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A PUFFIN BOOK

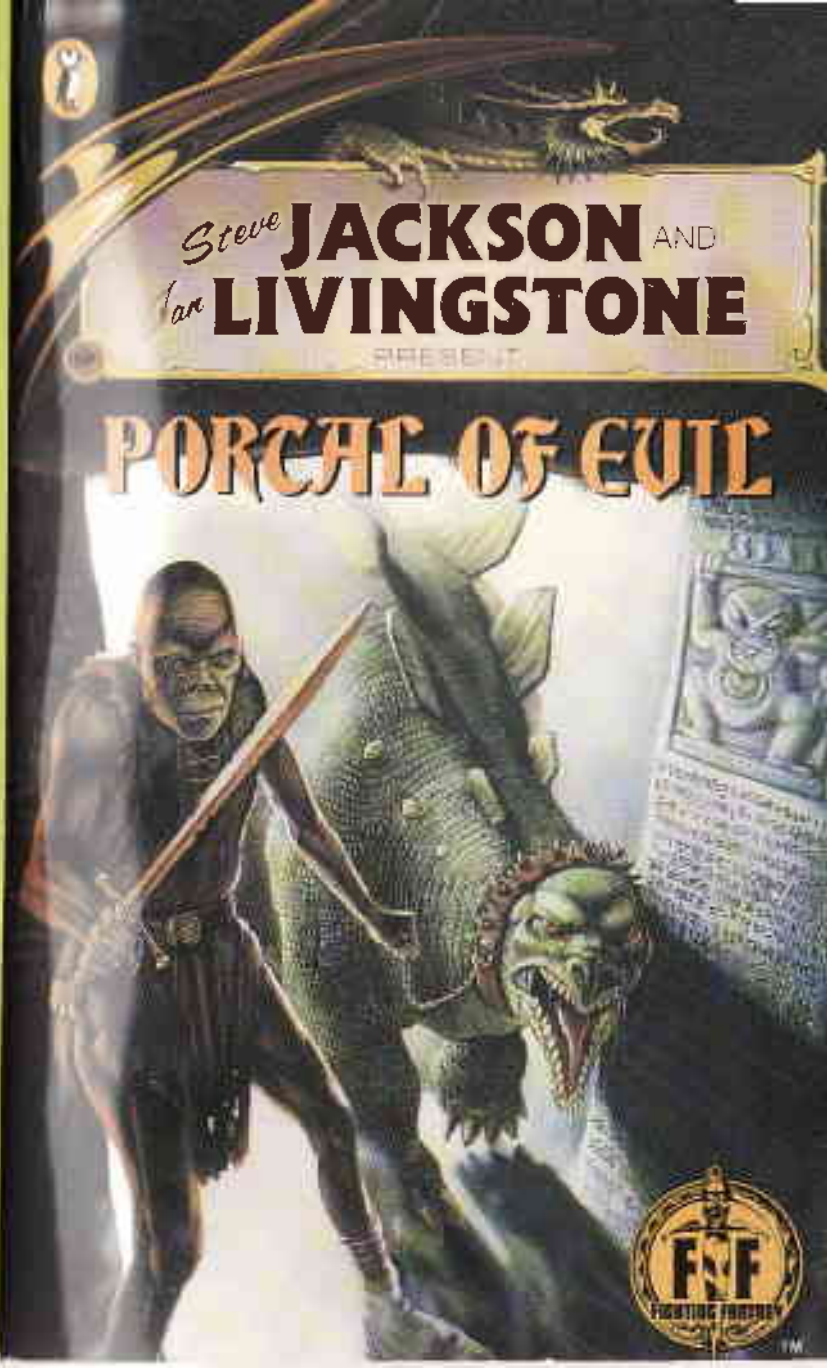
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STEVE JACKSON
AND IAN LIVINGSTONE

Portal of Evil

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Steve JACKSON AND
Ian LIVINGSTONE

PRESENT

PORTAL OF EVIL



PUFFIN BOOKS

PORTAL OF EVIL

Shunned by humankind since time began, the hills and valleys between the Cloudhigh Mountains and Lake Mlubz have begun to echo with human voices and the rhythmic sound of pickaxes. With the lure of riches beyond belief, gold fever has hit this inhospitable place! But then one shaft is dug too deep into the hillside and an ancient source of evil is unleashed . . . and used. The consequences are terrifying, as strange prehistoric creatures roam the woods and miners and their families start to disappear. Only a brave and resourceful adventurer can destroy this ancient evil before it's too late.

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

Many dangers lie ahead and your success is by no means certain. YOU decide which routes to follow, which dangers to risk and which monsters to fight.



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PORTAL OF EVIL

by Peter Darvill-Evans

Illustrated by Alan Langford

Puffin Books

For Chris and Amy

PUFFIN BOOKS

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CONTENTS

HOW TO VANQUISH THE PORTAL OF EVIL

7

ADVENTURE SHEET

14

BACKGROUND

16

PORTAL OF EVIL

21

HOW TO VANQUISH THE PORTAL OF EVIL

Your Character

You are a warrior, a skilled and hardy adventurer. At the moment you are down on your luck: you have no money, and your backpack contains Provisions for only two meals. Your abilities, however, are more noteworthy and remarkable than ever. You will use dice to determine your exact attributes; on pages 14–15 there is an *Adventure Sheet* on which you will record your scores and the incidents of your adventure. Use a pencil, or make photocopies of the *Adventure Sheet*, as you will almost certainly need to make more than one attempt to defeat the threat of the Portal of Evil.

Skill, Stamina and Luck

Roll one die. Add 6 to the number rolled and enter the total in the SKILL box on the *Adventure Sheet*.

Roll two dice. Add 12 to this number and enter the total in the STAMINA box.

Roll one die. Add 6 to the score and enter the total in the LUCK box.

These are your *Initial* scores and you must keep a permanent record of them. Any of your scores may change during your adventure, but they will exceed

their *Initial* amounts only very rarely. You must keep a record of all changes to your scores – so write small or use an eraser.

Your SKILL score reflects your expertise in combat, your ability with weapons, and your dexterity. Your STAMINA is your health and fitness, and your ability to survive wounds and physical hardship. Your LUCK score shows how lucky you are.

Restoring Skill, Stamina and Luck

Skill

Your SKILL will not change much during your adventure, and you should change it only if given specific instructions to do so in the text. As SKILL is a measure of combat prowess, it can be reduced by losing your weapon or by the effects of poison, for instance; acquiring a magical weapon could increase your SKILL – but remember that you can use only one weapon at a time!

Stamina

Your STAMINA will change frequently during your adventure as you suffer wounds and then recover. At various times you will be given opportunities to eat meals and to acquire Provisions. Eating a meal normally restores up to 4 points of STAMINA, although there will be times, when you get very hungry, when you will need to eat a meal simply to avoid losing STAMINA; you may eat only one meal at a time, even though you may have more in your

backpack. Unless specifically stated, your STAMINA may never exceed its *Initial* score.

Luck

There will be times when the success or failure of your exploits will depend entirely on your LUCK. You will be instructed to *Test your Luck*; the procedure for this is as follows: roll two dice. If the total rolled is equal to or less than your LUCK score, you are Lucky. If the total is higher than your LUCK score, you are Unlucky. Whatever the outcome, you must deduct 1 point from your LUCK score every time you *Test your Luck*. As you will see, the more you use your LUCK, the less likely you are to be Lucky. There will be occasions when you will be able to recover some points of LUCK; however, unless specifically stated to the contrary, your score cannot exceed its *Initial* value.

Combat

During your adventure you will meet other people and creatures. Some of them will attack you; others you will decide to fight. The procedure for resolving battles is described below.

SKILL and STAMINA scores are given in the text for each adversary that you face. Write these numbers

in the first vacant Monster Encounter Box on the *Adventure Sheet*. Make a note also of any special abilities or instructions that are unique to this particular opponent. The combat sequence is then:

1. Roll two dice for your opponent. Add the total rolled to its SKILL score. This is the Attack Strength of your enemy.
2. Roll two dice and add the total to your own current SKILL score. This is your Attack Strength.
3. If your Attack Strength is the higher, you have wounded your opponent: go to step 4. If your opponent's Attack Strength is higher, it has wounded you: go to step 5. If the Attack Strength totals are the same, you have avoided each other's blows – start a new Combat Round from step 1.
4. Deduct 2 points from your opponent's STAMINA. You may be able to deduct extra points if you use your LUCK (see below) or if you have a special weapon.
5. Deduct 2 points from your own STAMINA. You may use your LUCK to reduce the seriousness of this loss (see below).
6. Make sure you have recorded on the *Adventure Sheet* all adjustments to the STAMINA and LUCK scores of either yourself or your opponent.
7. Begin the next Combat Round, starting again at step 1. This procedure continues until either you or your opponent has a STAMINA score of zero. If your opponent's STAMINA score reaches zero,

you have killed it and can continue with your adventure. If your own STAMINA score reaches zero, you are dead; you must start the adventure again from the beginning, first rolling the dice to create a new character.

You may from time to time be given the opportunity to escape from your opponent. If you decide to do this, the battle ends – but the enemy automatically wounds you once as you turn your back and flee. You must deduct 2 points from your STAMINA. You can use your LUCK to minimize this wound, as for any other (see below).

Often you will have to fight more than one opponent at a time. Sometimes you will be told to treat them as a single opponent; at others, you will be able to fight them one at a time; and sometimes all of them will be able to attack you, while you defend yourself and may attack only one of them. Specific instructions will be given whenever you meet more than one opponent.

Using Luck in Combat

You can use your LUCK in combat to inflict a particularly serious wound, or to minimize a wound that has been inflicted on you.

Whenever you wound an opponent, you may *Test your Luck*: roll two dice. If the total rolled is equal to or less than your LUCK score, you have been Lucky. If the total is higher than your LUCK score, you are Unlucky. (Whatever the result, you must remember

to deduct 1 point from your current LUCK score.) If you are Lucky, you have inflicted a severe wound: deduct 2 extra points from your opponent's STAMINA. If you are Unlucky, you have merely grazed it, and you deduct 1 point less than normal from its STAMINA.

If you have been wounded, you can *Test your Luck* in exactly the same way. (Remember to deduct 1 point from your LUCK, whatever the result.) If you are Lucky, the wound upon you was only a glancing blow, and you can deduct 1 point less than usual of STAMINA. If you are Unlucky, the wound is serious: deduct 1 extra point from your STAMINA.

Getting Started

The forests that cover the hills between Kleinkastel and the Cloudhigh Mountains are extensive and are populated by dangerous denizens. You are very unlikely to succeed in your mission at the first attempt. It is recommended that you make notes and draw a map as you explore. There is a way to succeed that involves little risk, even if you start with low *Initial* scores. There are many more routes that lead to failure and unpleasant fates.

Start by reading the Background section; then go on to the paragraph headed with the number 1. After that, go to whichever numbered paragraph you are instructed to turn to. Do not read paragraphs you have not been led to: this amounts to cheating – and will lessen your enjoyment.

ADVENTURE SHEET

SKILL <i>Initial</i> Skill =	STAMINA <i>Initial</i> Stamina =	LUCK <i>Initial</i> Luck =
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EQUIPMENT LIST

GOLD

POTIONS

**PROVISIONS
REMAINING**

MONSTER ENCOUNTER BOXES

Skill = Stamina =	Skill = Stamina =	Skill = Stamina =
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Skill = Stamina =	Skill = Stamina =	Skill = Stamina =
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Skill = Stamina =	Skill = Stamina =	Skill = Stamina =
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Skill = Stamina =	Skill = Stamina =	Skill = Stamina =
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BACKGROUND

Far to the east of the great port of Kelther, a line of snow-capped peaks divides the fertile lands from the deserts and wastes that make up the interior of the continent of Khul. To the humans who have settled along the streams that run from the northern half of the range, the peaks are known as the Cloudhigh Mountains. Half-way down the range a spur extending to the west marks the southward limit of human habitation – or, rather, it did until recently. From the southern half of the range, streams rush through narrow valleys between hills that are covered with impenetrable woodlands, and drain into an inland sea. The forest is home to wild beasts and to Goblins, whose name for the huge lake is Mlubz.

No humans had set foot in the forest within recorded history. Southern tribesmen and, in later centuries, armoured Neuburgers had shunned the inhospitable hills. A few years ago, however, a small band of trail-blazers set out from the frontier town of Kleinkastel and disappeared into the forest. Months later, two survivors returned – with gold nuggets. Gold – that soft, malleable metal, useless for making weapons or tools or even lodestones and yet, in a way, a magnet. Its matchless lustre attracts, not other metals, but human greed.

Within days, as if drawn by an invisible force, humanity began to invade the forest from north and south. Some came alone, with just a pickaxe and shovel; others came as families, or in entire tribes; some groups were as big as small armies. There were miners; and there were those who provisioned the miners, and others who swindled them; there were robbers of all sorts, from desperate outlaws to clerks and lawyers; finally, there were the Margrave's men, come to tax everyone else.

Bridges were slung across raging cataracts; giant trees were felled; battalions of man-eating Goblins were defeated and dispersed. Bands of outlaws roamed the hills, more deadly even than the forest creatures. In an effort to restore law and order, and to generate income, the Margrave of Kleinkastel declared the whole forest to be part of his demesne. Now his foot soldiers march across the hills, chasing bandits, selling mining licences, and dealing summarily with unlicensed miners. To the miners, the Margrave's soldiers are just one more irritation. Like the Goblins and the southern bandits, they interfere with the serious business of digging for gold. The most successful miners are already wealthy enough to defy the Margrave. They employ teams of less fortunate migrants to work the richest seams, located deep under the higher mountains, and they organize caravans to transport ore from the highland diggings through the forest to Kleinkastel, now a bustling boom town, where equally wealthy merchants wait to weigh, assay and buy

their loads. One of the most successful mine-owners is Gloten. Recently he sent out invitations to selected warriors, including yourself, to come to Kleinkastel and work for him as caravan guards. At the time you had better things to do than trudge back and forth through a hilly forest at the beck and call of a wealthy mine-owner, and you declined the offer.

Now, however, something is very wrong in the forest. Gloten has sent out messengers with another story: miners, and sometimes entire families, have gone missing from their villages; strange beasts, the like of which have never been seen before, are terrorizing the woodlands; and Gloten pleads for one of Khul's renowned warriors to come to Kleinkastel and investigate these mysterious occurrences. He declares that he will pay the warrior's own weight in gold in return for restoring normality to the forest. You could refuse neither the appeal for help nor the lure of such a reward.

With the last two coins you possessed, you have bought a map of the area (it is reproduced on the inside front cover of this book) and you have it safely stowed in your backpack, along with what remains of your Provisions – after your long journey from Kelther, you now have enough for only two more meals. You are wearing leather armour; your trusty sword hangs in its sheath at your belt. You reached the forest without incident; however, thanks to a rainstorm and the flooding of a ford, you



managed to miss the road that links Neuburg and Festham to Kleinkastel and found yourself in the depths of the woodlands. Last night you slept rough in the undergrowth; this morning, you came across a well-worn track, leading south-west, which you hope will lead you out of the forest and towards Kleinkastel, where you expect to find Gloten and offer your services to him for the promised fee. With luck, you will reach the little town before dusk.

Now turn to paragraph 1.





1

A line of blood-spots crosses the path. The blood is still warm and unclotted. Your hand goes to your sword-hilt as you scan the surrounding forest. You can hear nothing, but it is clear that a wounded animal has crossed the path – a very large animal, to judge by the extent of broken branches and trampled undergrowth that show where the creature crashed into the forest. You follow the trail between the trees and into a clearing, where you stop in amazement. The wounded animal is there – but it is not a bear or a wolf or any other woodland beast you have ever seen. It is like an enormous lizard, as big as an ox, with a sail-like frill running the length of its back and supported by spines. Its scaly hide shows several severe gashes. Stroking the monster's snout is an Elf woman. As you enter the glade, the monster snarls and the Elf woman raises her sword; but then, instead of attacking, they speak. *Both* of them say: 'Help us! Please help us!' Even as they speak, two soldiers come running into the clearing, swords drawn, and advance towards the wounded beast. Will you help to defend the monster (turn to 229), or will you stand aside and await the outcome of the confrontation (turn to 375)?

2

You find a broad-limbed tree that looks easy to climb, and you clamber up to the highest boughs in order to establish your whereabouts in the forest. If you want to eat a meal and regain lost *STAMINA*,

you can do so here, perched on a branch. Remember to note the changes on your *Adventure Sheet*.

From your vantage point, you survey the landscape; now you have to decide in which direction to travel. To the west the forest thins, and you can see a wide track leading towards Kleinkastel. If you want to go to the town next, turn to 143. To the south the forest stretches into the distance like an endless green carpet. If you want to head south, turn to 155. To the east the vegetation rises up the foothills of the Cloudhigh Mountains, and in the distance the peaks form a jagged, bleak horizon. Beneath the mountains are the mine-workings. If you want to take this direction, turn to 22.

3

The more you twist and turn, the more you adhere to the glutinous slime. By the time the tongue curls round you and draws you into the Stegocéphalian's fetid maw, you are completely helpless. At least you are asphyxiated before the monster's digestive juices begin to dissolve your body.

4

The stream bubbles down a series of small rapids as the ravine becomes deeper, cooler and darker. Jumping from rock to rock, you are becoming rather footsore, and you are pleased when you find that the ravine levels off and widens, and the stream runs into a sun-dappled pool. You stop at the edge of the pool; you cannot see a way to continue, unless

you wade through the water, or cross it by jumping between the rounded boulders that are half-submerged in the pool. Will you turn back, trudge up the slippery stream-bed to the place where it veered sharply, and then climb the hillside path (turn to 358); or will you rest in the shade of the overhanging cliff while you consider your next move (turn to 179)?

5

You continue along the path, which takes you higher into the hills; there is a cool breeze, and very few trees rise out of the scrubby hillside vegetation. You look down to your right where the forest stretches away into the distance. Closer, at the foot of the slopes, you can see clearings in the woodland, some of them containing hamlets, or single huts. The path divides into two: one branch continues uphill, and you think that you can hear the sounds of fighting in that direction; if you take this path, turn to 319. The other runs downhill, back into the forest; if you take this path, turn to 144.



6

When all seven contestants have given their answers, Gloten opens his fist to reveal 2 Silver Pieces. You are one of four contestants who gave the wrong answer. The three winners step forward to acknowledge the cheers of the crowd. Gloten approaches the losers. Turn to 339.

7

You try to shoo away the baby Pteranodon, but it refuses to move. Instead, it increases the frequency and volume of its screeching. You yell at it and stamp your feet, and eventually it hops away, still shrieking. You peep over the rock, to find that the two Slave Warrior guards are approaching, attracted by the noise you have been making. You must fight them. Turn to 262.

8

You up-end your backpack and shake out your purse. All your belongings are lying on the grass. Do they include any Gold Pieces? If so, turn to 92. If not, turn to 218.

9

You prowl through the jungle towards the centre of the valley. You see no guards, but you do come across several long, low sheds that are deserted, but which you imagine have been used as barracks. The Warlord has kept very few of his soldiers in this lost world; but enough are left to guard his palace, as

you find out when you reach the edge of the jungle. Staying out of sight, you circle the clearing in which the huge stone building stands. Every doorway has sentries posted at it; the closest you can approach without being seen is to sneak up among the empty outhouses. And finally you find an unguarded entrance: a wooden lattice covers a hole in the floor of an outbuilding. You lift this cover, and your feet encounter a steep staircase. You descend into a dark tunnel illuminated by occasional torches. It leads towards the main stone building; after you have followed it for some distance, it stops at a staircase. Will you go up, presumably towards the upper levels of the palace (turn to 378), or downwards (turn to 201)?

10

The Margrave is outraged at your suggestion, and orders his men to seize you. Gloten, however, insists that you are brought on to the platform rather than thrown at once into a dungeon. The crowd surges forward to look at you, and Gloten speaks out: 'This warrior knows how a miner likes to fight! Bring two pickaxe handles! We'll settle this here and now!' He shrugs off his rich cloak. His body is short



and stout, but his arms bulge with muscles. He throws you one of two wooden staves. You circle each other, and then close in. The crowd roars its approval.

GLOTEN

SKILL 9

STAMINA 16

When the STAMINA of either you or Gloten is reduced to 4 points, you realize that the duel cannot last much longer. You have to decide how you want the fight to end. If you think it would be diplomatic to let Gloten win, you can do so without losing any more STAMINA. You simply pretend that Gloten's next few blows strike you hard, and then collapse and submit. Turn to 389. You can, instead, carry on fighting until the STAMINA of one of you is reduced to only 2 points, and that person submits to the other. When that happens, turn to 314.

11

There are fewer paths criss-crossing the forest as you continue eastwards, although the path you are on is still well defined. The woodland round you is dark and silent. You are beginning to wonder, whether you have penetrated too far into the forest – and then you see two bodies lying on the path ahead. You approach cautiously. The dead creatures are Scurrallors, long-tailed, fur-covered humanoids who live in trees and are very rarely seen by ground-dwellers. These two had been on a hunting trip: each has a bow and an empty quiver, and a bag of game birds. They have been shot down

with a crossbow: the metal bolts are still embedded in their green-leather clothing and soft brown fur. Will you search the bodies (turn to 151) or pass them by and continue along the path (turn to 230)?

12

Clouds of darkness close round you from all sides. You turn around and around under the grim gateway, desperately pushing your torch this way and that to fend off the enclosing shadow. But your torch cannot be everywhere at once, and the darkness deepens round you. Your torch is snuffed out; the black shadows wrap themselves round you and snuff out your life.

13

The little punt is trapped in the whirlpool caused by the monster's convulsions. It fills with bloody water and sinks. You cling to it with numbed fingers until the creature's writhing body crashes into it and breaks it apart. Dazed and helpless, you are barely able to keep afloat as you are carried downstream. You collide with submerged rocks and with the timbers of a jetty; roll two dice and deduct the total from your STAMINA. If you manage to survive this watery ordeal, you find yourself washed up on the eastern bank of the river. You pull yourself ashore and collapse in the undergrowth.

When you wake, you feel stiff but able to walk. Without a boat you cannot continue downriver; you begin the long walk upstream. Turn to 278.



The dark shadows recede, absorbed into the black stones of the Portal. Your vision clears: you pick up your possessions and peer into the cavern, which is still deserted. Then you turn to look through the other side of the Portal – and gaze open-mouthed at an impossible scene. Before you stretches a sunlit wilderness – a vast panorama of marsh and jungle, plains and forest, with snow-capped mountains lining a distant horizon. Your mind cannot comprehend how all this can exist in the depths of a gold mine; and then you realize that the Portal is a gateway to another world. This is not Khul: the sky is a different blue, the sun a different yellow. Some of the monstrous animals you have seen before, roaming the forest between the mines and Klein-kastel; this other world teems with them. Like mobile hills, armoured monsters lumber across the grasslands; flocks of sharp-beaked creatures soar in the skies. Somewhere in this landscape lurks the Warlord of the Slave Warriors.

You step forward and look back: from this side, the Portal is just a black cave-mouth in a hillside. Hoping to return, you conceal your burning torch in a nearby rocky cleft. Three paths lead away from the Portal; you ignore the middle way, which is the widest and most used. Will you choose to go to the left, through hilly country (turn to 239); or to the right, into the jungle (turn to 322)?

15

The stream has now become a wide river, curving through flat forestland of ancient green trunks that rise majestically, as far as the eye can see, out of dense brambly undergrowth. Your path clings to the western bank of the river, and eventually you find some evidence of habitation. An old wooden jetty juts out across the shallows. Moored to it are two boats: a flat-bottomed punt with a long pole, and a skiff with oars. A track leads from the jetty into the woods, where you see a hut. It occurs to you that boating downstream would be quicker and easier than walking. Will you take a boat (turn to 166)? Or will you go to the hut and knock on the door (turn to 275)?

16

Lignia has no weapon and no experience of combat. She offers no resistance to your blows. However, she has surprisingly hard skin, like the bark of a tree; despite all your advantages, you can inflict only 2 points of STAMINA loss on her each Attack Round. You cannot use LUCK in this situation; therefore, as Lignia has 12 points of STAMINA, it will take six combat rounds to kill her. As you attack her motionless body, you are uncomfortably aware that the leaves of the tree are rustling louder and louder, and the branches seem to be bending towards you. At the end of each Attack Round you must roll one die; if you roll a 6, turn to 279. If you reach the end of six Attack Rounds without once rolling a 6, turn to 76.

17

Even muzzled, and with all four paws enclosed in leather mittens, the huge bear is a formidable opponent. Standing on its hind legs, it is an arm's length taller than you, and its thick coat of hair is as protective as leather armour.

GIANT BROWN

BEAR

SKILL 6

STAMINA 13

If you defeat it, you find nothing of interest in the cell. You leave, closing the door behind you, and continue along the corridor. Turn to 295.

18

The rocky pinnacle is yours. You look inside the stone shelter: it is empty, clean and dry, and you decide to stay in it during the coming night. It will act as a hiding-place and as protection against the cold wind. In the light of the setting sun, you sit by the shelter to rest and reflect on your progress. You may eat a meal from your Provisions, if you want to, and restore up to 4 points of STAMINA. You take a stroll round the summit to survey your surroundings. Turn to 123.



19

The guard tosses and turns in his sleep as you creep past, but he does not wake. You pace down the stairs, circling downwards in the dark interior of the trunk, and finally you see a glimmer of grey light ahead. The stairs end, and a short tunnel winds between the tree's massive roots to the leaf-strewn forest floor. At the end of the tunnel stands an Elven Slave Warrior; he has heard you coming down the stairs and has drawn his sword in readiness. You must fight him.

ELVEN SLAVE
WARRIOR

SKILL 8

STAMINA 5

If you win, you emerge from the bottom of the Elves' tree-home and decide to get away from it as quickly as possible. Turn to 150.



20

By the flickering firelight you inspect the bodies of the Goblins. They are a battle-scarred pair: one has an eye-patch over an empty socket, the other has a hook in place of a left hand. They were professional thieves, to judge by the collection of trinkets and assorted coins that each has in his purse. You find a total of 6 Gold Pieces, which you can keep. You pull the bodies out of the hollow and return to sit by the

fire until dawn. In the grey morning, before the sun has risen, you scatter the remaining embers, make your way back to the path and continue southwards. Turn to 36.

21

You surrender to the Half-Goblin guard and wait with him as a group of warriors runs from the centre of the town to find you. They take you back to the little stone hut and push you inside – and this time they remember to lock the door. You can do nothing but wait. If you want to, you can eat a meal from your Provisions and restore up to 4 points of STAMINA. Turn to 110.





22

In spite of the jagged terrain and thick undergrowth, this part of the forest is a maze of small paths. Most of them run east-west, between the mineworkings in the mountains and Kleinkastel. Branches lead northwards into the hills and southwards into the heart of the forest. The highest peaks of the Cloudhigh Mountains can be seen above the treetops to the east, and you decide that this is the direction in which you will travel.

You have been walking for some time when you hear heavy footsteps behind you. You push on to a clearing, where you turn and see your pursuers emerging from the trees. There is a man in the background, but you have eyes only for the bizarre beast that is trotting towards you, uttering high-pitched squawks. It is the size of an ostrich but with no feathers and with claws instead of wings. The eyes in its beaked head glare down at you as it approaches. It is a *Struthiomimus*, and it became extinct millions of years ago – but here it is apparently very much alive, and intent on attacking you.

STRUTHIOMIMUS SKILL 9 STAMINA 12

After three rounds of combat, turn to 189.

23

The black shape moves towards you. 'Not good enough!' echoes its weird voice. 'Not a good enough answer. However – you have paid for your boat-

trip, and you deserve another chance to succeed. Come; step into the coracle.'

You feel weak and weary. As if sleepwalking, you paddle through the shallows and step into the little round craft. You curl up in the bottom, and as the coracle drifts away from the shore you hear the voice saying: 'You will do better next time . . .'

You wake up on a path in a forest. You feel refreshed. All your scores are at their *Initial* level. Your sword is at your side. In your backpack you have nothing but a map and enough Provisions for 2 meals. You look around; the scene is very familiar. You are sure that you have been here before. Turn to 1.

24

Your jump takes you clear of the Giant Centipede's long body, but your feet collide with its erect tail. Your head strikes the wall of the gully, and you tumble to the ground in a senseless heap. Deduct 3 points from your STAMINA. If you are still alive, you regain consciousness just as the stinging tail and clicking mandibles are converging on your body. You lash out in desperation.

GIANT CENTIPEDE SKILL 6 STAMINA 7

If you win, you step over the still wriggling legs and hurry into the jungle. Turn to 9.



25

The river is now broad and slow-moving, and it is taking you in a southerly direction. As you drift along you have time to eat a meal from your Provisions if you want to (restore up to 4 points of STAMINA) and to gaze at the scenery. Both banks are still thickly forested, but the undergrowth appears to be less dense and to consist mainly of vines and creepers. If anything, the trees are even more massive than those in the forest further north, with wide, glossy leaves. You think that open glades in the forest are becoming more frequent as you travel further south. Eventually you notice that the flow of the river has become faster; at the same time, you see the first signs of humanoid life since you took the boat: there are wooden jetties ahead, one on each bank. You can now manoeuvre your boat to one side or other of the river, to reach one of the jetties; or you can stay in midstream. Will you:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| Steer to the right, towards the west bank? | Turn to 382 |
| Continue in the centre of the river? | Turn to 104 |
| Steer to the left, towards the east bank? | Turn to 152 |



26

The Noasaurus roars, revealing rows of jagged teeth, as you launch your attack.

NOASAURUS

SKILL 8

STAMINA 12

If you manage to defeat it, you are not surprised to find that your struggle has attracted the attention of one of the Slave Warriors. You hardly have time to recover your breath before he advances towards you with mechanical movements. Turn to 135.



27

The thunder of hoof-beats dies away behind you, and the forest is silent except for the lapping of the river. And then you see it: through the gaps between the widely spaced trees, you can make out sparkling water – a vast lake, or an inland sea, rippling southwards as far as the eye can see. To the north-east its coast is thick forest; to the south-west it is bordered by wide grasslands. You walk on and approach the tree-shaded shore. Bobbing on the water, tied to a post, is a coracle. You head towards it; and a shape appears in your path. Ten paces in front of you, between you and the coracle, stands a black figure – a silhouette – a completely dark shape,

squat but humanoid, its outline suggesting a compressed Dwarf, in tattered robes and a floppy hat. And all as black as a bottomless pit.

Suddenly the shape moves; and a voice seems to emanate from the air: 'Gold! Throw gold to me or I will not let you pass!' Will you:

- Throw yourself at the shape in attack? Turn to 306
- Toss a Gold Piece towards the shape? Turn to 77
- Ignore the shape, and walk past it? Turn to 345

28

As you continue to fight the Oviraptor, you step back to dodge its beak – and collide with the emaciated body of a Slave Warrior. Four of the expressionless soldiers have entered the cage, attracted by the noise of your fight, and are silently watching your struggle with the small dinosaur. Now they intervene: they fend off the Oviraptor, take you out of the cage, and knock you unconscious again. They carry you back to the Tyrannosaurus's pit, and throw you in. You are to be a meal for the monster, and this time there is no escape.

29

The Goblins snatch the scroll from you and run off into the forest. You sit on the edge of the jetty, watching the sunlight sparkle on the river's surface. Behind you, the rustling trees are full of birdsong,

and across the wide river you catch glimpses of forest creatures flitting between the trees. You wait for the Goblins to return.

Several hours later, you have become very bored. You begin to wonder whether you have been tricked . . . perhaps the Goblins have no intention of coming back. If you decide that you have waited long enough, you can jump back into your boat, cast off from the jetty, and let the current take you downstream – turn to 104. Or you can set off in much the same direction along the riverside path – turn to 50. In either case, you have lost the letter – delete it from your *Adventure Sheet*. If you want to carry on waiting, turn to 198.

