

John Edward Churchill's

PASSAGES - OF - PERIL

A thrilling fantasy adventure in which YOU are the hero!



How to fight creatures in the underworld

Passages of Peril is a fantasy adventure in which YOU are the hero. Before you start, you must first create your own character by rolling dice to determine your Skill, Stamina and Luck scores. Once created, you enter these onto the *Adventure Sheet* below. These scores will change during your adventure. Write on the *Adventure Sheet* in pencil, so you can rub out previous scores when you start again. Or make photocopies of the blank *Adventure Sheet*.

Creating your Skill, Stamina and Luck scores:

To determine your *initial* Skill, Stamina and Luck scores, follow the simple steps below:

- Roll one die. Add six to this number and enter this total in the Skill box on the *Adventure Sheet* below.
- Roll two dice. Add twelve to the number rolled and enter this total in the Stamina box.
- Roll one die. Add six to this number and enter this total in the Luck box.

The Skill score represents your overall swordsmanship, fighting expertise and dexterity. The higher your Skill score; the easier you'll find it to dispatch your enemies and survive battles.

The Stamina score represents your overall strength and endurance. The higher your Stamina score; the longer you'll survive.

The Luck score represents how naturally lucky a person you are. The higher your Luck score; the more good fortune will favour you in certain situations.

Your *current* Skill, Stamina and Luck scores will change constantly during your adventures, so keep a rubber handy at all times to allow you to change them. You must keep an accurate record of your *current* scores throughout your adventure from start to finish, but never rub out your *initial* scores. Although you may receive additional Skill, Stamina and Luck points, your *current* scores may never exceed your *initial* scores.

Fighting Battles:

When you're instructed in the text to fight a creature, you must resolve the battle as described in the simple steps below. First, record your opponent's Skill and Stamina scores in one of the empty *Creature Encounter Boxes* on your *Adventure Sheet*. The sequence of combat is thus:

1. Roll two dice for the creature. Add its Skill score. This total is the creature's *Attack Strength*.
2. Roll two dice for yourself. Add your *current* Skill score. This total is your *Attack Strength*.
3. Whose *Attack Strength* is higher? If your *Attack Strength* is higher, you have wounded the creature (proceed to step four). If the creature's *Attack Strength* is higher, it has wounded you (proceed to step five). If both are the same, you have both missed each other! Start the next *Attack Round* from step one.
4. You've wounded the creature; subtract 2 points from its Stamina score. You may use luck here to do additional damage (see 'Using Luck in battles:' below).
5. You've been wounded by the creature; subtract 2 points from your Stamina score. You may use Luck here to minimize the damage you receive (see 'Using Luck in battles:' below).
6. Make the appropriate changes to the Stamina scores on the *Adventure Sheet*, including your *current* Luck score if you used Luck to influence the damage (see 'Using Luck in battles:' below). Begin the next *Attack Round* by repeating steps one to six.
7. This continues until the Stamina score of either you or the creature you are fighting has been reduced to zero which indicates death! If you're killed in this way, you must stop your adventure immediately, role new Skill, Stamina and Luck scores and start from the beginning if you wish to continue.

Testing your Luck:

Sometimes you will be instructed by the text to *Test your Luck*. As you'll discover, using Luck is a risky business. The result of this test, reflects whether good fortune will favour you or not in that particular situation. The way you *Test your Luck* is as follows:

Roll two dice. If the number rolled is *equal to or less than* your *current* Luck score, you have been *lucky*. If the number rolled is *higher* than your current Luck score, you have been *unlucky*. The consequences of being *lucky* or *unlucky* will be described in the text.

Each time you *Test your Luck*, you must reduce your *current* Luck score by one point. You'll find that the more you rely on luck in your adventure; the more risky it becomes!

Using Luck in battles:

In battles, you always have the option of using your Luck to favour you over an opponent. You can use Luck to inflict a more serious wound on an opponent you're fighting, or to minimize the effects of a wound an opponent has just inflicted upon you.

If you've just wounded a creature, you may *Test your Luck* as described above. If you're *lucky*, subtract an *extra* two points from the creature's Stamina score (i.e. four instead of the normal two). But, if you're *unlucky*, you must restore one point to the creature's Stamina score (i.e. you cause one point of damage, instead of scoring the normal two).

If you've just been wounded by a creature, you may *Test your Luck*. If you're *lucky*, subtract one point from the damage to your own Stamina score (i.e. one instead of the normal two). But, if you're *unlucky*, you must lose an *extra* one point from your Stamina score (i.e. you receive three points of damage, instead of the normal two).

Don't forget to subtract one point from your Luck score each time you *Test your Luck*.

Restoring Skill, Stamina and Luck:

Occasionally, a page may give instructions to restore your *current* Skill, Stamina or Luck scores. You may only do this if specifically instructed in the text to do so. You'll have to rely on finding food in your adventure to sustain your Stamina, as you don't begin with any provision. Remember, your Skill, Stamina and Luck scores may never exceed their *initial* values at any time.

Starting Equipment:

You will start your adventure with the bare minimum of equipment. Apart from your clothes, you are armed with a sword and dressed in leather armour. You carry a lantern to light your way and a backpack to hold any treasure or artefacts you may find on your journey. Be sure to record all your finds in the *Equipment* box on the *Adventure Sheet* below.

Hints on Play:

There are a number of ways through the adventure ahead. However, it'll probably take you several attempts to find the easiest route overall. Make notes and draw a map as you explore; this'll be useful in future adventures and help you to identify any unexplored areas.

Not all rooms contain treasure; some merely contain traps and creatures which you will no doubt fall foul of. However, as you explore and become familiar with the adventure, you'll learn to avoid these.

The one true way involves a minimum of risk and any adventurer, no matter how weak your *initial* Skill, Stamina and Luck scores, should be able to get through it in one piece.

Good luck on your adventure ahead.

Adventure Sheet

Skill: <i>Initial:</i>

Stamina: <i>Initial:</i>

Luck: <i>Initial:</i>

Equipment: <i>Sword</i> <i>Leather Armour</i> <i>Lantern</i>

Treasure:

Notes:

Creature Encounter Boxes

Skill: Stamina:

Skill: Stamina:

Skill: Stamina:

Skill: Stamina:

Skill: Stamina:

Skill: Stamina:

Skill: Stamina:

Skill: Stamina:

Skill: Stamina:

Background

The life of a travelling adventurer has never been easy; the boredom of the road, constant danger and an uncertain future. But that's what you love about this life anyway. The open road and an adventure or two around the next corner is why you ran away from home when you were barely in your teens. You'd rather earn your living slaying Goblins for gold and jewels than scything wheat for a pittance on a farm field somewhere.

It all started when you were passing through the pleasant country village of Oakbridge, a week's walk west of the great castellated city of Neuberg. At first you put the villagers' strange, distrust of outsiders and guarded behaviour down to local banditry, but a conversation with the local Landlord of the White Horse Inn changed your mind.

Over ale, cheese and bread, you learn of a fearsome giant called Grimbald who's been terrorising the villagers of Oakbridge. This huge monster of chaos lives in an underground dungeon at the bottom of a deep gorge in the hills, a day's walk north from here. For the last year, he's been using violence and threats to extort wealth from the good folk of Oakbridge!

At first the villagers tried to buy Grimbald off with their meagre tributes of gold. But, when this was exhausted, Grimbald returned to spread terror with fire and the sword. Sorry looking villagers begin to crowd around your table, telling you mournful stories of their possessions, livestock and crops being stolen to feed Grimbald's insatiable greed for loot. The villagers have now been reduced to abject poverty by his depredations.

Many brave young men have tried to confront and slay Grimbald in his subterranean lair, but all have failed completely, meeting grisly deaths at Grimbald's hands as a result. Village boys and farmhands are no match for a cruel tormentor like Grimbald, only a professional soldier and adventurer like you would stand a chance against him. The villagers implore you to help them in their plight against this foul beast!

Moved by their cries for help, you resolve to free them from their slavery once and for all. The villagers are relieved and overjoyed, offering you more drink in celebration. The Landlord promises you food and lodging in his Inn if you kill the giant for them. It's not much of a reward for your skills, but as they're poor you accept wholeheartedly and shake his hand on it.

Next day, a village shepherd called Morri leads you out of Oakbridge to begin your quest. You soon leave the hopeful villagers behind as the two of you travel for a whole day along muddy, country paths. Up ahead, the land begins to rise up into stony hills covered sparsely with vegetation. Your guide takes you to a ridge and sits down behind some bushes. Pointing down to the landscape below, he draws your attention to a deep, rocky, gorge that ends at a huge natural cavern. Vines and roots hang down from the roof, partially obscuring the entrance like a curtain. Beyond this you can see an immense iron portcullis.

In a quiet voice, Morri tells you that this is the main entrance to Grimbald's dungeon complex. Every night, he leaves through this portcullis to do his terrible work against the peaceful villagers on the plains below. However, with a wry smile, he says that the giant is asleep during the day and only comes out at night. Picking yourselves up, you both continue up the narrow track, higher and higher into the hills.

As the light begins to fade at the end of the day, you reach a small, circular hole in the ground beside a dead tree stump on a lonely path. Morri tells you that the hole is a secret way into Grimbald's underground home deep below the earth. Looking down the shaft, you see that it descends quickly into total darkness.

Tying your rope to the tree stump, you throw it down the shaft. You check your equipment one more time and light your lantern. As twilight descends, you thank Morri, promising to rid him of this Grimbald tyrant, and shake his hand. You begin your descent into the gloomy, dank, darkness below. By lantern light alone, you slowly climb down the rope a few feet at a time. You'll need all your wits about you if you're going to succeed in your perilous mission. Good luck and begin your quest now...

Turn over...

1

Down and down you go into the gloom. Slowly, you descend on the rope with your lantern lighting your way. The earth walls of the shaft give way to solid rock and then worked, stone blocks. Gradually, your lantern illuminates the ground and you gingerly touch down. You're in a silent, deserted, stone-walled passageway. The ground is paved in odd-sized, well worn cobblestones, the air is dank and musty. Water drips from lichen on the moist walls into puddles here and there, making eerie plopping sounds. There are four ways onwards. You can either go to the left or right along the passage, a closed ironbound wooden door set into the passageway wall, and a small, partially collapsed side passage barred with rough wooden planks nailed across it. Will you:

Examine the ironbound door (*turn to 23*)
Walk left along the passageway (*turn to 12*)
Walk right along the passageway (*turn to 45*)
Examine the partially collapsed side passageway (*turn to 34*)

2

Carefully placing your feet on the small stone steps to avoid falling head over heels, you slowly descend the darkened staircase. At the bottom of the steps, your lantern illuminates a wide corridor stretching off into the distance like the one you left behind above. You're just standing on the last step, taking this in when you see movement out of the corner of your eye. Before you can react, you receive a crashing blow to your head from some unknown assailant! The blow sends you sprawling onto the passageway floor! If you're wearing a Metal Helmet on your head (*turn to 88*). Otherwise (*turn to 91*)

3

Climbing down, the ladder goes on for quite some time; the shaft is very deep indeed! Eventually you step down onto a stone paved floor. With your feet on solid ground again, you look around the bottom of the shaft. In front of you is a narrow and low stone archway covered in gargoyles. The bottom of a heavy, iron portcullis is protruding from the top of the archway. You duck under the raised portcullis and walk into a corridor beyond that opens into a small, circular chamber with rough, stone walls. You survey the scene under lantern light and realise you're in an armoury! All manner of weapons are scattered carelessly about in piles or stacked on wooden racks. The room is thick with

dust and obviously hasn't been used in years! Will you:

Decide to push on, climb back up the ladder, go through the metal hatch and carry on along the passageway (*turn to 32*)

Search the chamber for anything of interest (*turn to 99*)

4

Your heart thumps in your chest and palms sweat as you prepare yourself to ambush them. If you could just get close enough to before they saw you, you'd even the odds a bit. Waiting for your moment when the guards are deep in conversation and not paying attention, you sprint around the corner and charge towards them as fast as possible. *Test your Luck*. If you're lucky, you take them completely by surprise and kill the HOBGOBLIN SERGEANT before he's prepared for you. If not, you'll have to fight both as they notice you and draw their swords.

