

# THE COLD HEART OF CHAOS

A FIGHTING FANTASY GAMEBOOK

by  
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## BACKGROUND

You are a young dwarf, one of a large clan that resides in Salamonis. You have had the best of education, and have been told a most secret tale of your ancestors; about the hold they lived in far north of the Icefinger Mountains, and the ritual they performed that blocks the power of chaos from ever entering this world again. Part of this ritual was the carving of the Pillar of Stability, which is located in the abandoned hold of your people.

Knowing this tale, you are certain something has gone wrong. Throughout much of your life you have heard travelers tales of the spreading of chaos, the growing boldness of those that worship the chaos gods, and the increasing effectiveness of their spells. Less than a year ago, Salamonis was threatened itself by a group of chaos cultists hoping to bring pestilence down upon the city itself.

You reason that the Pillar of Stability must be losing power. None of the elders or your tutors want to investigate, indeed they just scoff at your reasoning. So you resolve to make the trek to Grimwoden, the halls of your ancestors, and find out first hand about the pillars.

You are going alone. The only other dwarf that you feel would have aided you is one of your old tutors, Diuron. Sadly he was taken prisoner by a band of goblin mutants many years ago, and is almost certainly dead.

You packed everything that you could afford, given your limited funds and lack of aid by your people: 2 provisions, a tent, snowshoes, kindling, and a bedroll. Then you set off north through the dwarven town of Stonebridge, and then the human town of Fang. Although the trip was not without danger, it pales in comparison to the problem you face now. You're well past the Icefinger Mountains, far from any habitation. Poor weather has slowed you considerably and you have only enough food for two more days. You know you are getting close to Grimwoden, but it could take you weeks yet to locate, and your path back to civilisation is even longer still. As the wind howls through the night outside your tent, you reflect grimly that you are almost certainly doomed. Morning is coming, and with morning, the end stages of your epic trek.

**NOW TURN OVER**

## 1

The gods gift you with a startling clear, sunny day. For the first time in days you are able to make good progress, your snowshoes leaving a trail behind you in the snow. You still believe you are some distance from your objective, but feel hope for the first time in days. If only this weather can hold, you may yet live to see the ancient hold of your people. Filled with growing excitement you pick up your pace.

As the sun moves to its zenith, you find yourself travelling through the lower foothills of the formidable, seemingly impenetrable, range of mountain peaks ahead, the Dragon Spires - whose peaks dwarf the Icefinger Mountains you have already conquered. You feel pride in your achievement, making it this far, against all the odds. If only the nagging sensation of being followed, of some danger growing ever closer, were to go away, you would almost be content.

Caught up in your thoughts, you do not notice until a fraction too late the blur of movement, the flash of fangs, and the growl from inhuman throats erupting around you. Test both your SKILL and your LUCK. If you fail both tests, turn to **12**. If you succeed in only one of the two tests, turn to **26**. If both tests are successful, turn to **45**.

## 2

The sun sets on a patch of snow twisted and formed into shapes and patterns that disturb the eye. In the center of the snow is a small mound, formed from a crumpled suit of chainmail, which has been polished to a perfect shine, as if by powerful and scouring winds. Next to the chainmail lies a well used battleaxe, a crack running through it, from a missing chunk on its head, all the way down to through its shaft. Tatters of leather beneath the chainmail partially conceal a small pile of carefully arranged bones, stripped not only of flesh, but also of its marrow.

Your adventure ends here.

## 3

You race through the halls of Grimwoden, past cold and empty forges, enormous feast halls, tunnels innumerable leading to residential rooms, and finally, into the

Throne Room itself. The Throne Room is majestic; its cavernous halls echo with your footsteps and your heavy breath. Behind the carved throne of stone is the Pillar of Stability, reaching up and through the roof. You slow down as you approach the pillar. A figure steps out from the concealment of the throne. "In Kerillim's name, what are *you* doing here?" you exclaim, stepping backwards in surprise.

Unfortunately you will never know the answer to that question. So great was your surprise, you didn't feel the presence of the inhuman creature stalking up behind you, and as you step back, it removes your head with one wrench of its powerful arms. Your expression of surprise will stay on the face of your severed head forever.

