Geography

The geography of the North ranges from the rugged mountains of the Spine of the World to the lush forests of Lurkwood and Moonwood—and a great deal more in between. Within these highly unique areas lie ruined towers, lost gold, and enough rumors to keep even the most active adventuring company busy.

Sword Mountains

nestled west of the Lurkwood, the Sword Mountains form a shield between the Sea of Swords and the forest and flatlands beyond. While not militarily significant, these mountains are home to savage beasts, vagabonds, and other unsavory creatures. Of more importance to travelers though is the High Road, connecting the cities of Leilon and Waterdeep with the rest of the “civilized” North.

Iniarv’s Tower

A ruined fortress located on the High Road between Waterdeep and Leilon, Iniarv’s Tower was destroyed in the final orc assault against the Fallen Kingdom. It’s said that on the anniversary of the battle, ghostly defenders walk the battlements, waiting for allies who never come. Though the tower is usually uninhabited, attempts by the Lords’ Alliance to rebuild it have always ended in failure. Bandits often inhabit the ruins of Iniarv’s Tower, east of the Mere of Dead Men, and the nearby hills are roamed by orcs, bugbears, kobolds, leucrotta, and other dangerous creatures.

Iniarv was a mighty archmage of the ancient North who became a demilich later in life. Some say he guards the ruins and his subterranean spell libraries, though many believe the claims of the Company of the Howling Wolf, who maintain they destroyed Iniarv 60 years ago. None who investigate the area have publicly made any comments on the truth of this dispute, however.

Kryptgarden Forest

Named after Southkrypt, this small forest is believed to be the second-most-powerful source of the evil that pervades the dwarven ruin, the first being the Sword Mountains lying just north. The eastern outskirts of the forest are often used by the inhabitants of Westbridge for hunting purposes, even they don’t delve farther than a few hours’ walk into it.

Unsubstantiated rumors of another dwarven citadel in the hills near the center of the forest have circulated in recent years. A mad adventurer, apparently the lone survivor of a nine-man adventuring company, was captured on Khedell Path in the plains west of Red Larch. He babbled about a citadel of erect insects casting spells—and hurling weapons that killed a man from 500 paces. According to the man’s crazed tales, the insects are able to camouflage themselves (probably magically) to the point where the only way to find the creatures is by scent and tracking. He’s a known liar, yet he was found with nothing in his possession and strange burns along his arms and back that cannot be explained.

Mere of Dead Men

A vast salt swamp stretches along the Sword Coast shore over 100 miles, reaching a width of 30 miles at its greatest extent. It’s a desolate, insect-ridden place seldom visited by civilized races and home to a variety of fell creatures. The Mere has grown in recent memory, swallowing several farms and holdings along the road, and it’s now avoided by all but crazed adventurers equipped with water-breathing magic and looking for battle practice.

Several rich castles and manor houses stand flooded in the Mere, with only spires and battlements showing above the dark waters. Sunken riches and powerful magic guarded by evil creatures await those mighty enough to take it. Khelben “Blackstaff” Arunsun advises adventurers that some of these flooded places (Castle Naerytar, Hilk House, Mornhaven Towers, and Wolfhill House) have their own wools. These allow certain spells to be cast at double strength, and other spells are negated. These effects are discovered by trial, for all relevant records are lost.
The Mere gained its name when thousands of men were slain by orc hordes striking south from present-day Triboar and east across the Stone Bridge and Ironford. The orcs pursued the men westward between the coastal peaks and slaughtered the human army as it was forced back into the icy waves.

Travelers on the High Road skirting the Mere to the east often travel for three days and nights without stopping to avoid camping near here. Will o’ wisps bobbing over the water are common night sights on this stretch of road. Legends speak of floating islands, eerie pools of magical origin, lizard men commanded by liches, a penanggalan of monstrous size, and other fantastic creatures often used to scare children and entice adventurers. More recent tales come from a brave few that ventured into the dark waters of the swamp that mention dark tentacles of gargantuan proportions, yuan-ti slavers, temples to inhuman gods, giant leeches with bullywug riders, and a will o’ wisp of monstrous size that pulsed with black energy.

One madman’s ravings about a black wyrm have gone mostly ignored, save by his host, Blackrabbas Khulthund, the Waterdhavian sage who now acts as the man’s guardian. Blackrabbas believes this “blackened wyrm that charmed the plants and darkened the air before him” could be the long-lost black dragon Chardansearavitriol. Two rare elven historical texts in Blackrabbas’s possession refer to the dragon’s legendary name of “Ebondoath,” a beast not seen on the Sword Coast since Ahghairon’s youth. Few folk are moved to investigate the dark, scum-coated waters of the Mere to learn the truth for themselves.

Self-styled bandit lords, such as Amalkyn the Black and the wizard Helduth Flamespell, have recently established holds in the hills. Dopplegangers dwell in some of the ruined villages and hamlets, taking the shapes of humans to lure weary caravans and traveling bands to their doom.

Helimbrar and Sar

These peaks rise north of Waterdeep, guarding that city from the winds of the North. Mounts Sar and Helimbrar are named for two great fomorian giants who lived in the mountains until slain by early warlords of Waterdeep. They’re said to harbor stone giants and more fearsome menaces, and travelers also report seeing sylphs on the high ledges and side peaks.

The evil wizard Marune (CE hm M23), a chief agent of the Shadow Thieves prior to his exile, inhabits an underground stronghold beneath the base of Mount Helimbrar. This fortress remains undetected by Waterdeep’s guard patrols on the Long or High Roads, local monsters, and curious travelers. In addition to the superb secrecy of his hidden lair, Marune chose to work alone with only a few compatriots and his primary guards—six will o’ wisps—over the past few decades. He hasn’t been seen or heard from since he sold his house and holdings in both Luskan and Mirabar 25 years ago; inquirers are also hard-pressed to find any former acquaintances willing or able to talk about Marune, as he left few associates alive.

Without a doubt, he schemes and plans fell magical revenge on Waterdeep, especially Khelben “Blackstaff” Arunsun, who ruined his plans—as well as those of the Shadow Thieves—70 years ago.

Old Owl Well

In the hills south of Conyberry is a strange location known as Old Owl Well. Several centuries ago, an outpost of Netheril was stationed here, though it’s unclear if the outpost was a trading post or a watering hole. In either case, the small keep had a well that piped water from nearly five miles below the surface, producing 20 gallons of water a day.

Every power group, save for the Harpers, have tried to control the well, charging travelers steep fees for the use of the water (as much as 1 gp for a drink, 3 gp to fill waterskins, 5 gp to fill barrels, and 2 gp for a two-minute shower or 20-minute bath). Amelior, a relatively infamous mage, investigated the well in order to determine its magical nature. His findings were inconclusive, leading him to believe that the well is indeed magical. Nothing he could do would drop—even temporarily—the water level enough for him to see how the well operates. Please note this is the only water source within a three-day ride, which gives the location some strategic importance.

A tribe of 600 orcs, all waiting for “The Calling of the Beast,” have controlled the well for the past decade. While the orcs have been battered a time or two by passing caravans and groups of adventurers, they have yet to suffer a serious enough blow to drive them from such a convenient source of water. Rumors of their alliance with the Zhentarim, a handful of, and an illithid are mostly unsubstantiated.

Phandalin

Phandalin was an important farming center located northeast of Leilon, where the Triboar Cutoff East fades into a trail. The road was abandoned after years of orc attacks obliterated every caravan that passed down the road, conquering Phandalin in the process. When the orcs were driven out, the village was left largely in ruins, and it remains so today.

Under the leadership of a chieftain called Uruth, the orcs expanded steadily, building a realm called Uruth U'krypt (Home of Uruth). Its name echoes today in Kryptgarden Forest. Too lazy to support themselves by farming, the orcs devastated the game in their realm and subsequently took to raiding human holdings for food. Some 400 years have passed since then, during which time concerted human attacks decimated the orc kingdom and nearly drove the creatures from the area entirely.

No one lives here now but monsters, though passing hunters and rangers often camp in one of the more secure buildings. It still has three usable deep wells, one of which is considered to be heavily tainted with an undetectable poison that kills the imbiber three days after ingestion. Orcs and half orcs are supposedly immune to the toxin.

The orc attacks forced gnomes and dwarves to abandon a mountain delve near Phandalin where they mined mithral in a union they called the Phandelver’s Pact. This lost lode was called Wavecho Cave because the roll of waves beating on the shore could be heard in the natural cavern. Shortly before the mine was abandoned, a lode of platinum was discovered. The size is unknown, but a very old dwarf who worked the mine remembers that the vein “held great promise.”

Phandalin is the best preserved of the many ruined keeps and villages scattered along the Sword Coast, most of which are little more than heaped stones, graves, and cellars hidden by reed grasses and creeping vines. Many of these areas shelter predatory beasts or passing adventurers.
**Place of the Unicorn**

One sight that shouldn’t be missed is the Place of the Unicorn. Found only at night, wizards of the Sword Coast believe it lies in another dimension, reached only by a moongate. The Place is sacred to Lurue, the unicorn of the beast cult. It’s a stand of trees with brilliant azure leaves, surrounding a bluegrass meadow. Humanoids who rest here are cured of diseases, poisons, curses, and insanity; unicorns are healed of physical damage in addition to the above benefits. Beings who have no faith or are wavering in their beliefs often see Lurue herself in the trees, and such sightings have frequently been cited as turning points in their lives.

**Southkrypt Garden**

This abandoned dwarfhold is the air of strange and dangerous creatures. Adventurers probing the upper levels have seen norkers and bands of ravening gibberlings. Deeper forays have uncovered xaren, vilstrak, gargouilles, and storopers. In addition to the creatures mentioned, the lower halls of Southkrypt are lair to a vampire hill giant shaman (6th level) and his three vampire hill giant servants.

**Sword Coast**

The Sword Coast is the western shore of Faerûn, a rough, brawling area dominated by Waterdeep. It’s treacherous, filled with undersea reefs, rock outcroppings, and soft undersea shelves reaching out for miles. True ports are few on the coast, which is the reason the best harbors capable of handling sea vessels, Waterdeep and Port Llast, grew into important cities. Other cities, like Luskan and Fireshear, are poor ports, but they service the northernmost towns where the demand for goods is small; these ports can only handle shallow ships.

In addition to the dangerous nature of the Coast, a large number of hostile races reside here, including sahuagin, lo-cathah, tritons, savage mermen, and barbaric sea elves. The Sword Coast is very similar to the nearby High Moors in that it’s both a forbidding terrain and contains inhabitants dangerous to those who pass through it.

The Coast was the first part of the North to be inhabited by civilized people, and it consists largely of gently rolling grassland. Sometimes the land touches the Sea of Swords in a pebble beach, but it more often meets the water in a series of sea caves, broken rock spits, and low cliffs marked by sea stacks (pillars of rock severed by the tireless waves). This terrain lends itself to smuggling, but it also forces ships navigating close to the shore to be small and of shallow draft, therefore vulnerable to the driving onshore storms that pound the area. The opposite side of the Coast area is a boundary of extensive woods, mountain ranges, or hilly regions. These high lands wall off the large Dessarin river system from the sea.

**Trackless Sea**

The northern extent of the Trackless Sea is cold, gray, bleak, and unforgiving to those who venture across its depths. Yet the people on the islands and the coast must live with the sea. It gives them life and—in unpredictable moments—takes life away.
Weather at Sea
The Trackless Sea crosses both arctic and subarctic zones. North of Luskan prevail arctic conditions, while the subarctic reaches as far as the Moonshees. Raging storms are common, and anything less than a stiff breeze uncommon. The storms reach their peak in winter, making travel impossible.

A warm ocean current flows northward along the Sword Coast, warming coastal areas and giving them a milder climate than inland regions. This current turns west along the Cold Run and deposits its last dregs of warmth on the shores of Tuern.

Travel at Sea
Assuming good weather and strong breeze, use the travel times from Table 2 on the inside front cover between the islands and the northern coastal cities. The time in days for a trip is given in the table. For all routes, assume that sailing against prevailing winds and currents adds 25% to the sailing time (multiply the time by 1.25).

Westwood
Westwood, as a general term, is used throughout the North to describe the western edges of a forest. This entry, however, details only the Westwood forest south of the logging town of Khedrell. It’s said that this forest used to extend easterly to the High Forest, north to the city of Yartar, to the Delimbiyr Route in the south, and along the Sword Mountain range in the west. If this is true, Westwood once stood as proud and as large as the High Forest of today. Some sages believe this forest’s been shrinking since the destruction of Netheril.

Elven Castle
Local legend claims that the ruins of an elven castle stand in a dell at the heart of the Westwood. Much magic exists in the ruins, and they’re supposedly haunted by owlbears and wild trees (probably evil treants preying on intruders). The way is best sought at night, for the route from Khedrell is marked by ancient spells that cause floating moonlight symbols to shine in the darkness.

Shrine of Mielikki
Mielikki is venerated at a hidden shrine in Westwood, and only rangers are guided to her temple. It’s said those who kneel and place fermented seed or newly sprouted oak trees at the altar are rewarded with a healing, neutralize poison, or remove curse spell (whichever is most needed). Those of evil alignment—or who venerate evil deities—that kneel at the altar are cursed with either a curse, a reversed neutralize poison, or a reversed cure critical wounds spell (whichever is most dangerous).

Neverwinter Woods
This forest seems to have a magical quality about it, or at least an air of mystic secrecy. The always-warm river flowing from the wood has its source deep under Mount Hotenow, a sleeping northern volcano home to fire elementals. The steep mountains north of Hotenow hide griffon lairs. These woods have never been logged by men—Neverwinter is feared and shunned by locals—and even today its depths are largely unknown. The woods are said to harbor fearsome creatures, and even orc hordes always go around the woods, never through them.

Berun’s Hill
This local landmark is a bare-topped, conical hill that commands a splendid view of the valley of the Dessarin to the east. This lookout is used to watch for advancing orc or barbarian tribes coming from the north and east. It’s named for the ranger Berun, who met his end here at the hands of such a horde. He failed to stop the orcs, but single-handedly slew 300 before he was overwhelmed.

Northern legend mentions an ancient dwarven tomb beneath the hill, rich in golden armor and treasures, but none have ever found it. Bandits often watch from the hilltop for the approach of victims, a much easier treasure to obtain than riches long since lost.

Crags
Beset with goblins and gnolls, these hills contain the dead mines that brought men to the area.

Gauntlgrym
Gauntlgrym is a large, underground city built by the dwarves of Delzoun for men in the early years of an amicable existence of dwarves, elves, and men in the North (long before the Fallen Kingdom). It’s now abandoned and holds great riches. All who hear the ballads and tales know of Gauntlgrym, but the precise location of this treasure trove is lost. Even the dwarves know only that it lies north of the Dessarin and its tributaries, near the valley of Khedrun.

Ten years ago, a trio of adventurers arrived in Waterdeep in triumph, entering the Copper Cup to proclaim they had discovered Gauntlgrym. After a spending spree in Waterdeep on armor and weapons funded with rare gems and solid gold jewelry, the group set out one week later to recover the bulk of the treasures; no one ever saw them again—nor has any other word been told of Gauntlgrym in the passing decade.

Gauntlgrym housed 30,000 men and dwarves in its day. Now, not even goblin races dwell here. Dripping water echoes eerily throughout the cold, empty halls, the sound broken infrequently by the wails of banshees. Gauntlgrym touches on Deepearth, and a powerful illithid clan controls part of the city. Although the way is long and deadly, Gauntlgrym also connects with Great Worm Caverns.

Helm’s Hold
This abbey was founded 20 years ago by a retired member of the Company of Crazed Venturers. Starting as a single farm known as Helm’s Stead, it’s grown over the years, with its main buildings fortified in 1353 DR against bandit and monster attacks. It’s now a thriving and self-sufficient farming and religious community of over 700 members who grow their own food, herd livestock, and diligently patrol a small section of the Neverwinter Wood. There’s one small building in the monastery’s walls set aside for travelers seeking shelter and aid.
**Morgur’s Mound**

The altar mound is shaped like a crude, long-necked, wingless dragon, the Uthgardt impression of a thunderbeast. The bones of a great beast are arranged on the mound in roughly their proper relationships, although the ribs are set upright and the neck vertebrae and skull have been threaded onto a pole to tower above the mounds. The thunderbeast of Morgur’s Mound is most likely an apatosaurus, a beast from ancient history, and not the unholy creature of the same name from the Abyss.

It may be that the "Morgur" of the mound is Morgred Gardolfsson, a brother of Uthgard Gardolfsson, the Raurlym Northman believed to be the legendary Uthgar. If so, then Morgur’s Mound most likely holds the loot taken by Gardolfsson’s raiders from fabled Illuskan.

During Runemeet, the combined power of shamans can cause the apatosaurus bones to animate.

**Animated Thunderbeast:**
- **AC:** 7
- **MV:** 6
- **HD:** 15
- **hp:** 102
- **AT:** 1
- **Dmg:** 3d6
- **THAC0:** 8
- **SD:** Edged weapons do half damage, immune to mental spells, holy water does 2d4 points damage; **SZ:** G (70’ long); **ML:** n/a; **Int:** non; **AL:** N; **XP:** 6,000.

**Tower of Twilight**

To the east of the Neverwinter Wood, west of Longsaddle, stands the Tower of Twilight. The enchanted tower rises from an island in a small lake that drains into the woods to the west. It’s invisible in sunlight, but as the light fades, the tower appears. An emerald-green bridge spans the water to the island, leading to an equally viridescent tower with sparkling, twisting spires.

No door is visible outside the tower, and the apprentice who greets friends appears to pass through the stone wall; it’s actually an extradimensional portal. The tower is home to Malchor Harpell (NG hm M18), a former aide of KHELREN ‘Blackstaff’ Arunsun.

