



Siege of Shadowdale Notebook & Maps

Recorded for Loris & Clio
&
Anyone else who may find them useful

First Play, June, 2023
Second Play, 2024

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I. General

This is basically the same walkthrough I did for the first play, with a few changes to correct typos and adjust a few things that changed the second time through. I have done this as a trip notebook or diary, recording what happened as I went along, with map graphics taken from my screen shots. The numbers on the maps are my own legend and generally reflect the order in which I did things.

I have made extensive use of the footnotes to record, among other things, the rewards from quest completion including from alternate ways to complete the quest when I tried those out. Ditto for puzzles or other difficult or confusing spots in the game. If you want to avoid spoilers, ignore the footnotes.

Finally, the sections and subsections into which I have divided the narrative (and the numbered areas on the Shadowdale Regional map) reflect the sequence in which I moved to the different areas and sub-quests of the game. It just made the most sense to me while I was playing. I suspect it is possible to play it in an entirely different sequence and still finish nicely.

1. Game Play - Character Design

This game can be played with either a new character or a previously created character.

If you really want to kick butt early on, playing with a previously made character lets you start at its previously achieved levels, hit points (HP), experience points (XP) and carrying all the possessions with which that character was previously saved. I'm not sure how well that meshes with the challenge of a new game, but it is a way to go. One downside, certainly, is that levelling up will come slower. I did notice that killing monsters with a higher level character earns fewer XP.

The same as my first time through, I chose to begin with a new character (a female Half-Elf Rogue) which I changed to Paladin after reaching Rogue level 7.

Character class may affect the sub-quests available. For instance, there was a nervous horse in a stable in Shadowdale and a wounded White Stag in Cormanthor, with which I could do nothing. I suspect there is a sub-quest written into the game code for a Druid or animal handler.

2. Game Mechanics

I downloaded the game from within the latest patched Neverwinter Nights Enhanced Edition by opening the Community and New game menus and downloading the latest (2023) version of the game.

Like some of the other NWN games and modules, this game uses a central map to move

you from one area to another. This map also gives a clue to the designer-intended progression of the game story. The different areas appear on the map only when they are relevant. You cannot actually move into, or take any meaningful action independently in, an area until its name shows up when you put the cursor on its location on the map. The numeric order in which I have put the areas on the map reflects, to a large extent, the order in which I was able to play them.

In some of the NWN games I have played, different merchants will charge or pay different prices when you buy items or sell them loot. For example, a Smithy often will pay more for a weapon than a potion merchant. Ditto for items they sell. In this game, I didn't notice any significant difference in the prices paid for items bought or sold at different merchants, although some would not buy what they thought were stolen goods.

Starting out as a Rogue and thinking ahead to changing class later, I kept an eye out for any shifts in alignment resulting from rifling others' property. I didn't see any negative shifts from opening chests, armoires or other containers and taking what I thought might be of use or sellable to a merchant for gold pieces (GP).

I found the combat-related experience points (XP) awarded to be a little idiosyncratic. For the quests, the XP awarded are always the same. But, I found in different areas and playing at different times, the XP for killing a monster varies considerably. This may be because some combat awards are purposely scaled to the level of one's character and/or the number of good guys fighting the bad. Still I found it puzzling. That is why, in my notes, there will sometimes be several XP awards noted. And, other players may find they get quite different XP awarded than did I. This is not a detraction from the game because XP add up quickly in any case.

I noticed that there are several doors that will unlock and/or open, but through which it is not possible to pass. Similarly, there are also a lot of doors that will not open or require a special key to open. And, in Elminster's Tower, there are two apparent portals that it is impossible to enter. I was not able ever to find whatever keys might have been needed or figure out why some doors would open but only to impassable darkness. I wonder whether these are for sub-quests I have not found or for sub-quests only available to players of other classes or alignment than I played. I mostly suspect these doors are there for verisimilitude, but that it is just not necessary or worth the time for the game's designers to put anything of substance behind them.

There are also some minor inconsistencies in the story telling. For instance, In the Sinkhole, there is the skeleton of a Wyvern and Rast tells the story of a pair once living there and one of them having been killed by a dragon. He suggests there is another one, older and meaner by then, might still be around. There is, however, no segue to that idea. Unless the Carrion Crawler that erupts from the big hole is the equivalent of the second wyvern. Similarly, the story of Allokair in Castle Crag did not seem to make a lot of sense to me. None of these inconsistencies appear to affect the play, the playability or the overall enjoyment of the game.

There are a few idiosyncrasies (or glitches) in the game engine/play that I noticed. One is in the Twisted Tower when your character is chasing off to try to find Scotti. The first time I

played this, two Scottis appeared after his first cry for help in the parlour and they turned into two Doppelgangers. The second time I played, there was only one Scotti and I think this is what the game intended. This is not necessarily a negative if your character is strong enough to kill both Doppelgangers: You get double the XP reward in XP and two Bags of Holding instead of one.

The second occurred after my character had first caught up with Malauntyr in the Old Skull and started beating on him in the central clearing. He fled the encounter and scuttled away and reverted into his Maugrym form a little farther off to the Southeast. When I met him in this form, I could not talk or engage him in any way, other than a hopeless eternal fight in which neither of us did any damage to the other. Only after I had left the Old Skull in frustration, gone over to Castle Krag and finished off the sub-quests there and then returned to the Old Skull was I able to engage meaningfully with Malauntyr. I was able to talk with him and start the fight over again. After a little more of the same fruitless combat as previously, Malauntyr said “What’s this?”, Elminster appeared at my side and we finished off the monster.

A smaller glitch occurred when I dismounted from a horse before going into a building and told it to stand its ground. When I came out of the building, the horse was gone for good.

Finally, like all of these games, the ending is a bit of a damp squib. At least in this one, all of the loose ends get more or less tied up neatly. It was a satisfying game to play through and a nice addition to the NWN(EE) library. Great that it is free for the downloading. If You enjoy it, do go make a bit of a financial contribution to the creator(s).

3. Henchmen

Only one henchman at a time may accompany you in the game. There are no potential henchmen in Shadowdale. Around a camp fire in Harper’s Hill, three become available:

Berliad of Tyr (Lawful Good Human Cleric) He is a pompous righteous holy book spouting cleric. He could be a good fighter because he still wears the uniform of a Waterdeep Guardsman. He clearly had to leave Waterdeep in a hurry if he couldn’t change his clothing. But, from the time I first heard him talking to the others in his party, I didn’t think I would be able to stand his religiosity or any other part of his personality for long.

Ferret (True Neutral Halfling Rogue) He is on a mission to prove his worth to his family, the Black Isle Halflings which, if I understood the sub-text, does not exactly operate within the law. He seemed skilled enough for a thief, was certainly mischievous and had a sense of humour. I might have been inclined to take him along if I were not also developing my own skills in his area of expertise.

Lady Lisabeth (Lawful Neutral Human Fighter) She is a quite powerful, capable fighter, an ex-Purple Dragon Guard. She came from a minor noble family that thought her sole purpose in life was to be married off. That “ex” is because she impersonated a

commoner to get in but was kicked out of the PDGs when her subterfuge was revealed. I admired the fact that she refused to submit to patriarchal tyranny and intended to make her own way. I was pretty sure we would get along, but wanted to see how far I could get with my own sword.

If you are starting out with a new character and want or need extra help, go into Harper's Hill early in the game and take on one of three henchmen there. When I did this later, there was no noticeable reduction in the XP or GP after combat.

Finally, when a henchman loses all but one of his/her HP, he/she drops out of any combat, prone and "Nearly Dead". After the combat is over, if you win, he/she stands and joins you with the 1 HP. If you can rest, all HP are restored. Or, if you can't rest, you can use healing potions or kits to restore a henchman to fighting fettle.

II. A Tourist's Diary (Walkthrough)

Shadowdale - Regional Plan



- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Shadowdale Town | 4. Harper's Hill | 7. Outer Cormanthor |
| 2. The Southern Farmlands | 5. Castle Krag | 8. Twisted Tower |
| 3. Elminster's Tower | 6. Druids' Grove | 9. The Old Skull |

I. Shadowdale

1. The Message Board and Bardag

When the game begins, I was facing North at a T junction on a road in the centre of Shadowdale. Ahead of me and to the left, there was a message board with a half dozen or so messages on it. One was labelled "Top Sekret", clearly written by someone with a strong grasp of the concept of secure communications. The others were job postings: One for a pest control expert; A second for a general labourer; A third for someone to recover lost property; A fourth wanted an experienced adventurer for a dangerous mission; Yet another offered silver for "a small task". Clearly, there was a shortage of good help in the town.

In front of me was Bardag Shulto, a general factotum who seemed to know where everything was and what was happening in the town and around it. He mentioned that Drow had

been marauding in the Forest and that Zhentarim had been active in the North. Then he told me that X had been assembling a group of mercenaries at Harper's Hill to the East of town. He also said that cattle thieves had recently raided the farm of Kulnar Ohane.



- | | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Old Skull Inn | 6. To/From Elminster's Tower | a. Eressa Ambergyles | j. Jamble the Eye |
| 2. Hoareb Nimblefingers | 7. To/From Harper's Hill | b. Beregon Hillstar | k. Kella's Cottage |
| 3. Weregand the Trader | 8. To/From | c. Temple to Chauntea | s. Town Smithy |
| 4. To/From Southern Farms | | e. Ereks Pit | t. Apple Tree |
| 5. To/From The Sinkhole | | h. Horses | |

All that was a lot to take in on a dry throat, so I made a bee line to the Old Skull Inn for a drink. One of those notes had been from the proprietress there, so I thought I might be able to do a bit of business, as well.