Your adventure ends here.

#### 4

"Diuron, you have caused pain and death to thousands of goodly folk, even you own clan!"

He sneers, "Don't be a fool. With change comes pain. We must shed the useless husks of those who cannot adapt".

If you have heard enough, and wish to attack, turn to **21**.

If you want to try once more, appealing to his sense of reason, turn to **42**.

#### 5

You make good progress for several hours before reaching a towering jagged cliff, which stretches as far as you can see along the base, both left and right. The cliff is climbable, but it is very high. The climb would stretch both your climbing skills and your endurance to the limit. The only other option you can think of is to work your way along the base of the cliff to try and find an easier way up. The gradient is sloping generally upwards to your left, making this the obvious direction to try.

As you consider your options, you hear terrible, agonized cries pierce the air, coming from across the snow, back the way you came. The sounds are those of the Snow Wolves but, as the last of the howls is suddenly cut off in mid scream,

you realize that something terrible has happened to them. You are still being followed, but by what sort of inhuman creature you don't yet know.

If you want to attempt to climb up the cliff, turn to **15**. If you want to head left along the base of the cliff, turn to **22**. If you want to head right along the base of the cliff, turn to **29**. To stay here and confront the creature following you, turn to **33**.

## 6

You run as fast as possible, the powdery snow beneath your feet slowing you down despite snowshoes. Roll 4 dice and add the total together. If the total you rolled is greater than your current STAMINA, turn to **14**. If the total is equal or less than your current STAMINA, turn to **10**.

## 7

Frantically you translate the runes, successfully finding a way to both open, and close, the portal. You place your hands on the points marked and the wall of stone slides sideways. You jump through the doorway, into dwarven carved halls, not a moment too soon. The inhuman form of your pursuer, surrounded by the whirling of the storm, slides malevolently up the last few steps. Its eyes are pools of darkness that seek to draw you in.

You must make a decision fast. If you want to sprint into your people's halls and attempt to lose this terrible foe within them, turn to **23**. If you want to close the portal, in an effort to stop your pursuer, turn to **44**.

## 8

You wander through the halls of Grimwoden, past cold and empty forges, enormous feast halls, tunnels innumerable leading to residential rooms, and finally, into the Throne Room itself. The Throne Room is majestic; its cavernous halls echo with the noise of your footsteps. Behind the carved throne of stone is the Pillar of Stability, reaching up and through the roof. You slow down as you approach the pillar.

The pillar is ornately carved and seems to radiate all the virtues you hold dear, stability, respect, harmony and life. As you examine it more closely you notice, to your horror, a fine crack running from the base, to almost half way up. The crack is oozing a darkness, more spiritual than physical. As you struggle to take in the implication this damage, a figure steps out from the concealment of the throne. "In Kerillim's name, what are *you* doing here?" you exclaim, stepping backwards in surprise.

It is your old and beloved tutor, Diuron the Wise. He looks well and he nods his head at you benevolently. His voice is deeply resonant. "I should have known you would come. You were always my favorite student, less hide bound than the others, more open to the richness of the world around you."

You shake your head in confusion.

"Yes, it was I who have damaged the pillars," he speaks earnestly. "It needed to be done. Our people are so bound up in their unbending life of tradition, they cannot see that change is a needed part of life, as important as food or shelter to our well-being."

"The creature..." you start to say.

"Yes, I called forth the demon of chaos also, and set it to slay anyone coming near. I cannot be disturbed in my work! I have too much still to accomplish!" His voice softens, "Although, if I had known you were coming, I would have let you passed. You did well to defeat it."

You cannot believe what you are hearing. How could Diuron be responsible for so much death, so much unnecessary evil throughout Allansia. You struggle to think of a reply.

If you have heard enough and simply want to draw your weapon and attack, turn to **21**.

If you want to try and make him aware of all the misery and destruction he has caused, turn to **4**.

If you want to ask him more about his reasons, turn to **32**.

