

About the Author

J.H. Brennan is one of those peculiar people who seem to be living in several different worlds at once . . . some of which you can enter via the GrailQuest series.

He has always been interested in magic, spells and wizardry, and among his many books has written a number on magic. He is also the author of two Fantasy Role-Playing Games - *Man, Myth & Magic* and *Timeship* and of four other Solo Fantasy Gamebooks in the '*Sagas of the Demonspawn*': *Book One - Fire*Wolf*, *Book Two - The Crypts of Terror*, *Book Three - Demonspawn*, and *Book Four - Ancient Evil*.

He has used a computer system to help him keep track of this book and others in the series and says that anyone who adventures in them without keeping careful notes of where they've been is asking to be sent to Section 14.

J.H. Brennan

GRAIL QUEST

BOOK FIVE

*

Kingdom of Horror

*Illustrated by
John Higgins*

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An Armada Original

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WARNING

This is the most difficult GrailQuest yet!

To complete it, you will require exceptional
patience, skill, courage and not a little luck.

Examine every possibility with care (and caution).
Ignore nothing. And above all be certain to map
your progress as you go along.

This latter point is especially important should
you manage to enter the Kingdom of Horrors,
where the nature of reality is such that retracing
your steps will not necessarily return you to the
place you have just come from.

HERE BE MERLIN

Ah, there you are.

Don't panic — there's no crisis. No wicked wizards on the loose. No rampaging dragons. No invading Saxons. No crisis at all — just a small problem. Or smallish. Well, quite a big problem, really. A rebellion in Avalon.

You remember Avalon, don't you? King Arthur's realm. Knights. Heroes. Damsels in distress - all that sort of thing. And me. The Wizard Merlin.

The King has instructed me to send you this message:

COME HERE AT ONCE!

Got that?

COME HERE AT ONCE!

signed, **Arturus Rex.**

You'll need your usual equipment, of course. A pencil, paper and eraser and two six-sided dice. One will do if you haven't got two, but two is better. Get your equipment together then come back. Now pay close attention because this is important.

1

If you have never adventured in the GrailQuest before, turn to 1.

If you have 'adventured in the GrailQuest, but can't remember the rules, still turn to 1. You can of course refresh your memory with the cut-out rule card bookmark at the back.

If you have adventured in the Grailquest and remember all about rolling up your LIFE POINTS, fighting and so on, turn direct to 2.

1

New to this sort of thing, then? Or possibly just forgetful. Never mind, GrailQuesting is simple.

Life Points

The first thing you have to do is find your LIFE POINTS. Roll two dice, add the scores together, and multiply the result by four. If you think you don't have enough — and let me tell you, you'll need every LIFE POINT you can get to survive in Avalon — you can do the whole thing twice more and pick the highest LIFE POINTS out of the three.

If you've been on a GrailQuest before and earned any PERMANENT LIFE POINTS, you should add up to ten of them to the total.

LIFE POINTS are useful to stop you dying. It's quite easy to die on a GrailQuest since there's usually a lot of fighting.



Combat

First, roll dice on behalf of your opponent and yourself. Compare the scores. Whichever of you has the highest score gets to strike the first blow.

To strike a blow, you (or your opponent) roll two dice. Most people need to roll a 6 to make contact, otherwise they miss the target altogether. But, for any serious fights, you'll be using a magic sword called Excalibur Junior (EJ for short). While you're using EJ, you only need to roll 4 or better to hit.

If there's no mention of what your opponent needs to score to hit, take it that he needs a 6. (But I have to warn you that many of your opponents will need a lot less.)

Anything you, or your opponent, score above the hit figure counts as damage. Weapons give you extra damage. Old EJ gives you an extra 5 damage points on any hit.

Any damage scored against you is subtracted from your current LIFE POINTS, and the same goes for your opponent as you fight him. If LIFE POINTS go down to 5, the person fighting falls unconscious. If they go down to 0, a serious complication sets in — death.

But before you start subtracting damage from LIFE POINTS, you have to take Armour into consideration. Armour always absorbs a certain amount of damage. Exactly how much, you'll find as you go along.

Friendly Reaction

You can always try to avoid fights, of course. Sometimes a Friendly Reaction will do the trick. To test for a Friendly Reaction, you roll one die once for your enemy and one die *three times* for yourself. If your total score turns out to be less than your enemy's single score, you've got yourself a Friendly Reaction and can move on as if you'd won the fight.

Bribery

Another way to avoid fights is Bribery. Bribery is only possible in sections marked *B. The number of asterisks tells you how much you'll have to offer as a Bribe. *B is 100 gold pieces; **B is 500 gold pieces; ***B is 1,000 gold pieces; ****B is 10,000 gold pieces.

You can offer actual gold pieces, or gems or anything else to the value of the bribe. Of course, the bribe won't always be accepted. Some monsters will just grab the money and fight you anyway. To find out if you've succeeded, you roll two dice. Score 2 to 7 and your bribe is refused. Score 8 to 12 and it's accepted and you can go on as if you'd won the fight. Either way, you lose the money offered for the bribe.

Healing

As you can see from all this, you won't be able to avoid every fight, even if you wanted to (which you probably won't, being an adventurer). So

you're going to lose LIFE POINTS. There are several ways to get them back again.

The first is to glug down a Healing potion. Your average Healing Potion contains six doses. Each dose restores a double dice roll of LIFE POINTS.

The second is to rub on some Healing Salve. A box of salve usually contains enough for six rubs and each rub restores 3 LIFE POINTS. (Not a lot, but it could mean the difference between life and death.)

Sleep

The third way to restore LIFE POINTS is to Sleep. You can take a little nap any time during an adventure, except when you're actually engaged in combat. You roll one die. Score 5 or 6 and you have LIFE POINTS restored equal to a double dice roll. Score 1 to 4 and you have to turn to the Dream time, which you'll find at the back of this book. Dreamtime is a dangerous place, so don't say I didn't warn you.

Experience

Every time you win a fight or solve a puzzle, you gain 1 Experience Point. When you've gained 20 Experience Points, this is equal to one PERMANENT LIFE POINT. PERMANENT LIFE POINTS can be added to your total LIFE POINTS. You can even take up to 10 of them into your next adventure. (If you survive that long.)

Now turn to 2 and I'll tell you about magic, equipment and interesting stuff like that.

Knock-knock!

Just ignore that - somebody's knocking at my door. They'll go away eventually - they always do.

Now, pay attention. In a moment I'm going to call you back to my time. I'm going to cast a Net Spell which captures your mind and pops it into the body of a young person here in Avalon. A young person called Pip, who is quite a hero. Pip has slaughtered wizards and dragons and monsters galore. Yes, indeed, a sturdy young person.

I have Pip's body here, all ready for you. It's in a wicker hamper underneath the table. In quite good order too. A few scars from old wounds, but sound of wind and limb. If you've used Pip's body before, you'll hardly notice any difference from the last time.

Except for the bolt through the neck. I'm sorry about that but there's nothing I can do about it now. It was a little experiment I was trying after I read an old diary by a Dr Von Frankenstein. He used lightning to animate bodies. Most ingenious approach. I tried it out on young Pip's body, actually. Iron bolt through the neck, propped Pip up against an oak tree and waited for a thunderstorm. There were seven lightning strikes directly into the bolt. It didn't animate the body, but it fused the iron into place and now I can't get the bolt out without removing the head.

Never mind: you'll look quite distinguished with

a bolt through your neck. There are also certain benefits from the lightning which . . .

Knock-knock-knock!

Go away! No, not you. Now where was I? Oh, yes, the Net Spell. When you get here, I'll have your spell books ready and your magic sword and some very special. . .

Knock! Crash! Crash!

Will you go away! Honestly, some people just don't understand the meaning of privacy. Of course, the whole of Avalon has gone to pieces since the rebellion started. But we'll soon sort out that little problem. It's only a question of getting back Excalibur for the King.

What was I saying? Yes — very special armour which will let you win all your fights without any chance of injury. And some excellent magical gear.

But first the Net Sp . . .

Crash! Crash! Splinter! Thud!

Those peasants don't know their own strength, do they? The door is half off its hinges. I shall have something to say to them all right when I've finished this spell.

Now you just relax and turn to 3.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

3

The Net Spell snakes through Time from Merlin's outstretched fingers, reaching with invisible tendrils to capture your mind and bring it to the green fields and rolling countryside of Arthur's Avalon. You feel faintly disorientated. Your surroundings fade. No longer are you in the Twentieth Century. Instead . . .

This isn't right. No green fields, no rolling countryside. You may be in Avalon, but if you are, you're in a funny part of Avalon. Your trusty



4-5

talking sword, EJ, is with you. Merlin must have left the body you'll be using for your adventure in a box somewhere. And now you've arrived, you're trapped!

If you want to call for help, turn to 23.

Or you could try poking EJ through the gaps in the wickerwork to knock up the hasp, in which case go to 55.

4

You follow the road without incident for perhaps twenty minutes, the serenity of the day broken only by EJ's mumbled conviction that you are going in the wrong direction.

And indeed he might be right, for the countryside around the road is featureless with nothing to indicate any entrance to anything, let alone the Fairy Kingdom you are supposed to be looking for. You are just beginning to wonder if you should turn back when you spot another corpse lying on the side of the road a little way ahead. This one is even smellier than the last.

Are you going to risk the Black Plague by investigating this corpse? If so, hold your nose and turn to 63. Or you can continue north by going to 41. Or you can backtrack to the fork where you have the choice of going south-west at 70 or south at 37 (or risking the Black Plague by examining the hanging corpse at 10).

5

There's something behind this stone!



"I am Camilla. Sometimes I come here to feel the stones ..."

Swiftly you draw EJ and zip around to confront the horror that awaits you. Equally swiftly you slide EJ back into his scabbard and remove your hat. 'I do beg your pardon,' you say politely. 'I'm afraid I thought you were a monster.'

'Do I look like a monster?' asks the slim girl in the white linen robe leaning on the stone.

'Not exactly,' you say. 'That is, not at all. I'm just a bit nervous.'

'I am Camilla,' says the girl, smiling. 'I sometimes come here to feel the stones.'

'To fee...' You stop yourself just in time. Looking closer at Camilla's eyes, you realise she is blind. 'Oh yes, I see.'

'May I feel your face?' she asks. 'You sound nice.'

'Yes, of course.' You stand there, a little embarrassed by this unexpected development, as Camilla runs her fingers lightly over your face,

'Excuse me,' she says after a moment, 'but do you have a bolt through your neck?'

If you still have that stupid bolt, turn to 52. If you have somehow managed to remove it, go to 31.

6

'Yes,' murmurs the Fiend, 'this all seems to be in order. Now, simply follow the instructions on your scroll - and the best of luck!'

You heard the Fiend. Follow the instructions . . . if you've managed to decode them.

7

What kept you?' Merlin asks crabbily as you run down the mountain path to help him the last few remaining yards on to the plateau. 'Haven't you realised Excalibur is still missing?'

'Excalibur?' you echo. 'The King's sword?'

'Yes, the King's sword. Nicked by some scabby tortfeasor while you were sunning yourself in Ancient Greece. I meant to mention it after you'd put paid to the Saxon invasion, but you skived off so quickly afterwards I never had the chance. And since it takes quite a time for me to prepare a Net Spell, half the country is in rebellion. Who holds Excalibur rules the realm - that's always been the way. And since Arthur doesn't hold it now, a lot of people are saying he's not fit to govern.'

But what of the knights of the Table Round?' you cry.

Merlin sniffs. 'They've stayed loyal for the most part. But they can't be everywhere. Although they're trying, of course. Lancelot is at Land's End, Galahad is at John O'Groats and King Pellinore is sailing up the Mersey. None of it is doing any good. As fast as one pocket of rebellion is put down, another one springs up. The only thing for it is to find the Sword. And quickly. Which is where you come in.' He brushes himself down and asks, 'Do you like my new house?'

You follow the direction of his gaze to the cubed

structure. 'Oh, that - yes, very nice.' As an afterthought you ask 'Where are we exactly?'

'Llaldoggogwent Tor,' Merlin replies. 'In the Welsh Mountains. I came here for a bit of peace, but the rebellion is everywhere. Never mind, now the Net Spell's done, I can set traps. But in the meantime we'd better get you ready for your search.'

As you walk together towards the cubical house, Merlin remarks, 'I really built this for you, you know. And a good job too. Those peasants ruined all the spells and most of the equipment I had stockpiled for you. So when you need a bit of magic, you'll just have to pop back for it. Have you noticed anything peculiar about the house?'

'It looks like a dice cube.'

'Most observant. And for good reason. Sympathetic magic. Like attracts like. As Above so Below. And so on. Any time you need to come back here, all you do is roll one die. It will transport you back to the house. So long as you don't roll a one or a six.'

'What happens if I roll a one or a six?' you ask.

Merlin regards you sternly. 'We won't discuss depressing things like that. Now don't hang about. You can help me repair the door, then I'll set you on the road to finding the sword.'

*Since Merlin is using magic, a throw of 10 or better on 2 dice will repair the door. After you've managed it, go to **28**.*



Merlin regards you sternly .

8-10

8

That was extremely well done, Pip - the world is definitely a better place without them. Don't forget to search the bodies, since you will find on each of them a full flask of Healing Potion: that's three flasks altogether.

Now back to your plan and pick a safer destination.

9

Indeed it does! Unbelievably simple though it may sound, all you need now do is consult your plan and pick another destination.

10

If you survive this operation without developing some noxious disease, it will be a miracle. The corpse has obviously been hanging here for a very long time and what bits of it haven't already fallen off soon will by the look of it.

The clothing is largely gone to rags, but by dint of holding your nose, you do manage a reasonably thorough search. It reveals only two items of interest. One is a small gold coin, the other is a scrap of parchment.

The coin is not a standard gold piece: it is too small for one thing. Nor does it carry Arthur's sovereign insignia, nor the head of any Roman Emperor, as some old coins in circulation still do. In fact, it is perfectly blank and featureless, so that it is perhaps not a coin at all, but a small golden disc.



The corpse has obviously been hanging around for some time.

11

The scrap of parchment has something written on it in spidery writing - a foreign language or possibly a code of some sort. To make matters worse, the parchment is obviously old, badly torn and certainly only a small bit of a much larger sheet so that only fragments of the original writing are left. But for what it's worth, this is what you can read:

ZMXRVMG OLIV

HVVP GSV TRZMGH WZMXV

TLOW WRHX ZXGREZGVH

Yes, well...

*And with those useful finds, you may now go north at **4**; south west at **70**; or south at **37**.*

11

It is rugged going under a hot sun. Around you stretches the Wilderness, rough ground and shrub, broken here and there by looming rock. You tramp for miles, growing more and more hungry until you are almost fainting for lack of a jam buttie or a bag of crisps.

You stop, prop your back against a rock and come to a decision.

*You have to eat. If you are equipped with rations, munch some now and go north to **19** or south to **58**. If not, you must take the chance of returning to Merlin's House in search of rations. Should you fail to arrive in the Equipment Room, your situation is so*

12-13

*desperate that you must ignore any goodies which may be in the room you enter and try again for rations. And keep trying until you get rations or are killed. If this little jaunt kills you, go to **14**. If you get your rations, eat something fast, then go north to **19** or south to **58**.*

12

Cautiously you touch the number.

At once a huge bolt of lightning erupts from the clear blue sky above the head of the Sage and strikes directly into the box by way, unfortunately, of your head.

*See if you can make your hair lie down again, then go to **14**.*

13

You are approaching mountains. Not very big, but definitely mountains. Already you are in the foothills and climbing swiftly.

Around you, the air is growing chill and, strangely, the light is growing dim.

The ground beneath your feet has a curiously shifting feel, as if it were not quite solid. The rocks around you are twisted and distorted and while they remain still when you look at them directly, they seem to writhe when you see them from the corner of your eye.

Something gibbers softly to your right, but when you swing around, nothing is there. Distantly,

ahead, there is a piercing scream, tailing off into utter silence.

Maybe you shouldn't stick around here too long, Pip. Westwards the mountains are impassable, so it's pointless going that way. Due east may or may not take you back the way you came — you will end up at 73. Due north will eventually lead you to 87. Due south takes you to 32. The bad news is that before you go anywhere, you are stuck with the effects these mountains have had on you, which is a degree of mental confusion so intense that you will automatically miss every second blow in your next three combat encounters.

14

That background music is a choir of angels singing Halleluiah. (Or possibly a First XV of drunken devils singing Roll Out The Barrel.) Either way you're dead.

Fortunately you don't have to stay that way. What you have to do now is *re-roll your LIFE POINTS*. With a bit of luck you might even do better than the last time.

'Once you have re-rolled your LIFE POINTS, you can start your adventure again. This gives you the chance to make different decisions or take different routes. And even if you decide to take the same route, any enemies you have successfully killed last time round can no longer harm you. (They'll still be around, of course, but you can safely consider them as ghosts.)

Being dead is not exactly a bowl of cherries, but it's not *too* bad either, except that you lose any booty you may have accumulated and have to start again with no more than old EJ as your companion.

Try not to worry about that too much. Just re-roll your LIFE POINTS and get going.

15

There's probably a very good reason why this mound is marked on the Plan, but it's certainly not very obvious. You search about for ages without finding anything more interesting than a straightforward mound of earth, then return to your plan to try another destination (muttering grimly to yourself).

16**B(each)

If you've been wondering why this was called the Slaughter Stone on your plan, you can stop wondering now. Leaning on the megalith, grinning evilly, is a black-robed figure carrying a razor sharp sickle. Beside him are two further figures, also in black (but with rather attractive maroon edging) and also carrying sickles. Something tells you they are not about to harvest corn.

Something is right: these are three of the dreaded Black Druids who sometimes use the Henge as a sacrificial site. The problem seems to be that they had no-one to sacrifice . . . until you came along.



