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Joel Marler
Games

PORTRAIT OF A TROUBLED ARTIST

A Tunnels & Trolls Solitaire Adventure



Written by Joel Marler

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About the Author:

Joel Marler is a poet, novella-ist, and gamebook writer for the Tunnels and Trolls system. When he's not writing he's an English and music teacher, and when he's not teaching he's a fantasy and sci-fi author. His collected works can be found at joelholmesmarler@wordpress.com, and he can be contacted at joelholmesmarler@gmail.com

Information:

Portrait of a Troubled Artist, a Tunnels & Trolls solitaire adventure by Joel Marler. Illustrated by Stanley Ditko. Published by Joel Marler Games, 2017. Tunnels & Trolls was originally created by Ken St Andre. T&T and Tunnels & Trolls are trademarks of Flying Buffalo Inc and are used with permission. Visit <http://www.flyingbuffalo.com> for more information.

Dedicated to my step-father, Brendan McGorry, who has tirelessly created art in his own, authentic style.

A solo campaign for a level one or two wizard.

Character sheets can be found at the bottom of the book. Bandit, creature, item, rest, spell, and talent appendixes can also be found there. All italicised creatures, items, and spells in the adventure are included in the appendixes. Do not

reference creatures to help you decide whether to fight them (unless you cast the spell *Know Your Foe*): reference them while you fight them instead.

This adventure is loosely based on the free abridged rulebook with the following **rule additions/clarifications/assumptions**:

1) All items that have a wizardry requirement are also additive in their requirement, just as non-magical items are in their strength and dexterity requirements. For instance, to use an *amulet of rubber*, which requires 10 wizardry to equip, and a *dancing dagger*, which requires three wizardry to equip, your character would need at least 13 wizardry in total.

2) I assume players are playing with magic resistance (remember it goes down as you and the opponent spend wizardry).

3) Targets of spells that do damage may choose to lose wizardry instead of constitution. If a foe doesn't have wizardry listed as an attribute, assume they don't have any.

4) The level that you may cast spells at is capped by your overall level.

5) You may carry kilograms of weight equal to your strength quintupled. Any item that hasn't been given a weight is basically weightless.

6) The dice and adds an opponent gets is reduced along with its MR.

7) If you know a spell or have a talent or item that should let you solve a problem in your own way, you can adjudicate it yourself. I can't account for everything! For example, let's say that you need to swim through a lake filled with poisonous sea snakes: if you know the spell *fly me* you should let yourself fly

over the sea snakes and get to the new section unharmed.

If the abridged rulebook is too long for your tastes use the **abridged abridged rulebook** instead:

1) Roll three dice eight times. These determine your starting strength, constitution, dexterity, speed, intelligence, wizardry, luck, and charisma in that order.

2) To increase one of your eight attributes multiply that attribute by 10. It costs that many adventure points (APs) to increase the attribute by one. If your character has 12 luck, for instance, it would cost 120 adventure points to increase your luck to 13. You can do this anytime.

3) Divide your intelligence by three. You begin the game with that many spells. You can choose your initial spells from the following: *Detect Magic*, *It's Elementary*, *Knock Knock*, *Know Your Foe*, *Lock Tight*, *Oh Go Away*, *Oh There It Is*, and *Will-o-Wisp*. You can learn new spells for 1000 gold pieces per level of the spell learnt between adventures. A level five spell would cost 5,000 gold pieces, for instance. All but the last digit of your wizardry must be at least as high as the level of the spell to be able to cast it. To cast a level five spell you would need a wizardry level of at least 50, for instance. You can cast each spell you know once. They recharge when you sleep.

4) You need to roll a 13 to pass a check plus the level of the check times five (a level zero check needs a roll of 13 to pass; a level two check needs a roll of 23 to pass). You roll two dice and add the relevant attribute to see if you pass. So for a level one luck check you would roll two dice, add your luck attribute to the roll, and pass the check with a combined roll of 18.

5) To win a fight you need to pass a level zero strength, dexterity, or wizardry check. Look at all but the last digit of your combined foes' MR (or all but the last digit of each foe's

strength, dexterity, and wizardry combined): take that away from the number you roll. If you lose the fight you die...

6) Your constitution is also your life total. When you take damage it goes down by that amount. When you sleep it's restored.

An example:

You roll three dice eight times, rolling an eight, seven, eleven, thirteen, fourteen, nine, nine, and ten. This means your character has eight strength, seven constitution, eleven dexterity, thirteen speed, fourteen intelligence, nine wizardry, nine luck, and ten charisma. You divide your intelligence by three to get four: this means you get to choose four spells to begin with. You choose *Take That You Fiend*, *Will-o-Wisp*, *Knock Knock*, and *Detect Magic*. All but the last digit of your wizardry needs to be at least as high as the level of these level one spells to cast them, so as your wizardry is only nine at the moment you will need to raise your wizardry to 10 to be able to cast anything (you don't have any digits preceding the final digit of your wizardry attribute as your wizardry attribute's currently a single digit!)

You begin your adventure by needing to push to one side the boulder blocking the entrance to a cave. You are asked to make a level one strength check. You roll two dice which add up to 11, then add your strength to this dice roll for a total of 19. As this is at least 18, which was the level one check target, you pass the check and are able to enter the cave.

Inside is an MR 20 cave bear. You need to pass a level zero strength, dexterity, or wizardry check to defeat it. You roll two dice which add up to seven, add your dexterity to the roll, which is 11, and take away all but the final digit of the foe's MR, which is two, leaving a total roll of 16. As this is at least 13, which was the level zero check target, you pass the check

and defeat the bear.

You're awarded 100 adventure points for doing this and decide to spend 90 of those points to increase your wizardry from nine to 10. Now that all but the last digit of your wizardry level is at least one you can cast level one spells. You cast *Will-o-Wisp* to create light, revealing a passage leading deeper into the cave. Do you enter? You can see your surroundings now but you won't be able to recast *Will-o-Wisp* until you sleep...

Introduction:

You, Blendan, are the royal portrait artist in the Rainbow Palace. For generations your family have captured (and when necessary improved) the noble visage of the reigning monarchs, imprinting their faces and frames on framed silk. Thanks to the decades of experience you've had doing this, and thanks to the centuries of accumulated wisdom passed on to you from your father, you always found the role to be simple. You were richly rewarded by your patrons, and greatly expanded the family's art collection with the gold given you.

Your troubles began when the new King ascended the throne: you simply could not capture the tone of his nicotined skin. When you tried blending yellow paint into your pastel tones it looked disturbingly sickly, but when you added nothing you couldn't capture his likeness at all. Now, in his immature impetuosity, he's threatened to dismiss you unless you can paint his coronation ceremony within the next month. A tall order indeed...

Your only hope is to create an entirely new kind of paint to capture the King's tone of skin. Curdled *hydra milk*, crushed *pink dragon scales*, and ground *mountain tooth* should form a good basis: you'll have to experiment from there. If you knock back a bottle of elvish limoncello you should be able to knock out the painting over an afternoon if you have to, although

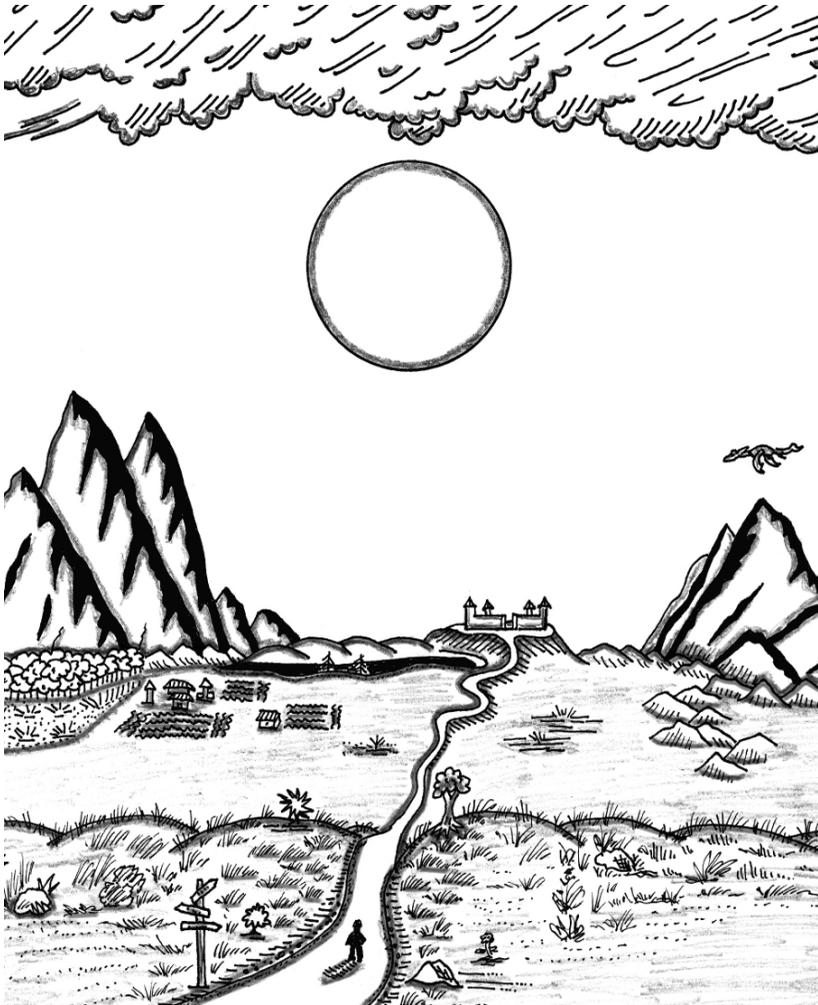
spending more time on the painting itself will result in a better job of it (and quite likely greater rewards from the King for your efforts) - the important thing is to create the paint before the month is up, ***so make sure to mark each night that passes*** so that you don't absent-mindedly pass the mark (it's the third of May now and the painting's due on the evening of the 31st). Now, no more dillydallying listening to the exposition - off you go!

You lock the front door of your studio apartment and tuck the key under the pot of lavender (for you might lose it if you bring it with you). If you leave the palace immediately, go to **1**. If you discuss your plans with the royal hunter, go to **10**. If you discuss your plans with the royal apothecary, go to **20**. If you see if the garrison captain can prepare you for your quest, go to **30**. If you say goodbye to your mistress before you leave, go to **40**. If you prepare for your adventure by exploring the palace's dungeoneering district, go to **90**.

1 - It's an unpropitious day to begin your adventure. The cerulean sky is streaked by slate clouds, and a foul wind strips the trees of their remaining sage, salmon, and sepia leaves. The thin moon is barely visible in the firmaments above. You button up the top of your vermilion and ochre jacket and rub your cream coloured hands together for warmth.

All around you is a fairly homogenous landscape of fields and cottages. Far in the distance you can see a lake to the south of the palace, hills to the south-east, mountains to the east (around which dragons soar), a fort to the north-east, swamps to the north, an exceptionally tall mountain to the north-west, expansive farms to the west, and a town to the south-west.

If you travel towards the lake, go to **9**; if you travel towards the hills, go to **7**; if you travel towards the dragon mountains, go to **19**; if you travel towards the fort, go to **17**; if you travel towards the swamps, go to **29**; if you travel towards the exceptionally



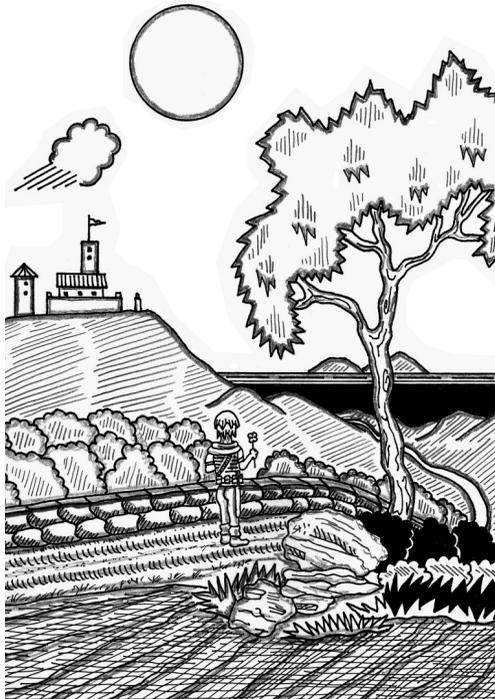
tall mountain, go to **27**; if you travel towards the large farms, go to **39**; if you travel towards the town, go to **37**.

2 - You walk towards the fort all day, but unfortunately you cannot make it there before sunset. You're only a few kilometres away from the Iron Chalice's metal walls, but they would never admit guests during the night anyway: you sleep

outside in the cold instead, finding a bridge under which to slumber. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You awaken to the thundering of military carriages traversing the stone arch above you, and waste no time following them to the fort. If you attempt to enter the fort, go to **207**.

If you have no interest in military matters you may instead walk south-east to the dragon mountains at **19**, catch a military carriage to the mountains at **218**, walk south-east to the generals' tent at **247**, catch a military carriage to the generals' tent at **523** if you possess a *travel pass*, walk east to the trenches at **297**, catch a military carriage to the trenches at **533** if you possess a *travel pass*, walk north-east to the trenches at **228**, catch a military carriage to the trenches at **543** if you possess a *travel pass*, walk north to the swamp at **336**, catch a military carriage to the swamp at **238** if you possess a *travel pass*, walk north-west to the marshland at **29**, catch a military carriage to the marshland at **226** if you possess a *travel pass*, walk south-west to the palace at **288**, or catch a military carriage to the palace at **52** if you possess a *travel pass*, or catch a civilian carriage to the palace at **286** for 20 gold coins.



3 - Make a level two dexterity check. If you pass, go to **33**. If you fail, go back to the second paragraph of **31**.

4 - As you walk through the farms you come across a wire fence. Not thinking much of it, you grab hold of it and attempt to jump over.

Unfortunately it's enchanted with a level one *zapp!* spell, and you flop onto the other side of the fence almost unconscious. If you survive the shock, take a level four intelligence check: if you pass you learn the spell.

Afterwards, stumble on your way to **39**.

5 - Mistress Pain smiles. 'I am pleased that you spend the night with me when you have pressing business. Put on the collar.' You buckle the collar around your neck, bark and pretend to strain against the leash, and pretend to exhaust yourself and be led to her boudoir.

A painful sequence of events takes place over the night, inflicting two piercing damage (you don't get any rest during which you could have healed from your wounds). During the twilight hours you lie next to your mistress in agony.

It strikes you that much of her equipment could be useful on your quest. She owns a *baton*, *brass knuckles*, a *sinuous whip*, a *strangling cord*, *caltrops*, a *weighted net*, *leather armour*, *curare*, *spider venom*, and 113 gold coins. If you clean her flat out and foot it, go to **36**. If you wait in bed until she wakes, go to **21**.

6 - You spend the rest of today fencing, firing arrows, riding horses, crawling through mud, and marching. At the end you're issued a regulation *short sword*, *very light bow*, *sheaf of 24 arrows*, and *leather jerkin*. The intense training raises either

your strength, constitution, dexterity, or speed by one and leaves you crawling to your bed exhausted. You wake up feeling much better prepared the next day. Go back to the **introduction**'s final paragraph.

7 - You have a pleasant, if tiring, walk to and through the hills. You lay down once the stars appear above, and drift off to a pleasant sleep. Consult the *rest appendix* unless the date is between the 6th and 10th, in which case go to **314**.

You awake the next morning in pleasant spirits. Your mood is disturbed, however, by the sobbing of a young woman further down the hill.



You may console the woman at **514**, hunt blue-tufted monkeys at **428**, forage for *dragonbane* at **519** if you've had the plant described to you, walk north-west towards the palace at **288**, northwards towards the dragon mountains at **19**, north-west towards the generals' tent at **247**, westwards towards the roosting grounds at **488**, or eastwards towards the lake's shore at **38**.

8 - You show your pass, enter the carriage, and lounge on the pillowed bench as you trundle towards the fort. After only a couple of hours you arrive, and hop out feeling fresh as a daisy.

If you attempt to enter the fort, go to **207**. If you have no interest in military matters you may instead travel south-east to the dragon mountains at **209**, south-east to the generals' tent at **247**, east to the trenches at **297**, north-east to the trenches at **228**, north to the swamp at **238**, north-west to the marshland at **187**, or south-west to the palace at **190**.

9 - A carriage service connects the palace and the lake. It costs 20 gold pieces to use. If you use it, go to **24**. If you decide to walk instead, go to **38**.

10 - It takes all day to track down the royal hunter, but you eventually find him in the King's forest. You help him carry a brace of gaily coloured blood-splattered birds back to the palace (the red predominates in their plumage.)

Along the way you tell him that you want to create a new tone of paint using curdled *hydra's milk*, crushed *pink dragon scales*, and ground *mountain tooth*. He advises you to only attack the hydra and dragon with the help of a band of renowned heroes, who you may be able to find in a tavern to the north. He also informs you that the hydra's wounds should be cauterised by fire and that dragons die instantly if hurt with a weapon covered in dragonsbane, which is a furry plant with eight leaves that grows in the hills south-east of the palace. He tells you that dragons can be found to the east and hydras nesting to the north in the swamps. You thank him and help him carry the birds all the way to the royal kitchen. It's too late to set out now: you dine with him and go to bed stuffed to the gills (you at least wake up feeling prepared for your journey.) Go to the **introduction's** final paragraph.



11 - Make a level two strength check. If you pass, go to **33**. If you fail, go back to the second paragraph of **31**.

12 - It is a long and demoralising walk to the town: although you try and catch a lift from the carriages they clatter right past you, the brackish puddles they plow through splashing onto

you from time-to-time.

It's dusk by the time you arrive at the market town, and you desperately need to rest. If you head for the nearest inn, go to **256**; if you camp outside the town limits, go **266**.

13 - You use up all of your wizardry to slowly create water inside the cauldron. Not only does this regulate the temperature of the broth but it eventually causes the liquid to overflow and quench the fire underneath. Go to **33**.

14 - Make a level two luck check. If you pass, go to **32**. If you fail, you find nothing but vegetables and go back to the second paragraph of **31**.

15 - The black-widow tattoo on Mistress Pain's neck throbs with anger. 'You'll spend the night with me when it's convenient, will you? I don't think so! Vile gimp, dare not show your face here again!' She drives you out of her apartment with her whip, dealing two piercing damage. Go back to the **introduction's** final paragraph.

16 - You kiss her boots and explain that most of the rewards given you by the king are used to replenish your art supplies. You begin to pedantically rattle off all of your expenses but are interrupted by your mistress. Go to **25**.

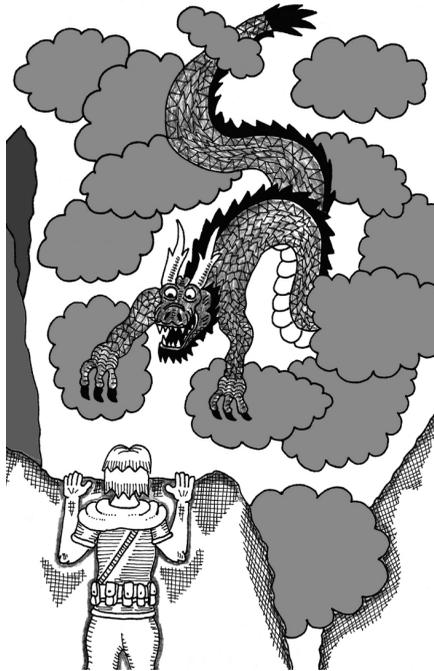
17 - A carriage service connects the palace and the fort. It costs 20 gold pieces to use. A military carriage service also exists for those who possess a *travel pass*. If you use the civilian carriage service, go to **34**. If you use the military carriage service, go to **8**. If you decide to walk instead, go to **2**.

18 - You pay the fare and hop in. The journey is quick and uneventful, and the day is still young by the time you hop off and walk through the town gates into a sprawling market. Go to the third paragraph of **266**.

19 - It's a long and exhausting trek towards the mountains, but you finally reach them by sunset. Dragons fly above you: definitely not a place to linger, but linger you must! Consult the *rest appendix*, and take away five from your roll.

You wake up the next morning to a dragon standing over you, salivating at the sight of its breakfast. If the date is between the third and 18th the dragon is a *bronze drake*; if the date is between the 19th and 31st it's an *old pink dragon*.

Dispatch (or be eaten by) the greedy beast before escaping for safer climes.



If you walk northwards towards the fort, go to **2**. If you walk north-east towards the trenches, go to **297**. If you walk east towards the generals' tents, go to **247**. If you walk south-east towards the roosting grounds, go to **488**. If you walk south towards the hills, go to **7**. If you walk west towards the palace, go to **288**. If you possess a *travel pass*, you may also catch a military carriage to the fort at **8**.

20 - It's easy to find the apothecary's room in the castle: fluorescent smoke billows from the crack under the door and stains your clothes orange. You open the door, revealing a willow-bent man coughing hackingly within a cloud of luminous

vapour. 'A little accident with the voluminous puff-root...' You lead him outside of his workshop, explaining that you want to make a paint out of curdled *hydra milk*, crushed *pink dragon scales*, and ground *mountain tooth*.



'A fine idea, it should work be splendidly! Just be aware that the hydra milk will require 10 days to curdle to the right degree. Try not to let it curdle any longer, otherwise the paint will clot. Oh, and the dragon scales - I'm sure you could simply buy them from the apothecary's on Lake Calamere. Good luck!' And with that advice he hobbles back to his workshop, wafting the thinning air with his hand. Go back to the **introduction's** final paragraph.

21 - A couple of hours later Mistress Pain awakes. She smiles. 'Tell me when the painting is almost finished. I shall tell the King that I find it most agreeable during one of our sessions. Now get to work!' You thank your mistress profusely and simpler out of her apartment. Go back to the **introduction's** final paragraph.

22 - The dragon deposits you in its nest and flies away.

In the nest is a sleeping newly-born dragon, a little smaller than yourself, and an empty eggshell. The nest is tucked into the side of a cliff. If you attack the whelp before it wakes up, go to **61**. If you hide in the empty eggshell, go to **46**. If you climb down the cliff, go to **79**.

23 - You scream for all you're worth and a couple of minutes later several cannibals emerge from the jungle. They salivate uncontrollably as they watch you braise over the next few hours. You may not have pleased the King but at least you pleased the tribe.

24 - The trip is quick and uneventful. Go to the second to last paragraph of **58**.

25 - Mistress Pain smiles. 'Your generosity pleases me. Tell me when the painting is almost finished. I shall tell the King that I find it most agreeable during one of our sessions. Now get to work!' You thank your mistress profusely and simper out of her apartment. Go back to the **introduction's** final paragraph.

26 - You kiss her boots and beg for her pardon. You're interrupted by a blow on your back.

The black-widow tattoo on Mistress Pain's neck throbs with anger. 'Pardon? For such an insult? I don't think so! Vile gimp, dare not show your face here again!' She drives you out of her apartment with her baton, dealing two piercing damage. Go back to the **introduction's** final paragraph.

27 - It's a hard enough trek getting to the mountain as it is, so you have little energy to climb it by the time you reach its base. It's already the afternoon, so perhaps you're justified in resting for the night.

If you camp next to the stream, go to **54**; if you enter the quaint alpine inn, go to **64**; if you press ahead and climb the mountain, go to **74**.

28 - Make a level one dexterity and intelligence check. If you pass, go to **33**. If you fail, go back to the second paragraph of **31**.

29 - You trek all day towards the fetid swamps, and eventually reach there by nightfall. A rough tavern stands nestled within the sludge: if you find a place to rest there for the night, go to **357**; if you set up camp on the firmest ground you can find, go to **367**.

30 - The captain is a craggy man who wears the palace's standard-issue military livery, a rainbow trench coat that blends in perfectly with the palace walls. 'Morning Blenden, how's tricks?' he says as you shake his hand. You explain that you need to collect a bottle of curdled *hydra milk*, a handful of crushed *pink dragon scales*, and a vial of ground *mountain tooth* to make a new tone of paint, and that you're hoping he can prepare you for the dangers you may face along the way. 'Holy cow mate, you're mincemeat if you try and collect that stuff yourself!' he says, his thin face blanching in perturbation. 'I absolutely insist that you at least carry out the garrison's one-day crash course. Here', he says, handing you a technicoloured khaki uniform, 'put this on and get in line!'

If you can spare a day to equip yourself for battle, go to **6**. If you need to leave the castle toot-sweet go to the **introduction's** final paragraph.

31 - You wake up bound and gagged with flax cords inside a large stone cauldron. Underneath the cauldron is a roaring fire which slowly heats up the broth - and yourself. All of your belongings lie in a pile next to a tree.

If you would like to try and break the cords with raw strength, go to **11**. If you would like to try and wriggle out of the cords, go to **3**. If you like to try and untie the cords, go to **28**. If you would like to fish around in the broth, go to **14**. If you would like to call out for help, go to **50**. If you can cast the spell *it's elementary*, go to **13**. The stock is heating up as you do all this. Before attempting an action from this paragraph take damage equal to the number of actions you've already attempted: zero damage for your first action, one for your second, two for your third, and so on.

32 - Your fingers close around a shellfish bubbling in the broth. Its edge is sharp enough to saw through the cords, which you do. Go to **33**.

33 - You jump out of the cauldron and madly dash through the dark forest, tripping over vines and tree roots but continuing on and on for almost an hour. Eventually, wearied out, you collapse on the forest floor - as dangerous as it will be to sleep here you must do so. You wipe away a circle of leaf litter and settle down for the night. Make a level zero luck check: if you fail, go to **6** of the *rest appendix*; if you pass, roll for the *rest appendix* as normal.



Go to the third paragraph of **77** if you survive the night.

34 - You pay the fare, enter the carriage, and lounge on the pillowed bench as you trundle towards the fort. After only a couple of hours you arrive, and hop out feeling fresh as a daisy.

If you attempt to enter the fort, go to **207**. If you have no interest in military matters you may instead travel south-east to the dragon mountains at **209**, south-east to the generals' tent at **247**, east to the trenches at **297**, north-east to the trenches at **228**, north to the swamp at **238**, north-west to the marshland at **187**, or south-west to the palace at **190**.

35 - Mistress Pain fondles her baton in contemplation. 'Your stinginess displeases me. Give me one good reason not to beat you on the spot. Make a level two intelligence or charisma check. If you pass, go to **16**. If you fail, go to **26**.

36 - You wrap her belongings in your knapsack and slink into the fading night. The King will hear of this so you better make sure your painting is extra good! You better stay out of the castle in the meantime. Go to **1**.

37 - A carriage service connects the palace and the town. It costs 20 gold pieces to use. If you use it, go to **18**. If you decide to walk instead, go to **12**.

38 - Your walk is long but uneventful, and by the time you arrive at the shore of the lake the sunlight is sinking into its surface. You could either rough it and sleep on the beach at **58**, or knock on the door of a houseboat at **68**.

39 - You watch the farmers tend to their crops and livestock as you walk towards the large farms, and finally decide to rest for the night once the sun begins to set. If you lie underneath the stars, go to **414**; if you knock on the door of a cottage and ask for a bed for the night, go to **424**.

40 - You use your spare key to enter your mistress' apartment. You timidly knock on the door of the lounge, enter, and see her sprawled in a leather armchair (virtually everything in her apartment is made of leather). 'Mistress Pain, your humble

servant begs your attention' you say, prostrating yourself on her obsidian floor. You make a movement to stand, but she cracks you on the head with her whip. 'Insolent slave, must I train you again? You only stand when I say so!' You're unsure whether you can now stand, so you think it safest to remain in your obsequious position. 'Now stand and explain the reason for your visit!'

You jump to attention and tell her that you will be unable to visit her for the next week. You explain that your job's on the line. 'And is your job more important than me then, hmm?'

Mistress Pain says, waving the whip menacingly. If you promise you'll at least spend tonight with her, go to **5**. If you



promise to spend the night with her as soon as you get back, go to **15**. If you promise to give her half of any rewards the King gives you for the painting as compensation, go to **25**. If you promise to give her 1/10th of any rewards the King gives you for the painting as compensation, go to **35**.

41 - If you survive the fight the merchant thanks you warmly and gives you a *pick-me-up potion* for your pains (for you are now in much pain). You accompany him and the wizard to **12**, and part on amiable terms.

42 - You wade into the river and begin greedily panning for gold. You're already thinking about the artwork you'll buy once you find a big nugget. Make a luck check then roll dice equal to the level you rolled: you find nuggets over the course of the day worth that value cubed. I hope you lucked out because it's time to rest now: if you camp next to the stream again, go to **54**; if you enter the quaint alpine inn, go to **64**.

43 - You make use of the ibex's momentum to throw it down the side of the mountain (it bleats in shame and terror as it rolls down). You reach the summit just before sunset.

The view is well-worth the trek, not just due to its aesthetic value but due to its utilitarian value too. You have an excellent view of the landscape surrounding the mountain:

To the north is marshland.

Far to the north is a beach.

To the north-west are forested hills. Beyond lies an almost endless mountain range not worth investigating.

To the west is a mountain in the shape of a tooth. Beyond lies the mountain range.

To the south-west are large farms.

Far to the south-west lies hilly pasture.

Even further south are small camps erected.

Far south is a town from which camels wend.

Far, far south stands a mysterious tower.

South-east is the palace.

Far, far south-east is a lake, hills, and mountains from which pink dragons fly.

Far east is a fort.

North-east are more marshes.
Far north-east are fens.

If you own a *pair of binoculars* you can make out additional details:

Flying around the marshes to the north are many birds. They leave a sparkling trail in their wake.

On the seashore far to the north sail pirate ships.

Within the forested hills to the north-west wander tribes of savages.

In the small camps far south are armed men.

The town far south contains an unusual number of markets.

On the lake shore to the south-east stands a small building.

Very far south lies a fishing village on the shore of the lake.

Very far south-east lie hills on which rest nests. Whelps and drakes fly from there occasionally.

Very far east stretch trenches from which palace soldiers launch volleys of arrows. It would not be safe to travel beyond the trench into enemy (and friendly) fire.

Very far north-east lie swamps in which hydras lurk. There's also a long beach on the shore of which sail military and merchant ships.

You see carriages clattering between the palace and the fort, the palace and the lake, the palace and the town, the town and the fishing village, and the fishing village and the lake.

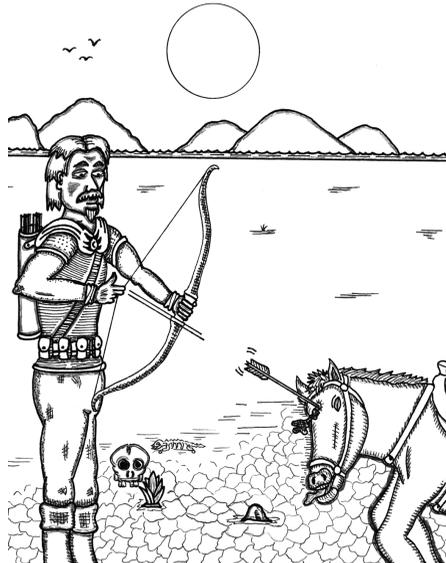
You see carriages clattering between the palace and the fort, the palace and the lake, the palace and the town, the town and the fishing village, and the fishing village and the lake.

It's a breathtaking experience - you wish you had time to paint it, but instead you quickly sketch the view, creating a *rough sketch* if you don't have binoculars and a *fine sketch* if you do, before descending the mountain before it gets too dark. You

reach the base: now, do you camp next to the stream at **54**, or enter the quaint alpine inn go to **64**?

44 - A carriage service connects the palace and the lake. It costs 20 gold pieces to use. If you use it, go to **286**. If you decide to walk instead, go to **82**.

45 - You slip away undetected, riding you know not where. You trot for many hours through the arid landscape, and are eventually forced to abandon your horse once it refuses to carry on (you mercifully fire an arrow through its head). Just as you're giving up hope you spot a well some distance ahead. You crawl towards it with relief.



You drink deeply from the well and, as it is getting dark, spend the night next to it (consult the *rest appendix*.) The next morning you spend the day, once again, travelling in a random direction. You may walk north-east to the tooth-shaped mountain at **483**, eastwards to the large farms at **39**, south-east to the town at **12**, southwards, bearing east, to the camps at **123**, or southwards to the camps at **493**.

46 - You tuck yourself in the eggshell. You soon hear the whelp awake, and see it peer inside the shell. If you attack it, go to **61**. If you attempt to screech like a young dragon, go to **69**.

47 - You walk along the the shaft for about twenty minutes,

eventually arriving in a cavern containing a well. You peer down into the water and see a *mithril double bladed broad axe* glowing at the bottom.

If you drink from the well, go to **220**; if you jump into the well to retrieve the axe, go to **230**; if you decide to exit this room, go to **240**.

48 - You walk along the shaft for almost an hour, and eventually reach a large cavern.

If the date is between the third and the 11th, go to **270**; if the date is between the 12th and the 21st, go to **280**; if the date is between the 22nd and 31st, or the month is over, go to **290**.

49 - You walk up the tunnel until it splits in two. You may walk up the tunnel to the left to **105**, or walk up the tunnel to the right at **186**.

50 - Make a level two constitution check. If you pass, go to **23**. If you fail, go back to the second paragraph of **31**.

51 - You walk along the tunnel for about twenty minutes until you emerge in an empty cavern. All you find here are scattered rocks, three *clay grenades*, and a handful-worth of *green rocks*.

A tunnel snakes out of the cavern behind you, which you can walk up to **210**, and a tunnel exits the cavern up from your left, which you can walk along to **48**.

52 - You flash your pass and hop into the carriage. After a short, smooth trip you clatter up to the palace's pearlescent gates. Go to the third paragraph of **479**.

53 - You grab onto the ibex's horns upon impact, sliding a few feet down the scree as you negate its momentum. The ibex

shakes its head and wrests free from your grasp, then backs up and charges once again. Go back to the second paragraph of **94**.

54 - You pitch a tent on the edge of the river and settle in for the night. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up the next morning to a sunny day. Butterflies flit around the riverbank and salmon swim upstream. It must be your lucky day: you also spot a *gold nugget* gleaming in the riverbed. If you own *gold panning equipment* and you'd like to spend the day sifting for gold, go to **42**. If you climb the mountain, go to the second paragraph of **83**. If you leave this place you may walk northwards to the marshlands at **99**, north-east to the marshlands at **29**, south-east to the palace at **288**, south-west to the large farms at **4**, westwards to the tooth-shaped mountain at **66**, or north-west to the forested hills at **77**.

55 - During the next evening the *mother dragon* arrives back at her nest. You pretend to waddle around clumsily. She regurgitates something burning hot into your awaiting mouth, dealing three dice of piercing damage and giving you the talent *fire-breath* if you take at least 15 damage, then gingerly hoists you both onto her back using her teeth. She swoops down from the mountaintop, gliding on currents of air.

She lands on the edge of a lake and models how to lap up the water by ostentatiously curving her tongue. If you join her and the whelp in this activity, go to **95**. If you dive into the lake off her neck, go to **76**.

56 - The *mother dragon* swoops down and clutches you in her talons, lifts you onto her neck next to the whelp, and deposits you back at the nest. She stays a little while, preening her scales, then flies away. If you climb down the cliff, go to **79**. If you play with the whelp, go to **65**.

57 - You don't remember much when you regain consciousness on the side of the mountain that evening, but at least the ibex has wandered off. Unfortunately your speech is noticeably slurred now - permanently lose one charisma. Go to **84**.

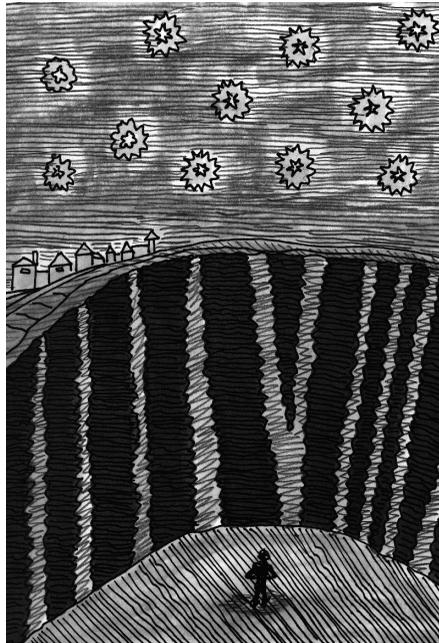
58 - Consult the *rest appendix* before reading on.

You wake up to the lapping of the waves against your feet (it must be high tide - or is that just for seas?) The morning seems pleasant enough, but you soon begin to scratch yourself all over.

Examining your body closely you see that you're covered in tiny crabs nipping you all over. Take a level one dexterity check: if you pass you manage to brush them all off before they can do any serious damage; if you fail they succeed in laying their eggs in your flesh and your constitution is lowered by two for the rest of this adventure.

After you shake the last of the crabs off yourself you look around.

The water in the lake is clear as glass, and in it red and blue fish scatter in all directions. On the shore of the lake is a run-down houseboat made of cork. Close to the shore of the lake

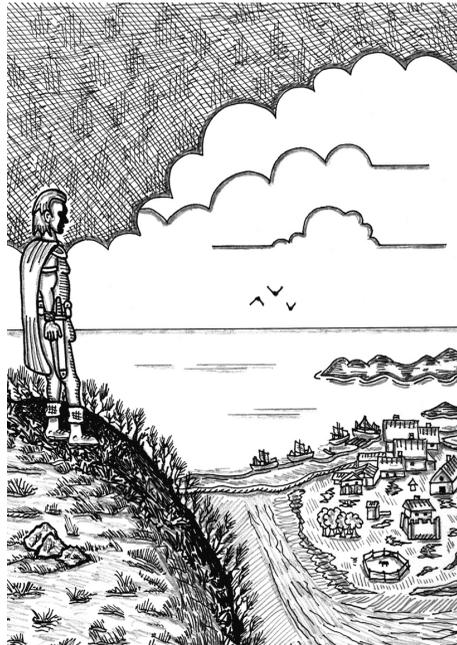


is a small island on which a building stands (if you own a *pair of binoculars* go to **101**). To the north sits the palace; to the north-east lie hills; to the north-west sprawls a town; to the west stands a mysterious tower; and to the south-west lies a village.

If you knock on the door of the houseboat, go to **68**. If you swim towards the island, go to **78**. If you travel towards the palace, go to **44**. If you walk towards the hills, go to **7**. If you walk towards the town, go to **37**. If you walk towards the mysterious tower, go to **89**. If you walk towards the village, go to **96**.

59 - You're forced to spend the last hour of your walk trekking in the dark. You finally arrive in the village and decide to take shelter in a dilapidated cottage. The door is barred, but it seems deserted so you open it with a *knock knock* spell.

You close the wooden door behind you and bolt it, just in case anyone tries to follow you inside. You find a pile of damp hay in one corner of the cottage and nestle yourself within.



'Have you come to hear my tale?' you hear someone mutter. You sit up and see a man, huddled for warmth, in the opposite corner of the room. He wears nothing but rags and a pair of

green boots.

‘Have you come to hear my tale, sir? Have you come to hear of... *them?!?*’ The man’s face is gaunt, and he stares at you with sunken eyes. A half-crazed beggar, you venture - totally insane, but harmless.

You humour him and say that you have come to hear his tale. The man croons to himself in delight. ‘Hummm... that’s the sound they make when they fly through the damp English air - hummm, hummm...’ The lunatic draws a shield in the dirt with a stick.

You ask what hums when it flies through the air. He points to the shield. ‘The flying bucklers! They’re everywhere, but you never see ‘em coming. They come during the night - maybe *tonight!!!* - and... hummm...’ You begin to tire of his babbling and try to go to sleep.

The deranged vagrant crawls over to you and pokes you with his stick. ‘Hey sir, you can’t go to sleep. When you go to sleep is when *they* get ya. It’s not safe to SLEEP! You don’t need to sleep anymore - I haven’t slept for 14 years, and it hasn’t done me a lick of harm!’ Even the moths stay clear of his clothes so foul is their stench.

You ask who *they* are. He leans over and whispers, ever so silently, into your ear: ‘Little. Green. Men. LITTLE GREEN MEN!!!’ You tell him to bugger off, and violently shove him away.

The crazy man holds out his hand expectantly. ‘100 gold coins. That’s how much I charge for my tale. I always used to charge that back in the taverns. They used to flock to hear my tale. My tale of wonder. My tale of adventure. My tale of little - green - men. And it’s all true! So cough up stranger!

If you pay him, go to **202**. If you tell him his 'tale' isn't worth a bugbear's arse, go to **212**.

60 - You thunder down the slope towards the defenceless villagers and help the outlaws cut them down. They offer no real resistance.

'Yes, a dangerous life' says the leader afterwards, turning over the corpse of the headman. He hands you your cut of the plunder, a *blood-stained dress* worth 50 gold coins. 'But a rewarding one too.'

You ride back to camp with your comrades and spend the night gambling. The next morning you are kicked awake.

'*Compadre!* Perhaps you are not brave but just lazy!' says the man in the *sombrero* sourly. 'Your brothers are ready for their work, and you are not too?' You quickly don your equipment and join seven *bandits* walking down a cobbled road.

The road becomes less and less well maintained as you walk along it until it's little more than a path through a forest. You recognise this spot: it's where the brigands found you. 'Our favourite spot to ambush. Stand behind that shrub.' You do so meekly.

You eventually hear the trudging of weary feet. Sneaking a peek from behind your shrub you spy a merchant and *battle-wizard* coming towards your group. The outlaws jump out and attack, and the wizard blasts them back as best he can. If you join the brigands, go to **70**. If you defend the travellers, go to **41**.

61 - You get a free attack on the *feeble whelp*: if it survives it attacks you.

If you survive the fight you climb down the cliff at **79**.

62 - You manage to escape the dragon and swim to **58** by nightfall without further incident.

63 - You fall onto the rocks and take five dice of damage. If you survive you find yourself at the bottom of the mountain. Go to the final paragraph of **19**.

