

THE UNOFFICIAL POOLS OF DARKNESS WALKTHROUGH

BY MATT HAAG

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Contact the Author
<http://www.lostcitadel.com/>

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PART I: GETTING STARTED

Pools of Darkness (or POD for short) isn't exactly the easiest AD&D Gold Box game to figure out—it doesn't give you a lot of guidance on where to go next, unless you know where to look. The best way to get through it is to work for Arcam or Mulmaster, who sends you on quests against his enemies, but doing that requires a lot of unnecessary walking. This walkthrough highlights what should be done right away, so that you have enough energy to survive the more difficult quests later on in the game.

In addition, there are a couple segments in the game that you need to know about so you can survive them. A lot of damage gets tossed at your party, and knowing when it's coming can help your people prepare for it and stay alive.

COMPOSITION OF PARTIES

If you are creating a party from scratch (instead of bringing one over from Secret of the Silver Blades, which is better than making a new one), you don't want non-humans unless you plan on bringing them in as thieves or as a multi-class something/thief. A thief is the only class where non-humans can max out (have unlimited level advancement, or achieve level 40); if they are any other class there is a level restriction (based on prime requisite scores) after which the character will no longer gain experience.

My own party consisted of five humans and a half-elf: a paladin, a cleric, a magic-user, a dual-class ranger/magic-user, a dual-class fighter/cleric and a multi-class half-elven fighter/magic-user/thief. The paladin was especially important, since having him in the party let me control the various NPC's who joined us for varying periods of time.

The other characters balanced everything out. The fighter/cleric started his career as a cleric, then immediately changed classes (something only humans can do). He began gaining levels as a fighter so that I would have another fighter in the party, but still have the spellcasting abilities of a cleric when his level as a fighter surpassed that of his clerical level. The ranger/magic-user was originally a mage, and that works on the same principle as the fighter/cleric—once his level as a magic-user surpasses that of his other class he gets to use all his spells. The reason I chose the ranger/magic-user combination is that only rangers are allowed to cast mage spells while wearing armor. Another reason to have a ranger in your party: you will encounter a number of giants in the game, and rangers deal double damage to giants. The multi-class character was added so that I would have that extra spell or two if needed, but also have the abilities of a thief and the attack capability of a fighter.

You can choose to have other characters in your party, but if you expect to survive more than two or three battles you absolutely have to have a magic-user, at least one fighter, a cleric and a paladin.

SPECIAL STRATEGIES

Another important trick truly clever adventurers learn early on is the technique of “sharing” equipment. This is a rather simple concept: if one player has Plate Mail +5, why shouldn't all the other characters? What you need to do is to load your saved game at the main menu where you have the option of adding and removing characters. Let's say that you have a fighter and a cleric in the same party, and you want the cleric to have the fighter's plate mail. View the fighter's items, and trade the armor to the cleric. Get back to the main screen, and remove the cleric from the game. Update the character when the game asks. Then remove the fighter, but do not update that character. Add both back in, and each has the same plate mail!

Before your party adventures into the dangerous world of the Moonsea, you must know several other things. Some creatures are magic-resistant: for example, all the lieutenants of Bane—Kalistes, Tanetal, Gothmenes and Thorne—drow elves, bits o' Moander, rakshasa, as well as some other enemies. This means that they are either partially or wholly not affected by your magical spells (this is based on a percentage—if a particular monster fails its magic resistance check it is affected by your spell, otherwise they aren't). However, the magic resistance of some creatures—like drow—is easier to overcome as your spellcaster's level increases. Unfortunately, it seems that this is the case with drow only.

Finally, a tip you may not know: When confronted with a vastly superior enemy in an indoor setting, if you want to avoid battle, get your troops to the other side of a wall parallel to the monsters.

Because of their programming, the monsters will likely start walking toward you—but of course, they won't reach you because of the wall in between the two groups. Unless one of the monsters wanders around the corner, your best bet is to simply do nothing for numerous turns—eventually the game will declare your party the winner, and you'll be out of the fight. I actually survived a room full of beholders, etc., with this very tactic: I basically put all my troops in a headlong retreat, and had the mage(s) cast stinking cloud spells after everyone got out the door. (I lost one or two guys on the way, but as you know, it doesn't matter as long as nobody flees.) This is the "Slam and Scram" strategy: 'slam' the door with spells and scam.

BASICS OF THE GAME

MAGICAL WEAPON BONUSES AND THAC0

First, let's talk about magical bonuses applied to an item. This can be because the weapon is of exceptionally fine quality or that it has been magically enchanted. In any event, magical bonuses work like this. On melee weapons (battle-axes, swords, spears, etc.) the number following the + is the number added to the character's dice rolls. For instance, let's say Thorin the 1st level fighter is attacking a creature with armor class (AC) of 0. Let's also assume that Thorin has an average strength score, say 12. So Thorin has no bonuses on his chance to hit the monster, or to his damage roll if his attack succeeds.

In order to hit this creature, Thorin must roll a 20 on a 20-sided die (1d20) in order to connect with the monster (this chance is his THAC0, or To Hit Armor Class 0). If he succeeds, his regular long sword will inflict 1-8 (1 8-sided die or 1d8) points of damage to the monster (note: a roll of 1 always misses and a roll of 20 always hits with no exceptions). Now let's change the equation. Thorin now has a strength score of 18(00), granting him a bonus of +3 on his attack roll and +6 to his damage roll. Now, Thorin's modified THAC0 is 17, since the bonus lowered the number required to hit the monster. So if Thorin rolls a 17 or higher on 1d20 he hits the monster. Then he rolls for damage. Since he has a +6 bonus to damage, he will inflict 7-14 points of damage (1d8+6) with his standard long sword.

Now let's make it easier for Thorin. Let's say that instead of your boring, everyday long sword he's holding a Silver Long Sword +5. This sword grants him +5 bonuses on his chance to hit (attack rolls) and his damage (damage rolls). This bonus is cumulative with his previous strength bonuses, so Thorin needs only roll a 12 on 1d20 to hit, and will inflict 9-23 points of damage with his attack.

The moral of the story is to use items that have the greatest enchantments. However, not everything works this way. For instance, bows and arrows are different. The attack modifiers apply (THAC0), but damage bonuses only apply to long and short bows. When using a crossbow a character gains no extra damage from his exceptional strength because the firing motion of the bow is mechanical in nature and the character only pulls the trigger.

MAGICAL ARMOR BONUSES

Armor bonuses work much the same way as weapon bonuses do. The idea behind armor class is that the lower it is, the harder you are to hit. If a character has an AC of 10, a monster with a THAC0 of 16 only needs to roll a 6 or higher to hit the character ($THAC0 - AC = \text{Number required to hit}$; $16 - 10 = 6$). However if you character had an AC of, say -7, the same monster would need to roll a 23 to hit the character ($16 - [-7] = 23$).

This is where armor comes in. Would you rather be prancing around in plain clothing or a full suit of armor protecting all your vital areas? Personally, I'd rather be inside the armor. Now, every kind of armor has a different AC rating. Leather armor has an AC of 8, chain mail has an AC of 6 and plate mail has an AC of 1. Now, let's say that instead of standard armor, you have some spiffy Elven Chain +4. This means that the character's modified AC is 2. In addition to reducing your character's chances to get hit, armor also aids your character's saving throws.

A saving throw is given to a character any time where the character may be affected by magic, wands, poison, paralyzation or dragon breath. Basically, saving throws are simple. Say your character happens to be in the way of an opposing magic user's fireball. It detonates. The fireball causes 24 damage to everyone inside the blast radius. That is, *if* they fail their saving throws. If your character rolls a successful saving throw, then they only receive $\frac{1}{2}$ damage (maybe they ducked under their

shield, hid behind a wall, or hit the deck in time to avoid most of the blast). So if your armor improves your chance of succeeding with your saves, why not use the best armor?

ARMOR COMBINATIONS

First, several important notes on armor use. Thieves cannot use any armor heavier than chain mail, which limits them somewhat. They can only equip leather, chain, elven chain and bracers of defense. Mages can only use bracers of defense or no armor at all. The other classes are allowed to use whatever armor they please. However, since the other classes have the advantage of extra armor, a cloak of protection or ring of protection will do nothing to lower their AC. Cloaks of protection should be given to the mages. On the other hand, a cloak of displacement will work in combination with plate mail or any other armor, because these cloaks make the wearer to appear to be a couple steps away from where they actually are (i.e. displaced).

MAGICAL RINGS & MISCELLANEOUS MAGIC

Any given character can only use 2 rings at a time. The rings your character will probably want to use are rings of electrical immunity and fire resistance, since most enemies use these spells. If you get into a fight with some rakshasa or other interesting bad guys, rings of cold resistance are good because they cast ice storm a lot.

Rings of invisibility and protection from evil are sort of pointless because their effect dissipates rapidly. For instance, a ring of invisibility will grant a character added immunity because enemies have a -4 penalty applied to their attack rolls, at least until the character attacks, casts a spell, etc., because then the invisibility disappears. A ring of protection from evil is slightly better, but it only grants a +2 bonus vs. evil opponents and immunity to charm attacks until the character makes a melee attack (i.e. an attack where the character is standing right next to his opponent).

PHLAN

The game begins with the heroes on the docks in Phlan. Visit the council and accept Sasha's mission (an interesting note/glitch in the game is that if you push your way to the right of the Council Chamber, all the way into the back of it, you'll get permanently stuck. You'll have to restore your saved game—or never return). Rest and memorize spells in the Sunrise Inn before leaving Phlan.

At the opposite side of Phlan is a tavern that goes by the name of the 'Troll Toss Tavern.' You have the option of fighting the ettins—giant two-headed beasts, which aren't particularly difficult to defeat. This way if you have fledgling characters (like humans who change classes) this is a good way to get some quick experience and still have the opportunity to train immediately after they gain a new level. As the party leaves town with Sasha's retinue, a god, Bane, appears and causes the sky to cloud over, destroying the cities and effectively capturing the Moonsea. You are transported to Limbo, where you meet Elminster, the Sage of Shadowdale. He explains the current situation and then teleports you back to the Realms.

PART II: THE SUNDERING

MELVAUNT

Upon returning to the Realms, you discover that you are near the crater of Melvaunt, on the north edge of the Moonsea. Go east into the crater and join Priam in investigating the temple of Tyr. Upon entering the public worship area of the temple, a figure will run upstairs. Pursue the figure. Upstairs you will run into a Vampire and some of his minions. Defeat them and record what the journal entry you are given says (this will be important later). If you explore the top floor you will find four unlit, iron braziers that you can't seem to light, a belfry and a study where you can rest.

After resting in the study, descend the stairs to the ruined public worship area. Go past the entrance and downstairs into the first basement (the Red Plume warriors stay behind as a rearguard). This floor is dedicated to acolytes' cells and the temple kitchen. However, if you go into some of the rooms off the main tunnel, you will discover the story behind the tower's curse, as well as some treasure. Continue down to the second basement. This floor is the temple's crypt. Again, investigate the rooms for clues and treasure. Go into the room where two bodies lie on the floor next to a coffin. A ghost, Brimwulf, will appear and ask if you will be tested. Agree and pass behind him.

Upon entering the hallway behind the coffin room, you will notice an indentation in the wall. Walk into it and perform the ritual of purification correctly by lighting the incense, then sipping from the bowl. Go to the door. Defeat the lone earth elemental to receive the Vessel of Purity with Torm's Symbol on it. Then continue onward to the next room with Ilmater's symbol on the floor. Defeat the fire elemental there and the Spirit Flame will jump into the bowl. In the next room, the Spirit Flame will jump out of the Vessel and light the Lamp of Vigilance. Take the lamp and ascend the stairs to the top floor of the tower.

Light the braziers in the corners of the tower with the Lamp and then go ring the bell in the center of the belfry. The banshee—Laurellin—and Brimwulf are reunited and thank you. When you go back downstairs, you discover that the pews of the worship area have righted themselves and that the High Priest waits at the altar to heal you if you desire.

TAYDOME'S KEEP

Go into the "stockade manned by giants and ogres" directly to the north of Melvaunt. Upon entering, a group of giants will greet you with steel. Destroy them and proceed north into the heart of the keep. You will discover a guard from Phlan who claims to have been with Sasha, who goes by the name Roulin. Supposedly, Quil and Kimarr ambushed Sasha and her party of Phlanarians in the keep's library. In reality, Roulin is Kimarr in disguise. Refuse his help (and be prepared to defend yourself). Kimarr is controlling tribes of giants with his magic, while trying to destroy Quil and kill Sasha.

After defeating the giants summoned by Kimarr, go west and then north into a room where some giants are interrogating two Phlanarian guards. Kill the giants and rescue the guards. Return to where you met Roulin, then go north to a fork in the path where a note suddenly materializes. Go east here, following the tunnel as it turns south further on. You might encounter drow on the way East. Be prepared, they are very resistant to magic, so traditional attacks generally work best unless you are of sufficient level. You will find Kimarr and his giant guards talking behind a door. Defeat them to clear the keep of evil and create a staging-ground for further Phlanarian campaigns.

DRAGONHORN GAP

Enter the steading near Dragonhorn gap and you will be confronted by a group of giants. Talk to the giants and they will let you pass. Proceed further and some other giants will ask you who let you in. Your choice here is unimportant except for purposes of deciding who goes first in the combat that follows.

After killing the giants, go either east or west into the hallways branching off from the main courtyard where you came in. Go down either hallway until where you find a set of doors that have

signs saying “Private! Keep Out” on them. Enter one of the rooms, claim the room as your own and beat the monsters there. You now have a convenient resting-place.

Go back into the main courtyard and proceed north. A pitched battle between giants and ogres is taking place. The best option is to duck so that one side kills the other before they turn on you. Defeat them and train any characters you need to in the training hall to the west.

All the rooms in the southern portion of the keep are filled with enemies. You don’t have to beat them, but with a free training hall and a resting place where you can remain undisturbed for as long as you want, there’s no reason not to rack up experience here by clearing the rooms. When you feel you’re ready, proceed into the Twisted Horn, an inn directly across the courtyard from the training hall. Approach a man that eyes you, named Kardal, and speak to him. Then defeat the cloud giants in the room to the south. If you used a lot of magic during the battle, you can rest in this private room; this will be your last opportunity to do so for a long time.

If you walk in front of the main gate in the northern courtyard, giants will pull you through the gate for an audience with the Hill Giant Shaman. Walk around if you wish to train characters first. Once inside the keep, the giants tell you to go to the northeast corner of the fortress for an audience with the Hill Giant Shaman. To get to the shaman, you must move toward the northwest corner of the keep, and then go more or less due east to the eastern side. When you enter the Shaman’s room, be prepared for a battle against an overwhelming number of giants. Knock out the magic-users first, and then worry about the hill giants. When you’ve defeated the giants, pick the lock to the treasure vault to the north and then proceed to the northeast to enter the Fire Giant’s cave. (Note: you can go back outside the steading and train your characters and rest before you continue.)

After entering the cave, go north until you reach a crossroads. Make sure you are in Area view, as you will spin about in the center of the road in an effort to make you lose your sense of direction. Proceed east, where the Fire Giant Mage thanks you for killing the Hill Giant and tosses you a bounty for killing him and bids you to leave.

Ignore her orders and continue into the cave, into the long hallway on the southernmost part of the map. Upon entering the tunnel and moving several squares eastward, the world will get a little blurry (a ‘dream-like miasma’ or something along those lines) and you will notice that you can’t use the Area map anymore. You will also notice a skull on the ground that will disappear. Keep walking east until the skull reappears in the middle of the path, this time with a strange ring embedded in it.

Take the ring out of the skull and throw it to destroy it to break the enchantment. Continue to the eastern end of the tunnel, and proceed north. When able, go towards the west, then north. You’ll have to backtrack to the east, past two rooms—one of which holds an ambush, the other is a dusty room where you can rest—and then north once again into a long hallway. Follow the hall to the western end, but activate ‘Search’ a few steps from the western end to discover the secret door to the south.

Go through the door and into the Fire Giant’s secret area. Make sure you rested in the last ‘quiet’ room before this, as there are several difficult battles coming up. When you go south, a Fire Knife Assassin approaches you to bargain on the Mage’s behalf. You might as well listen to what he has to say—it can’t hurt. The mage offers you a position in her army, as well as a reward. You are then left to decide whether you will accept the offer, demand more money or reject it entirely. Unless you accept the offer, you end up in a pitched battle, which you don’t really need right now. Accept the offer, and follow the assassin into the mage’s quarters.

