

GARDEN OF BONES

WRITTEN BY
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(based on the Fighting Fantasy gamebook system created
by Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone)

INTRODUCTION

Before embarking on your adventure, you must first determine your own strengths and weaknesses. You use dice to determine your initial scores. On pages 5 there is an *Adventure Sheet*, which you may use to record the details of your adventure. On it you will find boxes for recording the scores of your attributes. You are advised either to record your scores on the *Adventure Sheet* in pencil or to make photocopies of the sheet for use in future adventures.

Skill, Stamina and Luck

Roll one dice. Add 6 to the number rolled and enter this total in the SKILL box on the *Adventure Sheet*.

Roll two dice. Add 12 to the number rolled and enter this total in the STAMINA box.

Roll one dice. Add 6 to the number and enter this total in the LUCK box.

For reasons that will be explained below all your scores will change constantly during the adventure. You must keep an accurate record of these scores, and for this reason you are advised to write small in the boxes or to keep an eraser handy. But never rub out your *Initial* scores. Although you may be awarded additional SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK points, their totals may never exceed their *Initial* scores, except on those very rare occasions when the text specifically tells you so.

Your SKILL reflects your expertise in combat, your dexterity and agility. Your STAMINA score reflects how healthy and physically fit you are. Your LUCK score indicates how lucky you are.

Battles

During your adventure you will often encounter hostile creatures which will attack you, and you yourself may choose to draw your sword against an enemy you chance across. In some such situations you may be given special options allowing you to deal with the encounter in an unusual manner, but in most cases you will have to resolve battles as described below.

Enter your opponents SKILL and STAMINA scores in the first vacant Encounter Box on your Adventure Sheet. You should also make a note of any special abilities or instructions, which are unique to that particular opponent. Then follow this sequence:

1. Roll both dice for your opponent. Add its SKILL score to the total rolled, to find its Attack Strength.
2. Roll both dice for yourself, then add your current SKILL score to find your Attack Strength.
3. If your Attack Strength is higher than your opponent's, you have wounded it: proceed to step 4.
4. If your opponent's Attack Strength is higher than yours, it has wounded you: proceed to step 5.
5. If both Attack Strength totals are the same, you have avoided or parried each other's blows: start a new Attack Round from step 1 above.
4. You have wounded your opponent, so subtract 2 points from its STAMINA score. You may use LUCK here to do additional damage (see below).
5. Your opponent has wounded you, so subtract 2 points from your STAMINA score. You may use LUCK to reduce the loss of STAMINA (see below).

6. Begin the next Attack Round, starting again at step 1. This sequence continues until the STAMINA score of either you or your opponent reaches zero, which means death. If your opponent dies, you are free to continue with your adventure. If you die, your adventure ends and you must start all over again by creating a new character.

Fighting More Than One Opponent

In some situations you may find yourself facing more than one person or creature in combat. Sometimes you will treat them as a single opponent; sometimes you will be able to fight each in turn; and at other times you will have to fight them all at the same time! If they are treated as a single opponent, the combat is resolved normally. When you are instructed to fight your opponents one at a time, the combat is again resolved normally - except that once you defeat an enemy, the next steps forward to fight you! When you find yourself under attack from more than one opponent at the same time, each adversary will make a separate attack on you in the course of each Attack Round, but you can choose which one to fight. Attack your chosen target as in a normal battle. Against any additional opponents you throw for your Attack Strength in the normal way; if your Attack Strength is greater than your opponent's, in this instance you will not inflict any damage; you can regard it as if you have parried an incoming blow. If your Attack Strength is lower than your adversary's, however, you will be wounded in the normal way. Of course, you will have to settle the outcome against each additional adversary separately.

Luck

At various times during your adventure, either in battles or when you come across other situations in which you could be either Lucky or Unlucky (details of these are given in the relevant paragraphs), you may use LUCK to make the outcome more favourable to you. But beware! Using LUCK is a risky business and, if you are Unlucky, the results could be disastrous.

The procedure for *Testing your Luck* works as follows: roll two dice. If the number rolled is equal to or less than your current LUCK score, you have been Lucky and the outcome will be in your favour. If the number rolled is higher than your current LUCK score, you have been Unlucky and will be penalized.

Each time you *Test your Luck*, you must subtract 1 point from your current LUCK score. Thus you will soon realize that, the more you rely on your LUCK, the more risky this procedure will become.

Using Luck in Battles

In certain paragraphs you will be told to *Test your Luck*, and you will then find out the consequences of being Lucky or Unlucky. However, in battles, you always have the option of using your LUCK, either to inflict more serious damage on an opponent you have just wounded, or to minimize the effects of a wound you have just received.

If you have just wounded an opponent, you may *Test your Luck* as described above. If you are Lucky you have inflicted a severe wound; deduct an extra 2 points from your opponent's STAMINA score. If you are Unlucky, however, your blow only scratches your opponent; and you deduct only 1 point from your opponent's STAMINA (i.e., instead of scoring the normal 2 points of damage, you now score only 1).

Whenever you yourself are wounded in combat, you may *Test your Luck* to try to minimize the wound. If you are Lucky, your opponent's blow only grazes you; deduct only 1 point from your STAMINA. If you are Unlucky, your wound is a serious one and you must deduct 1 extra STAMINA point (i.e., deduct a total of 3 points from your own STAMINA).

Remember: you must subtract 1 point from your LUCK score each time you Test your Luck.

More About Your Attributes

Skill

Your SKILL score will not change much during the course of your adventure. Occasionally, a paragraph may give instructions to increase or decrease your SKILL score, but it may not exceed its Initial value unless you are specifically instructed to the contrary.

At various times during your adventure, you will be told to *Test your Skill*. The procedure for this is exactly the same as that for *Testing your Luck*: roll two dice. If the number rolled is equal to or less than your current SKILL score, you have succeeded in your test and the result will go in your favour. If the number rolled is higher than your current SKILL score, you will have failed the test and will have to suffer the consequences. However, unlike *Testing your Luck*, do not subtract 1 point from your SKILL each time you *Test your Skill*.

Stamina

Your STAMINA score will change a lot during your adventure. It will drop as a result of wounds gained through combat, or by falling foul of traps and pitfalls, and it will also drop after you perform any particularly arduous task. If your STAMINA score ever falls to zero, you have been killed and should stop reading the book immediately. Brave adventurers who wish to pursue their quest must roll up a new character and start all over again.

You can restore lost STAMINA by eating meals or Provisions. You start the game without any Provisions, but during your adventure you will be able to obtain meals. You must keep track of how many meals worth of Provisions you have left by filling in the details in the Provisions box of your *Adventure Sheet*. Each time you eat a meal you may restore up to 4 points of STAMINA, but you must remember to deduct 1 meal from your Provisions box. You may stop and eat Provisions at any time except when you are engaged in a battle.

Luck

Additions to your LUCK score may be awarded in the adventure when you have been particularly lucky or created your own luck by some action. Details are given, where appropriate, in the paragraphs of the book. Remember that, as with SKILL and STAMINA, your LUCK score may never exceed its *Initial* value.

Equipment and Gold

You begin your adventure carrying a sword, a lantern and tinderbox, and a backpack to hold your Provisions and Gold Pieces. To find out how many Gold Pieces you begin your adventure with, roll two dice and add 12 to the number rolled. Note this total down in the Gold Pieces box on your *Adventure Sheet*. Your sword and lantern should be noted in the Equipment box on your *Adventure Sheet*, as must any other useful items you may acquire on your quest.

