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Part story, part game, this is a book in which YOU become the hero! Two dice, a pencil and an eraser are all you need. YOU decide which routes to take, which dangers to risk and which foes to fight.

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ISBN 0-14-034057-2



U.K. £3.99
CAN. \$4.99

STEVE JACKSON
AND IAN LIVINGSTONE

Black Vein Prophecy

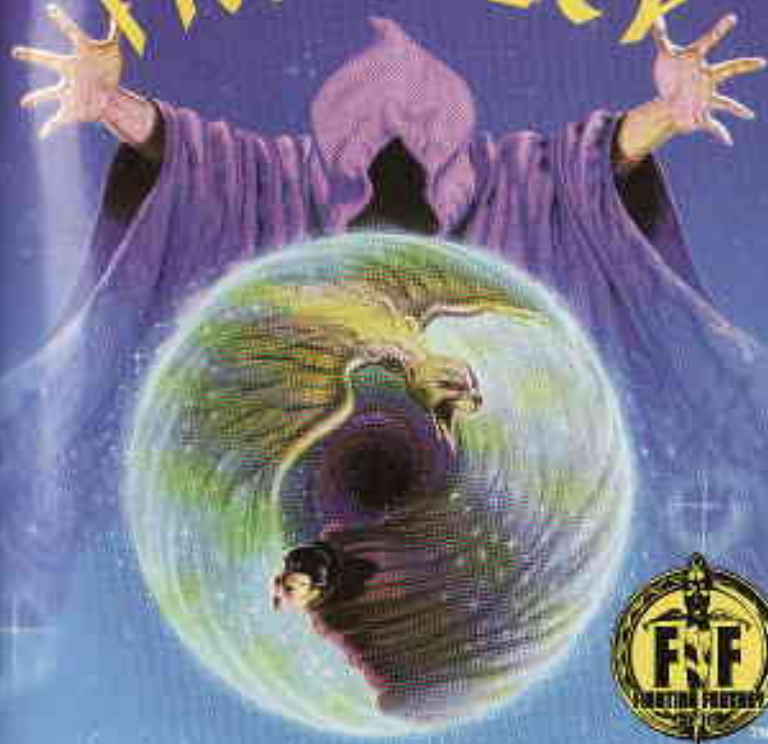
42

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Steve JACKSON AND
Ian LIVINGSTONE
PRESENT

BLACK VEIN PROPHECY



PUFFIN BOOKS

BLACK VEIN PROPHECY

The Black Vein Prophecy was decreed many, many years ago, in the time of the fiendish ruler, Bezenvial, but its arcane power reaches across time to curse the land. Now the Child-King's hold over the Isles of the Dawn is crumbling to nothing, as ancient evil emerges once more to reclaim its birthright.

Awakening inside a dusty sarcophagus, you are plunged into a bewildering world cursed with the taint of chaos and war. But for you there is a more pressing need – to discover just who you are.

The fragments of distant memories provide some clues, and those you meet on the road may offer others. Ultimately, though, it will be for YOU to discover just who you are, and how you can fulfil the ancient prophecy.

Two dice, a pencil and an eraser are all you need to embark on this astonishing adventure, which is complete with its elaborate combat system and a score sheet to record your progress.

Many dangers lie ahead and your success is by no means certain. Powerful adversaries are ranged against you and it's up to YOU to decide which route to follow, which dangers to risk and which foes to fight

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Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone
present:

BLACK VEIN PROPHECY



Paul Mason and Steven Williams

Illustrated by Terry Oakes

PUFFIN BOOKS

*To the staff of the Beijing House, Wandsworth, to
Tim of Shropshire, to Susana, to Poppy, and to the
gods of Perseve . . .*

PUFFIN BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Books Ltd, 27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ, England

Penguin Books USA Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA

Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia

Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 10 Alcorn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4V 3B2

Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, 182-190 Wairau Road, Auckland 10, New Zealand

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England

First published 1990

5 7 9 10 8 6 4

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Text copyright © Paul Mason and Steven Williams, 1990

Illustrations copyright © Terry Oakes, 1990

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Printed in England by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

Filmset in Linotron Palatino

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

7

ADVENTURE SHEET

8-9

BLACK VEIN PROPHECY

11

THE RULES

230

Adventure Sheet

SKILL <i>Initial Skill =</i>	STAMINA <i>Initial Stamina =</i>	LUCK <i>Initial Luck =</i>
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TREASURE	PROVISIONS REMAINING
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EQUIPMENT LIST	NOTES
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ENCOUNTER BOXES

<i>Skill Stamina=</i>	<i>Skill Stamina=</i>	<i>Skill Stamina=</i>
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<i>Skill Stamina=</i>	<i>Skill Stamina=</i>	<i>Skill Stamina=</i>
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INTRODUCTION

This is an adventure shrouded in darkness. When you start to play you will be unprepared for what lies ahead. You will discover your strengths and weaknesses by trial and error as the story unfolds. On pages 8–9 you will find an *Adventure Sheet*, which you should use to record the details of your adventure. Do not roll the dice to determine your SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK yet. These will be determined once the adventure is under way.

It is particularly important to try not to cheat in this adventure. There *is* a correct path through it, but you are unlikely to find it unless you play fair!

If you haven't played a Fighting Fantasy adventure before, or if you need a reminder concerning the rules, turn to the back of the book, where you'll find them explained. If you are a seasoned adventurer and are already familiar with the Fighting Fantasy system, then you can leap straight into action by turning to paragraph 1 and starting your adventure.



1

Blackness . . . The sound of marching feet . . . The musty odour of decay. Somewhere in the void which envelops you, a voice cries out. The pounding feet fade away and sparks swim before your eyes. Nausea grips you. You double up; your head thumps against stone. The numbness retreats from your limbs and, as your senses return, you feel the cold stone slabs which entomb you. You panic, flailing desperately. Your hands strike the slab above you and a flash sears your vision. As your sight returns, you see the lid of your sarcophagus hurtle upwards. It smashes against a high ceiling and disintegrates, raining stone shards and dust down upon you. Silence descends.

You drag yourself out and collapse weakly. You are in a round, high-domed chamber, festooned with rich tapestries and glittering ornaments, each carefully stacked and ordered. A faint golden radiance suffuses the treasure, dimly illuminating the chamber. The sumptuous marble floor is shot through with black veins, but its perfect surface is flawed by a series of fine cracks. Along one of these a thin rivulet of crimson seeps across the dust towards you. You look up. A broken body lies among the rubble, a trickle of blood oozing from its head. You back away, scrabbling across the marble to the base of your tomb. Beyond it is another identical sarcophagus, but you are too bewildered to pay any attention to it. Tracing your hand over the carved surface of your own tomb, you struggle to make

sense of the weird designs covering it. But their significance eludes you, leaving you with only the vaguest feeling of recognition. The whole chamber seems filled with echoes of your past, but their meaning is lost to you. All you are left with is a terror which grips your innards and gnaws at your mind.

Something makes a noise. You turn towards the sound, grasping the lip of the sarcophagus for support. Just as you are struggling to focus, the crushed body twitches. Then a silvery snout pokes out from behind it and a pair of startled eyes meet yours. Shaken into action, you pull yourself to your feet. Will you:

Attack the silvery creature?

Turn to 65

Approach cautiously?

Turn to 142

Retreat to the other sarcophagus?

Turn to 360



2

You come to the edge of a cliff and peer down into a green gorge, its far depths delicately veiled by rising vapour. Some way along the cliff you can see people lowering themselves down the cliff face on ropes. If you want to investigate them, turn to 47. If you ignore them and continue on your way, turn to 29.

3

The king's forces line the foothills about you, waiting nervously for battle. The officer escorts you through their ranks towards a lavish tent, covered in royal emblems and banners. The troops who surround it seem disorganized and chaotic; infantrymen wander about aimlessly, while sergeants bellow orders at them – to little effect. The scene is one of confusion and apprehension; no one seems to be in charge. You are ushered into the tent and presented to the young king, Poo Ta, whom you find lounging in a sea of cushions. He is waited on by at least twenty servants and is being fed grapes and succulent sweetmeats. The boy points at you with a jewel-laden finger. 'Who is this wretch, and what does he want?' The king gestures the slaves to leave, and half listens to your news while sucking his teeth. 'Heavens!', he cries. 'From the way you talk, you would think that we were all doomed! I have the troops, I have the generals, and history is on my side. I shall take great pleasure in leading a glorious victory against Bezenval's impudent child!'

'But, your majesty,' interjects a worried-looking officer, 'we have no plan of attack. I have reports that Feior's army far outnumbers our own, we . . .'

'Silence!' snaps the king. 'I am invincible. My family line is unbroken. War is in my blood – I have no need of petty plans!'

The commanders bow their heads respectfully, but you can sense their apprehension. If you volunteer

your services as a commander, turn to **61**. If you set out alone, leaving the king to blunder into battle unaided, turn to **137**.



4

Try as you may, you cannot get a word in edgeways. Merzei is obviously a master of the art of talking down opponents. He rants on incomprehensibly for several minutes, talking about social injustice and how you and all lickspittle lackeys of the ruling autarchy will be swept away by a tide of righteousness.

'Down with the Tyrant! Up with the Council!' he yells, before turning on his heel and stalking off among the trees. There seems little point in following him, so you make your own way out of the woods. Turn to **239**.

5

Desperately you try to clear your mind, and you begin to speak the word. But before you can finish it, the creature's poison makes contact with your hands. Your arms lock rigid. Very soon your entire body is paralysed. The creature reels in its helpless prey, and prepares to dine . . .



6

The creature stares at you expectantly, then the grin broadens. It reaches forward slowly and takes the brooch from your outstretched hand.

'Thank-k-k-ks,' it says, then it disappears with another loud pop. The brooch is lost with it. Turn back to the paragraph you were at when you decided to open the brooch.

7

The shimmering Lock spell catches Feior doubled up in agony. It spreads out around his body, freezing him in position. It seems that you have prevailed. If you abandon him where he is, turn to **219**. If you climb to his perch and free him from the Lock spell, turn to **159**.





8

'Fool!' Velkos calls back to you as she hurries off. You follow the screeching to a large wooden door which blocks the tunnel. The door is not barred, but a dislodged chip of stone wedges it shut. As frantic hands thump on the other side, you kick the stone away. The door flies open and dozens of young Cressents pour out, sweeping you along with them. One of them gestures at you, but you can't make out what he is trying to communicate. Behind them seep tendrils of smoke. Soon light appears ahead of you, and the Cressents quicken their pace. You emerge on the mountainside to see traders and Cressents alike fleeing from an incandescent creature, its shapeless body surrounded by whip-lashes of flame. Bolts fly from it, incinerating all they touch. You notice Velkos among the fleeing traders. If you run from this creature of wizardry, turn to 354. If you stand and face it, turn to 280.

9

The slash takes you by surprise and slices cleanly through. Fatally wounded, you slump forward into blackness. Your adventure ends here.

10

Though scarred and pocked, the sea walls of the city still stand. Flights of stone steps lead up to their ramparts, and you begin to ascend. After a short while you reach a ledge, from which another flight leads upwards. This time the climb takes a little longer, and by the time you reach the next ledge you

are panting with the effort. Looking up, you see the top of the wall still rearing far above you. You are halfway up the next flight of stairs when you notice that you are only a dozen steps up from the ground. Below you there is no sign of the ledges on which you rested. Hurrying back down the steps, you look up at the wall from a distance. A single flight of stairs leads up to the top – there is not a ledge to be seen. Puzzled, you abandon your attempt to scale the walls. If you turn your attention to the catapults on the platforms near by, turn to 175. If you return to the city's ruins, turn to 97.

11

The first wave of your attack holds well. You dismount and follow your men into battle. Soon you are in the midst of the fray, fighting for your life. Two of Feior's foot soldiers break free and charge you. You must react instantly and defend yourself.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First SOLDIER	6	5
Second SOLDIER	5	6

Fight them one at a time. If you win, turn to 169.

12

Sevmiroda, the outlaw leader, whispers at you threateningly: 'What are you playing at? You're supposed to be one of us.' If you try to persuade Sevmiroda that you're not cut out for the bandit life, turn to 356. If you run from the bandits, turn to 182. If you want to try to defeat them, turn to 258.

13

Before you can reach the sitting prophet, the Kreehuls are upon you. They seem reluctant to attack, but their sheer weight of numbers crushes down on you. Trampled beneath their webbed feet, you die swiftly.

14

Velkos refuses to follow you and sets off up the scrub-covered slopes. You head along the track into the pine-scented darkness of the wood. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 363. If you are Unlucky, turn to 110.

15

You start to run, but the cloud shoots towards you, enveloping you in utter blackness. You waver, unable to find a safe footing. Suddenly you are struck violently from behind. You topple and plunge into the chasm below. The ground hurtles up towards you, and you lose consciousness. Turn to 165.

16

The tunnel leads down for some way, twisting and turning. You cannot tell in which direction you are facing, but soon a glimpse of light ahead leads you to guess that you are approaching the cliff face. You enter a chamber, which is full of flickering candles. At the far end of the cavern, another short tunnel leads out to the sky, in which birds wheel and dive.

In the chamber stands an old man; he regards you with an intense gaze. 'Your name is Maior,' he says,

'I am Credas.' He gestures to you to find a place to sit on the floor. 'I can teach you to use the power you hold, if you are willing. But first we must think of something to do about those unwelcome intruders.'

He leads you back down the tunnels to where the outlaws stand mesmerized. 'If we combine power we can send them out of here none the wiser,' Credas tells you.

If you decide to trust him and join in his enchantment, turn to 326. If you refuse, turn to 221.

17

You untie the man from the wheel and support him.

'Aha!' a coarse voice says.

You turn to find yourself facing three men in black lacquered armour made up of many scales, their swords as broad as hands. You look each of them in the eye and each, in turn, flinches from your gaze. 'Begone!' you shout. The warriors disappear among the buildings.

You help the man from the village into the relative safety of a nearby copse. But his injuries are too great, and he dies in your arms. It seems you must head north if you are to keep away from the ravaging army of Feior. If you return to Credas's cave, turn to 329. If you search for somewhere safe to stay, turn to 29.

18

You crouch just inside the opening, taking comfort from the dim radiance which seeps through it. But the pressure inside is mounting again. Ahead of you, another flare bursts on the chamber floor. You think you can discern another opening on the far side of the chamber, so you prepare to make a dash across the riddled floor. Turn to 390.



19

You head off alone into unfamiliar countryside, soon finding a wide dirt road. Continuing along it for some time, you observe the state of the surrounding fields; vast tracts of millet lie rotting and unharvested. After an hour, when you have given up hope of seeing anyone, shouts rise up from across a muddy field to your left. Cautiously you advance across the deep mud and spy two peasants, who seem to be crouched on their hands and knees.

If you answer their cries for help, turn to 158. If you choose to ignore them and continue along the road, turn to 361.



20

At the head of the army stalks a figure that fills you with queasy recognition. Dressed in the most ridiculous finery is a tall, imposing figure, whom you recognize as your brother, Feior. He approaches with a jaunty stride and fixes you with a quizzical grin. 'Well met, fleshkin,' he says. 'Would you care to join my little band of brothers? I need a lieutenant I can rely on.'

If you agree to Feior's offer, turn to 174. If you refuse, turn to 339.

21

You take the fellow by surprise, landing a stinging blow that sends him crashing. He is up quickly, however, and flails about him with a spiked club.

BLINDED BANDIT SKILL 4 STAMINA 6

If you defeat the bandit, turn to 387.

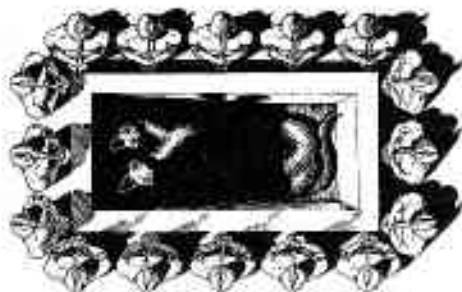
22

'That is unfortunate, but we may still prevail. You must unite an army to meet Feior in battle and destroy his forces. Without soldiers he has no real power. Go now, and may your fate be kind, for the sake of the Isles.' If you have a Bejewelled Box, turn to 377. Otherwise, turn to 119.

23

The lid of the box flips open of its own accord, and a shimmering haze of vapour emerges. You leap back but are too late to avoid a mouthful of the enchanted

substance. It burns your throat horribly (lose 2 points from your STAMINA) and you choke badly. The merchant makes good his escape while you lie doubled up. Eventually the vapour disperses and there, before you in the dirt, lies the bejewelled box, so you pick it up (note this on your Equipment List). Turn to 161.



24

The object is warm to the touch. You roll it away from the wall and brush off the accumulated dust. No sooner have you touched it, however, than a shadow crosses your vision. You look up to see a mirror image of yourself stepping from the silvery surface of the wall in front of you. Its face is contorted in the same rictus of fear as your own, but it moves in to attack you.

MIRROR

IMAGE SKILL YOUR OWN STAMINA YOUR OWN

You must fight an exact, but reversed, replica of yourself. If you win the fight, turn to 272.

25

The coin lands with Feior's screaming face uppermost. The coin swells, then pops, and your brother's prone form lies at your feet. He is utterly defeated. Turn to 264.

26

You call the sacred word from your memory and repeat it aloud. As the last syllable leaves your tongue, you feel a ball of energy blossom in your chest. It spreads to your arms and then to your fingers, finally collecting itself into a ball of energy, which you fling into the pool. The water locks solid, trapping the bathers and giving you a few seconds to dash for the exit. Turn to 202.

27

It feels as if huge bloated worms are gorging themselves on your organs. Just as the sensation grows too much to bear, your power is released in a single bolt. The Polybleb rears, the air around it warping and changing. What was already a fearsome magical creature has now been transformed into an enormous mound of eye-searing horror. Before your brain can fully comprehend the extent of the creature you have created, a gout of plasma erupts from it and envelops you. Your end is swift.

28

As you charge towards the village and into the heart of battle, the flying Sturramak notices your fresh assault. It swoops towards you, releasing a fiery

pass through each seal. The corridors tremble spasmodically the further you progress, and by the time you approach the seventh seal loose pebbles are raining down upon you. Breaking into a run, you make a dash for the sunlight which streams through the seal ahead of you. Roll one die, note down the result and turn to 107.



31

You start to generate the same destructive power in your own body that Feior is producing. Sparks flicker between your fingers, and you feel the sorcerous fire building within you. As Feior looses his bolt of energy, your own bursts forth. The blasts fly at each other, striking with a thunderous roar. With a mighty explosion the two spells combine, and the shock-wave hurls you from your perch on to the rocks below.

32

Darkness now surrounds you. By trailing your fingers against the wall to your left, you make your way safely along the passage, which meanders for some time, hopelessly confusing your sense of direction. A glow appears ahead, and you stumble into a chamber lit by limpid trails of luminescent slime. By this ghastly light you can see pile upon pile of nuts, berries, leaves . . . and gemstones. Sparkling in the dim light they lie there, beckoning you with the comforting finger of wealth. As you stare, a wisp of smoke writhes into the chamber beside you. You turn . . . and more billows out from the tunnel. If you make for the opposite tunnel straight away, turn to 372. If you pick up some gems first, turn to 262.

33

The Kreehuls have been temporarily thwarted but, in a forest of such size, it seems likely that more will arrive soon. The statue of the Sitting Prophet is not the figurine Credas led you to believe it was. In vain you try to shift it, and succeed only in straining your back. Dejected, you slump down against one of its chubby legs and stare out into the jungle. Green eyes stare back at you from the darkness as more Kreehuls prepare for another assault. Your situation seems hopeless. If you have the Small Jar, turn to 391. Otherwise, turn to 214.

bolt of energy which smashes into the peasants, instantly disintegrating those it hits. The beast nears, and you watch in horror as it releases hundreds of squirming, leech-like creatures from its underbelly on to the people below. You turn your gaze towards the village's river and spy the golden figure of the Sitting Prophet as he wades into battle, at his heels a mass of screeching Kreehuls. The swamp beings spill out on to the banks and attack Feior's troops, while their idol waits for the Sturramak to near him. The two magical beings lock in fierce combat. But the battle has been poorly planned. Without a strategy, the three factions buckle under the weight of attacks. You perish, amid scenes of terrible carnage.



29

You trek through the countryside, past fields of peasants working away to eke out a lowly existence. They look at you suspiciously as you pass, and several make superstitious gestures in your direction.

You arrive at a fair-sized town feeling tired, miserable and estranged from those around you. This town is unlike the one you encountered previously: its streets are clean and its people, for the most part, prosperous. You are stopped by guards as you pass through the gates, and they ask you your business and your home town. When your reply fails to satisfy them, they haul you off to a cell. You consider resisting, but there are too many of them, and they look as if they know how to use their weaponry.

Several hours later, a young man in fine robes comes to visit you, flanked by stern-faced soldiers. 'It's Feior!' he shrieks upon seeing you. 'I'd recognize that devilspawn anywhere! Slay him before he enchants us!' You have no opportunity to act before the soldiers swing their swords, and your adventure ends.

30

At the top of the stairs you are confronted by yet another seal. You scramble through the opening and find yourself in a low-ceilinged corridor which snakes off ahead of you. On the floor beside you, neatly laid out, are a greatsword and a haversack. If you wish to take either or both of these, you should add them to your Equipment List – the haversack contains fresh food equivalent to 5 Provisions.

You continue along the passage, passing through another three seals. You notice that the pressure builds as you advance, then drops again when you

34

Mortally wounded, your opponent collapses just as Velkos gets to her feet, grabs a pole and fends off the second sphere. You shoot a searching glance at her, then look back to the man who emerged from the floating ball. Velkos explains that, as punishment for his crimes, the wretch has been cast out upon the ocean in the inflated bladder of a Shael-beast to live a short life of seclusion and madness. Exhausted by your fight, you slump to the deck. If you allow yourself a restful sleep, turn to 292. If you stay awake, turn to 247.

35

You are deep in the forest. A rich smell of decay wafts from the north, while the road ahead shows signs of use. Do you follow the smell (turn to 382) or the road (turn to 361)?

36

The Sturramak feeds off the energy of others. Your powers simply fuel its own, and you perish.



37

You have a refreshing rest (restore 2 points of STAMINA). You think you can remember in which direction Velkos fled. If you search for her, turn to 67. If you set off on your own into the lush lowlands, turn to 19.



38

Soon you are lost in the heart of the jungle, with no means of retracing your steps. You are doomed to roam the hinterland until death finds you and sends you once more into the blackness from which you emerged.

39

You pass through the tortured streets. The air is rich with strange smells. The charred ruins give off oppressive auras: some fill you with dread, others draw you to them, while still others stir you to uneasy laughter. You begin to get the distinct impression that someone or something is moving among the buildings. The grand arch of the city gate is carved in the shape of two mighty interlocking serpents. The wrought-iron portcullis has been

blasted through, leaving jagged edges jutting from it like an old man's broken teeth. All around you the walls are riddled with fragments of metal, driven there by the power of the explosion. You approach the open gate, looking through it to the scorched fields beyond the city. You step closer, hearing a faint pattering of hoofs. In an instant you are blown off your feet as the mouth of the gate erupts in a sheet of crackling flame. As you back away, you hear the hoofs pounding closer. The barrier of flame parts as a rider plunges through and into the square, before careering off among the buildings. As he charges away, you gaze at the powerful horse, then at the naked rider, whose skin is dappled with blotches of livid colour. It is only as they disappear that you realize that horse and rider were fused – their bodies are merged and distorted in a grotesque parody. Will you:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| Follow the rider's example and leap through the flame barrier? | Turn to 283 |
| Wander back through the city streets? | Turn to 132 |
| Hurry in the direction of the rider? | Turn to 379 |

40

'So quiet, weakling?' your father's voice booms out across the chasm. You snap out of your trance and steady yourself on the rocky pinnacle. 'To think that my child would side with the very men who brought me down. You shame me, son!' As he shouts, a fierce blast of wind lifts you off your feet and carries you upwards. The sky disintegrates into

a brilliant white, followed, seconds later, by a rippling crash. Fragments of glass shower down about you as you plummet to the chasm's rocky floor. Your adventure ends here.