Three black-robed figures at the well-named Slaughter Stone.

17

The Druids are bribable, if you have the wherewithal (and if you don't have the cash to bribe all three, you can always try bribing the ones you can afford to bribe). If you want to try this and succeed, you may return to your Plan and try another destination. (The same goes for three Friendly Reactions.)

Should you elect to fight, however, you should know each Black Druid has 20 LIFE POINTS, hits on 5 and slices off +3 damage with those sickles. If the Druids sacrifice you, go to 14. If you slaughter all three, go to 8.

17

The wilderness stretches around you, the silence broken only by the sound of your own footsteps.

Or are they your own footsteps?

You stop. The footsteps stop. You check the silver sphere. It is glowing blood red.

You move on again. The footsteps move on again.

You stop. The footsteps continue.

You spin round. Frantically you grab for your sword.

And not before time. Rushing towards you is a Sand Dragon. No chance to surrender here, Pip - the creature would tear you limb from limb. It's fight or run. If you decide to run, turn to the section headed RUNNING on page 191 to find out what to do. If you decide to fight, turn

to the section headed *ENEMY STATISTICS* on page 192. Should the creature kill you, go to **14**. Should you kill the dragon, go to **34**.

18

You pick some of the yarrow and stuff it into your pocket.

*Now you'd better get back to **50** and make some sort of sensible decision.*

19

The Wilderness hasn't changed much — still the same old shrub and rock - but you somehow feel a lot more positive about it.

Which is just as well, since you are going to have to deal with those three Barbarians riding towards you on their small, but sturdy ponies.

You glance at the silver sphere and find it has turned amber. In the Fairy Kingdom, this is your only guide to the danger you face until you make your decision to fight, run or surrender.

*If you decide to run, throw one die, then turn to the section headed *RUNNING* on page 191.*

If you decide to surrender, the Barbarians will not injure you, but they will take all your equipment, leaving any magical items (which they do not understand) and your sword (which they do not need.) To renew your equipment, you will have to return to Merlin's

*House. When the Barbarians have gone, you may go north to **87** or south to **58**.*

*If you decide to fight, turn to the section headed *ENEMY STATISTICS* on page 192 for details of how tough your opponents are. Should you win, turn to **65**. Should they kill you, go to **14**.*

20

That was well done, Pip: a nasty encounter by any account. By the looks of things, the Wolf was emerging from its lair, which was hidden by the shrub. A quick glance inside assures you the rest of the pack are absent. You are about to move on when you notice something odd inside - a scrap of parchment. You fish it out with the tip of EJ.

Something is written on the parchment:

'Code 5

COR PERVC DZHES EYTVKNUBE'

Here a part of the parchment is missing, having been chewed by the wolf. The remainder reads:

'DTEHPOHKKHZ TNCX.'

Your available directions are:

*North or west to **13**.*

*North east to **73**.*

*East to **80**.*

*Any southerly direction to **53**.*

21

Oh, no - you've ended up in a herd of cows! They're all over the place, and they've churned up the ground so much is impossible to see where the track leads.

A harassed cow-herd is racing around with a stick trying to get the animals into some sort of marching order, but without any real degree of success.

*If you're feeling benevolent, you can give the cow-herd a hand with his cattle at **100**. Or search for the continuation of the track at **140**. Or throw your hat at it and backtrack to the fork where you can go south west at **70**, north at **4** or search the hanging corpse at **10**.*

22

Oh no, it's getting up again!

You definitely killed the thing, but it's getting up again! And changing.

An incredible metamorphosis is occurring. The Ghoul's ghastly chalk white skin is turning silver! And its fangs are retracting, its arms growing shorter, its ...

In stark contrast with the Ghastly Ghoul, the creature now standing before you is one of the most beautiful you have ever seen - a tall, slim, blue-robed, silver-skinned humanoid with an aura of power around him that absolutely precludes any question of your renewing your attack (even if you had the energy). His eyes - twin orbs of silver, flecked with gold - regard you gravely.



The creature hands you a small silver sphere.

'You did well to kill my alter ego, Pip,' he says. 'And by doing so, you have proven yourself worthy to enter the Fairy Kingdom which for some becomes the Kingdom of Horror. Your quest is known to me, and it is a noble aim. But I say this to you: to achieve your goal, you must travel widely, search everywhere, equip yourself well and use your head as often as your sword arm. To aid you, I make you this gift. . .'

And he takes from a fold of his robe a small silver sphere.

'This artifact,' he says, 'must never leave you. Hold it to you even in death. Its value is 100,000 golden pieces, but you must never sell it or attempt it as a bribe. This is a Sphere of Warning. It may be used only in the Fairy Kingdom. Take it in your hand.'

Hesitantly, you stretch your hand and the silver creature drops the sphere into your palm. At once the sphere glows green.

'When the sphere glows green, you are in no immediate danger. When it glows amber, some danger threatens. When it glows red, great danger threatens. But most of all, should the sphere begin to glow golden, then the great sword you seek is close by.' Your tall companion folds his arms. 'And now the time has come . . .'

He closes his eyes in silent meditation. A spiral of clear blue light erupts from somewhere near his feet and begins to curl upwards, spinning faster and faster. The light expands, swirling around you until it is all you can see.

For a moment your senses are disrupted, then the light fades and the silver skinned creature is gone. So too is the stone lined chamber. You look around you in amazement.

As you well might, since you are now standing in 58.

23

'HEEELLLP!!,' you call. 'HEEELLLP!'

You feel the hasp being slid from its position, followed by the sound of somebody fiddling with the lid. In a moment it is flung open, flooding the hamper with light.

You squint up into the glare. Thank you, kind . . .' At which point you see you are staring into the glowering face of a rude peasant carrying a particularly nasty club with a nail stuck in it.

'Oo are you, then?' asks the peasant. You make to stand up and he adds, 'Not a muscle, or I'll bash yer.'

Eyeing the club warily, you say in your best mannered voice, 'My name is Pip, good sir.'

'Pip, eh? The one wot killed the Wizard Ansalom and slew the Brass Dragon and survived the Ghastly Kingdom of the Dead and saved this 'ere Realm from the hairy Saxons?'

You say, rather pleased to be recognized, 'Yes, that is I.'

The peasant shrugs. 'And I'm Cleopatra.'

24-26

You have a chance here of a quick punch in the throat. If you want to try, go to 46.

If you prefer to continue with diplomacy, sneakily biding your time, turn to 75.

24

Something strange here. A little way ahead, rising out of the Wilderness, is a curious metal cube. The artefact stands nearly 10' high and seems, at this distance, quite featureless.

If you want to investigate the cube, go to 94.

Alternatively, you may take the following directions:

West to 58.

East to 59.

North to 87.

South to 53.

25

Cautiously you touch the number.

At once a huge bolt of lightning erupts from the clear blue sky above the head of the Sage and strikes directly into the box by way, unfortunately, of your head.

See if you can make your hair lie down again, then go to 14.

26

There's probably a very good reason why this



The glowering face of a club-carrying peasant.

mound is marked on the Plan, but it's certainly not very obvious. You search about for ages without finding anything more interesting than a straightforward mound of earth, then return to your plan to try another destination (muttering grimly to yourself).

27

'Excuse me,' you say, staring up while shielding your eyes against that violet-tinged sun, 'but what are you doing sitting on that pillar?'

The hooded ancient glances briefly in your direction and smiles. 'Waiting for you,' he says.

'For me?'

'Certainly. My meditations convinced me that one who sought the sword must venture here eventually. You do seek the sword, do you not?'

'Yes, but who are you?'

'The Sage of the Basalt Pillar,' he replies. 'It is my task and my pleasure to test your worthiness.'

'Hold on,' you say, in some alarm. 'I've already been tested - I fought the Ghastly Guardian Ghoul!'

'Which tests only your skill with a sword. I must test your skill with magic. Do you happen to have any with you?'

'Not a lot,' you reply quickly, unwilling to risk losing precious magic to some old idiot on top of a rock.

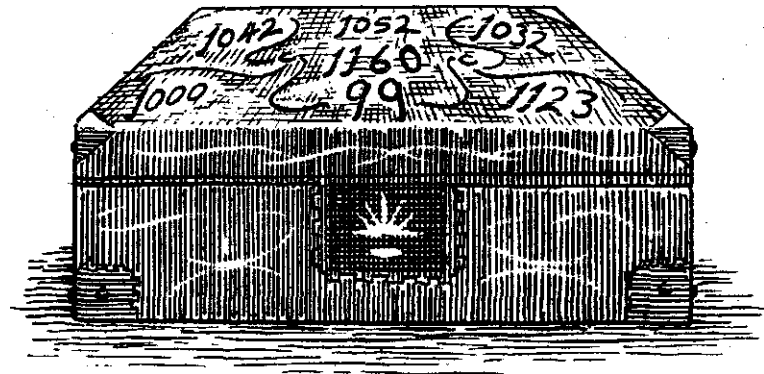
'I may be an old idiot on top of a rock, but I am skilled at reading minds,' remarked the Sage. He sighs. 'No matter. Take this - ' And he tosses you down a finely made little rosewood box with inlaid lid. 'A magical artifact and a gift from me to you.'

The magical artifact reminds you that you are carrying another. Surreptitiously, you glance at the silver sphere, which is, to your surprise, glowing blood red. How odd. Certainly this old idio . . . this Venerable Sage doesn't look all that dangerous. But the sphere is definitely red and a very threatening red at that.

To be on the safe side, you say politely, 'Thank you for your gift, Venerable Sage. I shall cherish it for the remainder of my life.'

'Which may not be all that long,' remarks the Sage drily, 'if you are unable to solve the mystery of the magic. Examine the lid of the box.'

You do so and discover that the inlay is in the form of numbers.



'Don't touch them,' warns the Sage quickly. 'The correct number, when touched, will open the box. To touch an incorrect number is death. But I will tell you that the correct number is my age. And my age is twice that of my youngest son. And my youngest son is ten years older than my eldest niece, who in turn is twice the age my third wife was when she died, which was 50 years ago. Coincidentally, my third's wife's first husband is today exactly the age my third wife would have been had she not died, which is 308 years. Now please examine the numbers on the box and try not to touch the wrong one.'

The numbers on the box are:

1000... 1042. . . 1052... 1032 1123

1160...99

So which number will you touch to open the box!

If 1000 then go to 12.

If 1042 then goto 25.

If 1052 then go to 30.

If 1032 then go to 44.

If 1123 then go to 57.

If 1160 then go to 69.

If 99 then go to 84.

Oddly enough, the interior of Merlin's residence looks completely different to the way you left it.

Much the same size and shape, but no sign of broken furniture- or wicker baskets or any of the mess left by the peasants breaking in.

'Can you read maps?', Merlin asks you abruptly.

You nod.

'Then take a look at this one.' He draws from a pocket a parchment scroll which he proceeds to unroll on a nearby table. 'It was discovered at the scene of the crime. It is my belief it contains a vital clue to the present whereabouts of Excalibur (See page 217). Do you recognize any of the placenames?'

You stare at the map, frowning *Mountains of Madness . . . Wilderness of Karn ... Scroghollow City..* . None of the names is familiar. You shake your head.

'That's because these places do not exist,' Merlin tells you. 'At least not in our reality. This is a map of a small part of the Fairy Kingdom.'

'But who?' you ask, 'in this Fairy Kingdom would want Excalibur?'

Merlin shrugs. 'Who can say? Now,' he adds briskly, 'on the matter of equipment and magic: you can't have any. At least not at the moment. All smashed up by the revolting peasants. Yes indeed. I shall do my best to sort something out and you can pick it up later.'

How?' you ask, alarmed at the prospect of setting off with no more than your faithful talking sword.



You are on the edge of a huge gloomy forest.

29

'By popping back to my new house when you feel the need!' snaps Merlin. 'I've already told you — when you want to return here, which you can do at any time except during a combat or when somebody has laid a spell on you, all you have to do is roll one die and turn to the Section headed MERLIN'S HOUSE. You'll only be able to take one thing at a time from here, of course, but it's the best I can do in difficult circumstances. Now, are you ready to be off?'

'I don't even know where I'm supposed to be going!'

'No, but I do,' says Merlin, beginning to wave his arms in the intricate pattern which marks the start of a transportation spell.

'Wait...' you shout desperately, having discovered in the past how unreliable Merlin's magical transportation can be. But as always it is just that little bit too late. The room begins to spin around you, growing faster and faster until you are aware of nothing other than a swirling fog.

Fortunately you don't have to stay fogged. It will clear a little at 50.

29

You are on the edge of a huge forest. Nearby, on a tree, someone has nailed a crude notice, scrawled on a piece of board.

The notice reads simply:

**BEWARE.
WITCHWOOD.**

*If you feel like ignoring the notice and entering the forest, go to **45**. Alternatively, you can always travel*

*North to **87**.*

*West to **71**.*

*South to **59**.*

30

Cautiously you touch the number.

At once the lid springs open revealing inside a small, but beautifully cut ruby nestling on a velvet cushion. The gem glints in the sun.

'Wow!' you breathe.

'The jewel,' says the Sage, 'is extremely valuable, but you must never sell it, for it has substantial magical properties. Indeed, I can tell you now, it is quite vital to the completion of your quest.'

'How do I use it, Venerable Sage?' you ask wildly, delighted to have a bit of magic booty come to you so easily.

'That I cannot tell you at this time, except to say this: the gem alone has no magic. Only when you find the ebony rod can you use it to its full effect.'

With which the old fool closes his eyes and falls asleep!

'I may be a sleeping old fool, but I can still read minds,' he murmurs before beginning quietly to snore.

Not much more you can do here except creep

*away, which you should now do. Due west will take you to **13**, south will get you to **92**, east to **19**, south east to **48**, south west to **73**, and any northerly direction to **87**.*

31

Well, the least said about that now the better,' remarks Camilla mysteriously. 'I suppose you're looking for the entrance to the Fairy Kingdom?'

'How on earth did you know that?' you ask in amazement.

'Merlin told me. He sent me here to help you.'

Can you beat that? The old fool wasn't as disorganised as he seemed. 'Do you know where the entrance is?' you say.

'Oh, yes,' says Camilla brightly. 'It's at one of the mounds: the one due south of here. But you'll need to start the Giant's Dance first. I suppose you do have the little golden disc?'

*Well, do you? If the answer is yes, go to **90**. If not, better move on to **61**.*

32

This Wilderness goes on forever. With nothing better to do, you check your silver sphere at frequent intervals and become so accustomed to nothing happening that it comes as quite a surprise when it suddenly turns red.

Glancing around you hurriedly, you catch sight of movement in some shrub.

Looks like a fight if you decide to investigate:

and the sphere suggests whatever is in there is highly dangerous. But the decision is up to you. If you want to investigate, turn to the *ENEMY STATISTICS* section on page 192 then come back here and work out the result of the encounter. If you are killed, go to **14**. If you survive, go to **20**.

Alternatively, you can simply steal away (without *RUNNING*). Available directions are:

North or west to **13**.

North east to **73**.

East to **80**.

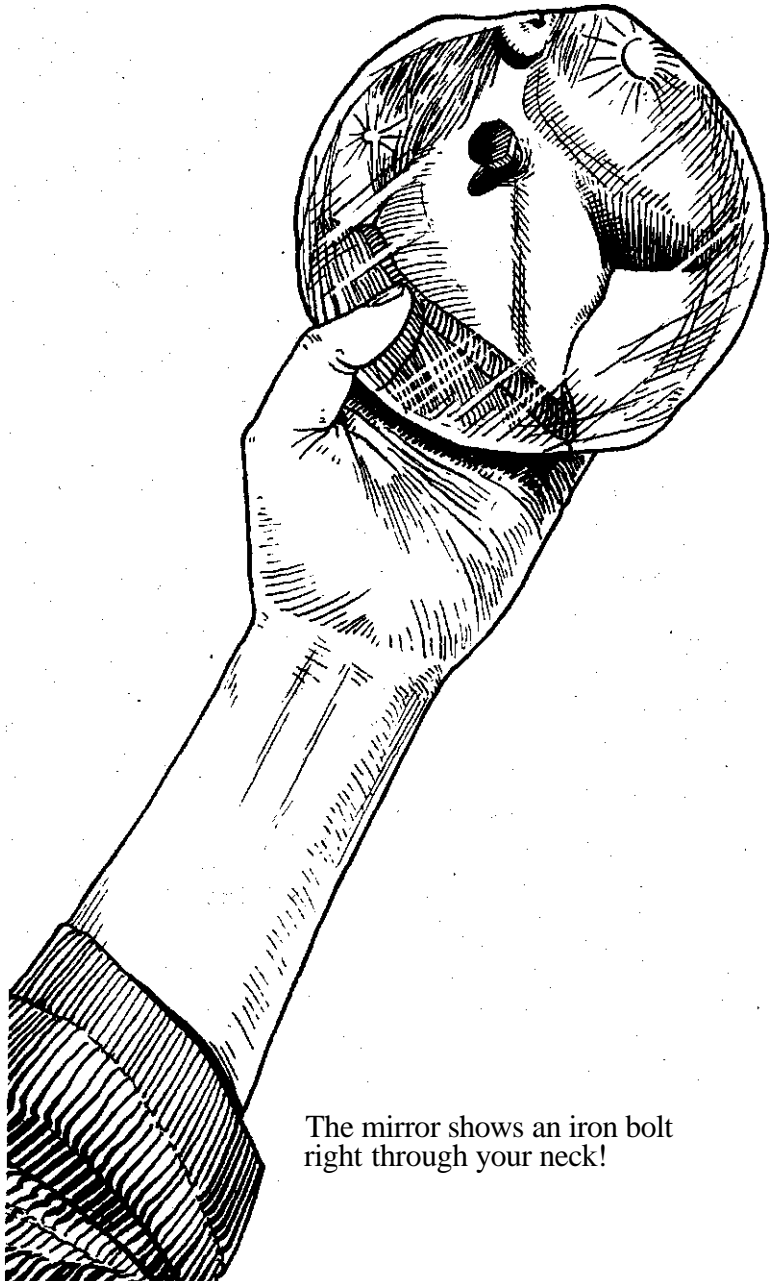
Any southerly direction to **53**.