ADVENTURE SHEET

SKILL

Initial

Skill =

STAMINA

Initial

Stamina =

LUCK

Initial

Luck =

ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT CARRIED

NOTES

MONSTER ENCOUNTER BOXES

Skill =
Stamina =

Skill =
Stamina =

Skill =
Stamina =

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BACKGROUND

The man behind you slowly draws a dagger. With a single motion you sweep your sword from its sheath and strike the weapon from his hand with a ringing clang. The dagger spins high into the air. You kick the man hard in the chest and he topples onto his backside. A second later the dagger lands point-first in the ground between his legs.

He yelps in surprise and his brow glistens in the moonlight as you aim the point of your sword at his throat. "I'm sorry," he babbles. "B-b-but..."

You lower your sword and laugh. If it was gold he sought he only had to ask. You toss him a gold piece. In astonishment he studies its seal - that of Baron Sukumvit of Fang! "But these," he exclaims. "These are granted only to one who has survived the Trial..."

You laugh again and sheath your sword. The great riches that you recently acquired in Chiang Mai have indeed come in useful. Gold has bought you everything you ever wanted, except excitement.

Bored with your comfortable dwellings in Chiang Mai you travelled to the city of thieves, Port Blacksand, in search of adventure. Of the many tales you heard in the Black Lobster tavern, one in particular caught your interest...

The next day you bought a leaky old boat and sailed down the ruddy waters of the Red River towards the Moonstone Hills. You stopped to buy supplies from the gruff Dwarfs of Stonebridge, along with a sharp new sword. Sailing on you passed the twisted trees of Darkwood Forest and the blood-red peak of Firetop Mountain, before coming to moor at the humble village of Barn.

The villagers were friendly enough, once they were satisfied you had not arrived on some wicked errand from nearby Darkwood. You quickly found a local man who could help you find what you were looking for. His eyes flashed at the mention of gold. But his look quickly turned to one of horror when you told him exactly what you were searching for. It took several more coins and several more mugs of ale before he agreed to act as your guide. As night fell the two of you crossed the ferry north and followed a seldom used path by lantern-light, with bleak and lonely hills stretching away on either side, shrouded in moonlit mist.

You stand now outside a neglected graveyard. The bright moon illuminates a pair of jagged iron gates and a low, crumbling stone wall. The church here apparently burnt down long ago. The broken headstones that remain have since become so overgrown with weeds and wildflowers that the place has long been known among the locals as, "The Garden of Bones".

The tale you heard in Port Blacksand concerned events that took place over half a century ago, when an ambitious warlock named Morbius Kane struck a bargain with a Demon Prince in exchange for a weapon that would make Kane as mighty on the field of battle as he was in the field of magic. Kane was a man of inhuman vanity and collected the skulls of his enemies so as to keep a total of the number of lives he had taken. The Demon knew this and promised Kane a weapon truly worthy of a harvester of lives such as he.

The Demon gave Morbius Kane a great scythe, its long blade carved with runes that glowed like hellfire. The weapon increased its master's ability in combat to such a degree that now not even the mightiest of Kane's warriors could best him. Thus Morbius Kane grew demented with a lust for conquest, seeking more and more skulls to add to his monstrous collection. He even swore

upon his scythe that he would not rest until he had claimed one hundred thousand Allansian lives.

He gathered an army of undead beings – Zombies, Skeleton Warriors, Ghouls, Wights and Crypt Stalkers – and with them ravaged the outlying lands. After months of bloodshed, Kane was eventually defeated by the Dwarfs of Stonebridge. In a ferocious battle their hearty leader, Gillibran, smote Kane dead with a blow from his magical hammer. Gillibran brought the Scythe of Kane back to Stonebridge for examination. But the weapon was stolen in the night by Kane himself, who had returned from death to reclaim it, bound by his own dreadful oath to take a hundred thousand mortal lives.

In the following weeks the villagers of nearby Barn saw ghostly figures wandering the streets at night. Men were found dead, women and children disappeared and word finally reached the wizard Yaztromo in his great tower on the southern edge of Darkwood Forest. The old wizard arrived in Barn and invoked a spell that took three days and three nights to cast. He thus captured the undead Morbius Kane, along with every one of the warlock's followers. Needing a suitable prison in which to house these monsters, Yaztromo bound them within the nearby Garden of Bones, placing a spell around the graveyard that prevented anything inside from ever escaping.

Yet legend has it that whenever the full moon shines upon the Garden of Bones its gates creak open once more. Though the undead remain trapped inside, it is possible for the living to enter their shadow realm. Many an adventurer has entered the Garden in search of the fabled Scythe of Morbius Kane. None have returned - at least none alive.

The full moon now shines bright upon the Garden of Bones. A strange fog seems to billow from among the graves. You hear a metallic clink, followed by a slow, painful, grinding creak as the gates open to greet you. Your guide scrambles to his feet, gibbering in terror, and dashes back towards the village.

It is said that once a living person enters the Garden of Bones they may never again find their way out. The writhing mist inside has a way of confounding one's sense of direction. But during your visit to Stonebridge you took the precaution of purchasing an enchanted lantern, which will light your way back to the land of the living.

The cold mist now curling round your ankles casts a pale glow. What a tale you will have to tell when you return to Stonebridge holding the legendary Scythe of Kane. A sudden shiver ripples down your spine. Then again, it will not do to underestimate the task ahead of you. Gripping the hilt of your sword for reassurance you walk boldly into the Garden of Bones. The gates swing shut behind you like the iron jaws of death.

Turn to paragraph 1.

1

At the sound of the clashing gates your blood turns to ice in your veins. You turn to see the iron railings vanish behind a rising wall of mist. Once it clears you see the gates through which you entered have vanished. You are now surrounded by seemingly endless hills littered with weed-strangled tombstones and dead trees. The sky appears a featureless grey and the air smells like stagnant pond-water. The only thing here that moves is the mist, ceaselessly curling and twisting. It seems possessed of a mind of its own, as you feel not the slightest breeze. All is silent, but for the occasional moan or strangled cry in the distance. You hear nothing else, not even the chirp of a cricket. Nothing seems to indicate the presence of anything living, except the clink of your battlegear and sound of your boots swishing through the tall slimy grass. Truly, you have entered a land of the dead.

You suppress a shudder and focus upon your quest. You must find the resting place of Morbius Kane and retrieve his magical scythe before the night is out. Your search begins now. To your left the land rises slightly and the graves and tombs appear more numerous. To your right the land slopes gently downward and seems particularly overgrown. Straight ahead you swear you saw something move among the tombstones, although your nerves may already be playing tricks on you.

If you wish to investigate the tombs to your left, turn to 43. If you wish to investigate the overgrown area to your right, turn to 30. If you wish to investigate the movement you think you saw straight ahead of you, turn to 37.

2

The moment you look away from Gunben and reach into your backpack, the crazed adventurer plunges his broken sword into your heart. As the blood drains from your body he rips your backpack from you and uncovers your lantern. Without so much as casting a glance in your direction, he dances with glee at his find. Soon he will be free of the Garden of Bones, while your soul will be trapped here forever. Your adventure ends here.

3

Despite an insatiable desire to know exactly what secrets the Scythe of Kane holds, you wisely decide that your life is not a price worth paying to find out. Instead you flip the weapon into the air with the toe of your boot and cleave the scythe in half with your sword. Without a living master to wield it, the Scythe of Kane breaks in two with a flash and a rolling boom like thunder. You hear a chorus of sighs from the surrounding darkness, a sound that washes over you like an ocean wave.

Only a fool would tarry here. You hurriedly search Kane's robes, until you find a signet ring – proof of your encounter with the undead warlock. Slipping this trophy into your pocket you leave Kane's tomb and light your enchanted lantern. It glows with a green flame that lights a glimmering path back through the tombstones. It takes you less than an hour to reach the gates through which you entered. You slip through just as the full moon sinks before the dawning sun. The gates clang shut behind you and the Garden of Bones once again resembles just another forgotten churchyard.

