

# THE QUEST

## BACKGROUND

“You were never among my favourites, you were always a disappointment to your mother and I.” Your father’s first words sting you, but only for a second. Having reached the age of 16 less than two months ago you were well used to the harsh manner of your father’s bluntness. The regal, 30-years king of the once-powerful but now war-torn kingdom of Monoland was never known for his good grace or pleasantness. Now today for some reason he has summoned you here to his private chambers. He then continues.

“You have only been training in swordplay for the last two months, not brilliantly but adequately. You are not exactly the first person I would consider entrusting a matter like this to but I have little choice. I must trust this matter, a matter in which our only chance between total victory and defeat rests, to you. And to you alone.” All of a sudden time seems to have stopped still. Did you hear the king correctly? A quest? You? How? Your thoughts are broken as the sound of an army bugle is blown and reaches the ears of everyone in the caves. Followed as always by the sound of battle cries and swords in the distance but not too far from the caves. You are well acquainted with such noises. In the last year your father’s armies have been fighting a losing battle against the screaming hordes of fanatics who are determined to see the royal family Longsilver dethroned. You do not even quite know why. All you know is that you used to live in a nice palace and now all your people are trapped in these emergency caves and the hordes get a little bit closer every day.

You are young, but you are not unwise. The king is only asking the youngest of his three children to perform a mission vital to the survival of your people because your older brother and sister were either killed or captured by the legions who have been swarming around your homelands for nearly a year. Your brutal father and his armies would once upon a time have stopped these fiends in their tracks in less than a fortnight but these foul monsters, goblins, rodent-folk, Orcs, trolls and worse, aren’t alone, they are led by the Elected Four, the group of wizards who once served your father as magical advisers until they had an argument with him. You never heard the details of their falling out but you do know that they are determined to get their revenge on your father. Ever since then the only world you have ever known has been torn apart by war. At first the creatures only started to appear in the woods on the outskirts of your towns, but then a whole army marched towards your castle and in less than a day your family had lost what it had owned for two hundred years and taken refuge in his Glowtooth Caves, the long-abandoned dwarf-operated gold mines behind the kingdom, with anyone else who had

survived the murderous attack. Now everyone is hiding in these caves in the mountains.

Your father continues, "You are old enough now to know how things stand. My guards outside are nearly at the end of their tethers. We cannot win this war. Our only hope is you."

Your father ignores your shocked expression and asks; "Do you know of your great-great-great-grandfather King Longsilver LIII?"

You nod, although there are so many former kings and ancestors you have no idea who your father is referring to.

"When my ancestor became king he had a brother." continues your father "whose name was Tallarm, and he was a traitor to the royal house of Longsilver. He was jealous because his older brother had the throne and Tallarm would spend day and night plotting ways to take the king's place.

"Well he almost succeeded. By using magic he stole. He forged a rod, which was designed to render the user invincible. He then marched towards his monarch's chambers, easily defeated anyone who tried to stop him and stood before the throne. Tallarm demanded the king give up his throne or he would kill him where he stood. Nothing could stop Tallarm. He was immune to any swords or spears they threw at him. But his pride was his downfall. The King challenged him to a duel without any magical aid and Tallarm accepted. Tallarm was never a very good swordsman but his success with his magical rod had made him proud and vain and he died at his brother's sword. Having narrowly lost his throne, our ancestor ordered the rod to be taken away as far as possible. No one would use it against him again."

You ask, "Why did the king let other people touch it? They could use it to get the throne from him just like Tall..."

"No," snaps your father "He, Tallarm, had crafted the token so only he could use it, or someone related to him anyway. Which is where you come in. So the rod was hidden in the Elkslayer Mountains a days' journey to the west of here. You must go there and bring the Rod of Tallarm back. I need you, my child."

You still cannot believe your ears. Now you can recall the legend of the Rod of Tallarm but you never quite believed it. Now your father is sending you to find it!

The kind explains, "When you reach the mountain you will find steps leading up to a cave. That a locked door, which will open if you place your hand on it, protects cave - it was long ago magically locked to anyone except for members of the royal family. On the other side a guardian of some kind may guard it but it should allow a descendant of King Longsilver to pass and take the rod. Once you have the rod, return here and give it to me. As I am also a descendant of Tallarm I will be able to use it to defeat the enemy!" Now you understand what you have to do.

“It is up to you,” finishes your father “Only one of our bloodline may touch it and your mother and I cannot leave here. Not while we are at war. Not only are we needed to direct the war effort but we could be easily recognized by anyone.”

You waste no time and leave. The foul armies are attacking the caves due south but the Elkslayer Mountains are due north so you have little trouble sneaking out the back of the caves and riding your horse towards the last hope for the Empire of Monoland. You cannot help marvel at a strange change, which has come over you. All your life you thought you would remain useless and despised by everyone around you. Suddenly however, all that has changed. You are a different person now. A stronger individual that you never thought you would be. You will save your people! Or die trying.

### 1

You are alone...but for the first time in your life you feel certain strength inside you. Life doesn't have to be this way! As you hear faint sounds of skirmish behind you, you do your best to ignore it. There is a war behind you true, but before you are The Wild lands. You will need to pass through the part of the kingdom where there are few people and much lawlessness. You presume this is why the Rod was hidden in these parts so long, the last place anyone would think to look for it. There is no way of telling what you will find. Perhaps you will be attacked; perhaps you will die out in this wilder land. You have not been trained for so in this kind of work. You feel strong, but you also feel very afraid. But you are ashamed of your fears.

Now you have come to a fork in the road. Will you ride west (go to 34) or will you instead investigate a parchment nailed to a wooden post (go to 13)?

