

AD&D: Pool of Radiance FAQ/Walkthrough

by true overdrive

Updated to v1.0 on Jul 23, 2004

POOL OF RADIANCE (NES) Walkthrough by Overdrive

Version 1.0

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pool of Radiance is the only one of the classic SSI turn-based strategy RPGs based on the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons world to make it to the NES. My guess is that they may have originally planned to release Curse of the Azure Bonds (the second in the four-game series), because when you complete the game, there are passwords available for all your characters. However, that never happened, sadly.

While this game is simplified/altered a bit from the computer version, it is still one of the greatest games ever for the NES (in my opinion). You have a lot of latitude in your decision-making; there are many dungeons, caves, buildings, etc. to explore -- and multiple ways to do a lot of them; all-in-all, this is as open-ended of a game as you'll get on the old NES.

Since a lot of people have been asking for a QUALITY FAQ on this game that actually caters to the NES crowd, I figured I do it. Gives me another

reason to play the game again.

2. COPYRIGHT NOTICE

This guide is copyrighted 2003-04 by Overdrive/Rob Hamilton. You may read and copy this guide for your personal use. You may use it for your website if you email me and ask for permission. You may not take this guide and post it wherever you want just because you feel like it. A lot of time is going into playing this game and writing the guide for it and I would appreciate it if you respect that. Believe me, I have no problems in letting anyone use this guide as long as I get proper credit.

3. VERSION HISTORY

1.0 (4/26/04) -- Took care of the entire walkthrough. Pretty much a done deal except for the stats for a number of monsters, which will be included whenever I get through the computer version of the game (unless someone knows something I don't). With all the options you have here, it's all too possible I missed something. Also, I may proofread this work a bit more carefully in the future and re-send it (probably when I get the remaining monster stats).

4. IMPORTANT NES/COMPUTER DIFFERENCES

- a. In the computer version, you get something for every battle -- usually the armor/weapons the enemies were wearing. Actually, it's somewhat of a positive that this was not implemented, as when your party is all decked out with magical items, it gets rather tiresome to say no to the generic crap those pesky Kobald-type wimps drop on a regular basis.
- b. You can have six PC/recruited characters and two storyline NPCs in your party at any one time in the computer version. Here it's five and one.
- c. Conversely, a number of battles are much larger and/or tougher in the computer version. You have more characters --- enemy forces also are much larger. Nothing like fighting 20-25 Orcs at one time. Let's just say, you better be loaded on Sleep spells.
- d. In the computer version, there are a number of secret lairs that contain monsters and treasure in the Wilderness that may be found in random spots if you have the `/search` function on. So far, no one has found any of those in the NES version (used to be a hot topic on the boards). One reason for this may be the fact that you are unable to use the `/search` function outdoors...
- e. In the computer version, any time you either entered a period of extended dialogue or heard a tavern rumor, you were directed to read the appropriate paragraph of a book that came with the game. Some entries in the book were false, so you couldn't read everything and know all the secrets in the game -- but you'd sure have a good idea. In the NES version, all the dialogue, rumors, etc. are in the actual hardware and will be displayed on screen.
- f. Money is a bit more complicated in the computer version. All the AD&D currency is there. Not only do you have gold pieces, you also have the more valuable platinum pieces and the less valuable electrum, silver and copper.

g. In the NES game, you have an unlimited amount of arrows, sling stones, etc. In the computer version, you have to continue purchasing them or you'll run out.

h. Here's a funny one. Spell names with religious meanings were altered. For example Bless is now 'Empower' and Prayer is 'Mediation'. Thanks, Nintendo for saving us from the horrors of religious words while putting us players in a world in which we have to kill most every life form out there in order to succeed.

5. TIPS/HINTS/STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW

PART ONE:

Okay, the first thing I want to make clear is that this is simply a guide to THIS GAME. I'm not going to rehash every AD&D rule, describe every single spell, explain the meaning of every stat, playing class, etc. If you go to the PC FAQ section for this game, you'll find a well-written AD&D Rules FAQ by DSimpson that should help you figure out what's what. However, I will mention a few stats/classes in particular that are of the utmost importance.

a. Armor Class/Movement -- The lower the number, the better. You start out with an armor class of 10 (minus any possible bonus for class/dexterity) and lower it by buying/equipping armor. Characters like Fighters and Clerics can equip stronger armor, so they should be toward the front. Thieves and Magic-users should be in the back, as they only get weak armor (although the right Bracer can do wonder for a Magic-User's AC. Now, one thing to take into consideration is that the heavier the armor you have, the more restricted in movement you'll be. A Fighter with Plate Mail equipped can move six squares per turn. When fighting enemies with distance attacks (arrows, spells, etc.) that start battle far away from you, that can be troublesome. So, there always is the potential 'mobility vs. protection' conflict for you to think about.

b. THACO -- This number determines your proficiency in combat. It stands for 'To Hit Armor Class 0'. Let's say it is 20. That means whenever you try to attack an enemy, the computer rolls an imaginary 20-sided die. If the enemy had an AC of 0, you'd have to get a 20 to hit it. If the computer had an AC of 10, you'd get a hit on a roll of 11 to 20. This may lower when you go up in level. Fighters get their THACO lowered each time they go up in level. Other classes get a bonus less frequently, as their primary focus isn't brute power. Needless to say, the lower you get this number, the more likely you are to consistently hit enemies in battle. As a side note, no matter how low or high your THACO is, there always will be a five percent chance that you'll either hit or miss. Example, you have a THACO of 20 and try to hit an enemy with an AC of -3. While it would seem that you have no mathematical chance of hitting this enemy, if the computer 'rolls' a 20, you will connect.

c. Magical Weapons/Armor -- So you have a few weapons and armor with +1 or +2 in front of them? That's good, because magical pieces of equipment are about the only way to improve THACO and AC easily. A Long Sword +1 will improve your THACO by one as long as you have it equipped AND add one point to the amount of damage you cause with a hit. A Chain Mail +1 improves your Armor Class by one more point than regular Chain Mail would. There are two ways to find out if something is magical. First, cast 'Detect Magic' on it. Second (and more efficient), go to a store and act like you're selling it. If it is dirt cheap, it's a regular old piece of equipment. But if the store offers a ton of \$\$\$ for it, it's magical. Now cast 'Detect Magic' (or if you have enough cash, just pay the storekeeper to identify it). This way, you're not

cluttering up your limited active spell selection with a bunch of spells that have no in-combat purpose.

d. Spells -- When you start out, you have next to no spell-casting ability for your Clerics and Magic-Users. They might have 2-3 casts of a Level 1 spell, after which they must rest to re-memorize their spells. For this reason, whenever you set off for hostile territory, you have to be careful in allocating spells to characters. Early on, I'd advise giving your Clerics nothing but Cure Light Wounds (so you don't have to run to town every time someone takes a hit). Magic-Users should have mainly Sleep (to incapacitate foes for easy kills) and maybe a Magic Missile (to cause a bit of damage). When a Cleric goes to memorize spells, they can choose between all spells of any level they've obtained knowledge of. When a M-U goes to memorize spells, they can choose between whatever spells they have chosen to learn of any level they've obtained knowledge of. When a M-U goes up in level, they get to choose a new spell(s) to learn. Picking the right spell is an important thing to do. Some are game-savers (Fireball and Hold Person), some are pretty limited/useless (Knock and Cure Blindness).

The healing spells Clerics get are the most useful spells in the game, as they are the only cheap and easy way to regain lost hit points. Basically, the only quick way to regain HP is to go to an inn/safe point, have your Cleric used all their Cure Wounds spells, rest (to regain magic) and repeat until everyone is healthy. Characters do regain HP on their own, but it's something pathetically slow, like one per 24 hours. A more advanced Cleric should invest in Hold Person, as that spell will work on humanoid enemies a bit too powerful for the Magic-User's Sleep spell.

Magic-Users also have some crucial spells. Early in the game, you get access to two of them (Sleep and Magic Missile). Sleep is a lifesaver early in the game, as it effectively turns weak enemies into helpless practice dummies. Magic Missile is a good way for a M-U to attack, as it is 100 percent effective. Later, they will get Fireball, an area-attack spell that can devastate an enemy squad (or you, if you're not careful -- make sure none of your characters are within its sphere of influence).

PART TWO:

And now, let's just go into a few other useful tidbits.

1. Save often. As in constantly. You never know when a group of enemies might gang up on your Magic-User. You never know when your weak party that has been struggling to overcome Kobolds and Orcs will run into Trolls. Quite frankly, you never know... (well, this guide will give you some damn good hints, but there always is the element of the unknown while in battle).

2. The Council gives out quests. By doing them roughly in the order given, you won't get overwhelmed. One exception -- save the cleansing of the local graveyard for immediately before the final assault on Tyranthrax. It is brutal and you want to be as strong as possible before facing all the legions of the hatefully strong undead. And I wouldn't be running to Mendor's Library as often as the game seems to prompt you to do so, as it will be a very humbling experience early in a party's career.

3. Clerics have the ability to 'Turn Undead'. This is really useful since (as long as it works), some number of undead enemies will be forced to attempt to escape the battle -- meaning they won't be attacking your party unless they get caught in a corner. Since a number of these guys (Wights, Wraiths, Spectres, Vampires) can steal experience levels and others (Mummies - disease, Skeletons - sharp weapons do half damage) have other unpleasant

abilities, a high-level Cleric is important to have.

4. Speaking of experience, you can only advance so far in this game. Each of the SSI AD&D games has a level cap for characters. In the computer version, you could just train immediately in the second game, Curse of the Azure Bonds to gain more levels -- here, regardless of how many experience points you have, after a certain point you won't be going up anymore. For the NES version, the best thing to do is have a couple of characters divide their experience between multiple classes. Not only does this make your party more diverse, but it also ensures that you won't have everyone maxed out long before the end of the game.

One thing I am going to do is include an experience chart for the various classes. This is because you have to train after reaching the experience requirements for any given level and the game itself won't tell you it's training time. If you have the instruction book, you're cool. If not, you'll be in the dark. To read the chart, the number on the left is the level number and the numbers under the class names tell how many XP are needed to obtain that level. All created characters start at Level 1 and have no experience.

	CLERIC	FIGHTER	THIEF	MAGIC-USER
2	1501	2001	1251	2501
3	3001	4001	2501	5001
4	6001	8001	5001	10001
5	13001	18001	10001	22501
6	27501 - MAX LVL	35001	20001	40001
7		70001	42501	
8		125001	70001	
9			110001	

5. Most importantly -- when you are rolling your character stats, do not be in a hurry. Re-roll and re-roll until you get great stats for everyone. For the most part, you're stuck with what you get, so don't short-chance yourself. The score of 18 is the maximum you get, with the exception of a Fighter's Strength. If you get an 18 here, then you also will get random number between 01 and (1)00. This gives Fighters the potential to get far better bonuses in this category than anyone else.

Here are some rolling guidelines:

Everyone -- High Constitution (a high score in this gives you HP bonuses for each level gained -- 16-18 is good).

Fighter -- 18+ Strength (the bigger THACO/damage bonus, the better).

Cleric -- 16 Strength or better, 17-18 Wisdom. High wisdom affects spells. Since they are the next best attack units after Fighters, you want them able to cause some sort of damage on at least a semi-consistent basis.

Thief -- I'm not sure that anyone has ever found much of a use for these guys (in one or two areas, having one makes things easier, but overall they are inferior to all other classes). If you have one, give them good strength and dexterity. Dexterity improves their shoddy defense if high enough and may improve their trap-finding abilities. It also works to improve their THACO with missile weapons, which is important because you don't want these guys getting carved up in hand-to-hand combat.

Magic-User -- Intelligence 17-18 for more spells. Dexterity also should be high so they not only can dodge attacks here and there, but also can move earlier in rounds to cast spells before the enemies attack.

6. Treasure gained may be somewhat random. I had originally started this game and then started over for the FAQ since some of my notes and maps were a bit vague. The treasure I got from Ohlo's quest was different both times. The first time, I got an awesome 2285XP, Bracers AC2, three potions, a scroll with three Cleric spells and a Necklace of Missile. The second time, it was a comparatively poor 425XP, three potions, two scrolls, but NO bracers. Basically, if you get XP or treasure I didn't get or I got something you don't get -- that's life. Apparently, there are some variations in what you may get and those variations can make a pretty big difference in things.

6. NPCs THAT MAY JOIN YOU TO FIGHT

Note: NPC characters move and act on the direction of the computer. You have no real interaction with them, except to improve their equipment. However, you can't take anything from them, so don't hand them anything expensive unless they'll be with you long enough to make it worth your while. Of course, if you follow my walkthrough, the only NPC that will be with you for any time is Dirten, and he comes into your party with some good equipment.

a. Dirten --- L5 Human Cleric

HP: 26 10STR 15INT 16WIS 10DEX 9CON 15CHA

Once you accept Bracchio's quest (which is early in the game), this fellow joins you. Is he a wonderful character? No, but he gives you extra heal spells, so he's worth keeping around as long as possible.

Note: In the NES version of the game, Dirten is NOT as good of a character as he is in the PC version. Why? Because of horrible AI. In this game, he's very fond of repeatedly healing himself -- even if he's at full HP -- and casting other spells at strange times, such as Hold Person against animals or undead. I'd still keep him around simply to have a sixth character in your party for as long as possible (he is a decent melee Cleric and you'll have more Cure Light Wounds spells for after battles -- but prepare to be frustrated by his frequent bouts of ineptitude.

b. Genheris --- L7 Human Magic-User

HP: 22 10STR 18INT 10WIS 10DEX 10CON 10CHA

Who'd have thought that a Magic-User would be such a good NPC, given their horrid AI in battles? While you'll likely only have this traitor to the Tyranthraxus cause on your side for two battles, he can make a big impact, as he'll actually use his spells in your favor. In the final battle of the game, he hit Tyranthraxus with two Magic Missiles that caused nearly half the damage needed to kill the brute. Just be careful --- he's not overly cautious about who he hits with his Fireball spell.

c. Mad Man --- L1 Human Fighter

HP: 07 17STR 10INT 10WIS 10DEX 10CON 10CHA

The most useless NPC in the game and not just because of his low starting level and his poor stats. This clown also has absolutely no courage. As a test, I kept him around for the two big fights in Mendor's Library (where you find him) in the computer version. He ran from the Basilisk and surrendered to the Spectre. After that, I dumped him.

d. Magician --- L6 Human Magic-User

HP: 23 10STR 15INT 10WIS 10DEX 10CON 10CHA

Two reasons why this graveyard spelunker is on the same level as Mad Man. First, he's a Magic-User and the NES version of this game really struggles with the AI of this class. Second, he's actually a servant of the Vampire

that runs this block. When you reach the Vampire, he'll betray you. So, just kill him on sight, so you don't have the hassle later.

e. Princess Fatima --- L4 Human Fighter

HP: 33 18/01STR 14INT 10WIS 18DEX 16CON 15CHA

The Princess is a good member, but you only have her for a short time. You pick her up in the Kobald Cave and she will leave you the second you exit that place. But she is handy for the brief moment you spend on her side.

f. Skullcrusher --- L4 Human Fighter

HP: 39 18/81STR 10INT 8WIS 16DEX 18CON 12CHA

Cadorna's servant will be found prisoner in the Textile House. If you free him, he'll join you until you completed the quest that brought you to this region. He comes unequipped, but since he's only going to be with you for a little while, only equip him with weapons and armor dropped by the local monsters. He is a powerhouse and will help you out in whatever battles he's around for.

7. WALKTHROUGH

Note: For this walkthrough, I used a Dwarf Fighter, Human Fighter, Human Cleric, Half-Elf Cleric/M-U and Elf Thief/MU. Just wanted a combo I didn't think I'd used before.

a. The Beginning/New Phlan

Common Monsters: See below.

After creating your party, you begin in New Phlan. The basic plot is that you are a group of adventurers looking for wealth and glory. New Phlan is in need of adventurers, as their formerly huge city has been gradually taken over by the forces of evil. Currently they are crammed into one little section of the actual city and are in dire need of help before they become victims of the monsters.

