

Set in TSR's Forgotten Realms game world (the same world as SSI's earlier *Pool of Radiance*), *Curse of the Azure Bonds* tells a seemingly fresh story: Your party members awakened to find their arms emblazoned with glowing tattoos. These magical sigils bend them to the will of unseen wizards who force them to commit evil acts (such as attacking the King!). In addition to slaying different wizards to remove each of the bonds, your team must round up the Helm of Dragons and two other artifacts.

The story seems fresh, but when you reach the endgame, you find the plot relies on a hackneyed, monster movie motif: Tyranthraxus, the fiend you assumed was killed at the end of *Pool*, is back with a New Master Plan.

In the end, the plot offers nothing new, and, similarly, the game system, which has first-person dungeon graphics and aerial-view combat arenas where your characters and the monster are portrayed and moved individually, contains no significant new features. The designers *did* implement a Fix command, which tells your Cleric to auto-cast enough Heal spells to cure the entire party, conveniently bypassing the need for you to manually have him Memorize, Rest, and cast them.

Like *Pool*, *Bonds* focuses on tactical combat rather than puzzle-solving—there's lots of combat, and some encounters take hours to complete. Also like *Pool*, *Bonds* is a magic- and hardware-heavy environment, with dozens of different swords, missile weapons, and spells drawn directly from the *AD & D* paper and pencil game. It's recommended only for adventurers who love war games, for the experience is one of casting spells and swinging swords instead of blasting away with artillery and rifle fire.

Type:
Fantasy Roleplaying

Difficulty:
Advanced

Systems:
MS-DOS (512K and two floppy drives or a hard drive required, 640K for Tandy 16-color, mouse optional, CGA/EGA/VGA/Tandy); Apple (128K required, joystick optional); C-64 (joystick optional)

Company:
SSI/Electronic Arts

The Curse of the Azure Bonds



The Solution

A number of dungeons and special events are not necessary for completing the quest and have not been addressed or mapped in this solution.

Character Creation

Include several humans in your party—they can advance to higher levels than other races and then switch classes. Be sure to include a female Elf for the special quest in the caves near Hap. For lots of gold, visit the Nomad Camp and accept the leader's invitation.

Combat & Magic

Most of the tips in the *Champions of Krynn* solution are applicable. Magic-users and Thieves should wear bracers for armor. The key to victory is the Dust of Disappearance, found in the Thieves' Treasure Room. Use it before a battle. Duplicate this and other special items. For example, after defeating the Dark Elf Lord in the Wizard's Tower, give the +3 Plate and +2 Shield to a character. Save the game, then reboot. Load the saved game and remove one character from the party. Add an extra one. Transfer armor and shield to the extra character. Transfer items to party members. Drop the

extra character to your back-up disk. Add an extra character from the original disk and repeat the process until all party members have duplicates of the items.

Tilverton

After exploring the town, head to the bar for tips and a Journal Entry. Visit the Armory and gear up quickly — things start happening fast when the King's carriage arrives (A). Defeat the guards, then head for the nearest alley and follow the Thief. Meet the Guildmaster (B), then join the fight with the Fire Knives. Explore all rooms, especially the Treasure Room (C) for the Dust of Disappearance, then head to (D) and enter the Sewers. Explore all rooms here to obtain experience points and magic items. Find the Training Hall (through secret entrance on east side of hall in third section of Sewers) to advance your party. Exit the Sewers into the Fire Knives' hideout.

Fire Knives' Hideout

Explore every room to obtain special items and experience points, especially locations (A) through (E). Defeat the Checkpoint guards (F), then camp and save the game. Cast spells to lower Thac0 and gain saving throws. Finish off the leader (G), then head outside.

Across the Land

Visit taverns and obtain tips in all towns except Yulash and Zhentil Keep. Go to the Standing Stone, where you'll be directed to the Red Wizard's Tower. Don't go there yet. Instead, earn more experience points and treasure by patrolling the forests and slaying Ettins, Displacer Beasts, Dragons, and Griffins. Also travel between towns along the trail and wilderness routes to find special detours. In the wilderness between Yulash and Voonlar is a cave with several magical items.