Upon entering, the visitor discovers a wide, circular chamber lined with stalls for steeds along one wall. A corridor from the chamber gradually arcs along the tower’s inner circumference, its incline growing more steep and its circles more tight as it winds to the top. The second level is the dining room. Above that is Malchor’s study, occupying a whole upper level, its door opening directly from the spiraling corridor. The passageway continues past the study to serve the turret chambers.

Malchor’s Museum, a treasure trove behind a heavy door, lies past an intersecting passage on the second level. For friends and trustworthy acquaintances, Malchor often lends aid in the form of magical items taken from this room. There’s a ward here that allows someone to teleport into the museum, but no teleporting or planar magic can be used to exit the room. The door to Malchor’s Museum, designed to be opened only from the outside, is nearly foolproof against the tools and guile of thieves (inflicting a -85% penalty to their pick lock attempt) as well as muscle-bound types who try to break down the door (open doors rolls are made at half-normal Strength).

---

**The Frozenfar**

Folk use the term the Frozenfar to describe the places so far north people can freeze solid as they walk. They suggest the frigid regions are where only the most crazed humans and dwarves venture in search of iron, gems, gold, and other metals the like not to be found in more hospitable lands.

The Frozenfar starts at Mirabar and extends west as far as the end of the mainland ice, reaching east as far as the farthest reaches of the Valley of Khedrun. No one knows how far north the land goes, but the glaciers of the Endless Ice Sea make it inhospitable north of the Spine of the World. Many tales speak of ice-locked valleys and wild plateaus ringed by a rampart of peaks where strange beasts and eccentric Netherese mages dwell. Only fools and adventurers go to this region for pleasure. Everyone else is there because they were born there or because they’ve come seeking the buried wealth of Faerûn.

The land is a remote and mountainous region where orcs breed in numbers great enough to bring vast hordes down upon the human habitations every decade or so. Here, the isolated ruins of long-fallen human cities stand, while dwindling numbers of dwarves cling to a few small parts of their once-proud holdings. Dwarven legends still speak eagerly and frequently of the rich metal ores and gems that lie waiting under the mountain peaks.

**A warning to the traveler:** The tales of winter cold aren’t wild. Roads are unknown north of Mirabar, trails are fewer still, and maps and safe havens are rare indeed.

**Cold Run**

From the Icetown to Icewind Dale, this bleak tundra is home to reindeer, wolves, tundra yeti, and a few Ice Hunter villages who cling to the rocky coast. Warm winds off the Trackless Sea bring a mild summer to the Run, but come winter, those same winds shriek bitter, deadly cold.

**Evermelt**

The Reghed Glacier is the western lobe of the great ice cap that spans Faerûn, north of the Spine of the World. Along its western margin, a minor fault (related to the mountain-forming processes that raised the Spine) allows the runoff to circulate deeply in an area warmed by vulcanism and reemerge in a small, warm spring-fed pool called Evermelt. The warmth from the pool holds the glacier at bay in a tiny area, causing the towering walls of ice to form a small dell with the spring at its heart. In recent years, hunters and scouts have reported that Evermelt is shrinking, losing out to the sheer frigidity of the glacier.

**Icingdeath’s Lair**

A glacier towers above Evermelt, also extending below a warm pool. Thousands of feet thick at the center, the glacier’s weight scours solid rock, pushing immense piles of stony till before it. These multicolored boulders surround Evermelt, and from these jutting rocks one can locate the center of the pool. If a creature holds its breath, it can float with the current and be pulled to the pool’s north edge and into the adjacent ice.

After passing through a long chute, the passageway opens into a wider tunnel high enough to allow a breath of air. The churning water continues to carry the creature through its twisting course until it reaches a deep and wide cavern with a 30-foot
waterfall, completely within the glacial ice. The dome of the cavern glows with sunlight because its peak is only a few feet below the glacier's surface. The internal melting forms icy stalactites, including one so immense it forms a column that extends to the floor of the cavern, allowing a creature to slide safely down the waterfall. At the foot of the falls, the stream hurries away through a small chasm that disappears under a wall of ice.

Several dry passages lead from the cavern, attesting to Evermelt's gradual loss to the encroaching glacial ice. The flow of water has decreased over the years, and the passages keep open by warmth from the waters has grown smaller. Through the largest of these tunnels, the dragon Ingeloakastimizilian entered its icy chamber—but the dragon was unaware of the tunnels' gradual change until too late, and it became trapped in its own lair. If Icingdeath thought it worth the trouble, escape was possible, but the dragon was apparently pleased with its current situation, keeping it safe from the barbarian humans who wanted its flesh and treasure.

Here, as in the chamber of the waterfall, the ceiling was close to the glacier surface, causing icicles to form, including a huge one directly over the dragon. Wulfgar’s mighty throw of Aegis-fang during the Icewind Dale Wars not only dislodged the spike and killed the dragon, but it also opened a small hole in the dome, allowing the barbarian and Drizzt to escape and return over the glacier to Evermelt. There’s still a great amass of treasure there, undoubtedly protected by another denizen of evil.

**Frost Keep**

For years, humans have tried to conquer this area in order to keep it free of giant infiltration, but decades of war have failed. An enclave of frost giants, 17 to be exact, have set up a keep assembled from ice and glacial frost. From this high vantage point, these colossal brigands, led by a 28-HD frost giant, interrupted trade along the Northern Means, putting sled dogs, traders, and adventurers in the spit, selling the stores they’ve stolen from their prey, and utilizing the magic they’ve captured to make themselves even stronger.

**Gundarlun Island**

Gundarlun is the only island member of the Lords’ Alliance, organized into 15 holds and ruled by King Olger Redaxe. Its largest settlement is Gundbarg, a city of 12,000 whose economy is based solely on trade, fishing, farming, and mining. Gundbarg has a standing army of 300 warriors who act as city guard and crews for the king’s six warships. Each hold has four longships crewed by 40 warriors.

Nearly every ship crossing the Trackless Sea puts in at Gundbarg (the Gateway Port) for fresh water, food, repairs, replacement crew, or goods to carry. Huge warehouses, dry-docks, inns, and taverns all provide necessary services to sea-farers—all at reasonable prices. The Dragon Turtle Inn on the harbor is noted as an adventurers’ hangout and a place to find captains with ships for hire.

**Berranzo**

Now ruins, Berranzo was a Calishite mining and refining colony on Gundarlun’s western shore that once housed 2,000 miners. Wizards used fire elemental to refine ore in this short-lived colony, but within three years all of the denizens went mad for no apparent reason and most died. For months, Northmen captains encountered drifting ore ships filled with corpses, gibbering madmen, and precious cargo. For 40 years the ruins have stood empty—even the bold Northmen are fearful to plunder here.

**Wreck of the Golden Crown**

A Calishite treasure galleon went down in a storm near Berranzo and now lies under 70 feet of water. It carried gold and silver ingots, electrum bars, and a fortune in gems. The wizard Hoch Miraz of Calimshan and his personal effects also went down with the ship. He was said to own a staff of the magi, a ring of spell turning, and a cube of force (that must have failed).

**Ice Lakes**

Barbarians are numerous in this chill wilderness, and their raids make the Ice Lakes region perilous places indeed. Though folk used to hunt bear and elk in these lands, the barbarians make it even more treacherous than it has to be. Today, hunters are advised to go in hunting parties of 30 or more.

**Ice Peak Island**

This ancient volcano is surrounded by near-permanent ice pack. Villages like Bjorn’s Hold, Icewolf, and Aurilssbarg are populated by a mix of Northmen and Ice Hunters. Seal skins and whale oil are bought by merchants, then sold for profits in the south. Many folk search for the lair of Freezefire, a white dragon whose last recorded flight took place centuries ago.

The Ice Peak is governed by First Captain Tranjer Rolsk, the ruler of Aurilssbarg, a Lusk colony of 3,000, who acts as spokesman for other villages (whether they like it or not). The island sustains itself through sealing, whaling, and fishing. Each community has several large fishing boats and 50 warriors, and Aurilssbarg has a standing army of 100 who man an ancient “Striker” craft equipped with ballistae and ram and six longships.

**Icewind Dale**

Icewind Dale is far to the north, sandwiched between the Sea of Moving Ice, the Reghed Glacier, and the Spine of the World. It’s home to a few tribes of tundra barbarians, reindeer, polar bears, wolves, elk, the fierce tundra yeti, and a white dragon or two. In the west, as the mountains descend to the Sea of Moving Ice, the ridge falls sufficiently to provide a pass. Through this, caravans journey to transport the ivory scrimshaw carvings that make the Dale financially worth inhabiting.

A harsh land almost beyond the reach of the warmer and more settled south, the small amount of warmth generated by the Sea of Swords funnels across the lowest part of the mountain wall, keeping the dale marginally hospitable. Nomadic tribes who hunt reindeer huddle next to the three lakes (Maer Dualdon, Lac Dinneshere, and Redwaters), and the dwarves in their tunnels attempt to survive in the harsh land. Evil creatures flourish in hundreds of mountainous delves, and Icewind Dale has the reputation as a hideout for those seeking to lose themselves.

In this bleak tundra is the farthest bastion of civilization in the Savage Frontier, a loose confederation of 10 towns and villages known collectively as the Ten Towns. The towns are located on or near the three deadly cold lakes, the habitat of the
knucklehead trout (found nowhere else in Faerûn). The lakes of Icewind Dale are justly famous for their fishing, but locals tend to think of the lakes as their own, not a pond for southerners to wander up to and pull their living out of.

**Kelvin’s Cairn**

Barbarian legend says the god Tempus battled the frost giant Kelvin in the midst of Icewind Dale. Kelvin was killed and Tempus scooped stones from the plain and heaped them atop the fallen giant as a reminder of the penalty of his wrath.

Kelvin’s Cairn stands 1,000 feet above the almost featureless tundra, while the dwarven valley falls at least that far. The homes and mines of Clan Battlehammer are within the valley, the entrances protected from the perpetual winds of the dale. The tunnels are lined with homes, meeting halls, forges with adjacent work areas, storage caverns, and treasure rooms. The complex is so extensive that some sections fell into disuse, especially when mining in any given area became fruitless.

The weathering that broke the mountain into a gigantic pile of boulders also produced the column of stones atop the eastern cliffs of the valley known as Bruenor’s Climb. Other notable valley sites are at the north end, tucked next to the southern flank of Kelvin’s Cairn, (including the nook where Bruenor secluded himself to forge Aegis-fang), the flat expanse of rock next to a stream where dwarves frequently camped, and the hidden lair near the valley’s north end a mile west of the flat rock where Biggrin’s patrol stayed.

**Mines of Mirabar**

Mirabar’s the chief mining city of the northern coast. The mountains and hills around the city are pocked with countless mine shafts. Each major mine entrance is fortified and defended year-round by troops loyal to the mine’s merchant owners, guarding against frequent orc, troll, bugbear, and brigand raids. If you go, you’d best have an invitation from someone you trust with your life, because that’s just what you’re risking.

Hunters swayed by the antler racks displayed on tavern walls in Waterdeep and points south—the ones as wide as three people lying down—should heed advice. Though orcs are fewer here and transport out of the interior is rare at best, remember that dead is dead wherever you are. Go armed, and go in numbers. Mirabar has several good guides for hunters, and some can be hired in Xantharl’s Keep and the Ten Towns.

**Purple Rocks Island**

The Purple Rocks used to be governed by two kings, one for each of the large islands that make up the Purple Rocks. In late 1368, however, the island of Utheraal fell to a raid by King Selger.

For years, King Bromm had ruled his island-nation of Utheraal from Vilkstead, paying King Selger enough gold to nearly bankrupt his nation in order to avoid a war. All of King Bromm’s efforts were for naught, however, when the longships of King Selger landed upon the shores of Utheraal. The battle for control of Vilkstead cost the lives of 200 of the island’s finest warriors, including King Bromm. Vilkstead’s population, which had grown to nearly 1,000 before the war, was reduced to around 750.

King Selger (NE hm F14) now owns six longships, four caravels, two cogs, and a war nao, but his army only numbers 500.
He's been looking for parties that would be interested in buying some of these “spare” craft, since he just doesn't have the manpower to use them.

For many years, rumors have circulated that King Selger is a pawn of the kraken Slarkrethel, an immense squid that rules the Kraken Society. Although none have seen the kraken, numerous sightings from merchant vessels report that something massive lives off the northern coast of Trisk near the fabled ruins of Ascarle. The Maiglen’s Defiance, a galley reportedly hired by the Harpers to investigate the ruins, was torn apart by something last year. None of her crew or passengers survived.

Ascarle
This legendary ruin on Trisk’s northern shore is now the home of the self-proclaimed Regent of Ascarle, the illithid Vestress. Servant to Slarkrethel, Vestress oversees the ruins and works to make sure that the nearby aquatic elves are kept in check, the human slaves kept working, and the minions of the kraken kept busy. With the exception of one horrific failure in 1363, when her merrow army was defeated in its bid to conquer Ruathym, Vestress has kept herself in the good graces of Slarkrethel.

Ascarle is totally submerged, safely shielded from the curiosity and interference of adventurers. During low tide, however, the ocean retreats to reveal a handful of sea caves that legends claim lead to the ruins. Those few who have ventured far into the caverns report that their maze-like qualities make forays past the caves difficult at best. Rumors abound that kapoacinth know the way through the caves, but their exact loyalties remain in question.

Many people, even those living on the island, believe that Ascarle is nothing more than a myth. Even the sea elves have been unable to ascertain Ascarle’s true location, and magical means of detection have proven useless.

Adventurers planning to search for the fabled ruins should be careful not to mention their intentions in any island cities; the land and surrounding waters yield barely enough for survival. This has forced the town to resort to piracy, and they are frequently cited as raiders and pirates on the Trackless Sea.

Many Trisk citizens are known to be members (though perhaps not willingly) of the Kraken Society, a fell organization intent on obtaining information regarding nearby kingdoms. The society is always interested in the underwater nations surrounding the Purple Rocks, such as the sea elves, but also pays close attention to the activities occurring on the mainland, especially Waterdeep.

Vilkstead
The rich fishing waters south of Utheraal now serve the interest of King Selger, filling his pockets with gold and aiding in the feeding of his subjects in Ulf of Thuger. The King of the Purple Rocks still maintains trade with nearby nations, however, since he needs resources from the other islands.

They export large amounts of dried, smoked, salted, and pickled fish to Gundarlun, which in turn ships it to cities across the coast. Vilkstead also produces a pungent, salty, herbal goat cheese called Vilksmaarg, popular in Sword Coast taverns.

Raven Rock
This is the alleged breeding site for the gigantic ravens the Great Raven tribe uses for their “sacred banditry.” The holy ground is in a canyon near the Black Raven River’s headwaters in the foothills of the Spine.

Ravens of Ravenrock: AC 4; MV 3, Fl 18(D); HD 6+2; hp 40 (average); THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3d4+; SZ L (22’ wingspread); Int animal; AL N; XP 225.

The central altar is a large stone formation bearing a striking resemblance to a great black bird. The giant ravens are neither native to the North nor natural creatures. Using secret rituals, the tribal shamans transport normal raven eggs into another plane and return with gigantic ravens only moments later.

Ruathym Island
United Ruathym is ruled by First Axe Aumark Lithyl. During the Luskan war, Aumark consolidated the four kingdoms on the island into one. The island’s largest settlement is Ruathym, a city of 5,000. Its economy is based on raiding, farming, mining, and shipbuilding. Aumark commands 500 warriors and has three 40-man longships and a single warship on loan from Holgerstead. Ruathym’s previous navy was destroyed by Luskan.

The city of Ruathym and many smaller villages and strongholds were all but destroyed by Luskan in a recent war. Much of the land’s wealth was looted or put to the torch, though the Green Rooms, a famous library filled with plundered books from a score of great cities, was spared serious damage. Likewise, the invaders spared the Hall of Black Waves, Umberlee’s temple.

Like Luskan, Ruathym thrives on trade and piracy, looking the other way as its warships attack merchant craft. Now and in the past, they have competed for the same clientele.

Holgerstead
First Axe Wedigar Ruthmaald rules this United Ruathym subkingdom. Its fierce berserkers played a key part in the stunning blow dealt to the invaders.

Inthar
Inthar is a ruined fortress that sits atop a rock crag some 35 miles south of Rethgaard. Eerie, green lights shine here at night, silhouetting shadowy shapes as faint whispers float across the waters. It’s said a hidden shaft leads straight to Baator. None know its origin, but sailors avoid this rock.

Rethgaard
Ancient seafaring dwarves built this stone fortress and, until recently, Rethgaard refused alliance with Ruathym and sided with Luskan. After Rethgaard refused to ally itself against Luskan, it was plundered by Luskan forces.
Sea of Moving Ice

The Sea of Moving Ice is a dense pack of ice north of The Ice Peak and includes both icebergs and thick floes of polar ice. The Sea is a collection of ice islands, often separated by channels wide enough to allow ships passage. Such channels may wind for hundreds of miles into the ice pack, but the ice changes, and what was a wide channel can quickly disappear. Many a ship has sailed into the Sea of Moving Ice only to be slowly ground to flinders by the shifting floes.

To the uninitiated, the Sea seems a frozen desert, void of all life, but all is not as it appears. Seals live on the floes, stalked by silent polar bears and walrus, who in turn are hunted by Ice Hunters. Ice-locked ancient ships are often ice troll lairs, and fiendish white dragons dwell in the crags of the larger icebergs.