HOBGOBLIN GUARD - Skill: 6 Stamina: 6

HOBGOBLIN SERGEANT- Skill: 6 Stamina: 7

If you win, you search the smelly, dirty bodies but find nothing of interest apart from a half-eaten chicken leg! Tossing it aside, you notice a small, metal hatch on the wall. You try pulling on the handle, but it's firmly secured with a chain and locked padlock. If you have a Vial of Acid, multiply the number of measures that the box could contain by eight and turn to the corresponding reference number. Otherwise, you have to give up on the hatch and carry on down the passageway (*turn to 32*)

5

You quietly journey down the smaller side passage. This route is very roughly carved out of the rocky walls and doesn't have any on the stone facing from the main corridor. You navigate a crudely cut flight of stone steps leading downwards. As you continue, startled rats dart from left to right, fleeing ahead of you. You walk for fifteen minutes then the passageway turns sharply to the right a few times and ends abruptly at a small, closed wooden door under a stone archway. You press your ear to the door and hear sound coming from within. Voices; in a heated argument in some unknown language! You hear yelps of pain and the sounds of a struggle! Peeping through the keyhole, you can see a chamber lit by a burning torch on the wall. Broken furniture litters the ground. Will you:

Leave the door, retrace your steps back to pile of skulls and continue the way you were going (*turn to 28*)

Retrace your steps to the pile of skulls and go back to where you originally entered by the rope (*turn to 25*)

Lift the latch and enter the room to confront whatever is inside (*turn to 90*)

6

The TROLL crashes to the ground as you finish it off with the deathblow. You stagger back, gasping for breath after your tiring fight and wipe the black blood off your sword blade. Searching your dead opponent, you find nothing of interest except for a half-chewed piece of mutton and a cloth bag full of marbles on its belt. You may eat the mutton (*gain 2 Stamina points*), and take the marbles. Looking around, you walk up to the barred rooms. There are six, small chambers cut out of the rocky walls of the passage. Each is blocked by a strong, iron grille and locked with a padlock. You see a motley collection of emaciated men and dwarves dressed in filthy rags in the prison cells. The starved prisoners clamour at the bars and cheer with unbridled glee at the death or their sadistic gaoler. One prisoner pushes to the front and takes a leather cord from around his neck. Holding it through the bars; he offers it to you in gratitude. Will you:

Lean forward and allow him to place his gift over your head (*turn to 83*)

Leave these poor wretches to their fate in Grimbald's prison and continue your quest (*turn to 22*)

7

Sitting down you break the fish apart with your hands and taste some. It's fresh and delicious. You wonder who this meal was prepared for; someone important, no doubt. Still, these thoughts are pushed to the back of your mind as you gorge on the succulent fish and wash it down with periodic gulps of frothy ale from the wooden flagon. You eat until you're full and feel greatly rejuvenated for it (*gain 5 Stamina points*). When you've finished and cleaned the tray, you pick yourself up and continue your mission (*turn to 43*)

8

You're lucky; you dodge the spiked ball just in time. It swings harmlessly past your head, brushing by your hair! Regaining your composure after your fright, you see the chamber is medium-sized and square. Standing in the middle of the

room are three, small, ugly creatures. They have rows of vicious, misshapen teeth and brownish-green, warty skin. Each is clad in filthy rags and assorted pieces of chain and plate armour. The trio of GOBLINS were wrestling each other over a piece of black cloth, but now stand staring at you in surprise. Their bemused expressions turn to anger and hatred and they draw their scimitars to advance and attack. Standing in the archway, you can fight each in turn.

GOBLIN GUARD - Skill: 5 Stamina: 5

GOBLIN GUARD - Skill: 5 Stamina: 4

GOBLIN SERGEANT - Skill: 5 Stamina: 6

If you defeat all three, you search the room. It's obviously a guard post of some kind, but the stupid and violent creatures have smashed the tables, beds and chairs into worthless firewood. One of the guards has an Iron Key on his belt. You may take this with you if you wish. Turning your attention to what they were fighting over, you see that it's a fine cloak. Pulling it over your shoulders, you're amazed when you become invisible! You've found a Cloak of Invisibility! You may take it with you too. Are you wearing a Golden Boar Pendant (*turn to 30*). If not (*turn to 39*)

9

Transfixed by the movement of the sarcophagus lid, you walk up and anxiously shine your lantern light inside. Suddenly, a skeletal hand, the flesh rotting in-between the bones shoots up and tries to grab your forearm! Shocked, you swiftly chop the emerging hand off with one swipe of your sword and stagger back in revulsion. A low moan of pain comes from within. You're suddenly distracted by loud thuds from elsewhere and realise that all the sarcophagi are now opening simultaneously! From inside emerge, foul-smelling corpses, animated by some dark magic! The creatures are dressed in torn and tatty rags that were once clothes. Their bodies are long decayed; the rotten, blackened flesh hanging off in disgusting strips and fleshy lumps revealing the decaying innards and yellow bones of their bodies in all their gore! Vacant eyed, the ZOMBIES begin to shamble towards you, blocking your escape! You'll have to fight your way out of this hellish tomb. Placing your back to the wall as they close in, you prepare to fight each of these loathsome beings in turn to the death.

ZOMBIE - Skill: 5 Stamina: 6

ZOMBIE - Skill: 6 Stamina: 6

ZOMBIE - Skill: 6 Stamina: 7

ZOMBIE - Skill: 7 Stamina: 6

ZOMBIE - Skill: 5 Stamina: 6

If you slay your assailants, you rest for a moment, before you're confronted by and even more powerful opponent. The lid of the last sarcophagi topples to the ground, smashing into pieces. Out springs another moving corpse; its appearance is a revolting as the others, except it's covered in a sea of writhing maggots! Fixing its eyes on you, it hisses with delight and bound across the chamber to attack you.

GHOUL - Skill: 8 Stamina: 7

If the GHOUL manages to hit you four times or more during the battle (*turn to 70*). Otherwise, after you've killed it, you rest and thank your good fortune for surviving the battle (*gain 1 Luck point*). Finding nothing else of interest, you decide to move on. Will you:

Leave the room, return to the junction and go under the stone archway and through the chain curtain (*turn to 67*)

Leave the room, return to the junction and go through the iron grille (*turn to 82*)

10

The head's solemn expression transforms into a sly smile. "Yes, that's correct! I have no name." It continues "If the master authorised you to leave his sanctum, he must've given you a token of some sort. If so, show me it now!" Do you have a Gold Signet Ring to show the guardian (*turn to 53*). Otherwise (*turn to 66*)

11

As you lean over, fumbling awkwardly with the leather cord that attaches the Bronze Key, you nudge the side of the table just enough to knock the metal cup out of the guard's hand. It tumbles to the stony floor with a loud clatter! Startled by the sound; the creature in the chair wakes suddenly. On seeing you, it topples backwards off the back of the chair in surprise and rolls on the floor. The BLACK-ELF leaps to its feet to confront you. It's as tall as a man, except more muscular and very thin. Its skin is black, its face angular with delicate, slightly pointed ears and a long nose. A leather, studded eye-patch covers its left eye; the other is yellow and feline in appearance. Long black hair tied into elaborate plaits, hang over its shoulder. It's clothed in strange, outlandish leather armour and has a large, curved sword attached to its belt. The BLACK-ELF's expression turns from one of shock to hatred upon seeing you. Pulling the sword from its belt, it nimbly advances towards you to fight. You step backwards and draw your sword too. You'll have to battle to the death.

BLACK-ELD CAPTAIN – Skill: 7 Stamina: 7

If you take 6 or more attack rounds to kill the BLACK-ELF (*turn to 94*). If you kill your opponent within 5 attack rounds or less, you quickly cut the cord and take the Bonze Key from the dead body. Holding it close to the candle light, you examine it in detail. It has sixteen serpents winding around its surface, interlocking with each other in an elaborate design. You carefully put it in your backpack. You hear the sound of heavy footsteps outside the room. Maybe someone has been alerted by the commotion of the fight and is coming to investigate! You'll have to move fast. Glancing around, you don't see anything else of interest. Going back through the iron door, you return to the leather curtain. In the main corridor, you hear footsteps coming from the right, so you hurry along the main corridor away in the opposite direction (*turn to 35*)

12

Determined to find and kill Grimbald, you cautiously walk along the passageway, dodging the water puddles amongst the cobbles. The passage is wide and well kept, despite the odd cobweb hanging from the arched, stone roof. After a while, you come upon a side passage on your left. The side passageway is dark and only half as wide as the main one you're already on. A pile of human skulls mark the side passage. There purpose to you is unknown. Will you:

Ignore the narrow side passage and continue along the cobbled main passage as (*turn to 28*)

Leave the main route and explore the side passageway, marked by the skulls (*turn to 5*)

13

Your aim is true! The Eagle Feather Spear pierces Grimbald's throat, its razor-sharp point slicing through his flesh and burying itself deep within his body! The Giant lets out a shocked gurgle of horror and agony as a crimson tide of blood gushes from his fatal wound! He staggers for a few moments more, desperately trying to grasp at the end of the spear shaft protruding from his throat in vain before succumbing to the clammy grip of death! You've slain the tyrant (*turn to 81*)

14

Pulling the Cloak of Invisibility over your shoulders, you become invisible. You walk slowly up the corridor, towards the guards. They laugh, joke and snort in merriment, occasionally

glancing up the corridor they're supposed to be guarding. However, your cloak conceals you completely and you're able to slip past the disgusting beasts without difficulty. As you past the guard post, you see a small, metal hatch in the wall, secured with a chain and padlock. The close proximity of the guards stops any further investigation. You walk on along the corridor, leaving them behind you (*turn to 32*)

15

Taking hold of the rope, you wrap your legs around it and slowly begin to slide downwards. Down and down you go, without seeing any walls at all. As you descend in silence, your lantern lights up an immense white carpet beneath you! As you approach, you see that the sheets are in fact huge cobwebs. Hundreds and thousands of them; each as big as the sail of a ship! You shudder to think of the size of the creature that must've spun them. Still, you remain unmolested as you cautiously slide down the rope; cobwebs of silk hemming you in on all sides. Eventually, you see the bare earth of solid ground below. Stepping down, you're horrified to see a humanoid figure, entirely encased in a thick covering of silk, hanging in a cobweb not far away! A glint of gold catches your eye! Looking closer, you see a small, golden skull grinning back at you from the gloom. Careful not to disturb any of the strands of silk, you reach out and pick it up. The object appears to be a vessel of some sort with a large cork sealing a hole in the top! A shake of the skull doesn't produce any sounds from within. Will you:

Pull out the cork in the golden skull and see if it contains anything (*turn to 80*)

Ignore the golden skull, place it back where you found it and climb back up the rope (*turn to 74*)

16

Having sprung the lethal trap, you panic! Desperate to escape your tomb, you rush through the cascading sand and vainly hammer and claw at the huge stone door. Suddenly, the sand begins to slowdown and then stops completely. What's this! Slowly, the sand drains away through the holes in the paved floor of the chamber, revealing the body of the Halfling again. There's a low rumbling sound and the stone door is lifted up into the archway, allowing you to escape unscathed. You curse yourself for your carelessness in almost becoming a victim of the Sand Trap. Thankfully, your Polished Copper Ring saved your life this time (*gain 1 Luck point*). After you've composed yourself, you go back down the stone steps and follow the corridor until you arrive back at the smaller side passage

and the gruesome pile of skulls. You decide to leave the main route and explore the cramped side passageway instead (*turn to 5*)