You have won little in the way of gold on this adventure, but much in the way of a tale. You have not only destroyed an evil weapon and its undead master, but also saved Allansia from the threat of Lucius Bloodfester. For a while, at least, you'll be able to pay your way with a tale

or three. The sun spreads its warmth across the Moonstone Hills as you begin the long walk back, thinking how best to tell the villagers of your victory over the Garden of Bones.

4

You desperately strike sparks from your flint and tinder, but the strips of material refuse to catch light. The door of the tomb suddenly grinds open and the Graveweed Zombies stumble towards you. You draw your sword, but it is too late. The creatures already have you in their coils, their thirsty branches piercing your eyes and draining your body of blood. An hour later your remains are bound in living Graveweed and you shamble from the tomb with your fellows in search of fresh victims. Your adventure ends here.

5

You focus your mind upon driving out Skullbinder as he attempts to take over your living body. With a mighty effort of will you manage to gain control of your right arm and smash the shrunken skull against a tombstone. Instantly you feel Skullbinder release his grip upon your mind, as his evil spirit is banished to wander the surrounding mists forever. You have rid Allansia of a great threat. Gain 3 LUCK points.

You pick yourself up and wade knee-deep through the bony remains of the Skeleton Warriors towards the tomb on which Lucius Bloodfester had been standing. Nearby you find a backpack, which must have belonged to him. Among the scrolls and notebooks inside you find a healing potion, which you immediately drink. (Roll 3 dice and add this total to your STAMINA score.) Having found nothing else of interest in the clearing you approach the grand tomb of Morbius Kane, the undead warlock whose Scythe you have come to claim for yourself. Turn to 31.

6

You pull back your arm and hurl the skull at the Dwarf as hard as you can. The missile bounces off his bald head, knocking him off his perch. As he lies dazed in the misty weeds, you spring forth before he can order the Skeletons to attack. Drawing your sword you strike the head from the nearest Skeleton. You kick another into an open grave where it shatters. Snatching one of their shovels you quickly destroy the rest, then run over to the groggy Dwarf and lift him off the ground by his shirt. Turn to 35.

7

As you pick your way through the graves the mist clears slightly. Ahead you can see some kind of building. You approach cautiously. A short distance ahead of you is a cabin made of some strange pale wood. It is only as you step nearer that you realise the walls are made entirely of bones, with hundreds of skulls piled on top of each other to form a conical roof. A faint smoke curls from the empty eye sockets of the uppermost skulls. Someone may be inside.

The place seems unguarded and you decide to take a closer look. As you approach a window you hear something move above you. Without thinking you throw yourself to the ground, just as a huge claw snaps shut above you. Had your senses not been so keen, your head would have been snipped from your body. You roll to your feet, swiftly drawing your sword.

Previously camouflaged among the bones of the cabin, something the size of a carthorse clambers down from the roof. Like the cabin itself, the thing is composed entirely of skulls and bones, and fashioned in the form of a giant SCORPION, no doubt created to protect this cabin

from intruders. A great barbed sting dripping with some sizzling black venom curls above the Scorpion's ribbed back as it clatters forward to attack you.

If the BONE SCORPION rolls a double 6 for its Attack Strength, it has impaled you on its great sting and you die instantly. Also because this creature is made entirely of bone you will have great trouble trying to impale it upon your sword. You will therefore cause only 1 point of damage unless you use some kind of CLUB, in which case you will inflict the usual 2 points of damage.

BONE SCORPION SKILL 8 STAMINA 8

If you win, the Bone Scorpion shatters, and you step inside the cabin. Turn to 22.

8

Gunben's eyes widen as you tell him about the lantern, which will lead you from this place once you have recovered the Scythe. But the crazed adventurer's look of astonishment quickly turns to a sneer. "You lie," he says. "Such an artefact does not exist. Show me..."

If you wish to prove you are telling the truth by showing him your lantern, turn to 2. If you wish to say that you were indeed lying and have no means at all of finding your way out, turn to 46. If you wish to press Gunben about this Lucius Bloodfester, turn to 18.

9

The Zombies continue to ignore you as you approach their work-bench, their dead eyes fixed blindly upon their task. You drag the chest from beneath the table and fling open the lid. Inside you find various bottles, among which you recognise a Healing Potion. You immediately gulp this down. (Roll 3 dice and add this total to your STAMINA.) Hidden beneath a collection of scrolls you find a large case containing a pair of BELLOWS, the kind of thing a blacksmith might use to pump air into his forge, although these are covered with some kind of ornate carved lettering. (If you wish to take the BELLOWS with you make a note of them on your *Adventure Sheet*.)

There's no more time to search as you hear the sound of several pairs of bony feet rushing in your direction. You run quickly between the tombstones along a path on the far side of the church ruins. Turn to 25.

10

Gripping the skull in your hand you hurl it at the Dwarf's head. The missile sails past him and smashes into dust against the tomb beside him. The Dwarf drops his bottle in surprise and catches sight of you. He shrieks arcane commands at the four Skeletons, which dash towards you with their picks and shovels. You grab a heavy wooden club from among a set of tools propped nearby and retreat into the doorway of a mausoleum so these unholy monsters can only attack you one at a time.

| | SKILL | STAMINA |
|-----------------|-------|---------|
| First SKELETON | 5 | 4 |
| Second SKELETON | 4 | 5 |
| Third SKELETON | 5 | 4 |
| Fourth SKELETON | 6 | 5 |

If you win you find that the Dwarf has long since escaped. You curse and kick over the bone-filled wheelbarrow, spilling its contents into an open grave. If you wish, you may keep the wooden CLUB (make a note of this on your *Adventure Sheet*). Otherwise, there is nothing else here of interest. You may travel into the clearer ground to your left, turn to 44, or the even more densely overgrown area to your right, turn to 49.

11

You pull the strange device from your backpack as the Skeleton horde rushes towards you. Gripping the handles, you aim the bellows at Lucius Bloodfester, as he hovers above you in the form of the black mist. You heave the bellows open and feel your ears pop, as the air around you is magically sucked away. With an awful scream the misty form of Lucius Bloodfester is dragged inside the bellows and the strange lettering carved into its sides glows silver, breaking Bloodfester's spell of command over the Skeletons. The monsters tumble into pieces as they rush towards you, and a tide of bones and grave-dust washes over the mist-covered ground, knocking you from your feet. The magical bellows, along with its prisoner, slip from your hands and tumble into an open grave, followed by an avalanche of bones. You have rid Allansia of a great threat. Gain 3 LUCK points.

You pick yourself up and wade knee-deep through the bony remains of the Skeleton Warriors, towards the tomb on which Bloodfester had been standing. Nearby you find a backpack, which must have belonged to him. Among the various scrolls and notebooks inside you find a healing potion, which you immediately drink. (Roll 2 dice and add this total to your STAMINA score.) Having found nothing else of interest in the clearing you approach the grand tomb of Morbius Kane, the undead warlock whose Scythe you have come to claim for yourself. Turn to 31.

12

You quickly leave the little girl's vault and begin searching the maze-like streets for an exit. Your sense of direction holds true and soon you are on the outskirts of this city of tombs. The little girl said that the vault containing the Scythe of Kane can be found on the other side of the Garden. The writhing mist obscures the horizon, but there appears to be a clear path straight ahead. Somewhere off to your immediate right, however, you catch the sound of a woman's laughter.

If you wish to walk directly ahead, turn to 7. If you wish to investigate the laughter, turn to 14.

13

You light the wick of the Spider candle. A thin smoke rises from the flame and takes the form of a woman's face, stern yet beautiful. "I am Dame Isabella Arachna, the great seer of Chalice," she says in a haunting hollow voice. "Release me from this waxen prison or begone." You take a moment to think, and then throw the candle into the fire, where it dissolves. The thin smoke continues to rise until Dame Isabella appears before you in her all her finery.