Either through skill of observation, or plain luck, you spot something that makes your heart race. Dwarven runes, which mark the start of a dwarven road. You

search around, and after much effort, find a small, apparently natural, lava cave opening.

You crawl into the tunnel, which soon opens out into a passage large enough for you to comfortably walk along. There is no light in here, but the walls and floor have been smoothed from their natural state. You are used to travelling underground, so you have no difficulty travelling this route. After about half an hours walk upward through the darkness you detect a strange scent, perhaps... flowers?

Feeling around to locate where the scent is coming from, you find a narrow passageway at right angles to the one you're in, leading slightly downwards.

If you want to crawl in and follow this new passageway, turn to **16**. If you want to continue to head upwards along your current passageway, turn to **38**.

## 10

Legs pumping, you scramble up the side of the valley, and not a moment too soon. A huge wave of ice and snow rumbles past you, its passing shaking the ground, almost sending you tumbling from your perch. You sigh with relief as the avalanche subsides. You continue on up the valley, turn to **18**.

## 11

“Diuron, all life by its very nature is change. That is its natural state. Can’t you see that all you are doing is bringing unnatural chaos and death into this natural cycle of change. Surely you know better, you taught *me* better”.

Diuron looks confused and uncertain for the first time.

If you have the *rose mark*, test you LUCK. If you are successful, turn to **37**. If you fail your LUCK test, or if you don’t possess the *rose mark*, turn to **34**.

## 12

You are stuck from behind by the solid weight of one of your attackers. As you are knocked to the ground, you feel the exposed parts of your body, your arms

and your legs, being torn into by your foes. Roll one die. This is the amount of successful strikes you endure before you throw your foes back for long enough to get to your feet. Each successful strike does 2 STAMINA points of damage to you.

You wildly strike around, trying to keep your assailants at bay as you clear the snow from your eyes. Surrounding you is a pack of ferocious Snow Wolves. They work as a team, nipping in, biting at you as you try and fend off others from their pack. You are in desperate peril and must fight.

SNOW WOLF	SKILL 9	STAMINA 7
SNOW WOLF	SKILL 7	STAMINA 9
SNOW WOLF	SKILL 8	STAMINA 8
SNOW WOLF	SKILL 9	STAMINA 8

You must fight them all together. If you manage to defeat one of them, do not continue the fight. Instead, turn to **39**.

### 13

You run like the wind, outdistancing your pursuer in the almost-familiar halls of your people. Finally, body burning with fatigue, you make it to the massive doors that can only be the entrance to the Treasury. The doors are closed, and you realize you have no chance to open them in the little time you have left. You must make for one of the other areas in the dwarven halls, but first subtract 1 STAMINA point, due to fatigue.

Now you must run again. Roll four dice and add the total together. If the total you rolled is greater than your current STAMINA score, turn to **36**. If the total is less than or equal to your current STAMINA score, where do you want to run?

If you want to run to the Throne Room, turn to **3**, or to run to the Hall of Heroes, turn to **27**.

### 14



You stumble through the snow. Looking up the valley, you are shocked to see a huge wall of ice and snow hurtling towards you. Desperately you look around for some way to save yourself. Test your LUCK. If you are successful, turn to **46**. If you fail, turn to **30**.

## 15

You start up the cliff. The going is easy at first, but quickly becomes difficult. The cold stones bite into your fingers, and the wall is unstable; you have to carefully test each handhold before placing your weight upon it. Test your SKILL and your STAMINA. You can test your STAMINA by rolling 4 dice and adding the total. If the total is rolled higher than your current STAMINA then you fail the test. If it is less than or equal to your current STAMINA, then you are successful. If both tests fail, turn to **28**. If you are successful with only one of the two tests, turn to **41**. If both tests are successful, turn to **47**.

## 16

As you crawl along the tunnel you feel warmth, then see light, from ahead. The passage opens up into a small cavern. In the cavern is a gently bubbling spring of mineral water, lit softly from beneath by a faintly glowing light. You get another hint of flowers, and find you cannot resist removing your equipment to enter the pool. It is very warm, most welcome after so many days travelling through the snow.

