

## **Prelude Table of Contents**

<b>MOD Info</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>MOD History</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Getting Started</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Hidden Chests</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Forest Below Hooknose Crag</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Forest Below Hooknose Crag: Cave</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Forest Below Hooknose Crag: Secret Ruins</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Narrow Chasm to Hooknose Crag</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Short Pass to Hooknose Crag</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Thunder Peaks Mining Settlement</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>RAPTS Portal System</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Marga's All Mart</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Colin's Forge</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Drow From Below</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>To the Darkened Forest</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The Darkened Forest</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>The Mountain Maze</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>The Mountain Maze Prisoners</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>The Starving Elf</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>The Mountain Maze Continued</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Hooknose Crag</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Cult of the Dragon Temple</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Back to the Temple of Mielikki</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Appendix A: Marga's Potions</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix B: Colin's Custom Weapons</b>	<b>18</b>

## Spoilers ReadMe for *A Harper's Tale: Hooknose Crag (Chapter 2)*

By JO Cool

*Life has no meaning but what we give it.*

*I wish a few more of ye would give it a little.*

~Elminster of Shadowdale

*Gather round children of Faerûn for 'tis not often in a lifetime or two that a being of our world is able to witness such a glorious event unfold. That is why, with every fabric of my soul, I shall impart upon you a tale of such simplicity in the grand scope of normal events, which is also wrought with purpose for the betterment of our existence. A time that will soon know trouble. A time, where moments before, the world will almost seem to stand still. A harrowing time, in which one young hero will return a grateful favor and create a Harper's Tale.*

**[Player Note:] – MOD Info** - This is a Spoilers ReadMe file for a series of Neverwinter MODS entitled *A Harper's Tale* by Dave Mason and SideStep. Following are many words of wisdom, advice, hints, and simplified walkthrus as told through the eyes of the Old Mage of Shadowdale himself, Elminster. Each of the fictional sections told by Elminster are in italicized text for easier reading within this document, but can be skipped if the player chooses just to get to the notable sections. Continue to read on if you seek some answers or direction in your adventure, but be warned that some of the truth you seek may spoil the tale that will soon unfold before your very eyes. Any forthcoming sections noted (as this one) with the bolded '**[Player Note:]**' title are for you, the player, and not part of the characterization behind this ReadMe file.

*It is not easy to explain the power that I hold over the magical weave upon Toril that I call art. I do not say that in a boastful way or try at all to jest, nay belittle, your understanding of the power that we all have within us. I tell you this so that you may try and grasp why I have the ability to tell a story yet to transpire. I, Elminster of Shadowdale, have traveled into the depths of our world, taken on the power of the Magelords, witnessed the destruction caused by Spellfire and touched the divine face of Mystra herself. These, and many other noteworthy travels, have given me the ability to see beyond my own existence and travel to other worlds, both distant and parallel to our own. I dare not reveal all my secrets or pretend to know of how my abilities have grown, but I will say without any doubt, that I have lived through this story as if it were my own. It was in the exact time and place where you now begin to take those brave steps and return a favor to an old friend that I also labored. The events that unfolded in my parallel beginning may have taken on a completely different course, but I will share my experiences with you, all the same, so some mistakes can be avoided and rewards truly discovered. Let the great bards of all our worlds sing of *The Harper's Tale*.*

**[Player Note:] – MOD History** - It is the Year of the Prince, 1357 in the Dale Reckoning. In the weeks immediately preceding the journey to Thunder Gap undertaken by the PC in response to a call from their old friend Calum Neigh, great events have

taken place to the North and East of here, events which still have tongues wagging amongst the common folks and gentry alike as the PC makes their way through these modules.

The kitchen girl turned thief, Shandril Shessair, through a strange combination of circumstances came, like her mother before her, to hold the uncanny power known as Spellfire. Working alongside the Knights of Myth Drannor, and the great mage Elminster, she slew two dracoliches, undead bone dragons of the Cult of the Dragon – and indeed, unleashed enough power in slaying Rauglothgaur to destroy the very mountain within which he made his lair! This and the not inconsiderable feat of slaying his mount, a black dragon, out from beneath Manshoon of the Zhentarim, leader of Zhentil Keep, and forcing him to retreat, close to death... Small wonder people talk in awe of these events.

But other, smaller problems face these lands too, and the Harpers, ever conscious of the doings of those who threaten the greater good are in need of an adventurer... a hero who can be trusted with a vital task which will benefit all good people in this part of the Realms. It is this task that begins the series of adventures, which together comprise *A Harper's Tale*.

Within the year, the Time of Troubles will come upon the Realms, and the Year of Shadows will prove to have been well named. This series of MODS will encompass all of the horrors and changes brought about by this event – magic failing, spells going awry – and gods walking the face of Faerun in the form of mortals. From humble beginnings, the PC will come to stand amongst the great of the land, and walk amongst heroes, and gods.

## **Chapter 2: Hooknose Crag**

**[Player Note:] – Getting Started** – Before jumping right in to loading the second chapter in the series there is one very important issue we would like the player to be aware of. If you were the type of player that micro manages your henchman's inventory, you will probably want to go to your last saved file from Chapter 1, take all the stuff that you want them to have, and then export your character. Thus, when you start Chapter 2 you can outfit your henchperson with the goods. They will still have most of the common stuff; this is just in cases you've given them "upgrades" along the way. Because even though the henchperson is a little tougher in Chapter 2, no export of your henchman's inventory takes place.

