful to stay clear of any possible inhabitants, indigenous or transplanted, of the mines under Sarth.

They finally reached another set of stairs. Owyn opened up the parchment again. "These stairs must lead to the Mac Bourgalan Dok emerald mine. The tunnels are very complicated, but with the instructions we found in Stellan's house we should be able to make it through. Shall we try to find the library vaults?"

Gorath nodded.

Together, they climbed the moss-covered stone stairway that led to the emerald mine. Bits of rock and splintered wood covered the dirt floor, making it difficult for them to walk. But they picked their way through the rubble and after nearly an hour came to a wrought iron ladder, piercing a dark hole in the ceiling. The rungs were rusty, and twisted metal ripped at their hands and snagged their clothes, as though trying to deny them egress from the mines as they climbed upward. The ladder ended up in a small wooden hallway, thick with dust and with silky strands of cobweb. A door at the end of the hall opened, after some effort, into a huge room stuffed with books.

They had been heard. Assembled in the book-lined passage were six priests, all keenly interested in the arrival of the two strangers. From amidst them, a broad-shouldered priest stepped forward. "Your presence may explain a great deal," the priest accused, stabbing a finger in their direction. "We have been unable to leave the vaults since this morning and we found the door is bolted from the other side. And since I find it unlikely that our brother priests of Ishap have chosen to starve us to death—"

"It's not like that at all," Owyn replied, shaking his head. "We ran into your Brother Marc when we were coming up the road. He said that one of your brethren has fallen ill with the Quegian fever and somehow his condition is linked to the passages being blocked."

"The mystic defenses?" one of the other priests offered. "It is possible his delusions may have triggered them." Quickly a debate ensued between the robed priests, finishing at last with several brethren scurrying off to shelves assigned for their examination. With a stern look, the angered priest also pointed to a shelf and instructed Owyn and Gorath to look for anything that mentioned the mystic defenses of Sarth or outbreaks of Quegian fever.



Hours passed.

His eyes aching from reading the nearly illegible handwriting of ancient scribes, Owyn leaned his head back against the ancient shelving. "I have no idea what we're looking for, Gorath. I've run across a half dozen references to this abbey, but then I discover it has something to do with experiments with peas or an account of a new system of organizing these books."

A sound drew their attention. At the end of the book-strewn passageway in which they sat, a priest eyed the disorganization with distress. "Why are you still down here?"

"Still looking for the answer," Owyn said. Vaguely he gestured at the half dozen opened books around him. "Haven't found it."

"Oh." Biting his lip, the priest seemed hesitant to continue. "Well, I am afraid we solved that problem about an hour ago. Brother Dominic is doing a bit better now. We were wondering where you two had gotten to."

Angered, Owyn slammed shut the cover of the book which he held in his lap, a translation of Dorcas's *Treatise on the Animation of Objects*. Likewise, next to him, Gorath stuffed away a wormy-looking book on history. "Keep it," the priest insisted before Owyn could put away the magical treatise. "Dorcas is popular here. We have other copies cross indexed in the library. I was also instructed that once I found you, I was to reward you with these." Opening a pouch, the priest handed them three nearly perfect emeralds. "They are yours, in appreciation for all you have done here. It is a small gesture, but I hope a useful one. Please feel free to continue to scan our library if it please you."

Owyn pulled down a book.

"Something of interest?" Gorath asked, looking over his shoulder.

Owyn tapped the words on the spine. "It's a journal written by Pug, entitled *Regarding Theories of Trans-Spatial Gateways Proposed by Macros*."

"Do you believe this is the book we seek?"

Responding only with a shrug, Owyn began to leaf through its pages, discovering immediately the majority of it was a technical document, filled with diagrams and columns of numbers with notations off to the side in a curious shorthand. Whatever the book contained was far more advanced than any of the things he had read on magic thus far. "He might as well be writing in Keshian," Owyn said, shaking his head. While searching for an index, he discovered a small addendum relating a few of his conversations with Macros. "This is interesting."

"Something to help us find Pug?" Gorath questioned patiently.

"No, but something that might lead us to someone who might know something about this *Book of Macros*," Owyn replied with excitement. "It says here that someone named Tomas Megarson of Elvandar once traveled with him and Macros. Perhaps this Tomas fellow would know something about Macros or his book!"

Smiling grimly, Gorath's eyes held a dark humor. "You intend then we should enter Elvandar? They will not be well pleased to see the likes of me."

"Why is that?" Owyn asked, putting the book back on the shelf.

"The kin of Queen Aglaranna and those of my blood are enemies of old. None enter Elvandar itself save those sworn to her or considered the most intimate of friends," he said. "It will not be an easy journey."

Chuckling, Owyn patted Gorath on the back. "After the past few months, I can't imagine this trip being all that difficult. Besides, we'll be back close to where we met near LaMut. I believe there may be a way through to Elvandar near there."



Sarth was south of the Mac Mordain Cadall, and the road was long. Thanks to Gorath's scouting ability they had avoided numerous ambushes by rogues in the area, a fact that struck Owyn as having little to do with coincidence.

The mine entrance was imposing; a sulfurous stench was in the wind. "This must be Mac Mordain Cadall," Owyn said, his eyes glazing as he lost himself in thought. "I knew that it was somewhere close. As I recall, Mac is dwarven for mine or cave or something like that. Now considering the dwarves are no friends of the *moredhel* they might be of some assistance to us, assuming they don't take exception to you. Let's go in."

Daylight faded. Pulling closer together, they descended into the dwarf-hewn mouth of the Mac Mordain Cadall, into growing darkness. The tunnels were damp. Although the silver-seamed earthen roof that stretched over their heads was tall enough for man-sized travelers, Gorath felt entrapped. Or entombed. Owyn struck a flint and set a torch ablaze, warming his spirits, if only slightly.

Before they took five steps into the mine, sparks rocketed down the corridor. Slamming Owyn flat against the mineshaft walls, Gorath narrowly leapt for cover himself as something skidded along the rocky floor. Abruptly the glowing cone of fire winked out as it collided with an unseen wall. After several long heartbeats, the *moredhel* peeled himself away from the wall, just in time to meet the gaze of a short, tree stump of a man.

The dwarf bore a strange expression, almost a scowl—or a grin. “Gah! Bloody awful ’ammer! You’d best ’ave a demon in your bones. I be Naddur Ban Dok. You’ve come to take a whack at killing the beastie, ’ave you not?”

Owyn sighed. “Beastie?”

Naddur waved his stout, muscled arms. “Beastie, aye! ’Alf a week ago we ’eard something fierce a’ bayin’ in the mine, terrible cold like. Of course a dwarf knows the sound instant whether he’s heard it before or not—Brak Nurr. Curse of every hole delver since first dwarves took up hammers.”

Owyn had only heard of a Brak Nurr from old Dubal at the Blue Wheel Tavern in LaMut. “I’ve never heard of them.”

The dwarf became even more animated, as his impatience with tall folk began to show. “No, an’ you wouldn’t! Not in a dragon’s life! There ’asn’t been a Brak Nurr in our mines for well on since the first conDoin laid claim to the Kingdom of the Isles. We thought we’d laid low the lot o’ them but evidently they ’aven’t heard that. They’ve collapsed the main passage an’ kilt thirty of our kin. We’ve a reward to whomever can do it in—if you’re of a mind and ’ave the spirit that is.” Naddur smiled at Gorath.

“We are more interested in passage to Elvandar,” said Owyn. The dwarf laughed. “Well then, it looks like we have a deal, because the Brak Nurr is blocking the main tunnel west. Towards Elvandar,” said the dwarf, while winking at the young magician.

“I’m not saying we’re interested in killing your Brak Nurr, but if we were, what would it look like?” asked Gorath.

“’Alf again your height, and a’ made of stone, like living rock they are. From out their nostrils they breath a green mist but I’d be wary of getting too close to look, for they’ll drop a boulder on your head sure enow. We’ve already ’ad a few bravos what’s come in to try a hand at killing the beastie, but there’s not much they’ve been able to do themselves beyond get themselves so mangled they needed the help of a temple. I’d be as wary of them, though, as I would be of the beastie. None of them want else but to claim the gold that we’ve offered to the creature’s slayer.”

Gorath returned the dwarf’s smile. “Looks like we have no choice,” said the moredhel, loosening his sword in its sheath. “Just point the way.”

Naddur laughed, a queer sound. "Follow yer ears, laddie. It's a deaf or dead man that canna hear a Brak Nurr! And if ye kill the beastie, p'raps I'll teach you a thing or two about sharpening yon moredhel-sticker at yer side" Naddur looked sideways at Gorath, who did not respond.



They pressed on through the tunnels, drawn by a peculiar braying roar every few minutes. They had encountered a small group of rogues who wanted the reward for slaying the Brak Nurr, but had already tried and failed. Battered and pummeled as if caught in a landslide, they hid in the tunnels hoping to recoup their losses by robbing other would-be heroes. A simple spell had stopped them in their tracks, as the two moved on through the darkness. "Down this way," said the moredhel, his eyes fixed straight ahead. "I think it's there."

A huge, hulking, rocky beast stood in the center of the cavern, its flesh resembling crumbled blocks of stone. It hadn't noticed them yet. Owyn motioned to Gorath, and the two wary travelers backed away from the cavern. "We'll try to take it by surprise," whispered Gorath, already feeling the tight anxiety of the battle to come. "Owyn," Gorath said, looking at the young magician. "We need your arts to ... inconvenience the beast while we put steel to its stony hide." Owyn knew what Gorath needed, and he began to gather his thoughts. They crept quietly into the room and charged the beast. The Brak Nurr turned and roared, and Owyn winced at the sound. Gorath ducked under a huge arm, and struck a glancing blow.

Owyn raised himself up and held the staff over his head. A ball of frozen energy enveloped the Brak Nurr and coated it with a layer of frost. Gorath looked at the creature carefully. It was not moving. "Quickly!" yelled a drained Owyn.

Gorath drove his sword deep into the Brak Nurr; the monster stiffened, and fell towards the moredhel with a groan.

The moredhel slid away from the dead Brak Nurr. His tongue felt thick, a bitter, chalky taste lingering in his mouth and nostrils. He hadn't expected the creature to emit the strange fog but, for that matter, he really hadn't planned on fighting the creature in the first place. Wanting air, Gorath turned and nearly stumbled over a small, grinning dwarf.

"You've doone it! I 'eard the conflagration down the shaft but I 'ad no idea what was a' happenin'! Congratulations!" Owyn leaned on his staff, still breathing heavily. "Right now I think we all could just use a rest," he gasped. Naddur laughed. "A rest you'll have and you'll be a' needin' it! You'll 'ave to 'ave your strength to be carryin' about all the gold in rewards! Well done!" Gorath looked at the tunnel at the far end of the cavern. "Is this the tunnel that leads through the Grey Towers to Elvandar, Naddur?"

Naddur stared at Gorath for a moment, then waved him off. "Aye, but I'll wager Aglaranna's people will be little happy t' see you, moredhel." Owyn looked surprised and started telling Naddur that Gorath was an elf, but the dwarf only laughed. "An elf that needs directions to Elvandar? Pah," chuckled the dwarf. "You 'ave yer own reasons for headin' towards Elvandar, and I won't interfere. You've doone us a great favor today, moredhel. We will not bar your passage, though there may be some ... undesirables left around. Stick to the main tunnels."

"We encountered rogues, too," interrupted Owyn, eager to change the subject.

"Aye, and more in here," said Naddur. "We've been separated from our kin by the tunneling, and some foul folk have taken refuge here near the entrance to the mines, including some of Guiswa's folk seeking to hunt the Brak Nurr—but once they got a taste o' the rock beastie, they took a likin' to huntin' folk passing through the mines." Guiswa, the god of the hunt, had many followers, and some were less civil than others. "Feel free ta look around here, and take what ye may," said Naddur, already turning his broad back on Gorath. "Though I warrant ye'll be taking most of yer booty off the dead!"

Gorath hefted the pouch of gold, and put his arm around Owyn—an action Owyn would have once thought impossible. "Well struck, my young magician, well struck indeed. I shall buy you a flask of ale when we get back to Krondor."

"If we get back," smiled Owyn.



They moved quickly through the tunnels, traveling to a new level and finding the exit from the Mac Mordain Cadall. The milling dwarves were busy repairing the damage from the Brak Nurr, but all looked strangely at the young man and moredhel.

The exit opened onto a lush forest, and Gorath let out a long sigh. Owyn's pulse quickened as he saw a lone figure approach; but when it became apparent they were not being attacked, he relaxed a bit, squinting slightly in an attempt to see who was about to join them.

"I'm McCannur Ban Dok, and since you are not of the mountain folk, I assume the Brak Nurr has been taken care of," said the dwarf.

"Yes," said Owyn, looking around. Some of the trees had been felled, and broken branches littered the ground. Some of the wood had been charred or burned. McCannur noticed Owyn's stare. "It's an awful mess from 'ere on out. Wyverns have come in from over the mountains and have burned things up a bit. If we 'adn't been beating back flames this past few weeks, we'd have been through a month sooner! I doon't know 'ow many roads are passable at this stage. What kin o' yours that come and 'elped us clear out the mess in the mine left as soon as word reached us that fires were approaching Elvandar."

"Where did the wyverns come from?" asked Owyn, gulping at the thought of meeting the winged beasts.

"Where else, lad? The Northlands! Some new bastard moredhel leader I hear harassing your kinfolk. I 'ope you 'aven't any kits in 'arms way."

"No ... what of the moredhel?" asked Gorath.

"A few as what 'ad the nerve to cross over from Moraelin 'ave already got themselves skewered, though I know that the Prince Calin has been on the frontier looking for others. The biggest concern as yet is to put out the flames and get 'elp to those as got trapped behind it all."

Gorath looked surprised. "Prince Calin leads? What of Warleader Tomas?"

"Poor news indeed. Three days ago, Tomas led a band o' elves to stem raiders what 'ad come from over the river near Moraelin. They beat the raiders back arights, but in the melee the Warlord took a thrust to 'is side with a tainted blade. They 'ad to carry 'im back to Elvandar, though I understand it wasn't without a struggle. Tomas wanted to stay, but word was carried back to Aglaranna of his condition and that was the end of that."

The dwarf took out a pipe and lit it, blowing small smoke rings that rose to join the slight haze that hung in the air. "Prince Calin assumed

control of the patrols at that point and I ken 'e's still up near the northeastern fringe of the forest, carving up moredhel."

"Does the Warleader yet live?" asked Gorath.

McCannur looked strangely at the moredhel. "That lad 'as ever been a fighter, and a tenacious one at that. Aye, 'e'd sooner let them cut a leg off than succumb to this poison. I wouldna worry. I think it took your kin for a turn though, seeing Tomas fall. I've never 'eard of it 'appening in the fifteen years 'e's been with your folk."

"We should find Calin," said Gorath to Owyn. The magician nodded, already excited to meet elves. They took their leave of the dwarf as he hurried into the darkness of the Mac Mordain Cadall.



They had taken only a few steps on the road north when Gorath halted.

Blinking slowly, he put a hand over his stomach, then looked towards his confused-looking companion. "Hold for a moment, Owyn. I wish to speak to you."

"Why? What is it?" Owyn looked concerned. Owyn knew that without Gorath, he had little chance of finding Pug.

"I merely wished to prepare you for things that may transpire before we reach Elvandar. The elves have devised magic—ancient things—to keep the moredhel from crossing into the forests of the eledhel, and I feel those things have been awakened. I may have some difficulty in completing our journey." Gorath smiled weakly.

"Difficulty—what do you mean?"

"It was not my intent to alarm you. Only to reassure you that no matter what may happen between here and Elvandar, I have come to consider you a friend." Gorath spoke no more, and Owyn decided not to question the mysterious moredhel further.

They walked in silence for some time, when Gorath stopped Owyn. Putting a finger to his lips, Gorath motioned to the clearing. Three huge coiled shapes stood, stretching their necks. They were licking wounds, and had just been beaten back by something, but they also seemed to be preparing for another strike. They hissed. Gorath nodded to Owyn, who closed his eyes. A ball of orange fire flickered in front of Owyn, growing larger until it became a ball four feet across. When Owyn opened his eyes, the ball shot forward and exploded in a blinding flash near one of the wyverns. Shaking his head, Gorath saw

one of the creatures had been burned and lay writhing on the ground, and the other two were badly burned. Gorath attacked the closest wyvern, evading its slashing paws and tail.

The other wyvern turned to Owyn and opened its mouth when an arrow appeared in its eye. It reared and let out a hideous roar, turning to meet the new foe. Its tail swung at a small copse of trees, and Owyn saw a figure quickly leap and roll clear. The figure kneeled, an arrow fitted to his bow in the blink of an eye. As the arrow flew, Owyn's own spell struck the creature, and it fell.

They were not alone.

Gorath pulled his sword from a dead wyvern's skull, and Owyn's pulse quickened as he watched the lone figure approach; his pointed and lobeless ears revealed him to be of elvish stock. Gorath stared. "Prince Calin."

Calin nodded. "If you had not slain that Wyvern ... I am grateful, but I beg you go from this place, cousin, and take with you the evil you have brought. You may not take what will not have you, you cannot harm what will not be harmed. You and your people belong among your own."

"I do not raid with my kin. Grant me passage, eledhel. I have come to look upon the face of the Shining Moon," said Gorath.

Calin's eyes widened slightly. "The old tongue ... I think then your coming will be well received in Elvandar. Tell my mother and Warleader Tomas I am well and I will continue on toward Moraelin to meet the moreldhel there. Perhaps we can yet put a halt to their raids."

Owyn felt out of place. "What's the Shining Moon? Is it in Elvandar?"

Calin glanced kindly at the young magician. "She, not it, young human friend. Your companion refers to our Queen Aglaranna. In your tongue it means something like Shining Moon."

"Is the way to Elvandar passable?" asked Gorath.

Calin looked north. "The attacks directed by the moreldhel have made travel difficult. Fires are burning all across Elvandar and the spellweavers are hard pressed to attend to them all. Most roads are impassable, but the western path was clear, last I heard of it. The path through the ancient ruin will bring you to Elvandar."

"I'm surprised you've been able to survive alone with the moreldhel raiding your borders. How have you escaped?" asked Owyn. Something

was happening here, happening to Gorath, but Owyn could not put his finger on it.

Calin looked at Owyn, seeing the boy's confusion. "The *moredhel* can do little harm to the *eledhel* within Elvandar and they would be fools to try. It would take remarkable strength of will for a *moredhel* to enter the forest with any evil intent and even a more remarkable will for him to survive such an attempt. It is part of the magic that protects our home."

"What about Gorath? He hasn't had any problems entering the forest," said Owyn.

Calin turned to the *moredhel*. "You have not told the boy?"

"My returning is of no consequence to him. He has his own quest to fulfill."

Owyn now felt utterly lost. "Returning? You mean you've been here before?"

Calin smiled slightly. "You will understand certain things later, should events unfold as I imagine. There is still the matter of your survival to deal with, however. Although our cousin Gorath moves with great grace, you are not so sure-footed. For your part in my rescue, I should like to teach you how to move the elven way."

"What about Gorath?" asked Owyn. His concern for the *moredhel* touched Calin, who smiled. "It is not custom between our kin, but if you wish it ... I will teach him what I know of using a crossbow. Come. We cannot be long at this."

Calin waited.

Seated cross-legged on the ground, he watched through half-lidded eyes as Owyn approached from a thick copse of trees. Although he still moved with little grace, he had made remarkable improvement in a short time.

"Do I move like an elf now?" Owyn asked, a look of eager anticipation written on his face.

"I wouldn't try to sneak up on the Warleader as yet, but yes, you have learned a bit," the elf replied. "Why don't you go around and try it again? You were still rustling the leaves as you approached."

Once the boy was gone, Calin shifted his gaze to study Gorath's progress with the crossbow. Although it was readily apparent that the *moredhel* was capable of doing great damage with the weapon, his concentration was elsewhere.

"I am told the call can be painful if one is uncertain of his feelings," Calin said. "You need not endure the pain. We will welcome you no matter who or what you might have been to us in the past." Gorath nodded without looking at the elf, his gaze fixed straight ahead as he resighted his crossbow with trembling hands and fired into the undergrowth.

"Hey!" Owyn shouted in the distance. Crashing back through the brush, he reentered the clearing. "Could you be a little more careful where you're firing that thing? That last shot was close."

Rising to his feet, Calin shook his head. "Then it is time the lessons came to an end."

Owyn told Calin about their travels through the Mac Mordain Cadall, and of the news from Krondor. "One nice thing about traveling underground, at least there's less chance of something dropping down on us from above. With all these wyverns flying about, I half expect one to come flapping out of nowhere any time I turn my head."

"You may not find you are quite so enthusiastic about the ancient ruin once you pass through it. We do not use it much," said Calin quietly.

"Please tell me it isn't infested with a Brak Nurr or something equally repulsive," sighed Owyn, not pleased about the prospect of fighting another monstrous creature.

"Infested? An interesting description, but not in the way you may think. None of the elven blood may easily walk its corridors without some measure of dread."

Gorath shivered. "It is of the Valheru, then."

Calin shook his head. "The Warleader assures us none of their ancient essence may touch us here, but the malevolence that permeates that place cannot be easily dismissed. We have not been so foolish, however, as to leave it open to any that wish simply to enter it. There is too great a danger—something there is beyond our control. Only a few of the elves have a key that will unlock its doors."

"How are we going to get in, then?" asked Owyn.

"I will give Gorath the key I carry. That is all that is required."

"As simple as that?"

Calin nodded. "Cross the western bridge. As long as you travel against the southern mountains, you will avoid the sleeping glades." The heir to the throne of Elvandar smiled. "As you'll see, there is nothing simple about it. The force of will it has taken Gorath to come even

this close to Elvandar is monumental. His reason for being here must be of the utmost importance, else he would have fled this forest long ago. I trust him."



The ancient ruins stood before Owyn, covered by brush and trees. The door looked almost new, and certainly impenetrable. Inserting Calin's key, Gorath pushed the door open. The passage was musty, and Owyn took a tentative step in.

The walls were in excellent condition, despite the mossy patches of growth that covered certain corners of the wall. The stones were joined together smoothly, almost seamlessly. Gorath noticed these details as well. The workmanship was beyond anything achieved by dwarf, human, or elf. The only possible equal was the craft in the walls of Sar-Sargoth, built by the glamredhel when the Valheru were driven from Midkemia. Gorath shivered. Unlike many of his brethren, he held no illusions about the ways of the Valheru. Slavery, destruction, and death were at the end of that dark road.

Before Gorath's eyes, smoke drifted up from the smooth stone floor. The hair on Owyn's neck stood on end. "Gorath," he whispered, "we should go."

"I know," said the moredhel, backing away from the misty shapes. Was it his imagination or did they look vaguely like men? "Shades!" cried Owyn, looking at an undead spirit's eyes. The shade moved to touch Gorath, who found himself rooted to the ground, tingling—Owyn had raised a mystic shield around the moredhel! The shade clutched at Gorath without success, and howled. The moredhel raised his sword, blessed by Kingdom priests, and struck the smoky apparition. The shade dissolved into smoke, and Gorath and Owyn ran down the tunnels, blindly seeking the exit, hoping to avoid any more encounters with the spirits who had been called back from the halls of Lims-Kragma.

They burst through a door, and Owyn fell to his knees, his lungs filling with clean air. Then he gaped—a dozen archers stood poised with arrows aimed at them. Gorath muttered a few words and the elves hesitated, then lowered their bows. They led Owyn and Gorath through the forest quickly, and Owyn struggled to keep up with the lightfooted inhabitants of Elvandar.



Awash in light, Elvandar glistened, its circuitous faerie walkways decked in glowing lanterns of brushed gold and crystal. Above, a canopy of silver-white leaves arched over the whole of the tree-top city, masking from view whether sun or moon reigned in the skies beyond.

"Gorath, isn't this the most perfect place you've ever seen?" Owyn exclaimed. "I've never dreamt of anything like this!"

"Squire, if you can hold your tongue for a moment," Gorath said, "it might behoove you to bow to their Queen." Flushed with embarrassment Owyn turned heel, shriveling as he noticed the cloaked figures who waited patiently upon their thrones. Quickly he made obeisance, hoping sincerely that human manners would be appropriate in the elven court.

"We have come from Krondor with news about Pug of Stardock," Owyn said. "We were in hopes—" began Owyn.

"Silence, child." Queen Aglaranna spoke gently, her pale blue eyes glowing in the shadows. "Though we would hear of our dear friend, Pug, we first must attend to the unraveling of eons." Inclining her head towards Gorath, her voice and demeanor were grave. "You have come before us as a *moredhel*, but never may you leave Elvandar as such. Are you willing to return to us, your ancient kin, cousin?"

Rage flashed in his eyes. Trembling with emotion, Gorath advanced on the Queen, his hand darting to the hilt of his sword. "No, Gorath!" Owyn gasped, fearing he could not stay his friend's wrath. "You can't!"

"I was Gorath of the Clan Ardanien," he spat, his voice thick with an ageless contempt. Color drained from his face as he gripped ever more tightly the sword at his side. "I am Gorath and I formally return to the Eledhel and swear fealty to Aglaranna, Queen of Elves, and to Tomas, Prince Consort and Warleader." Falling to one knee, he knelt low before Aglaranna's feet. "I am yours to command, lady."

His heart hammering an unsteady tattoo in his chest, Owyn stared in frank appraisal of the elves before him. Except for a glazed expression lingering on Prince Consort Tomas's face, he saw no evidence that any of them had witnessed anything unusual, even though returnings were extremely rare. The *moredhel* dreams of power were a strong lure.

"Rise. From this day forward, you are no longer *moredhel*, Gorath," Aglaranna said. "You are a member of the family of Elvandar and of the *eledhel*. When your quest is done, you will return here to be one with us. That is our desire."

"What is this news of Pug?" As if wakening from a dream, the elven Warleader spoke the magician's name with great concern, his dark eyebrows rising in interest as Owyn began to speak. At times he would request that certain details be repeated, but always his glassy eyes focused sharply when Owyn spoke the names of Pug and of members of Arutha's court.

"By the moons, that means trouble," Tomas murmured as the boy finished his tale. "The *Book of Macros* is not a book but rather a gift that Pug gave to me long ago. I was to use it to come to him if ever he left that message for me. I must go."

"You cannot, love. Even now I can sense the effects of the painkilling herbs are beginning to wear off," Aglaranna said, laying a pale hand on Tomas's shoulder. As if broaching a delicate subject, she continued quietly. "Three days ago the Warleader was struck with a poisoned blade. Only last evening did his fever abate, but he demanded to be brought here when he heard that a *moredhel* was returning. He hasn't the strength for the trip. You must go in his stead."

"Don't try my patience, Aglaranna. Pug needs my help and I shall go!" Struggling to gain his feet, he blanched with the effort, standing straight only by gripping the back of his throne.

"How many of our kin carried you here, my Warlord?" the Queen asked, her voice heavy with concern. "Was it five or six? You are no longer possessed by the soul of Ashen-Shugar and you are not gifted with immortality! None doubt your strength or loyalty, Tomas, but you owe it to Pug to send able help."

"The soul of Ashen-Shugar," whispered Gorath, a mixture of respect and fear in his eyes as he watched Tomas.

"As always, my love, you are wise," Tomas whispered, his strength beginning to fail him. Reaching beneath the seat of his throne, he brought forth a leather tome covered with dust.

Gorath stepped forward. "We may not be the strongest or the fastest, Tomas, but we are able and we are here. Send us to him." Tomas regarded the two carefully, as he opened the book. A blue nimbus of energy formed around them. "I have little choice. You, Gorath, shall be my emissary in this. May the blessings of Elvandar go with you ... and tell Pug I am sorry."

"We shall," said Gorath, the trees of Elvandar, his new home, already fading from sight.

Chapter 6 Walkthrough

There are many quests to complete in Chapter 6. The betrayal in *Betrayal at Krondor* takes place when Makala tells Pug he has kidnapped Pug's adopted daughter, Gamina. There are shady goings on afoot, so Owyn and Gorath (who should be pretty powerful by now) need to explore the sewers—which is where the game begins. Head to the exit and talk to Limm—if you buy his items, you will receive a spynote that indicates the Crawler is looking for something called the Idol of Lassur. Kat is hiding in the southeast corner, and she is apparently working with the Crawler to retrieve that artifact of Lims-Kragma, the death goddess. The storm has opened a new level of the sewers, so head downstairs, and defeat the band of rogues that are standing around a chest. The chest is trapped, but it contains the idol and a Sword of Lims-Kragma—the best sword in the game other than the Guarda Revanche.

Return the idol to Kat and learn it is cursed; she is plotting the downfall of the Crawler and tells you that Abbot Graves in Malac's Cross has been working with the Crawler. Go to the tavern in Krondor and talk to Nivek—you can find his key on a corpse right outside Krondor. The key opens Stellan's office in Eggley (the man killed during the festival). But first check out Malac's Cross. Use the temple in Krondor to teleport to the Temple of Lims-Kragma outside Malac's Cross (you cannot teleport directly into Malac's Cross yet). The road to Malac's Cross is infested with Pantathian snake people, so use combat modifiers such as potions and naphtha. The abbot has been blackmailed into working with the Crawler, and since he refused to help the Crawler retrieve the idol, the Pantathians behind the Crawler have asked for his head. Oh, what a tangled web ...

Go to Mitchel Waylander for help. His house is in Sloop, as you'll remember from an earlier chapter. He probably still has the caffeine shakes from his encounter with the Nighthawks, but he will give you a note for Graves that will get him on a boat to Kesh. If you want, you can head to Kenting Rush to visit Ugyne to solve a miniquest that involves getting alcohol to Lurough, who owns the Dagger 'n Star Tavern. Talking to Lurough will reveal that a small mutiny is about to happen if he doesn't get some ale for the troops. Ugyne will tell you that Lady Boswich has a pretty respectable bar. Find Lady Boswich,

who is staying in a barn near Kenting Rush. Bribe her guards, and you will get an audience with her. The Lady will tell you that she keeps her goods hidden behind an illusory mountain nearby. If you go through the mountain, you can find chests with ale kegs; return one to Lurough and he will give you another Sword of Lims-Kragma.

After you return to Abbot Graves, he will tell you before he escapes that you should make for Elvandar and speak to Tomas. Your next stop should be Eggley, where you open up Stellan's office and find a scroll that will get you into the secret entrance to the mines under Sarth. Brother Marc, who is outside Sarth, can improve Owyn's spellcasting abilities. Explore the mines under Sarth and find the tunnels to the library—you must read the scroll from Eggley to use the tunnels to get to the library. You will be rewarded with two emeralds and a copy of a magical treatise. While browsing through the library, you will find another book that also points you to Elvandar.

Your next stop is the Mac Mordain Cadall, but there are many ambushes on the road to the mines. Luckily most of the ambushes are set by rogues, and few spellcasters oppose you. If you didn't killed the Brak Nurr in Chapter 1, kill it now. The tunnel in the first Brak Nurr cavern leads to the second level of the mines, which opens up onto Caldara on the other side of the Grey Towers mountain range. On level two, there is a pit where kobolds live—they will ask for a suit of Grey Tower armor, which can be purchased in a shop in Caldara. In exchange, they will give you a drink that will permanently raise your Health points. The exit from the mines also has another Brak Nurr guard, so kill it after you freeze it with Fetters of Rime (Figure 6-1). If you head north in the forest, you will see a small cul-de-sac that opens to the east. Kill the wyverns and find Prince Calin, who will give you a Key of Lineages. This opens the door to the ancient ruins. Stock up on food in Caldara, and keep an eye out for ropes hanging from trees (which indicates an elven structure). Don't forget to use the spyglass, either.

Find Eliaem on the riverbanks—she is on the southeast shore of the lake. She is a Rusalki who seeks rest for her kind. A moreldhel magician has an Eliaem's Heart and has called up six Rusalki to serve him. Kill him and open the chests in the area. Return the Eliaem's Heart to Eliaem and she will give you a seashell, the one described in the *Abbot's Journal*. There are many wyverns, moreldhel, and witch hags in the

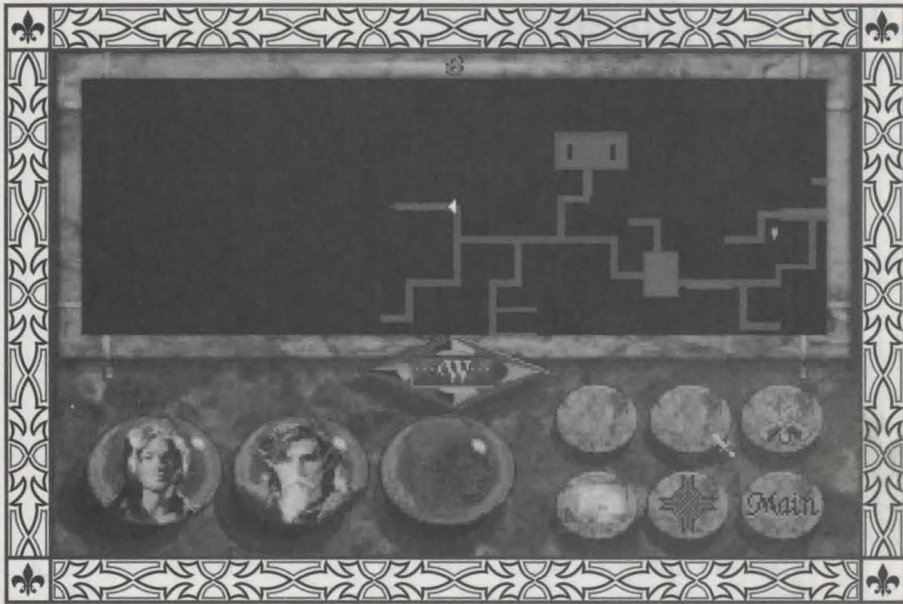


Figure 6-1. The exit guarded by the Brak Nurr

area. There are also several bridges that cross the river; Calin says the westernmost bridge is the safest. He is correct! Take that bridge and head north on the main road, then west on the path. When you run into the sleeping glades, you'll want to hug the river banks to the south and the mountain face to the west to avoid trouble. The sleeping glades will make you sleep for a day, using up your food supply quickly.

On the north face of the mountain range you will find the entrance to the ancient ruins. The ruins were once a Valheru place, feared by all the elves. There are many shades inside, so be prepared to fight. In a wordlocked chest that opens to "Glamredhel," the hilt of the Guarda Revanche can be found. The sword was forged by the glamredhel long ago, the same elf kin who built Armengar and Sar-Sargoth with the knowledge their Valheru masters plundered from other worlds; it is therefore a formidable weapon that never becomes dull. Use Eliaem's seashell, which will repair the blade.

The exit from the ruins leads right into the end chapter sequence, with a surprise from Gorath and a meeting with Tomas and Aglaranna.

Chapter 6 Quests

- ⇌ The No Idols before Me Quest
- ⇌ The Pantathian Miniquests
- ⇌ The Quandaries Quest
- ⇌ The Brother Dominic Quest
- ⇌ The Whisperers in the Pit Quest
- ⇌ The Eliaem's Heart Quest
- ⇌ The Ancient Ruin Quest

The No Idols before Me Quest

Chapter 6 begins with Owyn and Gorath in the sewers below Krondor. When you find Limm by the exit to the city outskirts; he will fill you in on all that's happened. The Upright Man has been killed, and the Crawler was the mastermind behind the crime. The Mockers had set a trap for the Crawler but a ferocious storm caused flooding and general mayhem in the sewers, foiling the trap and reopening an old level of the sewers. Buy the miscellaneous items from Limm—a spynote reveals that the Crawler wants something called the Idol of Lassur thought to be lost in the sewers.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

Find Kat in the southeast dead end on the first level (Figure 6-2). She is looking for the idol, but is hiding from the Mockers because she is working for the Crawler. In reality, she is plotting to betray the Crawler. Go down to the newly opened lower sewer level (Figure 6-3). The first encounter on level two with the rogues will win you the Idol of Lassur and a Sword of Lims-Kragma, a formidable weapon. Return the idol to Kat (Figure 6-4). She will explain that the idol is cursed, and that the Crawler should die within a month of owning this artifact of the death goddess. *Do not* keep the idol for yourself.



Figure 6-2. Talking to Kat

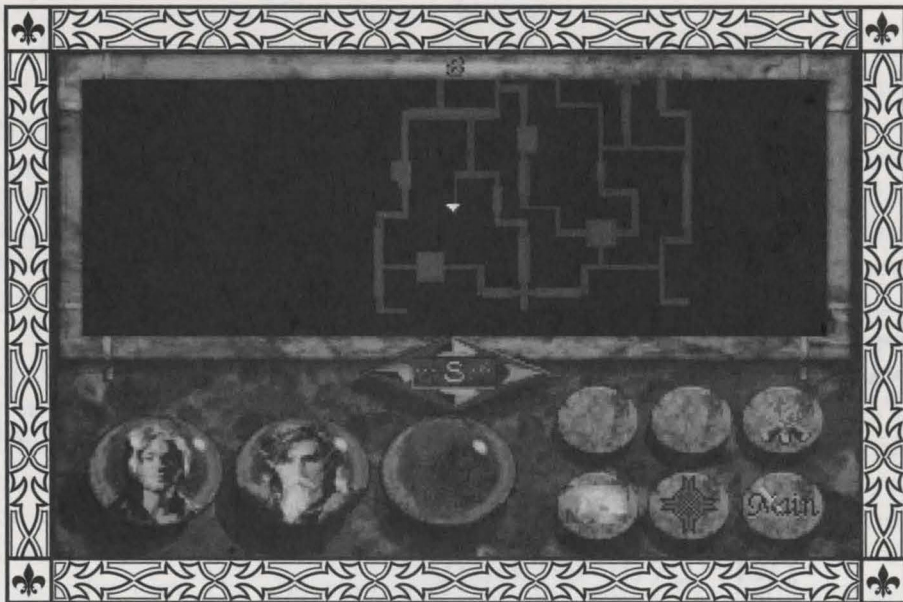


Figure 6-3. Exploring the depths of the sewers

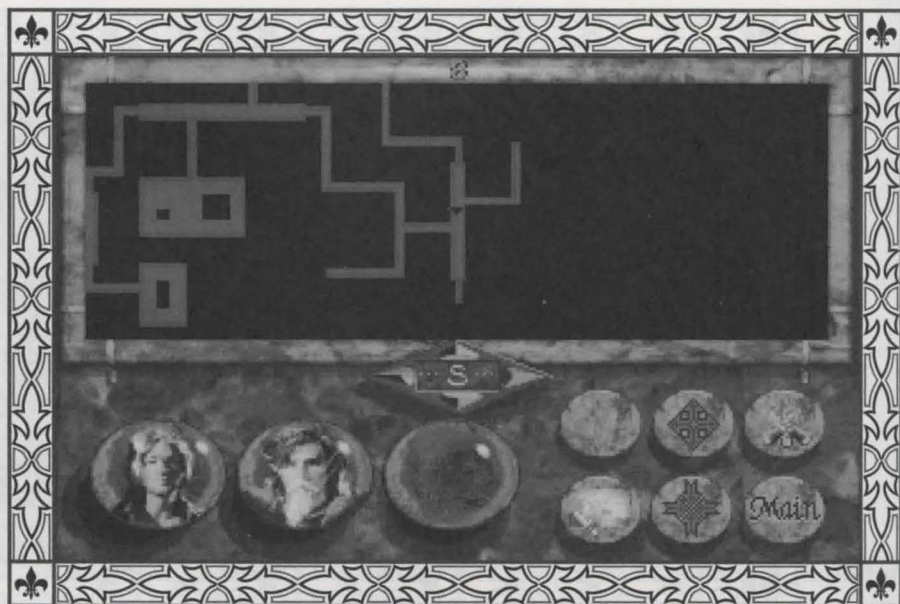


Figure 6-4. Leaving the lower sewer levels

Reward for Solving the Quest

In addition to foiling the Crawler, Kat tells you that Abbot Graves of Malac's Cross is the leader of the Crawler's magicians, and that he had some books from Stardock. This leads to the Pantathian miniquests. Of course, the Sword of Lims-Kragma is a formidable weapon.

The Pantathian Miniquests

The Pantathian miniquests are related by storyline but are solvable as individual quests.

Hell-Bent Granny

If you head east on the road from Darkmoor, you'll eventually run into "Gran Petrumh," who was a faithful patron of the Queen's Row until the Pantathians advanced on the city. Unfortunately, in her hurry to

leave the town, she left her “moral support” (a Keshian wine cask) behind at the Queen’s Row and wishes to have it back. As she has almost reached her friend *Ulam’s house* in Darkmoor, she asks that you bring the cask to her if you should happen to wander back in that direction. Of course, you’ll first have to fight your way through the Pantathian pickets that have surrounded the town of Malac’s Cross. If you do manage to fight past these formidable foes and make it to the Queen’s Row and ask the barkeep about something lost by Petrumh, he will produce the Keshian ale. If you then take the ale to Ulam’s house in Darkmoor, you’ll receive three vials of Fadamor’s Formula and a set of picklocks.

Comeuppance

Abbot Graves in Malac’s Cross has run afoul of the Crawler. The people of the town are demanding he be turned over to the Pantathians, who seem to have appeared from thin air and have encircled the city limits. Although you cannot teleport to Malac’s Cross because of the problems with the abbot, the Temple of Lims-Kragma is a good place to have your Sword of Lims-Kragma blessed.

This is a good time to visit the Oracle of the Aal. You will be met by two serpent men. The Oracle will be able to give you hints about the *Book of Macros*, Pug, and the Guarda Revanche.

The road to Malac’s Cross is crawling with Pantathians, who are deadly spellcasters. Using the infinity pool is a good idea if you do not surprise them in combat; *Evil Seek* or *Fetters of Rime*, and *Skin of the Dragon*, should keep their spellcasting damage to a minimum. They are easily surprised, but save your game before and after your combats.

It seems that the townspeople blame Abbot Graves for the presence of the Pantathians. The abbot has blackmailed himself into the position of head of the Abbey of Ishap. The Crawler discovered Graves’s deception, and in turn blackmailed the abbot into teaching some of the Crawler’s men magic. Pug discovered that not all the students were on the up and up, and so the magician withdrew his tutors. The Crawler made a new demand on Abbot Graves, to uncover the Idol of Lassur for him. The abbot refused, and the Crawler’s Pantathian masters were not amused. The abbot needs the help of Mitchel Waylander to book passage to Kesh. His departure will mean that the Pantathians

will withdraw. Return to Sloop and talk to Mitchel, who will agree to help the abbot. Bring Mitchel's note back to the abbot to solve this quest.

The Comeuppance Quest is not designed to give you any material rewards per se, but does reveal the scope of Pantathian involvement behind Delekhan's uprising. After helping Graves, he will send you to Tomas in Elvandar, and give you a clue as to the whereabouts of the Guarda Revanche.

The Quandaries Quest

Both Tabar and Lurough, the tavern owners near Kenting Rush, are in a pickle. Lady Boswich must manage the reinforcement troops ordered to wait at Kenting Rush as an intermediary force to be sent to Highcastle or Northwarden as the need arises. As both the barkeeps are good Kingdom subjects, however, they dig in, but both find they have been tapped out by the unquenchable thirst of the rowdy soldiers and riots seem imminent if something isn't done. Tabar has closed up shop, but Lurough is holding out and needs ale in significant quantities—fast. Find Lurough and learn about his quandary (Figure 6-5).

Hints and Clues

Men, Men Everywhere

If you choose, you can wander up towards Cavall Keep after visiting Mitchel Waylander. Owyn will feel the need to check in on his cousin Ugyne, who is at something of a loss. They have moved out of the keep to Kenting Rush, and she has learned that her brother was Navon du Sandau and that her father at one time attempted to brick him up in the basement of the keep but failed, and in so doing, created a brilliant monster. To add to her befuddlement, she now finds herself in Kenting Rush, surrounded by the hustle and bustle of a Kingdom gone to battle. If the player finds and cues her with the keyword *alcohol* (Figure 6-6), she will mention that Lady Boswich "had wine to surpass even father's, though she had never seen the cellars from which they came," but will suddenly grow quiet at the mention of the tunnels that have recently brought her so much grief.



Figure 6-5. Lurough explains his quandary



Figure 6-6. Ugyne in Kenting Rush

What You Need to Do to Solve the Quest

Speak to Lady Boswich

Getting in to see Lady Boswich will be no easy matter. Forced to come to Kenting Rush from her estates elsewhere, she has set up temporary headquarters in a barn and she is heavily guarded by rogues. To get past them, you must first speak to Lurough and then bribe them as well. If bribed, they will escort you inside to see her. More stern looking than attractive, Lady Boswich will be somewhat irate at the intrusion. (Note that Count Corvalis is not nearly as much in charge of the situation as he had hoped to be; Lady Boswich is quite capable of handling the mustering.) She will listen to the bartenders and agree that because most of the men are conscripts, they'll need to be pacified, although she will warn the bartenders not to allow anyone to get drunk—only give them enough to boost morale. She will tell you about the “illusionary mountain” that protects her wine reserves, created by an inventive little magician named Patrus on his way to Northwarden. She will tell you to take a cask of Keshian Ale to the dry bartender (Figure 6-7).

Reward for Solving the Quest

When you give the Keshian ale to Lurough, he will reward you with a Sword of Lims-Kragma, given to him by his cousin from Krondor.

The Brother Dominic Quest

Thanks to a few of the Quegian mercenaries hired to help Nago, a rare strain of Quegian fever has been introduced to coastal Midkemia and Brother Dominic has fallen ill with it. In his hallucinating state he has imagined the abbey is under attack by a mystic threat and, as keeper of the gate of the temple of Ishap and controller of great powers, has surrounded the hill top with an invisible barrier that cannot be penetrated. Unfortunately, he has also inadvertently prevented any from entering or leaving the Temple. While Quegian fever is rarely



Figure 6-7. Obtaining a cask of Keshian ale

fatal, Brother Marc is concerned that in his hallucinatory state Brother Dominic may do great harm; he hopes that Dominic's fever will wane enough to weaken the force field and allow him entrance.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

I'm the Taxman

After leaving the sewers, head to the tavern in Krondor and talk to Nivek the tax collector. He will tell you that he's hung over and is missing his keys. If you go outside Krondor, you'll find a corpse off the road with Nivek's key. Go back and talk to Nivek, and he will remember that he was drugged, and the key probably stolen from him. It opens his office in Eggley (belonging to Stellan, his collection agent), where you will find a note with a spell that will give you entry into the mines under Sarth.

The Vaults

Use the mines under Sarth to gain access to the vaults (Figure 6-8). If you have the note from Nivek's Eggley office, you'll be able to enter. The exit from the caves is another series of tunnels passable only if you read the note from Nivek's office (Figure 6-9).

Rumors and Hints

Brother Marc

Talking to Brother Marc will inform you about the quest, turn on the *mystic defense* keyword (listed as a subject to research in Sarth's vaults), and trigger Naddur Ban Dok's *Sarth* keyword. If asked about the *mine* (another keyword) under Sarth, Brother Marc will say that he thinks it is unlikely the mine still connects, but that the only person who could say for sure would be the tax collector in Eggley, named Stellan. When Stellan had inquired about the wealth of the abandoned mines (since its abandonment technically made it the property of the Prince of Krondor), the Brothers of Sarth had willingly turned over the old written accounts that were found of the mine after Mejakaar had abandoned the abbey.

Naddur Ban Dok

Naddur will become a little sentimental at hearing the name of Sarth, and will mention that even before the robber baron occupied the site before the Brothers of Sarth, the mountains in that area were the property of the dwarves (in his granddaddy Grudan's day), and that the mountains were riddled with tunnels (very probably the reason old Mejakaar "Blackpatch" chose the site). He will say that there is probably still a way from the old dwarven Mac Bourgalan Dok emerald mine to the vaults under Sarth (this will turn on Brother Marc's *mine* keyword).