33

Quickly you hustle through the room, desperately searching for something of use. But anything that hasn't been stolen has been smashed or torn. The only thing that seems to have survived is a small bronze mirror; and even that is badly dented.

You glance at your harassed reflection as you are setting the mirror to one side. Good Grief, Merlin wasn't joking! *There is an iron bolt right through your neck!!*

You pick up the mirror again and stare at it in mute astonishment. If you weren't such an incredibly handsome young person, you would be the spitting image of Frankenstein's monster. The bolt enters your neck just below the jawbone and emerges in much the same place on the other side.



The mirror shows an iron bolt right through your neck!

And as if that wasn't bad enough, Merlin's let it go rusty!

'I've got a bolt through my neck!' you exclaim.

'I know,' says EJ. 'Try not to touch it.'

'Why not?' you ask, involuntarily touching the bolt. At once a vicious shock jabs through your arm, making your hair stand momentarily on end and deftly removing three of your LIFE POINTS. (If this kills you - which is, admittedly, unlikely - go to 14.)

'Warned you,' sniffs EJ. 'I was watching when Merlin was messing around with that thing. It's full of lightning bolts.'

This is all you need. A bolt through your neck charged full of electricity, a wrecked room, Merlin kidnapped (or worse), a rebellion on and not a scrap of magic or equipment left intact.

'Come on,' you say, 'we've wasted long enough in here. Let's get after the people who took Merlin!'

'Aren't you taking the sleep-globe under the sofa?' asks EJ.

'Sleep-globe?' you ask stupidly.

'Little glass thing about the size of a cricket ball,' says EJ. 'It's got gas inside and that will put one enemy to sleep for 12 combat rounds or 12 enemies to sleep for one combat round or six enemies to sleep for two combat rounds or three enemies to sleep for four combat rounds or two ...'

Yes, yes, I get the idea. Why didn't you tell me about this before ?'

'You didn't ask me. Incidentally,' EJ adds, 'you can only use it once. You have to break the globe to get the gas out.'

Grabbing the globe in one hand and EJ in the other, you race from the wreckage of the room through the broken door and outside into **83**.

34

With the Sand Dragon safely out of the way, you begin to plan your next move when a vague memory of the creature's habits abruptly surfaces in your mind. Something about the Dragon's Lair.

Carefully you begin to follow its tracks, which leads eventually to a gloomy cavern in a massive rock. Cautiously you enter, sword at the ready, but a quick glance round convinces you no danger lurks here.

The cave is smelly, full of junk and debris - the sight of which clears your mind at once: the Sand Dragon is notorious for collecting all sorts of rubbish. Quickly you begin to search. The Dragon must have killed a good few travellers in its time, for there are many old rusting weapons here and bits of useless armour.

You persevere and finally your patience is rewarded. A sack in one corner contains no less than six bottles of healing potion and an unused Sleep Globe!

Stash away the goodies, leave the cavern and decide where to go next.

North will take you to 58.

South will take you to 38.

West will take you to 80.

East will take you to 67.

35

You're sinking!

The silver sphere is glowing bright red, but it's a bit late for that since you're now up to your waist and still sinking in what seems to be a pretty smelly patch of bog or marsh or possibly quicksand.

There is a simple way out of this mess. All you need to do is lasso that piece of rock a little to your right. Which you can do on a throw of 4 or better on double dice. Provided you have a rope, of course. (No, it's too late to try going back to Merlin's House.) If you haven't a rope or fail in your dice roll, you will sink all the way to 14. If you escape, you have the choice of these directions:

North to 87.

East to 29.

West to 11.

South west to 17.

South to 67.

36

Please permit me to assist you in any way I can,' you say in your best pompous voice. 'But first what may seem to you a rather obvious question — what's a Borfax?'

'That's a Borfax,' Ben says calmly, gesturing behind you.

You turn to discover, rushing across the wilderness towards you at a fearsome rate of knots, one of the most terrifying creatures you have ever seen. Although only four feet high, it is some six feet long, not including a grotesque forked tail. It runs on two powerful hind legs, the front legs bearing savage claws, and displays enormous fangs. All three of its huge bulging eyes are yellow and its long tongue is lashing hungrily from side to side. Its massive head and muscular body is scaly and slimy and generally unappealing.

'Be careful not to kill it,' Ben remarks as he slides down from his rock to stand at your side, short sword drawn.

Maybe he should be telling the Borfax not to kill you. No matter: the die is, so to speak, cast and as an Avalon adventurer you are committed to your promise to help.

The Borfax, you will not be too surprised to learn, has 70 LIFE POINTS. It strikes successfully on 5 or better, first with claws then, on its next successful strike, with fangs. Claws do +4 damage. Fangs are even worse at +5.



"Racing towards you is a creature from a nightmare ..."

If you are carrying a quartz crystal, the Borfax will sense its vibrations when it is ten feet away and stop, transfixed, allowing you (and Ben) to go to **42**.

If you don't, you'll have to fight: and this is where things get even more complicated. Roll for Borfax and yourself to see who gets first strike. (Ben, who is a lazy little maggot, will be quite content to leave the whole job to you since you were fool enough to offer.) If you manage to remove 65 of the Borfax's 70 LIFE POINTS, it will roll over on its back and submit, this being the nature of the beast. You may then stop fighting and proceed to **42**.

If, however, you accidentally kill the Borfax (by bringing its LIFE POINTS to zero) Ben the Warrior Dwarf will go berserk with annoyance and fight you to the death. Ben has 30 LIFE POINTS, hits on 5 or better and does +3 damage with his nasty little sword.

Should you be killed, either by Borfax or Ben, go to **14** and try to figure out why you should get yourself into such complicated situations.

Should you kill both the Borfax and Ben you can walk away from the whole sorry mess as follows:

West to **17**.

South west to **38**.

South to **53**.

East to **59**.

North to **24**.

37

Looks like the Romans ran out of paving stones. The road ends less than half a mile along here. Or at least dwindles into what looks like a cattle track.

You can follow the track at 21. Alternatively, you can return to the fork where you can search the corpse at 10, go north at 4 or south west at 70.

38

You are approaching a broad expanse of salt flats, as if some vast brackish lake had been here once, but dried out completely underneath that violet sun. Nothing grows and the flats glisten whitely.

Will you approach this remnant of a former lake? If so go to 82.

Alternatively, you may go:

North to 17.

South to 153.

East to 47.

West to 13.

39

The strong flow of the great river carries you swiftly eastwards for several hours before the waterway abruptly narrows and unaccountably slows.

As an intelligent and opportunist young adventurer, it occurs to you that this might be

your chance to reach the southern side of the river. A lightning fast mental calculation convinces you that your chances of doing so safely are quite high.

But is this, in fact, the best way to go?

Make up your mind now, Pip, since you're unlikely to have another opportunity. If you decide to try for the southern bank, throw two dice. Score above three and you will make it safely to 81. Score 3 or below and your raft overturns, depositing you wet and shivering into 14. Alternatively, you may continue eastwards on the river to 91.

40

You are approaching a broad, swift river with some rather peculiar-looking trees growing along the edge of the far bank. The air feels fresh here and the distant trees are full of birdsong. The river is too deep and fast to risk swimming.

If you have already crossed this river to reach the Giant's Wall, you will find your raft safely in some shrub. If not, you might think of building a raft using some of the logs you will find washed up on this side of the river. But to do this, you will need an axe, a saw, a hammer (or mallet) and some nails (or spikes). If you have these, items or are prepared to zip back and forth to Merlin's House to get them, you may build your raft, launch it and proceed to 77. If you decide not to go sailing, your options are:

South to 99.

West to 64.

Bast to 54.

41

The road eventually leaves the plain and enters a valley which narrows quite quickly into a high walled gorge. The road, previously so straight, now begins to twist and turn, and it, too, narrows.

You turn a corner and almost walk into three burly men with short swords moving in the opposite direction. Their leader, a villainous-looking individual whose face hasn't seen the touch of a razor for at least a week, looks you up and down, then turns to grin at his companions.

'Wot 'ave we 'ere, lads?' he asks. 'A young traveller, is it? And one wiv a fine sword to boot, wot any one of us might be proud to own, eh?'

'I warn you, sirrah, keep your hands off Excalibur Junior!' you exclaim proudly, recognizing these vagabonds for the brigands they are.

'Ere that, lads,' grins the leader. 'This one thinks to give us trouble!'

At which point all three begin to giggle.

Only one way to get past these louts, Pip, and that's to teach them a severe lesson: like death. If you elect to fight, each Brigand has 15 LIFE POINTS, hits on 5 or better and does +2 damage with the short sword. You will have to slaughter all three of them before you can



"This one thinks to give us trouble, lads," grins the leader.

continue north at 79. All three belong to the Brigand's Union and are consequently immune to a Friendly Reaction, even if magically induced. Fooling them in any way will not work either, by reason of their experience: even if you were to feign death, they will not let you pass. In short, the only way north is to kill them. But there is nothing to stop you running back south, of course, since you're faster than they are and will easily escape. If you do so, you will eventually reach the fork in the road where you can go south at 37, south west at 70 or examine the hanging corpse at 10.

42

'By Jove!' exclaims Ben, leaping up and down in excitement. 'That was neatly done.' He produces a rope from his backpack and quickly hobbles the legs of the supine Borfax, which rights itself after a moment and stands staring dolefully at the two of you without, however, making any move to attack.

'What are you going to do with him?' you ask curiously.

'Well, the first thing is to get him house-trained,' Ben tells you.

'You mean you're going to keep this thing as a pet?' you ask incredulously.

He nods. 'They're quite affectionate, really. Given time and patience.' He fumbles underneath his breastplate and extracts a necklace made from

strung fangs, one of which he unfastens and hands to you. 'Your reward,' he says.

You stare at the fang glistening in your palm. 'What is it?'

'A Vron tooth,' Ben tells you. 'It's the only thing in the known universe that will protect you from Vron attack. Very useful it can be. Now, since I can't stand here chatting all day, I'll be off.' He turns to the Borfax. 'Heel, Spot!' he commands and walks off northwards, To your intense surprise, the creature hobbles off quite peacefully after him.

Stow away your Vron tooth and pick a direction:

West to 17.

South west to 38.

South to 53.

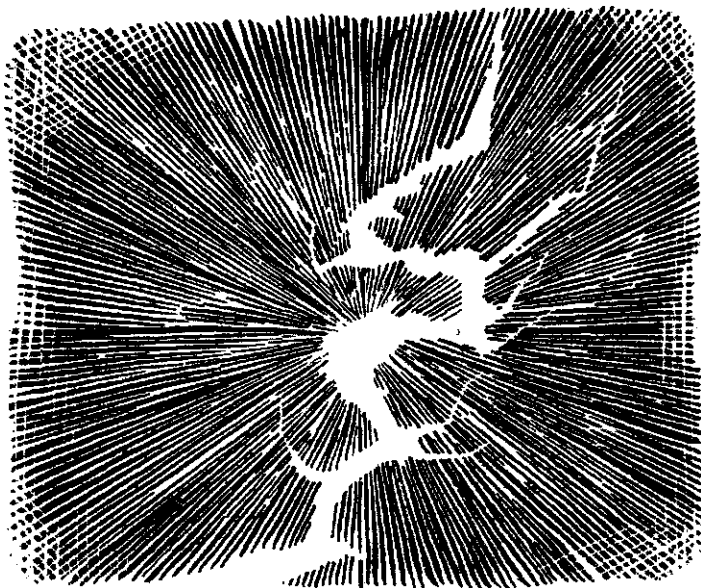
East to 59.

North to 24 (where, probably fortunately, you will not catch up with Ben and Borfax since they have too much of a head start by the time your surprise wears off.

43

That's torn it! As soon as you follow the instructions, the great stones around you begin to glow!

At once a rumbling noise begins beneath your feet, for all the world like an earthquake or a team of giants dancing.



'What's going on here?' you ask the Poetic Fiend in sudden alarm.

'Sorry,' he says, 'just remembered a previous appointment!' And disappears without so much as a farewell ode.

The ground begins to rise and fall beneath your feet like an angry sea. The glow becomes brighter and brighter until you are half blinded. A great voice echoes through the air:

'Reverse the numbers of the mounds to find that which you seek. But beware. The wrong mound means... DEATH!'

The great voice dies away. The ground slowly

reverts back to solidity. The bright glow dims, then disappears.

Leaving you to solve the Mystery of the Message of the Voice if you are going to get very much further.

44

Cautiously you touch the number.

At once a huge bolt of lightning erupts from the clear blue sky above the head of the Sage and strikes directly into the box by way, unfortunately, of your head.

See if you can make your hair lie down again, then go to 14.

45

This is not a holiday resort, Pip. In fact, it's one of the nastiest places you've ever entered. But the biggest problem with a dank, dark forest is that one tree looks much like any other, with the result that in very short order you find yourself totally lost.

There's only one thing to do in a situation like this: roll a dice.

Score 6 and you stumble out of the forest into 87.

Score 1 and you stumble out of the forest into 76.

Score anything in between and you stumble out of the trees into 78.

Swiftly you punch him in the throat, automatically gaining first strike, but requiring a 6 to hit (since you aren't using EJ) and doing only the damage shown on the dice without any weapons additions.

The stupid peasant has only 15 LIFE POINTS despite his broad build. The club he carries will do +3 damage if it connects, but since he is not a trained fighter, he too will require a 6 to hit. If you render him unconscious, (which is the best you can do without a weapon) gather up EJ and go to 60. If he bashes you to death, go to 14.



Something is moving on the horizon. Something sleek and brown, and there's more than one. A quick glance at your silver sphere confirms what you already half suspect. The sphere glows blood red, indicating you are in big trouble. Quickly you turn, intending to go back the way you came, but behind you, distantly, comes a coughing howl.

You are being hunted. Turn to the ENEMY STATISTICS section on Page 192 to find out by what and how many. If you survive this encounter you may proceed in any of the following directions:

East to 76.

North to 24.

West to 38.

South to 53.

If you don't survive, the only place you 're going is 14.

The wilderness of rock and shrub has turned to sandy soil, then desert dunes encroaching in a broad swathe that may one day swallow up the wilderness itself.

'I suppose you do know where you're going?' asks EJ.

'Of course I do,' you tell him confidently.

Which is probably just as well, since there are quite a few choices of direction here:

North to **87**. South east to **58**.
 North west to **103**. South to **80**.
 North east to **19**. West to **13**.
 East to **11**. South west to **32**.

49

You move closer.

At once a stream of soldier ants (each as big as a rat) emerges from the hole and forms ranks in front of you.

Swiftly you draw EJ, but before you can make any further move a high pitched female voice sounds *in your mind*:

'Who are you?'

You glance around, searching for the source of the voice, then decide you were not mistaken: whatever is talking to you is talking inside your head. Could these be *telepathic* ants?

'Not telepathic ants - a telepathic colony,' the voice says, adding:

'I am the Group Mind of the colony. And you are.. ?'

'Pip,' you reply, a little sheepishly.

'Ah, of course - Pip. We should have known. Merlin has mentioned you quite often.'

'You know Merlin?'

'Quite intimately. We have engaged in long-distance telepathic conversations with him

frequently. He is currently trying to teach us astrology, as a matter of fact.'

What an interesting development. If this colony is friendly with Merlin, they might be quite useful to you. They might even have some clue to the whereabouts of Excalibur.

'We're afraid not.' remarks the colony. *'The only person we communicate much with apart from Merlin is the sage on top of the stone pillar and while he may be of some use to you, we fear he is half mad, as sages frequently are, and does not know where the sword is either. However, it is obviously our duty- to extend hospitality to a friend of Merlin's. Would you care for a little honey?'*

Honey? I thought it was bees that made honey, not ants.'

'We blush to admit we stole it. Would you like some -it has remarkable healing properties?'

The soldier ants scuttle back inside and re-emerge carrying six neat little cubes of honeycomb.

Looks as if you've lucked out yet again, Pip. Each cube not only tastes delicious, but contains the exact equivalent of six doses of healing potion. That's 36 doses in all and every one will restore a double dice roll of LIFE POINTS.

Resist the temptation to scoff all the honey now, stash away the cubes, thank the colony politely and pick your next direction.

North to **48**.

East to **17**.

West to **13**.

South to **53**.

South east to **38**.

50

The fog clears, although you may well wish it hadn't. You are standing, alone, on a broad Roman road running due north in one direction and branching southwest and south in the other. All around you is a sweeping plain. At the fork is a wooden gibbet from which hangs the smelly remains of a rotting corpse. Beneath the corpse a clump of yarrow plant is growing.

If this is the Fairy Kingdom, the fairies must be pretty funny folk. But something tells you it's nothing of the sort: all your instincts point to the fact that you're still in Avalon. But where in Avalon?

'I don't suppose you know where we are?' you ask EJ.

'Nope!' EJ replies shortly. 'I don't suppose Merlin remembered to give you that map of the place we're supposed to be going, did he?'

'No, he didn't,' you mutter sourly.

'Better pop back for it then,' remarks EJ with a self-satisfied sniff.

*Well, possibly. But you do have several alternatives. One is to follow the Roman road north, by going to **4**. Another is to take the southern fork at **37**. Or the southwestern fork*

*at **70**. Or you might pick some of the yarrow at **18**. Or examine that smelly corpse at **10**. Or, as EJ says, you can throw a dice to get back to Merlin's new house, then turn to the MERLIN'S HOUSE section.*

51

Looks as though you've solved the mystery, Pip — this is definitely one of the mounds. At first glance it looks just like an ordinary mound. But as you circle round it, you find set into one side a heavy, brass-bound wooden door.

