

THE DEMON'S CLAW BOOK 3

DAVE MORRIS & OLIVER JOHNSON

BLOOD SWORD

General

\$4.95

The first game book
series for both solo *and*
multi-player adventures



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BLOOD SWORD

THE DEMON'S CLAW BOOKS

DAVE MORRIS & OLIVER JOHNSON

Illustrated by Russ Nicholson
Maps supplied by Geoff Wingate



KNIGHT BOOKS
Hodder and Stoughton

To all those who have been our guides in the Arabian night, but *especially* to Eric Goldberg and Robert Irwin

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THE RULES OF THE GAME

Your world is the magical land of Legend. In Legend there are many kinds of hero, each with unique skills and techniques for dealing with creatures of the supernatural. One who relies on a good sword and the strength of his (or her) right arm is called a Warrior. A hero who practises the magical arts is called an Enchanter, with many deadly spells always ready at his or her fingertips. A Sage is an ascetic monk - wise in ancient lore, but also skilful in the use of quarterstaff, bow and the unarmed martial arts. Lastly there is the Trickster; this figure is a swift and dextrous swordsman when the need arises, but prefers to employ trickery and stealth whenever possible.

If you completed the second book in the series, *The Kingdom of Wyrld*, you will carry over the same adventuring team for this book. Your character(s) will have the abilities, rank and equipment with which they ended their last adventure.

If this is your first adventure in the Blood Sword series, read on. You may take a single hero or put together a group of adventurers. If playing alone, you take a single hero of one of the four adventuring classes (Warrior, Enchanter, Sage or Trickster). You will be on your own, but with the advantage that you are a higher *rank* - ie, individually more

powerful - than you would be in a group of adventurers. A solitary adventurer created for this adventure will be 16th rank.

If there are two players, each takes the persona of an 8th rank adventurer. These two must belong to different adventuring classes. Ideally, these will be chosen so that one of the adventurers' strengths will make up for the other's weaknesses. An Enchanter is physically not very powerful, for example, while a Warrior has little resistance to sorcery, so a combination of these two classes makes a strong team.

If the adventure is undertaken by three players each takes a 5th rank character, while in a team of four players each has a 4th rank character. Again, all characters *must* be of a different class.

These preconditions are summarised below:

<i>number of players</i>	<i>composition of adventuring party</i>
one	a single 16th rank character
two	two characters of 8th rank
three	three characters of 5th rank
four	four characters of 4th rank

To reiterate, that applies to a team generated specifically for this book. Player-characters who got through the previous book may or may not meet these requirements, depending on how well they did.

After reading the sections on Combat, Magic and Teamwork, you should decide how many players will be taking part and to which of the four adventuring classes each player will belong. Each player should *only* read the special section applicable to his or her own character.

TERMINOLOGY

The usual role-playing abbreviation is used to indicate different Dice rolls. This uses the basic format of

XDice+Y

meaning that X Dice are rolled and Y is added to the total.

As an example, 'two Dice+3' means 'roll two Dice and add 3' - giving a number from 5 to 15. Taking another case, 'one Die -1' means 'roll one Die and subtract one'. *Negative numbers count as zero unless otherwise stated*, so this would give a score from 0 to 5.

FIGHTING PROWESS, etc.

Each character is described by four *attributes*. These are:

Fighting Prowess a measure of how powerful a fighter the character is,

Psychic Ability an indicator of the character's resistance to attack spells and (in the case of an Enchanter) his or her aptitude for magic,

Awareness a difficult concept, as it encompasses quickness of thought, dexterity and general nous,

Endurance the attribute measuring the character's state of health; wounds are deducted from Endurance, and if it reaches zero then the character dies.

COMBAT

Combat takes place in Rounds, each of which represents about ten seconds of action. Each Round, everyone who is taking part in the combat gets the

opportunity to perform one action if they wish: to attack, cast a spell, or whatever. Actions are taken in sequence based on each combatant's Awareness score. The combatant with the highest Awareness acts first, then the combatant with the next highest Awareness, and so on. Combatants with equal Awareness scores act simultaneously. A combatant who is killed (reduced to zero Endurance) before his turn does not get to act!

These are the possible combat options and the circumstances in which they may be used. A character may choose any option for which he or she is eligible as his or her action for the Round:

MOVE

This action allows the character to close *and fight* an enemy, or to move to an exit (if any). If you take the *move* option while an opponent is fighting you, then (unless your Awareness is higher than the opponent's) you take an automatic wound. Once all surviving characters in the party have *moved* to an exit, the party may *flee* at the start of the next Round.

FIGHT

The character must have previously chosen the *move* option in order to be close enough to an opponent to *fight*. (But there are exceptions to this rule; sometimes the tactical maps in the text will show that your opponents are directly adjacent to you at the start of the combat, in which case an immediate attack is possible.)

DEFEND

You cannot attack in the Round in which you choose this option, but it has the advantage of making you harder to hit. This is explained more fully below.

SHOOT

This is an option for Sages and Tricksters only. You loose off an arrow at any one opponent. Unlike the *fight* option you do not have to *move* first because (of course) arrows are long-range weapons. You cannot choose to *shoot* if an opponent is striking at you in the same Round - that is, you must dispose of any opponents who have closed to attack you before picking off others with your bow.

FLEE

Sometimes the text will give your party the option to *flee* from a battle. All surviving adventurers must have made a *move* before the party can *flee*. When this option is taken, the entire party *flees* at the start of the Round, so their opponents get no chance to hack at them or cast spells as they run off.

CALL A SPELL TO MIND/ CAST A SPELL IN MIND

These are options for Enchanters only. They are explained in the special section on Enchanters.

You can perform ONE of these actions in each Round. (Tricksters sometimes get the opportunity for two actions in a Round, though, as explained in their special rules section later.)

The rules for combat are designed for ease-of-play but require a short explanation. When striking at an opponent (ie, when you take the *fight* option for a Round), you roll two Dice. A score of *equal to* or *lower than* your Fighting Prowess means that your blow has hit. If you hit, you roll a damage Die (or Dice, at higher ranks) to see how much of an Endurance loss you have inflicted. If your opponent has an Armour

Rating, you must reduce your Die roll for damage by this amount, and the result (if greater than zero) is deducted from the opponent's Endurance.

Take an example. You have a Fighting Prowess of 7 and a damage roll of one Die+1. You are attacking a Troll whose Fighting Prowess is 6 and which also rolls one Die for damage. You have the higher Awareness, so you get first blow. Rolling two Dice, you score a 3; this is under your Fighting Prowess score, so you have succeeded in hitting it. Next you roll one Die and add 1 for the damage your blow inflicts. You roll a 6 (+1=7), but the Troll has an Armour Rating of 2 so only 5 points are deducted from its Endurance. If still alive (that is, if it hasn't yet been reduced to 0 Endurance) the Troll now gets to hack back at you. It rolls a 6 on two Dice - equal to its Fighting Prowess, so good enough to hit you (though only just!). For its damage Die roll it scores a 1; because you have an Armour Rating of 2 this means that you lose no Endurance. The Troll's claws hit you, but scrape harmlessly off your studded leather jerkin. The battle rages on for another Round . . .

Two other factors need to be considered. If you *defend*, then your opponent must roll equal to or under his Fighting Prowess on *three* Dice in order to hit you. You do not get to strike a blow yourself in the Round you are *defending*.

The other point concerns the *move* option. If you have a high Awareness and can *move* away from an opponent before he gets his/her action for that Round, all well and good. If you try to *move* away from an opponent who has already attacked you earlier in the Round, however, then he/she immediately gets a second strike at you - *and this is an automatic hit*. For this reason it is usually best to

dispose of one opponent before you *move* to engage another.

ARMOUR

You will start your adventure with a suit of armour. This gives an *Armour Rating* of 3 if you are a Warrior, or of 2 if you belong to one of the other adventuring types.

Your armour protects you in combat by absorbing its Armour Rating from any damage you would otherwise take. For instance, if a monster rolls two Dice+1 for damage and gets a total of 13, that is the number of Endurance points you would lose if you were unarmoured. If you are wearing armour with an Armour Rating of 2, you would take only 11 (ie, 13 minus 2) points of damage.

You *cannot* wear two suits of armour in combination. Thus, if you were to lose your armour and later come across two breastplates of Armour Rating 1, say, then you could put on one breastplate - but you could *not* put on both and claim a total Armour Rating of 2.

WEAPONS

If you lose your weapon, you must reduce your Fighting Prowess and damage Dice rolls by 2 until you find a replacement. An 8th rank Warrior normally has a Fighting Prowess of 9 and rolls three Dice+1 for damage when he/she hits an opponent. If he were to lose his sword and be forced to fight barehanded, he would have a Fighting Prowess of 7, and three Dice - 1 for damage rolls.

SPECIAL CHARACTER OPTIONS

With only one player, the adventure works just like

a standard gamebook. With parties of two or more players, one player is the 'reader', and he/she reads aloud the sections from the book as the adventure progresses.

Sometimes there will be the option for a character of a given class to act. Eg: 'If there is a Trickster in the party, turn to ...' If such an option is taken, *only* the player concerned looks at the appropriate section. He/she will usually read out the section to the other players, but sometimes part of a 'restricted' section will be set in *[bracketed italics]*. This means that the player can if he wishes keep that part of the information to himself. For instance, there might be the option for a Sage to read an ancient piece of parchment. The book passes to the Sage player, who reads in his 'restricted' section:

'(SAGE) You decipher the faded runes on the parchment. *[It tells you that the Egg of the Roc lies beyond the jewelled trapdoor.]* Turn to **559**.'

The player must tell his/her companions that he is reading the parchment, but he is not obliged to tell them what it says.

In a situation where two or more players are both given the chance for individual action (say, the Sage could speak to a jinni or the Trickster could shoot it with an arrow), the players roll Dice and the highest score decides who acts.

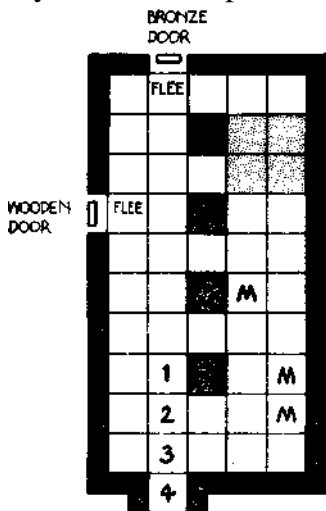
ENCOUNTERS

At all times players must specify their battle order. The best way is to prepare two, three or four card counters labelled 'first player', 'second player', etc, each player then holds the counter referring to him/her. Battle order may be changed (ie, the

counters exchanged) any time except when in combat.

Obviously, battle order makes no difference when only one person is playing (he/she *must* be the 'first player'), but in parties of two or more it may be crucial. Generally (but *not* always!) the 'first player', being at the front, will be the one to get hit by surprise attacks and so on. If players cannot agree on a battle order then they must adopt the following standard arrangement: first Warrior, then Sage, then Enchanter, then Trickster.

Encounters (fights, that is) are almost always played out on a tactical display of the room, corridor or what-have-you. An example is shown here:

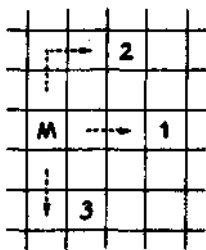


The numbers on this tactical map show where the adventurers are standing when the combat starts. The Ms refer to the monsters' starting locations.

It is only possible *to fight* a monster in an adjacent square (NOT across a diagonal), and it is not possible to *move* onto a square already occupied by a

monster or another player. When a monster or player is slain, remove the counter from the map. (In other words, you can step over or even stand on a fallen character.) You cannot *move* where there are no squares - nor on to a blacked-out square, which represents an obstacle such as (in the map above) a pillar or a large statue. Shaded squares can be *moved* through by monsters but not by players. (Eg, in the map above the shaded squares indicate a bed of coals which the monsters are immune to.)

Unless otherwise stated, a monster will always *move* to attack the nearest adventurer. To find out who the nearest adventurer is, count the number of squares the monster would have to pass through (using straight-line moves, not diagonals) to reach a position where it could *fight*. In the diagram below, Adventurer 1 is closer to the monster than Adventurer 2 and the same distance as Adventurer 3. (If several adventurers are equidistant from the monster, roll Dice to see which it goes for - the lowest roll is the unfortunate target of its attention! A similar roll must also be made when a monster is adjacent to more than one adventurer, to see which of them it will *fight*.)



Before starting the adventure, prepare a few card counters to represent adventurers and monsters. You don't need many, as you will rarely encounter

more than three or four monsters at a time.

Always make a note of a monster's remaining Endurance if you *flee* from it. Monsters sometimes give chase, and if they catch up with you then you'll need to know how many wounds you've already inflicted.

ENCUMBRANCE

There is a limit to how much you can carry. As shown on the Character Sheets, you can usually have *ten* items at a time. If you are fully encumbered and find another item you want, you must discard one of the items you're already carrying (or give it to another player) in order to make space for it in your backpack.

Two special points need to be made. A quiver (available to Sages and Tricksters) will hold up to six arrows. The quiver counts as one item for encumbrance purposes *regardless* of the number of arrows it contains. That is, if you have a quiver containing six arrows then it still counts as only 'one item' and not as 'seven items'.

Your money pouch counts as one item, too. As with the quiver, the contents are not relevant. The money pouch will hold a maximum of 100 coins (of any type), but whether it is full or empty it counts as only 'one item'.

MAGIC

Magic is the special province of Enchanters and (to a much lesser extent) Sages. The way in which magic functions for these classes is fully set out in their special sections, but there is one thing that *every* adventurer must know about magic.

There are two types of magic. *Blasting* spells simply inflict damage when they are cast, and if you happen to be the target there is not much you can do about it! You deduct the damage the spell does (less your Armour Rating) from your Endurance score. The other sort of spells are *Psychic* spells, and these you can try to resist. To resist a Psychic spell you must roll equal to or less than your Psychic Ability score on two Dice. If you make this roll, the spell fails to work against you.

You will always be told whether a spell is of the Psychic or Blasting variety.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Experience points are a measure of a character's skill and power. If you complete *The Demon's Claw* successfully, you will be awarded a number of *experience points* to be divided amongst all surviving characters. At the same time, you add up any special bonus awards (or penalties) you were given during the adventure. The total *experience points* a character accumulates will enable him to rise in rank.

The overall *experience points* needed for each rank are set out below.

<i>rank</i>	<i>experience points</i>
1st	less than 250
2nd	250-499
3rd	500-749
4th	750-999
5th	1000-1249
6th	1250-1499
7th	1500-1749
8th	1750-1999

9th	2000-2249
10th	2250-2499
11th	2500-2749
12th	2750-2999
13th	3000-3249
14th	3250-3499
15th	3500-3749
16th	3750-3999
17th	4000-4249
18th	4250-4499
19th	4500-4999
20th	5000

There is no rank above the 20th.

Characters who survived earlier adventures will already know their *experience points*. If this is your first adventure, start with the base level *experience points* required for your rank - 750 if you are 4th rank, 1750 if you're 8th, etc. If you play through the adventure with a single (16th rank) character and receive an award of 1000 *experience points*, for example, then you will advance to 19th rank. If you had got the same award as a party of four 4th rank characters, each character would advance to 5th rank.

After successfully completing the adventure and totting up your *experience points*, keep the Character Sheet. Characters who emerge alive are eligible for the next adventure in the series.

GETTING KILLED

If you are playing the adventure solo and your character gets killed (reduced to 0 Endurance), you do the same thing you would with any other gamebook - get a new character and start again at

the beginning. But what if you're playing as a team and one person gets killed?

The other players go on with the adventure, of course. Their party is now at reduced strength because of the loss of a character, but they still have a chance to win through. The player whose character was killed does not have to sit on the sidelines, however - *he now gets to roll the Dice for the monsters*. He can also change a monster's strategy if he wishes. (Though he cannot invent powers for it that are not listed in the description!) Getting 'killed' can thus be quite fun ... you lose your character, but at least you get to give your former companions a hard time!

THE SOLO-TEAM OPTION

Normally the number of characters in the part will be equal to the number of players, the idea being that most people will have their hands full just running one adventurer with all his various special skills.

However, once you have gained some experience with the BLOOD SWORD system, you may like to try using the Solo Team Option. Under this alternative system one reader takes, not a single character, but an entire team of four characters. In other words, it is just the same as if there were four players, but all the characters are run by the same person. (They are still just 4th rank, of course - you can't take a team of four 16th rank superheroes!)

SPECIAL SECTIONS

The following sections contain the detailed rules for each adventuring type. You should ideally read only

the section that applies to your character - though, of course, if you are using the Solo Team Option (see above) then you will need to know the powers of several different character types.

For convenience during play (ie, so that you don't need to keep flipping back here!) please feel free to make photocopies of these special sections and Character Sheets.

THE WARRIOR

You are the master of the fighting arts. You have better Fighting Prowess than any other adventuring type at the same rank, and when you strike a blow you inflict more damage. You also have chainmail armour which provides an Armour Rating of 3 - better than the armour available to other characters.

These advantages give you a real edge in any fight, but you do not get things all your own way. You have none of the other characters' special skills - the Sage's ESP, for instance, or the Trickster's low devious cunning. Also, because you are of noble birth and follow the honourable traditions of your ancestors, you must be careful to stay true to the Code of Chivalry. You may take an *experience point* penalty if you behave in a dishonourable, cowardly or uncouth manner.

Your attributes at various ranks are these:

2nd rank	Fighting Prowess: 8	Damage: 1 Die+1
	Psychic Ability: 6	Awareness: 6
	Endurance: 12	
3rd rank	Fighting Prowess: 8	Damage: 1 Die+2
	Psychic Ability: 6	Awareness: 6
	Endurance: 18	

4th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 6 Endurance: 24	Damage: 2 Dice Awareness: 7
5th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 6 Endurance: 30	Damage: 2 Dice+1 Awareness: 7
6th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 6 Endurance: 36	Damage: 2 Dice+2 Awareness: 7
7th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 6 Endurance: 42	Damage: 3 Dice Awareness: 7
8th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 48	Damage: 3 Dice+1 Awareness: 7
9th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 54	Damage 3 Dice+2 Awareness: 7
10th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 60	Damage: 4 Dice Awareness: 7
11th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 66	Damage: 4 Dice+1 Awareness: 7
12th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 72	Damage: 4 Dice+2 Awareness: 8
13th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 78	Damage: 5 Dice Awareness: 8

14th rank	Fighting Prowess: 10 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 84	Damage: 5 Dice+1 Awareness: 8
15th rank	Fighting Prowess: 10 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 90	Damage: 5 Dice+2 Awareness: 8
16th rank	Fighting Prowess: 10 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 96	Damage: 6 Dice Awareness: 8

Fill in your rank and attributes on a Character Sheet.

If you are playing with a character from Book Two, you already know what equipment you have. You can also add 25 gold pieces to the money you already have.

If you are taking a new character, you begin with three items which you should now note down. These are:

- SWORD
- CHAINMAIL ARMOUR (Armour Rating 3)
- MONEY POUCH

The money pouch contains 10 gold pieces if you're 4th rank, 15 gold pieces if you're 5th rank, 20 gold pieces if you're 8th rank, and 40 gold pieces if you are 16th rank. Regardless of its contents, the pouch still counts as *one item* for encumbrance purposes.

WARRIOR Character Sheet

NAME _____

RANK _____

Fighting Prowess _____ Damage _____

Psychic Ability _____ Awareness _____

Endurance _____

ITEMS:

THE TRICKSTER

Some Adventurers are honest, chivalrous and honourable. Not you. You are basically a rogue - a likeable rogue, perhaps, but a rogue nonetheless. You live by your wits. If you can win a fight by trickery or by shooting someone in the back, you will. Cunning is your main weapon.

But when you *have* to face someone in a straight fight, you are no pushover. After the Warrior, you are perhaps the best fighter in any party.

Your attributes at various ranks are these:

2nd rank Fighting Prowess: 7 Damage: 1 Die
 Psychic Ability: 6 Awareness: 8
 Endurance: 12

3rd rank Fighting Prowess: 7 Damage: 1 Die+1
 Psychic Ability: 6 Awareness: 8
 Endurance: 18

4th rank Fighting Prowess: 7 Damage: 1 Die+2
 Psychic Ability: 7 Awareness: 8
 Endurance: 24

5th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 30	Damage: 2 Dice Awareness: 8
6th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 36	Damage: 2 Dice+1 Awareness: 8
7th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 42	Damage: 2 Dice+2 Awareness: 8
8th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 48	Damage: 3 Dice Awareness: 9
9th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 54	Damage: 3 Dice+1 Awareness: 9
10th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 60	Damage: 3 Dice+2 Awareness: 9
11th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 66	Damage: 4 Dice Awareness: 9
12th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 72	Damage: 4 Dice+1 Awareness: 9
13th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 78	Damage: 4 Dice+2 Awareness: 9
14th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 84	Damage: 5 Dice Awareness: 10

15th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 90	Damage: 5 Dice+1 Awareness: 10
16th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 96	Damage: 5 Dice+2 Awareness: 10

Fill in your rank and attributes on a Character Sheet.

If you are playing with a character from Book Two, you already know what equipment you have. You can also add 35 gold pieces to the money you already have.

If you are taking a new character, you begin with five items which you should now note down. These are:

- SWORD
- STUDED LEATHER ARMOUR
(Armour Rating 2)
- MONEY POUCH
- BOW
- QUIVER

The money pouch contains 10 gold pieces if you're 4th rank, 15 gold pieces if you're 5th rank, 20 gold pieces if you're 8th rank, and 40 gold pieces if you're 16th rank. Regardless of its contents, the pouch still counts as *one item* for encumbrance purposes. The quiver contains six arrows at the start of the adventure. Cross these off as you use them. (If you used up your arrows in Book Two, you may assume you have replaced them in the interval before this adventure begins.)

Two special rules apply to you:

Dodging technique

You are very adept at evading attacks. When an opponent makes a *fight* roll against you, he (or it) must roll two Dice+1 instead of the usual 2 Dice.

Archery

As long as you have your bow and arrows, you can use the *shoot* option in combat. You do not have to be in an adjacent square to your opponent in order to *shoot*. A *shoot* roll is just like a *fight* roll - that is, to hit you must roll equal to or less than your Fighting Prowess on two Dice.

Regardless of your rank, arrows inflict only one Die Endurance damage (less Armour Rating) on the target.

TRICKSTER Character Sheet

NAME _____

RANK _____

Fighting Prowess _____ Damage _____

Psychic Ability _____ Awareness _____

Endurance _____

HEMS:

THE SAGE

Your upbringing has been in the spartan Monastery of Illumination on the barren island of Kaxos. There you studied the Mystic Way- a series of demanding psionic disciplines and rigorous physical training.

Your attributes at various ranks are these:

2nd rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 10	Damage: 1 Die Awareness: 6
3rd rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 7 Endurance: 15	Damage: 1 Die+1 Awareness: 6
4th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 20	Damage: 1 Die+2 Awareness: 7
5th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 25	Damage: 2 Dice Awareness: 7
6th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 30	Damage: 2 Dice+1 Awareness: 7
7th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 35	Damage: 2 Dice+2 Awareness: 7
8th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 40	Damage: 3 Dice Awareness: 7
9th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 45	Damage: 3 Dice+1 Awareness: 7

10th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 50	Damage: 3 Dice+2 Awareness: 7
11th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 55	Damage: 4 Dice Awareness: 7
12th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 60	Damage: 4 Dice+1 Awareness: 8
13th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 65	Damage: 4 Dice+2 Awareness: 8
14th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 70	Damage: 5 Dice Awareness: 8
15th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 75	Damage: 5 Dice+1 Awareness: 8
16th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 10 Endurance: 80	Damage: 5 Dice+2 Awareness: 9

Fill in your rank and attributes on a Character Sheet.

If you are playing with a character from Book Two, you already know what equipment you have. You can also add 15 gold pieces to the money you already have.

If you are taking a new character, you begin with five items which you should now note down. These are:

- QUARTERSTAFF
- RINGMAIL ARMOUR (Armour Rating 2)
- MONEY POUCH
- BOW
- QUIVER

The money pouch contains 10 gold pieces if you're 4th rank, 15 gold pieces if you're 5th rank, 20 gold pieces if you're 8th rank, and 40 gold pieces if you're 16th rank. Regardless of its contents, the pouch still counts as *one item* for encumbrance purposes. The quiver contains six arrows at the start of the adventure. Cross these off as you use them. (If you used up your arrows in Book Two, you may assume you have replaced them in the interval before this adventure begins.)

Several special rules apply to you:

Archery

As long as you have your bow and arrows, you can use the *shoot* option in combat. You do not have to be in an adjacent square to your opponent in order to *shoot*. A *shoot* roll is just like a *fight* roll - that is, to hit you must roll equal to or less than your Fighting Prowess on two Dice.

Regardless of your rank, arrows inflict only one Die Endurance damage (less Armour Rating) on the target.

Quarterstaff technique

Your expertise in quarterstaff fighting includes a knowledge of critical nerve points. When attacking with the staff, you can elect to make your *fight* roll on three Dice instead of two. This is obviously more difficult, but it means that if you *do* hit you inflict one extra Die's worth of Endurance damage and knock your foe off balance, causing him to take his

action at the end of the following Round (ie, as if he had an Awareness score of 1).

An example: Bede is a 12th rank Sage. Striking at a foe with his quarterstaff, he decides to go for a nerve point. This means he needs to roll 8 or less on three Dice. He scores a 4, so he hits and (because he was using his quarterstaff technique) he inflicts five Dice +1 damage on his opponent.

Healing

You can use this psionic ability at any time except during a combat. When you attempt to Heal, you decide how many points of Endurance you are going to use. You deduct these from your Endurance, then roll one Die-2 and multiply this by the number of points you expended. The result is the Healing energy (in the form of Endurance points) that you are able to draw from the Cosmic Flux. These points may be distributed as you wish among the players (including yourself). No player can increase his or her Endurance above its initial score, of course.

An example will show how this works. Alfric is a Sage who decides to expend 5 Endurance in a Healing attempt. He thus rolls 5x(one Die-2) - rolling '4' on the Die, say, and thus getting a total of 10 Endurance points. He could restore his own Endurance to what it was before he tried the Healing, and this would still leave him with 5 points to distribute to himself or his companions as he wishes.

Negative results on the one Die-2 roll are counted as zero, as mentioned earlier. Your power of Healing is always a gamble, though, because you might roll 1 or 2 on the Die and thus get back no points from the Cosmic Flux.

Other psionic powers

Your other psionic powers will be explained in situations where you might need them. They include

ESP (the ability to detect thoughts)

Paranormal Sight (the ability to see through soft materials such as curtains, fog or water - though not stone or metal)

Levitation (the ability to negate the force of gravity on your body, allowing you to rise vertically into the air)

Exorcism (the ability to dispel ghosts and other wraiths by stifling the paranormal energies that sustain them).

SAGE Character Sheet

NAME _____

RANK _____

Fighting Prowess _____ Damage _____

Psychic Ability _____ Awareness _____

Endurance _____

ITEMS:

THE ENCHANTER

Forget the mundane arts of swordplay. You can use a sword if you have to, but your true forte is in the manipulation of occult powers of Sorcery.

Your attributes at various ranks are these:

2nd rank	Fighting Prowess: 6 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 10	Damage: 1 Die-1 Awareness: 6
3rd rank	Fighting Prowess: 6 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 15	Damage: 1 Die Awareness: 6
4th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 20	Damage: 1 Die+1 Awareness: 6
5th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 25	Damage: 1 Die+2 Awareness: 7
6th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 30	Damage: 1 Die+3 Awareness: 7
7th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 8 Endurance: 35	Damage: 2 Dice+1 Awareness: 7
8th rank	Fighting Prowess: 7 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 40	Damage: 2 Dice+2 Awareness: 7
9th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 45	Damage: 2 Dice+3 Awareness: 7

10th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 50	Damage: 3 Dice Awareness: 7
11th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 55	Damage: 3 Dice+1 Awareness: 7
12th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 60	Damage: 3 Dice+2 Awareness: 8
13th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 9 Endurance: 65	Damage: 3 Dice+3 Awareness: 8
14th rank	Fighting Prowess: 8 Psychic Ability: 10 Endurance: 70	Damage: 4 Dice Awareness: 8
15th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 10 Endurance: 75	Damage: 4 Dice+1 Awareness: 8
16th rank	Fighting Prowess: 9 Psychic Ability: 10 Endurance: 80	Damage: 4 Dice+2 Awareness: 8

Fill in your rank and attributes on a Character Sheet.

If you are carrying on with your character from Book Two, you already know what equipment you have. You can also add 25 gold pieces to the money you already have.

If you are taking a new character, you begin with three items which you should now note down. These are:

- SWORD
- SILVER ARMOUR (Armour Rating 2)
- MONEY POUCH

The money pouch contains 10 gold pieces if you're 4th rank, 15 gold pieces if you're 5th rank, 20 gold pieces if you're 8th rank, and 40 gold pieces if you're 16th rank. Regardless of its contents, the pouch still counts as *one item* for encumbrance purposes.

Your special skills are more involved than those available to any other character because you have a host of useful and deadly spells at your command. The procedure for spellcasting is quite involved, so read the following stages carefully.

1 Before you can cast a spell, you must call it to mind. If done during a combat, this takes one Round. You can call spells to mind at any time - and keep them in mind without effort - so you may wish to have a few ready before encountering an enemy. (Rather like having a cocked and loaded crossbow.)

However, each spell that you have in mind temporarily reduces your Psychic Ability by 1 until it is cast. If you keep several spells in mind at all times, you will therefore be adventuring with quite a low current Psychic Ability, and this makes you vulnerable to psychic attacks.

2 The attempt to cast a spell takes one Round. It does not happen automatically. In order to cast a spell successfully, you must roll equal to or less than your Psychic Ability on two Dice. You must *add* the Complexity Level of the spell to the Dice roll. If you fail to cast it, you can try again the next Round; this time the roll is easier, as you *subtract* 1 from the two-Dice-plus-Complexity roll. If you fail again,

you subtract 2 from your roll on the next Round. If the spellcasting process is interrupted (eg, you take a Round out to *dodge* or *fight*) then you have to go back to stage one.

An example will show how this works. Ragnarok is an Enchanter with a Psychic Ability of 9. He has called two spells into mind in case of trouble, so he currently has a reduced Psychic Ability score of 7. In an encounter with three Hobgoblins, he decides to use his *Sheet Lightning* spell. This is a Complexity Level Four spell, so the first Round he tries to *cast* it he must roll 7 or less on two Dice+4. He fails this difficult roll but continues trying on the next Round, this time making two Dice+3. He fails again, so on the third Round he needs to make his roll of 7 or less on two Dice+2. This time he succeeds, and a crackling bolt scatters the Hobgoblins. If Ragnarok had stopped trying to *cast* the spell in order to *fight*, and then started trying again the Round after that, he would have had to start with a two Dice+4 roll again.

All your spells except for *Ghastly Touch* are 'ranged' - that is to say, you do not have to be in an adjacent square to your opponent in order to cast the spell at him.

The combat spells available to you are as follows:

Volcano Spray Complexity Level One

Causes *all* enemies in the vicinity to lose one Die Endurance. This is a Blasting spell, so it cannot be resisted. The enemies' Armour Rating (if any) is deducted from the damage Die roll.

Nighthowl Complexity Level One

A Psychic spell which affects a single opponent. If the opponent fails to resist, he/she/it must make

fight or *shoot* rolls using one Die more than usual (that is, on three Dice rather than two Dice) for the next four Rounds.

White Fire Complexity Level One

This Blasting spell strikes one opponent, causing the loss of two Dice+2 Endurance (less Armour Rating).

Swordthrust Complexity Level Two

A Blasting spell affecting one enemy, who loses three Dice+3 Endurance; armour reduces the damage in the usual way.

Eye of the Tiger Complexity Level Two

When this spell is cast, you can *either* add +2 to your Fighting Prowess and damage rolls *or* add +1 to the Fighting Prowess and damage rolls of everyone in the party including yourself. This lasts for four Rounds of combat.

Immediate Deliverance Complexity Level Two

Used during a combat from which you wish to *flee*, this spell teleports everyone in the party to the exit (if there is one). You are then ready to beat a retreat in the next Round.

Mists of Death Complexity Level Three

All enemies in the vicinity lose two Dice Endurance if they fail to resist this Psychic spell. Armour gives no protection.

The Vampire Spell Complexity Level Three

This Psychic spell can be directed against a single foe, who loses four Dice Endurance if he fails to resist it. Some of the vital energy he loses is

channelled into you: your own Endurance is *increased* by half the amount he loses (rounded down). Of course, your Endurance still cannot exceed its initial score.

Sheet Lightning Complexity Level Four

A powerful Blasting spell that inflicts two Dice+2 damage to all opponents in the vicinity. Armour protects from this as usual.

Ghastly Touch Complexity Level Four

This is the *only* spell that requires you to be in an adjacent square to your intended victim. It is a Psychic spell that affects one opponent, who loses seven Dice Endurance if he fails to resist it - and two Dice even if he *does* resist it. Armour gives no protection.

Nemesis Bolt Complexity Level Five

This highly focused bolt of energy strikes one foe, who loses seven Dice+7 Endurance. It is a Blasting spell, so armour will reduce the damage.

Servile Enthralment Complexity Level Five

This Psychic spell affects one enemy. If not resisted, it brings the enemy under your control. He (or she, or it) simply stops moving and in non-combat situations may respond to your questions. If you order an Enthralled foe to fight for you (ie, against his own former companions), you must roll one Die: on a 6 he recovers his wits and attacks you. Enthralment lasts long enough for you to slay the enemy, so it effectively functions as an 'instant kill' spell.

You also have a number of non-combat spells.

These include *Summon Faltyn*, which calls a sly, faerie creature to serve you for a time; *Prediction*, which grants a glimpse into possible futures; and *Detect Spells*, which informs you when magic is operating nearby. There is no need to make Dice rolls to cast such spells because it will not usually matter whether it takes several attempts to get them to work.

ENCHANTER Character Sheet

NAME _____

RANK _____

Fighting Prowess _____ Damage _____

Psychic Ability _____ Awareness _____

Endurance _____

ITEMS:

FINAL NOTES

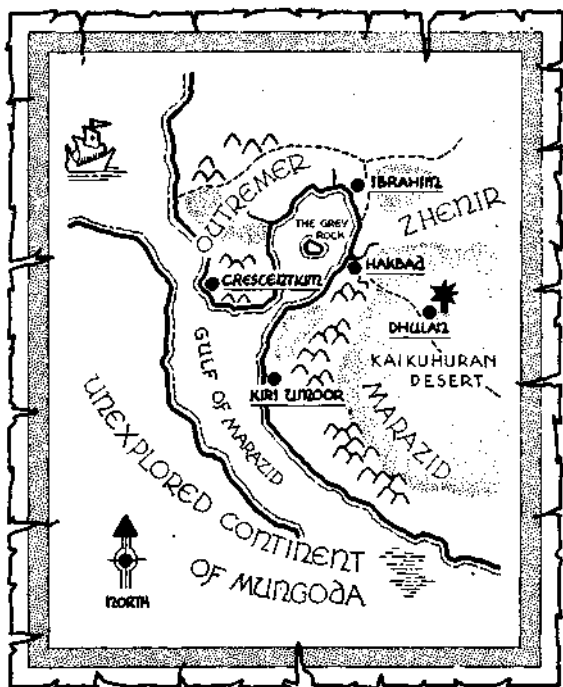
You now have all the rules you need to play. But remember that the name of the game is enjoyment (even if you thought it was 'Blood Sword'. . .), and

if rules and numbers are not to your taste then you are at perfect liberty to ignore them. The book is, after all, a text from which you can draw one thousand and one different stories. You do not have to play it to 'win'. You might like to try various options just for the fun of it. Just to see what happens. The essence of role-playing, in fact, is to see the adventure through the eyes of your character and to enjoy thinking how he or she would act.

In the words of Hasan i-Sabbah, Grandmaster of the Marijah Assassins, 'There is no single truth; everything is possible.'

Or, as the Saviour of the True Faith said, 'From the Cup of Truth one can drink a thousand times.'

All of your stories start overleaf.



1

More than two years have passed since your adventures in the Kingdom of Wyrd. All players who were suffering from wounds at the end of Book Two can now restore their Endurance scores to normal. Any player who had lost his or her armour or weaponry has managed to replace it in the interim. This includes arrows in the case of a Sage or a Trickster.

You have two special items: the hilt and scabbard of the fragmented Sword of Life - the weapon known in popular folklore as the Blood Sword. You can pass these from one player to another (in a multi-player party) *but you must never discard either of them*. If at any point in this adventure you lose either the hilt or the scabbard - in other words, if they are lost to the whole party - turn to **475**. Their enchantment is all that now protects you from the last of the True Magi, who constantly seek to prevent you from finding the third and final fragment: the blade. If you can locate the blade then you will be able to make the Blood Sword whole again. Its power is the only thing the True Magi fear.

It is to find the blade that you have roamed the world these wearying years. In the north you met a wise woman who told you the blade was somewhere in Outremer, the Crusader lands. Now your quest has brought you to the southern outpost of Coradian civilisation: the city of Crescentium . . .

Turn to **269**.

2

Which item will you use? A black satin cushion (turn to **504**); the orb of fire (turn to **434**); or a gold mirror (turn to **117**)?

If you do not have any of these items, or decide

against using them, go back to **379** and choose a different option.

3

'Only to the fishing village yonder,' you reply. Then, changing the subject: 'These strange buildings around us are mausoleums, then?'

'Indeed. This is where the Ta'ashim notables buried their dead in the days before our forerunners came from the north to conquer Outremer.'

'And where are you travelling?' you ask the man.

He shrugs. In neither one direction nor the other. I sit here in a company of three -I, my shadow and my gourd of wine. My companions are not quarrelsome, and that is as much as one can ask for in this life.'

Time is getting on, and you have yet to hire a boat. Rising to your feet, you thank the man for sharing his wine and then set off on your way.

Turn to **314**.

4

. . . You are now standing at the top of the charnel tower. A narrow ledge runs around a metal grille on which bodies are left for vultures to devour. This is the traditional way in which the Ba'adin race of northern Zhenir dispose of their dead, for the soil in that land is hard and rocky, and graves cannot easily be dug. Those Ba'adin traders now living in Crescentium have had this tower built. Old customs die hard.

The moonlight casts a thick shadow from the tower parapet across the grille, so you are spared the sight of the bodies that have been left up here. You are not spared the smell, though - a foetid mixture of carrion and bird-droppings that makes

you gag each time you draw breath.

As you make your way across to the rungs so that you can climb down to the ground, a voice calls out of the darkness: 'Heed my words! A flesh-eating ghoulish ghoul lingers at the foot of this tower by night. Best if you wait up here until dawn.'

You turn and peer at the one who has spoken. You can barely make out a hooded figure crouching in the shadows.

If you ignore the advice this stranger has given you, and wish to descend, turn to **72**. If you ask the stranger who he is, turn to **507**. If the Trickster is in the party and wishes to do something, he or she should turn to **546**.



5

(ENCHANTER) *[You push your perception forward through the currents of Time. A scene of dastardly evil is revealed: Psyche intends to bring a demon to murder you while you sleep!]*

Armed with this foreknowledge, turn to **372**.

6

You try to tell them that you are bound for the house of Lady Psyche, and ask them how much further it is. You are unsure whether they understand what you are saying or not. Their almond-shaped eyes study you from behind their veils.

Suddenly one of them begins to shout: '*Vill! Vill! Psyche itlahet - vill!*'

If you wish to go back to Crescentium, turn to **170**.
If you are intent on pressing on, turn to **172**.

7

'Ruined...' moans Lagrestin as he sees the damage the water has done to the delicately dyed silk. Then, suddenly remembering the situation, he says, This is not mine, this contraband. Of course not! It was brought up from the depths of the harbour by sorcery, was it not? The evidence against me is circumstantial - nay, it is entirely phantom!

'Arrest this wretch,' says Anvil, pointing at Lagrestin. His men rush forward and bear Lagrestin to the ground. After frisking him for concealed weapons, they coil a rope around his shoulders.

'You know how you'll be leaving Crescentium?' Lagrestin screams at you as he is led away. 'You'll be floating out with the tide. Face down.'

'Don't worry about him,' says Anvil. 'He'll be locked up for at least a week. You should be out of town by then.' He is not advising you, he is *telling* you. 'For tonight, I'll give you a letter of introduction to the Commander of the Knights Capellars. He is a man who believes fervently in the rule of law. When he learns of your deed tonight, he'll certainly give you food and lodging.'

He hastily scrawls a note for you and tells you to take it to the Temple of the Roc. Thanking him, you set off through the unlit streets.

Turn to **47**.

8

You come to another fork in the passageway. Realising that the branch to your left will lead you back northwards, you go straight on.

Turn to **554**.

9

(SAGE) [*The legend Galor has related is just as you have read it in various ancient books. However, the version you know also includes the secret word that Simbar used to make the Roc land when he reached his destination. This word was 'Tawi'.]*

If you want to try Galor's plan, turn to **320**. If you simply bid him farewell and go on your way, turn to **314**.

10

The tariff is written in Jezant script,' says Alexius, indicating a slate hanging on the wall. 'A whimsical custom in these parts, intended to lend a trace of exoticism and calligraphic style to the hostelry - but allow me to translate. Each bed is priced at two gold pieces, with a further one gold piece for meals each day.'

If the Sage is in the party, he or she should turn to **331**. If there is no Sage but the Trickster is here and would like to do something, he or she should turn to **112**. Failing either of these, turn to **381**.

11

If the Trickster is here and has not yet tried opening the door, he or she should turn to **61**. If the Trickster is not in the party, or has already failed to pick the lock, then you will have to try using an item; turn to **393**.

12

This is a serious misdemeanour,' says the Selentine captain. 'Brawls threaten the security of the city - indeed, of the whole realm. People do not have enough respect for the law.'

He appears in no great hurry to arrest you. While

he is questioning Alexius, will you make a bid for freedom (turn to **342**); offer the Selentines a bribe (turn to **581**); or wait to see what happens (turn to **478**)?

13

'What is the reason for your distress?' you say as you step off the road towards him. Then, seeing him more clearly, you know the answer. The lower part of his body has been turned into stone!

'See how I am punished for my sins,' he says, twisting his upper torso around to look at you. 'I was a savant and a friar, but I wandered from the True Faith when I began to become obsessed with the magical arts. My journeys brought me to Outremer and, hearing of the sorcerous Lady Psyche, I decided to visit her and exchange knowledge of spells and rituals. Alas! when I laid eyes on her all thought of learning flew from my head. I was enraptured, enslaved - reduced to imbecility by my love for her. I lost no opportunity to declare my devotion; and whenever Psyche went for a walk through the orange groves, or journeyed into Crescentium, I would waylay her.'

'Well, I brought this miserable fate on myself. Psyche's patience was not limitless. At last, after numerous warnings that my adoration was unwanted and hopeless, she employed the Petrifying Rhyme of Kadiras. Only because her heart is as gentle as a tulip and as merciful as a freshwater spring, she spared my upper body from the spell's effect.'

'A sad tale,' you concur. 'Though you may indeed have strained the lady's patience, perhaps one day she will take pity on you and disband the enchantment.'

The young man sighs. 'Perhaps, perhaps. I live for the day when she will come to my arms . . . Could you possibly grant me one small favour before you go on your way?'

You shrug. 'Name it and we shall see.'

The day has been long and hot, and my mouth is parched. Psyche has not forgotten me, and usually sends a slave with food and drink, but this evening the slave is late in coming. Could you pick one or two oranges and hand them to me?'

If you agree to do this, turn to **571**. If you decide to return to the road and continue on your way, turn to **262**.

14

(ENCHANTER) Shambeer has warned you that time is of the essence. You call the Prediction spell to mind and cast it, obtaining glimpses of the near future. This spell will enable you to explore the ship more efficiently, eliminating wrong turnings and delays before they occur.

Put a tick on a piece of paper and write the number **422** above it. As you turn to successive paragraphs you will be told to record more ticks. *These ticks are keeping track of the time you spend searching the ship, and once you have a total of ten ticks you should turn immediately to 422.*

After recording your first tick, turn to **487**.

15

(WISHINGPLAYER) 'Grant me wealth beyond the dreams of avarice,' you tell the jinni. You have used one of your wishes, so cross off one of the boxes you are using to keep track of these.

'In point of fact,' says the jinni, 'nothing is beyond the dreams of mortal avarice. Still, we must

settle upon some figure. Let us say ten million pieces of gold, which will make you wealthier than any Coradian monarch and possibly even on a par with the merchants of Ferromaine. This sum awaits your arrival in Chaubrette where, by my magic, I have just procured a stately palace for you to live in.'

'It would help to have a little cash to carry around, too,' you point out.

The jinni waves his hands and bags full of gold appear around your feet. Each bag contains 100 gold pieces and thus counts as one item for encumbrance purposes. You can take as many as you wish, and there are also enough for your companions (if any) to fill their haversacks. (If you do not want to enrich your companions, on the other hand, then the jinni can transport any excess bags to swell the treasure-vaults of your palace.)

Turn to **140**.

16

You enter a bowl-shaped cave. The walls rise up on all sides, glistening with veins of quartz. Huge stalactites hang with Damoclean foreboding from the cavern roof. Ahead of you, set into the rock, there is a jewelled trapdoor.

Susurrien is here ahead of you, but he is a man at bay. He has retreated to a shelf of rock, menaced by an animate wooden idol which paces the perimeter of the cave. Its body is squat and its limbs look heavy and full of strength. As you enter, it turns its carved face towards you - an unyielding snarl made all the more fierce by the totemic scars radiating from its eyes.

'It is the Seven-in-One!' shrieks Susurrien. 'Destroy it or our quest is doomed to fail.'

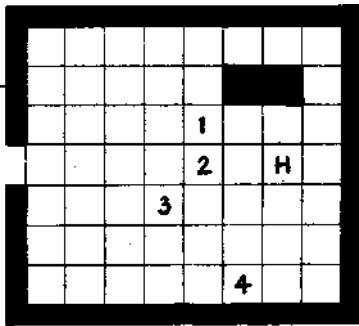
Turn to **204**.

17

You scatter the charts. Nothing - the emeralds are not here. Perhaps on the shelf . . . ?

You glance at the dimensional portal and see that time has run out. Hunguk's silhouette fills the frame. He steps through and his sharp grey eyes widen as he sees you. In stature he resembles a rugged rock. Clad in iron armour and strung with kelp, he seems an ancient and unconquerable foe. The axes in his hands are caked with gore. When he speaks, you hear the voice of thunder:

'Who are these mortal mice who scratch in my larder while I roam the world's waves? Throughout this middle-world there are many thieves, and most reckless of all are those who bring their sea-steeds to plunder the Pirate-King's hoard!' He clashes his axes. 'Come, you land-pests! Put up your swords against the Lord of the Sea Paths.'



Hunguk

Fighting Prowess: 10 Damage per blow: 6 Dice

Psychic Ability: 9 Awareness; 9

Armour Rating: 5

Endurance: 100

Note: Hunguk strikes twice every Round (once with

each of his two axes). He is immune to the spell of Servile Enthralment - no mere mortal could hope to command the Pirate-King.

You cannot afford to *flee*. If you win, turn to **547**.

18

Tariq feeds you creamy yoghurt and bread spiced with mint, with a jug of bitter coffee to wash it down. Any player who is currently suffering from wounds can restore one Endurance point for the meal, plus Endurance equal to half his or her rank for the night's sleep. Endurance scores will not climb above their initial level, however.

A group of Selentine Knights arrive to look into the Badawin's murder. After putting a few questions to you, they start to interrogate poor Tariq. Since he seems to have forgotten to charge you for last night's drinks, and you do not want to disturb the questioning, you slip quietly out into the street. You take your belongings with you; you will not be coming back to The Sorcerous Coconut.

Crescentium is a veritable maze of streets, market squares, bazaars and alleyways rising in tiers between the buildings of stone, hard-baked clay, and patterned brickwork. As the inhabitants of the city enter into their daily round of barter and toil, a fine choking dust rises from the streets until you find your eyes stinging and your lungs dry. Flies, enticed by the moisture soaking your face and clothes, follow you as resolutely as a gang of beggars. From the shadowed colonnade of a caravan-serai, merchants and pilgrims who have retreated from the day's growing heat stare out at you sullenly as you pass. You imagine them as the minor actors and stage-hands of a travelling theatre troupe, watching from the wings while it falls to you

to act out the great drama on which their petty lives depend. Somewhere in all this sprawling city there must be a man - or woman - who can aid you in your quest. Someone who has heard of the Sword of Life. You trudge on through the streets until the heat and babble make your thoughts spin . . .

Turn to **41**.

19

If you have used up all your wishes, turn to **307**. If you still have one wish left, turn to **509**. If you still have two wishes left, turn to **343**.

20

(WARRIOR) You have not come to Crescentium unprepared. As soon as it became clear that a journey to Outremer was necessary, you had the foresight to obtain a letter of introduction to the Provincial Commander of the Knights Capellars. Those doughty and pious warriors will certainly greet you as an honoured guest!

If all players agree to go to the Capellars, turn to **395**. If not, turn back to **269** and try another option.

21

You enter a bowl-shaped cave. The walls rise steeply on all sides, glittering where your torchlight shines on veins of crystal. Stalactites hang like tears from the immense vault of the roof. The Hatuli stops and lifts its arm to indicate a jewelled trapdoor set into the far side of the cave. You smile and pick the little mannikin up.

'Yes, the Hatuli has done its work,' mutters a voice behind you. You turn.

'Susurrien . . . You maggot!'

He winces. 'Please. Even allowing for your res-

stricted mentality, there is surely no cause for insult.'

'No, not really.' There is the hiss of sword leaving scabbard. 'Remember the butcher's shop in Crescentium, O prince of perfidy? Those bloody carcasses? In just a few moments . . .'

'Threats too,' he says, not unduly worried. 'Haven't you realised yet that you are no match for my magic? In the event, however, dealing with me is not the most immediate of your problems. Why not take a look behind you?'

You snort contemptuously. 'You don't expect -'

A heavy tread echoes off the cave walls. You turn slowly. A large monster stands there - a squat, heavy-limbed thing apparently carved from wood. As it inclines its face of totemic scars towards you, you hear Susurrien say: 'It is the Seven-in-One - a whimsical folk-name for *a* primitive god of great ferocity. Much nastier than my umbracules; this is the real thing

Turn to **204**.

22

Psyche releases her spell. All players must roll two Dice, trying to score equal to or less than their Psychic Ability. Anyone who fails this roll is transformed into an ape and casts his or her belongings down before rushing off into the night, chattering mindlessly and lost forever.

Surviving characters can either *fight* on (turn to **276**) or run for their lives (turn to **152**).

23

He puts the peg back into his knapsack. 'Ah, well,' he sighs. 'Since it only brought me sorrow, who can blame you for refusing it? Go with God.'

You eat a bowl or two of dry porridge that Alexius

gives you, and each wounded player recovers one Endurance point. Unfortunately you find a weevil at the bottom of the bowl and, feeling slightly queasy in case it was not the only one in your breakfast, you stagger outside to find a fountain from which to drink. As you are engaged in this, you see a number of sick and destitute people gathering outside a narrow white-walled house nearby.

Alexius, who has come outside to throw slops into the street, notices your curiosity. 'That is the house of Emeritus, a physician,' he says. 'I have heard it said that he is the wisest man in Outremer.'

'Thank you, Alexius,' you reply, taking a final sip of water from the fountain. 'Such information is worth more than that entire hovel you have the gall to call a hostelry.'

Ignoring his splutter of indignation, you stroll away towards Emeritus's house. Fortune has brought you to the very man who might be able to help you in your quest!

Turn to **419**.

24

(SAGE) You are fluent in the Nascerine tongue. [*'May your days and nights be blessed by God,'* you say to the women. *'Is it possible you can direct me to the villa of Lady Psyche?'*

'God preserve you if you journey there!' they cry in unison. *'Turn back as you value your living flesh, for this Psyche is a ghoulish feast on mortal men!'*]

If you wish to go back to Crescentium, turn to **170**. If you decide to press on, turn to **172**.

25

(ENCHANTER) Seeing a flat roof nearby, you use

the Spell of Immediate Deliverance to teleport to it. When you turn and look back at the charnel tower, you see the ghoul silhouetted like a tiny figure of black paper against the moon. He is darting to and fro in a rage, unable to understand where you have gone. Silently you slip down a flight of stairs leading from the roof, pass by a large family asleep under one blanket, and emerge from the house into a secluded side street.

Turn to **164**.

26

Tobias turns, bristling with incomprehension. 'Have I not said we will speak on the morrow?' he says, cutting you off in mid-sentence. 'Patience is one of the seven virtues by which Man- comes closest to God's perfection, is it not?'

Not as far as you can remember, it isn't. You are on the verge of pointing this out, when you notice Tobias's implacable glare. Shrugging, you bid him good evening and turn to follow the servant.

Turn to **198**.

27

Slaying the evil ghoul gives you no reward - he has only a few gristly fingerbones concealed in the folds of his robe. Take these if you wish (they count as one item). Then you descend to the ground and hurry away from the charnel tower.

Turn to **164**.

28

You bump into something in the fog. Something as large as a bull. It emits a bubbling growl, and you retch at the charnel-house odour of its breath.

Turn to **229**.

A haunting chant billows out over the city. You glance up at the mosque tower, hazy like a mirage in the purple shadows of dusk. It is the muezzin calling the Ta'ashim faithful to prayer.

Your assailants, who are all of the Ta'ashim race, immediately take to their heels. You cannot be bothered to follow them - even if you could distinguish them from the hundreds of other faces in the crowd. You sit on the podium of a statue and wait for the market square to empty. The stars appear like a scattering of diamonds, and then a group of torch-bearers arrive to light the braziers that stand at some street corners. Gradually groups of ill-assorted characters begin to congregate in the square: elegant Coradian merchants strut like bantam cocks around the perfumed courtesans, while emaciated rogues offer various deals to unwary sailors who have just got into port. Even by night, it seems, the square still functions as a market. . .

Realising that you cannot stay here all night, you consider your alternatives for a place to stay.

If the Warrior is in the party, you could try the Knights Capellars - turn to **47**. If the Sage is here, you could call on Emeritus the healer - turn to **394**. If you cannot or do not wish to try these options, you could look for a hostelry - turn to **579**.

Icon sinks to the floor, but even now it seems that his sorcery will not allow him to die. Or perhaps it is not sorcery at all, but just the force of his implacable hatred for you. He crawls along the floor, spitting savage curses out with his lifeblood.

He is on the lip of the green shaft - the Death Focus, which descends into a realm from which

none can ever return. It is a horrible fate, but no one could deserve it more than Icon. You hesitate for only a moment, then you lift your foot and push him over the edge of the shaft.

'Goodbye, Aiken . . .' you murmur.

As he realises the fate to which you have consigned him, his scream is spinechilling. His hideously wounded form tumbles down into the deathly green radiance. But then his voice comes echoing up the shaft like the rumbling of thunder; and what he says lays a pall of dread over you. 'If I am to die, it will be with a final savour of revenge. I call upon all the spirits of my ancestors to grant my final wish. By the spell of Dying Wrath, I summon them from the land into which I now descend. As you have taken my life, which is the thing most sweet and precious to me, I charge them to take that which is most precious to you

He has now fallen out of sight, but you see something flowing *up* the shaft towards you. At first it seems like a bank of greenish fog, but then you begin to discern faces . . . staring eyes and soundlessly howling mouths . . . emaciated hands reaching towards you . . .