Spine of the World

This mountain range, separating the North from the Uttermost North, has many of the highest peaks in Faerûn, all eternally snow-capped. "The Wall" is its other name, used commonly south of Waterdeep. Though once riddled with dwarfholds, it’s now home to fierce, cold-loving monsters; countless tribes of orcs, goblins, bugbears, and verbeeg. Hill giants prowl the foothills, and frost giants, white dragons, yeti, and fauns claim the high peaks and frigid valleys. If the Mines of Mirabar are any indication, it contains the richest mineral deposits in the North; due to its monstrous inhabitants, only the smallest fraction of that wealth is exploited. The heart of the range is uncharted, but it’s said to hide lost cities, abandoned dragon lairs, and even frozen dinosaurs.

Tuern Island

Tuern’s government consists of five Northman kings, all of whom recognize High King Threlked Ironfist of Uttersea as liege. Uttersea, a village of 2,000, is the largest settlement. Its economy consists of whaling, fishing, farming, and diamond and adamantine mining (which they can’t refine or use). Each king has two longships crewed by 50 warrior/archers.

Tuern is a rocky but fertile land of black beaches and seething volcanoes. Conditions are harder on Tuern than on the other outer islands, but the Northmen here are the wealthiest in the North. The island’s vulcanism produces two great treasures—huge diamonds and the valuable ore from which adamantine is refined. This same geothermal activity creates a perfect home for fire giants and red dragons in Flame Fault. The giants are sea rovers who sail gargantuan long ships, but rarely raid farther east than Gundarlun.

Flame Fault

Flame and smoke continually belch from this deep crevasse in the western mountains. The three red dragons of Flame Fault raid herds for food (though several kingdoms bring monthly tributes of cattle, fish, and slaves to placate the dragons’ hunger and offerings of gold and gems to salve their greed). The dragons range far and wide. Many islands suffer under their attacks.

Throne Rock

This fortress is the sanctuary of High Artificer Fizmorayen Fitzmoran, an exiled cleric of Gond (NG hm P14). He dwells here with several dwarves, human tinkerers, and an alchemist. Fizmorayen purchases adamantine ore, reselling it to Waterdeep merchants. The castle contains several tons of ore and is heavily protected by numerous glyphs of warding.

Uttersea

Uttersea is built into the sides of the collapsed caldera of an ancient volcano whose high walls shield the town from all but the worst weather. Heat rising from deep geothermal activity warms the town and the bay, actually boiling it in places. The bay is home to species who normally would not be found so far north, including giant octopi which dwell near the south shore and prey upon ships and fishermen.

Uttermost North

Also called the Utter North, this refers to the area beyond The Spine of the World, including Icewind Dale and the glaciers of The Endless Ice Sea. Few humanoid races live this far north, but there are a few sites of interest here, most of them accessible only to orcs and their allies.

The Endless Ice Sea

Some of the sites believed to exist in the Endless Ice Sea are Dzoulin’s Cradle, Gallad’s Garden, Gate of Perdition, and Print’s Floe. A few of these sites are nothing more than baseless rumors, rewarding the traveler with ice, frost-bitten feet, and a remorhaz or two. Others are rumored to be in different places, and the adventurer must discover the truth on his own. These locations have historic legends attached to them, and a good rumor or two is generally enough to send even the most stubborn of adventurers gallivanting into death’s arms.

Dzoulin’s Cradle

To get to this location, one must first travel through a huge orc homeland. At the Cradle, orcs pay homage to Dzoulin, whom they believe is the apparition of their deity. Anyone not of orc blood who approaches Dzoulin’s Cradle with the intent to enter their holy ground finds the orcs instantly hostile. About 120 orcs live, including a handful of 1st- and 2nd-level priests. The remainder fight as standard orcs with +1 bonuses.

The location features an extravagant castle, featuring paraphernalia, a drawbridge that’s always up (probably frozen in place), and a deep chasm that surrounds the fortress. If the drawbridge isn’t used, visitors must circle the chasm (crossing 100 miles one way before it can be crossed by foot), use mountaineering equipment and proficiencies, or obtain magical items and spells.

Once the chasm is crossed, the viewer beholds a wondrous sight: a castle made of magically hardened ice, giving the structure the tenacity of iron and the yield of hardwood. Formed by melting ice and shaped magically, a modified glassteel spell was cast upon the structure, making it impervious to magical and mundane heat, fire, and lightning.

The castle is inhabited by Clank, a fearsome frost giant. Mutated by evil, he’s achieved a status only dreamed of by frost giants. He’s the equivalent of a 7th-level witch doctor with access...
to every priest sphere. He has five winter wolf pets who serve his every whim and attack if they fear their master is in danger.

Clank, frost giant male, P7 (witch doctor of unknown deity): AC -4 (chain mail +4); MV 12; HD 17; hp 136; THAC0 4 or 2; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+9 (fist) or 2d8+9 (huge battle axe); SA hurl rocks for 2d10 (200-yard range); SD impervious to cold, regenerates one hit point every six turns; SZ H (21' tall); ML very steady (14); Int average (10); AL CE; XP 13,000. S 21, D 14, C 20, I 10, W 16, C 15.

Notes: Clank has a weakness for items that possess beneficial magical properties. Clank has a natural ability to detect the difference between cursed and beneficial items, but he never shares this information. When attacking man-sized or smaller opponents with his battle axe, use the damage stated above; if the opponent is 7 feet tall or greater, roll 1d8+9 instead.

Personality: Clank only wants to be left alone to lead his orcs into battle after battle to win more baubles. If humans or demihumans approach his retreat, his orc minions attack them. If the battle goes against the orcs, Clank enters the fray by throwing boulders of ice from his inexhaustible stockpile.

Special Equipment: chain mail +4 (frost-giant sized), huge battle axe.

Spells: 1st: command, create water, magical stone, protection from good, shillelagh; 2nd: charm person or mammal, chill metal, hold person, obscurement, speak with animals; 3rd: call lightning, prayer; 4th: animal summoning I.

Winter Wolf (5): AC 5; MV 18; HD 6; hp 38, 36, 34, 30, 29; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4 (bite); SA 6d4 frost breath; SD immune to cold; SW fire-based attacks cause an additional point of damage; SZ L (12' long); ML elite (13); Int average; AL NE; XP 975.

Notes: Winter wolves can use frost breath once every six rounds affecting a 90° arc, 10 feet long in front of the beast. A save vs. breath weapon is allowed for half damage. If properly cared for and not damaged, each pelt is worth 5,000 gp. The wolves only attack if PCs enter the castle or if the drawbridge is lowered.

Gallad’s Garden

Rumored to be located somewhere in the Endless Ice Sea, the Garden is a haven for weary travelers who think they’ve got the body heat to make it across the frozen land. This location is rumored to be a magical oasis sitting on thousands of feet of ice, yet is covered in green grass, flowering trees, and an endless supply of cool, clean water. It’s a place of warmth, comfort, sunshine, and days of blue, cloudless skies. Creatures once thought extinct roam in vast numbers.

Sages have been trying to determine the origin of this rumor, but nothing substantial has been discovered. Ascalhorn records dictated an account of Shard Orefist, a dwarven explorer, and his three companions who lost their way walking across the surface of Faerûn while looking for the lost city of Gauntlgym. Shard came across the Garden and spoke of huge, reptilian beasts, ferns of enormous size, and a humidity to make the jungles of Chult seem arid. When he and his companions—two of whom lost feet to frostbite on the way back—returned, they could never find the way back to verify its existence.

Darnell the Unfearing thinks Shard, and others who have reportedly seen Gallad’s Garden, passed through a gate of some kind that leads to an uncared for vale in Elysium. But Darnell’s theory does not explain that folk living in the Dessarin plains believe Gallad’s Garden is designed to hold lost souls whose fate has yet to be determined. Many fear continued searches for the Garden are angering the gods.

Gate of Perdition

The exact location of this gate is unknown. A few rumors tell of its location near Print’s Floe, but others state it can be found due north of Mirabar by three days on the hoof. The gate’s believed to send its visitors to an other-planar location wrought by unearthly cold and chill. Darnell the Unfearing claims to have crossed the Gate of Perdition’s magical stoop and encountered a multi-homed, many-footed beast similar to the remorhaz. The foul creature was so contemptible and repellant that it withstood every attack Darnell laid in its way—even magical disparagements were ignored. He managed to escape to the Endless Ice Sea with barely a life intact.

When he recovered from the fever of his wounds, he claimed he fought the god of the remorhaz. The surgeons and sages from Raven’s Rock, however, passed off Darnell’s recollections as fevered hallucinations, but they now look to the north with a little more trepidation.

Print’s Floe

This unusual ice floe, named for the historically vicious orc leader who first located this perpetually vibrating area, looks like the splintered ribcage of a wolf-slain muskox of monstrous size. For the orcs who call the Sea of Endless Ice their ancestral home, this powerful location is a sacred site because of its legendary medicinal properties.

Twelve years ago, a captured orc witch doctor, under the delusional effects of a potion of truth, claimed he was the caretaker of Print, the relaxer of fever, the mender of furrows, exorciser of dementia, and the avarice of pestilence. He gave a convoluted set of trails and paths to find Print, but it wasn’t until five years later that it was found. Unfortunately, a council of orcs (more than 1,000 in number) were at the site and didn’t take kindly to the interruption. To this day, it’s unknown if Print’s Floe actually does cure all diseases, heal all wounds, and remove insanity and mental illnesses.

Darnell the Unfearing states the following. “I discovered a glacier possessing spears of ice thrust into the floe like head-pikes for the war dead. Hundreds of carcasses lie around the effect, littering the ice like a chilling graveyard. Most of the bodies belonged to indigenous animals (muskox, remorhaz, wolf, and frost giant), but there were both orc and goblin corpses—some even in the bellies of huge unknown beasts whose flesh were flayed by the sharp arctic winds.”

Colorful as he may be, sages believe the old scout could be speaking of the ribcage mentioned by the orc shaman. Several scouts and captured orcs have given directions to the Floe. The locations with the most fingers pointing to it are labeled on the poster maps (three to be exact).
Nchaser's Legacy

Nchaser (CG hm M27), a brilliant and inquisitive mage who devised glowing globes, has not been seen in Faerûn for more than 20 years. He's generally thought to be dead, but he may still be alive in another guise or plane. Darnell the Unfearing claims to have come across an island of ice lying high above the polar cap, suspended by a 300-foot-tall, perfectly smooth stalagmite of ice five feet in diameter.

Darnell climbed the monolith using pitons and hemp and discovered a tower sitting on what he called "a rough hewn boulder of unforgiving and indestructible ice." There were hundreds of glow globes circling the tower and the upper face of the "boulder-like" satellites, giving light to the dark, winter landscape.

As he approached the tower, slipping many times in the process, magical beams of light shot from the tower's parapets. The beams missed him, disintegrating nearby ice in the process. Darnell turned tail and ran. He slid down the pillar, falling at an incredible speed in order to get away from the beams of light. He broke both legs when he hit bottom.

Darnell showed the scar where the bone jutted through the skin of his leg to prove his point, but all who know Darnell the Unfearing know him as a clumsy lad—those scars could have come from anywhere! If this is indeed Nchaser, the Kraken Society and the Zhentarim would pay large sums of money for directions to his current location.

Valley of Khedrun

The valley was named for a dwarven hero who in legend was a famous dwarven prospector who discovered the greatest gem lodes ever known. He is also supposed to have carved out the homeland of the dwarves in the North from lands dark with wolves, orcs, and bugbears with only his axe. Khedrun, in truth, existed, but so long ago no one can now separate fact from fantasy.

This valley of the upper Mirar is one of the supposed sites of legendary Gauntlgrym and is a known melting pot of mercenary, orc, goblin, and cold-weather amphibians and lizards. It is also the site of Great Worm Caverns.

Frost Hills

This is the rugged area south of the Spine of the World, a literal spillway for creatures that wander out from Faerûn's unexplored frontier. The southern borders of this area stretch nearly to the borders of the Evermoors, encompassing a few Uthgardan ancestor mounds but ending at the western edge of the Lurkwood.

Castle of Illusion

When Ascalhorn was in its prime, Fhzmilliyun Sparkledrim, a powerful gnome illusionist from Shinglefell Gnome Burrow, built the Castle of Illusion. He crafted grand puzzles like Milliyun's Mirror Maze, the Crystal Cube, Ten Doors, and No-Way-Out around, within, and below the castle, combining mechanical gimmickry with magical illusions to fool even the most perceptive visitor. Within a century of Sparkledrim's death, greedy orcs overran the castle and put its inhabitants to the sword. No treasure was found, but the illusions drove the orcs mad. The castle sat empty for centuries, protected by its illusions. It's now occupied by dour MacBec Maclyon (NE hm M12). MacBec and his orc minions have sealed off the lower mines. The wizard's followers number 30, including a 4th-level mage, a 6th-level fighter bodyguard, and a 3rd-level orc witch doctor.

The puzzles to be found here include a hall of mirrors (possibly with a mirror of life trapping and a mirror of opposition built into it), a 10-foot cube of apparently indestructible crystal in which valuable treasure and at least three skeletons can be seen, and a room with 10 doors that appears to spin each time a door is opened. Only one door leads out, the rest release traps or magical guardians. The gnomes' treasures are all hidden in the puzzles and traps.

Dungeon of Death

This ruined dwarfhold is not lightly named. Many believe the ruins are cursed, for the dungeon depths demand a toll of blood and lives from those who pry into its secrets—it's a rare adventuring band who returns with all members breathing.

The upper levels, the old habitats, open onto a deep lava bubble. The bubble is deep and even the dwarves never delved to its greatest depths.

Dungeon of the Ruins

Unlike most ancient dwarfholds, this ruin is primarily above ground. Passing barbarian hunters have noted "great froglike forms" dancing around huge pyres amid the ruins.

Fell Pass

This pass through a southern spur of the Spine of the World was the site of a desperate battle between orcs and the dwarven army of Delzoun. Now, most folk avoid it if they can, for it's haunted by ghosts, haunts, and apparitions of the warriors who died here.

Gate

As its name suggests, the ruins of Gate hide a portal between planes. The underground gate takes the form of an immense black cube with a single door. Inside, a number of colored stone slabs are doorways to other planes, including teleporters to several Prime Material Plane worlds.

Gate is guarded by powerful bugbears in the service of the beholder Zythalarlir, who fancies itself as "the keeper." Those who want access to Gate must first answer a riddle or be killed and eaten by both the bugbears and the beholder.

Great Worm Cavern

This unusual ancestor mound is underground, deep in massive, multi-level caverns at the base of a mountain in the Spine of the World. It can be reached by a well-worn, well-guarded path from the surface. The largest cavern of the complex has a level floor and contains the ancestor mound. The altar is shaped like a spiraling winged snake, the great worm Elrem.

Lurkwood

The edges of this forests are logged by men, though its dark depths are largely a mystery. Stories of bottomless pits and quicksand keep locals from treading too deeply into the forest.
**Mithral Hall**

The most famous dwarfhold in the north, dwarves recently resettled Mithral Hall. For centuries, its rich treasures were only legends, and some fear it could be swept away again. This dwarfhold’s mithral lodges are said to be the richest known in the North, and perhaps the richest left anywhere in Faerûn.

The hall lies underground—north and west of the Surbrin, and east of the Lurkwood—within a mountain known as Fourthpeak. Mithral Hall is a half-day’s climb east into the mountains from the ruined dwarven village of Settlestone, known now as “the Ruin.” The dwarven village was above ground, something rare these days and unheard of in the time of Mithral Hall. Built to last, the structures of Settlestone were like giant houses of cards—great slabs of stone—cunningly laid together.

One enters Mithral Hall through a secret door from a high valley known as Keeper’s Dale. The general location of the door is marked by ancient monoliths that date well before the time that Mithral Hall was settled. The Hall has a maze-like upper level designed to divert intruders into traps. The middle level includes mines and smelting furnaces vented through long shafts to the height of the peak. The lower level is where the deepest mines descend from a vast cavern called the Undercity.

Here, the walls are studded with the cave mouths of homes for 10,000 dwarves. The homes open onto concentric ledges. The cavern is spanned by a bridge leading east, and eastward passages eventually lead to a huge cavern over 1,000 feet deep known as Garumn’s Gorge. This cavern is spanned by a bridge, forming an excellent defensive barrier for the eastern hall. The bridges lead to a hidden exit on the eastern slopes of the mountain.

Over 175 years ago, Clan Battlehammer delved too deeply, breaking into a cavern that was linked to the Demiplane of Shadow. The greatest shadow dragon in Faerûn, Shimmergloom, entered Mithral Hall, ravaged Clan Battlehammer, and took the Hall as his own. He dwelled therein with his entourage of shadow creatures, including shadows, drels, shades, shadow mastiffs, a shadow fiend, and a tribe of duergar. Shimmergloom was clever, and his forces attacked with guile, not brute strength. Duergar of Clan Bubukken occupied the Hall and worked its mines until 1356 DR, the year Bruenor returned to slay Shimmergloom. The following year, he returned and drove out the duergar and proclaimed himself the Eighth King of Mithral Hall, Lord of the Peak and Depths.

Today, the dwarves of the Hall are suspicious of uninvited guests. Only those who trade with the dwarves are advised to go there. A watch is kept over Settlestone, whose massive stone buildings still provide shelter to travelers, explorers, and monsters. Since the opening of Mithral Hall, the dwarves have quietly disappeared from Llorkh, presumably seeking better lives under the rule of King Bruenor Battlehammer.

Bruenor Battlehammer (NG dm FT1) is about as open-minded as dwarves come, and he is a deadly fighter. Bruenor was also the only dwarf in Icewind Dale who still remembered Mithral Hall.

Drizzt Do’Urden (CG em (drow) R16), an outcast of House Daermon N’a’shezbaernon, cannot return to his homeland of Menzoberranzan again. As a youth, Drizzt discovered he was different from other drow; he cared about others and fled his evil homeland, taking with him a figurine of wondrous power, a small onyx panther from which he can call forth Guenhwyvar, a powerful panther spirit.