If you have played *A Harper's Tale: Escort Duty* and have *A Harper's Tale: Hooknose Crag* loaded in your Neverwinter Nights Modules folder, after telling Archenpriest Jorinson you are ready to move on to Chapter 2, the next chapter in the saga will automatically load. If you are starting from scratch (not having played the first chapter in the series, even though we highly recommend that you do) with *A Harper's Tale: Hooknose Crag* your character will have to meet the following requirements:

- Must be of human, half-elven, or elven decent
- Must be a non-evil alignment (any goods or neutrals - If you have shifted too much from any of the neutral or good alignments in Chapter 1 you may no longer be able to play with that character.)
- Must be at least level 10 (level 12 or higher if the character is not from previous chapters in this saga)

You will find that you are right back where you left off in the Temple of Mielikki with the opportunity to speak with Archenpriest Jorinson and company. Find out what the next mission is and if you are ready to head out just tell him yes, but if you need to do some shopping first it would be a good thing to check out Father Clutos's new store! This includes some SoU specific items – you may want to buy a few Stone to Flesh scrolls, just to be on the safe side!

*The truth spell had revealed what I had known, nay felt in my very being, all along... that my dear Darlo was innocent of all the charges against her. After speaking with Archenpriest Jorinson and Lucas O' the Song, I found out that the little matter of revenge against a one Albertus Magister, who is now believed to be hidden away in the city of Selgaunt, would have to wait. My debt to the great Archenpriest for revealing the truth about Darlo would have to be repaid. Little did I know that it would mean trying to stop the foulness of a dracolich!*

*Aye, you heard me right the first time, a beast of bones constructed with the gravest of intentions. Once a majestic dragon, or parts of many, this aberration against life would have to be stopped by my own hands. I know it won't be easy, especially now that the Archenpriest suspects casting the truth spell has revealed more about our intentions that we wish for the dreadful Cult of the Dragon to know.*

*Regardless, I shall pay back the Archenpriest, for I am a man of my word and thankful that my new companion is free and alive with me today to help me in my journey! Cult of the Dragon be damned!*

**[Player Note] – Hidden Chests** – As with the early adventures, there will be opportunities for the players to find two types of hidden chests, a Rune Chest and a Shimmering Chest. One of the important things to note is that now the reward will be greater for these “Easter eggs” but that will also mean that they will not be as abundant or as easy to find as they were in Chapter 1 (so keep boosting that search skill if you want to have a chance!). Remember that using the Rune chest will consist of finding or buying various basic items or jewelry, placing them on the ground, and then using the rune's unique power on said item. If you need to see a run through of how it is done refer to the section entitled Rune Chests in the Chapter 1 Spoilers Read Me.

**[Player Note:] – Forest Below Hooknose Crag** – After getting the new story details from the Archenpriest and Lucas O' the Song, you and your henchperson will be magically whisked away to a shrine dedicated to Mielikki in the *Forest Below Hooknose Crag*. This map is pretty straight forward, to continue on through the story you need to head north through this area making your way to Hooknose Crag. But before you do, there is immediately a welcome diversion to help boost your character and give you some

decent loot. Head up the right side of the map and you will see a cavern entrance about half way up on the right. As you know we suggest saving often and before going into this cave that would be a good idea, as well as maybe beefing up weaker characters a little bit with some bonus or protection spells and maybe some summons help, because as soon as you enter here there is a pretty tough fight.

**[Player Note:] – Forest Below Hooknose Crag: Cave** – Upon entering the cave you will have some tough wolf encounters right on you and some bugbear archer ranged attackers who you can't get to from this side. Quickly dispose of the wolves and then make your way around the little hall on the left to the ranged attackers to take them out. One of the higher bugbear archers will drop a Bugbear Cave Key amongst all of the other loot you find through your swath of kills. If you haven't found this go back and double check all the drops, because it's important for you to continue.

As soon as you finish clearing out this first little area, at the end of the first sections cavern hall will be a door. Just on the other side is another large group of various bugbear pests near some of their little huts. Go in and take those guys out. If you have been developing your search skill throughout this series, then you will probably immediately notice a hidden trapdoor that appears just to the left of this group after going through the door (this is in the southern section of the map). If nothing is there after you've taken out the bugbears walk around that area in detect mode (if you're not an elf) and the trapdoor will eventually appear. It's fine to just descend down this trapdoor now because you'll be coming back out this way later.

**[Player Note:] – Forest Below Hooknose Crag: Secret Ruins** – You will enter an area with 3 doors, left, right and straight. The way going straight will be magically blocked until you do the left and right paths. So head out to either side first (unless you want to go check out the cool magic seal blocking your way). Also, as soon as you enter here, your henchpersons dialog should kick in so, if you choose to, you can get to know them a little better. (Another also, there is also a Rune Chest at the end of one of the bridges. I just wanted to give you this one time hint to make sure you know to keep searching for them!)

There are some pretty tough magic beasts in this area. It would probably be a good thing to also use some of your Clarity Potions (yes, stock up on these bad boys for this chapter as well) because some of the creatures have the ability to stun you. And as always, remember to save often! (You'll get tired of hearing me suggest that. ☺)

Continue clearing out all the rooms and take a strategic approach to fighting because even with strong characters, if you run straight into a room with a bunch of encounters and get stunned it can easily be over for you. The first important item to find in these series of rooms is an empty bottle. Take that bottle over to a room with a fountain in it and fill it up by using the unique power of the bottle on the fountain. This will change the bottle to "bottled fountain water". From there, continue clearing this side, then take this water over to the room with the dead tree. Now use the unique power of the filled bottle on the tree and you will see the tree come to life and hear something in the background.