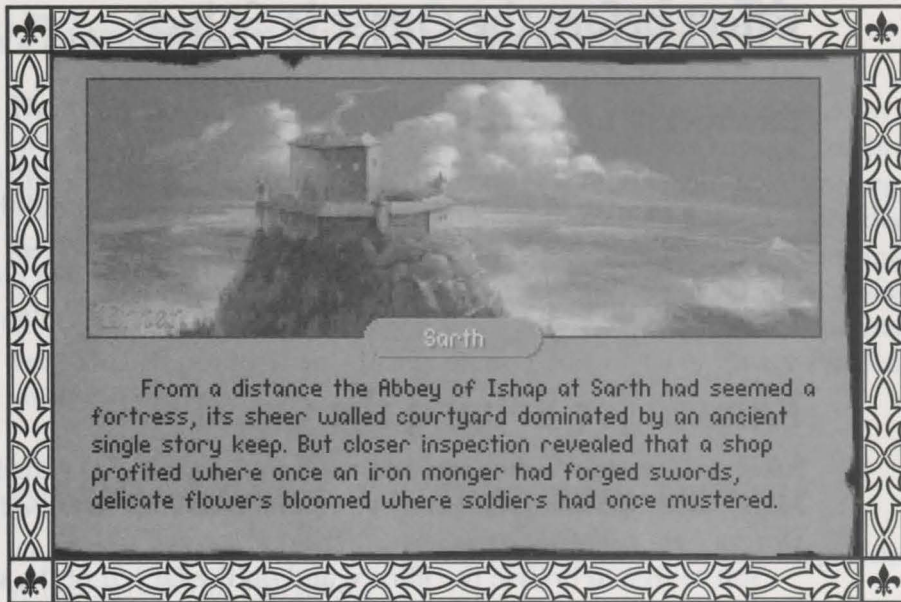


Figure 6-8. Entrance to the mines under Sarth

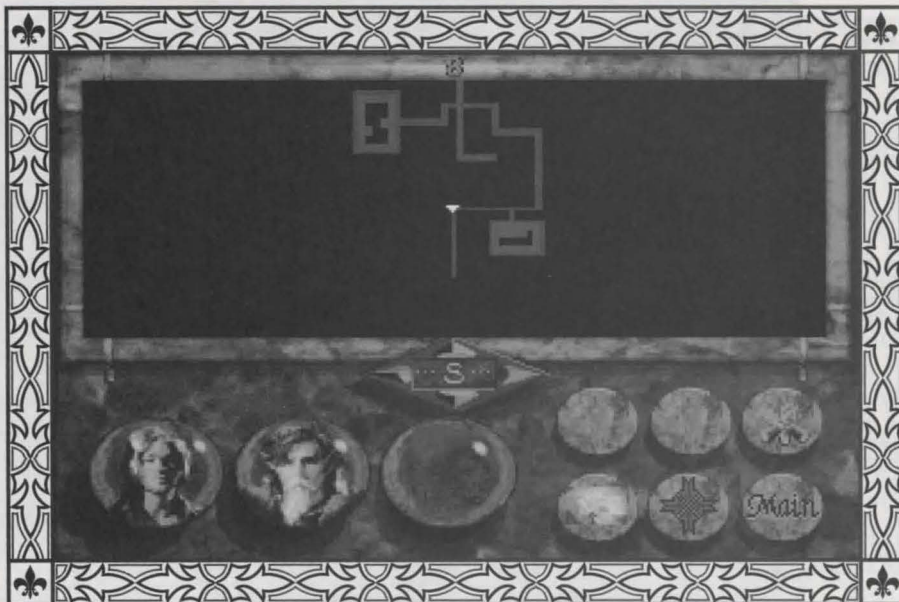


Figure 6-9. Finding the way out of the mines

Effect before the Quest Is Solved

Strawberry ... er, Mystic Fields

The only significant effect related directly to Dominic's illness is that you'll not be able to enter Sarth by conventional means, and therefore won't be able to get the information you need to find Tomas and the elves in relation to the *Book of Macros*. An invisible force field blocks the entry and you'll be unable to progress up the road to the abbey.

Reward for Solving the Quest

After you've done what was required and have spoken to Brother Marc, he will reward you with three emeralds and his treasured copy of Dorcas's *Treatise on the Animation of Objects*.

You're free to browse the library, and on the far left of the screen is a book that suggests Tomas of Elvandar is the person to speak to about the *Book of Macros* (Figure 6-10).

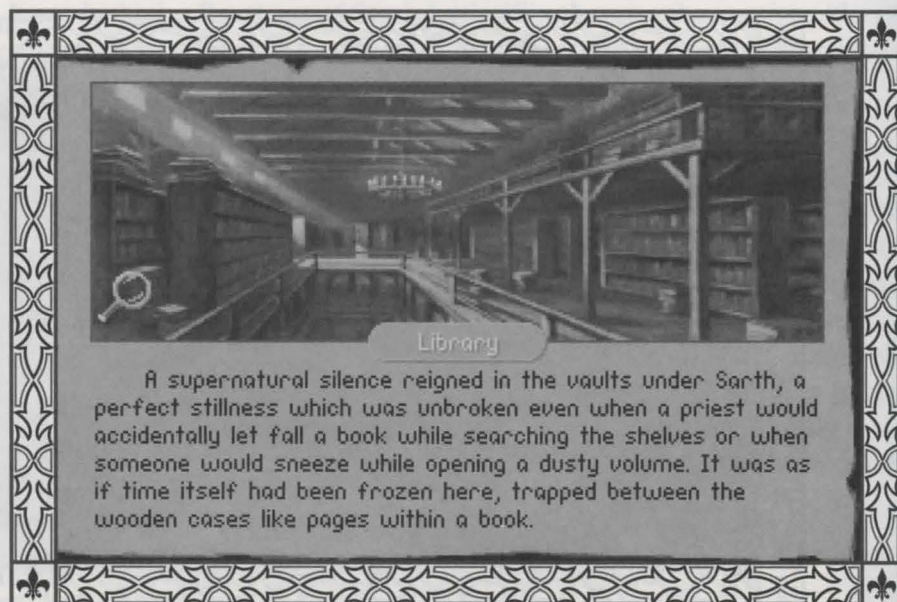


Figure 6-10. Pug's book

The Whisperers in the Pit Quest

The kobolds who live in the depths of the Mac Mordain Cadall are in a spiteful mood (Figure 6-11). Unsuccessful in their quest to find Rhuagh, they have decided to try to bribe King Dolgan into “freeing” their god. (They refuse to believe that Rhuagh died and have decided in the 10-year interim that the dwarves have imprisoned him somehow.) When you approach the pit in the second level of the Mac Mordain Cadall the kobolds will offer to give you additional permanent Health points if you bring them a suit of Grey Tower Plate to satisfy Dolgan.

Hints and Clues: Chatting with Naddur

You’ll find out about dwarven armor and battles when you trigger the Whisperers in the Pit Quest.



Figure 6-11. The kobolds in a bargaining mood

Dwarven Armor

Naddur will tell you the kobolds are a nuisance and shouldn't be trusted. To his knowledge, the Grey Tower Plate is hard to come by on the eastern side of the Grey Towers (as there isn't much call for it among humans). He will comment that, on occasion, treasure seekers will find dwarven armor at the sites of old battles, but the men that find them are usually gifted with incredible scouting abilities.

Battle Sites

To find out about battle sites, click on the *dwarven armor* keyword. Naddur will tell you that the last great dwarven battle that occurred outside of the Grey Towers was when the dwarves encountered the conDoin conquerors at Tyr-Sog. There was a pitched battle on the western bank of the river and the matter was settled only by a peace agreement. (The dwarves were abandoning the area because it wasn't a good place to mine, and had decided to settle the matter by allowing the conquering forces to "buy" the land in exchange for a mutual nonaggression/allied force agreement.)

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

Find the Suit

You'll need to "search" the area to the west of the river by lawn-mowing the area. If you run across the suit of armor and your Scouting ability is 80 percent or higher, you'll trigger a dialogue event in which you "see something sticking out of the dirt." You'll dig up a suit of Grey Tower Plate, a Sword of Kinnur, and bad rations. On the other hand, you could simply buy the armor, which is also for sale in the armor shop in Caldara.

Reward for Solving the Quest

If you return to the pit with the Grey Tower Plate, you can exchange the suit for an additional 10 points of permanent health.

The Eliaem's Heart Quest

The *definitive* Rusalki, Eliaem guards the southern boundary of her beloved Elvandar. She will say she knows the true hearts of Owyn and Gorath and that they are on a great quest, but she'll also tell them there is a *moredhel* magician nearby who is perverting her kin by means of a cruel device. If they will return her the Eliaem's Heart the *moredhel* magician is carrying, she will manifest as much food as they will need (as much as would be required to walk through the sleeping glades alive, anyway.) She will never attack the players, whatever they do (Figure 6-12).

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

"I Tought I Taw a Moretel!"

A *moredhel* Magic User and three Rusalki will be waiting for you at the branch in the river. If you kill the *moredhel*, you can get the Eliaem's Heart so dearly desired by Eliaem (Figure 6-13). A group of chests to the south contains some useful items as well (Figure 6-14).

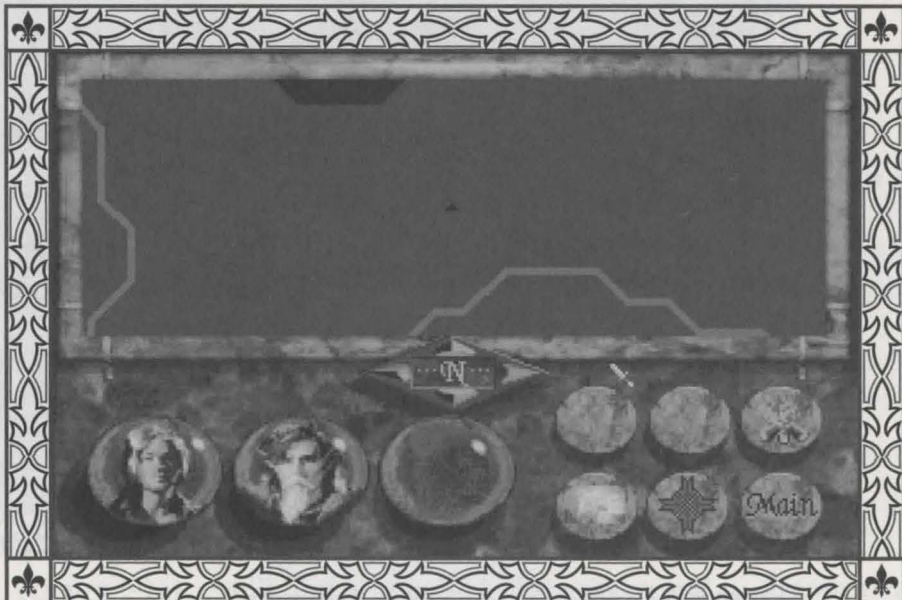


Figure 6-12. Listening to Eliaem's plea



Figure 6-13. Eliaem's Heart

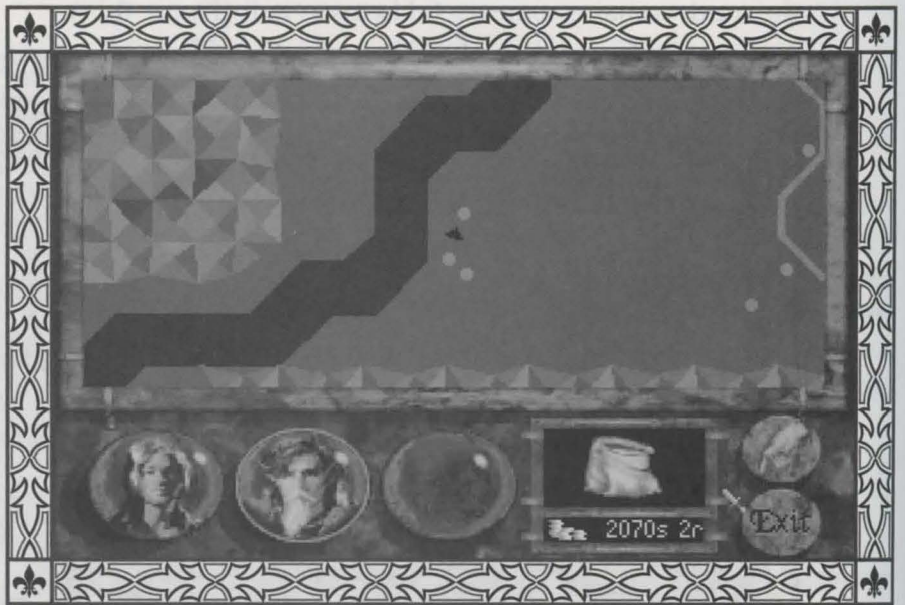


Figure 6-14. More goodies from lockchests

Have a Heart

Give it to Eliaem.

Reward for Solving the Quest

Eliaem rewards you with food. In addition, you'll get what's in the boxes located near the combat. Eliaem will hand over an unusual seashell that, when used with the hilt of the Guarda Revanche, will renew the weapon.

The Ancient Ruin Quest

There are two ways to Elvandar, one of which can be considered a "march of death" through the red and blue wyverns guarding the high road to Elvandar. The second way involves taking the low path through the ancient ruin, a Valheru stronghold once used by the elves during a dark period of their history, but abandoned when Elvandar was constructed.

Hints and Clues

Naddur's Twin

If you talk to McCannur Ban Dok, you'll learn that Prince Calin is in grave danger and is apparently trying to head off the invasion on the northeastern side of the river. McCannur will also tell you that the Prince might have the only answer as to how to save Elvandar from the *moredhel*.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

Save Calin

If you manage to fight your way to the cul-de-sac in the northeast (Figure 6-15), you'll find a wounded blue wyvern and its friends near the entrance. After you kill them off and wander into the cul-de-sac, a

very grateful Prince Calin will thank you. If you follow a chain of keywords starting with *Elvandar*, you'll eventually learn about the ancient ruin and get a Key of Lineages and the spell *Thy Master's Will*.

Enter the Ancient Hall

If you have the Key of Lineages when you try to enter the ancient hall (Figure 6-16), then you'll be allowed to enter. If you don't have the key, you won't be able to enter and a booming voice will curse you in an ancient tongue (Gorath actually kneels when he hears the voice). You'll each lose 3 points of Permanent Health.

Reward for Solving the Quest

If you follow this route, the monsters you fight will be far less difficult, and you'll have an opportunity to get some nifty items in the ancient ruins—the Guarda Revanche hilt (Figure 6-17), for one, which when repaired with Eliaem's seashell is a weapon that never loses its edge.



Figure 6-15. Fighting the blue wyverns

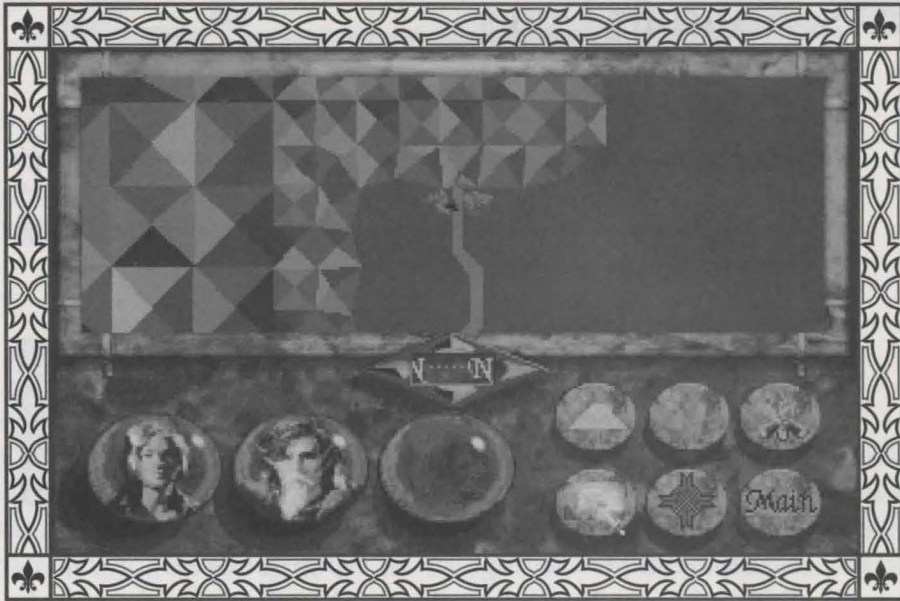


Figure 6-16. The ancient hall

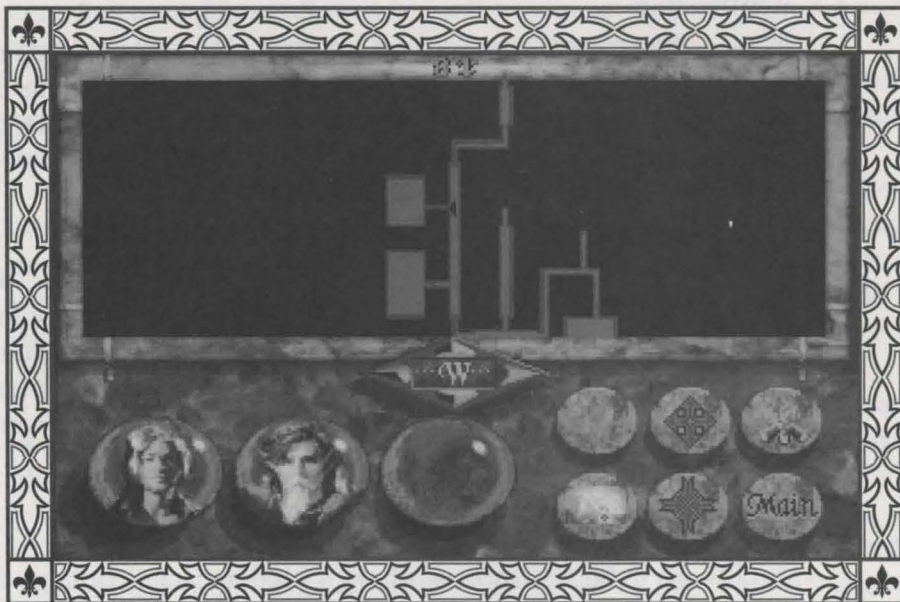


Figure 6-17. The Guarda Revanche hilt

Miscellaneous Notes

Monster Mash

There should be heavy attacks by witches and *moredhel* Magic Users in the forest of Elvandar on the south side of the river. Attacks by blue and red wyverns will make crossing any but the western bridge a blood-bath—although it is technically possible.

Sleeping Glades of Elvandar

After crossing the western bridge, the grey path leads into the sleeping glades of Elvandar. These are a series of dialogue-style triggers that, when stepped on, will force you into a “need sleep” mode for at least one day per trigger. Of course, the upshot of this is that you’ll starve to death unless you’ve picked up a lot of rations whenever you’ve run across them. (These traps can be avoided, however, if you’ve spoken to Prince Calin.) If you hug the southern river banks and the western mountain face, you will avoid the glades.

Ambushes

There are a few interesting ambushes with wyverns “dropping down from the treetops.” This can happen while traveling along the main road. Don’t deluding yourself into thinking an area is safe because you can’t see any monsters in the world.

This Is Too Damn Hard

If Gorath and Owyn have taken the “march of death route,” using any bridge other than the westernmost bridge, then at some point before hitting the red wyverns Gorath should comment they should expect the toughest forces near Elvandar and suggest perhaps they should take another, less combative route. This will not stop you from marching straight ahead, however.

Sethanon Open for Business

You can go to Sethanon now, where a hidden cache contains the spells *Dragon’s Breath*, *Dannon’s Delusions*, and *Grief of a Thousand Nights*; useful but not as critical as *Evil Seek*, *Fetters of Rime*, and *Skin of the Dragon*.

Chapter 7

The Long Ride



Bells tolled in the towers of Northwarden. Jubilant guards shouted from the walls, slapped backs, exchanged war stories only days old. Already a bard was milling through the crowd, gathering names and places, scribbling them down as fast as he could. Tonight they would gather, they would drink, and they would pay old Tamney the Minstrel each time he sang their names.

Listening to the general hubbub drifting in through opened shutters, Seigneur James allowed himself a grim smile as he joined Arutha and Locklear, who were conferring over a battle map.

"By day's end, I warrant that Delekhan will have died on the sword point of every man here," James said. "It's a shame he wasn't really leading that raid."

"Indeed," Arutha agreed, his eyes shrouded as he brooded about something. "It would be good to ask him a few questions." He turned to James. "I leave for Highcastle at noon. I'm certain that the first of the moredhel we've turned aside here will attack our troops at Highcastle by sunup tomorrow. Fortunately, my army will be there to greet them. Still, I wish I knew what they were up to."

Arutha glanced up, startled, as a page boy skidded into the chamber. "Your p-p-ardon, my lord!" the boy stuttered. "They have captured the moredhel raiding leader!"

Arutha's eyes hardened. "Prepare him for questioning."

He was chained to a table, his eyes piercing and defiant as Arutha entered the room. This moredhel was feared by his men only slightly less than Delekhan; now, facing the Lord of the West, a little of that fear crept into his own heart.

"Cooperate now, moredhel, and I promise you'll live to see your children become adults. Thwart me and I'll have your eyes for necklace beads and your manhood for an inkwell!" Arutha was in no mood to be trifled with.

"My death is unimportant," said the moredhel, steeling his eyes and mustering his courage.

Arutha knelt next to the moredhel and whispered. "If you think we shall torture you unto death, I would advise that you ponder my mood. Anxious though I am to have answers I will keep you screaming this side of death for a month or a year, or until I feel well satisfied that we have heard all that you have to say!"

"A day, a month, you've already lost! Nail my entrails to your door post, feed me to your dogs, it will not matter! Even if you act now, you will be too late!" A look of maniacal glee flared in the moredhel's face.

Arutha stood. "You will win only pain for your trouble! Instruct him, torturer!"

The hooded man picked up tongs and selected a coal. The coal was no longer red hot, because that would sear the flesh too quickly. No, the coal had cooled slightly, but would be very, very painful.

The smell of burnt flesh filled the room. "You do—not—listen!" gasped the moredhel. "We know the secret of Sethanon! We shall free him!"

A chill grasped Arutha. "What secret? Why to Sethanon?"

"Ten years ago we attacked ... with Murmandamus. You captured, imprisoned him ..." Weakened by the coal, the moredhel had lost some of his fight.

"Deluded fool, we killed Murmandamus at Sethanon and burned his bones for potash! There is nothing there for Delekhan to find!" roared Arutha.

"A lie ... we have spied ... What else could. You guard so closely?"

Of course, the moredhel could not have known about the Lifestone. "How does he think he will win past our garrison at Highcastle! He hasn't enough men!" The moredhel's head rolled loosely on his shoulders. "Answer me!"

The coal was applied to the moredhel's feet, and the scream carried through the castle. "Riiift machine! The Six have a machine ... It can take them place to place ... like a door between great distances ...

Even while your troops die at Sethanon ... we will walk through the machine!"

The moredhel turned his head and calmly regarded Arutha. "We shall be through the Dimwood and inside Sethanon a week before you can reach us! Your troops will be exhausted! The day will be ours!" The moredhel passed out even as Arutha turned away.

Arutha slammed his fist into his hand. "A rift machine inside the Dimwood! That bastard Tsurani magician has been consorting with Delekhan! Torturer, tell Seigneurs James and Locklear to ride to the Dimwood. They must find and destroy that rift machine while I hie to Highcastle and divert our forces once more! Time is of the essence!"



Patrus was beginning to look a little pale.

James felt a little guilty for having dragged the magical adviser along on such an extended mission, but James knew no magic—and so Prince Arutha had thought it wise to have Patrus take a look at the alien rift machine. What none of them had counted on was a long journey on foot.

For days they had ridden at a panicked pace, astride three of the finest chargers from the stables at Northwarden. Driven too hard for too long, the horses had all died within hours of one another, expiring long before they had reached the outer rim of the Dimwood. From there, they had been forced to walk, sneaking past a patrol of goblins on the road leading north out of the Dimwood. Now, far behind enemy positions and without quick transport, they faced a very difficult task.

Locklear scrambled down a hill, where he had been scouting possible moredhel movements. He did not look pleased at what he had seen. "So ... nothing much to accomplish. Find something the size of a man in the whole of the Dimwood. Shouldn't be too difficult."

"Not the most difficult thing Arutha ever had us do. Remember that berry hunt we went on after the Riftwar? Very nearly wouldn't have found them if we hadn't realized the rainfall had been heavier that year. I'm just sorry we had to drag poor old Patrus along on this one."

The magician snorted. "You worry 'bout your own skins, you whelps. I ken I can run with the best of 'em and you two ain't no exception. Get runny nosed on me and I'll brain the both of you."

Locklear laughed. "Better listen to him, Jimmy. He's a killer." Indeed, Patrus had been invaluable on their travels.

James backed away from the red-faced magician. "Hmmm ... I believe you're right. So, where do you think we should start looking for this rift machine? Your guess would be as good as mine."

Locklear sighed. "Since we just came from the north, I'd say it's a good bet it isn't up there anywhere. That still leaves east, west, south, and everything in between. Like spearing fish in a barrel."

"That being the case, I suppose we should just try to be as systematic as possible. I say we make a sweep east, then maybe move to the south or the west," suggested James.

Locklear looked east. "East? Why? West seems as good a direction."

James shrugged. "Not sure. But the instinct that's telling me east is the same one that's kept me alive this long, and I've learned not to ignore it. If you've got a better idea, I'll follow your lead."



They had traveled east and crossed an old bridge. No one was in sight, so they all jumped when they heard the voice.

"James! Locklear! What are you doing here?"

"Duke Martin!" yelled Locklear as they whirled around. "Prince Arutha told us that a Tsurani magician has given over a rift machine to the moredhel. We've come down here to locate and destroy it before Delekhan can get full use of it. How did you get here? We never saw you at the castle."

"When a portion of the Southern Arrow company began to fall back from Northwarden, I decided to follow after them and make sure they weren't up to any mischief. As you might have guessed, they had that infernal machine of theirs set up a few miles to the north, but they spotted me and assumed I was a human mercenary that was slacking behind." Martin's lip curled in a sign of disgust.

"So you played along and went through the gate and ended up here. How did you know you wouldn't end up in Sar-Sargoth?" asked James.

"I didn't, but I was surrounded by moredhel. I imagined that my best hope for survival lay on the other side of wherever that door led. When we emerged here, I told the captain I had to rejoin my unit and I was off. There were a few close moments along the way, but I won

free at last." Martin looked around, listening for any rustling in the underbrush signaling an ambush.

"Why didn't you try to destroy it?" asked Patrus.

"I thought about it, but the device was surrounded by moredhel at the time, so I decided I'd try to get help. You three are the first humans I've seen in a week," said Martin.

Patrus scratched his beard. "Where is this contraption? Is it nearby?"

"I'm not sure. To escape the moredhel camp, I slipped under a stack of canvas bags in the back of a supply wagon they brought with them. After we had traveled for a few hours, they pulled over for a nature break and I was able to get away. I do recall hearing rushing water as we were moving out, however." The Duke of Crydee looked a little uncomfortable. Martin was an outstanding tracker, and he was at a loss.

"So you were near a waterfall or a river—at least that gives us an idea of where we can start our search. Anything else we should know?" asked James.

"From listening to the wagon driver's talk, I get the feeling I wasn't the only unexpected visitor through that machine of theirs. Apparently some rebel moredhel chieftain came through and caused them a good deal of grief, then headed south towards where one of their warlords is staging the attack on Sethanon. They were none too happy about him being on the loose. I'm hoping I can find him myself so I can ask him a few questions."

"Any idea who this warlord in the south is?" asked James.

"I believe it's Delekhan's son Moraelf, though I couldn't be certain of it. They were bandying about names so fast, I was having a little trouble understanding all of it. My moredhel isn't all it used to be." Martin laughed.

Locklear leaned against a tree and sighed. "What is it with Sethanon and the moredhel? This is the second time they've attacked there and I never understood why they struck ten years ago. There's nothing in Sethanon but a heap of ruins."

James nodded in agreement. "At least the last time we had an army to get in their way. Even at a forced march, Prince Arutha's men can't get here for another few days and they'll be exhausted once they arrive. The one major advantage I can see in our favor is that we and

the moredhel are at an equal disadvantage. Neither of us will have a clear supply of materials and they will have to hold out some of theirs so they can retreat to the Northlands when the time comes."

Martin's eyes darkened. "If they intend to retreat. They didn't seem to be too interested in it the last time they came. A bit of advice, though. If you come across any food, I'd suggest holding on to it. We've found several of their food caches and poisoned them as we did at Northwarden, and with two armies marching through here at the same time, I imagine food is about to get scarce. As unpleasant an option as it may seem, you may have to resort to taking food off dead moredhel."

Patrus spat on the ground. "Moredhel rations."

They left Martin and continued scouting southeast. Locklear stopped in a clearing. James was frustrated—they had been hiking for hours, and they had not found any sign of a rift machine, although Patrus managed to find a chest to the northeast, by a waterfall, that contained a password. They had stumbled on a cache of food and provisions nearby, but still no indication of troop movements aside from wandering goblin patrols.



Patrus yelped.

Rubbing his head where he had felt a hard thump, he turned and saw that Locklear and James were doing likewise. Exchanging puzzled looks, none were prepared for the sudden appearance of a towering moredhel.

"I, too, have difficulties," he said. "I am Obkhar. Perhaps it may be that we can help one another."

James' eyes widened. Locklear spun and expected to see moredhel warriors sneaking up behind them, but saw only trees. "You're assuming quite a bit. I don't think any of us have good reason to trust you, moredhel," James said, although he realized that he had already come to trust one moredhel.

"Just now you all felt the pelt of my stones, each of which could just as easily have been a moredhel throwing knife. If I had wished you harm, you'd already be dead."

James squinted and rubbed his head again. "You speak the Kingdom tongue remarkably well. Handy skill for a spy."

"We cannot trade our goods with the traders who come from the Kingdom or from far-off places if we speak only our native tongue. It would seem it is beneath them to learn our language." Obkhar turned away from them and looked north.

"Granted. I'm still listening," said James.

"There is a device being used by Delekhan to invade this wood. If it is left operational, it will mean utter defeat for you. If Delekhan succeeds in his goal, he will use whatever is hidden in Sethanon to gain the power that eluded Murmandamus's grasp. It will mean a new tyranny for your Kingdom and for mine." Obkhar's voice was tinged with sadness.

Locklear folded his arms. "We already know about the device. Bled it out of one of the field captains that attacked Northwarden. If you really mean to help us, tell us where to find it."

"On a peninsula where the rivers meet. It is accessible only by passing through an illusory mountain created by the Six, although I am not sure how to find it from here. I have been looking for a magical artifact since I slipped out of the camp."

Patrus looked hard at Obkhar. "Artifact? For what purpose?"

"Shortly after they began staging soldiers through the rift, I discovered the gate could be disrupted by something they called a *Waani*, a word foreign to me. I found such an item on a magician who was guarding the gate. Before I slew him, I discovered that if it's thrown into the maelstrom of the gate, it would cause it to collapse. I had thought it permanently destroyed."

James nodded. "Delekhan has a number of tricks up his sleeve. So, do you think we might be able to find another of these devices?"

Obkhar smiled. "From what little I learned before I slew the magician, they are necessary in the creation of a gate. If one is to build a bridge, it is usually wise to bring more planks of wood than necessary, in case one should snap."

"Seems to be a reasonable assumption. Now it's just a matter of locating this—*Waani*? Who would have them?" James looked at Locklear, who nodded. They would have to trust Obkhar—he seemed to be the *moredhel* who had caused so much chaos in Delekhan's camps.

"If any would know it would be the leader of the rear guard, Moraelf. He has his troops preparing themselves for the final advance near the southern tip of this wood."

James pulled his cloak over his armor. "Then I suppose it's time we went and had a talk with him."

Locklear looked at James in amazement. His friend had a penchant for the outrageous, and Locklear was sure that James would get them killed or honored by every minstrel west of Rillanon. Or both. "Have a talk with him, Jimmy? Do you propose we simply walk up to him and ask for this device that will destroy his campaign?"

"Not without saying hello first. We'll pose as Quegians and hope he doesn't see through us. In all this chaos, he can't possibly know everyone in all his companies."

James was interrupted by laughter. "An admirable gamble. I approve," said Obkhar. James returned the moredhel's smile. "Hear that, Locky? The moredhel approves. It must be a good idea. Let's get moving before I regain my common sense. Goodbye, Obkhar."



The bridge leading south was heavily guarded. Several goblins eyed them suspiciously as they approached.

"Delekhan has sent us to help guard the rift machine," shouted James in a gruff voice. One of the goblins turned to the others and James thought he heard the words "Quegian mercenaries." This was followed by some laughter, which died down almost as quickly as it had begun. "What's the password?" demanded a goblin.

James stepped forward. His stomach in knots, he fought desperately to remember the note he'd found in the faerie box.

"Perhaps a sharp rap to your skull with my sword would help you remember," a goblin slavered. These troops were well armed.

"Narab's blood!"

The goblin turned away. "Pass quickly, men of Queg. The air reeks with your presence."



They had followed the river east and found Moraelf in a military camp teeming with goblins, mercenaries, and moredhel. James walked tentatively up to the moredhel commander.

"*Crualla sholbah moredhelan nordrannas baktu ?*"

"Uh, we're ... Quegian, Warlord. If you'd speak the Kingdom tongue, maybe we could understand one another better?"

Moraelf sneered. "*Sebah!* How progresses the transfer from the Tsurani gate?"

"We were ambushed, Lord Moraelf! Several men, heavily armed, were moving through the Dimwood. We were lucky to escape!"

"Kingdom soldiers?" asked Moraelf, waving away a goblin mercenary.

"Perhaps ... I know they weren't under our standards, so they probably weren't mercenary. We heard sounds farther off from where they came. It might be a whole army."

Moraelf roared. "Obkhar may have reached someone and raised the alarm. Damn! This will complicate the march to Sethanon. How close were they to the Six's rift machine?"

"No idea. We got turned around during the attack. Our couriers were killed and we needed field reports. We hoped you could help us."

"What do you need to know?" Moraelf was growing impatient.

"The magicians at the rift machine tell me there seems to be a malfunction with the gate. They need one of the parts they had stored away." James prayed to Banath that Moraelf would not be suspicious.

The moredhel raised an eyebrow. "But the gate still functions?"

"No. Failed just before the magicians sent us and it is beyond repair with what they have. They said they need the devices they stored with you."

Moraelf nodded. "It is hidden in a box, locked with our ... special ... locks. *Victory* is the password. You will find the box in a canyon near the southwest corner of this wood." The moredhel had turned to the goblin, and they began speaking in an unintelligible stream of staccato syllables.

"We have our orders to attend to, with or without our squadron," said James, bowing and backing away from the moredhel. So close to Moraelf's throat, thought James, but no way to kill him and escape.

"Get to it, then, with all haste. If any further complications arise, report to me immediately," said Moraelf, before continuing his conversation with the goblin.

"Your will, Warlord," said James, his heart beating easier as he moved away from the camp.



They searched the chest.

"It's not here," exclaimed Locklear. "This is the chest Moraeulf told us about, but the Waani isn't here! How will we find it now?"

"Probably tricked us," Patrus spat. "Can't 'spect a moredhel to tell the truth even if'n he's tellin' you how ta kiss his hindquarters!"

"I don't think that's it," Locklear replied. "Perhaps there is something else here that can tell us what happened to the Waani." Locklear pulled out packages of poisoned rations, and found a note.

To Whom It May Concern,

I have found your interesting device and became fearful that someone less honest than myself would steal such a beautiful piece of art. If you wish to retrieve this item, please come and see me at my house in the Dimwood and I will be more than glad to see that you receive it back. You will find it is a short journey due north of this chest.

Yours Truly,

Phillip of the Dimwood

"I don't know what this Phillip fellow has got up his sleeve, but I intend to find out," Locklear said. "It sounds almost as if he's trying to lure whoever finds that note north to his home."

They traveled north, and spied a huge contingent of goblins converging on a house. "Well, Locky," whispered James, "it looks like someone else has come to collect the Waani as well. What's the expression? The enemy of my enemy?" Locklear smiled grimly as he drew his Great sword. There were two groups of goblins, and if they were lucky, thought Locklear, they could surprise one group before the second group—approaching the house from the other side—realized what had happened. James pointed to the goblin leader and raised his crossbow—then he turned and winked at Locklear. Locklear shook his head in mock despair. The goblins were well armed, and they looked angry.

As Locklear charged, James's crossbow bolt pierced the neck of the goblin leader. James threw the crossbow down and unsheathed his sword, running to catch up with Locklear. Locklear quickly cut open one goblin and parried the blade of another.

An explosive wave of heat and sound washed over James, singeing his hair. Patrus had sent a fireball into the midst of the stunned goblins, and was preparing another blast of flame for the second group. James made quick work of his foe and the remaining goblin mercenaries in the first group, then took cover behind a tree to avoid the incoming crossbow fire.

Locklear had already taken up position, using the house as cover, and launched quarrel after quarrel into the advancing goblins. Two had already been paralyzed by Patrus, and lay under a thin covering of frost. James took a few blows before downing his foe, a huge goblin commander, with a quick duck and a steady thrust through the mercenary's stomach. Locklear ran around the house and took the remaining goblin by surprise, cutting him down before the stunned mercenary could raise his Keshian blade. Looking up, Locklear noticed that the two paralyzed goblins had fallen, face down, into a widening pool of their own blood.

A boy hurried from the house, carrying a bloodied sword.

Dressed in a Squire's colors, he made haste as he closed the distance between them, his expression revealing he was more than a little happy to see them. Huffing out heavy breaths, he waved to them.

"Squire Phillip!" cried Locklear.

"Please, do not leave us yet. Seigneurs, under ordinary circumstances I wouldn't be empowered to ask for your aid, but our forces are spread rather thin at the moment. We need everyone we can get to aid in this effort, whether you've sworn an oath to the secret garrison at Sethanon or not."

James sat on the ground, Patrus binding his wounds. Goblins were known to poison the blades, and the old magician searched for any sign of Silverthorn. "Sethanon garrison? I've never heard Arutha mention anything about troops being stationed near Sethanon and you're far too young for senior duty," whispered James, feeling some pain from Patrus's field bandage.

"How old do you think I am?" asked Phillip.

"Eighteen, maybe nineteen summers. About the same age as a Squire we know from Tiburn," said James.

"While Count Beleforte's son Owyn was taking his first baby steps, my wife and I had already had a son for three years. I'm thirty-seven summers old and hold the rank of Captain in the Kingdom Army.

When my commander noticed how young I looked, even as a veteran officer, he thought I'd make an ideal courier for the secret garrison." Phillip smiled, as if a little embarrassed.

"Sink me! A spy for the Kingdom!" Locklear slapped his forehead.

"Even if the things you say about yourself are true the rest of your story's impossible," said James. "Arutha would have told me about a secret garrison."

Phillip chuckled. "Has he ever explained to you why there is an absolute ban on visitation to Sethanon? Can you recall any other occasion when Prince Arutha or King Lyam forbade people from visiting battle sites?"

"No, but I always assumed he wished to keep it as a memorial to the battle there." James realized that there was more than met the eye regarding Sethanon, as well as Arutha and Lyam's actions.

"A memorial that cannot be visited by its veterans? You're trying to rationalize, Seigneur. Not even the members of the garrison are allowed near Sethanon unless an armed force approaches. Their orders are to destroy any who come against it. And now I must find a way to get word to them that the moredhel are advancing. Do you have any ideas on the subject?" asked Phillip.

"No, but we have other plans that may foil this invasion. We found your note in the moredhel chest. Do you still have the Waani that was in it?" asked Locklear.

Phillip nodded. "If you mean the magical device, yes, although neither I nor Wilindi have been able to find out what it's for. We were hoping it could be used against the moredhel somehow."

"Pah! No toad-stickin' witch could figgur how! It's Tsurani and probably one o' those infernal Greater Path objects. Pompous little buggers made up a whole new magic just to make my liver itch!" snorted Patrus.

"Although she might have said it differently, I believe Wilindi would agree. She's still studying it intensely. I'll fetch it for you." He ducked into the house and produced a small, oddly shaped object. Patrus picked it up, hefted it, and sniffed it suspiciously.

James nodded. "We need to get back to our mission. Will you be able to hold things together here?"

"Unless another band of goblins comes round, I should be all right. I need to stay here and keep an eye on the supplies, but you'll be welcome if you need to come back."

"That's appreciated. Farewell, *Squire*."

They quickly found the peninsula that Obkhar spoke of, and Patrus stood in front of a sheer rock face. "This must be the illusion," he said. "Good 'un, too." To James and Locklear's astonishment, Patrus stepped forward and walked through the wall of rock! James and Locklear looked at each other, shrugged their shoulders and stepped forward.



The rift gate was surrounded by a few moredhel spellcasters and mercenaries milling about. Two wooden poles, topped by blue-tinged globes of crystal, crackled faintly with energy. No one noticed their loitering yet, as James held the Waani in his hand.

"I pray to Ishap this wooden gem works," he said. "Although I hate to think about the fate of the Kingdom resting on this little experiment, I fear that is the truth of it." He took a deep breath. "Well ... shall we give it a try?" Patrus nodded.

The Waani arced gracefully through the air.

James grunted loudly, nearly falling from the effort of his throw. He glanced up just in time to see the strange wooden object pass between the two crystal-topped posts.

The Waani never made it to the ground.

Powerful lightning-like blasts rocketed out from each crystal, ripping the Waani into a thousand points of light that floated gently downward to a cold death on the dusty forest floor. The ground trembled, and before they could utter a sound, an ominous humming buzz rolled towards them. The sound grew in intensity, knocked from their feet by the roaring rush of energy and sound.

Still dazed, they watched in horror as the energy storm reversed direction. Suddenly it was rushing back through the rift machine, sucking leaves and dirt and small stones with it! An angry scream of air raked at James and Locklear like the claws of an invisible beast, tugging at them as if to stuff them whole into the insatiable black maw of the collapsing rift machine. Desperately they called out to Patrus to grab onto something, but for him it was too late ...

Patrus cried out. "Stay back! Stay back!" James and Locklear could only watch helplessly as the old magician was sucked into the rift. They shielded their eyes as the light from the explosion dwarfed even the mid-day sun, leaving only Patrus's last anguished cry hanging in the still air.

Three figures began to materialize.

"Spellweavers!" James and Locklear were unprepared for another assault. And Patrus was gone.

Chapter 7 Walkthrough

This is the last chapter for James, Locklear, and Patrus. They have to destroy Delekhan's rift machine before the moredhel troops can mass in the Dimwood forest. From the starting point, you should move to the southeast, and cross the east-west bridge. Both Martin and Obkhar, the renegade moredhel leader, are to the southeast from the bridge, and both will have valuable clues as to where the rift machine is, and how to destroy it. In the northeast corner of the forest, a wordlocked chest contains the password *Narab's blood* (Figure 7-1). You need to use this password on the north-south bridge, to the southwest (Figure 7-2). Do *not* bluff the goblins guarding this bridge.

Most of the foes you will fight are very well armed, with Dragon Plate armor and Weapon modifiers. On the other hand, food is very scarce, so try not to get into the "near-death" condition, and travel at night by torchlight if necessary. Strip food from the bodies of your fallen foes.

Travel along the southern shore of the river towards the southeast corner of the Dimwood. Moraeulf is here, and he will tell you where to find the Waani—in a small canyon in the southwestern corner. A note in the box reveals that someone named Phillip has been there first. Travel north to his house (surrounded by a fence and two tough groups of goblins). Kill the goblins in two combats (use all your resources to enhance your magic and Combat skills). Phillip will give you the Waani and reveal that he is on secret duty for Arutha.

Along the road leading south out of the Dimwood is Craig's house, who wants you to retrieve his traps for him. His life has been sucked out of him by some magical field to the southeast (past Moraeulf and over the east-west bridge). In the southeast corner "canyon," three



Figure 7-1. The chest containing the password needed to get past the goblins

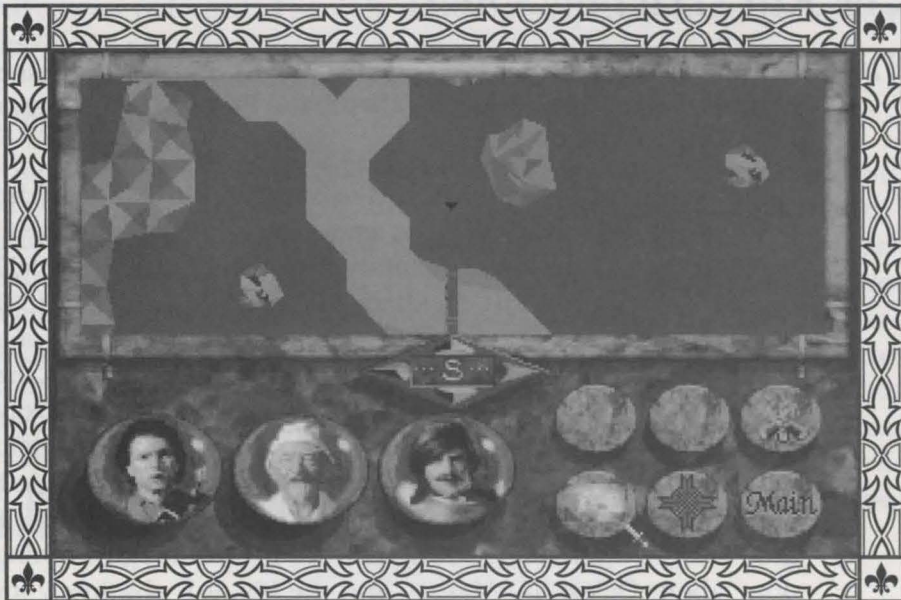


Figure 7-2. The goblins at the bridge

Pantathians have set up a life-draining spell. The Pantathians are in the northern section of the little canyon, while the traps, are in the southern area. Kill the Pantathians first, then retrieve the traps which are in an unlocked chest.

The rift machine is on a peninsula in the middle of the Dimwood. There are two "Y" deltas in the waterways through the Dimwood; the rift machine is located at the vertex of the northern "Y." It is heavily guarded. After you reach the rift machine (it is shorter than the surrounding trees, so keep a lookout for two posts, each topped by a blue crystal globe). Click on the rift machine to watch the chapter ending sequence.

Chapter 7 Quests

↔ The Rift Machine Quest

↔ The Snake Men Quest

The Rift Machine Quest

Note: This is the big finale for James, Patrus, and Locklear (the rest of the game is carried out by Gorath, Owyn, and Pug); so this, in a small way, feels like end game sequence.

After an earlier attempt was sabotaged by Obkhar (though he believed he was destroying an experimental siege engine), the rift machine has finally been established in the Dimwood. Delekhan and the core of his force (Delekhan, Makala, Moraelf, and "the Six") hurry through, fearing the rift may be subject to another unexpected closure. After encountering unexpected resistance from the "secret garrison," Delekhan orders an additional two thousand troops to be marched through as soon as they arrive at the rift gate's Northland terminus. Unknowingly, Delekhan has also provided the vehicle by which Duke Martin and Obkhar arrive at the battle; both men will help buy time for the approaching Kingdom troops. Although nothing can be done about Delekhan, Makala, and the Six, it is absolutely imperative that you destroy the rift machine.

Hints and Clues

Duke Martin

Locating Martin is one of the first things you should do when your party begins Chapter 7 (Figures 7-3 and 7-4). If you cue Duke Martin with the keyword *rift machine*, he will say he isn't certain where the rift machine is located because he rode out of the moredhel camp in the back of a moredhel supply wagon. He will indicate that on his ride he heard the moredhel searching for a tall, bald moredhel who apparently was causing them trouble. They suspected he was "heading south to interfere with Warlord Moraaulf's troops staging at the south of the Dimwood." If you ask him about *Sethanon* (keyword), he will indicate that the fight will have already begun as Delekhan runs into the men of the secret garrison. If you ask about the *secret garrison*, he will say that while he can't explain all of the details about why Sethanon is so important, shortly after the war King Lyam placed a special detachment of men there to guard the ruins of Sethanon. He is hoping to find Phillip. If asked about *supplies*, the Duke will warn you not to open any of the boxes or chests you find because he also overheard that they have been poisoned. The only source of supplies you should depend on should come from dead moredhel or from Squire Phillip.