"You have my gratitude, adventurer," she says. "And my blessing." Her smoky form flashes a brilliant blue and you feel a jolt of energy surge through your body and soul. (Restore your STAMINA and LUCK to their initial levels.)

You thank her and ask her how she came to be trapped inside the candle. "That wretch Lucius Bloodfester snatched me from my daughter's side and bound me to his service, summoning me

at his whim like a common Genie. But his downfall shall come soon enough." She laughs cruelly. "Tonight the fool shall claim the Scythe of Kane, and its curse."

Before you can ask her what she means, the ghostly face of Dame Isabella rises into the air and disappears through the empty skulls in the roof. If you have a BLACK KISS on the back of your hand it disappears now (cross it off your *Adventure Sheet*). Pondering what Dame Isabella meant by her mention of a curse, you leave the cabin and travel along the muddy track leading north between the graves. Turn to 25.

14

You cautiously follow the sound of the laughter, but the mist makes it difficult to see ahead. As you move nearer the laughter seems broken up by horrible snuffling sounds, like pigs feeding at a trough full of slops. Picking your way through the graves towards an overhanging tree you see three women seated demurely on three graves with their backs towards you. They make no movement at the sound of your approach, and then you see why. Their heads are missing.

You gasp in horror and the three headless women silently turn as one in your direction. As you draw your sword something flies out of the mist towards you, trailing long black hair. It knocks you to the ground and your sword is thrown from your hand. The thing circles back and hurtles at you again. It is a woman's flying head, its fanged jaws streaked with blood. Two more fly from the mist to join their monstrous sister, as it dives towards you. No time to search for your sword. You back against the dead tree and grab a fallen branch, which will serve as a sturdy club. The three headless women watch you in silence as their flying, cackling heads dive to attack you at the same time.

| | SKILL | STAMINA |
|--------------------|-------|---------|
| First FLYING HEAD | 6 | 5 |
| Second FLYING HEAD | 5 | 4 |
| Third FLYING HEAD | 4 | 5 |

All three Flying Heads will have a separate attack on you in each Attack Round, but you must choose which of the three you will fight. Attack your chosen Flying Head as in a normal battle. Against the others you must throw for your Attack Strength in the normal way, but even if your Attack Strength is greater you will not wound it. You must count this as though you have defended yourself against its blow. However, if its Attack Strength is greater, it will have wounded you in the normal way.

If you win, the last head explodes into dust as you strike it with your club. The three watching bodies vanish into the mist. You recover your sword and may keep the wooden CLUB if you wish (add this to your *Adventure Sheet*). Eager to move on you may travel down a path that forks to your left, turn to 7, or the path that forks to your right, turn to 34.

15

You light the wick of the Snake candle. A thin smoke rises from the flame with a hiss and takes the form of a hovering cobra. You find you cannot look away from its glinting green eyes, which seem to bite into your very being. You feel a great chill overwhelm your body as the serpent begins to drain the years of your life. Roll 2 dice and deduct this from your STAMINA. This is the total number of years by which you have now aged. Your hand shakes until you can no longer hold the candle and it drops to the floor. The flame is extinguished and the snake

disappears. You flee this cursed cabin along the muddy track leading north between the graves. Turn to 25.

16

You offer the little girl your hand and swear that you will find her mother. Wiping away her tears, the little girl rises to her feet and steps towards you with a smile. She takes your hand in her cold fingers and plants a freezing kiss on your knuckles. You cry out in pain and wrench your hand away. (Lose 1 STAMINA point.) She has left a smoking mark on the back of your hand in the form of a BLACK KISS. (Make a note of this on your *Adventure Sheet*.) "You are now bound to your word, adventurer," says the little girl. "Go now, for time is short." You look up from your wounded hand to find that the vault is now empty.

If you wish to do as the little girl says and leave now, turn to 12. If you wish to ignore her and search the vault first, turn to 27.

17

You dash down the path towards the tomb, dodging several Graveweed Zombies as they lurch out of the undergrowth, their green tendrils flailing. The surrounding grass seems alive with them. You arrive at the tomb's immense door. The lock appears to have been destroyed recently. As the shambling creatures edge nearer and nearer you manage to get your fingers around the edge of the heavy door and pull. It moves slightly, then sticks. You plant your boot against the tomb wall and heave again, but the door won't budge. By now the creeping monsters are almost upon you, hissing in anticipation of a bloody feed. You can feel their tendrils already tickling your throat. With a final effort you pull and the door suddenly gives way. You dart inside the tomb, swinging the huge door shut behind you.

As the thwarted monsters give a collective hiss of rage from behind the tomb door, you step backwards, panting, desperately trying to formulate an escape plan, when you stumble over something on the floor. You look down to find a robed corpse with a long-handled dagger in its back. "A visitor," says a low voice from behind you. "How perfectly delightful." You spin around. Before you stands the GHOST of the man who lies dead at your feet.

"Have no fear, adventurer," he purrs. "In life I may well have wished you harm, but not now. My name is Andros Xincaris, once known across Allansia as 'Skullbinder the Necromancer'. That is until I explored the Garden of Bones with my young apprentice and the little swine murdered me and bound my spirit within this tomb. Perhaps you've heard of my pupil, he likes to call himself Lucius Bloodfester."

You tell Skullbinder that you have indeed heard of his murderous student and explain how Bloodfester intends to steal the Scythe of Kane. "So his ambition remains undiminished," chortles Skullbinder. "As does his stupidity. I told him long ago that only a fool would lay hand upon the Scythe of Kane. Yet it grieves me to think that he shall die by a hand other than my own."

You hear a grinding of stone behind you. The Graveweed Zombies are prying open the tomb door. "Oh dear," says Skullbinder mildly. "It appears that your death is at hand and that you are soon to join me in this tomb forever."

You tell Skullbinder that you admire his optimism, but that you not dead just yet. Your sword rings sharply as you draw it from its scabbard. "Young fool," hisses Skullbinder. "Listen. Help me avenge myself upon Lucius Bloodfester and I will save your life."

You know better than to trust a necromancer – alive or dead - but it seems you have little choice. Writhing green tendrils begin to appear around the door as it grinds slowly open. If you wish to help Skullbinder avenge himself upon Bloodfester, turn to 45. If you wish to refuse Skullbinder's offer and rely on some other means of escape, turn to 21.

18

"If you wish to find Bloodfester, he sleeps in a cabin made of bones about twenty minutes walk left of here. He also has something going on in the ruins of the old church straight ahead, but it's always been too well guarded for me to take a proper look."

He shuffles nearer to you again. "Now tell me, I insist. How do you plan to leave this place? You know of a way don't you? If you do, take me with you, I beg you."

If you wish to tell Gunben about the enchanted lantern you bought in Stonebridge, turn to 8. If you wish to lie and tell him that you are trapped here the same as he is, turn to 46.

19

You fumble for your flint and tinder, hurriedly striking sparks until, by the luck of the gods, one of them catches light on the dry material. By the time the Graveweed Zombies have torn open the door of the tomb you are holding a blazing torch fashioned from a piece of coffinwood. The creatures hiss and recoil from the doorway, their green tendrils blackening as you force them to retreat. You fight your way out of the tomb, with torch and sword in hand. One of the creatures grabs hold of your sword arm and you plunge the flaming torch into its weed-bound ribs. Within seconds the Graveweed Zombie is ablaze and stumbles into its fellows, which in turn catch light. As the creatures scatter into the mist, you flee uphill to where the vegetation gradually recedes and the field of gravestones is visible once more. Turn to 25.