41

A sweat rises rapidly on your flesh, and your face contorts with the effort. Your nose wrinkles, and your whole body feels as taut as a drumskin. Then there is release: flame bursts from your nostrils, feathers flare, and the birds are no more. Behind you the bandits gasp and mutter wardings, but you take control of the situation. 'Forward!' you call, striding further into the caverns. You march into a chamber lit by a thousand candles, to see an old man gesturing feebly. As he sees you his eyes widen. 'Maior!' he gasps. Something within you fills you with certainty that this man is an ancient enemy of yours. You gesture casually to Sevmiroda; he cuts the old sorcerer down with a single stylish sweep of his sword.

You search the cavern complex, but there is no treasure to be found – only sorcerous knick-knacks, books, charms and scrolls. Cursing, you and your band haul yourselves back up the ropes. Turn to 238.



42

Men with whips and nets chase behind the creatures. Somehow you know that they are foreigners to these lands, here to strip it of its wealth. Up on the cliff above the cave entrance you see three more, nets atwirl. The terrified creatures pay you no heed as they rush headlong into the sanctuary of the cavemouth. Velkos curses and turns to run. Stones rain down from above. Will you:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| Follow the creatures into the cave? | Turn to 285 |
| Evade these foreigners by fleeing down the mountainside? | Turn to 146 |
| Attack them? | Turn to 213 |

43

Before you stands the monastery. No one is about, so you step through the open gates. Within is a sparse but neatly tended garden and, in it, several buildings. You enter the nearest and find a hall devoid of furniture or decoration of any sort. You hear a faint sound from above and, after a few moments, two men enter the hall through a door opposite. They wear only loincloths, and their bodies amply demonstrate the physical perfection these monks are said to aspire to. If you have the Clay Effigy, turn to 255. Otherwise, turn to 342.

44

As you watch the chaos, the locals nearest you double up, clutching their noses and retching. You yourself have become quite used to the smell the

Shael-beast pit has left you with; however, the villagers take a different view. You are manhandled out of the shop and across the square, then stripped of your clothes and booted through the doors of the local tavern. You hurtle into the steamy chamber and fall . . . into a pool of water. Turn to **286**.

45

The boat slides up on to a shingle beach and you leap out with Velkos, who carries a line to make the boat fast. Then you hurry up the beach to a cave in the cliff face. Velkos looks around then turns to you, frowning. 'Enemies have been here,' she says. 'We can try to flee from them or we can hunt them out and get them before they get us. What do you think?' Will you:

Flee?

Turn to **232**

Hunt out the enemies?

Turn to **215**

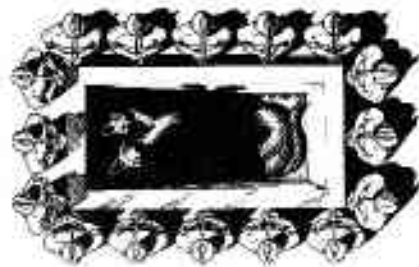
Abandon Velkos and strike out on your own?

Turn to **117**

46

You begin to prepare your Disruption spell, focusing your power and trying to ignore the heat which gushes through your body. You are already tired, though, and concentration comes hard. When you release your bolt at Feior, he simply cackles and flips a translucent shape through the air at it . . . and your bolt evaporates. Another shining sphere flies from Feior's hands, and you are frozen where you stand.

Feior has you brought down from the mountain top, and on the journey he tells you that he will have you stand in his throne chamber, that you may see how a true child of Bezenvial should rule.



47

Hiding behind a rotten tree stump you observe the figures. Two remain looking after the ropes. They appear to be wood folk or possibly outlaws, as their clothing is rough and they carry swords and other weapons. One of them glances in your direction, and you shrink closer to the tree. Looking inside the decaying hulk, you see a pool of darkness. A tunnel leads down! Unable to resist the temptation, you scramble inside the tree and slither down the narrow tunnel. After several yards it widens out, and you can walk with ease.

A fluttering from up ahead is your only warning. You are enveloped in a veil of wings. The birds' flight forms patterns in the air, patterns which tease your memory. Images flash before your eyes: you see once more the glyphs on your sarcophagus, and a feeling of calm descends on you. You have learnt

the power of Harmonization. Whenever you see the word 'Tiaohe' as an option, you will be able to use this power.

You step forward and the birds part before you, as if they sense your command of their power. Beyond them lies a chamber, roofless and open to the sky. The bandits stand here, blank-faced and unmoving. Another passage leads out of the cavern. If you slay the bandits while they are enchanted, turn to 138. If you ignore them and take the other passage, turn to 16.



48

'You can't just go orderin' . . . ' The peasant breaks off his ranting as his eyes meet yours.

His wife prods him. 'Well, go on then, get on with it.' She kicks him off his perch, and they both set about helping you manhandle the idol on to the cart. After much heaving and grunting, you succeed and set off towards Credas's cliff-top retreat. Turn to 185.

49

The battered entrance-hall of the ale-house is littered with piles of filthy, stinking clothes; you

notice that the stone floor is slick with water. A toothless youth sidles up to you and nervously slobbers, 'You ain't from here, are you?' When you fail to answer, he asks, 'Shall I take your clothes and things 'fore you get a soakin'? I'll get 'em cleaned good and proper.' You are cold and dirty. The village store is closing up, and only the travellers remain in the square, camped round their fire. If you disrobe and enter, turn to 112. If you return to the square and join the drifters, turn to 197.

50

Another red wax seal bars your progress, but once again it has been breached. As you squeeze through, the pressure in your head eases and you notice that the air has lost its musty tang. Ahead of you is a small, rough-hewn chamber, dominated by an imposing flight of stairs which ascend steeply into darkness. The chamber is illuminated feebly by two blue-flamed torches, which also give off a delicate scent. The stairs give you hope of escaping this eerie realm, and you make for them with renewed vigour.

You are no more than halfway up when a voice behind you stops you dead. 'Wait!' it grates with a dry, rattling timbre. The voice is familiar and you are gripped by the same foreboding you felt when you awoke. If you ignore the command and continue up the stairs, turn to 200. If you wait, turn to 121.



51

The black cloud swirls about you. It forms a series of bizarre patterns, then combines into a crude face with gaping eyes. Slowly the features sharpen until you recognize your father. He speaks your name. 'To think,' he hisses contemptuously, 'that one of my blood should oppose my will. I did not sacrifice my city and my life to preserve a traitorous misfit.' The cloud changes, forming the shape of a writhing snake. 'When I laid you to rest in the seventh plane I hoped that I had planted the seeds of a new order that would return and crush my enemies, not side with them against me.' The snake weaves hypnotically in the air before you, its gaze upon you all the time.

You are struck violently from behind. You topple and plunge into the chasm below. The ground hurtles towards you, and you lose consciousness. Turn to 165.

52

Framed in the doorway is a short, scrawny fellow. He eyes the bath's occupants with deep scorn. 'Greetings, you worthless hulks of wasted flesh. How can you wallow in luxury while outside the people of this land grow weak with hunger? How can you live with the guilt, knowing the misery your slavery has caused to countless families, eh?'

'I manage all right, thank you very much!' shouts one bather, sending his friends into howls of laughter.

'Enough!' screams the little man. 'I am Merzei, Defender of the People, Righter of Wrongs, and Future Grand Councillor of the Isles.' He struts around the edge of the pool brandishing a thick scroll, which he uses to direct his insults with. 'I will ask you once, and once only. Are there any among you who will join me and fight for justice? Answer now, before your chance takes flight!' The laughter subsides, and Merzei scans the room slowly, waiting for a reply. If you climb out and volunteer to uphold justice with him, turn to 186. If you prefer to keep quiet, turn to 302.

53

Delighted with the chaos it has caused, Izkhao dives into the bath and circles beneath its surface, forming a swirling vortex. As it picks up speed, the whirlpool throws out its victims, sending them crashing into walls and timbers. The thundering cyclone finally explodes, showering you with foam and debris. The brooch slips from your grasp, and Izkhao pounces on it before you can react. He hovers momentarily – grinning madly – then shoots out through a shattered window, clutching his prize. Turn to 202.



54

'You are a true agent of the cause,' Merzei says. 'I am almost ready to rouse the people to action, and this war may prove just the thing to spark them off.' If you stay to help Merzei raise his peasant army, turn to 383. If you try to recruit other soldiers and arrange to rendezvous with him later, turn to 106.



55

The statues are all identical save one – a larger figure, squatting at the back of the host. As you start to examine the figures he straightens his legs very slowly and rises stiffly. He carries a large, serrated sword and a tough wooden shield, and his frozen features are stern and daunting. You approach, and his upper body slowly leans forward in an exaggerated mockery of a bow. You wait for him to straighten, but he is frozen in his gesture. Will you:

Prod him?

Turn to 147

Bow to him?

Turn to 347

Hurry out of the chamber?

Turn to 265

56

Your face reddens and your breathing comes hard. Sevmiroda looks at you anxiously, not certain of what is happening. Red-hot bristles scratch at the inside of your skin. Then an expanding globe of flame coalesces around you. It seems to move so slowly, yet the nearest outlaws have time only to turn and scream before they are caught in its searing path. The rest flee. You notice the merchant staring at you fearfully, then he spurs his donkey to an unexpected turn of speed and bounces off towards the village. Exhausted from your efforts, you follow the merchant towards the village at a leisurely pace. Turn to 263.



57

You begin to prepare your Disruption spell, focusing your power and trying to ignore the heat gushing through your body. You are already tired, though, and concentration comes hard. Purple tendrils stream out from Feior's hands towards you; they close the distance slowly but inexorably. In desperation you force the power from you. The gout of flame issues from your mouth just as the first

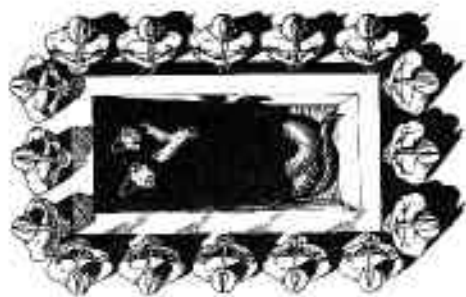
questing tendril touches you. Baopo is still a part of you, and Feior's mutation spell fuses you with your own creation. For a moment you know what agony it is to be part matter, part energy. Then you know peace.

58

The man pokes at you and examines you carefully, before walking off. A few hours later a plate of rancid slops is brought to you by a miserable-looking wretch with an iron collar round his throat. One mouthful, hastily spat out, is enough to persuade you that it's not worth trying to eat it.

Night falls. You test all the bars of your cage, finding them sturdy and unbreakable. The latch is far out of your reach. How are you to escape? 'Escape! Escape! Escape!' – the word reverberates in your head. Pressure builds, and your hands start to tremble. You sob with the pain, but it doesn't relent. Waves of blackness sweep across you.

As if from a distance, you hear a sharp crack, followed by splintering. The pain recedes. The cage has been smashed apart. Bemused, you stretch your aching muscles and step out. Your possessions are nowhere to be seen (cross them all off your *Adventure Sheet*) but you do pick up a short knife (note this on your Equipment List). You slip quickly through the dark streets and out into the countryside. A mossy dell provides you with a bed for the rest of the night. Next morning you set off once more. Turn to 2.



59

The muddy bank of a jungle river is not an ideal resting place, but you manage to find a dry patch to lie on. A few of the fruits look edible, and you eat enough to restore some of your strength (add 2 points to your *STAMINA*). While searching for food, you discover a small, crudely shaped clay figurine (note it on your *Adventure Sheet*). Gathering a few more handfuls of berries to keep in store, you return to your boat, only to find an army of tiny red beetles swarming up its mooring rope. You beat off their invasion with a stout branch and secure the boat once more, away from their greedy clutches. If you set out into the forest, turn to 399. If you return to your boat and continue downriver, turn to 131.

60

More by luck than by skill, you gain the upper hand. With a ferocity that surprises you, you drive her to the stern of the boat and butt her in the midriff. Without a sound she topples over the side. The waters close about her with scarcely a ripple. She does not surface again.

Bruised and exhausted, you gaze out at the sea, wondering how you are going to steer to land through the mists which are rapidly enveloping you. After a few hours spent drifting through a silent, sepulchral shroud, you are glad to see the mist thin, and a brisk wind fills the sails of your small craft. You struggle with the sails for a while, but the wind has other designs. It veers erratically, throwing you into confusion. The skies darken and soon you are caught in a violent storm. Forced to shelter from the gale, you cower under a tarpaulin. Then, with a sharp crack, the mast crashes down on top of you and knocks you out.

You regain consciousness, lying in a pool of water, slumped in the bottom of the boat and with the sound of waves breaking gently against the hull. Lifting yourself wearily from the wreck of your boat, you find that the storm has driven you ashore and you struggle through the water to the beach. (You must deduct 2 points from your *STAMINA*.) After a brief rest, you set off to find out what this land holds in store for you. Turn to 19.





61

You leave the tent with the officer; outside, he turns to you and whispers, 'Do you see what we are up against? It's impossible. He's quite mad. By my reports we're outnumbered ten to one. To die in battle is a glorious thing. But death through the incompetence of a brat is too much to bear!'

Trumpets sound as scouts spot the dark army advancing in the north. The king's troops fall into ranks, and you are assigned a company to command. The dejected officers gather to agree a plan of attack. If you are expecting Merzei, turn to 346. Otherwise, turn to 250.

62

You advance on him carefully and prepare to strike. At your approach his eyes widen slightly, and he seems to look a little afraid.

The next thing you remember is waking up in an empty clearing, with a raw bruise on your head. You can remember almost nothing of the fight with Merzei. You certainly don't remember him displaying any great skill at arms . . . but somehow he has bested you. You get your bearings from the sun and make your way out of the still wood. Turn to 239.

63

Eventually you hear shouts from below. Sevmiroda and the others haul themselves back up the ropes, cursing and groaning. They explain that the wizard ensorcelled them for a time, but that they managed

to break free and slew him, only to find no treasure. Turn to 238.

64

You get a blow in on Feior, wounding him badly in the shoulder and interrupting his enchantment. He draws a gold-bladed knife and faces you once more.

FEIOR

SKILL 9 STAMINA 14

If you defeat your brother, turn to 219.



65

Grabbing a sharp fragment of rock, you fling yourself at the creature. Your feeble swing misses, and you skid on the slick marble surface. You fall heavily on to the body – and feel a sharp bite on your forearm. You pull yourself up, to find a small, silver-furred creature hanging from you, its teeth lodged firmly in your flesh. Recoiling, you see that the creature is tethered to the wrist of its dead owner. As you step back, it releases its vice-like hold on your arm and scuttles back to its hiding-place. The wound on your arm has a silvery sheen and, though the puncture is deep, little blood flows.

Make a note of the fact that you have a silvery wound.

If you leave the chamber now, turn to 217. If you decide to examine your sarcophagus again, turn to 315.

66

You flip open the brooch and call the name 'Izkhao'. The bald-pated creature forms above you and grins inanely. He draws in and holds a deep breath, and expands slowly to three times his normal size. With a sudden exhalation of wind, he breathes out, propelling himself into the advancing horde. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 289. If you are Unlucky, turn to 157.

67

Shouts and the clash of metal warn you of a fight ahead. You edge closer, to find Velkos locked in combat with three ragged-looking desperadoes. If you go to her aid, turn to 305. If you remain hidden and wait until the fight is over, turn to 209.

68

Nikko's men move swiftly through the hard terrain and you find it difficult to keep up with them. After two days' march, you enter a region of rolling hills. Over a crest ride two armoured figures, and the vanguard of your force charges to attack. Huddled behind rocks for cover, you watch as the mercenaries make light work of their opponents.

One of the men rides back and reports, 'King's men on a scouting mission, sir, but we've silenced their tongues.'

Nikko turns to you. 'I just hope you know what you are getting into. You can buy an army, but money won't protect you from bad planning.' Looking ahead, he points to rows of banners advancing over the hills on both sides. 'Looks like we've got a fight on our hands.'

If you charge into battle with the men, turn to 311. If you decide to flee on your own, leaving the two sides to fight it out, turn to 335.

69

The sound of jingling metal gets closer, and into the glade marches a gang of men, carrying heavy sacks, armed to the teeth and dressed in weather-worn leather. Their leader wears a pair of golden spurs on his boots. As soon as he sees Velkos, he lets out a roar. 'Breaker of rules! You dared to journey to Takio?' Velkos shakes her head and explains that she has never left the mainland. The bandit leader turns to you and asks what you have to say. If you confirm Velkos's story, turn to 154. If you tell how Velkos found you on an island, turn to 369.



70

Huge and intimidating, the wagon looms above you. Strange runes and emblems have been scratched into every inch of its black surface. As you approach, the driver wakes up. He scrambles down from his seat and adjusts his tatty uniform hurriedly. He seems terrified by your presence and avoids looking you in the eye as he fumbles open the carriage door. Out of the inner darkness steps a tall, dark-clad figure. Turn to 310.



71

'So quiet, weakling?' Your father's voice booms out across the chasm. You snap out of your trance and steady yourself on the rocky pinnacle. 'To think that my child would side with the very men who brought me down. You shame me, son!'

The apparition forms into a coiling snake and rears up at you. You gaze at the vaporous beast, unable to turn away. But then a child's voice rings out through the din. Instinctively you turn to greet it, only to see the flaming Sturramak tearing towards you. The creature dives, but you have enough time to fling yourself away from its grasping talons.

Unable to stop, the Sturramak crashes into your father's visage and explodes.

You come down from the mountain to greet your anxious friends. They tell you of King Poo Ta's heroic death as he led the last charge, and of the peasant army's steadfast defence of the town. Poo Ta left no heirs; to the victorious army, you are his natural successor. Without you to pull the land's factions together, the battle would never have been won. Your coronation is conducted on the battlefield, and your first action is to appoint Merzei Grand Councillor of the Isles.

Bezenvial's prophecy has come true. One of his children now rules the Isles, but black blood no longer taints your veins. Your absolute success heralds a new era of peace and harmony for the Isles of the Dawn.



72

'No! Go back! The waters are too high!' The anguished shout reaches you as you flail about. The boat is carried out of sight by a huge wave which surges into the chamber. It sweeps you up to the ceiling and you dash your head against the rock.

You choke on a mouthful of sea water and go under. The chamber is completely submerged. There is no escape.



73

As you charge towards the village and into the heart of battle, an enormous dragon-like beast takes to the air from behind Feior's lines. It swoops towards your position, releasing a fiery bolt-blast of energy which smashes into your men, instantly destroying those it hits. The beast draws near, and you watch in horror as it releases hundreds of squirming, leech-like creatures from its underbelly. These vicious purple grubs make short work of their victims. You are caught in this shower of death. Your adventure ends here.

74

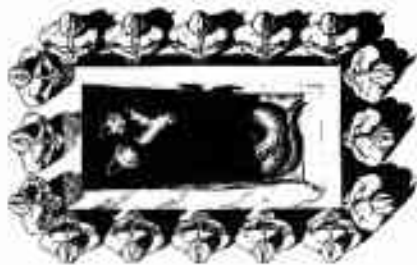
You clamp your free hand over your mouth and trust to your sense of direction, lowering your head and squinting through the smoke. Your judgement is sound and soon you are out of the chamber and into the relative safety of the exit tunnel. Turn to 312.

75

Many of the bathers make it to their weapons, and your chances of escape seem small. Wondering if things might have been different if you had been on the other side, you glance back to see Merzei charging towards a group of fighters. The situation seems hopeless, but you prepare to fight a pair of attackers:

	SKILL	STAMINA
ROBBER	5	6
SLAVER	4	8

You must fight both the men at the same time. Each will make a separate attack on you during each Attack Round, but you must choose which of the two you will fight. Fight your nominated target as in a normal battle. Against the other opponent, throw the dice for your Attack Strength in the normal way, but if your Attack Strength is greater you will not wound him, you will just have parried his blow. Of course, if his Attack Strength is greater, he will wound you in the normal way. If you win, turn to 202.



76

Thick vegetation clogs both sides of the bank and walking becomes more difficult. Eventually the weeds become impenetrable, and you are forced to come to a halt. Looking around for a means to continue, you espy a small boat, lodged in a thicket of reeds on the opposite bank. Strong currents seem ready to tug it free. If you swim out to it, turn to 324. If you decide to turn back and follow the river upstream, turn to 148.

77

Grabbing a horse, you ride off quickly in pursuit of Feior, while Credas and the Prophet hold off the monster. Roll three dice. If the result is less than or equal to your STAMINA, turn to 233. If the result is greater than your STAMINA, turn to 129.

78

Minutes later, a dark wooden hull looms up ahead of you. Strong arms reach down and pull you from the water up into a small boat. Your rescuer is a woman, dressed practically in leather, and with a sailor's long knife at her belt. As you look her over she stares at you, her brows furrowing. 'Who in all the Isles are you?' she cries. 'And what has happened to Thandile?'

If you shrug your shoulders and say you've never heard of Thandile, turn to 384. If you tell her about the dead man you found, turn to 189.



79

Cautiously, you approach the captive. He is a ridiculous sight to behold: his visor has slipped down over his eyes, and the scroll between his teeth converts his cries into animal grunts. You tug the parchment from his mouth, only to uncork a tirade of insults. 'Hah! I knew there must be two of you. How could your pathetic accomplice get the better of one of Feior's elite officers? Untie me before I summon my fellow-soldiers and grind you and your babbling friend into a pulp.' You explain that you know nothing of his attacker and untie him. While accepting your ignorance, he still seems wary of you, and marches off to collect his clothes, leaving you alone. You examine the soggy scroll but cannot decipher its contents. Shrugging, you tuck it into your pocket and set off towards the village. Turn to 263.

80

'Excellent, excellent,' froths the merchant. 'A deal well done is a blessing in clover!' From his palanquin he retrieves a small burlap bag, from which he tips a handful of sparkling diamonds. 'I think you'll find this payment is in order.'

The merchant trundles off with the idol, leaving you to contemplate your new-found riches (don't forget to note it on your *Adventure Sheet*). If you head north, back towards the isle from which you came, turn to 29. If you go south, turn to 126.

81

You explain how bandits attacked your party on the outskirts of the village. The commander looks sceptical. 'Bandits wiped out a whole company? It hardly seems possible!' Angrily, you ask why he should question your word. 'Forgive me, Master. I had no idea the locals were against us. They seemed greedy for your gold and easy to recruit. How wrong I was, Your Highness. Let us leave this place with haste.'