The layout will be different but the concept for the other side is the same, empty bottle, fill it, and then bring the dead tree to life. After you do the other side as well, the magically sealed section up the middle will open up. Also check the revived trees because they contain some petrified wood. This is a new combination item you find in Chapter 2 when you use a hammer on it.

Now proceed down the middle door of the Secret Ruins. There will be some nice, already visible, Shimmering Chest treasures for you to loot after you've killed the encounters in this area. Once you're done with this little section you can head out through the door that takes you to the strange Secret Ruins Exit room that has more great loot and if you look hard enough, some hidden loot too. After you've cleaned up the goods in here, just head into the portal which teleports you right back to the cavern area where you found the hidden trapdoor.

Essentially you are doing a little circle from left to right and will use the key at the end door, which after you go through it, takes you right back to where you entered. The difference now is there is another large group of bugbears back in here investigating why their companions are dead and thirsty for the culprit's blood. Take them out and then you're done with this little bonus diversion.

*As soon as we were teleported away from Archenpriest Jorinson, I knew something was amiss in the forest below Hooknose Crag. There was an eerie silence to it and some angry felines attacked us on sight.*

*We found a cavern up the right side of the path with what seemed like a small army of grey renders hanging around it. Good thing Darlo was with me and had some stunning magic handy because disposing these giants is much easier when they aren't all attacking you at once.*

*We proceeded to head down into the cave and were immediately accosted by some trained guard wolves while pesky bugbear archers shot at us from the other side of a fence. Darlo and I had to quickly dispose of the wolves and run for cover from the arrows as soon as we could. Once in the other hallway we worked our way back up to those archers and disposed of them and their other fighting companions with relative ease. I found a key on one of my attackers that came in useful later for me to get back out of this area quickly without having to backtrack all the way around where we had started.*

*Before we left we discovered a trapdoor next to the bugbear huts and decided we had enough time to check it out. The area around us was no longer the rock walls of the dim cavern, but some ancient stone carved ruin with many rooms and bridges that led down to the beyond.*

*Some of the creatures we came across in this area were mystical and powerful indeed. After the first time one of those fierce basliks stunned me, I decided it would be a good idea to drink one of my Potions of Clarity to be able to withstand that magic again. I found some empty bottles and figured I'd fill them with the water in these mysterious fountains, just because it seemed like the right thing to do. What was even more compelling is when I saw the dead trees in these secret ruins and just knew that they needed the water.*

*With each tree brought back to life I could hear some stirring down the halls and decided to take the path up the center of the ruins. I was sure glad we took this diversion because there were some shimmering chests with very valuable items in them and even another strange room with some good treasure tucked away in a couple sarcophagi. I just hope disturbing those didn't curse us in some way so early on this trip!*

**[Player Note:] – Forest Below Hooknose Crag Continued** – If you chose to clear out the above cave and secret ruins then after coming back out, the forest area will seem like a walk in the park. Head back over towards the shrine area where you teleported into and work your way north through the center. The encounters will be pretty basic through the rest of the woods, some angry tigers and bears. Even though you are just seeing furry creatures ahead of you don't run too far up and get surrounded by a big group of imposing dire bears, because they can do some good damage. Head all the way north to a small bridge on the top of the map and take the transition. Don't forget to look for those Rune and Shimmering Chests throughout the chapter.

**[Player Note:] – Narrow Chasm to Hooknose Crag** – As you advance northward through this narrow area, you will see that you're no longer just fighting the "not so friendly" furry creatures in this region, a few earth elementals and mephits will try to stop you as well. It would probably be a good idea here to give your henchperson some more defensive tactics. Tell them to stay close and to defend you by not attacking until you do. You don't have to do this, but there is a good chance that they will run off into a huge battle with elementals, mephits and tough bears and you'll be using the resurrect scrolls way too early in this adventure.

If you have a weaker class of character you'll probably want to travel north through the right side of the map where you'll find fewer elemental groups. Once you have made your way all the way to the north side of the narrow chasm, there will be a pair of evil mercenary dwarfs over in the east corner. Enjoy the fight and then do what you will with their other little cowardly comrade. Be sure to look in the crates in their encampment because you'll find some worthy items and maybe get lucky and find a gem or two that will be useful later in the adventure. Now head up through the cave entrance.

*Darlo and I continued heading north through the Forest Below Hooknose Crag until we came into the narrow chasm after crossing this rickety old bridge. I began to feel the rock outcroppings and tree limbs around us closing in. As if this whole chasm was some sort of trap. It didn't take long to realize that we were in for a tough time of it when we heard the ground shaking footfalls of a huge earth elemental and more of its lesser companions.*

*We fought our way through the endless curse of creatures in this area, and more that once I had to call on the help of Bulgar's Bird Whistle and the magic of the resurrect scrolls for Darlo. Oh, how it pained me to even hear that I let her fall!*

*When we reached the north end of the chasm we encountered an angry and odd pair of mercenary dwarfs that attacked us on sight. Why is it that so many normally docile creatures or ill tempered but goodly folk are attacking us? This was one of the mysteries I hoped to get to the bottom of.*

*After disposing of those two berserker dwaven warriors, we found a “companion” of theirs who was a little more willing to behave in a civilized manner. Whatever the reason for their presence, there was certainly something important on the journey that Darlo and I were now embarking. Entering the short pass to Hooknose Crag would be the only way to find out.*

**[Player Note:] – Short Pass to Hooknose Crag** – This small area is a short pass indeed. You will find that there are some annoying little bats, rats, and rat-like creatures, but nothing in here to be too worried about. But, even this small area has a hidden Rune Chest that makes the easy clearing worth every second. In here, you’ll realize that the way is blocked! The tunnel has collapsed! Once you get to the collapsed section of the tunnel, it’s time to use the magic ring that the Archenpriest gave you and go back to report the news to him.

