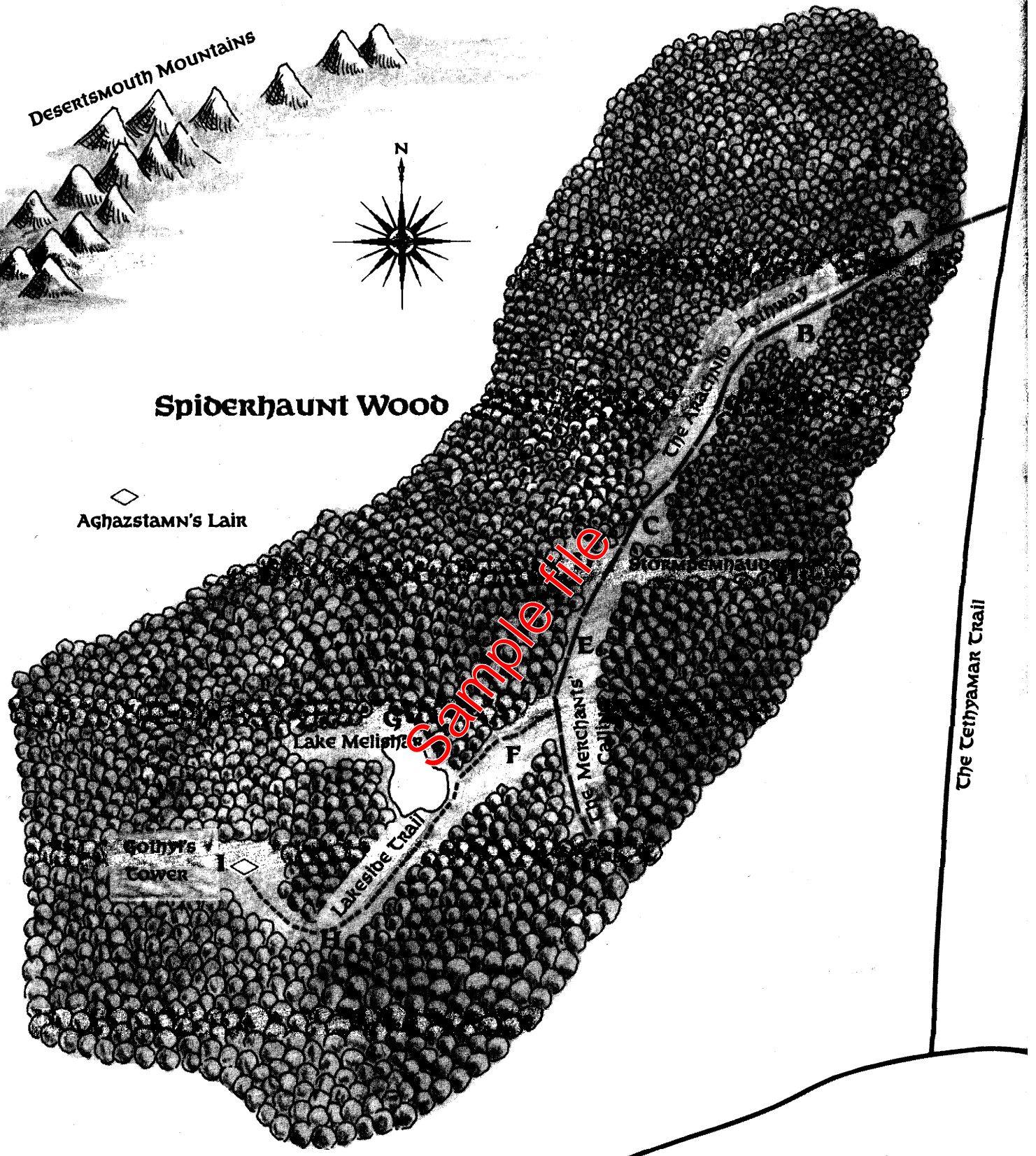


# Spiderhaunt Wood

◇  
Aghazstam's Lair



The Northrife

—  
ONE INCH = 10 MILES

— — — — — = Clear Trail

- - - - - = Hidden Trail—Mabarn's Route

# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons



## The Secret of Spiderhaunt

by Jim Butler

### Table of Contents

Welcome To Spiderhaunt.....	2	Final Battle.....	24
What Happened Before.....	2	Wrapping It Up.....	25
DM Notes.....	3	Monsters	
Starting The Adventure.....	4	Arch-Shadow.....	26
Heirlooms.....	4	Demi-Shadow.....	27
Dream Visions.....	6	Darkenbeast.....	28
Sweet Dreams.....	7	Magical Items and Spells	
Trailbound I.....	7	The Sword of The Dales.....	29
Forest Gnome Exodus.....	11	Dreamglobe.....	29
The Village of Stormpemhauder.....	11	Teleport Ring.....	30
Fearful Night.....	13	Create Darkenbeast.....	30
Aftermath Dreams.....	13	Shadowshield.....	30
Dream Tower.....	18	Encounters Appendix.....	31
Approach.....	18		

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# Welcome To Spiderhaunt

*There is more to adventurers' worth than the sharpness of their blades and the pureness of their hearts. I measure them by their gold.*

— Kimal Rax, Jeweler of Arabel



**T**he *Secret of Spiderhaunt* is a FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Setting adventure for six characters of 1st through 4th levels. It is essential that there be at least one cleric in the party to battle the variety of undead the PCs will face. All party members should be at least 2nd level as well, unless most of them are 4th level, in which case a 1st-level character or two is acceptable.

This is the second installment of the *Sword of the Dales* trilogy. It is important that the DM thoroughly read this module before beginning play, because the *Sword of the Dales* has additional powers that were not revealed in the first adventure. In addition, the arch-shadow Gothyl begins to take a more active interest in the characters in this adventure. Specific information regarding both the *Sword* and the arch-shadow Gothyl can be found at the end of this module.

## What Happened Before

**I**n *The Sword of the Dales*, the characters were hired by Lhaeo, scribe to Elminster of Shadowdale, to rescue Randal Morn. Lhaeo explained the situation surrounding Randal Morn's disappearance and all known information about the wizard Shraevyn.