Cautiously you try the handle and discover that it opens easily, revealing a flight of worn stone steps descending into darkness.

*But will you take them? The voice warned that the wrong mound led to death. The choice is yours, of course. Go down the steps to **105**. Or look for the other mound and see what happens there.*

52

You nod, then remember and say, 'Yes.'

'I thought so,' says Camilla. 'Would you like me to take it out? I'm quite good at that sort of thing.'

'I was told it couldn't be taken out without my head falling off.'

'Stuff and nonsense!' says Camilla. 'I can remove it quite safely.'

*It's up to you, Pip. If you want the bolt removed, go to **68**. If not, you can always decline politely and go to **31**.*

53

You are approaching a broad, swift river with some rather peculiar-looking trees growing along the edge of the bank. The air feels fresh here and the trees are full of birdsong. Altogether a very pleasant place, which makes you instantly suspicious.

Closer inspection convinces you that the river is too deep and fast to risk swimming, so you park yourself on a nearby rock and consider your alternatives.

*The most obvious of these is to make yourself a raft, launch it on to the water and see where the river takes you. But to do this, you will need an axe, a saw, a hammer (or mallet) and some nails (or spikes). If you have these items or are prepared to zip back and forth to Merlin's House to get them, you may build your raft and proceed gaily to **39**. If not, your options are:*

*North to **38**.*

*West to **13**.*

*East to **76**.*

54

You come to a river, over which a narrow stone bridge has been built. On the far side of the bridge, you can see, distantly, the outlines of a city. The only problem is that the bridge is guarded. Two dwarven Men at Arms regard you ill-temperedly.

'Toll bridge,' one says abruptly as you approach. 'The fee is 500 gold.'



Two dwarven guards regard you sourly.

*Sounds a bit steep just to get across a bridge, but it's your decision whether or not to pay. If you can fork out the 500, the dwarves will let you pass over to **76**. If you can't or won't pay, you can always try hacking them to pieces - you'll find details of their stats in the *ENEMY STATISTICS* section on page 192 — and go on to **76** if you win (or **14** if you don't.)*

Of course, nobody's forcing you to cross the stupid bridge at all. You can always return to the section you've just left, providing you can remember what it was, and try some other direction.

55

Carefully you slide EJ, blade first, through a gap in the wicker hamper. Although you can't see what you're doing, after an age something clicks. At once the lid springs open, allowing you to stand up impatiently and bang your head against the underside of the table.

You extricate EJ from the wicker basket and crawl out.

The room is in a total shambles. Furniture has been smashed, cupboards overturned, an alchemical furnace pounded into scrap metal, books and parchment manuscripts torn into shreds. A door leading outside hangs drunkenly from broken hinges. There are marks on the dusty floor as if somebody had been dragged out and several damp bootprints throughout the

room. Merlin is nowhere in sight: nor is anybody else for that matter.

'Where is this place?' you ask EJ.

'Merlin's new house, I think.'

You groan inwardly. Merlin is notorious for the odd places he picks as home. At various times he has lived in a log castle, a crystal cave, an old oak tree and a bubble at the bottom of a well. If this is his new house, it could be anywhere.

You hesitate a moment, taking stock of your position. Obviously something very nasty has happened to Merlin, probably related to the rebellion he mentioned. The marks on the floor suggest he has been dragged away bodily, so that the longer you wait, the greater chance there is that his assailants will get away.

As against that, without Merlin to meet you when the Net Spell worked, you have no magic nor equipment for an adventure - nothing, in fact, but your LIFE POINTS, your skill and your trusty talking sword.

*You can risk Merlin's attackers getting away and search this room in the hope of finding magic or equipment by going to **33**.*

*Or you can risk running into Merlin's attackers without magic or equipment by turning to **66**.*

56

You are approaching a vast trilithon Gateway - and a bit of action, by the look of it. A shimmering

mist fills the space between the granite uprights and within it stands a towering figure, arms crossed over his massive chest, a club as big as a tree trunk in his right hand, frowning like thunder and generally making you feel as if you'd just climbed up a beanstalk.

'Where is my cherry blossom?' asks the figure in a voice that reverberates across the plain.

Not just a giant, but a giant nutter. Still, you may be carrying a bit of cherry blossom, in which case give it to him quick and zip on to 132. If you fancy trying to pass the Giant without the blossom, you'll have a bit of a scrap on your hands. He has 499 LIFE POINTS (and count yourself lucky it wasn't more), strikes on 3 or better and does +15 damage with his club. Magic might beat him, if you have any, but even the most potent death spell will only render him briefly unconscious. If you want to risk it, have a go. Should he kill you, go to 14. Should you succeed in rendering him unconscious or otherwise magically incapacitated, turn very carefully to 144. Your final (and probably most sensible) option is to go back to your Plan and pick another destination.

57

Cautiously you touch the number.

At once a huge bolt of lightning erupts from the clear blue sky above the head of the Sage and strikes directly into the box by way, unfortunately, of your head.



Not just a giant, but a giant nutter!

See if you can make your hair lie down again, then go to 14.

58

You are standing within a megalithic ring — but one very different from the henge at Salisbury Plain. There are fewer stones and those are smaller and more ancient.

All around you, stretching as far as the eye can see, is a vast wilderness. High above you the sun shines brightly in a clear green sky.

Green?

You look up again. The sky is definitely green (and the sun, now you come to notice it, has a distinct violet tinge.) Wherever you are, you are certainly not in Avalon, quite possibly not even in the known world.

But wherever you are, it's pointless staying put. You can move off in any one of eight directions (N,S,E,W,NE,NW,SE,SW). (Perhaps the map of the Fairy Kingdom might be useful, if you happen to have it with you.)

To go North turn to 11.

To go South turn to 17.

To go East turn to 24.

To go West turn to 92.

To go North-east turn to 35.

To go North-west turn to 48.

To go South-east turn to 67.

To go South-west turn to 80.

59

It has grown extremely rocky here. So much so that you quickly find your only real choice of direction is:

North to 29

or

North west to 116.

60

You extricate EJ from the hamper and look around, ignoring the prostrate peasant on the floor.

The room is in a total shambles. Furniture has been smashed, cupboards overturned, an alchemical furnace pounded into scrap metal, books and parchment manuscripts torn into shreds. A door leading outside hangs drunkenly from broken hinges. There are marks on the dusty floor as if somebody had been dragged out and several damp bootprints throughout the room. Merlin is nowhere in sight: nor is anybody else for that matter.

Where is this place?' you ask EJ

Merlin's new house, I think.'

You groan inwardly. Merlin is notorious for the odd places he picks as home. At various times he has lived in a log castle, a crystal cave, an old oak

tree and a bubble at the bottom of a well. If this is his new house, it could be anywhere.

You hesitate a moment, taking stock of your position. Obviously something very nasty has happened to Merlin, probably related to the rebellion he mentioned. The marks on the floor suggest he had been dragged away bodily, so that the longer you wait, the greater chance there is that his assailants will get away.

As against that, without Merlin to meet you when the Net Spell worked, you have no magic nor equipment for an adventure — nothing, in fact, but your LIFE POINTS, your skill and your trusty talking sword.

*You can risk Merlin's attackers getting away and search this room in the hope of finding magic or equipment by going to **33**.*

*Or you can risk running into Merlin's attackers without magic or equipment by turning to **66**.*

61

'Oh dear,' says Camilla, 'didn't Merlin mention that?' She looks distressed. 'I'm afraid I don't know where you can find that — he assured me you would have it by the time you arrived. I suppose the only thing you can do is go back and look for it - it's a little golden disc about the size of a small coin.'

Nothing else for it but to retrace your steps from where this whole mess started, which for



62-63

practical purposes is at the fork in the road. From there you can go north at 4, south at 37, south west at 70, yarrow picking at 18, or corpse examining at 10.

62

Looks as though you've solved the mystery, Pip - this is definitely one of the mounds. At first glance it looks just like an ordinary mound. But as you circle round it, you find set into one side a heavy, brass-bound wooden door.

Cautiously you try the handle and discover that it opens easily, revealing a flight of worn stone steps descending into darkness.

But will you take them? The voice warned that the wrong mound led to death. The choice is yours, of course. Go down the steps to 95. Or look for the other mound and see what happens there.

63

The corpse opens its eyes.

'Be the hokey man!' it exclaims in a broad Hibernian accent. 'If it's money you're after, Your Lordship, sure I haven't a penny piece to me name and that's the truth.'

You step back in alarm, then realize this smelly heap of rags is, in fact, an old beggar. 'Pray be reassured,' you tell him politely. 'I am no brigand, thief or robber, but merely an adventurer in search of the entrance to the Fairy Kingdom.'



Set in one side of the mound is a heavy brass-bound door.

'Ah,' says he, scratching himself wildly, 'the Kingdom of Horror, is it?'

'I beg your pardon?'

'You'll be looking for the Giant's Dance - that's the only entrance to the Fairy Kingdom I know of.'

'The Giant's Dance?' you frown.

'The big stone circle down the road a step the way you came. Sure it's a miracle you didn't notice it.' He stands up. 'Well, since you won't be after robbing me, I'd better be on me way.' With which he sets off briskly northwards.

You may do the same, if you wish, by turning to 41. Or you may like to look into this Giant's Dance stone circle business by returning to the fork from which you can travel south at 37 or south west at 70 (or search the hanging corpse at 10).

64

Well now, here's something to set your nerves atingle. Somehow or other you have stumbled on a vast, dark lake, so still and silent you could hear a goldfish sneeze. Great gnarled trees hang at the edge, trailing ancient branches in the water.

No more than a hundred yards away from you a ferryboat is beached, a craft of strange design, ornately carved with weird demonic heads and mythic beasts. Standing in the prow is a slim, robed and hooded figure: presumably the Ferryman, although his face is lost in the shadow



A sight to set your nerves atingle.

of the hood. As you watch, the figure stretches out one arm. A skeletal hand emerges from the robe and beckons you silently towards him.

*If you feel like a little cruise, you can join this weirdo at **108**.*

*If not, you can circumvent the lake by going north to **40** or travelling further east to **13**.*

65

You search the Barbarian corpses and discover to your greedy delight that each one is carrying a bag of gold.

Roll two dice for each bag and multiply the result by 10 to determine how much gold is in there.

*Now you can move off north through the wilderness to **87** or south to **58**.*

66

You crash through the door like a bat out of heaven to be confronted by your own reflection in the polished bronze of a shield.

In different circumstances you might have concluded that somebody carrying a shield might well have a sword behind it but just at the moment you are too stunned to think. Merlin was not joking. Your reflection stares out at you *with a bolt through its neck!*

Mouth open, you begin to reach up to feel the bolt. But before you can do so, the carrier of the shield, a stocky layabout in peasant's leggings and

a smelly sheepskin jacket, falls upon you with a large wooden club.

*No question of a Friendly Reaction here; nor of First Strike for that matter, which definitely goes to your opponent. He has 26 LIFE POINTS, and the club does + 4 damage. Fortunately he is not a trained fighter, so he needs 6 or better to hit; and since he is not wearing armour, you will do full damage to him every time you hit successfully. If you survive the encounter, you may step over the body and head for **83**. If not, pay an early call to **14**.*

67

Shrub and rock, rock and shrub ... the wilderness goes on forever. Desolate, lonely ...

Well, maybe not quite so lonely here, on account of the little figure sitting on that rock. Quickly you glance at your silver sphere to discover it is flashing blue.

Blue? What on earth does blue mean? Green is safe, amber a little dangerous, red very dangerous, but *blue* ... ? Blue could be anything.

Cautiously you approach the little figure which, on closer inspection turns out to be a well-armoured dwarf. 'Greetings, Sir Dwarf,' you call politely, since you are uncertain whether this is friend or foe.

'Greetings, Gigantic Person,' replies the Dwarf, everything being relative.

My name is Pip,' you introduce yourself. 'Here on

a quest for the great sword Excalibur by order of His Majesty King Arthur of Avalon.'

'My name is Ben,' replies the Dwarf. 'Here to catch a Borfax.'

First your sphere flashes blue, then this little warrior talks about something called a Borfax. The world is full of mysteries. And decisions, come to that.

Will you offer to help Ben catch his Borfax, whatever a Borfax may bet If so, go to 36. If not, you may take your leave politely and trudge off in any of the following directions:

West to 17.

South west to 38.

South to 53.

East to 59.

North to 24.

68

Delicately she touches the left side of the bolt, turns it gently in a screwing motion, then withdraws it with no trouble at all.

'There,' she says, tossing it away. 'I'm sure you'll feel much better without that old thing.'

And perhaps you will. But for now it's off to 31.

69

Cautiously you touch the number.

At once a huge bolt of lightning erupts from the

clear blue sky above the head of the Sage and strikes directly into the box by way, unfortunately, of your head.

See if you can make your hair lie down again, then go to 14.

70

Ah, the joys of life on the open road! Trudging along without the slightest notion of where you're supposed to be going or what to do when you get there. But it's a lovely day, the birds are singing, the air is fresh and the only thing you have to worry about is that huge group of ugly looking peasants with pitchforks bearing down on you.

In a moment they have completely blocked your path. There must be at least 25 of them, looking grim and suspicious, not to say threatening.

'Stand aside,' you say bravely, fingering the hilt of your sword (although in truth you know you wouldn't stand a chance against so many in a fight).

Not until ee shows us your Right of Passage token, properly inscribed,' growls their leader, hefting his pitchfork menacingly.

If you have a Right of Passage Token, simply hand it to the leader and you will be allowed to pass on without hindrance to 111. Alternatively, you might just be in a position to fight all these idiots using magic. (Or, if you're really nuts, you could tackle all 25 without magic and hope EJ is in good form: each has 30 LIFE

POINTS, strikes on 6 and does +2 damage with those pitchforks.) If you succeed, go to 111. If they kill you, go to 14.

Finally, you can always return the way you came. When you reach the fork, you can go north at 4, south at 37 or search the corpse at 10.

71

The trouble with this Wilderness is that one bit of it looks much like any other. At the moment, you have a choice of the following directions, with not a lot to help you in determining which way to go:

North to 87.

West to 116.

South to 76.

East to 29.

72

The great stones of the henge loom all around you. Before you is a flat granite slab laid out to form a massive altar. And on the altar ...

You don't really want to know what's on the altar, do you Pip? You can always go back to your Plan and try another destination. Or slip back to Merlin's House for more supplies. Or something. But if you insist on facing the appalling white faced and long fanged creature even now rising up from that altar, turn to 120.

73

The big problem with this Wilderness is that it all looks the same. Nothing but rough ground, shrub and rock as far as the eye can see.

Patiently you trudge onwards, thinking of your quest, wondering about the great sword without which Arthur can no longer hold his realm.

And so introverted have you become at this time that you fail to notice the amber glow beginning in the silver sphere.

What has occasioned that glow is a small scorpion close by your foot. Since you did not notice it, you have no opportunity to run, or roll for surprise. (And naturally, there is no question of surrendering to a scorpion.) The creature requires 6 or better to strike successfully. It does only 3 LIFE POINTS damage whatever the dice indicate, but will poison you on its first successful strike. This means that you will automatically lose 2 LIFE POINTS for every new section you enter until you munch a little yarrow, which is the only antidote for the poison of this particular breed of scorpion. Killing the scorpion should not be too difficult: it has only 8 LIFE POINTS.

Assuming you survive the scorpion for the moment (and if you don't, you should go to 14) you may go:

West, or north west to 13. North east to 103.

East to 92. South east to 38.

South to 53. South west to 32.

North to 87.

Cautiously you approach the mound. As you get closer, the impression of a gigantic anthill grows stronger.

Closer still, you can see an opening in the side, no more than 6 inches in diameter. A movement catches your eye and you see within the opening two slowly waving antennae. Almost instantly an ant as big as a rat scuttles out, waves its antennae in your direction, then scuttles back in again.

It may, of course, be the only ant at home. Or you may manage a Friendly Reaction 148,000 times if all the ants are at home. Or you may be able to come to some sort of arrangement with the Queen Ant. It's up to you: if you still want to explore this stupid anthill, go to 49.

If not, you can still go:

North to 48.

East to 17.

West to 13.

South to 53.

South east to 38.

'There is no-one in here with me,' you say smoothly. 'Since you have seen through that nonsense I was talking about being Pip the Hero, I suppose I may as well admit I am no more than a wandering ventriloquist.'

'A wandering whatoquist?' asks the peasant, rummaging in the hamper, but finding no-one more interesting than EJ who, fortunately, has the sense to keep his mouth shut and pretend to be a sword.

'Ventriloquist,' you repeat. 'An entertainer who throws his voice, making it appear to come from different places.'

'Never 'eard of that sort of fing before,' remarks the peasant.

'If you will permit me to get out of this hamper, I will demonstrate,' you say.

'Yus, orl right — but no smart moves now, mind.'

You stand up, smiling disarmingly, and step out of the hamper. 'As you can see,' you say, 'there is nothing else in there except that rusty old excuse for a sword. Now listen ...' You strike a dramatic pose and whisper, 'Say something, EJ.'

'Who are you calling a rusty old excuse for a sword?' EJ asks belligerently and loudly.

'Ere,' exclaims the peasant, 'ow did yer do that?'

'A mere bagatelle,' you shrug modestly. 'In fact, if you were to place your club beside the sword, I can make it appear that the two weapons are talking to one another.'

'Really?' asks the idiot, dropping his club into the hamper. 'Go orn, you just prove it then!'