Obkhar

Your next task is to find Obkhar (Figures 7-5 and 7-6). He will give you the most valuable piece of information in Chapter 7—that the rift machine is hidden in a valley accessible only by passing through an illusory mountain, created by a pair of Makala's servants. He will also mention that he was able to sabotage the rift gate the first time by tossing a special magical item through the gates, but he has no idea where another could be found (he had overheard some of the spellweavers at the site talking about the results). He has heard, however that Waani cannot be transported through rift gates, but rather must be fashioned in place or transported overland to the place where they are to be used. (This turns on Moraaulf's *rift machine* keyword.)



Figure 7-3. Searching the Dimwood for Duke Martin



Figure 7-4. Finding Duke Martin



Figure 7-5. Finding Obkhar



Figure 7-6. Speaking to the Moredhel dissident

Moraelf

Moraelf will have a keyword concerning the *rift machine* (Figure 7-7). If this keyword is clicked on, James will say they were sent from the transport site that the spellweavers have said something is wrong with the rift gate, and that they need the “other Waani they stored.” Moraelf will fume about the incompetence of Makala’s helpers and indicate the other Waani has been stored with other goods in a canyon in the southwest corner of the Dimwood, in a moredhel lockchest with the code word *Victory* (Figure 7-8). This will turn on Squire Phillip’s *Waani* keyword.

Trapped

If you talk to the man in one of the only remaining occupied houses, he will tell you that a group of goblins and moredhel has moved northwest towards the house of Wilindi the Witch. He will warn you that they seemed very angry and heavily armed.

Squire Phillip

If you stumble across Squire Phillip’s note in the moredhel lockchest, and have spoken to Duke Martin, you will probably figure out that someone is trying to lead the moredhel into a trap laid at Wilindi the Witch’s home in the Dimwood (Figure 7-9). After fighting through the goblin soldiers (well armed and armored) that are heading up to Wilindi’s house, you can speak to Squire Phillip. If you ask him about the *Waani* (keyword), he will indicate that he removed it from the chest and that you can have it. If asked about *supplies*, he will tell you about the stores of supplies in tree trunks.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

To solve the quest, you’ll need to find the *Waani* and the *rift machine*, and then “use” the *Waani* on the *rift machine*.

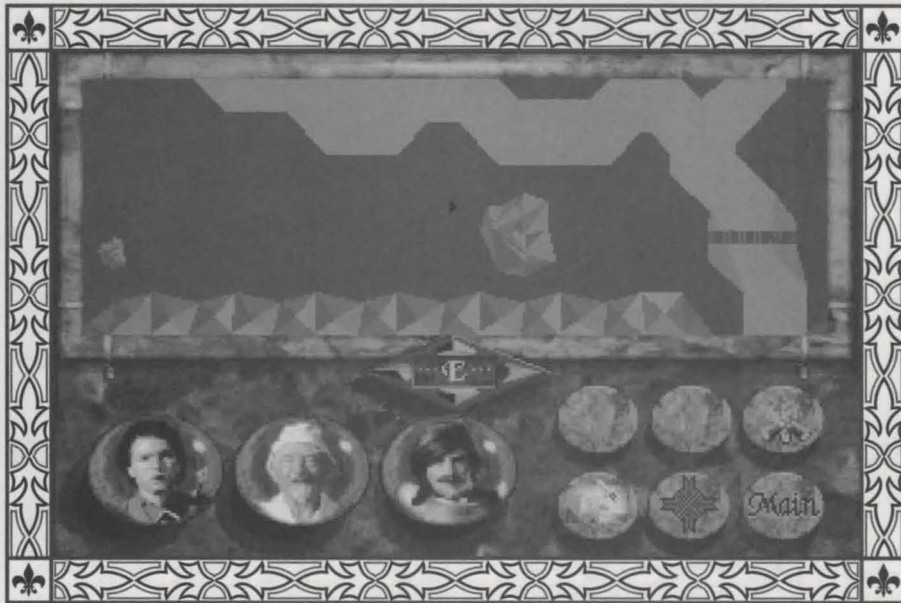


Figure 7-7. Deceiving Moraelf



Figure 7-8. Finding the Waani lockchest



Figure 7-9. The house of Wilindi the Witch

What's In the Way

- ↔ **The Rift Machine** The defenses around the rift machine are formidable. Its primary defense is the fact that it is hidden in a valley, blocked by an illusory mountain. Immediately after passing through the mountain, there are puzzle traps and combats. At last, the rift machine itself is under the guard of two spellweavers (Figures 7-10 through 7-13).
- ↔ **The South Bridge** A nearly impossible combat is waiting for you at the south bridge. If you approach the bridge, you'll be confronted by the goblin guards who will demand to know the password. If you have opened the lockchest and read it's contents, then your party will reply with the proper password and will be allowed to cross. If, however, you haven't found the password then you'll be prompted to (1) bluff or (2) leave. If you decide to bluff, then the goblins will become infuriated and will attack you. If you opt to leave, then they may turn back, away from the bridge. If you approach the bridge again they will go through the sequence again until it is solved.

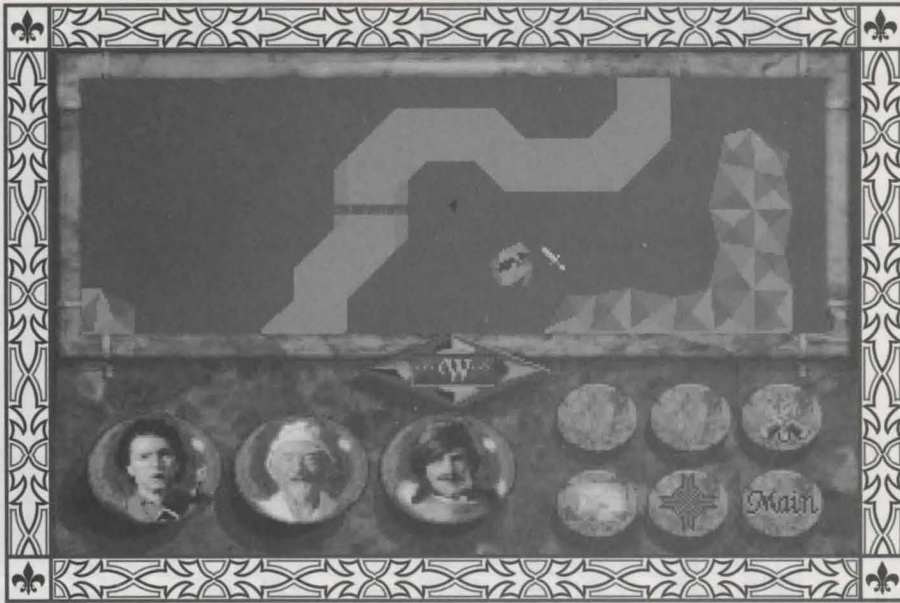


Figure 7-10. Bridge to the illusory mountain



Figure 7-11. The illusory mountain



Figure 7-12. The rift gate peninsula



Figure 7-13. The rift gate

✦ **Two Dozen Mad Goblins** Along with the note he left behind in the moredhel lockchest, Phillip has poisoned and damaged the goods left behind in preparation for the attack. As a result, he has angered several members of the Southern Arrow company, who are equally concerned that he is going to do something strange with Makala's "toys." An expedition of goblins (Figure 7-14) and moredhel has been ordered to find and take back the Waani at whatever cost. If you do your scouting properly, you should have a chance of skirting a majority of the combats, but will run across the final combat near Wilindi's house.

Reward for Solving the Quest

This quest must be completed in order to end Chapter 7. The reward is the nifty explosion sequence at the end and the satisfaction of knowing that the bulk of the moredhel army has been halted. Patrus, however, gets sucked into the rift machine and either dies or ends up on another world. For every triumph, a tragedy, I suppose ...



Figure 7-14. Angry goblins

The Snake Men Quest

Completely unaware that Makala and the moredhel are planning a strike at Sethanon, the Pantathians are once again surveying the area in preparation for events to come in *The King's Buccaneer* and the forthcoming *Serpent War*. (If he were here, Finn might be inclined to say, "Yes, this is years ahead of schedule, but the Pantathians don't take a dump without a plan, son") Having already "bumped up" against Pug's metaphysical defenses, the Pantathians are certain they will need a considerable amount of energy to scry the caverns and have decided to repeat their old life drain-for-power methodology.

Hints and Clues

The Twenty-Three-Year-Old Octogenarian

If you visit Craig, living in the shack off the road leading south out of the Dimwood, he will insist that he is only twenty-three years old, but something strange happened to him while on a trapping trip to the east. He will relate he had spent over a month there, but slowly he began getting weaker and weaker and decided to head home. He will indicate that in his haste to get home, he forgot the traps he was using to catch deer. He will ramble a bit then, and will mention having seen some kind of snake man, but will just as quickly change the subject back to his traps and the fact that he would like them back. Talking to Craig will turn on Squire Phillip's *Craig* keyword.

Illusion of Evil

If you find the old general store north of Craig's house (the Fife and Laurel), the man inside will tell you that the store has closed down since Sethanon was destroyed. He will report that if you're looking for food, there's good trapping down towards the southeast (if you're paying attention, you may notice that the man has very sibilant speech and his eyes look, well, *unusual*.) He will refuse to answer the door thereafter. Talking to him turns on Squire Phillip's *the fife* keyword.

Squire Phillip

If you speak to Phillip about *the fife* you'll discover that there's reason to doubt the man's statement about good trapping. If you speak to him about *Craig*, he will indicate that the man is telling the truth and that they should be cautious if they decide to investigate. Craig isn't one to exaggerate about things. (Owyn will comment that this sounds like Phillip knows him fairly well, and Phillip will offhandedly remark that he reminds him of himself when he was that age. A bit of a tip-off about his own identity.)

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

All you have to do to solve the quest is retrieve the traps. Of course, in dealing with this quest, you'll have to head east from Craig's shack, cross the bridge (Figure 7-15), and either kill the Pantathians hiding in the northerly corner of the southeastern section, or take the Strength Drain damage as they approach the chests containing the traps (Figure 7-16).

The Quest's Red Herring

- ⚡ Before you get to the chests, you'll run across five triggers. The first one will launch an interparty comment, with someone telling the rest of the party that he feels a very strong burst of energy and that he feels physically weakened; he advises you not to go any further forward until you discover the cause. If you go ahead and ignore the warning, you'll step on four other invisible triggers which will drain 5 points from your party's Permanent Strength. (You can get Permanent Strength back by drinking from a well elsewhere.) These triggers will have no effect on you, however, if you have killed the Pantathians.
- ⚡ There will be three Pantathians north of the traps who will remain there until killed.

Reward for Solving the Quest

If you return the traps to Craig, he will give you a Ring of the Golden Way as a reward for your help.



Figure 7-15. Crossing the bridge during the Snake Men Quest



Figure 7-16. The chests containing the traps

Miscellaneous Notes

The Dimwood is central to the plot of *Betrayal at Krondor*. Therefore, if you choose to visit the forest at different times in the game, various things will be happening.

- Following Makala's successful tests of the rift machine, Delekhan has ordered a reconnaissance team into the Dimwood to gather further information regarding the defenses at Sethanon. They have instructions to do two things: (1) secure the staging area and (2) investigate the route south through the Dimwood. As a result, you may encounter reconnaissance (recon) units (composed of any combination of moredhel archers, witches, and Quegian mercenaries). Unlike the assassination attempts that you've encountered in other chapters, most recon units will be highly likely to retreat from you. (They are, after all, only checking to see how much resistance they are likely to encounter in the later push. Obviously you will lead them into expecting a reasonable counterforce, since the three of you have managed to wipe out their entire recon operation!) These combats will remain where they are through all chapters until you wipe them out. They are not dependent on other game elements.
- The Dimwood is a wild place, the native home of the giant scorpions that populate Midkemia. As a rule they tend to stay away from human settlements, but have an affinity for nesting near treasure chests (don't ask me why).
- At some point, someone in your party will question how and why the moredhel would have scouts in the Dimwood (considering that this group doesn't seem to be concerned about Gorath at all.) Someone else will comment that all these moredhel are part of Delekhan's war tribe and he will be equally puzzled about the numbers and the purpose of the warriors. (This will remain in place through *all* chapters.)

Chapter 2

- Random scorpion attacks

Chapter 3

- ◀▶ Arutha's "call up" is beginning to gain momentum as soldiers begin to enter the Dimwood on the Prince's order. Unfortunately, some of them (Quegian mercenaries) have run afoul of Delekhan's recon men and the sight of Gorath will make them none too happy. If you run across one of the "dialogue" triggers (your party will shout something to the effect of "Hey, it's another of those cursed moredhel archers! An' look, they killed someone from Krondor. Look at that soldier's colors! Get 'em!"), you'll enter combat with these angered Quegian mercenaries. They will be located primarily in the southeastern corner of the Dimwood.

- ◀▶ Random scorpion attacks.

Chapter 6

- ◀▶ On orders from Prince Arutha, a band of mercenaries is standing at the north pass waiting for further instructions about whether they should ride to Northwarden or Highcastle. If you step on a dialogue trigger, the Quegians will inform you that they can't allow you any further north, regardless of who you think you are. If you wish, you can challenge the Quegian captain, but it will result in a combat with endless numbers of Quegians attacking you until you retreat.

Chapter 7

- ◀▶ Random scorpion attacks.
- ◀▶ Seek and destroy recon units of goblin archers have blocked the other passes. Any attempt to get past these location will result in endless numbers of goblins attacking the player until the player retreats.
- ◀▶ If the players approach Maiden's Leap (a waterfall) in the northwest corner they will be attacked by a single, but very powerful, Rusalka. The hole nearby contains a scroll for the spell River Song, which summons a Rusalka.

Monster attacks everywhere and virtually no unpoisoned rations or messed up weapons; the only reliable sources of food should be dead *moredhel*, trapped game, and a few tree trunks. The main thrust of Chapter 7 is that you must fight starvation while fighting your way across the Dimwood. Restoratives should be available on a few corpses. If you helped Wilindi earlier (like in Chapter 1), Phillip may direct you to some rations and other supplies.

Chapter 8

Of Lands Afar



Golden sweat traced his jawline.

Uncomfortable in the unrelenting heat, he stripped back his shirt sleeves and with passing humor noted his sunburn. Within a month he doubted even his closest kin would recognize him; his moon-pale skin tinged a light almond color and his brownish hair streaked with golden highlights. All things considered, he felt different now, felt more aware that there were problems in the world bigger than his own. Still, it was difficult not to dwell on his sudden ... disability.

Owyn considered resuming the meditations that had occupied him the length of the morning, but decided that in the space of four hours he had learned nothing he hadn't already deduced intuitively. For some reason, his magical abilities were useless in this alien environment and the prospect frightened him.

"Another week beneath this strange sun and I shall seem pale next to you," Gorath shouted as he hiked back up the path, his dark hair dancing in a hot breeze. "This magician Pug must walk without leaving footprints! I can find no evidence of him. How go your meditations?"

Owyn shrugged. "No luck. I've tried everything from Lesser Path cantrips to Greater Path incantations. Nothing works. It's almost as if there were no manna here." His brows arched inquiringly, Gorath motioned for the boy to continue.

"Most people misunderstand the way magic works," Owyn explained. "As a magician, I don't have power within me. All I know are a series of words and actions that help me gather the power, or manna, from the natural world. If, however, there is no manna for me to collect, then all of my magical training is futile. I'm powerless."

"Would the same be true of Pug?"

Owyn nodded. "He would be as helpless as I am, worse perhaps. If I were accustomed to having the kind of command that he has and suddenly lost it—"

"He could be in grave danger," Gorath said, finishing the thought. Leaning over, he fetched Owyn's staff from where it lay discarded in the sand. "I think that makes our journey all the more urgent."

Owyn stood and watched an alien sun sink beneath the barren landscape. He shivered. If the greatest magician in Midkemia was lost here, what chance did a renegade moredhel and aspiring apprentice have, he thought. Owyn turned and looked at Gorath, who was already making a small shelter for the night. They had both changed greatly since they met near LaMut; they had even escaped the dungeons of Sar-Sargoth together! Perhaps things weren't so bleak, after all ...

They slept uneasily under alien stars.



The next morning, Gorath roused Owyn. "We should be moving before the sun gets too strong." Owyn stood up slowly and nodded. The mannaless environment made Owyn's tongue feel thick and heavy. They moved north for a while before Owyn stopped on the side of the road.

"Wait," Owyn said, stooping over a mound of dirt. He buried his hands in the sandy soil and pulled out a handful of crystals. They tingled on his palm. "I can't explain, but these feel like magic." Scooping them up, he dropped the crystals in his pack. "They may be useless, but they're the first thing I've felt here that seems magical, so they might come in handy. Maybe Pug can figure out a use for them." Looking up, he noticed Gorath had disappeared along the dirt path. "Gorath?" yelled Owyn.

"Come here," said the moredhel. "I think you'll find this interesting."

A domelike structure sat on the ground. It was clearly made by someone or something, but it looked more like a burrow than a home. "We are not alone here, it seems," said Gorath. "It's empty. And I found this." Gorath handed Owyn a note.

Tomas,

As Katala no doubt summoned you, I imagine you have heard most of the pertinent details leading up to the time of my departure from Midkemia. I will give you the details of the circumstances once we meet, but I think it is more pressing you know certain facts:

Do not depend on magic. It does not function here in any way I comprehend and I have concluded something has become of the manna. Its absence may, in some way, relate to a second factor I have discovered about this planet. I don't know to what extent your inherited senses have already told you this, but this world appears to have been visited by your Valheru benefactors. A violent race exists here greatly similar to the Pantathians, similar enough that I think they surely must have been stranded here by Alma-Lodka during the time of the Valheru raids across the cosmos. You surely could judge better than I.

Gamina is still missing, and I have made a sweep of the entire island. I am going to head to the northern tip of the island to a ruin I spotted there earlier. Perhaps I will find answers there.

Pug of Stardock

"Pug is here!" cried Owyn. Gorath nodded. "And so are they," said Gorath quietly. He pointed to a corner with his sword. Owyn stared at the blade for a moment. It was bloodied. Owyn's eyes followed the blade to a corpse. He gasped. "Serpent men!"

Gorath smiled. "So it would seem. But this was a poor cousin. It did not wield magic, and did little more than sling stones at me. It did not speak to me. Perhaps these were creatures left behind by the Valheru, as were the Pantathians on Midkemia." Owyn bent over and examined the scaled creature. It was dressed in little more than tatters. "We should be careful nonetheless," Owyn said.



They discovered another dwelling further to the north. Owyn nudged open the strange door.

He gritted his teeth, waiting for a surprise attack. When none came he pushed the door open a little further and walked inside. He was stunned to find each wall completely covered with indecipherable sym-

bols and markings. His attention was also drawn to a dark-colored box in the far corner of the room.

Moving closer to it, he felt a strange tingling in his fingers, a sensation not unlike the one he felt immediately prior to casting a particularly powerful spell. The feeling pulled him in, and without even being aware of the possible dangers involved he grabbed the box and threw open the lid. Inside he found a dark crystal staff!

Holding the staff in his left hand, he held up his right palm and whispered a simple incantation. Flames leapt from his hand. "I can't explain it," Owyn said. "But this staff has rejuvenated my magic. It's as though the staff is made of ... I don't know ... crystallized manna. It seems that the serpent men on this world may be able to use some magic. Let's keep moving north."

Gorath handed Owyn another piece of paper. "I found it under a small rock," said the moredhel. "It appears we are on Pug's trail."

Tomas,

While I discovered no evidence of Gamina at the ruin, I have learned the manna on this planet has undergone metamorphic concretion or, in simpler terms, transformed into crystal. As there is no natural phenomenon that can account for this, I can only assume the change was engineered by an agency of the most supreme order. It is doubtful the Valheru could have mastered it, as it would have had cataclysmic effects beyond their control, although it may have given Draken-Korin the inspiration for the Lifestone under Sethanon. I can only assume at this point that the ancient gods on this planet may have used the tactic to drive away the Valheru. Again, this you would know better than I.

I made my discovery when I touched one of the crystal columns in the ruin and sensed the power of it. At the same time, I sensed within what I will tentatively call an intelligence, because I felt the stirrings of mind speech although no specific thought ever formed. If you go to the ruin, do not touch the central column. I felt greatly ill for several days after touching this particular column, although I am not certain of the cause and I avoided the rest thereafter. Perhaps after I have found Gamina, I will have an opportunity to learn more.

Pug of Stardock

"Well, we should make for the ruins," said Owyn. "Perhaps Pug left another marker there."



The pillar was smooth to his touch.

Towering over Owyn, it seemed to be made of an exquisite crystal, although it was wholly unlike anything he had ever seen on Midkemia. Through it he could see refracted images of the desert beyond, but when he varied the angle at which he held his head, it seemed as though he could see other places that were not on the other side of the column. Instead, it seemed that there were images of oceans and skies of other colors. ...

Your observations intrigue me. You are savani, are you not?

Startled at the presence of the alien sentience in his mind, Owyn shook his head. Unsure whether he should simply think his reply or speak it aloud, he decided that speaking it would be the safest route. "I'm not familiar with the term *savani*, so I don't know if I am one or not. With whom am I communicating?"

Nearby, Gorath threw Owyn a startled glance, apparently alarmed that his friend was speaking to the air. Before Owyn could rattle off an explanation, the voice within his mind returned. *I am Sutakami, Mother of the Thousand Mysteries, once goddess of Timirianyana. You have summoned me. What do you desire to know?*

"I'm not sure what you are asking," Owyn said. "Are you an oracle?"

No, the voice replied. I may only tell you that which is already known, although I dimly perceive things that may come to be. I sense you are newly come to this world. Perhaps you would desire to see something of the creatures who inhabit the desolation of our world.

Suddenly Owyn's mind reeled with visions of men with scales rather than skin and large hulking creatures with shining carapaces that roamed the deserts. Grasping to retain what he learned about the creatures as the information flooded through his mind like a tide, he at last seized upon an image of a wispy figure.

"What are these things I see?" Owyn asked. "They look as if they are made of smoke."

They are the ancient servants of Rlynn Skrr, the last priest of Dhatsavan before the Desolation. Creatures of magic, they can be killed only by special spells that drain directly from their materiality, their strength. Now they wander the ruins of Dhatsavan's ancient temple. For a moment the image wavered, then stabilized once more. I must rest ... I am needed elsewhere.

The next pillar was made also of crystal.

In better condition than the others in the circle, its reflective surface was not as pitted by blasts of sands. Stroking its surface, Owyn marveled at the level of craftsmanship.

"I wonder what this place was originally," Owyn asked, not expecting the mental reply that flooded his senses.

You stand in the ruins of Karzeen-Maak, once the high temple of the seven gods of Timirianya. Once, these columns were only symbols of the gods, crafted by the savani artisans who were the servants of Dhatsavan. Now they are the vessels within which we have taken refuge.

"Refuge? What drives a god into refuge?" Owyn asked. "I wouldn't think it would be possible."

Valheru, the voice said. Although without a true voice it was impossible for Owyn to be sure, there were shadings within it that seemed a mixture of hate and sorrow. Those who were known as the Valheru extinguished all life as we knew it here, using this land as a battleground where they warred with all who dared challenge their universal supremacy. Only when Dhatsavan showed to us that our struggles would be futile did we create a plan by which we could drive out their hordes of Pantathians and Kada and Xekka'mati.

"What did you do?" Owyn asked. A long silence greeted him before a distant reply came to him.

Of the Seven Who Ruled, only six of us survived the Desolation. Two have faded so far from the world they can no longer give voice to their thoughts, but instead are little more than sentient forces of nature. Only Dhatsavan will remain, waiting for the time of the Awakening. He shall call us when the need has come ... We shall not speak again, savani.

Owyn stood before the next pillar and hesitated.

Shimmering in the hellish alien heat, it seemed probable the sun-warmed crystal would blister him if he touched it, but Owyn was curious and laid his hand upon the glasslike pillar. Privately he wondered if the serpent people they had encountered in the desert plains had constructed the enigmatic monoliths, but somehow the idea seemed wrong to him.

No. The Pillars of Karzeen were not crafted by the Panath-Tiandn, a voice whispered in his mind. We made ourselves.

Horried by the sudden, uninvited intrusion of the alien presence within his mind, Owyn drew back from the column, but the intruder

remained. *We seven were the gods of Timirianya, savani. I myself was once Dhatsavan, Lord of Gates. But once the Valheru brought their wars of desolation, we narrowly averted the great star death.*

"I don't know what any of the things you are saying mean," Owyn replied. "I have heard a very little bit about the elven old ones called the Valheru, but beyond that—"

It is unimportant, savani, the voice said. What we were is lost beyond regaining, but there is time yet to save your people from the same fate.

"Our world?" Owyn asked. "The Valheru have been dead on my world for time beyond reckoning. They can't pose any threat to us." A feeling of disinterest washed through him as the god brushed aside the question. *The one you know as Pug of Stardock will tell you more when the time comes for you and the Wanderer to make your choices. For now, you must bring to this place the Cup of Rlnn Skrr. Do this and we will free Pug from his captivity.*

Suddenly suspicious about the nature of the entity that spoke to him, he worded his reply carefully. "If you are a god, why do you need me to fetch a cup for you? And why should I trust a bodiless someone who claims to have imprisoned the one we look for?"

You are wise to question, the voice replied, but it is mine alone to know this truth. You may do as I ask and bring to me the Cup of Rlnn Skrr or you may perish in the desolation of Timirianya. The choice is yours. I warn you, however, it would be unwise not to utilize its powers. Pug has already learned this lesson.



They made their way to the southeastern portion of the island. The burrow-like dwellings were more and more common, and the southeastern area seemed like a city with its scattered dwellings. Looking over a rock outcropping, Gorath turned to Owyn. "If they thought the cup was a sacred artifact, they probably brought it to their mystic, if such a thing exists. That," Gorath said, while pointing to the village, "seems like the center of activity here. Let's find out if they have the Cup."

Serpent men turned to face the intruders. They hissed unintelligible syllables at Gorath and Owyn, and one raised his hand. As if rocked by an unseen fist, the moredhel was knocked off his feet. Serpent men leapt on top of him, using their claws and crudely made clubs. Owyn's lips moved soundlessly, and he started into the yellow eyes of a shaman.

The shaman opened his mouth in a wordless scream. His teeth glinted as invisible coils constricted around him. Owyn, who had been concerned about his spellcasting ability even with his new staff of crystallized manna, smiled briefly as the shaman fell to the ground. He turned to assist Gorath.

The moredhel was still grappling with three serpent men. "If you don't mind, Squire." Owyn raised his staff in the air, and the serpent men were flung off the moredhel like leaves. Leaping up, Gorath spun around and gutted one of his attackers while the others fled.

Sniffing as he entered the central burrow, Gorath carefully turned over the contents of the room. Reaching under some rags, he gingerly held up a cup. Although worn and scuffed, the craftsman's skill was still evident. Owyn picked up the artifact and hefted it in his left hand. "This must be it," whispered Owyn, feeling a strange throbbing in his head. "Let's go back to the ruins."



Owyn touched Dhatsavan's column.

Feeling the familiar presence stir within, he waited patiently for the entity to respond to his mental call.

You have returned with the Cup, the voice said calmly. That is well. The abandoned progeny of the Pantathians will now be denied access to the Hall. We can be assured they will never again hear from their Midkemian mistress, although their reestablished contact with their brethren holds dire consequences for the future of your world. But, for now, you have no need of concern. The Cup's powers may now be subdued until such time as it is needed again.

"Pug's welfare still remains," Owyn said firmly. "We have run to the limits of this island for you, now we wish to know where you have kept him."

He is safe within a structure constructed by the Panath Tiandn. The protective barrier that kept him within the structure will be removed once you locate him. He misapprehended the scope of the Cup's powers. When he awakened its powers to seek the mind of his lost daughter, it overwhelmed him and reduced him to little more than a helpless child.

"You imprisoned him so you could protect him?" Owyn ventured. "To save his life?"

The god's reply, seemed amused, although Owyn felt certain such feelings were beyond a god. *As an individual he is of little interest to us, but we saved his life in honor of a kindness done for the last survivor of our world's*

holocaust by one known as Macros. He knew of these events and asked that the one known as Pug be sheltered until you returned here with the Cup. Already he has regained most of his identity and memory, but his abilities will yet be impaired for some months. You will also find that the way is open to a place that would have gained you your deaths had you gone there—the ancient lands once occupied by the Valheru during their wars here. There you will find artifacts that may be of help to you in battle. You may now leave, but take the Cup with you. With it you may teach Pug any of the spells you know.



There was motion in the strange burrow.

Pushing back the strangely woven doorflap of the tent, a short man stepped forward and squinted at them. Unassuming in most respects, he walked casually forward, as if it were not at all unexpected that he would find humans in the strange desert world.

"Where is Tomas? It is important I speak with him." Pug regarded Owyn and Gorath carefully.

"He was unable to come and he sent us after you. He gave us the spell you left to him."

"Unable to come? Why? What has happened to him?" Pug looked concerned for the first time.

"He was injured during an attack on Elvandar by the moredhel. Queen Aglaranna assures us that he will be all right."

Pug scowled. "I can't believe that Makala's plans would be served by sending you here, so for the moment I will have to trust your word. ... In looking at you, it occurs to me your face is familiar. Are you the magician boy who came into Krondor with Seigneur Locklear a few months ago?"

"Yes, and you remember Gorath?" Owyn looked at Gorath, who remained expressionless.

"His face has been hard for me to forget these last few nights. He was Makala's first tool in this grand scheme."

"You accuse us of being liars and spies?" Gorath growled.

Pug shook his head but did not seem intimidated in the least by the moredhel's fierce expression. "I'm not suggesting you were a willing participant, Gorath. You were as unknowing in your part as I must assume Delekhan is in his. When you said he had raised the war banners of Murmandamus over Sar-Sargoth, I became somewhat alarmed."

Pug turned away and seemed lost in thought. "Having seen Murmandamus's death with my own eyes, I had no reason to believe he still lived, but forces acting in his name caused the calamity at Sethanon and I thought it possible the Pantathians were once again responsible. After some investigation I found they were indeed interfering with affairs in the Kingdom, but were acting through a band of magical thieves searching for various magical items—trinkets—in no way directly responsible for what was happening in the Northlands or posing immediate threat to Midkemia. With the issue resolved, I believed then that Delekhan was merely exploiting the reputation of his predecessor to gain power."

Owyn still had some questions about the scheme now revealed to him. "So, what did Gorath tell you that was so important?"

"It was only after Makala tricked me into coming here that Gorath's testimony to Prince Arutha took on any significance. In passing, he had mentioned Delekhan wearing a helm of black, shaped like a dragon. Murmandamus wore such a helm and had it with him when Prince Arutha cut him down. Whoever had given Delekhan Murmandamus's helm had to have been inside the caverns beneath Sethanon."

Pug's face showed concern. "There are only four magicians I can think of who might have had the wiles to slip inside the first perimeter of defenses that have been placed there. One is Macros, but since he was instrumental in averting catastrophe there, I cannot believe he would be responsible. Another is a magician of whom Macros once told me, named Nakor the Isalani; but again, I have reason to believe the Northlands would hold little interest for him. The only others who would be capable are Elghar and Makala, but Elghar has been quite busy with his students at Stardock."

Owyn nodded. "Leaving Makala as your only suspect. But why is he doing all of this? Why would he be pushing Delekhan into a war with the Kingdom?"

"If he was ingenious enough to get within the caverns, he would still need considerable help to achieve his final objective—a chamber containing an artifact of unbelievable destructive power about which he has been indefatigably interested. I left behind a dragon to guard it, and even my powers would be sorely taxed in a single battle against a dragon her age, let alone one with the special capabilities of the one

who sleeps under Sethanon. Once she is alarmed, she will no doubt summon help from a secret garrison of soldiers that King Lyam ordered to remain in the region of Sethanon, soldiers whom Makala surely would have detected on his first visit and intends to counter with Delekhan's moredhel troops."

Owyn jumped. "But that's why Prince Arutha sent us to find you! He's afraid that Delekhan is going to have magicians working at the siege at Northwarden! Can you stop them?"

"Unfortunately, I'm of no use to anyone at the moment, let alone Prince Arutha. In my blind haste to find Gamina, I used a magical artifact that would have been best left alone."

Owyn smiled. He had a chance to teach something to the greatest magician in his time. "We already know something about it. You said before that you were going to have to trust us, so you'll have to trust me now when I tell you I think I can help. I hope for all our sakes that I'm not wrong about this."

Pug shook as he lifted the jeweled Cup of Rlnn Skrr, feeling power flare within the jeweled artifact. In ever-expanding circles, his consciousness stretched outward, touched on the minds of those with whom he traveled, finding awe, confusion, fear, pain, knowledge ...

With jarring suddenness Owyn's mind was joined to Pug's, and each was dazed by the intimacy of the contact. *Concentrate on what you know of spellcraft*, Pug thought. *I shall do the same, although I warn you—I shall benefit more from this than you.*



Owyn stirred and found Gorath standing over him, a look of concern on his face. "I've been afraid for you two," he said.

"How long was ... were we out?" Owyn asked, sitting upright.

"Two days," Gorath replied, smiling at Owyn's startled reaction. "It is a good thing you both had enough presence of mind to eat when I put the food into your hands." As Gorath spoke, Pug raised himself up by his crystalline staff, and headed north.

Gorath stopped Pug. "I don't mean to be rude, but where are we going?"

"We must find my daughter, Gamina! In my current state, I am unable to reach her mind. I know not of your travels, but I must complete my search."

"Then we shall continue our random wanderings?!" asked the moredhel.

"I have no desire for our search to be random. Assistance may lie to the north at the pillar of Dhatsavan, Lord of Gates. While trapped, I found my mind focusing there ..."

"We know the pillar of which you speak," said Gorath.

"Then lead the way, my friend."



Pug studied the column.

When he had visited the site at Karzeen previously, he had sensed the sentience that radiated from them, but had been unaware of the true nature of the beings who inhabited them. Stepping forward, he made a slight bow.

"Greetings, cousins of the Aal," he said. "I regret that I did not recognize you on my first visit. My apologies. It was only during the time I was in the tent that something the Oracle spoke of once occurred to me."

Apologies are unneeded for such as we, savani, but we accept your tribute. Your safety was greatly prized by Macros.

Pug nodded. "He has been a true friend to me, only as one other has ever been. It is an honor that he prized me so highly. I sometimes wonder that he will ever stop protecting me."

You have not come to us to waste thanks on us, one called Pug. What do you wish from the gods of Timiriana?

"I came here in search of my daughter, Gamina. A magician, a savani by your terms, brought her here against her will. It is important that I find her and return to my home to avert a possible catastrophe. Forces are gathering to tamper with the Lifestone."

For a moment there was silence, the only motion in the air made by the hiss of the sands moving in the deserts. Then, quite abruptly, Dhatsavan's voice returned. *Your daughter is caged by Panath-Tiandn. They believe her an omen that Alma-Lodka has heard their pleas and is preparing the way for her return.*

"Is she in any danger?" Pug asked. "Is there something you may do for her?"

No, Dhatsavan replied. *Such as my powers once were, they are limited, part of the price we paid for continued existence.*

"You exhausted your essence when you crystallized the manna to drive off the Valheru. When their magical abilities seemingly began to wane, they assumed they had tapped the manna of the planet dry and moved on."

Your speculations are deft, savani. But the gods of Timiriana are not yet dead. We will abide until the time comes when either we sleep or we are reborn through these children of the holocaust. Perhaps once they have forgotten Alma-Lodka and the rest of the Valheru, they can mature in their own ways.

Pug accepted the information calmly and turned to leave, then halted. "Has Makala placed any special spells around her? I am very limited in my abilities at present."

Seek the old hordes of the Valheru. There may be something there to assist you. Farewell, Pug. Dhatsavan shall speak no more.



"This road to the southwest was blocked before," said Pug. "I believe Dhatsavan lifted the barrier to assist us on our journey." With the use of Gorath's spyglass, Pug dug up some chests that seemed like treasures themselves. Flawlessly made of white and gold metal, the hinges opened smoothly. Two suits of armor and a scroll were covered by the remnants of cloth that had long since disintegrated into dust.

Gorath picked up the suit of armor and despite the revulsion at the unmistakable echo of the Valheru, he could not help but marvel at the workmanship. White with gold tracings, the armor was exceedingly light and strong. It was armor no human hands could hope to make. Pug placed his hands on the tabard and closed his eyes. "Nothing of the Valheru remains in their arms," he whispered. "They are safe to wear."

"Keep it," hissed Gorath. "I have no desire to wear gifts from my people's former slave masters. Besides, you may need armor for whatever lies in that temple." Pug smiled at Gorath and turned to Owyn. "This scroll may be useful when we meet the Elemental that lingers in the temple—it can mystically drain the strength from its target. The creature may be impervious to physical harm." Owyn nodded, and together they began to study the scroll carefully.

The three scouted the remains of the temple, and found that the corridors all led to a large chamber in the center of the temple. Pug looked at Owyn and Gorath. "Shall we?" he asked. Owyn gulped and nodded, while Gorath drew his sword. The door swung open. Two

winged creatures bellowed a gust of foul air at the intruders, while three serpent men spun in surprise as Gorath and Owyn attacked.

For a moment, Pug froze. "Gamina!" Pug's daughter lay in the center of the chamber, entrapped in a crystal prison. Then he leapt forward. "Owyn," cried Pug, "the Elementals! Strike now!"

Owyn concentrated and recited the spell he had learned together with Pug. He could feel the life draining out of the Elemental and dispersing into the ground. The two Elementals were reeling, weakened by their mystic assault. With a scream, they disappeared, leaving only an acrid scent that hung in the air.

Gorath whirled among the serpent men, slashing deep cuts through scaly flesh. He knew that he could not harm the elemental creatures, so he moved to strike down the serpent men before they could launch their own mystic assault. When the pounding began to subside in his temples, he blinked and saw the three serpent men lying in tattered heaps, in growing pools of blood.

Owyn regarded Gorath with renewed respect. He had grown into a fearsome warrior during their time together.

Pug examined the crystal surrounding his daughter. Gamina's eyes widened as she saw her father. "She lives. Makala has many blessings to count," said Pug. "Gorath, see if you can do something about the cage."

Gorath smiled grimly and raised his sword. "Protect your daughter, magician, and stand back!"

The sword fell, and the crystal exploded into a thousand harmless fragments. Pug took Gamina into his arms. Eyes glistening with relieved tears, he hugged the dazed girl tight to his chest and for a long moment he simply held her, his head resting in her silver-white mane of hair. At last he slipped a finger beneath her chin, gently lifted, and looked into her eyes as they initiated the special mind speech that had been Gamina's gift since birth.

He was lying, father, all that time, Gamina thought. Even when he brought me here. He was trying to get you away from Krondor!

I know, I know, Pug thought in return, pushing a stray wisp of her hair into place. I shall have to see you better guarded in future. I had always supposed that your gifts would keep you safe from harm, but I see my pride in you sometimes borders on the dangerously arrogant. We must be more careful.

Agreed?

Agreed.

Feeling her faint nod, he released her and kissed her forehead, looked to where Owyn and Gorath stood at the cave mouth. Curiously, the Squire was bent double, his face buried in his hands as he shook with violent coughs.

"I'm okay," Owyn wheezed, waving his hands, occasionally stealing glances at Gamina. "Really, I'll be fine."

Pug smiled. The boy's theatrics were poor, but it was manifestly obvious he wished an introduction before his lungs collapsed. "Gamina, this hacking young ruffian is Squire Owyn Beleforte of Tiburn. Both he and Gorath have helped me find you. Perhaps we should have them down to Stardock for dinner someday."

"Stardock?" Owyn's performance faltered at the mention of Pug's Academy of Magic. Realizing his lapse, he coughed tentatively into his hand. "You mean, *the* Stardock?"

"None other." Pug frowned as he drew out a small, multifaceted stone from the folds of his robe. "This special pattern stone should take us there, but we have to drop off Gamina before we attend to our business."

"We go to join Prince Arutha?" Gorath asked.

"No," Pug replied, clapping his hands overhead. "We go to Sethanon!"

Chapter 8 Walkthrough

Owyn and Gorath have been sent to another dimension through a rift opened by the *Book of Macros*. Pug is imprisoned somewhere in this barren land, and you need to find him.

Your first surprise is that magic does not work on this world. In fighting off the Valheru, the gods that ruled this world reduced magical essence to crystallized form. The Valheru assumed that they had depleted the world's magical energy and left. Make sure you gather all the crystal manna you find, from holes, buildings, and yellow crystal plants. Before you can use the manna, you need to retrieve a staff of crystallized manna for Owyn (Figure 8-1). Finally, one of the dwellings holds a map that can be used to see where you are on the island (Figures 8-2 and 8-3). Pug also carries a staff and a map.

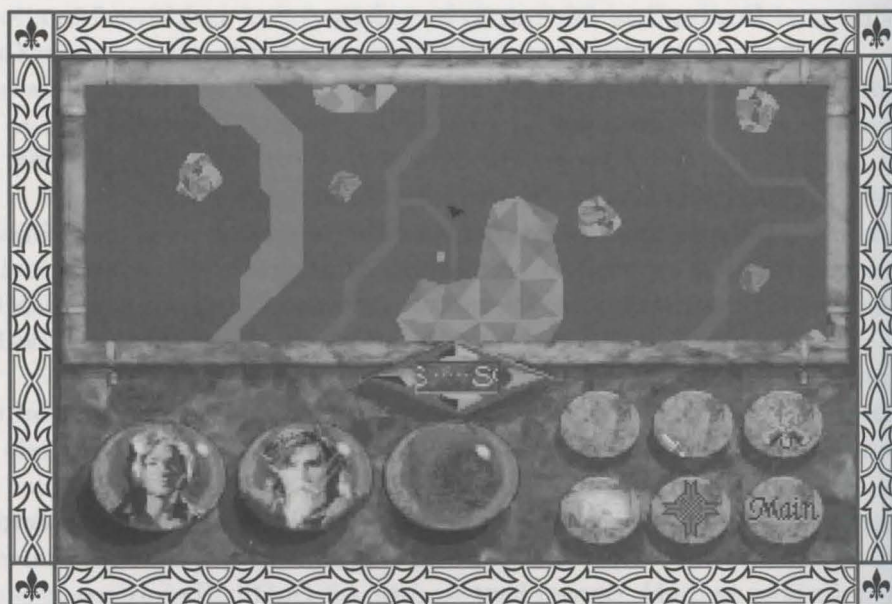


Figure 8-1. A crystal staff

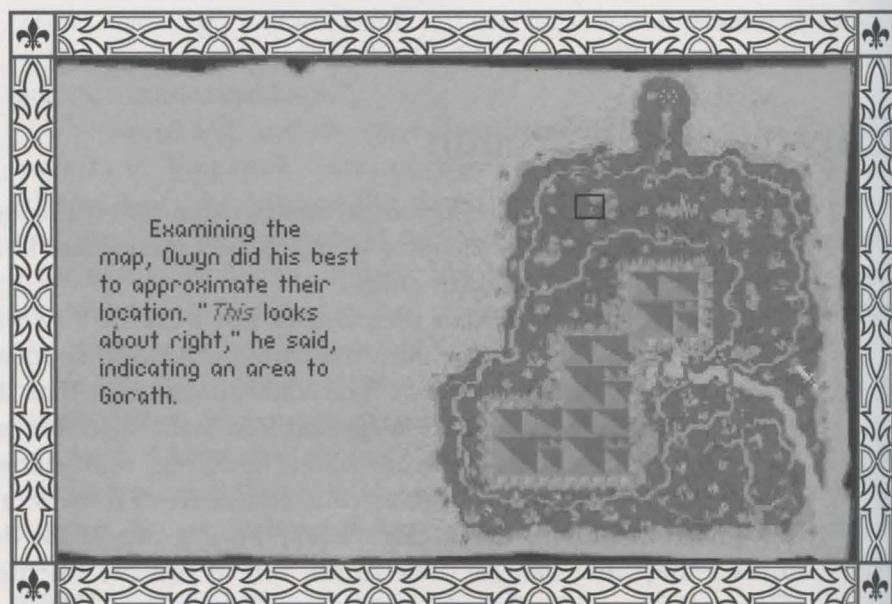


Figure 8-2. Where you can find a map of the riftworld



Figure 8-3. Finding the map

You will also run into Pantathians, or this world's version of Pantathians, who are less formidable than their Midkemian counterparts. Few can use magic, and they do not carry arms or armor, but they may be carrying food—a valuable commodity on a desert world. The beetle-like nethermanders are more dangerous opponents, as they can inflict serious physical damage.

On the north end of the island, seven columns of the gods of the dead world stand—the remains of a temple. The seven gods of Timirianya inhabit the pillars, weakened during their wars with the Valheru. Touching each column will boost your abilities or give information about Timirianya. However, one of the columns drains you of strength—do not touch the seventh column.

Dhatsavan tells you that Pug is imprisoned, and that you must retrieve the Cup of Rlnn Skrr before he will release Pug. The Cup is held in the southeastern corner of the island. Do not go to the southwestern corner of the island yet; in addition, the eastern road along the south coast is impassable. Retrieve the Cup and return to Dhatsavan, who will tell you where to find Pug. Find Pug (who has a

crystal staff already). Return to Dhatsavan one last time and he will direct you to Valheru Alley in the southwest, where you can get a scroll inscribed with the Strength Drain spell and two suits of Valheru armor. Use the Cup to transfer knowledge of spells from Owyn to Pug.

One of the two bridges in the central section of the island leads to the temple ruins. Gamina is imprisoned in the central chamber. Use the Strength Drain spell on the two Wind Elementals, who cannot be harmed by physical implements.

Chapter 8 Quests

☞ The Memory of a War Quest

The Memory of a War Quest

Having brought his plans to fruition, Makala seizes Gamina and hurls her across space and time to Timiriana, a far-distant world where magic has faded and the descendants of an old enemy are warring for control of a dead planet. When Pug rushes to rescue his daughter, he finds himself stripped of his magical abilities and facing eternal imprisonment by gods thought dead for ten million years.

Hints and Clues

Notes from a Friend

Aware that his chances of survival are growing slim, Pug has decided to leave a paper trail in case Tomas should come after him. If you explore the deserted Riftworld shack near the place you first appeared, you'll discover a lengthy note from Pug; a second spynote can be found nearby.

What Is Needed to Solve the Quest

Dear God. . .

If you touch the Pillar of Dhatsavan in the ruins of Karzeen-Maak, you'll be "told" by the stirred god that they have imprisoned Pug because he allowed the Cup of Rlynn-Skrr to fall into the dangerous hands of the Panath-Tiandn, who inhabit the Crystal Grove, and that they fear the Panath-Tiandn may find a way to use it to summon their old masters, their Valheru. The god tells Owyn that they will free Pug from his captivity if he and Gorath will return to Karzeen-Maak with the Cup of Rlynn-Skrr. The god also warns Owyn not to use the cup himself, as Pug did, because it could wipe out all his knowledge of spellcraft.

Lizards Shouldn't Play with Cups

If you fight your way into the Crystal Grove, you can find the Cup of Rlynn-Skrr by killing the Panath-Tiandn mage in the southeastern section of the island (Figures 8-4 through 8-6).