If you chose to take on the Hooknose Crag Cave and the Secret Ruins earlier, it would probably be a good thing to stop by Father Clutos’s store to do a little buying and selling. One important thing to remember here is that you can manipulate your henchperson’s inventory at will (thanks to the new henchman inventory control system) so don’t be cheap. Spend some money on much-needed potions and other items or scrolls that they can use. Darlo casting Horrid Wiltings in a big fight can be quite helpful! One other thing to keep in mind is make sure you still have at least 75k in gold because you’ll need it a little later.

After you talk to the Archenpriest you will be teleported on to a mining settlement to try and take an alternate, but more difficult route to Hooknose Crag.

**[Player Note:] – Thunder Peaks Mining Settlement** – No settlement in the mountains would be complete without their fair share of issues for you to deal with. This settlement is certainly no exception. There are many new faces to talk to and a side quest or two to take on to help the good people of this small mining community. One of the most important things to take care of initially is getting a room at the *Pick & Shovel Inn* and if you can afford it, purchasing the gold package to gain the use of the RPTS system. This is a local and invaluable teleporting system within this town that could save you a lot of backtracking time.

**[Player Note:] – RPTS Portal System** – Speak to Micho in the inn and for the right price, you can purchase your portal rod and room while in town. This item is very useful to teleport you back to the inn during times of trouble or when you need to get back to civilization for some R&R or shopping. Once you have the rod, go up to room #4 and use the unique power on it in your room to bind your essence to the portal. From then on you should be able to teleport back to this area from anywhere (with one devious exception). But just remember its 5,000 gp a trip because commercial teleportation travel doesn’t come cheap! While up here you may want to look around.

**[Player Note:] – Marga’s All Mart** – Directly across from the Pick & Shovel Inn’s main room entrance are two important stores. One is Marga’s All Mart where you can find a



slew of good stuff with an emphasis on magic. Here you can also talk with Marga about her ability to create elixirs for you out of various items you can find during your adventure (or even stuff you have collected from the previous chapters – that’s why it’s good to hold on to stuff). You will get a completed journal entry listing the items that she can make you potions with. Refer to Appendix A at the end of this document for her complete combination matrix. (Additional Note: The combinations of these potions, especially the higher end one with spirits, can be very useful, but not profitable.)

**[Player Note:] – Colin’s Forge** – Right next door to Marga’s is Colin’s Forge where you can find a nice shop for weapons and armor, but more importantly, get a set of standard weapons made into magical blades with the combination of certain gems. One important thing to note here is that the NW engine takes all of the gems in a stack when grabbing them with a script for making stuff, so be sure to separate out any of the gems you want Colin to use for weapon crafting. You will get a completed journal entry listing the gems that he can use to enhance weapons for you. Refer to Appendix B at the end of this document for his complete combination matrix. (Additional Note: Not only may these weapons be useful for you or your henchperson, but very profitable to make as well.)

**[Player Note:] – Drow from Below** – After you’ve checked out the settlement area, the main side quest that you can help the people out with while clearing your way to the Darkened Forest is blasting closed (consider it an “unopening”) the new drow opening into Van Hirtz’s mine. You will need to speak with him to get the blasting cap and instructions for completing this quest.

Upon entering the Thunder Peak mines, you will really have two direction options (there is a third path kind of straight ahead but it also takes you to the right or north side). Take the right (or north side) path first. This will take you through some minor drow and drow related encounters. Make your way all the way over to the east side where the Darkened Forest exit is. Don’t take this exit yet, just dispose of the drow encounters in this large room and then go over to the blasting powder crates.

Go into your inventory and use the unique power on the empty blasting canister on any one of the crates of blasting powder and the empty canister will turn into a full blast canister (if you do not have the empty one to do this with you need to go speak to Hirtz for this quest). This blast canister will be used in the south eastern room where the rest of the drow party is waiting and prepared for something.

Continue south through the large middle room where you should find a few more drow fodder and some hammers lying around. Clear out these two side rooms on your way to the south hall and then head east. Now would be a good time to save it before getting to the real drow fight (or not depending on how you play it!).

In the southeast room you will find a large drow war party. They are lead by a priestess, and consist of a couple archers and warriors and some spider and umberhulk companions. Now since we all know that most encounters with drow end in bloodshed you must be ready for a big fight. However, there is only one way, and one small path to take to get

out of this encounter with a great XP reward for doing the righteous path. **If you have a human character only**, before going into that main room, have your henchperson (Darlo or Dent) stand their ground outside the room (because the drow will attack any elf or half-elf character on sight). With the drow priestess, chose the dialog path of **2, 1, 1**, and you will notice that they will leave in peace and you will be rewarded handsomely. Any other path that you chose could be disastrous, especially for a weaker character, because you will be surrounded and on your own (unless you have the help of the whistle).

After disposing of the drow party, or getting them to go away, go back and get your henchperson (if you told them to stand their ground) and then go to the bottom left corner of the map where the drow tunnel is. It is here that you will find the “good stones for blasting”. Use the unique power of the full blast canister on the stones. As soon as you do start running for the entrance! This is the only time you cannot use the RAPTS Rod. You have to run your ass off! Although, it can be said here that most characters will make it out based on their speed, unless they are really slow, but ultimately it doesn't really matter if you don't. Sure you and your henchperson will take a lot of damage, but it will only be enough to put you down close to death and not kill you.

Now you just need to report to Hirtz to let him know you have blasted the mine entrance the drow were coming through.