You awake from a most restful sleep, gain 4 STAMINA points and 2 LUCK points. You don't know where you are at first, but then remember. You must have fallen asleep, and your dreams, something about your dreams, something about your old mentor Diuron the wise...imprisoned...chained somehow, but you can't quite remember.

Reluctantly you get out of the hot water spring and put your equipment back on. As you do, you notice something strange. On the back of your hand is a red mark, almost like a birthmark, in the shape of a rose. Mark that you have the *rose mark* on your adventure sheet. You crawl back to the main passage, and continue on your way, turn to **38**.

The new day dawns. It is another brilliantly fine day. Your spirit lifts, and you make excellent progress throughout the day. Looking around at the glistening fields of snow and ice - offset by a backdrop of mighty peaks, you remember one of your favorite tutors sayings, "There is beauty to be found in stark simplicity." You wish he were here to view this majestic vista.

During the day you must eat one of your provisions, but do not gain any STAMINA from the meal. If you cannot eat some provisions, you lose 3 STAMINA points through starvation. By the end of the day you have reached the upper foothills of the Dragon Spires. From now on the travelling will be a lot harder. You settle down for the night, undisturbed apart from the low moan of the wind through the mountains.

Waking the next day you find that the wind has increased, and dark clouds have started to gather around the highest peaks. You can only hope that the weather holds for some time yet. Throughout the morning you travel up a wide valley. You keep a close watch behind you as you feel... something, a dark presence but not quite like you experienced before.

Tension builds in the air around you; the wind suddenly drops away. You hear a loud CRACK! from the valley above, that echoes through the mountains all around. There is a sudden building rumble from ahead. Avalanche.

You need to act quickly. If you want to dig into the ice as best you can, and brace yourself for the coming avalanche, turn to **30**. If you want to flee up the valley walls, in the hope of getting out of the path of the avalanche before it reaches you, turn to **6**.

Late in the day you come across an incredible sight. Tucked away in the valley, shielded from the worst of the wind and snow, is a small grove of sturdy, vibrantly growing trees. You walk through them, awed by this sight, so far above the tree line.

Collecting up the loose wood around, you use the last of your kindling to make a small but welcome fire, gain 1 STAMINA point from this much-needed warmth. If you have any meat you are able to cook up one portion of provisions with the

small amount of fire you have. You must also eat one provision at this time, although this does not restore any STAMINA. If you cannot eat one meal of provisions, you lose 3 STAMINA points through hunger.

If you have any more meat, you can break off a few branches from the trees to keep your fire going. If you want to cook some more meat before you rest, turn to **40**. If you are content just to settle down to sleep, turn to **25**.

## 19

Either through skill of observation, or plain luck, you spot something that makes your heart race. Dwarven runes, which mark the start of a dwarven road. You search around, and after much effort, locate a small, apparently natural, lava cave opening.

You crawl into the tunnel, which soon opens out into a passage large enough for you to comfortably walk along. There is no light in here, but the walls and floor have been smoothed from their natural state. You are used to travelling underground, so you have no difficulty travelling this route.

You continue upwards, turn to **38**.

## 20

As the body of the Snow Wolf collapses to the ground, you quickly butcher the animal as best you can. You can hear grisly tearing sounds coming from the rest of the wolf pack as they continue to tear into the dead member of their pack. You are able to safely skin and slice enough meat off the dead wolf to provide you with enough food for 3 provisions, assuming you can find enough fuel with which to cook them. Until you can cook the meat, it is inedible; the meat is far too tough and stringy to eat raw. Add *meat – enough for 3 provisions when cooked*, to your adventure sheet. You can also add the *snow wolf pelt* to your adventure sheet if desired. Now you must continue on before the remainder of the wolf pack comes to investigate the smell of the butchered wolf. Turn to **5**.

## 21

“You hidebound fool, you are as shortsighted as all the rest,” Diuron shouts, pulling out his dark edged axe, to meet your attack. You feel a wave of uncertainty pass through you, eroding at your confidence. What if he is right? You must lose 1 SKILL for the duration of the coming battle, as you begin to doubt the righteousness of your cause. This will be a tough fight; Diuron taught you almost everything you know about fighting, and he is able to predict with ease every move you make.