64 - You enter a quiet inn filled with souvenir bric-a-brac. 'Welcome customer!' says the inn-keeper, who's garbed in full alpine dress. 'Nice few days coming up for climbing. What can I do for you?' Prices are painted on the wall above him (with a fine hand, it must be said): 10 gold coins for the local specialty, a magical herb called *fisslewort* (often used in preserves), 20 gold coins for a room, 50 gold coins for a set of *gold panning equipment* (the locals don't call it Mt Mint for nothing), and 100 gold coins for a *pair of binoculars*. If you get a room for the night, go to **71**; if you don't, and you exit the shop instead, go to the second paragraph of **27**.

65 - You and the whelp pretend to claw and bite each other (your nails and teeth are suspiciously blunt). Afterwards you drift off to sleep. Go to **55**.

66 - The tooth-shaped mountain is tall, and it's dusk by the time you've climbed most of it. You find a small cave to shelter in for the night. Consult the *rest appendix*.

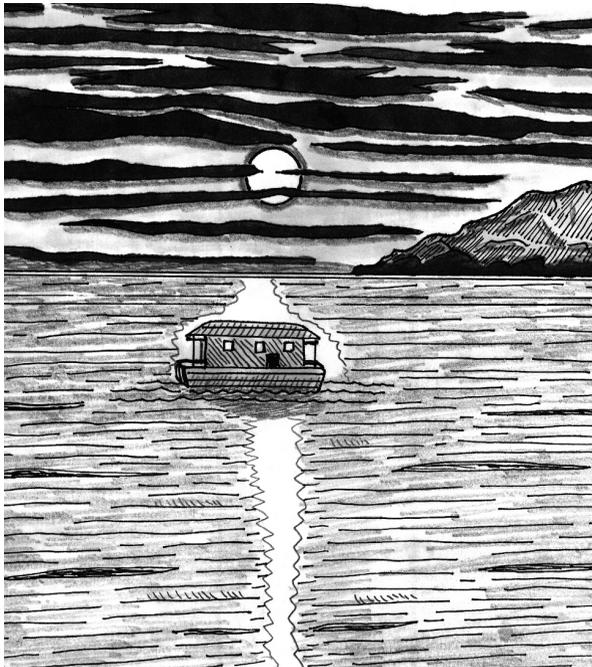
You awake in the gloaming hours of the morning to a large *vampire bat* sucking on your neck. You wrench it off and it flies at you, enraged at the interruption to its breakfast.

If you survive the fight you stuff the beast into your backpack: it would make an excellent blood sausage if roasted over a fire, effectively making it a day's worth of *provisions*. You walk out of the cave into the crisp mountain air.

You continue to walk up the mountain and eventually come across the entrance to a mine. Goblins enter and exit the tunnel carrying sacks of rock on their back. If you wait for an opportunity to enter the mine, go to **86**. If you climb to the summit of the mountain, go to **93**. If this place is too dangerous for your tastes you may walk towards the hilly pastures to the south-west at **328**, the large farms to the south-east go to **39**, or the exceptionally tall mountain go to **27**; or if you're marked by a *fish gate tattoo*, and you want to swim by river to the forested hills to the north-east, you may go to **264**.

67 - If you made the check at level three or higher, go to **43**; if you made the check at level two, go to **53**; if you made the check at level one, go to **75**; and you made the check at level zero or less, go to **81**.

68 - You walk along the creaking jetty until you get to the houseboat. There's no reply when you knock on the door. If you cast *knock knock* on the door, go to **110**. If it's night-time and you want to sleep on the beach you can rough it there at **58**.



If it's day time

you look around. The water in the lake is clear as glass, and in it minnows flit about in all directions. Close to the shore of the lake is a small island on which a building stands. To the north sits the palace; to the north-east lie hills; to the north-west sprawls a town; to the west stands a mysterious tower; and to the south-west lies a village.

If you swim towards the island, go to **78** (if the date is between the 8th and 12th or 22nd and 26th you may walk to the island instead thanks to the neap tide and skip the first paragraph of **78**.) If you walk towards the palace, go to **44**. If you walk towards the hills, go to **7**. If you walk towards the town, go to **37**. If you walk towards the mysterious tower, go to **89**. If you walk towards the village, go to **96**.

69 - You pretend to breathe out fire by casting *it's elementary* while you screech. Take a level one charisma check: if you fail you must fight the *feeble whelp* and climb down the cliff at **79** if you survive.

If you pass the check the whelp licks your face and leaves you be. Go to **85**.

70 - The wizard senses your magical capabilities and rightly regards you as his greatest threat. Each round he targets you with a *take that you fiend!* spell if possible.

If you survive the fight you plunder the wizard and the merchant of their goods along with the rest of the brigands. Your share consists of a *ring of blasting*.

One of the bandits pores over a map found on the merchant. 'Treasure!' he says, turning the map upside down. 'We must head back to camp immediately!' You and the rest of the survivors limp back to camp and spend the night discussing what to do with your leader.

It is decided that, as you proved yourself so well in the last battle, you will mount a horse and lead five *bandit horsemen* to the marked location at the northern most tip of League Beach. The journey will be dangerous - passing outside bandit country without notice by the law will be difficult, and the trip will be long - but considering how wealthy the merchant was great riches should await any survivors. The man in the *sombrero* hugs you tightly before you set off the next morning.

'*Compadre*, you are true *bandetto* now. I know you two days and I love you like a brother - no, like a sister.' He kisses you roughly on the mouth. 'Remember, my cut is a quarter.' You nod, clasp the reins, and ride with the six others into the morning sun.

How do you approach the northern beach though: by slipping through the more densely populated centre of the realm or by hugging the kingdom's wild frontier? Go to **301** if you brazenly flout the forces of order, and **311** if you trek through the realm's untamed backwaters.

71 - The inn-keeper leads you to your room, above the bed of which a tacky painting of the mountain hangs. 'Here it is sir, the Emperor's Suite. Leave your shoes by the door: don't want gravel in the carpet!' He hands you the key and leaves you.

You wake up the next morning to a breakfast of milk, toast, apple, and fondue. You write something pleasant in the guestbook and exit the inn.

If you climb the mountain, go to the second paragraph of **83**. If you leave this place you may walk northwards to the marshlands at **99**, north-east to the marshlands at **29**, south-east to the palace at **288**, south-west to the large farms at **4**, westwards to the tooth-shaped mountain at **66**, or north-west to the forested hills at **77**.

72 - You make the cut and are taken by military carriage to

392, arriving there the following night.

73 - The ibex head-butts you, sending you rolling down the mountain. You break your arm as you fall - for the rest of this adventure you are one-handed (you may still cast spells). If you were already one-handed you are now effectively hand-tied for the rest of this adventure and might as well give this one up now. You land at



the base of the mountain: as you need to tend to your wound you need to rest. If you camp next to the stream, go to **54**; if you enter the quaint alpine inn, go to **64**.

74 - Rest is a luxury you can't afford: as exhausted as you are you hike up the mountain regardless. Halve your strength until you rest.

You follow the path up the mountain, but the path doesn't take the most direct route and you're worried you won't make it before sunset. If you keep to the path, go to **84**. If you take a shortcut, go to **94**.

75 - You try to head-butt the ibex as it does you, but you're sent reeling. Make a level one constitution check: if you pass, go to **91**; if you fail, go to **57**.

76 - The mother dragon cries out in alarm. How long can you swim underwater for, and can you avoid the dragon's sight? Take a constitution check followed by a level three luck check, lowering the level of the luck check by the level of the constitution check you made. If you pass the luck check, go to **62**. If you fail, go to **56**.

77 - The sun lours above the crest of a hill as you walk into the forest, then dips out of view. You stumble through the woodland, brushing past dull silver ferns and hoisting parasitic vines out of your way.

What little light that trickles through the canopy dims as the minutes pass, and soon you can't see anything around you except the thickest of the totara trunks. As dangerous as it will be to sleep here, you must do so. You wipe away a circle of leaf litter and settle down for the night. Make a level zero luck check: if you fail, go to **6** of the *rest appendix*; if you pass, roll for the *rest appendix* as normal.

The call of wood pigeons wake you up, and in the dawn light you see a small cottage in the distance next to a river. Extremely thankful that you're not destined to die here, you walk towards it and knock on the door.

A dark-skinned man opens the door. He wears nothing but a loin-cloth, and colourful feathers adorn his hair. His ears are bedecked with carved pebbles collected from the riverbed, and he holds a quill in his hand that appears to have been dipped in blood. 'You-a are-a Blenden. I-a am-a Took-a-Taka-a-Filao-a-Fafi. You-a a art-a man. Me-a a art-a man.' He grins, revealing a set of tombstone-like teeth - abandoned

tombstones that have cracked and blackened with neglect. For an artist he seems to place little value on personal appearance, although it could just be that his tribe hasn't yet discovered an efficacious substitute for toothpaste. And of course, you probably look a bit rough too, to be fair. Took-a-Taka-a-Filao-a-Fafi gestures you inside his hut, judging by the curious way he flaps both of his hands. You take off your hat and enter.



Stretched on the walls of the hovel are three flaps of human skin covered in intricate markings: one is marked by a fish, one

by a sun, and one by a spirit. You shudder, but fortunately Took-a-Taka-a-Filao-a-Fafi seems to see you as a peer instead of a victim. You search for a hat-stand but cannot find one. 'My-a best-a arts: fish gate tattoo-a, sun gate tattoo-a, and the spirit gate tattoo-a. You-a wants? I-a do its cheap-a for you: one day-a of *provisions*-a each-a. Thissa tree land-a big hurt-a for whitey man-a, big-a stretchey - gets fish gate tattoo-a and-a swims out-a stream.' He gestures towards a hammock in the middle of the hut and lifts his quill up.

If you buy the *fish gate tattoo*, go to **104**; if you buy the *sun gate tattoo*, go to **114**; if you buy the *ghost gate tattoo*, go to **124**; if you politely decline and take your leave go to **144**.

78 - You plunge into the icy water and strike out towards the island (all of your *provisions* are ruined unless you wear a *deluxe traveller's backpack*.) You soon discover what the minnows scatter from: the lake is infested with sea snakes, one of which bites your toe if you fail a level one luck check. As you straggle onto the island you begin to feel the effects of its venom if you were bitten: your speed is permanently lowered by one for the rest of the adventure.

The island is small and featureless bar the building in its centre: a small shop on the sign of which is an apothecary's symbol. You enter.

A middle-aged woman sits erect at the counter. 'Welcome' she says curtly. 'What can I do for you?'

You ask if she has any ground *mountain teeth*, curdled *hydra milk*, or crushed *pink dragon scales* in stock. She replies that she does have the scales, which cost 3000 gold coins a handful. If you buy them, go to **115**; if you buy them with 2000 gold coins and hope she doesn't bother counting them, go to **145**; if you barter, go to **125**.

79 - There are many handholds in the cliff-face, but the climb is nonetheless dangerous as several sharp rocks lie below you. Make a level zero dexterity and strength check: if pass both, you safely descend to the final paragraph **19**; if you fail either, go to **63**.

80 - You sit by a camp fire in front of an olive skinned man wearing a *sombrero*. He is surrounded by brigands who play dice well and elvish guitar badly. Their leader takes a swig from a hazel bottle and squirts the liquid into the fire, guffawing as the spirits burst into flame. He passes the bottle to you. 'Drink up, *compadre*. You're one of us now.' You choke back a mouthful of the spicy liquid and pass the bottle to the footpad next to you. The outlaws dance and cheer at this, wildly firing arrows into the air.

'Yes, you make a fine *bandetto*' says the leader. 'It's a good life is the life of an outlaw. You take what you want. You like a man's clothes, you take the clothes. You like a man's woman, you take the woman. You like a woman's man, you take the man! We don't judge, it's the 54th century. This is our life, the life of a *bandetto*.' Arrows thud down around you, making many of the outlaws scatter.

'Drink up *compadre*, tomorrow is a big day.' You take another couple of swigs and pass out.

The next morning you wake up to the brigands arming themselves upon their horses. The man wearing the *sombrero* walks around, guiding the others. 'You sleep like you have no fear *compadre!* I like you - it is good for a *bandetto* to have no fear. Look around. They have no fear now, but when they began they shook in their boots. An outlaw has many fears. Some of them say you are not brave, just ignorant, but I like you all the same. Now, time to prepare!' He helps you into your stirrups, hands you your gear, and slaps your horse on its butt. You gallop after the others towards the hills, the leader soon

chasing up behind.

By noon you've all crossed over the hills. A village lies below you in the valley. 'Brothers!' says the man wearing the *sombrero*, 'take no prisoners! These filthy dogs have stopped paying protection for too long! *Bardana!* With a whoop and yell all the brigands charge down the slope towards the hamlet to the pealing of the church bell. If you join in the attack, go to **60**. If you make use of the tumult to escape, go to **45**.

81 - You feel like you've taken a sledgehammer to the head. Take four dice of damage, permanently lower your intelligence by one, and tumble down to **57**.

82 - The Rainbow Palace is a dull panoply of grey by the time you approach its walls. The gate is closed: you'll need to rest for the night before carrying on. If you try and find a room in the Black Cat Inn, go to **469**; if you camp outside the ramparts, go to **479**.

83 - You nimbly dodge the ibex, which charges, then rolls, down the side of the mountain. You reach the summit just before sunset.

The view is well-worth the trek, not just thanks to the aesthetic value of the view but due to the view's utilitarian view too. You have an excellent view of the landscape surrounding the mountain:

To the north is marshland.

Far to the north is a beach.

To the north-west are forested hills. Beyond lies an almost endless mountain range not worth investigating.

To the west is a mountain in the shape of a tooth. Beyond lies the mountain range.

To the south-west are large farms.

Far to the south-west lies hilly pasture.

Even further south small camps are erected.
 Far south is a town from which camels wend.
 Far, far south stands a mysterious tower.
 South-east is the palace.
 Far, far south-east is a lake, hills, and mountains from which
 pink dragons fly.
 Far east is a fort.
 North-east are more marshes.
 Far north-east are fens.

If you own a *pair of binoculars* you can make out additional details:

Flying around the marshes to the north are many birds. They
 leave a sparkling trail in their wake.
 Within the forested hills to the north-west wander tribes of
 savages.
 In the small camps far south are armed men.
 The town far south contains an unusual number of markets.
 On the lake shore to the south-east stands a small building.

Very far south lies a fishing village on the shore of the lake.
 Very far south-east lie hills on which rest nests. Whelps and
 drakes fly from there occasionally.
 Very far east stretch trenches from which palace soldiers
 launch volleys of arrows. It would not be safe to travel beyond
 the trench into enemy (and friendly) fire.
 Very far north-east lie swamps in which hydras lurk. There's
 also a long beach on the shore of which sail merchant ships.

You see carriages clattering between the palace and the fort,
 the palace and the lake, the palace and the town, the town and
 the fishing village, and the fishing village and the lake.

You see carriages clattering between the palace and the fort,
 the palace and the lake, the palace and the town, the town and
 the fishing village, and the fishing village and the lake.

It's a breathtaking experience - you wish you had time to paint it, but instead you quickly sketch the view, creating a *rough sketch* if you don't have binoculars and a *fine sketch* if you do, before descending the mountain before it gets too dark. You reach the base: now, do you camp next to the stream at **54**, or enter the quaint alpine inn at **64**?

84 - The sun sets before you reach the summit. You'll have to camp here so that you can see the view once the night expires. Consult the *rest appendix* then read on.



The next morning you wake up to an almost mystical sunrise above the clouds. In the gaps between the clouds you see the landscape surrounding the mountain:

To the north is marshland.

Far to the north is a beach.

To the north-west are forested hills. Beyond lies an almost endless mountain range not worth investigating.

To the west is a mountain in the shape of a tooth. Beyond lies the mountain range.

To the south-west are large farms.

Far to the south-west lies hilly pasture.

Even further south are small camps erected.

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You see carriages clattering between the palace and the fort, the palace and the lake, the palace and the town, the town and the fishing village, and the fishing village and the lake.

It's a breathtaking experience - you wish you had time to paint it, but instead you quickly sketch the view, creating a *rough sketch* if you don't have binoculars and a *fine sketch* if you do, before descending the mountain and reaching the inn at the base. It's not even noon so you could walk somewhere new: go to **29** if you walk north-east towards the marshes, go to **99** if you walk north towards the bird-filled marshes, go to **77** if you walk north-west towards the forested hills, go to **66** if you walk west towards the mountain shaped like a tooth, go to **4** if you walk south-west towards the large farms, and go to **288** if you walk back to the palace.

85 - During the next evening the mother dragon arrives back at her nest. You pretend to hatch out of your shell and waddle around clumsily. She regurgitates something into the feeble whelp's mouth, then gingerly hoists you both onto her back using her teeth. She swoops down from the mountaintop, gliding on currents of air.

She lands on the edge of a lake and models how to lap up the water by ostentatiously curving her tongue. If you join her and the whelp in this activity, go to **95**. If you dive into the lake off her neck, go to **76**.

86 - You patiently wait until there's a lull in the trickle of goblins entering and exiting the mine, then dash towards the entrance. You manage to get inside undetected.

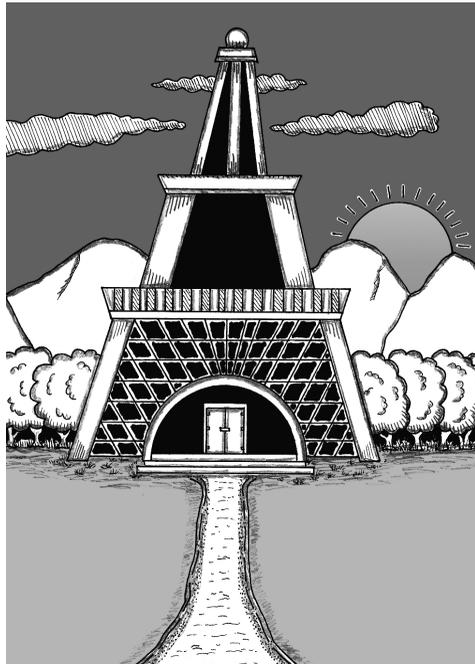
If the date is between the 3rd and the 11th, go to **105**; if the date is between the 12th and the 21st, go to **129**; if the date is between the 22nd and the 31st, go to **139**.

87 - The brigands bind you and bring you back to camp, dumping you among a small crowd of similarly bound men. A captain in rainbow garb examines you all closely. 'A motley crew. The best are barely fit for service - the worst... well... do what you like with them.' An outlaw wearing a *sombrero* spits into the dirt. '*Compadre*, fate delivers what it will into our hands. It is still 100 gold coins we ask for each, but you take what you like - that is your privilege, no?' The captain nods, and points to several of the prisoners.

Make a level one check, adding your personal adds to the roll. If you pass, go to **72**. If you fail, go to **100**.

88 - You walk along the tunnel until it splits in two. If you creep down to the left, go to **151**; if you slink up to the right, go to the second paragraph of **105**.

89 - The mysterious tower casts a spindly shadow over the landscape as the sun sets. You knock on the door but there's no response. You're forced to sleep against its side for the night. Consult the *rest appendix* then read on if you haven't



killed the wizard here (go to the second paragraph of **185** if you have.)

You wake up the next morning to a wizard standing over you. 'What're you doing there?' he snarls. 'Are you a bandit?' If you affirm that you are a bandit and tell him to put his hands up, go to **155**; if you try to persuade him that you're not a bandit, go to **165**; if you cast *will-o-wisp* to prove that you're not a bandit, go to **175**.

90 - Experimenting with novel ways to raise funds for the war, the King privatised part of the palace's outer complex upon his succession. Part of this bazaar specialises in equipping would-be adventures for life outside the safety of the palace walls, and it is among these alleyways that you walk.

A special training dungeon has also already been erected here, designed to simulate dangerous situations future swashbucklers may face in a controlled environment. The entry fee is 30 gold coins.

If you explore the shops, go to **195**. If you enter the dungeon, go to **224**.

91 - You're severely concussed by the blow, but your exceptionally thick skull protects you from the worst of it. The ibex shakes its head, then backs up and charges once again. Go back to the second paragraph of **94**.

92 - You walk along the shaft and re-enter the room with the roasted dwarf. Three tunnels snake out of this chamber: the one behind you branching up to your right, which you can go along at **179**, the one behind you branching down to your left, which you can go down at **189**, and the one snaking in front of you, which you can go up at **176**.

93 - The mine looks far too dangerous to enter, so you

continue your ascent. After an hour or two you scabble to the top, lean your backpack against a rock, and take a breather.

If the date is between the third and 21st, go to **204**. If the date is later than that, go to **214**.

94 - You climb directly up the mountain, scrabbling over steep scree and up almost vertical rock-faces. As you clamber up a particularly steep section of the mountain you see an ibex grazing on the orange tussock so particular to this altitude. You bleat in an effort to greet it, but you must say the wrong thing as it looks up at you, snorts, and charges.

Dodging it on the scree will be difficult: take a level two dexterity check if you wish to try. Alternatively you could brace for impact: in that case take a strength check and add a fifth of your carried weight to the roll. If you pass the dexterity check, go to **83**. If you take the strength check, go to **67**. If you fail your chosen check, go to **73**.

95 - You lap up the water as best as you can and pretend to screech in delight. After a refreshing drink the *mother dragon* lifts you both back onto her neck and deposits you back at the nest. She stays a little while, preening her scales, then flies away. If you climb down the cliff, go to **79**. If you play with the whelp, go to **65**.

96 - A carriage service connects the lake shore and the village. It costs 20 gold pieces to use. If you use it, go to **81**. If you decide to walk instead, go to **59**.

97 - As you browse the wizard's collection you find a book called *Ogre Jokes: The Definitive Anthology*. It looks pretty hilarious.

After 15 minutes in the library your insides begin to churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs. When the

nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself sprawled back in the room with the three portals. Take one piercing damage and go back to the second paragraph of **173**.

98 - Eventually you reach the edge of a cliff. Below you is an endless sea of trees. If you walk along the left edge of the cliff towards a wisp of smoke, go to **107**; if you walk along the right edge, go to **117**.

99 - The sun sets as you approach the marshes: you will need to rest before doing anything else. You find a spot of firm ground and settle in for the night. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You awake to the squawking of black, blue, and white birds scratching for breakfast in the mud: magic pukekos. If you've already set a *snare* here, go to **106**; if you have a *snare* but you haven't set it up yet, go to **116**; if you have a *silver kazoo*, go to **121**; if you have a ranged weapon, go to **126**; if you walk towards the beach to the north-east, go to **136**; if you walk towards the fens to the east, go to **146**; if you walk towards the marshlands to the south-east, go to **29**; if you walk towards the tall mountain to the south, go to **27**; if you have a *fish gate tattoo* and you swim upstream into the forested hills, go to **156**.

100 - You don't make the cut, and as a result the brigands cut your throat once the captain leaves. Weakling.

101 - You peer through the binoculars and see that the building on the island is a shop. On its sign the apothecary's symbol is expertly painted. Looking at the water you also see that the lake is infested with sea snakes. Go back to the penultimate paragraph of **58**.

102 - As you browse the wizard's collection you find a book about alchemy. You skim through it and find an entry about hydra's milk which says that it will curdle after 10 days and that flame will speed up the curdling process. It also warns that

hydra's milk will clot to an every greater degree once it begins to curdle.

After 15 minutes in the library your insides begin to churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs. When the nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself sprawled back in the room with the three portals. Take one piercing damage and go back to the second paragraph of **173**.

103 - You hand over the 50 gold pieces, and ZippZapp spends the day preparing the ritual (he's not so fast after all). He often asks you to run on a large hamster wheel, and when you do so a red, a blue, and a yellow portal appear in the room: the wizard then enters through one portal, exits through another, enters through the last, and reappears 15 minutes later holding the necessary ingredient or equipment.

'Now,' he says, 'where to, friend?' You tell him that you seek crushed *pink dragon scales*, curdled *hydra's milk*, and ground *mountain tooth*, so you want to go anywhere where you can find those ingredients. 'Ah', he says, 'then you'll be wanting to go to either the roosting grounds, the swamps, or Incisor Mountain. Name which place you want to go to and you'll be there in a jiffy!'

You do so and a tunnel of light forms around you, which you walk along for several minutes. Once the tunnel of light fades you go to **488** if you picked the roosting grounds, **336** if you picked the swamps, or **66** if you picked Incisor Mountain.

104 - You hand over a day's worth of *provisions* and point to the *fish gate tattoo*. Took-a-Taka-a-Filao-a-Fafi lies you down in the hammock and straps you down using jungle vines. 'Thissa hurt' he says, slashing your veins with the quill (dealing two piercing damage) and collecting the blood in a stone basin. He then leaves the hut for half an hour and returns with a live pantherfish: he mercilessly rips its head off, mixes its

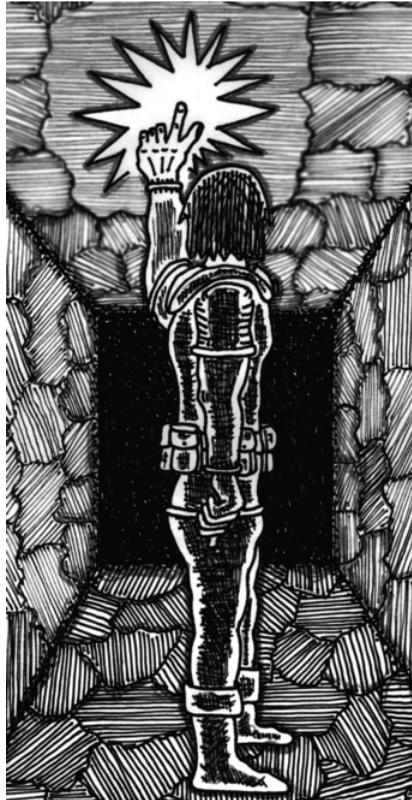
blood with yours, and inscribes the tattoo on your neck with the 'ink'.

You feel extremely hydrated by the time he's finished, yet paradoxically thirsty too: if you buy another tattoo, go to the final paragraph of **77**; if you jump into the river and transform into a fish, go to **154**.

105 - Make a level zero luck check whenever you walk down a tunnel: on a failed check you come across two *goblin miners* which you must fight.

The mine is dark: you will either need to cast *will-o-wisp* each paragraph to light the end of your staff, carry a light source with one hand (you'll still be able to cast spells), or wear a *miner's helmet*.

The mine branches down to the left and up to the right. If you follow the tunnel left, go to **141**; if you follow the tunnel right, go to **149**; if you exit the mine, go the final paragraph of **66**.



106 - You find a 10 kg magic pukeko caught in your *snare*. You break its neck and stuff it in your pack.

If you walk towards the beach to the north-east, go to **136**; if you walk towards the fens to the east, go to **146**; if you walk

towards the marshlands to the south-east, go to **29**; if you walk towards the tall mountain to the south, go to **27**; if you have a *fish gate tattoo* and you swim upstream into the forested hills, go to **156**.

107 - You trek along the cliff edge and soon see that the smoke curls up from fire heating a cauldron. Two tribesmen spring up from either side of the fire and point their sharpened sticks at you. They do not seem to understand your pleas for mercy. If you attack them instead, go to **127**; if you raise your hands above your head, go to **137**.

108 - You walk back into the portal room through the red portal. If you walk through the red portal, go to **178**; if you walk through the blue portal, go to **188**; if you walk through the yellow portal, go to **198**.

109 - As the smell of onions fills your nostrils your insides begin to churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs. When the nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself sprawled back in the room with the three portals. Take one piercing damage and go back to the second paragraph of **173**.

110 - You weave your spell and hear the lock click.

The inside of the houseboat is egregiously sandy, so much so that several centimetres of the stuff litters the floor (there's four sacks' worth of the stuff, which you may collect if you possess *sacks*). Large footprints are imprinted in the sand. If you call out and announce your presence, go to **120**. If you explore this level of the houseboat, go to **130**. If you explore the upper level of the houseboat, go to **135**. If you've got a baaad feeling about this place, you exit and go to the penultimate paragraph of **58**.

111 - 'Dat makes sense: dey send da runts for da errands, yeah? Ok - take yur stuff den.' You grunt in thanks, take

however many of the *pickaxes*, *clay grenades*, *sacks*, and *mining helmets* you want, and hightail it back to **88**.

112 - As you browse the wizard's collection you find a book about teleportation. It details how to cast a spell that lets you teleport back to this location at the second paragraph of **112**. The spell takes 10 minutes to cast, so cannot be used to escape combat.

After 15 minutes in the library your insides begin to churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs. When the nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself sprawled back in the room with the three portals. Take one piercing damage and go back to the second paragraph of **173**.

113 - You politely turn down the offer, claiming you don't have any money. 'Ah well,' ZippZapp says. 'Goodbye!' He turns you out of his tower. Wizards are like that - they more spells they've mastered, the fewer social niceties they've memorised.

It's still early morning so you have plenty of time to walk somewhere else. If you walk south-east towards the village, go to **59**. If you walk east towards the lake, go to **38**. If you walk north-east towards the town, go to **12**. If you walk north-west towards the camp, go to **123**.

114 - You hand over a day's worth of *provisions* and point to the *sun gate tattoo*. Took-a-Taka-a-Filao-a-Fafi lies you down in the hammock and straps you down using jungle vines. 'Thissa hurt' he says, slashing your veins with the quill (dealing two piercing damage) and collecting the blood in a stone basin. He then leaves the stone basin in the sun for half an hour before inscribing the tattoo on your chest with the 'ink'.

You feel comfortably warm by the time he's finished: you hop out of the hammock and go to the final paragraph of **77**.

115 - The lady carefully counts the small hoard of coins you push towards her, then recounts it just to be sure. Once she is satisfied she hands you the scales.

The proprietor informs you of her other wares: *fisslewort*, which she sells for 50 gold coins each, and *protagonist potions*, which she sells for a 1250 gold coins each. If it's between the 23rd and the 31st she also has some *hydra milk* which she sells for 2000 gold coins, which was bottled on the 22nd (it's not worth that much, but she can tell you really want it.) You conduct your business then walk out.

If you swam here you have to swim back: go to **134** if this is the case. If you came by boat you may chug back to the lake shore at the second to last paragraph of **58**, or you may steam toward a village to the south-west at **200**.

116 - You set up the snare. By the time you come back here you should have caught one of the birds.

If you have a *silver kazoo*, go to **121**; if you have a ranged weapon, go to **126**; if you walk towards the beach to the north-east, go to **136**; if you walk towards the fens to the east, go to **146**; if you walk towards the marshlands to the south-east, go to **29**; if you walk towards the tall mountain to the south, go to **27**; if you have a *fish gate tattoo* and you swim upstream into the forested hills, go to **156**.

117 - You trek along the cliff edge for a couple of hours until the trees to one side begin to rustle. A *moa*, a large, flightless bird, bursts out of the bush and charges straight at you, its large beak clacking open and shut in anticipation of tearing you limb from limb. If you survive the fight you continue down the edge of the cliff and eventually reach the bottom at **147**.

118 - You're violently thrown back as you try and enter the portal. Take one piercing damage and go to the final paragraph

of **173**.

119 - You leap out of the pot in pain, and are confronted with a momentarily surprised *troll*. It recovers from the shock more quickly than you do and swings at you with its rolling pin. Make a level one speed check: if you fail you may not roll any dice or take any action during the first round of combat with the troll.

If you survive the fight your insides begin to churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs. When the nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself sprawled back in the room with the three portals. Take one piercing damage and go back to the second paragraph of **173**.

120 - There's no answer to your calls. If you explore this level of the houseboat, go to **130**. If you explore the second level of the houseboat, go to **135**.

121 - You blow on the kazoo. The effect is immediate: a *flock of pukekos* instantly flap towards you in a rage, determined to make *you* their breakfast. If you survive you stuff one of their bodies in your bag and hurriedly move on.

If you walk towards the beach to the north-east, go to **136**; if you walk towards the fens to the east, go to **146**; if you walk towards the marshlands to the south-east, go to **29**; if you walk towards the tall mountain to the south, go to **27**; if you have a *fish gate tattoo* and you swim upstream into the forested hills, go to **156**.

122 - As you browse the wizard's collection you find a spell book from which you learn *zapp!*

After 15 minutes in the library your insides begin to churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs. When the nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself sprawled back in the room with the three portals. Take one piercing

damage and go back to the second paragraph of **173**.

123 - Consult the *banditry appendix* before reading on.

By nightfall you have arrived at the camp, which you have now realised is home to many of the realm's most notorious thieves and brigands. If you've come to torch and loot these defenceless criminals, go to **302**; if you want to avoid parlaying with these hardened outlaws, go to **312**.

124 - You hand over a day's worth of *provisions* and point to the *ghost gate tattoo*. Took-a-Taka-a-Filao-a-Fafi lies you down in the hammock and straps you down using jungle vines. 'Thissa hurt' he says, slashing your veins with the quill (dealing two piercing damage) and collecting the blood in a stone basin. He then chants over the stone basin for half an hour before inscribing the tattoo on your heart with the 'ink'.

You feel dissociated from reality by the time he's finished, like you're observing the world from another person's perspective: you hop out of the hammock and go to the final paragraph of **77**.

125 - The stern lady will not budge an inch in her price. She does offer you a different kind of trade, however: if you were to bring her a handful of *magic pukeko feathers* she would give you an equal quantity of scales. She tells you that the birds live in marshlands three days walk to the north. If you have the feathers you may trade them now; if not you tell her you'll keep a lookout for the beasts in your travels. She suggests that you might as well collect some *sacks of sand* for her just north of the marshland while you're there, which she'll buy for 100 gold coins each (she explains that she needs sand to make glass vials and bottles and that, inconveniently, the lake shore is covered in rocks).

The proprietor informs you of her other wares: *fisslewort*,

which she sells for 50 gold coins each, and *protagonist potions*, which she sells for a 1250 gold coins each. If it's between the 23rd and the 31st she also has some *hydra milk* which she sells for 2000 gold coins, which was bottled on the 22nd (it's not worth that much, but she can tell you really want it.) You conduct your business then walk out.

If you swam here you have to swim back: go to **134** if this is the case (if the date is between the 8th and 12th or 22nd and 26th you may walk to the island instead thanks to the neap tide and skip the first paragraph of **134**.) If you came by boat you may chug back to the lake shore at the second to last paragraph of **58** (unless the date is between the 8th and 12th or 22nd and 26th), or you may steam toward a village to the south-west at **200**.

126 - It'll be tough to shoot one of the birds: you'll have to pass a level three dexterity check to hit it. You can always take a level two intelligence check to try and creep closer, which will lower the difficulty of the dexterity check by one level. If you fail any check all the pukekos fly away in fright and won't return until the next day; if you pass the dexterity check you manage to shoot one down and stuff its 10 kg corpse into your pack.

Afterwards, if you walk towards the beach to the north-east, go to **136**; if you walk towards the fens to the east, go to **146**; if you walk towards the marshlands to the south-east, go to **29**; if you walk towards the tall mountain to the south, go to **27**; if you have a *fish gate tattoo* and you swim upstream into the forested hills, go to **156**.

127 - If you defeat the two *tribal warriors* you find a heap of clothes and equipment by the cauldron containing a *medium longbow* and a *sheaf of 21 arrows*. You continue down the edge of the cliff and eventually reach the bottom at **147**.

128 - You're violently thrown back as you try and enter the

portal. Take one piercing damage and go to the final paragraph of **173**.

129 - Make a level one luck check whenever you walk down a tunnel: on a failed check you come across two *goblin miners* which you must fight.

Go to the second paragraph of **105**.

130 - You find a deserted kitchen, closet, and bedroom in this level. Inside the kitchen are three day's worth of perfectly fine *provisions* stored in jars, which you take, along with a *down sleeping bag* in the closet. If you explore the upper level of the houseboat, go to **135**; if you sleep in the bedroom, go to **150**.

131 - The *lightly armoured troll* is surprisingly quick on his feet for a lumbering idiot, and before you can ready yourself he charges at you. Make a level one speed check: if you pass, fight him normally; if you fail, you're tackled to the ground and take two dice of damage before combat begins.

If you survive the combat you may take however many *pickaxes*, *clay grenades*, *sacks*, and *mining helmets* you want before hauling your loot back down the tunnel to **88**.

132 - As you browse the wizard's collection you find a book detailing how to cast the spell *mirror image*.

After 15 minutes in the library your insides begin to churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs. When the



nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself sprawled back in the room with the three portals. Take one piercing damage and go back to the second paragraph of **173**.

133 - The wizard smiles. 'I am the one they call ZippZapp the Quick - at your service.' He waits for a response, so you pretend to be awed by his presence. He seems pleased. 'You seem lost friend, and this corner of the realm is definitely not one to linger in: if you wish I will spend the day teleporting you wherever you wish to go. They don't call me ZippZapp for nothing! (You wonder who these adoring fans of his are). All I ask for is a 50 gold coin donation to cover the cost of the materials involved. Shall I begin? If you agree, go to **143**; if you turn down the offer, go to **153**.

134 - You plunge into the icy water and strike out towards the lake shore (all of your *provisions* are ruined unless you wear a *deluxe traveller's backpack*.) You soon discover what the minnows scatter from: the lake is infested with sea snakes, one of which bites your toe if you fail a level one luck check.



As you straggle onto the shore you begin to feel the effects of its venom if you were bitten: your speed is permanently lowered by one for the rest of the adventure. Go to the second

to last paragraph of **58**.

135 - If you haven't destroyed or encountered whatever lies in this level of the ship, go to **140**; if you have, go to the second paragraph of **180**.

136 - Sand hoppers skittle over the iron dunes towards their warrens, burrowing downwards to escape the frigid eventide. You feel cold yourself in the dusky breeze, and decide to pitch camp. You stack several pieces of driftwood into a pyre and alight it with an *it's elemental* spell, warming yourself while you set up for the night. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up the next morning to a most beautiful sight: the sight of warm dawn-light on the mellow sea-swells. You bathe yourself in the ocean, under the orange clouds, and air-dry yourself once you return to land.

If a *sand golem* is under your control it has armed itself while you swam with a piece of driftwood and a massive shell, which it seems to be using as a rudimentary sword and shield. Increase its MR to 28 and its armour to six.

League Beach is known as one of the natural wonders of your kingdom, and rightly so. It takes a whole day to walk from end to end, and the whole breadth of the coastline is clean and pristine. Man has not despoiled this corner of the realm quite yet; you may fill as many *sacks* with sand as you wish. But whereto after that?

If you possess a *common spear* and wish to spend the day fishing, go to **306**; if you walk north-east along the beach, go to **316**; if you cut east through the dunes to the other side of the beach, go to **326**; if you walk south-east to the fens, go to **146**; if you walk south-west towards the marshland above which pukekos fly, go to **99**.

137 - Perhaps the tribesmen misinterpret your gesture, or perhaps they're opportunists - in any case they charge at you while you're defenceless. During the first round of combat with the two *tribal warriors* you don't get any adds and can't cast any spells. If you survive the fight you find a heap of clothes and equipment by the cauldron containing a *medium longbow* and a *sheaf of 21 arrows*. You continue down the edge of the cliff and eventually reach the bottom at **147**.

138 - You enter a magical man-cave containing many tools and items. You clear it out of the *chisel*, three *clay grenades*, and *everlasting blowtorch* it contains.

Wedged between a vice is a small replica of a kitchen filled with many ingredients, including bottles. The statue is made of green stone, similar to jade. You sense that a powerful enchantment has been placed on the statue. If you take it, go to **142**. If you leave it be, go to **152**.

139 - Make a level two luck check whenever you walk down a tunnel: on a failed check you come across two *goblin miners* which you must fight.

Go to the second paragraph of **105**.

140 - You walk up the staircase and emerge in the bridge. An eight-foot tall golem made of sand and covered in shells stands at the wheel, as if expecting you.

If you back away down the stairs, go to **160**; if you cast *know your foe!* on it, go to **170**; if you attack it, go to **180**.

141 - You follow the shaft for sometime until it splits in two. It slopes down to the right and up to the left. If you follow it to the right, go to **151**; if you follow it to the left, go to **186**; if you turn back to the entrance, go to the second paragraph of **105**.

142 - The small statue glows a sickly green as you touch it. Your insides churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs.

When the nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself in the kitchen represented by the statue. You hear heavy footsteps in the room beyond the door. If you search the kitchen, go to **162**; if you hide under the kitchen counter, go to **172**; if you hide in one of the massive stockpots, go to **182**.

143 - You hand over the 50 gold pieces, and ZippZapp spends the day preparing the ritual (he's not so fast after all). He often asks you to run on a large hamster wheel, and when you do so a red, a blue, and a yellow portal appear in the room: the wizard then enters through the same portal twice and reappears holding the necessary ingredient or equipment.

'Now,' he says, 'where to, friend?' You tell him that you seek *pink dragon scales, curdled hydra's milk, and mountain tooth*, so you want to go anyway where you can find those ingredients. 'Ah', he says, then you'll be wanting to go to either the roosting grounds, the swamps, or Incisor Mountain. Name which place you want to go to and you'll be there in a jiffy!'

You do so and a tunnel of light forms around you, which you walk along for several minutes. Once the tunnel of light fades you hear laughter and appear at the second paragraph of **467**.

144 - You compliment him on the lovely tattoos, but explain that you'll go hungry without your food. 'You-a getta lost inna the tree land-a! You-a food runna all gonna!' You thank him for the advice and leave.

You walk aimlessly through the forest for a few hours, hoping to find some way out. Eventually you spot a trapper in the distance setting snares on the forest floor. If you try and talk to him, go to **184**. If you walk around him, go to **194**.

145 - The lady carefully counts the small hoard of coins you push towards her, then recounts it just to be sure. Once she is satisfied she hands you the scales.

The proprietor informs you of her other wares: *fisslewort*, which she sells for 50 gold coins each, and *protagonist potions*, which she sells for a 1250 gold coins each. If it's between the 23rd and the 31st she also has some *hydra milk* which she sells for 2000 gold coins, which was bottled on the 22nd (it's not worth that much, but she can tell you really want it.) You conduct your business then walk out.

If you swam here you have to swim back: go to **135** if this is the case (if the date is between the 8th and 12th or 22nd and 26th you may walk to the island instead thanks to the neap tide and skip the first paragraph of **134**.) If you came by boat you may chug back to the lake shore at the second to last paragraph of **58** (unless the date is between the 8th and 12th or 22nd and 26th), or you may steam toward a village to the south-west at **200**.