Inside the plush carriage, Tamroth continues to ask questions about the bandits. You evade them skilfully, until finally he gives up his examination. He pulls out a roll of maps from a compartment and spreads one on the carriage floor. 'Here is the battle-plan you requested.' He pauses. Pointing to a spot on a range of mountains, he then asks, 'Should we relocate Baelmark's troops further north, or leave them where they are?'

If you continue to bluff the commander, turn to 299.
If you attempt to escape, turn to 252.



82

Her face betrays no elation as you show her the treasure. She simply gestures up the corridor, and glances urgently backwards.

You hurry along for a while, then pause at a junction. You feel Velkos prod you forward, and you half-turn to ask the way. You look down, to see Velkos's long knife protruding from your side. Blackness comes. Your adventure ends here.

83

Feior's pathetic figure has no defence against your power. For a moment a charred silhouette stands outlined against the brooding sky. Then it crumbles away to ashes. Turn to 219.

84

The bandits draw their weapons and encircle you. The leader speaks. 'This fine-plumed bird refuses to sing for us. What shall we do, compatriots?' If you try to battle your way out, turn to 398. If you give in without a struggle, turn to 173.

85

Looking up, you get your first clear look at the huge winged beast. Its stomach is so bloated that it resembles a balloon, while its head and claws appear to be those of some grotesquely warped fowl. The blubbery folds of skin sway beneath its beak as it beats its wings furiously to stay aloft. With surprising speed, it swoops to attack. You have no option but to fight.

SHAEL-BEAST SKILL 6 STAMINA 14

If you do not have a weapon, you must fight with your SKILL reduced temporarily by 4. If you defeat the creature, turn to 218.

86

It is a long walk up the path. You are barely half way to the top when a black cloud descends upon you. At first you think it must be the shadow of some giant flying creature – but then you realize that this shadow has a life of its own. A strange sensation of well-being comes over you. You feel lighter, and you hardly notice as several of your possessions vanish into scintillating specks. Cross off any of the following that you may possess from your *Adventure Sheet*: greatsword, spiked club, axe, shortsword, knife, jewelled dagger, brooch, Shrivelled Claw. Remember that if you have to fight without a weapon at any time, you will fight with your Attack Strength reduced by 4 points.

Invigorated, despite the loss of your possessions, you complete your climb to the summit. Turn to 43.

87

You crane your neck around to trace the source of the noise. Above you a large droplet of black liquid plummets towards you. You instinctively dive to one side, but you are too late to evade the globule. It explodes on your shoulder with a blinding flash of colour, and you are dashed to the floor. You crawl to the far side of the chamber, your shoulder numb and steaming. When you pick yourself up, you find that the liquid has seared its way through the material of your garment. Fearing the worst, you twist your shoulder into view, but find it unharmed. A thin film of multicoloured scales covers the exposed flesh; it is sensitive to the touch, tingling slightly as you brush your fingers across it. Turn to 50.

88

As you focus on the Word of Power, the ghastly image of Bezenval's face forms in your mind, clouding your control. In vain you struggle to intone the word, but your father's power has silenced your inner voice. The spell's energy races round inside your skull, unable to escape, building in intensity until it explodes.



89

Next morning you set off through the trees. Half an hour later, you leave the forest and, after another hour's trek up into the hills, you find yourself on a cliff edge, overlooking a verdant ravine. The bandits begin to prepare ropes, and Sevmiroda asks for two volunteers to guard the top of the cliff. If you volunteer, turn to 290. If you choose instead to lead the descent of the cliff, turn to 210.

90

Seizing the opportunity, you turn tail and flee back to your boat. No Kreehuls follow you, but you feel certain that your magic would not restrain them from killing you if you tried once more to get to the Sitting Prophet. You paddle disconsolately back up the river.

The journey is hard (deduct 2 points from your STAMINA), but this time you are prepared for the dangers, and manage to avoid them. Eventually you escape the jungle. The small boat which has carried you through so much is finally lost when it is holed by a jagged rock. Forced to abandon it, you wade ashore and strike out along the river bank. Turn to 148.

91

You stagger about in rising panic, the smoke swirling and coiling round you like half-glimpsed serpents. Your eyes burn with imagined fires, and the chamber begins to turn, always in the opposite

direction to the way you want to go. The floor slides up beside you and you stare intently at its rock, inches from your face. Your adventure ends here.

92

Success! You finally punch a hole through Feior's lines. Your peasant marauders swarm into the gap and rout the enemy, who fall back to open ground, only to be cut down by the waiting archers and cavalry. Slowly your army forces home its advantage, and the battle seems won. All that remains of the village centre is charred ruins. The Sitting Prophet lies flat, barely moving. Above him, ready to strike, hovers the Sturramak. If you have the multicoloured scales, turn to 183. Otherwise, turn to 259.



93

You now have little choice but to head towards the sea. Turn to 175.

94

You continue to wander through the hills until a cry from up ahead sends you scurrying for cover. You watch from behind a rock as a lone rider gallops over

the crest of the hill. It is Merzei. The skinny leader of men pulls up and grins confidently. 'We are ready! The power of reason has triumphed. See for yourself.'

As he speaks, thousands of peasants begin to stream over the hill, brandishing improvised weapons. 'Take us to the enemy!' You mount up and lead the rabble towards the enemy in the north. When you arrive, a day later, the battle is already raging. The king's men are all but beaten, and Feior's troops surround them. High above the mêlée, spewing bursts of flame into the throng, hovers a dragon-like creature. Merzei delivers a defiant speech to the people and orders them to charge. If you fused Credas with the Sitting Prophet, turn to 28. Otherwise, turn to 304.



95

You run up in front of the man and gesture for him to stop. He guesses immediately what your business is. 'Don't hurt me,' he whines pitifully. 'I'm only a poor man, but what wealth I have, you may

take. Only please leave me my memento: it was given to me by my mother.' He tosses his saddlebags into the dirt at your feet but clutches on to a small box. If you pick up the saddlebags and return to the outlaws, turn to 243. If you reach up and snatch the box from him, turn to 319.

96

You call the sacred word from your memory and shout it into the jungle's mists. Pain wells up inside you, until you force it out from within, directing it at the advancing horde. A blurred blast of energy crashes into at least a hundred Kreehuls, transforming them into a contorted mass of limbs. Others advance to take their place, however, and you can no longer summon the energy to repel them. They swarm towards you, and your end is mercifully quick.

97

You hurry through the city streets and along a series of narrow alleyways, while ahead of you hoofbeats rattle against stone. At a crossroads you catch up with the horse and its multicoloured rider; the two are welded together by some bizarre sorcery. The horse's mouth opens and a piping voice splutters at you: 'Rat trapped in a maze. And how is it going to get out?' The rider stares at you, his eyes blank. 'It needs a friend, it does. Someone to carry it from the city, someone who knows.' If you attempt to befriend the mutant rider, turn to 212. If you leave it and make for the sea, turn to 175.

98

Soothing patterns form in the air about you and calmness washes over you; Feior's desperate puffing and blowing seems ridiculous to you. At last he unleashes a furious bolt of energy; it streaks towards you, singeing the very air as it passes. You meet your fate with serenity. The bolt destroys you instantly.



99

Sparks dance in front of you, and your muscles alternately tense and relax. Waves of panic course through you. Once in the safety of the exit tunnel, you hear a chuckling sound. Izkhao stands before you, the brooch clutched in his stubby fingers. He winks at you. 'B-b-b-bye!' he says, and vanishes in a sparkling of diamond dust. Not only have you lost the brooch, you may no longer call on Izkhao for aid. Turn to 312.

100

You hesitate. Despite having doubled your forces, you are still unsure how to deploy them. As the minutes tick away, the invading army grows more threatening. Eventually you decide to send the peasants into the village below, in order to slow down Feior's advance, and you will lead the cavalry round the edges of the nearby forest to attack his flanks. You charge down into the valley and veer off towards the forest. Merzei's forces pour down towards the village and join the battle. You reach the tree-line, only to see a volley of arrows shot by archers hidden within the woods. Before you can pull up, the hail descends . . . Your adventure ends here.

101

You turn away, wade back through the mud, and rejoin the road – leaving the two pathetic souls to their shouting. Something inside tells you that extending charity to such lowly beings is beneath your station. After a mile or two, you come to a fork which leads off into the forest. If you take it, turn to 35. If you continue on the main road, turn to 361.





102

Izkhao wastes no time. No sooner is he out of the brooch than he launches a stinging uppercut to Feior's jaw. Your brother goes down like a paper house in a hurricane. Izkhao turns to you and grins, 'I've always w-w-w-wanted to do that, Master!'

You stare down at your brother's unconscious form; obviously, he's not to be trusted. If you kill him now, turn to 219. If you wake him up and take him prisoner, turn to 264.

103

'Liar!' she shouts, drawing a sailor's long knife and stepping towards you. She starts to rock from side to side so that the boat heaves beneath your feet. 'You've killed Thandile and stolen his goods, but you won't pull the same trick on me,' she cries, and lunges for you with her knife. She's more used than you to fighting on board ship and your wild dodge carries you, crashing, into the boom - deduct 1 point from your STAMINA. Then you are embroiled with each other in close combat, reeling and stumbling as the boat rocks. A sword is useless to you here amongst the rope and tackle. You fight with your SKILL reduced temporarily by 4 points.

VELKOS

SKILL 6 STAMINA 6

If you defeat her, turn to 60.

104

Just as the blob reaches your grip, you throw out your arms and dive backwards, grasping for a nearby vine. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 266. If you are Unlucky, turn to 316.

105

You know that you cannot afford to be in the way of one of the creature's bolts, so you circle warily, looking for a vulnerable spot. A bolt streaks towards you and instinctively you hold out your hands to ward it off . . . the bolt stops, inches from your palms. You push out with your hands and the bolt streaks back at the Polybleb. There is a flash, and the creature vaporizes in a fine spray of scintillating particles. You have learnt the power of Disruption. This is known to you by the name 'Baopo'. Whenever you see this as an option, you may choose to use it as your new power. Turn to 245.

106

You should choose an option that you have not already chosen:

Look for mercenaries to recruit?	Turn to 191
Try to find Merzei (if you recognize the name)?	Turn to 279
Try to find the king's army?	Turn to 216
Recruit outlaws to the cause?	Turn to 349
Follow your instincts?	Turn to 261

107

Add 4 to the number you rolled and write down the result in the SKILL box of your *Adventure Sheet*. Roll two dice. If the result is less than or equal to your SKILL, turn to 303. If the result is greater than your SKILL, turn to 204.

108

You grab the thread and twist it round your wrist. The creature senses your contact and lifts off, jerking you up into the air, high above river and out of arrow-shot. Beneath you, the river runs deep into the jungle, occasionally disappearing beneath the rich canopy. Just as your arms seem to pop from their sockets, the dragonfly begins its descent. When you are no more than five metres from the ground, your grip finally breaks and you land safely in a shallow swamp. The creature remains above you, hovering expectantly. Wading through the scummy water, you come to a clearing. Turn to 366.

109

The bandits begin to stamp their feet as you divest yourself of your heavier equipment and prepare to take on your former travelling companion in combat. She tests the weight and balance of her knife, then faces you.

VELKOS

SKILL 6 STAMINA 6

If you beat her, turn to 267.

110

You follow the path as it weaves to and fro among the trees. After a little while there is the sound of crashing from up ahead. An armoured figure, its hands clutched to its head, races round the corner. You are taken by surprise as the fellow careens into you, knocking you over – deduct 1 point from your STAMINA. He roars and draws a wicked-looking spiked club from his belt, then begins to swing wildly in your direction. His helmet seems to have been crushed so that he cannot see, but he is still a dangerous opponent.

BLINDED BANDIT SKILL 4 STAMINA 10

If you defeat the bandit, turn to 387.

111

The Sturramak dives on you before you can escape. Perhaps sensing your mastery of magic, it slashes at you with razor-sharp claws.

STURRAMAK SKILL 11 STAMINA 25

If you defeat the Sturramak, turn to 323.

112

You pass your clothes to the boy, keeping your most valuable possessions with you, and push open the tavern door. A thick wall of steam prevents you seeing into the centre of the room. Carefully you step inside and notice that there are rows of pegs set into the wall on which clothes and weapons are hung. Your suspicions aroused, you swing back

around – just in time to watch the urchin race away with your robes. Muttering oaths, you walk out into the steamy haze . . . and fall headlong into a pool of water. Turn to 286.

113

At the end of the chamber is a pair of huge doors, which you heave open. Just beyond them is a huge, red wax barrier, sealing the archway. A circular hole large enough for you to climb through has been burned through. The familiar pain nags at you once more. Behind you there is a creaking, rustling sound. If you turn to see what is making the noise, turn to 207. If you squeeze through the opening, turn to 334.

114

'They attacked from yonder ridge – thousands of them, swinging evil-looking swords about their heads.' The smaller of the two peasants points off into the darkness with the broken shaft of an arrow. 'The garrison troops didn't stand a chance. Boys they were, didn't know one end of a halberd from the other. Reckon we're in for some bad times if Feior's lot take over.' You walk into the firelight and hail the men, but they leap like startled deer and run off into the night. Gazing into the fire's blaze you notice that it is fuelled by thousands of broken arrows. You pick up a snapped shaft (note this on your *Adventure Sheet*) and return to the Prophet. The rest of the night passes peacefully. Turn to 393.

115

You manage to keep your mouth shut as you are tugged through the intoxicating smoke. Although you feel nauseous, you retain your wits and, once in the safety of the tunnel, order Izkhao back into the brooch. Turn to 312.

116

The last voice you hear as you slide into unconsciousness is your father's. 'Your time will come, child. Make me proud of you, and all that I have will be yours.' Turn to 1.

117

Velkos eyes you suspiciously and smirks. Her silence unsettles you even more. She walks out of the cave, surveys the beach and points to a neglected path that leads up the cliff. 'I suggest you head that way if you're to have a chance,' she says. 'If they catch you, don't tell them where you came from. And don't mention me, unless you are as determined to die as you appear to be.'

You thank her tersely and make your way up the rocky path without looking back. Turn to 19.

118

The birds' flight forms patterns in the air, patterns which tease your memory. Images flash before your eyes; you see once more the glyphs on your sarcophagus, and a feeling of calm descends on you. You have learnt the power of Harmonization. Whenever you see the word 'Tiaohe' as an option, you will be able to use this power.

You step forward, and the birds part before you, as if they sense your command of their power. Turn to 16.

119

You head out into the countryside. Although time is short, you have much ground to cover. First you must decide how you will start to recruit men. Will you:

Search for Merzei?

Turn to 279

Recruit an outlaw band?

Turn to 349

Try to hire mercenaries?

Turn to 191

Follow your instincts?

Turn to 261



120

Your stomach lurches dizzily and the smoke around you glows purple as your power begins to flow. Its wreaths and coils start to move sluggishly, then take on more substantial form. Soon the glow of your own power is all that enables you to see. Around you the smoke mutates to liquid, a viscous, acrid-smelling treacle which rises around you. Too late you realize your mistake. The liquid rises up past your chest as you flail your arms desperately in its syrupy embrace, all thought of gemstones and wealth now gone. Your adventure ends here.



121

You look down into the chamber below, watching as the blue torch-flames snake outwards and combine into a glowing sphere. The voice comes again, tinged with sadness. 'Too soon, too soon! For the sake of the Isles, remember all I have taught you.' As he speaks, you feel the stairs quiver beneath your feet. The pressure grows, and your feet slip on the crumbling stone. The stairs are quickly reduced to a rubble-strewn slope, and you scabble frantically for purchase. Roll two dice and note down the result, then turn to 223.

122

You control your heaving stomach and send ghastly purple shapes groping out towards Feior. He stares at them in panic, and flails desperately with his arms. The shapes grip him, and he wails frantically. Now is your chance to finish the duel. Which power do you use:

Baopo?
Izkhao?
Tiaohe?
Shangsuo?

Turn to 83
Turn to 396
Turn to 246
Turn to 7

123

As he spots your wound, the bandit leader lets out a shout. 'Ha! That's a Silverine bite if I know what's what. You've met Thandile, and I'll wager you've done him no good.' Turn to 173.

124

Shaking with fear, you clear your mind, summon the word and speak it aloud. A warm tingle spreads through you, collecting in a ball of energy at your fingertips. You send the spell flying towards the rampaging Kreehuls, and you watch as it crashes into the water, instantly freezing its surface. At least a thousand creatures stand trapped by your magic, croaking in fear and anger. Your feet are free, and you carefully navigate around the Kreehuls' flailing arms. Turn to 33.

125

You leap at the whirling tentacles and strike. The heat is so intense that you must deduct 2 points from your STAMINA for each round you are in combat, even if you have a higher Attack Strength.

POLYBLEB SKILL 5 STAMINA 7

If you defeat the Polybleb, turn to 245.

126

In the first village you stop at, news is rife of trouble brewing in the south. Fifty years ago, the Isles of the Dawn were ruled by Bezenval, a despotic fiend whose corruption and cruelty earned him the hatred of all his subjects. He was finally overcome by the Triurge of Aven, sorcerers of great power, who destroyed his cityport on the northern island of Takio and banished him to the shadow realms. Now his son, Feior, has returned. He is raising an army and will soon clash with the forces of King Poo Ta.

His soldiers are foreigners and creatures of ill-omen, as well as the most despicable mercenaries of the Isles. They pillage the countryside as they go, forcing refugees to flee north.

If you have a Bejewelled Box, turn to 377. Otherwise, if you decide to travel north to avoid the war, turn to 29. If you try to raise an army to help in the war against Feior, turn to 119.

127

The huge sphere bounces against the ship, and the dark shape within it starts scrabbling frantically. The ball rears up against the rail – it is nearly on the deck. You pick up the pole and swing it two-handed at your opponent. It strikes the membrane where the dark shape is pushing, and the ball rears back, splashing into the water below. With another prod of the pole the sphere is sent rolling back into the mist whence it came. As it disappears, you think you can hear a pitiful wailing from within the rubbery prison.

You are very tired now. If you let sleep take its course, turn to 292. If you struggle to stay awake, turn to 247.

128

You are toppled by a blow from behind. Then you feel yourself gripped powerfully by the shoulders and wrenched up, out from the mud, spluttering and gasping; you leave the ground and your legs dangle helplessly. All you can see of the creature

that is carrying you up is its huge, bloated underbelly and its scrawny legs. Its foul smell is beyond description; your eyes water and breathing is almost impossible. The creature's flying is dangerously erratic. You can hear its tiny wings flapping desperately as you lurch across treetops and fields. If you hang on and wait to see what happens, turn to 358. If you try to struggle free, *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 227. If you are Unlucky, turn to 322.

129

You drag yourself up the mountainside, barely able to focus on Feior. By the time you have crawled up, he has ensconced himself on the top of a pinnacle of rock. You look up, bleary eyed: Feior is puffing and gasping, his face red and his arms flailing. Turn to 195.

130

The skittering sound of rocks falling is the only warning of landslide. Velkos grabs you and throws you to one side as stones crash down from the rock, dislodged perhaps by your noisy approach. Your face stings and, when you wipe it, your hand comes away red with your own blood. You stare at the stain, light-headed, not quite realizing that you were hit (deduct 1 point from your STAMINA). A screech! Pounding up the slope towards you are two bald, baboon-like creatures, each madly waving two tails. Turn to 42.

131

You continue on your voyage downriver. The mist thickens and brings with it a chorus of strange animal cries. The banks rise up some five metres or more above you, and dark shapes flit among the foliage. The noises suddenly stop. A slender arrow bursts through the undergrowth, arcs lazily towards you and thuds into the prow. You crouch on the deck as more arrows rain down from the unseen attackers. If you have the Small Jar, turn to 306. If you sit tight and wait for the shooting to stop, turn to 231. If you have the Chang whistle and wish to use it, turn to 374.

132

The ground between the buildings is scored by deep, long ruts. You trace these marks to some of the most violently disfigured houses. The walls around here have a metallic sheen, and the smell of sulphur in the air increases. You soon discover the source of the ruts when you come upon a marrow-shaped object as thick as your waist. Its husk is intricately woven from wicker and it lies at the end of a deep gash, resting at the foot of an undamaged wall. Will you:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| Examine the object? | Turn to 351 |
| Ignore it and make your way to the sea wall? | Turn to 10 |
| Continue searching among the buildings? | Turn to 379 |

133

You run your fingers across its surface, then lift it from its hook. A bare wall lies behind it.

'Unhand me, you impolite youth!' says a voice from the canvas. You drop the painting in surprise, and leap back as the subject of the painting materializes in front of you. 'Look to the future before you're too old to change your ways!' He points to the window, then does a backflip into an open chest. The lid slams down on him. Tentatively, you open the chest but find it empty. The only way out is through the window, so you climb on to the ledge. Turn to 344.

134

Velkos shins up the trunk of the tree then reaches down to give you a helping hand. She climbs further up the tree as you settle yourself among the lower branches. The jingling of metal gets closer, and into the glade marches a gang of men, armed to the teeth and dressed in weather-worn leather; they carry heavy sacks. Their leader wears a pair of golden spurs on his boots. He looks around suspiciously and then turns his head rapidly in your direction. 'Climb down,' he calls. 'No one hides from me.' Reluctantly you lower yourself down the tree trunk, and are at once surrounded by bandits. You realize that Velkos has not come down. If you tell the bandit leader that she is hiding in the tree, turn to 234. If you keep quiet about her, turn to 365.



135

His strike misses, and you knock the dagger from his right hand. You grab it, in time to parry Tamroth's second thrust. You must fight to the death.

TAMROTH SKILL 6 STAMINA 8

If you win, turn to 252.



136

'I'm a fountain of charity,' says the man-horse mutant, 'ever willing to transport rats to new realms.' The human part of the creature gestures you to climb up on to his back, and soon you are galloping towards the city gate. As you approach, a wall of fire springs up to bar your way, but your mount plunges on regardless. The flames bathe you with a gentle heat, bringing a feeling of well-being and happiness. You ride out into the charred meadowland around the city, your skin vivid and colourful, your muscles powerful, your hoofs well-shod, glad of the company. There are now three of you to leap and gallop and play. It will be a good life.

137

You leave the king's forces preparing for battle, and set out into the hills alone, leaving his army behind. If you are expecting Merzei, turn to 94. Otherwise, turn to 335.

138

You prepare to strike, but a sharp voice interrupts: 'No! Come to me!' No one else is in the chamber, but it seems that the voice came from the passageway leading out. You feel drawn to this passage; before you go, however, you may take a weapon from one of the bandits if you wish: a sword, an axe or a knife (if you take one, note it on your Equipment List). Turn to 16.



139

The trader goes down, but you stagger with the effort. His blade carried poison! Deduct 1 point from your SKILL. Somehow you drag yourself into cover and rest for a few hours before setting off again. You make your way down from the hills into the lush lowlands. Turn to 19.

140

You had not realized how tired you are. You black out briefly as nausea grips you, and the purple glow you create is weak, compared with the tendrils that snake towards you from Feior's outstretched arms. Your spell is barely half way towards your opponent when you feel your body begin to warp and stretch. Summoning all your reserves, you concentrate on the changes, maintaining your true form. But this leaves you no defence against Feior's next spell – a blast which strikes you full on, incinerating you instantly.



141

You follow the trail of clothes away from the road and into some thick gorse. Lying there, tied up like a pig for roasting, is a helmeted man. A parchment scroll protrudes from his jet-black visor. He tries to roll away as you approach, moaning when the thistles rake his yellow flesh. A broken half-sword lies by him – further evidence of battle.