Here the mage makes her offer again, this time in person. Reject her offer, and prepare to do battle. Kill the Fire Giant Shamans right away; the others can wait for a short time. After killing all the enemies, continue through the room to an antechamber where two red dragons and a green dragon are preparing to take off. Defeat them, rest and exit the fortress through the tunnels on the north end of the room.

SULASSPRYŊ¹

Upon entering the cave surmounted by the symbol of the Silver Blades, a hill giant will approach and ask if you want to see the ‘silver lady.’ He gives you directions that lead you to Vala. Vala will give you a silver shield and join your party. Since there are many undead enemies in the cave, be sure your cleric is of sufficient level so that he can cast Restoration, the opposite of the vampire’s Energy Drain. After Vala joins your party, go to the east, then proceed south. Upon entering a room with coffins in

¹ This section of the game can be completed later at the behest of the Phlanarian council for pay.

it, search them to find the Lindenwood staff, the first item needed to control the elementals. After taking the staff, a lich, some skeletons and several wraiths will spring from the coffins and attack you.

After defeating the undead, you will notice three doors, two on the west wall and one on the southern wall. The door in the northwest corner contains a large sarcophagus that houses many vampires. The other door on the west wall is a 'quiet' room where you can rest. In the southern room, treasure is hidden below some of the refuse on the floor.

Leave the room with the coffins and go to the south into a room with oak roots growing out of all the walls and the ceiling. Search the room and take the Oakroot staff. Upon taking the staff, five earth elementals will attack. Kill them and exit the room. Rest again in the quiet room.

Go north past where you originally entered the cave and continue past the main intersection, to the east of which is a large room. After passing the intersection, you will enter a room to the north where drow and Vaasans are planning an alliance. To traverse the room, you will have to kill them. After defeating the drow, proceed northward again, to a rectangular room in the center of the top of the map, and defeat three hill giants that were arguing over a pretty stone. This is the Worldstone, which is used in conjunction with the Oakroot staff. From here go south into a room across the hall. The southern door in this room is yet another 'quiet' room, while the eastern door contains fire elementals and the Crucible of Flame.

After collecting all the artifacts, proceed to the main chamber in the center of the map. Be prepared for a tough fight. As you proceed eastward through the room, the Vaasan army will break through a breach in the wall. Vala instructs you to put the Worldstone in the Oakroot Staff's setting, and light the Lindenwood Staff in the Crucible of Flame. Bend the elementals to your will and make them seal the breach. Vala takes the artifacts and charges into the breach to complete the task of sealing the breach in the wall. She leaves you to deal with the Vaasan army (or the small portion that has broken through so far). Cast fireballs and destroy the mages first, then work on killing the Vaasan warriors. When you have defeated them and rested yourself, leave the cave.

ΜΥTH DRANNOR²

Enter the promenade of Myth Drannor and Nacacia, elven princess meets you and begs that you aid her in the retaking of Myth Drannor. It seems parties of knights sent in to scout never return. Agree to go with her, take the treasure she gives you and enter the ruins.

You enter into an open courtyard. Proceed to the southwest corner, where you discover that something heavy had been dragged south from this point. In the south-central part of the ruins is a room where a rakshasa is bending over a knight with a glowing ball. The knight screams as his life is sucked into the ball, and his life force condenses inside. Nacacia throws herself at the nearest rakshasa, drawing you into a battle. Use your weapons against the rakshasa since they are magic resistant creatures. After killing them, leave the room through a door in the west wall, then reenter the building to the north and rest in a dusty room there. Go west into the southwest corner of the ruins and kill the Banite clerics training their new rakshasa disciples.

From here go northward into the northwest portion of Myth Drannor. Go east through the first of the narrow passages on the eastern wall and find a lone rakshasa, disguised as a knight who has found treasure. Threaten him and he will talk about the rakshasa's plans to reanimate Tyranthraxus, pet of Bane. Go north from here, climb over the door which is stuck (have your thief or Nacacia do this), proceed eastward, and then northward in a reverse 'C' formation. The northwest room is a dusty, unused room where you may rest.

Go back east into the room at the center of the 'C'. Inside are many rakshasas, all with globes of light. Tyranthraxus is rising from the floor, only a shadow but becoming more solid by the second. Of the choices presented you, choose to Dispel Evil, destroying the globes, and causing Tyranthraxus to disintegrate. Kill the many rakshasas in the room, and quest to reclaim Myth Drannor is complete—with the exception of the many basilisks that still roam around the ruins. Exit Myth Drannor, and Nacacia promises to have master bards sing songs about you!

² See note 1.

PART III: THE ROAD TO BANE

THORNE & THE DRAGONS

Return to Dragonhorn gap where you defeated the Hill Giant Shaman, but rather than entering the steading, go north up to the Crater of Verdigris. Go due west and enter the ground where you see a dragon swoop into a large hole—in reality a dragons' aerie. A horde of dragons will be waiting for you inside (1), aware of your intentions, so make sure you saved outside the cave. Defeat them, cross the antechamber and you will see a robed figure move through a door to the east. Instead, go through the door to the west (2) and rest in the room there. Go through the eastern door (3) and take the scroll that is lying on the floor. Move north, and enter the main chamber (5), where a robed figure, Modthryth, Patriarch of the Cult of Dragon, is reading from a scroll. Two dragons, a blue and black are engaged in mortal combat. The black will kill the blue and the gathering will depart.

SEE APPENDIX A: MAP OF THE DRAGON'S AERIE

You will notice eight doors around the hall; two on the west side, two on the east and two on the north, and the two behind you. For now we'll concentrate on the doors on the east and west. The order which you finish the dragons' lairs behind the doors is not important, so long as you complete them all. It is also a good idea to rest whenever you have the chance in here because both the random and planned encounters here are rather nasty.

The southwest door contains the Blue Dragon lair—as is evident from the dry, crisp air and the shock you get from the door's metallic handle. Explore the lair to find a treasure horde in a room to the south and east of the entrance (4) and continue south into a disused room where you can rest (6). The main chamber in the southeast (7) contains a gathering of blue dragons. Kill the five dragons and take the blue steel key. Return to the main hall.

The northwest door contains the lair of the White Dragons—it's very cold and your armor chills your skin. Upon entering the main hallway, you will see four doors on the north wall. The second door from the east contains a room where you can rest (8). The door farthest from the entryway houses a green dragon that is chained and suffering from the cold (9). If you free him, he attacks the party. Go north and east to get to the main room (10), where Modthryth is talking with white dragons, which will warn him of your approach because they sense your body heat. Battle the nine Zhentil mages and three white dragons. Take the silver key and return to the main chamber.

The Black Dragon lair is in the northeast corner of the aerie and is filled with humid air and fetid clouds of mist on the ground. As you move down the passage to the east, you will notice a room on the left side, which you can't get to (11). If you come around from the other side, by going north and west, you can rest in this room. Upon entering the main chamber here (12), you will see four black dragons worshipping the black dragon that killed the blue dragon earlier. Kill them to receive the iron key and exit to the main chamber.

The final lair is that of the Green Dragons. When you go through the southeast door, the greenish-yellow air will have an edge of chlorine to it. Proceed south from the entrance, and search the rooms for a secret door. If you wander around in the initial area while searching, you will also discover a short sword hidden under some debris (13). Go through the secret door (14), and enter the southeastern chamber. A small room, south of where you entered, but to the west contains bones and treasure (15). The next room to the west contains a green dragon that gives Modthryth an amphora of vampire's blood (16). Modthryth leaves and four green dragons attack you. Kill them, take the copper key, and go back to the main chamber.

After collecting all four keys, go north through the main doors in the central chamber (5) and you will be in a smaller room. Go through the northeast door and burn the preserved corpses of dragons that lie there to gain experience (17). Live dragons will attack immediately after this. Kill them, and then cross to the western side of the room you were just in. Go through the southern door and rest in the room there (18).

Go through the door to the northwest (19), directly above where you rested, and you will discover Modthryth there. He will summon snakes to fight you. Defeat the snakes and continue north until

you discover a room with two doors, with and four intricately carved keyholes set in the wall next to the door (20). Save the game and use the keys to unlock the doors.

On the other side of the doors, Modthryth is waiting for you (21). He attacks as you walk in the door with his personal bodyguard, two Dragoliches, which are immune to magic. Kill them all, then go through the portal to the north (22).

You will reappear in Elminster's camp in Limbo, where he has fashioned a small island. Deposit your items (as they'll be destroyed if you take them with you), train characters that need to be trained, and memorize spells. Generally, just get your party as ready as it can be.

SEE APPENDIX B: MAP OF THORNE'S CAVE

Have Elminster transport you to Thorne. Upon entering this area on another plane, two red dragons will attack you (1), but not before you overhear them saying to the 'ready to fly by the third blast of the horn.' Defeat them and go south and east. An important note: you will not have a place to rest for a little while. Go through the east door, where dragons are herding prisoners out of the room (2), then go north into a hallway. If you go west, you will discover a room with treasure in it—the prisoners' belongings, along with a Ki-rin's corpse (3).

Go back to the east and rescue the prisoners (4). A woman who has a 'certain look about her' will approach you. Raziel offers to join your party in return for all the loot she can carry. Agree to her offer because where you're going you'll need an extra pair of hands (besides, there is plenty of treasure for everyone).

Continue east into a hall with two doors. The southern door leads to a room with a red dragon busy hiding its horde (5). Defeat the red dragon and take everything you can carry. Continue through the room by going towards the door to the north, where a patrol of human rogues will accost you; you can beat them easily and take their weapons and armor. The other door in the aforementioned hallway bypasses this room, but it is not a great idea as you need to equip your characters with some sort of protection.

In any case, continue north. Raziel will suggest that you go to the south in hopes of finding treasure. Agree to her suggestion and go south. You will enter a room with a door on each wall. The door of the west wall has a golden light seeping out from underneath it. A Ki-rin is here (8), providing you a safe place to rest and relax.

There is treasure here—but you can come back after you have finished the cave and not risk random monster encounters. If you want the treasure now (it's platinum, gems and jewelry), proceed west from the Ki-rin's room across the map. The treasure (7) is hidden behind a secret door (6). Go back the way you came in and go east, then north. Raziel shows you the secret door to get to Thorne (9); proceed south from here.

To the southwest is a room that houses an old man wielding a sword (10). He is a servant of the Ki-rin, and gives you treasure. Continue north and west searching for a secret door. As you come to an intersection, Raziel suggests you go east for more treasure. The treasure is where she says it is (11), but you continue you will be confronted by a Ki-rin (a lawful good creature), and will ask you why you're here—for treasure, glory or duty. Again, you can come back to the treasure later (besides, if you loot it now, Raziel falls into a bottomless pit and dies once you open the secret door 'guarding' the treasure).

Go through the door to the northwest (12), and several red dragons inside the room will attack you. Continue through the secret door barring the passage to the west (13). In the next room, defeat the rush of two red and two green dragons (14), which bar your way. Continue westward.

Upon turning south, you will notice the hallway ends with doors on the east, west and south walls. The door on the west wall leads to a room which has a Ki-rin in it and a place where you can rest and save (15). This step is particularly important, as there are several tough battles ahead. When you are rested and rememorized, go through the southern door into an antechamber where a small guard of red dragons awaits (16). Kill them and then go back to where the Ki-rin is to rest so that you are in top shape to battle Thorne.

Go back to the antechamber where you killed the red dragons and go south through the double doors (17), where Thorne is preparing to blow the Horn of Doom for the third time, signaling the beginning of the war on the Forgotten Realms. He asks you if you want to throw your life away like that Ki-rin. Yes is the right answer, of course, so a battle begins.

Seven red dragons are spread out around the room, along with Thorne, who is magic resistant and has an Armor Class of -11. Concentrate on killing the other dragons first with Delayed Blast Fireballs

and then work on Thorne. The trick is to minimize the number of dragons living with fireballs so they don't get the chance to breathe fire on you. After killing Thorne, a Ki-rin will appear and explain how Thorne happened upon the Horn of Doom. Raziel takes all the treasure she can and bids the party farewell. Loot the remaining horde and then, after resting, take the horn with you and depart by following the path you came in on in reverse. If you haven't gotten the treasure that was mentioned earlier, now is the time to get it.

MARCUS, THE RED TOWER & TAPETA

Upon entering the Red Tower in the middle of the Elven Court, you will be in the garden. Go to the west, then north. In the northwest corner of the tower you will find a back door (A), which bypasses the ambush set for you at the main entrance to the tower (B). Pass through the door and inside a room where there is a mosaic of a hand on the floor and hundreds of eyes are glaring at you. Go east into the hallway.

SEE APPENDIX C: MAP OF THE RED TOWER (BASEMENT & 1ST FLOOR)

From the hallway, go south and then west into a closet where you discover Phlanarian guards. They seek Shal, a fighting mage of Phlan. Agree to help search for her and exit the closet. Go north and then east down a flight of stairs (O).

From where you enter the basement, you will notice a large walled area to the west. This is Phlan, trapped under the Red Tower. The citizens of Phlan will not allow you to enter the city, but they beg you to help find Shal. Follow the city wall northward, and when the path makes a second intersection, go to the east. Avoid the room to the southwest (C), because it contains a Banite cleric and numerous troops. When you are given the option of which way to go again, head north into the dungeon (D). Defeat the guards, rescue Shal (E) and proceed back up to Level 1, the straight west up the stairs to Level 2 (2).

SEE APPENDIX D: MAP OF THE RED TOWER (2ND & 3RD FLOORS)

SEE APPENDIX E: MAP OF THE RED TOWER (4TH & 5TH FLOORS)

From this point, all the party has to do is find the way up the tower, however there are several encounters that must be taken care of before making it to the top floor. On Level 3, the party runs into some drow (H). For some reason, they don't attack right away. If you decide to talk to them, they will explain that they oppose Marcus also, because when he transported Phlan, it just happened to land on a drow city. They go on to say that a woman mage, Petra, is aiding him and they want to kill her. The game then asks you if you want to tell the drow about Shal. If you tell them about her, they attack, mistaking her for Petra, after which you gain some background information about Shal and Petra (which I got later on anyway). If you don't share any information, you avoid the battle entirely.

SEE APPENDIX F: MAP OF THE RED TOWER (6TH, 7TH & 8TH FLOORS)

The next major event happens once you reach Level 6. In the middle of this floor, is the dome of the tower (I), which has a black hand over the sky and eyes of flame watching. A red eye opens in the palm of the hand—a sign of the union between Bane and Moander. Then the 'chill of eternal' night enters your soul and you take damage for every step you take in this room. On the other side of the tower, there is a small room (J) where a dead hero lies. He has some valuable treasure on his body, so there is a reason to cross the open area.

On Level 7, you have to pass through a large room on the western end (K) that contains 14 warriors blocking your way. Eliminate them and proceed east where you will enter a hallway (L) and hear mages coming from both directions—1 group in front of and 1 behind you. Out of all the choices the game gives you here, the best choice is to move. Immediately duck into the door on your left (which turns out to be a closet) and wait there. The mages proceed to kill each other, saving you the trouble.

The next level, 8, is the home of the otyugh clan. In fact, as soon as you step away from the stairwell, you are attacked by the 'otyugh army' (M). Not very fearsome—just a lot of them. Go west and you will find an evil shrine (O). There are multiple undead enemies here, but by defeating them and walking into the shrine (P) proves worthwhile when you discover the treasure within. In the large room in the northwest corner (N), you will find an ambush set by Moander's followers to eliminate the 'spies.' They aren't hard to beat.

On the next level is the Circle of Moander, which in reality is a big shrine where Moander Cultists have hung themselves from vines as sacrifices to Moander. As much as you might like to leave them there to die, you must cut them down, after which they attack you. After killing them, proceed to the next floor.

A short while later, you will enter the Majestic Loft. Go into the rooms on the sides of the loft and kill all the Black Circle Mages that are in them (you can rest inside the rooms after the battles). From there, go into the temple adjacent to the loft and kill the Banite clerics animating pieces of Moander. When you exit the temple, you discover that the Black Circle—or what is left of it—has formed to kill you.

After destroying the Black Circle, rest and then proceed into the Wizard's Loft where the Red Wizards reside. One is saying to two others that if one rival coven of wizards is planning on attacking the speaker's coven to knock on his door and say 'red'. When he leaves for his room, enter the loft and kill the two wizards you surprise there. Then knock on the first wizard's door and when he responds, say 'red'. He charges out of his room, assembles his coven and attacks another, killing everybody involved (but leaving you unharmed). Keep going up the tower.

The next level is where Marcus resides. But before you can visit Marcus, make a stop in the Manufactory of Moander. The Manufactory of Moander more or less covers the entire floor, so you must wander around killing Banite clerics, mages and Bits o' Moander (with the exception of the people in the Temple of Transformation). Once you have eliminated everyone, go to visit Marcus.

