



THE SILVER GAUNTLETS

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How to Play

In order to play the Silver Gauntlets you will need a set of dice (2D6), a pencil and some paper should you need to take notes. You will also need to make a copy of the character sheet located after this section.

To progress through the book, read it as if it were a normal novel, starting from the very beginning and pick a number you wish to go to or proceed to when offered a choice. The number to go to, will be in **bold** characters. Flip through the pages to get to such number and progress onwards within the story.

Character Sheet

The following character sheet will help you keep track of your statistics and items. It is suggested that you print the sheet and make a copy. Your starting stats are: **Health Points 18, Base Attack 3.**

<u>Ambrosine</u> Health Points: Base Attack:	<u>Items</u>
<u>Allies</u>	<u>Spells</u>

Battle Mechanics

Battles are fought between you and one or several opponents. As you progress through the story you will encounter sections entitled BATTLE. The number of adversaries is given as well as the health points and base attack points for each battle. When starting a battle you always go first and roll the dice. You add this number to your base attack number. This is your **attack roll** for this round.

For the rest of the enemies, you roll the dice once and add the roll's number to enemy's base attack. This is the **attack roll** of that enemy for this round. Repeat this procedure for every enemy.

Once the attack rolls have all been calculated, compare your attack roll to that of every other enemy. If your attack roll is greater than that of an enemy, you are stronger than that enemy for this round and can choose to inflict damage on him or her. Note that you can only inflict damage to one enemy per round. To inflict damage, roll one die and subtract this number to the attacked enemy's health points. If your roll is equal to an enemy's attack roll, you cannot inflict damage, and neither can the enemy. However, if your attack roll is less than that of an enemy, you roll one die for damage and subtract this number from your health points. Once this has been done for every enemy, the round is over and the process is repeated until all the enemies reach zero health points, or until you reach zero health points. When this happens the battle is considered over. An enemy with zero health points is considered dead and does not participate in the remaining of the battle. If you die you lose the game.

Battles occur in rooms in some instances and display a type on them. If the battle is type R which means repeated, you have to fight this battle and complete it every time it occurs. If the battle type is S which means single, the battle needs to be completed only once and even if you encounter it again, you must not battle.

On occasions, you will gain allies. The attributes of your allies will be displayed to you and you can write them on your character sheet in the sections entitled "Allies". For allied combat, roll the dice and add the roll number to your base attack to determine your attack roll. Compare it against all of the enemies in battle and if possible, roll one die for damage on one. Proceed to calculate the attack roll of each of your allies and compare it against that of the enemies' attack rolls. Apply damage to one enemy if possible. When all allies have compared their attack rolls to every enemy's

attack roll, the round is over. Enemies only attack allies in ally combat and will only attack you when there are no other allies in battle. Allies can attack the same enemy but only once per round. If the health points of an ally drop to zero that ally is out of the battle. If all your health points drop to zero, you lose the game.

At the end of each battle, your health points and those of your allies are reset to their highest value. However, some allies will not die after a battle, even if their health points are fully depleted. These allies are type R which means that an ally can rejuvenate. Type D allies die permanently if all their health points reach zero in battle.

Number Types

As you flip through the book's pages you will notice that some numbers have a type specification on them. If the number type is S which means single, you can only get the items once. Attempting to get the items by visiting the location again will not be valid. If the number type is R which means repeated, you can get items from this area by revisiting it.

Letters

This section contains letters that you collect on your journey and serves as an appendix to read the contents of the letters you have collected. Note: do not read a specific letter of this section unless you have received it through gameplay.

My Ambrosine

My dear child, if you are reading this, I am no longer with you. I have fallen to the hands of that murderer and could not save the people of Cirencester. I have no doubt, that Ander has explained to you my business with Radagaisus and I apologize for not having told you... I only wished to protect you. The thought of losing you was just too much to bear... I have entrusted Ander with the task of giving you my brew kit, which I know will be of great benefit to you. If you ever find yourself in any distress, I have left you a sample of **Mandrower**. It has been prepared; and should you find more herbs for it on your travels, you can prepare more... You only need to spill the vial contents on those who may wish to cause you harm.

You are destined to do greatness my dear Ambrosine. Always remember to follow your heart and your mind.

My undying love for you my dear daughter and farewell,

Roman

Items Usage Context

This section contains items you collect on your journey and serves as an appendix to read about the effects that occur when you use an item at a numbered location due to the # choice. Note: do not read a specific item usage context of this section unless you have received it through gameplay.

Trowel

8 You pull out the trowel and proceed to **9**.

Lantern

17 Below the table resting on the porch of the red shop you spot six looms lying on the wooden floor. Place them within your items and proceed to **29**.

Magical Fruit

60 You show the fruit to Carleton. Proceed to **175**.

Cedric's sweater

119 You pull out Cedric's sweater and the creature pauses its walking to stare in shock. It grabs the sweater from you with a sudden arm movement and begins to put the sweater on. Proceed to **120**.

Noble wear

167 You show your wears properly to the guard and receive a heartfelt apology. Proceed to **170**.

Queen's Name

182 You say the queen's name to Gwyn. Little strands of water flow out of his eye sockets. "Her name brings back those times she brought delight to my wooden heart." says Gwyn. "Here, take the pear, maybe someone will grow a bit more joyful from it." You get a **Magical Fruit**. Proceed to **179**.

Weaving Kit

192 You take one of the nylon rags and use the contents of the weaving kit. Fobrin looks at you in wonder as you manage to fashion a nylon rope with the nylon rags. “Good thinking lady Ambrosine! We can attach this to the horses!” says Fobrin. Proceed to **194**.

Climbing Hook

196 You twirl the hook for a moment, allowing it to gain momentum and release it skywards. You hear a small clang and pull the rope. It tenses, signaling the hook has attached itself properly. “Well done” says one of the knights. You grasp the rope and begin to climb as does Leon and the knights. You arrive at the top of the wall and spot a set of stone stairs leading downwards. You walk down the stairs, as do Leon and his knights. Proceed to **198**.

Hot Iron Key

219 You place the key in the lock. The ice melts from it and releases the lock. You enter the room. Proceed to **221**.

Iron Key

219 You place the key in the lock. If the ice inside the lock has been melted, proceed to **221**. Otherwise, the ice inside the lock avoids the key from turning inside it. Proceed to **219**.

Green Gem Stone

198 You place the Green Gem Stone in the leftmost socket. If all three sockets are full, proceed to **273**.

Blue Gem Stone

198 You place the Blue Gem Stone in the center socket. If all three sockets are full, proceed to **273**.

Red Gem Stone

198 You place the Red Gem Stone in the rightmost socket. If all three sockets are full, proceed to **273**.

Crystal Lenses

273 You put on the lenses and see a glimmering black orb resting on the creature’s forehead. It is pulsating with large veins exposed and digging into the sides of its head. Proceed to **275**.

Throne Room Key

290 You put the key on the lock and turn it. The door opens and you walk inside. Proceed to **291**.

Brew Kit Concoctions

Brew kit concoctions serve as recipes to make spells. You will learn them throughout your journey. As a direct result of brewing them, you learn spells that can be casted on enemies or used within context specific situations. You should write down the ingredients for the concoction and the resulting spell in the Spells section of your Character Sheet. Note: you may only brew concoctions if you have a brew kit within your items.

During battles, instead of damaging an enemy when your attack roll is higher, you may use a spell on one enemy for that round. Each successful brew only gives you a time spell; therefore, make a note of the number of spell casts you have available.

Example of Spell notes:

Mandrower Herb + Brew Kit= 1 Possess Creature

Spells

This section contains detailed rules on how to use the various spells you receive throughout your journey. It serves as an appendix should you need to consult how to use a spell.

Possess Creature

Can be used only once during an entire battle. Use it on the enemies you wish to damage and they will become your allies for the rest of the battle. The damage to this possessed enemy is not applied. Note: enemies attack a possessed enemy by default unless the possessed enemy's health points have been completely depleted. If the battle ends and an enemy is still possessed, that enemy automatically dies.

Heal

You can heal as many times as desired in battle but to do so, you must have a higher attack roll than an enemy. Instead of applying damage to an enemy, heal your health points or those of an ally by 7.

Infieri Corneum

Can be used only once during an entire battle. Use it on the enemies you wish to damage and they will take one point of damage automatically at the beginning of every round until their health points reach zero.

Vaporum Solidus

This spell can only be used within a specific context and has no effect on enemies.

Spells Usage Context

This section contains spells you collect on your journey and serves as an appendix to read the effects that occur when you use a spell at a numbered location due to the # choice. Note: do not read a specific spell usage context of this section unless you have received it through gameplay.

Vaporum Solidus

58 You form your artificial hands and reach inside. You just barely feel the hook in your vaporous fingers and pull it out successfully. Proceed to **61**.

270 You form your artificial hands and reach inside. You get the **Hot Iron Key**. Proceed to **218**.

Infieri Corneum

149 You place the powder on the gate and the ice begins to melt. The doors are now open. Proceed to **161**.

160 You place the powder on the frozen beast and the ice begins to melt from it. Proceed to **162**.

219 The ice inside the lock melts. If you have an **Iron Key**, proceed to **221**.

The Silver Gauntlets

1

You find yourself in your room. The rays of the sun are shining outside your window and gracefully falling over the curves of your sheets. The wood of the walls looks smooth by the reflection of sunlight bouncing from the bronze handles of your closet. You tilt your body to your left and slowly raise your legs upwards. Your body rises to a vertical position ever so softly and you stop moving as you sit on your bed to contemplate your room.

You see the double door in your closet. Its left side door is half opened. A well-kept loom is sitting next to your chair. The shuttle you were using yesterday is dangling from the main weaving thread. What would you like to do?

2 Inspect the Closet

3 Inspect the Loom

4 Inspect the Desk

5 Go out of your room

2

Type S

You look at your closet and spot jackets, a skirt, shirts and a bodice. You look below your clothes and spot a couple of **Varrochini** herbs. Their crimson color makes you reminisce of the times your father used them to heal those nasty scabs you unfortunately received while playing outside in the field. You get **2 Varrochini** herbs in your items.)

What would you like to do?

3 Inspect the Loom

4 Inspect the Desk

5 Go out of your room

3

You grab the shutter of the loom and gently pull out the remaining thread inside of it. Your mother taught you how to use it well. You begin to imagine yourself back in your infancy years, sitting on your mother's lap while she held your hands and pulled the threads towards you to wrap them all together and bring a plethora of colors and strings into shape. You come back to the present.

What would you like to do?

2 Inspect the Closet

4 Inspect the Desk

5 Go out of your room

4

You look at your desk and find an old hand drawn illustration of a woman. The lady has long thick threads of hair flowing towards the sides of her shoulders. She is wearing a semi smile on her lips with a look of genuine kindness in her eyes. You know this is your mother.

What would you like to do?

2 Inspect the Closet

3 Inspect the Loom

5 Go out of your room

5

You go out of your room through the door and enter the kitchen and dining room. A circular table sits in the center of the room next to an iron stove. The plates and utensils are nicely kept inside the uncovered pantries. You can hear a man calling your name from outside the house. You peek through one of the windows and see your father. You head outside and arrive at a great field filled with many crops and plants. Your father comes closer to you "Ambrosia! Good day my dear! I hope you feel rested from yesterday. We must gather the Varrochini and Errodish from the field

to make a special invention I have been working on lately! I shall get the necessary preparations ready in the brewing room.” You see your father has his usual active and dedicated way of being; however, you can’t help but notice he has an air of dread in his eyes. He asks you to meet him inside once you are done. You spot 3 patches of land in front of you.

Which patch would you like to view?

6 The first patch of land

7 The second patch of land

8 The third patch of land

6

You see a vast group of Granadilla shrubs and your pet dog Gerard is laying down in the middle of the patch, to the sides of one of the grouped shrubs. He suddenly wakes up, shakes his whole body with two great shifts of his body. His black mane stops at a graceful position although some of it has a bit of dirt from the ground. He skips over the rows of plants and stands next to you, licking your ankles with his slightly scratchy tongue. (Gerard will now follow you wherever you go.)

Ally

Gerard: Type S

Hit points 10, Attack points 2.

Which patch would you like to view?

7 The second patch of land

8 The third patch of land

7

There are mounds of dirt spread throughout the ground where signs of previous shoveling are seen. A little further from where you are standing is a trowel stuck halfway inside the ground. You get the **Trowel**. (You place it in your items).

Which patch would you like to view?

6 The first patch of land

8 The third patch of land

8

To your sides there are sets of different types of plants with various intertwining tentacles that spread for miles. You have a tough time walking on top of them and barely manage to maintain your balance. Suddenly, you spot two small patches of Varrochini and Errodish. You try to force them out of the ground with your bare hands but they are firmly stuck and do not budge an inch.

What would you like to do?

Use an item.

6 Check the first patch of land

7 Check the second patch of land

9

You force down the trowel into the ground and retrieve the Varrochini and Errodish though the task took much strength. The sun is gently setting in the far away plains as its tones of orange blend with the shades of pinkish purple from the overhead clouds. The sky begins to shallow in darkness as if the light from the setting sun was robbed of its routine. Your father's brewing room can be seen a couple of feet away, standing next to your home. The typical gasses from the exercise of potion brewing can be seen spewing out of the room's chimney, mixing and creating small particles of light within the dark sky.

You set off on your way to meet your father and enter the brewing room. Upon entering, your father looks even more anxious than ever. You hear him whispering "I hope this work... It has to!" He hears you come in abruptly and asks you for the Varrochini and Errodish. Your father hastily takes them from your hands and places them inside his cauldron. It is a large basin, complete with a set of measuring tools comprised of burners, beakers and dishes for mixing

substances. The equipment looks not a day old due to the excessive cleanliness your father often prides himself with.

You see your father chop the plants you provided him into evenly cut morsels and line them up next to each other. Pieces of the Varrochini are crushed on a dish until the remains are but fine powder. The morsels of Errodish are mixed with liquid poxyclynen to attain a liquid which he mixes with the Varrochini powder. “Yes, that’s it! I have to mix it evenly for only fifteen more seconds...” your father says. “Ah, it is done my sweet!” your father shouts. You see a fine sliver of bright almost porcelain colored smoke creep out of the cauldron and onto the air. You can see your father’s eyes filled with joy. A joy you had not seen in him for days. Just as quick as this wondrous moment began, a blunt knock hits the door of the room. You quickly notice the expression on your father’s face has turned to a horrified and distorted visage. “Oh, my! I’ll be damned! He is here.”

Your father rushes you to the adjacent room. You recognize this to be your father’s library with books lined against the walls in alphabetical order. The door shuts behind you but you bend to look through the door’s lock.

The entrance door is kicked open. At first it is hard to tell what is outside the house as darkness has engulfed the exterior. With slow progression, a black undistinguishable mound moves forward inside, passing the house’s threshold. Within seconds, the shape takes the form of an armored knight grasping an inhumanly proportioned broadsword. He moves to his right and behind him enters a tall slender man wearing a long red robe with eyes as black as the darkness outside. The tall man steps to his left and turns around to face the doorway. From it springs a lightly armored man with black hair combed to one side and skin as pale as the moonlight. You can spot diffuse figures adorning his armor, which seem to be falling from a landscape and into a fiery depth. His eyes are of a great and bright blue which seems more pleasing than the ominous attire he wears.

“Radagaisus you made it just at the right moment, I have that which you asked me for.” The man takes a brief look around the room and says: “I see, you keep a tidy workplace Roman. It fits your personality, although I wonder why I had to meet you here. This isn’t like you, having to show things at the very last moment. Everything looks so freshly used”. “You must forgive me lord of Venzor but the task was much too difficult to accomplish within the given timeframe. I had to...”

“Shush!...” interrupts Radagaisus. “Where is it? Show it to me!”. Your father hesitantly takes hold of a wooden rod and starts stirring. The contents once again bring forth the bright porcelain fumes. Radagaisus looks at the performance for mere seconds and does not change his expression. With one motion of his frame, the armored knight swiftly slams down his broadsword onto your father’s cauldron shattering the contents of it and spilling some of the liquid over the walls.

“Is this what you promised me!? A mere stratagem? This is not what I asked for Roman! I specified a means to construct life from that which is material. All you have done is to give shape to ethereal mater!” shouts Radagaisus. “My deepest apologies, your Excellency, but I do not know of such magic,” says Roman pleadingly. “Since you have nothing to offer me Roman, I shall be forced to take a part of what you owe me”. Radagaisus moves forward in a flash and grasps your father’s arm.

What would you like to do?

10 Do not interfere.

11 Grab hold of Radagaisus.

10

You feel the fear for your father’s life, grasp your chest, but resist the urge to help him. You respect his authority far too much. Radagaisus holds your father’s arm tightly but he is struggling to push him off and frowns in desperation. Cold sweat starts to drip from your father’s forehead as if announcing the beginning of that which is inevitable. Radagaisus moves his hand about his waist line and raises a thin sword. The unsheathing is barely heard and all that comes from it is a whisper. Your father says one last word, “I’m sorry Ambrosine...”. You hear a loud scream come out from your father’s mouth. A horrendous shout of agony contorts your father’s face and harshly changes the pitch of his whining. As if in a split second, Radagaisus separates your father from his entire right arm, leaving a red shield of blood to appear and vanish between them. The blood from the wound inundates the floor in a crimson mat, surrounding your father and painting him red. Your vision becomes slightly blurred as the tears from your eyes come forth, rolling down your cheeks.

With one last breath, your father lays completely dead on the ground. Radagaisus throws your father’s severed arm behind him and it is swiftly caught by the armored knight. “We have what we

need gentlemen. Time we were on our way.” Says Radagaisus. The three men leave in reverse order compared to how they originally entered your father’s brewing room.

When the men are finally gone, you open the library door and tend to your father. You can sense faint breathing from your father. He says “Ambrosine, my dear... I’m so sorry, I wasn’t strong enough. You did as I told you, always following your old man’s orders my dear. Please listen to me carefully...You have to speak to Ander, our village elder. He..., he can help you... Radagaisus’s terror must be stopped!”

“I hid my encounters with him from you to keep you safe but I could not save myself... I love you Ambrosine. Go to Ander...”

You see your father’s eyes slowly come to a close and hold him in your arms one last time. You stand up and leave the brewing room. The sky is too dark to see anything.

What would you like to do?

12 Inspect the library.

13 Inspect the brewing room.

11

You push the door open and rush to help your father. You attempt to take hold of Radagaisus but his free arm grasps your throat. His stare still remains fixed on your father. “Hiding someone? Are we Roman?” says Radagaisus. He turns his head, his eyes seem even larger up close with a bright golden shimmer across the dark blue center of his eyes. “And who might this be...? Such a beautiful creature! Is she your lover Roman? No, no, you have far too much integrity for that... Perhaps she is a daughter of yours? She, she does have your eyes!” Radagaisus examines you as your father struggles to get away. “Let her go, she is of no concern to you!” shouts your father. “Oh, but now she is... She willingly tried to jeopardize our little exchange... Maybe she should be the one to pay” says Radagaisus sinisterly. “No, please do not hurt her!” pleads your father. Radagaisus throws your father effortlessly with one thrust onto his companions who take hold of him. He pushes you down to the floor and says: “Now girl” instructs Radagaisus, “if you do not want your father to die stay there and pay attention. “Kneel before me and close your eyes! Now, stretch your arms out...” You follow Radagaisus’s instructions blindly and you kneel in fear.

Without the slightest indication you hear a slight unsheathing of a sword and are struck by an excruciating pain in your hands. You try to move your wrists and then your fingers but you feel as if they are not there. The agony is too strong! It causes you to distort and bend your body. You open your eyes and are met with a pair of blood red stumps. Blood is still gushing from them and you start to feel sick from the shock of having lost your hands. You feel darkness clouding your view of the scene and give in to it...

You wake up and raise yourself trying to place a hand on the bed but instead, you feel as if your torso is being supported by a column. Your hands truly are gone and both stumps are wrapped mummy like in white bandages. Your father lays to your left asleep on your room chair but gently wakes from the noise of your movement. "Oh my dear, are you alright?" asks your father. He rises from the chair and embraces you for a brief moment. You slowly feel his body twitch slightly as he gives signs of sobbing. "I, I'm so very sorry my dear! I couldn't protect you from him..." Your father moves back slightly on the bed into a sitting position. His face is red and swollen with strands of tears rolling down his cheeks. "I have stopped most of the bleeding but there is still some." Your father takes a breath of air and says: "My dear, I know of a means to stop your suffering, but it is outside my reach. There are tales of a great forest that lays to the North East of our village. The fruit that grows from those trees, they say, has a magical curing effect on the deepest of wounds. Alas, I cannot come with you because those who need my help are in the village and I must try to keep Radagaisus from hurting more people by furthering my research. I can however show you how you may become stronger for the road ahead."

Your father helps you up and leads you out into the fields. He has a satchel hanging from his right arm and gently lets it slide down from it. He holds it in his right hand and outstretches it towards you. "Here my dear take it. It is a brew kit I made for you. You get the **Brew Kit**. You place it within your items. I planned to give it to you one of these days and hoped for better circumstances, but I know now is a good time for it." You look inside the contents of the satchel and see the brewing kit in one side with its instruments and a couple of herbs placed alongside it. One vial says **Mandrower**. (You get a concoction recipe: Brew Kit + Varrochini = 1 Heal. You get a concoction recipe: Brew Kit + Mandrower = 1 Possess. Write the recipe in the spells section of your character sheet. Write the spell in the spells section of your character sheet) you get **1 Mandrower** herb and **100 Gold** pieces. "One other gift I wish to bestow you my dear is that which

you saw in the brew house...” says your father. “It is a concoction that restores artificial shape. It is called **Vaporum Solidus**. You may use it to restore your hands but, it might be difficult for you to perform certain tasks that otherwise would be easier to accomplish. Just call out the words “Vaporum Solidus!” to summon your hands back. You can take hold of objects that do not require much force or speed...” says your father. (Write the spell in the spells’ section of your character sheet. To understand how to use the spells, consult the spells’ section of this book).

What would you like to do?

36 Go in search of the magic fruit.

37 Ask who Radagaisus is?

38 Ask what the **Mandrower** is for.

12

You see books lining the shelves of the library and sets of tables lined up against each other. One of the tables has a large book opened to the page of a phantasmagorical illustration. The top of the page says; “Vaporum Solidus”. A magnifying lens rests atop the lettered page next to the illustration and the words “A means to create artificial form” stand out. A slightly worn lantern sits next to the opened book. You can place the lantern within your items.

What would you like to do?

13 Inspect the brewing room.

14 Leave to the village square.

13

The brewing room holds a mere shadow of its previous air of study, replaced by an overwrapping sense of sorrow. You see nothing but instruments of varying shapes and sizes that bring back memories of your father’s countless hours at the brewing table.

What would you like to do?

12 Inspect the library.

14

Before leaving the brewing room, you take one last look at you father’s mutilated body and turn forth into the darkness with your lantern in hand. Outside, the field looks as horrid as ever, the weeds and tentacles of Errodish feel like a treacherous wood, warning fellow heroes of the challenges ahead. You move beyond you home and arrive at a path that leads to the village of Cirencester. Within minutes you are at the center square of the town. A lonely peasant is counting his looms at the corner; you can see a tavern named “Tonic Pinch” and a row of small shops which are all darkened inside.

What would you like to do?

15 Speak to the peasant.

16 Go inside the “Tonic Pinch”.

17 Inspect the row of small shops.

15

“Ah! Look at you, you pretty little thing! ” Says the peasant. “Be wise not to be wondering these streets at night miss”. “Are you lost? Why are you here at this time of the night?”

What would you like to do?

18 Ask for the healer.

19 Speak about your father’s death.

20 Ask him what he is doing.

16

The scent of sweet and sour, malt and wheat perfume the air in many directions. The air, however, is quiet and a small amount of villagers are sitting at the tables that seat from two to four people per table. The largest table where four men are seated is located at the far end of the tavern. This table in particular attracts your attention. The tavern keeper is at the bar, tending to the distress of a voluptuous barmaid who holds a visage of complaint.

What would you like to do?

22 Speak to the tavern keeper.

23 Speak to the men at the far away table.

17

You find yourself in front of a group of shops, one is painted red; it has dark wooden window frames and a small table that was left on the porch. The middle shop has features that resemble more those of a true boutique with larger windows that show some of the contents within. One can see a cluster of sewing rolls of oval and cylinder shapes stacked on shelves and safeguarded within cupboards. It is not possible to look below feet level very well due to the obstruction of light by the outward jutting roofs of the shops.

What would you like to do?

15 Speak to the peasant.

16 Go inside the “Tonic Pinch”.

Use an item.