I'll be giving coordinates to describe most of the points of interest here and everywhere else in the game. Here is a crude example of a level (not drawn to scale -- most are 16 by 16 squares)

(0,15) (15,15)

```
-----  
|       |  
|       |  
|       |  
LLLLLLL
```

(0,0) (15,0)

Because I have no skill creating computer maps, I'm just putting in the coordinates. Besides, I've always felt, it's better for the player to make their own map in a game like this --- that way you gain a more intimate knowledge of your surroundings. To help you, through the menus, you can access a vague map of your immediate surroundings. You'll have to fill in doors, points of interest and such, but you'll be able to sketch in the walls and corridors.

Anyhow, in Phlan, there are a ton of places to go. You have stores, inns, temples, a training ground, taverns, a dock. Yes, this is civilization. So, let's first look at the generic shops. All stores in a class are identical.

At (2,1), (4,3) and (6,2), you'll find Inns. These are the only places in town that you may rest without being disturbed by the city guards -- and you only have to pay a tiny fee of 5G. While resting, you may cast spells to heal party members, re-memorize spells, sleep, cast them again, etc. until you are completely healed. You'll be coming here often.

At (8,2), (8,4), (9,2), (11,3) and (13,7) are Armories. These places are great early on, as you can buy any non-magical type of weapon or armor. However, as you find GOOD stuff in battles or in hidden caches, these stores become obsolete -- only good for selling off old items.

Taverns are at (8,6), (10,7), (15,1) and (15,5). You can get rumors here, but the act of snooping for information can set off a drunken brawl. The encounters can range from easy (L1 Thieves) to not-so-easy (mid-level Fighters).

At (9,5) and (12,5) are Jewelers. While exploring, you'll find several gems and jewelry. Turn them to gold or vice-versa here.

Silver Shops are at (10,2) and (11,5). You can get a couple silver weapons (stronger vs. undead) here.

And at (9,4), (11,4) and (15,7), you'll find Item Shops that contain a few assorted things that may or may not ever come in useful.

There are a large number of other places that will be of great interest to you. The town has three Shrines dedicated to different Gods. The Shrine of Tempus entrances are at (1,12) and (3,14). The Shrine of Sune entrances are at (0,3) and (2,3). The Shrine of Tyr entrances are at (8,9), (8,11) and (11,12). At Shrines, you can have a number of healing services provided and you may purchase various healing/restoring items. As a side note, Bishop Bracchio of the Shrine of Tyr is located at (10,10). He will eventually give you a quest, so keep his location in mind. As you get a surplus of gold, Temples will be your favorite place to visit in Phlan, as paying to get healed takes a lot less time and is far less tedious than going to an inn (or other safe resting spot) and repeatedly casting and re-memorizing Cure Light Wounds until everyone is healthy).

The party can do plenty of things at the Training Hall, located at (6,13). Most importantly, this is where you go after someone has gained the experience to go up in level. For a fee, that character will gain their new level. Also, you may compete in one-on-one arena battles (very little purpose to this) and hire replacement base party members (something I've never done -- if someone dies, I've always reset).

Since you'll likely want to know what you're supposed to be doing, go to the City Hall entrance at (4,11) and enter the Clerk's office at (5,10). She will hand out quests for you and give you rewards upon the completion of them. You start out with three quests and will get one new one for each one you complete until you've depleted the supply. Sometimes, a different member of Phlan's Council will have a quest for you. Usually this is the only time you may enter their office without resistance from the guards. Including among these people are Cadorna (6,10) and Bracchio (10,10). The first three missions that you'll get involve cleaning out the Slums, investigating Sokal Keep and finding history books concerning the history of Phlan.

To leave the civilized part of town, you have two options. To go to the Slums, leave at (0,11). To go to Sokal Keep, go to the docks at (15,14). After you clear Sokal Keep, when you go to the docks, you'll be able to

sail to a variety of destinations, giving you easy passage to the outside world and to some harder-to-reach areas of Phlan. The Slums will be your first destination after leaving town.

WHAT TO DO IN PHLAN EARLY ON?

Simple. After creating your party, go to an armory and buy everything you can. Odds are that you won't be able to buy the best equipment for everyone at this point (Plate Mail is too expensive), so just make sure everyone has something to aid them in the Slums. You'll be running back and forth between the two places quite often for some time, so it won't be too long before you will be able to upgrade your characters dramatically, as far as equipment. Don't forget to stop by the Clerks office to start getting commissions.

FIGHTING IN FRIENDLY TERRITORY?

Yep, even in your only true safe zone (at least until you clear out other sections of town), you can get into trouble, but you never are forced to fight -- it's purely free-will combat. So, how do you get into battles? Three ways.

1. The arena in the Training Hall. Pick a character and they fight a solo battle for fun and (minor) experience. Personally, I feel this is a waste of time.
2. Taverns. By asking for information in Taverns, you may cause a fight to break out. Because of this, it's not good to go to Taverns until you've gained a couple of levels, as the power of the opposition is randomly determined.
3. Antagonizing the guards. There are a number of things you may do to get the attention of the town guards. To name a few: trying to 'rest' on the street, being in a Tavern brawl and going in unauthorized doors in City Hall. Young parties or those not looking for trouble should comply with the guards. However, you can fight them and go up against a large group of Aides that are accompanied by a few high-level Fighters and a couple Sixth Level Magic-Users. In other words, this is a rough brawl. You'll want to incapacitate/kill as many Aides as possible quickly (Sleep, Fireball, Stinking Cloud, etc.) and also wear down the Fighters before they can get their hands on you. I'll put a bit more detail on this battle later in the walkthrough.

Now this opens up a whole new can of worms. By slaughtering the city guards, you will alienate the townfolk and you won't be able to use most (if not all) of the services available to you. The only way to get back on everyone's good side is by going to City Hall after completing a quest. Apparently the knowledge that you're still working to save Phlan causes the people to forgive your evil, bloodthirsty ways.

So why would you ever want to kill the guards? The first time I played, I found this out by accident. By killing the guards, you unlock a very tough battle that gives a HUGE experience reward (perfect for getting that final level for a multi-class character before finishing the game). I'll go into more detail about this encounter toward the end of the walkthrough (after I've done it again for the fun of it), but here is a brief synopsis. It is triggered by entering the Temple of Sune after killing some guards. Most Temples, stores, etc. simply refuse to serve you. In this one, there is a horde of Clerics and Fighters just waiting for the chance to ambush you. Good luck!!!

But all that is only possible in the distant future. Try to attack a legion of guards now and your party will be wiped out with brutality. So, why not take a trip to the Slums to start the long quest to become powerful enough to eliminate guards (or beat the game....which is what your actual goal is).

b. The Slums

Common/Set Enemies: Gnoll, Goblin, Hobgoblin, Kobald, Ogre, Orc, Troll.

Goal to Clear: Win each and every 'set' battle.

Reward for Clearing: 500XP and 500G

For the most part, this level has easy encounters. The problem is that you are so weak when you enter here that those 'easy' encounters can be anything but an assured win. What looks to be a simple conflict with four Goblins and two Goblin Leaders can become quite an ordeal when your guys in the front line are whiffing with every swing and getting cut to shreds by the arrows fired by the Leaders.

Speaking of Leader-class enemies, you'll start meeting them here. They are just like their normal brethren (bit different color), but have a little more HP, a little better AC and possibly a new trick. For example, regular weak humanoid monsters (Kobalds, Orcs, etc.) use hand-to-hand combat. The Leaders of these classes have bows and attack from a distance while you're distracted with the others.

Throughout the game, but especially in the early areas, keep a constant eye on your characters' XP. The game does not tell you when you've earned enough to go up in level, so it is your job to watch and IMMEDIATELY train when you've reached the mark to be promoted. Early in the game, one level will make a mammoth difference. A character can double his hit points, get one or two more casts of a crucial spell, get a five percent better chance of hitting any monster, etc.

When it comes to major battles, I'll denote them with common RPG terms like boss, sub-boss, etc. While this game has few encounters that are actual boss fights, that is the easiest way to do things.

When you first enter the Slums (at 15,11), you'll want to stay close to the entrance, as your characters won't be able to take too much damage. When participating in any set battle, use a Sleep spell as soon as possible. These encounters are tougher than random battles, so you'll want your beginning-level characters with store-bought (i.e. non-magical) weapons and armor to have any advantage possible. For random battles, just choose advance until you're close before starting to fight. That way, your melee characters won't have to advance and you won't have to worry about enemy leader-class monsters shooting arrows.

Most random encounters involve weak humanoid monsters such as Kobalds, Goblins and Orcs. Very rarely, a Bugbear will enter the fray -- but that is more of a fluke than anything, since they are not really seen with any frequency until you are near the end of the game.

There are a few lairs close to you, so clear them out first. At (13,14), you'll find two Orcs guarding a scroll with two Cleric spells.

A squad of Goblins will be found at (10,14). This battle was a bit difficult, as they have an Leader (archer) to go with four normals and you start some distance away from them. The best way to handle this is to use a Sleep spell to knock out a couple of the regular Goblins. This way, not

only are they automatic one-hit kills, but you can rush the Leader before he gets the chance to do any real damage with his bow. They guard a Leather Armor +1.

If you want to pick up your first treasure cache, head west to (6,13). When you enter this room, use the `/search` option and you'll find a leather bag containing 100G, 2 gems and a Short Bow +1. Oh, and your party also will split 950XP.

A bit north of here (7,15) is a squad of Kobalds (five normal, one leader) guarding a Bracers AC6. This will likely help out your Magic-User's AC, so equip it immediately. You also share 1262XP for the win and treasure.

Close to the Kobalds, there is a building (2,14). If you go there and pass through the wall (secret door) that blocks you at (1,15), you'll find a secret treasure room. Party members will share 2700XP and you'll get 350G, eight gems and another Short Bow +1. Skip the room at (0,13) for now. You can fight the Hobgoblins there after getting a level under your party's belt.

A very helpful battle is just west of the cache at (6,13). At (3,12), there is another band of Orcs. Defeating these guys will deliver a bounty of magical weapons unto you and 1468XP to share. You'll get three Long Swords +1, a Flail +1 (nice for Clerics) and Chain Mail +1. This will improve your fighting prowess nicely, as when you have horrible THAC0, any improvement is key to extended survival.

By the Orcs, there is a Fortuneteller (7,10), who gives a vague prophesy. You can kill her, but I don't know that it has any affect (the game gives a line about how you feel you made a big mistake, but I've never checked to see if that means anything down the road).

Now, don't get the idea that you should be trying to do all this in one swoop. To assure that your party has at least a good chance of survival, you should be returning back to New Phlan often to heal and re-memorize spells after every one or two set battles (depending on how many random battles you fought and how many curing spells you had to use). Save after every battle, regardless of how easily you won. And, when you're going after some of the lairs in the west part of the Slums, it never hurts to try to Parlay out of random battles. If it works, that's one less opportunity for enemies to wear down your young party.

After you've done the early lairs, it is time to help out someone for some hefty rewards. Head down to (13,5) to visit the mage Ohlo. If you're polite to him, he commissions you to get a potion for him from a store farther south in the Slums. Since this game does offer a good amount of freedom, you also have to option to let Ohlo know who rules this city --- with a large dose of cold steel. This is a big mistake. You'll soon find out that Ohlo is not alone and the combination of he and his cronies are more than enough to put you in a world of hurt at this point. Fighting him might be viable if you ignore his room until you're strong, but the experience you get from helping him is pretty important at this stage of the game, so this walkthrough assumes you help him. In case you do want to tussle, here is what you'll be going against: Ohlo, two Ogres, five Hobgoblins and two Hobgoblin Leaders --- pretty painful stuff there.

To get to his potion, you'll first have to find the entrance to the Rope Guild (6,5). The game warns of potential danger here...and they're right. If you don't know where you're going, there is a 50% chance that you'll find the Trolls instead of the shop. To avoid that danger, head east (on

the map) and meander through the maze until you get to (15,3).

In the shop, if you drop Ohlo's name, you get the potion with no trouble. Or you can choose the hostile route and get thrown into combat with the storekeeper's collection of four Ogre bodyguards. While this battle may be a bit easier than Ohlo's, it still likely is too tough for a Level 1 party. You can always try it and you might win, but it's more trouble than it's worth.

After you procure the potion, head back to Ohlo and give it to him. Not only will your party share some amount of experience (I did it twice and got two dramatically different totals), but the grateful mage will also hand out potions, scrolls and (not every time) Bracers AC 2, which is an awesome reward by itself, since it gives one of your weak Magic-Users good armor. Both times, I did get a Necklace of Missile, though. This is a very useful item for several tough battles in the near future, as it casts the Fireball spell.

The next place to go is back in the western area of the Slums. Meander west to (4,7) first. Going into this room will take you to a monster meeting place. You can hide and get info here (such as Thieves living in the catacombs and that the shrine across the river is held by elite Orcs).

Take the south exit and go east now. Go through the door and you'll meet an Ogre, an Goblin Leader and five Goblins at (3,4). Put as many Goblins to sleep as you can and focus on the Ogre until he's dead. If you can take him out quickly, this is an easy fight. If not, he may create a bunch of trouble for you. For winning, I got 6443XP to split, 11G, 23 gems and a Leather Armor +3.

Go into the next room. The message you get when you enter (4,5) should be a good warning to use the /search command. Do so and find a loose floor board nearby with 1000G and 2 gems (amounting to a total of 1800XP to split). I also got a Shield +1 and scroll.

Now, it's time to take out the Hobgoblins in the northwest corner (just to be complete). Go to (0,13) and fight four of them for some goodies. Kill them and you'll also get some treasure. I picked up Chain Mail +1 and a Mace +1.

That should have been the last preliminary battle (not counting the Trolls), so it's now time to take out the leaders. You'll have to handle two back-to-back battles to do this, so when you're ready, take the west exit from the monster meeting place and head north. At (0,8), you'll meet the guards -- an Ogre, two Orc Leaders and five Orcs. This is just a bit tougher variation of the Ogre-Goblin battle you did a bit ago. Orcs are slightly tougher than Goblins and you'll be starting at a distance, giving the enemy time to mobilize and cause some damage before you can start casting Sleep.

After winning, go through the door to (1,10) to meet the leaders. Note: if you are weak, go back to Phlan. You don't have to fight the leaders at this point in time --- they're very patient and won't be going anywhere.

BOSS: Enemy Leaders

You have to contend with the elite class of the Slums here. There is one Ogre Leader, one Gnoll and one Hobgoblin Leader. If you have a Sleep spell left, take out the Gnoll and Hobgoblin Leader with it and pound everyone down. Just don't let the Ogre Leader bludgeon you down and you'll win.

After I won, I did get a Dagger +1. Now, leave and go back to Phlan to rest up. Just killing the leaders isn't enough to get your commission, though. In the computer version, the Troll battle doesn't have anything to do with clearing the area, but it does here (of course, it's also an easier fight in the NES version).

The battle consists of two Trolls behind four Kobalds. If you have a Necklace of Missile, just soften the Trolls up with one or (preferably) two Fireballs and (if necessary) finish the job with your melee troops. If you don't, things get more complicated. The best thing to do is go to the store and buy bows for your Fighters (or equip any +1 bows you've found, but haven't sold, on them). Have your Magic-Users cast Sleep on the Kobalds to form a wall between you and the Trolls (or try to simply move four party members up and hope that the Kobalds stay in their original formation). Either way, with the Trolls unable to reach you, gang up on one at a time with as many projectile attacks as possible.

Winning netted me a total of 2862XP, a Broad Sword +3 and a Ring of Fire Resistance. It also gave me the right to collect my 500XP and 500GP from the clerk, who also will give a quest involving getting info on an auction to be held at Podol Plaza.

c. Kuto's Well/Catacombs/Podol Plaza

Common/Set Enemies: KW/C -- Gnoll, Kobald, Lizardman.

PP -- Ogres, most small humanoids

Goal to Clear: KW/C -- Kill Norris the Gray

PP -- Get info at auction

Reward for Clearing: KW/C -- 1250XP, 1250G

PP -- 1250XP, 1250G

Note: It really doesn't matter if you do Kuto/Podol or if you do Sokal Keep first. Kuto's has tougher random encounters, but Sokal has a tougher major (boss) fight. In my computer walkthrough, I completed Sokal first -- so I figured I'd do Kuto's and Podol first here.