146 - It's a tiring walk to the fens, and by dusk you're ready to collapse on the tussock around you. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up the next morning to rain: a bad start. If the date is between the 14th and 19th you can just make out, through the spring shower, a black cat running northwards, from which you sense a strong magical energy. If you investigate the cat, go to **187**.

Otherwise you may forage for wobblyroot at **254**, walk north-west to the beach at **136**, northwards across the dunes to the beach at **316**, north-east to the beach at **326**, eastwards to the swamps at **336**, southwards to the marshes at **29**, or westwards to the marshes above which magic pukekos fly at **99**.

147 - You continue trekking through the forest, and eventually come across a grove of bushes covered in *cocoa leaves*. There's an endless supply of the stuff, so you may stuff your pack with as many as you wish. Afterwards you continue trekking through the forest for several hours, eventually arriving at the second paragraph of **77**.

148 - You enter a library. Take a luck check: if you fail to make the check at any level, go to **97**; if you make the check at level one, go to **102**; if you make the check at level two, go to **112**; if you make the check at level three, go to **122**; if you make the check at level four or more, go to **132**.

149 - You walk along the shaft for some time until it splits, worming down to the left and down to the right. If you follow it to the left, go to **157**; if you follow it to the right, go to **159**; if you turn back to the entrance, go to the second paragraph of **105**.

150 - If you've destroyed or encountered the *sand golem* you sleep soundly. If you haven't, you quickly wake up to the automaton trudging into the bedroom to attack you and are forced to fight it without the aid of any items or equipment. If you survive the fight you're too rattled to rest properly.

The ship gently rocks from side-to-side the next morning in the breeze. Go back to the second paragraph of **110**.

151 - You follow the shaft for several minutes until it widens out into a chamber. Inside the chamber is a store run by two trolls.

'Ere ere, what's a 'uman doin' down 'ere den eh?' says one of the trolls, eyeing you suspiciously.

'Baz, be friend-like to da cus-to-mer! It's a good ting to be friend-like to the cus-to-mer, Baz! 'Ey, 'uman,' says the second

troll to you, 'your kind is righ' welcome 'ere long as you carry a righ' big pouch of whoppers, you know what I mean?'

'Yeah, cause we buy low and sell 'igh, so you'll need loads o' coins and plenny of 'em!'

'Yeah, we're enterpernerials like dat, dat's how we're still in da biz like.'

'We crush our competitors.'

'Wiv our clubs.'

'Crush! Destroy!'

'So, you gonna buy somethin' or what?'

The trolls sell *potions of peppiness* and *provisions*. If you buy anything, go to **161**; if you don't buy anything, go to **171**.

152 - You decide to leave the statue be, and spend the rest of your time rifling through the wizard's workshop instead. During this time you find a builder's DIY manual containing the spell *handy man*.

As you finish memorising the spell your insides begin to churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs. When the nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself sprawled back in the room with the three portals. Take one piercing damage and go back to the second paragraph of **173**.

153 - 'You're not getting away that easily!' he shouts gleefully. The *mysterious wizard* splays out like a hand of cards. Time to fight: if you survive the encounter, go to **185**.

154 - You're at one with the river, and effortlessly shape-shift into a fish. The river flows strongly downstream: if you allow

yourself to be carried with the current, go to **164**. Alternatively you could swim against the current: if you do so, go to **174**.

155 - At your words the *mysterious wizard* splays out like a hand of cards. Time to fight: if you survive the encounter, go to **185**.

156 - You dive into the river, shape shift into a fish, and swim against the current all day, flinging yourself onto the bank in your human form once the sun sets. You'll have to settle in for the night. Make a level zero luck check: if you fail go to **6** of the *rest appendix*; if you pass roll for the *rest appendix* as normal.



The call of wood pigeons wake you up, and in dawn light you see Took-a-Taka-a-Filao-a-Fafi's cottage in the distance next to the river. You walk towards it once again and knock on the door.

The dark-skinned man opens the door. He wears stone earrings today made of... *mountain tooth!* 'You-a again-a! I-a knew you be-a back!' Took-a-Taka-a-Filao-a-Fafi gestures you inside his hut. You take off your hat, wring it of the river water, and enter.

Stretched on the walls of the hovel are three flaps of human skin covered in intricate markings: one is marked by a fish, one by a sun, and one by a spirit. Took-a-Taka-a-Filao-a-Fafi

guides you towards the hammock. 'The **sun gate tattoo**-a and the **spirit gate tattoo**-a. You-a backs because-a you wants, right-a? One day-a of *provisions*-a each-a.' He lifts his quill up and looks at you expectantly.

If you buy the *sun gate tattoo*, go to **114**; if you buy the *ghost gate tattoo*, go to **124**; if you politely decline and take your leave, go to **144**. If you ask if you can buy his earrings, go to **166**.

157 - You follow the shaft for several minutes until you see the tunnel widen beyond into a room. Inside the room a *troll* breaks apart boulders with a *pick-axe*. You can see that the room is a dead end. If you attack the *troll*, go to **167**; if you turn back, go to **177**.

158 - You're violently thrown back as you try and enter the portal. Take one piercing damage and go to the final paragraph of **173**.

159 - You follow the tunnel for about a quarter of an hour until you begin to smell smoke up ahead. Creeping closer, you can also make out flames reflected on the tunnel walls. If you keep going forwards, go to **169**; if you turn back, go to **176**.

160 - The golem makes no movement to follow you. Go to the second paragraph of **110**.

161 - 'Atta boy! Good 'uman!' says the troll named Baz, handing you your wares. 'Ya won't never regret ya made such a fine deal! And remember 'uman dat 'Baz and Gaz iz where you bought your fine products from - spread da word near and far like!' You thank Baz and Gaz and leave the store.

Behind you is a tunnel sloping upwards, which you can walk along at **49**, and in front of you is a tunnel that splits in two, sloping down to the left at **47**, and down to the right at **51**.

162 - You find as many days worth of *provisions* in the kitchen as you wish to take. More importantly, you also find two bottles of hydra milk: one marked that it was bottled on the 4th of May and one marked that it was bottled on the 27th of April. You take both, then notice someone open the door.

The *troll* captures you red-handed and immediately swings at you with its rolling pin. If you survive the fight your insides begin to churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs. When the nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself sprawled back in the room with the three portals. Take one piercing damage and go back to the second paragraph of **173**.

163 - As you run in the wheel a red, a blue, and a yellow portal appear above the three green stones. When you hop off the wheel they disappear. Go to the last paragraph of **185**.

164 - You doze for a couple of hours as the river takes you to the marshes (this doesn't count as resting). Once the river trickles to a stop you awake at the second paragraph of **99**.

165 - Make a level one charisma check. If you pass, he relaxes: go to the second paragraph of **175**. If you fail, go to **133**.

166 - Took-a-Taka-a-Filao-a-Fafi removes the earrings. 'Thissa art issa not my-a best. If you-a buy-a a tattoo, I-a give. If you buy the *sun gate tattoo*, go to **114**; if you buy the *ghost gate tattoo*, go to **124**; if you politely decline and take your leave, go to **144**.

167 - Unfortunately the boulders provide excellent cover for the *troll* to avoid being hit by ranged attacks and spells: if you try to hit it with ranged attacks you'll need to make the dexterity check at one level higher than normal, and if you cast a spell at it you'll only hit it with a passed level one dexterity check.

If you survive the fight you may take the troll's *pickaxe*. If you pass a level two luck check you also find a *mountain tooth* buried in the broken up rocks. You exit the chamber and go to **177**.



168 - You're violently thrown back as you try and enter the portal. Take one piercing damage and go to the final paragraph of **173**.

169 - You enter a chamber in which two *goblin miners* spit roast a dead dwarf over a fire. The goblins pick up their *pick-axes* as they spot you, and attack.

If you survive the first you may take the dwarf's *chainmail*, which lies in a heap next to the fire. Three tunnels branch out from this chamber: the one behind you, and one ahead of you which branches up to your left and down to your right. If you walk up the one behind you, go to **176**; if you take the left tunnel, go to **179**; if you take the right tunnel, go to **189**.

170 - You may look up what a *sand golem* is in the creature appendix. The creature makes no movement to attack you. Go back to the second paragraph of **140**.

171 - 'Ey, ey, what's wrong wiv dem products bruvva? Top-notch products like they are! Aren't we not good salestrolls?'

'Yeah 'uman, you basically insultin' us by not buyin' any ov our fine wares!' says Baz, taking his club out from behind the counter.

'I'll tell you what bruvva, we'll cut you a real nice deal like since we like ya so much - your pouch of gold for a day's worth of *provisions*. Deal?'

If you agree to the trade, go to **181**; if you try and haggle, go to **191**.

172 - You tuck yourself behind several stacks of plates, and not a moment too soon! You hear the door open and see a troll's legs in front of you - the troll sings something about eating humans while it chops up shallots on the counter above you.

After 15 minutes sweating bullets your insides begin to churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs. When the nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself sprawled back in the room with the three portals. Take one piercing damage and go back to the second paragraph of **173**.

173 - The golem dutifully obeys your command, and as it runs in the wheel a red, a blue, and a yellow portal appear above the three green stones.

If you walk through the red portal, go to **183**; if you walk through the blue portal, go to **193**; if you walk through the yellow portal, go to **108**. If you want to leave, go to the final paragraph of **113**.

174 - You swim all day and night against the current, halving your strength until you next rest. Finally you reach the base of the tooth shaped mountain the next morning and wriggle onto the riverbank: as the day is young and time is short, you climb in your human form! Go to the final paragraph of **66**.

175 - The mage relaxes. 'A fellow wizard! Come inside, you should have knocked instead of sleeping out here!' You follow him into the tower.

'I am the one they call ZippZapp the Quick - at your service.' He waits for a response, so you pretend to be awed by his presence. He seems pleased. 'You seem lost friend, and this corner of the realm is definitely not one to linger in: no fears though, I shall spend the day teleporting you wherever you wish to go. They don't call me ZippZapp for nothing! All I ask for is a 50 gold coin donation to cover the cost of the materials involved. Shall I begin? If you agree, go to **103**; if you turn down the offer, go to **113**.

176 - You walk back along the tunnel until it splits in two, down to the left and down to the right. If you follow the tunnel left, go to **105**; if you follow the tunnel right, go to **157**.

177 - You follow the tunnel until it branches, now sloping down to the right and down to the left. If you follow the tunnel right, go to **105**; if you follow the tunnel left, go to **159**.

178 - You're violently thrown back as you try and enter the portal. Take one piercing damage and go to the final paragraph of **173**.

179 - You walk along the tunnel for a while, and eventually hear grunting and grinding ahead of you. If you press on ahead, go to **197**; if you turn back because you're a bit timid, go to **92**.

180 - The golem springs into motion and fights back.

If you destroy(ed) the sand golem you cannot make use of the ship and descend to the lower level: go back to the second paragraph of **110**.

If you gain(ed) control of the sand golem and you don't need to rest, you may command it to run in the water wheel next to the captain's wheel. It will do so, powering the ship forwards and allowing you to steer it towards the island at the second paragraph of **78**, or the village on the lake shore at **200**.

181 - 'Atta boy! Good 'uman!' says the troll named Baz, handing you your food. 'Ya won't never regret ya made such a fine deal, dat's good eatin' dat is! First class goblin fare dat is!' You stare at the boiled cabbage rolled in rice powder in disdain.

'Remember 'uman dat 'Baz and Gaz iz where you buyed your fine product from - spread da word near and far like!' You thank Baz and Gaz and leave the store, cursing them as quietly as possible under your breath.

Behind you is a tunnel sloping upwards, which you can walk down at **49**, and in front of you is a tunnel that splits in two, sloping down to the left at **47**, and climbing up to the right at **51**.

182 - You tuck yourself in one of the massive stockpots just before a large creature enters the kitchen. You hear the being sing something about eating humans while it cuts shallots on the counter beside you. If you leap out of the pot and attack it go to the second paragraph of **162**; if you wait and see what happens go to **192**.

183 - You walk back into the portal room through the blue portal. If you walk through the red portal, go to **118**; if you walk through the blue portal, go to **128**; if you walk through the yellow portal, go to **138**.

184 - The trapper flees as soon as you greet him, leaving behind his *snares*. You may take them if you wish before

travelling on to **98**.

185 - The wizard crumples.

The door to the tower is now wide open, so you enter.

You enter a room containing a large hamster wheel and three green rocks firmly set in the floor.

If you take a run in the wheel, go to **163**; if you have a *sand golem* under your control, go to **173**; if you exit the tower, go to the second paragraph of **113**.

186 - You walk along the tunnel for about ten minutes until you emerge in a storeroom. A virtually limitless number of *pickaxes, clay grenades, sacks, and mining helmets* (with *candles!*) lie stacked within it - unfortunately guarded by a *lightly armoured troll*. 'Uh - a 'uman! No 'umans allowed!' If you try to convince him that you're not a human, go to **196**. If you waste no time in attacking him, go to **131**.

187 - You run after the cat, but it's too fast for you to catch. If you cast a spell, write it down before going to **209**.

188 - You enter the wizards bedroom. You find a pair of *six league boots* at the end of the bed, which you take (if you haven't already).

After 15 minutes of searching the room your insides begin to churn inside you and your vision pounds and blurs. When the nauseating sensation finally ceases you find yourself sprawled back in the room with the three portals. Take one piercing damage and go back to the second paragraph of **173**.

189 - You enter a room in which one dice of *goblin miners* queue up for food, holding trays in their hands. They throw down their trays as you enter, pick up their *pickaxes*, and

attack.

If you survive the fight you may plunder the buffet they were serving themselves from: it only contains boiled cabbage and rice powder, but its perfectly edible and equal to three days' worth of *provisions*. The only way out of this chamber is by the way you came, so back up along the shaft to **92** you go!

190 - You grab the feline in your hands. 'What are you, or rather who are you, and where are you going in disguise?' you shout. 'Answer or I'll pull your whiskers out!'

'Curiosity killed the cat!' the feline snarls in the voice of an old woman. 'I was going north to try and find my late husband's eminently pawnable treasures, but I'll leave them to you if you leave me alone!' You throw the cat away (which lands on all fours) and sprint towards the northern beach at **316**, unless this is old news to you, in which case you go to the final paragraph of **146**.

191 - You haggle, all the way up to your pouch of gold plus all your armour. If you agree to the trade, go to **181**; if you decline their generous offer, go to **199**.

192 - You hear the crackling of a flame beneath the pot, and feel the water heating up. Take one dice of piercing damage and a level one constitution check: if you pass, go to **109**; if you fail, go to **119**.

193 - You walk back into the portal room through the yellow portal. If you walk through the red portal, go to **148**; if you walk through the blue portal, go to **158**; if you walk through the yellow portal, go to **168**.

194 - You make a detour around the trapper, not wanting to disturb him. You continue walking through the bush to **98**.

195 - As you walk through the market, you pass a sitting war-veteran who holds out a hat for money. Write down how much money you give him before going to **541**.

196 - You try to convince the troll that you're a stunted ogre. You grunt and beat your chest a few times to prove it. Take a level one charisma check: if you pass, go to **111**; if you fail, go to **131**.

197 - You enter a chamber in which two *ogres* push a grindstone round and round. As soon as they see you they attack.

If you survive the fight you examine the millstone and find ground rice, which you could scoop out and save as *provisions* (there's enough for two days). The only way out is by exiting the way you came: you walk along the tunnel and go to **92**.

198 - You're violently thrown back as you try and enter the portal. Take one piercing damage and go to the final paragraph of **173**.

199 - 'Baz, 'e's a snarky customer iz what 'e iz! 'E comes 'ere lookin' to buy somethin', den 'e says "oh, no, I'm a picky 'uman, your stuff ain't fine enough for da price you askin'!"

'Gaz, I reckon' dis is a provocation iz what it is like. 'E just came 'ere to flash about 'is dough and say "na, you ain' gettin' any, you jus' trolls!"

'I reckon 'im not buyin' anythin' is pretty near fightin' words Baz, what do ya reckon?'

'I reckon we knock 'im.'

'I reckon.'

‘Knock ‘im!’

The two *trolls* attack. If you survive the fight you loot their store of the one dice of *potions of peppiness* and one dice of *provisions* it contains. You also find Baz and Gaz’s safe: if you possess an *everlasting blowtorch* you’re able to crack it and take the 550 gold coins inside.

Behind you is a tunnel sloping upwards, which you can walk down at **49**, and in front of you is a tunnel that splits in two, sloping down to the left at **47**, and climbing up to the right at **51**.

200 - You arrive in a virtually deserted village on the shore of Lake Calamere. It seems to be a fishing village, but only one woman loads her dingy with nets and tackle.

You ask where everyone is, and she replies that they’ve left because there’s not many fish to be had. She explains that for some reason every year there’s fewer and fewer fish to be seen, although she did catch an *octopus hat* in one of her traps that she’d be willing to part with. If you’re marked with a *fish gate tattoo* and you want to investigate, go to **213**.



If not, there’s little to be had in this place. You may travel north-west to the mysterious tower at **89**, north to the town at **219**, or

north-east to the lake shore at **229**.

201 - You easily manage to excavate the *mountain tooth* and stuff it in your pocket.

You've got what you came here for - you run out the mine to the final paragraph of **66**.

202 - The lunatic thanks you. You sleep soundly to the sound of his eerie humming.

The next morning you walk out of the cottage and explore the village. Go to **200**.

203 - The enemy crumples as your forces charge out of their trenches and into the ranks of the blues. 'The best offence is a good defence' you muse to yourself as the blues flee down the mound and back onto the plains, 'it is a maxim old, trusty, and true.'

You allow the troops a pint of rum during the night to celebrate, and join the festivities yourself. You wake up the next morning with the biggest hangover in the army but, summoning every ounce of willpower you possess, drag yourself out of your tent and address the troops.

'My fishy brothers! The blue's army lies in tatters - now is the time to bring the fight to them and conquer the lake for ourselves! Forwards, forwards to their castle!' Your army cheers and sallies forth to the beat of the crab drum.

You surround the enemy's capital sand castle, which is only manned by a 3,500 strong skeleton crew, with your 8,000 strong army. You call out to the blue fish manning the enemy walls. 'Surrender oppressors, and we shall spare you! Hold out, and we will not spare even a child! Blendan, Blendan the Just, is fair: he gives you the choice to acquiesce to his terms

or perish!' One of the blue fish fires an arrow at you in reply, which fortunately is blocked by a fast acting subordinate's body. 'Give that fish a promotion!' you cry out, pointing to the rigid corpse.

If you order your army to storm the castle, go to **292**. If you order your forces to lay in for a siege, go to **299**. If you order your forces to storm the enemy's close-by satellite fort, go to **255**.

204 - Your rest is interrupted when the rock your pack leans against is moved to the side by a dwarf underneath. The dwarf is climbing up a ladder. 'Och, enjoyin' th' view are we? Ah wa' jus' fair abou' t' do th' same.' The dwarf clammers out of the hole and sits on your bag, his stocky frame and chainmail crushing anything delicate you hold inside.

'Ma name is Dultimdar, I'm th' chief's son - wha' y' name?' You ask if the chief and his kin live down that hole.

'Och, righ' y' are - w' th' outermos' clan i' th' Mountain Too' range. Troll folk an' goblins pushed us ou' long ago. It's a fair long tale, all wri' down i' th' tome - come dow' f' a cuppa!' You follow Dultimdar down the ladder, curious but dreading the moss tea that will accompany his story.

The trip down the ladder is taxing: you've been climbing down for 20 minutes with your pack on, and while that's no trouble to a dwarf you're a feeble painter-turned-adventurer. Make a level zero strength check and take away all but the last digit of the weight you carry. If you pass you manage to climb down to the bottom, but if you fail you fall and break one of your legs (for the rest of the adventure you speed will be halved - if you've broken both legs the adventure will have to come to a close!)

Either way you've entered a tiny settlement filled with about 30 dwarves, many of which smelt mithril ore and beat it into arms.

Dultimdar introduces you to his father, Daltimdur.

‘Stupi’ boy! We don’ nee’ outsiders knowin’ ‘bou’ ou’ hearth!’ he says, cuffing his son smartly on the nose (dwarven parenting is old fashioned in that regard.) ‘You wan’ th’ goblins t’ hear wor’ o’ our whereabouts?’ Blenden!’ He turns to you. ‘Wha’ interes’ d’ y’ ha’ comin’ dow’ ‘ere anyway?’

Take a level zero charisma and intelligence check. If you fail either, go to **234**; if you pass both, go to **244**.

205 - You stand up stiff as a spear. ‘Blendan, artist and adventurer extraordinaire: at your service.’ You bow down so low that you could almost kiss his fine leather boots.

‘Up, up - this is the army man, not the court!’ You kiss his ring and ask for forgiveness.

The general runs his moustache through his fingers. ‘Say, an adventurer... I’ve got a request to make of you.’ You tell him you don’t do favours, you do quests for big fat rewards.’

‘Yes, yes, I’m sure - there’ll be a reward. Just find a certain captain who’s gone missing, one Archibald Winsome: he’s a craggy, wolf-like man with a thin face, you’ll recognise him when you see him. Find out what happened to him - he probably deserted, although it’s hard to imagine - and we’ll give you a *crown of the commander* if you do. And please, take this *travel pass* to make use of the military carriages while you’re doing our bidding, now and in the future!’ If you’ve got information about him go to **378**; if you don’t, you mind as well start looking!

The day is still young: you may instead walk north to the trenches at **297**, north-west to the fort at **2**, catch the military carriage to the fort at **8**, walk west to the dragon mountains at **19**, south-west to the hills at **7**, or south to the roosting

grounds at **488**. Walking eastwards would be suicide: there lies the realm's foe.

206 - 'The scoundrel! He's responsible for all this? Sir, give me back that gemstone!' The generals smile and shake your hand.

'No need to bring back his head this time... we'll hear about his death one way or another. Good luck young man!' You salute and leave the tent.

The day is still young: you may walk north to the trenches at **297**, north-west to the fort at **2**, catch the military carriage to the fort at **8**, walk west to the dragon mountains at **19**, south-west to the hills at **7**, or south to the roosting grounds at **488**. Walking eastwards would be suicide: there lies the realm's foe.

207 - You march alongside the carriages through the gate, chanting a soldier's song to the rhythm of your footsteps in an effort to blend in. Two knights grab hold of you as you enter.

'Knave, why did you try and enter the fort un-noticed? What is your name?' inquires one of the professional soldiers. If you give him your real name, and tell him you wish to assess the value of the commander's art collection, go to **225**. If you tell him you're a bounty hunter, and that you have bandit *scalps* to deliver, go to **217**. If you tell him you're a patriotic commoner who wishes to sign up for service, go to **237**.

208 - The generals are ecstatic to see you, and not only push a pouch of crushed *pink dragon scales*, a vial of curdled *hydra milk* (dated today), and small jar of ground *mountain tooth* into your hands, but also give you a 2,500 gold bonus for finishing your mission so quickly. You thank them profusely before exiting the tent.

The day is still young: you may walk north to the trenches at **297**, north-west to the fort at **2**, catch the military carriage to

the fort at **8**, walk west to the dragon mountains at **19**, southwest to the hills at **7**, or south to the roosting grounds at **488**. Walking eastwards would be suicide: there lies the realm's foe.

209 - Casting *little feets* on yourself, *glue you* on the cat, or anything of that nature will let you catch up to it at **190**; otherwise you must give up the chase and travel elsewhere at the final paragraph of **146**.

210 - You walk along the tunnel and enter the cavern containing the troll's shop. You may follow the tunnel sloping upwards in front of you at **49**, or follow the tunnel behind you which splits in two, sloping down to your left at **51**, and down to your right at **47**.

211 - It'll be difficult to excavate the *mountain tooth* with a *pick-axe*: if you pass a level one dexterity check you manage to do it, but if you fail you strike the tooth and the powder mixes with the rock, making it impossible to retrieve.

You've got (or failed to get) what you came here for - you run out the mine to the final paragraph of **66**.

212 - The lunatic eyes your tunic enviously. 'I like you sir, I'll cut you a deal: let's swap clothes. Then *they* won't know I'm me! *They'll* think you're me, and I'll think I'm you! Hahahaha, ahahaha - hummm...' The vague vagrant begins to remove his fetid shirt.

If you agree to the trade, go to **202**. If you tell him to keep his shirt on, go to **222**.

213 - Something seems miiighty fishy here, so you swim into the lake and activate your *fish gate tattoo*. You dive deeper and deeper into the lake until you come across a curious sight: two massive schools of fish, arranged in columns, face each other in silence. One school is red, and the other is blue. If you

approach the red school, go to **223**; if you approach the blue school, go to **233**. During the adventure you may only approach one school of fish.

214 - Your rest is very relaxing. After recovering your breath you clamber down the mountain to the final paragraph of **66**.

215 - It's not long until the blues tire and order a general retreat. 'The best defence is a good defence' you muse to yourself as the blues flee down the mound and back onto the plains, 'it is a maxim old, trusty, and true.'

You allow the troops a pint of rum during the night to celebrate, and join the festivities yourself. You wake up the next morning with the biggest hangover in the army, and groan as two red fish bring you a hostage. Go to the third paragraph of **253**.

216 - You accept his hospitable invitation. 'Excellent. Take a seat and have lunch with us.' You sit at the table next to the commander, and three waiters enter the room laden with scarlet fish, fiddlewort, and swedes. Three plates are set and three chalices filled.

'By the way Blendan, how much would you say my collection's worth?' You quickly guesstimate the value of the artwork in your head, and tell him it's worth at least 20,000 gold coins.

The commander scratches his stubble contemplatively. 'Ah. 20,000 gold coins seems a little high... are you quite sure?' Write down how much you tell him it's worth this time, then go to **310**.

217 - The knights tell you that the commander is paying 50 gold pieces for each *scalp*. You conduct your grisly trade before leaving the fort and going to the final paragraph of **2**.

218 - You hop into the armoured carriage and clatter into the

dangerous mountains. After a few hours you disembark, eager to escape for safer climes. Go to the final paragraph of **19**.

219 - A carriage service connects the village and the town. It costs 20 gold pieces to use. If you use it, go to **18**. If you decide to walk instead, go to **12**.

220 - You pull up a pailful of brackish water. It smells foul: are you sure you want to drink it? If you do, go to **260**; if you tip it back down the hole, go to the second paragraph of **47**.

221 - Not only do you manage to blow up the mountain tooth, but the sound of the explosion attracts the attention of two *goblin miners* who enter from one of the tunnels and run towards you.

If you survive the fight you decide to hightail it out of the mine to the final paragraph of **66**.

222 - The lunatic frowns and hums to himself. His boots begin to glow, and soon he's flying around the cottage.

The *paranoid-schizophrenic* whips out a *laser pistol* and begins firing at you. 'The shirt! I demand the shirt!' If you survive the fight you strip him of his strange gear and sleep soundly throughout the night.

The next morning you walk out of the cottage and explore the village. Go to **200**.

223 - 'Halt! Who goes there!' shouts an especially large carp at the front of the school. You explain that you're a renowned wizard sent from the Rainbow Palace to investigate the disturbance, and ask what the situation is. You change the colour of your scales to display your magical powers.

The carp salutes. 'Sir, have you been sent to lead us in our

uprising against the blues? We knew our plight would not go unnoticed on land! You must guide us: we're only fish after all!

The carp addresses the school of red fish behind him, placing his side-fin collegially on your scaly shoulder. 'Soldiers! Troops! Finally, after years of struggle, victory is at hand! The Rainbow Palace recognises the legitimacy of our cause, and roundly denounces the oppressive blues! The human King has sent a powerful sorcerer to lead us against our foes, a mighty mage by the name of...' You whisper in his ear. '...Blendan! Blendan the Just, leader of men... and fish!' The 10,000 carp moronically open and shut their mouths in approval, bubbles floating up like topsy-turvy confetti. You bask in the respect they hold for you, waving to the masses.

The larger carp waits until they're silent. 'My aquatic comrades! Prepare yourselves - the blues attack! Follow the directions of our new general and we shall prevail!' And indeed, although the 5,000 blue carp opposing you make no move to advance, 4,000 eels dart around your left flank. If you order your troops to advance on the enemy carp, go to **243**; if you order your army to assume a square formation, go to **253**.

224 - You purchase your entry ticket, and enter the so-called 'Nightmare Dungeon' through a gate made of thin wood. The door is locked behind you by the bouncer.

Inside is a large room containing a 10 foot wide ravine, above which dangles a rope. The rope extends through a hole in the ceiling large enough for you to climb through. On the other side of the ravine is a gate marked 'exit'.



If you attempt to jump the ravine without using the hanging rope, go to **231**; if you attempt to jump the ravine by using the hanging rope, go to **241**.

225 - 'Good sir,' you cry, 'would I sing at the top of my lungs if I were trying to enter without detection? No, I announce my presence and identity loud and clear: I am Blendan, court painter of the Rainbow Palace, here to evaluate your commander's art collection!'

One of the warriors scowls. 'An ingenious story. You're coming to see the commander, buddy.' The two knights frog-march you deep inside the fort.

Sitting at a long ebony table, insouciantly drinking sack and digesting a military treatise, is a gaunt man sporting cropped white hair. The two soldiers salute and throw you at his feet. The commander languorously places the tome beside his chalice of wine.

'Sir! Sorry to interrupt you, sir! We have intercepted a man who claims to be one 'Blendan', painter of the Rainbow Palace, who expresses the wish to evaluate your art collection!'

The commander hands you his chalice. 'If you're an artist, tell me: how much is this worth?' Take a level two intelligence check: if you pass, go to **232**; if you fail, go to **239**.

226 - You climb into the military carriage and have a brief, pleasant journey to the fetid marshland. Go to the final paragraph of **367**.

227 - You grab your weapons and don your armour as if you plan to join in the push, then smile at the sergeant. 'Sorry sir, we've got no interest in going to some kangaroo court if we survive today's battle. Guess who's the first casualty of today - you.'

The soldiers around you make no move to support you, but neither do they defend the sergeant. Your leader, quickly assessing the situation, attempts to stab you with his weapon. Take a level two speed check: if you fail you take damage equal to however much you missed the roll by. Afterwards, fight the *sergeant* as normal.

You toss the dead man's corpse (stripped of everything valuable, of course) into no man's land. If you decide to now join in the push, go to the fifth paragraph of **397**. If you would rather avoid the ill-fated push, go to the second paragraph of **398**.

228 - You spend all day walking towards the trenches, and arrive there by dusk. You dive in for cover as you approach: a volley of arrows whistles your way and thuds into the sandbags facing no-man's-land.

'War is hell boy!' a soldier shouts next to you, cocking an arrow in his bow. He stands up and shoots towards the opposing front, firing wildly. 'Get some! Get some!' he shouts before ducking. Several arrows zip past where his head had just been.

'Damn, they're quick on the draw! Don't know how long we'll hold - don't care!' You unwrap a sandwich from your backpack and munch on it, eagerly watching the drama through the trench periscope.

'You got food boy?' says the soldier. 'We ain't got diddly-shit 'less you go countin' the rats, and there ain't even so many of them critters left. Can ya spare some grub for the front?' If you can, write down how many days' worth of *provisions* you give him before going to **307**; if you can't, go to **317**.

229 - A carriage service connects the village and the lake. It costs 20 gold pieces to use. If you use it, go to **24**. If you decide to walk instead, go to **38**.

230 - You dive into the water and manage to wrest the *mithril double bladed broad axe* from the dead dwarf's hands. The question is, how are you going to get out again? The walls of the well are quite slick and wet. If you have the ability to fly, or you pass a level one dexterity check, go to the second paragraph of **47**; if you don't have the ability to fly, and you fail the check, go to **250**.

231 - Make a level one strength or constitution check. If you pass, you jump to the other side and exit the dungeon at **527**. If you fail, go to **478**.

232 - The goblet is heavy, dull in tone, and without feature. You toss it back to the commander. 'A pewter cup worth less than the metal it's made from.' The grey haired man helps you to your feet himself.

'Very good! Well, what is your reason for evaluating the worth of my art collection then?'

You tell him that the King wishes to know how much it could be sold for if another round of war funds need be raised. If the commander is angry he doesn't show it: he complies with the King's request and guides you through the fort, meticulously showing you all it contains. You pretend to jot down the value of it all on a scrap of paper, in reality noting anything worth stealing (an animated painting of a raft particularly catches your eye.)

During your tour you're alone with the commander. If you kill him in the hopes of taking what you can before escaping, go to **530**. If you carry on with the tour, go to **540**.

233 - 'Halt! Who goes there!' shouts an especially large carp at the front of the school. You explain that you're a renowned wizard sent from the Rainbow Palace to investigate the disturbance, and ask what the situation is. You change the colour of your scales to display your magical powers.

The carp salutes. 'Sir, have you been sent to lead us in our uprising against the reds? We knew our plight would not go unnoticed on land! You must guide us: we're only fish after all!'

The carp addresses the school of blue fish behind him, placing his side-fin collegially on your scaly shoulder. 'Soldiers! Troops! Finally, after years of struggle, victory is at hand! The Rainbow Palace recognises the illegitimacy of the rebels' cause and roundly denounces them! The human King has sent a powerful sorcerer to lead us against our foes, a mighty mage by the name of...' You whisper in his ear. '...Blendan! Blendan the Just, leader of men... and fish!' The carp and eels moronically open and shut their mouths in approval, bubbles floating up like topsy-turvy confetti. You bask in the respect they hold for you, waving to the masses.

The larger carp waits until they're silent. 'My aquatic comrades! Prepare yourselves - we must attack and crush our foes while we have them cornered! Follow the directions of our new general and we shall prevail!'

You ask your lieutenant how large the red army is, and he says a scout stumbled across them on the other side of the sand hill and that they consist of 10,000 carp unawares of our presence. You have 5,000 carp and 4,000 faster moving eels under your command, all eager for battle. If you send out more scouts to verify the state of the red army, go to **242**; if you send your whole army to attack immediately, go to **252**.

234 - You explain that Dultimdar invited you here. Daltimdur explains that he's inviting you out. He points to the ladder

gruffly.

The trip up the ladder is taxing: you've been climbing up for 20 minutes with your pack on, and while that's no trouble to a dwarf you're just a painter-turned-adventurer. Make a level zero strength check and take away all but the last digit of the weight you carry. If you pass you manage to climb up to the top, but if you fail you fall and break one of your legs (for the rest of the adventure your speed will be halved - if you've broken both legs the adventure will have to come to a close!). You may try and climb the ladder as many times as you wish.

If you manage to get to the top you clamber down to the entrance of the mine. Go to the final paragraph of **66**.

235 - Make a level three charisma check: if you pass, go to **245**; if you fail, go to **257**.

236 - The tiddly chap is gone for some time: ten minutes have passed, and you begin to grow impatient. If you just decide to leave, go to the second paragraph of **246**; if you wait patiently for his return, go to **248**.

237 - 'Oh yeah?' The other warrior pinches your bicep. If you pass a level two strength check, go to **251**; if you fail, go to **287**.

238 - You flash your pass, and are allowed into the cast-iron carriage. The trip to the swamp is short, which is a good thing as insects keep flying into your coach and crawling on you.

If the date is between the 14th and the 31st, you hear the hideous screech of a *hydra* as you climb out of the carriage. You can see it in the distance, but it hasn't seen you, so it's entirely up to you whether you attack (you may cast spells on yourself before doing so.)

Whether you attack or retreat, it's time to leave this depressing place. You may walk north-west to the beach at **326**, south-east to the trenches at **228**, south-west to the marshlands at **29**, or westwards to the fens at **146**, or catch a military carriage southwards to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel pass*.

239 - You tell the commander that the vessel is a silver plated Khazanian antique worth at least 250 gold coins. The commander scoffs. 'It's pewter. A military leader has no need of such frippery as you described. I think, stranger, you need to become better acquainted with the harsh realities of war... Guillimar, escort this fine citizen to the front-line immediately!' The soldier salutes and ushers you into a military carriage to **392**.

240 - Two tunnels exit this room: one going up from your right, which you can walk along to **48**, and the one behind you, which you can walk up to **210**.

241 - Make a level zero dexterity check. If you pass, go to **521**. If you fail, go to **531**.

242 - You send out a small contingent of eels to verify the scout's claim, but the eels come back half an hour later and report that the red army spotted them and are now prepared for battle. They think that nonetheless your army holds a slight advantage and should carry the day. Grimacing at your caution, you order your army over the hill.

You see the 10,000 red carp as you crest the sand hill. If you order all of your 5,000 carp and 4,000 eels to charge as one go to **262**; if you order your carp to stay put for now while your eels wheel around the enemy's rear go to **272**.

243 - You give the order to advance on the out-numbered carp, but soon the blue eels have shot around to your rear and begun attacking you. Your army turns around to repel them,

but then the blue carp charge. Attacked from all sides, the fish under your command flee in confusion and fear. You take advantage of the confusion to swim away from the debacle unnoticed and fling yourself onto the village shore at **200**. Never show your fish-face to the reds again - fraud!

244 - You reply that you've already heard rumours of the outpost's plight, and that you came here to battle the trolls and goblins. You also explain that you're searching for *mountain tooth*, and you hope that the dwarves can help you in return. Daltimdur smiles.

'Mountain too'? Fair plenty o' tha' 'roun' 'ere, if y' know 'ow t' extract i'. Righ' - y' bring me th' scalp o' a goblin', an ogre, an' a troll, an' I'll gi' y' one o' tho' tee' y' value so fair high.'

You eye the blacksmith's wares covetously and ask if the settlement has any arms to spare for your perilous quest. 'Fo' a price: we'll sell y' *mithril weapons* an' *mithril armour* if y' wan' i'.'

You conduct any business you want to in the cavern then leave by attempting to climb the ladder.

The trip up the ladder is taxing: you've been climbing up for 20 minutes with your pack on, and while that's no trouble to a dwarf you're just a painter-turned-adventurer. Make a level zero strength check and take away all but the last digit of the weight you carry. If you pass you manage to climb up to the top, but if you fail you fall and break one of your legs (for the rest of the adventure you speed will be halved - if you've broken both legs the adventure will have to come to a close!). You may try and climb the ladder as many times as you wish.

If you manage to get to the top you clamber down to the entrance of the mine. Go to the final paragraph of **66**.

245 - The dainty codger cowers before you as soon as you begin casting *take that you fiend!* 'A refund it is sir!' he says, handing you back your 30 gold coins. 'Sorry for the bother!' You walk out of the tavern and pitch camp at **266**.

246 - The tiddy chap twaddles back and barks out that you may go. You do so without thanking him, slamming the door brusquely behind you.

Carriages and donkeys stream around you laden with goods. You follow them into the market, which seems to engulf the city.

You reflect on the location of the town, situated as it is between the palace and the massive Lake Calamere, and realise it must exist as a hub of trade. Perhaps such a place would have exotic wares for sale - if you spend the day combing the place for useful knick-knacks go to **276**. If you'd rather not waste time and money here you can instead go south-east to the lake at **286**, south to the village at **296**, south-west to the mysterious tower at **89**, west to a collection of tents at **123**, north-west to hilly pasture at **254**, north to the large farms at **39**, or north-east to the palace at **288**.

247 - You spend all day walking towards the generals' tent, but don't quite reach it by nightfall. You set up your own some kilometres away and consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up the next day to the sound of birdsong, and smile at the warbler on the tree above you. You cover the final stretch in a couple of hours and knock politely on the flap of the generals' tent.

'What? Who's there!' says someone inside before untying the door. A head sporting a fine moustache pops out and surveys you from head to foot.

If you haven't received the general's first mission, go to **205**; if you can finish his first mission, but haven't received his second, go to **378**; if you can finish his second mission, go to **208**; if you tell him you've knocked on the wrong tent, and that you'll be on your way, go to **513**.

248 - Four *hobbit guards* burst into the tavern. Upon seeing you they attack.

If you survive the fight you run out the inn. Go to the second paragraph of **246**.

249 - xxxx

250 - You are trapped. A troll wanders into the cavern for a drink of water and, seeing you in the bottom, tosses a boulder onto your head. You die of your concussion and drown.

251 - The valiant warrior clearly likes the cut of your jib; he hands you a cigarette. 'Our realm needs more men like you: Patriotic and tough! Sir Guillimar, escort this fine citizen to the front-line immediately!' The other soldier salutes and ushers you into a military carriage to **392**.

252 - Surprise is a synonym for success: you order your army over the hill and rout the unprepared enemy forces.

'Three cheers for Blendan the Just! Cool in the heat of battle, collected in the chaos of war!' The carp cheer wildly as you swim through their ranks and pin shells on their chests. 'Fish!' you shout, 'you have done well today. The soldiers of the rainbow palace are not more valorous! The reds' - here the blues hiss and spit - 'thought they could upturn the ancient hierarchy in one bold stroke... only to retreat with their fins between their tails! They are peasants, quick to flee when they do not win decisively, but we... we are trained soldiers, and in comparison we are immovable, indomitable, implacable!' Your

army laughs heartily at the reds' misfortune.

Two blue carp swim up to you holding a wounded red. They dump the prisoner of war at your feet and salute. 'Sir! This red says that his army's regrouping nearby!' You crouch down and lift the red's chin up. 'Is this true?' you ask. It spits in your face. 'I curse you, you filthy mercenaries, you sons of gurnards - we'll be back, and we won't take any of you alive neither!' You smile. 'Then neither shall we.' You click your fin and the two blues haul the prisoner away. You call out: 'but soldiers... waterboard him first. It's best to milk a cow before you slit its throat, as we say above.' The soldiers salute and drag the defiant red into 'the yard'

You turn to address your troops. 'Fishy brethren! The red swines' revolt falters against our fishbone spears, their violent ideology ribboned by our gnashing teeth and slicing fins! They attempt to recombine nearby, but we will disband their motley spawn immediately - we will lance the boil before it can swell once more! Forwards fish, forwards for the King!' The blue fish cheer and march to the beat of the crab drum.