30

Reluctantly, you unbuckle your swordbelt and drop it on the wooden platform. Then you look over the edge, to find that the rope-ladder now extends to the ground, so you go down it. You wander into the dell and unenthusiastically begin to inspect the damaged plants. With your bare hands you dig holes in which you replant uprooted saplings; you clear the lawns of branches that have been hacked off shrubs by passing soldiers; you replace turf in boot-marks; you pull rubbish out of the stream. After a while, you find yourself enjoying your work. You stand up to survey the results and see Lignia walking towards you, followed by a dozen Dryads. She is holding your sword at arm's length, and she returns it to you with a shudder. 'Take this thing!'

she says. 'I no longer fear that you will use it against me or my forest. Forgive my mistrust, but we have few friends now – even the Wood Elves have turned against us. And please accept these gifts: I sense that they will be important to you.' Two Dryads approach, each bearing a tiny bird in a small wooden cage. One bird has red plumage, the other blue. You put them in your backpack, and when you look up you are alone again. You leave the clearing and continue along the narrow forest path. Turn to 144.

31

You pull the talisman from your backpack and let it hang by its thong. The wizard stares at it in disbelief, then stumbles backwards, his face white with horror and fear. 'I think I know where I have seen these markings before,' he whispers, 'and, if I am right, this thing is more fearsome than my worst imaginings. Come! Up this stairway to my library!'

In a bright, book-lined gallery, the wizard pores over dusty tomes. You cannot read the ancient script that he is studying. 'It is an old Goblin tongue,' he explains, 'and the Forest Goblins no longer speak it, still less write it. This book, old as it is, is merely a collection of fragments of songs and stories that are thousands of years older. And yes! As I thought – here is a description of a small stone tablet inscribed in the same manner as this talisman. It is apparently a replica, or representation, of something larger . . . I suspect that it will require several

hours of study to decipher this old story – and it may be no more than a fable. If you do not want to waste your time, I can carry out this research later, after my return. We can leave now.'

If you urge the wizard to leave now, turn to 102. If you want to wait while he studies his books, turn to 81.



32

At the summit of the ridge, the track passes between two rocks. You take cover there to survey the landscape on the other side of the ridge. You are looking down into a circular, bowl-shaped valley. Jungle vegetation covers most of its area, but clearings and paths have recently been cut through the verdure, and in the very centre of the valley a huge clearing surrounds a palace. This massive building is so new that its stone blocks are painfully white in the glaring sun. Wooden outbuildings cluster against its

high walls. This must be the headquarters of the Warlord who controls the Slave Warriors through the power of the Portal. Looking along the rim of the valley, you see patrols of tireless Slave Warriors. Within the valley, however, there are no signs of movement. A gully, into which you can just squeeze, runs down into the valley from your hiding-place. There is no other way to enter the valley without walking into the open – and a Slave Warrior patrol is approaching along the ridge. Will you wriggle into the gully (turn to 156); or will you step out of hiding, adopt a stiff stance and an unblinking gaze, and hope that the Slave Warriors take you for one of their own kind (turn to 247)?

33

The man holds his knife to your throat while a dozen or so roughly dressed men and women, armed with an assortment of knives, axes and staves, emerge from the undergrowth round the clearing and congregate round you. Turn to 216.

34

You retreat from the woman's enraged onslaught, trying to explain that you mean her no harm, and colliding with silk-upholstered chairs and tripping backwards over velvet floor-cushions. The woman wields her length of chain with the skill of a seasoned gladiator, and you must deduct 3 points from your STAMINA as you back away from her. If you survive this attack, the woman suddenly stops. She

is staring at the doorway. You turn to see a Dwarven Slave Warrior with a bunch of keys at his belt; he is the gaoler. The woman snarls at him, but his gaze remains fixed on you. He turns, presumably to go and seek assistance to deal with you. You must stop him, so you throw yourself across the room to fight him.

DWARVEN SLAVE

WARRIOR

SKILL 6

STAMINA 5

If you defeat the gaoler, the woman smiles at you and pats her hands together in polite applause. Turn to 276.

35

The enthusiastic mood of the hunters turns to anger as they argue with you, insisting that you must face the Triceratops alone. Your failure to do so mystifies them, and brands you as a coward. Perhaps, after all, you are not fit to be a warrior of the People. The hunters take away your spear and thrust a short-sword into your grasp before forcing you, at spear-point, towards the dinosaur. You will have to fight it; and with only a shortsword, your SKILL is reduced by 1 point for the duration of this fight. The Triceratops scuffs the grass and prepares to charge. As the beast lowers its head and thunders towards you, you despair of ever defeating it.

TRICERATOPS

SKILL 8

STAMINA 18

Your sword makes little impact on the leathery, knobby hide – deduct only 1 point from the Tricera-

tops's **STAMINA** each time you wound it. Its horns and its thick, muscular tail are formidable weapons – deduct 3 points from your **STAMINA** each time it wounds you. If you are still alive after five rounds of combat, you are relieved to hear the war-cries of the other hunters as they join in the attack. Surrounded, the Triceratops is soon overwhelmed and slaughtered. Turn to 390.

36

The trees of the forest are now so thinly spread that you feel conspicuous as you stride southwards through the grass that grows everywhere between the trees and on which herds of animals imperturbably graze. You hear the river to your left, and on your right you glimpse distant sun-baked plains beyond the trees.

You hear hoof-beats. There is little cover, and you are spotted by the riders – five Southerners in flowing robes, galloping towards you on horned, cloven-footed ponies. Will you stand and wait for them to reach you (turn to 294)? Or will you run, hoping either to outdistance them or to find a refuge (turn to 134)?

37

Consciousness returns. You are in the forest. Your body aches all over. Your eyesight seems weak; you think you must be lying on the ground, looking up at the trunks of trees that appear discoloured and distorted. You move your legs to stand up; you hear

a scuttling noise from under your body and find yourself being propelled across a clearing and under a bush. You move your arms . . . and two huge pincers swim into view in front of your eyes. The Portal has transformed you into a Giant Scorpion. You will end your life scurrying across the forest floor, preying on small woodland creatures; meanwhile the Warlord's armies will continue their conquest of Khul.

38

The soldier looks at the barrels, peering inside some and kicking the ends of others. The one next to yours disintegrates under the impact of an armoured boot. But the soldier fails to look in your barrel and, as he stamps out of the tavern, you climb out of the barrel. You find a back door; next to it is a stack of unlit torches, bound reeds soaked in pitch. You can take one, putting it in your backpack as you slip through the door.

You find yourself on a narrow track, overshadowed by forest trees; you head eastward and, out of sight of the village, you rejoin the main path you had been on before you entered the village. Turn to 11.



39

You pull yourself through the narrow slit, and slide in darkness down a short slope, landing in a foul-smelling pile of rotting meat and other rubbish. The slit was obviously the drain through which waste from the beast's enclosure is sluiced. You stagger across the fetid heap, and your outstretched hands touch a wall. You feel your way along it and discover a narrow aperture. Forcing your way through this, you find yourself wedged between two high walls; a little grey light reaches you from a long way above. You shuffle along sideways, until eventually you emerge at a torch-lit landing; stairs lead up and down; as you fear meeting your captors if you go up, you decide to step warily down the stairs. Turn to 78.

40

You are within range of the Dwarf's boat-hook, and you have to defend yourself against it. If the Koailit is still alive, it will wrap its tail round your legs and peck at your knees with its pointed beak; this will reduce your SKILL by 2 points while you are fighting the Dwarf, and cause you to lose 1 point of STAMINA each combat round.

DWARF BOATMAN SKILL 7 STAMINA 5

If you win, you can untie the boats, step into one of them, and let it carry you on your way downstream. If you choose to do this, make a note of which boat you use – the punt or the skiff – and turn to 227. If

you would rather leave the boats and continue on foot down the riverside path, turn to 79.

41

As you stand at the side of the path you notice that the ancient oak tree whose branches are sheltering you from the sun has a hole in its trunk. Peering into the dark centre of the tree, you can just make out an irregular heap of twigs and dry leaves – and something shiny. If you want to reach into the tree to pull out the heap, turn to 194. If you decide not to do this, you continue to await the arrival of the marching men. Turn to 363.





42

Standing in the middle of a circle of taut bows, you ask the Wood Elves what they want of you – but they remain silent. You are not afraid: Wood Elves are not usually unfriendly to humans. Another band of Elves enters the clearing; and you realize, from her bearing and her costume, that the leader is the Queen of the tribe. You bow as she approaches. She is stern and unsmiling, and asks you your business. You explain that you are searching for the source of the evil that has arisen in the forest. ‘Then we can help you,’ she says. ‘You should travel east, and up into the mountains; but tomorrow we will escort you there. Tonight you must rest with us.’ You thank her for her kind offer, and accept it – in fact you have little choice, as a dozen arrows are still aimed at you. ‘Forgive our suspicions,’ adds the Queen. ‘These days it is hard to know whom to trust.’ The Elves form a marching column, with you at its centre, and move off into the forest. You are walking along woodland paths, but the trees seem misty and your footsteps are muffled. If you have a Potion of True Seeing, turn to 335; if not, turn to 217.

43

You are hurled against a jagged boulder. Bones smash in every part of your body. Your corpse is carried away by the torrent.

44

The Slave Warriors see you, and stop. They turn and march away along the ridge. Your acting skills deserve applause. You are now free to enter the valley, and you slide down a dusty slope and into the shelter of the jungle. Turn to 9.

45

You step through the door and hurry away from the building. A strange noise – a series of soft pops overlaid with a sizzling hum – makes you look back. You witness the effect of Igneolite: when lit, it bursts forth in a cloud of dust that covers stone – and transforms it. You see the individual blocks of the building's stone walls and slate roof melting, flowing together and re-hardening into one seamless, featureless shape. The building has turned into a gigantic smooth boulder, with the alchemist and his gold sealed into the hollow interior. Igneolite is clearly a powerful substance; you are sure that you will find a use for the small sack of it that you have in your pack. You decide to investigate the mine entrance near by; turn to 106.

46

You guess that this ragged specimen is one of the Slave Warriors whom the Spinosaurus mentioned. You hope he will not see you. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 162. If you are Unlucky, turn to 193.

47

Horfak stops talking and steps back as you advance. 'You dare to interrupt me?' he hisses. 'And you dare to threaten violence to your Warlord, to the Emperor of all Khul? Your attack is futile. Feel the power of the Portal!' He gestures with his arms, and the black lightning crackles and seems to descend from the ceiling, enclosing you. Pain stabs into your head; your limbs feel heavy. Reduce your SKILL by 2 points for the duration of this fight. Horfak draws a two-handed sword, and a laugh bubbles from his twisted lips as he swings the blade in murderous arcs, black lightning coursing along his arms. Strengthened by the evil power of the Portal, Horfak is a fearsome foe.

HORFAK

SKILL 10

STAMINA 20

If you defeat him, turn to 170.

48

'Well done, brave warrior. The wizard will be happy to welcome you. Please step into the coracle – it will take you to the wizard's home.' The dark shadow vanishes.

You paddle through the shallows and sit down inside the little round craft, which begins to drift away from the shore. A mist creeps across the surface of the water, obscuring the sun. Soon you are no longer able to see the shoreline. After some time, a shape looms out of the mist ahead of you. It

is a tiny island, no more than fifty paces across. The coracle draws towards it, and you see that its surface is piled high with rusty weapons: swords, spears, shields, bows. The coracle bumps against a post that stands in the water; the post once supported a notice-board, but the inscription is so old that you cannot read it. You wonder what you are supposed to do.

If you decide to throw your sword on to the rusty heap on the island, turn to 357. If you decide to keep your weapon, turn to 205. If you have no weapon, turn to 97.

49

You understand only a little of the language of this mixed tribe of warriors, but it is clear that you are their prisoner. They take you up the hill and into the walled village. Here you are locked inside a small stone hut. Soon the door is thrown open, and a human woman enters. She speaks to you in an archaic dialect of your own tongue. 'Greetings, Otherworlder. My name is Witta. I will explain your situation. The gateway in the Sacred Cave used to be kind to us: once every century or two, someone from Otherworld would find it and come to us. My grandfather was the most recent arrival; a Neuberger by birth and a forester by trade, he found the gateway while exploring the caverns beneath the Cloudhigh Mountains. We call ourselves the People; here, all races are one tribe, and live in peace, unlike the tribes of Otherworld. But since

Horfak arrived, the gateway glows with evil; none but hordes of Slave Warriors enter our land through it, and Horfak orders the Slave Warriors to destroy our dwellings and make captives of us. I have more to tell – but first, you must eat. I will fetch food.' She leaves – and forgets to lock the door! Will you wait for her to return (turn to 360); or will you make a dash through the door (turn to 72)?

50

As you stride southwards alongside the rushing waterway, you find the forest thinning as the ground becomes rocky; soon you are clambering up and down crags and ravines. The path climbs higher and higher until you lose sight of the river below. Now above the tops of the forest trees, you zigzag through massive boulders on your way up a steep hill. Finally you reach the summit. It is a bare, windswept crag, cold in the red light of the setting sun. Ahead of you there is a shelter made of piled rocks and stones; next to it, motionless, a cloaked figure sits facing south. Its back is to you. Will you call out, or cough politely, to announce your presence (turn to 373)? Or will you attempt to sneak up quietly and attack the figure (turn to 171)?

51

Horfak steps back as you advance. 'You dare to threaten violence to your Warlord, to the Emperor of all Khul? Your attack is futile. Feel what the Portal can do!' Black lightning streams from the tip of his sword and surrounds you in a web of flickering



53

The heap of broken furniture is a nest. Inside it is a large egg – and, scattered about, a total of 10 Gold Pieces. You can take the egg, or the coins, or both, and put them in your backpack – but not without a fight. The tower shudders as two huge talons grasp the parapet of the belvedere, and a nightmarish creature emits a scream of rage as it sees you. It is a Pteranodon, a long-extinct flying saurian. It stalks towards you, its scaly wings outstretched almost across the full width of the room, its toothless beak wide enough to swallow you whole. You will have to fight it.

PTERANODON SKILL 5 STAMINA 8

If you kill it, you climb over its body and return to the empty first-floor room of the tower. Turn to 109.

54

The Ankylosaurus is quick-footed despite its massive bulk. As you attack, it turns and swings its tail towards you. The end of its tail consists of a knobby ball of bone, as big as a barrel and with long spines. If the Ankylosaurus succeeds in striking you, you must deduct 6 points of STAMINA; not many creatures could survive such a blow.

ANKYLOSAURUS SKILL 4 STAMINA 22

As you fight, you leap and run about the dinosaur, trying to stay clear of its murderous tail. If you survive long enough to inflict three wounds on the

animal, it tires of the conflict, and ambles away downhill. You are able to continue your uphill trek. Turn to 32.

55

You clamber on to the seat and sink into the pile of cushions. This is a very comfortable throne. You rest your head against the high, carved back and place your hands on the upholstered arms. The arms feel a little loose; you inspect them and find that they are hinged – you could lift them. Will you:

Leave the chair and wait for
Gloten?

Turn to 211

Try to lift both of the arms
together?

Turn to 173

Try to lift the right arm, then
the left?

Turn to 126

Try to lift the left arm, then
the right?

Turn to 296

56

You have spoken the correct number. 'Very good! Well done!' says the enchanted door as you open it and step on to a thick branch. Clinging to twigs as you realize that you are in the topmost branches of the Elves' tree-home, you make your way to a narrow, rickety stairway that slopes downwards, criss-crossing from branch to branch. As you climb down it, you pass openings in the massive trunk and wooden buildings set among the branches, and you can see that all the Elves have been turned into

Slave Warriors, and are silent and motionless. They do not hear you pass, and your staircase ends on one of the tree's broad lower limbs. You hear a groan, and you decide to investigate. Turn to 249.

57

The stream runs along the bottom of a valley, and as you follow its course the sides of the valley grow steeper and higher until you find yourself in a deep gorge. The cliffs that rise vertically from both banks of the swiftly flowing brook block out most of the daylight. You are on the west bank, where a narrow path runs alongside the watercourse. At the next bend in the river your path is squeezed between the cliff and the water – and at that point there is a large cave in the cliff face. You cannot cross the stream here, so you must either continue along the path, past the cave-mouth (turn to 246), or attempt to climb out of the ravine (turn to 365).

58

You turn away from the Noasaurus's questing snout and start to creep towards the nearest tree. This seems to infuriate the huge animal; it roars and lunges at you, raking your back with its claws and knocking you to the ground. Deduct 2 points from your STAMINA. If you are still alive, you pick yourself up and see the Noasaurus strutting away as a Slave Warrior, attracted by the noise, advances towards you with his sword at the ready. Turn to 135.

The wizard's metal horse skims the canopy of the forest, sparks from its hoofs scorching the topmost leaves. You travel north in this manner until the green carpet below you is pierced by the stony outcrops of the foothills of the Cloudhigh Mountains.

The wizard brings his machine to earth in a clearing. 'If you walk east from here,' he says, 'I think you will soon find yourself in the thick of the trouble, if that is what you're seeking. But if I can persuade the Margrave and the mine-owners and the townspeople to forge an alliance to fight the evil, we will need warriors such as you. Can I not convince you to come with me to Kleinkastel?' If you insist on setting off into the forest, you bid farewell to the wizard, watching his machine rise into the air once more and fly into the distance, before you plunge into the green undergrowth. Turn to 22. If you agree to accompany the wizard, you stay seated on the metal horse as it lifts into the air. Turn to 398.

Your torch stays alight. The echoing footsteps are now almost at the open door of the ice room, but you have melted two holes in the frozen sheet that covers the closed door. With your free hand you hammer on the ice; cracks zigzag across it; and then the whole curtain of ice shatters and falls like a pane of glass. Three Slave Warriors are crossing the room towards you; with desperate strength you push

against the door. It opens and you fall through the doorway; a descending blade catches your arm, and you cry out in pain, but you turn, slam the door, brace your shoulder against it and secure it by sliding home the iron bolts. Deduct 2 points from your STAMINA for your wound. The Slave Warriors hurl their thin bodies against the door, heedless of self-injury; you sit with your back against the other side of the door, safe for the moment. You have time to eat a meal from your Provisions and restore up to 4 points of STAMINA. In front of you stretches a corridor lined with torches. You pick yourself up and walk towards the far end of it. Turn to 372.

You join the excited crowds heading for the Market Square. You overhear gossip: the town aldermen, the Margrave and his lieutenants, and the chief priests from the temples have been in conclave for days . . . a mysterious wizard has arrived to join their deliberations . . . there will be an announcement at the public meeting today.

Kleinkastel's dignitaries are gathered together on a platform in the Square. Spectators point out for your benefit the most important ones: the Margrave, tall and young; the elderly priests; the merchants and the mine-owners, among them Gloten, who addresses the crowd. 'You all know,' shouts the short, stout mine-owner, 'that I have long been worried about events in the forest. I hope that among you are some brave warriors who have responded to my



previous appeals. The Margrave now shares my fears; and we have recent news that the situation is even worse than we had thought. An ancient evil, a gateway between our world and another, has come to life. With its help, a Warlord has arisen and commands an ever-growing army of Slave Warriors. We must unite to form an army of our own; and, to buy time, we must find a Champion who will try to find and defeat the Warlord. The Champion will be chosen by tournament. Contestants for this position, to the platform, please!

Will you enter the tournament (turn to 190), or will you set out for the forest immediately (turn to 268)?

62

As you stroll across the clearing, enjoying the feel of soft grass beneath your feet, you become aware of movements in the midst of the grove of trees. You approach cautiously; one by one a dozen delicate, graceful forms step from among the trees. They look like tall young women or young female Elves, but their skin is dark brown, their hair is green and their bodies are covered with leaves. They are Dryads, tree-spirits that until now you thought existed only in legends. They form a line to block your way, and wordlessly point to the edge of the dell. It seems they want you to leave. Will you:

Leave the dell, skirt round it,
and continue along the forest
path?

Turn to 144

Go to the edge of the dell and
climb the tree with the platform
in it?

Turn to 366

Run at the Dryads, to force a
way through their line?

Turn to 297

63

A flame flickers back to life on the smoking tip of your torch. A tendril of darkness curls round it, trying to quench it; but it stays alight, and the shadows begin to retreat. Your two lights flame up more strongly. The cold releases its icy grip on your body. You have survived the Portal's final attack. Turn to 14.

64

You stamp on the embers of the fire and scatter the ashes. You lie on the warm earth, your head resting on your backpack and your sword unsheathed at your side. You fall asleep; and during the night you dream. You have a feeling of being suffocated beneath a warm, black blanket; you want to struggle but you cannot move. You wake up, shaking, and look skywards – but the stars are concealed by a vast pair of gently moving wings. Only two lights are to be seen: the glittering red eyes of the monstrous Vampire Bat that is gliding down to feast on your blood. You grasp your sword and thrust upwards as the leathery wings enclose your body and the bat's fangs seek your throat.

VAMPIRE BAT

SKILL 6

STAMINA 7

If you survive, you stay awake for the rest of the night. At dawn, you return to the path and continue southwards. Turn to 36.

65

The woman raises her right hand, makes a sign in the air and addresses you in a language you do not understand. You reply in your own tongue; she understands, and smiles at you. 'You must be a recent addition to the ranks of my subjects,' she says in an archaic dialect of your own tongue. 'I am your Queen, Anxis the Hunter; obey me, and help me take my revenge on the verminous Horfak. I must escape from these chains; I must have a weapon. Both can be achieved if together we prepare an ambush for my gaoler. I will shout until he comes; you stay by the door and take him as he enters the room.' You take up your position; Anxis starts to scream.

Very soon, a Dwarven Slave Warrior with a bunch of keys at his belt appears in the doorway. As he enters, you grab him from behind – and Anxis, with a ghastly grin on her face, strangles him with her chains. 'Horfak's chamber is above,' says Anxis as she unlocks her manacles and picks up the Dwarf's shortsword. 'He wants me for his consort. Pah! I would rather wed a jellyfish. All he will get from me is naked steel. Come! Let us finish the loathsome scum!' If you have met Dirlin, turn to 138; if not, turn to 334.

By the time your fight is over, there is a lull in the battle for the hill. Your intervention has prevented the Troglodytes from overwhelming the Goblins, and they have scattered into the mountains, leaving the hillside littered with the bodies of their fallen comrades and an even greater number of slain Goblins. Only two Goblin warriors remain in sight, standing at the base of the glittering hilltop statue. If you want to investigate this idol, you can try to sneak to the top of the Goblins' warren in order to spring a surprise attack on the two near the statue – turn to 172; or you can advance towards them openly, dragging the bodies of the Troglodytes you have defeated in order to show that you have helped the Goblins – turn to 343. If you are not interested in the statue, you retrace your steps along the hillside path and descend into the forest – turn to 144.

67

You run between the Spider and the Goblin, who falls to the ground, gasping for breath. The Spider stops and swivels to face you. It jerks its claw-tipped front legs in the air. Its mandibles open and close, making sounds that are distressingly like human speech. Its body is as big as an ox, and its crooked legs tower above you. It attacks.

GIANT SPIDER

SKILL 7

STAMINA 7

If you win, turn to 220.

You are inside a semi-circular palisade enclosing a flat area of dirt before the cliff that rises ahead of you. Scattered across the enclosure are derelict wooden sheds. A well-trodden track leads from the gate in the palisade to a hole in the face of the cliff. The hole is the entrance to the Horfak and Dirlin mine workings – and also to the source of the Slave Warriors and the other weird creatures that have been terrorizing the forest inhabitants. As you watch from behind a hut, another group of scarecrow-like Slave Warriors shuffles out of the mine entrance and heads for the gates. With them is a glowering, armoured beast with a low belly and a mountainous back crested with bony plates. When they have gone, you approach the dark hole. A torch flames in a bracket. You take it and, if you have a miner's helmet and a candle-stub, you put on the helmet and light the built-in lamp. Then you enter the tunnels. The mine is disused and deserted; some passages are blocked by fallen rocks. Only one trail looks well worn; you follow it deeper and deeper into the mountainside. It leads you, finally, to a rough hole at the end of a narrow tunnel. You step through, into a natural cavern. In the centre of this cavern stand three huge blocks of black stone, one laid as a lintel across the other two to form a massive gateway. Turn to 397.



69

You pick up a small stone and throw it at the figure – and are amazed to see the stone veer to one side, as if caught by a strong gust of wind. It circles the stationary old man and seems to pick up speed as it hurtles straight back towards you. You dodge out of its path, but the stone follows you and strikes you in the stomach with tremendous force. Deduct 2 points from your STAMINA. If you are still alive, you are writhing on the sand, trying to recover your breath, when you again hear the disembodied voice of the black shadow. ‘Such bad manners! And such foolishness, too. It is inadvisable to throw stones at a wizard.’ You look up at the old man, who still has not moved a muscle. ‘Are you a wizard?’ you manage to gasp. Turn to 175.

70

You fight your way towards the Warlord, who is trying to steer his chariot through the mêlée to the Sacred Cave. You leap up alongside him, push him out of the chariot, then jump down to the ground beside him. He turns to face you – and you recoil in horror. His head, swaying on his shoulders like a huge balloon, is a bulbous misshapen lump of flesh. His face is stretched and distorted, the features lost among rolls of blotched and flaking skin. You are separated from the main battle by the bulk of the chariot, and in the comparative calm the Warlord taunts you. ‘You dare to face me? Fool! I am Horfak! My strength alone could defeat you; with the Portal, I am invincible. Feel my power!’ He

waves a hand, and the air vibrates; bolts of black lightning crackle along his arms as he unsheathes his two-handed sword. If you are wearing the mad god’s mirrored helmet, or have another mirror, you can interrupt Horfak’s gloating and place the mirror in front of his face – turn to 330. Otherwise, you waste no more time, but attack – turn to 51.

71

Your little craft manages to stay afloat. The monster’s convulsions lessen and finally cease as the huge body sinks to the bottom of the river. You are battered, dazed and drenched. Deduct 2 points from your STAMINA. If you are still alive, you find yourself lying in the keel, with fetid water sloshing over you. The boat is wallowing, and you force yourself to concentrate on bailing out as much water as you can. When you look around, you realize that you have drifted back to the centre of the river, and you continue to float downstream. Turn to 25.

72

You run through the doorway and out into a narrow street. There are folk all around you, going about their daily business; as you hurry through the lanes between the stone huts, you realize that the People are such a mixture of types that you can easily blend into the crowd. You head for one of the gates in the town’s wall, where you find that escape will not be quite as easy as you had thought. The gate is guarded: a Goblin-faced being as tall as a man bars your way with a mace. ‘Everyone’s to stay in town

for the ceremony tonight,' he says, as far as you can understand. 'Here! You're a stranger! Who are you?' Behind him, the wooden gates are open, and the open countryside beckons; the streets round the gate are deserted, but you can hear a hue and cry beginning in the centre of the town – your escape from the hut has been discovered. The Half-Goblin hears the noise too, and eyes you with increasing suspicion. To get through the gate, you must fight him; if you decide to do this, turn to 367. If you give yourself up without a fight, turn to 21.

73

'What's this piece of old parchment?' sneers the officer, snatching the scroll from your hand. As he reads it, his expression remains unchanged – but his face gradually turns white. He gulps, rolls up the warrant, hands it back to you, salutes, and says through gritted teeth: 'Please accept my apologies. My men and I are at your disposal.' You reply that all you require is a rest and a meal, and to be allowed to remain in the village while the troopers search it. The officer orders a couple of soldiers to bring you a table, a chair and some rations, and you eat a pleasant meal in the village square, restoring up to 4 points of STAMINA if you need to. Then you go to find out what, if anything, the soldiers have discovered in the village. Turn to 327.



74

You have many questions that you would like to ask: What are the Slave Warriors? Where is this evil Portal? – but it is clear that the Elf, imprisoned in the body of the badly wounded Spinosaurus, is almost exhausted. Gasping for breath, it manages to continue: 'The Margrave in Kleinkastel, the mine-owners, the King of the Goblins, even the Wood Elves – none of them know how bad things are here. Gartax was a miner; he had the sense to get people out of his village before the Slave Warriors arrived. Now he and his followers live in the forest, trying to organize some kind of resistance. He's camped not far from here – half a league to the south-east. He can explain what's going on. Now I must rest. Thanks for your help, warrior.'

You return to the path. Will you now continue along it, south-westwards, towards Kleinkastel (turn to 143)? Or will you strike out eastwards, straight into the wild and wooded foothills of the Cloudhigh Mountains (turn to 22)? Or will you enter the forest in a south-easterly direction, hoping to find Gartax (turn to 263)?

75

You take a few steps backwards, and then run at the Giant Centipede. You leap upwards just before the creature's clicking mandibles touch your legs. Roll one die twice. If the total is less than your current SKILL, turn to 337; if the total is the same as, or greater than, your SKILL, turn to 24.

76

At last, Lignia lies motionless at your feet, and the branches of all the nearby trees are suddenly still. Lignia shed no blood; even as you watch, the wounds that you have inflicted begin to heal, and a slight rustling of leaves begins again. You decide to leave as quickly as possible; the rope-ladder has unrolled to the ground, and you use it to descend from the treetop platform. By the time you reach the bottom of the tree, its branches are writhing towards you with renewed enthusiasm; you assume Lignia is recovering her strength. You are now once again on the ridge that circles the idyllic garden dell. Will you continue your journey by walking straight through the middle of the dell (turn to 318); or will you walk round the edge of it to reach the far side (turn to 144)?

77

The Gold Piece sparkles as it turns in the air. The strange black being makes no move either to catch the coin or to dodge it. The coin meets no resistance; it does not strike the dark figure; it simply disappears into the blackness as if it had been thrown down a deep well. Turn to 225.

78

The staircase is lit by torches. You reach the bottom, which seems to be a dead end: a short corridor leads from the foot of the stairs to a blank stone wall. You wonder if a secret door is hidden here. On the wall hangs a handwritten sign, part of which appears to be in code:

TIDSIV FUUS! KEY IS UNDER MAT!

You search the floor of the corridor, back towards the stairs; you cannot see a mat of any sort. But the corridor is wider than the stairs, and there is a pool of shadow next to, and underneath, the staircase; and you can make out the edge of something that might be a piece of cloth – or even a mat. Will you look under the staircase (turn to 341); or will you say the words 'under mat', in the hope that they are magic passwords (turn to 386)? If you want to try a different password of your own choice, write down the words you will say before turning to 184.

79

The path continues beside the river for many miles and then branches off from it and takes you deep into the forest. You stumble and trip through the bushes and creepers that stretch across the path almost as if they had been placed there to obstruct you. A voice with an unfamiliar accent cries out for help somewhere ahead. You run forward – and tumble into a pit lined with sharpened stakes. Goblins crowd round the lip of the pit, pulling on the ropes, and your broken body is hoist upwards in a net. Human stew for supper tonight!





82

The Korven overhead shriek in frustration as you escape into the forest. You find a path and follow it, without meeting anyone or anything, until the forest begins to thin, and you hear running water. Through the trees you glimpse a stream. A pathside sign reads 'Deadpan Wharf', and as you turn the next corner you see warehouses, jetties and barges huddled between the forest and fast-flowing water. This once-sleepy supply point is now alive with macabre activity: silently, tirelessly, mechanically, Dwarf Slave Warriors are loading boxes into barges. You sneak through the trees to the doors of one of the warehouses, and peer in. It is empty, except for rows of long oblong boxes. You hear footsteps approaching, so you decide to hide in one of the boxes. You lift up the lid – and a Slave Warrior slowly sits upright in the box. You draw your sword – but, as you do so, other boxes begin to open, with pale bony fingers clawing out of the darkness, blank-eyed faces turning towards you from all sides. Dwarven Slave Warriors meet you as you run for the doors. Your adventure ends here.

83

You conclude that Kleinkastel is a town of skinflints and cowards. Some of the wealthy citizens that you accost look down their noses at you as they brush past, while others back away as if afraid that you are a thief. You are becoming almost delirious with hunger, and the increasing desperation of your pleas only serves to alarm the people you address.

No one will help you. It looks as if you will have to suffer the loss of 4 points of *STAMINA*, and then continue your day in a weakened state – turn to 61. Or you can try to steal enough money to buy a meal – turn to 304.

