

THE SPEAKER IN DREAMS

James Wyatt

Credits

Editor: Roger E. Moore

Creative Director: Ed Stark

Art Director: Dawn Murin

Cover Illustration: Jeff Easley

Interior Illustrations: Dennis Cramer

Cartography: Todd Gamble

Typography: Erin Dorries

Production Manager: Chas DeLong

Project Manager: Josh Fischer

Graphic Design: Sherry Floyd

Playtesters: Julia Martin, Bill Baumann, Eric Haddock, Jason Iha, Gwendolyn F. M. Kestrel, Brooks Peck, Pat Ryan, Dave Gross, Rob Stewart, Bryan Kinsella, Barbara Walker, Christopher Perkins and Matthew Sernett.

Resources: Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson, and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison. Other sources include *The Castle*, *Cities of Mystery*, *City System*, *City of Splendors*, *The Illithiad*, *PLAYER'S OPTION™ Spells & Magic*, and *The Gates of Firestorm Peak*.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2	Area Effect Spells in Town Streets.....	7
The Town of Brindinford.....	4	Curse of Lycanthropy.....	13
Events and Encounters: Part One.....	5	Maps:	
Events and Encounters: Part Two.....	18	Adventure Flowchart.....	32
Concluding the Adventure.....	26	Brindinford Overview Map.....	inside front cover
Appendix: Statistics.....	27	The Bell Tower.....	inside front cover
New Creature: Wyste.....	31	The Reality Wrinkle.....	inside front cover
Sidebars:		The Temple of Pelor.....	inside back cover
Cohorts, Followers and Hirelings.....	4	The Manor House.....	inside back cover
Characters and the Law.....	5	Maze of Alleys.....	inside back cover
Exploring the Fair.....	6	Heironeous's Shrine.....	inside back cover
Splitting Up.....	6	Abandoned Warehouse.....	inside back cover

U.S., CANADA,
ASIA, PACIFIC, & LATIN AMERICA
Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 707
Renton WA 98057-0707
(Questions?) 1-800-324-6496



620-WTC11830

EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS
Wizards of the Coast, Belgium
P.B. 2031
2600 Berchem
Belgium
+32-70-23-32-77

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, DUNGEON MASTER, and the Wizards of the Coast logo are registered trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

The d20 system logo and PLAYER'S OPTION are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

All Wizards characters, character names, and the distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks owned by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Distributed to the hobby, toy, and comic trade in the United States and Canada by regional distributors. Distributed in the United States to the book trade by St. Martin's Press.

Distributed in Canada to the book trade by Fenn Ltd. Distributed worldwide by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and regional distributors.

This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America.

Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

This product is a work of fiction. Any similarity to actual people, organizations, places, or events is purely coincidental.

©2001 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Made in the U.S.A.

Visit our website at www.wizards.com/dnd



INTRODUCTION

Immense power is acquired by assuring yourself in your secret reveries that you were born to control affairs.

—Andrew Carnegie

The Speaker in Dreams is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure featuring a mind flayer's attempt to establish a slave empire, starting from a town called Brindinford.

Encounter Levels: *The Speaker in Dreams* is suitable for four 5th-level player characters. Player characters could reach 7th level by the adventure's conclusion.

In a city adventure, it is relatively easy for player characters to rest in safety, regain hit points, and find curative magic. As a result, encounters in this adventure are skewed toward slightly greater challenges, assuming that the characters can meet each one relatively fresh.

PREPARATION

You, the Dungeon Master (DM), need a copy of the *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, and the *Monster Manual* to use this adventure.