If you chase the retreating eels with your whole army, go to **259**. If you chase the eels with a portion of your own eels, go to **269**. If you let the red eels flee and march on, go to **279**.

253 - You give the order to assume a square formation, and the carp under your control, well-drilled as they are, execute the order flawlessly. The blue eels shoot around to what used to be your rear only to find row upon row of jaws and pointy teeth. The blue carp join with the eels in charging your forces, but you're prepared for the two-front battle and manage to repel all attacks. After several hours the enemy general calls off the attack, and the blues retreat.

'Three cheers for Blendan the Just! Cool in the heat of battle, collected in the chaos of war!' The carp cheer wildly as you

swim through their ranks and pin shells on their chests. 'Fish!' you shout, 'you have done well today. The soldiers of the rainbow palace are not more valorous! The blues' - here the reds hiss and spit - 'thought they could quell our rebellion in one bold stroke... only to retreat with their fins between their tails! They are hired arms, quick to flee when they do not win decisively, but we... we fight for what is right, and it makes us immovable, indomitable, implacable!' Your army laughs heartily at the blues' misfortune.

Two red carp swim up to you holding a wounded blue. They dump the prisoner of war at your tail and salute. 'Sir! This blue says that his army's regrouping and will attack again this afternoon!' You crouch down and lift the blue's chin up. 'Is this true?' you ask. It spits in your face. 'I curse you, you filthy rebels, you sons of mackerel - we'll be back, and we won't take any of you alive neither!' You smile. 'Then neither shall we.' You click your fin and the two reds haul the prisoner away. You call out: 'but comrades... waterboard him first. It's best to milk a cow before you slit its throat, as we say above.' The soldiers salute and drag the defiant blue into 'the yard'.

You inform your army that an attack will be coming, and order them to dig themselves into a defensive position atop a mound of sand as best they can. They spend the next few hours piling up sandbags as the blues amass on the plains below.

The blues begin to swim up the mound. They move as one force this time, which is comprised of 4,500 carp and 3,500 eels; you have 8,500 carp under your command. If you order your forces to charge down the mound at the enemy, go to **263**; if you stay put and fight from the top of the mound, go to **273**.

254 - It's well known that wobblyroot grows wild in the fens, and has sustained many a traveller during their journey. Take a luck check, and add the day of the month to your roll (as

you've picked up some survival skills during the month): you find days' worth of *provisions* equal to the level of the check you make. You eat a little of your find in the twilight: consult the *rest appendix* before going to the final paragraph of **146**.

255 - 'Alright - have it your way!' you shout out, and order your troops to swim on the Kelp Fortress. You reach it in just a few hours, but you're shadowed by a 2,000 strong force from the capital sand castle sent to relieve the satellite fort. If you order your force back to the sand castle, go to the third paragraph of **283**; if you still order your forces to storm the fort, which is manned by 1,500 fish, go to **265**.

256 - You trudge into the Red Hob tavern, a lively inn in which hobbits quaff mead while listening to a cover artist play the lute.

A heavily obese, wealthy hobbit wallows in an applewood lazy boy in one corner of the tavern. He seems to be trying to catch your attention. If you talk to him, go to **274**. If you have a *tumeric* root to give him, go to **376**. Otherwise you should talk to the bartender about a room at **284**.

257 - The *minute man* throws a knife at you for four dice of damage, unless you pass a level two speed check, then attacks.

If you survive the fight you flee out of the tavern before anyone notices he's gone missing. Looks like you're sleeping outside the town limits: go to **266**.

258 - It's a short night: five minutes after slugging back the liquor you're out like a light. You wake up the next morning to an empty bar (and empty pockets - someone must have robbed you blind while you were out like a light). You do, however, find a few *pink dragon scales* in the bottom of your shot glass, which you take. You stagger out of the tavern and

follow the carriages and donkeys into the market, which seems to engulf the city.

You reflect on the location of the town, situated as it is between the palace and the massive Lake Calamere, and realise it must exist as a hub of trade. Unfortunately you have no coins to squander, so you must instead go south-east to the lake at **286**, south to the village at **296**, south-west to the mysterious tower at **89**, west to a collection of tents at **123**, north-west to hilly pasture at **254**, north to the large farms at **39**, or north-east to the palace at **288**.

259 - Your whole army enthusiastically swims after the red eels, shouting taunts and threats. The swim through the water current is taxing however, and by the time your army straggles to the other side it's totally exhausted - it's at this point that the hidden bulk of the red army pounces and flounces your forces. You, fortunately, have enough energy to swim away from the debacle and fling yourself onto the village shore at **200**. Never show your fish-face to the blues again - fraud!

260 - Wrinkling up your nose, you choke down a mouthful of the water. It tastes like rotting flesh, and you immediately feel queasy.

You've become diseased: until you spend a night resting in an inn you'll fail any strength or constitution checks asked of you. Go back to the second paragraph of **47**.

261 - If you took at least three days' worth of *provisions*, go to **236**; if you took less than this, go to **246**.

262 - There's nothing wrong with good ole' brute force, but how energetically your army charges the enemy will depend on your charisma. Take a level one charisma check: if you pass, go to **271**; if you fail, go to **282**.

263 - Make a level one luck and charisma check. If you pass both checks, go **283**; if you fail either check, go to **293**; if you fail both checks, go to **300**.

264 - You doze for a couple of hours as the river takes you to the marshes (this doesn't count as resting). Once the river trickles to a stop you awake and knock on Took-a-Taka-a-Filao-a-Fafi's door at the fourth paragraph of **77**.

265 - Your forces sweep across the fort's defences, despite being harried by the relief force. During the battle you also obliterate the relief force, which was your real goal. After the battle you march your army back to the sand castle to find it manned by a mere 1,500 blue fish.

'Blue fish! I respect those that fight valiantly, but you have no hope of holding out against us! Your castle is defended by the same number of soldiers Fort Kelp was - was, because we butchered them all as you well know! So, I repeat: surrender or perish!'

After half an hour's wait the drawbridge is lowered over the moat. The enemy exits the castle with their fins above their heads, and prostrate themselves at your tail. 'Rise, vanquished ones, you have no need to fear. Blendan the Just takes note of your wilful surrender and shall deal with you as is meet.' You whisper to your lieutenant: 'escort them to the slave market and we'll split the proceeds between us. Don't take too long trying to get the best price - get rid of them before anyone asks too many questions.' Your second-in-command winks and organises everything for you.

You lead the red army into the sand castle and sit yourself in the throne. Your troops plunder the royal treasury for everything it's worth and dump piles and piles of coins in front of you: 25,000 in total. If you tell your army that this is the fee you demand for your services, go to **275**; if you keep 1/20th of

refund - now get to sleep!’

If you fume out of the tavern in a rage and sleep outside the town limits instead, go to **266**; if you grudgingly accept your mean accomodation, go to **294**; if you tell the petite geezer you’re staying here for free, go to **235**.

268 - The petite man jabs his thumb behind him. ‘Hobbit rooms’re too small for you humans. I gotta place you can stay for the night out back: 30 gold coins, all you can eat breakfast.’ If you accept the deal, go to **278**; if you decline the offer you walk out of the tavern and rough it outside the town limits at **266**.

269 - Write down how many of your 3,800 eels you send chasing after the 1,000 retreating red eels, then go to **289**.

270 - You’re at the mine-face, although fortunately no-one is here.

You can see a *mountain tooth* buried in the stone wall: if you use a *chisel* to get it out, go to **201**; if you use a *pick-axe* to get it out, go to **211**; if you use a *clay grenade* to get it out, go to **221**.

271 - You rouse the men into a frenzy and send them charging into the ranks of the reds. The battle is long and bloody, but after several hours your side prevails. The reds retreat in disarray.

‘Three cheers for Blendan the Just! Cool in the heat of battle, collected in the chaos of war!’ The carp cheer wildly as you swim through their ranks and pin shells on their chests. ‘Fish!’ you shout, ‘you have done well today. The soldiers of the rainbow palace are not more valorous! The reds’ - here the blues hiss and spit - ‘thought they could upturn the ancient hierarchy in one bold stroke... only to retreat with their fins

between their tails! They are peasants, quick to flee when they do not win decisively, but we... we are trained soldiers, and in comparison we are immovable, indomitable, implacable!' Your army laughs heartily at the reds' misfortune.

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It's not long until your army, consisting of 4,500 carp and 3,800 eels, stumble across a small force of 1,000 red eels, which retreat across a water current upon sighting your forces. 'Is this all that is left of them, sir?' asks your lieutenant.

If you chase the retreating eels with your whole army, go to **259**. If you chase the eels with a portion of your own eels, go to **269**. If you let the red eels flee and march on, go to **279**.

272 - The eels dart up the left flank of the opposing army and out of view. You will need to predict how long the eels will take to reach the red's rear so that you can synchronise your carps'

frontal attack. Take a level one intelligence check: if you pass, go to **281**; if you fail, go to **291**.

273 - Your position is impenetrable, and after an hour of fighting uphill against an entrenched position the blues seem to be wearying. If you order a counter-attack, go to **203**; if you suspect a trap, go to **215**.

274 - You brush past the sea of halflings and take a seat at the obese hobbit's table. The rotund midget stares at you, his eyes almost fully enveloped in the folds of fat surrounding them. 'You are an adventurer, no? Your bag' - with a superhuman effort he lifts his arm and taps your pack, which almost bursts at the seams with all you've crammed in it - 'your bag is one of a plunderer, no?' You reply that you are not an adventurer but a painter on an adventure, and that once you've found some ground *pink dragon scales*, curdled *hydra milk*, and crushed *mountain tooth* you'll return to the palace to continue your profession. The corpulent pygmy smirks.

'Aha, they always say that it's temporary when they start, that they'll just make one or two dungeon raids so that they can travel somewhere or to make the most of their youth - but it's addictive! There's gold in thar tombs! Boy - you like gold, no?' You tell him that you do indeed like gold, that you like gold very much.

The tubby Lilliputian withdraws a necklace from the folds of his linen gipon and dangles it in front of your face. It's made of chintzy glass, and badly blown at that.

'Take a *casket* of this jewellery to the merchant on the northern beach, then return to me with the spice he'll give you. You will be richly rewarded: I shall give you 2,000 gold coins for your efforts!' He puts the necklace around your neck, hands you the box, and kisses both your cheeks. You tell him he has a deal and go to the bar at **284**.

275 - Your troops laugh before killing you. They don't need your brilliant leadership anymore after all. The end.

276 - Make a luck check: you find merchants selling the following items up to the level of check you make:

Failed check: *Toolkit, excessively coarse sandpaper.*

Level zero check: *Sheaf of six homing arrows, earrings of hearing.*

Level one check: *Ethereal shield, grapes of wrath.*

Level two check: *Soul armour, tremblestone.*

Level three check: *Pogo boots, book of voluminous law.*

Level four check: *Mask of trepidation, deluxe traveller's backpack.*

Level five check: *Envelope knife of the sky gods, Taozen's hand-wraps.*

All merchants also sell the items listed in the handbook, including *provisions*, and buy any item you own.

It's the evening by the time you've scoured the market-town. You may head to the nearest inn for the night at **256**, or camp outside the town limits at **266**.

277 - The evil brownie acknowledges you as you exit the kitchen and trusts that you slept well. He tells you that he just needs to check the state of your 'room' before you leave. If you run out the building while he does this, go to the second paragraph of **246**; if you wait for him to return, go to **261**.

278 - You graciously accept his kind offer. 'Money up front!' says the squat pixie, leveraging the till open with a knife. You hand over the coins without murmur and are led into the kitchen out back.

All around you pots, pans, and hams dangle from the ceiling. 'Little man', you say, 'I'm not sure what to make of this. This is a kitchen, not a quarters fit for peaceful slumber.'

The pint-sized barkeep opens the pantry door. 'Not here you dolt, you're in there for the night!' He hands you an empty sack of flour. 'Here's your sleeping bag - make your own breakfast in the morning!' If you accept your situation meekly, go to **294**; if you demand better quarters for 30 whole coins, go to **267**.

279 - You ignore the small force of reds and continue marching towards the kelp jungle, determined to destroy their motley collection of bases and flush them out.

You allow the army to rest for the night just outside the bush: tomorrow's going to be a big day after all. You order the cook, a fat jellyfish named Brent, to give them all the men double portions. You want them full, high spirited, and ready to fight.

You give the order the next morning for your army to cleanse the area of the rebel camps, once and for all. But should they do so all together, for safety, or in groups, for speed? Write down how you divide your army and what each battalion is composed of (remember that you had 4,500 carp and 3,800 eels when you stumbled across the red eels yesterday), then go to **308**.

280 - You're at the mine-face - you can tell because three *goblin miners* work the rock excitedly. As you enter the cavern they swivel around, then attack. If you survive the fight go to the second paragraph of **270**.

281 - You wait for about ten minutes, then send the carp under your command charging into the ranks of the reds. Your timing is near perfect, and although the battle is long and bloody your side ultimately prevails. The reds retreat in disarray.

‘Three cheers for Blendan the Just! Cool in the heat of battle, collected in the chaos of war!’ The carp cheer wildly as you swim through their ranks and pin shells on their chests. ‘Fish!’ you shout, ‘you have done well today. The soldiers of the rainbow palace are not more valorous! The reds’ - here the blues hiss and spit - ‘thought they could upturn the ancient hierarchy in one bold stroke... only to retreat with their fins between their tails! They are peasants, quick to flee when they do not win decisively, but we... we are trained soldiers, and in comparison we are immovable, indomitable, implacable!’ Your army laughs heartily at the reds’ misfortune.

Two blue carp swim up to you holding a wounded red. They dump the prisoner of war at your feet and salute. ‘Sir! This red says that his army’s regrouping nearby!’ You crouch down and lift the red’s chin up. ‘Is this true?’ you ask. It spits in your face. ‘I curse you, you filthy mercenaries, you sons of gurnards - we’ll be back, and we won’t take any of you alive neither!’ You smile. ‘Then neither shall we.’ You click your fin and the two blues haul the prisoner away. You call out: ‘but soldiers... waterboard him first. It’s best to milk a cow before you slit its throat, as we say above.’ The soldiers salute and drag the defiant red into ‘the yard’

You turn to address your troops. ‘Fishy brethren! The red swines’ revolt falters against our fishbone spears, their violent ideology ribboned by our gnashing teeth and slicing fins! They attempt to recombine nearby, but we will disband their motley spawn immediately - we will lance the boil before it can swell once more! Forwards fish, forwards for the King!’ The blue fish cheer and march to the beat of the crab drum.

It's not long until your army, consisting of 4,500 carp and 3,800 eels, stumble across a small force of 1,000 red eels, which retreat across a water current upon sighting your forces. 'Is this all that is left of them, sir?' asks your lieutenant.

If you chase the retreating eels with your whole army, go to **259**. If you chase the eels with a portion of your own eels, go to **269**. If you let the red eels flee and march on, go to **279**.

282 - You're unable to rouse your troops to fight to their utmost, and as a result they are eventually routed by the more motivated rebels. You take advantage of the confusion to swim away from the debacle unnoticed and fling yourself onto the village shore at **200**. Never show your fish-face to the blues again - fraud!

283 - Your army thunders down the mound into the ranks of the enemy and smashes their formation into smithereens. 'The best defence is a good offence' you muse to yourself as the blues flee down the mound and back onto the plains, 'it is a maxim old, trusty, and true.'

You allow the troops a pint of rum during the night to celebrate, and join the festivities yourself. You wake up the next morning with the biggest hangover in the army but, summoning every ounce of willpower you possess, drag yourself out of your tent and address the troops.

'My fishy brothers! The blue's army lies in tatters - now is the time to bring the fight to them and conquer the lake for ourselves! Forwards, forwards to their castle!' Your army cheers and sallies forth to the beat of the crab drum.

You surround the enemy's capital sand castle, which is only manned by a 3,500 strong skeleton crew, with your 8,000 strong army. You call out to the blue fish manning the enemy walls. 'Surrender oppressors, and we shall spare you! Hold

out, and we shall not spare even the spawn of your wives! Blendan, Blendan the Just, is fair: he gives you the choice to acquiesce to his terms or perish!' One of the blue fish fires an arrow at you in reply, which fortunately is blocked by a fast acting subordinate's body.

If you order your army to storm the castle, go to **292**. If you order your forces to lay in for a siege, go to **299**. If you order your forces to storm the enemy's close-by satellite fort, go to **255**.

284 - You rap on the bar's counter with your knuckle to get the owner's attention. The little fellow breaks off his conversation with one of the customers and asks how he can help you.

If you ask for the strongest drink in the house, go to **298**. If you ask for breakfast and board, go to **268**.

285 - Your troops find your terms reasonable enough: 1,250 gold coins are given to you, plus a further 1,500 when the lieutenant returns during the night. You swim away from the celebrations unnoticed and fling yourself onto the village shore: sleep and consult the *rest appendix* before going to **200**.

286 - You pay the 20 gold coin fare and hop into the carriage. After a short, smooth trip you clatter up to the palace's pearlescent gates. Go to the second paragraph of **479**.

287 - The soldier manages to wrap his whole hand around your bicep, so lean is your frame. 'I admire your patriotism, but you will serve us better in the field of grain than war. Vamoose!' The two soldiers frog-march you out of the fort, grasping you firmly by your spindly arms.

Fortunately the day is still young and your feet aren't too sore. You may travel south-east to the dragon mountains at **209**,

south-east to the commanders' tent at **247**, east to the trenches at **297**, north-east to the trenches at **228**, north to the swamp at **238**, north-west to the marshland at **187**, or south-west to the palace at **190**.

288 - The Rainbow Palace is a dull panoply of grey by the time you approach its walls. The gate is closed: you'll need to rest for the night before carrying on. If you try and find a room in the Black Cat Inn, go to **469**; if you camp outside the ramparts, go to **479**.

289 - Your eels enthusiastically swim after the red eels, shouting taunts and threats. The swim through the water current is taxing however, and by the time your eels straggle to the other side they're totally exhausted - it's at this point that the hidden bulk of the red army pounces and flounces your forces.

If you committed at least 2,000 of your eels to the chase you have lost too large a portion of your army to continue the campaign, and are obliged to swim away from the debacle and fling yourself onto the village shore at **200**.

If you committed less than 2,000 of your eels you hurriedly swim your fish away from the debacle, seeking a decisive victory to make amends. Go to **279**.

290 - You enter a large empty cavern. Ahead of you is another tunnel: not wanting to walk back along the long tunnel by which you came, you walk along the new one.

You emerge in a finely hewn room filled with dead dwarves and a very much alive *heavily armoured troll*. The troll is panting, and covered in blood, but doesn't hesitate to attack you.

If you survive the fight you find a *mithril heavy mace* on one of

the dwarves, which you may take. You exit by climbing up the ladder in the cavern.

The trip up the ladder is taxing: you've been climbing up for 20 minutes with your pack on, and while that's no trouble to a dwarf you're just a painter-turned-adventurer. Make a level zero strength check and take away all but the last digit of the weight you carry. If you pass you manage to climb up to the top, but if you fail you fall and break one of your legs (for the rest of the adventure your speed will be halved - if you've broken both legs the adventure will have to come to a close!). You may try and climb the ladder as many times as you wish.

If you manage to get to the top you clamber down to the entrance of the mine. Go to the final paragraph of **66**.

291 - You wait for 20 minutes before sending the carp under your control crashing into the enemy's ranks. The whole red army swarms against you undeterred and begins to cut down your forces. You take advantage of the confusion to swim away from the debacle unnoticed and fling yourself onto the village shore at **200**. Never show your fish-face to the blues again - fraud!

292 - You send wave after wave of red fish against the outnumbered defenders, but you make little progress over the day and are forced to call off the attack once you've lost too many men to continue. You swim away from the debacle unnoticed and fling yourself onto the village shore at **200**. Never show your fish-face to the reds again - fraud!

293 - Your army thunders down the mound into the ranks of the enemy, but this time the blues manage to repel your attack. What begins as a charge down the hills end up a retreat down the hill.

You take advantage of the confusion to swim away from the

debauched unnoticed and fling yourself onto the village shore at **200**. Never show your fish-face to the reds again - fraud!

294 - You thank the wee man for his hospitality and nestle among the bulk ingredients once he's gone. You get no sleep (and recover no lost constitution) as your eyes sting throughout the night: the next morning you empty the sack you had used as a pillow and several onions roll onto the floor.

Angry at your ill-treatment, you determine to rob the little bastard blind. Take as many days' worth of *provisions* as you wish before returning to the bar at **277**.

295 - Your troops look at you with adoration: permanently increase your charisma by three. By way of financial consolation you do also receive 1,500 gold coins when the lieutenant returns during the night. You swim away from the celebrations unnoticed and fling yourself onto the village shore: sleep and consult the *rest appendix* before going to **200**.

296 - You hand over the fare and hop into the camel-driven carriage. You chatter amiably to the exotic woman next to you, permanently increasing your charisma by one in the process if you pass a level two charisma and intelligence check. Too soon, your cab arrives in the village. Go to **200**.

297 - You spend all day walking towards the trenches, and arrive there by dusk. You dive in for cover as you approach: a volley of arrows whistles your way and thuds into the sandbags facing no-man's-land.

'War is hell boy!' a soldier shouts next to you, taking a grenade from his belt. He pulls the pin, stands up, and hurls it towards the opposing front. 'Fire in the hole! Thar she blows, boys!' he shouts before ducking. Several arrows zip past where his head had just been before the dull boom of a blast stops them dead.

'Damn, they're quick on the draw! Don't know how long we'll hold - don't care!' You unwrap a sandwich from your backpack and munch on it, eagerly watching the drama through the trench periscope.



'You got food, boy?' says the soldier. 'We ain't got diddly-shit 'less you go

countin' the rats, and there ain't even so many of them critters left. Can ya spare some grub for the front?' If you can, write down how many days' worth of *provisions* you give him before going to **418**; if you can't, go to **426**.

298 - 'Dragon's Breath: 100 gold a pop.' If you hand over a hundred of your finest crowns, go to **258**; if this liquor sounds too rough for your courtly tastebuds, go to the second paragraph of **284**.

299 - Take a level three luck check: if you pass, the siege is successful and you go to the penultimate paragraph of **265**; if you fail you must rest for the night and continue the siege the next day. Each day that you carry out the siege lowers the check you take by one level: you'll need to make a level two check on the second day, a level one check on the third day, and a level zero check on the fourth day.

300 - The troops are not at all convinced this was the right decision to make, and you find yourself charging down the mound with only a ragtag collection of diehard followers. The blues makes quick work of you as you plunge into their ranks virtually alone. The end.

301 - You lead your band of vagabonds towards the town, instructing them to act as civilly as possible. One of your men can't help himself however, and snatches a woman's purse: soon you and your five *bandit horsemen* are galloping out of the borough, a half dozen *knights* hot on your trail.

Your horses are nothing special, scavenged as they are from the bandits' victims; your pursuers' are thoroughbreds however who gain on you six with each passing minute. A showdown is inevitable.

If you have any *clay grenades*, *caltrops*, or anything similar, you may take them out of your pack and throw them behind you as a free attack. Doing this also slows the *knights* down momentarily, allowing you to swivel around on your horse and make a ranged attack against them, or giving you enough time to cast a spell. You may repeat doing this as many times as you wish.

When you're ready you order your five *bandit horsemen* to wheel around and attack, getting a free round of combat against your opponents. The fight carries on as normal from there.

If you and any of your subordinates survive the battle you trot off the path and make camp for the night, badly needing to recuperate from your brush with the law. On the plus side, the fierce battle with the knights has hardened up any surviving *bandit horsemen*: their MR value is now 25 each. Consult the *rest appendix* before reading on.

You stir in the glade outside the town limits before dawn, and shake awake any others with you. ‘Comrades, we must leave while the night still cloaks us!’ The others grumble, but harness their horses.

Soon you are off, trotting away from the market town towards safety. You cowl your faces from the passers-by, and doff your *sombreros* with gap-toothed grins at any knight passing your way.

It is dusk by the time you reach the outskirts of the palace. The Black Cat Inn stands outside its mighty walls. ‘Boss, there’s plenny of money in this purse - let’s sleep in style tonight!’ If you heartily agree with this suggestion, go to **321**; if you tell your fellow brigands to suck it up because you’re roughing it again, go to **331**.

302 - Cast any spells you wish on yourself before charging into the camp. You will need to face one dice of *bandits*, one dice of *bandit archers*, and one dice of *bandit horsemen*.

If you survive the fight you ransack the camp of the four days’ worth of *provisions* that roast on the spit. Also, take a luck check: you find 100 gold coins for every level you make. Steal away with your plunder to **319**.

303 - You get back into bed and sleep soundly for the rest of the night.

You awake the next morning to Helena curling into your body. You gently shake her awake and tell her you need to leave for the day to give your report to the King, but that you'll catch the rapid express carriage and be back by sundown. 'Oh honey, what's the rush? Let's play!' she says, leaping on top of you.

Is your will strong enough to resist her temptations? Take level three intelligence or charisma checks until you pass one: the number of failed checks you make equal the number of nights you spend in the fort with Helena. Each failed check also cripples you with sexually transmitted infections, lowering your constitution by one for the rest of the adventure.

Eventually you manage to persuade her of your job's importance. She sees you off as you catch a carriage to **52**.

304 - You let loose a *take that you fiend!* and fry one of your assailants to a crisp (lose wizardry as if you had cast the spell). The *privates five, six, and seven* attack you in fear and rage, this time to the death.



After three rounds of combat you all hear the sound of a charge hurtling towards the trench, and desperately turn to fight your common foe together. Go to the second paragraph of **387**.

305 - Fire leaps from your staff and accidentally sets one of

the tapestries alight. While some bonding occurs while you both beat out the flames, it's a bit of a mood killer. Lose one quotient of romance and go to the second paragraph of **330**.

306 - Make a dexterity check and a luck check: the combined level of these checks is how many days' worth of *provisions* you manage to harpoon. You collect whatever creature you've managed to fish from the sea and go to **136**.

307 - Take a level six charisma check, and add the weight of the provisions in kgs to your roll. If you fail, go to **337**; if you pass, go to **372**.

308 - The army, or the battalions, scatter and comb the kelp for reds.

Each day, each battalion takes a level five strength check, using their number of troops divided by 100 as their strength. If they pass they manage to destroy a rebel base: if they fail they lose 100 fish for each point they missed the check by. The army can be reformed however you like each day. Continue making checks until you've destroyed five bases or been reduced to 2,000 fish, whichever comes first. Go to **318** if you manage to crush the rebellion, and **327** if the rebellion manages to crush you!

309 - 'Men' you say 'we've killed our sergeant, failed in the push, and can expect a counter-attack any moment. Let's get out of here!' The men scatter in all directions before you've even finished giving your short speech, as do you once you've finished.

Whiter do you yourself run? You may either walk north-west to the swamps at **336**, westwards to the marshlands at **29**, south-west to the fort at **2**, catch a military carriage to the fort at **8**, or walk south-east to the lower portion of the trenches at **297**.

310 - The commander thanks you for the evaluation, then calls out: 'sweetypoo? Lunch is ready!' You hear the sound of footsteps and wheezing approaching the door.



A young woman dressed in white enters the room, a shetland hydra dragged behind her by the leash. 'Blendan, this is

Helena, my daughter. Helena, meet Blendan, an artist famous all throughout the realm.’ You mumble greetings to each other and dig into your meal. Helena throws scraps of fish to her pet, which snaps the morsels out of the air.

‘What’s its name?’ you ask, edging your chair away as it begins gnawing on the table leg next to you.

‘Chompy: no. NO.’ she says authoritatively, pointing at the half-wild beast with each syllable. Chompy whines and stares at her with nine pairs of plaintive eyes, grovelling in submission.

‘Her name is Chompy. You can pat her if you want - it’s just a name. Her screech is worse than her bite.’ Hearing the vicious animal is female you notice its udders are swollen with milk. You hatch a plan to seduce the fair maiden and express the valuable liquid from her pet while they both sleep.

Are you willing to go near it while it’s awake though? Go to **320** if you attempt to stroke one of its nine heads, and go to **330** if you value your hands.

311 - You lead your men through hilly pasture, steering clear of any shepherds or huts in sight. Unfortunately the local predators also lurk in the backwoods, and soon a large pack of *wolves* five dice in number tail you and your band of vagabonds. The swiftest of the beasts bound ahead of you and cut off any chance of escape. You ready your weapons before they pounce on you.

If you and any of your subordinates survive the battle you make camp for the night, badly needing to recuperate from your brush with the wild. On the plus side, the fierce battle with the *wolves* has hardened up any surviving *bandit horsemen*: their MR value is now 25 each. Consult the *rest appendix* before reading on.

The next morning rosy fingered dawn dapples your face and awakes you. You rouse your companions and set off at once, not wanting to linger in this curish corner of the kingdom.

You all continue trotting northwards. The hills become progressively larger as you travel, and you eventually find yourself leading your men up Incisor Mountain.

The path you follow that wends around the mountain's flank is narrow, and to fall off would almost certainly mean death. You glance at the pointed rock below, stained red by the blood of previous travellers, their skeletons picked clean by plump vultures. You assume they didn't know *fly me*.

You lead your men along the treacherous track, around a bend, and almost ride into the chest of a troll. There are six of them in all.

'Ey, 'umans, you enterin' troll country now! You better know da passwor', else you gonna know da clubs of Thog, Rog, Og, Lug, Log, and Sog!' Write down what you think the password is before going to **322**.

312 - You attempt to creep away from the camp and rest for the night further away, but can you do so undetected? Take a level zero luck, dexterity, and intelligence check: if you pass all three, go to **319**, and if you fail any, prepare to fight at **302**.

313 - You manage to soothe the beast before it fully awakes. After several minutes Chompy is snoring away. Go to the final paragraph of **455**.

314 - You awake in the middle of the night to the howling of wolves in the distance. As you sit up on the hill, you notice something gleaming under the moonlight in a stream below you. You walk over to the mysterious object and find that it's a *silver scimitar*: and not a moment too soon! One of the *crazed*

wolves runs down and leaps upon you... if you survive the fight go to the second paragraph of 7.

315 - A powerful blast of energy tears through the room and hits your fair lady square in the chest, sending her hurtling into the stone wall behind her. You've killed Helena! This obviously ends any attempt to woo her. You'll need to try and hide the body before anyone finds her: if you cast *hidey hole* on her corpse go to **375**; if you have a *sack*, or you empty out your backpack and put her corpse inside, go to **385**; otherwise go to **395**.



316 - Sand hoppers skittle over the iron dunes towards their warrens, burrowing downwards to escape the frigid eventide. You feel cold yourself in the dusky breeze, and decide to pitch camp. You stack several pieces of driftwood into a pyre and alight it with an *it's elemental* spell, warming yourself while you set up for the night. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up the next morning to a most beautiful sight: the sight of warm dawn-light on the mellow sea-swells. You bathe yourself in the ocean, under the orange clouds, and air-dry yourself once you return to land.

If a *sand golem* is under your control it has armed itself while you swam with a piece of driftwood and a massive shell, which it seems to be using as a rudimentary sword and shield. Increase its MR to 28 and its armour to six.

League Beach is known as one of the natural wonders of your kingdom, and rightly so. It takes a whole day to walk from end

to end, and the whole breadth of the coastline is clean and pristine. Man has not despoiled this corner of the realm quite yet; you may fill as many *sacks* with sand as you wish. But whereto after that?

If you pass a level four luck check, go to **333** (you take this check at level two if you've interrogated a cat, and automatically pass this check if you have the merchant's map); if you possess a *common spear* and wish to spend the day fishing, go to **329**; if you walk south-east along the beach, go to **326**; if you walk south-west along the beach, go to **136**; if you walk south to the fens, go to **146**.

317 - The warrior frowns. 'Well, go on eatin' your sandwich then while we die, I won't stop you. I'm sure you deserve it more than us guys defendin' liberty and freedom and all that.' As you lick the mayonnaise off your fingers the soldier ducks, and seconds later a blast of fire hits you from above for four dice of damage. 'Dragon strike - din't ya hear the flapping up above? Serves you right you fat bastard!'

You ask whether you may sleep here for the night before leaving. 'Here? Like hell you're sleepin' here! You can sleep in no-man's-land for all I care!' he says, pointing to the arrow-studded area between the trenches. You take it to mean that there's some kind of truce that applies to the area, and that no man is allowed to attack another if he goes there. You set up camp in the middle of it: consult the *rest appendix*, and fight one dice of *night-raiders* if you roll anything other than a 12 - 16.

The cry of the bugle awakes you the next morning from both sides: wishing to avoid being stuck in the middle of the day's fighting you either walk north-west to the swamps at **336**, westwards to the marshlands at **29**, south-west to the fort at **2**, catch a military carriage to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel pass*, or walk south-east to the lower portion of the trenches at

297.

318 - Once the guerrilla camps have all been smashed, you order the remains of the red army to be sold into slavery. The blue army cheers as their old nemeses are led towards the royal docks, no doubt to be shackled as oar hands in the navy's galleys.

Word is sent to the fish king of your success, and the next day a count rides towards you on a valiant eel. 'Blendan!' he says, withdrawing a velvet-bound manual from the folds of his robe, 'the King recognises your contributions to the stability of the realm, mighty wizard, and rewards you with knowledge: the knowledge of a rare incantation from his treasury!' You take the spell book from the count, thank him, and swim back to the village shore at **200**, reading how to cast *cry me a river* while you go.

319 - You are a chameleon of the night, a shadow among shadows... you tiptoe to the other side of a hill and settle down next to a clump of gorse. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up early the next morning, not wishing to tarry in this lawless part of the realm. You may walk westwards towards the camps at **457**, north-west towards the hilly pasture at **328**, north-east towards the large farms at **334**, eastwards towards the town at **348**, or south-east towards the mysterious tower at **362**.

320 - Take a level two charisma check. If you pass, go to **340**; if you fail, go to **350**.

321 - You grab the purse from the brigand and count the money: 327 gold coins altogether. You run the glinting crowns through your grubby little fingers, chuckling, then toss the empty purse to your companion. 'Very well - we shall have wine, women, and song!' You all gallop towards the tavern, tie

your steeds to the side of the building, and enter.

A wizened witch reads a tome behind the counter, no doubt on the secrets of the occult. You pour all the coins onto the dusty bench. She puts the book down, which sports a picture of a necromancer kissing the neck of a purple-haired succubus, and looks at the hoard in wonder.

‘The best rooms in the tavern - dinner, breakfast, liquor with both, and wenches a plenty included!’ you cry. One of your erstwhile associates gives the handbag to the proprietress. ‘And give me first pick on the wenches... a little something for your troubles.’

The crone sweeps the coins into the till and leads you upstairs. ‘I’ve only got one kind of room left: you’ll all have to cram together. As for the wenches, I’m the only one here... but I can oblige.’ She begins to unbutton her blouse, but you hurriedly stop her and tell her that part of the service won’t be required.

‘Hag, as for the rooms didn’t there used to be more? I quartered here often as a child, and the whole second floor used to be bustling.’ The old bat shrugs her shoulders. ‘I let them out long term now. You’ll just have to manage.’

A murmur of dissent courses through your underlings: you’ve paid good money for tonight! If you demand a 250 gold refund for the mean accommodation you’ll be subjected to go to **341**; if you meekly follow the gnarled gorgon into your chamber go to **351**.

322 - If you told Thog (or was it Og?) that the password is ‘trolls’, go to **332**. If you told him anything else, go to **342**.

323 - You try to soothe the nasty creature before it can fully awaken, but fail. Chompy’s nine heads grouchily bite you for one dice of damage each before the beast rolls over back

asleep. If you survive go to the final paragraph of **455**.

324 - ‘Fellas’ you say, ‘I gotta scram!’ You try to leap out of the trench, but the others grab you by the arms.

‘What, and leave us to our fate? I don’t think so, deserter!’ They mob you and begin to give you a beat down. Go to **304** if you resist, and **382** if you take your medicine.

325 - You channel every iota of kremm in your body, focusing it into the point of your staff. After several minutes of intense concentration it begins to glow.

‘Is that it?’ Helena says. You subtly change the colour of the light from an orangey-yellow to a yellowy-orange, beads of sweat rolling down your forehead from the effort.

Helena yawns. Go to the second paragraph of **330**.

326 - Sand hoppers skittle over the iron dunes towards their warrens, burrowing downwards to escape the frigid eventide. You feel cold yourself in the dusky breeze, and decide to pitch camp. You stack several pieces of driftwood into a pyre and alight it with an *it’s elemental* spell, warming yourself while you set up for the night. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up the next morning to a most beautiful sight: the sight of warm dawn-light on the mellow sea-swells. You bathe yourself in the ocean, under the orange clouds, and air-dry yourself once you return to land.

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kingdom, and rightly so. It takes at least a whole day to walk from end to end, and the whole breadth of the coastline is clean and pristine. Man has not despoiled this corner of the realm quite yet; you may fill as many *sacks* with sand as you wish. But whereto after that?

If you possess a *common spear* and wish to spend the day fishing go to **306**; if you swim out to the ship off the shore go to **346**; if you walk north-west along the beach go to **316**; if you cut west through the sand dunes to the other side of the beach go to **136**; if you walk south-west to the fens go to **146**; if you walk south-east towards the swamps go to **336**.

327 - A mixture of bad luck, poor training, and inept leadership stops your army from making any real progress in its campaign. You are forced to call off the attack once you've lost too many men to continue, swim away from the debacle before the King starts looking for a scapegoat, and fling yourself onto the village shore at **200**. Never show your fish-face to the blues again - fraud!

328 - A bandit's gotta eat, and the bandits in these parts find the unattended livestock here easy pickings. Consult the *banditry appendix* before continuing on your way to **454**.

329 - Make a dexterity and a luck check: the combined level of these checks is how many days' worth of *provisions* you manage to harpoon. You collect whatever creature you've managed to fish from the sea and go to **316**.

330 - Not wanting to woo her that badly, you shy away from the drooling beast and finish your meal in silence.

This doesn't mean your conquest is at an end however - far from it! The commander instructs his daughter to entertain you for the day while he judges the jousting, so you have time to try any of the following tactics once:

- Recite love poetry to her at **370**;
- Give her flowers at **380**;
- Buy fashionable clothes for yourself at **390**;
- Impress her with your spell-casting at **400**;
- Sketch a painting of her at **410**;
- Flirt with her at **420**;
- Display your manliness by jousting at **430**;
- Declare your love for her at **440** if you've wracked up at least seven quotients of romance;
- Retire for the night in defeat at **450** if you failed to win her love.

331 - The brigands mutter among themselves, but when you brandish your staff at them threateningly they acquiesce to your decision. You all canter inside the royal woods and set up camp. Consult the *rest appendix*.

Rosy fingered dawn wrests you from your slumber the next day. You blink in the dappled light that percolates through the leaves above, then wake your fellow bandits.

It's a risky trek to the swamps up north: travellers often pass your way, but fortunately none of the bandits with you are recognised. By nightfall you have reached the muddy mire, and confront the same choice: do you set up camp in the bog at **339**, or do you take up board in the Wayfarer's Tavern at **349**?

332 - 'Yeah, dats right. Trolls: cause it's troll country, right? Ok, maybe you servin' the troll king or somethin', I don' know.' You ride past the thick-headed guards, doffing your hats as you go. Descend to the third paragraph of **342**.

333 - You notice that from the position you stand at on the beach, a certain kind of shell seems to have been scattered in the shape of a cross. If you own some kind of digging

implement you may excavate the cross at **344**; otherwise, go to the final paragraph of **316**.

334 - Bandits, bandits everywhere, not an honest soul in sight! Consult the *banditry appendix* before continuing on to **39**.

335 - You cast *knock knock* with a practiced hand. 'Who's there?' asks Helena in response, 'because this is a joke, right?' Go back to the second paragraph of **330**.

336 - You walk all day towards the fetid swamp, finally reaching it by nightfall. You find a hollow log to sleep in for the night. Consult the *rest appendix*, and add five to the roll for daring to sleep in such a dangerous area.

If the date is between the 14th and the 31st, you awake the next morning to a hideous screech: the screech of a *hydra*! You peer out of your log and see it in the distance. It hasn't seen you, so it's entirely up to you whether you attack (you may cast spells on yourself before doing so.)

Whether you attack or retreat, it's time to leave this depressing place. You may walk north-west to the beach at **326**, south-east to the trenches at **228**, southwards to the fort at **2**, south-west to the marshlands at **29**, or westwards to the fens at **146**, or catch a military carriage to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel pass*.

337 - The warrior receives the food with thanks. 'You one nice fella, you know that? Duck -' you do so, and a harnessed dragon flies overhead spouting fire '- dragon strike!'

You ask whether you may sleep here for the night before leaving. 'Here? Well... if you can stand it, sure!' Consult the *rest appendix*.

The cry of the bugle awakes you the next morning: wishing to

avoid the uniform inspection you either walk north-west to the swamps at **336**, westwards to the marshlands at **29**, south-west to the fort at **2**, catch a military carriage to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel pass*, or walk south-east to the lower portion of the trenches at **297**.

338 - You think of something real clever to say. Take a level one charisma and intelligence check. If you pass both checks, go to **309**; if you fail either, go to **324**.

339 - If you camped in the royal forest, or you lost the bandits' respect by not attacking the witch, go to **359**. Otherwise, go to **369**.

340 - Chompy screeches in delight as you rub it behind its ears.

'Wow, you're brave Blendan: most people back away from Chompy in horror!' Gain one quotient of romance.

You've softened her up, but what's your follow-up? The commander instructs his daughter to entertain you for the day while he judges the jousting, so you have time to try any of the following tactics once:

- Recite love poetry to her at **370**;
- Give her flowers at **380**;
- Buy fashionable clothes for yourself at **390**;
- Impress her with your spell-casting at **400**;
- Sketch a painting of her at **410**;
- Flirt with her at **420**;
- Display your manliness by jousting at **430**;
- Declare your love for her at **440** if you've wracked up at least seven quotients of romance;
- Retire for the night in defeat at **450** if you failed to win her love.

341 - The wiccan is used to dealing with young upstarts such as yourself. She casts a *curse you* spell on your strength, the level of which is equal to two dice.