84

As you trudge up the slope you realize that this mine is not as deserted as it had first appeared. The mine entrance is a simple opening in the hillside, buttressed with timbers; from within it you hear a continuous high-pitched twittering noise. The one-storey building, made of large blocks of stone, is big and rambling. It has only one door that you can see, and a number of slit-like windows through which you can see a flickering light. Before you reach the building, the door is thrown open and a bizarre figure runs out. He is a human, you think, tall and thin but stooped with age. His tufts of white hair and thick round eye-glasses give him a comical appearance, but his strangest feature is his right arm, which from shoulder to fingertips is made entirely of metal rods and wires. It clatters as he waves and shouts at you. 'At last! A fellow human! Greetings – I've seen none but those accursed Slave Warriors for weeks now, and my work is nearing completion. Please help me – I'm an old man, and this metal arm is more decorative than useful, I'm afraid.'

Will you agree to help the old man? If so, turn to 385. If you refuse, you can go on to the mine entrance (turn to 106), or return to the main path (turn to 5).

85

One by one, knives, hatchets, spears and axes hurtle through the air towards you and bury their blades in the wooden board you are standing against. The warriors of the People are displaying all their skill tonight: their weapons shave your skin and impale your clothing, but not a single one wounds you. Turn to 174.

86

For untold hours you lie senseless, half-covered by ice-cold river water and exposed to the burning sun. Deduct 4 points from your *STAMINA*. If you are still alive, you eventually regain consciousness.

You are lying, face down, in mud. Every muscle in your body aches as if you are being tortured on the rack. Your head pounds. You drag yourself out of the water, on to firmer ground. Amazingly, you still have your sword and your backpack, although the contents of the pack have been lost: delete all Provisions, equipment and Gold Pieces from your *Adventure Sheet*. You are on the west bank of the river. It is daylight, but you cannot guess how long you have been here – hours? days? You rest until you feel able to move, then you head south through the forest – turn to 36.

87

You are unable to withstand the shape-changing power of the Portal. Through a red mist of pain, you watch in horror as your limbs distort and your body bulges and contracts. As you sink into merciful unconsciousness, your last sight is of the caged birds: as their tiny bodies crumple and then expand again, the one with red feathers suddenly becomes blue; the blue one acquires red plumage. Turn to 37.

88

You cannot escape from this fight; if you try to retreat, the Struthiomimus will run you down within minutes.

SLAVE WARRIOR SKILL 6 STAMINA 9

If you win, you can stay in the clearing to search the body (turn to 160) or leave immediately, following the eastward path (turn to 264).

89

You step through the Portal, and you are once again in the cavern, deep below the Cloudhigh Mountains. With one last glance at the sunlit jungles of the lost world, you set off into the mine-workings, hoping to make your way back to Kleinkastel. Your future plan is to lead a team of volunteers back to the mine to try and destroy the Portal by looping ropes round it and pulling the stones apart. You have to admit to yourself that it seems a hopeless mission. You turn a corner and come upon a tunnel full of Goblin Slave Warriors. They are milling about pur-

poselessly – until they see you. Then they attack. You are outnumbered, overwhelmed and killed.

You have failed in your quest: Horfak the Warlord is dead, but the Portal has the power to maintain the Slave Warriors in their grim parody of life. Many people will give their lives as the Margrave's army fights its way inch by inch into the forest and eventually into the mines. The Slave Warriors will fight to the very end; and the last few will block the entrance to the cavern of the Portal – its evil will live on, waiting to be discovered by the next greedy being who digs too deep under the mountains.

90

'So the bigwigs in Kleinkastel have decided to do something at last! Or at least Gloten has. He's the sharpest of the mine-owners – he started out himself as a miner, just like us. I believe your story. I'm Gartax. These are some of my people. The rest are in camp, to the south. We have to go back there now. Come with us – a trained sword will be useful.' You accompany Gartax at the head of his short column of rough and ready troops. Bit by bit he tells you his story.

Gartax and his people lived in villages in the foothills of the Cloudhigh Mountains. Alarmed by a sudden influx of ferocious and abnormal beasts and by the disappearance of villagers, Gartax and his followers took to the forest. Now, Gartax tells you, entire settlements are being found deserted. Silent, pale-skinned soldiers, the Slave Warriors, infest the

area – and some of them are recognizable as mining folk who disappeared weeks ago. Others are tribesmen from the south, and some are Goblins. Gartax had intended to create a woodland army to resist these invaders, but their numbers increase daily and Gartax's only aim now is to lead his followers safely out of the forest. Finally, Gartax falls silent.

Will you ask for information about Gloten (turn to 362)? Or ask if there is anyone else who can help (turn to 185)?

91

You tie one end of your rope round one of the uprooted floorboards, which you then place across the gap in the floor. You drop the coil of rope through the gap and, hand over hand, you begin to descend, grasping the rope between knees and ankles as you go. You see that these upper branches of the Elves' tree-home are a maze of ramps and stairs that link the wooden dwellings. As you abseil past open windows and doorways, you glimpse some of the Elves: each is stationary and silent and, now that the Queen's illusion spell has dissipated, it is clear that all the Wood Elves are Slave Warriors, having been enthralled by the evil power that you hope to find and defeat.

You reach the end of the rope, but you have not yet reached the ground. You scramble on to one of the tree's broad lower limbs, and as you stand there indecisively, you hear a groan. It seemed to come

from inside the tree's trunk. Will you investigate (turn to 249), or attempt the jump to the ground (turn to 293)?

92

'What a paltry sum!' guffaws the bandits' leader. 'Just our luck to come across the most destitute warrior in the whole of Khul. I'll tell you what, my friend: this gold of yours isn't enough to make you rich, and it matters to us still less. Let's have a little game. Let's wager these Gold Pieces on one throw of our swords – I'm sure you've seen the way we gamble in camp. Or, if you won't do that, let's have a decent fight. Kran here is our best swordsman – you can fight him for your money, and your other possessions, and your life. What do you say?'

If you want to gamble for your money in a game of chance, turn to 331. If you choose to duel to the death with the bandit Kran, turn to 164.

93

You remain motionless as the Noasaurus's snout sways towards you, nostrils snuffling; you manage to keep still even when the beast's fetid mouth nuzzles your face. But one of the Slave Warriors notices that the Noasaurus has discovered something interesting at the edge of the grove, and the huge creature turns and struts away as the Slave Warrior, sword at the ready, advances with mechanical steps. Turn to 135.

94

The Stegocephalian is vast and its skin is as tough as boiled leather, but its only weapon is its tongue.

STEGOCEPHALIAN SKILL 3 STAMINA 19

If you survive until you have inflicted enough wounds to reduce the creature's STAMINA to 12 or less, the Stegocephalian realizes that it is not worth getting its tongue perforated just for one meal of human being. It flicks its tongue and you fly out of the cave, landing with a painful bump (deduct 2 points from your STAMINA) on the path next to the stream. If you are still alive, the restrictions on your SKILL no longer apply, and you can charge back into the cave to finish your battle with the Stegocephalian. If you do this, and win, turn to 377. If you have had enough fighting and decide to continue along the path, turn to 15.

95

You thrust your hand into the cold liquid and your fingers grab a glittering chunk of gold-bearing ore. It does not move. No matter how hard you pull, the nugget will not budge; it is as if it is set in cement. You withdraw your arm. If you reach in again to try and pick up a smaller nugget, turn to 186. If you give up fishing for nuggets, and return to the other room to help Azudraz, turn to 316.



96

The silvery light from the ring on your finger is dim and flickering, but it is a thing of brightness and beauty that your mind clings to as you are engulfed in wave after wave of intimidating vileness. Roll one die three times. If the total is higher than your current STAMINA score, turn to 340; if the total is the same or lower, turn to 105.

97

Your coracle begins to drift away from the island of rusty weapons and it is soon swallowed by the mist. After a while, you see another, larger island appearing out of the haze. The sun breaks through and shines on wooded slopes. The coracle glides into a bay, where you see a figure waiting for you on the beach. It is a tiny old man – perhaps an old Dwarf or Goblin – wearing a tattered cloak and a floppy hat. The coracle runs aground on the sand. The figure does not make the slightest movement; you peer at it and decide that it is human, an old man – unless it is a very life-like statue. As you step ashore, he stares at you, or at the sea beyond you, without moving. Will you ask him if he's a wizard (turn to 175), or throw a pebble at him to see if he's real (turn to 69)?



98

Only the Slave Warriors hear your cries. The one that was carrying you kicks you in the torso and, while you are winded, knocks you on the head again. You lose consciousness immediately, and are unaware of being thrown into the pit and eaten by the Tyrannosaurus.

99

The tower looks abandoned and derelict. It stands in a clearing which the forest has begun to repossess. Solidly built of blocks of stone, it has four storeys, of which only the topmost has started to crumble. Ivy clings to its pitted walls. There are no openings – not even an arrow-slit – in the ground floor. A flight of stone steps leads up to the only doorway, in the first floor. Higher up, there are narrow windows, indicating the position of the second storey; and you can see that the top storey was a belvedere with wide arches supporting a domed roof that has started to collapse.

You climb the steps and look through the doorless entrance. Arrow-slits provide a little light. There is one large room, dry, dusty and empty. It looks like a good place to spend the night. A trapdoor is set into the centre of the floor. If you decide to lift it and inspect the cellar, turn to 129. If not, turn to 359.



100

The narrow path takes you up a ridge, and as you reach the top you stop in amazement. You are looking down into the most beautiful garden you have ever seen. It is a large bowl-shaped dell, clear of trees except for a fringe of woodland round its circumference and a graceful spinney at its centre. A stream flows from a waterfall at the edge of the dell to a small lake near the central group of trees. Dense patches of shrubs and flowers decorate the lush grass which carpets the ground. You cannot believe that such a place could occur naturally in the middle of a wild forest. You notice also that the garden has been damaged. Booted feet have trodden down the grass, and plants have been cut with swords. And then you see the rope-ladder, only half unrolled, hanging against the trunk of a nearby tree; looking up into the branches, you notice a wooden platform. Will you cross the clearing (turn to 62), or will you climb the tree to reach the platform (turn to 366)?

101

Before you can reach the edge of the clearing, you hear a ferocious shriek and the rattle of claws. You turn, to see the huge bird hurtling towards you, flapping its tiny wings in anger. Not a moment too soon, you draw your sword.

PHORORHACOS SKILL 7 STAMINA 12

After three rounds of combat, you notice out of the corner of your eye that the man with the knife is



standing near by, hands on hips. He speaks. 'Enough! Enough, Agrid! Hold still that beak of yours for a moment. And you, stranger, put up your sword. You are a well-matched pair for a duel, and you will only wound each other badly if you carry on.' The bird hesitates; you have a chance to deliver a fatal blow. Will you strike (turn to 351)? Or will you, too, pause in your attack (turn to 393)?

102

The wizard leads the way up a staircase to the roof. Stumbling between slate-covered slopes, you finally catch up with the wizard on a flat expanse of tiles. The little old man is standing next to a misshapen statue of a horse. It is made of bronze and gleams brilliantly. 'Not as elegant as a Pegasus, I admit,' says the wizard, 'but rather more reliable – and it is all my own work. Now jump on behind me, and don't forget to hold on to the handles!'

The wizard settles in the front saddle, and moves some of the glass rods that bristle from the horse's mane. Sparks sizzle from under the metal hooves – and the machine is airborne. It rises through the thick mist that surrounds the wizard's residence, and then you are out in the sunlight, with the blue expanse of the lake beneath you (and, you notice, no sign either of any mist or of any islands in the lake!).

The wizard turns to you. 'I'm going to Kleinkastel to try to organize some co-ordinated action against

this rising evil. You should come too, we'll need doughty warriors. But I'll put you down in the forest if you'd prefer it.'

Will you go with the wizard to Kleinkastel (turn to 398) or ask to be left in the forest (turn to 59)?

103

The statue of the Goblin god towers above you, and you are now able to see that the brilliant scintillation has nothing to do with jewels – there are thousands of pieces of reflective glass embedded all over the surface of the statue. Pieces of mirror litter the ground at your feet; if you want to, you can pick one up and put it in your backpack. You hear a noise and turn to see two Goblin warriors tiptoeing from behind the statue. They see you at the same time, but before you or they can act, a wild howling fills the air as the Troglodytes emerge from within the mound and begin to climb towards the statue. Like the Goblins, you move back to the base of the statue to await the Troglodytes' assault. Turn to 203.

104

Your little boat is swept along by the current and buffeted by sudden eddies. You cling to your seat; to your right, the forested bank continues as usual, but as you career past the left bank you see that it rises steeply, with sheer cliffs topped with a treeless crag. Abruptly, you are past the boulder-strewn base of the cliff and you find that your river is joining with another, even wider and faster, that

floods in from an easterly direction. Together, the waters of the two rivers continue southwards in a torrent. Your boat is tossed about like a cork. And then you reach the rapids: the river cascades over half-submerged rocks. You can do nothing but hope that you will reach calmer waters quickly, before the boat smashes against one of the granite boulders. If your boat is a skiff, turn to 178. If it is a punt, turn to 214.

105

Like a rock standing in the midst of gale-swept waves, your mind survives the Portal's onslaught. The pulses of power finally ebb away. You are still free; but you have not yet felt the full force of the ancient evil. The Portal has failed to turn you into a Slave Warrior; you are a reject, unfit for use in the Warlord's army. Your mind is too strong to be overruled; instead, the Portal will transform your body. You find that you cannot move from the shadow under the Portal. You are a prisoner, trapped by invisible walls. You do not know what to expect next. You lay out whatever possessions and equipment you may have in front of you; as you do so, you feel your flesh being touched. Invisible hands pluck at your body, squeeze and twist your limbs, as if gauging the amount of force required to alter your shape. You cry out in pain as the pressure increases. If you have two cage-birds with you, turn to 302. If not, turn to 167.

106

Peering into the blackness of the hillside tunnel, you see that a rockfall has blocked the passage, only a few paces from the timber-framed entrance. Between the entrance and the tumbled rocks there is a narrow doorway, and it is from here that the continuous twittering emanates. If you decide to go through the doorway, turn to 371. There is nothing else of interest on this bleak hillside, so the only alternative is to rejoin the main path – turn to 5.

107

Gloten is astonished. 'You are not only a diplomat and a warrior,' he says. 'It is clear that you are also either remarkably perceptive or very clever – or both. Before we meet the Margrave to discuss your mission, come with me to my house.'

You accompany the mine-owner to his mansion on the outskirts of the town. His servants show you into an audience-chamber, where you are left alone. Apart from tapestries and a few couches, the only item of furniture in the room is an enormous armchair. It is as big as a throne, and you assume that it is Gloten's chair. While you are waiting for Gloten to return, will you:

- Sit patiently on a couch?
- Sit in Gloten's armchair?
- Search the armchair?

- Turn to 211
- Turn to 55
- Turn to 347

108

The bear looks at you with suspicion as you stand in the doorway. You step forward, and the animal begins to growl and rub its covered paws against the leather muzzle that surrounds its snout. You fear that the noise it is making will be heard by a guard. Will you step back, close and bolt the door, and continue along the corridor (turn to 295); or will you approach the bear and make signs asking for silence (turn to 208); or will you attack the bear (turn to 17)?

109

It is now dark, and you decide to make camp in a corner of the first floor of the tower. You are very hungry, and in need of some sustenance. You must eat one meal from your Provisions or lose 4 points of STAMINA.

Your sleep is undisturbed and you wake at dawn. You leave the tower and return to the path, following it southwards. Turn to 36.



Eventually the door of your prison opens and Witta escorts you out of the hut. It is evening and the streets are illuminated by flaring torches. You are taken to a large open space at the edge of the town; a tiled canopy, supported on timber pillars, extends from the battlements of the town wall and covers the entire area. All the townspeople are gathered under this roof, and they greet your appearance with a buzz of conversation. The People are a mixture of every type of humanoid you have encountered on Khul, as well as some that you have never seen before. Witta explains: 'The man with the scaly skin, looking a bit like a lizard, is the Shaman of this town. The others, dressed like him in coloured robes and feathered head-dresses, are shamans from the outlying towns and domains. They are waiting for you to begin the Ordeal. You must stand against that wooden board; the warriors will throw weapons, testing their skill; with luck, they will all miss you. If you flinch, you fail the Ordeal – the heads of previous failures can be seen hanging from the rafters. If you keep still, you will have proved your bravery and will be accepted into the People.'

All eyes are on you as you lean back against the scarred surface of the board and await the thud of the first weapon. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 85; if you are Unlucky, turn to 233.



You begin to think that Kleinkastel is a town of skinflints and cowards. Some of the wealthy citizens that you accost look down their noses at you as they brush past, while others back away as if fearing that you are a thief. But in the end a very important-looking merchant, short and stout and dressed in rich furs, stops to scrutinize you. Without a word, he hands you a small purse. You open it to find 3 Gold Pieces within; when you look up to thank your benefactor, you find that he has gone. You immediately spend 1 Gold Piece on a hearty breakfast, thus avoiding any loss of STAMINA, and return to the bustling streets in good spirits. Turn to 61.

You sit with your back against the rock and watch the baby Pteranodon as it gulps down one of your precious meals. It flaps its wings, then settles on your knee to bask in the sunshine. You can tell by the tightening grip of its talons that it is growing stronger by the minute. You push it away and stand up to peer over the rock; but the Pteranodon has become quite attached to you, and it flutters up to perch on your shoulder. The two Slave Warrior guards are, or were, aged Gnomes. They see the Pteranodon and begin to advance towards your hiding-place. You prepare yourself for a fight – but the Pteranodon saves you the trouble. With a terrifying scream it launches itself into the air and swoops towards the Slave Warriors, snapping at

them with its beak and raking them with its talons. Two old Gnomes, even when armed with knives and controlled by the iron will of the Warlord of the Portal, are no match for a playful young Pteranodon. They retreat down the rocky hillside, pursued by the screeching pterosaur. The gate is left unguarded and you walk through it. Restore 1 point of LUCK if you need to. Turn to 68.

113

'You may have no money,' says the bandit leader, 'but you've got some spirit. Maybe we can have some fun after all. You want to keep your sword? Well, let's see if you can use it. Our best swordsman is Kran here. You can fight him – for your sword, and the rest of your stuff, and your life. After all, you won't need any sword or belongings once you're dead, will you?' If you are willing to go through with this duel to the death, turn to 164.

If you aren't, you must surrender your sword: reduce your SKILL by 4 points until you acquire another weapon. The bandits take everything you own, then ride away. Turn to 27.

114

You land on your feet and roll forward on to your hands. You feel shaken, but you are not hurt. You check that all the equipment in your backpack is intact, and then you decide to get away from the Elves' tree as quickly as possible. Turn to 150.

115

There is no sound or movement within the cave. If you want to take a look inside, turn to 329. If you prefer to hurry away from the cave and continue following the path beside the stream, turn to 15.

116

You wave the food in the air, hoping that the Ankylosaurus will detect its scent, and then you throw it down the slope. The huge animal blinks, looks at the food strewn across the hillside, looks back at you, and then finally lifts its great body and turns. With surprising speed it runs down the rocky slope, causing a minor avalanche, and finally skids to a halt to gobble up the food. You are able to continue your uphill trek. Turn to 32.

117

The black shape shimmers like heat haze. After a moment of silence, its ethereal voice comes again: 'And why, searcher for wizards, should the wizard be interested in talking to you? A wizard's time is valuable, you know.'

If you have a scroll containing a letter from the King of the Forest Goblins to the wizard, you can produce it and explain how you came to obtain it. If you do this, turn to 48.

If you describe the strange things you have seen and heard of in the forest, and say that you would like to help combat the spreading evil, turn to 252.

Having climbed down the rope-ladder, you walk along the ridge that encircles Lignia's dell. When you reach the far side, you turn back to look across the beautiful garden towards the platform in the treetop. Lignia is standing there, tracing a pattern in the air with her thin brown fingers. You turn again to continue your journey, and see an upright wooden stake in your path. You step forward and pluck it out of the ground. It is a stout staff, a little longer than a sword, and made of the hardest timber you have ever seen. One end has been carved to form a handle, with a weighty pommel, so that it balances in your grasp just like a well-made rapier; the 'blade' is lined with rows of razor-sharp thorns, and terminates in a large spike. It is a truly deadly weapon, although it contains no metal at all. It seems to be a gift from Lignia. You may now restore the **SKILL** points that you lost while you had no weapon. You walk away from the dell. Turn to 144.



As you stumble through the forest, you concentrate on expanding your muscles, hoping to loosen the ropes that bind your hands and arms. The effort is very tiring, and you begin to trip over tree-roots and blunder into bushes. Deduct 1 point from your **STAMINA**. Success depends on your determination and the strength in your arms. Add together your **SKILL** and **STAMINA**. Roll one die seven times and add together the scores. Compare the two totals. If the die rolls are equal to or less than your combined **SKILL** and **STAMINA**, you succeed in shrugging off your bonds. You choose a moment when your captors are distracted by a noise in the woods to slip away unnoticed. You still have your sword and your backpack. You wander aimlessly through the forest until you are sure that there is no pursuit. Turn to 2. If the total of the die rolls is higher than your combined **SKILL** and **STAMINA** score, you are unable to free yourself. Despite all your efforts, you are still a prisoner when your captors arrive at their camp. Turn to 333.



You pull the hunting-horn from your backpack, fill your lungs with air, and put the horn to your lips. The Troglodytes recoil as a strident blare fills the skies, echoing back from the mountains and rolling across the roof of the forest. As it fades, the Troglodytes recover their courage and move in for the kill; but you can see dots circling in the blue distance above you, like specks of dust in a ray of sunlight. And as you parry the clubs of the first attackers to reach you, the Eagles arrive, plummeting like stones from unimaginable heights, spreading their vast wings at the last second with discordant shrieks, as their talons sink into the Troglodytes' flesh. Feathers and flashing eyes and cruel beaks surround the Troglodytes, who try to fight back, and then flee. Meanwhile the biggest of the Eagles hovers above you and you throw your arms round its claws. It carries you up, past the appalling face of the Goblin god; as you fly past, you see the stone eyes move! A voice in your head is offering you thanks, and as you feel extra strength surge through your sword-arm you know that the statue has rewarded you for your help in protecting it. Add 1 point to your *Initial SKILL*.

The eagle swoops down to the hillside path, and you jump to the ground, shouting your gratitude. You retrace your steps downhill and enter the forest. Turn to 144.

121

The bandit leader hurls the swords into the air. They land with a clash of steel, and you and the bandits crowd round them to see how they have landed. 'Equal!' shouts the leader. 'We play again! I will add another 5 Gold Pieces to the sack. What will you put in, friend?'

You have no more money to wager, so you must contribute one of your other possessions, or your sword. Make a note of what has been put in the sack, and roll one die six times. If you roll more odd numbers than even, turn to 157; if more even than odd, turn to 248. If the numbers are equal again, don't turn at all! – go back to the top of this paragraph and increase the stakes yet again. If you have no more possessions to put in the sack, the bandit leader will not add his 5 Gold Pieces either, but the game will continue until you roll an unequal number of odd and even die-rolls.

122

You tear yourself free from the Slave Warrior's grip and run. The Tyrannosaurus snarls deafeningly as you race round the rim of its pit, then you set off down a narrow corridor. With a steady rhythm of footsteps, the Slave Warriors run in pursuit. One side of the corridor is a blank wall; the other, you glimpse as you run past, consists of a series of barred cages. The corridor ends at a descending staircase; next to it, the last cage has a closed door,

secured with a bolt. Will you go down the stairs (turn to 78), or will you draw the bolt and try to hide in the cage (turn to 265)?

123

To the south the hill drops precipitously; far below you at the base of the cliff you can see rushing waters. Two rivers – the one you boated down and another, from the east – merge at this point and tumble in a white froth over rock-strewn rapids. Further on, the waters slow and the wide river disappears into the forest. In the distance, beyond the forest, you think you can just make out a sheet of still water. To the west, across the mouth of the tributary that you floated down, the forest appears less dense. Above the trees that line the opposite bank, the crumbling parapet of a tower is silhouetted against the red-streaked sky. As you watch, a bizarre creature, huge and bat-winged, lands on the broken stonework. There is no way across this river, nor, when you look east, is there any hope of crossing the other tributary that flows into the rapids. Beyond it, the forest lies like a carpet across the flatland and the rising foothills beyond. In the distance, the peaks of the Cloudhigh Mountains are touched with the fire of the dying sun. You shiver, then crawl into the shelter to sleep. Turn to 312.



The arm-rest is heavy, and the hinge is stiff, but as you pull upwards you can feel movement beneath you, which encourages you to continue. As you yank the arm to an upright position, the chair tilts backwards at terrifying speed, and spear-heads thrust through the cushions to propel you down the chair-back, as if down a child's slide, into the pit that has opened behind the chair. As you tumble down the abyss, you see the chair begin to right itself as the trapdoor begins to close, shutting out all light. Your adventure ends here.

The torch falls from Azudraz's metal hand and drops on to the pile of crumpled paper at the place where the various fuses meet. Within seconds, the centre of the room is ablaze; thick smoke fills the air, and all you can see are the eager lines of fire running towards the sacks of Igneolite. You drop to the floor and cover your head, expecting an explosion; but each sack, as the flame reaches it, bursts with a gentle pop, sending up a cloud of glowing dust which coats the stonework. When the flames have died and all the sacks have burst, you inspect the walls. You have been imprisoned: Igneolite melts and remoulds stone in an instant. The entire building has been turned into a seamless curtain of smooth rock. Doors and windows have disappeared. Eventually, you may be able to dig a tunnel and escape; but this adventure ends here.

You fall through whip-like sprays of leaves and hit the ground awkwardly, on your back. If you have a large egg in your pack, you find that it has broken – and the baby Pteranodon inside it is dead. If you have two tiny cage-birds in your pack, you find that the cages are crushed and the birds have been killed. Deduct 2 points from your STAMINA, for the severe bruises you received as you landed.

If you have survived these misfortunes, you decide to get away from the Elves' tree as quickly as possible. Turn to 150.

The trapdoor has an iron ring which you tug upwards, to reveal a wooden ladder leading down into the darkness of the basement. You climb down and stand in the musty silence while your eyes become accustomed to the meagre light from above. This cellar has been used for storage, but it appears to have been ransacked and looted. Boxes, barrels and sacks lie, broken open, all over the earth floor – which, you notice, has been recently disturbed. As you explore the dark corners, you hear a snuffling noise behind you. You turn to see the floor moving! Soil is being pushed up from underground, and a strange star-shaped snout protrudes to sniff the air. The whole creature emerges: it is an Armoured Mole, a blind subterranean carnivore with scaly plates like those of an armadillo protecting its body.



This one is a giant – as big as a large dog – and its pointed teeth and powerful claws make it a dangerous opponent. Its star-shaped nose has scented you. It moves towards the corner in which you stand. If you decide to try to confuse the creature's senses by knocking over boxes and spilling food-stuffs out of barrels, turn to 209. If you would rather fight it, turn to 273.

130

You tear the blindfold from your eyes and cry out in horror as you see the monstrosity that is clinging to your chest. It is a Saltsucker from the southern deserts, and it will graze harmlessly on the salt on your skin – as long as you keep still. Your violent movement has alarmed it, and it will attempt to wrap its tentacles tightly about your limbs while gnawing your body with its beak-like mouth.

SALTSUCKER

SKILL 4

STAMINA 5

Because your feet are bound and you are encumbered by the Saltsucker's tentacles, you must reduce your SKILL by 2 for the duration of this fight. The Saltsucker's beak is pressed against your body: it will inflict 2 points of STAMINA damage on you each Attack Round, regardless of who wins the round. In each Attack Round that you win, you inflict 2 points of STAMINA damage on the creature; each round that the Saltsucker wins, it winds another tentacle round your limbs, reducing your SKILL by a further point. If you win, you look about you and see that half the contestants are still standing motionless,

with Saltsucker tentacles all over their faces. You have not proved to be among the more courageous. Turn to 339.

131

Nothing you can say convinces the officer that you have any good reason to be in the forest. 'As I am sure you are well aware,' he says, 'this forest and the surrounding hills form part of the Margrave's demesne, and a person such as you has no right to be here – unless, of course, you have the Margrave's authority, or unless you are a miner. But let me warn you: if you want to claim to be a miner, you will have to be able to produce a Mining Licence. I doubt if you have such a thing. Of course, I can issue one to you; the fee is 5 Gold Pieces.' Will you agree to pay 5 Gold Pieces for a Mining Licence? If so, turn to 222. If not, turn to 394.

132

Gartax is overjoyed. He calls a meeting of all the camp's inhabitants and, as you meet them one by one, it is clear that their spirits are lifted by your presence. As an experienced fighter, you are able to suggest several defensive techniques that Gartax had not thought of – placing trip-wires in the forest round the camp and concealing archers in the trees – as well as organizing some last-minute tuition in swordsmanship.

The camp's cook brings you a hearty meal, and you have just finished it (restore up to 4 points of

STAMINA if necessary) when the attack begins, heralded by the tinkling of bells attached to the trip-wires. All in the camp rush to the defensive positions you have arranged for them. You take your position on the perimeter; you can hear movement in the forest.

Will you advance into the trees to try to spy on the enemy (turn to 280)? Or will you hold your position in the defensive line and wait for the attack (turn to 370)?

133

Racked with pain, you stand rigid, every muscle clenched. The two tiny birds are unable to withstand the shape-changing power of the Portal, and you see their bodies crumple into shapeless bundles and then expand again – and the one which had red feathers now has blue plumage, while the blue one is now red. This transformation exhausts the efforts of the invisible hands that grip your body, the pressure eases and then disappears. You have survived; but the Portal will not let you go. It has failed to twist your mind or your body; now it will try to obliterate you. Pulsating clouds of inky blackness, darker than the deepest unlighted abyss, collect round the lintel of the Portal and begin to roll down towards you. Shadows creep towards you from both sides. You need light to keep the darkness at bay; how many lights do you have to burn? If you have only the *one* torch that you picked up at the mine entrance, turn to 12. If you can hold up *two*

lights – by adding an extra torch from your own equipment, or by wearing a miner's helmet with a lit candle-stub in its lamp as well as holding one torch – turn to 283. If you have enough torches to hold one in each hand as well as wearing a lit miner's helmet – three sources of light – turn to 307.

134

You sprint through the trees, hoping to find a patch of denser woodland through which you will be able to travel faster than the ponies. But the hoof-beats sound louder and louder, and then they are right behind you, and you are struck a tremendous blow which knocks you senseless to the grass. Deduct 2 points from your STAMINA. If you are still alive, you recover and pull yourself upright. Turn to 294.

135

In the centre of the grove, the man and the Dwarf, although wounded, are managing to hold off the remorseless attacks of two of the Slave Warriors. The third, silent and expressionless, faces you, but does not attack immediately. His sword is pointed at your chest, and he seems to be giving you an opportunity to surrender. If you decide to sheathe your weapon and put up your hands, turn to 328; if you choose to attack the Slave Warrior, turn to 260.



136

The old Goblin knows quite a few words of your language, and when he has rested for a while he thanks you endlessly for saving his life. To keep him quiet, you give him a meal from your Provisions (deduct this from your *Adventure Sheet*) which he devours ravenously. As he finishes you ask him why he is out alone and unarmed in the forest.

'Important diplomatic mission,' he says. 'Can't do it now. Too weak. You know of the Wizard? The Wizard of the Lake? That's why no weapon. Wizard won't have weapons on his island. Got to take a letter to him. From my master, the King of the Forest Goblins. Need the Wizard's help to fight the Slave Warriors. All our people disappearing, coming back like zombies, attacking everyone. Need help. Humans, too. But I can't finish this journey. Will you deliver the letter?' The Goblin pulls an inscribed sheet of hide from inside his jerkin. It doesn't smell very pleasant, but it appears to be an official document. If you agree to take it, note down the fact on your *Adventure Sheet*. You then continue your journey downstream along the clifftop path. Turn to 399.





137

You dip a corner of your cloak into the tank. Nothing happens. You pull it out again. It is wet. The liquid has no particular smell. You put your tongue to the wet patch of your cloak – the liquid tastes like water. Will you put your arm into the tank to retrieve a nugget (turn to 95), or will you return to Azudraz in the other room and continue to help him move nuggets (turn to 316)?

