

# the LORDS of MIDNIGHT

*Julie Lewis leads the armies of the Free to victory in the struggle against the hordes of the evil Doomdark*

THERE is little doubt in my mind and, I suspect, in those of most of you reading this article that *The Lords of Midnight* is one of the most exciting games currently available for the Spectrum.

Having completed (to date) four quests and one military defeat, I am writing this article in the hope of helping those of you who are still struggling desperately against Doomdark and his hordes.

There are 32 main characters in the game and these will be listed at the end of the article. Suggestions as to where they may be found will be given as we go along.

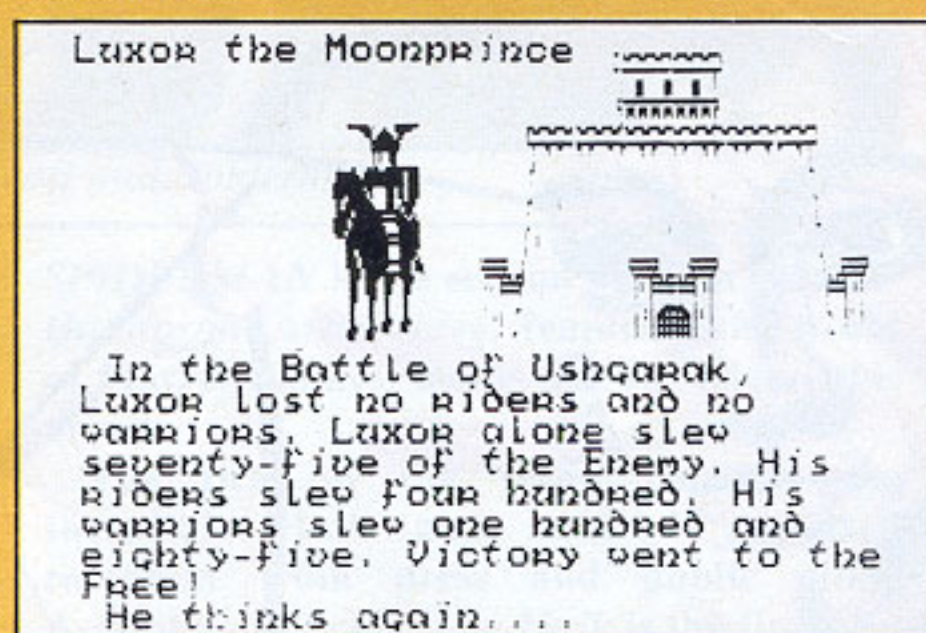
As I have had more experience of success with the quest, it is this aspect of the game which I shall deal with first. You will no doubt be aware that this is the quickest way to defeat Doomdark — it is also the easiest. However, it is possibly not the most satisfying!

On reading the booklet included with the cassette, you will have been told (p. 21, para. 3) that "Morkin can have no army to help him on his journey . . ."; this, however, is not strictly true. Admittedly, Morkin cannot recruit any men to assist him, but he can be *accompanied* by an army — there is a subtle difference here, and I suspect Beyond of being not unintentionally misleading when writing those words!

When Morkin starts out on his journey, he should travel N-W-NW-NE. This will bring him, in exactly one day, to the Lord of Shadows, who can be recruited to his aid. Do not, however, move Shadows at this point (in any case, he is always 'slightly tired' when you reach him, but don't ask me what he's been up to in that forest!)

You may think that it would be more sensible to take a more direct route to Shadows, which would be a combination of three moves North and one West, but this would involve Morkin in the risk of being killed by wolves or skulkrin (he is not particularly good at overcoming the latter, especially, unless armed). The directions I have given are, therefore, the safest. You will find that it is sometimes preferable to take slightly longer routes

occasionally when directing a single character, unless they have with them a sword such as Dragonslayer or Wolf-slayer (incidentally, each sword will kill all three kinds of creatures, not just the one it is named after). A single character should always take an available sword rather than the leader of an army — if 2,400 warriors and riders can't kill a few wolves, they aren't going to be much use when the real fun starts!