‘Let that be a lesson to you. Now, follow me to your chamber.’ Are you going to take that? Go to **351** if you are, and **361** if you aren’t.

342 - ‘Wrong answer, ‘umans - now turn back!’ There’s no way you’re giving up your quest for a couple of trolls: you decide to butcher them all.

There’s six *lightly armoured trolls* in toto, but the path is only wide enough for two of them and three of you to fight at once: those not involved in the fight on both sides will have to wait for one of their brothers to die before they can take their place. You’re at the front of the melee from the get-go, of course. There’s a real risk of being knocked off the mountain too: whenever you lose a combat round you must pass a level two luck check: fail, and someone on your side is clubbed square in the chest and sent hurtling to their death! If you survive the fight any *bandit horsemen* still with you don the troll’s *leather armour*, increasing their armour value to six.

You lead them down the mountain and camp at the base for the night, keeping your eyes peeled for lumbering interlocutors. Consult the *rest appendix*.

The night-guard wakes you all the next morning, placing a cup of coffee by your head. ‘Milk, three sugars: that ok, *compadre?*’ You cradle the Phantogian blend in your hands, and gently blow on it. ‘You even put it in the rabbit cup. You are a thoughtful *bandetto*, Jacob.’ You sip of the subtle blend, wiping the dregs off your handlebar moustache once you finish.

After your morning victuals you set off north, towards the forested hills.

You and the bandits are quickly lost in the maze of trees. You stumble across a tribe of savages, and ask them for directions.

‘Yala-a-fili-pa! Pa, pa, fili-pa!’ they shout, brandishing their spears. If you defeat the two dice of *tribal warriors* you continue stumbling through the forest until dusk, then camp for the night. Consult the *rest appendix*.

The next morning you spend several hours studying your surroundings and the map in a desperate effort to find a way out. Take a level four intelligence check: if you pass, go to **352**; if you fail, go to the sixth paragraph of this section.

343 - A floorboard creaks underneath you, alerting the fort to your escape and sounding a general alarm! You frantically sprint for the gate but the two *knights* bar your escape: if you fight and defeat them (remembering you haven’t really slept and rested, go to **353**; if you surrender, go to **363**.

344 - You spend all day digging in the sand, but find nothing. You are bitterly disappointed as you set up camp for the night.

After you consult the *rest appendix* you wake up on the untarnished beach next to the giant hole. If you continue digging go to **354**; if you decide to cut your losses go to the final paragraph of **316**.

345 - This spell does indeed make Helena go away, but not against her will. Lose one quotient of romance and go to the second paragraph of **330**.

346 - You swim out to the ship and clamber up its side. It’s a majestic ship adorned with an alluring mermaid on its prow, filled with all manner of goods. A captain built like a stump struts up to you.

‘What’re you doing on my ship? What’s the meaning of this?’ If you tell him that a merchant sent you here, and hand him the *casket* of glass necklaces, go to **356**. If you tell him you’re looking for a position, go to **366**.

347 - The King’s face turns a most striking purple as he surveys your work. He orders your head to be cut off, and several guards unsheathe their swords, all eager to fulfil the King’s bidding before the other. Which one manages to behead you first is irrelevant to you: your head thuds to the floor with a dull ‘thwack!’

348 - Brigands particularly enjoy mugging the traders that ply this road... consult the *banditry appendix* twice before continuing on to **12**.

349 - You enter the tavern and tell your fellow ruffians that you’ll buy them a room for the night.

The inside of the inn is plain, but bog-standard quarters are better than the tents the brigands are used to. They survey the weathered stand-up harpsichord, the pedestrian paintings on the walls, and the dancing blue-tufted monkey in wonder, as if they had never seen such prosaic trifles before.

As you haggle with the barkeep over the price of the night’s accomodation, you hear the brigands talking to someone, then shouting, then hear an almighty crash. Turning around you see one of the brigands sprawled on the floor, blood spurting from his nose, and the rest of the no-gooders unsheathing their weapons. A one-eyed dwarf, a hobbit clenching a pipe between yellowed teeth, and an elven wizard are similarly preparing for battle. Will you watch the brawl unfold from a safe distance at **358**, or help your brothers out, however in the wrong they may be, at **368**?

350 - Chompy snarls as your hand hovers over one of its

heads, and without warning it tries to tear it off. Take a level one speed check: if you pass, go to the second paragraph of **340**; if you fail, go to **360**.

351 - You have certainly lost a great deal of respect from the brigands, along with no small quantity of coins. The vagabonds set off the next morning in bad spirits, cursing your cowardice. Go to the second paragraph of **331**.

352 - You judge the height and relative location of the hills around you and match them with those on the map. You triumphantly lead the bandits out of the forest and towards the marshlands filled with magic pukekos.

You all trot through the marshlands, when suddenly... nothing happens! You thank the troll gods for the respite and canter to the other edge of the watery field, camping on dry land for the night. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You all lope towards the western edge of the beach in high spirits the next day, and reach it by noon. Excitement ripples through your band, and you decide to gallop straight to the northern tip of the beach, reaching it by night. You all set up camp for the night, rubbing your hands in anticipation of your prize. Go to **316**.

353 - You run away for some distance and hide under a bridge, sleeping out the night under a bridge. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You awaken to the thundering of military carriages traversing the stone arch above you. You may travel south-east to the dragon mountains at **209**, south-east to the commanders' tent at **247**, east to the trenches at **297**, north-east to the trenches at **228**, north to the swamp at **238**, north-west to the marshland at **187**, or south-west to the palace at **190**.

354 - You continue to excavate the waterlogged silica for one or two more hours, and eventually hit a smooth wooden surface. You wipe away the sand and see you've found a coffin. Extremely strong magical energy emanates from within. If you open it, go to **364**. If you leave it be, go to the final paragraph of **316**.

355 - The room crackles with kremm as you cast your mighty spell. 'Ooh, your staff is so big' she says afterwards, running her hand down your wooden stick. Gain one quotient of romance and go to the third paragraph of **340**.

356 - The captain eagerly takes the large box from your outstretched hands. 'The natives go wild for this stuff! It's good doing business with your master. Here's my side of the bargain,' he says, prising open a crate and handing you a *tumeric* root from inside, 'give this to your master with my thanks.' You take the spice from him and swim back to the final paragraph of **326**.

357 - You tether your horse to a pole outside the tavern, and enter. The inside is nothing special: there's a weathered harpsichord leaned against an oak wall, a few *passe* paintings hanging on the wall, and a blue-tufted monkey dancing on a table sticky with mead. Three adventurers - a one-eyed dwarf, a hobbit with pipe in hand, and an elf holding a vine-covered staff - guffaw as the simian breakdances wildly to the dwarf's tapping on the table. 'Sit down traveller, and watch this!' he cries, doubling the tempo at which he beats the wooden surface with his knife and spoon.

The azure ape spins on his head round and round to the applause of the three onlookers, jumps to its feet, and takes a bow. 'Entertainment fit only for plebeians' you say, waving your hand dismissively. 'What sublime truths can be communicated through the movements of an animal's limbs, however skilfully they are jerked about?'

The dwarf points a grimy finger in your face. ‘You better listen fella, the eternal can be communicated with raw aesthetic experience alone! Only by momentarily abandoning your temporal concerns can you connect with the Other!’ The hobbit removes his pipe from his mouth, and smirks. ‘But maybe guvnor thinks that what can only be momentarily observed has no intellectual value, that the Other is merely an aggregation of insights collected by man and communicated through language in art: that the Other is merely a catalogue - a catalogue, mark me! - a catalogue of lofty ideas that can be set down using the same lexemes an adulterer uses when conversing with his lover with in bed!’ The hobbit coughs hackingly to show his displeasure before relighting his pipe.

It’s clearly going to be difficult to persuade them that you’re right. If you try and do so, go to **373**; if you pretend to be swayed by the buffoons’ ridiculous argument, go to **383**.

358 - *Daltimdim*, *Scruffles*, and *Gondwar* are no pushovers: resolve the battle between your *bandit horsemen* and them, with the gnawing realisation that you’ll likely need to jump in and save their skin during one of the combat rounds if you think it’s worth saving.

No matter what happens, the barkeep appreciates the effort you put in digging the graves of the recently deceased, and lets you stay in a room for free by way of apology for the troubling incident. You wake up the next morning to a hearty breakfast, and go to the second paragraph of **369** in high spirits.

359 - When the brigands refuse to set up tent in the mud, you threaten them with a *hellbomb burst* if they don’t follow your orders. They sullenly fit the poles together and unfurl the khaki canvas.

You, as their leader, of course sleep in your own tent. If you cast any spell on the tent before you sleep write it down before going to **379**.

360 - You go into shock as the savage beast tears off your hand and devours it. If you had two hands you now have one (you can still cast magic), and if you already had one you may as well close this book.

Helena apologises profusely and tells you that Chompy's never done that before. Shaking all over, you tell her not to worry about it, and that you didn't use that hand much anyway. The fair maiden bandages your stump in her napkin, wiping the blood that stains her hands on your sleeve. Go to the second paragraph of **340**.

361 - You shove the hag against a wall and hold your weapon against her chicken-skin gullet. '250 coins? I think we better make that 2,500 coins - and you can remove this curse too, witch. I'm still strong enough to bash in your head.' The brigands chuckle and unsheathe their weapons. The grey-haired harpy says nothing.

As you drag the old woman towards the till by the arm, you feel something slither from her sleeve into your own. You scream and let go of her, dealing with the *magic snake* as best you can while your underlings hold the witch at bay.

Once the black serpent is disposed of you assist your brothers in their battle with *The Black Cat Witch*. If she sends you all to sleep, go to the second paragraph of **421**; if you defeat the powerful occultist, go to **381**.

362 - Bandits infest the south-west of the realm like the rats they are... when will the King increase the guard budget? Consult the *banditry appendix* before going to **89**.

363 - The commander and his retinue of *knights* burst into the courtyard and interrogate you, quickly realising you just attempted to abandon Helena. The commander is furious and orders you impressed into service as punishment. You're bundled into a military carriage and trundled to the frontline. Go to **392**.

364 - You prise open the heavy coffin, and out floats a lich wearing a circlet and shroud. The dead wizard points his staff at you threateningly.

'Who, what mortal, dares disturb the restless slumber, the eternal cogitations, of the mighty N'liq'tro'xilliq'tri'fiqxliq?' You raise your hand. 'Erm, me sir. Sorry sir, I wanted to see what's in the coffin.'

The lich waves his staff, and an amethyst dome forms around you and any of your allies. You tap it with your own staff, but it seems to be impenetrable. 'What reason is that to exhume the honoured dead? What, insolent creature, were you hoping to discover other than my sacrosanct bones?' You point to the equipment he carries. 'Rare artifacts sir, like that stuff. You're dead: can I have it, sir?'

The lich's socket gleams with malignity. 'Yes, you can have it all... but you must do me a favour. You must... exact my revenge!'

'Anything, anything for the loot you carry!'

The lich waves his staff once more, and your amethyst prison fades away. 'You see, mortal, I was murdered, most foully and cruelly, by a perfidious wizard named ZippZapp. He coveted my magical equipment, much like you I suppose... like a coward he attacked me with no warning, knowing he was otherwise no match for my magical prowess!' If you also wish to attack the lich with no warning, go to **374**; if you continue to

listen to his woeful tale, go to **384**.

365 - 'You're so creative!' she says after you've finished casting your spell, 'I've never seen that one before!' You tell her you created it yourself and you're planning on publishing it someday. Go to the third paragraph of **340**.

366 - The captain points out three of his subordinates. 'Talk to them - I'm busy!' Go to **200** of Mark Thornton's solo adventure *Ocean's Edge* if you do so, and swim back to the final paragraph of **326** if you'd rather focus on the painting.

367 - You hunt out the driest spot you can find in the marshland, and settle down for the night. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up the next morning half buried in cold mud. You're quite likely going to become sick from this... lower your constitution by one dice for the rest of the adventure if you fail a level one constitution check.

Where to now? You may walk northwards to the fens at **146**, north-east to the swamps at **336**, eastwards to the trenches at **228**, south-east to the fort at **2**, southwards to the palace at **288**, south-west to the exceptionally tall mountain at **27**, westwards to the forested hills at **77**, or north-west to the other end of the marshland at **99**, or catch a military carriage to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel pass*.

368 - *Daltimdim*, *Scruffles*, and *Gondwar* are no pushovers: resolve the battle between your *bandit horsemen*, yourself, and them, but let yourself cast a spell before the fight begins since you have the element of surprise!

No matter what happens, the barkeep appreciates the effort you put in digging the graves of the recently deceased, and lets you stay in a room for free by way of apology for the

troubling incident. You wake up the next morning to a hearty breakfast, and go to the second paragraph of **369** in high spirits.

369 - The bandits grudgingly agree to set up the tent in the mud. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up the next morning to a beautiful sunrise, the sunlight of which shimmers on the surface of the sludge around you. You canter through the glimmering gumbo and towards the fens, when suddenly... nothing happens! You praise the troll gods, thrice bowing to the heavens before repeating the sacred mantra. As it's only noon you gallop straight through the dunes to your destination, reaching the northern tip of League Beach by nightfall. Go to **316**.

370 - The court of the Rainbow Palace places great emphasis on the literary arts: perhaps the courtiers' skill has rubbed off on yourself? Take an intelligence check and recite the appropriate entry to your beloved:

Critical Fumble:

Yo,

Yo,

A'right, dis is for ma main b**ch, ma main b**ch Helena,
Yeahhh, a'right - here we go!

Night watchmen never catch me,

TYUF, yollo robbery,

24k 24k gold dinars, straight outta da coffer, snap wivdrawal,
For my main b**ch Helena, got da bling bling now I gonna get
her - b**ches!

Ma crib be Khaboommm kremmstone and ma stones be
mountain toof,

Ma horse be strapped rowan fast as arrows on da hoof,

Ma buckla be brecciated jasper and ma brand be hilted bronze,

I be decked out in da bling bling for ma b**ch, b**ches, she be a digga truf be told!

And if you touch her I'll pop a spell in your a**,
m*****f***ers*****ing*****ed*****ers!

'Sick him!' she shouts, pointing at you. *Chompy* bounds towards you snarling.

Even if you survive the fight your romance has come to an end. The true object of your affection, the shetland hydra, lies dead in a pile of green blood and Helena screams in woe at the loss of her favourite pet. You back out of the room and escape the fort before she can sick any *knights* on you in retribution.

Fortunately the day is still relatively young and your feet aren't too sore. You may travel south-east to the dragon mountains at **209**, south-east to the commanders' tent at **247**, east to the trenches at **297**, north-east to the trenches at **228**, north to the swamp at **238**, north-west to the marshland at **187**, or south-west to the palace at **190**.

Failed intelligence check:

Helen-

A name like no other name.

It's a flop and you know it. Lose one quotient of romance and go to the second paragraph of **330**.

Level zero intelligence check:

Roses are red,

Violets are blue,

But you're the sweetest flower -

It's true!

A mediocre poem from a mediocre mind: Helena's not impressed, but neither does she scorn you. Go to the second paragraph of **330**.

Level one intelligence check:

There once was a girl from the Iron Chalice,
And a churl from the nearby Rainbow Palace.
They fell in love,
Like two krakendoves,
And all of their friends were jealous.

Helena smiles: it's sweet, just like her. Gain one quotient of romance and go to the third paragraph of **340**.

Level two intelligence check:

To who shall you I false compare?
My deer, lightsome as spring, lighter than air?
My dove, white and fair as maiden ever,
Shall you be mine, paragon? I pine - today, tomorrow, never?

A poem refined as the object of your desire, even if a tad stilted. Helena looks at you in surprise and delight, amazed at your artistic versatility. Gain two quotients of romance and go to the third paragraph of **340**.

Level three intelligence check:

Eyes ears lips nose fingers toes fingers toes
Head shoulders knees and toes knees and knees and elbows
and nose
Pink white pink black auburn black hair luscious long long long
looong and wavy wavy luscious like the black and blue sea
Thin as a spider. A spoon. A fork. A knife (the edge). You can
cut it if you try. Buttery, buttery, mmm.

Hip, daring, and avant-garde as it comes. Helen asks if you've had any work published - you tell her you have. Gain three quotients of romance and go to the third paragraph of **340**.

371 - The King's face deepens into a most striking ruby hue, but he manages to control himself for once. 'Blendan - you and your ancestors have served the court faithfully for many generations, but it's time to face the truth: you have no artistic talent! Begone from my court, and thrive in my realm as best you can!'

You hang your head in shame, but are thankful it's at least still attached to your neck. Trudging back to your apartment, you wonder at the futility of your adventure and curse the young King's callousness.

You check your apartment before you leave. Leave, yes, leave - there's nothing for you here anymore. You've stored little of value to an adventurer here, except for a dozen *paintings* which could be sold for a pretty penny: you strap as many as you can carry on your pack and don't even bother to lock the door behind you.

Now that you belong to no court you'll probably need to give up your old profession, but at least you've learnt a new one: how to handle a staff properly. You take one last look at the palace before leaving. Where will you go? Wherever your feet take you. Take 500 adventure points for finishing *Portrait of a Troubled Artist*.

372 - The warrior gruffly hugs you. 'You one helluva sonnuva bitch, you know that? Duck -' you do so, and a harnessed dragon flies overhead spouting fire '- dragon strike! Look, I like you buddy: take my bow as thanks, will you?' You receive *Uzi's Bow* off him with jous thanks.

You ask whether you may sleep here for the night before leaving. 'Here? Well... if you can stand it, sure!' Consult the *rest appendix*.

The cry of the bugle awakes you the next morning: wishing to avoid the uniform inspection you either walk north-west to the swamps at **336**, westwards to the marshlands at **29**, south-west to the fort at **2**, catch a military carriage to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel pass*, or walk south-east to the lower portion of the trenches at **297**.

373 - Take a level two charisma and intelligence check. If you pass both, go to **393**; if you fail either, go to **403**.

374 - You launch a *take that you fiend!* spell at the undead abomination, but the spell ricochets off him and fizzles in the lapping sea. You wonder if it's too late to pitifully plead for mercy.

If you manage to defeat *N'liq'tro'xilliq'tri'fiqxliq* you tell any surviving allies that may be with you to get lost, because on second thought you won't be sharing the spoils with anyone. A fight ensues with them too.

Now, time to leave with your winnings while there's still time to walk. Go to **404**.

375 - Helena's corpse is inhumed into the plane of elemental fire and incinerated. You make while the going is good south-east to the dragon mountains at **209**, south-east to the commanders' tent at **247**, east to the trenches at **297**, north-east to the trenches at **228**, north to the swamp at **238**, north-west to the marshland at **187**, or south-west to the palace at **190**.

376 - You sit down at the beer-bellied broker's table and triumphantly remove the *tumeric* from your tunic's pocket. The paunchy pedlar orders you a drink. 'Waitress, a bottle of your finest wine. Karangahape *blanc* '46: I trust you still have one in the cellar?' The waitress pales. 'Karangahape *blanc* - yes, your excellency!' She returns several minutes later bearing the

carafe of aromatic liquor.

‘A toast: to prosperity!’ the blubbery trader says, lifting his goblet aloft with one hand and taking the root with the other. You savour the rare drink, swishing the delicate booze from cheek-to-cheek before spitting it back into the chalice, and carefully note its unusual profile: gain a talent for etiquette.

The flabby trafficker counts out 2,000 gold coins while you do this from his purse. He pushes the hoard towards you. ‘A fine job you did there. It was a long trip: you deserve every penny, no?’ You take the money, skull bag the last of the wine, and leave him, deciding to either talk to the bartender for lodgings at **284**, or camp outside the town limits at **266**.

377 - The king smiles. ‘Not bad... my figure is a little rounder than it is in reality, but otherwise... good enough.’ You bow as he doles out his faint praise, then exit.

You’ve kept your job, but do you really want it if you’re not even particularly appreciated? You’ve found a real talent during your travels: a talent for adventuring. You mull the decision as you insert the key in the hole.

If you have outgrown your old position, you check your apartment before you leave. You’ve stored little of value to an adventurer here, except for a dozen *paintings* which could be sold for a pretty penny: you strap as many as you can carry on your pack and don’t even bother to lock the door behind you.

Now that you belong to no court you’ll probably need to give up your old profession, but at least you’ve learnt a new one: how to handle a staff properly. You take one last look at the palace before leaving. Where will you go? Wherever your feet take you. Take 600 adventure points for finishing *Portrait of a Troubled Artist*.

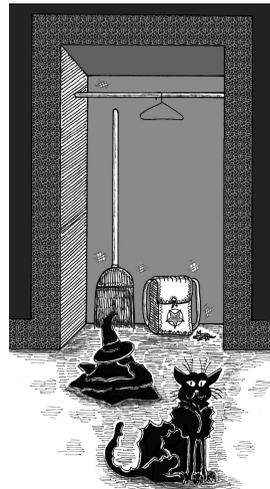
378 - You show the general Archibald's severed head. 'Arghhh!!!' the veteran exclaims, vomiting a little demi-glazed woodcock onto his medals. You inform the military strategist that it's well-known in the court that the late captain liked to partake of werewolfism, and that you knew exactly where to hunt him out during the full moon. 'Impressive! Most impressive!' stutters the general as he mops up the bile. He hands you the *crown of the commander*, which you take with a god-a-mercy.

The military mastermind peers at you in curiosity. 'You certainly are intelligent, and you have a knack for getting things done... prove yourself in the field and I may just give you the captain's job!' If you've won a medal of honour and commanded the blue fish to victory, go to **388**; if you haven't, you say you'll do so before leaving the tent at the second paragraph of **513**.

379 - If you cast *ding-a-ling* on the tent as a precaution, you're roughly awoken as the *bandit horsemen* open the door flap (if you didn't do so they murder you in your sleep). People run towards you from the tavern, and should be able to save you after three rounds of combat: if you survive the fight for this long go to **389**.

380 - You walk to the garden with her and pick several flowers for her. If you pick roses for her, go to **460**; if you pick hyacinths for her, go to **470**.

381 - The witch's robes flutter to the ground in a pile, and out of them bolts a black cat. You breathe a sigh of relief and ransack the place while the others sleep, finding the *witch's robes*, a *witch's broom* in a closet, eight days' worth of *provisions*, and 800 gold coins in the till. You divide the gold with



anyone awake, then wake up anyone who sleeps. You all benefit greatly from your exposure to the witch's magic, gaining a minimum magical resistance of 20 each.

The brigands grab the jet spirits from behind the bar and begin slugging it back. They suggest that you all drink and stay here for the night. If you do so, go to **391**; if you tell them you all need to scram, go to **331**.

382 - You curl up like a dog as they hail you with kicks, taking three dice of damage in the process.

After three rounds of combat you all hear the sound of a charge hurtling towards the trench, and desperately turn to fight your common foe together. Go to the second paragraph of **387**.

383 - You see no point in arguing the matter - you know you're right in any case. You pretend to be swayed by their arguments, logos by logos. 'Wise stranger, introduce yourself. How have you come to know so much about art, and what are you doing in the middle of nowhere?' Go to the second paragraph of **393**.

384 - A necrotic tear rolls down the lich's cracked face. 'He hid me in this coffin and teleported it far away where he hoped nobody would find it. He took everything I owned. My home, the beautiful tower of N'zulqit'qir'qqq'xqxqxq; my companion, my beautiful golem Sandy; my magical equipment - except the cursed items I hold and wear before you, of course - things such as my ever useful *everlasting blowtorch* and my snug *six league boots*. But he never found, and didn't even know the existence of, the magical map that always shows my whereabouts! Puny saviour, he must be killed! Bring me back the golem or one of the items as proof of his departure, and I shall remove the curse on the items I wear and gift them to you!

If you have the golem or one of the items to give to him, go to **394**. If not, go to the final paragraph of **316**.

385 - Hopefully no-one catches you while you make your way to the pig's trough. Take a level three luck check: if you pass, go to **405**; if you fail, go to **415**.

386 - 'The white light... I saw the white light!' splutters the man as your life-giving kremm courses through his body.

'Sure you did son. Now let's get going.' You begin to stagger back to your trench with him slung over your shoulder.

Along the way you see fellow soldiers retreating with you back to the trench, some of which are felled by arrows and alchemical artillery. The push seems to have been a washout.

Finally you manage to crawl back into your line, along with the others. Go to the penultimate paragraph of **491**.

387 - You prick your ears. 'Do you hear something, like a distant rumble?' you say to one of the newly christened cripples. You faintly hear the word 'charge!' in the distance.

You jab your weapon upwards as enemy *men of the line* pour into your trench all around you. You've got no intention of dying heroically: fight them one at a time, and whenever you kill one take a level three luck check. If you pass a check you manage to flee the trench, and may either skelter north-west to the swamps at **336**, westwards to the marshlands at **29**, or south-west to the fort at **2**.

388 - You show the general your medal of honour, relate how you led the royalist fish to victory and were rewarded with a water-spell, and cast *cry me a river* on the general to prove it. 'You're brilliant!' cries the old man, dabbing his cheeks with his

vomit-stained handkerchief, 'and you're hired!' You salute and enter the tent after him.

Three other generals sit in the tent, moving tin soldiers over a map. You look at the map and see that it shows the Rainbow Palace. 'If they over-run the flank here, and push to here, we retreat here!' says one of the commanders, jabbing outside of the palace's east-facing wall. 'No, no - here, the troops will make it!' says another, pointing at the walls. You ask why the map shows our own capital and not the enemy's; the generals testily rest their arms on the map. 'Who're you to ask - go away!' You explain that you killed Archibald and earned yourself a promotion.

'You killed that cowardly deserter? Good!' says an elderly commander who wears a uniform two sizes too large for himself. You pull out the well-wrought scimitar and show him the blood that still stains the blade.

'Yes, well, that's quite enough showing off now!' says the moustachioed general, turning quite pallid at the gory sight. 'Put that thing away, will you? It's awfully dangerous!'

You salute and sheathe your weapon. 'Just proving my credentials, sirs. After all, it could affect my salary.' You stare at the generals searchingly.

The elderly general unties his pouch from his belt and inexpertly tosses it to you. You eagerly open it and find a krakenstone worth 250 gold coins. 'An advance payment. It should cover your expenses during your first mission.' Curious, you ask what the disassociated tacticians would have of you.

If you've killed the commander of the fort, go to **510**. If you haven't killed the commander, go to **520**.

389 - I hope you didn't kill any of the brigands: that won't look

good to your saviours! If you did do this they attempt to arrest you at **399**. If you fought smart and to the law, by casting spells such as *oh go away* and *hold that pose*, they help you to the tavern instead at **408**.

390 - You pay a visit to the fort's tailor. Write down how much money you spend on court clothes before going to **480**.

391 - All goes well and fine for a couple of hours, but your revels are eventually interrupted when a client enters the tavern. 'Where's the owner?' says the woman, staring at you all in confusion.

Take a level one charisma check: this will be difficult as you're totally toasted and your charisma is halved. If you pass, go to **401**; if you fail, go to **411**.

392 - You arrive at the front line during the night, and are led by a sergeant towards your bunk in the trench. 'This your new home, worm. You like mud, right?' You shake your head. 'Sure you do - you're a worm, worm! You better learn to like it because you're going to be living in it, probably dying in it too... war is glorious, worm, war is glorious!' You thank your superior for the pep talk and take your bed.

'Hey buddy, how'd you wind up here?' you hear a voice from the bunk above you say. A thin man with a black eye dips his head below the edge of the bed. 'Did the commander buy you or force you to 'volunteer'... or did you just volunteer yourself?'

You politely explain that you love your King and wish to serve him in battle, and that you believe the pay here shall adequately compensate you for your pains. The battered soldier laughs in your face, and rolls off to sleep. 'He's got 'deserter' written all over him, the lout. I bet he deserved that black eye' you muse before drifting off yourself.

The blast of a bugle jolts you awake the next morning, like a cup of strong java poured right down your ears. The soldiers around you quickly jump out of bed and stand to attention, apparently having slept in their clothes: you hurriedly pull on your pants and strain to button the top as the sergeant walks into your portion of the trench.

‘You! What do you think you’re playing at? You’ve been here three days already and you can’t even put your clothes on!’

You finally manage to put on your pants, and salute your superior glumly. ‘Sir, I only arrived last night, I had no idea...’

The sergeant softens. ‘Ah, you’re the new recruit. My apologies, you look like the old one. Alright worm, at ease.’

Your superior turns to the bleary-eyed soldiers. ‘Well worms, a new day dawneth. The sun is shining, the bees are buzzing, and the flowers doth bloom, fair and bright - so brighten up!’ The men around you yawn and groan.

Take a level one constitution check. If you pass, go to **416**; if you fail, go to **436**.

393 - You gradually sway the battle-hardened dilettantes to your position, logos by logos. ‘Wise stranger, introduce yourself. How have you come to know so much about art, and what are you doing in the middle of nowhere?’

You explain that you’re the court painter of the palace, but that you’re out looking for ground *pink dragon scales*, curdled *hydra’s milk*, and crushed *mountain tooth*. The adventurers look at you with interest.

‘Well you’re in luck... Daltimdim, Scruffles, and myself are going on a dragon hunt tomorrow, and we could use some back-up! Come with us and you can scrape all the scales you

want off the beast's corpse!' You remind them that it specifically needs to be a pink dragon, and they reassure it will be.

The hobbit looks at you slyly. 'But guvnor, we don't have to hunt a dragon... we could just as easily hunt a hydra. But hydras don't hoard gold you see... so we would need to be recompensed for our efforts. 750 gold coins each would do nicely.'

If you tag along in their dragon hunt, go to **402**. If you pay them to hunt a hydra, go to **412**. If you decline their offer, go to the bar at the second paragraph of **403**.

394 - The lich holds you in his bony embrace. 'Wretched mortal, you're one of a kind! Our agreement...' He removes his equipment and waves his hand over it: a gaggle of demonic spirits fly from the items into the sky. As you inspect *the lich's circlet*, *the lich's shroud*, and *the lich's staff*, the lich itself collapses into a pile of bones.

If any *bandit horsemen* are with you, you inform them that you'll be keeping the equipment for yourself on second thought. After you've finished slaughtering them with your new-found power, go to the final paragraph of **316**.

395 - Hopefully no-one catches you while you make your way to the pig's trough. Take a level three luck check: if you pass, go to **405**; if you fail, go to **425**.

396 - The king smiles. 'Not bad, not bad at all! You could've painted a few more haloes around my head, but otherwise... well done!' You bow as he doles out his praise.

'A boon for your troubles, artist.' He summons a squire and commands the young man to fetch a *silver easel* from the treasury. You thank your sovereign for the gift before

departing.

You've kept your job, but do you really want it? The King has no idea of what efforts you went to to finish his portrait - or if he does, he's too stingy to reward you for your effort. You may as well be a nobody in the court if it's not noticed when you disappear for weeks at a time. But you don't have to stay anymore. You've found a real talent during your travels: a talent for adventuring. You mull the decision as you insert the key in the hole.

If you have outgrown your old position, you check your apartment before you leave. You've stored little of value to an adventurer here, except for a dozen *paintings* which could be sold for a pretty penny: you strap as many as you can carry on your pack and don't even bother to lock the door behind you.

Now that you belong to no court you'll probably need to give up your old profession, but at least you've learnt a new one: how to handle a staff properly. You take one last look at the palace before leaving. Where will you go? Wherever your feet take you. Take 800 adventure points for finishing *Portrait of a Troubled Artist*.

397 - While the more patriotic and simple-minded men ignore the sergeant's plea, you force yourself to limit your revels to sugared toad juice and regulation poppadoms. You go to bed at the reasonable hour of 9:25, and wake up feeling refreshed.

The cry of the bugle all along the line calls you to attention. 'Where's the rest of them?' shouts the sergeant as he runs into your section of the trench.

'Sleeping sir. They're idiots, sir.'

Your superior helps you over the bank of the trench. 'I warned them - I warned them, don't tell me I didn't warn them! I'll court

martial them for desertion in the heat of battle, the bugbear's bum b***** f***ers! We're attacking - go, go!

You clamber into no man's land, unsheathe your sword, and charge. Arrows and alchemical explosions zip and thunder around you - take a level zero speed check each paragraph until you're safely ensconced in a trench, whether yours or the enemy's, and take two spite damage whenever you fail. If you cast *little feets* on yourself, only take one spite damage whenever you fail.

As you run forwards you see a blast, then a cloud of gas envelop the terrain in front of you. If you run through it, go to **438**; if you run around it, go to **473**.

398 - Nothing happens after the men line up. 'I guess the sergeant couldn't make it' you think to yourself.

If you take the opportunity to try and talk the men into fleeing, go to **338**. If you wait and see what happens, go to **387**.

399 - Among the people trying to arrest you are a one-eyed dwarf called *Daltimdim*, a halfling with a pipe clenched between with teeth called *Scruffles*, and an elven wizard names *Gondwar*. If you manage to defeat them the rest of the tavern's occupants back off, and you can ride away, set up camp further off, consult the *rest appendix*, and go to the second paragraph of **369**. If you'd rather surrender to them, go to **407**.

400 - You tell Helena that you have a cool magic trick to show her. She asks whether you can pull a rabbit out of a hat, and you say no.

Do you instead cast *it's elementary* at **305**, *take that you fiend!* at **315**, *will-o-wisp* at **325**, *knock knock* at **335**, *oh go away* at **345**, a higher level spell at **355**, or a spell not part of the

wizard's guild core curriculum at **365**?

401 - You tell her that the owner's taking the night off, and that you're looking after things tonight. You show her to the empty room and sleep behind the counter with the rest of the brigands. In the morning you collect the key from her, wish her well, and set off to the laughter of your associates. Go to the second paragraph of **321**.

402 - The one-eyed dwarf shakes your hand so firmly you fear it will break. 'Excellent - there's plenty of space in our room, so stay the night with us!' You sleep pleasantly in the suite they've rented for the night (dragon hunters tend to be liberal with their gold).

The next morning you all have a hearty breakfast before the wizard, Gondwar, *blows you to* the dragon mountains to the south-east. You land at the entrance to a cave.

'An old, rich, weak dragon - pink - lives down there guvnor', explains the rogue, Scruffles. 'Easy pickings I reckon... we've had our eye on him for some time.' You peer into the cavern, but all you see is darkness.

'Well, you're a wizard - lead the way!' says the dwarf, Daltimdim. You cast *will-o-wisp* and enter the dark hole, the adventurers following behind you. Perhaps they are testing you. If the date is between the third and 18th, go to **422**. If the date is between the 19th and 31st, go to **432**.

403 - The adventurers look at you in disdain as you ineptly plead your case. The wizard instructs the small simian to dance. 'Go away - your kind isn't wanted here! If you don't feel the monkey lays bare the eternal wisdom of Trollworld in its movements, don't watch!' You turn your back on them and storm off to the bar.

'A glass of halibut white - and how much are rooms?' you ask testily. The barkeep replies that they're 25 gold coins a night, breakfast included. If you sleep here for the night, go to **413**; if you camp outside instead, go to **367**.

404 - You walk a few steps, but stop as you feel a little weak...

If you equipped yourself with *the lich's circlet* the band contracts painfully into your head, lowering your constitution by five. The circlet refuses to cast spells for you as well, and unfortunately the curse and item can't be removed unless your wizardry is at least 30...

If you equipped yourself with *the lich's shroud* the garment attracts danger instead, negating your magic resistance and any armour you have. Unfortunately the curse and item can't be removed unless your wizardry is at least 30...

If you equipped yourself with *the lich's staff* the spirit inside works actively against you, blocking all but the most ineffectual spells from being cast. You may only cast spells that cost three wizardry or less (after discounts). Unfortunately the curse and item can't be removed unless your wizardry is at least 30...

Others don't know the items are cursed of course, so you can always just sell whatever you didn't equip. Now, go to the final paragraph of **316**.

405 - You don't bump into a soul save the swine in the filthy pen. You dump the *sack* or backpack into the trough and decide to hightail it before the water needs changing: walk innocuously south-east to the dragon mountains at **209**, south-east to the commanders' tent at **247**, east to the trenches at **297**, north-east to the trenches at **228**, north to the swamp at **238**, north-west to the marshland at **187**, or south-west to the palace at **190**.

406 - The king smiles. 'Not bad, not bad at all! You even included a few angels showering me with petals... well done!' You bow as he doles out his praise.

'A boon for your troubles, artist.' He summons a squire and commands the young man to fetch a *magical paintbrush* from the treasury. You thank your sovereign for the gift before departing.

You've kept your job, but do you really want it? The King has no idea of what efforts you went to to finish his portrait - or if he does, he's too stingy to reward you for your effort. You may as well be a nobody in the court if it's not noticed when you disappear for weeks at a time. But you don't have to stay anymore. You've found a real talent during your travels: a talent for adventuring. You mull the decision as you insert the key in the hole.

If you have outgrown your old position, you check your apartment before you leave. You've stored little of value to an adventurer here, except for a dozen *paintings* which could be sold for a pretty penny: you strap as many as you can carry on your pack and don't even bother to lock the door behind you.

Now that you belong to no court you'll probably need to give up your old profession, but at least you've learnt a new one: how to handle a staff properly. You take one last look at the palace before leaving. Where will you go? Wherever your feet take you. Take 1000 adventure points for finishing *Portrait of a Troubled Artist*.

407 - As you're dragged back to the tavern you desperately try to convince the small crowd that they attacked you first, and tell them that your attackers are all notorious bandits. Take a level two charisma and a level one luck check. If you pass both, go to **417**; if you fail either, go to **427**.

408 - You relate to the people supporting you how bandits tried to murder you while you slept, but how you had cast *ding-a-ling* on your tent just in case something like this eventuated. They tell you that your spell woke up half the tavern, and congratulate you on your cunning. They buy you several rounds as they listen to your exploits this month, and suggest you write an autobiography about it all someday. A one-eyed dwarf, a halfling smoking a pipe, and an elf holding a vine-wrapped staff seem particularly interested in the feats you've accomplished so far.

'Stranger, it's clear you're a seasoned adventurer - allow us to introduce ourselves.' The curious trio seat themselves at your bar table and shake your hand. 'My name is Daltimdim, son of Daltimdur. This here is Scruffles, the wiliest rogue this side of the Mountain Teeth range.' You feel for your pouch and notice it's already missing. 'And this here's Gondwar, a mage who'll *blow you to the moon and back* if you want. Yes, your pouch: join us and we'll double it.'

Scruffles takes your map from his pocket and unrolls it on the bar table. 'We're hunting a dragon *guv'nor*, but we reckon we need another man! The deal's straight *guv'nor*, and you can trust me on that - we split the hoard four ways, no two ways about it!' You ask whether it would be possible to hunt a pink dragon, and they say yes.

Gondwar holds your hand and closes his eyes. 'I sense you... are not yet convinced. That you... have other priorities.' You take your hand back - you don't like being read that way. Daltimdim, Scruffles, and Gondwar look down at the big cross on the map, then grin at each other.

You ask whether Gondwar could blow you all to the northern tip of League Beach instead, where treasure's bound to be buried. You promise to split the hoard four ways, and no two ways about it. A four way handshake ensues, and you go sleep

in their room for the night.

You all have a good breakfast in the morning before Gondwar transports you to the third paragraph of **316**.

409 - You convivially call out and wave to the commander. The commander stops telling his anecdote at once and strides over to you.

‘Blendan - how brave of you to visit me again after the way you treated my lovely daughter.’ You tell him that you had to leave immediately to bring your report back to the King.

‘Yes, the King’s report... I can at least thank you for that. You re-evaluated my art collection in my favour: take the difference in gold.’ He instructs one of his knights to fetch gold coins from the treasury equal to the difference between 20,000 gold coins and the value you ascribed to his works.

‘More importantly, your report spurred me into action. The new king was a rash youth, already turning to tyrannical methods to fund his senseless war - I stewed in my fort, hoping he would learn from his mistakes, but you forced me to realise he was fundamentally flawed!’ His warriors cheer at his words.

‘He had to go. I honour the royal line as much as the next guy, but the realm is buckling under his errors: a strong leader is needed to salvage the situation. I have made myself regent until princess Luxaline comes of age, and I do have you to thank for it.’

The chest of gold coins is presented to you by the *knight*. You open it greedily, but the commander stops you.

‘Your treatment of Helena though... that cannot be forgiven! I dole rewards when my subjects do me good but punish mercilessly when I am crossed, and my daughter is of my own

flesh... what retribution should I serve him, men?’

‘Beat him like a dog’ one of them says.

‘Chop his willy off, the randy bugger!’ Everybody except you laughs at this suggestion.

‘Leave him to me’ says a knight in a suit of rusty armour.

The commander squeezes your shoulder. ‘I am generous, even when I mete: you choose!’ If you choose to take your punishment like a man, go to **419**; if you have always identified with the fairer sex, go to **429**; if you choose to fight it out, go to **439**.

410 - If you do a quick sketch of her, go to **490**; if you spend a couple of hours painting her, go to **500**.

411 - You tell her that you and your associates have bought the witch out and taken over this joint. The lady looks at you and your scruffy companions in disbelief, and tells you that she’ll find somewhere else to sleep for the night.

Take a level one intelligence check, halving your intelligence for the roll since you’re trashed. If you pass you tell the outlaws you need to scram and go to **331**; if you fail, go to **421**.

412 - The one-eyed dwarf takes your gold and shakes your hand so firmly you fear it will break. ‘Excellent - there’s plenty of space in our room, so stay the night with us!’ You sleep pleasantly in the suite they’ve rented for the night (dragon hunters tend to be liberal with their gold).

The next morning you all have a hearty breakfast before the wizard, *Gondwar*, *blows you to the swamp* to the north-east. You land about a kilometre away from a 10 metre tall *hydra*.

‘Well, there it is... let’s go!’ Cast any spells you want to on yourself and your allies before charging at the fearsome beast.

You thank the adventurers for their help afterwards, and buy them all a drink at the inn once Gondwar has blown you all back. Go to the second paragraph of **413**.

413 - You sleep badly due to the drumming and laughter of the adventurers downstairs (and don't recover any lost attributes). At least the breakfast is good. You thank the proprietor the next morning and exit.