138

You manage to persuade Anxis that Dirlin would be a valuable ally. You lead her back to Dirlin's cell, where you use the gaoler's keys to unchain the great bear's legs. Both Anxis and Dirlin are afire with lust for revenge on Horfak, but you find time to gobble down a plateful of food that had been left for Dirlin (restore up to 4 points of STAMINA) before the two of them lead the way along the corridor and up a flight of stairs. You emerge into a wide corridor: you are in front of a big wooden door guarded by two of the largest Slave Warriors you have yet seen. One is half Orc, half Cave Giant; the other was in the Margrave's elite infantry regiment. 'This is the entrance to Horfak's chamber,' says Anxis. 'Let us dispose of these two buffoons. Attack!' Anxis launches herself at one of the guards, while Dirlin tackles the other; they draw their opponents away along the corridor, leaving you facing the big wooden door. You take a deep breath, and prepare to face Horfak. You push open the door, and walk through. Turn to 395.





139

As you approach the river's eastern bank, you make out a maelstrom of swirling waters beneath the overshadowing trees. The boat begins to rock alarmingly, but you cannot prevent it being dragged towards the centre of the disturbance, where the water is bubbling and splashing as if in a cauldron. From the prow of your little craft you can see something moving below the seething surface – and suddenly from the boiling waters erupts a massive reptilian head. It is almost as big as the boat, and it sways towards you on a serpentine neck. The creature is an Elasmosaurus; you are to be its next meal, unless you act quickly. Many yards away, its muscular tail thrashes the water into a froth, and you realize that the monster will capsize the boat at any moment. You draw your sword and manage to stand up as the huge head swings towards you. The Elasmosaurus is covered with thick scaly skin; your only chance is to try to drive your sword into its mouth or eye as it comes close. Roll one die twice, and add 2 to the sum of the scores. If the total is less than or equal to your SKILL, turn to 266. If the total is greater than your SKILL, turn to 396.

140

You are standing on the edge of the jungle, about to start up the bare hillside towards the township of stone huts, when you are ambushed. From right and left, a motley collection of warriors emerges from the vegetation. Some of them are Goblins, others are Dwarfs, Elves, Orcs, and remarkable

hybrids of several races; most are human, or near-human, but from very diverse peoples – one is tall and dark-skinned, another short and fair, a third is covered in hair, like an ape. All of them have weapons, and they are closing in. You have only a moment in which to decide: will you **surrender** (turn to 49) or run (turn to 383)?

141

Standing close to you, the dark figure seems thin and flimsy enough to be blown away by the breeze. Even as near as this, you can make out no features of the thing's face, body or clothing – just deep blackness. Its hand touches your forehead, but you feel nothing at all – and then you fall, unconscious. Lose 2 points from your **STAMINA**. If you are still alive, you wake up a few seconds later. You are lying on the beach. Your head aches. The scene has not changed: the black shape stands between you and the coracle that bobs on the water. Turn to 225.

142

You crawl out of sight of the Slave Warrior guards, and approach the fence. It is made of thick timbers, each of which is twice your height and whittled to a point at the top. There are no gaps between the timbers, which are held together with huge iron nails. The structure is far too strong for you to be able to break through it – but at least you can be sure it is strong enough to bear your weight as you begin to climb it. You manage to find enough toe-holds,

and are soon within reach of the top of the fence. Your hands grasp two of the pointed stakes, and you pull yourself up till you are astride the top – and then you grimace in agony as the acidic slime with which the points have been coated begins to eat into the flesh of your hands. Deduct 2 points from your **STAMINA**. You lose your grip, and fall sideways. Roll one die to determine which side of the fence you fall to: if you roll an odd number, turn to 228; if you roll an even number, turn to 80.

143

The track leads you out of the forest, and you can make out the town of Kleinkastel nestling in a hollow between gentle grassy slopes. The old town, no more than two crossed streets and a jumble of tall, thin houses protected by an ancient fortified wall, has been surrounded by new suburbs. Spacious mansions belonging to the merchants and mine-owners alternate with patches of wretched shanty town. The gold rush has caused a frenzy of new building, but the most impressive edifice is still the Margrave's castle, its turrets out-topping even the grandest of the new villas. As you enter the town, you are amazed at the throng of people.

You realize that, with evening approaching, you will have to find a bed for the night. If you have some money, turn to 271. If you have no money, turn to 181.

Coming down from the hillside, you plunge into the dark shadows of the trees, and you struggle southwards through the undergrowth, deeper into the forest. Somewhere in this wilderness lurks the evil power that you seek: the power that transforms ordinary beings into shrivelled, faceless, mindless slaves; the power that summons obsolete monsters from ages past. You suspect that the evil has been awakened by the delving of the gold-hungry miners; and you worry that you have missed the correct mine, that you have already travelled too far. However, the paths that you are now crossing still run from east to west, and you assume that there are still mines to be found to the east. You resolve to continue that way in the morning – but now it is dusk, and you have found a clearing in which to sleep. Your eye is caught by a nearby tree that towers above the rest of the forest; as you watch, you see lights appear among the branches. When you look down again, you find yourself surrounded by slender, green-clothed bowmen. They are Wood Elves, and they are notching arrows to their bows. Will you run (turn to 300), or will you talk to them (turn to 42)?



You are still exchanging blows with the Half-Goblin guard when a group of warriors runs towards the gate from the centre of the town. They rush to help their comrade defend himself against the escaped prisoner, and you are overcome by a rain of cuts, hacks and slashes. Your adventure ends here.

Illuminated by orange rays from the setting sun, the forest comes alive with evening birdsong and the bellows, roars and shrieks of strange wild animals. You cut a way through the creepers and find a dry hollow in which to camp. You light a fire and relax. You are very hungry, and need sustenance. You must eat one meal from your Provisions, or lose 4 points of STAMINA. It is now almost dark: time for sleep. Will you extinguish your fire, to conceal your whereabouts (turn to 64)? Or will you stoke it up with branches to burn all night in order to deter the forest animals (turn to 257)?

When all seven contestants have given their answers, Gloten opens his fist to reveal 2 Silver Pieces. You are one of four contestants who gave the correct answer. You step forward to acknowledge the cheers of the crowd.

The last part of the tournament, announces Gloten, 'will be a test of skill and swordsmanship. We have four brave warriors here, so let us organize

two bouts, the winners to go on to a final duel to find our Champion.'

You are not sure that this is a good plan, and it is clear that your fellow-contestants are also displeased. By the end of the tournament all the contestants will probably be too badly wounded to venture into the forest! You notice that Gloten's servants are armed with wooden pickaxe handles. Will you suggest to Gloten that these would be less damaging than swords, and therefore should be used in the tournament (turn to 52)? Or will you decide that the quickest way to prove yourself as Champion is to challenge Gloten (turn to 10) or the Margrave (turn to 235) to a pickaxe-handle duel?

148

You hold the flaming tip of the torch against the wall of ice; drips of water threaten to extinguish the spluttering flame, and all the time the footsteps are approaching. You must melt the ice and escape through the door before the Slave Warriors arrive! Grimly, you take the risk of pushing the precious flame even closer to the dripping ice. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 60; if you are Unlucky, turn to 192.



149

'Me and poor old Hirnic worked for Horfak,' says the Dwarf. 'He wasn't a bad boss, but he drove us hard: he was never satisfied; he always wanted to dig deeper, he never could get enough gold. When some of the lads dug their way into that cavern and found the Portal, Horfak took me and Hirnic down to take a look. Hirnic went in first, and then me – we both found ourselves here, in this world full of giant lizards! Then, after a while, Horfak came through – but he'd changed. The Portal had done something to him. He seemed bigger, stronger; and his face was horrible. It's got worse since then, too; he's a monstrosity. He's banned all mirrors from his citadel; I reckon he'd get a real shock if he looked in one now. Anyway, since then the Portal's been somehow *alive*; throbbing with evil power. Anyone who comes through it now goes through the trial you had; most of them turn into Slave Warriors. I reckon that Portal's been there a long time, waiting for someone as greedy as Horfak, but in the meantime letting through the few others who find it. There's a tribe of all sorts of folk here – humans, Dwarfs, Elves, Goblins – who reckon their ancestors came through the Portal. Like I say: I was the last to get through in one piece – until you!'

You ponder the Dwarf's words as you head for the end of the valley – turn to 348.



150

You run across the clear ground that surrounds the Elves' towering tree-home and plunge into dense undergrowth. You turn to look back and are appalled to see that the entire Wood Elf tribe is on the move. An endless line of ragged, mindless slaves, some leading bizarre reptilian creatures, emerges from between the roots of the great tree. The Queen, at the head of the column, turns and gestures with her fingers; suddenly surrounded by a misty illumination, the Wood Elves are restored to a more normal appearance. Then the Queen leads the column north-westwards, towards Kleinkastel. By the time they have all gone, the forest birds are announcing the approach of dawn. You are ravenous: eat a meal from your Provisions or lose 4 points from your STAMINA. You set off eastwards, determined to find the source of the evil that has transformed so many of the forest's inhabitants. Turn to 221.



151

One of the Scurrallors has a purse containing a Gold Piece, which you can take. You glance around at the forest, and realize with a start that there are two more Scurrallors perched in the branches, almost invisible against the green and brown of the trees. Knives drawn, they jump to the ground and move to attack you from two sides. They chatter and squeak at you in a language you do not understand. You will have to fight them, or escape into the forest. If you decide to run through the trees, turn to 338. If you stand and fight, turn to 215.





The boat bumps against the timbers of the jetty, and you cast a loop of rope over a bollard as you clamber on to the planking. Two paths lead from the jetty: one follows the riverbank downstream, and the other leads to a small house made of timber and stone. There is a lingering smell of smoke; some of the window-frames of the house are blackened, as if by fire. Then you notice the bodies: some are ragged, skeletal humanoids, others are gaudily dressed Goblins. A battle has been fought here; as you watch, the surviving victors come rampaging through the door of the house. They are three Goblins, shouting and cheering and waving their shortswords. They have draped themselves with loot from the house: brocades and furs, jewellery and ornaments. With them, bridled, muzzled and on a leash, is a ferocious-looking creature. Standing on its hind legs, it is taller than the Goblins, and its flailing tail, horned snout and clawed limbs combine to make the Oviraptor a vision of menace. The Goblins see you and start to free the beast's muzzle. Will you:

Advance towards the house?

Turn to 387

Wait on the jetty?

Turn to 308

Jump back into the boat, cast off, and allow the current to take you downstream?

Turn to 104

You prise a lump of stone from the floor and begin to use it to pound the chains that link the iron bands round Dirlin's ankles. Dirlin protests that the noise will bring the gaoler; you point out that, if the gaoler comes, you will be able to fight him for the keys. Sure enough, the gaoler, a Dwarven Slave Warrior, appears in the doorway, sees you, and turns to seek assistance. You launch yourself at him.

DWARVEN SLAVE
WARRIOR

SKILL 6 STAMINA 5

If you defeat him, you find his keys hanging at his belt. You free Dirlin, and the giant bear-man leads the way to Horfak's chamber. When you reach it, you find the door guarded by two Slave Warriors. Dirlin tackles the one that is a cross between an Orc and a Cave Giant, while you advance on the one who was once in the Margrave's elite infantry regiment.

SLAVE WARRIOR
GUARD

SKILL 9 STAMINA 12

If you win your fight, you turn to see that Dirlin has drawn his opponent away, along the corridor, and is still involved in a furious battle. You turn back to the door, take a deep breath, and prepare to face Horfak. You push open the door, and walk through. Turn to 395.

The soldier looks at the barrels, peering inside some and kicking the ends of others. He kicks the one in which you are hiding, and it disintegrates under the impact of his armoured boot to reveal you, crouching in the midst of the wreckage. 'Sergeant!' bellows the soldier. 'Captured a prisoner!' Three more soldiers run into the tavern, and you are escorted at sword-point out into the street. Turn to 255.

You set off southwards, trying not to deviate from your chosen course. The forest seems empty of living things, and your progress is impeded only by the woodland itself. You have to cut your way through brambles, scramble up and down ridges, and wade across rushing streams.

Finally you come to a stream that you cannot cross on foot. You will have to follow its course until you come to a fording-place. Will you walk upstream, in a north-easterly direction (turn to 326)? Or do you prefer to go downstream, towards the south-west (turn to 57)?



156

Out of sight of the Slave Warrior guards, the gully widens as it twists and turns downhill. Soon you are able to walk upright between its overhanging banks, and you are congratulating yourself on finding such an easy entrance to the Warlord's domain when you meet the gully's inhabitant – a Giant Centipede. It is as long as you are tall, with savagely sharp mandibles at its front end and a scorpion-like sting rising above its back. It waits, twitching its feelers. You are reluctant to attack it, because you fear that the patrolling Slave Warriors might hear the noise. Just beyond the Giant Centipede, the gully opens out and the jungle begins. You seem to have only two choices: to return up the gully to the top of the ridge and try to impersonate a Slave Warrior (turn to 247); or to attempt to jump over the Giant Centipede and run into the jungle (turn to 75)?

157

The bandit leader hurls the swords into the air. They land with a clash of steel, and you and the bandits crowd round them to see how they have landed. 'The unmarked blades are showing,' announces the bandit leader. 'This sack, and everything in it, is yours. My thanks for an entertaining encounter. Now that we've lost this wager, it seems to me that it would have been more profitable and just as much fun to have killed you and taken everything you own. But that would not be honourable now. Farewell!'

He mounts his pony, drops the sack at your feet and leads his men away. You empty the contents of the sack into your backpack (make any necessary alterations on your *Adventure Sheet*) and continue on your way. Turn to 27.

158

You take the small sack of powder from your backpack and approach the Portal. You struggle against the evil emanation that pulses from the ancient stones, but you succeed in placing the Igneolite at the base of one of the two upright megaliths. You are torn between a desire to destroy the Portal as quickly as possible and a curiosity to know what lies beyond it. Will you thrust a flame into the top of the sack now (turn to 332), or will you step into the shadow of the Portal (turn to 289)?

159

Everything goes wrong. The merchant is so large that he is scarcely shaken by your shoulder-charge. When you make a grab for his purse, he grasps your wrist – and then starts yelling for help. Within seconds you are surrounded by indignant townsfolk, and within an hour you are chained to the wall of a damp, dark cell in the dungeons beneath the Margrave's castle. If anyone bothers to remember that you're there, you will eventually be dragged out, tried in the Margrave's court, and executed.

160

With some reluctance, you tug at the filthy rags covering the Slave Warrior's corpse. Then you hear a ferocious squawk and a stampede of footsteps, and before you can move the Struthiomimus crashes into you. As you attempt to pick yourself up, the creature kicks you and snaps at you with its beak to force you away from the body of its master. You retreat from the clearing, rubbing your bruises. Deduct 3 points from your STAMINA. You continue eastward along the path. Turn to 264.

161

You crouch behind a boulder and watch as the tide of battle ebbs and flows. The Goblins make a heroic stand round the circumference of their hilltop settlement, but finally they are all slain, and the surviving Troglodytes disappear through the small doorways into the interior of the warren. Silence returns. On top of the mound, inside which the Troglodytes are presumably rampaging and looting, the grotesque statue sparkles. Attracted by the thought of glittering gemstones, you continue along the path and up the hillside towards the Goblins' mound. You are approaching one of the rough doorways that lead into the darkness of the Goblins' warren. Will you enter it (turn to 298), or will you pass it by and climb across the top of the mound towards the base of the statue (turn to 103)?



162

The Slave Warrior fails to notice you, and leaves the tent. The sounds of battle fade, and soon the only noises you can hear are the groans of wounded camp-dwellers and the unnervingly regular footsteps of the victors. Eventually even these sounds cease. By this time you have managed to extricate one hand from the ropes that bind you, and you unsheathe your sword and cut yourself free.

The camp is a scene of devastation and butchery. The Slave Warriors have not left any survivors, but the camp-dwellers fought to the last man, woman and child, and many of the attackers are lying dead alongside their victims.

If you want to, you can undertake the unpleasant task of searching the ruined camp and the corpses — turn to 254. Alternatively, you can leave the camp and wander into the green depths of the forest — turn to 2.



163

You pull your sword from its scabbard and advance. The giant ape roars and charges towards you. Drawn up to its full height, with its arms extended the same distance again above its head, and the black cloak flying behind it as it lopes towards you, the creature looks like a demon from the lowest depths.

CARNIVOROUS

APE

SKILL 9

STAMINA 13

If you manage to survive this encounter, turn to 18.

164

Kran looks strong and fit. After a few feints and parries it is clear that he is also a skilled swordsman. This will be a difficult engagement.

KRAN

SKILL 9

STAMINA 14

If you manage to stay alive, you will eventually reduce Kran's STAMINA to 2 points or less. When this happens, Kran staggers and falls to his knees on the grass. His wounds are severe, and he is barely able to lift his sword. Will you show mercy? If you hold your sword-point to Kran's throat, and ask the bandit leader to acknowledge his champion's defeat, turn to 261. If you finish Kran off with one final sword-thrust, turn to 368.

165

As you approach the grove of trees, you hear sounds of fighting. You advance under the fronds of leaves, and witness a mêlée in progress. Near the smoking embers of their camp-fire, a man and a Dwarf are standing with their backs against the largest tree in the grove, defending themselves against the attacks of three Slave Warriors. None of the combatants notices you, but you are seen by a creature that, to judge by its studded collar and leash, belongs to the Slave Warriors. It steps from behind a tree and moves towards you – it is a Noasaurus, a man-high carnivore standing on two powerful legs, with claws on its two front limbs. If you decide to retreat from the copse and walk towards the end of the valley, turn to 348; if you decide to stay where you are, turn to 224.

166

As you start to untie the mooring-ropes, you hear footsteps approaching. You look up to see a Dwarf marching down the track from the hut. He is hefting a vicious-looking boat-hook. In front of him flutters a strange bird; you recognize it as a Koailit, a small white parrot-like bird with a sharp beak and extraordinarily long tail-feathers which it can use to cling to branches. The Dwarf is very angry. 'I don't care if you're a bandit, or one of the Margrave's bunch, or even one of them shrivel-faced horrors,' he shouts, 'you're not taking my boats without a fight! Polly –

go for his legs!' The Koailit squawks and dives at you as you pull your sword out to defend yourself.

KOAILIT

SKILL 6

STAMINA 3

After two rounds of combat, turn to 40.

167

Every part of your body burns with agonizing pain. As you feel the very bones shifting under your writhing skin, you scream, and scream, and scream – and drop into merciful unconsciousness. Turn to 37.

168

You run between two wooden huts. The safety of the forest is only a few paces away when two soldiers step round a corner ahead of you. You crash into them and, before you can pick yourself off the ground, your pursuers catch up with you and entangle you in ropes and chains. You will be taken to the Margrave's dungeons in Kleinkastel and, although eventually you will convince your captors that you are innocent of any crime, this adventure ends here.



169

Gartax cannot find words to express his gratitude to you, and he is ashamed that he has no treasure with which to reward you. You assure him that his thanks are reward enough – but you also suggest that he might give you some Provisions to sustain you on your travels. He readily agrees, and soon your backpack is bulging with bread, cheeses and salted meats – enough for five meals. Note these on your *Adventure Sheet*.

All the camp-dwellers gather to wave goodbye as you stride off into the depths of the forest. Turn to 2.

170

You stand over the corpse of the Warlord. The palace is silent. You wander through a door and find yourself facing two Slave Warriors. Their movements seem disjointed and even slower than usual – but they are still controlled by the Portal, and they lurch into the attack when they see you. You retreat, and find another exit from Horfak's chamber, and eventually you leave the palace. The People of this strange prehistoric land, led by their Queen, Anxis, are fighting back against the enfeebled Slave Warriors. As you hurry towards the Portal, you pass several bands of warriors, and you tell each the news of Horfak's death. They all hail you as a hero; but you know that Horfak's great Slave Warrior armies are in Khul, and that by killing Horfak you have defeated only the lesser part of the evil partnership. You make for the cave that contains the Portal. Turn to 369.

171

Making no sound upon the bare rock, you step towards the silhouetted figure. Its black cloak flaps in the wind, but the figure itself sits quite still. You begin to wonder if it is dead, or senseless. Deciding to take no chances, however, you plunge your sword into its back. Roaring, the figure erupts into life, spinning around to face its attacker. You stare into the strangely intelligent face of a massive Carnivorous Ape. It is wounded but, maddened with pain, it will fight to the death.

CARNIVOROUS

APE

SKILL 9

STAMINA 10

If you win, turn to 18.

172

Leaving the path, you circle the hill until you are facing the back of the huge hilltop idol. Every inch of its surface sparkles, and you are sure that it must be encrusted with gems; but when you reach the Goblins' mound you are at last able to see that the statue's scintillation is caused by nothing more valuable than reflective glass – thousands of small mirrors have been embedded in its surface. In your disappointment your attention wanders, and you fail to notice that a wounded Troglodyte has been inching towards you. Its spiked club rakes the back of your legs, causing you to lose 2 points from your STAMINA, then it lurches upright. You must fight it.

TROGLODYTE

SKILL 6

STAMINA 3

If you win, you turn from your fight to find that the noise has attracted the two Goblins who were at the foot of the statue. They march you at sword-point back to their vantage point; before they can question you, however, a wild howling fills the air: the surviving Troglodytes have regrouped and are attacking again. Turn to 203.

173

No matter how hard you pull, you cannot lift both of the arm-rests at the same time. You decide to try them one at a time – but before you can do so, you hear footsteps approaching. You jump down from the chair and practise your innocent look. Turn to 211.

174

The last weapon parts your hair as it thuds into the wood above your head. The Ordeal is over, and you have not moved a muscle throughout it. The Shaman gives a signal and the crowd erupts into cheering. The warriors come to retrieve their weapons and shake your hand. You are carried on their shoulders to the seat of honour next to the Shaman, and the townsfolk bring out plates and pots; everyone joins in the feast to celebrate your success. Restore 1 point of LUCK if you need to, as well as up to 4 points of STAMINA. Witta translates the Shaman's after-dinner speech: tomorrow, as is usual when the People accept a new warrior, there will be a ceremonial dinosaur-hunt in which you are to strike the death-blow. After that, the warriors of the

People will march against the hated Warlord Horlak, who is vulnerable at last, having sent most of his Slave Warriors back to Khul through the Sacred Cave. At midnight the Shaman administers the ceremonial – and rather painful – tattoo: the Sign of the Spear on your forehead shows that you are now a warrior of the People. At last Witta shows you to your new home, which is a stone hut like your earlier prison – but now you have the door-key! Will you sleep, and wait for the dinosaur-hunt (turn to 350); or will you try to slip away from the town under cover of night (turn to 291)?

175

The figure remains motionless, and then disappears! Equally suddenly, it reappears – and this time it is definitely not a statue. The little old man smiles, walks towards you and speaks. 'A wizard? I have some knowledge of ancient things and unusual practices. Some people call it wizardry. What of you? You are clearly a warrior. Not a Goblin, but a human – and not from the south, either. Few of any other kind ever come here. You people from the north have your own gods, your own wise men – what do you want with me? What could bring you here?'

If you have a message from Gartax for the wizard, you may give it now, and tell Gartax's story; or, if you have a letter for the wizard from the King of the Forest Goblins, you may give the wizard the scroll. If you do either of these things, turn to 353. Other-

wise, all you are able to do is tell the wizard about a plague of unusual creatures roaming the forest, and depopulated settlements, and rumours of strange warrior bands terrorizing the whole area from the Cloudhigh Mountains to the western edge of the forest. Turn to 234.

176

Drawing your sword, you run across the glade and step between the giant bird and the exhausted man. You stare into the beast's cold eyes and raise your sword to strike – and then you feel a knife-point against your spine. Behind you, the man chuckles. 'Our little ruse worked, Agrid. This warrior shows true nobility in intervening to protect the weak and helpless – I think I acted the victim's part very convincingly. Now, warrior – put up your sword. Surrender!'

Will you sheathe your sword and surrender (turn to 292); or will you swing round and attack the man (turn to 204)?

177

You approach the door, and a voice says: 'Don't touch!' You step back as the voice continues: 'Don't be alarmed. I'm not actually a talking door; I'm an Elven enchantment and I just sort of hover round the door and keep it locked from the inside. I'll open it if you say the right number.' You ask what the right number is. 'I can't tell you that!' says the voice.

I'm not allowed to say any numbers at all, just in case. But life's been very dull since all the Elves were turned into Slave Warriors, so I'll give you a clue. If numbers were letters, my number would be in "Left", but not in "Little Soft Felt Elf". Is that any help? I'm afraid you only get one chance to say the right number.'

If you want to try to unlock the door this way, make a note of this paragraph number so that you can return here if your guess is wrong. Then turn to the number that you think will unlock the door. If you guess wrong, return to this paragraph.

You have to find another way out of this prison. With some difficulty, you pull up a couple of floorboards. You peer down into the darkness, then recoil as you realize that you can see branches waving in the breeze far below you. This hut is in the highest limbs of the Elves' tree-home. You must try to climb down. A length of rope would be very useful – if you have one, turn to 91. If you do not have any rope turn to 309.

178

The little skiff crashes down the rock-strewn stairway of the rapids, its keel striking boulders with lumber-shattering, bone-juddering force. A skiff is not constructed to take this kind of treatment: the keel shatters into fragments against a huge rock. You are thrown into the air, along with the wreckage of the boat. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 244. If you are Unlucky, turn to 43.



179

You sit by the pool, debating whether you can use the mottled, sun-baked boulders as stepping-stones to the far bank. Making your mind up, you put your boots in your backpack and dip your toes into the cool water. It is very refreshing; you shuffle closer to the edge and submerge your feet and shins. And then, as the boulder nearest to you rises out of the water, your ankles are encircled by a tightening loop of rubbery muscle. The 'boulder' is the tip of the shell of a Giant Watersnail, a foul creature that resembles its land-living counterpart on Khul but is more dangerous because of the powerful tentacles that surround its mouth. It is trying to pull you into the depths of the pool, towards its beak-like mouth, and you cannot extricate your feet from its grasp. You must fight it. Reduce your SKILL by 2 points, because your legs are trapped; reduce your SKILL by a further point at the end of each Attack Round as you are dragged further into the water.

GIANT WATERSNAIL SKILL 6 STAMINA 10

If you defeat it, turn to 281.

180

Flat-bottomed boats are not designed to cope with rough conditions, and the death-throes of an Elasmosaurus are the equivalent of a storm at sea. Test your Luck. If you are Lucky, turn to 71. If you are Unlucky, turn to 13.

It is impossible to find a bed for the night. The town's inns barely have room for all the paying guests! As darkness falls, you are reduced to searching for sheltered doorways in which to huddle. You find a clean, dry corner next to a buttress of the town wall; you lie down; despite the discomfort, you doze.

You wake with a jolt. It's still dark. Someone is prodding you with a stick. You make out two strange shapes: a small humanoid and a two-legged animal that resembles a giant featherless bird. The humanoid – he is a Dwarf – speaks. 'Give me everything! Everything you've got! Give me that backpack! Hurry it up! Or else Gluda here will rip you to shreds!'

If you decide to surrender your backpack to this Dwarf thief, turn to 299. If you want to make a fight of it, turn to 342.



'I should have guessed it!' sighs Lignia. 'Another human brings an accursed metal blade to ravage the trees of my woodland. Approach no closer!' She begins to whisper and trace a pattern in the air. You are sure she is casting a spell against you. Will you:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| Interrupt her, protesting that
you mean no harm to the forest? | Turn to 236 |
| Attack her? | Turn to 16 |
| Wait to see the result of her
incantation? | Turn to 381 |

In increasing darkness you wander round the room, feeling for secret doors or hanging ropes. You find absolutely nothing. A ray of moonlight creeps in through a window but provides no help in your search. Then, as you are about to give up, you notice a glimmering shape where the moon's glow crosses the centre of the room. And, as you watch, a ladder takes shape, glittering and insubstantial, stretching from floor to ceiling. You touch it with your sword – and your sword passes through it as if through empty air. This ghostly ladder is clearly the handiwork of a wizard – or an illusionist. If you try to climb it, turn to 290. If you think it would be wiser to go back downstairs and get some sleep, turn to 109.



184

You stand before the stone wall and intone your password. If you say 'Apfis nev!' turn to 256; if you say anything else, turn to 386.

185

Gartax shakes his head, and his shoulders slump. 'Our only hope is to get out of the forest before the Slave Warriors corner us. I don't expect any help. The Margrave's soldiers are too busy extorting taxes out of honest folk; the big mine-owners are safe in Kleinkastel and haven't a clue what's going on here. If you want to do something useful, find the Wizard of Lake Mlubz – that's the Goblins' name for the inland sea that's at the far southern end of the forest. It's said this Wizard has been there for centuries, longer even than the Goblins themselves. If anyone knows what's behind these evil events, it's the Wizard. I've met him, just the once; if you tell him what I've told you, and ask for help in my name, I'm sure he'll do everything he can. The lake's not hard to find: just go south until you come to a stream that's too wide and deep to jump or wade across, and then follow it down to the place where it flows into the lake.

'And now there's no more time for talk! We've arrived!' Turn to 310.



186

You plunge your arm into the tank once more and your hand closes round a small gold-specked rock. You tug it, but it will not move. You try to twist it, to move it from side to side – all to no avail. And when you finally give up, you discover that you cannot open your fist. Your fingers will not move; in fact your entire arm is set solidly in the liquid. No matter how hard you strain your muscles, you cannot remove your arm from the tank. Azudraz has certainly invented an effective method for storing gold; no one will ever be able to steal it from this tank! If you have the Sword of Gravalan, turn to 210. If not, turn to 352.

187

Test your Luck. If you are Lucky, the Goblins watch in silence as you set off down the southward path alongside the river. Turn to 50.

If you are Unlucky, the Goblins chase after you when you turn away from them to walk towards the path. One of them slashes your arm with his blade: deduct 2 points from your STAMINA. You whirl round to face your attackers. Turn to 282.

188

Roll one die five times. If the total is higher than your current STAMINA score, turn to 340; if the total is the same or lower, turn to 105.

In the midst of the deadly interplay of sword, claws and beak, you become aware of a remarkable noise—a low, booming, repetitive bellow that distracts you from your fight. The Struthiomimus hears it too; with a squawk, it turns away from you and trots back to the man standing at the edge of the clearing. You see from the man's grey pallor, with his bony limbs poking through tattered clothes and his expressionless, pinched face, that he is one of the enslaved humanoids that have been terrorizing this area. It is he who is producing the weird noise, attracting the creature to him. He places a rope round its long neck and then draws a notched scimitar. He advances towards you.

If you have a Ring of Zombie Warding, turn to 349. If not, turn to 88.

You are one of a dozen warriors who push through the crowd and climb on to the platform to volunteer for the tournament. Gloten shoos away all the dignitaries except the Margrave. 'Attendants!' he calls. 'Bring ropes and blindfolds and the animal boxes. Bind each contestant's ankles, and blindfold each face — but leave the sword-arm free. Place a box in front of each contestant.' Turning to you and the other volunteers, he goes on: 'This first test is of courage, my brave warriors. Have you the courage to remain quite still once the animal is released from its box? And at what point does courage become

sheer foolhardiness? Let us see who can remain motionless the longest. Release the animals!'

You cannot see. You cannot move your feet. You can hear a slithering, rasping noise, and then something touches your leg. You control the urge to strike out. Something long and muscular winds itself round your waist. You hear shrieks of loathing and the sounds of fighting as other contestants leap to defend themselves. Feelers with rubbery suckers probe your clothing and adhere to your skin. A heavy body bumps against your legs as the creature climbs higher. A tentacle reaches your throat, and winds round your neck. You remember Gloten's words about foolhardiness. The creature is climbing up the front of your body. Is it time to act? If you force yourself to remain still, turn to 285. If you tear off the blindfold and grab your sword, turn to 130.

If the answer that you gave was: 'You are the wizard's shadow,' turn to 48. If you gave any other answer, turn to 23.

With a hiss, your flame dies. You cry out in despair. Frantically, you hold the glowing tip of the torch between your cupped hands, and blow on the red glow, again and again, trying to breathe life into the fire. A little smoke rises; or is it just steam? No — it is smoke: you have rekindled a tiny flame which

grows stronger as you watch. Now you can continue to melt the wall of ice – but you realize that no longer is there any noise or sound of footsteps. The Slave Warriors – three of them – have already entered the room. One of them is standing behind you. Turn to 328.