When you get into Marcus' chamber, a spectral servant will appear. The servant will tell you one of two things. Either that Marcus is not there, nor is lady Petra, and they are visiting either (a) the Manufactory of Moander, (b) the Black Circle, (c) the Wizard Loft or (d) the Circle of Moander. This means that before you can meet Marcus you must go and eliminate all the people living in the places he could visit. If you've successfully eliminated everybody, then the servant tells you that Marcus awaits, then proceeds to attack you.

The servant, who happens to be a banshee, attacks with a number of specters. When they've been defeated, the second wave of attackers, hidden Moander Cultists, Banite Clerics and Red Mages spring forward. After that threat has been eliminated, Minions of Bane, Banite Clerics and Moander Cultists spring forth. When the third wave is retired, you finally get to fight Marcus. Of course, his personal bodyguard of Minions of Bane and Black Mages is there too, but they shouldn't present a problem.

When Marcus is killed, Shal and Petra face off. Petra raises her hands to cast a spell, Shal tosses her sword down and then they run into each other. Shal comes out as one being instead of her two respective parts. As Petra's influence is destroyed, the Red Tower begins to fall apart. Run into the Temple of Transformation and up to the Vessel of Moander (Shal will join you later). Jump onto the vessel and watch as the Tower falls apart beneath you. Inside the Vessel is a Pool of Darkness, which the party should take to Elminster.

Elminster fills you in on the next bit of your quest—to go to Moander's body, which is sealed in another dimension and kill Tanetal, the lieutenant of Bane staying there. You should choose to go down the rope that he dangles from the pool of darkness, which was at the top of the tower.

When your party travels over the base of the Red Tower, you will discover that the tower has fallen in on itself, and that there is a rope dangling down into the pit. Climb down the rope. You will be confronted by guards from Phlan, who inform you that the city is still trapped below. They ask you to join them in helping keep the city free of attackers.

As you descend the rope and reach the bottom, the party (and about ten of Phlan's warriors) are attacked by Black Wizards and four white dragons. Once you defeat the dragons and mages, the party will manage to enter Kuto's gate. At this point, a guard will meet you, telling you that Shal sends her greetings and asks you to join her at the Town Hall. You should rest at the Sunrise Inn and train your characters if they need it.

Shal tells you that Sasha managed to get herself kidnapped by a man named Gagnak Ulfim. Supposedly Sasha was turned over to "evil itself" (this will make more sense later in the game). In the meantime, Shal asks you to volunteer to bolster the crumbling defenses by going to Traitor's Gate.

As it turns out, I didn't come across any enemies around Traitor's Gate. When trying to leave the city through Kuto's gate, however, I wasn't able to get out. If you go back to the council chamber for another audience, Shal directs you to a house near Kuto's gate where a family is being held captive. Once you clear the room, the family thanks you. Upon leaving the house, a guard approaches you and informs you that the city has been cleared of the attackers.³

³ If you have not completed the sections of Sulasspryn and Myth Drannor, you can go to the council chamber and be paid by Phlan's council to complete the quests.

Once you're done with Phlan, climb the rope, and walk back over the image of the Red Tower on the map. Climb up to Elminster's camp and have him send you through Limbo to Moander.

Once you arrive in Moander's dimension, you will need to go two places. You will need to visit the shoulder and the heart. Everything else is optional, but remember that you have no weapons or armor, either. So if you go into Moander's left foot you will find fanatical Moander Cultists who try to forcibly impress you into their faith. One way to get weapons and armor is to kill them and steal their armor.

From the foot, proceed to the other end of the body and enter Moander's Tear Duct, which is on the right side of the god's right eye. Kill the black mages inside and look into the globes that they are installing in Moander's brain. This will show you what recently to Moander (i.e. an army of elves teleported here with a huge arrow, and were eliminated once they entered the heart). That's all there is to see there, so exit the brain and go into Moander's ear.

You must corner the hermit who lives there and talk to him. He tells you about Moander, and tells you to talk to Agehwat, who lives in Moander's shoulder. He also lets you train and rest here. From here visit Agehwat, and clear his home of the minions of Tanetal sacking Moander's shoulder (the hardest bit of this entire segment of the game). Upon successful completion of the task, he gives you two potions that you need to get into Moander's heart.

Leave Agehwat and the shoulder and go to the hole in Moander's side. You will pass through a couple of chambers and into the area outside Moander's heart. The game prompts you to try to enter into Moander's heart. Spread the potions on the cell wall and cut through.

SEE APPENDIX G: MAP OF MOANDER'S HEART

You can easily follow the arteries around the heart, but most of the action happens in the muscle tissue. A couple of important notes, before you start wandering all over the place: first, that this is a beating heart, and if you're in an artery when it beats then you're going to get pushed around. The heart will 'dub' (or expand and get ready to pump the blood) and 'lub' (pump the blood and you with it) at seven minute intervals. That is, there is a space of seven minutes between 'dub' and 'lub,' and another gap between 'lub' and the next 'dub.' So if you're wandering around in an artery, and the heart has just beaten, you have 14 minutes before you get pushed through one of the arteries.

The first item the party needs to recover is the Golden Cornucopia, which is in the muscle tissue between the two exits to the heart in the northmost part of the heart, or area 1 on the map to the left. The next thing the party needs to get is a cache of weapons and weaponmaking tools, belonging to Tanetal, near the left atrium (2). Take it and get back into the artery. After this point, if you run into the Watcher she will suggest that you mix Agehwat's potions together you might get rid of the annoying slimy things that are clinging to you.

From there, go to area (3)—or south of the location marked on the map—near the left ventricle in the muscle tissue and find the mouth, which is a piece of muscle that initially falls from the cell wall. Talk to it. It says that it is hungry, so make sure to feed it. It then allows you to take it. After taking the mouth, I had it snap at me, then demand to be fed again. I did this for several reasons: one, it's harmless and you gain experience for putting up with it, and secondly because it warns you five minutes before the heart is going to beat. Later on when you run into the Watcher, she tells you that the mouth is one of her failed spells, and that it's relatively harmless.

Once you've collected these three items, go to the Arrow (4), which is north of the right atrium and fashion weapons out of the remnants of the Arrow. You can make four weapons before the Arrow starts to shock you. From the arrow, go straight east through an artery and into the muscle tissue to find the Watcher. I found the Watcher at location (5) when I first played the game, but discovered her in the middle of an artery the next time through. She is struggling with bits of Moander, who wrest the Unguent from her, then run off. The Watcher thanks you, then says that Moander is getting restless, and that she must put him back to sleep or you won't be able to kill Tanetal. She says that she's lost the Golden Cornucopia, a necessary component in putting Moander back to sleep. Place the Cornucopia at her feet. She begins to weave a magic spell and she invites you to help her. Moander falls peacefully asleep at this point (what this means for you is that there is about an interval of a little over an hour between heartbeats). She then gives you further instructions and a tuning fork and disappears.

From here, go to (6), where the Pulmonary artery branches off to the east and west. Follow the east branch and you will run into a group of iron golems. Your weapons are instantly pulled from your hands and cling to the golems, because these golems are magnetic. Use the tuning fork to reverse the

magnetism and retrieve your weapons (resulting in damage to you, but that's life I guess), then defeat the golems. Your weapons are now magnetic.

Continue east under the left atrium to an area where you find bits of Moander with a small vial (7), the Unguent. Take the vial from them and leave peacefully, since they shrink from your metallic weapons. At this point you will want to proceed to the left ventricle (8), where Tanetal waits, but before you do that, find the Watcher first—she's wandering around somewhere in Moander's heart. When you find her, she's drinking tea, and is pessimistic about finding Tanetal. Suddenly, her teacup flies from her hands and sticks to your magnetic weapons, which gives her an idea. She rubs your weapons together along your arm, and you receive a shock. She then hints that you might give Tanetal a surprise if you did the same thing when you meet him. When you find Tanetal, he won't notice you right away because his back is turned, so rub your weapons together against the wall. Moander's heart receives a shock, causing it to beat suddenly, pumping everybody out of the heart, and causing Tanetal to drop the Talisman of Bane.

From here, you need to find the Watcher again. She may be anywhere in the heart—you may have to look for a while to find her. When you find her, she suggests that you go after Tanetal, and says that she has a trap for him planned in the right ventricle (10), where she will attack him with her own version of Bits o' Moander. She asks you to find him and chase him into her trap.

Tanetal is on the east side of the left ventricle, inside the muscle tissue (9). You will surprise him while he's sharpening his dagger. Tanetal fakes an attack and then runs off. The Watcher throws Unguent on him as he runs off, and shouts "after him!"

Hurry to the right ventricle. Tanetal is there, right near area 10 on the map. Bits o' Moander rear up around Tanetal, surrounding him. The Watcher shouts her triumph, only to have the Bits o' Moander convulse and disintegrate. Tanetal manages a laugh, and mutters a word to seal the ventricle. Suddenly, he collapses. The Watcher checks his pulse, and pronounces him dead—you ran him to death. She turns around and picks up the Talisman of Bane. Tanetal suddenly sits up and stabs her in the back, reclaiming the Talisman. Two Moander Cultists and several Bits o' Moander enter through the walls of the heart and aid Tanetal in attacking you.

Tanetal himself isn't difficult to defeat (45 HP and an AC of -7) but you need to be wary of the spells of the cultists and the poison of the Bits o' Moander. Once Tanetal and his minions are defeated, take the Talisman of Bane and leave the heart.

From here return to Elminster's camp. When you tell him of your adventures and show him the Talisman of Bane, his eyes light up and he says that the resistance may have a chance! He tells you that the Talisman is the key to Bane's realm, so if you can find the gate to Bane's realm you might be able to drive Bane off entirely!

Rest and train here, then return to the Realms.

ZHENȚIL KEEP, THE DROW & KALISTES

Enter Zhentil Keep and go to the south, towards the training hall and bribe the man at the desk if you need to train. After training, go north and rest in the Purple Plume Tavern. After resting, cross the road by going straight east and finding a man in the shadows of the building there. Say that you are opposed to Bane, and Mabril introduces himself. He tells you of a halfling, Traned, who is trapped under Manshoon's temple, and tells you of a way to get into the building without having to go through the main entrance where the clerics will examine you.

Proceed through the secret door into the southeastern part of the temple. Go around the courtyard and walk right up to the main (north) gate of the temple. Kill the guards and enter the gate. You notice a hallway with gates on both sides lining the walls. Go through the east wall and then proceed north. Go west, then north again and enter a hallway stretching to both sides of you. Since the tower is circular, it doesn't matter which way you go. Upon finding the purple door, go through it and up to level 2.

On level 2, go north into a room where Manshoon's fanatics scream at you. Kill them and then go into the next room, which is a gloomy room with a high ceiling. Go right through the other door, but be prepared for an attack by spiders rappelling down upon you. Defeat them and proceed through the door. Go to the north, through the next door and into the main hallway. Find the purple door to level 3.

You will be in a hallway where it makes a corner. You are then presented with a gate and two doors, one on each side. If you go through the central gate, dragons will ambush you. The other doors both empty into the room with the dragons; however, you will not be in the middle of the three groups of dragons.

After killing the dragons, go through the gate to the north, where Manshoon's adjutant, a beholder orders monsters to destroy the party. Kill the beholder first, without using magic because it is magic resistant, then worry about the other minor monsters. Go through either of the doors, and go through the main door to the north and into the main hallway of level 3.

When you enter the hallway, go to the west (though it is a circle, this is the shortest route). Manshoon speaks to you, telling you that the Gelt has been released. This is a beast that is really a watchdog, but with x-ray vision that hurts you if you get too close. So to pass the Gelt, you must go down the hallway that it is guarding so that it can't see you. You really have three options: make your party invisible by, blind the Gelt or put on rings of invisibility. If your magic-user knows Power Word Blind, just walk into the hallway and the game will ask you if you want to cast the spell. Go up the stairs to level 4.

Once you've passed the Gelt and gotten to level 4, you will discover that level 4 is simply one room, with a necklace in the middle. Avoid the necklace to get to level 5, Manshoon's private chambers. However, if you wish to avoid another battle, simply walk over the necklace. If you were foolish enough to venture up the stairs, Manshoon will be casting, and if you do anything but charge he will gesture and hidden enemies will ambush you. If you charge, you fall through a trap door to the level below and land on the necklace, triggering a trap.

The trap is rather simple (Manshoon was never known for being particularly intelligent): a crystal prism surrounds the party, which happens to be right in the middle of a conjuring circle, a circle of dust which keeps summoned monsters confined. Manshoon gloats over your stupidity, and summons a Harpy. Unfortunately for him, he doesn't know the creature's name, and the Harpy offers to allow one of your party's members out to attack Manshoon for her, as the conjuring circle prevents her from doing so. It doesn't matter who you choose, because the party member who is chosen gets freed from the crystal prism and steps on the conjuring circle, scuffing the band of sand.

The Harpy goes nuts, attacking Manshoon, destroying the room and causing the ceiling to fall in on you. Since the party is now freed, go back down to level 3, where you are no longer damaged by falling debris.

The immediate threat from Manshoon is now gone, so it's time to dispose of the drow. Go into the chamber where the wagons pushed by drow disappear. In the southwestern corner of the room is a path leading down into the drow city beneath Zhentil Keep. From the archway where you are standing, you will notice a room ahead of you and another smaller room to the northeast which contains a dark well (marked with asterisks [*] on the map). These represent points where it is safe for

the party to rest. You can avoid the battle in the room to the east (1) by going through the door to the south and east out into the main hallway.

SEE APPENDIX H: MAP OF THE FIRST DROW TEMPLE

Once you enter the hallway, you will be confronted by a royal coach (2). The coachmen are occupied by the horses, so you're given a choice of what to do next. If the party gets in the coach, a prince and princess of the drow jump in and you accompany them to the Central Hall (4) where you are paid to let them free. If you try to sneak by the coach, the horses will get spooked and carry the carriage down the hallway. You'll just have to walk to the Central Hall.

Since the Hall is heavily guarded by drow, go around and enter through a doorway to the west of the hall. Proceed east from the doorway and meet Traned, the halfling (3). She offers to join the party. Allow her to join, then proceed into the Central Hall, surprising the guards inside.

After defeating the guards in the Central Hall, you will want to go north and east, around some drow guards guarding a door on the east wall. Go to the north and through another door, avoiding the guards entirely, and go east. A drow abbess and her clerics are in the passage (5). She protects herself, and sends her clerics to attack you. Immediately after destroying the clerics, the abbess attacks you with the remainder of her retinue. Defeat them and proceed south to the stairway leading down to level 2 (C).

From the stairway, enter the drow barracks (6) from the west and defeat the drow ambush inside. Stop in the room to the northeast containing the dark well to rest if you need to replenish spells. Exit the barracks to the east, and follow the hallway south and down the stairs to level 3 (D).

You are standing in a long hallway. As you walk north, you will notice a room full of unguarded slaves on your right (7). Traned offers to go inside the rooms because something doesn't seem right; the drow don't usually leave slaves unguarded. If you allow Traned into the room, whispers tell her to get down so the ambush isn't foiled. Traned barks a command and the slaves drop to the ground revealing the armed drow. They shoot her with an arrow and then the party falls on them. If you just charge into the room, Traned commands the same thing of the slaves, and still takes the arrow. In any event, the party surprises the drow.

When the drow have been vanquished, the poisoned Traned offers to take the prisoners out of the stronghold. Allow her to do this; you'll catch up with her again later. One prisoner approaches you and explains how the drow split the prisoners up. He goes on to say that the majority of the slaves were taken to the right, but a few of the most beautiful were taken to the left. You can actually rescue all of them, but you must rescue the beautiful ones first.

Rest yourself in the dark well to the south, and go east into the hallway. Go south down the stairs (E) and then to the east, through the door, into another chamber and down another set of stairs (F). Upon reaching level 5, go north, then east through the room with the statue of the drow king, and south down the passage. Continue east when the path curves and into a room with numerous umber hulks await you. Defeat the umber hulks, and then go east through the room. The southern door contains a dark well where the party can rest and memorize spells. The northern door contains a stairway (G) to take you to the second drow temple.

SEE APPENDIX I: MAP OF THE SECOND DROW TEMPLE

Upon entering you will notice the walls are no longer made of rock, but of hewn stone. Go east from the entryway and north around the island in the center of the main courtyard. Enter the door on the east side of the stone structure and go into the central room (9). Here you encounter a drow woman with a silver streak in her black hair. Approach her, and she introduces herself as Silk, a renegade drow and leader of the Swanmays. Silk implores you to help her free her companions, who are prisoners in the dungeon to the east, and joins the party. But first rest in the room, as it is safe, and will be your only resting point for a while.