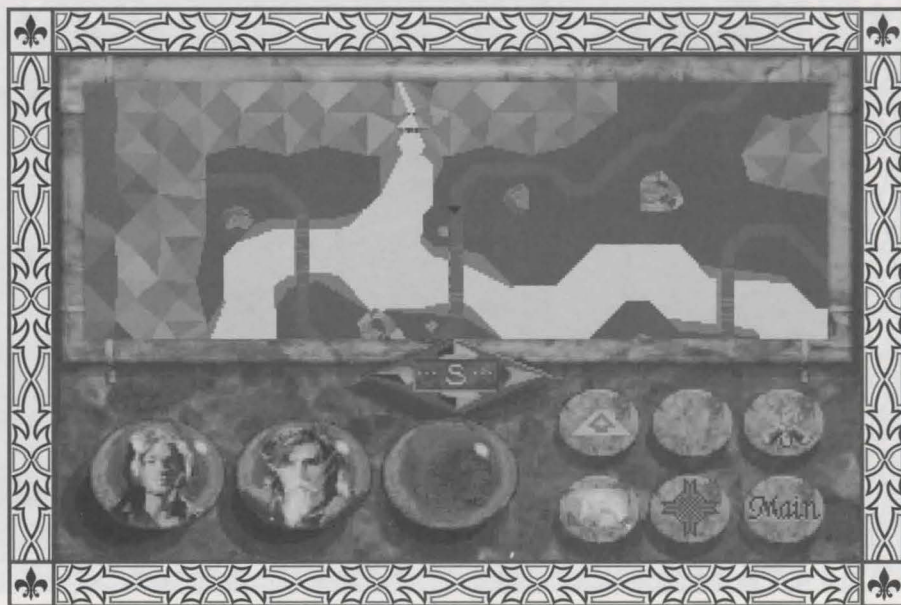


Figure 8-4. Crossing the bridge to the Crystal Grove

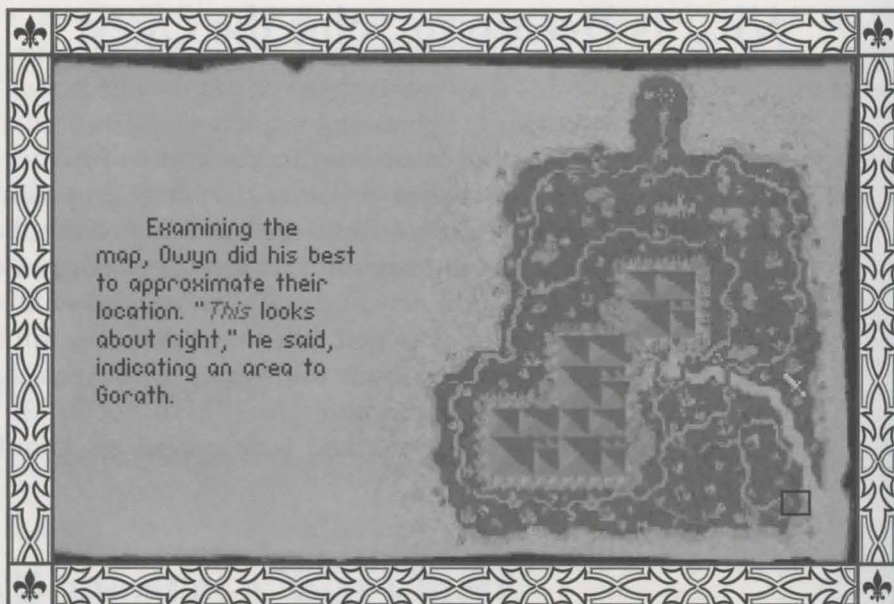


Figure 8-5. Locating the Panath-Tiandn mage



Figure 8-6. The Cup of Rlynn-Skrr

This Is Yours?

If you click on Dhatsavan's Pillar and you have the Cup of Rlynn-Skrr, Dhatsavan will advise you that he has drained the Cup of some of its most vital powers, and while he cannot teach Pug the spells he has lost, Owyn may now take the Cup to Pug (who has been freed) and then use the Cup once Pug has rejoined them.

Effects before the Quest Is Finished

Pug

You won't be able to get closer than several dozen feet towards Pug's prison (Figure 8-7), because there will be triggers all around him that check to see if the quest is finished. If it is not finished, then you won't be able to get any closer and Owyn blathers on about the fact that there is a force field of some kind surrounding him. Once the quest *is* finished, then you can get closer, and Pug will be able to join your party.

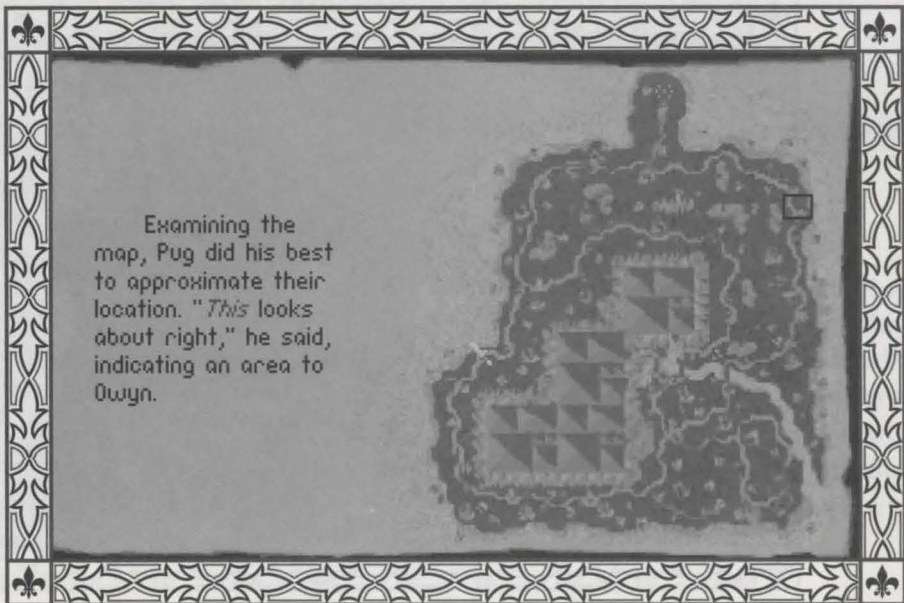


Figure 8-7. Pug's prison

Reward for Solving the Quest

Pug is freed from his captivity and you'll have access to Valheru Alley to pick up the Strength Drain spell, if you don't have it already.

Miscellaneous Notes

The Pillars of Karzeen-Maak

The ruins at the north end of the island house the remaining essences of the gods of Timiriyana, reduced to this state after driving the Valheru off their world (Figure 8-8). Each of the columns has a specific god associated with it and a specific dialogue trigger event. Each column produces its effect only once (except for pillar 2, which has a special purpose) and thereafter you'll sense that whatever may have been within has returned to its unnatural sleep.

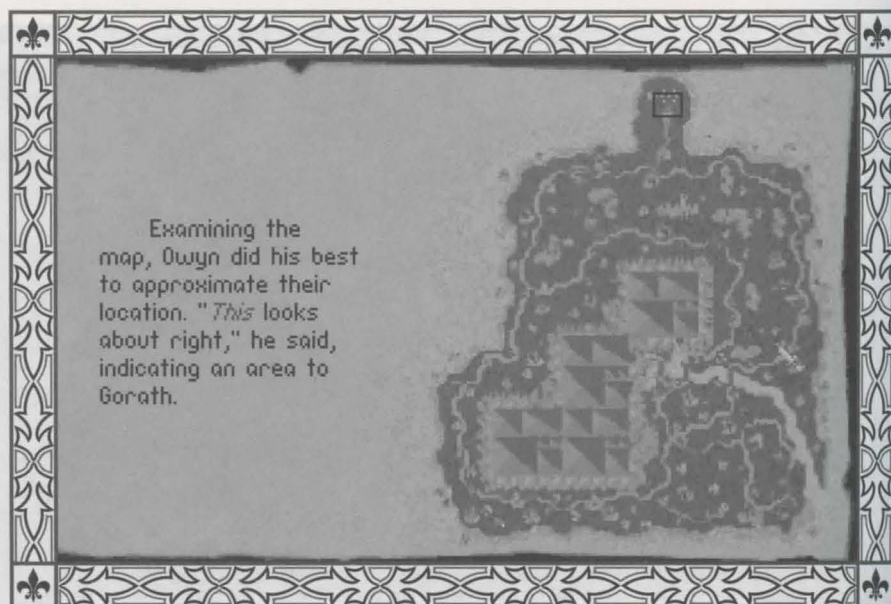


Figure 8-8. The columns of Karzeen-Maak

Column 1: Pillar of Sutakami

You will see visions of the Pantathians, nethermanders, and Wind Elementals that are native to the planet and will learn that Wind Elementals are difficult to kill. You'll gain a bonus of 15 percent to your Assessment skill.

Column 2: Pillar of Dhatsavan

The first time you click on this, it will activate the Memory of a War Quest, which will allow you to free Pug from his magical trap.

Column 3: Pillar of Ardejin Torru

Clicking on this column will fill your party with a lust for revenge for the murder of all the citizens of Timiriana who died needlessly under the heel of the Valheru. Your party gains a bonus of 10 percent to their permanent Strength.

Column 4: Pillar of Gobi Ulakaliki

When you click on this column your party will experience a dark foreboding about something, but with no certainty as to what its source is.

Column 5: Pillar of Kubal AbDhet

Clicking on this column will fill your party with warm feelings. Each gains a bonus of 10 percent in Defense skill.

Column 6: Pillar of Metemori

This is a talkative little column. You'll learn several things, including the names of the gods, the reasons for the pillars, and the fact that Gamina has been taken captive in the Riftworld mine (which is really the ruins of the Temple of Dhatsavan; the rock that surrounds the cave is actually manna, which allows those within to exercise magic) and that the Panath-Tiandn who are holding her captive intend to sacrifice her, believing it will bring back Alma-Lodka. Metemori wishes them well before he fades back to "sleep."

Column 7: Pillar of Amorn

Touching this column causes your party to writhe in excruciating pain losing 4 points of permanent Health. At the same time, you'll sense overwhelming loss and anger.

Gamina the Captive

Gamina is being held captive in the Riftworld mine which is guarded by magical Panath-Tiandn (Figure 8-9). The central chamber is guarded by two Wind Elementals, who have special regenerative powers and who cannot be harmed by any physical damage (Figure 8-10). They cannot be defeated unless both Pug and Owyn are capable of spellcasting the Strength Drain spell. Once you set foot in the central chamber, it will trigger the end of Chapter 8.



Figure 8-9. The Riftworld mine, where Gamina is trapped

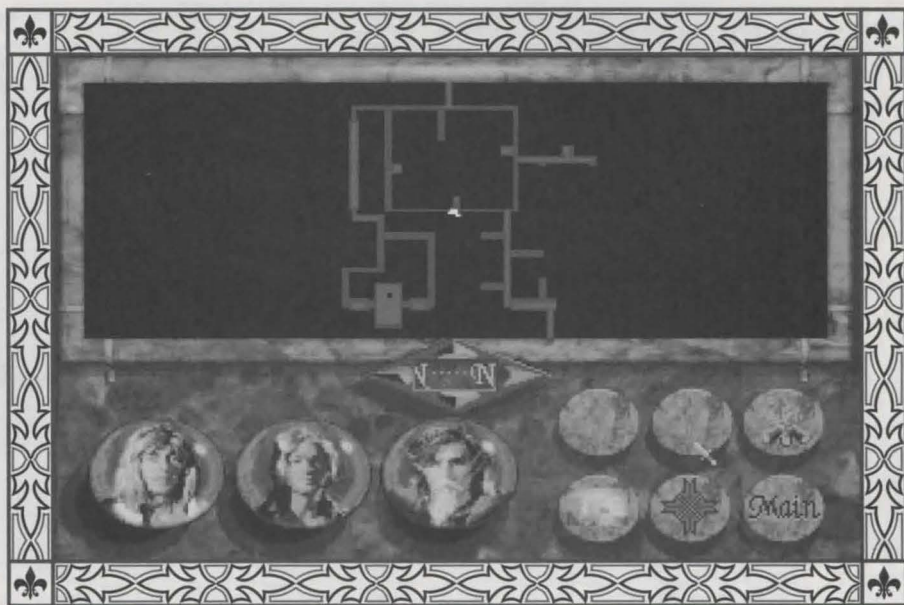


Figure 8-10. Behind the door ...

Valheru Alley

Valheru Alley was once part of the world occupied by the Valheru and their *moredhel* servants. If you attempt to cross into this area before completing Dhatsavan's quest, you'll hit several dialogue triggers in a row that drain 15 points of Endurance/Health from *both* Owyn and Gorath, until they are both dead. If, however, the quest *has* been completed, nothing will happen to them as they pass into Valheru Alley. You can find a mound of dirt in which is buried two suits of Valheru armor and a Strength Drain scroll (Figure 8-11 through 8-13).

Monsters, Monsters Everywhere

Everything that moves here is hostile and you should have quite a battle trying to make it through alive (Figure 8-14). The second toughest problem should be locating food, and eventually a crystal staff for Owyn and the raw manna they will need to recharge their staffs.

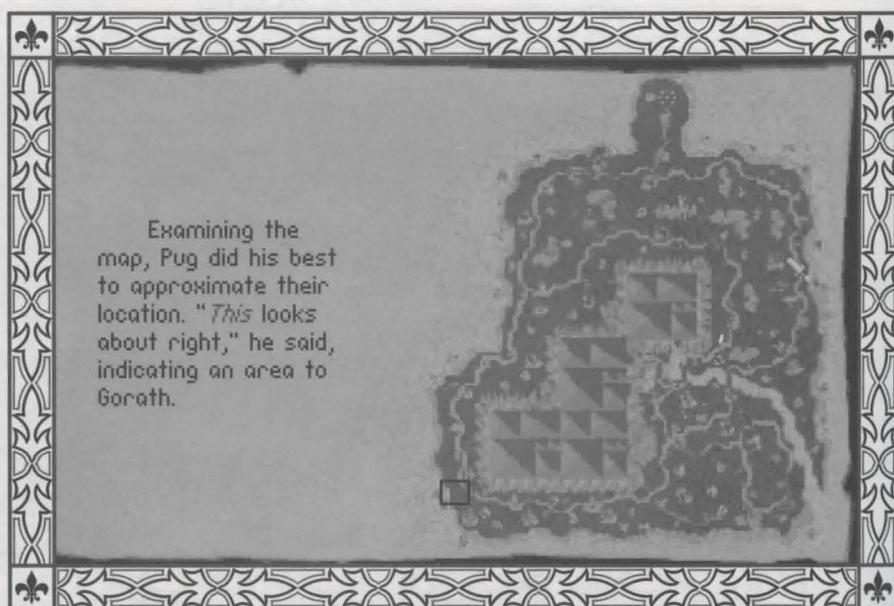


Figure 8-11. Heading towards Valheru Alley



Figure 8-12. Locating lost Valheru artifacts



Figure 8-13. Valheru treasure



Figure 8-14. Fighting the Pantathians

The northwestern corner of the island is primarily dominated by nethermanders, although Panath-Tiandn begin appearing as you head north from the “beam down” site. Heavy concentrations of warriors and slingers appear directly down the middle of the island, south of the columns. The population of Panath-Tiandn increases geometrically (well, at least a lot) as you move down the eastern coast of the island towards the bridge district. The district around the mine will be heavily populated and violent, but the population thins out as you enter the Crystal Grove. Within the grove there are only a few magical Panath-Tiandns, who are attended by nethermanders.

Chapter 9

Mad Gods' Rage



Locklear's eyes hardened.

At some level he wanted to believe he'd seen something in the instant of the gate's collapse. It was irrational, no doubt a vision he had conjured to soften the blow of Patrus's death. As a man who had stood against many armies, Locklear knew all too well about last-second visions seen on the battlefield. There was absolutely no chance that Patrus could have survived the blast. None.

Locklear suppressed the the melancholy that threatened to overtake him, and put aside his grief for the lost magician. There was still an army to contend with, still *moredhel* to slay, still a Kingdom to defend. There would be time for grieving when it was finished.

"Such a stupid way to die," Locklear said, biting off the words bitterly.

Seigneur James nodded. "He died a good death, Locky. I wouldn't have wished for him to go, but he died to save others."

"You say that all the time, James, but there's no good way to die. They're all bad."

James stared at his old friend and saw the coldness that glimmered in Locklear's gaze. He had come to know that look over the years, an expression that had first manifested itself years before at the Battle of Armengar, when Locklear's beloved, Bronwynn, had been slain by a troll. Part of Locky had died then and in that place had grown the seed that had bloomed into a deadly and superior knight. But in all that time, he had never forgiven himself for letting the girl die.

"You're not angry Patrus is dead," James said, finally. "You're angry that you didn't die in his place."

Before Locklear could protest, three flashes appeared in the woods. "Spellweavers!" Locklear shouted, reaching for his sword. James steeled himself, knowing that without Patrus they would be at a disadvantage against a magical opponent. *A good death*, he thought, drawing his weapon, and laughed to himself ...

... as Pug, Owyn, and Gorath appeared. Pug raised his hand. "Stay your swords, Seigneurs. I believe it is still considered rude in the Kingdom to skewer your friends."

James was visibly relieved. "Duke Pug! Never have I been so relieved to see a friendly face. We were expecting moredhel magicians."

Pug shook his head. "Tsurani magicians, James, or rather magicians trained by a Tsurani. No moredhel witch would have the capability to make a rift machine nor would they chance going into battle with such poor odds of success."

Locklear was busy talking to Owyn and Gorath. Recently he had found his thoughts turning to concern for the safety of the young Squire, and incredibly, the moredhel. He ascribed that strange feeling to his desire to know whether Gorath was telling the truth about the events past.

In the meantime, Pug continued. "I still should like to know how, exactly, it was that Delekhan managed to make contact with Makala? I had hoped that the moredhel would be wary of another such attack following the defeat of Murmandamus ten years ago."

"Prince Arutha said they hope to find Murmandamus and free him," said James. "The moredhel are convinced we've been holding him captive all these long years."

"So Gorath has told me. Doubtless Makala exploited that belief to his advantage."

James cast a sidelong glance at Gorath, who was laughing as Locklear told him the story of Tamney the Minstrel. "That at least explains one wrinkle. The moredhel have never forgiven us for that loss. But why is Makala doing all of this? Obviously he isn't in this to rescue a dead moredhel leader."

"For the moment I believe I know, but I don't wish to say until I have taken a better look at something. This last problem I will have to unravel myself, with some assistance from Gorath and Owyn," said Pug

as he motioned to Gorath and Owyn. "From here I think we will be able to teleport into the caverns beneath Sethanon. It is there our objective lies."

"What of Locklear and myself?" asked James.

"Once Prince Arutha arrives with his reinforcements, deliver my assurance that he will not face anything magical from the *moredhel*. If Makala indeed has assistants, they will be uninterested in the Prince. They will be waiting for me."



A flash, then darkness. Owyn squinted as his eyes adjusted to the light of the caverns below Sethanon. Like the ancient ruins near Elvandar, the stonework was meticulous but had fared worse during the ages since the Dragon Lords walked on Midkemia.

Gorath moved forward but Pug stopped him. "Before we go any farther, I must prepare you for what we are going to encounter. Located in these chambers is an artifact known as the Lifestone, crafted by the ancient Valheru. It has powers beyond even my comprehension, but we know that it was crafted for the purpose of great destruction. It was this that the false Murmandamus sought to achieve during the Great Uprising."

"False Murmandamus? What do you mean?" Gorath was puzzled.

"He was not truly *moredhel*. He was a Pantathian who took on the semblance of a *moredhel* so he could achieve his goal. The point is irrelevant. What he sought was to activate the Lifestone. If that had happened, the devastation of Timiriana would seem a garden compared to what would be left of Midkemia."

Gorath reeled as if struck. So many deaths, at the rantings of a hated Pantathian! Owyn, too, was confused. "If the Valheru are dead, what does it matter? If no one knows how to use it, then it can't be of any danger to us."

"Not so. The souls of the Valheru are bound to the stone and it may be that tampering with it may allow them to emerge once more, perhaps even to inhabit a living body. Even in a symbiotic state, we have no certain way of knowing what destruction they would be capable of."

"So Makala wants to destroy everything?" asked Owyn.

"He is not mad, but his curiosity may lead to more trouble than he imagines. Hopefully, we can find and stop him before he can do anything catastrophic."

"But why tell us about any of this? I'm a Squire from Tiburn and Gorath is a renegade from the Northlands. Isn't that dangerous?"

Pug looked at the two of them seriously, but compassionately. "Your stations are unimportant. I was once a kitchen boy in the court of Crydee. I trust you because apparently Macros prefigured your involvement in this and did nothing to warn me before he left Midkemia. For whatever reason, I think he believes it necessary that you be involved in these events and he invariably acts for the greater good, however mysterious his reasons may be."

The door to the first room opened easily, and they caught two heavily armed goblins unaware. Gorath vented his rage on the mercenaries, and before Owyn could even bring a spell to his lips, Gorath was standing among two corpses. He bent down and picked up a strangely shaped object.

He sensed something abnormal about the key even before picking it up. "The key is . . . pulsing," Gorath said. "The inscriptions on the haft look elven but parts also appear to be *moredhel*. Whatever it is, I have the feeling it predates the Kingdom, the Northlands, or even Elvandar itself."

"Some of the doors here date back to the Valheru," said Pug, "while others Arutha put in. The Ward of Ralen-Sheb is ancient, and Makala must have labored greatly to obtain such an artifact of the Dragon Lords."

"I am loathe to carry items belonging to my former masters," whispered Gorath.

Pug nodded. "I understand," he said, taking the key from the Gorath's outstretched hand. "You are a rare *moredhel*, indeed, Gorath."

The *moredhel* shrugged. "Perhaps. Or perhaps not. I have seen too many of my brothers and sisters die, pursuing a dream of death founded on lies. I will have none of it."

Pug carefully led the way to the Lifestone chamber but stopped before a corridor. He picked up a rock, and tossed it down the darkened hallway. The pebble seemed to ricochet off thin air. "It is much the same as the magical perimeters the Timirianyan gods use. Makala must have learned their ways while he was there."

"Can you disassemble it?" asked Owyn.

"Not directly. We will have to go to the source of its generation and eliminate the problem there."

Owyn nodded. "So if we find Makala, we'll be able to remove it."

"No. Makala is already within, investigating the Lifestone even as we speak. He will have spellweavers scattered throughout the area to maintain this power shield. I don't think he was absolutely certain that I would find the Cup."

"But he thought it likely you were going to find it?"

"About two years ago, he was absent from Midkemia for a number of months—shortly after I informed him that I would divulge no more about this chamber and the events at the end of the Great Uprising of the *moredhel*. When he reappeared, he dismissed his absence, saying that he had been traveling." Pug shook his head at Makala's machinations.

"So you think he ran across the Cup himself?" asked Gorath.

"Among other things. It's the only way he could have known about its powers and left it for me to discover. It is also probably about the time he decided to make contact with the *moredhel*. ... It's time we found the Six."

"Delekhan's *moredhel* assistants?" said Gorath.

"Not having seen them, I can't be certain whether they are native or not, but I suspect they aren't *moredhel* spellweavers, despite whatever appearance they may be using. Makala has played your ruler for a fool. Delekhan won't stand to benefit in the slightest from this raid, despite anything Makala might have indicated ... enough speculation. The sooner we find the Six, the sooner we can get this shield down."

The hallways twisted, leaving Owyn and Gorath disoriented. Finally they reached an old door. Pug pulled it open, revealing crumbling stairs leading downward.

The spellweaver foiled their ambush.

"We were told to expect you, Milamber," the spellweaver said, raising his staff. "And we were instructed not to let you pass into the Lifestone chamber."

"You cannot win," Pug bluffed, not entirely certain he could match the Great One's power in his present state. From somewhere, he found the resolve to continue. "We shall discover the truth of it."

Shouting something in Tsurani to the spellweaver, Pug watched hard for a response from the magician and apparently saw what he expected to see.

"What did you say to him?" Owyn asked.

"I offered peace," Pug said, nodding to the Great One. "Apparently he isn't interested."

Fire bloomed around Gorath and Owyn, while Pug leapt aside. Owyn raised his own staff, and Gorath found himself standing in an inch of water, only slightly singed. Pug shouted something and the ground beneath the spellweaver shook, tossing him to the cold stone. Gorath leapt forward like a striking snake, and his weight carried him, sword first, upon the startled spellweaver. His sword cut through cloak and entrails, becoming lodged in the spellweaver's spine. His eyes widened, and seemed to look through Gorath.

The other five spellcasters proved to be no match for Pug, Owyn, and Gorath. They were expending much of their energy maintaining Makala's mystic shield, and relied on their mundane guards—moredhel warriors and an occasional hill giant. Without any magical defense, Delekhan's minions could not withstand Owyn and Pug's magical attacks. Pug, in his crippled state, began to admire Owyn's seemingly innate understanding of magic.

"This is the way back to the Lifestone chamber," whispered Pug. Without hesitation, Gorath walked first down the shadowy corridor.



The corridor widened.

In a few moments the path turned, opening into a large chamber where a dragon lay curled on the ground.

I called for you but was unable to reach your mind. The magician wields an amulet that renders this body feeble and he is in the process of disabling the last of the defenses that ring the Lifestone. The Oracle of the Aal's speech echoed through the minds of the three small figures.

"Makala is reckless, but I do not think he will have crippled you permanently," said Pug. "He must have unearthed some Valheru artifact, likely a product of Lyron-Baktos, the Master of Dragons. While he would be incapable of ruling your mind, he could still command your dragon's flesh." To Gorath's amazement, Pug walked right up to the huge creature.

My inability to know my own future blinded us to the possibility.

"It's something we will have to attend to later. Gorath, I wish you to stay here and guard the Oracle."

Thank you. It pains me that protection is necessary.

"Pug, you may require my strength when you reach the Tsurani magician ..." said Gorath, in fact reluctant to leave Owyn and wishing his own vengeance on the Tsurani puppet master.

You will have a difficult time in the Lifestone chamber.

"No, Gorath. You have already given too much to this quest and seen what should have been seen by no one other than myself. You would never so much as scratch Makala's skin before he burned you to cinders. He will be more respectful in the presence of magicians and less likely to do anything rash. For now, you have a responsibility to guard the Oracle," said Pug firmly. Gorath nodded reluctantly, and took up guard near the entryway.

Pug hurried Owyn under an archway. The corridor angled sharply downward, its rough earthen floor littered with a slippery ceramic material that cracked underfoot. In places, the boy glimpsed ancient frescoes of a moredhel-looking race; the face stared back at him with eyes filled with enigmatic hate, the cause of which had been dead for millions of years.

Following a slow bend, they arrived at last at what looked to be a stone wall, but quickly Pug muttered a few words and the wall shimmered away into nothingness. Beyond lay a vast chamber, and Makala was waiting for them.

"I had hoped for more from you, Makala. When first you came to us years ago from the Assembly I sensed your heart full of dark calculation, but I had thought with us you would grow to gentleness."

Makala's imposing form, clad in a thick black robe, glowered before Pug and Owyn. "We Tsurani are, of course, bereft of that quality."

"Save your prating for the Assembly!" Pug shot back. "You have shown contempt for my friendship, treated my daughter as a wolf to his prey and have defied my interdict to visit Sethanon. Assume nothing between us now other than the respect due between practitioners. Why has the Assembly of Magicians seen fit to interpose itself into Midkemian affairs?"

"As a whole, the Assembly was unable to reach consensus on this matter; they hesitate to dabble in matters that might arouse your ire. As they were otherwise disposed with a small problem concerning House Acoma, they decided those who felt this investigation necessary could conduct it of their own volition. I undertook that responsibility." Owyn shrank back from Makala.

"I should be careful, taking such weight upon your shoulders. It may yet crush you." Pug returned Makala's cold glance. It seemed to Owyn that their conflict had already begun, as Makala subtly tested Pug's strength.

Makala smiled thinly. "Ten years ago you engaged in a battle to bar the Valheru entrance to your world," he said, "a battle in which you requested the service of several companies of Tsurani foot soldiers. As such, the battle became a matter of imperial interest and fell within the jurisdiction of the Assembly. You, however, have thwarted all our efforts to gather information about that battle and have forbade our investigation of Sethanon. Many sons of great houses fell but their bodies were never recovered for the proper rites."

"Your attempts at evasion are execrable, Makala! Never has the Assembly concerned itself with the souls of the dead and I don't believe they are practicing a new-found piety. You wished to learn how I defeated the Valheru."

Makala nodded slowly. "Indeed. How could we not? The Valheru were a race of unspeakable evil and dreadful power who once nearly destroyed our world. Although my brothers harbor the greatest respect for you, Pug, you would be incapable of turning aside such monstrous power unaided. Judging by the numerous defenses that ringed this abandoned town, we derived the only possible conclusion. You concealed a thing of power in the caverns here."

"I cannot fault your logic, Makala, but your methods have been despicable. The Lifestone was created in the darkest days of the Mad Gods' Rage, a war in which the Valheru strove to destroy the gods of Midkemia. With it they believed they could conquer every corner of the universe, and in all likelihood they could have. It must be eternally locked away here and its existence must die out with that small handful of us that have looked upon it. You will speak to none of the Assembly about what you have found here or you shall answer to me."

"I cannot in good conscience keep such a secret. What if such a weapon were wielded against the Empire? Could not such a weapon lay waste to all her children? We cannot simply bury such a weapon. It must be destroyed for the good of all future generations of the Empire and the Kingdom." Makala pointed at a huge gemstone with a sword buried in a gleaming facet. Owyn found himself hypnotized by the swirling reflected torchlight.

"Impossible. We have no way to know what would happen if we attempted to destroy it. It may not be tested without potentially disturbing the Valheru whose souls now occupy the stone." Pug shook his head.

"As I suspected. You have done nothing to study it. Great though your power may be, you haven't an inkling what secrets lie within that stone. Its very existence is obscene! It must not fall into the hands of a hostile power."

"Makala, do not tamper with the stone. It must be left untouched for the good of all!"

Makala bared his teeth as he spoke. "I judge now as is my right as a Great One of the Assembly of Magicians. It must be destroyed, Pug . . . for the good of the Empire!"

Makala raised his staff.

Not wanting to strike down the Tsurani, but realizing the choice was being made for him, Pug summoned what resources were left to him after the Timirianyan cup had erased his spellcasting ability. Perhaps between him and the boy, they could still defeat Makala.

Two creatures, hideous and foul, materialized as Makala waved his staff and shouted. Pug stared in horror for a moment. "Dreads! Owyn, take care—" Dreads were creatures once conquered by the Valheru, and whose lords (the Dreads' masters) were feared by the Dragon Lords themselves.

Owyn was already leaping away from a clawed and muscled arm, tumbling across the ground before landing on his feet. He clapped his hands together and the dread fell backwards, knocked off balance by a shock wave. He turned and shouted at the other dread, and a wave of frost sprouted up from the cold stone like vines, wrapping around the dread's extremities. Owyn ducked and swung his staff at the stiffening creature's leg, and cracked a piece of frozen flesh. The dread shook off Owyn's spell quickly. Knocked backward by the creature's desperate blow, Owyn smiled through the blood that ran down his face. He stood and raised his staff again.

Pug narrowly deflected Makala's attack.

Normally, Makala would be no match for Pug's talents, but Pug had only begun to recover from his experience on the alien Riftworld. He stamped his staff on the ground twice, and Makala was wracked by lightning, electrical serpents writhing around the startled Great One's

body. Singed but not seriously hurt, Makala opened his hand and the lightning was drawn into his palm. Makala clenched his fist, which began to glow.

"Milamber, you seem to be distracted," Makala laughed. He opened his fist and a ball of flame shot towards Pug.

Pug gritted his teeth and thrust his hand forward, cleaved the fireball, and watched it explode on the wall behind him. He raised his hands and a bolt of force hurled towards Makala.

Makala laughed at Pug's feeble attack, and began to raise his hands in a defensive gesture. Then his eyes widened in pain and surprise—Owyn, who had regained his feet at a point behind Makala, saw Pug's need. With no time to think, Owyn brought his staff up between the Great One's legs, lifting the startled Tsurani off his feet. Then Makala's broken body struck Owyn from the force of Pug's renewed attack, throwing him against the wall.

When Owyn got his wind back, he expected to see the two dreads closing in for the kill, or perhaps some less savory purpose. Instead, he saw Pug standing above him. "When Makala was killed, the spell that bound the two creatures to this world was broken," Pug explained while offering his hand to the dazed Squire. "And your intervention was quite timely—and resourceful." Owyn took Pug's hand and stood, about to say something. But then his attention was drawn to the glowing gemstone instead.



The Lifestone pulsed warmth.

Rays of emerald light touched Owyn's solemn features, deepening the hollows of his face. Nearby, Pug spoke softly, his voice echoing off the cavern walls. "It may be difficult," Pug said, "but don't judge him too harshly, Owyn. I have performed acts nearly as monstrous in the name of common good."

"I find that hard to believe," Owyn replied. "You're a good man."

"So was he, in his own way. Loyalty can sometimes misguide even the finest of men."

Both magicians flinched in unison as the sound of clashing swords erupted in the corridors outside the chamber. With startling rapidity the sounds approached, resolving into desperate footfalls and half-screamed oaths.

"Watch yourself!" Pug shouted across the cavern. "Someone's coming!"

Harried by a shadowy assailant, Gorath backed into the chamber, his sword flying in a defensive arc before him. Repeatedly, razor-like fists flashed out of the darkness to

challenge him, but he skillfully turned the attacks to his advantage. Finding the rhythm of his opponent, he feinted right when he was expected to move left and a warrior barreled past him.

"Delekhan!" Owyn exclaimed.

Tripped up by Gorath, the moredhel leader crashed to the ground, snarling all the while in slaving fury. Attempting to rise, he slashed upward with his gauntleted fist but brutally Gorath stepped inside his guard and delivered a rain of heavy kicks until the older warrior fell quiet.

"I suggest you lie still," Gorath snapped, wiping rivulets of blood from his face. "I may decide to kill you yet."

"I hear you," Delekhan croaked, his voice weak. For a long moment he remained curled in a ball, his breath tearing raggedly from his throat as he clenched and unclenched his fists. With extreme effort he turned his head and looked upon the mesmerizing light of the Lifestone ... and froze.

"No!" Pug shook his head, apprehension welling within him like a black lake as he caught the moredhel's expression. Stumbling forward, he tried to block Delekhan, but his failing strength abandoned him.

"No!"

Swatting Gorath aside effortlessly as he rose, Delekhan's eyes flashed with reflected radiance. Like a puppet on a string, he began to stagger forward, his steps almost childish in their plodding. Undoubtedly something had control of his mind.

Dazed but still alive, Gorath leapt to the attack and tackled the moredhel leader, his blow carrying both of them not down but forward, forward into the Lifestone ...

Together, they reached for the sword.

Delekhan's features contorted into a mask of surprise. "What madness is this? ... *who?*" Delekhan's face began to melt away, replaced by the fierce visage of a warrior god long dormant.

"Something within the sword ... consumes! Can't fight ... it ... *him!* ... Ashen-Shugar ..." Gorath's whisper was full of pain.

Pug screamed at Owyn. "The Valheru souls trapped within the stone are slipping their bonds! We will have to kill them both!"

"But what about Gorath?!" cried Owyn.

Gorath looked at the Squire with eyes that were becoming more than mortal. "You must ... Owyn ... evil ... can't fight it—*him*—much longer ... can't hold him"

Pug had already conjured another bolt of magical force. Owyn's reflexes responded automatically—he wedded his magical strength to the blast, feeling a simultaneous sensation of horror and elation as the Lifestone chamber crackled with power. In an instant, all that had been Delekhan or Gorath vanished in a concussive blast.



Owyn stared blankly at the Lifestone.

"We killed him," Owyn said, a bitter hurt in his words. "He came to the Kingdom to warn us and we killed him."

"Don't, Owyn. This isn't the time for it." Glaring at Pug with shock, Owyn opened his mouth to reply, but found that words failed him. Angered, he turned as if to leave, but felt the master magician's hand on his shoulder.

"Wait," Pug said, his voice more gentle than it had been. Meeting the boy's hateful gaze, he motioned for him to stay. "You must understand. Gorath was dead the minute he touched the sword. If we had hesitated another moment longer, both he and Delekhan would be dead and an unspeakable evil would be loose on our world. When Delekhan began to change you could see the Valheru were attempting to mold them into a form they could use. Do you remember the terrible devastation we saw on Timirianyana? That would be a paradise compared to the lives we would lead under their dominion. I'm telling you this because you now have knowledge and abilities that come with terrible responsibilities. You will have to make decisions far worse than this someday if you continue down the path you are on. You are going to have to learn to think before you act, but never to regret your decisions, right or wrong. Otherwise, you will slowly begin to not make decisions at all."

"But how can I know which are the right decisions?" Owyn asked. "How can I be sure?" Pug squeezed his shoulder. "You need to live to a ripe old age to know that and I am not nearly old enough to have an answer. All I know is what Macros the Black once told me. He said to train those around me well, to make them powerful, but also to make them loving and generous. I see those things in you."

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The battle was going against them.

Enraged, Warleader Moraelf growled orders to his terror-stricken lieutenants as he reviewed their weakening lines from the safety of an elm-shaded hill, watched with fury as his forward ranks of pikemen retreated under an unexpectedly heavy rain of Kingdom longbow fire. In a short while, the combined mass of Prince Arutha's relief forces and the garrison at Sethanon would be in a position to push them into the only quarter of the city where they would be unable to retreat, and then it would only be a matter of hours before they would be forced to surrender or die in a blaze set to flush them out.

"Warleader Moraelf, you must come quickly!" Hearing a commotion to his left, he muttered a silent curse on Delekhan's head for leading them on this fool's errand, then snapped his attention to a small group of moredhel who were advancing towards him, faces flushed with excitement. Their leader, a scar-faced whelp of twenty summers, knelt reverently at his feet before breathlessly delivering his message. "At the keep! Your father has taken Prince Arutha! And I believe the marked one is with him! The tide of the battle turns!"

Stalking skeptically after his messengers, he progressed through a ruined avenue and into a cobbled central square filled with moredhel warriors. Above them, Delekhan mounted the fire-blackened pet walk of the keep, preceded by a mysterious robed figure and the Prince of Kronдор, the latter bound hand and foot, unable to do anything but follow where he was led.

"Brethren!" Silence fell over the square as the robe-clad figure stepped past Arutha and Delekhan and into an archer's turret, a hand placed over his right breast. Ripping open his white garment, he revealed a body gaunt with hunger, but bearing an unmistakable curling purple birthmark that resembled a dragon and was the mark of legend. Instantly, a chant rose among the moredhel warriors, many of them falling to their knees in ecstatic reverence.

"I have returned, O my children!" Murmandamus shouted from the battlements, revealing a glittering sword of gold, its hilt set with stones of lapis. "Hidden deep in the chambers below our feet, Prince Arutha sought to keep this sword from me, from us, the key to our future! For ten years he imprisoned me in the bowels of this hell against my will, but you have freed me," he said, sweeping the air with the sword. "Ten

years ago I promised you the dawning of a new age. I was repaid with abandonment. But today I am free, because you who followed Delekhan believed in our dream. You have demonstrated your worthiness and loyalty, and as a reward you shall all bear witness to the death of the Lord of the West and the final fulfillment of the Prophecy!"

A dark cheer rippled through the crowd as Murmandamus held the sword aloft and faced Arutha, his lips curled back in a wicked smile as he advanced on the dazed Prince. Considering the things that had been done to him, the crowd thought it likely their former leader would execute Arutha slowly, and they were ripe for the spectacle.

Abruptly Murmandamus halted. Beneath him, the stones of the keep began to tremble, as if the structure were being shaken by an invisible hand. His look of proud defiance suddenly turned to outrage.

"What treachery is this?" Murmandamus screamed. "Who meddles with the Prophecy?"

As if in answer, thunder pealed overhead, announcing the arrival of a great dragon and rider, the pair seemingly having formed from the very air itself. Floating down from dizzying heights, they descended to a point level with the keep's rooftops, the dragon's wings beating great gales of wind against the crowd.

"The Prophecy is false, Murmandamus, as are you!" Pug shouted from the dragon's back. "You have betrayed the folk of the Kingdom and those of your own people for a lie! It is time for your terror to come to an end!"

At Pug's command Arutha ducked, narrowly averting death as the dragon skimmed low overhead, lashing the battlements with its titanic whiplike tail, hurling both Murmandamus and Delekhan, screaming like babes, into the horrified hordes who watched far below. Fanning away from the impact of the two, bystanders hastened to escape, fearing a possible second attack from the flying dragon and its equally menacing rider.

Standing in the midst of the crowd, Moraelf looked on, void of pain or fear, his voice calm and clear as he addressed a goblin lieutenant who stood near him. "Gather your kin and call the retreat."

"Lord Moraelf, we may still win! Lead us!"

Collaring the green-skinned creature, Moraelf lifted him off his feet. "I now lead the nations of the north and my first command is that I shall lead us home. Call the retreat," Moraelf spat, hurling the goblin backwards. "The day is theirs, but I must see to something first."

Disregarding the panicked warriors who sought escape from the square, Moraelf picked his way over the burning rubble to where his father lay dead, his wolfish eyes reflecting only the clouds of smoke that drifted through Sethanon. For all his father's grand schemes, for all the things he had thought to accomplish, he was nothing now, nothing but a hulk of dead flesh. He had been a fool to trust the Tsurani magician.

Leaning over the dead body, Moraelf snatched up the golden sword that Murmandamus had retrieved from the caverns below. Although he knew very little of the Prophecy that had led both his father and Murmandamus to their deaths, he had no intention of wasting what little they had gained in the battle. Perhaps when he returned to the Northlands he could still find a way to harness the power of the artifact, assuming it had any powers at all—

"Moraelf!"

Turning, the moredhel Warleader had no time to react before the lightning-quick assassin was upon him, driving a knife skillfully through his left eye and deep into his brain, killing him instantly. Without a sound, he crumpled to the ground across his dead father, dropping the sword even before he could raise it.

Smiling coldly, Narab withdrew his knife and wiped it clean, then snatched Murmandamus's prized sword from where it lay abandoned on the ground. One by one he had witnessed the destruction of his rivals: Gorath of the Ardanien, his own brother Nago, and Delekhan and his son Moraelf, all destroyed by their own greed or inaction. Now there would be the matter of dealing with the bitch Liellan, who had been Delekhan's mate, and then he might even claim the throne of Sar-Sargoth for himself, assuming no bastard of the former warleader claimed the right. It would be of small consequence, however, for now he possessed what they had all sought. Assuming he lived, he would learn to exploit his new-found advantage.

Resheathing his knife in his boot, he spotted a slow moving band of moredhel limping towards the Dimwood, and he hurried to join them, blending in with the crowd in the same manner in which he had come to Sethanon, as an unrecognizable face in a mob of the beaten and the angry.



Arutha watched with mild wonder as Pug conjured the Prince's duplicate into nonexistence, then just as quickly eliminated the remarkably lifelike illusions of Delekhan and Murmandamus, who lay crumpled on the ground below the keep. The corpse of Delekhan's son would have to be removed later by less arcane means.

"A shame we didn't have you with us at Armengar, cousin Pug," Arutha said. "A performance such as that before Murmandamus's troops might have won us the battle."

Pug shook his head. "Spectacle won't win your battles, but at least it may prevent the Dark Brothers from plotting another attack against Sethanon. With the dozen or more *moredhel* witnesses you've left alive on the battlefield, most of them should return alive to the Northlands. Having seen their leaders die and possessing the object Murmandamus sought, they'll have little reason to return here."

"Let us hope," Arutha said. "I have little desire to do this again."

"What about the artifact?" Owyn asked.

"A useless sword," Pug replied with a grin. "The Oracle of the Aal indicated a hidden room where I might find it when I asked for assistance with the plan. Shortly after that *moredhel* gentleman who picked it up returns to Sar-Sargoth, he will discover it useless and curse the names of both of them for having spilled so much *moredhel* blood on false prophecies."

Seeing James and Locklear poking about in the ruins near the keep, Arutha scowled. "I have a feeling those two are going to keep me busy for months with their questions about this place. Fortunately they're loyal—if I tell them the subject is closed, they'll both trust me enough to leave the issue alone."

"You can always tell them the sword was truly what was buried here," Owyn suggested. "The answer is good enough for the *moredhel*."

Arutha shook his head. "Locklear will probably forget the matter once he sees a pretty young face in Krondor, but Jimmy is different. He won't accept it, though he will never ask anything more. I don't like that I will have to lie to him. He's as loyal a subject as I've ever had."

"What about the Tsurani?" Owyn asked. Nodding, Arutha seemed equally concerned with Pug's answer.

"I shall have to talk with them. A well-respected member of the Assembly of Magicians named Hochopepa already knows something of the event and he will help me assuage their fears," Pug said.

"Thankfully they have their hands tied with another bothersome individual at the moment."

Satisfied, Arutha said his farewells and moved off to be of assistance in evacuating the remaining soldiers from the area, fearing that some might become too curious and discover things best left unfound. While watching the Prince depart, Pug smiled quietly to himself, gaining Owyn's attention.

"You seem pleased about something," Owyn said. "What is it?"

"You will note that the Prince said nothing about your silence," Pug said. "You know the secret of Sethanon. In all of Midkemia, only Prince Arutha, King Lyam, Duke Martin, Tomas of Elvandar, and myself truly know what lies beneath our feet." As if to reinforce the point, Pug tapped his staff at Owyn's feet.

"What are you saying?"

Smiling, Pug began to lead him down the winding path towards the city's smashed southern gate. "What that means is the Prince expects me to guarantee your silence. That will be difficult to do. With you in Tiburn and me at my Academy of Magicians at Stardock, it will require that I make a number of long and tiresome journeys for the sole purpose of ensuring you keep your silence. It seems a waste of time." Stopping to look into the sunset, Pug seemed lost in thought. "Of course, it is possible I could take you on as a student of magic, your living expenses paid in full by Prince Arutha. Are you interested in becoming a true magician, Owyn?"

Laughing for the first time in a great while, Owyn twirled his staff in his hands. "I've never wanted anything else!"

Chapter 9 Quest: Protect the Lifestone

This is the only quest in Chapter 9. All of Makala's ambitions are revealed—using Delekhan as a puppet to distract attention from his activities, Makala has learned a great deal about the Lifestone, the Valheru artifact that was designed to destroy all life on Midkemia. Although Makala seeks to act for the "good" of the Empire, his impetuosity in trying to destroy the Lifestone actually threatens to release the Valheru souls imprisoned within.

Pug, Owyn, and Gorath teleport into the Lifestone caverns beneath Sethanon only to discover that Delekhan and Makala's minions are already there, and that Makala has raised a mystic shield around the Lifestone chamber. This spell is anchored by the Six, advisers to Delekhan who are actually Tsurani magicians. Pug and company must find the Six and defeat them before they can enter the Lifestone chamber.

Hints and Clues

One of the goblins in the first chamber carries the Ward of Ralen-Sheb, a Valheru key that opens many of the doors in the caverns beneath Sethanon. Proceed down the stairs to level 2—the stairs are in the northwest corner of the first level (Figure 9-1). You can also find a chest with some useful items, such as rope and an infinity pool. Find and incapacitate the Six on level 2, then proceed to the Lifestone chamber for the final battle with Makala. You will run into a Servitor of Lims-Kragma on level 2 as well (Figures 9-2 and 9-3), a dangerous creature but no match for Pug, Owyn, and Gorath.