Text that appears in shaded boxes is player information, which you may read aloud or paraphrase as appropriate. Text in sidebars contains important DM notes, for you, offering insight into issues peculiar to city adventuring. Monster and nonplayer character (NPC) statistics are provided with each encounter in abbreviated form. Full monster statistics for standard monsters are in the *Monster Manual*, while statistics for citizens, unusual monsters, and unique individuals are provided in the Appendix at the end of this booklet. You should review all of these statistics before the game starts to refresh your memory of the creatures' abilities. Each encounter is given an encounter level (EL) to let you know how challenging it should be for the adventurers.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Far below the surface of the earth, in the lightless caverns of the Underdark, a weird and alien city broods on memories of ancient glory. Long ago, the mind flayers ruled a mighty empire that spanned hundreds of worlds until it met its downfall in a slave rebellion. Every mind flayer in the underground city of Ilkkool Rrem dreams, plans, and schemes for the restoration of the illithid empire, the crowning achievement of their kind.

Ghaerleth Axom is one such mind flayer. His dreams are grand indeed: In his vision, the hub of the reborn empire will be none other than himself, Emperor Ghaerleth Axom, Ruler of Worlds. Not only human thralls, but illithids too will bow and grovel before him. He will report to no god, no illithid Elder Brain—all will report to him. He will be a god, and even devils will serve him.

This dreaming frequently bears dangerous fruit, such as Axom's ill-considered alliance with a beholder mage

who summoned a devil into the heart of Ilkkool Rrem. The gelugon broke its magical bonds, slaughtered the beholder, and went on a wild rampage through the illithid city. Although Ghaerleth Axom's involvement in the plot was never proven, remaining in the city became increasingly dangerous for him. Shortly after that incident, he fled, an outcast from his kind.

He wandered the Underdark for many years, until he set his sights on a great challenge: the infiltration of a human town on the world's surface. Ghaerleth Axom strode out of the Underdark and into Brindinford. Under cover of darkness, he moved through the town, gathering allies and thralls around him as he had done in numerous subterranean cities before. With their help, he plants the seeds of a new illithid empire.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The Speaker in Dreams brings the player characters to Brindinford, a town besieged by evil forces within its walls. Ghaerleth Axom has amassed great power during his stay here; he and his gangs are a force to be reckoned with in every part of the town. Grimlocks terrorize the lower-class neighborhood of Southspur. A cabal of mad sorcerers, called Those Who Hear, has taken root in West Hill, the middle-class buffer zone between Southspur and well-to-do Silver Hill. A diabolical cult draws its members from Silver Hill and threatens the established temple of Pelor in Ford North, the temple district. A pack of wererats extorts protection money from the merchants of Chatterstreet Market. All these villains report to Ghaerleth Axom. Only the baron's keep seems free of his influence—for now. As the annual street fair begins, promoted by wandering halflings who make Brindinford a regular stop, Ghaerleth Axom moves to solidify his power and seize control of the town—from the top.

The adventurers arrive here during the street fair. The fair is disrupted, however, by a wererat attack that serves twin purposes: distracting the town guard while Ghaerleth Axom enters the baron's keep, and thinning out the ranks of the guards. The player characters are near this disturbance and can help dispatch the wererats.

Investigating the wererats leads the party into a web of secret allegiances. Evidence appears to show the wererats' leaders are the sorcerers of West Hill. These sorcerers babble about an alien master who speaks in their dreams, but no indication exists of an actual, corporeal master. In defeating the cabal and its apparent minions, the characters have every reason to believe that they have successfully completed the adventure. The townsfolk believe so, too, and give a feast in the characters' honor.

After the celebration, the characters discover that the threat to Brindinford has not been abolished, when they become the targets of an assassination attempt. The baron then declares martial law to crack down on lawlessness within the town. He announces that the diabolists will be the enforcers of this new order, instituting a reign of fear and mistrust. The town guards and the baron turn against the characters, who must



find unlikely allies as they strive to overcome the cult and its infernal cohorts. At last, the characters confront Ghaerleth Axom, the true mastermind, freeing the baron from Axom's influence and returning order to Brindinford.

The Speaker in Dreams is a combination of event-based and site-based adventuring. The primary “map” of the adventure is a flowchart that allows you to track the characters' actions and their repercussions; the party's physical location is less important. Certain actions lead the characters to key sites within (or below) Brindinford, detailed on separate maps and keyed in the same way a site-based adventure would be.