At which point, since he now no longer has his club, you abandon stealth and diplomacy and

punch him in the throat, automatically gaining first strike, but requiring a 6 to hit (since you aren't using EJ) and doing only the damage shown on the dice without any weapons additions.

The stupid peasant has only 15 LIFE POINTS despite his broad build. Since weapons are not being used, no-one will be killed in this combat. If you render him unconscious, gather up EJ and go to 60. If he knocks you unconscious, you will wake up again at 3.

76

Now there's something different! You are approaching a walled city and you realize quite how peculiar when you take a little time to examine the place more carefully: there are no entrances anywhere in the walls! None at all. How do the people of the city get in and out? More to the point, how do sturdy adventurers like your good self get in and out?

The annoying thing is that, from what you can see of it over the walls, it's a most interesting looking city: high slim spires and towers like an illustration from a book of fairy tales.

Convinced there must be an entrance somewhere, you circle round a little. The city, it seems, is divided in two by a river unfortunately too wide, deep and swift for swimming although you do discover an unguarded bridge which allows you to cross from one side to the other, but each sector is completely walled, still with no indication of a way in or out.



77-78

With no way in, your only options are:

South to 81.

East to 29.

West to 47.

North to 87.

77

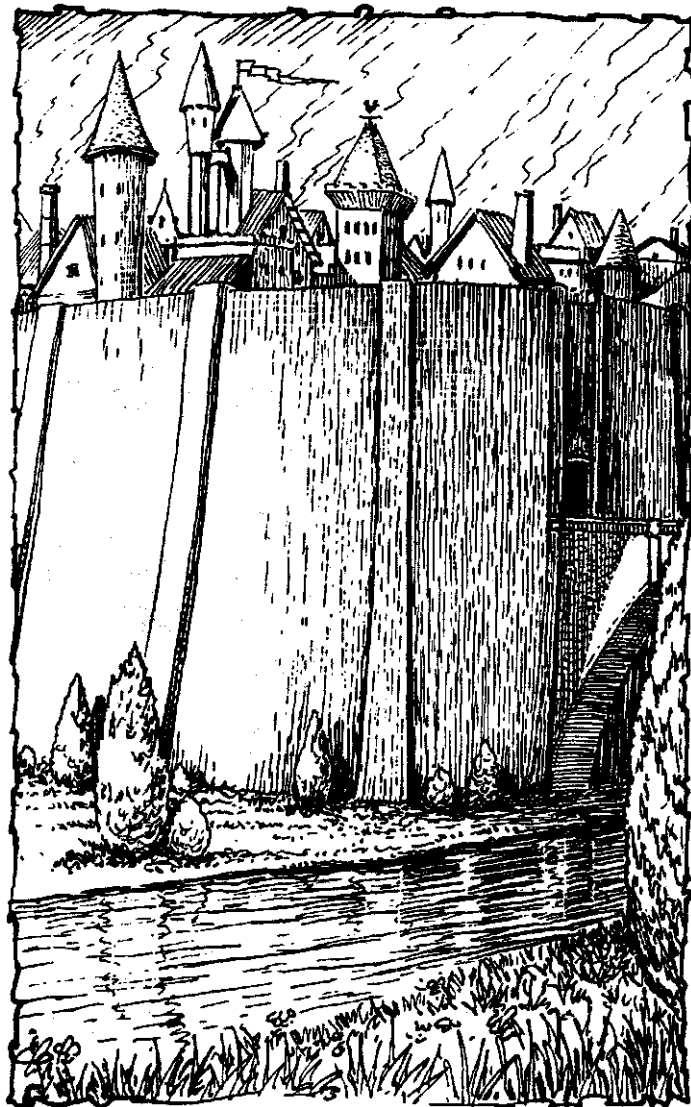
The strong flow of the great river carries you swiftly eastwards for several hours before the waterway narrows and slows.

It occurs to you that this might be your chance to reach the northern side of the river. A lightning fast mental calculation convinces you that your chances of doing so safely are quite high.

Make up your mind now, Pip. If you decide to try for the northern bank, throw two dice. Score above three and you will make it safely to 81. Score 3 or below and your raft overturns, depositing you, luckily enough, at 81, but with the loss of 10 LIFE POINTS due to chill. (If the loss of 10 LIFE POINTS kills you, you will have to get to 81 the long way round... via 14!) Alternatively, you may continue eastwards on the river to 91.

78

You step out of the trees into a clearing and into a great deal of trouble. In the middle of the clearing, hunched over a bubbling cauldron, are three old hooked-nosed crones wearing black dresses and pointy hats. They appear to be making some sort



You approach a very peculiar walled city.

79-80

of stew of toad's legs, newt's eyes and bat's wings. This is either a group of strolling players rehearsing *Macbeth* or a genuine witch's sabbat. And, with your luck, it isn't difficult to guess which.

One of the old dears glances up excitedly. 'Look what we have for desert!' she tells her companions. A disturbing remark, considering she is looking right at you!

Well, it's fight or be stewed. The witches are a bit special as you'll find in the section marked ENEMY STATISTICS on page 192. If you survive this encounter, go to 97. If not, they'll pick your bones and drop them down a chute to 14.

79

Some fight, Pip! And quite worthwhile too, since each of the three brigands was carrying 500 gold pieces which have now become your property.

That's the good news. The bad news is that just around the next corner, the road has been completely blocked by a recent rockfall, so your only option is to return south to the fork.

And there you may continue south at 37, go south west at 70 or search the hanging corpse at 10.

80

You are approaching a large mound which, to be perfectly frank, looks suspiciously like a giant anthill. If it really *is* a giant anthill, the ants themselves would have to be the size of rats,



Three hooked-nosed crones hunched over a cauldron.

81-82

which hardly bears thinking about. But perhaps it isn't a giant anthill.

If you want to explore the large mound go to 74.

If not, you're at liberty to go:

North to 48.

East to 17.

West to 13.

South to 53.

South east to 38.

81

Travelling due south, you quickly find yourself at 99.

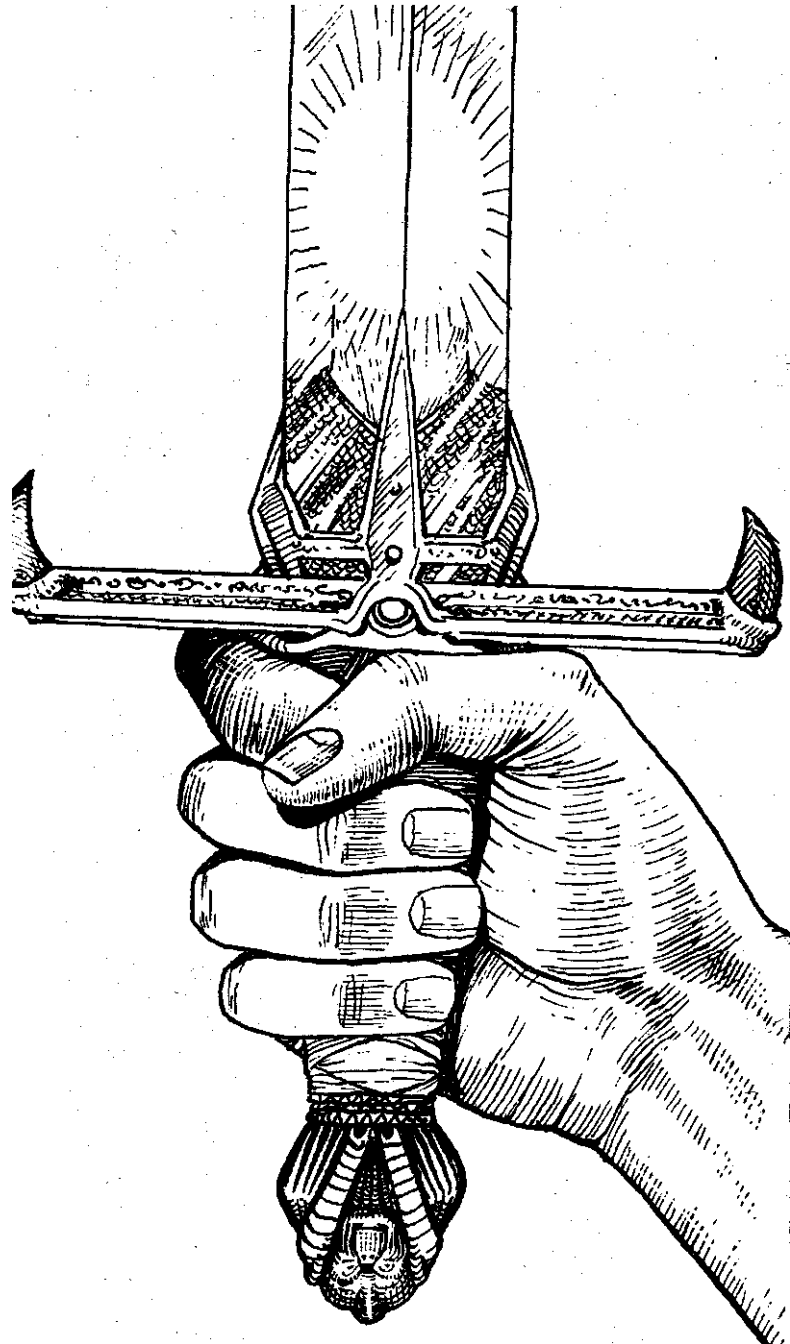
82

Close up, the glistening white crystals look more like salt than ever. Kneeling down, you take some on your finger and touch it to your tongue.

'Here, steady on!' remarks EJ, 'That could be poison, you know!'

At once you clutch your throat, utter a strangled gasp, spin round twice and fall down flat on your back, grimacing horribly, legs and arms twitching uncontrollably.

Then you get up again, grinning. (That'll teach EJ to be such a fusspot.) 'It's not poison,' you tell him. 'In fact, it tastes rather nice.' The crystals have left a pleasant tingling sensation on your tongue.



'Then why has your head disappeared?' EJ asks.

'Oh come on, EJ, you can do better than that! Just because I caught you with my poison act -'

'No,' EJ insists, 'I'm serious. Have a look at your reflection in my blade.'

You peer at the reflection. And he's right! Feet, arms, legs, body are all there - slightly distorted by the polished metal - but no head! Quickly you feel to make sure and poke yourself in the eye. Your head is still there all right, but totally invisible!

'This is incredible,' you murmur. 'These must be some sort of invisibility crystals.'

'Not very good ones,' says EJ. 'Your head is beginning to come back.'

'I only took the smallest taste,' you tell him, beginning to fill your pockets with the crystal powder. 'Maybe if I take a larger dose I can become completely invisible.'

Maybe you can. But you've been paying so much attention to that silly powder that you failed to notice your silver sphere has begun to glow red; and failed to hear the stealthy footsteps creeping up behind you. In fact the first you realise of your danger is when two powerful arms embrace you with a terrifying force. You twist your head, but there is nothing there! Whatever has attacked you is totally invisible!

Since you have no chance to run, surrender or get in the first strike, you might as well know that your attacker's LIFE POINTS are 45, it

strikes successfully on 5 and does a fearsome +6 damage on account of its great strength. More to the point, you will have to roll 7 or better to get free of the creature's grip before you can take a single swipe at it. Each time you fail to roll 7 or better, 6 LIFE POINTS will be crushed out of your current total.

This is bad news all the way, Pip. Even if you succeed in breaking free, you will find your invisible assailant is extremely difficult to hit, so that you miss every second strike no matter what the dice say.

If you're killed in this disaster area, go to 14. If, against all odds, you succeed in dispatching your invisible opponent, go to 96.

83

Now that you have a moment to look around, you quickly take stock of your surroundings. The building you have just left is a perfect cube (with slightly rounded corners) standing on what appears to be a rocky plateau on the top of a small mountain. Neat round windows have been set into the sides of the cube in such a way as to give it the appearance of a six-sided die. The effect is absolutely fascinating, but for the moment you have no time to worry about it.

At the edge of the plateau, a narrow path winds downwards and from your vantage point you can see a group of men hurrying along it. Their progress is being slowed substantially by the furious struggles of a tall, thin, white robed (and

-similarly bearded) figure whom they are, apparently, attempting to kidnap.

'You down there - stop!' you call bravely, waving EJ for added emphasis. The group halts and heads turn at the sound. For a moment they confer together, while you begin to wonder if stealth might not have been a better strategy since there are seven of them altogether, not counting the white robed figure who is certainly your crabby old mentor, Merlin.

The distance is a little too far to hear what they are saying, but in a moment three of the men break away from the group and rush back up the path towards you. All three are waving +3 clubs, so it seems unlikely they are coming back to invite you out to tea. Nonetheless, you stoutly stand your ground, legs akimbo, EJ trembling with suppressed excitement in your strong right hand. The men reach the plateau and the fight is on!

And a tough fight it will be for an adventure that has hardly started yet. Each one of these rough peasants has 20 LIFE POINTS and though they each require a 6 or better to hit, the clubs, as mentioned, do +3 damage. If they kill you in the encounter, go to 14. If you manage to put paid to them, the remainder on the path will release Merlin and run, allowing you to proceed (more or less peacefully) to 7.

84

Cautiously you touch the number.

At once a huge bolt of lightning erupts from the

clear blue sky above the head of the Sage and strikes directly into the box by way, unfortunately, of your head.

See if you can make your hair lie down again, then go to 14.

85

You made it, Pip - congratulations! You are standing on the bridge, a little breathless to be sure, but safe enough for the moment. Glancing about you, you can see the largest part of the city lies to the north, while fewer buildings stand in the southern sector. Before you can make up your mind where to go, you notice two heavily bearded dwarves approaching, one male, one female. Yes, the female dwarf is just as heavily bearded as the male. They stop abruptly as they catch sight of you.

'That person has a nude face, Henry!' exclaims the female dwarf to her companion in some alarm and not a little outrage.

'Nobody dares come to Scroghollow City with a nude face, Minnie,' Henry says. 'Not with the police and the guards and everybody else ready to kill them and beat them and throw them in jail. Nude faces are against the law in Scroghollow.'

He takes her by the arm and, despite the fact that she begins to belabour him strongly with a leather handbag, leads her past you over the bridge, nodding civilly and shortsightedly in your direction.

No harm done there, as it happens, but the

incident would certainly suggest you won't get far in this place unless you have a decently hairy face. If you happen to be carrying a false beard and moustache, whip it out and put it on instantly. If not, you can always try Merlin's House and the equipment store before you move any further. Or you can chance exploring the city with a nude face, in which case you should adopt the following procedure:

Before entering a new section within the city, you must make one roll of a single die. Score 4, 5 or 6 and you can proceed safely to your chosen section. Score below 4 indicates you have encountered a Wandering Dwarf Police Patrol en route. (You can determine how many dwarves are in the patrol by rolling the die again and reading the score as patrol strength.) Unless you are prepared to fight the dwarves to the death, you will then face a challenge. When challenged, you will be obliged to:

- a) Pay a fine of 200 gold pieces on the spot or*
- b) Go to Court.*

If you cannot pay the fine and opt for the Court option, then you must throw the die again. Score 10 to 12 and you will be released with a caution. Score 7 to 9 and you will be temporarily banned from the section you wish to visit and must pick another in its place to visit first. Score anything else and you will be hanged.

Now you may study the City Plan on page 219 and decide where you want to go.

86

The tower is very sturdily built, with only one entrance: a stout wooden door, bolted on the outside as if to keep something in rather than to keep intruders out.

You try the bolt and find that it slides easily. But as it does so, the door crashes open with terrifying force, knocking you flying.

Which is possibly just as well since it places you temporarily out of reach of the creature which has just escaped from its prison, it is squat, very heavily muscled, humanoid but horned and scaled, similar in many respects to the sort of nightmare you might expect from eating cheese and drinking whisky at bedtime. It hesitates, momentarily, blinking at the light. That hesitation gives you the choice of:

*a) Fighting. You will find the creatures stats in the section headed ENEMY STATISTICS on page 192 if you decide on this option. Should you survive the encounter, you may go to **106**. Should you succumb, go to **14**.*

*b) Running like the clappers. Unfortunately it is such a small island that the only way you can escape, now the ferryboat has vanished, is to risk swimming. A roll of 3 or better on a single die will do the trick, allowing you to go north to **40** or*

east to 13. However, a roll of 1 or 2 means you drown, allowing you to go only straight down to 14.

87

This is one of the most remarkable sights you have ever seen, Pip! Only a few hundred yards in front of you, the ground simply ceases, as if you had reached a vast, descending cliff. You move forward cautiously, testing the way beneath your feet. Eventually you reach the edge and look over. The cliff face drops away further than the eye can see, dropping into the depths of Space. This is no ordinary precipice. Far below you can see faintly twinkling stars!

You have reached the edge of the world!

The problem being what you intend to do about it.

South takes you to 11.

South west takes you to 103.