20

As Bloodfester cries out "Hear me, restless dead, draw sword and knife," you hold aloft the copper-bound skull and cry in return, "And by my command end thy master's life!" The skull glows white in your hand and the gathered army of Skeleton Warriors suddenly advance on a horrified Lucius Bloodfester. The young necromancer tries to cover himself with the hood of his cloak, no doubt trying to escape by some magical means, but the nearest Skeleton tears the garment from him. Bloodfester is dragged screaming into their ranks and hacked to pieces. As the necromancer's screams finally end so too does his spell of command and the entire Skeleton army abruptly collapses into a heap of bones that sends a vast cloud of grave-dust into the air.

You emerge coughing from behind a tombstone, still holding the shrunken skull. Having visited Skullbinder's vengeance upon his traitorous pupil as agreed you go to toss the skull aside, but your fingers remain clenched around it. Your arm suddenly stiffens and to your horror you become aware of an evil presence invading your mind, trying to wrest control of your body away from you. You were right to distrust Skullbinder, as he is now attempting to possess your living body. Roll 2 dice. If the total is equal to or less than your current SKILL score, turn to 5. If the total is greater than your current SKILL score, turn to 26.

21

Skullbinder's ghost vanishes with a bitter laugh. Ignoring him you tear strips from the remains of his robes and hurriedly set about making a torch, hoping that you can repel the Graveweeds with fire as they wrench open the tomb door. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 19. If you are Unlucky, turn to 4.

22

The interior of the cabin is lined with furs and surprisingly warm, though a musty smell fills the air. A small fire burns below a cooking pot and you help yourself to the stew simmering inside. (Restore 3 points of STAMINA.) A sleeping blanket is tied up in one corner, next to a locked chest, which is too cumbersome for you to carry. In a far corner, on a small table, stand three candles next to an open book. The book is written in an unfamiliar language, but its diagrams seem to indicate that if the candles are lit they will release something that has been magically bound within them.

The sounds of your battle with the Bone Scorpion will no doubt bring attention, and if you wish to light one of the candles you will have to do so quickly. Each candle is marked with an animal crest on its holder.

Will you light the candle with the Spider crest, turn to 13, the candle with the Bat crest, turn to 32, or the candle with the Snake crest, turn to 15. Or if you wish to leave these evil items alone before you are discovered you may follow a muddy track between the graves that leads north from here, turn to 25.

23

Howling like a wild animal Gunben stabs at you with his broken sword. You must defend yourself from this madman or else become his next meal.

GUNBEN

SKILL 6

STAMINA 7

If you win you search his body and find nothing but chewed bones and a flask of HOLY WATER. (Add this to your *Adventure Sheet* if you wish to take it.) If you wish to walk straight ahead from here, turn to 34. If you wish to walk left, where you are sure you can hear the sound of a woman's laughter, turn to 14. If you wish to pick your way towards the densely overgrown graves to your right, turn to 44.

24

You draw your weapon and prepare to fight your way free. If you possess a HAND AXE you may use it now and inflict 3 points of damage instead of the usual 2 points for the duration of this combat. All three Graveweeds attack you at once.

| | SKILL | STAMINA |
|-------------------------|-------|---------|
| First GRAVEWEED ZOMBIE | 7 | 8 |
| Second GRAVEWEED ZOMBIE | 6 | 7 |
| Third GRAVEWEED ZOMBIE | 6 | 7 |

All three Graveweeds will have a separate attack on you in each Attack Round, but you must choose which of the two you will fight. Attack your chosen Graveweed Zombie as in a normal battle. Against the other two you must throw for your Attack Strength in the normal

way, but even if your Attack Strength is greater you will not wound it. You must count this as though you have defended yourself against their blows. However, if their Attack Strength is greater, they will have wounded you in the normal way.

If you win you manage to hack these monsters into twitching pieces, just as several more emerge from the undergrowth. There are too many of them. You must retreat. Turn to 17.

25

You press on, threading your way through the tombstones until you see the glow of torchlight up ahead. Someone is loudly chanting what sounds like an incantation. You tread carefully, keeping an eye out for any guards. If your hand does *not* bear a BLACK KISS you approach the clearing ahead without incident, turn to 40.

If you have a BLACK KISS marked on your *Adventure Sheet* and have not yet been told to remove it, turn to 42.

26

Skullbinder's psychic power is too strong for you to resist and he overwhelms you entirely. You feel yourself squeezed out of your living body, as the dead necromancer claims it for himself. "Many thanks, adventurer," cackles Skullbinder. "A fine strong young body you've given me. I do promise to look after it." You watch helplessly as your body, now under Skullbinder's command, strides away laughing, leaving your spirit to wander the Garden of Bones forever.

27

There is little of interest here besides the great sarcophagus in the centre of the vault. The stone lid is sealed shut and carved in the likeness of a tall, cruel-looking woman and her child – the little girl you have just encountered. At their feet you read an inscription: "Dame Isabella Arachna and her daughter, Lidia: Fell to the Reaper's Scythe 184 AC." Beneath this you can make out their gruesome family crest: a black spider.

There is nothing else here but dust and cobwebs, although you feel the little girl's presence tingles the hair on the back of your neck. You decide it is best to leave, and quickly. Turn to 12.

28

As you approach the vase of swirling black water, the bubbles inside form the thin face of a man. The eyes glower at you with such malign hatred that you feel your resolve falter. (Lose 1 LUCK point.) The face lengthens into a scream of protest as you swing your sword at it. The glass vase shatters and spills its contents across the ground. Smoke rises as whatever liquid the vase contained begins to dissolve the stones like acid. The blade of your sword disintegrates also and you cast the now useless weapon aside.

Whatever spell of command had been cast over the Zombies has now been broken. They stagger towards you with their arms outstretched, hungry for your living flesh. Unless you have a CLUB or a HAND AXE you must deduct 3 SKILL points from your total for the duration of this combat, since you will be fighting barehanded. Since these creatures are slow and clumsy you may fight them one at a time.

| | SKILL | STAMINA |
|---------------|-------|---------|
| First ZOMBIE | 6 | 6 |
| Second ZOMBIE | 5 | 7 |
| Third ZOMBIE | 6 | 7 |

If you win, the sound of your combat has drawn attention. You hear many bony feet running in your direction. You have just enough time to grab a new sword from a pile of weapons by the table before escaping between the tombstones along a path on the far side of the church ruins. Turn to 25

29

The glowing creeping mist follows you inside, illuminating the tomb's interior. The mist crawls across a vast stone floor at the centre of which the Scythe of Kane hovers upright. Its long thin blade glows with red runes that pulse like a heartbeat in the dark. Dressed in ragged robes, an old man with an iron-grey beard is slumped beside it. He is chained to the Scythe by ghostly manacles attached to his wrists while his hands are clamped over his ears as if to shut out some awful noise. He whimpers like a wounded Aardwolf.

So this pathetic creature is the legendary Morbius Kane. The old man turns as you approach. You gasp in horror. His eyes. The old man has clawed out his own eyes! "Keep away," the blind man gibbers. "Keep away from me."

At Kane's words the Scythe seems to shiver like a living thing. Its runes turn a deep crimson and it springs into the air, dragging the manacled Kane to his feet. The old man grips the Scythe as if forced by some sinister compulsion. His long hair rises on his head and he howls like a maddened werewolf. He turns and sweeps the Scythe at your neck with perfect accuracy despite his lack of sight. You manage to deflect the blow with your sword, but Kane recovers and brings the weapon down, point first at your heart, the Scythe seeming to seek you out on its master's behalf.

MORBIUS KANE

SKILL 12

STAMINA

12

If you win, turn to 33.

30

You walk down a grassy bank into an area of the graveyard almost completely overrun with weeds. The rampant vegetation has practically swallowed the surrounding tombs and the ever-present mist makes it difficult to see the terrain ahead. You pick your way through the undergrowth for a while, cursing occasionally as you trip on the tangled grass or bang your knee on a concealed tombstone.