CHARACTER HOOKS

The player characters need not arrive looking for adventure in Brindinford. One advantage of the setting is that adventure can find the characters while they are busy doing other things. Each character may have a different reason to visit the town, they may be united in a common purpose, or the group may follow one character with a compelling reason to travel here. Consider the following motivations for going to Brindinford.

- Brindinford is famous for its annual street fair. The fair originated when a large clan of nomadic halflings made the town a regular stop in their travels. Now the halflings are settled around the town, but the fair offers a healthy dose of halfling culture at its finest. Halfling characters may be particularly drawn to the fair, but any character will find it worth visiting.
- One of the characters is originally from Brindinford and has friends or relatives there. The character could be returning home to rest, bringing companions along, or coming for the funeral of a relative. Perhaps a young sibling has gotten involved with shady characters and needs help. (The sibling could be an infected wererat, a mad sorcerer, a diabolist, or a member of a gang of thieves—later instrumental in winning the gang's assistance for the party in Part Two.)
- A mentor of one of the characters lives in Brindinford, but has not been heard from in an unusually long time. As Ghaerleth Axom prepares to cement his hold on the town, he has eliminated a number of higher-level characters who could muster significant opposition to his rule. The mentor could be one of his victims, or one of Axom's controlled allies.

THE TOWN OF BRINDINFORD

Brindinford: divisive, eccentric, wealthy, and ripe for the picking.
—Ghaerleth Axom

Brindinford is a large town that can be placed anywhere in your campaign. It is a trade center on a major river, and its food comes from small farming villages scattered in the nearby countryside; no fields are in the immediate vicinity. Forestation has been cleared in a radius of about a mile outside the town on the east side of the river, but much of the west bank is still heavily wooded.

See the Brindinford Overview Map for a depiction of the town and its neighborhoods. The town follows the rules noted for a town of its size in Chapter 4 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*.

Brindinford (large town): Conventional and Monstrous; AL LG and LE, 5,000 gp limit; Assets 1,200,000 gp; Population 4,807; Mixed (human 79%, halfling 8%, elf 5%, dwarf 3%, gnome 2%, half-elf 1%, half-orc 1%).

Authority Figures: Baron Espinemes II, male human Ari5, LG; Ghaerleth Axom, mind flayer, NE.

The street fair going on during the adventure effectively doubles the town's total assets to 2,400,000 gp, though it does not affect the maximum value of individual items. Each neighborhood in the town has its own gold piece limit on the maximum value of a single item for sale in that neighborhood, reflecting the different levels of affluence in different areas of the town.

TOWN NEIGHBORHOODS

The town of Brindinford is divided into six neighborhoods, or wards. No walls or other clear divisions separate the wards, but the quality of a neighborhood changes rapidly as one travels along the single main road

through town. The neighborhoods are shown on the Brindinford map and briefly described below. Important locations marked on the map are described in the adventure text.

Brindinford has forty-eight professional guards who work on two shifts. In general, the guards on duty in a particular neighborhood respond to a disturbance in that neighborhood within 2d10 minutes. The guards on specific detail are listed below. Statistics for town guards, veteran guards, and Lieutenant Shella are presented in the Appendix for easy reference throughout the adventure.

The Keep and Silver Hill

Character: Wealthy, elite.

Businesses: Luxury goods, library.

Prices: Double normal, except for masterwork items.

Gold Piece Limit: 5,000 gp.

Buildings: Free-standing estates.

Guard Detail: Four town guards on fair patrol, Lieutenant Shella and veteran guard (day) or two veteran guards (night) in the keep.

Ford North

Character: "Holy quarter."

Businesses: Temples, shrines, icons, good-luck charms.

Prices: 150% normal.

Gold Piece Limit: 3,000 gp.

Buildings: Large row houses.