**Moondark Mountains**

No sage is sure just which of the thousands of peaks visible from the upper Surbrin are the Moondarks, but riches and power beyond the dreams of avarice await whoever does. Their forested slopes hide abandoned elven citadels of spell books and lost swords of power. The magic is said to be far more strange and powerful than that of the elves today. Tales speak of bracers allowing flight, items that call full plate armor from nothing and hurl bolts of felling force, scepters that unleash claws or whips of life-draining energy and can encase foes in stone (that hurl them away to shatter against obstacles or sink to watery graves). Many tales (no doubt grown in the telling) describe magic left behind by elves who took to ships that sailed the stars an age ago. Some accounts even say some of their skyships remain—ships, the tales insist, that are alive. The truth of this awaits adventurers valiant enough to find the peaks.

**Shining White**

The circular cairn rings of Shining White are separated by vales of purest white, where the barbarians have cut through the shallow turf to the chalk layer below. The menhirs and altar here are made of a bright opalescent marble.

**The Evermoors**

Also known as the Trollmoors, this barren, upland area still shows the scars of the huge bonfires set to burn the corpses of the trolls, or “everlasting ones,” that once roamed here in hordes. Trolls still lurk in the hills and bogs, but not in vast numbers as of old.

**Flintrock**

This bleak ancestor mound in the moors east of Longsaddle is situated on a gnarly knob of flinty stone. The cairn rings and altar mound are created from piles of heaped rock, barren of plant growth, and are shaped like a leaping elk stag. The Elk tribe follows other gods, so the mound is almost abandoned, though a few tribesfolk use it at Runemeet.

**The Dessarin Valley**

Much like Delimbiyr Vale, the Dessarin Valley encompasses the area surrounding the river that is its name. Stretching from the western borders of the High Forest and south from Yartar to the Ardeep Forest, the Dessarin Valley holds sights of interest to both travelers and adventurers alike.

Of course, if you’re like most travelers or adventurers, the only secrets a river holds is the method by which to cross it. There are three bridges across the Dessarin—Ironford, Stone Bridge, and Zundbridge—and these are detailed below. Of course, people crossed rivers long before bridges existed in the North, but such crossings can become hazardous, especially in the spring.
Ardeep Forest

Until recently, this ancient forest, a remnant of the woods that once covered the North from the river Delimbyr to the mountains of the Utter North, was the home of the moon elves. This ancient race of elvenkind lived in harmony with men and dwarves in a kingdom that stretched to the east of the forest, in what is now rolling moorlands known as the High Moors. Even before the times of the Fallen Kingdom, this was part of the vast forest that was elven Ilelfaern.

The forest is forlorn and largely empty. The elves have left the forest of tail blueleaf, duskwood, and weirwood trees unattended. This region was known as “Faraway Forest” to the elves because, although it was near the coast of Faerûn, it was still far away from what the elves considered home: the island of Evermeet.

Somewhere deep in this forest is the overgrown tomb of Reluraun, a warrior-hero of the elves, who lies in a vault clad in elven chain mail, with a dragon slayer sword +2 on his breast. According to legend, the tomb is not unattended; magical creatures guard Reluraun’s remains. “Ardeep” was the name of the western region of the Fallen Kingdom and now gives this forest its name.

A manicured clearing in the forest surrounded by unusually tall and thick-trunk elms is a relic of Ilelfaern. The refreshing glade radiates constant protection from evil, and it’s always spring here, regardless of the season. Cure disease spells cast here always cure lycanthrope, regardless of the level of the priest. Elves feel an incredible, restful aura of peace here, and other races can vaguely sense the clearing’s calmness. Nonmagical wood brought into the glade comes alive and magically begins to sprout leaves and roots.

Calling Horns

South of the Evermoors is an area of lightly wooded, rolling hills. The exact spot is marked by a cairn of weathered and lichen-covered orc skulls commemorating the slaughter of a horde. Overlooking this point is a hogback topped by a low, massive fieldstone inn and its stables. This inn bears the name Calling Horns and is run by Tosker Nightsword, a retired hunter and guide.

Calling Horns takes its name from a battle that took place nearby long ago. During this legendary battle, humans and dwarves united to defeat the last real troll army. The Calling Horns was originally built as the hunting lodge for the Zoar family, once-powerful Waterdhavian nobles that are now outlaws. There are persistent rumors of the Zoars using the inn as a base, was tom apart by a babau tanar’ri. The creature took over the lodge as its own abode. For many years, it preyed on travelers and creatures of the High Forest. After many years, the tanar’ri was destroyed by the Bright Blade Held High, an adventuring band of half-elves. These folk used the lodge as their base for a decade before disappearing into the depths of the High Forest.

The lodge was then used by a succession of brigands, monsters, and orc raiding bands until a dwarven adventuring band from Sundabar, known as the Axe of Thunder, found some ore nearby. Before they located any real riches, however, an orc horde swept out of the north and slaughtered them.

The lodge was thereafter taken by a human band of adventurers called the Bored Swords. All members of this party were idle sons and daughters of noble Waterdhavian birth. They enjoyed success finding ruins, but they grew tired of fighting their way into their own abode when they returned. It seems brigands continually came looking for the treasure the adventurers found, so they hired their friend Tosker to run the lodge as an inn. They soon simply gave him the place.

Their treasure is certainly hidden somewhere in or near the inn, and they may never return to claim it. The Swords went deep into the High Forest, telling Tosker little. They mentioned they’d found a ruined city cloaked in a field of magic, similar to the mythal around Myth Drannor. Apparently, they hoped to find powerful magic there. They haven’t returned; with each passing year, the likelihood of their return diminishes.

The inn has a slate roof and very thick stone walls. Cellars, kitchens, and a lower floor of rooms are dug into the south face of the ridge. The rooms of the inn are arranged in a single row, and the doors of the rooms all open into a single passage. The passage wall opposite the doors is broken only by a series of arrow-slits. The watchtower at the eastern end overlooks the stables, and a large feasting hall lies at the west end, with meeting rooms and grand suites set into the hill below it.

Furnishings are sparse but are of high quality and show a good fashion sense. Driftlights dispel the gloom of the belowground areas. The luminance of these spheres of radiance is controlled by will; they can even be made to trail like a faithful dog.

Crumbling Stair

In all likelihood, a fine mansion once stood here, harking back to good times during the years of the Fallen Kingdom. Now, only this marble stair and a moldering foundation remain. A ghost or haunt is said to lurk in the ruins around the stair.

Dead Horse Ford

This ford across the Dessarin near the High Wood draws its name from a battle fought here in which the hero Destril Longtracker had three horses slain beneath him.

Goldenfields

Sometimes called the Granary of the North, this walled abbey was founded over a decade ago by the priest Tolgar Anuvien (NG hm P18 [Chauntea]) of Waterdeep, a retired senior member of the Company of Crazed Venturers. Once only a small farm lost in the rolling sweep of the grassy Dessarin meadows, Goldenfields has grown into the largest abbey of Chauntea. It is currently a fortified farm complex sprawling across 20 square miles. Within its walls, over 5,000 devout worshippers of Chauntea tend crops of grain and vegetables.
Most folk of Faerûn are staggered by the sheer size of the tillage. It seems like a large slice of the "paradise of plenty" promised by many gods.

Of course, an agricultural wonder like this is walled and jealously guarded. The people of Goldenfields have already driven off more than 20 large-scale barbarian raids. Mounted patrols of 20 or more adventurer-priests scour the lands around Goldenfields. They patrol as far north as the Stone Bridge, and as far east as the High Forest. These patrols seek trolls, goblin-kin, and other evils to fight. They also try to capture game for domestication. They challenge all folk they meet but don’t fight unless they are attacked or encounter obviously evil creatures, such as drow or orcs.

Goldenfields is rapidly becoming the agricultural backbone of the North. It supplies food to Waterdeep and most of the inland settlements. With its increasing importance, the influence and stature of Tolgar Anuvien has also grown. He is quickly becoming the equal of such rulers as Lord Nasher of Neverwinter and High Lady Alustriel of Silverymoon.

Tolgar plans to expand Goldenfields northward to gain control of the strategic Ironford river crossing at Bargewright Inn. From there, Goldenfields could safely expand to the east bank of the Dessarin. Tolgar is now puzzling over just how to absorb, ally with, or take over Bargewright Inn, but he has not yet made any open offers to Feston Bargewright. Before he can undertake any further expansion, Tolgar needs adventurers willing to defend Goldenfields. Evil creatures, such as orcs, brigands, trolls, and a few goblins, bugbears, and foraging monsters, still roam the area. Tolgar’s defenders must be faithful worshippers of Chauntea or Lathander, with a loyalty to Goldenfields. They would most likely spend their lives patrolling the region. Tolgar’s main problem is that most adventurers quickly find such service too boring.

Goldenfields enjoys good relations with Waterdeep and all the human-held cities of the North. It’s officially a member of the Lords’ Alliance, and Tolgar is in nearly constant communication with Khelben “Blackstaff” Arunsun and Piergeiron of Waterdeep.

Goldenfields happily takes in adventurers weary of danger or those on the run from justice. They may stay as long as they are willing to work in the fields and fight to defend the abbey. Chauntea’s said to be very proud of Goldenfields and allegedly watches over it personally. Rumors say that she guides her workers through dream-visions and aids defenders with timely bolts of lightning or earth tremors.

Tolgar amassed great wealth, including many magical items, in his adventuring days. Some of it’s hidden in Piergeiron’s Palace in Waterdeep, some is in a private house owned by Tolgar there, and still more is somewhere in or near Waterdeep’s Inn of the Dripping Dagger. Tolgar’s friend, Malchor Harpell, also safeguards some of Tolgar’s riches in the Tower of Twilight. Of course, the main bulk of Tolgar’s wealth is hidden in Goldenfields. His community used to be a significant drain on his treasury, but it now adds to his riches with each passing day. Thieves beware: Tolgar fully earned both his nicknames—The Patiently Vengeful and Beholderslayer.
Halls of Hunting Axe

The tumbled stones of this ancient dwarfhold are still visible from the apex of the Stone Bridge, some 30 miles distant. This colony of Delzoun succumbed to ruin long before its homeland disappeared. The few cathedral-like halls that remain standing have no equal in the North. Fragments of colored glass amid the rubble hint at the stained glass that may have adorned the towering windows.

House of Stone

To the east of the Ardeep Forest is a huge, square tower built over a millennia ago by dwarves under the charge of Turgo Ironfist. The citadel was established to help defend what is now known as the Fallen Kingdom against tribes of attacking orcs, hobgoblins, bugbears, and troll. The dwarves excavated huge, multi-leveled storage granaries out of the rock and built above them a fortress cunningly crafted of fitted stones. The fortress came to be known as the House of Stone after an old children’s rhyme.

Although it is nearly as large as a small town, it seems to be a single building. Hundreds of rooms, atriums, halls, temples, and towers are interconnected in a maze-like manner. Some chambers are open to the sky, others are roofed over, while still more are crumbled ruins. Stairs, shafts, and wells descend to subterranean areas. Most rooms contain lifelike statues of men, elves, orcs, and minotaurs.

For many years, the moon elves of Ardeep guarded the tower, letting no one near it. Since their departure decades ago, several groups of adventurers set out to explore the structure. As far as Waterdhavians know, none of these groups have ever returned. In old tales, the House of Stone is said to have many hidden doors, sliding rooms, and chambers that rise and fall in shafts like buckets in a well. The House of Stone is also believed to have dangerous traps designed to capture intruders and numerous caches of treasure (rooms of gold and gems mined by the dwarves from everywhere across the North). Most importantly, an armory of weapons for the defense of the kingdom is apparently collected here, including weapons of powerful magic crafted by the elves and dwarves of long ago. The famous bard Mintiper Moonsilver was allowed to see the House of Stone some years ago at the permission of Eroan, archmage of the moon elves. He reported that the gates to it were open. A hill giant apparently forced them apart some months before his visit, for her huge corpse hung just beyond, impaled on a massive stone claw that sprung out into the space beyond the doors. The elves just smiled when asked if the place was full of such traps, and Mintiper noted that it was best to flee deep within the many subterranean passages under the Tor. The tunnels were sealed with rock and the area was heavily patrolled for three years; the patrols have fallen off recently, the guard believing the kobolds gone for good. If kobolds (or something far worse) are still under the Tor and digging to the surface, no one in the city knows or worries much.

Ironford

This is the sight of a new bridge built across the ford here. While the details regarding the fate of the last bridge are somewhat hazy, it appears that a group of adventurers emptied a wand of fireballs into a group of trolls that were charging out of the water toward them. By the time the smoke and flames had cleared, the old wooden bridge was gone.

Maiden’s Tomb Tor

This bare, high peak is a landmark named for an unknown barbarian princess who was buried at the foot of the peak over 420 years ago by warriors of Waterdeep. This honor occurred after the princess’ people attacked the City of Splendors in the harshest time of winter and had been repelled. The princess and her bodyguard fought with such ferocity that they slew thrice their number of fully armed Waterdhavian fighters in their day-long, bloody retreat. The barbarians died fighting to the very last warrior, ending their valiant campaign at the foot of the Tor 20 miles east of the city. In memory of their bravery, the princess and the last of her bodyguards were laid to rest in a cairn under the summit of the Tor.

Ten years ago, a tribe of more than 450 kobolds, led by Chief Kuthil, took up residence in the caverns beneath Maiden’s Tomb Tor. Their presence there (and some settlements in the Rat Hills) went unnoticed by patrols of the Waterdeep guard for four years. Upon discovery, the guard and various mercenary groups set upon the kobolds, causing them to flee deep within the many subterranean passages under the Tor. The tunnels were sealed with rock and the area was heavily patrolled three winters ago. The patrols have fallen off recently, the guard believing the kobolds gone for good. If kobolds (or something far worse) are still under the Tor and digging to the surface, no one in the city knows or worries much.

Sarcrag

This small, jutting crag of bare rock provides a perfect natural lookout. On a clear day, some 60 miles of territory can be viewed; on clear nights, campfires can be seen 90 miles off to the north or east. Sarcrag also serves Waterdeep as a warning beacon. From its heights, northern patrols can signal the approach of attackers (as happened many winters ago during the bleak winter of the Year of the Shaking Serpent).

Sarcrag is said to be haunted by the Howler, a banshee-like creature who is never around when adventurers come seeking it but always seems to attack the weak or unwary. Leucrotta are also a persistent problem in the area, and are the main reason Waterdeep and Goldenfields patrol the road north as far as the trail that heads east to Ironford.

Long ago, an armed force escorting King Jaszur of Tethyr was ambushed north of Waterdeep and destroyed by bandits. These bandits were surrounded by Waterdeep’s armies and slaughtered the next morning. Jaszur’s body was found stripped of its golden and bejeweled crown, orb, scepter, and sword of state (a flame tongue long sword).
The Waterdeep guard swore that no man could have escaped through their lines, for mages cast detect magic and detect invisibility spells all night to prevent magical escapes or attacks. Likewise, the aerial forces from Waterdeep searched from griffonback to no avail. Many hopefuls have continued the search for King Jasuz’s treasure over the intervening years, but none have found the lost riches.

**Stone Bridge**

This massive stone arch spans the River Dessarin without ceremony or accompanying settlement, rising lonely and weathered in the midst of rolling grasslands without a road or building to be seen as far as the eye can scan. Built by dwarves 5,000 years ago to link the now-ruined Halls of the Hunting Axe with forgotten dwarven holds, it’s a lonely reminder of ancient days.

The Bridge was built to span the broadest imaginable spring flood of the Dessarin. It rises in a great arc, without supporting pillars, some two miles in length and 100 feet wide, reaching a height of 400 feet above the waters of the river (at normal flow). Equally impressive are the four pylonlike sculptures, two flanking each end of the bridge, that rise 500 feet above the valley. Each weathered pylon depicts a grim, dwarven warrior-flow). Equally impressive are the four pylonlike sculptures, two height of 400 feet above the waters of the river (at normal flood of the Dessarin. It rises in a great arc, without supporting pillars, some two miles in length and 100 feet wide, reaching a height of 400 feet above the waters of the river (at normal flow). Equally impressive are the four pylonlike sculptures, two flanking each end of the bridge, that rise 500 feet above the valley. Each weathered pylon depicts a grim, dwarven warrior-flanking each end of the bridge, that rise 500 feet above the valley. Each weathered pylon depicts a grim, dwarven warrior.

The dwarves explain the awesome size of the bridge—and its continued survival, despite armies clashing on it and mages hurling mighty spells to and from it over the centuries—to the fact that it is a temple to the dwarven god Moradin the Soul-forger. It’s true that some pious dwarves do make pilgrimages there, and at least once in times of darkness for the dwarves, Moradin appeared on the bridge. Local legend even claims that Moradin, when banished to Faerûn during the Time of Troubles, stood guard on the Stone Bridge, barring the passage of a number of evil avatars who sought to reach the Celestial Stairway at Waterdeep and cause mischief along the way.

**Stump Bog**

This vast, sprawling bog is named for the numerous rotting stumps that rise from the still, green waters like blackened teeth; the dead trees were cut by an enterprising woodcutter long ago. Frog-fishermen are the only humans who have entered in the years since. The bog’s algae-covered, muddy waters drain into this marsh from the River Dessarin just south of Goldenfields and are home to many unpleasant creatures.

The waters of the Stump Bog may hide many small treasures. Countless corpses have been dumped in the Bog over the years. Many wounded victims met death in the bog by getting lost, falling into the sticky morass, and drowning. Today, the bog remains a favorite corpse disposal site for brigands, thieves, and those who find it more convenient for someone to disappear than to be found dead—more corpses of political enemies of Waterdhavian nobles can be found here than any other specific group of people.