DIURON THE CORRUPT

SKILL 10

STAMINA 18

If you are victorious, turn to **50**.

## 22

Hours pass as you trek along the base of the cliff. Slowly the sun starts to set. Worse still, you feel your pursuer getting closer and closer. Finally, as you are beginning to run out of hope, you see a way up. There is a jumbled mass of rocks, caused by part of the cliff collapsing, that forms a difficult but climbable slope.

With pursuit so close behind you, only two choices remain. If you want to turn and face your inhuman pursuer, while there is still light in the sky, turn to **2**. If you want to attempt to struggle up the slope, despite the oncoming night, turn to **35**.

## 23

As you run, you are relying entirely upon oral records, told from one generation of dwarves, to the next, to guide your way. You can think of three different places to run to, the Throne Room, the Treasury, and the Hall of Heroes.

Can you outdistance your pursuer in your fatigued state? Roll four dice and add together the total you roll. If this total is larger than your current STAMINA score, turn to **36**. If the total is less than or equal to your current STAMINA score, where do you want to run?

To run to the Throne Room, turn to **3**. To run to the Treasury, turn to **13**. To run to the Hall of Heroes, turn to **27**.

## 24

Diuron lets out a somehow sad smile. "You were always the best of my students, it is fitting you join me."

You feel an obscene, coldly alien presence enter your mind. While you obtain great fame as one of the most feared warriors of chaos in the years to come, this presence is always there, taking any joy, any emotion, from your life, and ultimately, destroying your sanity.

Your adventure ends here.

## 25

The weather in the morning is harsh. While you are very well sheltered in your protected valley, once you pack up and start on your way, the full force of the wind assaults you. Dark clouds have gathered overnight, and a light flurry of snow falls from the sky. You know the weather is only going to worsen as the day goes on. If you had more time, if you didn't fear you were still being followed, you would be tempted to stay in the sheltered vale until the weather improved.

You pick up your pack and go. Trudging up the valley against the force of the wind is wearying work, but you are afraid to rest. You need to push on. The day darkens as the weather worsens, and as the snow starts falling heavier and heavier, you begin to despair. Test either your **SKILL** or your **LUCK**, whichever one of the two you think gives you the best chance of success. If this test fails, turn to **31**. If the test is successful, turn to **9**.

## 26

You strike out wildly at your attackers, at the same time dodging back and forth in an attempt to avoid their blurred forms. You feel your weapon strike one of them. As it tumbles to the ground in front of you, recognition flows through you;

it is a Snow Wolf. Unfortunately, other members of the Snow Wolf pack also successfully strike you. Roll one die, and divide the number you roll by 2 (rounding fractions down), to get a number from 1 to 3. This is the amount of successful strikes upon you. Each successful strike does 2 STAMINA points of damage to you.

As the rest of the Snow Wolf pack gathers itself for another attack, you strike out at the wolf in front of you, which is already struggling to its feet.

SNOW WOLF

SKILL 9

STAMINA 5

If you win this fight, turn to 39.

## 27

You race through the halls, only moments ahead of your inhuman adversary, until you make it to the Hall of Heroes. This wide, long hall is lined with statues of dwarves who have achieved fame for their heroism. Perhaps, under the still glaze of these forgotten heroes, you can face your foe. You turn, prepared to fight, and to your surprise, a warhammer appears in your hand.

Power flows through you from the warhammer. The *hammer of heroes* has been specially crafted to fight demons, such as the one you face now. It gives +1 to your attack strength in any fight, a total of +2 to your attack strength against demons. Against demons, every wound it inflicts does 3 STAMINA points of damage (5 with a successful LUCK test, 1 with a failed LUCK test) instead of the usual 2.

The Demon of Chaos falters as it views the hammer in your hands, then with a hiss of hatred, glides forwards to do battle.

DEMON OF CHAOS

SKILL 11

STAMINA 16

If you defeat this most terrible foe, you look at the statues, and are not surprised that one of them is now missing their hammer. If you possess the *rose mark*, turn to 48. If you don't possess the *rose mark*, you notice the palm of your hand, where you touched the hammer, is now marked with the dwarven rune of law.