193

The scarecrow-like warrior notices you, and fixes you with his blank, unblinking eyes. You struggle helplessly. He leans over you and appears to ponder for a moment before skewering his sword into your chest. Silently, he watches you die.

194

You insert your hand into the hole, grab as much of the pile as you can, then, just as you are pulling your hand out of the tree, something inside the trunk grasps your forearm between sharp teeth. You shake your hand free and yank it out of the hole. The creature's teeth have drawn blood, but the wound is not serious. Deduct 1 point from your STAMINA. To your chagrin, you find that the shiny article in the heap of leaves is a small hand-mirror, which you can put in your backpack if you want to. You are about to throw the twigs and leaves into the undergrowth when you notice that among them is a sprig of Swords-ease, a very rare medicinal herb that, if swallowed immediately before a battle, enables the body to repair wounds almost as soon as they are inflicted. You may chew this sprig once,

before any one fight, and you will find that your opponent reduces your STAMINA by only 1 point each time he wounds you. Add 1 point to your LUCK for this fortunate find. The sound of marching men is closer. Turn to 363.

195

As the guard slumps to the paving-stones and the shouts of other warriors echo more loudly through the streets, you sprint through the gate and down the hillside. Plunging into the darkness of the jungle, you know you are safe from pursuit, but you keep running.

You emerge on to a broad plain. In the distance ahead of you, there is a ridge of low hills, which you make for. After some time, you come to a wide, well-used track which you think is the main road leading to the Portal. You cross it hurriedly, not wishing to meet a squad of Slave Warriors, and climb the ridge. You look down into a grassy valley, dotted with clumps of trees, that widens towards your left and is narrower between high ridges on your right. You walk down into the valley, and find a path that runs along it. You assume that travelling leftwards will take you back towards the Portal, so you turn right, towards the narrow end of the valley. Turn to 348.





196

Just as you feel that your aching muscles cannot bear your weight any longer, your fingers touch grass instead of rock. You have reached the top of the cliff. You lever your body upwards and collapse on a patch of greensward, a natural clearing in the forest that elsewhere grows to the cliff's edge. A path crosses the clearing. You hear movement in the undergrowth, but you cannot conceal yourself. You keep very still. A Goblin, frail and limping, lurches out of the forest and along the path. Only a few paces behind him is the biggest Giant Spider you have ever seen, clicking its mandibles and rattling its eight furry legs. On this clear terrain, the Spider will catch up with the Goblin within seconds. If you keep still, the Spider will pounce on the Goblin, bite him, enfold him in sticky strands of web, and drag him into the forest. You can then continue your journey downstream along the clifftop path. If you want to do this, turn to 399. If you would rather draw your sword and attack the Spider, turn to 67.

197

On the other side of the bridge, the other two contestants are trying to cut each other's rope. Roll two dice for each of them, and add the results to their SKILL scores (given below) to determine which one falls into the moat.

OSTBAR: SKILL 9

TRELLA: SKILL 8

Now only two of you remain dangling beneath the bridge. Roll dice again to determine an Attack

Strength for yourself and the winner of the above combat. If your Attack Strength is the lower, your rope is cut and you splash into the moat. Gloten spares a word for you before going to congratulate the winner – turn to 339. If you cut your opponent's rope, you are the winner; you are hauled up on to the bridge and cheered by all the townsfolk – turn to 259.

198

By the time the Goblins return, the warm sun and the murmur of the river have lulled you to sleep. This is unfortunate, as the Goblins have brought with them most of the rest of their tribe. They plan to tell their King that they fought a desperate battle with you in order to rescue his letter. And, to make their story convincing, they intend to take your dead body to the King's court. Finding you dozing on the jetty makes their task very easy.

199

The Goblin war-chief made his base on the other side of the Portal, in the forgotten land. He thought he was safe there, believing that anyone from this world who passed beneath the Portal would be enslaved or, if his will was too strong for slavery, would be transformed into an animal or, in the last resort, simply exterminated by the power of the Portal. But the Goblins found a hero: one of their own race who was brave and strong and who, by chance, found the means to pass safely through the

Portal. He took with him two animals – and many flaming torches, for the Portal was deep underground. And it seems that, after the Portal failed to enslave him, it could not change him into an animal either, because he had two other creatures with him, and this dissipated the Portal's power; nor could it destroy him, because he was surrounded by light. Once through the Portal, the hero found the war-chief and slew him; returning through the Portal, he ordered that it be sealed below ground for ever. I would guess that the recent mine-workings have undone the concealment that the Goblins undertook all those thousands of years ago. Another great evil-doer has found the Portal; another warlord has arisen. But at least we have some clues about how to find and destroy him. Now we must depart!

Turn to 102.



You examine the bodies of the Slave Warriors. They wear no armour or uniform, and their clothes are filthy and tattered. Their skin is pale, and their faces are almost blank. Some of them have actually lost their facial features, having a short lipless slit instead of a mouth, two small holes instead of a nose, and deeply set eyes without brows or lids or lashes. Each of them wears a stone talisman on a leather thong round the neck; the stone is carved with unintelligible hieroglyphics. You find one of these strange soldiers still alive, although dying. You notice that his talisman is shrouded in black shadow. You remove it from round his neck; it seems almost a living thing. You can place it in your backpack (remember to note it on your *Adventure Sheet*) and then either set off on your travels immediately, striding into the depths of the forest (turn to 2), or return to Gartax's camp (turn to 169). If you want to hang the talisman round your own neck, turn to 384.



Taking a torch from the wall of the tunnel, you descend into darkness. The short flight of stairs leads you down into a wide passage. You pass dark openings which, on investigation, you find are mainly disused storerooms. You seem to be in the cellars of the palace. You are sure you are nearing the area beneath the centre of the building – but the passage ends at a small wooden door. Cautiously, you draw the bolts; you depress the latch, and pull open the door – and the flickering light of your torch reveals a room of icicles. Your breath steams as you enter a polar scene: layers of ice cloak all surfaces, columns and sheets of ice connect floor and ceiling. You begin to shiver uncontrollably – reduce your SKILL by 2 points until you leave this room. Creeping from behind a wall of ice comes the cause of the cold: a Glaciator, a creature which maintains its own body's temperature by extracting warmth from the air. If it stays in one place, its surroundings soon freeze. This one needs a new source of warmth – your body will suffice. It rears up on four back limbs and advances, its other limbs outstretched to smother you against its wide, flat underside.

GLACIATOR

SKILL 6

STAMINA 8

If you win, turn to 242.

With your help, the Dwarf overcomes his opponent with ease. Meanwhile, the man and the other Slave Warrior both collapse and die from their wounds. You help the Dwarf to bury the body of his comrade, and the two of you sit together by the smoking fire and share in silence the meal that the Dwarf had been preparing when the Slave Warriors attacked. Restore up to 4 points of STAMINA if you need to. Finally, the Dwarf asks you who you are. You explain that you have come from Khul to find and finish off the Warlord who, through the power of the Portal, controls the armies of Slave Warriors. You describe how you survived the journey through the Portal.

'I have to admit,' grunts the Dwarf, 'that I'm impressed. Apart from Slave Warriors and animals, you're the first person to come through that accursed gateway since Horfak – and he's the Warlord you're looking for. Go to the end of the valley and take the right-hand path; that'll lead you to his citadel. He's sent most of his foul troops back through the Portal to ravage Khul; but you'd still best look out for guards.'

You thank the Dwarf for his information. Will you now go towards the end of the valley (turn to 348); or will you ask how the mine-owner Horfak came to be the Warlord of the Portal, and how the Dwarf came to this lost world (turn to 149)?



Ten Troglodytes have survived the earlier battle and are now converging on the hilltop statue to finish off the two remaining Goblins – and you. You stand alongside the Goblins in the shadow of their god's idol. Its staring eyes and its eight outstretched arms do not deter the Troglodytes, although they are troubled by the flashes of light reflected from the mirrors all over its body. You are certain, however, that this alone will not be enough to even the odds. It looks as though this could be your last fight – unless you have Gloten's Dwarven hunting-horn. If you have it, turn to 120. If not, turn to 392.

The man backs away from you and yells for help. From between the trees all round the clearing a mob of men and women converges on you. There are about a dozen of them, armed with knives, axes and staves, and you cannot defend yourself against all of them. Your adventure ends here.



The coracle might as well be anchored to the shore; it will not move. You become very exasperated – and then you glimpse a movement. Appearing from the other side of the island of rusty weapons is another coracle. As it drifts towards you, you see that it contains a wounded warrior – an Elf. Although barely able to stand, he flourishes a long slim blade and, as his boat bumps into yours, he attacks. He is an experienced swordsman, but as his STAMINA is very low you expect an easy victory. It is not to be. When he strikes you, you are wounded as normal; but when you land a blow on him, you are horrified to find that the wound appears on *your* body. What is more, the longer you fight, the less wounded your opponent seems to become. You cannot win; and eventually you are lying, wounded in a dozen places, waiting for the death-blow to fall. Instead, the Elf, now completely recovered, speaks. 'I apologize, human. I, too, failed to surrender my sword, and I fought the wounded warrior who attacked me then. He left me as you found me, but now I can escape at last.' His coracle drifts away; yours stays by the island.

Your fate is to remain, weak and wounded, until the wizard has another visitor who refuses to disarm. You will escape eventually, but this adventure ends here.

You scramble up the boulder-strewn hillside, hearing the beat of wings as the Korven take to the air behind you. You find a crack between two enormous rocks and turn to fight the Korven one at a time.

KORVEN

SKILL 5

STAMINA 5

If you win, you find that the other Korven are reluctant to continue to attack you in such a confined space. You have time to look around, and you discover that the gap between the boulders is the end of a dry stream-bed. You can crawl through the gap into a narrow gully – almost a tunnel – that leads uphill. As you do this, two of the surviving Korven strike. They land on your back, lacerating your flesh and sawing through the straps of your backpack. You force your way into the gully and safety; however, you have lost 3 points from your STAMINA – and your backpack, along with everything in it, has gone. If you are still alive, you have no choice but to follow the course of the gully. When it becomes too narrow, you emerge to find that the Korven have flown away. Turn to 68.

Your other limbs are all engulfed in glutinous slime, but your sword-arm is free. You extract your sword from its scabbard and begin to jab clumsily at the black tongue. Because it is almost impossible to move, you must deduct from your SKILL score the number that you rolled on the die, to take account of

the difficulty of your position. As you strike with your sword, the Stegocephalian responds by trying to roll up its tongue – with you inside. Turn to 94.

You step warily towards the bear, and put your finger to your lips. The bear understands, and quietsens. It pushes a covered paw against the muzzle, repeatedly: it wants you to take the muzzle off. With some reluctance, you undo the buckles that secure it; and the bear does not bite you – it speaks! 'A thousand thanks, friend, whoever you are. I am Dirlin, and I was once a man, and the partner of another, named Horfak, who is now the ruler of this place. He discovered that foul gateway into this strange world. When he entered the Portal, it came alive with awful power. Horfak insisted that all our miners must go through it; those who objected were dragged through, screaming, by others who had already been changed into Slave Warriors. I was pushed under, but my will was too strong; so the Portal changed my body instead, and Horfak imprisoned me here. From time to time he visits me and gloats. Now I want my revenge; but these chains on my ankles are locked, and only the gaoler has the key. Find him, take the keys, and free me, I implore you!

You explain briefly that your mission is also against Horfak and the Portal. Will you leave Dirlin and look for the gaoler (turn to 295); or will you stay with him and try to break the chains with chunks of stone (turn to 153)?

You run about as best you can in the darkness, scrambling over piles of boxes, kicking over barrels, and upending sacks of rotting vegetables. The Armoured Mole is confused: it can neither hear you nor smell you because of all the other noises and odours that are filling the cellar. You reach the ladder and climb up it, slamming the trapdoor behind you. You are back in the empty first-floor room of the tower. Turn to 359.

With your one free hand you manage to pull the Sword of Gravalan from its scabbard and twist the hilt. You plunge the rapidly heating blade into the tank. It soon seems that this desperate act has made things worse: the sword becomes as fixed as your arm, and it is heating the liquid to an unbearable temperature. You watch helplessly as steam rises from the bubbling surface. Your arm is being boiled – but at last you can move it a little; inch by inch, you pull it and the sword out of the liquid. You sit against the wall and inspect your red, blistered arm – deduct 3 points from your STAMINA. If you have survived this ordeal, you force yourself to carry on; you return to the other room to help Azudraz. Turn to 316.



Gloten enters the room. 'I'm sorry I've kept you waiting, my perspicacious friend. How did you detect my dwarfish origins, eh? I've been looking for a special item that I'd like you to have, but I can't find it anywhere. Only one place to look now: the strongbox. Watch this!' He clammers on to the seat of the chair, and proceeds to pull at the arm-rests, lifting first one and then the other with some difficulty. The front of the chair's plinth, which had looked like a solid block of wood, swings open to reveal a cavity. In it is a wooden box.

Soon Gloten has the box open and is rummaging through a dazzling heap of coins and gems. He pulls out – a battered old hunting-horn. 'Don't look so disappointed,' Gloten says. 'This will be of more use to you than a sackful of jewels. It's a family heirloom, obviously of dwarfish workmanship. Take it; sound it when you are in dire peril. The eagles swore an oath to my forefathers that they would aid anyone who sounds this horn. They will come only once. Now – let us prepare for your mission.'

Turn to 259.

You manage to hide only just in time. As you crouch inside the barrel, you hear footsteps crossing the tavern floor. A voice shouts: 'Nothing much left in here, sergeant! Not even a drop of ale.' The reply from the street is: 'Have a good look round, trooper,

all the same. You never know what or who you might find.' It is clear that a troop of the Margrave's soldiers are searching the village. The trooper approaches the barrels behind the bar. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 38. If you are Unlucky, turn to 154.

213

The warriors of the People carry you and the body of the Triceratops in triumph to their hilltop town. Dinosaur steak tastes surprisingly good. You spend the rest of the day feasting, resting and basking in the adulation of the townspeople. You may rest up to 6 points of STAMINA.

The following morning you and the Shaman lead all the fighters of the People to the Sacred Cave; you settle down to lie in wait on a hillside overlooking the road that leads to the Warlord's headquarters. Your scouts run back with the news that the enemy is approaching; soon you can hear the marching feet and see the cloud of dust that they are raising. A long column of Slave Warriors comes into sight; among the skeletal forms is a chariot, drawn by Elven Slave Warriors, whose occupant must be the Warlord – a giant of a man with a bulbous head. A second team of Slave Warriors pulls a wheeled cart containing the proud figure of a tall human woman. The People cannot contain their anger. 'Anxis!' they cry. 'Our Queen! We will release you!' – and they hurl themselves into battle. Anxis is heavily guarded; your comrades are attacking the strongest

part of the Slave Warrior army. Will you help them (turn to 344); or will you ignore everything that distracts you from confronting the Warlord himself (turn to 70)?

214

Again and again the punt jars as its flat bottom scrapes across the rocks, but somehow its timbers hold together as the foaming river bumps you down the stony stairway. You are thrown from side to side, and drenched in ice-cold water. However, you manage to hang on. As the punt enters deeper water it begins to leak and break up, but before it sinks it comes to ground on a bank of the river. You stagger out of the wreckage and collapse, battered and exhausted. Turn to 86.



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215

You stand with your back against the trunk of an enormous oak and await the attack. There is room for both Scurrellors to fight you at once, but only one advances; as it approaches, its knife weaving patterns in the air, you realize why: the tip of its tail has begun to crackle with energy and is burning everything it touches. The second Scurrellor stays well out of range. You therefore fight the Scurrellors one at a time. You fight as normal, but in addition at the end of each round of combat you must roll one die; if the result is a 6, the Scurrellor's tail has struck you, and you must deduct 4 points from your STAMINA.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First SCURRELLOR	5	9
Second SCURRELLOR	5	8

If you defeat them both, you continue along the path. Turn to 230.

216

The man turns his back on you with a shrug, and addresses his followers. 'You men, there! Bring some ropes! Bind this prisoner! It's time we returned to camp. We'll take the prisoner with us. Then we'll find out what this warrior's really doing here.'

And so, a little while later, you start a southward march. Your hands are tied together, and your arms

are pressed against your body by coils of heavy rope. A sack over your head makes it hard to see where you are going. A rope connects you to the belt of one of your captors, and you are pulled along at the end of the line of marchers. You are dragged deeper and deeper into the forest.

You think you may be able to loosen your bonds by continually flexing and relaxing your muscles. If you decide to try this, turn to 119. If you'd rather not, turn to 333.

217

The narrow path passes a wooden hut. The marching column halts, and the Elf Queen opens the hut's door and invites you to enter. 'Rest here tonight,' she says, 'and tomorrow some of my Elves will take you to your destination.' You enter the hut, and the door closes behind you. There is just one windowless room, containing only a straw mattress, on which you sit. You can eat a meal from your Provisions at this point, and restore up to 4 points of STAMINA. There seems nothing to do in the darkness but go to sleep and await the morning – if you do this, turn to 376. If you want to leave the hut and explore your surroundings, turn to 177.



218

'No money?' yells the bandit leader. 'No gold? What kind of incompetent adventurer do you call yourself? We'll take everything – the whole lot. Well, you can keep the backpack – empty, of course. And hand over that sword, too!'

You cannot stop the bandits taking all your possessions – erase all equipment and Provisions from your *Adventure Sheet*. If you refuse to part with your sword, turn to 113.

If you give them your sword as well, you must reduce your SKILL by 4 points until you acquire another weapon; the bandits will ride off with their booty. Turn to 27.

219

You jump to your feet – and a Slave Warrior's bony arms encircle your waist as you try to run. You have only one chance to shake loose his grip before you are surrounded by the other Slave Warriors. Roll one die twice. If the total rolled is equal to, or less than, your SKILL, turn to 122; if the total exceeds your SKILL, turn to 305.

220

You pull your sword-blade out of the bulbous carcass of the Giant Spider and move out of reach of its still-twitching limbs. You turn to look at the Goblin. He is in a pitiable state. He is old and lame, and his once fine clothes are in tatters. Blood from a multi-

tude of slight wounds trickles down his face, arms and legs. You are surprised to see that he carries no weapon. He seems too exhausted to move. Will you stay with the Goblin until he recovers a little, and offer him some Provisions? If so, turn to 136. If you have no Provisions to offer, or if you decide that you should continue your journey without delay, you leave the Goblin and continue heading downstream along the clifftop path. Turn to 399.

221

The forest is full of noises: the tramp of marching feet, the roars of animals. Armies are on the move; you keep under the cover of the undergrowth, as the paths that cross the forest are full of Slave Warriors. You see squads of humans, Goblins, Elves and Dwarfs, as well as other nameless creatures that the forest has hidden until now – all are blank-eyed, expressionless, mindless thralls, silent except for the sound of their footsteps and the weird cries of the scaly creatures that accompany them. They are marching to the west – towards Kleinkastel and the rich settlements beyond.

Your eastward path branches. You come out of the forest to read the signpost. One wooden arm points north, and is inscribed 'Horfak and Dirlin Mines'; the other points east, saying 'Cleevers Mine and Throke Mine'. Which path will you take: north – turn to 356; or east – turn to 258?

222

You hand over 5 Gold Pieces, but protest that you don't know anything about mining. 'I really couldn't care less about that,' says the officer. 'My concern is raising revenue for the Margrave's treasury. Wait here while I draw up the documents.' While the officer signs and seals your Mining Licence, his soldiers are searching the huts of the village. He returns and hands you the paper, and you ask whether you are permitted to stay and find out what, if anything, the soldiers find. 'Do as you please!' says the officer. 'You're a miner now; you've every right to be here.' Turn to 327.

223

Within an hour of dawn the streets are crowded. All the inhabitants of Kleinkastel seem to be congregating in the Market Square. Swallowing your pride, you walk up to the more prosperous-looking passers-by and ask each of them for a Gold Piece with which to buy a meal. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 111. If you are Unlucky, turn to 83.

224

You keep still. The Noasaurus continues to step towards you, although it does not yet show any sign of aggression. It worries you, however, because you fear that it will draw the attention of at least one of the Slave Warriors to you. The creature is now only a sword's length away: will you attack it (turn to 26); move away from it (turn to 58); or remain motionless (turn to 93)?

225

The disembodied voice whispers again: 'Thank you! That will suffice as payment for your boat-trip. And now please be kind enough to tell me – what is your business here?'

You decide that it would be best to make some kind of reply. Will you say:

'I am searching for a wizard who it is said can be found at this end of the forest.'

Turn to 117

'I am a wandering warrior and my adventures have brought me here by chance.'

Turn to 23

226

The Oviraptor may be small but it has a sharp beak and powerful claws. It shrieks as it hurls itself at you.

OVIRAPTOR SKILL 8 STAMINA 8

If you defeat it in four or fewer rounds of combat, you can leave the cage by squeezing through the slit at the base of the back wall – turn to 39. If it is still alive after four Attack Rounds, it continues to attack you – turn to 28.

227

You push off from the bank and sit down in the swaying boat. When you reach the centre of the stream, you find that the cross-currents cease, and

the flowing waters take you gently in a south-westerly direction. You relax and enjoy the trip as the river gradually veers to the south and you drift peacefully past the vast slumbering forests that crowd the banks.

You hear splashing and, looking ahead, you see a commotion in the water near the left bank, where the surface is otherwise calm. Will you manoeuvre the boat eastwards, towards the left-hand bank, to get closer to the disturbance (turn to 139)? Or will you let the boat continue to drift with the current in the middle of the river (turn to 25)?

228

You fall forward and crash to the ground on the compound side of the fence. Roll one die: if you roll a 4, 5 or 6, you twist your leg as you land – deduct 2 more points from your STAMINA. If you are still alive, you pick yourself up and look around. Turn to 68.

229

One of the soldiers runs to attack the monster and the Elf woman, while you intercept the other. He seems to be in no mood to talk, and attempts to barge past you. You fight.

SOLDIER SKILL 5 STAMINA 8

If you survive long enough to reduce his STAMINA to 3 points or less, he turns and runs away into the forest. Turn to 320.

230

A little further on, the path forks. If you take the wider of the two branches, which leads north-east and uphill towards the mountains, turn to 277. If you take the smaller branch, south-eastwards into the forest, skirting the hills, turn to 100.

231

You stumble backwards, fending off the spiked tips of half a dozen clubs, and find time to glance at the Goblins. Both have been felled before they could finish their incantation, and you are alone against ten Troglodytes. Surrounded, you are soon clubbed to the ground. Your adventure ends here.

232

As you walk forward, sword swinging, your leather armour spattered with the blood of the vanquished Oviraptor, you present an awesome sight. The Goblins huddle together, fingering their swords uncertainly. You have to decide how you will deal with them. If you have a letter from the King of the Forest Goblins, you could show it to them in the hope that it will impress them and persuade them to leave you in peace. If you do this, turn to 336. If you charge, yelling and brandishing your sword, straight at the Goblins, turn to 282. If you pretend to ignore the Goblins and saunter towards the river-side path, turn to 187.



233

Knives, hatchets, spears and axes hurtle through the air towards you in succession and bury their blades in the wooden board against which you stand. The warriors of the People are not on their best form tonight: among the shower of weapons that shave your skin and impale your clothing are some that strike too close, wounding you. Roll one die: the result of the die-roll is the number of points of STAMINA you lose. If you are still alive, turn to 174 – unless you rolled a 6, in which case turn to 311.

234

The wizard's frown deepens. He stamps his foot in irritation. 'I have been so anxious about my privacy that I have ignored these events taking place only a few miles away. I did not take heed of the rumours I heard. Now I must act, and I hope I am not too late. Grasp my hand!'

You grip the wizard's wrist; everything goes black, and then you find yourself standing alone in a torch-lit cellar. The wizard walks in bearing a tray of food, and as you eat (restore up to 4 points of STAMINA) he searches among the racks of swords and shields that line the walls. 'None of them is made of iron,' he says, 'and so they don't interfere with the use of my . . . unusual gifts. And this is the weapon for you! The Sword of Gravalan! It is bronze, but as strong as steel. It will serve you as an ordinary blade; but, in addition, if you twist this part of the hilt the tip of the sword will instantly

become white-hot. You may do this three times. Each time the heat will last long enough to finish off one opponent. The heat will double the effect of wounds that you inflict, and you may find it also has other uses. The blade stays dark even when hot. Take it! And now, before we leave, do you have any more news for me?

Restore your SKILL to its *Initial* value. If you have a stone talisman on a leather thong, turn to 31. If not, turn to 102.



235

The Margrave is outraged at your suggestion, and orders his men to seize you. Gloten protests, but the Margrave is incensed that a mere adventurer should challenge him to a duel, and insulted by the suggestion that he should use such a plebeian weapon as a pickaxe handle. He instructs the soldiers of his bodyguard to escort you out of the town. You are banished, on pain of death.

Fuming at the injustice of this sentence, you are determined to prove your worth. You set off into the forest. Turn to 22.

236

Lignia breaks off her chanting, and her thin fingers cease their complex figures. 'It is very easy for you to claim friendship with the forest,' she says, 'but the contrary evidence is there, hanging from your belt. Prove your harmlessness, warrior: surrender your weapon! And then go down into my garden and expend some of your war-like energies in fruitful labour; repair the wounds inflicted on my charges by your fellow soldiers.' Will you agree to these instructions (turn to 30); or will you refuse and insist on leaving (turn to 325)?





237

You open the door to reveal a room much larger than a prison cell. The stone floor is strewn with soft rugs; glowing tapestries cover the walls; cushions and rugs lie in profusion across intricately carved pieces of furniture; streamers of velvet and silk hang from silver chandeliers. In the midst of all this luxury stands a woman; tall, dark-skinned and haughty, she glares at you as you enter her room. She is beautiful and richly dressed; yet her slim limbs have hints of muscle that belie the softness of her surroundings, and her flashing eyes make you rather glad that she is restrained – her ankles and wrists are manacled in heavy iron chains. If you bear the Sign of the Spear on your forehead, turn to 65; if not, turn to 324.

238

With your hands raised to show that you are holding no weapon, you move closer to the ape. You point down the hill and say: 'Go away from here. Leave this place. Return to the forest. Do you understand? Go down the hill. Go!'

The ape rubs its muzzle with the palm of a huge hand. Its face clears, and it looks at you shrewdly. 'It is a powerful restorative for the mind,' it says, 'to hear a few simple sentences of human speech. I will relinquish this hilltop to you, my friend, with pleasure. It is a sorrowful location. The views, by the way, are quite magnificent. I will take my leave. I trust my appearance has caused you only a little

distress; I can assure you that any anxiety this bestial form has engendered in you must be as nothing compared to the anguish it brings me. Good evening to you.' The giant ape lopes away down the hill. Turn to 18.

239

The sound of marching feet on the main path behind you makes you hurry along the narrow track into the sun-baked hills. You find a rocky ravine that takes you out of sight of the Portal's entrance, and you follow it downhill. It widens into a broad, flat, grassy valley, dotted with clumps of woodland. Some of the trees are very unusual, like giant ferns; all the animals are strange to you, although not all resemble giant lizards – some are furry, some hairy, looking a bit like the wild animals of Khul. In the distance, the valley narrows again; you are now in the widest part of it; to your right, you see a thin column of smoke rising out of a copse of trees. Will you investigate the source of the smoke (turn to 165), or will you continue towards the far end of the valley (turn to 348)?

240

It takes you hours to carry all the cages from the narrow chamber to the path outside the mine entrance, where you arrange them in lines with their doors facing the down-sloping forest. Then you open the doors, and one by one the birds soar into the sky, their colours flashing in the sunlight. The

last one flies away, but remains near by, circling over the treetops and, as you watch, all the other birds return, swooping out of the sky. You gaze upwards, entranced, as the blue sky becomes a kaleidoscope of twittering colours; their separate songs merge at last into a harmonious crescendo, and you understand that the birds, or perhaps the deity that watches over them, are offering you their thanks. They fly away into the forest. Restore 1 point of LUCK if you need to. Turn to 5.



241

Gartax is reluctant to talk about Gloten's treasure. However, you make it clear that you expect such information as the price for your help against Gartax's enemies. He tells you that the treasure is in Gloten's house, in the very room in which Gloten receives visitors. The mine-owner's vast armchair – more like a throne – sits on a solid plinth in which there is a concealed compartment. In order to open the secret door, it is necessary to sit on the seat, and then lift the arm-rests in the correct order: first the left and then the right. Inside the compartment is a chest full of gems and gold coins. 'And now there's no time for more talk!' says Gartax. 'We have arrived!'

Turn to 310.

242

Drips of ice-cold water drop on your head: now that the Glaciator is dead, the underground room is beginning to warm again. Through the ice that coats the walls you can make out a second door; you assume that the Glaciator was brought here from Khul to guard this entrance to the heart of the palace. You hammer at the sheet of ice but you cannot break it; it is as thick as your fist, and must be melted. However, you cannot wait for a natural thaw: echoing along the passage is the steady tread of a squad of Slave Warriors, attracted by the noise of your fight with the Glaciator. You will have to try to use the flame of your torch to melt the curtain of ice (turn to 148) – unless you have the Sword of Gravalan with at least one heat-charge remaining in it; in this case, turn to 315.

243

'So! A human!' says Lignia. 'And a warrior, too, unless I am mistaken. But a warrior without a sharp blade of metal – a very rare species indeed. Why are you wandering through this forest?'

You tell Lignia that you are investigating the cause of the recent disturbances in the area, and you relate some of your recent adventures. 'Your cause is worthy,' says Lignia, 'but it is not my immediate concern. You may leave in peace, but do not cross my garden. Go!' Will you attack Lignia (turn to 16); or will you follow her instructions by descending from the tree and skirting the dell (turn to 118)?

244

You are hurled into the raging torrent and swept downstream. Swimming is impossible; the most you can do is to gulp air whenever a swirl of current lifts you out of the icy water. Numb and helpless, you plunge headlong through the endless cataracts.

Roll one die. The number that you roll is the number of rocks that you smash into as you are swept through the rapids. For each rock that you strike, roll one die: a 1 or 2 causes 1 point of STAMINA loss; a 3 or 4 means you lose 2 points; a 5 or 6 and you lose 3 points. Even if you are still alive, you are unconscious before you reach the calmer waters at the bottom of the rapids. Turn to 86.

245

The jumble of stone blocks was once a village. The jungle creepers have not yet begun to cover the ruins, so you assume that the destruction occurred recently. There is no sign of fighting, but the stone huts have been torn down deliberately; ashes and patches of scorched earth show where fires were built to burn the huts' furnishings. One building, set apart from the village at the end of a narrow path into the jungle, has escaped the destruction. As you approach it, you see that it is a big building – a temple. The doors are hanging open on broken hinges; you look inside.

The interior has been devastated: torn wall-hangings and broken statues litter the floor. The idol on the altar has not been damaged; the seated

statue stares down at you with a hundred eyes, each one a coloured gemstone. With a click, its wide mouth opens and, from inside it, a long wooden scoop extends towards you. Although you have never seen this particular deity before, you have been in enough temples to know that the scoop is a mechanism for receiving offerings. If you place a Gold Piece on the scoop, turn to 124; if you climb on to the altar to prise out the statue's jewelled eyes, turn to 274; if you leave the temple and head for the hilltop settlement, turn to 140.

246

A trail of mud runs across the path from the stream to the dark cave-mouth. It looks as if the cave has an inhabitant, and you decide that you would rather not find out what it is. You tiptoe past the gaping hole. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 115. If you are Unlucky, turn to 329.

247

You step out from the shelter of the rocks. The squad of Slave Warriors is only a stone's throw away, approaching steadily. You try to mimic their regular, mechanical movements and expressionless stare. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 44; if you are Unlucky, turn to 270.



248

The bandit leader hurls the swords into the air. They land with a clash of steel, and you and the bandits crowd round them to see how they have landed. 'We win!' yells the bandit leader. 'The marked blades are showing!' He grabs the sack and stuffs it into a saddlebag. He and his men mount their ponies, and are about to ride off when the leader turns to you again. 'Thank you for the game. This has been an entertaining and profitable encounter. I would hate to see you going hungry – here, take this!'

He takes a Gold Piece from his purse and throws it to you. You catch it; the bandits ride away. With a sigh, you shoulder your pack and continue on your way. Remember to deduct your losses from your *Adventure Sheet.* Turn to 27.

249

You walk along the broad limb until you reach the centre of the tree. The trunk is as wide as a house, and there is a cleft in the bark that is big enough to squeeze through. You look inside: it is a sentry-post, and the groan came from a young Elf, apparently in the throes of a nightmare while asleep on duty. His facial features look like those of a normal Elf, and his clothes are still quite clean and tidy. You assume that he has only recently been impressed into the ranks of the Slave Warriors. As you expect, he wears a stone talisman round his neck; he seems to be struggling to pull it off as he

dreams. Behind him, a staircase carved out of the interior of the trunk winds downwards. Will you tiptoe past the sleeping guard and go down the stairs (turn to 19); or will you try to remove the talisman from round the guard's neck (turn to 313)?

250

Your plan succeeds. You shoulder-charge the merchant and, as he staggers, you grab his purse and wrench it from his belt. You run to the end of the alley and merge with the crowd before the merchant can recover his wits or his breath. The purse contains 10 Gold Pieces. You immediately use one of them to buy a hearty breakfast, and thus you avoid losing any STAMINA.

As you leave the tavern, you almost fall over a group of tiny children. They are thin and dirty and dressed in rags. They ask you for money. If you give them the remaining 9 Gold Pieces from the stolen purse before setting off through the town, remember to deduct them from your *Adventure Sheet*, and turn to 61. If you ignore their pleas, turn to 355.

251

The hunters present you with a long spear, and with it you advance towards the Triceratops, which lifts its three-horned, crested head and begins to bellow, warning you to stay away; as you stalk closer still to its nest of eggs, it scuffs the grass and prepares to charge. As the beast lowers its head and thunders towards you, you despair of ever defeating it.

TRICERATOPS

SKILL 8

STAMINA 18

Your spear is useful in fending off the animal's charges – during this fight, increase your SKILL by 2 points; but it has little impact on the leathery, knobbly hide – deduct only 1 point from the Triceratops's STAMINA each time you wound it. Its horns and its thick, muscular tail are formidable weapons – deduct 3 points from your STAMINA each time it wounds you. If you are still alive after five rounds of combat, you are relieved to hear the war-cries of the other hunters as they join in the attack. Surrounded, the Triceratops is soon overwhelmed and slaughtered. Turn to 390.

252

'The wizard certainly shares your concern; he has of late heard disquieting reports about perils threatening humans, and Goblins, and beasts, in the forests to the north.' The thin voice pauses; the black shape moves restlessly. 'Your desire to render assistance is noble – but have you sufficient wit to be of any use in these testing matters? Let us try a simple test. Study the dark shape of me, and answer this: I am stunted now, but will be fully grown by sunset. I am always here on fine days. Whose am I, and what am I?'

Write down the answer that you give, and turn to 191.



You step through the Portal, and you are once again in the cavern, deep below the Cloudhigh Mountains. You look for the sack of Igneolite – it is still there, resting innocuously against the Portal's black stone. With one last glance at the sunlit jungles of the lost world, you thrust your flaming torch into the fine powder, then retreat to the edge of the cavern. The sack bursts open, and a cloud of dust settles all over the black blocks of carved stone. For a few seconds a loud sizzling fills the cavern – and the surface of the Portal bubbles and writhes as the stone is melted, re-congealing instantly into a smooth, featureless lump of fused rock. There is a moment of silence; then an indescribable, brain-curdling noise as of the rending of the substance of the universe, a scream fading into infinite distance. You know that the Portal is destroyed. As you make your way out of the mine, you come across groups of Slave Warriors: most of them are dead, but a few – those most recently converted – are recovering their wits. You try to comfort them, but you are anxious to return to Kleinkastel. Turn to 400.

The attackers have looted the camp and taken away everything of value – not just coins and gems, but also weapons, armour, food, and even the pack-animals. As you search the bodies, you observe that, to a greater or lesser extent, all the Slave Warriors exhibit strange and unhuman features.

They wear no armour or uniform, and their clothes are filthy and tattered. Their skin is pale, and their faces are almost blank. Some of them have actually lost their facial features, having a short lipless slit instead of a mouth, two small holes instead of a nose, and deeply set eyes without brows, lids or lashes. Each of them wears a stone talisman on a leather thong round the neck; the stone is carved with unintelligible hieroglyphics. You find one of these strange soldiers still alive, although dying. You notice that his talisman is shrouded in black shadow. You remove it from round his neck; it seems almost a living thing. You can put it in your backpack and then wander into the forest – turn to 2. Or you can hang it round your own neck – turn to 384.



255

You are held under guard in the village square and, before long, an officer arrives on horseback. Jumping from his saddle, he brushes dust from his blue cloak and gleaming armour as the troopers salute and the sergeant explains about your capture. The officer strolls over to you. 'A vagrant, eh?' he drawls. 'Explain your business in this area – and make it a good explanation, for your own sake.'

Do you have a warrant from the Margrave? If so, you show it to the officer – turn to 73. Otherwise, turn to 131.

256

You wait. A crack appears between two of the huge stone blocks; it widens and, as you squeeze through the gap, you hear the regular tread of Slave Warriors' feet on the stairs. On the other side of the stone wall you find yourself in the middle of a deserted corridor; you hastily push the block back into place. Now you can no longer hear the sounds of pursuit. To your right, the corridor ends at a wooden door; it has strong iron bolts, but they are not drawn across the door. When you try to pull the door open, however, you find that it will not open, no matter how hard you tug. The latch feels strangely cold. In the other direction, the corridor, lined with torches, stretches into the distance. You walk towards this other end. Turn to 372.

257

You collect armfuls of dry twigs and several dead branches and trunks of trees, and pile them on to the embers of your camp fire. Within minutes the hollow is full of light and heat from the bonfire you have built. The logs will stay alight all night. You go to sleep with your head resting on your backpack and your sword unsheathed at your side.

You wake suddenly, and open one eye. By the dancing light of the flames you see a stealthy hand reaching for your sword. You grab your weapon and jump to your feet. Two Goblins face you, their shortswords at the ready.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First GOBLIN	5	4
Second GOBLIN	6	4

You must fight both at once. In each round of combat, both Goblins attack you but you can attack only one of them – choose which one at the start of each round. Any Goblin with an Attack Strength higher than yours wounds you; you can wound only the one you have chosen to attack. If you kill them both, turn to 20.



258

The path takes you out of the forest and into lightly wooded hills. You pass beneath the branches of a tree and hear a raucous shriek; you look up to see a colony of four Korven perched above you. They spread their wings and glide to the ground in front of you, blocking your way. Korven are reclusive forest-dwellers; you have heard of them, but have never seen them before. They are small humanoids, resembling evil-faced Goblins, with claws instead of feet and feathered wings instead of arms. You observe that even they have been captured and enslaved – each wears a stone talisman on a leather thong round its long neck. You cannot defeat four of them together. Will you turn off the path and head for the thick woodlands to your right (turn to 82); or will you turn off the path to your left, up into the rocky hills, hoping to find a defensible position (turn to 206)?

259

During the evening, apothecaries examine your body for wounds and prepare remedies which you swallow before retiring to the Margrave's guest chamber. You awake next morning invigorated: if any of your scores are below their *Initial* levels, restore them to their full amount.

The townspeople gather again, and again you are at the centre of a public ceremony. The Margrave presents you with a warrant ordering his subjects to allow you free passage and to furnish you with any

help you may require; Gloten gives you a purse containing 10 Gold Pieces and, 'from the Wizard', a phial containing a Potion of True Seeing. And the townspeople bring you Provisions – you manage to cram enough for five meals into your backpack. (Note these changes on your *Adventure Sheet*.)

'All we know,' says Gloten, 'is that, somewhere underground, someone has discovered an ancient portal to another world and is using its evil power to create an army of Slave Warriors out of enslaved forest-dwellers. This Warlord is probably to be found beyond the Portal, in the strange world from which unnatural beasts have issued to plague our countryside. If you can defeat the Warlord, your reward will be as generous as your deeds are glorious. Remember: not only the weak are at risk – Horfak and Dirlin, two of the wealthiest mine-owners, are among those missing.'

You thank Gloten; if you have no sword, you borrow one from a soldier; and you set off into the forest. Turn to 22.



A Slave Warrior is an unnerving opponent. His movements appear slow, but he wastes no effort and never tires. No expression ever crosses his face: not even the cruellest wound causes a flicker of emotion in the blank depths of his eyes.

SLAVE WARRIOR SKILL 7 STAMINA 8

If you win, you look towards the centre of the grove, where the *mêlée* is coming to an end. The man and one of the Slave Warriors seem to be badly hurt; the Dwarf is prevailing against his opponent. If you decide to leave now and travel to the end of the valley, turn to 348; if you stay to help defeat the remaining Slave Warriors, turn to 202.

For several seconds the bandit leader stares at you grimly. Then he grins widely and begins to clap his hands together. The other bandits join in the applause as Kran pulls himself to his feet and offers you his scimitar.

'Well fought! Both of you, well fought!' says the bandit leader. 'Stranger, you have proved your courage and have entertained us well. You may keep your sword. You may keep everything. Pick it all up – it's all yours!'

Kran's comrades help him into his saddle, and the bandits ride away. You collect your possessions, then continue on your way southwards. Turn to 27.

Looking closely at the sentries, you can see that only the dregs of the Slave Warrior army are being left behind on guard duty. The two guards are, or were, aged Gnomes, and they look far too old to fight. However, they are controlled by the will of the Warlord of the Portal, and they attack with knives in their shaking hands. You can easily fight them one at a time. If you have a Ring of Zombie Warding, it affects the Slave Warriors – the SKILL of each of them is reduced by 1 point.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First GNOME SLAVE WARRIOR	5	4
Second GNOME SLAVE WARRIOR	4	4

If you defeat the Gnome Slave Warriors, you walk through the gate in the high fence. Turn to 68.





263

You hack a way up overgrown slopes, slide down treacherous banks, and splash across tree-shadowed streams. You join a narrow path which soon leads you to a clearing, in the centre of which a solitary tree spreads its shade. You step into the clearing, uncomfortably aware that the surrounding forest is unnaturally quiet. As you reach the central tree, you hear the rustle of branches from the far side of the glade, and you see a man run into the open, closely pursued by a creature from a nightmare. It is a Phororhacos, a vicious flightless bird, much taller than a human, with a huge curved beak and glittering eyes surmounted by a crest of feathers. The man looks frail and tired; he is limping and is armed with only a small knife. With an ululating cry the cruel bird chases him relentlessly as he tries to back away.

If you want to come to the man's rescue, turn to 176. If you would rather avoid getting involved, and return to the cover of the forest, turn to 101.

264

On your left, rising above the trees, the bare brown hillsides are pockmarked with mine entrances. You reach a village, an unplanned cluster of cabins, home for the miners and their families. But the village seems to have been abandoned; there is no sound, and doors and shutters hang loose on their hinges, revealing dark silent interiors. You pause at

the edge of the village, and you can hear a noise from the path behind you. It is the tramp of marching feet, and the guttural sound of men's voices, speaking in the local dialect. Will you wait on the path for the men to arrive (turn to 41); or will you quickly find a hiding-place in the village (turn to 125)?

265

You can hear the Slave Warriors approaching, but they are not yet in sight. You pull back the bolt, open the door and enter the cage, pulling the door shut behind you. A wooden partition divides the cage; if you stay in front of the partition, you can be seen from the corridor, so you hurry behind it. You find that the back of the cage is not empty. You are sharing it with an Oviraptor, a small beaked dinosaur rearing up on its hind legs, no taller than a Dwarf. You look for another exit from the cage: apart from the door at the front, the only way out is to squeeze through a horizontal slit that runs along the bottom of the back wall. The Oviraptor does not allow you much time for thought; it attacks. Will you escape through the narrow slit, suffering the loss of 2 points of STAMINA as the Oviraptor lacerates your departing body (turn to 39); or will you stand and fight the creature (turn to 226)?

266

Your sword slides into the creature's eye-socket, and the momentum of its attack forces the blade deep into its cranium. The Elasmosaurus is mortally

wounded, but it will not die quietly. It writhes in frenzy, lashing its tail and neck from side to side, tossing your little boat into the air and filling it with blood-reddened water. All you can do is hang on to the side while trying to sheathe your sword once more.

If you are using a skiff, turn to 71. If your craft is a punt, turn to 180.

267

You follow the path towards the Goblins' statue-topped hill. You dodge between bushes and boulders, trying to remain concealed even though there is not much cover on the hillsides at this altitude. You move out from behind a clump of gorse, and come face to face with two Troglodytes. They lift their snouts, squinting and snuffling and shielding their eyes with their paws. They exchange a few gruff syllables, then attack, one at a time.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First TROGLODYTE	5	9
Second TROGLODYTE	6	7

You can escape, with the loss of 2 points from your STAMINA as a spiked club catches your shoulder, by running back along the hillside path and down into the forest - turn to 144. If you stay to fight, and win, turn to 66.



268

As you make your way through the outskirts of Kleinkastel, you pass stalls and craftsmen's workshops. You may buy Provisions, at a cost of 1 Gold Piece per meal, up to a maximum of five meals. If you do not have a sword, you may buy one at a cost of 5 Gold Pieces. (Remember to make a note of any changes on your *Adventure Sheet*.) Once you have completed your purchases, you leave the town and head eastwards into the forest. Turn to 22.

269

Cautiously you push up the trapdoor and look around. This level also consists of one large room; it seems to have been the living-quarters of whoever inhabited the tower. All that remains of the furniture is a bed and a chest; the chest contains robes embroidered with arcane symbols. Smaller items have been removed – you find hooks on the walls where pictures once hung. Under the bed you find the stub of a thick candle, which you put in your backpack. There is a window in each of the four walls. Looking west, you see that the forest thins, and beyond there is scrubby steppe, ending in the far distance at mountains silhouetted against the sunset. Northwards, the river down which you boated disappears into the forest. To the east, the foreground is dominated by a rocky eminence on the far bank of the river; stained pink by the setting sun, it is surmounted by a stone hut. At the foot of the crag the river joins another waterway, and their combined flow foams down ferocious rapids as they

speed south. In that direction, beyond the forest, you can see a vast expanse of still water, lit by the sun's last rays. You can see no way to reach the top storey of the tower. If you decide to stay in the dark and look for one, turn to 183. If you decide to return to the first-floor room, turn to 109.

270

The Slave Warriors continue to march along the ridge towards you. You dare not try to enter the valley – they would know that you were not one of them and could capture you as you attempted to push into the jungle. You continue with your pretence, marching slowly in front of the Slave Warrior patrol. They are gaining on you, but you dare not run. You see another squad marching towards you from the other direction. As you are caught between the two groups, you realize that none of them has been fooled by your play-acting. You are surrounded. Turn to 328.

271

The third inn that you visit, a small establishment within the old walls and in the shadow of the castle, has room for you. It costs 1 Gold Piece, which you pay gladly, to spend the night on a straw mattress in an attic.

You sleep well and wake in the morning feeling very hungry. If you do not eat, you will lose 4 points from your STAMINA! You can avoid this by eating one meal from your Provisions, if you have any. Alternatively, if you have money, you can obtain an



excellent breakfast from the innkeeper at the cost of another 1 Gold Piece. If you have neither Provisions nor money, you must either deduct 4 STAMINA points or go out and beg for food in the streets. Make all necessary adjustments to your *Adventure Sheet*, and then turn to 61 – unless you are going to beg for food, in which case turn to 223.

272

Your backpack is moving! You look inside: the Pteranodon's egg is vibrating violently. You lift it and place it on the ground. Cracks appear on the shell; a beak appears; then the egg bursts apart and a tiny Pteranodon stares up at you. It spreads its wings, hops up and down, and then opens its beak and lets out an ear-splitting screech. It is hungry. If you give it a meal from your Provisions, turn to 112. If you have no Provisions, or do not wish to waste any on a baby pterosaur, turn to 7.

273

Snuffling as it scurries along, the Armoured Mole heads unerringly towards you.

ARMOURED MOLE SKILL 4 STAMINA 10

Because of the darkness and the confined space, your SKILL is reduced by 2 points for the duration of this fight. If you defeat the mole, you may continue your search of the cellar. You find nothing of value, but there is enough unspoilt food to provide you with Provisions for two meals. You can take these if you wish – note them on your *Adventure Sheet*. You

climb out of the cellar into the relatively light and airy first-floor room. Turn to 359.

274

The wooden tongue withdraws into the statue's mouth, which clicks shut. You are standing on the altar, trying to pull out one of the gems on the idol's face, when you see a movement in the darkness at the back of the temple. 'Desecration!' a voice echoes round the roof. 'Can the Mad God never rest?'

You run, but a vast multi-fingered hand blocks your way; you see a huge foot on each side of the altar. You look up and cry out in terror as a hundred eyes glare down at you from a head that touches the roof. You feel yourself pulled upwards towards the great face with its glittering array of eyes. Closer . . . you are embedded in the god's cold skin. You struggle to turn, to look down at the temple floor.

You have been transformed: the Mad God now has another eye, and you will see for him until the end of time.

275

The door opens before you have time to knock on it twice. From the darkness inside the hut, four eyes gleam at you. Two of them belong to a grim-looking Dwarf; the other two, even more belligerent, are those of a white parrot-like bird sitting on the Dwarf's shoulder, its long tail-feathers curled round his neck. The Dwarf is holding a long-poled boat-

hook which he pushes up to your throat. 'I'm the boatman,' he says. 'What are you after?' You ask for passage downriver. You say that you will pay in coin or in hard work. The Dwarf is not interested. 'What's the use of money? There's nothing to buy any more. And I don't want to take off down that river. Now if you've got some grub - why, I'd sell you one of me boats for a decent meal. We haven't eaten in days, have we, Pol?'

If you want to give him some of your Provisions in return for a boat, turn to 323. If not, the Dwarf stands guard over his boats as you continue your journey along the riverside path. Turn to 79.

276

In this moment of calm, you tell the woman again that you mean her no harm. She replies in an archaic dialect of your own tongue. 'You kill my enemies; you are therefore my friend. I have seen only enemies since I was brought to this foul place. I am Anxis the Hunter, Queen of the People. Quickly, unlock these manacles; give me that creature's sword. That's it; hurry! You must help me to finish Horfak the Tyrant. The People had lived at peace in this land for thousands of years - and then Horfak arrived through the Sacred Cave, bringing death and destruction to our world. The gateway from your world has become an evil thing; all beings coming here through it since Horfak have been half-dead things under his command, like this Dwarf here. Horfak built this palace in the middle of

	SKILL	STAMINA
First SLAVE WARRIOR	5	7
Second SLAVE WARRIOR	4	7

As you desperately parry their blows, you hear the hopeless cries of the camp-dwellers as the Slave Warrior army launches its attack. If you win this fight, you see more of your skeletal opponents stalking through the forest towards you. You make a run for it; eventually, although you have lost your bearings, you are sure you have shaken off your pursuers. Turn to 2.

281

The body of the Giant Watersnail sinks slowly to the bottom of the pool. With shaking hands, you put your boots back on – and look up sharply as you hear noises above you. Slave Warriors – dozens of them – are staring down at you from the ridges that enclose the pool. You turn to scramble back up the course of the stream, but other Slave Warriors, careless of their unfeeling bodies, are throwing themselves down the steep slopes to cut off your escape. Others tumble down behind you. You are soon surrounded and, although you fight, you are outnumbered. Turn to 328.



282

The Goblins have no stomach for this fight, and are slow and disorganized. You find that you can fight them one at a time: you fight the first Goblin until you wound him, whereupon he drops back to nurse his injury and you face the second Goblin; when he is wounded, you face the third, and so on.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First GOBLIN	5	4
Second GOBLIN	6	4
Third GOBLIN	6	3

If you survive until you have inflicted wounds on the Goblins amounting to a total of 8 points of STAMINA, the Goblins surrender at this point. They throw their loot to the ground and run off into the forest. You can pick up 6 Gold Pieces.

You can now either return to your boat, cast off from the jetty, and let the current take you downstream (turn to 104), or walk in the same general direction along the riverside path (turn to 50).

283

Clouds of darkness close round you from all sides. Your lights seem as dim as distant stars seen through fog; and as the torch that you are holding aloft in your right hand is snuffed out, the cloak of blackness begins to wrap itself round your body. Shuddering in the grip of the unearthly cold, you attempt to relight the torch. *Test your Luck.* If you are Lucky, turn to 63; if you are Unlucky, turn to 374.

284

The torch falls from Azudraz's metal hand and drops on to one of the paper fuses. Tongues of flame run in one direction towards one of the sacks of Ignolite and, in the other, towards the mass of crumpled paper where all the fuses meet. You cannot put out the fire; you must leave the building. Turn to 45.



285

Dozens of pairs of dry, leathery lips nuzzle your face. You manage to remain motionless. After what seems like an eternity, the suckered tentacles relax and the heavy weight of the creature's body slithers down your legs. You remove the blindfold and stare at the hideous monstrosity that has been crawling all over you.

'Well done!' says Gloten. 'Seven of you have passed that test. The animal is a Saltsucker, and perfectly harmless as long as you keep still. The second part of the tournament will test your wits. One of you at a time, please; and, Margrave, your assistance would be appreciated. Thank you. Now then; as you probably know, in Kleinkastel's coinage, 2 Brass Pieces are worth 1 Silver Piece, and 2 Silver Pieces are worth 1 Gold Piece. I have six coins, worth a total of 3 Gold Pieces. I will give two coins to one of you; two coins to the Margrave; and I will keep two coins myself. The Margrave's coins are of two different types; my coins are both of the same type. What type of coins have I got?'

The coins you have been given are both Brass Pieces. Will you answer 'Silver Pieces' (turn to 147) or 'Gold Pieces' (turn to 6)?





Under the stars you search the grasslands until you find the pile of round boulders. You sense the presence of animals grazing on the plains, but you wriggle down out of sight and into a comfortable position. You sleep; and you wake to find the sun high in the sky. As you stretch your limbs, you realize with some amusement that you are not in a pile of boulders at all: the hard round shapes are large eggs. You have spent the night in a nest. Your smile fades as a shadow falls across you, and you look up into the angry eyes of the nest's guardian – an adult Triceratops. Its three-horned head is as long as you are; each of its four legs is as tall as you. It is the size of a small house. You must fight it.

TRICERATOPS SKILL 8 STAMINA 18

Your weapon has little impact on the leathery hide – deduct only 1 point of STAMINA each time you wound it. Its horns and tail are formidable weapons – deduct 3 points from your STAMINA each time it wounds you. If you are still alive after six rounds of combat, you are relieved to hear shouts: the town's ceremonial hunt has arrived, and the warriors salute your bravery as they join in the attack. Surrounded, the Triceratops is soon overwhelmed and slaughtered. Turn to 390.



287

You run between two wooden huts and on into the safety of the forest. The sounds of pursuit soon die away behind you, and you rest in the forest for some time. Then, keeping out of sight of the village, you cut a trail eastwards, and eventually rejoin the main path that you had been on before you entered the village. Turn to 11.

288

As you cling to the rock with the tips of your fingers and toes, you feel your strength failing. You reach for the next hand-hold, but slither down the cliff and land on the riverside path. The number you have just made a note of is the number of STAMINA points you must lose. If you are still alive, you have no choice but to drag yourself along the path, in front of the mouth of the cave. Turn to 246.

289

You take a deep breath and step into the blackness between the towering uprights. Your previous mental torment was nothing compared to this: you are assailed by a malignant will that invades your mind, sweeping aside your flimsy objections and denials as it pursues your frantic spirit deeper and deeper into the recesses of your brain. Only the strongest of wills can survive the onslaught of the Portal's coercive power. A Ring of Zombie Warding will help. If you have one, turn to 96; if not, turn to 188.

290

You reach out to feel the silvery filaments that outline the sides of the spectral ladder. Your fingers touch – nothing; but a searing pain rips through your body and you cannot move your hands from the moonlit object. Deduct 2 points from your STAMINA. The pain passes; you shake your head, look again at the ladder – and it is now clearly made of real, solid wood. You test a rung – it takes your weight. You mount to the ceiling, where you find a concealed trapdoor. You push it open and climb through to the tower's top storey.

You are in a belvedere, a once-beautiful viewing platform with graceful open arches supporting a high-domed roof. The stonework is deteriorating; chunks of the roof and the parapet are missing. The shattered remains of the furniture have been gathered together in a corner. The heap looks almost like an enormous bird's nest – and just as you start to approach it you hear the flapping of huge wings. If you decide to leave at this point, you can descend to the first-floor room – turn to 109. If you prefer to wait for the nest's owner, turn to 53.



As a warrior of the tribe, you are free to do as you please. Several of the townsfolk see you leave your hut, but they merely call out greetings to you. The gate in the town wall is guarded, but the sentry unbolts the doors for you and claps you on the back as you go through. You stumble down the hill and into the jungle. Dawn is still hours away, and you make slow progress in the darkness. You emerge at last on to a broad plain. In the distance ahead of you, there is a ridge of low hills, which you head for. You pass a pile of boulders that you think you could shelter in, and perhaps get some sleep, until day-break; but you press on. After some time you come to a wide, well-used track which you reckon is the main road leading to the Portal. You cross it quickly, not wishing to meet a squad of Slave Warriors, and climb the ridge beyond it. You look down into a grassy valley, dotted with clumps of trees, that narrows towards your right – the direction that leads away from the Portal. A cluster of rocks forms a shelter in which you could rest until dawn; will you stay here, and walk up the valley in the morning (turn to 348); or will you return to the pile of boulders (turn to 286)?



'You have made a wise choice, my friend,' says the man, as about a dozen roughly dressed men and women, armed with axes and staves, converge on you from all sides of the clearing. 'Now then: why are you here in the forest?'

You describe your incredible meeting with the talking Spinosaurus, and explain that you are looking for Gartax. The man is not impressed. 'Gartax? He's no more than a brigand, from what I've heard, and the rabble that follow him are worse. You haven't answered my question: you're a trained fighter – what are you doing in this part of the world?'

If you reply that you are on your way to Kleinkastel in response to Gloten's appeal for help in investigating the mysterious occurrences in the forest, turn to 90. If you say that you're a free-booting adventurer who just happened to be in the area, turn to 216.

293

Test your Luck. If you are Lucky, turn to 114. If you are Unlucky, turn to 128.

294

The dark-skinned horsemen surround you. The saddles and bridles of their ponies are decorated with coloured ribbons, and the Southerners' robes are covered with silk sashes and ornate bandoliers of throwing knives. They are bandits; each holds a curved scimitar. From your previous adven-

tures you have learnt to understand a little of the Southerners' tongue and so are able to follow him when their leader speaks: 'Look at this! A real person for a change. These are hard times for a gang of honest thieves, my friend. The pickings have been poor of late – there's no one in the forest but frightened Goblins and those grey-faced shrivelled-up Zombies. But maybe our luck's changed! Let's have a look at what you've got in that backpack. Come on, empty it out – and empty your purse too!'

Will you obey his instructions (turn to 8), or will you draw your sword and fight (turn to 391)?

295

As you continue along the corridor, you pass more open doors and empty cells. Then you reach another bolted door. This one has no spy-hole. Will you unbolt the door and enter (turn to 237); or continue along the corridor (turn to 364)?

296

The arm-rest is heavy and the hinge is stiff, but you manage to pull the left arm of the chair to an upright position. Nothing happens. You pull on the right arm; as you do so, you feel movement in the base of the chair. Looking down, you see that the front of the plinth on which the chair stands has opened outwards; as you jump down from the seat, you see that the plinth is hollow. It contains a wooden box. You are about to pull the box out of its hiding-place towards you when you hear footsteps approaching.

You must not be discovered as a thief. Frantically, you wrench at the arm-rests, trying to pull them back down. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, you succeed in restoring the chair to its original appearance. Turn to 211. If you are Unlucky, turn to 317.

297

With surprising speed, some of the Dryads run to head you off while others move to cut off your retreat. You find yourself at the centre of a circle of unsmiling elfin brown faces. You try to fight your way out, but you find that Dryads have very tough skin, and your attack serves only to anger them. They close in, their thin fingers tearing at your body and gouging your face and throat. You have no chance to escape.

298

You squeeze through the doorway into a narrow tunnel that twists and turns sharply before widening into a large chamber. It is completely dark, but you can hear something moving in the chamber. It is a Troglodyte, and it can see very well in the dark. It attacks. You cannot see your opponent or the way out of the underground chamber – reduce your **SKILL** by 3 points for the duration of this fight.

TROGLODYTE **SKILL 5** **STAMINA 8**

If you win, you locate the dim glimmer that indicates the way out of the chamber, and you emerge, blinking, into daylight. You can either climb to the

top of the mound – turn to 103; or return to the hillside path and descend into the forest – turn to 144.

299

While the Dwarf examines the contents of your backpack, you stare in amazement at the strange creature called Gluda. It looks a bit like a lizard – but it walks on its hind legs and stands as tall as its Dwarf keeper. Its front legs are like short arms, with claw-tipped fingers, while its powerful back legs have even larger claws. It opens its mouth, revealing yellow fangs, and speaks! 'What are you staring at, mud-brain?'

'Don't mind him, Gluda,' says the Dwarf. 'You've got to expect people to look at you a bit now that you've . . . changed. What about this backpack? Not worth the leather it's made of. Let's have that sword instead – or I'll set Gluda on you.' He throws your backpack towards you, and you catch it. If you refuse to surrender your sword, turn to 342. If you give the Dwarf your sword, he will leave you and you can go back to sleep, but you must reduce your SKILL by 4 points when in combat until you acquire another weapon – turn to 380.



300

Wood Elves are renowned archers. Before you can reach the edge of the clearing, an arrow embeds itself in your calf. You collapse, clutching your leg. Deduct 2 points from your STAMINA. The Wood Elves seem determined that you should not escape. You struggle to your feet to ask them their purpose. Turn to 42.

301

However much you twist and turn, you cannot reach your scabbard. Your limbs are covered in glutinous slime, and it is all you can do to prevent the creature's tongue rolling you up into a helpless bundle. You struggle and kick, and you hope that as you are drawn near the Stegocephalian's face you will be able to land a blow on one of its huge luminous eyes. This will be a desperate fight. Deduct from your SKILL score the number that you rolled on the die, to take account of your helpless position; then deduct a further 4 points from your SKILL because you are fighting without a sword. If this reduces your SKILL to less than 1 point, turn to 3. Otherwise, turn to 94.

302

In the midst of your agony you hear a frantic twittering. In their cages on the floor by your feet, the two tiny birds are fluttering in panic. You realize that the shape-changing power of the Portal is being dissipated, spread across three living beings. But the

pressure on your body is increasing, and the pain is almost more than you can bear. You grit your teeth and knot your muscles, determined to hold your body's shape.

Roll one die twice. If the total is higher than your current SKILL score, turn to 87; if the total is the same as, or lower than, your SKILL, turn to 133.

303

All the huts are similar in both construction and their contents. They are simple wooden buildings with only one or two rooms each. Each contains only a few rugs, straw mattresses, and pots and pans. Food, clothing and valuables have been taken away – if not by the villagers themselves when they left, then by gangs of Goblins, bandits or soldiers. Among the items that remain are a length of stout rope, a bundle of torches (dried rushes bound together and soaked in wax and pitch) and a miner's helmet. This last object looks very like a warrior's helm, but with the addition of a lantern fixed at the front; the lantern has a little door that opens to reveal that the inside surface of the lamp is brilliantly reflective metal which magnifies the light cast by the lantern's flame. The source of the flame would normally be a short candle – but this is missing. If you have a candle-stub with you, you will find that it fits perfectly, and that the miner's helmet will provide you with light in dark places, while leaving both your hands free. You may keep any or all of the

items that you find in the village (make any additions to your *Adventure Sheet*); you then leave, continuing along your eastward path. Turn to 11.