**[Player Note:] – To the Darkened Forest** – You can either backtrack down the short distance to the settlement to let Hirtz know you did the blasting deed, or use the RAPTS Rod to get you there quicker (but if you use the portal back it will be 5,000 gps). Once you let him know, it's off to the Darkened Forest for you.

You will immediately realize that the Thunder Peaks Mines without the Drow is now a changed area (which makes sense consider the blast you just delivered). This explosion must have opened up some previously sealed tunnels in this area because now you'll have to contend with some undead encounters. It's a good thing to look around here first, because you will find some useful items for Marga's potion and Colin's weapon creating. And, if you look close enough in the main blasted area, a secret hidden door to a bonus level below!

We won't go into all the details of this secret bonus area so you can figure some stuff out on your own. I will give you some words of warning though. Some of the creatures down here are pretty tough with regeneration or death spells, if it's a successful attack, so make sure to save often. Also, with each “disturbing coffin” you disturb, your alignment shifts towards evil so be aware of this if you want to use this character for the next chapter. If you shift too much evil (no longer even neutral) then you'll need to shift back some how by doing more righteous stuff to continue playing in this series. Overall, you don't miss much by not disturbing too many of those tombs, just killing a bodak and getting their tooth for Marga's potion ingredient. Also, a little helpful hint when fighting the slaads, go for the gray ones because then their summons will disappear and make the fight a little easier. At any rate, the slaads are a tough, but worthy diversion because you can get some good XP out of them.

*It was actually a pleasant diversion being teleported to the mining settlement on our way to this fabled mountain maze. I enjoyed my stay at this forward thinking town of rough and humble mountain folk.*

*There was so much to see and do in such a small area. At the Pick & Shovel Inn, Darlo and I were given a room, although we never used it for the purposes I had in mind due to time constraints...and this ingenious little rod that would teleport us back to our room any time we needed it, for a heap of gold to be sure.*

*There were also a couple of nice shops where a lady alchemist of sorts would brew me up some fine working, and some quite tasty, potions out of all kinds of stuff. They held powerful magic properties that were far more useful than profitable. The other store had a gnome smithy. I knew the gnomes where a smart race of folk and this smithy was no exception. He could make a weapon with the best of the metal molders, and if you had the money and the gems for him to add, make you a find edge indeed. Not only were his weapons useful, but if the particular weapon didn't fit your style of fighting you could sell it for a tidy profit!*

*But alas, all these good people had more pressing issues to deal with. They had a serious drow elf problem in the depths of their mines, where no one could work for fear of their doom. So the pleasant diversion quickly turned into a personal mission of ridding these fine settlement folk of their drow worries.*

*Turns out the drow seemed to be just as worried about them as they were of the drow. After clearing out some uniformed drow militia and their pets, I came across a large war party but was lucky enough to share words with their priestess. Through some scary moments I had managed to convince her and her brethren to leave the mines and that I would seal them in with an explosion, never to be seen or disturbed again.*

*Now that the mining problem was settled it was off to find the Darkened Forest for me, but not before discovering that the mine explosion I set in motion also opened up some unknown and dark corners of the mines. I had to work my way through some uninviting undead creatures to get to the forest and find my way to this mystical maze.*

**[Player Note:] – The Darkened Forest** – Immediately you will notice something very odd about in this dark forest. There are a variety of golems and constructs and beware of the iron ones because they will put up a tough fight. Even with a tough character they have good damage absorption and some magic resistance so, again, be sure to save often.

You will find Bagold's Brick Hut towards the middle of the map if you go straight ahead from where you entered the area. The witch Bagold is your key to getting on to the maze. **First, you must have least 75,000 (with a penalty for lying) to 100,000 gps to get her to open the magically sealed gate to the maze.** Also, you must quickly take a message to the Archenpriest for her. If for some reason you do not have enough money, you will need to start trying to make it, maybe even cheat. This is one of the many reasons we **STRONGLY** suggest you have played the other chapters in the series because you would have had plenty opportunity to find and sell for gold in Chapter 1.

After you have done the witches bidding continue to head east over the little wooden bridge and through the now opened gate to the maze entrance. Now that you have reached the maze... good luck! ☺

*With the settlement behind us, Darlo and I worked our way from the mines into the Darkened Forest. I can truly see, or not see for that matter, where this eerie wooded area got its name. The canopy of trees didn't seem to be the only reason behind that darkness. It seemed that some form of strange magic plagued this forest, the same magic that controlled the abominations that guarded the land.*

*Those abominations that I speak of were constructs and golems with only two intents, protection and destruction. They were guarding a little brick hut of the witch Bagold. If only there was a way that we could have avoided destroying her creations, but it would have either been us or them. And, at times it was almost us because of the raw power and resistance of those iron golems!*

*We found a magically sealed door that appeared to head into the mountain, but could not get through it. So, even against my better judgment we ventured in to investigate the mysterious hut in the center of the wood.*

*The witch Bagold was an unpleasant old nag, with a screeching, but powerful voice and a short temper. She told us more about the mountain maze and required an unspeakable amount of gold for our passage along with the quick delivery of a message to Archenpriest Jorinson.*

*Luckily the gains that we have made over the course of our adventures could help fund this "little" passage and I delivered the message as instructed because I wanted to get on with this investigation into the Cult of the Dragon.*

*Ultimately though, we were done dealing with Bagold, and thankfully so. Without a look back, Darlo and I headed into this mountain maze to take on the challenge of the Soncreates.*

**[Player Note:] – The Mountain Maze** – This maze is complex and challenging. Even after testing this chapter many times I was constantly finding myself getting lost in this maze and some of its outside areas. I thought the task of writing this portion of the readme would also be just as daunting but instead of doing a room by room detailed walkthrough, I've decided to just drop all the major hints involved in this collection of areas. That way you can still explore to your liking, map out the areas you've been, and get the feel of true PnP dungeon crawling. If there are particular areas you get stuck then continue reading through, but first make sure you read all the hints below.