You were commissioned to go to Podol, so you might think that Kuto's Well is just some unimportant little area to sap your HP through random encounters. Nope. If you go down the well, you'll be in a Catacomb region. Beat the boss of the tunnels (Norris the Gray) and you'll get rewarded for clearing this area -- even though the Clerk never hands out a quest for it.

While the random encounters here can get a little rough, it is worth it in the end. Lizardmen are the most dangerous random encounters, as they can attack multiple times per round and are generally a lot more vicious than other humanoids. You also fight bands of Gnolls and Kobalds (but in larger groups than in the Slums).

So what is there to do in scenic Kuto's Well? Well, in the overworld part, not much at all. If you go into the room at (11,10/8), you'll get to fight two back-to-back battles with Kobalds (both are six leaders with two regulars. The well/entrance to Catacombs is at (7,8).

The only important thing to do here (besides entering the Catacombs) involves entering the door at (7,5). This puts you into the base of operations for the Phlan branch of the Lizardmen. When you try to open the door at (7,2), you'll face an attack from three Giant Lizards and three Lizardmen. Try to put as many enemies to Sleep as you can (these folks are

somewhat resistant to that kind of thing, so it may not work as well as it did against Kobalds and the like -- but anything that knocks out some amount of these enemies is good).

Finish off the battle and pry open the door to meet a woman who tells you that a wicked one has come out of the Pool and that you won't be able to recognize him easily. Far more importantly, there is treasure here if you search on (7,1), which is the square which you entered the room on. I got 2300XP total, Banded Mail +1, Bracers AC4 and a Quarterstaff +1.

After doing all that, it's time to wipe out Norris. Enter the Catacombs and go one space south to (7,7). You'll have an arrow shot at you by an unseen assailant who will then disappear. From here, there are three ways to get to Norris. If you go through the door at (5,4), you'll reach him eventually, but two more unseen enemies will get free arrow shots on you. Taking either the door at (7,6) or (7,4) will also get you there without getting shot at and a secret door at (5,7) will accomplish the same. No matter where you go, it will be only a matter of time before you are forced into a battle with Norris and his merry men.

BOSS FIGHT: Norris the Gray, Ogre and five Goblin Guards.

If you have any Sleep spells left (may be determined by whether you came here directly after the Lizardman compound or if you went back to Phlan or the cleared Slums to rest), use those to knock out some enemies. No matter what, Norris and the Ogre are the main obstacles to victory, but if you've gotten any sort of quality weapons and armor and gone up a level or two by now, this will be an easy fight.

Victory yields a Long Sword +1 and letter in which The Boss commands Norris to follow some Ogres to Sokal Keep and Norris refuses unless he leads. You also are told that you'll be rewarded upon returning to Phlan and that the Catacombs is a safe place to rest, now.

Before resting, travel to (13,14) for the bandit treasure. I got 10300XP to split up, as well as 300G, 30 gems and a Manual of B(odily) Health. This item is weird. In the world of AD&D (I checked), it's supposed to raise a character's Constitution by one point permanently if you read it. However, I tried it on every character in my party and nothing happened (and two of them were below 18 in this category). So, either my game glitched on this OR the makers didn't include the use of this item in the programming. If it doesn't work for you, sell it for the money. If it does, congratulations. Now rest and go back to Phlan to get your reward of 1250XP and 1250G as well as any possible level-ups. Now it's time to go to Podol.

Podol Plaza is located directly west of Kuto's Well. When you get to the border between the two areas, you'll be asked what to do. For the purposes of this quest, disguise yourselves to reduce the possibility of hostile action being taken against you. If you stride boldly, odds are you'll be besieged by Ogres and smaller humanoids quite regularly. Of course, if you are discovered by the opposition and don't want to fight, you can always Parley with a sly tone, which will lead them to think you're one of their leader's human employees.

By exploring, you'll get to wonder who proofread the game (a naben doned house -- I didn't realize abandoned was such a toughy), as well as find a couple of interesting places, but for now, just go to the auction place.

You'll find it at (7,9) and get there just in time. If a monster has blown

your cover, don't try to sneak in closer or a battle will ensue. All you have to do is stay where you are, watch and wait. When the auction is done, head back to Phlan to get a 1250XP and 1250G reward. Your next commission will be from Councilman Cadorna, who will tell you to get his treasure from the Textile House. Do that later (as well as fully exploring Podol Plaza). For now, it's time to take care of business at Sokal Keep.

d. Sokal Keep

Common/Set Enemies: Ogre, Orc, Poisonous Frog, Scorpion, Skeleton, Zombie.

Goal to Clear: Tell ghost of Ferran Martinez the truth.

Reward for Clearing: 5000XP, 1250G, 15 gems and the right to sail to places NOT named Sokal Keep.

Go to the Phlan docks and set sail toward Sokal Keep. Getting to the final battle is supremely easy, as long as you take the proper steps. You start out in an entryway. Go to (6,2) and search the skeleton to get a scroll with some words on it. This is your ticket to getting through most of the Keep unscathed. Whenever you encounter wandering undead patrols in the Keep, you can use the words on this scroll to avoid a fight. Since you get very little XP for killing Skeletons and Zombies, but you can take damage, using the scroll is a very good idea.

If you go west to (2,4), you can fight three Large Scorpions and a Huge Scorpion (Huge are tougher). There are three good reasons to avoid exploring this half of the Keep. First, the Scorpions are the only object of note here. Second, they have the ability to take out a party member with their poison. Third, you DON'T have to come here. It's not like the XP makes it worth it.

Instead, go in the door at (12,8) and fight the four Poisonous Frogs. After the easy kills, you get find a Hammer +1 at (15,9). Then, go north and find the secret door at (15,13). Go to the northwest corner of the room (12,15) and you'll find some secret treasure. I picked up 1250XP, a Shield +1, a Long Sword +1 and a Mace +2. After this, enter the center area through (6,10) or (9,10). You can also enter through (9,13), but I believe you start farther from the enemy.

BOSS FIGHT: Ogre-led onslaught

You have two Ogres, four Hobgoblins, three Orc Leaders and seven Orcs to contend with. Sleep spells work great here and if you're having trouble, don't hesitate to use a Fireball from the Necklace of Missile (if you have it) to thin out the enemy ranks. Basically, if you play smart, this is a pretty easy battle.

For winning, I got over 4000XP, a Mace +1 and a Composite Bow +1. You also find a note that says that 'The Boss' sanctioned the attack on Sokal Keep. Now, there are two rooms off this one to explore. First, go through the door at (7,13). Walk around in this room until you find ghosts and parley with them. The end result will be 1250XP, five gems and Ferran Martinez's diary, which describes the monster invasion.

Now, go south from the main central room through one of the doors at (7/8, 9) to the Keep's shrine. At the far south of the shrine is the ghost of Ferran. Parley with him (have to choose 'Advance' this time) and tell him the truth. He gives the names of Tyranthraxus, Edranka and Torath as those who destroyed Phlan searching for the Pool and notes the information

about them is in Mendor's Library, but that place is overrun by monsters.

Note: If you want, you can fight Ferran Martinez, but that is not the best of choices. My guess is that for all intents and purposes, he is a Spectre, which means that successful hits drain levels. You'll get plenty of chances to fight Spectres down the road, so don't whack the friendly one.

After talking to Martinez, you may leave the premises and return to Phlan. You'll get a great reward for your victory. Not only did I get 5000XP, 1250G and 15 gems, but you also have the freedom to sail to many points in the general area, now.

I got quests to talk to Bracchio (clean out Bane Temple -- get Dirten the Cleric), to remove Thieves from Kovel Mansion and to prevent Nomads from joining the enemy. The Clerk also mentioned removing Valhingen Graveyard's undead population for a reward. So what do you do next?

Well, Valhingen is out of the question, as it's too tough. Besides, if you wait awhile, the Clerk will sweeten the pot with some nice items. You could clear out the Bane Temple, but when you do, Dirten leaves. You want to keep him around for a little while, as he's the only NPC that you really have control over the duration of his stay. I'd recommend saving the Library for a little while longer, as you have to fight two tough monsters there.

That leaves the Textile House, Kovel Mansion and the Nomads. I'd save the Nomad quest for last --- use it as a tune-up for the tougher Wilderness quests. And I'd wait a bit to do the Textile House, as there are some tough wandering monsters there. While Kovel Mansion does have the potential for a couple of tough fights, the amount of experience you get for all the treasure you may find ought to help at least a couple of characters level up.

e. Kovel Mansion

Common/Set Enemies: 1st Level Thief, 6th Level Thief

Goal to Clear: Wipe out the thieves.

Reward for Clearing: 1150XP, 400G, 3 gems.

Since you've cleared Sokal Keep, you've noticed that you have a few options when you go to the Phlan Docks (for a cost of 5G). Well, let's use those options to pay a visit to one of the more remote parts of the city --- Kovel Mansion.

Pay the money and choose to go north. When given the option to enter the northern part of the city or Valhingen Graveyard, pick the city and you'll be at northern reaches of Kovel Mansion. If you exit from the south, you'll be in the Wealthy district, which you have to go through on your way to the Temple you're helping Dirten to take back from the forces of Bane. By exiting to the east, you'll be able to go back to Phlan or to the Wealthy district. Also, whenever you leave the Phlan walls and get the option to go to various parts of Phlan, choosing the option 'leave' (if available) allows you to travel into the wilderness.

As to Kovel Mansion, itself. While outside the actual mansion walls, there are no encounters. The only way in are the double doors at (9/10, 14). There are three doors on the west side, but they all are dead ends. Once in the mansion, until you get to the main battle, you'll mainly have skirmishes with solo 6th Level Thieves, who aren't tough to kill. However, there still is a high possibility of damage here because the thieves have trapped virtually everything. Unless luck is with you, the traps will cause

enough damage to make up for anything the thieves are unable to do. If you cast a Find Traps spell on the assorted treasure in the area, you'll be able to detect the traps, but that doesn't assure that you'll be able to disarm them. Prepare to cast healing magic and potentially make at least one trip back to Phlan for a stay at an inn (you can't rest at Kovel until the area has been cleared).

For the most part (with a few exceptions), the encounters with thieves go the same way. Upon entering many rooms, a thief will try to sneak up on you, placing your party in an easy fight with one 6th Level Thief. Good fun, that. Of course, that thief may damage one character with his sneak attack, so this isn't just a walk in the park. Like I said before, while the enemies here aren't that tough -- there are other ways the game will find to deplete your HP.

There are a number of traps at the entrance to certain rooms. They are present at: (4,13), (5,9), (3,4), (11,5), (12,2) and (13,4).

Most trapped rooms have treasure in them. Here is a rundown of all the treasure caches and what they consist of:

At (3,11) is a pile of weapons. The trap protecting them is the most dangerous of all in the mansion. If you're unable to successfully disarm it, gas will stun you and five 6th Level Thieves and 10 1st Level Thieves will assault you. Hopefully you can disarm the trap, because this is one tough fight. The 6th Level Thieves are all in the front row, they all get a free shot in on you and they are immune to Sleep spells. For simply disarming the trap (no fighting), I got 2400XP, Short Sword +1, Hammer +2, Halberd +1, Mace +1, Battle Axe +1, Chain Mail +1 and Shield +1.

At (4,10) is a piece of paper telling you that Giants are stupid and will say anything when flattered.

A table with four trapped caskets is at (6,8). The first one has 12 gems (worth 3000XP), the second has seven gems worth 1750XP, the third has three gems worth 750XP and the fourth has 20 gems worth 5000XP.

At (3,2) is a cabinet with six scrolls, Scale Mail +3 and a Shield +3. Go to (5,1) to find a piece of paper warning not to steal the treasure in the Shrine of Bane, as they will hunt robbers mercilessly.

The thieves' loot is at (10,6). I got 1662XP, Short Sword +3, Leather Armor +4, Silver Mirror, Silver Scarab, Short Sword +1 and two Daggers +1. At (14,1), I picked up two fine tapestries and Splint Mail +2.

Three trapped wooden cabinets are at (14,5). The first has documents noting the thieves have been spying on important people in Phlan, the second has a whopping 43G and the third has 1800G, which gives a total of 1800XP.

There also are a couple other encounters with thieves other than the standard attempt to sneak attack you.

First, at (6,10), two thieves fail to sneak up on you and run away. You have the option to follow them and if you do, you'll have the option of which one to chase after they split up. If you follow the one that runs to the south, you'll be ambushed by the bulk of the gang (5 6th Level and 15 1st Level thieves). If you follow the thief that goes east, you'll corner him and he'll beg for mercy. If you give it to him, he'll taunt you and leave. Otherwise, kill him -- he's only a 1st Level Thief. So, either don't chase them or chase the one that goes east. Don't go after the one that

goes south --- you want to wait before fighting the main group, as collecting all the treasure could mean a couple of characters will level up.

If you take the south door at (11,4), you'll be in a room converted to a jail cell. Ten 1st Level Thieves are beating an older thief to death, but take a break for you. Slaughter them and the old thief gives you a note before dying. The note says the boss may be a dragon and that you'll need a code word when you pass a gate of the castle.

After completely exploring the mansion, enter the gang's room through either the door at (6,1) or the south door at (8,3). It's time for a big confrontation, as they'll be waiting for you -- meaning it's ambush time! Note: There seems to be no way to avoid being ambushed. Even if you make a beeline to this room, they still will be waiting for you. Well, anyway, time to fight!

BOSS FIGHT: Five 6th Level Thieves and 15 1st Level Thieves

First off, four of the 6th Level Thieves are in the front row, so you'll have the toughest part of the fight first. I'd cast a Sleep spell or two on the rows of 1st Level Thieves, so you have a very easy time after getting past the front ranks of combatants. After winning, you'll get a total of 2500XP.

At (8,1) in the headquarters is a piece of paper saying that when the Boss conquers Phlan, all important members of the town must be slain --- except Cadorna. Looks like our beloved councilman isn't so nice after all. Wonder how we can repay him? I know! Let's go to the Textile House, find his treasure and steal it!

Before doing that, make your way back to town to get rewarded for this job. You'll get a total of 1150XP, 400G and 3 gems. The Clerk will then ask you to take the Valhingen Graveyard quest and reward you for saying yes (420XP, 2-handed Sword +1, +3 vs. Undead, Scroll w/ 2 Restoration spells). You also be given the commission to prevent a large group of Kobalds from joining the enemy.

But before any of those quests, it's off to Podol Plaza and the Textile House.

f. Textile House

Common/Set Enemies: Ghoul, Grishnak, Hobgoblin, Ogre, Poisonous Frog, Scorpion, Wight.

Goal to Clear: Retrieve Cadorna's treasure.

Reward for Clearing: Giving box back to Cadorna -- 5000XP, 20 gems

Before actually entering the Textile House, let's clear out a couple of places in Podol Plaza. While you have to fight a number of random battles to officially clear this block, you can explore all the buildings to get some goods and experience. To avoid random battles (unless you want to fight tons of humanoid creatures), simply parley 'slyt to them and they'll think you're new recruits of the Boss. That tactic has not failed once for me.

At (14,7) is a tiny Shrine to Bane. If you parley with the Orc Cleric on hand, he'll offer to let you meet Mace, the primary Bane Cleric for this area in order so that you may 'workt at the Shrine across the river IF

you come back in two hours. Agree to this, return in two hours and get assaulted by eight Orcs, three Ogres and an Orc Leader. Oh, and you don't get your hands on Mace, either.

Instead, take the path of least resistance and simply attack the Orc. One very quick battle against one overmatched Orc Leader and you've cleaned out this little cesspool of sin. There is nothing of interest here, but the Orc.

The Pit, a local tavern is at (4,7). The minute you enter, you anger a rowdy Buccaneer, who challenges you to a duel. While you could honor his wishes and fight him one-on-one with a party member, it's more fun to simply attack as a group. You'll be in a huge brawl. The Buccaneer (4th Level Fighter) has a crew of eight Hobgoblins and one Hobgoblin Leader on his side, but you have the assistance (whatever it may be) of eight Goblin Guards. Nothing like good old fashioned drunken monster brawling fun to liven up a quest. You don't get any actual reward for smashing up the Pit, but it's a fun little thing to do.