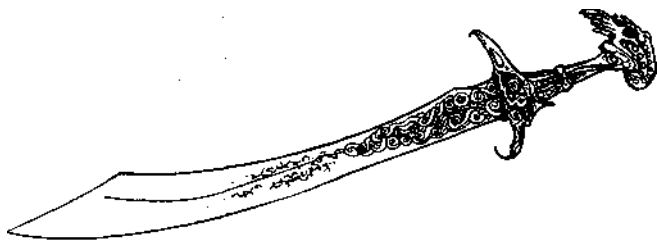
The grisly host of Icon's ancestral spirits comes clawing its way out of the realm of Death to grant his final wish. You turn - but even as you start to run, the spirits burst from the shaft. They flow around you, shrieking curses you cannot hear and clutching at you with their spectral claws, and you feel as though the blood in your veins has turned to ice. You collapse with a moan to the hard marble floor, trying to fend them off as they whirl in a macabre dance around you. Far away at the limit of your hearing, you seem to hear a susurrations of ghostly laughter. You see Icon's face, standing clearly out

among the throng for an instant. He is truly in the realm of Death now. He stoops over you, and you hear the echo of his curse:

'That which is most precious to you.'

You look up, wondering if you blacked out for a moment. The spirits have faded from the hall, returned to their deathly abode. The barrier of flame has also dissipated, allowing you to reach the exit. But as you reach for the Blood Sword, you know that your victory has been turned to ashes. You give vent to a long, tortured howl of anguish and despair. When the spirits sank back to the realm of death, *they took the Blood Sword with them!*

Turn to **489**.



31

You see the gate of Fatima's garden again. It is open, and she is standing in front of it with Hasan. You sorrowfully make your way across the dew-slick cobblestones to join them.

Their smiles of greeting soon darken to frowns as they hear your story. 'That is bitter news,' says Hasan. This Aiken must have had the spiteful soul of a viper. A pity I did not linger with you a while longer, as my knife might have found his heart and prevented this sad conclusion to your quest. But take solace from what I tell you: there is nothing which is good or bad in itself - for all such judge-

ments are made in the mind, which is no more real than a mirage. You may seem to sup on the dregs of despair - but viewed in another light it may become a tasty draught. In the moment of heart's rending it is often possible to achieve sudden Enlightenment.'

Turn to **588**.

32

(ENCHANTER) The giantess is one of the monsters created by Sa'aknathur in his thaumagenetic vats. He imbued her limbs with great strength, but also made sure that no one could ever control her mind and thus turn that strength against him. The spell-defences he set around her brain centuries ago are still active. The Enthralment is automatically reflected back at you!

Roll two Dice in an attempt to resist the spell. If you score equal to or under your current Psychic Ability, you have succeeded and can act normally. If you roll higher than your Psychic Ability, your eyes glaze over; you are unable to act until the spell wears off in 2-7 Rounds' time. (Roll one Die+1 to see how many that will be.) If you live that long...

Turn to **400**.

33

(TRICKSTER) The spice vendors' market is packing up for the night as you arrive (along with your companions, if any). You find Lagrestin strutting self-importantly around the stalls making some last minute deals. He knows that at this hour the Ta'ashim traders must haggle quickly or lose the chance for a sale, for when the call to prayer goes out from the tower of the mosque that must be the end of the day's business.

Lagrestin views you with detachment and some

suspicion as you approach. 'Lagrestin!' you call out. 'Have you so soon forgotten your old friend and comrade, with whom you spent many a pleasant hour in the taverns of Baumersheim?'

He shoves his way past you. 'You are deluded,' he growls. 'I have never laid eyes upon you before, and you are obviously mistaking me for someone else.'

You are aghast at Lagrestin snubbing you like this. Will you pursue him to see where he goes (turn to **455**); mention some embarrassing incident from his past (turn to **327**); or berate him for his rudeness (turn to **190**)?

34

Have you encountered Psyche the sorceress? If so, turn to **392**. If you have never met her, turn to **396**.

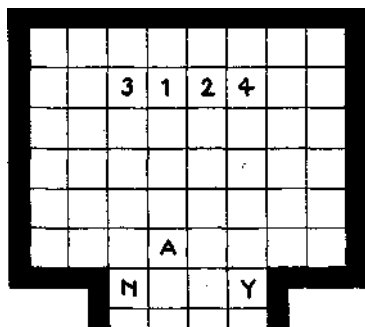
35

(TRICKSTER) You have a couple of contacts in Crescentium. Jablo the Knife is an unprincipled and scurrilous rogue - a lot like yourself, in other words. The last you heard, he was living near the jewellers' market. You also once met a man called Lagrestin when you were in Baumersheim; he was selling berths on Crusader ships and had plans to settle in Crescentium as a spice dealer.

If you wish to go and see Jablo, turn to **375**. If you would rather try Lagrestin, turn to **33**. If all players cannot agree on either of these alternatives, turn back to **521** and choose again.

36

You have faced giants, demons and jinn. Even the Warlock-King could not overcome you. But these creatures are the shadows of gods.



REE

Azidahaka

Fighting Prowess: 11	Damage per blow: 12 Dice
Psychic Ability: 10	Awareness: 7
Armour Rating: 6	
Endurance: 100	

Nasu

Fighting Prowess: 10	Damage per blow: 8 Dice*
Psychic Ability: 11	Awareness: 8
Armour Rating: 3	
Endurance: 140	

*Nasu's touch is the touch of decay. A player whom she wounds must attempt to resist a Psychic spell. Failure to resist means that the player rots away and dies.

The Yazir

Fighting Prowess: 9	Damage per blow: 5 Dice+1
Psychic Ability: 18	Awareness: 9
Armour Rating: 3	
Endurance: 85	

Note: The Yazir will call spells to mind and cast them on alternate Rounds. Roll a Die to see which spell he is using: 1=Nemesis Bolt, 2=Sheet Lightning, 3=The Vampire Spell, 4=Mists of Death, 5=Swordthrust, 6=Nighthowl. Once he has called

the spell to mind, he casts it automatically on the following Round. (His Psychic Ability is high enough that he always succeeds with his casting roll.)

If you *flee* turn to **587**. If you win, turn to **270**.

37

You breathe a prayer of thanks when the first jar you open turns out to contain the emeralds. Pocketing these (the two together count as one item for encumbrance purposes) you glance back at the dimensional portal. Hunguk's silhouette nearly fills it now. A split-second before he steps through, you duck out of the other door and race for the companion-way.

Turn to **185**.

38

(WARRIOR) You have not come to Crescentium unprepared. As soon as it became clear that a journey to Outremer was necessary, you had the foresight to obtain a letter of introduction to the Provincial Commander of the Knights Capellars. Those doughty and pious warriors will certainly greet you as an honoured guest!

If all players agree to go to the Capellars, turn to **395**. If not, turn back to **521** and try another option.

39

You are just advancing along the hall when the setting sun emerges from behind a cloud and throws a shaft of blood-coloured light through a high window at the far end. There it mingles with the glow of a dying fire, and in this lurid illumination you see a strange sight. A giant woman, as tall



as a palm tree and with coal-black skin, sits with a large iron pot between her knees, occasionally scooping gobbets of greasy stew out of it with her bare hands. Although her size is bizarre in itself, the most striking thing about her is that she has only one eye - a large yellow-green orb in the centre of her forehead.

Beside her is an iron cage. It has one occupant: an old man with a long beard. He is dressed in tunic and leggings of grey cotton and has an overrobe of scuffed blue velvet. He is holding onto the bars of the cage and staring at the giant woman miserably as she consumes her meal.

If you wish to advance and announce your presence, turn to **584**. If you wish to back out of the hall and resume your journey to Hakbad, turn to **498**. If you decide to attack the giant woman, turn to **183**. If you stay hidden in the shadows and listen to what the two of them are saying, turn to **379**.

40

Hasan steps over to the trapdoor and swings it open with a single fluid sweep of his arm. You test the weight of the trapdoor as you pass through, and realise that his wiry frame must conceal the strength of three normal men. Fortunate indeed that you and he are not enemies.

You follow him into a long hall of white marble. Unadorned pillars of polished black granite form an avenue towards the far end. There you see two circular shafts that lead up into the ceiling and down into the floor. The shaft in the ceiling burns with a thick red light; the one in the floor emanates a cold green glow.

'These are the eternal Foci,' says Hasan, 'the Poles of Life and Death. We have arrived at them by

way of the underworld beneath Hakbad - but in fact there are many routes, and many truths.'

Advancing along the hall with him, you come to a grey stone block beside the two Foci. Hasan reaches out and lifts a sparkling scimitar from the block. You watch him test the edge of its blade against the hairs on his arm. He lets out a sigh of sheer awe at its beauty, but to you there is something of far greater beauty here. Also lying on the stone block is the object for which you have searched and fought these many years: the blade of the Blood Sword.

Hasan strings the Sword of Death across his back and turns to you. 'Susurrien would certainly have betrayed you,' he says. 'He would have gained nothing - he wanted only the Sword of Death - but it was in his nature to do so. Remember that: the betrayal was in *his* nature. The Swords of Life and Death do not have to oppose one another; they are two halves of a whole. When we meet again, therefore, I am hopeful it will be as allies.'

You bow courteously, expressing the same wish. When you look up, he has gone. You blink, dazed at his extraordinary stealth, and repeat the wish even more fervently.

Then you take up the Blood Sword blade. Opening the hilt, you fix it reverently within. You have kept your vow to the old minstrel who charged you with your quest. The objective you have strived for since that fateful night in the forest clearing is now achieved. The Sword of Life is restored!

All surviving players get 1,000 experience points to be distributed equally among them; these experience points will take effect at the *end* of this adventure.

Whoever was carrying the hilt and scabbard should delete these items. The Blood Sword is now

one single item. Also, by completing your quest you have become mighty enough to oppose the power of the True Magi even without the aid of the sword. If you lose it, you do *not* have to turn to **475**. But, of course, you have no intention of losing it...

You begin to walk back out of the hall. A tall slender figure clad in exotically fashioned armour stands waiting for you on the steps by the door. You recognise him at once - an enemy you made even before your quest for the Blood Sword began, when he was your rival in the Krarthian Battlepits:

'Icon...'

Turn to **415**.

41

You search the streets all day. You can now add aching feet to your list of woes. You have visited shrines, caravanserais, lice-ridden bordels and dingy drug-dens where the cloying air made you gag. You have questioned hundreds of people, from the most wretched of beggars and the poorest carpenter's apprentice to the wealthy merchants from Ferromaine and the perfumed priests in their gold-trimmed finery. But your efforts have been fruitless.

As it gets dark, the muezzin's voice pierces the evening calling the Ta'ashim faithful to their prayers. Finding that your search has brought you to a hostelry, you decide to take lodging for the night.

Turn to **406**.

42

Anvil spits into the harbour. 'Get yourselves off the streets,' he growls at both you and Lagrestin. There's enough going on in Crescentium of a night without you adding to it.'

As Lagrestin slopes off, mouth turned down in a scowl, you ask Anvil where you might spend the night. 'Try the Tower of the Throne of Purple,' he says. There are worse hostels.' He is already walking away as he describes how to get there.

Turn to **406**.

43

The Thulanders wear great axes across their backs, but in the confines of the narrow alley they choose instead to draw the shortswords that hang at their belts.

'You're just diced meat now,' says one nastily.

'Hrothgar's tellin' it like it is,' says the other, nodding.

They advance.

		4	1	T		
FLEE		3	2	T		

Thulanders

Fighting Prowess: 8 Damage per blow: 2 Dice+1

Psychic Ability: 6 Awareness: 7

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: *first* 30 *second* 30

If you *flee*, turn to **161**. If you beat them within two rounds, turn to **257**. If you are still fighting at the end of two rounds, turn to **443**.

44

Close to evening, the storm around you dies down little by little until there is only a spray of warm rain falling out of an overcast sky. Ahead you see a narrow spire of rock that juts vertically upwards



from the sea. Its peak is level with the jinni's head. You realise that this must be the famous Grey Rock, atop which Sa'aknathur the Wizard had his all-but-impregnable fortress. The ruins of that fortress are still visible. As you pass by, the weathered shells of buildings can be seen clinging like ancient barnacles to the peak.

Then you see a light - 'Stop!' you tell the jinni.

He halts and holds up his hand to squint at you. 'What is the matter? Is our journey too slow for your liking? Or is it too fast, perhaps, and you are becoming nauseated? Speak the will of your heart; I live only to oblige you!'

'This is not a wish in the absolute contractual sense,' you reply, 'but it would be pleasant if you gave up your sarcasm. Our association is only brief, and when we reach Hakbad there will be a parting of the ways. Let us try not to antagonise each other in that time.'

'Agreed. Why did you ask to stop?'

You point to the light among the ruins. 'Someone has taken up residence at Sa'aknathur's palace. This may require investigation.'

'By us? On the basis of our newly established friendship, allow me to advise you against any investigation. Anything that dwells in the remains of Sa'aknathur's palace is unlikely to want company. Curiosity can be very dangerous - or are you unfamiliar with the Tale of the Vizier and the Four Dwarves . . . ?'

You wave him to silence before he can launch into this undoubtedly tedious tale.

But you must decide now whether you want to investigate the light (turn to **501**) or continue straight to Hakbad (turn to **550**).

45

(ENCHANTER) The hunchback summons up a burst of willpower from the reserves of his bitterness and arrogance. 'I am no slave!' he snarls. 'Your dastardly use of the black arts has doomed you. You can rot in there forever!'

He slams the panel shut and hobbles away, laughing with relief at having resisted your spell. As the echoes of his laughter die away, you are left with only the sullen dripping of water and the scrabbling of rats to disturb the silence.

If you are with a companion, turn to **126**.

If you are alone in the cell, then what the hunchback said is true. You will rot here forever. When you get thirsty you might lick water from the walls, but even if you can bring yourself to do that then your only fate will be a slow death by starvation...

46

The automaton watches your antics for a few seconds, then hefts its massive mace. It is about to attack.

Turn to **285**.

47

You make your way through the starlit streets to the ancient Temple of the Roc. In this Ta'ashim shrine, reconsecrated as a temple of the True Faith, the monastic Knights Capellars have made their headquarters.

Passing a gauntlet of alert guards - for the Capellars are as vigilant by night as by day - you are taken to meet the Commander. He is a stern keen-eyed man who introduces himself as Tobias de Vantery. After glancing at your letter of introduction, he impatiently summons a servant.

'Of course you will wish to say your prayers,' he says, 'and then possibly sleep for an hour or two. We will speak again at breakfast.'

Tobias's manner suggests he would brook no argument. You follow the servant along a draughty corridor to an alcove where some reed mats are strewn.

'Sleeping arrangements are basic here,' he says superciliously as you gape in disbelief. 'This is after all a military barracks, not a hostelry.'

What will you reply? 'You insolent dog! You deserve a flogging.' (turn to **63**); 'This will not do; these mats are not comfortable enough to sleep on.' (turn to **115**); or 'Thank you. That is fine.' (turn to **205**)?

48

You dream you are approached by a houri who suddenly gives you a painful kick in the ribs . . .

You wake up. The pain in your ribs is real. Six grinning bully-boys stand around you wielding stout clubs.

'A present from Lagrestin,' says one. 'Sweet dreams.'

They swing their clubs again. Each player must endure several blows, for a loss of three Dice+3 Endurance points, before getting to his or her feet and striking back. Once this Endurance loss has been recorded (and remembering that you are not in armour), surviving players turn to **404**.

49

The adepts panic. The High Priest's face contorts in fury and fear, his power ebbing now that they are no longer chanting the magical mantra. 'Do not break ranks!' he shouts as they flee. 'You leave me

open to the ifrit's attack!

The jinni sees that his foe's concentration is broken. He throws up his hands and brings them together with titanic force. A thunderbolt sizzles towards the High Priest, who attempts in vain to deflect it. He is engulfed in a fireball, and the accompanying rush of wind knocks you flat. You feel your eyebrows singe, but most of the heat passes overhead. When you look up, all that remains of the High Priest is a blackened skeleton clutching a wand. The skeleton sways and topples, falling apart like a bundle of twigs. Incredibly, the wand is undamaged; you can take it if you wish.

'Our mission has been a most gratifying success,' says the jinni as he lifts you in the palm of his hand. Today we have dealt the Magians a blow from which they will not soon recover!

Turn to **494**.

50

(SAGE) You step out over the water, then use your psionic ability to alter your own weight so that you sink gently down despite the water's buoyancy. Quickly locating one of the boxes, you rise back up to the quay with it in your arms. Anvil and his men are amazed at this spectacle, of course - but no more amazed than they are at the sight of the bolts of expensive Khitan silk that are revealed when you throw open the lid.

Turn to **7**.

51

The militia return your greeting with suspicious looks. Crescentium is a city where few people are anxious to co-operate with the authorities. Come to that, you never knew a city where they were.

'Well?' barks the sergeant. 'What is it? You lost?'

'No, no, sir. Far from it.' You affect an air of bucolic simplicity. 'But there were some rough-looking men hanging around in an alleyway back there, and they were discussing something about "a hit" at the Governor's mansion. Do you think it could be important at all?'

One of them splutters, nearly inhaling the water he's drinking. 'Too pigging right!' says the sergeant, unable for a moment to do much more than gape in disbelief. Then, pulling himself together, he shouts to his men: 'C'mon, you layabouts! We better get over to the Governor's place 'fore somebody jobs the old sot - !'

Grabbing their spears, they set off after the sergeant. You saunter off in the other direction, whistling. That should spice up Jablo's evening for him. He always used to say how a little opposition made his work more of a challenge, after all...

Turn to **406**.

52

(ENCHANTER) Once you are ensconced in your room and the slave has gone, you call for a Faltyn using the arcane magical words of summoning. A faint aura of the unreal pervades the room, and a phantom hand touches your shoulder.

'Tell me what you know,' you say to the Faltyn.

['The one you incorrectly call by the Emphidian name "Psyche" is in fact the sister of an old foe of yours,' whispers the Faltyn. 'The true rendering of her name is "Saiki", a Yamatese word with malevolent connotations. She means to do you harm, and it will be difficult to avoid the hideous fate she has planned. Even if you flee into the night, she will send mystic emissaries to vex you.']

'You have a solution to suggest, of course,' you

say, turning to look at the Faltyn.

It flickers to the edge of your vision. [*I will raise a mist to confound her agents, allowing you to return safely to the city.*]

You consider this. The Faltyn will obviously demand some high price for its services. Are you willing to pay such a price?

If so, turn to **492**. If not, dismiss it and turn to **372**.

53

'Cheating scumbags always try to worm their way out of a game when the going's good,' growls one longshoreman. 'Why don't you just hand back the money you've cheated from us, and then push off?'

Your blood boils! Will you take this insolence quietly (cross off the sum of five gold pieces and then turn to **106**) or will you punish them (turn to **195**)?

54

(WARRIOR) 'This is preposterous!' you cry, pointedly sheathing your sword rather than dropping it. 'These curs flung insults that caused my noble blood to boil! Where is the law that says a warrior of noble ancestry must meekly submit to the cackling remarks of riff-raff?'

The Selentine Knights look at you uncertainly. When you also mention that your family is linked to one of the old patrician clans of Ancient Selentium, their leader addresses you with respect. As equal to equal, he bows and says, 'Torgive my hasty words. In your shabby armour - which you doubtless affect for a good reason - I mistook you for a vagabond. Such a mistake is evidence of my own stupidity.'

'No harm is done,' you reply with equal courtesy. 'I have spent so much of my life among the dregs of

society that I almost forget my noble origins at times. When I choose to dress like a lordless rogue, I should expect to be mistaken for one.'

The fourth knight soon returns with reinforcements, and the longshoremen are hauled off to their final fate.

If any player is wounded, turn to **232**. Otherwise, turn to **456**.

55

(TRICKSTER) You take the proffered phial. [*Do you really want to drink from it? If so, turn to 119. If you would rather use sleight of hand to fake it, turn to 98.*]

56

You must keep track of how many wishes you are using. Draw three boxes on a sheet of paper (or on the back of your Character Sheet), and put a tick in one of the boxes each time you give the jinni a command.

If you now wish to make use of any of the jinni's powers *except* Transportation, turn to the entry corresponding to your wish:

To wish for riches, turn to **15**. To wish for renewed health, turn to **275**. To wish for your arms and armour to be restored, turn to **558**. To wish for your strength to be enhanced, turn to **540**. (Remember that it is up to the player who originally commanded the jinni to decide on any wishes.)

If you choose not make any other wishes yet, but just tell the jinni to take you to Hakbad, turn to **290**.

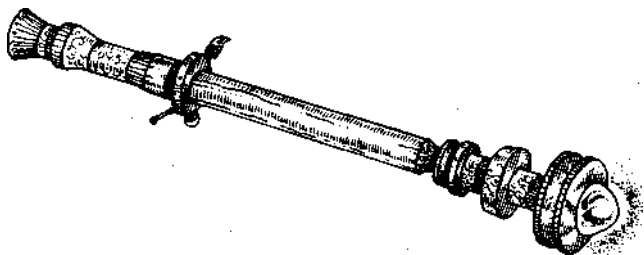
57

You show Tobias the hilt and scabbard. These are fragments of the Blood Sword - the ancient Sword of Life,' you tell him. The third fragment, the blade

itself, is thought to be somewhere in the Crusader territory or the bordering Ta'ashim lands. It must be found and the sword restored, as it is the only weapon which can prevail against the five True Magi. These five survived the destruction of Spyte by the expedient of apotheosis. If the Sword of Life is not made whole, they will return to the world at the end of the millennium.'

Tobias rubs his jaw. 'God has sent you to me for guidance!' he says. 'For I have heard of this Sword of Life, and in the legends I have heard it has its dark twin: the Sword of Death. Find the one and you will find the other, is my guess. Now, in order to learn more you must seek out the learned Emeritus, a physician of Quadrille. You will find his house by a fountain of black marble which lies at the eastern end of the street of silversmiths.'

Turn to **566**.



58

You race through into a smaller courtyard. A dog leaps up and starts to bark - only to curl in a whimpering heap when it sees what is pursuing you. The gate leading from this courtyard is locked. You will have to turn and make your stand here.

Turn to **36**.

59

If there is an Enchanter in the party who wishes to act, he or she should turn to **14**. If not, turn to **576**.

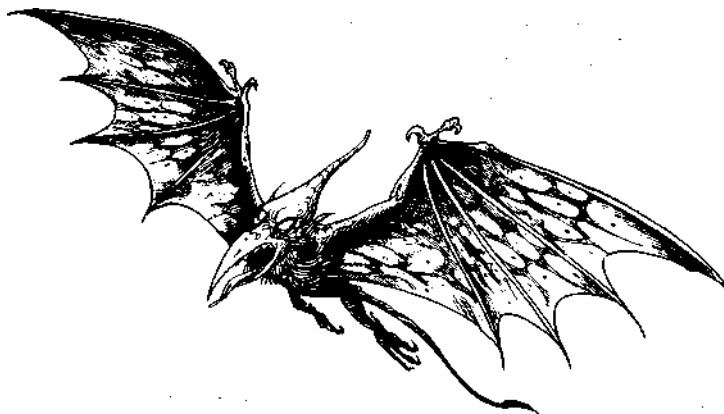
60

'As you may have heard it told,' says Emeritus. 'In the very earliest days of the world there was no way for the living and the dead to tell one another apart. Between Life and Death there was not the absolute line that exists today, but only a kind of inconstant blur. Eventually this became intolerable, so the Archangel Abdiel was sent down to earth and cut apart the place for the living from the place for the dead. He created two icons of this Parting - two great swords of power. One of these, the Sword of Death, remained beneath the earth until brought back from hell by the paladin Ganelon. It is said that he hoped to use it against the very forces of the Dark One, but was corrupted himself by the intensity of its deathly power. Ganelon's eventual fate is well known, and I need not recount it to you, I am sure. The Sword of Death, often referred to as the Demon's Claw, is now thought to be somewhere in Marazid.

The other sword contained within its blade the essence of Life. Speaking for myself, this is a concept I cannot grasp, but many warriors have spoken to me of the mystical concept of the sword that is a force for life even as it dispenses death. That is what the Sword of Life - the "Blood Sword" - embodies. This sword was broken by Yaunt the Seven-Eyed, a fiend from the frozen desert wastes of Krarth. I thought even the fragments had been destroyed or lost forever, but it seems that is not the case.'

'Was the Blood Sword created to destroy the last of the True Magi?' you ask Emeritus.

'Not originally - not according to the version of the myth that I have just recounted. But remember that Truth has more than one shape and speaks with more than one tongue. If we stand in a river, it is one fed by many tributaries. Some would claim that it was indeed for the express purpose of slaying the True Magi that the sword was forged. It will certainly be able to accomplish that, as Blue Moon and his ilk are of the Undead. I mean this not in the trite sense that Adventurers use the term, when they speak of clattering skeletons and shambling zombies as "undead". Some great entities linger in the world without tasting death, and their undeath is a kind of apotheosis. This applies to Heorowearð the Outcast, Vallandar of Ancient Ellesland, the God-King Imref Kharid, vampiric Lord Abraxus, and other figures of myth. The last True Magi belong to this category, and the Blood Sword will sever their link with our reality and send them into the Void.



'Now, if you seek the final part of the Blood Sword, I can only suggest that you go to see a man called Susurrien. He is an Opalarian prince, but is now exiled from the Ta'ashim lands. And with good reason - from what I hear, he is as sinister as a snake. However, he is known to desire the Sword of Death for himself, and hence he may be able to give you some information about the Sword of Life. The two are inextricably linked.'

Turn to **137**.

61

(TRICKSTER) You try picking the lock which is holding the door shut. You must roll four Dice. If you score equal to or less than your rank, the door opens - turn to **483**. If the Dice roll exceeds your rank, turn to **447**.

62

You see no alternative but to hand Alexius the money. He sees that you are disgruntled and tries to mollify you, saying: 'Perhaps I can extend my service to you beyond mere hospitality. A short while ago another important person occupied this suite. He was an abbot from Chaubrette, and he was suffering from leprosy. "I have come to Crescentium to visit a man called Emeritus," he said to me. "It is widely said that out of every ten conundrums he knows the answer to nine. I am here in the hope that he knows how to cure the incurable .. ,"

'I don't know if the abbot found what he sought, but my guess is that if you have any quest or difficulty you should go to see Emeritus.'

If the Sage is here, he or she should turn to **85**. If there is no Sage in the party, turn to **537**.

63

He chews his lip and watches you with narrowed eyes. 'I regret that you took umbrage. I only recently learned your northern tongue and so sometimes I give unintentional offence.'

Not a very convincing excuse. If you flog him, turn to **211**. If you accept this half-apology, turn to **205**.

64

(ENCHANTER) You swipe the mirror from the astonished leper's grasp and proffer it to the Faltyn, who pockets it in a manner you cannot determine.

['*Easy come, easy go,*' it declares as it causes itself to become flat and slides under the door.] A moment later the door opens and you are able to leave. The Faltyn has already vanished.

You can now try the black door if you didn't do so before - turn to **377**. If you wish to go up to the next landing, turn to **97**. If you decide to leave the tower and go to get some sleep, turn to **151**.

65

You enter a vast barrel-vaulted chamber which runs east to west. There are two other entrances besides the one you have come through in the north wall, and two archways ahead of you in the south wall. The walls are decorated with hundreds of metal leaves, artfully made lifelike by the use of verdigris and gold to obtain the right colours. The leaves are intended to be those of the ash tree, as far as you can tell; an odd representation to find so far south . . .

Your attention is distracted by a metallic figure that is lumbering along the hall towards you. It is twice the size of the tallest warrior you have ever



seen, and three spikes project evilly from its otherwise featureless head. From the way it is swinging its giant mace, it must have been set here to prevent anyone passing further into the underworld.

If you passed through the room with the frieze, turn to **512**. If not, turn to **285**.

66

His story is indeed long and elaborate, seeming to take endless twists and turns. He begins by narrating how he banished three of his sons from Hakbad seven years ago, believing them to be involved in a harem plot against him. Then, one day quite recently, he was visited by a powerful mage from the East. . .

The story continues. You are tired, and the hour is late. Each player must roll three Dice, trying to score equal to or less than his or her Psychic Ability.

If one or more players succeed with the roll, turn to **424**. If you are on your own and you failed the roll, turn to **231**. If you are a group of players and all of you failed the roll, turn to **582**.

67

You apologise to the abbot, but explain that you cannot help him retrieve the sapling at the expense of your own quest. You shake hands with him sadly.

'Good luck,' he calls as the jinni raises you aloft. 'And do not feel that you did too little to assist with my quest. You saved me from that cannibal Cyclops, and I shall now return to my monastery via the Astral Gateway to recruit new companions. Five years still remain before the Day of Judgement. I will recover the sapling by then, or die in the attempt!'

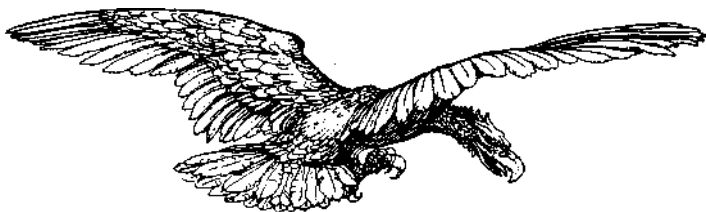
Brave words, but he is an old man. Most likely he *will* die in the attempt. You smile back wanly and shout: 'May God and all the saints watch over you! Your mission is of the gravest importance to all living souls. Have faith, and you cannot fail!'

You watch until he is just a frail speck in the distance.

Turn to **550**.

68

The Roc flies on and on across the ocean, eventually alighting on a cold rocky isle at the southern rim of the world. You can hear a distant roar, which you take to be the unimaginable waterfall where the sea pours off the edge of the earth into nothingness. Icicles rime your lips. It is with a shudder of dread that you realise the truth: you are doomed to end your days here, far from the lands of the True Faith, and your quest has failed . . .



69

The experience would be most edifying,' you tell Tobias. 'Much could be gained by studying the methods of the renowned Knights Capellars.'

Tobias favours you with a dark look. The Marijah sect shares your sentiments. At past times we have had, er, arrangements with that group of assassins. Now we are at loggerheads with them concerning

events in the Holy City. So Marijahs spy on us as vultures spy on a lion, waiting to profit by the diligent actions of others!"

The hound is edging back towards the table. Tobias's spittle hits it squarely between the eyes.

'Sir Balian here will take you out with his patrol,' continues Tobias, indicating a tall young officer with a rather perplexed expression on his aristocratic face. This said, he gets to his feet and gestures to the other officers to follow him. You are left at the breakfast table with Balian.

Turn to **104**.

70

(ENCHANTER) You can cast one of the following spells: Summon Faltyn (turn to **52**); Detect Spells (turn to **252**); or Prediction (turn to **5**).

71

The jinni takes the brunt of the wand's blast, but you are still enmeshed in a flare of agonising power. Each player loses four Dice Endurance, with armour protecting as usual. Also, if you survive you are permanently scarred: reduce your normal (not current) Endurance by two points.

'We call this the Icarian manoeuvre,' gasps the jinni as you plummet downwards. 'But don't worry, I'm not finished yet. Not quite, anyway . . .'

He pulls out of his dive to hover in front of the cliff, staring down at the balcony like a man peering at an anthill. It is a ploy to overawe the adepts, and it works. Several of them quail and miss their chant, provoking a furious glare from the High Priest. As he rebukes them, the jinni reaches across to the edge of the balcony and sets you down there.

Turn to **485**.

72

You begin to climb down the rungs on the outside of the tower. You are half way to the ground when the stranger who spoke to you before appears on the parapet above. He has a decomposing human head in his hands. 'There is a quicker way to get down,' he shouts. Then he hurls the head, which strikes the nearest player (the last player in the battle order) on the brow. This player loses his or her grip and, stunned, plummets off the side of the tower. He or she lands with bone-crunching impact, losing six Dice Endurance; armour gives no protection from this.

Surviving players hurry away from the charnel tower as the ghoulish dancer dances crazily around the parapet, his laughter ringing out across the city like a horrible parody of the Ta'ashim call to prayer.

Turn to **164**.

73

You have been told that Susurrien lives in a room above a butcher's shop. You enter and look towards a stone slab where a bearded giant of a man is dismembering a carcass. His cleaver strikes the raw flesh with remorseless *thwacks*. As he sees you, his eyes betray no emotion - but the cleaver slips, striking the stone of the slab and giving a metallic shriek.

The bearded man glowers at his chipped cleaver, then nods towards the stairs.

Still no word has been spoken. You pass him and begin to ascend. After a few moments you hear him start to hack at the meat on the slab once more.

Turn to **283**.

74

You quickly whip out the mirror and hold it up in front of the creature. It starts back as though surprised at what it sees, and begins to raise a hand to its face.

Turn to **286** for the fight, but the dog-headed creature does not act in the first Round because of its hesitation.

75

(ENCHANTER) If you cast Prediction, turn to **562**. If you cast Detect Spells, turn to **213**.

76

'In order to rendezvous with a certain vessel, it is important to find some way to get sixty miles out into the Gulf. The rendezvous is to take place in two days' time.' You withhold any details that might reveal the full nature of your quest. Since you do not know who the man is, this precaution seems worth taking.

'How fortunate you have spoken of this to me,' he replies, 'for I truly believe that your quest would have been doomed to failure if you had not. You see, it is well known that at this time of year the Gulf is frequented by a gargantuan sea monster called the Dendan. Fishermen are frightened of high waves, and cling to the shore as a babe to its mother's breast. You would never have found anyone willing to lend you his boat for such a venture.'

His effusive words make you suspicious. If you ask him to explain how he can help, turn to **113**. If you decide to bid him good afternoon and continue on your way, turn to **314**.

77

The sailor mentioned this *sea* monster. The Den-dan, he called it. Perhaps you recall him mentioning a sorcerer who calmed the monster with magic words.

But what *were* the words? 'Hui Yu-Yang' (turn to **551**); 'Ching Tso' (turn to **390**); or 'Li-chur Hau Chur' (turn to **552**)?

78

(TRICKSTER) You might be able to fool the hunch-back into unlocking the cell door. Then you could overpower him and escape. The old ploy of pretending to be ill probably wouldn't work. He has the look of an experienced gaoler who would be familiar with that trick. And in any case, if he thought you were sick he wouldn't bother to do anything about it anyway. No - you must try something a bit more cunning.

Roll two Dice. If you score equal to or under your rank, you've had a brainwave (turn to **90**). If you score over your rank, you can't think of anything (turn to **145**). Note that a roll of 12 counts as automatic failure, whatever your rank.

79

'Bah!' snarls Shambeer. He goes through the motions of spitting. 'How am I to know? The pilot is gone, and blind destiny plots our course now. I will tell you this, though: we are on your mortal plane but five minutes. Complete your business and be gone by then, or you will become part of the crew of *The Devil's Runner* and sail with her into eternity

As he chortles voicelessly, you hurry below.

Turn to **59**.

80

The automaton watches your antics for a few seconds, then hefts its massive mace.

Turn to **285**.

81

Which item do you wish to use? A tuning fork (turn to 305); a copper bottle (turn to **222**); or a golden mirror (turn to **74**)?

If you have none of these, turn to **286**.

82

You continue along the road, gazing out to sea as you walk. In two days, sixty miles to the south, Hunguk's ship will sail into the mundane world for a short while. But will you be able to get there in time to intercept it, . . . ?

Do you have the magic carpet of Augustus of Vantery (from the adventure of the Kingdom of Wyrd)? If so, turn to **383**. If you do not possess such an item, turn to **577**.

83

The white door opens and you step into a room hung with curtains of grey and violet silk. A spindly figure looks up, his face hidden within the shadows of a cowl. 'Tray enter,' he says. 'But close the door behind you as there is a draught.'

If you do as he asks, turn to **208**. If you back out of this room, you can try the black door if you have not already done so (turn to **377**); or go up to the next landing (turn to **97**); or leave the tower and retire for the night (turn to **151**).

He puffs at his pipe and stares blankly around him. 'Many study the thread of their lives, looking to see what tapestry is woven, without understanding that the thread itself is the life,' he declares at last. When you ask him to explain this cryptic remark, he mumbles for a while and then falls asleep - still in a sitting position.

It is late. You lie down and soon drift off to sleep.
Turn to **236**.

(SAGE) 'I already know of Emeritus,' you tell Alexius. 'Indeed, I studied with him and he is a learned fellow as you say. However, another point has arisen and it is causing me some consternation. You did not mention last night that a leper had recently occupied this suite.'

Alexius is speechless for a moment. 'Urn - what of it?' he blusters. 'The bedding has been changed, the room aired.'

'Malevolent spirits are the cause of disease,' you tell him. 'They will not be banished like a mere stench, merely by opening the windows. You should have had the suite purified by a blessing and a sprinkling of holy water. Did the abbot not tell you this? Why, by the saints, he could have done it himself as he left!'

'I have become fretful and uneasy,' says Alexius. 'Wherever this line of argument is leading, it cannot bode well for me.'

'Indeed not. Since you gave no warning of the suite's leprous history, you are guilty of cozenage - which is to say, deceit for the purposes of procuring money. This is an offence under Outremer law. Hand back the money you have just taken, or must I

summon the Knights Capellars to adjudicate?'

Alexius returns your money at once. Bidding him good day, you make your way through the streets to Emeritus's house. You are met at the gate by a winsome serving-girl who escorts you to a vestibule and serves you with fruit and wine while you wait for Emeritus to return. The girl leads him in to see you shortly after noon. Though obviously weary after a long journey, his clothes covered with the dust of the road, he is overjoyed to see you again. 'How happy were those far-off days at the monastery,' he says. 'I often think back to those times when the horror of the disease and poverty that are rife in Crescentium weighs too heavily on me.'

After a few pleasantries, telling him you have something to show him, you take out the hilt and scabbard. He stares in amazement. 'If I am not mistaken,' he gasps, 'surely these are fragments of the Sword of Life? I believed it was lost, destroyed forever. . . !'

Turn to **60**.

86

Susurrien suddenly turns and points to the mural. 'This is particularly fine,' he declares. 'It was found in a temple buried under volcanic ash. It predates the Ta'ashim faith, as you can see; half a millennium ago, many of the people who live in what is now western Zhenir and Outremer worshipped the gods you see here.'

You try to repress a shudder. 'On close inspection, the graphic technique used to depict these demons' activities becomes almost too much for the stomach to bear. Did people really ever worship such vile and unclean monsters?'

He laughs delightedly. 'You Coradians are so

prudish! But, no, they did not quite worship *these* deities in the sense that you use the word. The beings shown here were objects not of supreme veneration, but of supreme *abomination*; they were the devils of the old myths. When I said that they were worshipped - well, in a way you worship the Devil of your own faith, don't you? His power is real because you believe in it. It is the strength of the *myth* that counts . . .'

'Preposterous.' You are beginning to find Susurrien's company annoying. 'When can we get going? Is the Hatuli ready yet?'

' - And so impatient.' He laughs again. 'Look here: this serpentine creature with the three human heads. It is Azidahaka, the demon of destruction.' He points to another image, showing what seems to be a wizened man with the roots of a tree growing out of the top of his head. 'This is the Yazir, demon of deception and trickery. The legends show him to be a master of magic. And here - here is Nasu -' He indicates a bloated female corpse with the head of a giant fly. 'She is the demoness of decay. If a man died from eating rotten food, the chances are that Nasu would be behind it.'

'Prince Susurrien,' you say. 'Your mural is distasteful and the gods shown in it are rank fiends. You yourself are sinister, if not openly depraved. If the Hatuli is ready yet, let's take it and find the swords - and then we can bring this odious alliance to an end.'

He turns to look at you. There is still an unruffled smile on his lips, but his eyes flash with menace. 'I had not realised you held me in such distaste.'

The fact that you have been exiled from every country in which you've lived rather speaks for itself. But we are poles apart- our goals diametrical,

as you said. There is no reason for us to quarrel.'

He nods. 'In fact you are right. I have no real argument with you, beyond the dislike I have for all your race and my scornful abhorrence of all righteous prigs. My motive at the moment is curiosity rather than malice.'

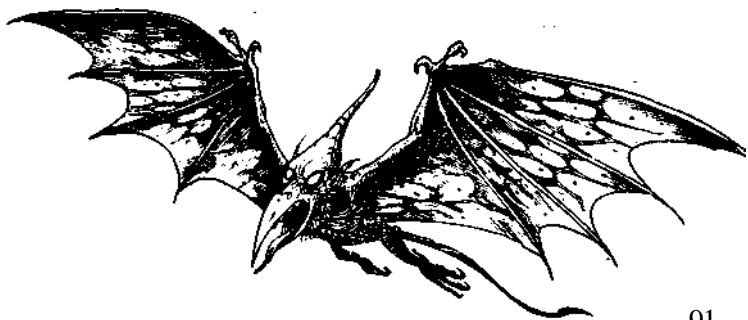
'What on earth are you talking about, Susurrien? Your motive for what?'

He gestures again at the mural. 'I have certain theories about the nature of myth and reality. I believe that just as it is possible to form images of distant objects through the use of lenses, it should be possible by magic to form images of mythical entities. A shadow cast from the myth plane onto our own, so to speak. Do you find these concepts difficult to understand? Ah, you Coradians are so feeble-minded! Allow me to demonstrate.'

He utters something in a sibilant tongue. The air immediately becomes stifling, laden with menace, like the heavy atmosphere before a storm. The candles gutter, threatening to plunge the room into darkness. Something is wrong, but it takes you a few seconds to realise what it is. The demon-figures have vanished from the mural.

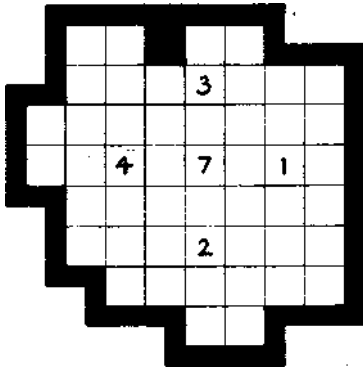
The candles flare up, casting three huge shadows on the wall.

Turn to **300**.



87

The fourth incarnation of the creature struggles out of the wreck of its predecessor and strikes at you with club-like fists.



Seven-in-One

Fighting Prowess: 9

Damage per blow: 4 Dice

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 5

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: 30

Note: The Seven-in-One has no mind in the proper sense, and thus cannot be controlled by Servile Enthralment.

If you wish to use an item, record the number **87** on your Character Sheet(s) and then turn to **402**. If you fight and win, turn to **382**.

88

You readily identify the House of the Desert Breeze from the dervish's description. It is a low building faced in grey-green marble, enclosing a pair of courtyards. Stabling and dormitories occupy the outer wings of the enclosure, while the central building separating the two courtyards comprises

the luxury accommodation. It is from this central building that the tower the dervish mentioned rises - a thin talon of a spire, covered with relief carvings and ending in a bronze-clad turret. The constellation known in Ta'ashim astronomy as the Spider does indeed seem to halo the tower. You have a nasty suspicion that Susurrien will be up there.

He is. You are kept waiting in the stairwell for several minutes, then a servant comes with a lamp to escort you up. Susurrien's chambers are at the very top of the tower, beyond a red-lacquered door carved with leering demon-faces. Dozens of thick candles cast a disturbingly uneven light around the room. A mural covering one wall depicts scenes of sybaritic abandon among the pre-Ta'ashim gods of Marazid. It appears almost alive in the flickering glow.

Susurrien flicks a curtain aside and steps into the room. He is dressed in a beige gown and a white satin overrobe bordered with gold and emerald green. A cabochon sapphire the size of a duck's egg glints in the centre of his turban.

He smiles languidly. 'I expected you sooner. You have the Hatuli's eyes?'

If you hand them to him, turn to **347**. If you show them to him but demand some assurance before handing them over, turn to **194**. If you don't have them, turn to **384**.

89

Several of the men accompanying him draw their swords at once, but Lagrestin holds up his hand. 'You again,' he says. 'You shouldn't have interfered - my business associates here don't appreciate interference.'

One of his "business associates" - a huge hairy

Mercanian with a scar across his lips - snarls and hefts his sword.

If you are alone, turn to **266**. If you are a party of two or more, turn to **247**.

90

(TRICKSTER) After a few hours, the panel in the door opens again. 'I am bored,' says the hunchback, 'so I have decided to amuse myself by taunting you.'

You shake your head, feigning a wistful and resigned air. 'Your impudence and hostility are understandable. How you must have suffered in your life - thrust into the world only half-formed, piteously ugly and twisted. In your youth, you must have been the butt of many cruel jokes. Even now, you are forced to live a life of menial drudgery while the Citadel bureaucrats, haughtily imagining themselves superior to you, are apt to snicker at your deformity. Who can blame you, then, for venting your spite on the prisoners in your gaol?'

Tears are welling up in the hunchback's eyes. 'You understand my plight,' he moans. 'Everything you have said is true. But how can one such as you, with your perfectly muscled body - how can you know what it is like for a poor hunchback like me?'

'This is simple,' you tell him. 'Once, I too was as bent and gnarled as you are. Children spat upon me in the street, while dogs tore at my cloak and urinated on my boots. But I was lucky enough to make the acquaintance of a kindly old wizard, who used his sorcery to transform me from a miserable crookback to the lithe and handsome form you now see.'

The hunchback is taken in by your tale. It is something he desperately *wants* to believe. 'Where

can I find this wizard?' he cries, clutching the grille. Tell me, please!' He stares frantically through the bars, ensnared as effectively by your wiles as you are by being imprisoned in his cell.

'I shall do better than tell you. I shall write a letter of introduction to the wizard, explaining that you are my very good friend and that you are deserving of his treatment.'

'How handsome I will be,' sobs the hunchback, unbaring the door and giving you a fulsome embrace.

If you have met Sir Tobias, the Commander of the Knights Capellars, turn to **495**. If not, turn to **246**.

91

'This game has been a farcical charade,' you announce to the longshoremen. 'You are simply a pack of crude tricksters without a jot of honour, intellect or scruples among the whole bunch of you. If you wait for your "winnings" then you will still be squatting here at the Last Trump.'

You and they get up slowly, like dancers in a dream. There is a murderous silence in the room.

If you go for your sword(s), turn to **191**. If you wait calmly for them to make the first move, turn to **453**.



92

Tobias looks back at his charts, losing all interest in you. As he begins to discuss various plans with his officers, you take your leave.

Turn to **193**.

93

She calls to a youth who is fixing nets, and he bounds over. 'This is my grandson, Ridaq,' she says.

'And this is my grandmother, Menira,' says the youth.

'Ridaq, will you prepare coffee for us?' she asks. He nods and rushes off to comply. The young have such energy,' she says, laughing.

You enter her cottage and Ridaq hands you a large bowl of the bitter coffee the Ta'ashim seem to drink almost constantly. As you look around the cottage, you are immediately struck by one thing in particular. In the centre of the room stands an ebony and ivory horse - a life-size mannikin.

Were you given a wooden peg by a Ta'ashim sailor? If you have this item, turn to **519**. If you do not have a wooden peg, turn to **469**.

94

You are running down a wide avenue. In the middle of the avenue is a grove of palms around an ornamental pool, like an island in a river of packed dirt. As you pass, you think you glimpse a tall slender figure standing among the trees. A phrase comes to mind: *the Stranger at the Oasis*. It is a Badawin name for Death.

Reaching the end of the avenue, you have a choice of routes. To your right is a narrow alley with high walls on either side. A small ape crouches there, watching you, and then turns and lopes off. If you want to go that way, turn to **321**.

The alternative is a path tiled with dull green ceramic. If you go that way, turn to **457**.

(ENCHANTER) The hunchback tries to fight your spell, but his will is too weak. His face pale and drained of expression, he numbly moves his fingers to unlock the cell door. At your command, he directs you to a postern gate by means of which you can leave the Citadel unnoticed. You bind and gag him and lock him in the cell, then hurry out into the fragrant evening air.

Turn to **164**.

Two beggars are squabbling over something. You catch sight of the glint of knives in the morning sunlight. One of the two snarls a malediction and darts forward, and the other barely dodges the swift lunge of his knife.

'Look here, now,' shouts Balian in a no-nonsense manner. 'Stop this or you'll both be on an impaling stake by sundown.' He catches hold of the first beggar's wrist, and you see two silver coins fall onto the dusty street.

A dark trickle stains the dust beside the coins, and Balian is clutching his side. You didn't see the beggar strike, but the sergeant did. He steps past Balian and knocks the beggar's few remaining teeth out with the pommel of his dagger. As the man falls, his opponent scrambles off into the crowd.

Balian shakes his head as his men rush forward to support him. 'Stupid of me!' he says. 'What a bloody fool - I deserved to get that knife right through my heart.'

'Thank God you didn't, sir,' replies the sergeant. The house of Emeritus the leech isn't far away; better get that wound seen to.'

Balian nods weakly, his face now pale and beaded

with cold sweat. He is taken to a narrow white-walled house near the street of silversmiths and sits on a bench while Emeritus dresses his wound. 'Try to get a few days' rest,' says the physician when he has finished.

Balian gets shakily to his feet. 'With Tobias's new regime in force at the Temple? But I'll do my best. Thank you, Emeritus.'

You are just going out with the others when Emeritus puts a hand on your sleeve. 'Wait,' he says. 'I must speak with you.'

Balian glances back. 'That's okay,' he says, waving to you. 'We'll just be going straight back to the Temple now. Perhaps I'll see you around . . . ?'

After he and his men have gone, Emeritus draws you aside to the privacy of a curtained vestibule. 'It is the hilt and scabbard you carry,' he says quietly. 'I recognised them at once as fragments of the Sword of Life!'

Turn to **60**.

97

A wall of force prevents you from ascending any further. Annoyed by this last vestige of Psyche's power, you turn back and head down to the first landing again.

Turn to **171**.

98

(TRICKSTER) Roll two Dice, trying to get equal to or less than your Awareness score. If you succeed, then you have managed to fool her - turn to **319**. If you fail the roll, then she spots you pouring the liquid away into the plant pot beside you - turn to **548**.

Reaching the shore of the island, you turn to watch the departure of Hunguk's ship. The fog thickens about its sides until it is only visible as a blur of shadow inside the pink sunset-lit cloud. Then a wind seems to catch the fog - though you can feel no breeze - and sucks it away into thin air. Only a few strands of mist are left, trailing across an empty sea. There is no sign of *The Devil's Runner*. The last waves from its wake lap at the shingle by your feet and, when those are gone, the ocean all around lies still and silent under a canopy of awakening stars.

Turn to **573**.

100

You touch the tuning fork to the door but, as you do, it shatters into a thousand fragments. Cross it off your Character Sheet. Suddenly you notice that the door is turning a dull red and you feel an intense heat coming off it...

Turn to **447**.

101

'Hand over your weapons,' commands Anvil. His men take them from you (cross them off your Character Sheet) but allow you to keep your armour and other equipment. Remember that if you have to fight without weapons, you do so with Fighting Prowess and damage rolls reduced by two points.

You are marched to the Citadel - the grim monolithic fortress from which Crescentium is governed. You are handed into the care of two surly men-at-arms who take you down to the dungeons.

'This one's empty,' says the taller man, jerking his thumb at a cell door.

'Except for the rats,' laughs the other as he lifts

the bolt and pulls the door open. He turns to you and sneers. There you go - your new home!

You are thrust unceremoniously inside. The door slams behind you. It seems that you have found a place to spend the night. . .

Turn to **470**.

102

(ENCHANTER) Reasoning that only a good deal of cunning will get you out of this predicament, you put on a slightly condescending smile as you address the jinni: 'Possibly you could crush me with your foot, possibly not. . .'

The jinni raises his bristly eyebrows by a couple of yards. 'How can you doubt it? Behold, mortal - each of my toes is larger than your entire body. You will be flatter than a puddle after I step on you. The weight of my bulk will reduce you to a mere paste - a stain on the rocks - a blot no more significant than the droppings of these seagulls!' He snorts derisively.

'You seem very sure,' you reply, nodding. 'But perhaps your boastfulness is all just hot air. I believe you jinn were created from fire, so that seems entirely possible.'

'Man, I will squash you flat!' booms the jinni, flying into a rage. His nostrils definitely *are* emitting smoke now. 'Never have I met so presumptuous a mortal! If it is proof you need, I will immediately demonstrate -' He begins to raise his foot from the ground.

'I may be more resilient than you suppose. Are you prepared to put a wager on it?'

'And what, precisely, would we wager?' demands the jinni.

You shrug, as though the notion has only just

entered your head. 'Possibly . . . Let us say if you crush me then I hereby bequeath all my magical power to you. It will pass to you on my death. You may think that such power is not great. In fact it is greater than you think, and it is only by the inheritance of power in this way that mighty wizards are made. It is worth considering the analogy of a king, who can fill his treasuries to capacity merely by levying a tax of one gold piece on each of his subjects.'

'That is acceptable,' says the jinni.

You smile. 'However, if I should still be alive after you lift your foot - regardless of how badly wounded, as long as I still live - you will grant me three wishes before going on your way.'

The sky rumbles with his laughter. 'I stand only to gain from this. It is agreed!'

As he lifts his foot you call the spell of Immediate Deliverance to mind. You have *one* Round in which to cast this before his foot descends. Essentially, you must roll equal to or less than your Psychic Ability on two Dice+2. Remember that having the Immediate Deliverance in mind reduces your Psychic Ability score by one point.

Attempt this. If you cast the spell, turn to **223**. If you fail to cast it on the first attempt, turn to **163**.

103

Concealed from Psyche's magic by the mist, you hurry back through the orange groves. Once or twice you glimpse loping figures in the distance, and Psyche's shrieks of anger can be heard in between the crack of a lash as she orders her servants to find you. But the Faltyn has done its work well, and the mist keeps you hidden until you are safely back at the city gate.

Turn to **170**.

Tobias's crazed fervour has infected you with a sense of nervous eagerness, so you are ready to be off at once. Balian, however, waves you back to the bench with a languid gesture. 'There is no rush,' he says urbanely. 'I was here before the new Commander arrived, and I'm afraid my way of doing things is not quite so urgent.' He beckons a slave over and orders him to bring breakfast of cold roast goose, fresh baked bread and piping hot coffee. You fall on this quite ravenously, and any player who is wounded gets back one Endurance point.

'Now then,' says Balian at last, 'I'll just round up the chaps and we'll go for a wander . . .'

You rendezvous with him by the gate. His patrol group consists of a sergeant and three men-at-arms. These are not Capellars proper, though they wear the eight-pointed star on their left shoulders. In a sense they bear the same relation to the Knights Capellars as lay brothers bear to monks at an abbey. Not being of gentle birth, however, it is extremely unlikely they will ever be elevated to the rank of Knight Capellar. This does not seem to make them any less enthusiastic for their job, however - and you soon realise they are devoted to Sir Balian. They fall into a loose marching order as you advance through the streets. Occasionally one or other of them breaks off to question a native trader, or to chat briefly with one of the fair-skinned Coradian settlers. A casual observer might think the patrol is just ambling down the street, but a closer look reveals the careful formation they keep as they orbit around their officer.

There is some kind of disturbance ahead. Shouts go up and the passers-by crowd in for a look. Do you want to hang back and see what happens? If so,

turn to **96**. If you prefer to push through the crowd and see what's going on, turn to **297**.

105

If the Trickster wants to do something, turn to **452**. If not, you merely step out into the open and challenge them; (turn to **266**). But note that the Trickster and the Sage (if present) can take one Round to shoot arrows before they reach you.

106

Alexius leads you upstairs to a suite of rooms at the very top of the hostel. The balcony gives you an excellent view of the city. Sparkling with lantern light shining from a hundred windows, it seems that Crescentium is a mirror reflecting the star-filled sky.

Leaving the balcony doors open to enjoy the fresh night breeze, you retire. A bulbul serenades you to sleep. In the morning, Alexius comes up with three servants bearing your breakfast on silver trays: fried bean-cakes with a mouthwatering selection of dips, vine leaves stuffed with rice, freshly baked bread flavoured with cinnamon and dates, and a large pot of creamy yoghurt. You eat well. Any wounded player recovers Endurance equal to half his or her rank (rounding up) for the night's sleep, plus two further Endurance points for the excellent breakfast.

When you are ready to depart, Alexius steps forward and asks you to settle the bill. You get a nasty shock: it comes to ten gold pieces per player!

If you pay, cross off this sum and turn to **62**. If you refuse, turn to **376**.

107

You have no intention of waiting for the night watch to arrive. You race along the street, now dark and deserted, and plunge into the shadows of a narrow alleyway. A few moments later you see the excited Alexius leading a patrol of grim-faced Selentine Knights towards his hostelry. Their swords are drawn, and you are now very glad you got out when you did.