There are many rumors of sunken treasure in its murky waters, but those who plunge into them would do well to remember that danger is never very far away. The bog is rife with will o’ wisp mudmen, and various undead creatures after dark, though they don’t stray from the bog. They haven’t been discovered due to the bog’s size and one simple fact: No one goes there after dark.

**Zundbridge**

Named for its creator, the wizard Zund, this squat, massive stone bridge spans the River Dessarin, carrying the main caravan road south from Waterdeep to the lands of the Inner Sea, Baldur’s Gate, and the lands of the south. Zundbridge has held firmly for over 90 winters, even in the roaring spring floods of the Dessarin, and has not been in need of repairs. Waterdeep patrols the road as far as Zundbridge and maintains a guardpost there at an attached double-walled castle to stop adventurers who come in search of a stone golem said to have been used by Zund in the construction of the bridge. According to legend, the golem was left at the bridge upon Zund’s death and can be taken by any who can divine or stumble upon the secrets of commanding it.

Over the years, many such seekers have dug around the bridge on both banks, swum beneath it, and even tried to pry stones out of the bridge arches. Waterdeep’s guard fear that if the bridge was left unguarded, it would soon be demolished by these zealous, would-be golem owners. The post is equipped with a flight of three griffon steeds to give Waterdeep advance warning of the approach of any important visiting delegation or attacking force.

The double-walled castle, situated on a rocky outcropping above the river gorge southeast of Waterdeep, guards the High Road bridge across the River Dessarin. An inner wall protects the garrison buildings and an outer wall encircles a vast field where caravans rest while being inspected by Waterdeep customs officers. Most trading costers own permanent “yards” here for their caravans. The outer bailey’s north gate opens onto a drawbridge, controlled from within the gate towers. “Judge” Kazardun, a former mercenary (LG dm F7), commands the Waterdeep troops here. He’s the Lord’s Alliance law as far south as Daggerford and east to Secomber. Zundbridge is home to the Red Rune Inn, claimed by many to make the finest shalass stew in all Faerûn.

**The High Forest**

Deepest, dark, and enigmatic, the High Forest is inarguably the greatest forest in Faerûn, since it has resisted the woodsmen’s axe for untold centuries. The sylvan wood’s expanse covers more than 500 miles from its southern edge near Secomber to its northern reaches at the foothills of the Nether Mountains. In fact, the forest accounts for nearly 20% of the total land area of what is considered the Savage Frontier. Many rumors and mysteries abound in regards to the High Forest and the secrets it holds within the shade of its trees. Folk talk of enclaves of druids, tribes of elves, and hordes of treants, dryads, and other sylvan races alike. Legends older than Waterdeep talk of ruined elven cities from the days of Netheril within the bowers of its trees and ancient mines within the lofty Star Mounts at the forest’s center. Truth be told, no one truly knows what lurks inside the tree line of the High Forest—few in recent memory have entered the forest and returned to tell tales of it. Those who dwell near its borders respect the forest, as it seems to emanate some suggestive force that keeps them from plundering its timber or other natural resources. Whether the powers that preserve the High Forest are mortal or divine in nature, there is something about this forest that warns human civilization away. As a result, the High Forest remains a mystery to all those who do not dare enter it.
The Secrets of the Forest

The amount of knowledge people should have about the High Forest is left up to the DM’s discretion. Bear in mind, however, that much of the information on the forest should be carefully guarded. Tavern talk might easily consist of legends and half-heard rumors of a name or a creature, but little beyond that should be counted on unless experienced firsthand by the player characters. Of course, if the PCs consort with the likes of Kelben the Blackstaff or Alustriel of Silverymoon, they can discover a bit more—but only as much as the DM wishes to dole out. After all, secrets shared are hardly mysteries for long.

Forest Folk

Within its green depths, the High Forest plays home to nearly every sort of woodland creature known to Faerûn. Scattered tribes of centaurs, dryads, korred, treants, and sylvan elves make up the bulk of the woodlands population, but nearly anything indigenous to forested areas can potentially be found here. Also expected are a few isolated encampments of human druids and rangers, many of whom are allies (if not members) of the Harpers. All of these creatures have their own territories inside the forest and are mentioned below. If no specific location is noted for a creature, it can be found in any part of the forest.

Aarakocra: This winged race once dwelt in great numbers among the central Star Mountains, but its five aeries on the upper slopes of the central mountains have been savaged by the attacks of Elaacricalmicos ("Elaar") the green dragon. These aarakocra villages are now abandoned and their buildings are slowly deteriorating past the point of repair.

The aarakocra are not extinct within the High Forest, but nearly so. Their only remaining village is located farther down the slopes of the Star Mountains’ southernmost mountains. At the headwaters of the Unicorn Run, the Khle’cayre ("Last Aerie") is home to a mere 47 aarakocra led by Wuorlah (NG P6), an old, enfeebled shaman.

Centaurs: There is one large, clanlike tribe of High Forest centaurs that makes its home on the plateaus, cliffs, and isolated glades among the Sisters waterfalls at the headwaters of the Unicorn Run. The tribe was once one clan led by one leader, Motril Thewstrong, but his recent passing in 1366 has nearly split the tribe into two clans, each camp led by one of his twin sons. There is no strife between the two brothers, but each sees a different direction for Clan Hoofmight.

Motril the Younger is an aggressive, warlike leader like his father, while his brother Naryath is a more diplomatic, thoughtful guide for their people. The split came with the Mistmaster’s call to arms against Hellgate Keep; Motril led a full army of 75 centaur warriors against the fiends, while Naryath remained behind to protect their lands from trouble during the fighting. With Motril’s return from the battle, there are many centaurs wanting to maintain their aggressive status and expand their territory.

For now, the brothers are at detente, but the situation remains tense and simply waits for a spark to reignite the problems. Naryath’s supporters include most of the tradesmen, craftsmen, and elder centaurs of the tribe, while Motril’s support comes from his warriors and hunters. Many young centaurs are starting to look for excuses to either go to war with some faction or simply break off into a new tribe and establish new pridelands elsewhere in the forest.

Dragons: There are currently three green dragons living within the leaves of the High Forest. Grimmiloshtsdrano, known in some circles as the “Riddling Dragon,” makes his lair in the Endless Caverns along or under the Unicorn Run. His brief foray into Waterdeep on Shieldmeet in 1364 attracted a number of daredevils into the High Forest hunting him and seeking his death, but they only fed him and added to his treasure hoard.

Elacricalmicos is by far the eldest dragon of the High Forest, and this ancient green wyrm has a lair among the highest peaks of the Star Mountains. He sleeps for decades at a time, but he was recently awakened by something, and his hunger drove him to devour over 120 aarakocra in their aeries a few miles from his lair before returning to slumber.

The third green dragon is a female named Chloracricida, newly arrived from the Far Forest. She currently cares for a clutch of two eggs in her lair and intends on remaining until these are hatched and her young are ready to leave. Her lair is located among the ruins of Mhiilamnir between the Lost Peaks and the Nameless Dungeon. She attacks anything within 200 yards of her lair to provide food for her young.

Drow: There have been rumors for centuries that the forest conceals entrances to the Underdark—specifically to Menzoberranzan, one of the most powerful Deepearth cities. Such rumors hold true in a number of places, including locations near the Endless Caverns, the Lost Peaks, and the ruins of Karse. Only one of these access points has actually resulted in a drow settlement, though a few bold Harpers use these points to venture beneath the Realms.

There is an established tribe of approximately 100 Vhaerun-worshipping drow living at the western fringe of the High Forest just two days south of the River Dessarin’s headwaters near the Lost Peaks. The tribe is led by a drow merchant and wizard named Misstyre (NE em (drow) W5). The colony is woefully short of female drow members, and it has taken in a number of outcast female elves from other tribes (as well as some kidnapped sylvan elves) to foster children and further cement their presence here. They waylay the few travelers or woodsmen that venture within a day’s presence of their encampment and have to maintain a strong military defense against both random korred attacks and organized strikes by the sylvan elf tribes.

Another, smaller enclave of drow live within the High Forest, brought here by Qilué Veladorn’s daughter, Ysolda. She leads a sisterhood of drow maiden priestesses to Eilistraee a score strong. Their camp is also near the Dessarin, but it lies north of the Lost Peaks and remains less than a night’s travel from the trade route to Everlund (north of Noanar’s Hold, at the forest’s edge). Their presence here is temporary, and they plan on returning to the Promenade of Eilistraee down beneath Waterdeep when the full moon rises again and shines into a hollow tree from which they teleported to the surface.

Elves: Of the sylvan elves of the High Forest, little is known. The Sy-Tel’Quesir within the woods are constantly moving bands of warriors and druids who earnestly protect the forest from all but the most peaceful of creatures vehemently. Numbering no more than 1,000 and no less than 200, the High Forest sylvan elves have aggressively exterminated three entire orc clans, a long-ago established drow slaving settlement, and all of the hill giants that once populated the Star Mountains and the Sisters.

The two main sylvan elf settlements within the forest are Nordhaeril, a small tree-city reminiscent of Tall Trees between the Sisters and the Stronghold of the Nine, and Rei-
theillathor, a settlement east of Karse along the Heartblood River and beyond the boundaries of the Dire Wood. If there are additional elven settlements or elves within the High Forest, they might dwell among the ruins of the southeastern forest kingdom that was ancient in Athalantar’s day.

Half-Elven Renegades: Eearlann’s centuries-old fall still has repercussions among these woodlands. Half-Elven brigands, primarily of moon-elf descent though numerous drow are also found, are all that remain of the once-proud elves of Eearlann within the High Forest. Princess Tianna Skyflower (CE hcf T12/M11/P5 [Karsus]) is one of the most noted of these renegades, and she and her band of raiders have made a regular practice of harassing trade and travelers along the southern edge of the forest. For unknown reasons, Tianna has moved her base and home from the Dire Wood to the forest’s edge by the Shining Falls.

Humans: Of all the races populating the High Forest, humans are the rarest. A bold few wander the forest as rangers or servants of some power, and there are a small number of druids who have appointed themselves the guardians of Tall Trees, the last remnants of an ancient elven tree-city of Eearlann. They live within the city ruins themselves, located near the forest’s eastern edge. Among other noted humans who bravely make the forest their home are the Mistmaster and his allies, Bran Skorlsun the Raven, and Jerinth Shaull, the Grand-daughter of Silvanus and Miellikki’s Chosen.

Korred: Korred and satyrs alike are found in great numbers among the forest glades south of the Lost Peaks. Numbers vary as per the population of these dance-happy forest dwellers, though amounts approaching 2,500 would be appropriate for the size of their territory. These diminutive satylike creatures worship their god Tappan the Dancer in dancing glades as well as honor Shiailia, a female woodland demipower associated with Miellikki.

Mongrel Men: These mixed breeds had become a force to be reckoned with in the central forest a decade ago when called into service by a charismatic man known as “The One.” Just as the One—or Radoc, as he was also known—disappeared without anyone’s knowledge, his mongrel men servants and soldiers likewise faded without a trace over ten years ago. At its height, the One’s mongrelmen numbered nearly 75 heads, but only a few are encountered in the High Forest today.

Orcs: Numerous orc tribes once dwelled in the cool darkness of the southwestern forest, but many of their crude villages have recently fallen to organized attacks by the sylvan elves of the eastern woods. There were four major tribes that previously lived at the forest’s fringes, and only the Iceshield Orcs remain a force of any great size. The orcs of the Gory Tusk, the Grisly Sword, and the Helmcruusher tribes were all brought to extinction by years of calculated warfare and raids by the elves over the course of the past forty years.

The Iceshield Orcs remain isolated but alive within a fortified wooden palisade protecting their settlement of 300. The encampment lies a half-day’s ride into the High Forest, directly east of the Halls of the Hunting Axe.

Pegasi: While their home terrain is mostly the foothills north of the High Forest, pegasi have a place within the woods thanks to the Mistmaster. He captures wild pegasi and breaks them for riders as well as maintains a stables within the Citadel of the Mists for pegasi. At any given time, pegasi can be found wandering within or flying over the northern forests around the Citadel.

Treants: The High Forest remains the home to the largest collection of treants known in the Realms. They once dwelt in the northern parts of the forest near the city of Everlund, and those woods are still known as the Woods of Turlang, named after the eons-old treant ruler, Turlang the Thoughtful.

Unbeknownst to most folk, Turlang and over 100 of his treant subjects have been on the move for the past few years. The treants have spread their branches east and south within the High Forest, likewise animating trees from deep within the forest to spread the tree line of the High Forest. Turlang is currently with a force of 60 treants in the Upvale, spreading small trees, roots, and overgrowth atop the ruins of Hellgate Keep. While the Upvale and the new “Hellgate Dell” have informally become the new “Home of the Wood Rulers,” Turlang keeps his wizened eyes trained on the forest as a whole, and thus he also has treants actively preventing any interference along the Delimbyr and along the southern forest near Loudwater.

Unicorns: Finally, the famed unicorns of the Unicorn Run are not mythical at all. While the main herd tends to remain scattered throughout the forest, quite a few unicorns are always present around the Sisters and all along the river that bears their name. There are at least 100 unicorns inside the High Forest, but no human traveler or group has ever seen more than a pair of unicorns at any time.

Locations

The High Forest has more than its normal share of lost cities, fabled sites, and rumored locations, because the land has remained relatively unspoiled over the centuries. The forest’s apparent invulnerability to woodcutters’ blades has kept many places secret long after other contemporary ruins about the Savage Frontier have since been plundered. Over the years, sections of the High Forest have gained alternative names, either for long-lost nations beneath the shade and the undergrowth or for the creatures and peoples that dwell therein.

The noted section below mentions both current geographic locations and well-known sites within the High Forest, including lost ruins and ancient strongholds fallen into nonuse (or not!). With the exception of the Old Road and some small foopath among the Unicorn Run, there are no paths through the forest obvious to the most skilled of human adventurers or trackers. Elves can barely spot the ancient traces of elven paths or monster tracks, but it should simply be noted that no location away from the mentioned trails is easy to reach even for the most tried of rangers and woodsmen.

Citadel of the Mists

Focal point of myriad magics and intrigues alike, the Citadel of the Mists is one of the most well-known human dwellings within the woods. This isolated castle lies in the forest’s northeastern fringes and is home to many powerful people. The citadel’s undisputed lord is known only as the Mistmaster (C19/Ill26), a human of extremely long life who has reputedly been at least a mage and a priest of no small power. He dwells here with his household retainers and allies, among whom number the fighting priest Iltmul (LN hm P11 [Helm]), Cherissa Muntarei (CG hf F9 [Tymora]), who gained great fame in the service of Cormyr, and the enigmatic wizardress from Silvermoon known only as Azure (NG hf Inv12).
The Citadel of the Mists, if not obscured by its namesake mists, appears as a slim triangle of three towers jutting from two large buildings and an enclosed courtyard. The tallest tower houses the aerie for the Mistmaster’s pegasi, and this (as well as its egress into the Citadel) is heavily guarded by charmed air and fire elementals.

The Citadel was built in its current form only 75 years ago, and it rests upon the foundations of an ancient elven fortress. Beneath the castle are ancient cellars and passageways belonging to the stronghold that preceded the Citadel at this location. These under-tunnels have been blocked repeatedly, and no one has walked these halls in nearly 3,000 years. Guarded by both monstrous guardians and mighty magic at all quarters above and below, the Citadel is cloaked in swirling wardmists whenever the Mistmaster wishes.

**Dire Woods**
This strange, hilly land within the eastern High Forest is named the Dire Woods because of a legendary massacre of humans that caused the soil to reddens. This epic predates even the hoary tales of Netheril, though folk today have other reasons to label this place as dire. Once a frenzied and ever-expanding area of unexplained magic, the chaos has stabilized and remained stable since the Time of Troubles.

During its expansions, the Dire Wood’s boundaries were marked by black, petrified trees; now, its outer boundaries are delineated by the same black trees surrounded by an outer ring of albino oaks—ancient oak trees bleached white in bark, wood, and leaves by some bizarre magic. While its outer ring can be paced out to measure a four-mile circumference of ivory wood, and leaves by some bizarre magic. While its outer ring can be paced out to measure a four-mile circumference of ivory trees, its interior dimensions are far more expansive and appear to measure 100-150 miles within the perimeter.

Whether inside or out, the terrain of the Dire Wood consists of uneven hills and undergrowth. The terrain changes only once, with a single, towering, red stone butte jutting out from the forest floor; this simply marks the location of the now-abandoned ruins of Karse, a former outpost dating from the forest floor. The trees themselves eventually Keep invaded its tree line. The trees themselves eventually fell as more fiendish creatures from Hellgate Keep entered what was due to the fact that some of the hoard went to Evereska, while the rest was hidden well.

**Eaerlann**
Eaerlann is yet one more of the lost civilizations of the North that fell before time and the blades of orcs and tanar’ri alike. Situated along the western banks of the upper Delimbiyr, elves of old built a realm comparable to Myth Drannor in the eastern High Forest called Eaerlann. Its works were rare but wondrous, and only hints of the achingly beautiful songs written there remain alive today (Many bards say that to find a true song of Eaerlann is worth more than your weight in purest mithral!).

Eaerlann and its holdings were abandoned when their fair city of Ascalhorn fell to tanar’ri hordes, becoming fell Hellgate Keep. Many, if not all, of the elves joined the migration to the west to Evermeet. Still, the works and some of the sites of Eaerlann remain evident today, but only to those who know where to look.