Most importantly, a secret Temple for you is at (2,0) or (1,2), depending on which door you took. You can heal and rest here -- which is good because 100 percent safe spots in the Textile House aren't exactly present at this time. In the NES version, you get an added bonus -- you don't need to have memorized the Knock spell to get in, meaning you don't have to waste a spell slot with a generally worthless spell at this time.

After those mini-adventures, take of the southern doors from Podol (preferably the one to the west) to go to the Textile House. Why should you pick the west-most door? Because, if you have a thief, you can take a shortcut here, which will cut down on the chances of you having an unfortunate encounter with a Wight or Scorpion.

Speaking of Wights and Scorpions, while there are a number of monsters you may meet in random encounters, those are the two to worry about. Wights drain levels (something you see a lot of down the road) and Scorpions kill with their poison. Fortunately, both reloading or using freeze states (if playing on a computer) can take the severity of both situations away, but it still is annoying, to say the least.

If you don't have a Thief, you have to walk through the north half of the block to the southern half. If you have one, go to (0,12) and pick your Thief to go down the well. That character will meet Restal, who (if you agree with him) will take you to (5,4), which is the heart of the enemy headquarters. He also lets you know to come back to the well if you want to see him again.

Now, go due north through the door at (5,5) to get to a barracks. Fight eight Hobgoblins and two Hobgoblin Leaders. Beat them for some treasure. I got a cursed Necklace, a Potion and two Scrolls.

Head through the door at (4,4) to meet the Hobgoblin Grishnak and his cronies in what seems to be a makeshift shrine.

SUB-BOSS FIGHT: Grishnak's Hobgoblin Paradise
Grishnak looks like a Hobgoblin Leader, but has about four times the HP. In the computer version, he also could cast Cleric spells, but either he can't in the NES version or he decided to spend two turns running up to one of my Fighters in order to attack him physically. He is with two Hobgoblin Leaders and eight regular Hobs. One Sleep spell should thin the

ranks a bit, making this an easy fight.

For winning, you'll get a Brass Key and some minor treasure (scroll and potion). Go south with this stuff to (2,0). Note: in the room located at (2/3, 1) you'll be attacked by a squad of Hobgoblins. If you've taken damage from the previous fights, you may need to use some spells to get through this battle.

At (2,0), you'll find Cadorna's servant, a cheerful chap named Skullcrusher. With the Brass Key, you can free him. If you don't already have an NPC in your party, you can get him to join. While he is a VERY strong Fighter, he will only be in your party until you've retrieved Cadorna's Box and returned to New Phlan. Regardless of whether he joins you or not, you will get some information from a piece of paper. To paraphrase the note: Giants and Trolls are entering the castle, Bugbears and Ettins are guarding the gate, smugglers have been able to sneak supplies through the gate.

Before taking on the Boss of the area, there are a few other points of interest to explore.

At (2,7) is another set battle with Hobgoblins. Same strategy as the rest.

At (1,7) is a piece of paper from the diary of a follower of The Boss. It says that The Boss is angry because of the amount of undead at Valhingen Graveyard and that the writer guesses the reason is the influence of a Vampire or another powerful monster.

There will be little messages from Skullcrusher (basically his name and possibly a Hobgoblin corpse) at (9,6) and (6,1).

After looking around, it's time to take out the boss of this area and get your hands on Cadorna's treasure. Go to (11,1) and go east through the secret door that is here (I believe that if you accept Skullcrusher into your party, he alludes to this door -- but if you don't have him, you'll have no way of knowing about it without either this guide or by being very diligent in exploring the place).

In this new room, you'll be accosted by a huge Ogre, which leads to...

BOSS FIGHT: Ogre and Hobgoblins

You'll have the standard eight normal Hobs and two Hob Leaders that you should be used to from other battles. The only addition is that of an Ogre. If you want to put some of the Hobgoblins to sleep, it'll reduce their numbers, so you don't have to worry about your fighters being ganged up on. However, this is a very easy battle (more so than a good number of the possible random encounters in this block).

Win the battle to get Cadorna's box. The game mentions that YOU can open it at the expense of permanently damaging the seal. Don't do that -- instead pay a visit to Restal who will open it and give you half the treasure... and then forge the seal, so it looks like it never was opened. My party got 8500XP, 1000G and 30 gems.

With the empty box, run back to Phlan. As you enter town, the guards will take the box from you and tell you to travel to City Hall to get your reward (fortunately, Cadorna apparently has no interest in actually taking

a peek at his ever-so-valuable treasure --- don't you just LOVE people who unquestioningly trust you). Your reward is 5000XP and 20 gems.

I didn't get any new commissions from the Clerk, but that wasn't a surprise, since I'd gotten two the last time (graveyard, Kobalds) and the one I just completed hadn't been given by her anyway.

So, let's look at the Wilderness now (yes, I'm still putting off Mendor's Library -- I hate that Spectre!) and visit the Nomads --- with one small stop first.

Note: You are likely not completely done with the Textile House. If you fight enough random encounters, they will eventually dry up and you can earn another reward from the Clerk. You'll never get commissioned to do this, so just go there whenever you feel like killing some time in battle.

g. Wilderness Overview/Silver Dragon Cave/Nomad Camp

Common/Set Enemies: Wilderness -- just about everything.

Nomad Camp -- Kobald.

Goal to Clear: Protect Nomad tribe from invading Kobalds.

Reward for Clearing: From Nomads -- 8900XP, 5000GP, items.

From Clerk -- 4000XP, 16 gems.

Take the boat out of Phlan to the north (without going into Kovel Mansion or Valhingen Graveyard) and you'll pretty much be due south of the Silver Dragon's cave (don't worry -- you don't have to fight it). Before exploring, though, there are some things you should know about the Wilderness.

1. While some monster encounters are relatively easy, others can be pretty tough. In other words, be prepared for anything and don't go outdoors until you have a reasonably strong party.
2. There are a number of places to go outdoors. However, you won't be able to access many of them until you've been commissioned to do so.
3. Unlike the computer versions, the NES version does not give outdoor coordinates. This means that my directions to places will be a little more rough and vague -- and will be contained in the actual walkthrough section pertaining to the quest they are a part of (in my computer FAQ, I have a separate section telling the coordinates of every single place of importance outdoors).
4. One thing I've noticed is that if you know what sort of monster resides in a hidden outdoor dungeon, it can be easier to find if you pay attention to the sort of random encounter you run into. In the general area of Zhentil Keep, you may run into Guards (Corporals). The same holds true for other areas. Kobalds, Lizardmen and Buccaneers all can be found in the general area of their respective dwellings.

To get to the Dragon cave, head north from the area you land when choosing to sail north from Phlan and follow the river. The Cave is located right where that body of water ends. Enter and play nice. When he (Diogenes) asks you to tell your intent, say you came for advice (unless you want to set a chain of events in place that COULD result in Mr. Dragon blasting you with a wicked Fireball attack). Diogenes will tell you that in the Kobald lair to the east, there is a bottle containing an Efreet that you will need. Note: You also could offer the dragon a gift. He says you have nothing he wants and tells you about the bottle in the Kobald lair anyway.

The best way to find the invisible Nomad Camp is to go due north of Phlan until you find a Pyramid surrounded by water (we'll be there later!). Walk

in the area northeast of this Pyramid and you'll find the camp. You'll know you're close if the game tells you that you've found a recently abandoned camp.

Enter the camp and head north --- only to trip over a wire and get the attention of everyone present. While things look pretty grim at the moment, the Nomads are not an enemy. Simply 'advance' and 'parley' to get the Chief to come out. He'll treat you like honored guests and you get to be their guest of honor. Sounds too good to be true? You're right, but play along with them -- you'll find the catch soon enough.

You'll be led to a tent, so heal any wounds you suffered in the Wilderness. Upon waking up, you'll be led away to drink 'cider' for 18 hours or so (really, that is NOT an exaggeration -- the on-screen clock does rapidly scroll through that many hours). Hassad (the chief) will talk about dangers and wickedness in the Pyramid, the eastern marshes and the castle to the west...and then mention that Kobalds will attack his camp. So basically, you were treated like an honored guest as a bribe to ensure your willingness to help them. But since you are being commissioned to make sure they don't join the side of evil, it just might be a good idea to help out a bit. You're given a night to think about it and then Hassad comes in to ask for your answer. Accept and then simply rest until you hear the sounds of battle. You will automatically leave your dwelling and run around to find a fight.

BOSS ENCOUNTER: Kobald Horde

This will be an easy warm-up for a few tough encounters you'll face later in the game --- multiple-wave battles. You will fight three battles with Kobalds here with the help of some Nomads. While everything is very easy here, in future multiple-wave battles, you'll have to use a good deal of strategy to come out on top.

Wave 1: 12 Kobalds and 3 Kobald Leaders. You have the help of 5 Nomads.

If you even break a sweat here, you are FAR too weak to be outside Phlan's city walls. After the battle, walk around until the second encounter happens (like I said, this is an easy multiple-wave confrontation).

Wave 2: Same as Wave 1. Walk around more after this fight and the third band will come up to you. The chief pleads with you to finish off the Kobalds, so agree with him.

Wave 3: 10 Kobalds and 5 Kobald Leaders. You still have 5 Nomads, but they are much better this time around (4th Lvl Fighters and the powerful Hassad join you, making this encounter even easier than the past two).

After wiping out the Kobalds, Hassad rewards you with 8900XP, 5000GP, a Two-Handed Sword +2 and a Wand of Magic Missiles. As they escort you out of their camp, they promise to not join the Boss, meaning you've completed another quest. Good job -- now back to Phlan with you. Note: While the Nomad Camp is now visible on the map, you are barred from entering it. Go figure, when you need to be there, you have to step right on it's square to find it --- now that it's useless, you'd have to be blind to not see it... The Clerk gives you 4000XP and 16 gems for your hard work in resolving this matter. Your new mission is to find out what is contaminating Stojanow River and put an end to it (hint, hint -- Pyramid). Determining where to go next can be a bit troublesome. The two main choices are the Library and Kobald Cave. Both have a few tough battles, though. Might as well handle the library now. It's as good of time as any.

h. Mendor's Library

Common/Set Enemies: Basilisk, Kobald, Spectre.

Goal to Clear: Get the ancient books and kill the monsters.

Reward for Clearing: 1500XP and 1500G for killing the monsters; total of 1100XP and 1100G for finding four books (may vary).

There really is very little in the way of opposition here. However, two encounters are very difficult and can have disastrous consequences, so it is never a good idea to come into this block thinking you'll have an easy time of it. The Library is located directly south of Kuto's Well, so head over to it. In the block, there are two doors into the actual building. Take the one at (9,1), so you can clear out the unimportant stuff before worrying about the books and monsters.

By using the `!look` command at (10,2), (10,6) and (8,5), you'll find boxes of gold foil worth 100GP and 100XP.

`!Look` at (8,4) for better treasure. You'll find three Potions of Extra Healing here.

Going to (11,3) sparks an encounter with Mad Man. If you don't have an NPC in your party, you can get him to join you -- but there is no reason to have this worthless fool in your party.

Go to (12,5) and meet five Kobalds who immediately surrender. Don't kill them to find out that the boss of the Textile House is in a secret room. If you've followed my walkthrough, you know that by now, so that info is worthless.

Now it's time to enter the northern (and more important) half of the library. Go north through the door at (8,6) to get there. If you keep going west and try to go through the door at (7,6), you'll briefly enter the garden, step into Green Slime, watch one person take a bit of damage and immediately leave the room. In other words, DON'T go through that door! In the northern part of the Library, there are a ton of rooms, but only four of them have books in them. The Mathematic Book room is at (3,9), the Philosophy Book room is at (13,9) and the History Book room is at (11,11). It seems to be random when/if you get books from `!looking`. On one time through, I got a book from this History room the first time I `!looked`, the next time I played, I `!looked` five times and got nothing.

Now it's time to enter the Literature Book room at (5,11). There may not be exciting books here (well there is one to find), but there is a grumpy Basilisk.

SUB-BOSS: Basilisk

Yes, there are only two real enemies in this block, but they both are boss-class monsters. This freaky lizard isn't afraid to use its gaze attack to try to turn a party member to stone. If it does (it isn't 100% accurate, but it is fairly effective), you might as well reload. It's not cheap to unstone a character and you'll want to be at full strength for the Spectre anyway. Basically, you'll want to go all out here. Have all your melee fighters assault it and have your magic-users go after it with Magic Missiles. You want to kill it as quickly as possible because the more turns it remains alive, the more chances it has to take someone out of commission for a long time.

Note: By purchasing Silver Mirrors in Phlan, it is possible to defend

against the gaze attack. Just a piece of advice for those who find this beast problematic.

For winning, I got 3368XP, two potions, a scroll and a Displacer Cloak (very useful, as it will lower someone's AC by two points). Look and you will find one book here. If you've explored everywhere, then it's time to leave. Just take either door out of the building. No problems here. Nope, not at all. Wait! What's that!!!!

BOSS FIGHT: Mendor's Spectre

After taking the books, any attempt to leave through either door is met with a hostile encounter with the ghost of the library's founder. After all, he spent his life guarding them. In the NES version, you'll have some interesting dialogue with Mendor saying he'll guard the books with his life and one of your party members coming back by saying that he's already lost his life.

Anyway, if the Spectre hits you, the struck member will lose two experience levels. If this happens, reload. While you can use a Restoration spell to get the levels back, you won't get any lost experience above the minimum needed to be at a character's maximum level. If a character that was about 100XP from advancing gets afflicted this way, it could take hours to regain those points.

The problem is that Mr. Spectre is very, very, very skilled in combat and has a pretty good THACO (not to mention a low AC). Regardless of your melee fighters' AC, getting through this fight unscathed is more a matter of luck than anything else. All I can really say for advice is to just keep trying until you get it and don't get discouraged. The discouraging part is when you get to the Graveyard and realize that you'll have to fight more of these Spectres....and they aren't the toughest things there....

Use the same strategy I gave you for the Basilisk and hope you kill him before it connects. This time through, I did something I never have done before on either the NES or computer version -- won on the first try. It struck first and missed and then I got a couple big attacks (10HP), a 10HP Magic Missile and a couple little attacks to win. Needless to say, I was very relieved.

Victory means you can leave this place and collect your reward --- which was a total of 2600XP and 2600G. The next quest given is to prevent a tribe of ever-lovable Lizardmen from joining the enemy. That Wilderness quest will wait for a while, you might as well head to the Kobald Cave now.

i. Kobald Cave/Textile House (revisited)

Common/Set Enemies: Envoy, Kobald, Troll, Wild Boar, Wyvern.

Goal to Clear: Take out the Kobald King so he doesn't join the Boss.

Completely clear Textile House.

Reward for Clearing: Kobalds -- 6250XP, 25 gems.

Textile -- 1250XP, 1250G

The Kobald Cave is located a bit east/southeast of the Nomad Camp. Look for a large mountain at the end of a river and you'll have no problems in finding this location. You'll know you're close if you're thrust into combat with a large platoon of the little buggers. This fight is simply a slightly larger version of the Kobald battles you endured in the Nomad Camp

battles.

In my opinion, trying to do all the Kobald Cave at once will result in nothing but frustration, as there are some very tough battles in here, news that might surprise you, being that Kobalds are so weak. Well, they are. However, there are a lot of them AND there are some powerful foes working with them, such as Trolls and a Wyvern. So, you will have your hands full in getting through here. If you have the right equipment (namely strong armor, items with Fireball and/or Magic Missile-firing capacity and plenty of healing goods), you might do everything at once -- but if you see your stats, spells and items dwindling down to a dangerous level, then leave the cave, heal in Phlan and then come back to finish things off.

Speaking of the Wyvern, let's take him out first. To do so, go through the large opening to the cave (you have two choices, but this way allows you to bypass a rather nasty trap at the expense of immediately fighting an angry lizard). The first thing you'll notice is that this is the first official dungeon (Nomad's Camp doesn't count) where the 'areaf command is not present. In other words, if you want a map, you have to draw it by yourself. The second thing you'll notice (whenever you enter a battle) is that this area is cramped (Kobalds are tiny by human standards). Because of this, your movement is very limited in battle. Take each character's standard squares-per-turn movement rate and subtract four from that number. That's how far you can move per turn while in this cave.