304

Lacking the pickpocketing skills of a sneak thief, you will have to attempt a straightforward purse snatch. You select your victim: a portly merchant, puffing along a quiet alley. You must barge into him, tear his purse from his belt, and run from the scene of the crime as fast as your legs can carry you. Roll two dice. If the total is less than your SKILL score, turn to 250. If the total is equal to or higher than your SKILL, turn to 159.



Trapped in a Slave Warrior's bony embrace, you can only wriggle your limbs helplessly as you are carried to the edge of the pit. Then the Slave Warrior lets go. You drop to the stone floor of the pit. Roll one die – the result is the number of points of **STAMINA** that you lose in your fall. If you are still alive, you are lying alongside one of the Tyrannosaurus's feet – it is almost as long as you are tall. You pull yourself upright: your head reaches to the top of the monster's thigh. You look up and see that the walls of the pit are twice your height; the Tyrannosaurus's great head is higher still, and the beast is looking down at you with keen interest. It decides to kill you and eat you. You must try to defend yourself, but this will not be a normal fight. Any weapon that you use has almost no effect; the dinosaur's hide is as tough as a coat of mail. All you can do is scurry about the floor, dodging the monster's stamping feet and snapping jaws, and trying to reach a narrow slit at the bottom of part of the wall that is the only exit from the pit. Roll one die. The result is the number of times that you must roll two dice and compare the result with your **SKILL**; each time the result of the dice-roll exceeds your **SKILL**, deduct 4 points from your **STAMINA** as you are crushed against the wall by the Tyrannosaurus's leg or raked by its teeth and claws. If you survive, turn to 39.



306

You run towards the black humanoid shape and, as it stands motionless, you hurl yourself at it. Your outstretched hands meet no resistance and darkness surrounds you as you fall headlong *into* the blackness of the being's body. It consists of nothing; it is a void, a bottomless pit, into which you fall for ever more.

307

Clouds of darkness close round you from all sides. Your lights seem as dim as distant stars seen through fog; but the darkness cannot quite quench them, cannot quite surround you with the absolute blackness of death. A coldness sits in the centre of your body and benumbs every sense; visions of destruction and decay float before your eyes. But your lights remain aflame, and at last they begin to flicker a little more strongly. The shadows begin to retreat. You have survived the Portal's final attack. Turn to 14.

308

Like a monstrous flightless bird, the horned Oviraptor charges towards you as you stand with drawn sword at the end of the jetty. The Goblins stay by the house to watch the fight.

OVIRAPTOR SKILL 8 STAMINA 10

If you win, you can jump into your boat, cast off from the jetty, and allow the current to take you downstream – turn to 104. Alternatively, you can advance towards the three Goblins – turn to 232.

309

You are in the topmost part of the Elves' tree-home, and during the first part of your descent there are enough branches to provide plenty of hand-holds. You also make use of some of the ramps and steps that the Elves have built to link their dwellings. The illusion that the Elf Queen cast on you has now dissipated, and every Elf that you glimpse as you tiptoe past open doorways and windows has clearly been enslaved and turned into a Slave Warrior. It seems that all the Wood Elves are now in thrall to the evil power that you hope to find and defeat.

Lower down the tree, there are fewer branches, and no helpful Elvish constructions. You are forced to jump from limb to limb, and eventually you fall. Roll three dice; if the total exceeds your SKILL, the difference between them is the number of points of STAMINA that you must deduct as you crash through the tree's branches on your way to the forest floor. If you are still alive when you hit the ground, turn to 293.

310

The camp, which occupies a large clearing, is a collection of old tents and rickety wooden shelters huddling around a central enclosure where pack-animals are tethered. Sentries stand guard outside the circle of shelters, while others sit in the branches of the surrounding trees. They look tense and tired, but Gartax's return cheers everyone in the camp. You can see at once that very few of the people are

trained fighters, although each of them, down to the youngest child, carries some sort of weapon: a flail, a pitchfork or a broom-handle.

Gartax invites you to his tent, where he tells you that he believes an attack to be imminent and confesses that he is doubtful whether he has enough armed warriors to defend the camp. He begs you to stay until his people are ready for the final stage of their trek out of the forest. Will you stay with Gartax and help to defend the camp? If so, turn to 132. Or will you insist on continuing your journey, and walk away into the depths of the forest (turn to 2)?

311

Too many sharp blades have nicked your limbs; too many minor wounds are pulsing with pain all over your body. You cannot bear the thought of standing still, helplessly rigid, as the laughing warriors take turns to hurl badly aimed death at you. An axe hurtles towards your head – and you duck. The crowd is suddenly silent; the warriors turn to the Shaman, who gives a signal. You have failed the Ordeal. With grim faces, the warriors resume throwing their weapons – but now you are a target to be hit, not missed. There is no escape. Soon your head is decorating the eaves of the town's meeting-place.



312

At dawn, you stand on top of the stone shelter and look again in all directions. You confirm your fears: you can continue your southward journey only by reboarding your boat and braving the rapids. You are very hungry, and you must eat to maintain your strength. Consume one meal from your Provisions, or deduct 4 points from your STAMINA.

Now you must decide. Will you retrace your steps and return to your boat, untie it from the jetty, and allow yourself to be carried downstream by the current? If so, turn to 104. Or will you abandon the boat and head north on foot, trekking upstream on the eastern bank of the river that you boated down yesterday? If so, turn to 278.

313

As gently as you can, you take hold of the talisman's leather cord and pull it over the head of the sleeping Elf. He cries out once, and then his body slumps. You fear that he is dead; after you shake him, however, he wakes suddenly and starts back as he catches sight of the talisman hanging on its cord. He snatches it from your hand and dashes it to the floor. He takes a deep breath then says: 'A thousand thanks, my friend. Just in time you have saved me from perpetual slavery, an existence worse than any death. All my tribe are lost, subject to the tyrant Warlord and that dread Portal below the earth. I must warn the humans in Kleinkastel: our Queen

plans to continue the illusion spell that conceals the true nature of the Wood Elves. She will march the entire tribe to meet the free humans, as if in friendship, and then at the Warlord's bidding the Wood Elves will strike. Follow me; there is another sentry at the foot of these stairs. He will suspect me less than you.'

You follow the Elf down through the darkness; when you emerge from the bottom of the tree into the open forest, you find an Elven Slave Warrior lying senseless on the leaf-strewn ground. The Elf you saved has disappeared towards Kleinkastel, and you decide to do likewise, but in the opposite direction. Turn to 150.

314

If you have defeated Gloten, you find that he is not a good loser. He refuses to shake your hand and claims that he was not on his best form today, on account of a slight fever. He insists that despite your performance you must still prove yourself in the tournament. Turn to 52.

If you are the loser, turn to 389.

315

You twist the hilt of your sword, and the room fills with steam as you apply the blade to the wall of ice. Puddles grow on the flagstones as your sword slices through the ice, and the door is soon revealed. You push it open, step through, and close it behind you.

As you secure it by sliding iron bolts into place, you hear the Slave Warriors enter the ice room; they cannot follow you now. You have time to eat a meal from your Provisions and restore up to 4 points of STAMINA. In front of you stretches a corridor lined with torches. You walk towards the far end of it. Turn to 372.



316

You find the old alchemist struggling with a pile of small sacks. 'There you are!' he says. 'I was beginning to think you'd got stuck somewhere!' His laughter has a manic ring which disquiets you. 'When you've shifted all those nuggets, you can give me a hand with these little sacks. Give me a hand! That's a good one! Hee-hee-hee!' It takes you only a few more minutes to load all the nuggets into

the tank. 'This is the second stage of the storage process,' Azudraz explains. 'The powder in these sacks is an invention of mine which I call Igneolite. It will stop anyone getting into this building. If you'll carry on placing sacks all round the walls of both rooms, I'll organize the central fuse. Igneolite goes to work when touched by fire. But when we and the gold are safely tucked away in here, who will look after the birds?' Azudraz begins to weep.

You are becoming convinced that he is insane. As he starts to connect the sacks together with paper fuses, you take one of the small packages of Igneolite and put it in your backpack. Then you have to decide: will you leave now (turn to 45) or will you continue to assist the old alchemist with his scheme (turn to 361)?



317

Gloten enters the room, to find his secret treasure cache opened and you struggling with the levers that control the mechanism. He calls for his servants, and you are soon surrounded. 'Brave and clever as you are,' he declares, 'you are clearly an unprincipled and ungrateful wretch. You have abused my hospitality. I should turn you over to the Margrave and his brutal form of justice; but you are a strong warrior, and you deserve better than to rot in a dungeon. Get out of my house; get out of Kleinkastel. Go into the forest, where you may be able to redeem yourself by combating this rising evil. No doubt you will die, but at least it will be an honourable death.'

There is nothing for you to do but obey. Turn to 268.

318

You stroll across the clearing, enjoying the feel of soft grass beneath your feet. You reach the grove of slender trees, and you stop in surprise as one by one a dozen delicate, graceful forms run from between the trees and form a circle round you. They are tall, with dark brown skin, green hair, and green clothes made of leaves. They look like Lignia, younger; they are Dryads, tree-spirits, and they seek revenge for your attack on their guardian. Their unsmiling elfin faces close in on you. You try to fight your way out, but Dryads, like Lignia, are tough creatures. Your attacks have little effect, and soon their thin fingers are tearing at your body and gouging your face and throat. There is no escape.



319

The uphill path rounds a bend, and you are looking at the scene of a battle. The next hill, a little higher than its neighbours, has been raised higher still by the addition of an artificial mound on its summit. The mound itself is crowned with an enormous statue of a ferociously ugly being which you recognize as a Goblin deity. The eight-armed statue, seated but in a warlike pose, glitters in the sunlight as if its surfaces were covered with gems. The mound has doorways near its base, and is evidently the home of a tribe of Goblins; they are on the hillside, defending their home against a band of Troglodytes. These attackers are like no creatures you have seen before, and you suspect that they may come from the same source as the long-extinct reptilian animals you have been encountering; clearly, they live underground, as their skin and hair are colourless, and their huge blank eyes are not accustomed to sunlight. They walk upright and use spiked clubs, but they are not truly humanoid: their legs are scaly, and terminate in claws like a bird's, while their heads have bony crests. They are bigger than the Goblins, and they are winning the battle. Will you wait where you are until the fighting is over (turn to 161), or will you advance towards the fray (turn to 267)?



The monster and the Elf woman have fought off the other soldier, whom you see limping away between the trees. The monster is very badly wounded, and seems to be near death. It is not surprising that you have never seen anything like it before: it is a Spinosaurus, an animal that became extinct millions of years ago. You ask the Elf woman where it came from, but it is the Spinosaurus itself that replies. 'I can speak for myself, warrior,' it says. 'I was once an Elf, although I myself find it hard to believe. My entire hunting party was captured by a horde of cursed Slave Warriors. They took us underground, and put us one by one through the dread Portal. All my comrades were overcome, their willpower broken, and they became mindless slaves of the Portal, or of whoever controls it. I resisted; I would not let my mind be wiped clean. I lost consciousness and, when I awoke, I was – as you see me. There are others like me. Many have gone mad. This foul body I inhabit is, I believe, of a sort that is common on the other side of the Portal; but only the Portal's slaves may go there. No one knows the extent of this evil – except perhaps Gartax. But you must be gone; the forest is a deadly place now.'

Will you hurriedly rejoin the path and continue towards Kleinkastel (turn to 143); or will you try to find out more about Gartax (turn to 74)?



Intent on dodging the acidic grubs that leap from the Metamaggot's body as you attempt to slice it into fragments, you fail to notice that the noise of your struggle has attracted spectators. You glance up from your fight to see that a troop of the Margrave's soldiers have entered the tavern. They move in to dispose of the Metamaggot, and then take you prisoner. You are escorted outside at sword-point. Turn to 255.



You enter the tangled vegetation of the jungle just in time; you can hear the sound of marching feet on the main path behind you. Surrounded by vast trees, many of them strange, fern-headed cylinders of mossy wood, you marvel at the bizarre creatures that dart across your path: giant insects, spiked and horned reptiles, and some furry and hairy animals that resemble those of Khul. The path forks: the right branch leads to a collection of tumble-down stone buildings; the left branch leads up a hill from which the jungle plants have been cleared, and on top of which you can see a settlement of stone huts, surrounded by a stone wall. Will you take the right-hand path (turn to 245) or the left-hand path (turn to 140)?

323

You open your backpack and give the Dwarf enough food for a good meal. (Deduct 1 Provision from your *Adventure Sheet*.) The Dwarf begins to push chunks of dry bread into his mouth with machine-like speed and regularity. When he slows down he remembers to crumble some of the food for his pet bird. Between mouthfuls he manages spurts of conversation. 'Been here since the early days of the gold-diggings. Never known it so quiet. Time was, we had nothing to worry about but the Goblins and a few raiders from down south. Now there's beasts in the woods bigger than I've ever seen, and things that come up to the door of a night and talk with human voices – but they're not human. And them mad fighters with the shrivelled-up faces and staring eyes! I keep myself locked in here. But if you want to go off down the river, that's your look-out. Take whichever boat you like, and watch out for the rapids – the skiff'll break up for sure on the rocks, and you'll be lucky to get over in one piece even in the punt.'

You thank him for the advice and go to untie a boat. Make a note of which one you take. Turn to 227.

324

With the grace of a dancer, the woman steps towards you, her ankle-chains clinking and a half-smile on her lips. She stands in front of you and raises her arms; suddenly with a clash of metal she strikes her manacles together and, with a low, cat-

like roar, she attacks, using the loop of chain as a flail aimed at your head. You jump back, perplexed. The noise of her attack could attract unwanted attention. Will you leave this room, bolt the door once more, and continue along the corridor (turn to 364); or will you stay in the room, retreating from the woman's attacks while trying to calm her (turn to 34)?

325

At the edge of the platform, you look down to see the rope-ladder rolling itself upwards towards you. You cannot descend from the platform. Behind you, Lignia has recommenced her incantation. Will you wait until she finishes it (turn to 381); or will you silence her by attacking her (turn to 16)?

326

As you follow it towards its source, the stream becomes a trickle and eventually disappears in an overgrown dell. Ahead of you the terrain is hilly, and the forest undulates towards the mountains, which now seem close. You stand under the canopy of a tree, uncertain whether to go on or turn back. Raindrops drip through the leaves on to your hair and clothing. And then you remember: no rain is falling. You look up; the liquid is issuing from large purple blooms at the top of the tree. A drop falls on to your outstretched hand: it is sticky, and it stings. You are beneath the branches of a carnivorous Graptor Tree; the liquid is poisonous and slows

your reactions. The earth moves beneath your feet, and woody fingers of root reach through the soil to encircle your legs and draw nutrients from your flesh. You must fight these moving roots; because of the poison, you must deduct 1 point from your SKILL each Attack Round until the fight is over.

GRAPTOR TREE SKILL 5 STAMINA 9

If you win, you can crawl away from the overhanging branches and recover from the effects of the poison. Your SKILL returns to normal. Will you now retrace your steps along the bank of the rivulet and follow it downstream (turn to 57) or advance through the forest towards the wooded hills (turn to 22)?

327

As you wander about the village and chat with the soldiers, it becomes clear that they do not know exactly what they are searching for. Some say Goblins, others bandits and renegade miners, while the sergeant seems intent on finding what he calls 'unnatural and abominable beasties'. A small reptilian creature is found and slaughtered; an argument breaks out over a sty full of pigs, with some soldiers wanting to take them home for bacon, while others insist on killing them at once in case they are possessed by demons. All the soldiers are very disgruntled because they can find no gold or other valuables.

Eventually they march off into the forest. Do you

continue your eastward journey (turn to 11); or do you decide to stay in the village a little longer and search it quickly yourself (turn to 303)?

328

Something heavy strikes your skull. A pain explodes inside your head; and then you feel nothing at all as you fall into unconsciousness. Deduct 4 points from your STAMINA. If you are still alive, eventually you wake up. Your head throbs; you feel sick. You are moving, lurching from side to side. You are being carried – you must be over someone's shoulder, as your head seems to be swinging very close to marching feet. You make no sign that you have come to your senses, and you try surreptitiously to look from side to side. You are being carried along a gloomy corridor by one of a squad of Slave Warriors. They reach a wide, light area, where you are thrown on to the stone floor. You wince with pain, but manage to stifle a cry. You look sideways, across the floor, and see massive reptilian eyes staring at you from a nightmare head as big as a cart and only a few yards away. It is the head of a Tyrannosaurus, the most feared of all dinosaurs; its mouth gapes to reveal rows of long thin fangs, each the size of a sword – and as sharp. You are close to the rim of the pit, a pikestaff's depth, in which it is kept; the Slave Warriors are about to throw you in as a snack for the monster. Will you try to jump up and run away (turn to 219); or shout for help (turn to 98); or continue pretending to be unconscious (turn to 305)?



329

There is a liquid noise in the depths of the cave, and a wide black membrane flaps towards you, unrolling like a glistening carpet. It slaps against you with such speed that for a moment you are sure you will be knocked into the water; but the black surface is covered with thick gum, and you stick to it. You are pulled into the darkness of the cave, where you see two huge round eyes and, beneath them, a gaping mouth. The black membrane is the creature's tongue; you are its breakfast. This huge toad-like monster is a Stegocephalian; you have never seen anything like it before. You struggle to free your sword-arm before you can be folded between the loose-skinned jaws. Roll one die. Make a note of the number that you roll. If you roll a 6, turn to 3. If you roll 4 or 5, turn to 301. If you roll 1, 2 or 3, turn to 207.

330

'What's this?' Horfak hisses as you push the mirror in front of his eyes. 'You have the audacity to bring this thing . . .' His voice fades as he stares at his own reflection. He moves a hand up to his face and touches the distended flesh. A low moan issues from his swollen lips, and his body seems to shrink as he stumbles backwards. The black lightning falters and then disappears from his arms. Horfak clutches his great head between his hands, and shouts into the air: 'What have you done to me? You

didn't tell me it would get worse! I won't be part of you any more. Leave me! Get out of my brain! No! No – not that! No –' Horfak's voice is cut off and his body stiffens. His eyes stare ahead and his limbs begin to move in the mechanical manner of the Slave Warriors. Horfak has been taken over by the Portal. You hear the People cheer as the Slave Warriors, no longer helped by Horfak's will, become slower and easier to fight; you face what remains of Horfak.

HORFAK SKILL 8 STAMINA 10

If you win this fight, the victorious People hail you as their hero. But you know that the Portal still exists. To save Khul you must try to destroy it. You make for the Sacred Cave. Turn to 369.

331

The game is very simple: the bandits take your sword, and scratch a mark on the flat of one side of the blade. The bandits' own swords are already marked in the same way. Their leader will hold all six swords in his two hands and hurl them into the air. Before doing so, he drops your Gold Pieces into a large sack.

'We count the number of marked sides that land uppermost,' he says, 'and the number of unmarked sides. If there are more marked sides, we keep the sack – and what's in it. If there are more unmarked, you keep it and the money inside it.' You ask what happens if there are the same number of marked

and unmarked sides. 'Why, we play again!' shouts the bandit leader. 'We increase the stakes, we put more in the sack, and we play again!'

Roll one die six times. If you roll more odd numbers than even, turn to 157; if more even than odd, turn to 248; if you roll three odd and three even, turn to 121.

332

You put your torch to the top of the sack, then step back as a cloud of Igneolite powder surrounds the huge stone blocks. You hear a hissing, bubbling noise as the dust begins to turn the Portal into molten rock – but then flashes of black lightning crackle round the stones, and the Igneolite powder drifts to the ground. A figure appears on the other side of the stone gateway – humanoid, but with a huge, bulbous blob of a head. Its voice echoes round the cave. 'A foolish attempt. I am Horfak, Warlord, and soon to be Emperor of all Khul. I am the Portal's chosen vessel of power: while I live, the Portal cannot be destroyed. Come! Come through the Portal; come and join my invincible army. Put down your weapon; put down your flame; put down your possessions. Enter; and surrender to my will.'

You try to resist, but cannot. You end your life as a Slave Warrior.



333

The camp, which occupies a large clearing, is a collection of old tents and rickety wooden shelters huddling round a central enclosure where pack-animals are tethered. Sentries stand guard outside the circle of shelters, while others sit in the branches of the surrounding trees. They look tense and tired.

You are taken to the animal fodder tent and, still bound, are thrown on to a heap of straw. You try to make yourself comfortable. You doze.

You are woken by the sounds of conflict. The camp has been attacked. You can make out nothing except that the battle is fierce – and going against the defenders. Suddenly a sword slices through the canvas of your prison. A warrior strides in and surveys the interior of the tent. He is thin and grey-complexioned, and is dressed in rags. He says nothing, and you notice that his face is blank – almost literally featureless, as if his nose and mouth had shrunk. If you want to try to attract his attention, turn to 193. If you decide to keep still, turn to 46.

334

You follow Anxis into the corridor and up a flight of stairs. You emerge into a wide corridor: you are in front of a big wooden door guarded by two of the largest Slave Warriors you have yet seen. 'This is the entrance to Horfak's chamber,' says Anxis. 'All we have to do is dispose of these two buffoons, and

then he is ours! I'll take this one that looks like a cross between an Orc and a Cave Giant; you deal with the musclebound military type.' With a ferocity that would unnerve any opponent other than a Slave Warrior, Anxis launches herself at the huge guard. You advance on the other, who was once in the Margrave's elite infantry regiment.

SLAVE WARRIOR

GUARD

SKILL 9

STAMINA 12

If you win the fight, you turn to see that Anxis has drawn her opponent away and is still involved in a furious battle. You turn back to the door, take a deep breath, and prepare to face Horfak. You push open the door, and walk through. Turn to 395.

335

The Elves make no move to stop you as you reach into your backpack and find the phial of potion. You drink the bitter liquid, look around – and almost fall to your death as you stagger with shock. The narrow path along which the Elves' column marches is indeed winding between the forest trees – but the path is a magical, silvery ribbon that snakes upwards, through the treetops, towards the upper branches of the tall tree with lights in its branches. For a few moments you are lost in the wonder and beauty of the scene; then you turn to the Elf behind you and stifle a gasp of horror and fear. The appearance of the Elves is an illusion; the potion allows you to see them as they really are: thin, pallid, ragged

travesties of Elves, with blank eyes and mechanical movements, each wearing a shadow-shrouded stone talisman round his neck. They are all Slave Warriors. But you cannot escape now – the jump to the forest floor would mean your death. You must pretend that you are still deceived by their illusion, and escape at the first opportunity. Turn to 217.

336

Waving your sword in the Goblins' general direction, you use your other hand to fumble in your pack, eventually extricating the letter from the Goblin King. Displaying the unfurled scroll at arm's length, you approach the Goblins.

At first they are suspicious. It seems that only one of them knows how to read. They talk among themselves and become very excited – but you know only a few words of their language and you cannot understand what they are saying. Using signs and hand-movements, they tell you that they want you to wait here while they take the letter to show to their leader. If you let them borrow the letter, turn to 29. If you refuse to part with the letter, the Goblins become very angry. You can attack them (turn to 282) or simply turn on your heel and walk away towards the riverside path (turn to 187).



337

Your jump takes you clear of the Giant Centipede's long body and erect tail. Before the creature can turn, you run out of the gully and into the jungle. Turn to 9.

338

The Scurrellors chase you, and you feel a knife-blade slice across your back. Lose 2 points from your STAMINA. In the forest you can outdistance your pursuers on the ground, but they take to the trees, jumping and swinging from branch to branch, and are able to keep up with you as well as pelt you with a steady rain of nuts and twigs. Eventually they tire of this activity, and you stop running. You try to orientate yourself: you think you have been running in a south-easterly direction. You are on a narrow trail that will take you further in the same direction, so you continue along it. Turn to 100.

339

Gloten shakes your hand. 'Not bad, my friend,' he says, 'but not good enough. You are not to be the chosen Champion. But I implore you to stay with us; there is much to be done, and an army to be recruited. We need brave adventurers such as you.'

You are bitterly disappointed that you have failed in the tournament, and you are determined to prove your worth. You reply that you always travel and fight alone, and that you would not be of any help as

part of an army. As you stride towards the town gate, you make up your mind that, Champion or not, you will enter the forest to hunt for the Warlord of the Slave Warriors. Turn to 268.

340

Your will snaps. You scream in anguish and despair as you feel your memories being stripped away . . . and then you feel nothing at all. You cease to exist. You are a Slave Warrior, a mindless minion of the Warlord of the Portal.



341

You approach the darkness under the stairs. The edge of cloth that you saw looks less and less like a piece of carpet. Loose threads hanging from it are moving, as if in a draught of air – but you cannot detect a draught. And then the whole thing begins to slide towards you, and you see that it is a Dourma, a rare subterranean creature that you have heard described on Khul. It is nothing more than a flat expanse of flesh, with hundreds of tendrils on both sides; those on the underside serve as legs and feelers, while those on the upper surface have evolved into borers, cutters and suckers with which the Dourma kills, dissects and ingests its prey. It scuttles towards you, attracted by the heat of your body, and you prepare to defend yourself. You do not fight it for long, however; a squad of Slave Warriors has followed you down the stairs. Taking advantage of your distraction, they capture you, knock you senseless again, and carry you back to be a meal for the Tyrannosaurus. This time there is no escape.



342

Whatever Gluda was before she was . . . changed, she is now a Dromaeosaurus, one of the smallest of the long-extinct carnivorous dinosaurs. As you draw your sword the Dwarf steps back, and you face your terrible opponent's grasping talons, rending claws and fang-filled mouth.

DROMAEOSAURUS SKILL 10 STAMINA 10

If you succeed in reducing Gluda's STAMINA to 2 points, she and the Dwarf will run away, leaving you in possession of both sword and backpack. There is nothing for you to do now but settle down again on the hard ground, and drift back into sleep. Turn to 380.

343

The two Goblin warriors eye you with suspicion as you approach; by the time you have dragged the dead Troglodytes to the hilltop mound, however, they understand that you have helped them by killing their enemies. They hold up their short-swords in salute, and you wave to them in reply. On the top of the mound, the grotesque statue towers above the Goblins, and you can now see that its scintillation is caused not by precious jewels but by mirrors – thousands of fragments of reflective glass have been embedded in the statue's surface. You are disappointed, but you climb the mound and join the Goblins at the base of the idol. Shards of mirror are scattered on the ground; if you want to, you can

pick one up and place it in your backpack. The Goblins are grateful to you and indicate that they will reward you for your help; but before they can do so, a wild howling fills the air as the surviving Troglodytes return to the attack. Turn to 203.

344

Nothing can stand between the People and their Queen. With you at their head, they hack a path to the cage. While your comrades repel waves of Slave Warriors, you cut through the wooden bars and release Queen Anxis. One of her subjects throws her a sword and, with a howl of glee, she hurls herself into the fray. Soon all the remaining Slave Warriors are slain, and the People are celebrating, singing and dancing – but the Warlord has escaped.

In the Sacred Cave, the Portal still pulses with evil life; through it you can see into the cavern, deep underground in Khul, where Slave Warriors stand on guard. The torch that you left has been removed, as has any Igneolite that you might have hidden next to the Portal. The Warlord is in Khul, leading his slave armies on a campaign of destruction. Kleinkastel will be only the first of many towns to fall. You are a hero among the People of the forgotten world, but you have failed in your mission.



345

You start to walk past the black figure but, as you do so, it moves, like a ripple passing across still water, and it extends towards you an arm that is paper-thin but as dark as night. You hear a voice like a whisper in your brain: 'If you will not pay in gold, I will take my fee by other means.' The arm reaches for you. Will you attack the strange figure (turn to 306), or stand still and let it touch you (turn to 141)?

346

You defend yourself furiously, but begin to suffer some serious blows. Deduct 4 points from your STAMINA. If you survive this attack, you stumble backwards, fending off the spiked tips of half a dozen clubs, and you glance at the Goblins. One is already lying motionless at the feet of a Troglodyte, while the other has been bludgeoned to his knees and is surrounded by three more of the brutal creatures. A club strikes the death-blow; but even as he collapses, the Goblin mouths the last syllable of his incantation – and the ground trembles beneath your feet. The vast statue is moving; you look upwards, and see the eight stone arms begin to swing towards the ground. Chunks of masonry fall round you as the idol's head leans forward, its great staring eyes now moving, searching for prey. The statue has come to life. The Troglodytes are frozen with fear and, as the monstrous hands descend, four of them are plucked from the ground and squeezed to death while being swept aloft. You start

to run; looking back, you see that none of the Troglodytes had the wits to escape as you did. On unsteady feet you retrace your steps along the hillside path and return to the forest. Turn to 144.

347

There seems to be nothing unusual about Gloten's huge chair. The intricate carvings contain no hidden meanings, and the plinth on which it stands appears to be solid. Beneath the cushions on the seat you find a small mirror, which you can put in your backpack.

You are tempted to sit down in the chair. If you wish to do so, turn to 55. Otherwise you have nothing to do but await Gloten's return – turn to 211.

348

The path in the valley follows the course of a stream. Where the valley ends, with stony ridges converging to tower above you, the stream runs down into a narrow ravine. Following the stream, you splash along the cool dell, hidden from the sun by the overarching cliffs and the branches of enormous ferns. At a point where the stream and the ravine turn sharply to the left, a track branches from it and zigzags up the face of the right-hand slope. Will you follow the stream (turn to 4) or the uphill path (turn to 358)?



349

You extend your hand, revealing the inscribed surface of the silver ring. A cone of white light spreads from your hand and envelops the Slave Warrior who stops, frozen. Then he moves, as if pushing against a wall, and the cone of light begins to fade. The Slave Warrior looks like a Zombie, but he is not of the undead; the ring's effect on him is limited, but it has slowed him, allowing you an opportunity to act. Will you use this breathing-space to attack the warrior (turn to 379) or will you run out of the clearing along the eastward path (turn to 264)?

350

You awake at dawn, roused by the shouts of your fellow-warriors as they prepare for the dinosaur hunt. Out on the streets, you find young townfolk – men, women, and all the other races that make up the mixed tribe of the People – sharpening their weapons, daubing their faces with war-paint, and adorning their hair and clothes with multi-coloured ribbons and feathers. Soon you are part of the exuberant procession that leaves the town, descending the hill and skirting the jungle, and that then marches out across the open grasslands in search of a dinosaur.

Dinosaurs are not hard to find. The scouts are soon scurrying back to the main hunting party to report that they have spotted a suitably challenging target. You are brought to the front of the column to look it over. It is a Triceratops: each of its four legs is as tall

as a man, and its head is equally long. Standing guard over a clutch of its eggs, the huge horned herbivore is the size of a small house. The warriors indicate that you must advance to fight it alone. Will you do so (turn to 251); or will you challenge the customs of the People by refusing to attack the dinosaur (turn to 35)?

351

You swing your sword and sever the bird's neck. As the great body crashes to the ground in a flurry of feathers, the man draws his knife from his belt. 'You verminous wretch!' he screams at you. 'You've murdered Agrid! He used to be the best miner down Dirlin's pit! I don't know what you're doing here but I intend to find out. Now – surrender or die!'

Will you sheathe your sword and surrender (turn to 33); or will you attack the man with the knife (turn to 204)?

352

You wait for a few minutes, then try once again to extract your arm. It is no use; your arm is as fixed as the nuggets on the floor of the tank. You realize now why Azudraz has only one arm – he must have lost the other conducting experiments with this strange liquid. There is a hatchet resting against the wall. It is just within your reach. Whatever you do, your adventure ends here.

353

'From these reports,' muses the wizard, 'it seems that the gravest threat to all living things in the forest is the appearance of these eldritch warriors: humans, Goblins, Elves, Dwarfs, all transformed into mindless, murderous reavers. They are clearly not exactly like Zombies; nevertheless, for a warrior such as yourself, this might prove useful.' He extends his hand, and on his upturned palm appears a silver ring. It has no jewel, but instead a flattened face on which is engraved a series of delicate letters. 'Take it!' says the wizard. 'Wear it on a finger. The letters are an abbreviation of a spell to ward off Zombies. It may help you when you face one of these mind-enslaved warriors. Now, then: tell what you have seen for yourself in your wanderings.'

You tell the wizard about the unusual creatures you have come across, and the stories you have heard about talking animals and depopulated settlements. Turn to 234.