Turn to **164**.

108

The thrice-cursed bird rises *higher*! All you can remember is the word to make it ascend, then . . .

The air at this altitude is becoming too pure for mortal lungs; you feel disoriented and supernaturally calm. You may be dying.

If you are a lone Sage, turn to **403**. If you are a Sage in a multi-player party, turn to **543**. If there is no Sage in the party, your quest is at an end; you soon pass out in the thin air, never to recover.

109

(SAGE) Any player who made use of the sacred clay unguent a few moments ago is able to see the invisible monster. Turn to **476** for the combat, but those who can see the monster can make their *fight* rolls on two Dice as usual. In addition, the clay gives some protection from the deathly aura, and players so protected do not suffer the *permanent* loss of Endurance noted there.

110

You ask Tobias the significance of the eight-pointed indigo star which the knights of his Order wear on their tabards.

'Opinions vary,' he says with a note of fervour in his voice, 'but I tell you that the truth is threefold. First, this emblem represents the great Wheel of Heaven, on which the archangels rack the souls of those who break faith with the Lord - heretics, simoners, sinful priests and their ilk. Secondly it represents the swords of the eight founders of our Order. And in the last interpretation, the points of the star represent the qualities which a good Capellar must possess: Wrath, at the Devil's pernicious works; Strength, to smite evil with such blows that it might never recover; Indefatigability, to pursue the opponents of the True Faith to the furthest limits of the world; Vigilance, to see through the subtle tricks of the Enemy . . .'

Tobias drones on at some length while his officers make their excuses and leave the table. Obviously one of the qualities Tobias cherishes is Relentlessness, with which one may stun people into a daze of boredom. You do not voice this opinion. At last he pauses for breath. Seizing your chance, you quickly jump up and bid him goodbye.

Turn to **193**.

111

With Ridaq's help you soon manage to haul the horse outside. As he says, 'Trying to fly it out through the window might not be too advisable!'

As a crowd of astonished children gather, you climb into the saddle and press the peg. You are lifted up into the air to a level slightly higher than Ridaq's head. Waving down to him and Menira, you thank them once more for their hospitality and for the gift of the miraculous horse.

In my old age I have learned to recognise goodness when it is present in people's hearts,' says

Menira. 'And I recognise it in you. May the peace, safety and success that are granted by the Maker of All Things fall to you in abundance.'

'And may He bless you for your words,' you tell her and, touching the peg again, you soar up into the sky ...

Turn to **510**.

112

(TRICKSTER) You suspect that Alexius is mistranslating the rate - deliberately quoting a low figure to entice you to stay in an opulent suite. Under Outremer law, in the morning you would be obliged to pay the full rate displayed on the tariff. You cannot be sure, as you can't read the Jezant alphabet, but you decide to bluff him.

'Untrue!' you shout, stabbing a finger in the direction of the tariff. 'Either you cannot read, or you are being deliberately misleading.'

Turn to **344**.

113

The man, who now introduces himself as Galor the tomb-robber, leads you away from the mausoleums and points up a steep hillside path. 'Recently, while sitting here one afternoon, I was taken by an urge to have gulls' eggs for my supper. There is none to be found in the necropolis, of course, so I went up this path to see if any gulls were nesting in the hillside. I found none - but I discovered a great marvel, for I stumbled upon a cave where the fabled Roc has its nest.

'Now, if you know your legends, then you will need no telling that the Roc is a giant bird which the mariner Simbar encountered on one of his voyages. You will also be aware of how Simbar made use of

the bird to enter the inviolable citadel of Shazireh the witch: he tied himself to the Roc's claw while the bird was asleep, and when it took to the air it bore him aloft with it.'

If the Sage is here, he or she should turn to **9**. If not, you must decide whether to go along with what Galor is suggesting (turn to **320** if so) or to bid him good afternoon and continue on your way (in which case turn to **314**).

114

Even as the creature lurches across the courtyard, shambling forward with its antlered heads lowered to gore you, you find that it is difficult to focus on it. A subconscious impulse is trying to impel you to avert your eyes. You guess from this that it is a demon from some nether realm, summoned here by magic to slay you - and protected even now by a residue of magic which will reduce the accuracy of your own attacks.

Perhaps you should *flee* now, before it reaches you. If you do, turn to **152**. If you intend to stand your ground and fight, turn to **481**.

115

The servant regards the hard pallets in the alcove and then turns a crafty look on you. 'Possibly an alternative accommodation could be arranged . . .' He licks his lips expectantly.

If you bribe him, decide how many gold pieces you are prepared to offer, then turn to 408. If you are not willing to offer a bribe for better beds, will you reply: 'Whelp of a slattern, you will not get so much as a copper penny for your insolence!' (turn to **63**); or 'No, this alcove will do after all.' (turn to **205**)?

116

You touch your money pouch and suggest that there is room for more players. One of the long-shoremen grins widely and hands you the Dice.

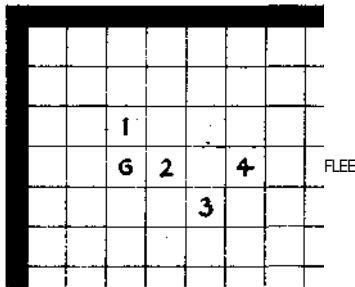
'The rules are almost elegant in their crude simplicity,' says another. 'You merely stake anything from one to three gold pieces and then roll the Dice. On a roll of two, three or four you are out. On a roll of eleven or twelve you win. Otherwise the Dice pass to port until someone achieves eleven or twelve or is the last player in. If you win, you collect the amount of your wager from the other players to the limit of what they staked for the round.'

'S'easy,' grunts another of them encouragingly.

If you have at least one gold piece and still want to join the game, turn to **248**. Alternatively, Alexius can now take you to your rooms - turn to 106.

117

You dart forward, moving so quietly that you are almost upon her before she turns. The mirror in your hands is angled to reflect the last flash of sunset into her large eye. Dazzled, she brings up one hand to shield her face. In the other hand she hefts the anchor and swings it at you with a vicious snarl.



Giantess

Fighting Prowess: 6

Damage per blow: 5 Dice+1

Psychic Ability: 8

Awareness: 5

Armour Rating: 1

Endurance: 65

Note: If the Enchanter is here and Enthral's her, he or she should note down the number of this entry and then turn to **139**.

If you win within three Rounds, turn to **474**. If you are still fighting after three Rounds, turn to **196**. If you *flee*, turn to **498**.

118

(WISHING PLAYER) 'Grant me wealth beyond the dreams of avarice,' you tell the jinni. You have used one of your wishes, so cross off one of the boxes you are using to keep track of these.

'In point of fact,' says the jinni, 'nothing is beyond the dreams of mortal avarice. Still, we must settle upon some figure. Let us say ten million pieces of gold, which will make you wealthier than any Coradian monarch and possibly even on a par with the merchants of Ferromaine. This sum awaits your arrival in Chaubrette where, by my magic, I have just procured a stately palace for you to live in.'

'It would help to have a little cash to carry around, too,' you point out.

The jinni waves his hands and bags full of gold appear around your feet. Each bag contains 100 gold pieces and thus counts as one item for encumbrance purposes. You can take as many as you wish, and there are also enough for your companions (if any) to fill their haversacks. (If you do not want to enrich your companions, on the other hand, then the jinni can transport any excess bags to swell the treasure-

vaults of your palace.)

Turn to **338**.

119

If you are on your own, turn to **363**. If you are in a multi-player group, hand the book to the other players and tell them to turn to **254**.

120

If there is a Sage in the party who has not already tried to Levitate to the top of the tower, and who now wishes to try, he or she should turn to **235**. If the Trickster wants to pick the lock and has not tried this already, he or she should turn to **122**. If the Sage and Trickster are not here, or if they do not wish to try anything or have already tried and failed, you may as well give up and go back to bed - turn to **151**.

121

Reclining on satin cushions out on Psyche's veranda, you puff at a hooka with her and watch the stars come out. After you have mentioned your quest, she leans forward. Her green eyes sparkle in the torchlight. 'Perhaps my magic can aid you?' she says huskily. 'I am considered an authority in the fields of scrying and divination.'

She takes up a lens of polished volcanic glass and peers into its wine-dark depths. 'Ah, yes,' she says after a moment. 'The Blade of Life! I see it - ' Suddenly she looks away, shaking her head as if in pain. 'No, I am sorry. I cannot locate it, as I have no affinity with the Blood Sword. "The skein of my destiny is not woven into that tapestry," as the Opalarian adage has it. On the other hand, if someone possessing the hilt and scabbard were to look into my scrying lens . . .' She smiles. 'I'd have



to put you in a trance.'

If you consent to one of you being hypnotised, turn to **309**. If you decline the offer, turn to **371**.

122

(TRICKSTER) You step forward and run your slender fingers across the smooth surface of the door. Locating a slight irregularity, you probe further. A small hinged plate flips back to reveal a keyhole. Selecting a thin strip of metal from the lockpicks in your sabretache, you begin the delicate task.

Minutes pass. Beads of sweat now stand out on your forehead. This lock has a more fiendishly complex mechanism than any you have had to deal with before. Roll three Dice, trying to score equal to or under your rank.

If you succeed, the door opens and you can enter - turn to **279**. If you fail the roll, turn to **471**.

123

You are in a walled garden. The scent of jasmine fills your nostrils, as thick as the purple shadows of morning twilight. The grass under your feet is lush, damp with the dew.

The ape, which slipped through the gate with you, scampers off across the lawn. You see a pavilion where a woman sits, sipping from a silver chalice.

You bow, recognising Fatima even though she wore a veil before. 'God bless you, good lady. Your garden is a refuge from perils too horrible to describe.'

'The danger is past,' she replies, her voice barely more than a murmur. 'Come and sit with me.'

This you do. After a while, as you accept sweetmeats from a silver dish, you suddenly remember

the demon-gods. They cannot enter this garden - ?' you say with a start of sudden alarm. The din of their howling can still be heard over the high wall.

The things that pursued you have faded,' she says with a smile. That is the chorus of alley cats...'

You listen again. She is right.

Another gate swings open. A thin old man in a leather tunic steps through and stands beside an ivy-covered trellis.

'Calm yourself,' says Fatima, stroking the ape's neck. 'It is only Hasan.'

The old man approaches and smiles. 'I hope you do not mind me taking a short cut through your garden, Fatima. The Nine Gates cannot open when Susurrien is near.'

'Susurrien - !' You leap to your feet. 'Do you know where that cur is?' you ask Hasan.

I hope to find out. I intend to kill him before sunrise.'

'You will have to join the queue!' You turn and bow to Fatima. 'Lady, it has been pleasant to converse with you. Our time together has been too brief. Now

She nods. 'Go out by way of yonder gate. You too, Hasan. It will bring you close to your objective, I think.'

You leave the garden through the gate she has indicated, and step out onto a small cobbled plaza with a well in the middle. Hasan was right behind you - or so you thought - but when you turn there is no sign of him. And no sign of the gate, either.

Turn to **202**.

124

The nearest child takes the coin. The din of shouting immediately stops as they all stare in disbelief at the

glittering gold. 'Now-be off with you,' you say, not unkindly.

The silence lasts a few seconds more, then the whole crowd comes to life as one. They tear off down the road cheering, kicking up billows of dust as they go. You watch the child with the coin toss it up into the air, seeing his smile when the sunlight glances off it as it spins -

'The Father of All sees your kindness and will ensure you are rewarded for it.'

You turn. Beside you stands an extremely old and gnarled Ta'ashim woman with a face roughly the shape of a turnip. 'Will you enter my home?' she says.

If you accept the invitation, turn to **93**. If you thank her but decline, explaining that you must be on your way, turn to **82**.

125

You decide against trying the same trick as before. The Roc might decide to fly off in any direction, and knowing the word to make it descend would do you no good if it chose to head west along the Azure coast or south-east towards the endless Silent Sea. No - you must think of some other way to get to Hakbad . . .

Turn to **201**.

126

(ENCHANTER) Balanced precariously on your comrade's shoulders, you peer out into the gathering dusk. The furthest point from the Citadel which could be reached by the spell of Immediate Deliverance is a charnel tower. Its sombre shape occludes the rising moon, lending it a sinister aura of silvery light.

No choice. You call the symbols and sequential mood-patterns of the spell to mind, then quickly run through them. The last symbol (particularly appropriate in this context) is the image of a falcon flying up into the sky as its hood is removed. As you visualise this, combining it with the mood of exultant joy, the spell activates and the cell dissolves away around you ...

Turn to **4**.

127

If you managed to substitute a fake Hatuli in place of the genuine article, turn to **157**.

If Susurrien got away with the genuine Hatuli, you have no means of finding where the Blood Sword blade is hidden. Your quest ends in bitter failure.

128

You approach the tower cautiously. Its sheer walls are studded with glazed mosaic fragments, and the whole structure is topped by a copper minaret. The door is a blank slab of polished black stone.

If the Sage is in the party, he or she could attempt to Levitate up the outside of the tower - turn to **235**. The Trickster could look for a lock to pick - if he or she is in the party and wishes to try that, turn to **122**. If the Warrior is here and wants to try forcing the door, turn to **295**. If you are a lone Enchanter, or if no one wants to attempt any of the above, you will have to go back to bed - turn to **151**.

129

You accept the peg and thank the old sailor for telling you all this. 'When one has enjoyed a full life,' he says, 'it becomes a duty to share it with others.'

You eat a bowl of gritty porridge that Alexius gives you, and each player recovers one Endurance point if wounded. Unfortunately you find a weevil at the bottom of the bowl and, feeling slightly queasy in case it was not the only weevil in your breakfast, you stagger outside to find a fountain in which to wash. As you are engaged in this, you see a number of sick and destitute people gathering outside a narrow white-walled house nearby.

Alexius, who has come outside to throw slops into the street, notices your curiosity. 'That is the house of Emeritus, the leech,' he says. 'I have heard it said that he is the wisest man in Outremer.'

'Thank you, Alexius,' you reply, taking a final sip of water from the fountain. 'That information is - worth a gold piece, even if your hostelry is not.'

Ignoring his splutter of indignation, you stroll away towards Emeritus's house. Fortune has brought you to the very man who might be able to help you in your quest!

Turn to **419**.

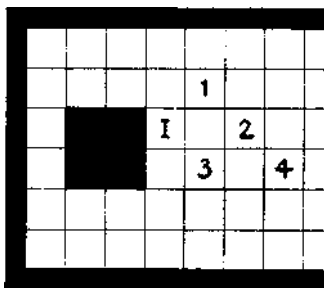
130

The cloud of mist that Icon has become rises towards the ceiling of the hall. You realise with a feeling of alarm where he is going. The mist curls up into the warm red glow of the Life Focus and crackles with energy as it absorbs the vitalising radiation.

After a few moments the cloud descends, giving the Death Focus a wide berth, and congeals to form Icon once more. His armour still shows the scratches and dents of your battle a few moments ago, but there is no sign of the wounds you had inflicted.

'I care not a jot for these Foci of Life and Death,' he

says, jeering, 'b^ut I find it ironic that the very force of Life, to which you have devoted your efforts over so many years, should restore the energy of your dearest foe. Come - let us resume our battle!'



Icon the Ungodly

Fighting Prowess: 9

Damage per blow: 5 Dice

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 9

Armour Rating: 2

Endurance: 55

Note: He is immune to the spell of Servile Enthralment. Because of the spell of Retributive Fire, anyone who strikes him in melee is burned for one Endurance point (armour notwithstanding).

If you win, turn to **30**.

131

Approaching Psyche's tower in the light of dawn, you soon see that a change has come over it. The massive ebon door hangs off its hinges. The mosaic walls are cracked and dull. Patches of verdigris stain the copper minaret like moss.

You enter cautiously, only too aware that sorcerous traps and wardings sometimes remain active after their caster's death. But nothing disturbs the ponderous silence. The stairs have collapsed, and

the stairwell is filled with choking dust. Amid the rubble, the only object of any interest is an item of jewellery. You pick it up off the scratched marble floor. It seems to be a brooch or belt-clasp- an oval plate of red gold into which two rubies have been set like eyes. On the reverse it bears the glyph of Iblis, fallen angel and latterly Prince of Evil Jinn.

If you wish to keep the jewel, record 'The Ruby Brooch of Iblis' on your Character Sheet. The tower contains nothing else of any interest. You spend the morning practising your combat manoeuvres in the courtyard, then you take a bath and enjoy a light lunch before setting off back to the city.

Turn to **521**.

132

Tobias squints at you as he drains his goblet of diluted wine. The expression seems to contain an undercurrent of hostility. 'If your quest be true and holy,' he says, 'you will not find the Capellars slow to aid you. But if you tread on the path the Devil has made, God help you!'

Will you tell him the full details of your quest now? If so, turn to **57**. If you wish to change the subject, turn to **110**.

133

The butcher falls silent and watches you leave. You make your way from Susurrien's home in a daze. Outside, the crowds flow around you like eddies on a vast sea. You glance back to see Susunien looking down from his window with a slight smile. Perhaps you are foolish to have agreed to obtain the emerald eyes for him - but what choice was there? Without his astrology you could never have hoped to find Hunguk's ship. Even if you stole the Hatuli, you

have no idea how it operates. Loathsome though it is, you are forced by Fate to co-operate with the untrustworthy prince. There is a Ta'ashim proverb: *When both are hungry for the flesh of the gazelle, even the lion and the serpent will lie in ambush together.*

Your wandering brings you to the outskirts of the city proper. Seeing a fishing village in the distance, you head towards it with a view to hiring a small boat. You soon find the village is further than you thought, for you are forced to take a meandering path between a number of low, sealed, stone buildings. The time is now mid-afternoon, and dry dust rises chokingly from the road. As you turn a bend, you come across a man sitting by the roadside drinking from a gourd. He looks up and smiles, greeting you with the words, 'We must swelter in the sun while those who lie in these sepulchres are cool. But they must endure their parched throats, as this wine is only for the living!' He holds up the gourd. 'Will you join me?'

If you accept his invitation, turn to **458**. If not, turn to **187**.

134

'It is late to be on the streets,' you say as the dervish draws level with you.

'Or early,' he replies. He stops, but says nothing further by way of conversation.

'What do you have in your pack?' you ask, pointing to the obviously heavy burden on his shoulders.

'Books. Here I have the apocryphal sayings of the Illuminate; the *ruba'i* of the Five Perceptives; a number of treatises on ethics, law and arithmancy; volumes of Nascerine and Opalarian literature; some manuscripts out of a Kaikuhuran tomb . . .'

'They must be of great value. Are you intending to sell them?'

He gives you a gap-toothed grin. 'Not at all! A fine dervish I would be with my pockets full of gold! No, I am going to make a fire with them to keep me warm until daybreak.'

This is madness! 'Surely you jest?' you say to him. 'The act would be nothing short of criminal.'

'It is better to live the Illuminate's teaching than to read it,' he replies, still smiling broadly. 'In every sense, action is superior to intellection. But if you wish, here is one manuscript you may save from the fire.' He draws a scroll at random from his pack and hands it to you. Record it on your Character Sheet if you wish to keep it.

Baffled by the dervish's oblique logic, you ask him if he knows the way to the House of the Desert Breeze.

'It is close by. Follow this avenue to the end, then look to your left. You will know the House of the Desert Breeze, as you will see its tower framed within the constellation called the Spider.'

Ominous. You thank him and set off in the direction he has indicated.

If you took the scroll he offered and want to look at it at any time (including now), turn to **518**. Remember to write down the number of the entry you are at when you do this, as **518** will not direct you back there.

Now turn to **88**.

135

(ENCHANTER) If you want to cast a spell, turn to 438. If you want to use an item, turn to **136**.

136

(ENCHANTER) Which of the following do you think might prove most useful? The Ruby Brooch of

Iblis (turn to **348**); the Orb of Fire (turn to **411**); or a gold mirror (turn to **353**)?

If you have none of these items, you will have to use a spell after all - turn to **438**.

137

If any player wishes to buy equipment, Emeritus can send his servants out shopping for you. If you ask him to do this, turn to **578**. If you are ready to continue your quest, turn to **186**.

138

(WARRIOR) With the inkling of a plan in mind, you turn. Your hand reaches instinctively towards your scabbard - but closes on empty air. You had forgotten that you lost your sword!

The jinni's foot blots out the sun. You look up as it descends, but you do not even have time to curse ...

The Warrior is crushed to death. Surviving players, if any, must now decide who will act next:

If the Trickster wishes to, he or she should turn to **572**. If the Sage, he or she should turn to **420**. If the Enchanter, he or she should turn to **135**.

139

(ENCHANTER) Make sure you have noted down the number of the previous entry, as this entry will not direct you back there.

The giantess is one of the cacomorphs created in Sa'aknathur's vats. He endowed her with great strength, but also made sure that no one could ever control her and thus turn that strength against him. The defences he placed in her mind centuries ago now activate automatically - reflecting your spell back at you!

You must roll two Dice and attempt to score equal to or under your current Psychic Ability. If you succeed then you have managed to evade the reflected spell.

If you fail, your eyes glaze over; you are unable to act until ordered by the spell's caster. Since that is you, it means that you will simply stand rigid until the spell wears off in 2-7 Rounds' time. (Roll one Die+1 to determine just how many Rounds.) If you live that long . . .

Now resume the combat by turning to the last entry you were reading.

140

If you have just used up your third wish, the jinni departs in a clap of thunder. Since this leaves you stranded on the island in just the same situation as you were before you found the copper bottle, your adventure ends here!

If you still have wishes left, you now have the opportunity to make another. You may not wish again for something you have already wished for, incidentally.

To wish for riches, turn to **15**. To wish for renewed health, turn to **275**. To wish for your arms and armour to be restored, turn to **558**. To wish for your strength to be enhanced, turn to **540**.

If you choose not to make any other wishes yet, but just tell the jinni to take you to Hakbad, turn to **290**.

141

(SAGE) It is one page from a longer story:

[. . . that a long life had been written for me. Faced with the moving idol, however, my wits took flight and my

bowels shook like a jellyfish. I fell to my knees and called upon God to deliver me, but the idol picked me up and carried me to a bamboo cage in the centre of the island. In its arms I had no more weight than a bag of dates. There were three other unfortunates in the cage, and when the creature had gone I asked them how they had come to be captured.

'In the same manner as yourself,' said the first. 'Do you not know that this is the island of the Seven-in-One? This is the name given to the malignant idol that seized you, and it has this name because it is actually seven idols one inside the next. You may wonder how such a thing could be, and in fact we three - who by happy chance are the wisest sages of all Khitai - have spent our time in this cage pondering just this question. My own view is that it is like the tale of the three ifrits who tried to enter Paradise.'

'What tale is that?' I asked . . .]

That is where the scroll ends. Return to the entry you were at before.

142

Make sure you know the number of the paragraph you have just been reading.

You no longer have the crucifix Tobias gave you. Perhaps you were expecting some disaster to befall you because of this, but in fact nothing happens. A crucifix is only a symbol, whereas it is really the faith it represents that is important.

Return to the last entry you were reading.

143

His swarthy face reddens as you take the money from the pocket of his tunic. For a moment he is speechless with indignation. But only for a moment.

'Consider what you are doing,' he says, voice soft with menace as he sees you count the coins. 'I will not trouble you with details of the ineffable punishments prescribed by the Illuminate Akaabah for those who break a fiscal agreement. God will see that such punishments descend upon the hairs of your head like locusts onto a field of corn. I might add only this: that money was justly mine, a fair reward for securing better quarters for you. In a very real sense you are guilty of abject speculation, then! May God devolve the Seven Plagues of the Xanthic Brethren on to your descendants for this crime; may He -'

A kick sends him flying out into the corridor. He starts to resume the catalogue of curses as he picks himself up, but you close the doors in his face.

You only realise how exhausted you are when you fall gratefully into the plush blankets. A nightingale's song wafts in on the jasmine-scented breeze, but you do not hear it. You are already asleep.

Turn to **167**.

144

Which of the following two items will you use? A bottle of yellow copper (turn to **388**) or the dog-headed man's spear (turn to **256**)?

145

If the Enchanter is here and wishes to act, turn to **425**. If not, turn to **334**.

146

You are directed to the refectory by a knight who is just going off guard duty. There you find Tobias with several of his officers, discussing their military

plans over a breakfast of bread and watered wine.

'I am pleased to see you refreshed by a good night's sleep,' says Tobias curtly. 'Be seated and break your fast with us. You will find this plain fare more fortifying than all the overripe fruits and oily meats of the Ta'ashim lands.' He ejects a gob of phlegm at a hound crouching under the table. It whimpers and slinks away.

'Yon hound is like the Ta'ashim race,' grunts Tobias with a sour sneer. 'It will come to beg at your table, but it is always ready to snap at your heels if you do not have the strength to show it you are the master.' Suddenly he turns his ice-grey stare on you, and you cannot help flinching momentarily despite your years of battle experience. 'Well,' he says flatly. 'What is your business in Crescentium?'

If you tell him you have come to find the Blood Sword blade, turn to **57**. If you tell him you are on a secret quest, turn to **132**. If you tell him you have no specific objective in mind but have just come in search of adventure, turn to **192**.

147

The great tail-fin rises, hangs for a moment against the evening sky, then falls like the hammer of Tor. The sea cracks in two, and your boat sinks between grey walls of water. You are given a drawn-out instant in which to contemplate this tableau of reversals: the ocean riven into two sides of a valley, the fish that dwarfs men, the planks of your fragile boat swimming like ripples on a pool of water, the defiant war-cry that becomes a whimper of fear ...

Then the ocean closes overhead.

Turn to **265**.

148

Write the codeword SPECULUM alongside any you have already recorded.

In your hasty search you spill dozens of bizarre artifacts and curios onto the cabin floor. Much as you would like to, there is no time to investigate them now. Pulling the lid off a clay jar, you pour out its contents: two sparkling emeralds. The eyes of the Hatuli. Note these down - the two together count as one item for encumbrance purposes.

Add *two* more ticks. If time has not yet run out, you can either take a look at the charts (turn to **209**) or, if you have not done so already, open the other door (turn to **561**). If you wish to leave now, turn to **185**.

149

You stride across the market square. The Ta'ashim, who account for four-fifths of Crescentium's population, are hurrying off towards their temple in answer to the muezzin's call to prayer. The crowds are thus thinning out and, now that the dry stifling heat of the day is giving way to the cool of evening, you feel more relaxed. You enter the building the boy pointed out. Jauntily you race up the steps to the first landing and rap on Jablo's door.

Turn to **216**.

150

'The question is perplexing,' says one, scratching lice out of his beard. There are many possible approaches to such a question, just as the wise men tell us there are many answers to the riddle of life. But still, in the end one must cast the die and see what answer one gets. You have asked me what I know of the Blood Sword, and my answer is -'

He pauses. You lean closer ...

' - Nothing! Now begone, for your irksome questions disturb our game and your gormless face would vex the patience of St Iolonus himself!

The blood rises to your face. If you wish to teach these sniggering scoundrels a lesson, turn to **195**. If you swallow your pride and retire to bed now, turn to **106**.

151

You awaken just before sunrise. The old man, whose name you take to be Sha'hat, brings you a fine breakfast of spiced buttermilk and unleavened bread with dates and oranges. Any wounded player recovers Endurance equal to one plus half his or her rank. A player of 4th rank thus gets back three Endurance. Fractions round up - and remember that you cannot exceed your score at the start of this adventure.

After breakfast you consider your next move. If you have not already done so, you can investigate the tower in the east wing - turn to **131**. If you would rather head straight back to the city, turn to **521**.

152

Panic-stricken at the thought of Psyche's sorcery, you turn tail and flee into the night. Running pell-mell along the road through the orange groves, you see the lights of the city towers winking in the distance. At last, deeming it safe to slow down, you let your run turn into a breathless jog.

Suddenly you hear a shrill squeaking in the air. A cloud of bats is descending out of the night sky towards you. More magical menace dispatched by the evil sorceress ...

The bats cover you like a shroud, finding any

exposed area of skin where they can rip through to the veins beneath. There are twelve of the creatures in all, and they distribute their attacks equally among all the players. Each bat that attacks a character draws one Endurance point's worth of blood. After this, they arise into the air and flap off, sated, back to Psyche's villa.

The survivors of this, if any, can trudge on to Crescentium; Psyche is finished with you now.

Turn to **170**.

153

You thank Menira and Ridaq for their hospitality and take your leave. However, the old woman recognises what is in your heart and calls after you, saying, 'If the horse can aid you in your travels, then please take it with you.'

'Surely it is a great treasure, though,' you say, protesting. 'It is not right that you should part with it and get nothing in return.'

'On the contrary, I will get a great deal in return,' says Menira. 'When you have taken the horse, my neighbours will ask where it has gone. I will invent stories to tell them, explaining its disappearance - and they will pay me to hear the stories, so I will be rewarded both with gold and with enjoyment! By taking the horse away, therefore, you are actually bestowing something on me!'

This line of reasoning is distinctly Ta'ashim! With a smile, Ridaq adds: 'It is as the Illuminate said when he stripped away the Magian priest's magic: the gift that is given by taking away is the gift of *possibilities*.'

Turn to **111**.

Hunguk gives a deep growl and sways upright! Sitting on the cabin floor, he is tall enough to look at you eye to eye even though you are standing. He pulls off his horned helm and stares into your face. There is no hostility in his grey eyes now, but the scrutiny still gives you a tingle of fear. Or awe, if you will not admit to fear.

'You were dead ,. .' you say, incredulous.

'Dead? Hunguk the Pirate-King?' He gets to his feet. 'Not I! If Feshtis couldn't finish me, surely you didn't think your puny efforts would do the trick?'

For a moment you think he is going to resume the fight. Then he drops his axes on the table and slumps down on the bed. 'O gods, I am weary. The cold is never gone from my bones . . .'

He looks at you. 'You fought well - boldly, and with honour. Hunguk's praise is not lightly given, so you should stand proud! Be boastful - it is not the way of heroes to mumble modestly like maids - and tell all you meet of your great adventures this day.' He pauses and his eyes close. 'I must rest... If only I could rest. . .' He waves one huge hand towards the shelves. Take what you came for. You've earned it by your courage. Your glory-path will take you into myth, if you can conquer your youthful rashness. Now go!

You find the emeralds in a clay jar; the two together count as one item of encumbrance. His tone is one that brooks no argument, so you bow and retreat from the cabin.

Turn to **185**.

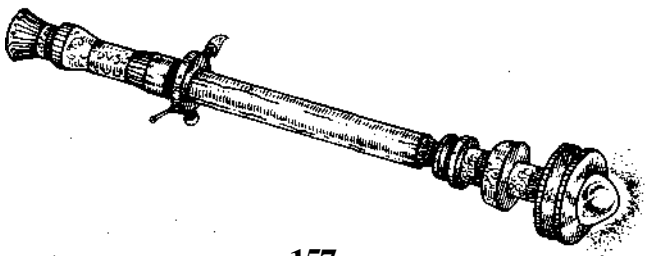
You slip out quietly into the courtyard. As you cross to the well to get a drink of water, you see a tall

figure standing under the boughs of a fig tree beside the gate. At first you assume it is the slave, Buko. Then it steps from the pool of moon-shadow and you see that it has two heads.

Turn to **114**.

156

Decide what you will offer Menira in exchange for the marvellous horse. This could be an item (such as a phial of healing potion, for example, or a magical Orb) or a sum of money. If you decide to offer money, at least forty gold pieces would be appropriate. Once you have made up your mind what you are offering her, turn to **368**.



157

Note the codeword **IMPROBITY** on your Character Sheet(s).

You set the Hatuli down. 'Find the Blood Sword blade,' you tell it - then add, in case it is unfamiliar with the weapon's folk-name: 'The Sword of Life.'

At first it remains motionless, allowing you a horrible moment of alarm. *What if it doesn't understand you . . . ?* But then it crouches and scurries across the floorboards. You follow it out of the door and watch it begin to descend the long staircase like an expert mountaineer. Even though its legs are only a few inches long, you have to quicken your

pace to keep up with it. Once outside, it leads you away from the House of the Desert Breeze and through a series of tiled streets to a part of the city where some of the buildings look overgrown and deserted. Arriving at a small circular *plaza*, it darts over the cobblestones and waits for you beside a well.

You lean over the side of the well. It is as dark as the grave, but it at least seems to be dry. More or less. The Hatuli will guide you through the underworld that lies below. The sequence you should follow is this: *Left-hand path. Left-hand arch. Turn right at first junction. Turn left at second junction.* Note this sequence down on the back of your Character Sheet(s). You might also wish to note down the number of this entry in case you need to refer back.

You climb down into the well.

Turn to **477**.

158

You touch the point of the spear to the lock. You are dazzled by a sudden flash, and drop the spear as you throw your arms up to shield your eyes. When your vision has cleared, the door stands open before you. You can pick up the spear again if you wish, taking a final glance around the room, you step through the door.

Turn to **483**.

159

You awaken to the sounds of bustle in the street outside. It is morning. As you get up to look out of the window, the serving-girl enters with a breakfast of oranges, buttermilk and spiced cakes. Each player (if wounded) recovers Endurance equal to half his or her rank for the night's rest, plus one

Endurance point for eating. Round fractions up.

The girl comes back to take the empty tray. 'Emeritus should be back within an hour or so,' she tells you in her lilting-accented Beaulangue. 'I will bring him to see you just as soon as he returns.'

She leads him in to see you shortly before noon. Though obviously weary after a long journey, his clothes covered with the dust of the road, he is overjoyed to see his old friend the Sage again. 'How happy and carefree we were on Kaxos,' he says. 'When the horror of the disease and poverty that are rife in Crescentium weighs too heavily on me, I think back fondly to those glorious days.'

'Ah, but Emeritus,' replies the Sage, '"the past mind cannot be held, the present mind cannot be held".' Both laugh merrily over this thought, sharing the pleasure of Enlightenment.

After a few further pleasantries, you tell Emeritus you have something to show him. Then you produce the hilt and scabbard. The jewel-encrusted metal glitters in the sunlight. He stares in amazement. 'If I am not mistaken,' he gasps, 'surely these are fragments of the Sword of Life? I believed it was lost, destroyed forever . . .'

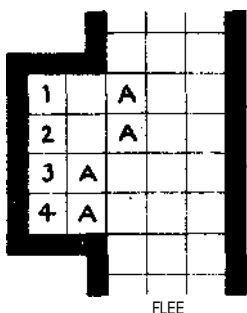
Turn to **60**.

160

You awaken.

Without knowing why, you are tense and uneasy. A bad dream . . . ? No - as your eyes adjust to the darkness, you see four hunched figures prowling silently towards you. You must have woken when they pushed back the curtain, momentarily allowing the feeble lantern-light from the corridor to shine into your alcove. Thanking God for the hairtrigger alertness that has saved you

from being murdered as you slept, you leap up to attack the assassins.



Assassins

Fighting Prowess: 7

Damage per blow: 1 Die+1

Psychic Ability: 7

Awareness: 8

Armour Rating: 1

Endurance: *first* 15

third 15

second 15

fourth 15

Note that you are *not* wearing your armour for this fight.

If you defeat them, turn to **217**. If you *flee*, turn to **215**.

161

You push your way between the jostling market traders. Sparing a brief glance back as you flee, you catch sight of the Thulanders searching for you among the stalls. Their angry red faces are contorted in frustrated battle-lust. You are pleased to notice that the woman has managed to slip out of the alleyway and into a building while her would-be assailants are pursuing you. Making your way unnoticed down a sidestreet, you head for Prince Susurrien's abode.

Turn to **73**.

There is a gate in one wall of the courtyard. It is open, and through it you can see a garden where Hasan is standing in conversation with an elegant Ta'ashim woman. He sees you and smiles, and you sorrowfully make your way across the dew-slick cobblestones to join them.

'I had not expected we would meet again quite so soon,' says Hasan. He introduces you to the woman, whose name is Fatima. She extends a slim ring-adorned hand, but behind her smile there is a troubled look. She has already sensed your sadness.

Hasan notices it too. 'Why so glum?' he asks. 'Success is often more disheartening than failure, it is true - but you are yet young to be learning that wry lesson!' Then he sees that you no longer have the Blood Sword, and falls silent.

Their faces grow dark as they listen to your story. 'That is bitter news,' says Hasan when you have finished. 'This Aiken must have had the spiteful soul of a viper. A pity I did not linger with you a while longer, as my knife might have found his heart and prevented this sad conclusion to your quest. But take solace from what I tell you: there is nothing which is good or bad in itself, as all such judgements are as illusory as a mirage. You may seem to sup on the dregs of despair - but viewed in another light it becomes a tasty draught. In the moment of heart's rending it is often possible to achieve sudden Enlightenment.'

Turn to **588**.

The enraged jinni brings his foot down on the Enchanter. When he lifts it again, there is only a red

smear which is soon washed away by the surf. If there are any surviving players, you had better act quickly or else share your luckless comrade's fate.

If the Warrior wishes to do something, he or she should turn to **272**. If the Sage wishes to act, he or she should turn to **420**. If the Trickster wishes to act, he or she should turn to **572**.

164

Much to your disgust, you are forced to spend the night sleeping rough amid the malodorous and lice-ridden beggars who inhabit the ramshackle buildings around the bazaar. Your fitful slumber gives each wounded player only one Endurance point back - plus another one point for breakfast, if you have anything to eat.

The first action of the beggars as they awaken is to crawl out into the street and accost passers-by with pleas for food and money. 'Give alms!' one of them might cry, spotting a likely patron. 'Give alms, or I am sure to starve before the dawning of a new day.'

'Get out of the way, you son of a camel,' is a likely response to such a request. 'I must get my wares to market or I will lose money and become as vile a pauper as you!'

To this discouraging tirade, a wily beggar could reply: 'Give alms and increase your own merit in the eyes of God!' and he will probably receive a few copper pieces in the end.

Grimacing with distaste, you find a fountain in which to wash. As you are engaged in this, you see a number of lame and diseased people queuing outside a narrow white-walled house nearby. Curiosity gets the better of you, and approaching a passing rug-seller you ask him who lives in the house.

'Emeritus the physician,' he replies. 'He is said to be the wisest man in Outremer. But what is wisdom? I have seen . . .'

You push the wretch aside, giving thanks to God. Your aimless wandering has brought you to the very man who might help you with your quest.

Turn to **419**.

165

(ENCHANTER) You have heard of Psyche the Sorceress, a noted practitioner of the arcane arts who lives in a villa on the outskirts of Crescentium. You are not aware of ever having met her personally, but you have some mutual acquaintances. Possibly she would welcome you, possibly not. . . There is an unstated tradition of hospitality among wizards, but it is not observed by all.

If the other players (if any) do not object to calling on Psyche, turn to **345**. If no agreement can be reached, turn back to **269** and consider the alternatives.

166

Make sure you have a note of the last entry you were reading.

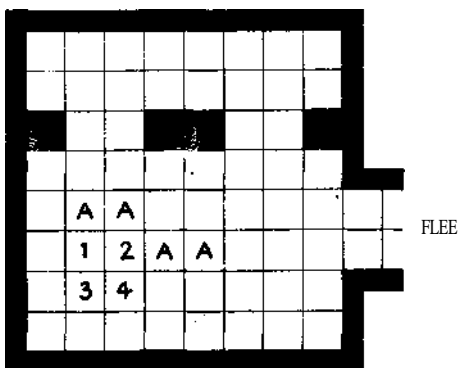
You are using the Magian's wand. If you are fighting the Seven-in-One, turn to **461** now.

If you were fighting anyone or anything else, a jet of flame shoots from the wand and inflicts four Dice damage on your foe. Cross the wand off your Character Sheet (it crumbles to dust now the last of its energy is gone) and return to the entry you were reading previously.

167

You awaken.

Without knowing why, you are tense and uneasy. A bad dream . . . ? No - as your eyes adjust to the darkness, you see four hunched figures prowling silently towards you. They must have climbed up the trellis-work to the veranda, and only woke you by the whisper of silk as they pushed the drapes aside. Thanking God for the hairtrigger alertness that has saved you from being murdered as you slept, you leap up to attack these assassins.



Assassins

Fighting Prowess: 7	Damage per blow: 1 Die+1
Psychic Ability: 7	Awareness: 8
Armour Rating: 1	
Endurance: <i>first</i> 15	<i>third</i> 15
<i>second</i> 15	<i>fourth</i> 15

Note that you are *not* wearing your armour for this fight.

If you defeat them, turn to **217**. If you *flee*, turn to **428**.

168

The Selentine captain hands two coins to his

second-in-command and says, 'I believe these long-shoremen were the cause of the trouble, Lanius. Have them shackled and taken to the Citadel.'

You watch a shiver of fear go through the long-shoremen. The Citadel of Crescentium has an infamous dungeon from which few return. The captain turns to you. 'You are lucky this time,' he says. 'While you are in Crescentium, don't push your luck again. And don't stay in Crescentium too long, either.'

The longshoremen are hauled off to their fate, leaving only you and Alexius in the hostelry common-room.

Turn to **456**.

169

The inn is a stone building on the fringe of a verdant park. Entering the courtyard, you approach an open doorway from which a flood of lamplight and chatter spills out into the deep night. The room you step into is draped with curtains partitioning off the guests' pallets. However, most of them are sitting in the middle of the floor on cushions, talking and chewing *silotta* (a bitter root often used as a stimulant). From their flowing desert garb and swarthy skin, you guess they are a Badawin trading party from Zhenir.

A spindly Ta'ashim man darts forward, proffering a jug of water in the customary greeting of his people. 'A thousand princes could not honour my establishment more than you do with your noble presence,' he says. 'If you will step with me into this curtained alcove, we can establish your requirements for tonight.'

'Fine.' You glance over at the Badawin, who have momentarily stopped talking to look at you. They

immediately nod in greeting, then turn away and resume their conversation. 'Who are you?' you ask the spindly man.

The first and least of my many names is Tariq,' he replies. That is the name by which you may call me, if it pleases you. I have the honour to own this humble inn, whose licence was granted by the esteemed Prince Angaelath. May I now be excused for turning our conversation to the subject of money? At The Sorcerous Coconut, the tariff is a very reasonable five gold pieces a pallet.'

If you find this sum agreeable, each player should cross off five gold pieces, then turn to **349**. If you want to try haggling over the price, turn to **351**. If you cannot or will not pay Tariq's rates in any circumstances, turn to **249**.

170

You return to the city. Where will you look for the night's lodging now? If there is a Warrior in the party, you could go to the headquarters of the Knights Capellars (turn to **47** if so). If there is a Trickster in the party, you could look for his or her old colleague Lagrestin (turn to **380**). If there is a Sage in the party, you could try calling on the learned Emeritus (turn to **394**). Alternatively, if the prospect of looking up your old friends does not appeal, you could find a hostelry (turn to **251**).

171

You look along the first landing. There are two doors here: one white, one black.

If you have not yet done so, you can open the white door (turn to **83**) or the black door (turn to **377**).

If you don't wish to try the doors - or if you

already have - you can now go up to the second landing (turn to **97**) or leave the tower to go and get some rest (turn to **151**).

172

'Il baraka fi hissak,' one of the women calls after you as you continue past them. You glance back, but they are already hurrying on their way.

Turn to **486**.

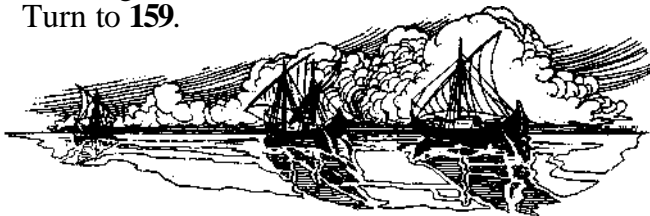
173

You soon learn from passers-by that Emeritus is a famous healer who lives in the street of silver-smiths. He seems popular among the native traders you speak to - perhaps because he is willing to treat anyone who is sick, whether or not they have money to pay him.

Dusk is filling the streets with thick shadows as you reach Emeritus's house. Stepping through the open doorway, you are greeted by a slave-girl who explains in halting Beaulangue that Emeritus is visiting a patient outside the city and will not be back till tomorrow. At first she wants you to leave and come back in the morning, but you manage to explain that you have only just arrived in Crescentium and are relying on her master's hospitality.

She shows you to a vestibule where you can sleep and, exhausted as you are after your weeks cramped on board ship, the next thing you know it is morning.

Turn to **159**.



174

A young Capellar officer comes up to you. 'Thank you for your good work last night,' he says. 'That villain had caused the death of many a good Capellar in ambushes and so forth. Their souls will rest more easily now you have brought him to justice. Will you join me for a bowl of coffee?' He points to a stall a little way down the street.

If you accept the offer, turn to **496**. If you take your leave with the explanation that you have a lot to do, turn to **41**.

175

'What idiocy do you speak?' she hisses, weakly evoking some of her old venomous spirit. 'I am dead. My soul was pledged to the demon Achferinar, Lord of Pestilential Torments. After you slew me, he took me as his slave. Subsequently my master lost a wager with Hunguk, the Pirate-King, and I was transferred to this abominable vessel. Hurry and free me - the only thing worse than the racking loneliness I have suffered in this cabin is the thought that Hunguk might remember he owns me and come to fetch me hence!'

'The shackles that bind you are of your own making,' you point out to her. 'You chose your life of demonolatry and sin - now you must pay the price. It would be blasphemous even to consider freeing you from your just fate.' You close the door and head aft.

Record another tick. If you have not yet run out of time, turn to **473**.

176

The jinni puts you down atop the tower and then flies around to commence his attack. The Magians

are not caught unawares. Resplendent in gold-trimmed scarlet robes and high copper crowns, the adepts of the sect pour out onto the main balcony. In their centre stands the High Priest, marshalling them into formation around him with curt gestures. He watches the jinni's descent with a smile, supremely confident of his ability to deal with any threat. The adepts begin chanting on a single high, clear note. The High Priest raises his wand; a fabulous thing of gold and jewels, it shimmers with magical energy.

You cannot waste time in idle spectatorship. You enter the tower. There is a kind of altar stone in the centre of the dome, and on it rests a large crystalline egg. Sunlight, filtering through the topaz inlays of the dome, bathes the egg in a rich glow.

You can see spiral stairs leading down. If you wish to take them, turn to **239**. If you want to shatter the egg, turn to **567**. If the Enchanter wants to cast a spell, he or she should turn to **75**.

177

Two huge scimitar-wielding slaves rush forth to fight for their mistress.

		4	1	5	P
		3	2	5	

Slaves

Fighting Prowess: 8

Damage per blow: 1 Die+2

Psychic Ability: 6

Awareness: 6

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: *first* 15

second 15

Psyche

Psychic Ability: 8 Awareness: 7

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: 45

Note: Psyche seems to be preparing a spell. She is not striking with a weapon, so her Fighting Prowess score is not relevant.

If you *flee*, turn to **152**. If Psyche is still alive after three rounds, turn to **22** when it is her turn to act in the third round. Remember your position(s) at the time, as you might survive to continue the battle. If you overcome Psyche herself within three rounds, continue the fight normally until the guards are down or until you retreat. If you win, turn to **180**.

178

Note the codeword IMPROBITY on your Character Sheet(s).

You set the Hatuli down. 'Find the blade of the Sword of Life,' you tell it.

At first it remains motionless, allowing you a horrible moment of alarm. Then it crouches and scurries off. Even though its legs are only a few inches long, you have to hurry to keep up with it. It leads you through a series of tiled streets to a part of the city where some of the buildings look overgrown and deserted. Arriving at a small circular plaza, it darts over the cobblestones and waits for you beside a well.

You lean over the side of the well. It is as dark as the grave, but it at least seems to be dry. More or less. The Hatuli will guide you through the underworld that lies below. The sequence you should follow is this: *Left-hand path. Left-hand arch. Turn right at first junction. Turn left at second junction.* Note this

sequence down on the back of your Character Sheet(s). You might also wish to note down the number of this entry in case you need to refer back.

You climb down into the well.

Turn to **477**.

179

(ENCHANTER) The jinni gives a scream like the heavens splitting open. Your blast strikes him with incredible force, searing his flesh and sending him reeling.

For a moment he stares bewildered. Then he falls to his knees in the sea and bows down to you. 'Master!' he cries. 'Forgive your servant for his impudence. I mistook you for a mere mortal hedge-wizard, forgetting in my foolishness that Isaf ibn Baraka has a thousand and one forms. Only when I felt the force of your righteous anger did I recognise you, for such power is beyond all but the mightiest of sorcerers!'

He thinks you are the one who imprisoned him - or, at any rate, he knows you are of similar power and is taking no chances.

'It is just as well for you that you came to your senses, witless firespawn,' you say. 'Now - if you do not want to be imprisoned again, you had better behave yourself!'

Turn to **525**.

180

You have defeated the evil sorceress. Her remaining servants followed her out of fear, and since they bore no love for their dead mistress they do nothing to oppose you now. One of them - an old man - shuffles up to you.

'*Kinuz*,' he says, pointing to the tower at the east

side of the villa. *'Kinuz - trezir! Trezir!'*

If you wish to take a look in the tower, turn to **128**. If you wish to return to Crescentium immediately, turn to **170**. If you would prefer to spend the night here and return to the city tomorrow, turn to **151**.

181

Alexius leads you into a dormitory at the back of the hostel. You glance along the rows of beds, which contain an unappealing selection of society's most unsavoury dregs: unwashed pilgrims, crippled soldiers, drunken street-hawkers and indigent wanderers. A Ta'ashim sailor sits on the edge of his bed, puffing at a pipe stuffed with some noxious weed and watching you with glazed eyes.

'A guest who lacked perceptive judgement might call this a poor hostelry,' says Alexius with forced good humour. 'A person bereft of all sense might call it a hovel. But see: the sheets are clean, the bedding firm and free of lice, the pitcher of water here is fresh. If you have any needs in the course of the night, my wife and I are at your beck and call...' He has retreated to the door by this time. With a final bow he bids you good night and is gone.

If you think it is worth striking up a conversation with the old sailor, turn to **460**. If you just want to get to sleep, turn to **236**.

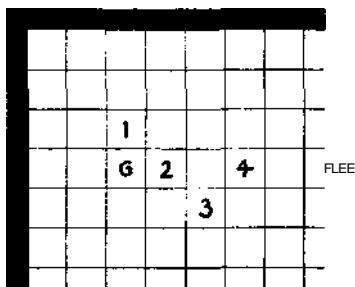
182

Coming to a door, you push it open and step into the crew's quarters under the forecastle. Bunks - tiered in fours against the bulkhead - fill most of the space, which is sufficient for at least a thousand men. Most of the bunks are empty, however, and the few occupants that are here are just heaps of dust, bone and rotted clothing.

Record another tick. You can examine one of the bunks (turn to **242**) or head towards the stern (turn to **564**).

183

Roaring your battle-challenge, you dash forward to attack the giantess. She is startled only for a moment, then she picks up the heavy ship's anchor lying by the hearth and hefts it like a war pick.



Giantess

Fighting Prowess: 8 Damage per blow: 5 Dice+1
Psychic Ability: 8 Awareness: 7
Armour Rating: 1
Endurance: 65

Note: If the Enchanter is here and Enthral's her, he or she should note down the number of this entry and then turn to **139**.

If you win, turn to **474**. If you *flee*, turn to **498**.

184

The barrier flares up as you try to pass through it. The first player in the battle order loses four Dice worth of Endurance points. Any other players lose two Dice Endurance each. Armour gives no protection from this terrible heat. With a cry of surprise

and pain, you stagger back from the barrier into the hall.

Turn to **130**.

185

A sense of impending disaster quickens your pace as you make your way back to the deck.

Something whizzes past, just missing you, as you emerge from the companion-way. Strange objects - *creatures?* - like conjoined trapezoids are flitting through the air all around. Whenever they touch the hull or rigging, they explode in a fountain of red sparks. Gusts of wind thunder across the deck, parting the mist with sheets of freezing drizzle. Ahead you can see only a black void. You turn. The view aft is like peering out of a tunnel: you see the island, and the waters of the Gulf tinged by the afterglow of sunset, but they are receding with alarming speed. *The Devil's Runner* is leaving the earthly plane!

If you arrived on the ship by means of a flying horse, turn to **352**. If you came in a boat, turn to **369**. If you swam across, turn to **225**.

186

You make ready to set off at once. 'I am sorry you cannot stay longer,' says Emeritus as he shakes hands with you. 'But obviously your quest must take precedence.'

'Hopefully we will meet again one day,' you reply. 'Many thanks for your hospitality and the help you have given.' You also give a courteous half-bow towards the beautiful Ta'ashim girl, Dhali, who met you when you first arrived. 'And the attentive service of your slave deserves praise, too.'

Emeritus laughs. 'There are no slaves in this



house. Dhali is my wife.'

You are a little shocked at this. Respectable Coradians should not, in most people's opinion, mingle intimately with the natives. Nonetheless, you manage to keep your sentiments to yourself and, bowing deeply, you take your leave of them.

Susurrien lives on the far side of the city. It is still early in the day and you are not unduly hurried. As you pass the *bazaar*, you happen to glance down an alley where you see a veiled Ta'ashim woman being molested by two Thulander merchants.

If you intervene, turn to **362**. If you pass by without getting involved, turn to **555**.

187

You apologise but explain that you must turn down his offer, as you are on a mission of some urgency. He jumps to his feet on hearing this. 'Why, I may be able to help you if that is so,' he says. 'What is the nature of this mission?'

If you are prepared to tell him, turn to **76**. If you insist that you must be on your way, turn to **314**.

188

(SAGE) [*You recognise the figure on the clay tablet as the ancient Kaikuhuran goddess, Karphi the All-Seeing. It was believed that clay ritually blessed by her priests would ward off evil in some way. As far as you can recall, one was supposed to smear it into the eyes. If you or your companions (if you have any - and if you tell them!) wish to rub any clay into your eyes, note this fact down on your Character Sheet. If you are accompanied by other players, you must tell them if they see you rubbing clay into your eyes.*]

Turn to **233**.

189

The sailor ruminates on your words. 'In his teachings, the Illuminate mentioned that it is the duty of all virtuous men to distribute alms to the poor. I am penniless. Would you let me starve in this execrable hovel?'

If you agree to give him some money, cross off the number of gold pieces you are prepared to hand over and then turn to **389**. If you refuse to give him anything, turn to **333**.

190

(TRICKSTER) You begin a fierce tirade against Lagrestin, who is surely ignoring you because of your travel-soiled appearance. 'Hah!' you snort. 'You are a fair-weather friend indeed. How soon you forget old pledges of comradeship when you think someone might be asking you for a handout!'

Lagrestin's face goes taut and white, and he fixes you with a burning stare as if willing the heavens to rain fire on you. Suddenly he snaps his fingers and four men dart from the crowd of traders to encircle you. The spice vendors stop their packing and haggling in order to watch the fight. Lagrestin himself melts into this gathering throng and is gone.

Turn to **405**.

191

As you step forward, the longshoremen pull long knives from their belts and begin to circle round, uttering stinging taunts in an attempt to goad you into a rash move. When they realise you are too experienced in the ways of battle to be taken in, they fall into a grim silence.

FLEE

		L		L	
L	1	2		L	
		3	4		
L			L		

Longshoremen

Fighting Prowess: 6 Damage per blow: 1 Die

Psychic Ability: 6 Awareness: 6

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: *first* 10 *fourth* 10

second 10 *fifth* 10

third 10 *sixth* 10

The landlord, Alexius, runs out into the street screaming for the night watch.

If you flee, turn to **107**. If you win within five rounds, turn to **416**. If you are still fighting after five rounds, turn to **329**.

192

'Do not allow idleness to take root in you,' cautions Tobias. 'Fix an objective in your heart, or the Enemy will put one there for you!' Before you can reply, he continues sternly: 'Let me suggest that you go out on patrol with some of my men this morning. You can help them police the streets, and perhaps you will gain some insight into the wellspring of energetic and virtuous action that we derive from our faith in God.'

If you agree to this proposal, turn to **69**. If you decline, turn to **92**.