Leave the central structure and go east across the courtyard, through the drow guard post (defeating the guards) and then south to the guardroom (10). Defeat the guards sitting around the table playing dice and read the letter that was left by the captain. Go back into the main chamber and north past the guard station, killing a patrol of jail guards and taking their keys on your way to the Swanmays cell (11). The cell you are looking for is the first one in the long row of cells on either side of the hallway.

Upon rescuing the Swanmays, Silk sends one of them to free the remainder of the prisoners trapped there. When the Swanmay returns with the prisoners, Silk bids you farewell, giving you advice as to how to handle some of the traps on this level. She also gives you a cache of weapons, and tells you of a secret door. Then the Swanmays guide the prisoners out, leaving you to deal with the drow.

Before you leave, Silk gives you some parting advice: “the fountain is guarded by many traps. The first is a series of gates. Passing through some will harm you. Part of the wall is an illusion. The second trap is a narrow bridge over a pit of spikes. When you step on the bridge, there will be a flash of light. Cover your eyes! I know nothing of the last traps. There is a secret door to Kalistes’ temple grounds somewhere in the fountain chamber.”

Proceed north along the line of cells, and follow the corridor to the east. Just after the hallway turns again to the south, you will notice a door on the east wall. Upon entering the party discovers an Alchemist’s Laboratory (12). Inside the laboratory is a Zhent woman, being strapped into a chair; a cap with wires attached to it is fitted to her head while drow and Pets of Kalistes watch in anticipation. No matter what you do, the party will end up fighting everybody in the room.

After killing the people in the laboratory, talk to the woman in the chair. She will tell you that the drow use the Essence of Pure Light and the Fire of Night to make Pets of Kalistes. She will also tell you that if the Essence and the Fire are mixed, that they will destroy one another. In any case, from the laboratory go through the door to the south and into the second storage area (13). In the northern half of the room the party will find many vials of the Essence of Pure Light. Take the vials; you will need them later. Go back the way you came and into the main courtyard. Rest in the area where you met Silk if you need to replenish spells.

From here go north to the main gate of the temple. Upon stepping up to the door, you discover a drow ambush. When the drow are defeated and the party enters the building, you will discover a room with black robes hanging up and hear chanting in the distance. Upon moving into the adjacent room, the chanting grows louder. When you step through the north door into the main temple (14), you discover the source of the chanting: drow priests and a spider. They won’t notice you, if you just decide to wait and watch them perform the ritual over the spider. However, it won’t matter, as you will fight them later, but in the interim the spider will become a Pet of Kalistes.

From the temple, go through the northwest door into a small hallway. On the other side of the hallway you will discover a room filled with arches, and lightning dancing between them (15). The correct path through the arches is illustrated on the map. Upon reaching the other door, go north into the room full of the pit of spikes (16). When any one of the party members tries to cross it, a bright light flashes from below and the character attempting to cross falls for about 20 points of damage. That is unless you have talked to Silk and covered your eyes as you crossed.

Upon reaching the other side, you will enter a room with glowing red runes on the floor (17). When you step on certain runes, you are teleported various places in the room. Your first step (a) will teleport you to (b). Immediately turn 180 degrees around and walk to the west (c). Once you step on this rune, you will be teleported to the other door (d), but you will be facing the door from which you initially entered the room. Turn around and proceed to the next room.

The next room contains a large iron golem (18). It perks up as soon as you enter the room, noticing the party. Since the party has to traverse the room anyway, you must enter the room and defeat it. This could almost be considered a battle—six against one. The next room (19), is a room which has a fountain in the center, from which pours black liquid. If you didn’t kill the priests and the spider in the temple (14), you will be forced to fight them here.

You will notice that lightning dances across the surface of the black liquid. Take the vials of the Essence of Pure Light and pour them into the black liquid, which turns out to be the Fire of Night. As you pour more and more of the vials into the liquid, the lightning weakens and as the last of the Essence combines with the Fire of Night the fountain begins to spew forth clear water.

Cross the room and you will find the secret door that Silk spoke of on the east wall. You will enter the inner sanctum of the drow, the area surrounding the Temple of Kalistes.

SEE APPENDIX J: MAP OF THE THIRD DROW TEMPLE

In all the rooms are drow awaiting a big ceremony, where the Night Spawn will swarm down upon Faerun. If you go up to the main doors you will be turned away, the guard saying it is not time yet. Your party must venture into all the rooms and either destroy all the drow in there or free the slaves (or both). In the northeast corner is a room with drow inside it shining their blades (1). This should

be one of your first stops, because when the drow have been defeated you can rest in this room without interruption.

After you've rested, go into the room to the west (2), where the door will slam behind you and you will hear voices saying that you are "guests." Have your thief pick the lock so that you can get out, and you will encounter Traned. She asks if you'd like her to join the party. She goes on to suggest that you call yourselves Marcus' people, and that she might be your drow guide.

The third room to the west (3) contains two drow priests discussing where Kalistes will send her minions once the rituals are performed later this evening. They look over a map, and leave. Take the map. You'll notice the locations of Hillsfar, and the plains of Thar and Thentia marked.

The rooms on the right side of the map are filled with slaves that must be freed. The southeastern room (4) contains a group of slaves that have been poisoned and are moving sluggishly. The drow have not even bothered to post a guard. Herd the slaves out of the room to gain experience.

The room in the south central part of the map contains a drow priest talking to a Moander cultist (5). He bids the cultist hurry so he does not miss the spectacle, and then reads from a proclamation. If you move toward the southern end of the room near the doors, you will cross a wall of energy that will knock you out and damage your party. Drow guards appear, and place you in the dungeon (the room to the west of the one where you can rest). Pick the lock to leave the room.

The room mid-way down the western edge of the map contains a myriad assortment of weapons, and a female drow laying her sword on an altar (6). Guards appear when if you try to take the weapons, but there is some decent stuff here. In the room directly to the north are two drow cleansing themselves before the ceremony (7). One uses a vial of spider venom antidote on his body, and the two leave the room. Have your thief take the vial, and quickly leave the room.

The room in the center (8) contains a drow priest accepting a bribe from some other drow, and guarantees them a seat at the ceremony. Traned introduces you as Marcus' people, and the priest explains what will happen at the ceremony—Kalistes will send her children from her dominion through the gateway to join Bane's army. The room opposite that one on the east side of the central area (9) holds a group of drow looking at a glowing spider's web. A booming voice, the Oracle, speaks and tells the drow within that there is someone among them that is not one of Kalistes' loyal followers and that they must guard their Lady.

Rest in the first room you cleared of enemies and prepare for a battle.

Upon entering the main temple (10), you see a huge statue of Kalistes governing the room. The statue points to three portals, and a voice seems to say to her 'children' that she wants those lands. The drow discover you and the audience in the chamber empties, leaving only armed drow and Pets of Kalistes.

After killing the drow in the chamber, turn your attention to the statue. Three of its hands point at portals on the opposite wall, showing Thentia, Thar and Hillsfar. The Night Spawn plan to invade through these portals. The slaves charge into the temple, and run through the gates, leaving the temple. Traned joins them. You look at the statue, trying to decide what to do. You remember what the Oracle said: "Guard yourselves. Guard our Lady. Guard the hands that open doors." "Guard the *hands* that open doors." As you destroy the hands, the portals fade. The Realms are saved!

Go to the north and through a Pool of Darkness to Elminster's camp in Limbo. Elminster will congratulate you on your thrashing of the drow, but then tells you that you must venture to Kalistes' realm. He thinks that if you destroy Kalistes that sunlight may return to the realms. Deposit your items and teleport to her domain.

SEE APPENDIX K: MAP OF THE RUINED TEMPLE

Upon arrival, a large woman jumps up (1). She identifies herself as the Eyes of Kalistes, and you as the thorn in Kalistes' side. She tells you that she has heard of what happened at the temple, and asks if the party had help there. If you answer anything but 'Silk' the spider webs on the ceiling disintegrate, and spiders fall on you.

The spider woman's eyes soften. She identifies herself as Cynthia, Silk's sister. She tells you that you must find two items in the Testing Grounds: the Ward of Safe Passage and the Amulets of Stillness. The Ward keeps the Pets of Kalistes away from the bearer, and his held by powerful drow mages. The Amulets make the bearer invisible to spiders. Cynthia then instructs you to kill her. Before you do so, she requests that you do three things for her: bring the spiders from the Cavern of Fireflies, bring her

drow prisoners, and declines to tell you what to do third, instead saying that she will let you know in time.

Proceed north within this temple to what appears to be the ‘top’ of the spider-like formation. Go west into a small indentation, and you will discover the Fireflies cave (2). You’ll notice a nest of small, pale spiders. Take them, and leave the cave. Move directly south towards the door there, and you will notice some spiders dragging something up the wall (3). Stop and kill the spiders and you’ll get a long sword for your efforts.

Go south through the door into the central area. There’s a door on the west wall. Walk towards it, and you will be confronted by a drow patrol (4). Don’t attack them—capture them. Your party will take damage, but it will be worth it in the end.

Return to Cynthia, where she greets you. She glares at the spiders and they begin to spin new features onto the drow. Cynthia glares at the drow, who appear to look exactly like your party due to the spiders’ handiwork. She declares that it is time for them to die, and spiders fall on the disguised elves. Cynthia asks that you behead her. You then bury her. Return to Elminster’s camp to rest if needed, and then exit the ruined temple (5).

You will see the entirety of Kalistes Land upon exiting the temple. Try to run from all the random encounters with the drow patrols and roaming monsters because you can’t rest anywhere (yet). Follow the ‘path’ east and around the bend to the north. When the path heads east again, move westward until you hit the Lava Ramparts.

SEE APPENDIX L: MAP OF THE LAVA RAMPARTS

You’ll enter the area at (1), and leave the room to the east. Go north along the west wall. Suddenly, you notice some of your provisions missing (2). A thief has stolen them! You look around for a moment, then hear noise coming from the southeast (3). A female drow is fighting some spiders, your possessions hanging from her belt. After defeating the spiders, the drow identifies herself as Dennia and returns your provisions. She says that you may know her brother, Daris, for he is in league with Kalistes. She goes on to say that Daris was embarrassed, not saddened, that her daughter failed the test and the Testing Grounds, and that Daris plans to kill her son, who is testing now. She offers to join your party and lead you to the testing grounds once you are finished looking around here.

SEE APPENDIX M: MAP OF THE DROW TESTING GROUNDS

Return to the entrance, and Dennia will lead you through the back door to the Testing Grounds (1). If you move eastward along the wall, you will come to a building, which is a drow barracks. You can surprise the drow within, and use the room to rest once they’re defeated. The same can be said for all the “corner” buildings, which are marked (C) on the map. Go north, where you will come across a protrusion into the pathway, which contains a door (A). The door is guarded by two drow. Have your thief character sneak up on the drow and kill them quietly. If your character fails, the guards simply attack you. Again, there are four of these encounters in the Testing Grounds, marked (A) on the map.

Once the drow guarding the door are dead, go into the room (B). Inside there are a lot of driders. They say that if you don’t free them you’ll be killed, but you explain your quest and they laugh. They dance about happily once freed, and will leave the room quietly. They also offer some advice (depending on the location of the room you’re in:

“It is death you want by wanting at all.”

“Be smart, or a riddle will cut you in two. It’s the bane of your life to miss it.”

“Find the door! The way to the maze.”

“You see me, I see you. What you see may not be true. Do I say false? Do I speak lies? Doubt and you’ll be certain; mistrust and you are wise.”

Next, proceed to the room in the northwest corner of the keep and listen to the conversation of two drow (2). Dennia identifies a regal elf as Locaste, the great mage. If you follow the two drow out to the east, they will go into another building where you will see another elf give a man a dagger, then exit. Dennia explains that the daggers are for the confrontation with Shest, and the other item is the Amulet of Stillness.

To test to become a drow, go to the southern part of the map right in the center of the fortress. You will see a pathway leading north into the heart of the keep. Go down this pathway. Your party should

notice that the east wall is 'odd' (3). When the game asks you what you want to do, select search. Enter the hidden door into the room with an eerie glow, which is the beginning of the drow testing grounds.

The testing grounds wind around the fortress in a counter clockwise fashion, so just continue from one room to the next until you complete the tests (you can rest after finishing each test). The first test is one of strength (4). Your characters will face a solid wall where they must "be strong for Shest." Select your strongest character and have him break through the wall. From here go east through the now-defunct wall and north into the main hall. You will be filled with a strong sense of dread, as if Bane is watching you (5). Simply push forward through the wall of fear and the party will gain experience.

Your party will encounter a number of drider in the next room, which you must defeat to complete the third test (6). The next room contains drow mages, which must be eliminated to keep going (7). The next test (8) is a riddle: "He is His name. Ill is His fame." The answer is, of course, Bane. Next you will encounter a wall of heat (9). Think back to what the drider in the areas around the keep said about illusions... simply press onward through the wall of heat, which turns out to be pretty real, as you take damage. If you continue to press on, however, the illusion is eventually dispelled.

In the next passage (10) you will come upon a young elf, Hern, who holds the wand you saw in the other room. Dennia rushes forward, and tells Hern to come with you. You are given a choice here: you should ignore the elf, who turns out to be an illusion.

Once you move into the next room (11), the game announces that you have passed the test. On the table is a huge mound of treasure, including amulets to protect you from the spiders, as well as some daggers.

In a hallway (12), located to the north, you are dazed by the spectacle: an altar to Shest, with a young drow standing naked below it. Also present are Locaste, Daris and Balia, guarded by drow. The young drow is Dennia's son. She begs you for your help. Guards will rush forward. After the battle, Dennia is reunited with her son. She thanks you and leaves.

Continue north into the altar room (13) where you encounter a number of guards. You can't even see Daris, after the battle he is turned into a drider by Bane for his failure amidst a lot of screaming. As you reach for the Ward, which is lying on the ground, Shest and some other spiders attack. You pick up the Ward of Safe Passage, and the game announces the Kalistes' parlor is open to you.

On the way to Kalistes' Parlor there is a stockade where a dwarf called Storm is located. He will join the party and help you, because he is looking for his sister.

The Parlor of Kalistes isn't very well marked. Follow the road across the main river of lava and to the main castle in the northeast corner. The castle doesn't have an entrance so you can forget the classic "barging in through the front doors" strategy. On the other hand, there is always the back way.

In any case, you'll go in through the village that's just off the side of the road on the way to Kalistes fortress. Upon entering the village, you'll appear in the room in the southwestern corner. Maneuver yourself to the middle of the west side of the map, into the segment of the village enclosed by the "legs" of the spider. You'll come across an unbroken wall of gossamer, which is the entrance into Kalistes' Parlor.

Locaste will come with her escort and approach the wall. Her drider becomes skittish and much of her escort leaves. She commands the wall of gossamer apart with the wand and calls upon the spiders that appear to devour her. You should ignore the spectacle and enter the parlor. The Ward will drive off the spiders that would normally try to attack you here. You will enter the main portion of the foyer, where Pets of Kalistes wait, but don't attack because the Ward protects you.

SEE APPENDIX N: MAP OF KALISTES' PARLOR

From the entrance, go north through the foyer (1), which is the center of the southern portion of your map. If you need to rest, go into the southeast corner room (2) and kill the drow inside, after which you can rest. This is a good idea anyway, since this is your last opportunity to do so for a while.

In the library (3), you can see a book that is open on the table. If you read it, the book tells you that Marilith (a type of creature) have a very strong desire to protect their children—even more important than their own lives. That is about the extent of the important contents of the room.

Go north to the next room, which is more or less in the center of the map on the far east edge (4). Inside, the room is draped with webs, and contains a drow servant. He doesn't call the guards, but instead addresses you saying that you wish to kill Kalistes, a task that he will help with. He beckons

you to look into a bowl filled with a black liquid, which you should recognize. It is a scrying bowl, allowing you to see Kalistes.

The servant then directs you to the kitchen. You might want to rest, just in case you ran into a drow patrol. You can clear out the southwestern room (5) and rest there, and then go to the kitchen. The kitchen (6) is in the northwest corner of Kalistes parlor. Inside is an ogre cook, ready to kill a dwarven girl to feed to the Hellspawn of Kalistes, who show up when you try to rescue the dwarf—Storm's sister. After the battle, the dwarf, Arta, explains that prisoners are butchered for food here, then dropped down a trapdoor to the larder to feed the Hellspawn. If you ask for more information about the trap door, she'll tell you that you're standing on it. Open the trapdoor and go down to the larder.