To start out with, by entering the large entrance, you are at (10,0). From this entrance, follow the path. You can trigger the battle by choosing to climbing the rocks at (13,6). Doing so will cause some stones to rattle, which serves to attract its attention. Or, you can simply continue north to (14/15,7), at which point you'll be close enough to its nest to provoke it into action.

SUB-BOSS: Wyvern

If you were very unlucky like me, you may have fought one of these beasts as a random encounter in the Wilderness. For all intents and purposes, consider this fight just like the Basilisk battle -- except instead of potentially turning someone to stone with a successful hit, this beast will remove them from battle with a poisonous attack. So, hit it with everything you have and hope that it only causes damage when it attacks and doesn't wipe someone out with poison. On a bright note, I do not believe that the movement penalty applies to this battle. Maybe the Wyvern's room is a bit more spacious due to its far greater size in relation to Kobalds.

After beating it, head north to (14,9) and you'll find the Wyvern's nest. Now that the beast is gone, its treasure is yours! I received 3300XP, 7 gems, two scrolls, Short Sword +1, Leather Armor +1, Banded Mail +1 and a Mace +1. Not a bad haul.

Go north to (15,12) and find a one-legged Kobald. If you give it water, it rambles for a bit before telling you to watch out for traps. Well, he's right. We're going into the main part of the cave now and there are a few traps to get by in this area.

Go up the rocks at (13,6) now and enter the corridor. Immediately (12,6), you'll run into a sleeping Kobald. Here, you have three choices. If you pass by it, it will NOT wake up (at least it didn't for me), allowing you to move on unharmed. If you wake it, it will be groggy and offer to take you to the King (possibly a good decision if you have either already

explored the tunnels or have no interest doing so at this time). Or you can kill it for no reward or penalty.

Assuming you don't go to the King now, let's explore the rest of the cave. At (11,6), a spike trap waits to cause damage to you. Always is nice to get a little taste of Kobald hospitality, isn't it?

Speaking of hospitality...walk one more square to the west (10,6) and a net will fall on you. As you struggle free, Kobalds will attack, so at least you'll get to take your frustration out on the little critters.

At (10,8) you'll get a message saying that women and children Kobalds are running from you. This is the entrance to their dwelling area. Word of advice: don't bother going here unless you have a deep-seated need to map every inch of this cave. I have never found any treasure here and all you will likely do is run the risk of taking unnecessary damage in battle with random parties of Kobalds.

At (8,3), there is a potentially lethal encounter with Kobalds. A solo Kobald waving a white flag comes up to you and tells you that if you spare him, he'll lead you to the treasury. Any attempt to act hostile or any refusal of his offer leads him to trigger a trap to drop rocks on you for some pretty hefty damage, followed by a battle with a squad of Kobalds. If you accept his offer, though, he'll just lead you to the Wyvern's domain. Here, you may kill him with no worries. And since you've (if you follow the walkthrough) killed the Wyvern, there is nothing to worry about as far as that's concerned, either. My advice for this area is to either follow my advice or not go to this square, as the damage you'll take from the trap far outweighs any benefits you'll get from killing a simple Kobald attack party.

At (6,4) if you search the stones, you'll find a map detailing a monster at the end of a small passage. My best guess is that it's a vague warning about the Wyvern, but I have no idea. Not that important of a clue, in my opinion.

Go south to (6,2) and you'll run into a pond. One character will fall in and possibly lose an item in the process, so be careful that you don't lose something important.

A bit farther south at (6,0) is an exit from the cave. If you had originally entered through the smaller entrance, you'd have started here. I would advise ignoring this entrance/exit, as you'll have to walk through the pond to get to it and there is no point in risking the loss of an item when there is another perfectly serviceable exit from the cave.

For the most part, the western third of the cave is quite unexceptional. However, Princess Fatima, a solid NPC Fighter, is at (1,12). If you don't have an NPC in your party, you can always pick her up to help out while you're in the cave. Just be warned that if you leave this region at any time for any reason, she leaves (that includes going to Phlan to heal and leaving after clearing the block).

At (2,12) is a written note saying that the Kobalds are planning to attack a Nomad camp (the one you just saved). Meaningless, but adds a bit of story to the game.

After you're through exploring the main part of the caverns, it's time to tackle the immense chamber in the center. By entering at (5/7,10), you'll get a fair warning that something big is about to go down, as the game will

inform you that your party hears the voices of Kobalds and Humans talking.

By entering the chamber through the door at (3,12) or advancing in this chamber to (4-6,12), you'll meet a large force of Kobalds in a meeting with some humans. Unfortunately, these aren't friendly ally-type humans. These are humans working for The Boss, who tell the Kobalds that killing you will do wonders for their standing with him. Get ready for a huge, multiple-wave battle!!!

BOSS FIGHT: Legions of the Kobald King

You'll soon find out that unlike the weak battles in the Nomad Camp, the Kobalds have come to fight. No longer will you be fighting weak groups of Kobalds with a lot of help from Nomads. Now, your party is on its own and it's the Kobalds who have enlisted the help. Watch out for some tough fights. I truly hope you have some way of casting Fireball multiple times (either the spell or a Necklace of Missile). After winning waves, choose to continue the battle, as this will be your only chance to heal party members (no breaks in the action). Also, you may get magical items for winning battles here. The first time I beat Wave One, I got a Wand. After forgetting to do the 'continue/heal' strategy, I started the battle over and got nothing for conquering the first wave.

Note: You have one big advantage in each of these fights in that you start the battle separated from the enemy forces. This means you can go wild with Fireballs without fear of hitting your own party members and that the monsters will have taken a good deal of punishment before reaching you.

Wave One: Six Kobalds, two Kobald Leaders, one Troll. Not too bad, but don't let the Troll live for too long. Those guys can kick your teeth in if you give them half a chance, so make it your top priority.

Wave Two: Before this round starts, the Kobalds assault you with a catapult for some added damage. Now, you get to fight four Kobalds, two Kobald Leaders, one Wild Boar and one troll. Try using a Fireball to wipe out as much opposition as possible.

Wave Three: The lackeys of The Boss get into the mix here. You go up against four Kobalds, two Envoys, one Troll and one Wild Boar. Before the battle, the Envoys say they'll show you how a real soldier fights and if you're not careful, they'll back up that bit of bravado (especially if the first two battles took a lot out of you). Hit this group with everything you have. I used the Necklace of Missile twice to kill the Troll and constantly chipped away at the Envoys with a combination of the Fireballs, Magic Missiles and melee attacks.

This fight netted me over 3500XP, two Two-Handed Swords +2 and a Ring of Invisibility. However, you will soon notice that the Kobald King slipped away during the battles. Now, it's time to decide if you want to finish him off now, or leave, recharge and then return.

Either way, once you get back to this room, you'll want to head east through the door at (6,13). You'll have one more little surprise in store for you here. The final group of bodyguards waits at (7,13) and this is a tough one.

SUB-BOSS FIGHT: King's Bodyguards

This fight is tougher than any of the previous three, but it is only one battle instead of a three-fight endurance test. You go up against 10 Kobalds, three Kobald Leaders and two Trolls --- with the Trolls right next to your front line. This means you might take a good deal of damage in this fight, so I hope you've replenished the HP of your top three characters. Once again, blitz them with everything you have and hope that you wipe out the Trolls before they really cause some damage.

I finished with a bit over 2000XP and a Leather Armor +1 for my efforts in this battle.

Now move through the rooms in this area of the cave until you get to (10,14). Here, you'll find that in his efforts to escape you, the Kobald King fell into a spiked pit and has perished. This is all you need to get your reward in Phlan (the Kobalds can't join The Boss now that they have no leadership), but it's wise to explore everywhere, so don't leave yet. The Kobald's treasure is located at (13,14). I got just under 4000XP, a Mace +2 and some assorted spells and junk.

But you're not done yet. At (12,15), use the 'look' option and you'll find a bottle. Try to pull it out of the wall and the cork comes off. Smoke comes out and forms an Efreet, who asks if your party is composed of Vampires. You can always attack him (or say 'yes'), but the wisest course of action is to say 'no'. He tells you to only call him when there are Vampires near and then goes back into his bottle. You get 3950XP and the Efreet Bottle (I also got a Flame Long Sword +1). If that piece of advice didn't explain the Efreet's purpose enough, if you go back to Diogenes' cave and offer the bottle as a gift, the silver dragon will tell you that you need it and to go to Valhingen Graveyard to kill the vampire with it.

Now, you're done with this area. Leave the Kobald Caves and head back to Phlan. Your reward is 6250XP and 25 gems. The new quest given to your party will be to find the kidnapped son of Bivant, who bears a heart-shaped mark on his shoulder. The clerk gives no clues as to his location, but a little Wilderness exploration will. Or you can just read a couple of chapters ahead. Next up on the 'to-do' list is solving the polluted water problem, unless you want a bit of (hopefully) quick and easy experience. Then, take a trip to the Textile House and fight enemies until there are no more random encounters.

If you choose to do this, note that there are two spots that are now of NO interest in the northern half of the Textile House. At both (10,9) and (3,9) there is a diary entry that is the exact same as the one at (1,7) (about undead in the graveyard, if you don't remember). That diary entry is duplicated in the computer version, too, so this isn't a NES programming error.

One important thing to keep in mind is to stay near the northern part of the Textile House to draw out random encounters. This way, you're near the Podol Plaza temple, so you can easily go up and heal/rest if need be. Remember that most of the encounters can be quite difficult under any circumstances, as Scorpions can incapacitate with their poison, Wights will drain levels with successful hits and Ghouls have the potential to paralyze party member (meaning the next hit will be an automatic death -- much like a Sleep or Hold Person spell).

After cleaning out the place (no real way to know -- so just leave and go

back to Phlan if you realize that you haven't been attacked in a while), go to the Clerk and you'll get 1250XP and 1250G for your troubles. Personally, I don't feel that is much of a reward considering the time and risk factors involved, but if you want to be thorough, then go ahead and clear out the Textile House.

When done with the Textile House (or the Kobald Cave, if you don't want to bother with Cadornal's old stomping grounds), it's time to unpollute the water and solve the problem of the Lizardmen (since both quests are somewhat connected).

j. Pyramid of Yarash/Lizardman Keep

Common/Set Enemies: 6th Lvl Fighter, 7th Lvl Thief, Displacer Beast, Drider, Drythfi, Dwarf Fighter, Giant Lizard, Kobald, Lizardman, Mutant Lizardman, Stirge, Yarash

Goal to Clear: Get rid of water pollution.

Prevent Lizardmen from joining The Boss.

Reward for Clearing: Water pollution: 19,000XP, 250G, 75 gems
Lizardmen: 10,050XP, 50G, 40 gems

First off, let's do something about all that polluted water. If you've been running around outside, you've probably seen a Pyramid in the middle of a lake that seems to be the center of this polluted area. Let's take a look at this place.

To enter the Pyramid, you must take a boat there. Fortunately, one is available if you know where to go. Step onto the forest square directly north of the Pyramid (bordering the lake). The game will note there is a boat here and you'll be able to take it to Yarash's Pyramid.

Once again there is no map. For this area, it is tough to make a 16-by-16 grid due to teleporters, so instead of giving coordinates of important places, I'll simply give directions on how to get to every location of interest.

From the entrance, head up the long dark red (or brown) corridor. If you go all the way in a straight line, you will simply find another secret door leading back outside. Where you need to be in order to advance is the small area where the corridor widens to a two-by-two room. On the first square to the right, you are told that there are small stones on the ground and given the option to throw one, go forward or go back. If you choose to go forward, you'll be teleported to a place with blue-colored walls. If you throw a stone here, you'll go to another dark red (or brown) area.

On the other hand, if you happen to step on the northern-most square to the right, you'll be automatically teleported to the other dark red (or brown) area. So, what do these two areas hold?

1. Second Dark Red (Brown) area -- this area is a pretty nasty maze with some tough opponents. You might get the idea that something fishy is going on here, as many humanoid enemies act like you've saved them, but then attack you when you attempt to parlay. Things are not what they seem in the domain of Yarash... Then, you also have to encounter some monsters, like Driders, who don't bother with deceit, but are pretty straightforward with their hostility.

So, what do you do if you're foolish enough to deposit yourself in this region (which is completely optional, has nothing worth your while and can be quite deadly to the average party)? Well, if you know, it's fairly

simple. From where you start in this area (a three-way intersection), go east, south and east again along the corridor, ignoring all doors and branching paths. When the corridor ends in a door, take that door and take another to the south. Go east and you'll run into a human cleric, who asks you to help him finish off an escape tunnel. Do so and you be teleported out of the pyramid. I probably don't need to mention this, but be nice and don't attack him. You have enough creatures to treat like trash and kill without brutalizing the few friendly folk in AD&D world.

Now, I need to add that there is another section of this maze. In the small room that you entered to take the south door to the final corridor, there also is a secret door on the east wall. If you go through it and follow the path to the north, you'll take a teleporter to a second section of the maze. My advice is don't do this. As far as I know, there are no benefits to being here and absolutely no reason for you to go here (unless you truly are masochistic). So, if you do this, you're on your own. If you find something extraordinary and wonderful, send me a message and I'll include it, but I'm not holding my breath. Yarash's little maze levels in his dungeon truly are painful to go through, holding much risk for no reward beyond the experience you get for killing enemies. Anyway, back to the quest & the rest of Yarash's domain is a bit more lucrative.

2. Blue area -- This is the place you want to be. Luckily, there are no random encounters and only a couple of actual battles. If you're careful, this is a pretty simple place. The first step to being careful is to always remember the first rule of teleporters in Yarash's Wacky World: if you have the option of throwing a stone, DO SO!!! If you don't, you'll end up having to really retrace your steps, as you get warped to either the maze or the entry area of the pyramid.

So, to start things off, go north and then west when you reach a fork in the road. Follow the hall to the north. Notice that area on the wall that looks different? That's a secret door. If you take it, you'll be in a recently used lab. Go through the secret door on the west wall and follow the hall to the north (south is a dead end, despite looking like a teleporter square). Go down the winding and meandering path and you'll reach an automatic teleporter (no stones necessary). This will zap you to a room with some Lizardmen. You can always fight them if you want, but they are friendly to you for the sole reason that you're not allied with Yarash. Exit the room through the secret door and you'll be right next to the secret door that started you on this little expedition. Fun, but worthless.

Now, let's go past that first secret door. Just follow the hallway and it will end with another secret door. This room looks like a dead end, but if you move from the entrance, you'll be forced into a fight with three Mutant Lizardmen. They're a bit tougher than the regular variety, but have the same weaknesses (i.e. being semi-vulnerable to Sleep). Exploit that and if you can take one or two out of the battle, things will get quite easy for you. There is nothing of value in the room, though, and the monsters don't give much experience, so it's up to you to decide if this room is worth the effort.

So, are you ready to actually start on your quest to teach Yarash a lesson? Well, this is pretty simple. Go back to the original fork in the road and go east this time. There is a secret door to your right, but it just leads to another boring lab. Just keep going and throw a stone when given the option. The triggers the teleporter to take you close to Yarash.

In this new area, just follow the path and you'll get to another

teleporter. Throw a stone and dive in. Go about two steps and repeat the process. Head around the corner and you'll see a closed door. Take a deep breath, open the door and confront...nothing. However there is some equipment spewing forth black water. Choose to break the equipment and then choose to leave the room. If you continue breaking things, you will get caught in a big explosion and take some damage. Leave the room, you'll be out of range.

Go back into the room and you'll see a door right across from you. That is Yarash's chamber. We'll go there in a bit, but you have the opportunity to do some good first. Take the hallway next to Yarash's room and you'll find another room on your right. Enter this and you'll find some Lizardmen chained up and forced into labor. Be a good fellow and help them out and they'll tell you to go to their castle in the East Marsh for a reward. Warning: Do not take any sort of antagonistic tone (including ~~slyt~~) when parlaying with them. If you do, they will throw poisoned water on you, which will kill some number of your party members. BE CAREFUL!!!

Now, it's finally time to take care of Yarash. Enter his room and the old wizard will discuss the possibility of using your party in his experiments. Since that sort of conflicts with your plans, you'll be forced into battle.