193

You gather your belongings and walk out across the

quadrangle. Pausing at the gate, you look up and down the street in bewilderment. The city is already bustling with activity. Mules laden with massive baskets and crates are driven between the makeshift stalls. Fruits and wet fish are laid out on racks along the side of the street - to the delight of the city's many flies, which clog the air just as the traders clog the streets. Urchins run to and fro, jostling passers-by and adding their whooping laughter to the dizzying din of barter and argument. Beggars emerge wincing into the morning sunshine and take up positions at street corners, using grease-paint and dust to produce the sores that will earn them their daily wage . . .

Somewhere in all this teeming mass of humanity, there is someone who can tell you more about the Blood Sword blade. But where can you find him - or her? As you step out through the gateway, it strikes you that the task is like plunging into a desert storm in search of a single grain of sand. You can only pray that God, Destiny and all the angels are watching over you!

Did you uncover the Marijah sect's agent in the Capellars' headquarters? If so, turn to **174**. If not, turn to **462**.

194

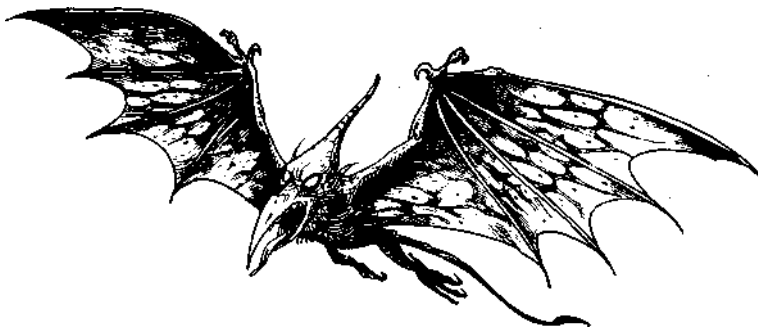
'Assurance?' He spreads his hands. 'What assurance can I give you? We are allies. I have the Hatuli and you have its eyes, and only by co-operating can we hope to achieve what we desire. Our interests do not conflict in any way. I have no use for the Sword of Life, any more than you have for the Sword of Death. Our goals are diametric, and there is surely no better guarantee against treachery than that.'

You must decide now: do you give him the

emeralds (turn to **347**) or not (turn to **384**)?

195

The longshoremen jump up as they hear the whisper of sword leaving scabbard. 'You detestable varlets,' you snarl through clenched teeth. 'Your insults and boorish ways would shame the lowest ore. Apologise, or else the time of reckoning for your many sins is now upon you!'



They reply by drawing long knives from their belts. Alexius runs out of the door, wailing for the night watch. You have a fight on your hands.

FLEE

		L		L
L	1	2		L
		3	4	
L			L	

Longshoremen

Fighting Prowess: 6

Psychic Ability: 6

Armour Rating: 0

Damage per blow: 1 Die

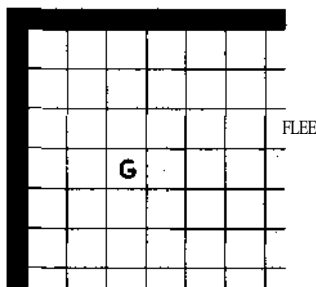
Awareness: 6

Endurance: <i>first</i>	10	<i>fourth</i>	10
<i>second</i>	10	<i>fifth</i>	10
<i>third</i>	10	<i>sixth</i>	10

If you *flee*, turn to **107**. If you win within five rounds, turn to **416**. If you are still fighting after five rounds, turn to **329**.

196

Her vision is coming back. *Now* you have a real fight on your hands . . .



(YOUR POSITIONS AS BEFORE.)

Giantess

Fighting Prowess: 8	Damage per blow: 5 Dice+1
Psychic Ability: 8	Awareness: 7
Armour Rating: 1	
Endurance: 65	

Note: If the Enchanter is here and Enthral's her, he or she should note down the number of this entry and then turn to **139**.

Remember to adjust her Endurance to take account of any wounds you have already inflicted.

If you win, turn to **474**. If you *flee*, turn to **498**.

197

If you want to stop playing now, turn to **332**. If you think your vein of good luck is not yet mined out, turn to **466**.

198

The servant takes you along one of the draughty corridors leading from the entrance hall. Halting by a threadbare tapestry, he pushes it aside to reveal an alcove strewn with reed mats.

'Sleeping arrangements are basic here,' he says superciliously as you gape in disbelief. 'This is a military barracks, not a hostelry.'

What will you reply? 'You insolent dog! You deserve a flogging.' (turn to **63**); 'This will not do; these mats are not comfortable enough to sleep on.' (turn to **115**); or 'Thank you. That is fine.' (turn to **205**)?

199

You run to the edge of the tower and prepare your mind for Levitation. But you hesitate a moment too long. The ghoul leaps to seize you and you both plummet to the ground. You land on him, losing ten



Dice Endurance points. Armour gives no protection from this damage. If still alive, you are gratified to see that the ghoul broke his neck in the fall. Nursing a sprained ankle, you stagger away from the tower.

Turn to **164**.

200

The adepts scatter in terror. The High Priest's face contorts in fury, his power ebbing now that they are no longer chanting the magical mantra. 'Do not break ranks!' he shouts as they flee. 'You leave me open to the ifrit's attack!'

The jinni sees that his foe's concentration is broken. He throws up his hands and brings them together with titanic force. A thunderbolt sizzles towards the High Priest, who attempts in vain to deflect it. He is engulfed in a fireball, and the accompanying rush of wind knocks you flat. You feel your eyebrows singe, but most of the heat passes overhead. When you look up, all that remains of the High Priest is a blackened skeleton clutching a wand. The skeleton sways and topples, falling apart like a bundle of twigs. Incredibly, the wand is undamaged; you can take it if you wish.

You encounter little resistance from the other Magians now that their leader is dead. They bring the sapling to you and, as you take it, you experience a tingle of restorative energy: any wounded player recovers two Dice Endurance. Record the sapling on your Character Sheet.

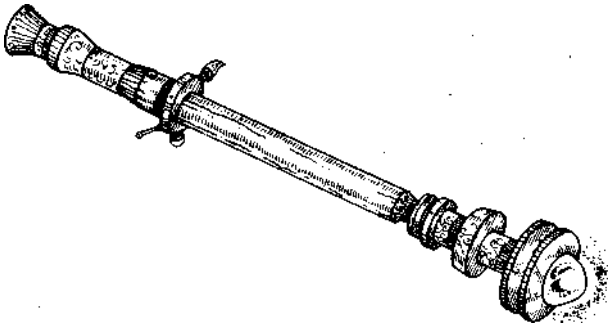
The jinni is looking smug when you return to the balcony. 'Our mission has been a most gratifying success,' he says as he lifts you in the palm of his hand. 'This has been a blow from which the Magians will not quickly recover!'

Turn to **494**.

201

A stroll along the shore turns up a fortuitous find: a bottle made of yellow copper, sealed with a lead bung which bears a curious glyph. Shrugging, you unstopper it to see what it contains.

Turn to **299**.



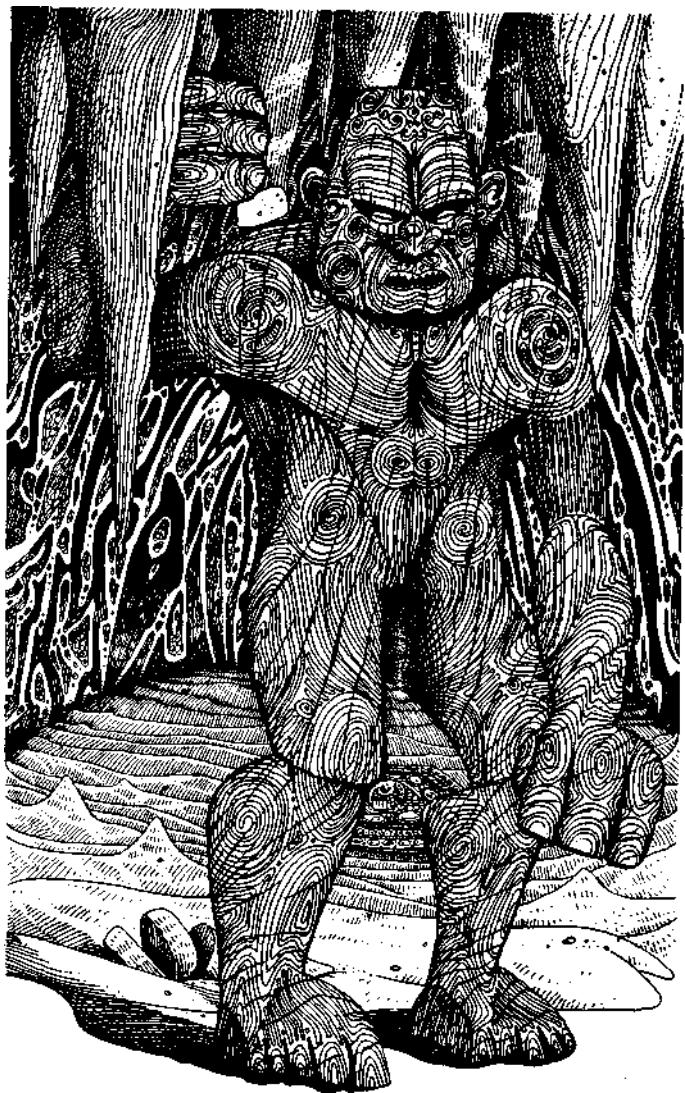
202

If you exchanged a fake for the genuine Hatuli, turn to **261**. If Susurrien still has the genuine Hatuli, turn to **493**.

203

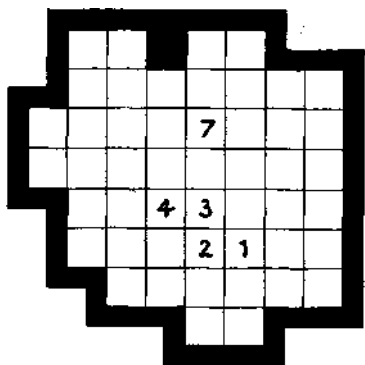
You prepare for sleep, but something in the corner of your thoughts keeps tugging you back to wakefulness. What if Lagrestin decides to try getting revenge for your interference earlier this evening? It might be more advisable to sleep with your armour on. More advisable but - in this heat - certainly less comfortable.

If you wish to don your armour, turn to **364**. If you think you would sleep more soundly without it, turn to **48**.



204

The Seven-in-One glares at you with eyes that are shards of seashell. Then it lifts its wooden fists and plods forward.



Seven-in-One

Fighting Prowess: 6

Damage per blow: 5 Dice

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 5

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: 45

Note: The Seven-in-One has no mind in the proper sense, and thus cannot be controlled by Servile Enthralment.

You cannot retreat now; you sense you are within a stone's throw of your goal - if only you can overcome this final threat.

If you wish to use an item, record the number **204** on your Character Sheet(s) and then turn to **402**. If you fight and win, turn to **243**.

205

You settle down to sleep on the thin mats. Though they are uncomfortable, you are sufficiently tired that you hardly notice . . .

The next thing you know, dawn light is spilling into the corridor from the high slit-windows set along its length. You push back the tapestry and step out of the alcove, stretching your limbs. The night's sleep has refreshed you, and any wounded player can restore Endurance equal to half his rank (rounding fractions up).

Turn to **146**.

206

You make your way cautiously along the tunnel. The growing daylight filtering down the well slips away into gloom behind you. Soon you reach a circular brick-lined chamber. An elaborate frieze set into a band of stone runs around the wall. The sequence of paintings on the frieze depicts a tall metallic figure wearing a three-pointed helmet. In one of the paintings it is shown attacking diminutive human figures who surround it, its mace scattering them like chaff. Another of the paintings features the metal warrior smashing the temples of the land to rubble. You notice only one painting in which it bows down to mortal men: the scene shows a group of priests commanding it by holding up their arms with the backs of their hands pressed together. Obviously some arcane magical gesture. You shrug, turning from the frieze to scan the room. There is only one exit. You pass through it and along a straight tunnel until you see a glimmer of light ahead.

Turn to **65**.

207

You come round hours later. It is night time. You are lying in a dank dungeon - presumably in the Citadel, where Crescentium's criminals are taken to

be executed or forgotten. Your swords have been taken (with the exception of a Crescentium steel blade and the Sword of Loge Skyrunner, if you have them), along with all your money, but you still have your other belongings.

With a moan of nausea at the aftereffects of Ulric's magic, you stagger to your feet and look around. The door is as secure as an oak, and the window at the top of the cell is really just a slit through which the rain can trickle in. You see no immediate way of escaping, so you decide to bide your time and let your jangling nerves recover from Ulric's Spell of Hypnotic Oblivion.

Turn to **470**.

208

Hearing the door close, the figure throws back his cowl and gives a gleeful chuckle.

'Now you are trapped here with me,' he chortles. 'The door can only be opened from outside.'

He is a leper, face obscenely ravaged by disease, and his eyes are filmed over with cataracts that blind him. He holds up a gold mirror in his rotting claw of a hand. This little device would have been the key to your quest - but now you'll never get out of here to use it. Ironic, eh?'

If there is a Trickster here, turn to **354**. If an Enchanter wishes to do something, turn to **218**. If neither the Trickster nor the Enchanter are in the party, turn to **448**.

209

They are like no seafarers' charts that you ever saw. Places from history and fable are mapped on a grid of ellipses and converging lines. Some of the symbols scrawled around the margin are taken from

Arcane, the sorcerers' script; others, you cannot identify at all.

Add another tick. If you wish to take some of the charts (several rolled up together count as one item) then record them on your Character Sheet(s).

If you have not already done so, you can now either search for the emeralds (turn to **148**) or open the other door (turn to **561**). If you have done both, you can leave (turn to **185**).

210

You almost do not need to row. As soon as you are caught in the current from the ship's bows you seem to be dragged towards her as though by an invisible hand. At one point you glance down into the water and glimpse a scarlet human-faced eel, thrashing mortally in the unbreathable ocean of middle-earth. It was presumably trapped in the undertow and pulled along with *The Devil's Runner* from whatever unearthly realm she last sailed through. The creature stares back at you with a look of desolate horror, then is dragged down out of sight.

Your prow bumps against the ship's side. Tethering your boat to the end of a mooring chain which dangles from the rail, you climb up on to the deck.

Turn to **374**.

211

He howls much more than your lenient blows really merit. After three strokes with a leather belt, you push him away. Nursing his shoulders - already showing a weal where you hit him- he slinks away.

You pull the tapestry across the alcove and lie down on the mats. They are uncomfortable, but you are so exhausted that you hardly notice. Within minutes you are fast asleep.

Turn to **160**.

212

You push through the crowds. Lagrestin's thugs chase you, but you shake them off in the back alleys and then double back to the market plaza. The call to prayer is ululating across the evening sky. The traders have dispersed - some to the mosques, the less devout to their gambling-dens. There is no sign of Lagrestin.

You consider your alternatives for a place to spend the night.

If the Warrior is in the party, you could try the Knights Capellars - turn to **47**. If the Sage is here, you could call on Emeritus the healer- turn to **173**. If you cannot or do not wish to try these options, you could look for a hostelry - turn to **579**.

213

(ENCHANTER) *[The crystalline egg both contains and is surrounded by very potent magic. You reel at the strength of such spells. Psychically dazzled, you decide against using Prediction.]*

If you now wish to go down the stairs, turn to **239**. If you want to break the egg, turn to **567**.

214

Now to deal with Susurrien -

You spin round, eyes glinting fiercely. Susurrien is standing with arms raised, as if about to cast a spell, but the expression on his face is one of astonishment. His arms lower as a trickle of blood runs from his mouth and splashes onto the green border of his robes. The sapphire in his turban, which has begun to shine with cobalt light, flickers and goes dark. Then he sways and falls lifeless to the floor of the cave.

An old man in a leather tunic is standing behind

him. He wipes his dagger on a square of black silk and sheathes it with a soft click. Each movement he makes is graceful and silent.

'Susurrien's history has caught up with him at last,' he says.

You are dumbfounded. 'Who on earth are you?' you demand. 'Where did you come from?'

'I am Susurrien's nemesis. Less poetically, you might know me as Hasan i-Sabbah. I am the Grandmaster of the Marijah Sect - the secret society that you Coradians call the Order of Assassins. Susurrien made many enemies in his time, many debts of vengeance. I came here today to repay those debts. And for another reason.'

'Not the Blood Sword . . . ?' You hope not. The tales of Hasan's prowess at his art are known throughout the world.

He looks at you, apparently relishing the idea of a battle no more than you do. 'No. I want its counterpart, the Sword of Death. It belonged to our Sect once, and I have come to reclaim it.'

You relax your fighting stance. 'In that case, Hasan i-Sabbah,' you say, 'lead on . . .'

Turn to **40**.

215

You go to fetch two Capellars from those on watch. By the time you bring them back to the alcove, the assassins have gone - possibly having taken some of your belongings with them. Each player rolls one Die for each item in his or her possession; on a roll of 5 or 6, the item has gone. You do not have to roll for your weapons (you're carrying them) or for the Blood Sword fragments (which are protected from common theft by their mythic power).

After checking that your assailants are not con-

cealed anywhere nearby, the two guards bid you good night. Your sleep for the rest of the night is tense and fitful. At dawn, each wounded player gets back two Endurance points. Yawning and with eyes full of sleep, you get up and set off in search of some breakfast. . .

Turn to **146**.

216

An old Ta'ashim man opens the door a crack and looks you over in the fading sunlight that is streaming through the decorative casement. 'Jablo?' he says - and, when you nod: 'Next floor.' You sigh and climb another flight of stairs. No one answers this door when you knock.

Will you try the door (turn to **301**) or wait for Jablo to return (turn to **535**)?

217

You see the wretch you beat earlier, skulking about in the corridor to watch the fight. You seize him and drag him before the officer commanding the night watch.

'Ha!' cries the officer. 'No doubt this is the detestable varlet who has been disclosing our secrets to the Marijah assassins. Well, varlet, you will be impaled at dawn.'

You are shuffling sleepily back to your bed when the officer calls you back: 'Your diligent action shall not go unrewarded. I will mention this to Sir Tobias, who will be most pleased with you.'

You nod, yawning, and go back to get what sleep you can. The sun rises an hour later (any wounded players get back two Endurance points) and, rubbing the sleep from your eyes, you get up to go to breakfast.

Turn to **146**.

218

(ENCHANTER) Much as it goes against your better judgement, you see no real alternative to summoning a Faltyn. It shimmers into being beside you, murmuring approval at the room's decor.

You notice the blind leper lift his head. He is looking straight at the Faltyn. He can see it!

['This diseased and eyeless individual has the gift of second sight.' explains the Faltyn. 'Luckily for him, he retained it despite the loss of his first sight. The one you called Psyche employed him as a reluctant oracle. As you know, she . . .']

'The door is locked,' you say, resisting the Faltyn's attempt to distract you from the matter at hand. 'I want you to flit outside and open it. Doubtless there will be some exorbitant price to pay . . . ?'

['Only the leper's gold mirror,' says the Faltyn casually. 'Take it from him and give it to me, and I shall arrange your release from this room.']

If you agree to give it the mirror, turn to **64**. If you refuse, turn to **263**.

219

(TRICKSTER) As you move to take a closer look at some of Susurrien's curios, you catch your foot on a rug and stumble against the table. Several of the counters fall to the floor.

'Clumsy dolt!' snaps Susurrien, glowering at you as he recovers the counters. 'You Coradians move with the grace of pregnant camels.'

'Sorry,' you reply, setting the toppled Hatuli back on its feet. *[You have switched the fisherman's doll for the real Hatuli. Susurrien is too irritated to notice.]*

Turn to **86**.

220

You consider your options.

If there is a Trickster in the party who wants to try something, he or she should turn to **78**. If the Enchanter is here and wants to try something, he or she should turn to **425**. If they are not with you, or if they don't want to act, turn to **334**.

221

'You have arrived too late in the day for a meal,' replies Tobias without a hint of a smile. (Looking at his harsh angular face, you suspect he *never* smiles.) 'Eating at this hour is unhealthy and would render you vulnerable to demons who might descend on you in the night. To sleep with an empty stomach is to live the life that the Lord intended for us.' He uses the sign of the Cross like a military salute.

Bidding him good evening, you turn away and follow the servant.

Turn to **198**.

222

You quickly take out the bottle and remove the stopper. No jinni arises from it to help you this time, and the dog-headed creature has lunged at you with its spear before you can do anything else.

Turn to **286** for the fight, but the player with the bottle loses his or her action for the first Round.

223

(ENCHANTER) You teleport out of the way a split-second before the jinni's foot crunches down with an impact that makes the whole island shudder. Not suspecting that you escaped, he grinds down with all his weight until the pebbles under his heel are turned to powder. Then he lifts his foot. The

broad grin on his face turns to a look of puzzlement, then blank disbelief, and finally a scowl of disappointment. You cannot help but laugh.

Hearing your laughter, he turns his head and sees you standing on the clifftop. 'You trickster!' he snarls.

'Not I,' you say, spreading your hands. 'We had a wager, which you have lost. Now you must bow down and serve me.' You chose the destination for your teleport well; the clifftop puts you nearer his eye-level.

The jinni grunts and folds his arms. 'I shall never bow to any mortal, but - grudgingly - I accept that I am the loser. I must now serve you as stipulated in our agreement.'

Turn to **525**.

224

(SAGE) You gently rise into the air and ascend until you are level with the minaret. Stepping onto the balcony, you enter the tower, which is lit by a trickle of moonshine. An elaborate filigree of silver mesh covers the walls. After finding a flight of stairs, you descend to the ground floor and unbolt the door of the tower before beginning your exploration.

Turn to **279**.

225

You dive over the side and swim powerfully away from the ship.

Turn to **99**.

226

You give Jablo a shove that propels him out of the doorway.

'Go, then. Forget the many favours and debts of

honour from your past as though they were but the songs of nightingales. It is said that God notes all deeds, be they great or small, lofty or mean-spirited. You may think it is all the same as you must be destined for Hell anyway after the life you have led! But consider this, Jablo, old friend: this churlishness is one more mark on the tally of your sins, and the Devil will be delighted to make you account for it when the time comes

'In that case,' says Jablo quickly over his shoulder, 'let me do you one small service for old times' sake, so that God and the Devil both know my conscience to be clear on this score. Go to the Tower of the Throne of Purple, a hostelry between the residential and dockland districts. One of the habitues of the dorm is an old Ta'ashim sailor whom many believe to be an inveterate liar. I believe otherwise. If you hear his story to its conclusion, God may reward your perseverance.'

You nod, considering this. 'Good luck with tonight's . . . um, business . . .'

Jablo darts off. You step out into the square, now nearly empty. The sky is now an expanse of blue velvet on which the stars are appearing like gleaming baubles. A patrol of militia stroll from the avenue opposite where you are standing and go to drink from a fountain.

If you wish to warn them of the assassination Jablo is planning at the Governor's household tonight, turn to **51**. If you decide to head straight for the Tower of the Throne of Purple, turn to **406**.

227

Much as it hurts your pride to run from such curs, it is still better than getting hurt physically. You race away from the inn with your assailants in hot

pursuit, but you manage to shake them off in the darkened backstreets. You decide it is not advisable to return to The Sorcerous Coconut, as Lagrestin's thugs will probably have gone back there to lie in wait for you. (And this means that if you took off your armour to sleep, then you have now lost it.)

Turn to **164**.

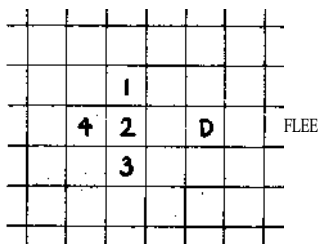
228

(TRICKSTER) You step back into the park for a moment and crouch down to search amid the gravel of the path. *[You quickly find what you are looking for: two sharp greenish pebbles. You press them into the doll's face. It does not look much like the Hatuli, but in poor light it might deceive a casual glance . . .]* You go back out onto the avenue.

Turn to **134**.

229

This fog has the stink of faerie,' snarls a voice you recognise as Psyche's. 'Now I have identified that, it is easy to find a spell to negate it.' She whistles a wild melody, and a wind springs up at once to disperse the fog. As the last tatters are swept away, a fearsome demon with two bestial heads is revealed. Psyche stands behind it. She points at you and screams: 'Rend this vermin limb from limb!'



Demon

Fighting Prowess: 8

Damage per blow: 5 Dice

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 8

Armour Rating: 4

Endurance: 60

If you *flee*, turn to **152**. If you defeat the demon, you can advance to take on Psyche herself - turn to **177**.

230

Sharkan weeps with joy. This rug . . . this rug . . .' he says, hugging it to him. 'It was the greatest work of my lifetime. The breath of the Most High inspired me when I wove it. Now that it has been returned to me, my heart is whole and my happiness unbounded.'

'Not all are as happy as you,' you say, sweeping a hand out towards the sea. 'While you cry tears of contentment into your magical rug, others may face great hardship and difficult trials. Some may even now be wondering how to make a journey across leagues of cruel ocean. Did the Almighty merely return your property to you on a whim? Not at all! He intends that you shall aid those who do His work.'

'You are right!' says Sharkan, nodding vigorously. This is how I shall devote the rest of my allotted span. And first, as you have delivered my rug to me, I shall take you wherever in the world you wish to go.'

He lays the carpet down on the road and you step on to it. Immediately it sweeps up into the sky and, though neither you nor Sharkan has uttered a word, begins to glide south over the ocean.

'Augustus required a stone talisman in order to control the carpet,' you tell Sharkan.

'He was the prince of fools, then; like the man who broke open his gourd to drink when he had only to pour from it. Perhaps you know the story called "The Three Merchants and the Camel" ... ?'

Sharkan keeps you entertained with stories until you reach the point where, according to the astrological chart, Hunguk's ship will appear. Spotting an island, you ask Sharkan to set you down. Once you have assured him that you will be content to wait here, he bids you farewell and flies off into the clouds.

Turn to **260**.

231

The stranger who claimed to be a sultan was actually a ravening ghoul! He waits until his interminable tale has lulled you to sleep, then gnaws the flesh from your bones. You are one more corpse among those lying on the charnel tower grille, but the vultures will not even find scraps to peck from your bones after the ghoul has finished his meal.



232

It would be best to have any cuts seen to at once,' the Selentine captain tells you. 'Longshoremen carry dirty blades which are like to give a festering wound. Let me take you now to the house of Emeritus, a leech who lives not far from here.'

He escorts you to the house - a narrow, stucco-walled building set back from the road behind an ornamental fountain - and leaves you with Emeritus's servant. The servant is a slim half-caste girl with almond eyes. She shows you to a vestibule where you can sleep, explaining that her master is visiting a patient and will be back in the morning. As she draws a triptych across the vestibule entrance to give you some privacy, you have already slumped down on the cushions there and are drifting off to sleep.

If the Sage is with the party, turn to **159**. If not, turn to **258**.

233

As you walk into the gathering gloom of the tunnel you notice a dim, glowing light at its end and standing before it a black-cloaked figure, its hand raised as if warning you not to continue any further. You approach it nevertheless and it suddenly pitches forward, collapsing into a heap of yellow mouldering bones held together by a ragged, black cloak. A grating set into the ceiling comes clanging down behind you, and you hear a low, preternatural cackle. Somewhere in front of you, there is an invisible creature. You hear its slithering footsteps on the damp stone as it approaches you.

If there is a Sage in the party, turn to **109**. Otherwise, turn to **476**.

234

(TRICKSTER) *[You can see what the longshoremen's game is. They are deliberately letting you win, using several sets of weighted dice. Doubtless one of them will soon suggest raising the ceiling on bets, so as to lure you into staking and losing everything. And if you were as*

naive as they seem to think, flushed by the excitement of your winning streak, the ploy might well have worked. You shake your head despairingly - not at their morals, which are on a par with your own, but at their amateurishness.]

By sleight of hand you contrive to lose back the coins the longshoremen caused you to win, until you (and your companions, if any) have the same amount you started with. Then, taking the Dice, you roll them expertly so that you score double six over and over again. The longshoremen look on with mounting incredulity. They have never witnessed such skilful legerdemain before in all their villainous lives.

'Be grateful I am too tired to continue playing,' you tell them. 'Otherwise I would certainly relieve you of every coin in your money pouches. Landlord! I will now inspect the accommodation, if you please. . .'

Alexius the landlord hurries to your side.

Turn to **106**.

235

(SAGE) You must adopt the proper state of mind. You relax your muscles, easing yourself into a state of sublime contemplation.

Turn either to **224** or to **315** - you decide which.

236

Alexius awakens you at dawn and gives you a dry brown porridge which, though bitter and grainy, is very nourishing. Each wounded player recovers Endurance equal to half his or her rank (rounding fractions up) for the night's rest, plus one point for breakfast.

When you point with some outrage to a weevil at

the bottom of your porridge bowl, a pilgrim on the next bed eagerly picks it out and chews it. 'Weevils provide the distinctive taste of Alexius's famous porridge!' he declares, smacking his lips.

This makes you feel rather queasy, and you hurry outside to drink from a fountain you noticed at the side of the street. As you are engaged in this, you see a number of sick and destitute people gathering outside a narrow white-walled house nearby.

Alexius, who has come outside to throw slops into the street, notices your curiosity. 'That is the house of Emeritus, a physician,' he says. 'I have heard it said that he is the wisest man in Outremer.'

'Thank you, Alexius,' you reply, taking a final sip of water from the fountain. 'That information is worth a gold piece, even if your hostelry is not.'

Ignoring his splutter of indignation, you stroll away towards Emeritus's house. Fortune has brought you to the very man who might be able to help you in your quest!

Turn to **419**.

237

What was the secret word that causes the Roc to descend? You rack your brains to remember, then pronounce: 'Tathi.' (turn to **68**); or 'Tshaba.' (turn to **108**); or 'Tawi.' (turn to **549**).

238

(WISHING PLAYER) You turn to give the jinni your command. 'With your power of Potentiation, endow me with superhuman strength and skill.' (Cross off one of the boxes you are using to keep track of your wishes.)

He crosses his eyes, incanting an ancient spell, and green globules of light float along his gaze to

envelop you. As they sink into your body, you feel an intoxicating surge of raw power run along every nerve.

[The glow fades, but you are changed forever into something more than human. Your flesh is strong as iron mesh now, and adds one to your Armour Rating. Your naked fists can strike with the force of sledge-hammers, so you do not need to reduce your Fighting Prowess and damage rolls when fighting without a weapon. Your strength, dexterity and intuition are all increased: add one to your Fighting Prowess, Awareness and Psychic Ability scores. Your Endurance score is permanently increased by ten points.]

The jinni surveys his handiwork. 'Excellent. You now have an aura of power which I respectfully suggest you lacked before . . .'

'Enough of your impertinence!' you snarl at him. New intensities of emotion have accompanied the change, and it may take you some time to get used to them.

Turn to **338**.

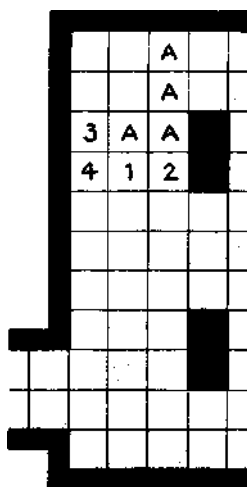
239

You descend into a high-pillared chamber. Plaques of beaten copper hang along the side walls, engraved with images from Magian myth. At the end of the chamber, on a raised podium, you see the sapling. A halo of light hangs around its grey branches - perhaps just the glow of sunrise, perhaps not.

Archways lead out from here onto the balcony. The High Priest and his adepts stand there, locked in battle with the jinni. Spells of fire and black smoke are being flung back and forth through the air. You pause to watch for a moment as the High Priest closes a pall of mist around the jinni, who

breaks free by summoning a thunderous gale . . .

There are four acolytes guarding the sapling. As their attention is fixed on the occult battle raging outside, you are able to get within a few feet before they notice you.



Acolytes

Fighting Prowess: 8

Damage per blow: 1 Die+1

Psychic Ability: 6

Awareness: 6

Armour Rating: 1

Endurance: *first* 10

third 10

second 10

fourth 10

If you win, turn to **527**.

240

Your worst fears are confirmed: the second shell breaks open and you are faced with yet another murderous wooden monster.

Seven-in-One

Fighting Prowess: 8

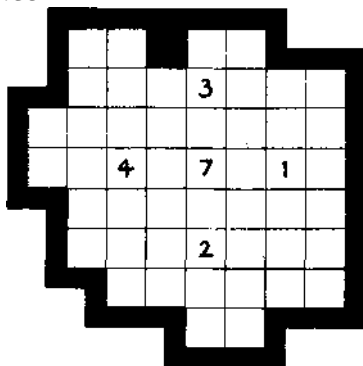
Damage per blow: 4 Dice+1

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 5

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: 35



Note: The Seven-in-One has no mind in the proper sense, and thus cannot be controlled by Servile Enthrallment.

If you wish to use an item, record the number **240** on your Character Sheet(s) and then turn to **402**. If *you fight* and win, turn to **87**.

241

You lose back all the money you had won and - just to cap this with a final indignation - you leave the game poorer by one gold piece than when you started. Cross this off your Character Sheet. Irritably, you call for Alexius to show you to your rooms
Turn to **106**.

242

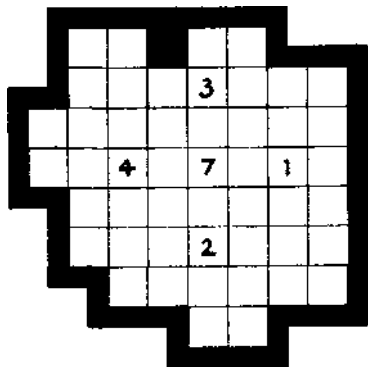
The bunks are metallic, and each pallet is criss-

crossed with a network of silver filigree. The flooring here is some sort of grey, springy wood. Moving against one of the bunk posts, you jostle a dead crewman and are startled by its skeletal hand dropping to brush your hair. Shaken, you head towards the stern.

Record another tick and turn to **564**.

243

The monster sways - and suddenly cracks apart like a nut. Another idol, slightly smaller but otherwise identical, steps from within the broken husk! You have an unpleasant inkling now as to why it is called the Seven-in-One . . .



Seven-in-One

Fighting Prowess: 7

Damage per blow: 4 Dice+2

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 5

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: 40

Note: The Seven-in-One has no mind in the proper sense, and thus cannot be controlled by Servile Enthralment.

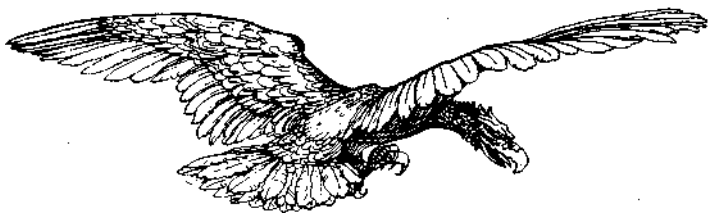
If you wish to use an item, record the number **243**

on your Character Sheet(s) and then turn to **402**. If *you fight* and win, turn to **240**.

244

At last it does. Strutting to the cave mouth, the bird peers to and fro into the dusk before launching itself out into space. You plummet sickeningly for an instant before it spreads its wings, then with languid beats it rises high up into the heavens. Breathtakingly, you are suspended between the stars and the glittering lights of Crescentium. Then the giant bird soars out over the ocean. The water far below is like a sheet of black onyx split by a smear of phosphor from the rising moon. You find the air cool and thin, but each breath is exhilarating. The Roc sweeps on across the skies, unaware of the tiny burden it carries tied to its claw, and in barely an hour you are above the point where Susurrien's chart says Hunguk's ship will appear. A small island is visible, washed by moonlit surf.

Did you hear the tale told by the ghoul on the charnel tower? If so, *or* if the Sage is in the party, turn to **237**. If neither of those applies, turn to **68**.



245

(SAGE) Bear in mind that you must be the only player (or the only *surviving* player) in order to use this avenue of retreat. You could not very well Levitate yourself to safety if you were abandoning

comrades by doing so. (If you are *not* a solitary adventurer, return to **534** for the combat, missing one Round's action.)

If you are alone and wish to Levitate, turn to either **199** or **413**. Your success hinges on which of these two numbers you choose.

246

(TRICKSTER) You write a letter for the excited hunchback and tell him to take it to the wizard's house. You invent a set of elaborate directions that will keep him wandering for hours in the hills outside Crescentium.

Clutching his letter, the hunchback escorts you to a postern gate of the Citadel and bids you farewell. It is dusk. You watch him lurching through the market square where the traders are packing up their wares. His ugly face is suffused with a look of radiant joy. Would some people say you have been cruel to him? At least you have given the poor wretch an hour or two of hope to brighten the rest of his miserable life. And you have secured your own freedom, of course: doing well while doing good...

Turn to **164**.

247

'Let's not be too hasty, Borkus,' says Lagrestin to the scar-faced man. He steps closer to you and whispers, 'Be off with you now. They will kill you.'

You cast a level glance at the ill-assorted band of ruffians behind him. 'They might *try* . . . Lagrestin, where can you recommend as a place to spend the night?'

He throws up his hands. 'Is that all? You risked your lives to ask me this? Very well - I'll write you a letter of introduction to take to Tobias de Vantery.'

He is the Commander of the Knights Capellars here.'

He hastily scribbles a note and tells you to take it to the Temple of the Roc. Rather than going back the way you came, you make a point of striding forward so that Lagrestin's cronies have to move out of your way. Borkus returns your cool gazes with a glare of hatred.

Turn to **47**.

248

Luck seems to be with you tonight. After several bets you have won more often than you lost, and you are now up by five gold pieces on what you started the game with. The longshoremen wear lugubrious faces and sip their wine sadly as they contemplate their own dwindling piles of coins.

If the Trickster is here, he or she should turn to **234**. If not, turn to **197**.

249

You march over to the Badawin. 'Where can one obtain lodging at a reasonable rate in this city?' you ask.

They look up, smiling indulgently at your northern brusqueness. 'Assuredly not here, my friend,' says one whose voice is rich and resonant. The others give a murmur of laughter. Tariq is a notorious crook. Some say he was not born, but stolen from a stall in the bazaar by his mother!' You are surprised to see that even Tariq laughs at this, apparently not taking the slur very personally. 'Why not try the Tower of the Throne of Purple? It is not far from here in terms of distance, but is a thousand days' journey in terms of price. It is not quite so elegant as The Sorcerous Coconut, but the tariff is acceptable.'

You obtain directions to the hostelry he has mentioned, then set out.

Turn to **406**.

250

(ENCHANTER) You wait impatiently for hours, until at last you hear the shuffling footsteps of the hunchback approaching on the other side of the door. The panel slides open and a few dry crusts of bread are pushed through.

'There is no gruel today,' says the hunchback. 'My dog ate it and has been taken ill.'

'Why is there no water, at least?' you demand.

The hunchback grins at you through the barred window. 'The dog will need water to cool its fever. Surely you do not begrudge the poor animal a few cups of water? I will bring you some tomorr - Ahhh!'

Your spell of Servile Enthralment closes on his mind. Roll two Dice. On a roll of 5 or less, turn to **45**. On a roll of 6 or more, turn to **95**.

251

You approach a furtive vagabond who directs you to a hostelry called the Tower of the Throne of Purple. Hearing his unpleasant snigger as you pass by, you whirl and glare at him, hands hovering threateningly near your weapons. He gives a deep bow and hobbles off. You set off towards the hostelry.

Turn to **406**.

252

(ENCHANTER) *[You sense a powerful - and undoubtedly hostile - spell being woven about the villa. Someone with considerable sorcerous ability means you harm.*

Surely it can only be Psyche herself. . .?]

If the Trickster is with you and wishes to reconnoitre, he or she should turn to **491**. If not, turn to **372**.

253

You walk back out to the terrace with the abbot while considering his request. It seems from what he has told you that his venture is as important as your own. But should you give priority to helping him recover the sapling, or to travelling on to Hakbad and finding the last segment of the Blood Sword?

You are brought out of your reverie by the abbot's gasp on seeing the jinni. 'It is a Ta'ashim demon!' he shouts. 'Get back, before it sees us!'

'Ah, you have returned at last,' says the jinni, completely ignoring him. 'And you have a new companion. He appears to be a very excitable old man. . .'

'Show some respect,' you reply. 'He is an abbot.'

The abbot is dazed. 'You . . . you know this creature? You control it? By the hallows -'

The jinni stretches out his hand to the marble balustrade. 'Are you now ready to resume the journey?' he asks you. 'Say farewell to the lord abbot and we shall be on our way.'

If you have a gold mirror, turn to **367**. If not, turn to **19**.

254

Psyche turns and sneers as your comrade lapses into a deep trance. 'Enough of this charade!' she hisses. 'Your conversation bores me, and now - for a reason you shall never learn - I intend to annihilate you.'

Turn to **177**, but note that the player who drank the fluid (indicated as Player 1 on the tactical map) is in a trance and can take no part in the fray for the first six rounds.

255

(SAGE) *Just as I let go of this bird's claw, you think to yourself, I must let go of being.* It is the thought that is your downfall. Literally. You plunge like a boulder towards the sea, unable to clear your mind. The waves of panic keep pulling you back to reality - the reality in which gravity is pulling you down in a deadly embrace. The waves of the sea close over your head.

As you gulp the salt water into your lungs, gravity and reality let go of you at last.

You cease to exist.



256

You swing the point of the spear through the air. Is it a magic weapon, which will pierce Icon's heart if he attacks you again? You have no way of knowing. Turn to **130**, but note that the player using the spear will take three Rounds to get used to its balance, and must deduct one point from his or her Fighting Prowess while doing so.

257

'It was most kind of you to take the trouble to help me,' says the woman in exotically accented Beau-

languer. She steps forward, and you notice the heady scent of jasmine that pervades her long robes. She presses a large silver key on you. 'This unlocks the secret doors into my garden,' she says. There are many ways there, all over the Ta'ashim world. These words may seem puzzling to you now, but if you are in need of a place to hide, then an ape will guide you to the scented garden of Fatima. Go with God.' She bows and slips past you, silent as silk.

Record Fatima's silver key on your Character Sheet if you intend to keep it. You can also take the Thulanders' battleaxes and shortswords if you wish.

Leaving the alley, you find no sign of Fatima. Shrugging, you continue on your way to meet the mysterious Prince Susurrien.

Turn to **73**.

258

You awaken to the sounds of bustle in the street outside. It is morning. As you get up to look out of the window, the serving-girl enters with a breakfast of oranges, buttermilk and spiced cakes. Each player (if wounded) recovers Endurance equal to half his or her rank for the night's rest, plus one Endurance point for eating. Round fractions up.

The girl comes back to take the empty tray. 'Emeritus should be back within an hour or so,' she tells you in her lilting-accented Beaulangue. 'I will bring him to see you just as soon as he returns.'

She leads him in to see you shortly before noon. Though obviously weary after a long journey, his clothes covered with the dust of the road, he wastes no time but immediately applies a salve to your cuts. 'It is as well you came to me,' he says as he

winds on a dressing. 'The dirt of Outremer contains pathogenic particles which must be neutralised before they can enter the body. Quite often these particles are passed on when the patient's blood is let, which is why I do not subscribe to that practice.'

A leech who doesn't believe in blood letting! You almost laugh out loud at Emeritus's eccentric theories - but you cannot deny that his salve has a very soothing effect.

As he turns away, his eyes fall on the hilt and scabbard where they lie among your belongings. A shaft of sunlight has caught them, making the jewel-encrusted metal glitter. Emeritus stares in amazement. 'If I am not mistaken,' he gasps, 'surely these are fragments of the Sword of Life? I believed it was lost, destroyed forever . . .'

Turn to **60**.

259

Lagrestin is just flitting into a back alley. You hurry after him, keeping to the shadows. He seems unaware that he is being followed, and after a furtive glance back he heads towards the poorest quarter of town.

Turn to **431**.

260

You spend two days on the island. The climate is comfortable and the air is invigorating: each wounded player recovers Endurance points equal to his or her rank. (You cannot go above your starting Endurance, of course.)

You are not able to catch any fish - you see none in the sea around the island - but you do find a trickle of a stream which provides you with fresh water. You also collect some fruit, despite your first

impression that the island was barren, and it proves most nourishing. Any player who is still suffering from wounds can restore one additional Endurance point for this meal.

Turn to **488**.

261

The little mannikin jumps from your haversack and runs over to the edge of the well. You go over and peer down. The well is as dark as a grave, but at least it seems to be dry.

The Hatuli will guide you through the underworld that lies below. The sequence you will need to follow is this: *Left-hand path. Left-hand arch. Turn right at first junction. Turn left at second junction.* Note this sequence down on the back of your Character Sheet(s). You might also wish to note down the number of this entry in case you need to refer back.

You climb down into the well.

Turn to **477**.

262

Another scent mingles with the tang of orange blossom on the evening breeze. It is a rich heady perfume. Metal jewellery clatters softly like wind chimes, and suddenly you are aware of a slim young woman standing among the trees just off the road.

'I am Psyche,' she says with a musical laugh. 'I'm sorry if you've had trouble finding me. My house is this way.'

She steps closer and raises her arm to indicate a side path leading obliquely through the orange grove. Strange that you failed to notice it before. You see now that she wears a cloak and pyjamas of gold and flame-red silk, and embroidered velvet

slippers in the Ta'ashim style. But her skin is a luminous white in the gleam of the rising moon, and she does not mask her face with gauze as a Ta'ashim woman would. Judging by her accent, you guess she is from Batubatan or Yamato.

With Psyche leading the way, you soon arrive at the villa.

Turn to **121**.

263

(ENCHANTER) You take the gold mirror from the leper, ignoring his bleated protestations, but you do not hand it to the faltyn. After turning it over in your hands, you suddenly hold it up and whirl round to face the faltyn. 'A Magic Mirror!' you cry. 'See how it reflects even your fay features. Shall I use it to capture your essence, then force you to serve me forever?'

['No!' quails the faltyn. 'I spoke in merest jest when I asked for payment just now. Of course I shall be happy to set you free.' It transforms itself into a translucent blue key and sinks ethereally into the surface of the door.]

There is a click, and the door swings open. The faltyn is hovering uncertainly in the corridor outside. 'Begone from my sight, you unreal knave,' you tell it as you pocket the mirror. (Remember to note this down among the items on your Character Sheet.)

It bows and wavers out of existence. If you have not already done so, you might like to try the other door - turn to **377** if so. If you go up to the second landing, turn to **97**. If you would prefer to go back to your rooms now and get some sleep, turn to **151**.

264

You vault over the sarcophagus, smashing the loll-

ing skeleton as you do so. With a deafening crash the sarcophagus shatters into a thousand fragments against the sealed door behind you. Thankful for your narrow escape, you make your way up the corridor. Soon you find an area where a number of other stone sarcophagi are stacked, many with their skeletal occupants still in them, wrapped in their winding sheets. The groove in the centre of the corridor peters out here and the passage forks.

You can either go left (turn to **542**) or straight on (turn to **554**).

265

The boat cracks apart like a walnut. Each player must roll one Die. On a roll of 1-5 the player shrugs off his or her armour and is able to swim to the surface; remember to cross off the armour, which is lost. On a roll of 6, the player is caught in a downward current and drowned.

Survivors must also roll one Die for each item they possess. On a roll of 1-5 the item is still with you, but a roll of 6 indicates that you lost it in the wreck. If either the hilt or the scabbard of the Blood Sword is lost, you must turn at once to **475**.

If you still have the hilt and scabbard, survivors turn to **339**.

266

Lagrestin's accomplices rush in to attack you. You can see that a lifetime amid Crescentium's seedy underworld has given them a vicious fighting instinct. They do not at all mind ganging up on an opponent.

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		1		S		S	
FLEE		2		5			
	4	3		S		S	
					S		

Smugglers

Fighting Prowess: 8

Damage per blow: 1 Die+1

Psychic Ability: 6

Awareness: 6

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: *first* 12

fifth 12

second 12

sixth 12

third 12

seventh 12

fourth 12

eighth 12

If you win, turn to **444**. If you *flee* turn to **324**.

267

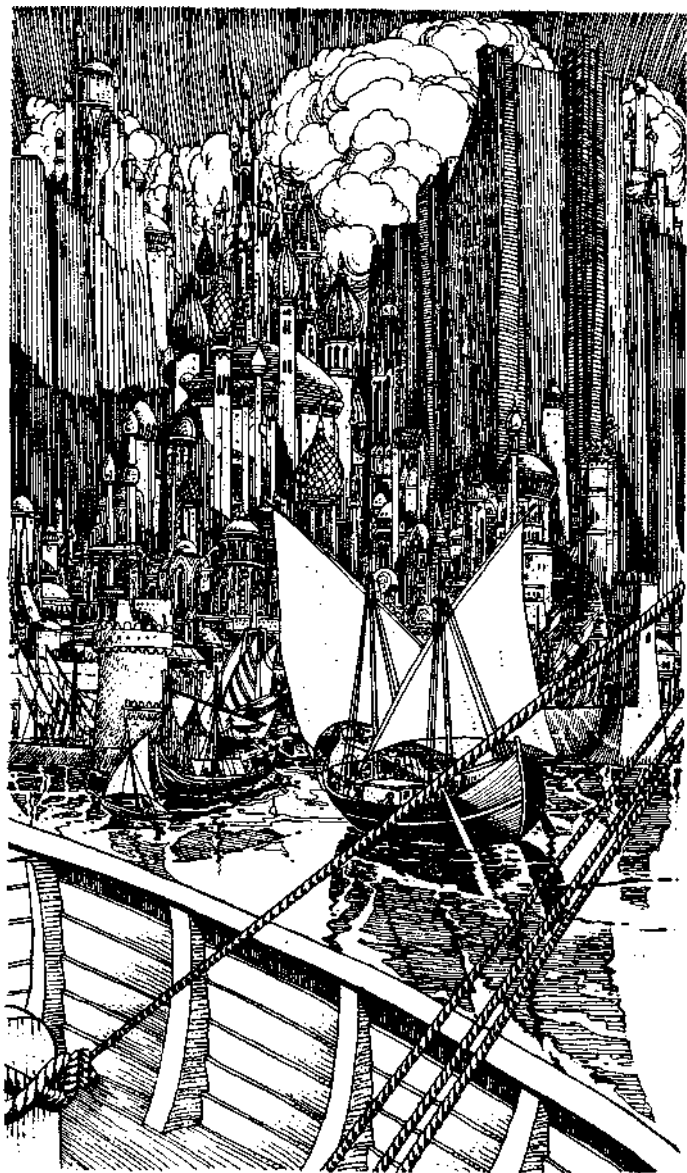
(WISHING PLAYER) You command the jinni to use his power of Invigoration. He stoops and breathes upon you, using his hands to fan tendrils of flame from the sparks in his lungs. The flames lick around you, but they do not burn - instead they fill you with renewed energy for your quest. All players can restore their Endurance scores to the level they were at the start of this adventure. Anyone who was already at maximum Endurance should add two points to his or her score; this is a permanent gain.

Now that you have expended one of your wishes, cross off one of the boxes you are using to keep track of them.

Turn to **338**.

268

Susurrien must even now be heading towards his



goal. Your fists pound the door futilely. You hear no sound from beyond. Your enemy might have succumbed to a final trap, or he might now be lifting the Sword of Death in his hands. Either way, you have failed in your quest.

269

Crescentium. The first city taken by the Coradian armies in the Crusade, it is a mighty port protected by fortified walls like the flanks of a great armoured dragon. It is from here that the first Crusaders launched their wars against the heathen Ta'ashim, and it is still the greatest port of all Outremer.

Jewelled minarets shimmer in the dusty haze of late afternoon sunlight as you sail into the magnificent harbour and slide in among the vessels at the quay. The scent of exotic spices, incense and hashish fills the air as you step ashore - only to be instantly surrounded by crowds of swarthy beggars vying with one another for your charity.

But you have no charity to spare for men who choose to live like parasites. With a snarl of distaste, you shoulder them aside and start up a steep alleyway leading to the Palatine Area. There you find the Hall of Records and register your arrival in the city before going to find lodging for the night.

Where will you stay? Each player has his or her own contacts here in Crescentium, and in a multi-player group you must agree whose contacts to make use of.

If the Enchanter wishes to suggest a place to stay, turn to **165**. If the Sage would like to suggest somewhere, turn to **450**. If you wish to consider the Warrior's suggestion, turn to **20**. If you would like to look up one of the dubious acquaintances that the Trickster has made in his time, turn to **441**.

Did you manage to put a wooden doll in place of the genuine Hatuli? If so, turn to **178**.

If Susurrien still has the Hatuli, he will have fled with it by now. You have no way of finding the Blood Sword blade. Your quest ends in failure.



The other door to the cabin suddenly flies open. Harsh grey-blue light floods in. A figure stands there whose shoulders are as broad as the beam of a Mercanian longboat. Even in this tall cabin he has to stoop. His harness of pitted iron plates tolls like a bell as he raises his arms. In each hand he holds a gore-spattered axe.

'Who presumes to steal the Reaver's hoard?' he thunders. 'You'll pay a toll of blood for this villainy!'

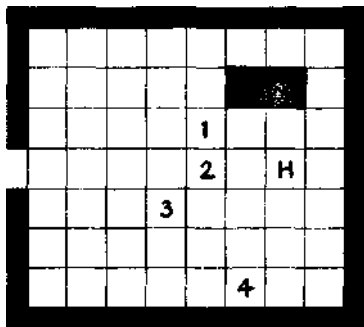
You size him up. You are not eager to fight this battle. Hunguk is no longer a mortal man. The centuries have turned him into a mythic figure:

The Reaver.

The Master Mariner.

The Lord of the Seven Seas . . .

Unfortunately he stands in the way of your quest for the Blood Sword. If you must overcome him to obtain the emeralds which you need - then so be it.



Hunguk

Fighting Prowess: 10

Damage per blow: 6 Dice

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 9

Armour Rating: 5

Endurance: 100

Note: Hunguk strikes twice every Round (once with each of his two axes). He is immune to the spell of Servile Enthralment - no mere mortal could hope to command the Pirate-King.

You cannot afford *to flee*. If you win, turn to **547**.

272

(WARRIOR) 'Hold!' you bellow up at the jinni. I have fought with all manner of creatures, foul and fell, that the Evil One put upon this earth. I do not intend to submit without a struggle now, not even to one as mighty as you.'

'What do you suggest?' asks the jinni, restraining his laughter.

Folding your arms, you give him a defiant look. 'A wrestling contest in the Emphidian style. The first of us to fall is the loser, and must submit to the victor's will.'

The jinni shakes in merriment. 'Now whose

brains are addled? You cannot have failed to notice the discrepancy in our heights and weights

'It is counterbalanced by the huge discrepancy in our intelligence,' you reply, turning to run.

The jinni, with a bellow of rage, steps after you as you scramble up the cliff beside the shoreline. Each step he takes covers fifty of your strides - but he moves slowly and, after a millennium's imprisonment, clumsily.

If you have a sword, turn to **401**. If you are without a weapon, turn to **138**.

273

A low vibration fills the air, drawing your attention to the dimensional portal. It is now flickering with a hard grey-blue light, and you can discern a broad-shouldered warrior coming towards you through the confusion of geometric images. Hunguk - returning to his ship!

Frantically you scan the cabin. You must find the emeralds before Hunguk gets here. Where will you look?

Among the curios on the shelf (turn to **37**) or under the charts on the table (turn to **508**)?

274

With a hideous scraping of fingernails on the hard stone side of the chamber, you manage to claw your way back to the entrance which you came through. You have lost one Endurance point through your ordeal. You realise that there is no safe way to get across this chamber and that you must return to the well bottom at **477** and select another tunnel.

275

You command the jinni to use his power of Invigo-

ration. He stoops and breathes upon you, using his hands to fan tendrils of flame from the sparks in his lungs. The flames lick around you, but they do not burn - instead they fill you with renewed energy for your quest. All players can restore their Endurance scores to the level they were at the start of this adventure. (Anyone who was already at maximum Endurance should add two points to his or her score; this is a permanent gain.)