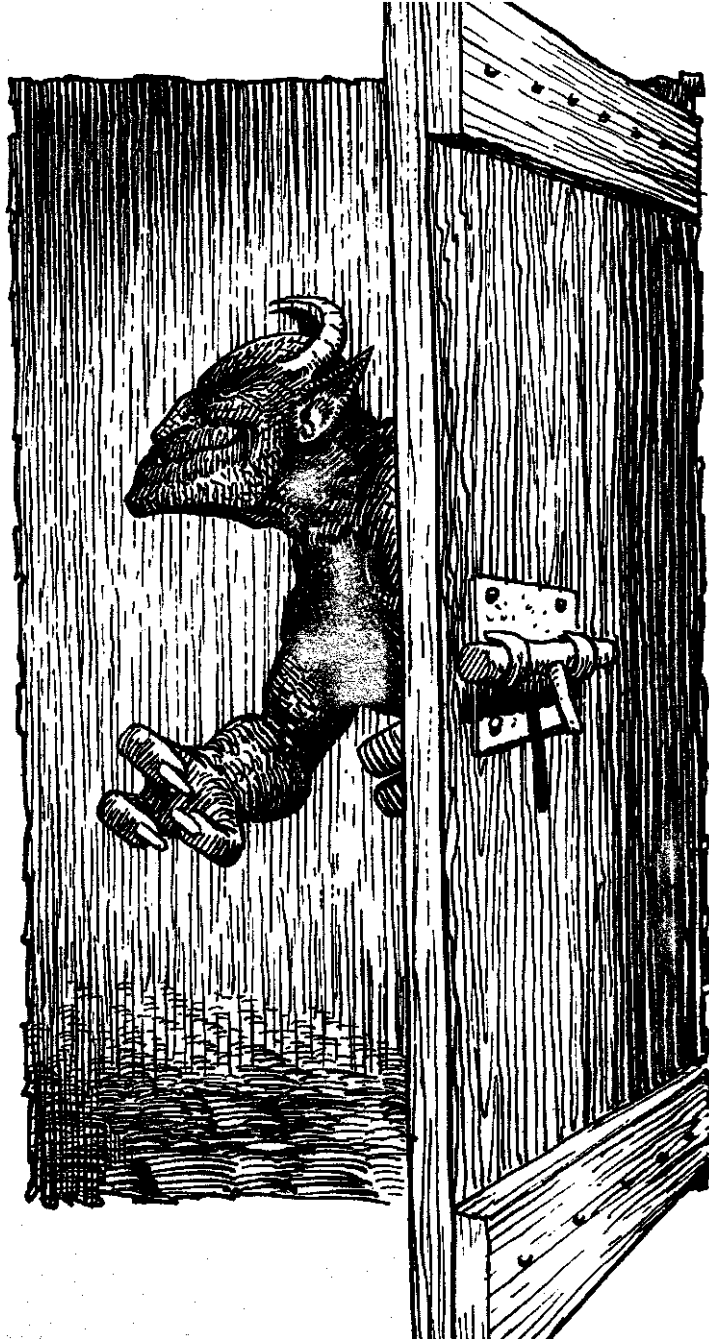
South east takes you to 116.

Any other direction takes you over the edge which, if you're daft enough, you may experience by turning to 147.

88

No sooner do you take the ball in your hand than your surroundings begin to spin dizzily, whirling you off into the depths of the Wilderness.

Go to 71.



89

Look out, Pip - it's a transportation device (in space and possibly even Time as well!) Oh, too late, you've noticed the silly thing despite all the warning notices. The world whirls around you dizzily, you are engulfed by fog which slowly clears.

If you touched *Yellow go to 29.*

Orange go to 50. *Violet go to 87.*

Indigo go to 13.

90

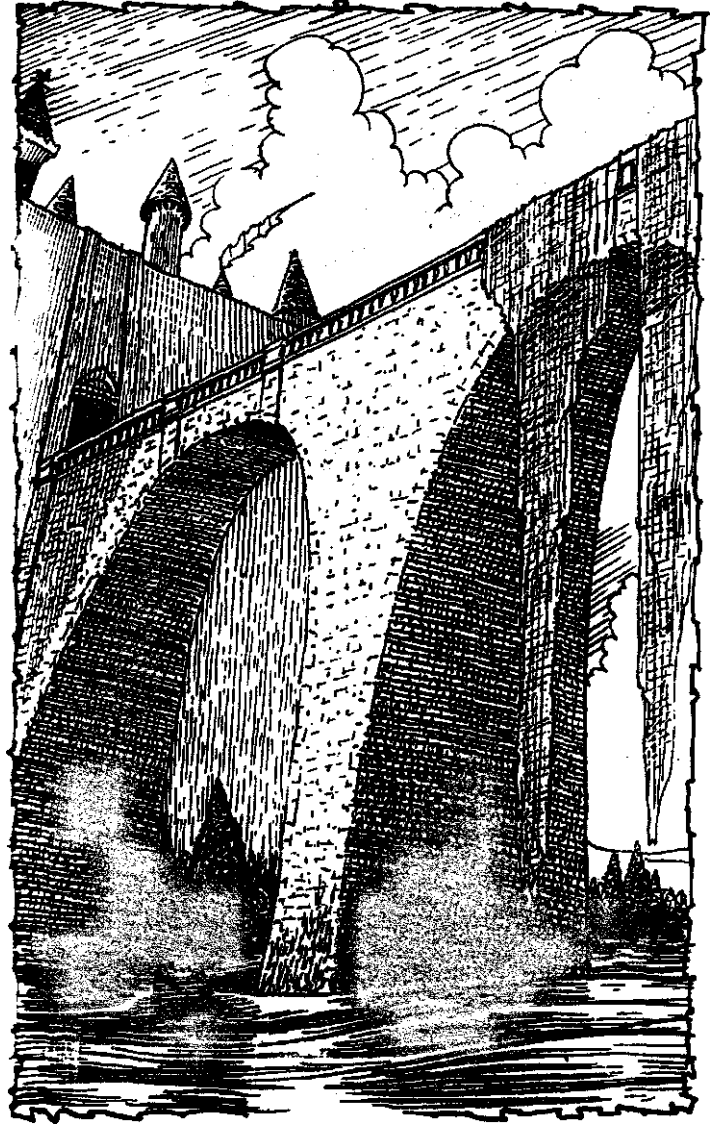
'I'm so relieved,' says Camilla. 'But you will also need this ...' She takes from a fold of her robe a sprig of cherry blossom. (Isn't this a *pretty* part of your adventure? Don't worry, it won't last long.) 'You must offer the blossom to the Guardian of the Gateway.'

'Where do I find the Gateway?' you ask, ever sharp.

'At 56.' Camilla replies, smiling. 'The Guardian will instruct you what to do next.'

91

By George, there is a city up ahead! The river you are on flows right through it! And what a curious city - all slim spires and turrets like some illustration in a book of fairy tales. A high wall surrounds the sectors both north and south of the river, but as the flow sweeps your frail craft eastwards, you can see a huge bridge linking the



Your boat approaches a towering bridge.

two. Trailing from the bridge are heavy fishing nets.

*Those nets are intriguing, Pip. With a bit of luck you could just about reach them as your raft sweeps past and climb up on to the bridge. If you want to try this, roll two dice. Score above 4 and you make it safely to **85**. Score 4 or less and you have a choice — falling into the river and drowning, or getting caught up in the nets and strangled: either way go to **14**.*

*If you prefer to stick with your raft, the river will carry you through the city and onwards to **101**.*

92

Something is moving on the horizon. Something sleek and brown, and there's more than one. A quick glance at your silver sphere confirms what you already half suspect. The sphere glows blood red, indicating you are in big trouble. Quickly you turn, intending to go back the way you came, but behind you, distantly, comes a coughing howl.

You are being hunted, Pip. Turn to the ENEMY STATISTICS section of page 192 to find out by what and how many. If you survive this encounter you may proceed in any of the following directions:

*East to **58**.*

*North to **103**.*

*West to **73**.*

*South to **53**.*

*South east to **80**.*

*If you don't survive, the only place you're going is **14**.*

93

Perhaps not the best building to explore, Pip: this is a Guard Tower. (Roll two dice to determine how many guards are in residence. Each has 15 LIFE POINTS, strikes successfully on 5 or better and does +3 damage with his sword.)

Is it Blagwort or Blogwort?' challenges the nearest Guard formally the moment you make your entrance. 'Answer at once!'

*A lunatic question, but you'd better give some sort of answer. If you think it must be Blagwort go to **107**. If you prefer the sound of Blogwort go to **119**.*

94

The metal surfaces of the cube glows slightly as you approach, radiating differing colours. Of the four sides you can see, one glows faintly orange, one indigo, one violet and one yellow. On each of the four sides is a warning notice stating simply: DO NOT TOUCH!

If you're the sort of adventurer who meekly obeys every silly notice you come across, you can leave the cube to its own devices by going:

West to **58**.

East to **59**.

North to **87**.

South to **53**.

*Of course, if you desperately want to touch the cube, you're quite at liberty to do so. Select the colour of the side you want to touch, keep it firmly in mind or write it down, then turn to **89**.*

95

The steps lead downwards into a 20' x 20' stone lined chamber, with no discernible exit. On the wall opposite the stairs, someone has scrawled a message.

*Will you approach the wall to read the message? If so, go to **156**. If not, you may still return to your Plan and pick another destination.*

96

By George, it's a bear! Great hulking brown bear, now becoming perfectly visible when it's too late to do you any good.

This place could be infested with them for all you know—and heaven alone knows what else in the way of baddies, all totally invisible. Scoop up a pocketful of the crystals. You'll have time to gather enough for six separate doses. Each time you take a dose, throw one die. Score 6 and you will become totally invisible,

gaining automatic surprise on an opponent and ensuring that he will miss you every second strike during combat. Score 5 and your head only will disappear, which can still be useful since any opponent failing to throw a six or better on a double dice roll immediately afterwards will run away in terror. Score anything else and while bits of you will become invisible, the only effect this will have on your opponent will be mild amusement.

Now, let's get out of here before anymore bears turn up.

North to **17**.

South to **53**.

East to **47**.

West to **13**.

97

You certainly did well to survive that mess, Pip. But fortune favours the brave and, while the three old biddies haven't a scrap of gold between them, you are certainly entitled to Minnie's Thunderbolt, Aggie's Kangling and Scrog's Dragonfire Pills.

The Thunderbolt, which hits on a throw of 6 or better, will remove half an opponent's LIFE POINTS and can be used by you only once in this adventure.

The Kangling, which you can sound on a throw of 6 or better, produces a gelatinous cube which

absorbs 10 of your opponent's LIFE POINTS per combat round for as long as the fight lasts. This item can be used only twice in your current adventure.

The Dragonfire Pills, of which there are, unfortunately, only two left by the time you count how many Scrog swallowed and how many she dropped in her excitement, cause you to breathe a plume of fire (no dice roll required) which removes 35 LIFE POINTS from your opponent.

With these valuable magical items, you may now go:

North to 87.

West to 11.

South east to 71.

South to 24.

98

There's quite a racket emerging from this building: banging, hammering and, worst of all, the most tuneless singing you have ever heard in your entire life. Cautiously, you stick your head around the open door. Inside, at rows and rows of wooden benches, close on three hundred dwarves are making shoes (and singing the while). The smell of leather, the tap of hammers, the beat of lapstones and the strangled gulps of swallowed tacks are everywhere. You are about to withdraw your head and creep quietly away when a voice from somewhere on a level with your navel asks,

'Come for a job, have you?' You glance down to find yourself looking at a dwarf dressed in a leather apron on which the single word FOREMAN has been stencilled.

'A job?' you echo foolishly.

'Pays 100 gold a week,' says the foreman dwarf. 'Union rates plus overtime. Are you interested or are you not?'

Well, are you? The gold could come in handy and the work doesn't look all that difficult if you can survive the singing. If you want to apply, go to 109. If not, you can refuse politely and pick another destination from your City Plan.

99

This is really weird, Pip.

Before you is a flat, featureless plain, covered by a short growth of *violet* grass. Beyond looms a towering wall constructed of cut stones any one of which must weigh at least 50 tons. The wall stretches east and west as far as the eye can see, with no indication of gate or door.

You cross the plain to examine the wall more closely. It towers above you like a cliff face, far too high to contemplate climbing and so massive that it would withstand the onslaught of an army.

No chance of going further south now - that great wall is quite impassable. North will take you to 40. West leads to 64. East goes to 54.

100

It's fortunate you have a bit of experience in farming as the adopted child of Freeman John and Goodwife Mary otherwise you'd be trampled by these stupid cows. Nonetheless, you persevere and between yourself and the cow-herd, the herd is eventually back together again.

'Oi be thankful to 'ee, young traveller,' exclaims the cow-herd gratefully, wiping his brow with a bit of straw. 'Them beasts be roight tricky to handle. Oi bain't got no mutt nor woife nor kin to give a helpin' hand. Happen ee moight loike to stay a while and work for Oi? A groat a year be the goin' rate, wi' a bed in the byre and all the mangleworzels ee can eat on Thursdays.'

Even a portable translator wouldn't make much of that lot, but you concentrate hard and conclude this rural entrepreneur is offering you a job.

'Thank you, no,' you refuse politely. 'I fear I already have a job as a professional adventurer.'

'Oh ahr,' nods the yokel sagely, fumbling in the pocket of his smock. 'Then take ee this here Right o' Passage token from the Official Peasant Rebellion Organization Committee of which Oi be shop steward. It moight be of use to ee sommat sometoime.' With which he hands you a small copper disc with a crude 'X' scratched on to one side.

'Thank you,' you reply, pocketing the token and wondering if he might have escaped from a funny farm. Then, as an afterthought you ask, 'I don't

suppose you might know where the entrance to the Fairy Kingdom is hereabouts ?'

'Oh ahr the Kingdom of Horror,' he replies, smiling broadly, 'you be needin' the Goiant's Dance, you be. Take ee the road backaways till ee finds the hanged man, then turn ee south west and mind yourself.'

*Which makes as much sense as anything he's said, although the instructions seem to be clear enough. If you want to follow them, go to the fork where you can search the corpse at **10** or go south west at **70**. (Or north at **4** if you want to be awkward.) Alternatively, you can ignore the cow-herd and look for the cattle track to continue south at **140**.*

101

There's a waterfall up ahead! Good grief, this is real trouble! The river is flowing faster and faster towards the edge of a great precipice, carrying you and your craft along with it! But this is no ordinary waterfall, no ordinary precipice. Even in your panic, you can see the whole environment around you has changed as if you had entered mythic realms. There are strange undercurrents of power here, swirling sheets of energy, distant glimpses of planets, asteroids and stars. The roaring of the waterfall rings louder and louder in your ears. Desperately you search for some means of escape. But it is too late. In a moment of ultimate insanity, you realize where you are and, in that very instant, your raft plunges over the edge of the world!

You fall. And float! Gently you drift downwards into the mist of distant stars, tumbling slowly over and over in a mind-numbing kaleidoscope of sensations.

Doesn't look as if you're for 14. this time, although you never can tell. But where you do end up depends on the interplay of energies at the end of the world. These energies swirl and drift, distorting time and space, so that your destination will always change each time you make the fateful plunge. Roll one die.

Score 1 and go to **29**.

Score 2 and go to **76**.

Score 3 and go to **13**.

Score 4 and go to **99**.

Score 5 and go to **58**.

Score 6, hit turbulence, be ripped apart and go to **14**.

102

This is a church building of some sort - a temple, perhaps — and quite unlike anything you'd find in Avalon. The inscription above the pillars says bewilderingly):

**THE NUMBER IS ZERO!
HAIL TO DACKWORTH, GOD OF DWARVES!**

From the partly open door you can smell the scent of incense and hear sounds of chanting.



103-104

*But do you enter? If the decision is yes, go to **133**. If not, you are free to return to the City Plan and pick a more interesting destination.*

103

Distantly, in the wilderness, you see a curious rock formation, a towering basalt pillar some twenty feet high and so regular that it appears almost to be man-made.

Squatting cross-legged on top of this formation is a robed and hooded figure, so still he might be carved from stone, but definitely a living (if extremely ancient) man.

*If you wish to approach this ancient, go to **27**.*

*If not, due west will take you to **13**, south will get you to **92**, south west to **73**, east to **19**, south east to **48** and any northerly direction to **87***

104

A weird piece of architecture here, Pip. The roof is curved like gently undulating hills and the supporting pillars lean crazily every whichway. Against all odds, it seems to be secure enough though. The entrance door (which has a ticket booth beside it manned by a bearded lady dwarf! carries a brass plaque stating: MUNICIPAL MUSIC HALL. A# From inside comes the sound of singing.

*If you want to enter, go to **122**. If you want to creep a little closer and hear the words of the song, go to **139**. If you want to creep away*

105-106

quietly, go to the City Plan and pick a new destination.

105

The steps lead downwards into a 20' x 20' lined chamber, with no discernible exit. On the wall opposite the stairs, someone has scrawled a message.

*Will you approach the wall to read the message? If so, go to **135**. If not, you may still return to your plan and pick another destination.*

106

You enter the tower with some trepidation following that nasty experience, but there is no danger inside according to your silver sphere which is now glowing green.

In fact, there isn't much inside at all except for a heap of filthy straw in the corner. Holding your nose with one hand, you search with the other and discover three interesting items.

One is an ebony rod with a hollow in the tip which seems to have been made to insert some sort of gemstone. One is a small, unpolished leaden ball about two inches in diameter. And one is a piece of parchment with a coded message. The message reads:

Code 3
EJ MTXCT EQPF IMXVT EXNT MTXU WXMM
PK MTSE QXKU XKU RJ EJ TPRQEZ TPRQE.

*Which may or may not do you a lot of good. Since there is nothing else of interest in the tower and still no sign of that weird ferryman outside, it looks as though you'll have to try swimming if you haven't discovered a better way out. A roll of 3 or better on a single die will do the trick, allowing you to go north to 40 or east to **13**. However, a roll of 1 or 2 means you drown, allowing you to go only straight down to **14**.*

107

'Correct!' exclaims the Guard. 'Here is your Free Pass to the Municipal Music Hall!' With which he hands you a card on which some overworked scribe has written:

MUNICIPAL MUSIC HALL

ADMIT ONE LOYAL VISITOR

FREE

A pleasant gesture to a tourist. Take your Pass and return to your City Plan to pick another destination.

108

The skeletal ferryman says not a word, but makes a mystic gesture in the air and the weird craft pulls away of its own accord and glides silently across the dark waters of the great still lake, carrying you both to **14**. No, sorry, that should be **114**. (Phew!)



109

'Thank you, sir,' you tell this mini-dwarf foreman politely. 'I should indeed like to take a job in your factory.'

