



Darkness over Daggerford

An Adventurer's Notebook
By
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Revised and recorded based on play
in September/October, 2024

For Loris and Clio
&
Anyone else who may find it of use

Table of Contents

1. General	3
Henchmen	3
Quests	4
Leveling Up	4
Maps	4
World Map - Daggerford & Environs	6
2. Walk-Through	7
Part 1 - Daggerford	7
1. A Caravan Wagon	7
2. On the Trade Way	7
3. Arrival in Daggerford	7
4. Daggerford - Intelligence Ops	9
Out and About	9
Docklands Discoveries	11
Black Business	12
Part 2 (South of Daggerford)	13
1. Western Farmlands	13
A Bear's Cave (Lost Trunk)	13
Burnas Redux (Perdeus's Spirit)	14
Maxillian Manor	14
2. Eastern Farmlands	15
Boonmoppet	15
Sibling Rivalry <i>ad extremum</i>	16
A Miller's Madness	17
A Churlish Cheese Maker	18
3. Gillian's Hill	19
Torluth's Treasures	19
Grave Tidings	19
Odds and Ends	20
3. Daggerford Reprise	20
4. The Lonely Barrens (1)	21
Scared Squires	21
Wild Elves	22
5. The Wild Hills	22
Dark Druids	22
Ogres & Gnolls	23
Wargs, etc.	23
6. The Lizard Marsh	24
Gladiators	25
Live by the Dragon; Die by the Dragon	25
Rites of Religion	26
The Scouring	27
7. Liam's Hold	27
By the Grace of Garlic	28
How to Handle Hooligans	28
Phantoms in the Night	29
New Digs (a.k.a. "The Stronghold")	32
Beyond Belief	32
Home Habitability	34
8. The Wild Pastures	34
A Waste of Time	35
Goblin Greed & Tanarukk Trouble	35
Night Moves	36
Part 3 (The West Coast)	37
1. The Crab's Claw Coast	37
Smugglers' Notch	37
Idiot Savant	38
What's a Wogbog?	39
The Cave of the Mists	39
2. The Blade Cliffs	41
Saving Soliana	41
Never Trust a Vampire	43
Advanced Cretinology	43
Part 4 (Out from Liam's Hold)	44
1. The Brush of Barbs (1)	44
The Pecking Order	45
Odds and Ends	46

2. The Lonely Barrens (2)	<u>47</u>
Edalseye's Tower - The Ascent	<u>47</u>
Edalseye's Tower - After The Wizard	<u>49</u>
Baator	<u>50</u>
3. Trollbark Forest	<u>51</u>
Troll Mound	<u>51</u>
Orc Lair	<u>51</u>
4. The Brush of Barbs (2)	<u>52</u>
Bandits, Griffons & the Iron Throne	<u>52</u>
Teygan's Treachery	<u>53</u>
Fernigold the Younger	<u>54</u>
Redecoration	<u>55</u>
Part 5 - Illefarn & Fate	<u>56</u>
1. Daggerford	<u>56</u>
2. Illefarn	<u>56</u>
No Laughing Matter	<u>57</u>
Welcoming Halls	<u>57</u>
The Great Hall	<u>58</u>
Slaves	<u>58</u>
The Feast Hall	<u>59</u>
The Elven Garden	<u>60</u>
The Ghost Smith	<u>61</u>
The Hall of Wonder	<u>61</u>
The Mines	<u>63</u>
3. Daggerford Once Again	<u>64</u>
The Castle	<u>64</u>
De-Orcing Daggerford	<u>64</u>
Finale: Gorgomoz and all that.....	<u>65</u>
Annex 1 - Maps	<u>66</u>
Part 1 (Daggerford)	<u>66</u>
1. The Trade Way Road	<u>66</u>
2. Daggerford - Plan	<u>66</u>
3. Daggerford - Château Elite Inn	<u>67</u>
4. Daggerford - Happy Cow Inn	<u>67</u>
5. Daggerford - Shrine to Chauntea	<u>67</u>
6. Daggerford - The Black Stone Inn	<u>67</u>
7. Daggerford - Militia Barracks	<u>68</u>
8. Daggerford - The Mariners' Alliance	<u>68</u>
9. Daggerford Docks - Plan	<u>68</u>
10. Daggerford - The Temple of Lathander	<u>69</u>
11. Daggerford - Stop Hole Abbey	<u>69</u>
13. Daggerford - The Sorceller's Encapsulate	<u>69</u>
14. Daggerford - Derval's Bright Blade	<u>69</u>
Part 2 (South of Daggerford)	<u>70</u>
1. Western Farmlands - Plan	<u>70</u>
2. Western Farmlands - Well of the Spirit	<u>70</u>
3. Western Farmlands - Maxillian Manor	<u>71</u>
4. Western Farmlands - Bricket House	<u>71</u>
5. Eastern Farmlands - Plan	<u>72</u>
6. Eastern Farmlands - Down the Rabbit Hole	<u>72</u>
7. Eastern Farmlands - Cemetery Mausoleum	<u>72</u>
9. Eastern Farmlands - The Mill	<u>73</u>
10. Eastern Farmlands - Churlgo Cheese	<u>73</u>
11. Gillian's Hill - Plan	<u>74</u>
12. Gillian's Hill - Torleth's Treasures	<u>74</u>
13. Gillian's Hill Graveyard Crypt	<u>74</u>
14. Gillian's Hill - Nagorm Stuffer's House	<u>75</u>
15. The Lonely Barrens (1)	<u>75</u>
16. The Wild Hills - Plan	<u>76</u>
17. The Wild Hills - Dark Druids' Burrow	<u>76</u>
18. The Wild Hills - Gnoll Cave	<u>77</u>
19. The Wild Hills - Ogres' Stronghold	<u>77</u>
20. The Wild Hills - Warg Cave	<u>77</u>
21. The Wild Hills - Dark Cave (Alaffinel)	<u>77</u>
22. The Lizard Marsh - Plan	<u>78</u>
23. The Lizard Marsh - The Village	<u>78</u>
24. Liam's Hold - Plan	<u>79</u>
25. Liam's Hold - Holdfast Inn	<u>79</u>
26. Liam's Hold - Behind the Cliff Face	<u>79</u>
27. Liam's Hold - My Digs, a.k.a. "The Stronghold"	<u>80</u>

Rez de chaussée	80
Cellars (1)	80
Cellars (2)	80
28. The Wild Pastures - Plan	81
29. The Wild Pastures - Goblin Kitchens	81
Part 3 (The Coast)	82
1. The Crab's Claw Coast - Plan	82
2. The Crab's Claw Coast - Smugglers' Cave	82
3. The Crab's Claw Coast - Umgatlik Shrine	83
4. The Crab's Claw Coast - Cave of the Mists	83
5. The Blade Cliffs - Plan	84
6. The Blade Cliffs Castle - Cellars	84
7. The Blade Cliffs Castle - Main Floor	85
8. The Blade Cliffs Castle - Upper Floor	85
9. The Blade Cliffs - Sea Caves	85
Part 4 (Out from Liam's Hold)	86
1. The Brush of Barbs - Plan	86
2. The Lonely Barrens (2)	86
3. The Lonely Barrens - Edalsey's Tower	87
4. Trollbark Forest - Plan	87
5. Trollbark Forest - Troll Mound	88
6. Trollbark Forest - Orc Lair	88
5. Iron Throne Caravan	89
6. Tomb of Telarthir	89
Part 5 - Illefarn & Fate	90
1. The Laughing Hollows	90
2. Illefarn - Entrance Hall	90
3. Illefarn - The Great Hall	90
4. Illefarn - Elven Garden	91
5. Illefarn - Hall of Wonder	91
6. Illefarn - Mines - Plan	91
7. Daggerford - Castle Cellar	92
8. Daggerford - Castle Main Floor	92
9. Daggerford - Sewers	92
10. Daggerford - Finale	92
Annex 2 - Summary of Quests	93
Annex 4 - Spoilers	101

1. General

The game was, apparently, designed to begin with a level 6-8 character. It is possible to start out with a complete novice character. If you do, you will be given an opportunity to level up either manually or automatically to Level 7.

My broad strategic objective in NWN has normally been to maximize experience (XP) and to level up, rather than accumulate wealth. In this game, I started new with a female half-elven Rogue, who I converted to Paladin after level 8. The insert is what she looked like just beginning Part 2 of the game.

If you start with a character you have played previously, you will have all of its levels, XP, belongings and gold pieces (GP).

Henchmen

In the first three quarters, the game allows you two henchmen, which your character can engage at various points in the adventure. The first I ran into was Raegen Brunegar, a human fighter, after the ambush on the Trade Way at the very beginning. The second was Purfin Doo-grick, a gnome thief, in the Black Stone Inn. You can choose whichever has more of the skills you think you may need. Or whichever you like best. Or you can take on both, if you want. Later on, assuming you get far enough on in the game, you can get Veiti Ironeater (the Daggerford Smith's daughter) as a henchman as well. She is a Dwarf fighter and a pretty good person to have along when you get into the domain of dwarves. Almost essential, I would suggest. So be careful and skillful when you speak to her father about taking her on.

I would have liked to be able to get one henchman, in particular, from the NWN(E) main package. Deekin Scalesinger, a Kobold Bard non-player character (NPC) who first appears in Shadows of Undrentide (SoU) and then again in Hordes of the Underdark (HoU). He is one of the most unappreciated NPCs in the whole range of NWN games. Unusual in being different from virtually all other Kobolds, he is intelligent (despite a shaky grasp on English grammar and syntax), with an inquiring mind, good attention span and ambitions that extend far beyond the normal scope of Kobold minds.

Deekin has a wicked sense of humour, not evident in his early development stages, but later on a real killer if you have the patience to pay attention. His interactions with Valen Shadowbreath, the Tiefling henchman in HoU, are hilarious comic relief episodes. It is well worth playing deep into that game just to read all of them. Quite apart from his skills as a bard, Deekin's abilities grow by leaps and bounds with your every leveling up. He is a helpful spell-caster, healer and fighter in combat (assuming you give him some good armour and other equipment) as well as a good identifier of items.

Character Record, Altheia iGenysis

Half-Elf, Lawful Good
Rogue (8)
Paladin (1)

Strength	14	2
Dexterity	15	2
Constitution	13	1
Intelligence	15	2
Wisdom	12	1
Charisma	9	-1

AC 18
HP 54/54
Experience: 36585
Next Level: 45000

Main Weapon: Rapier +1
Attack bonus: +8/+3
Damage: 1-6 + 2 (Critical: 18-20 / x2)
+1 Piercing Damage

Offhand Weapon: Short Sword +1
Attack bonus: +8
Damage: 1-6 + 1 (Critical: 19-20 / x2)
+1 Piercing Damage

Fortitude: 7
Reflex: 12
Will: 5
Base Attack: 7
Spell Resistance: 0
Arcane Spell Failure: 10%
Armor Check Penalty: 0
Alignment: Lawful (87), Good (87)

Effects:

- AC Increased
- Skill Increased
- Attack Increased
- Damage Increased
- Damage Resistance
- Saving Throw Increased

Quests

There are lots of quests in this adventure and I have noted all that I found as footnotes and in Annex 2. Many of these quests do not, however, net you many GP or XP, if any at all. I think this is because some are components of the main quest or another quest's line of progression, for which you usually get a quite nice reward in the end. You will hear a background sound when you undertake a quest and it is recorded automatically in your game diary. You also will hear a sort of "TaDa!" when a quest is completed.

If you have not paid close attention when undertaking a quest, your diary entry will usually record all the salient parts and hints given to you, as well as the stage you are at in completing that quest. Note that, in your diary, you can have quests listed for you in either game priority or in the chronological order of their having been initiated. This may assist in determining your strategy for quest completion. Note also that when you click on the diary rectangle in the upper right hand corner and the diary appears, a quest's rectangular border is highlighted if something has happened in that quest and that diary entry has not yet been reviewed.

In the Quest Annex and often in the footnotes, I have noted the rewards I received in both GP and XP for completed quests. When you play, you should always check the rolling dialogue box (at the bottom left of the screen) because I may have forgotten (in excitement of the moment) to take notes of everything. Also, you should be aware that the exact number of XP awarded when you play may be different from what I note below, depending on the level of your character or some other variable in the game engine.

Finally, it is probably not possible to do all of the secondary quests that are built into the game. Some, for example, are available only to certain character classes (e.g., only to Wizards). Others will depend on how you choose to pursue each different quest (e.g., do you pay off Vlad or accept his mission).

Leveling Up

As in the other NWN games, your character advances in levels as he/she accumulates XP. The game does not appear to place a premium on XP gained by fighting, but that may just be my impression. You don't seem to get any at all for resolving some issues or confrontations without a fight. But, there may be other story line or character-related developments that are affected by how you resolve dicey situations.

Overall, the game also seems a bit stingier in awarding XP than other NWN games. Big XP are awarded, however, if a player succeeds in accomplishing the necessary steps of the game's critical path. Uncovering the nefarious plot of the Zhentrim, getting that information back to Astriel and then fighting off the agents sent to do you no good nets a lot of XP in Part 1, for instance. So there is quite a reward differentiation between the principal story line quest and many of the side quests.

The trick, of course, is determining which is which. And deciding which is most important to you: Just forging ahead with the main quest, or amassing as many XP and GP or good/saleable items as possible, or somewhere in between.

Maps

I have taken screen shots and created maps of all the places that I found important. All the important places on the map with which an adventurer can have some interaction, substantive or only

incidental, are shown. The numbers on the maps indicate the general order in which I explored or interacted in the respective areas.

A few observations: First, most specific places will not appear on the world map unless an NPC has marked them for you or you have seen a signpost pointing to them. Second, while some places may be marked on the map, you may not be able to get access to them. This is usually because you can only do so by traveling via an intermediate location, or because the game engine will not allow you access to that place at all at that particular time. Access is gained thereafter only after you have done something specific someplace else. Alternatively, you may have to be directed there specifically by a specific NPC.

Another thing to note is that, often, when you move between different locations on the map, you sometimes find yourself in a small transition zone and attacked by various monsters there (Zhentarim, Trolls, Giants, Skeletons, etc.). This can be quite rewarding if your character is reasonably good at combat (i.e., often upwards of 40XP per monster, 150XP for surviving the attack and occasionally some minor loot). I have not mapped these transition zones because they are all very small and uncomplicated.

Nor have I mapped most places that are only one or two rooms or single entry/exit, unless there is something interesting therein.

World Map - Daggerford & Environs



2. Walk-Through

Part 1 - Daggerford

1. A Caravan Wagon

When the game opened I had just been awakened in a caravan wagon on the Trade Ways Road by a Halfling named Fallas Emberthumb who had hired me to protect his caravan on its route. He asked that I help in clearing a tree blocking the road. He mentioned that Talarenne (a good fighter and, apparently, a long time friend) was waiting outside.

At this point there were several options among which were to go out immediately, to tell the little bugger to bugger off or to tell him to tell Talarenne I would be out in a bit.¹

There was a traveller's chest in the room, which contained a *History of Daggerford*, some GP and a few potions of *Cure Serious Wounds*.

2. On the Trade Way

Outside, I saw Talarenne and we began to reminisce about previous adventures. However, a bandit attack interrupted that and Talarenne disappeared in a circle of fire.² When the fighting was over, I searched all the bodies for loot and other sellable items. I was a new character, but I knew I was going to need lots of GP down the road. While cleaning up and looting the dead bandits, I noticed a patch of trampled grass and a scorched spot which suggested that Talarenne had been a specific target of several unseen characters.

In the camp, I spoke with another caravaner, Amara Leontyne, who bore a strong resemblance to Talarenne. The first time we spoke, immediately after the fighting stopped, she told me that she did not think Talarenne was killed in the attack. In searching the area, I found the bandit camp, and a note in a bag there to back up that conclusion. When I saw her again, I told her about the note I had found. It was then I began to suspect that whatever took Talarenne had made a mistake, misled by the resemblance between the two.

I also spoke to Fallas, who was of course exceedingly grateful and offered nice little bonus for fending off the bandits.³ Finally, I met another adventurer, Raegen Brunegar, who also fought against the bandits and took her on as a henchman.

When I had done all that could be done in this area, I found Fallas and tell him I was ready to move on. At that point, the game transported us to just inside the front gates of Daggerford.

3. Arrival in Daggerford

Fallas approached, thanked me for my service and offered that if ever needed a fine dress, he

¹If you tell him you will be out in a bit, this gives you time to rest up and restore any spells and hit points through "quiet contemplation at your bedside". Or do your leveling up.

²All this happens in a cut scene which must end before you are able to take any independent action. Eventually, you are able to counterattack.

³This also nets XP. If you refuse the reward, your alignment shifts toward each of Lawful and Good for honouring the Paladin's Code. You also may get the opportunity to try to pickpocket a cloak protruding from his belt if you are so inclined. This is a *Cloak of Invisibility*.

would be happy to supply it or to help source anything else I might need.

Amara Leontyne also approached me and complimented my fighting skills. She said she feared evil was afoot in Daggerford and that Lady Bronwyn, after the death of her brother (the now deceased Duke Greatshout) had gone off on some 'ducal' mission, and had been missing for several months. She asked if I would be willing to entertain "an interesting offer" and told me to meet her in the Château Elite Inn later.

Only after both these interactions had occurred was I freed by the game engine to be able to act independently. I had a wide choice of what to do.⁴ I ran into Ginny Tollerson, the local tourism booster, who gave me a good lot of information on most places in town.⁵

Outside the Château Elite, I was stopped by the doorman and advised of the dress code, with which I did not comply at that moment and was refused entry. Remembering Fallas's offer, I found him and got a quite nice, if excessively feminine, gown.

Back at the Inn and finally allowed entry, I saw to my left Quintessa, who described herself as a "sniffer" (a parfumeur).⁶ I got a sample in order to avoid offending her (or others) until I had had a chance to bathe and clean up after the caravan ride. To my right were Lord and Lady Pemberton, a supercilious, quarrelsome couple. They didn't seem to have much time (or information) for anyone but themselves.

In the guest room area, in the first room on the right, I met Egbert Dulcaster, a self-important fop.⁷ I managed to get a few GP by playing on his self-importance, but no useful information and ended up being ordered out of his room. In the second room on the right was Lady Chastity, who from her demeanour, is probably not named for that particular attribute. I got nothing useful out of her.

In the Master Suite, I found Amara, who I quickly learned was not really Amara, but Astriel Shalyn, a secret agent for the Lords of Waterdeep. She was on a mission was to investigate the death of Duke Greatshout of Daggerford, the disappearance of his wife, the circumstances relating to the takeover of town government by Baron Matagar Bugo and the operations of an apparently secret organization. The mission, she explained, had been compromised because her presence in Daggerford had become known to that organization and she was not able to move or to operate freely.

⁴ Going to the Château Elite Inn to pursue Amara's offer straightaway, you will find the doorman less than welcoming and will have to figure out how to get in. How to do so will be obvious to you.

⁵ I found the shop of the town smithy, Derval Iron eater (Derval's Bright Blade), with the intention of unloading the miscellaneous loot I had picked up after the fight on the Tradeway, but before doing that took the trouble to have a conversation with him and his daughter. Illefaron was mentioned by the daughter, but the smith himself shut down the subject before we could get far. There is a sub quest in here, but it doesn't start until later in the game.

He also offered to make some enhanced kit for me if I could find the inputs needed. These are: (1) a *Hoarfrost Blade*, for which you need an *Ice Blade Hilt* (from Loru in the Mill) and an *Ice Blade* (from Alaffinel in the Wild Hills); (2) a *Last Rest* flail, for which you need a *Glowing Flail Shaft* (from Torleth's) and a *Glowing Flail Head* (from Daxiong in the Gillian's Hill Crypt); and (3) a Blackhammer, for which you need a Head (Temple Bhaal in Liam's Hold) and a Shaft (from bones in the Sea Cave in the Blade Cliffs).

⁶ When she offers, you can get a sample, decide to stick with your BO, or, maybe, just have a long overdue bath. I learned later from the Town Crier that she and Lord Pemberton had a thing going, when he could get away from his witch of a wife. The Town Crier was quite a gossip and also told me that Liam Sunquist in the Temple of Lathander had a thing for Maerovyn in the Shrine to Chauntea.

⁷ Your conversation with him can follow several threads, depending on how you manage it. Complimenting him on his clothes appeals to his vanity and saves you being thrown out of his room immediately. If you bluff him successfully about being a trader, he will tell you about the newest arrival at the inn. If you indicate you know the tailor he mentions, he will be surprised. If you bluff him successfully about that tailor being out of fashion, he will recover by telling you about his family. If you are good at bluffing, you can get him to give you 100GP for not telling others about his dreadful fashion sense. Or, if you are good at the arts of persuasion, you can raise that to 250GP.

Her "interesting" offer to me was to assist her by becoming an intelligence agent (act as her 'eyes and ears'). Although I do not normally like being given orders or "run" by anyone, I said "Why not." (A useful addition to my resumé.) She mentioned some farmers in the area needing help, another situation that required investigation. She also suggested that I begin with the militia to find out why Daggerford was in lock down and no one allowed to leave.

4. Daggerford - Intelligence Ops

When I exited the Château Elite, I was approached by a farmer who was looking to hire an adventurer capable of dealing with a problem of "evil afoot" in Liam's Hold. He asked that I meet up with Hevesar Dimpet, the farmers' leader in the Happy Cow Inn to settle on terms of engagement if I were interested.

Out and About

In the Happy Cow, there were several characters besides Hevesar, but he was my first go-to guy there. From him, I learned that cattle-rustling was rife in the farming areas and that the Daggerford militia was unable to deal with it because Baron Bugo, the new town governor, had ordered them to focus on the security of the Trade Way. When I agreed to help, he directed me to meet up with him at the Holdfast Inn in Liam's Hold once it was possible to leave Daggerford and marked it on my map.

Before leaving, I spoke to the other NPCs in the inn. Demetira Landscaper gave me a steer toward Fulbar Hardcheese, the Inn's owner, who possessed a wealth of inside local knowledge, as long as I was able to buy drinks from him. (And keep standing.) Burnas Tellrot, whom the more astute readers will immediately suspect from his name, I regarded with circumspection, but gave him the benefit of the doubt. Jorey Fontelas was a bard who didn't take a lot of persuasion to perform.⁸ I also got a room from Fulbar in order to clean up, rest up and to try to recover from my subtle questioning of him. (That also gave me the opportunity to check out the upstairs and gave me a place to which I could always return to rest or store items I didn't need or want to carry around.).

Given that the town was still in lock down, and my curiosity piqued by Fulbar, I headed out to the Shrine to Chauntea. There was not much there, other than leaves and grass. Nonetheless, Maerovyn, the priestess told me about problems with the town's grain supply and sought my help.⁹

With the town still in lockdown, I wandered about aimlessly for a bit. In my wandering, I found a Wizard of Thay (Ilkor) hiding out in a flop house. He was not very welcoming and sicced a couple of familiars on us without provocation. Which left us no option but to fight the lot of them. There was something going on there, but I never figured out exactly what it was.¹⁰

In the Sorcellers' Encapsulate, I was able to gain access to the library and read about Illefarin, but not get access to a special area which, I was told, was only for wizardry adepts or approved students. In the Temple of Lathander, Liam Sunmist asked me to look into the mysterious deaths of farmers in Gillian's Hill.¹¹ He also asked me to try, if I came across her, to dissuade a teen named Lula Redcap from

⁸ Doing the Burnas/Jorey two step started the sub quest *Peredus the Great*.

⁹ Starting the sub quest *A Mad Miller*.

¹⁰ This did not open up a quest for me, but killing Ilkor netted 532XP and his robes (the *Tinder of the Mendicant*) and a *Bolt of Frostbite*. His summoned Skeleton Warrior was worth 168XP and his familiar, Creech, 52XP.

¹¹ Starting the sub quest *The Truth about Vampires*.

pursuing her fascination with the Undead. Finally, he identified Ilkor's armour for me, and had for sale several items that would have been useful kit. Unfortunately, most of what he had was well beyond what my purse could afford. I made a note to go back once I had more GP to spend more freely.

From there, I went to the Black Stone Inn where a small cutpurse tried to pickpocket mine. I was having none of that, but he was just a kid, so I gave him a chance to explain himself. The kid, Davey Halloran, told a tale of woe about having to steal to try to get the money to pay off his father's gambling debts to some shark called Vlad. I told him that I would try to straighten out the situation, but only on condition that he not try any more pickpocketing until I got back to him.¹²

Before leaving, however, I found a disreputable, but helpful, merchant called Stran in one corner of the Inn. He took some of the traps I had in my kit that no other merchant would buy and sold me some knockout drops that he said would work wonders. I got a couple, just in case they might come in handy. They were certainly cheap enough. I also ran into a character named Bad Bill O'Shaughnessey, who told quite a tale about his life story. He did drop a bit of information about his ex fellows in the Mariner's Alliance: That they loved *Harbour Bottom Whiskey*. Purfin Doogrick was also there and I spoke to him, but did not particularly need his rogue/thief skills, nor like his sleazy manner, nor trust him any farther than I could see his hands.

The owner/barkeep, Gildamesh, was a gruff sort and I decided to see if he were as forthcoming as Fulbar had been. Indeed, he was, although at the cost of numerous drinks (an another throbbing headache). Among other things, he mentioned that the Zhent Black network was on the loose in Daggerford. I salted that away to report back to Astriel. I also took the opportunity to buy a bottle of that *Harbour Bottom Whiskey*, just in case I ran into some unfriendly sailors. I figured I might be able to use it as a disinfectant if/when I got wounded, if nothing else. Before leaving I sneaked down to the cellar and rifled through all the rooms there, finding some useful loot. There was, however, one door that defeated all my lock picking skills.

Then, I thought, it was about time to go see Captain Frederick of the Town Militia, whom Hevesar had mentioned with a degree of respect and whom Astriel had suggested as a lead. He could not explain why the Town had been closed, other than at the orders of one Dratharion, Captain of the Griffons, mercenaries whom the current town ruler (Baron Bugo) had engaged to deal with attacks on merchants on the Trade Way. He suggested that I speak to Dratharion and then let him know if I found anything out.¹³ It was evident that he did not like Dratharion or his crew of mercs.

Dratharion, Captain of the Griffons, was a haughty, self-important, imperious thug. He did, however, tell me that the reason for closing the town was the escape from the Town dungeon of one Wickers, whom he described as mad and dangerous. That he had his own agenda became quickly evident and I found myself agreeing with Frederick's assessment of him. Leaving Dratharion, I went back and reported the Wikker thing to Frederick. In that dialogue, when I pressed him, Frederick offered me the task of dealing with an aggressive band of Drow harassing farmers on the outer borders of Daggerford.

Having done all the above, I thought that I had enough raw intelligence to report back to Astriel. When I did get back to her, she took it all in then said she had uncovered more information and sent me off to check out the Mariners' Alliance.

At the Mariners' Alliance, I had to get past a big guy named Taffy, who was guarding a door in

¹² Starting the sub quest *An Uncommon Criminal*. Whenever you tell Davey that you have dealt with Vladmyr, you earn 500XP.

¹³ Good powers of persuasion are useful for these dialogues. They open up the sub quests *Play the Spy for Frederick, Detained in Daggerford* and *Border Dispute*.

one corner of the main floor. I tried getting him falling down drunk on *Harbour Bottom*, but it didn't seem to faze him. So, I told him that his friends over at the Black Stone were in a fight and offered to stand guard for him. Which worked: He ran off leaving the fox in charge of the hen house, so to speak.

In the basement, I overheard an indistinct conversation going on behind a door, something about cargoes going successfully. When I opened it slightly to hear better, three thugs came at us. After sorting them, I found shipping documents in a cabinet which suggested something was going on with something called the Shoreside Shipping Consortium. I thought I should get the documents back to Astriel quickly.¹⁴ (But not until after I had rifled through the various cabinets in all the rooms and picked up anything of interest.)

A few steps outside the Alliance, I found myself "invited" to the Castle for an audience with Baron Bugo. There was little choice but to submit to this dialogue (and to his bombast). In the end, though, I was not mistreated nor searched, and was permitted to go on my way. Once outside the castle, I went back to Astriel with the documents. After looking them over, she gave me my next assignment: To the docks, to check out the *Barracuda* and its Captain and, if possible, to find out where the suspicious cargoes were bound and for whom. [Erudite players will note that Astriel's grasp of correct grammar tends to fail the King's English.]

Docklands Discoveries

Over at the docks, I checked out unattended chests, barrels, etc. and got some good stuff. I met an old guy named Fernigold, who asked my help in finding his son, who had apparently gone off on a treasure hunt or some such thing somewhere.¹⁵ I also met a Captain Turgat, alone aboard his ship moored near the *Barracuda*. He was happy to pass on his observations about the 'odd' night loading of the *Barracuda* from barges arriving from up river. Further along, on the *Barracuda*'s pier, I met a fellow called Eric the Fin, who wanted help finding a chest he said had been dropped in the River Delimbyr.

I went over to the *Barracuda* and, with the help of some *Fillian's Brew* (which I had bought from a guy in a corner of the dock area), got into the Captain's cabin and looked through his log book and desk. After that, I went across the pier to the barge moored there and found loads of weapons and armour inside. Back to Astriel with the poop, she was pleased but, while suspicious of the connections between Shoreside and Bugo, couldn't see any *prima facie* illegality in the cargoes.

Then she sent me off to find out what I could about the death of the Duke, from any eye witnesses I might find.¹⁶ I began by making discreet inquiries back at the Black Stone, but all I got for my trouble was feeling grubby, dirty and generally soiled by the place. So I went back to the Happy Cow to get cleaned up, have a drink of something good and see if any of the people there had been in the Duke's hunting party.

I found one such person in Demetria Landscaper, who had been taken along as beerkeeper, bartender and general dogsbody. She had thought the circumstances of his death suspicious at the time and described them to me, but would not be drawn any further on the subject. I took that back information to Astriel and she told me I should go back to the Black Stone. When I told her I had been there already and found nothing, she gave me a *Rod of Revealing* and said "Try again, if there is anything to find, it will be there!" I don't now why she didn't just give me the rod in the first place.

¹⁴ Beginning the sub quest *Strange Cargoes*.

¹⁵ This dialogue starts the sub quest *Fernigold the Younger*. Talking with Eric the Fin and agreeing will start *The Missing Chest*.

¹⁶This initiates *The Suspicious Death of Duke Greatshout*.

Black Business

I had to give her credit, though: She had good instincts. Back in the Black Stone cellar, which I thought I had diligently searched, I discovered a trap door that had been impossible to see before. It led down to a secret room with a chest and a crate in it. In the chest was a *Cloak of the Bat*, a note that indicated an operations centre had been set up in the sewers below and a key to that door I had been unable to open earlier. I made an executive decision to follow up on my own and tell Atriel later. Assuming there was a later.

Through the door, we came upon a bunch of Zhentarim agents cackling over their plans for Daggerford. They took exception to our presence and showed it. After quite a battle, with no little thanks to Raegen, we finally prevailed and took a look around. There was some good loot but, most important, was a note that detailed the plans of the Zhentarim to take over the region, as well as their alliance with an army of orcs and some sort of Devil. I decided Atriel should see this ASAP.¹⁷

On exiting the Black Stone, a cut scene showed several goons chase and kill the infamous Wickers. I saw them search his body and find a book, then leave to take it back to Captain Dartharion. After they left, I searched Wickers's body, but there was naught on it other than a single GP. So I went straight on to Atriel.

Looking over the Zhent notes, we concluded there was, indeed, a nefarious plot afoot.¹⁸ Before we knew it, we were attacked by several Zhentarim agents. With the excitement over, Atriel decided that it was no longer safe for her in the Château Elite and told me she would hide out elsewhere in Daggerford and contact me again when able to do so.

She told me that the lockdown had been lifted and, in the meantime, suggested I follow up on the farmers' problems in the South.

I was about to do just that when I remembered my promise to Davey Haloran and went to see Vlad the loan shark, also known as Vladymr, owner of the Stop Hole Abbey. Under cover of his 'legitimate' business, a kind of junk emporium, he was quite willing to talk about the Haloran loan. The father, evidently, was an inveterate bad gambler and had no chance ever of repaying the 500GP he owed. Vlad, generously, would have let me pay it, but also offered to cancel it if I were able to do a minor chore for him. I didn't particularly like what he wanted me to do, but agreed, thinking I could always back out if it truly was too unpalatable.¹⁹

With that minor delay, I was off to find Hevesar and to help the farmers if I could.

On our way out of town, we found Lula Redcap wandering about near the town castle. She was decked out in typical Goth: All black clothing, dyed black hair, black fingernails, eye shadow and makeup touches. Her attitude matched her black attire, haughty, and dismissive. Typical teenager know everything - and nothing! I got nowhere with her and we left her to her fanciful nocturnal rambling.

¹⁷ The good loot was a few GP, a *Ring of Hiding* and an *Amulet of Fire Resistance*. The Zhentarim Agents were worth 14, 38, 78 or 168XP, depending on their respective skill set.

¹⁸ Telling her this earns 500XP. And you lose the *Rod of Detection*. After disposing of the Zhent Agents who attack you and completing the dialogue with Atriel, you earn 2500XP and 250GP.

¹⁹ This is one possible development in the sub quest *An Uncommon Criminal*.

Part 2 (South of Daggerford)

1. Western Farmlands

The Southern Farmlands were divided into East and West sections. I went to the West which, in retrospect, delayed progress on the principal quest/adventure. Still, it did give me a chance to follow up on some of the things I had undertaken to do while wandering around Daggerford.

Walking in, I noticed on my right (North) an old stone tower. The door was locked tight and I could not get access to it, so left it for another time and continued West.²⁰ A little farther down the road, I came to a farm house and knocked at the door to see if anyone was home. There were, but they said they were not ready to receive visitors and that, if I were there to pay my respect to their brother, he was at the Daggerford graveyard in the Eastern Farmlands. I could not make heads nor tails out of that, so went on my way.²¹ We carried on to the West and came to a cave in the Northwest area of the section.

A Bear's Cave (Lost Trunk)

Inside the cave, we were immediately attacked by two Grizzly bears. Luckily, I had several Magic Missile scrolls and used them before closing, which made the odds more even for us. Looking around afterward, I saw a chest, from which came a voice pleading to be let out. I tried unlocking it, but that didn't seem to work. The voice inside asked that I take it to Delfen at the Sorcellers' Encapsulate back in Daggerford who, apparently, had a key. I know what it is like to have claustrophobia, so I figured I could put everything else on hold while I helped this fellow out.²²

When I got back to the Encapsulate, I spotted Delfen Yellowknife in a corner. Somehow, I missed seeing him when I had been there earlier on. He was able to open the chest and out came some kind of small flying beast that looked a Qualit. Delfen recognized it, and introduced as an old friend named Sujit and was kind enough to offer me a small reward. Sujit told the story of how he had become trapped by his old master, one Mogdor who it turned out, was Delfen's arch nemesis, which quite enraged Delfen. When I told them that Eric the Fin had asked me to find the chest, Delfen said that Eric was one of Mogden's lackeys and asked me to help him in a revenge plot. Well, I knew for sure that I would have hated to be locked up in a chest, so I agreed.

Delfen repacked the chest with a surprise for Mogden and told me to take it to Eric the Fin. He suggested that, for my own safety, I not go along with Eric when he took the chest to wherever he would take it. I was intrigued enough to want to find out what was going on, so when I returned the chest to Eric, I also went along to see where he would take it. That was, of course, back to a cave and Mogdor who gave Eric 1000GP, then opened the chest and released a floating skull that called itself Extramillix. There followed a cut scene where Extramillix destroyed Mogdar and then began to threaten me before getting distracted by something it called "My servants". It then disappeared, exhorting whatever they were to "Rise for Extramillix".

Erik had run off at the first sight of Extramillix, so after the skull disappeared, I made a bee line for Erik back on the Daggerford docks to get some explanations and something for our deal with the

²⁰ In fact, it is an entrance/exit to Boonmoppet's store, but there is no possibility of using it until you have dealt with Boonmoppet a little later in the adventure.

²¹ This also plays into another sub quest started later in the adventure.

²² The bears were worth 90XP each. The talking chest was a development in the *Missing Chest* sub quest. When Sujit is freed, it earns 400XP and Delfen gives you a potion of *Heal* and a *Wand of Lesser Summoning*.

chest. He was pleased to see me and gave me a reasonable share of his payment from Mogdor.²³ But he had no explanations or apologies for running. Nor was there anything or any information of value got when I went back to Delfin.

Burnas Redux (Perdeus's Spirit)

So I went back to where we were in the Western Farmlands and continued my explorations. South from where we had entered the Bear cave, I found Burnas Tellrot standing beside a well. He told me that it was up to me to go down and do what had to be done: Get Perdeus's treasure and get out. When I objected, he agreed to raise my share of whatever loot there was.

I got down the well and found there Perdeus's spirit who told me it had been imprisoned there and that there was no way out except through the Black Dragon Sulphurus, and after it even worse creatures. But he did give me an alternative: Kill the dragon, get his bones from the dragon's hoard and cleanse them in a shimmering pool, which would release his spirit from its prison there. If I were able to do that, the spirit would tell me another way out.

I figured one dragon might be easier to deal with than that same dragon and other, worse, creatures, so agreed to try to get and cleanse the bones. As it was, it did not turn out to be an insurmountable fight, thanks to the help of Raegen and the boar I got from that Summoning Rod I got from Delfin. In gratitude, the spirit told me how to get back to the Western Farmlands and told me to keep Perdeus's Sword and armour (and everything else I had got from the dragon's hoard).²⁴

Using the exit the spirit disclosed got me back in the Western Farmlands, not far from the well. Tellrot was nowhere to be seen and, to tell the truth, I didn't care. Perhaps I would check later to see if he went back to the Happy Cow.

Maxillian Manor

Exploring the remaining parts of the section, we came across an apple orchard and a house named the Maxillian Manor. Inside, Jonas Maxillian and his son Jonas Jr. were very welcoming, but something didn't seem right about them. The wife, Gravia, was downright dour and unwelcoming. The men, however, invited me to share in Jonas Jr.'s birthday celebration and plied me with their apple cider.²⁵

That was a bad choice on my part. I awoke with a throbbing head and stripped of all my kit, in a holding cell in some kind of dungeon. There was another prisoner in the cell next to me, Pettywick Wocket, who introduced herself, told me what was going on and, when I promised to come back and get her, told me about how to get out of the maze before being killed. Jonas Sr. Then told me that I had a 20 second head start before Jonas Jr would come after me.

²³ When the chest was opened and Extramillix did in Mogdor, I received 750XP and on Mogdor's corpse a *Scroll of Summon Creature IX*. When I made it back to Eric, he willingly gave me 400GP. Just giving Eric the chest and not going along to see where he takes it earns only 200XP and the same 400GP. Back at the Encapsulate, Delfin will willingly answer questions, but his answers are not very useful.

²⁴ Killing Sulphurus nets 367XP. Cleansing Perdeus's bones nets 800XP. In the dragon's hoard, besides *Perdeus's Sword* and *Chain Mail +2* (which you get to keep if you cleansed the spirit's bones), there is a 60% *Magic Bag*, an *Amulet of Natural Armour+1*, a *Sling+1*, a *Morningstar+1*, some *Fire Bullets*, assorted rings and necklaces, several precious and semi-precious stones, some other minor loot and over 6,000GP.

²⁵ This starts the sub quest *Birthday Present*. If you refuse the cider, both men attack. In this case, Jonas Sr. Is worth 142XP and Jonas Jr. 90XP. The wife is relieved and you can deal with her as you wish, understandingly or harshly. No loot to speak of, other than the apple cider recipe in a store room off the kitchen.

If you accept the cider, you get transported to the maze. There, you survive or die.

I had two choices: Try to find some kit to defend myself with or to try to make it out the way Pettywick had told me. I decided that I swas a pretty good runner so would try the latter. I was lucky in choosing my route, able to avoid locked doors and to resist the temptation to open chests and find a weapon. In the North part of the maze, I found a fissure in the wall and manged to get through it before the hunter caught up with me. The fissure opened on to a long hallway that led to a study that I took to belong to the senior Jonas.

Two doors opened off the chamber and I was lucky again in choosing the one that opened to the main floor of the Maxillian House. (That name, Maxillian, should have served as a warning when I first met this murderous bunch. But then, perhaps only doctors and dentists might hit on what it connoted quickly enough.) Coming into the salon, who should I meet but the wife. My mind was racing about how to deal with her, but that was not necessary. When she spoke, she made it clear that she was not part of her menfolk's 'game'. Indeed, she told me she would be happy to see it and them ended and showed me where to find all the kit that had been taken from me.

Re-equipped again, I went back into the study and then trough tae other door. That got me back into the holding cell area. I freed Pettywick from her cell and then found Raegen. Virtually immediately thereafter, both of the werewolves attacked. Raegen and I, properly kitted out, were able to put paid to them and their little game. We went back up to the house and met up with Gravia again. It turned out she was a non-violent lycanthrope. While she considered her men's activities reprehensible, like most abused females, she had dared not resist. I suggested that she might check out the followers of Seline, the mood goddess, for solace and a home with people who might be similar to her.²⁶

The we rested up. I decided to go back down to the study and the maze to see what loot I might pick up, in order to get some profit from the ordeal. Apart from a few jewels in a chest in the study, most of the contents of the chests in the maze was relatively low grade loot. Luckily for me Raegen was able to bear most of the weight of the different pieces of armour while I picked up the light stuff. We headed back to Daggerford and unloaded the stuff we had picked up at Derval's place.

2. Eastern Farmlands

From there we went to the Eastern Farmlands. Immediately on entry, we were accosted by a distraught little girl who claimed to have lost her dog.²⁷ The story she told sounded a little fishy, but I couldn't discount it entirely. Besides both Raegen and I were getting better with our weapons and reasonably confident we would be able to handle whatever might cross our path. And that we could run fast enough if we couldn't handle it.....

Boonmoppet

As it turned out, suspicions were in order. Immediately we went down the hole, the little girl turned out to be a not very nice Baatezu who sicced a bunch of quite nasty Kocrachons at us. They kept coming at us through a red portal and we kept sorting them until we got bored and smashed the portal. In a lull in the fighting, I discovered in a pile of bones a *Wolf's Bane* shield which I equipped as it had some nice magical enhancements. It was good experience and we got a bit of minor loot on the remains of a

²⁶ In going at the sub quest this way, the elder and junior werewolves, respectively, are worth 178XP and 112XP. Telling Gravia they are dead nets 750XP. There is no reward for freeing Pettywick or letting Gravia go off to start her life anew. The loot is decidedly middling, but the proceeds from selling it are probably worthwhile for a relatively new adventurer.

²⁷ This begins the sub quest *Fishing with Live Bait*. Killing off Kocrachons nets 90XP each. Having a successful conversation with Boonmoppet earns 225XP and access to his store, which has some very good kit in it and which you can come back to whenever you get enough GP to buy some of that kit. Just killing Boonmoppet nets only the 225XP.

few of the Kocrahons

With the Kocrahon attacks ended, we went after the Baatezu through the blue portal. When we caught up, I didn't attack at once and we actually had a fairly fascinating dialogue, at the end of which, he offered me access to his store. He had quite a selection of some quite good stuff. In the end, I decided that he was better alive and working as a storekeeper than dead as Baatezu normally should be. We left the store and found ourselves in the Western Farmlands area, in that tower that had previously had its door locked.

Sibling Rivalry *ad extremum*

We went back to the Eastern Farmlands and, following the road, noticed the graveyard on our left. I remembered that locked farmhouse back in the Eastern Farmlands and decided to check out the Bricket crypt, which opened all too easily. Inside, there was an open sarcophagus and footsteps leading away from it toward the door. That was decidedly odd, so I went off to the cemetery office to tell someone about it.

No one was at the reception desk, so I sneaked a look at the ledger and saw that an Elverone Bricket had very recently been laid to rest (at a cost of 500 GP!), but was now, it appeared, no longer in the family crypt. I found the funeral director, Morris Olgund, in one of the side rooms, quite distraught at losing a body, which just happened to be that of Elverone Bricket. Intrigued, I agree to accept his commission to find the lost corpse.²⁸

Back at the Bricket house in the Western Farmlands, I noticed some muddy footprints leading to a cellar door. I tried following, but the lock could not be picked nor the door opened. Inside the front door, there was a big party going at full swing. Food, drink, the only thing missing was a brass band. I went up to the Bricket sisters, Muriel and Alicine, and asked a few questions. That seemed to upset them and they ran upstairs.

Following them, I spotted Muriel throw something out a window. She gave me some story about clearing tree branches, which was a real load. I stepped aside when she set out back downstairs. Then I noticed Alicine stashing something away in a trunk in her room. When they had both gone back downstairs, I checked Alicine's trunk and found the "old papers" she had talked about: her journal, gloating over getting her brother's most prized possession, some sort of necklace, from his body in its coffin. Under a loose floorboard in what had been the brother's room I found his journal and a key. The journal revealed a hidden aspect of Elverone's evidently otherwise dyspeptic personality: a lost love and attachment to an Elven Keepsake Necklace he had received from her.

I wondered if the key opened that locked door outside and went out through the back door of the house to check. On the way, I picked up the object that Muriel had thrown out the window: A vial of poison. In the cellar, I found Elverone's corpse walking around. It told me of how the sisters had killed him and that he had come back from the dead to get his keepsake necklace. I persuaded it to let me see if I could get the sisters to give back his necklace. I was successful and with it in hand, I returned to Elverone and used the Holy Water on him. I didn't want an undead corpse walking around whenever it felt like it, whatever the reason and I didn't trust Elverone. Then I returned to the Graveyard, checked that Elverone's body was back in its crypt and told Moris what had happened.

I found none of the Brickets particularly sympathetic. Elverone was an abusive, ogre of a

²⁸This begins the sub quest *A Party to Wake the Dead*. It earns 250GP or 500GP, whichever you are able to persuade Moris to give you. It also earns 500XP when you report Elverone's definitive return to the crypt.

brother. The girls were scheming harridans. But the way I dealt with them left none of them the object of their respective plotting.²⁹ I figured that was only justice.

A Miller's Madness

Mindful of my promise to Maerovina to check out the flour situation, I made my way over to the mill. On the way, I stopped to chat with a couple of farmers to see if I could find anything out about Fernd the Miller. They were not much help, but did confirm something was amiss at the mill.

At the mill, I found the miller wandering about, quite delusional. The place was in an awful state and he kept nattering on about staying away from the flour. Getting nothing out of him, I left him to his mumblings and took a look around the mill. He was in no state to mind or even to notice. Down in the cellar, there were bats flying about, but nothing else. Then I noticed a fissure in one of the walls and went through it.

The fissure led to a cave and in one corner, I spotted what looked like a monk of sorts, lost in thought. I could move pretty stealthily, so I checked out the chamber before speaking to the monk. In a small room, I opened a locked and booby-trapped chest. Inside was a journal belonging to a Slaad, detailing its plans to take over the local area by adding some poison to the flour the miller sold and turning all the residents into slaads.

I went up to it and, feigning ignorance, asked the monk about itself and what it was doing. That didn't go on very long before I called the Slaad on its falsehoods and it revealed itself. It wasn't a bad fighter, but no match for Raegen and me. On its remains, I found a Slaad's Tooth and a broken Ice Blade hilt. The hilt looked like an artifact, so I put it into my pack to show to Derval back in Daggerford later. Back upstairs, Fernd was in no better state, so after a short attempt at conversation, we left him. I decided to get right back to Maerovyna to tell her about what had been going on and so that she could get some help to the miller.

On the way back, I spotted the farmers again and told them, as well. They were pleased and at the possibility of things getting back to normal. Back in daggerford, I told Maerovyna who was relieved that the situation had been sorted and sent a crew off to get Fernd and begin his healing process.³⁰

I was beginning to think it was time I got back on the road, but stopped in the Happy Cow to see if Tellrot was there. He wasn't but I met a Mariner named Dalia who boasted of having knifed him and thrown him out to sea. I can't say I was upset at that news. He was a dirty rotten scoundrel and deserves no less. Jorey had written a concluding verse to his epic (a panegyric to my prowess) and thanked me for guaranteeing the success of his future entertainment career.

²⁹ There are several ways to do this quest. First is just to use Holy Water on Elverone to end him. Second is to get him to let you persuade the sisters to return his necklace, give it to him and let him go back to his crypt. Third is just send him up to kill the sisters, in which case he will get the necklace and return to his crypt. Fourth, if you have picked up the vial of poison, you can poison the sisters, in which case he also gets the necklace and returns to the crypt.

The only way for you to keep the necklace is to persuade the sister to give it up, go back to Elverone with it and then use the *Holy Water* on him.

³⁰ Killing the Slaad earns 441XP, its journal, its tongue and the broken Ice Blade, one of the artifacts Derval can use in making an enhanced weapon. Talking to Fernd too long on the way in or out makes him attack you (@10XP). Joe the Farmer will offer you a reward (50GP) which you can accept or pass up. Back at the Shrine to Chadea, giving the Slaad's journal to Maerovyna earns 600XP.

A Churlish Cheese Maker

On our way South, just past the mill, I noticed a cheese factory and thought it might be nice to have some in my pack for the road. Approaching, I ran into a quite nasty little sod tending some cattle who pointed me to his mother inside. There, Millie Churlgo was very welcoming and quite chatty. She told me all about her family's background and how they had moved to Daggerford in order to escape intimidation and extortion in the Dalelands. She also intimated that she was coming under pressure from inside her family to sell out and go into a different line of farming.

She seemed quite proud of her products and pushed me to try the three different samples out for tasting. They were all equally awful. When I told her that, she apologized profusely and told me the quality had deteriorated because she had had to change production standards due to the interference of bandits with her shipments. In the end, I offered to help out with the next shipment. She called in her son Porto who, sarcastic as bitter almonds, was less than pleased to learn that we were going to guard him and the next shipment to their distributor in Gillian's Hill.³¹

"Too bad, you little twerp," I thought, and we were off. As we came to a bridge over a stream on our way, a group of bandits attacked us. Porto ran off, but it didn't matter as he would have been useless in a fight. We sorted that lot soon enough, although Raegen got quite badly injured.. Picking through their remains, I found a breastplate, a whip, a scroll and a note signed by a "Y" instructing the bandit leader simply to escort the cheese wagon to Gillian's Hill. That seemed passing strange: "Escort", not "intercept?".

Our wagon took us the rest of the way to Gillian's Hill, where a cut scene showed Porto and another ugly looking guy together, with the latter asking the former why he was still there and telling him to get lost. After the cut scene, Sejellus Krimp came running up to us, saying he believed the cheese shipment was for him. He gave me a receipt and a bag of gold for Millie and told me to tell her she would have to accompany the next shipment and regularize deliveries if she wanted to keep doing business with him.

I arrived back at the Churlgos' farm, I time to witness that little slime bag Porto telling his mother that they had to do something that someone named "Yentai" demanded. The twerp even reassured his mother that this Yentai had changed and would keep his word. Sending the jerk on his way, I spoke to Millie and found out the whole story about how they had been forced to leave the Daleland by this Yentai, a Iron Throne thug and their factory there to him. Now, it seemed, this Yetai was demanding all of the Churlgo Cheese recipes and Porto was lobbying hard to get his mother to agree. Millie's only thought was to have Yentai removed, as in dead. She offered me 800GP, one quarter in advance, to do the deed. Well, I would have been happy to sort an Iron Throne thug for free, so I readily agreed.

In Gillian's Hill, I searched out and found Yentai's store. After a bit of chit chat, I took a look at his selection and it was very good. I was even tempted buy something from him, but resisted. When I confronted him with his ultimatum to the Churlgos, he tried to buy me off by offering twice what Millie had contracted. Then he told me a long story about how ruthless Millie and the Churlgos were in business and how he was doing other businesspeople a favour. When I had heard enough of what I was sure were lies, I challenged him. I will trust a Halfling over an Iron Throne thug any say.

He then sicced two guards on us. When we had sorted them all, I found on his body his merchant's amulet as proof he was definitively gone and a note that proved Porto was in cahoots with the thug. I just knew that the little so-and-so was up to no good. Back at the cheese factory, Millie lived up

³¹ This begins the sub quest *The Great Cheese Caper*.

to her part of our contract and Porto got exiled from the family. May he rot searching for another protector thug.³²

Then I got back on the road to Gillian's Hill and Liam's Hold. Those farmers were still waiting on me.

3. Gillian's Hill

I sought out Sejellus Frimk, the local cheese distributor whom I had met previously, first. I figured he was probably the best connected and most knowledgeable about the area. And, of course, he was. He told me about Yentai, which confirmed all that I had thought about the thug. Then, when I asked about the origin of the name of the town, he told me it was after a ranger who had kept it free of brigands. He asked if I might take a look at sorting a band of robbers that had taken to harrying the area recently. And I agreed.³³ He also told me about Jouka the Wainright and Torluth Mindulspeer, that other dealer for whom Vladmyr had had it in. He didn't have much to add when I mentioned that I had hear that a lot of folks neare here had been ding recently, so I let him get back to his work and went out to explore the village.

Torluth's Treasures

The first open door I came to was that of Torluth and so I went in. He was welcoming but looked as if he had a lot on his mind. When I asked about that, he mentioned lots of sickness plaguing residents as well as repeated Lizardfolk raids. He didn't know much about what might have been causing the increased mortality but gave short shrift to the idea of Vampires. He suggested I talk to a farmer named Calloway and someone named Mabda who had definite ideas about Vampires. I also asked him about Vladmyr and it was evident that, while they were business rivals, Torluth was the less unscrupulous.

That made me somewhat uneasy about the deal I had done with Vladmyr, but I nonetheless looked around until I found the key to Torluth's private strong room and made the exchange of portraits. Looking around down there, I also found a *Bag of Holding* and a *Necklace of Fireballs*. Back up in his store, I found in one of his piles of items a *Glowing Flail Shaft* and a *Lantern of Revealing* at reasonably good prices. Before I left, I asked Torluth again about Vladmyr just to see if I could hit on any reason not to complete my end of the bargain, but found none other than his slightly greater likeability than his rival.

Grave Tidings

Leaving Toruth's, I made my way a little to the South and found Farmer Calloway out working in his corn field. He was not very welcoming or helpful at first, but thawed a bit when I asked about the reported increase in deaths in the area. When pressed, told me about emptied graes and agreed to take me to the herbalist Mabda that Liam Sunquist had mentioned, though protesting that he didn't know what good it would do.

We arrived at Mabda's campfire soon enough. She was barely compos mentis and rambled on in such a way that it was nigh impossible to make heads nor tails of her words. Eventually, however, there emerged a legendary story about an ancient vampire named Gothma who, apparently, resided in the deep vaults beneath the local cemetery. Calloway had a key to the vaults, gave it to me with a shrug and went back to his fields.

³²In total, you earn 800GP from Millie, plus 750XP, plus 90XP for Yentai and 45XP per guard.

³³ This starts the *Gillian's Hill Gang* sub quest.

We went on to the cemetery and opened the vault with Callaway's key. Inside, I followed a trail of body parts and ran into a bunch of Undead bodies and Zombie warriors. We fought our way into the far southernmost part of the crypt, but then came to a door that seemed to be unopenable. With no way forward, we went back to the entrance area and proceeded down the Eastern passageway. That way was easy enough, with only some bats to bat away before being free to load up the mounds of treasure.

Then I noticed a lever in the South wall of the treasure chamber. Of course I pulled it and we heard the sound of a door opening in the part of the crypt we had already worked through. So back we went to that locked door. Inside it was a charnel house, with body parts strewn everywhere. In the centre stood a robed figure with two of those Undead bodies at either side. This guy turned out to be Daxiong, a necromancer, who was very forthcoming about his plans to create a range of zombies with the same intelligence and abilities as humans. When I mentioned that *Demon's Blood* served as a strong adhesive in many applications, he gifted me his *Marvelous Macroscope*. He went on, demonstrating the abilities of the two prototypes beside him. He claimed that his motives were entirely altruistic, aimed at creating an infallible means of protecting the borders and the people Falerun. In the course of our conversation, it became clear that there were no vampires at work in the area, only this necromancer taking advantage of a local outbreak of the plague to collect body parts for his experiments.

When I had heard enough of his sacrilegious nonsense, I told him he had to stop his experiments. He did not take very kindly to the idea and ordered his zombies to attack. We made short work of them, and him. On his body, I found a *Glowing Flail Head* and his *Robe of Undead Protection*. Then rooting about the remaining remains found some other bits of loot.³⁴ We rested outside the crypt and then went off to check out the rest of the area.

Odds and Ends

A little outside the cemetery, I met Jouka Ansaar, the Wainright, cursing at the Lizardfolk for having stolen his awl in the latest raid. I heard him out and told him, I would look for it in my travels and return it to him if I could.³⁵ Then I went over to Gillian's Tower to check out that gang of thugs Sejellus Frimk had mentioned. No sooner had I poked my head in the door but they attacked us. They were not, however, very skilled fighters and we dealt with them pretty easily. There was not much to be found in the tower, other than a *Devil's Bane* dagger. We went back to Frimk to tell him his troubles with the gang were over and were pleased to find out a reward had been posted, which we were able to collect.³⁶

I took a last look around the area, but found nothing of interest other than a house whose door was locked. I tried unlocking it to investigate, but someone inside told me he was too busy investigating a new specimen to come to the door. So I made a note to come back at another time.

3. Daggerford Reprise

Then we made a quick dash back to Daggerford to report back to Liam and Vladmyr and to unload the loot we had found. I thought a little more cash might help us to improve our kit a bit. There, we reported back to Liam Sunquist in the Temple of Lathander who was mightily grateful for my having

³⁴ Intimidating or straight out attacking Daxiong earns 100XP plus 100XP and 73XP, respectively, for each of the two demo zombies. It is possible to persuade Daxiong to relocate to the South. Doing this earns 500XP and whatever bits of loot are in his work space. The trade off for doing it this way is that you do not get the *Glowing Flail Shaft* nor the *Robe of Undead Protection*. When you report back to Liam Sunquist in Daggerford, you receive 750XP plus an *Amulet of the Morningstar*. He will also treat you as a favoured customer thenceforth.

³⁵ This starts the *Jouka's Awl* sub quest.

³⁶ The Gang members are worth 157 XP each but the leader only 100XP. You earn another 100 for reporting to Sejellus plus the 500GP reward.

cleared up the mystery and named me a *Favoured of Lathander*. Then, on the way to give Vladmyr the painting, I stopped at Derval to see what he could make of the artifacts I had found so far. Of the two flail parts, he was able to forge a *Last Rest Flail* (and charged me 2500GP for doing so). I didn't have any use for it, but he was offering only 160 more GP for it than I had paid, so I thought I would try to flog it to a more interested merchant.

Which took me to Vlad the loan shark and whatnot dealer. I gave him the painting and he gave me the Halloran debt note. I was pretty sure he had never told the truth about the painting, but it did enable me to go back to Davey Halloran and tell him Vlad would no longer hassle him or his father. I did make Davey swear off thievery and promise to take care of his father and keep him from gambling in the future.

While I was there, Vlad offered me the opportunity to do another errand for him, totally above board this time. At least from how he described it. It involved trying to find some items in a collection that had been lost and scattered over the countryside along the Trade Way.³⁷ In his helpful way, he said it was possible they had been lost in the Waste Lands East of Gillian's Hill and Liam's Hold and told me to ask locals for more information. That finished, I flogged off to him most of the loot I had picked up. That included the flail that Derval had made for me - for which Vlad paid 1500GP more than the smith offered! Vlad, if nothing else, paid better than most other merchants for the stuff I brought to him.

Then I sat down and discussed with Raegen what we should do next. We had several quests before us. There were, of course, the farmers waiting for us in Liam's Hold. Then there was the problem that Jouka and the Gillian's Hold population had with the Lizardfolk. And, in addition to that, there was the missing Fernigold and that border dispute problem Frederick had mentioned. Not to mention Vlad's little treasure hunt. All except the last seemed equally urgent. So we drew lots. Wouldn't you know it but Vlad's errand was the one I picked. At least it promised not to have any fighting in it.

4. The Lonely Barrens (1)

Following Vlad's direction about the general area to look, we made our way to the Lonely Barrens West of Gillian's Hill.

Scared Squires

There, shortly after entering, we came across three young squires wailing in fear outside a cave. It turned out that they had been sent on a test to check their mettle. They had to confront and fight a creature known as the MRCD (Mighty Rat of Cunning Demeanour). It was evident that they were not up to the task, so I went into the cave to deal with the creature.

To my surprise, there was but a single small, rather mousey, rat named Roo who directed me to a fissure where I could find the MRCD. There was not one big rat, but rather many small and troublesome rats. After killing on several waves of rats repeatedly, I was able to confront Roo once again. He had propagated the myth of the MRCD and he banked on all comers thinking that his mass of miniature vermin was something great and fearsome. And, for most others, his ruse had worked. I gave him a choice: Die, or be taken back by the Squires as evidence of their worthiness. He chose the latter.³⁸

³⁷ This is the sub quest *Scavenging the Countryside*. Vladmyr wants found *The Sheet Music for the Song of Breaking*, an *Uthgart Burial Totem* and the *Mazewalker Chalice* of Chult.

³⁸ This is the sub quest MCDR. You earn 10XP per rat killed (including Roo if you decide to put him to the sword) and 350XP for persuading him to be taken back to the Squires' master. There is some minor loot among the remains in the chamber behind the fissure, among them the *Mazewalker Chalice* that Vlad wants.

That done, we continued in our exploration of the area. In the central part of the area, between the chasm and the stream, I found a leaf covered cache and under a stone there a *Zeal's Walk* Armour, which I equipped because it improved my kit. Behind the chasm, there was a large area that we were not able to penetrate. I guessed that this was something we would have to come back to later.

Wild Elves

Across a bridge over a dammed up stream, I came to a Wild Elf Captain and several Elven Guardsmen. They directed me to their leader, who turned out to be that Kyleena Moonglow whom Guard Captain Frederick had asked me to sort. In the course of speaking to her, I learned that a halfling bard (Petrello) who had attached himself to her entourage was in possession of some new music.

I had two choices in dealing with Kyleena and Petrello: Negotiate/Persuade or Intimidate/Fight. I chose the former and, though it cost me personally a bit in terms of accumulated loot and GP, it was easier and more rewarding for my peace of mind. I persuaded Kyleena to decamp, unblock the streams and cease harassing the local farmers. It cost me 100GP to get the sheet music from Petrello, but I had no doubt I would be able to recover that from Vlad later.³⁹

With nowhere else to go and nothing else to do in this area, we decided to dash back to Daggerford, report to Frederick, unload excess loot, and head on back out. This time to deal with the menace of the Lizardfolk. To get there, however, we had to traverse the Wild Hills.

5. The Wild Hills

It took me a while to find our way into this wild area.⁴⁰ Eventually, coming from the East, we stumbled upon the path but not without first having to fight off a bunch of zombies that tried to block our way.⁴¹ When we reached it the first things we saw were carrion crows and skeletons hanging from a tree. Lots of skeletons. Not a good sign. Exploring the Southeast quadrant, I noticed a grass mound and found a ladder going down.

Dark Druids

Down the ladder, we came upon a cove (?) Of Dark Druids. They attacked us before we knew it. After sorting them, I checked out the book piles and a locked chest. There was not much in the book piles, but the chest held a *Heart of the Beast*, a *Ring of Protection+2* and a *Summon Creature IV* spell

³⁹ Persuading Kyleena to find another area in which to settle earns 500XP and another 625XP plus an *Amulet of Will+2* from Frederick when you report your success back to him. Buying *The Sheet Music for the Song of Breaking* from Petrello costs 100XP.

Taking the violent options earns, for killing Petrello, 73XP, the sheet music and 13GP; and, for killing Kyleena 100XP, for the Captain of her Guard 173XP, and for each Wild Elf Guard, 10XP. Plus, *Kyleena's Silken Armour*, a set of *Gloves of Spellcraft*. And 435XP plus the Amulet when you report to Frederick.

The contents of the locked and booby trapped chest in Kyleena's tent you can get in either case, but with a twist. You always get 9 bottles of dye, a Topaz and a *Glittering Necklace*. If you open the chest before or without having killed Kyleena, you get a *Handaxe of the Elves*. Opening the chest after killing Kyleena, you may - or may not - find a *Spirit of the Predator* helm instead of the handaxe.

Also, I found that if I reported to Frederick after having killed Kyleena at her camp, even after having unblocked the streams, there was no dialogue line enabling me to tell him I had dealt with Kyleena. If I killed Kyleena at the bridge over the stream where I met her Guard Captain, the line appeared. This may be a glitch, or it may be an intended trade off for taking loot and kit instead of XP.

⁴⁰ I found the game a little buggy at this point. Although the sub quests pointing to the the Wild Hills showed up in my notebook, the area did not automatically show up on the game map. It took some moving around the other areas I was able to enter before it finally did show on the game map. I am not sure exactly what made that happen.

⁴¹ This was one of those transition areas. The Zombies were worth 10XP each and we received 100XP for seeing them truly dead.

scroll. On the remains of one of the druids was a *Sword of the High Hunt* longsword. There were three oubliettes and I thought I heard noises in one of them. I tried looking down and getting down, to no avail. So, I just put the nearby ropes in my pack and decided I might try to come back at a later time to check it out again. It is hard to put a situation like that out of your mind when you know you should be able to do something about it.⁴²

Ogres & Gnolls

Once out in the fresh(!) air again, we explored to the West and came to a bridge with an Ogre Berserker demanding an outrageous sum to cross. I was not going to pay the 500GP he wanted, but the Ogre Bridgekeeper offered me a way to permanent free passage.⁴³ All I had was to kill off the Gnolls, still resident nearby, from whom the Ogres had taken the bridge in the first place. Now, I don't like either Ogres or Gnolls, but I agreed, thinking I could figure out the situation better. Then, I might be able to decide which of the two sides (if either) I might help.

So I left the bridge and explored North until I came to a bunch of Gnolls standing around in a kind of fortress. They did not attack at once, and we began a dialogue and they pointed me to their leader, Rattlefang, inside a nearby cave. So In I went.

Inside, I met with Rattlefang. I heard him out and he offered me the same deal as the ogres. At that point I had heard enough and decided that neither bunch was worth helping. I attacked Rattlefang immediately and he was one of the first of the Gnolls to go down. Then we took the rest of them on. Focussing on one at a time proved, as usual, to be the best way to whittle the lot of them down to manageable numbers.⁴⁴

Then I went back to the Ogres at the bridge. When I told the Bridgemaster that the Gnolls were done, he confirmed my free passage. I was going to take him and the others on then and there, but decided that I might as well see the Ogre leader, one Gurak Bonesnap, to see what might transpire and went down into their tower. Not much happened, as it turned out: Just confirmation of the right of free passage and a dismissive "Get out!" At that point, I decided I had had enough of these characters and attacked Guruk first, then the Ogre Mage beside him. Getting those two out of the picture first was a wise move. The others, while quite ferocious in attacking, were not as organized or as effective as they might otherwise have been. Slowly but surely (and resting when we got a moment and spot of respite), we eventually took them all out.⁴⁵

Wargs, etc.

With the ogres sorted and after resting again, we were attacked by several Wargs. So we followed them to their cave and sorted the bunch of them as well. Their pack leader was the most effective of the bunch, but we had to be careful because there were enough to do real damage if we didn't reduce their numbers quickly. It was a good thing that I had bought some potions of *Bull Strength* and

⁴² The oubliette is part of a later sub quest.

⁴³ This begins the sub quest *Taking a Toll*.

⁴⁴ Killing Rattlefang earned 346XP, each Gnoll Elite was worth 157XP and all the prole Gnolls 49XP each. Afterward, cleaning up the remains and the crates in their hide, I found Rattlefang's Talisman, some miscellaneous piddling loot and a few GP.

⁴⁵ When telling the Bridgemaster and Guruk about the Gnolls, I earned 310XP from each. Attacking Gurak earned 625XP and killing him another 347XP. The Ogre Bridgemaster was worth 222XP dead, the Ogre Berserkers variously 159XP or 222XP, and the ordinary Ogres 38XP or 49XP each. There was several hundred GP in piles in Gurak's chamber and lots of other middling loot, including a couple of Dobule Axes+2 and assorted other weapons. Not good for much other than flogging off to Vladmyr.

Speed, because they stood us in good stead. I didn't see the Dark Druid among them at first, but luckily, when he appeared we had the rest down to manageable numbers and sorted him as well.⁴⁶

With the Wargs eliminated, it was quite easy to map out the rest of the area. In the Southwest quadrant, we found another cave. Inside it was a panther (I think) and a winged creature who identified himself as Alaffinel. Well, I didn't know Alaffinel from Adam, and he wasn't much interested in telling me much more. All I got from him before he attacked us was that he was hiding from sort of retribution. Luckily, we were fully healed before entering the cave and I had taken the precaution of imbibing another potion of *Bull Strength*. So, when he attacked, we were ready and managed both the planar and his cougar familiar.⁴⁷ Picking about the remains, I found an *Astral Blade*+1 and a *Broken Ice Blade* plus a few scrolls and potions.

With nothing else profitable to do in these lands, I decided to dash back to Daggerford, sell off the loot and go after those lizards that were plaguing the farmlands. In Daggerford, I took the *Ice Blade* parts to Derval and he forged for me (at a cost of 3500GP!) the *Hoarfrost Blade*. I was tempted to keep it, but *Perdeus's Blade* had served me well and I calculated that selling the *Hoarfrost* to Vlad would get me just enough to buy those *Boots of Haste* I had seen in Boonmoppet's shop earlier. I was pretty sure that being able to move faster was a good trade off for the marginal extra enhancements of the blade Derval had wrought. So that is what I did.

And then went off to the Lizard Marsh via Boonmoppet's store in the Western Farmlands.

6. The Lizard Marsh

Entering the foul smelling marsh, I noticed almost immediately a hut on my right hand side (North). Inside was a Green Hag. She acted as if she knew I were coming and my purpose. She wasn't quite accurate, but I listened to her tale and, in the end, agreed to help her get out from under the voodoo spells of the lizard shaman Uzzuk-Salzik by getting her hairbrush and the voodoo doll that was causing her such misery.⁴⁸ She then transmogrified my shape into that of one of the Lizardfolk. It was a good thing I agreed because I would probably not have gotten very far among the lizards unchallenged unless she had done that. They were quick to identify and attack non-lizards they came across.

As I proceeded, I ran into another lizard who beckoned me over. This one was Redeye, who had previously been leader of the Lizardfolk until deposed by a rival (Saslack) who was being guided by an old Black Dragon (Thuraskilusk). Despite my lizard form, he knew that I was not one of his kind. After a bit of dialogue, he sought to enlist my help as an outsider in putting some dragon's eggs in the hut of Saslick in order to turn the dragon against his rival so that he could regain his position. I agreed after a bit of thought. None of the lizards was a particularly appealing choice, but Redeye seemed the best bet. I was not sure, but I thought that if this guy were leader again he would owe me big and I could get him to stop the raiding of the farmers.⁴⁹

On my way to the Lizard village, thinking about how to accomplish these things, I ran into a

⁴⁶ Wargs are worth 26XP each. The pack Leader 159XP and the Dark Druid 50XP. A couple of corpses in the cave had some piddling loot on them.

⁴⁷ Allafinel is worth 223XP and the cougar 74XP.

⁴⁸ This begins *The Green Hag* sub quest.

⁴⁹ This begins the sub quest *Redeye's Eggs*.

young Black Dragon and a few other creatures which we despatched with surprising ease.⁵⁰ And I came across a pond teeming with piranha fish. I wasn't sure what to do there, but I did take a few of the fish in a jar and stuck it in my pack, just in case they might come in handy. We also ran into several other creatures that attacked us willy-nilly, but which we were able to handle.

Finally we got to the Lizard village by slogging through a nasty slough and being challenged by a guard. We had to talk our way through him, but that was not hard. In the village, the first hut we looked into was a lizard feeding hut, bloody and absolutely disgusting, with nothing in it but feeding lizards. Across from it was a hut filled with Gourds. It didn't seem very important, but I made a note to come back to it after we had accomplished the immediate tasks before us. There were also a couple of other huts nearby with lizardfolk inside, both of which I also decided to leave for later.

Gladiators

Then I noticed a pen with several human and other race slaves in it. I spoke to the one who looked liked the strongest, a fellow named Igaleus. He told me how they were being kept to fight each other for the pleasure of the lizards. He also told me how he had got caught: Apparently hunting for food supplies for some massive orc army. But he wouldn't say anything more about that.

I agreed to try to break them out and went over to the nearby hut where they had the fighting cage. I noticed an elf named Lenaia fighting the biggest strongest slave, Thokk, who seemed to relish killing everything that opposed him. I was able to pickpocket the slave pen key from the Slavemaster without being detected. But while I was doing that, Thokk killed Lenaia.⁵¹ So I sidled back out and over to the Slave Pen, where I unlocked the gate and let the bunch of them free.

Live by the Dragon; Die by the Dragon

Then I explored the rest of the village. I found the Chieftain's hut farther to the West, near a pond with a large Black Dragon overshadowing it. I figured I had better get those eggs I had got from Redeye hidden away someplace inside before the Dragon smelled the eggs on me. So inside I went. Saslick was inside, but I managed to keep out of his sight long enough to put the eggs inside an empty chest. Then he spotted us and I decided to run rather than fight at that moment.

That was a good choice because, as we emerged from the hut, the dragon appeared in a cut scene and confronted Saslick. It was amusing to see the lizard squirm before the angry dragon who believe he had stolen the eggs. Needless to say, the dragon made short work of Saslick and went away, ignoring us. That left us free to go back into the hut and help ourselves to the stuff inside. In a chest there, I found a *Cloak of Protection+2*, a *Ring of Jade*, an *Amulet of Acid Resistance*, a glittering necklace, a gold ring and a pair of *Gargoyle Boots*. In a medium sized pot, I found some foodstuffs and a couple of curative potions. A larger pot had some other pretty good potions and a bottle of ale. I gave the cloak and boots to Raegen to improve her kit (always good to take care of your own!) and we went out to find the Shaman's hut.

⁵⁰ Most things that attack you as you traverse this area will be worth only 9XP (Jaguar, Giant Spider,). That is true of the Black Wymling. The Green, however, is worth 26XP and the Blue 39XP. Stag Beetles and Bulettes are worth 74XP each. The Young Black Dragon, however, is worth 819XP.

⁵¹ This is the *Slaves to the Lizards* sub quest. Lenaia, as I discovered, is haughtily ungrateful if you save her. So, if you want to save her without putting the Slavemaster onto you, you should just surrepticiously heal her enough to enable her to kill Thokk. Of course, that means you cannot get a few XP from killing him later when you clean up the village. Going back to the slave pen and releasing the slaves earned 340XP. (Saving and getting Lenaia free does not earn anything in any case. So think twice before going out on a limb for her.)

Rites of Religion

As we circled the pond to the Shaman's hut, I saw a lizard priest officiating in the water in front of the dragon statue. For fun, I emptied the jar of piranhas into the pond and observed the cleric thrashing about as they fish reduced him to bones. Proving again that the Gods help those who help themselves.

We found the Shaman's hut empty, so took a look around. Rummaging in the various chests, pots and sacks, I found lots of minor loot, many good potions, not to mention the *Hag's Hairbrush* and the *Hag's Effigy*. Inside a couple of locked and booby trapped chests, there was a lot of other good stuff, inter alia, a *Composite Shortbow+2* and a *Ring of Fortitude+3* and *Uzzak-Szalzik's Knife*, not to mention more curative potions.

Just as we were about to leave, Uzzak-Szalzik came in through the door and began questioning us. I had no idea what the lizard was saying, so I nodded my head ("yes") at his first question and then shook it ("no") at his second. He seemed satisfied and went off to putter around in another part of the hut, leaving us to depart unhindered and undiscovered. [It was a good thing that the lizards don't have the same mannerisms as the Greeks or we would probably have had to fight him.]⁵²

Once outside his hut, I had a choice: Go through the rest of the village or just go straight back to the Hag and Redeye. I decided to do the latter, figuring I could clear the rest of both areas after having finished the two principal things I had agreed to do in the area.

As I approached the fen we had to walk through, I saw that hut with all the gourds and decided to check it out. Inside was a Lizard Crafter beside his tool chest. I was going to knock him on the head and loot it, but then thought of a better stratagem that would not give us away. I poked holes in all the gourds I could get to and that began to flood the place. At which point the lizard left and I had free access to its chest. There were a few things good inside, most notably a *Kukri+1*. But the big thing was *Jouka's Awl*, got without a fight!

With that packed away, we waded out way to the exit and back to the swamp, the Hag and Redeye. On the way back, we were accosted by several Black, Blue and Green Wylmings and, at other times, by assorted other minor monsters.

I went back to the Hag first and gave her the effigy, her hairbrush and Uzzak-Szalzik's knife. She removed our transmogrification and we were back in our proper forms. The Hag was both gleeful and grateful. Gleeful because she would get her revenge on the Shaman. Grateful because of the sentimental importance of the hairbrush. Then I went over to Redeye. He also was grateful and gave me a chest full of gemstones (the most valuable of which was a Sapphire), a few minor caltrops and a *Belt of Hill Giant Strength*.

When I pressed him for information also, he pulled up a bloated corpse that I identified as a Tanarukk, which had clearly come from salt water and in whose pouch I found some rotted beef.⁵³ I made a note of this in code in my secret intelligence notebook.

The rotting beef reminded me of Hevesar and his farmers' problems, so I began to think about

⁵²It is also possible to get out by just avoiding entering into a dialogue with him altogether.

⁵³ Returning the effigy, the comb and the knife to the Hag earns 685XP, returns to you own body shape and offers access to her store of potions at any time, at commercial prices. Telling Redeye that the egg ruse had worked and that Saslick had been eliminated nets 480XP, Redeye's chest and the Tanarukk corpse. If you go to Redeye before the Hag, i.e., in Lizard form, you get an *Ice Blade* instead of the *Belt of Hill Giant Strength*. So decide which of the two items is more important to you before closing out either of these two sub quests.

getting on down to Helm's Hold. Not, however, before I had thoroughly scoured both the Marsh and the Village of any remaining lizards that might choose to maraud into Gillian's Hill. Or anywhere else, for that matter.....

The Scouring

Thus, we began a systematic scouring of the Lizard Marsh of all unfriendlies. Down in the Southeast quadrant, after rushing through the piranha pool, I came to a hut inhabited by a Queen Spider and two Dire Spiders. That was not an encounter for the faint of heart or the weak because they were some very adversaries. With the arachnids sorted, I had time to look around. There were a couple of spell scrolls on the floor and a *Tasha's Bow* longbow. Underneath a cocoon, which I could not at first open up, I found the bloated corpse of a wizard. On it were an *Illusionist's Robe*, a *Staff of Defense*, a *Wand of Summoning*, a *Ring of Clear Thought*+2, a *Dagger*+1 and a *Scroll of Darkness*.⁵⁴

Back across that fetid pond, we were 'welcomed' by that Lizard Guard and a couple of villagers. We systematically went through each hut, sorting every Lizard we came across and taking everything that might have a resale value. In the Slave Pit hut, I offered to heal Thakk and try to bash down the cage door, but he had no interests other than to stay and keep fighting. So We obliged him. When we came to Uzzack-Szalzik's hut, himself was inside, pestilence ridden. We wiped him out quickly enough. On his remains we found a *Hide Armour*+1, a *Large Shield*+1 and a *Club*+1.⁵⁵

After reassuring ourselves that Lizardland was free of all remaining lizards, we left the village and marsh areas for good, we hoped. When, if ever, Redeye reestablished his kind in the area, he would, I hoped, think twice about letting any of his folk wander to the East. We then dashed back to Gillian's Hill to give Jouka his awl. Then we made another dash to Daggerford and Vlad to unload our loot and pick up any bits of kit I thought necessary or desirable before, finally, heading South to Liam's Hold.

7. Liam's Hold

Arrived at Liam's Hold in the evening, I noticed a thuggish-looking group gathered around a camp fire. When I went over to investigate, they were quite rude and unwelcoming, so we let them be and followed the road into the village. Or was it a hamlet? There, we went into the Inn to find Hevesar. On our way, Raegen noticed to the far West of the settlement's wall an old structure in apparent disrepair and wondered what it might have been.

Over at the Inn, I spoke to the owner/bartender Ivus Barbarak. He was quite happy to chat and told me that Evani, a well known and quite talented (so I had heard) bard, was going to play her Incredible Fantabulizer in the evening floor show. When I asked about work, he suggested Hevesar. When I told him I was going to see Hevesar in any case but wanted something additional, he told me he had a load of beer that had to be taken to Rab Bitnez for a party the gnome was having.

Then I went over and talked to Hevesar. It was a good thing I hadn't bothered rushing to Liam's Hold because he did not seem at all in distress. Indeed, he told me he had been talking to the Mayor and they had agreed that the job about which we had spoken in Daggerford should be delayed until I had done

⁵⁴ The Dire Spiders earn 74XP each and the Queen Spider 817XP. Getting to the corpse through the cocoon requires a precise sequence: (1) Try to cut through and fail; (2) Get the three empty bottles from the cabinet; (3) Fill up the bottles from the acrid smelling cask; and then (4) Pour the bottles acid on to the cocoon. Or, if you already have an Acid Flask, you can try pouring that on the cocoon. The cocoon will melt away, exposing the bloated corpse.

⁵⁵ Lizard Villagers are worth 9XP or 26XP, depending on where they are killed. The Guard at the entry fen and Thakk each earn you 38XP. The Slaver and the Carvers are 159XP each and Uzzak-Szalzik a nice 601XP.

another thing or two for Mayor Wilsey.

As it was after normal village office business hours and as Hevesar was quite complacent, I thought I might as well have a look around, do Ivus's beer delivery and catch a kip in the room I had taken. There was not a lot going on in the inn's public rooms other than Ivani fretting over a missing parts for her Fantabulizer. When I spoke to her, I undertook to try to find the part (because I really was curious to see her perform in person with her famous contraption).⁵⁶

I went upstairs and in the hallway was Ivus's daughter, Emmaline, who questioned me eagerly about Daggerford and Waterdeep. She seemed bent on getting herself out of Liam's Hold to the bright lights and promise of the big city. I did not have much luck suggesting to her that she might find that all was not sweetness, light and opportunity in the big city. Leaving her to her chores, I found a couple of spell scrolls in the upstairs library and in a corner room found an irascible old so and so named Yano Kent. He was barely civil, so I left him to stew in his corner alone.

By the Grace of Garlic

After cleaning up a bit in the room I had taken, I went back downstairs and into the kitchen and spoke to Ivus's wife Nuli, the cook. She pointed out the cask of ale that was destined for Rab, so I hoisted it up on my shoulder and took it to Rab's house. It was not far, just a few steps away from the Inn's back door.

Inside, Rab was passed out on the floor. I managed to bring him back to consciousness by wafting under his nose a clove of garlic that just happened to be handy. That roused him, but he was still quite confused. Eventually, he began to recall what had happened to him in vague terms, at least. Apparently, some big black thing had clouded his vision and all he remembered hearing before passing out was a voice "He will not do." That seemed more than passing strange to me and I immediately began to suspect some kind of foulness or evil had been at play.

When Rab was sufficiently recovered, I showed him the delivered beer and he began to babble, detailing the plans for food for his party. It was clear that he had garlic on the brain and that anyone going to one of his parties had to love garlic. I could not find a guest list, but I did see his recipe book and managed to jot down a few recipes for future use. Perhaps.⁵⁷ It occurred to me that Rab's obsession with garlic might have been the reason he was not worse off from his experience than he might have been.

Back at the Inn, I told Ivus about what had happened to Rab and he said I should discuss it with Mayor Wilsey. By then I knew it was time to find her, regardless of the hour, so off I went to her house.

How to Handle Hooligans

The Mayor was expecting me and said she was thinking of giving me that pile Raegen had noticed on the way into the area as my home and operations centre. There was only one small catch: I had to deal with the Munroe gang, those thugs we had met on our way into Liam's hold. And she added the rider: Peacefully, if possible.

So off we went to see them. They were thuggishly resistant to virtually all of my attempts to reason with or persuade them. In the end, I told them that I was taking over and they had 12 hours to

⁵⁶ The chat with Ivus initiated the sub quest *Party 6*; The chat with Hevesar the *Mayor Wilsey* sub quest; and, The chat with Evani the sub quest *Evani's Incredible Fantabulizer*.

⁵⁷ Telling Rab you delivered his ale is worth 300XP and writing down the recipes 50XP each.

leave or face the consequences. They wisely chose to leave immediately. I reported this back to the Mayor and she gave me the key to the remnants of the old temple across from the hamlet.⁵⁸

That done, I was about to leave when I remembered to tell her about what had happened to Rab. She was concerned and told me it might be related in some way to the strange dreams and experiences that jemmy, the daughter of Nell Kirchetorte the baker, had been having which also suggesting something was amiss in the hamlet. She suggested I go over to check that out. Without, of course, upsetting the girl. [!Politicians!]

So I did that. With some gentle questioning and the help of her pet bat (!!) Mr. Barnaby, I learned that the girl had had visits at night from a large dark man who appeared in a mist from the floor. That had been the cause of her disturbed sleep and the worrisome tales she told her mother and others.. Without alarming either Nell or the child, I promised the mother that I would look into the whole thing. It was becoming even more clear to me that something evil was indeed afoot. Then, after buying one of each of the offerings on Nell's shelves for my pack (I love sweets!), I went back to the Mayor.

Phantoms in the Night

Back in the Mayor's office, I overheard her talking to Hegrad, a member of the hamlet's militia, who had been on watch the previous night. He recounted his experience of seeing a man appear to disappear into the cliff face on the East side of the hamlet. He had come to see the Mayor because of concerns about his watch partner, Xanda, who was nowhere to be found when he had gone to check on her in the morning. She had disappeared without a note or notice, apparently highly uncharacteristic behaviour. The Mayor asked me to go and investigate both Xanda's house and the cliff face.

I went over to Xanda's house and, looking around, found her diary on a table. I flicked through the pages but found nothing particularly germane to the situation other than that she also had had restless nights. Then I read her entry for the current day. That was enlightening and worrisome. It suggested that she had some compulsive urge to go over to the cliff face in the very early morning. I tried to check out the upstairs, but that door was unopenable so I left it for later and went over to the cliff face.

Looking carefully at the rock formations, I found the spot where Hegrad thought he had seen a figure disappear. Looking more carefully, I found what appeared to be a small crevice. On closer examination, however, I discovered that it was an illusion of rock on the cliff face. I was able to walk straight through it easily. ("To go boldly" as a grammatically challenged explorer once failed to put it.)

Inside, was a musty hallway. On my left, I found a small chamber in which there were bones strewn about the floor. Among them I found a short sword and small shield, but most curious was a letter of instruction from Maerovyn from the Chauntea shrine back in Daggerford. It ordered one Ranger Conway (presumably of whom the bones were the remnants) to lead a combined Elf/Druid/Human attack on the temple of Bhaal on the outskirts of Liam's Hold. It was not clear to me whether that instruction had been carried out nor whether the ranger had met his end before or after carrying out his orders. It was, however, clear that the temple of Bhaal was viewed as something incredibly evil. So I stuffed the letter in my pack for more detailed examination later.

Then we went on ward into what at first appeared to be an empty dead end chamber. Looking about the walls very carefully, I discerned a loose brick. Fiddling about and turning it, I heard a creaking

⁵⁸ If you are a Paladin, honouring the code and pledging assistance to the citizens of Liam's Hold earns 50XP. Getting the gang to leave without bloodshed earns 500XP, +2 Good and +2 Lawful. Resorting to bloodshed earns 250XP from the Mayor, 9 for killing Jethro and 13GP from his body.

sound behind me and turned to find a secret passage had appeared in the North wall. Through it we went and moving cautiously, we found a chamber in which there was a large dark figure and a woman lifeless on the floor beneath it. I took the still body to be the missing Xanda. The figure did not attack immediately and I was able to speak with it.

It turned out that the figure was a vampire named Sleronius Dethick. He told a sob story about how he had been turned into what he was by some rival or enemy, locked in the tomb and Liam's Hold forever and how the only way he could be freed of his curse was to take a human wife. Listening to him, it was quickly evident that this guy was a thoroughly bad character. I was about to attack him when I remembered Lula back in Daggerford and her fascination with the Undead.

A clever plan quickly developed in my mind about how I might save Xanada (if she were still alive), teach that teen twit a lesson she would never forget and deal with this evil thing once and for all. I knew it was risky, but I had already dealt with one undead back in Gillian's Hill and the Western Farmlands and I was pretty confident that Raegen and I together could take down this thing standing before us. It so far had shown that it was capable only of troubling things smaller than itself: a gnome, a child and a weakened woman.

So I told Dethick about how he might secure a willing, instead of an unwilling, bride and he agreed to give up Xanda when the marriage to Lula had been consummated. Back we dashed to Daggerford. Unfortunately, we arrived during the day and couldn't find Lula. So I unloaded some of our excess loot on Vladmyr. On the way to the Happy Cow, I remembered that note I had found on the bones and stopped at the Shrine of Chauntea and asked Maerovyna about it. She explained that those events occurred before the time of troubles and confirmed that the bones must have been Ranger Conway's, told me about the threat posed by the Bhaal worshipers. Adding that no other bodies had ever been found, she said the whole affair had receded from memory during and after the time of troubles. She did not provide much more elucidation than that.

After a bit of abstemious refreshment in the happy Cow, I went up to my room for a nap. We went out after dinner and, night having fallen, found Lula wandering about again. She was still as obnoxious as ever, but this time I had her. I told her if she really wanted to meet up with and marry an Undead, I would take her to one. She hemmed and hawed a little, but when I suggested she didn't have the courage to live up to her convictions, she somewhat reluctantly agreed.

We were immediately whisked back to the tomb in Liam's Hold. When presented to her prospective husband, Lula quickly backed out, soiled herself and turned into a blubbering, wailing mess. No more snappy sass there! Dethick didn't like that development very much, but Raegen and I quickly disabused him of any thoughts he might have had of surviving further. We pretty quickly put him out of his pain and rid the hamlet permanently of his pestilence.

With Dethick truly dead, Xanda recovered consciousness and we were very pleased to find her relatively unhurt. She was grateful and went back to her home to recover further, telling us to drop by and to be welcome always.⁵⁹ I managed to help Lula regain a small measure of composure and she ran off to find a place to hide. I stayed on to check out anything the tomb further and found among the bones on in a satanic throne a *Bone Brothers Bakadi* artifact and on Dethick's remains a toy top and 452GP.

When I made it back to the Mayor, Lula was there carrying on and still blubbering away. So

⁵⁹ This whole episode is the Phantom of Liam's Hold sub quest. Killing Dethick earns 963XP. Observing the Paladin's Code when speaking to the recovered Xanda earns another 50XP, +2 Good and +2 Lawful. The Mayor gives you nothing but a tepid thanks or, worse, short shrift when you report back to her. Maybe she figured you had enough with that pile of repair work to which she gave you the key.

much for the smart, sophisticated, superior know-it-all presence she had pretended to previously. Although the Mayor tried to tear a strip off me for supposedly endangering the little ass, I was happy to see her learn a life lesson, actually two life lessons.⁶⁰ And get her comeuppance: It will be a long time before she pulls any of the kind of pretentious nonsense she tried on me any time soon, if ever with again, with anyone else.

I guess the Mayor really was miffed because she dismissed me with a huff and went back to comforting Lula. I suspected the reasons for the ostentatious and theatrical hovering were probably Lula's family connections and the Mayor's political ambitions beyond Liam's Hold and wanting to get her name better known in Daggerford and beyond. "What a load," I thought, "You'll be nice enough when you need my help again." (I know that is very un-paladin-worthy, but the posturing was just more than I was prepared to take from anyone.) So I just left them to each other.

Then, I went back to Rab and the others in turn to let them know what had transpired. Rab was quite astounded and pleased to learn that his love of garlic had probably saved him from a fate worse than death. Ivus was impressed and relieved that there would be no disruption of business. Nell was relieved to know everything was over, but asked me not to tell Jemmy for fear of upsetting her. When I agreed, she made me a favoured customer. Yum! I didn't have to fudge words with Jemmy because her bat friend had already told her and she didn't seem at all adversely affected by her experiences.

Finally, I went to check on Xanda Pennywell to see how she was making out. She, after all was said and done, was the one person in all this affair who came under the closest real personal danger. I saw she was recovering quite nicely and was very happy for her. I reassured her that she would overcome any residual bad effects in time. She seemed to appreciate that so much that she gave me a *Dwenthor's Cloak of Bravery* that she had made. I was reluctant to take it, but she insisted. So I thanked her and took my leave.⁶¹

As it was getting on in the afternoon, I decided I should check out the new digs the mayor had granted me. When going out the town gates, though, I noticed a tent set up beside the wall, just a little to the South and thought it looked interesting. When I went into it, I found an old wizard who turned out to be that Veijoni H. Wyzz who Evani had mentioned. When I spoke to him, and mentioned Veijoni's Fantabulizer problem, he professed not to be able to help.

I couldn't get anything else related to that out of him, but he did tell me about his tent, which was in fact some kind of planar travel machine. He didn't know much more about it than that, but had been smart enough to figure out the controls and how to work it. When he said he had com to Liam's Hold on business, I agreed to check out his wares. He did have a lot of good stuff and at not horrendously outrageous prices either. I picked up several Bags of Holding, of which he seemed to have an endless supply. While I would have liked some of his other stuff, I thought the bags would be more useful, especially if, as often happened, I picked up a lot of loot in places where merchants were few and far between.

By the time I left Veijoni, it was getting dark, so instead of checking out my new homestead, I went back to the Inn for the night. I was pretty sure it would be a restful evening seeing as how Evani would not be performing quite yet. Hevesar was pleased that I had got on with the Mayor and told me he had sent word of my impending arrival to the farmers in the Wild Pastures. He gave me 700GP as an advance payment and looked forward to my getting on with it. I told him I would be off in the next day

⁶⁰ No, there is no typo. The absence of an "I" is deliberate. The life lessons: (1) Be careful what you wish for because you may just get it; and, (2) Give your elders and, especially your betters, at least a modicum of respect.

⁶¹ In addition to the cloak, you are awarded a further 250XP for visiting and talking Xanada through her trauma.

or so, after I had checked out the property the Mayor had given me. Then Raegen and I had a bite of dinner, a drink to relax and went upstairs to our rooms. Emmaline was still in the hallway and still obviously overeager to get out of the hamlet. Old Yanno the Grouch was still in his corner grouching at the slighted approach. We slept well that night, a good couple of days work accomplished and a good few GP earned.

New Digs (a.k.a."The Stronghold")

The next morning, bright eyed and bushy tailed the first thing after an early breakfast, we headed over to the my new demesne. A quick look at the interior indicated that it pretty much a ruin. I thought, "It is going to take a lot of professional help to make this liveable." But, before I could develop that thought any more, who should emerge from the shadows but Astriel. She was much more up beat and optimistic about what could be done with the place.

But moral support was not why she was there. She was there for business, so we got right down to it and I plied her with all of the questions that had been gestating in the back of my mind. The first thing she confirmed was that the heap had long ago been the site of the temple of Bhaal. Having spoken to Maerovyna a short while ago, I was already near certain that was the case. Still, it was good to have it confirmed. At least I would be prepared for whatever I might find in fixing up the place. Astriel dispelled that thought in the next breath, telling me that there was something untoward about the place and that we should begin looking around to find out what it was, beginning in the cellar.

I was ready to do that, but I pressed her on the other questions in my mind first. She was able to give me some of the history and current information on Liam's Hold, but not much that I did not already know. Then I asked her about the Griffons and she said there was little to be discovered about them other than that their caravans never seemed to be hit. Raegen added that she too had never heard of them. I took that as confirmation of something suspicious: If anyone were know anything about other mercenaries, it would be Raegen. When I asked about the weapons I had found, she had little to share other than that she thought them and the Zhentarim presence connected in some way. When I asked about next steps, she thought dealing with Hevesar's cattle rustling problems the first priority.

I tended to agree but I was not going to head out without first making sure my new home was properly cleared and cleaned. So we (Raegen & I - Astriel stayed behind) began a systematic recce, starting in the cellars. And a good thing we did too! There we found a skeletal creature who identified itself as Xatum, a priest and servant of Bhaal.

Beyond Belief

According to Chauntea, these guys were supposed to have been long disappeared. But here one was, not quite in the pink, but alive. I thought it might e useful to pump him, so I did and got a few more pieces to the puzzle of before the time of troubles. This guy clearly thought I was a long-lost disciple and tasked me with reviving the cult by finding out who had ordered the assault long ago. Of course I already knew and showed him that old letter of instruction from Maerovyna. Well, he almost wet his pants at that and ordered me to seek out the heart of this his arch nemesis. I asked why he had not done this himself already and he gave me a sob story about not being able to neglect his duty in the temple. I decided to play along with his little game and see what happened, so I agreed. Overjoyed, he gave me a *Bhaal's Bloodletter Blade* dagger and sent me on my way with his blessings.

Back upstairs Astriel was waiting and asked if we had cleared the place yet. I told her what had happened and she said "Goodness gracious, do get on with it!" or words to that effect. Easy enough for her to say, She was not coming along to help. So we headed back to Daggerford post haste. On the way,

we were waylaid by a band of Zhentarim Agents. It was a delay, but not much of one.⁶²

In Daggerford, I told Maerovyna what I had been up to. She was relieved and suggested that we might use a pig's heart to deceive Xatuum and she just happened to know where one was to be found. Apparently, a couple of the farmers in the Eastern Farmlands had just lost a prize market boar to wolves. "Right," I said, "I'd better get over there and get its heart before they bury the thing - or butcher it!" So, off to the Eastern Farmlands I dashed, even though it was the dark of night by then. I got there in time to commiserate with my old acquaintances Joe and Sam over their loss - and get the heart. Back, we went to Liam's Hold.

Astriel was still there, painting her nails and tapping her toes impatiently. I just passed her by without speaking. If she wasn't going to help, then I would do things in my own way and time.

Down to the cellar and Xatuum I went. I showed him the heart and he was impressed at first. Then he took a closer look and began to express doubts about it. I tried bluffing him about its being the real thing, but he said "No Dice, Impostor!" and attacked. Another half dozen or so skeleton priests of Bhaal appeared and joined him in hacking away at us. It was a real fight. But we prevailed, finally. On Xatuum's body I found a *Cloak of Fortification*+2 and a key.⁶³ There was nothing on the skeleton priests, but as I was looking around carefully, I found what looked like the hallmarks of a secret door behind the bloody altar of Bhaal.

I tried to find a way to open that door, but without success. We were making our way back out toward the stairs up when I spotted a heavy grey flagstone that was loose. Lifting it (with some difficulty, let me tell you!) I found a small iron lock. I tried the key I had taken from Xatuum's remains and when I turned the key, the lock rotated and a small iron lever appeared. When I pulled the lever I heard a scraping sound back over toward the altar.

We went back to investigate and noticed a grasping hand now appeared on the altar. Behind it, I could see that a passageway had opened up. It opened on to a hallway that was empty so we took the opportunity to level up and rest a bit. Raegen really needed it. Looking around there was a door at either end of the hall. Both doors were locked and booby trapped, so I treated them quite gingerly. Behind one was a library which had several spell scrolls on its shelves, most those of use to evil characters. Behind the other, however, we had to fight off a wave of Gargoyles.

And for good reason, too! What they were the last protection of was the veritable treasure room of the Bhaal temple. In coin piles strewn on the floor, there was a total of 922GP. In one locked chest was a *Talona's Tear*, something nomrmall used only by those who rule by fear. A cabinet nearby held a few healing potions. In another chest of drawers was an assortment of precious and semi-precious gems. And in another locked chest a *Shadow Cut* rapier, another thing mostly of use to ghouls. Still, there was enough loot most merchants would buy, which would perhaps let me get some more useful kit.

The important thing, however, was that I had eliminated the evil from the place. Once we got it cleaned up, properly lit and that hidden passage widened, I was pretty sure I could build an amazing model railway layout in the area. It could be something to keep grown men occupied with things other than war and power for whole evenings, days even.

⁶² Killing off the agents earned 9XP apiece and another 483XP when they were all sorted. Plus the remains: An small assortment of healing potions, scrolls.

⁶³This is the sub quest *Xatuum's Time of Troubles*. Killing him earns 1200XP plus his key to the hidden treasure rooms behind the Altar of Bhaal.

Coming up from the cellars, I noticed another set of stairs that led up to a what must have been Xatuum's private quarters when he was still supposed human. In the anteroom lined with bookshelves, there were several spell scrolls, a few of which I decided to keep because they could be used gainfully. In what was his bedroom, there were a few more spell scrolls, a volume titled *The Treatise of Suffering* (which was subtitled *A Priests' Guide to Ritual Torture*) and Xatuum's journal, which was a litany of gore and gratuitous violence but which also described the last days of the flourishing temple. Apart from that, there were only a few other bits and pieces of minor loot. I decided that the only thing to do with these rooms was to strip them, whitewash them and convert them to a kitchen or storeroom.

The only other part of the place that I had not checked out was the roof, which turned out to be a nicely crenelated structure with lovely views in every direction. A true breath of fresh air after the stink of the cellar. Being up there made me feel as if the place had real promise. But, I thought, "There will be time - and more money - to do that later." It was time to head out on Hevesar's task. So that is what I did, stopping on the way out to tell Astriel that I had cleaned out the evil. It was evident she would not be going along with me as she appeared to be polishing her nails.

No sooner had we emerged from the front door but we were stopped by a page sent by Sir Griswald to solicit our help in freeing Princess Soliana of Fanloc, who had apparently been abducted by Lord Feldran. How could I refuse going to the aid of a damsel in distress?⁶⁴

Home Habitability

I hadn't taken more than a few steps more when I was accosted by a gaudily dressed merchant type who buttonholed me and would not let me loose until I agreed to talk about the possibility of her redecorating my new digs. I decided that it would be a good idea, seeing as how I was probably still going to be away for a while. She had all kinds of decorating ideas that I thought crazy stupid and I told her so. I made it clear that my first priority was to scour clean the whole place from top to bottom. Then to finish the wall either in plain stone or muted tones of mostly ecru shades. And only then to begin furnishing with classic simple and comfortable furniture in good taste. (I knew that was dangerously vague, but made crystal clear I mean my good taste, not hers.) She didn't like it, but finally agreed. I didn't haggle too much about her 500GP price on the job because I didn't have time. But I did tell in no uncertain terms that if I didn't like what she had done, she should not expect to be paid. And I meant that! Finally, I was able to get away from her.

That interruption was useful, however, because my subconscious must have been at work the whole time. It was clear to me that, while the good Lady Soliana had a full fledged knight going to her rescue, Hevesar's farmers had no one other than me. I decided that was where my first priority lay and that, once I had dealt with it, I would go after Griswald.

8. The Wild Pastures

Night had fallen by the time I made it to the Wild Pastures. After moving a little to the Southwest, I looked on as a cut scene played showing the shepherd Irvin watching one of his cows disappear before his eyes. I heard some giggling as it happened, but he apparently did not. I asked if his dog, who had barked shortly before the cow disappeared might help find the trail. But Irvin said he would be no help because unlike other dogs, he had no sense of smell and, "Besides, the cow had gone poof, how could there be a trail?" I thought, "Lord deliver me from the simple of mind....."

I started trying to search systematically on a grid, but the terrain defeated that and I ended up over

⁶⁴ This begins the sub quest *The Princess of Fairloc*.

near another group of shepherds and their herd. One of them, a girl named Lavna, was adamant that the problem was due to an old one-eyed Warg that lived in the Southeast of the area. I personally doubted that a warg was the problems because I was sure that they rarely hunted at night. But I agreed to go down and check it out. I also met Jerrick, who seemed to be the most senior and sensible of all I had met so far. He was not able to help me much, but was a font of information about the Wild Pastures area.

A Waste of Time

So off I went to the Southeast. There near an old oak tree, I came upon the Warg. He was quite ferocious, but we put him down without too much of a problem. I took his head back to Lavna and she was pleased and relieved. So much so that she offered me her *Shepherd's Necklace*. I really didn't want to take it, but couldn't refuse without seeming to insult her. So I just packed it away and said goodbye.⁶⁵

I was not at all persuaded that the Warg was the problem. It had been just too easy. I went back to where Irvin had lost his Betsey and took a very careful look around. This time I spotted small footprints in the grass and tracked them. They led me to the Southwest where, at the edge of a clearing, I heard more giggling. This time I saw the source, a goblin who hot footed it to a narrow pathway through the trees. I lost the creature, but noticed at the very edge of a cliff more trampled grass. Over the edge, I saw a stairway cut into the side of the cliff and followed it down to a cave entrance.

Goblin Greed & Tanarukk Trouble

I lost the creature, but noticed at the very edge of a cliff more trampled grass. Over the edge, I saw a stairway cut into the side of the cliff and followed it down to a cave entrance. Inside the cave we found a warren of tunnels and it looked like the goblins were getting ready to settle into the area permanently. I found a backpack with a piece of paper bearing crudely written "instrukshuns" on how to rustle cattle. When we went exploring the network, there were lots of goblin settlers about, all of which we dispatched with ease.

Then we opened a door in to what looked like a slaughterhouse. A couple of goblins were chomping down on some raw beef when a group of orcs came along and started chewing them out for cheating on some agreement they had had. It was clear that in that bunch, the orcs were the alphas. Then the Tanarukk who seemed to be in charge sniffed us out and we were soon in the thick of it, fighting off both goblins and big, strong orcs. If we had not had potions of Bull's Strength and a healing potion or three apiece, we would have been up against insurmountable odds. As it was, we just managed to deal with all of them.

After cleaning up the remains, I decided that we had better get back to Hevesar, and maybe Astriel as well, to tell them what we had discovered and show them the two notes. Perhaps they could make more out of them. It was clear to me, however, that the Goblins, on the promise of new lands to settle and make into slums, had been given some magical abilities to steal cattle from the farmers in order to supply foodstuffs to the orcs. They had been just too stupid and greedy to honour their end of the bargain.

On our way back to Liam's Hold, I told each of the shepherds that the threat to their herds had been dealt with, for a little while at least.

Back in Liam's hold, I stopped at my domain and briefed Astriel, who was still ensconced there

⁶⁵ This is the One-Eyed Warg sub quest. Killing the Warg earns 49XP and another 150 when you take its head back to Lavna. Plus the quite crude necklace.

supervising the renovations I had ordered. She saw connections between the Zhentarim and the weapons and the orcs and suggested that, given the text of the noted I had found on the Tanarukk, that Trollbark Forest might be the place to hit next for more intelligence. At the Holdfast Inn, I related everything to Hevesar.⁶⁶

Hevesar was pleased but then went on to tell me that Farmer Gaslo (Remember him from the Happy Cow?) had noticed shadowy figures he was sure were orcs moving about for several nights back in the Wild Pastures. That tied in with my discoveries in the Goblins' abbatoir, so I agreed to go back and check it out. On the way, we ran into a couple of Ogre Mages and Berserkers, but we were able to deal with them summarily.⁶⁷

Night Moves

Back in the Wild Pastures, I found Gaslo near the Shepherd's hut. He was helpful, in his way, and reported that the shadowy figures seen by the shepherds had been seen only at night. He was pretty sure they were orcs, as were the others. He told me that they had been seen most over near a big rock, called Dragon Rock, on the other side of the river. So we cautiously moved over there and set up camp and watch for the night.

We had not been there more than an hour when a band of Orcs came by and stopped not far from us. They seemed to be on their way somewhere, but were clearly lost. We listened to see what we might pick up, but before we knew it, they had spotted us. What happened next was what usually happens when Orcs spot anything they think looks less formidable than themselves. They attacked us. Afterward, there was nothing of interest on most of the carcasses. But on the remains of the Tanarukk leader of the bunch, I found a pile of evidence. Among it was a letter telling them to head North to the farmlands where they would be met by a scout. Under no circumstances were they to bother the farmers. At least until ordered to do so by "the Master".

When it looked like there would be no more Orcs passing through that night, I decided to go back and report to Hevesar. On the way out, I stopped to tell Farmer Gaslo who was relieved, for the duration of the night at least, and pleased that he had been right about the Orcs.

Back at the Holdfast Inn, Hevesar was chagrined at the news. Before we could go any further, Jerrick's son interrupted, wailing about his father. Hevesar explained that Jerrick and others had been abducted by Orcs and that they had been herded off toward the West just a short time before we returned to Liam's Hold. (The kid had, apparently, run all the way back and must have known lots of short cuts to be able to get there before us.) I agreed quickly that we had to go after them without delay.⁶⁸

Both Raegen and I were, however, totally wiped and could hardly move. So we went back to the Stronghold for a short rest. Astriel was still there, so we told her what had transpired. She was afraid that by now, the Orcs might be aware that someone was on to what they were about. She said that made it imperative to find out exactly where they were and how ready they were to carry out whatever plans they had. Easy for her to say.....

⁶⁶ This earns 2250XP and ends the sub quest *Cattle Rustling around Daggerford*. Each of the Goblins and Orc Soldiers killed earns 9XP. The Goblin Shaman was worth 24XP and the Tanarukk, Orc Shaman and The Butcher 49XP each. There was not a lot of loot to be found in the whole area. A couple of Emeralds, a few GP, a couple of revolting Goblin Cookbooks and the Butcher's *Stick with a Nail* made up most of it. The follow on dialogue with Hevesar starts the sub quest *Shadows in the Fields*.

⁶⁷ The reward was 49XP per Ogre (120XP for the ast Ogre) and 120XP for surviving the encounter.

⁶⁸ Orcs @9XP, Orc Shaman @37XP, Tanarukk @24XP. Reporting to Hevesar back at the Holdfast Inn earns 1125XP. Finishing the dialogue with him and Jerrick's son start the sub quest *Abducted Shepherds*.

I thought the best way to do that was to go after the abducted farmers. That way we could save them if that were at all possible and at the same time find out more about what was afoot. All thigs pointed to the West. Astriel had thought that was the way to go; We had heard Orcs referring to water transport and seen the underground river and docking area in the Goblin Kitchens, not to mention that Tanarukk corpse back in the Lizard Marsh.

So, after regaining our strength, Westward we charged. (Astriel, of course, stayed back to oversee the renovations.)

Part 3 (The West Coast)

Coming out of the Stronghold, we were stopped by a cleric, Jared Deathstalker, sent to seek my help in stopping a bumbling cleric, Savant Gumbiril, who recently discovered a Shrine to the evil god Umgatlik, from trying to summon the god. That meant another task to add to m plate on the Crab's Claw Coast. "What the heck," I said when agreeing to try, "In for a penny, in for a pound." My first priority, however, was to try to rescue those abducted shepherds.

1. The Crab's Claw Coast

We made our way to the Crab's Claw Coast and it was easy enough to see how it got the name. The cliffs were dizzying and the whole cliffside jagged and intimidating. Especially for those of us who suffer from acrophobia. After peering over the edge at several locations, I was about to fall over in wooziness but then spotted a narrow path down to the water. As we descended, a bunch of seagulls descended on us, screaming "Mine! Mine!", in seagullese, I presume. After beating them off definitively, I noticed on the sand a dead fish where they had congregated before attacking us. It was quite gross, stinking and mushy in the sun. But I took a closer look anyway and was rewarded when I spotted *Umberlee's Blessed Band*.

Smugglers' Notch

Moving on the firmest sand at the edge of the cliff bottoms, we came around a corner and spotted the *Barracuda* at anchor a little offshore. "Curious and curiouser," I thought, "But not surprising, given what we knew about the ship and its activities so far." So we proceed carefully from that point. I spotted the ship's First Mate and another crew member and a Smuggler priest at work unloading cargo. They spotted us at the same and attacked. We managed to deal with them without setting off any other alarms and went on to where I found a cave entrance.⁶⁹

We then went into the cave where they had been unlading their cargo. Inside, several Tanarukk orcs attacked when we came to what appeared to be a massive store room. Several more erupted from a chamber just to our right. But we managed them without too much damage to ourselves. The storage cavern was filled with large boxes of armour, arms and ammunition. Something big was clearly in the offing.⁷⁰

As we moved to the North end of the storage chamber, I saw a prisoner lockup, but was not able to unlock the door. I spotted Jerrick inside and he told me that the key was held by a fearsome ugly Tanarukk who kept it around his neck. I knew we had to get that key. Off to our right I saw a door. It

⁶⁹ Killing the sailor earns 24XP, the Smuggler Priest 37XP and the First Mate 75XP. On the remains are a *Large Shield*, *Breastplate+1*, *Gladiator's Club+1* and a few GP.

⁷⁰ The boxes, crates and barrels held everything from Orc Armour, to Double Axes to helmets to arrows and bolts to meat. All low grade stuff to carry about. But saleable nonetheless. The guard Tanarukks were only 9XP each.

was the only place this orc could be, given that we had cleared all the others in our way. So in we went.

Inside, we surprised the *Barracuda's* Captain Herab and the big Tanarukk leader with a guard and a Hound of Xvim at their side. That was quite a fight, but we put them down. Picking about the remains, I found *Herab's Leather Armour* and *Short Sword*, as well as a *Dagger+2* and a couple of potions. On the Tanarukk's corpse, I found the key to the slave compound, but also found a small sphere in which a miniaturized Talarenne was held captive.

Talarenne told us what had happened back at the caravan (they had meant to take Astriel but got the wrong person), that the wizard who had shrunk her had disappeared and that the Tanarukk had been going to take her to his 'master', one Gorgomoz. I remembered reading about that Goromoz back in the Soorceller's Encapsulate Library. Gorgomoz, it now seemed, was not dead after all. Being taken to it was not a fate to be desired. I told Talarenne that we would try to get her out as soon as possible and put the sphere in my pack.

Back out at the lock up, I put Jerrick's mind at ease about his son and released the captives. We had cleared the area of Orcs, so it was pretty safe for them to run back to their respective homes.⁷¹ Back in the room where we had found Herab and the Tanarukk, there was nothing much else except an Urn of Fire burning hotly. I thought about checking it more closely, but decided it wasn't worth the effort. We loaded up with much of the marginally better stuff in the store room in order to sell it off at the earliest opportunity. The extra weight slowed Raegen considerable, but I had noticed a door at the upper (North) end of the chamber where Herab and the Tanarukk had been and it proved a short cut back up to the top of the cliffs.

Idiot Savant

We had just started our way back to Liam's Hold when I spotted off to the South, that cleric who had begged us, back at the Stronghold, to help him stop the summoning of some kind evil god. If matters turned out as they usually did, being slowed was going to be a major disability. So we dumped the stuff that was weighing us down and headed over to him. We figured we could pick it up on our way out later if we still thought it worthwhile.

Over at the cliff's edge where I had seen him, Jared Deathstalker was ecstatic that we had lived up to our word and come to his aid. He took us down the side of the cliff and led us into a fissure at the water. Inside was an ornate shrine to some ancient evil named Umgatlik. There was a lot of minor loot and other stuff in chests in the area where we entered, which I picked up and stored in one of my bags of Holding. Also, in a pile of rubbish, I found a walking stick of sorts. Examining it closely, it had "Wogbog" scratched on it. Intrigued, I put it in my bag, too.

Having thoroughly picked over the entryway, we made out way along a narrow parapet to a set of doors and went in. In the chamber, we found the archaeologist Savant Gumbril who was about to begin some kind of recondite rite before an altar. When we tried to dissuade him from continuing, he wavered and stopped to think about it. Unfortunately, his assistant Vetrexia Nightmaden immediately took over and we could not stop her. Before we knew it, we heard the doors clang shut, locked and a portal seemed to have opened behind the altar. Not only that, she had brought to life what had theretofore been strange statues standing around the walks of the chamber.

⁷¹ The guard and Hound of Xvim earn 24XP each, the Tanarukk Leader and Herab 75XP each. Putting jerrick's mind at ease in the dialogue earns 75XP but this dialogue has to occur before he tells you about the key. At this point there is no other reward for freeing the shepherds. When you get back to Liam's Hold and report to Hevesar, you earn 2435XP.

The urn of fire is just that. Putting your weapon in it earns a hot hand. Putting your hand in it earns a burnt hand if you don't have a high fortitude quotient. Better to leave it be than waste time on it.

Stupid woman! She had brought to life two Succubi who evidently were intent on killing every other living thing in the room and summoning their master, this Umgatlik. Vetrexia was the, immediate, first casualty and by the time we had sorted the two Succubi, all of the ‘workers’ were dead, as well. Gumbriel was no where to be seen. And a portal had opened up behind the altar. Looking around, I found some quite valuable stuff on Vetrexia’s remains and a couple of piles of bones in corners of the chamber.

I checked out the altar and, it appeared that I might be able to summon this Umgatlik by completing the ritual that had been started. Jared begged me not to do so and I told him that I intended to go through the portal and deal with whatever was there. Well, what was there was Gumbriel cowering in a corner and Umgatlik himself. Raegen and I had to do some pretty powerful buffing, including me using my scroll of *Summon Creature I*, before we were able to take Umgatlik down. But we managed it, barely. He was one powerful Lich.

Back out in the altar chamber, I spoke to Jerod again, telling him that I had dealt with Umgatlik. Then I looked at the altar more closely and found the sceptre that was to have been used to summon Umgatlik through the portal. Well, I knew for sure that Umgatlik was no more, so I just destroyed the sceptre. That closed the portal for good and unlocked the doors to the chamber. We were then free to depart. Which we did.⁷²

What’s a Wogbog?

Picking up the loot we had dropped we headed toward the Eastern exit from the cliffs. As we were about to leave, I spotted a fire to the North of us and decided to investigate. So, once again, we dropped the loot that was weighing us down and went over.

There was a campfire and a barely literate semi-human creature there. We could not get much out of him other than that he was hungry. So I gave him the cherry pie I had bought from Nell back in Liam’s Hold and that seemed to make him less odd. Eventually, we understood that he had lost or had stolen some kind of walking stick. Which reminded me of that stick I had found back in Umgatlik’s shrine with the scratched name on it. This obviously was Wogbog. Whatever a Wogbog was. When I gave the stick to him, he became very happy but no more comprehensible.⁷³ I never found out what he was exactly.

The Cave of the Mists

Glancing over the edge of the cliffs from Wogbog’s camp, I spotted another fissure, big enough to be a cave opening down at the water’s edge in the Northwestern part of the quadrant. I wasn’t certain what was down there, but I thought we still had enough time to be able to go and check it out. So we went back down the cliff side path we had used before and made our way to the cave’s opening.

Inside, there was a narrow walkway toward a large, ornate gate behind which was an island

⁷² There are a lot of rewards for doing the *Umgatlik’s Shrine* sub quest. First, Wogbog’s Stick can be found even before you know you need it for that sub quest (i.e., if you have not previously talked to Wogbog.). Second there is all the relatively minor loot to be found in the approach area of the shrine. Then, in the shrine itself, on Vetrexia’s body, there is a *Whip*+1, a *Ring of Protection* +1, a *Periap of Wisdom*+1, and a few scrolls and potions. Finally, on Umgatlik’s remains, there is a *Cloak of Resistance*+4.

In addition, sorting the Succubi earns 217XP each and each ‘worker’ 9XP. Killing Umgatlik after entering the portal earns 1000XP plus another 1125 for completing the sub quest. Not only that, coming out of the portal, finding the sceptre on the altar, doing the dialogue with Jared and then destroying the Sceptre earns another 500XP +1125XP. Lastly, if you wish, and can persuade Gumbriel to do so, he gives you 80GP as a reward for saving him (from both Umgatlik and his own stupidity).

⁷³ Giving Wogbog something to eat earns 50XP and +1 Good orientation. Giving him his stick earns another 50XP and +5 Good orientation. This begins and completes the sub quest *Wogbog’s Stick*.

shrouded in mist. The gate was locked, but then I remembered that *Ancient Ornate Key* I had picked up off the junk tables back at Torleth's in Gillian's Hill. It worked and I was through the gate and able to enter a structure on the island. Here, once again, the doors slammed shut, locked after we entered.

In the centre of the chamber, itself shrouded in wisps of mist, was a quite lovely creature. She, for it was a she, was very apologetic and obviously very weak. I was able to communicate with her, but at first it was not easy. Eventually, I learned her name was Metastakixx and that she had been left in the structure for how long she could not remember in order to control some kind of unworldly powers that had been locked within the structure. She was able to explain that her strength was weakening to the point where she would not be able to contain these things for much longer and that they would then be free to unleash evil and havoc beyond the place.

I quickly agreed to help and she told me how to destroy the things, locked in the four urns in the rooms. When I went to examine the urns, I stopped at a column which seemed to whisper at me. I didn't much like the sensation I got from that. Then I approached each of the urns in turn and released the things inside. They were a kind of spirit, fragments of very powerful emotions bent on no good, I think, and it took some brutal fighting to deal with them. I had to make sure we had fully rested after sorting the ones that emerged from an urn before going to the next. Otherwise we would not likely have been able to survive the experience.⁷⁴

Finally, when I had sorted the spirits in each of the urns, I was able to return to Metastakixx. When I went to tell her that the spirits were no more, it was evident she was completely exhausted. There was nothing I could do to revive her, unfortunately. When she expired, I felt such a deep sense of loss, it was almost unbearable. With her death, the doors opened and when I was finally able to bring myself to leave, I could only reflect that this had somehow turned out to be a great personal loss.

Departing the cave, we picked up our loot where we had cached it and made our way back to Liam's Hold. In the Inn, we sold the stuff to Lahar, who had set up his night business corner. Then I reported to Hevesar, who was mightily pleased and passed on a message from Astriel for me to meet her at my place.⁷⁵ Back home she was appreciative of all the intel we had picked up and told me she thought that the orcs might be gathering in Trollbark forest. She then marked it on my map so I could get there by the most direct route.

I then told her about finding Talarenne in the crystal orb, at which point Tala began tearing a strip into Astriel for the mistake that had been made. Astriel's first comment that the deed had been done by magic and would have to be undone by magic did not do much to assuage her rage. Things did not simmer down until Intervened and Astriel undertook to get in touch with all of her magic-oriented contacts to see what they could best advise. It was not a very satisfactory conclusion for Talarenne, but she didn't have much choice in the matter.

⁷⁴ This is the sub quest *A Season in the Mists*. It can only be done by having possession of the *Ancient Ornate Key*. Without that, the ornate gate and lock is unopenable.

For killing each *Fragment of a Dead God's Hate* (3), I earned 963XP; For each *Fragment of a Dead God's Wrath* (3), 867XP; For each *Fragment of a Forgotten God's Clarity*, 41XP; and, For each *Fragment of a Mad God's Will*, 9XP. After speaking to the dying Metastakixx, conclusion of the sub quest earned 1300XP and a *Cloak of the Mists* was all that was left of her.

The items described in other walk throughs that I have read as being on the remains of the different Fragments were not present. Either I omitted something that makes that happen or else the latest software/game engine patch has removed them.

⁷⁵When Hevesar proffered the remainder of our agreed contract (700GP), I declined and said to give it to the farmers who had suffered losses. That earned me 150XP and an alignment shift of +4 Lawful. When I finished with Hevesar, I earned another 2500XP, presumably for finishing off all the help to the farmers sub quests.

2. The Blade Cliffs

I was still thinking about that abducted princess and decided to see if I could help getting her freed before going prospecting for Orcs in Troll country.

Saving Soliana

Arrived at the Blade Cliffs, we made our way to Sir Griswold's tent and got a briefing on the situation. He was quite despondent about getting into the heavily fortified and quite unbreachable castle and asked if I might find a way in. I went over to the drawbridge and attempted to talk my way on or at least arrange for a parley with Soliana or the Lord Feldran for Griswold. The fop I spoke to at the drawbridge finally agreed to a meeting and told me to bring Griswold at midnight. I took that back to Griswold, but it didn't sound right to me and I told him it was likely to be a trap. That left me to take a look around to see if there wasn't another way into the castle.

Exploring carefully along the cliff edge, I found a steep path leading down to tidewater. A little ways along from the end of the path, I spotted a gravestone and an old woman standing nearby. When I asked, she gave her name as Olree and told me she had once been a sevanf of Lord Feldran's mother. Lady Exeltis. It didn't take much talking before she showed she had little time for Feldran. Indeed, she was certain that the rat had murdered his own mother. When I told her he had kidnapped the Lady Soliana, she was more than willing to show me a little way into the castle. She made me promise to say hello to Feldran from her when I sorted him.

I followed the map she drew me, along the cliffs' waterline until I came to a cave that had a foul stink and dark, polluted water streaming out of it. Holding our noses, we followed Olree's directions and went in. We followed it for a short while until we emerged through a fissure in the castle sub-cellar's wall. Up a set of stairs into the Castle's basement and followed muddy footprints into a large store room filled with barrels of oil. Looking at the sheer number of barrels, I hit on an idea that might make it easier to infiltrate and distract the castle guard: Start a fire! Unfortunately, I didn't have a torch and my tinder box was not up to the job.

In a crate in nearby store room, however, I did find a Torch and, with it lit, I was able to set all of the barrels on fire without burning myself. In a few minutes, all of the guards from the upper levels came down to try to put out the conflagration. Raegen & I were well positioned to pick them off two or three at a time as they came down to the cellars. With them all out of the way, we were able to clear the place methodically, room by room and floor by floor.

In the rest of the cellar, we did not find a lot of stuff, a spell scroll or GP or two. I did notice that, in the wine cellar, what had been reputed to be vast stores of the very fine Exeltis wine were reduced to a few dusty - and empty - casks. I found only four bottles left in the whole area. This seemed very strange for a chateau long famed for its exquisite and very expensive vintages.

In one chamber, I found a bookcase which had a few volumes on it. When I picked up one, the bookcase revealed itself to open to a secret staircase upward. I decided to leave it for later and continue around and up methodically. I was sure we had already dealt with most of the castle guards, so we would face, at best, little obstruction. So we went up to the next floor

On the next (ground) level, emerging in the Great Feast Hall, we ran into lots of servants, all of whom either stepped aside politely or ran away in terror. Coming out of there, I faced the front entry to the castle. My first instinct was to go out and try to open the drawbridge. But then I thought, I had better try to find Soliana and make sure she was ok first. And, perhaps, check Feldran a little more closely. We cleared the soldiers' dorm on each side of the entry hall. The lone Sergeant left in each did not pose

much of a threat. There were a few pieces of small stuff of only a little value in the various chests and weapon racks, hardly worth the effort to unlock the chests.

I was able to unlock the door to what appeared to be a treasure room in which there were piled of gold pieces on the floor, a total of almost 700GP.

Next, we came to what must have been Feldran's suite. He wasn't there and the few servants cowered in the corners of the salon. In his bedroom, an armoire held only a few GP. His office was a bit more interesting. An open ledger recorded a history of great profits and wealth from the family vineyards, but showed a total reversal in recent years, to the point where nothing was left but great debts from profligate spending. In the nearby library, there were only few books and Feldran's Butler, a snotty guy who would only warn us what a great swordsman Feldran was.

Up the stairs to the private wing, on entering from the stairwell, who should greet us but Feldran himself. A greasy, sleazy looking mountebank if I ever saw one. I didn't particularly like him calling me "Monkey" either. It didn't matter what I said, it was clear the encounter was going to come to blows and it quickly did so. I had him on his last legs when he upped and turned tail, disappearing down the stairs and out of sight faster than Jack B. Nimble. I didn't rush to follow. He was not going to get out past Griswald and his men. And I didn't think he knew about the way we had entered. Also, I was pretty sure I had hurt him badly and that he would not put up much of a fight when we next met.

So I started to check out the rest of the upstairs level. On one wall of the chamber in which we had crossed swords, there was a bookcase, which turned out on close inspection to be the other end of the secret passage behind the bookcase in the castle's cellar. Also off the chamber was a room which must have been Feldran's main bedroom. There were several locked armoires in it, filled mostly with clothing. But stashed among the outfits, there was a pair of *Gloves of the Rogue*, a *Faker's Crown* and a *Nymph Cloak*+1. Also off the central chamber was an opening on to the castle ramparts. I took a quick look out, saw no one and went back in to check out the rest of the level.

Another room at the end of a longish hallway was Feldran's private study. There was not much in it, but I did find a key and also a letter addressed to Feldran from something called the Agency of Cartographic Investigation. That letter indicated that Feldran had been checking up on the Soliana's land of origin. The agency had reported that the search had come up negative on any country called Fanloc. had

In one small room, I found an alchemist's laboratory. There were a few potions and other bits and pieces needed for experiments and potion brewing. Beyond it, at the end of another hallway was a lock up cell with blood on the floor and bones that were long dry. Fearing the worst, I moved back up the hall and opened another door, finding only a maidservant. Finally, seeing the locked door with the yellow banners outside it, I tried Feldran's Key. That worked and I found Soliani inside.

She was quite unhurt but also quite confused. Feldran had told her she was being locked in for her own safety because the castle was being besieged by brigands. I disabused her of that notion by telling her that it was, in fact, Griswald and his troops who were at the castle to save her. She was confused because Feldran had got her to go away with him on promises of preparing her for and introducing her to high society. I showed her the letter Feldran had received, told her about the state of his finances and advised that he was only after her money. At that, she said she had none, realized that Griswald was her true love, and then proceeded to tell me the story of how she had been transformed from falcon to human form by none other than the Green Hag, back in the Lizard marshes. Itold her to stay put while I went back out to deal with Feldran and get Griswald into the castle.

I went out on the ramparts, around to the front of the castle and found the levers that controlled

the drawbridge. Once the drawbridge was down, Griswald and his men rushed in. After a brief confrontation with Feldran, which left the latter dead in the castle courtyard, Griswald ran upstairs to find Soliana. I followed, after rifling Feldran's remains.

Up in Soliana's chamber, she and Griswald were embracing. I was happy things had finally worked out for them. Griswald, in a fit of gratitude, gave me his magically enhanced belt. When I asked for a keepsake, Soliana gave me the necklace the Green Hag had given her to use in case she ever wanted to return to her falcon form. Soliana said that, having refound Griswald, she would never need or want it again. I suspected she might regret having given it away when she and Griswald had their first, or second or third or fourth marital tiff. But I took it nonetheless. [Take it as my contribution to long term marriage strengthening.]⁷⁶

When I left the lovers, they were headed back to Griswald's place. I remembered I had promised Olree to let her know when I had dealt with Feldran. She was pleased to see him dead and gone, but I have no idea what her plans were thenceforward. I suggested that she go back and direct the clean up Chateau Exeltis and that the next occupant might do well to engage her in service again. But, she did not seem so inclined. Leaving her, I spotted a ship run aground and decided to check it out.

Never Trust a Vampire

Inside the hold were several caskets and when I looked a vampire who called himself Nostraad gave me a long spiel about how he got there and why he was trapped in the disintegrating ship. He sought my help in getting him free, making all kinds of claims about being a special kind of Vampire and promising me great rewards if I did. Well, I do not believe in 'good' vampires, nor even neutral ones.

But, for some reason I was willing to credit that it just might be possible. So I agreed and went out to eliminate the three beacons that formed his virtual prison. I always carry a bow or crossbow and ammo, so it was just a matter of time until I destroyed the beacons. Then I went back to see Nostraad.

As it turned out, there is still no evidence of the existence of good vampires. I was on my guard and it was a good thing too, because the thing and its two minions tried to feast on us. The great gift it had promised was eternal life/death as one of them. Well, we were having none of that, told them so and sorted them with only a little trouble.⁷⁷

Advanced Cretinology

Back up at the top of the cliffs, we took a cursory look around in the Southeast and found a cave opening. Inside, there was nothing more dangerous than Ochre Jellies. That is not to say that Ochre jellies are not dangerous, given that when hit they just split and split and split until you have managed to squash every last little one of them. There was not a lot good to be found in the cave, but there were some things worth fighting the jellies for: An *Adamantine Helm*, and a *Blackhammer Shaft*, and a journal that had belonged to some academic named Vugu.

Vugu, apparently, had been a reasonably good scholar, philosopher and professor. In the journal,

⁷⁶ Killing Exeltis Guards earns 9XP each and the Sergeants 28XP each. On Feldran's body, there is a *Rapier+2*, an *Exeltis Blade* dagger, and the *Castle Master Key*, which you might need to get into some rooms if your lock picking skills are not high enough. There are other small items such as healing potions or spells scrolls or GP, all of which seem to be randomly included by the game machine. In addition to *Griswald's Belt* and *Soliana's Necklace* if you take them, you earn 1750 for completing the sub quest.

⁷⁷ This is the sub quest *Shipwreck Survivor*. Nosfraat's minions are worth 9XP each. Attacking Nosfraat earns 250XP and killing the vampire another 425XP, plus *Nosfraat's Blade*.

he recorded being beset by a pair of inescapable idiot students, Ben-Shuur and Xianga, who had taken some of his speculative ideas to ridiculous conclusions. He seems to have entered the jelly cave in order to get away from them. Not a very good thing to do for someone with clearly inadequate fighting skills, seeing as how we found the journal on his bones.

When we emerged from the cave, we saw the two cretins mentioned in the journal standing at the edge of the cliff. I made the mistake of entering into a dialogue with them. Even when faced with incontrovertible evidence of the error of their reasoning, they persisted in their idiocy. Stupid people are, in most cases, too stupid to understand that they are stupid. When I got sick of listening to their sheer nonsense, I suggested that the logic in their thinking meant they should both jump off the cliff. To my astonishment, that was what they did. I thought, "Well, that helps clean out the shallow end of the gene pool".⁷⁸

That done, I made a quick dash back to Daggerford, unloaded my loot on Vlad, got Derval to forge the Blackhammer for me and went back to Vlad and sold it at a good profit. Then we went back to Liam's Hold to see whether Astriel had any new intelligence.

At the door of my digs, I was stopped by a young elf, Deladrine, who had apprenticed herself to a wizard in the Lonely Barrens named Edealseye. She told a tale of how the wizard had changed over the year she had been with him, from gentle and kind to inexplicable wickedness. Badly disfigured by Edealseye, yet still wishing to get him back to his old self somehow, Deladrine begged my help. I felt I had no alternative but to agree to meet her back in the Lonely Barrens and see what I could do. I took this to Astriel and she agreed it needed checking out but left it to me to balance it with the need to get to the Trollbark Forest to get intelligence on the Orc menace.

Part 4 (Out from Liam's Hold)

As I left the Stronghold, still puzzling in my mind what to do, a chicken came up to me squawking, or rather screaming for help. Fleeing from a butcher with his knife at the ready, the chicken pleaded with me to save it. It's story was that it was, in fact, a Druid named Jaeda who had been involuntarily changed into avian shape. Now, I like birds generally, but I have hated chickens since one pecked my raspberry Jam and fresh bread out of my hand when I was three years old. So I was not very sympathetic.

But the thing made a good case that it wasn't really fowl, so I saved it from the butcher - at a cost of 25GP! So we went, as it asked, to the Brush of Barbs to speak to its head Druid, Tathum and the others of its circle, all of whom also had been turned into talking birds.

1. The Brush of Barbs (1)

Entering the area from the west and looking for the Druids' grove, I mistakenly took us into what turned out to be a spider infested soodland. Every time I bashed a web, several giant spiders came down from the trees and attacked us. They were not really hard to beat off, but they were annoying. The wood turned out to be a worthwhile digression, however, because inside a cocoon, I found that Uthgart Burial Totem that Vlad wanted. I tucked it in my bag and made a mental note to return to Daggerford sometime soon to collect on the reward he had promised.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ This is the sub quest *Theosophy is for the Birds*. No Xp are awarded for doing it, other than the 9XP per Ochre Jelly wiped out and the loot found in the cave. It is possible to persuade the two idiot students to jump off the cliff. This garners an alignment shift of +2 Evil, but I thought that it was worth it to see the cretins gone for good.

⁷⁹ It was also rewarding in terms of XP also. Each Giant Spider was worth only 9XP, but there was one whose death earned 1200XP.

We got ourselves back out of the wood and started looking for the Great Oak tree that jaeda had explained marked the entrance to the Druids' grove. In our wandering, we came upon an encampment where a drunk was stumling around looking for a bottle that wasn't empty. I managed to speak to the guy for a bit. His name was Woude and it was almost appropriate, given the woodenness of his head. Apparently, he had been engage by some old merchant who he said had just appeared in Liam's Hill to steal a part from Evani's Incredible Fantabulizer and had done so.

Overcome by remorse, however, he had made his way to where he had made his camp and had been drunk ever since. I explained to him what he had taken and told him that, if he gave me the part, returned to Liam's Hold and reported himself to the authorities, I would argue on his behalf. I had bigger fish to fry. I was pretty sure that the old merchant Woude had spoken of was none other than Veijoni. In addition to helping Evani, I planned on burning him something good.

So I tucked the part away in my bag for the moment and went back to trying to find the Druids. The danger to them in the form of birds had been made quite manifest by the plight of the 'chicken', Jaeda.

The Pecking Order

I finally found the Great Oak, said the magic passwords jaeda had given me and entered the Druids' grove. There, I found several birds trapped under a net. None of them were in good shpae, so it was a good thing I got there when I did. Tathum, in the form of a nearly dead seagull, the head druid explained that druids had been betrayed by one of their number (named Feynemonee) to an enemy Druid named Stegin who had cast the spell on them. He said that he needed all of the transformed Druids of the circle together to figure out how to break the spell that had made them all birds. The problem, however, was that two were missing. Jaeda piped up that one was in Liam's Hold and the other in Gillian's Hill. So, next I went after them.

As we returned to Liam's Hold, we passed that tent with the astral gate and the wizard Veijoni and for half a second I thought about going in anconfronting him about the part for Evani's whatever it was. But then thought better of it. Lives were at stake, even if only birds' lives. So straight into the hamlet and knocking on doors did we go.

I found the first of the two birds, in the form of a parrot, in the house of an old woman, Hester, who was packing up to leave the hamlet. I got nowhere trying to explain to her that the parrot was not really a parrrot. The old girl was deaf as a post and I could not get through to her. Iwas about to do something rash to get the parrot, but I managed to keep my temper. As I walked away, I noticed her desk had some pen and paper on it. So I grabbed those and wrote her a note. Luckily, she could read, that cleared everything up. She quickly agreed that I should take the parrot. I stuffed it in my pack and got out of there as quickly as I could. I warned it that, if it messed my bag one hundredth as badly as it had its cage at Hester's, I would wring its neck myself.

Next, I went back to Gillian's Hill. I had been in nearly every building in the place except for that one where the occupant had been preoccupied and had told me to come back later. So I went back to it first and this time, the owner, Nagorm Stuffer, let me in. The gnome was a taxidermist and the place was loaded with dead stuffed animals. He was chuffed as all get out about buying a very unusual bird at a bargain basement price and was getting ready to kill and stuff it.

When I asked what kind it was, he admitted he didn't know and told me to go look for myself in his back room. There in a locked cage, I found the druid Urith in the form of a penguin. The penguin told me its tale of woe and said I could get the key from Nagorm's belt. Urith was a not very likeable type and told me just to get on with killing Nagorm to get the key. I was not going to do that so I went

out and tried to persuade the gnome to let the bird go.

I tried persuasion without success. And I tried buying the bird, without success. Finally, I hit on telling him that the bird was, in fact, a woman temporarily disguised as a penguin. Nagorm was doubtful, but was willing to go in and give the bird a hearing. I have to give it to Urith: She told a really good tale and the gnome was totally convinced he had a disguised princess from a far off empire. Profoundly apologetic, he let the bird free. Into my bag it jumped, albeit with the same warning from me that the parrot had gotten. And we were off back to the Brush of Barbs.

There, after a somewhat joyful reunion the birds cheeped about for a while. Then, finally, the seagull told me that they could not do anything without the bloodstone of the Druid, Stegil, who had cast the spell on them all. And Stegil, according to one of them, had gone to a hideout near something called the *Tree of Blood* in the Wild Hills. That did more than ring a bell with me. I knew exactly where it was.

“Finally,” I thought, “Something easy. I have already dealt with that gang!” Back to the Wild Hills we dashed. When we got there, it was not so easy. Stegil and several other Dark Druids were there to receive us. Not very kindly. Stegil tried to persuade me to go back and kill the other birds/druids for him, but I demurred. At which point, he and his cronies attacked us. Cleaning up the remains I found a *Sickle+2*, a *Small Shield+2*, several potions and a key. I was sure the key was key to securing Stegil’s bloodstone, but couldn’t find it, even on a thorough search of the place.

Then I heard a voice form that oubliette I had noticed on our first visit. It turned out to be Feynemonee, who had betrayed the other Druids, who had been thrown down there by Stegil. According to her, she had fallen in love with Stegil and he had persuaded her to help him carry out his nefarious plan. Cured of her illusions now, she promised to direct me to his bloodstone if I got her out of the hole she was in. Easily done with the rope I had taken previously. She pointed me to exactly where Stegil had hidden the bloodstone in a chest behind a brick in one of the wall of the burrow.

I found it after careful examination of the bricks on the walls and used the key I had found on Stegil to open the chest. And got the bloodstone. I asked Feynemonee what she would do. She realized she could not go back to the other Druids and just said she would go off in the wilderness to pray for forgiveness.⁸⁰

Back at the Druids’ grove, I watched as the birds performed their ritual and returned to their respective druid/human shapes. I asked if there was any hope for Feynemonee to rejoin them, but realized quickly that was not going to happen. Druids may seek to be, may even be, in harmony with nature, but that does not mean they are kindly or forgiving creatures.

Odds and Ends

With no immediate life-threatening issue before us, I decided we could finish up our deal with Vladimyr back in Daggerford. So we made our way back and set them out on the table for him. He was pleased and was about to give me the reward we had agreed. But then I turned on some charms and persuasion and he agreed to increase the reward to 3000GP. Which I was pleased to have in my pocket.⁸¹

Back in Liam’s Hold, I checked with the Mayor about Lucas Woude and his story. He had

⁸⁰ This ends the Circle of Fowl sub quest. It earns 1750XP when the spell breaking ritual is completed. Killing Stegil in the burrow in the Wild Hills earned 665XP and each of his Dark Druids 9XP.

⁸¹ Turning over the objects completed the *Scavenging the Countryside* sub quest and earns 500XP. I didn’t mind titting Vlad up for more than we had agreed and my persuasion abilities were high enough to do it. Others may not be able to get the extra 1000GP.

reported back as he had promised and the Mayor's secretary verified his having been accosted by the wizard. I decided I would have to speak to Veijoni directly. The Mayor again cautioned me about bloodshed. I reminded her that I generally tried to avoid it, but that it was not always possible. Then I stopped in to see Evani and give her the part so that she could get on with her performance later in the evening. Then went to confront Veijoni.

The wizard was not very accommodating when I broach the subject with him. Indeed, he became downright hostile and quickly revealed himself to be a Rakshasa that had devoured the real Veijoni. With a snarl, it attacked us. The Rakshasa was not, in itself, a major fight but the four Strange Gargoyles it brought into action did give us a run for our money.⁸² After all that was said and done, I returned to the Inn to tell Evani and take in her show.

Off in a corner, I spotted Lahar and went over to sell of the excess loot we had picked up. Beside him, there was a new arrival, a Rashemi merchant named White Glove. I preferred to sell and buy from Lahar because he gave me better prices all around but White Glove had some interesting items. In particular, she a quite powerful perfume whose scent I was certain would help out if I ever had to persuade a particularly difficult character. So I bought a bottle for my bag, even though it was crazy expensive.

2. The Lonely Barrens (2)

After the show, I went back to the digs, had a bit of a kip and then spoke to Estriel. Again she was no help in setting priorities. So I decided to go and see what had been happening in the Lonely Barrens. I had a feeling that it was just possible that it somehow tied into everything that had occurred to that point.

Edalseye's Tower - The Ascent

I remembered that there had been areas of the Lonely Barrens we had not been able to penetrate on our earlier visit there, so I was not sanguine when we arrived. At first, I couldn't find Deladrine, but she soon appeared near that cache in which I had found the armour and at the edge of the chasm we had been unable to cross. She explained that it required a magic portal, which she then opened for us. She explained, though, that she could not risk going back, so ill disposed had Edalseye been to her. She nonetheless begged me not to harm her former mentor. I agreed, but was not at all sure that would be possible.

Then we went through the portal and after a quick look around went to the only entrance that was visible. Inside, we were greeted by a floating talking skull named (of course!) Skully, who had been expecting us. He told us a little about Deladrine and Edalseye and some of the strange things that had been happening then told us we had to get with the programme and get to the top of the tower to find Edalseye. There were no stairs, only portals to move from one level to the next.

The first was easy once Skully told us about it: Just walk right through it. The next was a little more challenging. We entered a chamber where there were four braziers around an ice crystal. But no portal to another level. I did spot a rope hanging from the ceiling with a note attached saying "The key to the door upward is about up to here." Or something like that.

⁸² The fight with the Rakshasa/Veijoni ends the sub quest *Evani's Incredible Fantabulizer*. Giving the part to Evani earns 500XP and also *Evani's Colour Ring*. Killing the Rakshasa earns 963XP and each of its Strange Gargoyles 44XP. After the fight, on Veijoni's remains there is an *Alien Blade* rapier and a *Rakshasa's Eye*. There may or may not be remains of the gargoyles: That seems to be a variable in the game engine. I have seen other walkthroughs that refer to different items on Veijoni's corpse, but only the two items I noted come up in the current version of the game. For me, at least.

It was pretty clear that the ice crystal had something to do with making that portal appear. I tried lighting the braziers, but each time I tried, an Ice Mephit appeared out of some kind of generator and put out the flame. The more I tried lighting the braziers, the more Mephits appeared. It was evident that the Mephits were going to keep coming out of the machine and fighting them would be useless. At least until such time as I could figure out how to stop the machine from working.

I took a careful look around the walls of the chamber to see if there was something nearby that I might use and, finally, spotted a pile of sacks of earth. I picked up a bag, took it over to the machine and put it on top of the works. The machine chugged for a bit, but then stopped dead. The Ice Mephits in the chamber still kept putting out the braziers as soon as I lit them, so Raegen and I took them all out. With the braziers lit, the ice crystal melted quickly.

But then a fire appeared in place of the ice crystal and Fire Mephits began to come out of it. And, as more and more kept appearing, soon the place got exceedingly hot, too hot for comfort. The only thing for it was to try to get some Ice Mephits back to ballance off the Fire Mephits with Ice Mephits. So I went back to the Mephit Generator and took out the bag of earth. That, as I thought, caused Ice Mephits to come out. Soon, a general melee was in full flight between the Ice and Fire Mephits. Then I noticed that water had begun to cover the floor of the chamber. [It makes sense, no: Fire vs. Ice = Water.]

Over in the corner where the rope measure had been, there was a Water Mephit observing the fighting. When I spoke to it, it bemoaned the faact that it was going to have to clean up again. Then it motioned me toward the portal that had just appeared behind the rope measure. That got us up to the next floor, something called the “Chamber of Delights”, although it did not prove to be much of a delight.

Eladseye was nowhere to be seen, but there was a character who called himself Prince Julap-Adeep and who seemed to be some kind of major domo. He offered me food and drink, all of which I declined. I suspected that there was something fishy going on, that he was up to no good and that whatever he offered was likely to be laced with something. I was correct because, when I declined, he bacme immediately much less hospitable. And highly obstructive.

In order to get by this guy, I had to answer four logic riddles he set. He set eight characters in a circle (all whose last name was “Kootchi”, who were to answer questions as clues to the solutions of the riddles he posed to me. I had to answer four riddles correctly in order to be permitted to pass through the portal to the next level of the tower.

The first of these was to find out which of the Kootchis had stolen his favourite lollipop. The culprit, apparently, had not written his or her first name first and last runes in the row in front of the sofas at the North wall. There were eight suspects, but only seven doublets of runes. And I had no idea what letters any of the runes represented. When I had solved it⁸³, he posed the next riddle.

For the second riddle, I had to determine which was the oldest and which was the youngest of the characters at the ‘party’. This one was much simpler to unravel. After questioning each of the characters, each of whom told me another’s age relative to a third, I managed to work it out. Julep-Adeep

⁸³ I stewed over this for the longest time but eventually gave up and looked for help on line. I used to think that I was quite good at logical thinking and reasoning. After all, I had aced my logic in the philosophy course I had to take way back when I was in first year at university, but I clearly have lost a step. My whole approach had been wrong: I started from the seven sets of runes instead of starting from the eight letter couplets from the characters’ first names: Bi, Al, En, Be, Gk, Mi, Tk and Jp. Had I done that, I would (should) have observed that only two names started with a “B”, but that in the rune sets, none started with the same rune.

That would have narrowed it down to the two “B” characters: Beowerne and Bappi. Then I would (should) have noticed that only two names ended with the same letter, an “i”, and that among the rune couplets there were two that ended in the same symbol. That would have eliminated the “B” character whose name ended in the “i”. Leaving only Be - Baerwyne - as the lollipop thief.

was not happy, but nonetheless impressed that I had done so.⁸⁴ It didn't stop him from posing the next riddle, however.

The third riddle was to determine who had 'killed' a puppet called "Mr. Fribbel". Stupid name, I know. To unravel this one, I had to speak to the characters that were left for clues as to who had been involved. So I did. It was another logic problem, so it took a while to solve it. But I did, eventually.⁸⁵

That left only two characters for the final puzzle and I had to determine which was the original author of a panegyric to the Prince. Both had given him different versions of the same statement, except that only the *bona fide* author hidden his own name within the statement. This turned out to be another frustrating pattern and letter matching exercise. So it was not until I tried looking at only the first letter of the different words in each statement that I finally worked it out.⁸⁶

When I took the solution back to Julep-Adeep, he relented, opened the portal to me without further restrictions and then took off for parts unknown. A vacation, he called it.

Edalseye's Tower - After The Wizard

Going through the portal brought me to an empty bedroom that obviously had been Edalseye's. The first thing I saw was an armoire that had nothing in it other than a bunch of old robes. My spellcraft was not sufficient to see if there was anything else about the robes or, indeed, in the armoire, so I left it.⁸⁷ On a long side table, there was a bottle of *Elminster's Oil*, which I put in my pack. Then, a little farther away on the same table, I noticed Edalseye's Journal open on a reading stand.

Only four entries were readable. The first recounted a trip to the planes, which explained how that Julep-Adeep character got to where he was in the tower. The second entry referred to problems with his planar portal mechanism sticking, for which he had got that bottle of oil, and to the potential for trouble if sticking and/or slipping of gears occurred. The third entry underlined his regard for Deladrine, which made his subsequent disfigurement very puzzling. He also mentioned have dropped and broken his mirror flask. The final entry outlined plans for a trip and suggested that he foresaw no problems with his planar portal before his return. Obviously, something did go wrong.

The next thing I saw was a moving, talking chest, the *Chest of the Wise*, whose finely finished surface had been marred by several scorch marks. It was more of a wise guy than wise, although I did get it to tell me that none other than Edalseye had caused the damage. It also referred to the changes that had occurred in Edalseye's personality. I tried opening the chest, but it would not give until I used a bit of the oil I had found on it. Inside, I found a Diamond and a *Ring of Insight*.

Next, I came to a large mirror. It was not reflective, but rather showed an old man out on one of

⁸⁴At first, I thought it a simple algebraic reduction problem and got a different set of equations from each of the characters. I was better at math than I was at logic and thought it would be simple. It wasn't because the equations were circular. I solved it by laying out the relative ages on a linear graph. That showed me that Gerrick was the youngest and Aliel the oldest.

⁸⁵ I had to work out which of the five were lying. The two whose statements were not contradictory were Minedi and Togrunk. The statements by Elwyn, Jesup and Bappi were all contradictory in one way or another. They had to be the ones responsible.

⁸⁶ The hint to the is the word "commencement" in Minedi's composition. In hers, it is possible to find the letters M, I, N, E, D & I at the beginning of words and in the correct order to spell her name. (This takes "I" as a single letter word.) In Togrunk's version, it is not possible to find the letters of his name at the beginning of words and in the correct order in his statement. That left Minedi as the originator.

Solving this riddle opens the portal to the next level for you and also earns 1000XP.

⁸⁷ I understand from seeing other players' experiences that there is nothing to be found, even with very high levels of spellcrafting ability.

the tower's parapets. I wasn't able to communicate with the apparition in any way, so I moved on. Beside the mirror, there was a fountain whose spout had blocked up, but whose pool was covered with the remnants of quicksilver. I tried opening the spout, but was unsuccessful until I used some more of the oil on it. That made the quicksilver flow and I was able to fill up a bottle with it. Remembering the journal entry, I thought of seeing what effect the quicksilver might have on the mirror.

I poured some on to the mirror and its surface changed, as if a door had been opened. I was able at that point to enter the mirror as I would a doorway. As I moved toward it, Skully said it was going to stay behind. When I went through, I was on the top parapet of the tower, face to face with none other than Edalseye himself. But he seemed somehow unreal, his eyes glazed and silvery without expression. When I told him Deladrine had asked me to come and help, he flew into a rage and brought down a lightning strike which killed Deladrine, who was still waiting over on the other side of the chasm. With that, the wizard disappeared through a portal that closed after him, saying that we were to be stuck on the parapet until he decided what to do with us.

Stuck we were, until I heard Skully's voice and told him what had happened. He told me that Edalseye had just passed by him without noticing the skull was there and that we should get after him quickly. I told Skully we were apparently stuck where we were because the portal had disappeared and asked if he knew how to open it. He had seen Edalseye throw a black cloth over the mirror and I knew that had to come off for the portal to open again. I got him to use his teeth to pull off the cloth and that did, indeed, open the portal. Through it, we were back in Edalseye's bedroom.

Looking around quickly, I saw Skully floating beside a new portal that had not been there before. Skully said that the wizard had opened the portal to the basement and I decided to charge in before it closed again. In the basement, we found ourselves in front of what must have been Edalseye's planar gate machine. As I made ready to go into it, Skully, once again, stayed back. Then I thought, "If the skull is staying back, we had better buff up. But good!" So that is what we did with all of the good fighting potions and spells I had available.

Baator

Through the gate and I was glad we had. Arrived in the plane of the Nine Hells, we faced four Kocrachons and a mean looking Devil who appeared to be directing them. The Devil seemed to hold back so we took on the Kocrachons first. I knew we were going to have to battle the Devil at some point, but I didn't want the things hacking at us while we did it. When we had the last of them almost sorted, the Devil waded into the fray. It was a major battle and I believe that if I had not had on Boots of haste and used a haste potion on Raegen, we would have been done for. As it was, it was we who came out on top.

With the Devil dead, I ripped its heart from the corpse.⁸⁸ Then I noticed Edalseye standing, oblivious of Raegen and me, looking imploringly at a floating sphere in the area where the Devil had first stood. I examined the thing closely, but saw only flames and twisted oblong forms. "This can't be good," I thought. So I took my cue from the old man and bashed the thing until it broke into pieces. Then I heard Edalseye shout "The geas is broken. I am free." I then noticed the silvery sheen that had covered his eyes had disappeared. When I asked what had happened, he explained that his planar gate had malfunctioned and taken him to Baator in the Nine Hells and that Abatorru, the fiend which we had just killed had placed a geas on him. That explained where we were and a lot of what had been happening in the tower.

But not everything. Edalseye said we had to get back to the tower urgently, so back we went. In

⁸⁸ Each Kocrachon killed earns 44XP. Abatorru is worth 1200XP.

the tower, he confronted Skully who, apparently, had been responsible for sabotaging the planar gate. Skully explained how he had been taken from torment in the Hells and offered life with the wizard in return for taking along a crystal. It happened that, unbeknownst to Skully, the crystal was a portal and an imp had been sent by Abatorru to sabotage the planar gate in order to bring Edalseye under his power.

Edalseye appeared to forgive Skully his inadvertent betrayal, and decided they would both go off to the Fugue plane to try to rescue Deladrine and the others whom he had killed while under the geas. He then thanked me again and teleported us to where Deladrine had set up the first portal on the other side of the chasm.⁸⁹

We then headed back to the Stronghold in Liam's Hold. It was high time that we got ourselves back to the principal task before us, finding out what was happening in the Trollbark Forest.

3. Trollbark Forest

It took quite a while to reach the forest, as we had first to traverse not only Liam's Hold, but also the Wild Pastures to get there. As we wandered about, getting the lay of the land, we ran into several groups of trolls. Those things were hard to kill. We had to reduce each to death three times before they would stay dead. I knew that I should have bought some lightning Strike or other fire spell scrolls.

Troll Mound

Eventually, we came to a waterfall in the far South of the forest. Behind the cascading water, there was a large cave entrance. That led to a Troll underground mound. There were several more hard to kill trolls in there, including a powerful Chieftain, who scared Raegen out of her wits for a while. When we had downed all of them for good, I looked around the mound carefully.⁹⁰

In a pile of dung, I held my nose and delved because I thought I had spotted something shiny under the slime. It was a *Ring of Resistance*+1 which I gave to Aegen to improve her kit. Under a couple of piles of stones there was a bit of low value loot. In two piles of bones, I found a *Horse Hair Helm*, *Hunter's Leather* armour, a *Dwarven Waraxe* and a *Large Shield*.

Up where we met the Chieftain, there was a large rock which looked as if it had fallen from the ceiling and squashed a troll or two. I managed, just, to move the boulder and the chest in which the trolls had stashed their (slightly) more valuable loot was revealed behind it. In the chest, I found a *Wand of Missiles*, a *Dagger*+1, a *Ring of Cyan*, and a few other pieces of minor loot.

Orc Lair

With the trolls all sorted, or so it seemed, we continued our exploration of the forest. Over to the Southeast, we surprised three Tanarruk outside a cave entrance and felled them before they could raise any alarm. Then we went inside and found almost a dozen Orcs along with their Shaman. After downing all of them, I found a couple of healing kits, and some very minor loot. There was also a map of the Sword Coast with a lot of notations and crude illustrations on it.

With nothing else to see where we were, we went through an opening that took us to a lower level of the lair. There, a cut scene showed the better part of a dozen Tanarruk Generals before a great demon

⁸⁹ This ends the sub quest and awards another 1750XP.

⁹⁰ The Trolls are a hard fight, but worth only 9XP each. The Troll Chieftain is worth 42XP.

that they called Gorgomoz. That name recalled to me the book I had read back in the library of the Sorcerer's Encapsulate. I thought, "This guy is bad news." The generals were telling the demon that everything was in place for a takeover of Daggerford. Then, for some apparent failure to meet standards of performance, the demon torched one of the generals "pour encourager les autres". Then he noticed me, threw of some threatening words and disappeared, siccing his generals on us.

When we had finished dealing with them, I rifled their remains and found a half dozen potions of *Bull Strength*, but not much more. On a speared corpse in one corner, there were a *Sling+2*, *Boots of Striding+2*, a *Chain Shirt+1* and some other small stuff. Finally, near ther remains of a fire was a charred note to Gorgomoz from someone named Fzoul. It referred to an alliance between the big G's armies of Dragonspear and the raiders of the Black Network and certain victory in Daggerford. The only other thing of note was a wooden barrel which was leaking oil.⁹¹

This was new intelligence and I thought it important to get it back to Astriel without further delay. So, it was back to Liam's Hold post haste. There I related all I had found to Astriel and we agreed it put a lot of the picture together. She wanted to try to discover where Gorgomoz's headquarters and the concentration of his armies were before we made our next move.

In the meantime, she told me that a fellow named Teygan had been looking for me but would not say what it was about. She suggest that I hang about the village until he rturned to find me. I was ready for a drink and headed out to the Holfast Inn for one or two. If Evani was still there, Imight even get to catch her act again.

4. The Brush of Barbs (2)

I did not get far before Teygan ran up and told me a bit about himself and recent happenings and the dangers to Daggerford. He asked me to go the Brush of Barbs and meet him there. I agreed, curious about this guy but also satisfied with my initial sense of him, especially when he swore he was pledged to fight the Zhentarim. He was, at the very least, on the right side.

Bandits, Griffons & the Iron Throne

Arrived in the Brush of Barbs, I found the entrance to Teygan's base of operations easily, having spotted the cave entrance on my first recce of the area (when helping the birds, er, Druids). Inside, Teygan greeted me and introduced me to two colleagues, Miyanda and Bewen. It soon became clear they were Harpers, which set me more at ease with them. He began by explaining that the three of them had been the sole defence of Daggerford against the Zhentarim menace.

He explained that the Zhentarim had been orchestrating the raiding of the carvans along the Trade Way, not only for their own profit but also to demonstrate how essential they, in the gusie of the Griffons, were beneficial to Daggerford and its population. Teygan then explained his plan to move from passive to offensive action and take the fight to the Zhentarim by disrupting their attacks on the caravans heading into Daggerford.

He said the current Zhentarim base was in the Lonely Barrens and asked that I track it down while he looked into the carvans they were taking up the Trade Way. Back up in the Lonely Barrens, it did not take us long to locate the bandit camp and deal. There were both bandits and Griffons together, which seem ed to confirm the connection between the two. After dealing with them, we returned to

⁹¹ The Tanarruk Generals are worth 8XP each, the Tanarruk Witch Doctor 55XP. I could not do anything with the leaking oil barrel. I didn't have a torch to set it on fire, but that might have done something.

Teygan's hide to report what we had discovered.

On entering, we seem to have surprised something strange going on when we interrupted a cut scene in when Teygan was upbraiding three hirelings for not finding a "her" in a tower somewhere. When he noticed us, he turned syrupy sweet, which made the hairs on the back of my head tingle. But I decided to play it straight for the moment. So I told him about the bandit camp and the apparent connection with the Griffons. He was pleased at that, but feared there were more difficult tasks ahead.⁹²

His efforts had discovered that a Zhenatrim caravan was going to Daggerford under the flag of the Iron Throne and that the caravan would be carrying secret documents relating to the broader conspiracy that was afoot. He suspected they were further orders and adjustments to the attack plans. The next task was to intercept the caravan and secure the documents. He indicated it was currently in Gillian's Hill awaiting contact with its bandit intermediaries. My job was to find it and get the documents, if possible by stealth but, in any case, by whatever means necessary.

It was at this point that I noticed a raven hovering about in the hide. When I went over to it, I discovered it was a talking, although a rather irascible, bird. When I asked Teygan about it, he would only say that the raven ("George") was bound to serve him for a while. I didn't much like that but had little choice but to let it pass for the moment. And we left for Gillian's Hill.

We found the caravan easily enough and, as Teygan had suspected, it was heavily guarded. I managed to infiltrate all the way to the door of the main tent before I was spotted. We had to kill all of the Zhents standing guard before we could try to enter. Inside were a Mean-looking Guard Dog, a hell Hound and an Iron Throne Witch Doctor. With them all down, I found a coded communiqué inside an attaché case. It was clearly what Teygan had wanted me to find and bring back. On the way back, on the remains of the iron Throne guards, I found several bits and pieces of loot.

Back at the hide, Teygan, having broken the Iron Throne's code, was able to read the document.⁹³ He revealed that the location for the Zhentarim operation was Illefarn. He went on to say that he had learned that a group of Zhentarim was on its way to Daggerford to bring the invasion plans to an earlier conclusion and that it was essential to head them off. I wondered whether I should not head directly to Illefarn, but said the assassins were the number one priority.

Teygan's Treachery

Teygan then told me the Zhentarim were in the largest suite in the Holdfast Inn in Liam's Hold and cautioned that they were extremely dangerous. He suggested that I not try to speak to them, but rather just kill them without warning or compunction. That struck me as rather odd, coming from a Harper and again, the hairs on my neck started to rise. I told him that I would go and check these assassins out and deal with them as necessary.

We got to the inn and found out in which room the adventurers/Zhentarim agents were staying. I heard talking behind the door and came to a quick conclusion. I was not convinced that Teygan was really on the up and up. So instead of just breaking down the door and attacking, I knocked. I was not totally surprised when the door opened and there was not a sudden confrontation. Instead, a woman opened the door, spoke quite civilly and introduced herself as Drelia Jadystacia.

⁹² This is the *Bandits Beware* sub quest. Reporting to Teygan at this time earns 1000XP.

⁹³ This is the sub quest *Caravans of Corruption*. Bringing the *coded communiqué* to Teygan earns another 1000XP. The iron Throne Guards, Witch Doctor and the canines were worth 8XP each.

I voiced my suspicion that they were Zhentarim and she denied it vigorously. As proof, she opened her cloak and brought out a crescent moon and harp pin, something only a true Harper would carry. “If they were Harpers,” I asked. “Then who is Teygan?” She claimed never to have heard of another Harper named Teygan. And when I mentioned that we had been sent to kill them, she replied that he could conceivably be a rogue Harper, but that the fact he had sent us to kill her and the others, something no true Harper would ever do, proved that he was an impostor. That had the ring of truth, especially when I remembered the scene I had witnessed after getting back from the bandit camp and that very curious raven “George”.

When I asked what their mission was, she was reluctant but decided to trust us and told me that it was to investigate the disappearance of the Lady Bronwyn of Daggerford and they were on their way there to gather more information to help in their search, in the hope that she was still alive. That also had the ring of truth. When I said that I had to return to Teygan’s Hide and confront him, she suggested that she and her companions come with me. I agreed: If there was going to be a fight, having others beside you is a good idea.

When we got to the Hide, Teygan and the others had disappeared and the place appeared totally deserted. Except, that is, for a quite egregiously insulting note from Teygan in which he revealed himself as a Zhent, Semimmon, how he had been using me and the main purpose of his machinations (to find his lover, one Ashemmi). Drelia explained a lot of the background and the reasons for what he had done. It boiled down to a rivalry between Semimmon and followers of Cyric and another Zhent, Fzoul and the followers of Bane, both equally evil and unappetizing bunches. I just shook my head and thought “Zhent politics! They are as bad as Democrats and Republicans.” Then she described him as “a mage of great power, the most cunning and intelligent villain in Faerun”.

Drelai said that her group’s principal responsibility was to chase down Semimmon and deal with him. She left, expressing the utmost confidence in my abilities to protect and to keep Daggerford from disaster.⁹⁴

Fernigold the Younger

Leaving the hide, I decided that I might as well see if there was anything else of interest in the Brush of Barbs. Each of my previous entries had been hectic, pursuing the agendas of others with little time for a sideways glance. So I went and checked out the Northwest quadrant, which I had not yet explored. Along the North edge of the chasm, I found a rope tied to a post and hanging down. So I took it and ended up on the sandy floor of the chasm. In front of me was an ancient throne and beside it an ancient obelisk.

I examined the throne carefully, but found nothing on it and nothing evidently special about it. Then I looked at the obelisk and tried to read the runes on it. I was successful and they read “Here lies the great Telarthir, emperor of the Ninth Dynasty of Lords.” The name Telarthir reminded me of my promise to that old guy I had met way back when on the Daggerford docks. It was the treasure of Telarthir that old Fernigold’s son had gone off to find with the forged map he had got from his ‘friends’. I still had that map in my pack and took it out. Looking at it closely for the first time and then looking around me, I could recognize all the points of reference on it. The goofs who had given the map to the young Fernigold may have thought it forged, but it was clearly the genuine article.

⁹⁴ This is the sub quest *Showdown at the Holdfast Inn*. When Drelia and the other go off after Semimmon, you earn 3750XP. The alternative scenario, when you go back to confront Teygan alone, produces exactly the same information and reward. The alternate has the additional step of you taking Semimmon’s letter back to Drelia and the other Harpers back at the Holdfast inn.

Along the bottom of the map there read the inscription “Temotimoth”. That made no sense so I went back to the obelisk. I touched it and nothing happened, so I said the word “Temotimoth” before it and a soft breeze blew, bringing a whisper of words. The words said to put three things on the ancient throne. The first was “The bone of the Long dead”. I had picked up a big bone while wandering and still had it packed away. The second was “The heart of the recently deceased”. I should have kept the heart of the demon I had killed back at Edalseye’s tower, but it was long gone. The last was “The fruit of what shall live”. That was more promising, at least. Up at the top of the chuff side, I had seen several trees with berries of sorts, so I clambered back up the rope to get some of them and see what I might find for a heart.

Up at the top, I picked up a bunch of the berries easily enough. While I was doing that, I spotted a dead bager in a corner of a little clearing in the woods. That gave me the heart I needed, and without having to kill anything to get it! Back down the rope, I went back to the throne and put on it the heart, a berry and the bone. And nothing happened. Undaunted, I went back to the obelisk and touched it. Before I knew it, we were surrounded by a green mist from the obelisk and transported inside what had to be the Tomb of Telarthir.

The first thing I saw was a smallish dead body, whose face was frozen in a mask of horror. The corpse matched the description given me by the old man, so I understood that the boy had achieved his objective and seemed to have died a bad death. The corpse was had become almost mummified in the dryness of the tomb and was small enough that I put it in one of my magic bags to return to the father. Then I looked around farther in the tomb.

There were five sarcophagi around the walls of the chamber and a big tomb in the centre. I figured that if young Fernigold had died of fright, then there must be something pretty awful in here. That did not stop us, however, from rifling the sarcophagi. Trying that would have been a bad mistake for someone weaker and unarmed, which we were not. As soon as I opened the first coffin, Skeleton warriors and a Warrior Mummy emerged from all of their resting places and converged on us. A good thing it was that we were neither unarmed nor weak. We sorted the monsters with relative ease, but it was clear the young man had had no chance of surviving.

Finally able to go through the sarcophagi at our leisure unhindered, I found potions of *Bless*, *Heal*, a *Scarab of Protection*+1, copper, silver and gold rings, a *Ring of Crimson*, a *Spear*+1, a *Studded Leather Armour*+1, a *Full Plate Armour*+1, a *Battleaxe*+1, a *Short Sword*+2. In the centre sarcophagus was a real prize, a *Rod of the Ghost*.⁹⁵ With nothing else to do profitably in the tomb, we went back to where we had arrived and found another obelisk, the same as the one outside. I touched it and we were transported once again to back in front of the throne. Back up the rope we returned to Liam’s Hold.

Redecoration

As we approached the stronghold, I saw Yani Pavani and she said with a flourish that she had found that special item for me. Dramatically, she told me to go inside and check it out for myself.⁹⁶ When I went inside, I saw a brand new workbench, custom designed for a Rogue. It was useful for identifying items (which I really didn’t need, having a high lore coefficient), poisoning weapons (which I considered cheating, not to mention evil) and crafting traps (for which I had little use). So much for

⁹⁵ The Mummy Warrior is worth 55XP, the Skeleton Warriors 8XP each. While the small loot in the sarcophagi is virtually always identical, the higher value stuff, for example, the *Rod of the Ghost* and the *Studded Leather Armour*+1 may only appear at random. Other players have reported receiving quite different high value items, or none at all.

⁹⁶ This ends the sub quest *Decorator’s Dilemma* and earns 465XP. The “special item” appears to be different depending on what you earlier told Yani you wanted and on your character class. The character class that determines the specific item you receive is the class in which you began the game, not whatever class may have changed to before you engage the decorator. I had been a paladin for eight levellings up, but my item was a Rogue Bench because I started as a rogue.

interior decorators: I never really had any use for them anyway.

Astriel was still in the stronghold, so I briefed her on the whole affair with Teygan. On learning that Illefarn was the Zhenatarim hidden base, she said that was where we would find all answers. The problem was that she had no idea where the legendary elven kingdom of Illefarn was. She asked me to return to Daggerford to see if anyone there could help. She suggested that Frederick was trustworthy and, if he did not know himself, might be able to direct me to someone else who knew the location of Illefarn. She, herself, had to return to Waterdeep to report directly to her superiors. She did, however, say that if she learned anything that would help Talarenne, she would get word to us.⁹⁷

Part 5 - Illefarn & Fate

1. Daggerford

So, without further adieu, we decamped the Stronghold and made our way back to Daggerford. There, I decided the first thing to do was to go see old Fernigold and give him the bad news about his son. It was very hard for him, but it has to be said that he took it like a man. He was grateful not only for the closure, but also because I had taken the trouble to bring his son's corpse back so he could bury it properly. It was not a happy ending, but it was at least satisfactory.⁹⁸

Then I went to find Captain Frederick. In his office, I told him about the connection I had discovered between the Griffons, the bandits and the Zhentarim. At first, he was incredulous, but I was able to persuade him of the truth of the matter.⁹⁹ When I asked him about Illefarn, he confessed only marginal knowledge, but told me to go speak to Derval. Which I did. I had tried talking to him about Illefarn when I had first read about it in the Sorceller's Encapsulate but he refused to speak about it at all.

This time, however, with a little persistence and help from his daughter Veiti, I was able to persuade him that something really bad was afoot. Then he was willing to open up, explaining that Illefarn had been a great Dwarf realm a long time ago but had been left behind as people moved on over the years. Then he said that some of his family had been interested in rebuilding the place into the Great Dwarven Deep. His brother Korin was who had gone off to find the place, and another was his daughter who had wanted to go with him. (Which explains why she was so interested when I had asked about it earlier and why Derval had shut her down so abruptly then.)

Anew development, however, was that his brother's regular visits back had stopped recently and he had gone silent. He had become worried that something bad had happened. When I said I would go off in search, he insisted that Veiti also go along. That was a sea change from his previous attitude, but I suspected that he didn't want a non-dwarf going into dwarven lands without a keeper. Then he told me that to get there, I had to find a bargewoman named Magdaren, down at the docks. With that, Veiti rushed off and we followed.

2. Illefarn

In the Docklands, we found Veiti and Magdaren together, ready to go. Once I confirmed we were

⁹⁷ Thus ended the main quest for the first part of the game (*Astriel Takes Flight*), with an award of 4685XP.

⁹⁸ Thus ended the *Fernigold the Younger* sub quest. Fernigold gave me 50GP for expenses in gratitude and I earned 500XP for completing the quest. I am not sure, but the XP and GP rewards may be less for not bringing back the son's body.

⁹⁹ Successfully persuading Frederick of the connection between the Griffons and the Zhentarim earns 750XP

good to go, we went. Literally transported to a place Magdalen called the Laughing Hollows. She went offshore, fishing and told us the entrance to Illefarn was somewhere atop the cliffs. The place may have been called “laughing”, but there was not much to laugh at: Lots of fog and mist and high cliffs everywhere. Eventually, though, I found a steep pathway that took us to the top of the cliffs. Up top, the fog and mist had dispelled, but as Raegen observed, the place seemed eerily empty.

No Laughing Matter

It was, indeed, a forlorn and empty place. We explored the whole cliff area and found nothing except an unremarkable set of what appeared to be temple ruins. Heading back to the top of the path by which we arrived, however, we found another steep path downward. Beside it there was an old stone marker, on which was written in runes:

”Begone, traveller!
 “This is the ancient dwarven hold of Illefarn.
 “None but dwarves are welcome in these halls.”

Well, that seemed clear enough: Dwarves at their welcoming best.

But it was not enough to deter the determined. The marker, while quite finely done, was very old and had been badly damaged by axe blows, not to mention smeared with crude pictures drawn in a thick black grease. That clearly suggested the warning was somewhat defunct. Besides, even if there were still dwarves to back it up, we now had a *bona fide* dwarf, Veiti, in our company.¹⁰⁰ So, down the path we went. Several steps down, we came to a door warded against entry by any but dwarves. Here, Veiti began to prove her worth to our company, whispering a few dwarven words and getting it to open for us.

Welcoming Halls

Once through the door, Veiti said a few words of welcome but then looked quite disconcerted. Turning around, we saw that the entrance appeared to have been sealed. “There is some dark magic here” she said, “Korin or someone should have been here to welcome us.” I agreed and we proceeded from that point very carefully.

Inside, we spotted several dwarf bodies. In a short hallway on our left, we found scattered ledge pages recording shipments of weapons and armaments and that a dwarf named Magdalen had transported these to Daggerford. Veiti quite proudly offered that Ironcater weapons were renowned on the Sword Coast and that shipments would be not at all unusual. Given the number of dead dwarves nearby, I thought it might not be that simple or straightforward.

Across the entryway was another short hallway, perhaps a guard station, in which there were more dwarf corpses. In there, I found a journal kept by one of the guards. He had, it seemed, seen things in the night that should have been very suspicious and set the place to high alert. Or, rather, should have done so to a less simple mind. After the last of these scribbles, the journal was blank.

Back in the entry passage, we began making our way in and across a bridge when we heard a couple of voices complaining about the ‘dwarf cleanup detail’ to which they had been assigned. That didn’t sound like good news, because it suggested that any fight there had been was now well over. As we moved closer, we saw they were Zhents and quickly dealt with them to avoid raising any alarm. On one of the remains was a *Stone Axe* and on the other a healing potion. From the sheer number of dead

¹⁰⁰ Veiti becomes a henchman(?) on arrival at the Laughing Hollows.

dwarves and the dialogue of the two Zhentarim we had killed, it was evident at that point that the Zhetarim had taken over Illefarn and Veiti swore a blood oath against every last Zhent in the place.

Ahead of us there were two doorways. The one on our right appeared open while the one on the left was blocked by a mass of boulders. Over by the latter, I noticed there was a rope on the ground in the alcove and picked it up. On the other side of the doors, there was another alcove that, farther in, led to the deep on one side of the bridge. I saw a post there, to which I attached the rope and descended. At bottom, there was a kind of tomb area, with several piles of bones around it. Raegen did not like the place at all and urged us out. I took a quick look around and found a *Goladren's Horn* in the bones that must have been Goladren himself. It was a useful bit of kit to have in a fight, so I put it in a quickslot, ready for use.

The Great Hall

We climbed back up the rope and went over and to the doorway that was open. That brought us into a Great Hall with several doors leading off it (or on to it, depending your perspective). There were several Zhent Guards patrolling, who we dispatched with little effort. In the centre of the hall was a stepped depression, a sort of amphitheatre, the floor covered with water covering. Wading into it, I could see a fissure but couldn't see much. So I left it as something for further investigation later.

Slaves

Then I heard a voice in a stairwell in the Northern part of the hall. We went over to check it out and there was a Zhent Slavemaster overseeing a group of slaves, ordering them to dig faster and deeper. We dealt with him quickly and going through his remains, I found a *Ring of Resistance*+1 and a nondescript *Stone Axe*. Then we spoke to the slaves. They turned out to be farmers from around Daggerford who had been abducted and whom we had been too late to save back on the Sword Coast. They said there were many more slaves working in the mines below, as well. They told us the Zhents had had them searching for an artifact, some kind of crown.

Veiti's ears pricked up at that. After telling me a bit about Illefarn and her family, she quickly identified what the Zhents sought as the *Crown of Illefarn*. It had been worn by the Dwarven kings of Illefarn but apparently had gone missing a long time in the past. Veiti volunteered that her uncle Korin had told the dwarves that had accompanied him to keep their eyes out for it. But she could not be drawn on anything else about it. Clearly, both Zhents and Dwarves thought there was something special about the crown. We left the slaves to rest, fairly confident that they would not be troubled further by any Zhent guards. On the level we were at, at least.

We looked all around the Great Hall just to make sure. That confirmed were no more guards around at the moment. We found a total of three doors: One in the Southwest corner; Another in the Northwest corner; and a final one in the middle of the East wall. The last one had outside it several Dwarf statues in guard positions, albeit with empty hands. When I listened at the door, I heard many loud inebriated voices inside. It was, Veiti said, the Feast Hall. I was about to charge in to attack them when Veiti stopped me. There would be too many for us to handle, even drunk as they sounded, she counselled. The she suggested there was a better way to deal with them.

He father had, she said, told her about four deadly traps she could trigger from outside the door. The key to doing that, however, was in the axes that each statue was supposed to have in its hands. She cursed the Zhents for taking from each statue its axe, probably because the stone weapon had been studded with jewels. Luckily, I had already found two of the *Stone Axes*. That meant we had two more to find. So we left the statues for the moment and went to check the doors we had not yet opened. We had found two *Stone Axes* relatively easily, so I was hopeful we might find the others nearby.

There was nothing else in the Great Hall, so we went back to the door in the Southeast corner. Inside, we found ourselves on the approach to a narrow bridge, the other side of which we saw three Zhents who were trying to open a door in front of them. We tried creeping up quietly across the bridge to where they were in order to get the drop on them, but they spotted us and attacked. One of the Zhents was a Wizard and the other two were halfling fighters (and sisters). Before we knew it, they were upon us. We dealt with the two fighters fairly quickly, but the Wizard was another matter. He kept disappearing and regenerating, so by the time we got him down, we were all in pretty rough shape. We tried to rest up but another couple of guards came out of corners and we had to deal with them before, finally, being able to rest and recuperate fully.

On the body of the Wizard, I found a *Wand of Fire*, an *Amulet of Fire Resistance*, a *Black Robe of the Archmagi*, a gold ring and several spell scrolls. On one of the two sister Zhents, I found another *Stone Axe*. On the other sister, there were a few useful potions and scrolls. We looked around after rifling the corpses and saw a crystal in the middle of six mirror mountings. I couldn't make head nor tail of them, but then Veiti said that, once mirrors were placed in the mounts and properly aligned, the reflected beam from the crystal would open those doors to the Hall of Wonder, over which the Drow had been puzzling. She said her uncle Korin had found five of the six mirrors and had hidden them somewhere in his office near the Feast Hall, but that he had not found the sixth mirror needed to open the doors. Nor had she heard in her lifetime of the doors ever having been opened.

There was only one other place to look, that last door. It opened on to a hallway that in turn opened on to a larger chamber. When we entered, we interrupted a dwarf and two Zhents looking for something or someone they thought was inside the walls. Then Veiti recognized the dwarf as her aunt, Brattal, realized she was conspiring with the Zhentarim and confronted her before I could do or say anything. And, before we knew it, we were in a battle royale with the three of the blacquards. After we had put them down, I found on Brattal's body another *Stone Axe*, a *Belt of Hill Giant Strength*, a potion of *Bull's Strength* and some GP. I gave the belt to Veiti to improve her kit as I had already given Raegen Griswald's belt.

Looking around the chamber, I saw it used to be a major workshop: Five alcoves had cold smelters in them and in barrels around the room there were still weapon and armour parts. Then I noticed a crack in the North wall from which there came a small flickering light. Listening more closely at the crack, I heard the sound of a hammer striking an anvil. Veiti identified it as the sound from a legend called "The Ghost Smith", a legendary spirit of Illefarn. She said most of the Ironeaters had traditionally left it alone and considered it good luck to have heard it. I looked more closely inside the crack and found a lever, which I pulled. Then a door appeared before us.

Inside, we found the Ghost Smith. He told me a long story of how he, the best of all the Dwarven smiths, had long ago been tasked by their king with creating an axe of unparalleled power. He said had begun work in this secret forge, but had lost the stone of great power, *Moraden's Stone*, which the king had given him to make the heart of the axe. When the Drow overran Illefarn in the past, he had been overlooked in his secret forge. There, as penance for having lost the stone, he had been condemned to spend eternity forging and reforging weapons and armour inside the walls. He asked me to find the stone which, he hoped, might then allow him to rest in peace at last. He offered to enhance my kit if I were to do so. I agreed, as much out of pity as for his promise.

The Feast Hall

With the additional two *Stone Axes*, we went back to the Feast hall door. After putting the axes in the hands of the remaining statues, Veiti was able to trigger the traps in the hall. It was a good thing she did, too. When we went in, there were still several Zhentarim Mages, Clerics and Fighters who were able to do us considerable damage before we prevailed. One of them had been Skron, the Zhent Lieutenant in

charge. Among the remains, we found a pair of *Boots of Hardiness*+1, a *Longsword*+2, a *Ring of Protection*+3, a *Scout's Sidearm* crossbow, a *Large Shield*+1, several minor spell scrolls and a few copper rings. In a couple of locked and booby trapped chests, there were several semi-precious gems and Skron's log book which recorded the caravans intercepted and provided further hard evidence of the Griffons involvement, including specifically, their Captain Dratharion.¹⁰¹

Off the South wall of the Feast Hall a door led to what had once been Korin's office. It had been well and truly ransacked: Nothing was to be found there. Then I noticed an undisturbed pile of sacks of gravel in a corner of the office's store cupboard. Inside the sacks, I found five of those mirrors Veiti had said Korin had hidden away. "All I had to do," I thought, "Was find the other."

At the North end of the Feast Hall there was a passage that led to a door that went down a level. I decided to leave it for the moment and go back to try to check out that fissure. Back at it, I saw the water had receded and there was only a small pool with water bubbling up from it. There were a few green leaves floating on the surface of the water. I was going to see if I could make my way down through the fissure when Veiti stopped me, saying the pool was forbidden by Iron eater elders. She couldn't give me a good reason for that, however. So I told her she could stay where she was, but I was going down it.

The Elven Garden

When I went down into it, I passed through the thin layer of water and entered a green garden and what appeared to have been some kind of temple or shrine. In an abandoned leather sack, I found a *Tower Shield*+3, a *Cloak of Elvenkind*, a set of *Elven Chainmail*, a *Glittering Necklace* and an Emerald. Not far from the sack was a beautiful vase made of mithral, with exquisitely carved leaves on it and encrusted with emeralds. An inscription in elven runes on it read:

"In friendship we bestow this gift to you.
"With our blessings shall you delve and forge.
"May the dwarven and elven peoples of Illefarn
"Live together in Harmony"

It indicated clearly enough that at one time the elves and dwarves had not been at odds. Something evidently had happened a long time ago to change at. Neither race had had any time for the other in my experience.

I thought of taking the vase, but when I tried it would not budge. I got a sense that, however it had been affixed there, the installation was permanent and probably magical. I was not going to try to mess with elven magic. Looking around, I found another leather bag. In it was the sixth mirror needed for working the entry to the Hall of Wonder. And the *Moradin's Stone* that the Ghost Smith had asked me to find.

There was nothing else to be found down there, pleasant and peaceful as it was. I was pleased with myself for ignoring Veiti's warning and made my way back up through the fissure.

Back up in the Great Hall, I told Veiti what we had found, which elicited just a harrumph. I suggested to her that she might want to do a bit of work to figure out what had really happened to estrange the elves and dwarves. But that, I could tell, fell on deaf ears. I could see from the gleam in her eyes, though, that she was glad to see the sixth mirror in my bag.

¹⁰¹ The Zhent guards and other ordinary fighters earn 6 or 7Xp each. The Wizard before the door of the Hall of

The Ghost Smith

I decided we should give the Ghost Smith his good news first, and led the way back to his workshop. He was mightily pleased and told me to put my choice of item in his chest so he could work on it for me. I put in my Blade of Perdeus. The smith went to work at his anvil and fire and after a while returned the sword to the chest. When I picked it up from there, I noticed it was no longer my old weapon, it had all of the attributes that the old one had had, but now it was keen and had another level of damage enhancement on it. And, in elven (!) runes, it bore the name of Moradin.¹⁰² I thanked him, but before I finished he had gone back to his anvil and ignored us.

The Hall of Wonder

Next we went back to the antechamber of the Hall of Wonder. There, I positioned the six mirrors in the six stands. I touched the crystal and a beam shot out to the mirror closest to the crystal and then went out after a few seconds. That didn't accomplish anything, but I then noticed that the pedestal on which the mirror stood could be rotated by increments and redirect the beam that hit it. Not long after that, it dawned on me that I had to make the beam from the crystal focus on the doors in order to open them. And, I had to do it using all six mirrors, or else it would not work. After a bit of trial and error, I did get the beam to bounce off every mirror and finally hit the doors to the Hall.¹⁰³

Inside the Hall of Wonder was not very wondrous. In fact, it was downright depressing: Decrepit, dusty, with cobwebs everywhere, and cracks in the walls and the floor. Not to mention spiders crawling from crack to fissure as if on a mission. Downright creepy. There were six pedestals in the chamber and, by blowing away the dust and debris on each found a variety of precious stones, including a *Blue Light Gem* and a *Pink Ioun Stone*. On the West wall of the chamber was a door behind an incredible mass of cobwebs, which could not be opened.

On the West wall, there was a crude passage from when small spiders kept emerging at short intervals. That passage led us, eventually into another dark chamber, in which I could just make out in the murk a humongous big spider. It had to be the Hive Mother who was spawning all those little spiders we had seen earlier. It was certainly the mother of all spiders....

Anyhow, we buffed up with lots of *Bull's Strength*, *Aid*, *Bless* and other potions enough to make us invincible, I thought. As it was, our maximum buffing was just barely enough. I narrowly escaped being cut down, Raegen was new death and only Veiti came out unscathed. Still, we prevailed.¹⁰⁴ And still on our feet, we began rifling the cocoons in the chamber. In the first, I found a pair of *Boots of Speed*, some *Fire Arrows*, and *Thieve's Tools*+3. In the next cocoon, there was a *Pot Helmet* and a *Chain Shirt*. In a third was a *Warhammer*+3, a gold ring and a piece of Fluorspar. In the last was a healing potion, a spell scroll, a silver necklace, a *Shield* and a *Ring of Clear Thought*+3.

I could see the door that should have opened to the first chamber, but it too was covered with cobwebs and there was no way to use it. With nothing else of importance in the chamber, we went back through the crack in the wall, followed the passage and came out into the first one again. Passing by the fissure in the centre of the room, I caught a glint of something or the other. The hole was also rife with scuttling little spiders. But I steeled myself and using my best quick snatch and grab skills, put my hand

¹⁰² This ends the sub quest *Secret Forge of Illefarn*. In addition to the weapon enhancements, it earns 600XP.

¹⁰³ This is *The Hall of Wonder* sub quest. Solving the puzzle earns 1500XP and access to the hall. If you cannot work it out, the route the beam has to take is shown in the spoiler appendix.

¹⁰⁴ The Hive Mother Spider is worth 1000XP, the others in the chamber only 7XP each.

in grasped whatever it was and pulled it out before any of the little buggers could do anything other than try, too late, to jump at me. Looking at what I had got, it turned out to be a *Glory Fist* light hammer, which I gave to Veiti to improve her kit.

Then, as the saying goes, it was time to blow that pop stand, and we made our way to that door off the Feast Hall that led downward. Well, we had to do that to get to the bottom of whatever this was we were in.

The Mines

When we descended into the mines, we saw many slaves, human, and dwarven. Those who were not dead were all in pretty bad shape, although a few thought they could fight if Korin were able to lead them again. Unfortunately, Korin had been taken and was prisoner in the Zhent headquarters, farther in the mines. We went through the mine shafts, killing every Zhent we came across and giving the slaves respite in our wake. Eventually, we came into a chamber where Dratharion was in counsel with many of his Zhentarim followers. It didn't take long before he saw me and decided to try to finish us off once and for all.

Vain hope on his part. On his corpse, I found his *Key*, a *Ring of Magic Defence* and an *Orb of Devil Containment*. After resting and recuperating, I saw a dwarf that looked like Derval behind a stockade. From him, I learned about how the Zhentarim had managed to get control of Illefarn and that they were looking for the Helm in order to use its powers in their plot to take over Daggerford. He also told us that both Duke Greatshot and Lady Bronwyn in a nearby chamber and had been torturing them.

I found them (the key from Dratharion's body was helpful) and, although in very bad shape, related what had happened to them. The Duke said that Dragonspear Castle had fallen into evil and that an army had had been marched into the Daggerford region. Daggerford, he said, was in danger of falling, notwithstanding its fortifications, because of a secret tunnel from the mines to under Daggerford Castle. The Zhents had developed a plan in which they sent a force of Orcs through it and then would follow and rescue the town from the Orcs. Then, with Bugo, they would be seen to be legitimate rulers.

I was about to charge off to deal with the orcs when the Duke stopped me, saying that the passage had been blocked after the Orcs had left but that there was another way to get up to the Castle. I was turning to leave when he stopped me again and proceeded to tell me about Gorgomoz who, he advised, was also on the loose and looking to take revenge on Daggerford. The Duke said that the Zhentarim had planned to use that *Orb of Devil Containment* I had found on Dratharion to deal with the Fiend. When I told him I held the orb, he was mightily relieved and showed me how to use it correctly.

Then, recalling the urgency of action, Lady Bronwyn added that the fastest way to get to the Castle and head off the Orcs was to use a portal that the Zhents had set up in their altar in the outer chamber. She had learned the secret passwords necessary to make it function by carefully listening to their guards. Greatshot and Bronwyn were not capable of moving very fast or very far so I told them I would send back help if successful up top. Lady Bronwyn gave me her ring so I could prove my bona fides if necessary with the town. Then I went after the Orcs.

Back out in the chamber where I had dealt with Dratharion, I found the altar and set up the portal. As I moved to enter it, Veiti stopped me, saying she would not return to Daggerford. She intended to stay and help Korin and the Duke and Lady Bronwyn and wished me well up top. With that, I entered the portal. At least Raegen remained at my side.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ This ends the sub quest *Duke Greatshot Lives* and earns 500XP.

3. Daggerford Once Again

We arrived back in the Castle cellar and I took the opportunity to get Raegen healed back up to full strength.

The Castle

Then, I saw a trail of muddy tracks and we followed them. As we moved to the stairway up, we ran into a few Tanarukk who didn't put up much of a fight. Up on the main floor, there were a lot more dead bodies and several more Tanarukk, who we handled easily enough. We cleared the whole area, picking up a few potions of Bull's Strength, some GP, assorted gems and some other small loot. The one thing that bothered me was that, in the centre of the floor was a locked door which I was just unable to open. But I didn't have much choice: We had to get the rest of the invaders sorted. I put it in the back of my mind to come back later if I had the chance.

De-Orcing Daggerford

We went out the front door to the Castle and found Frederick and Astriel there, with a militia force, surprised to see us. I told them we had cleared the castle and about the Duke and Lady Bronwyn and about the impending main orc attack. They reported that at least the Griffons had all been arrested on orders from the Lords of Waterdeep after Astriel had established their perfidy. Frederick said there were still many Orcs marauding in the town and asked me to help in clearing them before they were able to do whatever it was they were there to do. I was about to head off when Astriel took me aside and asked me to see her after we had dealt with the immediate crisis. She had to ready the guard so could not take any time at the moment, but intimated she had news of how it might be possible to help Talarenne.

I went off in one direction and the others went off on theirs. I heard noises under a sewer grating near the North Wall of the town, as we passed it and went down it to investigate. There we were immediately attacked by the Tanarukk Chieftain and his entourage. We dealt with them, though not without some trouble. On the Chieftain's body, I found *Bracers of Armour*+1, a *Tanarukk Greataxe*+1, a *Ring of Crimson* and a *Note* giving his infiltration orders.¹⁰⁶ In this area, I found a locked grate that I could not open. The passage beyond it seemed to lead to a sewer grate outside Derval's place, which I was notable to open either.

Exiting the sewers, I couldn't find any other of the Orc infiltrators anywhere, so decided to take a breather before heading back to find Astriel and Frederick to report and show them the note. I went into Derval's and told him about the part that Veiti had played in Illefarn. He was suitably proud of his progeny and made me a favoured customer. Then I went to Vlad's and sold off all of the loot we had acquired over the last while. Then I went over to the Temple of Lathander and bought a bunch of healing potions from Liam Sunquist. I thought they might be needed if I were going to have to go up against that Gorgomox thing.

All that done and with both Raegen and I kitted out as well as possible, we went back to find Astriel and Frederick. They were standing at the Castle entrance, waiting for me.

I took the opportunity to speak to Astriel as she had asked. Her news was that she had found out Talarenne's imprisonment in the sphere was directly connected to Gorgomox's powers. And that if we were able to deal with Gorgomox, we would be able to see Talarenne set free. Simple.

¹⁰⁶ Each fighter earned 8XP and the Tanarukk Chieftain 117XP. (This is less than other players have reported being awarded for the Chieftain.)

I showed Frederick the note I had from the Tanarukk Chieftain's body. He read it as an ominous sign that an attack was imminent from the forces against Daggerford, probably before nightfall. He gave me chance to rest a bit and prepare ourselves and asked that I come back as soon as I was ready.

Finale: Gorgomoz and all that....

When I was ready, I told Freerick to bring them on. Then we had to wait through several cut scenes. The first, with the Orcs massing outside the wall and trying to figure out why they are not being let in is really quite fun. Then, after a bit, Gorogomoz shows up, promises death and destruction to all and sundry. The graphics are quite good and, it has to be said, the demise that twat Bugo is very satisfying. Hoist on his own petard, as the saying goes.

At last all of the play acting and histrionics were over and we were able to come to grips with Gorogomoz and his Orc minions. The orcs were no problem for the most part and Raegen and the militia did a good job on them. Gorgomoz was all mine, however. Every time I got him just about cut down, he transported himself away and landed nearby, only a little more weak than he had been at the beginning. Luckily, I too had a store of healing potions. In the end, I felled the beast.

Seing Gorgomoz down, there is a short cut scene where the Orcs decide they are not going to fight me with Gorgomoz dead and all scuttle off to their respective holes. Then Talarenne, freed from her miniaturization in the little orb turns out to be a snotty little thing, but realizes it and buys drinks all around.

After that was a series of cut scenes of great huzzahs from the soldiers, then a pompous ceremony where the Duke bestowed the Order of Daggerford on me and the citizenry sang "For she is a jolly good fellow." Thank the gods for no political correctness in the realm of Neverwinter!¹⁰⁷

Then the game is done, exit to the credits and back to the main menu. All in all a good time was had by all. Worth the time. Worth the money. And worth doing again in a few years.

Enjoy.

¹⁰⁷ There is no chance to sell off excess swag or to save your character at its current level after you tell Frederick that you are ready to take on the invaders, so do that before going to him and Astriel the second time. You are given a chance to say you have a few things to do before saying you are ready. I couldn't see that I got any XP or GP for any of the finale battles. Other reviewers have said they did, so maybe something has changed or I have missed something.

Annex 1 - Maps
Part 1 (Daggerford)

1. The Trade Way Road

1. Your wagon
2. Burnt grass
3. Bandit camp



2. Daggerford - Plan

1. Main Gate
2. Château Elite Inn
3. Marketplace
4. Happy Cow Inn
5. Shrine to Chauntea
6. Militia Barracks
7. Mariners' Alliance
8. Castle
9. Gate to Docks
10. Black Stone Inn
11. Stop Abbey
12. Temple of Lathander
13. Derval's Bright Blade
14. The Sorceller's Encapsulate
15. Farmers' Gate
16. Sewer Grate
- a. Locked Door (unopenable)
- b. Wealthy Artist's House (Barrow & Parker)
- c. Locked Door (Special Key needed to Open)
- d. Ilkor of Thay's Flop House
- e. Dwarf Brigands' Hideout



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 1

3. Daggerford - Château Elite Inn

1. Quintessa
2. Pembertons
3. Cook
4. Egbert Dulcaster
5. Lady Chastity
6. Amara Leontyne/Astriel Shalyn
- d. To/From Daggerford

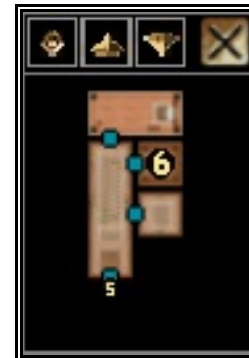


4. Daggerford - Happy Cow Inn

1. Hevesar Dimpet
2. Demetrea Landscaper
3. Fullbar Hardcheese
4. Burnas Tellrot
5. Jorey Fontelas
6. Locked Room
- d. To/From Daggerford
- s. Stairs Up/Down



Happy Cow (Main Floor)



Happy Cow (Upstairs)

5. Daggerford - Shrine to Chauntea

1. Maerovyna
- (Not much else here!)



6. Daggerford - The Black Stone Inn

1. Entrance/Exit
2. Black Bill O'Shaughnessy
3. Stran
4. Purfin Doogrick
5. Gildamesh
6. To/From Basement
7. Trap Door
8. To/From Sewer Control room



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 1

7. Daggerford - Militia Barracks

1. Entrance/Exit
2. Captain Frederick
3. Captain Drathanion



8. Daggerford - The Mariners' Alliance

1. Entrance/Exit
2. Taffy
3. To/From Basement
4. Voices
5. File Drawers



9. Daggerford Docks - Plan

1. Gate to/from Daggerford
2. Feingold the Elder
3. Captain Turgat
4. Klevtor/Magdaren
5. Fillion
6. Shoreside Shipping Consortium Barge
7. The *Barracuda*
8. Erik the Fin



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 1

10. Daggerford - The Temple of Lathander

1. Entry Exit
2. Liam Sunmist



11. Daggerford - Stop Hole Abbey

1. Entry/Exit
2. Vladmyr



13. Daggerford - The Sorceller's Encapsulate

1. Entry/Exit
2. Rylett McGinn
3. To/From Library
4. Book of Illefarin
- c. Locked Door (Special Key needed to Open)



14. Daggerford - Derval's Bright Blade

1. Entry/Exit

- d. Derval
- v. Veiti



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 2 (South of Daggerford)

1. Western Farmlands - Plan

1. To/From World Map
2. Maxillian Manor
3. Bear Cave
4. Well of the Spirit
5. Exit from Well
6. Bricket House
7. Stone Tower/Boonmoppet's Store
8. To/From World Map



2. Western Farmlands - Well of the Spirit

1. Tellrot/Rope Down
2. Sulfurus
3. To swim or not to swim?
4. Cleansing Pool/Way Out



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 2

3. Western Farmlands - Maxillian Manor

1. To/From Western Farmlands
2. Holding Cell Area (Arrival)
3. To/From Fissure
4. To/From Jonas's Den
(Accessible after escape)
5. Store Room (Accessible after escape)
6. To/From Holding Cell Area
(Accessible after escape)
7. To/From Jonas's Den
(Accessible after escape)



- c. Cider Recipe
- g. Gravia Maxillian
- j. Jonas Maxillian (Jr. & Sr.)
- l. Lever
- p. Pettywick Wocket

4. Western Farmlands - Bricket House

1. Entry/Exit
2. Party: Muriel & Alicine
3. To/From Upstairs
4. To/From Basement
5. Alicine's Chest (Diary)
6. Loose Floorboard (Diary)



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 2

5. Eastern Farmlands - Plan

1. To/From World Map
2. Distraught Little Girl (Boonmoppet)
3. Cemetery Mausoleum
4. Bricket Family Crypt
5. Mill
6. Churlgo Cheese & Farm
7. To/From Southern Farmlands

- h. Big Hole
- m. Mooring
- m. Mooring
- x. To/From Mogdor's Cave



6. Eastern Farmlands - Down the Rabbit Hole

1. From Top of the Hole
2. Blue Portal
3. Red Portal



7. Eastern Farmlands - Cemetery Mausoleum

1. To/From Cemetery
2. Moris Olgrund



Annex 1 - Maps
Part 2

9. Eastern Farmlands - The Mill

1. Entry/Exit
2. Fernd
3. To/From Basement
4. Wall Fissure
5. Loru



10. Eastern Farmlands - Churlgo Cheese

1. Entry/Exit
2. Millie Churlgo
(& Cheese Samples)



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 2

11. Gillian's Hill - Plan

- 1a. To/From Trade Way North
- 1b. To/From East
- 1c. To/From West
- 1d. To/From Trade Way South
- 2. Yentai's Store
- 3. Sejellus' Office
- 4. Jouka The Wainright
- 5. Gillian's Tower
- 6. Mabda
- 7. Gillian's Hill Graveyard
- 8. Torleth's Treasures
- 9. Nagorm Suffer's House (Penguin)
- f. Farmer Callaway



12. Gillian's Hill - Torleth's Treasures

- 1. Entry/Exit
- 2. Office
- 3. To/From Basement
- 4. (Real) Treasure Room
- 5. Back Entry/Exit



13. Gillian's Hill Graveyard Crypt

- 1. Entry/Exit
- 2. Gothma Shrine
- 3. Necromancer



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 2

14. Gillian's Hill - Nagorm Stuffer's House

1. Entry/Exit
2. Caged Penguin
3. ?



15. The Lonely Barrens (1)

- 1a. Entry from/Exit to North
 - 1b. Entry from/Exit to West
 - 1c. Entry from/Exit to South
 2. Squire Blancheflor & Roo's Cave
 3. Elven Guard Captain
 4. Kyleena's Camp
- b. Moss Covered Stones
p. Petrello



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 2

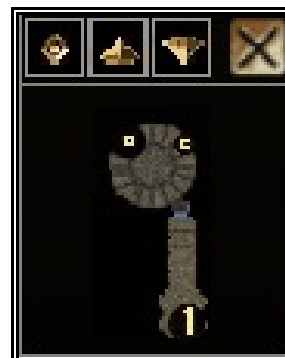
16. The Wild Hills - Plan

- 1a. To/From Trade Way North
- 1b. To/From East
- 1c. To/From West
- 1d. To/From Trade Way South
- 2. Dark Druids' Burrow
- 3. Ogre Toll Post
- 4. Gnoll Fort & Cave
- 5a. To/From Ogre Tower
- 5b. To/From Ogre Tower
- 6. Warg Cave
- 7. Dark Cave



17. The Wild Hills - Dark Druids' Burrow (1)

- 1. Ladder Up/Down
 - a. Oubliette
 - c. Chest



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 2

18. The Wild Hills - Gnoll Cave

- 1. To/From The Wild Hills
- r. Rattlefang



19. The Wild Hills - Ogres' Stronghold

- 5a. Entry/Exit (Upper)
- 5b. Entry/Exit (Lower)



20. The Wild Hills - Warg Cave

- 1. To/From Wild Hills
- c. Corpse
- d. Dark Druid
- p. Warg Pack Leader



21. The Wild Hills - Dark Cave (Alaffinel)

- 1. To/From Wild Hills
- a. Alaffinel
- c. Cougar



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 2

22. The Lizard Marsh - Plan

- 1a. To/From the East
- 1b. To/From the South
- 2. The Green Hag Cave
- 3. Redeye

- d. Young Black Dragon
- p. Piranha Pool

- q. Queen Spider Hut



23. The Lizard Marsh - The Village

- 1b. Entry from/Exit to the Lizard Marsh
- 2. The Slave Master/Fighting Pen
- 3. The Chieftain's hut
- 4. The Shaman's hut

- D. Old Black Dragon

- f. Feeding Hut
- g. Gourd Hut
- h. Villager's Hut
- p. The Slave Pen
- .



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 2

24. Liam's Hold - Plan

- 1a. Entry From/Exit to North
- 1b. Entry From/Exit to West
- 1c. Entry From/Exit to East
2. Holdfast Inn
3. Mayor Wilsey's House
4. The Munroe Mob
5. Rab's Place
6. Nell's Pie Shop
7. Michael & Xanda's House
8. Rock fissure
9. Planar gate
10. Old Temple/Stronghold
11. Hesther's House (Pet Parrot)



25. Liam's Hold - Holdfast Inn

- 1a. Entry/Exit (Main)
 - 1b. Entry/Exits (Back)
 - 1c. To/From Upstairs/Downstairs
 - 1d. Door swollen shut
- b. Ivus Barbarak (Bar & Reception)
 d. Emmaline Barbarak
 e. Evani
 h. Hevesar
 l. Library
 n. Nuli Barbarak (Kitchen)
 y. Yanno Kent



26. Liam's Hold - Behind the Cliff Face

1. Entry/Exit
- b. Loose Brick
 r. Ranger Conway's Bones
 p. Secret Passage
 s. Steronius Dethick
 x. Xanda



Annex 1 - Maps
Part 2

27. Liam's Hold - My Digs, a.k.a. "The Stronghold"

Rez de chaussée

- 1. Entry/Exit
- 2. To/From Roof

- A. Astriel

- d. Stairs Down
- u. Stairs Up



Cellars (1)

- a. Altar to Bhaal
- u. Stairs Up
- x. Xatum



Cellars (2)

- l. Lock/Lever
- p. Passageway
- t. Treasure Room
- u. Stairs up
- x. Xatum



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 2

28. The Wild Pastures - Plan

- 1a. Entry/Exit to North
- 1b. Entry/Exit to East
- 1c. Entry/Exit to South
- 1d. Entry/Exit to West
2. Irvin the Shepherd
3. Lavna the Shepherdess
4. Jerrick the Shepherd (& Gaslo)
5. Old One Eye
6. To/From Goblin Kitchens
7. Dragon Head rock



29. The Wild Pastures - Goblin Kitchens

1. To/From Wild Pastures

- b. Goblin Butcher
- c. Cattle Pen
- d. Dock/Open Water
- i. Backpack
- o. Tanarukk Leader



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 3 (The Coast)

1. The Crab's Claw Coast - Plan

- 1a. Entry from/Exit to East
- 1b. Entry from/Exit to North
2. The Smugglers' Cave

- b. The *Barracuda*
- c. Cave of the Mists
- e. Exit from the Smugglers' Cave
- j. Jared Deathstalker
- p. Path Down to Water
- u. Fissure
- w. Wogbog



2. The Crab's Claw Coast - Smugglers' Cave

1. To/From Waterside
2. Abducted Shepherds
3. Captain Herab & Tanarukk Leader
4. To/From Surface



Annex 1 - Maps
Part 3 (The Coast)

3. The Crab's Claw Coast - Umgatlik Shrine

1. Entry/Exit
 2. To/From Shrine to Umgatlik
- a. Altar
 - b. Bones
 - d. Door to/from Shrine
 - g. Savant Gumbril
 - p. Portal
 - r. Rubble Pile
 - s. Succubus
 - u. Umgatlik
 - v. Vetrexia Nightmaiden



4. The Crab's Claw Coast - Cave of the Mists

1. Entry/Exit
 2. Locked Gate
 3. To/From Chamber of Mists
 4. To/From Cave
- c. Whispering Column
 - m. Metastakixx
 - u. Urn



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 3 (The Coast)

5. The Blade Cliffs - Plan

- 1a. Entry/Exit to the South
- 1b. Entry/Exit to the East
2. Griswald's Camp
3. Nosferit
4. Sea Caves
5. A Lesson (?) in Theorosophy

- c. Cave of Detritus
- d. Drawbridge
- e. Entrance to Castle
- f. Feldran's Fop
- l. Drawbridge Lever
- o. Gravestone/Olree
- p. Path to water's Edge
- r. Ramparts Entrance to Castle



6. The Blade Cliffs Castle - Cellars

1. Fissure in Rock (To/From Tidewater)
 2. Entrance to Main Cellar
 3. Stairs Up
- b. Bookshelf/Hidden passage
o. Oil Barrels
w. Wine Cellar



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 3 (The Coast)

7. The Blade Cliffs Castle - Main Floor

1. Stairs Down
2. Stairs Up
3. Exit to Courtyard

- b. Bedroom
- d. Guard Dormitories
- f. Feldran's Office
- g. Great Feast Hall
- l. Library
- t. Treasury



8. The Blade Cliffs Castle - Upper Floor

1. Stairs Down
2. Exit to Ramparts

- b. Bookcase (Hidden Staircase)
- c. Lock Up Cell
- f. Feldran's Bedroom
- e. Feldran's Study
- l. Fedran's Lab
- S. Soliana's Chamber



9. The Blade Cliffs - Sea Caves

1. Entry/Exit
2. Bones
3. Bones



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 4 (Out from Liam's Hold)

1. The Brush of Barbs - Plan

- 1a. Entry from/ Exit to North
- 1b. Entry from/ Exit to West
2. Woude's Camp
3. Govan's Stone Circle Entrance
4. Teygan's Hide
5. Tomb of Telarthir

S. Spider Woods

- b. Berry Bush
- c. Cocoon
- h. Boar's Heart
- r. Rope
- w. Spider Web



2. The Lonely Barrens (2)

- 1a. Entry from/Exit to North
- 1b. Entry from/Exit to West
- 1c. Entry from/Exit to South
2. Squire Blancheflor & Roo's Cave
3. Wild Elves' Camp
4. Edalseye's Tower Entry/Exit

- b. Moss Covered Stones
- d. Deladrine
- p. Portal
- z. Zhentarim Bandit Camp



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 4 (Out from Liam's Hold)

3. The Lonely Barrens - Edalseye's Tower

1. Entry/Exit
2. Scully
3. Portal 1/2
4. Mephit Generator
5. Portal 2/3
6. Portal 3/4
7. Mirror (To/From Rampart)
8. Portal to Basement



4. Trollbark Forest - Plan

- 1a. Entry/Exit
- 1b/ Entry/Exit
2. Troll Mound
3. Orc Lair



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 4 (Out from Liam's Hold)

5. Trollbark Forest - Troll Mound

1. Entry/Exit
2. Troll Chieftain

- b. Bones
- d. Dung Heap
- f. Fallen Boulder



6. Trollbark Forest - Orc Lair

1. Entry/Exit
2. To/From Upper/Lower Level

- g. Gorgomorz Statue/Note
- m. Map



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 4 (Out from Liam's Hold)

5. Iron Throne Caravan

1. To/From Brush of Barbs
2. Large Tent



6. Tomb of Telarthir

- f. Fernigold the Younger
- o. Obelisk
- s. Sarcophagus



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 5 - Illefarn & Fate

1. The Laughing Hollows

1. Boat Landing
2. Path Up/Down the Cliffs
3. Stone Marker/Steps Down & Up



2. Illefarn - Entrance Hall

1. Entry from/Exit to Laughing Hollow
2. Zhent Cleanup Crew
3. Exit to/Entry from Upper Hall

- b. Boulders Blocking Door
- d. Dwarf Corpse
- j. Journal
- l. Ledger Pages
- p. Post
- r. Rope



3. Illefarn - The Great Hall

1. To/From Entrance Hall
2. Fissure
3. Zhent Slavemaster
4. To/From Hall of Wonder
5. Workshop
6. To/From Feast Hall
7. Looted Rooms
8. Rotating Pedestals
9. Crack in Wall
10. To/From Mines



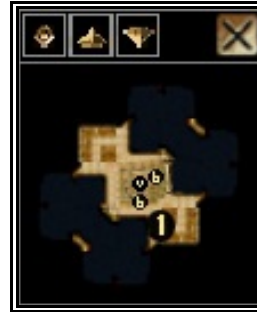
Annex 1 - Maps

Part 5 - Illefarn & Fate

4. Illefarn - Elven Garden

1. To/From Upper Hall

- b. Leather Bag
- v. Elven Vase



5. Illefarn - Hall of Wonder

1. To/From Upper Hall

- c. Crude Passageway
- d. Door behind Cobweb
- f. Narrow Fissure
- p. Pedestal
- s. Hive Mother Spider



6. Illefarn - Mines - Plan

1. To/From Upper Level

- a. Zhent Altar
- b. Lady Bronwyn
- d. Dratharion
- g. Duke Greatshot
- k. Korin
- s. Articulate Slave
- t. Blocked Secret Tunnel



Annex 1 - Maps

Part 5 - Illefarn & Fate

7. Daggerford - Castle Cellar

1. Point of Arrival
2. Stairs up

b. Blocked Doors



8. Daggerford - Castle Main Floor

1. To/From Cellar
2. To/From Castle Courtyard

b. Banquet Hall
 s. Study
 t. Throne Room
 x. Locked Door



9. Daggerford - Sewers

1. To/From Surface
- c. Tanarukk Chieftain
 g. Locked Gate



10. Daggerford - Finale

1. To/From Castle
- G. Gorgomoz
- a. Astriel
 d. Derval's Smithy
 f. Frederick
 m. Militia
 o. Orcs outside the walls
 s. Sewer Grate
 v. Vladimyr's shop



Annex 2 - Summary of Quests

There are a lot of quests and sub-quests in the game. Some of these net GP and/or XP. These are the ones I have been able to discover

Ambush on the Trade Way or The Story So Far...

This quest appears in your diary as *The Story So Far...* After you exit the wagon and begin your conversation with Talarenne, an attack by bandits begins. Killing these nets XP: Leader @46XP, Mage, Cleric, Archers & Blades, each @ 8XP. If you survive and talk to Fallas there is an additional award of 400XP and 100GP. If you refuse the GP reward, your alignment moves 2 points to each of Good and Lawful.

Talarenne

Your friend and companion was magically 'disappeared' during the ambush on the Trade Way. If you explored the area afterward, you found a crumpled note in the bandits' camp which suggests there was a case of mistaken identity between here and Amara. (You may have noticed a resemblance, yourself when talking to Amara after the fight.)

Amara Leontyne

After the ambush on the Trade Way, Amara Leontyne one of the party indicated you may meet again in Daggerford. On arrival in Daggerford, she asks you to meet her at the Château Elite Inn for an "interesting offer". When you go to meet her, this quest gets the completed quest tinkling, but no GP or XP appear to result. You learn that she is, in fact, Astriel Shalyn, a spy from Waterdeep, come to Daggerford to investigate the current situation in the area.

Detained in Daggerford

Astriel explains that she needs your assistance as "eyes and ears" because her presence is known to a sinister organization operating in the area. When you report back to her on the reason for the lockdown, this quest ends. No GP or XP. Sorry.

Trouble Down on the Farm

A farmer outside the Château Elite approaches you and begs you to meet the farmers' leader Hevesar Dimpet about 'evil afoot' in Liam's Hold. Ends when you speak to Hevesar. No GP or XP.

Cattle Rustling around Daggerford

Hevesar Dimpet engages you to investigate the mysterious - and increasing frequency of - disappearance of cattle from rich grazing lands in the Wild Pastures near Liam's Hold. When you meet up with him in Liam's Hold, he advances 700GP. When finally get around to investigating in the Wild Pastures, and tell him what the problem really was, that earns 2700XP. And earns you a further engagement for him.

Peredus the Great

Burnas Tellrot proposes a joint recovery of the arms and accoutrements of Peredus the Great, an adventurer hero, from a well in the farmlands West of Daggerford. Faced with the spirit of Perdeus, you will want to let your alignment guide you. Reward is 480XP, the sword of Perdeus plus LOTS of GP and other stuff, assuming you play your cards right. And survive.

A Mad Miller

Maerovyna in the Shrine to Chauntea asks you to find out what is wrong with Fernd, the Miller, who appears to have become despondent and distraught over some personal tragedy. You have to seek him out in the Eastern Farmlands, explore the mill and find out what has driven him mad. If you tell Joe the Farmer, he will offer you a modest 50 GP reward. When you report back to Maerovyna you net 480XP and access to her store.

Play Spy for Captain Frederick

Frederick asks you to find out what you can from Captain Dratharion about the lockdown. Finding out the reason nets you 125XP and a proposal to take on the Border Dispute quest.

The Border Dispute

Captain Frederick asks you survey the situation where Wild Elves who have settled in the South near the Trade Way, and under their stubborn and strong willed leader Klyeera Moonglow, are arrogating to themselves the property of area farmers. He wants you to resolve the situation, peacefully if possible, but resolved by whatever means necessary.

If you are able to do so, he also wants all the streams the elves have blocked opened up again for the farmers' traditional uses. Nets 400XP if you are successful plus another 500XP if you accomplish it using persuasion and diplomacy rather than the sword. Plus another 1000XP when you report back to Captain Frederick in Daggerford.

Strange Cargoes

Ariel has learned that mysterious cargoes are coming down the river by barge and not being unloaded into the city and asks you to look into it. First step is to search the Mariners' Alliance for information. Second is to find out where the arms and armour are headed and to whom. When you report your findings on the latter to Astriel, your reward is 1,700XP.

Fernigold the Younger

Fernigold's son has gone missing while on a treasure hunt to King Telarthir's Tomb and the old man needs some help seeing as how neither the Militia nor the Griffons are offering him any joy. His son's friend Klevtor, a young dock ruffian, may have some information. Nets 50GP and 400XP when you return the son to the father.

The Missing Chest

Erik the Fin has lost a chest overboard down river from Daggerford and needs help retrieving it. He is not, however, very forthcoming about its contents. "Personal stuff", he says, not very convincingly. The chest is in a cave in the Western Farmlands. If you take it back to the Sorceller's Encapsulate in Daggerford to be opened, you get 320XP and a couple of magic items as a reward from Delfin Yellowknife. Delfin also offers you further rewards if you take the chest back to Erik (this time with a nasty surprise in it for the next person to open it). If you then just take the chest back to Erik, you net 400GP and 160XP. If you take it back to Erik and accompany him to Mogador and watch the cut scene, you net 600XP. In this latter case, Erik disappears from the scene and you have to go back to the docks to see him and collect the 400GP.

The Suspicious Death of Duke Greatshout

Astriel asks that you find out what you can about the death of the Duke because he would be unlikely to be taken unawares by any wild game. When you report back to her the suspicious circumstances of his death as related by Demetira Landscaper, your reward is 200XP.

An Uncommon Criminal

Davey Haloran tries to pickpocket your purse in the Black Stone Inn in order to pay off his father's gambling debts to the local loan shark, Vladmyr. (Who coincidentally owns the Stop Abbey shop.) If you pay off the Haloran debt, you net 400XP after telling Danny back at the inn. If you decide not to pay off the debt, you can do a deal with Vlad which opens up another development of the quest story line. (Replacing - stealing - a portrait from one of his competitors) If you decide later to back out, leaving you free to pay the Halloran debt.

The Black Stone Inn

Astriel asks you to check out the Black Stone Inn and gives you a rod that detects magic items. Central to the progress of the adventure. On reporting back to Astriel, you net 250GP and 4000+XP.

The Truth about Vampires

Liam Sunmist at the Temple of Lathander asks you to investigate the deaths and disappearance of their bodies in the Gillian's Hill area. When you report to him that the cause is not vampires, but a necromancer making zombies, you net 600XP and an Amulet of the Morningstar.

Astriel Takes Flight

When you report the Zhentarim plot and plans you found in the basement of the Black Stone Inn, you are attacked by Zhentarim agents and Astriel decides to hide out somewhere else in the town. She says that she will get in touch when she can and points you South to explore the farmers' problems. You find her again in your stronghold in Liam's Hold and she can give you a lot of good advice. After you tell her about the Zhents and Illefarn, she rushes off to Waterdeep, leaving you alone to deal with the bad guys and find out where Illefarn, in fact, is. But you net 5000XP.

Birthday Present

While exploring the Western farmlands, you encounter a couple of apple farmers who are really werewolves. They invite you back to their place for a drink which, of course, is drugged. Then you have to escape from a maze, unarmed at first because all your gear has been taken away from you. You can find some fighting gear in chests in the maze, but you have to be quick because they come after you at the count of 20. You can get a hint as to how to get out from a fellow prisoner, but you have to promise to go back for her after killing the werewolves. The mother of these two also wants you to kill them. The reward is 600XP if you are successful. Plus any of the ordinary weapons and other items in the chests around the maze that you may care to take.

Fishing with Live Bait

A distraught little girl asks you to save her dog which has fallen down a hole in a nearby island. Of course you suspect it is a trap, but go anyway, just for the sport. If you kill off all the 'pets' (@6XP), get through to the Imp (Boonmoppet) and speak to it civilly, you net 440XP and access to its store. Boonmoppet's store turns out to be the Stone Tower in the Western Farmlands. If you just kill Boonmoppet, you get

400XP, but no store.

A Party to Wake the Dead

Moris Olgrund in the Eastern Farmlands Cemetery asks you to try to find the corpse of Elveronne Bricket, which disappeared from the family mausoleum in the cemetery. Finding the Elveronne and using the Holy water Moris gives you to end its undead state nets 500XP. The alternative solution, talking to Zombie Elveronne, getting the sisters to confess, getting the necklace from Alicine, giving it to Elveronne and letting him go to rest, finally, in his grave nets the same. Another, more satisfying, alternative is just to let Elveronne loose on the sisters. They deserve whatever he hands out, anyway. The only way to get the necklace for yourself is to get it from the sisters and then kill Elveronne with Holy Water instead of giving it to him or, if you are a cleric, to use your Turn Undead skills..

If you have good persuade skills, you can also get Moris to pay you 250 (or even 500GP) for getting Elveronne back in his tomb. (He can afford it, by the way.)

Jouka's Awl

Jouka, the Wainright in Gillian's Hill has lost his awl, a valuable family heirloom, stolen by a band of Lizardfolk thieves. He wants it back. It is in the Chieftain's or shaman's hut in village in the Lizard Marsh. Nets 200XP.

The Gillian's Hill Gang

Sejellus the Distributor offers a reward for settling the hash of the gang operating out of Gillian's Hill Tower. It is worth 80XP and 500GP.

The Great Cheese Caper

Millie Chulrgo asks you to rid her of an Iron throne thug (Yentai) who has plagued her cheese making business. Yentai is in cahoots with her son Porto, who wants to get into the cattle raising business. If you have accepted the quest from Millie, you net 1000GP & 600XP when you have killed Yentai, report it back to Millie and show her the evidence Porto has conspired with him.

Taking a Troll

There are Gnolls and Ogres at odds over a Toll Bridge. You can pick a side and be rewarded for wiping out the other side. Net reward is 600+XP plus a lot of loot, some reasonably good. Of course, you can also wipe out both sides. Neither is particularly nice.

Redeye's Eggs

Redeye, Shaman of the Lizardfolk tribe, has lost his leadership position in the tribe due to the influence of an ancient Black Dragon (Therakulusk) on a rival (Saslick). He engages you to regain his position by planting the dragon's eggs in Saslick's house, causing the dragon to turn on the rival. Nets 628XP and a bunch of reasonably good stuff.

The Green Hag of Lizard Marsh

She wants to get the effigy the Lizard Village Shaman is using to torture her. He also wants something of the Chief's so that she can do the same thing to him. She also wants back the brush her daughter gave her. Nets 900XP.

Slaves to the Lizardfolk

You see slaves in a pen and one of them tells you he can get them all free if you can get him the key from the Slave master. Nets 448XP.

Party 6

Ivus Barbarak, the owner and bartender at the Holdfast Inn has a case of ale that has to be delivered to Rab Bitnek for a party and asks if you can do it for him. Nets 240XP.

Evani's Incredible Fantabulizer

Evani's performance at the Holdfast Inn will not go on as planned unless you can find the missing part to her "Incredible Fantabulizer". Nets 400XP and Evani's Ring of Colours. And another 180XP after you confront the real culprit in the theft of her part.

Mayor Wilsey

The Mayor asks you to deal with the Munroe gang of thugs that is causing grief to the town and interfering with commerce. Nets 500XP and the Key to the Stronghold if you are successful in accomplishing the job without having to use violence. 250XP, plus 9XP and 13GP from Jethro's corpse.

The Phantom of Liam's Hold

Strange happenings in Liam's Hold: Rab Bitnek knocked senseless; The daughter of Nell the Baker has had strange dreams and/or a nocturnal visitor; The Night Watch sees mists disappearing into a rock wall and then one of its volunteer members goes missing. The Mayor asks you to investigate. Nets any or all of 348XP; 452XP; 40XP +2Good +2Lawful; and 200XP plus lots of good items and GP, depending on what you do and how you do it.

Xatum's Time of Battles

In the cellar of your Stronghold home, you find the recrudescence of the Bhaal cult, Xatum, who wants to revive his god and get back at Maerovyna for the damage she caused a long time ago. You can either help him or put paid to him and his god for good. Nets 960XP for Xatum, 6Xp or 40XP per Bhaal Priest, key to the hidden treasure rooms and lots of GP and other valuable items.

The One-Eyed Worg

Lavna the shepherdess in the Wild pastures thinks that the cause of the disappearing cows is a warg called "Old One Eye" who hunts in the South. If you bring her his head, that nets 180XP.

Shadows in the Fields

When you report to Hevesar on the cattle rustling, he asks you to investigate farmer Gaslo's sightings of orcs moving in the night in the Wild pastures. Astriel also wants to know about orc movements. Nets 1348XP.

Umgatlik's Shrine

Jared Deathstalker finds you outside your home/stronghold in Liam's Hold and asks your help in stopping a ceremony being planned to resurrect an evil god called "Umgatlik" in the Crab Claw Coast. When you meet up with Jared in the Crab's Claw Coast, and deal with Umgatlik's Shrine, you net +/-1900XP & +5 Good for destroying the shrine. If you also kill Umgatlik, you get an extra 666XP. And a whole bunch of loot and GP if you remember to search remains and chests in every part of the area.

Decorator's Dilemma

When you finally give her some time a gypsy called Yani Pavani, who calls herself a home decorator tries to sell you on redecorating your new home. If you agree, she will finish off the work and in due course, also find a last item "uniquely suited to your tastes". After you report back to Astriel about what happened in the Trollbark forest, if you stop to see Yani, she will tell you that she has put the finishing touch on your stronghold (and net you 500XP). In my case, I guess because I started out as a rogue, what she installed was a workbench, apparently with facilities to craft traps and poison weapons.

The Princess of Fanloc

Sir Griswold has asked for your help in rescuing some princess and capturing the castle of his enemy Lord Fedran Exeltis at the Sword Cliffs. If you do this, you have to find the secret entrance to the castle. Setting fire to oil barrels draws guards to put it out, but can also burn you. Guards and rats are worth 6XP. Searching about for info about Fedran can glean information for use in speaking to Soliana. If you reunite Griswold and Soliana successfully, that nets 1900XP and, if you take it, Griswold's Belt (+Strength & Fortitude&True Strike), and (if you persuade lightly) Soliana's necklace (+Listen, Spot, Charisma & eagle's Splendour).

Abducted Shepherds

When you report to Hevesar on the Orc movements at night, some of the shepherds you met in the Wild Pastures have been kidnapped. He asks you to follow quickly and free them. Astriel agrees on the urgency of the matter and advises you to head to the Coast where, incidentally, there may be more intelligence to be got on the arms shipments. Nets 200XP + in the Smugglers' Cave (for killing *Barracuda's* Captain & Orc leader), plus 6XP per Orc killed and 60XP for telling Jerick that his son is safe. Another 2848XP when you tell Hevesar back at the Holdfast Inn. If you decline the reward (700GP), that nets another 120XP, +4 Good and +4 Lawful alignment. Finally, if you react nicely to his telling you about Astriel in your stronghold home, that nets another 2000XP for helping out the farmers.

Wogbog's Stick

Wogbog (the Hermit in the Crab's Claw Coast) has lost his stirring stick and asks you to find it. Finding it and giving it to him nets 200XP and +5 Good alignment.

A Season in the Mists

Inside the Cave of Mists, you find Metastakixx. To free her you have to kill the evil spirits in the mists in the columns that surround her. You can free her, but not keep her from dying. Nets 7100XP for managing to kill all of them, plus the Cloak of the Mists, a Dreamstone and an Ancient Shadow Blade (evil).

A Circle of Fowl

The chicken rescued from the butcher turns out to be a cursed Druid who needs to get back to the Brush of

Barbs and find the twin oaks where a Druid named Tatham is imprisoned. Nets 640+XP and minor loot for killing the Evil Druids in the Wild Hills and another 2000XP after the birds complete their restoration ritual in Govan's Circle in the Brush of Barbs. Tatham also become a merchant with whom you can buy and sell goods.

A Shipwreck Survivor

Nosferaat, a vampire, has been magically imprisoned in a shipwreck and promises rewards if you help him get out. Dealing with him nets +/-500XP, 6XP for each minion a magic scimitar and armour.

A Theorosphical Debate

Xhinga and Beb-Shuur are two pompous fools who claim to be theorosphers, who have driven a bona fide philosopher to jump to his death in despair at their ruining his good name. There is no reward for making them both jump from the cliff edge other than a shift of 2 points in alignment toward Evil. But it certainly is satisfying to see them jump! Not talking them into jumping and leaving them be nets nothing. Killing them both nets 6XP each, presumably for ridding the world of their presence.

A Rendezvous with Teygan

Teygan identifies himself to you in Liam's Hold as a Harper and enlists your help in fighting the Zhentrim. I think you get 900+XP the first time you enter the Brush of Barbs for taking on this quest. You also net 800XP when he sends you off to kill a group of bandits and again when he sends you to find secret documents that a bad guy caravan is carrying.

Edalseye's Tower

Deladrine, beaten by her normally good master in suspicious circumstances approaches you in Liam's Hold and asks you to help find out what has gone wrong with him in the Eastern Barrens. Killing Abatoru is worth 960XP and each of his Kocarochons 29XP. Once outside the tower with Edalseye and Scully, another 2000 is awarded. You are then teleported back across the chasm.

Showdown at the Holdfast Inn

After you give Teygan the secret documents he sent you after, he will tell you that there is a band of bad guy assassins staying in a private room at the Holdfast Inn and suggests you would be best to get the drop on the bunch and kill them before they kill you. There are a couple of ways to finish this quest, depending on who you believe are the good guys in the scenario. If you decide to return to Teygan with the 'assassins', you net 4200 and the truth about Teygan. If you decide to return by yourself, learn the truth from Teygan himself, and return to the Holdfast and speak to the 'assassins' there again, you net the same XP.

Finding Illefarn

After you tell Astriel the truth about Teygan, she assigns to you the task of finding Illefarn before rushing off herself to warn the powers that be in Waterdeep of the impending incipient danger.

The Secret Forge of Illefarn

A ghost smith is hidden in one of the walls. If you can find and give the ghost the Moradin's Stone, he will upgrade one weapon or piece of armour for you and you net 628XP.

The Hall of Wonder

A set of reflecting mirrors has to be set up on rotating pedestals and the pedestals rotated so that, when the crystal is activated, there is a light line to the door. If you succeed, you net 1482XP. Also 697XP for killing the Hive Mother and her spider friends behind the crude passage.

The Dwarves of Illefarn

You learn that Korin and some others may be taken captive. It is up to you to find and free him and the other slaves. You get a few XP for killing their guards. You get other stuff that is important for the pursuit of the main quest

Duke Greatshout Lives!

Once you have found and dealt with Dratharion, the way is clear to the torture chamber, where the Duke and lady Bronwyn are held. Nets 400XP when you head back to the castle at their urging.

Annex 4 - Spoilers

These solutions are presented in the order in which I found them in my first time through the game.

Daggerford - Entry to the Château Elite: You can get a dress or suit from Fallas in the marketplace which the doorman will consider to be suitable attire. Or, you can go around to the back door and bribe the cook to let you in through the kitchen.

Daggerford - The Peredus the Great quest initiation: You have to speak first to Burnas Tellrot before Jorey will sing the tale of Peredus the Great. Only after the bard has sung that for you, will Burnas proceed to lay out his proposition.

Daggerford - The Mariners' Alliance: You have to get past Taffy. If your bluffing skills are good, you can get him to rush out to help friends you tell him are fighting in the Black Stone Inn. You can also suggest a drink, in which case, you have to get enough Whiskey to put him out. You could try an invisibility potion or spell. Or you can just try to kill him. (And announce your presence to all and sundry!)

Once past Taffy, you are faced with pretty much the same choices to get the shipping records from the boardroom. Neither bluff, nor booze, however, is likely to have much success. Going invisible or fighting it out are your only realistic choices.

Daggerford Docks - The Barracuda: You have to get the key to the Captain's cabin from the two crew members you meet on board. You have a choice, try to sneak by, put them out cold with Fillian's Brew and try to pickpocket them or search around the deck for the key, or else just fight it out.

The Black Stone Inn: That locked door in the basement requires a specific key to open it. You can only find that key if Astriel has assigned you to find out what is afoot in the Black stone. You can then find a magically concealed trap door with the Rod of Revealing and find the necessary key in a chest in the hidden room.

The Suspicious Death of Duke Greatshout: You have to go back to the Happy Cow and speak to Demeteria Lanscraper. She was along on the Duke's Hunting party.

Fishing with Live Bait: If you bash the Red Portal, the monsters will stop appearing. Going through the Blue Portal takes you to Boonmoppet's store.

The Mad Miller: You have to kill the disguised Slaad in the cellar who has taken control of his mind.

A Party to Wake the Dead: After speaking to Moris, you have to go to the party, speak to Muriel and follow the sisters upstairs, then speak to Muriel and open Alicine's chest. Then you have to find the loose floorboard in Elvronne's room to get the key to the cellar and find out why he is undead.

The Great Cheese Caper: You have to speak to Millie to begin the quest. Then you have to decide who you believe: Millie or Yentai. They can't both be telling the truth.

Redeye & The Green Hag: You have to undertake Redeye's quest first and he will direct you to the Hag. She will have her own quest and will polymorph you into Lizardfolk so you can move freely in the village. Don't steal everything in sight, or you will lose your disguise more quickly. Just get what you need for the Hag's quest first, and then plant the eggs in the Chieftain's hut for Redeye. Report back to him first, then to the Hag. If you try to complete the Hag's quest before planting the eggs for Redeye, you will lose the

polymorph you need to be able to because you lose your lizard guise when you report to her.

Slaves of the Lizardfolk: You have to pickpocket the key from the Slave Master to free the penned slaves. Or kill him and the others in his hut. (And risk blowing your cover.)

Party 6: After speaking to Ivus, you have to speak to his wife in the kitchen to get the ale to deliver. She will not speak to you unless you have spoken to Ivus first, not after you have picked up the ale.

Mayor Wilsey: You have to persuade or intimidate the Munroe gang into leaving. Just killing them doesn't win you the Mayor's trust or confidence. Getting to other side quests depends on that.

The Phantom of Liam's Hold: In order, you have to: (1) Resuscitate Rab Bitnek and get his story; (2) Report that to the Mayor; (3) Speak to - and get the whole story - from Nell's daughter; (4) Report that to the Mayor and overhear her conversation with the Night Watch; (5) Read all there is to read in Xanda's diary; (6) Find the hidden crypt and kill the vampire. That is, if you are a Good/Lawful aligned adventurer. [If you are something else, you may have a quite different way through, assuming you get to it and/or through it.]

Xatum's Time of Troubles: To be able to gain his confidence, you have to find the orders given to Ranger Conway by Maerovyna among his bones in the hidden crypt in Liam's Hold. To kill Xatum and the recrudescence of his god Bhaal, you have to agree to bring him Maerovyna's heart but then work with Maerovyna to fool him into using the boar's heart for his ceremony. If you don't, you will have a really hard fight and, further, will not be able to 'see' the loose flagstone that hides the lever that opens the secret door to the treasure rooms behind the altar to Bhaal.

Wogbog's Walking Stick: It is in the garbage pile just inside the entrance to Umgatlik's shrine.

Umgatlik's Shrine: You don't have to kill Umgatlik, but you get lots of extra XP for doing so. You have to talk to him first, or else he will be invincible, even for a powerful character.

The Princess of Falroc: You have to arrange a meeting for Griswold at the drawbridge, then persuade him it is not a good idea, then he will ask you to find another way. If you don't do that in that order, you will never meet Olree and be able to get entry to the secret cave entrance.

A Shipwreck Survivor: You are going to have to fight Nosferaat whatever you decide to do. If you decide to help him and destroy the runestones, you may get a few extra XP for killing rats and ghouls and such, but no more loot. You have to use a ranged weapon to 'bash' the stones.

A Theosophical Debate: If you want the satisfaction of seeing those dolts jump off the cliff, you need to refer to Vugu's journal in your conversation with them.

Edelseye's Tower: This is a complicated, multi step problem

First, You need to find and speak to Deldarin in the East Barrens, after which she will set up a portal to the otherwise inaccessible tower.

To open the portal from the second to the third floor, you have to plug up the Mephit Generator with a bag of dirt, which you can find along the far wall, then kill all the Ice Mephitis and light the pillars. When Fire Mephitis start to appear, you have to remove the bag of dirt so that Ice and Fire will neutralize each other. When the Water Mephit appears (??Get it: Ice and Fire turn into Water!!), you have to speak to it to get the 2/3 portal to appear.

To get out of the Chamber of Delights, you have to give the following answers to the riddles: (1) Baerwyne; (2) Gergrick is the youngest, Aliel the oldest; (3) Jessup and Elwryn are guilty, Bappi involved; (4) Minedi.

To get from Edalseye's bedroom to the tower, you have to take the Elwinster's oil into inventory, oil the fountain so that it flows again, fill a bottle with quicksilver, put the quicksilver on the mirror and step through.

To get off the tower again, you have to wait until you hear Scully call for you, then speak to him and get him to take off the sheet that he saw Edalseye throw over the mirror. You can then leave the tower. Back in the bedroom you see a new portal. Take it to the basement. Spell and buff up before going into the planar portal you find there. You will need it for the fight with Abatoru.

Mighty Rat of Cunning Demeanour: You have to survive waves of rats and then persuade Roo to go back as a prisoner and the squires to take him back as one.

Evani's Incredible Fantabulizor: The missing part is a Amotic Force Microflangulator, which you get from Lucas Woude in the Brush of Barbs.

A Circle of Fowl: You have to speak to the wounded Seagull in Govan's Circle in the Brush of Barbs. Then you have to go and rescue the parrot from Hesther in Liam's Hold. [You could not get into her house before speaking to the Seagull.] Then you have to rescue the penguin from the Taxidermist's Shop in Gillian's Hill. In both of these situations, you can be either violent or use persuasion. With Hesther, who is apparently deaf, you will find a pen and paper in her desk on which you can write notes. Both birds in the hand, so to speak, you have to speak to the Seagull again and let him talk to the two birds you just brought back. Then he will send you back to the Wild Hills to get Stegil's Bloodstone. You have to kill him and his Dark Druidminions and then pull Feynemonee out of the oubliette and talk to her so she can tell you where the Bloodstone is hidden. (Underneath the Stag's head on the wall. Look closely or you will miss it.) Take it back to the birds so that they can conduct their unbirding ceremony.

Fernigold the Younger: You will find the kid in the Tomb of Telathir in the Brush of Barbs. (Yes, he did find it, amazingly enough.) You will find a rope hanging down a cliff. Go down it. You will see an ancient throne, an obelisk and a cave entrance. You can get clues on how to gain entry to the cave from the obelisk. You need to put some of the local berries, a boar's heart and a set of bones (all to be found in the Brush of Barbs) on the throne, then touch the obelisk. Take the corpse back to the father for your reward.

Finding Illefarn: You have to tell Captain Frederick back in Daggerford about the Griffon/Zhent connection and then ask him about Illefarn. He will direct you back to Derval who, when you ask now, will tell you about Illefarn and his brother and will require that you take Veiti along to show you the way. Veiti will tell you to meet her at the docks, where a bargewoman named Magdaren will take you to laughing hollow. You have to find your way up the cliff and then over to the steps in the Northwest.

Illefarn - Dwarven Statues: You have to kill the Zhent Mage & Minions in one area on the west side of the Great Hall and loot their stone axes. Ditto for Veiti's Aunt and her goons. Once you have the four of them, you can fit them into the statues. You then get Veiti to set up the trap for you. If you don't use the trap, you are going to have to fight an awful lot of Zhentrim.

Illefarn - The Elven Garden: Veiti will warn you that it is off-limits. Maybe for dwarves. You can safely ignore her.

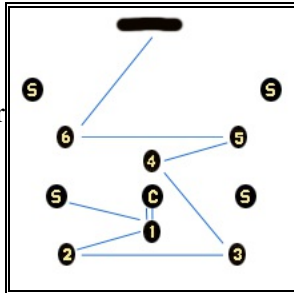
Illefarn - The Secret Forge: You have to listen at the wall for noise, ask Veiti about the location and then

Speak to the Ghost and give him the Moradin Stone. You can put more than one weapon in the chest, but only one will get upgraded. If you want a specific weapon or piece of armour upgraded, be sure to put only that in the chest. Otherwise, the selection will be random.

Illefarn - The Hall of Wonder: To unlock the door you have to (1) Try to pick the lock and fail (as you will), (2) Speak to Veiti, (3) Activate the crystal and let hit the stature and then go out (You should not turn any of the mirrors to get this done) in order to have the quest added to your diary, and finally (4) align the mirrors by turning them until the beam from the activated crystal hits the door.

See diagram:

C = Crystal
Red Line - Beam to Statue
S = Statue
Blue Lines - Beams to Door
1-6 = Mirror



Illefarn Mines - Freeing the Dwarves: You have to kill Dratharion and get his key to free the prisoners
Illefarn Mines - The Portal to Daggerford: You have to speak to Duke Greashout and Lady Bronwyn, who will give you the words necessary to activate the portal.