SEE APPENDIX O: MAP OF KALISTES' NEST

Inside the larder (1) are many prisoners chained to the walls, and they begin to cry out when you enter the room. If you try to rescue them, they say you might as well not because they won't be free until Kalistes is dead anyway. Go east into a room directly across the hallway from the larder (2). This room contains a number of women whom Arta was captive with. She begs you to free them. Just as you are doing this, the guards return. Once the guards are defeated, the women agree to wait until Kalistes is dead before leaving.

The next room to the east contains a group of men (3), in the same situation as the women, except without the guards. If you continue east, you find a room (4) with gold inside, but it is guarded by drider. From here go south where you will find an intersection of hallways with four rooms around it (5). These are torture chambers.

If you continue south, you will enter the holding area (6) for Pets of Kalistes. They will avoid you initially because of your amulet, but they will gather and eventually attack en masse. There's nothing important here, unless you're looking for experience. The main area is to the west, which is where Kalistes' eggs are (7). Upon entering the chamber you will notice the oblong gelatinous eggs lining the walls, pulsing with light. Destroy the eggs to gain experience and incur the wrath of Kalistes (54 HP, AC -9), who appears and challenges you.

The battle that follows is all but impossible—the Pets of Kalistes cast disintegrate spells, the drow cast 'hold monster,' 'confusion' and 'ice storm' spells, and are spread out around the room. Make sure your magic-users cast 'mirror image' and 'globe of invulnerability' before the battle, and then just lob delayed blast fireballs into the opposition. Keep party members apart so that the drow don't use their area-effect spells so much. You might even have to change the setting on the game to 'novice' to pass this portion of the game.

Once Kalistes has been defeated, you will gain the Crystal Ring she used to keep the sunlight away from the Realms, which is a major blow to Bane. Before leaving, simply rest inside the egg chamber, then venture out the way you came in.

On the way out you will notice that the slaves have fled, and once you leave the fortress, you will also notice that the drow training grounds have been abandoned. But that is not your task. Your task is to go to the southwest corner, into the ruins of the drow temple, and take the Pool of Darkness back to Elminster's camp in Limbo. From here you should return to the Realms, where the sun will be shining!

MULMASTER, ARCAM, BANE'S LAND & GOTHMEPES

From Zhentil Keep, travel to the Black City of Mulmaster in the southeast corner of the map. You must defeat the monsters in the arena to gain passage to Arcam. The first wave is two black dragons; the second is Purple worms and displacer beasts, and the third wave (which attacks maybe one time in ten) consists of salamanders and pyro snakes.

SEE APPENDIX P: MAP OF ARCAM'S CHAMBERS

A beholder will come up to you. It says that you have earned an interview with Arcam. Will you go? Agree and follow the beast out of the arena and into the tunnels below. You need to proceed south, through Arcam's Hall of Victory (1). In the next chamber is the chancellor of Arcam. If you come to the chancellor before this point in the game, he will assign you a task (eliminating other allies, like Marcus, Manshoon or whomever, offer to pay you for it, and have margoyles escort you out exit A). At this point, he decides that you are becoming too dangerous and orders the legions inside the chamber against you.

The first battle is against the mercenaries. Defeat them, and move directly south toward Arcam. The chancellor and the many margoyles cover his retreat. After the battle, Arcam drifts out of view to the south. Follow him south and west, looping back around to the east where you are confronted by a red mage saying that Arcam wishes to parley. He offers a bag of gems in return. If you attack him, he utters a command word and fire elementals jump out. After defeating them and continuing east you will run into a dungeon (3) off to the north. Rescue the prisoner in the northeast corner, then go down to level 2 (B).

Upon arrival in level 2, you discover that you are on the outskirts of the Hall of the Dead. When you step into the hall, you are attacked by undead (obviously). You can either use exit C or D to go down to level 3, however if you go directly south to exit C you will be ambushed by more undead. Looping around to the west and doubling back is much more effective.

When you arrive on level 3, go down the hallway. You will notice a door on the south wall, which leads into the Labyrinth. Think back to the chant that the Banites were using, if you happened to run into them. In any event, you'll have to wander around until you find the exit, or you can simply follow these directions. From just inside the entrance (4), take one step to the east. Turn south; take three steps, then turn around without moving. This is the exit, which will take you to the room immediately to the east (5).

Go north from here into the next room where some of Arcam's allies are trying to set up and ambush. They won't be prepared for you however, and as you engage them in battle Arcam floats off north. Follow him north into a large square room (6). This is Arcam's chamber, which contains organized resistance. After defeating the group of monsters guarding the door, you will be informed that the room is full of odd ornaments and stalactites, which are good hiding places for defenders (or, in other words, if you move too much you get attacked).

Proceed to the northwest corner of the room where Arcam finally faces you. Another of his kind accompanies Arcam, who turns out to be a beholder. Don't bother with magic; you have to go right for the jugular because both of the monsters are magic resistant. The ladder to the next level is immediately to the west (F), but if you go to the southwest corner of Arcam's chamber and go west through the arches to the southwest corner, you will discover the treasure trove of Arcam (7).

When you reach level 4, you will enter a room to the east with a lone, stone sentinel inside it, in the shape of a dragon (8). When you try to walk past it, it senses the Horn of Doom, and calls its dragon allies from the north, who swoop down on you and attack. Once they're defeated, you can rest in the room to the north. Proceed east to the next room (9), which contains a huge statue, this time of a spider with a thousand eyes looking down upon you.

You guessed it, when you try to walk by, the spider senses the Crystal Ring and calls spiders from the room in the north to attack you. Once you defeat them go to the east into the next room (10). Inside this room, the party will notice a giant black hand jutting from the far wall. The hand is in the shape of a clenched fist. When you approach it, it senses Bane's Talisman, the fingers spread out revealing a portal, from which Bits o Moander and walking trees attack you.

Once you defeat them, go through the portal inside the hand and teleport to Elminster's camp in Limbo. He congratulates you on getting this far, then says that he's going to send you into Bane's Land. When you arrive in Bane's Land, you will see several drow dragging Sasha through a door. One continues dragging her, the others turn and attack you. Once the drow are dead, leave the room. If you switch to area view, you'll notice that you're in the northeastern corner of what might be Phlan (in reality it's "Dark Phlan," but more on that later).

Upon leaving, you will be swept along with a rushing tide of monsters to an open area where an announcement is being made. As it turns out, the undead form of one of Phlan's ex-councilmen, Porphrys Cadorna, announces to the citizens of Dark Phlan that he intends to marry Sasha. The only real choice you have is to listen to the rest of the announcement, since the other two choices involve you fighting a mass of monsters (trying to leave will jostle monsters, who in turn attack you). Cadorna then retreats into the town hall and the crowd disperses.

Once you begin to adventure around, you will notice the layout of the town is just like the Phlan of the Realms, only here there are roaming monsters. Go to where the Sunrise inn used to be and rest there. Then go into the town hall. Minions of Bane demand that you leave, so you have to defeat them to get to Cadorna, who is in the main chambers to the west. Cadorna screams that you will not spoil his wedding plans, then orders his minions on you and leaves through the south door.

Defeat the minions, and go back the way you came. You will notice 2 doors; one to your north and one to the south as you exit the chamber. The north door contains the town's treasury, but it is guarded by vampires. Which reminds me, don't bother trying to turn undead with you clerics at this point; the evil is so great that with my 40th level cleric he was only moderately successful in turning basic skeletons (sometimes it didn't work at all). Through the south door is Gragnak Ulfim, who tells you his story, which is really just a sidelight.

Rest and relax in the inn if you need to, then go to the south of the council chambers into a room with a number of female drow into it. They are enchanting a black wedding dress for Sasha, placing a powerful charm on it so that she will obey Cadorna's commands. They notice you, then attack. Once you defeat the drow, you should burn the dress. Go west into the next building where Cadorna is undergoing an intricate ritual supervised by Banites. He leaves, and turns the Banites on you. You obviously need to defeat them, but afterward you are given the option of plundering the temple.

From here, go north (rest if you need to) to the room in the northwest corner of the map. Enter the room and you will hear Gothmenes' voice chanting part of a ceremony. Go around the corner to the west, and you will see Gothmenes standing at a twisted altar. A malicious smile plays across his face as Sasha is forced down the aisle by some drow. Sasha is forced to kneel in front of the altar. She starts to scream, but then stops, since it would be rather pointless. Gothmenes begins the ceremony, and Cadorna laughs.

Now the game asks you if you will rescue Sasha. Once you interrupt the ceremony, Gothmenes bellows his wrath at Cadorna, accusing him of his inability to rule, even while Cadorna is directly supervised by Gothmenes. He demands that Cadorna take care of you, or suffer his wrath. Gothmenes then files off, blowing up a cloud of dust.

Then Cadorna attacks you with the remainder of his minions. After defeating him and his followers, Sasha comes up to you, thanks you and opens a pouch, presenting the party with two rings. Then she takes her leave. You should follow her out, and then go west through the gates.

This is where the city differs from Phlan. There is only a huge iron wall, which radiates black magic and saps your strength. When you approach the wall, the game asks you what you want to do. You must blow the Horn of Doom here. Upon putting the horn to your lips, Gothmenes appears, saying that death will be swift and terrible and that he will take you to the Abyss if you blow the horn. Then his minions attack as he flies away. Once you defeat the minions, the party trudges through the carnage left by the minions, and the game asks you if you want to go to blow the Horn now. Say yes, then type 6 (or the number of members in your party) when the game asks you the number of times you wish to blow it.

SEE APPENDIX Q: MAP OF GOTHMENES' TEMPLE OF BANE

The iron wall comes crashing down with the sound of a thousand tormented souls shrieking. Once you enter the Palace of Gothmenes, you will notice that the area map feature is sorely missing. The map provided here is an accurate rendering of the Palace. You appear in the southwest corner (1). It doesn't matter if you move north or east, as the palace is more or less symmetrical. You need to go to the one of the exits of the room, which appears to be a dead end.

In reality, both dead ends contain secret doors. To find the secret doors, make sure you either look when you are in the corner or are searching. However, if you use your search ability while you are in the palace, the game will tell you that you have three items of power: Bane's Talisman, the Crystal Ring and the Horn of Doom. It then asks who you want to give the items to. Right now it doesn't matter who has what item, just so long as three members of the party have the items. Go down one of the hallways.

Either way, you emerge into the main courtyard. You should hear a voice, or rather, the person with the Horn of Doom will hear a voice. The voice asks another if the second (Gothmenes) won't send for the minions of Bane to protect himself from you. Gothmenes replies that he's studied you and that you're weaklings and easily dealt with.

Continue through the courtyard. If you wander in the courtyard long enough, you will hear the voices a second time. This time they are a bit harsher. Gothmenes says to Xoham (the first voice) that he should invite Mashavad for tea and to greet their 'guests.' Upon passing over the main intersection of the courtyard (2), you will be confronted by Sasha leading a group of armed Phlanarians. This should immediately seem very fishy because you just rescued her (or if you haven't then that all the more reason for you to suspect this entourage).

Well, 'Sasha' claims to have heard that Elminster has been captured, and asks where he is so that she can rescue him. Of course this is a lie, and you shouldn't tell her. She begins to get angry, and demands to know his location. If you deny her again, her rage transforms her and her band into rakshasas, and they spread out to attack.

After defeating the rakshasas, you will notice two doors before you, one on the north wall and one on the east wall. You can rest outside the doors, and in fact is almost necessary that you do so, for there is a huge battle on the opposite side of each door. Once you step through the door, enemies, who wait to see what you will do, will surround you.

If you had stepped through the north door, minions of Bane and Pets of Kalistes (3) would have confronted you; the east door hides all manner of dragons and some dragoliches (4). In any event, if you move you will be attacked. What you must do first is to use the look option to get the game to tell you that you have three items of power. It then asks you to distribute them, and then asks you if you want to use them.

In order to win the battle, you must use the artifact that you won from each group of monsters against that same group. So, if you walked through the north door, have one member of the party brandish the Talisman of Bane; if you are facing dragons, have another member blow the Horn of Doom. The creatures facing you will reel in dismay or terror, granting you a round where you are free to attack them while they stand around and watch or try to reorganize themselves. You must spend this round eliminating most of the monsters, generally with delayed blast fireballs. The second round works as normal, but you should have the advantage since many of the enemies are already dead.

You will notice a path leading between the two rooms; don't use it unless you want to fight another battle right away. In my opinion, the fight with the minions of Bane was easier, but then you miss the treasure room (5) that you can only reach by fighting the dragons and crossing that room to the southeast. In the northeast corner of the minions' room, on the other hand, is a lair filled with beholders. While you may not want to go in there, it may be advisable, since the final battle (which is next to impossible) is easier assuming you defeat the beholders.

The choice is up to you; both rooms lead to the inner palace of Gothmenes, which is impeccably wrought in the finest materials, the design of a mad architect. An important note: rest here and save the game—there are several *major* battles coming up. As soon as you leave the passage and enter the main room, a dark fog begins pouring from the arches to the right. Suddenly, in a flash of light, a figure appears. It is Elminster. He offers to join your party. This is also sort of strange, since Elminster is supposed to stay in Limbo to provide you a gateway home, right?

Well, as it turns out, the game gives you a choice of what you want to do. You can either let him join the party, or turn him down or kill him through battle. If he joins the party, he turns into Mahasvad the rakshasa and you easily kill the lone rakshasa. If you turn him down, he asks if he should return to Limbo. If you say yes, Gothmenes knows where Elminster, the only being with enough power to face him single-handedly, is located. If you fight him, 'Elminster' becomes the rakshasa and you kill him.

After the battle—or slaughter, whichever you want to call it—is over, you will hear Gothmenes curse, saying that you didn't babble about Elminster's exact location (which makes him that much

harder to find). However, though the world is big, Gothmenes says that he will return with Elminster. Xoham asks fearfully what will happen if you come by. Well, Gothmenes says that he will wind the Tantalus clock, which is the countdown until he returns. Gears grind, the clock strikes one, Gothmenes teleports to Limbo, and ripples hiss evilly in the dark pool beyond the arches (9).

The clock strikes about every two minutes game time; you have about 75 ticks to wander around before he returns. You're supposed to be looking for Bane's Crystal, so you can go to the northwest and see the immense book collection Tanetal has amassed in his library (7), or to the museum (8) where he has many works of art. Both rooms contain minor treasures; nothing of any value. You will be surprised that there are no monsters here, though.

The Crystal is really in the center of the dark pool. This is where your selection of who holds what artifact becomes important. Whoever has the Crystal Ring should be wearing it, but more importantly, you must choose who wears it. The problem lies in the fact that whomever wears it stands a good chance of being killed. The best choice here is to select the character that you can best afford to lose.

The person wearing the Crystal Ring must reach into the pool to retrieve the Crystal of Bane. That character's hand will be chilled, but they won't suffer the 20 damage anyone else will upon touching the surface. The character should take the Crystal, and upon touching it will notice that every evil-aligned monster in the Realms suddenly has their thoughts focused on that character. Gothmenes notices this too, and rushes back with Elminster, so that you only have until the clock strikes several more times before he returns. Before Gothmenes returns, it is imperative that you cast all the protective spells your party has: first *Prayer* and *Bless*, then have those that can cast *Globe of Invulnerability*. The battles that ensue are next to impossible.

Once he arrives, you are teleported against your will right next to the pool. Gothmenes holds Elminster at a wicked angle, tied up in his flail. He demands that you give him the Crystal, saying that if you don't Elminster will die. If you give him the Crystal, he will use it to directly channel Bane's power and will kill the entire party and Elminster instantly with no chance for escape. So you obviously turn down his request. Again he demands it. Turn him down again. He loses his composure over being denied the Crystal, and Elminster escapes.

Elminster and Gothmenes face off, human to balor, good to evil, dancing in a circle of death around the pool. Creatures begin to bubble from the pool, amassing and flocking to you. The person who has the Crystal of Bane is presented with the option of using the Crystal to force the creatures back into the pool, but the game warns you it may be deadly to try this. It's right—the character who does this will end up with less than 15 HP. Anyway, it works. Most of the monsters retreat into the pool where Bane kills them for disobedience. Oh well, he saved you the trouble. The remaining monsters swarm forward as Xoham the beholder goads them on from behind.

Throw everything you've got against this wave: your magic is ineffective after this battle, and there are two more major encounters coming up. The party is attacked by a room full of dragoliches, Bits o' Moander, Pets of Kalistes and the blue Minions of Bane. Concentrate on killing the dragoliches and Pets of Kalistes first; the dragoliches cast *charm*, and the Pets of Kalistes cast *disintegrate*, so they are your top priority. One tactic is to use *Delayed Blast Fireballs* to clear the Pets of Kalistes (and any nearby Bane Minions) to start, and then use *Ice Storm* spells to prevent the dragoliches from using their magic. Before eliminating all the enemies, you may wish to replenish your party with whatever curative spells your clerics have left.

Once the first wave is defeated, you glance at the battle between the two titans and watch them tire. Then Xoham attacks you with his fellow beholders. If you have eliminated the beholders in their lair earlier in this level, this portion of the final battle may be easier.

Your spells will fail against the beholders' magic resistance; don't even try casting. Have everyone—magic users included—attack. Spread your party out, but concentrate on killing one monster at a time. Rather than hitting each beholder once, make sure that each dies before moving on to the next. Don't worry about trying to interrupt their spellcasting; beholders normally use their innate abilities every turn: a flesh to stone ray, followed by a disintegrate ray, a death ray, causing serious wounds and then finishing their turn with a melee attack. This is where your *prayer* and *bless* spells will come in handy—your characters must make all their saving throws or they will not be able to help you in the final battle.

Once the beholders have been defeated, you turn to watch the battle between the Elminster and Gothmenes again. Suddenly, Elminster slips and falls into the pool of darkness. Gothmenes looks around at the carnage you've left so far, and a look of doubt over his ability to beat you crosses his face.

He says, that “Perhaps you have earned the use of my gem. With it you can rule the Realms. I will teach you the command word if you let me go.” The game asks you if you agree to this. The obvious answer is no. Then he licks his lips and calls his loyal minions to himself. He gets scared and calls on Bane to protect his ‘chosen one.’ At first it seems as if nothing happens. Suddenly, a weird light seeps from the pool and you feel you magic draining away.

OPTIONAL - SEE APPENDIX R: THE EASY WAY TO KILL GOTHMENES

Gothmenes attacks. If you haven’t figured it out by now, the bright blue Minions of Bane give you a nasty electrical shock if you hit them with a melee weapon (i.e. a sword, axe, staff, etc.). You will have to use missile weapons (bow and arrow, darts, etc.), but to use these you must be at least 1 space away from the nearest enemy. (The idea is that if you are any closer to an enemy you would have to defend yourself against other attacks, which doesn’t work too well with a bow and arrows.) The first enemy you should kill is Gothmenes, followed by the Minions of Bane, and finally the Bits o’ Moander. Gothmenes has a really nasty vorpal sword, so you may wish to use missile weapons against him as well.

Once all the monsters have been destroyed, Gothmenes drags himself to the edge of the pool and calls out: “Bane! Save your faithful servant!” But it seems Bane doesn’t hear, because the god eliminates those who fail him. The cold flame from the pool, which burns Gothmenes alive, is merciless.

Suddenly the Crystal of Bane turns to dust in your character’s hand and Elminster reappears from the pool of darkness. He says that he has seen Bane’s realm and it is terrible. A fog begins to descend upon you, but suddenly it vanishes from your eyes. Elminster says that only he and you will ever remember that these events happened; the fog will make the rest of the Realms forget. Then he transports you to Phlan.

You are done with the game, in as much as saving the Forgotten Realms goes. You can wander around Phlan and talk to the people who you met on your journeys; they’ve forgotten all about the attack on the Moonsea: it is as if it never happened, and they act as if they don’t know you (though Shal seems to recognize you from somewhere...). Sasha has canceled her trip to Thar to inspect their forces there because it is such a peaceful time. Priam greets you, but not as if you were any different than another passerby. Vala wants to go to Vaasa and stir up trouble for you. Nothing has changed—or has it? You can also wander around the Realms, visiting the cities you have freed. You can even go to Mulmaster and clear out some of the monsters that are running loose after the fall of Arcam if you like, but you should really go back to Phlan.

Once you return to Phlan, you should go to the boat docks—the place where you started the game. Elminster steps out from some crates and welcomes you. He explains exactly why nobody remembers anything about Bane’s attempt at conquest (it wasn’t the fog after all!). When the greater powers returned the cities, they also returned time as well—it’s as if time resumed right before the big catastrophe with the Moonsea and the disappearance of the cities, only the nightmare that followed never happened.

He goes on to say that you have passage on a boat to a realm far away, where you may go and live the rest of your lives in peace (all the treasure you left with Elminster in Limbo is in the cargo hold). He also says that a mysterious boat has also landed and has there should be one more challenge for you there should you wish to undertake it before leaving the Realms. He’s going back to Shadowdale. He leaves. Go east to the door to the docks, and Rolf will ask what you want to do.

If you take the fine ship, he asks you if you really want to bid a final good-bye. If you say yes, you will pass from the Realms forever, knowing that by your hand the Realms were saved and that your deeds will change the face of the earth altogether.

On the other hand, if you take the other ship, complete with broken mizzenmast, the captain explains that he met a man who loved challenges—ones that involve death. Anyway, he asks if you are sure you want to go. If you say yes, he allows the party to encamp and save the game and rest beforehand. Afterward, he asks you to confirm your choice. If you still agree to go, know that there is no turning back at this point. You all board the ship and sail on calm seas for several days until you reach an island, your destination.

PART IV: DAVE'S CHALLENGE

Please note: this portion of the walkthrough is optional.

This deserves to be in a whole section by itself. The map included and the directions should help you through Dave's Challenge itself (the area map feature is off in this segment too). The object of Dave's Challenge, as Dave himself will tell you after noting your deeds, is simple: Survival. To achieve this end, you must recover four Bonds: the Fighter's Bond, the Cleric's Bond, the Mage's Bond and the Thief's Bond, which are scattered throughout the fortress, and then escape.

To complicate matters, all the enemies in the fortress are more powerful the second time around, and have something in the neighborhood of two to four times as many hit points. However, the other attributes seem to remain the same. Good luck! You'll need it.

SEE APPENDIX S: MAP OF DAVE'S CHALLENGE

Upon entering the labyrinth, Dave speaks to you. In addition to what he tells you, there are a couple important notes. First of all, there is only one place where you can safely rest (29), and even so you can only rest for a limited period of time (the longer each rest is the less often you can do it). The best solution is to use the potions that you find and clerical spells, and to also try not to rest until you have recovered all 4 bonds. Also, the Rune will disappear after resting twice to regain spells lost in these three locations: 3, 13 and 34. A couple more notes. Turning undead has basically the same effect here as it did in Gothmenes' palace: none. Don't bother wasting your attacks. You should also know that the wandering monsters are packs of vampires. The only other place to rest other than the Rune is after the battle at 21. Off you go!

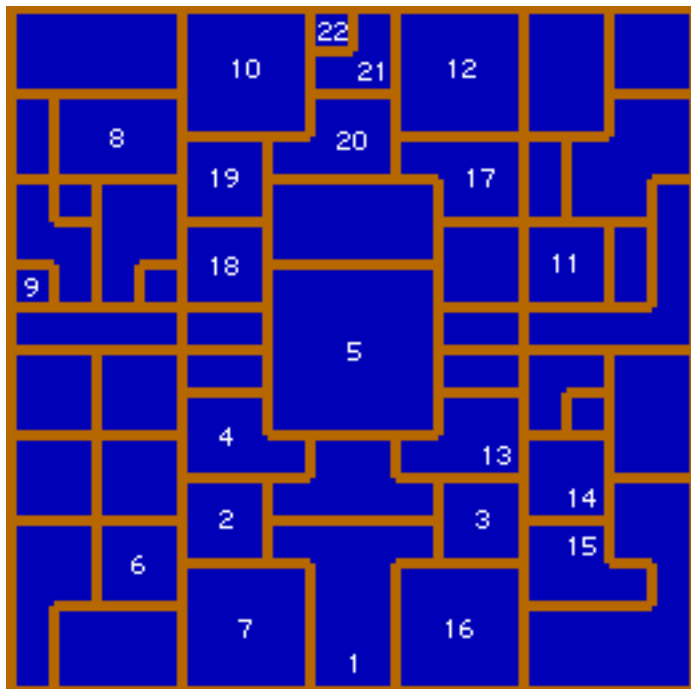
1. The entrance and a fight with Greater Basilisks and Carrion Crawlers.
2. Beholders will allow the party to talk with them 3 times to get clues to the challenge; after this they attack.
3. All memorized spells are lost.
4. A fight with about 6 Pets of Kalistes.
5. A fight with a number of human thieves.
6. Treasure: Money, minor swords and armor and potions.
7. A fight with Red, Green and White Dragons; The Fighter's Bond is located here.
8. A fight with vampires, IF you go into the center of the room.
9. Another battle with wraiths, spectres, and wights.
10. Several liches and spectres guard the Cleric's Bond.
11. A fight with skeletons, after which you advance to another encounter with even more skeletons.
12. Treasure: Money, minor swords and armor and potions.
13. All clerical spells are lost.
14. A battle with a large force of vampires.
15. The Mage's Bond is here, along with a one way door.
16. There's an electric trap under the door, so go through the secret door to the south.
17. The Thief's Bond is here.
18. Treasure: Potions, money and minor weapons and armor.
19. The secret door here will only appear after all bonds have been destroyed.
20. The next step you take will teleport you to 21; this is your last chance to cast spells!
21. All spells are lost. In the final battle, the party must face 2 waves: the first consists of Gothmenes, Tanetal, Blue Bane Minions and Red Bits o Moander. The second wave consists of Thorne, Kalistes, some Red Dragons and Pets of Kalistes.
22. Type "Oh, well" here and be transported to 23.
23. A safe spot, believe it or not (no pun intended)!
24. Drink from the fountain to gain experience points.
25. Train your characters.
26. There's a pool of water here; it has no visible effect either good or ill.
27. Treasure: 2 Vorpal Swords, 2 Girdles of Giant Strength, 3 Pairs of Boots of Speed, and other good stuff.

28. You can be teleported back to Phlan (but might as well keep going at this point).
29. The Rune: the only place to rest (see notes above).
30. The clerics can destroy the altar.
31. One person must stand against fear.
32. Next is a fight with Blue Bane Minions, Bulettes, and Red Bits o' Moander.
33. An encounter with Large Iron Golems.
34. All mage spells are lost.
35. The passageway is charged with electricity; searching would be a bad idea right now!
36. Disarm the trap on the secret door or you will take damage.

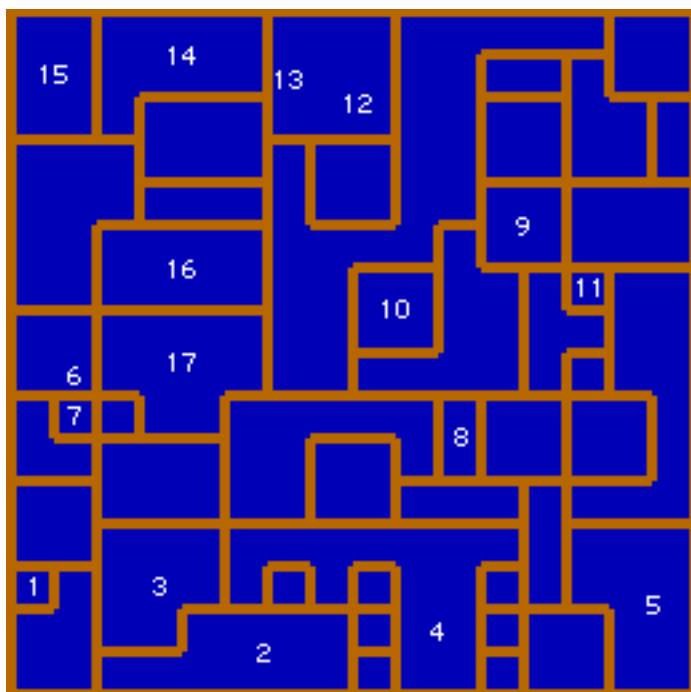
OPTIONAL - SEE APPENDIX T: THE EASY WAY TO FINISH DAVE'S CHALLENGE

APPENDICES

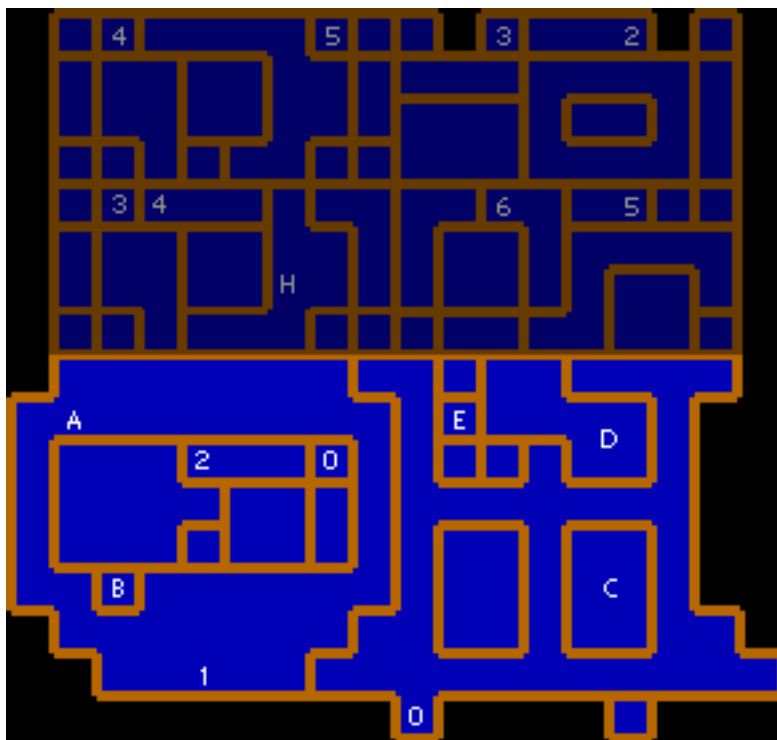
APPENDIX A: MAP OF THE DRAGON'S AERIE



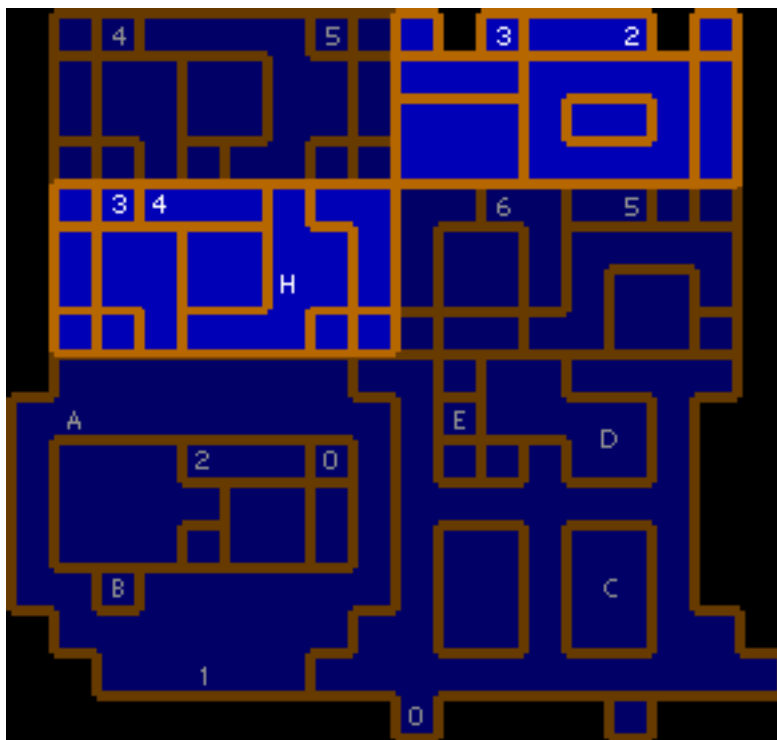
APPENDIX B: MAP OF THORNE'S CAVE



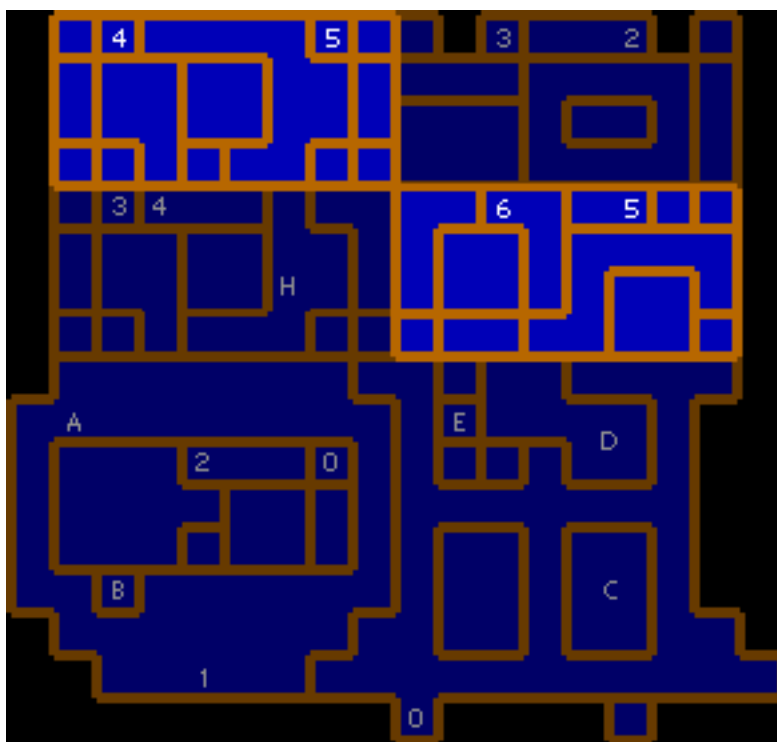
APPENDIX C: MAP OF THE RED TOWER (BASEMENT & 1ST FLOOR)



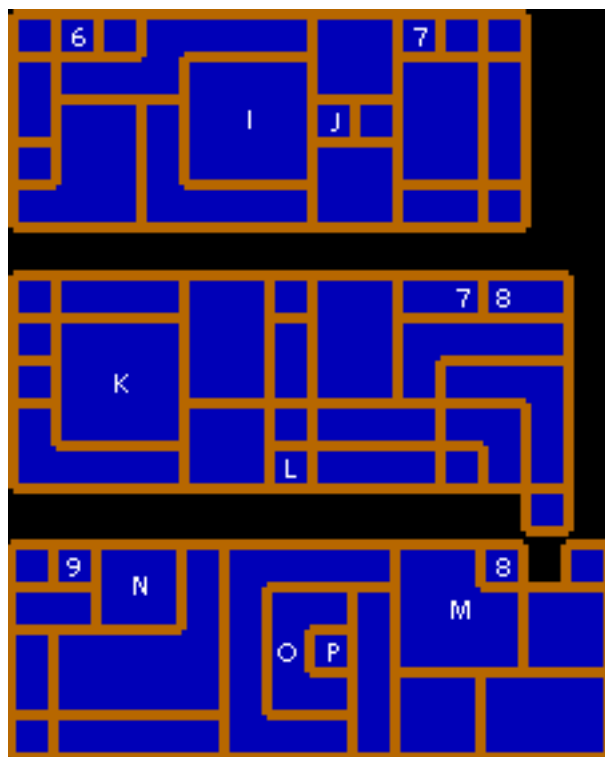
APPENDIX D: MAP OF THE RED TOWER (2ND & 3RD FLOORS)



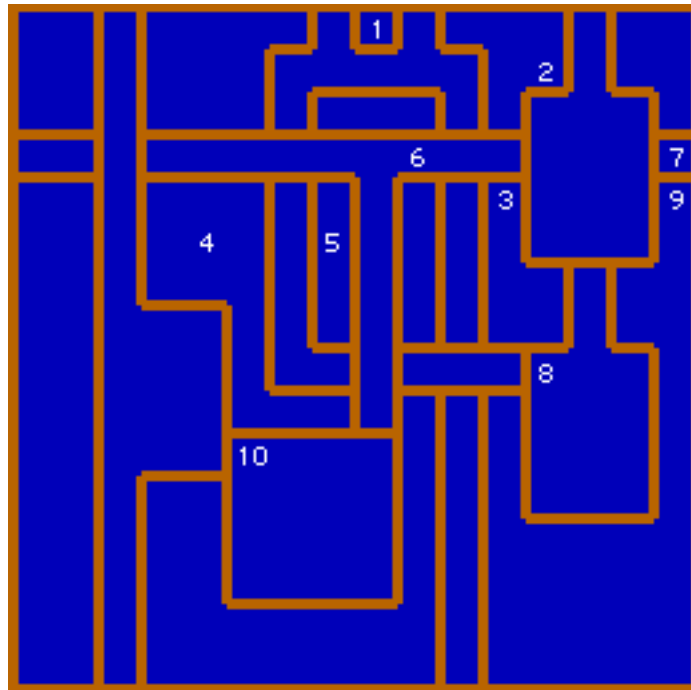
APPENDIX E: MAP OF THE RED TOWER (4TH & 5TH FLOORS)



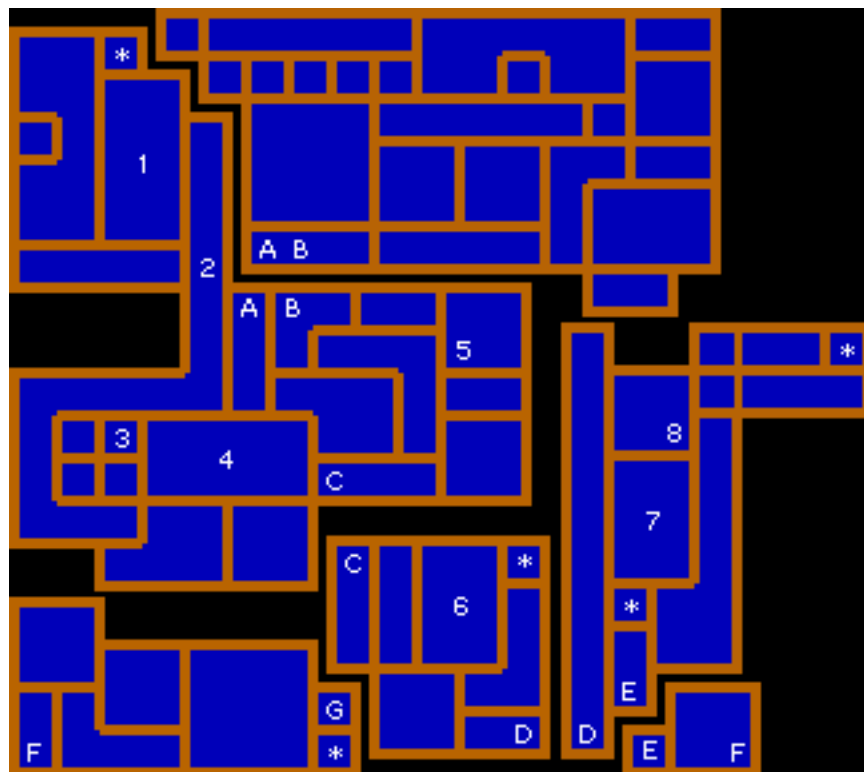
APPENDIX F: MAP OF THE RED TOWER (6TH, 7TH & 8TH FLOORS)



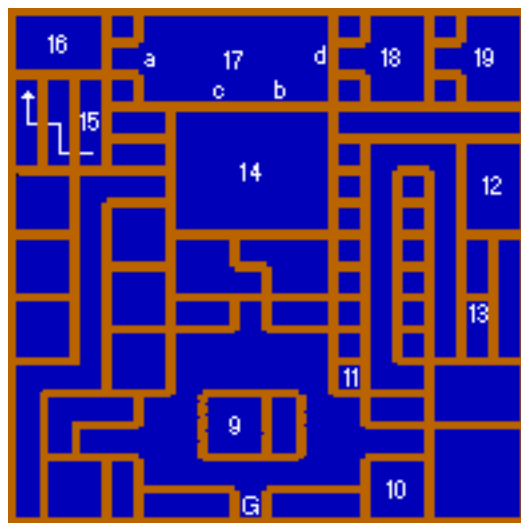
APPENDIX G: MAP OF MOANDER'S HEART



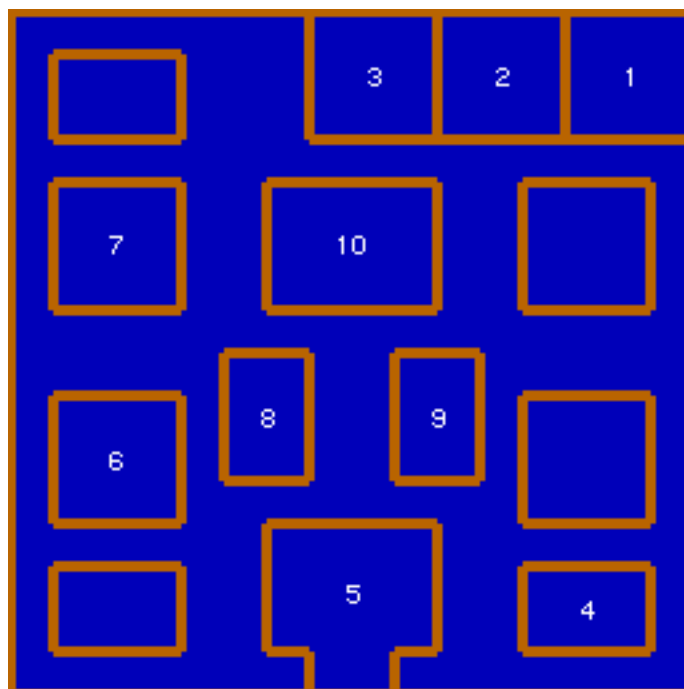
APPENDIX H: MAP OF THE FIRST DROW TEMPLE



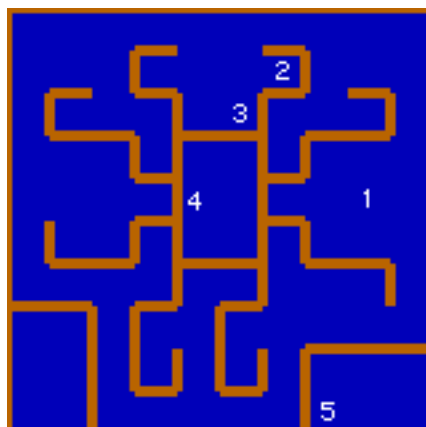
APPENDIX I: MAP OF THE SECOND DROW TEMPLE



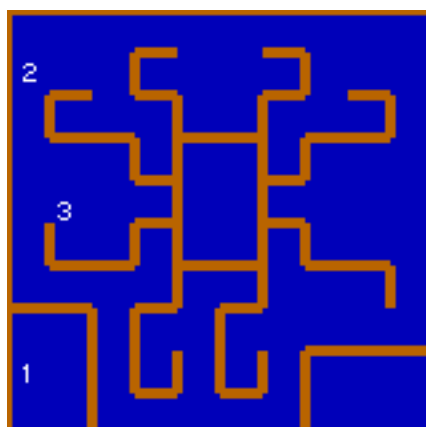
APPENDIX J: MAP OF THE THIRD DROW TEMPLE



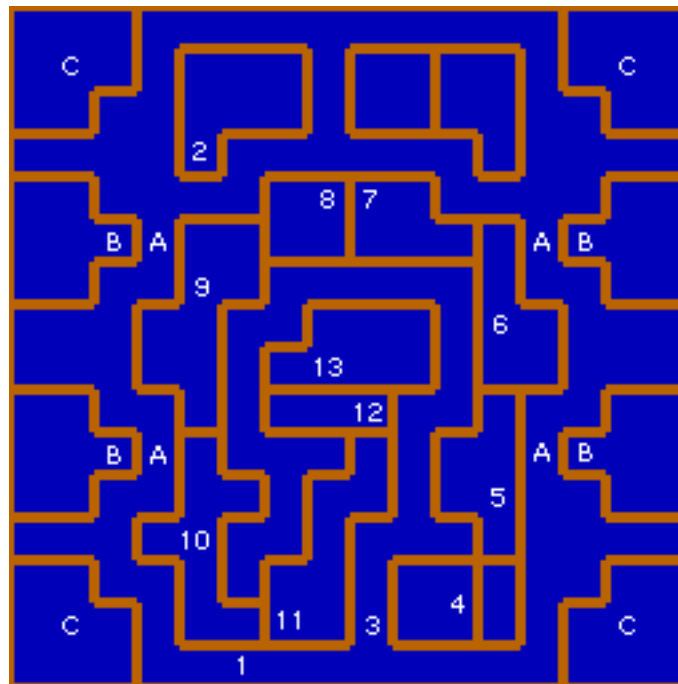
APPENDIX K: MAP OF THE RUINED TEMPLE



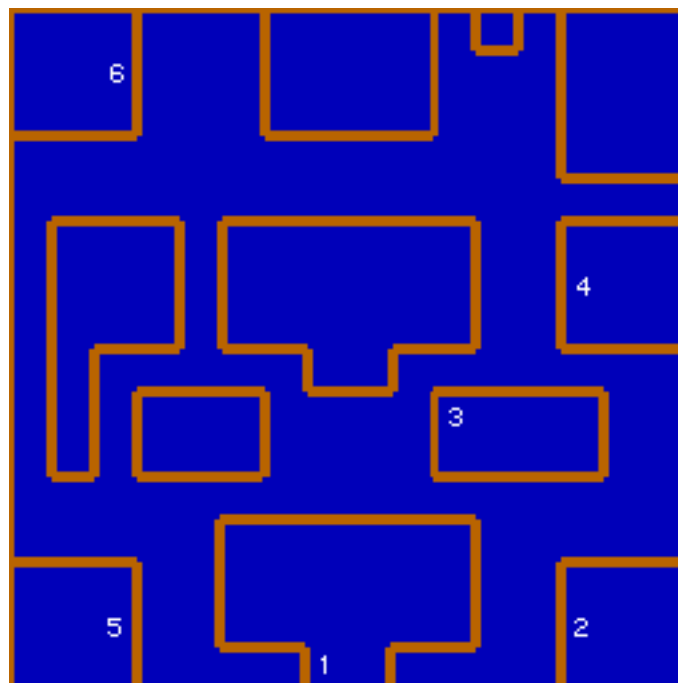
APPENDIX L: MAP OF THE LAVA RAMPARTS



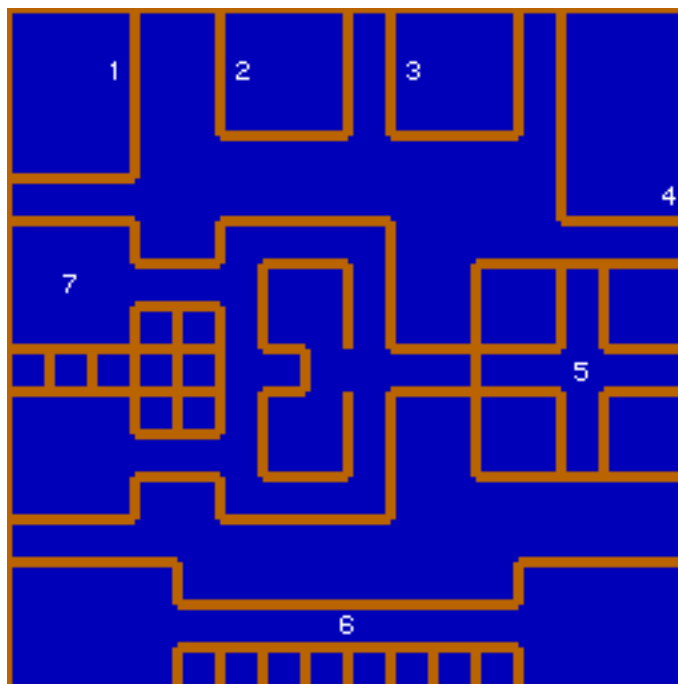
APPENDIX M: MAP OF THE DROW TESTING GROUNDS



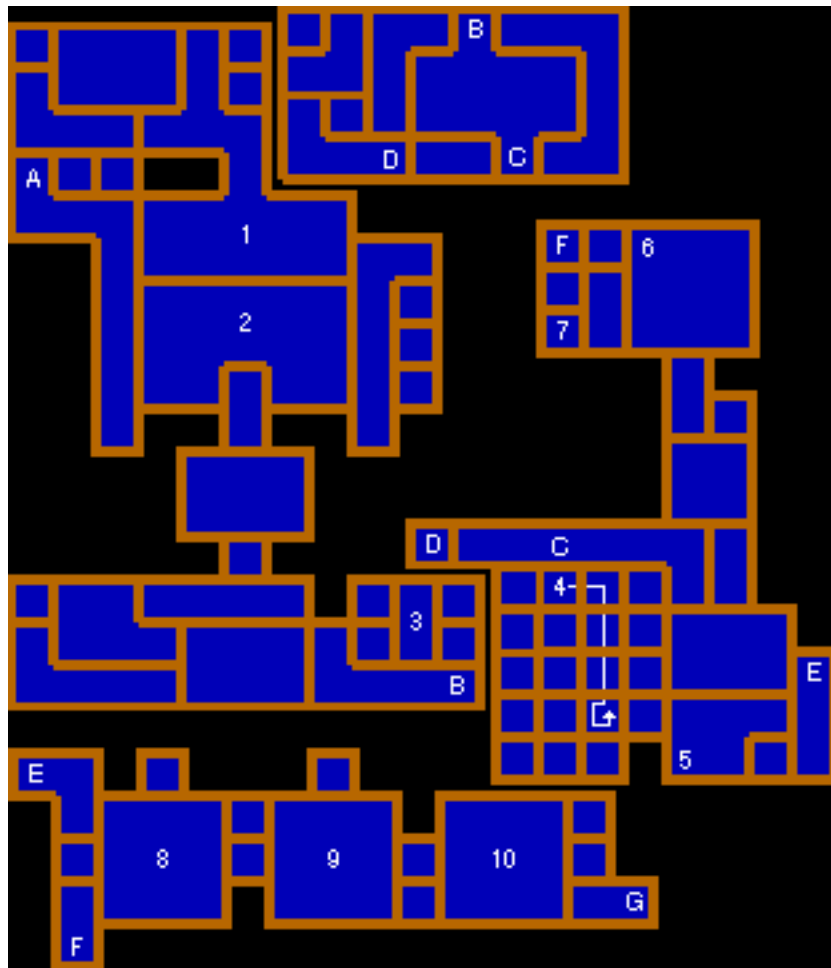
APPENDIX N: MAP OF KALISTES' PARLOR



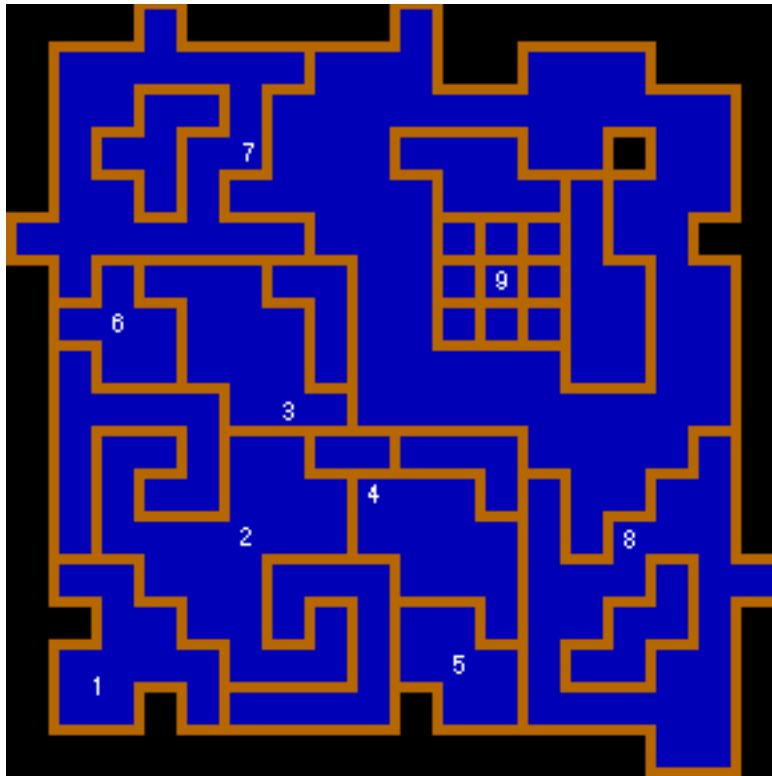
APPENDIX O: MAP OF KALISTES' NEST



APPENDIX P: MAP OF ARCAM'S CHAMBERS



APPENDIX Q: MAP OF GOTHMENES' TEMPLE OF BANE



APPENDIX R: THE EASY WAY TO KILL GOTHMENES

It's possible to win the big battle with Gothmenes without killing Gothmenes—or anybody else, for that matter. It's true. You'll recall the "Slam and Scram" strategy I told you about in Part I—that is, get away from the monsters and hide on the other side of a wall, parallel to them? Well, the same ploy works with Gothmenes. Here's what I do:

1. Make sure everybody has Boots of Speed. You can cast a Haste spell in the previous melee for good measure.
2. When the battle with Gothmenes begins, go left (toward the Minion), then down, hugging the wall so you don't draw an attack from the Minion. Then it's left around the corner, then upward—as far as you can go. With the Haste plus Boots of Speed, you should be able to quickly get one or more characters even with the monsters in the left compartment.
3. There's a corner that juts out to the right. Position your men in and above that corner. Then stay put. It's unlikely anyone will follow you. Simply hit "E" or "G" on each character's turn. Eventually, the game will declare you the victor and proceed to the "Phlan" stage, even though you haven't killed anyone.
4. If this sounds too weenie—and if you'd like to win the fight the old-fashioned way, on the battlefield—I recommend modifying this strategy. Position most of your party along the aforementioned wall, but send 2 or 3 toward the lower wall. This will draw the occasional monster, but you'll have a better shot at eliminating them when they arrive solo (or 2 or 3 at a time), instead of leaving your party in the middle of the arena, getting fried with lightning bolts.

For what it's worth, I think the final scenario is flatly unfair. If you play the game by the book—that is, if you don't create extra items—and if you leave the party as it is, useless thief included, it is all but impossible to survive three straight clashes. It is doubly difficult when two of them don't allow you to use magic at all. The "no magic allowed" battle with Gothmenes is simply a joke, considering the party isn't allowed to rest beforehand.

Here's a final tip: In the first of the three final battles, the *Hold Monsters* spell is very effective. Obviously, the *Delayed Blast Fireball*, *Haste* and *Magic Missile* spells are also important. And of course,

it's important to cast *Heal* and *Cure Critical Wounds*, etc., spells before ending one battle and beginning the next.

That's all for now. Just thought you'd like to know that "Slam and Scram" works against Gothmenes (and against the beholders in Dave's Challenge, too).

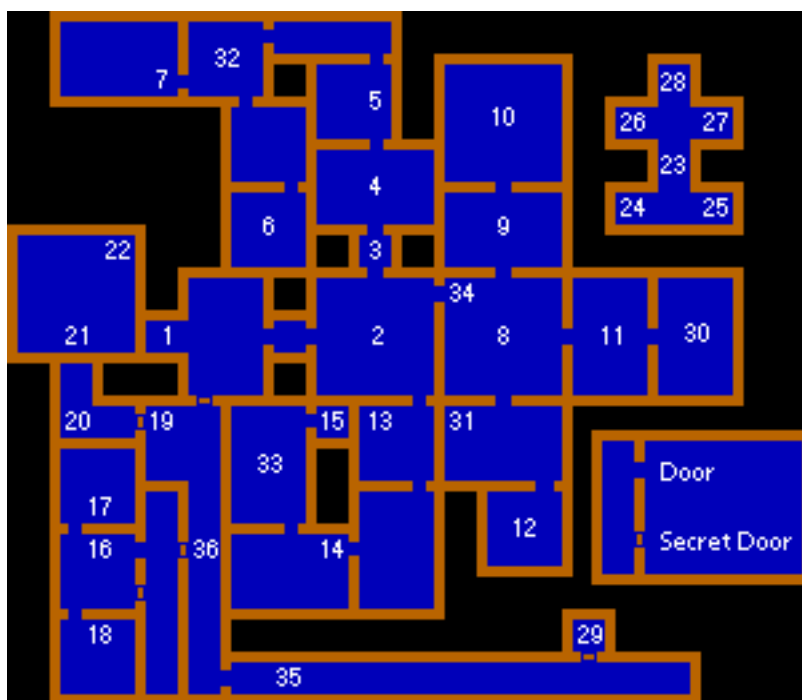
Contributed by Brian Smith

Another possibility to make the final battles with Gothmenes easier is to use a technique that may seem strange at first. Before the battle with the beholders ends and your magic becomes ineffective, have the magic users cast *haste* on everyone (boots of speed will work as well). Then have the magic users cast *fire shield (hot)* on themselves. It would also be a good idea to heal everyone, especially the magic users. Finish the battle quickly so that the *haste* and *fire shield* spells are still operating even when your spells slip away prior to the last battle.

For the final battle, think of the party as two separate groups—the magic users, and everyone else. Have the magic users move immediately next to the blue Minions of Bane. Then, have them step away. This provokes a melee attack from the Minion—but because of the *fire shield*, the Minion of Bane will suffer double the damage it inflicts against the member of your party. Have the other members of your party attack the other monsters and dispatch them while the magic users do their work with the Minions.

Contributed by Lagor Reinhardt

APPENDIX S: MAP OF DAVE'S CHALLENGE



APPENDIX T: THE EASY WAY TO FINISH DAVE'S CHALLENGE

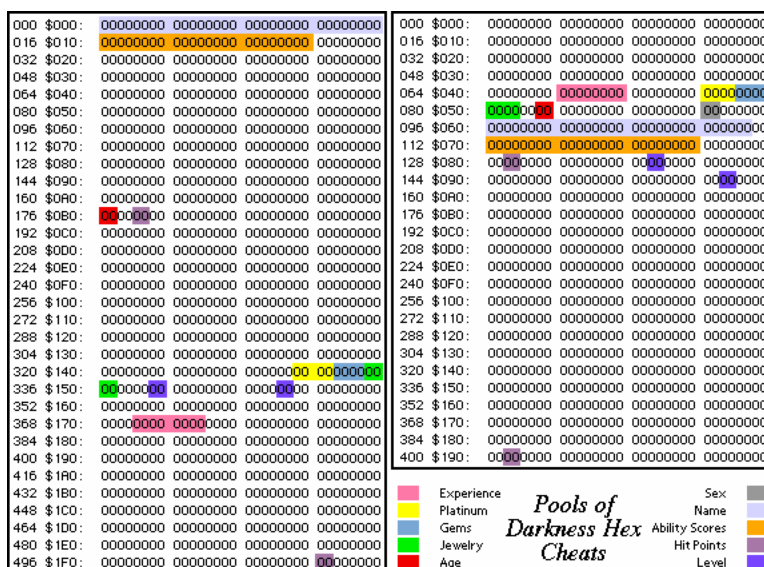
After getting the Thieves Bond in Dave's Challenge, proceed to the secret door at 19 on the map. That door (which leads to Gothmenes, Kalistes and Tanetal, and is supposed to be locked) is open! You don't need to recover the rest of the bonds!

Contributed by dmbarr@erols.com

APPENDIX U: POOLS OF DARKNESS CHEATS

Ever wonder what it would be like to promote your Pools of Darkness characters to god-like status (without taking the same party through the game multiple times)? Now you can. All you need is a hex editor, some know-how, and your character files.

Now, the first thing you have to know about before you go and start hacking your characters is how to do it *intelligently*. If you start ripping them apart and screw them up, you can't get them back together again unless you knew what they looked like beforehand. So a wise idea is to make backup copies and then edit those (or the originals, as long as they're backed up somewhere else too).



You'll notice that the files are displayed with a lot of zeros in them. To get this effect you need a Hex editor (I used Norton Utilities' Norton Disk Editor). Open the file and you'll notice that a bunch of the zeros are color coded, and the codes are in the lower right corner of the screen. The colors represent the things about your character that you can change; for example, their ability scores or their hit points. To change a value, click on the appropriate byte and then type in a new value. Let's say that I had a character with ability scores that were all 17s. Say I wanted to make those scores 23s. I look under the key and find that ability scores use the orange color. I go up to the correct place on the table; in this case the numbers would look like this:

11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11

You would change the numbers to this:

17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17 17

Now if you saved your character and then opened him in Pools, all his attributes would be 23s.

Now, let's say you want to change the name from "Bob" to "Sir Bob of Kent" (make sure you count spaces as characters!). So find the line that contains the name attribute and change it from:

42 6F 62 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00

To the the following string of numbers:

53 69 72 20 42 6F 62 20 6F 66 20 4B

Now the name is changed. Here are some important rules:

The changes you make *must* fit inside the highlighted area. Your character's ability scores *cannot* be more than 25 or less than 1. Your character's level can't be more than 40 or less than 1. Your character's hit points must not exceed 255. Also, notice that there are 2 different areas that contain hit point information. The first is the number of hit points your character has currently; the second is his maximum. Make sure the two agree in number when you're finished.

If you increase your character's level, you must also increase experience points proportionally. Look in your instruction manual to find out how many XP you need for a certain level.

Your character's level must not exceed 40. In addition, the "Level" attribute is tricky. You'll notice only one byte denoted for level; however if you have dual-class characters, there is more than 1 level attribute. You must know what level these characters are on; for instance, there are a total of four hex bytes that correspond to levels; the first 2 are right next to each other. The second two bytes vary in locations; usually these bytes reside within the next several lines.

NB: Some options (like character's sex) are available for the Macintosh only; I couldn't find them in the IBM code of the file. An easy remedy is to create a character to taste then modify him or her.

QUESTIONS

Q: How do I enter values bigger than 255 (say I want my character's experience to be 1,000,000+)?

A: Aha! Good question. The simple answer is that the system continues logically; i.e., when you get to FF, then you start again at 100, etc. But there's also a significant byte-ordering issue. Let's talk about these one at a time.

CONVERSION - HEX TO DECIMAL

This is easy. You take the column number and multiply by a factor and take the sum. Well, given a number:

wxyz

The formula is: $\text{decimal} = 4096*w + 256*x + 16*y + z$ And of course if you have a letter in the column, you have to convert it to 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, or 15 first. Example:

$$14A3 = 4096*1 + 256*4 + 16*10 + 3 = 5283$$

This covers numbers 0 to 65535 (0 to FFFF). For larger numbers, the system expands logically but with larger factors. I don't have a calculator with me, but the pattern is obvious:

Rightmost column: Factor is $2^0 = 1$ (two to zeroth power)

Next column: $2^4 = 16$

Then: $2^8 = 256$, $2^{12} = 4096$, $2^{16} = 65536$, $2^{20} \dots$ etc.

CONVERSION - DECIMAL TO HEX

This is a little bit harder... essentially you need to do the reverse of what we have just done. Let's take 5283 and convert back to hex. We take the largest factor that doesn't exceed 5283. The 65536 factor is too large, so we know we will start with 4096 (and thus we'll have a four-digit hex number at the end). We divide 4096 into 5283 and discard the remainder. The answer is 1. This is the first digit of the hex digit. Now we curiously multiply 1 by the factor again to get 4096, then we subtract this from 5283 to get 1187. Now we divide 1187 by the next factor, which is 256. Throwing out the remainder, we get 4. This is the next hex number. Now we do the curious re-multiplication again, but notice that $256*4 = 1024$. We subtract THIS from 1187 to get 163. Moving on to the next factor, $163/16 = 10$ (remainder discarded). Ten is 'A' in hex, so we write A for the next hex digit. Now we multiply A by the factor again, i.e. 10, so $10*16 = 160$, and we subtract this from 163 to get 3. Now 3 divided by 1 is 3, so we write 3 for the last digit and we're done. This is a bit long, but with practice you can do it quickly. Or you can cheat and find a calculator that does the conversion for you.

A word of caution: once you've picked the correct starting factor, don't skip any in the middle. For example: $514 \div 256 = 2$ (remainder discarded). When we subtract $256 \times 2 = 512$, we get 2 left. The next factor is supposed to be 16. So $2/16 = \text{ZERO}$ when the remainder is discarded, so we have to write zero for the next digit. THEN the next factor is 1, so we can write 2. So the correct answer is the 3-digit hex number 202.

BYTE ORDERING

You probably know that a byte can hold a number from 0 to 255, or 00 to FF hex. For larger numbers we have to use multiple bytes. But when we have a 4-digit hex number like FFD2, do we store the FF first or the D2 first? Historically, no one thought of this at first, so hardware designers ended up doing both. Intel chips put the D2 first whereas Motorola chips put the FF first. There are good reasons for choosing one over the other so neither convention is better than the other. But because there are two different standards out there, this creates a compatibility problem.

So when you are working on editing the binary files, before you start working with numbers larger than 255, you need to first determine which byte-ordering convention is being used. I'm sure that when working with the Mac files, we have the "FF first" convention. No surprise, since Macs have Motorola chips. If you're now working with IBM files, it's likely that you could have a "D2 first" situation.

Three-byte numbers are NOT common. If 65535 (FFFF) is not big enough for a number, four bytes are typically used. The bytes are either all "forward" or all "backward," never mixed-up. For a number like EA2150A2, it would be coded like this:

Intel: A2 50 21 EA; Motorola: EA 21 50 A2

By the way, the "Intel" ordering is OFFICIALLY called "little endian," whereas the Motorola ordering is OFFICIALLY called "big endian." Little endian has the littlest part of the number first whereas big endian has the biggest part of the number first.

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Internet: <http://www.lostcitadel.com/>