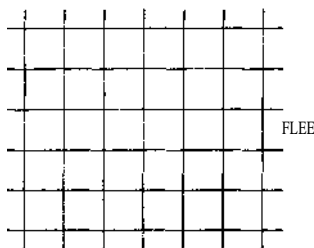
Now that you have expended one of your wishes, cross off one of the boxes you are using to keep track of them.

Turn to **140**.

276

Psyche bites her lip hard and spits into her palm. The gobbet of blood sizzles and becomes a tendril of vapour which takes shape and substance. She is now armed with a glowing scarlet sword!

Deploy yourselves as before.



Slaves

Fighting Prowess: 8

Damage per blow: 1 Die+2

Psychic Ability: 6

Awareness: 6

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: *first* 15

second 15

Psyche

Fighting Prowess: 8 Damage per blow: 3 Dice+3
Psychic Ability: 8 Awareness: 7
Armour Rating: 0
Endurance: 45

Make the appropriate adjustments for wounds you have already inflicted on them, of course.

If you *flee*, turn to **152**. If you win, turn to **180**.

277

Tariq takes the Badawin off to the physician's house. Exhausted, you are asleep before he gets back. The next morning, you awake to find him regaling a crowd of children in the street with the story of last night's adventure. From what you can piece together of the Nascerine language, this version of the story features Tariq himself as the hero.

'Ah,' you say to him good-naturedly. 'It is widely said that you Ta'ashim are inveterate liars.'

He gets up from the doorstep and bows to you. 'We enjoy storytelling - and a skilful lie is better than an artless truth.' He shoos the children away and sets about preparing your breakfast.

Turn to **18**.

278

You burst from the chamber and hurtle frantically down the stairs. A cacophony of shrieks and howls pursues you, echoing down the long stairwell. The god-things have the scent of their prey now; the hunt will not stop until you are caught and slain.

Susurrien steps out onto the landing above. 'You cannot escape!' he jeers. 'My umbracules are tireless. Wherever you flee they will pursue. When your legs are like water and your breath comes in

painful gasps, they will rush relentlessly onwards. And when at last they seize you, ripping your frail flesh

You emerge into the courtyard. You are out of earshot of Susurrien's ranting, which is something to be thankful for. Risking a glance back, you see that the god-things are halfway down the staircase. Their large bulk and their insensate lust to attack have caused them to get in one another's way, giving you a few seconds' respite.

You scan the courtyard - a tableau of blues and purples in the predawn twilight. You could flee through the main gate, the way you came in; or you could go through a narrow archway at the back of the courtyard. You must decide quickly.

If you choose the main gate, turn to **587**. If you try the narrow archway, turn to **58**.

279

A flight of stairs winds up the tower. When you stand in the middle of the stairwell and look up, you can see the moon and stars through the open structure of the minaret. The inside of the minaret is marked out with calibrations and astrological symbols, suggesting that the tower is a sidereal scrying-device. The secrets of its use, however, died with Psyche.

Alert to the possibility of danger - for you know that some of Psyche's spells might still be active even now she is dead - you begin to ascend.

Turn to **171**.

280

You suspect that *he* is the ghoul. When you voice this opinion, his inhuman bellow of thwarted rage confirms the theory.

Turn to **534**.

'My tale is a sad one,' says the giantess. 'I was on a ship bound for Crescentium, where my future husband awaited me. He is a prince, blessed with courage, health and vast riches. The reports sent to my father described him as having the countenance of an angel. But alas - do you think he would look at me now that Sa'aknathur has worked his spell? Now that my body is bloated and black, and my face is the face of a cyclops?'

'But I am getting ahead of myself. I was on the ship, as I say, with an entourage of twenty-one slave girls, seven ladies-in-waiting, and an honour guard of fourteen young warriors from my father's army. What a sight we would have made when we disembarked at Crescentium! I in my splendid silks and jewels and cloth-of-gold; the ladies in their gowns of azure brocade; the warriors with their burnished armour, spears held high . . .'

She buries her face in her hands. The old man gives you a frantic look and seems about to say something, but she glances up sharply and kicks the cage. 'Say nothing, you dog!' she says with a scowl. 'None of your words of trickery now, or I'll make you suffer.'

Her tone changes as she turns back to you: 'But we were not fated to reach Crescentium. A storm blew us off course, into the Sea of Lament and on to the rocks around this accursed isle. When the grey waters closed over my head I thought my life was at an end - but I was not so lucky. Sa'aknathur had observed the wreck and brought me to him with his magic. I became the object of his ungodly experiments, culminating in the spell that made me the monster I now am. But for all his vaunted intellect, this ancient villain had forgotten to allow for my

increased strength. I broke free of the shackles in which he had placed me, and then the tables were turned! If I appear to torment him now, it is less than a thousandth measure of the cruelties he has inflicted on others in his time.'

"Not true!" cries the old man desperately, almost swinging on the bars of his cage like an ape. 'She - argh!' He falls silent as she jabs a finger into his ribs.

'Thank you for your attention to my plight,' says the giantess, addressing you but still smiling sadistically at the old man. 'However, I can cope quite well on my own now. It is all right for you to leave.'

If you depart as she suggests, turn to **498**. If you attack her, turn to **183**. If the Enchanter is here and wishes to try a spell, he or she should turn to **360**.

282

Anvil gives a wolfish grin. 'Arrest this wretch,' he growls, nodding at Lagrestin. His men rush forward and bear Lagrestin to the ground. After frisking him for concealed weapons, they coil a rope around his shoulders and begin to lead him away.

'You know how you'll be leaving Crescentium?' Lagrestin shrieks back at you. 'You'll be floating out with the tide. Face down.'

'Don't worry about him,' says Anvil. 'He'll be locked up for at least a week. You should be out of town by then.' He is not advising you, he is *telling* you. 'For tonight, try the Tower of the Throne of Purple - just down that alleyway there, turn left at the end. Watch out for the proprietor, though, as he's been known to cheat his guests before now.'

Thanking Anvil, you set off for the hostelry.

Turn to **406**.

The room you enter is plain. A man sits in a wooden chair by the window, drawing occasionally at a tall hooka that stands beside him. The odour of incense masks the charnel stench from the butcher's shop below.

Prince Susurrien turns. His robes rustle- a crisp, silken sound. His chair creaks as he shifts his body to half face you. A limpid red gem glowers like a third eye from the centre of his gold turban. His jewellery and gilt-decorated tunic glitter as they catch a shaft of morning sunlight.

His stare is intense and unnerving. With his swarthily handsome face he looks like a man capable of great passion and cruelty. Then he gestures to the cushions piled against the wall and bids you sit. Sharp white teeth flash as he smiles. You crouch down on the cushions but your muscles remain tense. The sunlight, passing through the wooden lattice across one window and through the dusty air, casts a host of narrow bright beams across your face. They all appear to radiate from the exiled prince. *The spider's web . . .?* you think, with a wry smile.

'I knew you would come,' he says. His voice is soft and deep, suggesting the quietest beat of an enormous drum. 'You seek the Sword of Life; I, the Sword of Death. By uniting we shall achieve what we desire.'

You don't pretend to like the idea, but there is no alternative. You nod.

'I have here the Hatuli - literally, the *Bring-hither*.' He holds up a mannikin that looks as if it has been carved from diseased wood. 'It was constructed by the great wizard Sa'aknathur, and my agents found it for me in the ruins of his fortress. If it were

operative, it could find the magical swords for us. But it is not.' He sets the mannikin on the floor by his chair, where it waits, lifeless.

'Its eyes are missing,' continues Susurrien. They were two tiny emeralds of flawless beauty, and I believe they were prised from the Hatuli's head by Hunguk the Pirate-King when he sacked the fortress. So: your quest will involve stealing them back from Hunguk . . . !

You can see a difficulty here. Hunguk the Pirate-King, if he ever lived, must have been dead for five hundred years.

Turn to **439**.

284

By the time you are flying over the Harogarn Mountains it is dawn. A mist of sunlit cloud shrouds the peaks far below you. The jinni has remained silent through most of the journey, but you can see that he harbours a grudge against the Magian sect. It is only as he begins to descend towards the eastern foothills that he explains: 'The Magians worship fire. Since jinn were created from fire, you might suppose that this would mean they worship us. Not so! Their worship is a perversion. They venerate fire as a vampire sect venerates blood. They draw out the flame from any jinni they capture, reducing him to a lifeless husk, or else quench his flame and force him into servitude. Ah, they are a pernicious breed, these Magians. As we draw nearer and nearer to their nest, I feel the old passions of my kind stirring in my breast, stoking the flames of vengeance. When we meet them, I will pit my might alongside your own!'

This dashes your hopes of a stealthful raid. With the jinni blundering into the Magians' stronghold

like an enraged bull, the best you can do is make use of the diversion. At least if the Magians are under attack from him they will have to band together to meet the threat - so with any luck the sapling will be left unguarded.

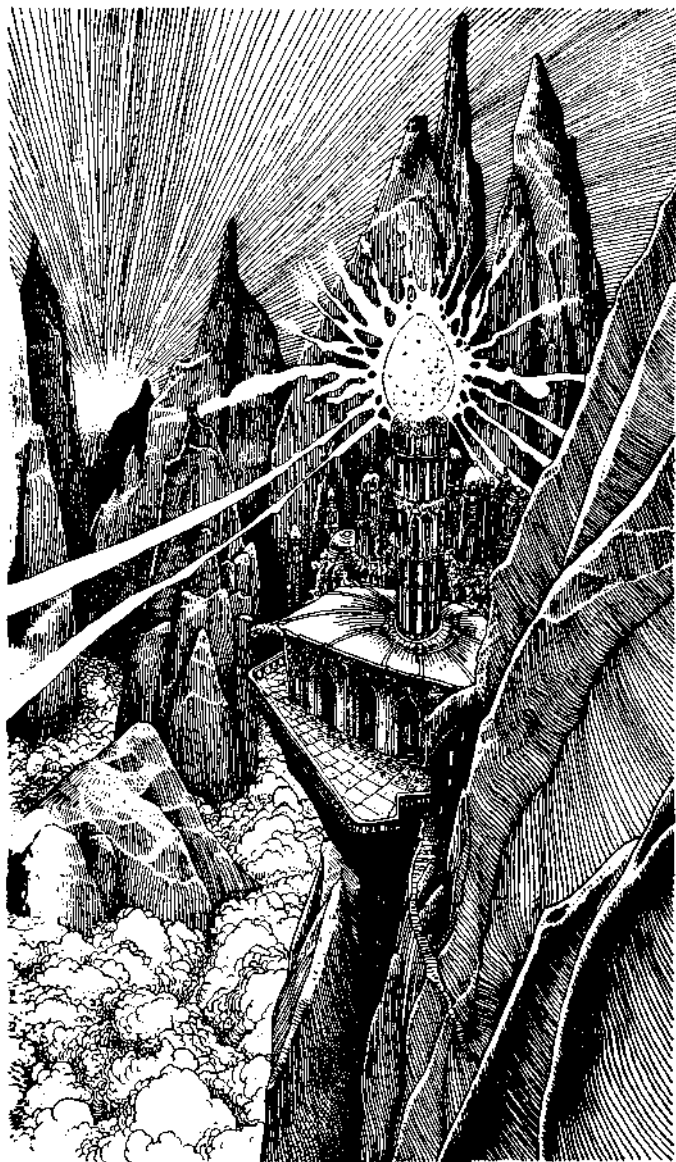
The stronghold of the Magian cult appears on the horizon. It sits on the cliffs above an almost sheer drop. The dawn light glances off its sharp cornices and many-faceted columns of glassy grey-black stone. It looks as if the whole structure was chipped from huge boulders of flint; but that, of course, is impossible. . .

The central tower of the stronghold has an egg-shaped dome encrusted with carnelian and topaz. It hangs above the grey buildings like a second sun, catching the rays of dawn and seeming to magnify them.

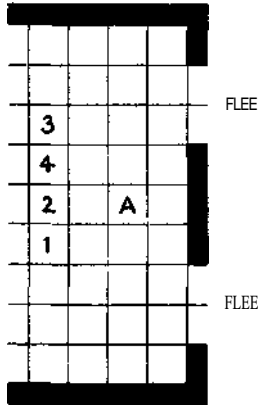
'I'll set you down on that tower and then launch a direct attack,' suggests the jinni. 'While the Magians are busy with me, you can go and find the sapling.'

If you agree to his plan, turn to **176**. If you insist on joining him in the attack, turn to **366**.





With a tinny roar that nearly deafens you, and the sound of heavy metal parts grating on one another, the metal figure lunges forward to attack. The tremors as its huge feet touch the flagstones are enough to convince you that this could be one of your toughest battles.



Automaton

Fighting Prowess: 7 Damage per blow: 8 Dice
 Psychic Ability: 9 Awareness: 6
 Armour Rating: 4
 Endurance: 60

If you *flee*, you can run either through the left-hand arch (turn to **528**) or the right-hand arch (turn to **522**). If you win, turn to **293**.

Moving with dazzling speed, the creature brings up its spear and slashes at you.

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Dog-Creature

Fighting Prowess: 9

Damage per blow: 3 Dice

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 9

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: 35

If you kill it, turn to **442**. If you Enthral it, turn to **574**.

287

Susurrien steps from the shadows behind you. 'You thought to go back on our agreement, it seems. In your faith, is there not a special place in hell for those who are forsworn?'

'There's a special place for treacherous heathens, Susurrien. Want to see it. . . ?' You step forward menacingly.

A fire of fury destroys his serene smile. 'The Hatuli led me here after all! You could have attained what you sought, but you were too stupid. Now you will die, here in this dank pit!'

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Prince Susurrien

Fighting Prowess: 8 Damage per blow: 4 Dice
Psychic Ability: 10 Awareness: 9
Armour Rating: 0
Endurance: 80

Note: Each Round, Susurrien will strike with his sword, prepare or cast a spell, or unleash a blast of energy from the sapphire set in his turban. Roll each Round for his action:

- 1 Strikes with his sword
- 2-3 Prepares/casts the Mists of Death
- 4 Prepares/casts Servile Enthralment
- 5-6 Shoots bolt from sapphire

The sapphire's energy bolts inflict three Dice damage on the person they hit; armour gives *no* protection from this.

If you beat him, turn to **529**.

288

'This man came here to receive a consignment of illicit goods,' you tell Anvil.

Lagrestin just laughs. 'Where are these so-called "illicit goods" now?' He turns to Anvil and spreads his arms. 'Do you want to search me?'

'He pushed them into the water,' you say, answering Anvil's glance.

'Then they are lost,' replies Anvil. 'If they ever existed. No evidence, no crime.'

'Regrettable that your time should have been wasted,' says Lagrestin, thrusting a purse full of silver towards him. Anvil gives him a guarded look, but takes the money anyway.

If the Sage is here and wishes to act, he or she should turn to **459**. If the Enchanter wishes to do something, he or she should turn to **575**. If they are

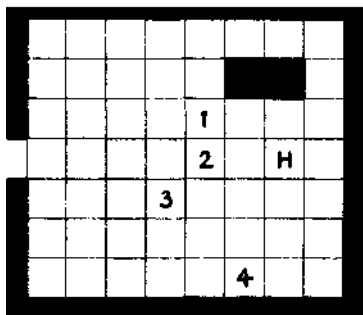
not here, or do not want to do anything, turn to **312**.

289

You scatter the charts. Nothing - the emeralds are not here. Perhaps on the shelf . . . ?

You glance at the dimensional portal and see that time has run out. Hunguk's silhouette fills the frame. He steps through and his sharp grey eyes widen as he sees you. In stature he resembles a rugged rock. Clad in iron armour and strung with kelp, he seems an ancient and unconquerable foe. The axes in his hands are caked with gore. When he speaks, you hear the voice of thunder:

'God's wounds! So a mortal mouse scratches in my larder while I roam the world's waves? Throughout this middle-world there are many thieves, and most reckless of all are those who bring their sea-steeds to plunder the Pirate-King's hoard!' He clashes his axes. 'Come, you land-pest! Test your mettle against the Lord of the Sea Paths, if you dare.'



Hunguk

Fighting Prowess: 10

Damage per blow: 6 Dice

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 9

Armour Rating: 5

Endurance: 100

Note: Hunguk strikes twice every Round (once with each of his two axes). He is immune to the spell of Servile Enthralment - no mere mortal can command the Pirate-King.

You cannot afford to *flee*. If you win, turn to **547**.

290

You command the jinni to convey you to Hakbad, This constitutes one of your three wishes, so cross off one of the boxes you are using to keep track of them.

'Ah, the City of Jade Stars,' he says as he lifts you in the palm of his hand. 'It was well known even before my imprisonment in that accursed bottle. The Sassanians founded it after seizing the western territories of Kaikuhuru from the Selentine Empire. They were two sick dogs fighting over a rancid bone by then. History has dispensed with them by now, I shouldn't wonder. At any rate, I shall enjoy the chance to see Hakbad again - those majestic spires and patterned domes, the terraced palace gardens, the palm-lined avenues . . .'

'Rather than allow another seven centuries to elapse,' you say sharply, 'let us set off at once.'

All day the jinni wades through the sea, which in the shallow waters at the head of the Gulf is no deeper to him than a stream is to a mortal man. As he goes, storm clouds gather and churn around him, sweeping out from his shoulders like a cloak until the sun is blotted out and the sky turns a violent grey-black. Talons of lightning shudder across the heavens, and the jinni cups his hands to shelter you from the rain.

It suddenly occurs to you that off at the edge of the storm there might be ships, even now being

tossed from wave to wave as the jinni strides across their horizon. If sailors on board were to look towards the eye of the storm, would they really see an ugly bearded giant wading waist-deep in the ocean? It seems too fantastic to be possible. You ask the jinni about this.

'Such things depend on one's perspective,' he bellows above the roar of the gale. 'You know that you are being carried to Hakbad in a jinni's hands, so you see my form and features with the same clear certainty that you see your own. But for one who did not know what he beheld, it would be different. A sailor looking up from the deck of a ship some distance off, if he had a fanciful eye, might imagine he saw a storm cloud with some resemblance to a wild and ragged giant. That is all. Most are not gifted with the senses to sniff out the magic in their mundane world, and I think that only a sorcerer would be likely to glance up and see me for what I am. And we will encounter no sorcerers on our route - save perhaps for Sa'aknathur, if he still lives.'

Hunguk the Pirate-King slew Sa'aknathur more than four centuries ago. 'No, he is dead,' you tell the jinni.

'Ah,' he replies. 'Even Sa'aknathur, eh? I was imprisoned for so long

Feeling a twinge of pity at the jinni's melancholy tone, you ask him what a sailor might make of spotting *you*, borne aloft in a massive hand. 'Surely this is a reality that does not depend on perspective,' you point out. 'A storm-tossed wave may appear to be a jinni's beard, and one may sometimes see a cloud very like a dragon - but a human is a human, and that fact is true and absolute.'

'Our hypothetical sailor- God preserve him from

shipwreck! If he sees you, what will he think? He will think he is seeing an unfortunate mortal who has been caught up in the teeth of a storm and who is being flung helplessly across the heavens. He will think he sees a hapless mortal in the grip of unrelenting Fate.' He booms with laughter. 'Are you so sure that he is wrong? Truth, as I have said, has more facets than all the jewels of the Orient.'

Turn to **44**.

291

Crescentium is a veritable maze of streets, market squares, bazaars and alleyways rising in tiers between the buildings of stone, hard-baked clay, and patterned brickwork. As the inhabitants of the city enter into their daily round of barter and toil, a fine choking dust rises from the streets until you find your eyes stinging and your lungs dry. Flies, enticed by the moisture soaking your face and clothes, follow you as resolutely as a gang of beggars. From the shadowed colonnade of a caravanserai, merchants and pilgrims who have retreated from the day's growing heat stare out at you sullenly as you pass. You imagine them as the minor actors and stage-hands of a travelling theatre troupe, watching from the wings while it falls to you to act out the great drama on which their petty lives depend.

It is almost midday by the time you find the street of silversmiths. You push your way along it through the crowds until you come to a narrow white-walled house set back behind a black ornamental fountain. Entering, you are met by a Ta'ashim serving-girl. After you have explained why you are here, she shows you to a small vestibule and asks you to wait while she fetches Emeritus.

Turn to **311**.

292

(ENCHANTER) You fall to your knees on the shingle. The jinni laughs. He assumes you are simply praying. In fact, reasoning that he is likely to have a high resistance to magical attack, you are only pretending to pray while you ready the spell. You want to hit him utterly without warning -

Suddenly you stand, throwing up your arms exultantly as you feel the release of the spell's power. The jinni staggers and clutches at his head. He moans deeply as he tries to shake off the sorcerous web you are closing around his thoughts.

Roll two Dice. If you get 9 or less, he manages to resist the Enthralment (turn to **163**). If you score 10, 11 or 12 then he is under your control (turn to **541**).

293

There is nothing else of interest here. As you watch, the supernatural illumination that fills the hall begins to fade, and you are plunged into torchlit gloom once more.

You now have the choice of taking the left-hand archway (turn to **528**) or the right-hand one (turn to **522**).

294

'As you value what a poor wretch like me can tell you,' cries the sailor with sudden passion, 'give alms, for the love of God! I have no belongings left in this world!' He pauses and then adds, for the sake of accuracy: 'Save for these ragged clothes, my trusty pipe and an ounce of hempweed.'

If you are willing to give him one or more gold pieces, cross off the amount you decide on and turn to **557**. If you refuse to give him anything, turn to **333**.

(WARRIOR) Setting your equipment aside, you plant your feet squarely on the ground in front of the massive door, spit into your palms, and brace yourself for a titanic effort...

As you push forward with all your strength you can feel every muscle and bone in your body groaning in protest. Sweat covers your huge frame. But the door gives slightly, dislodging a trace of dust from the lintel above and, as you see this, a guttural snarl of defiance breaks from your lips.

Roll four Dice, trying to get equal to or under your rank. If you fail you lose one Endurance point - and you can then either abandon your attempt or, if you are determined enough, you can make the roll again as before. If you succeed with the roll, the lock finally snaps under the strain and the door swings open.

If you give up on your attempt to force the door, turn to **120**. If you persevere and eventually break it down, you can enter the tower - turn to **279**.

You draw near to the strange figure, but leave enough distance between you so that the fog spares you the details of his face. His cheeks are hard and sallow, and he seems to wear a disquietingly fixed grin.

'Do you know who I am?' His voice suggests a gusty grey storm. Your gorge rises as you smell his rank breath.

'Hunguk the Pirate-King . . .' you reply.

'Hunguk?' he chuckles. 'Not I! I'm Shambeer, Hunguk's trusty steersman. See this wheel? My old hands haven't left this wheel in seven mortal lifetimes. "Outlived his own flesh in the service of

Hunguk" - that's what they'll say of old Shambeer.' Under his long cape, thin shoulders twitch as he gives a wan laugh.

You start to ask him a question, but he snaps his jaws and stares intently into the fog dead ahead. 'Caligosums and luridors all about us!' he yells. 'No peace for the wicked, eh? Now ask your question and be quick about it, for if I'm distracted from my job then Satan's hounds will have all our bones to gnaw!'

If you are only going to get the chance for one question, you had better make it count. What will it be?

'Where are the emeralds Hunguk stole from Sa'aknathur?' (turn to **517**); 'Where is Hunguk?' (turn to **433**); or 'Where is the ship bound?' (turn to **79**)?

297

Two beggars are squabbling over something. You catch sight of the glint of knives in the morning sunlight. One of the two snarls a malediction and darts forward, and the other barely dodges the swift lunge of his knife.

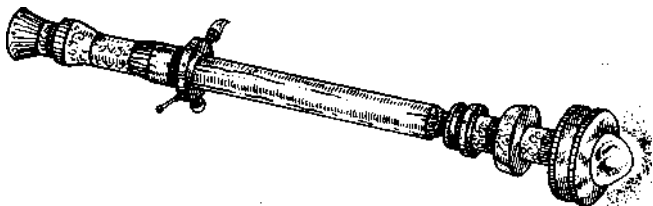
Events move faster than your eyes can follow. As you move to separate the two beggars, one of them barges past the first player in the battle order and then runs off into the crowd. A dark trickle of blood falls into the dust at your feet. The other beggar stares goggle-eyed for a moment before making his escape. The first player, who has been knifed, loses one point of Endurance.

'Never mind them!' Balian calls to his men, who are on the verge of pursuing the two beggars. He turns to you: 'The house of Emeritus the leech is not far away; better get that wound seen to.'

With the sergeant leading the way - and not infrequently shouldering any curious Ta'ashim onlookers into the gutter - you soon reach a narrow white-walled house near the street of silversmiths. Balian apologises for leaving you, but you fully understand that he and his men have to get on with their patrol. A serving-girl fetches Emeritus, who soon dresses the wound.

As you are thanking him and gathering your belongings together, he gives a gasp of surprise. 'The hilt and scabbard you carry,' he says quietly. 'I know them - they are fragments of the Sword of Life . . . !'

Turn to **60**.



298

(SAGE) you cross your legs, adopting the posture of meditation, and negate all thought of past or future. When you exist truly in the present instant, the force of gravity has no power over you. You allow yourself to drift gently downwards out of the night sky till you alight. You are alone on the barren island. You do not rise to your feet at once, for there is no need for urgency now. The moon finally sets, and you are reminded of the old Kaikuhuran poem:

*A drop of water fell into the sea,
A grain of sand merged with the desert.*

*What can be said of our life on this earth?
A moth tarried by a candleflame, then
flew out into the darkness.*

Turn to **260**.

299

A thick column of black smoke boils out of the mouth of the bottle. This spreads along the length of the shore and rises up until it touches the clouds. As it begins to coalesce, you see features gradually emerging until finally a huge jinni appears. His head touches the sky while his legs, knotted with cords of muscle each as thick as a tree, reach to the ground. When he stretches out his arms, you have to turn your head to look from one giant hand to the other. He is clothed only in the long dusty strands of his unkempt hair and beard, which reach right down to his knees like ivy covering a massive block of stone. His mouth opens to reveal snagged black teeth and, above this cavernous maw, his eyes burn like torches.

Simple dread deprives you of your strength, and it is all you can do not to drop to your knees in front of the menacing jinni. Peering down at the tiny island on which he is standing, he catches sight of you and booms: 'Where and when, how and why? Tell me your tale, you who have freed me.'

You have managed to recover your composure after the initial shock. 'It would indeed be pleasant to linger awhile and exchange our stories,' you tell the jinni, 'but events are moving at a pace that will not allow us such leisure. Your first command is as follows: create a winged chariot -'

'My first *command*?' leers the jinni, interrupting you. 'Aha, I sense you have misunderstood the situation. To spare you further embarrassment,

perhaps I should explain that there will be no commands. Pleas for mercy might be more appropriate, though equally useless. When I lift my foot in a moment, it will be to crush the life from you!

You protest. 'Where is the logic in this? Perhaps your long imprisonment has addled your brains. It is generally considered proper to reward someone who frees you from captivity. Lambasting them with threats of violence ignores all the rules of gratitude and etiquette.'

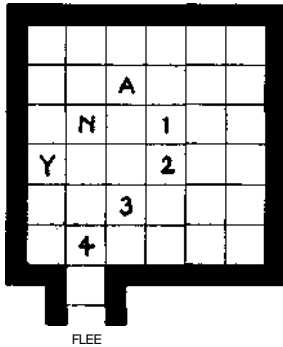
'Not so!' growls the jinni. 'Consider how long you left me trapped in that bottle. For the first hundred years I was resolved to bestow staggering riches on the one who set me free. But did you free me then? Very well - for the next two hundred years, I swore each day that the one who freed me would receive all of the treasures and honours of the world. But did you free me then? As the next four hundred years dawned, I pledged to grant the one who rescued me the three wishes of his heart, to elevate him to wealth and power undreamed of in mortal history, to create for him a kingdom where his own word was the only law, and to render to him the gift of eternal youth so that he could enjoy these rewards to the end of time. *But did you free me then?*

'No! So . . . you find me now in an entirely different mind. In bitterness, I decided that the only reward for the one to free me would be a quick death. If you have no further words, prepare to receive that reward . . .'

If the Trickster is here and wishes to do something, he or she should turn to **572**. If the Enchanter wants to do something, he or she should turn to **135**. If the Warrior wants to do something, he or she should turn to **272**. If the Sage wants to act, he or she should turn to **420**.

300

You face the simulacra, or mimomyths, of three of the gods of ancient times.



Azidahaka

Fighting Prowess: 11

Damage per blow: 12 Dice

Psychic Ability: 10

Awareness: 7

Armour Rating: 6

Endurance: 100

Nasu

Fighting Prowess: 10

Damage per blow: 8 Dice*

Psychic Ability: 11

Awareness: 8

Armour Rating: 3

Endurance: 140

*Nasu's touch is the touch of decay. A player whom she wounds must attempt to resist a Psychic spell. Failure to resist means that the player rots away and dies.

The Yazir

Fighting Prowess: 9

Damage per blow: 5 Dice+1

Psychic Ability: 18

Awareness: 9

Armour Rating: 3

Endurance: 85

Note: The Yazir will call spells to mind and cast them

on alternate Rounds. Roll a Die to see which spell he is using: 1=Nemesis Bolt, 2=Sheet Lightning, 3=The Vampire Spell, 4=Mists of Death, 5=Sword-thrust, 6=Nighthowl. Once he has called the spell to mind, he casts it automatically on the following Round. (His Psychic Ability is high enough that he always succeeds with his casting roll.)

If you *flee*, turn to **278**. If you manage by some miracle to win, turn to **325**.

301

The door opens when you lean against it. Inside you find piles of thick velvet cushions. Elegant silk drapes partition the room and disguise its drab grey walls. They are embroidered with pictures of the houris of the Ta'ashim paradise, which is an unlikely decorative motif to find in the room of Jablo the Knife. A stout cupboard stands by the window, and when you throw it open you discover it is filled with brocade robes, scented silk blouses and pyjamas, jars of henna and kohl, jewelled copper breast-cups . . .

By all the hallows, you have been duped! This room belongs to a woman. Then Jablo - Jablo was the 'old Ta'ashim man' who directed you up here!

You race from the room and go down the stairs three at a time. Jablo, still in his disguise as a Ta'ashim oldster, is just about to slip out into the market square. 'One moment, "grandfather",' you snarl, seizing him by the shoulder and shoving him to the back of the stairwell. 'Too busy to talk to old friends these days, eh, Jablo?'

Jablo winces. 'Don't be foolish. I would have welcomed you with open arms if it wasn't for the danger. . .'

'What danger?' you scoff.

'I have a contract on a man in the Governor's household. I was just on my way to fulfil it when you turned up. I can't very well drag you along with me, can I? You'd trip over your own shadow and the guards would be all over us in a trice.'

If you insist on accompanying him, turn to **340**. If you let him go, turn to **226**.

302

Put down another tick.

The shackles resist all your efforts to snap them. 'Perhaps they merely represent the chains of your life of wanton evil,' you suggest.

The concept does not appeal to her, but she reluctantly admits that she is bound forever. 'In that case, kill me again!' she pleads. But this, too, proves impossible.

You leave her and head further aft.

Turn to **473**.



303

(ENCHANTER) The faltyn reaches with icy spectral fingers into your mind and, finding what it seeks, plucks out a segment of your memory. You have now lost all knowledge of the Nemesis Bolt, and can never cast it again.

The faltyn begins to fade. [*'Make haste,' it sighs. The effort of raising a mist will soon exhaust my interest in your affairs . . .*']

You look outside. A thick mist swirls between the posts of the veranda and out across the courtyard. The lanterns from Psyche's room give only a smudgy yellow gleam. You hurry outside. A muffled shout drifts out of the fog. You dimly glimpse the gate and, beyond it, the road back to Crescentium.

If you want to leave immediately, turn to **103**. If you would rather explore under cover of the fog for a while before leaving, turn to **430**.

304

Icon coughs blood, but even though his face is ghastly pale he does not fall. Before your eyes, he dissolves into a sparkling mist and begins to drift up into the air.

I used the spell of Vaporisation as a means of escape when we last did battle, says a disembodied voice. Now it provides me with the means to restore my vitality.

What can he mean? You glance at the barrier of flame. It seems to be dying down, but the heat from it is still intense.

If you wish to dive through it and flee, turn to **184**. If you would rather use an item, turn to **144**.

305

As soon as you flick the tuning fork to make it ring, the creature pricks up its ears and regards you solemnly. It steps over to the door, lifting its spear. It seems to have an almost majestic bearing now, and you sense a glimmer of proud wisdom behind its eyes. As the spear touches the door, there is a blinding flash of light and the locks and bolts fall away.

The door swings open, and with an imperious

wave of its spear the dog-creature ushers you through.

Turn to **483**.

306

You cast a critical eye over your boat. It has brought you a long way, but it is time to accept that it has seen better days. The chance of it reaching the mainland in one piece is negligible. The notion of travelling in it to your rendezvous in Hakbad is simply farcical. You must think of some other plan, or wait for Providence to hand you one . . .

Turn to **201**.

307

You explain to the abbot that it is impossible for you to help him. 'The jinni could have transported us to the stronghold of the Magian sect,' you say. 'But all three wishes have been expended.'

The abbot looks up at the jinni and speaks imploringly: 'Aid us out of self-interest, if nothing else. The sapling must be recovered as it represents hope, and without hope the next millennium will be blacker than the last.'

'Not for me!' says the jinni. 'I have spent seventenths of this millennium in a copper bottle not much bigger than your hand. Whatever the next thousand years have in store, I welcome them as a glorious new adventure.'

'Are you mad? It will be an era of such fearsome things - I know not what, but they will be the terrors of the earth!'

'As a "Ta'ashim demon" (in fact I was still imprisoned when the Ta'ashim religion was founded) I rejoice at these tidings. If the new millennium is one where mortals grovel in blood-soaked mud and

howl as flames char their flesh, so much the better. Do not expect me to show kindness, as the race of mortal men has never shown kindness to me!

'Of course, that is because you're a creature of irredeemable wickedness,' you feel obliged to point out. But the jinni refuses to argue further.

You shake hands with the abbot. 'Good luck with your own quest,' he calls as the jinni raises you aloft. 'And do not worry about mine. I'll return home through the Astral Gateway and recruit a new band of helpers. Five years still remain to us before the End; I may yet recover the sapling.'

'May God reward your courage with success!' you shout back. You watch until he is just a dwindling speck in the distance, then you turn your gaze east, towards Hakbad . . .

Turn to **550**.

308

If the party includes a Sage who has not yet tried Levitating up the side of the tower, he or she could now attempt this - turn to **235**. If the Warrior is here and wants to use brute force on the door, turn to **295**. Otherwise, you may as well go back to bed - turn to **151**.

309

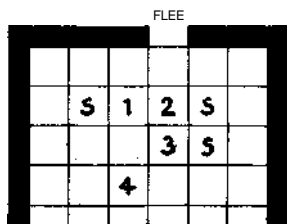
'Excellent!' she cries, clapping her bejewelled hands. A slave hurries to her side bearing a copper tray on which rests a small crystal phial. She offers this to you along with the obsidian lens. 'Drink the contents of the phial and then peer into the lens,' she says. 'As you enter the trance, the location of the item you seek will be revealed.'

Who is drinking the liquid? The Trickster (turn to **55**); the Sage (turn to **335**); the Warrior or the

Enchanter (turn to **119**)?

310

You lick your lips. The Selentine Knights have a reputation as some of the deadliest fighters in the known world. Unfortunately, you have no choice but to put that reputation to the test. You drop into fighting stance, and the Selentines respond by fanning out to encircle you. The longshoremen - craven curs! - seize this opportunity to run off.



Selentines

Fighting Prowess: 8 Damage per blow: 2 Dice+2
Psychic Ability: 6 Awareness: 7
Armour Rating: 3
Endurance: *first* 36 *third* 36
 second 36

If you win, turn to **516**. If you *flee*, turn to **342**. If you surrender, turn to **539**.

311

You are not kept waiting long. Emeritus is led into the vestibule by the excited slave-girl, who babbles something in Nascerine and points to you. Emeritus smiles indulgently, murmurs a reply, and shoos her away.

'You must excuse Dhali,' he says, greeting you warmly. 'I rarely receive social calls, you under-

stand, so your arrival is a source of some excitement . . .' His words trail off as he spies the Blood Sword hilt and scabbard that you carry at all times. The morning sun is shining through the window on them, causing the jewelled metal to scintillate with a thousand colours. 'The Sword of Life!' he gasps, sinking onto a couch beside you. 'I thought it had been destroyed long ago . . .'

Turn to **60**.

312

'Wasting the militia's time is a criminal offence, is it not?' prompts Lagrestin as he hands over a second bag of coins. He is bribing Anvil to throw you in gaol!

If you want to make a counter-bribe, turn to **569**. If not, you know better than to fight the city militia; you can either make a run for it (turn to **499**) or allow Anvil to arrest you (turn to **101**).

313

You give a sigh of despair as you stare down at the half-man's body. The conflict was pointless and bloody, and you get no satisfaction from your victory.

Metal jewellery clatters softly like wind chimes, and you turn to see a slim young woman standing among the trees nearby. She wears a musky perfume which mingles with the scent of oranges in the air.

'I am Psyche,' she says. 'I'm sorry you've had trouble with that creature. I should have destroyed him years ago, but I felt it would be wrong.'

'He said that you cursed him with a spell of fossilization,' you reply, bowing warily.

'He lied.' She steps closer and you see now that

she wears a cloak and pyjamas of gold and flame-red silk, and embroidered velvet slippers in the Ta'ashim style. But her skin is a luminous white in the gleam of the rising moon, and she does not mask her face with gauze as a Ta'ashim woman would. Judging by her accent, you guess she is from Batubatan or Yamato.

Psyche goes to look at the body of the half-man and then continues: 'In my homeland, it is believed that every rock and tree contains a spirit. I was walking one day and came across a rock which I fancied had some resemblance to a man. I decided to use my hands to sculpt it and my sorcery to awaken its spirit. But when the task was half completed, I became aware that the man I was fashioning, though fairer of face than any mortal man, had the spirit of a very devil. I left a warning on the unsculpted rock at his feet - unfortunately you didn't see it in time. Please accept the hospitality of my house, and perhaps I can recompense you for some of the harm you have suffered.'

She leads the way through the orange grove to an elegant villa.

Turn to **121**.

314

You stroll down the road to the village. You have barely passed the first cottage when you are surrounded by dozens of scrawny Ta'ashim children, brown as nuts, who pluck at your robes and screech at you to give them money.

If you give them a gold piece to quieten them down, turn to **124**. If you cuff them and send them packing, turn to **479**.

315

(SAGE) You remember part of your teaching - that

the state of mind itself is a fetter, and you must attain the state of 'no-mind'. But you allow yourself to become bogged down in the paradox this involves. Your feet remain firmly planted on the ground. *[In your mind, you seem to hear the voice of your old teacher at the monastery. 'Too much thinking!' he snaps at you.]* You are too demoralised to make another attempt; you need time to reassess your understanding of the Mystic Way.

If you number the Trickster among your colleagues and he or she wants to try looking for a lock, turn to **122**. If you are with the Warrior and he or she wishes to force the door open, turn to **295**. If neither the Trickster nor the Warrior wishes to do anything, you may as well go back to bed - turn to **151**.

316

'Extraordinary,' mutters the jinni as he lifts you in his hands. 'Are you sure you understand what you are doing? You are condemning your own venture to failure in order to help this old man who may, for all we know, be quite deranged -'

'Enough! He has asked for assistance, and it will be given unstintingly.' You turn and wave to the abbot, who has chosen to stay here and await your return. This arrangement suits you perfectly. The last thing you would want is to have to protect him from the Magians while at the same time trying to locate and retrieve the sapling. Better that he stays here, out of harm's way. He is obviously not cut out for heroics.

'God go with you!' he shouts from the terrace. He is haloed by the flickering firelight from the cyclops' hall, giving him the appearance of a saint depicted on a church window. Borne rapidly away by the jinni, you watch until Sa'aknathur's palace is just a

speck in the distance, all sign of the abbot and the firelight now lost in the gathering darkness.

You suddenly realise that you are rising still higher into the air. The jinni is ascending into the night sky. *Flying . . .*

'We have a long way to go,' he explains. 'Normally I dislike employing the power of Aeriality as it is a drain on my energy, but the thought of a long trek to Opalar is even less appealing.'

From all around you comes a growl of thunder. It rolls heavily across the sky as a new storm gathers. The wind drives cool rain into your face.

You smile as you remember your conversation earlier. 'What will they see, those who look up now?' you ask the jinni.

'Honest Ta'ashim who glance out into the night may catch a glimpse of something in the sudden flash of a lightning stroke. They will think it is a demon from out of their folk-tales.' His smouldering gaze is fixed on the east where, in the far distance, lies Opalar. 'But as for any Magian who should chance to look into the western sky . . . I encountered their sect in ancient times.' There is hatred in the jinni's voice. 'He would see an avenging angel!'

Turn to **284**.

317

(SAGE) [*You detect the thoughts of those near you in the mist. Psyche's are easy to identify - vicious and impatient, a cold fiery net of malice. The other thoughts are seething and ugly - assuredly those of magical non-human. The thoughts are too gross for a faltyn, leading you to suspect the presence of a demon.*]

To remain here any longer would be absurdly reckless. If Psyche so badly wants to kill you that



she is prepared to imperil her own life by summoning a demon, your best course of action will be to steer clear of her in future.

Turn to **103**.

318

The Badawin traders, disturbed by the commotion, have jumped up and seized their swords. Seeing that you have the situation well in hand, however, they stand back and watch you despatch the last thug. The Badawin leader bows, acknowledging your fighting skill. 'Let us hope the rest of the night is less eventful,' he says with a sonorous chuckle.

Turn to **533**.

319

(TRICKSTER) If you are on your own, turn to **480**. If you are with one or more companions, turn to **472**.

320

Galor leads you up into the hills, then along a tortuous ledge to a cave entrance. Motioning you to keep quiet, he points within. It is indeed the eyrie of the Roc. The huge bird lies sleeping, waiting for the cool of nighttime before it flies out from its lair. Its breathing ruffles feathers the size of a ship's sails. Its claws are like copses of fir trees.

Nodding your thanks to Galor, you edge stealthily over to the Roc and tether yourself (or selves) to its claws. Galor waves goodbye and departs down the hillside. You wait for dusk, when the Roc will awaken.

Turn to **244**.

321

Do you have Fatima's silver key?

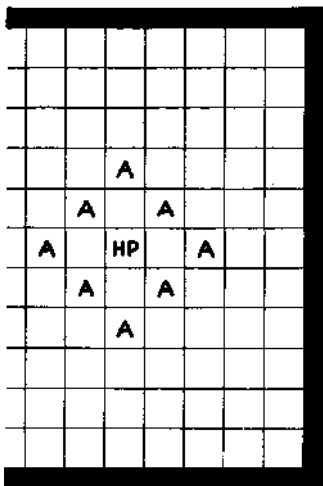
If so, turn to **524**. If not, turn to **330**.

322

At this close range you can see that a network of flickering energy flows from the adepts to the High Priest. The one you have just attacked falters in his chant, and the nimbus of light around the High Priest dims for an instant.

The key to defeating the High Priest is to kill the adepts, thus breaking the network of power.

Deploy yourself (or selves) as before; remember to adjust the guards' Endurance scores for any wounds you have already inflicted.



Adepts

Psychic Ability: 7

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance:	<i>first</i>	8	<i>fifth</i>	8
	<i>second</i>	8	<i>sixth</i>	8
	<i>third</i>	8	<i>seventh</i>	8
	<i>fourth</i>	8	<i>eighth</i>	8

Note: The adepts cannot strike back at you as they are intent on maintaining the magical mantra.

Guards

Fighting Prowess: 8	Damage per blow: 1 Die+1
Psychic Ability: 6	Awareness: 6
Armour Rating: 1	
Endurance: <i>first</i> 10	<i>fourth</i> 10
<i>second</i> 10	<i>fifth</i> 10
<i>third</i> 10	

Once you have killed all the guards *or* at least three adepts, turn to **200**.

323

You scramble madly along the labyrinthine passages of the Citadel. By sheer luck, your headlong dash brings you to an unguarded postern gate. You fling the bolt aside and fall panting into the street. It is night. You move furtively away from the brooding walls of the Citadel, muttering a silent prayer of thanks for your deliverance.

Turn to **164**.

324

There is no dishonour in retreating when you are hopelessly outnumbered. Ignoring the hoots of derision from Lagrestin and his cronies, you dash along a narrow alley and emerge on a wide street leading to a market *plaza*.

Turn to **251**.

325

You stand amid the wreckage of your battle. Broken furniture, ripped tapestries and lumps of masonry lie all around you, slick with your own blood and the supernatural blood of your foes. Their bodies

are decomposing into a thick phosphorescent vapour that flows out across the floor. Now that you have overcome them, they are no more than the ectoplasmic shells which Susurrien created to contain the essence of the three demon-gods. But while you faced them they were the avatars of the gods themselves, and you are exultant at having fought and won your greatest victory.

You are in some pain from your wounds, but you ignore it. It is time to deal with the insidious Prince Susurrien. He retreated into the back room when he saw the fight was going against his mythagos. You rip the curtains aside -

Gone! The dog has fled from your vengeance! Somehow he must have transported himself away; an acrid stench still hangs in the air. You stumble to the window and bellow your rage out into the night: 'SUSURRIEN!!'

Your cry is lost across the rooftops of Hakbad, now blue like smoke in the shimmering predawn twilight.

Turn to **127**.

326

(SAGE) *[It strikes you as odd that a princess of Opalar should refer to 'Siout', which is the archaic name for the city nowadays known as Amsa'im. It is also odd that she chooses to refer to the Emphidian legend of Ulixes, when the one-eyed giant encountered by Simbar on the first of his seven voyages should surely be a more familiar folk-tale to any Ta'ashim princess . . .]*

Turn to **281**.

327

(TRICKSTER) 'Surely you have not forgotten?' you call after him with exaggerated politeness. 'We met

in Achant, where you were arranging transport for a party of pilgrims to Outremer. Their ship was somehow intercepted by Marazidi slavers in the Gulf, and all were taken. You *must* remember . . .'

Lagrestin turns with a big smile. 'Of course! Of course! I could not believe it was you at first - the years seem to have increased your vigour instead of diminishing it. You retain a lithe and dashing figure, while my own belly swells into the shape of an old pot!' He steps forward to embrace you, hissing into your ear: 'But let us say no more of that incident of the enslaved pilgrims

'A tragedy for which none can be blamed,' you reply with an ironic smile. 'You have attained great wealth and prestige in Crescentium, it seems.' You indicate his fine robes and then grimace as you glance at your own travel-stained tunic.

'What is wealth?' cries Lagrestin. 'A bugbear! An albatross around the neck! I have little regard for money these days - here, take this as a token of our friendship. Buy yourself some new clothes.' He presses a purse into your hand. 'Now, you must excuse me . . .'

You catch his sleeve. 'Where can a newcomer to Crescentium spend the night?'

His smile freezes. The call to prayer rings out through the dusk and the Ta'ashim traders swarm towards the mosque.

'Well, old friend

'Well?' you say, nodding.

Lagrestin takes a scrap of paper from the ledger he is carrying. He begins to scribble a note. 'Take this letter of introduction to Tobias de Vantery, at the Temple of the Roc. I still arrange shipping for the Capellars, so he and I are on good terms.' He hands you the letter and begins to move away. 'We

shall not meet again, I'm afraid, as urgent business takes me out of the city for a few weeks. May God grant you the proper rewards for your virtue.'

You bow. 'And may He see that you enjoy as long and healthy a life as you wish for me.'

Lagrestin crosses himself in momentary alarm, then turns and vanishes down an alleyway. You look into the purse he gave you. Twelve gold pieces. With the letter of introduction in hand, you make your way across the now nearly deserted square. As the daylight drains away, a few torchbearers come to light the braziers that stand on some street-corners. From one of these unfortunates (for they are mostly cripples who can find no other work) you get directions to the Temple of the Roc.

Turn to **47**.

328

You run to catch up with the militia patrol. Several of them turn uneasily at the sound of your footsteps, hefting their cudgels and giving you threatening looks. Anvil just glances over his shoulder without breaking stride. 'You again,' he grunts. 'What is it now? Has the murderous Mungodan been spotted again - or perhaps you caught a glimpse of Prester John himself?'

As Anvil's men laugh, relaxing their grip on their weapons, you fall into step beside him. 'Can you suggest a place to spend the night?' you ask.

'Go down that alley and turn right at the end. You will soon come to the Tower of the Throne of Purple, which is as reasonable a hostelry as any.' You head off in the direction he has pointed out. 'And you may as well watch out for the proprietor,' Anvil shouts back. 'He's quite a villain himself.'

Turn to **406**.

329

Suddenly the door bursts open. Four burly Selentine Knights stomp in. Behind them you see Alexius, lingering nervously in the street.

If anyone has been killed during the fight, turn to **391**. If there have been no fatalities either on your side or on the longshoremen's, turn to **12**.

330

Dead end. You are too exhausted to run any further, anyway. You sigh grimly and turn to face the onrushing demon-gods.

	4	1	A			
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Azidahaka

Fighting Prowess: 11

Damage per blow: 12 Dice

Psychic Ability: 10

Awareness: 1

Armour Rating: 6

Endurance: 100

Nasu

Fighting Prowess: 10

Damage per blow: 8 Dice*

Psychic Ability: 11

Awareness: 8

Armour Rating: 3

Endurance: 140

* Nasu's touch is the touch of decay. A player whom she wounds must attempt to resist a Psychic spell. Failure to resist means that the player rots away and dies.

The Yazir

Fighting Prowess: 9

Damage per blow: 5 Dice+1

Psychic Ability: 18

Awareness: 9

Armour Rating: 3

Endurance: 85

Note: The Yazir will call spells to mind and cast them on alternate Rounds. Roll a Die to see which spell he is using: 1=Nemesis Bolt, 2=Sheet Lightning, 3=The Vampire Spell, 4=Mists of Death, 5=Sword-thrust, 6=Nighthowl. Once he has called the spell to mind, he casts it automatically on the following Round. (His Psychic Ability is high enough that he always succeeds with his casting roll.)

If you manage to destroy them, turn to **270**.

331

(SAGE) You can read Jezant, so you know that Alexius is misquoting the tariff. You also know why. Under Outremer law, the written and displayed rate for hostelry rooms is what one must pay. The legal system you are more used to has a feudal basis, where verbal arrangements are binding; but here in Crescentium it is the Coradian financiers who call the tune, and a contract must be in writing to be enforceable in law. The rate displayed on the tariff for an individual chamber is much higher than Alexius claimed - and that is the rate you would have to pay if you accepted a room!

'The rates quoted here are three times what you say,' you point out to Alexius. The tariff also mentions an all-in rate of one gold piece per night for a pallet in the dormitory, and you did not translate that at all!

Turn to **344**.

332

The longshoremen almost jump to their feet in astonishment. 'But you are winning!' cries one. 'See how downcast we are!'

They fall into sullen silence, then one - more

crafty than the rest - says: 'Do not forget the house rule which we explained to you before. You cannot simply get up from the game and walk away when you are winning. You must play on for at least six more bets to give us a chance to win back some of what we've lost. I understand, then, that you are now announcing your intention to retire from the game in six rounds' time . . .'

If you go along with that, turn to **241**. If you insist on leaving the game now, turn to **53**.

333

Inspired by the sudden cry of a bulbul from out of the night, the sailor says, 'Only a brainless bird sings its song without thought of reward!' He draws furiously on his pipe until he has sunk in a dazed stupor. You grimace, sickened by the clouds of noxious smoke he is producing, then lie down to get some sleep.

Turn to **236**.

334

The hunchback feeds you only intermittently over the next couple of weeks. The effects of malnutrition and lack of clean air take their toll. Each player must reduce his or her Endurance score by the roll of three Dice; armour does not (of course!) give any protection. However, no player need reduce his or her Endurance below 2. You are not going to die of starvation. . .

At long last the door is flung open. Are you about to be freed?

Turn to **373**.

335

(SAGE) As you raise the phial to your lips you

recognise the aroma of the liquid it contains. It is *stritten*, a drug produced from certain Mungodan ferns; when ingested, it causes narcosis and possibly heart failure.

'Such hospitality!' you murmur, handing the phial back to Psyche. 'Is your heart, milady, truly as poisonous as the refreshment you offer?'

Turn to **548**.

336

You push the horse out of the cottage and clamber onto its back. As Menira wails and Ridaq remonstrates angrily, you depress the peg. The horse rises up into the air.

'Ah, it is a base rogue indeed who steals from the house where he was welcomed as a guest,' mutters Ridaq. 'Truly, you deserve the fate of the ungrateful wine-seller in the story of Rayyan and the camels

'Be silent,' you tell him. 'The horse is needed to expedite an important quest. Unless the Blood Sword is recovered, all the world will suffer - you and your grandmother as much as anyone. That is why you must part with the horse.'

Ridaq spits into the dust. 'When a cart runs over me and breaks my foot, should I thank the driver if it turns out he is bringing gifts to my house? Your argument is a shell of sophistry concealing a moral void.'

You can only gasp in annoyance. Fools such as he must be saved in spite of themselves. Twisting the peg, you soar up into the sky . . .

Turn to **510**.

337

You settle down to sleep. The beds are so luxurious

and your fatigue so overwhelming that you are asleep in a trice . . .

The next thing you know, dawn light is spilling into the room from the tall arched windows along the east wall. You push back the drapes and step out onto the veranda, stretching your limbs as you breathe in the cool morning air. The night's sleep has refreshed you, and any wounded player can restore Endurance equal to half his or her rank (rounding fractions up).

Turn to **146**.

338

If you have just used up your third wish, turn to **432**.

If you still have wishes left, you now have the opportunity to make another. You may not wish again for something you have already wished for, incidentally.

To wish for riches, turn to **118**. To wish for renewed health, turn to **267**. To wish for your arms and armour to be restored, turn to **464**. To wish for your strength to be enhanced, turn to **238**.

339

Naked, bedraggled and half-drowned, you cling desperately to a broken plank and drift wherever the current will take you. At last, after two days of this horror, you are washed up on to the shore of a rocky island. As you slowly come to your senses, you realise that it was marked on Susurrien's chart beside the course that Hukung's ship would take. Fate has at last dropped you a crumb of succour, by bringing you here to keep your rendezvous with *The Devil's Runner* . . .

Turn to **488**.

Jablo pretends to agree to this, but as soon as he catches sight of a militia patrol he sets up *a furore*: 'Help! My life is threatened! Help me!'

The soldiers saunter over. You glance around for an avenue of escape, but three Knights Capellars also heard the commotion and are coming over to investigate.

'What's all this?' one of the soldiers asks Jablo. 'Who's threatening your life, oldster?'

'Have pity on a poor beggar, sir.' Jablo points to the Trickster. This person is the notorious Jablo the Knife, the most deadly hired killer in Outremer. And that's *including* the best adepts of the Marijah sect

The soldiers fan out, surrounding you. The three Capellars watch silently. With a pink scar of after-glow along the rooftops behind them, they look like three Angels of Death waiting at the edge of the Inferno.

'Look for the mole on the killer's jawline,' shrieks Jablo. 'Even Jablo, a master of disguise, cannot hide that.' Even while setting you up he cannot resist singing his own praises!

'Yes, there is a mole,' grunts the sergeant of the militia, peering at you in the twilight. 'Jablo the Knife - you're under arrest.'

It is useless to claim you are innocent; the concept of innocence is not really relevant in Outremer law. The Capellars step forward to help the militia disarm you (in a multi-player group, the others are taken in as the Trickster's accomplices), and Jablo is already skulking away as your weapons are taken. Even if you have a sword of Crescentium steel they search you closely enough to find it, though if you possess the invisible sword of Loge Skyrunner they

will not find that. Cross any other weapons off your Character Sheet(s); you must reduce your Fighting Prowess and damage rolls by two points until you manage to rearm.

You are marched briskly to the Citadel in the highest part of the city, and there hurled into a cell in the festering maze that passes for a gaol. The cell door slams shut and you hear the bolt being lowered into place. You are imprisoned.

Turn to **470**.