Headed for Hap

When your party has hit at least eighth level, head for Hap, a small village south of the Stone and Essembria (not mapped here). Take AC4 Bracers and extra Darts or a Staff Sling +1 (give the weapons to Akabar when he joins your party). Defeat Dark Elf patrols and go to the Inn, where you meet Akabar. Don't leave town until after the battle in the barn. Fight at least six patrols before going to the barn in the south part of town. Enter the barn and defeat Efreet. After the battle, heal up and head for the wilderness and the cave (directions are found on Efreet's body).

Cavern After Hap

If you choose not to enter the cave, Akabar will leave the party. If you have a female in the party, see Silk (A). Regardless, visit the Salamanders (B) and talk Sly into opening chests for gold and experience points. Then go to Crimdrar's Lair (C). A Confuse spell occasionally works on him. Have most characters surround him and hack away. Then head for the Wizard's Tower at (D).

The Tower of the Wizard

Attack the Wizard. After defeating the first wave of guards, head downstairs to level one (the roof isn't mapped here). The Dark Elf Lord (A) is tough: Surround and hack away while casting Lightning Bolts and Magic Missiles.

At the Trial of the Sphere (B), have Akabar represent you. Go to level two via (C). Pass through the Illusion (D) and defeat the Dark Elves and Owl Bears (E) guarding the stairs. Take the stairs to level three. Visit rooms (F), (G), and (H) for experience and treasure. Go to level four via (I). Head for (J) and defeat Draconis and obtain Wand of Ice Storm, Wand of Fireballs, and other magic items. Exit via the door at (K).

If you saw Queen Silk and have the pod from (G), take it to her. Go to the Standing Stone, where you'll be told to seek Green to the northwest. At this point, you should wander the countryside to find special events and engage in battles to strengthen the party.

Yulash

Sneak into town. Watch for Pits. If caught by Red Plumes, go to the Commander's Office and talk Nice. He'll probably give you access to the city; if not, fight your way out of the Office. You'll meet two Keep Monsters and Shambling Mounds galore in Yulash. Neutralize the Keep Monsters' magic when fighting them; Ice Storm and the Defoliation Wand work well on Mounds (from which you get the Wand of Defoliation and Wand of Lightning Bolts). Head to the Pit in the NW corner of town.

The Pit of Moander

Get Alias and Dragonbait (A) to join the party by telling them your story. Then fight the Cultists and the Slug at (B) and tackle Mogion at (C). There are two waves of attacks here, so don't waste all your spells on the first one. Exit the Pit after victory.

Zhentil Keep and Dexam's Shrine

At the Standing Stone, you'll be told to seek Black to the north. Go to the Keep and visit the Magic

Shop (A) for Hornet Darts and Magic Arrows. Meet Ruskettle (B), who takes you to Dimwart's Cell (C). Explore the area before going through the secret door (D) in the west wall. Try the Trap Door (E) to get the Wand of Paralyzation. When you meet Dexam at (F), the fun begins. Say "Yes," and she'll take you to her temple (Dexam's Shrine on map from Journal Entry #59), where you'll fight her guards. Use Fireball Wands and heavy offensive spells to defeat the five waves of Minotaurs and Clerics. Exit temple through the southwest door on the same map and meet Dexam at the area marked "Minotaurs." Defeat Dexam, exit, and go to Standing Stone to meet the Evil One himself.

Myth Drannor

Don't rob the graves here; return any bodies you find to their graves. Use Fighters against Rakshasa. If you don't loot graves, you'll get special weapons

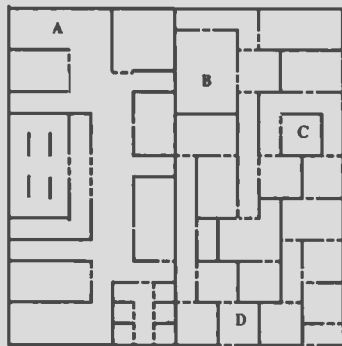
to use against Rakshasa; save these weapons for the Ruins, if you want to fight the Rakshasa. For experience points and gear, visit sites (A) through (G). Enter the Ruins by going east through the woods to the next area.

The Ruins of Myth Drannor

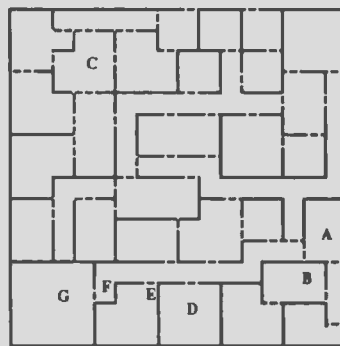
Talk Nice to Rakshasa patrols and offer gold. You can get some gold by helping the man at (A) and by going to (B). Also visit (C) and help this individual fight at the warehouse, which you can then loot. Head north to (D) and the Temple.