Where to now? You may walk northwards to the fens at **146**, north-east to the swamps at **336**, eastwards to the trenches at **228**, south-east to the fort at **2**, southwards to the palace at **288**, south-west to the exceptionally tall mountain at **27**, westwards to the forested hills at **77**, or north-west to the other end of the marshland at **99**.

414 - You lie down between two rows of swedes, wandering where it all went wrong. Harvest as many days' worth of provisions that you want, then consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up the next morning to a group of farmers poking



you with a stick. Go to **434** if you took any swedes, and **444** if you didn't.

415 - You cross the path of a knight who asks what's in the bag. Take a level one charisma check: if you pass, go to **435**; if you fail, go to **445**.

416 - They say yawning is contagious: it must be, for you have to fight down the urge to join your comrades. Fortunately you manage to control yourself, and watch in satisfaction as the thin man yawns loudest of all.

'What's that sonny? Still need waking up?' The sergeant strikes him flush on the jaw and sends him sprawling. 'Is that better, or do you need another?' You find that his yawning has indeed been cured, perhaps partly because you he seems to no longer be able to move his mandible.

'Let that be a lesson to you, to all of you: I want you perky and ready to fight at all times! What if we had a night-raid here: would you get out of bed with no pants on, giving away your location by the cries of your fatigue?' You all stand in nervous silence, not wanting to stand out to the enraged sergeant.

'Good - not a peep. Much better. Now, onto today's schedule!

Today's the last day of your basic training. I know it's going to be pretty basic for some of you -' he glances your way '- but our commander is of the opinion that quantity has a quality of its own, and that the strong will, in any case, survive. I'm sure you'll be fine. It's not hard to use a sword and bow... so let's get started wrapping things things up!' The sergeant leads you along the trench to the armoury.

Your superior picks up a stick. 'First up, let's hone that swordsmanship of ours. Now, I've taught you how to thrust, parry, and even grapple during the previous classes: I want

you to bring it all together during practice. Take a rod, find a partner, and show me what you can do.'

If you partner with someone weak, go to **448**. If you partner with someone strong, go to **456**.

417 - You give the crowd pause, and somebody goes back to look at the brigands' faces more closely. Thankfully, someone in the crowd recognises one of the dead men as a bandit. They apologise for the trouble, congratulate you on ridding the realm of such scoundrels, and walk with you back to the tavern. Go to **408**.

418 - Take a level eight charisma check, and add the weight of the provisions in kgs to your roll. If you fail, go to **437**; if you pass, go to **447**.

419 - 'Very well... soldiers, stand by the door, don't let him escape!' The commander hooks your jaw, then begins kicking you in the ribs once you collapse on the floor. Take ten dice of damage: even if you survive your constitution is permanently lowered by ten from the severe thrashing you receive.

You wake up several days later in your apartment. Go to the second paragraph of **498**.

420 - Take a charisma check and read the result, you cad you!

Critical fumble: You pinch her bum and get slapped in the face. She calls on her paramour to defend her honour: not only have you failed to win Helena's love but you will still need to duel with her suitor. Go to the second paragraph of **455** and fight her suitor before going to **450**.

Failed charisma check: Everyone likes a good pick-up line, so you rattle off a dozen:

- 1) Wench, you so hot you'd make Wilberhelm, land of eternal frost, thaw if you were inside of it.
- 2) I seek treasure. May I examine your chest?
- 3) My sword in your scabbard. Now.
- 4) Are you the village witch? 'Cause you've cast a spell on me.
- 5) Did you cast *glue* you on me? 'Cause since you walked in I've been glued to the spot.
- 6) My wizard's staff has a knob on the end. Care to take a closer look?
- 7) I am a wizard without equal. I shall prove it by doing what no-one has done before: making your clothes disappear.
- 8) Your chastity belt would look great tied to your wrist and bedpost.
- 9) It's not the size of the *deluxe wizard's staff* that matters but how you unleash the demon that's inside.
- 10) They say a knight is always as hard as his armour. Mine is worth 17 hits.
- 11) I may not be an ordained priest of Lerotra'hh's death cult, but I can take you to the heavens, wench.
- 12) Are you a medusa? Because you've just made me rock hard.

Helena is not impressed. These are common fare in the Kraken continent and in extremely bad taste. Lose one quotient of romance and go to the second paragraph of **330**.

Level zero charisma check: You make small talk. There are small pauses, and nothing particularly interesting is said, but at least no damage is done, right? Go to the second paragraph of **330**.

Level one charisma check: You make conversation with Helena, but you lace it with sexual innuendo and double entendre. It's so subtly done that at first she doesn't realise what you're doing, but soon she's joining in and giggling about the working stiffs standing guard outside the door. Gain one quotient of romance and go to the third paragraph of **340**.

Level two charisma check: You engage in deep and meaningful conversation, ‘happening’ to find common interests, views, and bonds between you. Your insight into her character allows you to pretend to be her perfect match: you both hate cliches and showoffs, and agree that the most vicious beasts can make the most loving pets. Gain two quotients of romance and go to the third paragraph of **340**.

Level three charisma check: You both sit down for a cup of earl grey. While she daintily blows on the hot beverage you lightly stroke her creamy leg with your big toe, creeping up towards her chastity belt and unbuckling the latch with your nail - it’s done so sensually that soon she’s blowing and puffing on her tea and splattering the table cloth with the tannin seeped liquid. Gain three quotients of romance, you cheeky devil, before going to the third paragraph of **340**.

421 - You all stagger off to bed for the night.

You wake up to the tromping of several pairs of footsteps coming up the staircase. You quickly rouse your underlings before five *elite knights* kick open your bedroom door.

‘In the name of the King, we charge you all with the suspected murder of one Matilda Murtlestone. Furthermore, we charge you with the suspected theft of a handbag reported in Quisslegreen! Confess and surrender, villains!’

If you fight them and survive, gallop away from the tavern to the second paragraph of **331**. If you surrender yourself, go to **431**.

422 - You all walk through the cave for several minutes until you see... the glitter of gold ahead! ‘He must be out!’ cries Scruffles before running towards the pile. You all rummage through the pile, and agree that there’s about 1500 gold worth

of treasure altogether.

Gondwar divides the pile in three. 'Tough luck buddy - look around, maybe there's some scales lying around somewhere!' If you follow his suggestion, go to **442**. If you demand a quarter of the treasure, go to **452**.

423 - The king smiles. 'Not bad, not bad at all! You even got the colour of my beautiful skin right this time - well done!' You bow as he doles out his praise.



'A boon for your troubles, artist.' He summons a squire and commands the young man to fetch a bottle of *enchanted body paint* from the treasury. You thank your sovereign for the gift before departing.

You've kept your job, but do you really want it? The King has no idea of what efforts you went to to finish his portrait - or if he does, he's too stingy to reward you for your effort. You may as well be a nobody in the court if it's not noticed when you disappear for weeks at a time. But you don't have to stay anymore. You've found a real talent during your travels: a talent for adventuring. You mull the decision as you insert the key in the hole.

If you have outgrown your old position, you check your apartment before you leave. You've stored little of value to an adventurer here, except for a dozen *paintings* which could be sold for a pretty penny: you strap as many as you can carry on your pack and don't even bother to lock the door behind you.

Now that you belong to no court you'll probably need to give up your old profession, but at least you've learnt a new one: how to handle a staff properly. You take one last look at the palace before leaving. Where will you go? Wherever your feet take you. Take 1,250 adventure points for finishing *Portrait of a Troubled Artist*.

424 - You politely knock on the door of a rude shack. An attractive woman answers the door. 'Good evening ma'am, my name's Blendan McGory. And who do I have the pleasure of speaking with?' The peasant folds her arms over her pronounced bust. 'No, I'm not interested in crop insurance and I'm not goin' to join the cult of the Death Empress!' She begins to close the door.

'No, no, you've got me all wrong ma'am! I'm an honest adventurer wanting bed for the night!' you protest, but she pays you no heed and slams the door in your face. If you sleep out in the fields, go to **414**; if you cast *knock knock*, enter, and give her a piece of your mind, go to **433**.

425 - You cross the path of a *knight* who attacks you upon seeing the body. If you survive the fight you drag the knight's corpse along with Helena's and go to **395**.

426 - The warrior frowns. 'Well, go on eatin' your sandwich then while we die, I won't stop you. I'm sure you deserve it more than us guys defendin' liberty and freedom and all that.' As you lick the mayonnaise off your fingers the soldier ducks, and seconds later a blast of fire hits you from above for four dice of damage. 'Dragon strike - din't ya hear the flapping up above? Serves you right you fat bastard!'

You ask whether you may sleep here for the night before leaving. 'Here? Like hell you're sleepin' here! You can sleep in no-man's-land for all I care!' he says, pointing to the arrow-studded area between the trenches. You take it to mean that

there's some kind of truce that applies to the area, and that no man is allowed to attack another if he goes there. You set up camp in the middle of it: consult the *rest appendix*, and fight one dice of *night-raiders* if you roll anything other than a 12 - 16.

The cry of each side's bugle awakes you the next morning: wishing to avoid being stuck in the middle of the day's fighting you either walk north-west to the upper portion of the trenches at **228**, westwards to the fort at **2**, catch a military carriage to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel pass*, walk south-west to the dragon mountains at **19**, or walk south-east to the general's tent at **247**.

427 - The crowd ignores your desperate pleas and take you to the palace. There you are tried for murder, found guilty, and executed.

428 - The hills teem with the nimble simians, and although they are difficult to catch they have sustained many a traveller during their journey. Take a dexterity check, and add the day of the month to your roll (as you've picked up some survival skills during the month): you find days' worth of *provisions* equal to the level of the check you make. You eat a little of your find in the twilight: consult the *rest appendix* before going to the final paragraph of **7**.

429 - You drop your pants. 'Very well!' says the commander, unsheathing his sword, 'say goodbye to your manhood!' With one simple cut the operation is done: if you survive the seven dice of damage you take your charisma is halved due to your heightened voice. If you survive the fight you waddle out of the throne room to the raucous laughter of the warriors. Go to **498**.

430 - You walk with Helena to the list and jot down your own name. You reassure her that you'll be fine, and that she shouldn't worry about your safety (she never voiced any

concerns).

It's not long until your name is called. Take a strength or dexterity check then read the result of your roll:

Critical fumble: Helena's suitor's lance knocks you off your horse before you've even gained control of the feisty animal, and his own steed tramples you underfoot dealing five dice of damage. If you survive you've lost Helena's affections with your maladroitness. Go to **450**.

Failed strength or dexterity check: You awkwardly trot towards Helena's suitor on your steed, waving your lance about ineptly. You're only saved from his attack when your horse rears and throws you into the mud. The object of your affection, the divine Helena, guffaws along with the rest of the crowd as you wipe the mud from your eyes. Lose two quotients of romance and go to the second paragraph of **330**.

Level zero strength or dexterity check: You lope towards Helena's suitor, but before you can lift your lance you're dealt a glancing blow. Take a level one speed check: if you pass you right yourself and wheel your steed around, rolling for the joust again; if you fail you are unhorsed and lose the bout (along with one quotient of romance) before going to the second paragraph of **330**.

Level one strength or dexterity check: You both canter towards each other and deal each other a glancing blow. You wheel your steed around and prepare for another bout. Roll for the joust again.

Level two strength or dexterity check: You gallop towards Helena's suitor and handily unhorse him with the thrust of your lance. Helena shows her favour by giving you a *silk handkerchief*. Gain one quotient of romance and go to the third paragraph of **340**.

Level three strength or dexterity check: You bolt towards Helena's suitor fast as magic, crouching into your steed to minimise air resistance. Your opponent's aims his lance straight at your breast, hoping to stake advantage of your momentum to skewer you, but you deftly knock his weapon away with your own and thrust straight through the eye hole of his helmet.

He is dead, but the commander acknowledges that you acted in self defence and absolves you of all blame. What's more, he gives you Helena's suitor's *plate armour*, *great helm*, and *lance* as your rightful prize. Helena is furious however, and you lose any chance you had of gaining her affection. Go to **450**.

431 - You're all dragged off to a rainbow-painted cell underneath the palace. If you tell the knights you had no part in this, that you don't know these knaves, and that you're just a traveller who was placed in the same room as the culprits, go to **441**. If you wait for your sentence with the others, go to **451**.

432 - You lead the adventurers into the cave, and eventually see the *old pink dragon* and his hoard up ahead. 'Righto, let's get this over with!' says *Daltimdim* to *Scruffles*, *Gondwar*, and yourself.

If you survive the fight the adventurers divide the spoils between themselves while you scrape the *pink dragon scales* off the poor beast's dead body (you can borrow the hobbit's dirk if you need to.) You thank the brave wayfarers for letting you tag along, and buy them all a round at the inn once *Gondwar* has blown you all back. Go to the second paragraph of **413**.

433 - The pretty peasant screams as soon as she sees you: an attractive wench such as herself probably expects the worst. Her husband and sons run into the house from the fields

and, seeing a stranger in the house, attack. If you manage to defeat the dice of *farmer joes* in five rounds, go to **443**; if you don't, go to **453**.

434 - 'Hey, what you doin' in ma swedes vagrant? I betta not find any o' them don' gon' crops gon' missin'!' You explain that the vegetable is known to have a soporific effect, much like camomile or limpwurt, and that you always sleep among the foodstuff when given the chance. One of the serfs points to a set of teethmarks in one of the vegetables. 'You tryin' to swindle our swedes? Ah knew it soon as I balled you from ma cottage! You just a dirty, thievin vagrant, and you ain't welcome here alive or dead, no bit!' You wonder how you could've sunk so low as you battle the dice of *farmer joes*.

You quickly bury the bodies under the rows of swedes, knowing that the dead farmers would have appreciated being used as fertiliser. Your good deed done, you decide to leave before anyone finds out: you may walk northwards to the exceptionally tall mountain at **27**, eastwards to the palace at **288**, southwards to the town at **12**, south-west to the tents at **123**, westwards to the hilly pasture at **454**, or north-west towards the tooth-shaped mountains at **66**.

435 - You convince the curious warrior that you're carrying beetroot to the kitchen, and that's why the bag's stained red. He informs you that he prefers turnips himself then continues on his way. Go to **405**.

436 - They say yawning is contagious: it must be, for you yawn loudest of all.

'What's that sonny? Still need waking up?' The sergeant strikes you flush on the jaw, dealing one dice of piercing damage and sending you sprawling. 'Is that better, or do you need another?' You find that your yawning has indeed been cured, perhaps partly because you can no longer move your

jaw.

‘Let that be a lesson to you, to all of you: I want you bright and perky at all times! What if we had a night-raid here: would you get out of bed with no pants on, giving away your location by the cries of your fatigue?’ You all stand in nervous silence, not wanting to stand out to the enraged sergeant.

‘Good - not a peep. That’s much better. Now, onto today’s schedule.

Today’s the last day of your basic training. I know it’s going to be pretty basic for some of you -’ he glances at you ‘- but our commander is of the opinion that quantity has a quality of its own, and that the strong will, in any case, survive. I’m sure you’ll be fine. It’s not hard to use a sword and bow... so let’s get started!’ The sergeant leads you along the trench to the armoury.

Your superior picks up a stick. ‘First up, let’s hone that swordsmanship of ours. Now, I’ve taught you how to thrust, parry, and even grapple during the previous classes: I want you to bring it all together during practice. Take a rod, find a partner, and show me what you can do!’

If you partner with someone weak, go to **448**. If you partner with someone strong, go to **456**.

437 - The warrior receives the food with thanks. ‘You one nice fella, you know that? Duck -’ you do so, and a harnessed dragon flies overhead spouting fire ‘- dragon strike!’

You ask whether you may sleep here for the night before leaving. ‘Here? Well... if you can stand it, sure!’ Consult the *rest appendix*.

The cry of the bugle awakes you the next morning: wishing to

avoid the uniform inspection you either walk north-west to the upper portion of the trenches at **228**, westwards to the fort at **2**, catch a military carriage to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel pass*, walk south-west to the dragon mountains at **19**, or walk south-east to the general's tent at **247**.

438 - You take a deep breath before running through the noxious cloud. Take a level one constitution check: if you fail you need to inhale, and all your attributes are reduced to a maximum of eight until you rest.

You sprint out of the haze, and see many dead and dying comrades in front of you. If you attempt to save one of them, go to **481**; if you ignore them and leap into the enemy trench, go to **491**.

439 - You slap the weathered soldier in the face with your glove. Everyone around you goes 'ooooh!', including the commander. The hardened chevalier grabs your glove and throws it to the floor.

'Sir, you are a base thief - you have stolen a fair maiden's honour!' He picks up your gloves and slaps you with it, dealing one piercing damage. 'I challenge you to a duel, in the name of Helena!' You wonder just how many suitors this fair maiden has.

The chivalrous *knight* unsheathes his sword and circles you. You begin to cast a spell, but the commander stops you. 'No magic: he can't cast any, so why should you? Fight him like a man!' He lends you his *short sword*.

If you survive the fight you leave the throne room to the commendations of the warriors. Go to **498**.

440 - Helena looks at you tenderly: now is the time to strike! You express your true feelings for her, telling her that you were

smitten as soon as she sat down for lunch.

Helena reciprocates, letting you know that she likes you dearly and asking if you like children. She tells you that only one obstacle lies between you two and matrimonial bliss - her other suitor.

If you challenge your rival paramour to a duel, go to **455**. If you suggest the two of you elope without him knowing, go to **465**.

441 - 'Wait, I'm not with these guys - I've never met them in my life! I'm an honest traveller! Check the records, check with the King - I'm a painter, not a criminal!' At this the brigands scoff and protest, and tell the knights it was you who murdered the witch. Take a charisma check, the level of which is equal to the number of bandits: if you pass, go to **461**; if you fail, go to **471**.

442 - Take a level two luck check. If you pass you do indeed find some *pink dragon scales*; if you fail you find nothing. Unfortunately, not wishing to linger, the three adventurers have blown themselves away in the meantime with all the treasure. You'll have to escape by yourself...

Go to **462** if you pass a level zero luck check, and go to **472** if you fail.

443 - You flee before the neighbours find you and camp in the nearby woods. Consult the *rest appendix*.

Take a level one luck, speed, and dexterity check: if you pass all checks you wake up to a deer and manage to kill it, providing you with as many days' worth of *provisions* as you can stuff in your backpack. You may walk northwards to the exceptionally tall mountain at **27**, eastwards to the palace at **288**, southwards to the town at **12**, south-west to the tents at **123**, westwards to the hilly pasture at **454**, or north-west towards the tooth-shaped mountains at **66**.

444 - 'Hey, what you doin' in ma swedes vagrant? I betta not find any o' them don' gon' crops gon' missin'!' You explain that the vegetable is known to have a soporific effect, much like camomile or limpwurt, and that you always sleep among the foodstuff when given the chance. The peasants give you a funny look, but they leave you alone - well, well alone.

Time to leave yourself: you may walk northwards to the exceptionally tall mountain at **27**, eastwards to the palace at **288**, southwards to the town at **12**, south-west to the tents at **123**, westwards to the hilly pasture at **454**, or north-west towards the tooth-shaped mountains at **66**.

445 - You tell the curious warrior that you're carrying turnips to the kitchen, but he argues that vegetables don't bleed and peers into the bag. The *knight* leaps back and unsheathes his sword. If you survive the fight you stuff his corpse in too and go to **385**.

446 - As should be plainly obvious, the tents you're walking towards belong to another bandit camp. Because the road you walk along rests between two such camps, the path positively teems with the lawless critters. Consult the *banditry appendix* three times before continuing to the second paragraph of **123**.

447 - The warrior gruffly hugs you. 'You one helluva sonnuva bitch, you know that? Duck -' you do so, and a harnessed dragon flies overhead spouting fire '- dragon strike! Look, I like you buddy: take half a dozen of these bombs as thanks, will you?' You receive the *flashbang grenades* off him with joyous thanks.

You ask whether you may sleep here for the night before leaving. 'Here? Well... if you can stand it, sure!' Consult the *rest appendix*.

The cry of the bugle awakes you the next morning: wishing to avoid the uniform inspection you either walk north-west to the upper portion of the trenches at **228**, westwards to the fort at **2**, catch a military carriage to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel pass*, walk south-west to the dragon mountains at **19**, or walk south-east to the general's tent at **247**.

448 - You take your weapon in hand and approach the thin man with the black eye, taking him to be a particularly easy target. Your partner-opponent scowls at you. 'Alright men, you know the rules: first one to win three rounds of combat wins the bout. And gentlemen, this one counts! What with the war dragging on, good weapons have to be rationed to those who can use them best! Now, first up... Slop and Fick!'

You watch the men pound each other with their sticks in interest, and see many useful techniques being used. Take a level three intelligence check: if you pass, gain the *duelist* trait.

Eventually it's your turn to fight. You and the *thin man* hold your *sticks* in front of you and circle each other warily until you finally break and lunge. Fight until there's a winner.

'Alright, alright guys, that's enough! Now, I saw some good work right here. Some of you are ok, and the rest of you... well, the army always needs cannon fodder!' Half the men look at each other in dejection.

'Time to get you worms equipped - graduation's coming up, isn't it! If you lost your duel, take a *broad sword* from the rack; if you won, take a *mithril broad sword*; if you accidentally managed to kill your partner, talk to me at **466**; if you cheated, and used offensive magic or a weapon other than the stick, step forward at **482**!'

The sergeant looks you all up and down. 'Yup, some of you are shaping up real nicely. I'm goin' to skip the athletic part of

today's training: let's practice our shooting one last time before we wrap things up, shall we? Follow me fellas.' You all march behind your superior to the bow rack.

The sergeant takes one of the weapons and cocks an arrow. 'Now guys, when you're shootin' from the trenches you're not goin' to be able to look at your target for too long before you shoot. You've got what? Stand, duck, cock, stand, and shoot, that's right. You don't want to wind up a sitting duck - or a standing duck either! Either way you're dead. So take a bow and three arrows, and try to hit the target we've set up in no man's land without looking at it for too long, like this.' Your superior jumps up, lets loose his arrow, and ducks. You all stand up and see that he's missed. 'And remember,' says the sergeant, oblivious to his failure, 'this time's for keeps: best shooters get the best shooters!'

The men begin firing their three arrows. How do you do? Take a level three, two, and one dexterity check (it gets easier to hit the target with practice after all.)

'Alright fellas, now here's the deal: hit the target no times and you don't get a bow, you're on cooking duty instead; hit it one time and you get a *very light bow*; hit it twice and you get a *crossbow*; hit it three times and you get an *Uzi's Bow*. Take your weapons from the rack people, and don't forget to take a *sheaf of 24 arrows* too!'

The sergeant looks at you all in pride. 'You know, there comes a point in the training when you know your men are ready; when you know some of them have even surpassed you. Look at my shot - I missed. Most of you missed once or twice too, and so does the enemy. None of us are perfect, but you guys are all good enough. I salute you, and wish you all the best, men!' You all worry that your superior's about to start crying.

'Rest soldiers - yes, I use the word soldiers now - and be ready

for the call. The general's are planning an offensive, I can tell you that much, and we could be over the top at any moment. My advice: don't drink too much during tonight's celebrations, you don't want to wake up with a hangover.'

Take a level two intelligence check. If you pass, go to **397**; if you fail, go to **492**.

449 - You hand her the 50 coins. 'Keep the change' you say warmly, patting her withered hand. 'What change? she says, 'I'll be repossessed if I don't come up with 10 grand!' You ask where your lodgings lie, swiping 50 gold coins worth of cutlery as you follow her to your abode.

She shows you into your quarters, blowing the dust off the furnishings before you enter. You cough as you walk into the windowless room. The desiccated harpy surreptitiously places a minted newt on your pillow before you notice, then hands you the key. 'Breakfast ain't provided. Leave the key in the box as you leave.' You thank her before settling in for the night.

'Enjoy your stay? Recommend the place to your band of heroes' says the old bat as you exit the next morning. You tell her that you're not an adventurer, merely a painter looking for ground *pink dragon scales*, curdled *hydra milk*, and crushed *mountain teeth*. She tells you to recommend the inn to your band of courtiers then. You thank her and exit the lachrymose alehouse. Go to the third paragraph of **479**.

450 - You are as graceless and ugly as the monsters you slay. Hanging your head in shame, you bid Helena adieu and withdraw to your quarters for the night.

You thank the commander the next morning for his hospitality. He shakes your hand and summons a military carriage to take you back to the palace at **226**.

451 - Your stoicism may be appreciated by the bandits, but you regret it once the sentence is handed out: death. What else could it be for murder? A black cat purrs and rubs itself against the executioner's leg as he chops your silly little head off.

452 - Take a level five charisma check, and add your personal adds to the roll. If you pass, go to **458**; if you fail, go to **468**.

453 - The church bell begins to peal in the distance, and peasant after peasant runs in and joins the fray. Now it's simply a matter of depopulating the entire demesne. Add one dice of *farmer joes* to the battle each round for the next three rounds: if you manage to defeat them all you may flee to the nearby woods and camp there. Consult the *rest appendix* before waking at the second paragraph of **443**.

454 - You pass many cows, goats, and sheep as you walk through the hilly pasture, all seemingly unattended: surely you could nab one without anyone catching you? Go to **464** if you do, and **474** if you don't.

455 - You puff out your chest and express the wish to meet this lover of hers in mortal combat. Helena throws her arms around you. 'Oh Blendan, you're such



a man! It's strange to think that you're only an artist - you should join the army, you'd look great in uniform!' You tell her you'll think about it and instruct her to bring the rejected suitor to you immediately.

Forty minutes later Helena returns with the enraged man. Take a luck check and fight the appropriate opponent:

Critical fumble: The *crown prince*. If you win the duel you realise the implications of what you have done and must flee the domain forever, ending the adventure (but you do at least survive).

Failed luck check: *Serendipidar the Mountebank*.

Level zero luck check: *A veteran captain*.

Level one luck check: *A half-orc*.

Level two luck check: *A middle-aged courtier*.

Level three luck check: *An elderly nobleman*.

After you wipe her butchered suitor's blood off your hob-nailed boots you kneel on the grass.

'Helena. Although I've only met you today I feel like I've known you all my life. I *have* known you all my life: you were in my dreams, in my waking dreams as my perfect woman and in my sleeping dreams as a premonition. Helena, you are a picture, a vision of graceful perfection...

Today I have defended both my honour and yours - our honour - against a most notorious and perfidious paramour matched with you by your father. Your father was not to blame, of course - this suitor no doubt presented himself as an upright, honest man worthy of your love - but I, Blendan, citizen of the

Rainbow Palace, heart of the realm, am privy to all opinions and knew him to be a conniving wretch. Desperate for his true character, history, and reputation to not be uncovered, frantic to swindle you by any means, he challenged me to a duel, hoping to bury my voice by burying my body. He ended up digging his own grave - I forgive him, and pray for his salvation in the hereafter.

Helena. Let us inter this bloody evening with hopeful rites: the right of conquest, the conquest of hearts.' If you have a ring you place it on her finger.

'Helena: yeah or na?' Helena breaks into tears and embraces you, whispering 'yes' into your cauliflower ear. You, in turn, whisper 'then I claim the final right of conquest. I shall knock on your bedchamber door at 9 o'clock.' Helena blushes, but the lady doth not protest, you think.



You knock on her door that night dressed in a velvet bed-robe. 'Helena? My sweet? My mouse?' The door opens, revealing your betrothed to your hungry eyes.

'How do I look?' Gone is the pure white dress of the virgin and the veiled conical hat: she's now dressed in red silk woven as fine as her figure and as low as your jaw. She darts her eyes

down to your lance and smiles. 'I guess I look pretty good. Come inside.'

You shakily walk over to her liquor cabinet and pour you both a goblet of red wine, nervously overfilling one chalice and underfilling the other. 'What am I doing?' you think to yourself. 'It's not like it's my first time, I'm not a schoolboy anymore with Marianne Dimpkins - why am I so rattled?' Helena takes the larger goblet and drains it while you try to collect yourself, then perfunctorily holds out the chalice for more. 'It's because she's so collected' you realise. 'I expected her to swoon and resist, but she's the one in control.' You smile weakly and fill her vessel. You look down at her crotch. 'Now *that's* the vessel I want to fill' you muse contemplatively.



While you drink your pinot noir you drink her in too. Her auburn locks, normally tied in pig tails, are now draped over her exposed shoulders. Her shoulders are fine, fine and pale as elvish porcelain, but softer, oh so much softer. Her chest is softer still, and softer the further down you look, culminating in two wide globes you'd give the world for to hold in your scarred hands. Her navel, meanwhile, withdraws in between her exposed thighs, but you don't doubt it's the softest part of all...

Your deep meditations are interrupted by a laugh. 'You're imagining how I look without my clothes on, aren't you? Why don't you just tear them off then so that you don't have to use your mind?' She brusquely grabs hold of your jousting stick. 'I don't want you to use your mind, big boy - I want you to use *this*.' With her words the spell is broken. It's now or never: you grab hold of her and kiss her forcefully, aggressively, on the mouth.

She moans in pleasure as your mouth meanders up and down her neck and your hands work her flanks. Her lacquered nails dig painfully into your side and the back of your neck, leaving burning imprints in your skin. You burn brighter though, you don't notice - you're in a passion now, and your kisses come harder and harder, faster and faster, all over her exposed flesh.

You can't control yourself: you rip the silk nightgown off her, starting with the stomach, and lick her from the top of her pubic hair all the way to her nipple. She arches her back in concurrence with your action, shouting out almost as if she were in pain. Pulling hard, you rend her clothes in two and whip them off her, leaving her yearning body exposed. All except one part of her...

Her chastity belt remains buckled around her. You always have trouble with these things, and unfortunately she makes no move to help you, wanting to test your lovemaking prowess to the utmost. Take level two intelligence and dexterity checks until you pass both: whenever you fail you cut your hands on the spikes that jut out from the belt and take one piercing damage; if you succeed you manage to remove the belt and breathe a sigh of relief.

Exhausted by the effort to remove the belt you flop down beside her in bed. She sits up angrily. 'Is that it??' You apologise and roll over, trying to sleep. Your betrothed fumes but, unable to rouse you, pleasures herself and drifts off afterwards. You wake up in the middle of the night to milk Chompy, creeping out of bed once you're sure Helena's asleep.

The foul hydra slumbers on a mat beside the bed. You will need to pass a level two dexterity check to milk Chompy without waking her up. If you pass, go to **475**; if you fail, go to **485**.

456 - You take your weapon in hand and approach a large peasant boy, taking him to be a particularly challenging target - after all, you want to be noticed! Your partner-opponent shakes your hand, confident he'll manage to win. 'Alright men, you know the rules: first one to win three rounds of combat wins the bout. And gentlemen, this one counts! What with the war dragging on, good weapons have to be rationed to those who can use them best! Now, first up... Slop and Fick!'

You watch the men pound each other with their sticks in interest, and see many useful techniques being used. Take a level three intelligence check: if you pass, gain the *duelist* trait.

Eventually it's your turn to fight. You and the *farmer boy* hold your *sticks* in front of you and circle each other warily until you finally break and lunge. Fight until there's a winner.

'Alright, alright guys, that's enough! Now, I saw some good work right here. Some of you are ok, and the rest of you... well, the army always needs cannon fodder!' Half the men look at each other in dejection.

'Time to get you worms equipped - graduation's coming up, isn't it! If you lost your duel, take a *broad sword* from the rack; if you won, take a *mithril broad sword*; if you accidentally managed to kill your partner, talk to me at **466**; if you cheated, and used offensive magic or a weapon other than the stick, step forward at **482**!'

The sergeant looks you all up and down. 'Yup, some of you are shaping up real nicely. I'm goin' to skip the athletic part of today's training: let's practice our shooting one last time before we wrap things up, shall we? Follow me fellas.' You all march behind your superior to the bow rack.

The sergeant takes one of the weapons and cocks an arrow.

‘Now guys, when you’re shootin’ from the trenches you’re not goin’ to be able to look at your target for too long before you shoot. You’ve got to what? Stand, duck, cock, stand, and shoot, that’s right. You don’t want to wind up a sitting duck - or a standing duck either! Either way you’re dead. So take a bow and three arrows, and try to hit the target we’ve set up in no man’s land without looking at it for too long, like this.’ Your superior jumps up, lets loose his arrow, and ducks. You all stand up and see that he’s missed. ‘And remember,’ says the sergeant, oblivious to his failure, ‘this time’s for keeps: best shooters get the best shooters!’

The men begin firing their three arrows. How do you do? Take a level three, two, and one dexterity check (it gets easier to hit the target with practice after all.)

‘Alright fellas, now here’s the deal: hit the target no times and you don’t get a bow, you’re on cooking duty instead; hit it one time and you get a *very light bow*; hit it twice and you get a *crossbow*; hit it three times and you get an *Uzi’s Bow*. Take your weapons from the rack, people!’

The sergeant looks at you all in pride. ‘You know, there comes a point in the training when you know your men are ready; when you know some of them have even surpassed you. Look at my shot - I missed. Most of you missed once or twice two, and so does the enemy. None of us are perfect, but you guys are all good enough. I salute you, and wish you all the best men!’ You all worry that your superior’s about to start crying.

‘Rest soldiers - yes, I use the word soldiers now - and be ready for the call. The general’s are planning an offensive, I can tell you that much, and we could be over the top at any moment. My advice: don’t drink too much during tonight’s celebrations, you don’t want to wake up with a hangover.’

Take a level two intelligence check. If you pass, go to **397**; if

you fail, go to **492**.

457 - As should be plainly obvious, the tents you're walking towards belong to another bandit camp. Because the road you walk along rests between two such camps, the path positively teems with the lawless critters. Consult the *banditry appendix* three times before continuing to **467**.

458 - The adventurers grudgingly admit that's fair enough, and redivide the pile into four (your share is 375 gold coins). Not wishing to linger, Gondwar shakes your hand and *blows you to the Wayfarer's Inn* along with everyone else. Go to the second paragraph of **413**.

459 - If you told the commander of the Iron Chalice that the new King was thinking of raising more war funds, and you haven't killed him, go to **489**. If not, go to **499**.

460 - 'Ugh, how cliché'd!' she says, tossing the roses back into the flower bed. Lose one quotient of romance and go to the second paragraph of **330**.

461 - 'Alright, alright, I'll check the records. But until proven innocent, you're in here!' He leaves, and the bandits beat you unconscious for your betrayal.

Five days later it is announced that the bandits will be sentenced to death, but also that the records corroborate your claims and that you are free to go. You collect your belongings to the hisses of your fellow knaves and exit the palace to **1**.

462 - You run out of the cavern, and fortunately don't run into its occupant! Now, time to get out of this dragon-infested area.

If you walk northwards towards the fort, go to **2**. If you walk north-east towards the trenches, go to **297**. If you walk east towards the generals' tent, go to **247**. If you walk south-east

towards the roosting grounds, go to **488**. If you walk south towards the hills, go to **7**. If you walk west towards the palace, go to **288**.

463 - You and the other surviving soldiers limp out of bed, and are greeted by the sergeant. 'I'm... so sorry men. I knew it was a mistake, but I take my orders just the same as you. How're you all doing?' One of the soldiers reapplies his bandage as it's sopping with blood.

'Soldiers are being moved in from lower down the line: command's going to thin them out while you recuperate. I want you guys to take a couple of days off, whether you're injured or not - you deserve it fellas. Take your 100 gold coins of pay, and a 100 gold coin bonus too... spend it wisely or unwisely as the case may be. And if you joined in the push on time, receive your medal of honour, with honour!'

The sergeant begins pinning *medals of honour* to your breasts: hopefully to your breast too. You salute and take your leave.

You may either walk north-west to the swamps at **336**, westwards to the marshlands at **29**, south-west to the fort at **2**, catch a military carriage to the fort at **8**, or walk south-east to the lower portion of the trenches at **297**.

464 - You fry the livestock with an almighty *take that you fiend!*, conveniently killing and cooking it in one blow. Take as many days' worth of *provisions* as you wish. Also, take a level two luck check: if you pass, no-one catches you and you may go to the second paragraph of **474**; if you fail, go to **497**.

465 - Helena accuses you of being a coward: you'll have to either duel the suitor at **455**, or forfeit her hand altogether.

If you do leave Helena to her other lover, go to **450**.

466 - The sergeant looks at the man you've killed in sorrow. 'A good man was Jerry, it's a darn shame... clearly you're his better though. Impressive; it's against regulations, but take my sword. I'm sure you'll put it to good use out there, and I'll manage to get it replaced.' You take the sergeant's *adamantine sword* before going to the sixth paragraph of **448**.

467 - Consult the *banditry appendix* before reading on.

By nightfall you have arrived at the camp, which you have now realised is home to many of the realm's most notorious thieves and brigands. If you've come to torch and loot these defenceless criminals, go to **477**; if you want to avoid parlaying with these hardened outlaws, go to **487**.

468 - The dwarf crosses his arms. 'The deal was that we got the gold, and you got the scales. If you didn't get the scales, that's no concern of ours! Now scram, before I get angry! If you insist on your share of the spoils, go to **484**; if you leave the cavern, go to the second paragraph of **442**.

469 - You enter the infamous inn. A dejected witch polishes obsidian shot glasses behind the counter, not even bothering to acknowledge your presence as you enter. 'A room for the night, wiccan!' you cry, sitting on a stool and swivelling around to face her. 'Ah, what's the use. I'm going out of business anyway. I'm no match for them big inn franchises!'

You look at her in shock. 'The Black Cat Inn out of business? Never! This place's been around for as long as I can remember!' The raven-robed crone looks at you tearfully. '50 gold coins for the night - I can't afford no less!' If you hand her the exorbitant fee, go to **449**; if you tell her to get a bank loan, camp outside the palace ramparts at **479**.

470 - 'How lovely!' Helena says, attaching them to her dress. She pecks you on your cheek in thanks. Go to the third

paragraph of **340**.

471 - 'Sure, sure: and I'm the crown prince, but I just work night-shifts.' The knights watch in satisfaction as the brigands beat you unconscious for your betrayal.

Several days later your sentence is announced: death. What else could it be for murder? You're dragged to the chopping block protesting your innocence to the last; a black cat purrs and rubs itself against the executioner's leg as he chops your lying little head off.

472 - You run out of the cavern, but run into the *old pink dragon* at the entrance! Not one to waste time, he attacks.

If you survive the fight you decide to escape this dragon-infested area. If you walk northwards towards the fort, go to **2**. If you walk north-east towards the trenches, go to **297**. If you walk east towards the generals' tents, go to **247**. If you walk south-east towards the roosting grounds, go to **488**. If you walk south towards the hills, go to **7**. If you walk west towards the palace, go to **288**.

473 - Caution is the better part of valour: you run parallel to the enemy trench, trying to run around the edge of the noxious cloud.

As you do this you see a soldier stagger out of the haze in front of you, weakened by whatever he inhaled. You call out in alarm as a grenade rolls towards him, but he seems too debilitated to hear you and is blown limb from limb.

You leap over the smoking crater and run on, reaching the edge of the cloud soon after. Panting, you pivot around and continue charging at the enemy trench.

In front of you are many dead and dying comrades. If you

attempt to save one of them, go to **481**; if you ignore them and leap into the enemy trench, go to **491**.

474 - You're a member of the court, not a base cattle-rustler!

As the sun sets over the pastoral scene you make camp for the night. Consult the *rest appendix*.

The whinnying of a horse awakes you the next morning. You have slept close to a coral, and inside is a mustang pacing from end-to-end of its cage. If you try to climb over the fence, go to **516**. Otherwise you may walk north-east to the tooth-shaped mountain at **483**, eastwards to the large farms at **39**, south-east to the town at **12**, southwards, bearing east, to the camps at **123**, or southwards to the camps at **493**.

475 - You delicately extract her milk and store it. Now, do you creep out of the fort at **495** while its occupants sleep, or do you go back to bed at **303**?

476 - You look in horror as the paint tints a livid pink. You rub the *pink dragon scales* between your fingers, and curse the apothecary: they crumble at your touch, they're obviously expired.

Your paint is ruined, but perhaps you still have time to begin anew. Leave your apartment in despair and trudge to **1**.

477 - Cast any spells you wish on yourself before charging into the camp. You will need to face one dice of *bandits* and two dice of *bandit archers*.

If you survive the fight you ransack the camp of the four days' worth of *provisions* that roast on the spit. Also, take a luck check: you find 100 gold coins for every level you make. Steal away with your plunder to **496**.

478 - Ten feet is a long way to jump. You fail miserably and fall down the ravine. Fortunately it's not too much of a drop and only deals one damage.

If you instead climb up the side of the ravine close to the exit and leave, go to **527**. If you climb up the side of the ravine close to the entry, go to the second paragraph of **224**.

479 - Consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up the next morning to the squawking of peacocks flying above you. If it wasn't for the raucous sound they make you wouldn't notice them, so seamlessly do they blend in with the seraglio's walls.

Where to now? You may enter the palace if you have all of the three ingredients for your paint - ground *pink dragon scales*, curdled *hydra milk* and crushed *mountain tooth* - in which case you should go to **459**. Otherwise you should move on. You scan the landscape around you:

All around you is a fairly homogenous landscape of fields and cottages. Far in the distance you can see a lake to the south of the palace, hills to the south-east, mountains to the east (around which dragons soar), a fort to the north-east, swamps to the north, an exceptionally tall mountain to the north-west, expansive farms to the west, and a town to the south-west.

If you walk towards the lake, go to **9**. If you walk towards the hills, go to **7**. If you walk towards the dragon mountains, go to **19**. If you walk towards the fort, go to **17**. If you walk towards the swamps, go to **29**. If you walk towards the exceptionally tall mountain, go to **27**. If you walk towards the large farms, go to **39**. If you walk towards the town, go to **37**.