### 2

Test your Luck. If you are lucky you arrive back at the signpost and continue westwards in good time, go to 34. If you are unlucky, go to 18.

### 3

“Three!” you shout out, feeling more than a little foolish. Sammy stops rambling on when you do so. “Three?” repeats the annoying little gnome puzzled “Three what?”

But then the two of you realise you are no longer in the forest clearing. You are in fact standing in the room where you found that orb. You're free! “Oh my heavens!” cries Sammy. “You found the magic word. I'm free!” to experiment he flexes his hands and some smoke rises from the floor with a bang and a puff. “Ha!” he cries, letting off more minor explosions, he's so glad to be free. “All my powers still work. This is wonderful!”

But then he turns to you and says, “You have freed me but I have not forgotten how you were going to attack me a minute ago.” he smiles and

raises his hand towards you. You gasp. He isn't about to harm you is he? He cackles, "This is one of the reasons I was imprisoned so long ago. I'm a very false friend!" He is. But then you see his hand is withered and old. So is his face. It is tightening as you stand there. He seems to be aging at a rather alarming rate!

"What's happening to me?" screams Sammy terrified. You realise that he must have been imprisoned in that orb from a time before you were born. Now he is free, time is catching up. You can do nothing but stand still and watch as his skin turns to grey, his hair falls out, and finally his skeleton collapses into dust right before you. You just sigh. You feel relieved that you aren't condemned to spending eternity in that orb, but this has been a bit of a waste of time. Then you notice in the middle of Sammy's remains there is a ring he used to wear on his finger with a bright blue stone in its centre, which you put on your own hand. Add 2 LUCK points for this find. Now there is nothing more for you here but to return to the fork and take the other route. Turn to 4

#### 4

The passageway twists and turns for maybe 15 - 20 minutes and you have a sneaking suspicion you are deeper under the mountain than you had originally planned to be. Your father never said you would spend this much time in here, but at least you have had no encounters with any hostile beings in here, and that is certainly a blessing considering the many that wander the wild lands of Titan. You begin to despair of ever finding what you came here to find, and then finally you arrive at a metal door. No handle, no lock, not even a magic inscription of some kind. It cannot even really be called a door; maybe a slab of metal would be a better description. You recall your father's words and stick your hand out to open it. But then you withdraw it. There have been some things happening to you in the course of this mission that have made you wonder if things are what they seem. Your father sent you on this mission. The two of you have never really seen eye-to-eye but something tells you that you are entering danger. There are many things he has never told you that he should have. But you have no other option. You raise your hand and press the door, damning the consequences! You wait with bated breath. Turn to 43.

#### 5

The pockets of the drenched clothes of the thugs yield little of interest for you to take. You manage to find a couple of Gold Pieces, which you pocket. Then suddenly from one of the pockets of one of the robbers jumps a little pet rat, which promptly bites your hand before disappearing into the undergrowth. Lose 1 STAMINA point and keep bad language to a minimum. Turn to 38.

#### 6

After riding a few more hours you still see unhappy people walking around. You even see some of your soldiers riding off the main road into a roadside village. This is rather strange; you thought you were the only one travelling

out this far. You wonder what your father's troops are doing out here so far away from the war. Will you follow them, turn to 33, or decide to ignore them and press onwards, turn to 11.

## 7

You quietly step out from your hiding place. Insores' back is to you but his Griffin suddenly sees you and growls. The wizard turns around and you stop. The two of you look one another straight in the eye. You know this man is one of the sworn enemies of your people. But he says nothing. He does not even look surprised to see you. Was he expecting you? Your heart sinks. You should not have shown yourself, this was a trap after all! Will you turn and run, turn to 23, or accept he can easily catch you and stay still, turn to 14.

## 8

The creature's expression softens and you feel more relieved. It seems to be studying you. "Yes." it eventually says, studying your face "You must be a descendant of the bloodline of King Longsilver LIII and Queen Domillia. I can see their noble features on your own face. Are you the heir to the throne?" Since your elder two brothers are lost in combat you answer in the affirmative, telling the being your father's name and what year it is. "Ah." says the being softly with a trace of sadness "Two hundred years. I have guarded this relic for your kingdom for a long, long time. You have travelled far to find it. Why do you need it? Do you not know it grants whosoever holds it invincibility?" You tell the spectre about the war. "Then you must hurry." it says, "Take the Rod of Tallarm. I hope you use it more wisely than its last owner!"

You smile at the joke. You reach out to take the rod thinking to yourself this mission has not been so hard after all. Once you hold that rod in your hands you will have the power to free your people from the wizards and their minions. You can almost feel victory as your finger touch the relic you have risk your life to...and then your world seems to explode all around you. The pain is unbearable. It feels as though your body is on fire! You scream and scream and cannot help yourself, but you can hear the spectre laughing just above you. just as you fall to the ground your bloodshot eyes fall upon the corpses next to you. You notice one has a bright blue scabbard. Didn't your second older brother carry one like that?

## 9

After more riding you make it to the top of a grass-laden hill. As your horse struggles through some dense bushes your eyes spy a welcome but ominous sight. The vast range of mountains covering the horizon from north to south known as the Elkslayer Mountains! At least you feel your mission is half over but you still do not feel any more relaxed. You can see them on the horizon, maybe only another hour's ride away. You have not seen them since you were much younger and travelling with your family and a host of bodyguards on a holiday, but even now they look very forbidding and intimidating. You wish you had company now. The tall peaks reach up into the heavens. You

remember hearing stories about snow-creatures that live up in the peaks and come down at night to hunt for food, living food. You hope they are just stories! Inside a vault in the heart of that mountain is the secret to freeing your people from the war you left only a day's ride behind. You lip your lips and ride your horse down the hill. There is a widespread dusty plain between you and the mountains and it will still take at least another hour's ride to get there.