The maze consists of 4 levels and a few outside areas that can only be accessed from the inside of the maze. You will also find many teleports throughout the maze. There are a couple major hints to know about this area that will just be easier to mention here:

- To find your way out of the maze, you never have to take any of the portals.
- All portals go to a specific location within the maze except for the one labeled "Take a Chance" which is random.
- Using the map pin function provided in the NW engine or even going as far as graphing it out on paper may be a big help.

- The direct path through this complex maze structure is **2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4.** (each number representing the floor level) This path also starts with the furthest door on the right (north) as you enter.
- Often times previously traveled areas may have new encounters triggered by some other area you were in so move through with caution. Oh, and have I mentioned yet to save often?!?

On the other hand, if you want to finish some very rewarding and satisfying side quests in this maze complex you will have to take some of the portals and go to some outside areas within the maze. If you need help doing these, read on.

**[Player Note:] – The Mountain Maze Prisoners** – As you can see from above, you can get through the maze using the direct path outlined, but then you could miss out on a very valuable XP, treasure, and alignment shift reward for rescuing the four prisoners in the maze, each with their own journal update.

The prison area is easy to find if you are in the maze's main entrance on level 2. Dave made it this way so that when you recognize where you are at you have an easy way to get to the prisoners once you find the key to their cell door. As soon as you enter the maze, continue straight ahead and take the little corridor that turns right (north) and has a teleport as a dead end. This teleport will always take you to the prisoner area.

Now, in the interest of time I cannot walk you through the path to every key and who it is for, but I can give you some major hints to finding each one and freeing all the prisoners.

- You will find one key on each floor.
- You will have to take teleports to get to some of them.
- **First Floor Key:** In the chest behind the two respawning giants area. They are in a little backwards "L" shaped room towards the middle of level 1 that can be reached only by a teleportation portal.
- **Second Floor Key:** In a chest behind a cave wall outcropping (can be easy to miss). It's in a room with a portal, a fire giant, and several fire mephits, towards the northwest corner of level 2.
- **Third Floor Key:** In the chest behind the two respawning mana spiders. The room is located over at the western edge of level 3.
- **Forth Floor Key:** At the end of a small dead end corridor with a deadly trap in front of it. The corridor is located between two portal rooms in the northeast corner of level 4.

In the key areas where the respawning creatures are you may want to get your treasure and get out, so keeping constant tabs on your henchperson and telling them to follow, or just getting far enough away where they reset will help with the escape. The respawns are set up where one creature will respawn on the other side of that little area after you kill the other, so they both won't be right on top of you. You can take advantage of this for a little bit and go back and forth between them gaining some XP, but I wouldn't suggest doing it for too long because then you may make your character too powerful for

the rest of the chapter or subsequent chapters in the series. Also, save often in here and keep an eye on your henchperson's health.

**[Player Note:] – The Starving Elf** – Another rewarding side mission that will require you to use the teleports and get to some of the outside areas of the maze is the one where you save this poor starving elf that has lost his teleport and needs for you to fetch a fresh dragon egg to fix it.

You will find Shano outside of level 4 just one corridor beyond the level 4 prisoner key in Mountain Maze: Level 4 Cliff, right towards the center of the small area. There is a nasty group of wolves in this area with a pack leader so make sure you move ahead cautiously. (Oh, and if you really want to do this mission, don't head into his little tree shack without killing all of the wolves first because one time through one of them followed me in there and killed Shano. I felt so bad, I had to reload.)

The area where the fresh dragon egg is at is through an outside maze exit in the top left of level 3, there's an exit to the left (west) below the room in that corner, which leads out to the Mountain Maze: Rugged Outdoors snow covered area. Down the ramp in that small area, you will find a mysterious cave called Thunder Peaks: Lair. It is in here that you must defeat the adult white dragon and get its key to open the little door to the dragons nest in the northeast corner of the room at the end of the long hall to your right.

After doing this you will have to back track a little bit to Shano, but again, the short trip is worth the reward! Especially when you see all the loot the white dragon has around it.

**[Player Note:] – The Mountain Maze Continued** – As you start to get near the end of the mountain maze, the last time you work you way up from level 1 to level 4, the level 1 area will have a big chessboard room in the middle of it. Once you enter this puzzle area the door behind you will magically seal and you will be locked in here until you figure out the mysteries of the pillars and color beams. There are two different combinations to this. Numbering the pillars from **left to right** (facing the lever side), one combination is **3, 4, and 6**. The other combination is **1, 2, and 5**. Once triggered successfully, the pedestals on the opposite side will self-destruct. Now you can continue on to the other side of the chessboard, and out the opposite door.

After you have finished the little color beams puzzle you will just have to work your way up the maze. Towards the end of the maze you will notice if you are on the right path or not because it starts to get pretty linear and obvious you are working your way out.