According to local legend, Shraevyn created a sword of tremendous power hundreds of years ago, just before his death. His secret hideaway had been lost in history until a recent landslide uncovered his tomb in the valley of the Giant's Crawl. Lord Randal Morn, a local rebel leader who battles against the Zhentarim occupation, learned that the crypt had been accidentally discovered. He immediately pulled together a search party and rushed to the tomb to recover the weapon. No sooner had he successfully retrieved the sword than Zhentarim forces attacked his band outside Shraevyn's tomb. A bloody fight ensued, and Randal's party pummeled the Zhents into retreat.

Then events at the tomb turned to terror. Randal and his group were mysteriously attacked by a horde of undead, and the rebels—including Randal himself—vanished. Only one of his men escaped alive. Ariton, the lone Dalesman survivor, staggered to Elminster's tower seeking help, and Lhaeo tended the man's wounds and listened to his story. In payment, Ariton gave him a *long sword* +1 he found in the crypt. The scribe then decided to round up some recruits and send them to rescue Randal Morn.

What neither Ariton nor Lhaeo knows is that the undead were commanded by a being whose very existence depends on the *Sword*. Gothyl, an arch-shadow,





emerged from the Sword itself, captured Randal, and killed all in his party.

Gothyl was once a wizardess of tremendous power who sought to achieve lichdom some 150 years past. The process failed, and she was instead changed into her current form, a powerful arch-shadow.

Gothyl plans to trick the PCs into believing she is a good spirit bound to the Sword. By leading them to long-lost treasures, Gothyl hopes to gain their trust.

The Zhents know Randal is missing and believe him to be held somewhere as a prisoner, but they have no idea of Gothyl's involvement. If they can take Randal before a meddling band of do-gooders frees him, the Zhentarim hold on Daggersdale will be complete.

## DM Notes

Gothyl's goal is to transfer the spirits of her disembodied apprentices into the living bodies of the PCs. She cares virtually nothing about the heroes save for their presence at her tower.

The arch-shadow is striving to ultimately achieve the status of a demi-shade (see page 27). In order to accomplish this, she needs to drain life energy from someone powerful. Randal Morn will do just fine, but she must keep him alive as bait until the PCs arrive and are possessed by her apprentices. With this accomplished, she plans to drain Randal Morn of his life force and have her minions carry out her will.