341

'... The handling of a small boat is a matter of plain common sense,' were Wuraq's parting words to you. As you scull out across the bay, rumbling to raise the sail, you begin to wonder about that. You also realise why he did not bother to haggle over the price: for it is necessary to bale water constantly, as the boat is at the very lowest limit of seaworthiness. You must pray that you enjoy clear weather and a calm sea until you reach your destination.

But on this occasion, as on so many others, your prayers are not to be answered . . .

Turn to **423**.

342

As you run out of the hostelry, Alexius points at you and begins yelling at the top of his lungs. You knock him down and race off down the street. A few shuttered windows open as townsfolk awaken and peer out to see the cause of the commotion. One very fat man, enraged at being woken up, hurls a bucket of slops from a high window. It misses you, but drenches a woman peering from the window below him. As the two begin a fierce row, you duck into an alleyway.

Having got into trouble with the Selentine Knights, you resolve to keep a low profile for the next few days.

Turn to **164**.

343

You try to plan how you could use your remaining wishes. 'To travel to the Magians' stronghold in Opalar from here would involve one of the wishes,' you say, thinking out loud. 'Then travelling on from there to Hakbad would use up the other. It is possible.'

'No, no!' says the abbot. 'The sapling must be brought *here*, to the Grey Rock. The Astral Gateway back in the hall is the only direct and completely safe route by which I can return the sapling to the monastery.'

That would bring us back here with no wishes left to you,' interjects the jinni. 'And if you wish for me to take you to Opalar from here that will mean cancelling the still-operative wish that we should go on to Hakbad. The upshot is, you can visit the Magian sect's headquarters and return here with the abbot's tree - but I would then depart, leaving you stranded. So what is it to be?'

If you decide to help the abbot and worry later about how you will get to Hakbad, turn to **316**. If you carry straight on to Hakbad now, turn to **67**.

344

Alexius shuffles his feet and seems unable to look you in the eye. 'You have identified a basic verity,' he says at last. 'In truth, my wife wrote the tariff for me and I cannot read at all. I am shamed! Normally I quote the room rates from memory, but I forgot that we put our prices up only this morning. The

best deal I can now offer is for a bed in the dormitory at the back. For this and a nourishing meal, we charge only one gold piece per person.'

If the Warrior is here, he or she should turn to **585**. If you want to sleep in the dormitory, cross off one gold piece for each player and turn to **181**. If you cannot afford this, turn to **164**.

345

Getting directions from a group of Weavers' Guild militia who are policing the avenue leading to the doth market, you pass out of the north gate of the city and along a dusty road that wends its way through orange groves. It is further to Psyche's villa than you had supposed, and soon you are walking through the deep blue-grey shadows of evening. Walking towards you are three veiled Ta'ashim women.

If you want to speak to them, turn to **355**. If you pass by, turn to **486**. If you decide to abandon the idea of staying with Psyche and go back to Crescentium, turn to **170**.

346

The creature, now just a pile of greenish sludge at your feet, slowly dissolves into a foul-smelling gas. You are eager to get away from the stench and hurry on down the remaining stretch of the tunnel past the guttering candle which was the light source you saw at the entrance. As you move, though, the greenish mist floats after you and suddenly you are surrounded by a dense fog of choking vapour.

Turn to **397**.

347

The emeralds reflect bright slashes of green light

across his face as he stoops to peer at them. 'Excellent, excellent,' he breathes. They are still redolent of Sa'aknathur's sorcery even after so long.' He takes the Hatuli from a cabinet and places the emeralds in its empty eye-sockets, then sets it down in the centre of a small table. You watch, apparently forgotten, as he next produces a brush and paints a gold spiral around the Hatuli. Lastly he arranges twelve engraved onyx counters in a pattern at the edge of the spiral and intones: '*Didan, jostan, peidaan, aavardan!*'

You could almost swear you saw the thing stand to attention.

Susurrien beams at it, then glances up. 'It is activated. In a few minutes it will have drawn the necessary energy from the cosmic flux to be able to move. Then it will find the Demon's Claw for me.'

If the Trickster is here, he or she should turn to **482**. If not, turn to **86**.



348

(ENCHANTER) You remember that Iblis is the Prince of Evil Jinn. It seems a safe bet that this bombastic creature falls into that category. 'Do you see this, O jinni?' you say, holding up the brooch.

He bends down and squints, then starts back as if a blinding light had flashed into his eyes. 'By the sacred flame! It is the talisman of my lord Iblis.'

'Yes.' You try to remember what you have read about the talisman's power - there was a reference in one of the books in your old tutor's library... Ah yes: 'You must serve one who holds this talisman, granting three wishes. Is that not so?'

The jinni nods slowly and folds his arms across his colossal chest. 'It is so. Your wish is truly my command

Turn to **525**.

349

Tariq shows you to an alcove piled with thick cushions. A silk drape gives you some privacy from the other guests. As you prepare for bed, however, you find your thoughts drifting back to Lagrestin and his smuggling activities.

If the Trickster wishes to do something, turn to **429**. If not, turn to **203**.

350

You utter the word which activates the Orb: 'Conflagration.'

A tendril of fire leaps from it and curls around the wooden monster. It emits a shriek of unhuman panic as it flails about within the flames, quickly becoming transformed into a living bonfire. You step back aghast, revolted by the eerie screaming. The Orb falls from your hands and breaks apart

with the intense heat it is producing - delete it from your Character Sheet.

At last the Seven-in-One topples, crashing to the floor and shattering into splinters of burning wood, and you watch as the flames reduce it to a pile of smouldering ash.

Turn to **356**.

351

'For a single cushion in a curtained alcove!?' you reply. 'Your mention of the sum of five gold pieces is presumably in the nature of jocular banter. The true payment must be closer to the region of one gold piece per pallet. . . '

Tariq raises his hands and sighs. 'It is said that God is as gratified by our prayers as we are by the granting of them. In other words, I have comfortable accommodation and you have wealth - an exchange will enrich us both. Let us say two gold pieces a pallet.'

He will not bring the price down any further - and he does not seem to have even heard of Lagrestin, whose name you had hoped might secure a discount.

If you agree to these terms, then, each player should pay two gold pieces and turn to 349. If you are not prepared to pay even this reduced rate, turn to **249**.

352

The horse has gone. You scan the deck, and then catch sight of something moving off through the mist. For a second you think it could be the horse... and is there something familiar about the man sitting astride it . . . ? A bank of fog drifts in,

covering it. A faint peal of laughter seems to echo out of the distance.

The loss of the horse is inconvenient, but this is not the time to worry about it. *The Devil's Runner* is equipped with rowing boats, and you quickly lower one of these into the water.

The curtain of blackness is drawing relentlessly closer. You climb down to the boat and row with powerful strokes away from the ship.

Turn to **99**.

353

(ENCHANTER) 'Wait!' you cry, holding up the mirror. 'Do you recognise this, O blighted creature?'

'Certainly,' says the jinni. 'It is a scrying-device used as an adjunct to spells of Prediction.'

You curse silently. If what he says is true, then you can abandon any hope of the mirror producing a bolt of energy to shrivel him where he stands. In desperation, you tilt the mirror so that it reflects the sunlight into his eyes, but this only provokes him to still greater fury.

Turn to **163**.

354

(TRICKSTER) You snatch the gold mirror out of the leper's gnarled hand and wipe it fastidiously on your cloak before pocketing it. Then you swing open the door, which (suspecting a trap when you noticed there was no handle on the inside) you never allowed to close in the first place!

'How - ?' mumbles the leper, staring blindly as you call out a cheery farewell.

'Ventriloquism,' you tell him. It is a useful trick

for any practising rogue to be able to throw his voice. More advanced exponents of the art - such as myself - can imitate sounds like the creak of a floorboard, the crackling of a fire, or the click of a door closing. The next sound you hear will be of the door *actually* closing . . . !

You let it swing shut.

If you have not already done so, you might like to try the other door - turn to **377**. If you go up to the second landing, turn to **97**. If you would prefer to go back to your rooms now and get some sleep, turn to **151**.

355

If there is a Sage in the party, turn to **24**. If not, turn to **6**.

356

If you have written the codeword IMPROBITY on your Character Sheet(s), turn to **214**. If not, turn to **436**.

357

The automaton seems to flinch back as you make the ancient gesture of command. Swaying, it drops its mace and puts its hands to its chest. You think for a moment that it is about to topple, and you move well back in case it does; but instead it opens a flap in its chest and takes out a crystal tuning fork. This it hands to you (one of the players must record it on his or her Character Sheet if you decide to keep it) and you feel a slight hum as you pass your fingers over its prongs.

Apparently satisfied, the automaton gives a stiff bow and retreats to the far end of the hall.

Turn to **293**.

358

'A huge Mungodan savage swam to the quay, clambered out of the water emitting murderous grunts, pulled a sharp knife from his belt and ran off down yonder street.'

Anvil looks at you for a few moments. His face shows neither interest nor belief in your story. Turning to Lagrestin, he asks, 'Did you witness this extraordinary sight?'

'No.' Lagrestin pauses, then nods encouragingly. 'But it could have happened before I got here.'

Anvil steps up to you. 'Don't stay very long in Crescentium,' he says, then motions his men away.

Lagrestin sidles up to you as the militia depart. 'A shame about our misunderstanding earlier,' he says with a broad smile. 'You're probably looking for somewhere to stay while you're in Crescentium, eh? Unfortunately I have no room for guests at my own lodgings, but the proprietor of The Sorcerous Coconut inn is a good friend of mine. Go there now and mention my name and he will give you accommodation at a very reasonable rate. Tomorrow morning I'll drop by for a chat.'

He saunters away.

If you wish to go to The Sorcerous Coconut inn, turn to **169**. If not, turn to **328**.

359

You enter a room illuminated by a greyish glow that seems to ooze from the dank stone blocks of the wall. There is a passage leading off the far end, but to reach it you would have to pass a number of desiccated corpses. You move closer, now noticing that the corpses are riddled with arrows. Your

glance goes to the left-hand wall, where you see a line of sinister arrow-slits.

You consider your options before advancing any further into the room. It looks as though you could avoid being seen from the arrow-slits - if there are indeed any bowmen still there - by dropping low and running close to the left-hand wall. Alternatively you could just sprint down the centre of the room, trying to get to the other end before any bowman had time to shoot.

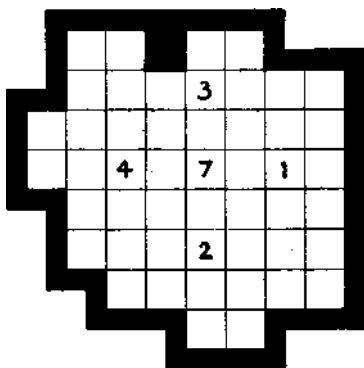
If you try to pass unobserved underneath the arrow-slits, turn to **418**. If you dash along the middle of the room, turn to **440**.

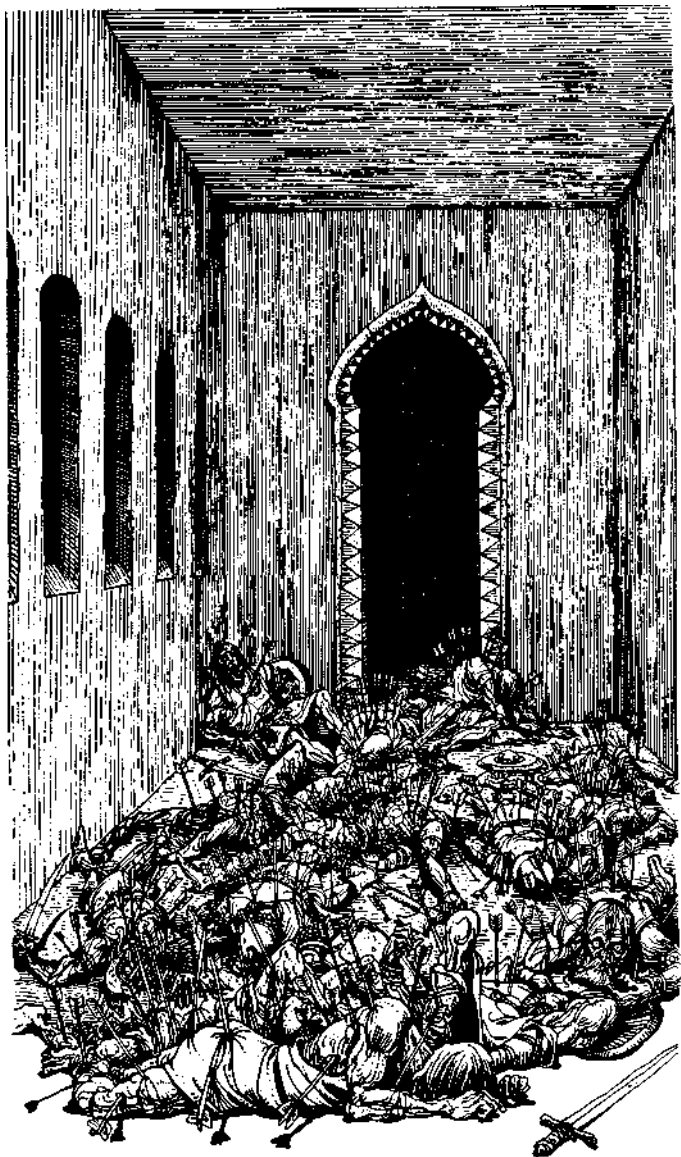
360

(ENCHANTER) Which of these spells do you want to cast? Servile Enthrallment (turn to **32**); or Detect Spells (turn to **526**)?

361

The seventh idol is a vicious wooden warrior barely a metre tall. You breathe a silent prayer that this is, indeed, the last of them.





Seven-in-One

Fighting Prowess: 12 Damage per blow: 3 Dice
Psychic Ability: 9 Awareness: 5
Armour Rating: 0
Endurance: 15

Note: The Seven-in-One has no mind in the proper sense, and thus cannot be controlled by Servile Enthralment.

If you wish to use an item, record the number **361** on your Character Sheet(s) and then turn to **402**. If you fight and win, turn to **356**.

362

The Thulanders turn as you approach, but one still holds the woman in a brutish grip. 'What is this interruption?' he snarls at you. 'Can't a couple of guys that're new in town have a bit of fun, eh?'

'Not at somebody else's expense,' you thunder. 'Unhand this lady at once. Ta'ashim or not, she deserves better than to be manhandled by two fatherless rodents like you!'

They didn't like that. You can see you have a fight on your hands now.

Turn to **43**.

363

A shadow blurs the edges of your vision. Psyche's face looms close, a distorted image shrieking with triumphant laughter. Her words roll over you like thunder, sending ripples through the narcotic haze: 'You credulous dolt,' she sneers. 'How did you ever master the simplest magical trick when you have such a feeble brain?' The effort of listening to her words is making you feel sick but, in spite of the drug, you feel you must hear what she has to say.

' . . . that I am the sister of Utayama-no-Sugensiki Aiken - whom you know, foreign barbarian that you are, as Icon the Ungodly!'

What is she saying? She is sister to Icon, your deadliest foe? You must awaken from this drug-dream . . . defend yourself . . .

A knife flashes like a cold smile. You feel it touch your throat.

'*Sayonara,*' whispers Psyche.



364

You are rudely awakened by what feels like someone digging you hard in the ribs. Six grinning thugs are standing over you in the darkness. You see they are armed with stout clubs.

'Lagrestin sends his regards,' says the largest of the six, and they rain a few more blows on your coverlet. How is it that all bully-boys have such a fatuous turn of phrase? You feign a few moans as your hands slide unseen to your weapons. They think you are unarmoured, so they are not bothering to put their full weight behind each swing. How is it that all bully-boys are such *amateurs*?

You leap up and hurl the coverlet in their faces. Turn to **404** for the fight, but you get one free Round while they are disentangling themselves.

365

The Badawin traders, woken by the commotion, jump up and draw their swords. This is too much

for Lagrestin's hired thugs, who turn tail and run like rabbits.

The Badawin leader returns your bow. 'I must remonstrate with Tariq in the morning,' he says with a smile. 'The standards of his inn are definitely declining, if rodents like that are to be found in-doors at night.'

Turn to **533**.

366

'Have it your own way,' grunts the jinni as he dives towards the stronghold.

Your spectacular arrival does not take the Magians by surprise. Resplendent in gold-trimmed scarlet robes and high copper crowns, the adepts of the sect pour out onto the main balcony. *In* their centre stands the High Priest, marshalling them into formation around him with curt gestures. He watches your descent with a smile, supremely confident of his ability to deal with any threat. The adepts begin chanting on a single high, clear note. The High Priest raises his wand; a fabulous thing of gold and jewels. It catches a shaft of sunlight . . .
And it throws it at you!

Turn to **71**.

367

The abbot sees the mirror glinting among your belongings and reaches out to take it from you. He seems entranced. 'Do you see? Do you see the tree and the serpent?' he says, holding the mirror up in front of you. They are both symbols of life.'

You peer into the shining surface. There are two blurs - is it possible they are only flaws in the metal? With imaginative effort you could make them out to be a tree and a serpent, as he says.

He is staring into the mirror again. 'My training includes the art of divination,' he explains. 'The snake changes; it becomes a sword now. A sword of life... What does it signify? It is coiling around the base of the tree. Ah - no, I am losing the image ...'

He blinks and shakes his head. There is silence. After a moment he says, 'The mirror is an extraordinary device. Never have I experienced such a vivid image.'

The Sword of Life. Could it be that his quest is linked with yours?

You can take the mirror back if you want - although, since he is able to use it and you are not, that would be rather ungenerous. Cross it off your Character Sheet if you let him keep it.

Turn to **19**.

368

She refuses your offer. 'Take the horse by all means,' she says. 'But I will not accept payment for it.'

'Surely it is a great treasure, though,' you say, protesting. 'It is not right that you should part with it and get nothing in return.'

'On the contrary, I will get a great deal in return,' says Menira. 'When you have taken the horse, my neighbours will ask where it has gone. I will invent stories to tell them, explaining its disappearance - and they will pay me to hear the stories, so I will be rewarded both with gold and with enjoyment! By taking the horse away, therefore, you are actually bestowing something on me!'

This line of reasoning is distinctly Ta'ashim! With a smile, Ridaq adds: 'It is as the Illuminate said when he stripped away the Magian priest's magic:

the gift that is given by taking away is the gift of *possibilities.*'

Turn to **111**.

369

You scramble down the mooring chain to which you tied your boat. Bent over the oars, you exert all your strength to row away from *The Devil's Runner* and out of the interplanar vortex before it is too late.

Turn to **99**.

370

Make sure you know the number of the last entry you were reading.

The phial contains a restorative potion. The player who has drunk from it, if wounded, gets back four to twenty-four Endurance points (roll four Dice). Your Endurance will not go above its level at the start of the adventure, of course.

Discard the empty phial and return to the last entry you were reading.

371

She twists her mouth into a scowl and for a moment her beautiful face looks violently ugly. Then she sighs and gives a nonchalant shrug. 'Oh well, I cannot blame you for being wary. In this world, trust is all too often rewarded with malice and intrigue. Still, I wished only to help you . . .'

There is an uneasy silence for a time, then Psyche summons one of her black-skinned Mungodan slaves. 'Buko here will show you to the rooms I have had prepared for your stay,' she says. 'Good night.'

You take your leave and follow the slave to a suite of rooms on the other side of the courtyard.

If you decide to question the slave, turn to **427**. If

there is an Enchanter who wishes to take some action, he or she should turn to **70**. If there is a Trickster who wishes to do something, he or she should turn to **491**. If you want to do nothing for the moment, turn to **372**.

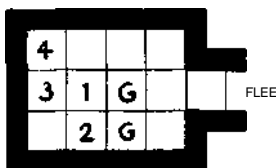
372

You lie awake in the stifling heat of the subtropical night. Somewhere far out beyond the orange groves, a jackal calls. Menace hangs like a pall of unbreathable air. Suddenly you sit up and brush sweat from your eyes.

If you want to look around the villa while Psyche's asleep, turn to **155**. If you just want to get to sleep, turn to **560**.

373

Two hulking half-caste warriors enter the cell, accompanied by an Asmulian eunuch. The eunuch opens a scroll and begins to read: 'You are hereby sentenced to death by order of His Highness Prince Baldric.' After a glance to see that you have taken this in, he waves the guards forward.



Guards

Fighting Prowess: 8

Damage per blow: 2 Dice

Psychic Ability: 6

Awareness: 7

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: *first* 24

second 24

The eunuch takes care to stay out of the way of the fight-

If you beat the two guards, turn to **568**. If you manage to *fight* your way past them to *flee*, turn to **323**.

374

In its perpetual shroud of fog, *The Devil's Runner* seems to hang in a space between worlds. Dazed by a sense of disorientation and timelessness, you stare down from the rail. You can no longer make out the surface of the ocean, or even hear the waves lapping against the hull. Intermittent moans come from far away, like the lost cries of all the sailors who have ever been lost at sea ...

You shake off such thoughts and begin to explore the deck. The ship is big - larger than the largest Crusader vessels, which can hold a thousand men. You estimate it to be thirty paces across at the beam, standing perhaps twelve metres out of the water. It has several stout copper-clad masts, but the sails look useless: just tattered cobweb sheets of mouldered canvas.

Finding a companion-way decorated with daemonic carvings, you are about to go below deck when you spot a figure lingering by the wheel. Wreathed in the eldritch fog, his long cape gives him the appearance of a tall black bat.

If you wish to talk to him, turn to **296**. If you wish to go below deck, turn to **576**.

375

It takes you some time to struggle through the teeming crowds to the jewellers' market. You are now walking in a tangle of late afternoon shadows under the branches of dusty cedar trees. The jewellers are beginning to close the shutters over their windows and make ready for evening prayers.

Seeing a young lad playing in the street nearby, you call him over and ask him where Jablo lives. He thinks for a moment, then grins. 'Cost you.'

If you have money and are willing to pay him, turn to **465**. If the Trickster wishes to do something, turn to **500**. If you try threatening him, turn to **544**. If you tell him you don't have any money, turn to **426**.

376

You give Alexius a cruel buffet behind the ear for his impudence. The next moment he is propelled towards the door clutching a mere three gold pieces from each player. (Cross this sum from your Character Sheets.)

'You must pay the full sum!' he screeches. 'The charge for that suite is clearly written on the tariff. Do you want me to call for the Knights Capellars? They would give you short shrift for your crime.'

A door opens across the landing. A tall thin man in brown velvet robes is standing there with a napkin in his hand. 'What is this disturbance?' he says. 'Alexius - did I hear you say that someone is refusing to settle their account?'

'Y-yes, my lord Ulric,' says Alexius, pointing to you.

Ulric looks at you. 'I detest raucous behaviour,' he says, 'and I *abhor* violence.'

He raises his arms, uttering a magical phrase. Your senses swim like a school of frightened fish. The room goes dark around you. And Ulric looked such a *mild* old fellow . . .

Turn to **207**.

377

The room is black and contains only one object of note: a sparkling crystal phial resting on a black

satin cushion. You may take what you want - remember to note it down on your Character Sheet. If at any time you want to drink the contents of the phial (you can do this except when in combat), turn to **370** to see what effect it has. Remember to record the entry you are at before doing this, as **370** will not direct you back there.

Leaving the black room, you have the choice of trying the white door if you have not done so already (turn to **83**), ascending to the second landing (turn to **97**), or going back to your rooms to sleep (turn to **151**).

378

Reluctantly you part with your armour and weapons. All players should note that they now have an Armour Rating of zero, and must reduce Fighting Prowess and damage rolls by two points until they manage to rearm.

The Selentine Knights march you to the Citadel. A grey brooding place overlooking Crescentium from the top of a steep hill, its dungeon echoes with the cries of criminals tortured or imprisoned there. You are led through the gate and down a winding staircase, then thrust into a cell. The door slams shut, leaving you in clammy darkness . . .

Turn to **470**.



379

The man in the cage utters a soft moan. The giantess turns her head, putting up a huge hand to shield her eye from the sunset.

'What is it, little man?' she says scornfully. 'Would you like to share my meal?'

'Ah, you fiend!' you hear him say. 'May it clog in your entrails and cause you unendurable pain.'

She scowls, then gives an unpleasant bark of laughter. 'On the contrary, all of your companions have provided me with most appetising meals.' She hurls the empty pot aside and it clangs against the hearth behind her. 'Now I am going to take a little nap. When I wake up it will be your turn . . .'

She goes over to the hearth and slings a few pieces of wood into it. They look like the broken timbers of a ship. She uses an anchor as her poker, prodding the hot embers to make the new wood catch alight.

What will you do now? Attack her? (turn to **183**); back out and go? (turn to **498**); use an item? (turn to **2**); or bide your time? (turn to **545**).

380

You manage to get directions to Lagrestin's house. Entering the courtyard, you see a lamp burning behind the closed shutters of the portico. Lagrestin himself comes to the door when you knock, and over his shoulder you glimpse a band of disreputable-looking individuals gathered furtively around a table.

'Lagrestin,' you say. He moves to block your view of the others. 'It has been many years.'

He looks uneasy. 'Yes. Yes, it has. Too many - but you are looking well. Have you recently arrived in Crescentium? Well, it is good that you dropped by to see an old friend . . .'

'Wait!' you cry, inserting your foot in the door as he tries to close it. 'Would you leave an old friend standing in the street?'

'I have business associates here,' says Lagrestin, narrowing his eyes. 'For this reason I cannot let you in. Wait.' He fetches a piece of paper and leans on the doorframe to write. You hear one of the men in the room mutter something, causing the others to murmur.

Lagrestin thrusts a note into your hands. Take this to the Temple of the Roc. It will introduce you to Tobias de Vantery, with whom I have had some dealings. He will give you lodging for the night. Do not come here again.'

The door is closed in your face. With the letter of introduction which Lagrestin has given you, you set off through the darkened streets.

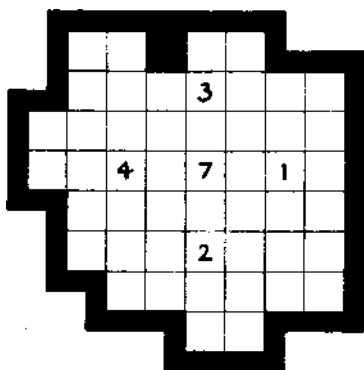
Turn to **47**.

381

You can now either speak to the gambling long-shoremen (turn to **503**), or get Alexius to show you to your suite (turn to **106**).

382

The idol seems unstoppable, while you are becoming more exhausted with each feint and parry.



Seven-in-One

Fighting Prowess: 10 Damage per blow: 3 Dice+2
Psychic Ability: 9 Awareness: 5
Armour Rating: 0
Endurance: 25

Note: The Seven-in-One has no mind in the proper sense, and thus cannot be controlled by Servile Enthralment.

If you wish to use an item, record the number **382** on your Character Sheet(s) and then turn to **402**. If you fight and win, turn to **536**.

383

You turn at the sound of someone puffing as he comes running up behind you. It is a small, portly Ta'ashim man dressed in fine silk robes. 'Ah!' he cries, bowing with his eyes fixed on the magic carpet. 'Praise be to the Lord of All and to his Prince of Messengers, the Illuminate Akaabah. As reward for an honest and virtuous life, my property has been returned to me.'

You watch as he bows again and again to you. 'Are you perchance referring to this rug?'

'I have the honour to be your servant, Sharkan by name,' he replies. 'I am indeed the one who wove that carpet - a miracle of tapissery, a wondrous web on which one may soar among the clouds. Yet when the labour of years was finished and I took the rug into the market place to sell it, it was deviously exchanged for another, ordinary rug. My heart grieves at the loss, and the bile rises to my mouth when I speak the name of that rascal... But you do not have time to listen to my tale of woe, I am sure. If you will only restore my property to me, I will trouble you no further.'

Sharkan waits with an anxious smile.

What answer will you make to him? 'By all means take your rug.' (turn to **230**); or 'Ownership is established by possession; the rug is yours no longer - if it ever was.' (turn to **506**)?

384

Susurrien glares at you, eyes smouldering with rage. 'Then what damned use are you?' he says. Turning to the mural, he utters a syllable that makes the air in the room seem to close in for a moment - like the oppressive atmosphere that presages a storm. Something is wrong, but it takes you a few seconds to realise what it is. Three of the figures have disappeared from the mural.

There is a sound from behind you.

Turn to **410**.

385

(TRICKSTER) On a sudden impulse, you offer Wuraq a gold piece for the wooden figurine he is whittling. 'Agreed!' he says at once, taking the coin. 'I can carve more if you like . . .'

You turn the little mannikin over in your hands, now wondering if you were rash to buy it. 'No. One will do.'

Turn to **341**.

386

He goes on with his tale, showing breathtaking stamina and a flair for choice phrases. The story takes several discursive turns, and includes at least one independent tale framed within the larger narrative, but he never quite loses track of the whole. At last, after landing on a far-off island, marrying a beautiful princess, meeting once more with the Yamatense sage (characterised in the latter part of the story as 'the evil infidel'), escaping the attentions of

a lovesick ghoul, and undertaking another perilous ride on the flying horse . . . at last, his adventures brought him back to Crescentium.

' . . . And that is the end of my travels,' he says. You have been listening to his story all night, and when Alexius comes in to open the shutters you see it is almost dawn. As you turn away, yawning, the sailor presses something into your hands. A wooden peg. It is the peg that controls the flying horse,' he says. 'The thing brought me only misery, and I wish now I had drowned those many years ago - but if you find the horse and replace this peg, then it may be of some use to you.'

If there is a Sage in the party, turn to **538**. If not, turn to **421**.

387

He chuckles and chews the stem of his pipe. Out in the night, a bulbul calls. The sailor listens to its song and then says, 'Do not blame the storyteller if his story seems absurd. It is up to the listener to supply the meaning of any tale.' You consider striking him for his insolence, but then he smiles and cups his ear to suggest that he was referring to the bulbul's singing. You snort with distaste and turn away to sleep.

Turn to **236**.

388

You pull the stopper from the bottle and hold it above the mist as it rises. You can see what Icon was planning to do; he was drifting in mist-form towards the Life Focus in the ceiling of the hall. The vitalising energy radiating within the shaft would have healed his wounds and restored his energy for the fight.

Perhaps he cannot see clearly in mist-form. Instead of rising into the shaft of the Life Focus, he



curls into the bottle. As soon as the last wisp of mist passes inside, you ram the stopper in hard.

Icon's voice rings from inside the bottle: 'What base trickery is this? Release me, you spawn of the peasantry. Are you too craven to fight with honour?'

You strike the bottle against a pillar until Icon is silent. If it was able to hold a mighty jinn in captivity for nearly a millennium, it should be able to hold your archfoe . . .

You bite your lip; you cannot be *sure* of that. If he should ever get free, he will surely pursue you with his hatred and power redoubled. And there might always be some moment when, perhaps recuperating from wounds, you could be taken unaware by his attack. You cannot remain vigilant forever.

Your gaze drifts thoughtfully around the room, and the numbing green radiance of the Death Focus gives you the solution to the problem. According to legend, the shaft leads straight into the realm of Death, from which there can be no returning. You feel a twinge of pity for Icon - but only a twinge. After barely a moment's hesitation, you hurl the bottle down into the green light.

As he realises the fate to which you have consigned him, his scream is spinechilling. But then you hear his voice resonating inside the copper bottle, echoing up the shaft like the rumbling of thunder; and what he says lays a pall of dread over you. 'If I am to die, it will be with a final savour of revenge. I call upon all the spirits of my ancestors to grant my final wish. By the Spell of Dying Wrath, I summon them from the land into which I now descend. As you have taken my life, which is the thing most sweet and precious to me, I charge them to take that which is most precious to you . . .'

The bottle has now fallen out of sight, but you see something flowing *up* the shaft towards you. At first it seems like a bank of greenish fog, but then you begin to discern faces . . . staring eyes and soundlessly howling mouths . . . emaciated hands reaching towards you . . .

It is the grisly host of Icon's ancestral spirits, clawing their way out of the realm of Death to grant his final wish. You turn - but even as you start to run, the spirits burst from the shaft. As they flow around you, shrieking curses you cannot hear and clutching at you with their spectral claws, you feel as though the blood in your veins has turned to ice. You collapse with a moan to the hard marble floor, trying to fend them off as they dance macabrely around you. Far away at the edge of your hearing, you hear the whispering of ghostly laughter. You see Icon's face, standing clearly out among the throng for an instant. He is truly in the realm of Death now. He seems to stoop over you, and you hear the echo of his curse:

'That which is most precious to you.'

You look up, wondering if you blacked out for a moment. The spirits have faded from the hall, returned to their deathly abode. The barrier of flame has also dissipated, allowing you to reach the exit. But as you reach for the Blood Sword, you know that your victory has been turned to ashes. You give vent to a long, tortured howl of anguish and despair. When the spirits sank back to the realm of death, *they took the Blood Sword with them.*

Turn to **489**.

389

He stuffs your money into his lice-ridden shirt before speaking. 'I have sailed on five of the seven seas and caroused in half a hundred ports. The dust

of twelve countries and two continents is on my feet. Yet I have never heard of this Blood Sword of which you speak.'

You start to protest, demanding your money back, but the sailor holds up his hand, saying, 'God gives guidance to whom He will. Be content with what is revealed.' This statement is made with such portent that you believe the sailor may be a madman. It would be impious and unlucky to wrest back your money from him. You leave him to his dreams and lie down to sleep.

Turn to **236**.

390

The Dendan holds you in the gaze of its unblinking eye as you intone the words. A feeling of clammy fear appears in the pit of your stomach when you realise you have got the wrong mystic phrase. It is too late to try again . . .

Turn to **147**.

391

'Death duels are prohibited under Outremer law,' says one of the Selentines flatly. 'Drop your weapons and unfasten your armour.' He turns and says something in Angate to one of the others, who nods and runs out into the street.

If the Warrior is in the party, he or she should turn to **54**. If not, you have the choice of disarming as you have been commanded to (turn to **378**) or resisting arrest (turn to **310**).

392

If you slew Psyche, turn to **523**. If you fled from her, turn to **396**.

393

Which item do you want to use? The dog-headed creature's spear (turn to **158**); a bunch of gristly fingerbones (turn to **414**); or a tuning fork (turn to **100**)?

If you have none of these, turn to **586**.

394

You encounter a patrol of Selentine Knights who tell you in their thick eastern accents that you should be off the streets at this hour. When you explain that you are looking for the house of Emeritus the Sage, they escort you there and pound on the door until a bleary eyed slave-girl comes to admit you. She explains in halting Beaulangue that Emeritus is visiting a patient outside the city and will not be back till tomorrow. At first she wants you to leave and come back in the morning, but you manage to explain that you have only recently arrived in Crescentium and are relying on her master's hospitality.

She shows you to a vestibule filled with comfortable cushions. Exhausted as you are, you fall gratefully into the arms of sleep.

Turn to **159**.

395

You go to the Temple of the Roc, where the Capelars have their Crescentium headquarters. The quadrangle teems with warriors, clad in chain mail, drilling and exercising in spite of the leaden heat.

A native servant meets you and conducts you into the high colonnaded hall behind the quadrangle. It is like stepping into a cool bath as the shadows deliriously enfold you. A fierce-looking knight steps forward and takes your letter of introduction,

scanning it briefly before speaking to you: 'You've just arrived in Outremer, then? This is good. You will not yet have become weakened by the insidious moral laxity prevalent in the Ta'ashim air.' He spits. 'My name is Tobias de Vantery. Possibly you have heard that I have recently been appointed as Provincial Commander of the Order here in Crescentium. I may say that I was disgusted at the profligate behaviour and poor standards of training that I found when I took over. Fortunately I was in time to stop the rot, and now I am licking the Saviour's Battalion into shape.'

You nod politely, disguising your boredom.

'Arrangements will be made for you to sleep. Tomorrow at breakfast we will have a chance to talk further.' He calls the servant over.

As the servant motions for you to follow, Tobias turns on his heel and strides out to the quadrangle.

If you go with the servant, turn to **198**. If you call after Tobias to ask him about supper, turn to **221**. If you call after him to ask if he knows anything about the Blood Sword blade, turn to **26**.

396

Inside the cabin lurks a strange, lustrous-skinned creature with eyes of green fire. Its muscles flow like quicksilver and it gives a lion's roar as it sees you. Fortunately it is pent within the confines of a mystic symbol, and is unable to reach and rend you as it would like.

Studying it, watching it prowl around the perimeter of the symbol with its hungry stare fixed on you, you begin to feel a buzzing pain behind your eyes. It obviously has some telepathic means for attracting or stunning its prey . . .

You quickly shut the door again. Record another tick and turn to **473**.

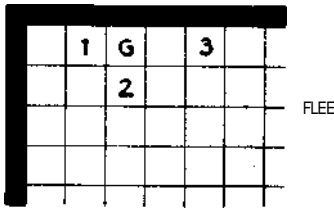
397

The mist is poisonous. Enchanters and Sages are immune to its effects, but Tricksters and Warriors must resist it as if it were a Psychic spell. Failure means that the character takes two Dice damage. Anyone surviving the mist stumbles through it to the end of the tunnel.

Turn to **65**.

398

(TRICKSTER) You can see it will take quite a few blows to kill the giantess, and as soon as she is woken up by the first blow she will fight back. You have to make that first blow count: you take the precaution of striking at her eye. She screams in sudden pain and confusion and leaps up, lashing out blindly with her massive fists.



Giantess

Fighting Prowess: 4 Damage per blow: 5 Dice—1
 Psychic Ability: 8 Awareness: 5
 Armour Rating: 1
 Endurance: 59

Note: If the Enchanter is here and Enthral's her, he or she should note down the number of this entry and then turn to **139**.

If you win, turn to **467**. If you *flee*, turn to **498**.

399

The one-eyed giantess screeches with rage and

swings her fists - each of which is as large and as hard as a warhammer.

		6			
	1	2			
		3	4		FLEE

Giantess

Fighting Prowess: 6 Damage per blow: 5 Dice-1
 Psychic Ability: 8 Awareness: 7
 Armour Rating: 1
 Endurance: 65

Note: If the Enchanter is here and Enthrals her, he or she should note down the number of this entry and then turn to **139**.

If you win, turn to **467**. If you *flee*, turn to **498**.

400

The giantess snatches up the ship's anchor from beside the hearth and swings it like a war pick. A scream of unhuman fury erupts from her throat as she strides forward to attack you.

		1			
	6	2	4		FLEE
			3		

Giantess

Fighting Prowess: 8

Damage per blow: 5 Dice+1

Psychic Ability: 8

Awareness: 7

Armour Rating: 1

Endurance: 65

Note: If the Enchanter is here and Enthral's her, he or she should note down the number of this entry and then turn to **139**.

If you win, turn to **474**. If *you flee*, turn to **498**.

401

(WARRIOR) The jinni is treading right behind you. 'You cannot escape me!' he booms. But escape is the last thing on your mind. Suddenly wheeling round, you draw your sword and plunge it up to the hilt in his toe, just under the nail!

The ensuing scream of rage and pain makes the very rocks of the island shudder. Clutching his injured foot, the jinni hops backwards. His torrent of curses, obscenities and threats is quite awe-inspiring, and the ground shakes with each hop he takes, but you remain calm and alert. You are waiting for his other foot to come down on a certain large boulder which you have noticed - a boulder very precariously balanced on the cliff's edge. As soon as the opportunity arrives, you seize it. Dashing forward, you throw your whole weight against the boulder just as the jinni's foot descends. The effort nearly snaps your sinews, but you manage to dislodge it. It slides away from under the jinni's foot and his anger evaporates into simple dismay as, arms flailing comically, he overbalances and falls flat on his back in the sea . . .

You are knocked down by the resulting deluge of water. When you scramble to your feet, drenched,

you see a very abashed jinni kneeling in the surf.

'Well, who is the victor?' you demand, almost laughing out loud as he wrings the salt water from his beard.

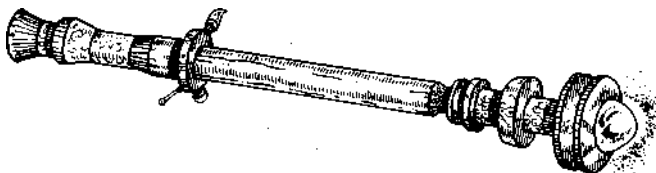
'It is you,' he admits, handing back your sword. 'Now I am yours to command.'

Turn to **525**.

402

You should have recorded the number of the previous entry before turning here. Check that you have done this.

If you wish to use the Orb of Fire, turn to **350**. If you wish to use the Magian's wand, turn to **461**. If you have neither of these items (or decide against using them), return to the entry you were at before and continue the battle.



403

SAGE) Calling on your immense reserves of willpower to stay conscious despite the rarefied air, you hastily untie the rope that binds you to the Roc's claw. You must use your psychic discipline of Levitation to float down to the island safely.

You look down. A long drop if you fail... But you must banish such thoughts - *all* thoughts - or you will certainly fail.

Turn either to **255** or to **298**. The choice is yours...

404

Lagrestin's hired thugs are of various races and

sizes, but all have the same expression of moronic belligerence.

B	1	2	3	4			
	B	B	B	B			
				B			

FLEE

Bully-Boys

Fighting Prowess: 8 Damage per blow: 1 Die+1

Psychic Ability: 6 Awareness: 5

Armour Rating: 1

Endurance: *first* 12 *fourth* 12

second 12 *fifth* 12

third 12 *sixth* 12

If you overcome them within four Rounds, turn to **318**. If you are still fighting after four Rounds, turn to **365**. If you *flee*, turn to **227**.

405

Lagrestin's thugs grin at you as they circle round, crescent-bladed knives weaving short arcs in the air. They imagine themselves to be experienced killers, but your only thought is to dispose of them before a militia patrol comes along.

FLEE

	T		T			
		1		2		
	4		3		T	
		T				

Thugs

Fighting Prowess: 8	Damage per blow: 1 Die+1
Psychic Ability: 6	Awareness: 6
Armour Rating: 0	
Endurance: <i>first</i> 15	<i>third</i> 15
<i>second</i> 15	<i>fourth</i> 15

If you win within four Rounds, turn to **259**. If you are still fighting after four Rounds, turn to **29**. If you *flee*, turn to **212**.

406

You find the large purple-lacquered door of the hostelry and push it open. Inside, a number of longshoremen are squatting round a gaming board throwing dice. Beyond them, a grey-robed man hovers like a giant moth in the light of a yellow lantern. He flits fussily to and fro with a wine jug, watching the game with sycophantic interest as he refills the longshoremen's goblets. Seeing you, he moves over and bows. Moves too close, bows too low - you don't like him.

'Welcome to the Tower of the Throne of Purple, on whose curious name hangs a ribald tale! I am Alexius of Ferromaine, your host. You may study the tariff if you wish - or, if that would be demeaning, allow me to show you directly to our best suite.'

If you wish to see the tariff, turn to **10**. If you wish to speak to the longshoremen, turn to **503**. If you go straight to your rooms, turn to **106**.

407

You press the peg gently to manoeuvre the horse until you are hovering level with the ship's rail. A further series of twists sends you gliding rapidly forward to alight on the deck.

Turn to **374**.

His mouth widens into a huge gap-toothed grin as he greedily pockets the cash you give him.

'Come,' he says. 'I have just remembered the vacant chamber at the end of this corridor.'

You are led on into an opulent suite of apartments. High foliate windows run the length of the east wall, opening on to a veranda of mosaic tiles. Silk curtains patterned with stars flutter in the evening breeze. The screen windows along the top of the west wall show the elaborate abstract decoration for which Ta'ashim art is famed; and below these are a group of jewelled arches, each of which bears a calligraphic panel. You are not familiar with the classical form of the Jezant script, but you presume that the panels feature lines from the sacred Ta'ashim Codex. Interesting that the notoriously intolerant Capellars have not defaced them. Perhaps they are aware that art (even heathen art) is a sound investment, and many do say that the Capellars worship Gold as much as they worship God ...

'These used to be the officers' chambers,' explains the servant. 'But the new Commander disapproves of luxury, and thus the officers now sleep with the men on blankets of horsehair while these rooms are available for you to use.' He retreats from the chamber and begins to close the doors.

If you wish to call him back and take away the money you have just given him, turn to **143**. If you bid him good night and go to bed now, turn to **337**.

409

If you have the Hatuli, turn to **287**. If not, turn to **268**.

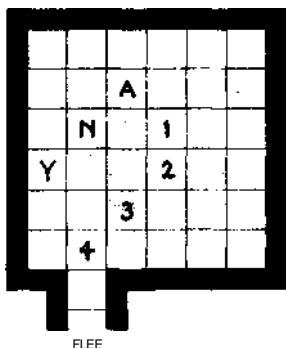
410

You turn slowly, coming face to face with three

grisly horrors out of the darkest pits of nightmare. The largest is a three-headed man whose lower body is that of a snake. On his right stands a wizened man with a dead tree growing out of the top of his head. The third figure is a hunched, corpse-skinned woman with a face like that of a giant fly.

These three are Azidahaka, the Yazir and Nasu,' says Susurrien conversationally. 'They were deities in this part of the world before the Illuminate brought the message of the Most High. These creatures before you are, in fact, not the gods themselves, but what I prefer to call "umbracules" - a reflection on the mundane plane containing some of the essence of the original myth. Possibly you do not understand the concept? It doesn't matter. All you have to do now is die.'

The umbracules slaver and move towards you...



Azidahaka

Fighting Prowess: 11 Damage per blow: 12 Dice
 Psychic Ability: 10 Awareness: 7
 Armour Rating: 6
 Endurance: 100

Nasu

Fighting Prowess: 10 Damage per blow: 8 Dice*
Psychic Ability: 11 Awareness: 8
Armour Rating: 3
Endurance: 140

* Nasu's touch is the touch of decay. A player whom she wounds must attempt to resist a Psychic spell. Failure to resist means that the player rots away and dies.

The Yazir

Fighting Prowess: 9 Damage per blow: 5 Dice+1
Psychic Ability: 18 Awareness: 9
Armour Rating: 3
Endurance: 85

Note: The Yazir will call spells to mind and cast them on alternate Rounds. Roll a Die to see which spell he is using: 1=Nemesis Bolt, 2=Sheet Lightning, 3=The Vampire Spell, 4=Mists of Death, 5=Sword-thrust, 6=Nighthowl. Once he has called the spell to mind, he casts it automatically on the following Round. (His Psychic Ability is high enough that he always succeeds with his casting roll.)

If you *flee*, turn to **570**. If you win, turn to **325**.

411

(ENCHANTER) The Orb releases a jet of flame in response to its secret word of activation. The flame strikes the jinni and licks up over his whole body, but he is unharmed. He even seems to bask in the furnace-like heat. As you drop the Orb, which is now burning your fingers, he sneers, saying, 'For a sorcerer you are uncommonly ignorant. Did you not know that we jinn were *created* from fire? This heat feeds my own flames, making me still more powerful. But do not expect gratitude even for this

service, because it is clear that your intention was to do me harm!'

Turn to **163**.

412

(WARRIOR) You know that the giantess is unspeakably evil, but you will have no truck with dishonourable behaviour. To attack a sleeping foe would be an act of rank cowardice. You deliver a kick to her muscular flanks, and she wakes with a yelp of annoyance.

Turn to **399**.

413

You step calmly off the top of the tower. A faint night breeze catches your near-weightless form and sends you drifting out over the city as you slowly descend. You gaze around, entranced by the beauty of the stars above and the scattered lights spread out below. The ghoul is beside himself with rage, and screams curses at you until you are out of earshot. 'How unlike a muezzin giving the call to prayer from a mosque tower,' you think. And, at this, gravity takes you - and you drop the last couple of feet into an alley.

Turn to **164**.

414

The fingerbones belonged to the best thief in Crescentium - at least that was before he was caught picking a magistrate's pocket and executed. Hoping that the thief's luck (prior to his arrest, that is) will rub off on you, you touch the bones to the door. To your amazement the bones spring to life and start to crawl over the lock mechanism like a strange white crab. Suddenly with a click the fingers find the right



catch and the door springs open. The fingerbones run up your leg and scuttle into your belt pouch. You step through the door.

Turn to **483**.

415

His lip curls in a sneer. 'You foreign devils always get my name wrong. It is Aiken, a spirit-name taken from my ancestors. Not some painted symbol of your own benighted faith.'

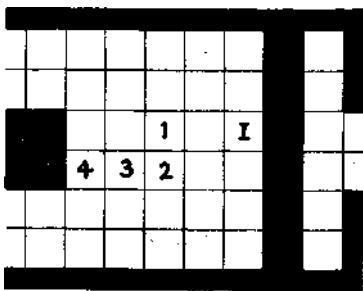
You shake your head. 'Get out of the way, Icon . . . Aiken . . . whatever you call yourself. We have no reason to quarrel. It has been a long night, with more than its fair share of bloodshed. You don't want to add your own name - however you pronounce it- to the list of casualties.' You look him in the eyes.

'By my honour, this is a call to battle!' he snarls. 'Do you mean to suggest that I am unable to destroy you? Like the merest ant, I'll crush you! Like a thing without bones, you'll squirm and die under the heel of my boot! For five years I have pursued you, since the days of your callow youth when by stark chance you managed to get the better of me in Krarth. When I arrived in Crescentium at the house of my sister Saiki, I discovered you were also in Outremer. Since then I have remained on your spoor, prepared to hunt you for hate's sake to the very boundaries of the earth if need be. This petty concern of yours for that magic blade is as nothing - my feud with you is like thunder; my wrath is the spitting of lightning!'

He suddenly becomes calm. Turning a wry glance at you, he draws a pouch of silvery dust from his jerkin and scatters it to right and left. A barrier of scarlet flame forms behind him, blocking your route out of the hall. Reaching with his left gauntlet into

the flames, he pulls out a swathe of them and wraps these around his body. You have seen him use a trick like that before - the Spell of Retributive Fire. He seems to have made it a little more powerful over the years.

'All right, Icon,' you say with a sigh. 'If you want a fight, you've got one.' You suddenly give a roar of anger and rush towards him.



Icon the Ungodly

Fighting Prowess: 9

Damage per blow: 5 Dice

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 9

Armour Rating: 2

Endurance: 55

Note: He is immune to the Spell of Servile Enthralment. Because of the Spell of Retributive Fire, anyone who strikes him in melee is burned for one Endurance point (armour notwithstanding).

If you win, turn to **304**.

416

You hear the tramping of feet from outside - and Alexius's voice, anxiously urging the soldiers of the night watch to hurry. Rather than try explaining things to them, you snatch up the coins the long-shoremen were gambling with and run out the back

way. In an alley some distance from the hostelry, you count your gains: fifteen gold pieces in all.

Turn to **164**.

417

Unused to strong drink, the honest Badawin traders are soon snoring deeply. As you get up to extinguish the lanterns, Tariq begins to hurry over. Feigning drunkenness, you shoo him back to his bed. These men sleep the sleep of the virtuous,' you tell him. 'Do not disturb them by clattering around in the dark.'

You glance down at the sleeping Badawin. There is one last touch: you drape your own cloak and hat over the man nearest the door, and pull rugs over the others. Then you go to wait behind the curtains of your alcove.

An hour passes. You are beginning to doze off. Then a group of unshaven scoundrels bursts through the doorway. Seeing your cloak and hat in the moonlight, they give hoots of violent pleasure as they begin to set about the sleeping traders with dubs.

If you wish to step in and prevent this, turn to **559**. If you turn over and go to sleep, turn to **530**.

418

As you stoop close to the left-hand wall, you hear a strange slithering sound. Looking up, you see a mass of tentacles sliding through the arrow-slits above - *and reaching out for you!* Before you can jump away from them you are seized. You are being dragged up towards the slits, your breath squeezed out of you. Your only chance of escape is to hack through the tentacles. Each player will lose two Endurance for each Round that he or she is held.

There are twelve tentacles in all; distribute these equally among all players. Any successful hit will sever one tentacle. If you cut through the tentacles you will be able to reach the archway at the far end of the room.

Turn to **554**.

419

Already the rising heat and dust of the city are becoming stifling. You are grateful for the cool shade of the entrance hall. A native slave-girl comes running up to you and points to the queue of sick people. 'These others were here before you,' she protests. 'Please wait your turn.'

A thin sandy-haired man with a benign smile emerges from a curtained vestibule. 'Dhali is right,' he says. 'I observe no favourites, and I treat my patients regardless of wealth or station in life . . .'

His voice trails off, and you look round to see what he is staring at. It is the Blood Sword hilt and scabbard that you carry at all times. The morning sun is shining through the window onto them, causing the jewelled metal to scintillate with a thousand colours.

'The Sword of Life!' gasps Emeritus. 'I thought it had been destroyed long ago.'

'The blade is still undiscovered,' you tell him.

He rubs his jaw. 'Perhaps I can help.' He ushers you into a vestibule and draws a curtain across in front of it, explaining: 'There are those who would like to see the blade remain lost. The precaution of talking in private may be unnecessary - but why take chances? Now, let me tell you what I know ...'

The other patients are incensed by what they see. 'What's this special treatment?' you overhear one

of them mumbling. 'Some of us been waitin' here since dawn

Turn to **60**.

420

(SAGE) Your quest is urgent, and you do not have time to waste on a vainglorious jinni. 'I constrain you with the Ineffable Name!' you cry, binding him into service using the ritual formulae set out in the Scroll of Salamin and the Seven Rings of Isaf, son of Baraka.

His fury is towering but impotent. The arcane words command him in your service. But you must be careful - your knowledge of jinn is not equal to that of the mighty Salamin, and if you ask too much of him he may break free of your binding.

Turn to **525**.

421

Do you wish to take the peg that allegedly operates the flying horse? If so, turn to **129**. If not, turn to **23**.

422

You may have recorded some codewords while exploring the ship.

If you have MYTHAGO, NEXUS and SPECULUM, turn to **451**. If you have MYTHAGO and NEXUS, turn to **273**. If you have MYTHAGO and SPECULUM, turn to **505**. If you have MYTHAGO only, turn to **271**. If you have none of these codewords, turn to **553**.

423

You sail south, checking your heading from time to time against the astrological chart that Susurrien gave you. Soon you begin to relax and enjoy the

voyage, basking in the afternoon sun and sniffing the bracing salty air. Even the baling turns out to be a less demanding chore than you had feared.

Towards sunset you are hailed by a group of fishing boats returning to shore. They appear as black ink-scratches against the blazing red of the western horizon. When you call back to the fishermen in Beaulangue, they shout something and sail on. Day retreats from the sky, revealing the stars one by one. A cool breeze blows across your bows, and shrieking gulls wheel above you.

A sense of sudden foreboding makes you shudder. Something touches your fingers, which you are trailing lazily in the warm water. You go rigid, staring around. The sea is filled with the bodies of hundreds of dead fish.

The waters churn and froth ...

Turn to **497**.

424

'... and then the evil ghoulish-mage flew me here to Crescentium on the back of the Roc. "Tawi! Tawi!" he cried and, as before, the great bird heeded his commands, descending to deposit me on top of this charnel tower. And here I beheld the body of my third and youngest son, and was left to share his destiny as I had so rashly wished.'

The stranger has come to the end of his tale. Not before time - you were starting to doze off. You look up sleepily to see him prowling softly towards you. *He* is the ghoul. He hoped to lull you off to sleep with his story, then feast on you!

Players who succeeded in the Psychic Ability roll can jump up to fight the ghoul at once. Others must roll one Die at the end of each Round, and on a roll of 5 or 6 they wake up.

Bearing this in mind, turn to **534**.

425

(ENCHANTER) With your spells it will not take you long to escape from this cell. You consider the alternatives. The most obvious tactic would be to subject the hunchback gaoler to your spell of Servile Enthralment and order him to free you.

Alternatively, there is a narrow slit of a window up near the ceiling of the cell. If you are in a multi-player party, one of your companions can give you a leg up, and you will then be able to teleport the whole party to freedom using the spell of Immediate Deliverance.

If you wish to try Enthralment on the gaoler, turn to **250**. If you wish to teleport out of the cell (and remember, to do this you must have at least one companion), turn to **126**.

426

'Oh, in that case,' he says, 'maybe it won't do any harm to tell you anyway. Jablo lives in that building over there.' He points across the market square.