Because you have recruited the Lord of Shadows, Morkin's journey will be less hazardous insofar as wolves, dragons and skulkrin are concerned. Shadows and his 1,000 warriors can go ahead of Morkin and kill them all. However, Shadows is not at all as successful when it comes to fighting Doomdark's minions — when situated at a keep he can usually hold his own for one night, but without such protection, or the support of other armies, he can easily lose all his men in one go (sometimes himself as well, which would be a pity, because he's probably most anxious to return to whatever — or whoever — is waiting for him in that forest!)

Anyway, to continue . . . On the second day, you should direct Morkin and his protecting band North-easterly to the Keep of Dodrak. Here, if you're lucky, they will be able to spend a night without encountering Doomdark. Shadows and his men should refresh themselves here (Morkin will not need this facility yet). Remember that whatever benefits (or otherwise!) are offered by ruins, liths, and so on, can only be taken advantage of once — do not put 'utterly invigorated' troops into a lake when you also command an army which is tiring.

On the third day, three moves North will take the travellers into the Mountains of Dodrak, and from here, on the fourth day, you will, on moving slightly North again towards the Plains of Ogrim, see two groups of mountains ahead of you. Position yourself so you can see a Tower in each of these directions, and aim for the one on the right. This will lead you to the Ruin of Coroth, where Morkin can

recruit Farflame the Dragonlord. At this point, it doesn't matter too much if Shadows loses his army (which he may well do, as Doomdark arrives here at about the same time) because Farflame is an excellent fighter and can easily kill up to 450 men in one go, which is more than Shadows and his warriors can manage! As a matter of fact, it can be an actual advantage later on if Shadows does find himself without an army . . .

If, when leaving Coroth, you find yourself being pursued by Doomdark's men, proceed North to the Forest of Lothoril, where Morkin will be able to seek the assistance of the Lord of Lothoril. Do not stay here too long, however, as the enemy will arrive within a day or two. If you are concentrating on a military defeat, you should leave Lothoril at his keep so you can remain aware of what is going on there — Doomdark is unlikely to return once Morkin has left.

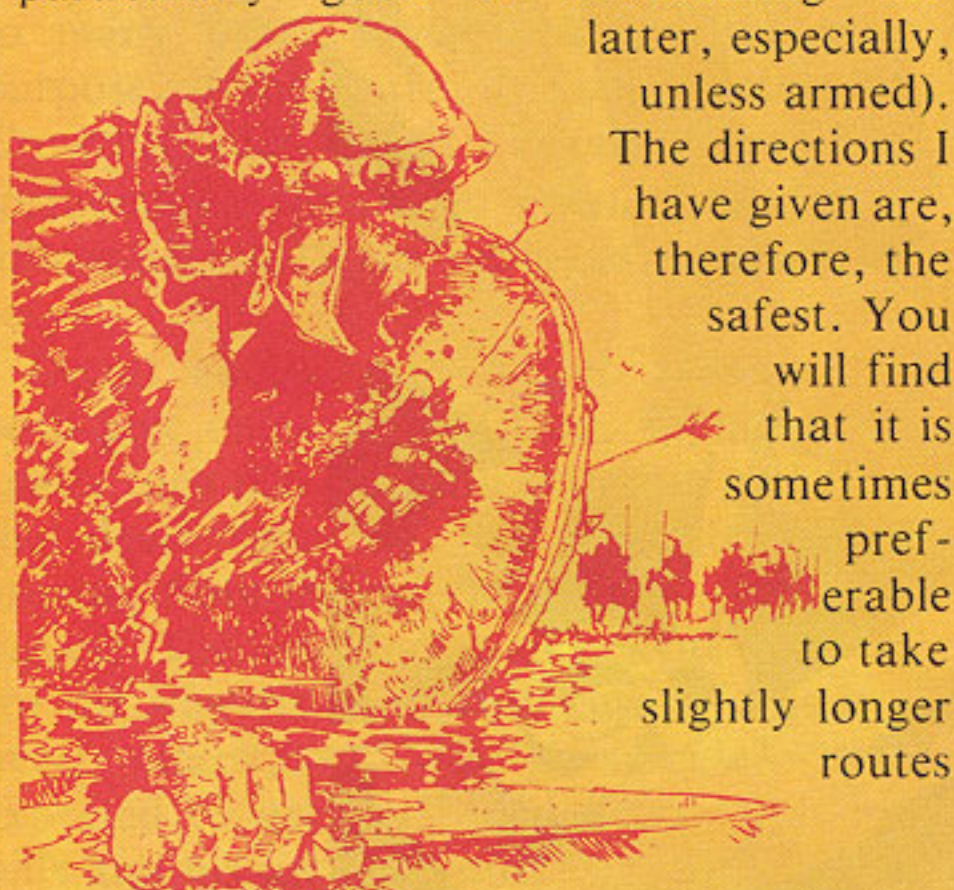
Once past the Keep of Lothoril, you are almost home and dry . . .