Note that you possess the *law brand* on your adventure sheet. Now you make your way through the halls of your people, towards the Throne of Kings. It is there that your quest will end. Turn to **8**.

## 28

You choose your route badly, and find yourself hanging on the wall, underneath a serious overhang, with no way on. It is almost impossible to climb down, as you cannot see below you to determine where to find footholds. You make it down five, then ten feet, before the inevitable happens. You put your weight on a rocky outcrop that gives way under you. Your overstressed hands cannot support you, and you fall.

Despite the great height you fall, you survive the impact, although you are crippled by your injuries. As you lie there, with your life slowly flowing away, you feel the terrible presence moving closer, turn to **2**.

## 29

Hours pass as you trek along the base of the cliff. Slowly the sun starts to set. Worse still, you feel your pursuer getting closer and closer. Finally, you give up hope. You turn and face your inhuman pursuer, while there is still some light in the sky, turn to **2**.

## 30

You know you are doomed the instant you see the massive wall of snow rumbling down the valley. It sweeps over you, wrenching you from your place on the ice, and tumbles you down the valley.

You live, but you are totally encased in snow and ice. As you lie there, you think to yourself that it will take a miracle to get yourself free. Unfortunately, you are freed, but by a dark miracle indeed. After lying in the ice for what seems to be an eternity, you feel the presence of your sinister follower getting closer, then above you, digging down into the snow. Turn to **2**.

### 31

You keep battling on, but the weather soon erupts into a full-blown snowstorm. You try and find shelter, but to no avail. Thinking of the sheltered vale you left behind, you head back down the valley, but somehow you miss it.

You struggle on for hours, possibly even a full day, before the cold and your exhaustion force you to stop, to rest, and to sleep. This is a sleep from which you will never awaken. Your adventure ends here.

### 32

“My reasons? Why, to bring change to the world. Too long have we stagnated, slowly being starved by unending order. To bring new life to the world, I must bring change.”

If you want to try and appeal to his sense of reason, turn to **42**.

If you want to try and convince him that his reasoning is incorrect, turn to **11**.

If he has managed to convince you, and you want to join his cause, turn to **24**.

### 33

As you wait, the air behind you hazes up. Moving towards you is a wall of swirling, twisting snow, like the vanguard of a storm on an otherwise brilliantly fine day. Within the depths of the haze you can make out a form, human shaped except larger and... an unnatural shiver of fear passes through your body. You feel your limbs weaken. The snow between you and the storm front starts to crack and maze, forming shapes and symbols that tear at your sight sending rhythmic strums of agony through your head.

If you want to flee, you now have only one choice - to climb the cliff. The approaching figure is moving fast, and will catch up with you if you try and flee in any other direction. To climb the cliff, turn to **49**. To stand and confront this oncoming abomination, turn to **2**.



**34**

“You hidebound fool, you are as shortsighted as all the rest,” Diuron shouts, pulling out his dark edged axe, and moving to attack. This will be a tough fight. Diuron taught you almost everything you know about fighting and he is able to predict with ease every move you make. However, his movements are unsure and lacking confidence, your final comments have left serious doubts in his mind.

DIURON THE CORRUPT

SKILL 9

STAMINA 18

If you are victorious, turn to **50**.

**35**

You climb for hours into the night. The way on is difficult, and at times dangerous but you push yourself to the limits. You finally reach the top, bruised and burning with fatigue, lose 3 STAMINA points, but dare not stop. For the rest of the night you push on towards the distant mountain peaks. During your trek, you must consume one of your provisions. This meal does not restore any STAMINA points; instead it helps to give you the extra strength to keep travelling through the night. To your relief, at some point in the night, the feeling of being followed recedes; you have outpaced your pursuer. Now the first rays of sunlight start to appear over the mountain range, turn to **17**.

**36**

You have come too far, and have been through too much. Sprinting through the musty halls of your ancestors, you slip, and fall. You try to rise but you are tired, so bone deep tired. You can only raise your head and watch numbly as your demonic foe strides towards you.