This adventure begins when Gothyl sends the heroes a dream of a tower in Spiderhaunt Wood, the place where Randal Morn is held. Characters who completed *The Sword of the Dales* know that Randal is imprisoned somewhere in the dark wood but have no idea exactly where he is—until now.

As the PCs venture deeper into Spiderhaunt, they meet Madarn, a gnome fighter from the forest village of Stormpemhauder. If they tell him about the dreams, he recognizes the tower from their descriptions. He agrees to lead them to the tower if they first accompany him to Stormpemhauder and tell their story to Telimas Dreamweaver, the village elder.

Telimas is the elder priest of the village, and he has been plagued by numerous dream visions of late—the same ones the characters are having. Once the PCs talk with Telimas, he gives Madarn his blessing and permission to lead the party to the tower.

Unfortunately, Gothyl discovers that Telimas saw

the vision meant for the PCs. She decides to kill the gnome, and undead attack the village of Stormpemhauder shortly after midnight. The PCs have the chance to save Telimas's life as well as kill more undead creatures.

The journey with Madarn through the forest is fraught with danger, but the party finally arrives at Gothyl's tower. As they approach, the PCs succumb to the magic of another dream vision sent by Gothyl.

Madarn has no intention of venturing into the dark recesses of the tower, but he agrees to guard the camp while the PCs explore. The characters go through an apparently deserted keep, but undead are hiding behind wall panels and secret doors.

Gothyl actually placed the undead here to attack the Zhent force that is closing in on the tower even as the PCs enter. The Zhents are led by Ilthond, the Zhent mage who nearly died at the hands of Shandrill in the novel *Spellfire*. This force is determined to capture both Randal Morn and the *Sword of the Dales* as well as to find out who interfered with their plans.

The PCs reach Gothyl's laboratory just as the Zhents enter the tower, and a battle royale erupts between the hidden undead and the Zhents. The PCs see Randal Morn trapped in a *dreamglobe*, and Gothyl—pretending to be a trapped spirit of the *Sword of the Dales*—reveals herself to the party.

Gothyl tries to convince the PCs that they were set up by the Zhents from the beginning. She also explains that the only way to release Randal is by uttering a certain phrase as they touch a set of skeletons in another room.

If the PCs do this, they find themselves under a spiritual attack by Gothyl's apprentices. If they refuse, the Zhents enter and try to touch the skeletons themselves. Suddenly, the PCs find themselves face-to-face with Zhent warriors as well as a very angry Ilthond.

The adventure concludes when Ilthond threatens the PCs by name. The wizard then breaks the glass *dreamglobe*, releases Randal Morn, then throws the unconscious warrior over his shoulder and tries to take possession of the skulls and the *Sword of the Dales*. Lightning leaps from the blade and strikes Ilthond, who then vanishes with both Randal and the skulls.

Gothyl is furious. Not only has she lost her apprentices, but she must now put her fate in the hands of the same adventurers whom she planned to use as possessed puppets. However, she puts on a good show of benevolence by casting a *shadowshield* spell on the party.

The *Sword of the Dales* trilogy concludes in *The Return of Randal Morn*.



## Starting The Adventure

Characters who have completed *The Sword of the Dales* begin this adventure either in the hills outside the Giant's Claw or wherever any intervening adventures led them.

If the PCs are making their way to Spiderhaunt, they have their first dream vision the night before they plan to enter the dark wood. If the PCs have been adventuring elsewhere, Gothyl begins sending them dream visions to lure them to Spiderhaunt, specifically to the crossroad of the Tethyamar Trail and the Northride.

These dreams get worse until each PC dreads sleep. If they ignore these midnight messages, Gothyl sends skeletons, bonebats, and zombies to trouble them. But instead of striking the PCs directly, the undead attack anyone who comes in contact with them. Soon the PCs are considered cursed and are forced to move on.

Once the PCs are in place, proceed to **Dream Visions** on page 6. Characters who did not go through the first module begin with **Heirlooms**, just a few miles west of Shadowdale, along the Tethyamar Trail.

## Heirlooms

Characters are walking along the Tethyamar Trail at the point where the Arachnid Pathway breaks free of Spiderhaunt (see Map 3 on the inside cover).