Will you:

Untie him?

Turn to 330

Remove the scroll from his mouth
first?

Turn to 79

Leave him and press on to the
village?

Turn to 263



142

The silver-furred creature eyes you suspiciously as you approach. Its long snout twitches at you, sniffing you out. You observe that a leather cord attached to its collar tethers it to the wrist of its dead master. Warily, you examine the corpse. The man is dressed simply, but his leather jerkin is fitted with pouches and pockets, all bulging with gems and small jewellery. A long, blunt, pocket knife is gripped in one hand; a gem-encrusted tiara lies, centimetres from the other. You realize that he must have been killed by a vicious blow from behind, his murderer having caught him by surprise. You flinch involuntarily and scan the darkness for his killer. If you want to leave the chamber now, turn to 217. If you would rather have another look at your sarcophagus, turn to 315.



143

The two peasants abandon their protestations and lead the cart off the track, avoiding the idol. Then they trundle off into the distance. You are now stuck in the middle of the countryside with an enormous bronze idol. If you decide to abandon it and follow the trail, turn to 216. If you wait for the next traveller on the road, turn to 244.



144

The bandits laugh. 'Well, if you weren't one before, you are now!' says the leader, clapping you on the shoulder. Turn to 336.

145

The coin lands with Feior's crowned head uppermost. Your brother's form bursts back into existence. He stoops, picks up the coin at his feet, smiles and flicks it at you. You reach to catch it.

You stare up at him as he looms above you. He bends down to pick you up, and you disappear into the darkness of his pocket.



146

With a leap, you charge off down the slope of the mountainside. The tall, coarse grass whips against your legs as you plummet down the steep incline. From behind you comes a harsh, guttural shout and you realize that you are an easy target. Pain blossoms in your chest. Your legs crumple but your momentum carries you on, and you fall, rolling head over heels, down the slope. You come to rest in a small depression. The steel head of a crossbow bolt protrudes rudely from your flesh. As you stare helplessly down at the missile, a consuming resentment flows through your mind and searing beams of light flare from your eyes, striking the quarrel and engulfing it in a pale iridescence. When the light fades, you see that the bolt which impaled you has also vanished! But the blood that flows thickly from the wound is real. Your vision fades into welcoming darkness.





147

The pain in your head grows, and you prod the white warrior impatiently. He rocks backwards, then pitches forward and smashes to the floor. The wreckage of his shattered remains exposes a dusty skeleton within; apart from this, the warrior was little more than a hollow vessel. The chamber shakes, and sparks fly dizzily across your field of vision. Pausing only to pick up the warrior's shortsword and shield (note that you have them on your Equipment List), you hurry off through the swaying statues to the far end of the chamber (turn to 113).

148

You follow the course of the stream until its banks become too treacherous, forcing you up into the rolling hills. Turn to 216.

149

The two creatures begin to move. You watch as they find their feet on the pool's slippery floor. Smoke and steam envelop you. Losing sight of the beasts, you make for the edge, only to be forced back by other frightened bathers. Briefly, the smoke clears and you find yourself face to face with one of Merzei's creations. Roughly human in shape, its clumsy features are only partially formed. Its skin is covered in a thick slime, which fizzes and crackles. As it wades towards you, the creature spits out more of this foul paste. You dodge to avoid the globules and prepare to defend yourself. If you do

not have a weapon, you must fight with your SKILL reduced by 4 points.

SOSEKI SKILL 8 STAMINA 8

If you win, turn to 202.

150

With a pop, Izkhao emerges from the brooch. He smiles at you, then turns to beam at the outlaws. They back away, making frantic gestures of superstitious warding. Izkhao leaps at them, and they flee, screaming. He shrugs, and grins at you. 'C-c-cowards!' he says, then disappears back into the brooch. Turn to 19.

151

You open the door and walk out into the corridor. The air is filled with shouting and banging. Servants scurry past without stopping to bow. They all seem as frightened as you. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 229. If you are Unlucky, turn to 188.

152

You cannot be sure whether you are dreaming or not. It seems that someone is searching through your possessions very carefully. You come to your senses and spring up, to find Velkos clutching a brooch, which she seems to have retrieved from your clothing. Sullenly she hands it to you. 'I was only trying to find out who you are,' she says. 'You can't be too careful nowadays.' You glare at her, then turn your attention to the brooch. It is of a

simple design, decorated with glyphs similar to those you found on your sarcophagus, and with a little clasp on it. If you open the brooch now, note down the number '152' and turn to 343. If you decide not to, note down the number '343' next to the brooch on your *Adventure Sheet*. You may open the brooch at any time when you are not involved in combat: make a note of the number of the paragraph you are at, then turn to 343. Now turn to 45.



153

You wait for a clearing to appear, then ground your boat. Mooring it to a tree-stump, you step out of it on to the jungle floor and gaze into the depths. Small birds of all shapes and sizes screech above you, and thick moss has painted everything with its dull green tones. If you strike out immediately into the jungle, turn to 399. If you stay in the clearing and rest, turn to 59.

154

You do your best to look honest and confirm that you met Velkos some way inland. Velkos recommends to the leader that you be allowed to join the

band; after looking you up and down, he agrees. Velkos next suggests that you bear a tattoo as a sign of your devotion to the group. There are many outlaws, all well-armed and grim of feature, so it seems unwise to argue. The needles are painful, but the outlaws all assure you that the tattoo pricked into the small of your back is a work of art. Note down on your *Adventure Sheet* that you carry a bandit tattoo. Turn to 336.

155

'What stinking rabble is this that you drag around with you like some dead mule?' says the officer, turning to the sentries with a smirk.

Merzei rises to his challenge. 'You look like a trussed-up duck, ready for roasting. It's your pompous posturing on behalf of that inbred nitwit, Poo Ta, that has let the Dark Son of Bezenvial loose on us.'

'How dare you insult the king!' growls the officer, leaping towards Merzei.

You dive between them, hoping to cool their tempers. But both men are proud. Merzei refuses to apologize and calls you a traitor to the cause. 'This is ridiculous,' he says to you. 'Let these imperialist oppressors fight their own battles. We will prevail in the end. Down with the Tyrant! Up with the Council!' He marches back to his army and signals an about-turn.

You are left with the king's army. Turn to 3.

156

Before you stand row upon row of smooth, white, motionless figures. Each holds a simple spear but wears no armour. The low ceiling of the enormous chamber adds to the feeling of oppression, and you step cautiously between the serried ranks. The sensation of pressure increases once more, and the white statues tremble faintly, producing a hollow ringing noise. You notice the familiar trceries of cracks appearing in the marble floor and a haze of dust wafting down from the ceiling. If you hurry through the chamber to the far end, turn to 265. If you stop to examine the white statues more closely, turn to 55.



157

Izkhao screams at you, 'I don't like this g-g-g-g-game no more, Master,' and it flies up above the battle. 'I think I'll watch you p-p-p-p-p-play now. That'll be nice, won't it?' Hardly able to believe its action, you have just enough time to curse the beast before the Kreehuls swarm over you. Your adventure ends here.

158

Both men appear to be stuck fast in the steaming mud. Their arms and legs may be only a few inches below its surface, but the mud has solidified around them. They fall silent and eye your robes fearfully. The younger one whispers to the other, 'It's them again.'

The older of the two swallows and says, 'We was only going about our lawful business, we was. We had no meaning to 'arm you or your kind. Two days we've been stuck here. Have pity, sir, and let us be on our way.'

If you bear multicoloured scales, turn to 281. If you choose to help the peasants, turn to 341. If you leave their cries for the ears of others, turn to 101.

159

Feior is as slippery as an eel. As you free him from the spell, he twists to one side, raises his arms and begins to prepare a spell. You must react quickly. If you try to destroy him with a spell, turn to 332. If you draw a weapon and attack him, turn to 64. Or, if you still command Izkhao, you may summon him to help you (turn to 102).

160

More slavers rush to take the place of the men you have killed. Velkos is nowhere to be seen - she must have run into the cave. If you decide to fight the rest of the slavers, turn to 394. If you flee into the tunnel mouth, turn to 285.





161

The saddlebag turns out to contain several hundred coins, which the outlaws gleefully share out (your portion comes to 25 gold pieces). Their next stop is an ale shop in the village. They are confident that the feeble sergeant of the village will not take any action, even if the merchant complains to him. After buying a large keg of Xingdao, a potent local brew, they return to the forest to celebrate, explaining that the village tavern doesn't heat the water enough for their tastes. If you join the bandits' celebrations, turn to 378. If you refrain from drinking, turn to 307.

162

Merzei looks you up and down. 'I see you have one of my tracts,' he says, 'but I am not clear why I should do this for you.' Will you:

- Tell him that you will reward him
with gold and riches?
- Order him to obey you?
- Say it will advance the cause?

Turn to 320

Turn to 268

Turn to 54

163

Just inside the ramparts of the city stand platforms, topped with powerful catapults, each with its own supply of pitch-smeared projectiles. Two of the engines are still winched back, primed for firing. Beyond them the sea-ramparts rise, and you can hear the crash of waves against rock. If you make your way back through the city towards the gate, turn to 132. If you search the buildings near the sea wall, turn to 379.

164

The cramped village store is packed with locals. Instead of the usual food and oddments you might expect to find, the shelves are lined with swords, armour and fighting provisions. Villagers haggle angrily for weapons, thrusting money at the harried shopkeeper. If you 'dropped' into the forest earlier, turn to 44. Otherwise, turn to 205.



165

You wake up with a jerk. Huddled within your silken sheets, you peer out into the bedchamber, half expecting the evil face in your nightmare to materialize again. But there is nothing—only the toy soldiers and the clothes you left scattered the night before. Feior's precious wooden sword lies near a pile of your spell books and practice slates. Normally, your brother never lets it out of his sight, and you wonder where he can be. You check the adjoining chamber and find his bed empty. It is early, but, outside your door, servants are rushing to and fro. Then you remember—Father's trip! All thoughts of the nightmare disappear as you think of the excursion the king has planned for you and Feior. The court has been dull without soldiers to play with, and your last week has been spent confined in the keep. Someone begins to unlock your door, and you dive back into bed and under the sheets. If you feign sleep, turn to 211. Otherwise, turn to 241.



166

The going is rough among the scrub and soft earth, but you make your way around the wood and head up into the barren hills. Turn to 352.



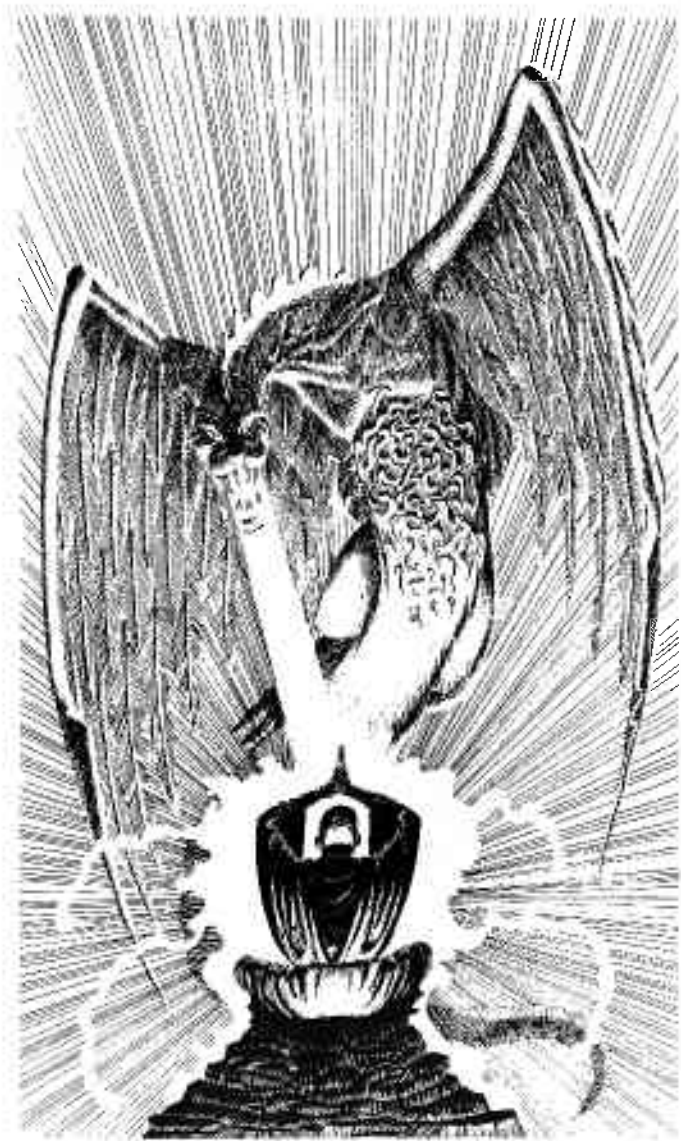
167

You look the man full in the eyes and tell him to let you out of the cage. He gives a start, then slowly pulls back the latch. You shuffle out and tell the slave master to untie you and return your possessions to you. He complies, muttering apologies and bowing. Soon you are free and stand in the open air once more, stretching your tired limbs to restore some of the circulation. If you have the Shrivelled Claw, turn to 187. Otherwise, turn to 263.

168

The bandits back away from you, gesturing and muttering charms of protection. 'We have not harmed you,' says the leader. 'Go in peace.' You assemble your belongings and make your way out of the forest. Turn to 19.





169

The battle rages on. Your battle plan begins to take effect: Feior's men are gradually being divided and pushed to the outskirts of the village, where wave after wave of cavalry tears into them, inflicting heavy losses. Poo Ta's knights, being heavy and cumbersome in their armour, fare less well in the street-fighting. The enemy hold their ground and even threaten to counter-attack. Meanwhile the struggle between the Sturramak and the Prophet reaches a climax, and the golden idol smashes aside a blast from the catlike dragon. The beast backs off and retreats to a group of enemy soldiers. Victory is in the balance, and one final push will tip the scales. If you hired the mercenaries earlier on, turn to 364. Otherwise, turn to 92.

170

Add 6 to the number you rolled and note the result in the LUCK box of your *Adventure Sheet*.

As you charge across the room there is a fizzing sound from directly above. *Test your Luck* (remember to deduct 1 point). If you are Lucky, turn to 295. If you are Unlucky, turn to 87.

171

The route you scythed into the jungle is already partially reclaimed by vines and creepers. Eventually you find your way back and prepare to leave. If you have the Clay Effigy, turn to 131. Otherwise, turn to 300.

172

'I don't know what reason you had for being on the island, and I don't care. Just so long as you pull your weight and manage the ropes. And don't go the way of other fools - I'm pretty handy with this.' She draws a sailor's long knife, drives it into the hardwood of the deck, and settles back with her hand on the rudder, keeping her eyes on you the whole time. 'Better get to work on those sails, hadn't you,' she says. Turn to 220.



173

You are seized from behind and a sword is held at your throat as the bandits take all your gear. Cross all items off your Equipment List. The outlaws tie your hands, blindfold you and lead you for some distance before abandoning you. It takes you several hours to free yourself. Turn to 19.

174

Feior's eyes drift over to the huge idol sitting incongruously in the back of the cart. 'What is this strange artefact? It makes me feel ill,' he says.

You start to tell your brother how you braved the Zushan Jungle to steal the Sitting Prophet. You lean over to pat the idol. Then you are falling, falling into a blackness that leers at you, mocking you for the evil within your soul. Your adventure is over.

175

The mighty catapults raise their arms towards the heavens, giving you an idea: perhaps you can escape this blighted city using them. The sea will break your fall and you should be able to swim along the coast until you find a safe place to beach. Climbing on to a nearby platform, you heave a large, tar-smearred missile into the waiting basket. You then tug out the wooden pin which frees the catapult bar and watch as the missile soars up and over the city walls. You haven't the strength to winch the arm back, but there is another primed catapult, a short distance away. It is the work of a moment to tie a string to the wooden pin and then clamber into the basket. Offering up a silent prayer to any deities who happen to be listening, you give the string a sharp tug. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 236. If you are Unlucky, turn to 340.



176

You tell Credas of the battle which took place in the fields to the south.

He sighs. 'Before we do what must be done I will tell you something of your history. You are one of the

two children of Bezenvial, who ruled this island with steel, fire and death until he was cast down. The Triurge of Aven defeated him in a battle that lasted many days: his cityport was destroyed and Bezenvial himself banished to the shadow realms. Now only one of the Triurge lives: for I am the last.

'The Sitting Prophet is a potent force for Harmony, and I sent you to fetch it because I knew that, if you were a true child of your father, the idol would destroy you utterly. But somehow you have been cleansed of your evil heritage. Not so your brother, Feior, who seeks to fulfil Bezenvial's prophecy that one of his children would rule the Isles of the Dawn once more. He must be defeated, or else the people will be ground under the iron heel of oppression. We must use every power at our disposal. Do you have the power of Mutation?'

If you have, turn to 284. If not, turn to 22.



177

You are blown backwards by the force of the exploding cloud, and a sharp pain sears your face as it blisters and blackens – deduct 2 points from your

STAMINA. You lie in a heap, head buried in the dirt, as about you a whining, crashing and hissing cacophony rages. It dies down at last, and you stagger to your feet. Around you the walls of the buildings are charred and disfigured, and a yellow, sulphurous smoke hangs in the air. If you head for the sea walls, turn to 10. If you continue to search among the buildings, turn to 379.



178

You wade up to a large, pock-marked gentleman. Choking on his ale in between sentences, he tells you all about his journey across the island to meet up with old mercenary friends. 'There's talk,' he says, 'that one of Feior's men is arrivin' from the war in the south, lookin' fer men to train his troops. Now, fightin's all well and good. But the real money's in slaves.' He is about to continue when the tavern door bursts open. Turn to 52.

179

Roll one die. If the result is odd, turn to 25. If the result is even, turn to 145.



180

From up ahead you hear the sounds of a struggle of some kind. You approach cautiously and come upon a strange battle. A short, scrawny fellow without weapons or armour stands above a hulking brigand in armour. Two horses crop the grass nearby – it is clear that these are the horses of the two riders who overtook you. Though you moved quietly, the scrawny fellow looks up in surprise at your approach. If you have a spiked club, turn to 331. If you don't have one, turn to 269.

181

Tears stream down your face, and each breath sears your lungs. Unable to focus, you stumble on to the bank and lash out at the largest tribesman. Coughing violently and convulsed with pain, you have to fight doubled up (fight with your SKILL reduced temporarily by 4 points).

JUNGLE MAN

SKILL 5

STAMINA 7

If you win, turn to 257.

182

You spin around and run off into the town, casting an anxious glance back over your shoulder to see whether the bandits are following. You are in luck, for you shake them off quickly. The town is dreary and depressing, and you are tired. Turn to 263.

183

Your shoulder tingles. The ghostly image of Credas appears above the Sitting Prophet. 'I am lost against this beast. Do not waste your time saving me.' He points to a lone rider, who is galloping away into the foothills. 'Your brother. Go after him, before he summons the darkness. Be quick!' The image fades as the Sturramak dives. If you pursue Feior, turn to 77. If you flee, turn to 327.

184

Pushed to their limits, your aching muscles fail you, and you are swept down by the force of rubble. Engulfed in the swirling radiance of the thing below, you catch glimpses of a melancholy visage: he stares balefully at you before being consumed by the dust, which billows up from the mounting rubble. The blue flames fragment and dissipate with an echoing sigh.

The slide has left you partially buried, and you struggle from the debris bruised and exhausted (deduct 1 point from your STAMINA). You wait for the dust to settle then pick your way back up the bare slope. Turn to 30.



185

When Credas sees what you have brought, his face turns ashen. 'I . . . I - but how did you . . . ?' he mutters. Then he stares at you intently. 'I never guessed such evil could be purged,' he says to no one in particular. 'I have committed a great crime.'

If you have a Broken Arrow Shaft, turn to 176. Otherwise, turn to 296.



186

You realize that these fellows are indeed all that he claims, and that the brave man stands little chance of escaping alive. You wade past the other astonished bathers, climb out and quickly wrap a towel round you. Merzei beams at you. 'I'm glad to see at least one of you has the good sense to follow me. Take this.' He throws you a jewelled dagger, and you turn to face the cut-throats as they advance. 'Now, to work! Let's cleanse the land of this scum!' Will you:

Fight with your dagger?

Say Biantai?

Call Izkhao?

Name Shangsuo?

Say Baopo?

Turn to 75

Turn to 270

Turn to 333

Turn to 26

Turn to 313

187

Among the possessions returned to you is a small brooch. You don't recall seeing it before, but, since it is decorated with the same glyphs that adorned your sarcophagus, it must be yours. There is a little clasp on it. If you open the brooch now, note down the number '152' and turn to 343. If you prefer not to, make a note of the number '343' next to the brooch on your *Adventure Sheet*. At any time, provided you are not involved in combat, you may open the brooch: note down the number of the paragraph you are at, then turn to 343. Now turn to 263.



188

You dash along the corridor, past the tapestries and emblems of your noble family, along the vast hallways, decked with arms and banners. All around, courtiers are fleeing, clutching possessions and gathering objects they come upon. You ignore the people and run to the winding staircase, straight into Panurge, your father's priest.

'Maior! I have been looking for you.' He smiles calmly. 'Take my hand, and I will lead you to your

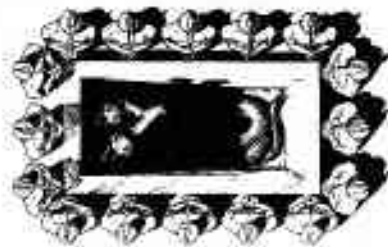
father.' The hawk-nosed mage extends his arm impatiently.

If you follow him, turn to 359. If you decide to evade him, turn to 229.



189

You cast your mind back to your first hours of consciousness. Her hard features soften as you describe the body that lay in your tomb chamber. It is obvious that you guessed correctly. She turns to look back at the city, her eyes moist. You say nothing, respecting her moment of private grief. A moment passes, then another. Finally she sighs and turns back to you. 'What are you gawping at?' she spits. 'Get to work on the sails, and thank the gods that I bothered to save you.' Turn to 220.





190

The claws of a beast rake your insides. You retch, and a purple glow surrounds you. The bandits writhe in ghastly contortion as their bodies melt and warp before your eyes. But the horror of it is that they are still alive. Their distorted forms shamble towards you. You try escape from them, but two block your way; you must defeat them quickly.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First MUTATED BANDIT	7	5
Second MUTATED BANDIT	6	4

Fight the bandits one at a time. If at any time you roll two fours for your Attack Strength, turn to 385. If you defeat the bandits, turn to 29.

191

It doesn't take you long to find out that a company of fifty mercenaries is passing close by. You make your way to their camp and approach their leader. He introduces himself as Wol Nikko; he strikes you as a shifty fellow who never seems to make eye contact. His affected mannerisms suggest that he has led a pampered early life, though you cannot guess what led him to become a mercenary. He says he will work for anyone who pays well, but that the minimum charge for the hire of his band is 1,000 gold pieces. If you have the money, and wish to pay him, turn to 370. If you promise to pay the mercenary the money later, turn to 226. If you abandon the

idea of recruiting mercenaries and wish to try another alternative, return to 106 and choose again.

192

'Quick, the Thaaaza smoke is near!' Velkos's voice urges you. She grabs your arm and drags you off, down another tunnel. A screeching echoes along the tunnels, and after a while you pass a side-tunnel from which issue pitiful, half-human screams. You pause at the tunnel mouth, but Velkos grabs you roughly. 'It's just some Cressent young,' she hisses. 'Leave them for the traders.'