2. The Old Skull Inn

Entering the Inn, I met Durnan Hilesta, the bouncer. I talked a bit to him and, turning on the charm, learned he wanted to retire and might be willing to part with his secret weapon. He wanted 3000GP for it, though, and I didn't have that kind of cash. He did say that if I were able

to find a replacement, he would give me the belt¹. I said that I would keep an eye out.

I went over to the proprietress, Jhaele Silvermane, and chatted her up a bit. She told me about the cattle thieves in the Southern Farms area. I mentioned I had seen her note on the message board and she told me her errand was to try to get some medicine to one of her waitresses, Kella. She directed me to Hoareb Nimblefingers, the local healer, to get it for Kella. There was nothing else of much interest in the Inn, so I decided to take on the job.

On my way to Hoareb, I saw the shop of Jamble the Eye, a merchant. He struck me as a shifty, smarmy type. My judgement was correct: He was the only merchant who would buy 'stolen goods'. I was carrying a trap I would never use, so I was able to unload it on him. While he had several *Magic Pouches* and a *Bag of Holding*, they and everything else he had was too expensive for a poor novice adventurer. So I unloaded the trap and left at least one GP the better.

When I spoke to Hoareb, she told me she had given Kella some medicine already and thought she would have been back at work already. When I told her Kella had not been seen for days, he gave me the key to her cottage to check up on her. When I got there, Kella's dog was antsy as all get out and whining at the staircase.² Upstairs, Kella was there on her bed all right. Only her head was bashed in and she was never going back to work. I looked around and found a diary which told of her plans to meet with an "N". Back at the Inn, I related all this to Jhaele and she told me the only visitor Kella had had recently was her brother from Archdale. She gave me the Inn's master key, told me to check the rooms and bring this "N" to justice if he was up there.

I went up and checked the rooms, clockwise from the stairs. In the first, there was only a booby-trapped, locked chest. I disabled the trap, picked the lock and found a *Ring of Protection*+1. I took it: I wanted as much magic protection as I could get. In the next room, I found a *Potion of Cure Serious Wounds* in an unlocked chest. I took it as well. In another, I found some kind of brooch.³ I couldn't tell what it was, but an unlocked chest was fair game. In the next room, there was only a bookshelf with a nicely bound copy of the *History of Shadowdale*. "How lovely!" I thought, "What a nice start for a personal library." In the next room, I found another finely bound book, *Famous Citizens of Shadowdale*, which I also took.

There was only one room left to open and I figured that had to be the one "N" was in if he were in the Inn. So I put on my leather armour, got both my short sword and my dagger comfortable in my hands, steeled my nerve and entered.

¹ This is the sub-quest *A Bouncer for a Belt*. You can buy his *Belt of Hill Giant Strength* for 3000XP outright from him. That nets you 750XP and the belt. Or, if/when you do find a replacement for Durnan and return to the Inn again, you get same 750XP and the belt. Either way, when he does give it to you, it is unidentified.

² If you mistreat the dog or touch it the wrong way, it will attack you, as dogs are wont to do.

³ I later had it identified as a *Brooch of Shielding* and put it in one of my quick slots. It was very helpful for a novice adventurer.

“N” was in there. He was, an aggressive lout named Narvel. He reminded me of a comic book thug. I confronted him about the dead Kella. He readily admitted he had killed her. He was quite unrepentant, even proud, of what he had done. He boasted he had done so because he had seen her talking to another man. What a twisted mind. (In retrospect, the man he must have seen could only have been Kella’s brother.)

He was one of those testosterone-crazed, entitled goofs who think they own women and can do whatever they want. I tried (not very hard) to persuade him to turn himself in to the Law. But, he attacked me and I killed him quite easily. In self defence, of course. Not such a big, tough man when faced with someone able and willing to fight back. I relieved his corpse of his dagger and topaz, then went down to Jhaele, told her what happened and received my reward.⁴

After a drink and a bite, I went back up to the room across from the one that had been Narvel’s, and appropriated it as a temporary home. It had two beds (in case I ever had a guest) and, more important, a bookshelf on which I could store my books and collection of other memorabilia. I would have liked another bookshelf and a desk, but it was free, so I didn’t push.

Both Jhaele and Bardag had mentioned the cattle thefts in the South as something unusual and there was nothing else going on at the Inn, so I decided to head South to see Kulnar Ohane.

3. Weregund, Hoareb, Beregon, the Apples and Eressa

On my way to the South gate, I stopped at the store of Weregund the Trader. I thought I might check out what he had to offer before heading South. But then I also remembered that he was the one who had put up the message about a rat eradicator. He offered me the job of ridding his basement of the rats that had infested it a few weeks previously. Did I mention that I detest rats? Of course, I took the job also because I was desperate for more GP to be able to buy kit, which I was sure I would need. So I went down to the cellar.

Creeping along, I was attacked by a pack of rats and had to use several of my healing spells to keep going. When I had managed to kill off most of those attacking me, a big rat-like creature named Ratbol came out and begged for mercy. He explained that the rats were kin to him and that they had been forced out of the forest by Drow and their Spider pets. He promised, if I let them go, that he and his rats would go off to an abandoned house and not be pests to the townsfolk any more and also to tell me where some good potions were hidden away in the town.

When I agreed, Ratbol told me about a burnt out building in the Southeastern part of the town and then they all disappeared. I went up and told Weregund the problem had been solved.

⁴ This is the sub-quest *Jhaele’s Missing Waitress*. Killing Narvel nets 50XP and whatever is on his body. Telling Jhaele he has been brought to justice nets a 250 GP reward (if you have not previously negotiated a better fee) plus 1000XP for completing the sub-quest. Persuading Narvel to turn himself in to the Magistrate nets the same reward, except you cannot take his possessions. And don’t get the satisfaction of killing the thug.

Weregund was pleased and willingly paid my fee.⁵ In conversation, he let slips something about partners, but refused to divulge anything further about them.⁶ When I looked at his stock, I wanted the *Bag of Holding*, but it - and everything else in the store - was too expensive.

I went out of the store and found the building Ratbol had told me about. It was, indeed, a burnt out foundation, but was named Ereks Pit on my map. There, I found a bag with several potions that would likely come in useful.

That reminded me that Hoareb was a potion maker and that I had not told her about what had happened to Kella. Her house was nearby so I went there. She took the news about Kella in stride and, when I asked, told me what she knew about the Temple to Chauntea. When I asked if she had any potions for sale (I had used one of my healing potions in fighting the rats), she said she didn't because he hadn't been able to get enough of the necessary inputs. She asked if I might be able to find the five ingredients she needed on my travels. She promised me a potion for free and discounted prices on any others I might want if I would bring them back.⁷

As I left Hoareb's house, I noticed a farmer outside his barn a few steps away. He was Beregon Hillstar, who had left the message about a labourer. He didn't talk much, saying only that his farm had been done in by a sinkhole and he needed to get the hay bales moved fast. When I showed him I could heft bales with the best of them, he was happy to pay me 50GP.⁸

Across the road was the shop of Bron Selgard, the town Smithy. He was not very friendly and his stuff, also, was too expensive for the quality as far as I could see.

Walking toward a bridge in the Northwest, I came to Eressa Amberyles who had put up that message about needing experienced adventurers. I was not very experienced, but I figured I might be able to fake it. She told me about a portal that seemed to connect to the Plane of Shadow had opened up outside Elminster's Tower. She stressed the urgency of closing it up. I offered to help but she saw just told me to come back when I was stronger and more experienced.

Wandering back East, I went by a couple of stabled horses, one of which seemed very jumpy. I tried calming it, but it just kept whinnying nervously and wouldn't stand still.⁶

⁵ This is the sub-quest *Rats, Rats, Everywhere*. The reward from Weregund was 250GP and I got 500XP for completing the quest. The potions I found are *Heal*, *Speed*, *Death Armour* and *Lore*. If you decide to kill Ratbol instead of letting it go, you get 90XP for doing so, and on his remains a *Scroll of Lesser Restoration* but you don't get told where the potions are. The reward from Weregund and the XP are the same.

⁶ This is one of the *non-sequiturs* in the game. There seems to be no follow up or subsequent story line.

⁷ This is the sub-quest *Hoareb's Herb Hunt*. She needed: Belladonna, Bitterroot, Red Nettle, Rosemary and Mugwort. The quest can also be started the first time you meet Hoareb, on the way to Kella's Cottage. When you deliver all five back to her, you get 1000XP, two *Potions of Heroism* free and good prices on everything else.

⁸ This doesn't qualify as a sub-quest, but does earn 100XP.

Moving on, I found the little twerp who had written that “Top Sekret” message. His story about a tree with apples made of blood located near the House of Plenty intrigued me. I thought I might check it out although it didn’t seem to offer any reward. I found the tree easily, climbed up and got three apples. When I examined them more closely, I saw they were not made of blood, but had something in them that was known to make anyone who ate one fight like a berserker. I stuck them in my pockets, just in case they might be useful.⁹

About the only place I had not checked out was the House of Plenty, the temple to Chauntea. I was right beside it, so I went in. Up by the altar was Glammerie Windbough, who seemed to be the high priestess. She told me about the Chauntea beliefs (a lot of woke eco stuff) and showed me what they had for sale in their little shop. She was not interested in my apples and everything was quite expensive, so I only bought a few inexpensive healing potions, thanked her for her time and left.

By then, I had knocked on every door and seen just about everything there was to see in the town itself, so I made my way down to and through the gate to the Southern Farmlands.