BOSS FIGHT: Yarash and Creations

Yarash doesn't fight you one-on-one, instead choosing to have six Mutant Lizardmen act as a barricade between you and him. Hopefully, you'll be able to put some of these guys to sleep or incapacitate them with a Stink Cloud, because this is one tough battle if everyone's awake and active. While the Mutant Lizardmen don't often cause much damage when they hit, they don't miss that often ~~h~~ and all those small hits will add up quickly. Even though he's a wizard, Yarash does next to nothing. Every once in awhile, he'll throw some thing at you that can paralyze a character, but that's the extent of his actions.

After I won, I picked up 6121XP, 40G, Bracers AC4, Paralysis Wand and three Potions. If you go to the east-central square, there is a desk with some paper. It seems The Boss wanted Yarash to help him out, but the demented wizard preferred to work alone and refused the offer. Much more importantly, on the center square of the northern side of the room is a dial. When you first get there, it is set to Blue. This dial affects the teleporter which happens to be in the northeast corner of the room. If the dial is set to Blue, it will send you to the entry area of the pyramid. So, where do the other settings take you? Read on...

Gold: a room with junk. With every step you take, you are greeting with a message that says there is a bunch of magical junk that looks useless. The first time you "look", you'll pick up some stuff.

Bronze: same as Gold.

Silver: same as the other two. Maybe it's not exciting, but it's free goods!

When you're done playing, get out of there and go back to Phlan and get your reward. It's a nice one, too, as you get 19,000XP, 250G and 75 gems. Your new mission involves a fun chat with your ol' pal Cadorna. Cadorna tells you to take a letter to Zhentil Keep and not open it beforehand.

But it's not like anything that Cadorna says is overly important, since he is

somewhat of a shady character. Let's finish off the Lizardmen quest by going to their castle. The first thing you'll want is to be sure you have a good number of healing potions (you ought to have a ton of Gold by this point, so start spending. Go to the dock and pick "east". After leaving your boat, head north and go into the forest northeast of the Kobald Cave. The Lizardman castle is here. Enter and you'll immediately notice an anti-magic barrier in effect. See why I had you get the potions? You can't cast Cure Light Wounds here.

There are a number of small crumbling rooms in this castle. Let's take a look at those first. To give you a sense of perspective, as there is no map to this place in the game, the entrances to the castle are at (7/8, 0). Many of these little structures are unimportant, but there are a couple of note. First, if you enter the doors at either (4,8) or (2,5), you will get into a fight with some Giant Lizards. By this stage of the game, this should be a very easy battle. Then, go on up to (4,12) to meet some Lizardmen and their Giant Lizard pet. Another easy fight. The main objective is the center of the keep, located at (8,6).

Before I continue, there are three ways of doing the main part of this area. You can follow the heroic path and help the Lizardmen out, or you can take more of an unsympathetic stance toward their plight. To the best of my knowledge (essentially an educated guess), you should be able to earn the commission no matter what \wedge but it's a lot easier to do things if you take the heroic path.

When you enter the center room, an old Lizardman comes forward in a peaceful manner. You to choose to listen to him, or attack. If you attack him, you'll quickly slaughter him and get stuck in an easy battle. After winning that, if you go back to Phlan, you'll quickly discover that you haven't accomplished your goal, as you'll receive no commission. You might be able to eliminate the Lizardman threat by going downstairs and clearing out the underground level of the Keep (detailed below), but I cannot confirm that at this time.

If you listen to him, he'll ask you to help his tribe. Apparently, a Lizardman named Drythfi is attempting to take the tribe over in order to sway them to Tyranthraxus. Conveniently enough, immediately after the old fellow explains the problem, Drythfi appears and challenges him for leadership of the tribe. You can either champion the tribal elder or sit back and enjoy the proceedings. If you do nothing, Drythfi will easily kill the old guy and then lead his troops into battle with you. If you take this route, you may have to also clear the underground level to get credit \wedge I'm not sure.

On the other hand, if you follow the path of chivalry, you'll have the opportunity to pick one party member for a one-on-one battle with Drythfi, who is essentially a Mutant Lizardman with a name. Pick your best fighter and you should should win without too much trouble (unless you have a massive run of bad luck in attempting to hit him or he has a fantastic run of luck in connecting with his high-damage attack). Win the fight and the old Lizardman will assure you that his tribe will never join Tyranthraxus. He'll then ask you to leave, as his tribe has a number of members that aren't fond of humans.

But that's not the fun thing to do, is it? Instead go into one of the smaller rooms in this area and go downstairs. You're in the secret lair of the Lizardmen and there are a number of opportunities to get treasure and experience here. Scattered through this area are seven ponds. Whenever you walk up to one, the same thing happens. A Lizardman appears, throws a spear at you and attempts to escape into the water. If you catch him, you have a battle with five Lizardmen. Regardless of whether you catch him or not,

you'll get the opportunity to dive in the water, an activity that will give you a bit of treasure (1500XP, 1000G, 2 gems). Find all seven ponds and get the treasure and you will have done all there is to do in this region.

Return to Phlan to get your reward (10,050XP, 50G and 40 gems). The next quest on our agenda is to recover the missing heir to Bivant. In order to do that, you must contend with a whole bunch of Buccaneer slavers. You'll have the option to fight for the youngster's freedom or use other methods, so decide what you want to do. If you want to fight, be aware that you'll need a strong party to survive all the challenges you'll face. If you're not confident in your party's strength, fight random encounters in the western part of the Wilderness. A couple of chance encounters with Quicklings will do wonders for a party's power, as they are worth a ton of experience and can drop some fine items. Also in this area are Buccaneers, who are worth a good deal of experience, especially considering they are one of the weakest foes in the game.

k. Buccaneer Base

Common/Set Enemies: 3rd Lvl Fighter, 4th Lvl Fighter, 5th Lvl Fighter,
Buccaneer, Captain, Sub-Captain

Goal to Clear: Recover the missing heir to Bivant.

Reward for Clearing: 3100XP, trinkets to sell

This is an easy place to find, if you know where to look. Go to the Phlan Docks and choose to go to the west destination. After being dropped off, just keep going west along the coast. Shortly after the coast takes a slight dip to the south, you'll find the base. When you reach it, you'll be escorted in by the slavers, who think of you as a potential customer (which you just might be).

First, here's a brief overview of the area. After you've been taken into this area, go north until you get to the double doors that signify the exit back to the wilderness. On a map, these doors are at (7,15) and (8,15) -- the far northern edge of the base.

The first thing to know is that there are eight guard towers on the perimeter. They are located at (6,15), (9,15), (2,13), (13,13), (0,5), (15,5), (4,1) and (11,1). Each guard tower has four Buccaneers in it and is a very easy fight that will net you a bit over 2000XP. The reason I'm telling you this is because slaughtering the guards has no ill effect on your success on this mission. In other words, before worrying about the Bivant heir, kill everyone in the guard towers for a lot of experience.

Now, as for the rest of the base. Just south of the entrance are two unimportant buildings. There is a row of four buildings just south of that. In this row, you'll find the entrance to the slave pens at (7,9) and pens of livestock at (11,9). Well, you'll find livestock pens all around the far east building, but this particular square is special, as you have the option to open the pens at this point. Then, there are three more buildings south of that row, with a shady individual at (2,4) who will sell you a pass to see the Captain for roughly 25,000G. Then, on the far southern tip of the Base is the Captain's headquarters. The door to enter this place is at (7,4).

Now that you have an idea where the important places in the Base are, here we go with a comprehensive look at how to recover the Bivant Heir. There are three methods you can use, depending on your party's strength and your intelligence.

1. The 'I'm an idiot with more gold than brains' plan: Go to the shady guy

and buy a pass. Show the pass to the guards outside the Captain's building and buy the Bivant heir for 30,000G. Leave and go back to Phlan. Sure it's easy, but you can also accomplish the same thing for no cost.

2. The 'I'm playing it safe because my party isn't that powerful' plan: Go to the entrance to the slave pens and try to get in. When the guards stop you, attack them (simple fight with four Buccaneers) and then enter the pens and collect the heir. Now (very important or you'll be fighting the whole base), go to the livestock pens and release them. Make your escape while the confused Buccaneers are running around trying to re-capture the animals. Quick, easy and no risk unless you accidentally get close to the gates before releasing the animals. Now, go back to Phlan.
3. The 'To hell with subtlety -- EVERYONE DIES!!!!' plan: After much experimentation, I've found the best way to pull this plan off is to suck it up and buy the pass from the shady guy. You could just walk into a random building and assault the Buccaneers there or walk up to the Captain's headquarters and attack his guards (two 4th Lvl Fighters), but that sets off a tougher string of battles that climaxes with a huge fight with the Captain, Sub-Captain and a ton of 3rd and 5th Lvl Fighters. By purchasing the pass, you can take out the Captain and a small group of 5th Lvl Fighters first and then move on to a slightly easier string of battles. It's going to be tough either way, but I found this method to be a bit easier to handle, as none of the fights are against overly intimidating forces. After you've beaten all the Buccaneers, simply enter the slave pens, collect the heir and go back to Phlan.

Now that you're back in Phlan...huh? Oh, you probably would like a bit of strategy on how to handle the fine folk of the Buccaneer Base, wouldn't you? Well, here we go....

BOSS FIGHT: Buccaneers A-Plenty!

If you follow Overdrive's approved method to slaughter these fellows, you'll have to fight four consecutive battles. The first and fourth fights have the most opposition, but you can't really relax in the middle two conflicts, as you won't want to take much damage in any single fight. Before deciding to do this, take a look at your party and go down this simple checklist of things you may want to have.

Let's start with the Clerics and Magic-Users. You'll want plenty of Cure Light Wounds spells, especially to use between waves (by saying yes when the computer asks if you want to continue battle). Potions of Healing or Extra Healing are wonderful for this also. Clerics also will want plenty of Hold Person spells, which work wonderfully on 5th Lvl Fighters. Magic-Users will be greatly helped by Sleep (for weak enemies) and Stink Cloud (for stronger foes) spells. If you can cast Fireball (either from being at a high enough level or by having a Necklace of Missile), that will help immensely. Finally, having a Magic Missile or two on hand (or a Wand of Missiles) also will help in combat, as the Captain seems resistant to any hold/paralysis spell you may have. As for Fighter-types, just make sure you're at a decent level (at least Lvl 6) and that you have strong armor and weapons. Overall, while having high-quality Fighters is very helpful, this conflict (and the potential Zhentil Keep one that will be detailed in the next chapter) will be won by your Clerics and Magic-Users. The more effective they are, the better things will go for you.

Now here's what you fight:

First Wave: Captain and four 5th Lvl Fighters. You start out with a tough

one, as the Captain is very strong, solid on defense and has a lot of HP. He also starts in the back row and will use a distance attack on you until forced into melee combat. The quicker you can (hopefully) get the 5th Lvl Fighters to succumb to Hold Person and the resulting one-hit instant kill, the better off you'll be.

Second Wave: A combination of Buccaneers, 3rd Lvl Fighters and 5th Lvl Fighters. Much easier than the first fight. The Buccaneers will go out without even a whimper and the 3rd Lvl Fighters aren't overly imposing. If you can Hold some of the fighters, you may not even take one hit in this fight.

Third Wave: A slightly tougher version of the second wave. There are a couple more Fighters here, but this is still an easy fight, even though you'll be under a bit more fire from the 5th Lvl Fighters.

Fourth Wave: Sub-Captain and a total of 11 3rd and 5th Lvl Fighters. With no weak Buccaneers in this fight, if your party is depleted they could be in for a bit of a fight. I like to bring out the heavy artillery here. Sleep works on the 3rd Lvl Fighters, Hold Person and Stink Cloud are potentially effective on everyone and Magic Missile does wonders on anyone left moving. Oh, and don't be intimidated by the cool-looking armor worn by the Sub-Captain. According to his HP total, he's just a 3rd Lvl Fighter that has a different look.

After ending the Buccaneer threat, you will automatically release all the slaves, including the Bivant heir. Go back to Phlan and get a piddly reward of 3100XP and a couple of trinkets that you can sell to get some gold. Sadly, there is no side-quest that allows you to go to the house of Mr. Bivant and shake him down for the reward YOU feel you deserve, but life goes on. Well, hopefully it will continue to go on after you attempt this next quest, a foray into the hallowed halls of Zhentil Keep at the request of your good friend, Cadorna.

1. Zhentil Keep

Common/Set Enemies: 4th Lvl Fighter, 6th Lvl Magic-User, Aides,
Commandant, Corporal, Dwarf Fighter, Guard

Goal to Clear: Deliver letter and escape with your life.

Reward for Clearing: 8000XP and 32 gems

Before I delve into the meat and potatoes of this region, let me forewarn you that Zhentil Keep is much like the Buccaneer Base, in that there are multiple ways to do this region. There's an easy way for players not overly confident in the strength of their characters and/or their tactical ability and there is a hard way for skilled players with a strong party.

If you have any doubts about your party, either choose to do things the easy way or at the very least, save your game before attempting to bust out of the Keep.

Without going into an obscene amount of detail, here is the summary of events that will explain why you'll need to fight your way out of Zhentil Keep.

First, to find the Keep, go directly west of the Buccaneer Base until you see a group of armed men going into a Keep. Explore in that area and the armed men will come up to you, take your letter and escort you into the Keep to meet the Commandant.

He seems like a nice guy at first, as he has his men give you a tour of the place before taking you to a room to rest from your trip. Basically the purpose of the tour is to let you know that there are a ton of soldiers here and that the Keep is very well fortified against outside attack.

After a bit of rest (you can try to leave now, but let's just let things progress naturally), you will be collected and taken to dinner with the Commandant. It will essentially be a brief Q-and-A session with him, during which you will get a bit of information about various things going on in Phlan. Interestingly, you'll also get the idea that the Commandant of this Zhentil faction that is supposedly hostile towards Phlan is in support of Cadorna being in charge of that city. If you didn't think your favorite councilman was shady before, you really should now --- and if you don't now, you will in a couple of minutes.

When the meal has concluded, you're escorted back to your room for the night. Whatever you do, do NOT rest. Just wait, because in a matter of hours, a group of four soldiers will come in with the intent of slaughtering you. While this group of four Aides is not a tough battle, if you're asleep when they come in, they will do some damage. However, if you're awake, this will be an easy battle.

Leave the room and you'll immediately be attacked by a larger group of foes that consists of four more Aides and 16 Guards. No problem here, as Guards are very weak (sort of the Buccaneers of Zhentil Keep). You should win this battle without any problems, too.

Now, it's time to make your choice. Do you make your escape now, or do you stay and kill everyone in Zhentil Keep in order to send a message that you're not to be trifled with? The consequences of both courses of action are listed below.

1. *Feets, Don't Fail Me Now!* method

If you feel like you should run away, leave your room and take a left through the door in the hallway. You should now be in the main part of the Keep. Go south one square and then turn east. Note: If you turn east immediately after entering this part of the keep and move into the corner, you'll get stuck in a tough battle with a Dwarf Fighter and a number of Aides. While it's smart to fight this conflict now if you want to kill everything, as I'll explain later, it's not a good idea to do this battle if you're just trying to escape.

Anyway, just keep going east until you reach an intersection. Turn left (north) and you'll reach the gates (due to the random nature of the battles here, you may fight once again against Zhentil's finest --- a host of Guards and Corporals). To escape, you'll have to fight a small detachment of Guards, but that should be easy. Also, if you make a wrong turn, there is at least one area along the perimeter of the keep where you can climb the wall to escape. So all is not lost if you fail to follow these instructions.

2. EVERYONE DIES!!!!

Now, if you want to stay, you'll want to remain in this general area to fight the random battles. Or, a smarter thing to do is immediately tackle the set battle with the Dwarf Fighter and cronies I mentioned above, as this will eliminate a number of battles that would normally deplete your party's health and spell-casting capacity.

Battle 3 -- Dwarf Fighter and 10 Aides:

This is a very tough battle that good spell usage can make a walk in the park. Having Magic-Users cast Sleep will take out a few of the Aides and having Clerics cast Hold Person does wonders for removing just about any one left standing from the conflict. Have your Fighters take out anyone left standing and capable of fighting and then slaughter the helpless held/sleeping foes. If you play this battle right, you'll take very little (if any) damage.

