

HOUSE OF HORROR

By Gaetano Abbondanza

Author's Introduction

Although you may have seen this adventure advertised as a “sequel” to House of Hell, it is, in fact a prequel. Readers who are familiar with Steve Jackson’s original foray into the horror genre may recognize situations and characters from that adventure in the following story. However, previous familiarity with *House of Hell* is not necessary for the (hopefully) enjoyment of this adventure. As this is my first attempt at writing a full-length fighting fantasy style adventure, any and all feedback (positive and negative) is appreciated. Send comments, likes, dislikes, questions, etc. to me by email at pericles23@aol.com Also, if you die a multitude of gruesome deaths in the house, and would like a walkthrough, don’t be afraid to ask. Growing up, Steve Jackson’s *House of Hell* (House of Hades in the U.S.) was one of my all-time favorite fighting fantasy adventures, and in a small way, *House Of Horror* is my tribute to Mr. Jackson’s original creation.

How to Survive in the House of Horror

If you’ve played Steve Jackson’s *House of Hell*, the rules of this adventure are exactly the same and you may begin immediately. Don’t forget to adjust your Skill score since you are unarmed at the beginning of your adventure. If you haven’t read *House of Hell*, or if it’s been a while and you need a refresher, read on.

House of Horror is a little different from previous Fighting Fantasy adventures. You start the adventure unarmed, with no provisions or potions, *and* you have to avoid being *frightened to death!* Before embarking on your adventure, you must first determine your own strengths and weaknesses. To see how brave, lucky, and resourceful you are, you must use the dice to determine your initial Skill, Stamina, and Luck scores. You are advised either to record your scores on the adventure sheet in pencil or, print out the page and make photocopies for future adventures.

Skill, Stamina, and Luck

Roll one die. Add 6 to this number and enter this total in the Skill box on the Adventure Sheet. This is your *initial* Skill. In this adventure, your Starting Skill is less, because you are unarmed, but you will have the opportunity to arm yourself (see the ‘Weapons’ section).

Roll both dice. Add 12 to the number rolled and enter this total in the Stamina box.

There is also a Luck box. Roll one die, add 6 to this number, and enter this total in the Luck box.

For reasons that will be explained below, Skill, Stamina, and Luck scores will change constantly during your adventure. You must keep an accurate record of these scores and for this reason you are advised to either 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, or Luck points, these totals may never exceed your initial scores, except on very rare occasions when you will be instructed on a particular section.

Your Skill score represents your general fighting expertise; the higher the better. Your Stamina score reflects your general constitution, your will to survive, your determination and courage; the higher your Stamina score, the longer you will be able to survive. Your Luck score indicates how naturally lucky a person you are. Luck – and evil – are facts of life in the devilish domain you are about to explore.

Battles

You will almost certainly come across sections in the story that instruct you to fight ghosts, ghouls, men, and beasts. An option to flee may be given, but if not – or if you choose to attack anyway – you must resolve the battle as described below.

First record the creature's Skill and Stamina scores in the first vacant Evil Encounter Box on your Adventure Sheet. The scores for each creature are given in the appropriate section each time you have an encounter. The sequence of combat is then:

- 1) Roll both dice once for the creature. Add its Skill score. This total is the Creature's Attack Strength.
- 2) Roll both dice once 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 the creature, you have wounded it. Proceed to step 4. If the creature's Attack Strength is higher than yours it has wounded you. Proceed to step 5. If both Attack Strengths are equal, 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 Luck at this stage (see below)
- 5) The creature has wounded you, so subtract 2 points from your own Stamina score. Again you may use your Luck at this stage (see below).
- 6) Make the appropriate adjustments to either the creature's or your own Stamina scores. (and your Luck score if you used Luck – see below).
- 7) Begin the next Attack Round by returning to your current Skill score and repeating steps 1-6. The sequence continues until the Stamina score of either you or the creature you are fighting has been reduced to zero (death).

Fear

As well as surviving your adventure by ensuring that your Stamina never drops to zero, in *The House of Horror* you must also avoid being frightened to death. Before you begin

your adventure, roll one die and add 6 to the result. This total will give you the maximum Fear score you can bear. Your Fear score is the number of points you can take before you are frightened to death. During your adventure, you will come across situations where you must, for example, 'Add one (or two, etc.) Fear points'. Your Fear score starts at zero and you must add Fear points as instructed in the text. If your Fear score ever reaches the maximum (as rolled initially, see above) then you have been *frightened to death* and must end your adventure. Note that Fear works in the opposite way to normal Skill, Stamina, and Luck scores; you start with zero and increase your Fear score towards your maximum, rather than subtracting, as you do with other scores.

Escaping

On some sections you may be given the option of running from a battle should things be going badly for you. However, if you do run away, the creature automatically gets in one wound on you (subtract 2 Stamina points) as you flee. Such is the price of cowardice. Note that you may use Luck on this wound in the normal way (see below). You may escape only if the option is specifically given to you on the section you are reading.

Fighting More Than One Creature

If you come across more than one creature in a particular encounter, the instructions on that section will tell you how to handle the battle. Sometimes you will treat them as a single monster; sometimes you will fight each one in turn.

Weapons

You begin *The House of Horror* adventure with no weapon. As with other Fighting Fantasy adventures, your Skill score reflects your combat ability *with* a weapon. So, before you start off on an adventure, deduct 3 points from your Skill score and note this 'Starting Skill.' Do not, however, change your initial Skill, as this is still used to determine the maximum Skill you have. If you find a weapon during the adventure, you may use your maximum Skill when fighting battles.

Luck

At various times during your adventure, either in battles or when you come across situations in which you could either be lucky or unlucky (details for these are given on the section numbers themselves) you may call on your luck to make the outcome more favorable. But beware! Using Luck is a risky business, and if you are unlucky, the results could be disastrous. The procedure on using your Luck is as follows: roll 2 dice. If the number rolled is equal to or less than your current Luck score, you have been lucky and the result will go in your favor. If the number rolled is greater than your current Luck score, you have been unlucky and you will be penalized. This procedure is known as *testing your luck*. Each time you test your luck, you must subtract one point from your Luck score. Thus you will soon realize that the more you rely on your luck, the riskier this will become.

Using Luck in Battles

On certain sections of the story you will be told to test your luck and will also be told the consequences on your being lucky or unlucky. However, in battles, you always have the option of using your Luck either to inflict a more serious wound on a creature you have just wounded, or to minimize the effects of a wound that a creature has just inflicted on you. If you have just wounded the creature, you may test your luck as described above. If you are lucky, you have inflicted a severe wound and may subtract an extra 2 points of Stamina from the creature's total. If you are unlucky, however, the wound was a mere graze and your blow causes only 1 Stamina point of damage instead of the usual 2.

If the creature has just wounded you, you may test your luck to try to minimize the wound. If you are lucky, you have managed to avoid the full force of the blow, and you lose only 1 Stamina point instead of the normal 2. If you are unlucky, you have taken a more serious blow, and must subtract an extra Stamina point from your total. Remember that you must subtract one Luck point from your own total each time you test your luck.

Restoring Skill, Stamina, Luck, and Fear

Your Skill, Stamina, and Luck scores may change during your adventure. Your Skill score will increase (from your Starting Skill) if you find a Weapon. Your Stamina Score will drain as you fight creatures, and may be restored by eating or resting as instructed in the text. Your Luck score will run out as you must deduct one Luck point each time you test your luck. Your Fear score is built up as you go through the adventure; each time you get frightened you will add to your Fear score. Occasionally, when you get the opportunity to relax, the text may instruct you to deduct points from your Fear score.

Hints on Play

There is one true way through the House of Horror and it may take you several attempts to find it. Make notes and draw a map as you explore – this map will be invaluable in your future adventures and enable you to progress through rapidly to unexplored sections. Remember to make a note of any advice you receive and write down any messages or special references you are given. Some rooms are death traps and others are chambers of horror – be warned! It will be realized that entries will make no sense if read in numerical order. Doing so will lessen the excitement and surprise of play. It is essential that you read only the sections you are instructed to read.

The one true way involves a minimum of risk and any player, no matter how weak on initial dice rolls, should be able to get through fairly easily. May the power of good go with you!

BACKGROUND

A deep fog has settled down as you gradually reduce the speed of your car. You have been traveling for over an hour, and the pace has now become intolerably slow. You glance at the time reading on your console- a half hour before midnight. *Strange that someone would need a presentation at this hour*, you think to yourself. You quickly glance down at the name on the order- *Pravemi*. It's odd that you've never heard about this name, but then again, you've only been employed by your company for a week. The work has been good so far; you've averaged six presentations a day and closed the sale on over half of them. So if some eccentric individual wants a presentation at this hour of the night, does it really matter? No sir. If it goes through, then you will have capped off a good week.

Still, the situation is rather strange. You haven't seen a house, or any kind of building for that matter, for quite some time. You turned off your radio miles ago, as static flooded the airwaves. You estimate that at this rate, by the time you find the location, make your presentation, and get back home, time will have elapsed into the wee hours of the early dawn. *Oh well*, you think, as the fog begins to clear. *Sometimes things just-* your thoughts are broken at the sight which greets you as you round the corner. The road narrows into a dirt track, running up a hill; and there, at the top, is the house. *House? Mansion is more appropriate*, you think. Although the estate before you looks like it has seen better days, it is extremely impressive. You gaze up at two stories of elegance from a bygone time. This is the kind of place you have seen only in movies. You drive past a stone archway and pause to read an iron plate imbedded on the side: *ORVIETO*. So this place even has a name.

You park your car about a hundred feet to the side of the house. You shut off the engine, lean back in your seat, and yawn. Hopefully this won't take too long. As you stare at the house, some other odd observations cross your mind, things that you hadn't noticed before, perhaps due to fatigue. For one, an estate of this size must have at least several occupants; and yet as far as you can make out there are no other vehicles around and definitely no garage. What's more, from what you can observe (it is rather dark) there are no power lines in sight. There is light emanating from both floors, however. *It doesn't matter*, you think as you lock your door. *It makes a sort of sense when pieced together. This estate probably belongs to some hideously wealthy but eccentric old chap, who's tired of being hit up for money, so he moved out here. I might do the same were I in his shoes.* You open the trunk and pull out the two suitcases. As you start to make your way to the house, you are startled by a noise that suddenly breaks the stillness. But it is only a hooting owl. You chuckle to yourself as you slowly make your way to the front door. Little do you know what fate has in store for you. Tonight will be a night to remember...

NOW TURN OVER

(1)

You climb up the steps leading to the front door and put down your suitcases. The wind has picked up, and you pause to take a deep breath. There is an elaborate knocker in the middle of the door, fashioned in the shape of a gargoyle's head (as far as you can tell).

There is no sign of a bell-pull anywhere, so you rap the door three times. The sound is surprisingly loud, and seems to reverberate throughout the house. A few moments later, you hear steps approaching the door. Go to 257.

(2)

You walk up to the door and pull it open. Sure enough, it is a closet, but before you have time to investigate, a headless corpse stumbles out! Add 2 fear points. It is wearing a brown suit and dark loafers. It stumbles straight into you, bounces off and begins crawling along the floor. When it reaches the chest, it begins to feel it up and down, as if searching for a way to open it. It appears to get frustrated or desperate as it begins to pound the chest with its hands. After a few moments, it gets on its feet, shuffles back to the closet, steps inside and slams the door shut. Do you want to open the chest (61) examine the bed (307) investigate the desk (109) or leave this room (208)?

(3)

The vase seems real enough, and when you shake it you can hear a rattling sound. You turn it upside-down, but nothing falls out! Will you probe into the vase with your hand (195) or, if that doesn't seem like a good idea, leave the room (206)? If you have not studied the painting, you may do so on 227.

(4)

You slump to the ground in exhaustion, then suddenly remember the woman and sit up. You find that she is on her feet, having removed the ruby ring, and watch silently as she flings it away with all her might. Wiping her hair away from her face, she turns to you and smiles sweetly. "Thank you, stranger," she begins in a soft voice. "I am the lady Margaret of Danvers, and while my fate was sealed long ago, at least I may now rest in peace." You slowly get to your feet and explain how you arrived in this land. "Yes", she replies, "there is evil enchantment at work, and I fear that you will have more travails and dangers to face." She turns in the direction of the castle. "Your way back lies through there," she intones, "but beware of the armor! There is also information that you seek. The crone, Grisela, may be able to aid you. You will know her by the rose colored scarf that she wears. But time grows short. You must be off." Before you leave, Margaret informs you that in her gratitude, she will reward you with a blessing. Will you ask for a blessing of strength (313) a blessing of courage (154) or a blessing of fortune (235)?

(5)

As you walk around the wall, you see that you are in a very spacious chamber. You seem to be standing on a platform, with a dais in the center. Steps lead off the platform to the ground, and you can see two sets of pews running almost fifty feet back. They are full of figures in black robes, who slowly raise their heads as you enter. But what has your attention most of all is the figure of a young woman tied to the dais. She is wearing a simple white robe. Her eyes are open but her breathing is shallow. It dawns on you that *you* are in the place of the high priest, and unless you have an incredible stroke of luck or divine intervention, you will soon be discovered. The congregation stares up at you expectantly, and the gravity of the situation hits you (add 1 fear point). You force yourself to think. Looking down at the dais, you see that beside the body of the young

woman there is a black chalice, a dagger, a set of candles, and a rolled up parchment. Will you light the candles (184) unroll the parchment (325) pour the black liquid of the vial into the chalice, if you kept the vial (137) raise the dagger (197) or wait for something to happen (36)?

(6)

The man does not hear you as you stride right up to him, but furrows his brow, as if disturbed. You clear your throat, and when there is still no reaction, you gently tap his shoulder. His eyes slowly open and he stares at the ground a few seconds, then slowly lifts his gaze towards you. His green eyes gleam with an unspeakable hatred, and then he suddenly opens his mouth to reveal dripping, unholy jaws. There are few things you could do that would be worse than disturbing a hungry vampire! Add 2 fear points.

Vampire: Skill 11 Stamina 14.

After each round, roll a die. If you roll a 1, the Vampire grows tired of playing with you and simply orders you to kill yourself, which you have no choice but to do. If you manage to reduce his Stamina to 4 or less, go to 143.

(7)

“Passwords?” He asks. Yes, they can get rather tedious, especially since they change so often. Of course, you have to be in good favor with the Count to even know any in the first place, you see.” You nod in agreement, your mind racing for a way to get him to disclose more information without arousing his suspicion. You take a deep breath while casting your eyes down and shaking your head. When he asks you what is wrong, you tell him how embarrassed you feel to have already forgotten a password that you received a couple of days ago. He sympathizes with you, telling you how bad his own memory is and how he usually has to write down new information. When you tell him that the password you need is the one that accesses Pravemi’s most revered item, his eyes open wide. “Well, you certainly are in a bind, my friend. Fortunately, I too am one of the selected few that maintains the Count’s confidence. The word you seek is, of course, *memnoch*. You nod your head in mock recognition and thank him. Go to 175.

(8)

Fortunately, the throw is a little wide and the knife thuds into the door. The figure curses in a raspy voice before rushing at you a second later and you must defend yourself.

Assailant: Skill 8 Stamina 10.

If you win, go to 180.

(9)

“Really? No one that you have seen compares to me?” he asks, lighting up. You assure him that his work is breathtaking, and that Pravemi is a lucky man to have such a qualified scientist. “Oh, please, stop, that is too much”, he gushes. He is so pleased with you that he disappears into his private room for a moment and then comes back with a

pint of whiskey that he offers to you. You thank his generosity and promise to come back and visit him soon. He waves farewell, and as he stands at his door, watching you, you have no choice but to walk back up the tunnel to the closet. The whiskey may prove handy, however. There is enough for three good swigs and you may drink at any time except when you are in combat or otherwise engaged (talking to someone, running for your life, etc.) Each time you drink, you may subtract 1 fear point. Now go to 282.

(10)

You recite the strange incantation, taking care to repeat it ten times. As you finish, a ghostly white figure shimmers out of thin air a few feet in front of you. It is dressed from head to foot in a hooded white cloak. It stares at you passively, then nods and flicks out of existence, but not before mentally imparting a message to you that you will have its aid at some point in the future, should you need it. Add 2 Luck points. The spirit's name is Hazrukiel- make a note of this. At some point in your adventure, you may be asked if you would like to summon someone or something to your defense. In this case, you may call the spirit to your aid by following the instructions you will be given. Alternately, you may summon Hazrukiel to your aid without any special instructions; if you choose to do this during a battle then you will automatically win that battle without losing any Stamina points. Whichever option you choose, you can only call on Hazrukiel *once* in the entire adventure, so use him wisely. Now, you may examine the book of local history (121) the book on witchcraft (203) or leave the room (186).

(11)

"Bless you," she responds, beaming at your answer. "Now, this is what you must know. This entire house serves evil, Pravemi being the high priest of the order. To defeat him, you must find a very special weapon, which is in a hidden room. You must find the location of this room and the password required to open it. Be on your guard at all times. There are supernatural and infernal elements in this house. Not all is evil, however- there are those who would help you". Her voice begins to fade. "Have courage!" she cries. "Be selective of the areas that you choose to explore! Look for the cast--" ...she is cut off in mid sentence as she begins to fade away. The door to the room swings open. You step into the hall. If you have encountered the hooded man, go to 324. If not, go to 378.

(12)

You walk up to the painting. It is very detailed- a great house stands in a nighttime setting. Oddly enough, you make out an automobile parked in front of a closed gate. You suddenly realize that it is *your* car and that you are staring at Orvieto! You stare at the painting, but nothing seems to happen. When you break your gaze, you suddenly realize that you are back in the room through which you discovered the painting that led to wherever you just were. Feeling somewhat strange, you look around to see that everything remains as it was. Will you exit the room (206) or investigate the vase if you haven't yet done so (3)?

(13)

Back on the other side of the alcove, you shed your cloak and run back around the corner, through the changing room and out into the tunnel. Will you follow the tunnel forward (114) or back up to the bedroom (397)?

(14)

You fall to the ground, the spinning in your head continuing as if you were free falling and spinning all at once. You clutch your head in agony, but eventually the sensation subsides. You sit up and see that everything is as it was before. You slowly get to your feet while deciding what to do next. You can investigate the vase, having not already done so (3) or leave this room (206).

(15)

Both of the pictures were taken in black-and-white. The first one is of the Count, or someone who looks exactly like him, standing in a room with several other men. They are wearing Top hats and dressed in an elegant manner- vests and tails; they are also holding canes. Perhaps some kind of turn-of-the-century costume party? No, they look too authentic. At any rate, the look on their faces is far from jovial- they are staring at the camera with cold, stern expressions. Something in their gaze is very disquieting. The other picture is of a beautiful young woman with dark hair and light eyes. A small plaque is set at the bottom of the picture containing a message: *Cassandra: 1904-1923. Your time with me was far too brief, my love.* Odd. It seems that premature deaths run in the family. Go to 275.

(16)

You raise the chalice up into the air, then down to your lips. The liquid is tasteless as you swallow it. You put the chalice down, trying to decide what to do next, when you chest suddenly feels as if it has caught fire. You sink to the ground in agony, clutching yourself, but within seconds you black out. The poison that you drank quickly does its work, and your adventure has come to a tragic conclusion.

(17)

You throw yourself underneath the bed just as the door begins to open. Underneath it is very dusty and your eyes immediately begin to water, but you cup your hands over your mouth and nose and try not to sneeze. Footsteps walk into the room and you can hear a conversation between two men: "...never been to one before. They say that only a few are accepted." "Yes. But I sometimes wonder about the need to involve outsiders. Remember the raid? Surely, there will be another..." After this, the men speak in hushed tones and you cannot make out their conversation. They walk to the center of the room and you can hear the sound of papers being shuffled. They converse for a few more minutes, then walk out of the room. By this time you desperately need some fresh air and you start to crawl out from under the bed. *Test Your Luck.* If you are lucky, go to 111. If you are unlucky, go to 174.

(18)

The wine is pale white in color; it tastes somewhat stronger than it looks. The Count asks you about yourself and your job. As you converse with him, you begin to feel somewhat

lightheaded and dimwitted. The Count notices and remarks that you look quite tired and that perhaps you should turn in for the evening. You agree, but as you gaze at him you notice a darkness in his features and manner that you did not sense before. You stand up, and the room begins to spin. You retch violently, reaching out to grab the cart, but in the next moment you black out. This is just as well, since you will never know what the Count and his minions do to your body! Next time, avoid white wine. Your brief adventure has ended.

(19)

You state your password and wait. After a few seconds, the door slides open silently. You peer inside and spot a table adorned with a white tablecloth set up on a step that splits the room into two levels. The room is well lit by a glass chandelier hanging from the ceiling. As you step inside, you are filled with wonder at the sight before you. A brilliant green crystal has been placed on the table. It is shaped like a starburst, with many jagged edges pointing out in all directions. It glows radiantly as you approach it. Go to 360.

(20)

Your blade whistles through the air, past her side, and into the fireplace. The crone glares at you in rage, throws the doll to the ground, and steps on it. You can scarcely breathe as a huge, crushing weight pins you down. Lose 4 stamina points. If you are still alive, the situation is grim. Will you crawl back to the door (293) knock over the table (296) or beg her for mercy (377)?

(21)

You do not sleep well. Strange, disturbing images drift through your mind. You see yourself running in a black background, with hideous screaming sounds all around you. Then, there are a man and a woman in white robes, stretching out their arms and beseeching you to listen; although their lips are moving no sounds come out. Then you see yourself again. You open a door which only leads to another one; you open this to find still another. The doors only lead to more doors. Finally, you find yourself in the room of a house. There is a body hanging from a rope tied around its neck. The rope is attached to a fan spinning around and around...you step forward to find that the body is...*yourself!* Go to 160.

(22)

After a few seconds, the playing begins again, only this time the notes are completely off key, as if a small child was banging on the keys at random. You are trying to decide what to do next when a cat, coal black with aqua blue eyes, jumps over the top and lands on the floor in front of you. It gazes deeply into your eyes for a moment before bounding to the door and scratching the surface. A glance around the room tells you that there is nothing here to search through. You open the door and the cat races down the hallway ahead and out of sight. Go to 224.

(23)

The door is locked. Do you have an iron key with a number engraved into it? If you do, you can use it by taking the number, doubling it, and turning to the section that matches

this new number. If you don't have the key, but you do have a set of lock-picks, go to 144. If you have neither, you can try the LUPUOMO room (385) continue down the hallway (172) or go back to where the landing splits (150).