Suddenly you hear a noise up ahead. You duck into the undergrowth and listen. You can hear someone singing. Badly. You can also make out the sound of digging and several heavy, hollow thuds. You creep through the weeds until they thin out slightly. Ahead you see a grove of dead trees and a bald wrinkled Dwarf perched on a tombstone like a vulture. He doesn't appear to have seen you. Creeping a little nearer you peer out from behind a broken headstone.

In the rough clearing before you the Dwarf swigs from a half-empty bottle and sings loudly to himself, while four SKELETONS armed with picks and shovels work at various graves around him. Two of these creatures are silently collecting the bones from a broken casket and loading them onto a wheelbarrow, while the other two Skeletons busily dig up another grave. The Dwarf takes another swig and sings aloud:

"His name was Morbius Kane,
With scythe and spell did he reign.
Till Yaztromo did mete out his doom,
Banished Kane to a yawning great tomb.

But hark now, my master has come.
No more shall great weapon be dumb.
For with the spells in his head, he'll raise army undead,
And the world to Kane's Scythe shall succumb."

The Dwarf belches loudly. "Three cheers for my master, you boneheads," he cries. The Skeletons under his command ignore him. "Three cheers for Lucius Bloodfester, soon to be master of the Garden of Bones and then..." He takes another swig. "The whole of Allansia."

So you now have a competitor. A spellcaster named Lucius Bloodfester has arrived to claim the Scythe of Kane before you. You wonder what else this loose-tongued Dwarf may be able to tell you, if only you could lay your hands on him. The Dwarf has only to utter a single word of command and all four of those mindless Skeleton slaves will attack. What will you do?

If you wish to sneak up on the Dwarf from behind *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 38. If you are Unlucky, turn to 48. If you wish to throw something at the Dwarf, you find a skull by your feet with which you may be able to stun him. Roll two dice. If the total is equal to or less than your SKILL score, turn to 6. If the total is greater than your SKILL, turn to 10.

If you wish to sneak away from here while you remain unseen, you may move toward the clearer ground to your left, turn to 44, or the even more densely overgrown area to your right, turn to 49.

31

The tomb of Morbius Kane looms over you like a storm cloud, ivy creeping down its marble columns like frozen lightning. Many adventurers have lost their lives in search of the scythe that lies beyond these tall arched doors. You ponder for a moment your wisdom in coming here in search of such a thing. Some say Morbius Kane was driven insane by his own magical weapon, others believe he became drunk with a lust for power. Other rumours have it that the scythe carries with it a much more subtle curse. The carved stone gargoyles leering at you from around the door frame seem to mock you in your uncertainty. But you've not come this far to turn back now.

With both hands you drag open one of the tall stone doors. The sound of grating stone feels like an earthquake in the misty silence of the Garden. You slide your sword from its sheath and step into the darkness of the tomb. Turn to 29.

32

You light the wick of the Bat candle. A thin smoke rises from the flame and with it comes a deafening shriek, so high and piercing that you have to clamp your hands to your ears to prevent being deafened. You drop the candle and stamp out its flame. The scream vanishes, but still echoes in your ringing ears. Lose 2 points of SKILL and 2 points of LUCK. The scream will no doubt have been heard by anything lurking nearby. You must leave now along the muddy track leading north between the graves. Turn to 25.

33

With a swordsmanship that rivals the great Blademasters of Hachiman you parry the Scythe's relentless sweeps, and recover with jabs of your own. With a final demented roar Kane swings the Scythe at your head. You dodge the blow and the blade lodges deep in a stone pillar. Before

Kane can tug the weapon free you dart to one side and bring your sword down with both hands. The blade sweeps through both of Morbius Kane's wrists, severing his hands along with his ghostly chains.

As the undead warlock topples backwards, his manacles vanish. A fleeting look of release crosses his withered features before his entire body crumbles to ash. His empty robes collapse in a dusty heap, while the Scythe lands with an echoing clang at your feet.

The tomb is now silent, save only for the sound of you gasping for breath as the mist settles around you. You have defeated Morbius Kane, a feat of valour only the mighty Gillibran of Stonebridge can claim also.

You instinctively reach for the Scythe of Kane, but hesitate to pick it up. This is indeed your moment of glory. What tales shall be told of you in taverns across Allansia. And yet what was it the spiteful Demon Prince had promised Kane when he gave him the Scythe? "A weapon truly worthy of a harvester of lives such as he." Yet perhaps a warrior as courageous as you will be strong enough to resist whatever enchantment the weapon holds. The only way to find out is to take the Scythe for yourself.

Will you take the Scythe of Kane, turn to 50. Or will you leave the Garden of Bones without it, turn to 3.

34

The ground hereabouts is muddy and littered with skeletal footprints. You draw your sword and weave stealthily between the tombstones, wary of an ambush. Ahead you see a tall crumbling stone wall with a high broken window in its centre. Evidently this is all that remains of the great church that once stood in the centre of the graveyard, before Yaztromo imprisoned the undead Morbius Kane here. Dead trees sprout from the surrounding rubble, and the rich stench of death is everywhere. You can hear a busy clattering sound, like the rattling of dry sticks. You try and peer through the mist when two thin figures emerge nearby. You duck behind a gravestone as two heavily armed Skeleton Warriors pause by your hiding place before moving on. Once they are out of sight you dart from tomb to tomb before creeping behind a heap of ancient rubble for a better look at what's going on behind the church wall.

Arranged among the rubble is what appears to be some kind of makeshift laboratory. Four ragged men with sunken white eyes and peeling flesh – ZOMBIES – rummage through a pile of bones, piecing them together on a long wooden table. You watch in amazement as they add the final pieces to a Skeleton, which sits up and clambers off the bench. The Zombies fit the Skeleton with a sword and shield, before it marches silently away down a path on the far side of the church ruins.

Beneath the table you can see an ironbound chest, while what looks like a glass vase full of swirling black water stands on a broken pillar nearby. You are deciding what to do next when suddenly the two Skeleton Warriors return. Do you have a BLACK MEDALLION?

If you do, the Skeleton Warriors pass by as though you are invisible, allowing you to approach the vase of water, turn to 47. If you do not own a Black Medallion, the Skeleton Warriors give an unearthly scream and rush to attack you with drawn swords. You must fight, turn to 39.

35

Gripping the Dwarf by the collar you demand to know what he and his master are doing here. "It's no secret," sneers the filthy creature, his breath reeking of alcohol. "My master is the great Necromancer Lucius Bloodfester, and within hours the Scythe of Kane shall be his." You notice a chain glisten round his neck.

You reach forward and draw it out, revealing a black medallion. You demand to know what it is and the Dwarf tries to hide his distress. "Merely a token of my master's affection," he gulps. "Nothing more." You suspect it may be some form of protection, worn to safeguard the Dwarf from the roaming horrors of the Garden of Bones while he goes about his master's errands.

Ignoring the foul creature's howls of protest you remove the BLACK MEDALLION from his neck, along with the HAND AXE from his belt (add these to your *Adventure Sheet*). You give him a kick in the backside and tell him to run back to his master. He curses and spits at you, swearing that his master will have your skull for a soup-bowl within the hour. He then scampers into the mist to your left. Moments later you hear a blood-chilling scream.

There is nothing else of interest here. Will you investigate the direction of the Dwarf's scream to your left, turn to 44., or investigate the even more densely overgrown area to your right, turn to 49.

36

You uncork the Holy Water and pour most of its contents into the brimming vase. The swirling liquid inside turns white and begins to boil uncontrollably until the vase explodes. The Zombies immediately stop what they are doing and lurch towards you, arms outstretched, overwhelmed by a mindless hunger for living human flesh. As they approach you dash the remains of the Holy Water at them. Their rotting bodies bubble horribly as the blessed water eats into them.