Winning this battle immediately puts you into conflict with the Commandant and his forces.

BOSS FIGHT: Zhentil Commandant and his legions

The Commandant sits way in the back and blasts you with items that cause electrical damage. There is also a 6th Lvl Magic-User in this battle, but because of the atrocious AI the computer gives that sort of chap, he'll be unable to chew you up with spells. That leaves 10 Aides and nine 4th Lvl Fighters, quite a formidable assortment of bodyguards due to the extreme numbers advantage and long-range attack capabilities they possess.

Fireballs are a great way to start things out, if you can cast them. After that (or if you can't cast them), use Sleep on the Aides and Hold Person and/or Stink Cloud on the 4th Lvl Fighters and Commandant. Take note that all the Aides and Fighters do have long-range attacks, so anyone standing is capable of damaging any party member at any time. Try to cut a path to the Commandant as quickly as possible, as he is a very real threat with brutally damaging item attacks. If you can Hold him, that is perfect, as he has an unreal amount of HP and will not be easy to kill normally.

One thing to keep in mind is that you WILL take damage in this battle, as no matter how strong you are or how many spells you have, they will get a few of their arrows into your party and the Commandant likely will blast someone with 10-20 HP of damage from his electrical attack. So, be sure that you have a powerhouse party that can not only create a ton of havoc quickly, but also can take a lot of damage, or this will be a painful battle for you.

For winning, I personally got 11,693XP and 75G, as well as a ton of items, including a Lightning Wand, Ring of Fire Protection, Bracers AC3, Shield +1, Plate Mail +2, Javelin of Lightning and Long Sword +2. Also, the rest of the Keep surrenders or escapes. To my knowledge, there is nothing of interest in the Keep, so can leave now.

Now, if you'd not challenged the Dwarf Fighter immediately (or if for some reason, his force didn't appear on the square immediately east of where you exited the hallway leading to your room), you would have been forced to fight about three more random guard battles that consisted of progressively more powerful assortments of Guards, Corporals and Aides before moving on to the Dwarf Fighter/Commandant battles. While a strong and smart party would be of no risk of getting killed by these groups, they will be at risk of getting worn down to the point where the Commandant fight becomes either impossible or near-impossible to win.

Anyway, after escaping the Keep and going back to Phlan, the Clerk will give you 8000XP and 32 gems for surviving. You will also get a new commission to slay Cadorna for his attempt to betray you and the city. Also, Lord Urslingen will give you a special mission to slay the guards at the Stojanow Gate and slay the guards there. This gate happens to be located just north of Podol Plaza and will be our next objective.

m. Stojanow Gate

Common/Set Enemies: 6th Lvl Magic-User, Aides, Bugbear, Ettin

Goal to Clear: Clear the two towers and wipe out the Bugbear patrols, so Phlan soldiers can secure the region.

Reward for Clearing: 12,500XP and 50 gems

After walking around for a little while in the southern portion of this place, you'll meet a merchant with a wagon. Offer to spend the piddly 250G to buy the wagon, as it will make getting past the actual gate a bit easier. Another thing you can do to make your time here easier is NOT go near the actual wall at this time. Just go to the gate after getting the wagon. If you run around the wall, you'll gain the attention of the Bugbear guards. As the merchant says, they are in a bad mood and will act in quite the hostile manner. Until you've cleared out the guard towers, you don't want anyone in this region angry at you, as the guard tower denizens will rain pain upon you from afar if you get their attention.

When you reach the general area of (7,4), a Bugbear will demand a 15G bribe. Pay it and you'll be placed on the other side of the gate. Now it's time to empty the guard area of monsters.

First, go west and through the door at (4,10). Go up the stairs and you'll run into three Ettins, an Aides and a 6th Lvl Magic-User. The Ettins are essentially a tougher version of the Ogres you've fought off-and-on throughout the course of the game & a two-headed giant-class foe with two wicked melee attacks per round. Also, the Magic-User apparently has a Lightning Wand, as he fires off electrical bolts at party members.

Winning this battle will give you a good deal of XP (about 4500 for me) and some items. Also, the alarm will start ringing. Now, it's time for you to move quickly. Leave the tower and the guards from the other tower will be waiting for you. This battle will be the exact same as the last, except you'll be starting from a distance. Take advantage of this to blast the opposition (especially the Ettins) with long-range attacks. If you did get a Lightning Wand from the final Zhentil Keep battle (or at any other time), the bolts that item fires off can be quite effective, as can a well-placed Fireball. I found this battle to be tougher than the previous one because it seemed that more Ettins would get involved in the action and because it always seemed that the Magic-User would fire off his Lightning Wand at least once. However, I also got a better reward, with over 10,000XP and a pair of items.

After wiping out the guard towers, you're notified by the game that all you have to do is wipe out the outside patrols and you'll have reclaimed the gate! Heal up and let's kill us some Bugbears. Go into the actual gate area via the door at either (7,9) or (8,9) and you'll be ambushed by the Bugbears. A Sleep spell or two will do wonders to knock out some of the 10 Bugbears in this battle. Look at this encounter as a more difficult version of a large battle with Gnolls or Lizardmen, as Bugbears are only marginally tougher than those two foes. Note: It's not a good idea to explore at this point, as brutally tough patrols from the Castle will be guarding the entrance to that area. Unless fighting large numbers of giants seems fun to you, just go after the Bugbears and save the Castle and its inhabitants for later.

Win this battle and the Phlan guards will secure the gate. Congratulations, you'll be able to enter the Castle whenever you want, now. However, we still have a number of quests to complete before doing that, so let's go back to Phlan and get our reward. You can look around the entire Stojanow Gate block, if you want, but there is nothing of interest in any of the small buildings

in this region.

The Clerk will exclaim that now Phlan can be on the attack thanks to you and gives you 12,500XP and 50 gems. You will be led by guards to the Special Council, where Lord High Mayor Ulrich Eberhard tells you to go to Valjevo Castle and save Phlan.

Before doing that, let's get rid of Dirten by clearing the Wealthy Area and Bane Temple. If you want, you can clear Valhingen Graveyard first, but in my opinion, a poor AI Cleric in a region jam-packed with powerful undead could be a liability, so let's just fulfill his quest now.

n. Wealthy Area/Bane Temple

Common/Set Enemies: Mace, Ogre, Orc

Goal to Clear: Kill Mace and destroy the Shrine to Bane.

Reward for Clearing: 1500XP, 750G, 3 gems

Take the boat to the north and enter the northern part of the city to go to Kovel Mansion. To enter the Wealthy Area, go through either door on the south side of this block. Now that you're here, explore all the buildings, as you'll find some useful items and some easy battles.

Go through the door at (14,11) and you'll meet a seven Orcs and one Orc Leader. Kill them and go through the south door to (14,7). Free the Goblin slaves and one will tell you that you need a special symbol of Bane to enter the temple. That symbol is named "Leather Symbol of Bane" and you'll have the opportunity to win it in a random Orc battle during your exploration of this block. Other than that random Orc battle, it doesn't seem like there are wandering monsters in this area, so it should be easy to get the symbol. Go back to the Orc room and go west through the rooms. By "looking" in each room, you'll find a number of minor treasures, so be thorough in your investigations.

At the end of this chain of rooms is an attack by an Ogre and some Orcs at (6,7). At this point of the game, this (like the other battles in this block) should be very easy. Win and you'll get to learn a little bit of the hierarchy around these parts, as there is a note saying that Mace is strong, the Boss (Tyranthraxus) is stronger and that Bane (evil god) is the strongest of all.

Leave this large building and head to the southern part of the Wealthy Area to find the entrance to a mansion at (8,4). Enter and immediately fight a squad of Orcs at (8,3). Go through the mansion to (9,0) and search the bed there to fight another Orc patrol. Kill the Orcs and you'll find there was nothing in the bed. In another part of the mansion (5,0), there is a message alluding to secret treasure in the Bane Temple.

After doing this, you've seen everything of interest in this block, so if you've gotten a Leather Symbol of Bane, you're ready to enter the Temple of Bane, so go through either of the two western exits from the Wealthy Area.

In the Temple, you'll regularly get assaulted by bands of four orcs holding the Leather Symbol of Bane, as well as battles against larger Orc patrols. They are easy battles, so don't worry about getting worn down, though. Just kill everything that gets in your way make your way to the entrance to the actual temple (the huge building in the center of the block). At the entryway (2,7/8), a blind Orc will examine you. If one character holds the Leather Symbol of Bane, you will be allowed into the temple.

At (14,7/8) is a shrine dedicated to Bane. Destroy it and the Half-Orc Cleric

Mace, two Bugbears and 14 Orcs will confront you.

BOSS FIGHT: Unholy Mace and his bodyguards

At this stage of the game, this will be an easy fight. Add the facts that Mace has the same terrible AI that other magic-using characters have and that he and the two Bugbears are in the front row and you should have no problems here. Cast a Sleep spell or two on the Orcs to simplify things and you'll cruise to victory here.

You'll get a small reward for winning his fight and true to his name, Mace will drop a Mace +1 for you to pick up. Dirten will tell you that the treasures of the temple are yours and then leaves your party for good. So, let's go treasure hunting! You'll find trapdoors at (5,10), (12,5) and (9,3) You will have to be in "search" mode as you walk around to find these places, as they are all well-hidden. Also, you should know that you will get a ton of minor magical items at each of these places, so watch your inventories. No point in unearthing the treasure if you can't hold it unless you're only out for the experience by this point.

After you're done searching, go back to Phlan. The Clerk will give you 1500XP, 750G and 3 gems for this job, as well as the shrine treasure you took. Now, it's time to give yourself a real challenge to set the stage for the final couple of quests, so let's go to Valhingen Graveyard.

o. Valhingen Graveyard

Common/Set Enemies: Ghoul, Giant Skeleton, Juju Zombie, Mummy, Skeleton, Spectre, Wight, Zombie

Goal to Clear: Wipe out the Vampire and his minions, such as the undead-producing Spectres.

Reward for Clearing:

Go back to the docks and once again, pick the north option. This time, instead of going to the northern part of town (Kovel Mansion), choose to go to the graveyard. You'll want to be very careful here and save after every battle. Many of the enemies here can drain levels with successful hits and you don't want to have to rebuild experience, as not even the Restoration spell can restore all the points you lose.

Basically, your main goal is to slaughter the evil Vampire that is controlling the undead forces. However, there are a number of Spectres (remember Mendor?...) that you also have to focus on. They are in charge of producing various types of undead (Skeletons, Zombies and Wights). By killing them, you will put an end to the hordes of undead the Vampire is creating to overrun Phlan.

There also are a number of other set monster encounters. Each of these is worth fighting as the rewards can outweigh the risks. The undead of Valhingen Graveyard hold plenty of wonderful treasures. Remember that for more encounters, the Clerical Turn option will be your best friend. When a Cleric reaches their sixth and final level of experience, their Turning ability can destroy Skeletons and Zombies, instead of simply forcing them to run away.

You'll enter the Graveyard at (0,11). Your final goal is in the northeast corner, but we have a long and meandering path to get to that location. So head down the paths marked by gravestones and seek out the mausoleums to progress through this region. At (4,9), go through to door to fight a band of Skeletons. Win that battle and continue east to (7,9) to fight larger group

of Skeletons -- led by a Giant Skeleton. The Giant Skeleton is very strong in melee combat, so try to wipe it out quickly or it will make life miserable for your party. After winning this battle, go south to (7,7) and "look" to find a marble box with a lot of treasure. I got 9050XP and four scrolls with two casts of Restoration each.

Continue south and go in the mausoleum at (1,3) to trigger a Skeleton attack (as if the game's notice that bones were laying outside the door didn't give that away). Win the battle and enter the building to take a good deal of damage from poisonous gas. Go through the door at (0,0) and you'll meet the Spectre in charge of animating Skeletons.

SUB-BOSS FIGHT: Spectre Uno

Nothing but one Spectre, although that still is a formidable foe. Use the same strategy you used on the one in Mendor's Library, although this battle should go a bit easier due to all the weapon/armor upgrading you've been doing since that point. Magic Missiles are great because of the automatic damage they generate and your Fighters should be a bit more adept at landing blows. Don't bother with attempting to turn this or the other two Spectres, as that isn't going to work out too well for you.

Beat him and leave this area. If you've taken too much damage from the gas or encounters, go back to Phlan. If not, then enter the door at (5,6) to visit another mausoleum. This building houses the Zombie-producing Spectre, so be ready for another fight. As with the Skeleton-producing Spectre's lair, you will face a battle as soon as you attempt to enter the place. Fight the 10 Zombies that greet you and then proceed into the building.

Meander through the building until you reach (4,5). There you'll see the Spectre and get the opportunity to fight it.

SUB-BOSS FIGHT: Spectre Dos

Same strategy as the first battle. Show no mercy, as none will be shown to you. I was able to get the jump on the ghostly monster and get a free round of attacks in, which made this fight very easy for me. Two hits and three Magic Missiles later and it was toast.

Now, if you go just a bit northeast of this mausoleum (8,7), you'll run into a helpful chap named Magician. Don't accept his offer. You already know how poor the computer AI is when it comes to magic-using classes AND this chap will betray you the minute you run into the Vampire. Yep, ol' fangy has himself an accomplice just waiting to trick stupid adventurers into falling into his trap. Just say no to him and watch him attempt to attack you. After having a hearty chuckle at the folly of solitary wizards attempting to take out five well-trained adventurers, slaughter him and continue exploring.

Anyway, go north from here, so we can kill the final Spectre. As you step in front of the door (9,10), the game sends you a message about static electricity and lightning crackling the air and a tough crew of Wights approaches. Now this fight is cause for concern. There are six of these level-draining undead and they start out right next to you. You'll want to hope your Clerical folk can turn all of them (my L6 Cleric was able to do so). If that doesn't happen, you'll want your Magic-Users to inflict pain on them with a Fireball (being careful not to burn anyone in your own party). A number of factors for your success in this fight are out of your hands & namely how quickly your Clerics get to act and how successful they are in

turning the Wights λ so be sure to save immediately before stepping on this square.

Beat the fight and enter the mausoleum. You'll immediately take damage from supernaturally being slammed into the air, but that shouldn't be anything to worry about. Go one step farther south and you'll find the Wight-creating Spectre.

SUB-BOSS FIGHT: Spectre Tres

Same drill as the previous two. Use your best attacking items and hope to finish it off before someone gets drained.

All three Spectres are dead, so no new undead will apparently be created (you'll still have the occasional random fight until the block is cleared, though). Before taking care of the Vampire, there are a number of other mausoleums to explore, each with their own encounters and with their own treasure.

At the entrance (10,0) to one building, located in the south-central part of the graveyard, you'll be greeted by Zombies loudly descending the stairs. Win that fight and enter the building to get challenged by the strangely named Juju Zombie. While this monster has more than twice the HP of a regular Zombie, there is only one of it, so this may be the easiest fight in the entire Graveyard. Win and you'll get to pick up "various objects" scattered around. I got 3280XP, a Lightning Wand, two scrolls and a potion.

Now enter the building at (11,4). Hmm...looks like it's empty. Take another steps and ...WHOOOPS!!! Guess it's not so abandoned. If the picture that pops up on the screen doesn't make things clear enough for you, your lead party member will kindly inform everyone that a Mummy is on the loose before the battle starts. Once combat has begun, you'll find out that it's actually four Mummies λ making this a nasty little confrontation. Fortunately, these beasties don't drain levels. Unfortunately, they are still diabolical creatures. At the beginning of the fight, everyone in your party has a chance of being paralyzed (if my AD&D memory is accurate, I believe Mummies have the ability to cause opponents to be paralyzed by fright). You'll see "*name* was unaffected" for each one that avoided this nasty effect. To make matters worse, each successful hit by a Mummy can disease a party member. Oh, and all four of them start right next to your party. Wait, I almost forgot that they seem to be a bit too powerful for your Clerics to turn. Yep, this sure is a fun battle, isn't it? If you have a Fireball handy, use it, as you'll be able to severely damage three of them without hitting a party member. This can make the battle a lot easier to win without taking severe damage. If not, use melee attacks and Magic Missiles and hope for the best.