(24)

Which bottle(s) did you send down the dumbwaiter? If you sent *only* the green, go to 51. If you sent the blue and the yellow, go to 136. If you sent the green and the red, go to 201. If you sent any other combination, go to 248.

(25)

You quickly pat the body down. There is absolutely nothing to be found on it. You glance back up to the face and suddenly *the eyes flick open!* You stifle a scream and pull back. Add 2 fear points. The "body" sits straight up and fixes you with a hideous gaze. The eyes are wide open and blazing with hellfire. You run to the door to find that it is locked. "Maledetto" the corpse snarls. "Curse you!" It stands up and steps out of the box. Then, incredibly, it *pulls off its own head* and flings it at you! You duck and an instant later it smashes into the door and rolls up to your feet. The ghastly thing is bleeding profusely from its nose, but its eyes are still staring at you. "Curse you, curse you! Rot in hell!" it cries, and then tries to bite your foot. This is too much. Add another fear point. You kick the head and it goes flying across the room and rebounds off the wall. You look up to see the headless corpse shambling towards you.

Headless Corpse: Skill 7 Stamina 7

If you win, go to 161.

(26)

How will you reenter the house? Ahead of you is a dark window that has been propped open. If you enter this way, go to 164. Around to your right is another window, this one with a light emanating from it. To try this, go to 254. A little to your left is a porch leading up to a door. If this way appeals to you, go to 185.

(27)

The thing looks like...but it can't be, you think to yourself. Then it leaps off the mantle and scurries up to your feet. You were right after all- this thing looks like, and is, a *severed human hand!* Add 1 fear point. You stumble back in shock, and the thing leaps at your neck and begins to strangle you!

Stringiamano: Skill 7 Stamina 3

If it wounds you, roll a die. On a roll of 1-4, it has rung your neck (lose 4 stamina points); on a roll of 5-6 it pokes out one of your eyes! Lose 3 skill points and 5 stamina points. If it strangles you three times, or pokes out both of your eyes, you pass out from shock and your adventure is over. If you win, go to 85.

(28)

As you set the dagger back on the alter, a faint murmuring from the congregation reaches your ears. Before you can decide what to do next, you feel a hand on your shoulder. "Father, are you feeling well tonight?" asks one of the men. "Perhaps he needs some air" another voice interjects. Your hood is pulled back and you hear cries of shock as your identity is revealed. Amid cries of "intruder!" you are bound and led away to a cell from which there is no escape. Your adventure is over.

(29)

You tear your eyes away from the brilliant green crystal sitting on the table- you know it's a trap. Stepping up directly in front of the table, you pull aside the tablecloth and your heart skips a beat as you spot the outline of a hidden compartment. When you place your hand on it, it immediately pops up. You pull away the fake wood and are immediately dazzled by the sight that meets your eyes. A brilliant, translucent, diamond shaped crystal lies before you, glowing in its own brilliance. You *know* that this is what you have been searching for...the thing needed to destroy the evil in this house forever...the Star of Ages. You lift it up and it glows through your fingers. A sudden jolt shakes you to the core- but not in a bad way. You experience a feeling that can only be described as a sort of regeneration. You are healed of all your wounds (restore your stamina to its initial level). You also, for the first time, feel supremely confident that your mission can succeed. Loss all fear points that you have accumulated so far, bringing your total down to zero. In addition, (though you don't know it yet) this artifact blesses you with a type of hyper-awareness, able to anticipate any kinetic movement. For as long as you possess the Star, you will fight all battles with a Skill of 16. Go to 38.

(30)

Having defeated your attacker, you drag the body under the table. You quickly search him to find that his vial is still intact. It contains a black liquid. You may slip the vial into your pocket to keep, if you wish. If you are in need of a weapon, you may take his dagger; remember to adjust your Skill score. Will you now leave the room by the door you entered and continue down the passage (114) exit from the door that the man entered from (182) or search the other robes (398)?

(31)

The figure looks towards the window, then back to the bed. It remains still for a few seconds, and you begin to grow restless, when suddenly it spins in your direction and flings a knife straight at you! Test your luck. If you are lucky, go to 8. If you are unlucky, go to 211.

(32)

You plunge the dagger into her chest without another word. Her eyes widen in shock, then her grip slowly relaxes and a faraway expression comes to her eyes. You grimly clean your blade on her vile robes, then exit the room. Could she have helped you? You will never know. Go to 286.

(33)

Without wasting a second, you jump in between the man and his victim, causing him to lose his grip. The woman falls back onto the ground where she sits up, shaking her head in a daze. Your action was brave, but it will cost you your life. The man is, in fact, a vampire; and locking his eyes on yours gives him total control over you. Your mind is in a panic as you feel yourself walk up to the vampire and drop to your knees. He covers you with his cape and your last human memory is a sharp stab as his teeth sink into your neck.

(34)

You slowly open the door and peer inside. The room contains a bed, neatly made; a chest, a desk with a lighted candelabrum, and a door to the side that you guess is a closet. If you'd like to ignore this room and continue down the hall, go to 335; otherwise you can enter and investigate the bed (307) the chest (61) the desk (109) or the door (2).

(35)

The brandy is a fine vintage from Firetop distilleries. The Count has decided on the same thing for himself. It is delicious, thick with a hint of sweetness and warm as it goes down. The Count asks you about yourself, your family, and your job. In turn he tells you about himself. Go to 100.

(36)

You stare out at the crowd from behind your hood; they stare back silently. Someone coughs; a fly buzzes by you; you glance back behind you to see the three men who brought you out here standing passively, staring straight ahead. It is clear that the congregation is waiting on you to do something. But what? You can light the candles (184) unroll the parchment (325) raise the dagger (197) or, if you kept the vial, pour its contents into the chalice (137).

(37)

The figure simply vanishes after one of your blows. You drop to your knees, sweating profusely. Swallowing hard, you stumble back to your feet and walk forward into the darkness. You run into a wall, and feeling it with your hands you grasp a door handle. You twist it open, eager to get away from this accursed room. You step into another dark room; this one however is not pitch black on account of a little light filtering in from the window of a door to the rear. That door leads back outside. You seem to be in a kitchen of sorts; pantries and cabinets are all around and a counter divides the room in two. You can spend some time searching here (162) or head for another door that lies straight ahead (218).

(38)

The crystal dims and you suddenly regain your senses. Slipping it into your pocket, you turn and leave the room. You walk back along the tunnel, through the gate, and back up into the darkness to the hidden entrance, which slides open automatically as you reach it. Stepping back into the hallway, you pause for a second to steel yourself for what lies ahead. Feeling the crystal in your pocket for reassurance, you follow the hallway as it bends to the right. Go to 348.

(39)

You hurl the pot at the Stringiamano. It shatters on the floor, wide of its mark. The hand flies up to your throat and you frantically defend yourself.

Stringiamano: Skill 8. Stamina ?

If you win consecutive attack rounds, the hand is stunned, go to 189. You will notice that there is no Stamina listed for your opponent. The only way to stun it this time is win two consecutive attack rounds.

(40)

The spectral image of a woman is coming into focus. It shines in a bright blue hue and you step back warily as the glare grows more brilliant. She seems to be wearing an elegant gown and holding some type of scepter. As the light starts to dim, the woman's features – skeletal features, you now see – shape into a hideous grin. The apparition cackles at you and raises its scepter. Add 2 fear points. The scepter begins to glow. Is there anyone or anything you can call upon for aid? If so, do it NOW – take the letters of the name and convert them into numbers (A=1, B=2,...Z=26.) Take this result, add 20, and turn to the section that matches this number. Otherwise, go to 240.

(41)

Back outside the room with the children, you may continue down the hall as it bears left (115) or go back to the split at the landing (150).

(42)

One of the balls hurtles straight towards your head but you are ready this time. You duck and feel the whistle of air as it flies over your head and crashes into the wall. The impact causes it to bounce back over and onto the table where it rolls to a stop and remains motionless. Several other balls from the table soon join the two remaining balls. From the corner or your eye, you notice a gleaming light that seems to be coming from one of the table pockets. If you hope to get to this, however, you will have to contend with the flying pool balls. The balls will attack four times. For each "round", do the following. First, roll two dice. This is the number of balls that will attack you in that given round. Next, for *each* ball that attacks you, roll one die. If the number is even, you have been pegged and must lose 1 stamina point; if the number is odd then you have avoided injury. You must survive four of these rounds before the balls become motionless again. If things aren't going well for you, you have the option of fleeing – you may go to 140 and choose another area to explore – but you may only do this in between rounds, not during one. If you stay and survive four rounds, go to 210.

(43)

The only way to sneak in is to gently prop open the window (it is unlocked) and silently let yourself in, hoping that Pravemi doesn't hear you or feel the breeze come through the window. Test your luck, adding 2 to the result. If you are lucky, go to 84. If you are unlucky, go to 247.

(44)

“I see...” he replies, slowly. He looks down in silence. You begin to question him, when he suddenly pulls out an axe and attacks you! “Die, infidel!” he screams, a wild look in his eyes. His attack is so sudden that you must fight the first two rounds of your combat unarmed (assuming you have a weapon to begin with!)

Old Man: Skill 5 Stamina 7

If you win, go to 299.

(45)

The woman reaches into her pocket and pulls out a long hairpin. Smiling wickedly, she plunges it into the doll. Her expression changes to surprise, then anger as she sees that you are unaffected. “Curse you, stranger! Who gave you Witch Bane?” she demands. You step forward, emboldened by these developments. “It doesn’t look like you’re in a position to make demands”, you counter.” “So say you,” she retorts. She places a hand on her collar, rubbing a necklace that she wears, and mumbles a few words. A panel in the wall suddenly slides back and a humanoid thing with pale white skin, long black hair, blood red eyes, and canine features steps out. It is rather frightening (add 1 fear point). If you don’t have a weapon, you had better beat a hasty retreat by leaving this room by heading back out to the hallway (286). If you have a weapon, you may still retreat, or fight this terror.

Rokkinok: Skill 9 Stamina 12

You may escape at any time; but remember the penalty for doing so. Go to 286 and continue down the hallway. If you win, you notice the Strega reciting another incantation! You draw your blade and hurl it at her. Go to 95.

(46)

Whoever the woman is, she’s of secondary importance at the moment. The one you’ve come for is now standing up, meeting your gaze with a look of unmasked evil. Pravemi addresses you: “It would have been better for you if you had simply stayed in your room, asleep. Much less” (he pauses) “painful”. You brandish your weapon. “This evil ends tonight, Pravemi. *Now.*” The Count scoffs at your boldness. “Then let us waste no more time.” He reaches under his robes and produces a wicked looking dagger with a curved blade. D’Onoffrio pulls out a similar weapon. Nodding at each other, they approach you slowly, attempting to encircle you. You realize that you must take the offensive. Who will you attack first? Pravemi (267) or D’Onoffrio (145)?

(47)

You decide that you really don’t want to spend any more time with “Cassandra”. You turn and bolt out of the room, a mocking laugh at your back. Go to 105.

(48)

You run your hands along the door, knock on it a couple of times, and even kick it, but nothing happens. Perhaps it can only be opened from the other side? You decide that you have wasted enough time here and leave the room. Go to 378.

(49)

You pour yourself some water as you stand by the window, contemplating the situation. Outside, through the gloom, you can make out an open field, with a line of trees in the distance. There is also some sort of building a little ways off. It is much smaller than the house. Perhaps a guesthouse? You down the last of the water and replace the glass on the nightstand. There is a sudden whispering, windy sort of sound coming from your left. You turn towards it and freeze. Go to 371.

(50)

You take a step forward, irresistibly bound by the will of the Soul Reaper. Just as you are about to be engulfed by the blackness, your necklace begins to glow and spark with a mystical energy. You stop, your will suddenly restored. The mass in front of darkens for a moment, then fades. All is quiet. Rubbing the necklace and murmuring silent thanks, you exit the room. Go to 335.

(51)

You wait for a few minutes, and just as you begin to grow impatient, the ropes suddenly begin to move and the tray comes back up. As it does, you see that a gold key is now lying on it! Hesitantly, you take it and slip it into your pocket. There is no more movement on the rope. Will you now enter the Strega room (340) or go back out to the hallway (286)?

(52)

You launch yourself at the spirit. Another ball comes whizzing towards you. You throw yourself to the ground, roll, and regain your feet in one fluid motion. Then you reach the spirit. The Star of Ages that you carry gives you the power to wound spirits and apparitions, chipping away at their essence until they are no more. It will still be a tough fight.

Apparition: Skill 14 Stamina 16

If you win, go to 316.

(53)

“Oh? And where is that?” he asks, with feigned innocence. You mumble something vague about up north, where they simply freeze the bodies. “I see,” he says, slowly. “Yes, of course, so much more convenient. Innovative, I dare say. Well, that’s about it. I need to get back to work, and I’m sure the master is waiting for you. Ciao.” With that, he turns away from you. You turn back towards the door, when there is a sharp whistling sound and a split second later a dart imbeds itself into your neck! You quickly pull it out and turn to face Petruccio. Go to 93.

(54)

You leave the room of bones behind. How did you come to be here, underneath the house? By finding a secret passageway (330) or by falling through a trapdoor (83)?

(55)

You are standing in the middle of the hallway between 2 doors. The door to your left is unmarked. The other door is labeled LUPOUOMO. Will you try the unmarked door (23) the other door (385) go back to where the landing splits (150) or continue down the hallway (172)?

(56)

The man pulls out another chair and invites you to be seated. He makes some general comments about the weather, as well as showing you his copious notes about the local flora and fauna that he eventually plans to publish. You show interest in what he is saying while trying to keep your comments as neutral as possible, not wanting to reveal too much about yourself before you know where his loyalties lie. After a little while, there is a lull in the conversation and you decided that now is the time to inquire about something. Will you ask him about passwords (7) secret rooms (243) or about his opinion of Count Pravemi (183)?

(57)

Taking a deep breath, you step away from the tree and call out to the Vampire, for that is exactly what you are dealing with. It pauses for a second, then looks up at you. Test your luck. If you are lucky, go to 219. If you are unlucky, go to 173.

(58)

A dagger flies past your head and clatters off the wall. Without pausing, you rush around the corner and back up the passage, through the room where you killed the priest, and out the door. Now decide whether to continue down the passage you had been following (114) or turn back and make your way back up to the bedroom (397).

(59)

Without wasting a second, you throw open the door and stumble out, almost running headlong into two men wearing identical black robes. The shock on their faces has barely registered before you slam your fist into one; he slumps to the floor senseless. The second man, somewhat younger than the first, quickly pulls out a dagger from beneath his robes. You will have to fight:

Acolyte: Skill 7 Stamina 8

If you win within 5 rounds of combat, go to 320. If you are still fighting after 5 rounds, stop and immediately go to 79.

(60)

The door opens into a rather bare room. There is a drink cart leaning against a dumbwaiter set into a wall. As you step in, you suddenly notice *another* door to your

immediate right; it is labeled STREGA. Now, will you leave this room and continue down the hall (286) examine the drink cart and dumbwaiter (375) or go into the Strega room (340)?

(61)

You walk up to the chest, flip it open, and jump back in shock at the sight of a decapitated head! Add 2 fear points. The head seems to have belonged to a middle-aged, bald man. As you are still taking this in, *the eyes flick open!* It fixes you with a penetrating stare, then seems to recognize you and its expression changes to one of fear. “No! Please” it begs, “please, don’t, don’t! Leave me alone! No! Wait! Arghhh!” Add another fear point. You slam the chest shut, but can still hear its muffled cries. Will you investigate the bed (307) the desk (109) the door (2) or have you had enough of this room, and leave (208)?

(62)

You sink comfortably into the chair, enjoying the brief chance to relax. A few minutes go by, and despite yourself you begin to nod off. With a start, you realize that you are wasting time here. But when you try to get up, find that you are somehow stuck to the chair. Your arms and legs won’t budge. Add 1 fear point. As if that weren’t bad enough, the fireplace suddenly crackles to life of its own accord. A second later (horrors!) the chair you are immobilized on begins to slide straight towards the blazing fire! You shriek in terror. Add 2 more fear points. Go to 187.

(63)

Holding your candle securely, you cautiously step into the tunnel. Shadows dance off the walls in the flickering light. You walk forward slowly, wary not to lose your footing on the loose gravel ground. The walls are rough and uneven, reminding you of a mineshaft. The descent gets fairly steep for a while before leveling out. After about 50 meters or so, the tunnel ends in front of two dark oaken doors. Will you open the one on the left (200) or the right (352) or will you instead turn back and make your way back up to the passageway (282)?

(64)

“The man was very, very sad,” continues Aldo. “He brought many flowers to her grave, and he prayed very hard to the Father and the Holy Son and Spirit to bring his daughter back. But she never came back.” His eyes close for a moment, then spring open to reveal a suddenly intense gaze. “Then one day, he started praying to someone else.” Anna begins to shiver, eyes wide open in fear. “He prayed to someone who gave him everything he wanted. He got his daughter back – but he had to give something up...something special. And after this, the man felt no happiness, nor sadness, nor anger, fear, love, or anything. Life!” the boy is shouting at you now, his face contorted into an ugly mask. “Power! Strength! Whatever you want!” The girl begins to sob, covering her ears with her hands and shaking her head back and forth. “My realm is yours! My powers are at your disposal! You will live forever in me!” The candles are flickering furiously, as if in a wind. The boy stands up and puts his face next to yours. “GIVE ME...*YOUR SOUL*”. Go to 214.

(65)

Brandishing your blade, you swiftly step behind the beast and slit its throat. It coughs, sputters, and gurgles for a few seconds, then hits the floor with a crash. Add 1 luck point. As you step out of the room, you hear footsteps coming from the same direction that you did. You decide not to risk sticking around, so you follow the hall as it winds to the right. Go to 172.

(66)

You try inserting the key in the lock, but it doesn't fit. Go back to 232 and choose another action.

(67)

As quick as a snake, the man's hand darts forward and stabs your arm with a dagger! You cry out in pain and shock. Before you can react, he pins you beneath his bulk. The other occupants of the cell are powerless to help you. This man was sent to prison by the Count. Capturing you will gain him the master's favor once more. He has saved his own miserable hide, but you will never escape from the house.

(68)

You uncork the bottle and carefully sniff the contents. A sharp, acrid odor drifts out. Warily, you take a sip...and immediately spit it out. Whatever this is, it certainly doesn't belong on a drink cart! You recap the bottle and set it back down. Go to 88.

(69)

The door opens into a circular room that is lit by mounted torches set high in the wall. Three figures lie on the earthy ground, shrinking back in fright as you enter. One is an old crone whose clothing hangs in tatters, save for a rose colored scarf wrapped around her head. She gazes up at you silently. The next one is a middle-aged man wearing a dark robe that looks up at you with an expression of utter hopelessness. The third is a man of rather rotund proportions that lies on his back, eyes shut. It is he who has been making the moaning sound this entire time. He, too, is wearing a dark robe. If you wish to approach one of them, will it be the old woman (233) the silent man (120) or the moaning man (342)? If you wish to address them all at once, go to 334. If, now that you have satisfied your curiosity, you merely wish to shut the door, head back down the tunnel and up the steps, go to 86. This option means that you will be heading down the hallway on the main floor.

(70)

Pravemi fixes you with a mirthless smile. "Well. It seems that our guest has finished his sightseeing. But we have one more area to show you, which we insist that you don't miss." Cassandra laughs. "Yes," she joins in, "since you are so inquisitive, perhaps you'd like to see the dungeons? They are quite agreeable this time of year". D'Onoffrio remains silent. You realize that you had better take the initiative if you hope to survive here. You decide to attack – who? Cassandra (318) Pravemi (82) or D'Onoffrio (387)?

(71)

“Grisela”, you whisper into her ear. Upon hearing this her eyes light up in alertness. She looks deeply into your eyes. “Child...” she whispers. “So you are the one. Do you still have the resolve to rid this house of its evil?” You nod silently. “Very well”, she continues. There is only one thing on this blessed earth that will see you through to victory. You must find the Star of Ages. This relic has existed for centuries. It is indestructible, and for this reason the master keeps it locked away in the most secret room of this house. I do not know its exact whereabouts, except for the fact that it lies somewhere *under* the house. There is one more piece of aid that I can give you”. She pauses for a few moments, as if to gather her strength. “The door that holds the relic can only be opened with a password. That password is *Malevia*. Alas, I fear that there are other traps and dangers to avoid, that I know not of. Good luck, child”. Do you have any parchment? If so, go to 142. If not, go to 311.

(72)

Pulling out the key, praying that it works, you slip it into the keyhole and turn. The door opens! You roll out and kick the door shut behind you. You are out of immediate danger, but the pain does not completely go away, although it does slacken considerably. You must reduce your skill by 2 for the rest of this adventure, due to the constant state of pain you are in. You exit the room. Go to 286.

(73)

You suddenly realize that the bodies of Pravemi and D’Onoffrio have disappeared. Even the stringiamano is gone. But you don’t have time to dwell on these observations as the woman addresses you again, standing up off the couch. “Who am I?” she asks playfully. “I am Cassandra, daughter of the great Count Pravemi.” A faraway look comes into her eyes. “The fool. He had everything – and everything wasn’t enough.” She eyes you again. “Father always had to have things his way. Always. But one day, he lost his daughter. And then, for the first time, his money couldn’t help him.” You notice a change coming over Cassandra. – you can’t quite place it yet, but she seems...darker, more haggard, her beauty changing into something else. “No. He loved his daughter, and had to have her back – by *any* means, at any cost. And oh, what a cost”. Alarmed, you notice that her teeth have seemed to grow; they flash in her mouth as she speaks. Her skin has definitely taken on a darker tint. She reminds you of – there is not better way to put it – a cat. If you have the Star of Ages, go to 287. If not, go to 391.

(74)

“But, my friend,” says the Count, following you to your car. “Please let me atone for this most unfortunate occurrence.” You pop open the trunk and throw your luggage inside. A few drops of rain begin to fall. Ignoring the Count’s entreaties, you get into your car and start it up. Or rather, you *try* to start it up. The engine turns over once, sputters and dies. It seems that the long trip has finally done it in. You smile sheepishly at the Count; it appears as though you will have to accept his offer after all. Go to 118.

(75)

You step into the room, quietly close the door behind you, and take a deep breath. Gathering your courage, you call out a friendly greeting. The playing abruptly stops. Silence. After a few moments, you call out again, apologizing for your intrusion, stating that you have no ill intentions towards the player. Again, silence. You start to feel nervous. What have you gotten yourself into? Add 1 fear point and go to 22.

(76)

The armor lies scattered all over the floor. You are about to turn away when you notice the shield. It has the design of a golden griffin on its face. If you wish to take it, you may add 2 to your attack strength in all future combats. However, you must discard any items that don't fit in your pockets. Now will you examine the chest (92) or the painting (12)?

(77)

You cautiously make your way towards the figure, blending in with the trees as much as possible. As you get closer, you begin to see the details in the dim light. The man is tall and pale, with jet-black hair. He wears a long black cape, fastened across the neck with a gold clasp. His head is bowed and his eyes are shut; he appears to be in deep concentration. His lips, however, are moving. It appears as if he is repeating the same words or phrase over and over. Will you silently move closer (202) or walk right up to him and start a conversation (6)?

(78)

As you are thumbing through a large black volume on witchcraft, a sudden rustling sound catches your ears. It seems to be coming from behind you...no, in front...now from above...you slowly replace the book on the shelf and take a cautious step backwards. You spot a sudden movement from the corner of your eye, but whatever it is is too quick. But something is oddly familiar about it...suddenly, there is a tug on your pants above your foot. You look down to see...a severed human hand. The stringiamano! *It's back!* It has tracked you down and it wants revenge. It leaps up to your throat. You swat it away, your reflexes honed from your last encounter with it. You rush towards the door but it scuttles ahead of you. You back away, desperately looking for a means to deal with the situation. In your haste, you back into the nightstand, lose your balance, slam into the bookshelves, and hit the ground. You turn, helpless, as the hand scuttles along the floor with unnerving speed straight towards your face...go to 212.

(79)

While you are in the throes of your fight, you suddenly feel a sharp pain in your leg. You look down to discover the other man, the one you had knocked out, has regained his senses and plunged his knife into you! Your brief second of hesitation is all the time your adversary needs to leap forward and plunge his dagger into your heart. Your adventure is over.

(80)

"Eh" grunts the man. "Not bad. Not good, mind you, but you could have done worse. Such is life." Go to 124.

(81)

The door is thrown open and four men covered in black hoods storm into the room. They brandish wicked looking daggers, and you realize that it is useless to resist. The men subdue you, throw a bag over your head, and march you away. When you regain your senses, you are lying in a dark cell. It slowly dawns on you that there is no escaping this place and that you have failed.

(82)

You rush at Pravemi, who remains motionless. When you are a step in front of him, a trapdoor suddenly opens and you plunge downwards. You fall twenty feet or so and land in a small, bare room. There is no escaping this prison.

(83)

You follow the dark tunnel slowly, still in pain from your bruises. It stretches farther than you would think possible before a light in the distance catches your eyes. You eventually reach a T-junction. Torches mounted on the wall give off a comforting light. Looking to your left, you see that the tunnel continues to be bathed in light, while the tunnel to your right disappears into darkness. You decide to follow the lit tunnel. Go to 319.

(84)

You slip into the room without a sound. Your heart begins to pound as you slowly approach Pravemi from behind. You are a few feet away when he puts down his book. You freeze. He stares at the fireplace, motionless. Minutes pass. You are just getting around to approaching him again when he suddenly begins to shimmer, like a reflection on the water, and then he disappears! What is this? A trick? Something more sinister? Add 1 fear point. You may now exit this room via the door to your right (165) or, if you want to risk remaining in this room to search it, go to 353.

(85)

The ghastly hand lies at your feet and you kick it across the room. You rub your raw throat and examine the room again. There seems to be nothing unusual about the window. The fireplace seems normal as well. You are about to examine the desk when you glance back at the hand and notice that the damned thing has begun to twitch and writhe! Will you risk a cursory examination of the desk (176) or beat a hasty retreat back out to the hallway (171)?

(86)

As you walk down the hallway, you pass a door on your left that is slightly ajar. You silently peek into what appears to be a small bedroom. A short, heavyset man is bent over the bed, stuffing clothes into a suitcase. Something about his bearing strikes you as odd...and then you realize that the man is not standing bent over, but is in fact a hunchback. Will you enter the room (386) or continue down the hall (367)?

(87)

The lid flips back easily. The chest is mostly empty save for several daggers and a meat cleaver lying underneath a blanket. If you are in need of a weapon, you may take a

dagger or the meat cleaver (remember to adjust your Skill). Now, if you have not rested yet, you may do so and also partake of the food while you're at it (365) or play it safe and leave it alone (158). Otherwise, you may leave this room and examine the other door (352) or head back (282).

(88)

You suddenly notice that someone is tugging on the rope of the dumbwaiter! If you want to ignore this, you sense that it probably isn't a good idea to tarry here. You can leave by the door you entered (286) or the Strega door (340). Consequently, you may send a bottle down to whoever is asking for one. Decide which bottle or bottles you will send down, then go to 24. Remember that there are four: blue, red, green, and yellow.

(89)

You land the final blow and he slumps to the ground. You quickly search the body to find only a leather wallet. You flip it open to reveal several crisp notes that you may take. You may also take his weapon if you are in need of one. You step out of the room and hear footsteps coming along the hall from the direction that you came from. You decide it probably wouldn't be wise to tarry here, so you follow the hall as it winds to the right. Go to 172.

(90)

The hall continues ahead before bending to your left and ending at a door. You hear quiet voices on the other side. A shiver runs down your spine and you feel a rush of adrenaline course through your body. You aren't sure why you are having these reactions, but one of the voices does sound vaguely familiar. You take a deep breath and open the door....go to 128.

(91)

You raise the chalice up above your head, bring it down to your lips and drink. It tastes like a light wine. As you set the chalice back on the altar, one of the men steps forward, unrolls the parchment, and reads aloud in a booming voice: "Brothers! Brethren! We have gathered here for the feast of the black moon, holiest of days. We pray that our sacrifice is worthy in the eyes of the master." As this is being read, one of the other men steps forward and begins pouring some type of oil over the body of the girl, who doesn't flinch. The first man finishes his speech "...the great one we do not name". At this, the congregation collectively bow their heads. The remaining man steps up, picks up the dagger, and bows as he places it into your hands. The men then step away as the congregation raise their heads and stare up at you. You know what is expected from you at this point. Will you kill the girl (205) or turn and make a break for it back towards the alcove (133)?

(92)

You walk up to the chest and test the lid. It is unlocked and flips back easily. Inside, you find an unmarked parchment. Strange. If you wish to keep the parchment, you roll it up and tuck it into your shirt. You may now investigate the armor (209) or the painting (12).

(93)

Anger turns to fear as your limbs start to grow heavy. You stumble out of the laboratory and manage to get a few meters up the tunnel before the anesthetic takes full effect and you crumble to the ground in complete paralysis. The man calmly walks up to you and proceeds to drag you back. “Oof, a heavy one here. Yes. ‘Study hard and learn a trade, Petruccio’ my mother always told me”. The man labors to lift you onto the table. “Learn a trade? Much better to go into business for myself, mama”. He unbuttons your shirt. “Be my own boss. Yes. Well, except for the master.” He pulls out a scalpel. “Now make sure you don’t move, O.K.? Hahaha. I always kill myself with that one”...

(94)

You begin to panic, throwing glances around the room and imagining that something horrific is going to step out of the wall and kill you. From deep within yourself, you find the strength to stop and take several deep breaths. Your heart gradually slows, and silence returns to the room once again. To your surprise, your hand is back. An illusion? Your imagination? Feeling your hand with the other one in relief, you may now examine the painting, if you have yet to do so (227) or exit this room (206).

(95)

The dagger whistles through the air, swift and true, imbedding itself in her chest. She screeches, dropping the doll, and claws at the blade frantically. You lunge for the doll and pull the pint out. The effect is instantaneous – restore all Stamina points you have lost in this room. Meanwhile, the Strega has pulled the dagger out but you quickly rush over and pin her down. Her look of hatred changes to one of fear as you grab the blade and point it down at her. “Wait, stranger,” she rasps. “I can give you helpful knowledge, if you spare me. I know what you seek”. Will you agree to this bargain (250) or do you think that she is merely playing for time and kill her outright (32)?

(96)

You dive and roll away as the liquid splashes into the wall behind you. It hisses and steams as it drips down to the floor. You quickly come to your feet as the demon, which by now has lost any semblance of humanity, crouches on all four legs and pounces at you. You meet its charge, your senses guided by the Star of Ages that you carry, the instrument of good in this battle against evil.

Hell Demon: Skill 15 Stamina 19.

If you are wounded, write down this section number and go to 400 immediately. If you win, go to 273.

(97)

You move to the center of the room and boldly stand your ground. The steps move closer, and you can hear voices as well. The doorknob turns, and two men in identical black robes stride into the room. You remain motionless, and they almost run into you before noticing you are there and drawing back in shock. One look at you is enough to tell them

that you are an outsider. You demand to know what is going on in the house, but they are uninterested in conversation. One of them silently draws a dagger from underneath his robes and attacks you while the other runs out of the room. You are just getting around to dispatching your attacker before the door flies open and six more black-robed men rush in. You cannot hope to defeat them all and are quickly overpowered. You are taken to a special holding cell beneath the house where you will be detained until the next feast of the black moon, when you will be sacrificed. Your adventure is over.

(98)

You remove the vial from your pocket and dump the liquid into the chalice, where it seems to dilute into the liquid that is already there. For your next action, will you drink the contents of the chalice (16) raise the dagger (197) or unroll the parchment (325)?

(99)

You walk up to the mirror. It is of an oval, elongated shape. You flip it around once, then examine your reflection. Nothing seems to be out of the ordinary. Now you may examine the bureau (270) or leave the room (378).

(100)

Pravemi, Count of Orvieto, comes from a highly distinguished family that has maintained the estate and its surrounding land for generations. For many years, the family's income was based on agricultural means. Gradually, modernization spread throughout the country, to the point that the farming industry gradually trickled away. When the Count's daughter unexpectedly passed away a few years ago, Pravemi was left as the last surviving member of his family. He has chosen to remain at his residence with a few servants, refusing to sell his land. At that moment, D'Onoffrio reappears and whispers something in Pravemi's ear. The Count begs your pardon and excuses himself, stating that he will return shortly. Go to 134.

(101)

You turn back to the altar to try and decide what to do next, when suddenly your hood is pulled back. There are gasps of surprise from the congregation as your true identity is revealed. The game is up; you are quickly subdued and led to a cell from which there is no escape.

(102)

Back out in the hallway, you may try the other door, if you haven't already (238) or follow the hall as it winds to the left (90).

(103)

You cautiously open the door and look in. In the center of the room, a flickering lamp on a wooden table gives off a dim light. At the rear of the room is a long wooden box – a coffin? Other than this, the room is bare. You can walk in and investigate the box (310) or close the door and continue on (207).

(104)

While you were dispatching your second opponent, the remaining man seems to have lost his nerve, turning and running back around the corner. He could very well be on his way to rounding up reinforcements, in which case you would be finished. You decide that you had better leave immediately. You retrace your steps back along the walkway, through the small room and out the door, continuing along the tunnel. Go to 114. Alternatively, you may make your way back up to the bedroom (397).

(105)

Outside Cassandra's room, things are very quiet. If you haven't already, you can open the other door (357) or continue down the hall (90).

(106)

You take a flying leap directly into the man's back. You, him, and the woman land in a heap on the ground. You know that few people tangle with Vampires and live to tell the tale; but that is exactly what you are dealing with. If you have a weapon, go to 265. If you are fighting unarmed, go to 129.

(107)

You slowly open the door. To avoid startling the children, you gently knock on the door as they look up. "Oh, hello," says the boy, as if expecting you. "Won't you come in? Move over, Anna." "Hello!" Anna greets you, her blue eyes beaming. She seems delighted to see you. She has curly, light brown hair and is wearing a bright blue dress. "Aldo and I never get visitors! Won't you sit down? May I offer you a drink?" She stands up and makes a great show as if admitting you into a grand dining room. You politely refuse, and sit down on the rug next to them. Aldo, wearing a blue sailor's outfit, moves over to make room. Both children stare at you eagerly, as if you had a present for them. Somewhat at a loss, you ask them how they are doing and inquire about their favorite games to play. They reply that they are doing well and enjoy hopscotch, playacting, and storytelling. Go to 272.

(108)

You cast your eyes along the hall. On a stand, underneath a mirror, is a jewelry box. An idea springs into your mind. You rush to the box and flip back the lid. Empty space – enough of it. You quickly turn back around and spot the hand racing towards you. Taking a step forward, you pretend to slip on the carpeting. You wait for a second and then thrust the open box in front of your face. The hand crashes into it a split second later and you slam the lid shut. The Stringiamano's new prison is sturdy and made of wood. You place the box on the floor and, just as you had hoped, the Stringiamano is packed in too tightly to wiggle out. Nevertheless, you decide that the only way you can be sure of avoiding future surprise attacks is to take the hand with you. Remember to mark the wooden box on your adventure sheet. Go to 316.

(109)

You walk up to the desk and begin pulling open the drawers, looking for anything useful. There is an abrupt change in the lighting; you slowly raise your head to see the candelabrum floating in the air. Add 1 fear point. The candles begin to float towards you

and you back away. After a few seconds, they float back down to the desk and remain motionless. It looks like someone or something doesn't appreciate your inquisitiveness. Shrugging your shoulders, turn away from the desk to decide on another course of action. Will you investigate the bed (307) the chest (61) the door (2) or will you leave this room (208)?

(110)

There is a lit candle on a stand next to the bed. You take it with you and cautiously approach the closet. The door is hanging open, and the wretched zombie is lying on the floor motionless. You start moving the clothes aside to step in, when something pulls on your neck! You spin around, only to discover that you had caught yourself on a hanger. Feeling a little foolish, you step inside and look around. Clothes are strewn about. You walk in the direction the zombie came from. Holding the candle up, you can make out the outline of a door! There is no keyhole or other obvious way to get through. Test your luck. If you are lucky, go to 163. If you are unlucky, go to 48.

(111)

As you start to crawl out, your sleeve catches on one of the bedposts. As you pull it away, there is an almost inaudible click and a gentle clinking sound. A small compartment has opened up and released an iron key! You hold it up and see the number "66" engraved into it. Add one luck point and go to 174.

(112)

You uncork the bottle and carefully sniff the contents – it is odorless. You raise it to your lips and take a gulp. It has a faint aftertaste of butterscotch. However, there are no effects of any kind. Go to 88.

(113)

Three volumes in particular catch your attention. You can peruse a volume on witchcraft (203) leaf through a tome on spirit summoning (306) or study a book of local history (121).

(114)

You follow the tunnel as it winds around to the left. There are fewer candles at this point, and the way gradually becomes darker. You are soon forced to slow down to a very slow pace. You begin to contemplate turning around and going back when you suddenly feel a light breeze on your face. Intrigued, you continue ahead. Go to 188.

(115)

As the hall bends to the left, you see that there is a door to your immediate right, labeled TIFOSO STRANO. There is another door a little further ahead on the left. The hallway continues for a little while before winding left. Will you enter the TIFOSO STRANO room (147) or continue down the hall, towards the other door (166)?

(116)

The hallway winds to the left ahead of you. On the right, you spot an unmarked door. As you draw nearer, you can hear a sound coming from behind the door. You stop for a moment, puzzled. And then it dawns on you – the sound on the other side of the door is that of someone playing a piano! The tune is light and melodic, quite out of place for such an evil house. Under normal circumstances, it would not have taken you so long to place it. Now you must decide if you will silently open the door (123) or follow the hallway around to the left (224).

(117)

The man jumps onto the bed and, after tearing his shirt off, begins to claw at himself, yelping and barking like a dog. However, you are relieved to see that he isn't sprouting hair or growing fangs. It appears that he is simply mad. You begin making your way towards the door when he abruptly stops. You turn to see him looking past you, towards the door, eyes wide open in fear. You look back at the door...and then you hear it – a scratching sound coming from the other side. You hear a rush of movement and spin back around towards the man just in time to see him dive out the open window! You rush over to it and peer out to find him lying motionless on the ground thirty feet below. You slowly raise your head and turn back to the door, where the scratching has grown noticeably louder...go to 337.

(118)

You follow D'Onoffrio and the Count inside, down a long entrance hall beset with beautiful marble statues and a fountain. This leads to a plush dining room, where your host bids you to be seated on a velvet divan. D'Onoffrio disappears into another part of the house, but returns shortly, rolling a cart laden with bottles containing an assortment of beverages. "Now then, my friend", begins the Count. "Perhaps we can atone for this misunderstanding. As I told you, I am expecting out of town guests, and it would be quite an embarrassment to me if I had to tell them that their trip was for nothing! Therefore, I am prepared to compensate you quite handsomely if you could stay the night and for a few hours tomorrow." You nod in agreement as D'Onoffrio offers you a drink. Would you like some:

- Brandy? (35)
- Port Wine? (138)
- Club Soda? (277)
- Coffee? (399)
- Chablis Wine? (18)
- Just some water? (300)

(119)

Whoever the figure is, he certainly doesn't mean you well, trying to sneak unnoticed into your room. You decide to try and subdue him first and ask questions later. Having made up your mind, you rush the figure and knock him into the wall. The cowl flops back to reveal a man with pale white skin and thinning hair. You pin him to the floor and demand to know who he is and why he was trying to enter your room unnoticed. At first, he struggles ferociously, but you grimly maintain your hold. Finally, he stops. "Stranger", he

rasps, “perhaps you are wiser than the other souls who have wandered into this house, or perhaps you have merely postponed your own death. At any rate, I am one who follows his order, and his orders, to the best of his abilities. Now I have no love for the master, and so I’ll give you some advice.” His voice becomes a whisper. “This is an evil place. There are unimaginable horrors within these walls. Escape if you may. Or, if the spirits attempt to convince you that you can defeat the master, and you are foolish enough to believe it, just remember this – *Orion wears a silver belt*. Now,” he continues, his voice back to normal, “Kill me if you must, or set me free. I can give you no more information.” Your head is swimming with all that you have learned. You stand up warily, and the man reaches into his robe and pulls out a dagger, which he gives to you. “One more thing,” he says, as he knocks on the wall and a panel slides open. “Do not attempt to follow this passage. It will only lead to your death. Leave by the doorway.” He lifts his head as a soft whispering fills the air. “Yes, they have already come for your aid. Little good it will do them, I’ll wager.” He snorts derisively, then disappears into the wall as the panel slides shut. Remember to adjust your Skill stat. The sound grows louder and you turn around. Go to 371.

(120)

You approach the man warily, but you soon see that he is friendly. “You obviously do not belong here, stranger,” he chatters excitedly. “and how you have managed to wander around in this house and live I’ll never know. But tell me, are you here to put an end to the Master’s reign of terror?” You nod eagerly. “Very well,” he continues. “During your exploits in this house, you may or may not have learned that you will need a very special item to succeed in your endeavor. The weapon you seek lies in a room that is located somewhere in the catacombs underneath the house. The door to this room cannot be opened by force. Only a password will aid you”. He takes a breath. “My name is Quintus. I am sorry to say that for years, I partook of the evil of this house as one of Pravemi’s head priests. After a time, for whatever reason, my heart was unclouded, and I sought to escape from the house, in the hope of someday returning to put an end to the horror. But alas, I was captured. During my time of service, however, I was gained Pravemi’s trust. I know that the password that unlocks the door of the room that you seek is *Memnoch*. I pray that that this information is still relevant.” You thank Quintus for his aid. You also ask if he would like to join you, but he is too weak to continue. Now, if you haven’t already, you may speak with the crone (233) or the other man (342). Otherwise, you exit this room, go back up the stairs, and explore the hallway (86).

(121)

You open the book to discover that it has been hollowed out. A small bottle containing a clear liquid has been taped to the inside. If you are in need of an antidote, go to 156. If not, you decide against drinking an unknown liquid but you may take the bottle with you if you wish. Will you now examine the book on witchcraft (203) spirit summoning (306) or will you leave the room and continue down the hall (186)?

(122)

You lay still, taking slow breaths. Faint light filters into the room from the window, and your eyes soon adjust to the dark. You roll over to your right and suddenly spot a figure

in a dark cloak and a hood standing near the bed. As you stare, it slowly takes a step towards you. Whoever it is, his intentions cannot be good. Add one fear point. It is time to act. You slowly stretch out your arms and yawn, as if in a deep slumber. The figure instantly freezes. Then, in the next instant, you throw the covers back and roll off to the left. There is a whistling sound and an instant later the window shatters. You grab the pitcher off the stand and hurl it across the room. It hits the figure straight on and he staggers back as it shatters on the floor. You glance at the door, but no sooner do you contemplate escape than the figure leaps across the bed straight at you. You must defend yourself.

Unknown Assailant: Skill 8 Stamina 10.

If you win, go to 225.

(123)

You slip the door open a crack and peer inside. The room you gaze into is rather small. The piano is directly in your sight but whoever is playing it is on the other side and obstructed from your view. Will you creep into the room (288) step into the room and clear your throat (75) or close the door and continue around the corner (224)?

(124)

With that, he flops back down on his mattress and begins humming to himself. You try to question him, but he is unresponsive. You decide that he must be insane and therefore cannot possess any useful information. You leave the room and continue down the hall. Go to 166.

(125)

You remember that you have a lighter in your pocket. You fish it out and flick back the cache. The light lasts for a few seconds before it begins to burn your finger and you put it out. You try again. After a few rounds of this process, you notice a small lever concealed in the wall directly above your head. You pull it down and the wall silently slides aside. You step back into the bedroom, which remains as you left it, and head out the door. Go to 378.

(126)

You uncork the bottle and carefully sniff the contents. As far as you can tell, it is some kind of liquor. You take a small sip – delicious! It is a type of mint-flavored spirit, which warms up your insides. Despite yourself, you take another sip...then a swig...and another swig. Soon, half the bottle is gone and you are grinning happily to one in particular. You may restore 3 stamina points, and due to your relaxed state, subtract 2 fear points. Unfortunately, you're a little *too* relaxed – reduce your skill by 2 for the next ten sections that you read. Go to 88.

(127)

The words sound strange to you as they roll off your tongue. There is silence. Nothing. You replace the book, feeling silly, when an echoing whisper fills the air. You look

around expectantly, and – there! In front of the door you spot a shimmering white image coming into focus. A hooded figure approaches, standing motionless. The image flickers as if made of flame. It then reaches up with ghostly white hands and flips back its hood. The face of an old man stares at you impassively. It seems to be examining you, but this only lasts for a moment. Suddenly, its face melts away into a grotesque, evil looking skull. It stretches out a pair of skeletal hands and advances towards you. You scream and draw back, but there is no escape. The specter envelops you in its life-sucking embrace and you fall to the ground, an empty husk.

(128)

You step into a large living room. An empty fireplace is off to the side. A wooden table with three chairs is on the other side. Your attention, however, is immediately drawn to the couch in the center and the three people who look up at you as you enter. Pravemi. D’Onoffrio. And lastly, a beautiful young woman with black hair and blue eyes. If you’ve met Cassandra, go to 292. If not, go to 46.

(129)

You grasp the vampire by the throat, trying to strangle the unholy life out of it, but it possesses an inhuman strength and flings you back to the base of the tree. It turns, eyes glowing with a terrible rage, and leaps at you. You manage to roll away a split second before it crashes into the tree. The vampire staggers back, momentarily stunned, and you seize the moment by attacking it. Resolve the battle:

Vampire: Skill 8 Stamina 11.

If you win, you manage to knock it senseless, and searching its robes, you find a pearl-handled dagger which you quickly plunge into its heart, ending its reign of terror. You may keep the dagger as a weapon. Go to 4.

(130)

You step back into the room and approach the wall. You run your hands along its smooth face, trying to find the secret door. You tap the wall in several places, to no avail. You are about to give up when the panel suddenly slides aside on its own. You peer inside to find a tunnel that disappears into inky blackness. Will you follow this tunnel (141) or step into the hallway outside the room (378)?

(131)

You call out for Hazrukiel, hoping desperately that the spirit will come to your aid. The apparition points her scepter at you and a bolt of energy shoots out. Before it reaches you, however, it explodes into multicolored pieces as if it had hit a wall. You stare in amazement as another spectral image forms in front of you. This one is of a man – a man clothed in a familiar pure white cloak with a cowl. Ignoring you, he strides purposefully towards your attacker. She shrieks in rage but seems powerless as Hazrukiel pulls the scepter from her. Stepping closer, he engages her in a forceful embrace. She struggles violently, blue and green sparks flying everywhere. After a few seconds, they both fade from view. Go to 316.

(132)

You insert the key into the lock and it turns. You slowly open the door and look inside. The room is dimly lit by a gas lamp resting on a wooden table. The only things of note are a painting of what seems to be a castle, hanging on the wall; and a long and narrow ceramic vase placed on the floor on the other side of the room. As far as you can guess, this is some kind of storeroom for extra furniture; but then why lock it? You can investigate the painting (227) or the vase (3) or simply close the door to this room and decide on another course of action (206).

(133)

You look at the dagger in your hand, then down at the defenseless young woman. You can't do it. You won't take innocent life, not even to save your own. Having made this resolve, you take a deep breath, then suddenly spin around and run back towards the wall. Test your luck. If you are lucky, go to 251. If you are unlucky, go to 241.

(134)

You recline back on the divan and survey your surroundings. For all his wealth, Pravemi appears to have shunned modern technology and conveniences. There does not seem to be any sort of electrical appliance anywhere. The room you are in at the moment is brightly lit by a large chandelier. The entire setting has an 18th century feel to it. You yawn and stretch out lazily. It's been a long trip and you feel drowsy. Will you remain seated and wait for the Count to return (275)? Or do you want to look around? If so, there is a glass table nearby with a pair of picture frames on it. You can examine this (15). Alternately, you can muse through some books lying on a desk directly behind you (333).

(135)

You slowly descend the steps, keeping a hand on the wall to maintain your balance. After a few moments, the board above you slams shut! You listen carefully and can faintly hear some kind of commotion in the room above. You consider climbing back up, but something tells you that you'd be better off continuing into the pitch-blackness. Go to 159.

(136)

You wait patiently for a few seconds, and then the rope begins to jerk violently! You nervously peer down the dumbwaiter, and at that moment the darkness is lit up by a bolt of fire shooting straight up! You jerk your head back, but not before you are singed by the flames – lose 3 stamina points and 1 luck point. If you are still alive, you stagger back, cursing, and decide to leave this place right now! You open the door and reenter the hallway. Go to 286.

(137)

You hold the vial over the chalice and pour out the liquid. It fills up about a quarter of the chalice. You put the vial down and stare out into the congregation, trying to gauge their reaction, but they remain motionless. Will you now light the candles (198) raise the

dagger (197) drink the liquid you have just poured into the chalice (16) or unroll the parchment (325)?

(138)

The wine is a deep red color; it tastes slightly tart with a low level of acidity. It is invigorating and delicious! The count notices your reaction and smiles, pleased that you are happy with his stock. He asks you about yourself, your job, and your family; he in turn tells you about himself. Go to 100.

(139)

You tell him that you have no interest in his laboratory and would just as soon be on your way. "Ah, very well, greener pastures and more pressing issues for our lamb, yes, to be sure. Perhaps another time, yes," he says. You nod your head and turn to leave. There is a sharp whistling sound and something thuds into your shoulder. You look down in surprise to find a dart sticking in your skin. You angrily pull it out and turn to face the man, who is now laughing hysterically and running around the table. He suddenly stops, puts a dart-blower to his lips, and sends another dart whistling your way. You duck and it flies over your head. Go to 93.

(140)

You reach the bottom of the stairway and take a moment to get your bearings. You seem to have descended to a leisure area. An elegant pool table stands to your right, with the balls neatly racked on the surface and a couple of cues crossed together at the head. A shuffleboard table stands off to your left, while a table containing a marble chessboard completely set up and ready for play stands behind you. The hall continues ahead of you, adorned with a closed door on either side. It winds to the left beyond that. Choose your next course of action. Will you:

Examine the pool table? (317)

Walk over to the chessboard? (194)

Examine the shuffleboard table? (390)

Leave the game area, and open the door on the left (357) or the right (238)?

Or simply ignore everything and follow the hall around to the left (90)?

(141)

You step into the tunnel, keeping a hand on the wall to aid your sense of direction. As you proceed, you notice the passageway beginning to slope downwards. There is a dim glow in the distance, and as you approach it you can see that is given off by candles mounted into the walls on both sides, spaced apart at intervals of a few meters. Eventually, you come to a door set on the right-hand wall. The tunnel continues ahead, winding to the left. Will you open the door (345) or continue along the passage (114)?

(142)

You suddenly remember the parchment you found in the chest. You pull it out and unroll it in front of her, feeling a little foolish since you know it's blank. But what you cannot see has great meaning for Grisela. She studies it intently, as if it were an important document. After a minute, she turns to you. "Listen carefully," she intones. "If it should come to pass that you locate this hidden room, be wary as you approach the table that you will find in it. Instead of taking what is on the table, lift up the tablecloth and look underneath." Make a note of the following instructions: If you locate the secret room you are searching for, and successfully enter it, you will read the words 'you are filled with wonder...' in the description. When you reach this sentence, *stop reading*, add 10 to the section number that you will be on, and turn immediately to this new section. This is very important! For this information on the location of the Star of Ages, you may restore your Luck score back to its initial value. Go to 311.

(143)

The vampire staggers back after your blow and, with a cry of rage, transforms itself into a bat and flutters off towards the trees. As there is nowhere better to go, and not knowing what else you might meet out here in the open, you decide to explore the castle. Go to 305.

(144)

When you pull out the lock picks, a ghost suddenly appears in front of you. "There is one thing that we absolutely cannot stand," it informs you, "and that is a cheater." With that, it whisks you back to wherever you found the lock picks, which certainly isn't anywhere in this adventure.

(145)

You take a step forward, then suddenly run straight at D'Onoffrio. A look of surprise comes over his face, and then he seems to lose his nerve. He turns and runs to the other side of the couch. Pravemi, obviously irritated, calls out to his servant – "D'Onoffrio! What are you doing? Step up and fight, man!" But D'Onoffrio looks from you to Pravemi and back, uncertain. Will you turn your attention to Pravemi (267) or keep after D'Onoffrio (309)?

(146)

You slump to your knees, exhausted after the exertions of the fight. You glance over to the mirror again and notice that it is now completely cracked over its entire surface, rendering any image unviewable. You walk over to the bureau and quickly go through the drawers. You find some gold coins that you may keep if you choose. Now it's time to move on. Go to 378.

(147)

You open the door and enter the room. It is rather dim, lit only by faint lamplight; there is no furniture but the center of the room is cluttered in debris. Broken bits of wood, a mattress, and shards of pottery are scattered around. You step through slowly, wondering if you'll find anything of value in here, when suddenly a man who had been lying on the mattress sits up. You jump back reflexively, but then relax. The man is quite old, nearly

bald, and grins at you toothlessly. He wears torn up jeans and a black-and-white striped shirt. "Hello, friend," he greets you cheerily, as if expecting you. "What's the news? How has our club been doing?" You hesitantly consider this unusual question. "Oh, come now," he prods, "you *do* enjoy football, no? Which club do your loyalties lie with?" What will you answer? Liverpool (226) Juventus of Turin (328) Inter Milan (44) another club (80) or you don't follow or care for European football (388)?

(148)

The man raises his head and opens his eyes, a faint smile on his lips. The woman stops directly in front of him, and as you continue to observe this strange ritual, you notice a flash of gold from the woman's hand – she is wearing a gold band encircled with rubies or some other gem on her ring finger. The very air is still, as if in observation as she thrusts her head back, baring her neck. She is breathing quickly now, breasts swelling in anticipation (or fear?) as the man suddenly steps closer to her and places his hand on the back of her head. With a start, you realize that if you are to act, now is the time. Will you swiftly attack the man (106) step away from the tree and call out to him (57) push him away from the woman (33) or take no such action and continue to observe (379)?

(149)

It's a shame that you didn't heed the warning you received. You close your eyes and drift off into a deep, peaceful sleep – one that you will never awaken from. The evil of the house has claimed another victim.

(150)

At this point, the hall splits into a t-junction. To your left, a new passage runs past a couple of doors before bending right. To follow this passage, go to 55. To your right, the hallways runs past a single door before curving left. To head in this direction, go to 262.

(151)

You stumble out of the closet, sputtering and choking. Grabbing on to one of the bedposts, you steady yourself while your breathing slowly returns to normal. It seems that whoever was in the room during your struggle has left. Will you now leave this room (378) or do you want to go back into the closet, to search it (110)?

(152)

You rush straight at Cassandra; however you have barely taken three steps when the room is suddenly plunged into darkness. You immediately stop in uncertainty. Tilting your head and listening closely, you hear something hard land on the floor – it strangely sounds much heavier than Cassandra should be. You step back cautiously, trying not to make a sound, and then it – whatever *it* is – takes a few steps forward. A fetid breath of air reaches you, and you wonder just what is in the room with you...but that is the last thought you will ever have. You barely have time to make out the glowing blue eyes before they momentarily float through the air, and in the next second something enormous slams into your chest, knocking you back. It is too big to push off, and you scream in agony as dagger-like claws rip you to shreds. Your adventure is over.

(153)

The hall winds to the left after a few meters, and you find three more men in black frocks standing silently against the wall. As you pass, they bow their heads and fall in behind you, single file. After a few more meters, the hallway opens out into an alcove. Uncertain as to what you should do next, you stop. One of the men places a hand on your shoulder. "Whenever you are ready, father," he intones, and then proceeds to walk around to the other side of the alcove, disappearing behind a wall. You glance behind you to see the three remaining men standing with their heads bowed in reverence. You must decide whether to follow the first man around the wall (5) or make a break for it past the men, back down the passage (256).

(154)

Margaret places a hand over your head, closes her eyes, and stands silently for a few moments. As the seconds pass, you feel a great resolve to destroy Pravemi and the evil of the house. Reduce your FEAR score to zero. You thank Margaret for her blessing and head for the castle. Go to 305.

(155)

You enter a small bedroom containing an adult sized, gold-backed mirror in the center. There is also a bureau next to the bed. The scene looks harmless enough, but you step warily into the room, shutting the door behind you. You pause for a few seconds to consider your options. Will you inspect the mirror (99) the bureau (270) or do you want to leave this room (378)?

(156)

You have steadily grown weaker since having been bitten by the spider. With nothing to lose, you uncork the stopper, put the bottle your lips, and drink. There is no immediate effect, but you will soon discover that you have indeed consumed an antidote that has saved your life. Add 2 luck points. You can now examine the book on witchcraft (203) or spirit summoning (306) or you can exit this room (186).

(157)

You close your eyes and pull the covers up, hoping to get some peaceful sleep this time. Test your luck. If you are lucky, go to 370. If you are unlucky, go to 149.

(158)

You slump down onto the chest, your ordeals catching up with you all at once. Your stomach rumbles as you hungrily eye the food. You decide not to take that risk, however. You spend a few minutes resting and you may restore 2 Stamina points. Will you now open the chest, if you have yet to do so (87) leave this room and try the other door (352) or make your way back up to the tunnel (282)?

(159)

The stairs continue downwards for a few more meters before you reach level ground. The passageway is pitch black; your progress is slow. You soon run into a wall. You step

back for a moment to try and get your bearings, and at that moment a light breeze reaches you from the left. You decide to go in that direction. Go to 188.

(160)

You awaken in a cold sweat. Your heart is pounding, and you look around wildly before remembering where you are. You take a deep breath and try to calm down. The sound of a light rain falling outside faintly reaches your ears. You lean over to the nightstand to check your watch – it is still a few hours before dawn. You lean back on your bed, thinking that perhaps the unfamiliar atmosphere has affected you. Yet, you can also sense that it is something more. But what can you do about it? Will you close your eyes and settle back down to sleep (157) have a drink of water and stay up for a little while longer (49) or do you want to get dressed and leave this room (326)?

(161)

You dispatch the corpse and turn back to the door. It looks like you may have to break it down. However, when you try the handle again, it is unlocked! Very strange. You leave the evil and terrifying room behind. Go to 207.

(162)

You find that you are indeed in a kitchen as you search through the cabinets. Forks, spoons, knives, bowls, and the like are neatly arranged. You come to a cabinet that seems to be latched; it opens slightly but no more. Curiosity gets the better of you and you pull hard, trying to force it open. Your efforts are “rewarded” when the door flies open and a stack of plates falls forward, knocking you back and shattering on the floor. The noise seems loud enough to waken the dead. You are stunned – lose 2 Stamina points. As you come to, you hear heavy footsteps swiftly approaching. Go to 81.

(163)

You run your hands along the door, knock on it a couple of times, and even kick it, but nothing happens. Giving up, you begin to turn away, when a faint sound makes you stop short. You freeze, holding your breath and straining your ears. The silence envelops you, but you concentrate deeply and can faintly make out a sort of low metallic rumble coming from the other side of the door. Turning your attention back to it, you reexamine the smooth face for a few moments. You place your hands on the door and slide them straight up, trying to get a feel for the dimensions – and then you see it. Straight above you and to the right is a small wooden cache lever. You immediately pull it, and the door opens inwards silently, revealing a tunnel that slopes downwards. Will you investigate (63) or exit this room (378)?

(164)

You walk up to the window and pause to listen. There is no sound coming from the room, so you gingerly step in. Pitch-blackness engulfs you; you are therefore extremely cautious as you slowly step forward. Your outstretched arms run into something – some type of furniture. Walking around this, you continue to make your way forward, searching for a door. “Who-oo-oo-os there-ere-ere-re?” rasps a voice, a voice that seems

both near and far, a voice beyond terrifying, that chills you to the core. Add 3 fear points. If you are still alive, go to 291.

(165)

The door opens up to reveal the dining room where Pravemi first entertained you. The drink cart is still there, and nothing seems to have been disturbed. You pause, trying to select another part of the house to explore. For no apparent reason, the hairs on the back of your neck stand out and a chill runs down your spine. There is some sort of disturbance in the air a few feet in front of you. Something is slowly materializing. Go to 40.

(166)

A little further down the hall, you reach an unmarked door to your left. You can open this (60) or continue to follow the hall as it winds around to the left (286).

(167)

A strange thing happens. As you gaze at the painting, it begins to glow. A shaft of sunlight seems to stretch into the room. At the same time, your surroundings begin to grow dim, then undefined and runny, like a watercolor left in the sun for too long. The scene in the painting begins to take on a third dimension. You almost feel as if you are being drawn *into* the painting! Will you continue to stare at it (312) or tear your gaze away (181)?

(168)

Startled, you draw back instinctively as a short, bald man steps out of the shadows. “What have we here?” he asks, brows raised inquisitively. “One of the flock, wandering around the pasture? Or all the way out from a different field, by the looks of you, I’ll wager,” he laughs quietly. “Well, I suppose I’ll play the good host and give you the tour since you dropped by.” Will you agree to take ‘the tour’ (304) or politely decline the offer (139)?

(169)

You have no way of opening this door. The witch hisses maliciously as she squeezes the doll in her bony hand – tighter, tighter. You black out, never to awaken.

(170)

Your answer is met with silence – and then the gate swings open. The voice floats out to you again: “I never thought this day would come, brother. Come forth and receive the master’s gift.” You step forward nervously, certain that at any moment your real identity will show through. A man in a black cloak steps out from the shadows. “Bow your head,” he commands. You do so. A second later, a bronze pentacle attached to a cord is slung around your neck (mark this on your action chart). “Now go,” he commands, pointing down the tunnel. “Remove this scourge from our midst.” He bows and steps away. You look down the tunnel to see that it ends at a door set in the wall. You stride up to it. Go to 242.

(171)

At this point in the hallway there are two more door that face each other. The one on the right is marked STRINGIAMANO while the one on the left is unmarked. Listening closely, you think that you can hear a faint sound behind the right hand door. Now decide what to do. Enter a room only if you have yet to do so. The STRINGIAMANO room? (246). The unmarked door? (232). Further ahead, the hallway runs past another door before winding to the left. To go this way, go to 116.

(172)

As you round the corner of the hallway you see that there is a single door to your left marked DIAVOLERIA. Beyond this, the hallway continues for several more meters before branching left. Will you investigate the DIAVOLERIA room (34) or continue down the hall (335)?

(173)

There is a brief cloud of surprise on its face, and then it mentally orders you to your knees. You feel your legs involuntarily jerk, and then you are on the ground, powerless. Too late, you realize that the element of surprise was your only chance and that you should have attacked right away. But such thoughts are useless now, and in a few moments, the vampire walks up to you, spreads its cape, and sinks its teeth into your neck. Soon, you will have a new awakening, as one of its undead servants...

(174)

You crawl out from underneath the bed and dust yourself off. You walk over to the closet and quickly glance inside – but just as you suspected, there are only clothes on hangers. Nothing unusual that you can make out. Not wanting to waste any more time, you walk over to the door and silently let yourself out. Go to 378.

(175)

You begin another line of questioning, but the man begs your pardon, stating that it is rather warm in the room and that he needs some fresh air. He pulls up the shutters and props the window open. Moonlight streams into the room, as well as a light breeze. “Much better,” he murmurs, as he sits back down. You begin to talk again but after a few moments he begins to scratch himself fiercely. You ask him what is wrong, but he doesn’t reply. Beads of sweat have broken out on his forehead, and he begins to grunt in a way that is somewhat disturbing. You cautiously stand up; all of a sudden he throws his head back and lets out a loud howl. You look to the door in fear, hoping that no one comes running in. Roll one die. If you roll an odd number, go to 231. If you roll an even number, go to 117.

(176)

You pull the chair back and throw open all of the drawers. Sheets of blank white paper are strewn about, as well as pencils, pens, postage stamps, and – what’s this? You lift up a personalized rubber stamp. You can’t quite make out the letters, so you stamp it on a sheet of paper read the work PRAVEMI in bold black ink. As this might prove useful, you slip it into your pocket. Meanwhile, the hand is now back on its fingers and starting

to scuttle towards you! You rush out of the room and shut the door. A second later, the hand thuds against it from the inside. That was close. Go to 171.

(177)

You plunge the dagger into the girl's chest. She lets out one short cry and then slumps back, blood spurting out of her body. You scarcely have time to register what you've done when the crowd bursts into noise. Someone is shaking you "...you fool! Didn't you realize that she wasn't purified?" Amid the confusion, your hood is thrown back – and noise suddenly ceases as everyone in the chapel stops to stare at you. After a few moments, you are tied up and placed on the alter next to the girl. The ritual *will* be performed correctly tonight – with you as the sacrifice. Needless to say, your adventure is over.

(178)

As soon as you begin to step into the room, you fall victim to the Count's most sinister and gruesome trap. From directly above you, a three-foot long, razor sharp guillotine blade is released. It lands directly on your head and slices you in two from head to foot. You never knew what hit you.

(179)

You place the deck of cards onto the figure's hand. There is a sudden grating sound and you recoil in shock as the figure slowly lowers its head to examine your offering! After a few moments, it raises its eyes to meet yours – and then, a liquid shoot out of its mouth directly into your eyes. Cursing, you reel back and trip. Your eyes are stinging badly. After a few minutes, the pain subsides, but your vision remains somewhat cloudy. Lose 2 Skill points. The door to the room has swung open and you stumble out. Delete the cards from your list of items and go to 102.

(180)

You strike your final blow and the figure topples to the ground. Its cowl falls back to reveal a man with pale white skin, thinning hair, and a jutting forehead. You search his robes but find nothing; however you recover his dagger, which you decide to keep as a weapon. Remember to adjust your Skill accordingly. You also notice that his arm is branded with a black tattoo of a crescent moon. What does this mean? There is a sudden rustling, whispering sort of sound coming from the other side of the room. You turn around. Go to 371.

(181)

You will yourself to look away, and the scene begins to ripple like a watery reflection. Suddenly, your head starts to swim, and you feel as if you are going to pass out. Roll three dice. If the result is *less* than your current Stamina score, go to 14. If the result is equal to or greater than your current Stamina score, go to 245.

(182)

The door opens into a long, narrow walkway that winds to the left after a few meters. As you are following this hall, you suddenly hear voices from around the corner. You consider running back, but in the next instant four men in black cloaks appear. They

immediately stop, almost stumbling over themselves. Their eyes glaze in uncertainty. You have a split second to decide whether to turn and run (290) or draw your weapon and launch yourself at them (268).

(183)

He seems a little taken aback by your question. “Well, er, haven’t spoken with him in quite some time,” he says shuffling his papers nervously. “I hope that he has found me...satisfactory?” You realize that he has taken you for a spy or an informer, and you try your best to assure him that you are merely making friendly conversation. He seems to calm somewhat, although remaining a little edgy. He tells you that he has only spoken with the Count on a few occasions, but that he seemed nice enough. Go to 175.

(184)

One of the candles is lit. You remove it from its place and use it to light the others. As you do so, one of the men behind you comes forward with a pitcher and pours a red liquid into the chalice. The other two stand at either end of the table. You seem to have guessed correctly – so far. Will you now drink the liquid in the chalice (91) unroll the parchment (325) raise the dagger (197) or dump the contents of the vial into the chalice, if you kept it (98)?

(185)

You walk up to the door and grip the handle. It is unlocked! You turn it slowly and quietly step into a room with tiled floors. You close the door behind you and stand motionless as your eyes adjust to the dark. The room has a counter, which seems to divide it in two; there are also cabinets and pantries. You seem to be in a kitchen or larder. Looking to our left, you can make out another door. Will you head for this (218) or try and search the cabinets and pantries in the dark (162)?

(186)

The hallway winds around to your left and you soon come to the head of a stairway leading down to ground floor. Looking over the balustrade, you see that the area below is quiet and unoccupied. You descend the stairs. Go to 295.

(187)

The chair is getting closer and closer to the fire. The heat singes your hair and skin (lose 2 Stamina points). You are directly in front of it now, and the chair begins to lean forward. *What a horrible way to die*, you think to yourself. And then, suddenly, the fire blinks out and the chair tips back. You sit still, stunned, and it is some time before you realize that you are free to move again. A faint laughter reaches your ears...and then fades away. You are relieved to be alive, but extremely demoralized. Is the evil in this house so strong that it is happy to merely toy with you, like the predator that plays with its prey before killing it? What chance do you have of success? Lose 2 Luck points. All you can do at this point is to continue by exploring the hall (86) or opening the door (376).

(188)

As you follow the tunnel, the breeze grows stronger. You also notice that the ground is becoming increasingly damp and muddy. A faint light beckons in the distance, and as you continue, the moonlight gradually lights up your surroundings. To your dismay, the tunnel ends at a latched gate. On the other side lie the great outdoors. If you have a key, go to 221. If not, go to 301.

(189)

You set on your task with grim ferocity. Stepping on the hand to keep it still, you proceed to slice off the fingers, then chop up the palm and the wrist. After a minute of this, small unrecognizable pieces lie strewn about on the floor. You kick them down the hall. This is hopefully the last time you will deal with that thing! Go to 316.

(190)

You give the box a few good shakes and throw it down to D’Onoffrio’s feet. It pops open and the Stringiamano stumbles out. As you had hoped, it goes after the nearest living thing. D’Onoffrio gets within a foot of the door before the hand flies up to his neck. D’Onoffrio begins to make gurgling, strangled noises and falls to his knees. You feel a sudden pain in your side. Pravemi has taken advantage of your momentary distraction and wounded you – lose 2 Stamina points. Conclude your fight with him. If you win, go to 355.

(191)

You take a running start and crash into the door. It shudders as you bounce back, clutching your sore shoulder – lose 2 Stamina points. You suddenly hear footsteps coming towards the room. You decide to stand behind the door and see who comes in. The footsteps stop in front of the door, pause, and then walk away. You are trying to decide what to do next when you hear a sound coming from *inside* the room. You turn around to find a panel against the wall sliding open. A few seconds later, a hooded figure steps through. It pauses, then takes a step towards the bed. It suddenly stops and you realize that whoever it is, he is now aware that there is no one in the bed. Will you continue to observe (31) call out to the figure (234) or attack (119)?

(192)

He draws his final breath and expires. In their black smocks, the two men could almost pass for priests, you grimly think to yourself. Searching their bloodstained cloaks, you discover only a gold chain necklace inset with a red ruby stone. You may take this if you wish. If you are in need of a weapon, you may also take a dagger. You drag the bodies under the bed and exit the room. Go to 378.

(193)

“I don’t believe you. I’ve been all over this house, and it’s full of evil, supernatural beings. I don’t believe for a second that that evil...*man* has any kind of a family. Whoever you are, you’d better come clean or...or...” She looks amused. “Yes? Or you’ll do – what?” She locks her gaze on you and you shiver, without knowing why. Roll two dice. If the result is equal to or less than *both* your current Skill and Luck scores, go to 349. If it is greater than either your Skill or Luck scores, go to 298.

(194)

The chessboard is beautiful. Handcrafted crystal pieces line the blue and black marble board. It is obviously worth a fortune. The Count may be the human embodiment of pure evil, but he does have pretty good taste. You are almost tempted snatch a piece for yourself; but suddenly, one of the pawns moves two spaces ahead of its own accord! After everything else you've seen in this house, you aren't very surprised. But what will you do? Counter with a move of your own (303) or ignore the board and investigate the pool table (317) or the shuffleboard (390). If you've already investigated everything, or you choose to ignore the remaining areas, you may open the door on the left (357) or the door on the right (238). To leave this area and follow the hall as it winds to the left, go 90.

(195)

You stick your hand into the vase. It is rather long and it swallows up half of your arm before you feel the bottom. From what you can feel, there is some kind of ring that is attached to the vase itself. While this doesn't make practical sense, it does logically explain the fact that nothing fell out when you turned it upside down. You withdraw your arm from the vase and suddenly realize that *your hand is gone!* You drop the vase in horror and it shatters against the floor. Add 2 fear points. Holding your arm up, you see that there is no cut or wound or blood, merely a fleshy stump where your hand was. From out of nowhere comes a faint, mocking laughter. Roll 2 dice and compare the result to your current fear score. If the result is equal to or greater than your current fear score, go to 94. If it is less than your current fear score, go to 258.

(196)

You run out of the room and slam the door shut behind you. At the same time, you hear footsteps approaching from the same direction that you did. You decide not to stick around; instead you spin around and run down the hall as it bends to the right. Go to 172.

(197)

The dagger has a rose-colored handle. You raise it above your head – but now what? Will you kill the girl (177) or set it back down on the altar (28)?

(198)

One of the candles is lit. You remove it from its place and use it to light the others. As you do so, one of the men comes forward with a pitcher and begins pouring its contents into the chalice, but stops. He looks over to you with a quizzical expression. "Father, why...?" he whispers. You aren't sure about how to respond. In the next moment your hood is suddenly thrown back. There are gasps from the congregation as your identity is revealed. The game is up; you are quickly subdued and taken to a cell from which there is no escape.

(199)

You step into a large bedroom. It contains a king-sized bed, neatly made, as well as a window behind some curtains that have been drawn back. Moonlight streams into the

room. As you are trying to decide on your next course of action, you quickly draw in your breath – there are footsteps approaching from outside the room! Your first instinct is to hide. Will you nip into the closet (220) duck under the bed (17) or instead choose to stand your ground (97)?

(200)

The door opens into what appears to be a storeroom. On one side are shelves stacked with various food items. Bread, dried meats, cheeses, fruits, and dried fish are lined on the shelves. Bottles of water and alcoholic spirits are on the bottom shelf. On the other side of the room is a closed chest. Will you eat some of the food and rest in this room for a little while (365) rest in the room without touching the food (158) examine the chest (87) leave this room and open the other door (352) or leave everything and make your way back up to the closet (282)?

(201)

You wait patiently, and after a few minutes the rope begins to tug as the tray comes back up. Much to your surprise, the bottles are gone, having been replaced by a gold key and a small diamond! You pocket them hesitantly while planning your next move. Will you exit this room (286) or enter the Strega room (340)?

(202)

You slowly draw closer, trying not to make a sound. It appears as though your efforts are aided by the fact that he is completely oblivious to his surroundings. You make your way up behind a tree a few feet away. Whoever he is, he could almost be considered catatonic if not for his low murmuring. Holding your breath and leaning forward, you strain to hear what he might be saying. After a few moments, you can make it out – “Margaret...Margaret...come to me...Yes, good...Margaret...” A sudden movement from the trees catches your attention. You grow wide-eyed as a stunningly beautiful young woman cloaked in a sky-blue dress and wearing a tiara slowly steps forward. Her breathing is slow and shallow, and her eyes stare straight ahead, unblinking. Go to 148.

(203)

The book seems pretty standard considering the subject; the kind of thing you would find in a public library. A witch, or Strega, is a being that draws her power from her association with evil spirits or the devil. She allegedly has powers such as causing or curing illness, raising storms, producing sterility in women, and causing crops to fail; in addition she may have the power to cause harm or even bring death by a single glance or by sticking pins into a wax or cloth image of the victim. You close the book. Will you now examine the book of spirit summoning (306) local history (121) or will you leave this room (186)?

(204)

You scream in terror! The “man” standing in front of you is something straight out of a nightmare. Rotting, sunken flesh hangs from his face. Wispy strings of hair hang haphazardly from the forehead. Decaying, black teeth are visible in its mouth. Even its clothing is tattered. Worst of all, there are two empty slits where the eyes should be. Add

2 Fear points. If you are still alive, a burning in your fingers jolts you back to your senses. You drop the lighter and the room is plunged into darkness once more. You try to escape, but in your blind panic you run straight into the door. Lose 1 Stamina point. You bounce backwards, straight into the zombie. It emits a low throaty sound and wraps its arms around you. Thrashing wildly about, you try to break its grip. You must fight for your life.

Zombie: Skill 7 Stamina 8

Because of the darkness and your panicked state of mind, you must deduct 2 from your Skill for the duration of this fight. If you win, go to 151.

(205)

You plunge the dagger into the girl's chest. She emits one short cry and then slumps back, blood spurting from the wound. You step back, aghast at what you have done, despite the circumstances. Lose 3 Luck points. The men sitting in the pews have risen and formed two lines. You feel as if you are going to be sick. Turning around, you silently walk back around the wall. Go to 13.

(206)

Back in the hallway, will you investigate the Lupouomo room, if you have not already done so (385) continue down the hall (172) or go back to the split in the landing (150)?

(207)

Leaving the Maledetto room behind, you soon reach an unmarked door to your left. Further ahead, the hallway branches off to your left and right. Will you open the unmarked door (244) or continue down the hall to where it splits (150)?

(208)

Cursing your decision to enter this room, you begin walking towards the door, but stop. Something is materializing out of thin air between you and the door. A black, insubstantial, formless shape that seems to radiate pure evil is coming into focus. Inexplicably, you feel yourself drawn to it. If you are wearing a gold chain necklace inset with a ruby stone, go to 50. If not, go to 222.

(209)

You warily approach the armor. It is about six feet tall and armed with a halberd. You knock on the chest plate and it echoes hollowly across the hall. However, when you flip back the visor it suddenly comes to life! Raising its weapon and shield, it steps towards you menacingly. Add 1 Fear point. You must fight.

Cursed Armor: Skill 10 Stamina 7.

If you win, go to 76.

(210)

You rub your bruises and stare contemptuously at the balls as they lie scattered across the table and on the ground. The gleaming catches your eye again and you remember why you stayed to begin with. You walk over to a side pocket, reach into it, and pull out a ring set with a large diamond that sparkles brilliantly. You slip it on your finger and it fits perfectly. But have you risked your life for something of no practical use? Time will tell. Now, if you haven't already done so, you can investigate the shuffleboard table (390) or the chessboard (194). If you are finished here, will you walk over and open the door to your left (357) or right (238)? If not, you can walk ahead and follow the passage as it winds to the left (90).

(211)

The cruel blade sinks into your side and you cry out in pain – lose 4 Stamina points. In the next second, the figure is upon you and you must defend yourself.

Unknown Assailant: Skill 8 Stamina 10.

If you win, go to 180.

(212)

Just before the hand reaches you, there is a loud crash. You open your eyes to see that a huge volume has fallen off a high shelf and landed on the Stringiamano, pinning it to the ground. The book is moving a little from the effort of the hand, but it is too large to be overthrown. You glance down to the title: *The Complete Works of J.R.R. Tolkien (One Volume Ed)*. You thank your lucky hobbits and leave the room. Go to 276.

(213)

You uncork the bottle and carefully sniff the contents – it is odorless. You raise it to your lips and take a gulp. It tastes very much like sweetened water. However, there is no apparent effect – for now. In actuality, unbeknownst to you, you have swallowed some Witchbane – which could be very useful in the future! Add 1 luck point. Go to 88.

(214)

The candles suddenly stop flickering and the boy's face returns to normal. "But that's just a silly story, anyway. Did you like it?" Anna seems to have recovered from her fright. "Oh yes, Aldo, you sure can tell 'em. Let's play a new game!" The children go back to their dolls. Somewhat puzzled and disturbed, you get up and leave the room. The children ignore you. Go to 41.

(215)

As you nod your head, another voice from behind intones, "Perhaps you will feel better with some fresh air." Before you can react, your hood is pulled back. There are gasps of surprise from the congregation as your identity is revealed. The game is up; you are quickly subdued and led to a cell from which there is no escape.

(216)

The moaning grows more piteous as you make your way towards it. You eventually run into a sturdy wooden doorway that is barred from the outside. The moaning sound seems to be coming directly from the other side. You've come this far, so you decide to raise the bolt and open the door. Go to 69.

(217)

You place your weapon on the statue's outstretched hands and wait. After a few seconds, the statue begins to move. You watch with fascination, and then shock as it raises your weapon and breaks the blade off of the hilt! Lose 2 Luck points and cross your weapon off of your action chart. The statue returns to its original position and is motionless once again. The door behind you swings open. If you leave the room, go to 102. If you wish to make another offering, go back to 338 and make another choice.

(218)

As you head for the door, there is a sudden shuffling behind you. A pantry door flies open and a figure steps out. As it limps towards you, you can see that it is wrapped from head to foot in decaying yellow bandages. It also emits a nauseating stench. Just before it reaches you, you see that there are no bandages around its head – or rather where its head *should* be. Add 2 Fear points. You are, in fact, now locked in battle with a Ghoul. This is especially dangerous because it has the ability to paralyze you if it manages to wound you 4 times! Resolve the battle:

Ghoul: Skill 8 Stamina 8

If you win, go to 274.

(219)

Fortunately for you, you aren't staring directly into the Vampire's eyes, and so its attempts to control your will are thwarted. With an angry rasp, it lays the woman on the ground and walks towards you. "Fool," it spits out, "Prepare to depart from the land of the living." This is a fight to the death.

Vampire: Skill 11 Stamina 14

If you win, go to 4.

(220)

You quickly step into the closet and close the door behind you. There is a rack of clothes on hangers and you have to push your way through these to get to the rear of the closet. You can hear footsteps walking into the room and the sound of muffled voices. You stand quietly, trying to make out what they are saying, but you cannot. As you stand there, a strange feeling comes over you. You hold your breath...and then you hear it...the sound of quiet, raspy breathing. *Someone is in this closet with you!* Your heart immediately begins to pound. Add 1 Fear point. As you are trying to decide what to do, whoever your companion is takes a step – towards you! Will you rush outside, not knowing what you might meet (59) or stay in the closet (394)?

(221)

You fish out the key, cross your fingers, and slip it into the lock. To your great relief, it turns. You walk through the gate and into a light rain. Looking around, you see the dark, foreboding shape of the house. You seem to be in the rear. A path winds around the house, disappearing into the blackness. Will you try to reenter the house (26) or make your way to the front and back to your car (374)?

(222)

You do not have the means to resist the Soul Reaper. You step straight into the blackness. Moments later, your body hits the ground, an empty husk.

(223)

Cassandra walks to her desk and removes a jeweled brooch from one of the drawers. She then walks up to you and presses it to your hand. “Take this as a sign of my loyalty. The Count is very near; at this very moment he plots your death. I will give you what aid I can. The final battle comes soon – very soon.” She then bids you to leave, promising that you will see her again. You step out of her room, wondering at the look in her eyes – something that you can’t place and aren’t completely comfortable with. Go to 105.

(224)

The hallway winds around to the left. Following it, you notice a door to your right. The nameplate is inscribed with the word MALEDETTO. Ahead of you, there is a door on the left and the hall continues until it reaches a wall, with further passages to the left and right. Will you enter the Maledetto room (103) or continue down the hall (207)?

(225)

Your attacker reels back after your last blow and falls to the floor, senseless. His cowl had fallen back during the battle, revealing a man with a pale face, thinning hair, and a jutting forehead. You search his robes but find nothing of value; however his arm is branded with a black tattoo of a crescent moon. You quickly dress, your mind racing to make sense of the situation. You turn towards the door and immediately stop. Go to 371.

(226)

“Oh really?” he chuckles. “Do they still exist?” He bursts into a fit of laughter at his own joke. Go to 124.

(227)

You study the painting. It is impressive but unremarkable. A medieval looking castle is set on a hill at the end of a sloping track. It seems to be surrounded by a clearing with short, twisted, stubby trees. You would judge the time of day to be early in the morning or sometime after dusk. Go to 167.

(228)

You hurl the pot at the Stringiamano. Your timing is perfect; the ceramic shatters on impact and the hand flips on its back, stunned. Go to 189.

(229)

Hoping that you've made the right decision, you unplug the stopper, raise the tube to your lips, and drink. It tastes strong yet slightly sweet, like a liqueur. You empty the tube and nervously wait. After a few moments, a sense of well being begins to spread through your body. Restore up to 6 lost Stamina points. Add 1 Luck point as well. You see that the door behind you has swung open, so you leave the room. Go to 102.

(230)

Try as you might, you can't find a way to open up the wall. Eventually, you are forced to turn around and head back. Unfortunately, guards have been posted along the tunnel. As soon as they see you, they call out for others and then rush you. You fight bravely, but it is hopeless. You are eventually overwhelmed, tied up, and placed in a cell, where you will be detained at the Count's pleasure. Your adventure is over.

(231)

The man jumps onto the bed and tears off his shirt, clawing at himself. As you suspect, he is quite mad; he seems to believe that he is a werewolf, but no transformation is taking place. You start towards the door, but he jumps in front of you. You raise your hands and smile, hoping that he will move away, but he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a switchblade. The situation has turned dangerous. You have no choice but to fight.

Deranged Individual: Skill 8 Stamina 10

If you win, go to 89.

(232)

The door is locked. If you have a key with a number engraved into it, go to the section that matches the number. Otherwise, you cannot enter this room. You can search the Stringiamano room (246) or continue down the hallway (116).

(233)

The woman stares at you intently as you kneel by her side. Do you know her name? If you think that you do, take each letter of her name and convert it into a number using the code A=1, B=2, C=3...Z=26. Take these numbers and add them up. Turn to the section that matches this result. If you don't know her name, go to 383.

(234)

You take a deep breath, assume an open stance, and call out to the figure. It seems to go rigid, then turns slowly in your direction. You demand to know who he is and what he wants. The figure bows its head for a moment, turns as if to leave, but suddenly pulls out dagger and attacks you! You must fight for your life:

Unknown Assailant: Skill 8 Stamina 10

If you win, go to 180.

(235)

Margaret snaps her fingers and you feel a gentle breeze blow by. Restore your Luck to its initial level. You thank her and start to make your way to the castle. Go to 305.

(236)

You reply that as you are a single person faced with overwhelming odds, you don't think that you will succeed. You promise to come back with help if you manage to escape the house. "Very well," replies the ghost, bowing her head. The door to the room swings open. "Good luck, stranger," are her last words before she fades away. You step out of the room. Go to 378.

(237)

A dagger whistles through the air and embeds itself in your shoulder. Grimacing in pain, you round the corner and run back down the hallway, through the room where you killed the priest, and back out into the tunnel. Your wound pains you (lose 4 Stamina points) but you are able to reach back and pull out the dagger. You must reduce your Skill by 2 for the rest of the adventure due to your injured shoulder. If you like, you may test your luck; if you are lucky then you only need to reduce your Skill by 1. Now, decide if you will continue down the tunnel (114) or turn around and follow it back up to the room (397).

(238)

You slowly open the door and enter an elegant bedroom. A queen-sized, canopied bed adorns the center of the room. A comfortable looking, cushioned chair is set to your immediate right, while a wooden desk lies to your left. A cozy fireplace is in the rear, crackling with life. All of these details are relatively minor, because your eyes are fixed on the person lying on the bed. Go to 260.

(239)

Pravemi is rapidly approaching the end of his life. He fights grimly, silently, his face expressionless. Finally, you land the killing blow and he slumps to the ground. You fall to your knees, tired but ecstatic that you've managed to kill the master of the house. Looking up, you once again spot the lovely young woman, still sitting on the couch, whom you had forgotten about. A faint smile traces the corner of her lips. "Who are—" your question is cut short by the sound of the door crashing open. D'Onoffrio reappears, followed by men in black cloaks and hoods that flood into the room in seemingly endless numbers. You fight valiantly, but are soon overwhelmed. You may have killed Pravemi, but unfortunately you won't live to tell anyone about it.

(240)

The specter fixes you with its gaze and you are powerless. A bolt of energy shoots from the scepter and slams into your chest, killing you instantly.

(241)

As you run back towards the wall, you trip within the folds of the cloak and hit the ground with a crash (lose 2 Stamina points). Fortunately, the congregation is so shocked

by your action that no one makes a move to stop you. You stumble back to your feet and run around the wall. Go to 13.

(242)

You stand in front of the door. Whatever you are seeking lies on the other side. You don't quite understand how you know this, but the knowledge is in your mind, as surely as if you were making an observation about the weather. But there is also danger. You take a deep breath and prepare to enter – and then you notice the absence of a doorknob or other visible means of entering. *Of course*, you realize. It is here that you must use a password. You cast your mind back through your grueling, horrible adventures and encounters in this house of horror – and then make your decision. What is your chosen password?

Memnoch? (362)

Medruseld? (315)

Malevia? (19)

Orvieto? (271)

(243)

“Secret rooms?” he laughs. “Why, this house is *filled* with secret rooms, spaces, and passages. Some open up with hidden levers, others require a password. Most of the brothers are hardly found in the main parts of the house anymore. Of course, with the chapel and ritual chamber underground, I can hardly say that I blame them.” You press him further, asking him what he knows about Pravemi's master chamber, but he is reluctant to answer. “When the Master decides that the time is right, my friend, he will impart the mysteries of Orvieto to you.” Go to 175.

(244)

The door opens up into some kind of storeroom. Drawers, shelves, and cabinets line the walls. You decide to search the room in the hope of finding something useful. The drawers contain forks, spoons, and other silverware. You do find a rather large knife, which you may keep as a weapon if you are in need of one (remember to adjust your Skill). Inside a cabinet you find several unopened plastic bottles of water. As you are feeling very parched, you decide to swig some down. It is very refreshing; restore up to 3 lost Stamina points. You also find an old but clean plastic canteen, which you may fill with water and clip to your belt. It will hold enough water for 2 good drinks, each one restoring 3 Stamina points. You may take a drink at anytime except during a combat. Happy with your finds, you leave the room and continue down the hall. Go to 150.

(245)

You fall to the ground, the spinning in your head continuing as if you were free-falling and spinning at the same time. You clutch your head in agony, until you lose track of everything around you. You eventually lose all your senses, save for the spinning, which does not subside. You find yourself crying out for the relief of death, which comes soon enough. The house has claimed another victim.

(246)

You cautiously open the door. There is only silence as you step into a cozy study. You close the door behind you and take in the scene for a moment. An unlit fireplace lies before you, and a desk with a chair is to your right. A window is to your left, and a sudden clap of thunder heralds the arrival of a storm. You take a step forward and abruptly stop. There it is again – a sort of scurrying, scuttling sound. You wonder if the house is infested with – WHAT IS THAT? Something scuttles across the mantle above the fireplace. You instinctively draw back. Whatever it is, it's moving too fast to get a good view of. It scuttles up the chair, across the desk, up the wall, and down to the mantle again before it finally stops. Go to 27.

(247)

As you silently slip into the room, taking care to be as quiet as possible, something lands on your neck. Sharp claws rake into you as you stagger back against the wall. The cat that has attacked you lets out an angry howl and drops to the floor. It is coal black; aqua blue eyes glare at you for a moment before it leaps out the open window and disappears. You gingerly feel the back of your neck; it is wet with blood. Lose 2 Stamina points. Suddenly remembering why you are here, you spin around to find that Pravemi is gone! The only exit from this room is a door to the right. If you wish to go through this, go to 165. If you'd rather search the room first, go to 353.

(248)

You wait patiently for a few minutes, but nothing happens. You tug on the rope, but again, there is no response. When you pull the tray back up and are met with no resistance, you wonder if the occupant below has left. When the tray reaches you, you see that the bottle(s) you had sent down remain as they were, untouched. You decide that you have wasted enough time here. Will you leave the room (286) or open the Strega door (340)?

(249)

Taking several steps back, you lower your shoulder and ram the door. After a couple of attempts, you are no better off and your shoulder is bruised (lose 2 Stamina points). Are you ready to make an offering (338) or will you keep trying to break out (364)?

(250)

“Speak quickly,” you command, “one false move and I won't hesitate to kill you.” “Yes, yes,” she rasps, “you surely seek to defeat the Master. The weapon you seek which makes this possible is the Star of Ages. It is hidden in a secret room below the house. The location I know not, but should you discover it, the password that opens the door is ‘Medruseld.’ That's all I know, so leave me in peace, intruder” – she spits out these last few words. You glare at her, but she remains expressionless. Slowly removing the knife, you stand up and walk back to the door, your gaze never leaving her. The door is locked when you try it, but the Strega snaps her fingers and it flies open. You exit the room, shutting the door behind you, then go out to the hallway. Go to 286.

(251)

With your blood pounding in your ears, you run full speed back to the wall. The congregation is obviously shocked by your action, as no one make a move to stop you. Go to 13.

(252)

The holes along the floor are becoming wider. The screams of the men are drowned out by the rumbling. One manages to grab you; you kick him off and he goes sliding into a hole. You look around desperately, but there seems to be no way out. You feel a sudden burning against your chest. You reach down and pull out the pentacle that the guard gave you. Inexplicably, an arrow has appeared on it, pointing in a western direction. Even if you turn it around in your hands, the arrow remains locked in the same position. Looking in the direction of the arrow, you see that a hole has appeared in the wall, and that it seems to be level. With nothing to lose, you run towards it. Go to 280.

(253)

There is something in this man's expression that you don't like. A split second later, the glint of metal flashes through the air as he viciously swipes a dagger at you! You jump back in alarm as it grazes your arm (lose 1 Stamina point) and the man rises with a growl of anger. He is blocking the exit and you must fight to the death.

Treacherous man: Skill 9 Stamina 11

If you win, you find nothing on him. You may keep his weapon if you don't have one. If you haven't spoken to one of the others, you may approach the old woman (233) or the other man (120). Otherwise, you return to the level above and explore the hallway (86).

(254)

You creep up to the window and look inside. The room is lit by a fireplace blazing with life. There is also a table and a comfortable looking divan in which a man sits, reading. That man is none other than Count Pravemi himself! Now what will you do? Sneak inside and assassinate him (43)? If you don't think you are ready for that, you can try the other window (164) or the door on the porch (185).

(255)

The tunnel slopes at a downward angle. You walk slowly, wary towards any possible dangers in the inky blackness. Eventually, a faint glow comes into focus. The tunnel levels out and you now see that torches are mounted on the walls at regular intervals. After about a hundred feet, a side tunnel appears, branching off to your left. This new tunnel is shrouded in darkness, while the tunnel you have been following continues straight ahead. Will you take this new branch (350) or continue in the direction you were going (319)?

(256)

Taking a deep breath, you suddenly spin around and rush past the men. As you near the corner of the passage, you hear yells behind you. Test your luck, twice. If you are lucky

both times, go to 58. If you are lucky once, go to 237. If you are unlucky both times, go to 269.

(257)

The door slowly opens, and a youngish looking man with curly brown hair stands before you. You examine each other silently for a few moments “Yes?” he finally asks. “How may I be of service?” You inform him that you are here to give the presentation. When he continues to look at you quizzically, you hand him the confirmation slip. As he is examining this, another voice drifts out from inside the house. “Who is it, D’Onoffrio?” This sounds like it’s from an older man, and your assumption is confirmed when a tall, middle-aged man walks up to the entrance. He has coal-black eyes, a friendly face, and black hair streaked with gray, which he wears slicked back. The young man steps aside. “It is my honor to present Pravemi, Count of Orvieto, his most esteemed...” Pravemi waves a hand and D’Onoffrio falls silent. “Now then, my friend, what may we do for you?” he asks politely. D’Onoffrio hands him the slip and the Count examines it. His brow rises in surprise. “My friend, I am afraid there has been an unfortunate misunderstanding. We were not expecting you until morning!” You protest, detailing your long trip and general inconvenience. “I understand your frustration, my friend,” replies the Count, “but I am expecting visitors early tomorrow, and they must be present as well. Please, come inside and perhaps we can reach a mutually satisfactory settlement.” Will you accept his invitation (118) or walk back to your car in disgust (74)?

(258)

You are in a panicked state of mind. You run to the door, to find that it is locked. There are no windows in the room. You are trapped. You cast your eyes around. The shadows cast from the lamp seem to twist and writhe in a sinister manner. What evil is in this room? Who is laughing? Will you escape this house alive? *What is that noise?* You slump to the ground in a quivering mess and bury your head in your hands. The house has broken you mentally, and you are unable to continue. You don’t hear the door open, or the footsteps that walk in and then stop right in front of you...

(259)

Cassandra stops directly in front of you. She certainly looks real enough. “Well? Grab my hands,” she commands. You relax a little and take hold of her wrists *but your hands grab nothing but air! They go right through her!* Before the full effect of this shock hits you, a terrible thing happens: the room suddenly goes pitch black, as if someone had flicked a switch. Roll 2 dice. If the result is equal to or greater than your current Fear score, go to 341. If it is less than your current Fear score, go to 278.

(260)

A stunningly beautiful woman is resting on the bed. She is lying on her side, facing you. Coal black hair cascades to her shoulders, matching her black, form-hugging dress. Her aqua blue eyes are keenly fixed to yours. A faint smile plays on the corner of her blood red lips. For a few moments, you simply stare at her, stunned. Her smile grows as she slowly sits up. “Well,” she begins, her voice her voice as beautiful as her appearance, “hello there.” “Hello,” you breathe. You cannot think of anything to say, so you blurt out

“What’s your name?” She tilts her head and a coy expression comes to her face. “My name? Why, I am Cassandra, Count Pravemi’s daughter.” What do you think of this answer? Will you keep talking to her (389) run out of the room (47) or challenge her (283)?

(261)

Through a blur of pain, you grip the handle of your blade and focus on the outline of the Strega. Drawing your arm back, you fling your weapon at her chest. Test your luck. If you are lucky, go to 95. If you are unlucky, go to 20.

(262)

Turning to your right, you walk up to the door to find that it is marked BAMBINI. You place your ear up against it and can faintly make out a pair of high-pitched voices that seem to be giggling and laughing. Curious, you open the door a crack and peer inside. The room contains a bed, a table, and a closet lined with a mirror. Several candelabrum stand on the table, providing a glow strong enough to illuminate the entire area. In the center of the room, on a rug, two children sit together. The boy and girl are laughing while they play with some cloth dolls. Will you make your presence known (107) or close the door and follow the hall as it bends left (115) or go back to where the landing splits (150)?

(263)

The door opens up into a small library. Stacks of books are shelved from the floor to the ceiling, making maximum use of the space available. A lamp glows on a small nightstand in the center of the room, providing a fair amount of light. You wonder if there is any information to be gained from these tomes. If you are in possession of Count Pravemi’s personal stamp, go to 78. If not, go to 113.

(264)

You roll back the covers of the bed – nothing. Under the bed – nothing. Around the fireplace – zero. Looking through the desk, you are annoyed to find that it is completely bare of anything as well. You realize that you are wasting precious time. Go to 105.

(265)

With one hand on the vampire’s neck, you raise your weapon to the sky – where it seems to gleam with a holy power for a brief second – before plunging the blade into its heart. It emits a fell shriek and its nails rip at your chest (lose 2 stamina points) before its grip relaxes and its arms fall limply at its sides. The vampire’s eyes continue to smolder with hatred, but it no longer sees anything. Go to 4.

(266)

You leap onto the beast and land a blow to its head, but this only seems to knock some sense back into it. It responds with a blow of its own, a shot to your head that knocks you back, senseless. The beast leaps onto you and tears you apart. Your days are over.

(267)

Pravemi strides confidently towards you, brandishing his blade. You stand to receive his onslaught. Resolve the battle.

Pravemi: Skill 10 Stamina 15

Note the following: D'Onoffrio, coward that he is, will leap in and aid his master every other round. Note that he has a SKILL of 9. In these instances, you must defend against both of them. If either one rolls a higher attack strength than you, then you are wounded as normal. If you beat both of them, you wound Pravemi in the normal way. If you bring Pravemi's Stamina down to 4 or less, stop fighting and go immediately to 384.

(268)

You pull out your knife and spring at them, killing the first one before they can react. They quickly recover and pull out their own blades. Fortunately, the hall is narrow, so only two of them can attack you at once.

First Acolyte: Skill 7 Stamina 9

Second Acolyte: Skill 8 Stamina 8

In each round, decide which of the two you will attack; against the other you must merely defend yourself. Of course, each of them can wound you in any round if they roll a higher attack strength. If you win, go to 104.

(269)

A dagger strikes you squarely in the back. You gasp and stumble forward from its force, losing your footing and hitting the ground. Seconds later, rough hands pull you to your feet and you hear gasps of surprise as your hood is pulled back. You are dragged back down the tunnel, into the alcove, and around the wall, your struggles to no avail. The other side of the alcove opens into a spacious room with a dais in the center. A young woman is tied to the alter, and you are unceremoniously dumped next to her. There will be an extra sacrifice tonight for the feast of the black moon.

(270)

As you walk over to the bureau, there is a sudden noise behind you. You wheel around, brandishing your weapon (if you have one)...but there is nothing. You glance over to the mirror and your heart skips a beat. *Your reflection is gone!* Before you can do anything else, you feel a tap on your shoulder. You spin around, to be confronted by an image of yourself! This thing is identical to you in every way, save for its blood red eyes and a horrible grin. You must add 2 fear points for this shock. Before you can react, it leaps at you and you must defend yourself.

Mirror Image: Skill ? Stamina ?

The image possesses the exact same attributes that you do (the same Skill and Stamina scores). If you are carrying a weapon, it carries the same kind. One possible advantage

that you have in this fight is that you are free to use your luck, while your opponent will not. If you win, go to 146.

(271)

You state your password and wait. The seconds tick by. Just as you are beginning to despair, the door silently slides open. You peer inside and spot a table adorned with a white tablecloth resting on a step that splits the room into two levels. The room is well lit by a glass chandelier hanging from the ceiling. Something has been placed on the table, and you step inside for a better look. Go to 178.

(272)

You gradually steer the conversation over to the house. Who do they live with? Who takes care of them? Where do they go and whom do they visit outside the house? They seem puzzled by your questions. "Story time!" interrupts Aldo. "House rules. You're the visitor, so you go first." "Oh yes, please," exclaims Anna, clapping her hands in glee and looking at you excitedly. "I love stories." If you decide that you are wasting time here, you can leave the children and continue down the hallways as it bears to the left (115) or you may go back to the split in the landing (150). If you decide to humor them, go to 308.

(273)

The demon staggers back from your final blow. It raises its head to the heavens and bellows in torment before crashing to the ground. A moment of dead silence follows, before a low rumbling reaches your ears. The room begins to shake. Cracks appear along the floor. At that moment, a door bursts open and men in black robes flood into the room. Some, upon seeing the remains of the demon, drop to the floor and begin wailing in lamentation. Others scream in terror and look for an escape, but lose their balance as the shaking intensifies. The cracks along the floor have opened into gaping holes; one of them claims the body of the hell demon. Several of the men soon tumble in to join their master in eternal damnation, screaming in terror all the way. You pull out the Star, hoping that it will lead to a way out, but it slips from your hands and falls into a hole, the light slowly fading away as it falls countless fathoms. Are you wearing a bronze pentacle? If so, go to 252. If not, go to 346.

(274)

As you strike the final blow, the ghastly ghoull falls back against one of the pantries. The door flies open and a stack of plates falls to the floor with a crash. The noise is deafening! Too late, you hear heavy footsteps approaching the door behind you. Go to 81.

(275)

The Count walks back into the room from a side hallway. "Once again, I ask for your pardon, my friend." You assure him that it was no trouble and he smiles before glancing down to his watch. "It is late, and in only a few hours you must be up. D'Onoffrio will show you to your room. Good night." You thank him again and then follow D'Onoffrio upstairs. The second story of the estate is a vast connection of hallways that are lit at regularly spaced intervals by lamps mounted to the walls. You pass several doors containing brass nameplates. At last, you arrive at an unmarked door at the end of a

hallway. It leads into a cozy room containing a bed that is made with crisp, satin sheets. A small nightstand is a few feet away containing a mirror, a glass, a pitcher of water, and a small tub of ice. D'Onoffrio bids you good night and closes the door as he leaves. You lay your clothes by the bed and climb underneath the sheets. You can hear the sprinkling of rain outside the window as you drift off to sleep. Go to 21.

(276)

As you exit the library, a quick flash catches your eye. Lying on the floor is a small silver chain. It appears to have been part of a locket, but the clasp has been broken. You decide to pocket this find (remember to mark this on your action chart). Leaving the room, you round the corner. Go to 186.

(277)

You relax and settle back comfortably in your chair, sipping your soda, while the Count takes a drink of his brandy. He asks you about yourself, your family, and your job. In turn, he tells you about himself. Go to 100.

(278)

After everything that has happened to you in this house, this latest shock is more than you can bear. Your heart simply stops beating and you fall to the floor, dead.

(279)

Little pieces of porcelain lie strewn across the room. You make a cursory search, but cannot find the diamond ring that you offered. Cross this item off of your action chart. The door to the room swung open during the fight and you decide not to waste any more time here. Go to 102.

(280)

The hole that you have entered seems in fact to be a tunnel. You run through the darkness as fast as you can, heedless of what might lay ahead, the tumult behind you slowly fading away. The tunnel twists and turns down and around, and you eventually emerge from a hillside near the start of the track that led to the house. You turn around and look back up at the house. It stands forlorn and silent, without a hint of the chaos occurring inside. Suddenly, it begins to shift backwards; a few seconds later it collapses in on itself, spewing a huge cloud of dust that slowly rises into the early morning sky. You glance down at the pentacle that saved your life and slip it back under your shirt. The rain has stopped and the air smells fresh and clean. You turn around and slowly begin the trek back to your car. It's going to be a beautiful day.

(281)

You place your coins on the hands, taking care not to spill any. While you are busy with this, one of the hands suddenly comes to life, grabbing your wrist! You jump back in shock, but the grip is firm. You look into the statue's face, but nothing has changed. The maniacal smile remains, and it makes no other movement. You cannot break free, nor can you drag the statue anywhere – it seems to be rooted to the floor. Anger gives way to desperation as you realize that you are stuck. Try as you might, you cannot break away.

You yell for help, but no one comes. Your life will slowly eke away in the grip of this supernatural fiend.

(282)

You make your way back up the tunnel. The door leading into the closet is still open, and as you reenter, the reek of the dismembered fiend assails your nostrils. A shiver runs down your spine as you slowly open the door and check to make sure that no one remains in the room. When you are satisfied, you quickly step out, close the door behind you, replace the candle on the table, and exit the room. Go to 378.

(283)

You look into her eyes for a moment. Think back to the beginning of your adventure. Did you examine any of Pravemi's photographs when he left the dining room? If so, go to 381. If not, go to 193.

(284)

If you have a weapon, go to 65. If you are fighting unarmed, go to 266.

(285)

The man makes no reply regarding your inquiries. He merely continues to stare at you with a look of burning hatred. You become a little unnerved and demand that he speak up or forfeit his life. At this, his eyes narrow and a faint smile reaches his lips. "You are doomed, stranger," he whispers. "The master will repay you for your transgressions. And I shall collect my reward now!" Before you can react, he draws his free hand across his neck. Blood immediately begins to gush out. You step back in disgust as his hand flops to the ground, revealing a small pocket blade hidden in his palm. You shake your head in disbelief. Go to 192.

(286)

Following the hall around to the left, you soon arrive at a stairway that leads down to the ground floor. There are no doors here, so you descend. Go to 140.

(287)

A burning sensation reaches your skin, and your hand is instinctively drawn to the jewel. As soon as you touch it, feelings of relief and calm flood over you, although they are intermingled with a great sense of danger. You feel sharp and alert, and stand ready while you stare at the thing that was Cassandra but is now rapidly changing to its true form. She continues: "The fool prayed every day for his daughter to return, but of course she didn't. So one day, he turned to someone else. And lo and behold" she rasps, spinning around, "he got what he wanted." In a sudden, blinding moment of realization, you understand that most of what you have seen and experienced in this house is the creation of the Hades demon that is standing before you. It has sprouted fur, and its eyes have changed from a brilliant blue to a bloodshot red, while also dilating into crescent shaped slits. Not insignificant is the fact the thing has also grown to three times its original size. It continues to speak to you, but its words have changed into unintelligible rasps. It

suddenly opens its maw and spits out a gob of fiery liquid straight at you. If you have a shield, go to 336. If not, go to 96.

(288)

You cautiously step into the room, holding your breath. Ever so slowly, you close the door behind you. Now that you are in the room, you can see that it contains only the piano, a divan, and a window. You slowly step towards the piano, hoping to get a view of the player. You are only a few feet away when one of the floorboards creaks. The playing abruptly stops. Go to 22.

(289)

You come directly to the point. You really don't believe that she is so ignorant as to not know what goes on in this house, and so you decide to find out if she is with or against you. You quickly relate your experiences in the house, as well as informing her of your intentions. She listens without interrupting, expressionless. When you finish, you nervously stand your ground, wondering if she is about to summon some hellish creature to kill you. But she does no such thing. Staring at you intently, she begins: "Stranger, I appreciate your candor. Indeed I know what goes on in this house and the activities that my father engages in. I would try to stop him, or at least escape, but I am a prisoner by his own hand. He does not keep me locked up in the dungeons, with the other prisoners; instead he holds me inside this house, hoping that one day I will turn." She bows her head in sorrow. "There have been others who have tried to end his reign of terror – all have failed. Perhaps you will be the one to succeed." She stares at you for a moment. "Yes. I will help you." Go to 223.

(290)

You spin around and race for the door. You are almost there when an excruciating pain rips into your back. The force drives you to the ground. You are dimly aware of the knife sticking out of you as rough hands drag you to your feet. You are dragged back around the bend and into an alcove that leads to a dais. A young woman is tied down on an altar, and you are dumped next to her. There will be an extra sacrifice tonight for the feast of the black moon.

(291)

Something steps forward out of the darkness. He, or it, is dressed from head to foot in black – but has a snow-white face and white hands. Its face is expressionless; black pools of darkness stare out at you. There is something vaguely and terrifyingly familiar about it; something out of your darkest childhood nightmares. It steps forward and you must find the strength to defend yourself, for you are now fighting

The Bogey Man

(Skill 10, Stamina 12)

Before each round, roll a single die; if a one ever turns up, then you are scared to death and your adventure is over. If you win, go to 37.

(292)

Your eyes meet Cassandra's. If you are in possession of a jeweled brooch, go to 368. If not, go to 70.

(293)

You doggedly drag yourself back to the door, which has closed. You stretch up, hand shaking in pain, grip the handle, and turn. But no – locked! You slump down in frustration. Is this the end? If you have a gold key, go to 72. If not, go to 169.

(294)

You clasp her hand. "Yes. I will help. I fully intended to defeat him myself, but it's nice to have some aid." She smiles. "Wait here." Walking to her desk, she pulls open a drawer and returns with a jeweled brooch, which she pins to your collar. "This won't completely protect you, but it will weaken his powers. If you continue down the hallway, you will run into him. I will make arrangements to be there as well. Then, before he knows what's happened, we will defeat him, together. He won't be able to fight off two attackers." Thanking her, you exit the room. If you haven't already, you can try the other door (357) or go continue down the hall (90).

(295)

You reach the bottom of the stairway and take a moment to get your bearings. To your left is a long hallway that appears to run past at least one doorway before bending to the right. To your right is an unmarked door. The scene directly in front of you is quite tranquil: a coffee table rests between two large, plush chairs. A fireplace lies a few feet beyond. Will you head down the hallway (86) open the door to your right (376) or sit down for a little while (62)?

(296)

You crawl over to the table, drag yourself up, and knock it over. It strikes the bedpost and hits the ground with a thud. The strega, however, is unimpressed. She puts the doll up to her teeth and pulls away some of the fabric. A gaping wound opens up in your side – lose 6 Stamina points. If you are still alive, will you throw yourself at her mercy (377) crawl back to the door (293) or throw a weapon at her, if you haven't tried this (261)?

(297)

You place the diamond on the statue's hands. After a minute, you blink your eyes and shake your head because you thought you saw...yes! The statue *is* moving! It raises the diamond up to its eyes, as if admiring it. It then looks back at you and nods its head. You nod back, unsure what this means. It then reaches behind its back and retrieves a small tube filled with a clear liquid, which it hands to you. It then becomes motionless again, its fist closed around the diamond. Erase it from your action chart. Will you drink this potion (229) or not (361)?

(298)

Time seems to slow down. You lose your bearings and your senses, but are strangely unalarmed. You are dimly aware of Cassandra walking up to you, smiling. She is saying something, but you can't make out her words. The next thing you know is that she is escorting you to the chair, where you sit down. You suddenly feel drowsy, and close your eyes for a moment. And then...you suddenly reel back, wide-awake. You are standing in a hallway. It looks familiar. Two doors are visible, facing each other. You feel drawn to the one on the right, but it is locked. You faintly remember...what? A dream? Your imagination? Or was it real? Cassandra...the name is burned in your mind. You feel a sudden compulsion to break the door down, but quickly restrain yourself. If you haven't already, you can try the other door (357) or continue down the hall (90).

(299)

Having dispatched the old man, you quickly search through the debris and find a dagger under the mattress, which you may take if you need a weapon. You also find a deck of cards lying neatly on the ground, which you may keep as well. You exit the room and continue down the hall. Go to 166.

(300)

D'Onoffrio twists open a bottle of sparkling mineral water and pours it into a glass for you. The Count relaxes with his brandy for a moment, then starts up a conversation. He asks you about yourself, your family, and your job. He, in turn, tells you about himself and his family. Go to 100.

(301)

You shake the gate in frustration; it is old and rusty and the hinges are loose. You decide to force it open by charging it. Roll 2 dice; if the result is equal to or less than your Skill score (use your starting skill) it flies open; if not, it takes several attempts to force the gate open and you must reduce your Stamina by 2. In either case, you walk through the gate and into a light rain. Looking around, you can see the foreboding shape of the house; you seem to be in the rear. A path winds around the estate, disappearing into the darkness. Will you look for a way to reenter the house (26) or make your way around the front, back to your car (374)?

(302)

"I'm sorry," you reply, smiling. "I couldn't sleep, so I thought I would tire myself out a little bit by walking around the house. I've seen some very...interesting things." You watch her carefully, looking for some type of reaction, but she betrays no emotion. "Your father keeps some very interesting company," you state, sticking with the same tactic. "What do you think of it all?" "Oh, I don't make it a habit to interject myself in his affairs," she replies coolly. You think carefully about what you will say next. If she is as evil as her father, then clearly she is toying with you, like a cat that plays with its prey. On the other hand, it could be that she has taken *you* for one of her father's friends and doesn't want to risk revealing her true feelings. The only way to find out for sure is to be truthful about yourself (223). If you think this is too risky, you can simply excuse yourself and leave (363). Alternately, you can try something drastic – you may attack her

and attempt to force her to divulge everything she knows. If you wish to do this, go to 152.

(303)

You lift up a pawn from the opposite side of the board and move it ahead two spaces. After a few seconds, a knight floats across the board and occupies a new space. You study the board for a few seconds, then counter with another move, taking a seat as you do. Your opponent, who you now see is a skeleton wearing a hood, selects another move. Strangely, this doesn't alarm you; you are too busy concentrating on the board. You select a move...and then another...another...time passes, and at some point ceases to exist for you. Your mission, your very life – all are inconsequential now. The game eventually ends, and you look up at your partner, who nods in agreement to your unspoken question: “Two out of three?”

(304)

The man claps his hands in glee and leads you around the laboratory. He tells you that his name is Petruccio and that he has been Count Pravemi's personal chemist for several years. You ask him why someone of his calling is needed and he laughs. “Ah, yes, such a joker. The master no doubt appreciates your humor. The bodies, of course, must remain clean and well preserved. Sometimes we go months before getting a new one. But you will learn the details when you are initiated. Yes.” He strides over to the table. “Tell me if your dressers are this skilled back home.” He unzips the bag to reveal a humanoid shape...yes, it's a man, or was, but it appears to have had its skin and hair removed! You gasp and jump back in shock. Add 1 Fear point. “My friend,” he laughs incredulously, “surely this isn't new to you? Especially if you have been promoted to the esteemed Pravemi's order?” His eyes narrow suspiciously. You'd better think fast. Will you apologize and tell him that you were simply taken aback by his great skill (9) or that this type of preservation isn't customary where you come from (53)?

(305)

You make your way up the track towards the castle. Once you reach the top, you walk through a courtyard up to a rusty iron door that is unlocked. You step inside to find a vast but nearly empty entrance hall. A suit of armor stands near the wall to your left; a wooden chest sits a few yards in front of you; a painting hangs on the wall to your right. Will you investigate the armor (209) the chest (92) or the painting (12)?

(306)

You flip through the pages of the book, trying to find some useful information in a minimum amount of time. You come across a page containing a diagram of what looks like a wizard throwing stones into a fire. The caption below reads as follows:

For the release and recall of Hazrukiel, recite the words of power:
NET NOITCES OT NRUT EGASSEM SIHT DNATSREDNU UOY FI

If you want to risk summoning the spirit, go to 127. Otherwise, you may examine the book of local history (121) or the book of witchcraft (203). If you are finished here, you may exit this room and continue down the hall (186).

(307)

You walk over to the bed, get on your hands and knees, and look underneath, but nothing seems to be there except dust. You then proceed to gently fold back the sheets, but again, everything seems to be normal. You replace the sheets and try to make everything look undisturbed. At that moment, you feel a sharp pain on your leg. You look down to see a large brown spider on your calf. Cursing, you slap it off and it scurries under the bed. You pull up your pant leg to see that a red welt has begun to form on your skin. Lose 1 Stamina point. You begin feeling lightheaded; it seems that the little beast was poisonous. Unless you are lucky enough to discover an antidote, you will quickly die. You must subtract one point of Stamina for every new section that you read until you either die or discover a cure. Now, will you investigate the chest (61) the desk (109) the door (2) or will you leave this room (208)?

(308)

You think for a minute, and then tell them the story of Pinocchio. They sit at rapt attention, eyes wide, hanging on your every word. At the end, Pinocchio becomes a real boy and they both clap their hands in glee. "My turn, my turn," says Aldo. "How about... a ghost story!" "Ohhh," breathes Anna. "Yes! I love ghost stories!" You nod excitedly and tell them how much you, too, appreciate scary stories. "All right," begins Aldo, lowering his voice. "Once upon a time, there was a man." "A nice man?" interrupts Anna. "Decent," continues Aldo. "This man had a daughter, and she was very beautiful." "As beautiful as me?" pipes in Anna. "Oh, no," replies Aldo. "She was much prettier." Anna frowns. "Anyway, he loved his daughter more than anything else in the world. But one day, she became very, very ill. And then she died." The candles standing on the table begin to flicker. Go to 64.

(309)

You begin chasing D'Onoffrio around the couch. The young woman bursts into a fit of laughter, clapping her hands in glee. You run, stop, and reverse your course; D'Onoffrio runs around, over, and along the couch. You are beginning to feel rather silly. At that moment, a small blade whistles through the air and embeds itself in your side. Lose 3 Stamina points. Grimacing in pain, you pull it out. Pravemi, who you should have attacked immediately, steps towards you with murder in his eyes. Go to 267.

(310)

You slowly walk over to the box. Taking a deep breath, you bend down and flip back the lid. Inside is a man dressed in a dark suit. He has straight, light colored hair; his eyes are closed and his skin is a pale hue. Dead! However, you were half expecting something like this and so you aren't particularly shocked or frightened. But why keep a body in a room like this? Will you search the body (25) or close the lid and leave (207)?

(311)

Grisela urges you to leave immediately. Taking her advice, you exit the room and proceed back down the tunnel and up the stairs. Exiting by the door, you continue down the hall. Go to 86.

(312)

The scene continues to shift. The painting seems to grow as big as a doorway, while surrounding you – and then, suddenly, you are standing outside, in a clearing. The air is warm and heavy; the last rays of the sun can be seen in the distance. Short, ugly trees are scattered sporadically around the landscape. Turning around, you see a great castle at the top of a hill. A sloping track leads up to it. You are trying to decide what to do when you spot a solitary figure standing at the edge of a hill near a group of taller trees. Go to 77.

(313)

Margaret places her hands on your shoulder, closes her eyes, and stands silently for a few moments. You feel strength flowing into your limbs. Restore your Stamina to its initial level. You thank Margaret and head for the castle. Go to 305.

(314)

There doesn't seem to be anything hidden in the pile of bones as you brush them aside with your foot. Disturbingly, many of them seem human – indeed, you spot skulls, ribcages, leg bones, and other recognizable parts. After a few minutes, you decide that you have had enough of this place and turn to leave. Go to 358.

(315)

You state your password and wait. The seconds tick by. Just as you are starting to despair, the door slides open silently. You peer inside and spot a table adorned with a white tablecloth set up on a step that splits the room into two levels. The room itself is well lit by a glass chandelier hanging from the ceiling. Something has been placed on the table, and you decide to enter the room for a better look. Go to 178.

(316)

Collecting yourself after your ordeal, you walk straight up to the door. It is unmarked, and no sound comes from the other side. You feel an unexpected rush of adrenaline, as though some kind of conclusion lies in the near future. Taking a deep breath, you open the door. Go to 128.

(317)

The pool table has been fashioned from oak wood. You run your hand along the felt surface, examine the cue sticks, and peruse the pool balls. Everything seems normal, until one of the balls suddenly floats into the air and flies into your shoulder, leaving you with a painful bruise (lose 1 Stamina point). You scowl in anger, but when three more balls rise into the air, the reality of the situation hits you and you realize that you are in danger – add 1 Fear point. If you back away, the balls leave you unmolested; you may go to 140 and select another area to explore. Or do you think there is something to be gained by staying? If so, go to 42.

(318)

You rush towards Cassandra, who remains motionless. When you are within a step of her, a trapdoor opens underneath you and you plunge downwards. You fall twenty feet or so into a small, bare room. There is no escape from this prison.

(319)

You have been following the lighted tunnel for several meters when it takes a sharp turn to the right. You follow the turn and immediately stop when you are confronted – oddly enough – with a gate, which bars your way. Before you even know what to think of this, a harsh voice barks out to you from the other side: “What is your business here at this hour?” Stunned, you offer no reply. The voice calls out again: “If you have a reason to be here, then you know the process. What color is Orion’s belt?” You are left to ponder this strange question and can only conclude that it is some kind of code. Do you know the answer to this question? If you do, take each letter of the word that is your answer and convert it into a number using the code A=1, B=2, ...Z=26. Add all of these values up, then take this new number, double it, and go to the section that matches your result. If the section you turn to make no sense, you have guessed wrong. Go to 332.

(320)

Your adversary slumps to the floor, lifeless. While you pause to catch your breath, you notice a movement out of the corner of your eye. The other man, whom you had forgotten about, is stirring awake. Your eyes meet for a moment, and then he pounces towards you, a curved dagger in his hand. Your reflexes are quick, however, and you pin his arm to the ground with your foot. The man has steely gray eyes to match his gray hair, and he stares at you in contempt. Will you kill him outright (192) or demand information (285)?

(321)

Once again, bones lie strewn about across the ground. You are on your knees, breathless. The sheer terror that you felt gave you the power to fight with fervor you didn’t know you possessed. A sudden, horrible thought comes to your mind – could the thing reanimate *again*? The thought is enough to make you leap up and run out of the room, into the tunnel. Go to 54.

(322)

The sound is a low humming sort of noise. The spectral image of a woman is coming into focus. It is a bright blue hue and you step back warily as it grows more brilliant. She seems to be wearing an elegant gown and is also holding what looks like a scepter. As the light comes into focus, the ghost’s features – skeletal features, you now see – form into a snarl of rage as she examines you. Before you can take any action, she raises her scepter and a bolt of energy shoots out straight towards you. Fortunately, your reactions have been sped up by the Star of Ages and you are able to dodge the shot. This certainly saves your life; but a piece of the ethereal matter still manages to graze your arm as you spin away – lose 4 Stamina points. Have you read a book on spirit summoning *and* solved its code? If so, go to 339. If not, go to 52.

(323)

You gaze at her warily. “I fully intend to defeat him on my own. At any rate, you’ve lived here for years. I’m sure you’ve had ample opportunity to take him out if you were so inclined. Goodbye.” You turn around and begin walking towards the door. “Wait!” she cries. You turn the doorknob... “Wait!” she cries again, her voice sounding strangely high pitched. You begin to turn back towards her, but at that moment sharp claws rake your neck and you grimace in pain. A second later, a black cat bounds through the door and races down the hall. You spin around angrily, shouting “What the hell do you...” but your voice trails off as you realize that she is gone. You run your hand along your neck and feel that it is wet with blood (lose 2 Stamina points). If you leave the room straightaway, go to 105. If you wish to search it first, go to 264.

(324)

You suddenly remember that the man entered your room from a secret panel in the wall. If you wish to locate this, go to 130. If not, you exit the room. Go to 378.

(325)

You slowly unroll the parchment, to find that it contains a message written in a medieval style of calligraphy. As you try to decide whether you should read it aloud, you hear a murmur from the congregation. One of the men behind you steps forward and takes the parchment from you. “What is wrong, father?” he asks. “Are you feeling ill?” Will you nod your head, hoping to get out of performing the ceremony (215) or turn back towards the altar (101)?

(326)

You quickly dress and walk over to the door. You wonder if anyone else is up – but either way you plan to explore for a while. Something about this house seems odd, and you are determined to investigate. But a shock awaits you when grasp the doorknob: the room is locked! It seems as though your host isn’t keen on having his guests prowl around. Will you pour yourself some water and think about the situation (49) undress and climb back into bed (157) or attempt to break out of the room (191)?

(327)

You spin around and fling your blade at D’Onoffrio’s fleeing form. It flies through the air end over end, and he yelps in pain as it lands in his shoulder. He staggers out the door and disappears. Pravemi is on you again and you must defend yourself. Go to 239.

(328)

The man seems overjoyed by your response. “Oh, yes, beautiful, wonderful, come and sit with me, my friend, there is room for you.” He brushes aside some junk and you take a seat next to him. “No one in this house but me follows the football,” he proclaims. “They are always so serious, so dark; ‘Anselmo, stop making so much noise, idiot; Anselmo, make them stop screaming; Anselmo, bury this body and be quick about it.’ Anselmo, do this, that, and the other. Bah. They do not have appreciation for our sport.” You nod in sympathy, telling him that you can see what a tough situation he is in. Go to 369.

(329)

“Underneath the house? Well, from upstairs, of course. But that is a long way for you. Has the master shown you the fast way?” You shake your head, but tell him that you would love to be directed by someone as knowledgeable as him. He beams at your flattery and takes you outside the room. “Now, Shekou will direct the master’s friend. Yes, Shekou will show the master how useful a servant he is. The master will appreciate Shekou when Shekou is gone.” You nod heartily. Shekou leads you down the hallway, where he stops in front of a painting depicting several peasants sitting outdoors by an apple tree. He reaches up and pushes his palm down on the tree. At that moment, the section of the wall containing the painting slides aside, revealing a tunnel that slopes downward at a sharp angle. Smiling, you thank Shekou for his help, promising to tell the master how helpful he has been. Shekou grins and waves goodbye. As you enter the tunnel, the panel slides shut behind you, plunging you into darkness. Go to 255.

(330)

You make your way back up the tunnel. The familiar glow of the torchlight meets your eyes, and you eventually reach the main passage. You turn left and continue down the main tunnel. Go to 319.

(331)

“Well done, well done,” she congratulates you. “I’ve never had a show this good. I was starting to think I’d made things too difficult. You eye her carefully, unsure of what to say, thoughts and emotions coursing through you. After everything you’ve been through, you’d expected something (what?) great once you defeated Pravemi. And yet, here you are, having achieved what you set out to do, with your victory feeling somehow hollow and incomplete. In addition, you have a gnawing sense of danger and fear that is growing by the second. Your thoughts are interrupted by the woman, who calls out sharply to you: “What’s the matter? Cat’s got your tongue?” She giggles, as if reveling in an inside joke. You shake your head to clear the confusion and angrily retort, “Who are you? If you were a prisoner, I’d expect a little more gratitude. If you’re one of Pravemi’s servants, I’ll let you live if you turn yourself in to the proper...” her laughter cuts you off. Go to 73.

(332)

Without warning, the gate swings open and a black-cloaked man wielding an axe steps out and attacks you. You must fight for your life.

Cloaked Attacker: Skill 9 Stamina 10

If you win, go to 356.

(333)

The books are set in a plain black binding. They are written in a strange, unfamiliar language, somewhat similar to Latin, as far as you can tell. Flipping through the pages, you spot several disturbing illustrations – faceless beings, writhing on the ground as if in great pain; an opened box with a whirlpool of ghastly clawed things (demons?) springing out; and one of a robed man holding a star shaped crystal that seems to be shooting out a bolt of searing light straight at a group of hideous and evil looking beings standing

nearby. You wonder what these books are about. The sound of approaching voices reaches your ears. You quickly replace the books and take your seat. Go to 275.

(334)

You smile nervously and clear your throat. “Er...hello,” you begin. They merely stare at you. The large man stops moaning. You try again. “I’m here...to help you,” you state. “I can help you escape. Would you like that?” Still no response. It is like talking to the walls. If you want to approach one of them individually, will it be the old woman (233) the man (120) or the large man lying on his back (342)? If you’ve had enough of these characters, you may retrace your steps and continue down the hallway on 86.

(335)

Leaving the Diavoleria room behind, you follow the hall as it rounds a corner and turns left. As you make the turn, you suddenly notice a door that you had not seen before on the wall to your right. It is unmarked. You place your ear up against it, but there is only silence. Will you enter this room (263) or continue around the corner (186)?

(336)

You raise the shield for protection, but at the last second your arm involuntarily jerks down and the liquid splashes onto your neck and chest. You scream in agony; your skin feels as if it were aflame. Lose 6 Stamina points. The shield is cursed. You discard it (remember to delete the bonus it gave you). In addition, reduce your Skill to 13. The demon spits at you again. Go to 96.

(337)

The door is suddenly thrown open and a shambling, seven-foot-tall horror lumbers into the room. It is covered in coarse brown fur; a set of yellow teeth protrudes from its snout. Its yellow eyes glow unnaturally as it momentarily stops to sniff the air. You, as a matter of course, are momentarily frozen in fear (add 2 Fear points) but manage to recover as the beast’s eyes meet yours. There is the briefest pause, and then the thing rushes straight at you. At the last moment, you tear yourself away and the beast crashes into the window frame and stumbles back, stunned. Will you take this opportunity to attack it (284) or run out of the room (196)?

(338)

What item will you offer?

- Some gold coins? (281)
- A pearl? (382)
- A deck of cards? (179)
- A diamond? (297)
- A diamond ring? (395)
- Your weapon? (217)
- Another item? (344)

(339)

You realize that even with the power of the Star, you are facing a powerful being that you might not be able to defeat. As it raises its scepter again, you decide to call on Hazrukiel for aid. Go to 131. NOTE: if you have *already* called on Hazrukiel, you have no choice but to charge the spirit and hope for the best. Go to 52.

(340)

You slowly enter a room containing a table, a bed, and a fireplace crackling with life. Sitting on a chair in front of the table is a gnarled old woman in a dark dress. Stringy wisps of gray hair hang down her forehead and she seems to be knitting some kind of cloth doll. She does not seem alarmed or surprised in the least upon seeing you; as a matter of fact her toothless smile gives you the uncanny feeling that she was expecting you. “There now, step forward, dearie,” she intones, and in spite of yourself, you do. She holds up the doll that she was working on, then looks over to you. “Perfect...” she hisses. If you have consumed any Witchbane, go to 45. If not, go to 354.

(341)

You clutch your heart – add 2 Fear points. If you are still alive, you turn and stumble out of Cassandra’s room. Go to 105.

(342)

The man had stopped moaning, but begins again as you approach. You kneel by his side to try and learn the cause of his ailment. Dried blood sticks to his forehead. “There, there,” you say, trying to comfort him. “I’m here to put an end to the evil in this house. But I’ll need your help. Any useful information that you can give me will greatly help.” His eyes flick open. Test your luck. If you are lucky, go to 253. If you are unlucky, go to 67.

(343)

He looks at you quizzically. “Hidden weapons? Master keeps all his secrets well hidden, yes.” He becomes evasive, and when you continue to press him for the location of the “most special” weapon, his face pales. “Most special...no! Shekou is a loyal servant, yes master, he is. Shekou no longer makes stupid mistakes. No more.” He hurriedly gathers his belongings, bids you farewell, and leaves. The thought occurs to you that perhaps you could force him to reveal some information; but when you step into the hallway, you find that he has disappeared! Shaking your head, you continue following the hall. Go to 367.

(344)

You place your chosen item on the statue’s hands. You wait. And wait. But nothing happens. Puzzled, you retrieve the item. If you wish to make another offering, go to 338 and choose again. Otherwise, you notice that the door behind you has swung open. If you leave, go to 102.

(345)

The door is unlocked and opens into a small room with a wooden floor and a table. Another door lies straight ahead. To your left are several black cloaks hanging by hooks set into the wall. You are trying to decide what to do next when the door opposite is flung

open and a short, middle-aged man with sandy blonde hair enters the room. He is obviously preoccupied with some matter of great importance; in his haste he fails to even notice you at first as he rummages through one of the cloaks. With a satisfied chuckle, he pulls out a vial from one of the pockets and slips it into his own. He then begins to don one of the other robes when he notices you. He jumps back as if he'd seen a ghost. "Who are you?" he rasps, eyes blazing. At your hesitant reply, he suddenly pulls out a dagger and attacks you. Resolve the fight:

Man: Skill 7 Stamina 8

If you win, go to 30.

(346)

The holes along the floor are becoming wider. The screams of the men are drowned out by the rumbling. One manages to grab onto you; a swift kick sends him sliding into a hole. You look around desperately, but there seems to be no way out. The room has started to tilt. You grab onto a windowsill for support as furniture and black-hooded figures slide past you. You get a last, desperate idea. Holding onto the windowsill, you smash open the glass with your free hand. You struggle to pull yourself out, but at that moment the house collapses in on itself. You have sacrificed your life to purge this evil from the face of the earth.

(347)

The hunchback, Shekou, tells you that he has been living in the house as one of Pravemi's personal servants for several years. However, his love for brandy and other fine spirits has led to his falling into disfavor with the master. One time too many, he fell into a drunken stupor while on guard duty; the last time this happened a prisoner almost escaped the house due to his carelessness. Thus, the decision was made to send him away to live with a friend of the Count who resides in a foreign country. While Shekou relates this story, you suddenly notice a sheet of paper and an envelope lying on the table. As the hunchback continues packing, you quietly walk over to investigate. Go to 396.

(348)

You follow the hall around the corner to find another long hallway that stretches out before you and ends at a door. Along the way, paintings and mirrors line the walls on both sides. There are also a couple of attractive brass tables with marble tops, holding flowers or picture frames. As you begin walking down this hall, a sudden noise makes you abruptly stop. If you have a silver chain, go immediately to 392. If you don't have a silver chain, but you do possess the Star of Ages, go to 322. If you have neither, go to 40.

(349)

You meet her gaze, but avoid looking directly into her eyes. After a few moments, she slowly lowers her eyes as if conceding defeat. She turns and walks to the back of the room, then spins around, her face drawn and serious. "Listen, stranger," she begins softly. "Perhaps you are the one. My father is an evil man, a veritable wizard of the black arts. It has been prophesied that one day a man, an outsider, would come to put an end to his

reign of terror.” She holds out her hand. “Are you that man? Come, together we may succeed where others have failed. Clasp my hand, and let us pledge to cleanse the world of this monster of die in the attempt.” Do you trust her? Yes (294) or no (323)?

(350)

Once again, you find yourself in pitch-blackness. The sound of your footsteps trudging on the dirt floor seems unnaturally loud in the dead stillness. You begin wondering if this tunnel leads anywhere when a dim, flickering glow in the distance catches your attention. As you continue ahead, you see that the tunnel ends at a closed wooden door. A single candle mounted on the wall provides the source of the light. Having come this far, you decide to open the door. Turning the knob, you find that it is unlocked; however you have to exert strong pressure to push the door open. The hinges creek as it slowly slides inward. The interior reveals a small room with bones strewn across the ground and little else, which you find rather puzzling. Do you wish to enter this room to investigate (314) or head back along the tunnel (54)?

(351)

You slowly descend the steps, keeping one hand on the wall to maintain your balance. You reach ground level after about fifty steps, to your relief. But then a sound catches you – a faint moaning. It seems human, but in this accursed place you can never be sure. The sound seems to come from directly ahead. There is still no light, so you use your lighter once again and see that you are in a narrow tunnel leading in the direction of the sound. If you wish to follow this, go to 216. Otherwise, you head back up the steps, out the door, and down the hallway. Go to 86.

(352)

You open the door and the pungent smell of preservatives drifts out. Peering inside warily, you make out what appears to be some type of laboratory. A wide table lines the center of the room, and something that looks disturbingly close to a body bag lies on it. As a matter of fact, the room is adorned with several of these bags hanging by hooks attached to the ceiling. You are just deciding against entering when a movement in the rear of the room catches your eye. Go to 168.

(353)

Examining the couch where Pravemi had been seated moments before, you are surprised to find a sticky residue on the seat. The fireplace seems normal. As there is nothing else to be found here, you exit by the doorway to your right. Go to 165.

(354)

The crone draws a long hairpin out from her pocket. Smiling wickedly, she plunges it into the doll. At that moment, you feel a sharp, horrible stabbing pain in your chest. Lose 4 Stamina points. You double over in agony as she rises to her feet. “So!” she screeches. “Put an end to this house, will we? Become a hero, eh? Bah!” She twists the needle around and you writhe on the ground in torment. If you don’t get yourself out of this, and soon, you will die. Will you crawl back towards the door (293) knock over the table (296) throw you weapon at her, if you have one (261) or beg her to stop (377)?

(355)

You land the killing blow and Pravemi slumps to the ground, lifeless. You fall to your knees, tired but elated at your victory. A strange sound reaches your ears, and you raise your head, puzzled. Then you realize that that what you are hearing is the sound of...clapping. You turn around to see the beautiful young woman, whom you had forgotten about, clapping her hands and smiling mirthfully, like a child at a marionette show. You stand up and face her. Go to 331.

(356)

You deal the final blow and he falls to the ground without a sound. You quickly search his robes but find nothing. Looking up to the now open gate, you realize that you've reached a section that contains something worth guarding – perhaps the very thing you seek. Stepping through the gateway, you see that the tunnel ends at a closed door. You stride up to it. Go to 242.

(357)

This door opens up into a small room full of ceramic figures. They resemble clowns and fools, dressed in all manners of outlandish outfits. The largest one, standing at about 3 feet, is at the rear of the room. It is dressed in white pantaloons, a checkerboard shirt, and suspenders. The expression frozen on its face is somewhat disturbing – a kind of maniacal smile. Its hands are outstretched, palms up, as if expecting something. As you step closer, you spot the word “offerings” etched into its forehead. On its shirt, a continuation of the message has been carved out, although a good portion is illegible: “...you...rewarded...manner.” Now, will you leave the room (393) or place one of your items on its hands as an “offering” (338)?

(358)

Out of nowhere, a wind begins to blow – a light breeze at first, but rapidly building up to a strong gust, then a powerful gale. You plant yourself against the wall, unable to move anywhere else. The wind picks up the bones and they begin flying through the air in some kind of pattern, rather than randomly bouncing off the walls. They spin in a circular motion, faster and faster...after a few more seconds, a tight vortex forms near the ground. The bones float down to it and begin to...*assemble*. With growing dread, you witness the creation of a grotesque skeletal thing, the bones strung together at odd and illogical angles. The wind abruptly dies. But the skeleton is alive. It turns its empty eye sockets towards you, and you feel as if you were staring at death itself. Add 3 Fear points. If you are still alive, the thing lumbers towards you. You scream in terror and prepare to defend yourself:

Re-Animator: Skill 11 Stamina 17

If you survive, go to 321.

(359)

You suddenly realize that you are sweating profusely. Cassandra smiles at you. “You can feel me. Solid as a rock. Here.” She walks towards you, arms outstretched. Will you run out of the room (47) or stay (259)?

(360)

You study the crystal in awe. It seems to glow, then dim, then glow again, as if charged with supernatural power. As you look closer, you could swear that you were looking into a pair of dark eyes within the crystal! But the glow dims once again and the image disappears. You slowly place your hands around the crystal and lift it up. It begins to glow again...brighter, brighter, so bright that you must shut your eyes – until it abruptly dims, and all is as it was before, with one exception: you are no longer in the room! Your body has been sucked into the crystal by the NANKA – a type of evil genie – living inside it. Your adventure ends here.

(361)

You may take the tube if you wish. Be sure to record it on your action chart. If, at any point, you change your mind and decide to drink the liquid, note the section you are on and go to 373. This option is available at any time except during a combat. You discover that the door through which you entered has swung open. You exit the room. Go to 102.

(362)

You state your password and wait. The seconds tick by. Just as you are beginning to despair, the door silently slides open. You peer inside and spot a table adorned with a white cloth, set up on a step that spits the room into two levels. A glass chandelier hanging from the ceiling casts a glow that lights up the scene. Something has been placed on the table, and you decide to enter the room for a better look. Go to 178.

(363)

You apologize for the intrusion and turn to leave. But as soon as you do, the door swings shut of its own accord. “No,” she calls out. “Why don’t you stay awhile?” You half-heartedly try to turn the doorknob to find that, sure enough, you are locked in this room. As you turn back to face Cassandra, you must decide if you will come clean about yourself (289) or attack her (152)?

(364)

After a couple of additional attempts, the door flies open. Rubbing your sore shoulder, you step back out into the hallway. If you haven’t already, you can try the other door (238) or continue ahead (90).

(365)

Taking your pick of some bread, cheese, and fruit, you settle down on top of the chest. You also uncork a bottle of brandy. The food offers a welcome respite, for you are rather hungry after your ordeals in this accursed place. The brandy goes down smoothly and warms you right up. After your feast, you lay back and close your eyes for a few moments, thankful for the opportunity to rest. After a little while, you feel stronger and braver, ready to deal with whatever else should come your way. You may restore up to 4

Stamina points and deduct 2 fear points. It is now time to decide your next move. Will you open the chest, if you have yet to do so (87) leave the room by opening the other door (352) or make your way back up to the closet (282)?

(366)

You lie on the ground for some time, senseless. Eventually, you regain your senses, but your entire body feels bruised (lose 3 Stamina points). Luckily, no bones seem broken and you are able to get back on your feet. As your eyes adjust to the darkness, you see that you are in a small room strewn with bones. A wooden door is set in the wall. The first thing you do is check to make sure it is unlocked – thankfully, it opens up, revealing a dark tunnel stretching out ahead. Will you leave straight away (54) or take some time to examine the room (314)?

(367)

You continue down the hallway, passing by a painting depicting several peasants sitting at the foot of an apple tree. The hall bends to the right. Go to 348.

(368)

Cassandra nods at you and you turn to face Pravemi, telling him that you have come to put an end to his evil. Cassandra draws a dagger and challenges D’Onoffrio, who runs into another room in terror, pursued by Cassandra. You advance on Pravemi, but as soon as you are close enough to land a blow a trapdoor opens up directly underneath you. You fall down several meters into a small, bare room. Mocking female laughter drifts down to you. There is no escape.

(369)

You and Anselmo discuss teams, tournaments, and strategies for a little while. He is surprisingly well informed, considering the fact that he is just an old man living in a room full of junk. You gradually steer the conversation to Pravemi and the house. He doesn’t seem to know anything useful, but when the topic of secret rooms comes up, he interrupts you excitedly. “Yes, yes! Wait. Anselmo can help.” He gets up, kicks aside some junk, and pulls up a section of the floorboard to reveal a set of stone steps leading down into darkness. When you ask Anselmo where this passage leads, he narrows his eyes in concentration for a few moments and then replies that he believes it leads outside the house. Now you must decide if you wish to descend into the darkness (135) or exit the room by the doorway and continue down the hall (166)?

(370)

Just as you begin drifting off to sleep, your eyes pop open. Were you imagining things? No – you can faintly hear a sliding sound, as if a closet door was being closed. You lay very still, concentrating on any sound that you can detect. There is only silence for a few minutes...and then you hear a slight creak of the floorboards. Someone is in the room! The thought is rather disconcerting. Add 1 Fear point. Will you remain silent (122) or suddenly leap out of bed, assume a defensive position, and call out to the intruder (234)?

(371)

A shimmering blue light is slowly brightening the center of the room. Within the light, the features of a middle-aged woman are slowly taking shape. She is dressed in a white robe and has light hair and ghostly blue eyes with no pupils. As the light fades, the apparition comes into focus. You never believed in ghosts – until now. The situation is very unnerving. Add 2 Fear points. She examines you solemnly for a few moments, as if sizing you up. “Stranger,” she begins, in a voice that sounds like the rustle of leaves, “you are in a cursed, unholy, evil place. Pravemi, your host, has welcomed you into his home, but little do you know of the evil in his heart. This house consumes all of those unfortunate enough to find themselves within these walls. We are powerless to destroy it, but one such as yourself, with what little aid we may provide, might succeed. Will you help?” Will you, out of the goodness of your heart, agree to help (11) or are you happy enough to escape the house with your life (236)?

(372)

Unless you have a weapon, you don’t have the means to destroy the Stringiamano. If you are unarmed, go to 108 and try to trap it. Otherwise, you brandish your blade as the hand whistles by your ear. You intent to cut the damned thing into little pieces; let it try to regenerate itself! But first you must immobilize it. Backing up, you reach a small stand holding a flowerpot containing a pair of pretty white gardenias. As the hand scuttles across the floor towards you, you wrap your fingers around the pot. If you have the Star of Ages, go to 228. If not, test your luck. If you are lucky, go to 228. If you are unlucky, go to 39.

(373)

The liquid possesses restorative properties, which allow you to regain up to 6 lost Stamina points. Go back to whatever section you came from.

(374)

You’ve had quite enough of this place. Without looking back, you follow the path straight up to your car. Relieved that it remains where you parked it, you slump into the seat and twist the key in the ignition. The engine sputters...once, twice, and then roars to life. You release the clutch and stomp on the accelerator. Clouds of mud are shot back as you screech away. *What an evil place*, you think to yourself. *Someone else can be the hero. I’m going home...*

Something rises out of the back seat and grabs you. Your car flies off the road and tumbles into a ditch. You are never seen or heard from again.

(375)

Nothing seems to be unusual regarding the dumbwaiter. The cart contains several unmarked bottles of colorful liquids – blue, green, yellow, and red. Since these drinks are on a cart, they aren’t dangerous – right? Do you want to risk finding out? If not, you may exit the room (286) or enter the Strega room (340). If you decide to have a swig from one of the bottles, what color liquid will you try?

Blue? (213)

Green? (126)

Red? (112)
Yellow? (68)

(376)

You grasp the knob and open the door. You are surprised when the door opens to reveal a set of stone steps descending into darkness. You have no way of gauging how far they go or where they lead. You take a lighter out of your pocket and flick the catch, but the flickering light reveals only more darkness. Will you follow these stairs (351) or close the door and head down the hallway (86)?

(377)

You plead with her to stop and show mercy. She merely grins contemptuously before walking over to the fire and holding the doll directly above it. You are suddenly gripped in a burning miasma of pain – lose 4 Stamina points. If you are still alive, will you fling your weapon at her (261) knock over the table (296) or crawl back towards the door (293)?

(378)

You are standing in the hallway. To your left is a door labeled SPECCHIO ACCESE. An unmarked door stands to your right. The hall continues ahead. Enter a room only if you not yet searched it. Will you enter the door marked Specchio Accese (155) the unmarked door (199) or continue down the hall (171)?

(379)

The vampire, for that is exactly what the man is, bares his sharp fangs, which gleam in the near darkness, then plunges them into the woman's neck. She shudders, but her face remains unchanged as the vampire buries his head into her and drinks his fill. You wish that you had acted to prevent this tragedy, and even think about attacking the vampire while it seems vulnerable, but something tells you that any attempt at this point would be futile and that the woman is beyond help. The vampire presently lifts the woman into his arms and walks off into the darkness. As there is nothing left here, you decide to explore the castle. Go to 305.

(380)

“Escape?” he repeats. “Only prisoners try to escape. Friends of the master leave only when they are sent to find more prisoners.” As he gathers his belongings, you realize that this wasn't the best question to ask, especially since you are trying to pass yourself off as a friend of Pravemi. You watch silently as he exits the room, wondering if you have lost an opportunity. You decide to continue down the hallway in the hopes of finding a quicker exit. Go to 367.

(381)

“You can't be Pravemi's daughter,” you begin, “because...” you suddenly stop. Add 1 Fear point. You take a hard look at her and think back to the girl in the photograph. Your mind flashes back to a few hours ago, in Pravemi's den, where you help up the picture frame and read the caption: *Cassandra 1904-1923 Your time with me was far too brief,*

my love. You shake your head and focus on the girl. “Cassandra is dead. So either you’re lying, you’re a ghost, or Pravemi has a sick sense of humor. Which is it?” you demand, sounding more confident than you feel. She addresses you in a slightly amused and condescending way, like an adult speaking with a child. “Ghosts? Really? Do you believe in them?” She arises from the bed. Go to 359.

(382)

You place the pearl on one of the hands and wait expectantly, but nothing happens. Feeling a little foolish, you remove your treasure. If you’d like to make another offering, go back to 338 and select another item. Otherwise, you turn around and see that the door has swung open. You leave – go to 102.

(383)

The woman looks at you with a piteous expression. “Poor dear,” she murmurs, stroking your hair. “Escape while you may. There is nothing you can do for us.” You start to question her, but her eyes glaze over and she faints. You check for a pulse...there is none. You stand up and look over to the other prisoners, who remain silent. Do you wish to speak with the robed man (120) the large man (342) or rather, to leave this area and explore the hallway on the floor above (86)?

(384)

“D’Onoffrio,” rasps Pravemi, reeling from your latest blow, “summon the brothers!” D’Onoffrio turns and runs towards the door. Pravemi leaps at you with grim determination. You’re not sure how many “brothers” are in the house, but something tells you that you *must* stop D’Onoffrio from getting help. What will do? Use a wooden box if you have one? (190) Throw your weapon at D’Onoffrio, if you have one? (327) Decide that what matters most is disposing of Pravemi, and turn your attention to him? (239).

(385)

You open the door of the Lupouomo room to find a man sitting in front of a desk, writing by lamplight. The only other objects in the room are a bed and a window that has been propped open, letting in a cool breeze. He looks up at you and you immediately tense up, but relax when he smiles. “Well hello, hello,” he greets you cheerfully. “Come on in, yes, there’s a good chap.” He seems friendly enough (although you resolve not to let your guard down) so you decide to enter the room with the hope of picking up some information from him. Go to 56.

(386)

You cautiously enter the room, prepared to take quick action if needed. But the hunchback acknowledges your presence with a nervous laugh that sets you at ease. “Almost done. Yes, Shekou will be gone soon, only a memory. Does the master grow impatient?” He has obviously taken you for someone else, and you decide it would be foolish not to play along. You tell him not to worry; there are no problems. He quickens his pace nonetheless. Casting your eyes around the room, you see that the only items besides the bed are a desk and chair. While you try to think of some useful information to

glean from him, you ask him about himself, hoping to set him a little more at ease. Go to 347.

(387)

You rush at D’Onoffrio, who shrinks back in fright but strangely remains seated. When you are but a step away from him, a trapdoor suddenly opens directly underneath you. Plunging downwards, you land after twenty feet or so in a small, bare room. There is no escape from this prison.

(388)

“No? Our game is not good enough for you? A youngster such as yourself? Ah, the youth, the youth. What is happening in this world of ours? What strange days we live in,” he muses. Go to 124.

(389)

“Well, I’m very pleased to meet you,” you reply, your mind racing with this latest development. “I, uh, wasn’t aware that the Count had a daughter at all, especially such a lovely one.” She beams at this. “Well, he does. As for myself, I wasn’t aware that my father was entertaining a guest, and at any rate the guests he has had in the past have not been given the freedom to roam around the house at their leisure all hours of the night.” She does have a point. Will you forget formalities and reveal your true purpose (289) play for time and try to find out more about her and how loyal she is to her father (302) or excuse yourself and leave the room (363)?

(390)

The shuffleboard table stretches all the way down to the wall, several yards away. It is made from lacquered wood, which looks like it was recently waxed. There is nothing unusual about it, however. You are about to leave when a trapdoor suddenly opens up directly underneath you! Test your luck. If you are lucky, you manage to grab the floorboard and haul yourself up – go to 140 and choose another area to investigate. If you are unlucky, you tumble down into pitch-blackness. Go to 366.

(391)

She gives you a carnivorous look, as if eyeing her prey. “The fool prayed every day for his daughter to return. Of course, she didn’t. So one day, he turned to someone else. And lo and behold” she spins around “he got what he wanted.” You feel very strange. You shake your head, trying to recover your senses, but you suddenly realize that the furniture in the room has started to grow. Cassandra, as well, has taken on gigantic proportions. Your back feels odd – until you get down on all four’s, your natural position. Your whiskers tremble as they sense imminent danger. Your instincts suddenly scream at you and you turn to scurry away to the nearest hole. But before you get very far, a great claw sweeps down on you, flipping you on your back. You squeal on terror as the head bends down to you, the glowing eyes, the fetid breath, the jaws...

(392)

A strangely familiar scuttling noise echoes down the hall. It stops, then starts again. Racing down the hallway in your direction is...no! It cannot be! The Stringiamano! It's back! *It will not die!* It leaps at your face and you spin away. The hand skids into a wall, turns, and relentlessly scrambles back. You've got to rid yourself of the damned thing once and for all. But how? Will you try to find a way to destroy it (372) or trap it (108)?

(393)

You make an unpleasant discovery: The door through which you entered is now locked! You turn back to the figure. Will you make an offering (338) or try to break out of here (249)?

(394)

You back up until you reach the wall. You stand completely still and breathe very slowly, listening for any sound that might identify your companion. A creak in the floorboards confirms that the inhabitant has taken another step in your direction. Suddenly, without warning, a reeking, decaying, nauseating stench hits you like a wave. You clap your hand over your mouth in disgust, while suddenly remembering that you have a lighter in your pocket. You quickly fish it out as the floor creaks again. Holding it up at eye-level, you flick the catch. In the flickering light, you can make out the features of the person standing a few feet away...go to 204.

(395)

You place the ring on one of the hands and wait. After a minute, the hand slowly clenches into a fist around it. You step back, shocked yet fascinated. The hand turns around and releases the ring, which tumbles along the floor with a soft tinkling sound. You look back up to the statue to find that it has fixed its gaze on you. It lifts up a finger and slowly draws it across its throat. This is not the reaction you were looking for – add 1 Fear point. There is a brief second of stillness, and then *all* of the figures in the room simultaneously come to life. Two of them block the door, while the rest solemnly advance on you. You must fight:

Possessed Statues: Skill 8 Stamina 11

If you win, go to 279.

(396)

The paper is in fact a letter, addressed to someone named “Kelnor.” Your heart skips a beat when you realize that it was written by the Count himself. It warns the recipient of possible dangers, while also describing some sort of raid on Pravemi’s estate and how he narrowly escaped being “caught.” It ends with a P.S. that states “I also suggest you further protect yourself by changing the password on your own cache room. I, for one, know it is Goathead. How many others know the same? Why not change it to something which will remind you of the sound advice of a good friend?” You are trying to make sense of this message when Shekou emits a gasp of surprise. “Oh, I had almost forgotten! Thank you for reminding me!” He shuffles over, takes the letter from you, seals it in an envelope, and puts it into his suitcase, which he then zips shut. If you are going to ask

him anything, now is the time. Will you inquire about secret weapons (343) locating a way to get underneath the house (329) or finding a way to escape the house (380)?

(397)

You turn and follow the tunnel back up into the darkness. Eventually, you reach a wall; you surmise that the other side must contain the bedroom from which you entered. But how do you open the secret door? You tap, wrap, and kick the wall, but nothing happens. Test your luck. If you are lucky, go to 125. If you are unlucky, go to 230.

(398)

You quickly pat the robes down, searching for anything useful. In one, you find a large and valuable looking pearl, which you may keep. You are just getting around to searching the last cloak when the opposite door begins to open! Not knowing what else to do, you throw on the cloak and turn away. "Father," a man's voice calls out, "the congregation awaits." You nod and slip the hood over your head. You turn around to see a short man in a black frock holding open the door. You walk out into a narrow hall and he follows you. Go to 153.

(399)

The coffee is dark and aromatic, rich with a slight sweetness. You detect a trace of alcohol; perhaps D'Onoffrio added a little something extra? Nevertheless, it is deep and satisfying and you sip it down slowly. The Count asks you about yourself, your job, and your family. In turn, he tells you about himself. Go to 100.

(400)

The demon's claws rake your flesh. Roll 1 die: If you roll a 1, the Star absorbs the full impact of the blow and you don't lose any Stamina in this round. If you roll a 2 or 3, the Star partially absorbs the impact and you lose only one Stamina point. On a 4 or 5, you receive damage as normal, and on a 6, the demon has delivered a particularly vicious wound and you must lose three Stamina points for this round. You must conduct this test whenever the demon wounds you. You can also use your luck as normal (to reduce three points of damage to two, or two to one, or one to zero. Make a note of these instructions and return to the section you came from to resolve the battle.