Tall Trees, the Nameless Dungeon, and the Old Road are the most noted of the ruins of Eaerlann, but others exist. The Stronghold of the Nine, long held to be a former dwarven hold, was an outpost, smithy, and armory created by dwarven allies of Eaerlann, abandoned only scant centuries after the elves left as well. Mihlamir is one of the best-kept secrets of the High Forest, and it is one of the most complete remnants of Eaerlann’s civilization outside of Tall Trees. One and a half day’s travel heading west-northwest from the western end of the Old Road (or three day’s travel east from the Lost Peaks) places travelers among the long-overgrown ruins of the lost temple city of Eaerlann. Various artifacts, personal treasure holds, and sundry carvings and statues dot the eastern expanse of the High Forest, constantly reminding inhabitants of what thơ this land before them.

**Endless Caverns**
At the edge of the Sisters, the broken lands south of the Star Mounts, numerous caverns dot the cliffs, and most are unremarkable. However, a northern fork of the Unicorn Run flows from a huge opening in the cliff face, and the cave it creates is the entrance to what Harper rangers and druids know as the Endless Caverns. These are a series of deep-reaching cavern and tunnel complexes that the elves of Eaerlann (as do the elves and centaurs of the High Forest today) believed had connection points with the Deep Realms of Underearth.

In the ancient days after the abandonment of Eaerlann, Grax Rekaxx, an ancient green dragon, made his residence in the ancient lair of Grax. He has quite an old and substantial hoard for a dragon of his relative young age; he was simply the first to uncover the remains of Grax’s hoard and absorb it into his own. Despite some distaste, Grimnosh leaves the bones of Grax in place simply as a warning to those who would test his patience.

A ranger, Skimmerhorn of Secomber, reported evidence of illithid activity here on his investigation there in 1356. Returning within a year’s time with a band of adventurers and fellow rangers, they ventured into the Endless Caverns, flushed out an encampment of illithids and drow slavers, and went deeper to collapse the tunnels used to reach the surface. No word of their success—or survival—has ever reached Secomber in the interim decade or more.

**“The Far Forests”**
Once an idyllic fair wood similar to the brightest parts of the High Forest, the Far Forests suffered a like fate as Ascalhorn with its fall. Its dryad and treant population abandoned its trunks centuries ago as more fiendish creatures from Hellgate Keep invaded its tree line. The trees themselves eventually
mirrored the horrific inhabitants, becoming twisted, sickly growths that provided gloom rather than shade. Aside from basic wildlife and the invading fiends, no intelligent sylvan races remained in the Far Forests.

With the fall of Hellgate Keep, the fiends within the Far Forests have begun to move south toward the Fallen Lands, seeking a safe haven from destruction. Currently, the Far Forests have once again become the home of treants and dryads, whose ministrations and care have begun to restore the woods to health. Some of the treants have marched the most corrupt or twisted of the trees to a new outer tree line closer to the Delimbiyr, allowing the sunshine to help heal the melancholic nature that permeated the trees and ground.

Motril the Younger, one of the centaur leaders of Clan Hoofmight, has discussed plans of moving some of his clan here both to expand their territory and to fight the fiends that remain in isolated pockets. As of this writing, the exodus has not progressed much beyond the idea. Also, the treants under Turlang and a clan of leprechauns are currently effective at ridding the Far Forests of fiends.

**Grandfather Tree**

Somewhere within the heart of the High Forest, a gnarled oak tree of monstrous proportions towers above the surrounding trees. This is the much-fabled ancestor mound called Grandfather Tree, and it is considered holy ground to a number of Northern barbarian tribes as well as most of the natives of the forest. Four lesser oak trees, dwarfed by the spread of Grandfather Tree’s branches, mark the quarters around its base and act as monolithic boundary marks for the inner cairn and ancestor mound. Only a few rotted stumps and fallen logs remain of any man- or elf-made works here, former tribal totem poles of the Blue Bear tribe.

Long ago, the mound’s champion spirits drove the Blue Bear tribe away for reasons known only to the gods and the spirits themselves. The tribal shaman brought a cutting from Grandfather Tree and planted the now-ancient oak at the Stone Stand ancestor mound to serve as the tribe’s new ancestor mound. When the tribe split between the Blue Bears and the Tree Ghosts with the advent of Tanta Hagara’s corruption, both tribes began single-minded quests to find the long-lost Grandfather Tree, hoping to restore the tribe’s might with a return to its roots. After long centuries apart, the Tree Ghost tribe finally rediscovered the Grandfather Tree and have built a settlement within the forest near it.

The colossal oak tree and its guardian spirits project what is akin to a natural ward. It negates any detection or location magics trained on anyone within 100 yards of its branches, just as the tree itself is immune to location magics and scrying. It also prevents anyone from teleporting or gating within a mile of its central trunk; said magics can be used to move away from Grandfather Tree, but any attempts to teleport or magically move closer to the tree are negated. Allies of the Tree Ghost tribe, and especially worshipers of Mielliki, Silvanus, Eldath, or Rillifane Rallathil, heal at twice the normal amount (via spells or natural healing) when under the spread of Grandfather Tree’s branches.

Finally, the wards surrounding Grandfather Tree allow those of neutral and good morals to approach it; those of evil morals must make morale checks (or saving throws versus paralysis, as applicable) every hour to approach within a mile.
of Grandfather Tree. Those who fail experience bad omens that cause them to decide on another path that leads them away from Grandfather Tree.

Beneath the tree and the mound, the Hall of Mists is guarded by giant ants with regenerative and phasing abilities. The hall is rumored to contain gates and portals to other planes, looking like far more ancient temples than any others in the High Forest, including the ancient ruined temples of Mhiilamniir. Grandfather Tree’s natural wards prevent anything from breaching these gates from their opposite sides, but those who brave the depths might find they lead to various locations among the Outer Planes.

**Hall of Four Ghosts**

Its name long lost to all but the most learned of historians, this ruined dwarven hold was once a logging town, where dwarves harvested mighty trees from the High Forest for the clans throughout the North. It now draws its title and reputation from its last remaining building, the decrepit great hall of the city’s former lord. The hall, abandoned for the past centuries since the fall of Ascalhorn, is still haunted by four ghosts.

This quartet of dwarven spirits shares a common link—they were all tragic lovers who caused each other’s deaths. While a number of dwarven adventurists have sought to free the ghosts from their torment, something holds them here against all attempts to turn them or bring them peace. Unlike many ghosts of the Realms, they also all seem oblivious to anyone or anything aside from each other. If there is any knowledge about the four ghosts’ identities and the reason for their post-mortem plight, it is so rare that no one speaks of it in the lands of the Savage Frontier.

Curiously enough, the ghosts of the Hall instantly converge around an entrance if a dwarf comes within 10 yards of it. They then appear to beckon and plead silently with the dwarf for something. No dwarf has entered these ruins or the tunnels in nearly a century, so this tale is long forgotten among the tavern tales.

Tunnels burrow deep from the former dwarven town’s location to caverns and tunnel networks far beneath the western High Forest. Their upper entrances are nearly all blocked by rocks, but it is possible to shift some rock and enter individually. Giant trolls are known to lair here along with their normal relatives. These tunnels eventually make some connections to the Underdark and have in the past been places for drow and illithid slavers to bring new slaves down to the Underearth.

**Hellgate Dell**

The former site of Hellgate Keep and lost Ascalhorn is recognizable today. The pile of rubble where the main citadel once stood is now an uneven, craggy hill overgrown with moss and small bushes. Surrounding that hill is a ring of 25 huge oak trees. Should any nonnative of the High Forest (and definitely any tanar’ri) approach the dell, five of the trees reveal themselves to be treants keeping watch over the ruins to prevent anyone from releasing the evil that yet lurks beneath the ruins.

**Karse**

In the center of the Dire Wood are the ancient ruins of Karse. In older days, religious Netherese emigrants built this city at the base of a tall butte of red stone. Like Eaerlann and many places, the town of Karse was abandoned after the fall of Ascalhorn and left to ruin. Both normal forest and black, petrified oaks have grown throughout the ruins. The only building that weather the centuries without scars is an eerie, black pyramid that pulses and flickers with a sickly green radiance.

The lich Wulgreth, whose infamy is legendary as the creator of the magical Dire Wood and the fool whom summoned tanar’ri to the fall of Ascalhorn, made Karse’s ruins its home for the past millennia. None have seen or heard anything of the lich for the past seven years, and even the tale-telling Harpers have no lore to enlighten adventurers as to the fate of Wulgreth. Some guess he either was destroyed, degenerated into demilich status, or perhaps he simply left. No one knows for certain, but all know that they do not want to be the ones to find out.

**Lost Peaks**

These two small mountains in the northwestern wood are the source of the River Dessarin, as well as home to Korred and satyrs on the lower slopes and in the woods. Rumors and legends place the Fountains of Memory here, on high plateaus and in small caves near the zenith of one of the Lost Peaks. The Fountains are magical pools that reflect views of Faerûn’s past, whether it is the recent past, long-past history, or a personal past of the viewer. The waters also allegedly form gates that allow instantaneous travel to the places viewed, however it is unclear whether the exact time periods viewed can be reached rather than just the place. Some legends link the Fountains to the powers of Tappan, the dancing god of the korred, but his magical Fountains are said to be in a peaceful glade rather than a mountain plateau or cave.

Within the slopes of the easternmost Lost Peak, a long-dead dwarven hold lies undisturbed as it has for 12 centuries. Should anyone discover its entrance, they discover a dwarven mining facility still filled with the forms of dwarves. Mysteriously, the entire place is dead as are its inhabitants, but some fell magics hold every dwarf upright and in place performing the action the corpse was doing when it died. Whatever destroyed this place killed everyone unawares and instantly, as most of the skeletal dwarves work at mining or smelting at dusty, long-dead forges or pounding out metal for weapons. It is truly eerie to walk through the halls, finding dwarven skeletal forms still hard at work long after death.

**Mhiilamniir**

Mhiilamniir is the most complete reminder of Eaerlann’s civilization outside of Tall Trees. Less than two days’ travel from the end of the Old Road (or three days’ travel east from the Lost Peaks) puts travelers among the overgrown ruins of the lost temple city of Eaerlann. At the height of Eaerlann’s civilization, Mhiilamniir was the location of a number of major temples and seats of power for elven clergies of the North.

Not one building in Mhiilamniir today is not thoroughly covered by mosses, undergrowth, shrubbery, or small trees. The largest building was the central temple, once dedicated to Corellon Larethian, that sits at the hub of the small grove-enshrouded ruins. With its central dome long shattered and fallen, its jagged edges of stone are the only easily sought suggestions that a city once stood here. Unfortunately, Mhiilamniir is no longer safe for elven pilgrims, since Corellon’s temple is now the lair of a green dragon female named Chloracridara. Chloria is rabidly paranoid about protecting her two eggs—not to mention her not-inconsiderable hoard—from raiders, and she attacks anyone she finds within the ruins of the temple city.
Nameless Dungeon
Eaerlann’s treasures were believed to have disappeared with the elves, but this was proven wrong when the elven ruin soon known as the Nameless Dungeon yielded mithral armor, magical weapons, and other works of lost elven craft to adventurers from Sundabar in 1351. The plundered citadel quickly caused a furor among elves in the North, and envys from Evermeet have established some guardians at the site (along with troops supplied by High Lady Alustriel of Silverymoon and others from Evereska) to prevent trespassers from plundering elven treasures that should remain buried.

In almost two decades, the Nameless Dungeon has produced only a few artifacts and items, such as two mithral suits of scale and chain mail armor, an ornately-crafted long sword with a basket hilt (carved to appear as multiple tongues of flame), and a helm made of mithral that was shaped like a hawk’s head complete with beak. This scarcity is due to the fact that its guardians (2-12 moon-elf warriors of levels 3-8) have allowed no one to enter for over twelve years without tokens of free passage granted exclusively by Alustriel (granted ostensibly to historians and elven scholars).

The elves claim they simply don’t want the holy ground of an ancient elven burial ground violated by ravaging intruders. Others claim that there is something powerful in the ancient crypts that the elves wish to keep secret.

Nordahaeril
Nordahaeril is a small tree-city reminiscent of Tall Trees between the Sisters and the Stronghold of the Nine. It is a series of houses built around and in the trunks of the massive trees at the forest’s heart. Consisting of approximately 20 trees and 30 individual buildings or huts interconnected by swinging vines, branch roads, and rope bridges between the trees, this settlement is home to about 100 sylvan elves. There is only one entrance to this colony from the forest floor, and it is a heavily guarded winding stair that ascends 100 feet up the interior of a massive oak to the lowest of Nordahaeril’s outbuildings.

The Old Road
This is a 35-foot-wide cobblestone road built by the elves of Eaerlann long centuries before Waterdeep was even a trading post. Many of the stones are cracked—if not dislodged or missing altogether—after years of nonuse and neglect. Still, it provides one of the easiest paths into the interior of the High Forest, no matter what shape it’s in. Its roughest treatment lies 10 miles into the forest, where either spells or wizard weather sun-dried the road with an earthquake and left a 50-foot-diameter crater centered on the Old Road, requiring folk to walk into the forest surrounding it.

There is one manned guardpost at the intersection where the Old Road splits off and leads to the Nameless Dungeon. The garrison here consists of moon elves and gold elves from Silverymoon and Evereska; there are no less than 25 warriors of varied levels at any given time, and at least four of them are mid-level priests or wizards as well. If travelers have a token allowing them passage to the Nameless Dungeon, they are escorted to it by a small force of at least one elf per party member. If they simply use the road to travel farther west, the elves keep a sharp eye on them for at least the next mile (to make sure they don’t double back and head for the Nameless Dungeon).

The Old Road ends in stages, gradually switching from its stone pavement to a well-worn log road for roughly five miles. After that, the Old Road degenerates into a footpath and finally dead ends in a small grove. There was once a small stone marker carved with elvish writing that simply said “This be the end of the Old Road of Eaerlann’s folk. Attend the silence of the grove and say a prayer to those who walked before you and those who follow your footsteps as well.” That marker was destroyed by lightning or some other explosive force in 1355. At the site of the blasted marker, though, is the skeletal severed arm of a gnoll still clutching a rusted and pitted short sword.

Reitheillaethor
Reitheillaethor is a new elven settlement east of Karse along the Heartblood River and just beyond the boundaries of the Dire Wood. Unlike Nordahaeril, this is a colony on the forest floor, still primarily using huts and tents. Many of Reitheillaethor’s inhabitants are nomads within the forest, coming to this site only during the winter. The few permanent buildings are wooden lodges, and they all seem to have grown out of the entwining roots and bark of the surrounding trees. Reitheillaethor is a circular encampment around one huge, central lodge with four great oaks as its four corners. Seven smaller lodges and a ring of trees form a perimeter around that center, and the remainder of the settlement tends to be individual tents, lean-tos, and temporary cabins.

While the sylvan elves of the High Forest are all hunters and gatherers, the elves of Reitheillaethor are also accomplished fishermen and craftsmen. In fact, the graceful yet sturdy pottery they create from the clay along the banks of the Heartblood River is a valuable trade commodity both within and outside of the High Forest. While the native elves were initially worried about the increased treant activity to the east at the Delimbiyr, it does not interfere with their lives. In fact, Reitheillaethor is planning on expanding as the forest expanse grows and offers them more protection.

The Shining Falls
What was once an outpost and portage road for eastern Eaerlann is now simply a light deer path at the top of a high, spectacular horseshoe falls. Legends tell of a hidden entrance to the tomb of the dwarven royalty of Ammarindar (a dwarven contemporary of Netheril) beneath the torrential waters of the Shining Falls. In truth, the tombs are long since plundered, and only Zhent-sponsored brigands use the caves behind the falls as hideouts.

While the falls normally end the upward travel of folk on the River Delimbiyr, the Zhents of Llorkh and Orlbar have spent the past two years re-establishing a portage here in attempts to reach Sundabar. With Hellgate Keep’s fall, the Zhents are that much more eager to open up these connections. To their dismay, the treants stationed at the forest by the Heartblood River fork prevent them from exploiting this avenue.

The Sisters
South of the Star Mountains lie a series of escarpments and gorges created by the flow of the Unicorn Run called the Sisters. Considered the most beautiful and idyllic of locations by all who ever gaze upon them, the many multi-leveled waterfalls of the Sisters show the beauty that results from unspoiled nature. The mists and waters of the falls provide the moisture that allow
scrub grass and vegetation to grow on the high plateaus and cliffs around them. These plateaus are home to a large number of centaurs, nereids, naiads, sylphs, pixies, and leprechauns. To see the moon rise over the Sisters and spot a unicorn atop a cliff is considered a blessing of good fortune from Mielikki.

**StarMounts**

Near the center of the High Forest, the majestic StarMounts rise far above the forest canopy, usually shrouded in clouds or mist, making the view of the peaks impossible but for a few days out of the year. Two rivers, the Unicorn Run and Heart-blood River, claim headwaters from these mountains.

The elves of Eaarlan first named the mountains, giving them the same names as stars in the northern heavens. Most of the original names are forgotten, only their rough translations survive: Bard’s Hill, Mount Vision, and Hunterhorn. Yet, a few are remembered: Y’tellarien (the Far Star), called Far Peak; Y’landrothiel (Traveler’s Star), called Mount Journey; and N’landroshien (Darkness in Light), called Shadowpeak.

The forest south of the mountains hides a gnarled surface that might be called a badland were it not so densely thick- eted. To the north, the land is unusually smooth, as if leveled with a woodworker’s plane. The mountains are also known to be rich in metals, including remarkably pure iron and nickel. But since the end of Eaarlan, no one mines there.

The StarMounts are an unapproachable curiosity. The an- cient elven names hint at some unfathomable mystery, though most suspect the elves know the truth of it. As far as anyone knows, no flying creature less powerful than a dragon can land there due to constant and usually fierce winds. Strangely enough, aarakocra, the bird-like winged race, seem to have no difficulty in flying to and from the mountains (though few dare do so now since they became a delicacy to a nearby green dragon).