On your way to the Tower of Doom (no, I am not going to give you directions!) let anyone without a sword collect Dragonslayer at the Cavern of Death, and whoever is most in need of refreshment acquire this at the Cavern of Despair. You needn't take the Lord of Shadows on this last lap. He will only attract attention if he still has his army, and if he hasn't he is of no use anyway. Once you reach the Tower, Morkin should SEEK. Then, as long as the right person is with him, just press the Night button, and — voila!

If Farflame is dead when you reach Coroth (check he hasn't been forced to move slightly by Doomdark) you can either go towards the Frozen Wastes and recruit Fawkrin the Skulkrin at Moonhenge (whatever you do, do not SEEK here — you've been warned!) or go straight to the Tower of Doom and steal the Ice Crown.

If you choose the latter course, you then have two choices. You can either go towards the NE end of the Frozen Wastes and recruit Lorgrim the Wise or send Morkin to Lake Mirrow (S from the Keep of Lothoril). The second alternative is probably the easiest, as the Tower of Lorgrim is difficult to locate, and Doomdark has lookout armies posted at various strategic points along the Wastes.

If you wish to take the Ice Crown but not destroy it, in order to concentrate on the military defeat, place Morkin in the Citadel of Gloom (NW corner of Frozen Wastes). Doomdark rarely attacks here more than once, and if you HIDE a single character in





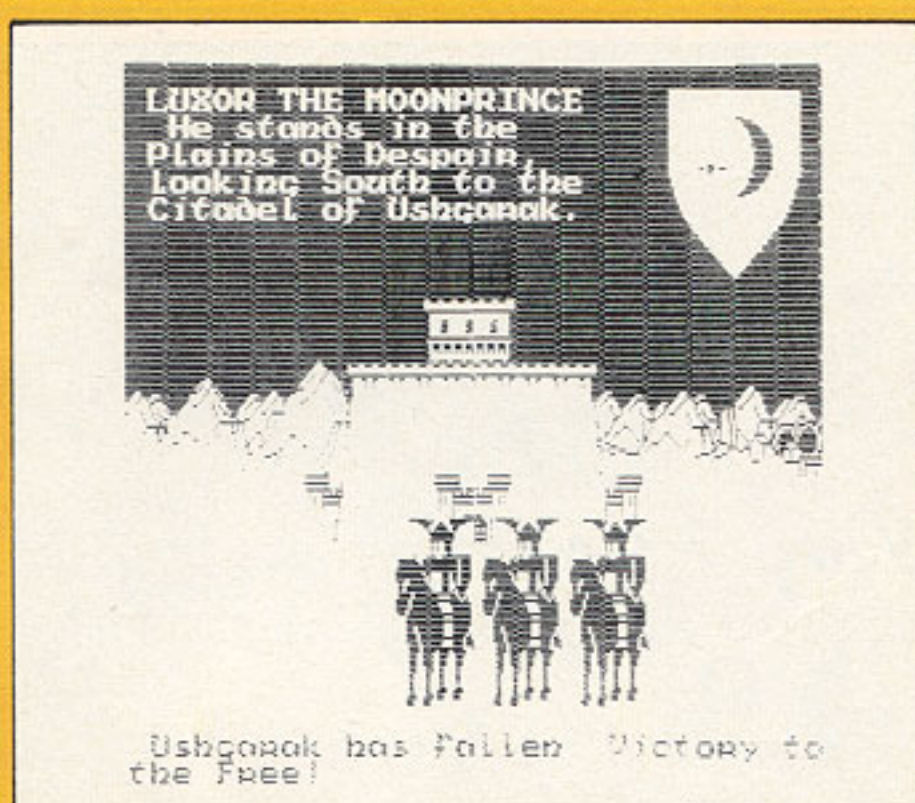
the snowhall on the Plains of the Lost (this is where an armyless Shadows can come in handy) you can easily see when an army is approaching and temporarily move Morkin out of the Citadel into the Mountains of Gloom (just move North a couple of times). Of course, you then run the risk of Doomdark's men going straight to Morkin and attacking him, so if he is fairly energetic it may be safer to stay in the Citadel and let the Lord of Gloom (who should, of course, be recruited) protect him — Morkin can survive several battles as long as he is not exhausted.