I got 5656XP for surviving this battle. Immediately after it's over, go to your "encamp" screen and cast Cure Disease on any afflicted party members. While my AD&D memory doesn't recollect how being diseased affects a character, as unforgiving as the status effects are in that world, I didn't really want to find out the hard way. There seems to be no treasure here, but getting over a thousand XP for every character kind of is a reward in itself.

Our next building is the one at (15,9), which is described by the game as a "large tower". Try to enter and some ghostly voices threaten to kill you if you don't leave. Ignore that advice and you have another six-Wight attack. Use the advice I gave for the battle outside the abode of λ Spectre Tres \bar{t} for this one, as it is identical for all intents and purposes. Note: While undead turning is a very imprecise science, it should be said that my L6 Cleric

turned all six Wights in the first such battle, but was unable to turn any here. It might have just been an unlucky attempt (as opposed to some in-game mechanism where that is an 'unturnable' group), but I was forced to use a more direct way to attack (one Fireball and one well-placed blast from the old Lightning Wand mixed with one or two successful melee attacks).

After winning, enter the building and go into the small room inside (15,8) to meet a Wraith. The Wraith moans that it is protecting a body and that you should leave. Failure to comply means a battle. Think of a Wraith as a slightly weaker Spectre (or slightly stronger Wight, for that matter). It does drain levels, but also goes down quicker. Win the fight and you'll get all the equipment the body possessed. For me, this was a Hammer +3, Sling of Seeking +2, and some scrolls and potions.

Now, take the door at (9,14). Well, try to take the door. As you attempt to open it, you'll be faced with another battle with a Spectre.

SUB-BOSS FIGHT: Spectre Quattro

The only difference between this and the previous Spectre battles is that you won't get a surprise attack on it, so it will have a much better chance of taking a swing at you and draining someone of a couple of levels. Do your best to prevent that from happening (i.e. saving before trying to fight it).

Now that this guy is dead, go through his building. In the final room (8,13), a ghost will give you a prize for your ability to meet his standard for bravery (or something like that). I received 2630XP, Plate Mail +2, Long Sword +2, Shield +1, Ring of Fire Resistance and a ton of scrolls.

Now go through the door at (12,13) and go to the center of the room. Read the scroll and sanctify the coffin. Leave this room and go through either the door at (12,15) or (14,13). There is a secret door at (15,14), so go through it and go one step west. It's Vampire Time!

BOSS FIGHT: Vampire and Wolf collection

If you got the Efrete Bottle from the Kobald Cave, the cork will automatically pop off and you'll have an ally for this confrontation. Samir Ahwahl, vampire-hunting genie, will come out and threaten to kill the Vampire as a precursor to this battle. As for the fight itself, it won't be easy. The Vampire starts right up next to your front line, the Efrete has no way of getting to him immediately and there are five Wolves getting in the way. The Vampire is another high-powered undead, capable of draining levels with ease. Really, this is another battle where strategy and luck must collide for victory to be yours. You'll have to unleash Fireballs on the enemies, hope your melee fighter can hit the Vampire and hope the Vampire misses once or twice, so you can win the battle without adverse side effects. The first time I tried things, the Vampire drained my Cleric immediately. The second time, he missed a Fighter early, two Fireballs killed four Wolves and did 30 damage to him, the Efrete killed the other Wolf and my Fighters finished the Vampire off.

After the battle has ended, the Vampire will dissolve into mist and attempt to visit his now-sanctified coffin. 'Look' on the square you fought him and you'll get his treasure. I picked up a sweet 16,230XP, 9000G, 12 gems, Magic Missile Wand, Shield and a bunch of potions and scrolls. Now, go back to the building with the coffin and step to the square where the coffin was to fight him again. Once again, Mr. Efrete will assist you in this endeavor.

BOSS FIGHT: Vampire II: Evil Never Dies

No wolves this time. It's just your party and the Efreets against the Vampire in a battle to the death. Don't hold back here! Have your Magic-Users use Magic Missiles or Lightning Wands and hope your melee fighters don't fall into a costly slump. And above all, hope that the Vampire misses with his attacks. Fortunately for you, the first fight depleted him and he won't take as much damage this time around (my guess: 15-20HP).

Now, go back to Phlan to collect your reward. You will get a great prize from the Clerk for completing this tough mission: a total of 26,035XP, 285G and 103 gems. After that, you'll also get a special reward from the Council of 35,000XP and 140 gems for driving away the Vampire. Also, with the Vampire dead, you can sell the Efreets Bottle for 17,500G.

Now, technically you're ready to challenge Valjevo Castle, but you might feel you need a little more experience to give some characters one more level. If so, read the next section and you'll find a somewhat villainous way to get a ton of experience (as well as a 'nicer' way to get a much smaller amount of XP and a questionable thing to do that will even give you fewer XP).

p. Three Optional Quests

Common/Set Enemies: See below

Goal to Clear: See below

Reward for Clearing: See below

This section will be divided into three areas. First, I'll discuss how to get a ton of experience by decimating New Phlan's defense. Second, I'll mention how to clear Podol Plaza for a reward. Third, I'll bring up Cadorna and the different paths you can take when you encounter him for the final time.

So, you need experience? Phlan is the place to be, as you can get an ungodly amount without even leaving the City Gates now that you are powerful. All you have to do is anger the guards, which isn't that hard to do. The easiest way is to simply go to the Council building and try to enter any room besides the Clerk's. Or you can try going into most buildings at night. Or get in a tavern brawl. Or try to 'rest' in New Phlan. Any of those actions will get the attention of the guards, who will tell you to move on. Instead of following orders, choose to attack. Note: It is best to instigate combat in a narrow area. Don't pick a fight in a wide-open area, as that will give the Fighters the opportunity to run around the Aides and immediately attack you.

BOSS FIGHT: New Phlan Guards

This is no easy battle, as you have 20 opponents. Up front, next to your party will be 10 Aides. Behind them will be two worthless 6th Lvl Magic-Users and a group of eight Fighters (four 6th Lvl and four 8th Lvl). If you follow my advice and picked the fight in a narrow area, such as the main hall of the Council building, all the opponents will be bunched up and will stay that way. You know what that means? Fireball-o-rama!! Two or three of these bad boys will weaken the Fighters and likely kill the Magic-Users and Aides that are in the path of destruction. Meanwhile, have your Clerics work on hitting as many Fighters as possible with Hold Person spells because high-level Fighters aren't easy to hit with melee attacks, regardless of your party's strength. Basically, you want to be at full strength when you enter this battle and you want to hit the opponents with ANYTHING you can. Don't hold

back, as you won't have to immediately fight any battles after this one.

Winning this war got me 10,400XP and 116G. It also alienates most of New Phlan. While the Clerk and the fine people at the Training Hall will still talk to you, Shrines, Inns and Shops all refuse to accept your patronage. That means you'll need to go to the Slums and heal your characters the old-fashioned way (i.e. before you got a ton of money and could just throw it at Shrine clerics). So repeat the pattern of healing, memorizing spells and resting until everyone is at full health with full magic-casting capacity.

Now go back to New Phlan. While most of the 'off-limits' buildings simply give you a message saying (in essence) that you aren't welcome there, there is one building that is a wee bit different. Remember the Shrine of Sune (southwest corner of town)? Save your game and go there. An ominous armored Cleric greets you by saying that you'll pay for what you've done & then attempts to ensure you do!

BOSS FIGHT: A Medieval Holy War!

You'll be locked in battle with three 7th Lvl Clerics, seven 5th Lvl Clerics, three 8th Lvl Fighters and seven 4th Lvl Fighters. The 7th Lvl Clerics were at the front of the battle (adjoining my front row), while the 5th Lvl Clerics were right behind them. Behind the Clerics were the Fighters with the 8th Lvl guys being in front of most of the 4th Lvl ones. Here are a couple of very important things to know before jumping into action.

1. In the NES version, you get one H-U-G-E lucky break & the horrible AI in this game. By all rights, the Clerics by themselves should eat your party up with a nonstop barrage of Hold Person spells followed by one-hit-kill melee attacks on your helpless characters. However, as I've probably said a million times in this guide & no computer-controlled character with magical capacity shall ever do anything intelligent with said magic. The point of the story is that all 10 Clerics did nothing but melee attacks when I fought them.
2. You're not home-free by any means, though. The 7th Lvl Clerics and 8th Lvl Fighters can give any character fits, there are enough 5th Lvl Clerics to add to that frustration AND the 4th Lvl Fighters will (if given the chance) pick you apart with long-range attacks. Since the 4th Lvl Fighters are the farthest away from you at the start of the battle, the odds are quite high that they'll have plenty of opportunity to do so.

So what does all this mean? Essentially that your strategy will be much the same as the previous battle with the exception that flawless execution is a bit more important here. Have your Magic-Users target their Fireballs so that all the Fighters are in the area of effect. About three Fireballs should be enough to kill all (or nearly) all the 4th Lvl Fighters, which will take away what is perhaps the biggest danger to you. Have your Clerics focus their Hold Person spells on the 8th and 7th Lvl foes. While they won't be 100 percent effective, you will be able to remove some tough opposition from the battle easily this way. Then, have your melee characters finish off what is left with a little help from some Magic Missiles and similar attacks.

As a reward, you'll get an incredible 211,670XP, 100,142G and 400 gems. In other words, for winning one optional battle, you'll get nearly as much experience as you've gotten for almost everything you've done up to this point. Needless to say, anyone who still may advance in level will likely be

able to do so at this point. So head over to the Training Hall and then go back to the Slums.

Yep, you still aren't welcome in town. While not being able to go to Shrines and Inns aren't much of a problem (you can rest in many places and you can still go to the hidden shrine in Podol Plaza), not being able to identify and sell items could be a bummer. However, there is an easy way to solve that problem.

Head back to Podol Plaza. Now, using the Shrine to heal when necessary, run around and fight all the monsters that you find. Eventually (like the Textile House), the random encounters will dry up. When that happens, go back to New Phlan and get 1250XP and 1250G from the Clerk. While that reward is insignificant, it has a very welcome side-effect. By doing a quest (even though you never were actually given it), you restore the faith of the townies and they welcome you with open arms again, allowing you access to everything.

Finally, before officially tackling Valjevo Castle, there is one quick 'seek-and-destroy' mission you can do if you know what you're looking for and if you feel up to it. Go north from Stojanow Gate (through the northeast exit) into the Castle. At this point, you'll be in the SW block (more on the blocks of the Castle will be explained below). Head north until you reach an east-west path. Go east into the SE block and continue going east until you reach the end of that path. Go a bit north and enter the door at (14,5) to find Cadorna. Apparently the villainous Councilman didn't meet with enough success for Tyranthraxus' tastes, as he is now in shackles. You can choose to kill him or free him. If you kill him, you'll be able to get a piddly reward of 850XP, 150G and 3 gems from the Phlan Clerk. If you release him, you'll get a password which will come in handy as you explore Valjevo Castle. It's really your call, as the experience is of much less importance than the password in the grand scheme of things, but you can get the password elsewhere.

Anyway, when you feel you're ready, it's time to lay siege to Valjevo Castle and put an end to the evil reign of Tyranthraxus!

q. Tyranthraxus' Final Day

Common/Set Enemies: 1st Lvl Cleric, 1st Lvl Thief, 4th Lvl Fighter, 5th Lvl Cleric, 6th Lvl Fighter, 8th Lvl Fighter, Fire Giant, Genheris, Giant Snake, Hill Giant, Medusa, Troll, Tyranthraxus, Tyranthraxus (Fake).

Goal to Clear: Kill Tyranthraxus.

Reward for Clearing: GAME OVER!!!!

--Part 1: OVERVIEW--

The first thing you need to be aware of is that you won't be completing this mission in one trip. Valjevo Castle is huge and is loaded with tough foes, including Giants, Trolls and high-level Fighters. The majority of the castle is contained in four 16-by-16 blocks, which you can consider a 32-by-32 block for all intents and purposes. The computer doesn't provide an automap, so you'll have to do that on your own.

To give a brief overview before delving into the details, think of the castle as a big square with a smaller square inside of it. The big square consists of a number of buildings with Giant guards, other foes and treasures/useful items. The smaller square, which can only be accessed by gates in the SE and NW blocks of the big square, is essentially the inner sanctum of the castle. You'll have to navigate a hedge maze and fight some tough battles to get to a

final, smaller area, where Tyranthraxus and his inner circle of cronies are hiding.

In my opinion, you'll want to have a specific strategy for how to tackle this area. If you still need XP, you should look for battles. Tackle the Hill Giant rooms and the Smithy (and any other place I note that the battle is optional). Hell, even alert and assault the guard patrols if you want.

However, if you aren't in need of experience, you'll only want to go to a couple of places in the outer block before tackling the inner block and finishing the game off. So, if you're only looking to finish the game, here are the only outer block places I'd recommend visiting (get coordinate from actual level walkthrough).

SW Block: At the evil Shrine, the Necklace of Missile you can get from the dead body of a Cleric will give you plenty of extra Fireballs, which is always a good thing.

NW Block: Not much & the only important thing is that one of the entrances to the inner block is here.

SE Block: Cadorna's here (if you haven't gotten him yet) and there's a pool with some swords in it). Also, the other entrance to the inner block is here.

NE Block: There is an armory with free equipment and two places where you can obtain useful passwords.

Finally, to save time, here is a strategy for where to go if you have to leave the Castle for various reasons.

1. Minor healing/spell replenishment & just go to Stojanow Gate, heal and rest.
2. Major healing/spell replenishment & go to the Podol Plaza shrine.
3. Identify and sell items & sorry, but you have to go all the way back to New Phlan for this task. Hope you're up for a long, time-consuming walk.

Okay, now it's on to the actual walkthrough. When going north from Stojanow Gate, you will start off in the SW block of the Castle. First I'll detail everything of importance in the outer square and then move on to the inner square, finishing with Tyranthraxus's domain.

--Part 2: SW Block--

The first thing you'll want to do after you get here is go through the door at (12,2). A woman here will be quite cooperative and hand you some clothes which you will use to disguise yourself. These clothes will be somewhat helpful in avoiding a few encounters, so be nice, take them and trust the woman when she says she won't tell anyone about you.

Go to (3,1) and you'll be in the smithy. You can choose to attack or talk. Using "sly" or "meek" will start a battle with the Smith (4th Lvl Fighter) and three Fire Giants, as will attacking (duh!). Fire Giants are very strong melee combatants. They don't have the two strikes per round that an Ettin has, but they seem to have better armor and are naturally resistant to fire (no Fireballs for this group). A lightning attack (wand or spell) will work wonders against them, though. I got 25,694XP, 12,182G and a ton of weapons and armor for my work here. All that equipment was only +1 for me, so you may consider not picking it up, as it's a long walk back to the Phlan shops from here.

The only area of interest here is a Shrine to Bane located at (1,12). This

can be a tricky area, as most of the options lead to far more pain than you want, as the head Cleric here has a Necklace of Missile. When you get the option to attack, meditate, talk or leave, the only correct choice is "leave", which will put you in a fairly simple battle with one 5th Lvl Cleric and two 1st Lvl Clerics. However, if you pick "attack", the head Cleric will use his Necklace to devastating effect. Even worse, if you "meditate", you'll take damage from the evil god Bane AND a Necklace (Fireball) before battle. Both of those methods will be highly lethal to your party, as only the strongest members will survive. Win the fight and you'll get that Necklace of Missile, as well as a couple more pieces of equipment.

At the back of the shrine (1,15) is the collection box and a pair of swords. Just ignore this stuff. Robbing Bane's collection box will attract his attention, causing damage to your characters (not worth it for 3G). The swords are cursed, making them pretty worthless, too.

From here, go north to the Northwest Block.

--Part 3: NW Block--

If you enter the first building on the left as you come in from the Southwest Block and go to (2,2), you'll encounter a group of five Hill Giants. Tougher than Ogres, but not quite on the same level as Fire Giants, these brutes can be softened up by a couple of Fireballs. However, doing so will set off an alarm, which will make things a bit tougher for you. Personally, I'd advise against entering this battle unless you in need of the XP, as you really have nothing to gain from alerting the attention of all the guards. There will be several encounters like this scattered around the four blocks of Valjevo Castle, so I'll be sure to inform you of each alarm-raisin

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