When you finally end your journey to the foot of the nearest forbidding mountain, you begin your search for the entrance your father mentioned. First though you get off your horse and rest for a while in the shade of the mountain peak. You may eat Provisions here if you wish. It takes you about an hour of circling the base of the mountain but you find nothing. No vault door, no sealed gateway. No sign anyone has ever been here before to secure something hidden here. Now what are you to do? But just as you are pondering your next move, you hear a strange sound up above you. You look up and see a surprising sight. A lion with wings is flying through the air right above you! You instinctively duck down but it flies right over you, showing no sign of having seen you. You're not sure but you think you saw an old man riding on its back. An old man wearing bright red robes with curious symbols on them. The beast hovers in the air for a few more minutes then it circles down and lands on the other side of some rocks, not far from where you are. Neither the GRIFFIN nor its rider has seen you. Will you:

Remain out of sight and wait and see what happens? **Turn to #28**  
 Approach and talk to the man? **Turn to #16**  
 Draw your sword and attack? **Turn to #21**

## 10

The light illuminates the cave and confirms your worst fears.

It is not just a cave you stand in, but also a tunnel, which winds on for some time. Taking a deep breath you stride boldly into the unknown. The dank smell and some small lizards running over your feet make you wonder what else you will find. You walk into the tunnel and daylight behind you is slowly lost. You are out of the wilds and seeing things before you only with artificial light. After about five minutes walk you come to a fork in the tunnel. Why would the ancient workers have made a fork in the tunnel? Your father didn't tell you about any complications, but perhaps he didn't know. What are you supposed to do now? Will you take the left turn **Turn to #27** or right turn **Turn to #4**?

## 11

After a few more hours riding the sparsely populated countryside with its farms and fields gradually disappears and turns into the wilderness. Large hills appear from nowhere and you suddenly find yourself trekking up and down them. You are forced to ride over several and you notice that there is no real road any longer. Well you did not agree to go on this journey for the ease of travel! After a while you see a cave off the road. You cannot see any

further into the gloom from where you are. Will you investigate **Turn to #29** or ride on **Turn to #9**?

## 12

The magician offers no comment about your answer, but you can sense that it pleased him. You cannot understand why that this, you always thought the Elected Four believed in exploiting other people. That was what your father told everyone just before the war began. Insores then moves on and asks you "Suppose that you one day discovered an unknown cavern directly underneath one of your kingdom's coal mines, and learned it was in fact rich with many diamonds. The diamonds are on your land so they obviously belong to you and you want them. What would you do? Would you spend the money to employ miners, safety workers and other kinds of people to operate the mine to dig the diamonds up? Or would you instead use a cheaper method: kidnap folk from their homes in the dead of night and keep them in the mines for the rest of their days and nights. As your slaves, never seeing the light of day again, their sole purpose in life is to mine the diamonds for you?" You still cannot comprehend why your enemy is asking you all these strange things. But will you answer:

"I would never take slaves!" **Turn to #44** "I think using slaves would be the best way to collect the diamonds." **Turn to # 37**

## 13

You ride over to the post and dismount from your horse. The note is a handwritten script on a piece of parchment, hardly what would expect to see on a signpost directing travellers. It reads, You are on your way, a quest to solve Around your task events revolve You may find a world, wonder how it came to be To leave all you must do is cry, not one, nor two, but three - Signed The Riddling Reaver, Servant of The Tricksters What?

Having read the script you feel no more informed, as you were when you rode up. Or do you? Now you must make a choice. If you want to go west, **Turn to #34**? Or **Turn to #24** to go east?

## 14

The magician's GRIFFIN growls at you, but he pats its hide and says "Easy Condora. [your name] will not hurt us, will you?" he looks over at you. He is speaking in such a way you would not think your two sides were currently at war!

You do not know what to say. Insores does not seem hostile or evil. But he is an enemy of your people! He is responsible for the slaughter of so many of your people. You cannot stop yourself. You cry at him "You traitor! You murdering half-Orc! I will never turn against my father, you will have to kill me."

"Kill you?" repeats the wizard, untroubled by your insults "My dear young friend, if I had wanted you dead I could have easily ended your life an hour ago with a firebolt from the sky. I'm sorry, but I have to say you have been very careless. You made no effort to conceal yourself as you approached this mountain and if anyone was waiting for you, you would be dead by now. And that was a very clumsy attack you just attempted. If I was a troll, ogre or even a one-legged goblin you would be most unlikely to take your father's throne one day." You frown in puzzlement. You cannot understand this.

Why is the enemy of your father chiding you? He will be either taking you prisoner soon or killing you so why should you have to listen to his criticism? You have had enough with him and his confusing words. But still he doesn't appear threatening or even angry. He is just way you remember him when you were younger. He had almost been like an uncle to you. But it was all a lie! He and the other wizards turned the rat people against your father and started the war. You will not be fooled into trusting him ever again.

Insore continues, "I knew you would be coming here. That is why I came to meet you." You retort bitterly "Why don't you...?" "Quiet!" he says, "I am speaking. You think I am your enemy but I am not. I am your friend. I have come to stop you from meeting death from the hand of one who you think has your best interests at heart. Your father has lied to you. It was he who began this war, not me and not the others. We have no wish to see our people suffer any more than you do. We want to stop this war; we never wanted it in the first place. Too many have died already." What? You cannot believe this! What ogre-dung he is saying! If, at any time you wish to get away from Insore turn to 23 whatever reference he is speaking to you in. Just run.