XP from Combat in this area:

Rat: @18XP

Kill Narvel: 50XP

II. Suburban Adventures

1. Goblin Invasion

I followed the main road until I saw a farmhouse to my left (West). This was the farm of Sulcar Reedo. He was a widower who was despondent not only because Goblins were raiding day and night, but also because they had stolen his wife’s wedding ring. He asked if I would get it back from them and I agreed to try to do so.¹⁰

As I went South from his place, on my right (East), I saw another farm, made my way up the stairs to the house and inside where Kulnar Ohane was fighting a bunch of Goblins. Afterward, Kulnar introduced me to the big blond guy, named Blaesgard, a retired adventurer who had been fighting at his side.¹¹ Kulnar told me the Goblins seemed to be coming from the Sinkhole in the Southwest of Shadowdale. He offered me a reward if I put them all down and brought back the head of their leader, Margblat.¹² He said that the entrance to the Sinkhole was

⁹ Climbing the tree or shaking down apples gets you 50XP. If you show the brat an apple, that nets another 50XP. I tried to eat (use) an apple in a combat but it didn’t help much. They can be sold for 150GP each to Jamble.

¹⁰ This is the sub-quest *Sulcar’s Ring*. For returning the ring to Sulcar, you receive 500XP and an *Amulet of Fire Resistance*.

¹¹ There may be a story line or another sub-quest related to Blaesgard, but I couldn’t find it.

¹² This is the sub-quest *Goblin Raiders*. Returning Margblat’s Head to Kulmar earns 250GP and 1500XP.

guarded to prevent people from getting in, but gave me his ring to show to Rast, the guard, who would then know to permit me to enter.



1. To/From Shadowdale Town
2. Sulcar Reedo's Farm
3. Kulnar Ohane's Farm
4. Abandoned House

- m. Windmill Tower
r. Rosemary

I agreed, needing enough cash to be able to kit myself out properly if I were going to get any farther in this adventure. After taking my leave of him, I also took the opportunity to take a look around his house to see if there was anything of use to me. I was, after all, still a Rogue. Kulnar's wife and kids were upstairs and overjoyed to get back to him. That left me free to look about for loot. About the only thing I found of real value was a cloak I couldn't identify and some GP. I figured Kulnar wouldn't object to making donations to a good cause.

Once back outside and on the road South, more Goblins attacked me. Several were shooting arrows from a windmill's walkway, so I went up and wiped out their attempt at air superiority. The barrel up there only had some arrows, but the lock chest had a set of armour of sorts. I didn't have enough Lore capability to identify it, but then I remembered that I had found a *Potion of Lore* back in Shadowdale. For the moment, no Goblins were near, so I used it on the armour and on Kulnar's cloak.

That turned out to be a very judicious use of the potion. It revealed that what I had was a *Cloak of Resistance*+1 and a set of *Studded Leather Armour*+1. Both improved my kit - and my fighting ability substantially and I quickly equipped them. I managed to conceal myself in a corner of the woods by the windmill and get enough sleep to restore myself.

A little to the Southwest of the windmill was an abandoned house that seemed to be the Goblins' local headquarters, given the number of them issuing forth from it. I fought my way inside, successfully killing off most of the Goblin cannon fodder that came at me. One of them got me with a poisoned arrow, but luckily I had a *Potion of Antidote* because I needed all my faculties to deal with the Goblin Shaman who seemed to be in charge.

I had to use one of my healing potions to keep myself in the fight before I was able to bring him down. On his corpse, I found Sulcar's wife's ring and a light hammer. In one of the crates in the room, I found nothing but rags. But in the other, I found a pair of *Gloves of Appraisal* wrapped in a Commoner's tunic. I thought they would be helpful in dealing with merchants from now on. And keep my hands warm as well. There was also a *Minor Acid Splash Trap* on the remains of one of the Goblins.

I had been poisoned again so I had to sleep another eight hours to fight off the effects. Except for a skulker or two, of which I disposed easily, I explored the rest of the area unmolested. Under some stones in a ruined tower were a Quartz Crystal and some Bullets+1 for which I had no use. Finding nothing else of interest and not being able to move any farther South, I returned to Sulcar and gave him back the ring. That made his day and he was effusive in praise. I was mildly embarrassed. After I left him, I looked around the outskirts of his farm, just in case he might have an herb garden, And as luck would find it, there was some Rosemary growing, hidden away in the Northeast corner of the area.

I decided it was time to check out the Sinkhole back in Shadowdale and see if I could deal with Kulnar's Goblin problem once and for all.

XP from Combat in this area:

Goblin: @18XP

Goblin Shaman: 137XP

2. The Sinkhole: Goblin Central

I made my way back to Shadowdale and from there to the Sinkhole in the Southwest. Going South through the gate, I mapped out the area and then walked up to Rast who stood guard at a fenced off area to prevent entry to the Sinkhole proper. I spoke to him and, when I showed him Kulnar's ring, he let me pass and I descended a steep path to the tunnels.



The Sinkhole

1. To/From Shadowdale Town
 2. To/From Sinkhole Tunnels
-
- h. Big Hole
 - r. Rast



The Goblin Tunnels

1. To/From the Sinkhole
 2. Margblat
- f. Frog Master
t. Young Troll

Immediately on entering the tunnels, a couple of Goblins attacked. I made short work of them and continued down what seemed to be a main passage South.

At a crossways, I turned left (East) and came to a bunch of frogs and a Goblin that didn't want to fight at all. Apparently, he was the Frog Master (frog keeper) and didn't like the head Goblin, Margblat, at all and told me where I could find him, in the southern part of the caves. The guy seemed harmless enough. All he wanted to do was care for his frogs. He posed no threat, so I decided to let him live. I found three barrels full of fish nearby which I thought I could sell in town. When I tried to rest, several other Goblins attacked and I killed them all, finding some minor loot on their remains. Then I was able to rest.

A hallway led South from the frog area, so I followed it down quite a way. In a big room to my left (East), there were a Goblin Shaman and several other Goblins. I managed to subdue them all, but not without some difficulty. I had to use one of my healing potions before I finished off the things. When I tried to rest, several more appeared. Luckily, I had recovered enough to deal with them. Their remains offered a small bit of minor loot, but on the body of the Shaman was an Amulet which I was not able to identify. In the two chests in the room, there was a bottle each of Wine, Spirits and Ale as well as a *White Light Gem*.

Leaving the room, I spied a Young Troll at the dead end of the hallway. I wasn't confident of facing one of those, yet at least, and darted back up to a hall leading to the left (West) before it saw me. "Once I have got Margblat under my belt," I thought, "I might take that on." I worked my way West and South and, after putting several more Goblin sentries and another Shaman to the sword, I finally found Margblat near his seedy throne.

He and his Warg Pup were a real handful and I had to use a couple of healing potions on

myself during the fight to deal with them. It was worth it, though. Not only did I get Margblat's Head, I also got his diary which I decided to keep for when I write my memoirs. In it he recorded how the Goblins had been forced out of the forest by the Drow. His short sword+1 was an improvement on my little blade, so I quickly equipped it. Just up a short passage North from the throne cave was a chamber with several traps that I had to disable. In it I found 83GP in loot bags, and in two chests a wand and a shield that I wasn't able to identify.

After resting, I checked out the rest of the tunnel area and, moving to the East came upon a Warg to the South. It was a challenge, but afterward at the Southmost end of the passage, I found a *Wand of Sleep*. Moving North, I ran into yet more Goblins. They were still a bit of a fight for me, but without Margblat to tell them what to do, I was able to prevail over their blind hostility.

With all but one (the Frog Master) of the Goblins wiped out and Margblat's head in my pack, I could just have gone back to Kulmar. However, my mind went back to that Young Troll. After resting, something made me think I had a chance of beating it. I had to find out. Besides, if I were able to beat it, I could rightly say that the tunnels no longer contained any threat to Shadowdale. So back down to it I went.

Big Mistake! Almost from the first blow was struck, I realized I was not going to get this thing by myself. If I was going to survive, I would need help, And the only help I had anywhere near was Rast, back up at the gate. So I ran. By, did I run! That troll, however was right behind me. Luckily, no sooner did he see me running toward him with the troll on my tail, than he came charging to my rescue. There ensued a real battle royal. We were able to injure the thing and get it to near death repeatedly, but it kept getting up and swinging at us.

I had already used my *Brooch of Shielding* but was still taking hits and had to use one of my healing potions to stay in the fight. It was not until the troll boasted that his wounds healed quicker than we could inflict them did the idea of speed hit me. I still had that *Potion of Speed* and quickly downed it. That proved to be the margin of difference in the fight. We slowly kept putting it down every time it raised its head or arm and, finally, it gave up the ghost. Did we need to rest after that?!

Then I decided I wanted to check out the rest of the area before returning to Kulmar. Over on the East side, I found a quartz crystal under a pile of rocks. On the West side I found a big hole and, of course, I poked around in it. Suddenly a Carrion Crawler erupted out and started trying to stun or paralyse me. I managed to use my *Brooch of Shielding* again and ran back and through the gate to the Sinkhole where Rast was still recuperating.

For some reason, the creature could not make it past the gate where we stood our ground. That let us inflict damage without getting hurt. That way we were able to overcome it.¹³

¹³ If you go back to the hole after killing the Carrion Crawler, you can retrieve a *Ring of Protection*+1.

Finally, I was ready to return to Kulmar. Which I did, received my payment and then went back to my room at the Inn. There, I put my new books on the shelves, along with a couple of keepsakes, had a rest and turned my mind to what to do next. When I woke up, I decided to check and see if Eressa was still looking for help.

XP from Combat in this area:

Goblin: @18XP

Warg Pup: @90XP or @75XP

Goblin Shaman: @120XP

Kill Margblat: 177XP

Kill Young Troll: 177XP

3. The Potentially Problematic Portal

I made my way back to Eressa, stopping by Weregund's store to sell some of the stuff I had picked up, which made me pretty flush. I got that *Bag of Holding* and a *Potion of Speed* or two. Then I hit the Temple to replenish my healing potions. My HP were not anywhere near elevated, so the *Minor Wounds* and *Moderate Wounds* were all I thought I might need to get me back into full fighting shape. Besides, they were cheaper. Passing Jamble's, I stopped to pick up a couple of *Bull's Strength*, just for the sake of having them too. And a cheap *Magic Bag* (20%).

When I met Eressa again, she seemed to think me seasoned enough to help her, so in we went to Elminster's Tower Grounds.¹⁴ There, I saw the big blue portal slab ahead of us. Nothing seemed to happen when I went closer to it, so decided to look around a bit before engaging.

1. To/From Shadowdale Town
2. To/From Elminster's Tower

- m. Mugwort
- p. Mysterious Portal



Past the portal, I saw the path up to Elminster's Tower and walked over to take a closer look at the forbidding warning signs. Why would you bother putting up signs if you really had the area trapped? Over by the edge of the lake, a bit South of the signs, I saw some Mugwort and tucked it away in my bag for Hoareb.

¹⁴ This is the sub-quest *Mysterious Portal*. Successful completion earns 1000XP and a *Ring of Resistance*+2 as a gift from Eressa.

I went back to Eressa and we decided there was nothing to lose by going at the portal. She began her incantations and before I knew it, a Shadow Fiend, a Shadow Mastiff and three Shadows came out of it. I used my *Brooch of Shielding*, a *Bull's Strength* and a *Speed* potion and quickly put myself between her and them. That fight was one long hard slog. Only the Mastiff did significant damage early on, so I focussed on it and put it out of the fight first. The other shadows and fiend did a lot of hitting but not a lot of damage. Of course, they didn't take much either. Eventually though, I put them all down, one by one and only had to use one of my healing potions in the process. I also used all of my *Speeds* and *Bull Strengths*: I think the shadows were able to reduce both my strength and speed by their touches in the fight, even though they did not do much damage.

After the fight, Eressa thanked me and said she had done her duty in Elminster's absence and was going back to the House of the Lady to resume her retirement. Before she left, she gave me a nice *Ring of Resistance*+2. I was grateful because I was sure this adventure was going to get tougher: Its extra enhancement powers and light would certainly help. Having done all of the things an adventurer might do in and around Shadowdale town, I knew I was going to have to go farther afield.

Not, however, before I got back to the Inn and had a good sleep. I was still feeling the effects of the shadows and, weakly and slowly, I made my way back to my room at the Inn. And slept a full eight, undisturbed, hours. I didn't even have to get up to go to the can.

XP from Combat in this area:

Shadow: @63XP

Shadow Mastiff: @65XP

Shadow Fiend: @309XP

III. Eastward Ho

1. Harper's Hill - New Acquaintances

The next morning bright and early, I was at the town's East gate where, after a lookover from the Warden, I went on toward Harper's Hill.

There, after a couple of hours' walk, I spotted three adventurers around a camp fire and overheard their conversation. They had travelled to Shadowdale together and quite clearly had had enough of each other's company, judging from the tenor of their exchanges. One accused another of stealing some of his things. The other called him a pompous prig which, in truth, he was. And the last of the three just called both of them out for their pretentiousness.

When I approached, they all engaged me in conversation, introducing themselves and offering to go along with me for a fee. The big pompous one called himself Berliad of Tyr, clearly some kind of religious nut. The little Halfling sounded like he had a sense of humour, but

I didn't think I needed a thief sidekick. Lady Lisabeth seemed a good sort to have by my side, but for the time being I wanted to try my own sword. I suspected I might well have to come back begging for help from one of them.



1. To/From Shadowdale
2. Adventurers' Camp
3. To/From Old Cormanthor Forest
4. To/From Castle Krag

n. Red Nettle

Leaving them, I explored the rest of the Hill area. Growing in a corner of a tower in the Southwest was a *Red Nettle* plant, one of those Hoareb wanted. I carefully wrapped it in a rag and tucked it away in a bag so nettles would get loose. I get rashes from nettles. I thought that if I took all the plants back to Hoareb with some life left in them, I would suggest that she set up her own garden or greenhouse for the things. That's me: Always helpful.

The road forked North to Castle Crag and East to Outer Cormanthor. I've always been fascinated by castle architecture, so I thought I might just head that way to see what I could see. Sort of like the bear that went over the mountain.

2. Castle Krag - Outer Castle

I arrived and found a bunch of orcs in the approaches to the castle. Before we came to their leader, Draggkor told me the Lich, Allokair, had taken over the castle from him. We agreed to go after the Lich together and headed to the castle courtyard to fight our way in.¹⁵



1. To/From South
2. To/From Castle Courtyard
3. To/From Castle Approaches
4. To/From Castle Subterranean Level
5. To/From West



There was a major fight with a bunch of skeleton archers and warriors there and all my newly found Orc allies got killed. There was little for it but for me to go on in by myself.

¹⁵ This is the start of the sub-quest *Castle Krag*. If you agree to cooperate, you get 100XP. Alternatively, you can fight Draggkor and his orcs for combat XP.

XP from Combat in this area:

Armoured Skeleton, Skeleton Archer, Orc: @5XP

Skeleton Ogre: @20XP

Draggkor: @ 31XP

Skeleton Warrior: @67XP

3. Castle Krag - Subterranean Level

As soon I entered, Allokair¹⁶ appeared. From what little sense he made, he seemed to have it in for comers, Orcs, other bad guys and good guys. After he took off, his skeletons attacked in force. After I had finished with the first wave, from a room immediately to the left (West) from where the Lich had appeared, I opened a couple of doors and found a secret store room. In it there was over 700GP, enhanced bullets, arrows and bolts, a Longsword+1, a *Robe of Cold Resist*, *Coldstones* and three assorted trap kits.



1. To/From Courtyard (4)

- a. Allokair
- b. Secret Door
- c. Crack in Wall
- d. Annabel
- j. Jyordhan False Lord

As I made my way deeper into the castle and followed the passage West, a Skeleton Ogre and several other assorted skeletons attacked. Their attempt to keep me out of the cell block was futile. Once in the cell block, with the key I found on the Ogre's remains (as well as his Greataxe+1), I was able to free Anabel, a captive Druid. She gave me the lay of the land in the castle. She also asked me to try to deal with a band of Cultists who were trying to bring a dead dragon to life in a nearby Druid Grove.¹⁷ Once again, I agreed.

In a malodorous room off the cell block, I ran into an Otyugh. After dealing with it, I found a Morningstar+1 and a healing potion among the dead orcs in the chamber. Proceeding West, I had to fight a Skeleton Ogre to the door of the cistern. Inside, a surprisingly effective Black Pudding attacked. When I was finished with it, and exploring, I came across a crack in the

¹⁶ This is the second part of sub-quest *Castle Krag*. Getting Allokair to speak of his plans is worth 100XP. Killing Jyordhan False Lord and chasing off Allokair earns 2000XP.

¹⁷ This is the sub-quest *Druid's Grove*. Going to the grove, engaging the Head Cultist in conversation to find out what he is about nets 100XP. Killing the zombie dragon earns 1000XP.

wall at the West end of the cistern. Stupidly, I yelled into the crack and before I knew it a Rust Monster charged at me from within. Luckily, I was fast enough to do it in before it could damage any of my kit. At least I was able to pick up a diamond from its remains.

Back out in the main hallway, at its West end, there were two doors. I opened the one to the South and had to deal with a Belker and a Skeleton Mage. With them out of the way, I found a few spell scrolls on a bookshelf and, in a booby-trapped chest, *Bracers of Armour*+2, a *Ring of Clear Thought*+2 and ten vials of *Potion of Heroism*.

The next room was my worst and hardest experience to that point. I managed, after a long travail, to kill Jyordhan the False Lord and his skeleton Priest and warriors. But then Allokair revealed itself again, and I had to use all of my buffing potions and keep using my best healing spells to keep me in the fight with the Lich. Several times, I came within an inch of death and only survived through good luck and fortuitous timing of my healing potions.

But then, all of a sudden, Allokair took himself off, leaving me exhausted and thankful to have managed to stay alive. Then, I checked Jyordhan's body and got his *Adamantine Helm* (which I quickly equipped) and his *Greatsword*+2.

Then I rested, made my way out of the Castle and tried to find that Druid's Grove.

XP from Combat in this area:

Armoured Skeleton, Skeleton Archer: @5XP

Skeleton Ogre: @20XP

Skeleton Mage, Skeleton Priest: @31XP

Black Pudding: @31XP

Rust Monster: @43XP

Skeleton Warrior: @67XP

Otyugh, Belker: @67XP

Jyordhan: 151XP

4. The Druids' Grove

I entered the Druids' Grove and made my way up toward where the Grove was located. As I approached, some guy dressed in a funny get up came rushing up to me and asked if I was there to witness a miracle and the dawn of a new age. He sounded pretty crazy to me, going on about some Cult of Draconic Doom. He called me a 'gibbering oaf', but pretty soon it became clear who was doing the gibbering. The guy was a reject from the Cult of the Dragon.

I told him he was crazy and I decided to put a stop to his nonsense once and for all. He then quickly brought his dead green dragon back to life, and then he attacked me. The creature, who he named "Corpsrenderer", was a pretty dumb zombie and it took a swipe at him. I took care of the leader in a stroke or two and then turned to face the dragon, buffed up. The other cultists all ran around, out of their respective minds with fear of the creature.

I managed the zombie dragon with only a little bit of angst and, after I had put it down, I took care of the other cultists.¹⁸ With some crazies, the only way to deal with them is to put them out of their misery fast. Otherwise, they will go off and become Q-Anon freaks, or worse MAGA (Make America Goofy Again!) politicians and believers.



1. To/From East
- c. Chief Cultist
- d. Green Zombie Dragon

With that sorry bunch taken care of, I searched their remains and got precious little in return: Their corpses were as bereft as their heads. The Zombie Dragon, at least, had an emerald.

Then, I checked around the area before heading back to Harper's Hill. (I figured that I could rest around the camp there for a bit before deciding what to do next.) In the Southwest part of the area, I found some of that Belladonna that was on Hoareb's list.

XP from Combat in this area:

- Cultist: @5XP
- Cult Leader: @43XP
- Green Zombie Dragon: 151XP

5. Outer Cormanthor Forest

Talking to the prospective henchmen around the camp in Harper's Hill reaffirmed my decision not to have any of them along with me. So I took my leave and headed East to Outer Cormanthor Forest. Hoareb had said that one or two of the things she needed would be in there.

Four hours trekking East took me to the Forest. My welcome there was from an attacking lynx and as I staggered off the path after from that fight, from a nasty Air Elemental. And as I tried to rest up from that, a pack of five wolves attacked. I managed to rest after that. I began

¹⁸ There is an alternative scenario. You can tell the Cult leader to go through with his ritual, in which case the dragon attacks and kills him. You still have to kill the dragon. The other cultists just say they are going to have to re-evaluate their respective lives. The XP for the sub-quest and killing the dragon are the same.

stumbling farther East in the bush, off the path and lost, when I spotted a camp fire. Unfortunately, it turned out to be a couple of orcs and their Shaman sitting around it. Afterward, I at least had a fire to warm myself by as I rested up. When I looked around, I saw a chest in which there was a healing potion and some kind of amulet.¹⁹ I resolved to improve my *Lore* skills, no matter what. Either that or buy more *Potions of Lore* the next chance I got.

I bush whacked my way back West over to a stream where I saw a wounded stag. I approached it, and it held its ground, letting me examine it. I wondered if my rudimentary healing skills might work and I tried but had no success. I could do nothing for it and had to leave it as it was. Perhaps a Druid or Ranger with better veterinary skills would come by.



1. To/From Harper's Hill
2. Camp of the Tel'quessir
3. From Drow Encampment

- a. Air Elemental
- b. Bitterroot
- d. Dracolisk
- l. Larn
- u. Brown Bear
- v. Black Bear
- w. Wounded Stag
- z. Zaethra

As I wandered Northwest of the stag, I ran into a Black Bear and shortly after it, a big Brown Bear. Those were horrendously hard fights and I was glad that I had my brooch and had bought as many healing potions as I had. I sure needed them. But those fights were worth it. Near the spot where the Brown Bear erupted at me, I found a Bitterroot plant and stashed it for Hoareb. That made Five out of Five.

I cautiously made my way further North and had just started East at the edge of the forest when I spotted an Ogre sitting alone on a platform. It wasn't at all aggressive, so I greeted it. That proved to be a good move. It had been outcast by its band because it thought him too stupid for words. Somehow we got to talking about lonely jobs and he thought he might be able to be a good bouncer. I told him about the job opening back at the Old Skull Inn and he was off to Shadowdale like a shot. Well, at least at an Ogre's shot-like pace. I hoped he would be able to work out a deal with Durnan because a belt of extra-strength would certainly help when it came to things like bears, elementals and orcs.

¹⁹ Later identified as an *Amulet of Will*+2.

Going further East, a giant Slug attacked and over in the Northeast beyond it, I spotted two very life-like statues. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a Dracolisk nosing around. I knew for sure that I was not yet ready for one of those. I was going to need some pretty good capabilities of resisting the paralysis rays or whatever it shot out. So I skulked away before it spotted me. Discretion is definitely the better part of valour. I told myself that I would come back to the spot and do it in later on. Hopefully. Maybe.²⁰

Finally, I wended my way down to the middle of the forest and came to a glen in which a troop of Elven Rangers, the Tel'quessir of the Old Elven Court, was gathered. The leader, Halinor Avalael, welcomed me but warned me of dangers ahead from Drow returning to the forest as the powers of the Old Elves had weakened. He told me of three Drow factions that had returned and the attacks they were making. I had just offered to help in their fight and he was politely declining, when the camp came under concerted Drow attack.

Several of them came right into the camp. I took care of them while the elves held off the others with their bows and arrows. In a short lull, I made my way to the flank of the Drow and saw their leader, some kind of Mage, shouting orders and casting spells. I was on him before he could react and managed to put him down quickly. By then the other Drow had all been seen despatched by the elves, so I despoiled the body of the Mage. On his body, I found a belt that I couldn't identify²¹, a dagger, a *Drow Recall Stone* and a note to the Mage.

I read the note (the Mage's name was Zaethra) from some honcho called Jezzra Jaele which spoke of a raid on Mistledale the next morning. That sounded ominous, so I quickly took the note back to Halinor. He asked if I had the stone it mentioned. He said it gave us a chance to hit the Drow camp and disrupt their attack on the Dale town.²² I noticed his use of the word "we", a change from before the attack. (I love it when male chauvinism suddenly disappears in when female help in 'man's work' is needed.) Of course I gave him the stone. With it, he set up a portal into the part of the forest where Jezz had set up his base of operations.

XP from Combat in this area:

Orc, Lynx: @7XP
Wolf: @26XP
Black Bear: @42XP
Giant Slug: @62XP
Orc Shaman, Air Elemental: @105XP
Brown Bear: @152XP

²⁰ I came back for it later, when I had gained a bit of experience and better kit. Near where the Dracolisk is patrolling, there are two locked chests. One is also booby-trapped. Inside them are 500+GP, an Emerald, Amethyst, a Mace Chain Mail+1 and a Large Shield+1.

²¹ Later identified as an *Archer's Belt*.

²² This is the sub-quest *Jezz the Lame*. Giving Halinor the *Drow Recall Stone* earns 1000XP. Going along with the elves and killing Jezzra ('Jezz the Lame') Jaele in his tent at the Drow camp earns another 1500XP.

6. Drow Outpost

We entered the portal and came out not far from the Drow camp, not far from the centre of the area. We found the camp and killed off all of the Drow in it. A little way to the Southeast, we found a couple of Drow Assassins and killed them too. I looted some barrels and chests for not much stuff and found what must have been Jezz's tent. At first it seemed deserted, with nothing but unfathomable blackness inside. Then, I spotted a carefully concealed entry.



1. Drow Encampment (Jezz's Tent)
2. To Outer Cormanthor Forest (No return)

- a. Portal Arrival
- c. Drow Camp

Inside, we got a brief look at Jezz himself before total darkness fell. He had cast some kind of spell to confound us. A knavish trick, but it was to no avail. I managed to get my blows in and the other Elves hit him with their arrows, even in the blackness. After a short, stressful skirmish, we had done the jerk in and lights came on again.

I took from his body a set of *Silent Moves Leather Armour*+2, a *Kukri*+2, and an unsent letter. The letter reported on a past attack on Battledale and then, somewhat prematurely, predicted success in a planned attack on Mistedale. There was also a map that revealed a secret path into the Outer Forest. Before we got into Jezz's tent, we had been unable to find a way back to elves' camp. In a booby-trapped chest in the tent, I found 250GP, but not much else.

Halinor, at that point, bade me farewell and said that I was always welcome wherever the Tel'quessir of the Old Elven Court might be. Which made me feel quite good. As a Half Elf, I often felt elves looked down on me, even though I knew I had the best of both races in me.

I rested up and made my way back to the Outer Forest. There, I still wasn't able to do anything for that Wounded Stag. I made a note that was something I should look into further.²³ Then I headed for Shadowdale, mainly to see if Larn got the job at the Inn (I really could use Durnan's belt). I wanted also to rest up, get the things I could not identify myself identified by one or the other of the merchants and to flog off all the stuff I didn't need or want.

²³ For me, at least, this was another of the game's *non-sequiturs*.

XP from Combat in this area:

Drow Assassin: @63XP

7. Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch

After a long hike back to Shadowdale, I stopped at Weregund's on my way to the Inn, had the things I couldn't identify identified, equipped the set of *Silent Moves Leather Armour+2* that I got from Jezz's remains and sold most of the rest of the booty. Thirsty and flush with cash, I rushed²⁴ over to the Old Skull to check on Durnan and Larn. And get a drink.

When I entered there were two smiling bouncers at the door. One was smiling because he has just got a new job that suited him to a T. The other was ecstatic to be able to pursue other interests. Durnan shook my hand gratefully and gave me the promised belt. I wished them both well in their new endeavours, then went of to Jhaele got a drink and retired to my room for a bit of a rest. There, I put the supplies in a bag, stashed the documents for my memoirs in a corner and put a few other mementos on the bookshelf. Then I went back down to the common room.

As I entered it, a distraught woman named Millie rushed up, raising the alarm that the town was under attack and the Drow were at the Twisted Tower of Ashaba. I, of course, agreed to go help the defenders.²⁵ Just as I was moving off, she asked if I would look out for her boy, Jaime, who she believed was still inside the tower.²⁶ I quickly made for the West gate, but made a stop at Jamble's store to get Durnan's belt identified and flog off all my accumulated loot. I put on the *Belt of Hill Giant Strength*, well worth the extortionate fee I had to pay to get it ID'd.