The Temple of Tyranthraxus

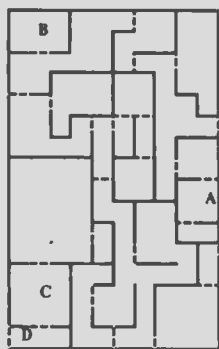
After defeating the minions at (A), go to (B), and up to level two. Tackle Tyranthraxus at (C). Clear out any Margoyles and High Priests with Fireball spells. Ice Storm, Bows, and Fighters are effective on Mr. T.



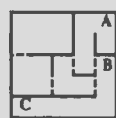
Tilverton and Thieves' Guild



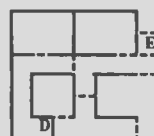
Fire Knife's Hideout



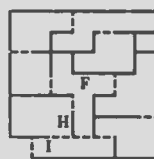
Cavern after Hap



Level One

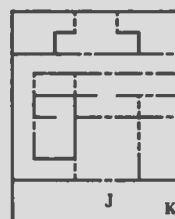


Level Two

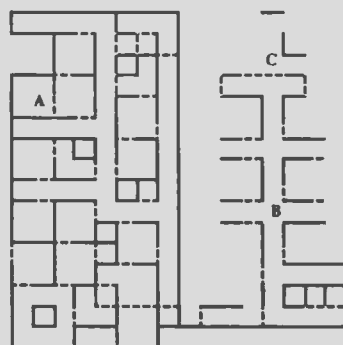


Level Three

Wizard's Tower



Level Four



Pit of Moander

Map Key: Curse of the Azure Bonds

Tilverton

- A: King's Carriage
- B: Guildmaster, Fire Knives
- C: Thieves' Treasure (Dust of Disappearance)
- D: Sewer Entrance

Fire Knives Hideout

- A: Weapons, Journal Entry
- B: Library, Journal Entry
- C: Journal Entry
- D: Hospital, Journal Entry
- E: Armory, Magic Weapons and Armor
- F: Checkpoint, Battle
- G: Fire Knives' Leader