'Workshop,' says the foreman. 'It's called a workshop. Only blogs call a place like this a factory. You're not a blog, are you?'

'I don't think so,' you reply, wondering what on earth he's talking about.

'Soon find out, won't we?' remarks the foreman, winning evilly. 'There's the Test.'

110-111

'The Test?' you echo in some trepidation.

'Simple enough,' sniffs the foreman, 'but it certainly sorts the blogs from the blags. You just tell me now which colour you prefer - forest green or russet red?'

Sneakily you glance at the shoes being made, but they are all brown, so that doesn't help.

'Come on,' says the foreman. 'I can't wait all day.'

*You're going to have to answer. If you tell him green, go to **117**. If you think it should be red, go to **123**.*

110

There is a momentary silence as the two dwarves look at you. Then one sadly shakes his head.

'A sinner,' he tells the other.

'Definitely,' the other concurs.

With which they launch themselves upon you with missionary zeal.

*Each priest has 25 LIFE POINTS, strikes successfully on 4 and does +3 damage with the mace. If they beat you to death, go to **14**. If you survive, you may step over their prostrate bodies to enter the Temple at **141**.*

111

You follow the road as before until your eagle eye catches sight of a signpost off the road across the broad surrounding plain. The signpost (burned into wood with a red hot poker by the looks of it and rather neatly done as well) says

TRZMGH WZMXV

*If you feel like following this mysterious signpost, go to **128**. If you want to stick to the road, go to **150**.*

112

What a merry place! Dwarves of all descriptions, dressed in the gaudiest of colours, wassailing and carousing, singing, dancing on the tables, fighting... an honest tavern by all appearances and quite like Avalon on a Saturday night. You shoulder your way to the bar, eyes narrowed as you keep a sharp look-out for the great sword Excalibur, this being just the sort of place you would expect to find rogues and thieves displaying their ill-gotten booty. You lean against the counter, a half smile playing grimly across your lips as you survey the merry throng. 'Three fingers of rye, a chew and a spittoon!' you drawl across your shoulder to the barman.

'Wot?' asks the barman.

You pull yourself together. 'My pardon,' you say politely. 'What I meant to say was a tankard of mead, by your leave, and a little information.'

'Mead it is,' says the barman. He leans forward confidentially and adds, 'Is it A or is it O?'

'Is it what?' you ask, taken aback. You are suddenly aware the whole tavern has gone quiet.

'I said,' repeats the barman, 'is it A or is it O?'

Everybody is looking at you, Pip — and there are

113-114

quite a few unsavoury characters in here. Better give him some sort of answer. If you think it's A, go to 149. If you think it's O, try 137.

113

'Wrong!' he shrieks.

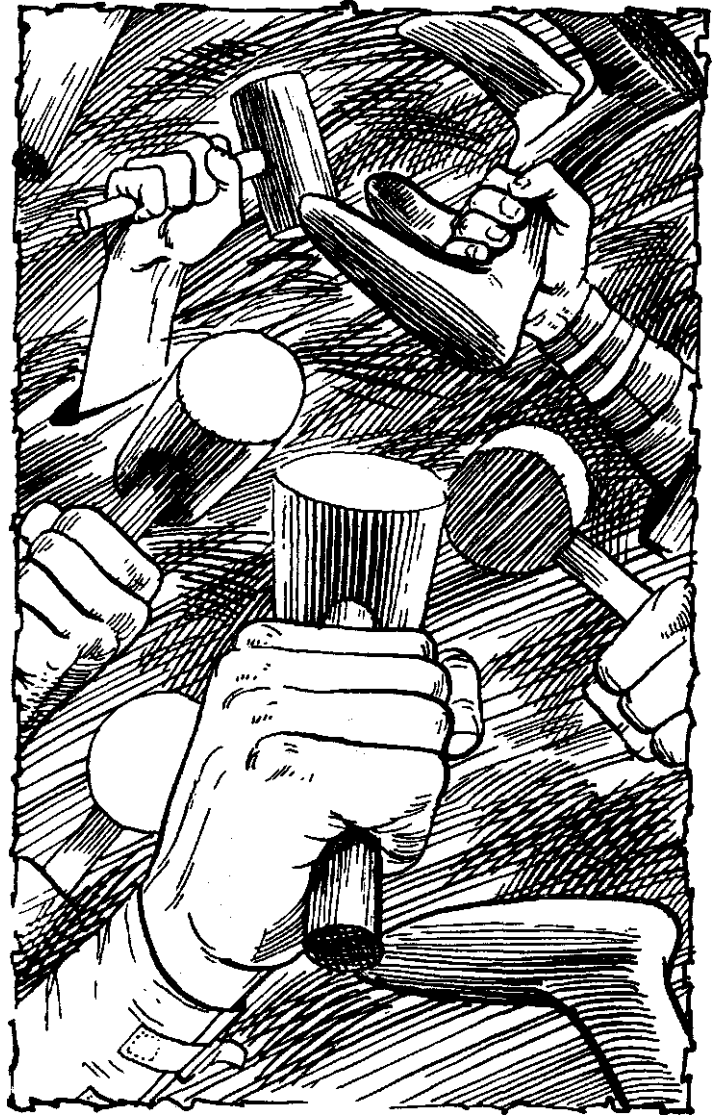
'Wrong!' chorus the workers, abandoning their benches and falling upon you furiously with a great waving of mallets and lapstones.

And fight bravely though you undoubtedly do, you have no chance against such superior numbers. The dwarves overpower you, carry you to the bridge at 85 and unceremoniously dump you over the edge. The nets are still there, but in your present situation you have less chance of climbing up them. Throw two dice. Score 6 or more and you scramble safely back up the nets to 85 on your City Plan, with the dwarves fortunately gone. Score less than 6 and you sink like a stone to 14.

114

The craft beaches on an island and, at a sign from the figure, you disembark. A quick glance around shows you the island is featureless other than a small, dark, stone-built tower near its centre.

'What is ...' you begin. But as you turn you find to your dismay that you are talking to yourself. Both the Ferryman and his weird craft have completely vanished.



They fall upon you with a great waving of mallets and lapstones.

115-116

*The tower doesn't look all that promising - in fact, it looks positively threatening - but if you want to explore it, go to **86**. Alternatively, you can try swimming back across the lake. A roll of 3 or better on a single die will do the trick, allowing you to go north to **40** or east to **13**. However, a roll of 1 or 2 means you drown, allowing you to go only straight down to **14**.*

115

The notice says, Municipal Museum! What a crashing bore.

*If you really want to explore this fossil repository, go to **155**. If not, there should be some interesting places left on your City Plan.*

116

Something is moving on the horizon. Something sleek and brown, and there's more than one. A quick glance at your silver sphere confirms what you already half suspect. The sphere glows blood red, indicating you are in big trouble.

Quickly you turn, intending to go back the way you came, but behind you, distantly, comes a coughing howl.

You are being hunted, Pip. Turn to the ENEMY STATISTICS section on Page 192 to find out by what and how many. If you survive this encounter you may proceed in any of the following directions:

*East to **71**.*

*North to **87**.*

117-118

*West to **19**.*

*South to **24**.*

*South east to **59**.*

*South west to **35**.*

*If you' don't survive, the only place you're going is **14**.*

117

'By the Holy Zero, you're definitely a blag!' exclaims the foreman dwarf in a sudden burst of total unintelligibility. 'You can start right away!'

So now you've got yourself an honest job - at least for a while. If you throw two dice and multiply your answer by 100 it will tell you how much gold you will earn before you return to your City Plan and pick another destination.

118

There's quite a racket emerging from this building: banging, hammering and, worst of all, the most tuneless singing you have ever heard in your entire life. Cautiously, you stick your head around the open door. Inside, at rows and rows of wooden benches, close on three hundred dwarves are making shoes (and singing the while). The smell of leather, the tap of hammers, the beat of lapstones and the strangled gulps of swallowed tacks are everywhere. You are about to withdraw your head and creep quietly away when a voice from somewhere on a level with your navel asks, 'Come for a job, have you?' You glance down to

find yourself looking at a dwarf dressed in a leather apron on which the single word FOREMAN has been stencilled.

'A job?' you echo foolishly.

'Pays 100 gold a week,' says the foreman dwarf. 'Union rates plus overtime. Are you interested or are you not?'

Well, are you! The gold could come in handy and the work doesn't look all that difficult if you can survive the singing. If you want to apply, go to 148. If not, you can refuse politely and pick another destination from your City Plan.

119

'Wrong!' exclaims the Guard furiously. 'There's a traitor in our midst - at him, lads!' With which you find yourself under such violent attack that you do not even have time to roll for first strike but must submit to one blow before you can get EJ out of his scabbard.

As mentioned, you should toll two dice to determine how many guards are in residence. Each has 15 LIFE POINTS, strikes successfully on 5 or better and does +3 damage with his sword. If you survive the bundle, you may pick another destination on the City Plan. If you don't, your choice is limited to 14.

120 B (Special)

'Greetings, Visitor to this place
How glad I am to see your face -'

Oh, no, it can't be!

'For I am lonely on this stone

Which tends to freeze one's backside to the bone.'

'Oh yes, it is!

'And while that has made me

Short-tempered as you can see'

I will accept your visit is well meant

Provided you have the proper equipment.'

Only one creature on earth could mouth verse quite as bad as that - the incredible Poetic Fiend, whose name is a living legend among adventurers the length and breadth of Avalon!

'And know exactly what to do,' (the Fiend continues)

Otherwise you'll be in a stew!

Summoning all your wits you quickly extemporize your reply:

'Oh, mighty Poet,

I do know it.

As to equipment,

It will serve

To take me just as far as I deserve!'

'Well said!' exclaims the Fiend. He approaches you with hand outstretched. 'But I'll still have to assure myself you have everything you need: a small, special gold coin and the coded instructions on how to use it.'

*If you have the coin and instructions turn to 6.
If not, you are in deep trouble since*

(a) you are going to have to go back and look for them and

(b) the Fiend will require a Bribe of 500 gold pieces in addition when you return here.

(Trying to fight your way through to 6 is useless, incidentally, since the Fiend will simply rhyme you to death. Friendly reactions won't work either — the Fiend is friendly enough, but still won't let you through.)

*To search for your missing bits and bobs, your best bet is to go right back to the fork in the road from whence you may follow the Roman road north, by going to **4**, take the southern fork at **37**, the southwestern fork at **70**, pick some of the yarrow at **18**, or examine the smelly corpse at **10**.*

121

As you stand staring up at this building trying to make sense of the sign above the door, a dwarf emerges and strolls slowly in your direction.

'Excuse me,' he says grimly, 'but do you know you are illegally parked?'

You back off in sudden alarm. 'Illeg ... ? Me ... ? Park... ? I...? No, no I didn't.' You can see he is wearing a uniform and suddenly the sign above the door (truncheons rampant on a field d'or with helmet sinister) makes sense: this is a Police Station!

'Fraid so,' he tells you, taking out a notebook. 'If you wouldn't mind answering one or two questions ... ?'

'No, not at all,' you tell him, fingering EJ nervously in case this turns into something more serious. (Like a desperate attempt to slaughter the entire Scroghollow Constabulary.)

'The first question is,' says the dwarven constable carefully, 'Are you a blag?' He pauses, significantly. 'The second question is: Are you a blog?'

*Tough questions. If you answer blag, go to **143**. If you feel more like a blog, go to **154**.*

122

'Got your Pass?' asks the Lady dwarf as you approach her booth.

*If you're carrying a Free Pass to the Music Hall, go to **159**. If not, you could try conning your way in at **151**.*

123

'Wrong!' he shrieks.

'Wrong!' chorus the workers, abandoning their benches and falling upon you furiously with a great waving of mallets and lapstones.

*And fight bravely though you undoubtedly do, you have no chance against such superior numbers. The dwarves overpower you, carry you to the bridge at **85** and unceremoniously dump you over the edge. The nets are still there, but in your present situation you have less chance of climbing up them. Throw two dice. Score 6 or more and you scramble safely*

124-125

back up the nets to 85 on your City Plan, with the dwarves fortunately gone. Score less than 6 and you sink like a stone to 14.

124

This is one monumentally large building, Pip. Unguarded, but locked up tight. A notice by the main door states:

CLOSED UNTIL 10.30 PM.

This is still a good few hours away, despite all the time you've wasted messing around in this city. Nevertheless, not being one to miss an opportunity, you have a little peer in at one of the windows.

Inside you can see rows upon rows of identical bunk beds with a wooden locker beside each. A notice on the far wall states:

LONG LIVE KING BLAGWORT

Not much more to see here, Pip. Better select another destination from your City Plan.

125

'By the Holy One, you're definitely a blog!' exclaims the foreman dwarf in a sudden burst of total unintelligibility. 'You can start right away!'

So now you've got yourself an honest job ~ at least for a while. If you throw two dice and multiply your answer by 100 it will tell you how much gold you will earn before you

126-127

return to your City Plan and pick another destination.

126

Wrong!' exclaims the Guard furiously. 'There's a traitor in our midst - at him, lads!' With which you find yourself under such violent attack that you do not even have time to roll for first strike but must submit to one blow before you can get EJ out of his scabbard.

As mentioned, you should roll two dice to determine how many guards are in residence. Each has 15 LIFE POINTS, strikes successfully on 5 or better and does +3 damage with his sword. If you survive the bundle, you may pick another destination on the City Plan. If you don't, your choice is limited to 14.

127

The building has open sides and beneath the high roof supported by colonnades is a bustling hive of dwarven activity. A single glance tells you what is going on: boatbuilding. On a nearby pillar somebody has stuck a notice stating:

ALL JOB APPLICATIONS

TO THE FOREMAN.

Directly underneath it is a second notice stating:

JOIN THE REVOLUTION!

SEE COMRADE NAGAER FOR DETAILS.

And directly under this is a third notice stating:

INQUIRIES

You glance across in the direction of the arrow to discover a small elevated platform with a desk on top. Sitting behind the desk is a dwarf.

If you want to make inquiries about a job or joining the revolution, you can reach the elevated platform by turning to 162. If not, you can return to your City Plan and pick a new destination.

128

This looks really interesting. You've reached a massive ring of Standing Stones: monoliths, megaliths, trilithons - the whole bag! This must be what they call the Giant's Dance locally, although you have some faint memory that the Romans (when they were in Avalon) called it Apollo's Temple and in a later age — the one you've come from thanks to Merlin's Net Spell - this is the ancient construction known as Stonehenge. Now you know where you are! Salisbury Plain! But how can this be the entrance to the Fairy Kingdom or the Kingdom of Horror, as some people seem to be calling it?

You'd better do a little exploration and see if you can find out. There is a neat map of the Giant's Dance on page 221 with various places numbered. Use it to decide where you are going next.

129

'Hold hard!' you cry and launch yourself upon the runaway.

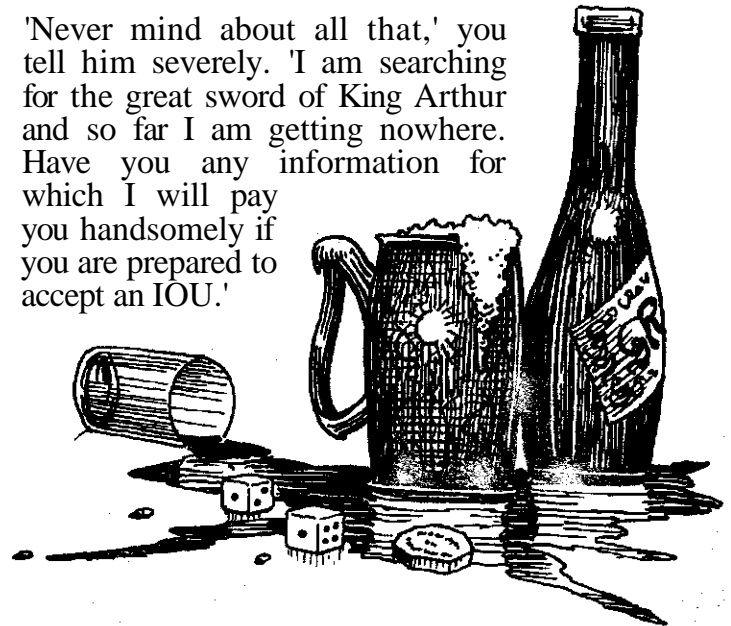
Who has 25 LIFE POINTS and will fight furiously for his freedom using a +2 dagger which will hit successfully on 5 or better. If he kills you, go to 14. If not, turn to 160.

130

If you've been feeling thirsty, you've certainly stumbled on the right place: it's a tavern and not too busy either by the look of it.

'Is is A or is it O?' the barman calls cheerfully as you approach. 'Is it blog or is it blag? Is it green or is it red? Is it sour or is it sweet? Is it even worth the bother?' And he giggles and sways alarmingly.

'Never mind about all that,' you tell him severely. 'I am searching for the great sword of King Arthur and so far I am getting nowhere. Have you any information for which I will pay you handsomely if you are prepared to accept an IOU.'



The barman sobers instantly. 'They say the blogs have it,' he mutters in a low, fearful voice. 'But whether you can believe what they say is a different matter. What will you do if you find the sword, Noble Adventurer?'

'I shall wrest it from the villain who purloined it and return it to its rightful owner, my liege Lord, King Arthur of Avalon!' you proclaim.

'Blow me down!' exclaims the barman in admiration. 'I'll toss you for a token.' He produces an octagonal pewter token from beneath the bar, along with a brace of dice. 'Highest roll wins.'

As you take the dice to roll them, you notice engraved on the pewter token the words:

PALACE PROPERTY
LONG LIVE KING BLOGWORT

Roll once for the barman, once for yourself. If your roll is higher than his, you may have the token. If not, buy him a drink and find another destination on your City Plan.