Your adventure ends here.

37

Diuron pauses, his face clearing of doubt. "You are right," he states. "How could I be such a fool." At that moment his body jerks and his eyes film over a pale white. Now something else is staring out of Diuron's body, something unhuman and cold. It laughs, "I don't need that poor deluded fool. You will die just the same." It smiles malevolently and Diuron's body strides towards you, drawing out a dark tinged axe. Diuron's body moves erratically as it attacks, and somehow you can tell that Diuron is fighting his own battle against the possessing chaos spirit, attempting to aid you one last time.

DIURON THE WISE (POSSESSED)

SKILL 8

STAMINA 18

If you win, you say a prayer over the fallen body of your mentor, your poor deluded friend. Turn to 50.

38

You walk up the lava tunnel for several more hours until you reach the exit. The weather is almost blizzard conditions but you can see more runic markings of your people; you must be close to your ancient homeland.

You head into the brutal winds, then realize your mistake. The presence that had been following you is suddenly very close, as if it had been waiting for you to leave the tunnel. You run to a series of almost natural looking steps, struggling to make headway against the wind. The presence gets nearer and nearer as you pound your way up the steps. Ahead, a solid stone wall blocks your progress... but it is not a completely unmarked wall. There is a stone portal, with ancient, faded, dwarven runes carved into it. You have but moments to decipher the runes before your foe most terrible is upon you. Test your SKILL. If you fail, turn to 43. If you are successful, turn to 7.

39

You cut the wolf down and desperately lunge over its dead body, trying to get away from the encircling pack. Only one of the wolves follows you. The others

are content to make a meal of their slain companion. Knowing you cannot outrun the pursuing wolf over any real distance, you sprint till you are out of sight of the pack, then turn to fight your pursuer. The chasing Snow Wolf howls with blood lust and goes for your throat.

SNOW WOLF

SKILL 9

STAMINA 8

If you manage to defeat this enemy, turn to **20**.

## 40

You cut off enough wood to cook the rest of your meat. As you cook your meals, there is an uneasy feeling of disapproval radiating from the grove around you. You settle down to sleep a little apprehensively, but nothing unpleasant occurs during the night.

The weather in the morning is harsh. While you are very well sheltered in your protected valley, once you pack up and start on your way, the full force of the wind assaults you. Dark clouds have gathered overnight, and a light flurry of snow falls from the sky. You know the weather is only going to worsen as the day goes on. If you had more time, if you didn't fear you were still being followed, you would be tempted to stay in the sheltered vale until the weather improved.

You pick up your pack and go. Trudging up the valley against the force on the wind is wearying work, but you are afraid to rest. You need to push on. The day darkens as the weather worsens, and as the snow starts falling heavier and heavier, you begin to despair. Test either your SKILL or your LUCK, whichever one of the two you think gives you the best chance of success. If this test fails, turn to **31**. If the test is successful, turn to **19**.

## 41

Your climb is longer than you ever hoped it would be, but you finally haul yourself to the top, shaking with fatigue. Lose 4 STAMINA points from your exertions. Looking down, you can see the strange hazy air and swirling snow

that marks your pursuer. It is at the bottom of the cliff, where you began your climb so many hours ago. As you watch, your unearthly stalker starts moving along the base of the cliff. It must not be able to climb the cliff! You are overjoyed, it will take them many hours, if not days, to regain your trail. By then you intend to be far away. You spend the last hours of the day travelling further up into the mountain peaks, before stopping for the night, turn to 17.

## 42

“What has happened to the good man I once knew, the one that taught me to revere the gods and the life they bestowed on us,” you shout.

“That man is dead, destroyed in the forge of change,” states Diuron, pulling out his dark edged axe, and moving forward to attack. This will be a tough fight; Diuron taught you almost everything you know about fighting, and he is able to predict with ease every move you make.

DIURON THE CORRUPT

SKILL 10

STAMINA 18

If you win this fight, turn to 50.

## 43

Frantically you translate the runes, finding a way to open the portal. You don't have a chance to translate all the runes before it is getting too late, but you have translated enough. You place your hands on the points marked and the wall of stone slides sideways. You jump through the doorway, into dwarven carved halls, not a moment too soon. The inhuman form of your pursuer, surrounded by the whirling of the storm, slides malevolently up the last few steps. Its eyes are pools of darkness that seek to draw you in.

You sprint into Grimwoden's halls, attempting to lose this most terrible foe in its depths, turn to 23.

44

You place your hands just so, and the door starts sliding closed. Slowly the door slides across, while the demonic form of your adversary flows closer and closer. Its foot long claws reach for you as its presence fills the doorway. You take a step back, your heart pounding with fear. The creature is flung sideways, against the stone frame by the closing of the door. There is a sickening crunch, and an inhuman howl.

Your foe is pinned in the door. It is not slain despite the incredible pressure of the closing door, but writhes around frantically trying to free itself. You step forward, drawing your battleaxe, and hack at its head again and again, until, despite the incredible resistance of its unnatural skin, it slumps in the door, unmoving. You have won.

Cautiously now, you make your way through the hall of your people, towards the Throne of Kings. It is there that your quest will end. Turn to 8.

45

You strike out wildly at your attackers, at the same time dodging back and forth in an attempt to avoid their blurred forms. You feel your weapon strike one of them. As it tumbles to the ground in front of you, recognition flows through you; it is a Snow Wolf.

As the rest of the Snow Wolf pack gathers itself for another attack, you strike out at the wolf in front of you, which is already struggling to its feet.

SNOW WOLF

SKILL 9

STAMINA 5

If you win this fight, turn to 39.

46

At the last moment you spot a large outcrop of stone and dive behind it. Just in time! The avalanche of snow sweeps around you, the strength of its passage shaking the ground. Even from behind the stone outcrop, you are buried in snow, but not deeply. By the time you have extracted yourself you are cold and

weary, lose 1 STAMINA point, but give thanks to the gods for your narrow escape. You continue up the valley, turn to **18**.

#### 47

You spent some time considering the route you were going to take, ruling out several that seemed climbable at first, but then become impossible part way up. The climb is long, longer than you hoped it would be, but you finally haul yourself to the top, tired with fatigue. Lose 1 STAMINA point from your exertions. Looking down, you can see the strange hazy air and swirling snow that marks your pursuer. It is at the bottom of the cliff, where you began your climb so many hours ago. As you watch, your unearthly stalker starts moving along the base of the cliff. It must not be able to climb the cliff! You are overjoyed, it will take them many hours, if not days, to regain your trail. By then you intend to be far away. You spend the last hours of the day travelling further up into the mountain peaks, before stopping for the night, turn to **17**.

#### 48

Now that the fight is over, the hilt of the hammer grows burning hot in your hand, and you are forced to drop it. Blinking with pain, you don't see the hammer disappear, but you do notice it is back in the hands of one of the statues. You give thanks for the loan of the hammer, and make your way through the hall of your people, towards the Throne of Kings. It is there that your quest will end. Turn to **8**.

#### 49

You are already weak with fear before you begin the climb, lose 1 SKILL point, but know you must climb before that terrible figure reaches you. You start up the cliff. The going is easy at first but quickly becomes difficult. The cold stones bite into your fingers and the wall is unstable, you have to carefully test each handhold before placing your weight upon it. Test your SKILL and your STAMINA. You can test your STAMINA by rolling 4 dice and adding the total. If the total is higher than your current STAMINA then you fail the test. If it is less

than or equal to your current STAMINA, then you are successful. If both tests fail, turn to **28**. If you are successful with only one of the two tests, turn to **41**. If both tests are successful, turn to **47**.

## 50

It is over. You have reached the halls of your ancestors, and against all odds, ended the threat to the Pillar of Stability. Although the damage to the pillar will not get worse, you know that chaos can still seep into the world through the crack already present on the pillar. This is only the start of your adventure; you have much to do before you can rest. You have to take news of your adventures to your elders, and...you vow to yourself, you will find some way to repair the damage done to the pillar and banish the powers of chaos from Allansia once more!

The End