480 - Helena's used to the finer things in life and is definitely one to judge a man by his shoes. If you spent less than 50

gold coins you earn her disdain and lose one quotient of romance before returning to the second paragraph of **330**. If you spent between 50 and 200 gold coins you fail to make any impression on her and return to the second paragraph of **330** light of pocket. If you spend between 201 and 500 gold coins you earn her respect (and one quotient of romance) before going to the third paragraph of **340**. If you spend more than 500 gold coins on the latest fashion you earn her admiration (and two quotients of romance) before going to the third paragraph of **340**. You can't sell these clothes later to recoup your losses: they're today's style, so tomorrow they'll be scorned by all.

481 - 'Hey buddy, you're gonna be alright' you say, lugging the arrow riddled man onto your shoulder. If you cast *poor baby* on him before you set back off, write down how much wizardry you spend on the spell before going to **494**.

482 - 'Oh - you think you're pretty clever, huh? Looks like we've got a pretty clever guy, pretty wise. Well we know what we do with you intellectuals in the army? We teach you a lesson.' The men snigger, looking forward to what's coming next.

'Guys!' says the sergeant, 'first one of you to win a bout against this man gets my sword!' Four men step forward: fight *private one*, *private two*, *private three*, and *private four* in succession without cheating (if you cheat again, return to this paragraph). If you survive the fight go to the sixth paragraph of **448**.

483 - The law is weak at the realm's frontier, particularly in the wild west. Consult the *banditry appendix* before going to **66**.

484 - *Daltimdim*, *Scruffles*, and *Gondwar* surround you. 'We don't like beggars, guvnor,' says the hobbit, unsheathing his dirks as he speaks. 'It's a worg-eat-worg world guv - and if

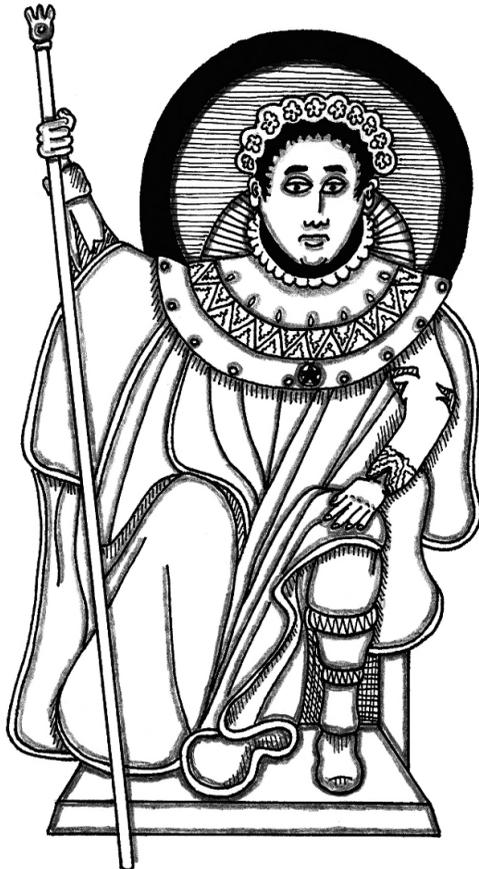
we're the worgs, I get guess that makes you the worg.' The three adventures attack you.

If you survive you take the 1,500 gold pieces and their equipment. The troll gods certainly are unforgiving on the weak. Go to the second paragraph of **442**.

485 - You squeeze the beast's nipples a little too firmly: Chompy begins to stir. Take a level two charisma check: if you pass, go to **313**; if you fail, go to **323**.

486 - The paint's hue almost imperceptibly alters over the minutes into that of a jaundiced peach. You hand trembles from ecstasy as you paint the King's coronation scene.

You present the painting to the King at the end of the month (or the end of the day if the month of May has passed). 'Well well - about time. A sovereign needs his authority memorialised, you know. How embarrassing it would've been if I'd had to entertain a foreign dignitary without optical proof



of my righthood!' He holds the picture in his gloved hands and surveys it.

The King judges the painting according to the following criteria: you gain two points of approval for each day spent painting it, lose three points for each day past the 31st of May you spent painting it, lose two points if you stole your mistress' goods, gain three points if your mistress vouches that the painting is good, lose one point for each day the hydra milk used in the paint under or over curdled (it curdled perfectly if left for 10 days once bottled), and gain two points for the level of intelligence check you passed when attempting to remember the details of the coronation.

If your painting scores zero points or less, go to **347**; if your painting scores between one and five points, go to **371**; if you score a 6-10, go to **377**; if you score a 11-15, go to **396**; if you get a 16-20, go to **406**; if you get a 21 or above, go to **423**.

487 - You attempt to creep away from the camp and rest for the night further away, but can you do so undetected? Take a level zero luck, dexterity, and intelligence check: if you pass all three, go to **496**, and if you fail any, prepare to fight at **477**.

488 - You spend all day walking towards and through the hills, and decide to nestle in one of the dragon nests once the sun sets. Consult the *rest appendix*, and add five to your roll.

You wake up to the screeching of dragons overhead. If you've previously planted *clay grenades* next to the eggs you may collect *pink dragon scales* from the splattered remains on a passed level one luck check. If you have any *clay grenades* you may light and plant them next to the eggs before running away (the explosion is sure to attract the mother): whether you walk or run, you may escape north-east to the generals' tent at **247**, north-west to the dragon mountains at **19**, or westwards to the hills at **7** (walking eastwards would be suicide as the

realm's foes have entrenched themselves in that direction).

489 - You notice that something is amiss as you walk through the palace courtyard: knights mill about where palace guards once stood, and arrows stick out of the ground wherever you look. You enter the inner palace with trepidation.

Coarse laughter rings from the throne room. You can't hear the King or Queen's voice inside. Curious, you enter...

The commander of the Iron Chalice sits on the throne, surrounded by loyal soldiers laughing at one of his jests. He doesn't seem to have seen you yet. If you exit before he notices your presence, go to **498**; if you announce yourself, go to **409**.

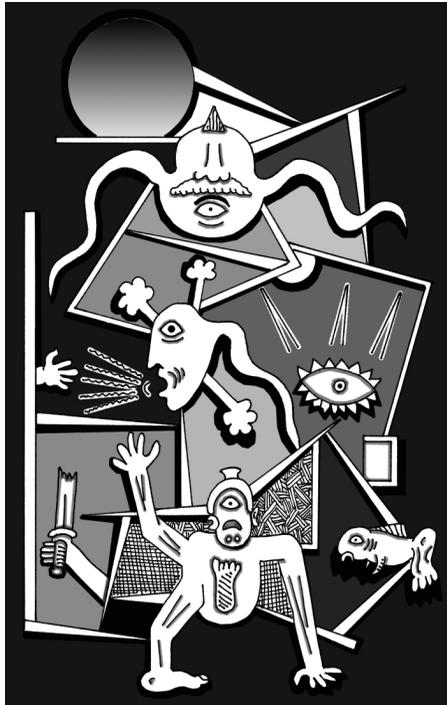
490 - You spend a few minutes drawing her with a piece of charcoal before handing her the outline. She's deeply impressed, and thanks you. Gain two quotients of romance and go to the third paragraph of **340**.

491 - You jump over the moaning soldiers, and dashing dash into the bustling line. 'For the King! Love live the King!' you cry, deflecting the daggers affixed to the enemy soldiers' bows.

Fight the two *men of the line*, then take a level two intelligence check.

Repeat until you pass one of the checks.

As the opposing forces



continue to swarm towards you, and as you consider all of the dead comrades behind you, you come to the realisation that the push has been repulsed. You leap out of the enemy trench and retreat to your own, taking one dice of spite damage in the process.

Fortunately no enemy counterattack ever comes, and your army is able to tend to the wounded for the rest of the day. You sleep to the groaning of those warriors who made it back safely.

You're awoken the next morning to the cry of the bugle. Go to **398** if you've killed the sergeant, and **463** if you haven't.

492 - You party with the rest of the boot-camp graduates all through the night, drinking grog smuggled in from God-knows-where. You eventually crawl to bed early the next morning in the hopes of sleeping off your dawning hangover.

You dream of bugles, people charging, and alchemical explosions. In your dream the blasts knock you from side-to-side by the blasts, this way and that.

You slowly wake up to the sergeant shaking you violently. 'You c***s***er, get up! We're attacking! I swear I'll court martial you, you b***** f***er - now go you b*****, go!' All around you, last night's revellers groggily clamber out of bed.

If you join in the attack, go to the fifth paragraph of **397**. If you tell your superior that you're not going to let him court martial you all, go to **227**.

493 - The south-west frontier is notoriously lawless: consult the *banditry appendix* before continuing on to **467**.

494 - You only need to keep him alive until you get back to a field-medic, so spending four wizardry will be perfectly

adequate. If you managed to prolong his sad existence, go to **386**; if he died in your hands, go to the final paragraph of **473**.

495 - You slink out of your beloved one's boudoir and along the Iron Chalice's corridors. If your carried weight is less than 50 kgs, go to **353**; otherwise, go to **343**.

496 - You are a chameleon of the night, a shadow among shadows... you tiptoe to the other side of a hill and settle down next to a clump of gorse. Consult the *rest appendix*.

You wake up early the next morning, not wishing to tarry in this lawless part of the realm. You may walk northwards towards the hilly pasture at **328**, or eastwards towards the camp at **446**. Going further south-west would not only be dangerous but, more importantly, a waste of your precious time: only outlaws lie there.

497 - You were right: there's not a soul in sight to witness your crime. There are, however, others attracted to the smell of roast mutton...

Fend off *wolves* equal to the number you missed the luck check by before going to the second paragraph of **474**.

498 - You close the throne room door behind you. Whatever has happened here, you want no part of it. The throne has been usurped, a foe presses on the realm's eastern flank, and you've betrayed the new princess: better to leave for new climes.

You check your apartment before you leave. It has been looted after the fighting of course, but fortunately a dozen of your *paintings* remain: what thief sees the value of art? You strap as many as you can carry on your pack and leave.

Now that you belong to no court you'll probably need to give

up your old profession, but at least you've learnt a new one: how to handle a staff properly. You take one last look at the palace before leaving. Where will you go? Wherever your feet take you. Take 500 adventure points for finishing *Portrait of a Troubled Artist*.

499 - It's a relief to re-enter the palace: you unlock your apartment in high spirits. Everything is just as you remembered, even though it seems like so many years since you were last here (and if you forgot to keep track of time, maybe it was!) Excitedly, you prepare and mix together the ground *pink dragon scales*, the curdled *hydra's milk*, and the crushed *mountain tooth* into a smooth paste, and carefully, ever so carefully, introduce the mix into a blob of white paint. Go to **476** if you used *pink dragon scales* bought for 2,000 gold coins from the apothecary on the island, and go to **486** if you didn't.

500 - Helena has difficulty standing in the same pose for three hours, and her pet hydra often wanders in front of you and obscures your view, but the painting is nonetheless one of your better ones. Helena is suitably impressed by it, but thinks you're a bit of a showoff. Go to the second paragraph of **330**.

501 - You may either walk north-west to the upper portion of the trenches at **228**, westwards to the fort at **2**, catch a military carriage to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel pass*, walk south-west to the dragon mountains at **19**, or walk south-east to the general's tent at **247**.

502 - You politely rap on the ballroom door, and wait patiently for someone to answer. Not getting a response, you cast *knock knock* and enter.

A cobwebbed chandelier sways from the high ceiling, its silky strands dangling like streamers. On the far side of the wall is the painting: to get to it, you'll need to go through the cobwebs.

If you walk through the cobwebs, go to **522**; if you burn the cobwebs away, go to **532**.

503 - You tell them that the cause seems admirable, and nothing could suit your mutual interests more. You also ask for the gemstone back as you're taking on the mission. The generals smile and shake your hand.

'Good luck young man! The safety of the realm somewhat depends on you!' You salute and leave the tent.

The day is still young: you may walk north to the trenches at **297**, north-west to the fort at **2**, catch the military carriage to the fort at **8**, walk west to the dragon mountains at **19**, south-west to the hills at **7**, or south to the roosting grounds at **488**. Walking eastwards would be suicide: there lies the realm's foe.

504 - You're certain that this is the right plant, and rub your weapon on the weed. You're certainly correct too - dragons beware!

By the time you've found the plant it's late afternoon: too late to walk somewhere new. Consult the *rest appendix* before going to the second paragraph of **7**.



505 - 'My weapon? I don't think so: nothing personal, but I always keep my weapon on me at all times. It's not worth much in any case: it's just a simple rapier.' The commander rests his hand on the hilt.

'Won't give it to me? I see... a good policy!' You fire a level one *take that you fiend!* from your hip and hit him with it if you pass a level two dexterity check before fighting him as normal.

Go to the fourth paragraph of **550**.

506 - You're frozen in terror at the sight of the mustang hurtling towards you, and sent hurtling into the enchanted enclosure behind you, taking five level one *zapp!* spells in the process. If you survive the almighty shock you wake up the next morning among the wreckage of the fence, the horse nowhere to be found. Go to the final sentence of **474**.

507 - You roughly hug her, and reassure her in a rich baritone that you'll be thinking of her in the trenches, thinking of her night and day, day and night, dead or alive or dead.

She stops sobbing, and smiles. 'Thank you, stranger. That was beautiful. I feel closure.' Take 250 adventure points before going to the final paragraph of **7**.

508 - As you futilely struggle to wrest yourself free from the web, its owner descends from the chandelier and onto your head. Fight the *horrorfang spider* before going to **542**.

509 - You're certain that this is the right plant, and rub your weapon on the weed. Unfortunately, the plant's actually a strong antidote to the plant you mistook it for - whoops!

By the time you've found the supposed *dragonsbane* it's late afternoon: too late to walk somewhere new. Consult the *rest appendix* before going to the second paragraph of **7**.

510 - 'It's not a dangerous mission, simply one suited to a man able to track things down. With the recent passing away of the old commander, we've finally been able to persuade the King to raise more war funds in the hopes of developing a new weapon' says the general with the moustache.

'If we're to have any hope of turning this war around, we need new weapons - better weapons! We want to develop a floating bomb capable of falling into the enemy line!' shouts the thick-set general, glaring at you as if you were responsible for the failed push.

'Our engineers say they need two ingredients to begin their experiments... five *grapes of wrath* and *magic pukeko feathers*. Find them and bring them to us, and we'll give you a big fat bonus!' says the elderly general.

You toss the gemstone back to the old general, who fumbles it. 'I'd love to help you with such a noble cause, but I don't have time. I've got to find curdled *hydra milk*, crushed *pink dragon scales*, and ground *mountain tooth* before the month is up, and I can't possibly find *five* ingredients.'

'Wait!' cries the moustachioed general. 'We'll send out soldiers to find your ingredients while you find ours, and give you them as your reward. We can easily procure those things - we need our best man to help us make this bomb though! Time is of the essence for us too!'

Food for thought: if you agree to the mission, go to **503**; if you refuse, and walk out of the tent, go to the final paragraph of **247**.

511 - You either walk north-west to the swamps at **336**, westwards to the marshlands at **29**, south-west to the fort at **2**, catch a military carriage to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel*

pass, or walk south-east to the lower portion of the trenches at **297**.

512 - You run out of the fort and far, far away! From now on, you dare not re-enter the scene of your crime.

You may escape south-east to the dragon mountains at **209**, south-east to the generals' tent at **247**, east to the trenches at **297**, north-east to the trenches at **228**, north to the swamp at **238**, north-west to the marshland at **187**, or south-west to the palace at **190**.

513 - 'Ah, I see' says the general before shutting the tent flap in your face.

The day is still young: you may walk north to the trenches at **297**, north-west to the fort at **2**, catch the military carriage to the fort at **8** if you possess a *travel pass*, walk west to the dragon mountains at **19**, south-west to the hills at **7**, or south to the roosting grounds at **488**. Walking eastwards would be suicide: there lies the realm's foe.

514 - 'What's wrong, fair wench? Cheer up. Turn that frown upside down!' you say as you approach her, grinning like a cheshire cat. 'Think happy thoughts, and happy feelings will follow. Stop and smell the roses - or is it flowers more generally? If one chooses to see darkness, one cannot see the light.'

The maiden looks up at you with a tear-streaked face. 'How can you tell me to be happy when I've been left a spinster so soon after my wedding? I'll never hear his voice again... it's not fair - I hate war, I hate it!' You pat her back awkwardly as she begins to wail hysterically.

If you have a talent for acting, go to **524**; if you have an *earring of hearing* you're willing to part with, go to **534**; if you have

both an *earring of hearing* and a *tremblestone* you're willing to part with, go to **544**. Otherwise, take your leave and go to the final paragraph of **7**.

515 - Casting *hidey hole* will let you avoid bumping into the two *knights*, but otherwise you must fight them: hard to argue your way out of a murder when you're wearing the dead man's equipment!

If you survive the fight you yell out, in the gruffest voice you can put on, 'that was a good, friendly sparring match! Got to stay sharp for the real thing, aye!' As no more warriors come to investigate the scene, you surmise that you must be a consummate thespian. Give yourself an acting talent before bolting away.

As you sprint ever closer to the exit, you remember that a valuable artwork plastered with kremm paint is hung in the old ballroom nearby. If you break in and take it, go to **502**; if you ignore it and run out the fort, go to **512**.

516 - As soon as your hands touch the partition, a crisp jolt of electricity courses through you as if a level one *zapp!* spell had been



cast. If you survive the shock, take a level four intelligence check: if you pass you learn the spell.

If you continue to climb over the fence, go to **526**; if you jump over the fence using *pogo boots*, or fly over the fence, go to **536**; if you decide the horse isn't worth it, go back to the final sentence of **474**.

517 - You march up and down in front of her, but she tells you it's no use. You hand her back the uniform before going to the final paragraph of **7**.

518 - You break free from your reverie and unhook the *masterpiece* from the wall. 'This'll be worth a fortune in fifty years!' you think to yourself as you run to **512** with the painting tucked under your arm.

519 - It's difficult to hunt out a plant you've only heard described to yourself, particularly when you can't remember the details of what was said to you. You find a plant with eight furry leaves, a plant with eight spiky leaves, a plant with nine furry leaves, and a plant with nine spiky leaves. If you smear your weapon with the first plant, go to **504**; if you smear your weapon with the second plant, go to **509**; if you smear your weapon with the third plant, go to **529**; if you smear your weapon with the fourth plant, go to **539**; if you smear your weapon with all the plants, go to **549**.

520 - A thickset general looks you in the eye. 'Don't lose that scimitar - it might come in handy.' He points at the fort on the map in front of him. 'We want you... to kill the commander of the Iron Chalice!'

You toss the gemstone back to the old general, who fumbles it. 'Well, I'd love to help you with such a noble cause but I must be going. I've got to find curdled *hydra milk*, crushed *pink dragon scales*, and ground *mountain tooth* before the month is

up, so I can't waste time talking to you psychopaths.'

'Wait!' cries the moustachioed general. 'We'll send out soldiers to find those ingredients while you undergo this mission. And it is a noble cause - a necessary cause!'

'He must be killed: he's starving the front of funds! We could do so much better with better equipment, but at the moment all we can do is hold - hold, at least, for the moment!' shouts the thickset general, gripping the table in his rage.

'You have to question his loyalties' says the elderly general. 'He's been in charge for almost a decade: long enough to grow restless and ambitious. Does he want to win the war, or win the support of the people by not taxing them too lightly?'

Food for thought: if you agree to the mission, go to **206**; if you refuse, and walk out of the tent, go to the second paragraph of **513**.

521 - You grab the rope as you jump. If you swing yourself to the other side and exit the dungeon, go to **527**. If you climb up through the hole in the ceiling, go to **537**.

522 - You try to brush aside several strands of the cobweb as you head for the painting, but find yourself becoming entangled in the process. Take a level one strength check: if you pass, you manage to break free and go to **542**; if you fail, go to **508**.

523 - You step into the stout carriage and clatter away towards the tent, reaching it in a matter of hours. You jump out, stretch your legs, and knock on the flap of the tent at the third paragraph of **247**.

524 - 'What was he like, and how did he talk? I'm known as something of an actor, you see - well, I'm a painter, technically,

but that's just my day job - so maybe I could impersonate him for a little while. I do great impersonations, you should see my one of the King afterwards!

The young woman tells you that she'd like that very much, and not only describes her late husband in detail but gives you his uniform to put on. Take a level two charisma check (adding your talent to the roll): if you pass, go to **507**; if you fail, go to **517**.

525 - Casting *hidey hole* will let you avoid bumping into the two knights, but otherwise the warriors stop you. 'Halt! We heard our leader scream - what's wrong?' they say.

Take a level one charisma check: if you pass, go to **535**; if you fail, go to **545**.

526 - Gritting your teeth, you clamber over the barrier, taking one dice of level one *zapp!* spells in the process. Go to **536**.

527 - 'What a lame dungeon. I've seen play-centres more dangerous than that' you think to yourself as you walk back into the bazaar. 'They ought to take us seriously and expand it a little.'

If you calm yourself with a little retail therapy, go to **195**. Otherwise, go to the **introduction**'s final paragraph.

528 - Your mind drifts as you stare at the lapping waves, and time passes without you remembering its existence... if you've set the room on fire, go to **538**; if not, go to **548**.

529 - You're certain that this is the right plant, and rub your weapon on the weed. Unfortunately, the plant's actually a weed called *dragonsblood* that heals the already formidable reptiles - whoops!

By the time you've found the supposed *dragonsbane* it's late afternoon: too late to walk somewhere new. Consult the *rest appendix* before going to the second paragraph of **7**.

530 - 'By the way, commander, may I ask to evaluate your sword?' you ask innocuously. 'I'm sure an esteemed leader such as you carries a fine one indeed - we may as well see how much it's worth, shan't we.'

Take a level one luck and charisma check. If you pass both, go to **550**; if you fail either, go to **505**.

531 - You try to grab the rope as you jump. You fail miserably and fall down the ravine. Fortunately it's not too much of a drop and only deals one damage.

If you instead climb up the side of the ravine close to the exit and leave, go to **527**. If you climb up the side of the ravine close to the entry, go to the second paragraph of **224**.

532 - You cast *it's elemental*, sending a trickle of flame from your staff. The cobwebs, reacting like superfine kindling, rapidly ignite; the charred hulk of a *horrorfang spider* drops from the chandelier onto the floorboards in front of you.

The room is catching fire fast: if you try and grab the painting before escaping, go to **542**; if you run for the fort's exit, go to **512**.

533 - You flash your pass. 'Official business' you say to the cabbie. 'Top secret, need to know basis only.' You clatter towards the lower portion of the trenches, and hop out at **501**.

534 - You hand her the earring. 'Take this. It can create any sound you desire: including the sound of your brave husband.'

The young woman stops sobbing, and smiles. 'Thank you,

stranger, that's most kind. I'll treasure this always.' Take 250 adventure points before going to the final paragraph of **7**.

535 - 'I was just running to get help: he's got a terrible blood nose!' The knights look at the spreading pool of blood in the distance in horror, and dash over towards him. You take the opportunity to run to the third paragraph of **515**.

536 - You land inside the corral, opposite the horse. It's a good horse - large, muscular, fiery - and would be enormously useful during your travels. 'It only needs to be broken in' you think to yourself as it charges at you.

Take a level two speed check. If you pass, go to **546**; if you fail, go to **506**.

537 - You shimmy up the rope, and emerge in a pitch-black room. You cast *will-o-wisp*, and find that you've entered the dungeon's rafters, which are being used as a makeshift storeroom.

'Did the people running this shoddy dungeon really think this room was hidden from adventurers? Do they think we're children?' you reflect angrily as you stuff a *toolkit* in your backpack. 'I'm giving myself a refund!'

Laden with your new-found loot, you slide down the rope, swing to the side of the ravine next to the exit, and leave at **527**.

538 - You do not notice as flames lick up your robes, and slowly perish as you study the painter's expert hand. End of adventure - and of you!

539 - You're certain that this is the right plant, and rub your weapon on the weed. Unfortunately, the plant's actually a highly corrosive weed that melts your weapon if it's made of

metal - whoops!

By the time you've found the supposed *dragonsbane* it's late afternoon: too late to walk somewhere new. Consult the *rest appendix* before going to the second paragraph of 7.

540 - 'And now that you have seen all I possess, Blendan, I present you with a choice: shall I send you back to the palace via military carriage, or would you rather spend the night here? If you take the carriage, go to **226**; if you spend the night in the fort, go to **216**.

541 - If you gave him 50 gold coins or more, go to **547**; if you didn't do so, he barely pays you any notice as you did not pay enough!

You spend the remainder of the day browsing the myriad shops for any useful items. The following stand out to you, which you may purchase: a *deluxe traveller's backpack*, *dragonsbane*, a *monkey staff*, *paragon potions*, *pick-me-up potions*, and, of course, *provisions*. It is late by the time you have prepared yourself here: rest in your apartment for the night before going to the **introduction's** final paragraph.

542 - You run up to the painting, which depicts a raft drifting on an ocean.

The kremm paint creates the illusion that the waves really are moving, and despite your dire situation you find yourself becoming immersed in the work. Take a level one intelligence check: if you pass, go to **518**; if you fail, go to **528**.

543 - You flash your pass. 'Official business' you say to the cabbie. 'Top secret, need to know basis only.' You clatter towards the upper portion of the trenches, and hop out at **511**.

544 - You hand her the earring and the stone. 'Take these. The

jewellery can create any sound you desire: including the sound of your brave husband. The stone can record the earring, so that even if you lose the earring you'll have a copy of his voice.'

The young woman stops sobbing, and smiles. 'Thank you, stranger, that's most kind. I'll treasure these treasures always.' Take 400 adventure points before going to the final paragraph of 7.

545 - 'Oh, hello' you say, smiling sickly. 'I can explain... you see, he started it!'

The two *knights* whip out their swords and attack. If you survive the fight, keep running to the third paragraph of **515**.

546 - You duck out of the mustang's way, and breathe a sigh of relief as it rams into the enchanted fence, destroying it and shocking itself unconscious. You attempt to tame the *hostile horse* once it awakes before going to the final paragraph of **474**.

547 - 'Sir!' he says as you deposit the small treasure into his hat with a kindly smile, 'you've gotta 'art o' gold, you do - and a pouch o' gold too! I'd wager - if I had anythin' to wager - that your generosity comes from an understandin' o' war. 'ave you seen service, sir?'

You reply that you haven't, but that war is glorious and that the beggar is a very brave man. You explain that you merely gave him that gold because your pouch is weighing you down and tiring you out.

'Oh sir, war's not glorious, I can tell you that. Maybe it's glorious for the winners, but we're not goin' to win. Don't join the war, sir: all you'll get out of it is a shiny medal and a wooden leg!' He raps his trousers, from which you hear a dull

knocking sound. You chastise the veteran for his pessimism before walking away.

You spend the remainder of the day browsing the myriad shops for any useful items. The following stand out to you, which you may purchase: a *deluxe traveller's backpack*, *dragonsbane*, a *monkey staff*, *paragon potions*, *pick-me-up potions*, and, of course, *provisions*. It is late by the time you have prepared yourself here: rest in your apartment for the night before going to the **introduction's** final paragraph.

548 - Your study is broken when an *elite knight* enters the room. 'Knave! This bloodshed for a painting? I see you've even killed his daughter's pet spider... I'll run you through I will!' If you survive the fight, flee out of the fort at **512**.

549 - Hedging your bets, you rub your weapon in all four weeds. Unfortunately, while one of the plants is indeed *dragonsbane*, another is an antidote to the poison, another is a weed called *dragonblood* that heals dragons, and another is a highly corrosive plant that melts any metal weapons it comes in contact with - whoops!

By the time you've found the four weeds it's late afternoon: too late to walk somewhere new. Consult the *rest appendix* before going to the second paragraph of **7**.

550 - 'Yes, it should be rather valuable: it doesn't look like much, but it is magical. It's the strangest thing: in the chaos of battle it always finds its mark. I still remember when I confiscated it off that rogue, Ruffles - best arrest I've ever made. Here you go.' The commander unsheathes his *unerring rapier* and hands it to you.

You examine the hilt of the blade. 'Hmm, no jewels... a pity. It does seem like a good weapon though. Let's give it a try!' You try to stab the *commander* with it: get a free melee attack with

the weapon against him if you pass a level two dexterity check before fighting him as normal.

‘Not... bad for an artist!’ the commander gurgles as he slumps to the ground. You may take his gear before running down the corridor.

You hear two knights clanking around the corner. If you cast a spell, do so and write it down before going to **515** if you took anything from the commander, and **525** if you didn’t.

Banditry Appendix:

Roll four dice to determine what happens, then consult the chart below:

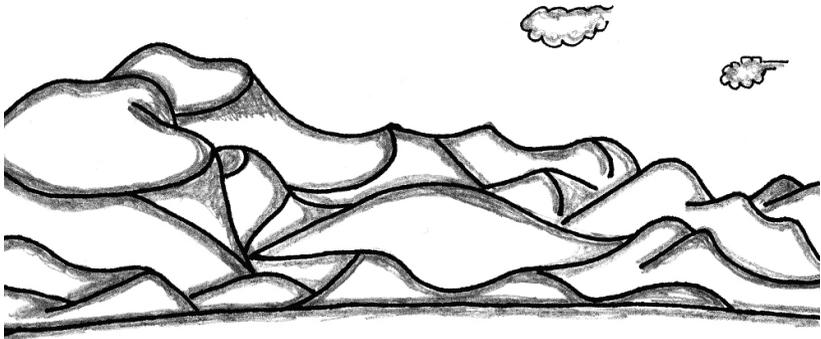
4: Two travellers on horseback approach you and ask if you are the great painter of the Rainbow Palace, Blendan. If you reply that you are, go to **4B**; if you reply that you aren’t, go to **4C**.

4B: The travellers are delighted. One of them holds out a shield and asks if you can sign it. As you do so they both grab hold of your arms, bind you, and hoist you onto the back of their horse. ‘A fine catch today: a pretty ransom!’ one gleefully says to the other. They ride back to their camp post-haste.

The King pays the ransom by the end of the week, not wanting to lose face, but fires you for the trouble you caused. You have failed in your endeavour, but at least a seasoned adventurer such as yourself should be able to make a living outside of the security of the palace walls...

4C: The travellers look disappointed. Go to **8** in this appendix.

5: Five *bandit archers* appear from trees all around you and fire arrows at your feet. ‘Surrender or die!’ they say. If you



surrender go to **87**; if you fight and survive you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

6: This must be a well-used road for fellow travellers keep crossing your path and befriending you. By dusk you're travelling with five others who argue that you should all make camp for the night.

Take a level zero charisma check: if you pass you feel uneasy camping with virtual strangers and continue on your way, reaching your destination without further incident. If you fail you readily agree and are garrotted and looted by them all while you sleep.

7: It's a sultry day and you feel drowsy. Take a level one intelligence and constitution check: if you fail either you take a *siesta* under an elm and are abducted by *bandits* while you sleep to **80**. If you manage to stay awake you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

8: Two *bandit horsemen* trot next to you. If your equipment is worth 100 gold coins or more, they attack; if it's not, they comment on how poor you look and try to convince you to join their band. In this case take a level zero charisma check: if you pass you politely decline and they leave you be, but if you fail you agree (largely out of fear), are hoisted onto one of the horses, and taken to **80**.

As long as you do not join the *bandit horsemen* you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

9: A fellow traveller walks the road from the opposite direction: make a level one charisma check. If you pass, you can tell that he's a brigand and avoid him; if you fail, you amicably address and shake hands with him, an hour later finding that whatever item of yours most closely approaches 50 gold coins in value has gone missing. You reach your destination by nightfall

without further incident.

10: An *ogre* bars your way along the road, demanding your best weapon to pass: you must either pay or fight him (if you own the book *Ogre Jokes: The Definitive Collection* you just make him laugh and pass unharmed). Afterwards, if you survive, you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

11: Early on in your trip one dice of *bandits* ambush you. They demand ten gold pieces each to pass: you must either pay or fight them. Afterwards, if you survive, you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

12: You reach your destination by nightfall without incident.

13: You reach your destination by nightfall without incident.

14: You can see a silver carriage surrounded by one dice of *bandits* in the distance. You may either take a detour around the road, keeping a wide berth around the stick-up and reaching your destination by night-time, or intervene on the nobleman's behalf.

If you intervene on the nobleman's behalf and defeat the *bandits* the nobleman beckons you to his carriage window. 'For your pains' he says, tossing you a pouch containing the number of *bandits* you defeated cubed in gold coins. He also offers you a lift to your destination, dropping you off there by lunchtime.

15: You reach your destination by nightfall without incident.

16: You reach your destination by nightfall without incident.

17: During your travels arrows suddenly whiz past your head. Behind the trees to your left you spot three *bandit archers*

firing at you. Make a level one speed check: if you fail one of the arrows hit you and you take two dice of damage; if you pass you manage to duck and dodge the missiles.

You may either attack the *bandits* or run away screaming from them. Either way you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

18: Five *bandit archers*, dressed in green, peer out at you from the canopy of the forest as you walk down the road. 'Ho there! How much money in your purse?' If you answer truthfully, go to **18B**; if you lie and say that you only have a few coins, go to **18C**.

18B: 'Well sir, we shall see!' says the brigands' leader. He leaps down from the tree and looks through your pouch. If you have 50 gold coins or more in your purse, go to **18D**; if you have less than 50 gold coins, go to **18E**.

18C: 'Well sir, we shall see!' says the brigands' leader. He leaps down from the tree and looks through your pouch. Looking at you in scorn he says 'a merry man: he jests! A merry man indeed: his weighty pouch belies a life of luxury!' The five *bandit archers* attack: if you survive the fight you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

18D: The brigands' leader smiles. 'An honest man, but a merry one: his weighty pouch belies a life of luxury!' He plucks one of the coins from your purse and flips it into the air, catching it on the back of his hand. 'Your life is in your hands: heads for the King, tails for the realm!' If you guess heads, go to **18F**; if you guess tails, go to **18G**.

18E: 'We look after the poor. Take, go, and prosper!' The brigand leader tops up your purse so that it's filled with 50 gold coins. You reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

18F: The leaders tosses you your coin and the five *bandit archers* attack as you catch it: if you survive the fight you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

18G: ‘An honest man indeed! Safe travels: we leave you be.’ You reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

19: Next to the road is a pack of *jackals* devouring the corpses of a man, woman, and three children. As you pass them they begin snarling, and four of the mangy beasts attack you. If you survive the encounter you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

20: You come across a travelling merchant during your travels. He sells *pick-me-up potions*, *protagonist potions*, *wink-wing arrows*, and *monkey staffs* for half their listed value.

After you make any purchases with the fellow you continue on your way, reaching your destination by nightfall without further incident. By this point you’ve found out that anything you bought lacks any magical qualities whatsoever.

21: You see two *knights* in rainbow armour battle seven *bandit horsemen* on the road ahead. If you join battle on the side of the knights, go to **21B**; if you walk around the melee, go to **21C**.

21B: If you and the *knights* survive the battle the knights thank you and ride off, leaving you free to loot all of the *bandit horsemen’s* corpses. After this you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

21C: Resolve the battle between the *knights* and *bandit horsemen*. If the *knights* won, go to **21D**; if the *bandit horsemen*, won go to **21E**.

21D: The surviving *knights* trot up you. 'Another brigand trying to escape palace justice!' one of them cries. They attack.

If you survive the fight you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

21E: The surviving *bandit horsemen* trot up you. 'A witness!' one of them cries. They attack.

If you survive the fight you reach your destination by nightfall without further incident.

22: Far ahead of you you can make out four damsels being carried away, bound and gagged, by six *bandits*. If you attack the *bandits* and save the women, go to **22B**; if you follow at a safe distance, go to **22C**.

22B: If you survive the fight the ladies thank you and kiss your cheek. You accompany them to your destination by nightfall without further incident.

22C: You skulk to your destination by nightfall without incident, but you lose any adventure points you've saved up for such an unheroic action.

23: As you are walking through a thick cover of leaf-litter a rope suddenly tightens around your ankle. You are lifted foot first until you dangle upside down from the bough of a tree. 'Surrender traveller' says a brigand cocking an arrow, accompanied by two companions, 'or die'. If you surrender, go to **87**. If you fight the three *bandit archers* you cannot use melee attacks and your spells only hit on a passed level one dexterity check. You can spend a round freeing yourself from the rope if you wish to during the fight. If you fight and survive you afterwards reach your destination without further incident.

24: You encounter a group of travellers during your travels who

laugh among themselves. They are very friendly, and even offer you a cigarette - not wanting to offend them you accept it. You convivially wave goodbye and continue on your way, relieved they did not mug you.

As you walk, puff, and flick your cigarette stub to the dirt, spirits and apparitions leer at you from all around. Everything seems to be alive: the trees, the rocks, even the road along which you stumble. Everything - is - alive!

You chuckle, then laugh hysterically at the realisation that everything you thought was inanimate is animate and everything animate is inanimate. Polar opposites. We are the puppets of nature, but we think it's the other way around. Presumptuous, so presumptuous - insects! Gaia. The Earth Mother. In some Trollworld cultures she's depicted as a goddess, but she's actually the planet itself. The planet breathes beneath our feet, and we realise it not! We realise it not! You feel famished and eat all of your provisions if you have any.

Abstract geometric shapes, somewhat reminiscent of the travellers you met before, fly around you and constrict your movements using brown lines. They lift you onto a cream-coloured boulder, which gallops away towards triangles and talking rectangles clustered around a fire. The fire: it is mesmerising. You stare at it intently, watching the history of the world unfold in its flames. 'He is far gone!' says a rectangle in a *sombrero*, but you ignore it, shouting 'Apollo, god of the Sun, grant me wisdom!' to its laughter. By nightfall the fire has told you all it knows and has reverted to its mundane form. Go to **80**.

Creature Appendix:

Bandit: MR six, armour one. Equipped with a *poniard*. Has a *scalp* you may cut off with a bladed weapon.

Bandit Archers: MR six, armour one. Equipped with a *very light bow*. Has a *scalp* you may cut off with a bladed weapon.

Bandit Horseman: MR 15, armour one. *Charge!* Equipped with a *common spear* and a *hostile horse*. Has a *scalp* you may cut off with a bladed weapon.

Battle-Wizard: 12 in all attributes except wizardry, which is 24. Knows all first level spells. Equipped with a *quarterstaff*.

Bronze Drake: MR 35, 25 armour. *Flying*.

Chompy: MR 40, five armour. *Rapid strike, regenerating, flammable*.

Commander: MR 28, 16 armour. *Duelist* (if equipped with his rapier). Thanks to the amulet he wears, if the commander takes damage from a spell that damage is also applied to his combat roll for that turn. Equipped with an *unerring rapier, plate armour, and a charged amulet*.

Crazed Wolf: MR 50.
Regenerating. Transforms into a wolf-like palace captain once killed, the *head* of which you may take.

Crown Prince: MR 18, 16 armour. Equipped with *gilded plate armour* and a *silver sword*.



Daltimdim: MR 50, 24 armour. Equipped with *mithril chainmail* and a *mithril axe*.

Driftwood Skeleton: MR 20, five armour. Equipped with a *driftwood buckler* and a *driftwood bludgeon*.

Elderly Nobleman. MR 24, six armour. *Bumbling*. Equipped with *leather armour* and a *short sword*, and carries 75 gold coins in his purse.

Elite Knight: MR 50, 21 armour. *Charge!* Equipped with a *heavy mace*, a *knight's shield*, and *banded mail*.

Farmer Boy: MR 30. Carries *grapes of wrath* on a passed level three luck check.

Farmer Joe: MR 20. *Bumbling*. Carries *grapes of wrath* on a passed level three luck check.

Feeble Whelp: MR 25, armour five. Each round it cries out in alarm: when it does so you must pass a level zero luck check or be attacked by a *mother dragon*. If killed, *pink dragon scales* can be scraped off his body if you possess a bladed weapon.

Flock of Magic Pukekos: MR 20. Can only be targeted by first passing a level one dexterity check (ranged attacks must pass a dexterity check one level higher than normal). Each magic pukeko corpse weighs 10 kgs.

Goblin: MR 12, eight charisma. *Coward*. Equipped with a *baton*.

Goblin Miner: Not really the fighting variety, although they do wear hard hats down there: MR 10, one armour, six charisma. *Coward*. Equipped with a *pickaxe*, a *miner's helmet*, and a *sack of rock*.

Gondwar: MR 40, 40 wizardry. Casts *glue you* on the first combat round, *little feets* on Daltimdim, Scruffles, and himself, then attacks you with his staff each round for four dice of

damage. Equipped with an *elven staff*.

Half-Orc. MR 27, five armour. *Relentless*. Equipped with *fetid animal hide*, three *scalps*, and a *falchion*.

Heavily Armoured Troll: MR 30, nine armour. *Regenerating*. Equipped with a *heavy mace* and *lamellar*. Approach at your own peril.

Hobbit Guard: MR 8, six armour. Equipped with *leather armour* and a *short sword*.

Horrorfang Spider. MR 18, 13 armour. If you're entangled in its web you fight with no adds and cannot cast spells. At the end of each round, you break free from its web if you pass a level one strength check. 1/ The spider injects you with paralysis-inducing poison, causing you to lose one speed and dexterity for the rest of the adventure.

Hunting Dog: MR 10. *Ferocious*.

Hydra: MR 140, 30 armour. *Rapid strike*, *regenerating*, *flammable*. Once killed take a level two luck check: if you pass it was a female and you may express milk from its udders; if you fail it was a male, and you get no milk.

Jackal: MR five. Whenever you take damage another *jackal* joins the battle.

Lightly Armoured Troll: MR 29, six armour. *Regenerating*. Equipped with a *heavy mace* and *leather armour*.

Knight: MR 32, eight armour. *Charge!* Equipped with a *common spear*, a *short sword*, and *ring-joined plate*.

Magic Snake: MR 35. The snake is poisonous, and deals piercing damage equal to the combat round number. You must

succeed at a level three dexterity check to grab hold of the serpent and fling it away so that you may fight it normally.

Man of the Line: MR 12, seven armour. Equipped with *leather armour*, a *steel helmet*, a *very light bow*, two *poniards*, a *sheaf of arrows*, a *day's worth of provisions*, two *candles*, and an *ineffectual healing potion*.

Middle-Aged Courtier: MR 20, seven armour, five wizardry. Equipped with a *dirk*, and carries 60 gold coins in his purse.