Insore continues, "Now I want to test you. I need to see if you have what it takes to rule the kingdom of Monoland, let alone complete the quest to find the Rod of Tallarm. As I told you I am not your enemy. I am here to help you." he smile "You have grown up so much since I last saw you but you are still very young. You have come through some hard trials to get this far across the wild lands. Trials outside and inside you haven't you? Don't forget I was once young too and I had to go a great distance before I could be considered a wise one. I want to help you end this war. But you must trust me. If you do not trust me, you may leave now and I will let you go on your way, no tricks **Turn to #30** or will you instead listen to what I have to say **Turn to #47?**

## 15

Before you even have a chance to swear at the creature it has raised its arms and flung a blinding white light towards you. You cringe with pain, but it does not last long. You should never attack a floating undead being with non-magical weapons. Remember that for future reference...

## 16

You look over the rock and you are about to step out, but then you get a closer look at the old man's face and you stop. Him? Impossible! You now recognize the wizard and, hoping neither he nor his mount has seen you, you



duck back down. That man is a man you have known since you were four years old.

His name is Insores and not only is he a powerful magician but he used to work for your father. As a member of the Elected Four! This is one of the very wizards who have been attacking your people for the last year! And he is here now. Why? Does he know of your quest and has come to stop you? Has he come to prepare a trap? You study him carefully.

He still wears the red robes of the court magicians you have not seen for some time now. But he doesn't appear to be wearing skulls of the enemies he murdered as everyone in the court says the Elected Four now adorn. You can only feel blazing anger as you see that man before you. He is one who murdered your people and started this horrible war. You want to kill him where he sits! But you stop yourself from blindly running out to attack him. He is a powerful magician; you will achieve nothing by getting yourself killed. But what is he doing here? Has he come to wait for you then kill you? Perhaps you had better leave before he succeeds. Will you:

Approach him and ask what he's doing here **Turn to #7** Sneak up on him and attack **Turn to #39** Slip away and continue the quest? **Turn to #30**

## 17

Weary after your ordeal you slump down against a tree and rest. You may eat provisions while you rest if you like. When you are ready would you like to explore the cave **Turn to #41** or decide you have had enough of this place and press onwards **Turn to #9**?

## 18

After carrying on for nearly another day, still not finding what you set out to look for, a sight makes you stop and weep. From where you are you suddenly see a plume of smoke coming from the direction of your homeland. You can't be sure but you think you can hear the sounds of screams and swordplay. Your heart sinks and you move no further. Tears come to your eyes as you realise you have failed in your mission, by spending too much time where you shouldn't have.

## 19

You suddenly remember in survival school you were taught how to make a light if you were stranded out in the wilds. You return to daylight and search along the ground for old branches or twigs. Once you have assembled your collection, you tear a sleeve off your shirt and tie it around a large branch. Then you light it with your tinderbox and you now have a working torch! You re-enter the cave and resume your search for the Rod of Tallarm. **Turn to #10.**

## 20

As you force your sword between the edge of the door and the rock wall, a bolt of power shoots up through your sword into your arm. ZAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAP! Crying out in pain, you drop your sword and nurse your arm. Test your Luck. If you were Lucky you were not using your sword arm and you need only deduct 6 STAMINA points. But if you were Unlucky you must lose 2 SKILL points in addition 6 STAMINA points. Once you pick yourself up, you may either return to the junction and take the other way **Turn to #27** or leave the Elkslayer Mountains for the time being and return later with proper equipment **Turn to #18?**

## 21

With a battle cry you run towards the newcomer with your weapon ready. The old man is demounting his winged beast of burden and turns as you hurl towards him. Before you are upon him he raises a strange staff he holds in his left hand and points it towards you, appearing undisturbed by your sudden attack. Before you can leap at him, blue sparks shine out of the device and strike down in a whirlwind of agonizing pain. You are suddenly lifted by a magical force, which hurls you around and around and around as though you are caught in a tornado. You cannot stop yourself from screaming. Roll 1 dice and double the number. Deduct this total from your STAMINA and then roll an additional dice and deduct this number as well. If you are still alive you open your eyes and find yourself on the ground, covered in the dust. The magical defence of the old man has stopped and you slowly turn your head to look towards him, though you cannot see his face with dirt in your eyes.

He shakes his head sadly "You are brave and yet so foolish. There was no need to attack me. I came to help you and save you from a trap. But you are obviously unworthy of the destiny that could have been yours!" he angrily turns back towards his griffin, remounts it and, as quickly as he appeared, flies away and disappears into the sky. You watch him leave. Perhaps this will teach you not to attack unprovoked! You couldn't tell because of the pain you were feeling, but you thought you recognized the old magic-user. Did he used to work for your father in the court perhaps? After allowing yourself an hour to fully recover (you may eat Provisions if you wish) you stand up and try to find the entrance to the vault once more. **Turn to #30.**

## 22

You ride off, wanting to avoid harmful combat with a mission to fulfil. Behind you a gang of ORCS suddenly appears out of the bushes and curse after you. You kick your horse into a gallop; they were planning to rob you! Some of the ORCS fire their crossbows after you as you gallop away. Roll one dice to determine the number of bolts that fly your way. For each one Test your Luck. For each one you are Unlucky for you lose 3 STAMINA points. If you are still alive, at least you get away. **Turn to #6.**

## 23

You run! Leaping and jumping over rocks for your very life, knowing the magician is right behind you and after you. Your chest is hurting and your

lungs aren't used to this much workout, you can't stand this pain. You know this is fruitless. Insore will catch up with you any second now and take you prisoner. You dare not look over your shoulder as you run over the rocks, but you can't hear any sound of pursuit. After about ten minutes you find can't run any more. Lose 1 STAMINA point for the exertion and lean against a rock and try to blend with it so he can't find you.