18

“Ander is who ye seek huh? Well he is in the “Tonic Pinch” right now if I’d be not mistaken. However, because it is night his young helpers are watching over him and will not let anyone near him without the password,” says the peasant. “Tough break dear, but you are in luck... I have lost a couple of my looms from today’s harsh endeavors and I see you have a lantern there. Maybe you might help me find some of me lost riches”

What would you like to do?

21 Agree to help the peasant.

14 Attend to something else in the square.

19

“What kind of creature would do such a horrendous deed!?” says the peasant in dismay. “My dear young lady, I am at a loss for words. If you have come to speak to the village elder I shall give you the password post haste. It is Popries” The peasant lets the looms in his hand fall into his pocket and places his hand on your shoulder. “I hope I have helped you this night. May luck be on your side young lady!”. Proceed to **30**.

20

“Holding a curious eye there lady? I’d be counting the looms I gathered from today’s endeavors. I polish the shoes of the merry village folk, although I had an odd day today. Some of my regular customers did not show at their regular hours. Something is strangely dark, in particular about this evening.”

What would you like to do?

18 Ask for the healer.

19 Speak about your father’s death.

21

“Oh the fates smile on me, thank you lady!” shouts the peasant. “I can’t seem to remember where I might have dropped them... Have a good look around and bring them back to me when you can dear. Shine that lantern as much as ye can!”

What would you like to do?

17 Inspect the row of small shops.

22

“Evening lass, first time at the “Tonic”, eh?” says the tavern keeper. “You are glad to have some of me mead if you so wish, it’ll be on the house this time.” “Look at ye being all smooth all the sudden Stuart” interjects the barmaid. “I’m telling you there were a band of strangers roaming around the fields neigh couple of moments ago.” “Calm down, Evelyn... Best stay out of their business.” responds the tavern keeper. “Keeping high spirits is the mightiest we can do now for our customers.” Directing his gaze towards you, the tavern keeper says “So what’ll it be lass?”

What would you like to do?

24 Have a glass of mead.

25 Ask about the village elder.

23

Three young men are facing away from the table and another, younger man is sitting at the table with a lackadaisical posture. The taller one, baring a mat of brown hair and a pair of emerald grey eyes says: “Why are ye wanting here fair lass? If it be a word with Master Ander, we have to decline your request. The master has sensed foul play this evening and wishes to not be disturbed...” says the man with a hard tone. “What if she knows the password?” interrupts the young seated man. “Uhhg! Always with your strange sense of humor Tim...” says the tall man. “Come on we haven’t seen anything exciting this evening and I still don’t quite understand what is Master Ander worried about.” replies the young seated man. “Hmmm fine! As my brilliant colleague here has mentioned, our master is only seeing those who know the password, but you may be out of luck; for I doubt you know someone besides ourselves who would know it.”

Proceed to **14**.

24

“Aye that a girl!” lets out the tavern keeper. He reaches below the bar and brings up a nice rounded, fist sized cup made of redwood. He reaches for a large pitcher behind the bar and gently pours the mead into the redwood cup, just letting a bit of liquid spill off one edge. You hold the cup in your hand and take a drink of the mead. It’s citrus and sour flavor fills your taste buds with delight and

has a calming effect on your ever growing worries. After a couple of extra gulps, you finish your mead and ask the tavern keeper for the village elder. “Ander is who you’d be looking for? Well he is busy at the moment. A group of his young apprentices are standing guard at his table. It looks like they’d need a password of sorts.” says the tavern keeper in a low register. “They are right there at the far-end of me tables. Why don’t you ask them for a chance to speak to their master?”

What would you like to do?

26 Speak to the men at the far away table.

14 Attend to something else in the square.

25

“Ander is who you’d be looking for? Well he is busy at the moment. A group of his young apprentices are standing guard at his table. It looks like they’d need a password of sorts.” says the tavern keeper in a low register. “They are right there at the far-end of my tables. Why not ask them for a chance to speak to their master?”

What would you like to do?

23 Speak to the men at the far away table.

14 Attend to something else in the square.

26

Three young men are facing away from the table and another one, much younger, is sitting at the table with a lackadaisical posture. The taller one, baring a mat of brown hair and a pair of emerald grey eyes, asks: “Why are ye wanting here fair lass? Are ye drunk or something? I can smell the mead from your breath. Aye Tim, maybe you can deal with this drunken maid. Be useful! Will you?” The seated young man rises from his chair and greets you. “Evening miss, I am Tim Landrade. I’d be one of the apprentices of Master Ander, our village healer. I sense you are not drunk, but if you seek to speak to our master you are going to need a password. My pal Jerome is counting looms outside in the square, he knows it already.” whispers Tim. Proceed to **27**.

27

“A, look at you, you pretty little thing!” says the peasant. “Be wise not to be wondering in these streets at night miss”. “Are you lost? Why are you here at this time of the night?”

What would you like to do?

28 Ask Jerome for the password.

20 Ask him what he is doing.

28

“A, look at you, you pretty little thing!” says the peasant. “Be wise not to be wondering in these streets at night miss”. “Are you lost? Why are you here this at time of the night? Did Tim send you? Oh! The password; well, maybe there is something you can do for me... See, I happen to have misplaced some of me hard earned looms and can’t recall where I left them.” Proceed to **21**.

29

“Ah! Me looms, you found them my lass, I knew you and that lantern there wouldn’t disappoint me. Right. The password would be Popries. Here, take three of me looms for her troubles. Hope they come in handy.” Proceed to **30**.

30

You enter the tavern and spot a group of four men sitting at the far end of it. You approach the group of young men and say “Popries”. The tall man frowns in amazement and says: “How’d you..? Fair enough, ye earned your right to see our master.” The tall man and one of the other young men proceed to walk behind you and guide you to the back of the tavern. You spot a secluded area with benches resting next to a table. You spot the back of a dark figure and are led to the front of it as you are instructed to sit. The dark figure sprouts a long branch from within and rests a black finger on a hidden candle stick. You hear a voice coming out from the figure. “What brings you here at this time of the night weary traveler?”

What would you like to do?

31 Ask the dark figure who it is?

32 Tell Ander your father sent you.

31

“I, my young lass am the village elder. I have been helping the weary and the weak of the village. There has been, I fear, an increase in the problems our modest town has faced. I sense there are those who seek to cause further harm to the townsfolk amongst us tonight. This is why I have taken the necessary precautions this evening. You may call me Ander. ”

What would you like to do?

32 Tell Ander your father sent you.

32

Ander lowers his eyes for a moment and gently raises them to gaze at yours. “My pour girl.... It is worse than I had hoped..,” says the elder. He frowns wrinkling his eyes in sorrow. “I had spoken to your father months ago and I knew of his plans to help the village from Radagaisus. He seemed so sure of himself...” says Ander. “You are no doubt in shock my girl and deserve an explanation for the tragedy that has taken place tonight.” Ander pauses for a short time looking to one side as the concerns and worries of the barmaid are heard faintly across the tavern. “There was once a man who was promised a kingdom and was blessed with a gift from an ancient but now extinct race.” Ander looks to the ceiling and says: “They came from the sky and were revered by the beings of our land. Many came with gifts and helped those in need. However, some decided to establish rather serious bonds with these heavenly creatures. The admiration and love they brought with them was too great to ignore...” The elder looks at you again and continues his explanation: “Some men decided to take these beings as wives and quickly bore offspring that inherited our traits and their strengths. Although all seemed calm at first, many grew afraid of this mixing of races. Violence grew into persecution and hatred became a driving force for one of these hybrids... Radagaisus was the child of one of those men. Someone meant to be king who was robbed of his right to the throne of Venzor. He now seeks to reclaim the kingdom he lost, but will do so by

punishing those who are mere humans.” Ander curls his aged lips, scratching the lower part of them and takes a deep breath. “I know your father was trying to offer him a means to satiate his relentless desire for taking human lives by building a concoction to recreate life. He hoped this would keep our townsfolk safe but alas he has failed.” Ander stops his explanation and starts to form a faint smile. “We must remember, however, that in mourning, there is always a means to find hope. Come my girl, there is something I must give you...”

Ander lowers his arms below the table, whispering things inside what sounds like a sack. After some effort, he places a satchel and takes a breath of air. “Ah, here it is... Your father entrusted this to me, should anything dreadful befall upon him.” “You will recognize your father’s brewing kit on one side with its instruments and a couple of herbs placed alongside it. You will get the **Brew Kit**. You will place it within your items. One vial says **Mandrower** and a parchment of paper entitled **My Ambrosine** rests next to it. You will get **1 Mandrower** herb and **100 Gold** pieces. (You will get a concoction recipe: Brew Kit + Varrochini = 1 Heal. You will get a concoction recipe: Brew Kit + Mandrower = 1 Possess. Write the recipe in the spells section of your character sheet. Write the spell in the spells section of your character sheet. (The contents of the parchment are viewable in the Letters section of this book).

While you are looking at the contents of you father’s satchel, Ander begins to speak: “My dear it is time I asked you to help our village. Without your father, I fear it is only a matter of time before we all perish... You must travel north east and seek aide. Radagaisus is preying upon the weak, preying upon us. Maybe the rulers of those lands will provide the salvation we urgently need. We must hurry my girl. I will point you in the right direction.”

Ander stands up from the booth and walks you towards his apprentices. “Take the route just right of our village; after that, it is up to you to choose your own path. You will eventually find the kingdoms which I spoke of. Farewell my dear.”

You thank the elder for his help, but suddenly, a loud thrash is heard and the tavern door is swung open. Two men dressed in a light red armor enter and pause to look at the patrons of the tavern. One of them says: “There he is, the dirty old elder.” One has a helmet and a nasty cut on his lip, while the other has a gravelly skin complexion and a mat of brown and gray hair. The two men approach you and the group of apprentices and the helmeted soldier says: “You are coming with

us you old sod; our lord wanted no trouble with his work. It is time we put an end to your interference.”

You look at Ander who is calm and standing in front of his pupils. “You can take me, but do not harm anyone!” shouts Ander. The other soldier looks at you and says: “Have it your way, we will cut you down and maybe after we are done with him, we may instruct this fine young lady how to properly please men like us.He,he,he”.

Battle

Type S

Helmeted soldier: Hit points 16, Attack points 3.

Soldier: Hit points 12, Attack points 3.

33

The two soldiers lay at your feet. Silence engulfs the whole of the tavern as you see the patrons staring at you in awe. A middle aged man sitting at the right of the entrance rises from his chair and starts to clap with a drunken clumsiness. “Bravo! Oh I had not seen such a display of arse kicking in me life. You are a fiery one lady!” The rest of the tavern begins to grow in cheers; Ander approaches you from your right shoulder and says: “My senses betray me not for I have chosen you well... We must be off now, let me show you the way.”

You exit the tavern accompanied by Ander and his apprentices and as the sound of the cheers fades out in the distance you arrive at a road. You bid farewell to the elder and his apprentices and head off to the road.

You arrive at a cross roads and see a left and a right path. On the left rests a crescent set of mountains lightly drowning in a sea of clouds, mixing with the bright beige tones of daybreak. On the right lies what looks like a great lake running through a set of grey trees engulfed in a dense fog. At the very intersection of the paths, two wooden signs point separately towards opposite directions, displaying “**Belfram Chain**” to the left and “**Swollen Swamps**” to the right.

Which path would you like to take?

34 Belfram Chain.

35 Swollen Swamps.

34

You continue down the road and see the pathway beginning to rise. Stones are jutting out of the ground and holding strands of soil against each other, forming bridges that ascend towards snowy peaks. You feel the chill of the air building as the currents of wind glide around your body. The greenery starts to fade away as you near the top of the mountain covered by the icy layer of winter. You find a walkway of uneven stone walls. You stand in front of it attempting to gaze further ahead of it. You blink your eyes to try to pierce your gaze through the cold air when: “You aren’t thinking of going through are you?” says a voice behind you.

You anxiously turn around and see a blonde woman covered in a furry hood and boots carrying wood on one arm and bending the other to place her hand on her waist. She looks at you raising an eyebrow and says: “That there is a derelict wasteland. How did you get here?”

What would you like to do?

142 Tell her about your mission.

143 Ask her why she is so concerned.

35

You delve deeper into the trees and the lake begins to fragment into pieces covered in a dense fog. The trees share disparate features since some possess leathery bark with a grainy green texture and others hold an assortment of red thorns protruding from their trunks. As you approach the lake further, the water seems murky and black. Up close, it looks as if deep in the dark water there is a system of branches and algae holding a vast universe of animal life. You notice a disparate shape within the blackness separating itself from the mass and gaining size. A gentle splash of water follows as a lump rises to the surface.

What would you like to do?

40 Investigate the lump.

41 Continue through the marshes.

42 Look around.

43 Go back to the crossroads.

36

“Right my dear; it is time you were on your way.”

Your father accompanies you to the center square of the village where the atmosphere has grown loud. A crowd of the townsfolk is gathered at the center of the square and a group of men is located at the center overlooking the crowd. Two soldiers stand while five others are kneeling with their chest facing the ground and their hands tied. The two soldiers are dressed in a light red armor, one of them says to the crowd: “Calm yourselves you wretches, for you’ll be next if you become a thorn on our sides”. He has a helmet and a nasty cut on his lip, while the other has a gravelly skin complexion and a mat of brown and gray hair. The second soldier unsheathes his sword and places a hand on an old man within the kneeling group of men. “This man, here...has become a nuisance to our lord and we have been instructed by our master to fix him up,” says the soldier. One of the young men who are tied yells: “Let go of him you vile piece of...”. “Shut your trap lad! You’re next!” exclaims the soldier. “Let this be a reminder to you all not to interfere in any way with our master’s work”. The soldier unsheathes his sword and lets it pierce the back of the old man’s chest. A violent scream is heard as he drops to the ground motionless. The stares of those in the crowd grow in horror at the act of execution before their eyes. Your father screams: “You will not perform any more acts of cruelty today, you animal!” “Who is this then?” says the helmeted soldier. “Another would be do-gooder and... what looks like a partially mutilated maiden...” says the other soldier. “How good for us. She be incapable of resisting when we get to have our fun with her after this fool has been cut down.”

Battle

Type S

Helmeted soldier: Hit points 16, Attack points 3.

Soldier: Hit points 12, Attack points 3.

The soldiers lay dead on the ground. Proceed to **39**.

37

“There was once a man who was promised a kingdom and was blessed with a gift from an ancient but now extinct race.” Roman looks to the sky and says: “They came from the sky and were revered by the beings of our land. Many came with gifts and aided those in need. However, some decided to establish rather serious bonds with these heavenly creatures. The admiration and love they brought with them was too great to ignore...” Your father smiles at you for a moment and continues his explanation: “Some men decided to take these beings as wives and quickly bore offspring that inherited our traits and their strengths. Although they all seemed calm at first, many grew afraid of this mixing of races. Violence grew into persecution and hatred became a driving force for one of these hybrids... Radagaisus was the child of one of those men. He was soon to be king and was robbed of his right to the throne of Venzor. He now seeks to reclaim the kingdom he lost, but will do so by punishing those that are mere humans.” Your father sighs for a moment and continues: “I was trying to offer him a means to satiate his relentless desire for taking human lives by giving him the “Vaporum Solidus” concoction. I hoped this would keep our townsfolk safe but alas I have failed.”

What would you like to do?

36 Go in search of the magic fruit.

38 Ask what the **Mandrower** is for.

38

“If you find yourself ever in any distress, I have left you a sample of **Mandrower**. It has been prepared and you can prepare more, should you find more herbs for it on your travels... You only need to spill the contents of the vial on those who wish to cause harm to you.” advises your father. “The victim of this will be under your control momentarily”.

What would you like to do?

36 Go in search of the magic fruit.

37 Ask who Radagaisus is?

39

For a moment the crowd grows silent and all is still. Your father pushes through the crowd to embrace you: “My dear are you all right?” You appear in good health and your father moves onto freeing the bounded men. Some of the people in the crowd begin to follow your father’s example while others begin to approach you and praise your act of bravery. You approach your father as he examines the old man’s wounds. “Ander, he is gone. This brings greater difficulty to my tasks. He was a good man, kept an eye on those who were weak. I would have never discovered the “**Vaporum Solidus**” spell had it not been for him” explains your father. “I’ll tend to the young men, follow the path to the east of our village. You will have to decide where you go from there.” Your father embraces you one last time. “You are destined to do greatness my dear Ambrosine. Always remember to follow what calls to you.”

You leave the crowd and head towards the East of the town. You arrive at a cross roads and see a left and a right path. On the left rests a crescent set of mountains lightly drowning in a sea of clouds, mixing with the bright beige tones of daybreak. On the right lies what looks like a great lake running through a set of grey trees engulfed in a dense fog. At the very intersection of the paths, two wooden signs point separately towards opposite directions, displaying “**Belfram Chain**” to the left and “**Swollen Swamps**” to the right.

Which path would you like to take?

34 Belfram Chain.

35 Swollen Swamps.

40

You approach the lump and start to notice an outline of a shape. You gently place your hand on the lump and it sinks slowly back under the water. However, something else rolls the water smoothly and reveals itself as a human face. The eyes resemble a pair of white stones and the mouth is drowned in black liquid. You step away from the dead body.

What would you like to do?

41 Continue through the marshes.

42 Look around.

41

You take your first set of steps through the water and ascend onto a small patch of land. You continue to cross the swamp but feel as if the trees are getting taller. With each step you take, your head gets further and further closer to the ground. You realize the ground is sucking you in. You look around but nothing lies near you to pull yourself out of the swallowing ground. Soon your whole legs and waist are below ground and your throat is being squeezed against the mud. You take a deep gasp of air preparing for your inevitable fate as your vision begins to turn black. The darkness engulfs you, but you feel something grabbing your hands, which are still placed above. You feel a sudden outward tug and rise from the mud. You now lay on the ground grasping for air and your whole body is almost entirely covered in mud. You wipe your eyes and see a man standing beside you. He is slim and his hair is tied back in a ponytail. His attire is comprised of a ragged tunic, trousers, and a wide hat. His face holds an expression of concern. “Just what exactly were you doing, you foolish girl?” says the man. “Every voyager knows the marsh is not to be crossed.” He grabs you by the arm and helps you to your feet.

What would you like to do?

44 Ask the man who he is.

45 Ask the man what he is doing in the swamp.

42

You notice there is a cottage beyond a winding wooden pathway. Along the pathway are small lanterns mounted on the sides. You can see light coming from within.

What would you like to do?

63 Check if someone is inside the cottage.

41 Continue through the marshes.

43 Go back to the crossroads.

43

You arrive at a cross roads and see a left and a right path. On the left rests a crescent set of mountains lightly drowning in a sea of clouds, mixing with the bright beige tones of daybreak. On the right lies what looks like a great lake running through a set of grey trees engulfed in a dense fog. At the very intersection of the paths, two wooden signs point separately towards opposite directions, displaying “**Belfram Chain**” to the left and “**Swollen Swamps**” to the right.

Which path would you like to take?

34 Belfram Chain.

35 Swollen Swamps.

44

“Me name is William miss” says the man. “I have been living in these gloomy parts for a good twenty years now and plan to keep it that way. Mind you the fishing is not great, but it kills time. Every so often, something unusual, such as this, happens; therefore I keep myself on guard. Come, now let me take you to my cottage to clean ye up and send you on ye merry way back to civilization.”

What would you like to do?

45 Ask William what he is doing in the swamp.

46 Go to the cottage.

45

“I am looking out for those who clumsily wander into these parts and tell them to go elsewhere” says William. “Too many have lost their lives here and I have promised myself to not allow these treacherous marshes to take another life. They don’t call these the “Swollen Swamps” for no good reason.”

What would you like to do?

46 Go to the cottage.

46

“Wise of you my girl! Now look at my feet and do as I do. Follow me and we will be there in no time.” says William. William turns to his left and walks across a small pool of black water and onto the location of one of the trees with red thorns. He stands on the ground firmly and is getting ready to move onto the next tree which possesses the same features.

What would you like to do?

47 Follow William.

69 Attempt to traverse the swamp on your own.

47

You follow William through the small islands of green and dark moss which constitute the swamps and hear the buzzing of a couple of native insects which wizz by your ears. You soon arrive at a winding wooden walkway that leads to a dimly lit cottage with an ill kept roof plagued with vine growth protruding from some of its open tiles. William enters the cottage door and leads you inside. You spot a set of fishing equipment, a crude looking kitchen stove and a desk where some books are resting. William pulls out a chair and has you sit down on it. “Wait here, I’ll go get some wash cloths from the store closet outside.” He opens the door and heads out. You notice a room adjacent to the one you are in and see a small bed nicely kept and a handful of drawings on the walls. You spot a heavily detailed illustration of a fish and a couple of others surrounding it.

What would you like to do?

48 Wait for William to return.

49 Look at the contents in the room.

48

You hear a rustling coming from outside and a door creaking open behind you. William comes in with a handful of light gray cloths. He kneels in front of you and starts to remove the mud from your shoes and legs. As he nears your waist he says: "I'll leave that to you. Don't want to cause any problem." He hands you the cloth and you begin to clean your waist and chest. "There you go, had not noticed there was such a beautiful young woman under all that rubbish. You must be thirsty, let me pop out something for ye." William goes behind his study and into a back door. He swiftly emerges with a wicker carafe and two glasses. He proceeds to pour you a glass of water and asks: "So what were you doing out there?". Proceed to **62**.

49

You enter a room and on the walls see a collection of drawings of various fish species and a pair of illustrations of a man and a boy fishing by a peer. The surroundings of this piece resemble a clear and pleasant version of the vegetation comprising the swamp.

What would you like to do?

50 Look left.

51 Look right.

48 Go back to your chair.

50

You see a small desk to your left. On top of it, there is a set of roughly carved wooden figurines. There is a group of three carvings that look like a man, a woman, and a young boy. To their right there are two carvings that look like creatures. One has a set of horns and a lion's mane that stretches across its back. It stands on its back legs and has a mouth like that of a great lizard. The

other creature resembles a dog with a slim physique and a large mouth lined with teeth. You notice a set of weaving tools lying at the center of the desk and a stack of papers upon which sits a letter.

What would you like to do?

52 Read the letter.

51 Look right.

48 Go back to your chair.

51

You see a small bed and small green sweater made of wool resting on top of it. The right sleeve is almost fully torn off; and close to the neck, it has holes of different sizes. The bed covers are neatly stretched and not a single wrinkle can be seen.

What would you like to do?

50 Look left.

48 Go back to your chair.

52

You carefully unfold the letter and stare at its contents:

Request from a friend

Dear William. I cannot begin to relate to the agony you are going through because of your loss. The others and I have come to the decision of taking our belonging elsewhere west. We hope to find the peace and comfort we once had here in Oclesh. The lake is no longer a safe place for our families and friends. The waters are darkening day by day and there have been reports of beasts roaming around the trees. A sinister fog is taking over the grounds and concealing the flowers and trees that once adorned this beautiful land.

I implore you to join us and not to break down here in this decaying land. The last preparations are nearly set and we will leave at dawn.

Please William, do not burden yourself further and move on. Hopefully, you will change your mind and come with us.

Terryn Luanda

What would you like to do?

54 Look right.

53 Go back to your chair.

53

You hear a rustling coming from outside and door creaking open behind you. William comes in with a handful of light gray cloths. He kneels in front of you and starts to remove the mud from your shoes and legs. As he nears your waist he says: "I'll leave that to you. Don't want to cause any problems." He hands you the cloth and you begin to clean your waist and chest. "There you go, I had not noticed there was such a beautiful young woman under all that rubbish. You must be thirsty, let me pop out something for ye." William goes behind his study and into a back door. He swiftly emerges with a wicker carafe and two glasses. He proceeds to pour you a glass of water and asks: "So what were you doing out there?"

What would you like to say?

55 Mention the objective of your travels.

56 Mention the letter.

54

You see a small bed and small green sweater made of wool resting on top of it. The right sleeve is almost fully torn off; and close to the neck, it has holes of different sizes. The bed covers are neatly stretched and not a single wrinkle can be seen. Proceed to **53**.

55

William seems astounded by the explanation you have given him. “What misfortunes have befallen you my dear! It is brave of you to undertake such an arduous task. I’m afraid I have only heard legends about the land you seek. I personally have not traveled past the swamps. Although, I did manage to see a group of red riders that were heading towards the west, I stood at the window of my cottage ready to run out to help them, should one become a victim to the swamp; but they walked past the waters, as if on an invisible floor. Surely they came from a land beyond here.”

What would you like to say?

57 Ask how to cross the swamp.

56 Mention the letter.

56

William turns his head left towards the room you investigated. “Thankfully I sense a kind heart in you; otherwise, I would have thrown you out without a second thought. Ahh... I’ll let this one pass. It is not the first time the floor in that room has been covered in muddy footsteps, or as I call them “mud steps”.” He straightens his posture and turns to look at the bed. “I sometimes wish I could see him again...” He looks at the floor with a hint of sorrow in his eyes. His eyelids slowly close. “Yes, things got worse and worse. The lake grew more swamp-like by the day. At first, my fellow neighbors and I thought it must not be anything too alarming; but we were wrong. Before I did anything to prevent a tragedy, it bashed me like a blunt sword. I lost what was most dear to me. My son... Cedric. He, with the adventurous personality he carried, ventured too far into the swamps looking for all sorts of animals and creatures to discover. He enjoyed translating them onto paper and even shaping them onto wood. I thought I could eventually find him, or hoped he would one day return, but I have not been so fortunate. The others thought me a fool to not leave, but I do not wish to and none shall suffer the same fate my son did.”

William pauses for a moment and heads inside his son’s room. He emerges with the green sweater and the weaving kit. He stretches his hands towards you and lets the sweater and the weaving kit lay on your lap. “Maybe you could help me fix his sweater dear. It was all I found of him that day and I am not talented at weaving.” You take the sweater and the kit and slowly pass threads through

threads as the holes of the sweater become less and less noticeable. Soon the sweater holds no evidence of its previous state. William's face turns bright red and his eyes fill with tears. "My, it looks just like it did on Cedric. I'm sorry; I... did not expect you to do such a formidable job." William pushes the sweater against his left cheek, partially wiping off his tears. He clears his throat and looks at you. "Lass, would you do me a favor? If you just happen to find Cedric out there, would you give him this?" You nod and place **Cedric's sweater** and the **Weaving Kit** within your items. Proceed to **57**.

57

William looks into your eyes for a moment and gives out a breath of air. "Very well, if you are half as smart as you are beautiful, you would have noticed the difference in the trees lying on the swamp. Stand next to a tree with red thorns and you will stand firmly on land, however, walk to a different tree and you will part with your life. Be careful miss and remember to look at your feet!" William extends a hand and assists you up and off the chair. "I beg your pardon for not accompanying you, but I must tend to catch the meal of the day. I am rather hungry and do not have a proper line prepared, but then again, I shall improvise."

What would you like to do?

58 Help William fix his line.

69 Attempt to traverse the swamp.

58

William leads you to the outside of the cottage and around the back of it, past the wooden walkway. You walk with him to the edge of the walkway and William guides your attention to a metal looking grating laying half sunk between the soil and the water. "Look there lass, I lost my hook while reeling a catch yesterday. It is stuck inside that metal rubbish and I cannot reach inside. I thought you might be able to reach inside and pull it out for me." says William. "I have an extra line kit to fashion some, if you need."

What would you like to do?

59 Use the line kit (if you have your human hands).

Use a spell.

59

Type S

You fashion a line using the line kit and make a tiny slipknot at the end of it. You move the line through the holes of the rubbish and manage to rope the hook. You gently raise the line and bring the hook out. You hold the hook in your hand and give it to William. He looks at you dumbfounded and says: “Astounding lass! My, you are full of surprises! Thank you my dear, with this I may hold a full stomach by tonight!” William embraces you and gives you **2 Varrochini** herbs and **100 Gold** pieces. “Good luck on your journey! Be sure to come visit me again, if you get the chance! Farewell.” You walk away from the cottage and proceed onto the swamp. Proceed to **69**.

60

Carleton approaches you as you enter the white marbled floor hall. “My lady, have you the pear?” asks Carleton.

What would you like to do?

172 Exit the courtyard.

Use an item.

61

Type S

You hold the hook in your hand and give it to William. He looks at you dumbfounded and says: “Astounding lass! My, you are full of surprises! Never have I witnessed such a spectacular feat ha!” William takes the hook from your and accidentally disassembles a bit of your hand. “Oh sorry, I did not know they were a little fragile... Thank you my dear, with this I may hold a full stomach by tonight!” William embraces you and gives you **2 Varrochini** herbs and **100 Gold** pieces. “Good luck on your journey! Be sure to come visit me again if you get the chance! Farewell.” You walk away from the cottage and proceed onto the swamp. Proceed to **69**.

62

William seems astounded by the explanation you have given him. “What misfortunes have befallen you my dear! It is brave of you to undertake such an arduous task. I’m afraid I have only heard legends of the land you seek. I personally have not traveled past the swamps. Although, I did manage to see a group of red riders that were heading towards the west. I stood at the window of my cottage ready to run out to help them should one become a victim to the swamp but they walked past the waters as if on an invisible floor. Surely they came from a land beyond here.” Proceed to **57**.

63

You knock at the door and hear approaching footsteps on the other side of the door. The door opens and a man peeks out from it. He is slim and has his hair tied back in a ponytail. “Yes, how may I be of service?” says the man. “Not thinking of crossing that there swamp are you? I’d advise you to turn and go back from where you came.”

What would you like to say?

64 Mention the objective of your travels.

65 Ask the man who he is.

64

The man seems astounded by the explanation you have given him. “What misfortunes have befallen you my dear. It is brave of you to undertake such an arduous task. I’m afraid I have only heard legends of the land you seek. I personally have not traveled past the swamps. Although, I did manage to see a group of red riders that were heading towards the west. I stood at the window of my cottage ready to run out to help them should one become a victim to the swamp but they walked past the waters as if on an invisible floor. Surely they came from a land beyond here.” Proceed to **66**.

65

“Me name is William miss” says the man. “I have been living in these gloomy parts for a good twenty years now and plan to keep it that way. Mind you the fishing is not great but it kills the time. Every so often something unusual such as this happens, so I keep guard. Proceed to **67**.”

66

“Me name is William miss” says the man. “I have been living in these gloomy parts for a good twenty years now and plan to keep it that way. Mind you the fishing is not great but it kills the time. Every so often something unusual such as this happens, so I keep guard. Proceed to **68**.”

67

The William seems astound by the explanation you have given him. “What misfortunes have befallen you my dear! It is brave of you to undertake such an arduous task. I’m afraid I have only heard legends of the land you seek. I personally have not traveled past the swamps. Although, I did manage to see a group of red riders that were heading towards the west. I stood at the window of my cottage ready to run out to help them should one become a victim to the swamp but they walked past the waters as if on an invisible floor. Surely they came from a land beyond here.” Proceed to **68**.

68

William looks into your eyes for a moment and gives out a breath of air while shaking his head. “Foolish of you my girl but fine have it your way. Stand next to a tree with red thorns and you will stand firmly on land, however, walk to a different tree and you will part with your life. Be careful miss and remember to look at your feet! I beg your pardon for not accompanying you but I must tend to catch the meal of the day. I am rather hungry and do not have a proper line prepared but then again I shall improvise.”

What would you like to do?

58 Help William fix his line.

69 Attempt to traverse the swamp.

69

You stand at the edge of the lake overlooking the mass of dense fog in front of you and can barely see a couple of islands of plants jutting out of the ground. The trees are still partially visible and you can make out some of their features.

What would you like to do?

70 Look left.

71 Look in front of you.

72 Look right.

73 Look behind you.

70

You turn left and a green tree further ahead. Many of its branches are protruding in all directions.

What would you like to do?

74 Go towards the tree.

69 Choose another direction.

71

You look in front of you and see a large tree with massive branches rising higher towards the sky. At its bottom, you notice a grouping of red thorns circling portions of it.

What would you like to do?

76 Go towards the tree.

69 Choose another direction.

72

You turn right and a gray tree curves on its sides as if some of its branches are keeping it from falling over.

What would you like to do?

75 Go towards the tree.

69 Choose another direction.

73

You look behind you and can see William's cottage, however, there is no need to go back that way.

What would you like to do?

69 Choose another direction.

74

You keep a steady pace but feel as if you are being swallowed. Your feet no longer seem to lift of the ground and you seem to be getting closer to it. You struggle but the downward pull of the swamps does not cease to tug you further down. Your face begins to drown inside the earth and you feel the supply of air left in your lungs fading away as death embraces you. **You are dead.**

75

You keep a steady pace but feel as if you are being swallowed. Your feet no longer seem to lift of the ground and you seem to be getting closer to it. You struggle but the downward pull of the swamps does not cease to tug you further down. Your face begins to drown inside the earth and you feel the supply of air left in your lungs fading away as death embraces you. **You are dead.**

76

You arrive at the large tree and stand firmly on the ground. The path in front of you is obstructed by a long set of vines wrapping in and out of themselves like a web.

What would you like to do?

77 Look left.

78 Look right.

77

You discover another red tree with thorns only slightly smaller.

What would you like to do?

79 Go towards it.

76 Choose another direction.

78

You see a twisting green tree with red fruit sprouting out of the tips of its branches.

What would you like to do?

80 Go towards it.

76 Choose another direction.

79

You arrive at the small tree and stand firmly on the ground. You notice even more trees around you.

What would you like to do?

81 Look left.

82 Look in front of you.

83 Look right.

84 Look behind you.

80

You keep a steady pace but feel as if you are being swallowed. Your feet no longer seem to lift of the ground and you seem to be getting closer to it. You struggle but the downward pull of the swamps does not cease to tug you further down. Your face begins to drown inside the earth and you feel the supply of air left in your lungs fading away as death embraces you. **You are dead.**

81

You see a brown and green tree with vines wrapping all around it.

What would you like to do?

85 Go towards it.

79 Choose another direction.

82

You spot a group of trees with a line of red thorns circling along their base. As the thorns rise to the branches, bulbs of black goo are forming at the extremities.

What would you like to do?

87 Go towards it.

79 Choose another direction.

83

You see a large red tree with thorns which you have already visited.

What would you like to do?

76 Go towards it.

79 Choose another direction.

84

You see large shards protruding from the fog and notice they are attached to a group of thick trees lying flat on the ground.

What would you like to do?

86 Go towards it.

79 Choose another direction.

85

You keep a steady pace but feel as if you are being swallowed. Your feet no longer seem to lift of the ground and you seem to be getting closer to it. You struggle but the downward pull of the swamps does not cease to tug you further down. Your face begins to drown inside the earth and you feel the supply of air left in your lungs fading away as death embraces you. **You are dead.**

86

You keep a steady pace but feel as if you are being swallowed. Your feet no longer seem to lift of the ground and you seem to be getting closer to it. You struggle but the downward pull of the swamps does not cease to tug you further down. Your face begins to drown inside the earth and you feel the supply of air left in your lungs fading away as death embraces you. **You are dead.**

87

You arrive at the set of trees and notice the thorns are pulsating in a certain way. These sets of thorns are slightly larger and seem to be transporting something to the bulbs with every movement they make. You look closely at one of the bulbs and notice a little black ball forming below and soon it becomes large enough to drop towards the ground. The black droplet falls inside the water, joining the immense darkness of the swamp. You notice more sets of trees and a denser fog around you.

What would you like to do?

88 Look left.

89 Look in front of you.

90 Look right.

91 Look behind you.

88

You see a couple of malformed trees with hollow trunks that seem barely held upright to the point of having a networks of vines supporting them.

What would you like to do?

92 Go towards it.

87 Choose another direction.

89

You see a very large tree with its great branches jutting into the ground and surfacing out on different spots. Little remnants of its foliage remain.

What would you like to do?

93 Go towards it.

87 Choose another direction.

90

You see a colossal tree with large bulbs of black goo places at the extremities of its branches. Some of the black matter is coursing down the tree and wrapping it, hiding some of the red thorns located at its base.

What would you like to do?

94 Go towards it.

87 Choose another direction.

91

You spot the small trees with red thorns you have already visited.

What would you like to do?

79 Go towards it.

87 Choose another direction.

92

You keep a steady pace but feel as if you are being swallowed. Your feet no longer seem to lift of the ground and you seem to be getting closer to it. You struggle but the downward pull of the swamps does not cease to tug you further down. Your face begins to drown inside the earth and you feel the supply of air left in your lungs fading away as death embraces you. **You are dead.**

93

You keep a steady pace but feel as if you are being swallowed. Your feet no longer seem to lift of the ground and you seem to be getting closer to it. You struggle but the downward pull of the swamps does not cease to tug you further down. Your face begins to drown inside the earth and you feel the supply of air left in your lungs fading away as death embraces you. **You are dead.**

94

You stand firmly on the grounds surrounding the colossal tree and have difficulty not stepping on the black goo with your feet. You spot a couple of large exposed roots and make your way to them. The gathering of red thorns, particularly on this tree, are nearly completely covered in the black substance. You look around and spot a wall of vines blocking the path behind you.

What would you like to do?

95 Look left.

96 Look in front of you.

97 Look right.

95

You spot the group of trees with red thorns and black goo bulbs you have already visited.

What would you like to do?

87 Go towards it.

94 Choose another direction.

96

You no longer see trees but instead see a gathering of molten black shapes. Little spaces can be noticed on the ground where brown moss lies.

What would you like to do?

99 Go towards it.

94 Choose another direction.

97

You see what looks like a small tree only the majority of it is surrounded by the same black goo you spotted earlier. The tree's form is barely distinguishable and only some spots of its trunk can be seen.

What would you like to do?

98 Go towards it.

94 Choose another direction.

98

Type S

You approach the black shape and see a semi hemisphere of vines obstructing the path beyond the former tree. However, you spot a couple of herbs on the ground. You get **2 Mandrower** herbs. You cannot see any other means of progressing and go back to the colossal tree. Proceed to **94**.

99

You arrive at the molten shapes and mistakenly place your feet on some of it. It feels as if taking steps is becoming a bit harder as it creates resistances as you cross through it. You see a couple of unaffected trees around you at a fair distance.

What would you like to do?

100 Look left.

101 Look in front of you.

102 Look right.

103 Look behind you.

100

You see a very large tree with its great branches jutting into the ground and surfacing out on different spots. Little remnants of its foliage remain.

What would you like to do?

93 Go towards it.

99 Choose another direction.

101

You spot another ensemble of black goo shapes further ahead and the fog seems to be getting extremely thick below your legs.

What would you like to do?

105 Go towards it.

99 Choose another direction.

102

You see a multitude of large trees standing above the ground as if some of their roots are lifting them. The curves of the trunk and the roots form arches with the ground.

What would you like to do?

104 Go towards it.

99 Choose another direction.

103

You can see the colossal tree with the large black bulbs standing in the distance. You have already visited it.

What would you like to do?

94 Go towards it.

99 Choose another direction.

104

You keep a steady pace but feel as if you are being swallowed. Your feet no longer seem to lift of the ground and you seem to be getting closer to it. You struggle but the downward pull of the swamps does not cease to tug you further down. Your face begins to drown inside the earth and you feel the supply of air left in your lungs fading away as death embraces you. **You are dead.**

105

You stand on a blanket of gray fog and cannot see your feet. Walking is a bit harder still but you notice even more trees around you.

What would you like to do?

106 Look left.

107 Look in front of you.

108 Look right.

109 Look behind you.

106

You see the bed of fog lying below your feet continues in this direction and more black goo covered trees lay ahead.

What would you like to do?

112 Go towards it.

105 Choose another direction.

107

You see grouping of large stones set around a large green tree. Some of its foliage has shades of red.

What would you like to do?

111 Go towards it.

105 Choose another direction.

108

You see a bed of green floating moss floating above the swamp water and some cracked remains of trees resting on the ground further ahead.

What would you like to do?

110 Go towards it.

105 Choose another direction.

109

You spot the molten shapes you have previously visited.

What would you like to do?

99 Go towards it.

105 Choose another direction.

110

You keep a steady pace but feel as if you are being swallowed. Your feet no longer seem to lift of the ground and you seem to be getting closer to it. You struggle but the downward pull of the swamps does not cease to tug you further down. Your face begins to drown inside the earth and you feel the supply of air left in your lungs fading away as death embraces you. **You are dead.**

111

You keep a steady pace but feel as if you are being swallowed. Your feet no longer seem to lift of the ground and you seem to be getting closer to it. You struggle but the downward pull of the swamps does not cease to tug you further down. Your face begins to drown inside the earth and you feel the supply of air left in your lungs fading away as death embraces you. **You are dead.**

112

You arrive at another bed of fog and black goo covered trees. It is becoming more difficult to see past some of the fog but you still manage to make sense of some shapes in the distance.

What would you like to do?

113 Look left.

114 Look in front of you.

115 Look right.

113

You can barely see what looks like more black goo covered trees.

What would you like to do?

116 Go towards it.

112 Choose another direction.

114

You see the fog has dissipated in this direction and spot what looks like a small sea of black liquid akin to the black goo.

What would you like to do?

117 Go towards it.

112 Choose another direction.

115

You recognize the bed of fog you previously were at.

What would you like to do?

105 Go towards it.

112 Choose another direction.

116

Type S

You stand next to the black shapes and can see a couple of herbs lying on the ground. You get **1 Mandrower** herb and **1 Varrochini** herb. Large vines surround the path ahead of your current location and there seems to be no other way but back. Proceed to **105**.

117

You stand in front of the sea of black goo and see no means of traversing it. The waters extend as far as the eye can see. Amidst the multitude of black you notice a small spot of green. It seems to become bigger as it approaches your location. Its shape is not quite distinguishable but it resembles a sort of lily pad. It does not follow the curving of the gentle flutter of the small waves but stays fixed as if a force is keeping it steady.

The pad gets closer and closer to the surface and begins to rise. You can now recognize a couple of strands of hair growing out of the center of the pad and two yellow semi circles forming below the hair. Soon a creature's head stands above the black water and is rising to its feet. The features of it look amphibian, with webbed hands and feet and a snapping mouth. The creature maintains a look of calm as it stares at you with those round large yellow spheres for eyes.

What would you like to do?

118 Battle the creature.

119 Attempt to speak to the creature.

118

Battle

Type S

Kappa: Hit points 6, Attack points 3.

The creature collapses and its shell falls, parting with its now exposed back. It is not moving which clearly signifies it is dead. You inspect the shell and see it is sturdy enough to hold you. Before placing it on the water your notice something etched on the shell: William, Bianca, Cedric. Next to those names is another engraving “**Up, left, right...**” but the last part is heavily scratched due to your battle.

You settle the shell on the water and move onto it. You kick against the ground and propel yourself away from the shore. You wait for a couple of moments, staring further ahead of the black sea and begin to notice a small gate filled with shadow at its insides. Soon you arrive at the shores and stand in front of the gate. There is no other visible way through the swamps so you proceed inside the gate. Proceed to **125**.

119

You try to speak to the creature and ask it what it wants. “Hun... hungry.. And so... so cold.” says the creature. “Standing outside of water make me cold. I. I want to taste you but not hurt but want to not feel hungry in belly.” The creature begins to shiver a bit and its mouth it clattering slightly.

“I feel sad to hurt you to eat but must, so hungry...” The creature begins to walk towards you.

What would you like to do?

118 Battle the creature.

Use an item.

120

The creature successfully wears the sweater and begins to speak again. “Not cold, no not cold. Warm, fell warm. No need to be in water.” says the creature. “I... I feel.” The creature’s features are shifting and strangely becoming human-like. The back of the creature detaches leaving a hollow shell on the ground. The being contorts and whines as its webbed hands and feet no longer hold any semblance of amphibian characteristics. Soon what looks like a human boy rises to its feet and opens its eyelids to look at you. “My skin, my hair, my feet, my binky!” says the little

boy. However, he proceeds to cover his privates with the bottom of his sweater. “Oh sorry!” The boy looks at you with awe. “Thank you! Thank you!” shouts the boy with joy. “I remember, I lost my way in these swamps. Oh no... father must be worried sick. A good spanking I’ll get for this eh... Oh, I am Cedric by the way! Who are you?”.

What would you like to do?

121 Say who you are and state your mission.

122 Ask Cedric how he got lost in the first place.

121

“Oh... my, that man sounds horrible, but never fear; if I run into him, I’ll give him a good throttling for you. Hmm I don’t recall ever seeing a place the likes you are looking for, but you might just find it at the end of the marshes.” says Cedric.

What would you like to do?

123 Tell Cedric his father is waiting for him.

122 Ask Cedric how he got lost in the first place.

122

“Me mind’s a bit fuzzy, but I do recall upsetting the sorcerer of the swamps. See, I enjoy looking for all sorts of odd ball bugs and beasties, but I did have an unfortunate run in with it. It’s unlike anything I have ever seen, but it did remind me of something lizard-like. You know, with scaly skin and a green tail.” says Cedric. “It raised its arms while staring at me; and before I knew it, I had webbed feet and hands. I had lost all of my clothes and had to get in the water to feel comfortable. Food was horrible; all I could eat were some tadpoles and murky roaches.”

What would you like to do?

123 Tell Cedric his father is waiting for him.

121 Say who you are and state your mission.

123

“Oh do I look forward to dad's cooking! Sure, as hell beats crunching on roaches. Don't worry about me, I know me way back. Oh, I almost forgot... I actually carved some directions on my shell.” says Cedric. He moves energetically towards the shell lying on the ground and turns it on one side. “Let me see... aha!” He turns towards you with the shell and points at a marking on it. “**Up, left, right and up..** You'll need to remember that when you get to the edge of the marsh. I etched it on my shell when I was turned into that thing.” Cedric gives thanks one more time and heads off into the fog.

You stand in front of the black sea and notice the shell lying on the ground. It looks as if it is sturdy enough to hold you. You place it against the shore and move up on top of it. You kick against the ground and propel yourself away from the shore. You wait for a couple of moments, staring further ahead of the black sea and begin to notice a small gate filled with shadows. Soon you arrive at the shores and stand in front of the gate. There is no other visible way through the swamps so you proceed inside the gate. Proceed to **124**.

124

You see a singular tunnel filled with black mist. No other means of progressing onwards is seen. You enter the tunnel, covering your mouth from the mist and exit the tunnel. Proceed to **125**.

125

You are standing at the threshold of the gate overlooking three archways made of stone. One is to your left, another to your right and a third one is ahead of you. The ground is covered in dense fog.

What would you like to do?

126 Head left.

127 Head forward.

128 Head right.

126

You enter an empty stone courtyard. Portions of some of the fog on the ground begin to rise and suddenly uncover what lies hidden within them. Black patches of smoke expel from the fog and take the shape of slender black canines with protruding lines of teeth.

Battle

Type R

3 Shadow Dogs: Hit points 8, Attack points 4.

The black canines evaporate and you are transported back to the gate. Proceed to **125**.

127

You cross the archway and enter the darkness. You emerge in a new room overlooking three archways made of stone. One is to your left, another to your right and a third one is ahead of you. The ground is covered in dense fog.

What would you like to do?

129 Head left.

130 Head forward.

131 Head right.

128

You enter an empty stone courtyard. Some of the fog on the ground begins to rise and suddenly uncovers what lies hidden within. Black patches of smoke expel from the fog and take the shape of slender black canines with protruding lines of teeth.

Battle

Type R

2 Shadow Dogs: Hit points 8, Attack points 4.

The black canines evaporate and you are transported back to the gate. Proceed to **125**.

129

You cross the archway and enter the darkness. You emerge in a new room overlooking three archways made of stone. One is to your left, another to your right and a third one is ahead of you. The ground is covered in dense fog.

What would you like to do?

132 Head left.

133 Head forward.

134 Head right.

130

You enter an empty stone-paved courtyard. Some of the fog on the ground begins to rise and suddenly uncovers what lies hidden within. Black patches of smoke expel from the fog and take the shape of slender black canines with protruding lines of teeth.

Battle

Type R

2 Shadow Dogs: Hit points 8, Attack points 4.

The black canines evaporate and you are transported back to the gate. Proceed to **125**.

131

You enter an empty stone-paved courtyard. Some of the fog on the ground begins to rise and suddenly uncovers what lies hidden within. Black patches of smoke expel from the fog and take the shape of slender black canines with protruding lines of teeth.

Battle

Type R

3 Shadow Dogs: Hit points 8, Attack points 4.

The black canines evaporate and you are transported back to the gate. Proceed to **125**.

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You enter an empty stone courtyard. Some of the fog on the ground begins to rise and suddenly uncovers what lies hidden within. Black patches of smoke expel from the fog and take the shape of slender black canines with protruding lines of teeth.

Battle

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Battle

Type R

3 Shadow Dogs: Hit points 8, Attack points 4.

The black canines evaporate and you are transported back to the gate. Proceed to **125**.

134

You cross the archway and enter the darkness. You emerge in a new room overlooking three archways made of stone. One is to your left, another to your right and a third one is ahead of you. The ground is covered in dense fog.

What would you like to do?

135 Head left.

136 Head forward.

137 Head right.

135

You enter an empty stone-paved courtyard. Some of the fog on the ground begins to rise and suddenly uncovers what lies hidden within. Black patches of smoke expel from the fog and take the shape of slender black canines with protruding lines of teeth.

Battle

Type R

3 Shadow Dogs: Hit points 8, Attack points 4.

The black canines evaporate and you are transported back to the gate. Proceed to **125**.

You cross the archway and enter the darkness. You soon find a bright speck of light and head towards it. As you come closer and closer to the light, you notice the fog on the ground is at the height of your knees and there are stacks of strange contraptions of black goo in front of you. The substance is being transported in and out of big containers and onto different sections of the ground. Further ahead, a large pool of goo is surrounding a patch of land with what seems like debris on top of it. You notice another gate, just like the one you crossed previously.

You make your way to the pool of goo and notice that you are able to stand without sinking into it. You make your way across and start to place your feet on the patch of land. You peek at the debris you noticed earlier and distinguish some human remains.

As you approach the gate you sense a disturbance in the goo. You turn and see a couple of bubbles rising to the surface; and following them, there is a violent rustle, as if pressure is forcing itself upwards and splitting the surface. Something leaps out of the goo with a splash and lands between you and the gate. It is a tall monster with a lion's mane and horns. It shakes to clear the goo from its body and opens its lizard-like mouth: "Ssss disturbing my work, are you human!? Issss do not know how you managed to enter my lair but your ssss trespassing shall not go unpunished!" The monster raises its arms and two shadows rise up from the ground. They take form and resemble canines with protruding sets of teeth.

Battle

Type S

1 Igopogo Sorcerer: Hit points 20, Attack points 5.

2 Shadow Dogs: Hit points 8, Attack points 4.

The monster falls to its knees and gives out a loud shriek as it collapses to the ground and the black canines evaporate. You receive **4 Varrochini** herbs, **2 Madrower** herbs and a **3 upgrade points**.

Your upgrade points may be distributed towards your health points or your attack points.

You exit through the gate and see a clearing with green trees brighten by the sunlight and crystalline blue streams of water coursing through the lands. Stones and pebbles are placed around

the greenery and you see a forest at the distance. Farther beyond the forest lies what looks like a castle, with a central tower reaching far up towards the sky.

The sun is gently descending, as dusk is approaching. You cross the small waterways and separate the ferns and leather leafs resting on the ground. You arrive at a naturally formed gap between two large trees. As you come close to the forest, these appear to extend higher up towards the heavens. The fading rays of sunlight shine through the trunks faintly, brimming with the last twinkling of daylight. Proceed to **138**.

137

You enter an empty stone-paved courtyard. Some of the fog on the ground begins to rise and suddenly uncovers what lies hidden within. Black patches of smoke expel from the fog and take the shape of slender black canines with protruding lines of teeth.

Battle

Type R

2 Shadow Dogs: Hit points 8, Attack points 4.

The black canines evaporate and you are transported back to the gate. Proceed to **125**.

138

You make your way further inside, circling wide tree trunks here and there. Within moments, you come to a clearing with connected pathways distancing the trees to their sides.

To your left you notice a small spike rising above the trees and recognize it to be part of the castle you saw earlier. Towards your right lies another path, however, nothing peculiar about it can be noticed.

What would you like to do?

139 Head left.

140 Head right.

139

You walk for a couple of minutes and arrive at an open road. A wooden sign lies only a few feet from you and you decipher the title on the board: “Larton Castle”. Ahead lays a stone bridge connecting the land to a stone archway where two guards stand at the sides and an iron gate is retracted, allowing men and women in and out of it. To your right there is a forest.

What would you like to do?

141 Head towards the gateway.

138 Head towards the forest.

140

As you make your way further inside the forest you can see bright shimmering lights emitting a luminous glow through the leaves of the trees. The trees are getting smaller in size compared to those you saw earlier. You arrive at a garden that is glistening with a supernatural mix of colors including lavender, scarlet, gold and magenta. A flute-like melody is flowing through the air, making the flora dance in its crescendo. You turn and twist your head to peek at the source of the music and see a wooden stump located banks of a crystal clear lake.

You get near the stump as the flute music becomes stronger, but you cannot recognize the elusive flute player. For a moment, you peer into the crystalline water and see a small school of fish with shiny scales reflecting the light of the luminous tulips. A spherical shape protrudes from the stump and extends arm-like extremities at its sides. The stump turns on its body and rises on two wooden legs. From the head of the sphere shape, two mandarin colored eyes are exposed. It begins to speak to you: “Here for the music huh? I doubt it! This is what I do now to keep myself busy. Hmm, a young beautiful girl prances into the garden without permission. What is this world coming to? I ask.”

What would you like to do?

184 Ask the stump what it is.

185 Ask for magical fruit.

141

You enter a great network of stone-paved walkways separated by merchant stands and wooden houses cast with marble bricks of varying shades of lavender and turquoise. You arrive at a large square where an assortment of trinket sellers and merchants stand. To your left, a small boutique is located, encased with oval windows and finely fashioned couture pieces displayed by the windows. To your right is a stand with a convex awning of a purple tone. Below it stands a bearded man who is shouting: “All your needs and desires can be fulfilled right here! Come get your very own magical remedies!” Ahead of you there is another gate with a guard standing at the right of the doorway. The finishes on this one are much finer than those of the gateway that lead you into the walkways. The doorway, made of redwood, has hand carved pieces resembling a forest with an assortment of native animals prancing and frolicking.

What would you like to do?

165 Enter the boutique.

166 Go to the potion stand.

167 Head towards the doorway.

139 Go back to the open road.

142

The woman stares at you for a moment and says: “Oh you poor girl. I can begin to imagine your pain. I...” She pauses and clears her throat. “In your condition, you should not be out here. It’s much too cold and your clothes are not fit for this sort of place. My shack is not too far from here. I can get you warmed up.”

What would you like to do?

144 Go with the woman.

143 Ask her why she is so concerned.

143

“It is not common for young girls to wander into this place. You won’t last long out here in your condition and my conscience would leave me restless unless I knew nothing of an ill-fated kind that would come to you.” she says. “Even if you managed to withstand the cold, there is a sealed gate that is frozen solid. Come with me, you need to get yourself warmed up.”

What would you like to do?

144 Go with the woman.

143 Ask her why she is so concerned.

144

She raises her hand off of her waist and places it on her chest while giggling a bit: “So rude of me, where are my manners? I am Acacia. You must think me so impolite hmmhmm. Follow me!” You wait for Acacia to turn, and begin to walk behind her as she continues through the snow. She leads you through small hills and snowcapped trees. Finally, you go around a large round shaped boulder and come to a cave with dim lights coming from inside. Acacia suddenly stops walking and slowly turns to you: “Did I say shack? Oh silly me. But think about it. Would you have agreed to follow me had I told you I live in a cave? Let’s press on, need to get the fire going for supper. It will have been a great while since we had a guest for dinner.” Acacia turns back to face the cave entrance and walks inside. You enter the cave and feel the floor leading you downwards through the gentle pull of gravity. You cannot see the floor too clearly but your footing feels firm. You continue to descend down the cave and start to notice more and more lights up ahead, shining from torches mounted on the walls. You arrive at a large circular floor where other men, women and children are joined in a banter. Words of concern for food, cave piercing and harsh cold weather echo through the caves’ hallways. You see a multitude of crevasses and tunnels from which people are coming out and gathering at the circular floor. “This way, careful not to get lost.” says Acacia.

After walking through the walkways you enter a rounded little room with its floor lightly covered with rugs and crude stone beds. To the beds’ side lies a wooden table, sitting in front of a curiously

sculpted chimney. “Hello mum! Back from the freezer!” says Acacia. From the other side of the room enters an equally beautiful blonde woman with gray hairs mixed amid here golden strands. She has an apron and smells of porridge. “Ah, thank you sweetie! The soup is about done! I was beginning to worry you wouldn’t be back in time for me to start... the grobel meat...” The older woman notices you and says: “Oh Acacia, you did not tell me someone was here. Oh dear, forgive me I am Leandra, Acacia’s mother.”

After a moment of introduction, Acacia takes you to the table and says: “Wait here. I’ll get you something to warm you up.” Acacia heads out in one direction and disappears around the corner. “Ah here we are dear, you must be so hungry from that freezing cold.” says Leandra. She places one of the bowls of soup she has on her arms in front of you, and lays the rest around the table. As she sits down, Leandra pops out of a corner: “Here you are; that one is my favorite but you can keep it for now.” Acacia helps you put on a furry hooded emerald coat. It does not look as crudely knitted as the one she has on and it has a finer finish on the sleeves.

Acacia and Lean take their bowls of soup and proceed to eat the contents. “Even better than yesterday mum!” says Acacia. “Glad you like it dear, I spent the whole morning preparing it.” says Leandra cheerfully. “Any good news with the cave piercing?” asks Acacia. “They are very worried about it dear. The men in charge of piercing are not optimistic about us getting any more sources of food than what little we are gathering so far. The layers of stone are getting thicker every day and we are exhausting our resources.” says Leandra.

What would you like to do?

145 Ask why they are living in caves.

146 Ask what cave piercing is.

145

“That is a very good question dear and one we continue to ask ourselves...” says Leandra. “We didn’t always live down here, and these homes were not present until our people dug them and sculpted them. On the surface is where we used to have our town. It was called Nandyr. We had to find a new home here in the caves when the icy cold started to appear in our land. The warmth of the sun would not heat the earth and the frost took with it some of the lives of the townsfolk. It

wasn't long before the men began to look for other places to stay and to move the families was not an easy task. Eventually the leaders of our town agreed to build a set of caves inside a cavern they found. It would keep us warm and safe for a while..." says Leandra. It is a life style we have grown accustomed to as we do not wish to leave what remains of our town. Many hope that the freezing cold winds will one day cease to blow and we will be able to return to the surface."

What would you like to do?

147 Ask what lies beyond the icy wasteland.

146 Ask what cave piercing is.

146

"We'll it means exactly what it sounds like dear. Our townsmen dig holes inwards of the caves to provide more living spaces for our families. When they are lucky enough, animals that dwell in the rocks are captured to make meals and satiate starving bellies." says Leandra.

What would you like to do?

147 Ask what lies beyond the icy wasteland.

145 Ask why they are living in caves.

147

"Beyond the wastelands lies a maze-like set of corridors and walls. They house an old creature that spreads fear in the hearts of men and stays in the maze for reasons none of us know." says Leandra. "However, beyond the maze, there is a kingdom with an honorable king who reigns, and at the bottom, there is a garden that holds magical traits. We knew of such a place when we were up above, but know nothing of it now."

After a few moments, Leandra goes out of sight to retrieve more food and comes back with a peculiar looking plate of round meat filets. They look succulent and fresh. "Here, try the grobel meat. It is quite a privilege to have it now, since we are facing the risk of running out of it soon." says Leandra. You eat the grobel meat and feel its rich taste through your taste buds.

“Mum, Ambrosine is looking for a place as the one you mentioned.” says Acacia. “Is that so?” says Leandra. Acacia tells her mother of your intentions as you enjoy your meal. “It feels wrong for me to allow a young girl to wander into certain danger, but I understand why you must. At least, give us the pleasure of indulging you with a bed to sleep in before you carry on with your journey...” says Leandra. The three of you finish your dinner and Acacia leads you to your bed. You find it a bit difficult to sleep due to the uneven bed surfaces, but eventually move into a comfortable position. You slowly drift to sleep and your mind goes blank.

You wake up but cannot tell if it is morning. Acacia calls to you: “Hey sleepy head! I’m ready when you are.” You rise up and proceed to get dressed. Acacia leads you through the caves’ corridors towards the snowy exterior. You retrace your steps with her and arrive at the entrance of the wastelands.

“I hope you are sure about this. You would never convince me into going in there I’ll have you know that. Before you go take this, you might need it if... I mean, when you get through the wastelands. I’m positive you can do it, you made it this far...”

You get **100 Gold** pieces and a **Weaving Kit**.

Acacia smiles at you as you enter the wasteland. You walk between the great rock walls and see crescent mounts of snow appearing around you. The sky is as opaque as it was the first time you gazed at the wasteland, if not more. You turn to see if Acacia is still within sight but you cannot see her anymore.

You continue through the wasteland and enter a crevasse between two rock walls. Proceed to **148**.

148

The path is broken into three possible choices. You see a corridor ahead of you, another to your left and a third one to your right.

What would you like to do?

149 Go forward.

150 Go right.

151 Go left.

149

Type S

You arrive at a gate frozen in ice. There does not seem to be any way for opening the doors, as a solid layer of ice holds them captive inside of it.

On the ground, you spot a couple of frozen herbs, you get **2 Mandrower** herbs.

What would you like to do?

148 Go back.

152 Go right.

153 Go left.

Use a spell.

150

You arrive at another intersecting set of corridors. On you right lays a path with snow on the ground that has been violently shifted around. On you left lays another corridor.

What would you like to do?

148 Go backwards.

152 Go left.

156 Go right.

151

You arrive at another intersecting set of corridors. Ahead of you lies a corridor, another to your left and to your right, a path.

What would you like to do?

155 Go forward.

154 Go left.

148 Go right.

152

You arrive at another intersecting set of corridors. On your right lies a path with nothing peculiar about it. On your left lies another corridor leading to a wider area and behind you lies another corridor.

What would you like to do?

150 Go backwards.

149 Go left.

157 Go right.

153

Type S

You enter a room with small patches of green grass separating the snow in a circular fashion. At the center of the circles lay herbs with red strands circling their stems. You touch one of them and feel warmth in your palms. You get an **Infieri** herb. Nothing else is of interest here. Proceed to **149**.

154

Type S

You enter a small room with slash marks on the stone walls. Small debris lies on the floor, close to where the slash marks are located. Amongst the shattered rocks you see one that has edges that seem smooth and molded by manual work. You pick it up and keep it. You get the **Crushing Stone**. (You get the concoction recipe + Crushing Stone + Infieri Herb = 1 Infieri Corneum!) As an item. Nothing else is of interest here. Proceed to **151**.

155

The area you enter contains a frozen fountain that is partially covered in snow on its top and sides. You approach the fountain to take a closer look at it and see it is ornamented with stone fish at the top. You take a moment to admire it and hear a whisper: “Hey you! Human, over here.” You turn around and cannot see the voice origin. “Not there, here!” says the mysterious voice. You turn your head once more to try and find the source of the voice. Ahead of the fountain, you spot a rock shaded with ice. However, what looks like a rock seems to actually have the shape of a winged creature. Its head lays covered in snow but a small orifice below it, is projecting the voice. “Don’t be afraid, I’m not a human eater.” says the voice. You push away the snow on its head and see a bare head with pointed ears, rising upwards about half the size of the head’s height. Its features are rough with a sharp edged nose and brows. “My, my, a brave soul! How interesting for it to be of a young female.” says the voice.

What would you like to do?

159 Ask why the creature is here.

160 Ask the creature what it wants.

156

You head trough the corners and arrive at an empty room filled with slashed mounts of snow. However some scarlet splotches are drawn on some of the snow. You notice movement coming from within the snow and soon see another scarlet splotch forming on the white surface. The red coloring keeps taking over the blanket of white snow. Without a hint of anticipation, an eruption bursts from the red snow and out of it emerges a white creature holding a small deer between its sharp teeth. The monster has fins protruding from its lower forearms and calves. Its red eyes are focused on the dead deer as it munches on it. It pauses for a moment and notices your presence. It throws the deer carcass to the side and yells. From behind it another creature like it emerges from the snow. The two raise their claws ready to attack.

Battle

Type R

2 Frostcuda: Hit points 10, Attack points 4.

The snow beasts lay on the snow, filling their white tones with those of their crimson blood. There is nothing else of interest in this area. Proceed to **150**.

157

You enter a snow covered room. A bit ahead of you spot a black stain on the snow which turns out to be the remains of a bonfire. The ashen wood is placed above a small patch of green grass that seems to have been uncovered by human hands. You look around and see a set of wool covers. As you get closer, you see that they are in fact resting above something.

What would you like to do?

158 Pull the frozen covers.

152 Head back.

158

Type S

You uncover what is below and discover a frozen human body. A man's remains lay petrified on the snow. His eyelids are shut and his skin is pale. A small set of objects are placed at his side. You get **1 Varrochini** herb and **100 Gold** pieces. There is nothing else of interest in this area. Proceed to **152**.

159

"I am not here of my own volition if that is what you are wondering. On one sunset, I had to rashly glide downwards to the ground. The skies had become frozen and I could not stay airborne. I pierced one of my wings upon impacting and stood while withstanding the pain. To my misfortune, some of your kind found me and thought I was a monster. They chased me and I fled in here. I was too weak to leave and turned into to the state you see me now. My wing is healed now but the case of ice I find myself in holds me prisoner."

What would you like to do?

160 Ask the creature what it wants.

160

“Freedom, human girl! Freedom!” says the beast. “I know of a spell my kind use when nothing but frozen sources of water are present. It allows us to melt them and drink them. You need to find an **Inferi** herb and use a **Crushing Stone** on it. I had mine, but I must have lost it on my way here. Help me get out of this frost cocoon and I shall repay you.”

What would you like to do?

151 Go back.

Use a spell.

161

You proceed through the large set of doors and come to a wide path broken up by a colossal rock-like cage structure. There seems to be no way around it. You enter one of the holes and make your way forward. The sides are uneven and it requires much effort for you to move around from point to point. You stop and feel a faint movement from the rocks you are holding yourself against. The movement stops and you press onward. You exit the structure after much difficulty and gaze at a castle in the distance. Its stone walls and towers rise majestically above the plains. You head on, but stop as you feel the ground begins to shake. A large rumble is heard from behind you and you turn to find that the structure you just crossed has become animated. The rocks twist and turn as some parts come to rest upon others and what soon takes form is a great being made out of stone. Its central part seems to be pulsing with sapphire streaks around its lung like-rocks and its outside texture smears itself with the sapphire shade. It opens its rock-like mouth and yells at you preparing to attack.

Battle

Type S

1 Ice Golem: Hit points 20, Attack points 5.

2 Frostcuda: Hit points 8, Attack points 4.

The golem falls to its knees and crumbles. The frost beasts drop dead. You receive **4 Varrochini** herbs, **2 Madrower** herbs and a **3 upgrade points**. **Your upgrade points may be distributed towards your health points or your attack points.** Proceed to **163**.

162

With a loud bang, the creature breaks out of its confines and lets out a roar. “Rrahhr! To move again! What a feeling!” shouts the creature. It regains its posture and stands on its hind legs. It stops and looks at you. “I thank you brave human, any longer and I would have become a permanent piece of this place. I imagine you wish to get through the gate, do not be afraid. Just let me do the work.” The creature bends its knees and pushes itself upwards. Through muscular reflex, the creature’s wings begin to flap in continuous motion. It places its legs on your shoulders and grabs them. You feel it pulling you up with the strength of its wings. You glide with the creature and soar over the maze, flying over the gate and landing just beyond what looks like a rocky structure.

It releases you from its grasp and you fall into the ground on both your legs. The creature stops the flapping of its wings and lands next to you. “First time I have helped a human. I must add it feels rather nice.” says the creature.

You gaze ahead of you and spot a castle at the distance. Its stone walls and towers rise majestically above the plains. A large rumble is heard from behind you and you turn to find that the structure you just crossed has become animated. The rocks twist and turn as some parts come to rest upon others and what soon takes form is a great being made out of stone. Its central part seems to be pulsing with sapphire streaks around its lung-like rocks and its outside texture smears itself with the sapphire shade. It opens its rock-like mouth and yells at you preparing to attack.

Ally

Gargoyle: Type R

Hit points 12, Attack points 6.

Battle

Type S

1 Ice Golem: Hit points 20, Attack points 5.

2 Frostcuda: Hit points 8, Attack points 4.

The golem falls to its knees and crumbles. The frost beasts drop dead. You receive **4 Varrochini** herbs, **2 Madrower** herbs and a **3 point upgrade**. **Your upgrade points may be distributed towards your health points or your attack points.** Proceed to **164**.

163

The golem's shades of sapphire wash away as its comprising rocks gain a green and gray texture. The coldness of the air seems to fade away and the sun rays pierce your shoulders with their warmth. The trees and the ground begin to uncover themselves, revealing their brown and green tones as well. The icy exterior of the maze melts away and reveals small houses and cottages, now dripping wet. Tiny fences emerge, connecting the sides of some of the homes to small half round wooden doors. The curse that has plagued these lands has been lifted. You proceed towards the castle **139**.

164

The golem's shades of sapphire wash away as its comprising rocks gain a green and gray texture. The coldness of the air seems to fade away and the sun rays pierce your shoulders with their warmth. The trees and the ground begin to uncover themselves, revealing their brown and green tones as well. The icy exterior of the maze melts away and reveals small houses and cottages, now dripping wet. Tiny fences emerge, connecting the sides of some of the homes to small half round wooden doors. The curse that has plagued these lands has been lifted. You remove your furry emerald coat and tell your companion about a human community that lives in the caves not far away from the maze. "Asking me to go to the wolf's den?" says the creature. It pauses for a moment staring at the ground, and then it raises its gaze at you. "Alright, since you saved my life I'll do this one favor to you. I'll not enter the cave, but will leave it at the entrance. Then it is up to fate that your friend sees it." says the creature. "Farewell brave soul! May you find what you are looking for." The creature spreads its wings and flies upwards and out of sight. You proceed towards the castle **139**.

165

You enter the boutique and are met with the scent of soft fragrances filling your nostrils and nicely kept rows of hanged dressing gowns, tunics, night shirts and shoes for all occasions. From behind one of the rows of tunics pops out a woman with red pursed lips, an elegantly folded shirt covered by a violet corset, and a dark thin aquamarine jacket. “Greetings poppet! I see you have taken a liking to some of my wears! What can I interest you in today? ”

What would you like to do?

168 See which clothes are available.

141 Exit the boutique.

166

You approach the potions stand and are greeted by the bearded man. “Well hello there young lass! What can I get for you on this fine day?”

What would you like to do?

169 See which potions are available.

141 Leave the stand.

167

You approach the doorway and are about to open the door when the guard halts you. “Just where you think you are going?” says the guard. “Only noble men and women are allowed into king Larton’s court miss.”

What would you like to do?

Use an item.

141 Leave the doorway.

168

“Look for yourself dear” says the boutique keeper.

Noble young maiden’s corset 30 gold

Noble dressing gown 40 gold

Noble emerald robe 60 gold

169

“Look for yourself dear” says the boutique keeper.

Varrochini herb 30 gold

Mandrowner herb 50 gold

Infieri herb 50 gold

170

You enter the courtyard. Men and women are assembled into small groups of two to three people. The subject of their banter is not too clear without context, but words such as “despair” and “selfishness” are echoed through the stone archways of the center hall. You spot a set of wide stairs located at one end of the hall and proceed to climb them. You enter a white marbled floor hall with an empty throne at the center and rows of long rectangular tables parallel to the throne. You see a guard and an old man wearing a fat feathered chaperone hat.

What would you like to do?

171 Tell the man about your mission.

171

“Enchanted lady Ambrosine! What a fine choice of clothes if I might be so bold.” says the man. “These are dark times my child, and our king has been met with a terrible tragedy. It was only three years ago that our queen vanished one day as she had set out to gather cherries and flowers to prepare a small banquet for the king’s birthday. Some of the guardsmen accompanied her but did not return either. King Leon has locked himself in his quarters and only speaks to those whom he trusts. Forgive me, for I did not introduce myself, Carleton le Fevre at your service! I am an advisor to the king.” announces Carleton. Carleton looks at you for a moment and continues: “I understand you have endured a fair amount of grief on your way here my child but despair not, I have good news.”

“Beyond the entrance of our kingdom’s square there is a forest and inside it is the source of a magical fruit which holds healing powers. If I am not mistaken, Leon would be pleased to see someone bring one from the forest. It might perk his majesty up a bit and give him motivation to see you. Queen **Meteli** certainly enjoyed spending hours there and even one of the guards swears he saw her speak to one of the creatures from the forest.” says Carleton. “No one has entered the forest since the queen’s disappearance as it brings us too much grief. Come back to me when you have the fruit. Farewell my child!” You receive the queen’s name **Meteli** as an item. Proceed to **172**.

172

You enter a great network of stone walkways separated by merchant stands and wooden houses cast with marble bricks of varying shades of lavender and turquoise. You arrive at a large square where an assortment of trinket sellers and merchants stand. To your left, a small boutique is located, encased with oval windows and finely fashioned couture pieces displayed by the windows. To your right is a stand with a convex awning of a purple tone. Below it stands a bearded man who is shouting: “All your needs and desires can be fulfilled right here! Come get your very own magical remedies!” Ahead of you there is another gate with a guard standing on the right of the doorway. The finishes on this one are much finer than those of the gateway that lead you into the walkways. The doorway is made of redwood, resembling a forest with an assortment of native animals prancing and frolicking.

What would you like to do?

173 Enter the boutique.

174 Go to the potion stand.

60 Enter King Leon's court.

176 Go back to the open road.

173

You enter the boutique and are met with the scent of soft fragrances filling your nostrils and nicely kept rows of hanged dressing gowns, tunics, night shirts and shoes for all occasions. From behind one of the rows of tunics pops out a woman with red pursed lips, an elegantly folded shirt covered by a violet corset and a dark thin aquamarine jacket. "Greetings poppet! I see you have taken a liking to some of my wears! What can I interest you in today? "

What would you like to do?

177 See which clothes are available.

172 Exit the boutique.

174

You approach the potions stand and are greeted by the bearded man. "Well hello there young lass! What can I get for you on this fine day?"

What would you like to do?

178 See which potions are available.

172 Leave the stand.

“My child you brought a pear! His majesty will feel right as rain this evening! Come with me, we shall go greet the King at his chambers.” says Carleton. You walk with Carleton up the stairs of what you recognize to be the interior of the high central tower you saw outside. You grow tired as the stairs seem unending, but you eventually cross a threshold holding a shield with a coat of arms bearing a white horse at its center. Carleton makes a pause and tells you: “Wait out here my child. I’ll make sure his majesty is ready to greet you.” Carleton opens the king’s chamber door and enters quietly. You hear muffled voices coming from inside the room. “I have no desire to see anyone Carleton, be gone!” says one voice, “Your majesty, please have a look at the maiden. She has brought you something. Something you’ll find rare given the circum...” “What circumstances!! What are you implying Carleton! I am not fit for the throne anymore, is that what you are saying!?” “No your majesty, please calm thyself. I’ll bring the girl in, you’ll see for yourself.” Carleton opens the door and makes a smooth gesture, signaling you to come in.

You enter the King Chambers and barely see any light. The windows have been draped; the king’s bed lies with its sheets ruffled in all directions and a mountain of royal orders stand on the night stand next to the bed. The king is holding his head with one hand, covering the top half of his face and letting his other arm hang beside him. He sits on a wooden chair, hunched and immobile.

“Here is the delightful maiden I spoke to you about your majesty! She has brought you a magical fruit from the garden.” says Carleton. The king releases his face from his hand with a sudden move and looks at you. “Meteli !? Meteli is that you!? Have you returned to me at last!?” exclaims the king. He rises from his chair ready to embrace you; then, he pauses abruptly. “No, no...no, it is not you! Forgive me fair maiden... You remind me of her.” says the king. The king lets himself fall back into his chair and stares motionless at the floor. Carleton asks you for the pear and gives it to the king. “Here sir, take this. You’ll feel much better. Please my child, excuse his majesty’s rudeness but he isn’t himself today.” “Or any day!” interrupts the king. Slow bites are taken from the pear as the king’s expression grows slightly more joyful. The king breathes steadily and calms down. He turns around to look at you. “Young maiden, why have you committed such an act of kindness, what do you seek?”

The time goes by as you tell the king about your mission and the reasons why you have ventured so far away from home. “I, I am truly sorry for your loss fair Ambrosine. It seems we both have suffered on our own accounts. I did not suspect lord Radagaisus capable of such cruelty. The few times we met outside the kingdom for diplomatic conversations, he never threatened me. He merely wanted our mutual understanding regarding the boundaries of our lands.” says King Leon. “I sympathize with you Ambrosine, but I must know what happened to Meteli, I feel my soul will not rest until I find out the truth...” says Leon. He pauses for a moment and says: “I have heard a legend about an all seeing oracle that grants a revelation to those who find it. One of my valets told me about such a being. I was too grief stricken to undertake such a quest, but your acts of heroism have inspired me to do some of my own. Yes, I shall do so, we shall do so. Ambrosine, I’ll have some of my guardsmen ready to travel to the Xapham desert and you shall come with me. Carleton, would you take maiden Ambrosine to the guest room? We leave in the morning.”

Carleton approaches you from your right shoulder: “Come with me child, you’ll enjoy the guest room I am sure of it!” Carleton extends his bent arm to you and both of you walk out of the King’s chamber. You descend a flight of stairs and enter a hallway on your left. Carleton lets go of you and reaches into his pocket. “Let me see, somewhere around here...there we go, you sneaky little thing.” He says. Carleton places the key in the keyhole and slowly opens the door. You peek into the room and see a golden plated chandelier hanging from the ceiling, holding what looks like twenty candles. The walls are filled from side to side with depictions of joyous gatherings; knights, maidens and buffoons entranced in celebration, holding expressions of gaiety and delight. A dressing mirror is held inside a wooden cupboard and the bed is roofed with blue curved linen hanging from its posts. “Good evening my child! I leave you to your dreams. Rest well for tomorrow will be filled with enterprise!” says Carleton. He closes the door, but pauses for a moment to look at you. “Thank you for helping our king. It had been a long time since I had seen him with such spirit. Bless you!” Carleton smiles and shuts the door.

After preparing yourself to sleep, you move the sheets and lay on the bed. You close your eyes and sleep soundly. You begin to dream...

You feel pain and exhaustion as you try to catch your breath. You cannot properly see where you are, but a damp murky smell assaults your senses. “Listen Ambrosine! See me for who I am. See

me... see me. No Ambrosine! Please do not strike!! Ambrosine No!! Ambrosine!” yells a voice in your head.

“Maiden Ambrosine! Maiden Ambrosine!” says a young female voice. You wake up with a rush and swiftly open your eyes. You see a young servant girl standing beside your bed. “Maiden Ambrosine, you... you were dreaming.” says the servant girl. “King Leon awaits you below at the castle gates. He has a horse ready for you and you are to leave to the Xapham desert at once.” The girl gently places her hand in yours and helps you off the bed. “Let us get you ready now, shall we?”

The young girl bathes you and helps you pick out a new set of robes from the closet. Moments later, you are on your way towards the gate of the castle, walking through the walkways outside the castle’s courtyard. You feel a hand harshly grasping your arm and pulling you into the shadows below a two story building.

You stand in the shadows with two figures. Both have an armor breastplate with a griffon engraved on it. One has a flat helmet and the other a bare head with a thick curly dark brown hair. “Apologies my lady, but I needed to have a word with you.” says the curly haired man.

What would you like to do?

187 Ask the man why he has snatched you into the shadows.

188 Run from the men.

176

You walk for a couple of minutes and arrive at an open road. A wooden sign lies only a few feet from you and you decipher the title on the board: “Larton Castle”. Ahead lays a stone bridge connecting the land to a stone archway where two guards stand at the sides and an iron gate is retracted, allowing men and women in and out of it. To your right there is a forest.

What would you like to do?

172 Head towards the gateway.

179 Head towards the forest.

177

“Have a look for yourself dear” says the boutique keeper.

Noble young maiden’s corset 30 gold

Noble dressing gown 40 gold

Noble emerald robe 60 gold

178

“Have a look for yourself dear” says the boutique keeper.

Varrochini herb 30 gold

Mandrowner herb 50 gold

Infieri herb 50 gold

179

You make your way further inside, circling wide tree trunks here and there. Within moments you come to a clearing with connected pathways distancing the trees to their sides.

To your left you notice a small spike rising above the trees and recognize it to be part of King Leon’s castle. Towards your right you notice another path; however, nothing peculiar can be noticed.

What would you like to do?

176 Head left.

180 Head right.

180

As you make your way further inside the forest you can see bright shimmering lights emitting a luminous glow through the leaves of the trees. The trees are getting smaller in size compared to those you saw earlier. You arrive at a garden glistening with a supernatural mix of colors including lavender, scarlet, gold and magenta. A flute-like melody is flowing through the air, making the flora dance in its crescendo. You turn and twist your head to peek at the source of the music and see a wooden stump located at the banks of a crystal clear lake.

You approach the stump as the flute music grows stronger, but cannot recognize the elusive flute player. For a moment, you peer into the crystalline water and see a small school of fish with shiny scales reflecting the light of the luminous tulips. A spherical shape protrudes from the stump and extends arm like extremities at its sides. The stump turns on its body and rises on two wooden legs. From the head of the sphere shapes, two mandarin colored eyes are exposed. It begins to speak to you. “Here for the music huh? I doubt it! This is what I do now to keep myself busy. Hmm, a young beautiful girl prances into the garden without permission. What is this world coming to? I ask.”

What would you like to do?

181 Ask the stump what it is.

182 Ask for a magical fruit.

181

“I am not a mere stump, you ignorant little girl.” says the stump; as it looked away into the lake. “I am a kapre, an animated bark being. Your kind calls me Gwyn, but then again, I have only ever spoken to one of your kind. You happen to catch me off guard. Lucky you! However, in my defense, I should say that my usual precautious self has not been the same since she stopped coming here.”

What would you like to do?

183 Ask who it was he used to see.

182 Ask for a magical fruit.

182

“Seeing you reminds me of her; therefore, I shall grant you your wish. If it hadn’t been for me, you’d never been able to get to the tree, you silly girl. How could you? The pears only grow on the highest yew of the garden.” says Gwyn. Gwyn leaps across the lake and begins to climb one of the trees resting beyond the water. You see him twist around the trunk and move upwards. The branches rustle for a while, but Gwyn emerges from them and rises even higher, grasping the sides of the trunk. He stops at the top, where you see him extend his arm and pull something from the branches. He begins to slide down the trunk and leaps off the branches and falls at the feet of the trees on both legs. With another leap, he reaches you and speaks: “I thought you might need one for yourself, but this other one I will hold unless you can guess the name of the one whom I named my garden after.” Your wounds are healed from eating one magical pear.

What would you like to do?

179 Exit the garden.

Use an item.

183

“A beautiful young girl, much like yourself I may add, used to spend her time with me learning about the creatures that dwell here, myself included. Sometimes she got tired with the daily tasks she had to perform as queen and felt relief coming to my garden. I grew very attached to her and even decided to name the garden after her. Mind you this place never had a name of its own and it seemed fitting to do so, as she brought berries from afar for me to savor. In return, I played my flute for her and made the garden dance.”

What would you like to do?

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182 Ask for a magical fruit.

184

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Use an item.

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she had to perform as queen and felt relief coming to my garden. I grew very much attached to her and even decided to name the garden after her. Mind you this place never had a name of its own and it seemed fitting to do so, as she brought berries from afar for me to savor. In return, I played my flute for her and made the garden dance.”

What would you like to do?

184 Ask the stump what it is.

185 Ask for a magical fruit.

187

“I am sir Hectyr of Vim and the other gentleman is Brom of Gaunt. We have been sent here by the orders of King Demerius of Irragin to question your business in Larton.”

What would you like to do?

189 Tell Hectyr about your actions in Larton and your expedition to Xapham.

188 Run away from Hectyr.

188

Hectyr closes his eyes and breathes deeply for an instant: “Not the choice I was hoping you’d make. I do not wish to harm a lady, but we have our orders.”

Battle

Type S

Hectyr of Vim: Hit points 20, Attack points 5.

Brom of Gaunt: Hit points 18, Attack points 5.

Both men lay dead at your feet. You catch a breath and head on to meet Leon. Proceed to **191**.

Hectyr looks to his right and pauses with a frown. “Lady Ambrosine, we understand you are not from these lands, but please realize that it is not customary for King Leon to act so rashly, let alone set out on an expedition. We have reason to believe the king has gone mad and is unfit to rule his kingdom. Our king mainly seeks to bring this degenerate to justice, before he causes further harm to his people.” warns Hectyr. “It goes without saying that he has ignored his duties as monarch and has abandoned his people to fend for themselves.” says Hectyr. He extends his hand towards you: “If you have the slightest bit of reason, you will come with us to Irragin and speak to King Demerius. Together we can end the rule of Leon.”

What would you like to do?

190 Accept Hectyr’s request.

188 Deny Hectyr’s request.

Hectyr stares at you and says: “Wise choice my lady. Come with us, we are stationed on the eastern wall of the kingdom.” You follow Hectyr and Brom through the shadowy walkways and cross under a semi hidden archway. Several minutes later, you appear outside the kingdom walls besides the men and follow them to a pair of armored horses. Brom mounts his horse as does Hectyr. Once on the saddle, Hectyr reaches forward a bit and extends a hand towards you: “Here, you can sit behind.” You make a small leap and manage to sit behind Hectyr. “Ha!” shouts Hectyr as the horses begin to gallop towards the east. As you ride with the knights, you pass by the forest and see a vast set of fields towards the north. Small groups of people are scattered among the fields collecting crops and working the land. You notice that parts of the soil are drier than others and the amount of healthy looking land pales in comparison.

You soon see a kingdom high above you, as Hectyr’s horse gallops onwards. Small waterfalls are trickling down rocky cliffs and mixing into a symphony of loud thunder. The layout of the castle is segmented, since various parts lay a couple of feet away from each other, as if they themselves were part of the cliff. The balconies and chambers of the castle are exposed; with curved archways holding everything together. You near one of the walls with a waterfall close by, as Brom raises

an arm looking upwards, making a kind of signal. Nothing happens at first, but soon you see, from where you stand, a small square object heading downwards from the kingdoms direction. As the squared object gets closer, you see it is a wooden elevator, big enough to hold a couple of men. The elevator touches the ground and a man dressed in a heavy wet coat opens a set of wooden doors to let you in. You, the knights and their horses enter the elevator.

You feel the humid breeze of the waterfalls as you rise upwards towards the castle. Within moments, the elevator comes to a halt at the top. The kingdom is even more breathtaking than it seemed from down below. The white marble walls and columns are finely made and symmetrically positioned. The stairways ascend in curved forms, creating a dissonance with the symmetry of the walls and columns. The supporting beams and archways curve under and through the roofs of the many halls, making it resemble the arms of a giant sea creature. “This way, maiden Ambrosine.” says Hectyr. You are lead through a set of entryways, where valets, noblemen and women are tending to the up keeping of different parts of the castle. You arrive at the throne room, located to the right of a large balcony where a man is resting against its stone railing. He is looking outwards to the lands with his back towards you. He is dressed in a turquoise embroidered tunic and has short dark gray hair. Hectyr guides you towards the man and signals you to wait where you are. He approaches the man and whispers in his left ear. The man turns towards you and begins to walk slowly in you direction. His eyes have the signs of age and his mouth is squared. His pace is slow and steady. He comes to a halt and looks at you straight in the eye: “So, are you the mysterious maiden who has entered our lands?” asks the man. “What is your business here?”

What would you like to do?

297 Ask the man who he is.

298 Tell the man about your business in Larton.

191

You arrive at the gate outside the castle. Leon is mounted on a white horse, covered in a bronze flanchard protecting its lower back. Its head is covered by a chanfron, holding a circular plate at the center of its forehead. Two other soldiers are mounted on their horses, each one barring the same armored features. One horse lays un-mounted to Leon’s right. Its fine fur is of a honey color

with a dark brown mane. “There she is lads. I was beginning to worry.” says Leon. The other two soldiers smile at you in response to his words. “This here is Valencia, fair Ambrosine. She is an astute and faithful mare. Strong tempered, but gentle if you know how to treat her well!” advises Leon. “Your majesty, it is best for us to be on our way. The desert is long and burdensome to travel...” says one of the guards. “Right you are! Come, my lady!”

You make your way on top of Valencia’s back. The mare neighs suddenly and kicks its two frontal hooves off the ground. You take hold of the animal’s neck, as you feel the weight of your body pulling you backwards. A strong thump is heard, as the mare places its airborne hooves back on the ground and kicks off to a gallop.

“After her men!” shouts Leon. You hear the horses of the kings’ men begin to gallop as you hold on. (Leon and his two knights join you.)

Allies

Leon: Type R

Hit points 27, Attack points 6.

Knight: Type S

Hit points 20, Attack points 4.

Knight: Type S

Hit points 20, Attack points 4.

After a moment for getting to handle your horse, you ride alongside Leon and the knights heading North West. The air begins to become a bit heavy as you notice that the greenery of the kingdom begins to fade and the soil turns into a light brown tone. The soil turns to grains and soon you notice a sandy comprised soil whizzing under Valencia’s hooves. You look ahead and at the distance, you see dunes rising and decreasing. Leon’s horse starts to rise above one of the largest dunes, as Valencia and the knights’ horses follow. Upon reaching the top, you hear some rustling. Slight metallic clangs are heard. You look downward and spot what looks like a set of wooden wheels jutting halfway out of the sand. Besides the cart stands a small mule. Leon and you approach the partially buried cart and notice a pair of feet sticking out from below. The rustling

comes to a stop, as a sand powdered head peeks out of the side of the pair of legs. “Bandits! Oh, oh... oh wait? You are... hmmm I don’t quite recognize your origins. Shali? Irragin? No, no, my apologies! I was just trying to get me cart back on track. I went downwards on one of them dunes and turned me self over. Clumsy me.” says the man. “We are from the kingdom of Larton fellow traveler. The maiden to my right is Ambrosine and behind me are my faithful knights. I am King Leon.” says Leon. The man makes a bow and lets trapped sand fall from the top of his hair. “Excuse me your majesty, I was not aware of being in the presence of nobility.” The man raises his head and says: “Me name is Fobrin! I am a merchant from the city of Keaduq. Travelling in between the lands and trading is me business. However, I do seem to be in a grave pickle this time. Where are the lot of you off to?” asks Fobrin. “We are headed towards the Bastion of Woe. We seek the truth granting being that inhabits it.” says Leon. “I see. That place is heavily guarded. Some soldiers patrol the entrance day and night. To me, it looks more like a prison. I wouldn’t dare try and sneak in though I do have something that would help brave or daring, or I should say, foolish adventurers.” says Fobrin. “Seeing that you seem determined to enter, it I’ll make ye a deal. Help me to fix me cart and I’ll help ye. What do ye say?”

What would you like to do?

192 Help Fobrin.

193 Head on to the Bastion of Woe.

192

“The four of you get on this side, we can try to push it out.” says Fobrin. You, Leon and the knights dismount your horses to assist Fobrin. “On the count of three: One....Two... Three!!” says Fobrin. All of you push the exposed side of the cart, but it does not give way. “Blast! Stuck in there for good.” says Fobrin. From the cart, a set of nylon rags fall off. The fibers seem a bit loose.

What would you like to do?

Use an item.

193 Head on to the Bastion of Woe.

193

“We must press onward your majesty. Dusk is approaching.” says one of the knights. “My apologies Fobrin but we have no time to lose.” says Leon. Fobrin looks to his feet and places one hand on his head. “Ahhh... back to rustling in the sand it is. I should have known noblemen where too good for me! Very well, then off you go.” says Fobrin.

You travel for hours with the king and his men leaving Fobrin behind. The night begins to fall as you spot the first early stars above the desert sands. Proceed to **195**.

194

You tie one end of the rope to Valencia and the other end to the cart. You mount Valencia and get her to begin galloping in the opposite direction of the cart. Valencia neighs as the rope tenses to her side. In moments, the cart rises out of the sand and stands on its four wooden wheels. “Hooray! Praise to Lady Ambrosine! Thank you, my lady, thank you.” says Fobrin. “As promised, I shall help you.” Fobrin makes a small leap above the cart and pulls out a **Climbing Hook**. You get the **Climbing Hook**. “Here, I’m sure you’ll make good use of it. Be sure to use it where no one will spot you.” advises Fobrin. He mounts his cart and takes hold of the leather steers. “I am eternally grateful me lady! May fate smile upon you.” says Fobrin. Fobrin lifts the steers in one sudden motion and onwards starts the mule, pulling Fobrin and the cart with it. Fobrin vanishes in the distance, leaving a cloud of sand in his wake.

“So very kind of you Ambrosine, I never would have thought of making a rope from the merchant’s contents. You hide great wisdom behind you beauty. I look forward to the rest of our journey together.” says Leon with a smile.

You travel for hours with the king and his men. Night begins to fall as you spot the first early stars above the desert sands. Proceed to **195**.

195

You see before you a wide fort. Its extents are beyond your vision sideways and straight-forward. Its walls raise high above the ground, touching some of the clouds gliding on the night air. “This is the place, your majesty.” says one of the knights. Leon stares at the bastion for a moment. “We

should set up a camp here and decide how we may enter.” says Leon. The four of you dismount your horses and the knights begin to empty the contents of their sacks. Leon approaches you and says: “Best the horses stay here. We have water for them to drink, should they grow thirsty.”

Leon looks into your eyes, as he places his hand on your left shoulder. He smiles and says: “I know that what’s inside the bastion will change us, but I will try my best to not let any harm come to you.” “The camp preparations are ready your majesty.” says one of the knights. “Thank you, we will be right there.” says Leon.

You and Leon enter the camp set up by the knights. Both are looking outwards from an exposed entrance between the nylon cloths that serves as a roof. One is holding a spyglass in his hands, while looking through it. “There are two possible areas of entry your majesty. A walled empty spot lays to the west and the gate into the bastion lays to the east. However, as expected, the gate is guarded.” says the knight.

“I have not been disappointed by your choices thus far Ambrosine, what do you say?” asks Leon.

What would you like to do?

196 Head to the walled spot on the west.

197 Head to the gate on the east.

196

You, Leon and the knights sneak towards the west wall and arrive at the empty spot. You examine the sides of the wall and see that its texture is rough enough to grip your feet. However, you need something to pull yourself upwards.

What would you like to do?

Use an item.

197 Head to the gate on the east.

197

You, Leon and the knights approach the gate. It is very large and made out of a sturdy looking wood. Two guards standing to its sides take hold of their weapons and come closer to you. Both bare a red armor. “Another lot of foolish wanderers are trying to get into the bastion! Well, there is only one thing to do with you...” says the soldier on the right. From behind you appear three more soldiers with their weapons in hand.

Battle

Type S

5 Soldiers: Hit points 13, Attack points 3.

The sands hold the corpses of the freshly slain soldiers. With the gates now unprotected, you enter the bastion. Proceed to **198**.

198

You find yourself in a circular room with brightly lit torches mounted on the walls. At its center there is a raised squared floor with four sets of stairs connecting it to the ground floor. Four pillars hold a square shaped stone roof above it and three half diamond shaped sockets are protruding from one of the stone pillars. On the sides of the circular room there are more pathways and a large set of stairs rest ahead of the raised floor, leading to an upper floor.

What would you like to do?

199 Head Right.

202 Head Left.

Use an item.

199

A narrow walkway lies to your right and ahead of you lays another stone entrance.

What would you like to do?

212 Head through the walkway.

200 Head towards the stone entrance.

200

You see three possible ways to explore. One is ahead of you, past a wall leading left into a set of stairs. The second lies to your right and the third, behind you.

What would you like to do?

210 Head Right.

201 Head Forward.

199 Head Backward.

201

You arrive at the bottom of the stairs. You see what looks like another room above the stairs. To your left lies a corridor and to your right lies another one.

What would you like to do?

217 Go up the stairs.

200 Head Right.

202 Head Left.

202

You see three possible walkways to get across. One is ahead of you, next to a wall curving towards the right into a set of stairs. To your left, lies another corridor and behind you, there is a raised squared floor with four sets of stairs connecting the ground floor.

What would you like to do?

201 Head Forward.

203 Head Right.

198 Head Backward.

203

You arrive at an intersection with three corridors. One is ahead of you and the sound of a string instrument playing is heard. To your right lies a corridor leading to the circular room and behind you is another corridor.

What would you like to do?

204 Head Forward.

202 Head Right.

207 Head Backward.

204

You arrive at a fork on the path. You see a room containing herbs on your left. The music is louder here and it seems to be coming from the room on the right. Behind you lies another corridor.

What would you like to do?

206 Head Left.

205 Head Right.

203 Head Backward.

205

As you enter, you hear the music becoming louder. You discover a curved stringed instrument with seven strings held by a wooden bow and a straight rectangular block connecting both its sides. At the bottom of the bow are seven miniature figures carved into the wood with their teeth clasped on each of the seven strings. From left to right, the miniatures seem to be more worn than the string

they hold. The instrument is resting on top of a cylindrical stone within a basin. The strings are lined one beside the other from left to right, and when they stop vibrating on their own, the room becomes silent. An engraving on the basin reads:

7 singing brothers.

On the mountain the brothers sang.

The last was the eldest; his tone was the most refined,

Then came another, with two siblings behind

After him, but not right before the last,

Sang a third brother.

The first was the youngest, his voice was but an utter.

What would you like to do?

242 Pluck the first string.

243 Pluck the second string.

244 Pluck the third string.

245 Pluck the fourth string.

246 Pluck the fifth string.

247 Pluck the sixth string.

248 Pluck the seventh string.

206

Type S

You enter a small room with patches of dirt enclosed in stone squares. A couple of herbs are planted on the soil. You get **2 Mandrowner** herbs. Nothing else is of interest in this room. Proceed to **204**.

207

You arrive at a fork on the path. You see a room containing herbs on your left. To your right there is a winding corridor, and ahead of you, another corridor.

What would you like to do?

203 Head Forward.

208 Head Left.

209 Head Right.

208

Type S

You enter a small room with patches of dirt enclosed in stone squares. A couple of herbs are planted on the soil. You get **2 Varrochini** herbs. Nothing else is of interest in this room. Proceed to **207**.

209

You arrive in a room with a pile of stone bricks rustled on the floor. The ground is covered with them and walking through the room is difficult, as you cautiously place your feet on even ground. You hear some of the stones on the wall shift and you look in the direction of the sounds' origin. A dark hole on the wall is exposed and piles of rubbish are visible from the orange hue of the torch light. You stare at the bottom of the darkness, where the rubbish lies, and make out human remains. A wet hissing sound comes from inside the darkness, as you see a set of six eyes aligned vertically three by three. They shine bright green in the darkness as they move towards you. You move backward, avoiding the creature. It emerges into the light with a strong hiss. It bares spider like eyes and hair. It has a set of triple fangs that drop saliva as they water at the sight of you. Its legs are black and hairy, with two long toes at the ends of its feet. On its sides are two pairs of black furred arms, like those of a man with a strong build. From behind it emerges another creature like it. Both stare at you with their arms up, menacingly, preparing to attack.

Battle

Type R

2 Werespider: Hit points 20, Attack points 4.

The arachnid like beings lay on the stone floor, motionless in death's grasp. There is nothing else of interest in this area. Proceed to **207**.

210

You see three possible walkways to get across. One is ahead of you, behind you there is another one and to your left is the circular room.

What would you like to do?

200 Head Left.

211 Head Forward.

212 Head Backward.

211

You enter a room with a hanging stone candelabrum at its center. The light from it shines sideways through a set of five tall statues. The statues bare the shape of human bodies, having no skin, with exposed musculature and bones. Some of them are oriented differently than the others. Each statue has a lever below it and writing can be seen on the ground: "Each of us stays frozen to the spot, some of us others see not."

What would you like to do?

231 Inspect the first statue.

232 Inspect the second statue.

233 Inspect the third statue.

234 Inspect the fourth statue.

235 Inspect the fifth statue.

212

You see three possible walkways to get across. One is ahead of you, behind you there is another one and to your left is the circular room.

What would you like to do?

199 Head Left.

210 Head Forward.

213 Head Backward.

213

You see another walkway to your left and another one ahead of you.

What would you like to do?

212 Head Forward.

214 Head Left.

214

You arrive in a room with a pile of stone bricks rustled on the floor. The ground is covered with them and walking through the room is difficult; therefore, you cautiously place your feet on even ground. You hear some of the stones on the wall shift and you look in the direction of the sounds' origin. A dark hole on the wall is exposed and piles of rubbish are visible from the orange hue of the torch light. You stare at the bottom of the darkness, where the rubbish lies and make out human remains. A wet hissing sound comes from inside the darkness as you see a set of six eyes aligned vertically three by three. They shine bright green in the darkness as they move towards you. You move backward, avoiding the creature. It emerges into the light with a strong hiss. It bares spider

like eyes and hair. It has a set of triple fangs that drop saliva as they water at the sight of you. Its legs are black and hairy with two long toes at the ends of its feet. On its sides are two pairs of black furred arms, like those of a man with a strong build. From behind it emerges another creature like it. Both stare at you with their arms up, menacingly, preparing to attack.

Battle

Type R

2 Werespider: Hit points 20, Attack points 4.

The arachnid like beings lay on the stone floor, motionless in death's grasp. There is nothing else of interest in this area. Two possible paths are available. Behind you, there is a corridor and to your right, another corridor.

What would you like to do?

213 Head Right.

215 Head Backward.

215

You arrive at another intersection. To your right there is a room with a set of engraved walls. They bare depictions of mutilated bodies on their surface. Ahead of you lies another path.

What would you like to do?

216 Head Right.

214 Head Forward.

216

You enter the room and see three levers resting under a row containing three stone frames, each depicting the mutilations of a human being. The first frame has a man screaming in agony. Both his arms and legs have been cut off with a large saw. The second frame shows a man with a set of wooden crutches. He only has one leg; his eyes are shut and his mouth is curved downward

expressing melancholy. The third frame shows a man who has no arms but has both legs. At the top of the row of frames, a writing is engraved in stone: "Make us race; though we are bizarre, one of us will never get far."

What would you like to do?

222 Flip the lever of the first frame.

223 Flip the lever of the second frame.

224 Flip the lever of the third frame.

217

You arrive at another floor and see a set of doors in front of you. To your right there is a corridor and to your left, a room with herbs in it.

What would you like to do?

218 Head Forward.

219 Head Right.

220 Head Left.

218

You go through the set of doors. You enter a room with a square rock furnace. The flames are dancing in and out of it. Resting on the side of the wall is a **Crushing Stone** and hanging on the wall is an **Iron Key**.

What would you like to do?

217 Exit the room.

270 Inspect the furnace.

271 Take the Crushing Stone and the Iron Key.

219

You got through the corridor and see a wooden door in front of you. It has a frozen lock attached to its knob. You push the door, but it does not open.

What would you like to do?

217 Head left.

Use an item

220

Type S

You enter a small room with patches of dirt enclosed in stone squares. A couple of herbs are planted on the soil. You get **3 Mandrowner** herbs, **2 Varrochini** herbs and **1 Infieri** herb. Nothing else is of interest in this room. Proceed to **217**.

221

You enter a room with frozen brick walls. At its center there is a well. You peek inside it and see a crystal blue liquid that is not affected by the room's cold temperature. Inside the liquid is a pair of lenses. You pick up the lenses from within the blue liquid and inspect them. There is writing on the side of the lenses. It says: "The enshrouded slave is revealed by me, see truth through me." You get the **Crystal Lenses**. Nothing else is of interest here. Proceed to **217**.

222

You pull the lever and hear a faint click. The frames begin to pull back and slide downwards, bringing new depictions that roll towards you. As with the previous frame, these depict scenes of mutilated human beings. The first frame has a man with an eye patch and a missing ear. He is grinding his teeth with pain. The second frame shows a man with his mouth sown shut and both eyes wide open, stretching his brows upward. The third frame shows a man who has no eyes in his

sockets but is grinning. At the top of the row of frames, there is writing engraved in stone: “As I see, night and day make no difference to me.”

What would you like to do?

225 Flip the lever of the first frame.

226 Flip the lever of the second frame.

227 Flip the lever of the third frame.

223

You pull the lever and hear a loud slash. The feeling of cold steel touches you behind the neck. You feel you are flying through the air, but very much lighter. As you approach the ground, you are unable to stop and take a strong blow to the sides of your temples. You no longer feel your body, as the light of your eyes fades away. You have been beheaded. **You are dead.**

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are unable to stop and take a strong blow to the sides of your temples. You no longer feel your body, as the light of your eyes fades away. You have been beheaded. **You are dead.**

227

You pull the lever and hear a faint click. The frames begin to pull back and slide downwards, bringing new depictions that roll towards you. As with the previous frames, these depict scenes of mutilated human beings. The first frame has a man with one ear ripped, resting in his bloodied hand. The second frame shows a man without a nose and one eye dangling from its socket. He has both his ears. The third frame shows a man who has no ears or eyes and is screaming. At the top of the row of frames, there is writing engraved in stone: "I enjoy silence as I listen to madness."

What would you like to do?

228 Flip the lever of the first frame.

229 Flip the lever of the second frame.

230 Flip the lever of the third frame.

228

You hear a faint click and a small compartment opens on the left wall. You reach inside and pull out a **Green Gem Stone**. You get the **Green Gem Stone**. Nothing else is of interest in this room. Proceed to **215**.

229

You pull the lever and hear a loud slash. The feeling of cold steel touches you behind the neck. You feel you are flying through the air, but very much lighter. As you approach the ground, you are unable to stop and take a strong blow to the sides of your temples. You no longer feel your body, as the light of your eyes fades away. You have been beheaded. **You are dead.**

230

You pull the lever and hear a loud slash. The feeling of cold steel touches you behind the neck. You feel you are flying through the air, but very much lighter. As you approach the ground, you are unable to stop and take a strong blow to the sides of your temples. You no longer feel your body, as the light of your eyes fades away. You have been beheaded. **You are dead.**

231

You see the statue and notice it is facing to another direction. No other statue is facing towards this direction.

What would you like to do?

236 Pull the lever on the statue.

211 Inspect a different statue.

232

You see the statue and notice it is facing towards a wall. Another statue is facing towards this direction.

What would you like to do?

237 Pull the lever on the statue.

211 Inspect a different statue.

233

You see the statue and notice it is facing towards a wall. No other statue is facing towards this direction.

What would you like to do?

238 Pull the lever on the statue.

211 Inspect a different statue.

234

You see the statue and notice it is facing towards another direction. No other statue is facing towards this direction.

What would you like to do?

239 Pull the lever on the statue.

211 Inspect a different statue.

235

You see the statue and notice it is facing towards a wall. Another statue is facing towards this statue.

What would you like to do?

240 Pull the lever on the statue.

211 Inspect a different statue.

236

You pull the lever down and hear a faint click. One of the flames of the candelabrum turns blue. The lever is stuck in its place and cannot be used anymore. If **three** blue flames burn, proceed to **241**; otherwise, return to **211**.

237

You pull the lever down and hear a loud thud. The statue is lying on the ground with its back bent forwards. It raises its head and opens its eyes to look at the room. It spots you and rapidly moves its arm to clutch your body in its stone hands. You struggle, but cannot break free. The animated

statue opens its mouth and lets you fall inside it. All is dark, as you feel the weight of many sharp boulders crushing you. **You are dead.**

238

You pull the lever down and hear a faint click. One of the flames of the candelabrum turns blue. The lever is stuck in place and cannot be used anymore. If **three** blue flames burn, proceed to **241**; otherwise, return to **211**.

239

You pull the lever down and hear a faint click. One of the flames of the candelabrum turns blue. The lever is stuck in its place and cannot be used anymore. If **three** blue flames burn, proceed to **241**; otherwise, return to **211**.

240

You pull the lever down and hear a loud thud. The statue is lying on the ground with its back bent forwards. It raises its head and opens its eyes to look at the room. It spots you and rapidly moves its arm to clutch your body in its stone hands. You struggle, but cannot break free. The animated statue opens its mouth and lets you fall inside it. All is dark, as you feel the weight of many sharp boulders crushing you. **You are dead.**

241

Three blue flames burn on the candelabrum. You hear a rasping noise that seems to rise from below the stone floor. You see a squared portion of the floor shift downwards and out of sight. From the darkness emerges a **Blue Gem Stone** on top of a sample of the stone brick floor. You get the **Blue Gem Stone**. Nothing else is of interest in this room. Proceed to **210**.

242

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

243

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

244

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245

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

246

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

247

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

248

You pluck the string with your finger. The tone it emits produces a harmony that reverberates across the room. The miniature eyes on the figurine, whose string you just plucked, glow bright red. What would you like to do?

249 Pluck the first string.

250 Pluck the second string.

251 Pluck the third string.

252 Pluck the fourth string.

253 Pluck the fifth string.

254 Pluck the sixth string.

255 Pluck the seventh string.

249

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

250

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

251

You pluck the string with your finger. The tone it emits produces a harmony that reverberates across the room. The miniature eyes on the figurine, whose string you just plucked, glow bright red. What would you like to do?

256 Pluck the first string.

257 Pluck the second string.

258 Pluck the third string.

259 Pluck the fourth string.

260 Pluck the fifth string.

261 Pluck the sixth string.

262 Pluck the seventh string.

252

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

253

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254

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

255

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

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You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

257

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

258

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

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260

You pluck the string with your finger. The tone it emits produces a harmony that reverberates across the room. The miniature eyes on the figurine, whose string you just plucked, glow bright red. What would you like to do?

263 Pluck the first string.

264 Pluck the second string.

265 Pluck the third string.

266 Pluck the fourth string.

267 Pluck the fifth string.

268 Pluck the sixth string.

269 Pluck the seventh string.

261

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262

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

263

You pluck the string with your finger. The tone it emits produces a harmony that reverberates across the room. The miniature eyes on the figurine, whose string you just plucked, glow bright red. You notice blood spilling out from the little mouths of the four miniatures. The blood flows down into the basin. Within seconds, the basin is half full and the spilling blood comes to a halt. Something emerges to the surface and shimmers from the light emitted from the torches in the room. You grasp the object and inspect it. It is a **Red Gem Stone**. You get the **Red Gem Stone**. Nothing else is of interest in this room. Proceed to **204**.

264

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

265

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

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You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

267

You pluck the string with your finger. It does not move, but it cuts the skin of your finger, exposing your flesh. The wooden top of the instrument juts up, separating itself from the strings, as they stretch to four times their previous size. The strings fling through the air and pierce your body. You bleed profusely and begin to feel very weak. Your vision becomes blurry and you collapse on the ground. **You are dead.**

268

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270

You see a key resting on top of the red hot embers.

What would you like to do?

217 Exit the room.

272 Attempt to grab the key.

271 Take the Crushing Stone and the Iron Key.

Use a spell.

271

Type S

You get the **Crushing Stone and the Iron Key** (You get the concoction recipe: Crushing Stone + Infieri Herb = 1 Infieri Corneum).

What would you like to do?

217 Exit the room.

270 Inspect the furnace.

272

You try to grab the key, but the heat of the furnace burns too fiercely. The key stays where it is.

What would you like to do?

217 Exit the room.

270 Leave the key.

271 Take the Crushing Stone and the Iron Key.

273

You hear a strong clicking noise from the elevated floor and step below the roof held by the four pillars. The floor shifts and you feel you are moving downwards. The whole structure is sliding down along a set of iron railings. You see the stone walls rising past you, as you continue heading downwards. Within moments, you enter a room, a rectangular room holding a set of bridges suspended by chains. Molten hot fire is spewing from stone sculptures of human heads, racing down the walls, forming a river of flame. You come to a halt at the level of the bridges and step

forth into them. The pillar structure juts upwards and leaves you, disappearing inside the stone roof. You hear a loud rustling of chains from a raised archway. Darkness hides its insides but a huffing breath is heard from within. A hand exits the darkness and grasps one of the columns supporting the archway. More rustling is heard, as a large creature reveals itself. You notice that the creature's skin has a bizarre texture, as you recognize parts of human bodies welded together onto it. The being's skin reflects the firelight of the room at your back, appearing as if taking the texture of a hardened shell. It begins to move its body back and forth violently, slamming its arms on the ground in front of it. For a moment you hear a pleading voice at the distance, you turn to look around the room but cannot perceive any indication as of where it is coming from. The creature begins to move towards you, rumbling the steadiness of the bridges with its every step.

What would you like to do?

274 Battle the monster.

Use an item.

274

Battle

Type S

Flesh Homunculus: Hit points 15, Attack points 6.

5 Werespider: Hit points 7, Attack points 2.

You get 3 upgrade points.

The creature falls to its knees, as you see the bits and pieces of the bodies dissipate across the floor and vanish into fumes. The place where the creature lays now is a large ball of mist, whizzing away until there is not a trace of the previous abomination but a lady in white and red. Her clothes have been bloodstained and she is severely slashed all over her neck, arms and legs. You walk to her as she turns to look at you. "Am... Amb... Ambrosine... I... I... am relieved to see you, love." says the woman in white. She looks at your hair, taking her time to observe every bit of you. "How beautiful you are, your father has raised such a fine girl. My... my daughter." says the woman with difficulty. "I... I wish I could have been with you all of those years. Roman did well to keep me a

secret from you.” She places her hand on the side of your cheek. “You see love; there was an insurgency in the past. In the beginning, I and my kind descended to help men with their burden over suffering and death. Few of us were chosen and few of us had fallen in love with men.” She caresses your lips and continues: “I loved your father and I still do. You came from that love Ambrosine. Your strength and fearlessness are divine gifts born from the union of our blood.” She looks away for a moment. “However, there were those men who feared the mixing of men and a divine guardian. Their fear grew to the point of chasing out those who had looked after them. I was hunted by one who betrayed us, a mixed breed. He imprisoned me here and attached me to that prison of flesh.” Your mother writhes and shuts her eyes to resist the bleeding. Leon kneels besides you and your mother. “Ambrosine, we need to take your mother to the castle. She is in a critical condition.” says Leon. “King Leon” says your mother. “Do you seek the seer?”

“That is correct my lady.” affirms Leon. “How did you know...” asks Leon. “You have found her.” interrupts your mother. “You wish to know the reason why your queen never made it back to you in all those years?” Your mother stares at Leon, pausing for a moment. “She was taken to Venzor castle, she was taken by the same man who placed me here: Radagaisus.” says your mother. “I am sorry to tell you, your majesty, but she does not live. I cannot sense her anymore.” Leon lowers his head and closes his eyes. “How do I know you speak the truth?” says Leon. “How else could I have known who you were and why were you here?” says your mother. Leon turns to his side. “I... I was... I hoped she’d be safe. I was a fool.” says Leon. Your mother turns to you: “I don’t have much time left. Give me your arms.” Your mother grabs your arms and a set of silver strands shoot out of her fingers. They curl around both of your arms separately and begin to take shape. They mold themselves on your wrists and soon take hold of your whole arm. The silver becomes thicker, creating gauntlets on your arms. (If you have your hands, proceed to **276**, otherwise, proceed to **277**).

275

Battle

Type S

Black Orb: Hit points 5, Attack points 3.

5 Werespider: Hit points 4, Attack points 2.

You get 3 upgrade points.

The black orb shatters as the creature falls to its knees. You see the bits and pieces of bodies dissipate across the floor and vanish to fumes. The place where the creature lays now is a large ball of mist, whizzing away until there is not a trace of the previous abomination, but a lady in white. You walk towards her, as she turns to look at you. “Am...Amb...Ambrosine... I... I... am relieved to see you, love.” says the woman in white. She looks at your hair, taking her time to observe every bit of you. “How beautiful you are, your father has raised such a fine girl. My... my daughter.” says the woman. “I... I wish I could have been with you all of those years. Roman did well to keep me a secret from you.” She places her hand on the side of your cheek. “You see love: there was an insurgency in the past. At the beginning, I and my kind descended to help men with their burden over suffering and death. Few of us were chosen and few of us had fallen in love with men.” She caresses your lips and continues: “I loved your father and I still do. You came from that love Ambrosine. Your strength and fearlessness are divine gifts born from the union of our blood.” She looks away for a moment. “However, there were those men who feared the mixing of men and a divine guardian. Their fear grew to the point of chasing out those who had looked after them. I was hunted by one who betrayed us, a mixed breed. He imprisoned me here and attached me to that prison of flesh.” Leon walks up to you and your mother. “Ambrosine, we need to take your mother to the castle. She can stay in one of the guest rooms.” says Leon. “King Leon.” says your mother. “Do you seek the seer?”

“That is correct my lady.” affirms Leon. “How did you know...” asks Leon. “You have found her,” interrupts your mother. “You wish to know the reason why your queen never made it back to you in all those years?” Your mother stares at Leon, pausing for a moment. “She was taken to Venzor castle, she was taken by the same man who placed me here: Radagaisus.” says your mother. “I am sorry to tell you, your majesty, but she does not live. I cannot sense her anymore.” Leon lowers his head and closes his eyes. “How do I know you speak the truth?” says Leon. “How else could I have known who you were and why you were here?” says your mother. Leon turns to his side. “I... I was... I hoped she’d be safe. I was a fool.” says Leon. Your mother turns to you: “We must hurry. Give me your arms, love.” Your mother grabs your arms and a set of silver strands shoot out of her fingers. They curl around both of your arms separately and begin to take shape.

They mold themselves on your wrists and soon take hold of your whole arm. The silver becomes thicker, creating gauntlets on your arms. (If you have your hands, proceed to **292**; otherwise, proceed to **293**).

276

You feel that the silver fastened itself on your arms. You get **The Silver Gauntlets**. Your base attack points increase by **7** and you can heal yourself to full health once per battle. Proceed to **278**.

277

You feel that the silver fastened itself on your arms and your fingers take their shape again with the divine metal. You get **The Silver Gauntlets**. Your base attack points increase by **7** and you can heal yourself to full health once per battle. Proceed to **278**.

278

Your mother looks at you; her eyes are small now, since her eyelids are barely open. “Stop Radagaisus’s madness my love, or others will parish.” Your mother smiles at you: “I know you will bring peace to the lands.” She caresses your lips one last time. You feel her hand leave your mouth and drop to the ground. You close her eyelids to shut her exposed blank stare. Proceed to **279**.

279

Leon stands still without saying a word. You approach him as he raises his head softly. He stares at you without any expression. He opens his mouth gently: “Time we left, no reason to stay here. We got what we needed.”

You retrace your steps back and leave the bastion. You find yourself outside the large entrance doors overlooking the Xapham desert. However, there are no guards and not a sound can be heard, except for the breeze displacing the sand. The sun is half way up from the ground, beginning a new day. You can see ahead of you with a bit of difficulty, but can spot the location of the small encampment Leon’s knights had setup previously. You cross the desert sands and find the horses.

“We have a long way back. Let us go inside and have a quick drink before we head off on our way.” says Leon.

You raise the nylon roof of the tent and enter. As you and Leon quench your thirst, you hear the sands shifting outside the camp. Suddenly, separating his lips from his cup, Leon raises his head. “What is that?” he asks.

You hear the sudden sound of metal slashing through the fabric. The roof is giving way as you duck to avoid being hit, but are not able to react on time. You are pushed downwards by its weight and fall to the ground. You sense movement, as you lie on the floor. Something pulls the debris of the camp off you piece by piece and grabs you by your left arm. You open your eyes and see the helmet of the armored knight. You cannot see any eyes from within the armor, but sense a sinister gaze upon you. It hurls you to the side, as you land rolling on the sand. He unsheathes his broadsword, as you rise up to your feet. (Leon is disabled and cannot fight!)

Battle

Type S

Armored Knight: Hit points 20, Attack points 5.

The armored knight thrusts its sword into the sands and stands still. His helmet falls from his shoulders and lands on the ground, exposing a hole where a neck and head should have been. The remaining pieces of the armor fall and roll on the sand creating a pile next to the sword. A blue mist is diffused from the armor and begins to take shape. After shifting for a moment, it resembles a man with straight blonde hair and fine features. He is wearing a tunic and a pair of trousers. Slightly blurred by the mist, the man looks around examining his surroundings and stops to look at you with eyes wide open: “Brave girl, you... you have freed me from my prison.” says the spirit. “I...I may rest in peace now.”

What would you like to do?

280 Ask the spirit who it is.

281 Let it be.

280

“When I was a mortal, dear maiden, I was known as Joachim. My brother and I were to reign over a kingdom inherited to us by our father.” says Joachim. “However, we were not entirely from this world. My brother and I were born from a divine mother. When it was time for us to take the place of our father, we agreed among ourselves that my brother would be the one to become king and that I would stand by his side. Little did we suspect, that our servants and valets had grown fearful of our gifts. My brother was very strong and I had great knowledge of the world. Their fear became so great, that they attacked us, claiming to save the kingdom. The few faithful servants and soldiers that we had attempted to protect us, but could not hold their numbers. My brother stood his ground fiercely. He tore them apart, limb by limb. Rage drove his every move.” says Joachim. He looks down. “I had not wished for such a violent resolve. I could not stand idle and watch him slay those who once served us. I ran towards him to stop him from continuing the slaughter, but he did not pause.” Joachim places his right hand on his chest. “I was pierced so quickly, that I had not realized that the cold came from the steel of his sword. The world swirled around me as I fell to my knees. He was seriously repented and begged me to fight the pain. I closed my eyes, fainting into oblivion. I later awoke in that armor, devoid of speech and free will. My brother thought I still had a shred of autonomy, but he just fooled himself.” says Joachim. “What my brother is attempting to do, will only bring destruction to the lands. He seeks to find a means to create beings born from his divine bloodline and that of men. Those who would be just like us and would end this old racial war.” Joachim hovers closer to you. “Please young maiden, stop my brother. You possess the weapon he has been searching for, the silver gauntlets. You can beat him!” Proceed to **281**.

281

The blue mist vanishes slowly from sight. You hear rustling coming from inside the debris of the camp and see Leon make his way out. “Ohmp, what... what was that?” he says as he rises to his feet. After telling him about your battle with the armored knight, Leon nods in acknowledgement. “We better hurry back. I must prepare my troops to battle Venzor. Radagaisus will pay for his crimes.” says Leon. (Leon joins you, he can fight again!)

You mount Valencia and head back towards Larton with Leon. After several hours, you see the castle in the distance. You notice there are specks of light across the surface of the central tower. As you near the castle you realize there is a fire; something is burning in the castle. “Hurry, the castle is under attack!” shouts Leon. Both of you rush towards the gates and enter by the stone-paved walkways. Zipping past the center square, Leon dismounts his horse in one swift move, as Valencia comes to a halt. You leap off Valencia and follow Leon up the stairs. Screaming and clashing of metal is heard from beyond the top of the stairs. You arrive at the top and see guardsmen battling red armored soldiers. They seem not to notice you, as you head towards the throne room. You climb up the stairs, making your way through fallen bodies lying on the stone steps. You enter Leon’s throne room.

Radagaisus holds Carleton from the collar. On Radagaisus’s right stands the tall man, donning his red robe. “Where is your king, servant?!!” shouts Radagaisus. “He... he left for...” pleads Carleton. “Halt!” yells Leon. “Let go of him, Radagaisus! Your attack on my castle and assault on my servants will not go without consequences!” Leon raises his sword towards Radagaisus. With a menacing grin, Radagaisus laughs subtly while looking at Leon. “So rash not to see one’s own errors; you have also violated our terms, your majesty. You ventured into the desert without my consent and stole something from me. Something I had been unable to retrieve until now.” says Radagaisus. He throws Carleton across the room; he lands on top of a chair and comes crashing down to the ground. Radagaisus stares at you and lowers his gaze to yours arms. “I’d never thought you’d be the one to claim them. Had I known then, I would have snatched you from your father. This means you were the one, the descendant of that foul creature. Only you could take the gauntlets.” says Radagaisus. “Fear not your majesty, for your punishment will be much milder. Give me the girl and I’ll see to it myself.” Leon turns to look at you and gives you a small smile. He turns to stare at Radagaisus: “I would rather face death, than to allow you to take her away, as you did Meteli.” “Have it your....” Radagaisus is interrupted: “No need to tarnish yourself my Lord.” says the tall man. “Leave them to me and I will take the gauntlets.”

“My thanks Guyon.” says Radagaisus looking at the tall man. Guyon makes a subtle nod and red armored soldiers grab you and Leon from behind. You resist but cannot free yourself. Guyon holds your arms and stares into your eyes. He slips off your gauntlets exposing your bare human hands. He Walks to Radagaisus. “As you requested my lord.” says Guyon. Radagaisus grabs the gauntlets

and places them in his arms. “Hmm, with this I can rule the lands as I see fit. Do with them as you wish Guyon. I must prepare the world for its new inhabitants.” says Radagaisus. He walks past the two of you and shuts the throne room door.

As you struggle, Leon manages to push one of the guards off. He rolls to the ground and strips the one holding you captive. Guyon stares at the commotion and shouts: “At the ready men, time to slay the pests!”

Battle

Type S

Guyon: Hit points 20, Attack points 6.

2 Soldiers: Hit points 8, Attack points 4.

Guyon lies wounded on the ground next to the slain soldiers. “This small victory means nothing ahhh... my... master will use the gauntlets to bring about your destruction. The... the coming of a new age will be at hand ahhrgr,” says Guyon. The blood spill under Guyon grows greater as he struggles to speak. He raises his eyes to look at you. “Without the gauntlets you are no match for my master. If I were you I’d take my life, urrg.” Guyon lets his torso fall with one last breath of air.

Moments later, the castle lies in ruins. Radagaisus’s soldiers have left the battle ground and you stand with Leon and Carleton in the throne room.

“The foul demon, he takes away my queen and destroys my kingdom.” says Leon. “How are we to put an end to him when he possesses so much power?”

You stand at the side of a broken glass window overlooking the forest. You look down to your arms and notice a faint glimmer as you examine them. You bring your arms up closer to your eyes and notice a very small strand of silver. Something is engraved in it: “Only to those willingly given shall they serve.”

You turn away from the engraving and go to Leon and Carleton. “Would it be a wise choice to have a meeting with King Demerius your majesty? Can we convince him to join our cause?” asks

Carleton. “We may convince him, but we haven’t the time to spare. We must attack Radagaisus as soon as possible!” says Leon. He turns to look at you as you approach them. “What is it Ambrosine?” he asks. You show him the engraving on your arm. As Leon reads it out loud, the strand of silver begins to animate and to move around your arms. As before, it molds itself and forms the pair of gauntlets once again.

“What kind of device is this?” asks Carleton. “Of divine nature, that is! My, I have never seen anything like it! Maiden Ambrosine, how did you do that?” asks Carleton. “A counteracting system, placed in the gauntlets. Genius!” says Leon. “But what about Radagaisus’s men? He will no doubt be surrounded by them.”

Leon stays still, with a frown on his face. Carleton looks at Leon for a moment and says: “Perhaps it is time I am honest with you, your majesty. Queen Meteli did tell me about the outings she had when you were on official business outside the kingdom. She mentioned traveling across distances no mortal being would think possible. I know she managed this, while visiting the garden in the forest just outside the kingdom. Please your majesty, she did not intend to lie to thee, only to have thee not be concerned about her. After all, both of you were still young and filled with curiosity.” Leon stares at Carleton with a blank stare. “Until now you tell me this? Why Carleton? If she had stayed in the castle and had not been wondering around without protection, she’d be with us!” shouts Leon. “Your majesty, she was of an inquisitive nature. The tragedy that befell her was not because of it. It was because of a monster. The monster is still threatening our very lives today.” says Carleton. Leon stares at the floor in the throne room, giving out a breath of frustration. He raises his gaze after a few seconds. “You are right Carleton. She was.” says Leon calmly. “We can send our troops to attack Venzor as a diversion, while we enter the grounds by other means.” (2 of Leon’s knights join you.)

Allies

Knight: Type S

Hit points 20, Attack points 6.

Knight: Type S

Hit points 20, Attack points 6.

After several hours, you walk into the garden of Meteli with Leon and two of his knights. The garden is vibrant with its supernatural colors, as it was the first time you were here; however, the stump is gone. You stand at the banks of the lake and call for Gwyn. The branches of the trees start to rustle and something leaps from them and falls to the ground in front of you. The kapre reveals itself to you and to the others. “It’s the beautiful young girl wondering again around the garden. No doubt there is something she wants.” says Gwyn.

You tell Gwyn the stories about the queen traveling across the lands when she was in the garden. “You are not foolish girl, no, not at all. Though why do you concern yourself with this? Do you wish to roam the lands and discover something beyond what you know?” asks Gwyn. “I know my queen used to come here creature. We want to avenge her death by traveling to the lands of Venzor to end her murderer’s life.” exclaims Leon. The kapre becomes silent and pauses. It stares at you and says: “What kind of creature would harm such a beautiful girl, I ask? I thought she had grown tired of me. The poor girl...” “We haven’t much time.” says Leon. “Will you help us?”

“This way, the bark on this one will hold all of you. It will.” says Gwyn. He leads you to a strange tree. It is curved in a corkscrew way, going in and out of the ground and stretching forward through it further ahead. Gwyn stands on one of the thick sides of the twisted tree. Half of it opens like a mouth and drops to the floor, revealing a large hollow tunnel inside it. The darkness inside has no end and the inside walls of the bark are soft and squishy. “This must be a farce!” says Leon. “No, no, this gulping oak will take you to Venzor without doubt. Just try not to move too much.” assures Gwyn.

You, Leon and the knights are inside the oak and hear the flap like mouth close... All is dark for an instant. You feel the soft texture of the bark covering you as it crawls up your waist. With a swift movement, the bark molds to create a large orifice and sucks you in it. You hear Leon and the knights screaming as you are forcefully pulled through the darkness.

Within a matter of minutes you emerge from the tree and land on the ground. Leon and the knights land beside you. You rise to your feet and look at your surroundings. You see a myriad of black dead trees twisting and curving across the grey skies. The air is heavier and dry. Beyond the trees,

there is a crude structure that resembles what was once a castle. Its walls are cracked and broken in some areas. Its foundations look slim and worn, giving the impression of skeletal remains.

One of the knights calls Leon: “Your majesty, for now, it seems that the walls are not under close guard on that side. We can proceed with our invasion.” He signals the side on the right. “The height is much lower over there. With some effort, we can work together to get over it.”

“Onwards!” says Leon. You make your way towards the lower wall and cross it with Leon and his knights. Inside the walls, soldiers are roaming around, but from where you stand, you take note of their exact positions. You enter an area filled with empty homes made of wood and stone. The windows are all shut and no signs of life are seen within them. You see that further ahead of you, there is a large squared tower. You look at Leon and point at it. He nods and proceeds towards it alongside you and the knights. You find a doorway leading into the tower and enter through it. Proceed to **282**.

282

You find yourself in a set of hallways lit by blue flames that shine on the stone walls. The ceilings are concave, divided in flower like portions, resembling petals. The floor is semi covered by an ill kept rug embroidered in gold. A set of displayed armors line the walls, although dust covers them almost entirely. You see another set of hallways. The one in front of you has a set of stairs lying below a twin doorway. Your right and left sides reveal more intersections.

What would you like to do?

290 Go Forward.

283 Go Right.

287 Go Left.

283

You arrive at an intersection with four possible hallways to cross. Ahead of you and behind you are shut doorways. To your right is another shut doorway. To your left there is another hallway.

What would you like to do?

284 Go through the doorway ahead of you.

286 Go through the doorway behind you.

282 Go Left.

285 Go Right.

284

Type S

You enter a small room with patches of dirt enclosed in stone squares. A couple of herbs are planted on the soil. You get **2 Mandrowner** herbs, **3 Varrochini** herbs. Nothing else is of interest in this room. Proceed to **283**.

285

You open the door and enter a small courtyard filled with Radagaisus's guards. Some stand still looking at you. One of them says: "How unfortunate for you. Arms ready lads!" The soldiers unsheathe their swords and stand ready to attack.

Battle

Type R

5 Soldiers: Hit points 13, Attack points 4.

Nothing else is of interest in the courtyard. Proceed to **283**.

286

Type S

You enter a small room with patches of dirt enclosed in stone squares. A couple of herbs are planted on the soil. You get **1 Mandrowner** herb, **2 Varrochini** herbs. Nothing else is of interest in this room. Proceed to **283**.

287

You arrive at an intersection with three possible hallways to cross. Ahead of you and behind you are shut doorways. To your right is another hallway.

What would you like to do?

288 Go through the doorway ahead of you.

289 Go through the doorway behind you.

282 Go right.

288

You open the door and enter a chamber filled with Radagaisus's guards. Some of them are seated on elegant chairs, while sipping a liquid from their canteens, while others stand beside them joined in joyous banter. One of them sees you and shouts: "Aye! On yer feet! We have company!" The soldiers unsheathe their swords and stand ready to attack.

Battle

Type R

5 Soldiers: Hit points 13, Attack points 4.

The last soldier drops to the ground and lets a key fall out of his pocket. You take the key. You get the **Key to the Throne Room**. Nothing else is of interest in the chamber. Proceed to **287**.

289

You open the door and enter a small courtyard filled with Radagaisus's guards. Some stand still looking at you. One of them says: "How unfortunate for you. Arms ready lads!" The soldiers unsheathe their swords and stand ready to attack.

Battle

Type R

5 Soldiers: Hit points 13, Attack points 4.

Nothing else is of interest in the courtyard. Proceed to **287**.

290

You approach the set of twin doors and attempt to push them open, but they won't budge. You can hear the sounds of muffled screams and wails coming from inside.

What would you like to do?

Use an item.

282 Go backwards.

291

You enter the doorway and stand at the bottom of a great set of marble stairs. To the sides of the stairs there are very tall glass windows with panes the width and height of a couple of men. From the top of the stairs you hear something screaming, although it does not seem entirely human. Suddenly, bright lights flash across the glass of the windows as the yelling follows them. You arrive at the top and see what looks like an entirely red creature yelling. It is seated on a wooden chair and it is being touched by a pair of hands coming from behind it. A figure emerges from behind the red being and shows his face. It is Radagaisus with a grin. He touches the head of the being, shaping its features one by one. With every touch of the gauntlets, the red being gains parts of a human anatomy. After shaping the creature, Radagaisus steps back to look at his work. The being looks around the room; its eyes wide open in awe. It begins to blink its eyes but this is soon followed by moans. The creature is in agony as it contorts and cries, dropping bloody tears on the floor in front of it. Its eyes and ears begin to slide down its face and smudge onto its body. Now, it only resembles a molten semi animated man.

“Another failed birth! How?” Shouts Radagaisus. “I have the gauntlets, they bare the gift of creation! Why!? Why do my children not take form?!?”. “Because you do not have the right to give them form!” shouts Leon. Radagaisus turns to look at you and Leon. “You! How could you have possibly made it here!?” asks Radagaisus. He looks at you and pauses. His eyes are firmly directed towards your arms. He scowls and shouts: “How is it that you have the gauntlets!? There is only one set and I have them!! I do!!” Leon smiles and pauses for a moment. “You said so yourself. Only she could take the gauntlets. They belong to Ambrosine!”. Leon unsheathes his sword and points it towards Radagaisus. “I will not allow you to carry out your sinister crimes anymore Radagaisus! Your terror ends here!”

Battle

Type S

Radagaisus: Hit points 30, Attack points 6.

Molten Being: Hit points 6, Attack points 4.

Radagaisus lies on the ground, kneeling with one arm supporting his body. “I was not supposed to have the right to a kingdom. They judged me for what I was. They shun me and my brother. They deserved their fate, all of them.” says Radagaisus. He raises his head with difficulty to look at you. “And you Ambrosine... You are just like me. Divine guardian blood courses through you... What do you think men will do to you when they find out? Welcome you with open arms?” Radagaisus stares at you with a grin.

You feel a hand holding yours. You look down at the arm whose hand is clenching your own. You look up and see Leon gazing directly at you. “I accept her!” says Leon. “Anyone who would selfishly help those in distress is as human as any other. None shall say otherwise!”

Radagaisus turns to face the ground coughing out a splotch of blood. “Ahhrgh... Ambrosine. The man will betray you and when he does, you will stand alone. Arrrg!” Radagaisus wails and falls completely to the ground. “You... will... be... alone...” Radagaisus ousts his final breath as Leon embraces you in his arms. “Do not believe him for one instant. I know you, you are not him. Ambrosine, you are not like him.” says Leon. He smiles and places his hand on your neck. “You have suffered enough. It is time for us to go home.”

You leave the castle alongside Leon and approach the entrance gate. The remaining soldiers of Radagaisus lay dead on the ground and some are held captive by Leon's soldiers. "They made it!" cheers Leon. A group of soldiers cheer loudly at the sight of the two of you approaching them.

Several minutes later, you enter Larton castle alongside Leon and his men. Some of the soldiers and townsfolk are working hard rebuilding the damaged walkways and the facades of the castle. "It will take time to have the kingdom back the way it was." says Leon. "I cannot thank you enough maiden Ambrosine. You have laid my old woe to rest and helped me end the horrors of a mad man; I am eternally indebted to you." He pauses for a moment to look around and then brings his eyes onto yours. "I have a question for you. Would you be available for a horse ride sometime?"

Months later, you stand in front of Leon amongst the townsfolk of Larton. You are inside a wondrous courtyard filled with birds of paradise, an emerald fountain and porcelain statues. A priest stands to your right smiling at the crowd. You are wearing a wedding gown, white with embroidered lavender lilies on it. The priest says: "I now pronounce you, queen and king of Larton. Ambrosine and Leon." The crowd roars with cheers as you smile at Leon.

THE END

292

You feel the silver fastened on your arms. You get **The Silver Gauntlets**. Your base attack points increase by **7** and you can heal yourself to full health once per battle. Proceed to **294**.

293

You feel the silver fastened on your arms and your fingers reform with the divine metal. You get **The Silver Gauntlets**. Your base attack points increase by **7** and you can heal yourself to full health once per battle. Proceed to **294**.

294

Leon stands still without saying a word. You approach him as he raises his head softly. He stares at you without any expression. He opens his mouth gently: "Time we left, no reason to stay here. You mother is no doubt eager to leave."

You retrace your steps back and leave the bastion. You find yourself outside the large entrance doors overlooking the Xapham desert. However, there are no guards and not a sound can be heard, except for the breeze displacing the sand. The sun is half way up from the ground, beginning a new day. You can see ahead of you with a bit of difficulty, but can spot the location of the small encampment Leon's knights had setup previously. You cross the desert sands and find the horses. "We have a long way back. Let us go inside and have a quick drink before we head off on our way." says Leon.

You raise the nylon roof of the tent and enter. As you, Leon and your mother quench your thirst you hear the sands shifting outside the camp. Suddenly, separating his lips from his cup, Leon raises his head. "What is that?" he asks.

You hear the sudden sound of metal slashing through the fabric. The roof is giving way as you duck to avoid being hit, but are not able to react on time. You are pushed downwards by its weight and fall to the ground. You sense movement, as you lie on the floor. Something pulls the debris of the camp off you piece by piece and grabs you by your left arm. You open your eyes and see the helmet of the armored knight. You cannot see any eyes from within the armor, but sense a sinister gaze upon you. It hurls you to the side as you land rolling on the sand. He unsheathes his broadsword as you rise up to your feet.

Battle

Type S

Armored Knight: Hit points 20, Attack points 5.

The armored knight thrusts its sword into the sands and stands still. His helmet falls from his shoulders and lands on the ground exposing a hole where a neck and a head should have been. The remaining pieces of the armor fall and roll on the sand creating a pile next to the sword. A blue mist is diffused from the armor and begins to take shape. After shifting, for a moment it resembles a man with straight blonde hair and fine features. He is wearing a tunic and a pair of trousers. Slightly blurred by the mist, the man looks around, examining his surroundings and stops to look

at you with eyes wide open: “Brave girl. You... you have freed me from my prison.” says the spirit. “I...I may rest in peace now.”

What would you like to do?

295 Ask the spirit who it is.

296 Let it be.

295

“When I was a mortal dear maiden, I was known as Joachim. My brother and I were to reign over a kingdom inherited to us by our father.” says Joachim. “However, we were not entirely from this world. My brother and I were born from a divine mother. When it was time for us to take the place of our father, we agreed among ourselves that my brother would be the one to become king and that I would stand by his side. Little did we suspect, our servants and valets had grown fearful of our gifts. My brother possessed great strength and I had great knowledge of the world. Their fear became so great, that they held an attack on us claiming to save the kingdom. The few faithful servants and soldiers that we had attempted to protect us but could not hold their numbers. My brother stood his ground fiercely. He tore them apart, limb by limb. Rage drove his every move.” says Joachim. He looks down. “I had not wished for such a violent resolve. I could not stand idle and watch him slay those who once served us. I ran towards him to stop him from continuing the slaughter, but he did not pause.” Joachim places his right hand on his chest. “I was pierced quickly, that I had not realized that the cold came from the steel of his sword. The world swirled around me as I fell to my knees. He was seriously repented and begged me to fight the pain. I closed my eyes, fainting into oblivion. I later awoke in that armor, devoid of speech and freewill. My brother thought I still had a shred of autonomy, but he just fooled himself.” says Joachim. “What my brother is attempting to do, will only bring destruction to the lands. He seeks to find a means to create beings born from his divine bloodline and that of men. Those who would be just like us and would end this old racial war.” Joachim hovers closer to you. “Please young maiden, stop my brother. You possess the weapon he has been searching for, the silver gauntlets. You can best him!” Proceed to **296**.

The blue mist vanishes slowly from sight. You hear rustling coming from inside the debris of the camp and see Leon make his way out. “Ohmp, what... what was it?” he says as he rises to his feet. He moves some of the debris and pulls your mother out. After explaining your battle with the armored knight, Leon nods in acknowledgement. “We better hurry back. I must prepare my troops to battle Venzor. Radagaisus will pay for his crimes.” says Leon.

You mount Valencia and head back towards Larton with Leon and your mother. After several hours you see the castle in the distance. You notice there are specks of light across the central tower surface. As you near the castle, you realize there is a fire; something is burning in the castle. “Hurry, the castle is under attack!” shouts Leon. Leon gets off his horse swiftly and rushes to towards the gates. You help your mother off Valencia and enter by the stone-paved walkways. Making your way past the center square, you enter the court. Screaming and the clashing of metal is heard from beyond the top of the stairs. You arrive at the top and see guardsmen battling red armored soldiers. They seem to not notice you, as you head towards the throne room. You ascend the stairs, making your way through fallen bodies lying on the stone steps. You enter Leon’s throne room.

Radagaisus holds Carleton from the collar. On Radagaisus’s right stands the tall man, donning his red robe. “Where is your king, servant?!” shouts Radagaisus. “He... he left for...” pleads Carleton. “Halt!” yells Leon. “Let go of him, Radagaisus! Your attacks on my castle and assault on my servants will not go without consequences!” Leon raises his sword towards Radagaisus. With a menacing grin, Radagaisus laughs subtly while looking at Leon. “So rash to not see one’s own errors, you have also violated our terms, your majesty. You ventured into the desert without my consent and stole something from me. Something I had been unable to retrieve until now.” says Radagaisus. He stares at you and notices your mother. “So, the ancient guardian has been set free. Too late though, it is without hope.” says Radagaisus. “No thanks to you! You held me imprisoned there for years and separated from my loved ones.” says your mother. “Love? Do you think they truly loved you? Oh, you must be mistaken. They feared you!” shouts Radagaisus. “Fear kept them restrained from their barbaric intentions!”

Your mother stares at Radagaisus for a moment and says: “Your suffering was not intended, they did not understand...”

“Did not understand!? What was there to understand? I was merely taking my birth right. They could not bear the reality of someone like me in power. A power not of this earth.” says Radagaisus. “My mother, a foul creature like you, blessed us with the burden of being judged by men when it is our right to rule over them. After all, who is to say I need to show mercy?”. He turns to look at your arms. “I’d never thought you’d be the one to claim them. Had I known, then I would have snatched you from your father. This means you were the one. Only you could take the gauntlets.” says Radagaisus. “Fear not your majesty, for your punishment will be much milder. Give me the girl and I’ll see to it myself.” Leon turns to look at you and gives you a small smile. He turns to stare at Radagaisus: “I would rather face death, than to allow you to take her away, as you did Meteli.” “Have it your ...” Radagaisus is interrupted. “No need to tarnish yourself my lord.” says the tall man. “Leave them to me.”

“My thanks Guyon.” says Radagaisus looking at the tall man. Guyon makes a subtle nod and red armored soldiers grab you, you mother and Leon from behind. You resist but cannot free yourself. Guyon grabs your arms and stares into your eyes. He slips off your gauntlets exposing your bare human hands. He walks towards Radagaisus. “As you requested my lord.” says Guyon. Radagaisus grabs the gauntlets and places them in his arms. “Hmm, with this I can rule the lands as I see fit. Do with them as you wish Guyon. I must prepare the world for its new inhabitants.” says Radagaisus. He walks past the three of you and shuts the throne room door.

As you struggle, Leon manages to push one of the guards off. He rolls to the ground and trips the one holding you captive. Guyon grabs your mother as he stares at the commotion and shouts: “At the ready men, time to slay the pests! Come claim you mother, girl. Ha, ha!”

Battle

Type S

Guyon: Hit points 20, Attack points 6.

2 Soldiers: Hit points 6, Attack points 4.

Guyon lies wounded on the ground next to the slain soldiers. “He, he, this small victory means nothing ahhh... my... master will use the gauntlets to bring about the destruction of you. The... the coming of a new age will be at hand ahhhrg,” says Guyon. The blood spill below Guyon grows greater as he struggles to speak. He raises his eyes to look at you. “Without the gauntlets you are no match for my master. If I were you I’d take my life, urrg.” Guyon lets his torso fall to the ground with one last breath of air.

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“The foul demon, he takes away my queen and destroys my kingdom.” says Leon. “How are we to put an end to him when he possesses so much power?”

You stand at the side of a broken glass window overlooking the forest. “Ambrosine.” says your mother. “Show me your arms.” She examines them for a moment and calls your attention with her finger. The silver strand is still curled around your arm and something is engraved: “Only to those willingly given shall they serve.”

You turn away from the engraving and look at your mother. “Yes love.” She smiles and reads the words out loud. The strand of silver begins to animate and course through your arms. As before, it molds itself and forms the pair of gauntlets once again. Leon and Carleton approach the two of you.

“What kind of device is this?” asks Carleton. “Of divine nature that is! My, I have never seen anything like it! Maiden Ambrosine how did you do that?” asks Carleton. “A counteracting system, placed in the gauntlets. Genius!” says Leon. “But what of Radagaisus’s men? He will no doubt be surrounded.”

Leon holds still, with a frown on his face. Carleton looks at Leon for a moment and says: “Perhaps it was time I was honest with you your majesty. Queen Meteli did tell me her outings when you were on official business outside the kingdom. She mentioned traveling across distances no mortal being would think possible. I know she managed this while visiting the garden in the forest just outside the kingdom. Please your majesty, she did not intend to lie to thee, only to have thee not be concerned about her. After all the both of you were still young and filled with curiosity.” Leon stares at Carleton with a blank stare. “You told me this until now? Why Carleton? If she had stayed

in the castle and not been wondering around without protection she'd be with us!" shouts Leon. "Your majesty, she was of an inquisitive nature. The tragedy that befell her was not because of it. It was because of a monster. The monster still threatening our very lives today." says Carleton. Leon stares at the throne room floor, giving out a breath of frustration. He raises his gaze after a few seconds. "Your right Carleton. She was." says Leon calmly. "We can send our troops to attack Venzor as a diversion while we enter the grounds by other means."

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You speak to Gwyn about the stories of the queen traveling across the lands when she was inside the garden. "No! How foolish of you to believe that girl: no, not at all. But why do you concern yourself with this? Do you wish to roam the lands and discover beyond that which you know?" asks Gwyn. "I know my queen used to come here, creature. We want to avenge her death by traveling to the lands of Venzor to end her murderer's life." exclaims Leon. The kapre becomes silent and pauses. It stares at you and says: "What kind of creature would harm such a beautiful girl I ask? I thought she had grown tired of me. The poor girl..." "We haven't much time." says Leon. "Will you help us?"

"This way, the bark on this one will hold all of you that it will" says Gwyn. He leads you to a strange tree. It is curved in a corkscrew way, going in and out of the ground and stretching forward through it further ahead. Gwyn stands on one of the thick sides of the twisted tree. Half of it opens like a mouth and drops to the floor, revealing a large hollow tunnel inside it. The darkness inside it has no end and the inside walls of the bark are soft and squishy. "This must be a farce!" says Leon. "No, no, this gulping oak will take you to Venzor without a doubt. Just try to not move too much." assures Gwyn.

You, Leon and the knights and the oak's insides and hear the flap like mouth close you inside. All is dark for an instant. You feel the soft texture of the bark covering you as it crawls up your waist.

With a swift movement, the bark molds to create a large orifice and sucks you in it. You hear the yells of Leon and the knights as you are forcefully pulled through the darkness.

Within a mere matter of minutes you emerge out of the tree and land on the ground. Leon and the knights land to your sides. You rise to your feet and look at your surroundings. You see a myriad of black dead trees twisting and curving across the grey skies. The air is heavier and dry. Beyond the trees is a crude structure that resembles what once was a castle. Its walls are cracked and broken in some areas. The foundations of it look slim and worn, giving the impression of skeletal remains.

One of the knights calls Leon: “Your majesty, it seems the walls are not under close guard on that side as of now. We can proceed with our infiltration.” He signals the side on the right. “The height is much lower over there. With some effort we can work together to get over it.”

“Onwards!” says Leon. You make your way to the lower wall and cross it you Leon and his knights. Soldiers are roaming around the inside of the walls but you take note of their exact positions from where you stand. You enter an area filled with empty homes made of wood and stone. The windows are all shut and no signs of life are seen from within them. You see further ahead of you, a large squared tower. You look at Leon and signal to it. He nods and proceeds towards it alongside you and the knights. You find a doorway leading into the tower and enter it. Proceed to **282**.

297

“I’d assumed you had guessed by now. I am King Demerius, King of Irragin.” says Demerius. As the monarch of this fine Kingdom, it has been my duties to ensure Irragin stands on the foundations of providing well-being to its inhabitants. Planned, as you can see, around an abundant source of water, me and the people of my kingdom have been able to sustain ourselves for years. Proceed to **299**.

298

The man turns to face the balcony once more. “You mean to tell me you have come from Cirencester and have been requested to venture to the Bastion of Woe with King Leon,” says the man. “Interesting...” He turns to face you. “As Hectyr has no doubt has informed you maiden Ambrosine, the King is not of a sane mind these days. He believes something terrible has happened

to his queen and hopes to find her one of these days. However, the townsfolk suffer from the scarcity of the sources of food available to them. He is too concerned with his loss to see their struggles. The both of us once had an accord for trading his crops and his materials for my crystalline water but our bond has become severed by his insanity,” says the man. He lets out a deep breath. “Maiden Ambrosine, King Leon is no longer fit to rule his kingdom and I wish to free his people from their suffering by placing someone who will help them prosper. This expedition he speaks of is not doubt a means to flee his responsibilities and do whatever his unstable mind wishes,” says the man. “I, King Demerius, want to end Leon’s rule. My men have informed me that you have managed to gain Leon’s trust and that we may proceed with our plan with your help. Leon must be assassinated. What say you maiden Ambrosine?”

What would you like to do?

300 Accept Demerius’s request.

301 Reject Demerius’s request.

299

Demerius turns to face the balcony once more. “You mean to tell me you have come from Cirencester and have been requested to venture to the Bastion of Woe with King Leon.” says Demerius. “Interesting...” He turns to face you. “As Hectyr has no doubt has informed you maiden Ambrosine, the King is not of a sane mind these days. He believes something terrible has happened to his queen and hopes to find her one of these days. However, the townsfolk suffer from the scarcity of the sources of food available to them. He is too concerned with his loss to see their struggles. The both of us once had an accord for trading his crops and his materials for my crystalline water but our bond has become severed by his insanity.” says Demerius. He lets out a deep breath. “Maiden Ambrosine, King Leon is no longer fit to rule his kingdom and I wish to free his people from their suffering by placing someone who will help them prosper. This expedition he speaks of is not doubt a means to flee his responsibilities and do whatever his unstable mind wishes.” says Demerius. “I want to end Leon’s rule. My men have informed me that you have

managed to gain Leon's trust and that we may proceed with our plan with your help. Leon must be assassinated. What say you maiden Ambrosine?"

What would you like to do?

300 Accept Demerius's request.

301 Reject Demerius's request.

300

"Listen carefully maiden Ambrosine." says Demerius. "You will be escorted back to Larton castle and will tell Leon you had fallen ill on your way to meet him. You simply had to wander around the outside of the kingdom for some time to steady your nerves. After all, you have been through a lot my dear. Tell him you wish to resume your trip so that he does not suspect anything." says Demerius. He looks at Hectyr and says: "Hectyr, will take hold of the throne with my men as you wander off into the desert with Leon. Have the king slow down his pace so that we may catch up to you. I shall deal with him myself." He turns to you and smiles: "Thank you maiden Ambrosine! Within the next days the suffering of a madman will have been subdued and a kingdom restored!" says Demerius. "Hectyr shall lead you back to the castle and sneak you back in. I'll see you in the desert."

Moments later, Hectyr guides you through the semi hidden archways you had previously used to gain entrance back inside Larton. He makes a gesture to you signifying his departure as you make your way outside the main kingdom gates and find Leon.

"Where have you been maiden Ambrosine? We were worried about thee." asks Leon. You explain your reasons for being so late. "I should have thought just as much. Do not worry we are accompanied by some of my finest men and I am certain we shall find the seer." Leon turns his head and signals to a mare standing at his side.

"This here is Valencia fair Ambrosine. She is an astute and faithful mare. Strong tempered but gentle if you know how to treat her well!" advises Leon. "Your majesty, best for us to be on our way. The desert is long and onerous to travel..." says one of the guards. "Right you are! Come, my lady!"

You make your way on top of Valencia's back. The mare neighs suddenly and kicks its two frontal hooves off the ground. You take hold of the animal's neck as you feel the weight of your body pulling you backwards. A strong thump is heard as the mare places its airborne hooves back on the ground and kicks off to a gallop.

"After her men!" shouts Leon. You hear the horses of the king's men begin to gallop as you hold on.

After a moment of getting to grips with your mare. You ride alongside Leon and the knights heading North West. The air begins to become a bit heavy as you notice the greenery of the kingdom beginning to fade and the soil turning to a light brown tone. The soil turns to grains and soon you notice a sandy comprised soil whizzing under Valencia's hooves. You look ahead and see dunes rising and decreasing in the distance. Leon's horse starts to rise above one of the largest dunes present as Valencia and the knights horses follow.

After traversing the desert for hours, you see before you a wide fort. Its extents are beyond your vision sideways and straight-forwards. Its walls raise high above the ground, touching some of the clouds gliding on the night air. "This be the place your majesty." says one of the knights. Leon stares at the bastion for a moment. "We should set up camp here and decide how we may enter." says Leon. The four of you dismount your horses and the knights begin to empty the contents of their sacks. Leon approaches you and says: "Best the horses stay here. We have water for them to drink should they grow thirsty."

Leon looks into your eyes as he places his hand on your left shoulder. He smiles and says: "I know the insides of the bastion will change us but I will try my best to not let any harm come to you." "The camp preparations are ready your majesty." says one of the knights. "Thank you, we will be right there." says Leon.

You and Leon enter the camp set up by the knights. Both are looking outwards of an exposed entrance between the nylon sheet being held as a roof. One is holding a spyglass in his hands while looking through it. "Two possible areas of entry your majesty. A walled empty spot lays to the west and the gate into the bastion lies to the east. However the gate is guarded as expected." says the knight.

“I have not been disappointed by your choices thus far Ambrosine, what say you?” asks Leon. You look at Leon and ask him to be patient about entering the bastion. You tell him you are tired and feel that your expedition inside the bastion can wait till tomorrow when you have all regained some rest. “Agreed Ambrosine. Best be fully ready. The bastion will no doubt possess no room for error.” says Leon.

The desert night brings with it sleep to you, Leon and the knights. You hear the gentle blowing of the desert sands as you fall asleep. You hear a faint voice in the distance in your dreams, a woman’s voice. “You are near. Please Ambrosine, see me for what I am. It is too difficult to free myself. I...must... I must try. I will find you!” says the woman’s voice. The voice fades away to nothingness.

You feel a hard hit on your sides. Another one hits you. You open your eyes quickly but must keep them half shut due to the bright sunlight shining above you. You cover your eyes to look around and see five red armored soldiers standing beside you and Leon. You are on the ground as is Leon. Leon’s knights are restrained by two of the red soldiers. The one in front of you has a dirty beard and his armor has most of its surface covered in sand. “Finally decided to wake up did ye lass? I thought another good kick was in order.” says the soldier. He looks at you and Leon. “Trespassers, we have here. You king Leon are in direct violation of lord Radagaisus’s orders. For this, the penalty is death.”

“You are mistaken, this desert belongs to no one!” exclaims Leon. “I didn’t mean the desert, I meant these grounds you fool! None other than Radagaisus’s men are supposed to be here!” shouts the soldier. He reaches down into his right side and pulls out a dagger. The soldier balances the dagger in his right hand and walks to Leon. He bends forward to look at Leon straight in the eye. “Worry not king Leon ha, ha. You shall never again unknowingly wander into forbidden territory, ha, ha”. The soldier raises his back as he laughs loudly. A high speed whistling is heard across the air and stops at the head of the soldier. The laughing stops as the soldier becomes incapable of speaking due to the arrow lodged in his head. More arrows follow, killing the rest of the red soldiers.

You turn to face the direction of the arrows’ origin and see a group of men mounted on horses making their way towards you. King Demerius is at the front of the group.

The mounted men come to a halt in front of you. King Demerius drops from his horse onto the desert sands and looks at you. “You have done finely maiden Ambrosine.” Demerius walks to Leon. “It seems your madness has reached its end Leon.” says Demerius. Leon looks at you with eyes wide open. “You did this!? You led him here!? Why?” exclaims Leon. “She saw things the way I did Leon.” Demerius unsheathes his sword. “Time for your reign to come to an end.” With a swift move of his right arm, Demerius thrusts his sword into Leon chest. Leon gives out a scream of pain and falls on his back. His eyes close as he gives out his last breath. Demerius nods to a pair of his men which raise their weapons. They swing their swords and slash the knights across the waists. Both Leon’s knights fall to the ground dead. Demerius sheathes his sword and helps you up to your feet. He smiles at you and says: “Larton may now be restored.”

A very loud bang is heard from a distance as you turn to look at the location of the sound. The doors of the bastion break open almost entirely. A strange creature emerges from the gateway. It has a bizarre skin texture as you recognize parts of human bodies welded together onto it. For a moment you feel a pleading voice in the distance, you turn to look around your surroundings but cannot see any indication of where it is coming from. The creature begins to move towards you, shifting the sands with every step it takes. Something suddenly leaps onto the creature and brings it down with it. The armored knight is struggling to incapacitate the creature as it wails in pain. The knight raises his large broadsword to his side and lets the blade fall on the creature. The creature shrieks loudly and begins to stop moving altogether. Just as soon as the creature stops moving, its skin begins to peel off in parts, dissipating on the sands. A blue mist forms on top of the remains of the creature as you hear the voice again only this time is clearly coming from within the mist. “Hurry Ambrosine, hurry love. Come to me!” shouts the voice. You eagerly approach the mist and see strands of silver whizzing out of it. They move towards you and curl on both your arms. “Take these Ambrosine. Take the Silver Gauntlets!” shouts the voice. (If you have your hands, proceed to **302** else proceed to **303**).

301

“Believe him do you?” asks Demerius. “Ahh... I see much mercy in you. I was indeed mistaken.” says Demerius. “I know not how to convince you otherwise but maybe you are the source of reason the King requires in these times.” Demerius looks to one side with a frown on his face then looks towards you again. “Very well... I shall give you a handful of days to aid Leon in regaining his

sanity. Though if his incompetence persists, I shall proceed with my plan through forceful means.” Demerius looks at Hectyr and says: “Hectyr shall lead you back to the castle and sneak you back in. I hope, for your sake, you prove me wrong.”

Moments later, Hectyr guides you through the semi hidden archways you had previously used to gain entrance back inside Larton. He makes a gesture to you signifying his departure as you make your way outside the main kingdom gates and find Leon.

“Where have you been maiden Ambrosine? We were worried about thee.” asks Leon. You explain your reasons for being so late. “King Demerius!? What business has he with you!?” exclaims Leon. The king lets out breaths of frustration for a moment. He becomes calm and says: “Apologies fair Ambrosine. He no doubt has grown weary due to my lack of participation in our diplomatic matters. Enough talk of this, we should be moving on.” Leon turns his head signaling a mare without a horseman standing to his side. “This here is Valencia fair Ambrosine. She is an astute and faithful mare. Strong tempered but gentle if you know how to treat her well!” advises Leon. “Your majesty, best for us to be on our way. The desert is long and onerous to travel...” says one of the guards. “Right you are! Come, my lady!”

You make your way on top of Valencia’s back. The mare neighs suddenly and kicks its two frontal hooves off the ground. You take hold of the animal’s neck as you feel the weight of your body pulling you backwards. A strong thump is heard as the mare places its airborne hooves back on the ground and kicks off to a gallop.

“After her men!” shouts Leon. You hear the horses of the kings men begin to gallop as you hold on.

After a moment of getting to grips with your mare. You ride alongside Leon and the knights heading North West. The air begins to become a bit heavy as you notice the greenery of the kingdom beginning to fade and the soil turning to a light brown tone. The soil turns to grains and soon you notice a sandy comprised soil whizzing under Valencia’s hooves. You look ahead and see dunes rising and decreasing in the distance. Leon’s horse starts to rise above one of the largest dunes present as Valencia and the knights horses follow. Upon reaching the top, you hear some rustling. Slight metallic clangs are heard. You look downward and spot what looks like a set of wooden wheels jutting halfway out of the sand. Besides stands a small mule. Leon and you

approach the partially buried cart and notice a pair of feet sticking out from below. The rustling comes to a stop as a sand powdered head peeks out of the side of the pair of legs. “Bandits! Oh... oh... oh wait? You are... hmmm I don’t quite recognize your origins. Shali? Irragin? No, no. Apologies. I was just trying to get me cart back on track. I went downwards on one of them dunes and turned me self over. Clumsy me.” says the man. “We are from the kingdom of Larton fellow traveler. The maiden to my right is Ambrosine and behind me are my faithful knights. I am King Leon.” says Leon. The man takes a bow and lets trapped sand fall from the top of his hair. “Excuse me your majesty. I was not aware of being in the presence of nobility.” The man raises his head and says: “Me name is Fobrin! Merchant of the city of Keaduq. Traversing in between the lands and trading is me business. However I do seem to be in a grave pickle this time. Where are the lot of you off to?” asks Fobrin. “We are headed towards the Bastion of Woe. We seek the truth granting being that inhabits it.” says Leon. “I see. That place is heavily guarded. Some soldiers patrol the entrance day and night. Looks more like a prison to me. I wouldn’t dare try and sneak in though I do have something that would help brave or dare I say foolish adventurers.” says Fobrin. “Seeing as you look determined to enter it I’ll make ye a deal. Help me with fixing me cart and I’ll help ye. What do ye say?”

What would you like to do?

192 Help Fobrin.

193 Head on to the Bastion of Woe.

302

You feel the silver fastened itself on your arms. You get **The Silver Gauntlets**. Your base attack points increase by **7** and you can heal yourself to full health once per battle. Proceed to **304**.

303

You feel the silver fastened itself on your arms and your fingers reform with the divine metal. You get **The Silver Gauntlets**. Your base attack points increase by **7** and you can heal yourself to full health once per battle. Proceed to **304**.

The blue mist clears as you see a white shape beginning to outline itself. A woman dressed in white lays wounded on the ground, dead with a large laceration stretching across her torso. The armored knight reaches up to its feet and looks at your arms. It raises its sword ready to attack. From behind you pops out Demerius and his men. He turns to you and says: “We stand at your side maiden Ambrosine.” He turns to the armored knight and shouts: “I know not what your business is here knight but you shall not hurt her!”. (Demerius and his knights join you!)

Allies

Demerius: Type R

Hit points 27, Attack points 6.

Knight: Type S

Hit points 20, Attack points 4.

Knight: Type S

Hit points 20, Attack points 4.

Battle

Type S

Armored Knight: Hit points 20, Attack points 5.

The armored knight thrusts its sword into the sands and stands still. His helmet falls from his shoulders and lands on the ground, exposing a hole where a neck and a head should have been. The remaining pieces of the armor fall and roll on the sand creating a pile next to the sword. A blue mist is diffused from the armor and begins to take shape. After shifting, for a moment it now resembles a man with straight blonde hair and fine features. He is wearing a tunic and a pair of trousers. Slightly blurred by the mist, the man looks around examining his surroundings and stops to look at you with eyes wide open: “Brave girl. You... you have freed me from my prison,” says the spirit. “I...I may rest in peace now.”

What would you like to do?

305 Ask the spirit who it is.

306 Let it be.

305

“When I was a mortal dear maiden, I was known as Joachim. My brother and I were to reign over a kingdom inherited to us by our father.” says Joachim. “We were however, not entirely from this world. My brother and I were born from a divine mother. When it was time for us to take the place of our father, we agreed among ourselves that my brother would be the one to become king and that I would stand by his side. Little did we suspect that our servants and valets had grown fearful of our gifts. My brother was very strong and I had great knowledge of the world. Their fear became so great, that they attacked us, claiming to save the kingdom. The few faithful servants and soldiers that we had attempted to protect us but could not hold their numbers. My brother stood his ground fiercely. He tore them apart limb by limb. Rage drove his every move.” says Joachim. He looks down. “I had not wished for such a violent resolve. I could not stand idle and watch him slay those who once served us. I ran toward him to hold him from continuing the slaughter, but he did not pause.” Joachim places his right hand on his chest. “I was pierced so quickly, that I had not realized that the cold came from the steel of his sword. The world swirled around me as I fell to my knees. He was seriously repented and begged me to fight the pain. I closed my eyes, fainting into oblivion. I later awoke in that armor, devoid of speech and freewill. My brother thought I still had a shred of autonomy, but he just fooled himself.” says Joachim. “What my brother is attempting to do will only bring destruction to the lands. He seeks to find a means to create beings born from his divine bloodline and that of men. Those who would be just like us and would end this old racial war.” Joachim hovers closer to you. “Please young maiden, stop my brother. You possess the weapon he has been searching for, the silver gauntlets. You can beat him!” Proceed to **306**.

306

The blue mist vanishes slowly from sight. Demerius looks at you for a moment and says: “Clearly, there is more to you than meets the eye, fair Ambrosine.” He turns towards the sands of the desert and says: “We must hurry back. Hectyr will have Larton under control and I must be present to set the rest of the affairs in motion.”

You sit behind Demerius, who is mounted on his horse, and heads back towards Larton with his men. After several hours you see the castle in the distance. You notice there are specks of light across the surface of the central tower. As you near the castle you realize there is a fire, something is burning in the castle. “How is this possible? The castle is under attack!” shouts Demerius. Both of you rush to towards the gates and enter by the stone-paved walkways. Zipping past the center square, Demerius dismounts his horse in one swift move. You leap off yours and follow Demerius up the stairs. Screaming and the clashing of metal is heard from beyond the top of the stairs. You arrive at the top and see Demerius’s soldiers battling red armored soldiers. They seem not to notice you as you head towards the throne room. You climb up the stairs, making you way through fallen bodies lying on the stone steps. You enter Leon’s throne room.

Radagaisus holds Hectyr from the neck of his collar. On the right of Radagaisus stands the tall man, donning his red robe. “Where is your king?!!” shouts Radagaisus. “He... he left for...” pleads Hectyr. “Stop!” yells Demerius. “Let go of him, Radagaisus! Your attacks on this castle are without reason” Demerius raises his sword towards Radagaisus. With a menacing grin, Radagaisus laughs subtly while looking at Demerius. “So insistent on saving this forsaken kingdom. Though unimportant to me, you do however have something of mine. Something I had been unable to retrieve until now.” says Radagaisus. He stares at you and lowers his gaze to yours arms. “I’d never thought you’d be the one to claim them. Had I known then I would have snatched you from your father. This means you were the one, the descendant of that foul creature. Only you could take the gauntlets.” says Radagaisus. “Fear not your majesty, for you punishment will be much milder. Give me the girl and I’ll see to it myself.” Demerius turns to look at you and gives you a small smile. He turns to stare at Radagaisus: “I would rather face death than allow you to harm others.” “Have it your” Radagaisus is interrupted. “No need to tarnish yourself my lord.” says the tall man. “Leave them to me and take the gauntlets.”

“My thanks Guyon.” says Radagaisus looking at the tall man. Guyon makes a subtle nod as red armored soldiers attempt to restrain you and Demerius. Demerius however, swings his blade twice effortlessly and brings the soldiers to the ground. Guyon halts as Demerius shouts: “Men! At the tower!”. Radagaisus throws Hectyr across the room. He lands with a crash beside Demerius who helps him to his feet. Two of Demerius’s soldiers enter the throne room. Radagaisus looks at Guyon for a moment then looks at you and says: “At the ready Guyon, time to slay the pests!”

Battle

Type S

Guyon: Hit points 20, Attack points 5.

Radagaisus: Hit points 25, Attack points 6.

Guyon lies dead on the ground next to Radagaisus. Radagaisus lies on the ground, kneeling with one arm supporting his body. He raises his head with difficulty to look at you. “You... Ambrosine... You have no idea what you are. You are just like me.” He pauses. “Divine guardian blood courses through you... What do you think men will do to you when they find out? Welcome you with open arms?” Radagaisus stares at you with a grin.

Radagaisus turns to face the ground coughing out a splotch of blood. “Ahhrg... Ambrosine, men will betray you and when they do, you will stand alone. Arrrg!” Radagaisus wails and falls completely to the ground. “You... will... be... alone...” Radagaisus ousts his final breath as Demerius places his hand on your shoulder. “I do not know what he means. However, I am certain that you are not like him.” says Demerius. He smiles and says. “You have suffered enough. It is time for you to lead a peaceful life.”

You leave the castle alongside Demerius and approach the entrance gate. Radagaisus’s remaining soldiers lay dead on the ground and some are held captive by Demerius’s soldiers. “I expected no less!” cheers Demerius. A group of soldiers cheer loudly at the sight of the two of you approaching them.

Several minutes later, you enter Larton castle alongside Demerius and his men. Some of the soldiers and townsfolk are working hard rebuilding the damaged walkways and the facades of the castle. “It will take time to have the kingdom back the way it was.” says Demerius. “I cannot thank you enough maiden Ambrosine. You have brought a chance of prosperity to a decaying kingdom; I am eternally indebted to you.” He pauses for a moment to look around and then turns to you: “A service such as this will not be without reward”.

Months later, you stand in front of Demerius amongst the townsfolk of Larton. You are inside a wondrous courtyard filled with birds of paradise, an emerald fountain and porcelain statues. You are kneeling in front of King Demerius as he places a medal necklace on you. He takes your hand to bring you up to your feet and asks you to face the crowd. “Larton! I give you your champion Ambrosine of Cirencester.” The crowd roars with cheers as you smile at it.

“You have no idea what you are. You are just like me. You...will...be...alone...” Radagaisus’s words are still echoing through your mind.

THE END