Guard Detail: Two town guards at Old Ford Gate, two town guards on Old Ford Road.

Chatterstreet Market

Character: Bustling market.

Businesses: Artisans and traders.

Prices: Normal.

Gold Piece Limit: 2,000 gp.

Buildings: Row houses with shops on ground floor, apartments above.

Guard Detail: Two town guards in Chatterstreet Market.

Eastgate

Character: Rough-and-tumble, transients.

Businesses: Inns, taverns, merchant warehouses, entertainment, provisioners.

Prices: Normal.

Gold Piece Limit: 1,000 gp.

Buildings: Row houses, freestanding warehouses and outdoor businesses, free-standing inns with yards.

Guard Detail: Four town guards at East Gate, four town guards on fair patrol.

West Hill

Character: Eccentric, intellectual.

Businesses: Booksellers, scholarly specialists.

Prices: Normal.

Gold Piece Limit: 3,000 gp.

Buildings: Freestanding houses with small yards.

Guard Detail: None (Silver Hill fair patrol is nearby).

Southspur

Character: Poor, rough.

Businesses: Undesirable (dyers, perfumeries, tanners).

Prices: Normal.

Gold Piece Limit: 500 gp.

Buildings: Row houses, free-standing businesses.

Fair Patrol: Two town guards at Southspur Gate, two town guards on Southspur Street.

Cohorts, Followers, and Hirelings

Among other things, the sheer number of people in a town makes it the place to go for a character interested in recruiting a cohort, followers, or hirelings. It is likely that the characters will reach 6th level in the course of this adventure, thus becoming eligible for the Leadership feat. As the characters go through the adventure, pay close attention to the way they interact with the people around them. If they treat certain NPCs particularly well and begin to build relationships with those people, then those NPCs might be good candidates for cohort or follower status, should any of the player characters be inclined toward Leadership. On the other hand, if they are habitually rude, condescending, or insulting toward the people of Brindinford, even characters with Leadership find it hard to recruit followers from among the spurned citizenry. Allow all relationships with NPCs to develop naturally, based on the characters' actions.

EVENTS AND ENCOUNTERS: PART ONE

Sometimes a little chaos ultimately serves a higher law.

—Ghaerleth Axom

The numbered encounters below refer to the Encounter Flowchart found on page 32. The characters begin the adventure with encounter 1.

1. A Trip to the Fair (EL 2)

This encounter assumes that the characters enter the town through its main gate, the East Gate. The fair runs the length of Eastgate Way and continues some distance outside the gate. If the characters choose to enter through a different gate, see encounter 2.

The town of Brindinford occupies a low hill beside the Brinding River. Crenellated stone walls, interrupted by tall watchtowers, surround the buildings, but the life of the town spills beyond its walls today. Colorful carts and wagons, flags and ribbons, and people of all sorts line the road for 100 yards beyond the gate. Dozens of halflings in bright-colored costumes are directing most activities. A busy, lively hum of noise rises from the fair, and the smells of roasting meats, exotic spices, and cut flowers fill the air.

Near the gates, the movement of the throng of people making their way inside the walls slows to a crawl. Four town guards, wearing bright red tabards, give each visitor a careful look, though they seem relaxed and friendly. The guards can be seen peace-bonding weapons.

If the characters proceed through the gates, the guards insist on limiting the characters' ability to cause trouble in the town. This is common practice in many cities, and if necessary you should encourage the players to view it as such. The restrictions are not too limiting and can easily be circumvented. Their purpose is more symbolic: a reminder that Brindinford is not a dungeon or battlefield. With that in mind, the guards impose the following restrictions.

☛ All edged weapons must be peace-bonded (daggers excepted). The guards attach swords to scabbards with leather straps. For axes, spears, and similar weapons, the guards put a leather bag over the blade and tie it with a leather strap. Similarly, they tie bags over open quivers and bolt cases, or secure them closed. Ready-ing a peace-bonded weapon for normal use requires a full-round action and makes the character vulnerable to attacks of opportunity. Attacks with peace-bonded

axes or spears suffer a -2 penalty to attack and damage rolls.

☛ Wizards and sorcerers must wrap a thick leather strap around the middle and ring fingers of each hand, and "peace-bond" their spell component pouches by tying them securely shut. The guards cannot necessarily tell by looking at a character if he or she is a wizard or sorcerer, and they rarely challenge bards. They ask any character they suspect might be a spellcaster to be peace-bonded (particularly characters who seem relatively unarmed compared to their companions), and they may search a character for spell components if unsatisfied with the answer. If someone is caught lying to the guards, they angrily impose a 10 gp fine.

Casting a spell with somatic components while a character's fingers are bound imposes a 30% chance of spell failure. Removing the band or untying a spell component pouch requires a full-round action and makes the character vulnerable to attacks of opportunity.

☛ Clerics of known neutral or evil deities must "peace-bond" their deities' symbols. This involves fastening each such symbol to the cleric's belt, so it cannot easily be brought to bear for spellcasting. Freeing the symbol requires a full-round action and makes the character vulnerable to attacks of opportunity.

☛ Druids and rangers must place all divine focus items into pouches and tie them shut. Untying a pouch requires a full-round action and makes the character vulnerable to attacks of opportunity.

If a character refuses to submit to peace-bonding, the guards deny the character's companions entry to the town as well. If the party attempts to force its way in, the guards attack to kill or capture the group, summoning help by sounding a horn one of the guards carries.

If the party looks for a different entrance into town, consult encounter 2.

Creatures: The four guards are 1st-level warriors. If they sound an alarm, four additional guards from the Eastgate fair patrol arrive in $1d4+2$ rounds.

☛ **Town Guards (4):** hp 3, 6, 6, 7.

2. Alternative Entrances

The two other gates into the town are the Southspur Gate and the Old Ford Gate. Two guards watch each of these gates at all times. They peace-bond weapons and spellcasters just as the guards at the East Gate do, and they do not relax those restrictions. If these guards sound an

Characters and the Law

If the characters decide to ignore the laws of the town, the guards are unprepared to handle the challenge. If the guards could deal with a party of 5th-level characters, they could deal with the problems now facing the town. The characters might decide to do as they please, figuring (probably correctly) that they can take on the whole town guard at one time. If so, they are not the heroes Brindinford needs, and a group of *real* heroes (NPCs directed by you) might emerge to protect the town from the menace the player characters have become, then from the schemes of Ghaerleth Axom. These heroes should be at least the same level as the player characters. At best, they can be rivals that the player characters are motivated to best, by dealing with the threats to the town first. At worst, they can encourage the player characters to get out of town and move on to their next adventure. If the characters are truly out of control, it may be time for an out-of-game talk with your players.

alarm, the guard contingent from the nearest neighborhood (Southspur or Ford North) arrives in 3d4 rounds (see Town Neighborhoods).

The characters can scale the 25-foot-high town walls with a series of Climb checks (DC 30). Magical means may also provide entry to the town. Spells such as *fly* and *levitate* can get characters over the wall, while *dimension door* and similar spells allow circumvention of the walls entirely.

Exploring the Fair

How long should you let the player characters explore the fair? As long as they are having fun. Some players, presented with a scene like this, jump right in with specific things they want characters to do or buy. Others want a little more direction, and it's often a good idea to move to the action as quickly as possible. Reward players who take the initiative, allowing them the chance to get a head start on the adventure by picking up useful information (such as rumors from encounter 5). If they are unsure what to do, move on to the next encounter. Pay attention to what the players do: If some are stacking dice while the others are busy at the fair, get things moving so everyone can be involved. This rule of thumb is the key to running a successful town adventure.

Splitting Up

If the players want to split up, each character pursuing a different goal in town, move quickly to the next encounter. It may be fine for them to split up later on, but they should all be together at the outset—the wererats in encounter 4 are a tough challenge for the whole party.

3. Around the Fair

The streets of Brindinford bustle with activity as the fair engulfs the main street through town. The main street—none too wide in the first place—is narrowed further by the carts and booths lining its sides. Fortunately, wagons are barred, but pedestrians clog the road effectively enough. Artisans, entertainers, and merchants staff the fair booths, calling to potential customers and trying to peddle their wares.

Above it all, two notable features define the town's landscape. A walled keep crowns the hill at the western end of the town, and in the center of town a huge bell tower stands like a sentry.

This encounter offers the characters an opportunity to explore the fair as much as they want to. The fair is confined to the largest thoroughfare through town, Eastgate Way. The flavor of the fair varies by neighborhood, as follows.

Silver Hill (from the keep to Old Ford Road): Like the neighborhood, the fair here is classy and high-priced. Musicians play sophisticated and serious music. Refined dancers move slowly on clear stages. Artisans sell elaborate items whose function is almost purely decorative, made from fine materials of the highest quality. Food vendors are less common closer to the keep, and they sell fine wines, freshly dressed game

(pheasant and venison) that can be taken home and cooked, and sweet pastries. The carts are well maintained and elegant.

Eastgate (from Old Ford Road to the East Gate): Lively entertainment raises the noise level in Eastgate, as minstrels, comedians, poets (lyric, epic, limerick), actors, storytellers, and others compete to be heard. Artisans, merchants, and other professionals sell their wares and their services. The quality of those wares and services varies widely, but seems to increase in both aesthetic and practical value the closer one gets to Silver Hill. Food includes meat pies, pastries, mead and ales, and produce.

Off the Beaten Path: If the adventurers decide to leave Eastgate Way and wander the rest of Brindinford, they find much less excitement. The streets are quiet, if not deserted. Many shops are closed, having moved their business to the fair for the day, while others offer sale prices but seem to attract few customers anyway. Allow the characters to explore for a while, then proceed with encounter 4. (Before they have strayed too far from the main roads, they hear the noise of the crowds reacting to the sudden appearance of monsters in their midst.)

4. The Fair Gets Foul (EL 7)

On the day the characters arrive in Brindinford, the wererat minions of Ghaerleth Axom instigate a disturbance along Eastgate Way. This disrupts the fair, draws the attention of the town guard, and distracts the town from Axom's infiltration of the baron's keep.

A shout from the middle of the busy fair spreads into an expanding ripple of cries and screams, accompanied by loud crashes that sound like carts and booths being overturned. These ripples of sound immediately transform into a wave of people, as bystanders try to escape whatever is wreaking havoc behind them.

For the characters to reach the scene of this disturbance—ideally 40–150 feet ($[1d12+3] \times 10$) away from the nearest adventurer—they must make their way against a tide of frightened fairgoers and merchants moving in the opposite direction. Characters using brute force to push their way through the crowds should make a Strength check. If they try to slip between people, use an Escape Artist check instead, and if they try to intimidate or otherwise convince people to make way for them, use an Intimidate check. A successful check against DC 15 allows characters to move their speed as a full-round action (or half their speed as a normal move action); failing this check restricts characters to moving half that far.

When the characters come within 20 feet of the trouble, they find a scene of chaos: pushcarts on their sides, booths smashed, goods strewn over the cobblestones. A handful of merchants swat ineffectually at several big rats with brooms and other implements.

Creatures: Four wererats in hybrid form continue their work of destruction, while a number of dire rats scramble around the wreckage and bite any human who does not get out of their way fast enough. If the party attacks the wererats, the dire rats come at their masters' call to join in the fight and slay the group.

➤ **Dire Rats** (5): hp 5, 5, 2, 3, 9.

➤ **Wererats** (3): hp 8, 5, 6.

➤ **Squim (wererat Rog3)**: hp 20.

A contingent of town guards arrives at the scene 2d10 minutes after the disturbance begins. These four guards are the regulars assigned to the Eastgate portion of the fair.