The Zombies rapidly dissolve and collapse into piles of bones and ragged clothing. You have successfully cleansed this place of evil. Add 2 LUCK points. At the sound of many bony feet rushing in your direction you dart between the tombstones, hurriedly following a well-used path on the far side of the church ruins. Turn to 25.

37

You approach the spot where you thought you saw someone duck behind a tomb. A rustling sound confirms your suspicions and you pounce, sword drawn. You find a bearded, wild-haired man clutching a broken sword and crouching behind a headstone. He drops his weapon and falls to the ground in surprise. You are unsure whether he was hiding or about to ambush you.

"No, friend. No," he cries, waving his hands. "My name's Gunben. I'm an adventurer like you, lost in this cursed place. I came seeking the Scythe of Kane, but now I know better." He begins to laugh madly. This poor fellow has clearly taken leave of his senses.

"I have been trapped in this shadow realm for more days than I can count, not that you can count days in a place where the sun never rises, let alone sets."

You ask him how he came to be here. "I bought a magic thread from a backstreet wizard in Port Blacksand. He told me to tie the thread to a tree in the outside world so that I may find my way

back out of the Garden once my quest was done. But the thread wasn't enchanted at all. It was nothing but common string. It broke and left me in this dreadful place."

He shuffles nearer to you, a wild gleam in his eye. "Tell me, friend. Tell me," he gibbers. "Do you know of way out of here?" You step away from him and ask him first to tell you what he knows of Morbius Kane. "Kane and his Scythe rest in a great tomb not far from here. But an evil wizard named Lucius Bloodfester has recently arrived from the living world. He caught me stealing food from his cabin, and swore to feed me to his creatures should I ever cross his path again. He's raising an army of undead creatures with which he plans to storm the tomb and claim the Scythe for himself. But he's insane. That way lies only death." He laughs again, and then suddenly stops. "Now, tell me, friend and tell me quickly. Do you know of a way out of here...?"

How will you reply? If you wish to tell him about the enchanted lantern that you bought in Stonebridge, turn to 8. If you wish to lie and tell him that you are trapped here the same as he is, turn to 46. If you wish to ignore his questioning and ask him where you can find this Lucius Bloodfester, turn to 18.

38

The Dwarf decides to sing again, this time even more loudly, while you creep through the undergrowth behind him with the stealth of a cat stalking its prey. When in range you pounce upon the little man and hold your sword to his throat. He cries out in surprise while the Skeletons all stop what they are doing and turn to face you. You hold the Dwarf tightly and tell him to call them off. He struggles, but cannot escape. He calls out in some arcane language and all four Skeletons suddenly fall to the ground in pieces.

Satisfied, you turn the Dwarf round to face you. Turn to 35.

39

The Skeleton Warriors are upon you in seconds. Unless you own a CLUB you will only inflict 1 point of damage to your bony enemies, as they are difficult to impale with your sword. You must fight both Skeleton Warriors at once.

| | SKILL | STAMINA |
|-------------------------|-------|---------|
| First SKELETON WARRIOR | 8 | 6 |
| Second SKELETON WARRIOR | 7 | 7 |

Both Skeleton Warriors will have a separate attack on you in each Attack Round, but you must choose which of the two you will fight. Attack your chosen Skeleton Warrior as in a normal battle. Against the other one you must throw for your Attack Strength in the normal way, but even if your Attack Strength is greater you will not wound it. You must count this as though you have defended yourself against its blow. However, if its Attack Strength is greater, it will have wounded you in the normal way.

If you win, you step over your enemies' shattered bones and approach the vase of water. Turn to 47.

40

The clearing is illuminated by torch-fire. Countless Skeleton Warriors stand to attention before a young man clad in a hooded black cloak. He stands atop a tomb and reads aloud from a huge book. Behind him stands a great tomb, two stories high with twisted marble pillars beside tall stone doors. The final resting place of Morbius Kane.

“Hear me gods of death and darkness,” cries the cloaked young man. “Hear the words of your servant, Lucius Bloodfester. Tonight my undead army shall storm the tomb of Morbius Kane and claim for me his mighty Scythe.” He turns his attention to the gathered troops. “Hear me, restless dead, draw sword and knife...”

He then looks up, as though alerted by some magical alarm, and points directly at you. “And by my command end that poor fool’s life.” The Skeleton Warriors draw their weapons as one and swivel round to face you. The fires gleam on their skulls and bared blades as they advance, step by step towards you. You draw your sword, prepared to destroy as many of these horrors as you can before they claim your life. Bloodfester cackles and draws the hood of his cloak over his face. Instantly he turns into black mist, which rises above his Skeleton army and floats towards you. No doubt Bloodfester wishes to get a better view of your death.

If you have a pair of carved BELLOWS, turn to 11. If not, the Skeleton horde rushes at you with a deafening shriek. You make a valiant final stand, but the undead, by sheer weight of numbers, eventually drag you to the ground and hack you to pieces. The mocking laughter of Lucius Bloodfester echoes throughout the Garden of Bones. Your adventure ends here.

41

“Bloodfester took my mother,” cries the little girl, and she explains what happened. Apparently this Bloodfester fellow came and made all the bodies in the City of the Dead clamber out of their tombs and join him. But the girl’s mother - once a great seer - was imprisoned in the form of an object hidden somewhere in the graveyard.

You promise to look for the girl’s mother during your travels. At this the little girl gives you a stern look. “If you promise to find her,” says the little girl. “I will bind you to your word. Therefore if you wish to help me, you will give me your hand...”

Will you do as she says and hold out your hand, turn to 16. Or would you rather leave this place quickly, turn to 12.

42

A sudden pain shoots through your hand. You drop behind a tombstone as the kiss melts into your flesh. Your veins turn black with poison. You have failed to release the little girl’s mother as you promised and this is the price you must pay. Lose 3 SKILL points, 6 STAMINA and 3 LUCK as the little girl’s agonising curse takes effect. You force yourself to press on, despite the pain. Turn to 40.

43

You trudge uphill for several minutes, threading your way through crumbling tombs covered in a strange lichen that seems to crawl and breath as you approach. You enter a kind of street, with crypts looming either side of you, decorated with leering faces and arcane lettering. Paths lead

off in every direction, down more streets lined with ever more grotesque mausoleums. A city of the dead.

There! Something moved. You spring forward, sword in hand. As you turn a corner you see what appears to be a small child running – or rather gliding - into an imposing tomb at the far end of the street. Defying the fear that grips your heart, you approach the tomb cautiously. You hear a faint sobbing coming from inside. Putting your shoulder to the vault door, which is already ajar, you shove your way inside.

The ever-present mist follows you in, illuminating a high-ceiled vault with an ornate sarcophagus in its centre. Cowering in the corner of this grim place is a pale little girl of about six years old, dressed in noble finery. Her cheeks are wet with tears and she stares terrified at your drawn sword. You sheath your weapon and crouch down to show her that you mean no harm. “Did Bloodfester send you?” she asks in a voice as soft as a cobweb.

You smile and ask her about this “Bloodfester”, reassuring her that you are no servant of evil. The little girl tells you that Lucius Bloodfester is an outsider like you, from the land of the living. He entered the Garden of Bones seeking a great weapon – the Scythe of Kane, no doubt - which the little girl tells you rests in a great tomb on the far side of the Garden. Bloodfester is an evil wizard and came here to gather an army of monsters, with which he hopes to claim the weapon from he who holds it. This weapon, she says, has drawn many adventurers to this place. All of them found nothing but death.

The little girl begins to cry again and pleads with you to help her. Her sobs can’t help but touch your heart, but it’s unlikely you can trust anyone you meet here.

If you wish to help the little girl, turn to 41, or if you wish to leave this awful place, turn to 12.