Then I stopped at Hoareg's to deliver the ingredients she needed. I was glad of the free *Potions of Heroism* that she gave me and, flush with cash from selling my loot, I bought a whole raft of buffing and healing potions I thought would be useful in the fight at the Tower. I had no idea when I might get back to her for more and, besides, her prices were so good, I couldn't resist filling up a magic pouch to the top. Then it was to the Tower post haste!

IV. The Twisted Tower

1. Tower - Grounds & Ground Level

Across the River Ashaba, I came to the tower and the Guard Officer Toman outside the

²⁴ If you don't move quickly, before you know it, Millie may intercept you and present you with a moral dilemma: Rest and sell your loot, or rush off to help the Tower

²⁵ This is the sub-quest *The Drow Assault*. If you are able to foil it, you earn 3000XP, get the Drow Leader's key (which is key to another sub-quest) and weapon, a Heavy Flail.

²⁶ This is the sub-quest *Milly's Lost Boy*. You have to find Jaime and send him back to Millie. If you do, when you next see Millie, you receive her thanks and 1000XP

gate hurriedly sent me inside the walls to talk to Guard Commander Thurbal.



1. To/From Shadowdale
 2. Tower Main Gate
- a. Tower Archer
 - h. Heavy War Horse
 - o. Officer Toman

Stepping through the gate, I saw men of the Guard in a melee with Drow. In a lull, Guard Commander Thurbal told me the Drow assault had come from the entrance to the Underdark beneath the Tower. He explained that most of the tower had been infiltrated, so was making a stand where he was, defending the entrance to the Dungeon. He said he was sure a traitor had given the Drow details of the Tower's many secret passages and rooms.²⁷ There were, he said, only four who knew that information: Himself, Elminster, Lord Mourngrym and Lady Shaerl. I questioned him closely, but it was impossible to decide on a suspect among the four, so I asked what I should do to help in the fighting.



1. To/From Tower Grounds
 2. The Armoury
 3. To/From Level 2
 4. To/From the Dungeon
- a. Audience Chamber
 - f. Feast Hall
 - g. Grand Entry Hall
 - j. Jaime
 - k. Kitchen
 - p. Pantry
 - s. Servants' Common Room
 - t. Training Room

He gave me the key to the Armoury and told me to go there and activate the Helmed Horror, something created by Elminster long ago as a tower defence.²⁸ I made it to the Armoury,

²⁷ This is the sub-quest *Traitor in the Tower*. When you finally discover who the traitor is and kill the Doppelgangers, you receive 1500XP for each.

²⁸ This is the sub-quest *Activate Horror*. Finding the Armoury before the Drow spot and kill you is a challenge. Reporting back to Thurbal that the Horror has been activated earns 1000XP.

not without a little trouble, found the Horror and gave it the activating code. It took off past me, searching out and killing most of the Drow in the area. There were one or two left behind that I had to sort after the Horror had gone on, but I managed (with the use of a healing potion or two). On the body of a Drow Priestess in the Feast Hall, I found a Chain Shirt+1, a Full Plate, a Mace+1 and a *Periapt of Wisdom*+2.

Behind a door on the North wall of the Feast hall, there were a couple of Drow Assassins, a Mage and a Phase Spider. Collectively, these were hard to put down, but having activated my Brooch and forcing most of them to attack me at the door, I managed them one by one. After I had finished with them, I searched through a store room to the South and in it found a dog with the name tag "Jaime". Then I realized he was Millie's 'boy' and sent him back to Shadowdale.

After having scoured the rest of the level for remaining Drow or spiders (and loot), I went back to Thurbal and reported that the Horror was taking care of business, on the ground level at least. That was a major relief to him. He gave me the key to the second floor and asked me to go up to check on the nobles while he concentrated on defending the Dungeon.

XP from Combat in this area:

Drow Assassin, Mage: @23XP

Phase Spider: @53XP

Wraith Spider: @77XP

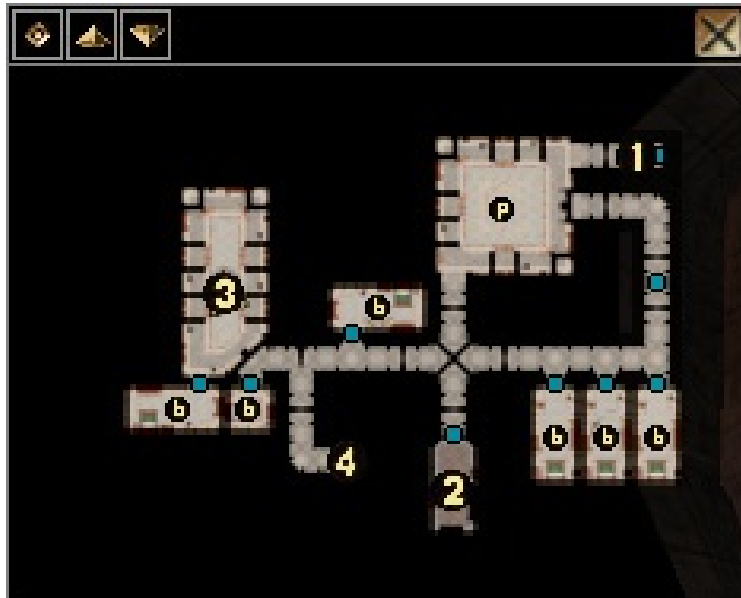
Drow Priestess: @353XP

2. Tower - Second Level (Mourngrym)

I cautiously went up the steps to the second level and at the end of a hall, spotted ahead in the Parlour several Drow Militia, Drow Assassins and Phase Spiders, as well as a Drow Mage who didn't show himself until after the fight started. I knew this was going to be a challenge so I ducked back, used my *Brooch* and potions of *Bless* and *Bull Strength* and a *Summon Level III* scroll to conjure a Dire Wolf. With all that, I only barely managed to survive the encounter.

I made my way through numerous bed chambers, some of which held Drow, GP or passable loot, or all three. I had to rest several times to recover from wounds I found, in the Library at the end of a short hall in the South of the area, a couple more Drow Militia and a Mage. Picking over the remains, I found a staff I could not identify, a Sapphire, several scrolls and an odd note.

The contents of the note, signed 'The Hidden One', revealed the Drow were confident in victory with Elminster ('the old fool') away and said that once his ruse was done, they would meet up at a base underneath the Tower. It appeared, from the note's content, that Mourngrym had been the traitor. It referred to a Matron and seemed to indicate that the Drow were acting for



1. To/From Ground Level
 2. Library
 3. Lord's Chamber
 4. To/From Level 3
- b. Bed Chamber
p. Parlour

someone or something called 'Malauntyr'. (The reference to a 'Matron' brought to my mind one of the Drow clans I had learned about from the Elves in Outer Cormanthor. The House Jaedre, apparently, was led by a Matron to whom that Jezz the Lamé had reported.)

All that remained was for me to find Mourngrym and confront him. There wasn't much more of the level to search, so I followed the hall I was in further West, passing on my left (South) a short passage that led to stairs going up. At the end of the hall, I found Mourngrym protected by Guard Elite and accompanied by two Harper Agents he referred to as 'Guests'.

I spoke to him, not hiding my distain, given the evidence of that note. Finally, I showed the note to him and he was flummoxed. He said the writing was that of his son, Scotti, who had been pressing him for information about treasures in the Tower. Convincingly upset, he asked me to accompany him and rushed up to the Tower's next level, where his wife and son were being kept safe, to get some clarification.²⁹ I gave him the benefit of the doubt and followed quickly.

²⁹ If you go to Level 3 before seeing Mourngrym on Level 2, a slightly different scenario unfolds. You meet Shaerl, who explains her husband is on the level below. The same dialogue occurs with Storm Silverhand, who appreciates my offer to help him fight, but says his place is there to protect Shaerl and Scotti. Both speak highly of Mourngrym, which does not jibe with the evidence of that odd note you found.

Scotti is in the room with them and, like the others, asks how the battle is going. However, he makes a mistake in referring to Commander Thurbal as "Thurval". (In retrospect, you might consider that to be suspicious and not just a typo.)

When you then go down to Mourngrym, the same dialogue as above with him ensues. But when you get upstairs, there is no opportunity to speak to Storm if you speak to Shaerl first. Mourngrym's reaction is immediate and they all just charge off to search for the boy.

XP from Combat in this area:

Drow Assassin: @18XP, @23XP or @53XP

Drow Mage: @18XP, @23XP or @77XP

Phase Spider: @42XP

Fire Mephit: @53XP

Drow Militia: @77XP, @61XP or @18XP

Drow Mage: @77XP or 23XP

3. Tower - Level 3 - A Missing Child

When I caught up, I saw him, his wife Shaerl and another man named Storm Silverhand. Mourngrym Storm had explained that he was a Harper who was protecting the family. The wife started shrieking that Scotti had just gone missing. (When I spoke to Storm, he had explained Harper concerns and involvement in the current situation and welcomed my offer to help.) As soon as Mourngrym heard his wife's story, he asked that I search the lower levels for the boy while he, Shaerl and Storm search the upper levels of the tower.



- 1. To/From Level 2
- h. Storm Silverhand
- m. Mourngrym
- s. Shaerl Rowanmantle

I quickly headed back to the ground level, but in the parlour on the second level, I saw a Drow Priestess and two Drow Assassins and Scotti, who cried out for help, saying the Drow were going to kill him. I killed the Drow and then went to the child. Immediately, I did that he cursed me for interfering, saying he hoped the 'Matron' had already cut out the kid's heart. He then turned into a Doppelganger and attacked me. Things did not bode well for the real Scotti.

The only good thing to come out of the encounter was the loot found I when the dust had settled: a *Bag of Holding* and a *Ring of Protection+2* on the Doppelganger's remains.³⁰

Just as I entered the ground level, a dying soldier cried, as he expired, that the Drow had broken through and the Guard could not hold. I rushed to where Thurbal was fighting and managed to kill a few Drow Assassins, but not in time to save the Guard Commander. As I was still fighting Drow, the Knights of Myth Drannor arrived and saved the day.

³⁰ If you are lucky, you will benefit from a glitch in the game engine which produces two Scottis and thus two Doppelgangers, with double the rewards in both XP and Loot.

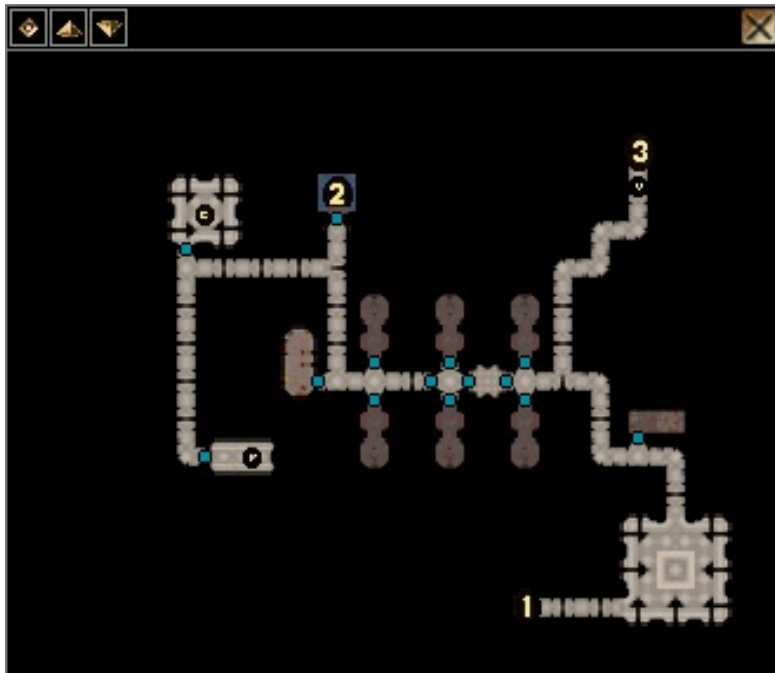
As I was catching my breath, Florin Falconhand explained who he and his knights (Torm, Rathan Thentraver, Merith Strongbow, Lanseril Snowmantle and Jessall Silvertree) were and apologized for coming to the rescue so late. When I informed him of developments and told him about Scotti, he and his cohort charged off to the Dungeon to try to save the boy.³¹ I followed as soon as I had caught my breath (and taken possession of Thurbal's Bastard sword+1).

XP from Combat in this area:

Drow Priestess, Drow Assassin: @23XP
Doppelganger: 73XP (first), 63XP (second)

4. Tower - Dungeon Level (Rescue Mission)

They charged off ahead of me, clearing Drow as they went. I found a Westward passage leading to cells and cleared the Drow from them as I went, picking up some loot, including a pair of Boots of Striding beside a corpse in one of the cells.



1. To/From Tower Ground Level (4)
2. To/From the Lords' Crypt
3. To/From the Underdark Level 1 (1)
- D. To/From Dungeon (2)
- c. Drow Captain's Quarters
- r. Rethaun D'Mezzun
- s. Sylune's Sarcophagus
- v. Vernla Quentha

Past the cell block, there was a long passage North that led to the Lords' Crypt, in which I found Longsword+2 in one of the sarcophagi. At the end of the crypt, there was a large chamber, in which an apparition, or ghost, of Sylune waited. She told the tale of Drow stealing her husband's amulet from his sarcophagus and asked if I could get it back for her. I, as usual a soft touch for a sob story, agreed to try to get it from the Drow.³²

³¹ This is the sub-quest *Saving Scotti*. If you are able to save Scotti in time and get him back to the Tower so he can make it to his parents, you receive 1000XP and his *Ring of Spell Resistance*.

³² This is the sub-quest *Sylune's Amulet*. If you are able to get it back to her, you receive 1000XP.

Back out of the Lords' Crypt, I made my way along a Westward-leading passage when a couple more Drow attacked. At the corner where the passage turned South, I noticed a door after the fight. It turned out to be the Drow Captain's chamber and a really tough fight ensued. Afterward, I found some quite good loot in the chests in the room.

The passage South ended with a booby-trapped door to the West. Behind it was Rethaun D'Mezzun, a Drow Mage who was happy, he said, to answer all my questions before he killed me. Well, he did and he didn't. I got the Intel, plus a set of Bracers+3 and a Quarterstaff+1.

After a little rest, I charged off and finally found the knights gathered at the Northeast corner of the Dungeons, facing Vernal Quentha another insufferable Drow officer who was guarding the crack in the foundation that led to the Underdark. After we had finished with her, Florin and his knights had a *crise de conscience* about whether to go on after Scotti or to return to protect the people of Shadowdale. I told him to follow his heart (what else?) and he consequently rushed back to the town.³³ To protect the innocent. "Fine and good," I thought, "But that leaves me to go on alone." Which I did.

XP from Combat in this area:

Drow Mage: @40XP
Drow Assassin, Drow Militia: @19XP
Drow Captain: 147XP
Giant Spider: @40XP
Rethaun's Fire Elemental: 40XP
Vernla Quentha: 209XP
Rehaun: 209XP

V. The Underdark

1. Level 1 - Drow, Dueregar & Spiders

After Vernla, my entry to the Underdark was anticlimactic. On my right (East) as I entered there was a large cavern chamber with several barrels that contained various potions and other minor loot there for the taking. The rest of the level was, unfortunately, not quite so easy.

Crossing a causeway across a subterranean lake, I came to another similar chamber in which I found two Hook Horrors. With them both eliminated, in the rear of the chamber I found a Longbow+1. Following the passage North, more Drow Mages and Priestesses, as well as Dueregar Clerics and Warriors later, tried to impede my progress. Note the "tried". I had become pretty proficient with my blades by that time. And all those healing potions I had bought also helped a lot.

³³ This is not a sub-quest, but telling him to follow his heart nets 150XP. There are several other ways you can advise him. I didn't bother to check them out.

In a large widening of the passage farther on, Some Dire Spiders, a Drow Assassin and Priestess blocked the way. On the Priestess's body I found Sylunes's Amulet. I just stowed it rather than rushing back to her. After all, she was dead and Scotti was, I hoped, still alive.

1. To/From Tower Dungeon (3)
2. To/From Level 2 (1)

- e. Earth Elemental
- f. Fire Elemental
- m. Mimic Chest
- s. Drow Priestess
- t. Grimbold Tornhelm



There were two exits from the chamber and, by coin flip, I went West. That brought me to an exit to another part of the Underdark. There, a message awaited:

No Exit: The vast Underdark stretches out for miles.
To venture forward without proper guidance would be suicide.

So I didn't try.

A little farther back, toward the Northeast, there was an area in which I spotted a Fire Elemental and also the dead body of a Drow Mage. I wondered if there were any connection. That was enough for me to buff up with my Brooch, and several enhancement potions before entering. It was a good thing I had because the Fire Elemental was HUGE and it took several healing potions to keep me in the fight. There was nothing on the Mage's body, but beside it I found a *Miscellaneous Small* which I identified as a *Brazier of Commanding Fire Elementals*. Oh, yes, and three lots of quite good treasure.

With nowhere else to go in the West, I went back to the Eastern passage which opened up in to another large chamber. The North and East exits off it led to that same Underdark exit message. So I followed the exit to the South. That brought me face to face with more Dueregar and then at another subterranean lake, more Drow Militia, Dueregar Clerics, etc. After them, I

was able to take the fork in the causeway to the West. At the end of that direction (in dead centre of the map), I found an Earth Elemental. It was protecting chests that contained a *Healing Kit*+6 and a Sapphire.

I emerged from there, went back to the lake causeway and down the Southern fork. An opening to the left (East) off the passage led to a storage chamber in which there were three chests and a barrel, protected by a Dire Spider, Drow Militia, Mage and Cleric. Looking closely at the chests, one of them seemed strange and indeed it was. It was a Mimic Chest which I had to destroy first, before it stole any of my kit. With that done, I examined the others, finding a *Belt of Agility*+2 and a *Bag of Holding* where the Mimic chest had been.

Moving on South, I came to a very large cavern chamber where several Dueregar attacked. Finishing off the Warriors, Rogues, Clerics, etc., I came face to face with their leader, Grimbold Tornhelm. I could have attacked him straightaway but thought I might see if I could get some Intel from him first. It turned out he was talkative, and also a truly mercenary mercenary. He told me about the Drow leader, a Matron Kineth Draurin, how the Drow all hated each other and about a Malauntyr who was really pulling the strings. He also told me good [news](#): That Scotti was alive, the matron's captive, being held for negotiating purposes.

Even better, he proved how unscrupulous he was by allowing himself to be bought out of the Drow service. He said that for 500GP he would not block my way and that for 1000GP he would help me fight them on the next level down. I was flush, so I figured, "Why not let someone who knows them fight them," and I paid him the 1000GP. With that, he charged off and said he would meet me at the Drow camp on the next level down.

XP from Combat in this area:

Drow Assassin: @19XP
Dueregar Rogue, Cleric, Mage: @19XP
Drow Mage: @40XP
Ochre Jelly: @40XP
Fire Elemental: @476XP
Earth Elemental: @63XP
Wraith Spider: @63XP
Hook Horror: @91XP
Mimic: @91XP
Dire Spider: @209XP

2. Level 2 - The Matron and Malauntyr

I followed him through the gateway down. Meeting successive waves of Derro and Drow and Dueregar mercenaries, I finally fought my way to a widening space that was the Drow command centre. A Derro Savant was rallying the monsters to protect the Matron. I finished off the Savant and had time to heal my wounds and have a look around. On the Savant's corpse, I found a Staff of Defence. There was some minor loot and potions in a chest in the area.



1. To/From Level 1 (2)
 2. Matron Kineth Drauron
-
- d. Durmtrang
 - m. Matron's Quarters
 - s. Scotti

Following a passage to the West I came to another chamber where Grimbold was in combat with a bunch of Drow. “So he did keep his word,” I thought. We prevailed, but unfortunately, he was cut down in the last stages of the fight. On the body of Durmtrang, the lead Drow, I found the enhanced spear *Kerishnar*. On Grimbold's body were his Greataxe+2 and a *Glittering Necklace*. After killing off a few remaining Drow Assassins, I had a look around, found two buildings with soundly locked doors and then had a rest.

There was a passage leading North, so I followed it. Although a couple of Drow militia, a Mage and a Priestess tried to stop me, I made my way to the Drow Head Honcho, Matron Kineth Draurin. She was a haughty, pretentious sow and I polished her off with less of a fight than many of her would-be guards gave. Typical for trumped-up fascist leaders: Great in their own minds; Terrific at conning others to fight their battles; But overhyped and underperforming bullies in the crunch.

On her body, I found the key to her quarters back in area I had cleared previously and her enhanced Heavy Flail *Asp*. Hoping against hope that Scotti might still be breathing, I went back. In a locked and booby-trapped chest, I found a cloak which I had to use a potion of Lore to identify as an enhanced *Drow Piwafi Cloak*. It was a better piece of kit than I had, so I equipped it. There was nothing else in there, so I left to go check the other nearby building.

Her key opened the door without problem. The first thing I saw was a book case on which I found a copy of *Volo's Bestiaries: The Malaugrym*. Then I saw a chest which I easily unlocked and found 500GP, a diamond and two fire opals. Hiding in a corner by the bookcase was Scotti.

Shaking he asked if I were there to rescue him. When I said yes, he said “But.. What about Malauntyr.” He then told me about how Malauntyr had been responsible for the attack on the Tower and had promised the Drow great power if they were able to get the *Stone of Shadow* from the Tower. He said Malauntyr was worse than the Drow and had planned to kill both his mother and father.

We then began our way back to the Tower. He was pretty good at keeping up, but he stopped suddenly when we came to where the gateway to the upper level was located. There, we saw Malauntyr standing. He shouted out that the Matron was simply a pawn in his game and he would deal with the Drow at the ‘Coming of the Shadowmasters’. He then challenged me to come and get him at the Old Skull.³⁴ Then he disappeared through a portal that vanished after he entered it. I hate it when goof balls call me names, so I resolved to get him as soon as Scotti was safe, I had got Sylune’s amulet back to her and I had got rid of my excess baggage in town.

We moved up to the first Underdark level and, as I was making for the passage out, a Dueregar Cleric attacked. I made short work of it and then just rushed ahead to the Dungeon level and gave Sylune the amulet. It was only then that I noticed that Scotti was not with me! I retraced my steps post haste and found him, finally, back at the gateway to the Underdark’s lower level, where I had fought the Dueregar Cleric.

I was about to give him a piece of my mind for not keeping up, until I remembered he was just a kid. And a lordling. Anyhow, when I spoke to him to get him to follow me, he somehow transported us back to the Tower entrance to the Dungeon. There he said he knew the way to the upper levels and to his father and mother. He gave me a Ring of Spell Resistance, which he said he got from Elminster, that might help in my fight with Malauntyr. But he made a plea that I help the townspeople on my way to the showdown with Malauntyr.

I agreed without compunction. I wanted to get back to town so I could flog off all my excess loot anyway, get some more useful potions and go at Malauntyr lean and mean.

XP from Combat in this area:

Drow Assassin: @19/33/40XP

Drow Militia: @ 17/47XP

Drow Priestess: @17XP

Derro Mercenary: @33/40XP

Derro Savant: @105XP

Dueregar Cleric: @50XP

Durmtrang: 168XP

Matron Kineth Draurin: 302XP

³⁴ This is the sub-quest *Showdown at the Old Skull*. There, if you are successful in dealing with Malauntyr, you earn 3000XP.

VI. The Old Skull - Malauntyr Redux

As soon as he left, I was transported back to the town's West gate and found the Drow running roughshod throughout. I killed off a bunch and made my way to Jamble's where I sold of virtually everything except for my kit, my Bags of Holding, my potions and a few other special items I wanted to keep. Then I had to fight my way to the Old Skull Inn so I could have a rest, a drink and a bite (?The Last Supper?) before heading off to the Old Skull area North of Elminster's Tower.



1. To/From Shadowdale
 2. Malauntyr (First Encounter)
-
- a. Cave Opening To/From (b)
 - b. Cave Opening To/From (a)
 - c. Cave Opening To/From (d)
 - d. Cave Opening To/From (c)
-
- m. Malauntyr (Second Encounter)

Back at the Inn, I was on my way over to Jhaele for a drink when I spotted Millie and her 'boy'. I went over to say I was glad to see them reunited. Millie was most pleased and gave me a pair of *Gloves of Swordplay* she said she had found on her way out of the Tower.³⁵ I fitted them, then went over for my drink, bite and sleep before heading out to chase down Malauntyr.

After a solid eight hours, I was up got a cup of coffee and was on my way. On entering the Old Skull area, I was in a sinuous canyon. I made my way East and then North, running into more Drow and an Earth Elemental before finding a broken-down wagon that blocked the way forward. I managed to squeeze past it and continued following the canyon to the East and then South, the only way to go forward. About that time, I remembered I had found that Fire Elemental conjuring thingee and decided it would be good to have one of those to help take care of the Drow and their creatures.

Finally I came to what seemed to be the end of the canyon, a dead end. Then I noticed a cave entrance. Well, that opened out into the Northwest corner of the area, facing East, up at the

³⁵ This also is where you get the 1000XP for her sub-quest.

top of the canyon. Looking down on the town, I could see the Knights of Myth Drannor fighting the Drow in the streets and alleyways. Moving East, I saw a set of tracks that led over a bridge over the chasm.

No sooner had I crossed over than a Two-headed Troll mercenary attacked. I was glad that I had conjured up another Fire Elemental. Somewhere in the back of my mind was the nugget of knowledge that fire damage was required to put down and keep down one of these trolls. And that is exactly what we did. I began to worry, however, that if I did not find Malauntyr soon, the town would be lost. The Knights below looked hard pressed.

Unfortunately, I managed to get myself lost on the upper edges of the canyon, ending up in an area in the South where I ran into an Adult Wyvern. It was an irascible bear to take down, probably the mate to that skeleton I had seen early on back in the South of town. The only good thing to come of the encounter was that I found a *Ring of Protection+3* not far from where I had killed the wyvern. As fast as I could, I got back to the cave entrance and back to the centre part of the area.

I found a semi-concealed pass into the true centre of the area and there I found Malauntyr near a glowing crystal, accompanied by two shadow clones. I buffed up quickly and charged at him and the clones. The battle raged for a bit and I had to use several healing potions to stay in it. Then, all of a sudden, Malauntyr said “Enough” and disappeared. At that point, I didn’t know what to do. So I buffed up and went down the pass to see if I could find the sob anywhere.

Back in the direction of that last cave entrance I had used, I saw a completely different creature. I conjured up another Fire Elemental and buffed myself to the maximum and went over to check it out. When I got there, I found out it was Malauntyr, but in his Maugrym form. He boasted about his limitless powers and I steeled myself for blows as well as bombast. I had started to fight, the monster said “What’s this?” in surprise.

I looked around and saw Elminster had returned. He told me to step aside, that I had done enough. Then he turned into a Dragon and began fighting with Malauntyr. I saw him cast several spells, including at least one Time Stop, before he had struck down the Maugrym for good.

Then Elminster told me he should have killed Malauntyr when he first had the chance and said he had to get off to the town to deal with the Drow and relieve the townsfolk and the Knights. He set up a portal and told me to use it to get to his tower, where he would meet me when he had finished. I didn’t think there was much more that I could do, given his powers, so I just used the portal.

Arrived there, I just rested and when I woke, there was Elminster so I went over to him. He told me the town was safe, thanks to the efforts of the Knights and to my efforts (which gave me a bit of a fillip). He confirmed the *Stone of Shadow* was safe and that the potential disaster of its loss had been averted. He also confirmed that Mournrym, Shaerl and Scotti were all safe. Then

he told me his history with Malauntyr and his regret, again, of missing the chance to kill him previously.

With that, he gave me a reward and the thanks, again, of Shadowdale, its rulers and people and presented me with a magic wand, a Netherese Blast Sceptre.

With that, a portal opened up (“Export Character and End module”) and the game ended.

XP from Combat in this area:

Shadow Clone: @13XP

Drow Assassin: @14XP

Drow Militia: @ 14/39/50XP

Drow Priestess: @14XP

Drow Mage: @14/39XP

Dire Spider: @29XP

Earth Elemental: @39XP

Two-Headed Troll Mercenary: @119XP