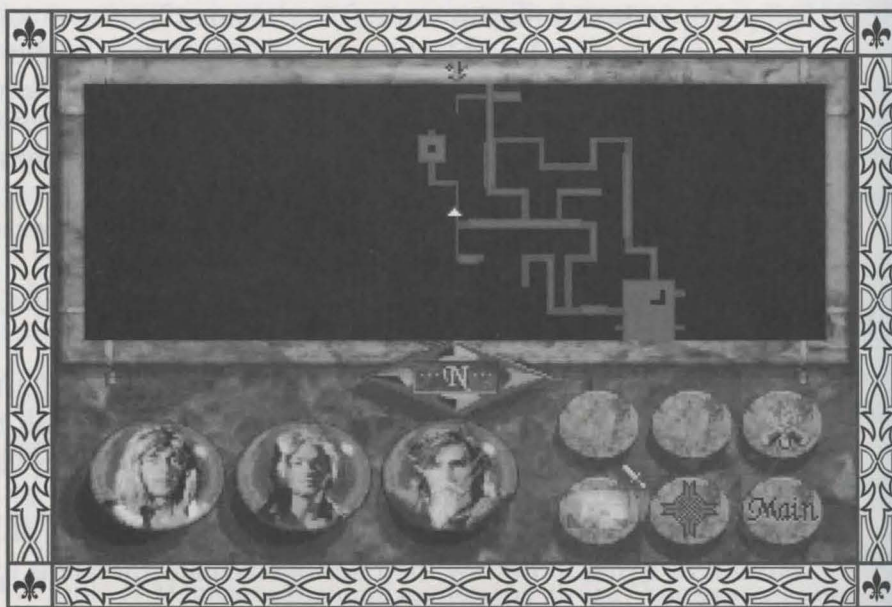


Figure 9-1. Finding the Six beneath Sethanon



Figure 9-2. Battling the Servitor of Lims-Kragma

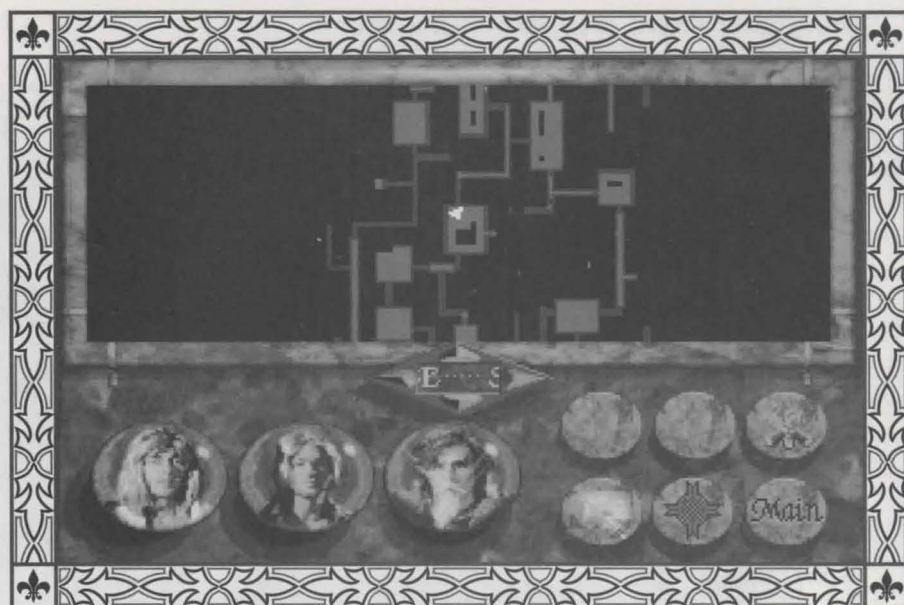


Figure 9-3. Finding the Servitor of Midkemia's Death Goddess

Find the Six

The Six are scattered about on level 2 (Figures 9-4 through 9-9).

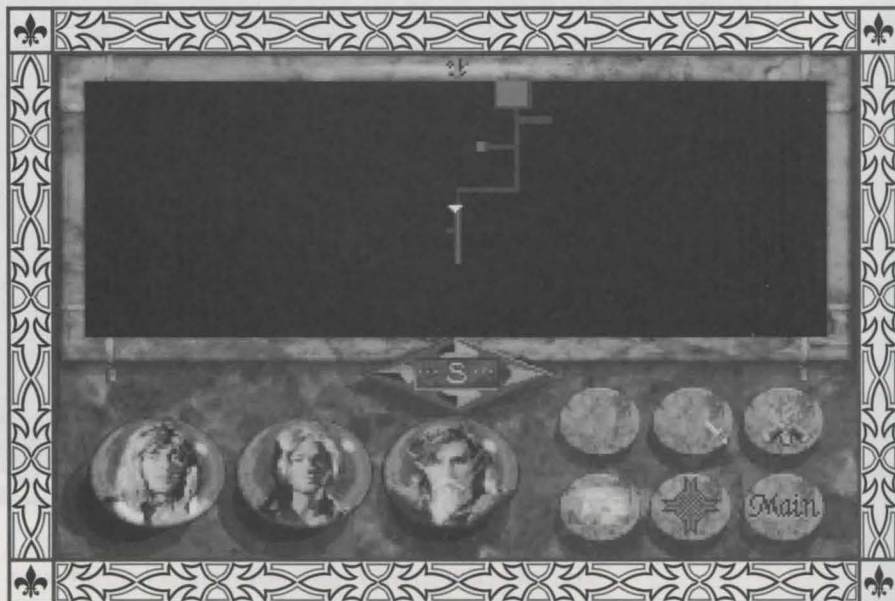


Figure 9-4. A Tsurani spell weaver



Figure 9-5. Another Tsurani magician

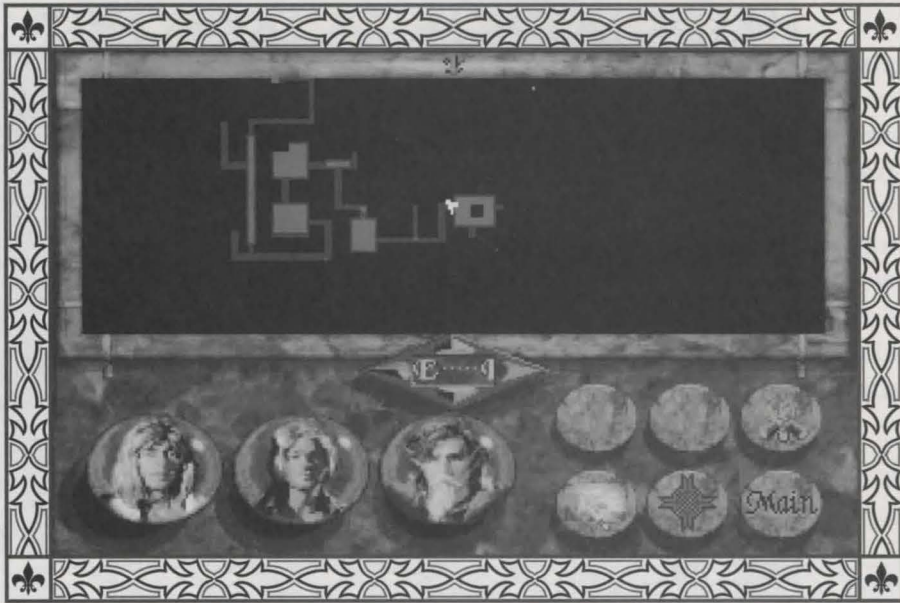


Figure 9-6. Another Tsurani magician

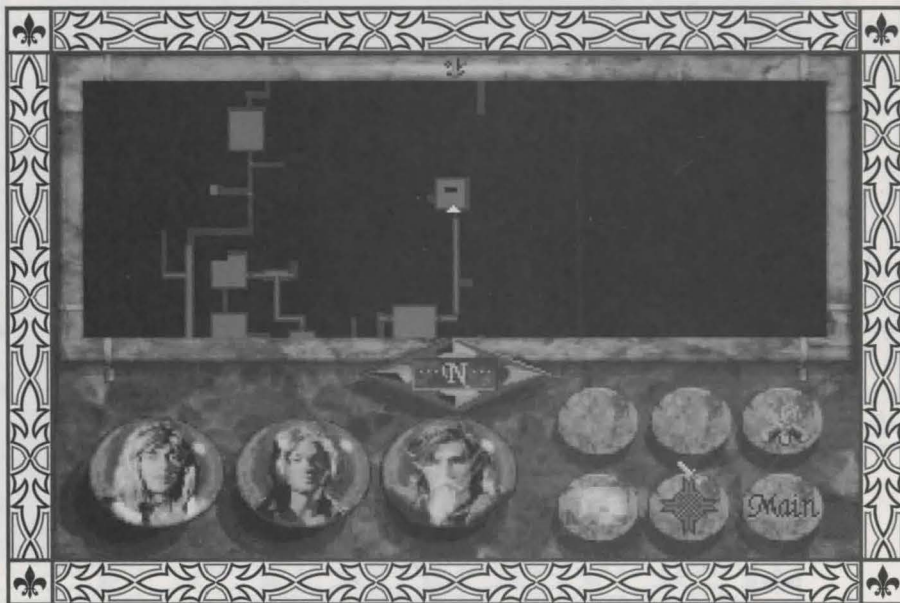


Figure 9-7. Another Tsurani magician

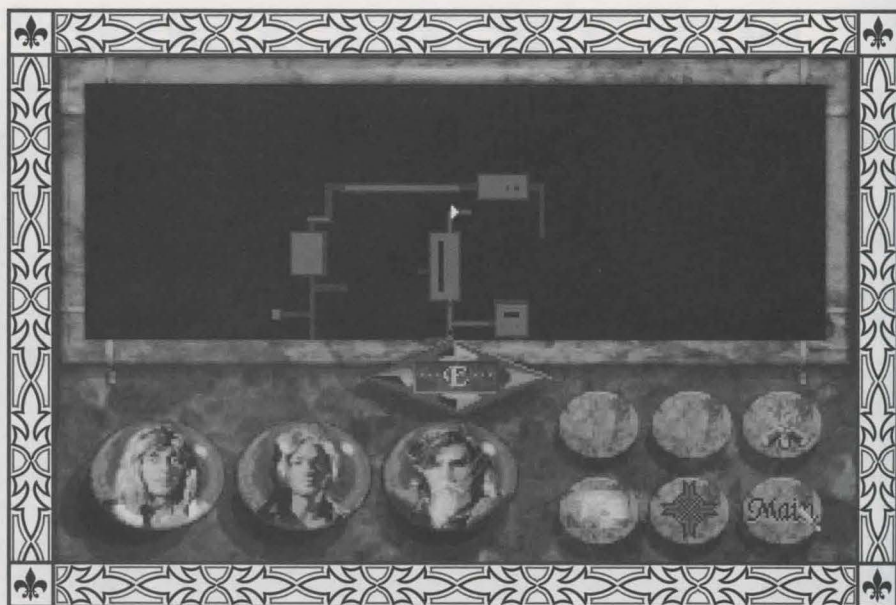


Figure 9-8. Another Tsurani magician



Figure 9-9. The final Tsurani magician

The Final Battle

After you kill the Six, return to level 1 (Figure 9-10); you'll find the barrier to the Lifestone chamber has fallen, and you can enter (Figure 9-11). Owyn and Pug learn that Makala seeks to destroy the Lifestone, but does not understand that his actions may release the Valheru imprisoned within. Makala summons two dreads for a very difficult combat against Pug and Owyn (Figure 9-12). Cast *Skin of the Dragon* on both Pug and Owyn, and use Lewton's *Concentrate* and the Infinity Pool to cast *Evil Seek*. You can use restoratives, then the Infinity Pool to heal and cast a spell in the same round. After killing Makala, Chapter 9 ends and the story resolves with the tragic death of Gorath.

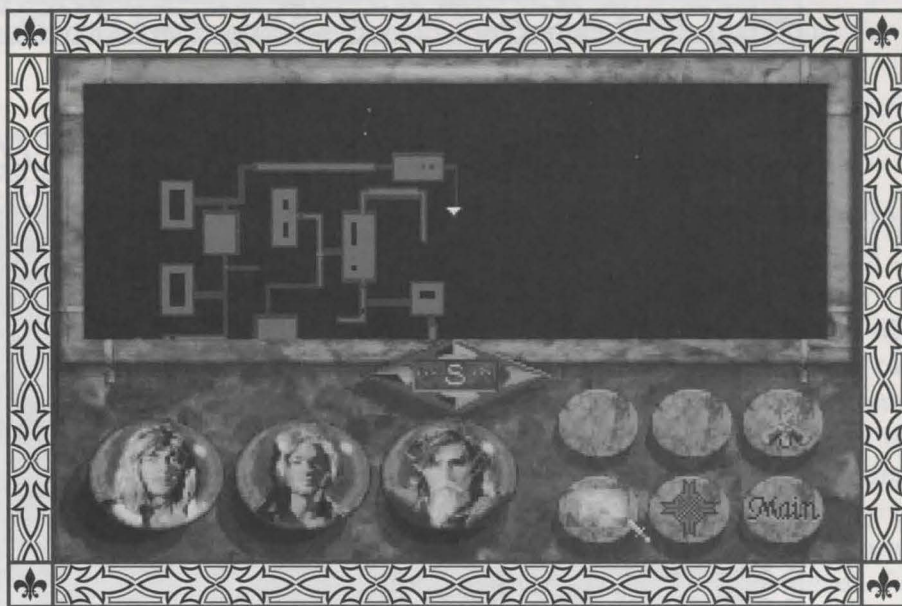


Figure 9-10. Climbing the stairs to level 1

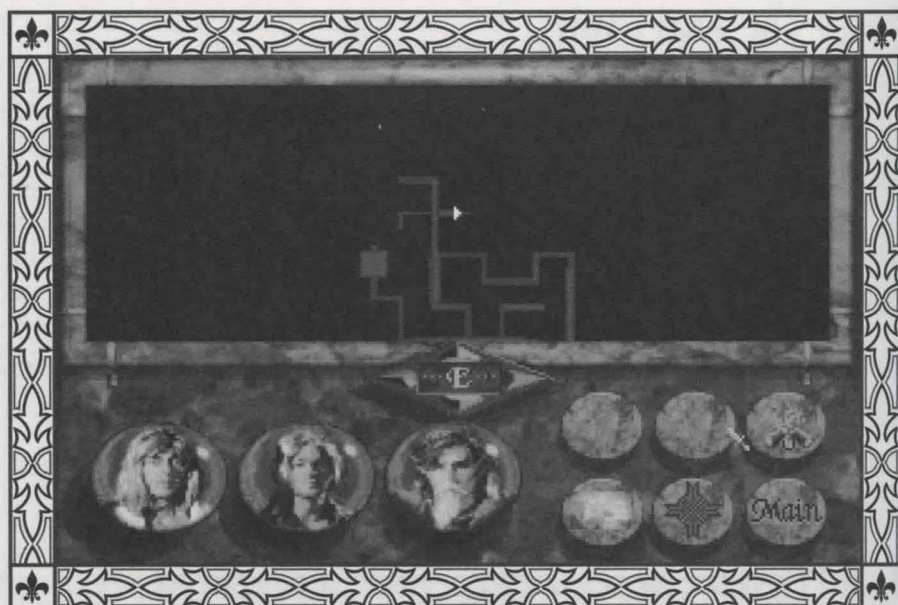


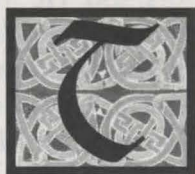
Figure 9-11. Entering the Lifestone chamber



Figure 9-12. Pug and Owyn in battle

Afterword

Other Quests



here are a few small side quests that don't have much bearing on the game, and can be completed at various times in the game. The Wicked Witch of the East Quest is one of them. If you complete it, James, Patrus, and Locklear will have a nicer greeting when they encounter Phillip in Chapter 7.

The Wicked Witch of the East Quest

If your party visits the Dimwood before Chapter 7, this quest will be active. After this, Phillip will have taken up residence with Wilindi in an effort to foil the Six and Delekhan's invasion force.

"Ockie" Neruson is simple in every sense of word. He doesn't like conversations that last over five or six minutes, eats only what he can kill within a day's walk of his house, and hates anything he can't immediately comprehend. When he begins to catch fewer animals in his traps, he makes the only rational decision possible—the witch woman living to the east is responsible. Not one to take such an offense lying down, he poisons the well next to her house and considers the matter solved. Unfortunately for him, Wilindi isn't such a simple woman. Far from guilty, Wilindi wishes only to be left alone but has found herself constantly harassed by ignorant neighbors who have poisoned her water, killed her livestock, and otherwise made living in the Dimwood unpleasant. Enraged to the breaking point, she creates a cantrip to "summon" up a pair of giant scorpions every time "Ockie" steps outside his front door.

Hints and Clues

Speaking to Ockie

If you approach Ockie's house, he will throw open a window and shout at you, but you won't be quite able to make out what he is saying because of his heavy Hadati accent. If you get close enough and click on the house, Ockie will answer the door, but with a scowl on his face. He'll tell you that you really shouldn't have come so close and will indicate that the dead guys in his yard were all visitors, too. He will begin to tell the story about Wilindi (from his point of view, of course, omitting the fact that he poisoned her well), and then shout in horror and point as two scorpions materialize. Infinitely practical, he will slam the door to his house shut, leaving you to your own devices. You'll have to fight off the scorpions but Ockie will refuse to answer his door until you have left and come again. Unfortunately, the scorpions will once again interrupt the meeting.

Note: If Wilindi has been pacified, the scorpion attacks will be shut off and you can talk to Ockie and get an IronJaw trap.

Wilindi

If you approach her house and she has *not* been pacified, you'll find yourself fighting your way through an army of scorpions. She will refuse to answer her door if you click on her house, although you'll hear her voice magically projected. "Ill has been done me, and I shall not speak with any until the wrong is erased." Once she is pacified, she will answer the door and chat. She will have a greatly enhanced role in Chapter 7.

Wilindi's Well

If you click on the well to drink out of it, it will trigger a text message indicating that whoever drinks from it immediately gags and discovers that the water is poisoned (triggered *poisoned* condition). Another character will comment that it is odd that anyone would poison her own drinking water, unless of course someone else poisoned it.

If you've drunk from this well before *and* have Silverthorn Anti-Venom, it will occur to your party that perhaps some could be dropped in to depoisn the water. You'll then have a yes/no option to depoisn the well. If you do, Wilindi will answer the door when her house is clicked on and she will be considered "pacified." Use only one of your anti-venom bulbs and "drop" the rest (to be picked up after the depoisning), so you don't use them all in cleaning up the well water.

Reward for Solving the Quest

Wilindi will reward you with two vials of Lewton's Concentrate for depoisning her well.

Appendix A

Technical Hints



Riftwar: Betrayal at Krondor is a role-playing game that uses a sophisticated three-dimensional polygon graphics engine—the same kind of engine that is used in flight simulators, a novel approach to creating a virtual world. And *Riftwar* was one of the first games to support a General MIDI music specification as well.

Hardware Requirements

An IBM or IBM PC compatible with 2 MB of RAM and 15 MB of hard drive space is the required minimum system configuration for *Riftwar: Betrayal at Krondor*. Krondor also requires a minimum 386SX processor and MS DOS 5.0. The frame rate (the speed at which the computer can redraw the screen as you move through the virtual world) on a 386SX processor is much slower than a 486 computer, and seems to be virtually standing still next to the latest generation of 80x86-compatible machines, like my IBM PS/ValuePoint P60, which runs the Intel Pentium processor at 60 MHz. *Krondor* allows you to change the detail setting (the amount of space each step takes you forward and the degree of turning) to adjust for the speed of your CPU. While playing the game on a nonlocal bus Insight 486/DX-33 computer, I kept the detail setting low to increase the speed of movement through the landscape. On my IBM PCI bus Pentium, the game blazed through on the highest detail setting. Games have always pushed the technological envelope as much as Windows or WordPerfect, and if you are considering a new machine, get the fastest one you can afford.

Bugs

There are remarkably few bugs in *Riftwar: Betrayal at Krondor*, which is astounding considering the size and complexity of the game. Some are design miscues—for example, if you keep the Idol of Lassur instead of giving it to Kat, you can kill the Wind Elementals in Gamina's chamber before you rescue Pug. Pug will appear and join your party without spells, making the final chapter almost impossible to complete. Other players have complained of running out of rope or food late in the game, particularly during Owyn and Gorath's trip through Elvandar and in the final chapter in the caverns under Sethanon. A few minor bug fixes and enhancements (some conveniently placed supplies, for example) are incorporated in a bug patch file available from Dynamix, or from the on-line services such as CompuServe's Game Publisher's Forum, GENie, and America On-Line.

Hardware

While a sound card is not necessary, it is highly recommended. *Riftwar: Betrayal at Krondor* supports the AdLib, Pro-Audio Spectrum (PAS), SoundBlaster, Roland MT-32, and General MIDI formats. The PAS and SoundBlaster are required in order to hear Krondor's digitized sound effects. While the AdLib, PAS, and SoundBlaster all operate on the principle of FM synthesis—manipulation of a sound wave to emulate instrument sounds—wavetable technology is the next sound standard. A wavetable card contains actual digitized samples of instruments stored in memory, and music played through a wavetable card like the Creative Labs WaveBlaster (which plugs onto a SoundBlaster 16) or the Roland MT-32 sounds like real instruments. The difference is phenomenal. The SoundBlaster 16/WaveBlaster combination has made games like *Krondor*, *X-Wing*, and *Privateer* an aural as well as a visual treat, since these newer games either support the WaveBlaster directly or the General MIDI standard (which the WaveBlaster accepts). Using a SoundBlaster 16/WaveBlaster combination also provides SoundBlaster compatibility and other benefits. A good pair of speakers is money well spent, given the quality of today's soundcards and CDRoms—Bose Roommates or AR Powered Partners are excellent speakers that provide solid frequency response.

A fast video card that performs well in DOS (many of the fastest Windows accelerators perform very poorly in DOS applications), a good noninterlaced monitor with a dot pitch of 0.28 or lower, and a comfortable ergonomic mouse like Microsoft's ergonomic mouse or the Logitech MouseMan series will also help performance. I have for some time been using an ATI Graphics Ultra Pro for excellent Windows and DOS performance, and a Logitech cordless mouse to keep my desk free of wire clutter. They perform flawlessly.

Software Requirements

Krondor requires 604,160 bytes free, or 590K and MS DOS or PC DOS 5.0 or later. Type **MEM** at the DOS prompt to discover your computer's largest executable program size. If you have enough memory, a disk cache, such as SMARTDRV.EXE, will improve your disk access times by keeping some of the data from the most accessed files in a portion of RAM. SMARTDRV.EXE comes with MS DOS and Microsoft Windows. If you have access to a modem, however, a shareware disk cache called Hyperdisk outperforms SMARTDRV.EXE and even many retail disk-caching programs. You can download it from CompuServe, GENie, or America On-Line; try it out and register it for the registration fee if you like it. It certainly is worth examining.

Memory Managers

Most computers sold today come with at least 4 MB of RAM. Owing to the original architecture of the Intel microprocessor and original version of DOS used in the first IBM PCs, the first megabyte of your system is divided into low or conventional memory and high or upper memory. The first 640K of RAM is low memory, while 640K to 1024K is called high memory. Anything above 1 MB is referred to as extended memory. By using an expanded memory manager, the extended memory can be converted to expanded memory (EMS). Since most DOS programs cannot access memory above 1 MB, the memory manager swaps different parts of memory in and out of EMS.

Memory managers also load certain programs, such as DOS and TSRs (Terminate and Stay Resident programs, such as virus scanners) into high memory, freeing low memory for the main program. *Riftwar: Betrayal at Krondor* requires 2 MB of RAM, with 1 MB of EMS RAM, which means a memory manager is required. The most simple memory manager, EMM386.EXE, comes with DOS. While *Riftwar* requires MS DOS version 5.0 or later, the latest version—MS DOS 6.2—comes with a utility called MEMMAKER. By running MEMMAKER, your computer will optimize loading your various programs into high memory in the most efficient combination.

Other programs, such as Quarterdeck's QEMM and Qualitas's 386Max, are more sophisticated versions of EMM386.EXE and can eke out more low memory. If MEMMAKER, QEMM, or 386Max fails to create enough memory to run *Krondor*, you will have to create a boot disk with a pared-down CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT file.

Creating a Boot Disk

The process of creating a boot disk is easy. At the C:\> prompt, simply type:

```
CD\DYNAMIX\KRONDOR  
INSTALL
```

and choose the option to create a boot disk. If, however, *Krondor* fails to create a boot disk due to your particular hardware/software setup, you can easily create your own. Insert the appropriate blank disk into drive A and type **FORMAT A: /S**. You can use any simple text editor (like MS DOS's EDIT.COM) to create the ASCII files for CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT.

Boot Files

Boot files are files that contain simple instructions for the computer when you turn it on. The following configurations are examples of sample CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT files to use with the various memory managers. The following configurations apply to the Logitech mouse driver version 6.2 (MOUSE.SYS) in the C:\MOUSE directory and a SoundBlaster 16 with drivers in the C:\SB16 directory.

Remember, if you use a data compression scheme such as Stacker or DoubleSpace, you will need to insert the appropriate `DEVICE=C:\DOS\DOSDBLSPACE.SYS` in the `CONFIG.SYS` file. Some actual parameters may vary as the size of different mouse drivers (i.e., Logitech drivers vs. Microsoft drivers) will vary.

Sample `CONFIG.SYS` for MS DOS 5.0, MS DOS 6.0, PC DOS 6.1, or MS DOS 6.2:

```
DEVICE=C:\DOS\HIMEM.SYS
DEVICE=C:\DOS\EMM386.EXE 2048 RAM
BUFFERS=25
FILES=25
DOS=UMB, HIGH
DEVICEHIGH=c:\MOUSE\MOUSE.SYS
DEVICEHIGH=C:\SB16\DRV\ASP.SYS /P:220
SHELL=C:\DOS\COMMAND.COM C:\DOS\ /p
```

Sample `AUTOEXEC.BAT` for MS DOS 5.0, MS DOS 6.0, PC DOS 6.1, or MS DOS 6.2:

```
@ECHO OFF
CLS
PROMPT $p$g
PATH C:\DOS;C:\DYNAMIX\KRONDOR
C:\DOS\SMARTDRV.EXE      (delete this if you still don't have enough RAM)
```

Sample `CONFIG.SYS` for **QEMM 7.0**:

```
DEVICE=C:\QEMM\DOSDATA.SYS
DEVICE=C:\QEMM\QEMM386.SYS RAM R:1
DEVICE=C:\QEMM\DOS-UP.SYS @C:\QEMM\DOS-UP.DAT
DEVICE=C:\QEMM\LOADHI.SYS /R:2 /SIZE=51456 C:\HYPERDKX.EXE S
DEVICE=c:\QEMM\LOADHI.SYS /R:2 /size=38320 C:\MOUSE\MOUSE.SYS
DEVICE=C:\QEMM\LOADHI.SYS /R:1 /SIZE=5280 C:\SB16\DRV\ASP.SYS /P:220
DOS=HIGH
SHELL=C:\DOS\COMMAND.COM C:\DOS\ /E:512 /p
BREAK=OFF
BUFFERS=4
FILES=30
FCBS=1,0
```

Sample AUTOEXEC.BAT for QEMM 7.0:

```
SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D1 H5 P330 T6
SET SOUND=C:\SB16
C:\SB16\SBCONFIG.EXE /S
C:\SB16\SB16SET /M:220 /VOC:220 /CD:220 /FM:220
@ECHO OFF
PATH=c:\DOS;C:\DYNAMIX\KRONDOR
PROMPT $p$g
```

Sample CONFIG.SYS for 386Max 7.0:

```
FILES=30
DEVICE=C:\386MAX\386MAX.SYS PRO=C:\386MAX\386MAX.PRO
DEVICE=C:\386MAX\386LOAD.SYS SIZE=38032 PRGREG=2
PROG=C:\MOUSE\MOUSE.SYS
DEVICE=C:\386MAX\386LOAD.SYS SIZE=4992 PRGREG=4
PROG=C:\SB16\DRV\ASP.SYS /P:220
DOS=HIGH
SHELL=C:\DOS\COMMAND.COM C:\DOS\ /E:512 /p
BREAK=OFF
BUFFERS=4
FCBS=1,0
STACKS=0,0
```

Sample AUTOEXEC.BAT for 386Max 7.0:

```
SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D1 H5 P330 T6
SET SOUND=C:\SB16
C:\SB16\SBCONFIG.EXE /S
C:\SB16\SB16SET /M:220 /VOC:220 /CD:220 /FM:220
@ECHO OFF
PATH=C:\DOS;C:\DYNAMIX\KRONDOR
PROMPT $p$g
SET TEMP=C:\DOS
C:\DOS\SMARTDRV.EXE
```


After you create the proper boot files, save them on your newly created boot disk. Make sure you return to the C:> prompt (i.e., exit Windows or your text editor), turn off the computer, and turn it back on with the boot disk in drive A.

Windows 3.1/Windows for Workgroups 3.11

Microsoft's graphical DOS front-end interface is very popular, and assuming you have enough memory (about 8 MB), you can run *Riftwar: Betrayal at Krondor* in a full-screen DOS session. You can even create a PIF file for *Krondor*—just make sure that you set the proper KB Required for regular memory and EMS memory, set Video Memory to High Graphics, and Display Usage to Full Screen.

OS/2 2.1

IBM has solved many of the memory management problems of DOS with their graphical operating system, OS/2 2.1, which provides DOS and Windows 3.1 compatibility. Simply run a virtual DOS machine (vom) with the appropriate settings (1 MB EMS, 610K lower memory) and you should have no problem running *Krondor* under OS/2. OS/2 provides true 32-bit multitasking, which means you can safely download a file from CompuServe in one application while playing *Krondor*!

Keep in mind that Dynamix does not claim that *Krondor* will run on OS/2; in fact, *Krondor* was never even tested on IBM's sophisticated operating system. While these VDM settings should run *Krondor* (and most DOS games) they are not the default VDM settings for OS/2. You may want to set up a new template for game settings: use the [Ctrl] key to drag the program template to an empty spot in the template folder, and drop in a copy of the default program settings. Rename it "Games." Change the settings to the following, then close the template. For future game installations, install the game using a DOS window from the command prompt, then just drag the Games template to the desktop, use the Find function to locate the path and file name of your new game, modify the object name and icon as desired, and the new game should be ready to run.

OS/2 Settings

DOS_FULLSCREEN

COMM_DIRECT_ACCESS: OFF

COMM_HOLD: OFF

COMM_RECEIVED_BUFFER_FLUSH: NONE

COMM_SELECT: ALL

DOS_AUTOEXEC: C:\AUTOEXEC.BAT

DOS_BACKGROUND_EXECUTION: OFF

DOS_BREAK: OFF

DOS_DEVICE: (none)

DOS_FCBS: 16

DOS_FCBS_KEEP: 8

DOS_FILES: 20

DOS_HIGH: ON

DOS_LASTDRIVE: z

DOS_SHELL: (setting provided by OS/2)

DOS_RMSIZE: 640

DOS_UMB: ON

DOS_VERSION: (setting provided by OS/2)

DPMI_DOS_API: AUTO

DPMI_MEMORY_LIMIT: 4 (or 0—most DOS games don't use DPMI
memory)

DPMI_DOS_BUFFER_SIZE: 8

EMS_FRAME_LOCATION: AUTO

EMS_HIGH_OS_MAP_REGION: 0

EMS_LOW_OS_MAP_REGION: 384

EMS_MEMORY_LIMIT: 1024 (2048) (This is EXPANDED memory.
If a game uses more than
1024K, use a higher number)

HW_NOSOUND: OFF

HW_ROM_TO_RAM: ON

HW_TIMER: ON (This is important, especially for those games that
use soundboards.)

IDLE_SECONDS: 60

IDLE_SENSITIVITY: 100 (This is important)
INIT_DURING_I/O: OFF
KBD_ALTHOME_BYPASS: OFF (unless you want to run your game in
a window)
KBD_BUFFER_EXTEND: ON
KBD_CONTROL_BYPASS: NONE
KBD_RATE_LOCK: OFF
MEM_EXCLUDE_REGION: (none)
MEM_INCLUDE_REGION: (none)
MOUSE_EXCLUSIVE_ACCESS: OFF
PRINT_SEPARATE_OUTPUT: ON
PRINT_TIMEOUT: 15
VIDEO_8514: OFF
VIDEO_FASTPASTE: OFF
VIDEO_MODE_RESTRICTION: NONE
VIDEO_ON_DEMAND_MEMORY: ON
VIDEO_RETRACE_EMULATION: OFF (You may have to experiment
with this one)
VIDEO_ROM_EMULATION: OFF
VIDEO_SWITCH_NOTIFICATION: OFF
VIDEO_WINDOW_REFRESH: 1
XMS_HANDLES: 32
XMS_MEMORY_LIMIT: 2048
XMS_MINIMUM_HMA: 0

Appendix B

Monsters, Spells, Valuable Objects, Prices, Gods, and Maps



he following subappendices will help you make quick decisions (even *cheat*, if you want) in playing *Riftworld: Betrayal at Krondor*.



Monsters

This list shows how many monsters, and what types of monsters, populate *Betrayal at Krondor* to give you an idea of what you'll be facing.

Count	Monster Type ^a	Count	Monster Type
476	Moredhel warriors	32	Bulldrake wyverns
2	Brak Nurr	24	Grandsire wyverns
50	Moredhel spellcasters	4	Hatchling wyverns
15	Black Slayers	29	Spiders
67	Nighthawks	41	Beasthounds
206	Rogues	64	Trolls
52	Pantathians	2	Dreads
75	Panath Tiandns	45	Witch Hags
6	Spellweavers	151	Goblins
1	Servitor of Lims-Kragma	4	Wind Elementals
5	Tor giants	154	Quegian pirates
34	Rogue mages	22	Rusalki
6	Cave giants	43	Shades
8	Rime giants	17	Nethermanders
35	Sentinel ogres	1	Great One (Makala)
31	Highland ogres	1	Moredhel spellcaster (Nago)
52	Scorpions		

^aMonsters that regenerate in combat situations are counted only once.

Spell Descriptions

Fetters of Rime

Cost: 1-20 Line of sight: Yes
 Damage: 2 x cost Projectile: Yes
 Special: Freezes opponents

Description: This spell projects a ball of ice at an opponent. If it hits it does 1-20 points of damage and freezes an opponent for as many rounds.

Skyfire

Cost: 12 Line of sight: No
 Damage: 40 Projectile: No
 Special: N/A

Description: Skyfire calls a bolt of lightning to strike your opponent for 40 points of damage.

Evil Seek

Cost: 20-30 Line of sight: Yes
 Damage: Variable Projectile: No
 Special: Strikes more than one target

Description: This spell causes a "ball of energy" to strike all of the monsters on the screen. When cast it moves to the selected target and does 40-60 points of damage (dependent on cost). It then moves from monster to monster, doing 80 percent of the damage it did to the last target. It continues until it has hit all the monsters.

Bane of the Black Slayers

Cost: 10-15 Line of sight: Yes
 Damage: 5 x cost Projectile: Yes
 Special: N/A

Description: This spell will cause massive damage to Black Slayers. When this spell hits a Black Slayer he will take damage equal to five times the cost of the spell. This spell affects only Black Slayers.

Strength Drain

Cost: 10-20 Line of sight: Yes
 Damage: None Projectile: No
 Special: Strength drain

Description: When this spell is cast on a monster it drains away an amount of strength equal to the cost of the spell. Half of that strength is then transferred to the caster for the remainder of the combat.

Flamecast

Cost: 1-20 Line of Sight: Yes
 Damage: 3 x cost Projectile: Yes
 Special: Damage to anyone standing within 2 spaces

Description: Flamecast is a basic fireball spell. If it hits it does damage equal to twice the cost. The damage to those standing within 2 spaces is calculated by taking one-quarter of the full damage and subtracting 1 for each space the victim is standing away from the blast (with a minimum damage of 1).

Spell Category #2

Despair Thy Eyes

Cost: 2 Line of sight: No
 Damage: None Projectile: No
 Special: Blindness

Description: This spell will cause your opponent to become blind for one round. In game terms this means that he will be unable to take any action for the rest of the turn.

Mind Melt

Cost: 5-15

Line of sight: No

Damage: 3 x cost

Projectile: No

Special: N/A

Description: This spell is a simple damage spell. The opponent takes damage equal to three times the cost of the spell.

Wrath of Killian

Cost: 20

Line of sight: No

Damage: 10-20

Projectile: No

Special: See below

Description: This spell causes an earthquake to strike one space on the combat grid. Whenever a monster or player steps onto this space he will be struck for 10-20 points of damage. Furthermore, he will be unable to cast any spells or shoot a crossbow until moving off the space.

Touch of Lims-Kragma

Cost: 50

Line of sight: No

Damage: Death

Projectile: No

Special: N/A

Description: When this spell is cast on a monster it will be instantly killed.

Grief of 1000 Nights

Cost: 4-16

Line of sight: No

Damage: None

Projectile: No

Special: Opponent held

Description: This spell causes an opponent to become so depressed as to be unable to move. The opponent is frozen for a number of rounds equal to two times the cost of the spell.

Mad Gods' Rage

Cost: Special

Line of sight: No

Damage: Variable

Projectile: No

Special: See below

Description: This spell will choose a random target and hit it with a lightning bolt or explosion for 15 points of damage; it causes the caster to expend 3 points of Endurance/Stamina. This process will continue until all the monsters or the caster is dead.

Thoughts like Clouds

Cost: 10-20

Line of sight: No

Damage: None

Projectile: No

Special: Affects spell casting

Description: This spell will cause an enemy spellcaster to be unable to concentrate enough to cast spells. This effect will last a number of rounds equal to one-half the cost. Note the victim will still be able to attack physically.

Unfortunate Flux

Cost: 20

Line of sight: No

Damage: Variable

Projectile: No

Special: N/A

Description: This spell causes sprites to appear and attack the opponent. The damage from this spell is wildly random; it will do anywhere from 30 to 130 points of damage to a victim.

Final Rest

Cost: 5

Line of sight: No

Damage: None

Projectile: No

Special: Affects only Black Slayers and Nighthawks

Description: This spell causes a dead Black Slayer or Nighthawk to sink into the ground and disappear instead of coming back as a Black Slayer.

Steelfire

Cost: 10 Line of sight: No

Damage: Special Projectile: No

Special: Increases sword damage

Description: This spell will cause a flame to spring into existence around a sword blade. This will cause a sword to do two times its normal damage. Opponents who are resistant will take normal damage while those who have a weakness will take double damage. This spell lasts until the end of combat.

Night Fingers

Cost: 14 Line of sight: No

Damage: None Projectile: No

Special: See below

Description: This spell requires the caster to have a glory hand in his inventory to cast it. When the spell is cast, it allows the caster to look at the inventory of a monster and take any nonused item.

River Song

Cost: 16 Line of sight: No

Damage: None Projectile: No

Special: N/A

Description:

River Song will summon a Rusalki to fight for you in combat. She will stay until combat is over and then disappear. Note she has her own combat intelligence and will not be controlled by you.

Firestorm

Cost: 1-30 Line of sight: Yes

Damage: 4 x cost Projectile: No

Special: Hits multiple targets

Description: This is a more powerful version of Flamecast that will strike multiple targets. It will hit all enemies on the screen within line of sight. It does damage equal to four times the cost.

Thy Master's Will

Cost: 20 Line of sight: No

Damage: None Projectile: No

Special: N/A

Description: This spell requires the caster to have a Wyvern's Egg. When it is cast it will cause the selected wyvern to retreat from combat.

Invitation

Cost: 1-10 Line of sight: Yes

Damage: None Projectile: No

Special: N/A

Description: This spell will cause the victim to be pulled toward the caster a number of spaces equal to the cost. This spell is useful in keeping monsters from retreating and for pulling monsters through traps.

Gambit of the Eight

Cost: 2-18 Line of sight: No

Damage: Variable Projectile: No

Special: N/A

Description: This spell creates a magical "mine" on one space for a number of rounds equal to 10 times the cost. The mine will do damage equal to the remaining duration. For example, a mine cast for the minimum cost would stay on the grid for 20 rounds, if stepped on by a monster after 2 rounds it would do 18 points of damage.

Hocho's Haven

Cost: 7-14 Line of sight: No

Damage: None Projectile: No

Special: Shields player from damage

Description: This spell when cast surrounds the caster with a glowing shield. Any damage that normally would go to the mage will instead be absorbed by the shield. The shield will take damage equal to four times the cost, then disappear.

Wind of Eortis

Cost: 1-14 Line of sight: Yes

Damage: None Projectile: No

Special: Pushes player away from caster

Description: This spell causes a whirlwind to spring into existence and push an opponent directly away from the caster a number of spaces equal to the cost. The opponent will stop if he hits the edge of the combat grid.

Dannon's Delusions

Cost: 5-10 Line of sight: No

Damage: None Projectile: No

Special: Creates illusionary character

Description: This spell creates an illusion of the caster or anyone in the party anywhere on the combat grid. Although the illusion will not move and will not take damage, the monsters will attack the illusion just as if it were real. It will last for a number of rounds equal to the cost of the spell.

Gift of Sung

Cost: 1-20 Line of sight: No

Damage: None Projectile: No

Special: Heals another character

Description: Gift of Sung is a healing spell. It will cause the character or monster (yes, it will even work on monsters if cast by a monster) to heal an amount of Health/Endurance equal to the amount spent by the caster.

Mirror Wall

Cost: 20 Line of sight: No

Damage: None Projectile: No

Special: Reflects spells

Description: This spell causes a magical column to appear on the combat grid in front of the caster for 12 rounds. If a projectile spell hits this column, it will be reflected back at the caster, if an arrow hits the column it will stop. This spell makes a good hiding spot when trying to avoid enemy spellcasters and archers.

Note: Due to the nature of this magic, there can be only one mirror wall on the field at any one time.

Black Nimbus

Cost: 1-10 Line of sight: No

Damage: None Projectile: No

Special: N/A

Description: The Black Nimbus spell will deactivate red and green crystal trap objects. The chance to deactivate the object is 10 percent times the cost.

Skin of the Dragon

Cost: 4-20 Line of sight: No

Damage: None Projectile: No

Special: N/A

Description: This spell will cause an invisible armor to surround the caster. It will absorb all damage taken for a number of rounds equal to one-quarter the cost of the spell (fractions rounded down).

Outdoor Spells

Note: The outdoor spells make references to minutes for duration. four minutes of game time is equal to one complete step. In the Preferences menu a “large” step size is a full step (4 minutes), a “medium” step size is a half step (2 minutes), and a “small” step size is a quarter-step (1 minute).

Dragon’s Breath

Cost: 5-15 Duration: 10 minutes/point

Description: This spell will call up a fog in the area, making it easier to sneak past combats. For normal combat the spell makes them ambushes (allowing you to use your Stealth skill to sneak past). For ambushes the spell allows you twice your normal chance to slip by.

And the Light Shall Lie

Cost: 15 Duration: 32 minutes

Description: This spell allows Owyn to masquerade as a Moredhel. This does nothing but allow the party that Owyn is in to talk to Moraeulf (allowing them to leave Chapter 4).

Candle Glow

Cost: 1-15 Duration: 48 minutes/point

Description: This spell causes a green-tinted light to come into existence, allowing players to see underground. This spell only functions underground.

Stardusk

Cost: 5-15 Duration: 48 minutes/point

Description: This spell causes a blue-tinted light to spring from nothingness, allowing characters to see at night. The opposite of Candle Glow, this spell can only be used above ground and only at night.

Union

Cost: 15 Duration: 20 minutes

Description: This spell has the unique function of allowing Patrus (who starts with this spell) to be able to read moredhel. This is only useful in deciphering moredhel lock chests.

Nicare Ciatrix

Cost: 5-14 Duration: Special

Description: This spell will cause the overhead map to come up, showing the location (indicated by a red dot) of any magic items in the area. The chance of this spell working is 10 percent for each point spent over 4 (5 = 10%, 8 = 40%, 14 = 100%).

The following is a list of what is considered a magic item:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| - Crystal Staff | - Magic Quarrel |
| - Glory Hand | - Horn of Algon Kokoon |
| - Restoratives | - Ring of the Golden Way |
| - Idol of Lassur | - Staff of Macros |
| - Weed Walkers | - Amulet of the Upright Man |
| - Infinity Pool | - Lightning Staff |
| - Raw Manna | - Ring of Prandur |
| - All scrolls | - Brass Spyglass |
| - Roric’s Seal | - Shell (Guarda Revanche) |
| - Eliam’s Heart | - Wyvern’s Egg |
| - Stone Slab ^a | - Cup of Rlnn Skrr |
| - Rift Machine ^a | - Riftworld Column ^a |

^aObject (this item does not have to be in a container).

The spell checks the following containers for the above items:

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| - Chest (any type) | - Stump |
| - Building | - Well |
| - Grave | - Siege engine |
| - Body | - Animal trap |
| - Mound of dirt | - Bag |
| - Bushes | - Rift crystals |

Eyes of Ishap

Cost: 1-10 Duration: Special

Description: This spell is another "find" spell. It takes you to the overhead map and points out any "potentially valuable" objects in the area. In this case a "potentially valuable" object is any container that can hold items. The chance of this spell working correctly is 10 percent per point spent on the spell.

Here is a list of "potentially valuable" objects:

- Stump
- Bag
- Well
- Catapult
- Building
- Chest (any type)
- Stone slab, siege engine
- Mound of dirt
- Bushes

The Unseen

Cost: 1-10 Duration: Special

Description: This "find" spell will take you to the overhead map and show you any food item (normal, poisoned, or spoiled rations) in your area. The chance of this spell working correctly is 10 percent for each point spent.

This spell searches the following objects for food.

- Chest (any type)
- Siege engine
- Bushes
- Grave
- Bag
- Well
- Mound of dirt
- Building
- Animal traps
- Stump
- Bodies

Scent of Sarig

Cost: 5

Duration: 12 hours (720 minutes)

Description: This spell allows you to detect magically trapped chests. If a chest is magically trapped the spell detects it and you are asked if you would like to disarm it, in which case your Lockpicking percentage is checked. If you successfully disarm the trap you can look into the chest; otherwise the trap goes off.

List of Valuable Objects to Be Found

The object list below represents all the objects that may be picked up by your party in *Betrayal at Krondor*. The name of each object is given as it will appear in the inventory. Any information presented in parentheses is intended only for the eyes of the designers.

The following explains the different parts of the list:

- ↻ **Found** This information indicates where a specific item may be found. If an entry is followed by a slash, all the information following the slash will relate to a specific instance (example: Guild Markets/Max Feeber's Barn would indicate that, generally speaking, the item in question would be available in Guild Markets, but one has specifically been placed in Max Feeber's Barn).
- ↻ **Given to** If an item is a quest item, this will indicate to whom the object is to be given.
- ↻ **Price** Price indicates what the raw, unadjusted value of the item is, as expressed in gold sovereigns and silver royals (example: 10s3r would indicate a price of 10 sovereigns and 3 royals). The base price assumes that the item is in prime condition and, if it has charges, a full charge. Many prices vary from shop to shop.
- ↻ **Damage** This is an expression of how much damage a given weapon can do and also expresses what modifiers to the base Chance to Hit you has with the weapon in question. If the weapon is a sword, then the damage will be expressed as a dual value, representing the base Swing and Thrust values. If an item cannot do damage, this space will be occupied by a (-). (Example: 10 (35 percent)/20 (40 percent) would mean that you have a 35 percent chance of swinging your sword (assuming you have a 0 percent Sword Accuracy skill) and hitting for 10 points of damage. If you thrust with the sword, then you have a 40 percent chance of hitting for 20 points.
- ↻ **Protection** If an item may be considered a piece of armor, this represents how much protection it affords you. This is expressed as a dual figure very similar to the Damage rating. (Example: 50 (25 percent) would indicate that a specified suit of armor would reduce the Chance to Hit of an incoming blow by 25 percent. If the hit still connects, the incoming Damage will be reduced by 50 percent. If an item isn't a piece of armor then this space will be occupied by a (—).

- ⇒ **Total possible charges** In some instances an item may be reusable. This figure indicates the maximum number of times that an item of the given type may be used before it has been depleted of its power/effects, etc. If an item doesn't have charges then this space will be occupied by a (—).
- ⇒ **Function** This is a brief description of how the item functions, in game terms.
- ⇒ **Game description** This is the description you will receive when right-clicking on the given inventory item.

Abbot's Journal (Journal of Raymere)

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters: 3

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used only in the walkabout mode. Reading this note gives you a clue about game events. It has no other usable function.

Accounts of the Shamata Garrison

Found:

Given to:

Price: 152s6r; varies

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: If you “read” this book (accomplished by using the book at any time except during combat) it will permanently add +5 percent to your Assessment skill. If you attempt to use the book again, there is a 3 percent chance every time you use it that you’ll gain a 1 percent gain in Assessment skill. The “value” of the book should be reduced by 85 percent after it is first read, so that shopkeepers will not pay much for it

Althafain's Icer

Found: Magic shops

Given to:

Price: 1066s0r; varies

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 8

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used either in combat or during walkabout mode. By picking up the object in the inventory and “dropping” it on any sword/blade, it has the effect of “frosting” the blade, adding a damage bonus of Damage + (DAMAGE x 0.75). The effect will last for only one combat situation

Amulet of the Upright Man

Found: Sold in a shop, and found in a chest south of Sarth

Given to:

Price: 293s3r; varies

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Bonus of 15 percent to Lock picking skill while you have it in inventory

Armorer's Hammer

Found:

Given to:

Price: Varies

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item allows you to utilize Armorcraft skill to repair damaged pieces of armor. To use it, the Armorer's Hammer is picked up on the Inventory screen and “dropped” on any piece of armor. The armor will then be repaired to the level appropriate as dictated by your Armorcraft skill and the condition of the armor

Aventurine

Found:

Given to:

Price: 398s4r; varies

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 6

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item allows you to utilize your Weaponcraft skill to maintain crossbows. To use it, pick up the Cleaning Oil on the Inventory screen and “drop” it on a specific crossbow. The bow will then be repaired to the level appropriate as dictated by your Weaponcraft skill and the condition of the crossbow

Game description: Uncorking the mouth of the oilskin, he poured out a small portion of the viscous fluid into his palm and examined it. Aside from a few crumbling pieces of cork the fluid was clean, untainted by foreign particles or the water seepage that could harm a bow string

Bag of Grain

Found:

Given to:

Price: Free

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters: 1-3, 6

Repairable: No

Function: This is needed for a side quest; it doesn't have to be completed to end the game.

Bessie Mauler

Found: Shop in Raglam

Given to:

Price: 2231s7r

Damage: 80 (-15 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 5

Repairable: Yes

Function: The heaviest class of crossbow in Midkemia, the Bessie Mauler can be used only during combat and must be in the Using column of your Inventory if it is intended for use. If the mauler is equipped during combat, it is “triggered” when you select the Shoot option. The crossbow cannot be used unless you have quarrels available in Inventory and the string on your bow has not been broken in combat

Ring of Prandur

Found:

Given to:

Price: 145s7r; varies

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 10

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used either in combat or in walkaround mode. When it is designated as USED on the Inventory screen, it will cast a Candleglow spell that lasts for 24 hours

Brass Spyglass

Found: Black Sheep Tavern

Given to: James, Gorath, and Owyn

Price: Free

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 3

Repairable: No

Function: This item may be used only in the walkabout mode. If you select this item from the Inventory and then hit Use, it will cast an Eyes of Ishap spell. For more details on its effects, see Eyes of Ishap in "Spell Descriptions"

Broadsword

Found: Weapon shops

Given to:

Price: 80s4r; varies

Damage: 20 (0 percent)/20(-10 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters: 1-9

Repairable: Yes

Function: The least powerful of all the weapons available to you, the broadsword can be used only in the combat mode of *Betrayal at Krondor* and must be in the Using slot of the Inventory screen before it can be used. It is triggered when you choose to swing or thrust with a sword

Game description: Slicing air with the weapon, —made a few passes at an imaginary foe. Although the sword was not the most remarkable he had ever held, it would serve well enough if he found himself in a sword battle

Burial Cloth

Found: Max Feeber's House

Given to:

Price: Free

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters: 1, 2, 3, 4

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used only in the walkabout mode, and is encountered in the Scooby Doo Quest in Chapter 2. Finding this gives you a clue about game events. It has no other usable function

Catapult Part

Found: In chest near bridge in Northlands, Chapter 5

Given to: Broken catapult in Northlands

Price: —

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 5

Repairable: No

Function: This item is a quest item. It is used by clicking on the item while on the Inventory screen. If you are near the broken catapult, then you will be allowed to drop the part on the broken catapult. Otherwise, you'll be advised that the "part cannot be used here"

Cellar Key

Found: On Navon du Sandau's rapidly stiffening corpse

Given to: Used on the door where the secret notes are kept

Price: Free

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This is a quest item that unlocks a door in the caverns under Cavall Keep. When it is used on the appropriate door, it will help trigger the end of Chapter 3, *The Spyglass and the Spider*

Chapel's Rmur n Whepuns

Found:

Given to:

Price: 398s4r; varies

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: If you "read" this book (accomplished by using the book at any time except during combat), it will permanently add +3 percent to both you Weaponcraft and Armorcraft skills. If you attempt to use the book again, there is a 3 percent chance every time you use it that you'll gain 1 percent in Weaponcraft and Armorcraft skills. The "value" of the book should be reduced by 85 percent after it is first read, so that shopkeepers will not pay much for it

Clerical Oilcloth

Found:

Given to:

Price: 395s5r; varies

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 4

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used either in combat or during walkabout mode. By picking up the object in the Inventory and "dropping" it on any sword/blade, it has the effect of enchanting the blade (Clerical Enhancement #1), adding a Damage bonus of Damage + (Damage x 0.75). It can also be used to enchant armor to negate the effects of a Clerical Enhancement of the same type. When armor is enchanted in this way, it reduces the damage effect by 50 percent. The effect will last for only one combat situation

Coltari Poison (SLOW POISON)

Found: Northwarden shop

Given to:

Price: Varies (can be purchased or found)

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 6

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Coltari Poison can be used only in walkabout mode and only on rations. By picking up the poison on the Inventory screen and "dropping" it on good or spoiled rations, it will make the rations poisoned, which will complete one of Duke Martin's quests in Chapter 5.

Crystal Staff

Found:

Given to: Owyn

Price: Free

Damage: —

Protection: 30 (20 percent)/15 (10 percent)

Total possible charges: 100

Chapter: 8

Repairable: Yes

Function: This item may be used only by a magician (Owyn or Pug) and must be in the Using column in order to be operated. You'll need this staff to cast spells while on Timiriana (the "Riftworld"). It may also be used like a sword, triggered when you attempt to swing or thrust with it

Cup of Rlnn Skrr

Icon #:

Found: Riftworld

Given to:

Price: Free

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 8

Repairable: No

Function: This item may be operated only in walkabout mode. Two things happen when this cup is used. First, it accomplishes a "quest" and unbefuddles Pug's mind (until this is done, Pug will be unable to cast spells. After his mind is cleared, the Unbefuddled Interparty Comments can then be triggered). Second, when it is used, all the spells known by Owyn will be added to Pug's spell inventory and it will trigger a text "event" that explains what has happened. If either Pug or Owyn later learns new spells, then each may use the Cup to add the new spell to the other's Inventory

Dalatail Milk

Found: Herb shops

Given to:

Price: 183s2r; varies

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 6

Chapters: 1-9

Repairable: No

Function: Dalatail Milk may be used either in walkabout or in combat mode. By using the Dalatail Milk while on the Inventory screen, you will gain a temporary boost in Defense rating. The effect will wear off either after combat has ended (if used in Combat mode) or after the end of the next combat

Diamonds

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters: 5

Repairable: No

Function: Diamonds are treasure items that may occasionally be used as a medium of exchange with certain shanty houses/NPCs (non-player characters), but can never be used directly in shops or taverns. (You may, however, convert diamonds into gold sovereigns at the appropriate institutions)

Dorcas's Treatise on the Animation of Objects

Found:

Given to:

Price: 1000s5r; varies

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: If you "read" this book (accomplished by using the book at any time except during combat) it will permanently add +5 percent to your Casting Accuracy skill. If you attempt to use the book again, there is a 3 percent chance every time you use it that you will gain 1 percent in Casting Accuracy skill. The "value" of the book should be reduced by 85 percent after it is first read, so that shopkeepers will not pay much for it. Note: Only Owyn or Pug can benefit when using this book

Dragon Plate Armor

Found:

Given to:

Price: Varies

Damage: —

Protection: 50 (15 percent)

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: Armor is taken into account only when it has been equipped by you (i.e., placed in the Using slot of the Inventory screen)

Dragon Stone

Found: Shops

Given to:

Price: 84s6r; varies

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 6

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used either in combat or during walkabout mode. By picking up the object in the Inventory and "dropping" it on any armor, it has the effect of enchanting the armor against the effects of a Steelfired blade (effectively reducing the damage of a Steelfired blade by 40 percent). The effect will last for only one combat situation

Eliaem's Heart

Found: Shop in Dencamp on the Teeth

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 6

Chapters: 7

Repairable: No

Function: A magical item created in homage to the legend of Eliaem and Gesthane, this item can be used only in the combat mode. If designated as USED on the Inventory screen, it casts a RiverSong spell, which lasts until the end of combat. The stone will be effective until it has run out of charges, after which it can be resold for 90 percent of its original value. No more than three Rusalki can be summoned in one combat

Eluiliko Armor (Tsurani armor)

Found:

Given to:

Price: 511s6r; varies

Damage: —

Protection: 45 (5 percent)

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Elven Armor

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: 40 (10 percent)

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Elven Crossbow

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 30 (20 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Elven Crossbow can be used only during combat and must be in the Using column of the Inventory screen if it is intended for use. If the crossbow is equipped during combat, it is "triggered" when you select the Shoot option. The crossbow cannot be used unless you have quarrels available in Inventory

Elven Quarrels

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 6 (10 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 20

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Quarrels must be present on the Inventory screen in order to be usable; there must also be a Crossbow of any class to fire them. They can be used only in the combat mode

Game Description:

Emeralds

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Emeralds are treasure items that may occasionally be used as a medium of exchange with certain shanty houses/NPCs, but can never be used directly in shops or taverns. (You may, however, convert emeralds into gold sovereigns at the appropriate institutions)

Fadamor's Formula (strength booster)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 6

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Fadamor's Formula may be used either in walkabout or in combat mode. By using the Fadamor's Formula while on the Inventory screen, you will gain a temporary strength boost equivalent to 35 percent of your current Strength rating. The effect will wear off either after combat has ended (if used in combat mode) or after the end of the next combat (if used in walkabout mode)

Firebrands (flame damage)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 6 (-10 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 20

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Firebrands must be present on the Inventory screen in order to be usable; there must also be a Crossbow of any class to fire them. They can be used only in the combat mode

Flame Root Oil

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 6

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used either in combat or during walkabout mode. By picking up the object in the Inventory and "dropping" it on any sword/blade, it has the effect of enchanting the armor against the effects of a Flaming Edged blade (effectively reducing the damage of a Flaming Edged blade by 40 percent). The effect will last for only one combat situation

Galon Griefmaker (elven)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 60 (15 percent)/35 (30 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Galon Griefmaker can be used only in the combat mode of *Betrayal at Krondor* and *must* be in the Using slot of the Inventory screen before it can be used

Geomancy Stones

Found: Diviner's Halls

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 5

Repairable: No

Function: This is a quest item. It has no player usable function. If you attempt to use them, a message will be printed that they don't understand what the patterns mean. Note: You'll need the Geomancy Stones to complete the Tamney the Minstrel Quest ("Come Home, Tamney"), and to get through Chapter 5

Glazers' Guild Seal

Found: Max Feeber's Barn

Given to: Mitchel Waylander

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 2

Repairable: No

Function: This is a quest item. It has no player-usable function

Glory Hand

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 1

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This is a material component that is needed for the Nightfingers spell. It need only be in the Casting column of the Inventory screen in order for it to be used. Once the spell is cast, the glory hand crumbles away

Goblin Sticker (elven)

Found: Weapon shops

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 45 (10 percent)/20 (15 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Goblin Sticker can be used only in the combat mode of *Betrayal at Krondor* and *must* be in the Using slot of the Inventory screen before it can be used. It is triggered when you choose to swing or thrust with a sword

Gold Sovereigns

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Sovereigns are the prime monetary unit of Kingdom exchange. They are used in inns, taverns, shops, and temples

Greatsword (elven)

Found: Weapon shops

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 70 (25 percent)/20 (10 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Greatsword can be used only in the combat mode of *Betrayal at Krondor* and *must* be in the Using slot of the Inventory screen before it can be used. It is triggered when you choose to swing or thrust with a sword

Game Description:

Grey Tower Plate (dwarven armor)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: Not usable by players

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function:

Guarda Revanche (activated—elven)

Found: Halls of the Ancients in Elvandar

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 150 (40 percent)/150 (40 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 7

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Guarda Revanche—the most potent weapon in the game—can be used only in the combat mode of *Betrayal at Krondor* and *must* be in the Using slot of the Inventory screen before it can be used. It is triggered when you choose to swing or thrust with a sword

Guarda Revanche (unactivated—elven)

Found: Hall of the Ancients in Elvandar

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 0 (0 percent)/0 (0 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 7

Repairable: Yes

Function: In its unactivated form, the Guarda Revanche cannot be traded for the sword in the Using slot of the Inventory screen, so it is incapable of doing damage. It must be activated by using the shell from Eliaem

Guilder's Passkey

Found: Gem store

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Opens the appropriate locks

Guildis Thorn Key

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Opens the appropriate locks

Heavy Bowstring

Found: Shops/The Works at Highcastle

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters: 1-9

Repairable: No

Function: Heavy Bowstring is the only bowstring that can be used to restring a Bessie Mauler or heavy Tsurani Crossbow once it has broken. The bowstring is picked up on the Inventory screen and "dropped" on the Bessie Mauler in order to effect the restringing process. Once the Mauler is restrunged, the Heavy Bowstring disappears from the Inventory screen

Herbal Pack

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: The Herbal Pack may be used in either combat or walkabout modes. To use the herbal pack, click on it with the Left mouse button and then the use button is activated. The effect of the Herbal Pack is to increase the rate at which you heal, until the next time you sleep

Horn of Algon-Kokoon

Found: Shop in Dencamp on the Teeth

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 4

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: The Horn can be used only in the combat mode. If designated as USED on the Inventory screen, it casts a spell that summons up two beasthounds, who will fight for you until the end of combat. The Horn will be effective until it has run out of charges, after which it can be resold for 90 percent of its original value

Idol of Lassur

Found: Sewers of Krondor, second level

Given to: Kat in the sewers of Krondor, first level

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 6

Repairable: No

Function: The Idol of Lassur is a cursed item that has three effects, one of which is beneficial, the other two of which are detrimental. It will put anyone within a 20-yard radius of it into a Near Death state (effectively your entire party) that cannot be lifted even by a blessing of a

priest of Lims-Kragma. Second, it will add a -10 percent Blessing to any weapons carried by its possessor. If the item is used, however, it can kill any single enemy opponent in combat mode. To use it, click on it and then press the Use button. You are then prompted to pick an enemy target. The effect may be used only once per combat but it may be used an indefinite number of times

Infinity Pool

Found: Magic shops

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 6

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: The Infinity Pool may be used only in the combat mode. While on the Inventory screen, select the Infinity Pool and click the Use button. This then calls up a list of all the martial spells that your character currently knows. When a spell is selected, the Infinity Pool exercises a +25 percent Damage modifier to the spell and casts it at the "amplified" level. The Pool can be used only six times before it burns out and becomes a useless item

Interdictor Key

Found: Dungeons of Sar-Sargoth

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 4

Repairable: No

Function: Opens the appropriate locks; needed to finish Chapter 4

Ironjaw Trap

Found: Dimwood

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: This is a quest item that must be given to an NPC (non-player character). It has no player-usable function

Kalem's Dialectic on Arrow Flight

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: If you "read" this book (accomplished by using the book at any time except during combat) it will permanently add +5 percent to your Arrow Accuracy skill. If you attempt to use the book again, there is a 3 percent chance every time you use it that you will gain 1 percent in Arrow Accuracy skill. The "value" of the book should be reduced by 85 percent after it is first read, so that shopkeepers will not pay much for it

Keshian Tapir (human)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 50 (15 percent)/30 (30 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Keshian Tapir can be used only in the combat mode of *Betrayal at Kronedor* and *must* be in the Using slot of the Inventory screen before it can be used. It is triggered when you choose to swing or thrust with a sword

Keshian Wine Cask

Found: Malac's Cross

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 6

Repairable: Yes

Function: This is a quest item that you can also use. If you use the item from the Inventory screen, it will put the make your character drunk.

Key of Lineages

Found: In Elvandar, from Calin

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 7

Repairable: No

Function: Opens the appropriate locks; needed to be able to get the Guarda Revanche

Killian's Root Oil (clerical enhancement #2)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used either in combat or during walkabout mode. By picking up the object in the Inventory and "dropping" it on any sword/blade, it has the effect of enchanting the blade (Clerical Enhancement #2), adding a Damage bonus of $\text{Damage} + (\text{Damage} \times 0.75)$. It can also be used to enchant armor to negate the effects of a Clerical Enhancement of the same type. When armor is enchanted in this way, it reduces the special combat modifier (SCM) Damage effect by 50 percent. The effect will last for only one combat situation

Knight's Piece

Found: Well in Kenting Rush

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 3

Repairable: No

Function: This is a quest item that must be obtained to gain access to Cavall Run. It has no player-usable function, other than to end Chapter 3

Game Description:

Lecture Ticket

Found: Malac's Cross

Given to:

Price: 55s2r

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This is a quest item that must be given to an NPC to gain entry into the lecture hall in Malac's Cross. After the lecture, your assessment skill will increase

Lewton's Concentrate (spell accuracy booster)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Lewton's Concentrate may be used either in walkabout or in combat mode. By using the Lewton's Concentrate while on the Inventory screen, you will gain a temporary Spellcasting Accuracy boost equivalent to 35 percent of your current Spellcasting Accuracy rating. The effect will wear off either after combat has ended (if used in combat mode) or after the end of the next combat (if used in walkabout mode)

Light Bowstring

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Light Bowstring can be used to restring any light Crossbow. The bowstring is picked up on the Inventory screen and "dropped" on the appropriate Crossbow in order to effect the restringing process. Once the Crossbow is restrung, the Light Bowstring disappears from the inventory screen.

Game Description:

Light Crossbow

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 5 (0 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Light Crossbow can be used only during combat and must be in the Using column of the Inventory screen if it is intended for use. If the crossbow is equipped during combat, it is "triggered" when you select the Shoot option. The crossbow cannot be used unless you have quarrels available on the Inventory screen.

Lightning Staff (human)

Found: Kenting Rush, Sarth

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 20 (20 percent)/8 (15 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Lightning Staff can be used only in combat mode, above ground. When used, it casts a Skyfire spell with a +15 percent Chance to Hit and +10 points of damage. It can also be used like a sword, triggered when you choose to swing or thrust with it

Medium Crossbow (human)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 10 (5 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Medium Crossbow can be used only during combat and must be in the Using column of the Inventory screen if it is intended for use. If the crossbow is equipped during combat, it is "triggered" when you select the Shoot option. The crossbow cannot be used unless you have quarrels available

Mitchel Waylander's Note

Found: Mitchel's house in Sloop

Given to: Abbot Graves in Malac's Cross

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 6

Repairable: No

Function: This is a quest item that must be given to an NPC (non-player character). It has no player-usable function

Moredhel Brooch

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: Moredhel Brooches are treasure items that may occasionally be used as a medium of exchange with certain shanty houses/NPCs, but can never be used directly in shops or taverns. (You may, however, convert brooches into gold sovereigns at the appropriate institutions)

Moredhel Lamprey (elven)

Found: Weapons shops

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 25 (0 percent)/20 (-10 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters: 1-7, 9

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Moredhel Lamprey can be used only in the combat mode of *Betrayal At Krondor* and *must* be in the Using slot of the Inventory screen before it can be used. It is triggered when you choose to swing or thrust with a sword

Naphtha

Found: Weapon shops/caves at Armengar

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used either in combat or during walkabout mode. By picking up the object on the Inventory screen and “dropping” it on any sword/blade, it has the effect of “flaming” the blade’s edge, adding a damages bonus of Damage + (Damage x 0.75). The effect will last for only one combat situation

Navon’s Note

Found: Navon’s body

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 3

Repairable: No

Function: This item can only be used in the walkabout mode. Reading this note gives you a clue about game events. It has no other player-usable function

Nivek’s Key

Found: Corpse outside Krondor

Given to: Nivek

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 6

Repairable: No

Function: Opens office in Eggley, allowing you to enter Sarth in Chapter 6

Noble’s Passkey

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Opens the appropriate locks

Owyn’s Staff (human)

Found: Owyn starts the game with it

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 10 (40 percent)/5 (10 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: This item can be used only in combat mode. The staff is used like a sword, triggered when Owyn chooses to swing or thrust with a sword

Peasant’s Key

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Opens the appropriate locks

Picklocks

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: You will need Picklocks if you wish to try picking a lock. They are used on the Locks & Lockpicking screen.

Poisoned Quarrels

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 6 (0 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 20

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Poisoned Quarrels must be present on the Inventory screen in order to be usable; you must also have a Crossbow of any class to fire them. They can be used only in the combat mode

Potio Noxum

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 1

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Potio Noxum can be used in either the walkabout or combat modes. (The use in walkabout mode is quest specific and may be used only in one location.) In combat, Potio Noxum may be used on a monster when you are 1 square away. By clicking on Potio on the Inventory screen and then pressing the Use button, you are then prompted to pick a target. When the target monster has been selected, they will then have their attack logic reset to Run Away. The Potio Noxum icon disappears from the Inventory screen after use

Powder Bag

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: The Powder Bag may be used only in combat and only when you are standing directly next to a monster. If you go to the Inventory screen and click on the Powder Bag, and then press the Use button, you will then be prompted to pick a target. The affected monster is struck with a Grief of a Thousand Nights spell. The Powder Bag has a 100 percent Chance to Hit. After the powder bag has been exhausted of its charges, it disappears from the Inventory screen

Practice Lute

Found: Shop in Tyr-Sog

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Practice lute may be used only in the walkabout mode. If you use the lute while on the Inventory screen, there is a 5 percent chance, every twentieth time it is used, that your Barding skill will be increased by 2 percent

Psalms of Dala

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total Possible Charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: If you "read" this book (accomplished by using the book at any time except during combat), it will permanently add +4 percent to your Defense skill. If you attempt to use the book again, there is a 3 percent chance every time you use it that you will gain 1 percent in Defense skill. The "value" of the book should be reduced by 85 percent after it is first read, so that shopkeepers will not pay much for it

Quarrel

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 4 (0 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 20

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Quarrels must be present on the Inventory screen in order to be usable; you must also have a Crossbow of any class to fire them. They can be used only in the combat mode

Rations (good)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 7

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Rations are not usable by you, although you must always have a pack of Rations on the Inventory screen at the beginning of every day, in order to avoid falling into a Near-Death state

Rations (poisoned)

Found:

Given to:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 7

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Poisoned Rations are not usable, although the party must always have a pack in the Inventory screen at the beginning of every day in order to avoid falling into a Starving state. If consumed, the party members will be poisoned

Rations (spoiled)

Icon #: INVICON2.LBM #48

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 7

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Spoiled Rations are not usable, although the party must always have a pack in the Inventory screen at the beginning of every day, in order to avoid falling into a Near-Death state

Raw Manna

Found: On Timiriyana

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 100

Chapter: 8

Repairable: No

Function: Raw Manna allows you to cast spells on the Riftword when applied to a crystal staff

Redweed Brew (sword accuracy booster)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 8

Chapters:

Repairable:

Function: Redweed Brew may be used either in walkabout or in combat mode. By using the Redweed Brew while on the Inventory screen, you will gain a temporary Sword Accuracy boost equivalent to 35 percent of your current Sword Accuracy rating. The effect will wear off either after combat has ended (if used in combat mode) or after the end of the next combat (if used in walkabout mode).

Restoratives

Found:

Given to:

Price: 128s8r

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 14

Repairable: No

Function: Restoratives may be used in either walkabout or in combat mode. When you select Restoratives on the Inventory screen and then click the Use button, you will gain back a number of Health points. If Restoratives have been drained of their charges, they will disappear from the Inventory screen

Ring of the Golden Way

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item has an effect only in the walkabout mode. If you have this item on the Inventory screen, it adds +15 percent to your Scouting ability

Rope

Found: General goods stores (shops)

Given to:

Price: 53s7r

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters: 1-7, 9

Repairable:

Function: Rope is not used by you, but must be on the Inventory screen if you wish to climb down pits to transfer between levels of a dungeon. Once you elect to climb between levels, the Rope disappears from your Inventory

Roric's Seal

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Rodric's Seal is a cursed item that may be used only during combat mode. If you select it on the Inventory screen and click the Use button, you will then be prompted to select an enemy target. The seal will then have a 20 percent chance of casting the Mind Kindle spell. If the attempt succeeds, then the monster will be hit by a Mind Kindle spell; if the attempt fails, then you are hit by a Mind Kindle spell

Royal Key of Krondor

Found: Krondor sewers, level 1

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 1

Repairable: No

Function: Opens the grate from the sewers to the Palace at Krondor, allowing you to end Chapter 1

Rubies

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Rubies are treasure items that may occasionally be used as a medium of exchange with certain shanty houses/NPCs, but can never be used directly in shops or taverns. (You may, however, convert his rubies into gold sovereigns at the appropriate institutions)

Sarig's Bane

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 8

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used either in combat or during walkabout mode. By picking up the object on the Inventory

screen and “dropping” it on any armor, it has the effect of enchanting the armor against the effects of a blade poisoned with a Silver Spider or a sword treated with Althafain’s Icer (effectively reducing the damage of either by 100 percent). The effect will last for only one combat situation

Shell

Found: From Eliaem in Elvandar

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 8

Repairable: No

Function: This object can be used only in the walkabout mode. If it is selected on the Inventory screen and then the Use button is clicked on, it “casts” the VisRevanche spell and repairs the Guarda Revanche, so long as it also is on the same Inventory screen

Shell (no spell)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Ordinary shells are considered treasure (although a nearly worthless treasure) and may occasionally be used as a medium of exchange with certain

shanty houses/NPCs, but can never be used directly in shops or taverns. (You may, however, convert ordinary shells into gold sovereigns at the appropriate institutions)

Shovel

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: This item is not used by you, but it must be present on the inventory screen if you wish to dig up the graves in the various cemeteries. If the item breaks while it is being used then it disappears from the Inventory screen

Silver Royals

Found:

Given to:

Price: 0s1r

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: The secondary monetary form used in the Kingdom, there are 10 silver royals to a sovereign and they will be accepted in very nearly every Midkemian institution

Silver Spider

Found:

Given to:

Price: 753s6r

Damage: Poison

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 3

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used either in combat or during walkabout mode. By picking up the object on the Inventory screen and “dropping” it on any sword/blade/arrow, it has the effect of poisoning the blade, adding a Damage bonus of +10 points

Silverthorn

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 8

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used either in combat or during walkabout mode. By picking up the object on the Inventory screen and “dropping” it on any sword/blade/arrow, it has the effect of poisoning the blade, adding a Damage bonus of +10 points. The effect will last for only one combat situation

Silverthorn Anti-Venom

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage:

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 4

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item can be used either in combat or during walkabout mode. By picking up the object on the Inventory screen and “dropping” it on any armor, it has the effect of enchanting the armor against the effects of a Silverthorn-poisoned blade (effectively reducing the damage of a Silverthorn-poisoned blade by 40 percent). The effect will last for only one combat situation

Skeletal Hand (Jared's hand)

Found: Lyton

Given to: Jared's Grave

Price: 0s5r

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters: 1, 2

Repairable: No

Function: This is a quest item. It has no player-usable function

Game Description:

Staff of Macros (human)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 35 (40 percent)/10 (20 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: Makala uses this staff against your party in Chapter 9, in the last battle

Standard Kingdom Armor (human armor)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage:

Protection: 30 (0 percent)

Total Possible Charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: Standard Kingdom Armor is taken into account only when it has been equipped by you (i.e., placed in the Using slot of the Inventory screen)

Strategies of Trading

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: If you “read” this book (accomplished by using the book at any time except during combat) it will permanently add +10 percent to your Haggling skill. If you attempt to use the book again, there is a 3 percent chance every time you use it that you will gain 1 percent in Haggling skill. The “value” of the book should be reduced by 85 percent after it is first read, so that shopkeepers will not pay much for it

Sword of Kinnur (dwarven)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 50 (15 percent)/25 (25 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable:

Function: The Sword of Kinnur can be used only in the combat mode of *Betrayal at Krondor* and *must* be in the Using slot of the Inventory screen before it can be used. It is triggered when you choose to swing or thrust with a sword

Sword of Lims-Kragma (human)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 100 (25 percent)/40 (15 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Sword of Lims-Kragma can be used only in the combat mode of *Betrayal at Krondor* and *must* be in the Using slot of the Inventory screen before it can be used. It is triggered when you choose to swing or thrust with a sword

***Thiful's Bird Migrations* (uses Book icon)**

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: If you "read" this book (accomplished by using the book at any time except during combat), it will permanently add +5 percent to all skills. If you attempt to use the book again, there is a 3 percent chance every time you use it that you will gain 1 percent in all skills. The "value" of the book should be reduced by 85 percent after it is first read, so that shopkeepers will not pay much for it

Torch

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 6

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Lighting a Torch effectively casts a Stardusk or Candleglow spell, depending on whether you are above or below ground. It is used by going to the appropriate Inventory screen, left-clicking on it, and then pressing the Use button

Truesight Tea (arrow accuracy booster; uses Flask icon)

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 6

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Truesight Tea may be used either in walkabout or in combat mode. By using the Truesight Tea while on the inventory screen, you will gain a temporary Arrow Accuracy boost equivalent to 35 percent of your current Arrow Accuracy rating. The effect will wear off either after combat has ended (if used in combat mode) or after the end of the next combat (if used in walkabout mode)

Tsurani Heavy Crossbow

Found: Archers' Shops

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 25 (5 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters: 1-7, 9

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Tsurani Heavy Crossbow can be used only during combat and must be in the Using column of your Inventory screen if it is intended for use. If the crossbow is equipped during combat, it is "triggered" when you select the Shoot option. The crossbow cannot be used unless you have quarrels available as well

Tsurani Light Crossbow

Found: Archers' Shops

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 15 (5 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters: 1-7, 9

Repairable: Yes

Function: The Tsurani Light Crossbow can be used only during combat and must be in the Using column of your Inventory screen if it is intended for use. If the crossbow is equipped during combat, it is "triggered" when you select the Shoot option. The crossbow cannot be used unless you have quarrels available as well

Tsurani Quarrel

Found: Archers' Shops

Given to:

Price:

Damage: 3 (5 percent)

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 20

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Tsurani Quarrels must be present on your Inventory screen in order to be usable; you must also have a Crossbow of any class to fire them. They can be used only in the combat mode

Tuning Fork

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item may be used only in combat. When it is used it has the effect of scaring off any trolls that you encounter (automatically sets all trolls on the combat screen into a run away mode). To use, go to the Inventory screen and click on the object; then press the Use button

Valheru Armor (elven armor)

Found: Riftworld

Given to:

Price: 3000s0r

Damage: —

Protection: 60 (25 percent)

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 9

Repairable: Yes

Function: Valheru Armor is taken into account only when it has been equipped by you (i.e., placed in the Using slot of your Inventory screen)

Vapor Mask

Found: Naphtha mines

Given to:

Price: 26s4r

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 4

Repairable: No

Function: If you wish to escape the Naphtha Mines in the Northlands, you all must have Vapor Masks to keep you from "passing out" from the gases that emanate from the crater mouth

Virtue Key

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Opens the appropriate locks

Waani (triangulation beacon)

Found: From Squire Phillip

Given to: Used on the rift machine

Price: 1492s0r

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 7

Repairable: No

Function: This is a quest item. It is used by clicking on the item while on the Inventory screen. If you are near the rift machine, then you will be allowed to drop the part on the machine. Otherwise, you will be advised that the "part cannot be used here"

Ward of Ralen Sheb (key)

Found: Caverns under Sethanon

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapter: 9

Repairable: No

Function: Opens the appropriate locks in the caverns under Sethanon

Weedwalkers

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: Weedwalkers can be used either in combat or in walkabout mode. Use them while on the Inventory screen by left-clicking on them and then clicking on the Use button. Although the Weedwalkers disappear from the inventory screen, they add a permanent +10 percent to your Stealth rating

Whetstone

Found:

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This item allows you to utilize your Weaponcraft skill to repair damaged weapons. To use it, the Whetstone is picked up on the Inventory screen and "dropped" on the weapon that needs to be repaired. The weapon will then be repaired to the level appropriate, as dictated by your Weaponcraft skill and the condition of the weapon

Wooden Chest

Found: In the Dimwood

Given to:

Price:

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total Possible Charges: —

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This chest propels you into the air to get a panoramic view of your surroundings

Wyvern's Egg

Found:

Given to:

Price: 2222s2r

Damage: —

Protection: —

Total possible charges: 1

Chapters:

Repairable: No

Function: This is a material component that is needed for the spell, Thy Master's Will. It need only be in the Casting column of your Inventory screen in order to use it. Once the spell is cast, the egg dissolves

For Every Deed There Is a Price

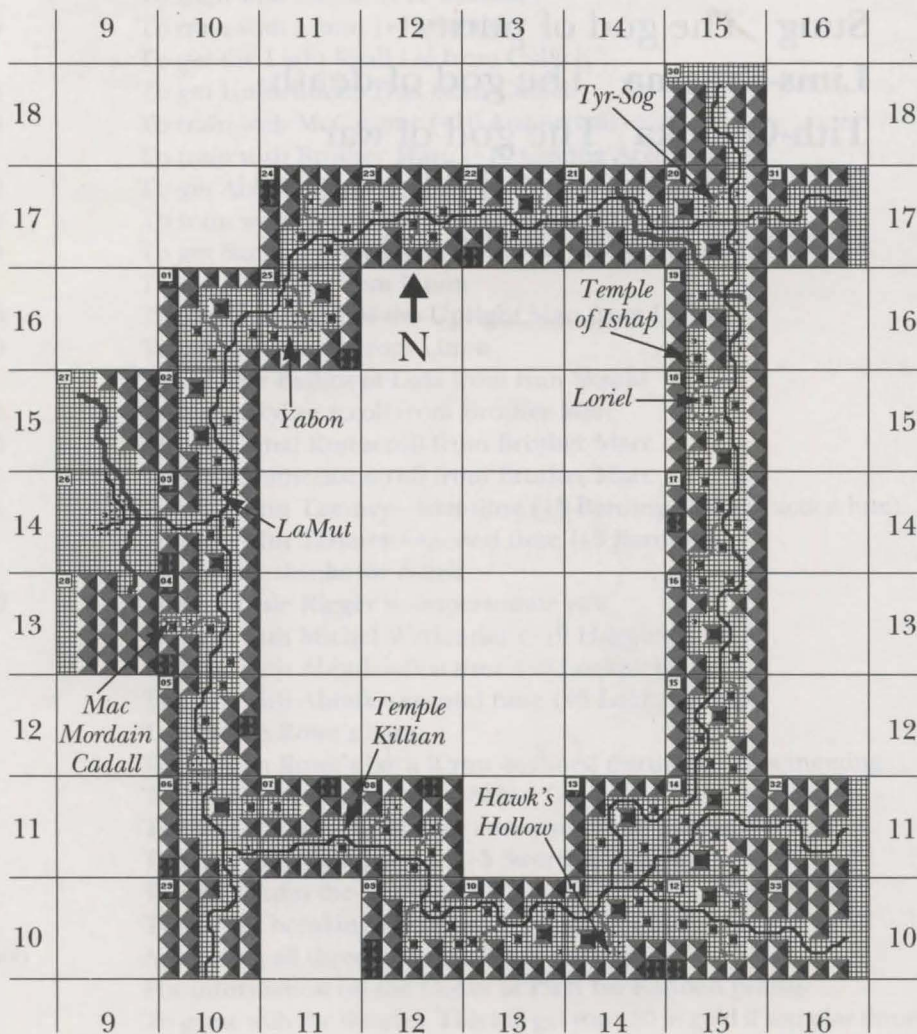
Price (Gold)	Action
30	To catch a ferry to the Island of Eortis
75	To train with Sumani (+5 Sword Accuracy and Defense)
50	To train with Naddur (+10 Weaponcraft)
80	To train with Devon (+10 Defense)
120	To train with Limm (+10 Stealth)
80	To get the Light Shall Lie from Cullich
300	To get Unfortunate Flux from Cullich
100	To train with McCannur (+10 Armorcraft)
50	To train with Brother Marc (+10 Casting Accuracy)
100	To get Abbar's Turn (chess move) from Brother Marc
200	To train with Count Corvallis (+10 Assessment)
100	To get Sandau's Retreat (chess move) from Navon du Sandau
25	To get picklocks from Limm
300	To get the amulet of the Upright Man from Limm
100	To get Spynote #1 from Limm
50	To get The Psalms of Dala from Ivan Skaald
100	To get a Skyfire scroll from Brother Marc
100	To get a Final Rest scroll from Brother Marc
100	To get a Flamecast scroll from Brother Marc
75	To train with Tamney—first time (+5 Barding and a practice lute)
20	To train with Tamney—second time (+5 Barding)
25	To buy five drinks for Nivek
100	To hire Lysle Rigger to impersonate you
50	To train with Michel Waylander (+10 Haggling)
80	To train with Abbuk—first time (+5 Lockpicking)
70	To train with Abbuk—second time (+5 Lockpicking)
10	To sleep in Rowe's barn
8	To sleep in Rowe's barn if you declined during the first meeting
20	To get a lecture ticket from Abbot Graves
25	To have Michele the Healer cure you of the plague
75	To train with Tad Questor (+5 Sword Accuracy)
20	To drink from the healing well
25	To pay for breaking in the actor's door in Prank's Stone
1,000	Answering all three of the wizard's questions
50	For information on the Codes of Piety for Kahooli priests
15	To game with the dwarves. This will get you 150 in gold if you play three times
100	Lost to Prank's Stone
50	Session with Madame Haphra
25	To pay the road tax in Lyton
150	To get the skeletal hand from Glover
50	To bribe Lady Boswich's guards
2,000	To pay the goblin mercenaries

Gods of Krondor

- Ishap** The god of balance
Killian The god of sailors
Banath The god of thieves
Sung The god of purity
Lims-Kragma The god of death
Tith-Onanka The god of war
Silban The god of the harvest
Eortis The god of the sea

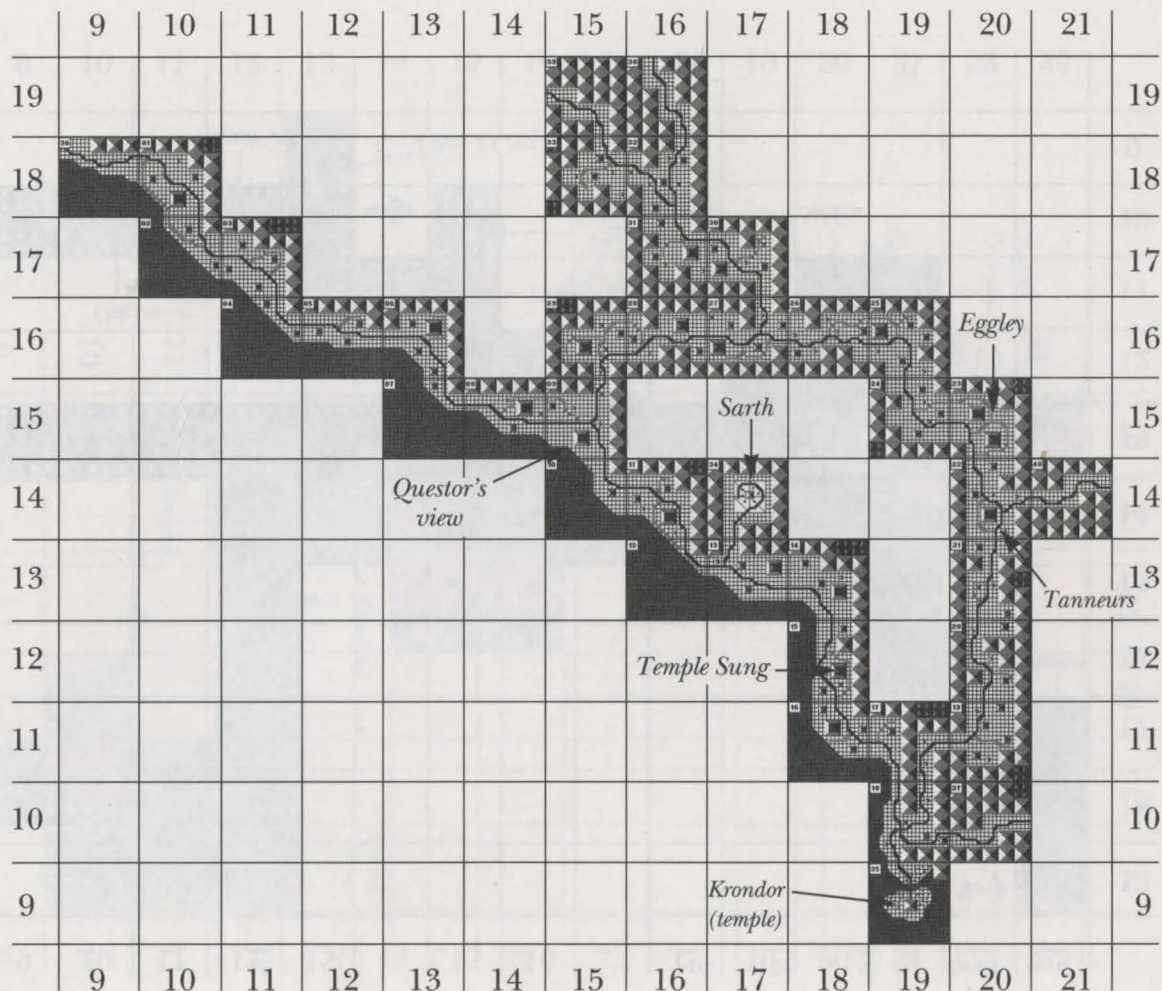
Maps of Kronдор and Riftworld

These maps will help you plan your journey through Midkemia more efficiently. Don't rely solely on the maps, however, or you'll miss lots of fun and exploration.