If you follow Velkos, turn to 298. If you go down the side-tunnel, turn to 8.

193

In desperation you summon the word, and the Kreehuls' advance slows. But your power cannot control so many creatures for long – you have simply bought yourself some extra time. You may flee (turn to 90), try to make off with the idol (turn to 13), or make use of one of the following powers, if you have them:

Shangsuo	Turn to 124
Izkhao	Turn to 66
Biantai	Turn to 96
Baopo	Turn to 235

194

The multicoloured scales on your shoulder tingle as you reach towards the object. If you handle the

object, turn to 24. If you leave it where it is and instead make for the sea walls of the city, turn to 10.

195

You leap to one side as the burst of energy spews forth from Feior's mouth and streaks towards you. The spell finds its target, however; before you can flee further, you are embraced by the pure heat of annihilation.



196

By the gods, this beer is strong! The world lurches around you, and the distorted faces of the outlaws leer and grimace. To one side you see Velkos looking at you; she smiles at some private thought, then turns away. Swirling patterns form before your eyes. You black out. You do not recover consciousness.

197

You blink awake and find yourself alone by the burnt-out fire. It is early morning, and the village is strangely silent. No smoke rises from the houses, and the livestock that roamed the square have vanished. Standing outside the tavern is a huge

black carriage, twice the size of a normal vehicle. Two antlered beasts are yoked to it, and the driver dozes on the roof. If you avoid the battle-wagon and head out of the village, turn to 2. If you approach the carriage cautiously, turn to 70.

198

You hurry out of the village, abandoning the poor wretch to his fate. Looking back, you see three armoured men staring after you. It seems you have had a narrow escape. Turn to 29.

199

These vicious creatures have formed into a single, seething mass of destruction. Frantically you try to beach your craft – but in an instant your boat is engulfed with screeching. You perish amid a mass of snapping teeth.

200

You quicken your stride, taking the steps three at a time, for your head is pounding once more. The stairs seem increasingly to be laden with thick dust, which shifts underfoot. It soon dawns on you that the stairs are crumbling and you can find little purchase on the disintegrating surface. Frantically you claw your way up, flattening yourself against the slope. Dust fills your lungs and eyes; exhaustion is close. Roll two dice and note down the result, then turn to 357.

201

The lid of the box flips open of its own accord, and a shimmering haze of vapour emerges. You clamp your mouth shut and stagger backwards, but not before some of the vapour burns its way into your windpipe – deduct 1 point from your STAMINA. You retch horribly and watch, helpless, as the merchant spurs his donkey towards the safety of the town. You leave the box where it lies in the dirt, but retrieve the saddlebag. Turn to 161.

202

You dash through the tavern's exit and out into the village square, grabbing some filthy clothes as you go (note this on your *Adventure Sheet*). Pulling on the robes, you feel a hard object in one of the pockets. It proves to be a short length of tube with several holes drilled in it, and a length of cord attached; make a note that you have a Chang whistle. In the square you notice a large black carriage parked near the storehouse. Two antlered beasts are yoked to it, and the driver is asleep on the roof, oblivious to the din coming from the tavern. If you avoid the battle-wagon and head quickly out of the village, turn to 2. If, however, you decide to approach it cautiously, turn to 70.



203

By the time you fling a glittering Lock spell at Feior, a purple glow is obscuring his features. Your spell is cancelled out; as the magical force clears, you see that Feior has prepared a bolt of energy. It flashes towards you before you can prepare any defence and burns you up in an instant.

204

As you squeeze through the opening into the warm sunlight, a shaft of pain shoots up your right leg as a chunk of rock glances off it – deduct 1 point from your STAMINA. Grabbing the lip of the entrance steps, you drag yourself painfully through the mouth out of the underworld. You collapse in a heap as a gout of dust is forced from the hole: there is a distant roar of collapsing masonry, then the hanging cloud of dust is sucked violently back into the depths, tugging at your clothes as it retreats. You have escaped. Turn to 242.

205

Your money is as good as the next man's. Most of the merchandise is second hand and in bad repair. However, you do find a serviceable sword, which will cost you the exorbitant price of 100 gold pieces, and 2 sets of Provisions for 30 gold pieces each. (If you buy the weapon or the Provisions, make a note of the fact on your *Adventure Sheet* and cross off the correct amount of money.) The crowd soon strip the shop bare, and the keeper shuts up shop – a happy man.

You are once again in the square. If you visit the tavern, go to 49. If you decide to find a place by the fire, turn to 375.

206

The Dragonflies carry you for many miles, gradually sinking lower as they begin to tire. You notice, thankfully, that the jungle is giving way to countryside. A few of the insects stop beating their wings and hang limply by their threads. Those which remain can only just keep you a short distance above the ground. Then they too begin to tire and finally give up. The statue thuds to the ground, sending you tumbling. You find yourself sitting on a rough dirt track. The light begins to fade, and you rest for the night.

The sound of crackling wood wakes you while it is still dark. A fire glows in the darkness some distance away, and two dark shapes are silhouetted against the flames. If you go over to investigate, turn to 114. If you ignore them and go back to sleep, turn to 393.

207

The falling dust begins to thicken until you can barely see an arm's length in front of you. The powdery mist swirls and billows as it gradually settles. The ranks of statues that once filled the chamber have been reduced to a chalky-white powder, through which the bones of an army of men protrude. The pressure builds once more. Turn to 334.

208

You look the officer in the eye and tell him why you are here. He drops his arrogant tone and salutes you with new-found respect. Turn to 3.

209

Velkos fights well, but none save the greatest warriors can defeat three opponents at once. One of the bandits dodges round behind her and his weapon slices deeply into her side. She goes down with a last bubbling call. Her three assailants waste no time in looting her corpse. You wait till they depart then approach to take a final look at your erstwhile companion. Turn to 19.



210

Standing well away from the cliff wall, you lower yourself on a rope. The drop is dizzying, but you tear your mind away from the consequences of falling and concentrate on keeping your footing. A dark hole looms in the cliff face, and you edge over towards it. With a kick and a swing you are in the cave.

Its white dust floor leads downwards, deep into the cliff. Behind you, the other outlaws pitch into

the cave. A flutter of many wings from within the cavern is your first warning. Then a cloud of whirling, chirping birds emerges. You must react quickly. If you have the power of Baopo and wish to use it, turn to 41. Otherwise, you had better stand still and hope to avoid attack by not threatening the frightened birds (turn to 118).

211

You hear the distinctive voice of Babbalha, your old nursemaid, as she bustles into the room. 'The little horror!' she mumbles under her breath, 'just look at the state of this place.' You blink a look at her as she busies herself at her tidying.

A second voice speaks. 'Please, Babba - they are ready for the boy downstairs. Shall I get his drink?'

'No. He's sleeping good enough. We'll let the priests sort him. I'll be glad to get the wretch off my hands. Nothing but trouble, that one, since the day he came into this world.'

'Poor boy. That's no way to speak of him, specially where *he's* bound for.'

The servants end their gossiping and leave. You wait for the key to turn, but instead they walk off: the absent-minded Babbalha has forgotten to lock you in. Turn to 271.

212

The creature continues to splutter in its piping voice, and you can't make up your mind whether to

look it in the blank eyes of its rider or those of the horse, which are covered with a silvery sheen. Its talk means very little to you: rats, meadows and bright lights seem to be all it cares for. As it speaks, though, you experience a faint trace of memory. You have an uneasy feeling about this mutant – it reminds you of something unpleasant. Will you:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| Take it up on its offer to transport you from the city? | Turn to 136 |
| Approach cautiously to find out more about it? | Turn to 397 |
| Attack it and take it by surprise? | Turn to 228 |

213

Two of the men charge you, whirling clubs.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First SLAVER	6	7
Second SLAVER	7	8

You must fight both the slavers at the same time. Each will make a separate attack on you each Attack Round, but you may wound only one of them. If you defeat the slavers, turn to 160.

214

Wave after wave of Kreehuls sweep out from the jungle's depths. Summoning all the magical forces at your disposal, you heroically repel many hundreds, until eventually your energy wanes. Then they are upon you, and your end is swift . . .

215

You keep your wits about you as you follow Velkos. She heads towards a forest of tall, dark pine trees. Soon you are basking in their sweet scent. You pause for rest beside the bole of an ancient tree. Sounds are muted in the forest, but you can hear a clinking. Velkos stiffens. 'Sounds like trouble,' she hisses. 'Reckon you want to face it?'

If you decide to hide in the branches of a tree, turn to 134. If you stay where you are and wait to see who is approaching, turn to 69.

216

You advance into the hilly terrain, keeping a careful watch about you. The land is harsh and unforgiving; the cold wind bites into your exposed flesh. Reaching the summit of a modest rise, you see banners fluttering in the valley below. The regal crest makes it obvious that these are the king's men. If you march down the hill to meet them, turn to 355. If you prefer to avoid them and continue onward, turn to 137.

217

The only exit from the chamber is through a huge pair of double doors. One stands open, but a smooth, red wall seals the portal. At its base a small round hole has been cut. As you make your way across to the doors the chamber shakes, and more shards of rock fall from the ceiling. You feel pressure building up and your body aches under the strain.

The pressure eases as you force your way through the circular opening: the red wall is made of thick wax, and the hole appears to have been burnt through. From the other side you can see that the doors have been sealed, and the wax carved with writhing symbols of warding. Turn to 156.

218

The final blow sinks deep into the creature's flesh, releasing a fierce blast of stale air which all but knocks you over (deduct 1 point from your STAMINA). As the gas escapes, the beast shrinks, leaving a rather pathetic corpse swathed in loose skin. The stench is sickening, and you leave the clearing, clutching your mouth and stomach. You soon recover, however, and find a road leading away from the forest. Turn to 361.

219

You come down from the mountain and are hailed by Feior's army as their champion. The rest happens as if in a dream. You become King of the Isles, ruling with an iron fist and undoing all the weakling changes that have been wrought since the usurpers deprived your father of his rightful throne. It seems, at times, that your father speaks to you and lives once more through your actions. Gradually your whole being is subverted to the forces of darkness. Bezenval's prophecy that his child would rule the Isles is fulfilled. Black blood flows through your veins.

220

Despite your lack of seacraft, you soon pick up the most important skill – avoiding the boom as it swings back and forth in the wind. Soon the sails are trimmed and ready to catch the faint sea-breezes. You make little progress, however. A dense, clinging mist settles about the boat, limiting your vision to a few metres. The wind finally drops altogether, and Velkos takes the opportunity to catch up on some sleep. You remain awake as look-out. After a while you hear muffled sounds ahead: a slight splashing like the gentle slap of cloth against water. Moments later, a large shape appears out of the mist. It looks like a huge translucent ball with a dark shape squirming within it. If you have a sword and wish to use it against the sphere, turn to 392. Otherwise, the only weapon available to you is a rough wooden pole lying on deck. Turn to 127.

221

'They will break out of the enchantment very soon,' says Credas. 'If you aren't prepared to help me, then we must flee at once.' He leads you along winding tunnels, finally emerging through a hole in a rotten tree. 'We must part here. If you reconsider, and wish to gain the power I offer you, then perform this task for me: fetch the Sitting Prophet from the middle of the Zushan Jungle to the south. Otherwise, may fate smile upon you.' He hurries off. If you travel south, turn to 240. If you head for the nearest settlement, turn to 29.



222

You are footsore from the walking you have done, yet nowhere do you find rest and peace. You travel the land for several days, hearing many reports of a war that is brewing in the south. Heading in that direction, you pass fleeing villagers who tell tales of monstrous creatures roaming the country under the banner of the son of Bezenvial. Finally you come upon the smoking remains of a village. You search cautiously among the ruined buildings until you find a poor villager tied to a wheel. Near by, an unidentifiable creature roasts on a spit over a fire. The peasant looks up at you and gasps out some words. You bend closer to hear what the man has to say. 'Flee! If you value your life, flee!'

There is movement among the buildings near by. If you wait and free the man, turn to 17. If you flee from the village at once, turn to 198.

223

Add 12 to the number you rolled and write the result in the STAMINA box of your *Adventure Sheet*. Next roll four dice. If the result is less than or equal to your STAMINA, turn to 30. If the result is greater than your STAMINA, turn to 184.

224

The first wave of your attack holds well. You dismount and follow your men into battle. Soon you are in the midst of the fray, fighting for your life. One of Feior's knights cleaves his way past two

peasants and stops you. 'Remember me, fool?' he cries, lunging at you with his two-handed sword. 'It's just you and me now . . .' You recognize him as the soldier you found, bound and gagged, on your travels. His humiliation burns deeply, and he is keen for vengeance.

FEIOR'S OFFICER SKILL 11 STAMINA 13

If you win, go to 169.

225

The bandit leader looks at you for a moment, then understanding dawns on his face. He winks. 'Lost your *memory*, have you? Well, there's several of us none too good at recalling our past. Still, you're one of us now.' Turn to 336.

226

Nikko agrees to your terms and arranges to meet you again in a week's time. Turn to 106.



227

You manage to weaken the beast's hold by twisting and punching at its warty talons. As it loses height, you break free and plunge to the forest below. The trees' soft canopy gives way to a dense tangle of thicker branches. You grasp at them as you plummet, until finally you catch hold of a thick vine, which slows your descent painfully but lacerates your palms deeply (deduct 2 points from your STAMINA). Bleeding and shaken, you look for a way out of this place. Turn to 35.



228

Your surprise attack enables you to land a blow on the mutant. Though injured, it is still a formidable opponent. If you do not have a weapon to fight it with, you will have to fight it with your SKILL reduced by 4 points.

MAN-HORSE
MUTANT

SKILL 8 STAMINA 11

If you defeat the mutant, turn to 93.

229

Panting with fear, you reach the king's quarters, only to find them deserted. The many books that lined his study are now packed into chests. Tiny

gems and trinkets are scattered about carelessly amid the general upheaval. You hear footsteps coming from behind and you dive into an empty chest. Crouched inside, you hear two men enter. 'I am sure Maior came this way, master.' It is Panurge, the priest.

The second voice speaks – it is your father. 'We have Feior. Could we not leave the weakling to Fate? It would be no great loss, and we have little time to save ourselves, let alone look for the wretch.'

'Your words contain reason, but should you risk your inheritance on one child alone? I think not. We must find Maior.'

Deeply shocked by your father's callous words, you barely manage to stem a cry of anguish. If you reveal yourself to them, turn to 359. If you remain hidden, turn to 253.

230

Next morning you set off through the trees. Half an hour later, you leave the forest and after another hour's trek up into the hills you find yourself on a cliff overlooking a verdant ravine. The bandits begin to prepare ropes, then lower themselves down the cliff face while you wait at the top with Velkos. The minutes drag on, and Velkos suggests you take a look to see whether there's any sign of the others. You peer over the edge of the cliff, and Velkos takes you by surprise. There is no handhold: you are tumbling, whirling, screaming for long moments before hitting the ground at the bottom of the gorge.

231

Eventually the shooting eases off, and the eerie silence returns. You stay down and let the current carry you to safety. The boat bumps to a halt and you straighten up, expecting to be alone by the river bank. Instead, you find yourself confronted by six mud-covered Pygmies, frozen in extravagant battle postures. Simultaneously, they let out a scream and break from their trance. Instead of charging you, each produces a small, tear-shaped pod, which he hurls into the boat. These burst, releasing a choking cloud of fine powder. If you have the Silken Mask and wish to use it, turn to 337. Otherwise, turn to 181.



232

You head off on foot, soon coming upon a rough dirt track that leads inland. A short way ahead you see the track enter a wide wood of closely spaced conifers. There is the thudding of hoofs on the earth behind you, and you dive for cover. Two well-armed men thunder by, heading into the woods. From where you hide, you can see where the track

leaves the wood. Several minutes after the riders enter the trees, they have still not emerged. Velkos is anxious and urges you to skirt the wood with her. Will you:

Follow Velkos?

Turn to 166

Follow the track into the wood?

Turn to 14

Sneak among the trees away from the track?

Turn to 317



233

Feior makes his way up to a pointing finger of rock, high up on the mountain. With a great effort you find an exposed perch of your own and face him. 'Only one of us can take up the mantle of our dear father,' he taunts, 'and I was always the stronger.' He raises his hands in the air and begins to tremble, so strong are the forces he is conjuring. His face reddens and a trace of smoke seeps from his robe. You must prepare a counter-spell now. What will you say:

Biantai?

Turn to 368

Baopo?

Turn to 31

Tiaohe?

Turn to 98

Shangsuo?

Turn to 380

Or, if you'd rather try to dodge his spell, turn to 195.

234

Two bandits climb up into the branches and haul her down, cursing. As soon as the bandit leader sees Velkos, he lets out a roar. 'Breaker of rules! You dared to journey to Takio?' Velkos shakes her head and explains that she has never left the mainland. The bandit leader turns to you and asks what you say. If you confirm Velkos's story, turn to 154. If you tell how Velkos found you on an island, turn to 369.



235

As you speak the word, an unbearable heat rises up inside you. Close to choking, you beat the spell out from your chest. It shoots from your mouth in the form of a flaming bolt and smashes into the first line of Kreehuls, sending up a blanket of steam. Unable to see your attackers, you try again but fail to stop their advance. They attack, and you perish beneath their webbed feet. Your adventure ends here.



236

The wind is a wall, and you have just been flung into it. You see a whirl of blue, white and brown, and then you are dropping, spinning in the air. Below you, a tiny boat bobs up and down on the water. The water rushes up to meet you. You suck in as much air as your lungs can hold and hope you know how to swim. You fall into the sea feet first, and the shock stuns you. You see a dimly lit realm of green, blue and silver, then your arms start to work, pulling you up. You break the surface and draw in a deep gulp of air, exhilarated. Turn to 78.



237

You grip the Jade Talisman in the hope that it will lend you strength. A feeling of tranquility creeps over you. If you have a weapon, it falls from your grasp. Your opponent takes the opportunity to land a blow on you (deduct 2 points from your STAMINA). You must fight the rest of the combat without the aid of a weapon (reduce your SKILL temporarily by 4 points). Turn back to the paragraph you came from.

238

After a disagreement, you depose Sevmiroda as leader of the bandit group. In the next few weeks you lead them on many lucrative raids. You hear about the king being deposed and replaced by a new ruler, Feior. According to the tales, Feior is the son of Bezenvial, the depraved former ruler of the Isles who was overthrown fifty years ago by battle and sorcery. But what do you care about such matters? All governments are alike, and a bandit's trade stops for no man.

One day you capture a man wearing the livery of the new king. With a sword at his throat he tells you that King Feior is searching for a bandit leader, Maior. The name seems familiar, but the man is carrying little treasure so you slay him anyway.

You are unprepared for the assault when it comes. Soldiers swarm into the wood, and sorcerous blasts rip apart any resistance. You fight as never before, but your foe is more powerful. You die in a blaze of glory, the last of your outlaw band to see the sweet light of day.



239

You leave the wood close to the track and hurry down to it. Soon afterwards Velkos slips out from behind a nearby bush and asks you what happened within the wood. You explain as briefly as you can while the two of you continue along the track. Turn to 352.

240

After a day spent travelling, you come to a wide river. Following its course downstream, you see it disappear into the fringes of a sprawling jungle. Looking upstream, you watch it meander off towards a distant line of hills. Neither of the routes look promising. If you go upstream, turn to 148. If you follow the bank towards the jungle, turn to 76.

241

'What are you doing awake?' Your old nursemaid bustles into the room, almost tripping over your collection of lead soldiers. 'Look at this mess. I've a good mind to put you across my knee!' Despite her stern words, you feel that Babbalha is hiding some sadness. 'How you goin' to enjoy your trip if you's fallin' asleep like a baby?' The large servant sits by you and wipes the sleep from your eyes. A young maidservant enters, carrying a glass of milky liquid. 'Take this and I'll wake you in good time for your trip.' She pauses, glancing nervously at the girl, then continues. 'Your Father's a wise man, no one gets the better of him. He wants the best for you and Feior. Remember that, my little dear. Sometimes

things have to be done that's hard . . . Babbalha breaks off and ushers the servant girl out of the room. She turns and whispers to you, 'Bye, my little one. May luck fall on you like rains from heaven.'

If you take the drink, turn to 293. Otherwise, turn to 271.



242

You bask in the comforting rays of the mid-day sun; a light wind brings the welcome tang of sea-salt to your nostrils. After a while your eyes adjust to the brilliant light and you gaze in wonderment at your surroundings. Around you is a scene of spectacular devastation. The remnants of a magnificent city stand, charred and distorted. Massive archways are riddled with clusters of tiny holes, as if consumed by ravening worms. Towers are contorted, the stone melted and warped. Houses are stained and spattered by a myriad colours, their walls jagged and jumbled. Mighty gashes scar the earth, filled with bubbling quagmires which give off noxious fumes. The air itself seems charged with magical powers. You are alone.

You are in a large open square surrounded by the bizarre wreckage of some diabolical battle. To your right, facing into the sea-breeze, you can see battered city ramparts and the arms of mighty catapults. To your left you can make out the imposing arch of the city gates. Will you:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Head for the gates? | Turn to 39 |
| Investigate the sea wall? | Turn to 163 |
| Search among the ruined streets? | Turn to 132 |

243

You allow the merchant to retain his treasured keepsake, and wave him on. Soon the outlaws are congratulating you. Sevmiroda, their leader, says: 'You're a smart fellow. That box was probably trapped.' Turn to 161.



244

You sit in the sun for an hour, wondering if this trail is ever used by anyone except the old man and his wife. Luckily, another cart comes along, driven by two stocky farm boys. Enthusiastically they help

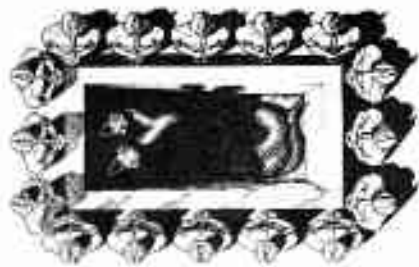
you manhandle the idol on to the back of the cart, and are glad to help you take it to Credas's cliff-top cave. Turn to 185.

245

Gain 2 points of LUCK. The Polybleb has been defeated, but now you are alone among the calcinated remains of its victims. Before you continue, you need some rest. If you have the Shrivelled Claw, turn to 325. Otherwise, turn to 37.

246

Your spell brings a feeling of peace and well-being. It flows gently towards Feior, still struggling against the effects of the mutation. The dancing patterns strike him and the purple glow around him changes to green. He remains doubled up in pain for some time, however. It is only as he straightens and laughs madly that you realize he has been preparing a disruption spell. You have no time to prepare a defence. The last thing you hear is Feior's mocking voice: 'You always were a weakling!'



247

Though your eyelids hang heavy, you steel yourself to remain awake; you talk with Velkos to take your mind off your exhaustion. She seems reluctant to talk about the past, but since you can tell her nothing of yours, you learn that she has been an adventurer for some years. She reaches into a pouch at her belt and draws out a shrivelled claw, tied to a leather thong. 'It's a lucky charm,' she explains. 'It's from a Chestrap Beast that nearly did for me. Maybe it'll bring you good luck.' She passes the charm to you. You accept it with thanks, and you silently hope it will bring you more luck than the unfortunate beast it was hacked from. Note it down on your *Adventure Sheet*.

As land looms ahead of you, you realize how tired you now are. Deduct 2 points from your STAMINA, then turn to 45.

248

You rummage for the brooch with your free hand and prise it open with your teeth. In an instant your vaporous plaything is spinning above your head. It sees the danger you are in and leaps to your defence, crashing into the repulsive monster. However, your familiar cannot be in two places at once, and the trickling poison reaches your grip. Your hands and arms lock rigid. Very soon your whole body is paralysed. The creature reels in its catch, and prepares to dine . . .

249

You have chosen a suitable resting place. The pressure builds on your skull and mercifully you black out. You have returned, no wiser, to the slumber from which you came. You will not wake again.



250

In the few hours before battle, you share tales with your men, in the hope that this will quell their nervousness, but as the dark hordes advance into position, you realize the inevitability of defeat. The first charge is led by the young king, and you watch in horror as it is consumed by the dark masses. The second wave falters then breaks ranks. A shout goes up from behind, and you turn to see the hills behind you lined with more foes. Surrounded and outnumbered, your troops are massacred. Your adventure ends here.

251

Delighted with the chaos it has caused, Izkhao dives into the bath and circles beneath its surface, turning the water into a swirling vortex. As it picks up

speed, the whirlpool throws out its victims, sending them crashing into walls and timbers. The thundering cyclone finally explodes, showering you with foam and debris. Through the din you call out Izkhao's name, and reluctantly it returns to the brooch. Turn to 202.

252

Grabbing Tamroth's hood, you pull it over his eyes, kick him into the corner of the carriage, and fling open the door. You snatch up the map and leap out, landing heavily (deduct 2 points from your STAMINA). Thick bushes grow by the roadside, and you tumble into one of them. By the time the driver has fought the carriage to a halt, you have made good your escape. Once again you are on the road, travelling alone. Turn to 2.





253

Your father and his aide begin to search the room. Just as they near you, a thunderous blast rends the air. The windows shatter and the screams and shouts of battle flood into the chamber. Hearing the door slam shut above the din, you peer out of the chest. The room is empty and you clamber out. You pick your way through the shards of glass as far as the door, only to find it locked. Turning back to the windows, you gaze out on to a scene of terrible destruction. The city is crumbling under the onslaught of three magical beings which hover above it, out of arrow-shot, flinging bolts of vivid colours which crash into buildings and men alike. The familiar streets and buildings that played host to your games and adventures have all been reduced to charred ruins.

If you search the room for another exit, turn to 301. If you climb out on to the ledge and cross to an open window to your left, turn to 344.

254

Stepping carefully, you advance into the middle of the chamber. From high above you can hear a fizzing noise, then silence. On an impulse you cower back as a globule of liquid drops to the ground ahead of you. It strikes the crystalline floor and explodes into riotous colour, blinding you. Once again you are in darkness. The way ahead is perilous. If you have a shield to protect yourself, turn to 321. Otherwise turn to 390.

255

The monk's eyes sweep over you, and you feel as if he can see right inside you. 'Your fate is woven tightly with the material. You are a creature of the physical world, and you will prevail by seeking a balance between active and passive. We cannot help you, for we have transcended the physical.'

With a swirl of stars the two monks fade into thin air and you are left alone in the monastery. You trudge back down by the way you came and resume your quest. Turn to 106.

256

A stone skitters down the slope near you. You sense movement above you and look up, into the blinding rays of the sun. You perceive a tiny glint of light: a sword perhaps, or even a crossbow bolt. You spin around; you feel sure that many eyes are upon you. A screech! Lolloping up the slope towards you are two bald, baboon-like creatures, each with two tails madly waving. Turn to 42.

257

You return hurriedly to your boat before the other natives come back. The river begins to widen. The mists lift and you find yourself in a large clearing, above which a huge Dragonfly hovers. The river has degenerated into a shallow swamp which the boat is unable to navigate. You disembark and wade out into the darkness. Turn to 366.

258

You may choose to attack the bandits with your weapons. If you do and you have the bandit tattoo, turn to 394; otherwise, turn to 173. Alternatively, you may call on one of the following powers, if you have them:

Izkhao	Turn to 150
Baopo	Turn to 56
Biantai	Turn to 190

259

Again and again the Sturramak dives, bombarding the Prophet with fiery blasts. The idol begins to tremble and fine cracks appear on its golden skin. Then it explodes into a thousand molten pieces, unable to absorb the magical onslaught any longer. Credas has made the ultimate sacrifice but has failed to defeat the beast. The Sturramak greedily devours the remains of the statue, rekindling its power in the process. Invigorated, the winged beast turns on you. If you summon magic against it, turn to 36. If you try to flee, turn to 327.

260

You dive backwards, your face stung by the heat of the whirling Fire Sprites (deduct 1 point from your STAMINA). You hide behind a chunk of rubble and watch as the blizzard of fire sweeps through the alley. The Sprites fly into walls and erupt into cascades of sparks, burning and warping everything they touch. Finally the cloud loses energy and dissipates. If you now head for the sea walls, turn to 10. If you continue to search among the buildings, turn to 379.



261

For several days you wander the countryside. Most of the inhabitants of this region are peasants, though, and they avoid you whenever you pass among them. From a chance conversation with a merchant in an alehouse you learn of a monastery to the east, whose monks strive for perfection through physical discipline. Might not monks fight in a righteous cause?

The monastery stands high on a hillside, a narrow track wending a tortuous path up to it. You can see no sign of life among the rounded buildings. If you follow the winding path up to the monastery, turn to **86**. If you climb straight up the side of the mountain, turn to **274**.

262

You scoop up an armful of fabulous wealth, brushing away a few of the nuts and twigs. Make a note of the fact that you have jewels worth 3,000 gold pieces in the appropriate box on your *Adventure Sheet*. The smoke swirls about you and with rising panic you realize that you can no longer see the exit tunnel. If you recognize the word 'Izkhao' and can take advantage of this power, turn to **338**. If you recognize the word 'Biantai' and wish to use this power, turn to **120**. Otherwise, you must roll two dice and compare the result with your SKILL score. If you roll less than or equal to your SKILL, turn to **74**; if your roll is greater than your SKILL, turn to **91**.

263

Your hopes for rest and sanctuary fade as you wander through the village. The few stone buildings still standing are dirty and squalid. Ragged children chase one another across the square, brandishing wooden swords and screaming obscenities. The adults are no better: drunken revellers stagger out of the local tavern, aptly named 'The Aqua Vitae', and what trade there is seems to deal exclusively in weaponry. The locals eye you with deep suspicion. In the ruins of a cottage, a group of wretched travellers huddle around a large fire. You are cold, hungry and exhausted. Will you:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| Try to enter the local bar? | Turn to 49 |
| Buy something to defend yourself with? | Turn to 164 |
| Settle down with the travellers in the ruin? | Turn to 375 |

264

You descend from the mountain with your prisoner. The battle is won. Merzei rushes to congratulate you, but you can think only of poor Credas, who gave his life in the battle to defeat Feior. Merzei begins to supervise the remaining forces, so you return to the top of the mountain to survey the battlefield, now that you have finally won.

A shriek rends the air and a huge cloud of inky blackness rises before you. Two burning globes hang in it and, staring into them, you *know*: your father has returned. He cannot harm the people of

this land, for the Triurge banished him beyond the physical realm. But part of him lives on in you, and through you he may still have his revenge. Will you:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| Use one of your magical powers? | Turn to 88 |
| Flee? | Turn to 15 |
| Stand your ground? | Turn to 51 |

265

Your head is swimming, but you still have your sight as you race between the silent white statues. In your haste, you send half a dozen toppling and they smash on the marble floor, scattering their bony contents. Turn to 113.

266

With an acrobatic flourish that would impress the most agile of monkeys, you flip across to a neighbouring creeper. Trembling with the exertion, you watch the repulsive insect reel in the sticky vine. Thanking your good fortune, you drop safely down and dart back into the jungle. The way ahead looks formidable: mile upon mile of dense, unforgiving jungle. If you press on, turn to 38. If you retrace your steps, back to the safety of the boat, turn to 171.



267

'Now,' says the bandit leader, 'you had better be honest with me. If you are capable and trustworthy, I may let you join our band. What is your business, for I gain no clues from your apparel?' Will you tell him you are a:

Merchant?	Turn to 345
Sorcerer?	Turn to 168
Bandit?	Turn to 144

Or, if you wish to tell him that you don't know, turn to 388.

268

For a moment Merzei wavers. Then his resolve returns. 'I am the future Grand Councillor of these Isles! I take orders only from the people!'

You will gain no help from this man. You must find another source of soldiers. Turn to 106.



269

The little man narrows his eyes at you and puffs out his pigeon-chest. 'I am Merzei,' he cries in a voice surprisingly firm for one so unprepossessing,

'Defender of the People, Righter of Wrongs, and future Grand Councillor of these Isles.'

If you talk to the fellow, turn to 4. If you attack him, turn to 62.



270

You utter the word from your dark past. Intense pain locks your entrails and a wave of nausea sweeps through you. With a great effort you straighten up and force the pain away. The bolt of summoned energy is expelled from your body and shoots into the pool, where it combines with the water and the bathers, forming a swirling mass of limbs and screams. You watch as the powerful spell melds the men into a single, complete being. Warped into a human web of confused limbs and shuddering skin, this pitiful creature rolls towards you, flailing its many arms and legs. To escape, you must fight your way past.

POOL BEAST

SKILL 10 STAMINA 15

You may choose to *escape* after two Attack Rounds if you so wish. If you survive, turn to 202.

271

As you sit, alone, in your chamber, you catch the distant sound of drums. If you prise open the heavy shutters, turn to 318. If you venture out into the hallway, turn to 151.

272

As you deal the final blow to your mirror-image, there is a blinding flash of light, and a shaft of agony shoots through you. A moment later, your sight returns; there is no sign of your opponent, but the wicker object still lies at your feet. Will you:

Examine it?

Turn to 309

Leave it be and head for the sea wall?

Turn to 10

Leave the object but continue to search through the buildings nearby?

Turn to 379



273

These vicious-looking eels form into a single seething mass of destruction. Acting quickly, you unravel the whistle and spin it furiously above your head. A high-pitched whining sound fills the air, and the creatures stop their thrashing. Calmness returns. Turn to 294.

274

It is a rough climb (deduct 1 point from your STAMINA) but you finally fight your way to the top. Turn to 43.



275

One of the bandits drunkenly describes his experiences in the jungles of the south. He pulls out a delicate silken mask from his pouch and puts it on his head. The other bandits cackle at his bizarre appearance, but he explains that it was useful to keep the insects from biting. The mask is passed around for inspection, reaching you as the fellow launches into an improbable description of a large, bluish-green fruit which, he claims, can sustain a man in the jungle for weeks on end. The drunken outlaws seem to have forgotten about the mask. You may keep it if you wish (note it down on your *Adventure Sheet*). Finally you bed down on the soft forest floor, in readiness for the next day's raid. Turn to 89.



276

Tendrils of purple magic stream out from Feior's hands, but you are prepared. You stand calmly, concentrating on the faint patterns in the air around you. When the spell strikes you, it plays gently up and down your body, changing colour from purple to a mild green.

Now is your chance to act. The vast power Feior has been wielding has singed his finery, and the rock around him bears the scars of magical force. He looks tired. Which spell are you going to cast at him:

Shangsuo?

Turn to 203

Baopo?

Turn to 46

Tiaohe?

Turn to 353

Biantai?

Turn to 122

277

As the creature regards you expectantly, a word surfaces in your memory.

'Izkhao,' you say. 'Obey me.'

'I o-b-b-b-bey,' replies the smirking homunculus. With a mocking bow, he disappears back into the brooch. Turn back to the paragraph you came from when you decided to open the brooch.

278

Adopting a rough country accent, you humbly explain to the commander that he has mistaken you for someone else. He eyes you closely for a while, then shakes his head and returns to his seat. As the

carriage pulls out, you see Tamroth staring intently at you through the window. You turn back on to the road once more, confused and alone. Turn to 2.



279

Travelling among the villages of this region you hear tell of a rabble-rouser who has been stirring the peasants to action. After a day spent searching, you find the village in which Merzei is staying. True to form, he is standing in the middle of the street, haranguing the local populace. 'Throw off the yoke of oppression!' he shouts. 'Resist those who exploit you! Join with me and bring the Council to power!'

When he has finished his speech, you approach him and tell him that you need men to fight against Feior. If you have at any time owned a Spiked Club or a Jewelled Dagger, turn to 54. If you never had one of those, but do have a Scroll, turn to 162. If you have none of these articles, turn to 291.

280

You face the blazing Elemental and compose yourself for action. If you know the codeword 'Biantai' and wish to make use of this power, turn to 27. If

you know the codeword 'Izkhao' and wish to make use of this power, turn to 376. If you charge the creature, turn to 125. If you circle and dodge, waiting for an opportunity, turn to 105.

281

The shimmering scales that cover your shoulder tingle as you crouch to examine the solidified mud. The dense vapour which hangs above its surface has a strangely pleasant smell and draws you closer. Involuntarily, you take a deep breath, filling your lungs with the gas . . . a face from your dim past flashes in your mind for an instant. Its lips mouth a single word: 'Shangsuo.' The power that Locked the mud is now at your command. Note it down and turn to 128.



282

The lone figure is toppled by a blow from the flying monster, sending them plummeting into the chasm below.

Hands suddenly grip you firmly by the shoulders and drag you, screaming, out of the chamber. 'Quiet now, child,' whispers Panurge, the King's Priest, 'you are coming with me.' He mumbles a word and touches your temple . . . Turn to 389.

283

As you near the flames, their heat seems to diminish. You bound the last few steps, exulted by the feeling of deliverance that sweeps through you. Then you are engulfed by the sweetly caressing tendrils of magical fire. Your ill-omened journey ends here.



284

Credas walks towards the Prophet and holds out his hands to touch it. 'You must use your power now. For the good of the Isles, I must become one with this idol.' Nausea washes over you as the power builds within. You hardly dare watch as Credas's form melts and fuses with the bronze idol. When you have finished, you stagger back to rest.

The mouth of the Prophet opens, and Credas speaks, his voice resonating with a metallic twang. 'Now you must unite an army to meet Feior in battle and destroy his forces. Without soldiers he has no real power. I will rouse the Kreehuls to action: for too long they have been hunted and slaughtered by man. Go now, and may your fate be kind, for the sake of the Isles.' If you have a Bejewelled Box, turn to 377. Otherwise, turn to 119.



285

You dive for the cave entrance, narrowly avoiding the net which spins after you. Down the corridor Velkos follows hard on the heels of the creatures – the name 'Cressents' leaps to mind – and as the light dims you lose sight of her. Where the tunnel branches in two directions you pause to catch your breath. The men have not followed you down the tunnel, but as you inhale deeply you catch the whiff of a sweet-scented smoke drifting after you. Two more tunnels lie ahead. The one to the left slopes up, while the right-hand path is downward. If you go left, turn to 32. If you go right, turn to 372.





286

You surface, spluttering and gasping. Gradually your eyes become accustomed to the steam rising off the bubbling surface of the water. You are floating in a huge communal bath, the villagers' place of entertainment. Bobbing around its sides are its patrons, guzzling cups of ale served from a network of pipes that hang over the pool. These characters must come from every corner of the land, for no two look alike. Your sudden arrival went unnoticed, and the bathers are talking and quaffing heartily. You relax and lie back, appreciating the water's invigorating qualities (restore 2 points of STAMINA). If you swim over to your neighbour and talk, turn to 178. If you take a drink from the ale-pipes, turn to 348.

287

The merchant turns up his nose at you and climbs back into his palanquin.

You continue on your way. The peasants you meet avoid you, but you don't encounter any hostility. On the third day you see many men approaching. As they draw nearer you see that many of them aren't men at all, but foul creatures, some ghastly pale of feature, others warty and covered with bristles. All, men and beast alike, are armoured and carrying vicious weapons.

If you abandon the Sitting Prophet and flee, turn to 350. If you stand your ground, turn to 20.

288

Waiting for a spout to subside, you tie the rope round you, secure the other end, and lower yourself down the shaft. Descending to the roiling sea below, you begin to tread water: the cave ceiling is barely an arm's length above you, and at the far end of the cave you can make out the open sea upon which a small boat is bobbing, in and out of view. You strike out for the entrance, carried up and down by the swirling tide. Now you can see an anxious face peering over the boat's side. She waves frantically and you hear a shout but cannot make out the words over the din of the sea-cave. If you swim out to the boat, turn to 72. If you return and climb back up the chute, turn to 371.

289

With your maniacal friend fighting by your side, you stand a chance of driving these creatures back. Three of their leaders bear down on you, and you must fight them to the death.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First KREEHUL	6	8
Second KREEHUL	5	8
Third KREEHUL	7	7

Fight the Kreehuls one at a time. If you win, turn to 33.

290

You wait with an outlaw called Ewenchu, while the others lower themselves down the cliff face: the only known entrance to the sorcerer's lair is through a cave mouth halfway down the sheer rock face. The minutes drag on, and Ewenchu annoys you by his habit of noisily scratching his armpits. You begin to worry at what may have befallen your comrades; then you notice a flock of birds rising from the ground behind a large rock, a short distance down the slope. You wander over to have a look, and find a well-hidden hole leading sharply downwards. If you slither down it to investigate, turn to 16. If you return to Ewenchu and wait for the bandits' return, turn to 63.

291

Merzei looks you up and down. 'Flee, O lackey of the forces of tyranny!' Behind him, several desperate-looking peasants heft improvised pole-arms. There's nothing to be gained by fighting these folk, so you leave the village as quickly as you can. Turn to 106.





292

No sooner have you lain down upon the deck than you fall into a deep sleep. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 152. If you are Unlucky, turn to 328.

293

You sip your nurse's comforting drink then slide gently into a restful sleep. Turn to 389.



294

As you drift down the river, contemplating what lies ahead, a fine mist begins to spill out from the jungle; it hangs above the water and cuts your field of vision to only a few metres. The river narrows, forks then narrows again, until you find yourself in a remote stretch of slow-moving water. Strange plants crowd in on either side, and the gnarled limbs of trees glide in and out of view. The tempera-

ture has risen dramatically and the moist, insect-laden air clogs your throat. If you would rather continue on land, turn to 153. If not, turn to 131.

295

Your foot snags in a crater and you tumble forward, grazing your elbows badly. But behind you a dazzling flash of colour bursts from the place where you tripped. Relieved, you scramble the remaining distance to the safety of the far door arch. Turn to 50.

296

'You must return the Sitting Prophet to its worshippers at once!' he wails, shaking his head in dismay. 'Go now, and hope that the damage done can be repaired.' With a final shake of his head he disappears back into his cave. If you obediently begin the long journey back with the Prophet, turn to 362. If you abandon it where it is, turn to 222.

297

Much to the amazement of the soldiers, you produce the plans you stole from the envoy: they show Feior's plans of attack, including a number of clever ambushes. Together with the other officers, you scour them for a weakness. There is one: if you can reach the village's central tower and hold it, Feior's men will be forced out into the open, where your archers and cavalry will be able to bear down on them. It is your only hope, and you must try it. If you used your powers on Credas, turn to 386. Otherwise, turn to 73.

298

A scene of devastation awaits you when you emerge from the burrows. Flaming goutts leap from the tentacles of a fiery creature – an Elemental of some kind – incinerating all they touch. You flee, your breath rasping hard in your chest. Velkos is just ahead of you when a bolt strikes her in the back; in an instant nothing is left of her but ash. Just as you think you have evaded danger, a man leaps up before you: he is one of the slave traders, and he grins evilly as he advances on you, wielding a black metal blade.

SLAVE TRADER SKILL 7 STAMINA 6

If you incur more than 6 points of damage from the trader and are still alive, turn to 381. If you defeat the trader, turn to 139.



299

You pause for thought, then give him your authoritative decision.

'Since when has your horse commanded troops?' he snarls. 'Impostor! You are not Feior!' He whips out a

pair of daggers from his robe and lunges for your throat. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 135. If you are Unlucky, turn to 9.

300

You clamber into the boat and prepare to set out. As you cast off, the bottom of your craft disintegrates. Sinking rapidly, you notice the shards of wood are riddled with thousands of tiny holes. Something in the jungle has feasted at your expense. You are stranded, with no means of escape, doomed to roam the jungle until death finds you and sends you once more into the blackness from which you emerged . . .

301

You try in vain to find an alternative exit. A large pile of books has been piled against one wall, and you knock them over, revealing a framed picture of a gaudily dressed man. You move closer and peer at his enigmatic features: his lips are curled into a wry smile, and his mischievous-looking eyes stare back at you intently. You turn away and start towards the door.

'Children like you should be tucked up in bed!'

You spin around and stare in amazement at the picture. The man's expression has changed, and his hood now sits on his head. If you back away from the picture and climb on to the window-ledge, turn to 344. If you lift the picture to see whether anyone is hiding behind it, turn to 133.



302

Merzei waits in vain for people to come forward, and some of the drinkers begin to chuckle. 'What did I expect from scoundrels?' he shouts. 'Courage? Well, you've had your chance to repent. Now prepare to pay for your crimes.' He reaches into his pockets and pulls out two shrivelled figures, which he tosses into the water. They land with a splash and float there harmlessly. By now everyone is laughing – all except Merzei. He takes a small bottle from a breast pocket and flings it into the pool: it sends up a shower of sparks as it sinks, and the water begins to bubble and churn furiously, throwing up vivid colours. Caught up in the ferment, the tiny figures begin to expand rapidly in size, until they reach their full height of over two metres. Just past them, you can see six burly men rushing for Merzei, who stands, arms akimbo and with a confident smile on his face. Turn to 149.

303

You dive through the opening in a single fluid motion. As you roll down a short flight of steps, a gout of dust is forced out of the hole. There is a distant roar of collapsing masonry, then the hanging cloud of dust is sucked violently back into the depths, tugging at your clothes as it retreats. You have escaped. Turn to 242.

304

As you charge towards the village and into the heart of battle, the flying Sturramak spots your fresh

assault. It swoops towards you, releasing a fiery bolt of energy which smashes into the peasants, instantly disintegrating those it hits. The beast nears, and you watch in horror as it releases hundreds of squirming, leech-like creatures from its underbelly. You are caught in the shower of death. Your adventure ends here.

305

At your approach the three bandits run off; Velkos thanks you for your timely intervention. Together, you follow the trail down from the mountains into lush lowlands. Turn to 215.

306

A low humming fills the air but from your prone position you can see nothing. The drone grows louder until it is directly above you. Feeling a light touch on your back, you twist around to look up.

High above you hovers an immense Dragonfly. Its diaphanous wings beat furiously, and from its magnificently coloured abdomen trails a thick silken cord. Arrows fly past, missing it by inches, but the beast refuses to depart. If you seize the creature's thread before it flies away, turn to 108. If you would rather stay in the shelter of the boat, turn to 231.

307

A premonition of danger deters you from drinking too much. The others jeer at you for what they see as faint-heartedness, but you are adamant; a sixth sense warns you to rely on unknown instincts you

have never considered before. While they drink themselves into a jolly stupor, discussing tomorrow's raid on a sorcerer's lair, you sit upright, alert to any possible threat. Sevmiroda scorns you for your abstinence and tells you that you'll lose the glory of being in the vanguard of the raid. If you bear the bandit tattoo, turn to 230. Otherwise, turn to 89.

308

Tremors wrack your body; you are tired, and a second Lock spell requires much energy. The pulsating globe you create this time is less bright; Feior's spell has reached you by the time you unleash it at him. He is still bathed in a purple glow, and as your body contorts and mutates you see your spell evaporate harmlessly against his warding. Before you can control the mutations which convulse you, your mind is wrenched from your body. The thing which quivers and gurgles on the mountain-top is no longer you.

309

You roll it away from the wall and brush off the accumulated dust. It seems quite light, so you pick it up to examine it more closely. No sooner have you raised it than it twitches wildly. You fumble for a moment, then throw it to the ground. As it lands, there is a hollow pop and the wicker snaps open. A dense cloud explodes from it, a cloud of fire and wings and dark, furry bodies. Roll two dice. If the result is less than or equal to your SKILL, turn to 260. If the result is greater than your SKILL, turn to 177.



310

The figure that steps from the carriage is dressed in military robes of deepest vermilion. He turns to his driver and snaps, 'Fool! Why do you wake me? Do you think I would wish to speak to this filthy peasant?' The driver cowers away from his master, stammering and pointing at you. The soldier turns to you and shouts, 'Be off before I take my sword to yo -' He gasps and bows. 'Forgive me, Your Highness . . . Commander Tamroth at your service . . . I had no idea that you had left Traole so soon. Were you captured? Where are your guardsmen?'

You must think quickly. If you attempt to bluff him, turn to 81. If you explain that he has mistaken you for someone else, turn to 278.

311

The clash of armies is like a wave breaking against a rocky shore. Your force is outnumbered, four to one, and you quickly find yourself engulfed in desperate hand-to-hand fighting with men-at-arms. Even with the powers at your disposal, you cannot prevail against so many adversaries. Bloodied and tattered, Nikko slashes his way through the ranks which surround you. 'You've betrayed us!' he bellows. 'But you'll pay for your treachery!' He charges at you, lunging with his double-handed sword and pinning you through the vitals. Before your life seeps away, you bring down a jarring blow on his skull. He dies before you.

312

A dark form rears up ahead of you, and you flinch. Then Velkos's voice hisses urgently at you to follow her, as she has found a possible way out of the burrows. If you tell her about the gems you have found, turn to 82. If you keep quiet about them, turn to 192.

313

You speak the word. A prickly heat rises up through your skin. Pressure begins to build in your lungs, and you tremble as the power builds. The bathers watch you grasp at your throat, your face reddening. In desperation you thump your chest with both fists. The blows finally dislodge a flaming bolt from within you. The flames fly from your mouth towards the bathers, who instinctively duck under the surface of the water. You collapse, exhausted, and watch the fireball extinguish itself in the pool. The angry patrons surface and swarm out of the water towards you. Unable to lift your arms in defence, you can only cry out as their blows rain down on you. Your adventure ends here.



314

Before the Sturramak can strike you with its fiery breath you leap on the horse of an unfortunate cavalryman. You spur it past a company of archers, yelling a warning. The Sturramak turns its attention to them, just as you spot a lone rider fleeing up the mountainside. Something about him is familiar and draws you to him: it is your brother, Feior, fleeing from battle. Roll three dice. If the result is less than or equal to your STAMINA, turn to 233. If the result is greater than your STAMINA, turn to 129.



315

The morbid glyphs on your tomb exert a strange fascination. Without thinking, you begin to trace the rough contours of these symbols. With the numbness gone, you pick up the faintest tremor: there is meaning and energy in the glyphs, but despite their familiarity you cannot unlock these forces. Reluctantly you draw your hand away from the stone face and turn around. You meet the reverent gazes of a hundred robed figures. The chamber is filled with a silent retinue. At their head a hawk-nosed man fixes you with a penetrating stare. He opens his mouth to speak.

You stagger as the chamber shakes. Chips of rock rain down and you cower from them, shielding your face. There is a popping in your ears and a dull ache builds in your temples. When you look up, you are alone once more. The chamber shakes again and at your feet a crack in the marble begins to widen. You dodge fist-sized chunks of stone as they crash to the ground. Pressure grips you; breathing becomes hard and your heart beats wildly. If you jump back into your sarcophagus, turn to 249. If you flee the chamber, turn to 367.

316

Unfortunately, the vine you leap for cannot support your weight. You plummet to the jungle floor, landing heavily (deduct 3 points from your STAMINA). However, the bruises you now carry are bearable when you think of the fate you have escaped from. Looking back up into the leafy canopy, you watch the loathsome creature move off, trailing its sticky tendrils. If you limp on through the forbidding jungle, turn to 38. If you retrace your steps to the boat, turn to 171.



317

You slip between the trees and strain your ears for any sound from up ahead. After a few minutes you hear the thud of heavy boots on the soft, pine-needle-covered ground. You conceal yourself behind a large tree trunk and watch as a heavily armoured man staggers past, clutching his helmet in both hands. The helm seems to be badly dented and, judging by the way the man keeps bumping into trees, he can't see very well. If you run out and attack him, turn to 21. If you wait till he has passed, and then continue into the wood, turn to 180.



318

You prise the bar free and kick the shutters open. Dawn is breaking and beyond the harbour walls you see the lights from a multitude of boats; they are all magnificently decorated with colourful flags. High above them, burning like fireflies in the mist, are three glowing spheres. Splashes of coloured light spark from them as they move towards the city, skimming across the water. Delighted, you stand transfixed. The first bolt of colour approaches the city wall, and it is then you notice that a great many of your father's soldiers have collected along the ramparts. They too stand silent, fascinated by the

display. The bolt smashes into the wall, obliterating it completely and sending a shock-wave that blows you backwards into the bedroom. Terrified, you close the shutters and climb back into bed, hoping the screams and shouts will go away. If you try to block out the din with your pillow and go to sleep, turn to 389. If you go looking for help or comfort, turn to 151.

319

You snatch the box from the merchant's quivering hands. It is intricately bejewelled and is opened by a tiny clasp, which you unfasten with ease. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 201. If you are Unlucky, turn to 23.

320

Merzei takes a step back and looks at you as if you are mad. Then he steps forward until his pasty face is close to yours. 'Never, corrupter of the righteous!' he hisses. Strong hands grip you round the throat. You flail helplessly but can do nothing to prevent the life being choked out of you.

321

Hefting the white warrior's shield above your head, you weave your way across the room to the opening on the other side. Metres from safety, you are knocked flat when a globule explodes on your shield. You fling it aside and watch it being consumed by flames of many colours. Cross the shield off your Equipment List. Choking on the sharp

smoke, you reach the safety of the door arch. Roll one die, add 6, and enter the result in the LUCK box of your *Adventure Sheet*. Then turn to 50.

322

You manage to weaken the beast's hold by twisting and punching its warty talons. As it loses height, you break free and plunge into the forest below. The trees' soft canopy gives way to a dense tangle of thick branches, which you grasp at vainly as you plummet to your death. Your adventure ends here.



323

Horribly injured, the mighty creature rises into the air with a majestic swish of its feathered wings. You take advantage of the moment to flee. Then you spot a lone rider galloping up the mountainside. Something about him is familiar, drawing you to him. It is your brother, Feior, fleeing from battle. Roll three dice. If the result is less than or equal to your STAMINA, turn to 233. If the result is greater than your STAMINA, turn to 129.

324

You walk back up the bank, slip into the water, and push out for the opposite side. The current is strong and carries you swiftly down towards the boat. You grab its side and begin to haul yourself up into the craft. Sprawled across the boards are the horrific remains of its owner. Barely able to set eyes on the bloody mess, you kick the corpse into the river. Hurriedly, you push out and steer downriver, struggling against the cross-currents and floating vegetation.

A faint rushing sound comes from ahead, and you brace yourself for rapids. Sure enough, you see a torrent of water rising up in the distance. As you approach, you can make out the writhing forms of thousands of thick, grey eels. If you have the Chang whistle and wish to use it, turn to 273. Otherwise, turn to 199.

325

As you rest, you decide to check through your possessions. You are surprised to discover a brooch in a small pocket of your robe. It is carved with glyphs which remind you of your dream-like emergence from your tomb. There is a little clasp on the brooch. If you open it now, note down the number '152' and turn to 343. Otherwise, note down the number '343' next to the brooch on your *Adventure Sheet*. At any time, provided you are not involved in combat, you may open the brooch. Note down the number of the paragraph you are at, then turn to 343. Now turn to 37.

326

Credas traces a symbol in the air, and moments later you are aware of the symbol hanging before your eyes. You feel the blood pumping through your arteries, the sinews tensing and relaxing, your mind's unconscious orders to your body speeding their way along conduits too narrow to imagine. You sense Credas's command to the bandits, and feel a part of it. Silently they turn and make their way out of Credas's retreat.

You shake your head. You are back to normal once more.

Credas speaks. 'If I am to help you, you must perform a task for me. Fetch the Sitting Prophet from the midst of the Zushan Jungle, to the south of here.' He passes you a small jar of sharp-smelling orange syrup. 'This will sustain you in times of need.' Then he leads you down a long tunnel and out by a hidden exit under a rotting tree stump. He bids you an abrupt farewell and disappears back down the tunnel, leaving you wondering if this was all a dream. If you make your way south, turn to 240. If you abandon your task and head for the nearest settlement, turn to 29.



327

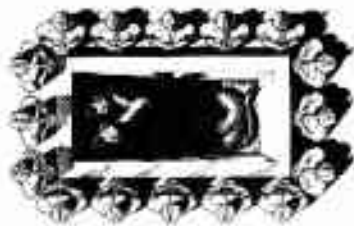
Test your Luck. If you are Lucky, turn to 314. If you are Unlucky, turn to 111.

328

You wake up, much refreshed, to the welcome sight of cliffs ahead. Velkos makes preparations to land. Turn to 45.

329

It is a long trudge. Finally you make your weary way up the hill to Credas's cavernous retreat. The Sitting Prophet is still where you left it and Credas is waiting for you. 'I was mistaken,' he says. 'Events move in the world. Malignant forces return to play the eternal game.' Turn to 176.



330

The fighter puts up little resistance as you untie his bonds. Once free, he removes the scroll from his mouth and curses. 'How in the name of Quel Damoth and all her sisters did that wretch get the better of me!' He stamps out of the gorse, ignoring the pain the thistles must be causing him, and picks up his clothes. 'Eat my words, indeed! Hah!' He

scowls at you and shouts, 'Would you laugh at me, clown?' He makes as if to strike you but then hesitates, finally deciding to leave you alone. You watch as he limps off towards the village, muttering. You follow him. Turn to 263.



331

As his eyes alight on the spiked club you are carrying, the little man grins. 'Excellent. You have dealt with the other. The cause grows ever stronger, though I confess I do not recall seeing you at any of my rallies. You had better have one of my tracts.' He rummages in a bulging leather sack lying to one side and produces a scroll, which he tosses to you. Then he holds his fist in the air. 'Down with the Tyrant! Up with the Council!' he declaims and hurries off.

You examine the scroll he has given you, only to find that you are unable to read the squiggles which cover it. Pausing only to kick the brigand as he groans his way back to consciousness, you make your way out of the wood. Turn to 239.



332

Your brother's reserves of power are no match for yours. Without even having to prepare a spell, a silvery missile shoots from your outstretched hand. As it flies towards Feior, it expands until it resembles a huge silver flower, which envelops its victim. Feior screams weakly as the shining folds compress him gently, slowly squeezing the life out of him. Smaller and smaller the fatal parcel becomes, until all that is left is a small silvery coin. You pick it up: on one side, Feior's screaming face is embossed; on the other, he smiles confidently, a crown upon his head. You smile wryly. If you flip the coin nonchalantly, turn to 179. If you simply climb back down, turn to 219.

333

You open the clasp on the brooch and call your plaything's name. A vaporous being shoots out and circles above you, calling out, 'Maior,' as it darts about. You point at the advancing men and order it to attack. With a gleeful yelp, Izkhao thunders into your assailants, causing them to topple back into the pool with a splash. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 251. If you are Unlucky, turn to 53.

334

Beyond the wax seal you find yourself in darkness. The pain in your temples recedes, and you pause briefly to catch your breath. Tentatively you edge forward, arms outstretched. Just as your eyes begin to accustom themselves, a brilliant flare of colour bursts from the blackness. It dies away, but in the fading light you can see that the rough floor is pockmarked. An acrid smell reaches your nostrils as the glow dissipates. If you press on into the darkness, turn to 254. If you wait by the entrance, turn to 18.

335

You climb high into the hills, to a point where you can see the king's troops advancing into battle. They are consumed by the tide of dark figures that spill into the valley beneath you. Not a single man of Poo Ta's forces emerges from the horde; Feior's army is totally victorious. The dark child has returned to claim his inheritance. You survive for a few days, camped out in the hills, until his men track you down and slaughter you. Your adventure ends here.





336

You accompany the outlaws to the stump of a huge tree, within which they hide the sacks of treasure they have captured. Then they decide to visit the nearby village. You have nearly reached the buildings when you are overtaken by a fat fellow, bouncing up and down on the back of a donkey. The outlaws nod at him, and nudge you meaningfully. It's clear they want you to tackle and rob him. If you sidle up to the merchant and tell him to hand over his valuables, turn to 95. If you refuse to rob him, turn to 12.

337

Tears stream down your face, but you cover your nose and mouth before the powder can do its worst. Amazed at your resilience against their bombs, the savages panic. Only the two strongest stay and fight. They are upon you instantly.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First JUNGLE		
MAN	5	7
Second JUNGLE		
MAN	6	6

You must fight them both at the same time. Each round you must choose which one you will attack, and roll dice as normal for yourself and your opponent. You should also roll at the same time against the other savage. Whereas he will wound you if his Attack Strength is the greater, you will not cause

him any damage if your Attack Strength is greater - you will merely parry his blow. If you win, turn to 257.

338

You flip open your brooch and call the name of Izkhao. The bald-headed magical creature emerges and grins at you wickedly. Then he tugs at your hand, pulling you through the choking smoke, straight towards the dark tunnel exit. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 115. If you are Unlucky, turn to 99.



339

'Such a pity,' says Feior, 'for I really can't let you wander around if you aren't prepared to take sides with me.' He clicks his fingers, and a squad of dour warriors in black lacquered armour approach.

You steel yourself to go down fighting and stand, ready, on the cart beside the Sitting Prophet. The soldiers approach, brandishing spiked axes. Suddenly you realize that you can no longer see your brother. You whirl around: he stands behind you, his face red, his eyes aglow. He beats his chest and a gout of energy bursts forth. You are incinerated instantly.



340

The wind is a wall, and you have just been flung into it. You see a whirl of blue, white and brown, and then you are dropping, spinning and twisting wildly in the air. The water rushes up towards you. Its surface feels as hard as granite as you hit it, and pain shoots through your back. Deduct 1 point from your STAMINA. Then you are thrashing around wildly under the water. You gulp in water, but break the surface before it reaches your lungs. Gasping and spluttering, you start to swim towards the coast. Turn to 78.



341

No amount of chipping and scraping will serve to free them. A noxious smell suddenly pervades the air. You spin around to face a small, hooded man, dressed in a filthy robe. The two peasants are terrified into silence and shake visibly. The air round you is redolent of the stench of decay. As you start towards the repulsive figure, he raises his gnarled stick. Turn to 128.

342

The monk's voice is gentle as he asks you how he may help you. You explain that a great evil is scourging the land, and beg his assistance.

He sucks in his breath and confers briefly with his companion. 'A mighty trial faces you. We may not leave this monastery, but we can be of assistance to you and help you on your path towards perfection.' He gestures with his hand, and a small jade plaque appears in it. This he passes to you. 'If ever you face the trial of combat, this talisman will give you the power to prevail against what is base and human.'



Note down the Jade Talisman on your *Adventure Sheet*, along with the number '237'. If at any time when you are in combat you wish to use it, make a note of the number of the paragraph you are at, then turn to 237.

While the Talisman may be of some use, you still need soldiers to fight in the looming battle. You trudge down from the monastery by the way you came. Turn to 106.



343

You prise open the brooch and find yourself staring at a grinning face: it looks like that of a malevolent baby and, as you watch, it winks. There is a crackle, a sharp tang of ozone . . . and the grinning face sits before you, attached to a small, smooth body. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 277. If you are Unlucky, turn to 6.



344

You inch your way across the ledge and climb in through the neighbouring window. The room is tiny, and the dark tapestries that drape its walls add to its air of mystery. The only door is locked, and you slump against it, exhausted and afraid. In the middle of the room sits a small table, covered by a large velvet sheet, and this you pull away, revealing a small glass sphere which has been set into the centre of the table. A dingy green glow radiates from it, and you gaze deep into it. At first your view is obscured by swirling mists; then they clear to reveal a lone figure standing on a pinnacle of rock. A thick black cloud floats in front of the figure, forming and re-forming, first into a crude face, then into a twisting vortex. As you watch, thoughts of your nightmare rush back into your head. Both figures are familiar, and your mind struggles to name them. Then, from behind the figure, a winged beast shoots into view. The dragon-like creature heads straight for the figure, spitting fire. They seem unaware of the danger and, as the view shifts, you finally glimpse their features. They are your own! The beast is nearly upon them. You must decide. Will you:

Shout a warning to the figure?

Turn to 373

Wait to see what happens?

Turn to 282

Smash the globe?

Turn to 400

345

'Ha!' cries the leader, 'Then you won't mind parting with your wares!' You are seized from behind and a sword is held at your throat as the bandits take all your gear. Cross every item off your Equipment List. The outlaws tie your hands, blindfold you, and lead you some distance before abandoning you. It takes you several hours to free yourself. Turn to 19.

346

Far off in the distance, beyond a small village in the middle of the valley, you espy Feior's army. It is awesome in size, making your forces look pitifully inadequate. Your fellow officers are shocked into silence, and the troops verge on panic. Then you observe another body of men advancing towards you from the hills in the east. Taking up a spyglass, you see an army of peasants, brandishing improvised weapons, and at its head the familiar figure of Merzei. He calls his people to a halt and waves to you, smiling. With these extra troops, hope returns and you resume planning your attack. If you have the Battleplans, turn to 297. Otherwise, turn to 100.

347

You return the white warrior's gesture and courteously ask him his name. But there is no response; the figure remains motionless, poised in mid-bow. Despite the growing pain in your temples, you are bathed in a feeling of security, an awareness that you have known and respected this man in the past . . . But he is lost to you now. Nausea rises up

through your gorge and takes you by the ears. You hurry away from the warrior, through the ranks of his army, to the far end of the chamber. Turn to 113.

348

You take hold of a pipe and nod to the barman to pump your drink through. A bolt of ale gushes into your mouth, where it stays for barely a moment. The inside of your mouth is on fire, and you quickly spit the liquid back out into the bath. The bitter taste of the ale refuses to leave you and you vow never to touch the stuff again.

Suddenly, the tavern door bursts open. Turn to 52.

349

For several days you scour the land, hunting out the traces of bandits. You get information from peasants by posing as a government official; but each time you think you have cornered a band they melt away into the countryside. Finally you hit upon the plan of posing as a merchant. Travelling down a well-worn path among closely spaced trees, you are accosted by a gang of brigands, who demand your money. You fling aside your disguise, and try to persuade them to join your cause. No sooner have they seen your face, however, than they take to their heels between the trees.

Recruiting bandits seems to be a dead end. On your travels through the villages you have heard the rumour that the king has sent an army to face Feior in battle, though it is said that the royal forces are far

outnumbered by the mercenaries, foreigners and creatures of ill-omen that have flocked to Feior's banner. Events are moving on apace, while you have achieved nothing. You should now choose an option that you have not already chosen. Will you:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| Look for mercenaries to recruit? | Turn to 191 |
| Try to find Merzei (if you recognize the name)? | Turn to 279 |
| Try to find the king's army? | Turn to 216 |
| Scour the countryside for some other possibility? | Turn to 261 |

350

You leap from the cart and set off, back the way you came. Although there are horsemen among their ranks, none pursue you. Marching rapidly, you soon lose sight of the army. Turn to 29.

351

You step gingerly up to the object and reach out to touch it. If you bear multicoloured scales, turn to 194. Otherwise, turn to 24.

352

As you walk, the land rises around you, and the foliage thins till only hardy grasses cling to the dark rock. Velkos begins to talk of a trove of gemstones that is said to be hidden in a cavern among these hills. A dark opening gapes at you from beside a rock, off to one side. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 256. If you are Unlucky, turn to 130.

353

The patterns dance delicately in the air about you, and calmness washes over you. You are hardly aware of Feior until he unleashes a furious bolt of energy, which streaks towards you, singeing the very air as it passes. You meet your fate with serenity. The bolt destroys you instantly.

354

You sprint down the slope, bolts flashing around you. You see several others reduced to ashes. A searing flame shoots through your side and you crash to the ground. Deduct 2 points from your STAMINA. When you recover consciousness there is no one about, so you hurry down the hillside. Turn to 67.

355

You are soon stopped by sentries, who send for an officer to interrogate you. A proud warrior in beautifully lacquered armour and a plumed helmet strides arrogantly up to you and demands to know your business. If you are at the head of Merzei's peasant army, turn to 155. Otherwise, turn to 208.



356

Sevmiroda listens with surprising sympathy. 'We can't afford to have someone with us who's lost their nerve,' he says. 'Don't think you can shop us to the authorities or dip your fingers into our treasure trove – we'll be moving our store soon.' If you have a haversack and a greatsword, the outlaws take these from you (cross them off your Equipment List). Then they head into town, so you think it prudent to travel in the opposite direction. Turn to 19.

357

Add 12 to the number you rolled and write the result in the STAMINA box of your *Adventure Sheet*. Then turn to 30.

358

The beast carries you high above the forest towards a large clearing; it hovers above a wide pit which has been dug at its centre. The crater measures at least twenty metres in circumference; a huge mound of rubbish lies within it: animal bones, furniture, cart-wheels, grain sacks, rotting food and other indescribable substances are all mixed together in this noxious stew. The smell is overpowering; flies mass in thick clouds above it. The creature releases its grip, and you drop, feet first, into the stinking morass. You emerge from the pit gasping, trying to beat off dozens of purple leeches that cling to your clothes. Deduct 2 points from your STAMINA and turn to 85.

359

Panurge grasps your arm tightly and leads you back up the stairs. Ignoring your cries, he mumbles a word to himself. He waves his free hand over your face . . . Turn to 389.

360

You back away, across the chamber, keeping your eyes on the silver-furred creature. It seems just as wary of you, and cowers behind the body. The other sarcophagus is covered with the same strange hieroglyphs as those which adorn your tomb. It too has lost its lid, and shattered fragments litter its interior. Though empty, the tomb exudes the same warmth as your own. Another wave of panic floods over you. If you make your way out of the chamber without delay, turn to 217. If you go to take a closer look at the corpse, turn to 142.

361

The road begins to widen. Up ahead, smoke rises from a small settlement. After a few minutes' walk, you come across a discarded bundle of clothing which lies strewn across the road. The garments are cut from supple leather, stained a deep black, and



inset with strange emblems which tease your memory. If you search about for their owner, turn to 141. Otherwise, you continue east towards the village. Turn to 263.

362

You have to find another cart to help transport the statue back to the jungle, but you don't relish the river journey. As the statue trundles on its way, you start to wonder how on earth you are going to return it to the Kreehuls. It was dangerous enough bringing it here in the first place. Is this Credas a madman? Why did you ever trust him in the first place, and go on his foolish mission?

The first two days' trek takes you down among the rice paddies. While you are pausing for rest, a palanquin borne by sweating youths pulls up near by. Out steps a gaudily dressed man, plainly a merchant. 'That item is very marketable, honoured traveller,' he says. 'I will offer you the sum of 1,000 gold pieces for it.'

If you accept the man's offer, turn to 80. If you refuse, turn to 287.

363

You follow the path as it weaves to and fro among the trees. After a little while there is a crashing sound from up ahead. An armoured figure, its hands clutched to its head, races round the corner. You have the presence of mind to dodge to one side and stick out your leg. The fellow crashes to the

ground with a roar, but quickly leaps to his feet and starts to swing wildly with a spiked club. You see that his helmet has been crushed down over his eyes, so he can't see. He is still dangerous, though.

BLINDED BANDIT SKILL 4 STAMINA 8

If you defeat the bandit, turn to 387.

364

A miracle! Just when you needed one last surge of strength, a battalion of heavily armoured men bursts from the southern forest and charges towards you. As they near, you recognize them as the mercenaries you hired earlier. Shouting for joy, you wave at them as they approach, gesturing them towards the weakest line of your defence. Swords raised, they thunder towards you. They do not stop, however, and you fall beneath their pounding hoofs. Bloodied and broken, you look up to see the traitorous soldiers cutting down your own troops. Blackness descends. Your adventure ends here.

365

You manage to restrain yourself from looking up into the tree where Velkos hides, and face the bandit leader. Turn to 267.





366

A few metres ahead of you, sitting amid the vines and creepers, you confront an imposing statue. The idol's hands are clasped above its head, and its face wears an expression of deep serenity. Judging from its size, you estimate it to be the work of many hands. As you approach it, a thousand pairs of emerald eyes flick open around you, peppering the darkness. From out of the shadows and beneath the water emerge strange, semi-human figures. Distended eyes sit proud of their flat faces, and spindly limbs support their large, warty heads. You near the statue. The massed Kreehuls move closer and emit deafening croaks from their fleshy throat-sacs. Will you:

Examine the statue?
 Seek aid from Izkhao?
 Name Biantai?
 Call Tiaohe?
 Summon Shangsuo?
 Call Baopo?

Turn to 13
 Turn to 66
 Turn to 96
 Turn to 193
 Turn to 124
 Turn to 235

367

The terrible pressure on your head threatens to engulf you as you force your way out of the chamber, barely able to keep your eyes open. You pass through a small opening and the pressure eases, but you stagger on. You crash into something hard and clutch your knee in pain. Your sight returns in time for you to see a smooth, white, human figure toppling over. It hits the ground and cracks open like a

hollow eggshell. A skull rolls out of it and away into the chamber. You look up. Turn to 156.

368

Your stomach churns with the effort of the spell; a purplish glow surrounds you, the only outward sign of your attempt to warp the fabric of the universe. You stretch out your arms to Feior, and the purple cloud oozes sluggishly towards him, taking on the shapes of fearful, half-glimpsed creatures as it goes.

Feior looses his blast when the cloud you have generated has covered half the distance between you. A bolt of sizzling energy slices through the purple glow as if it wasn't there and streaks towards you. You have no time to prepare a second defence.

369

Velkos shoots you a glance of pure hatred. 'He lies!' she shouts. 'I demand the right of satisfaction!'

Several outlaws grin at this, and the leader turns to you. 'Will you fight Velkos to decide the truth of the matter?' he asks. If you will, turn to 109. If you refuse, turn to 84.



370

You hand over the money and Nikko asks you when and where his men will be needed. If you tell him to accompany you straight away, turn to 68. If you wish to do more recruiting, and arrange to rendezvous with him in a week's time, turn to 106.

371

Realizing the danger you are in, you kick back towards the rope. Before you can reach it, you are borne up by a swell of water. It dashes you forward and up the chute. You are tossed up through the manhole amid a spout of water, landing wet, battered and bedraggled – but safe. Lose 1 point from your STAMINA and turn to 97.

372

You dare not run, lest you bump into something in the dim light. You hurry along the passageway, then stop abruptly as a dark form rears up in front of you.

'Quick, the Thaaza smoke is near!' Velkos's voice urges you on. She grabs your arm and drags you down another tunnel. A screeching noise echoes down the tunnels, and after a while you pass a side-tunnel from which issue pitiful, half-human screams. As you pause at the tunnel mouth, Velkos grabs you roughly. 'It's just some Cressent young,' she hisses. 'Leave them for the traders.'

If you follow Velkos, turn to 298. If you go down the side-tunnel, turn to 8.

373

You scream a warning into the globe. Your voice seems to echo back at you from its polished surface and reverberates in the small room, causing your ears to ring painfully.

Hands grip you firmly and drag you, screaming, out of the chamber. 'Quiet now, child,' whispers Panurge, the King's Priest, 'you are coming with me.' He mumbles a word and touches your temple. . . . Turn to 389.

374

You unravel the whistle's string and try vainly to whirl it around from your lying position. Finding this impossible, you sit up and manage to sound the note. An arrow thuds into your arm, forcing you back down (deduct 3 points from your STAMINA). Turn to 231.

375

Despite your strange appearance, the travellers honour the code of the road and offer you a place by the fire and some food. As you settle down and warm your feet, you hear talk of the war that is raging throughout the island. You learn of the young king and his fight against an ancient menace from across the sea. These hardy folk have learnt enough to keep well away from the fighting and laugh at the villagers' attempts to defend themselves. Recover up to 4 points of STAMINA (remember, it may not exceed its *Initial* value) and turn to 197.

376

Izkhao appears out of thin air – but, upon seeing the creature, his features crease with consternation. He launches himself into the fray with a keening moan. Seconds later, there is a blinding flash of light and your ears are stinging as if from a sound so loud you couldn't hear it. The Polybleb is gone – but so is Izkhao. In your hand is a pool of silvery liquid – all that remains of the brooch. Cross the brooch off your *Adventure Sheet* and turn to 245.

377

You set out into the countryside, wondering how you should go about your task. The air feels remarkably humid, and you break into a sweat. Pausing for rest, you find that you are shaking all over. The shaking worsens and is followed by dizziness and nausea. You retch, then clutch at your chest, where a throbbing pain is spreading.

You die alone, in unfamiliar countryside, from an unknown disease. Your shallow grave is unmarked.

378

You merrily knock back several horns full of the foaming rice beer. After the first couple it begins to taste almost palatable. The bandits discuss tomorrow's raid, which is to be on a sorcerer, a hermit whose retreat is said to contain many precious magical artifacts. Do you bear a bandit tattoo? If you do, turn to 196. If not, turn to 275.

379

You are close to the seaward-facing part of the city when you catch sight of a sudden spout of water among the ruins. As you make your way over to it, it spurts again, showering you with salty spray. The source of the geyser is man-made: a circular stone-clad hole at the bottom of which you can hear the echoing roar of the sea. By the side of the manhole lies a metal grating, to which a tightly woven rope is tied. Wet clothing is strewn about the place.

You deduce that the water spouts at regular intervals as rogue waves pound into a sea cave below and force their way up. You peer into the thundering depths.

'Rats, rats, always the last to leave a sinking ship!' The voice is behind you. You turn. A magnificent horse rears up, a multicoloured rider looking down at you from its back. 'But there's plenty of room here to play - why leave?' it whines in shifting tones. But the rider remains silent, for the words come from the mouth of the beast. With a parting swish of its silvery tail, it canters away. Will you:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| Chase after it? | Turn to 97 |
| Climb down the shaft, using the rope for security? | Turn to 288 |
| Make for the sea walls? | Turn to 10 |

380

A gentle heat pricks the tips of your fingers, and a scintillating ball forms there. Feior looses a gout

of cascading flame, which streaks towards you. Almost casually, you gesture with a finger, and your spell flies to meet it. They collide, and the disruption solidifies, then is blown away in the wind like streamers of fine rice paper. Feior screeches in anguish then raises his arms once more. Even at this distance, you can see his face contorting with the effort, and two pulsating globes of purple begin to form around his hands. Which spell do you use in this clash:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| Baopo? | Turn to 57 |
| Tiaohe? | Turn to 276 |
| Biantai? | Turn to 140 |
| Shangsuo? | Turn to 308 |

381

A leaden weight settles about your body. The trader's blade carried contact poison! Lose 1 point from your SKILL. You collapse, unconscious.

When you reawaken, all your joints ache. Your wrists are tied with thick leather thongs, and all your possessions have been taken. You are crammed into a wooden cage among the tumbledown buildings of some squalid town. Staring down at you is a sallow-faced man wearing a gaudy hat; obviously he is the slave master. If you demand to be released, turn to 167. If you wait till nightfall before attempting to escape, turn to 58.



382

The forest opens out into a clearing. A shallow pit, more than twenty metres in circumference, has been dug at its centre. A huge mound of rubbish lies here: animal bones, furniture, cartwheels, grain sacks, rotting food and other indescribable substances are mixed all together in this noxious brew. The smell is overpowering; thick clouds of flies mass above it. Hovering high above the pit is an enormous beast. Its stomach is so bloated that it resembles an inflated balloon, while its head and claws appear to be those of a ridiculously warped fowl. Its thick, blubbery folds of skin quiver madly as it pounds with its wings in order to stay aloft. It swoops to attack. You have no option but to fight.

SHAEL-BEAST

SKILL 6 STAMINA 14

Don't forget, if you do not have your sword you must fight with your SKILL temporarily reduced by 4 points. If you defeat the creature, turn to 218.

383

Merzej sends out his most trusted lieutenants to rouse the peasants in other villages. You both spend the next few days travelling up and down the countryside, your ranks swelling at every rally. Every moment of your waking hours is spent organizing, equipping and planning. Finally, after weeks of labour, the army is assembled and ready to march. Turn to 216.

384

The woman frowns suspiciously and casts a searching gaze over you. If you have a greatsword, a haversack or a silvery wound, turn to 103. If not, turn to 172.

385

One of the bandits manages to evade your strike and wrap his arms round your neck. You feel his mutated flesh begin to fuse with your own, and then the other bandits are upon you, tearing and rending and chopping. Your adventure is over.

386

As you charge towards the village and into the heart of battle, an enormous, dragon-like beast takes to the air behind Feior's lines. It swoops towards you, releasing a fiery bolt of energy which smashes into your troops, instantly disintegrating those it hits. The beast nears, and you watch in horror as it releases hundreds of squirming, leech-like creatures from its underbelly on to the people below. You turn your gaze towards the village's river and spy the golden figure of the Sitting Prophet as he wades into battle, leading a mass of screeching Kreehuls. Credas has returned with his force! The swamp beings spill out on to the banks and attack Feior's men, while their idol waits for the Sturramak to near him. The two magical beings lock in fierce combat, gradually working their way towards the tower. If you have the Soggy Scroll turn to 224. Otherwise, turn to 11.

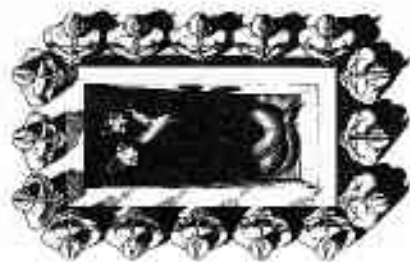


387

Your opponent crumples and falls. He is still alive, but some inner compulsion prevents you from finishing him off. You stoop and pick up his spiked club, to keep it out of harm's way. If you hurry out of the woods now, turn to 239. If you continue to walk among the trees, turn to 180.

388

The bandit leader's brow creases. 'What kind of person doesn't know what they are?' he asks. He looks you up and down. If you have a silvery wound, turn to 123. Otherwise you can tell him that you came from an isle over the sea (turn to 168) or simply explain that you have lost your memory (turn to 225).





389

Slowly you regain consciousness. As the haze lifts, chanted words drift into your head, growing gradually louder as sight returns. You stare up at a high stone ceiling, which is lit by the flames of a thousand candles. With a great effort you raise your head and meet the reverential gazes of a hundred robed figures. At their head stands your father and his hawk-nosed priest, Panurge. They stare back at you impassively and continue their slow chant. The numbness refuses to leave your limbs and forces your head down on to the pillow. Unable to cry out, you watch as the figures melt into one, and their strange intonation eases you back to sleep . . .

If you have a splinter, turn to 40. If your ears ring, turn to 71. Otherwise, turn to 116.





390

You bound out into the blackness, trying not to stumble on the rough, cratered floor. Roll one die, note down the result and turn to 170.



391

You produce the jar and notice that the Dragonfly you saw earlier is still hovering high above you. As you remove the lid, you see it fly closer, drawn by the scent of the sticky orange paste inside. An idea blossoms in your mind. Acting quickly, you smear

the bald head of the Prophet with the sweet goo and wait. The Kreehuls again begin to advance, sensing that their sacred idol is in danger. Then suddenly, amid a din of beating wings, the air is filled with Dragonflies. Greedily they bear down on the rich paste, jostling for position and ignoring you completely. As they eat, you gather the ends of their silken threads and tie them securely to the prophet's arms. Gorged on their meal, the insects lift off, only to find the idol attached to them. The Kreehuls croak their battle-cry and attack, sending the Dragonflies into a frenzy. The statue shifts. Again it moves, until finally it works free from its muddy seat. You grab the Sitting Prophet's arm as it is carried up and hang on, high above the sea of angry Kreehuls. As you rise slowly out of the clearing and above the green canopy, you can hear their distressed croaking until it is drowned out by the beating of wings. Turn to 206.





392

The ball bumps into the side of the ship, and another rolls up behind it. You leap across, slashing wildly at the ball, and you feel your blade cutting into a pliant membrane. There is a gust of fetid air, and the ball deflates. From it leaps a form of whirling madness.

**MADDENED
CRIMINAL**

SKILL 7 STAMINA 5

If you slay the criminal, turn to 34.

393

You are roughly woken up by the slobbering tongue of a fly-ridden buffalo.

'Better get that thing out of the way,' a voice mumbles from behind the beast. A haggard old fellow of many years peers vaguely down at you. Picking yourself up from the ground, you see that the man and his pudgy wife are sitting on top of a large wagon. If you look them in the eye and order them to help you transport the Sitting Prophet, turn to 48. If you wait to see what they are going to do, turn to 143.

394

You are seized from behind and a sword is held at your throat. 'What shall we do with him?' asks Sevmiroda. A woman's voice replies: 'Kill him!' You don't even have time to protest. Your adventure ends here.



395

Three men advance cautiously towards you; having seen their comrades defeated, they are taking no chances. Just before they come within striking range, though, they back off. Too late, you realize they were simply giving others time to load their crossbows. The impact of three bolts flings you to the ground, where you writhe briefly before expiring.

396

Izkhao appears at once. As soon as he sees Feior, his normally jovial face becomes serious. He shoots through the air, grasps your opponent by the heel and drags him back to you, dumping him in an untidy heap at your feet. Feior has finally conquered the Mutation spell, but the effort has left him drained. He is no longer a threat to you; he looks up at you with eyes that you know are just like yours. If you finish him off, turn to 219. If you spare him, turn to 264.

397

While the creature babbles, you edge towards it and stretch out your hands. As soon as they touch its flesh, a tingle runs through your fingers. You realize that you can sense the magic which caused the creature's state. And, more, you can understand that magic. You have acquired the power of Mutation and should write this down on your *Adventure Sheet*, together with the code word: Biantai. Whenever this code word is given as an option, you will know that you can use your power of Mutation.

You are concentrating so hard on your new knowledge that you hardly notice the mutant creature shy away in fright and gallop off. Now you are left with little choice but to head towards the sea. Turn to 175.

398

You have no chance to act. As soon as you move, the bandits overwhelm you and bring their swords down upon your helpless body. Your adventure ends here.





399

The jungle is thick, and hacking your way through countless vines drains your strength (deduct 2 points from your STAMINA). You brush aside a thick creeper but find that it sticks to your arm. As you reach out to free it, the vine shoots upwards, taking you with it. By the time you can work your arm free, you are too high to let go. You look up and follow the trail of the creeper to its source – the multiple mouths of a bloated Hac-quel-rat. The beast releases a viscous blob from its jaws, which trickles down the vine towards you. Will you:

Try to leap across to a nearby creeper?

Turn to 104

Summon a word from your memory?

Turn to 5

Call on Izkhao?

Turn to 248

400

You grab the edge of the table and heave it over on end, sending the globe crashing to the floor. As it explodes, a fragment of glass embeds itself in your cheek. As you try to pluck it free, a pair of hands grips you firmly by the shoulders and drags you, screaming, out of the chamber. 'Quiet now, child,' whispers Panurge, the King's Priest. 'You are coming with me.' He mumbles a word and touches your temple . . . Turn to 389.

THE RULES

Skill, Stamina and Luck

On your *Adventure Sheet* there are boxes for you to record your **SKILL**, **STAMINA** and **LUCK**. For reasons that will be explained below, these will change constantly during the adventure. You must keep an accurate record of these scores, and for this reason you are advised either to write small in the boxes or to keep an eraser handy. But never rub out your *Initial* scores. Although you may be awarded additional **SKILL**, **STAMINA** and **LUCK** points in the course of your adventure, these totals may never exceed your *Initial* scores, except on very rare occasions and then you will be informed of the fact in a particular paragraph.

Your **SKILL** score reflects your swordsmanship and general fighting expertise; the higher, the better. Your **STAMINA** score reflects your general constitution, your will to survive, your determination and overall fitness; the higher your **STAMINA** score, the longer you will be able to survive. If your **STAMINA** score drops to zero, stop reading, close the book and then start again from the beginning. Your **LUCK** score indicates how naturally lucky a person you are. Luck – and magic – are facts of life in the fantasy kingdom you are about to explore.

Combat

You will often come across paragraphs in the book in which you are instructed to fight a creature of some sort. An option to flee may be given, but if not – or if you choose to attack the creature anyway – you must resolve the battle as described below.

First record your opponent's **SKILL** and **STAMINA** scores in the first empty Monster Encounter box on your *Adventure Sheet*. The scores for each potential adversary are given every time you have an encounter which may end in combat. The sequence for combat is then:

1. Roll two dice for your opponent. Add its **SKILL** score. This total is the opponent's Attack Strength.
2. Roll two dice for yourself. Add the number rolled to your current **SKILL** score. This total is your Attack Strength.
3. If your Attack Strength is higher than that of your opponent, you have wounded it: proceed to step 4. If your opponent's Attack Strength is higher than yours, it has wounded you: proceed to step 5. If both Attack Strength totals are the same, you have avoided each other's blows – start the next Attack Round from step 1, above.
4. You have wounded the creature, so subtract 2 points from its **STAMINA** score. (You may use your **LUCK** here to inflict additional damage – see below.)

5. The creature has wounded you, so subtract 2 points from your own STAMINA score. (Again, you may use LUCK at this stage – see below.)
6. Make the appropriate adjustments either to the opponent's or to your own STAMINA score (and to your LUCK score if you used LUCK – see below).
7. Begin the next Attack Round by repeating steps 1–6. This sequence continues until the STAMINA score of either you or your adversary has been reduced to zero (death).

Escaping

In some paragraphs you will be given the option of running away from a battle, should things be going badly for you. However, if you do run away, your opponent automatically inflicts one wound on you (deduct 2 points from your STAMINA) as you flee – such is the price of cowardice. (Note that you may use LUCK to minimize this wound in the normal way – see below.) You may *escape* only if that option is specifically given to you in the relevant paragraph.

Fighting More Than One Opponent

If you come across more than one potential adversary in an encounter, there are two possible ways of fighting them. Sometimes a paragraph will tell you to fight opponents one at a time. In this case you

conduct the fight as usual, going through steps 1–7 against each opponent in turn.

More often you will have to fight all opponents at the same time. At the beginning of each Combat Round, decide which opponent you will be attacking. Then conduct the fight against that opponent as normal (following steps 1–7, above). Then follow the same steps against the next opponent. However, this time you may not wound the second or later opponent. If your Attack Strength is higher, this simply means that you have parried your adversary's blow.

Luck

At various times during your adventure, either in battle or when you find yourself in a situation in which you could be either Lucky or Unlucky (on such occasions, you are invited to *Test your Luck* in the relevant paragraph), you have to call on your LUCK to make the outcome more favourable. But beware! Using LUCK is a risky business, and if you are *unlucky*, the results could be disastrous.

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

Each time you *Test your Luck*, you must subtract 1 point from your current LUCK score. You will soon

come to realize that, the more you rely on your LUCK, the more risky the outcome will be.

Using Luck in Battles

In certain paragraphs you will be told to *Test your Luck* and you will then discover the consequences of being Lucky or Unlucky. However, you always have the option of using your LUCK in battle, either to inflict a more serious wound on an opponent you have just wounded or to reduce the effects of a wound an opponent has just inflicted on you.

If you have just won an Attack Round, you may *Test your Luck*, as described above. If you are Lucky, you have inflicted a severe wound on your opponent and may subtract 2 extra points from the creature's STAMINA score. However, if you are Unlucky, the wound was a mere graze and you must restore 1 point to its STAMINA (i.e. instead of inflicting the normal 2 points of damage, you have now scored only 1).

If you have just lost an Attack Round and been wounded, you may *Test your Luck* to try to lessen the wound. If you are Lucky, you have managed to avoid the full impact of the blow. Restore 1 point to your STAMINA (so that, instead of doing 2 points of damage, it has done only 1). If you are Unlucky, you have had to take a more serious blow. Deduct 1 extra point from your STAMINA.

Remember: you must always subtract 1 point from your LUCK score every time you *Test your Luck*.

Restoring Skill, Stamina and Luck

Skill

Your SKILL score will not change much during your adventure. Occasionally, a paragraph may give the instruction to increase or decrease your SKILL score. A special weapon may also increase your SKILL; but remember that only one weapon can be used at a time! You cannot claim two SKILL bonuses for carrying two magic swords.

Stamina and Provisions

Your STAMINA score will change frequently during your adventure, as you fight monsters and undertake arduous tasks. As you near your goal, your STAMINA level may drop to a dangerously low level and battles may be especially risky, so be careful!

In the course of the adventure, you may acquire Provisions. You may rest and eat at any time except when engaged in battle. Eating a meal restores up to 4 STAMINA points. When you eat a meal, you may add up to 4 points to your STAMINA score and you have to deduct one of your Provisions. A separate Provisions Remaining box is provided on the *Adventure Sheet* for this purpose. Remember that you have a long way to go, so use your Provisions wisely! Remember also that your STAMINA score may never exceed its *Initial* value.

Luck

Additions to your LUCK score are awarded during the adventure when you have been particularly lucky; details of occasions when this occurs are given in the relevant paragraphs. Remember: as with STAMINA, your LUCK score may never exceed its *Initial* value.

Equipment

You start your adventure with no equipment, but you will probably acquire items during your travels. Keep a careful note of any articles you pick up.

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BLACKSAND!

Marc Gascoigne and Pete Tamlyn

Sprawling like the corpse of some giant creature, Port Blacksand is a festering den of pirates and brigands. Unforeseen dangers lurk around every street corner and in every dark alleyway. Devious plots and crimes are hatched in every tavern. Thieves and assassins slip through the shadows. Ancient mysteries lurk in the cellars and sewers. But the infamous City of Thieves is also home to excitement and adventure beyond compare!

The second volume in the Advanced Fighting Fantasy series which started with *Dungeoneer*.

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