Do not worry about the fact that the Lord of Gloom is 'utterly afraid' when in his Citadel. For some reason, as soon as he takes one step out of it he brightens up considerably, and he will fight. Once more, it seems as if Beyond are pulling a fast one — but I didn't waste my time sending commanders all the way to the Citadel of Gloom to take over Gloom's men!

Finally, it is worth mentioning that you should always keep Morkin and his 'guards' together — Farflame, for instance, can travel as far in one hour as Morkin can in a day over flat ground, but don't fall into the deliberate trap set by Beyond by letting him go on ahead. If by any chance Morkin and Farflame (for instance) are separated, send the latter to the Tower of Doom, or some location on the way which you can find easily, and HIDE them there until Morkin catches up.

Now for the military defeat!

According to Mike Singleton, the creator of *Midnight*, it is more or less impossible to take Ushgarak before Xajorkith falls, so you may as well take all available men off



the citadels and keeps (including Xajorkith) in order to build up your armies, rather than leaving them for Doomdark to wantonly destroy (in fact, Mike himself also recommends this strategy).

Send Luxor SE twice and then S to the Citadel of Gard. SEEKing at the Lith of Gard will earn him an extra day's traveling, and doing the same at the Lith of the Moon or Mitharg will arm him with the very useful sword Wolfslayer. Another of these useful weapons is available at the Citadel of Gard.

Continuing on his way, Luxor should travel E to Brith, SE to Rorath, E to Thimrath and Xajorkith, and North through Dregrim to Ithron, via Utarg and Kumar. It is a good idea to keep him without armies at this stage, as he will move quicker and be safer, and you can easily provide him with the full quota of 1,200 riders and the same number of warriors by allowing 'utterly afraid' and 'very afraid' characters to drop men on keeps and citadels in the North and letting Luxor (and other brave commanders) collect them

when they arrive.

Corleth the Fey should go straight to the Forest of Kor and then to Dreams, via the Keep of Blood (four N and straight E, in any combination to avoid danger). He also may be better off without an army, as the journey from Kor to Dreams is a hazardous one. Waste no time in arriving at the Village of Kor, as Doomdark arrives there early.