*Never in my life can I recall a time when I have been so utterly lost a desperate to get out of somewhere. The legend that this mountain maze has become is gravely understated. Darlo and I knew as soon as we entered this area that we were going to need to keep our wits about us to survive. Not only were the creatures we faced formidable, but all of them seemed to be magically placed in our path and set on our destruction. If the creatures weren't already bad enough, the endless path of levels and*

*backtracking to try and find our way out worried me much more than I put on in front of Darlo.*

*To make matters worse, we found other goodly creatures trapped, both within the maze wall and outside as well. Four wrongly imprisoned beings and one starving poor shut out elf were part of the reason the path through the maze took us so long. I could not live with my conscious if we had left any of them there to die or waste away in those cavern prison walls.*

*With patience and some luck, we were able to find all four of the prisoner's keys and figure out the secret to placing the items in the chest of the prisoner area. After some time we even managed to find a fresh dragon egg and backtrack our way to give it to Shano so he could get back on his feet again.*

*There were many tough encounters along the way, but in the end we finally found our way out of the top of the mountain and into Hooknose Crag. I doubt anyone will ever truly understand how much relief and elation we felt at that moment!*

**[Player Note:] – Hooknose Crag** – As soon as you get out of the mountain maze you will be in a small and nondescript area of Hooknose Crag. Make your way though some angry bears to a cavern on the other side of the area.

Here you will enter Hooknose Crag cave. This is laid out in a simple spiral pattern that goes towards the middle and ultimately down a level. If your character does not have good magic resistance, you may want to go back to the mining settlement and pick up a few more Potions of Clarity because sometimes the Cult of the Dragon magic users were able to stun my fighter with a powerful color spray AND very soon you will be facing another dragon!

**[Player Note:] – Cult of the Dragon Temple** – The path to follow in the temple is pretty linear as well (a little reprieve after figuring out the maze!). You will work your way south and east, in a big counterclockwise direction. About three quarters of the way through the temple you will run across an adult red dragon so be ready to use one of those Clarity Potions if you need it or wear a Golden Circlet.

Right before the temple's main locked area there is a normal sized room with a couple of the same cult member types you've been fighting all through here, except one of them is a little tougher and, after his death, he will drop the temple key for you to get in the main area.

Before you go in this area, I strongly suggest you resting, saving, and beefing up your character with all forms of boosting potions. Even if you've had an easy go of it before, now would be the time to get your defenses ready and maybe even enlist some help from Bulgar's Bird Whistle, if you have it.

When you are all ready for this end scenario move in towards the middle of this large room and a cut scene will kick off where you get to witness Master Priest Andrinor summon a great dracolich. Also notice that the master priest has a bunch of company around. Hey, no one said an ending should be easy! No matter what path in the

conversation you take, you will end up fighting a big battle in here. Some of the paths reveal more information that will give you some more interesting background on the story, others quickly lead to fighting.

Andrinor is actually kind of a weaker leader (well for now... but more to come on him later), so when the fighting ensues the best thing to do would be to take out the Cult of the Dragon magic users and assassins, because their magic can be pretty painful. This is why it would be good to enlist the help of your summons, animal companions, and whistle summons, so they can keep Andrinor and some of the other fighters busy while you work on the magic users.

The other reason to wait and keep Andrinor alive is so that the dracolich won't go immediately hostile. This gives you a little time to break down the forces in this room before getting into the big fight. (Side Note: It was really fun during my run through because I got lucky on my first use of the whistle right before going in here and called a black dragon! The ensuing battle was just amazing and although my black dragon was killed by the cult fighters, he took out the dracolich first and had a bunch of them running scared. Just remember to save it before hand because depending on the duration you may end up fighting your summons as well!)

Ultimately, if you've beefed up well you will clear out the room, and probably have to resurrect your henchperson. As soon as the battle is over, rest and save, because it's really not over! Just after you loot Andrinor's dead body, he will reappear in lich form himself and summon a small entourage of undead while he makes his escape. The undead shouldn't be any trouble, they are just there as sword or spell fodder while Andrinor gets away to bug you another day!

Look around the room some more. There is some great stuff in the altar and the book (Auschylactus's Lich Spell) that you can put into one of the fires (like inventory) on the ground behind the altar. If you do this you will get a little reward.

You are pretty much done, but before you use the scroll to go back to the Archenpriest, if you don't want to shift in alignment for stealing the RAPTS Rod you should transport back to the Pick & Shovel Inn to give it back to Micho. Here you can also do any selling you may need because you get a better deal in the settlement stores (Marga's is the best) than Father Clutos's.

**[Player Note:] – Back to the Temple of Mielikki: Chapter 2 Conclusion** – Once you are finished with any settlement business, selling stuff off, re-supplying for the next chapter, and returning the RAPTS Rod, use the scroll the Archenpriest gave you to return back to the temple and report your success.

Here you will be given the option to hang around or move on to Chapter 3. This Chapter 3 is just a placeholder for the next MOD and doesn't take you anywhere significant for now (although, I still love the desert tileset!)



One word of advice before you do move on though is to strip down your henchperson, if you can carry all their stuff. And then save the instance of your character. That way if you are the type that likes to manage their inventory, you can give them back everything they had from the previous chapter. And for the common items that they will have again like the weapons and armor... well you can make a few extra gold pieces!