17

Taking one last look around, you see the passageway is entirely deserted and quiet. You start up the spiral staircase before you. Up and up you go; your lantern light illuminating each step in turn. Occasionally, you see large, crimson, stains on some of the worn stone steps. You wonder what this could be; maybe blood! Up and up you go until you reach the top. You pass through a small archway and emerge into a wide passageway with a flat, paved, stone floor. Walking along, you soon come to a large, wooden door. The door is closed and has a big, iron ring handle. You see light coming from within through a crack in the wood. Gripping the ring, you slowly push the door inwards and peep around the edge. You find yourself looking into a large room that appears to be a kitchen of some sort. The chamber has dozens of battered wooden cupboards and tables covered with strange and exotic ingredients of every sort, including the severed heads of several men! Dozens of dirty and unwashed tin plates are stacked in the corner, along with piles of rotting meat and vegetables. In the centre is a huge hearth. The fire burns fiercely, permanently keeping the huge iron cauldron above bubbling away. The room is deserted except for a Dwarf in a small cage, tightly gagged and bound. You don't doubt for a second that he's next for the cooking pot! The grisly scene is lit by burning torches around the walls. You also notice a corridor sealed by a portcullis on the right-hand wall. While surveying the kitchen, you notice a helmet, lying unattended on a stool. It's made of metal and has two horns on either side. You may take the Metal Helmet with you if you wish to protect your head. You may also eat some bread and salted beef from one of the tables (*gain 4 Stamina points*). You're thinking about what to do next, when you hear footsteps approaching from the corridor behind the portcullis. Someone is coming! Do you have a Cloak of Invisibility to hide yourself with (*turn to 48*). Otherwise (*turn to 36*)

18

Continuing up the cobbled passageway, you approach a bend up ahead. Cautiously creeping up, sword in hand, you peep around the corner and see a disturbing sight. The corridor continues on about twenty paces before reaching two loathsome creatures standing in the passageway talking. The creatures are as tall as men, clad in badly repaired chain mail armour and armed with

swords. They're exceedingly ugly with flat noses and small beady eyes. Their limbs are muscular and bony. Their skin is brown, lumpy and scarred by battle wounds. The scene is lit by three burning torches attached to the corridor walls. The HOBGOBLINS haven't noticed you yet. They laugh and jape; pushing and hitting each other occasionally to relive the boredom of their lonely sentry post. You realise that going through them is your only way onwards. Will you:

Charge up and attack them with your sword (*turn to 4*)

If you have a Cloak of Invisibility, you can make yourself invisible and try to and sneak past the guards (*turn to 14*)

If you don't fancy a fight, you can retrace your steps and go back to where you came in by the rope (*turn to 21*)

19

The stone head lets out a burst of laughter as you say the name with as much authority and confidence as you can. "Wrong!" It says slowly (*turn to 66*)

20

Leaving your lantern and backpack on the last but one step, you step into the dirty water and descend down the spiral staircase until it's just beneath your chin. Gagging from the smell, you hold back your revulsion, take a deep breath and duck under the surface to explore what lies beneath. Searching for handholds on the walls, you pull yourself about deeper and blindly explore the murky darkness with you hands. To your surprise and shock, you gasp what appears to be a humanoid body lying on the submerged steps! You're just about to pull it to the surface for a closer inspection when something pulls you back! You splutter to the surface in horror; there's some sort of foul creature under the water with you. Too late! A couple of leathery, black tentacles seize your legs in a vice-like grip. More snake around your waist and pull you back under. Struggling, you break the surface again, failing wildly at your attacker with your sword. This'll be a fierce battle to the death.

TENTACLED BEAST - Skill: 8 Stamina: 10

If you kill the beast within seven or less attack rounds (*turn to 31*). Otherwise (*turn to 64*)

21

You decide to turn around and go back the way you originally came. Walking through the dank,

silent, darkness of the corridor, you contemplate on what you've seen so far. Walking along the passageway is as deserted as it was before. You wonder where Grimbald's disgusting followers are hiding out. As you approach the vertical shaft where you entered the dungeon on the rope, you see your rope lying in a pile on the cobblestones. Studying the end, you realise that someone has deliberately CUT your rope with a knife! Your only means of escape has now been lost! You look left and then right, but don't see any evidence of who or what cut your rope. Maybe they've gone to rouse the guard watch! You quickly decide your way onwards. There are three ways onwards. Will you:

Examine the ironbound door (*turn to 23*)

Walk left along the passageway (*turn to 12*)

Examine the partially collapsed side passageway (*turn to 34*)

22

The prisoners protest loudly, but you ignore their pleas and threats and trudge on along the corridor. Soon, you're walking along in silence again, having left them far behind. The passageway continues straight for some time before turning to the right and dipping down at a shallow angle. The climate becomes increasing cold and damp. A couple of times you uncomfortably step into deep puddles where cold water has collected on the passage floor. Up ahead, you see a light! Drawing your sword, you advance cautiously, so as not to be taken by surprise. As you approach, you see that a large, unattended, metal tray is set upon the cobblestone floor of the passageway. The tray is lit by a single burning candle mounted on a metal candlestick. Your mouth waters at the sight of a plate of cooked fish, still piping-hot, and a huge flagon of ale. Looking left and right along the corridor, you don't see any sign of who or why this appetising meal has been left here. Still, it smells delicious and is too good and opportunity to pass up. Will you:

Gorge yourself on the fish and ale meal (*turn to 7*)

Ignore the food to continue along the passageway (*turn to 43*)

23

Holding your lantern up, you step up and examine the door. It's large, sturdy and held together with thick iron bolts. The door is most securely locked so you kneel down you peer cautiously through the keyhole. At first, you see nothing. Suddenly your heart jumps as you find yourself staring into a red, bloodshot eye! To

your horror, you realise that someone, or SOMETHING, is staring back at you from the other side of the door! You pull back and compose yourself after your fright (*lose 1 Skill and Luck point*). You decide to leave the door and continue. Will you:

Walk left along the passage (*turn to 12*)
Walk right along the passage (*turn to 45*)
Examine the partially collapsed side passageway (*turn to 34*)

24

To your surprise, you find yourself suddenly plunged into freezing water! The icy current immediately chills you to the bone as you're submerged momentarily, only to sputter to the surface in shock. Before you can react, the strong flow of the river swiftly drags you away from the main passage and under the forbidding, left-hand archway. Your lantern goes under the surface and is extinguished, plunging you into complete darkness. Over and over you tumble, pushed relentlessly by the torrent, the roar of the flowing water in your ears. You claw at the river bed to slow your progress, but all you touch are loose pebbles and sand that gives way. You're pulled under again, hitting your head on a rock (*lose 1 Stamina point*). Sputtering to the surface, you see a natural cavern up ahead lit a torch! As you're dragged through the cave, you manage to scramble out of the water onto a gravel beach. Looking around, you see the cave is half filled with water and half with the beach. There's also a man in a small, rusty cage beside a doorway. Suddenly, the he points a withered arm out off his cage at you and shrieks a warning! Looking over your shoulder, you see a huge, dark-green, CROCODILE advancing towards you. You role over and pull out your sword. You'll have to resolve this fight to the death.

CROCODILE - Skill: 7 Stamina: 7

After, you've killed it, you relight your lantern from the burning torch and step up to talk to the man. He looks starved and beaten with dirty hair and a long, messy beard. He pleads with you to let him out of his prison. He tells you that if you do this and give him your cloak, he'll tell you some important information about the dungeon guards. If you want to release the old man and give him your Cloak of Invisibility in return for his information (*turn to 50*). Otherwise, you ignore his pleas and leave the room by the doorway (*turn to 44*)

25

Turning around, you go back the way you came. You travel up the precipitous stone staircase, past the pile of skulls and back into the main passageway again. Returning to the vertical shaft; you find your rope in a pile on the passageway floor! Someone has cut the rope in two with a knife! Your only escape route is now lost forever! The passageway is as dark and silent as before. You ponder which way to proceed. Will you:

Examine the ironbound door (*turn to 23*)
Walk right along the passageway (*turn to 45*)
Examine the partially collapsed side passageway blocked with planks of wood (*turn to 34*)

26

Pulling the curtain aside, you see the side passage is quite narrow. You slowly follow it as it runs straight then turn sharply to the left before ending at an impressive door. Stepping up to the door, you examine it and see that it's made of solid iron. The surface is etched with images of ugly, bestial creatures. While the gargoyles leer out of the door, you notice a small metal flap covering two brass tumblers etched with numbers. A combination lock! You think twice about using the iron knocker, but a push on the door reveals that it's securely locked shut. A crude wooden plaque on the door reads "Capt. Ezded". The door is far too strong to be forced. Do you know the combination to Ezded's room? If so, turn to the corresponding reference number now. Otherwise, you'll have to leave the iron door, retrace your route back to the leather curtain and continue on along the main passageway (*turn to 35*)

27

Grimbald confidently strides forward to attack, sword outreached, hatred and anger in his eyes. Suddenly he stops and sways backwards and forwards on his feet. Gripping his stomach, a grimace of pain creases his bemused face. "What's this? Poisoned by an assassin!" You smile with satisfaction as your poison begins to take effect on the leviathan. Grimbald looks at you in surprise and disbelief. "You! Why, I'll tear you limb from limb!" he howls in rage! While he's in a weakened state, you leap forward to attack him yourself. Do you have an Eagle Feather Spear? If so, multiply the number of eagle feathers by four and turn to that reference now. Otherwise, you attack him with your sword. This'll be an epic and bitter battle to the death, where only one of you will survive.

GRIMBALD THE GIANT – Skill: 9 Stamina: 27

If you survive and slay the tyrant (*turn to 81*)

28

The cobbled passageway continues straight ahead, neither deviating to either left or right. Except for the odd plopping of water dripping into puddles, all is silent. The passageway soon turns sharply to the right and you climb a wide flight of stone steps. At the top of these is a stone arch, beyond which is a circular room with a paved stone floor. Entering the chamber, you see the floor is dotted with hundreds of holes; each is about the same size as a gold piece. As you're pondering on this, your lantern lights up a body, prostrate on the ground. A body! The corpse is that of a Halfling. The poor creature clasps a large Bronze Key in its dead hand. Picking it up, you see that the key has an elaborate snake design worked into it; thirteen serpents to be exact. Searching the backpack, you find some decaying food and a small wooden box. The box has a faded label on the lid that reads 'Acid vials, twelve measures'. Opening the box, you see it's empty except for one Vial of Acid. You throw away the rotten food, but may take the Bronze Key and Vial of Acid with you if you want. Suddenly, you hear a loud rumbling sound behind you! Spinning around, you're shocked to see an immense stone door descend from the ceiling, slamming shut over the entrance. You're trapped! Tons of sand begins to pour into the room from holes in the roof, filling the chamber quickly. Are you wearing a Polished Copper Ring (*turn to 16*). Otherwise (*turn to 69*)

29

Slowly lifting the rusty metal latch, you open the door slightly and look around the edge. Beyond is a large, unlit chamber. The lantern in your hand lights up a roughly square room, about twenty paces square. The walls and ceiling are made of wooden panelling, an elaborate chandelier hangs from the roof by a rope; the candles long extinguished. Advancing into the chamber, sword in hand, you notice a big coil of rope on a hook by the inside of the door. You may take this Rope with you if you want. Suddenly, you hear the grating noise again! To your horror, you notice the stone slab sealing one of the sarcophagi in the corner moving! As you stare on, it slides over a bit more, as if someone was trying to push it aside from WITHIN the tomb! You'll have to think fast, will you:

Creep up and investigate whatever is trying to force its way out from inside the sarcophagus (*turn to 9*)

Leave the room, return to the junction and go under the stone archway and through the chain curtain (*turn to 67*)

Leave the room, return to the junction and go through the iron grille (*turn to 82*)

30

You're deciding what to do next, when your attention is drawn to an ugly painting of a goblin on the wall. You step up and look at it, wondering who on earth the foul creature represented is. You THINK it may be a female, but they all look as ugly as each other to you, so you can't be sure. To your alarm, the Golden Boar Pendant around your neck begins to vibrate and heat up slightly. The painting emits a loud click and swings open. Behind which is a small niche in the wall housing two bottles. One is rectangular, made of blue glass and sealed with wax. It's labelled 'Strength elixir' (*you may use the elixir to restore your Stamina score to its initial value ONCE at anytime during your adventure, except while in battle*). The other bottle is ten inches high and made of black glass. The bottle has a skull and crossbones symbol painted on it and is sealed with a cork. You've found a bottle of Poison! You may take these with you if you wish (*gain 1 Luck point*). You decide to press on (*turn to 39*)

31

Driving your sword deeply into the main body of the TENTACLED BEAST, you're covered by a gush of purple blood. Thankfully the tentacles relax their grip as it dies and sinks slowly beneath the surface. Searching the water, you locate the humanoid body you discovered earlier and drag it up onto the steps. The drowned corpse is that of a young man, presumably the TENTACLED BEAST's last victim. Searching his sodden clothes you find some items of interest; a Silver Necklace, a Polished Copper Ring, a Golden Boar Pendant and 8 Gold Pieces. You may take some or all of these with you. You decide that the only way onwards is to retrace your steps to the main corridor when you originally by the rope. After packing up your gear, you retrace your steps (*turn to 47*)

32

Only when you've left the guard post safely behind and you can no longer see the torch light do you relax a little. You walk on along the corridor in silence. The corridor bends gradually to the left, then sharper to the right. Everything is silent, dark and deserted. As you progress; the air becomes noticeably cool and damper. You hear

the sound of running water up ahead. Your lantern soon reveals a startling sight; the passageway falls away abruptly, ending at a wide, fast flowing, subterranean river! The gushing water flows from a low archway on the right-hand side, across the corridor, to a low archway on the left. Your heart leaps as you spy a small, grinning face staring out of the water back at YOU! Looking closer, you see that it's actually just a stone gargoyle, carved into a crocodile head. There are more of them, rising above the torrent. You realise that they must be stone steppingstones to allow passage across the river. Taking your life in your hands, you begin to cautiously leap from one crocodile headed stone to the next. Most are covered in patches of wet lichen, making your task even more precarious. *Test your Skill.* Roll two dice three times in a row. If you role higher than your current Skill score once or more, you slip on a stone, falling headfirst into the raging river (*turn to 24*). If you role equal to or below your current Skill score three times in a row (*turn to 72*)

33

"As you wish!" Aezetbur uses his magical powers to create a seven foot long spear that appears on the ground before you! Picking it up, you hold it close and examine it. The weapon is indeed a work of art, having been crafted by a master sword smith from the finest metal. Touching your finger lightly to the edge draws blood; a testament to its keen cutting edge! The spear is decorated with seventeen eagle feathers just behind the blade and has patterns carved in its wooden shaft (*if you use it in battle, you may add 1 to your Attack Strength*). You may take the Eagle Feather Spear with you if you wish. Delighted, you're just about to thank the Genie, but the purple cloud has already returned to a boiling mass again. As you watch, it's sucked back into the golden skull, the cork stopper replacing itself! You decide it's time to move on. You secure your equipment and climb back up the rope and through the hole. Glad to be on your way again, you retrace your steps back to the junction. Will you:

Walk down the short passageway and examine the wooden door (*turn to 77*)
Push the chain curtain aside and go through the stone arch (*turn to 67*)

34

You climb between the planks that block the entrance, light up the passage with your lantern in front of you. It's small and is quite a squeeze; your arms rubbing against the rough walls. You stumble over a floor covered with large and small

pieces of broken masonry; the walls and arched ceiling are in an appalling state of repair. The roughly cut passage twists and turns quite haphazardly to the left and the right. After an hour of walking you come to a small, partially finished, spiral staircase descending down into the darkness. Climbing down these precipitous stony steps your foot slips on a piece of moss, sending you tumbling forward. *Test your Luck.* If you're lucky, you regain your footing safely. If not, you trip, painfully hurting your leg on the stone steps (*lose 2 Stamina points*). Eventually you're confronted by a layer of scummy water filling the staircase. The staircase is flooded and your only way onwards is blocked! You curse your luck for wasting your time with this route. Will you:

Dive under the water into the murky depths to see if you can find a way onwards (*turn to 20*)
Go back to main junction and walk left along the passage (*turn to 12*)
Go back to main junction and walk right along the passage (*turn to 45*)
Go back to main junction and take a look at the door (*turn to 23*)

35

Leaving the leather curtain behind, you walk on along the featureless passageway in the dank and gloomy atmosphere. After a while, you come to a square, wooden trapdoor in the passage floor. Most of its surface is covered by green lichen and it has a heavy, rusted iron ring as a handle. Looking along the corridor, you see that it continues in the same direction as far as your lantern light reaches, before disappearing into the darkness. Will you:

Ignore the trapdoor and continue walking along the passageway (*turn to 84*)
Open the trapdoor and explore whatever is beyond it (*turn to 61*)

36

You panic and frantically look around for somewhere to hide. Too late! The portcullis opens and a creature enters the room carrying a bucket. It's the size of a man and dressed in ill-fitting, torn clothing covered by a filthy, leather apron. Although like a man, it's more muscular and far uglier with dark, motley skin, a flat nose and ragged ears studded with rings. The creature is a MAN-ORC, the sorry, mongrel offspring of Humans and Orcs! Although related to both, these miserable creatures are universally shunned by everyone. The MAN-ORC COOK lets out a howl of anger on seeing you in the kitchen.

Dropping the bucket, it pulls an axe from its belt and lunges forward to attack you.

MAN-ORC COOK - Skill: 8 Stamina: 8

If you win, you search its pockets and find 5 Gold Pieces and the keys to the Dwarf's cage. Releasing him, he thanks you profusely before disappearing through the portcullis and down the darkened corridor. Finding nothing else of interest, you decide to quickly go back the way you came before any guards appear. Leaving through the wooden door, you go back down the spiral stairs (*turn to 2*)

37

Pushing back the lid of the chest, you see it's crammed full of precious metals and jewels of every sort! Emeralds, rubies, sapphires and diamonds are mixed in with gold and silver. The sight causes you to draw breath in amazement! On top of the pile is a large signet ring, made for the hand of a Giant. It has a flat surface with a coat of arms etched into it, inlaid with diamonds and rubies. It's the size of a cabbage and very heavy; it must be worth an absolute fortune! Placing the Gold Signet Ring carefully in your backpack, you search through the rest of the treasure. Suddenly, you're halted in your tracks by the guttural howls and barks of voices outside the hall! Your worst fears are realised; Grimbald's loathsome henchmen must be coming to investigate their master's room! The alarmed shouts and clumping of running feet gets louder and louder as they approach in large numbers. How will you disguise yourself? If you have a Cloak of Invisibility, you may use it now (*turn to 55*). Otherwise (*turn to 79*)

38

Heaving you way up the rope is quite an effort. You climb back up through the cobwebs, careful not to disturb any of them. Eventually, you rise above the silken carpet and reach the hole without further incident. Exhausted after your tiring climb, you retrace your steps back to the junction and pass back through the iron grille. Will you:

Walk down the short passageway and examine the wooden door (*turn to 77*)
Push the chain curtain aside and go through the stone arch (*turn to 67*)

39

You find nothing else of interest in the guard room and decide to leave and backtrack. Will you:

Retrace your steps back to pile of skulls and continue the way you were going (*turn to 28*)
Retrace your steps to the pile of skulls and go back to where you originally entered by the rope (*turn to 25*)

40

Climbing up the ladder, you ascend the shaft in silence. Cobwebs brush by your face as you progress, but after ten minutes of strenuous climbing you reach the top. The shaft terminates abruptly, almost as though the workmen who built it decided to down tools suddenly. There's nothing but solid stone with no way onwards! You spy a small niche in the rock; inside is a lever set into a vertical slot. You wonder what the lever must do and toy with the idea of pulling it. Will you:

Take a chance and pull the lever in the wall to see what, if anything, happens (*turn to 62*)
Ignore the lever, climb down the ladder, go back through the metal hatch and carry on along the passageway (*turn to 32*)
Ignore the lever and climb down the ladder, past the metal hatch, and explore whatever is below (*turn to 73*)

41

Taking the Iron Key from your backpack, you insert it in the lock and turn it. Click! The key turns in the door lock, unlocking the door (*gain 1 Luck point*). Pushing it aside you enter a large, seemingly deserted, room which is so big your lantern light cannot reach the far wall. The floor is covered in a thick layer of old straw. Just inside the entrance is a wooden table, upon which are some artefacts. You step up and study the objects in front of you. One is a tin plate with the words 'Ezded's room, fifty-seven', crudely carved in the surface. There's also a piece of jewellery, fashioned into a fish armband and a piece of cheese. You may take the Silver Fish Armband with you if you want and eat the cheese (*gain 3 Stamina points*). Your attention focuses back on the room. Will you:

Perform a much more detailed search of the room to make sure you haven't missed anything (*turn to 54*)
Leave the room and continue along passageway (*turn to 18*)

42

You move along the side of the huge passageway in silence. Your spirits are raised when you spy a point of light in the distance! As you begin to jog along the passageway; the light gets closer. You realise the cavern ahead of you opens out into daylight and freedom! You force your tired limbs onwards, realising you're close to the end of your quest. Soon, you're met with a depressing sight. Just before the cavern ends, an immense, iron portcullis blocks your way onwards! Peering through the rusty bars, you can see a curtain of roots and vines hanging down from the roof of the cavern. Beyond this, you see open ground and sunlight! You're just pondering on how to get through the portcullis when you notice a hole cut in the stone wall of the passageway, way above your head height. Inside the hole is mounted a stone-carved head. You're wondering what to do when the head turns on its base and looks down at you! "I'm the guardian of Grimbald's lair. Who are you?" The disembodied head states impassively. Thinking fast, you confidently declare that you've been given permission by Grimbald himself to leave his underground complex! The stone head replies "If that is so, then you must know my name! Tell me, what is it?" This is something you hadn't expected! What will you answer:

Your name is 'Ezded' (*turn to 95*)

Your name is 'Balthus' (*turn to 19*)

Your name is 'Aezetbur' (*turn to 85*)

Say you don't know (*turn to 10*)

43

Continuing on, the corridor you're in turns gently to the left and then right. You trudge along in dutiful silence; contemplating what horrors may lie in store for you ahead. You notice that the walls are in a bad state of decay, with lumps of stonework littering the passageway floor. You soon come to a tatty, brown, leather curtain covering a smaller side passage on the left-hand wall of the main passageway. Will you:

Pull aside the dirty, leather curtain and explore the smaller side passage (*turn to 26*)

Decide better of it and continue along the main passageway (*turn to 35*)

44

Walking under the doorway arch, you find yourself at the foot of a narrow staircase leading upwards into the silent darkness. Climbing up the steep flight of stone steps, you eventually arrive in a large corridor beside a stone, statue. The statue appears to be a soldier of some sort and is missing his head! The name 'BALTHUS' is inscribed on its base. Ignoring this, you decide

carry on left along this bigger passage. Eventually, you arrive at a stone spiral staircase. You can smell the aroma of cooked meat coming down the worn steps from above. Will you:

Decide to cautiously climb up the spiral staircase (*turn to 17*)

Choose to climb down the spiral staircase instead and see what's below (*turn to 2*)

45

Walking along the passageway, you have to leap over the odd puddles on the passage floor to keep your feet dry. The passage remains straight for a time and then slowly bends to the left. Up ahead, you see the passageway bends sharply to the right. To your consternation you see a dull light coming from around the corner, accompanied by a few guttural laughs! Some of Grimbald's foul creatures no doubt! Just before the bend to the right, your lantern illuminates a large, cast iron door set into the left passage wall. The door is closed. Will you:

Step up and examine the closed iron door (*turn to 97*)

Ignore the iron door and continue along the passageway towards the sounds you can hear (*turn to 18*)

46

With some trepidation, you cautiously step out onto the bridge's mouldy and rotten timbers. They creak and groan, but thankfully hold your weight! Slowly, you progress towards the centre and then the other side of the rope bridge without incident. Glad to be back on solid ground, you walk on up a stone corridor as before which rises up a slight incline before ending at a room. The chamber is quite small with a slope leading down to its floor from the passageway you entered it by. The room is seemingly bare except for a low, circular, stone wall around a shaft opening and a large inanimate statue of some ugly goblin-like creature as tall as you. The statue has an open mouth with an emerald inside it and lichen growing all over the surface! Looking down the shaft, you can see running water far below. Will you:

Lower yourself down the shaft on a Rope (if you have one) and investigate the fast flowing water below (*turn to 75*)

Place your hand in the statue's mouth and try to take the emerald (*turn to 56*)

Search around the chamber for anything else of interest (*turn to 63*)

Retrace your steps across the bridge, back to the junction and explore the short passageway and wooden door (*turn to 77*)

Retrace your steps across the bridge, back to the junction, pull aside the metal bolt and go through the iron grille instead (*turn to 82*)

47

It takes an hour of clambering along the debris in the badly decayed passage to find your way back to the junction. You climb between the planks, glad to be back in the main passageway again. A look left and right reveals a corridor as silent and deserted as before. However, you see that someone has cut down your rope! You stare mournfully at the sliced end of the rope and then at the shaft opening, high above. You realise that there's no way back now, you'll have to continue regardless. You step up to choose one of the three ways onwards. Will you:

Examine the ironbound door (*turn to 23*)

Walk left along the passageway (*turn to 12*)

Walk right along the passageway (*turn to 45*)

48

Pulling the Cloak of Invisibility around you, you become invisible and stand quietly against the wall knowing that you won't be discovered. The portcullis opens, grating as metal grinds against stone; allowing a creature to enter the kitchen carrying a bucket. It's the size of a man and dressed in ill-fitting clothing covered by a dirty, leather apron. It's quite muscular and very ugly with dark, motley skin, a flat nose and ragged ears studded with rings. The creature is a Man-Orc, the mongrel offspring of Humans and Orcs! As you watch, it stirs the contents of the cauldron with a ladle before tasting a sample. Another of the disgusting creatures appears and they begin to debate over whether or not to put more salt into their master's soup or not. Eventually, a decision is made to leave and get some. You're left on your own in the kitchen for a few minutes. Do you have a bottle of Poison (*turn to 92*) If not, you can find nothing else of interest so you leave by the wooden door and descend down the spiral staircase (*turn to 2*)

49

Aezetbur smiles. "Very well, adventurer! If that's your desire!" As he works his magical powers, you're enveloped in a thick cloud of purple smoke that swirls around you, blinding your vision! The smoke soon dissipates as quickly as it appeared, leaving you somewhat disorientated. To your astonishment, you find yourself standing

at one end of an immense, rectangular chamber like a huge hall of some sort. It's truly on a gigantic scale; as spacious as the inside of the biggest temple. A flight of stone steps leads down to a floor, paved with large, square slabs of black and white marble arranged in a chequered pattern, like the surface of a chess board. The walls are decorated with dark, wooden panelling that reaches from the floor to the roof high above. The ceiling is an engineering marvel; spanned by entire tree trunks used as massive beams to support the triangular shape of the roofing. On the walls, colourful tapestries as large as houses dominate most of the available space. They depict epic landscapes, titanic armies, siege engines and fierce battles of every description. Directly opposite the double doors you entered by is a hearth, the arch of which is as tall and wide as a stone bridge. Beside the burning hearth is a stone archway, covered by a thick, red curtain as tall as a town wall. Your attention is drawn to the mantle over the fire which is covered in ugly, stone gargoyles and piles of skulls! The fire is stacked high with wooden tree trunks and is burning fiercely, casting an eerie glow around the chamber. Silhouetted against the fire are an oversized, wooden chair with its back to you and a table with a bowl and spoon on it. A large, ironbound chest sits on one side of the chair; a gigantic sword as tall as two men rests against the other. The chair has an exceptionally high back, the middle of which tapers to a point. The room is lit by dozens of burning candles set in iron brackets or candlesticks. "What's this?" a voice booms, startling you as you thought the room was empty. A bulky figure rises slowly out of the chair and turns to face you. "Who dares to enter my private chamber?" he sneers. You realise that this is Grimbald; the tyrant you've come to slay. His appearance truly lives up to his fearsome reputation. Grimbald is as big as an oak tree; a veritable mountain of flesh and muscle as tall as six men. You wonder how you'll ever defeat this monstrosity, as your head barely reaches the top of his leather boot! He's dressed in thick furs, a woollen shirt and breeches of dull green, brown and red. An iron helmet rests upon his immense head. His skin is weathered and tough. A large, unkempt, messy white beard rolls over his chest; his piercing eyes are fixed on YOU! Descending the steps to the marble floor, you declare that you're here to put an end to his tyranny and oppression of the good folk of Oakbridge. "Pah!" he scorns "So, those impudent worms have hired an assassin, eh! Well, once I've finished with you, I'll pay the peasants of Oakbridge a visit and burn their pathetic village to the ground and they'll have you to thank for it!" Undaunted by Grimbald's boasts, you prepare yourself for battle. Throwing his fur cloak back, he reveals bare, muscular forearms, each thicker than your entire body with leather wrist straps. Picking up his mighty sword he

declares, “Fool, I doubt you’ll be anymore of a challenge than the last adventurer I slew. Why I expect you’re not even a match for my favourite pets!” With that, he reaches out a hand and twists one of the stone gargoyles above the fireplace. To your horror, the marble slab you’re standing on drops away, plunging you into a pool of icy water before you can react! You go under the surface, struggle to the surface and go under again. Under the clear water, you see hundreds of small, fist-sized fish with large mouths filled with needle-like teeth! As you struggle and splash about, the SNAPPERFISH close in for the kill! Do you have a Silver Fish Armband (*turn to 51*). Otherwise (*turn to 86*)

50

Much to his delight, you easily hack the corroded chain off that secures the cage door bolt. Forcing the bolt over, the door opens, releasing the ragged, old man. He leaps with glee, claps his hands and gives you a toothy smile. You realise this poor soul must’ve been imprisoned for a long time indeed. You loathe to hand over your precious Cloak of Invisibility, but hand it over you must as you made a deal (*cross it off your Adventure Sheet*). He folds it up and runs his hands over the rich material admiringly. You interrupt him and remind him of his pledge. He tells you that you need to use a secret password to get into Grimbald’s inner sanctum. Today’s password is ‘Balthus’, the name of one of the Black Elf master sergeants. He leaves by the doorway and disappears into the darkness. After a search of the cave reveals nothing of interest, you leave by the same route too. Climbing up a steep flight of stone steps, you eventually arrive in a large corridor beside a stone, statue. The statue appears to be a soldier of some sort and is missing his head! The word ‘BATLHUS’ is etched on the base. After pondering on this, you decide carry on left along this bigger passage. Eventually, you arrive at a stone spiral staircase. You can smell the aroma of cooked meat coming down the worn steps from above. Will you:

Decide to cautiously climb up the spiral staircase (*turn to 17*)

Choose to climb down the spiral staircase instead and see what’s below (*turn to 2*)

51

You panic and thrash around with your sword. However, to your surprise and immense relief, the SNAPPERFISH seem to hold back from the attack! They swim around you on all sides, occasionally nipping at you but causing you no real harm! You take your opportunity to escape by clambering carefully up the slippery stone

bricks of the pit wall. Eventually, you pull yourself back up to face Grimbald again in the hall, albeit soaking wet! Grimbald is standing by the hearth, eating soup hungrily from the bowl with the spoon. His eyebrows rise in surprise when he sees you emerge unscathed from his trap. Draining the remainder of the soup into his cavernous mouth, he pushes the bowl aside and wipes his face clumsily with his sleeve. “So, the puny weakling is stronger than he looks, eh! Well, I’ve bested far better than you, worm!” He picks up his oversized sword leaning against the chair. “We’ll end this with weapons, insect! And when I’ve killed you, I’ll hang your skull over my fireplace as a trophy!” With that, he lumbers across the chamber to finish you off once and for all! Did you poison the soup in the kitchen? If so, multiply the number of onions you saw the cook put into the soup by three and turn to that number now. If you didn’t poison the soup (*turn to 76*)

52

Suddenly, you’re halted in your tracks by the guttural howls and barks of voices outside the hall! Your worst fears are realised; Grimbald’s loathsome henchmen must be coming to investigate their master’s room! The alarmed shouts and clumping of running feet gets louder and louder as they approach in large numbers. How will you disguise yourself? If you have a Cloak of Invisibility, you may use it now (*turn to 55*). Otherwise (*turn to 79*)

53

You present the Gold Signet Ring to the head, holding it up as high as you can. “Very well, you may pass.” It says. There’s a loud grating sound as the heavy portcullis is lifted slowly into the roof of the cavern, allowing you to continue. Outside the cavern walls become plain earth. Roots and vines from plants growing on the earth above hang down in your way. Brushing these aside you step out of the cavern into the bright sunshine of midday! You realise your subterranean mission made you lose all track time! Although a welcome sight, the light hurts your eyes. Do you have a Blue Flower in your backpack (*turn to 78*). Otherwise (*turn to 100*)

54

You examine the underside of the wooden table for a concealed draws. However, there are none. Directing your attention to the ceiling, you’re shudder with revulsion to see it crawling with every sort of loathsome insect imaginable. Huge cobwebs hang down in enormous arches and creatures scurry away from your light in all

directions. Thud! You spin around just in time to see the huge iron door slam shut! You run to the door but you're not fast enough. Listening at the cold metal, you hear hysterical laughter from outside the door. Someone has deliberately locked you in! Reaching into your backpack, you pull out the Iron Key and attempt to open the door, but to your horror, you realise that there's no lock on this side of the door. Desperately searching around the room, you realize that there's no escape from your prison. The door is the only exit; all the other walls are solid stone. After exhausting yourself, you sit down on the stool and wait. However, you wait turns from minutes into hours and then days. You pound on the door and shout for help, but nobody ever comes. Slowly you get weaker and weaker. You face a slow and agonisingly painful death by starvation in your lonely subterranean prison. You survive a little longer by licking the moisture off the cold, stone walls, but you never leave the room alive. You've failed in your mission...

55

Quickly, you pull your cloak over your shoulders and head. Invisible to the outside world, you're safe from discovery when the door at the far end of the hall bursts open and dozens of Grimbald's disgusting, chaotic guards pile in to survey the scene! Some mill about aimlessly, unsure of what to do. Others make a futile attempt to put out the fire or sob mournfully beside the immense bulk of their fallen leader. Unnoticed by the guards, you slip quietly through the stone archway, covered by a thick, red curtain. Immediately, you're plunged back into complete darkness! Your lantern lights up a huge cavern cut out of rock with a flat floor and arched roof. It disappears off into the blackness as far as your lantern light illuminates. You press on along it (*turn to 42*)

56

Reaching into the statue's mouth, you clasp the emerald in your fingers. You're half expecting the stone mouth to clamp shut, crushing your hand flat! However, nothing happens. The emerald is huge and must be worth a fortune! Smiling at your good fortune, you slip it into your backpack. Suddenly, you see movement out of the corner of your eye. A blue and red POISONOUS SNAKE was also residing in the statue's mouth! Disturbed, it falls to the ground and lashes out at you! You'll have to be careful of its poisonous venom (*each time it bites you, lose 4 Stamina points instead of the usual 2*). Fight it.

POISONOUS SNAKE – Skill: 5 Stamina: 3

If you survive and kill the POISONOUS SNAKE, you prepare to leave. Will you:

Lower yourself down the shaft on a Rope (if you have one) and investigate the fast flowing water below (*turn to 75*)

Search around the chamber for anything else of interest (*turn to 63*)

Retrace your steps across the bridge, back to the junction and explore the short passageway and wooden door (*turn to 77*)

Retrace your steps across the bridge, back to the junction, pull aside the metal bolt and go through the iron grille instead (*turn to 82*)

57

Remembering the message you found scratched into the tin plate, you kneel down on the floor, lift up the metal flap and turn the tumblers to the numbers five and seven. The door makes a loud click and swings in a few inches. You've successfully opened the door! Slowly, you inch into the room beyond. You see a small, roughly square chamber cut right out of the rock, cluttered with damaged and crudely made furniture. Rags and dirty clothes of every description litter the floor and are carelessly draped over the headboard of a tatty bed. In the centre of the room is a wooden table surrounded by some chairs. The table has playing cards, gold coins and a few precious stones scattered over its surface. A humanoid creature with dark skin sits in one of the chairs, lazily slumped back, snoring loudly as if in a deep sleep, one hand wrapped around a half-empty metal cup balancing precariously on the edge of the table. The room is dully illuminated by a single candle mounted on a tin candlestick on the table. Your attention is attracted to a large Bronze Key hanging around the creature's neck by a leather cord; you can't resist taking a closer look. Leaning forward, you see that it has a complex snake design covering its surface. Apprehensively reaching out, you attempt to take the Bronze Key while the creature slumbers. *Test your Luck*. If you're lucky (*turn to 87*). If you're unlucky (*turn to 11*)

58

Removing the Bronze Keys you've collected from your backpack; you put each in a keyhole on the giant door and turn them one at a time. After a bit of effort, both turn 180 degrees with a satisfying click. The lock snaps open; releasing the doors which swing outwards slightly on their hinges (*gain 1 Luck point*). Sensing that you're now deep within Grimbald's inner sanctum and near your ultimate goal, you take a deep, slow

breath to calm yourself. With lantern in one hand; sword in one other, you step forward to see what lies beyond. Cautiously peeping around the door edge, you see a sight that stops you in your tracks! On the other side of the double doors you find yourself standing at one end of an immense, rectangular chamber like a huge hall of some sort. It's truly on a gigantic scale; as spacious as the inside of the biggest temple. A flight of stone steps leads down to a floor, paved with large, square slabs of black and white marble arranged in a chequered pattern, like the surface of a chess board. The walls are decorated with dark, wooden panelling that reaches from the floor to the roof high above. The ceiling is an engineering marvel; spanned by entire tree trunks used as massive beams to support the triangular shape of the roofing. On the walls, colourful tapestries as large as houses dominate most of the available space. They depict epic landscapes, titanic armies, siege engines and fierce battles of every description. Directly opposite the double doors you entered by is a hearth, the arch of which is as tall and wide as a stone bridge. Beside the burning hearth is a stone archway, covered by a thick, red curtain as tall as a town wall. Your attention is drawn to the mantle over the fire which is covered in ugly, stone gargoyles and piles of skulls! The fire is stacked high with wooden tree trunks and is burning fiercely, casting an eerie glow around the chamber. Silhouetted against the fire are an oversized, wooden chair with its back to you and a table with a bowl and spoon on it. A large, ironbound chest sits on one side of the chair; a gigantic sword as tall as two men rests against the other. The chair has an exceptionally high back, the middle of which tapers to a point. The room is lit by dozens of burning candles set in iron brackets or candlesticks. "What's this?" a voice booms, startling you as you thought the room was empty. A bulky figure rises slowly out of the chair and turns to face you. "Who dares to enter my private chamber?" he sneers. You realise that this is Grimbald; the tyrant you've come to slay. His appearance truly lives up to his fearsome reputation. Grimbald is as big as an oak tree; a veritable mountain of flesh and muscle as tall as six men. You wonder how you'll ever defeat this monstrosity, as your head barely reaches the top of his leather boot! He's dressed in thick furs, a woollen shirt and breeches of dull green, brown and red. An iron helmet rests upon his immense head. His skin is weathered and tough. A large, unkempt, messy white beard rolls over his chest; his piercing eyes are fixed on YOU! Descending the steps to the marble floor, you declare that you're here to put an end to his tyranny and oppression of the good folk of Oakbridge. "Pah!" he scorns "So, those impudent worms have hired an assassin, eh! Well, once I've finished with you, I'll pay the peasants of Oakbridge a visit and burn their pathetic village to the ground and

they'll have you to thank for it!" Undaunted by Grimbald's boasts, you prepare yourself for battle. Throwing his fur cloak back, he reveals bare, muscular forearms, each thicker than your entire body with leather wrist straps. Picking up his mighty sword he declares, "Fool, I doubt you'll be anymore of a challenge than the last adventurer I slew. Why I expect you're not even a match for my favourite pets!" With that, he reaches out a hand and twists one of the stone gargoyles above the fireplace. To your horror, the marble slab you're standing on drops away, plunging you into a pool of icy water before you can react! You go under the surface, struggle to the surface and go under again. Under the clear water, you see hundreds of small, fist-sized fish with large mouths filled with needle-like teeth! As you struggle and splash about, the SNAPPERFISH close in for the kill! Do you have a Silver Fish Armband (*turn to 51*). Otherwise (*turn to 86*)

59

You're resting when another beast steps through the doorway to confront you. It's very tall and has to stoop to enter the room. The creature has a bald head with lumpy, brown skin covering its massive, muscular frame. Its ears are ragged and torn, studded with crude jewellery in places. The OGRE is stripped to the waste and carries a huge battleaxe in its warty hands. As a testament to its fighting prowess, a number of shrunken heads are tied to its leather belt! Letting out a bestial, howl; it charges across the room to attack you in a fierce rage. Holding your sword up, you prepare to defend yourself.

OGRE BERSERKER - Skill: 9 Stamina: 10

If you survive this battle, you feel drained by the effort (*lose 2 Stamina points*). You withdraw your blade from the dead beast's body (*turn to 94*)

60

Aezetbur remains silent as you tell him that the third son must receive fifteen fish from the Fisherman, as it's the next number in the sequence. "Oh, very clever. How very clever indeed! I'm impressed!" he mocks. You take no time in reminding him of his pledge to help you. "Very well, you've answered my riddle, so what is your wish?" How will you use Aezetbur's help? Will you:

Ask him you heal your wounds (*turn to 71*)

Ask him to give you a powerful weapon to increase your fighting ability (*turn to 33*)

Ask him to transport you to Grimbald's inner sanctum (*turn to 49*)

61

The trapdoor is very heavy and hard to lift and push back. Obviously nobody has bothered to open it in a long time! Holding your lantern in front of you, a dusty wooden staircase is illuminated going downwards steeply. You descend slowly; one step at a time, the steps creaking and groaning under your weight. At the bottom, you find yourself in a narrow passage with earth walls, supported at irregular intervals with columns and beams made of rotting wood. The passageway reminds you of a dilapidated mine; it all looks quite delicate and precariously balanced to say the least! You cautiously walk on until you come to a junction with three ways onwards. On you left, a short passageway ends at a closed wooden door, in front of you is a stone arch covered by a curtain of chains, to your right is a closed, iron grille secured with a metal bolt. Will you:

Walk down the short passageway and examine the wooden door (*turn to 77*)

Push the chain curtain aside and go through the stone arch (*turn to 67*)

Pull aside the metal bolt and go through the iron grille (*turn to 82*)

62

You gingerly pull the lever. It's stiff, but moves slowly when you put all your weight behind it. At first there's silence, but then you hear an ominous rumbling sound from somewhere deep inside the rock followed by a noisy grating sound! After a few seconds the noises cease. You can't see any difference! Somewhat disappointed, you review your options. Will you:

Climb down the ladder, go back through the metal hatch and carry on along the passageway (*turn to 32*)

Climb down the ladder, past the metal hatch, and explore whatever is below (*turn to 3*)

63

Searching around the chamber, poking all the dark corners with the point of your sword, you realize the room is quite barren apart from the statue and shaft. The only thing that attracts your attention is a fist-sized flower with three dark blue petals. It grows in a small niche in the wall and emits a strong, sweet-smelling perfume that's quite pleasant. You may take the Blue Flower with you if you wish by tucking it gently into

your backpack. You decide what to do next. Will you:

Lower yourself down the shaft on a Rope (if you have one) and investigate the fast flowing water below (*turn to 75*)

Retrace your steps across the bridge, back to the junction and explore the short passageway and wooden door (*turn to 77*)

Retrace your steps across the bridge, back to the junction, pull aside the metal bolt and go through the iron grille instead (*turn to 82*)

64

You slash and hack at your underwater assailant with all you might. You chop off one, two and then three of the monstrosity's limbs off in turn. You battle on, but more and more tentacles wrap around your body, squeezing you relentlessly. The TENTACLED BEAST's large bulk drags you from the surface and the fight continues underwater. You thrust your blade into the main body on the creature again and again, turning the water purple with its blood. But still it doesn't relent on its death hold. Feeling faint from lack of air, you resist to the last, realising that once you pass out the battle will be lost. But alas, all is in vain as the creature's strength is overpowering! Your death is mercifully swift when the cold water enters your lungs. The TENTACLED BEAST will feast for many weeks to come on your corpse. You've failed in your mission...

65

You scream out in pain as it smashes into your forehead, knocking you to the ground (*lose 3 Stamina points*). Regaining your composure, you stagger to your feet. The chamber is medium-sized and square. Standing in the middle of the room are three, small, ugly creatures. They have rows of vicious, misshapen teeth and brownish-green, warty skin. Each is clad in filthy rags and assorted pieces of chain and plate armour. The trio of GOBLINS were wrestling each other over a piece of black cloth, but now stand staring at you in surprise. Their bemused expressions turn to anger and hatred and they draw their scimitars to advance and attack. Standing in the archway, you can fight each in turn.

GOBLIN GUARD - Skill: 5 Stamina: 5

GOBLIN GUARD - Skill: 5 Stamina: 4

GOBLIN SERGEANT - Skill: 5 Stamina: 6

If you defeat all three, you search the room. It's obviously a guard post of some kind, but the stupid and violent creatures have smashed the tables, beds and chairs into worthless firewood. One of the guards has an Iron Key on his belt.

You may take this with you if you wish. Turning your attention to what they were fighting over, you see that it's a fine cloak. Pulling it over your shoulders, you're amazed when you become invisible! You've found a Cloak of Invisibility! You may take it with you too. Are you wearing a Golden Boar Pendant (*turn to 30*). If not (*turn to 39*)

66

After a pause, you're shocked when the head's expression turns to one of hatred. Its lips curl up at the edges as it hisses "Intruders in the master's lair deserve death!" With that, you hear a popping sound as dozens of deadly darts are fired from small, concealed, holes in the walls! The darts pierce your body all over; your legs, belly, arms and head! Staggering backwards in agony, you scream out in pain! However, your screams don't last long as the fast acting poison from the darts kills you within seconds. You slump down in front of the portcullis, you life over. So near to freedom and yet so far...

67

Going under the archway and through the chain curtain, you enter a passageway in a much better state of repair. The walls and ceiling is solid stone, the floor is covered in well worn cobblestones. Forging onwards, the passage turns sharply to the left and a dozen paces further, it turns even more sharply to the right. Up ahead you see a sight which takes your breath away! The passageway ends abruptly at a wide chasm in the earth! The chasm is far too wide to jump and is spanned by a rope and wood bridge. Looking down, you can't see the bottom, but you get the impression of a big drop that would certainly kill you if you were to fall. An examination of the bridge spanning the gap doesn't fill you with confidence; the majority of the planks are soft, wet and rotten! The ropes holding the entire construction together are threadbare and covered in mould in places! It all looks very precarious, but the bridge is the only way onwards. Will you:

Take a gamble and try to cross over the chasm via the rickety old rope and wood bridge (*turn to 46*)

Retrace your steps to the junction and explore the short passageway and wooden door (*turn to 77*)

Retrace your steps back to the junction, pull aside the metal bolt and go through the iron grille instead (*turn to 82*)

68

As Grimbald is preoccupied, you seize your chance to throw your Eagle Feather Spear at him. Aiming for the beast's throat, you stride forward and hurl it with all the might your tired body can muster! The spear flies through the air towards its target. *Test your Luck*. If you're lucky (*turn to 13*). If you're unlucky (*turn to 93*)

69

You struggle through the swiftly rising tide to the stone door blocking your escape. You try pushing and clawing with all your might, but the heavy door is immovable. Finding the frame, you desperately try to force your sword into the seam to pry an opening. All to no avail; your sword snaps in two like a twig! The cascading sand stings your eyes as more and more pours into the trap, covering the door completely, ending any chance of escape. Struggling to stay atop the ever increasing sand mountain, you're forced up against the vaulted roof. You squirm and struggle; gasping for breath, as the sand enters your mouth, nose and eventually your lungs. You face an agonisingly death by suffocation! After the sand drains from the holes in the floor, there'll be two bodies in the sand-trap. Your mission and life have ended here...

70

The GHOUL attacks you with an insane fury, slashing wildly with its clawed hands! You try desperately to fend off the beast's blows but too many find their mark and tear into your flesh. One of the creature's abilities is to paralyse a victim with its poison claws so they can be devoured more easily. Your limbs and body go numb as the GHOUL's venom takes effect; paralysing you completely! You slump to the ground helplessly as the GHOUL moves in to begin feeding on your succulent, living flesh! Thankfully, you lapse into permanent unconsciousness and don't survive this torture too long. Your mission has come to an unfortunate end here...

71

You ask Aezetbur to use his magic to heal your wounds and make you strong again. As his powers take effect, you feel a warm surge of energy inside your body. The cuts and wounds on your body heal before your very eyes; the flesh closing up without leaving any marks (*restore your Skill, Stamina and Luck scores to their initial values*)! Delighted, you're just about to thank the Genie, but the purple cloud has already returned to a boiling mass again. As you watch, it's sucked back into the golden skull, the cork

stopper replacing itself! Feeling rejuvenated and refreshed, you decide to leave this place. You secure your equipment and climb back up the rope and through the hole. Glad to be on your way again, you retrace your steps back to the junction. Will you:

Walk down the short passageway and examine the wooden door (*turn to 77*)

Push the chain curtain aside and go through the stone arch (*turn to 67*)

72

You navigate the slippery stones successfully by nimbly leaping from one to another and reach the opposite bank without incident (*gain 1 Luck point*). You walk on along the corridor as it begins to turn gently to the left again. Up ahead you come to the curious sight of a headless, stone statue on a plinth at the side of the passageway. The statue is of a big, powerful humanoid, dressed in a suit of armour, one hand resting on the pommel of a sword, the other on the top of a large shield. An inscription on the base reads 'BALTHUS'. Beside the statue, on the left-hand side of the corridor, is a small side passage that immediately descends down a steep flight of stone steps. You decide carry on the way you were going. Eventually, you arrive at a stone spiral staircase. You can smell the aroma of cooked meat coming down the worn steps from above. Will you:

Decide to cautiously climb up the spiral staircase (*turn to 17*)

Choose to climb down the spiral staircase instead and see what's below (*turn to 2*)

73

Adjusting your equipment, you climb down the ladder, looking over your shoulder as you go. The ladder goes on for quite some time; you begin to get concerned about just how deep this shaft is! However, you're relieved when you eventually see a stone paved floor come into view out of the darkness. With your feet on solid ground again, you look around the bottom of the shaft. In front of you is a narrow and low stone archway covered in gargoyles. A heavy, iron portcullis seals the archway, blocking your way forward. The portcullis is far too thick and strong for you to break your way through. All you see beyond is darkness. With no way onwards, you forced to retrace your steps. Will you:

Climb back up the ladder, go back through the metal hatch and carry on along the passageway (*turn to 32*)

Climb back up the ladder, past the metal hatch, and explore whatever is above (*turn to 40*)

74

Taking hold of the rope, you begin the laborious process of heaving your way back up the rope. You soon work up a sweat and get into a rhythm as you ascend. As you climb up, your foot slips; accidentally hitting a silken strand from one of the webs! The cobwebs quiver from the force of the kick. You stare around anxiously, waiting for a response. Unfortunately, you don't have to wait long! Within a few seconds you see a disgusting creature materialize out of the dark, heading directly for YOU! A huge spider is advancing on you; its body as big as an entire cow. Eight legs, covered in sensitive black hairs extend in all directions, making this loathsome monstrosity look even more fearsome! On its head, multiple eyes scan you hungrily and its clicking mandibles make you turn away in revulsion. The GIANT SPIDER moves in for the kill. You have no choice but to fight it or end up its next meal! Holding your lantern in your mouth, you wield your weapon in your free hand (*minus 2 from your Skill score for the duration of this battle because of your precarious position of the rope*).

GIANT SPIDER - Skill: 7 Stamina: 8

If you survive this encounter, you secure your equipment and use your aching arms to climb back up the rope and through the hole. Glad to be free of the creature's hellish lair, you retrace your steps back to the junction. Will you:

Walk down the short passageway and examine the wooden door (*turn to 77*)

Push the chain curtain aside and go through the stone arch (*turn to 67*)

75

Tying the end of your Rope to the base of the statue, you throw the coil down the shaft and hear it splash loudly into the water far below. Securing all your equipment, you slowly slide down the rope, using your feet to stop you hitting the shaft wall. Down and down you go. As you approach the water, you struggle and pull your boots off to keep them dry. The underground river you find yourself in is only about a foot deep, yet exceedingly cold! Unable to untie the Rope, you're forced to leave it behind. Walking along, you realise you're in a low tunnel. Up ahead, the tunnel opens out into a large passageway, forded by the flowing water. *Test your Luck*. If you're lucky, you reach the other side of the ford without incident. If you're unlucky, you tread on a razor-sharp, metal spike

that someone has deliberately concealed under the surface of the water. Your foot is badly cut (*lose 1 Stamina point*). Reaching the other side, you put your boots back on and painfully hobble off along the corridor. The passageway rises up now and turns to the right while widening out to twice and then three times its previous width and height. Up ahead, the passageway terminates at an impressive set of closed double doors the size of a house! The wooden, ironbound doors are covered with melodramatic carving of animals and plants of all descriptions. Bears, wolves, horses and dogs are expertly carved into the wooden surface and painted in realistic colours. Two burning torches are set into iron brackets, either side of the massive portal, casting a dull light. A dozen, stone steps lead upwards; their edges stacked high with dozens of skulls of every sort, size and shape! Carefully climbing up, you approach the doors expectantly, sword in hand. Tugging on the iron ring reveals your worst fears; both are locked tight. You notice two bronze keyholes at head height. Staring up at the giant structure, you realise that no amount of battering will allow you to continue. Do you have two Bronze Keys in your backpack that you've picked up on your journey so far? If so, add the number of serpents on each Bronze Key together, multiply the result by two and turn to the corresponding reference number now. If you only possess one or neither Bronze Key, there's no way onwards (*turn to 98*)

76

Grimbald bounds across the chamber, his huge stride allowing him to move amazingly swiftly for such a huge creature! You manage to parry the first two blows, but the strength knocks you off your feet each time! Struggling on, his third blow smashes your weapon into pieces and sends you flying backwards into the wall. You fall to the ground, dazed and with broken ribs! Painfully, you spit out the blood and force your aching body to go on; knowing that the second you give up, victory will be his and it'll be the end of you. Another powerful blow from the Giant sends you sprawling across the floor in front of the hearth. Broken and bleeding, the last thing you see is the leering face of Grimbald as his booted foot descends on your body to crush the life out of you! After it's all over, Grimbald indeed gets to place your skull as a trophy over his fireplace! You've failed the people of Oakbridge, who'll pay for your failure with you in time. Your mission ends here...

77

You approach the wooden door and examine it in detail. The wood is old and half rotten with splits

in some of the planks. An iron latch secures the door closed. To your disgust, a severed head is nailed by its hair to the centre of the door; dried blood stains cover the floor! You wonder on the significance of this; a warning not to proceed perhaps! Peeping through the cracks in the wood, you see nothing but darkness beyond. Listening against the door, you hear a faint sound coming from within. There it is again! Something on the other side of the door is making a sound, like stone scrapping against stone! You think about what it could possibly be. Will you:

Confidently lift the door latch and open the door, ready to confront whatever lies on the other side (*turn to 29*)

Go back to the junction and go through the archway covered by the chain curtain (*turn to 67*)
Go back to the junction and go through the iron grille (*turn to 82*)

78

Unbeknown to you, the Blue Flower is a very rare and expensive type of hybrid orchid. The flower is specially cultivated by the Troglodytes; a subterranean race of creatures that live deep underground all their lives. They harvest blue orchids to produce lethal venom for their arrows. Unfortunately, the perfume on this particular species is a slow but deadly poison! As you walk out into the sunlight, you finally succumb to its effects. Slumping down on the ground, you fall into a sleep from which you never awake! You saved Oakbridge from the Giant's ministrations, but die here unnoticed and with nobody to mourn you...

79

You desperately search around for a hiding place, but you're too late! The doors at the far end of the hall bursts open to reveal a sea of angry guards. Upon seeing their master's body, the burning tapestries and you, they're driven into a frenzy of rage! Howling insanely, the chaotic hoard advances on YOU! Placing your back to the fireplace, you make a determined, if futile, last stand. Coming upon you from all sides, you valiantly hack and slash left and right at your attackers. Wounded, you still fight on, your heroic resistance driving them berserk with anger and frustration. Nine, ten, eleven of the foul creatures are slain by your hand before you finally fall under their blows. You've saved the good folk of Oakbridge by slaying Grimbald, but you end up paying for it with your life...

80

You pull and push at the cork in the golden skull with your fingers, slowly easing it out. Finally, it comes free emitting a wisp of purple smoke. Alarmed, you drop the golden skull and stumble backwards! The smoke pours out faster and faster in such a volume; it doesn't seem possible that it could all fit into the container! As you watch in awe, the top of the smoke cloud collects together and forms into the upper torso of a humanoid while the bottom remains a formless cloud, tapering down into the golden skull! The entity before you has a bare upper body. The head is completely bald, except for a long, single plait of hair at the back. It slowly surveys its surroundings before fixing its attention on you. "My name is Aezetbur the Genie. Why have you disturbed me?" he demands. You apologise and tell him that it was an accident; you had no idea that a Genie lived in the golden skull. He crosses his arms, seemingly dissatisfied with your explanation. "Well adventurer, I'll give you one chance to appease me. Answer me a riddle of my choosing and I'll help you on your way. Fail to answer it and I'll hinder you for disturbing me." You open your mouth in protest, but he ignores your pleas and continues regardless. A sly smile spreads slowly across his face "Now listen carefully adventurer!" He starts to tell you his riddle. "A Fisherman wants to divide his catch of eighty-four fish up among his seven sons. He gives one quarter of a dozen fish to his seventh son, three times as many to his fifth son. He gives twice as many fish to his second son, as he gives to his fifth son. To his fourth son, the Fisherman gives as many fish as he gave to his fifth and seventh sons combined. He divides the remaining fish up amongst his first, third and sixth sons. My question is this." He pauses for effect. "How many fish does the Fisherman give to his third son?" Can you work out the correct answer to his riddle? If so, multiply the number of fish the third son receives by four and turn to that reference now. If you don't know (*turn to 89*)

81

As he finally dies, Grimbald falls backwards and smashes into the ground with a terrific force that makes the whole chamber tremble and dust fall from the ceiling! An outreached hand dislodges half-a-dozen logs from the fire which sets fire to some of the tapestries! Exhausted from your epic clash, you slump to your knees to rest for a moment. When you've got your breath and wits back, you realise the fire is spreading quickly out of control! Also, you presume that Grimbald's guards must've been alerted by the noise of battle. With no time to celebrate your spectacular victory, you begin to make plans to escape immediately. Will you:

Take the opportunity to fill your pockets with precious jewels from the treasure chest by the wooden chair (*turn to 37*)

Make good your escape through the stone archway, covered by a thick, red curtain beside the fireplace (*turn to 52*)

82

As you approach the iron grille, you see that it's very rusty. As the grille opens and swings inward on rusty hinges it squeaks loudly. In front of you is a narrow, rounded tunnel with bare earth walls. Stumbling along it, you soon find it beginning to descend at a steep angle. Digging your sword into the earth to stop yourself plunging forwards out of control, you follow it until you come upon a wooden staircase. The wooden staircase bends sharply to the right every dozen steps as it descends. Eventually, you arrive at another earth tunnel that terminates at a circular hole in the ground. Above the hole is a rope, attached to the ceiling of the tunnel by a metal hook, its length dangling down the hole into the darkness. Peering down the hole, you can't see anything but blackness, the lantern illuminating the rope until it disappears out of sight below. Dropping a stone, you listen but don't hear it hit the bottom! Either the chamber below is very deep or has a soft bottom of some sort. Will you:

Climb down the rope and see where it goes (*turn to 15*)

Retrace your steps to the junction, walk down the short passageway and examine the wooden door (*turn to 77*)

Retrace your steps to the junction, push the chain curtain aside and go through the stone arch (*turn to 67*)

83

You graciously accept the wretch's gift. Leaning forward, you allow him to slip the leather cord over your head and pull it tight; a bit TOO tight for comfort! Suddenly, you realize he's pulling the cord through the grille, pinning you to the bars by your throat! You struggle, but more and more of the demented prisoners grip the cord and grab at your body. Driven insane by the torments of their gaoler, they're driven into a frenzy. You squirm, red-faced, eyes bulging as they choke the life out of you while laughing like madmen! One of the fiends manages to steal your sword from its scabbard and thrusts it through the bars into your back killing you. Your trust has sealed your fate and ultimately cost you your life here. You've failed in your mission...

84

Carrying along the silent corridor, the passageway dips down at a sharper angle and up ahead you hear running water. Soon you come to a shallow river crossing the passageway from left to right. The river is only about a foot deep or so and disappears through low archways on either wall. Taking off your boots to keep them dry, you're forced to wade across the freezing cold water, barefooted! *Test your Luck*. If you're lucky, you reach the other side of the ford without incident. If you're unlucky, you tread on a razor-sharp, metal spike that someone has deliberately concealed under the surface of the water. Your foot is badly cut (*lose 1 Stamina point*). Reaching the other side, you put your boots back on and painfully hobble off along the corridor. The passageway rises up now and turns to the right while widening out to twice and then three times its previous width and height. Up ahead, the passageway terminates at an impressive set of closed double doors the size of a house! The wooden, ironbound doors are covered with melodramatic carving of animals and plants of all descriptions. Bears, wolves, horses and dogs are expertly carved into the wooden surface and painted in realistic colours. Two burning torches are set into iron brackets, either side of the massive portal, casting a dull light. A dozen, stone steps lead upwards; their edges stacked high with dozens of skulls of every sort, size and shape! Carefully climbing up, you approach the doors expectantly, sword in hand. Tugging on the iron ring reveals your worst fears; both are locked tight. You notice two bronze keyholes at head height. Staring up at the giant structure, you realise that no amount of battering will allow you to continue. Do you have two Bronze Keys in your backpack that you've picked up on your journey so far? If so, add the number of serpents on each Bronze Key together, multiply the result by two and turn to the corresponding reference number now. If you only possess one or neither Bronze Key, there's no way onwards (*turn to 98*)

85

The stone head remains silent and expressionless as you say the name with as much authority and confidence as you can (*turn to 66*)

86

You panic and thrash around with your sword, but to no avail. The SNAPPERFISH close in on all sides at once and furiously bite chunks of flesh from your living body! In agony, you claw frantically at the slippery stone bricks of the walls, but the SNAPPERFISH assault in relentless! Driven into a feeding frenzy, the fierce carnivores tear you to piece in minutes; forcing

their way into your body cavity to gorge on your internal organs! The water turns red with your blood as you pass out and sink beneath the surface to your doom! Soon, there'll be a lonely skeleton at the bottom of Grimbald's SNAPPERFISH pit; picked clean of flesh. Your life and adventure ends here...

87

You delicately lift up the leather cord and skilfully untie it while hardly daring to breath. The Black-Elf snorts, coughs and moves a few times, but thankfully remains deep in sleep while you relive him of his key. Holding it close to the candle light, you examine it in detail. The Bronze Key is truly crafted by a skilled locksmith. Sixteen serpents wind around its surface, interlocking with each other in an elaborate design. You carefully put it in your backpack. Turning you attention to the table, you scoop up the coins and jewels. There are 18 Gold Pieces and 12 precious diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds in total. You also pick up the playing cards too. You may take these with you if you wish. Looking around, you don't discover anything else of interest. Going back through the iron door, you return to the leather curtain and continue along the main corridor (*turn to 35*)

88

Although stunned and somewhat dazed by the attack, you survive and recover your wits swiftly thanks to the Metal Helmet you had on your head. Hoots and howls of laughter come from some creatures that imprisoned in small rooms behind iron bars on the right-hand side of the passageway. You turn you attention to a huge, muscular creature standing in the corridor in front of you. The beast is huge with warty, disfigured, brown skin. The TROLL GOALER is stripped to the waste and has an ugly face with a big nose and vicious, tusk-like teeth sticking out of its slavering mouth. You leap to your feet and reach for your sword as it roars in anger and rushes forward to finish you off with its battleaxe.

TROLL GAOLER – Skill: 9 Stamina: 9

If you survive and manage to kill the creature (*turn to 6*)

89

Aezetbur waits expectantly. However, after struggling with the riddle, you're unable to come up with the answer. "Pah! You'll need to do better than that if you're to survive in this place!"

he scowls contemptuously. With that, he uses his powers to magic away all your possessions except your sword, leather armour, lantern and clothes (*cross everything else off your Adventure Sheet*). The purple cloud becomes completely formless again and is sucked back into the golden skull. With Aezetbur's laughter ringing in your ears, you curse your bad luck for crossing the path of such a mischievous being! Finding nothing else of interest, you decide to go back the way you came. Taking hold of the rope, you begin the laborious process of hauling your way back up. *Test your Luck*. If you're lucky (*turn to 38*). If you're unlucky, as you climb, your foot hits a silken strand from one of the webs! Within a few seconds you see a disgusting creature materialize out of the gloom, heading directly for YOU! A huge spider is advancing on you; its body as big as an entire cow. Eight legs, covered in sensitive black hairs extend in all directions, making this loathsome monstrosity look even more fearsome! On its head, multiple eyes scan you hungrily and its clicking mandibles make you turn away in revulsion. The GIANT SPIDER moves in for the kill. You have no choice but to fight it or end up its next meal! Holding your lantern in your mouth, you wield your weapon in your free hand (*minus 2 from your Skill score for the duration of this battle because of your precarious position of the rope*).

GIANT SPIDER - Skill: 7 Stamina: 8

If you survive this encounter, you secure your weapon and use your aching arms to climb back up the rope and through the hole. Exhausted, you retrace your steps back to the junction. Will you:

Walk down the short passageway and examine the wooden door (*turn to 77*)

Push the chain curtain aside and go through the stone arch (*turn to 67*)

90

Putting your lantern down, you grasp the iron latch in your hand while holding your sword ready in the other. You push the door open and take a look at what's inside. Unexpectedly, you trigger a booby-trap that swings a spiked iron ball on a chain down into the doorway at head height! *Test your Luck*. If you're lucky (*turn to 8*). If you're unlucky (*turn to 65*).

91

The blow is so hard it caves in the side of your skull and breaks your neck instantly with a sickening crunch! In your last few seconds of life, you hear howls of laughter from all around in your ears. You taste the warm sensation of

blood in the back of your throat. Your vision begins to fade as a hulking, silhouetted, figure stands over you. Thankfully, you pass out just before the second blow lands; crushing your head completely. You've failed the villagers of Oakbridge and you die here never having seen the face of your attacker...

92

As you ponder on your next course of action, a plan develops in your mind. You remember that they mentioned that the meat soup in the cauldron was for their master. This can only mean the giant Grimbald himself; the tyrant who you are here to kill! You'd certainly be doing the good folk of Oakbridge a favour by poisoning Grimbald's meat soup. You hear footsteps; they're coming back! Reaching into your backpack, you retrieve the bottle of Poison and pop out the cork. Leaning over the bubbling cauldron, you pour the contents into the meat soup with a smile and stir it in with a giant spoon from one of the tables. Satisfied, you replace the spoon just they return. The ugly brutes add some salt into the mix, completely ignorant of your earlier handiwork. You watch as they then chop up nine, oversized, onions which are dropped into the cauldron too. You slip out of the door without being noticed, thanks to your Cloak of Invisibility. Heading back down the corridor; you descend the stone steps (*turn to 2*)

93

Unluckily, your aim is off! Your spear misses Grimbald's throat but hits his shoulder instead! Grimbald lets out a deafening bellow of pain as the weapon pierces his flesh and buries itself in his body! Gripping the end of the shaft, he wrenches it out with shear force and snaps it like a twig! Undaunted, you leap forward and attack him with your sword. This'll be an epic and bitter battle to the death, where only one of you will survive.

GRIMBALD THE GIANT – Skill: 9 Stamina: 18

If you survive and slay the tyrant (*turn to 81*)

94

Gasping for breath at your exertions, you wipe the blood from your sword and lean on a chair for support. Suddenly, a large, brutish creature appears at the chamber doorway. It fills the doorway completely and is covered in thick chain mail and plate armour. It has a dark grey, leathery hide and the head of a Rhinoceros with small, pig-like ears, tusks and small, beady, black

eyes. Levelling its spear at you, it snorts with contempt and lumbers across the chamber towards you in a rage. You ready yourself to fight the beast.

RHINO-MAN GUARD - Skill: 8 Stamina: 9

If you survive and slay the RHINO-MAN, you fall to your knees exhausted (*turn to 59*)

95

The stone head remains expressionless as you say the name with as much authority and confidence as you can. "Wrong!" It hisses slowly (*turn to 66*)

96

Carefully taking out your Vial of Acid, you pull out the cork and pour the entire contents over the padlock. It fizzes and smokes profusely as the strong acid swiftly dissolves the metal away, releasing the chain and hatch. Taking hold of the handle, you pull it open to reveal an unlit, narrow shaft lined with stone bricks. There's a wooden ladder that runs up and down the inside of the shaft, disappearing into the darkness. There isn't any light coming from either above or below. You decide which way to go. Will you:

Ignore the metal hatch and carry on along the passageway (*turn to 32*)

Squeeze through the metal hatch and climb up the ladder (*turn to 40*)

Squeeze through the metal hatch and climb down the ladder (*turn to 73*)

97

You approach the door and examine it closely; it's big and heavy with rows of large iron rivets around the edges. Halfway up the door on the right-hand side, just below the ring handle, is a large keyhole. The door is most securely locked and is so tough as to be impossible to break down. Do you have an Iron Key (*turn to 41*). Otherwise, you're forced to abandon your investigation of the iron door and continue up the corridor (*turn to 18*)

98

You slump down on the cold stone steps in total despair; burying your head in your hands. There's no way of advancing to achieve your goal. As you can't progress, you'll have to turn back and take your chances trying to find another way out. Maybe you'll be able to evade Grimbald's chaotic dungeon minions to survive

and try again tomorrow night. But that's a different story altogether. For the time being, you've failed in your quest...

99

Searching the dusty chamber, you find many weapons in a bad state of repair. Many are old, rusty and broken! After a determined examination, you find only three objects that could be of use to you. You find a Chain Mail Coat (*add 1 to your Attack Strength when in battle*), a Crossbow with four bolts (*at the beginning of a battle, you can fire one crossbow bolt at one enemy by testing your Skill. Roll two dice. If your role higher than your current Skill score, you miss. If your role equal to or below your current Skill score, you hit your opponent with a crossbow bolt causing 3 Stamina points of damage*) and a Metal Helmet. You may take some or all of these with you if you wish. Before you go, your lantern light scans the wall illuminating some writing. The words etched into the stone wall read 'To enter the Master's inner lair, seek out the Genie they call Aezetbur'. You think about the significance of this for a few moments before deciding to push on. Leaving the armoury, you go back through the archway, climb back up the ladder and go through the metal hatch. Back in the corridor, you carry on along the passageway (*turn to 32*)

100

Staggering out into the gorge beyond the cavern, you allow yourself to relax after your trial. Finding a small river in the hills, you take your time bathing and quenching your thirst before bandaging your wounds. In high spirits, you set off for Oakbridge to tell them about your victory. Your journey is uneventful, except for a few peasants travelling the country tracks. By the time you reach Oakbridge, you're tired and hungry. The inhabitants are overjoyed at seeing you again and rally around! As word spreads, more down their ploughs and come running in from the fields to see the local hero. They cheer with relief when you tell them that Grimbald the Giant is no more! Showering you with applause, they insist you stay with them. Food and drink is brought in by the joyous townsfolk from the surrounding villages and you all celebrate heartily through the night. You amaze and astound them long into the evening with stories; your epic battles, escapes and daring adventures underground. Grimbald's golden signet ring alone means you'll live in comfort for many years to come. As the merriment ends and you slip into a soft bed for the night, you're asleep as soon as your head hits the pillow. You rest easy after a job well done!