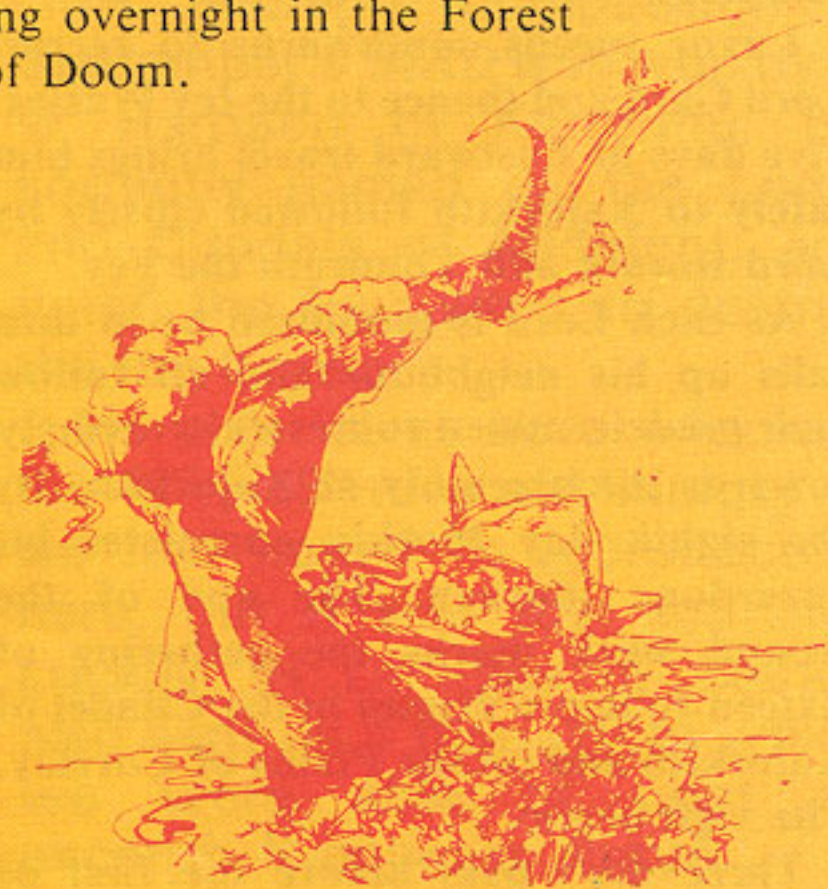
Rorthron the Wise should aim for the Citadel of Shimeril (South easterly) and thence to the Village of Thrall, the Keep of Herath (Doomdark arrives here early, too), the Citadels of Marakith and Kumar, and the Keep of Utarg. Very few characters can recruit the Utarg — Rorthron is one, the Lord of Dregrim is another, and Luxor sometimes can, usually if he assists him in battle. Note, however, that the reverse doesn't always apply — Utarg doesn't seem able to recruit Dregrim, for instance.

The other commanders can recruit the remaining Lords — Rorath or Brith can collect Morning, Shimeril can recruit Mitharg and Morning can recruit Dawn and Athoril. Keep smaller armies together rather than splitting them up.

Note that the size of an army doesn't necessarily indicate how well it will do in battle. Thimrath the Fey, for instance, has a relatively small army, yet he can quite easily take three keeps in succession and lose very few men. Generally speaking, the armies of the Fey seem to be worth the equivalent of an army double the size commanded by a Lord of the Free.

Rorthron and Corleth can take part in battles when they are invigorated if their assistance is needed. Rorthron, for example, can put paid to around 125 Foul in one go when 'utterly invigorated' — indeed, I found on one occasion that using this rather worn-looking old man to assist a Lord in trouble actually meant the difference between victory and defeat!

Send all your armies in a Northerly direction to the Citadel of Ithron via the Forest of Whispers. Stay at Ithron until all your armies are together and fully recuperated from their journeys. Attack from Doomdark at this stage of the game is unlikely. There are a fair number of keeps and villages around Ithron where you can speed up your armies' recoveries, and several lakes along the top of the Frozen Wastes, which you can use as you approach Ushgarak from the rear, gathering overnight in the Forest of Doom.