*After relishing in the relief of finally discovering our way out of the mountain maze, Darlo and I continued on through Hooknose Crag. In just a short time we found a cave entrance that led us into another winding path, but thankfully that path was clearer.*

*We worked our way through the cavern halls and could tell we were on the right path, because this was the first time in this adventure where we started to confront some members of the Cult of the Dragon. Their magic was strong. Had it not been for the Potions of Clarity that I always have handy, I may have easily been stunned and disposed of in those caves.*

*We eventually made our way down to the Cult of the Dragon Temple itself. Again, many more cult members tried to halt our advance, but we prevailed. I knew we were on the right path when we had to battle our way through many dragon wyrmlings and a frightful red dragon.*

*Finally we had reached the center of the large temple so both Darlo and I took some precautionary potions to prepare ourselves for what was in that large locked chamber. As we walked into the depths of the temple we witnessed something both terrific and horrifying. A power hungry and crazed priest finished the ritual to summon the deadly dracolich! I witnessed a power that I feared may be greater than my own, not to mention all of the priest's guards that were lined up and waiting. It was then that I began to know, and later deal with, fear.*

*This high level cult member, one Andrinor Hos, told me of a pending doom that all would suffer in a short time. He made it perfectly clear that all of my efforts over the last few months were for naught. Somewhere in the back of my mind I believed in some of his rhetoric but I also knew that with faith, good can prevail.*

*The battle was a tough one! I fought on in a blind rage with many cult members, the dracolich, and Andrinor, especially when I had witnessed Darlo fall in battle. In the end I was triumphant but weary. I was thankful for the resurrect scrolls Archepriest Jorinson had given me, but it still pained me to have to use them knowing that I could not keep Darlo from feeling the tinge of death.*

*With her alive and by my side again, we began looking around for anything of value or vileness to destroy. Much to our surprise, the fight was not over. After disturbing Andrinor's body his form began to rise as a lich of his former self. I didn't have time to appreciate the new power that began to rise with him because a weak but numerous force of undead creatures appeared between us to cover his escape. With a teasing farewell, Andrinor escaped into a shaft of light as Darlo and I finished off his undead entourage. It was done, but not over. I know that the newly formed lich of Andrinor will someday come back to haunt me.*

*After collecting some valuables in the now quiet area, and destroying that evil spell book in the fires behind the altar, Darlo and I used the RAPTIS Rod one last time to return it to its rightful owner and sell of our newfound treasures in the settlement.*

*Soon after, we used the scroll to return to the Archenpriest and report our findings and victory, although I sometimes wonder how victorious we really were since the Lich Andrinor made his escape.*

That concludes Chapter 2 in our ongoing series of *A Harper's Tale*. Dave Mason, Sidestep, and I thank you for playing. Be on the lookout for Chapter 3 of the series in the coming months!

### **Appendix A: Marga's Potions**

	<b>Fairy Dust</b>	<b>Gargoyle Skull</b>	<b>Dragon Blood</b>	<b>Skeleton's Knuckle</b>	<b>Slaad's Tongue</b>
Ale	Lesser Potion of Nimbleness	Potion of Protection	Lesser Potion of Might	Lesser Potion of the Ghost	Potion of Hiding
Wine	Potion of Nimbleness	Potion of Stoneskin	Potion of Might	Potion of the Ghost	Potion of Polymorph
Spirits	Greater Potion of Nimbleness	Greater Potion of Stoneskin	Greater Potion of Might	Greater Potion of the Ghost	Potion of True Seeing

	<b>Ettercap's Silk Gland</b>	<b>Fire Beetle's Belly</b>	<b>Bodak's Tooth</b>
Ale	Potion of Cure-All Disease	Lesser Potion of Protection	Lesser Potion of Toughness
Wine	Potion of Death Removal	Potion of Ether	Potion of Toughness
Spirits	Potion of Purging	Greater Potion of Ether	Greater Potion of Toughness

### **Appendix B: Colin's Custom Weapons**

Weapon w/ gem combo	Greenstone (acid)	Fire Opal (fire)	Amethyst (ice)
Dagger	Acid Dagger +2	Fire Dagger +2	Ice Dagger +2
Longsword	Acid Longsword +2	Fire Longsword +2	Ice Longsword +2
Great Sword	Acid Great Sword +2	Fire Great Sword +2	Ice Great Sword +2
Great Axe	Acid Great Axe +2	Fire Great Axe +2	Ice Great Axe +2
Halberd	Acid Halberd +2	Fire Halberd +2	Ice Halberd +2

Weapon w/ gems combo	Quartz Crystal (electric)	Sapphire (Sonic)	Diamond (keen)
Dagger	Electric Dagger +2	Sonic Dagger +2	Keen Dagger +2
Longsword	Electric Longsword +2	Sonic Longsword +2	Keen Longsword +2
Great Sword	Electric Great Sword +2	Sonic Great Sword +2	Keen Great Sword +2
Great Axe	Electric Great Axe +2	Sonic Great Axe +2	Keen Great Axe +2
Halberd	Electric Halberd +2	Sonic Halberd +2	Keen Halberd +2

Weapon w/ 2 gems combo	Greenstone & Diamond	Fire Opal & Diamond	Amethyst & Diamond
Dagger	Keen Acid Dagger +2	Keen Fire Dagger +2	Keen Ice Dagger +2
Longsword	Keen Acid Longsword +2	Keen Fire Longsword +2	Keen Ice Longsword +2
Great Sword	Keen Acid Great Sword +2	Keen Fire Great Sword +2	Keen Ice Great Sword +2
Great Axe	Keen Acid Great Axe +2	Keen Fire Great Axe +2	Keen Ice Great Axe +2
Halberd	Keen Acid Halberd +2	Keen Fire Halberd +2	Keen Ice Halberd +2

Weapon w/ 2 gems combo	Quartz Crystal & Diamond	Sapphire & Diamond
Dagger Longsword	Keen Electric Dagger +2 Keen Electric Longsword +2	Keen Sonic Dagger +2 Keen Sonic Longsword +2
Great Sword	Keen Electric Great Sword +2	Keen Sonic Great Sword +2
Great Axe Halberd	Keen Electric Great Axe +2 Keen Electric Halberd +2	Keen Sonic Great Axe +2 Keen Sonic Halberd +2