The late afternoon sun warms the stones beneath your feet as you trudge on the Tethyamar Trail toward Shadowdale. The winds have been calm all day, and the last stubborn puddles of water from last night's torrential rains are slowly evaporating.

*It should only be a few more hours until we reach Shadowdale, you think to yourself. We may even be fortunate enough to meet Elminster, the most powerful wizard in Faerûn.*

Suddenly, a human male wielding a long sword comes stumbling out of the nearby trees. His face is white and his hair stands on end in wild tufts. His chain mail armor is smeared with blood—

much of it his own, you notice—and his eyes dart frantically across your group.

The tip of the man's sword dips toward the ground, and he breaks into a fit of coughing. Spit- tle and blood run down his short, scraggly beard as he tries to speak.

"You are those I have seen," he gasps. "Perhaps all is not yet lost." With that, he falls against a nearby tree and slowly slides against it to the ground, still gazing up at you.

He refuses any priests who attempt to help him, but he does let someone bind his wounds. When the party gathers around him, he continues his story.

"My name is Temeron Flightseeker," the warrior begins, "and I am the last of the Company of the Aerie. Some weeks ago we were commissioned by Lhaeo, scribe to Elminster of Shadowdale, to rescue Randal Morn." The warrior gasps and coughs, fighting for breath.

"We were told the story of the wizard Shraevyn, who created a mystical long sword that Randal Morn sought to wield. The Company went to rescue Randal Morn at the tomb of Shraevyn, but the fighter was not there. All we discovered were undead, Zhentarim, and a note from Randal telling us to seek him in Spiderhaunt."

A gurgling sound produces more blood, which wets the front of Temeron's chain mail. He whispers, "We also found the *Sword*." He nods toward the weapon still clutched in his right hand. "The *Sword of the Dales*," he says, "the weapon capable of restoring Randal Morn to his rightful throne. Lord, King, and Emperor of all of the Dalefolk!" His eyes close for several moments, and you fear he has lapsed into unconsciousness. Finally his eyes flutter open and he speaks again.

"This weapon is powerful, true, but its powers cannot hope to drive the Zhentarim from Daggerdale. I have discovered it can unlock chains and manacles when the wielder speaks the word *merrydale*. It also allows me to breathe underwater for a period of time. It has proven effective against undead, but I can only assume it's because the blade has other powerful enchantments."

Temeron closes his eyes and seizes rock his body, but his grip on the *Sword of the Dales* remains strong.





It is clear that he's going to die soon. If anyone moves to help him or if the PC aiding him continues to do so, read the text below. If not, Temeron dies without revealing anything else.

"We searched Spiderhaunt for weeks, but to no avail. As we left the woods three days ago, we were attacked by a horde of undead creatures. Forlim, Emenslee, Worsha—friends all—died at my feet as we tried to destroy them. Only I escaped, and I have been pursued for days by creatures that do not fear the light of day."

Gasping and coughing, Temeron's face contorts into a painful grimace. Gazing at each of you, his voice drops to a low gurgle.

"I can no longer feel my legs. It is to your company that I give this weapon; you must decide amongst yourselves who will wield it. Of my possessions, take what you need and burn the rest with my body. Rescue Randal Morn and succeed where we have failed! Follow your hearts into Spiderhaunt." With one final ragged breath, Temeron breathes no more.

Unless the PCs possess powerful healing magic, Temeron dies after releasing the *Sword*. A successful healing proficiency or herbalism check reveals that the man is poisoned. A *potion of sweetwater*, *neutralize poison* spell, or similar cure is effective in saving Temeron's life.

Should he be revived, Temeron is thankful to the PCs, but also determined to be rid of the *Sword of the Dales*. He then professes to be strong enough to stumble his way to Shadowdale and bids the PCs good luck on their quest.

Temeron carries a *long sword +1*, one *potion of extra-healing*, the *Sword of the Dales*, four days' worth of iron rations, a pouch containing 78 gp, a holy symbol of Mystra, and three normal daggers.

His chain mail needs much work. Many links are crushed, broken and bloodied, and the vest serves as only a hindrance until repaired.

From this point, characters should begin their journey into Spiderhaunt. Once they reach the edge of the woods, proceed with **Dream Visions** on page 6.