Huge crystals dot the surface of the mountains, many as large as small houses. There are several uncharted ruins in the mountains with walls made of fractured crystal shards. When moonlight strikes the crystals, it creates webworks of reflected light across the surface of the mountain. On a small internal peak at the heart of the StarMounts during the full moon, the crystals cover this peak with patterns of light. This is rumored to either generate a gate to another plane, or the light has the ability to resurrect anyone laid within the cairn of standing stones at its top.

**Stone Stand**

A tall oak tree surmounts the altar mound here. The oak is a cutting taken long ago from the legendary Grandfather Tree. Both cairns rings here are surmounted by menhirs, spaced roughly 10 feet apart and capped by lintel pieces that link the stones together into two unbroken rings of capped columns.

Since the Tree Ghosts have found Grandfather Tree once again, Stone Stand serves as more of a reminder to the strug- gling remnants of the Blue Bears of what they have lost. The Tree Ghosts still consider the site holy ground, however, and constantly drive off any rogue Blue Bear tribesman who makes an effort to remain close to the ancestor mound.

Magical cast in the mound’s inner cairn ring is more potent. The effects of spells are half again more potent (a spell that would last six turns lasts nine; a spell that would heal 1d8 points of damage heals 1d8+1d4).

**Stronghold of the Nine**

This cavern complex is a former dwarfhold rebuilt by the Nine, a famous adventuring band led by the female archmage Laeral. Long-since abandoned by that group of heroes, it has recently been taken over by a group of sylvan elves who have claimed the title of “The Nine” as their own—apparently with the blessing of Laeral.

Some believe that this is the first in a series of steps for the elves in their effort to reclaim the High Forest. But while many of the forest denizens appear to be cooperating with the new “rulers” of the stronghold, it is going to be many years before the Stronghold of the Nine can attain the level of power neces- sary to be a force in the area.

**Tall Trees**

The Tall Trees, a small northeastern section of the forest, is thus called because it probably has the oldest trees in the for- est. They tower over the rest of the forest like hill giants to human youth, and their trunks are the width of most northern villages.

The tree homes of Tall Trees are home to nearly two dozen druids who inhabit only a handful of the more than 30 tree homes present. They care for the trees like a farmer watches over his fields, carefully tending to the health of the trees and removing excess animals from their branches.

The leader of the community, Uthgang Jyarl (TN hm D14 [Mielikkil]), has been worrying over two of the oldest oaks located in the center of Tall Trees. Apparently, these two trees are dying, and he’s planning to transform himself a replace- ment for one of them upon his death, though no one’s sure how he can accomplish this feat.

Tall Trees has proven itself immune to fire on many occa- sions, ignoring the effects of both fireball and similar spells. Likewise, it has withstood a few concentrated orc attacks, as the druids have both the advantage of high ground and spell- casting when dealing with the troublesome orcs (who have become much less dangerous since the sylvan elves’ campaign against them).

**Turnstone Pass**

Formerly the quickest way to reach Hellgate Keep and the Up- vale from Sundabar, this pass is now totally blocked by a mas- sive avalanche initiated by Turlang’s treants and a large num- ber of galeb duhr. Caravan traffic is now encouraged to go south to Everlund, following the River Raurin as it winds its way to Silverymoon.

**Unicorn Run**

This clear, pristine river begins at the very heart of the High Forest, right at the base of the StarMounts. It’s known for its purity, excellent fishing, and slow-moving current, as well as the fact that it’s a gathering place for unicorns. Although the water does not detect as magical, something draws unicorns to its banks. . .

**The Upvale**

This is the area between the Tall Trees and the Far Forests that has now been taken over by Turlang and his treants. While it’s going to take many years to reforest this area, Turlang has al- ready begun work at the ruins of Hellgate Keep, known now as Hellgate Dell.
**Deeper Secrets**

Plots abound within the thickets and shadows under the leafy canopy that encompasses the High Forest. Aside from rumors of wizard weather reported from the Dire Wood, no news of any of the following secrets should reach the ears of PCs or NPCs alike until they experience it themselves.

**New Eaerlann**

The sylvan elves of the High Forest have long-range plans to restore and rebuild the great forest kingdom of Eaerlann. Talks with Evereska—and very covert discussions with the Lords’ Alliance—have progressed, and the number of elves migrating into the High Forest is rising slightly. The center for the first major city of New Eaerlann appears to be the newly-rebuilt Stronghold of the Nine and additional outbuildings, now collectively becoming called Caerilcarn by the elves that occupy it.

**Radoc’s Fate**

Radoc (LE hm C20/W23), also known as “The One” and the “Doc of New Empyrea,” was a planar mortal exiled here from the other plane for reasons unknown. He spent nearly 20 years living in the Star Mounts, purchasing mithral from orcs and bringing solidarity and leadership to the scattered mongrelmen and other monstrosities in the forest. He was last reported leaving the Star Mounts in the summer of 1366 with his amassed forces, and he was rumored to have enough power to teleport them to their unknown destination.

Rumors talk of Radoc moving into the Fallen Lands to collect more forces into his misfit army, while other wilder tales place him as slaughtered—along with his forces—on an extraplanar battlefield. Simply put, no one knows where Radoc is, but he’s nowhere to be found within the High Forest.

**Turlang’s Calling**

After a sleep of nearly a century, the treants of the High Forest, and especially their leader, the noble Turlang, have embarked on an agenda after being spurred to action against Hellgate Keep. In exchange for Turlang’s aid against Hellgate’s forces, the Mistmaster agreed to allow Turlang and company to expand the forest over the ruins of the keep and seal them forevermore, a mutually agreeable situation it seemed.

What the Mistmaster underestimated was the scope of Turlang’s plan; over the course of the next few decades, Turlang and his dryad and treant allies intend to expand the High Forest’s tree line to cover the grasslands of the Upvale encompass the Far Forests, swell the eastern border of the forest up to and across the River Delimbiyr to abut the Graypeak mountains, and continue the expansion until South Wood is restored to being a part of the High Forest.

Even with all the treants working at maximum efficiency, this undertaking is going to require at least 20 years. Even so, enough trees have been animated from the center of the High Forest and walked by treants out to Hellgate Keep that the few visitors that might know where the citadel once was could never reach its ruins, surrounded as it is by guardian treants and oak trees with dryads.

**Wizard Weather**

The High Forest and the surrounding countryside experience occasional exotic weather patterns that can only be of magical origin—and seem to be centered on and caused by the Dire Wood. The weather appears suddenly, ends suddenly, and is often destructive and deadly. Recorded types of weather have included red snow that smells of blood, a steaming-hot rain that boiled the flesh of those it fell upon, instant blizzards under a clear sky at midsummer, hail that varied from transparent to multi-colored spheres that exploded on impact, and sleet that coated trees within its area with steel.

There is a 1% chance each day of encountering wizard weather while within the High Forest. However, those who enter the ruins of Karse and are foolish enough to touch or enter the black pyramid there increase their chances to 10% per day until they leave the High Forest for more than a ten-day.

**The Woods Have Eyes**

Part of the magic and mystery of the High Forest is its seeming invulnerability to the axes of loggers in the past centuries. One of the major reasons for this, aside from the mortal inhabitants and the sylvan folks’ powers, are the attentions of two goddesses. Both Mielikki and Eldath, each for reasons of their own, have chosen to protect the wild territory of the High Forest and keep it from losing its trees to civilizations of elves or humans or any races.

Any incursions that moderately disrupt the natural order of the High Forest usually result in some Harpers or rangers (if not the native elves of the forest) receiving signs from the goddesses to go to the aid of the forest. If major problems are introduced into the woods, Mielikki may assign her chosen agent, Jeryth Phaulkon, to directly intercede on her behalf to defend the High Forest. Often, this direct intervention is not necessary due to the ears and eyes of the elves as well as the other natives more than willing to stop anyone from despoiling the status quo of the timberland.

**The Coldwood**

This is both an ancestor mound and a small town of about 500 Uthgar, named after an Uthgar ancestor, Beorunna, the father of Uthgar. The village is unremarkable, a number of huts and tents for the tribesfolk who work the small fields, raise cattle, and hunt the surrounding woods. It’s unremarkable until one learns the unfortified village has never been successfully raided. The Black Lions claim the spirit of Beorunna keeps the village safe.

**Beorunna’s Well**

The village namesake is the huge pit containing their circular ancestor mound. The pit is the ruins of a collapsed cavern where Beorunna died while saving the world. It’s probable that Beorunna destroyed Zukothoth, a fiend in the cavern, collapsing it in on both of them. What local legend doesn’t say is a vast fortune in ancient treasure is also in the collapsed cavern.
The predominant life form is a giant catlike reptilian biped—sentient creatures are intelligent and cast spells of low level.

Rumor has it Ssessibil is not as human as he appears. He dwells in Faerûn to obtain supplies for his potions, compo-
sitions and magical items, while a small army of orcs keeps races of the North—even some of the histories and badges of the orc, goblin, and hobgoblin races are preserved within its walls. Ssessibil seeks solitude from humanity, which he both fears and loathes. He conducts magical experiments and manufactures potions and magical items, while a small army of orcs keeps visitors away. It’s difficult for wizards of Ssessibil’s power to keep their whereabouts entirely secret, yet he manages quite well. Rumor has it Ssessibil is not so human as he appears.

The tower has no visible entrance, and the interior consists of four rooms connected by magical doors. An elemental being and enough of its element to make it dangerous guards each room. One chamber contains earth, another fire, the third water, and the last, air. In the air room, a pool of silvery liquid (like mercury) acts as a gate that Ssessibil uses to travel to and from his true home on an alternate world (where most normally nonsentient creatures are intelligent and cast spells of low level). The predominant life form is a giant catlike reptilian biped—Ssessibil’s true form. He has a vast selection of potions, at least one of each listed in the ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™ accessory. He dwells in Faerûn to obtain supplies for his potions, components not readily found on his home plane.

Towering above the trees on five enchanted stone legs, the home of reclusive Tulrun (CN hm M27) avoids visitors. Tulrun’s Tent consists of a stone platform large enough to hold a small, gaily colored silken tent nestled in a dozen gnarly oaks. Inside, the tent is much larger than it appears. It’s possible to wander its elegant corridors for hours and never see a familiar hall or chamber.

In the depths of the Moonwood, legends claim that a ruined, overgrown elven castle stands. Its name is forgotten, but great magic is believed to sleep in its gloomy chambers. The castle’s vine-choked, needle-thin spires are lost among the trees, and it bears some sort of cloaking magic deterring both monster intrusions and magical detection alike.

There’s also a hill where drow ladies come on moonlit nights to dance in a great ring. This seems to be done in worship to Elistraee, a goddess of good aims. It’s dangerous to approach the women, the guides say. They hurl potent spells at intruders, chasing those they see for long distances through the forest.

This snowcapped range contains the remnants of northern dwarven power, Citadel Adbar and the realm of Adbarrim. Few humans are found here, other than the wild hunters of the Red Tiger (snow cat) barbarian tribe or merchants from Sundabar. Frost giants, orcs, verbeeg, remorhaz, ice lizards, and white dragons dwell here. It’s said an ancient silver dragon and his bronze dragon companion roam the mountains in the guise of an old hunter and his hound.

The ready militia of Beorunna’s Well consists of 80 1st-, 30 2nd-, 20 3rd-, and five 4th-level warriors led by Heafstagg Fourfinger (CN hm F6 [barbarian]), the eldest son of Alaric the Strong, the Black Lion tribal chieftain. The trapdoor in the water-surrounded altarp leads down through a flooded passageway to a partially collapsed cavern complex, home to slimes, jellies, molds, and insectoid creatures. Ickshar, a rakshasa, and his ally X’ss’a,’ an illithid, have been trapped in stasis here since the collapse of the cavern.

**Ice Mountains**

**Lonely Tower**

From the top of this tall, white tower, it’s possible to glimpse the glacier far to the north. The Lonely Tower is the dwelling of Ssessibil Istahvar (LE hm M27) and his small entourage. He conducts magical experiments and manufactures potions and magical items, while a small army of orcs keeps visitors away. It’s difficult for wizards of Ssessibil’s power to keep their whereabouts entirely secret, yet he manages quite well. Rumor has it Ssessibil is not so human as he appears.

The tower has no visible entrance, and the interior consists of four rooms connected by magical doors. An elemental being and enough of its element to make it dangerous guards each room. One chamber contains earth, another fire, the third water, and the last, air. In the air room, a pool of silvery liquid (like mercury) acts as a gate that Ssessibil uses to travel to and from his true home on an alternate world (where most normally nonsentient creatures are intelligent and cast spells of low level). The predominant life form is a giant catlike reptilian biped—Ssessibil’s true form. He has a vast selection of potions, at least one of each listed in the ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™ accessory. He dwells in Faerûn to obtain supplies for his potions, components not readily found on his home plane.

**Tulrun’s Tent**

This name is not the name of a single forest, instead encompassing Lurkwood, Southkrypt Garden, Southwood, Moonwood, and Westwood. The edges of these forests are logged by men, though their dark depths are largely a mystery.

**The Moonwoods**

At the far end of the corridor is the largest room of the Holdfast: the greatest library of the North. This treasure trove exceeds even the Vault of the Sages in Silverymoon. Lining the walls and piled on tables large and small are countless volumes.

**One Stone**

Shadowed by deep forest, this ancestor mound served the now-dead or disappeared Golden Eagle and Red Pony tribes. Now, only the Sky Ponies make their visit to the One Stone. Instead of an altar mound at the center of the cairn rings, there’s a single, massive, rounded boulder, easily 20 feet across and 12 feet high and covered with precisely engraved tracery. Carved steps ascend the south face to the altar on top.

The legend of One Stone tells of a god who sealed a passageway from Baator with a single rock thrust into the ground. One can only wonder if the evil supposedly sealed beneath the stone was able to reach out to whisk the missing tribes away. Some say the Golden Eagle and Red Pony tribes were destroyed by inter-tribal rivalry. Darker tales suggest that they disappeared beneath the ground, where they yet dwell today.
The Delzoun Region

These areas were once the home of the dwarven kingdom before falling to hordes of orcs. The kingdom is now long gone, yet its history remains for the brave to uncover once again.

Ascore

Once a thriving port on the Narrow Sea, Ascore served as the gateway to the dwarven nation of Delzoun. Here, humans, dwarves, and elves conducted trade with nations like Eaerlann, Netheril, Nimbral, and Myth Drannor. Now it is sand-swept ruins with mighty stone docks thrust proudly into the advancing desert. The empty hulls of colossal stone ships lie half-covered in the desert beyond, the remnants of lost Delzoun’s dwarven navy.

From the west, an ancient road leads to the cliffs above Ascore. Here, a pair of gigantic stone griffon statues crouch, grimly guarding the dark, yawning entrance to Ascore—a door in a hill that leads down into the rock before exiting into the ruins at the base of the cliff.

The ruins are said to contain great treasure, but even orcs avoid the city. It may have something to do with the circle of 13 tall, five-sided red pyramids in the heart of the ruins. Something evil lurks in Ascore—something that’s been here for 2,000 years. Desert creatures like dunestalkers and permicon are found here, as are many kinds of undead.

Citadel of Many Arrows

This fortified city, once known as the dwarven hold of Felbarr during the time of the realm of Delzoun, stands on a rocky mount in the center of a mountain valley. Once home to 25,000 dwarves, this citadel was among the first abandoned by the dwarves due to dwindling mine activity. The dwarves left more than three hundred winters ago, and the citadel was quickly claimed and garrisoned by 3,000 troops out of Silverymoon. The folk from that city hoped to use it as a base for exploration of the Coldwood and the needle-sharp Ice Mountains north and east of Dead Orc Pass. They wanted to find giant trees for use in shipbuilding and new sources of gold and the increasingly scarce silver. Unfortunately, the orcs of the mountains had other ideas. The humans were under attack from their first day in the Citadel.

Fifty years after the human occupation began, an orc horde of awesome proportions surrounded and besieged the citadel. The sky rained arrows, with orcs packed so close together that no shaft could miss. But the time came when all arrows and spells were gone. Needless of losses on both sides, the Battle of Many Arrows lasted for more than four months, the battle so-named for the use of all the defenders’ arrows which slew many orcs—enough for surviving orcs to climb up the corpses and scale the citadel walls. The battle ended with the fall of the Citadel and the outright slaughter of the defenders.

Since the liberation of the citadel by the dwarves in 1367 (refer to the Recent History section on page 10), King Emerus Warcrown (LG dm F11) has been striving to rebuild the “once-glorious city of Felbarr” to dwarven standards. Still, the citadel is but one orc horde away from being swept back into history (or orc occupation).

A small handful of dwarves have heeded Emerus’s call to arms, arriving to rebuild the ancient dwarfhold. They’ve currently managed to rebuild the main gates, which were shattered during the battle with the orcs, and have cleaned up much of the fire damage. Given another year—and about another 1,000 dwarves—Felbarr could actually rise again.

Mining activity has undergone somewhat of a rebirth, and many miners are bringing gold out of the nearby mountains. An earthquake some 80 years ago has apparently opened up new areas for mining. Of course, some of the abandoned mines contain monsters, and adventurers are always in need to clean out such menaces.

Around 1,200 dwarves and another 250 humans now make Felbarr their home, but each man and woman keeps a wary eye on the horizon. No one doubts that the orcs will have a score to settle during their next invasion of the North, and King Warcrown has a standing bounty of 2 gp per pair of orc’s ears.