354

'What's this?' Horfak hisses as you push the mirror in front of his eyes. 'You dare to bring this thing . . .' His voice fades as he stares at his own reflection. He moves a hand up to his face and touches the distended flesh. A low moan issues from his twisted lips, and his whole body seems to shrink as he stumbles backwards. The lines of black

lightning falter, then disappear. Horfak drops the mirror and clutches his great head between his hands. He shouts into the air: 'What have you done to me? You didn't say it would get worse! I won't be part of this any more! I won't be a part of you! Leave me! Get out of my brain! No! No – not that! No –' Horfak's voice is cut off, and his body goes rigid. His eyes stare straight ahead, and then his limbs begin to move in the mechanical manner of the Slave Warriors. Horfak himself has been taken over by the Portal. It forces him to draw his two-handed sword, and advance towards you.

HORFAK SKILL 8 STAMINA 10

If you defeat him, turn to 170.

355

You are a scoundrel as well as a thief. Evil-doers have little to fear from you – you're joining their side! You may keep your ill-gotten Gold Pieces, but the gods frown on you: reduce *all* your *Initial* scores by 1 point. Now turn to 61.



356

You are approaching the centre of the evil. Scurrying uphill between bushes and boulders, you hide from the bands of Slave Warriors who march past you, down into the forest. Some of the mind-en-slaved humans are in an appalling condition: as thin as skeletons, their skin grey and flaking, their faces featureless except for dark, staring eyes. Many of these war-parties include captured animals, huge reptilian creatures armed not only with teeth and claws but also with spikes, horns, armoured plates of bone, and clubbed tails. You reach another large rock, and peer over it. The path enters a compound which is surrounded by a high fence of pointed stakes. Above the gate are the names 'Horfak and Dirlin'. Outside the fence and next to the gate stand two guards. You sit behind the rock to consider your next move. Do you have an egg in your backpack? If you do, turn to 272. If you do not, turn to 388.

357

With a dull clang your sword lands on a pile of old blades, sending up a cloud of reddish-brown dust. Reduce your SKILL by 4 points until you acquire another weapon and turn to 97.



358

As you climb out of the shadowed ravine and up the steep, barren, rocky hillside, the heat of the sun is like a weight laid across your neck and shoulders. The uphill path seems to go on for ever, zigzagging across the slope. You drag yourself round another bend, past a huge boulder, and then stop. Basking in the sun's rays, and completely blocking the path, is one of the gigantic reptiles that inhabit this strange land. This one is an Ankylosaurus, an armoured monster as big as a barn. It glares at you; it has no intention of moving. You consider its horned head, the iron-hard scales of its back, the spikes that run along its flanks, and the idly swinging club of bone at the end of its powerful tail. You cannot continue unless you can make it move. Will you attack it (turn to 54); or, if you have Provisions, will you toss some food down the slope to entice the beast to move (turn to 116)?

359

Hugging one wall of the empty first-floor room is a stone staircase that leads to a trapdoor in the ceiling. You assume that this provides access to the second storey of the tower. If you decide to climb the staircase and push up the trapdoor, turn to 269. If not, turn to 109.



Witta returns with a plate of food. If you want to eat it, you can restore up to 4 points of STAMINA if you need to. She continues her story. 'Horfak is unlike other men. The gateway in the Sacred Cave has changed him horribly. He is bigger and stronger than ordinary men, and his will controls the Slave Warriors. And ever since he arrived here, his face has been changing into ever more loathsome shapes. He has become mad: he has ordered all mirrors to be destroyed, as he cannot bear to see his own features, even accidentally; and he claims kingship of this world and over all the People. Our Queen, Anxis, defied him; he has taken her captive. Now, at last, he has sent his armies out of our land, through the Sacred Cave; we are thankful, but I fear for the tribes of Otherworld. We are suspicious of you because, since Horfak, nothing good has come through the gateway in the Sacred Cave. Tonight, however, you will be tested in the Ordeal, and we will discover your worth.' She picks up the plate, and leaves. This time she remembers to lock the door. You have no choice but to wait in your prison. Turn to 110.

The work is soon completed: the small sacks of Igneolite are placed at regular intervals, resting against the walls of the two rooms in the stone building; from each sack runs a strip of paper to act as a fuse. You realize that Azudraz has arranged the

fuses so that they meet in the centre of his work-room. You are about to suggest that he should run the fuse-paper through the door and light it from outside the building, when you see him advancing, with a flaming torch, towards the central fuse. 'And now, my loyal friend,' he exults, 'we will keep all our gold, for ourselves, for ever!' You try to stop him, and he attacks you, using the torch as a weapon. It inflicts 2 points of STAMINA loss whenever he wounds you with it. Each time he does so, roll one die; if you roll a 6, your clothing catches alight; once it has done so, you must deduct an additional 1 point from your STAMINA each combat round until the fight ends.

AZUDRAZ

SKILL 5

STAMINA 8

If you survive and defeat the mad alchemist, he drops the torch. *Test your Luck*. If you are Lucky, turn to 284; if you are Unlucky, turn to 127.

'Gloten? It cheers me up just to think of the fellow. He's a wealthy man now, of course – they say he could match the Margrave himself, coin for coin and gem for gem. But he's laboured for his riches, not like some of those thieving merchants down from Neuburg. Through the trees, do you see the mountains in the east? Gloten's done his share of grubbing under them – and now he owns some of the best gold-bearing soil in the whole of Khul. I know a few secrets about old Gloten – like where he keeps

his personal hoard of gems. And I know something else he doesn't like spread about: the fact that he's a Dwarf. It's true. Every other mine-owner and gold-merchant in Kleinkastel is as human as I am, and Gloten knew they wouldn't accept a Dwarf into their circle. So he shaved off his beard and bought himself some built-up boots – and the only people who know are we miners who've dug alongside him. A word of advice: if you ever want anything from Gloten, challenge him to a pickaxe-handle fight. He can't resist it. Let him win, mind! And then tell him he's got the strength of a Dwarf! Then he'll do anything for you.'

You thank Gartax for the advice. Do you ask him about the secret of Gloten's treasure (turn to 241)? Or ask Gartax if there is anyone else who can help him and his followers (turn to 185)?

363

A troop of the Margrave's infantry marches towards you along the path. They are led by a sergeant who halts his men next to you and asks you your business. Without waiting to hear your reply, he barks: 'Never mind about that. I've got no time to listen to your excuses. I've got to search this here village. You come with us.' You are escorted into the village at sword-point. Turn to 255.



364

A flight of stairs ascends from the left-hand side of the corridor, but you pass it in order to peer round the next corner. You see another length of corridor; there are no cells, and the walls are blank, but at the end there is an open door, and beyond it, a well-lit room. You start to walk towards the door. A low, slow voice calls out, 'Who's there?' and through the doorway plods a Dwarven Slave Warrior with a bunch of keys at his belt. You assume he is the gaoler. He stares at you, then turns and marches swiftly back into the room. You give chase. You reach the doorway in time to see the Dwarf running up a set of stairs. You follow him and emerge into a wide corridor. The Dwarf has disappeared; you are in front of a big wooden door guarded by two of the largest Slave Warriors you have yet seen. You have found the Warlord's chamber – and now you must fight his bodyguards. One is half Orc, half Cave Giant; the other was in the Margrave's elite infantry regiment. They advance on you one at a time.

	SKILL	STAMINA
First SLAVE WARRIOR	6	14
Second SLAVE WARRIOR	9	12

If you defeat them, you must now push open the door and face the Warlord himself. Turn to 395.



365

There are fissures in the face of the cliff that serve as hand- and foot-holds; but the cliff is both high and steep, and the climb will tax your strength and staying power. Add together your SKILL and STAMINA; roll one die six times. If the total of the die-rolls is equal to or less than your SKILL and STAMINA combined, turn to 196. Otherwise, deduct your SKILL and STAMINA total from the die-roll total, make a note of the result, and turn to 288.

366

You clamber upwards from branch to branch until you reach the rope-ladder; you use this to complete your ascent to the wooden structure that you could see from the ground. It is a platform constructed out of whole branches lashed together with creepers. You reach the platform and peer over the edge. At first sight it looks empty; then a strange being steps forward from next to the tree's trunk. She is very tall and thin, with wrinkled brown skin and brown hair. Her clothes are made of brown leaves and, when you look closely, you are sure that at least some of the leaves are attached to her – as if they had grown from her arms and fingers and head. She looks old and stern, but her voice is gentle and sorrowful. 'Come up, stand with me on my guard-post. I am Lignia; my duty is to protect the forest. What of you?'

You pull yourself on to the platform. If you have a weapon, turn to 182. If not, turn to 243.

367

You launch yourself at the Half-Goblin guard.

HALF-GOBLIN SKILL 7 STAMINA 7

You fight four rounds of combat. If you defeat the guard within this time, turn to 195. If not, turn to 145.

368

Bandits from the south have a strict code of honour, part of which is to fulfil a promise. On the other hand, another part of it is to avenge the death of a slaughtered comrade. As you tug your sword from Kran's crumpled corpse, the other bandits attack you, screaming curses. It is four against one; you cannot win this fight.

369

The torch that you hid in a cleft near the cave entrance is still there. It has burnt away almost to nothing, but a glowing fragment remains. You blow on it and manage to coax a flame into life. You enter the cave. Before you stands the Portal, its black stones glowing with malignant force. You have passed through it once, and it cannot harm you directly now; but you know that if you return to Khul, vast armies of Slave Warriors stand between

you and Kleinkastel. If you have left a sack of Igneolite resting against the foot of one of the megaliths, turn to 253; if not, turn to 89.

370

For a few minutes the forest is silent. Then an army of scarecrows lurches into the clearing. Once they were miners, and southern tribesmen, and Goblins; now they are mindless Slave Warriors, thin and pallid, wearing filthy rags, with no sounds coming from their lipless shrunken mouths and no expression in their staring eyes.

The camp-dwellers are petrified with fear. You scream at them to start fighting, and as the bowstrings twang the battle for Gartax's camp begins.

It is a long and bloody business. The attackers are as untrained as most of the defenders, and you find that by running from one mêlée to another you can use your expertise to push back the zombie-like horde whenever it threatens to break into the camp. The defensive line holds, but the Slave Warriors do not retreat. The swordplay continues until all the attackers are dead: a wall of corpses round the camp. Many of Gartax's people are wounded, and some are dead; you personally have come through without a scratch.

If you decide to search the bodies of some of the attackers, turn to 200. If not, turn to 169.



371

You enter a narrow chamber carved out of the rock. By the light from the doorway behind you, you see that one side of the room is lined with long shelves, and that the shelves are occupied by hundreds of caged birds. There are more cages than you can count, and each has one, two or three little birds fluttering and trilling inside. Next to you is a sack of seeds and a tub of water, but the little metal cups for food and water inside the cages are all empty. You notice two particularly small cages: each contains a tiny bird, one with red plumage, the other blue. Both cages would fit inside your backpack, and you can feed these two birds and then pack them in with your other possessions if you want to. You then either leave the mine (turn to 5), or you decide that you will undertake the laborious task of releasing all the birds from their cages (turn to 240).



372

As you walk along the corridor, it becomes clear that you are entering a section of the cellars that has been built as a prison. You pass several open doors and, when you look inside the small rooms, you see that they are designed to hold captives. Each has only a narrow bed and a single chair for furniture; chains hang from iron rings set into the walls. You come to a closed door; you uncover the spy-hole and peer through. The prisoner in this cell is an enormous Brown Bear - the biggest you have ever seen. It is muzzled, and its paws are enclosed in leather covers, presumably to prevent it scratching anything; but the strangest thing about it is that it is wearing the costume of a circus clown: a pointed hat, a satin tunic, and ballooning pantaloons, all decorated with coloured frills and pompoms. You look up: on the plaster of the cell's ceiling you can make out the words: *I always said you were a bit of a clown! Ha ha!* Will you unbolt the cell door and walk in (turn to 108); or will you continue along the corridor (turn to 295)?



373

For some seconds after your shout has been carried away by the wind, the seated figure remains motionless. Then, slowly, it stands and turns. Facing you across the barren hilltop is a massive Carnivorous Ape. You notice first its pointed teeth and its long arms corded with muscle; then you start to wonder why the beast is wearing a black cloak. In its eyes you detect a strange intelligence and deep melancholy. You are hardly surprised when it begins to speak. 'A human! Was a human. What's a human? Hairy, hairy, beastly. Eat 'em raw! Trickle of blood, down the chin, hairy. Where's the chin? Was a human, human.' The huge ape continues in this manner for some time.

You can make no sense of it, but you decide that with dusk approaching you do not want to share this hilltop with a demented Carnivorous Ape. Will you attack it (turn to 163) or speak to it and ask it to go away (turn to 238)?



374

The extinguished torch drops from your numbed fingers. You twist and turn in a frenzy, trying to fend off the chill tendrils of shadow with your one remaining flame. But you cannot face in every direction at once, and the darkness deepens round you, smothering you in the cold blackness of death and decay. Like your torch, your life is snuffed out.

375

One of the soldiers attacks the wounded monster while the other defends himself against a desperate onslaught from the Elf woman. Within a few minutes the battle is over, the only survivor one of the soldiers. He notices you and raises his sword again, but you hold up your hands to show that you do not intend to fight.

'Pity about Sig,' says the soldier. 'Still, we managed to deal with this horrible beast. Can't imagine why that Elf was so bothered about it. Stranger in these parts, are you? I should clear off sharpish if I was you. There's weird monsters of all sorts wandering about the forest these days. Some of them can talk, they do say, and come out with some cock-and-bull story, trying to make out they're ordinary folk that have been changed into unnatural monsters by some stone gateway underground. I ask you, who'd believe a tale like that? They're all obviously possessed by demons. We do our best to hunt them down, but there seems to be more of them about than ever. Anyway, I can't hang around here, got to rejoin my unit.'

The soldier tramps off, and you return to the path. Will you continue south-westwards towards Kleinkastel (turn to 143), or will you turn left off the path and explore the forest towards the east (turn to 22)?



376

During the night, you hear the door open. You keep still, pretending to be asleep, as two Elves, moving with the mechanical stiffness that reveals them to be Slave Warriors, enter the room. They are carrying a blanket that shines with a luminous glow in the darkness, and they drape it over you and then leave. The blanket is very welcome: it is warm and comfortable. But you cannot stop worrying about the fact that the Elves looked like Slave Warriors; and the blanket is almost too relaxing. You find it hard to move your limbs. With a huge effort, you throw the luminous thing off the bed. You realize that it was magical; you are helplessly weak, but gradually, as you sit shivering on the bed, you recover your strength. Your limbs will feel shaky for several days, however: deduct 1 point from your *Initial SKILL* for the rest of this adventure. You must try to get out of this hut. Turn to 177.





377

Although your eyes are accustomed by now to the gloom inside the cave, it is difficult to make out whether it contains anything other than the massive carcass of the beast you have just slain. You pick up a few sticks, and drop them quickly when you realize that they are the bleached bones of the monster's past meals. You notice something gleaming, and discover a Gold Piece; after a while you find another. The search is taking too long. You emerge from the cave and resume following the path beside the stream. Turn to 15.



378

The short flight of stairs ends at a closed door. You push this open, to reveal a long, wide, empty corridor. You are in the Warlord's palace. You can hear no sounds at all. You tiptoe along the corridor in the direction that you hope leads to the centre of the building. You cross other corridors, equally silent and empty. You pass open doors that show large, bare rooms. You turn a corner – and come face to face with two Slave Warriors, on guard in front of a closed door. These Slave Warriors are big; they are the Warlord's bodyguards. Before succumbing to the power of the Portal, one was from the Margrave's elite infantry, and the other was half Orc, half Cave Giant. You know it will be a difficult fight, and you are debating whether or not to retreat when the door opens to reveal the Warlord – and you are rooted to the spot by the hideous appearance of his distorted, bloated head, swaying like a vast balloon on his wide shoulders. In that instant the Slave Warriors strike, and the Warlord assails you with mental attacks as his guards drive home their advantage. You cannot escape. Your adventure ends here.



379

Your blow crashes into the Slave Warrior's unprotected torso. He merely staggers backwards, uttering no sound. Then he is free of the ring's influence and raises his scimitar. You see the Struthiomimus pacing around in the clearing, and you realize that if you try to run away now the warrior can instruct the creature to catch you. You must fight.

SLAVE WARRIOR SKILL 6 STAMINA 5

If you win, you can stay in the clearing to search the body (turn to 160), or leave immediately along the eastward path (turn to 264).



380

At the base of the town wall darkness still reigns, but the pointed rooftops of Kleinkastel are gilded with the first rays of the morning sun. You wake up groaning, your body cold and stiff. You are also very hungry. If you do not eat, you will lose 4 points from your STAMINA. You can avoid this by eating one meal from your Provisions, if you have any. Deduct either one meal or 4 STAMINA points from the scores on your *Adventure Sheet*, and turn to 61.

If you cannot or will not do this, there is only one alternative: you must try to beg for food in the streets. Turn to 223.



Lignia's chant ceases; her hands freeze in mid-air. You wait for something to happen. You become aware of slight movements on your clothing and equipment. Your hand flies to your sword, but as you grasp the hilt it turns to red dust. There is nothing left of the blade except a scabbard full of rust. Reduce your SKILL by 4 points while you are without a weapon. You open your backpack; everything made of metal has been destroyed, including the miner's helmet, if you had one, and any coins you may have had. The Ring of Zombie Warding, if you had it, has crumbled into fragments. To make matters worse, your metal buttons and buckles have disappeared; you have to hold your clothes round you with your hands. 'Use vine-stems to secure your clothing,' Lignia advises. 'You will be better off without metal – it has always been a source of great misery for all the humanoid races. My ladder has unrolled itself, and now you must leave. Do not venture into my garden dell, but go round it, and continue your journey.' Will you obey this order (turn to 144), or are you so angry that you feel you must attack Lignia (turn to 16)?



The boat bumps against the timbers of the jetty. You throw a loop of rope over a bollard as you climb on to the planking. An overgrown path leads away from the jetty, into the forest. You force a way along the path, and soon you can see, between the trees, a stone tower. The path turns to the left and continues southwards through the forest; a side-track leads towards the tower.

Dusk is approaching; soon you will need to make camp for the night. Will you go to the tower to see if it can provide shelter (turn to 99)? Or will you continue along the path and look for a suitable bivouac in the forest (turn to 146)?





383

You spin to your left, where a narrow trail leads back into the depths of the jungle, and you run. A thrown spear grazes your thigh – deduct 2 points from your **STAMINA**. If you survive this wound, you succeed in making your escape.

You run until all sounds of pursuit have disappeared, and you find that you have crossed the strip of jungle and emerged on to a broad plain. In the distance, ahead of you, there is a ridge of low hills, which you head for. After some time you come to a wide, well-used track which you suppose is the main road leading to the Portal. You cross it hurriedly, not wishing to meet a squad of Slave Warriors, and climb the ridge. You look down into a grassy valley, dotted with clumps of trees, that narrows at both ends. To your right, a path leads away from the direction of the Portal, along the valley bottom; to your left, you see a thin column of smoke rising from a copse. Will you investigate the source of the smoke (turn to 165); or will you turn right, towards the end of the valley (turn to 348)?



384

You pull the leather thong over your head and, as you feel the weight of the dark-shadowed talisman rest against your chest, you realize that you have made a terrible mistake. The talisman is a conduit for a power that was old before mankind learnt to use wooden clubs – an infinitely evil power that you cannot hope to resist alone and unprepared. Your personality is snuffed out; you will join the Slave Warriors in mindless thrall to the Portal.



385

'My name is Azudraz,' says the old man as you follow him into the stone building. 'You've probably heard of me: the greatest alchemist this side of Buruna. Six months ago I allowed myself to be dragged up into this wilderness to work for one of these mine-owners - Horfak, his name was, though I haven't seen him since he first employed me. He wanted me to invent a perfectly secure method for storing gold; and now, at last, I've done it! It's a two-stage process. The first step is to take all these gold nuggets and drop them into the tank that I've built in the next room. I've managed to carry some of them; but you'll do the whole lot in no time with two arms and this wheelbarrow.'

You pile gold-speckled rocks into the barrow and wheel it through an archway into a room which is dominated by a vast metal tank. Pipes of glass and metal snake into and round the tank and each other, and a wooden ramp takes you up to the rim. The tank is full of clear, colourless liquid; its floor is littered with nuggets. You tip the barrow, and watch the load sink through the liquid to form a glittering heap. The tank is wide, but not very deep, and you are tempted to reach into it to retrieve a nugget for yourself. Will you do so (turn to 95)? Or will you first test the liquid by dipping a piece of your clothing into it (turn to 137)?



386

Nothing happens. You wait in front of the stone wall, but no secret door appears. And then you hear footsteps on the stairs: it is the regular tread of Slave Warriors' feet. There is only one place to hide – in the dark shadow under the staircase. Turn to 341.

387

As you charge off the jetty towards the house, you realize that you have made a terrible mistake. The ferocious Oviraptor has been freed and is obviously keen to sink its talons into your flesh and rend your body into bite-sized chunks with its rows of teeth. This dinosaur alone would be a formidable opponent, but in this open space in front of the house there is ample room for the three Goblins to encircle you. They do so. You cannot retreat. You cannot hope to defeat them all. The Oviraptor will not understand if you try to surrender. Your adventure ends here.

388

You have only two choices: to march up to the gates and fight the Slave Warrior guards (turn to 262), or to attempt to climb over the spike-topped paling (turn to 142).

389

Only one thing puts Gloten in a better mood than fighting, and that's winning. You have impressed him. He announces to the assembled townspeople

that only a superlative warrior could last so long against Gloten and his favourite weapon. He cancels the remainder of the tournament and tells the crowd that you are to be their Champion. You are deafened by cheers and applause. You shake Gloten's hand and wonder whether you should murmur some complimentary phrase. You could tell him, for instance, that he fights with the strength and courage of a Dwarf. If you do this, turn to 107. If you think it would be better to keep silent, you go with Gloten to prepare for your solo mission. Turn to 259.



390

Your fellow-warriors perform a war-dance round the carcass of the Triceratops. The tribal bard improvises verses to commemorate your bravery. When the celebrations have quietened, you hold a council of war. At the moment you are very close to the road that runs between the Portal, known to the People as the Sacred Cave, and the tyrant Warlord's headquarters. The Shaman is sure that the Warlord intends to leave his headquarters tomorrow, taking his remaining Slave Warriors with him back to Khul; the Shaman's plan is to set an ambush at the Sacred Cave, with the aim of killing the Warlord and rescuing Anxis, Queen of the People.

You can see no fault in this strategy, but you are impatient of any delay; you suggest that you could attempt a solo mission to infiltrate the Warlord's headquarters today; the warriors tell you that beyond the ridge at the far side of the grassy plain there is another path that leads along a valley towards the Warlord's base. Will you return in triumph with your fellow-warriors and prepare with them for tomorrow's ambush (turn to 213)? Or will you set out alone to cross the ridge and follow the path to the Warlord's headquarters (turn to 348)?

391

Before your sword is out of its scabbard you are in a whirlwind of flying knives, slashing swords, and kicking hoofs. You don't stand a chance.

392

As the Troglydtes move in for the kill, you glance at the two Goblins; they too seem to know that they cannot hope to survive a battle against so many enemies. You watch in despair as they calmly put down their swords, turn towards the looming statue, and raise their arms in supplication to their god. They begin to murmur an incantation. And then the Troglydtes are upon you, and you can do nothing but parry their clubs. Roll one die twice. If the total of the two rolls is 6 or less, turn to 346. If the total is 7 or more, turn to 231.



393

'Listen, stranger,' says the man. 'You are obviously a mighty warrior – which, I must confess, I certainly am not; nor are any of my fellows who are concealed about this glade. But between us we can defeat you, and therefore I urge you to surrender now. If you are in this forest with good reason, you have nothing to fear from us. Now sheathe your sword, or it will go badly for you.'

The man pulls the knife from his belt. Do you believe his story about there being men concealed in the forest? If you decide to surrender, turn to 292. If you decide to attack the man, turn to 204.





394

'If you are not prepared to make a contribution to the Margrave's treasury,' the officer pronounces, 'then you are clearly no better than a vagrant, and I shall class you as such in my official report. I will take you back to Kleinkastel for interrogation. Sergeant! Take this vagrant away!'

The sergeant and several soldiers approach, carrying ropes. If you are going to escape, you must do it now. There are troopers at both ends of the village, guarding the path, so you will have to run into the forest by dodging between the village cabins. You cannot tell which of the huts have soldiers lurking near by. So you just run. Throw one die. If you throw an even number, turn to 168. If you throw an odd number, turn to 287.

395

You step into a vast, empty hall. In the centre of the room is a table, and leaning over it is a large figure. Drawing closer, you see that the table is covered with a map of Khul; but you recoil in horror as the figure ceases its study of the map, looks up and stares at you. This is the tyrant Warlord of the Portal: a giant of a man, and normal enough up to his neck; but his head seems to have grown out of all proportion to the rest of him: it is swollen, distorted and discoloured, like a huge rotting vegetable, the eyes, nose, mouth and ears small and misplaced among the mounds and rolls of decaying flesh. 'I am

Horfak,' whispers the abomination. 'I see through the eyes of all my Warriors. I have observed you before. No doubt you think you have come to kill me. Fool! My strength alone could defeat you; with the Portal, I am invincible. See!' He waves a hand, and you feel the air vibrate. A living lattice of black lightning-bolts criss-crosses the walls and ceiling. 'No one can enter or leave now,' Horfak announces and goes on to describe his victorious campaigns on Khul.

You are bored with his gloating. If you have the mad god's mirrored helmet, or another mirror, you can place it in front of Horfak's face – turn to 354; if not, you waste no more time, but attack – turn to 47.



396

Your sword skids across the saurian's snout and snaps as it jars against a protruding plate of bone. The tail, as thick as a barrel and as long as a tree-trunk, sweeps out of the water and descends on your boat, smashing it into fragments. Stunned, you fall into the foaming whirlpool, where you are easily snapped up by the monster.

397

You have found the Portal. You stare up at it, rooted to the spot by an overwhelming sense of alien evil. Every inch of the surface of all three black stone slabs is covered with intricate hieroglyphics that seem to writhe in the flickering light. You try to decipher them; although you recognize none of the symbols, your mind is filled with appalling images. A darkness that is darker than the darkness of underground tunnels seems to hover round the edges of the megalithic slabs. You shudder as you feel the Portal probing into your mind. Somehow you know that this monstrous gateway is old; as old as the rock walls that have hidden it for aeons, older by far than the humanoid races of Khul. You shake your head. You know you must try to destroy it. If you have a sack of Igneolite, turn to 158. Otherwise, turn to 289.

The wizard's flying machine swoops over the treetops, until suddenly the forest ends and you are soaring above fields and orchards beyond which rise the rooftops of Kleinkastel. The wizard adjusts the crystals of the horse's mane, and the machine turns in a long descending curve, coming to earth in a clearing just inside the thick forest. Both you and the wizard jump from your saddles, whereupon the metal horse rises into the air in a shower of sparks and disappears from view. 'We part here,' says the wizard, 'and although we will not meet in the town, we will continue to work towards the same purpose. I will go there now, alone; my business is with my fellow-mages, and the town elders, and the Margrave. Stay here one hour, then come to the town. By then, I hope, I will be in conclave, and you will have to kick your heels waiting for the results of my deliberations. Put yourself forward at the first opportunity if you desire the glory of leading the fight against the evil menace. And – I almost forgot – here are 2 Gold Pieces; you may need to find food and shelter overnight.' The old wizard hobbles away along the path that crosses the clearing.

An hour later, you follow him. Turn to 143.



The pathway continues with a slight downhill slope, taking you through stretches of dense forest and grassy clearings. You are able to catch glimpses of the stream below; you notice that, as you progress, the cliffs become less steep and the ravine less deep. Finally the cliffs peter out, and your path joins the one that runs along the bank of the stream. Turn to 15.



You blink in the daylight at the mine entrance, and descend into the forest, where you find the same thing: all the Slave Warriors are either dead or they are no longer slaves. You keep going until you reach the edge of the forest, and Kleinkastel is in sight across the meadows. The landscape before you has been transformed: farmland has been dug up and turned into fortified earthworks and networks of trenches; siege-engines litter the fields.

As you approach Kleinkastel, the town's bells begin to ring; the Forest Gate swings open, and the Margrave rides out at the head of a small column of wounded knights. You tell him that the Slave Warriors are all gone. 'Praise the gods!' he breathes. 'These are the only soldiers left who are fit to fight. You have saved the town.'

Later, at a private meeting, Gloten and the Margrave invite you to attend a public ceremony at which you will receive your own weight in gold, as well as other riches. But, strangely, you decline their offer; gold seems to have lost its attraction - at least for now. You accept a chest of gems, and a good pack-horse, and you slip quietly away from Kleinkastel. Many others leave the area, too. The Cloudhigh Mountains lie undisturbed again.





lines. Pain stabs into your head; your limbs feel heavy. Reduce your SKILL by 2 points for the duration of this fight. A laugh bubbles from Horfak's twisted lips as he moves forward, swinging his blade in murderous arcs. Strengthened by the power of the Portal, Horfak is a fearsome foe.

HORFAK SKILL 10 STAMINA 20

If you defeat him, you hear a victorious shout from the People. As Horfak fell, the Slave Warriors faltered; now they are fighting on, but they are slow and ineffective, as if deprived of energy. Soon they are all slain. The People celebrate and hail you as their hero; but you know that the Portal still exists, and that to save Khul you must try to destroy it. You make for the Sacred Cave. Turn to 369.

52

Gloten shakes his head. 'In the right hands, these lengths of wood are no gentler than swords,' he says. 'However, I agree we must not produce a winner who is too wounded to be our Champion. We will cancel the combat.' The crowd hisses its disapproval. 'Silence!' roars Gloten. 'I have an alternative. To the moat!'

The other contestants are: Ostbar, of the Margrave's bodyguard; Einbol, a Dwarf miner; and Trella, a Wood Elf. The crowd follows you, Gloten and the other contestants to the moat, overshadowed by the castle and the town wall. A narrow footbridge arcs

from the street to the ramparts. 'Tie their ankles again!' orders Gloten. 'And dangle them on ropes, upside down, two on each side of the bridge, all within sword's reach of each other. Now, when I give the word, draw your swords – and each try to cut the others down. This will be a real test of swordsmanship! The one who stays dry will be our Champion! Draw swords!'

You find yourself hanging upside down above the green water of the moat. On the same side of the bridge is Einbol, and you decide to try to cut his rope first. Einbol has 7 points of SKILL. Roll dice as for combat; the contestant with the higher Attack Strength succeeds in cutting the rope of the other, who falls into the slimy water below and is pulled out by jeering townsfolk. If you are the unfortunate loser, you find Gloten waiting at the side of the moat – turn to 339. If you win, turn to 197.



80

You fall backwards and crash to the ground on the outside of the fence. Roll one die; if you roll a 4, 5 or 6, you twist your leg as you land – deduct 2 more points from your STAMINA. If you are still alive, you pick yourself up and find that the noise of your fall has attracted the two Slave Warrior guards. You must fight them. Turn to 262.



81

While the wizard consults crumbling scrolls and worm-eaten volumes, you gaze out of the windows at green slopes descending to a rocky shore. Bored, you browse along the shelves, but find few books written in languages you are familiar with. You find an illustrated book of Goblin recipes: revolted, you return to staring at the countryside.

Finally, the wizard stops taking notes and explains what he has found. 'The danger we face is greater than anyone can imagine. This evil has arisen before

– many thousands of years ago, when only the Goblins lived for hundreds of miles around. Underground, a source of evil was discovered: a gateway to another place, a forgotten, ancient world of giant and unnatural beasts. This Portal had, perhaps, existed since time began, allowing a few wandering animals and humanoids to pass through. The evil in the Portal was quiescent, waiting – and one day a Goblin war-chief, proud and powerful, found the Portal, entered it, and was held fast by the evil force. The war-chief and the Portal took strength from each other, and together they enslaved the population, creating an army of merciless thralls. Each wore a stone like the talisman you have shown me. But the Goblin war-chief was defeated! There are clues to help us.'

Turn to 199.