*The 32 characters inhabiting the Lands of Midnight are listed below:*

## Main Characters

LUXOR THE MOONPRINCE  
MORKIN  
CORLETH THE FEY  
RORTHON THE WISE

## Lords of the Free

(Citadels)

LORD OF DAWN  
LORD OF GARD  
LORD OF GLOOM  
LORD OF ITHRON  
LORD OF KUMAR  
LORD OF MARAKITH  
LORD OF SHIMERIL  
LORD OF XAJORKITH

## Lords of the Fey

(Citadels)

LORD OF DREAMS  
LORD OF WHISPERS

## Others

(Keeps)

THE UTARG OF UTARG

## 'Quest' Characters

FARFLAME THE DRAGONLORD  
FAWKIN THE SKULKIN  
LORGRIM THE WISE

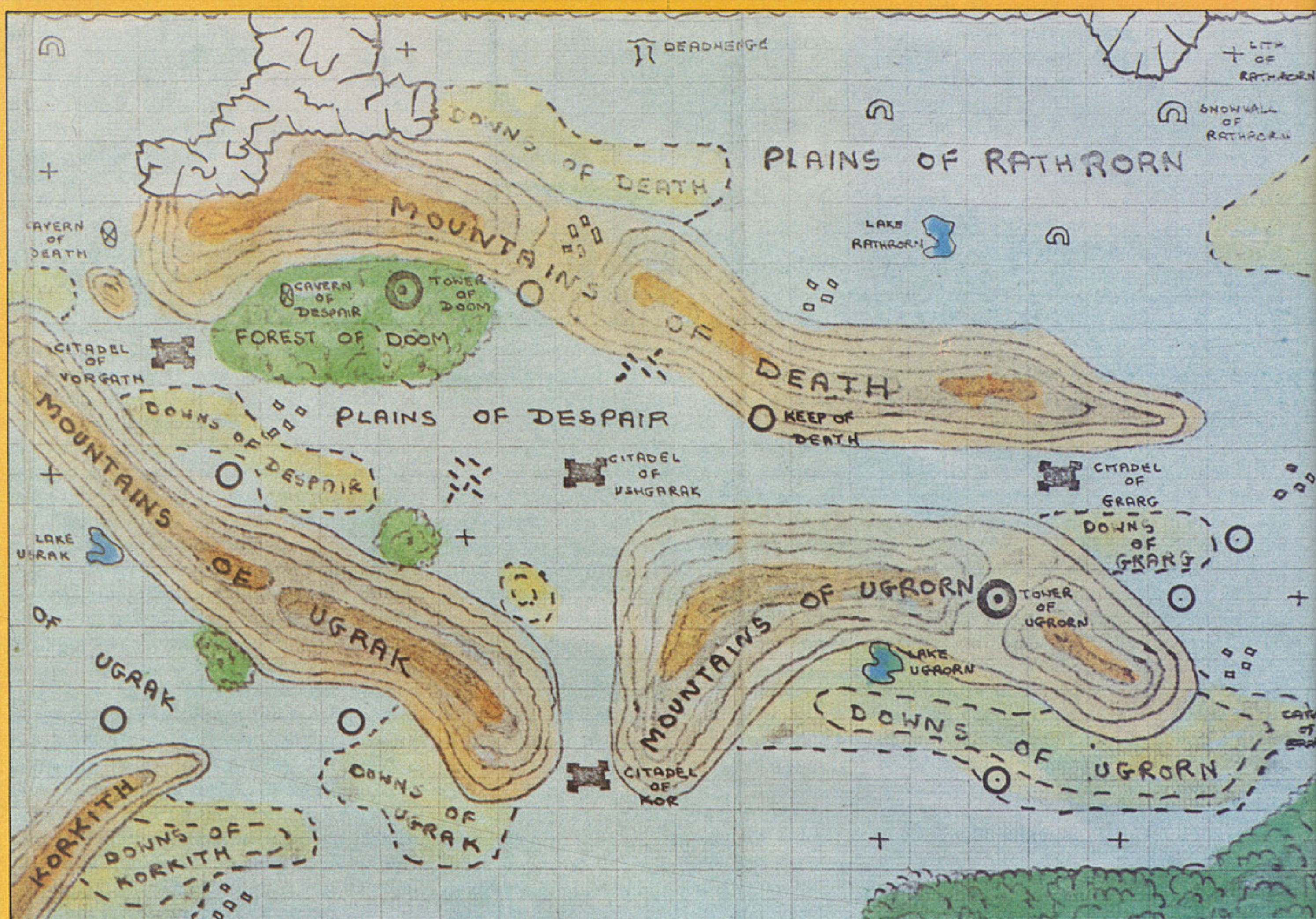
(Keeps)

LORD ATHORIL  
LORD BLOOD  
LORD BRITH  
LORD HERATH  
LORD MITHARG  
LORD MORNING  
LORD RORATH  
LORD TRORN

(Keeps)

LORD OF DREGIM  
KORINEL THE FEY  
LORD OF LOTHORIL  
LORD OF SHADOWS  
THIMRATH THE FEY  
LORD OF THRALL





## The defence of Xajorkith

*Geoff Lyas successfully defeated Doomdark by defending Xajorkith — here's how.*

THE COUNCIL of the Wise is dissolved. The War has begun.

Rorthron travels East, hurriedly rallying Lords to the Cause, his ultimate goal to guide the Lords Ithron and Marakith to the safety of Lorgrim's Tower, there to remain until the final assault on Ushgarak.

Morkin, accompanied by Corleth, is despatched North-West to seek refuge in the Citadel of Gloom. From this vantage point he effectively neutralises the Ice Fear throughout the entire campaign.

Luxor speeds southwards to recruit Lord Gard and thence to the Icy Wastes. Five days of Eastward travel brings him safely to Xajorkith followed closely by Lord Rorath and Thimrath the Fey.

As each Lord is mobilised he in turn calls up his neighbour and all follow their predetermined routes unswervingly towards the assembly at Xajorkith. By the eighth day Morkin completes his hazardous journey. The end of the second week marks the gathering of sixteen footsore armies in the Citadel of Xajorkith and on the Plains of Corelay. The vigil begins...

Three days pass before the first of

Doomdark's many armies arrives, hurls itself at the Citadel walls and is completely destroyed. For forty days the assaults continue with the same results on each occasion until on the sixtieth day of the war the Forces of Darkness are spent.

Luxor selects his four strongest Marshals and together they march irresistibly Northwards...

### Conclusions

The campaign ended with the fall of Ushgarak on the eighty-sixth day with no loss of Lordly life. The following observations may hold the key...

Doomdark has two weapons, the Ice Fear and his many armies.

Morkin attracts the Ice Fear.

Morkin is safe in the Northwest. Xajorkith is in the Southeast.

Doomdark has a finite number of men, and must garrison captured Keeps and Citadels of which there are many between Ushgarak and Xajorkith.

Once an army is in garrison it may no longer move.

A significantly outnumbered offensive or defensive army is annihilated with no loss to the opposition.

Doomdark's forces attack as soon as they have a target. They do not wait to gather strength.

You should now take the two keeps near the Citadel of Ushgarak — place half your armies in each keep, balancing them equally for size. Put the not-so-brave commanders and their men in the same keep as Luxor, and let them fight alongside him — they'll perform better. Your men can remain in these keeps until they are all 'utterly invigorated' if you wish, Doomdark will not risk attacking such numbers. From one keep, take half your armies and move West once to the Citadel. From the other keep, take half again and move N-N-NW. Attack Ushgarak and, if necessary, return to the keeps and continue with fresh armies. Use the lakes and villages around the Citadel when refreshment is needed. The Citadel nearest to the furthest keep can be attacked and taken if you wish. Then move straight back into the keep, let Doomdark reclaim the Citadel, and attack and take it again — I slaughtered about 10,000 Foul nasties that way (needless to say, Doomdark didn't risk another attempt!) Don't waste energy doing this, however, if you are seriously attempting to take Ushgarak before Doomdark takes Xajorkith (if you manage it, let Mike Singleton know how you did it!)