44

The mist thickens as you walk, making it hard to see ahead of you. Suddenly a cloaked and hooded figure emerges from the fog and stands before you. You draw your sword and step back, demanding the stranger reveal himself. The figure does not answer. The hem of the cloak ripples in an unseen wind, and you notice that it is hovering an inch from the ground. The seemingly empty cloak suddenly throws itself open, revealing inside it a black void out of which shoot a host of grey tentacles that catch hold out your arms and legs. You fall onto your back, but manage to keep a grip on your sword, as the tentacles drag you through the grass towards the hovering cloak. You can see no face within the hood, while huge slavering teeth slide into view from either side of the open cloak, forming a huge pair of jaws towards which the tongue-like tentacles drag you closer and closer.

Roll 1 dice and add 2 to the result. This is how many Attack Rounds you have to kill the TENTACLES before they drag you into the Cloak’s open maw. If you have not reduced the Tentacles to zero STAMINA before your Attack Rounds are up you are dragged inside the Demon Cloak and digested at its leisure.

TENTACLES

SKILL 6

STAMINA 9

If you win, you manage to hack yourself free and the Demon Cloak flees into the mist in search of easier prey. You may now continue into clearer ground, turn to 34, or investigate the densely overgrown area further to your right, turn to 49.

45

“Excellent,” hisses Skullbinder. The Graveweed Zombies wrench open the door of the tomb and stumble towards you. Skullbinder mutters something under his breath and twin beams of light shoot from his eyes to envelop the weed-covered creatures. You shield your eyes as the roots and grasses that bind their bodies together quickly rot and wither under Skullbinder’s dazzling gaze. Soon they are nothing but heaps of smoking mulch and bones. Skullbinder closes his eyes and the beams of light vanish.

“Now,” he says, turning his attention to you. “Inside my robes you will find a tiny skull.” You rummage through Skullbinder’s remains until you find the horrible thing, a yellowed human skull, shrunk to the size of a child’s fist and bound with bands of copper. “The artefact you hold now will reverse the effects of any spell of command over the undead,” says Skullbinder. “Providing you speak the correct counterspell at the correct time.”

If at any time during your adventure you read a paragraph in which Lucius Bloodfester casts a spell that begins with the words, “Hear me, restless dead, draw sword and knife...” you may cast Skullbinder’s counterspell by deducting 20 from the paragraph number you are reading and turning immediately to that new paragraph. Make a note of this on your *Adventure Sheet*.

Skullbinder’s ghost also casts a healing spell over you (roll 3 dice and add this total to your STAMINA score). He then dismisses you with an imperious wave of his hand, vanishing with a promise that the two of you will soon meet again. The mist creeps over the withered remains of the Graveweed Zombies as you leave Skullbinder’s tomb and hurry away uphill where the vegetation gradually recedes and a field of gravestones are visible once more. Turn to 25.

46

You tell Gunben that you were hoping *he* could tell *you* how to escape the Garden of Bones. Otherwise you have no idea how to escape and are trapped here just like him. Gunben’s face drops, and then hardens into a snarl. “In that case, fool, let me teach you the first rule of survival here.” He snatches up his broken sword and licks his lips. This starving madman intends to kill and eat you! Turn to 23.

47

The Zombie workmen ignore you completely, no doubt ordered to do nothing but focus mindlessly on their work. The water inside the vase nearby swirls and changes colour, from black to purple to blue and black again. Perhaps it exudes some kind of influence over the Zombies.

You cannot afford to linger here. If you have a bottle of HOLY WATER you may use it now, turn to 36. Otherwise, you may smash the vase containing the water, turn to 28. Or you may investigate the chest beneath the table where the Zombies are working, turn to 9.

48

As you creep up behind the Dwarf he drains the rest of his bottle and tosses it over his shoulder. The bottle bounces painfully off your head. Lose 4 STAMINA points. You can’t help but cry out and the Dwarf spins round on his perch. Immediately, he points at you, hollering an order at the Skeletons in some arcane tongue. Your head bleeding profusely, you manage to rise to your feet, just as the four Skeletons rush to attack you brandishing their picks and shovels. You grab

a heavy wooden club from among a set of tools propped nearby and retreat into the doorway of a mausoleum where these unholy monsters can only attack you one at a time.

| | SKILL | STAMINA |
|-----------------|-------|---------|
| First SKELETON | 5 | 4 |
| Second SKELETON | 4 | 5 |
| Third SKELETON | 5 | 4 |
| Fourth SKELETON | 6 | 5 |

If you win you find that the Dwarf has fled. You curse and kick the bone-filled wheelbarrow, spilling its contents into an open grave. If you wish, you may keep the wooden CLUB (make a note of this on your *Adventure Sheet*). Otherwise, there is nothing else here of interest. You may travel into the clearer ground to your left, turn to 44, or the even more densely overgrown area to your right, turn to 49.

49

You wade through the weeds and overgrown grasses that have swallowed the tombstones in this part of the graveyard. The ground underfoot feels boggy and sucks at your boots as you trudge onward. You think about turning back when suddenly you stumble onto a dry path. Relieved to be free of the tangled vegetation you follow this trail towards a particularly imposing tomb, which stands some distance ahead of you. The undergrowth obscures the gravestones either side of the path. As you look to one side you catch sight of a skull hanging amid the misty greenery, weeds sprouting from its eye sockets. You can make out an entire skeleton in fact, long grass wrapped around its ribs and bones.

The weed-strangled skeleton suddenly lunges at you. You recoil in surprise and another pair of bony arms grabs hold of you from behind. As the creature squeezes the breath from your chest you feel its green tendrils worming their way into your ears and nose. With a mighty effort you burst free just as another of these monsters steps onto the path nearby. These are GRAVEWEED ZOMBIES, human remains animated by a blood-sucking plant known as Graveweed, and they have you surrounded. Will you try to run past them towards the tomb that stands at the end of the path, turn to 17. Or will you stand and fight, turn to 24.

50

With thoughts of the fame that awaits you upon your return, you lift the Scythe of Kane from the floor. It somehow feels almost weightless and you twirl it between your fingers, stopping now and then to sweep it at an imaginary enemy. This magical weapon moves with unearthly speed and strikes with unerring accuracy. You think of all the dungeons you could conquer and all the treasures you could win with this in your possession. Then you notice the ghostly manacles upon your wrists. You drop the Scythe in horror, but it does not hit the floor. The weapon is attached to your wrists by lengths of phantom chain. You claw at the manacles, clutching nothing but empty air. You plant your boot on the Scythe and try to pull yourself free, but it's no use. Your bonds may appear to be no more substantial than mist, but they prove as solid as Dwarf steel.

Your mind is racing. If you've any hope at all of freeing yourself from the Scythe's seemingly unbreakable curse you must first escape the Garden of Bones. Now if you can just find your enchanted lantern. There it is. You pull the item free from your backpack and go to light it, when you notice the floor around you is heaped with chains. A hundred ghostly chains. Perhaps a thousand. Ten thousand, all piled on top of one another, and all linked to the Scythe

as surely as you are. These chains reach into the surrounding darkness, attached to something that makes you drop your lantern in terror.

Countless dead white faces peer at you from the dark. The soul of every man, woman, and child whose life has been claimed by the Scythe of Kane, chained to the weapon that murdered them. The Demon Prince that forged the Scythe had indeed found a way of reminding Morbius Kane of just how many souls his weapon had claimed, but their ceaseless voices had eventually driven the warlock insane.

The dead glide towards you, hands outstretched, pleading for release. Their countless murmuring voices are unbearable. The lantern which you had hoped would light your way out of here lies shattered. The dead close in. Their bloodied faces, their inescapable voices drive you mad with horror. Your terrified screams echo around the high stone walls of your new home.