Cave of Crimdar

- A: Queen Silk
- B: Salamanders
- C: Crimdar
- D: Wizard's Tower Entrance

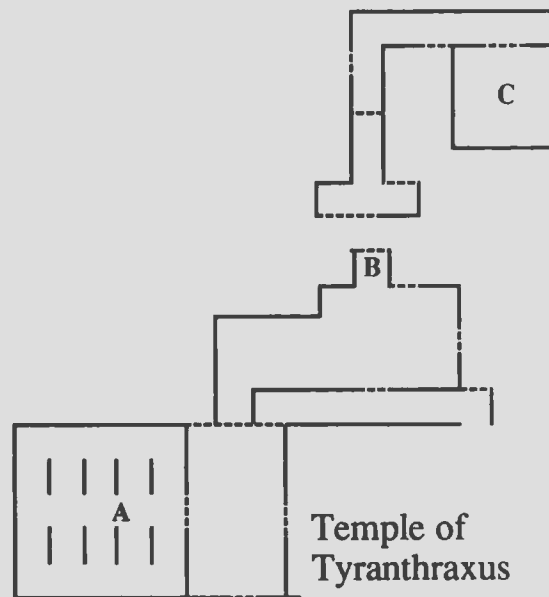
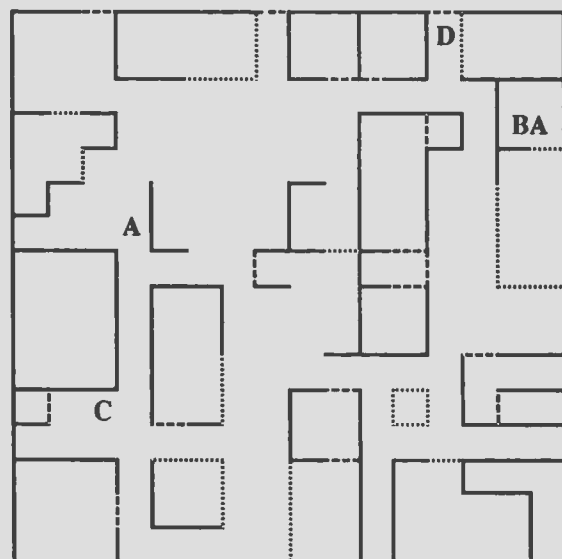
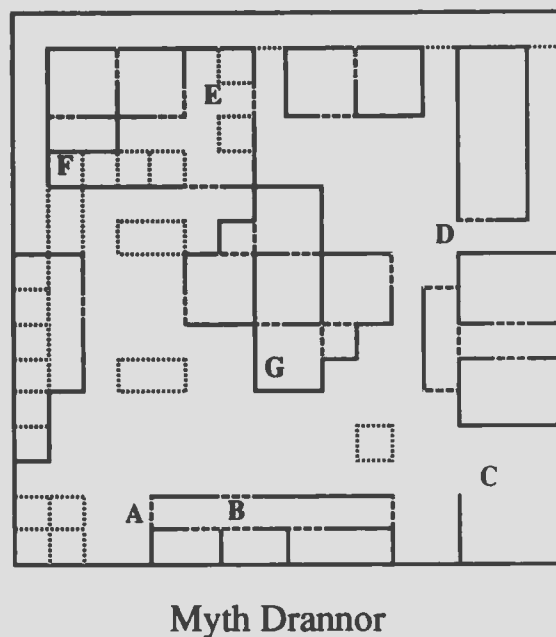
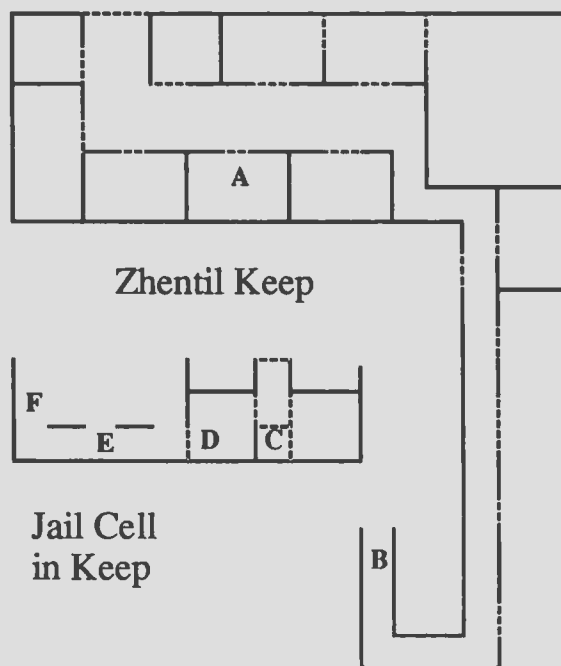
Wizard's Tower

- A: Dark Elf Lord
- B: Trial of the Sphere
- C: To Level Two
- D: Illusion (pass through it)
- E: Encounter at stairs to Level Three
- F: Encounter
- G: Pod (Take to Queen Silk)
- H: Treasure
- I: To Level Four
- J: Draconis, Wand of Ice Storm
- K: Exit

Pit of Moander

- A: Alias and Dragonbait
- B: Cultists and Slug
- C: Mogion

Curse of the Azure Bonds: Map 2



Map 2 Key: Curse of the Azure Bonds

Zhentil Keep

- A: Magic Shop
- B: Ruskettle
- C: Dimwart's Cell
- D: Secret Door to Shrine area
- E: Trap Door (Wand of Paralyzation, other weapons)
- F: Dexam

Myth Drannor

(The lines with small dots indicate fences, hedges, and other obstacles.)

- A: Spirit, Journal Entry
- B: Spider Web, Encounter
- C: Spirit of Princess Demeaur
- D: Rakshasa
- E: Ghostly Shape
- F: Queen's Ghost, Blessed Arrows
- G: Encounter

Ruins of Myth Drannor

- A: Man being attacked
- B: Treasure (See A)
- C: Rakshasa with a plan
- D: Warehouse and loot

Temple of Tyranthraxus

- A: First encounter with Tyranthraxus and Minions
- B: To Level Two
- C: Final battle with Tyranthraxus

The Quest Buster's CODE

Use this table to decode clues. To make this process more convenient, photocopy it and place it beside the coded sections.

b = a

c = b

d = c

e = d

f = e

g = f

h = g

i = h

j = i

k = j

l = k

m = l

n = m

o = n

p = o

q = p

r = q

s = r

t = s

u = t

v = u

w = v

x = w

y = x

z = y

a = z

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