Also, you should avoid marching on Ushgarak until Morkin has possession of the Ice Crown — unless, of course, you're trying to prove something!

You will probably find, as I did, that one night's fighting is all it takes if you have already stolen the Ice Crown and Xajorkith has long fallen into enemy hands. (It's the shock, you see, they thought they'd dispos-





ed of your lot and were busy celebrating . . .!). Actually, I was rather disappointed to find it so easy — I only lost five men (honestly!) and I had so many armies I couldn't even put them all into battle! So much for the ding-dong affair I'd been building up to in the three months since the Solstice had begun (yes, it did take me that long, but the shock to Doomdark was probably greater because of it!). Obviously, the longer it takes you to reach Ushgarak, the more of Doomdark's men you will have to overcome, as more and more armies keep arriving from Xajorkith; but I disposed of about 20,000 in that one night, so I wouldn't worry too much if you're at it for a year!

Incidentally, never try to put too many armies into any one battle. It is better to lose a few of your men and kill the majority of Doomdark's army rather than scaring them off — your army will tire but won't kill anyone!

Doomdark has three kinds of armies — attackers, defenders and what Mike Singleton calls ‘hunters’. The first two varieties are self-explanatory; the third are programmed to follow certain characters, such as Luxor and Morkin. If these armies are involved in battle they will immediately withdraw if they see the character they are programmed to hunt, and start after them. This is why it is essential to use the HIDE facility whenever danger is anticipated. (Yes, I know things would be a whole lot simpler if Morkin could HIDE, but would you really like it that easy!)

The key to success in this marvellous game, especially where the quest is concerned, is to make full use of the SAVE facility. You should SAVE prior to entering into any battles which have a doubtful outcome, and *always* before moving Morkin, at least from day three onwards. Then, if you lose your battle, or Morkin encounters danger or is killed, you can re-load your saved game as often as is necessary to achieve success in battle or safety for Morkin before allowing Night to fall. It is worth adding here that the first time you enter into a battle you will kill more men than on immediately subsequent attempts (after a while, however, the total will creep up again) so be prepared for the fact that if you have to re-stage a battle because Morkin was killed, you will not do so well when using your saved game, unless you continue re-loading until an acceptable level is reached.

*The Lords of Midnight* has only one or two 'faults'. The most inconvenient is something which seems like a bug in the program but, according to Mr Singleton, probably isn't (I don't think he's telling!). Basically, what happens is that if you prefer to play a defensive game and try to place more than 1,200 men in a citadel, you will find that most of them disappear inside, never to return (well, I suppose there have to be some women somewhere in this Land!). As an example, Xajorkith will have 750 riders in it when you arrive. You can place 400 more into it, but if you exceed this number you will lose 1,000 and not get them back.

My only other 'complaint' concerns the rather feeble victory announcements. Bleeps and flashing lights would have been out of place, I admit, but what does finally appear is something of an anti-climax after all the blood, sweat and tears!

As things are supposed to come in threes, I'll also have a little moan about the fact that the keyboard overlay seems to have a will entirely of its own.

Enjoy yourselves in the Land of Midnight, but don't look for me there. As soon as I'm utterly invigorated I'll be joining Tarithel the Fey on her journey *beyond* the Frozen Wastes to rescue Morkin.

Hold on there, son, I'll soon have you out of there, Doomdark's daughter doesn't frighten *me*. (Why does that boy always expect me to get him out of trouble?)

**OUR *Midnight* competition in September's *MAD* was won by G W Harrison of Kettering. He correctly named all the Lords and Citadels of Midnight, and listed the four ways to destroy the Ice Crown.**

He also let us have a look at his 40" x 30" map of Midnight — we had hoped to reproduce it here, but it was just too big! Luckily, H Douglas of Belfast also sent us a map, from which we were able to print an excerpt. It appears above.