Dalagar’s Dagger

Under the Coldwood and the Ice Mountains, atop the nearest peak east of Sundabar in the westernmost fang of the Nether Mountains, is a place known as Dalagar’s Dagger. For some unknown reason, many aged and ailing dragons come here to die—wyrms of the black, blue, and green species. They typically perish in a suicidal dive onto the sharp pinnacle. Their bones litter the utmost slopes. Among their skeletal remains wink the treasures they bore: rings, pendants, and even loose gems and coins once glued to dragon bellies by means of ancient dragonhide oils and ointments. The Dagger’s almost vertical lower faces are treacherous and crumbling, and the mountain is almost impossible to climb, so most of the treasure remains unclaimed.

Dead Orc Pass

This is a steep, rocky gorge northeast of Sundabar. The River Rauvin roars through in a series of cataracts, rapids, and falls, filling the valley with mist and making the narrow trails wet and slippery. The orc-king Graul is thought to have his stronghold here.

Everfire

Dwarves come from all over the North to a certain rift beneath Sundabar known as Everfire. Here, the dwarves forge the finest blades known in Faerdin—blades that readily take enchantments, and outlast the people who wield them. Everfire is guarded by a dedicated band of dwarves who are fed, armed, and healed by Sundabarians. This band, known as the Vigilant, fight off drow, duergar, and greedy humans seeking to gain control of the molten-rock rift. The Vigilant report that evil is rising in the ruins of Ascore to the east, and monsters have been coming through the Underdark from that direction in increasing numbers.

The Fardrimm is not a wealthy region; its lodes have been largely worked out. Dwarves say much metal lies northward, under the Coldwood and the Ice Mountains, and atop the nearest peak east of Sundabar. That would be the westernmost fang of the Nether Mountains, known as Dalagar’s Dagger.
The Fork

The Fork is located where the trail east from Sundabar splits to go north and east. Here is found the ruin—a mossy foundation—of the mansion of the ancient dwarven hero Ghaurin. Legend says that when the heavens are right, the air shimmers and the mansion reappears as it was so long ago, giving Ghaurin a chance to right an ancient mistake.

Nether Mountains

This dark, brooding mountain range once marked the northern boundary of ancient Netheril and the southern boundary of Delzoun. It’s home to orcs of the Ripped Gut and Thousand Fists tribes, bands of verbeeg, a small community of pech who are constructing a huge granite cube supposedly filled with gems, the Morueme clan of blue dragons and their hoards, and the Monastery of Loviatar which guards a trove of secret volumes taken from a lost Netherese college of magic.

Morueme’s Cave

Morueme is the clan name for a family of blue dragons who have had a lair in this cavern complex for over a thousand years. Usually a family grouping of three to six dragons dwell here. Kizzap Morueme, the eldest, is a very old dragon. He lives with a younger mate and two adult offspring—each dragon has its own lair and jealously guarded treasure within the caves. The Morueme clan has a particular hatred of orcs and ogres. They judiciously avoid mankind, but consider orcs and fiends fair and entertaining game.

All Morueme dragons can speak and use magic. Their spell selection is usually exotic, taken from ancient Netherese and Ascorian spell books in their treasure (including at least one page of the Nether Scrolls). In addition to the dragons, the treasure is guarded by hobgoblin mercenaries of the Red Flayers tribe, who have served the dragons for generations. The hobgoblins live in a small fortified encampment outside the caves, protected by catapults and ballistae.

Triangle of Trees

This small area is named for the three forests that compose its borders, roughly resembling a triangle. It stretches north to the Far Forest and south to the Southwood and Weathercote Wood.

Far Forest

Once, this was a fair wood of healthy trees and frolicking forest creatures. It’s currently being tended to by Turlang and other forest denizens who are trying to revive the forest after the fall of Hellgate Keep.

Southwood

The edges of this forest are logged by men, though their dark depths are largely a mystery. Recently, however, reports have surfaced that the Zhentarim have established a stronghold in the dark wood. The truth of such suspicions, as with all things Zhentarim, remain in the hands of brave adventurers to discover.

Weathercote Wood

This isolated wood is avoided by all save the bravest adventurers; it’s existed since before Netheril’s fall and continues to do so, despite the advance of Anauroch. Rumored a place of fell magic, blue mists and glowing lights are often seen in its interior by Zhentarim caravans passing at night to and from Llorkh to the west. The elves say gates to other worlds lie in the depths of Weathercote, and mages of awesome power from other worlds have settled in the Woods and guard the gates to prevent others from using them. This news has yet to be tested, as neither spells nor psionics seem to penetrate the Woods’ interior; few enter Weathercote Wood willingly and walk out again.

The Fallen Lands

This is the present-day name for the strip of habitable land west of Anauroch, stretching between the Far Forest and Weathercote Wood. The Fallen Lands are now home only to monsters, although rumors persist of powerful mages inhabiting the southern reaches. This was once part of Netheril, and mysterious magic still saturates the area.

When Vanthorm and Haladan visited the lands 15 winters ago, they found a beholder of awesome size with hobgoblin servants directing a strange bestial breeding program with captured monsters. Since then, anyone that went into the Fallen Lands has not been heard from again. The last report from here came two years ago by some Harpers traversing the Graypeak mountains who spotted flying creatures of monstrous size and unfamiliar shapes along with many areas of blasted, desolate ground. Whatever lurks there is likely—for the rest of Faerûn—distracted by an interior conflict.

At the eastern edge of the Fallen Lands, shifting desert sands have uncovered a ring of nine gigantic statues who peer down into a wide hole of unknown origin.

Anauroch

Anauroch, the Great Desert, is a barren wasteland that forms the eastern border of the Savage Frontier—a vast mass of steppeland, rocky wastes, and sandy desert that runs from the Uttermost North almost to the Lake of Dragons. Over the millennia, it has crept south, swallowing the Narrow Sea and destroying ancient civilizations. Desert creatures and monsters often wander into the eastern fringes of the Savage Frontier. Nomad tribes from the desert visit Sundabar and Llorkh on occasion, though such visits are few. The men of the desert often trade for goods with relics of ancient design.

The area of the Great Desert is a collection of different types of deserts and includes the hot sandy wastes similar to the Dust Desert of Raurin, rocky badlands with very sparse scrubs and no available water, basins filled with salt flats and prickly cacti, sandstone mountains carved by wind into bizarre shapes, and polar steppes and icy wastes in the north that rival those of Vaasa. In general, it is as inhospitable a place as can be found on the surface of Toril.
Bleached Bones Pass

This pass once connected Dekanter with Illefarn to the west, but few use it now. The pass draws its name from piles of sun-whitened bones that line the trail. Numerous small, crude orc strongholds dot the slopes of the pass, warring constantly with one another.

Dawntreader Gap

This pass toward Llorkh through the Greypeak Mountains is guarded by a Zhentarim ally—a beholder and his gnoll minions from nearby Dekanter. The beholder is wild and near uncontrollable, but honors his deal with the Zhentarim since the agreement suits its present needs (and because the Zhents pay extremely well). This pass is regularly traveled by Zhentarim caravans. It’s steeper and more demanding than Bleached Bones Pass to the south, but it’s easier to defend. A garrison of 30 purple-cloaked Lord’s Men from Llorkh guard the pass.

Dekanter

More correctly, these are the Mines of Dekanter, the only known ruins of lost Netheril. In ancient days, the mines of Dekanter provided the realm with iron. As the mines were worked out, Netherese mages used them for research, to isolate the effects of new spells, and to store magical paraphernalia. When Netheril fell, all was abandoned, and the mines became an extensive crumbling ruin surrounded by low hills (talus piles from the mines). Above the hills, gaping holes and hidden entrances open on the dark mysteries within. The magic that once filled Dekanter is long depleted, and it now serves as home to goblins, gargoyles, and others.

A tribe of 500 goblins and 50 gargoyles live in the mines, known minions of the Beast Lord. The Beast Lord is an illithid who has created a variety of unnatural monsters to do his bidding, and he’s managed to take over the surrounding area. He’s currently waging a war in the Underdark against unknown enemies as he tries to expand his territory into the depths of Faerûn.

Forgotten Forest

Near Anauroch, between the Marsh of Chelimber and the Lonely Moor, stands the Forgotten Forest, a rich, mature wood filled with oak, walnut, and shadowtop trees. The foliage is so thick the interior is cast into deep and continual shadow. This forest is the remains of a larger wood that diminished over the years with the spread of Anauroch. It’s a mysterious, deeply overgrown wilderness of huge trees.

Travelers who have skirted its edges have reported seeing sprites, korred, and unicorns within its depths. The Forgotten Forest is said to have the largest population of treants in the North, ruled by one known as Fuorn (a 24-HD treant that delivers 5d6 points of damage with a blow). In addition to the treants, the Hierophant Druid Pheszeltan (TN hm D18 [Mieliikki]) makes his home somewhere in the depths of this land. Travel through the forest is discouraged, and those in the area are highly encouraged to build their fires only using wood from deadfalls.

Greypeak Mountains

This eastern mountain range separates the Fallen Lands from the Delimbiyr river valley. The range is named for the tribes of gray-skinned stone giants who dwell here. Its mineral wealth was removed thousands of years past during the reign of lost Netheril.

The easternmost mountains of the Interior are known to offer the richest concentration of griffons in all Faerûn. Cloud giant castles are sometimes seen drifting over these eastern peaks, and every so often, dragons are seen in full, magnificent flight among the clouds, winging their lone and splendid ways into or out of the most remote peaks. Travelers in this region should beware of attacks from orcs, bugbears, goblins, monsters of all sorts, barbarians, and large expeditions mounted each year by the Cult of the Dragon to seek dragons and their treasures in the high valleys.

Large groups of travelers should never camp without at least a triple watch. Fires should be doused, for their light calls death from miles away. Lone travelers are advised to break their scent by crossing water several times, and to sleep on a rocky height, or better, on a ledge sheltered from above. Most of us, as the ballad goes, have only one life to lose.

Greyvale

The traveler may sometimes hear about the Greyvale. The Greyvale consists of the grasslands drained by the Greyflow and the Leagrann, the three-branched river that joins the Greyflow at Orlbar, northwest of Llorkh. Travel in the Vale is dangerous, and one must beware of bugbear raids and the tightening grip of the Zhentarim.

Even with the fall of Hellgate Keep, these lands are perilous. Bordered on one side by wild mountains and on the other by a vast wild wood—perhaps the largest in Faerûn—this is a territory roamed by monsters and rapacious humanoids. The dale also holds the ruins of Netheril that are haunted by fearsome creatures warped by the fell magic of decadent human sorcerers.

Lonely Moor

This moor is a rolling desolation of stunted scrub that reaches from the desert to the Greypeaks, named for its isolation from civilized areas. This stretch of moors is wilderness territory, a land of scavengers and savages, leucrotta, and more deadly creatures. While the outskirts of the moor are relatively dry, pools of water become more commonplace as one travels to its heart.

The Zhentarim have made the moor a stopping point for their caravans for years, secure in the knowledge that few of their enemies would travel into the swamp to attack them. The Zhents must also have made a deal with the Beast Lord, as few caravans emerging from the Lonely Moor seem to have been the target of attack.

The Delimbiyr Vale

Delimbiyr Vale actually refers to an area of land that surrounds the Delimbiyr River—also known as the Shining River—and its tributaries. The Vale reaches as far south as the western-most borders of the South Wood to its headwater in the Nether Mountains.
Dungeon of The Hark

For many years, a wererat bandit gang has been operating out of these ruins, attacking travelers along the Delimbyr. Their favorite strategy is a hit-and-run attack followed by a retreat into the depths of the dungeon when organized resistance is encountered. They’ve shown themselves to be fearless and cunning, never attacking in the same manner twice.

They’ve also infected a great many of the survivors of caravans and adventuring groups with lycanthrope, in some cases swelling their own ranks. At last reports, 25 wererats were operating out of the ruins led by the Hark (LE hm (wererat) T9).

Talk is spreading about the fate of a well-armed and prestigious adventuring company from Waterdeep that disappeared into the ruins. The Enclave of Echoes pretended to be caravan guards and then counter-attacked as the wererats hurled themselves at the caravan. The group hasn’t yet returned from the dungeon, yet the wererats continue attacking travelers in the area.

Halls of Hammer/Hammer Hall

West of Mount Hlim, near the shores of Highstar Lake, is a pit half full of loose, sharp rubble. An opening cut in its rock walls leads into the Halls of the Hammer, a long-abandoned dwarfhold. Nearby stands Hammer Hall, a log house and stables encircled by a stout wooden palisade. Hammer Hall was built by an adventuring group called the Men of Hammer Hall as a base to explore the dwarfhold. As is common for adventuring companies working for long periods in a particular area, the Men of Hammer Hall used the stockade as a place to retire to between sorties into the dwarfhold.

On several occasions, the adventurers, who hailed from Waterdeep, fought off trolls, orcs, and bugbears from this fortified home. After exploring the ruins for several seasons, the adventurers are said to have set off north—and have not been heard from since. The fate of their treasure, and the treasure that may remain in the Halls of Hammer, is unknown. This area is a true wilderness, traveled by people but seldom settled, and the question remains open.

Hammer Hall has been broken into many times. It’s now deserted, with stones dug in a corner to reveal a storage niche (empty, of course). It remains, however, a stout building offering shelter to travelers in this rugged wilderness. Stacked firewood even waits beside its main chimney.

The humanoids roaming the High Moor know its location and can be expected to attack anyone seen traveling to it. Wood smoke draws them, of course, but in a blizzard or blinding rainstorm, Hammer Hall may prove a refuge worth the harrying. The design of its entrance forces intruders to make a sharp turn down a wooden hall, or chute, fitted with ports for archers or spearmen to attack from. A lone swordsman can hold the narrow entryway beyond.

Inevitably, rumors have spread of treasure buried by the adventurers in Hammer Hall and not recovered. The dug-over state of the grounds suggests that many have come looking. Rich treasure may well lie in the dwarfhold. The Men of Hammer Hall told a bard of their adventures once, and the tale he recounts has been echoed by later adventuring groups. The Halls of the Hammer is said to have a large central chamber wherein a hundred human corpses dangle from the ceiling.
in a forest of chains—an illusion that vanishes and reappears from time to time, for no known reason. At least five watchghosts (powerful, wraithlike spirits) roam the halls beyond, guarding a glowing magical war hammer that floats by itself in a chamber guarded by helmed horrors and magical defenses. What powers the awesome-looking hammer possesses, who put it there and why, and how to win past its defenses are all mysteries as yet unsolved. Seeking the answers has killed at least 20 daring women and men thus far.

**The High Moor**

Most folk think the Moor is a rocky wilderness, vast and uninhabited—except by trolls. Its soil is too thin for farming, and its stone—mostly granite—is of poor quality for mining. It’s sparsely settled by human barbarian tribes that raise goats and sheep on the moors, guard caravans coming from the east, and fight constantly with the various goblinoid tribes.

Bound on the west by the Misty Forest, whose dim blue glades and deep groves have always carried a fey and whimsical—but deadly—reputation, and on the east by the yuan-ti and ophidian-haunted Serpent Hills, these crag-studded, rolling grasslands are said to hide the ruins of lost, long-fallen kingdoms. Just which kingdoms sages argue furiously over. Minstrels sing colorful but contradictory ballads on the topic, and legends are uniformly vague. “The bones and thrones of lost lands” is a favorite phrase; it’s borrowed from a long-forgotten ballad.

A few wolves and leucrotta are the most numerous predators on the Moor thanks to trolls, bugbears, and hobgoblins, who have slain most other large beasts of prey. Their relative scarcity has allowed hooved grazing animals of all sorts to flourish, from small, sure-footed rock ponies to shaggy-coated sheep. Those who dare to venture onto the moor can be assured of ready food—either they catch it, or they become it. Rope trip-traps, javelins, and arrows are the favored ways of bringing down the fleet grazing animals, although those with patience and a quick hand can dine on grouse, flunderwings, or deep mists, to those in the right spot.

**Laughing Hollow**

Laughing Hollow is an eerie, shadowed place up the Delimbyr River from Daggerford and is known as an area where fey beings reside. Even in the daylight, the shade from the omnipresent trees gives a perpetual twilight effect—this is a place meant for elves, not men. The trees and brush are occasionally broken up by warm, light-filled glades and larger clearings holding small lakes.

The area was once a quarry worked by the dwarves of the Fallen Kingdom and is rumored to contain a passageway into the dwarves’ old home. Reputed to be full of treasure, no one has found the entrance—or lived to tell about their discovery. Some travelers report having seen and even spoken with a King of the Woods, the chieftain of the wild elves in the area. To travelers simply wishing to pass through, he’s said to be gruff and impatient at his worst. He has no time for treasure hunters.

**Lizard Marsh**

This tangled mess is the home of several otherwise rare creatures. The most significant of them are the lizardmen whose ancestors are said to have ambushed the boy whose actions gave Daggerford its name. There are also known to be a number of dinosaurs in the lizard marsh, including some nasty carnivores.

The proximity of the lizardmen to humans has increased their level of civilization to the point of using shields, clubs, darts, and javelins. While metal weapons are rare, due to their tendency to rust in the swamp, they do exist. And the lizardmen know how to use them.

Many years ago, a group of heroes entered the swamp and killed the lizardman leader known as Redeye. In recent months, however, reports have surfaced that a lich calling itself Redeye is taking control of the lizardmen once again. If this is the same creature that was reported killed many years ago, many organizations—good and evil alike—would be interested in knowing how the transformation into undeath occurred.

**Misty Forest**

This forest of pine and other evergreens covers the slopes of the western approaches to the High Moor. It gets its name because of the mists and fogs which creep down from the High Moor, making navigation difficult on even the best of days.

This forest is partially patrolled by the local rangers, and several druids have shrines here. There is also a small community of wild elves who work with the druids and have some druids of their own. These forces can only cover a small fraction of the forest at any one time.

The barbarians of the High Moor come into the forest for hunting and wood gathering. The orcs of the High Moor use the protection of the forest for approaches to the Trade Way.