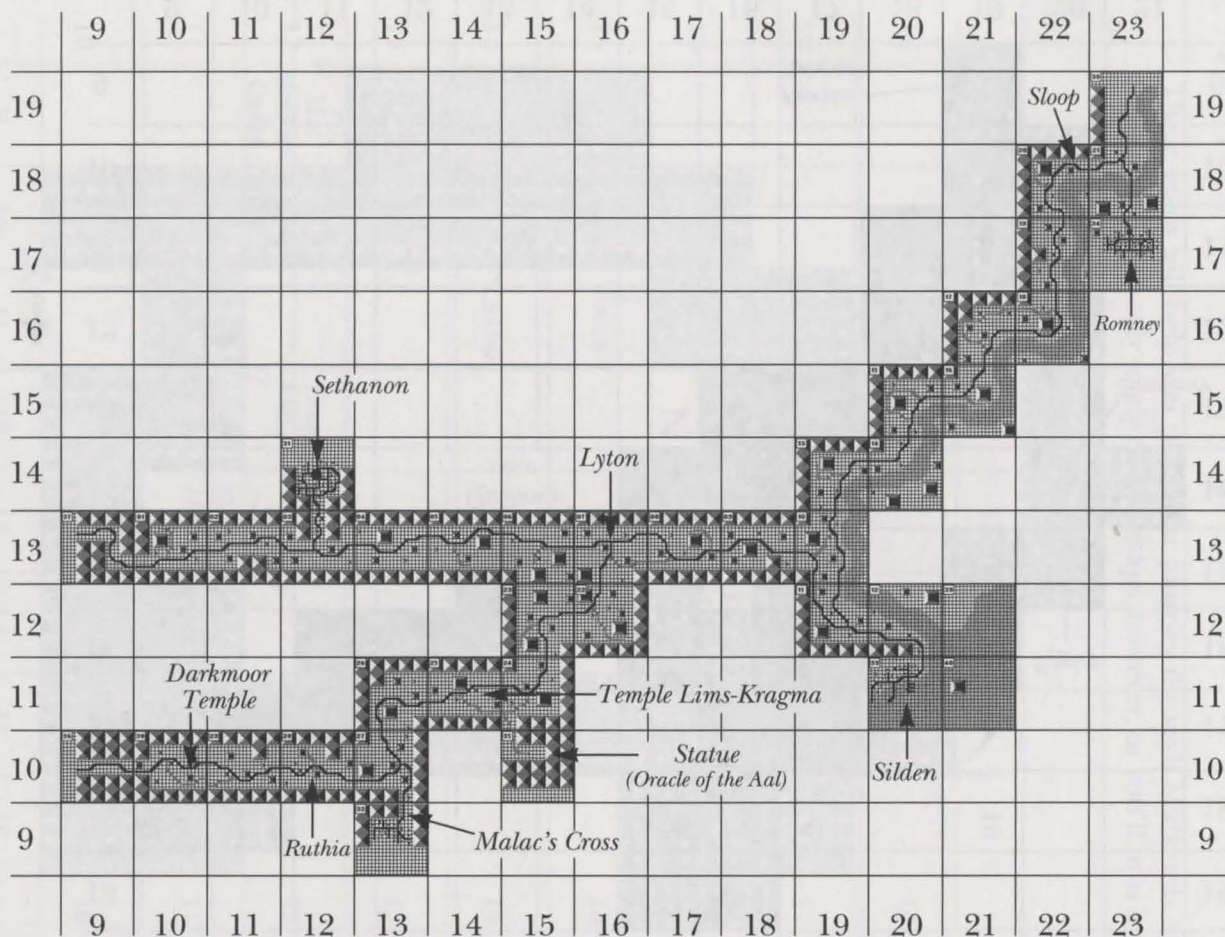


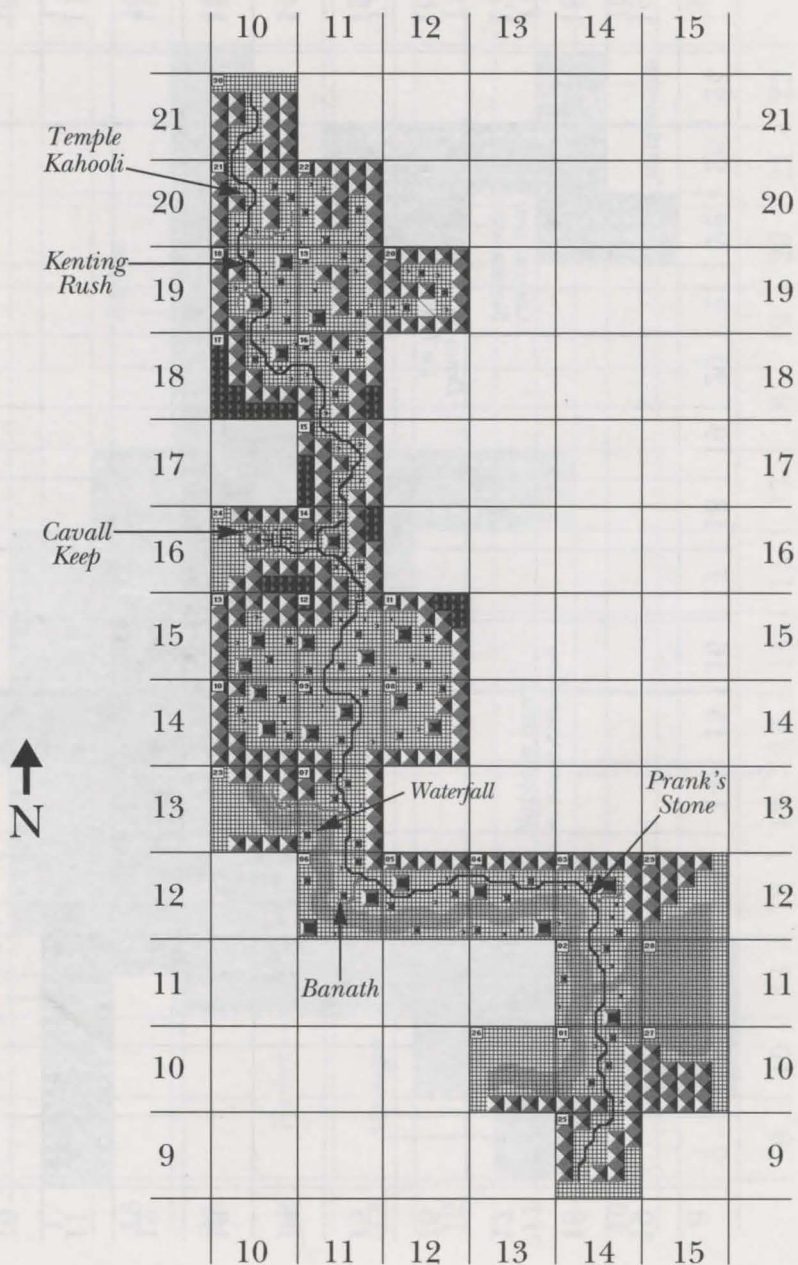
Zone 1

Zone 2



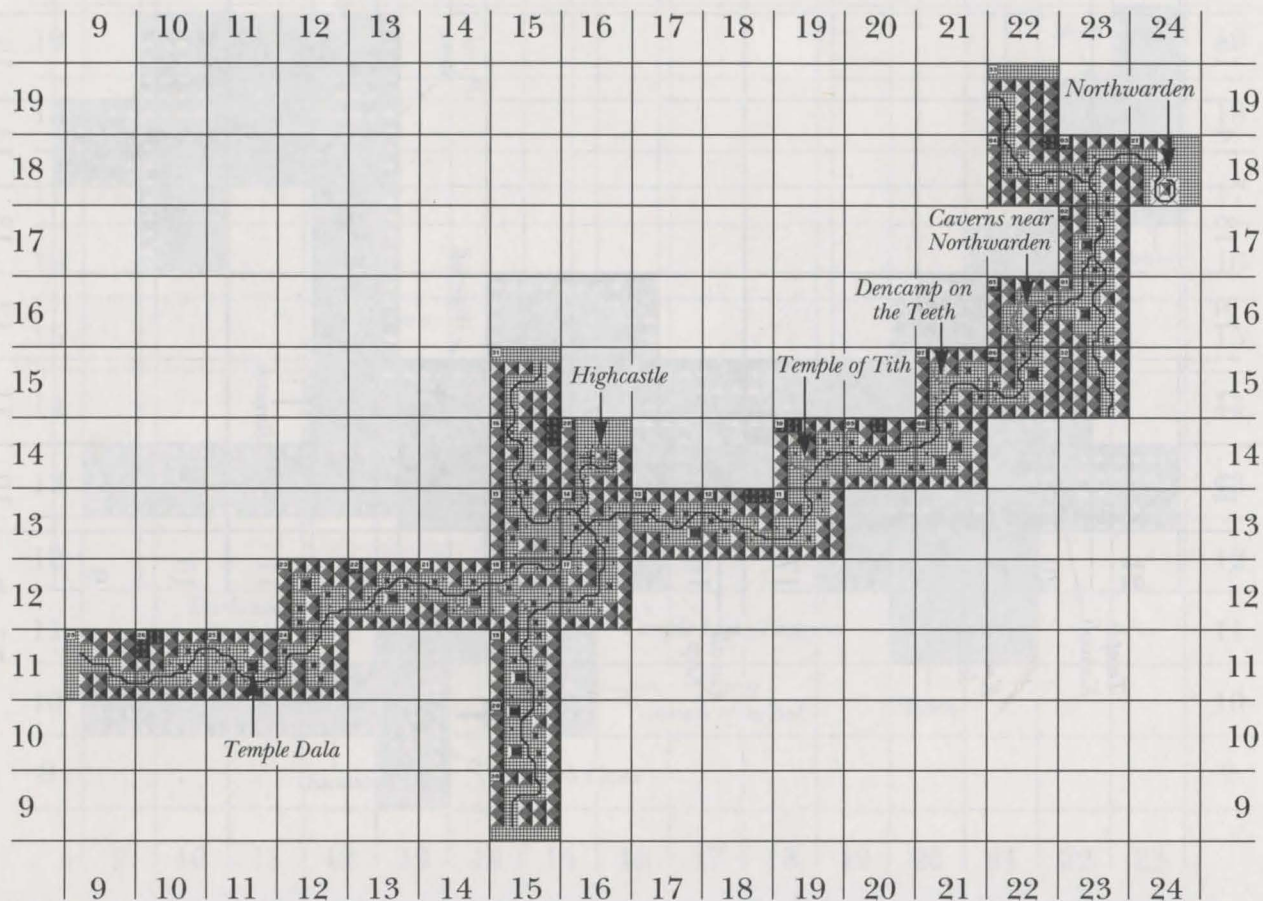
Zone 3



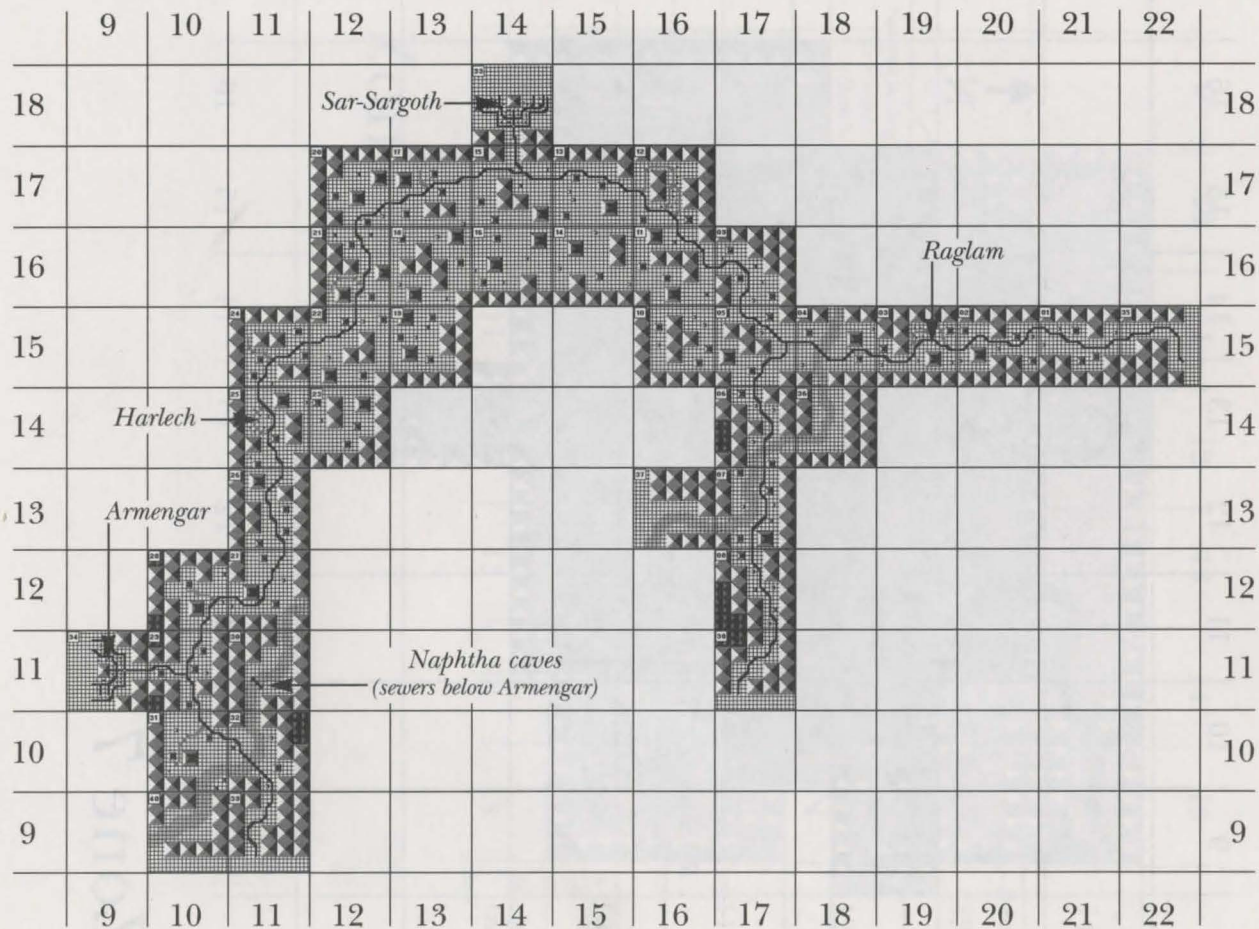


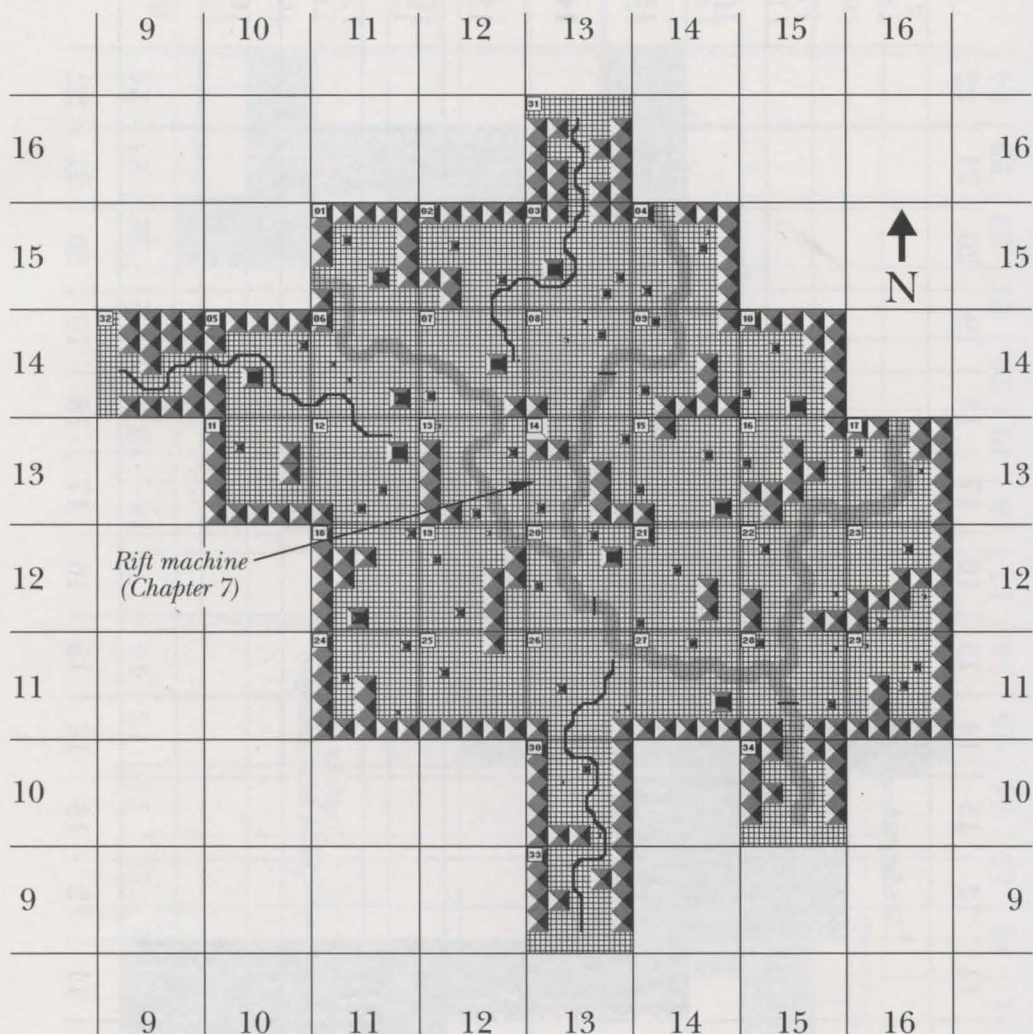
Zone 4

Zone 5

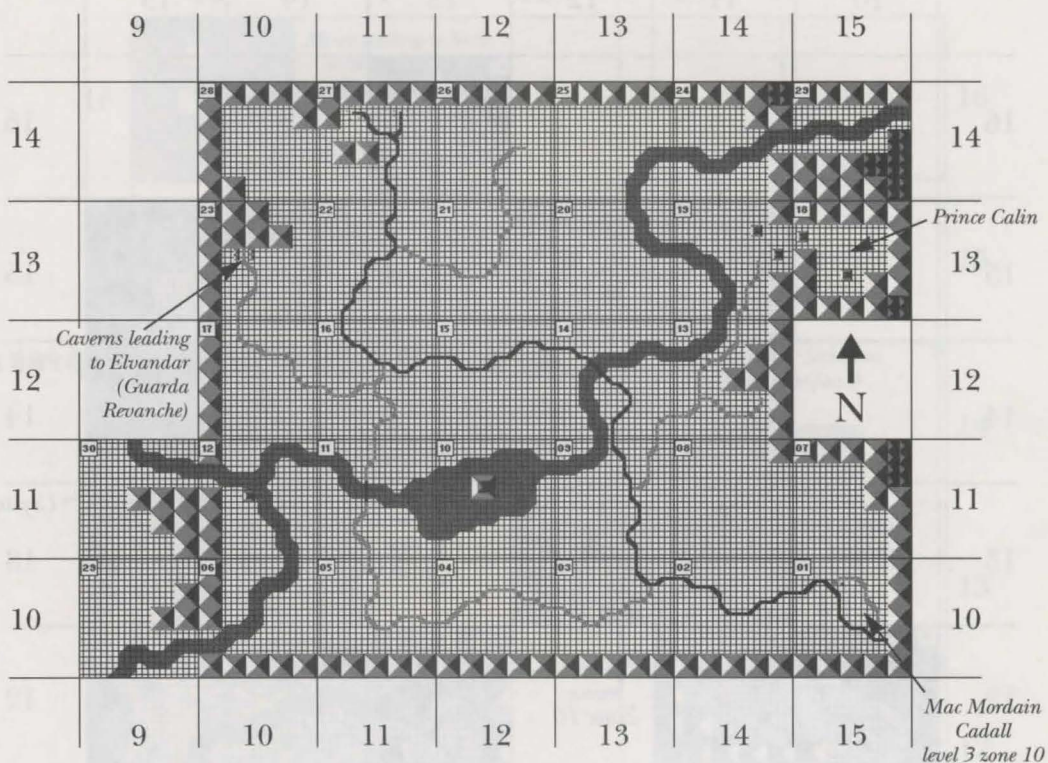


Zone 6

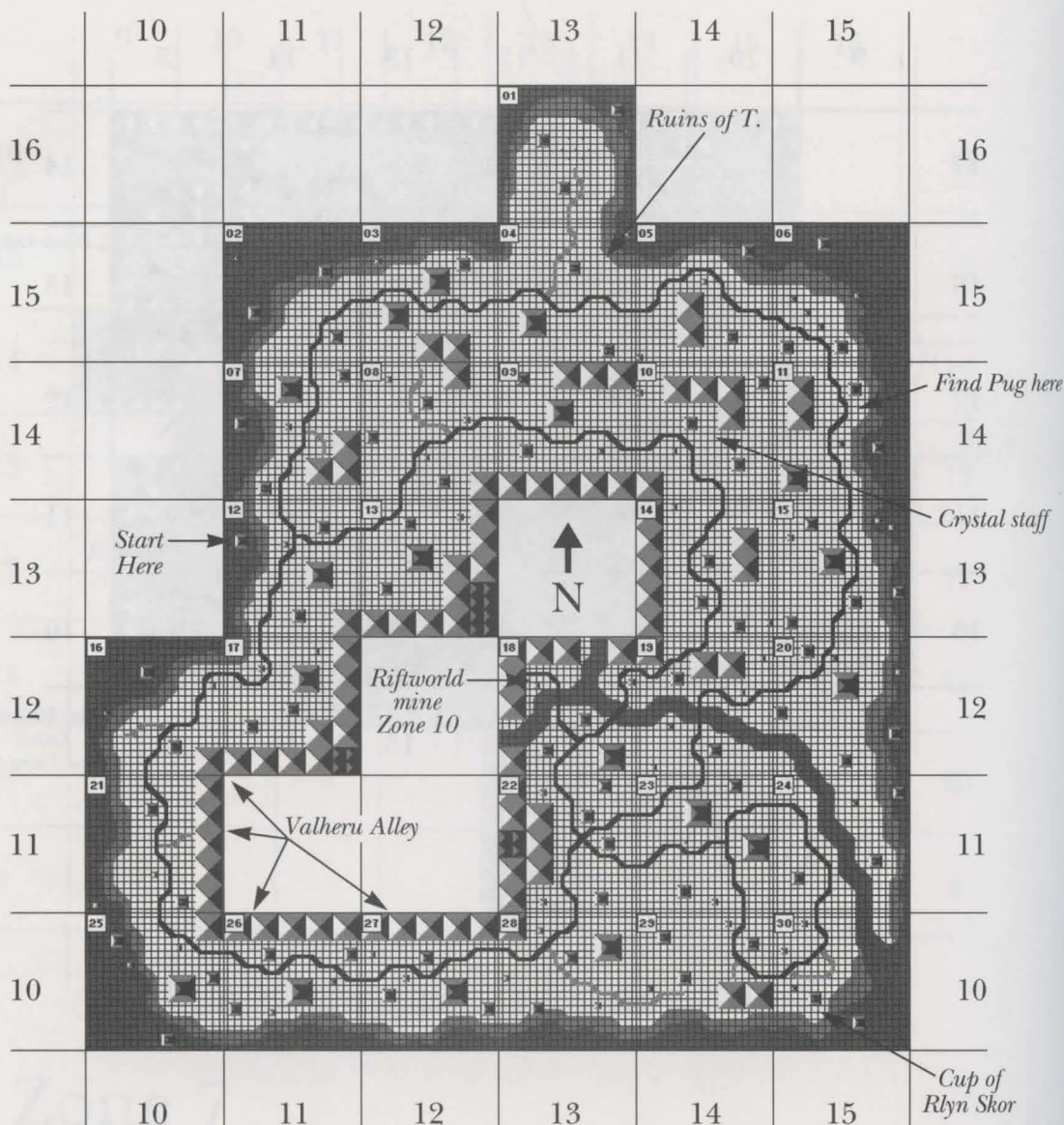




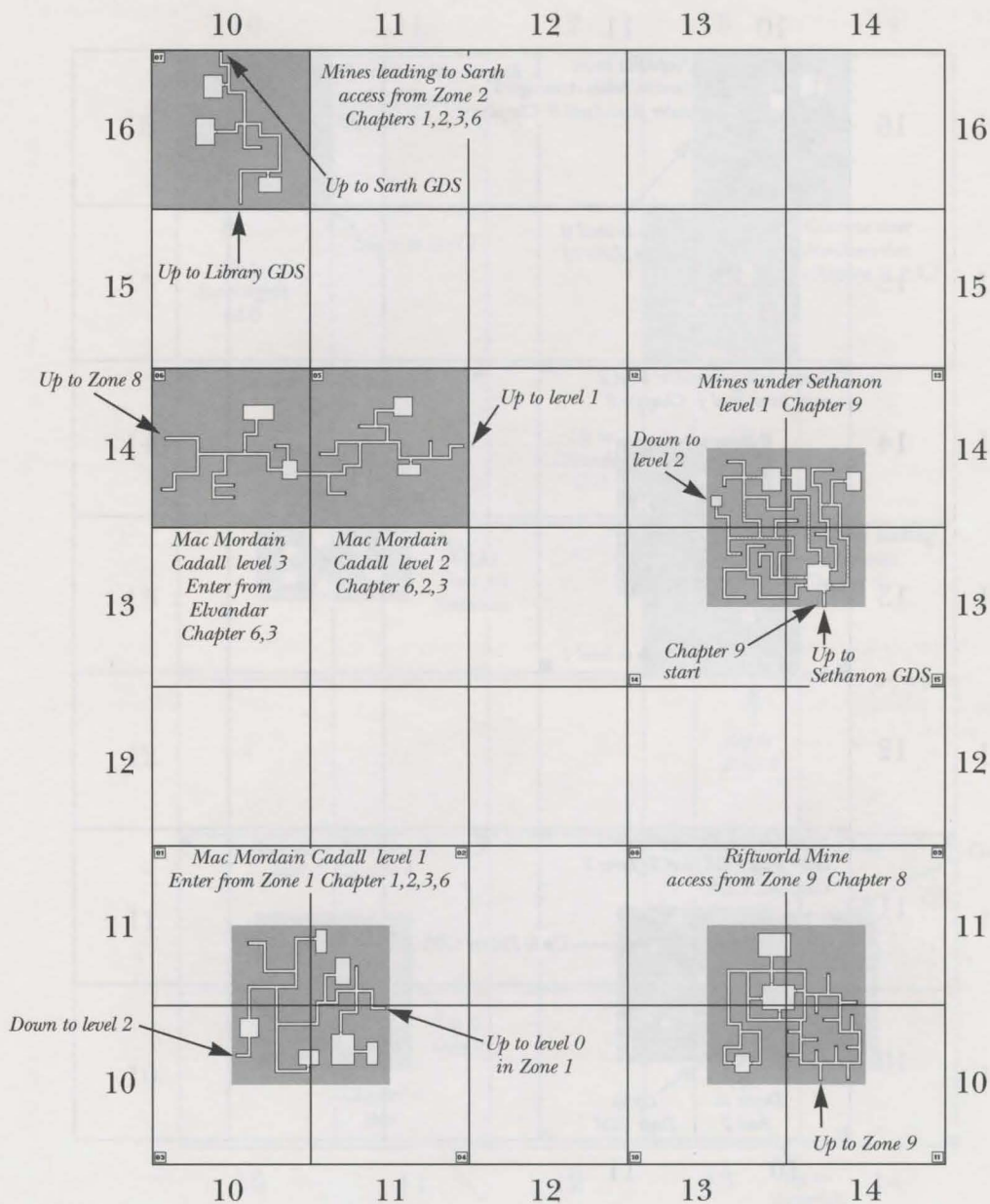
Zone 7



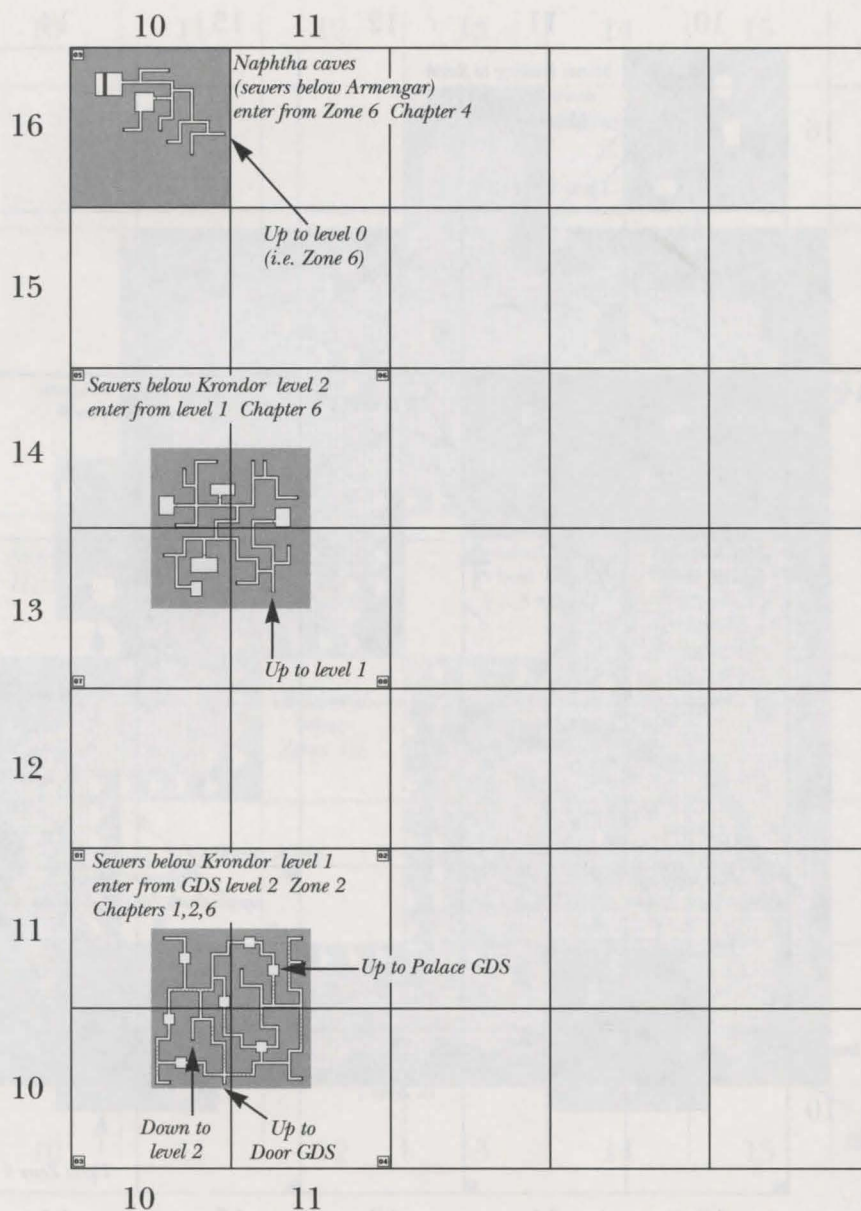
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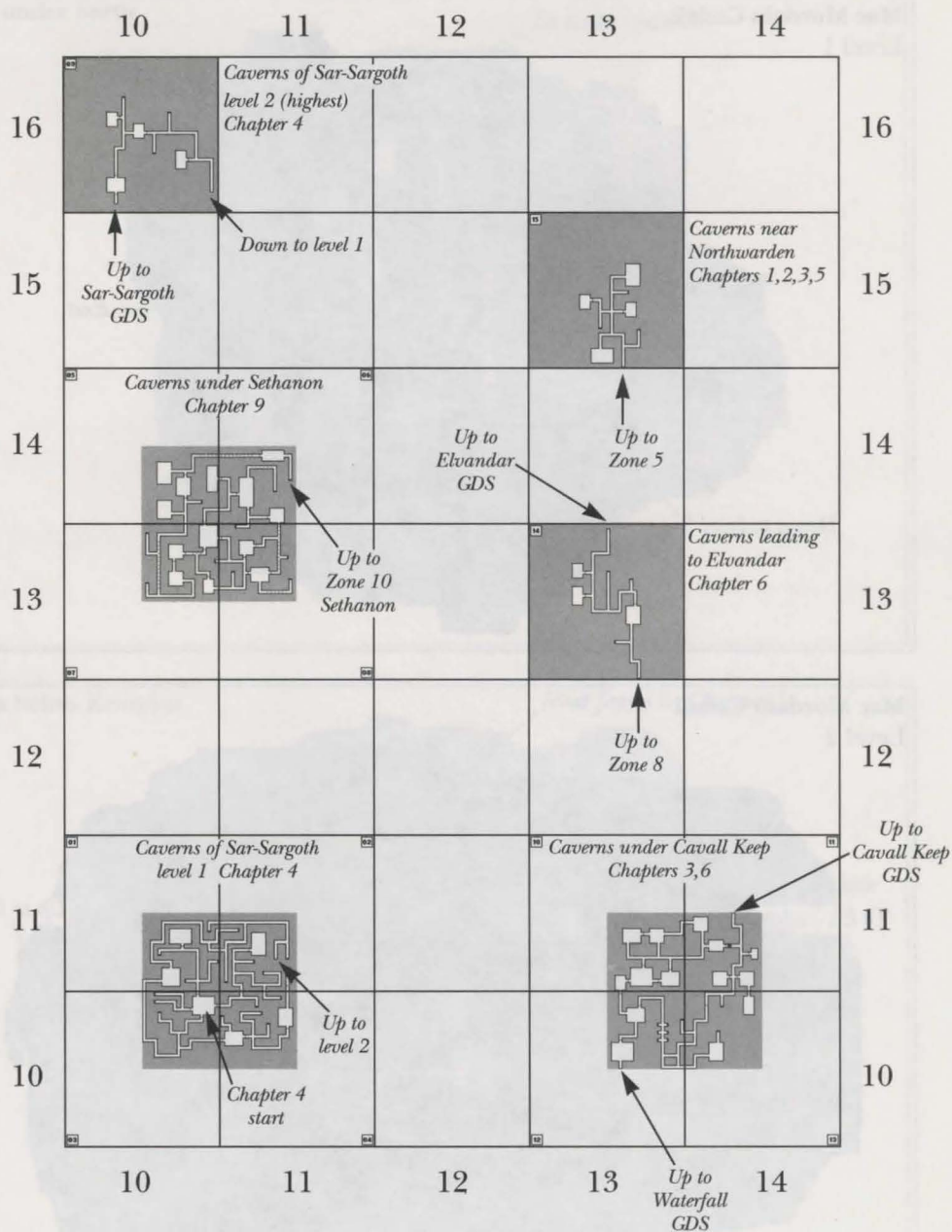
Zone 9



Zone 10



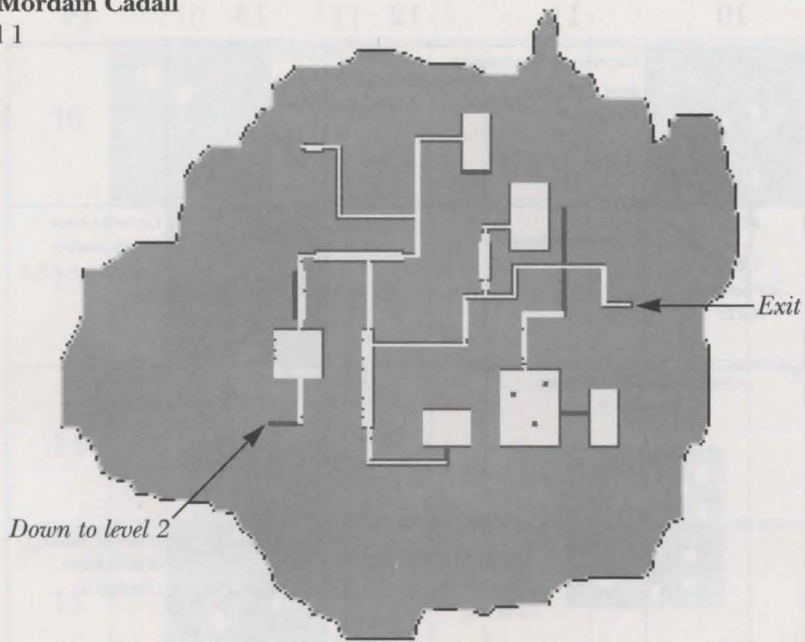
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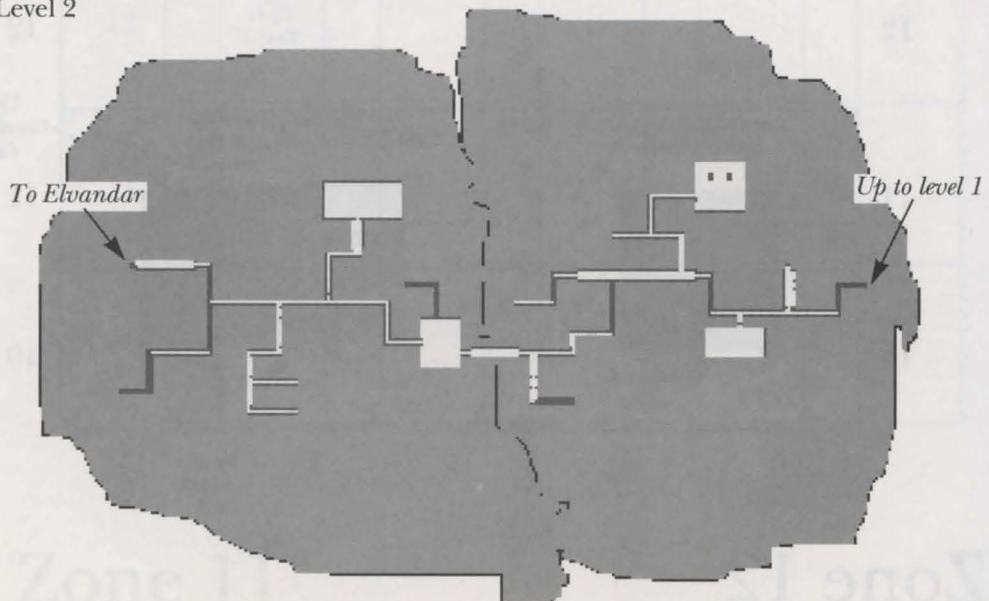
Zone 12

Mac Mordain Cadall

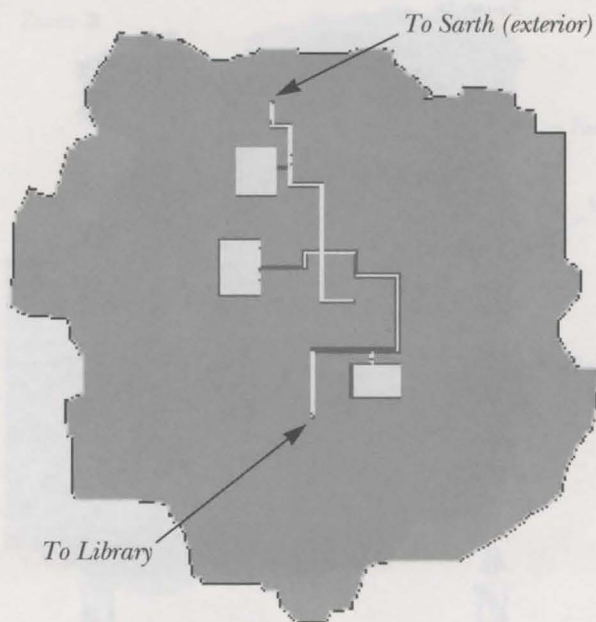
Level 1

**Mac Mordain Cadall**

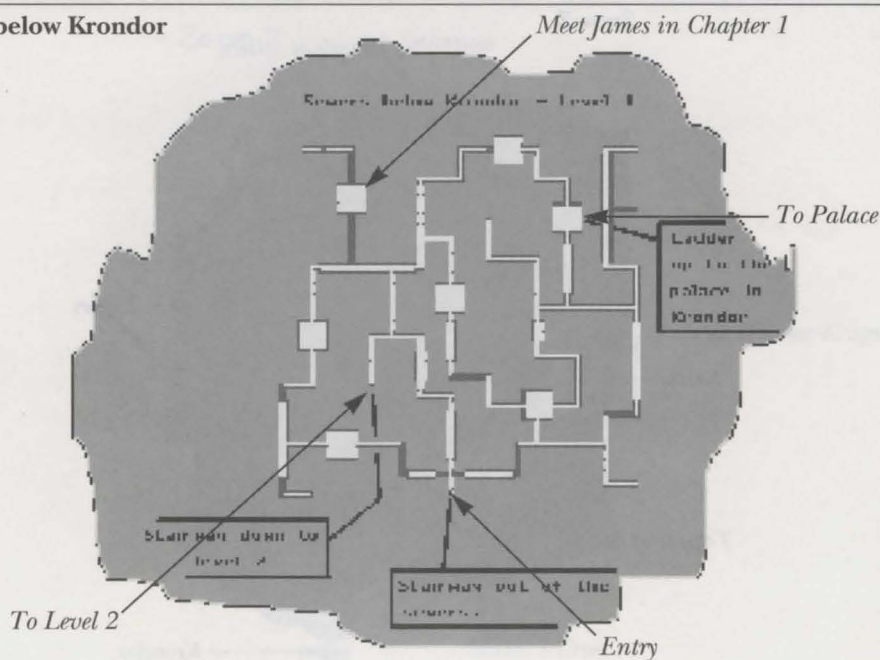
Level 2

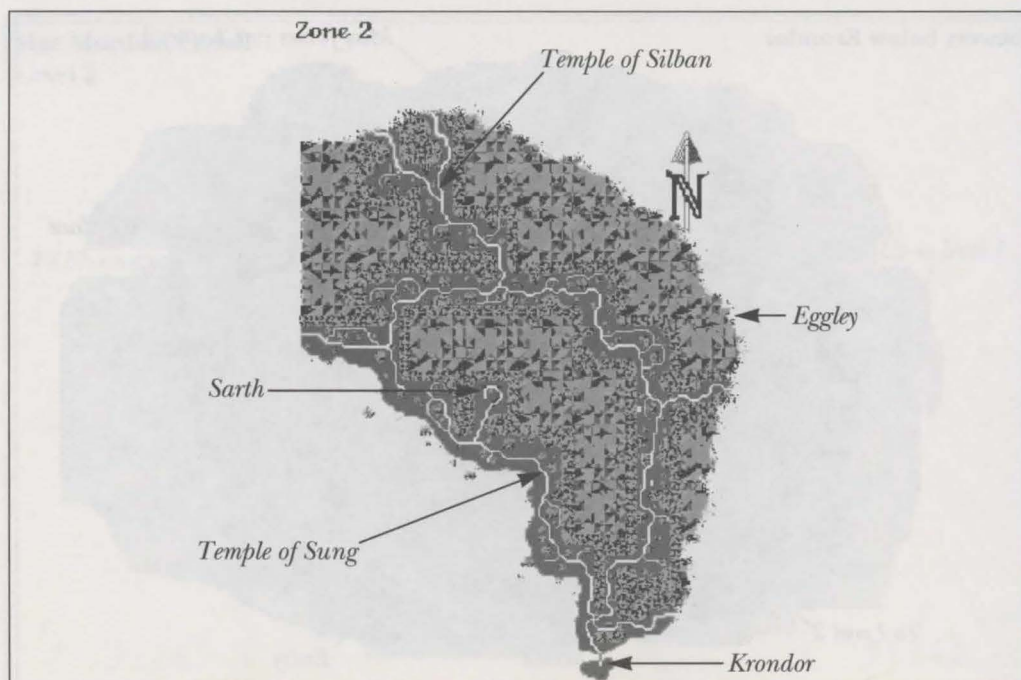
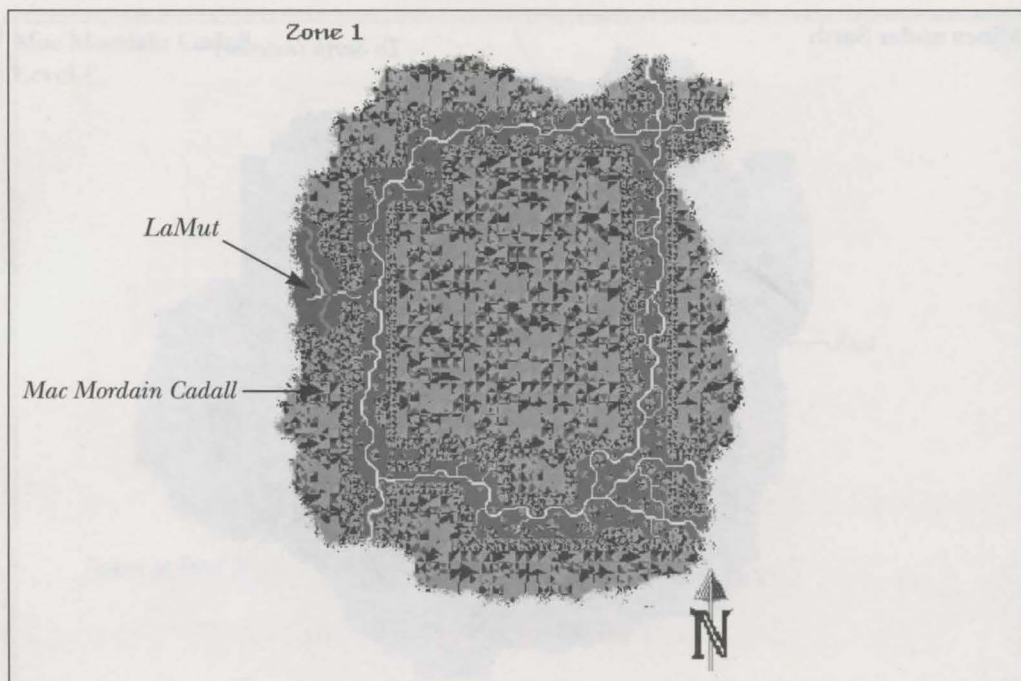


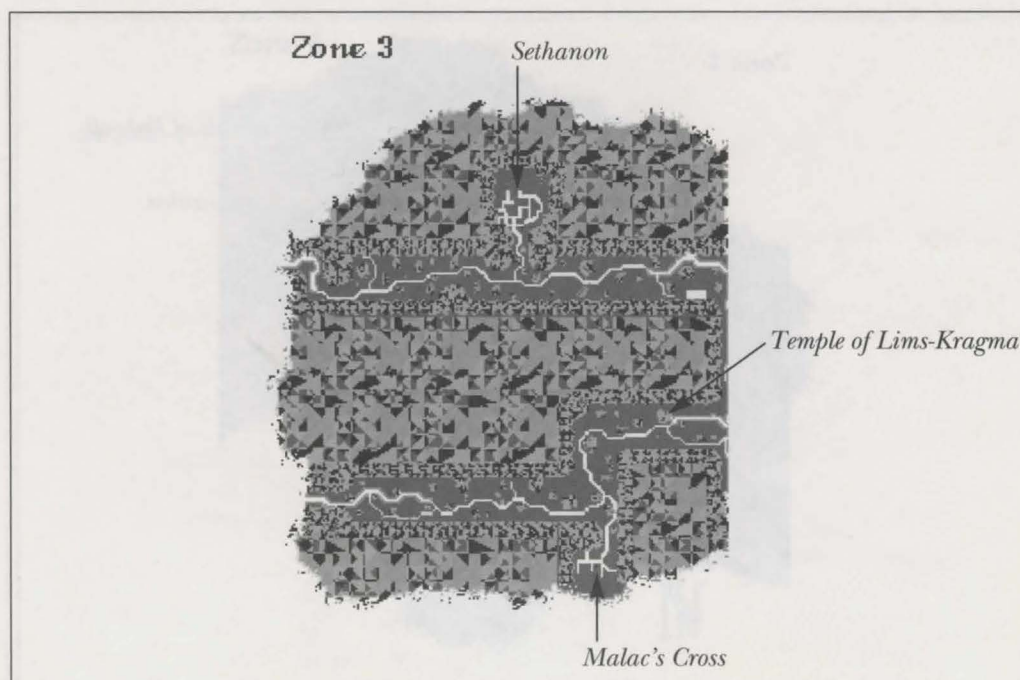
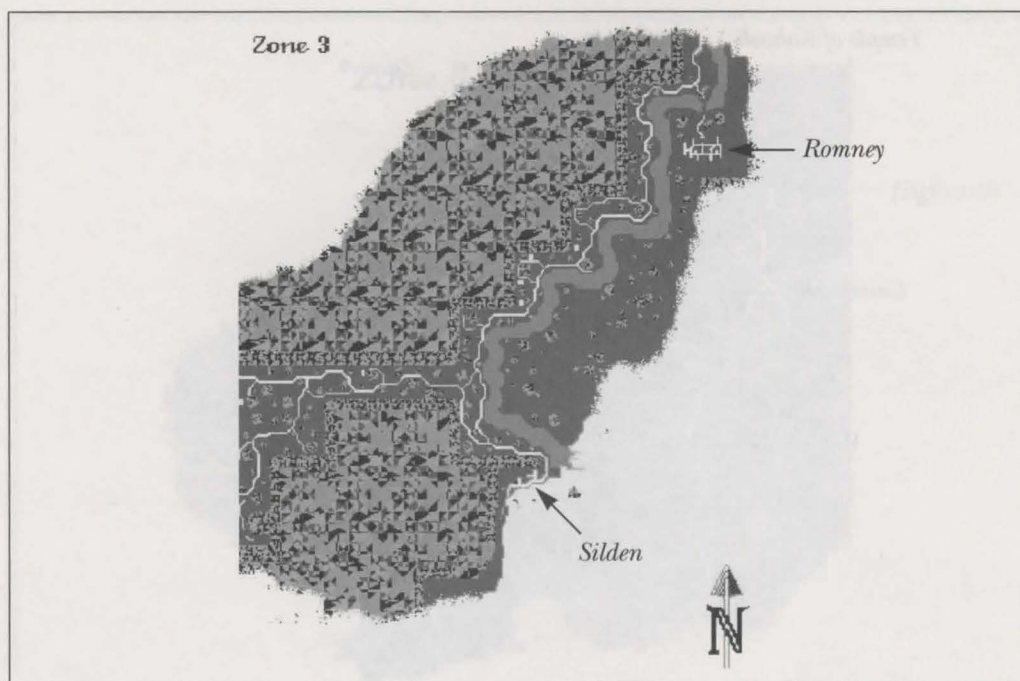
Mines under Sarth

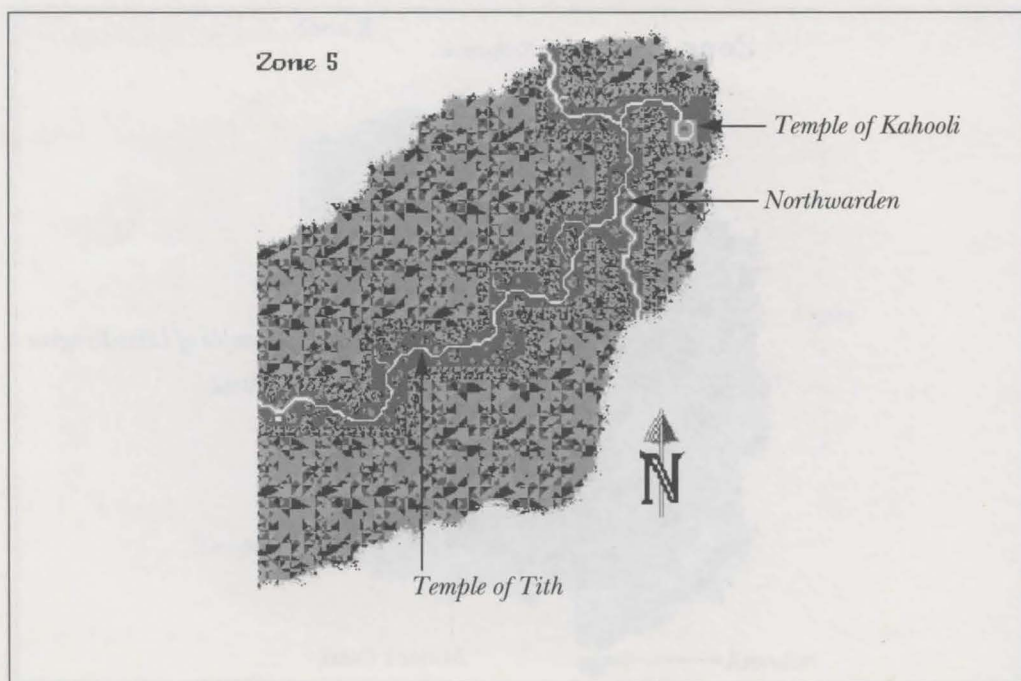
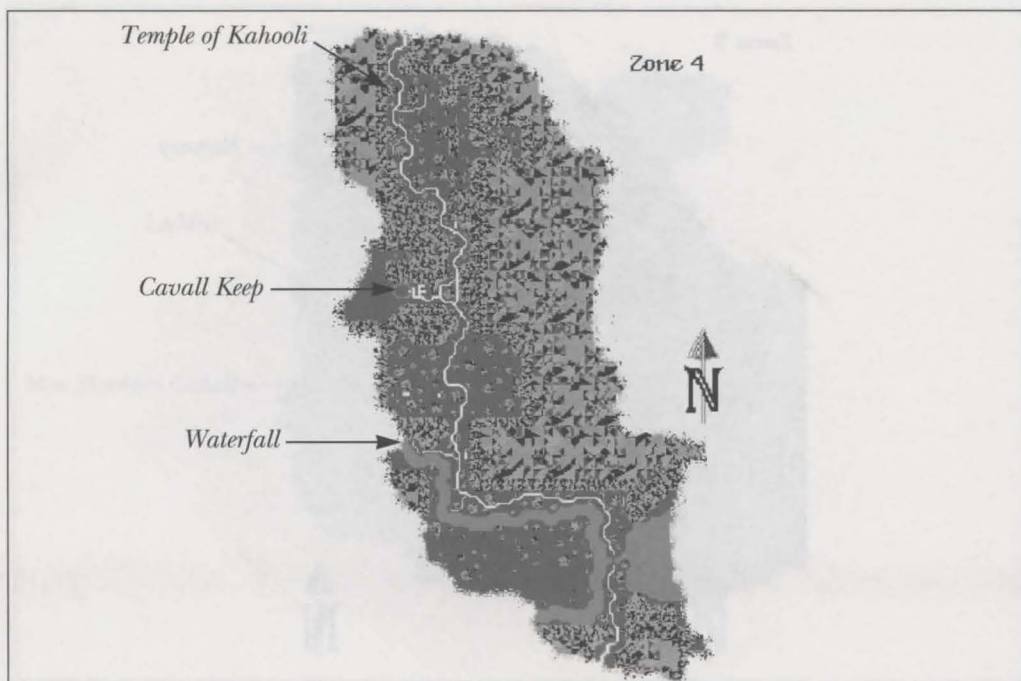