Turn to **149**.

427

He turns as you speak, then after watching you mournfully for a few moments he opens his mouth to reveal that his tongue has been cut out. Taking a furtive glance back towards the veranda to see that his mistress hasn't noticed anything, he rolls his eyes fearfully. He seems to be warning you of some kind of danger. You nod and motion for him to go.

Turn to **372**.

You go to fetch two Capellars from those on watch. By the time you get back to your bedchamber, the assassins have gone - and they may have taken some of your belongings with them. Each player should roll a Die for every item in his or her possession; on a roll of 5 or 6, the item has gone. You do not have to roll for your weapons (you're carrying them) nor for the Blood Sword fragments, which are protected from common theft by their mythic power.

After checking that your assailants are not concealed anywhere nearby, the two guards bid you good night. Your sleep for the rest of the night is tense and fitful. At dawn, each wounded player gets back two Endurance points. Yawning and with eyes full of sleep, you get up and set off in search of some breakfast. . .

Turn to **146**.

(TRICKSTER) Something tells you that Lagrestin is not just going to let matters rest after the debacle at the quayside. Calling Tariq over, you ask him for some strong liquor. The Badawin gentlemen presumably wouldn't want a drink,' you add casually.

The Ta'ashim Codex is interpreted most severely in Zhenir,' replies Tariq, nodding. They never touch intoxicating drink. But I, for my sins -'

You hold up a hand to nip his confession in the bud. 'Enough. Bring some-pitchers of fruit juice with the liquor. I may be ordering more drinks later, so I'll settle the account tomorrow morning.'

Tariq hurries to comply, doubtless hoping you will get drunk and order many more jugs before the night is done. Screened by the alcove curtain, you

take the liquor he has brought and use it to spike the fruit juice. Then you go out and approach the Badawin, saying, 'Would you care for some company, gentlemen?' You set the pitchers down beside them. 'And some refreshing fruit juice, for I know your faith abjures liquor.'

'It is true,' says one of the men, inviting you to sit. 'Even though the poet says that one sip of wine is worth the whole realm of Khitai. . .'

'Ah,' says another, pouring goblets of fruit juice for himself and his companions, 'but Khitai is a land of infidels.'

You laugh with them. 'We can all agree on that,' you say, touching your cup to theirs.

Turn to **417**.

430

You make for Psyche's own private apartments, groping blindly through the faerie mist. You halt suddenly as the babble of voices wafts from somewhere up ahead. One of the voices is Psyche's, crackling with hysterical anger. The other voice does not sound human.

If there is a Sage who wishes to try something, he or she should turn to **565**. If you continue on towards Psyche's rooms, trying to edge around where the voices are coming from, turn to **28**. If you decide to leave the villa and head back to Crescentium right now, turn to **103**.

431

Lagrestin meets with several other men - a covert assignation, to judge by the way they dart into an alleyway as a militia patrol passes nearby. You follow them at a reasonable distance, and eventually reach the docks. One of the men imitates the

cry of a screech-owl, and is answered by a splashing from out in the darkness. Edging nearer, you see a black barge sliding towards the quay. The crew tie it up alongside Lagrestin's group and there is some hushed negotiation before several boxes are handed over. Lagrestin pays the men on the barge with a sack of coins. After counting out the sack's contents, they cast off and punt away into the darkness.

Concealed behind a stack of barrels, you chuckle quietly to yourself. Lagrestin is still up to his old tricks - smuggling, this time.

The question is, what are you going to do about it? Call out for a militia patrol (turn to **583**); attack the smugglers (turn to **105**); or step out and announce your presence (turn to **89**)?

432

The jinni transforms himself into a large black hound with glowing coals for eyes. As he runs off across the park, he barks back over his shoulder: 'You can keep the copper bottle, by the way, if you picked it up. It might be worth something as an antiquity. I shan't be needing it again, that's for sure!'

You soon lose sight of the hound among the trees. Susurrien said that he would wait for you at the House of the Desert Breeze. You have no idea where that is, so you set off at random and eventually come to a gravel path which seems to lead towards the centre of the city. After a few minutes it brings you to a wide tree-lined avenue, and you see an old dervish coming towards you carrying a heavy pack.

If the Trickster is here *and* has a wooden doll, he or she should turn to **228**. If not, turn to **134**.

433

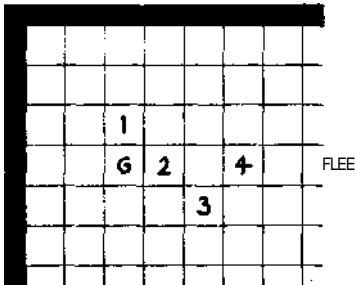
Locked in combat with the demon-lord Feshtis right about now,' says Shambeer. 'He'll take a wound in about five minutes and be back on board soon after that. You'd better be off the ship by then, you mark my words!' He fixes you with his disturbingly hollow gaze and you hurry below.

Turn to **59**.

434

You lob the Orb into the fireplace, shouting the word that activates its magic. The giantess is just stoking the fire, and is unprepared for the sudden inferno that explodes in her face as the Orb releases its flames. (Cross the Orb off your Character Sheet, as it is too hot to pick up again.)

You rush forward to attack before the giantess can recover. Shrieking in agony, she lays about her blindly with the anchor.



Giantess

Fighting Prowess: 6 Damage per blow: 5 Dice+1
Psychic Ability: 8 Awareness: 5
Armour Rating: 1
Endurance: 65

Note: If the Enchanter is here and Enthral's her, he or

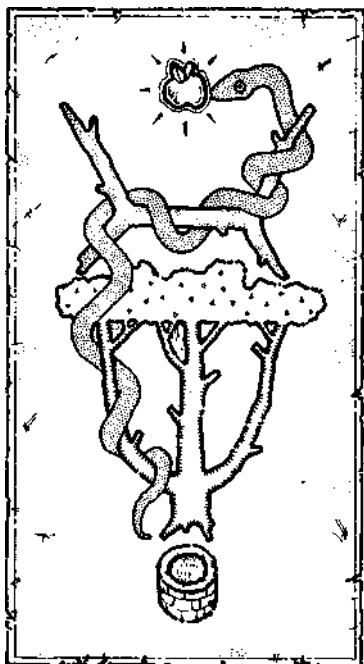
she should note down the number of this entry and then turn to **139**.

If you win, turn to **474**. If *youflee*, turn to **498**.

435

It is around sunset when you wake up. The abbot immediately hurries over. He is packed and dressed for a journey, and has the sapling in his arms. 'I am ready to return through Pereus's Astral Gateway to the monastery,' he says. 'I waited to give you this.'

You stare sleepily at the parchment he thrusts into your hands. It shows an enigmatic drawing:



'While you slept, I saw this as a vision against the dawn,' says the abbot. I am sometimes prone to visions.'

'After being imprisoned and deprived of food for so long, it is not surprising.' You hand the drawing back to him.

'No, no,' he says. 'You must keep it. The tree, the antlers and the serpent are important symbols in the Yggdrasil myth. God has sent this vision to guide you in your quest.'

You shrug. 'Why give *you* the vision, in that case?'

'Perhaps because you trust me. Would you have trusted your own eyes? Perhaps so that I can help you in return for the help you have given me. The Lord God is all-wise, and we cannot doubt that if He has chosen to act in this manner then it must be for the best.'

You fold the drawing and tuck it amongst your other belongings. As it is so light, you do not need to count it against your encumbrance limit. Note the number **435** beside it on your Character Sheet(s), though, in case you want to refer to it later.

The abbot gives you a breakfast of biscuit and salt beef from his own pack, along with a sip of some brandy that the giantess did not find. Each wounded player recovers one Endurance point for the meal, plus Endurance equal to half his or her rank (rounding fractions up) for your sleep.

After shaking hands with you, he goes over to the wall and feels along it until he finds something. When you squint, you can just make out a shimmering against the stone. 'Now what was it Pereus said . . .?'" muses the abbot. He holds up his hand and grimaces as he makes the pagan horn-gesture with his left hand. 'And Lord, excuse me this witchery; I employ it only to do good in Your name. Now, then: *vestigia nulla retrorsum!*" With those words, he steps into nowhere.

You stand blinking, your eyes baffled by the

manner in which he departed. When you go forward and touch the wall, it feels solid once again.

After a while, you go out to stand on the terrace.
Turn to **520**.

436

Now to deal with Susurrien. You turn with a feral glint in your eyes. He is standing with arms raised, as if about to cast a spell, but the expression on his face is one of puzzlement. A trickle of blood runs from his mouth and splashes onto the green border of his robes. His eyes roll up, and he sways and falls lifeless to the floor of the cave.

Hasan is standing behind him. He wipes his dagger on a square of black silk and sheathes it with a soft click. In that moment you know who he is: Hasan i-Sabbah, the Old Man of the Mountains. The Grandmaster of the Marijah Assassins.

'Susurrien's past has caught up with him finally,' he says. 'It is dawn.'

Turn to **40**.

437

Add another tick to your list. You are passing a number of cabins on either side of the passage. If you wish to open a door at random and look in, turn to **34**. If you just wish to continue towards the stern, turn to **473**.

438

(ENCHANTER) You give careful thought to the choice of spell. Your life almost certainly depends on it. Will you cast the spell of Immediate Deliverance (turn to **102**); the spell of Servile Enthralment (turn to **292**); or the Nemesis Bolt (turn to **490**)?

Susurrien only smiles when you point this out. 'No, he is not truly dead. And not truly alive. Hunguk was too great a man for this world. We are in the last days now, and those who are born and walk the world's face are timid things compared with those mighty heroes of times past.'

'Like King Vallandar, Lord Abraxus, Imref Kharid . . .' you add, remembering Emeritus's words.

'Just so. I have heard it said by the scholars of your faith, that Hunguk forfeited his soul for the bloody rapine he committed. They say he is doomed to roam the world till the Hour of All's Ending. I prefer to think he is too great a man for heaven or hell. He has sailed the only course he could: into myth. Many have claimed to see his ship *The Devil's Runner* bearing down on them from fog or storm. Not all can be liars.'

Susurrien allows a few moments of silence for you to take this in, then reaches for a parchment. 'I have prepared this astrological projection to show when and where *The Devil's Runner* will next appear on the earthly plane. It is a point some sixty miles offshore in the Gulf of Marazid, and two days from now. From my planisphere I know that the Swords of Life and Death are located somewhere in the city of Hakbad. Once you have recovered the emeralds, go there and seek me at the House of the Desert Breeze.'

He turns away. The audience is at an end.

'Have you any suggestions on how to get there?' you ask, rolling the parchment and putting it among your other belongings before heading for the door.

'No,' says Prince Susurrien. That is your problem.'

Turn to **133**.

440

You sprint across the room dodging the corpses on the floor. Strangely no arrows are fired from the slits, but as you reach the safety of the arch at the far end you see mysterious coils of writhing tentacles spring through the arrow-slits. Anyone sneaking by underneath them would doubtless have been seized. ..

Turn to **554**.

441

(TRICKSTER) You have a couple of contacts in Crescentium. Jablo the Knife is an unprincipled and scurrilous rogue - a lot like yourself, in other words. The last you heard, he was living near the jewellers' market. You also once met a man called Lagrestin when you were in Baumersheim; he was selling berths on Crusader ships and had plans to settle in Crescentium as a spice dealer.

If you wish to go and see Jablo, turn to **375**. If you would rather try Lagrestin, turn to **33**. If all players cannot agree on either of these alternatives, turn back to **269** and choose again.

442

The creature's head lolls back in death, its canine teeth still bared and flecked with foam. Its spear lies on the floor beside it, held limply now in its human grip. You may take the spear if you wish - remember to record it on your Character Sheet if you do.

You go over to inspect the door. It is firmly barred and seems solid enough to withstand any impact. How are you going to open it?

If the Trickster is here and wishes to act, he or she

should turn to **61**. If you think you might have an item that would do the trick, turn to **393**.

443

There comes a sudden flash of light, against which you have to shield your eyes. The alley is filled with the stench of sulphur. When your vision has cleared there is no sign of the Thulanders. Their weapons lie scattered at your feet.

The Ta'ashim woman they had accosted is standing a few paces away. You sense a smile under her veil. She holds up two grey rats by the tails, and you see she has just cut their throats with a curved silver knife.

'Fatherless they may have been,' she says with a light musical laugh. 'Rodents, certainly . . .'

Turn to **257**.

444

You grab Lagrestin as he tries to run off. Holding him over the side of the quay, you say, 'So far you have not given your old friend a warm reception in Crescentium, Lagrestin. This will now change. Let us go to your house, where you will provide lodging and a sumptuous meal.'

'Impossible!' gasps Lagrestin, staring at the water lapping inches below his nose. 'I c-currently reside in a single rented room near the bazaar. It is so small that my cat and I must sleep there in shifts -I from dawn till dusk, she at other times. There is no room for guests!'

'Suggest an alternative.' You push his head under the water for a few seconds to give your words emphasis.

'Glub,' he splutters. 'I'll write you a letter of introduction to take to the Knights Capellars at the Temple of the Roc. I am acquainted with their

Commander. He'll let you stay there for a day or two.'

You haul him up and wait while he scrawls the letter. Booting him into the harbour for good measure, you set off towards the Temple of the Roc.

'By the way, Lagrestin,' you shout back; 'hope you can swim . . .'

Turn to **47**.

445

The dripping sound intensifies as you pass down a dank stretch of corridor. After a few yards this opens out into a spherical underground chamber, half filled with water. The water level laps at the edge of the corridor. Across the chamber another identical tunnel entrance can be seen. Apart from swimming across the pool (an option you don't consider practical), the only other way to reach this other entrance is a narrow ledge which runs around the circumference of the chamber just above the water level. A steady drip of water splashes down from a moss-covered area in the centre of the ceiling.

If you wish to make your way around the narrow ledge to the other entrance (one at a time only in a multi-player party), turn to **580**. If you wish to return to the well bottom and choose another route, turn back to **477**.

446

Despite the lateness of the hour, Tariq is happy to fetch a lantern and show you to Emeritus's house. You are met at the door by a native slave-girl. Despite her poor grasp of Beaulangue, she manages to explain that her master is staying overnight at the home of a patient, but will be back in the morning.

She leads the wounded Badawin off to a dormitory at the back of the house, then makes up bedding for you in a small vestibule off the hall.

You sink gratefully on to the cushions and blankets she has provided. As she draws a curtain across the alcove, you are already asleep.

Turn to **159**.

447

Bright needles of green light lance out of the door's surface. The nearest player (ie the last one to act) is hit by 2-12 of these (roll two Dice to determine how many). Other players will be struck by 1-6 (roll one Dice). Each needle burns for five Endurance points, less the player's Armour Rating.

If anyone survives this, turn to **11**.

448

You experience the bitter taste of defeat. You cannot escape from the room, and now that Psyche is dead there is scant chance that any of her servants will screw up the courage to enter this tower. Realising you are trapped here with the blind leper, you slump in despair. He seems to sense this, and his monstrously deformed face splits into a horrible grin. He says:

' "The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it. . . "'



449

(SAGE) You recall Emeritus of Quadrille, who was an acolyte at the Monastery of Illumination at the same time you were there. After completing his studies, Emeritus became a friar and went on a pilgrimage to the holy city of Ibrahim. You later heard that he settled in Crescentium and started practising as a leech. You feel sure he would welcome you with open arms, as the two of you were firm friends.

If you wish to go and see Emeritus (and, in a multi-player party, everyone must agree together), turn to **173**. If you wish to consider the alternatives, return to **521** and choose again.

450

(SAGE) You recall Emeritus of Quadrille, who was an acolyte at the Monastery of Illumination at the same time you were there. After completing his studies, Emeritus became a friar and went on a pilgrimage to the holy city of Ibrahim. You later heard that he settled in Crescentium and started practising as a leech. You feel sure he would welcome you with open arms, as the two of you were firm friends.

If you wish to go and see Emeritus (and, in a multi-player party, everyone must agree together), turn to **173**. If you wish to consider the alternatives, return to **269** and choose again.

451

A throbbing hum fills the cabin, drawing your attention to the dimensional portal. It is shining with a hard grey-blue light, and you can discern a broad-shouldered figure approaching through the

confusion of geometric images. Hunguk - returning to his ship!

The hum wavers - alters in pitch and frequency, becoming the tread of clanking footsteps. The figure halts and peers towards you out of the blue haze. 'Who is it who dares to poach from the Harvester of the Ocean Furrows?' he roars. 'Who presumes to plunder the Reaver's hoard? Fie! A curse upon cowardice and covetousness! You'll be a morsel for my axes to chew on -'

You see no point in a needless confrontation. You have what you came for, so you retreat from the cabin and head towards the companion-way.

Turn to **185**.

452

(TRICKSTER) You have a plan that should even the odds. With a well-placed kick, you send the barrels you were hiding behind tumbling towards Lagrestin and his cronies. They are knocked flat like skittles at a market fair, and you rush out to attack before they can recover. None of them can take any action until the third Round of combat.

				5		5			
				1				5	
FL				4					5
				3	2	5			
				5	5		5		

Smugglers

Fighting Prowess: 8

Psychic Ability: 6

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: *first* 12

second 12

third 12

fourth 12

Damage per blow: 1 Die+1

Awareness: 6

fifth 12

sixth 12

seventh 12

eighth 12

If you beat them, turn to **444**. If you *flee*, turn to **324**.



453

Their nerve snaps first. A signal passes between them - a quick glance of deathly fear - and they turn tail and run off into the night. You turn to the trembling landlord, with your weapons still sheathed, and calmly ask him to show you to your rooms.

Turn to **106**.

454

You will have to swim out to the vast ship. This means taking off your armour (if you have any

armour), which you must leave here on the island. Wading out into the chilling water, you swim towards *The Devil's Runner* and seize hold of a mooring chain by means of which you climb up on to the deck.

Turn to **374**.

455

Lagrestin edges swiftly through the crowds and ducks down a narrow alley. You hurry after him, keeping to the shadows. He seems unaware that he is being followed and, after a furtive glance back, he heads towards the poorest quarter of town.

Turn to **431**.

456

When the Selentine Knights have gone, you round on Alexius. He quails before your wrath.

'I thought only of your own safety when I called for the Knights,' he says - adding hastily: 'But of course, I knew those longshoremen were no match for the likes of you!'

You glare at him. 'Be silent, you irksome little man. You will provide tonight's lodging free of charge. See to it.'

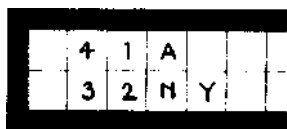
Alexius's white face bobs up and down stupidly. Your tirade has left him crestfallen and speechless.

Turn to **181**.

457

The path leads to the closed door of an embalming house. You curse grimly. Fate has chosen an ominous location for you to make your stand. The demon-gods come rushing towards you, roaring with bloodlust. You whirl; steel flashes in the pale twilight. Too exhausted to run, you will at least

show these devils that their prey has sharp claws to fight back with. . .



Azidahaka

Fighting Prowess: 11 Damage per blow: 12 Dice
Psychic Ability: 10 Awareness: 7
Armour Rating: 6
Endurance: 100

Nasu

Fighting Prowess: 10 Damage per blow: 8 Dice*
Psychic Ability: 11 Awareness: 8
Armour Rating: 3
Endurance: 140

*Nasu's touch is the touch of decay. A player whom she wounds must attempt to resist a Psychic spell. Failure to resist means that the player rots away and dies.

The Yazir

Fighting Prowess: 9 Damage per blow: 5 Dice+1
Psychic Ability: 18 Awareness: 9
Armour Rating: 3
Endurance: 85

Note: The Yazir will call spells to mind and cast them on alternate Rounds. Roll a Die to see which spell he is using: 1=Nemesis Bolt, 2=Sheet Lightning, 3=The Vampire Spell, 4=Mists of Death, 5=Sword-thrust, 6=Nighthowl. Once he has called the spell to mind, he casts it automatically on the following Round. (His Psychic Ability is high enough that he

always succeeds with his casting roll.)

If you win, turn to **270**.

458

You sit down and take a long swig from the gourd. The wine is deliriously cool and refreshing.

'Have you come far?' asks the man, mopping his tanned brow.

'From Crescentium.'

'And going far?'

You take another gulp of wine before passing the gourd back.

Will you tell him where you are bound? If so, turn to **76**. If you prefer not to disclose the details of your quest to this stranger, turn to **3**.

459

(SAGE) Your power of Levitation would allow you to dive straight down into the water, take hold of one of the boxes, and float back up with it.

If you wish to try this, turn to **50**. If not, the Enchanter could do something; he or she should turn to **575**. If there is no Enchanter, turn to **312**.

460

His conversation is listless at first, but he gradually becomes more animated as he relates his story: 'I was once in a ship bound for the port of Shahmir. On board - along with our usual cargo of sandalwood, silk and ebony - we had a passenger, a learned sage from the land of Yamato. When he came aboard, he brought with him a very large crate which was placed in the hold. I began to wonder what he had in this crate, and at last my curiosity got the better of my judgement. I stole down into the

hold by night when I was supposed to be on lookout, and taking up a belaying-pin I broke the crate open. Within I found a statue - the statue of a horse, made of ivory and ebony.

'Even as I inspected this marvel, a sickening lurch threw me to one side and I heard the timbers of the ship being split like brittle twigs. A cry went up, by which I knew we had encountered the Dendan, a monstrous fish that inhabits the Gulf. Had I been at my post in the crow's nest I might have spotted it and given the signal to change course. But now, because I had succumbed to foolish curiosity, the ship and all her crew - including myself! - were surely doomed . . . !'

The sailor puffs at his pipe and watches you from under half-closed eyelids.

What will you say? 'Continue this wondrous tale! How did you escape death by drowning?' (turn to **294**); 'A nonsensical tapestry of lies from start to finish! Surely you are not now waiting for payment to continue this absurd tale?' (turn to **387**); or 'Never mind the story of your insignificant life - what do you know of the Blood Sword?' (turn to **189**)?

461

A tendril of fire leaps from the wand and curls around the wooden monster. It emits a shriek of unhuman panic as it flails about within the flames, quickly becoming transformed into a living bonfire. You step back aghast, revolted by the eerie screaming. Finally it topples, and you watch as it burns down to a pile of smouldering ash.

Cross off the wand (you have now expended the last of its power) and turn to **356**.



Crescentium is a veritable maze of streets, market squares, bazaars and alleyways rising in tiers between the buildings of stone, hard-baked clay, and patterned brickwork. As the inhabitants of the city enter into their daily round of barter and toil, a fine choking dust rises from the streets until you find your eyes stinging and your lungs dry. Flies, enticed by the moisture soaking your face and clothes, follow you as resolutely as a gang of beggars. From the shadowed colonnade of a caravan-serai, merchants and pilgrims who have retreated from the day's growing heat stare out at you sullenly as you pass. You imagine them as the minor actors and stage-hands of a travelling theatre troupe, watching from the wings while it falls to you to act out the great drama on which their petty lives depend.

Your nostrils are clogged with dust, and as the sun reaches its zenith you resolve to find some shelter from the intolerable heat. A sign written in both Nascerine and Beaulangue proclaims something for your parched thirst: *Coffee - one gold piece*. It is above a booth with a linen canopy giving shade to its patrons. One of the men drinking there is a Knight Capellar, and he calls out cheerily when he sees you.

If you go over to join him, turn to **496**. If you wander on through the city, turn to **41**.

After what seems like an eternity, the fire dies down. Outside there is silence. The blackened fragments of crystal crunch under your feet as you walk over to the parapet. Looking down to the balcony where the Magians assembled, you see only a few

charred husks. The jinni, smiling broadly, notices you and reaches out his hand.

'What happened here?' you ask as he lowers you to the balcony.

He gives a huge shrug. 'I was sorely pressed - just able to hold my own against the priests' attacks. Suddenly, whatever energy source they were using gave out. Their warding spells dropped, and I annihilated them with a thunderclap.'

You search among the burnt corpses, trying not to grimace at the hideous sight of their faces and the smell of charred flesh. Something sparkles amid the carnage: the High Priest's wand, miraculously undamaged. You can pull it from his skeletal grip if you want - remember to note it on your Character Sheet if you do.

The remaining Magians put up no resistance now that their leaders are dead. They bring the sapling to you and, as you take it, you experience a tingle of restorative energy: any wounded player recovers two Dice Endurance. The player who is carrying the sapling should record it on his or her Character, Sheet.

The jinni is looking smug when you return to the balcony. 'Our mission has been a most gratifying success,' he says as he lifts you in the palm of his hand. 'This has been a blow from which the Magians will not quickly recover!'

Turn to **494**.

464

(WISHING PLAYER) 'Employ your power of Restoration,' you order the jinni. This is one of your three wishes, so cross off one of the boxes you are using to keep track of them.

He spreads his arms wide, then brings his huge

hands together to produce a thunderclap that makes your teeth rattle in your skull. Momentarily dazzled by the burst of blue light accompanying this, you are pleasantly surprised to find that when your vision clears you are arrayed in splendid new armour. This is enchanted and gives an Armour Rating of two points more than the unenchanted version would. (Thus, if you are the Warrior, for instance, you now have an Armour Rating of 5.)

You also have a magnificent sword or, if you prefer, a steel-shod quarterstaff. This is also magical, and adds +3 to your damage rolls. (So if you would normally inflict three Dice +1 on a successful blow, you inflict three Dice +4 when striking with this weapon.)

If you are the Sage or the Trickster, the jinni also supplies you with a new bow and a quiverful of arrows. These are not magical, but are of the most marvellous craftsmanship you have ever seen.

Your companions, if any, are not forgotten. If they are lacking any weaponry or armour, the jinni supplies them with a replacement. These items are simply replacements for the items they lost, and are not magical.

Turn to **338**.

465

Cross off the sum of one gold piece. The lad is delighted, but he pockets the money as though it does not mean very much to him. You suspect that his family is quite well-to-do, and it is merely the fun of haggling with you that has given him such a broad grin. He turns to point at a building on the far side of the market square. 'Up the steps beyond that doorway,' he tells you. 'That's where Jablo lives.'

Turn to **149**.

466

You feel that Lady Luck is no longer smiling on you; she is now laughing outright. You watch your winnings slip away. Soon you are five gold pieces *poorer* than when you started playing. When you suggest you should be turning in for the night, the longshoremen guffaw loudly.

If you pay them what you owe (players may spread the five gold pieces loss among themselves), turn to **106**. If you cannot or will not pay, turn to **91**.

467

After you have calmed him down a little, the old man is able to tell you his story. 'In the north of Kurland, set among the Drakken foothills, is the Monastery of the Reawakening. My companions, who were all eaten by that pitiless cyclops, were the senior monks. I was their abbot.

'Our mission was one of great importance to all mankind, and we had been preparing ourselves for it for many years. As you may be aware, at the dawn of the new millennium it will be time for the Author of All to set aside His work - this earth - and begin anew. Evil will be pulled from the world like a weed; the Devil and his followers will be forever expunged; our descendants will find the coming millennium to be the era of God's kingdom on earth.'

You nod. It is also said that the year 1000 will be a time of storms and bloody battle. It is then that the gates of Spyte will open, and the True Magi are fated to return to the world . . . This heaven-on-earth will not come about without a struggle,' you say.

'Quite so!' replies the abbot. 'You understand precisely! Many imagine that heaven is their birth-

right, but in fact God will judge Man's worthiness for such a state by the vigour with which we are prepared to fight for it. God can provide guidance, but it falls to mortal men to destroy the evil that has plagued us since the world began. If we cannot do that for ourselves, we can never inherit Paradise.'

'Peace,' you say, putting a hand on his shoulder to calm him. 'You are still distraught after your ordeal

'No!' he declares passionately. 'I am troubled by a greater worry - a danger that still exists. You see, we travelled so far in order to recover something that will be needed in the battle of doomsday: a sapling ash, nurtured through many generations by the monks of our monastery. It was grown from a key taken from Yggdrasil - the Tree of Life.'

'And where is this sapling now?' you ask.

'Stolen. Taken from under our noses by cultists of the ancient Magian Sect of Opalar. They used witchery to penetrate our defences, then flew off with the sapling on a bridge of flame. We thought to pursue them using an Astral Gateway which was opened by my colleague Pereus, who had once been a pagan and practised sorcery. Unfortunately he must have miscast the spell: because, instead of leading to Opalar, the Gateway opened into this very hall. The moment we emerged, we were seized and imprisoned by that elephantine fiend! I might have been eaten - our quest doomed to failure - if God had not sent you to rescue me. Now I must ask one more favour of you. The sapling *must* be recovered. It is to stand for the new era just as Yggdrasil, which was the first tree in the Garden of Eden, stood for the era that is past. Help me retrieve it from the faithless Magians!'

Turn to **253**.

If you offered 1-3 gold pieces, turn to **101**. If you offered 2-16 gold pieces, turn to **42**. If you offered 17 or more gold pieces, turn to **282**.

'What is this strange contraption?' you ask Menira.

Though it is astonishing to relate,' she replies, 'I will tell you the full story. Many years ago, before your people conquered our land, a man came out of the east from Minj to wed the daughter of the Sultan. He arrived on the back of a flying horse carved of ebony, to the amazement of all who beheld this spectacle, and greeted the Sultan with gifts of incense and silk.

'But as soon as the Sultan laid eyes on the flying horse, he conceived an ignoble plan by which he could possess it. Going back on his word, he rescinded the betrothal and ordered the Minjian bound in chains. He excused this to the people, who were aghast at such injustice, on the ground that the Minjian was of repellent aspect: "Should my youngest daughter marry an ugly infidel?" he cried.

'As the wretched man was dragged away, the Sultan mounted the horse and began to tug at the reins. Suddenly the horse rose up into the air, swift as an arrow shot from a bow, until the Sultan sat on its back among the clouds. He was first frightened, then jubilant at the thought of his new toy - then frightened again, when he found that for all his tugging at the reins he could not cause the horse to descend. ..'

Menira pours more coffee and begins to plump up the cushions on which she is reclining. You recognise the telltale signs of an interminable Ta'ashim storytelling session, and hurriedly inter-



rapt her. 'The tale is doubtless fascinating,' you say, 'but there is not the time to hear it all now. Suffice to say, the horse obviously returned to solid ground and now here it rests in your cottage. Can it be made to fly?'

'No, no indeed! For one who did would surely suffer the fate of the slave who took the pearl from King Ishan's jar. By coincidence, this tale too is part of the story of the flying horse and serves as an alarming cautionary note. Would you like to hear it?'

'It would be a great joy,' you say, rising and bowing to her. 'If only current circumstances were not so urgent. . . But, alas, only an oaf or a villain puts pleasure before duty. Thank you for your hospitality. Ridaq, thank you for the coffee. God bless you both.'

You retreat from the cottage and, breathing a sigh of relief, continue down the coastal road.

Turn to **82**.

470

After a while a panel slides back in the cell door and an impudent hunchback shows his face there. 'Greetings!' he says brightly. 'I am in charge of your wellbeing. Unfortunately I do not always take my duties seriously. Today, for instance, I have forgotten to bring the gruel and water I was supposed to give you for your meal. On other days I may torment you with jeering cries, or slip maggots or pebbles into your food. It is never possible to tell what I will do next, for I am just that sort of mercurial fellow!' He snorts with laughter and closes the panel.

This situation is intolerable. Surely you will be

able to think of some way of escape?

Perhaps. . .

Turn to **220**.

471

(TRICKSTER) Your pick snaps in the lock. Cursing, you do not hear the grate of stone above you until it is almost too late. Your botched attempt to open the door sets off a trap which causes the heavy block of the lintel to topple towards you. To avoid it, roll your Awareness score or less on two Dice. If you succeed in making this roll, then you leap clear just in time. If you fail, you are crushed to death. Your comrades (if any) mourn you briefly before continuing their adventure.

Turn to **308**.

472

Psyche's lip curls into a sneer as she gives a harsh bray of triumphant laughter. 'Fools that you are!' she cries. 'Do you think with my scrying talents that I am not aware of your past? I have good reason to hate you, even if you do not know it. Now you die . . .'

Magical energy coruscates in the air around her as she gathers her power for a spell of death. She has turned her back on the Trickster, whom she assumes to be in a deep trance. She learns her mistake as the Trickster leaps up and drives a knife into her back. She gives a blood-choked cry and falls lifeless to the floor.

Turn to **180**.

473

Arriving at a large circular door, you stand in confusion for a moment and then turn the handle in its

centre. It opens in sections, unfolding like a flower carved of wine-dark wood, and you step through into a cabin. The furniture here seems to have been made for someone at least two metres tall. There is a bed - draped with antique tapestries - and a table on which several yellowing charts are laid out. Facing you, between two shelves full of curios, there is another door.

Write the codeword MYTHAGO under your list of ticks, then add another tick to the list.

Assuming your time has not yet run out, will you look at the charts (turn to **209**); search the shelves for the emeralds (turn to **148**); or open the other door (turn to **561**)?

474

Overcome at last by the wounds you have inflicted on her, the cyclops sinks to the floor. As she breathes her last, the baleful eye clouds over and goes dark. You notice with distaste that, in place of blood, her cuts ooze a greenish-black foam.

The old man is beside himself with excitement and simple relief as you release him. With tears running down his face he takes hold of your robes and kisses them, thanking you over and over again. 'She ate every one of my twenty-three companions,' he sobs. 'When she ate Epicurus she gave a great belch of satisfaction! Ah, me! Ah, my! If you had come a few hours later, I would have been a stew in yonder pot. How can I ever repay you?'

Turn to **467**.

475

You are floating in a timeless void. Eternal space surrounds you - a thing without depth, colour or form. There is no sound.

How long have you been here? Time means nothing in the stark void, but your last mortal memories were of relinquishing the jewelled Blood Sword scabbard.

The giant image of the scabbard floats against the darkness before you. Taunting laughter echoes all around you, gradually filling the emptiness with a sense of time and staggering size.

The image of the lost scabbard disappears. Five majestic lords appear - huge and mighty, their presence overwhelms your senses. They radiate light. Each is robed in a single colour, shining with so agonising an absolute of that colour that your vision stings and swims. On one side you behold a lord in scarlet, on another a lord in cerulean blue. A third is clad in emerald green, another in gold. And the last of the dread lords is wrapped in scintillant white.

The red lord speaks. 'In the place where mortal voices, though those of strong lords, spoke to the shapers of men's fate; that place was called, in mortal tongue, Spyte.'

The walls of Spyte towered high,' continues the blue lord, 'for it was not yet at the time that feuds should crack the keystones, nor at that time had ravening flame tasted the ramparts.'

This long endured,' says the lord in green. 'Those who could speak of the first days of middle-earth spoke their lore to mortal ear. Mortal words, though those of lords most wise, were counted by all from shore to shore as inviolate commands.'

It is the turn of the gold lord. 'The brutish thing that lives in the darkness of the belly then stirred, the cursed creature that drives oath-brother to war with oath-brother, that hellish hate that eats from within.'

'From threescore, now only five await the day that is to come,' pronounces the lord in white. The images grow dim. 'From this pernicious place we shall go. We shall escape the foul fastness of the void, and return into the mortal land. No thing on middle-earth now opposes us . . .'

The five lords fade away, and you are left alone in the void.



476

The invisible creature stalks forward, emitting slobbering grunts that give you some idea of where it is. Suddenly it screams in bloodlust and launches itself upon you.

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Aphanos the Unseen

Fighting Prowess: 9

Damage per blow: 4 Dice

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 9

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: 55

Note: Because Aphanos is invisible, *fight* rolls against it must be made using three Dice instead of two.

A flux of life-destroying rays flow from this demon. Each Round that you fight it, each player suffers the *permanent* loss of one Endurance point.

If you win, turn to **346**.

477

At the bottom of the well there is still the full chill of night-time, although sunrise is now only a few minutes away. The chamber is dank, but there is no water in this well apart from a slimy puddle of muck in the centre of the floor.

Three tunnels lead out of the south wall. From the right-hand one you hear a steady dripping. The other two tunnels are silent. You make a torch from some sticks of dry wood lying on the broken flagstones. It gives a sputtering, uneven light - but it will do. The sudden heat of the torch alarms a serpent, which you notice slithering away into the left-hand tunnel.

You take a last look up at the sky, now turning a limpid azure. Then you lift the torch and head off southwards.

Which tunnel will you take? The right-hand one (turn to **445**); the central one (turn to **502**); or the left-hand one (turn to **206**)?

478

Reinforcements arrive, crowding into the room until you can barely move for the broad-shouldered Selentine Knights in their segmented plate armour. You glance at the door when the captain calls for shackles to be placed on you, but escape is impossible now.

'Yield your arms and armour,' says the knight with the shackles. 'And have the sense not to resist us.'

Turn to **378**.

479

'Avaunt, you heathen whelps!' you growl, clipping the ears of the nearest children. 'God placed you Ta'ashim brats on the world as He placed fleas on a camel's back.'

They scatter, wailing for their parents. One of them pauses and picks up a large stone, but you give him such a look that he steps back, paling with terror, and drops it again.

An old Ta'ashim woman emerges from a cottage and hugs two of the smallest children. As she dries their tears, she murmurs, 'The blessed Akaabah said that he who shows hatred to a child earns for himself the stern retribution of our Celestial Father.'

You make the sign of the cross and pass by. To punish the old woman for her insolence would be a waste of time, and could incur a debenture of ill luck.

Turn to **82**.

480

(TRICKSTER) She leans forward, her beautiful and delicate features now a white mask of hate. 'Ah, you fool,' she hisses in your ear as she takes out a slender knife. 'Death is the only suitable reward for one so trusting . . .'

As the knife sweeps towards your throat, you drop your pretence of being in a trance. Flipping into a backward somersault, you snatch up your sword and lunge forward, impaling her. She gapes in surprise and sinks to the floor.

'Why this attempt on my life?' you ask her as she lies groaning. But she dies without giving you an answer.

Turn to **180**.

481

Psyche steps from her own chambers and leans languorously against the door-frame to observe your struggle against the creature she has summoned. Her occasional low cackles begin to provoke you into a blind rage. Once you have slain this dullwitted demon you will be happy to do the same to her!

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Demon

Fighting Prowess: 8 Damage per blow: 5 Dice
Psychic Ability: 9 Awareness: 8
Armour Rating: 4
Endurance: 60

If and when you defeat it, turn to **177**. If you can take the humiliation of *fleeing*, turn to **152**.

482

(TRICKSTER) Have you got a wooden doll that you bought from Wuraq the fisherman? If so, turn to **219**. If you never met Wuraq, turn to **86**.

483

If you have the Hatuli, turn to **21**. If not, turn to **16**.

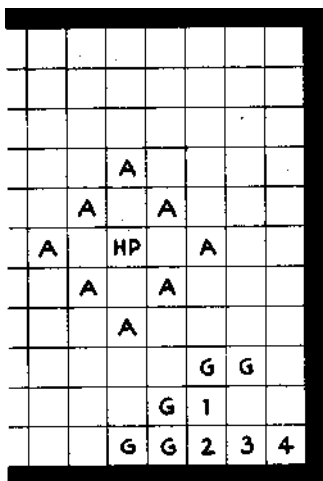
484

If there is a Warrior in the party, he or she must turn to **412**. If there is no Warrior but there is a Trickster,

he or she should turn to **398**. If there is neither a Warrior nor a Trickster, turn to **532**.

485

Guards wielding dumbbell-shaped maces rush forward to attack you. Locked in magical combat, the High Priest and the jinni are trading bolts of dazzling energy.



Guards

Fighting Prowess: 8

Psychic Ability: 6

Armour Rating: 1

Endurance: *first* 10

second 10

third 10

Damage per blow: 1 Die+1

Awareness: 6

fourth 10

fifth 10

If you kill all the guards, turn to **200**. If you attack an adept, note down everyone's position on the tactical map and then turn to **322**.

486

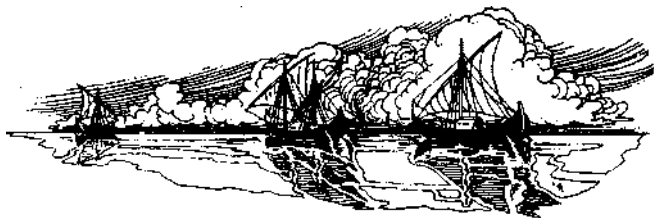
A low moan draws your attention to *a* figure among the trees. Peering into the shadows, you can dimly make out a man who seems to be standing inside a hollow rock. A thin sliver of light from the moon, which is just rising, penetrates the thicket of trees around him and illuminates his face. You can see that he is very handsome, but his looks are marred by an expression of agonising woe.

If you wish to go over and investigate, turn to **13**. If you ignore this and continue along the road, turn to **262**.

487

The air is thick and musty, but at least it is warmer down here than in the white mist enveloping the deck. Light trickles from morosely flickering globes set into the walls of the passage. The floor seems to be made of amber, while the rest of the passage consists of archaically carved mahogany panels.

Record a second tick. You can head forward, towards the bow of the ship (turn to **182**); or aft, towards the stern (turn to **437**).



488

Mist rolls in around the island as the sun sets. Almost choking on the dank air, you peer out from the shore trying to catch a glimpse of Hunguk's ship. If Susurrien's astrology is right, it should be

very near. A rumbling vibration judders through the rocks at your feet. It is a sound too low for human hearing, and it heralds the arrival of the Pirate-King's ship. Against the backdrop of fog, *The Devil's Runner* looms as big as a castle and slides slowly past.

If you have the flying horse, turn to **407**. If you have a boat, turn to **210**. If you have neither of those, turn to **454**.

489

You are so sunk in despondency that you scarcely notice your return journey through the underworld, until you are clambering out of the well into the first light of dawn.

If you have recorded the codeword IMPROBITY on your Character Sheet(s), turn to **162**. If not, turn to **31**.

490

(ENCHANTER) The jinni is boastful, but he will change his tune once you have given him a taste of *real* power. You call the Nemesis Bolt spell to mind and unleash it at him without warning.

Roll the Dice for the spell's damage. If you inflict more than forty Endurance points damage on him, turn to **179**. If you get him for forty points or less, turn to **163**.

491

(TRICKSTER) [*You skulk back to the veranda. Psyche has returned to her chambers but left the shutters open. You watch her as she swirls about the perimeter of a pentagram, singing a lilting ritual chant. You do not need any sorcerous training to recognise that she is performing some kind of summoning spell.*]

After observing this you return to your own rooms.

Turn to **372**.

492

(ENCHANTER) [*'Of course, the fee for such a service is not trivial,' murmurs the faltyn when you broach the subject. In fact I will take nothing less than your knowledge of the spell you call Nemesis Bolt. If you agree to this bargain, I shall take the spell from your mind and you will never again be able to cast it. Is that understood?'*]

If you agree to give up the Nemesis Bolt, turn to **303**. If not, the faltyn exudes an aura of fay pique and departs: turn to **372**.

493

You instinctively duck out of sight as an elegantly robed figure enters the plaza. It is Susurrien, following the Hatuli. The little mannikin darts forward, occasionally crouching as though to sniff the ground, and leads its master to the edge of the well.

Susurrien peers down with a look of consummate distaste, then picks up the Hatuli and uses the spell of Immediate Deliverance to descend. You leave the shadows and run to the well. It is dark and uninviting, but at least seems to be dry. You guess that it must lead to an underworld where the Swords of Life and Death lie hidden. The trouble is that Susurrien is ahead of you - and he has a guide.

You swing over the lip of the well and begin to climb down.

Turn to **477**.

494

The jinni rises high up into the sky, choosing to

walk across the clouds back to Sa'aknathur's island. This return journey is the last of your wishes,' he reminds you. 'Once you are back with the abbot, I intend to depart and leave you stranded.'

You see no point in arguing about it. You will just have to find some other way to get to Hakbad. After seven hundred years' confinement, the jinni cannot be blamed for extricating himself from your service at the earliest opportunity.

If you took the Magian High Priest's wand, you can use this during any combat. When you use it, make a note of the section you are reading at the time and then turn to 166. It is important that you make sure to record where you are before doing this, as 166 will not direct you back there. The player who took it should write: 'Magian's wand - turn to 166 when used' on his or her Character Sheet.

Weakened after his battle, the jinni takes a full day to make the return journey. The palm of his hand is not comfortable enough for you to snatch more than a few minutes' sleep, and you arrive back at Sa'aknathur's fortress quite exhausted.

Turn to **531**.

495

(TRICKSTER) You write a letter for the hunchback and tell him to take it to the Commander of the Knights Capellars at the Temple of the Roc. 'He is a friend of mine, and he will take you to the wizard.'

The hunchback is fairly skipping with joy. He doesn't notice what you write: "This hunchback is an evil heretic. He is forcing me to write this on pain of torture. He thinks it is a note of credit, but God has granted me the wisdom to fool him. Signed, a monk of the Kaptahitic Order."

The hunchback escorts you to a postern gate of

the Citadel and bids you farewell. It is dusk. You watch him lurching through the market square where the traders are packing up their wares. His ugly face is suffused with a look of radiant joy. A smile of an altogether more sinister sort crosses your own lips as you contemplate the reception Tobias will give him after reading the letter . . .

Turn to **164**.

496

You sit down with him, grateful for the cool shade under the canopy - and even more grateful for the refreshing bowl of sugared coffee that is set in front of you moments later.

'My name is Clovis,' says the young Capellar officer, fishing into his sabretache for a coin to pay the coffee vendor. He seems to have a very pleasant manner, and you warm to him almost at once - a far cry, thankfully, from the cheerless demeanour of his superior, Tobias.

If you decide to tell Clovis about your quest, turn to **511**. If you simply finish your coffee and then bid him good day, turn to **41**.

497

Your boat is swept crazily in a swirling current as something rears up out of the sea. At first you cannot tell what it is, for it is too big for a single glance to take it in. Then you see that it is a giant fin - as big as a mountainside! A colossal fish is surfacing from the depths under you. Each of its scales is like a dozen copper shields, and with the opening of its cavernous mouth it creates a whirlpool. Your tiny vessel is sucked down.

Did you hear the tale of the sailor at the Tower of the Throne of Purple? If so, turn to **77**. If you never

met him, or if you did not bother to listen to his story, turn to **147**.

498

Time to leave,' you call out to the jinni. He stretches out his hand to lift you from the terrace, then begins to wade eastwards towards the city of Hakbad.

Turn to **550**.

499

Shoving the nearest watchman against a bollard, you run off. Behind you, Anvil yells orders - and suddenly three slingshots hit the last player in the battle order. Each bullet inflicts one Die-1 Endurance damage, less the player's Armour Rating.

You plunge into the pitch dark of an alleyway and race along it, occasionally alarming a cat or treading on a sleeping beggar. At last you emerge onto a wide street near a market hall.

Turn to **251**.

500

(TRICKSTER) You tell the boy you are on a special mission for the Dyuch of Ferromaine, and that it is imperative you find Jablo at once.

'Will I have to be sworn to secrecy?' he breathes, eyes wide.

'Not just that. I am hereby instating you as an emergency operative on behalf of the Ferromaine League. Do you agree to uphold the principles of Justice, Truth and Free Enterprise?'

The confused lad nods quickly. 'Jablo awaits you in the building across the square.'

You put your hand on his shoulder. 'Excellent. Now slip quietly home and be ready to receive further orders.' As he darts off, you size up the

building he pointed out.

Turn to **149**.

501

You put it to the jinni that if he agrees to stop here for a while, and does not charge you another wish to resume the journey, you will let him stay out of the exploration.

'I am too big to enter the ruins in any case,' he points out. 'But, very well, I shall wait here until midnight. If you are back by then we will continue on to Hakbad. If not, I can assume that you have no further need of me and I am free to be on my way. Is it agreed?'

You have every intention of being back long before midnight. 'It is agreed,' you say, stepping from his hand onto a marble terrace whose balustrade is still intact in places. The light you saw is coming from beyond a colonnade. Stepping closer, you pass through an archway and enter a large hall.

Turn to **39**.

502

As you pass through the entrance of this tunnel, you notice an ancient clay tablet set into the wall next to it. Looking closer you see that a votive figure has been drawn onto the surface of the tablet. Around the figure, small amounts of the soft sticky clay have been scraped away.

If there is a Sage in the party, turn to **188**. If there isn't and you wish to continue down this tunnel, turn to **233**. If you wish to choose another tunnel, you may go down the left-hand one (turn to **206**), or the right-hand one (turn to **445**).

'Please wait a moment,' you tell the unctuous Alexius.

You approach the longshoremen, who look up sourly from their dice board. This is a private game,' one of them mutters.

If you wish to join the game, turn to **116**. If you ask what they know about the Blood Sword, turn to **150**. If you are ready to go up to your rooms now, turn to **106**.

You toss the satin cushion so that it lands just behind the giantess. She looks round, but you have already ducked back behind a pillar.

'Did you hear anything?' she asks the man in the cage.

'Nothing,' he replies. 'Perhaps you heard the heavy tread of your own guilt, you thing of perfect evil. . .'

'Bah,' she says, forgetting the noise. 'Your sophistry parades itself unclothed. How can a creature of perfect evil know the emotion of guilt?' As she steps back from the fire, her heel brushes the cushion. 'Why, what is this? A pillow . . . How utterly delightful! And its colour matches my own flawless complexion! Strange that I never noticed it before - but no matter. At last I have a pillow on which to rest my head, which is something I have longed for since my creation.'

She goes over to a pile of fallen masonry which seems to constitute her bed. Small wonder that she appreciates the pillow. As she is about to lie down, the old man calls out to her: 'Wait. If I am to die when you awaken, at least grant me a final wish.'

'No,' she spits, rocking with mirth.

'Listen, I beg you. If you do not grant this wish, my bitterness will befoul your coming meal

She considers this. 'Very well. What is the wish?'

'Among my companions' belongings there is a lyre,' he says, pointing to a pile of rucksacks beside the hearth. 'Hand it to me and I shall play a last tune to mourn their passing from this world.'

'And spoil my nap? Fie!'

He shakes his head. 'Ah, why is your anger so impatient? The elegy is beautiful and haunting; its soft notes will lull you off to sleep. You will awaken with improved appetite . . .'

'Agh! Words, words, words! You and your fellows scattered words like - I know not what! If you were not the last, and your tongue the next succulent morsel I shall taste, I would ask God to give me one ear to match my one eye. Every time you open your mouth, it is as though a swarm of bees pours out to vex me!'

'You use ten words to my one,' says the old man quietly. 'Now, am I to get my lyre or not?'

'Yes, all right. Just let me sleep, curse you!' She rips open the bags and, finding the lyre, hands it to him pettishly.

As she lies down, carefully positioning the cushion under her huge head, the old man begins to play a wistful song. The notes are quiet, the melody seductive rather than obtrusive. Immersed in the serene beauty of the song, you almost forget where you are for a short time. When you look out from behind the pillar again, you find that the giantess has fallen into a deep sleep.

You stride softly down the hall and release the old man from the cage. 'Thank you,' he says, almost weeping with relief. 'She ate every one of my twenty-three companions, and later tonight she

planned to eat me.'

You are alarmed that the sound of your voices might awaken the giantess, but the old man shakes his head. 'No, she will sleep unless prodded violently awake. The song I sang was a powerful enchantment I learned from a bard in Cornumbria.'

'Really,' you say. You still think it was the cushion that did the trick.

If you want to attack the sleeping giantess, turn to **484**. If you prefer to question the old man, turn to **467**.

505

The other door to the cabin suddenly flies open. Harsh grey-blue light floods in. A figure stands there whose shoulders are as broad as the beam of a Mercanian longboat. Even in this tall cabin he has to stoop. His harness of pitted iron plates tolls like a bell as he raises his arms. In each hand he holds a gore-spattered axe.

'Who presumes to steal the Reaver's hoard?' he thunders. 'You'll pay with your blood for this villainy!'

You waste no time in sizing him up. You can see when you are outclassed. There is no point in battling with him anyway; you have what you came for. You retreat through the other door and race for the companion-way. From behind you come the echoes of his clanking footsteps.

Turn to **185**.

506

'You have laid claim to another's property,' says Sharkan, 'and by doing so you have lost your honesty, which was more precious by far. Thus God does not need to punish the guilty, for they punish

themselves.' He bows curtly and walks off.

Turn to **577**.

507

'Unbelievable though it may seem, I am the Sultan of Hakbad himself!' hisses the stranger. The story of how I came here is a bizarre one, but since the night is long and the ghoul below is likely to remain until the sun is close to rising, you may wish to hear my tale ...'

If you ask him to tell you his story, turn to **66**. If you climb down the tower in spite of what he has said, turn to **72**. If you decide you cannot trust him and you had better attack immediately, turn to **280**.

508

If you are a lone adventurer, turn to **289**. If you are in a group of players, turn to **17**.

509

You could get the jinni to take you to the Magians' secret stronghold in Opalar. It would mean using your last wish. And, since you cannot expect him to postpone executing your current wish and then to resume it afterwards, you would be left stranded in Opalar with no way on to Hakbad.

'You could travel there overland,' suggests the abbot when you have explained the situation to him.

'Across the Kaikuhuru Desert? It could take months. Susurrien will not wait forever; he might find some other way to get what he desires, and then the Blood Sword blade would never be recovered.'

'Good luck, anyway,' says the abbot sadly, shaking hands with you. He watches as the jinni raises

you aloft. 'And do not worry about my quest. I'll return home through the Astral Gateway and recruit a new band of helpers. Five years still remain to us before the End; I may yet recover the sapling.'

'May God reward your courage with success!' you shout back. The jinni starts to wade across the ocean. You watch until the abbot is just a dwindling speck in the distance, then you turn your gaze east, towards Hakbad .. .

Turn to **550**.

510

The city and the bay are like a toy far below you; the sea over which you fly is just a painter's palette of grey and blue. After some experimentation you soon learn to control the horse's speed and direction, and then you use Susurrien's astrological chart to steer your way southwards down the Gulf of Marazid. The air whips at your clothes, and sweeps in cool exhilarating gusts into your lungs. You seem closer to the sky than to the sea.

It is not very long before you reach the point where, according to the chart, Hunguk's ship will appear. An island lies nearby, and you touch down there to wait for the ship's arrival.

Turn to **260**.

511

Clevis's eyebrows rise higher as your tale unfolds, and his slight smile is soon replaced by a look of blank astonishment. 'Good heavens!' he says when you have finished. 'Your quest is truly a most epic and worthy endeavour. Having little experience of magical affairs - save for an incident in my youth which is irrelevant to the matter at hand - I can give you only one snippet of advice. The wisest man in

Crescentium is Emeritus, a leech who lives in the street of silversmiths. I think you should go to him with your story.'

Thanking Clovis for his suggestion, you set off to do just that. Emeritus's house proves to be a narrow building with stucco walls set back behind an ornamental fountain. A serving-girl shows you into a vestibule and goes to fetch her master.

Turn to **311**.

512

If you wish to fight the metal monster, turn to **285**. If you wish to try and duplicate the command-gesture you saw depicted on the frieze, turn to **515**.

513

(SAGE) You almost groan in exasperation. The faltyn extended the fog into other dimensions adjacent to the real world, so even your Paranormal Sight cannot penetrate it. As you consider using ESP instead, a shout from ahead makes your blood run cold.

Turn to **229**.

514

(SAGE) 'There can be no better physician in Crescentium than my old colleague Emeritus,' you tell the Badawin. I'll take you to him.'

Turn to **446**.

515

Was it arms raised with backs of hands turned in together? (Turn to **357**.) Or palms of hands pressed together with fingers splayed out? (Turn to **80**.) Or fingers interwoven with thumbs projecting upwards? (Turn to **46**.)

You gather up the coins the gamblers dropped, then hurry out into the street. Alexius takes a few stumbling steps backwards, mouth wide with horror, then turns and runs off. His screams of 'Murder!' fall like lead shot in the deserted streets.

The realisation of what you have done begins to settle on you. Having slain members of the Order of the Selentine Knights you will be hunted throughout the known world. Even in the Ta'ashim lands you cannot be totally safe, for the Selentines certainly have contacts among the Marijah assassins and will offer them a great deal of money to kill you.