Perhaps twenty minutes has passed when you listen once again for sounds of pursuit. You keep looking up expecting to see the magician's face looking at down you, smiling. But there is no sign of him when you poke your head out around the corner. Where is he? All of a sudden you think you can see his Griffin flying away to the north. Why didn't he come after you? You remember as a child when you were naughty and hid from your nurse he used to be able to cast spells, which found you in less than a minute. You cannot understand this. You wait another hour just to be sure. There is no further sign of the wizard or his beast. You got away very easily, but you cannot complain. You pick yourself up and decide to search for the entrance to the mountain again.  
**Turn to #30.**

## 24

You ride east, along the weed-invaded road of ages. As you are riding along the road strange noises continue to come from woods or deserted shacks you pass by. Cautiously you continue. Ten minutes later you are attacked. Three masked figures leap out from behind some trees by the roadside and charge straight in your direction, screaming. They will not listen if you try to explain you are the son of the King of Monoland so you draw your sword and fight them one at a time.

First BANDIT SKILL 5 STAMINA 11

Second BANDIT SKILL 7 STAMINA 13

Third BANDIT SKILL 4 STAMINA 13

If you win, **Turn to #48.** If you lose, why are you still reading?

## 25

The guardian's bolt is absorbed by Sammy the Gnome's ring. And deflected back at the creature! It screams a horrible, otherworldly cry before the light fades and so does the awful spectre. Your torchlight comes back on. Only now do you look at the bodies at your feet...and very nearly collapse to the ground with shock. The bodies are your own brother and sister!

After crying, which you cannot stop yourself from doing, you pick yourself up and look at them. They bear no wounds or disease symptoms and you cannot understand what happened to them. Then you notice both palms on their right hands are burnt black. As though they touched a fiery object before they died. You look up at The Rod. Will it be safe for you to touch? In despair you look at their bodies one more time. Why were they here? Your father told you they

had been captured presumed killed. No one knew. Did he send them both here to get The Rod like he did you? Just then you remember your sister always kept a journal, a written record of what she did each day. Sure enough, in her backpack you find her diary. You sit yourself down and read through all her last entries. It says that about a month after your brother had disappeared she had been sent by her father the king on a quest to bring back the Rod of Tallarm. Her father had told her exactly what he told you, about a guardian, and that only she could pick it up, being a descendant of Tallarm. That must have been exactly what she did.

You reach out and take the Rod of Tallarm. At last! Despite the power it wields it doesn't feel any different from any other metal object. You waste no further time. You run out of the Elkslayer Mountains, jump onto your horse and gallop full felt back to your home. Now you feel like a hero! You have a score to settle with someone.

When you finally arrive back at the caves you run to see the king. Will you give him The Rod **Turn to #36** or use it to demand he surrender to the wizards **Turn to #50**?

## 26

The ancient door opens immediately with no harmful side effects and you can see a single room. Is your quest over now?

Beyond the door lies a square room. The room has a marble floor and oak-panelled walls. The walls have the tapestries of your family arms on them. The only object in the room is a table with a bright red rod lying on it. The Rod of Tallarm! At last it is within your grasp.

But then you remember the king warning you that there could be a guardian of some sort present. You look around and see nothing else. You step into the room and the door slams shut behind you. Only now do you see something you didn't see when you opened the door. There are two bodies lying on the floor next to The Rod. You turn your head with disgust; you cannot bear to look at their faces. What could have killed them? Just then a strange whirling noise fills in the room. You spin your head in the direction and see a strange spectral shape materializing above you. Your light goes dead in your hands but the strange being's glow illuminates the room enough for you to still see. The SPECTRE addresses you in a deep penetrating voice "Who are you? What business do you have here? This vault belongs to the Royal House of Longsilver!" It is glaring at you, no-nonsense, expecting an answer. Will you reply?

"I am of the House of Longsilver." **Turn to #8** "Silence! Be gone, foul creature of death!" **Turn to #40** Or attack the creature? **Turn to #15**.

## 27

Your light illuminates the rock around you and soon you see something in the distance ahead. This particular tunnel soon comes to a room, which has been

hollowed out of the rock. There is no way out of this room and it is clear you will have to return to the fork and take the other way, but the contents of this room interest you. There is a collection of old things in here, chairs, tables, old rugs, and some chinaware. Having grown up in royalty you are not impressed with the quality of these things. This certainly looks like some kind of junk room, but why would your ancestor have left this collection of furniture here? However, there is no lock on the cave, perhaps someone else has visited here before. These thoughts do not inspire confidence in remaining here, but you have a job to do. There doesn't seem to be anything of use to you in this room, but what does catch your eye is a glass orb sitting on a rickety old table. It seems cleaner, and better kept than everything else does. Will you examine the orb **Turn to #35** or return to the fork and turn right **Turn to #4**?

## 28

The old man steps off his winged mount and then walk's slowly across the ground. From behind the rocks you are peeking over you wonder what he is up to. Perhaps you should show yourself, he seems harmlessly enough. But how many harmless old men travel around on the backs of Griffins? You try to recall. You are sure that you have seen him before, and decide to watch him. The old man takes something out of the pockets of his red robes. You are still too far away to get a good look at him but you are sure you have seen him before somewhere. He has produced some small metal disks. Now he sits himself cross-legged on the ground and closes his eyes. Is he meditating? As he concentrates the metal disks suddenly lift themselves up into the air! He must be a wizard of some kind.

Now he is just simply sitting there and making his metal disks float around his head in circular motion. Is he some travelling magician who simply stopped for a rest? You are not quite sure what to do. Will you take advantage of his concentration to slip away and search for the entrance to the vault **Turn to #30** or step forwards and talk to the wizard **Turn to #16**?

## 29

You get off your horse and tie it to a nearby tree. Walking towards the cave you are rather put off by a foul stench but you decide to keep going. Inside there is suddenly a growl. You jump away from the entrance as two large CAVE TROLLS emerge growling at you. You have no time to do anything else; you draw your sword and fight them:

First CAVE TROLL SKILL 9 STAMINA 11

Second CAVE TROLL SKILL 10 STAMINA 15

Each troll will attack you during each attack round. Decide which one of them you want to fight and resolve the combat in the normal way. Roll dice for the other as well, but if your attack strength is higher than the second creatures you have defended against it's own blow. You cannot inflict wounds onto this one until you choose to attack it in a future attack round. Of course, if its

Attack Strength is higher than yours is you must deduct the normal 2 STAMINA points. If you defeat the Two Trolls then **Turn to #17.**

### 30

After several more fruitless attempts to find your way into the mountain you are almost on the verge of giving up. But just then you spy a portion of the rock face that somehow seems a little different from the rest of the mountain. On closer inspection you can see it is a cleverly concealed outcropping and behind it lies a hidden flight of stairs leading upwards! Your heart leaps as you eagerly ascend the rock staircase, which leads into the mouth of a cave. You could not see either of these from the distance. You step inside the cave, expecting to find a sealed metal door. But your eyes are unable to penetrate the gloom as the daylight outside is cut off and you do not feel very comfortable about stepping into total darkness feeling around for a door.

Do you have a lantern? If so **Turn to #10.** If not, you will just have to try to adjust your eyes to the gloom and hope the door you seek is close to the entrance. **Turn to # 42.**

### 31

When you wake up you find yourself sitting in a cauldron with several large brutes standing around licking their lips. Your adventure ends here.

### 32

The priest is obviously is kind old man. But now he has been broken and hurt. He says, as you help him up "Thank you youngster, but there is nothing you can do. Cheelah will prevail." You hope so, even though you can't remember which God Cheelah is. The priest curses the king, obviously not knowing who you are. "This is not the first time." he tells you "The soldiers from the south are always hurting the poor people up here. They are at war at the moment, I hope they lose.' You do not particular like this priest speaking ill of your side but you cannot blame him considering what you have seen. Why were those soldiers behaving like that? You make up your mind to mention this to your father when you return. You decide now is the time to leave. **Turn to #11.**

### 33

The village the militia ride into followed by you, is a small affair. About twenty houses together, one or two taverns for those travelling. You wonder what business your father's warriors have here. One of them looks your way and frowns as he recognizes you. But he says nothing and turns his attention back to the road. Then they all stop outside one of the buildings, which look like a church. The sergeant shouts out "We have come to collect your taxes!" An old man in a robe, presumably the priest comes out and says "Oh I'm sorry sir, but we cannot. We..." "Enough!" shouts the sergeant. "We will make the choice simple for you. Men!" at his command some of the troops ignite their bows and pull them back. They are going to set fire to the building! You cannot believe what you are seeing. You are sure your father would never

approve of this! Will you try and stop them **Turn to #46** or leave this town immediately, deciding this is none of your business **Turn to # 11?**

### 34

You ride along for nearly two hours. Although it is nearly ten years since you have been around these parts you somehow were quite certain that this road would have reached a town a town by now. But it keeps winding through woods and forests. Occasionally hurried people will ride or run past you, or other kinds of beings, but no one will stop and talk to you. Some even look at you in the eye and hurry on further.

It cannot be because of the war, you have left that far to the south. Or maybe the wizards and their minions have expanded their siege operations far north? You decide to try not to worry. You must focus your mind on the quest that lies ahead. After a few more hours of riding you think you can see the Elkslayer Mountains far off to the horizon. But it will still take a while to get there. You pause to reflect. So far your journey has been quite safe, rather uneventful. Maybe Libra or Telak is smiling down upon you. "Growl!" You spin around just in time to see a lumbering, hairy, misshapen creature come charging out of the undergrowth towards you. It wears a loincloth and swings a massive club in your direction. If you wish to avoid this combat you may do so **Turn to #22**. But don't forget to lose 2 STAMINA points. You quickly draw your sword and block the Ogre's blow. Fearlessly, you leap from your horse and do battle with this creature.

OGRE SKILL 7 STAMINA 12

When you have inflicted your first wound on the creature **Turn to #45**.

### 35

As soon as you touch the Orb it seems to grow larger. You panic as you realise it is enveloping you and seems to take over the whole room...but then the scene changes and your eyes widen.

You are standing inside a clearing in the forest glade. Sunlight is shining through the trees, birds are chirping merrily high up in the trees and the grass before you is green and luscious. You cannot understand how this can exist in an underground room. But it certainly is a beautiful scene. You feel relaxed. More content than you have felt since you left to find the rod. But how can this place have come to be? Just as you are pondering these strange mysteries you hear your name. You spin around and see, sitting behind you on a rock, a small man with a long white beard and a cheery, cheeky, smiling face. Is he a dwarf or something? He seems very at home. "Company at last!" he cries "I'm so pleased to see you. You have no idea how lonely I get in here sometimes?" You ask this person who he is. "Oh I'm Sammy the Gnome. This is my home. With my powers I can make the inside of the orb anything I like. I know you feel you have a responsibility to your people to find the Rod of Tallarm and save them. But I need the company so you'll be staying with me." You wonder how Sammy knows so much about

you. Before you can ask he says, "Well you're inside my home my friend as well as my mind and your mind and also this orb. Take your pick. They're all true to some extent. And since I was banished with magical powers of my own here I have control over the environment, therefore it is only natural I am able to read your mind." You really don't like this individual reading your mind. But since he controls this place you may never again have a choice about anything you do. As Sammy goes on and on about things you really don't want to listen to, you realise you will have to outwit him somehow to get out of here. You draw your sword, but you find you cannot pull it out of its rapier. Sammy laughs cheerfully "Oh don't be silly. We don't have any need for that kind of behaviour in here? It's just you and me together for the rest of time. We must learn to like each other." During the course of your adventure have you stumbled upon any cryptic messages that tell you to shout out a number when you were in a strange magical world? If so call it out now (i.e. turn to that reference number). If not, prepare to listen to boring stories for the rest of your life...

### 36

Your father cannot believe his eyes when he sees you, especially with the Rod of Tallarm in your hands. His jaw is dropped but he quickly recovers himself and says, "Well done. I knew you could do it. Give me that." You hand him the rod, unsure about his reaction...Two days later you regret your action. Your father has defeated the enemy but he has now had you imprisoned in a secret diamond you never knew he had. You have become a slave worker. He said he wanted the secret of that Rod to go unsaid...

### 37

Insore does not look surprised by your answer. "Yes," he says sadly "Your father believes in hurting others for his personal pleasure. Why should you be any different?" Before you can reply your archenemy mounts his Griffins and takes to the air without any further word. You watch him leave, unable to believe you are still alive. You cannot understand what has just happened. But for some reason you feel really guilty. You decide to continue the quest.  
**Turn to # 30.**

### 38

Your journey onwards for several more hours, pausing only to let your horse drink when required. By now the sun is beginning to set in the west over your shoulder and you suddenly realise you've been travelling the wrong way all this time. The Elkslayer Mountains are to the west; you've been riding east! You turn your horse around and begin to gallop to make up for lost time!  
**Turn to # 2.**

### 39

Silently you draw your sword, offering a silent prayer of vengeance for all your friends, family and country folk who have died and suffered because of this man. Soon they will rest a lot easier! You raise your weapon and quietly



step from your hiding place, careful to make no noise. Insores is meditating; his eyes are shut and his Griffin stares into the other direction. This is your chance! Neither of them has seen you yet. You try to step softly, thinking only of the revenge you will soon have. Insores's back is now facing you and this is your chance. You spring forward with a cry of vengeance. This is for the people of the Monoland! You swing your sword, cutting straight into the evil wizard's neck. "Die, troll dung!" you scream... But something is not quite right. Your sword has penetrated the sorcerer's body, as intended but there is no blood. Or wound. Not only that but his discs continue to float around him and he has not moved at all. It is as though he is not really there but...an illusion? Just then, there is a polite cough behind you. You spin around and there stands Insores the Wizard leaning comfortably against his Griffin. He has tricked you with an illusion spell! Now he has you right where he wants you. You draw your sword again, but stop yourself. It is no use. He can strike you down with a spell any second now. You have failed in your mission. **Turn to # 14.**

#### 40

The guardian's mouth turns into an expression of anger. "Who dares insult the..." "Shut up!" you cry and begin to taunt it. You can see the anger building up on its face. "Enough!" it cries and holds its hands towards you, preparing to unleash a bolt of something agonizing. It is about to destroy you! Do you have a ring of invincibility that you purchased from the dwarves of the village of Steel tower? If so, **Turn to #49**. If not, do you have a ring with a blue stone in it **Turn to #25**? If you have neither of these things (turn to 15).

#### 41

The inside the cave does not reveal much of interest. Only the trolls personal possessions and refuse. However you do find a bracelet of bone tucked away behind a stone in one corner. Presumably this was one of their prize trinkets. You try this on...and pull it off immediately and throw it away into a corner. It hurts! Luckily you were putting it on your sword arm so you may only deduct 2 STAMINA points. Now it's time to leave. **Turn to #9.**

#### 42

You decide you can only stick your hands out and feel around, hoping you will come to this door soon. You take your first step into the cave with arms outstretched. After about 30 seconds your head bumps into the rock wall for the first time, lose 2 STAMINA points. You stop and grind your teeth with frustration. This isn't going to work. There must be an easier way! Test your Skill. If you succeed, **Turn to # 19**. If you fail, you angrily leave the cave with frustration, deciding to see if you can find somewhere to buy a light or something. **Turn to # 18.**

#### 43

Once your hand touches the door a magical flash of light appears before your eyes. You spring back in alarm but you are unharmed. All that has happened

is something new has appeared on the door in front of you. There is now an inscription on the door, which reads:

There is a number you must call out Will you dare to open the ancient vault? Enter! The number required is hidden in these words Neither force nor weeping will open this door Though you may think you cannot solve this puzzle You are seeing part of the answer every time you Start reading the next line I wish you much luck X. (Signature)

If you think you know the number it refers to, try it. Turn to that number now. If the first words you read are "The Ancient Door Opens Immediately..." you are correct. If it doesn't make sense then the door remains shut. That being the case now you may either:

Go back to the fork and try the other way (if you haven't done so already) **Turn to #27**. Leave the underground tunnels and set off into the sunset **Turn to #18**. Try to force the door open with your sword **Turn to #20**.

#### 44

Insore looks at you, impressed. "Very good." he says "Of course one cannot tell from so few questions whether the answerer is fit to rule a kingdom but time itself shall tell that." By now you feel that he means you no harm, but you do wonder what he is talking about. He continues "Your father probably never told his family why myself and my colleagues left his service after working for him nearly twenty years. We had learned that he had lied to us about a great many things. Your family has ruled a wide empire for many generations. Those kings or queens who were the cruellest took great pains to conceal the unspeakable acts they performed so their subjects and their court magicians would remain loyal. Your father is one. He never told us how mercilessly he taxed the common folk, he never told us about his secret underground diamond mines where his Rat folk slaves worked for him day and night and how he secretly threw people in jail because they disapproved of things he did or did not want to sell their farms to his barons. When we left your father's service we never wanted to start a war. All we did was free the rat men and other creatures from his mines. When your father learnt we had done that he told everyone that we had gathered together as an army and attacked villagers. That was a lie!" You cannot believe what you are hearing! You father is an unkind man. But would he ever...? This is impossible! "We would never do anything like that," says Insore "But your father's lies have made many brave souls die in battle. But when we learnt your father had sent you here we had to warn you?" "Warn me about what?" "Warn you that your father has sent you to your death. If you lay one finger on the Rod of Tallarm, you will die. It is cursed. A spell was laid on it after its creator died at the hands of your ancestor. The spell would mean no one could touch it without dying a horrible death. We don't know what happened to your brother and sister, perhaps your father secretly sent them on the mission he sent you on." You think you see Insore wiping a tear away. Could your father possibly be responsible for their deaths? Insore finishes "You father partly told you the truth. The Rod of Tallarm does render the user invincible, but according to ancient scrolls that used to be in our chambers, a spectral guardian of some

sort guards it. Whose sole instructions are to destroy anyone who enters its chamber to retrieve the Rod? Even royalty. The rules of your dynasty quite clearly state your father must share his riches with his sons and daughters. He wishes to keep the diamonds all for himself. That is why he sent you to retrieve an artefact that would surely kill you." You ask "But what can I do?" He says, "Well the Rod can still be used against an enemy. And only by someone related to Tallarm. But only if the guardian is destroyed first and the guardian can be defeated. But it requires a jewel of protection. Such a jewel in fact exists in the mountain before you, but I do not know where or even if is guarded. Unfortunately, due to the magical nature of The Rod, parties of adventurers cannot enter there together. So I cannot accompany but I can give you this," he offers you a lantern, which you gratefully accept. "Now," he finishes "I must be off. He begins to mount his beast but turns to you one last time "I cannot force you to believe what I have told you. But can you see any problems with what your father has told you?" with that he takes to the air, disappearing as mysteriously as he appeared. You sit still for a few moments and think about what he has told you. Your whole life is a lie. Slaves. Kidnappings. Your father has been the cruellest man in Monoland for many years and it is only those unjustly hurt who have been trying to overthrow him all this time. What will you do now? You resume your search for the entrance. **Turn to #30.**

#### 45

The OGRE shrieks as your sword cuts through its arm. You smile and press home your attack. You should win this combat very soon - except the sound of others emerging from the undergrowth makes you spin around About a dozen ORCS are standing behind you, smiling devilishly. You decide there are too many for you to fight and leap for your horse. Test your Luck. If you are lucky you manage to escape with only 3 STAMINA points worth of damage. **Turn to #6.** If you are unlucky, **Turn to #31.**

#### 46

"Stop!" The soldiers turn to you with puzzled annoyance as you ride up. The sergeant recognizes you "What are you are doing here?" he asks. Then snaps "Never mind. We are here on official business at your father's orders. Do not interfere!" You cry, "My father told you to burn down a church?" "That's right." snaps the officer "Men! Continue the operation." You draw up to the sergeant "But..." SLAP! You do not even see his hand move, but suddenly you find yourself lying on the ground as the soldiers fire their flaming arrows at the church, despite the vicar's protestations. Then they ride off laughing. You cannot believe what you have just seen. Soldiers are destroying someone's home? Will you leave now **Turn to #11** or try to help the priest **Turn to #32?**

#### 47

You let Insore tell his story. "Before I tell you more," says the old wizard; glad you have decided to give him the benefit of the doubt "I will ask you some questions. First, imagine that you have taken your father's throne and are

now the ruler of Monoland. You can do anything you want. Your word is law. You are unhappy because the royal treasury does not have enough money to pay for a new bathhouse you wanted to build for yourself. But if you taxed your farmers for more money then you would be able to afford it. Which would you do?" What is he talking about? First you thought he was going to kill you, now he is asking you strange questions about regal management. He is waiting for an answer. Will you say:

"I would tax my farmers for the extra money." **Turn to # 37** "I would find other ways to get the money without hurting people." **Turn to #12**

#### 48

The bodies of three bandits lie at your feet. Will you search them **Turn to #5**, or continue onwards **Turn to #38?**

#### 49

Don't cheat! What ring of invincibility? There's no such place on Titan as Steel tower. Naughty. Re-roll your initial scores and start the adventure again please.

#### 50

You angrily march up to your father, the tyrant of Monoland. Everything he ever told you. Everything he ever did in the name of justice. It was all lies! Your father sees you with the rod of his ancestor in your hand and gasps with horror. He has seen the rod many times before, in his nightmares! "Give me that, my fox." he says, trying to sound calm. You shake your head and hold The Rod before him and say, "Call this war off." coldly. His face is pale. He does not want to surrender. "Now!" you insist. He has no choice. He knows he cannot go against the bearer of the Rod of Tallarm. Within 24 hours your people are back in their homes and Insore and the other wizards are holding a trial for your father for crimes against the people. In the Palace, which wasn't burnt to the ground after all, another of your father's lies! The truth is now known about how the Rat folk have been enslaved by the king for so long and, as his heir, you have many of your father's best officers arrested. The ancient spell fulfilled. His own child has deposed the evil ruler. The people all hail your brave deeds and few hold you responsible for your father's actions, especially when they hear about the fate of his other children. You recall the ancient command "Respect Thy Father." but you feel the gods will make an exception in the case of a father who had such disrespect for children he'd conspire to murder them all! Especially the new ruler of your people Somehow you don't Somehow you don't see people looking at you disrespect or contempt any longer.

**THE END**