Minute Man: MR 25. Carries 30 gold coins in his purse.

Moa: MR 40. *Bumbling*. It's large legs provide five days' worth of *provisions* when killed.

Mother Dragon: MR 500, 100 armour. *Fire-breathing*, *flying*. If killed, *pink dragon scales* can be scraped off his body if you possess a bladed weapon.

Mysterious Wizard: He begins the fight by creating five duplicates of himself. During each round of combat roll one dice: you only hit him on a six, but once you hit him you know which image is the real one and do not need to make this roll any longer.

This mage is an MR 15 human with 25 wizardry and 10 intelligence. Each round he zaps you with a *take that you fiend!* spell if he has enough kremm and if your magical resistance isn't too high for you to be affected by it - if he can't cast the spell he rolls for combat normally.

Night-Raider: MR 11, four armour. Equipped with a *short sword*, a *buckler*, and a *steel helmet*.

N'liq'tro'xilliq'tri'fiqqliq: Once the lich realises your hostile intentions he casts *slush yuck* on the sand below you,

transforming it into quicksand. Make a level zero strength check and deduct a quarter of your carried weight from the roll to try and scramble out. If you fail you flounder fruitlessly in the quicksand: the struggle exhausts you, so lower your strength by one for the rest of the adventure. If your strength reaches zero you faint - you're sucked underneath and smothered alive.

If you do manage to scramble out of the quicksand (or if you simply cast *hard stuff* on it), you and your allies find yourself confronting one *driftwood skeleton* for each round you spent scrabbling for safety. The lich increases the wizardry resistance of all skeletons by 5 at the end of each round of combat.

If you manage to defeat the lich's minions, you'll have to face the lich directly. He has an MR of 60, 50 wizardry, 18 intelligence, 14 luck, and 18 charisma. He casts *oh go away!* before combat begins, casts *take that you fiend!* each combat round as a level two spell each turn if able (which only costs him six wizardry a pop), and casts a bolt of lightning that deals two dice of piercing damage if not. He is equipped with *The Lich's Circlet*, *The Lich's Shroud*, and *The Lich's Staff*.

Ogre: MR 20, three armour. *Ferocious*. Equipped with *fetid animal hide*.

Old Pink Dragon: MR 200, 30 armour. *Fire-breathing, flying*. If killed, *pink dragon scales* can be scraped off his body if you possess a bladed weapon.

Paranoid-Schizophrenic: MR 50. *Bumbling*. Fights with a *laser pistol*. Because he flies around using his *green boots* you can only hit him in close combat with a passed level one dexterity check. Wears a *hat of the idiot savant* on his head.

Private One: MR 14, armour six. Equipped with *leather armour*.

Private Two: MR 12. *Duelist.*

Private Three: MR 22, armour one. Equipped with a *steel helmet.*

Private Four: MR 18. *Duelist, charge!*

Private Five: MR 26. *Bumbling.*

Private Six: MR 13. *Rapid Strike.*

Private Seven: MR 20, armour six. Equipped with *leather armour.*

Sand Golem: MR 20, five dice of wizardry, two armour. For your combat turn you may try to magically overpower its will: if you pass a level three wizardry check it becomes your ally until it's destroyed; if you fail you take the full brunt of its attack that round. Collapses into two *sacks of sand* when destroyed, which you may collect if you possess *sacks*. The golem's owner can spend wizardry enchanting a *sack of sand* and have the golem roll around in it the next turn to restore MR to the golem equal to the wizardry spent.

Scruffles: MR 30, six armour. *Rapid Strike.* If you take damage from *Scruffles* his dagger poisons you, halving your strength, dexterity, and speed for the rest of the battle (and if this means you can't use all of your equipment, all the better!) Equipped with *leather armour*, a *poisoned poniard*, and a *+6 poniard*.

Serendipidar the Mountebank: MR 28, eight armour, 30 wizardry, 15 intelligence. Casts *shrug it off* before the duel, then casts *take that you fiend!* each round as a level one spell. Fights with a *poniard* if his *take that you fiend!* spell would be blocked by your magic resistance or if he runs out of wizardry.

Sergeant: MR 20, armour 14. *Duelist*. Equipped with an *adamantine broadsword*, *mithril chainmail*, and a *double-bladed shield*.

The Black Cat Witch: 100 constitution, 100 wizardry, 20 intelligence, 35 charisma. Her magical defences are strong: she is permanently enchanted with the spell *shrug it off*. Casts *rock-a-bye* each round if able, and transforms into a black cat and scrams if not (each combat round is two minutes long).

Thin Man: MR 15, armour six. *Duelist*. Equipped with *leather armour*.

Tribal Warrior: MR 17. Has a *ghost gate tattoo* etched on his heart, which he gets the benefit of in combat. Equipped with a *common spear*, and carries a *scalp*.

Troll: MR 28. *Regenerating*. Equipped with either a rolling pin large enough to be used as a *bludgeon*, or a *pickaxe*.

Vampire Bat: MR 25. *Vampiric*.

Veteran Captain: MR 35. *Duelist*. Equipped with a *rapier*.

Wolf: MR five. *Flammable*.

Item Appendix:

Adamantine Broad Sword: 5+4. Requires 15 strength and 10 dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 280 gold coins.

Banded Mail: Provides 13 armour. Requires 11 strength to use. Lowers the wearer's dexterity by three. Weighs 25 kgs. Worth 400 gold coins.

Baton: 2+0. Requires two strength and one dexterity to use. Worth 10 gold coins.

Blood-stained Dress: Should come out in the wash. Weighs five kgs. Worth 50 gold coins.

Budgeon: 3+0. Requires five strength and two dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 15 gold coins.

Book of Voluminous Law: A thick tome that sends anyone who reads it to sleep. Not a magical item. Weighs five kgs. Worth 50 gold coins.

Brass Knuckles: 1+3. Requires three strength and six dexterity to use. Worth 45 gold coins.

Broad Sword: 3+4. Requires 15 strength and 10 dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 70 gold coins.

Buckler: Three armour. Requires four strength to wear. Weighs five kgs. Worth 10 coins.

Candle: Emits light. Worth five gold coins each.

Caltrops: 1+1. Requires three dexterity to use. When used as an area of effect weapon, reduces the foe's speed and dexterity by the number of caltrops thrown. Worth one gold coin each.

Casket: Filled with glass necklaces. Weighs 15 kgs. Worth 50 gold coins.

Chainmail: Provides 12 armour. Requires 11 strength to use. Lowers the wearer's dexterity by three. Weighs 25 kgs. Worth 330 gold coins.

Charged Amulet: If the wearer of this amulet takes damage from a spell, the damage taken is added to his combat roll for that round. Requires eight wizardry to use. Worth 1000 gold

coins.

Chisel: Worth five gold coins.

Clay Grenade: Deals two dice of damage to all beings, friend and foe, in a two metre radius. Requires eight strength and dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worthless.

Cocoa Leaves: Chewing two kgs of these leaves temporarily fills you with energy, allowing you to walk through the night without needing to rest. The cost of chewing these leaves is high in the long run however: your speed and constitution will be lowered by one each of the rest of the adventure. Each kilogram of leaves is worth five gold pieces.

Common Spear: 3+1. Requires eight strength and dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 22 gold coins.

Crossbow: 5+0. Requires 15 strength and 10 dexterity to use. Weighs 10 kgs. Worth 250 gold coins.

Crown of the Commander: Gives the wearer charisma equal to their level. The commander's allies and summons also have +50% MR/attributes. Requires 10 wizardry to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 1000 gold coins.

Curare: A poison good for one combat. If a weapon is doused in the venom, doubles any damage it deals if the wielder wins a combat round and pierces his foe's armour (spite damage is also doubled). Worth 50 gold pieces.

Deluxe Traveller's Backpack: Waterproof, fireproof, resistant to wear and tear, and uses a system of straps and buckles to distribute its weight all over your body, allowing you to carry 10 kgs more weight. Worth 500 gold coins.

Double-bladed Shield: 4+0. Provides two armour. Requires

eight strength and 14 dexterity to use. Weighs 10 kgs. Worth 130 gold coins.

Down Sleeping Bag: Whenever you roll on the *rest appendix* you may raise or lower the roll by one if you wish. Weighs virtually nothing. Worth 200 gold coins.

Dragonsbane: A dragon hurt by a weapon covered in this plant will be instantly killed. Even spite damage will be enough to apply the poison. Lasts for the rest of the adventure.

Dragonsblood: A dragon hurt by a weapon covered in this plant will be healed instead. Even spite damage will be enough to apply the poison. Lasts for the rest of the adventure.

Driftwood Buckler: Four armour, makes the user *flammable*. The user can use the buckler as a boogieboard to swim across water unharmed for long stretches of time, such as sea-snake filled lakes or long rivers. Requires five strength to use. Weighs five kgs. Worthless.

Earring of Hearing: Emits a simple sound of your choice: a bird cry, the rumble of an approaching avalanche - almost anything except speech. Requires three wizardry to use. Worth 200 gold coins.

Elven Staff: 2+0. Allows you to cast level one elvish spells, even if you're not elvish. Requires two strength, eight dexterity, and 15 wizardry to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 1000 gold coins.

Enchanted Body Paint: Allows the user to disguise himself as any similarly shaped humanoid he's ever seen. Good for five uses. Worth 400 gold coins.

Envelope Knife of the Sky Gods: 20+0. Requires 40 strength and 20 dexterity to use. Weighs 50 kgs. Worth 5,000 gold

coins.

Ethereal Shield: Although this highly reflective tower shield provides no armour, it does provide 10 magical resistance and weighs nothing. Requires five wizardry to use. Worth 300 gold coins.

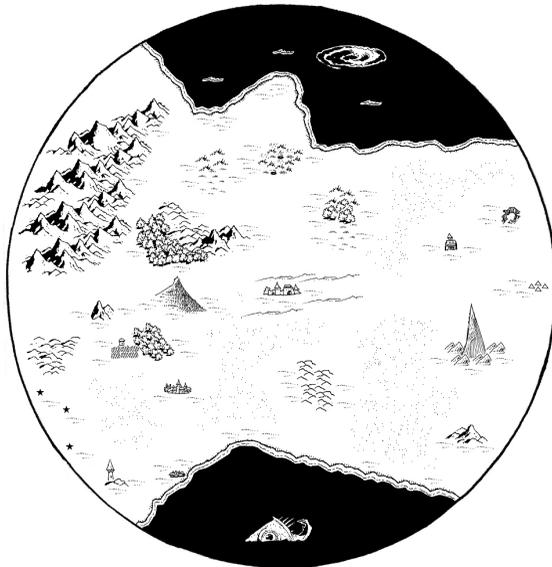
Everlasting Blowtorch: This enchanted blowtorch continuously spurts out an inch long flame. The end is enclosed in a metal orb for safety reasons. When the orb is removed the blowtorch can be used as a *candle* in a pinch. Worth 500 gold coins.

Excessively Course Sandpaper: By vigorously rubbing yourself with this sandpaper you can remove any tattoo on your body, although you will take two piercing damage in the process. Worth 100 gold coins.

Falchion: 4+4. Requires 12 strength and 13 dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 75 gold coins.

Fine Sketch: A detailed sketch of the area around the exceptionally tall mountain. Worthless.

Fetid Animal Hide: Three armour. Requires eight strength and two dexterity to use. Weights 10 kgs. Worth 20 gold coins.



Fish Gate Tattoo: Transforms the one marked by the tattoo into an aquatic creature for any length of time when activated. The wearer may transform into any creature at or below the wearer's level:

Level one - an MR five goldfish (freshwater).

Level two - an MR 10 lantern fish able to cast *will-o-wisp* (saltwater).

Level three - an almost invisible MR two whitebait (freshwater).

Level four - an MR 20, 10 armour spider crab (freshwater and land).

Level five - an MR 50 swordfish with the *charge!* talent (saltwater).

Level six - an MR 100 great white shark with the *ferocious* talent (saltwater).

Level seven and above - an MR 150 mystical jellyfish with the *awe* and *rapid strike* talents (freshwater and saltwater).

The cost of being etched with this tattoo is that the wearer can no longer cast fire spells. Tattoos cannot be removed.

Fisslewort: When added to a foodstuff, or suspended in a liquid (such as milk), this magical alpine herb stops it going off. When taken out of a foodstuff or liquid the ageing process will continue. Worth 10 gold coins.

Flashbang Grenades: Deals five dice of damage to each being, friend or foe, in a five metre diameter. All beings within a 50 metre diameter, except for yourself, are also blinded for one turn if they fail a level two speed check, rendering them unable to fight for one combat round. Requires eight strength and dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 200 gold coins.

Ghost Gate Tattoo: The bearer of this tattoo is healed by spite damage, but at the cost of no longer being able to recover lost constitution when resting. Tattoos cannot be removed.

Gilded Plate Armour: Provides 16 armour. Requires 10 strength to use. Gives the wearer minus three dexterity. Weighs 30 kgs. Worth 800 gold coins.

Gold Nugget: Worth 10 gold coins.

Gold Panning Equipment: Weighs 10 kgs. Worth 50 gold coins (that's what we call an investment).

Grapes of Wrath: Fifteen grapes are on this bunch, which can each be spat at a foe or hard surface as if it were a *boom bomb*. Each grape can also be eaten to violently purge your body of any toxins within it, although you will take 10 piercing damage if you do so. Worth 500 gold coins.

Great Helm: Provides three armour. Requires three strength to use. Lowers the wearer's dexterity by one. Weighs five kgs. Worth 20 gold pieces.

Green Boots: Allows the wearer to cast *fly me* on himself. Requires 16 wizardry to power. Worth 1200 gold coins.

Green Rocks: Who knows what they're for. Weighs five kgs. Worthless.

Hat of the Idiot Savant: Lowers the wearer's charisma by five, but raises the wearer's intelligence by the same amount. Requires five wizardry to use. Worth 250 gold coins.

Head: The head of a wolf-like palace captain. Weighs five kgs.

Heavy Mace: 5+2. Requires 17 strength and three dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 120 gold coins.

Hostile Horse: If you pass a level two charisma check you may tame and ride it. Riding it will allow you to travel along two

roads each day (just ignore the need to rest at the first location you go to each day). Worth 250 gold coins if tamed.

Ineffectual Healing Potion: Restores a measly one constitution. Worth 10 gold coins.

Knight's Shield: Provides five armour. Requires 10 strength and 10 dexterity to use. Weighs 10 kgs. Worth 70 gold coins.

Lamellar: Provides nine armour. Requires nine strength to use. Lowers the wearers dexterity by two when worn. Weighs 30 kgs. Worth 300 gold coins.

Lance: 7+0. Two handed. Requires 18 strength and 12 dexterity to use. Weighs 10 kgs. Worth 170 gold coins.

Laser Pistol: 0+0. Deals no damage if you win a round of combat. Deals double spite damage. Each six you roll as spite damage also reduces the target's armour by one (as it melts a hole through it). Requires eight dexterity to use. Worth 10 gold coins.

Leather Armour: Provides six armour. Requires two strength to wear. Weighs five kgs. Worth 50 gold coins.

Magical Paintbrush: Gives the holder a painting talent when used (or doubles their painting talent if they have one). Worth 300 gold coins.

Mask of Trepidation: Fills all who see the mask with unease. When fighting opponents with a combined MR value less than your charisma, they have the *coward* talent. Requires 10 wizardry to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 2,500 gold coins.

Masterpiece: By studying this work you figure out how to paint with kremm and create animated still-lives. Give yourself the talent of being able to create 'hypnotic animated painting'.

Weights 15 kgs. Worth 2500 gold coins.

Medium Longbow: 4+3. Requires 15 strength and dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 100 gold coins.

Miner's Helmet: Provides one armour to provide the wearer against falling rocks. Also contains a *candle* holder to free the wearer's hands up. Weighs five kgs. Worth 50 gold coins.

Mithril Armour: Has no negative dexterity modifier and weighs nothing. Worth double its non-mithril equivalent.

Mithril Axe: 6+0. Requires 13 strength and nine dexterity to use. Weighs nothing. Worth 150 gold coins.

Mithril Broad Sword: 4+4. Requires 15 strength and 10 dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 140 gold coins.

Mithril Double Bladed Broad Axe: 7+3. Two handed. Requires 21 strength and 10 dexterity to use. Weighs nothing. Worth 280 gold coins.

Mithril Heavy Mace: 6+2. Requires 17 strength and three dexterity to use. Weighs nothing. Worth 240 gold coins.

Mithril Weapons: Rolls one extra dice and weighs nothing. Worth double its non-mithril equivalent.

Monkey Staff: A magic staff that can shrink down to any size as small as a matchstick or expand to any size as large as yourself. Requires two strength, five wizardry, and eight dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 300 gold coins.

Octopus Hat: 0+1. Also supplies an unlimited supply of ink. Equal to one day's worth of *provisions* when roasted. Weighs five kgs. Worth 50 gold coins.

Ogre Jokes: The Definitive Anthology: Jokes by ogres for ogres. The first page reads:

'Q: Why did the ogre cross the road? A: To get to the other side.'

'Q: Why did the troll cross the road? A: To get to the other side.'

'Q: Why did the goblin cross the road? A: To get to the other side.'

'Q: Why did the dwarf cross the road? A: To get to the other side.'

'Q: Why did the elf cross the road? A: To get to the other side.'

'Q: Why did the half-elf cross the road? A: To get to the other side.'

It's quality stuff, and would easily sell for 2 gold coins. Weighs 10 gjs - there's a lot of great jokes in it.

Painting: Weighs five kgs. Worth 500 gold coins.

Pair of Binoculars: Allows you to see further than you otherwise could. Worth 100 gold coins.

Paragon Potion: Transforms the drinker into a paragon for one combat. Worth 200 gold coins.

Pickaxe: 3+0. Two handed. Requires 10 strength and five dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 10 gold coins.

Pick-Me-Up Potion: Restores all of your attributes to their maximum level, including constitution. Worth 300 gold coins.

Plate Armour: Provides 16 armour. Requires 10 strength to use. Gives the wearer minus three dexterity. Weighs 30 kgs. Worth 500 gold coins.

Pogo Boots: Allows the wearer of these boots to jump up to

one metre for each point of strength they have. Requires five dexterity to use. Worth 500 gold coins.

Poisoned Poniard: 2+0. If you damage an opponent with this poniard, his strength, dexterity, and speed will be halved for the rest of the battle. Requires one strength to use, three dexterity to use in melee, and 14 dexterity to throw. Worth 200 gold coins.

+6 Poniard: 2+6. Requires one strength and six wizardry to use, three dexterity to use in melee, and 14 dexterity to throw. Worth 100 gold coins.

Poniard: 2+0. Requires one strength to use, three dexterity to use in melee, and 14 dexterity to throw. Worth 10 gold coins.

Potion of Peppiness: Restores all of your attributes to their maximum level except constitution. Worth 50 gold coins.

Protagonist Potion: Until you rest this potion, once consumed, allows you to re-roll the first failed check you make in each section you visit. Worth 1000 gold coins.

Provisions: Contains enough food and drink for one day. Weighs five kgs. Worth five gold coins.

Quarterstaff: 2+0. Requires two strength and eight dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 10 gold coins.

Rapier: 3+4. Requires 10 strength and 14 dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 80 gold coins.

Ring-joined Plate: Provides eight armour. Requires eight strength to use. Gives the wearer minus two dexterity. Weighs 25 kgs. Worth 280 gold coins.

Ring of Blasting: Allows the wearer to cast *take that you fiend!*

as a level one spell, even if they're a warrior.
Requires 12 wizardry to use. Worth 1000 gold coins.



Rough Sketch: A rough sketch of the area around the exceptionally tall mountain. Worthless.

Sacks: Can be used to carry about a body's worth of material. Or a body, if necessary. Hopefully not your own. Worthless.

Sack of Sand: You'll need a *sack* to carry a sack's worth of sand in. Weighs 20 kgs. Perhaps it's of worth to somebody?

Scalp: Weighs one kg.

Sheaf of 24 Arrows: Contains 24 arrows. Worth 40 gold coins.

Sheaf of Six Homing Arrows: When firing these arrows you take a level one wizardry check instead of a dexterity check to hit your target. Worth 150 gold coins.

Short Sword: 3+0. Requires seven strength and three dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 35 gold coins.

Silk Handkerchief: Worth 100 gold coins.

Silver Easel: Worth 200 gold coins.

Silver Scimitar: 4+0. Requires 10 strength and 11 dexterity to



use. Deals triple damage to werewolves. Weighs five kgs. Worth 200 gold coins.

Silver Sword: 3+5. Requires nine strength and four dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 150 gold coins.

Sinuous Whip: 2+0. Although difficult to master, this whip offers many possibilities to those who can effectively use it. Each combat turn the user can do one of the following:

- Attack;
- Crack the whip in front of one opponent, giving them the *coward* talent for the rest of the battle;
- Constrict one opponent with the whip on a passed dexterity check equal to the level of the foe, immobilising them for the round.

Requires five strength and 18 dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 200 gold coins.

Six League Boots: As long as you are not burdened with any carried weight these boots allow you to sprint a mile a minute. Running to a location using these boots will mean that you do not need to rest upon arrival. Requires six wizardry to use. Worth 1000 gold coins.

Sleeping Bag: Whenever you roll on the *rest appendix* you may raise or lower the roll by one if you wish. Weighs five kgs. Worth 100 gold coins.

Spider Venom: A poison which causes severe paralysis. Damage rolled by the victim is halved for five combat rounds; if the victim is hit again, he is paralysed for five combat rounds. Worth 150 gold coins.

Soul Armour: Provides 20 armour, but lowers the wearer's constitution by five. Requires 10 wizardry to use. Worth 300 gold coins.

Steel Helmet: Provides one armour. Requires one strength to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 25 gold coins.

Stick: 0-5. Requires three strength and dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worthless.

Strangling Cord: 1+0. Requires eight strength and fourteen dexterity to use. Worth five gold coins.

Sun Gate Tattoo: Whenever the one marked by this tattoo is standing in sunlight his wizardry is depleted and his maximum wizardry is added to his combat rolls. If the wearer steps out of sunlight his wizardry begins to replenish as normal. Tattoos cannot be removed.

Taozen's Hand-Wraps: Taozen was a naughty monk who fought instead of reciting the sutras, and as a result he was reincarnated as a pair of hand-wraps. His loss is your gain! While these strips of cloth are worn, and your hands remain empty, your speed is increased by your dexterity. What's more, your total speed is added to your combat rolls as adds and to your armour value as hits. You deflect any small projectiles that would hit you on a successful speed check, the level of which is equal to the number of projectiles whistling your way, and if you must take any speed or dexterity check using your hands you take the check at two levels lower than you otherwise would. Requires 50 dexterity to use. Worth 10,000 gold coins.

Tent: Whenever you roll on the *rest appendix* you may raise or lower the roll by one if you wish. Weighs five kgs. Worth 100 gold coins.

The Lich's Circlet: All of the circlet's attributes are 10, which can be increased if you spend APs on the item. The circlet can potentially cast *kramm kremm*, *boulderdash*, *hobby horse*, *ditto*, *I'm a hero too*, and *a wizard's intuition* using its own

attributes.

Requires wizardry to use equal to the circlet's wizardry. Worth 5,000 gold coins.

The Lich's Shroud: Has a constitution of 10, which can be increased if you spend APs on the item. The shroud is able to soak up damage for you, and resews itself anew each night. If the shroud is ever reduced to 0 constitution it's destroyed. Requires wizardry to use equal to the shroud's constitution. Worth 5,000 gold coins.

The Lich's Staff: All spells you cast that can be powered up are automatically powered up one level free of charge. The ghost that possess this staff requires a portion of your spirit to maintain it's power though: all APs rewarded for casting spells, defeating foes, and making saving rolls go to the staff as long as it remains in your possession. APs specifically given to your character by a Tunnel Master or solo adventure are yours, however. Requires two strength and eight dexterity to use, and requires wizardry to use equal to your maximum spell casting level. Weighs five kgs. Worth 5,000 gold coins.

The Witch's Broom: Allows the rider to cast *fly me* if they can cast magic but don't know the spell. Requires 10 wizardry to use. Worth 1,000 gold coins.

The Witch's Robes: These robes are enchanted to reflect magic, endowing the wearer with a permanent *shrug it off* spell. Requires 30 wizardry to use. Worth 5,000 gold coins.

Toolkit: Contains a hammer, 50 nails, a hacksaw, a chisel, pliers, 50m string measure, safety goggles, a pencil, leather gloves, a spirit level, and a dust mask. Weighs 10 kgs. Worth 400 gold coins.

Travel Pass: Allows the holder of this pass to make use of

military carriages throughout the realm. Worth 500 gold coins.

Tremblestone: This small pebble passively records all noise and plays whatever you want back when held in your hand. Worth 200 gold coins.

Tumeric: This rare yellowish spice can be used to replace one of the three ingredients for the paint. Worth 1,000 gold coins.

Unerring Rapier: 3+4. Requires 10 strength, 14 dexterity, and five wizardry to use. Deals double spite damage. Weighs five kgs. Worth 500 gold coins.

Uzi's Bow: 0+0. Uzi's infamous bow uses a complex system of strings to easily allow the user to fire two arrows at once, at some cost in power. Requires 20 strength and 30 dexterity to use. Worth 3,000 gold coins.

Very Light Bow: 2+0. Requires nine strength and 15 dexterity to use. Worth 50 gold coins each.

Weighted Net: Breaking out can only be accomplished with a passed level one strength check. Requires eight strength and 12 dexterity to use. Weighs five kgs. Worth 30 gold coins.

Wink-Wing Arrows: The firer of this arrow switches places with this arrow upon impact. Can only be used once, even if retrieved. Worth 300 gold coins each.

Rest Appendix:

Roll four dice to determine what happens, then consult the chart below. Numbers next to a (zzz) sign mean you rest and restore all of your lost attributes. You must consume a day's worth of *provisions* while you attempt to rest if you have any, whether you want to or not, and if you do so you restore any lost attributes in the process (unless your roll doesn't have the

(zzz) sign next to it). When staying in an inn, or as someone's guest, you do not need to consume *provisions* as food is presumably provided (and you still recover lost attributes). Note that during the course of the adventure some of your attributes may be lowered until the adventure has finished - these will not be restored when resting.

4: The damp cold makes you shiver throughout the night. Not only do you get no rest but you've developed severe pneumonia. Halve your strength and constitution for the rest of the adventure.

5 (zzz): The biting cold gives you frostbite during the night. Not only do you get no rest but a toe and finger seem to have fallen off, permanently lowering your speed and dexterity by one each.

6 (zzz): You dream that you are carried, bound and gagged, deep into a jungle by cannibals. In the dream you are dumped in a cauldron and left to stew in your own juices over a fire. Go to **31**.

7 (zzz): You wake up in the morning with a terrible case of acne. For the rest of the adventure your charisma is halved.

8 (pass = no zzz; fail = zzz): Make a level one speed check. If you pass, you wake up and fight two *bandits*. If you fail, your most valuable item is stolen while you sleep.

9: You suddenly wake up to find fire ants crawling up your nose. Take one dice of piercing damage.

10: You spend the night without incident but you're unable to sleep. You're cold, you're miserable, you're wet from the rain, and you swear you can hear demons cackling close-by (or was that an owl?) Because you don't rest properly you don't regain any lost constitution or wizardry.

11: You spend the night without incident but you're unable to sleep. You're cold, you're miserable, you're wet from the rain, and you swear you can hear demons cackling close-by (or was that an owl?) Because you don't rest properly you don't regain any lost constitution or wizardry.

12 (zzz): You sleep soundly.

13 (zzz): You sleep soundly.

14 (zzz): You could swear your dream is a premonition of the future. Until the next time you rest you may read all of the section options before choosing which one you will take.

15 (zzz): You sleep soundly.

16 (zzz): You sleep soundly.

17: You spend the night without incident but you're unable to sleep. You're cold, you're miserable, you're wet from the rain, and you swear you can hear demons cackling close-by (or was that an owl?) Because you don't rest properly you don't regain any lost constitution or wizardry.

18: You spend the night without incident but you're unable to sleep. You're cold, you're miserable, you're wet from the rain, and you swear you can hear demons cackling close-by (or was that an owl?) Because you don't rest properly you don't regain any lost constitution or wizardry.

19: Take a level one speed check. If you fail, you take the full attack of a *goblin* while you sleep; if you pass, you wake as the *goblin* approaches and fight it as normal.

20: Take a level one wizardry check. If you pass, you fly over farms, mountains, marshes, beaches, towns, and forts during

your dream and wake up as you land on a particularly tall mountain. Permanently gain one wizardry and go to **27**.

If you fail, you fly over farms, mountains, marshes, beaches, towns, and forts during your dream and wake up as you crash into a particularly tall mountain. Permanently gain one wizardry, take four dice of damage, and go to **27**.

21: Roll one dice. You wake up to this many *wolves* surrounding you.

22 (zzz): You spar with a malevolent spirit in your dream. Take a level two wizardry check. If you pass you gain one wizardry permanently. If you fail you have no wizardry for the rest of this adventure.

23: You wake up in the clutches of a dragon swooping through the air. You're deposited in its nest at **22**.

24: You wake up in a severe blizzard. For the rest of this adventure it takes two days to travel to a new location instead of one unless you use a carriage (the roads are kept clean thanks to the liberal application of salt). Whenever you walk along a road you must rest halfway along it out in the open (and consult this appendix).

Spell Appendix:

Level One:

Cry Me a River (8): Makes a foe with less charisma than yourself cry a river over one round. The size and maximum velocity of the river depends on what level the spell is cast at: if cast at level one the foe will cry you a trickle, but if cast at level 10 it will be a raging river many kilometres long.

Detect Magic (1): Detects the presence of magic being used or

stored by objects (not humans).

Handy Man (5): Fixes any non-magical item no bigger than yourself.

It's Elementary (4): Caster must specify fire (small flame), water (splash), ice (icy gust), earth (pebble) or wind (puff of air). Each is capable of one point of damage depending on use.

Knock Knock (3): Unlocks most mechanical locks, or magical locks of same or lower level.

Know Your Foe (5): Determine MR or attribute total of any one target.

Kramm Kremm (3): Reduce the cost of all spells you cast for one combat by the level this spell is cast at.

Lock Tight (3): Creates a level one lock that holds a door tight for ten minutes.

Oh Go Away (5): Target(s) flee if their individual MR is less than the caster's intelligence, luck, and charisma combined (rated foes flee if their intelligence, luck, and charisma is less than the caster's)

If the spell fails for any reason the target concentrates its attack exclusively on the caster for one combat turn.

Oh There It Is (4): Causes all invisible items, doors, or beings



to glow with a soft purple radiance.

Will-o-Wisp (2): Summons a tiny light elemental that emits up to one candlepower of cool blue light per caster's level. Lasts 10 minutes.

Zapp! (2): Deals armour piercing damage to a creature wearing metal armour equal to its armour rating. Power up: multiply the damage done by the level the spell is cast at.

Level Two:

Boulderdash (12): You magically harden your body before ramming your opponent (if you wish). For one combat round add your constitution to your armour rating and combat roll. Power up: double the duration that the protective armour lasts for.

Level Three:

Hobby Horse (10): Your staff is transformed into a horse for minutes equal to your constitution. Power up: double the duration of this spell.

Level Four:

Ditto (20): Gain one of the target's talents or abilities for up to an hour. Power up: double the length of time you have this ability for.

Mirror Image (30): Once cast, your opponents need to roll a dice whenever they attempt to attack or target you. They only hit you if they roll a six. Once they roll a six the spell ends. Opponents with higher wizardry than yourself easily perceive the illusion. Lasts until combat ends (or the opponent successfully strikes you). Note that area of effect attacks, such as *blasting power* or the talent *fire breath*, will automatically

strike you and end the spell.

Level Five:

I'm a Hero Too (30): Transforms you into a paragon for one battle.

Level Six:

A Wizard's Intuition (x): Allows the caster to read one word of one of the section options without choosing it for each wizardry spent on this spell.

Talent Appendix:

The number in each bracket is how many adventure points the talent costs in addition to taking up a talent slot. Talents worth a negative number of adventure points give APs instead. Not all talents can be bought in this list.

Awe (5,000): Animals will not voluntarily attack the being. Creatures of near-human intelligence and above can only attack the being if they first pass a charisma check equal to the being's level. Can be bought.

Bumblng (-3,000): The being gets no combat adds. Can be bought.

Charge! (2,000): The being doubles its adds during the first round of combat. Can be bought.

Coward (-3,000): Whenever the being loses a round of combat and takes damage it takes a charisma check, the level of which is equal to all but the last digit of its opponents' adds (so zero if their opponents' adds are between zero and nine, one if their opponents' adds are between 10 and 19, and so on). If the being fails the check it flees to the paragraph it was at previously (and is cut down if it can't). Monsters simply run

away. Can be bought.

Duelist (2,000): If the being would be damaged in melee combat by a single opponent, the being may take a level one dexterity check, deducting the damage it would receive from the roll for the check (if the being would receive four damage for instance, four damage would be deducted from the being's dexterity roll). If the being passes the check, he parries the blow. Can be bought.

Ferocious (4,000): If the being wins a round of combat it deals double combat damage. Can be bought.

Fire-breathing (5,000): 5/ Fire Breath - You may deal damage to each enemy equal to your wizardry instead of through your combat roll. Cannot be bought.

Flammable (-1,000): The being takes double damage from fire. Cannot be bought.

Flying (3,000): The being can fly. Cannot be bought.

Rapid Strike (10,000): The being may take two actions during each round of combat. The being may cast two spells for example, make two combat rolls (and add the rolls together), drink a potion and fire a bow... can be bought.

Regenerating (4,000): The being regenerates one MR at the end of each round for each dice it rolled. Cannot be bought.

Relentless (2,000): The being doesn't lose dice or adds as it loses MR. Cannot be bought.

Vampiric (6,000): Whenever the being deals damage to another being it recovers that much health. Cannot be bought.

Character Sheets:

T&T Character Sheet One

Name: Blendan (pre-set/sample)

Type: Wizard

Level: One

Kindred: Human

Carried Weight: 60kgs

Date: 03/05

Current location:

You:

Strength: 8

Constitution: 11 (11)

Dexterity: 13

Speed: 11

Intelligence: 15

Wizardry: 17 (17)

Luck: 12

Charisma: 10

Weapon(s):

Personal Adds: 0

Your attack this round: (+)

Armour:

Total armour:

Sand Golem (Ally):

Maximum MR:

Current MR:

Armour:

Wizardry:

Attack this round:

Foe One:

Strength:

Constitution: ()

Dexterity:

Speed:

Intelligence:

Wizardry: ()

Luck:

Charisma:

Personal adds:

Enemy attack this round: 0

Enemy armour: 0

Enemy MR: 0

Foe Two:

Strength:

Constitution: ()

Dexterity:

Speed:

Intelligence:

Wizardry: ():

Luck:

Charisma:

Personal adds:

Enemy attack this round: 0

Enemy armour: 0

Enemy MR: 0

Foe Three:

Strength:

Constitution: ()

Dexterity:

Speed:

Intelligence:

Wizardry: ()

Luck:
Charisma:
Personal adds:
Enemy attack this round: 0
Enemy armour: 0
Enemy MR: 0

Foe Four:
Strength:
Constitution: ()
Dexterity:
Speed:
Intelligence:
Wizardry: ()
Luck:
Charisma:
Personal adds:
Enemy attack this round: 0
Enemy armour: 0
Enemy MR: 0

Your talents:

Your spells:

Your equipment:

Your notes:

Your Adventure Points:

T&T Character Sheet Two

Name:

Type:

Level:

Kindred:

Carried Weight:

Date:

Current location:

You:

Strength:

Constitution: ()

Dexterity:

Speed:

Intelligence:

Wizardry: ()

Luck:
Charisma:

Weapon(s):
Personal adds:
Your attack this round: (+)

Armour:
Total armour:

Sand Golem (Ally):

Maximum MR:
Current MR:
Armour:
Wizardry:
Attack this round:

Foe One:

Strength:
Constitution: ()
Dexterity:
Speed:
Intelligence:
Wizardry: ()
Luck:
Charisma:
Personal adds:
Enemy attack this round: 0
Enemy armour: 0
Enemy MR: 0

Foe Two:

Strength:
Constitution: ()
Dexterity:
Speed:
Intelligence:

Wizardry: ():
Luck:
Charisma:
Personal adds:
Enemy attack this round: 0
Enemy armour: 0
Enemy MR: 0

Foe Three:
Strength:
Constitution: ()
Dexterity:
Speed:
Intelligence:
Wizardry: ()
Luck:
Charisma:
Personal adds:
Enemy attack this round: 0
Enemy armour: 0
Enemy MR: 0

Foe Four:
Strength:
Constitution: ()
Dexterity:
Speed:
Intelligence:
Wizardry: ()
Luck:
Charisma:
Personal adds:
Enemy attack this round: 0
Enemy armour: 0
Enemy MR: 0

Your talents:

Your spells:

Your equipment:

Your notes:

Your Adventure Points:

T&T Character Sheet Three

Name:

Type:
Level:
Kindred:
Carried Weight:
Date:

Current location:

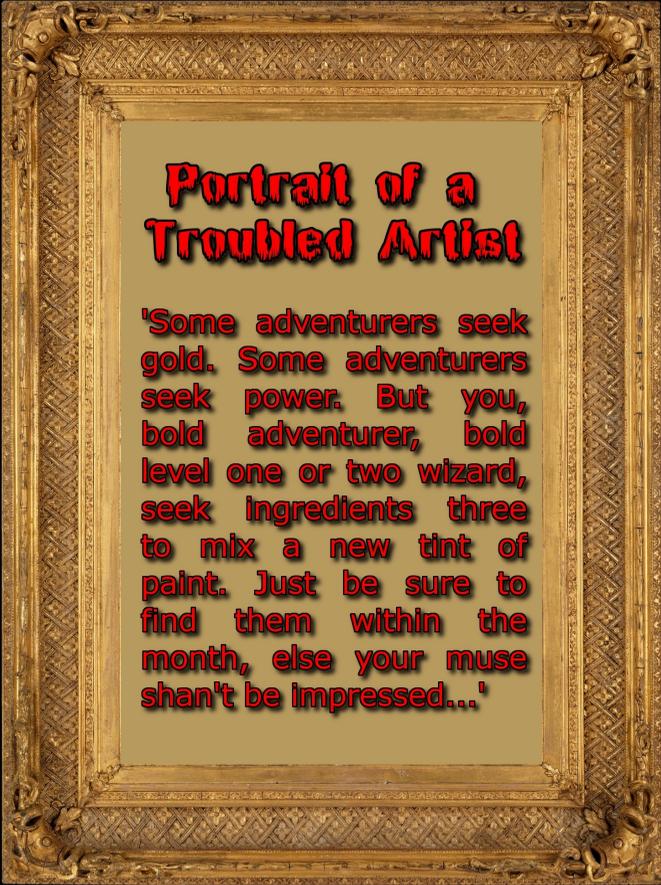
You:
Strength:
Constitution: ()
Dexterity:
Speed:
Intelligence:
Wizardry: ()
Luck:
Charisma:

Weapon(s):
Personal adds:
Your attack this round: (+)

Armour:
Total armour:

Sand Golem (Ally):
Maximum MR:
Current MR:
Armour:
Wizardry:
Attack this round:

Foe One:
Strength:
Constitution: ()
Dexterity:
Speed:



Portrait of a Troubled Artist

'Some adventurers seek gold. Some adventurers seek power. But you, bold adventurer, bold level one or two wizard, seek ingredients three to mix a new tint of paint. Just be sure to find them within the month, else your muse shan't be impressed...'

Intelligence:
Wizardry: ()
Luck:
Charisma:
Personal adds:
Enemy attack this round: 0
Enemy armour: 0
Enemy MR: 0

Foe Two:
Strength:
Constitution: ()
Dexterity:
Speed:
Intelligence:
Wizardry: ():
Luck:
Charisma:
Personal adds:
Enemy attack this round: 0
Enemy armour: 0
Enemy MR: 0

Foe Three:
Strength:
Constitution: ()
Dexterity:
Speed:
Intelligence:
Wizardry: ()
Luck:
Charisma:
Personal adds:
Enemy attack this round: 0
Enemy armour: 0
Enemy MR: 0

Foe Four:

Strength:

Constitution: ()

Dexterity:

Speed:

Intelligence:

Wizardry: ()

Luck:

Charisma:

Personal adds:

Enemy attack this round: 0

Enemy armour: 0

Enemy MR: 0

Your talents:

Your spells:

Your equipment:

Your notes:

Your Adventure Points:

T&T Character Sheet Four

Name:

Type:

Level:

Kindred:

Carried Weight:

Date:

Current location:

You:

Strength:

Constitution: ()

Dexterity:

Speed:

Intelligence:

Wizardry: ()

Luck:

Charisma:

Weapon(s):

Personal adds:

Your attack this round: (+)

Armour:
Total armour:

Sand Golem (Ally):

Maximum MR:
Current MR:
Armour:
Wizardry:
Attack this round:

Foe One:

Strength:
Constitution: ()
Dexterity:
Speed:
Intelligence:
Wizardry: ()
Luck:
Charisma:
Personal adds:
Enemy attack this round: 0
Enemy armour: 0
Enemy MR: 0

Foe Two:

Strength:
Constitution: ()
Dexterity:
Speed:
Intelligence:
Wizardry: ():
Luck:
Charisma:
Personal adds:
Enemy attack this round: 0
Enemy armour: 0
Enemy MR: 0

Foe Three:

Strength:

Constitution: ()

Dexterity:

Speed:

Intelligence:

Wizardry: ()

Luck:

Charisma:

Personal adds:

Enemy attack this round: 0

Enemy armour: 0

Enemy MR: 0

Foe Four:

Strength:

Constitution: ()

Dexterity:

Speed:

Intelligence:

Wizardry: ()

Luck:

Charisma:

Personal adds:

Enemy attack this round: 0

Enemy armour: 0

Enemy MR: 0

Your talents:

Your spells:

Your equipment:

Your notes:

Your Adventure Points:

Notes: