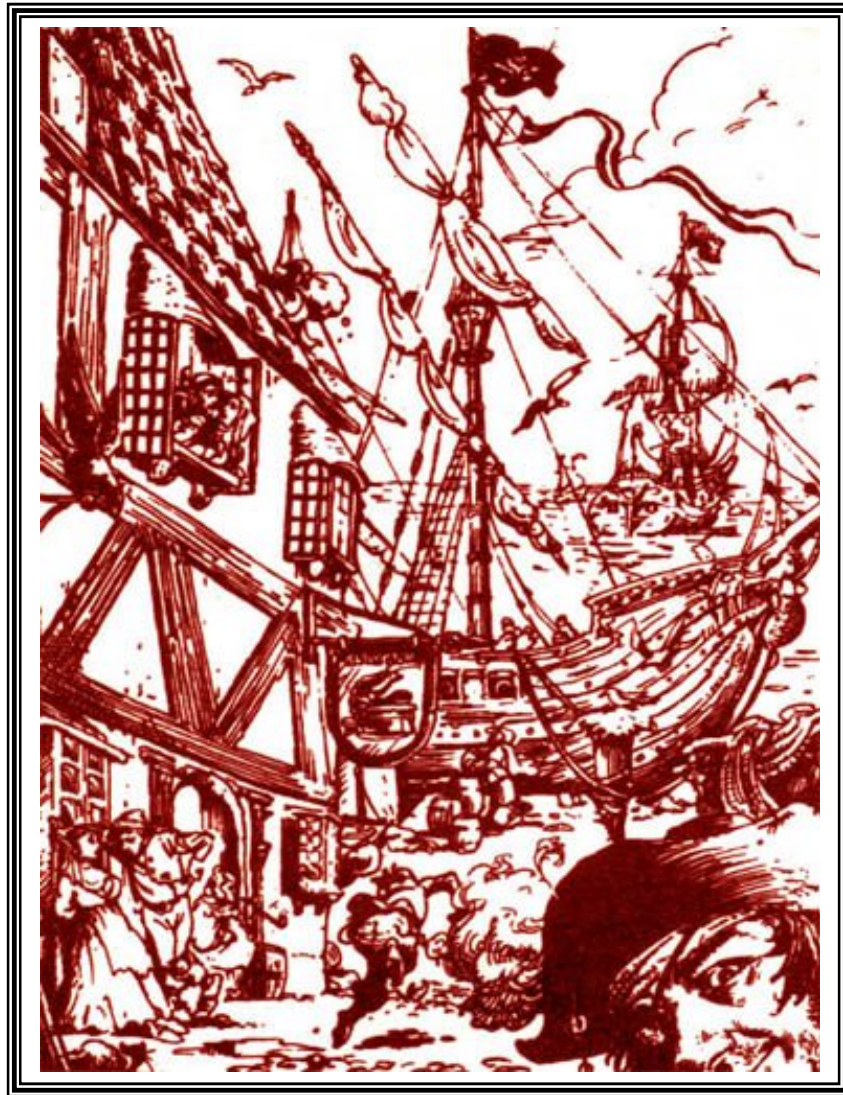


# The Black Lobster

BY ANDREW WRIGHT



This illustration of Lobster Wharf and the Black Lobster Tavern is copyright © Iain McCaig, 1983, and comes from the book *City of Thieves* which is copyright © Ian Livingstone, 1983.

# The Black Lobster

*A Day in the Life of Halron Allierté*

Two dice, a pencil and an eraser are all you need to embark on this exciting adventure, which comes complete with its own combat system and an adventure sheet to record your progress. It is up to YOU to decide which routes to follow, which dangers to risk, and which foes to fight!

Big thanks to the Oiseau/Martin Charbonneau for his Advelh software – use it to write YOUR next interactive gamebook adventure!

Big thanks to Edward T. Jolley for rehashing the Background section into something based more on solid fact than hazy recollection. In addition, Ed's adventure *The Great Blacksand Robbery* has proved a fantastic source of inspiration for this adventure.

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## INTRODUCTION

You are about to take the lead role in an adventure that will make you quite a legend, and in more ways than one. Before you take part in this quest, you must first determine your own strengths and weaknesses. You use dice to work out your initial scores. On page 11 is an *Adventure Sheet*, which you may use to record details of your adventure. On it, you will find boxes for recording your SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK scores, as well as other details. You are advised either to record your scores on the *Adventure Sheet* in pencil or to make photocopies of the sheet for use in future adventures. Take note that you begin this adventure as Halron Allierté, permanently half-drunk barman of the Black Lobster Tavern, in the north-western Allansian city of Port Blacksand, and your SKILL and STAMINA score are generated a little differently to other *Fighting Fantasy* gamebooks!

### Skill, Stamina and Luck

Roll one die. If you rolled a 1 or 2, your *Initial* SKILL score is 7. If you roll a 3 or 4, your *Initial* SKILL score is 8. If you roll a 5 or 6, your *Initial* SKILL score is 9. Enter your *Initial* SKILL score in the SKILL box on the *Adventure Sheet*.

Roll one die. (Yes, that's right! Roll one die – this is not an error.) Add 6 to the number rolled and enter this total in the STAMINA box. This is your *Initial* STAMINA score.

Roll one die. Add 6 to the number and enter this total in the LUCK box. This is your *Initial* LUCK score.

For reasons that will be explained below, all your scores will change constantly during the adventure. You must keep an accurate record of these scores, and for this reason, you are advised to write small in the boxes or to keep an eraser handy. However, never rub out your *Initial* scores, except on those very rare occasions when the text specifically tells you so.

Although you may be rewarded with additional SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK points, these totals may never exceed your *Initial* scores, except on very rare occasions, when you will be instructed specifically to do so on a particular page.

Your SKILL reflects your general expertise in fighting and combat; the higher the better. Your STAMINA score reflects your general constitution, your overall will to survive, your determination and overall fitness; the higher your STAMINA score, the longer you will be able to survive. Your LUCK score indicates how naturally lucky a person you are. Luck – and magic – are facts of life in the fantasy world you are about to explore.

## Battles

During your adventure, you will often come across pages in the book, which instruct you to fight a creature or opponent of some sort. An option to flee may be given, but if not – or if you choose to attack the creature anyway – you must resolve the battle as described below.

First, record the opponent's SKILL and STAMINA scores in the first empty Encounter box on your *Adventure Sheet*. The scores for each opponent or creature are given in the book each time you have an encounter. You should also make a note of any special abilities or instructions, which are unique to that particular opponent.

The sequence of combat is then:

1. Roll two dice for your opponent. Add its SKILL score. This total is the opponent's Attack Strength.
2. Roll two dice for yourself. Add the number rolled to your current SKILL score. This total is your Attack Strength.
3. If your Attack Strength is higher than your opponent's is, you have wounded it. Proceed to step 4. If your opponent's Attack Strength is higher than yours is, it has wounded you. Proceed to step 5. If both Attack Strength totals are the same, you have avoided each other's blows – start the next Attack Round from steps 1 above.
4. You have wounded your opponent; so subtract 2 points from its STAMINA score. You may use LUCK here to do additional damage (see below). Proceed to step 6.
5. Your opponent has wounded you; so subtract 2 points from your STAMINA score. You may use LUCK to reduce the loss of STAMINA (see below). Proceed to step 6.
6. Make the appropriate adjustments to either your opponents or your own STAMINA scores (and your LUCK score if you used LUCK – see below).
7. Begin the next Attack Round, starting again at step 1 with your current SKILL score. This sequence continues until the STAMINA score of either you or your opponent reaches zero (death). If your opponent dies, you are free to continue with your adventure. If you die, your adventure ends and you must start all over again by creating a new character.

## Escaping

On some pages you may be given the option of running away from a battle should things be going badly for you. However, if you do run away, your opponent automatically gets in one wound on you (subtract 2 STAMINA points) as you flee. Such is the price of cowardice! Note that you may use LUCK on this wound in the normal way (see below). You may only *Escape* if that option is specifically given to you on the page.

## Luck

At various times during your adventure, either in battles or when you come across other situations in which you could either be *Lucky* or *Unlucky* (details of these are given in the relevant pages themselves), you may use LUCK to make the outcome more favourable to you. However, beware! Using LUCK is a risky business and, if you are *Unlucky*, the results could be disastrous.

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

This procedure is known as *Testing your Luck*. Each time you *Test your Luck*, you must subtract 1 point from your current LUCK score. Thus, you will soon realise that, the more you rely on your LUCK, the more risky this procedure will become.

### *Using Luck in Battles*

On certain pages of the book, you will be told to *Test your Luck*, and will be told the consequences of your being *Lucky* or *Unlucky*. However, in battles you always have the option of using your LUCK either to inflict more serious damage on an opponent you have just wounded or to minimise the effects of a wound you have just received.

If you have just wounded an opponent, you may *Test your Luck* as described above. If you are *Lucky*, you have inflicted a severe wound; deduct an extra 2 points from your opponent's STAMINA score. However, if you are *Unlucky*, however, your blow only scratches your opponent, and you deduct only 1 point from your opponent's STAMINA (instead of scoring the normal 2 points of damage, you now only score 1).

Whenever you yourself are wounded in combat, you may *Test your Luck* to try to minimise the wound. If you are *Lucky*, your opponent's blow only grazes you; deduct only 1 point from your STAMINA. If you are *Unlucky*, your wound is a serious one and you must deduct 1 extra STAMINA point (i.e., a total of 3 points from your own STAMINA). Remember: you must subtract 1 point from your LUCK score each time you *Test your Luck*.

## More about your Attributes

### *Skill*

Your SKILL score will not change much during the course of your adventure. Occasionally a paragraph may give you instructions to increase or decrease your SKILL score, but it may not exceed its *Initial* value unless you are specifically instructed to the contrary.

At various times during your adventure, you will be told to *Test your Skill*. The procedure for this is the same as that for *Testing your Luck*: roll two dice. If the number rolled is less than or equal to your current SKILL score, you have succeeded in

your test and the result will go in your favour. If the number rolled is higher than your current SKILL score, you have failed the test and will have to suffer the consequences. However, unlike *Testing your Luck*, do not subtract 1 point from your SKILL each time you *Test your Skill*. Your SKILL score can never exceed its *Initial* value unless specifically instructed on a page.

### *Stamina*

Your STAMINA score will change a lot during your adventure. It will drop because of wounds received through combat, or by falling foul of traps and pitfalls; and it will drop after you perform any particularly arduous task. If your STAMINA score ever falls to zero or below, you have been killed and should stop reading the book immediately. Brave adventurers who wish to pursue their quest must roll up a new character and start all over again.

You can restore lost STAMINA by eating meals and sleeping. More details about eating and sleeping are given below.

### *Luck*

Additions to your LUCK score may be awarded in the adventure when you have been particularly lucky or created your own luck by some other action. Details are given, where appropriate, in the paragraphs of the book. Remember that, as with SKILL and STAMINA, your LUCK score may never exceed its *Initial* value unless specifically instructed on a page.

## **Eating and Sleeping**

You can eat a meal at any stage of the adventure, except during combat. Each time you eat a meal, cross the meal off your *Adventure Sheet* and restore 3 STAMINA points to your STAMINA total, though you cannot of course exceed your *Initial* STAMINA score. You may also get the opportunity to sleep at some stage in the adventure. This also restores lost STAMINA and you will be instructed by the text as to how much you should restore at the time.

## **Equipment**

Although you start with a bare minimum of equipment, you may find or buy various objects during the course of your adventure. As you can see from the *Adventure Sheet* on page 11, there are two large boxes labelled ‘Equipment’ and ‘Strongbox’. Anything valuable, such as Gold Pieces, gems, and jewellery, are recorded in the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*. This represents the funds available to you as boss of the Black Lobster. All other items, whether they be mundane or magical, are recorded in the Equipment section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

You start the adventure with the following:

- A sword (note this in the Equipment section).
- 2-7 Gold Pieces (roll one die and add one to the result – note this number of Gold Pieces in the Strongbox section).
- 2 meals (note these in the Equipment section).

## **Your Strongbox and the Passing of Time**

This adventure is split into five chapters concerning different times of a typical day at the Black Lobster Tavern. At the start of each of these chapters, except the first, you will be told to roll a die or two dice (or possibly more) and add the result to the number of Gold Pieces in the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*. This crudely represents money spent by visiting customers and patrons of the Black Lobster.

At certain times you may wish to bribe somebody or purchase something. This is dependent on the amount of funds available to you. This is known as your Strongbox total, and is equal to the total number of Gold Pieces recorded in the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet* plus the value in Gold Pieces of any items recorded there. For example – if your Strongbox contains 8 Gold Pieces and a red jewel (worth 10 Gold Pieces), you have funds of 18 Gold Pieces (10 + 8) available to you.

### **Hints on Play**

This adventure is dangerous. You might well fail on your first attempt. Make notes as you explore – this will prove invaluable when making further forays in this adventure, and it will enable you to progress more rapidly to new sections. Remember: when you are travelling through any environment, it is a good idea to make a note of where such encounters lie in the adventure, including useful objects and information to aid you on your dangerous quest.

Be wary about *Testing your Luck*, unless a paragraph instructs you to do this! When it comes to fights, you should *Test your Luck* only to keep yourself alive if an opponent's blow would otherwise kill you. However, be warned! If you decide to use LUCK in this way, be certain your adversary is worth it – LUCK points are precious!

You start this mission with very few possessions, but will be given opportunities to collect food, weapons, and items. However, choose your equipment carefully – although many are precious or magical, others are red herrings and of no real value at all.

You will soon realise that paragraphs make no sense if read in numerical order. It is essential that you read only the paragraphs you are instructed to go to. Reading other sections lessens the excitement and surprise during play. The only true way to succeed in this adventure involves minimal risk; even if your character scores are low, you should be able to find magical artefacts and weapons that may increase your chances of victory in battle.



## BACKGROUND

*“Beware Blacksand ... an open sore on a dying leper! Even those who dwell there call it ‘the City of Thieves’, for it attracts every pirate, brigand, assassin, thief and evil-doer for hundreds of leagues around. Danger lurks in every corner of every street, as the strong prey on the weak, and the weak prey on one another.”*

*“A typical inn: ‘the Black Lobster’ in Port Blacksand. The ‘Black Lobster’ is a renowned dockland inn, much frequented by pirate crews and their captains. It is owned by ‘Laughing’ Guidon Allierté, who also owns two taverns in Rimon, and three in Halak, further down the coast. As a result, ‘the Black Lobster’ is left to itself most of the time, run by a succession of barmen under the watchful eye of Allierté’s nephew, Halron, who is more concerned with drinking the profits than making them! The Allierté family have owned taverns in Allansia for many years, and they have built up strong ties with several pirate captains, who always bring their custom to Allierté’s joints when in port.*

*‘The Black Lobster’ is a typical city tavern, with a single average-sized bar and a number of small booths. Its rooms are filthy and bug-ridden, but at least they are not shared with other guests, and they are not overpriced at 1 Gold Piece a night. The bar serves a number of local ales and spirits, as well as seamen’s grog made from cane sugar all the way from Arantis. Its clientele is invariably half pirate and half adventurer (often looking for passage on a pirate ship).”*

Mh’ark Ghazcoin, *Titan: The Wide and Dangerous World*, 284 AC, the Year of the Fox, Salamonis: Scrolls from the Halls of Learning.

YOU are Halron Allierté, nephew of ‘Laughing’ Guidon Allierté, and overseer of The Black Lobster. In all honesty, you’ve probably been running the tavern for far longer than you’d care to admit, however, there are certainly worse jobs available in Port Blacksand. The perks of the job are not too bad either, and as long as you are not too greedy or noticeable in skimming the profits to fund your continual drunkenness, then you are also safe from the legendary ire of your uncle Guidon.

Besides, the tavern has a violent reputation, and few barmen work here long enough to discover your frequent trawls through the Strongbox in search of drinking funds. Those barmen that do find out generally keep well quiet about it, lest they wind up on the wrong end of a sword during one of The Black Lobster’s nightly tavern brawls. The very smartest barmen leave town immediately...

One night however, things took a sudden lurch into troubled waters. The great Allansian hero Chadda Darkmane had been entrusted with a quest by the wizard Yaztromo. This was to stop the evil sorcerer known as Malbordus the Storm Child, before the latter acquired five mysterious dragon artefacts from the ruins of the Lost City of Vatos, deep within the windswept sands of the Desert of Skulls.

All very impressive, but of what relevance to a simple dockside tavern in Port Blacksand?

The problem lay with Chadda Darkmane, who, en route to Vatos, passed through Port Blacksand and the Black Lobster. Darkmane was looking for passage on a ship heading south, and bribed you to introduce him to Gargo, first mate on the pirate vessel known as the *Belladonna*. After Gargo left to notify the *Belladonna*'s captain, one of the Black Lobster's frequent brawls started up, during which Chadda Darkmane slew a gunner from the very same ship – the *Belladonna*. You reported the death to the first mate Gargo, but neglected to identify the killer – after all, you had just taken his gold. How were you to know that Chadda Darkmane would then betray the *Belladonna* to a Dwarven man-o-war whilst sailing along the Skull Coast?

Regardless, the *Belladonna* and her captain were of some standing in the complex hierarchy of the southern pirates. Your act of carelessness in not identifying Chadda Darkmane as the killer, making it easier for him to infiltrate and betray the ship, was considered highly treasonous by the leadership of the Pirate Coast. Pressure was brought to bear on your uncle Guidon to send somebody north to Port Blacksand to keep an eye on you, in the event of any further traitorous behaviour on your part. That somebody was Thord Death-Dealer – barman, bouncer, freelance thug, and paid-up member of the Brotherhood of the Knife, known to all as the Guild of Assassins. Should you mess it up again, he will thus be your executioner...

Thord Death-Dealer was originally a northerner from the Dragon Reaches – a lithe, compact, scar-faced warrior – who had been working for your uncle for years, in various capacities, and he scares you worse than any Demon. Since he started working at The Black Lobster, the roles have been reversed with him the overseer and you the barman. Although you still have some degree of control over the contents of the Strongbox, you dare not complain about the new division of labour, in case Thord should report your drunken over-spending to Guidon.

Further complicating events has been the arrival of the new Cook, a member of the weird race known only as FLAYERS – bizarre humanoids with a jellyfish-like head (from which dangle numerous claw-tipped tentacles), no arms, and a sullen and occasionally hostile personality. You suspect Thord hired him, after the old cook mysteriously disappeared, but Thord claims innocence in the matter. There is no denying the new Cook is capable, it's just that you find his appearance rather disturbing...

Lastly, The Black Lobster Tavern employs three serving wenches named Raetha, Laksi, and Oon-Mai. Since Thord's arrival however, they have further scaled back their working hours, and sometimes whole days can pass without any of them making an appearance.

This is the current unhappy state of play at The Black Lobster Tavern. Dare YOU step into Halron's shoes?

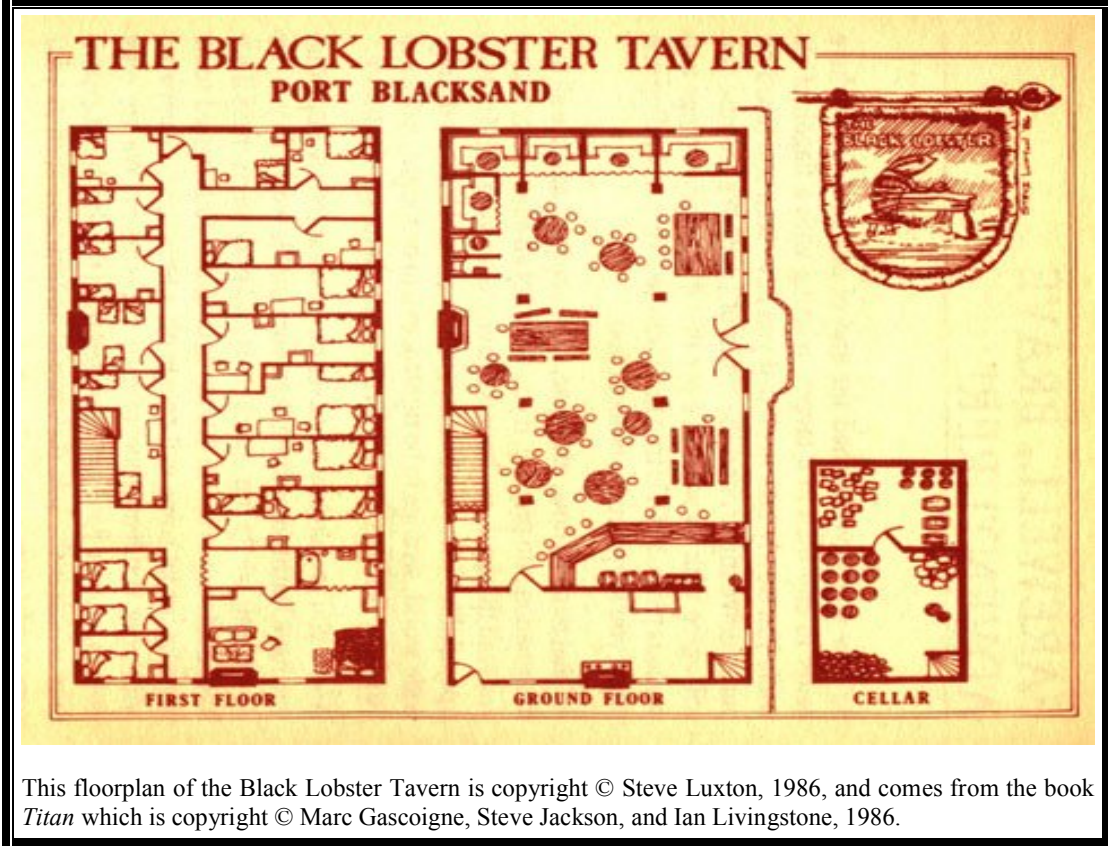
**NOW TURN OVER**

## HALRON ALLIERTÉ

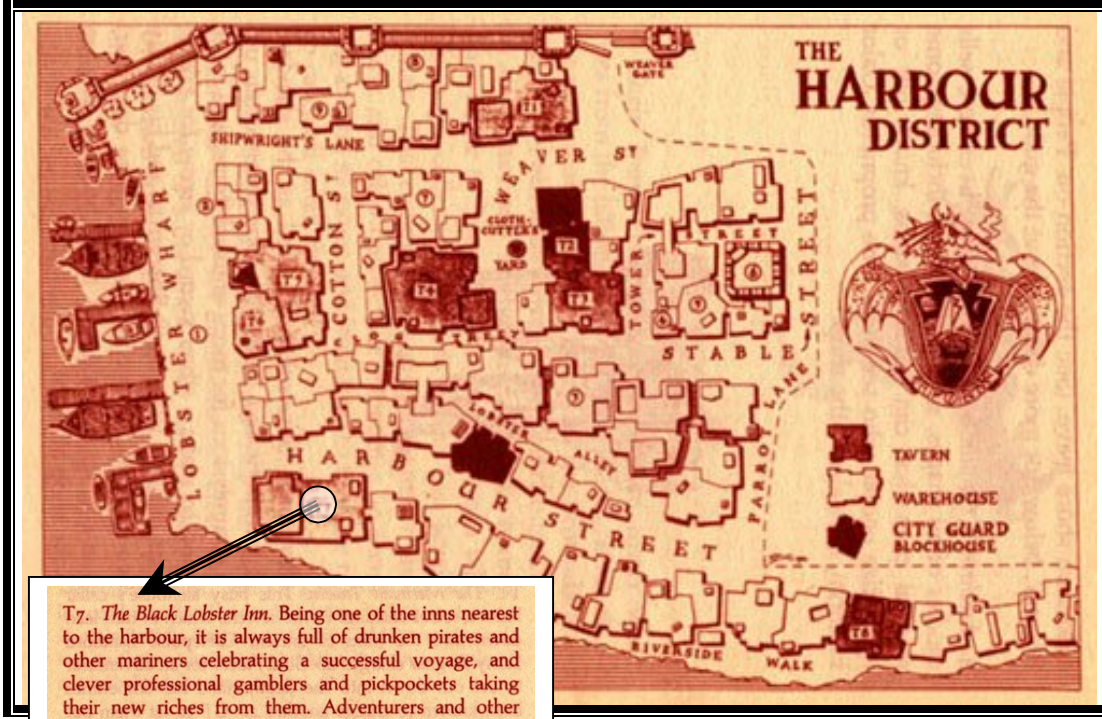
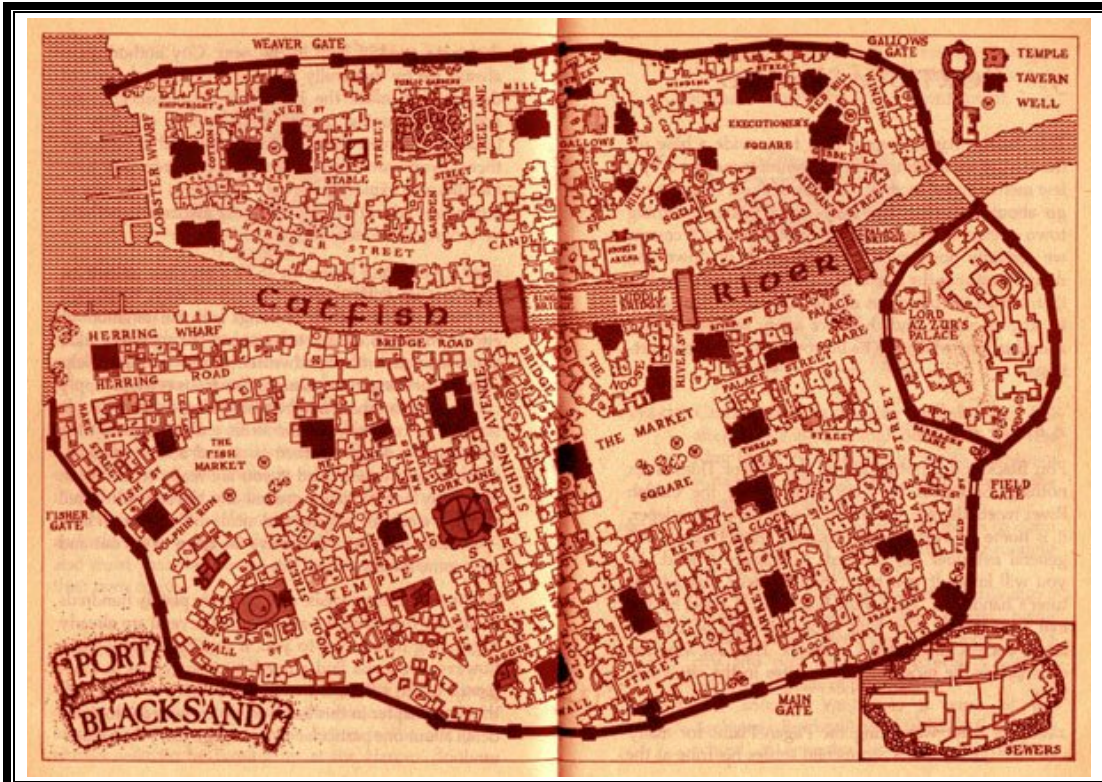
<b>SKILL</b> <i>Initial=</i> <i>Current=</i>	<b>STAMINA</b> <i>Initial=</i> <i>Current=</i>	<b>LUCK</b> <i>Initial=</i> <i>Current=</i>
<b>EQUIPMENT</b>	<b>STRONGBOX</b>	

<i>Skill=</i> <i>Stamina=</i>	<i>Skill=</i> <i>Stamina=</i>	<i>Skill=</i> <i>Stamina=</i>
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This floorplan of the Black Lobster Tavern is copyright © Steve Luxton, 1986, and comes from the book *Titan* which is copyright © Marc Gascoigne, Steve Jackson, and Ian Livingstone, 1986.



T7. *The Black Lobster Inn*. Being one of the inns nearest to the harbour, it is always full of drunken pirates and other mariners celebrating a successful voyage, and clever professional gamblers and pickpockets taking their new riches from them. Adventurers and other travellers looking for passage to other lands are also regular customers. The permanently half-drunk landlord, Halron Allierté, is only a temporary manager, looking after the inn for its owner, his uncle Guidon, who also owns places in Rimon and Halak. There is a floorplan of the Black Lobster, together with further notes, in *Titan*. (Poor quality.)

All maps and text on this page are taken from the book *Blacksand!*, and copyright © Marc Gascoigne & Pete Tamlyn, (text), Steve Luxton (maps), and Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone (concept), 1990.

1

**CHAPTER ONE – BREAKFAST AT ALLIERTÉ’S**

Another day, another Dragon, as they say in Port Blacksand, where your lifeblood is measured in gold coins bearing Lord Azzur’s coat-of-arms on one side, and a fire-breathing monster on the other.

Woken well after sunrise, by the cries of time-challenged roosters from nearby Lobster Alley, you struggle from your filthy pallet, unsuccessfully attempt to wash away yet another hangover with the urn of cold water in your room, and shrug on a set of stained clothes. Shambling downstairs, you immediately face a scene of utter devastation: the bar! It’s a complete mess, and since neither Thord nor the wenches have yet to show up, cleaning duty falls on your tired shoulders.

You know the Cook is here though – the stench of him preparing breakfast is already creeping under the kitchen door and infiltrating your nostrils. However, the thought of roping in some tentacled monstrosity to help wipe away the excesses of last night does not agree with you, so you grab a stray mop and begin to clean up.

A while later, the front door has been opened, a few early punters have popped in for ‘a quick one’, and the Cook has stuck his jelly-like face around the kitchen door to hand you a plate of greasy eggs and a stale loaf of bread. You wash this wholesome repast down with the carefully collected dregs of last night’s ale. Life does not get much better than this!

Afterwards, there’s not a lot to do – the wenches and Thord are still absent – so you concentrate on the customers. Several look worthy of hassling for a round of ale or more. At the bar are two adventurers – a bearded man in scraps of plate armour, and a braided-haired woman in a scruffy leather jerkin – whose air of forced bravery easily gives their profession away. Sitting at a table is a rat-nosed individual that you possibly think could be a pirate, judging by the rusty cutlass shoved through a scarlet sash at his waist. Finally, lurking drunkenly in one of the booths is a mysterious figure clad in a hooded vermilion robe, edged with golden trim. You suspect it may be a wizard...

Who will you bother?

The adventurers

turn to **27**

The pirate

turn to **56**

The wizard

turn to **42**

2

You try to blend in with the walls whilst all around you heads are cracked and furniture smashed. A Bay is hurled screaming through the air past you and out a window. Nearby a pirate keels over shrieking, clutching his kneecaps where they have been shattered by a grinning Bay wielding a bloody cudgel. The fight is showing no signs of stopping soon and clearly something has to be done. What will you do?

If you want to join the brawl and get stuck in, turn to **22**. If, however, you decide the whole situation is best avoided and head upstairs for some sleep, turn instead to **55**.

3

To the general disgust of most of your customers – some of whom go as far as paying up and leaving – you invite the adventurer and his skeletal entourage into the Black Lobster. The adventurer, who calls himself Tristram of Jitar, shows he is not ungrateful by giving you three large and ancient-looking gold coins, which more than

covers the cost of the three ales you serve him.

‘Taken from the hoard of a Sea Dragon,’ says Tristram, when he sees you eyeing the coins dubiously.

The coins are genuine however – you bite them surreptitiously to check – and worth a little more than the standard Blacksand Gold Piece. Note the “old coins (worth 6 Gold Pieces)” on the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

Tristram then spins an entertaining yarn about his undead minions, concerning ancient sorcery, the sunken city of Atlantis, and a mysterious wizard known only as Greylock, not to mention a Sea Dragon, the Kraken, Merfolk, and sundry other denizens of the deep. By the end of it, even your most hardened regulars are listening in, entranced by the tale.

Eventually however, the adventurer leaves, taking his Skeletons with him. Turn to **24**.

#### 4

Your last blow sends the Dwarf crashing senseless to the floor of the kitchen. Yelling at the Cook to help you, the two of you dump the body out in the back alley, though not before looting it of valuables. The Cook then bolts the back door and shoves a few crates in front of it, clearly not wanting to take chances.

Your share of the loot comes to 3 Gold Pieces (add these to the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*) and the Dwarf’s rune-inscribed axe. It is a magical Axe of Troll-Slaying! If you use it to fight any opponents named specifically as TROLLS then you may add 1 to your Attack Strength for the duration of the battle. In addition, the Axe of Troll-Slaying will cause an extra 1 point of STAMINA damage for every successful hit you inflict on your TROLL opponent. Note the Axe of Troll-Slaying and its abilities on the Equipment section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

Typically, Thord has not even bothered to come to see what the all the noise was about. If you have not already done so, you may go and see what Thord Death-Dealer is up to at the bar, in which case turn to **31**. Alternatively, you may decide to take a nap after your exertions here – turn to **45** if you favour this choice. Finally, you can always wait until evening by turning to **36**.

#### 5

You attempt to bribe the Trolls with up to ten Gold Pieces from your Strongbox. Cross them off the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

‘That’s pathetic!’ says the first Troll, spitting on the floor. ‘Whaddya think, Rotgut?’

‘I say kill him, Yellowfang,’ Rotgut replies evenly.

Yellowfang looks pained. ‘Excuse my companion here, and his blunt speech,’ he says. ‘What he means is: you have a short sharp talk with me and mister axe.’

Both Trolls advance towards you, hefting their battle-axes with frightening ease. Thord quickly hands you your weapon from behind the bar, before drawing his own sword from its scabbard. What will you do?

Fight the Trolls

turn to **38**

Flee, out through the kitchen

turn to **49**

#### 6

You try to order the Trolls out, but the first Troll merely flexes ill-constrained muscles under his leather armour.

‘That doesn’t sound very promising,’ he says ominously, before gesturing at

the second Troll. ‘Whaddya think, Rotgut?’

‘I say kill him, Yellowfang,’ Rotgut replies evenly.

Yellowfang looks pained. ‘Excuse my companion here, and his blunt speech,’ he says. ‘What he means is: you have a short sharp talk with me and mister axe.’

Both Trolls advance towards you, hefting their battle-axes with frightening ease. Thord quickly hands you your weapon from behind the bar, before drawing his own sword from its scabbard. What will you do?

Fight the Trolls

turn to **38**

Flee, out through the kitchen

turn to **49**

## 7

Stirk casts the Enhance spell, mumbling in a low monotone, accompanied by seemingly random finger gestures. Suddenly, there is a faint sound like a buffalo breaking wind in the distance, and a subtle but nevertheless foul odour begins to permeate the air of the Black Lobster. As one, the customers peer suspiciously at one another, but when the odour fails to dissipate, they rapidly drink up and leave the premises.

Stirk has miscast the spell! Evidently he has misplaced an important incantation in his drunken stupor. This will have a serious effect on the Black Lobster for the remainder of the day. From now on, whenever you are instructed to roll a die, or two dice, and add the result to your Strongbox, you must halve the dice result (rounding all fractions up) before doing so. So, if the text told you to roll two dice, and the total was 7, you would halve it to 3.5, round it up to 4, and add 4 Gold Pieces to your Adventure Sheet, instead of 7. Note this penalty on your *Adventure Sheet*: “Halve all Strongbox income from now on (rounding fractions up)”. In any case, you bundle the incompetent sorcerer out of the Black Lobster before he can instigate further mischief against you.

If Stirk Cuckling is the second customer you have talked to this morning (i.e. you have already talked to the adventurers prior to talking to Stirk), turn immediately to **12**.

If Stirk Cuckling is the first customer you have talked to this morning, then you can now talk to the adventurers, as the pirate has already left the Black Lobster. Turn to **27**.

## 8

You approach the pirate’s table. His pet monkey, having successfully downed a pint, is dozing under a nearby chair. You recognise the pirate as Hesolute, a member of the crew of the notorious Captain Blackskar. Blackskar is a pirate chieftain who normally launches raids on merchant ships from his base on Fire Island to the south.

‘Alright, Hesolute?’ you inquire, carefully avoiding the drunken monkey. ‘Where’s Blackskar and the rest?’

‘Out and about, Halron,’ he says nonchalantly. ‘Ere, need a bit of gold to visit the lovely ladies later tonight. ‘Ow ‘bout I sell you this monkey for a Gold Piece? Be an amusing addition to the Lobster, it will!’

You’re not so sure. From what you can see, it’s a fairly strange monkey – squat, yet powerfully built, with short black hair, red-orange eyes rolling drunkenly in their sockets, and a mouthful of sharp teeth. It also lacks a tail.

If you want to buy Hesolute’s monkey, deduct one Gold Piece from the Strongbox section on your *Adventure Sheet*, and turn to immediately to **58**.

If you’d rather not, Hesolute leaves the Black Lobster, dragging the inebriated

beast along behind him. If you have now already talked to two people this noon-time, turn immediately to **16**.

If Hesolute is the first person you have talked to, then, although you see that Vhelrekh the City Guardsman has left the Black Lobster, you may talk to somebody else. Who?

Raetha the serving wench	turn to <b>23</b>
Vartan the Swordsman	turn to <b>44</b>
The Cook	turn to <b>37</b>
The purple-clad merchant	turn to <b>19</b>

## 9

You wander into the kitchen to see the Cook at the back door, engaged in a heated argument with a Dwarf.

‘Thank Kerillim!’ says the Dwarf with feeling, upon seeing you. ‘A human! I’ve had it up to here with this walking jellyfish!’

The Cook doesn’t like this but he moves aside to let you talk to the Dwarf, who looks quite officious, wearing an expensive cloak and small eye-glasses perched on the end of a long nose. A rune-carved battle-axe hangs loosely from his belt.

‘I am led to believe,’ says the Dwarf, consulting a scrawled parchment in one hand. ‘That you owe the wholesaler Ganga of Mirewater 15 Gold Pieces for a small keg of Skullbuster spirits you ordered recently.’

‘Huh?’ you gape incredulously. ‘This is no Dwarf drinking house. I ordered no Skullbuster!’

The Dwarf frowns in annoyance.

‘I don’t really care. This parchment says you owe 15 Gold Pieces, and the seal on it never lies,’ he says, showing you an official-looking stamp mark. ‘Pay up now! Since I never threaten, I will not mention the alternative.’

What will you do?

Pay the Dwarf 15 Gold Pieces (If you have it and wish to pay)	turn to <b>21</b>
Suffer the alternative (If you do not have or do not wish to pay 15 Gold Pieces)	turn to <b>50</b>

## 10

Quickly, you shoulder-charge the Dwarf out the back door, and, yelling for the Cook to help you, slam it shut. The Cook then bolts it and piles on a few crates, clearly not wanting to take chances.

There is a loud *whack* as the Dwarf attempts to put his axe through the door in sheer frustration. Clearly however, he does not want to damage the weapon’s blade, and, after a few muffled Dwarf curses, he departs.

If you have not already done so, you may go and see what Thord Death-Dealer is up to at the bar, in which case turn to **31**. Alternatively, you may decide to take a nap after your exertions here – turn to **45** if you favour this choice. Finally, you can always wait until evening by turning to **36**.

## 11

The Skeletons collapse in a tangle of shattered bones. Quickly, before the customers begin sheepishly emerging from under tables and behind booth curtains, you collect the four black pearls that were the Skeletons’ eyes. Note “four black pearls (worth 10 Gold Pieces)” on the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*. Of the adventurer,



and his cutlass-brandishing undead bodyguards, there is no sign. Turn to **24**.

## 12

### **CHAPTER TWO – THE [NECROTIC] LUNCH** **(LIVE, AT THE BLACK LOBSTER)**

Roll one die. This represents the number of Gold Pieces spent by customers at the Black Lobster this morning. Add this number to the number of Gold Pieces already written in the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

By noon, things are approaching an evenish keel, and there's yet to be any repercussions from this morning's weirdness. The place is nearly full with a lunch-time crowd, and there are more than a few lone drinkers to talk to, or cadge drinks from.

Your nemesis Thord Death-Dealer has yet to appear, but Raetha, one of the Lobster's serving wenches, has grabbed a booth, and, when not serving, rests behind a filthy curtain swilling grog. In addition, the Cook has abandoned the kitchen for a break and now lurks at the far end of the bar, one tentacle firmly entwined around a big mug of ale. You'd like to order him back into the kitchen to work, but the last time you did that, it took weeks to recover from the welts caused by his venomous claws.

At the other end of the bar sits Vhelrekh, a City Guardsman resplendent in polished black leather armour, and enjoying a small measure of Holdgut's Special Blue ale before returning to duty. Nearby, a crusty pirate you vaguely recognise, is sitting at a table teaching his pet monkey how to drink beer. At another table, staring moodily into space, is Vartan, a muscular swordsman with a grudge.

Lastly, and strangely, one booth holds a fat merchant in purple robes with ermine trim, enjoying an expensive bottle of one of your finest spirits. The only reason none of the regular scoundrels are disturbing him, is that his two hefty Southerner Strongarms, stationed immediately outside the booth, look entirely too menacing to disturb. However, you run this place, by Fourga! If anyone can make an exception and talk to the merchant, it has to be you, right?

To whom will you approach?

Raetha the serving wench

turn to **23**

The Cook

turn to **37**

Vhelrekh, the City Guardsman

turn to **51**

Vartan the Swordsman

turn to **44**

The pirate with the monkey

turn to **8**

The purple-clad merchant

turn to **19**

## 13

You move quickly to the bar to see what Thord has to say. Whispering behind his hand, he tells you that the Bays arrived recently, and are apparently mid-way through a pub-crawl following some improbable victory at the Sports Arena.

'And the pirates?' you ask.

'They just disembarked from their ship, the *Blood Auk*. I don't think Kullion and his crew appreciate the Bays being here...' Suddenly, he breaks off from his explanation, staring at the Bays' table with widening eyes.

One of the Bays is giving a demonstration of Bays' Ball technique using a wooden stick and a small leather ball. He tosses the ball up into the air and hits it with the stick, causing it to arc gracefully through the air until landing in Kullion's full

tankard, spraying the pirates with ale and foam! As one, they rise from their table, draw their weapons and charge at the Bays, howling in fury.

Brawl time! The Black Lobster erupts into chaos as tables are overturned and weapons drawn. If you want to join the brawl and get stuck in, turn to **22**. If you want hang back and see what happens, turn instead to **2**.

#### 14

You try to calm Raitharve down. ‘Look,’ you say to her. ‘It was a joke, right. In this town you have to pay people to get good advice. You never paid me!’

At your words, she lowers the sword, and the green flames surrounding it quietly flicker and fade. This is encouraging.

‘You’re right,’ she says. ‘I’m too new at this. If I pay you gold now, can you tell me who might turn Melric back into a man?’

You give a relieved nod, and she removes a ring from her hand and throws it towards you. Add “gold ring (worth 3 Gold Pieces)” to the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

‘As I see it, you have three options,’ you tell Raitharve. ‘Firstly, there’s Duramax Frogshaper and the Sorcerers’ Guild of Blacksand, on Garden Street, not too far from here. Secondly, there’s the wizard Brabantius who lives in a tower on Brass Lane, in the Merchant District of the southern side of the city. Lastly, you could seek out Yaztromo, on the edge of Darkwood Forest, many days ride from here. He’s a wizard also, and a friend of Nicodemus, and may help you.’

‘With Avana’s thanks!’ says Raitharve, and backs out of both the Black Lobster and your list of immediate problems.

Thord is looking at you with raised eyebrows, but you ignore him and contemplate your options. If you have not already done so, you may go and see what the Cook is up to, in which case turn to **9**. Alternatively, you may decide to take a nap after your exertions here – turn to **45** if you favour this choice. Finally, you can always wait until evening by turning to **36**.

#### 15

You attempt to bribe the Trolls with eleven to twenty Gold Pieces from your Strongbox. Cross them off the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

‘That’s a decent amount,’ says the first Troll, scratching his head. ‘Whaddya think, Rotgut?’

‘I say kill him, Yellowfang,’ replies Rotgut evenly. ‘Then we get it all!’

Yellowfang looks pained. ‘Excuse my companion here, and his blunt speech,’ he says. ‘What he means is: you have a short sharp talk with me and mister axe.’

Both Trolls advance towards you, hefting their battle-axes with frightening ease. Thord quickly hands you your weapon from behind the bar, before drawing his own sword from its scabbard. What will you do?

Fight the Trolls

turn to **38**

Flee, out through the kitchen

turn to **49**

#### 16

Suddenly, walking through the front doors comes an adventurer with bronzed skin and scarred face. A rune-inscribed dagger is thrust through a sash at his waist, and he wears a matching set of jewelled arm-bracelets. Hanging from a pendant around his neck is a charm in the form of a shell, and numerous rings – including an eye-catching greenish brass spiral ring – encircle his fingers.

Stalking behind him are a pair of peculiar bodyguards – two SKELETONS! Both hold tarnished cutlasses in their boney hands, and you see what look like large black pearls glinting in the eye-sockets of their skulls.

A general murmur goes up from the Black Lobster crowd, and you hear many mutters of ‘Necromancer!’ and ‘Foul sorcery!’ There have never been undead in the Black Lobster to the best of your knowledge, and you feel a precedent has to be set.

‘Out!’ you yell, gesturing at the Skeletons. ‘We don’t serve their type in here!’

‘I’d be surprised if you could,’ says the adventurer with a bemused expression. ‘I don’t think they can eat or drink.’

‘Well then, they can definitely go,’ you say. ‘Paying customers only in here!’

‘How about I pay for three drinks then,’ says the adventurer. ‘And drink them all myself?’

You become aware that the whole tavern is now quiet, awaiting your response. Will you order the adventurer and his Skeleton bodyguards out (turn to **54**), or invite them in (turn to **3**)?

### 17

You decide against buying the rat skull bracelet.

‘Sod you then!’ mutters Forash Fearbringer darkly, and, after finishing his mug of ale, stalks out of the Black Lobster, fingering the hilt of his cutlass.

The few other customers look askance at you, but you’re already retreating to behind the bar, to steady yourself with a gulp or two of sludgy dregs.

If Forash Fearbringer is the second customer you have talked to this morning (i.e. you have already talked to the adventurers prior to talking to Forash), turn immediately to **12**.

If Forash Fearbringer is the first customer you have talked to this morning, then you can now talk to the adventurers, as the wizard has already left the Black Lobster. Turn to **27**.

### 18

You grab your weapon from behind the bar, and surge forward to help Kullion and his pirates against the rabble of Bays. Your first opponent is a drunk but muscular Bay, swinging a cylindrical wooden club that is studded with vicious-looking spikes.

‘Yooman!’ it howls. ‘You’re out!’

This is a fight to the death.

DRUNKEN BAY

SKILL 5

STAMINA 5

If you defeat the Bay then the rest of the surviving Bays flee through the door and various windows. The brawl is over quickly, before too many bystanders can get involved, and Kullion and his crew are appreciative of your efforts. In their eyes you have been redeemed, and they lead a crowd of regulars in numerous ale-inspired toasts to your good name. Whilst you admire their sentiments however, you are too busy looting the bodies of the fallen. Turn to **59**.

### 19

You wander over to the booth containing the purple-clad merchant. Before you can disturb him however, one of the Southerner Strongarms sticks an enormous hand flat against your chest, pushing you backwards. It is not unlike walking into a large tree.

‘Boss man no want talk,’ says the Southerner, nostrils flaring in irritation. ‘Go

now or get big hurt!

Both Strongarms look rather intimidating up close. They stand over two metres tall, with large scimitars sheathed in elaborately decorated scabbards, and their muscular bodies are adorned with a mixture of ritual scars and the pelts of wild beasts, such as Nandibears and Black Lions.

Will you persist in attempting to talk to the purple-clad merchant? If so, turn immediately to **46**.

If you'd rather not, and have now already talked to (or attempted to talk to in this case!) two people this noon-time, turn immediately to **16**.

If the purple-clad merchant is the first person you have attempted to talk to, then, although you see that Vhelrekh the City Guardsman has left the Black Lobster, you may talk to somebody else. Who?

Raetha the serving wench	turn to <b>23</b>
Vartan the Swordsman	turn to <b>44</b>
The Cook	turn to <b>37</b>
The pirate with the monkey	turn to <b>8</b>

## 20

Thord tosses you your weapon from behind the bar, but otherwise makes no attempt to interfere.

'You problem, chief, not mine,' he says, shrugging his shoulders helplessly.

Raitharve laughs cruelly at this and storms towards you, her sword swiftly descending in a flaming green arc. You must defend yourself!

RAITHARVE

SKILL 10

STAMINA 9

You cannot *Escape* from this battle. If you manage to reduce Raitharve's STAMINA to 5 or less, turn immediately to **57**.

## 21

You send the Cook back into the bar to collect the Strongbox, and the Dwarf gives a nod of approval but says nothing. The Cook returns and stares at you as you extract 15 Gold Pieces and hand them over to the Dwarf. Cross them off the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

'Thank you sir!' says the Dwarf, counting out the coins into his money pouch and nodding at you once more. 'Ganga of Mirewater will be most pleased!'

He hands you the parchment, after scrawling a sign on it with a small quill. Note Ganga's parchment on the Equipment section of your *Adventure Sheet*. Turning to the Cook, the Dwarf merely clicks his tongue and sighs, before leaving through the back door.

If you have not already done so, you may go and see what Thord Death-Dealer is up to at the bar, in which case turn to **31**. Alternatively, you may decide to take a nap – turn to **45** if you favour this choice. Finally, you can always wait until evening by turning to **36**.

## 22

By the time you grab your weapon from behind the bar, the Black Lobster is a heaving mass of Bays brawling with pirates, with the odd street gangster or adventurer also involved in cracking heads together. Roll one die and consult the table below to see who is your first opponent in the tavern brawl.

<i>Roll</i>	<i>Opponent</i>	SKILL	STAMINA
1	NAMELESS ADVENTURER	8	10
2	RED STAR VAGABOND	6	6
3	DRUNKEN BAY	5	5
4	PIRATE	6	5
5	RAZOR CAT BRAWLER	7	6
6	BROTHER OF THE KNIFE	8	8

Each time the BROTHER OF THE KNIFE wins an Attack Round, you must deduct 3 STAMINA points as he is using a poisoned weapon. A successful *Test your Luck* will reduce the damage to 2 STAMINA points. An unsuccessful *Test your Luck* will increase the damage to 4 STAMINA points.

Note that this is a fight to the death and you cannot *Escape!* If you defeat your opponent, turn immediately to **34**.

### 23

‘Alright, Raetha?’ you say, drawing the curtain to her booth aside. ‘Good to see you could finally make it here.’

‘Give it a rest, Halron,’ she scowls. ‘How can I attract customers with you bumbling drunkenly over here like a love-struck Troll?’ That hurt, although not to the extent that you will actually lose any STAMINA points!

If you have now already talked to two people this noon-time, turn immediately to **16**. If Raetha is the first person you have talked to, then, although you see that Vhelrekh the City Guardsman has left the Black Lobster, you may talk to somebody else. Who?

The Cook	turn to <b>37</b>
Vartan the Swordsman	turn to <b>44</b>
The pirate with the monkey	turn to <b>8</b>
The purple-clad merchant	turn to <b>19</b>

### 24

#### CHAPTER THREE – AN AFTERNOON IN PORT BLACKSAND

Roll two dice. This represents the number of Gold Pieces spent by customers at the Black Lobster at noon. Add this number to the number of Gold Pieces already written in the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*. If however you invited Tristram of Jitar into the Black Lobster then you must only roll one die, instead of two, to reflect the disgust of your customers in allowing undead to enter the tavern.

An afternoon in Port Blacksand to you means golden sunlight weakly filtered through the grime-stained windows of the Black Lobster. The tavern is almost empty, although Thord Death-Dealer has finally arrived and is drinking from a mug in the corner where the bar meets the wall. Prospects are bleak – what will you do?

Talk to Thord Death-Dealer	turn to <b>31</b>
See what the Cook is doing in the kitchen	turn to <b>9</b>
Go upstairs for a nap	turn to <b>53</b>

### 25

You attempt to bribe the Trolls with twenty-one to thirty Gold Pieces from your Strongbox. Cross them off the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

‘Nearly there...’ says the first Troll enigmatically, squinting his eyes through the effort of obvious mental calculation. ‘Whaddya think, Rotgut?’

‘I say kill him, Yellowfang,’ Rotgut replies evenly. ‘He’s probably got a bit more stashed away, and then we’re in the black.’

Yellowfang looks pained. ‘Excuse my companion here, and his blunt speech,’ he says. ‘What he means is: you have a short sharp talk with me and mister axe.’

Both Trolls advance towards you, hefting their battle-axes with frightening ease. Thord quickly hands you your weapon from behind the bar, before drawing his own sword from its scabbard. What will you do?

Fight the Trolls

turn to **38**

Flee, out through the kitchen

turn to **49**

## 26

As you hand the six Gold Pieces over, Vartan gives you a big hug.

‘Many thanks, Halron!’ he says. ‘You just saved my life!’

‘Steady on!’ you say sharply, pushing him away. ‘People might get the wrong idea!’

Vartan leaves the Black Lobster. The silver scorpion brooch has magical healing properties. After surviving any battle, the brooch will immediately restore 1 STAMINA point to your total, provided you do not exceed your *Initial* score. Note the silver scorpion brooch and its properties on the Equipment section of your *Adventure Sheet*. Pleased with your purchase, you wonder what other surprises the day will have.

Turn to **16**.

## 27

You sidle up to the two adventurers at the bar, and grab a stool to steady yourself. The bearded man looks fairly typical, but you note with some surprise that the woman looks considerably younger than yourself, or her drinking partner.

‘Another round?’ you inquire, noting with distaste that they’re both drinking small ales.

‘Not yet,’ says the woman, who then introduces herself. ‘I’m Raitharve, and this is the legendary Melric Moonblade.’

‘Halron,’ you reply, trying to suppress a chuckle. ‘Owner of this humble establishment. Moonblade, eh? Therein lies a tale...’

Melric sullenly responds: ‘It’s me sword it is. Glows blue when I’m fighting.’

‘Here, maybe you can help us!’ says Raitharve. ‘Do you know where we can find Nicodemus the Wizard?’

Before you can respond, a drunken trio of dock-workers nearby chorus: ‘Under the bridge!’ and then break into a dirge-like tribute to Port Blacksand made famous by some angst-ridden minstrel a few too many years back. Both adventurers look mystified – they are obviously not from around here.

You interrupt the raucous noise: ‘You can find Nicodemus the Wizard under the Singing Bridge, in the middle of Blacksand.’

At this, you hold out your hand, expecting a tip of some sort, but the adventurers are clearly straight off the barge, and both instead shake your hand, before making ready to leave.

‘Is he friendly?’ asks Melric Moonblade, draining his ale.

Still aghast at not receiving gold for information supplied, you reply: ‘Sure, he’s friendly. Bang on his door real loud – he’s a bit deaf, see – and call him a grumpy old bugger! He’s got a great sense of humour, and he’ll help you out sure enough.’

Thanking you profusely, the adventurers leave the tavern, seemingly not

noticing the knowing snickers from some of the other customers that overheard the conversation.

If the adventurers are the second set of customers you have talked to this morning (i.e. you have already talked to either the pirate or the wizard prior to talking to the adventurers), turn immediately to **12**.

If the adventurers are the first set of customers you have talked to this morning, you can now choose who you want to talk to next – the pirate or the wizard.

Talk to the pirate turn to **56**

Talk to the wizard turn to **42**

## 28

You bow obsequiously to the two Trolls.

‘But of course, valued customers,’ you blurt out. ‘This humble establishment would be only too happy to supply you with the wholesome repast required to appease the hunger induced by a hard day’s gainful employment in the service of our far-sighted leader, Lord Azzur!’

‘You what?’ says the first Troll in some confusion. ‘Look here, none of this fancy stuff mind, we just want two hot meals and a flagon of that Holdgut’s Special Blue.’

‘Certainly,’ you reply. ‘A bargain at a mere eight Gold Pieces.’

There is an uncertain silence.

‘I don’t think he understood you, Yellowfang,’ growls the second Troll.

‘Nah, he didn’t, Rotgut,’ replies Yellowfang, glaring at you. ‘Let me make it simple, innkeeper. You give us the grub and booze for free, plus a bit of gold on the side, for expenses, and we won’t turn your “establishment” into a pile of firewood. Whaddya say to that, then?’

Well. What will you do now?

Bribe the Trolls turn to **52**

Fight the Trolls turn to **38**

## 29

Wandering over to the Bays’ table, you sit yourself down on a spare stool. They look a little shocked to see you join their company.

‘All right lads!’ you say. ‘How goes it?’

There’s a brief moment of silence, before one of them speaks in a high, scratchy voice: ‘Not bad, actually. Our Bays’ Ball team won at the Sports Arena today for the first time in ages, and we thought we’d have a few drinks to celebrate, like.’

‘Yeaugh!’ screeches another rather drunk Bay, suddenly swinging a wooden club around his head. ‘It’s worth celebrating! It’s almost like the time that adventurer hit a homer to win the game for Skrag’s team a while back!’

A thick, aggressive voice suddenly cuts its way through the tavern noise.

‘Careful with that, son!’ says Kullion the Crab, pointing at the club the drunken Bay is still swinging. ‘You don’t want to hurt yourself now.’

‘What’d he say?’ yells the Bay.

‘He said: “Don’t hurt yourself!”’ replies another.

‘I’ll show him hurt!’ screams the Bay, leaping towards Kullion’s pirates, club in hand. Brawl time! The Black Lobster erupts into chaos as tables are overturned and weapons drawn. If you want to wade into the fight to help the Bays, turn to **47**. If you want to hang back and see what happens, turn to **2**.

### 30

You bribe the Trolls with exactly thirty Gold Pieces from your Strongbox. Cross this amount off the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

‘With full compliments, gentlemen,’ you say. ‘To cover the expenses for sending your mother to her rightful place beside the god Hashak, after her glorious exploits against those foul Dwarfs of Stonebridge!’

Both Trolls stare at you open-mouthed and momentarily stunned.

‘He knows!’ moans the first Troll, dabbing at his eyes. ‘He knows! Whaddya think, Rotgut?’

‘By Hashak, some of these humans are alright, Yellowfang!’ Rotgut replies, suppressing a snuffle.

Both Trolls tearfully embrace you in an iron bear hug, whilst Thord looks on in disbelief at this bizarre spectacle. Of course, he wasn’t here at the tavern when the Guardsman Vhelrekh told you the information that has just saved you much unpleasantness. Vhelrekh has definitely earned a few drinks on the house, you feel.

Meanwhile, the Trolls carefully count out their “expenses” before thanking you once more and shuffling slowly out the doors of the Black Lobster, into the chill night air of Port Blacksand.

Congratulations! Not only have you successfully survived a rather eventful day in the life of Halron Allierté, innkeeper of the Black Lobster, but you have also gained two powerful and loyal allies as well. The sun goddess Glantanka will rise again tomorrow over the scum-pit of Port Blacksand and you will begin the day secure in the knowledge that you have the goodwill of at least several of the more dubious members of Lord Azzur’s Imperial Elite Guards. Thord Death-Dealer may still be top of the list of your pressing concerns, but not for long, you feel. Not for long, indeed...

## THE END

### 31

As much as you despise the man, you wander over to Thord at the bar.

‘Been busy?’ you say, indicating the newest batch of scars and bruises decorating his face.

‘Nothing I can’t handle, chief,’ he replies with a sinister grin.

Suddenly the front doors of the Black Lobster are violently thrown back! Striding in to the tavern comes Raitharve, the adventurer you talked to earlier this morning. There is a vicious snarl on her face, and she holds her sword out in front of her, its blade wreathed with arcane green flames that light up the entire room.

Seeing you loitering at the bar, she howls: ‘You bastard! Look what happened to Melric thanks to your advice!’

At this she pulls out a green lizard-like creature from a pocket.

‘You and your lies got Melric turned into a newt!’ she screams. ‘And now you’re really going to suffer!’

She stuffs the newt-that-was-Melric Moonblade back into her pocket, and advances on you, the fiery green sword held straight and steady. If you want to fight Raitharve, turn to **20**. If you want to try and attempt to calm Raitharve down instead, you must *Test your Luck*. If you are *Lucky*, turn to **14**. If you are *Unlucky*, turn instead to **43**.



### 32

You have obtained a Throwing Knife. Before the start of any combat you may hurl the Throwing Knife at your opponent and *Test your Skill*. If you are successful, the Throwing Knife has hit your opponent and you may deduct 2 STAMINA points from their total before continuing the fight as normal. If you are unsuccessful, the Throwing Knife has missed the target, and you must continue the fight. In either case you may reclaim the Throwing Knife after the battle, assuming you win, and do not die, or *Escape*. Now return to the paragraph you have just come from.

### 33

You have decided to buy the rat skull bracelet from Forash Fearbringer. Make sure you have deducted 2 Gold Pieces from the Strongbox total and noted the rat skull bracelet in the Equipment section of your *Adventure Sheet*, if you have not done so already.

‘Alright,’ you say, and return to the bar to extract two Gold Pieces from the strongbox. Arriving back at the table, you see that Forash has already deposited the bracelet next to your stained mug of rancid beer. You give him the gold, and strap the bracelet onto your wrist, experiencing a painful tingling. Even as you do this, Forash has emptied his mug in record time and almost jumped out of the door of the Black Lobster. You know why – the ruddy bracelet has been cursed by a HAG – and you can feel it sitting there on your arm, sapping your energy away. Deduct 1 from both your current and *Initial* SKILL scores.

You rise shakily from the table, mug in hand, and retreat to behind the bar. Futile experimentation shows that you can’t even get the bracelet off your wrist, much less flog it to a bunch of clueless hedge-wizards at the market.

Cursing your greed and stupidity, you swill your pint of dregs and ponder dark thoughts of vengeance, if, of course, you ever see Forash Fearbringer again.

If Forash Fearbringer is the second customer you have talked to this morning (i.e. you have already talked to the adventurers prior to talking to Forash), turn immediately to **12**.

If Forash Fearbringer is the first customer you have talked to this morning, then you can now talk to the adventurers, as the wizard has already left the Black Lobster. Turn to **27**.

### 34

The carnage continues! By this stage many of the initial brawlers have dropped out either through exhaustion or injury, and their place has been taken by fresh combatants. These newcomers pile in through the doors and windows, being both random passers by, as well as committed head-breakers from drinking establishments further up Lobster Wharf, such as the Vulgar Goblin Inn and the Hemlock Tavern. Roll one die and consult the table below to see who is your second opponent in the tavern brawl.

<i>Roll</i>	<i>Opponent</i>	SKILL	STAMINA
1	APPRENTICE SORCERER	6	9
	Before the fight, the APPRENTICE SORCERER will cast a Weakness spell upon you! This insidious spell temporarily saps both your will and energy. Roll one die and reduce your SKILL by the amount shown on the die for the duration of this combat only. Note that the cost of casting the Weakness spell has already been taken into account when calculating your opponent’s STAMINA score.		
2	BARBARIAN	8	9
3	SOUTHERN CORSAIR	7	5

4	THIEF	7	6
5	STURTZ-CHENSER SCION	8	8
6	(LAPSED) PRIEST OF DALGALLA	6	8

Before the fight, the (LAPSED) PRIEST OF DALGALLA will cast a Mind Dart spell on you! It manifests as a painful stab of force that you feel but cannot see. Roll one die and reduce your STAMINA by the amount shown on the die. If you are still alive you may resume the fight. Note that the cost of casting the Mind Dart spell has already been taken into account when calculating your opponent's STAMINA score.

Note that is a fight to the death and you cannot *Escape!* If you defeat your opponent, you are aware that the brawl is now subsiding and the worst offenders are either dead, or senseless, or have vacated the Black Lobster rather promptly. Many of the survivors are keen to get a few more rounds of drinks in however, both to steady their nerve as well as to celebrate their continued existence. You appreciate their custom but you keep one eye on the bodies of the fallen for potential loot. Turn to **59**.

### 35

You attempt to bribe the Trolls with thirty-one to forty Gold Pieces from your Strongbox. Cross them off the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

Both Trolls look at you with naked greed in their eyes.

'We could do a lot with that...' says the first Troll, slowly. 'Whaddya think, Rotgut?'

'I say kill him, Yellowfang,' Rotgut replies evenly. 'Take it all and get out of this stinking city!'

Yellowfang looks pained. 'Excuse my companion here, and his blunt speech,' he says. 'What he means is: you have a short sharp talk with me and mister axe.'

Both Trolls advance towards you, hefting their battle-axes with frightening ease. Thord quickly hands you your weapon from behind the bar, before drawing his own sword from its scabbard. What will you do?

Fight the Trolls

turn to **38**

Flee, out through the kitchen

turn to **49**

### 36

#### CHAPTER FOUR – HAPPY HOUR ON HARBOUR STREET

Roll one die. This represents the number of Gold Pieces spent by customers at the Black Lobster during the afternoon. Add this number to the number of Gold Pieces already written in the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

In the evening, trouble hovers over the tavern like some dark bird of the night. The Black Lobster is crowded with more than a few groups of peace-breakers – amidst the throng you spot the odd member of one of Port Blacksand's various street gangs, such as the Red Star Brotherhood – and there are certainly numerous varied adventurers all drinking heavily. Two groups in particular, however, have attracted an atmosphere of potential mayhem.

At the big table by the fire sits Kullion the Crab and his crew of pirates, rapidly drinking themselves to either oblivion or violence. The source of their aggression is a table of small goblin-like creatures by the door, cackling drunkenly in high-pitched voices. You recognise the creatures as Bays, which is strange as they do not usually frequent the harbour-side taverns of Port Blacksand. At the bar, Thord is motioning urgently to attract your attention. What will you do?

[continued over page]

Talk to Thord	turn to <b>13</b>
Talk to Kullion the Crab	turn to <b>41</b>
Talk to the Bays	turn to <b>29</b>
Decide the whole situation is best avoided and head upstairs for some sleep	turn to <b>55</b>

### 37

You pull up a stool at the bar, alongside the Cook. He turns to look at you, two bleary eyes wobbling unsteadily in the jelly-like mass that forms his head. A claw-tipped tentacle lifts his mug of ale to an unseen mouth, buried deep within the mass of polyps on his lower face.

Sipping cautiously, he addresses you and says: ‘D’ya fin kitza gud ay, buz?’

‘What?’

‘Ay sah “D’YA FIN KITZA GUD AY, BUZ?”’

This often happens. Due to the Cook both being a FLAYER and having a strong Kakhabad accent, not to mention both your and his usual drunken states, clear communication is rare. You shake your head and reply: ‘Yes, whatever...’

The Cook sighs, drains his mug of ale, slamming it back down atop the bar, loudly voids an inhuman belch (‘Uuuurrppp!’), and stalks back into the kitchen to prepare more food. That was most illuminating.

If you have now already talked to two people this noon-time, turn immediately to **16**. If the cook is the first person you have talked to, then, although you see that Vhelrekh the City Guardsman has left the Black Lobster, you may talk to somebody else. Who?

Raetha the serving wench	turn to <b>23</b>
Vartan the Swordsman	turn to <b>44</b>
The pirate with the monkey	turn to <b>8</b>
The purple-clad merchant	turn to <b>19</b>

### 38

Brandishing his battle-axe, YELLOWFANG THE TROLL howls grimly and storms towards you, whilst Thord Death-Dealer squares off against the other Troll. You have no time to watch that conflict however – you must fight for your life!

YELLOWFANG THE TROLL      SKILL 10      STAMINA 10

If you defeat the Troll, turn to **40**. If you wish, you may choose to *Escape*, by fleeing out through the kitchen. Reduce your STAMINA by 2 for the usual *Escape* penalty, and turn to **49**.

### 39

Stirk casts the Enhance spell, mumbling in a low monotone, accompanied by seemingly random finger gestures. Suddenly, there is a sound like the chime of bells and the interior of the Black Lobster takes on a faint golden hue. As one, the rest of the customers peer suspiciously at their drinks.

The spell has worked! From now on, whenever you are instructed to roll a die or two dice, and add the result to your Strongbox, you may roll one *extra* die as well. So, if the text told you to roll two dice, you would actually roll three, total the result and add it to your Strongbox. Note this bonus on your *Adventure Sheet*: “Roll one more die than instructed when adding income to the Strongbox total”. In any case,

Stirk shambles drunkenly out the door of the Black Lobster, but not after accepting your effusive thanks.

If Stirk Cuckling is the second customer you have talked to this morning (i.e. you have already talked to the adventurers prior to talking to Stirk), turn immediately to **12**.

If Stirk Cuckling is the first customer you have talked to this morning, then you can now talk to the adventurers, as the pirate has already left the Black Lobster. Turn to **27**.

#### 40

Even as Yellowfang topples over dead before you, you see the other Troll, sorely wounded, swing his battle-axe in a vicious arc that decapitates Thord Death-Dealer. Thord's headless body instantly collapses, staining the floor of the Black Lobster with his blood. ROTGUT THE TROLL then turns to you, a murderous expression on his face.

'That's gonna cost you, human!' he screams, pointing his axe at the corpse of Yellowfang, before charging towards you. This is a fight to the death.

ROTGUT THE TROLL

SKILL 9

STAMINA 4

If you defeat the Troll, turn to **60**.

#### 41

You join the table of Kullion and his pirates, who are predictably outraged by the presence of the Bays in the Black Lobster.

'You go away for a hard month of piracy on the high seas,' he rants, spittle flying from his silvery beard, 'and when you return, your favourite tavern is full of bloody Goblins!'

'They're actually Bays,' you say gently.

'Who cares!' Kullion screams. 'By the stinking Sharadrin, if I want to drink with their sort, I'd go to Troll Alley! Or that fleapit alehouse run by Varag Madhand near the Sports Arena! Not here, by Hydana! Do you not understand?'

You are about to reply when one of the Bays yells out in a loud but reedy voice: 'Pipe down, granddad! We're trying to have fun over here, we are!'

His face mottled darkly, Kullion utters an inarticulate howl of rage and leaps towards the Bays, cutlass in hand. His crew of pirates all follow.

Brawl time! The Black Lobster erupts into chaos as tables are overturned and weapons drawn. If you want to wade into the fight to help Kullion the Crab and his pirates, turn to **18**. If you want to hang back and see what happens, turn to **2**.

#### 42

You slide into the dingy booth where sits the mysterious cowed figure. Sensing your presence, it pulls back the hood of its robe, displaying a face of horror that leaves you speechless!

Although it would appear at first glance to be an old, tired and drunken man, what was once a beard is now a slithering tangled knot of hideous, green-skinned SERPENTS – a sort of inverted MEDUSA!

Several of the serpents hiss angrily at you, displaying needle-like fangs and tiny, forked tongues, but the majority seem to be as drunk as the old man to whom they are attached. The man merely nods blearily at you and speaks: 'Morning Halron,

how *goesh* it?

Sheepishly you realise that the old man is actually Stirk Cuckling, Vice-Master of the Sorcerers' Guild, whose beard was transformed into a nest of snakes by the mad alchemist Dietrich Zuvember. Despite being an accomplished wizard, Stirk has yet to be able to reverse the process, and has sunken deep into a drunken depression as a result.

'Not bad, Stirk,' you say, sitting down. 'Yourself?'

'Not good,' replies Stirk. 'I'm right out of *fundsh* and I can't pay for *this* lot.' He indicates a considerable number of empty ale pots that cover the surface of the booth's table.

'I can however *casht*, sorry, cast, a powerful cantrap that will increase your Strongbox income on this *aushpish*, *auspish*...erm...lucky day!' says Stirk, brightening hopefully. 'A sort of enhanced Enhance spell, if you like!'

You sigh deeply – clearly you have no choice. To see if the drunken wizard Stirk is capable of pronouncing the correct arcane syllables and successfully casting the Enhance spell, *Test your Luck*.

If you are *Lucky*

turn to **39**

If you are *Unlucky*

turn to **7**

### 43

You try to calm Raitharve down.

'Look,' you say to her. 'It was a joke, right. In this town you have to pay people to get good advice. You never paid me!'

She will not be so easily placated however, spitting on the floor of the tavern and yelling: 'In that case, I hope they pay you in the Pit!'

Turn to **20**.

### 44

You approach the table of Vartan the Swordsman. He made a name for himself a few years back with a spot of mayhem at the Port Blacksand market, slaying a drunken Dwarf, a Man-Orc and a human slave-trader, in approximately that order. Since then, he seems to have been drifting from one semi-professional killing to the next, and his tall muscular body and two-handed sword accord him minor-hero status in the teeming city streets.

'How goes it, Vartan?' you say, sitting down at his table.

'Bad, Halron, bad!' he mutters into his ale. 'The Brotherhood of the Knife caught me freelancing again. If I don't pay compensation sharpish, then word on the street says that Baraban himself will come to collect!'

That sounds unpleasant indeed. The Brotherhood of the Knife is a guild of assassins, and Baraban, the self-styled Professional Murderer, is one of the guild's most prominent and effective members. You don't rate Vartan's chances in the event of a duel between the two.

'Here! You can help me, Halron!' says Vartan, pulling something from his money pouch. 'Buy this silver scorpion brooch from me for six Gold Pieces and me problems will be almost over! What do you say?'

If you wish to buy the silver scorpion brooch from Vartan, deduct 6 Gold Pieces from the Strongbox section on your *Adventure Sheet*, and turn to **26**.

If you'd rather not, you leave Vartan sobbing helplessly into his ale. If you have now already talked to two people this noon-time, turn immediately to **16**. If Vartan is the first person you have talked to, then, although you see that Vhelrek the

City Guardsman has left the Black Lobster, you may talk to somebody else. Who?	
Raetha the serving wench	turn to <b>23</b>
The Cook	turn to <b>37</b>
The pirate with the monkey	turn to <b>8</b>
The purple-clad merchant	turn to <b>19</b>

#### 45

You wander back upstairs for a short nap. Falling into a light sleep, you are disturbed by bizarre dreams of rolling dice and methodical note-taking. Strangely, you awaken chanting a weird mantra: ‘May your stamina never fail!’

You begin to wonder about what effect this existence at the Black Lobster is having on you. However, you may add up to 2 points to your current STAMINA score due to the nap, though you cannot exceed your *Initial* score.

After your nap, you head downstairs to see how the evening trade is shaping up. Turn to **36**.

#### 46

You attempt to push past the Southerners, into the booth containing their merchant employer. You do not get very far – one of the Strongarms pulls you backward by your shirt, and the other punches you solidly in the stomach. You fall to the floor, retching heavily. Deduct 2 STAMINA points from your current STAMINA total. Assuming you are still alive, read on below.

The merchant sweeps out of the booth, accompanied by the Southerners.

‘Insolent wretch!’ he mutters, in a heavy Arantian accent, pausing briefly to spit on your groaning form and toe you painfully in the ribs with a bejewelled sandal. The trio then leaves the Black Lobster. After a while, you get slowly to your feet, pointedly ignoring several sniggers from around the room. Turn to **16**.

#### 47

You grab your weapon from behind the bar, and surge forward to help the Bays against Kullion’s pirates. Your first opponent is none other than Kullion the Crab himself. He stares at your sword and sneers.

‘You must be getting soft, Halron,’ he smirks. ‘Helping these goblin scum, and all...’ He slashes out with his cutlass, hoping to catch you off guard. This is a fight to the death!

KULLION THE CRAB

SKILL 10

STAMINA 8

If you defeat Kullion then the rest of his surviving crew flee through the door and various windows. The brawl is over quickly, before too many bystanders can get involved, and the Bays thank you profusely before hurriedly, and sensibly, leaving themselves. Many of your regulars are also leaving however, disgusted that you supported a bunch of weakling goblinoids instead of upstanding members of the pirate community. You care little for their opinions however, as you are already looting the bodies of the fallen. Turn to **59**.

#### 48

### CHAPTER FIVE – AFTER THE LAST CALL

If you helped Kullion the Crab and his pirates in the tavern brawl, roll three dice. If

you helped the Bays, roll one die. If you helped neither group, roll two dice. This represents the number of Gold Pieces spent by customers at the Black Lobster this evening. Add this number to the number of Gold Pieces already written in the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

It is almost the end of an eventful day. The Cook is snoring loudly in the kitchen, curled up under a table, tentacles wrapped protectively around a bottle of some unspeakable non-human liquor. Meanwhile, Thord is having a last drink at the bar, and all the wenches slunk off long ago.

You've kicked all the stragglers out and are about to lock up, when two enormous figures barge through the front doors and into the Black Lobster. They're both Trolls – brutal mercenaries employed by Lord Azzur as Imperial Elite Guards – wearing black studded leather armour and casually brandishing razor-sharp battle-axes.

'Hullo, hullo,' says the first Troll, through a mouth full of cracked yellow tusks. 'We was wondering if you was still open?'

What will your response be?

'Yes, of course!'

turn to **28**

'No, we're closed!'

turn to **6**

Or do you fancy a quick dive towards the Strongbox to bribe your way out of trouble?

turn to **52**

#### 49

You drop your weapon, and to the sound of jeers, flee through the kitchen and dart out the back door into the darkened streets of Port Blacksand. You'll never make it out of the city alive however, as you have neglected to grab the contents of your Strongbox, and thus you have no gold with which to bribe the guards at the Weaver Gate. By noon the next day you have been hunted down by the City Guard on charges of tax evasion, and are promptly strung-up from a gibbet in Executioner's Square as an example to all of the power of Lord Azzur and his Imperial Elite Guard.

Your adventure is over.

#### 50

You refuse to pay the Dwarf, crossing your arms and staring down at him, sneering: 'So what's the alternative then, shorty?'

The Dwarf calmly unhooks the battle-axe from his belt and says one word: 'Violence!'

Too late, you realise you are unarmed! You try to order the Cook back into the bar to get your weapon or warn Thord, but the cowardly Flayer is hiding under the table, shivering and whimpering. The Dwarf laughs cruelly at your predicament and advances towards you, tossing his axe lightly from hand to hand. You must fight!

DWARF EXTORTIONIST

SKILL 7

STAMINA 7

During this battle you must subtract 2 from your Attack Strength every Attack Round, as you are fighting unarmed. If you defeat the Dwarf, turn to **4**. If you wish, you may choose to *Escape*, by shoving the Dwarf out the back door and bolting it. Reduce your STAMINA by 2 for the usual *Escape* penalty, and turn to **10**.

## 51

Ignoring the Cook, you pull up a stool at the bar, alongside Vhelrekh the City Guardsman. He is an imposing man, wearing a studded black leather surcoat adorned with the coat-of-arms of Lord Azzur, with a scabbarded longsword at his belt. Vhelrekh has removed his iron helmet, which sits on the bar next to his drink, revealing close-cropped hair and beard that is flecked with grey.

‘Friend, how goes it?’ you say conversationally.

He slowly sips his ale and raises an eyebrow quizzically in your direction.

‘Got some news for you, Halron,’ he says. ‘Two Imperial Elite Guards, Yellowfang and Rotgut – both Trolls, of course – are trying to raise some gold to pay for the funeral of their mother who died recently in a raid on the Dwarf town of Stonebridge.’

‘What’s that got to do with me?’ you say, perplexed.

‘Seems they think you can help them with the funeral costs,’ he says evenly, indicating the large crowd of paying regulars in the Black Lobster. ‘Barrack talk says they’ll be visiting you later tonight to ask for a donation of thirty Gold Pieces for the cause. Take care now...’

That doesn’t sound promising! Before you can ask for more details, Vhelrekh has finished his drink, and, with a final wink in your direction, departs from the Black Lobster. Vhelrekh is the first person you have talked to this noon-time. You may now talk to someone else. Who?

Raetha the serving wench	turn to <b>23</b>
Vartan the Swordsman	turn to <b>44</b>
The Cook	turn to <b>37</b>
The pirate with the monkey	turn to <b>8</b>
The purple-clad merchant	turn to <b>19</b>

## 52

Bribing yourself out of this rather ugly situation seems like the best course of action. Count up the total value of Gold Pieces recorded in the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*. How much will you offer the two Imperial Elite Trolls as a bribe, bearing in mind you cannot offer them any more in Gold Pieces value than your Strongbox currently possesses?

One to ten Gold Pieces	turn to <b>5</b>
Eleven to twenty Gold Pieces	turn to <b>15</b>
Twenty-one to thirty Gold Pieces	turn to <b>25</b>
Thirty-one to forty Gold Pieces	turn to <b>35</b>

Alternatively, if you know the exact amount of Gold Pieces that the Trolls are seeking in bribes, along with the reasons for doing so, turn to that number now.

## 53

You stagger back upstairs for a long nap. Falling into a deep sleep, you are disturbed by bizarre dreams of rolling dice and methodical note-taking. At one point you are nearly roused from your slumber by sounds of a commotion from downstairs but you manage to ignore it and return to sleep. Strangely, you awaken chanting a weird mantra: ‘May your stamina never fail!’

You begin to wonder about what effect this existence at the Black Lobster is having on you. However, you may add up to 4 points to your current STAMINA score due to the nap, though you cannot exceed your *Initial* score.

After your nap, you head downstairs to see how the evening trade is shaping



up. Turn to **36**.

#### 54

You try to order the adventurer and his cutlass-waving Skeletons to leave, but he is grossly offended by both you and your customers, who are now drunkenly chorusing ‘Undead out! Undead out!’ with considerable enthusiasm. Reaching into his pouch, the adventurer pulls out several small objects and casts them on to the floor of the Black Lobster, whilst yelling ‘Derdnuhen!’

The objects are black pearls and a cloud of fog immediately appears around them and solidifies into chalk-white bones. The pearls have become the eyes of two more enchanted SKELETONS! As customers scream and dive out windows or under tables, the undead pair advance jerkily towards you, skeletal fingers clawing for your throat. Hurriedly you retrieve your sword from behind the bar and turn to face your fleshless adversaries. Fight them one at a time.

First SKELETON	SKILL 7	STAMINA 6
Second SKELETON	SKILL 6	STAMINA 6

You cannot *Escape* from this battle. If you defeat both the SKELETONS, turn immediately to **11**.

#### 55

Deciding to avoid the spectacle of yet another tavern brawl, you quickly ascend the stairs for an early sleep. This however proves to be a major tactical blunder. No tavern-keeper abandons his main bar room to the mercies of a brawl. Ever.

Downstairs, the brawl begins – or continues – and rapidly escalates with Thord Death-Dealer unable to maintain order by himself. A dropped torch, a spark from the hearth, a broken lantern is all it takes – and then suddenly the bar is on fire, and then the entire tavern. You die screaming in your bed-chamber, your body aflame and your blood boiling in its veins.

Before long, the Black Lobster has burned to the ground and the flames have spread rapidly through the ancient hovels that line both sides of Harbour Street. The raging fire is now well beyond the abilities of a bucket brigade organised by the local City Guard Blockhouse, and by daybreak, much of the Harbour and Garden Districts are little more than ashes and rubble. Indeed, such is the scale of the devastation that a hovering column of dark smoke pouring out from Port Blacksand is visible as far away as Oyster Bay and the city-state of Kaad. (Admittedly, much of this later destruction was caused by the explosions when the Sorcerers’ Guild burnt down, which in turn breached several protective pentacles leading to the Demonic Pit).

Regardless, you, Halron Allierté, are tried and convicted posthumously for grand arson, and your extended family, led by your uncle Guidon, banned from entering Port Blacksand on pain of death.

Your adventure is over.

#### 56

You saunter over to the pirate’s table. You’re pretty sure you haven’t seen his whiskered face before in these parts.

He raises his mug of watery ale towards you and speaks: ‘You’re Halron!’

‘How did you know?’ you mutter suspiciously, sitting down at the table.

‘From Halak myself,’ he says. ‘Your laughing uncle’s always telling me to visit the Black Lobster if I ever get up here. The name’s Forash, Forash Fearbringer!’

‘So, you’re here alone?’ you say, surprised. Pirates rarely travel alone.

‘Nah, the rest of the crew had a heavy night on the Yellow Lotus,’ he says, shaking his head. ‘Not my thing, really, so while they’re sleeping their dreams away, I thought I’d grab an ale.’

Fair enough. You wonder briefly if he’s going to buy you a drink, and decide to indulge in small talk: ‘Good business on the way up?’

Forash sniggers. ‘Not bad – ran into a ship of Northerners – useless seamen. “Acquired” this from one of them. It’s yours for two Gold Pieces.’

He fishes a weird-looking bracelet out of his shirt pocket – a leather band, to which have been tied several small rats’ skulls.

‘What are you selling it for?’ you ask suspiciously.

‘Friend, we sail at noon.’ Forash says. ‘No time. I sell it to you now, and you can sell it to those flea-bitten hedge-wizards I’m told infest Blacksand market. It’s definitely magical, so that’s got to be easy gold for you, yes?’

Do you want to buy the rat skull bracelet? If you do, deduct 2 Gold Pieces from your Strongbox total, note the rat skull bracelet in the Equipment section of your *Adventure Sheet*, and turn to **33**. If you do not want to buy the rat skull bracelet, turn instead to **17**.

## 57

You think you have Raitharve beaten but she suddenly unleashes a flurry of sword-blows. Blinded by the green flames, you hang back from her fury, only to find she has used the respite to flee the Black Lobster, leaving the front doors swinging. She has dropped something during the fight – a semi-precious stone amulet of Goblin or Troglodyte craftsmanship you fancy – which you grab before anyone else can. It might be worth something to a collector. Add “stone amulet (worth 5 Gold Pieces)” to the Strongbox section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

‘Close call there, chief,’ remarks Thord, eyebrows raised.

You ignore him and contemplate your options. If you have not already done so, you may go and see what the Cook is up to, in which case turn to **9**. Alternatively, you may decide to take a nap after your exertions here – turn to **45** if you favour this choice. Finally, you can always wait until evening by turning to **36**.

## 58

You pay Hesolute one Gold Piece, and carefully deposit the drunken sleeping monkey, which is surprisingly heavy, behind the bar. Later however, you discover that the monkey is not from Fire Island at all, but rather a small and intelligent ape known as a MUNGIE! Mungies come from the forested highlands of Mauristatia, in the centre of the Old World, far across the Western Ocean. They are uncontrollably drawn to gold and make excellent natural thieves.

Unfortunately, of course, you only discover all these details long after Hesolute’s Mungie has raided the contents of your Strongbox and fled out into the streets of Port Blacksand. Cross off ALL the Gold Pieces currently stored in your Strongbox from your *Adventure Sheet* and deduct 1 LUCK point for your misfortune.

Having done all this, turn now to **16**.

## 59

One of your favourite things about a good tavern brawl is the opportunity to acquire a bit of booty from those unfortunates that succumb during the melee. For this particular fight, roll one die and add one. This is the number of Gold Pieces you recover afterwards – add this number immediately to the Strongbox section on your *Adventure Sheet*. Then, roll two dice and consult the table below to determine what special item you have likewise purloined. Don't forget to record the item's name and abilities on the Equipment section of your *Adventure Sheet*.

<i>Roll</i>	<i>Special Item</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
2-3	Winged Helmet	This magnificent helmet has magical properties and will allow you to add 1 point to all future dice rolls when computing your Attack Strength during combat as long as you wear it.
4	Ring of Fire	You can use this immediately before combat. It will shoot a jet of flame that will reduce your opponent's STAMINA by the roll of one die.
5	Potion of Fortune	This potion can be consumed at any time, except during combat. It will restore your LUCK score to its <i>Initial</i> level.
6	Bomba Fruit	If you eat this large, apple-like fruit along with a meal, it will double your gain in STAMINA points. Thus, if you normally would restore 3 STAMINA points when eating, you would actually restore 6 STAMINA points instead.
7	Bag of Abundance Nuts	These count as 1 meal, and will restore 3 STAMINA points when eaten.
8	Chubbley Fruit	This large, round, nourishing fruit counts as 1 meal, and will restore 3 STAMINA points when eaten.
9	Mixture of Healing Herbs	You can use these at any time by placing them on a wound in order to heal it. Unfortunately, the strength of the mixture varies. Roll one die – the number rolled is the number of STAMINA points that are restored.
10	Potion of Skill	This potion can be consumed at any time, except during combat. It will restore your SKILL score to its <i>Initial</i> level (if you have an item such as a rat skull bracelet that reduces your SKILL you may now cross the item and its effects off your <i>Adventure Sheet</i> ). If your SKILL score was already at its <i>Initial</i> level, then this potion will let you add 1 to your Attack Strength for your next fight only.
11-12	Throwing Knife	Turn to <b>32</b> for an explanation of the Throwing Knife. Make sure to note down the number of the paragraph you are on at the time however, as <b>32</b> will not direct you back there.

Note that with the exception of the Winged Helmet and the Throwing Knife, the rest of these items have one use only, and you must cross them off the Equipment section of your *Adventure Sheet* once you have used them. Once you have finished here, turn to **48**.

## 60

If you bribed the Trolls with any Gold Pieces from your Strongbox, you may recover that amount now, and add it back on to the Strongbox section of your *Adventure*

*Sheet.*

You stand alone in the bar room of the Black Lobster, surrounded by smashed furniture and the bloody corpses of Thord Death-Dealer and the two Trolls. Well, that is one good thing – Thord Death-Dealer is now no longer top of your list of immediate problems. Unfortunately, for killing members of the Imperial Elite Guard, you know you can expect a long and painful public execution, at the hands of Lord Azzur's most skilled torturers. However, should you flee the tavern, your uncle Guidon will no doubt set assassins and hire-swords onto your trail for besmirching the family name.

It's no contest – you loot the bodies of the Trolls and Thord, ransack the contents of your Strongbox, and flee out into the shadowy streets of Port Blacksand. Bribing your way past the sleepy guards of the northern Weaver Gate, you realise your old life as innkeeper has now ended. From now on, you will begin a new life as Halron Troll-Slayer, fugitive and adventurer...

**T H E E N D**