You head towards the docks. Your only hope is to stow away aboard a ship bound for Khitai or Minj. There you will be unknown, your past crimes only a subject for indifferent gossip. The Khitans sometimes hire foreigners as mercenaries in their army, so that is probably your best bet. . .

Your thoughts are filled with plans of escape. Your heroic quest to restore the Blood Sword must be abandoned. Though you may indeed get out of Crescentium alive, this is the end of your story.



'So that's what you're after,' cackles Shambeer. They're in his cabin, I suppose. Go below and head towards the stern - but don't drag your feet!' His skeletal frame is racked with silent laughter as you

step down into the gloomy companion-way.

Turn to **59**.

518

Make sure you have a note of the last entry you were reading. If the Sage is not here, you cannot make head or tail of the scroll. Return to the previous entry. If the Sage is here, he or she should turn to **141**.

519

Menira looks on with wide eyes as you produce the peg and fit it into a slot on the horse's neck. 'Patience is bitter, but bears a sweet fruit,' she says. 'I have waited my whole life for someone to return with the peg that operates the magic horse.'

In view of the sailor's story, this surprises you. 'How long has the horse been here, then?' you ask her.

'It was carved by my own grandfather, the great-great-grandfather of young Ridaq. He was also called Ridaq, and he was a woodcarver. When the Sultan held a contest among the craftsmen of the city, my grandfather was inspired to produce this marvel: a flying horse, carved of ebony and inlaid with ivory panels. At first the Sultan did not believe the astounding story my grandfather told - for who would credit a living horse that could fly, let alone a wooden one? He thought my grandfather was being insolent, and had him thrown into prison, but then the Sultan's son experimented with the horse and undertook a thrilling journey to a land beyond Khitai. There he rescued a princess who had been imprisoned by her evil uncle, and brought her back to Crescentium to wed her. My grandfather was set free and given a robe of honour, and his horse was returned to him.'

'How did the peg come to be lost?'

She pauses for a moment, sipping her coffee. Is she making all this up? 'The Sultan's son wore it as a keepsake on a thong around his neck. It must have remained in his family and been lost when they fled Crescentium. When you northerners came.'

You sigh, close to exasperation. 'In that case, if the story you have just told is true, the sailor's story must have been false. But in *that* case, how did he come by the peg?'

Ridaq grins. The Illuminate taught that Truth is like a fountain from which you may drink many times. Each mouthful is different from the last, though no less refreshing . . .'

'One reaches a point when one's thirst *is* slaked,' you retort. But you are thinking about the horse. If the peg really causes it to fly, it is exactly what you need to get to your rendezvous with Hunguk's ship. The problem is, will Menira and her grandson be willing to part with it?

If you offer to buy the horse, turn to **156**. If you try to take it by force, turn to **336**. If you leave without it, turn to **153**.

520

You are startled to find the jinni is still here, standing in the sea to watch the moon and stars come out. Out of the corner of his eye he sees you emerge from the ruins.

'Ah, the abbot has departed, then. I hope he appreciated the effort we went to on his behalf.'

'He did indeed. Why haven't you yet continued on your way? Surely you are not at a loss for something to do after your seventy decades in the bottle?'

He turns to you with a pained expression. 'Of

course I have many things to do. In point of fact, I was halfway to Khitai while you were sleeping. Then it struck me that in a sense I still owed you half a wish, as I got some satisfaction of my own out of whipping those Magian curs. Thus I have returned to take you on to Hakbad, which will definitely mark the last of your wishes.'

You look at him askance. 'Surely I do not perceive a trace of compassion in your voice? Surely you are not motivated by a spark of decency?'

'Have a care!' he growls. 'I will carry you on to Hakbad, but I will not stand for insults along the way!' And with this he reaches out and gently scoops you into his hands.

Turn to **550**.

521

It is afternoon before you reach the city walls once more. Trudging wearily in the baking heat, you pass through the north gate. Three knights with indigo stars emblazoned on their white tabards watch you with sharp interest, but make no move to accost you.

Already it is time to think about where you will spend the coming night, as you have heard that some of the various militia forces apply a curfew.

If there is a Sage in the party who wishes to suggest a place to stay, turn to **449**. If a Warrior has a suggestion to make, turn to **38**. If you think it might be worth relying on the Trickster's contacts in the city, turn to **35**. If you are a solitary Enchanter, or if none of the others trust their own contacts, you will have to find a hostelry - turn to **251**.

522

You pass through the archway. A deep groove runs

up the centre of the corridor sloping upwards ahead of you. Abruptly there is a crash behind you, and when you look back it is to discover that a stone block has descended. There is now no going back.

A rumbling echoes out of the darkness ahead of you. Holding out the torch, you see an open stone sarcophagus rolling down the groove of the corridor, gathering momentum as it comes. You turn and push at the block, but it is immovable. In the fraction of a second before the sarcophagus hits, you glance up to see a skeleton propped up eerily behind it.

Each player must roll three Dice. A roll of equal to or less than your Awareness means that you vault over the sarcophagus - turn to **264**. Anyone who fails the roll is crushed to a pulp against the stone block. . .

523

You recognise Psyche's beautiful features as soon as you open the cabin door, though her appearance is changed somewhat since your last meeting. Bound to the wall by iron manacles, she is battered and dirty, wearing only rags in place of her former fine robes and jewellery.

'Ah, help,' she moans. 'Break these shackles that bind me. Quickly . . . !'

Record another tick.

If you close the door and continue aft, turn to **473**. If you enter and free her, turn to **302**. If you ask her how she comes to be alive, turn to **175**.

524

You stumble down the alley. Walls six metres high on either side - no time to scale them, even if you could find handholds . . .

In your desperate haste you nearly trip over the ape. The stupid creature has stopped to gawp at you. 'Better move it, chum,' you grunt as you run past. 'Or you'll end up as the appetiser.'

You suddenly stop dead and whirl around. The ape is pointing to a door in the wall of the alley. You remember the key. Fatima said something about an ape - !

You fumble for the lock, fingers made nearly nerveless with panic. The demons are almost upon you. You smell the rank stench of their breath - and worse, the suffocating odour of evil that hangs around them. As you unlock the door and push it open, their taloned hands are reaching for you.

You throw yourself through the door. The gods' leering faces loom out of the twilight, right behind you. . . .

You slam the door shut. On the other side, three unhuman voices are raised in a howl of frustrated bloodlust. You slump against the door - exhausted; weak with relief. Safe.

Turn to **123**.

525

As a precaution, you pick up the copper bottle in which the jinni was imprisoned. If you wish to keep this item, one player must record it on his or her Character Sheet. In a multi-player party, note that it is the player who has commanded the jinni's obeisance who decides on any wishes to be granted. Other players can make suggestions, but the jinni will only take his orders from his new master or mistress.

'You have only to say something for me to make it so,' he says. 'But choose carefully, for after I have granted three wishes I am free to depart.'

You protest at this. 'Already we are haggling over terms. Let us say that the first wish is that you should grant a thousand more wishes, and that will preclude any further argument.'

The jinni twines his fingers obsequiously. You found him less objectionable when he was full of boasts and threats. 'Ah, if only that could be so,' he simpers. 'But a greater authority than I has shown that such a notion quickly leads to a logical paradox which, if carried to its conclusion, would make a mockery of the whole wish-fulfilment procedure. I cannot remember the reasoning in detail, but I can vouch that it is sound and true.'

This is an annoyance, but you accept it. After all you only really need to make one wish. You tell the jinni to bring you the blade of the Sword of Life.

'That is not within my power!' he answers, shaken. 'Some things may only be achieved by dint of heroic effort, and I am surely not destined to be one of the world's heroes! In any case, though I can bestow large sums of money on you and so forth, and even equip you in a magical harness, it is simply impossible that I should locate a specific object among all the millions of things scattered across the earth's face. I am bound by the flow of Time just as you are, and before I had completed a search of half the civilised lands you would have crumbled to bones and dust waiting for my return. And this assumes that I encountered no mythic or magic barriers to thwart me! No, what you ask is disallowed by legend and by logic.'

'What exactly *can* you do?' you yell at the jinni. 'If every wish turns out to be beyond you, the whole pleasure of wishing will be rather soured!'

'If I set out the general ways in which I can serve,' suggests the jinni, 'that should help you to order

your thoughts. *I am able to employ several different powers: that of Enrichment, which is the bestowal of vast sums of money; of Invigoration, which is the gift of perfect health; of Restoration, which is the renewal and improvement of your arms and armour; of Potentiation, which involves enhancing your natural strength to superhuman pitch; and of Transportation, which is the simple act of carrying you in my hands across a great distance.'*

The last of these is obviously the answer to one problem. The jinni can carry you to Hakbad, presumably in a space of hours rather than the days it would take by any other means. But since you have only three wishes, you must be careful how you use the other two.

Turn to **56**.

526

(ENCHANTER) *[Despite what she says, the giantess is not under any enchantment. The form that you see is her true form.]*

If you decide to leave, turn to **498**. If you attack her, turn to **183**.

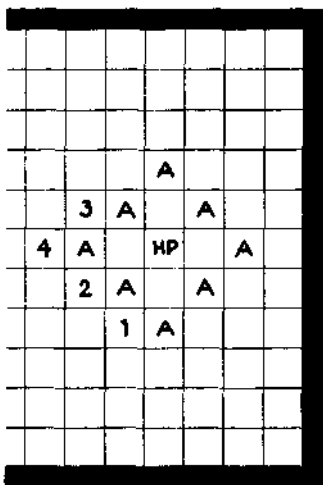
527

You reach out to take the sapling. A tingle of restorative force runs through your sinews; all wounded players recover two Dice Endurance. The player who is carrying the sapling should remember to note it down on his or her Character Sheet.

You go over to the archway that leads to the balcony. The battle is still raging on unabated, but the jinni is now clearly getting the worst of it. The Magian High Priest seems to have an inexhaustible supply of magical power. It may have been a mistake to beard him here in his lair, where his spells

must be at their strongest.

Then you notice that a network of flickering energy flows from the adepts to the High Priest. Their mantra is focusing a continuous flux of power towards him. The key to defeating him is to break the network of power . . .



Adepts

Psychic Ability: 7

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: *first* 8 *fifth* 8

second 8 *sixth* 8

third 8 *seventh* 8

fourth 8 *eighth* 8

Note: The adepts cannot strike back at you as they are intent on maintaining the magical mantra.

Once you have killed at least three adepts, turn to **49**.

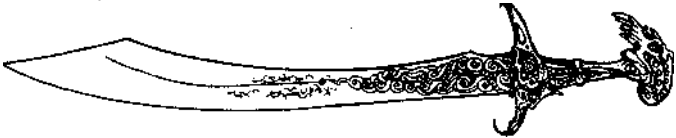
528

You advance along a granite-lined passageway. Soon you come to a junction.

If you wish to go straight on, turn to **359**. If you wish to go right, turn to **8**.

529

You stand over Susurrien's body. The skein of deceit that was his life has been cut at last. Many would rejoice at having slain the evil prince, but your own thoughts are steeped in bitter despair. Your first aim - more important than mere vengeance - was to obtain the Blood Sword blade; and in that you have failed.



530

You awaken to the sound of Tariq's wailing. It is dawn, and he is standing over the bodies of the Badawin.

'For what sin am I punished?' he groans. 'A terrible calamity has been visited on my house?' Seeing you are awake, he says: 'See - robbers burst in during the night and beat them to death! But many of the Badawin were skilled swordsmen, and I cannot understand how they slept so soundly that they did not arise and defend themselves . . .' He wrings his hands.

'It is an impenetrable mystery,' you reply. 'But what is the point in questioning the will of God? Now - where is breakfast?'

Turn to **18**.

531

You find the abbot inside, snoring in front of the fire. You approach and set the sapling down in front of him before gently shaking him from his slumber. It is the first thing he sees as he wakes up.

You grin at him. 'Is this the tree you wanted, lord abbot?'

He blinks, rubs his eyes in disbelief. For a moment his mouth opens and closes but he is unable to utter a word. Then he leaps to his feet with a cry of simple delight. 'Am I still asleep? Has the Archfiend sent a dream of vain hope to torment me? No, the sapling is real! I can feel its branches between my fingers, smell the scent of the leaves and buds and tender bark. . . The final assurance is to pinch myself - ow! No wine could be as delicious as the pain of that pinch, for it tells me I am awake.' He turns and hugs you. 'Even if I could properly thank you for all you have done, it would not express a millionth part of the debt you are now owed by all mankind.'

You stretch languorously and go to lie down. You would gladly exchange that debt for a good sleep.

Though that may be so,' you reply sleepily, 'the whole venture will come to nothing if the blade of the Sword of Life is not recovered too. That, however, is a problem that will keep for eight hours or so . . .' You close your eyes.

'Look, look!' says the abbot a few minutes later. 'A vision appears in the eastern sky . . .' But you have already fallen asleep.

Turn to **435**.

532

You approach the sleeping giantess, weapons at the ready. Turn to **399** to fight her, but you get one free

Round at the start before she wakes up and fights back.

533

After thanking the Badawin for their assistance, you return to your alcove. Little now remains of the night, but you snatch a few hours' sleep.

Wounded players recover Endurance equal to half their rank if they were unarmoured, two points if they slept in armour. Tariq's breakfast of thick yoghurt, mint-spiced bread and bitter coffee restores one further Endurance point to each wounded player.

After breakfast you gather your belongings together. After last night's incident you decide it would be safer - and fairer to Tariq - if you moved to another inn. Bidding the Badawin farewell, you step out into the street.

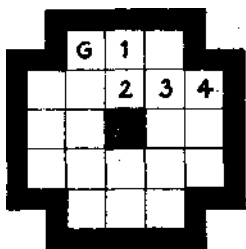
Crescentium is a veritable maze of avenues, market squares, bazaars, and alleyways which rise in tiers between the buildings of stone, hard-baked clay, and patterned brickwork. As the inhabitants of the city enter into their daily round of barter and toil, a fine choking dust rises from the streets until you find your eyes stinging and your lungs dry. Flies, enticed by the moisture soaking your face and clothes, follow you as resolutely as a gang of beggars. From the shadowed colonnade of a caravan-serai, merchants and pilgrims who have retreated from the day's growing heat stare out at you sullenly as you pass. You imagine them as the minor actors and stage-hands of a travelling theatre troupe, watching from the wings while it falls to you to act out the great drama on which their petty lives depend. Somewhere in all this sprawling city there must be a man - or woman - who can aid you in

your quest. Someone who has heard of the Sword of Life. You trudge on through the streets until the heat and babble make your thoughts spin. But despite every hardship, you refuse to abandon your quest.

Turn to **41**.

534

The crafty ghoul cackles and lopes agilely around the parapet to attack you.



Ghoul

Fighting Prowess: 8 Damage per blow: 4 Dice
Psychic Ability: 9 Awareness: 8
Armour Rating: 0
Endurance: 45

If you are a solitary Sage and wish to use Levitation to *flee* to the ground, turn to **245**. If the Enchanter is in the party and wishes to use Immediate Deliverance again, turn to **25** when the spell is cast. Other than these, there are no other means to get away. If you beat the ghoul, turn to **27**.

535

You settle down on the stairs to wait for Jablo. The call to prayer finally stops ringing out across the city. Bells are rung for those of the True Faith to attend evensong. The last rays of the dying day

drain from the stairwell, leaving you in darkness. After a while, silvery moonlight picks out the details of the decorative screen across the window. A dog barks in the street outside. Then you hear a creak on the stairs below - and a soft peal of laughter. Someone is coming up.

You step out to intercept them. 'Jablo -'

It is a young Coradian nobleman with a sultry Ta'ashim courtesan on his arm. 'Jablo lives downstairs,' says the courtesan, then sweeps past dragging the grinning nobleman with her. You smell brandy on his breath.

'Wait,' you say, putting a hand on her arm. Her paramour gives you a look of uncomprehending belligerence and reaches for his sword, but the woman pushes him through the doorway. He lurches onto a pile of cushions and begins to sing. After favouring him with a gaze of fathomless distaste, the courtesan turns to you. 'From what I know of Jablo's business,' she says, 'you would do well not to stick your nose into it. Might get cut off.' She touches a painted fingernail to your face and then trills with laughter.

You are at a loss. 'Where can one spend the night in this ungodly city?' you ask her.

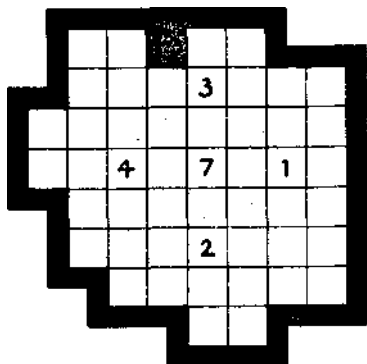
She looks you up and down and then shakes her head. 'Not here. Try a hostelry called the Tower of the Throne of Purple. Not exactly the lap of luxury, but cheap as long as you know not to trust little Alexius, who owns it.'

She gives you directions to the hostelry and then sweeps into her chamber without a backward glance. Obviously not *all* the Ta'ashim have found the occupation of their city bad for business, you think as you descend to the street.

Turn to **406**.

536

Another idol bursts out of its wooden shell to attack you. This one is no bigger than you are, but it seems faster and more deadly than ever.



Seven-in-One

Fighting Prowess: 11 Damage per blow: 3 Dice+1

Psychic Ability: 9 Awareness: 5

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: 20

Note: The Seven-in-One has no mind in the proper sense, and thus cannot be controlled by Servile Enthralment.

If you wish to use an item, record the number **536** on your Character Sheet(s) and then turn to **402**. If you fight and win, turn to **361**.

537

You bid Alexius a sour goodbye and, taking up your belongings, set off through the streets to Emeritus's house. It is a narrow building with walls of decorated stucco, set back from the busy street of silversmiths behind a black marble fountain. After taking

a sip of water from the fountain, you enter the house.

Turn to **419**.

538

(SAGE) *[You feel his story was too expertly told for him to be a simple sailor as he claims. More probably he is one of the professional storytellers endemic to Ta'ashim society. And if you are right, then he must be trying to trick something out of you . . .]*

Turn to **421**.

539

'You have found wisdom too late,' says the Selenite captain as shackles are put on you. He looks at his men and jabs his thumb at his chest. They smile grimly, drawing their shortswords. You are executed there and then, in the common-room of the hostelry. It is an ignoble end to your quest - and to your life.



540

(WISHING PLAYER) You turn to give the jinni your command. 'With your power of Potentiation, endow me with superhuman strength and skill.' (Cross off one of the boxes you are using to keep track of your wishes.)

He crosses his eyes, incanting an ancient spell, and green globules of light float along his gaze to envelop you. As they sink into your body, you feel

an intoxicating surge of raw power run along every nerve.

[The glow fades, but you are changed forever into something more than human. Your flesh is strong as iron mesh now, and adds one to your Armour Rating. Your naked fists can strike with the force of sledge-hammers, so you do not need to reduce your Fighting Prowess and damage rolls when fighting without a weapon. Your strength, dexterity and intuition are all increased: add one to your Fighting Prowess, Awareness and Psychic Ability scores. Your Endurance score is permanently increased by ten points.]

The jinni surveys his handiwork. 'Excellent. You now have a aura of power which I respectfully suggest you lacked before . . . !'

'Enough of your impertinence!' you snarl at him. New intensities of emotion have accompanied the change, and it may take you some time to get used to them.

Turn to **140**.

541

(ENCHANTER) The jinni's arms drop limply to his sides. He is under your sway, but only for a brief time. You cannot hope to keep him dominated with continual recastings of the spell. Eventually he would resist, and then he would surely exact an unpleasant revenge!

Sudden inspiration brings a crafty smile to your lips. 'Jinni,' you say. 'How may you be forced to obey a mortal?'

'By the Spell of Servile Enthralment.' He is fighting your will.

'How *else*?' you demand. He must answer before the spell runs out, or . . .

'By using the Ineffable Name to constrain me,

then invoking the ritual formulae set out in the Scroll of Salamin.' He describes these to you.

Satisfied, you relax the spell and allow him control of his own mind once more. He turns a look of black rage on you, gnashing his teeth with the sound of an avalanche. But before he can take his revenge, you intone the formulae he has just taught you.

He stops and bows his head to you. 'My own tongue has betrayed me!' he groans. 'Now I must serve a mortal again. Ah, Fate must hate me to curse me with this series of defeats that is my life . . .'

'Be silent,' you tell him and, incredibly, he is.
Turn to **525**.

542

After a while you come to another fork in the tunnel. The fork to the left would take you back the way you have come. Not wishing to retrace your steps, you go to the right.

Turn to **359**.

543

(SAGE) At least it is possible that you might save yourself and continue the quest, even though there is nothing you can do for your comrade(s). You begin to say farewell, but then you see that the rarefied air has already caused your comrade(s) to black out. Perhaps that is for the best. Sorrowfully, you take hold of the Blood Sword hilt and scabbard. (Record them on your Character Sheet if you were not carrying them before.) Then you untie the ropes securing you to the Roc's claw and clear your mind ready for Levitation.

Turn either to **255** or to **298**. The choice is yours.

'You misbegotten spratling!' you thunder at the boy, 'Point out the house of Jablo the Knife at once, if you don't want to feel the weight of a leather belt across your backside.'

The lad begins to wail at the top of his lungs. Suddenly you see tall shadows fall across the ground and, turning, you face a patrol of six Selentine Knights.

'What is the trouble here?' demands the leader of the group, speaking in his native Angate.

You begin to reply, but then he steps past you and you realise he was addressing the boy, who says: 'I was threatened with a flogging for not saying where a man called Jablo lives.'

The Selentine officer ruffles the boy's hair and turns to you. 'You have made a grave error,' he says in thickly accented Beaulangue. (Pah - does he think you can't speak Angate?) This youngster is the son of Lord Averne, the Governor.'

He orders his men to arrest you. You have heard enough about Outremer law to know that resisting would probably just earn you a death sentence. You hand over your weapons. Even if you have a sword of Crescentium steel they search you closely enough to find it, though if you possess the invisible sword of Loge Skyrunner they will not find that. Cross any other weapons off your Character Sheet(s); you must reduce your Fighting Prowess and damage scores by two points until you manage to rearm.

You are marched briskly to the Citadel in the highest part of the city, and there hurled into a cell in the festering maze that passes for a gaol. The cell door slams shut and you hear the bolt being lowered into place. You are imprisoned.

Turn to **470**.

545

After stoking the fire, the giantess goes to lie down on a pile of fallen rubble. Though this bed looks most uncomfortable, she is soon snoring deeply.

Stepping out from the shadows, you tiptoe past her sleeping bulk and approach the man in the cage. He is on the point of crying out from sheer relief at being rescued, but you motion him to keep quiet. You had not reckoned on the rusty hinges of the cage door, however. As you open it to release him, there is a harsh scream -

You wince. The old man stares aghast, paralysed with dread. The giantess has stopped snoring. You turn to find her awake, rising to her feet with the gaze of her single eye fixed balefully on you.

Turn to **399**.

546

(TRICKSTER) You turn a convincing glance of trepidation towards the shadows at the bottom of the tower. 'A ghou?' you say, stifling a gasp. 'This is frightful news, for normally I command great powers of sorcery, but I was recently in combat with a mighty jinni and I'm now so weakened that I barely have the strength to stand up.' You appear to steady yourself with one hand on the parapet.

'Weakened . . . So you cannot cast your spells?' replies the stranger. You hear him lick his lips.

'Not until the sun rises, putting the stars to flight. And dawn must be many hours off yet. Tell me - are these ghouls powerful creatures?'

'Very powerful indeed!' declares the stranger, with a note of something like outraged pride in his voice. He regales you with a series of tales which show that ghouls are deadly adversaries for even the bravest warrior.

You listen to the Tale of the Ghoul and the Jinni, the Tale of the Seven Ghouls of Marazid, the *Dream* shared by the Ghoul and the Tent-Maker, and the Tale of the Fortress of Ghouls. When he finishes telling you the last of these, you shake your head sorrowfully. 'I must certainly spend the night up here, and hope that the ghoul does not choose to climb up. From what you say, it doesn't seem I could match such a creature with all my magic. Do ghouls fear nothing at all, then?'

'Only the name of Allah,' says the stranger, shuddering slightly although the night is warm.

You jump to your feet and shout: 'Then begone, vile and ungodly monster, in the name of Allah, who will hold all of the world in His grasp and will fold up the heavens in His right hand. Tremble at the name of the Lord of Creation and flee, you ghoul!'

The ghoul flings up its arms and, giving vent to a blood-curdling cry, leaps from the tower. You hastily descend but can find no sign of its body.

Turn to **164**.

547

It is like the felling of an old oak when Hunguk crashes to the cabin floor. The sudden silence is eerie, disturbed only by the rasping of your own breath. You try lifting one of his axes - surely an item of immense magical power - but it is immovable. Easing off some of the vast plates of his armour, you discover that he was already sorely wounded before your battle. It looks as though a creature with massive claws must have struck his shoulder, pressing the iron plates deep into his flesh. You feel less proud of your victory in the light of this discovery. Hunguk was fighting with a

wound that would have killed any ten ordinary men. Then he groans.

Turn to **154**.

548

Her beautiful face twists into a grin of hatred. 'So, you do not trust me?' she snarls. 'With good reason, for I now intend to expunge you from this world...'

Turn to **177**.

549

The Roc descends rapidly and alights on the island. Perched atop the highest pinnacle, it surveys the sea for food. What kind of fish would a bird the size of the Roc need for sustenance? The very thought gives you a shudder.

It seems the Roc is too stupid to realise that it only landed here because of the magic word you spoke. But then, as you loosen the ropes and creep away, another thought strikes you. Perhaps the Roc was going to land here anyway, and the word you uttered was not magical at all. The truth is unknowable.

Turn to **260**.

550

You arrive at Hakbad in the early hours of the morning. From the air you can see the great palaces and peak-domed temples, separated by tracts of orchard, necropolis or dusty scrub. You, who are accustomed to the crowding of northern cities, can understand why some Coradian merchants find these sprawling cities of the Ta'ashim world so agoraphobic. Hakbad has more than a million inhabitants, you have heard - four times the population of Ferromaine, but covering an area nearly *ten times*

as big. The idea is breathtaking.

'See how it sits at the confluence of several rivers,' remarks the jinni. 'Originally there were a number of smaller settlements here but, as they grew and merged, the city of Hakbad took shape.'

'You are well informed, it would seem . . .'

The jinni begins to glide down towards a swathe of parkland situated between two canals. In olden times I would occasionally take the form of a dog or a merchant in order to stroll these very avenues.' He shrinks as he sets you down on the ground, and soon is no taller than the palm tree which stands behind him. 'I might amuse myself in such a way tonight, once all our business is concluded.'

If you have used up all your wishes, turn to **432**. If you still have one or more wishes left, turn to **556**.

551

The Dendan stops moving and sinks slowly below the waves. You slump to the bottom of the boat, shaking uncontrollably now that the danger is past. Nervous exhaustion gives way to sleep, and you drift on in the grip of a gentle sea breeze. When you wake the next day, it is to find water lapping around your ankles; but once you have baled out, you find you only have to make a slight correction to your course. It is almost as though the wind and the ocean currents are conspiring to bring you to your fateful rendezvous.

After two days at sea you sight the tiny barren island which marks where Hunguk's ship will appear. (Each wounded player can restore four Endurance points for rest during the voyage, with an additional two Endurance points if he or she has had something to eat.) You put into shore and wait for *The Devil's Runner* to show.

Turn to **488**.

552

The Dendan holds you in the gaze of its unblinking eye as you intone the words. Along with the realisation that you have got the words wrong comes a feeling of numb terror. You do not have time to try again . . .

Turn to **147**.

553

The whole vessel shudders. The walls around you shimmer, dissolving momentarily into distorted images of themselves. When the effect passes you know that something has changed. *The Devil's Runner* has sailed out of middle-earth and onto the seas of some other world.

Racing up to the deck, you find that the sea has become an expanse of bright violet. Malformed, featherless birds spin and shriek above the rigging. And... You reel in disbelief. *There are two suns in the sky.*

'You're part of the ship's company now,' cackles the figure at the wheel. 'Now and always . . .'

You follow his empty gaze up to the bridge, where a massive armoured warrior stands like a rock. Hunguk the Pirate-King broods on his unending voyage, not even aware of the wretched addition to his crew. You are doomed to share his fate now. Your own quest has failed . . .



554

You reach a chamber. There is another passage entering this room from the north - presumably the one you would have entered by had you gone the other way. Opposite you there is a large door of stout ashwood, held shut by a large padlock and several rusted iron bolts.

A shape seems to detach itself from the shadows. You swing round, thrusting the torch forwards, but there is nothing there. As you turn round again, you come face to face with a monstrous guardian which is now standing in front of the door. It has the slavering features of a dog - or a jackal - but the muscular body of a human warrior. In its hands it holds a glittering spear which it lowers to point at you. As its yellow eyes glance over you, it lets out a growl of menace.

If you wish to attack the creature, turn to **286**. If you prefer to use an item, turn to **81**.

555

You see a flash of light out of the corner of your eye. Looking back, you see a cloud of sulphurous smoke belch out of the alleyway. Then two squealing piglets dash forth. The Ta'ashim woman steps briskly out after them and gathers them up, one under each arm. A breeze lifts her veil, and you catch a glimpse of a sardonic smile. You continue on to Susurrien's abode.

Turn to **73**.

556

Remember that it is up to the player who originally commanded the jinni to decide on any wishes.

To wish for riches, turn to **118**. To wish for renewed health, turn to **267**. To wish for your arms

and armour to be restored, turn to **464**. To wish for your strength to be enhanced, turn to **238**.

557

He pockets the money you have given him, nodding happily. The ship was tossed to and fro across the waves by the monstrous fish,' he continues, 'and I was flung into a corner of the hold. As I picked myself up, I beheld the Yamatese sage scurrying down the ladder. He did not see me, but when he saw that his crate was broken open he gave a deep groan. However, when he discovered the horse of ivory and ebony to be intact he became quite cheerful - not at all the manner of one who thinks he is about to die. Giving thanks to the idols of his homeland, he mounted the horse and touched a peg on its saddle. Immediately (and I implore God to strike me blind and dumb if I lie) the horse rose up into the air with the infidel sage on its back!'

Suddenly the sailor rolls his eyes up and gurgles incomprehensibly. Has God's curse struck him so quickly for his lies - ?

Seeing this thought in your eyes, he bursts out laughing. 'Forgive me,' he says between chuckles. 'No tale, however grim, is complete without a comic interlude. To return to events on the ship, however: I, seeing that the infidel intended to escape the wreck on his flying horse, ran forward before he could gain altitude and dashed out his brains with the belaying-pin.

'By now the Dendan was beginning to chew the timbers in its mighty jaws. I could hear the screams of my comrades as they were ripped by its teeth or cast off the deck into the sea. I lost no time in clambering on to the horse's back and pressing the peg on its saddle. The horse rose up and up and up

with me on it - out of the hold and into the sky. Far below, it seemed that a goldfish was nibbling at a paper toy. Then the infidel appeared on the shattered deck. He was a mere ant from my lofty perspective, but I heard his voice as clearly as the thunder. First he commanded the Dendan to retreat with the words "Hui Yu-Yang". "Hui Yu-Yang!" he said, and it sank beneath the waves. Then he looked up towards me and I peered down at him. I could see that my blow had sorely wounded him, and he had used his magic on the Dendan too late. The ship was sinking, and already the salt water was lapping at his robes.

"Fly, you foreign devil!" he screamed at me. (Obviously the blow had so scrambled his wits that he'd forgotten *he* was the foreigner.) "Fly," he said. "You will not escape my curse, which is that your wife will do you a worse wrong than infidelity and that your sons will do you a worse wrong than ingratitude . . ."

The sailor pauses. The sea swallowed him up then, so if the curse has further stipulations I do not know them. However, flying on . . .'

You are beginning to tire of this. If you tell the sailor you have to get some sleep, turn to **84**. If you let him continue, turn to **386**.

558

(WISHING PLAYER) 'Employ your power of Restoration,' you order the jinni. This is one of your three wishes, so cross off one of the boxes you are using to keep track of them.

He spreads his arms wide, then brings his huge hands together to produce a thunderclap that makes your teeth rattle in your skull. Momentarily dazzled by the burst of blue light accompanying

this, you are pleasantly surprised to find that when your vision clears you are arrayed in splendid new armour. This is enchanted and gives an Armour Rating of two points more than the unenchanted version would. (Thus, if you are the Warrior, for instance, you now have an Armour Rating of 5.)

You also have a magnificent sword or, if you prefer, a steel-shod quarterstaff. This is also magical, and adds +3 to your damage rolls. (So if you would normally inflict three Dice +1 on a successful blow, you inflict three Dice +4 when striking with this weapon.)

If you are the Sage or the Trickster, the jinni also supplies you with a new bow and a quiverful of arrows. These are not magical, but are of the most marvellous craftsmanship you have ever seen.

Your companions, if any, are not forgotten. If they are lacking any weaponry or armour, the jinni supplies them with a replacement. These items are simply replacements for the items they lost, and are not magical.

Turn to **140**.

559

You are spoiling for a fight as you leap out at the bully-boys, but they lose all stomach for their job when they have to face alert and well-armed foes. They throw down their cudgels and race off into the night. You spit through the doorway and curse them for their cowardice, but you cannot summon any enthusiasm for chasing them down the unlit alleys of Crescentium.

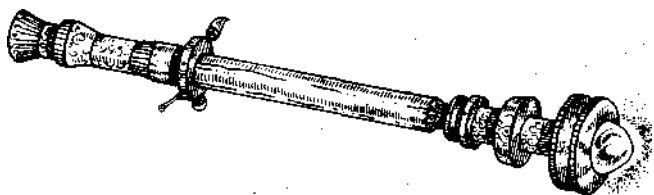
There is a moan from one of the Badawin. Nursing bruises and aching joints, they slowly sit up. 'Those robbers would have slain us and taken all our money,' says the leader of the group. You notice

him wince as he is speaking, and you wonder whether it is because of the beating he has just received or the alcohol you tricked him into drinking.

'My wrist is broken,' puts in another. 'I am in some discomfort, and urge that we visit a physician at once.'

'There is one thing we must do first,' chides the Badawin leader. He turns to you. 'We owe you our lives. Accept this small token of our gratitude.' He gives you a pouch containing twenty-five gold pieces. (If there is a Warrior in the party, he or she is handed the pouch. Otherwise it goes to the first player in the battle order.)

If the Sage is in the party, turn to **514**. If not, turn to **277**.



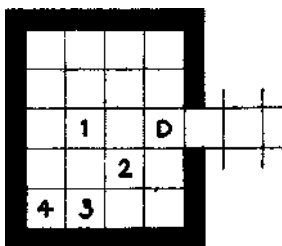
560

You are rudely awakened by the splintering of wood. A tall, shambling figure has smashed through the wall of your suite. As it is silhouetted against a moonlit rack of cloud, you cannot distinguish its features. But you can see that it has two andered heads, and a smell of blood and brimstone hangs about it. Behind, out in the courtyard, you see the slender figure of Psyche. She is now clad in the silver-and-blue gossamer robes of a summoning ritual.

'Be careful, spawn of the Pit!' she cries to the

creature attacking you. 'I do not want my house damaged unduly.'

There is no escape route. You must take up your weapons and fight.



Demon

Fighting Prowess: 8

Damage per blow: 5 Dice

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 8

Armour Rating: 4

Endurance: 60

If you defeat it, you can step out into the courtyard to face Psyche herself - turn to **177**.

561

Write down the codeword NEXUS with any others you have recorded.

Opening the door, you are confronted with a haze of jumbled shapes and dizzying perspectives. You strain to focus your eyes, but what lies beyond the door is a place of unearthly geometry. You can discern no pattern or logic in the drifting lines, most of which disregard the normal rules of shape and space. This must be a dimensional portal allowing Hunguk to range across the many planes of reality and unreality.

Record another tick.

If you have not yet done so, you can search through the objects on the shelves (turn to **148**) or

look at the charts (turn to **209**). If you are ready to leave, turn to **185**.

562

(ENCHANTER) You strain to peer beyond the curtain of the present. *[You see a fearsome holocaust: yourself, caught in an incandescent blast of flame. Fragments of crystal tumble to the floor all around you, but the sound they make cannot be heard above the roar of the fireball. The roar of the fireball - and your own screams. . .]* You exhale, allowing the vision to fade. What you have seen is one possible future. Forewarned, you may be able to avoid it.

If you decide to go down the stairs, turn to **239**. If you try to shatter the egg, turn to **567**.

563

You scramble down a narrow street. At the end it splits into two alleys. You stop to glance behind you. You can see no sign of the pursuing gods, but you sense that they are very much closer. Almost upon you . . .

A movement from the right-hand alley makes you jump. Then you see it is only a small ape who must have been sleeping in the shadows. He gibbers and lopes off along the alley. Wise move. You had better get away from here, too.

If you go right, turn to **321**. If you go left, turn to **330**.

564

Record another tick. You return to the steps leading up to the main deck. Mindful of the need for haste, you hurry further aft.

Turn to **437**.

565

(SAGE) You can attempt to use either your power of ESP (turn to **317**) or your Paranormal Sight (turn to **513**).

566

You thank Tobias and go to make your preparations for leaving. As you walk out into the quadrangle, the morning sunlight is slanting down past the distant minarets of the native quarter, A single voice, raised in rhythmic chanting, echoes out across the city. It is not unlike plainsong, but with a wistful quality you find rather beautiful. You could imagine it as the lamentation of the sun, rising to find Crescentium still occupied by northern invaders . . .

Tobias catches up with you at the gate and breaks in on your reverie. 'The Ta'ashim call to prayer,' he snarls, glaring in the direction of the highest minaret above the Ta'ashim mosque. 'Those heathens would be converted to the True Faith on the point of a sword if I had my way - but the Coradian community here has become softened by venal urges, led astray from their earlier religious ardour. They would sooner trade with the Ta'ashim than wage war on them. How the Devil must be dancing in glee!' He gives a bark of unamused laughter. 'I have something to aid you in your quest. The Magi are agents of unholy force, so it is well that you should have with you the most potent talisman of good.'

Opening the box he is carrying, he presents each player with a crucifix. Record these on your Character Sheet(s). Note that you cannot refuse them, so if accepting the crucifix takes you over your encumbrance limit of ten items you will have to discard something else.

If a player loses his or her crucifix, turn at once to **142**; write down the number of the entry you are reading at the time before doing this, as **142** will not guide you back there. (Note on your Character Sheet: 'Crucifix - turn to **142** if lost or discarded.')

Thanking Tobias for this gift, you set off to find Emeritus.

Turn to **291**.

567

You swing at the egg with all your might. It shivers into a thousand crystal shards which tumble outwards on the edge of a blossoming fireball. It seems to happen so slowly: crystalline leaves scattering in a fiery breeze. Then you are engulfed in flame, screaming in raw agony at the heart of an inferno.

Each player loses seven Dice Endurance, and armour gives no protection against this.

Survivors turn to **463**.

568

You leap past the defeated guards and slam the eunuch against the wall. Perspiration glistens on his bald pink brow. 'Which way out of here?' you snarl. He stares at you with scared eyes, barely managing to stutter the directions you must take.

You can take the guards' swords if you wish. Pausing only to bind and gag the eunuch, you bolt the cell door and make your way to the postern gate he described. There are no guards in sight. You open the gate and slip out into the street. It is night. You move furtively away from the brooding walls of the Citadel, muttering a silent prayer of thanks for your deliverance.

Turn to **164**.

569

You must decide how much you are offering as a bribe. Cross off a sum between 1 and 20 gold pieces, then turn to **468**.

570

You burst from the room, hurtling down the stairs and out into the predawn twilight. The courtyard is a tableau of shimmering blues and greys. You scan frantically for some means of escape, but the umbracules are right behind you and you have little time to think.

Even as you run, you know that the question of whether you live or die now is irrelevant. Without the Hatuli, you could never find the place where the Blood Sword blade is hidden. As the umbracules reach out and grasp you, sinking their talons into your soft mortal flesh, the last thing you know in this life is the bitter taste of failure.



571

You readily agree to perform this small service. However, as you go to pick the fruit you do not notice the young man's brow furrow in concentration. When you step forward to put the oranges into his hands, he pronounces an occult word - and a blast of searing red fire engulfs the first player in the battle order. This player takes seven Dice +7

damage (reduced by his or her Armour Rating, if any). If you survive, you see in the light of the Nemesis Bolt that an inscription is carved on the rock base:

*Waste no pity on this half-a-man
His heart is a vessel of lies*

This warning comes a little late in the day, and you wonder with some irritation why it could not have been displayed more prominently - perhaps on a placard by the roadside. Now you are caught up in a senseless battle.

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Half-Man

Fighting Prowess: 7

Damage per blow: 2 Dice+2

Psychic Ability: 9

Awareness: 7

Armour Rating: 0

Endurance: 25

Note: The half-man cannot move. His action each round will be to prepare or cast the Mists of Death spell.

If you *flee* back to the road and continue on your way, turn to **262**. If you destroy him, turn to **313**.

572

(TRICKSTER) 'Jinn are the mightiest beings God created,' you say. 'If you are truly resolved on this

course of action, there is nothing that I - a mere mortal - can do to stop you.'

'True,' says the jinni, nodding. 'Quite true.'

'As this is the case, and it is unalterable, at least grant me the answer to one question. If I must die, at least do not send me to my doom in a state of perplexity.'

'Now it is I who am perplexed,' says the jinni. 'What question could you possibly need to ask?'

'Do you swear to answer truthfully?'

The jinni twitches his eyebrows, each of which is as large as a pine tree. 'Of course!'

'Do you so swear by God and by the Sigil which bound you?'

The jinni gives a shudder and rolls his eyes. 'Y-yes. I so swear by God and the Holy Seal. Ask your question.'

'Well then. Tell me how you could possibly have occupied this tiny bottle, into which I could barely fit a clipping from your toenail?'

'Such a thing is easy for a jinni like myself,' he replies. Then, seeing you look askance at him: 'Do you doubt it?'

You allow a momentary pause. 'To be quite honest. . . !'

The jinni stamps his foot, causing the whole island to shake. 'Very well - watch and see it with your own eyes. You will not scoff then!'

At this, the jinni screws his eyes shut and begins to quiver along the whole length of his titanic frame. At first he blurs like ink splashed by the rain, then very quickly becomes a cloud of black smoke once more. This cloud swirls into a vortex which gradually descends, shrinking as it comes, to wind into the bottle. 'There,' speaks a muffled voice from within.

'Yes, there!' you cry, jamming the bung back into the mouth of the bottle. 'Now, you overbearing lout, you thing of crass ingratitude, you will go back into the sea and languish for a further seven hundred years!' You draw back your arm as if to throw the bottle out from the shore.

'No, no!' whimpers the jinni. 'I beg you to reconsider. To subject me to such a torment is too great a punishment. It is out of all proportion to the fate I intended to mete out to you.'

To your perverted eyes, perhaps. I value my own life quite highly, and yours not at all. Farewell, o jinni! You lob the bottle -

'Aiyee! Wait - ' the jinni screams. You leap forward and catch the bottle before it hits the waves.

You adopt a bargaining tone. 'Well?'

'I agree to serve you,' promises the jinni. 'I swear to do this - before God and all His Angels, by the power of Salamin's Seal, I swear to serve you if you set me free.'

You grin and pull the stopper from the bottle.

Turn to **525**.



573

You enjoy a good sleep and get up some time after sunrise. Each wounded player can restore Endurance points equal to half his or her rank for the rest (rounding fractions up), plus one additional point for your breakfast of fruit.

If you left your armour here before visiting Hunguk's ship you can now put it back on. Now you must turn your thoughts to getting off this island...

If you were brought here by the Roc *and* know the word that commands it, turn to **125**. If you arrived in a boat, turn to **306**. If you came on the flying horse or carpet, or were shipwrecked here, turn to **201**.

574

(ENCHANTER) You command the now-subservient creature to open the door. Savage resentment smoulders in its eyes, but it stiffly turns and obeys you. As it touches the point of its spear to the door, the bolts and locks drop away and the door swings ponderously open.

Pausing only to slit the dog-creature's throat, you step through the open doorway.

Turn to **483**.

575

(ENCHANTER) You call a faltyn to your side. With typical whimsy, it manifests in a faerie boat beside the quay. [*'What is it you desire?' it asks, sending an enticing whiff of ethereal incense towards your nostrils.*]

'Fetch up one of the boxes from under the water,' you reply. You ignore the odd looks you are getting from Anvil and his men, who cannot see or hear the faltyn unless it wishes them to.

[It looks down into the depths with a dubious expres-

sion. 'Not so easy a task as your lightness of tone would suggest! There must be-'

' - some exorbitant payment. No doubt. Name your price, sly faerie thing.'

['If you have an enchanted sword I will take it. Failing that, some potion or salve of healing. If you have neither of those, I will accept a magical Orb. If you have none of these things, I will take any two other items of your choice...']

Cross off the item(s). *[These need not be items that you possess. Once you have struck a bargain with the faltyn, it can just as easily use its magic to remove an item from one of your companions. You must tell a companion if he or she has lost an item, of course. And they might not be too happy about it. . .]*

Satisfied with the bargain, the faltyn casts a glittering net into the black water. A few moments later, one of the boxes is hauled into view. Anvil and his men watch as the box rises onto the quay and - apparently of its own accord - snaps back its lid. It is filled with Khitan silk, worth a king's ransom to the disreputable Lagrestin.

Turn to 7.

576

Put a tick on a piece of paper and write the number **422** above it. As you turn to successive paragraphs you will be told to record more ticks. These ticks are keeping track of the time you spend searching the ship, and once you have a total of *eight* ticks you should turn immediately to **422**.

After recording your first tick, turn to **487**.

577

You espy a fisherman who has a particularly shiftless look about him. Though his nets are worn in many places, and the caulking on his boat shows

need of work, he is merely lounging beside it carving a small doll out of driftwood. Under the gaze of his heavy-lidded eyes, you trudge down the beach towards him.

'I am Wuraq, the son of Abdalla the net-maker,' he says. 'If I may serve you without rising to my feet then it will be my pleasure to do so.'

'How much will you take for your boat?' you ask him.

A crafty look comes into his eyes. 'The boat is old. I ask only five gold pieces, or something of like value. But... if you should meet my wife, do not tell her you bought it. The story I shall give her is that it sank, and that I barely escaped with my life.'

'Understood.' You must pay him five gold pieces if you have that much. If not, he will accept an item instead. Decide what you are giving for the boat and make the necessary deduction from your Character Sheet(s).

If there is a Trickster in the party *and* he or she has at least one gold piece left, turn to **385**. If not, turn to **341**.

578

You can obtain the following items if you have the money to pay for them. If you are genuinely destitute (with an average of no more than three gold pieces per player), Emeritus will make you a gift of twelve gold pieces. These must be divided equally among all players.

Warrior's armour	30 gold pieces
Trickster's armour	10 gold pieces
Sage's armour	15 gold pieces
Enchanter's armour	25 gold pieces
Quarterstaff	1 gold piece



Sword	8 gold pieces
Bow	5 gold pieces
Quiver with six arrows	2 gold pieces
Rations for a week	2 gold pieces

Once you have given Emeritus's servants the money to make any purchases you need, record the item(s) and turn to **186**.

579

You approach a trio of soldiers. From the cirde-&-arrow emblazoned on their tabards, you take them to be members of the Order of Selentine Knights. Glowering, they listen to your request and then point towards a bulbous tower a few streets away. 'Try the Tower of the Throne of Purple,' says one. Turn to **406**.

580

(FIRST PLAYER in battle order) You step onto the narrow curving ledge and edge cautiously along it. As you reach the centre of the walkway there is the sudden grinding sound of stone on stone and the whole spherical room seems to rotate and you find yourself sinking into the pool of black water. At the same time, the trickle of water from the ceiling changes into a jet that turns the centre of the room into a whirlpool. You are being sucked towards the centre of this maelstrom. You realise that you will be drowned the minute you are sucked under the fierce jet of water.

With a last despairing grab you try to claw your way up the gradually sloping side of the room. To determine whether you succeed in this manoeuvre, roll equal to or under your Awareness on three Dice.

If you succeed, turn to **274**. If you fail, you have been sucked to the bottom of the pool and drowned. Any of your remaining colleagues in a multi-player group must return to **477** and choose another tunnel to go down.

581

The Selentine officer listens with interest as you explain about the gambling game. You produce a gold coin and press it into his hand, but he hardly glances at it. 'Surely you weren't playing with only one coin?' he says, smiling.

Cross off the coin you have just given him.

If you are willing (and able) to give him a further four gold pieces, deduct them too and then turn to **168**. If not, turn to **478**.

582

(ALL PLAYERS *except* the first in battle order) You awaken suddenly, disturbed by a strange sense of panic. The last thing you remember was the stranger's droning voice, lulling you off to sleep with his convoluted and improbable yarn.

You see the stranger in the full moonlight now. He is crouched over your comrade, chewing . . .

You vomit uncontrollably as you see your friend's fate. The stranger is a ghoul, and he has claimed the first player in the battle order as his victim. This player is now dead - you can retrieve his belongings only after dealing with his killer.

Grim-faced, you approach the ghoul with thoughts of vengeance for this evil deed.

Turn to **534**.

583

The smugglers scatter like frightened sheep as soon

as you begin bellowing for the militia. Only Lagrestin does not panic. He tries to drag one of the boxes away, but soon discovers it is too heavy for him. Snarling angrily, he kicks all the boxes off the quay. Ripples spread out across the dark water and the last evidence of Lagrestin's nocturnal mischief is a splutter of bubbles from the harbour bed.

The militia arrive just as Lagrestin is sauntering back nonchalantly from the quay. They are ordinary townsfolk wearing scratched and battered cuir-bouilli breastplates and armed with staves and cudgels. Lagrestin stops and looks at them, eyebrows raised quizzically, as if he were up to nothing more sinister than a stroll along the waterfront.

The commander of the patrol is a short burly man who introduces himself as Anvil. Turning to you, he asks, 'You raised the hue and cry? Why was that - did you see a crime being committed?'

You can answer by accusing Lagrestin (turn to **288**), or by making up another story that does not implicate him (turn to **358**).

584

Emerging from behind the pillars, you walk down the hall with your hands raised in greeting. The man in the cage opens his mouth to cry out, but the giantess bangs on the bars and growls: 'Stay silent! We want no more of your wily magics.' Turning to you, she puts on a smile and says, 'Greetings. Welcome to the ruinous palace of Sa'aknathur. I am Yamlika, a princess of Opalar - and this scoundrel is none other than Sa'aknathur himself!'

You peer dubiously at the old man. He returns a pleading look, but seems too frightened of the giantess to open his mouth. 'It is generally believed that Sa'aknathur is dead,' you say.

'No,' insists the giantess. This is he. Just look at the evil he has wrought. Once I was the most beautiful maiden in Siout, as delicate as a tulip and as graceful as a heron. But now I am more hideous than the monster encountered by Ulixes on his fabled voyage . . .'

If the Sage is here, he or she should turn to **326**. If not, turn to **281**.

585

(WARRIOR) Your nostrils flare as you lower your face within inches of Alexius's. 'Because of your mistake,' you say with a low growl of menace, 'I suggest you now waive the fee altogether.'

'Of c-course,' replies Alexius, eyes widening. 'You must stay here free of charge. I would not c-consider anything else. My error has already inconvenienced you enough!'

Turn to **181**.

586

You have a sudden notion that the dog-headed man's spear might help. You look around for it, but both it and his body have vanished. As your gaze flicks across the walls, you suddenly notice a peeling mural that you had somehow overlooked before. It is in the Ancient Kukuhuran style, and shows a spear-wielding deity with a canine head. Your adversary in times of past greatness, or merely a coincidence . . . ? You will never know.

If there is a Trickster in the party and he or she has not yet had a go at the lock, turn to **61**. If the Trickster is not here, or has already tried to pick the lock and failed, turn to **409**.

587

Gasping for breath, you run across the courtyard and out into the street. The three god-things are following you - indistinct shapes in the gloom, like nightmares that spill over into the waking world. You look right and left. The streets are desolate. You shiver in a cool easterly breeze. An hour or so after the sun has risen, the city will bask in blazing heat. But that may be an hour or so after your death.

If you go right, turn to **94**. If you go left, turn to **563**.

588

Fatima lays a hand on his arm. 'No, Hasan,' she says. That is *your* way. You act without striving to act. Others must strive for that is the way of heroes. Even if the cause is futile, it must be fought for. Your own path leads you away from striving, but a hero must be steeped in the world and lusty with life.'

She turns to you and gestures through the gate to her garden. 'Hasan counsels you to accept defeat and thus negate it. There is another way, and though it is fraught with peril I think you will be drawn to it for that very reason. You think that the Sword of Life is lost to you forever, now that your archfoe has taken it down with him into the realm of Death. Not so! It is said that Death's kingdom is a land from which there can be no returning - but *I* say that everything is possible. If you have the courage to attempt it, I will show you the path by which you can pass into the Netherworld and recover your sword. I will show you how you can challenge Death . . .'

Glossary

- Akaabah 'The Illuminate'. In the Ta'ashim faith, Akaabah was chosen by God to preach His message to the world. (Gatanades, the Saviour of the True Faith, is recognised in Ta'ashim as one of Akaabah's forerunners - making the two religions closer than most people will admit.)
- the Blasting The demon-spawned disaster in which Spyte was laid to ruin and the True Magi were killed. After this holocaust, which lasted for three days and nights, Spyte was left isolated by a deep chasm. Many believe that this goes right down to the fires of Hell.
- the Coradian Sea The sea around whose shores are located the richest ports and cities of the world. 'Coradian' is also used as a collective adjective for the countries of the True Faith - Algandy, Chaubrette, Kurland, the New Selentine Empire, Asmuly and Emphidor - surrounding this sea.
- Coradians In Outremer, a blanket term used for anyone of northern blood to distinguish them from the native Ta'ashim.
- the Crusade The war against the Ta'ashim, waged by the Coradians ostensibly for religious reasons. Certain parties (the merchants of Ferromaine,

the Selentine Church, etc) have found the Crusade very profitable, however, and are active in trying to whip up religious fervour in the north in order to further their own ends.

Ferromaine The richest port on the Coradian coast.

Krarth A large country in the far north of Legend, divided into several dozen separate states each of which is ruled over by a Magus. It is divided from the civilised lands around the Coradian Sea by a deep rift valley which cuts through the Coradian continent from eastern to western shore. A cold and inhospitable country, full of ancient and xenophobic traditions, Krarth is avoided by most merchants from other lands.

Legend The mortal world; Midgard, or middle-earth

the Marijah Sect A society of assassins who follow an unorthodox branch of Ta'ashim. The Marijahs have a secret fortress in the wilderness east of the Harogam Mountains and are thought to use 'astral gates' to come and go as they please.

Outremer [pronounced *oo-tre mair*] The Principalities of the Crusade, being those areas of Ta'ashim territory which have been captured by the armies of the True Faith.

the Old Man of the Mountains	The leader of the Marijah Sect. He is mentioned in documents dating back at least a hundred years. If these accounts all refer to the same individual then he must be one of the long-lived Adepts of Ta'ashim mysticism.
Selentium	The capital of the Old Selentine Empire which once comprised most of the western world. After the fall of the Old Empire seven hundred years ago, Selentium has risen to a new importance as the centre of the True Faith.
Spyte	The 'holy city' of the True Magi, who convened there every seven years in order to commune with the gods of Krarth. Today it stands in ruins, atop a pinnacle of rock in the middle of a vast rift in the earth, ('the Cauldron').
Ta'ashim	The name given to the religion and peoples of the southern lands, in the area that was once the empire of Kaikuhuru. The countries of Ta'ashim are Marazid, Zhenir, Harogarn and Opalar.
the True Faith	The principal religion of modern Legend.
the True Magi	The original rulers of Krarth, wizards of unimaginable power, who were all slain in the Blasting of Spyte centuries ago. Five of the True Magi sent their spirits out of Spyte as the cataclysm began. These five, now identified with shooting

stars in the night sky over Krarth,
are Red Death, Gift Star, Plague
Star, Blue Moon and White Light.



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