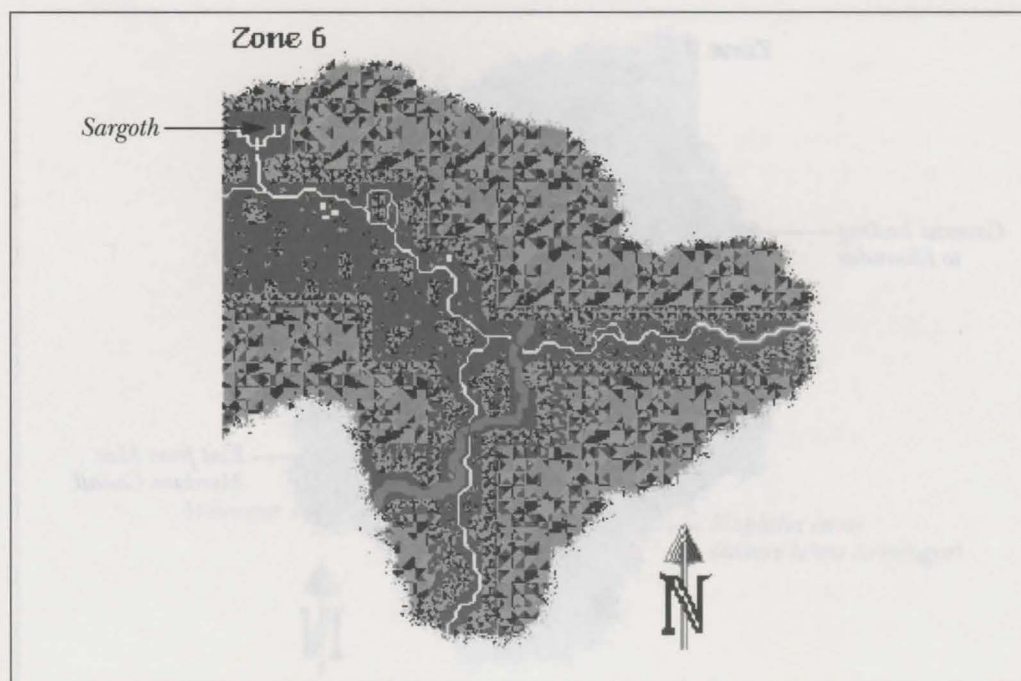
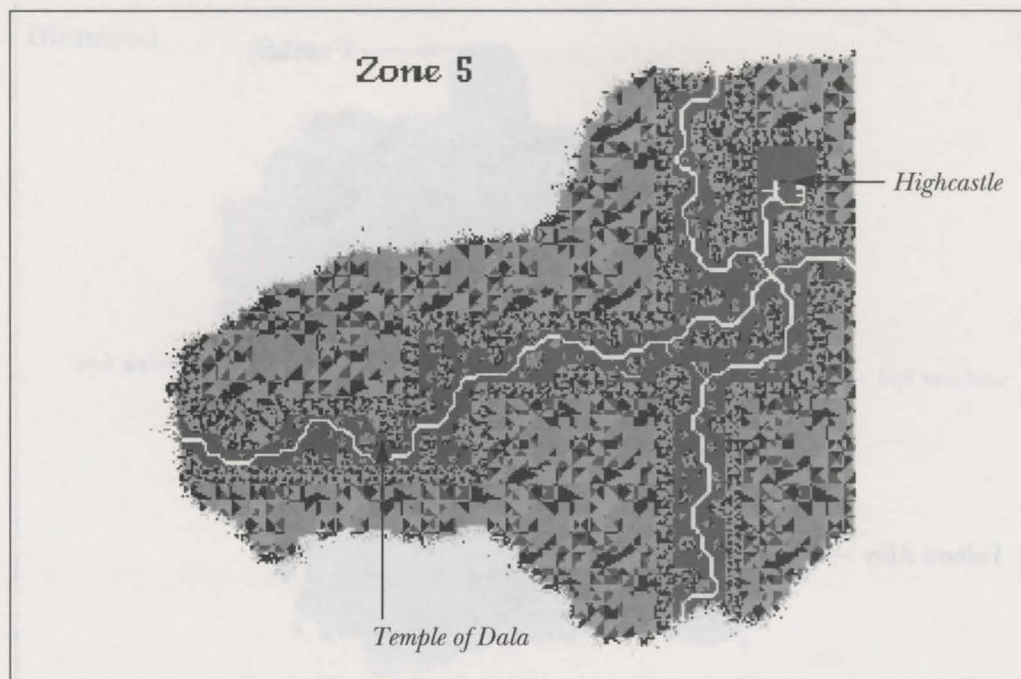
Sewers below Krondor

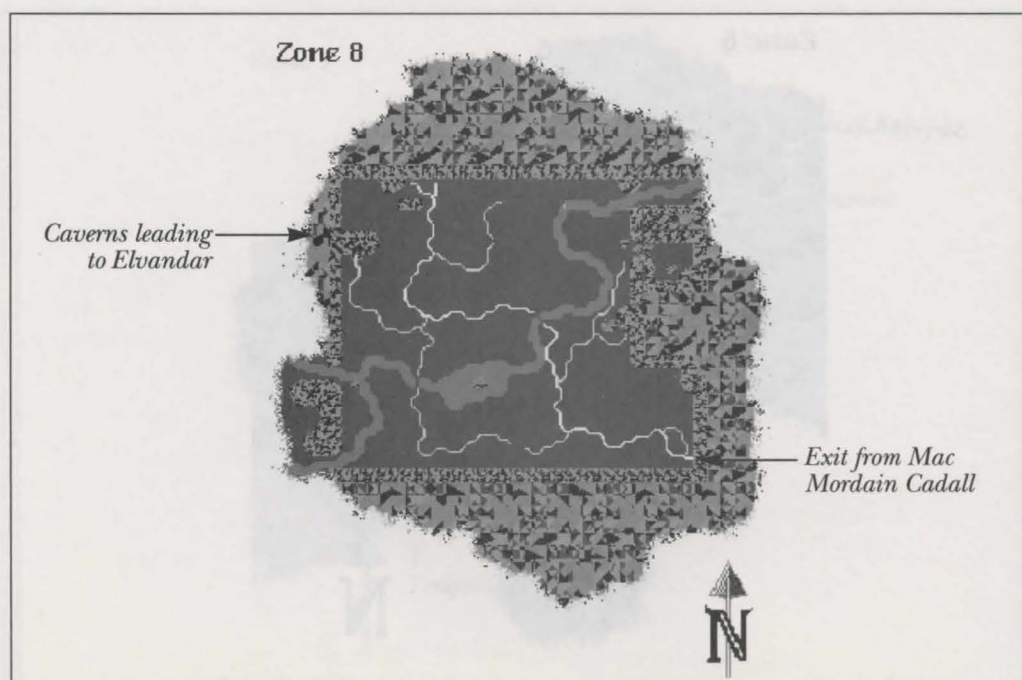
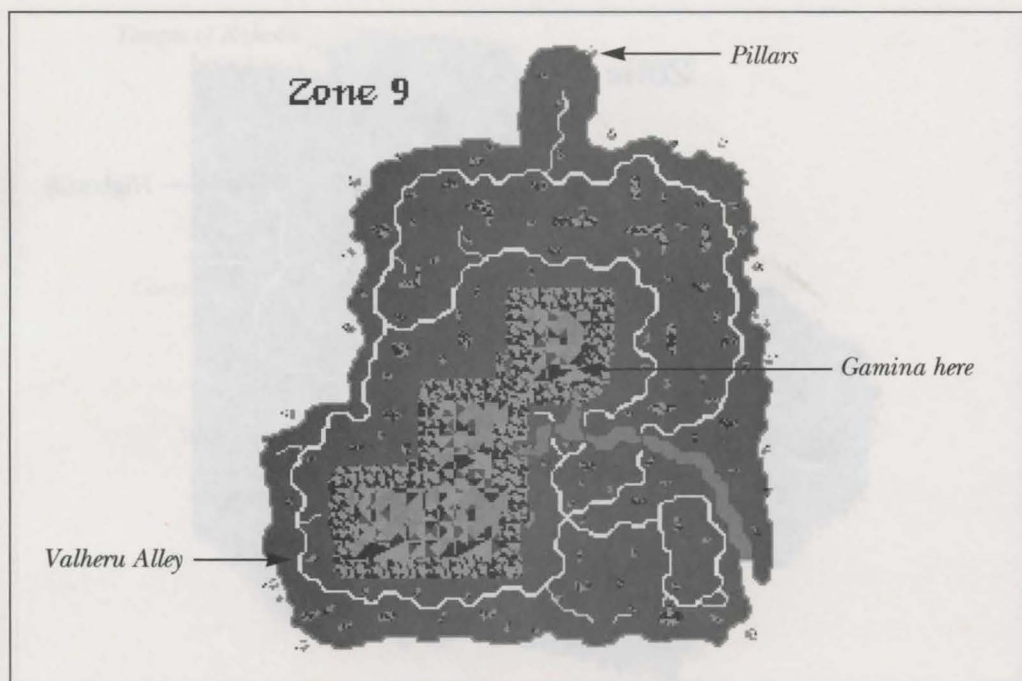






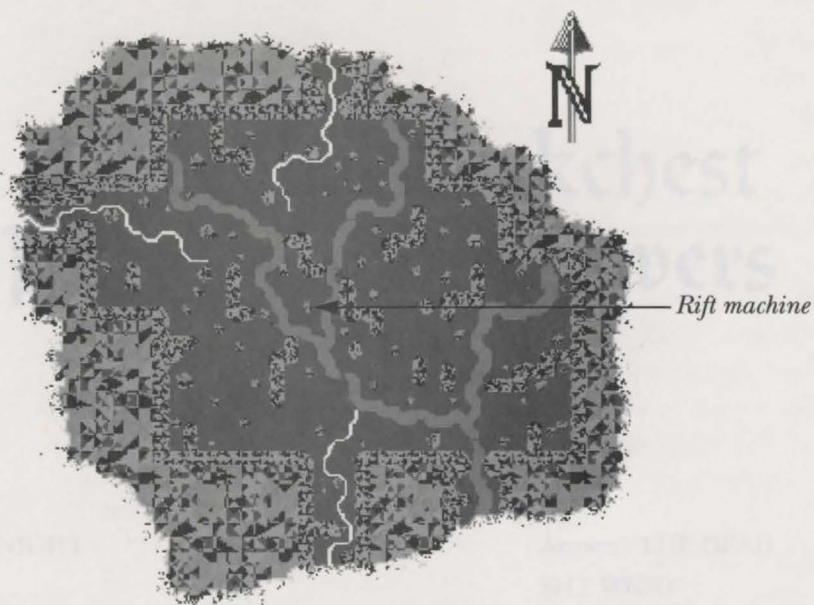






Dimwood

Zone 7



Zone 6



Appendix C

Moredhel Lockchest Puzzles and Answers

1

Answer: DAY NIGHT

DRV SAGHO

OAB FIRMT

FLC HRUNI

EPYNGHSK

The light one breaks but
never falls.

His brother falls but
never breaks.

2

Answer: HANGMAN

WORGSEL

HBNBMSE

SHINETN

AAEOTAR

Swollag, the famous
moredhel craftsman,
Guarantees his work
until the end of time.

3

Answer: FIRE

WSTE

AINL

FORN

BREH

The chill of its death,
You may soon mourn.
But though it dies,
It cannot be born.

4

Answer: RAIN

RSOE

SERN

ENAT

LAIO

You see it about in field
and town,
It cannot get up,
But will oft fall down.

5

Answer: THE DEAD

SHT WESD

OBS DAET

LEE RIAS

TRN ORTO

They feel no pain,
No sorrow, no greed.
They have no anger,
No hatred, nor need.

6

Answer: SMOKE

RMEES

SHPKT

TERLR

ALOE

Though easy to spot,
When allowed to plume,
It is hard to see,
When held in a room.

7

Answer: EYES

AHAE

TAET

SYIS

ELNN

Be you ever so quick,
 With vision keen,
 By your eyes,
 We are never seen.
 Unless, perchance,
 It should come to pass,
 You see our reflection,
 In a looking glass.

8

Answer: RING

ROBN

OLEG

SHIE

TINS

A precious gift, this,
 Yet it has no end or
 beginning,
 And in the middle, nothing.

9

Answer: SHADOW

RHNBFT

SLEDNW

AEATOL

NILORK

Silently he stalks me,
 Running as I run,
 Creeping as I creep.
 Dressed in black,

He disappears at night,
 Only to return with the sun.

10

Answer: GLOVES

SHORAS

TLLDTR

GREESH

AERVEE

Buckets, barrels, baskets,
 cans;

What must you fill with
 empty hands?

11

Answer: ARROW

PSAOS

LRWTW

ETRHE

AOSET

It flies without wings,
 Strikes without beak,
 teeth, or talons.

It has no eyes
 In its pointed head,
 But it can kill birds in
 flight.

12

Answer: STAIRS

TERIES

RHARRE

STESTT

ALLOND

Up and down they go,
 But never move...

13

Answer: CANDLE

RHEDLS

STNBET

TARLAO

CIGORE

He gets short when he
 gets old.
 He goes out, then it gets
 cold.

14

Answer: WIND

PATD

NIDE

AHNS

WOSH

The strongest chains will
 not bind it,
 Ditch and rampart will
 not slow it down.
 A thousand soldiers can-
 not beat it,
 It can knock down trees
 with a single push.

15

Answer: BLOOD

TROPs

BHEDT

CERRD

OLAOA

Moredhel brothers, make
 it rain,
 Kingdom rivers, crimson
 pain!

16

Answer: RIVER

MORIT
WHATS
AIVSR
RRIEE

An untiring servant it is,
Carrying loads across
muddy earth.
But one thing that cannot
be forced,
Is a return to the place of
its birth.

17

Answer: SWORD

SOOES
JHDRI
EUEST
MWNGD

With sharp edged wit,
And pointed poise,
It can settle disputes,
Without a noise.

18

Answer: ICE

THR
SCO
IET
WSE

Power enough to smash
ships
and crush roofs. Yet it still
must fear the sun.

19

Answer: ALCOHOL

AROOLET
TLIHHVS
BOCROOL
FAEETRE

Today he is there to trip
you up,
And he will torture you
tomorrow.
Yet he is also there to
ease the pain,
When you are lost in grief
and sorrow.

20

Answer: DELEKHAN

BREETOEW
FLRUSNVN
DOLTRHPR
AEKOKDAM

Death to our Enemies!
no Living adversary shall
Escape the new King of
these isles. He will lead us
to glory And provide New
lands for our people!

21

Answer: TREASURE

TAALREWL
PREHOUPB
OHDASWLE
SLSEITRX

Moredhel And Pantathian,
Guarding Our Lid, Did
Close Her Ever So Tightly.

22

Answer: HOLE

RTLE
SOES
ERRL
HAVT

It can hold you,
But you cannot hold it.
And the more you
remove,
The bigger it will get.

23

Answer: RUST

TULD
RSOE
HESS
ADVT

It can pierce the best
armor,
And make swords crumble
with a rub.
Yet for all its power,
It can't harm a club.

24

Answer: VICTORY

SHOTEED
TICOSIT
ARESOTY
VARITRS

With this one thing
alone,
You will have defeated
even the strongest foe.

25

Answer: EYE TO EYE

RAE IN SOL
BRS OO TYA
EOI TE LIQ
SYN AS EDE

Three fools did once sacrifice,
To win a contest long ago.
Dobe Oyle, a Kingdom lad,
Gave his blood to start.
A goblin man, Ethorat,
Hacked out his dying heart.
Sou Oyle, Dobe's sister, won,
She cast away her soul.

26

Answer: THORN

SHSTE
CLIRD
ARAUN
TEOGS

He got it in the woods and
Brought it home in his hand
Because he couldn't find it.
The more he looked for it the
More he felt it. When he finally
Found it he threw it away.

27

Answer: HOLES

WEMHI
GOPTD
HRLEF
NHIOS

A barrel of rainwater
Weighs twenty pounds.
What must you add
To make it weigh fifteen?

28

Answer: HAIR

TRKY
EAIE
HLLD
BEER

Kingdom fools are born without,
A lot of this, there is no doubt.

29

Answer: EGGS

EITL
TOEE
RGLS
SNGD

They go up white,
But come down yellow and white.

30

Answer: NOTHING

SOSLPLG
PLTHNEK
EHCOINS
NEIEKSE

We love it more than life.
We fear it more than death.
The wealthy want for it.
The poor have it in plenty.

31

Answer: KNOCKER

KLICBTR
TERTOIE
AIDECES
INOLKST

It asks no questions,
But demands many answers.
Don't knock it until you
Are ready to see what waits
On the other side.

32

Answer: CHEST

SASSU
TLILT
CREOS
AHRIE

At last you may solve this.

33

Answer: MILK

SOSK
MRLS
ATOT
DIDE

You can spin, wheel, and twist.
But it can turn without moving.

34

Answer: BARD

BSRO
AOTT
RASN
FRUD

Who works when he plays,
And plays when he works?

35

Answer: DIE

DOC

ARE

FEW

SIN

Prince Arutha, from his
lofty perch,
Will find our troops with-
out a search.

His men will fall, his cas-
tle too,

And then what will Prince
Arutha do?

36

Answer: SILENCE

TUVETED

RPINNCE

SHOOYSS

OILSRRY

Names give power,

Magic to control.

But what is broken,

By naming it?

37

Answer: WRONG

PERDE

WOISD

THONS

IREOG

The language of men,
Can be mastered.

But what Kingdom word
Is always pronounced
wrong?

38

Answer: CARDS

SLLAT

CARSD

ATIRS

OUSDE

Brought to the table.

Cut and served.

Never eaten.

39

Answer: PEACE

SIADÉ

THOCT

PRTLS

AESIY

Widows and orphans,
Parents and kin.

This is disturbed most
By riots and war.

40

Answer: SHADOW

THTATW

SRAUUY

WEILSS

AOVDOE

It can move over water,
But cannot fly.

It can move under water,
But stay quite dry.

41

Answer: WAGON

RARPE

WHGMD

EITEB

SLCON

Has tongue,

But cannot talk.

Runs,

But cannot walk.

42

Answer: SAWS

TIWE

SREY

WHIT

OADS

We don't need wine,

We don't need meat.

We have sharp teeth,

But cannot eat.

43

Answer: TABLE

CLAYS

SATRE

IHBID

TOELO

It stands while others sit.

It groans when it is too
full.

It has four legs, but can-
not run.

44

Answer: WALL

SAMT

WILS

PROL

ETUE

It goes past gates,

But asks no one's leave.

It runs clear around castles,

Without taking a step.

45

Answer: SUNSHINE

TUORBCTN

ARNNEIAE

SOLOTENT

MHTSHYKS

Never resting, never still.
Moving silently, hill to hill.
It does not walk, run or trot,
All is cool where it is not.

46

Answer: NAME

TRSE

PENS

MAMY

NIOT

Passed from father to son,
And shared between
brothers.
Its importance is unquestioned,
Though it is used more
by others.

47

Answer: NOISE

BESTD

SLESE

NRILT

FOTOY

What goes with a wagon that
Doesn't benefit the
wagon,
But the wagon cannot
move without?

48

Answer: COFFIN

TAFKTE

PREFEL

IOISFS

CHSEIN

The one who made it,
Didn't want it.
The one who bought it,
Didn't need it.
The one who used it,
Never saw it.

49

Answer: COLTS

BILET

TLABN

CRONE

SOTTS

What has a mare,
That the cow has not?

50

Answer: OUTSIDE

TREGCDS

PLTORWD

OHISINY

CUSTEAE

This side of a wolfhound
Has the most hair.

51

Answer: CANDLE

TAEDIE

CHNSRT

ILOULD

BRTHES

Its orange eye blinks.
The burning tears flow.
But what its sorrow is,
None may ever know.

52

Answer: BARROW

ETRIOS

RSWLNW

OAOHDG

BUTRTE

Two legs it has,
And this will confound:
Only at rest,
Do they touch the ground.

53

Answer: ONION

KIEN

OEVFE

SHROP

TNELS

She has tasteful friends
And tasteless enemies.
Tears are often shed on
her behalf,
Yet never has she broken
a heart.

54

Answer: SPIDER

TRLDRY

CHATEE

APSEOR

SEISTS

In all the world, none can
compare,
To this tiny weaver, his
deadly cloth
So silky and fair.

55

Answer: BREATH

THTHCS

PISRFE

BLEANH

AROLTG

You can see it in winter,
 Never in summer.
 Even though it is as light
 As a feather, the mightiest
 moredhel

In the North can't hold it
 for long.

56

Answer: YESTERDAY

TOLIELIOE

YHORNRPST

SETHTDRY

PRSELETAD

Every creature in the
 world has seen it.

But to their dying day
 they'll never see

The same one again.

57

Answer: BOTTLE

COEVLS

BRSIRD

FLTOWE

ASATOT

Kingdom soldiers will
 look like it,

When the headsman
 gives them a lop.

For then, like it, they'll
 have a neck,

But not a head on top.

58

Answer: GAUNTLET

SHUETSEC

ERRVEESE

GATNLLNT

CLNBMYOR

What is the thing
 With fingers long,
 That grips our deadly
 swords so strong?

59

Answer: HORSEMAN

WOTSOMEN

SERETNSP

HTHPSIAX

OCEIEUNW

Six legs, two heads,
 Two hands, one long nose.
 Yet he uses only four legs
 Wherever he goes.

60

Answer: COALS

THPLE

PRKSS

GOLTD

CEAOY

Black when bought.
 Red when used.
 Gray when thrown away.

61

Answer: SECRET

TEIRAE

SHOCLT

CLCEKS

ARLMEY

It is too much for one.
 Two it is meant for.
 But it no longer exists,
 When the two become
 more.

62

Answer: FUTURE

BELUAE

FRIESD

SUSTET

PLTSRR

It never was before.
 It is not now.
 Fools wait for it forever.

63

Answer: THOUGHT

PHENGSS

SRPBSHE

ASLUIOD

TEOVTLT

What ranges far and
 Cannot be confined,
 Yet stays in one spot?
 The correct one will
 Open this chest.

64

Answer: PADDLE

TASDOY

PHOSLS

CREREK

GIDLCE

Held firmly in the hands,
 Like a sword it cuts deep.
 Bloodless strokes, all,
 Then forward we leap.

65

Answer: SNAIL

KOSPL

ONETS

SHAYT

TELIR

Bloodless and boneless

It travels about.

Yet it never leaves home.

66

Answer: BELL

SLCK

BIWS

RETL

ARLE

You hear it speak,

For it has a hard tongue.

But it cannot breathe,

For it has not a lung.

67

Answer: SHOE

CHLT

SLOS

TEPE

AIAY

Has a tongue,

But never talks.

Has no legs,

But sometimes walks.

68

Answer: STOVE

CHSVD

WTLOE

SLISS

OEOET

You seek it out,

When your hunger's ripe.

It sits on four legs,

And smokes a pipe.

69

Answer: MATTRESS

BLTERIST

MEIRTEEY

CRETSPLD

AASSEDDS

Has feathers

But can't fly.

Rests on legs

But can't walk.

70

Answer: SQUARE

CQATRL

PHTADK

SAUDOE

AEIEPR

One pace to the North.

Two paces to the East.

Two paces to the South.

Two paces to the West.

One pace to the North.

71

Answer: SNOWFLAKE

TNFIFDRKY

WHRWLEAST

OREUISCEE

SEOBTLEOD

It flies without wings,

Drops without fear,

But held in warm hands,

It will soon disappear.

72

Answer: FLEAS

BLUER

ARERT

CETAD

FIOTS

When they are caught,

They are thrown away.

When they escape,

You itch all day.

73

Answer: THISTLE

CESSHDN

WRITTOL

OHAESPE

TILVILP

He stands beside the road
in aPurple cap and tattered
green cloak.Those who touch him,
curse him.

74

Answer: BROOM

FSAOT

BIETM

ARRSH

GLORE

All about the house,

With his Lady he dances.

Yet he always works,

And never romances.

75

Answer: PATH

CICH
PLTY
FROM
GALL

All across the countryside,
To front doors he travels.
But you never invite him
in.

76

Answer: KEY

TOB
HRT
EEY
KNI

Axes and swords,
Will not help you
through.
Yet it and a little push will
do.
Some in the road would
Have fought and soon
died,
Were it not close at hand,
To let them inside.

77

Answer: SURF

AUOD
WRIF
MTVT
SARY

Pounds all day,
Beats all night,
Never rests.

78

Answer: WATERFALL

TRYOEUCIE
OHTRONBOL
CAIHRAATS
WEDEMFEIT

This old one runs forever,
But never moves at all.
He has not lungs, nor throat,
Still, a mighty roaring call.

79

Answer: DICE

BIEE
ALCK
DUOH
OLY

You can count on them,
though
Some would rather curse
Them. You can speak
dear to them,
Though well all know 'tis
Just in vain.

80

Answer: LOGS

TIAD
LRSE
IOTG
DMGS

They have not lips nor
tongues,
Yet lead them green to
the pit,
And as they die you will
hear,
Them sputter, hiss and spit.

81

Answer: FARRIER

BRIROED
FALTAR
ALSOTLS
CERSIFE

There is a shoemaker in
the dell.
Makes his shoes with steel
and nail.
Although his goods last
right well,
Folks need two pair, with-
out fail.

82

Answer: BRIDGE

THEDTS
CRINEE
BOSAGL
WANHSY

When it is stout,
People gladly tread.
When it is thin,
People walk in dread.

83

Answer: MIRROR

VAEOST
MEREOE
LISRUS
HOTNR

Look in my face,
I am somebody.
Look at my back,
I am nobody.

84

Answer: SNARES

BRATLY

SKOLSD

TEIRES

ANBATT

The bones of the dead,
Can be used to trap the
living.

85

Answer: TROLLS

TOTELC

BROSDV

CHALSA

WLPIYS

Say away from these hideous
Beasts, they kill our females
And children.

86

Answer: BOOK

TORA

BRTK

CLOS

SAST

It is a journey whose path
Depends, on another's
vision
Of where it ends.

87

Answer: BLADE

BRINK

FOALM

ANFIE

KLNDG

Blessed are the first.

Slow are the second.

Playful are the third.

Bold are the fourth.

Brave are the fifth.

88

Answer: ASHES

SLOOY

AHTED

CSSWS

TEHST

After the final fire,
The winds will blow.
And these, which are
already dead,
Will cover the ones who
have
yet to die.

89

Answer: ORANGE

THAORT

CRNDDE

OAINSY

PMSCGS

Men seize it from its home,
Tear apart its flesh,
Drink the sweet blood,
Then cast its skin aside.

90

Answer: ICICLE

LEIELT

IRTRHL

GCOHTE

CACCES

You see me oft,
In woods and town.
With my roots above,
I must grow down.

91

Answer: GRAVE

SELET

GHTTS

DREVR

ALAAE

A strange earthen house,
That brings nought but
disdain.
And yet those who stay
there,
Never do complain.

92

Answer: EYES

SARD

TLES

EHTY

CYOB

Twins on either side of
A ridge that smells.
They shall never see
Each other directly.

93

Answer: RAIN

RIAC

HRLN

OOTV

DAIG

With flashing sword and
booming cry,

With darkness staining
land and sky,

The army comes, pre-
pared to die.

Soldiers fall in glistening
dress,

As battles are joined with-
out egress,

Save comfort in the
earth's caress.

94

Answer: STARS

SARDS

TLASL

EHTYM

CTORA

The wheel is steered,

Despite the night.

They prefer our lead,

More than the light.

95

Answer: SADDLE

THDELY

CAEDRS

ORBWSE

STVIEL

When it is down,

It is lower than a horse's
belly.

When it is up,

It is higher than a horse's
back.

96

Answer: SPONGE

CPTEGY

RRNSTD

SHITSS

IEONEE

Holes at the top.

Holes at the bottom.

Holes in the middle.

But still it holds water.

97

Answer: BRIARS

THIURS

CLETDT

ORSASE

BEAROH

Claws like a cat,

Crooked as a snake's hiss.

Patch together your
guesses,

You won't guess this.

98

Answer: SIEVE

BREEL

SHAVE

ALLST

WIOLD

Round as an apple,

Deep as a cup,

All the Bitter Sea,

Can't fill it up.

99

Answer: DRUM

TRAK

BIUP

DLCM

EOTH

Although my cow is dead,

I continue to beat her.

What a racket she makes!

100

Answer: BUTTON

CUOHHD

BLITRY

PRSPES

GETEON

Flat as a leaf,

Round as a ring,

Has two eyes,

But can't see a thing.

101

Answer: TRADE MARES

RWRDL ATJSN

OENCE TOKOT

TLIPC MNFEV

SRANK UARHS

Two brothers wanted to
race a course,

To see which had the
slowest horse.

Since neither wanted to
spur his mare,

What must they do to
make it fair?

102

Answer: WALNUT

SAETES
CTRLUT
WHLORD
ARSNSY

A box beneath a tree,
Inside some tasty meat.
Kept for a month or
more,
It still tastes just as sweet.

103

Answer: PIPE

OHDE
PLER
SRPD
CIST

Its tail is round and hollow,
Seems to get chewed a bit,
But you'll rarely see this
thing,
Unless the other end is lit.

104

Answer: DOOR

BOTN
DRSE
ELOL
FSAR

It doesn't live within a
house,
Nor does it live without.
Most will use it when they
come in,
And again when they go
out.

105

Answer: STAKE

TEFBT
SAAMS
IHOKY
RTLEE

Although lower than a fence,
And thinner than a rail,
It can still be used to hold
a horse;
Hooves, mane, and tail.

106

Answer: BOOK

CONS
BLEE
GRSK
IEOT

Though not a plant, has
leaves.
Though not a beast, has
spine.
Though many wouldn't
need this thing,
'Tis more valuable than
wine.

107

Answer: PLOW

CLIW
PHAT
SEOP
TRSY

Four legs in front, two
behind.
Its steely armor scratched
and
Dented by rocks and sticks.
Still it toils as it helps feed
The hungry.

108

Answer: BULL

BATI
TELS
CREL
OUST

In the fields a frightful
thing,
Watch it and you will find,
It has a pitchfork in the
front,
And a broom back
behind.

109

Answer: PROMISE

JARMLAY
PLSITTE
BRASWSS
CEOTIET

Our valiant leaders will
keep this.
But only after they have
given it.

110

Answer: DEATH

THACK
DRTTE
RESHY
COUEH

What is this thing that
having it,
You can no longer give it
away,
But lacking it, for the
moment at least,
You can give it to those
who must pay?

111

Answer: DISPUTE

DSWPSTY
HISOILE
LTOHUER
EAISRID

Whoever has it is angry,
Whoever loses it is angrier,
Whoever wins it has it no more.

112

Answer: MUSIC

RTHIC
NSSST
MOILO
AUTDY

This wondrous thing,
though not an herb,
Can help comfort the weak
And the dying.
It can even be used to rally the troops,
Or make one start
Laughing or crying.

113

Answer: BUBBLE

FOBPLY
PLDSHE
BRINOS
EUABIT

This sparkling globe can float on water,
And weighs not more than a feather.
Yet despite its weight
Ten giants could never pick it up.

114

Answer: ROPE

MBTN
RVSE
OOES
PEPT

Ten trolls' strength,
Ten trolls' length,
One troll can pick it up,
No troll can stand it up.

115

Answer: OCEAN

CCASE
OIEON
TRBAL
PHCLS

A shimmering field that reaches far.
Yet it has no tracks,
And is crossed without paths.

116

Answer: SHOES

BDREY
SLOSL
HOSLT
AHEIS

You tie these things,
Before you go.
And untie them,
After you stop.

117

Answer: DARKNESS

TATHEENW
GRETANYB

DUSKHL SZ

AIRENOTS

This engulfing thing,
Is strange indeed.
The greater it grows,
The less you see.

118

Answer: LIFE

PSTE
HEFS
AIED
LTDT

Don't grow too attached to this thing.
Without it you will never even know it is gone.
But be careful, friend,
It is much easier to lose on Kingdom soil.

119

Answer: EQUALS

SHTABY
TINBSL
WQATLD
ESUEES

What is it of yours
That you see every day,
But our Leader
Sees only rarely?

120

Answer: GLAMREDHEL

RCONCADGSR
MMAHOOONEY
ATRMGNTARN
SANDIBURDS
GEIORIRQUT

ILUVASHELL
CIESDELAEE
KRSPMUBHBD

Where once there were
three,
Now only are two,
Ancient kin ours,
Whom we sent to their
doom.

121

Answer: JACKET
MAOHLL
JLEKST
EIRLES
KOCIOD

Neck, but no head.
Arms, but no hands.
Waist, but no legs.

122

Answer: SAWDUST
CEORLIY
THNDUES
ALWQRLT
SATOESE

A carpenter left some wood,
Would not take it back.
I saw some dust where he
left it,
But couldn't find his
stack.

123

Answer: NOOSE
TOSES
RSODE

NLLSW
EATOD

Once alive, but now
twisted 'round.
It is used by moredhel
and men
To punish their own kind.

124

Answer: EGGS
TOGY
ETET
LSID
AGTS
No visible flesh,
Nor blood, nor bone,
But given time,
They will walk alone.

125

Answer: FIRE
BRRD
GLFS
FIAT
ASEE
Put into a pit.
Locked behind a steel grate.
Guarded all through the
night,
Still it goes out.

126

Answer: ECHO
TCKD
EHHO
CLOS
SAWT

Answers its caller without
being asked.

Responds within seconds,
And speaks all languages
with equal ease.

127

Answer: ALPHABET
WRSHTDEE
TLATOIAS
ASEPMBST
BEPOANTY

This marvelous thing,
Though it sounds absurd,
Contains all our letters,
But is only a word.

128

Answer: PRIEST
BRLESD
PLELHT
DEITOS
AOPSUY
This Kingdom fool has
married many women.
Yet he has never been
married.

129

Answer: TOWEL
HLALY
TEWAT
ROSED
EDRSL
This odd thing seems to
get wetter,
The more it dries.

130

Answer: CANE

TATE

CHND

BLIL

ORPS

Though blind as well,
Can lead the blind well.

131

Answer: MOUSER

QISSHD

KLATAS

MUEHTR

EOUAEY

What goes down to the
cellar
With four legs,
But comes back with eight?

132

Answer: TEMPER

CLAPVT

TRMSEE

SHERLD

OEPASR

You must keep this thing.
Its loss will affect your
brothers,
For once yours is lost,
It will soon be lost by others.

133

Answer: HONEY

RSMST

LANNS

HEAED

IOPAY

Though a tasty treat,
Made in spiral towers,
Rarely will it be eaten
alone.

134

Answer: WATER

PLESR

WRTEO

SHALT

CAOAY

This great thing can be
swallowed,
But can also swallow us.

135

Answer: HASTE

ROSET

LSLSS

AAORD

HITTE

Inside a burning house,
This thing is best to make.
And best to make it
quickly before,
The fire's too much to
take.

136

Answer: WEARY

TIAPY

CRIRT

WHOEN

OERSR

Plow and hoe, reap and sow,
What soon does every
farmer grow?

137

Answer: ADVICE

PIESCS

AHOIED

CDVCHE

TRAATY

Everyone offers this thing.
But few will take it when it
Is offered by someone else.

138

Answer: STRANGER

COSAEFIE

SRISPALT

PTETNEED

AHRDRGSR

You will invite him into
your house,
Yet you know him not.
Once you get to know him,
This thing he will no
longer be.

139

Answer: LAKE

HSKO

LOLJ

MAOL

EISE

I saw him where he never
was,
And where he could not be.
And yet within this place,
I saw a wavering face,
Staring back at me.

140

Answer: SPURS

CRETY

SHUSD

PPAES

AIYRT

We travel much, yet prisoners are,
And close confined, to boot.
Yet with any horse we will
keep pace,
And always go on foot.

141

Answer: GALLOWS

EHEPETS

GRASCET

CLLEBWD

SAOLONY

When people come for
me to meet,
They come to me with
heavy feet.
The one I hold,
When I get my chance,
Will turn and spin,
And start to dance.

142

Answer: FOG

EOE

GRA

FLL

SAG

When it comes in,
From sea to shore,
Twenty paces you'll see,
No less, no more.

143

Answer: BARK

EOEN

GRAM

BLLK

SARB

Like dogs shouting at the
moon,
Or armor worn by the
trees.
Like a sharply spoken
command,
Or a tiny vessel upon the
seas.

Cheat Codes

There are some cheat codes in the game that allow you to stock up on some supplies. To access them, go to the overhead map and press **[Alt]-[⇧ Shift]** (the right one)-**[*]** and hold them down for a few seconds. A lockchest will appear—here are the codes for each chapter.

Chapter 1

Answer: 6478

Chapter 2

Answer: 9216

Chapter 3

Answer: 7702

Chapter 4

Answer: 2132

Chapter 5

Answer: 5052

Chapter 6

Answer: 0680

Chapter 7

Answer: 0194

Chapter 8

Answer: 4743

Chapter 9

Answer: 9995

And by the way, when you fall into a pit, press **[P]** to see the bottom.

Appendix D

An Interview with Raymond E. Feist



Raymond Feist, a long-time role-playing gamer of the pen-and-paper variety, and incidentally a bestselling author, created the world of Midkemia. It is Raymond Feist's creative skills that allowed *Riftwar: Betrayal at Kronedor* to give, for the first time, the sense that a gamer was playing in a world, and that a plot worthy of a novel was unfolding. Up to this point, most games had been written by programmers—who created the universe, the characters, the magic system, and the mythos behind a world, like Richard Garriott's *Ultima*. *Riftwar* is the first role-playing game that builds off the world of a living author, and the marriage was an astounding success. I thought I would put a few questions to Raymond Feist to get a feel for his creation, the world of Midkemia.

Yee: *How did you first get involved with creating the world of Midkemia?*

Feist: The “world” of Midkemia first began as a “local” project, in two senses of the word. It was local in that it was created by a bunch of lunatic friends of mine at UCSD back in 1975–1978 as a means for getting from one “dungeon” to another, while keeping some consistency in the game universe. We had, like many others, tossed aside the original D&D rule books as being impossible to understand, and were developing the “Midkemian” game, or “The Tome of Midkemia,” as we thought of it. It was also local in the sense of it being limited to the area immediately around the Bitter Sea. Over the following years, I added the con-

continent of Novindus, while our company, Midkemia Press, populated “the Far Coast,” which is where much of the action of *Magician* takes place. It’s now a complete world (though with many blank spots, “here there be unknown critters,” kinds of places).

Yee: *How did you start playing fantasy role-playing games?*

Feist: I started because my friends were playing and it was a cheap hobby, back then. Most of the rules were photocopied and passed around, the photocopying coming courtesy of various graduate school department machines around the campus—mostly in the biology building. So, you only needed pencils, dice, and an active imagination. So, being starving graduate students for the most part, we played a lot. There were about a dozen regulars; most are named in the acknowledgments of *Magician*. And over the years other folks came and went, so that all told, I must have played with about fifty different people.

Yee: *Did you favor any particular game system?*

Feist: We tried several different systems, D&D original, which quickly evolved into our own unique game, which is what we played 99 percent of the time. We tried *Tunnels & Trolls* when it came out, and *Runequest*, and *Chivalry and Sorcery* (once!), and *Traveler*, the SF roleplaying game, a couple of times. But mostly it was our own system.

Yee: *What inspired you to begin writing the novel Magician?*

Feist: *Magician* began as a hobby, really, dabbling with the idea of telling a story. I really had no idea what it would turn into as a book, let alone [that] it would be the start of a writing career. I got serious about writing the book while between jobs, then when I got the new job, I put it on the shelf. We had a tax revolt in California called Proposition 13 back in 1978, and the funds for my job were cut—I had been in the Health and Human Services field before then—so I found myself with plenty of time to write while I was looking for another job. I finished the book and against my wildest dreams, found a great agent who sold it about a year after he read it, and after that, I was a professional writer.

Yee: *How did the series evolve?*

Feist: Like any other series, half commercial considerations, half wanting to know what comes next. When I wrote *Magician*, I didn't know if I'd ever write another book, so I went light on the bits that turn out to be plot points in the later books, but they are there. When I did *Silverthorn* and *A Darkness at Sethanon*, I got to really tie things together. Obviously, this is a world, which means there are lots of loose ends.

Yee: *What are your experiences with computers? Computer gaming?*

Feist: Well, I took a course in Fortran IV and was part of Ken Bowell's guinea pigs at UCSD as he developed UCSD Pascal, so I know my way around a PDP-11. But other than that, I'm only a semi-techno wonk. I can screw up the system on my Macintosh to a fare-thee-well, and that's about it. As for games, I've always used games as a way to stay at my desk, rather than turning off the computer and going away. If I leave the office, it takes a great deal to get me back to the desk, but if I'm there playing *Spaceward Ho!* (which is maybe one of the most addictive games ever created), sooner or later guilt kicks in and I get back to writing.

Yee: *How did John Cutter and Dynamix first contact you?*

Feist: John tracked me down through the usual call the publisher, get the agent's name, call the agent, get to me, etc. route. When he first called, he said they wanted to do an FRPG and would I consider writing one for them. After I explained to John he couldn't afford me, I told him he really didn't want me "writing a game," but rather he wanted to license my stuff for a cross-promotional tie-in, which is what turned out to be the case.

Yee: *As the "creator" of Midkemia, what did you think of their game ideas?*

Feist: I give 99 percent of the credit for the game design to John Cutter, Neal Hallford, Nels Bruckner, William McHugh, and a very talented crew at Dynamix for the game. My 1 percent was mostly yelling at Neal that stuff in the story text needed to be changed. I have had more input with the next game's original concept and design, for example. But what's astonishing is how well the game integrates into my vision of Midkemia and how little yelling at Neal I really had to indulge in. It's a solid story

concept as well as being a good game. My rule of thumb in this is, "if this wasn't a game, would I be willing to turn this into a novel in my series?" The answer for both *Betrayal at Krondor* and *The Thief of Dreams* is "you betcha." I would be proud to call either one of those stories "my own."

Yee: *How did you help influence plot and game style during development of BAK?*

Feist: In terms of amount, not much. But where I made suggestions were at points critical in the development to keep a "Midkemian" flavor. Credit also goes to Stephen Abrams, my school friend and "father" of Midkemia Press, for his input into the project.

Yee: *What did you think of the final product?*

Feist: I am very pleased. It was so much more than what I had envisioned, even after I had read the script. The combination of story, tasks for the players, seemingly "open" structure, and the rest gives it a unique feel. I've never seen anything remotely like it.

Yee: *Did you play any other computer FRPGs?*

Feist: Like a lot of older gamers, I started on my university's computer playing *Adventure*, which had been pirated off of the MIT computer. Then came *Zork* and *Zork* begat . . . I've tried many of them. Most blur together. I remember cursing Lord British many times during *Ultima* on the old Apple, as it was one of the most pointless, tedious games I had ever seen, but I kept coming back to it.

Yee: *What do you think of computer FRPGs?*

Feist: Most games are pretty much theme and variation, with little real "story" save what the player runs in his or her own head. I've had people tell me "such and such has a great story!" and have looked at the game and said, "What? Where?" It's the usual, "you were in the wrong place, so now you've got to go save the universe from the Evil Thing That Eats Universes, and when you're done, you'll be back in the tavern, but you'll be 30th level and able to drop a panzer division with a single spell!" Fun for a while. In fact, one of best of these was *Might and Magic II*, which John Cutter worked on while at New World Computing. But nothing really comes close to *Betrayal at Krondor* for giving a real "fantasy role playing" feel to a computer game, in my opinion.

Yee: *When you and I first “met” on CompuServe, it seemed that you and John Cutter were deluged with praise from the gamers on the service—a notoriously picky bunch. They also seemed to be pleased to be able to discuss the aspects of the Riftwar game world with its creator.*

Feist: I must admit I was unprepared for the reaction to the game. First, I was unused to the typical game player behavior, insofar as John told me, “First you’ll hear the complaints. Then a few weeks later, the good stuff.” We were hearing good stuff from day one. People were saying things like, “This is not only the best FRPG I’ve ever played, it’s the best game of any kind I’ve seen.” While no game is universally loved, and we’ve had our share of complaints—mostly from folks who want either another arcade game or who want a simple “roll your own character and then start hacking” game—on the whole, the reception has been incredible. I knew we’d touched a nerve when we were the “Hot Topic” on CompuServe’s Gamers Forum for two months running, the first time any game has held that slot more than a month. When *Compute Magazine* named us “FRP/Adventure Game of the Year,” I knew others in the industry were reacting the same way our players were, and when *Strategy Plus Magazine* named us not only “FRP Game of the Year,” but also “Game of the Year,” in all categories, I think we have a solid hit in all senses of the word.

Yee: *What ideas did you have for a sequel?*

Feist: I got to yell at Neal some more. Seriously, Neal, John, and I started talking about Neal’s ideas for *The Thief of Dreams* from the start.

Yee: *So your role in Thief of Dreams will be greater than in BAK?*

Feist: I’ve had several conferences with both of them on the subject, and while I am not the author, I’ve written volumes of pages and notes on the stuff they’ve sent me. I’ve changed a few things in terms of the plot—there was a very convoluted subplot in the beginning of the game. I finally asked, “Why are we doing this?” John and Neal said, “Because we want character B to be really angry at character A?” I said, “How about you simply say, “Family feud going back generations, the reason for which is lost in time, but the hatred burns on,” or some such drivel and get on with the game? They agreed and changed a bulky slow beginning to a

slam-bang one that should hook the player within minutes of turning on the computer. As for my ideas, let's say that no one on this project is going to breath a word about it. But it's going to be something.

Yee: *Any particular fantasy worlds you might like to see on a computer?*

Feist: Any fantasy world, as long as it's fun. Some, like Piers Anthony's *Xanth*, are downright silly, while others, like Stephen R. Donaldson's *The Land*, are unrelentingly grim, but both are interesting. I think as computers get more powerful and the AI for the game systems improves, we'll see lots of unexpected things. Fantasy is a great environment for games, because you can do things that are visually stunning without having the reader/viewer/player go "huh?," what we call a "metaphorical break" in writing. I think the players are growing tired of "Bigger! More monsters to slay! More gold to carry!" I think they want intelligent stories that have some fiber to them, along with the glory and gold!

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