'I'm looking for the foreman,' you tell the dwarf. 'That's me,' he replies. 'Job, is it?' You nod. 'Think you can stand the pace — it's heavy work?'

'I'm sure I can, sir,' you say politely. 'I am something of a seasoned adventurer, which is heavy work in itself.'

'Soon see about that,' the foreman says cheerfully



'Think you can stand the pace?' asks the Dwarven foreman.

He turns and calls loudly, 'Alf!'

And out of the crowd of bustling shipbuilders lumbers the broadest, baldest dwarf you have ever seen. He stops in front of you, frowning slightly and flexing muscles.

'Alf's our New Applicant Test Executive. You fight bare handed. No scratching, no gouging, no hitting below the belt. If you're still standing after four rounds, you're in.'

The fight won't kill you, or Alf either come to that. Roll for the first strike as usual. Since this is a friendly punch-up, you won't be using EJ so you will need a 6 or better to hit and score only dice damage with no weapons additions. One strike by you and one strike by Alf counts as a round. Alf hits at +10 because of his enormous strength, but your damage score against him should be deducted from the damage he scores against you in that particular round. If you still have 10 or more LIFE POINTS after four rounds of this, you can go to work in the shipyard for a double dice roll of days at 100 gold pieces a day. When you collect your pay at the end of that time, go to 170.

If you can't stand up to four rounds with Alf, go back to your City Plan and pick another destination.

132

'Thank you,' says the Giant. 'I adore cherry blossom. Take this and pass through the Gateway.'

'This' turns out to be a scroll on which is written:
DSVM (ZMW RU!) BLF YVHG GSV NLMHGVI,
KOZXV TLOWVM WRHX LM ZOGZI ZMW
HGZMW YZXP ZMW TL GL ULIGB GSIW!

Keep the scroll carefully and step through the Gateway, which transports you directly to 72.

133

You move towards the door, only to have your way blocked by two broad shouldered dwarves in priestly robes carrying wicked-looking maces.

'Peace,' intones one, waving his mace.

'Hail who?' asks the other, threateningly.'

'Dackworth, God of Dwarves!' you reply promptly, remembering the inscription.

'What is the number?' inquires the first priest, still waving that menacing mace.

'Zero!' you reply triumphantly, again remembering the inscription.

'Is it Sweet or is it Sour?' asks the second priest, scowling.

You stare at him dumbly. *That* certainly wasn't on the inscription!

But on it or not, they're looking for an answer. If you think it might be Sweet, go to 110. If Sour takes your fancy, try 158.

134

Well said!' exclaims the Guard in admiration. He

135

draws a sheet of parchment from his jacket and hands it over to you. 'You've earned this.'

You glance at the writing on the parchment. It reads:

FREE PASS TO
MUNICIPAL MUSEUM

(NEUTRAL TERRITORY AND DIPLOMATIC
IMMUNITY, ETC.)

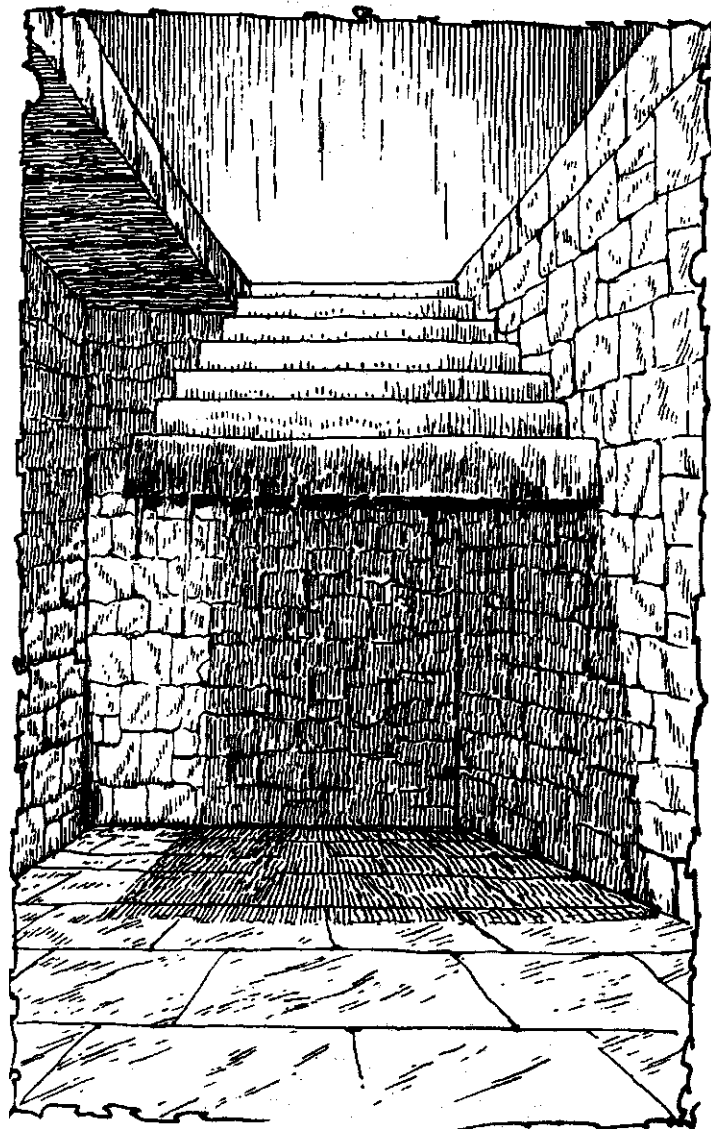
A puzzling document, but it may come in useful. Now stash it away and pick another destination from your City Plan.

135

As you step on to the floor of the chamber, a sudden grinding noise erupts behind you. You swing round, just in time to see the stairs withdrawing upwards, sealing the room completely and leaving you trapped. With an oath too obscene and terrible to record here (except in code as follows: LS WIZG!) you turn back to the wall and the scrawled message. It reads:

'Mortal, beware. You stand at the brink. Those who enter the Kingdom of the Fairy do so at their peril. Only the bravest and most daring may venture beyond this point. Prove yourself now by defeating the Ghastly Guardian Ghoul... or die in the attempt.'

The Ghastly Guardian Ghoul? There's no Ghastly Guardian Ghoul here — just an empty chamber



You swing round to see the stairs withdrawing upwards ...

with no exit now the stairs have disappeared. Frowning, you read the message again, wondering vaguely if you somehow misunderstood it. But it's plain enough.

'Hello . . . ' you call uncertainly. 'Any ghouls here . . . ?'

'Just one,' a soft voice whispers in your ear.

You spin round in sudden alarm. The creature before you is nearly eight feet tall with pink eyes, chalk white skin, claws, fangs, pointy ears, long arms and a natty little moustache. It is wearing a mackintosh and gumboots, doubtless torn savagely from some earlier adventurer, and carrying a mace from which drips a poisonous green slime.

It smiles. 'Welcome to the Kingdom of Horror,' it says.

This is big trouble, Pip. Don't waste your time trying for a Friendly Reaction — you should know by now you never get one from a ghoul. This particular Ghoul has exactly the same LIFE POINTS as you have, strikes on 4 or better and does +5 damage with that brutal mace. Worse still, the first successful strike it gets will poison you so that you automatically lose 3 LIFE POINTS during every combat round until the fight is over.

If the Ghoul kills you (and it will certainly try its best) go to 14. If you kill the Ghoul, turn to 22.

136

This huge building is locked, bolted and deserted. A notice nailed to the main doors states:

BOATYARD
CLOSED DUE TO STRIKE

Underneath it, someone has scrawled in code:

Code 4

ASFS IJLY PSFS RIF DPS VSSF!

Nothing else for it but to return to your City Plan and pick another destination.

137

'Right!' he exclaims.

'Right!' choruses the motley crew, returning to their former occupations.

'The mead's on me,' growls a sinister-looking dwarf a little way down the bar. He is nattily dressed in black with silver edging. He sidles up to you. 'Couldn't help but overhear you asking for information, Stranger. That could be misunderstood in these parts. Some might take you for a blag. But not me. If you need information, just ask. The name is Honest Harry.'

Are you going to risk asking this sinister (if honest) personage for information on Excalibur? If so, turn to 152. If not, buy him a drink and get out of here fast to somewhere — anywhere - else on your City Plan.

138

You've landed into action here and no mistake, Pip. As you approach this building you can see a masked dwarf carrying a large sack prominently marked 'Swag' racing like the clappers in your direction. Behind him, in hot pursuit, are three uniformed dwarves with drawn truncheons.

'Stop that dwarf!' calls one of the truncheon-bearers, catching sight of you.

Stopping the runaway dwarf could be dangerous, but if you want to try, turn to 129. If you would prefer not to get involved, turn your back and walk briskly to 180.

139

The words of the song, which you can now hear quite clearly, having crept closer, are:

'De Scroghollow Racetrack's three feet long.
Do-dah. Do-dah. In de northern half where it
belong. Do-dah. Do-dah. Dey!'

Quite edifying really, but if you've quite finished you should decide what you want to do next. If you want to enter, go to 122. If you want to creep away quietly, go to the City Plan and pick a new destination.

140

Bum move, Pip: the ground is so churned up her that you don't have a pup's chance of finding the track.

Unless you want to get lost in the wilderness better go back to the fork where you can search

the corpse at 10, go south west at 70, or north at 4.

141

The interior of the temple is a huge circular chamber, ringed by colonnades. At the exact centre stands an organ on which a long-haired dwarf is pounding out a frenzied rendition of 'Roll Out The Barrel'. Around him stand groups of dwarves in silent meditation.

Dotted around the place are statues of a giant dwarf, which you take to be representations of the god, Dackworth. In front of the one nearest you is an offering plate in which lies an octagonal copper token.

If you feel like robbing a church, make a grab for the token and go to 161. If not, you can simply steal away (bad pun) and pick another destination from your City Plan.

142

It's a castle - and a very well-guarded castle at that. Pennant banners on the turrets identify it as 'Blagwort Keep' and the whole place is so securely fortified it would take a full-scale army to capture it.

There is, however, a steady stream of visitors through the main gates, each one stopped briefly by the palace guards and either turned quietly away or permitted to enter.

Curiously, you join the queue. As you reach the Guards, you are asked, politely enough, 'Do you 'ave Palace Tokens?'

143-144

Well, do you? If you have any octagonal tokens, turn to 163. If not, you're just going to have to go back to your City Plan and pick another destination.

143

The dwarven constable looks mollified. 'So far, so good,' he remarks. 'But where were you on the night of the 25th?'

'I don't know!' you cry desperately. 'I can't remember!'

'Nor can I,' says the constable, putting away his notebook and fishing a small octagonal copper token from his pocket. 'Here you are then,' he says, handing it across. 'Now be off with you and stay out of trouble.'

You glance at the copper token. Engraved on its surface are the words:

PALACE PROPERTY

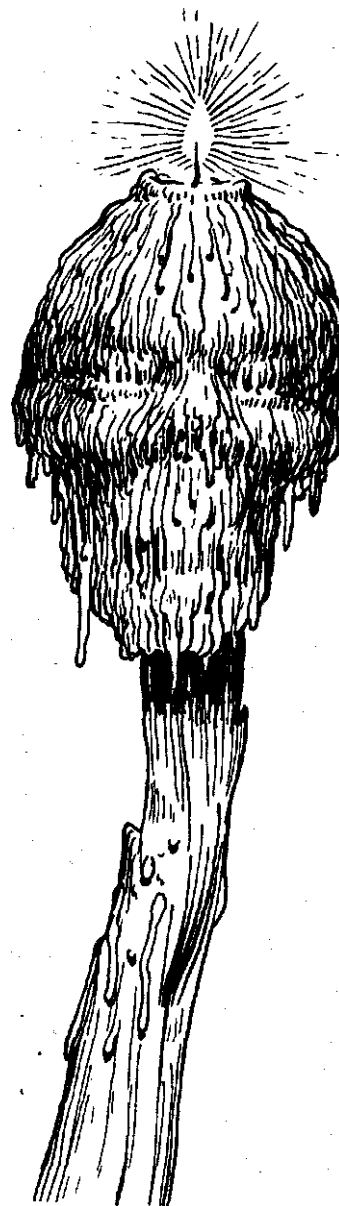
LONG LIVE KING BLAGWORT

Pocket the token and get away quickly, Pip. never pays to argue with the police. You can select another destination from your City Plan.

144

Congratulations on a sterling effort. The bad news, however, is that he is coming round again.

'By Jove,' mutters the Giant, 'it's years since anybody has got the better of me like that.' He picks himself up and says, 'Take this scroll - you



145-146

deserve it - and pass without further let or hindrance.'

You glance at the scroll, discovering with a sinking feeling, but probably no surprise at all, that it is coded:

DSVM (ZMW RU!) BLF YVHG GSV NLMHGVJ,
KOZXV TLOWVM WRHX LM ZOGZI ZMW
HGZMW YZXP ZMW TL GL ULIGB GSIW!

Keep the scroll carefully and step through the Gateway, which transports you directly to 72.

145

Perhaps not the best building to explore, Pip: this is a Guard Tower. (Roll two dice to determine how many guards are in residence. Each has 15 LIFE POINTS, strikes successfully on 5 or better and does +3 damage with his sword.)

'Is it Blagwort or Blogwort?' challenges the nearest Guard the moment you make your entrance. 'Answer at once!'

A lunatic question, but you'd better give an answer. If you think it must be Blagwort go to 126. If you prefer the sound of Blogwort go to 134.

146

'I'm looking for Comrade Nagaer,' you tell the dwarf.

'That's me, Comrade,' he tells you. 'Come to join the Revolution, is it?' You nod, wondering what on earth the Revolution is all about.



Uh, oh — you've stumbled on the Guard Tower.

'Willing to take the Loyalty Trial?'

'I suppose so.'

'Good!' he says, then calls over his shoulder, 'Comrade Alf!'

And out of the crowd of bustling shipbuilders lumbers the broadest, baldest dwarf you have ever seen. He stops in front of you, frowning slightly and flexing muscles.

'Comrade Alf's our Revolutionary Council Loyalty Investigation Committee Trial By Combat Sub Committee chairman,' Comrade Nagaer explains. 'You fight bare handed. No scratching, no gouging, no hitting below the belt. If you're still standing after four rounds, you're in.'

The fight won't kill you, or Comrade Alf either come to that. Roll for first strike as usual. Since this is a friendly punch-up, you won't be using EJ so you will need a 6 or better to hit and score only dice damage with no weapons additions One strike by you and one strike by Alf count as a round. Alf hits at +10 because of his enormous strength, but your damage score against him should be deducted from the damage he scores against you in that particular round. If you still have 10 or more LIFE POINTS after four rounds of this, you can stagger off to join the Revolution at 175.

If you can't stand up to four rounds with Comrade Alf, go back to your City Plan and pick another destination.

With one mad, suicidal step, you plunge over the edge of the world!

And fall. And float! Gently you drift downwards into the mist of distant stars, tumbling slowly over and over in a mind-numbing kaleidoscope of sensations.

Doesn't look as if you're for 14 this time, although you never can tell. But where you do end up depends on the interplay of energies at the end of the world. These energies swirl and drift, distorting time and space, so that your destination will always change each time you make the fateful plunge. Roll one die.

Score 1 and go to 29.

Score 2 and go to 76.

Score 3 and go to 13.

Score 4 and go to 99.

Score 5 and go to 58.

Score 6, hit turbulence, be ripped apart and go to 14.

'Thank you, sir,' you tell this foreman politely. 'I should indeed like to take a job in your workshop.'

Factory,' says the foreman. 'It's called a factory. Only blags call a place like this a workshop. You're not a blag, are you?'

'I don't think so,' you reply, wondering what on earth he's talking about.

'Soon find out, won't we,' remarks the foreman, grinning evilly. 'There's the Test.'

'The Test?' you echo in some trepidation.

'Simple enough,' sniffs the foreman, 'but it certainly sorts the blogs from the blags. You just tell me now which colour you prefer — forest green or russet red?'

Sneakily you glance at the shoes being made, but they are all light yellow, so that doesn't help.

'Come on,' says the foreman, 'I can't wait all day.'

*You're going to have to answer. If you tell him green, go to **113**. If you think it should be red go to **125**.*

149

'Wrong!' he shrieks.

'Wrong!' chorus the motley crew, falling upon you furiously.

*And fight bravely though you undoubtedly do, you have no chance against such superior numbers, even if half of them are three sheet to the wind. The dwarves overpower you, can you to the bridge at 85 and unceremoniously dump you over the edge. The nets are still there, but in your present situation you have less chance of climbing up them. Throw two dice. Score 6 or more and you scramble safely back up the nets to **85** on your City Plan, with*

*the dwarves fortunately gone. Score less than 6 and you sink like a stone to **14**.*

150

The road begins to curve gently, but you follow it grimly until it disintegrates into a cattle track. You press on regardless, while the going gets more and more confused, until you pick up the road again, which seems to be running north now. You follow it until. . .

Wouldn't that make you mad! You're back at the fork with the hanging corpse, having approached it from the south this time.

*You can now follow the Roman road north, by going to **4**. Or go back south at **37**. Or take the southwestern fork at **70**. Or you might pick some of the yarrow at **18**. Or examine that smelly corpse at **10**.*

151

'I'm afraid not,' you tell her, 'but I am quite prepared to pay if the price is not too high.'

'High?' echoes the lady dwarf. 'Price? You can't put a price on culture! Be off with you!'

Which seems to put paid to the diplomatic approach. Since it hardly seems worthwhile fighting a lady dwarf to the death to get into a music hall, you'd better return to your City Plan and pick another destination.

152

The place has gone quiet again. Even Honest

153

Harry seems subdued. He glances around him and lowers his voice. 'We don't talk much about matters of that sort round here, Stranger. But since you're obviously a blog at heart, I'd suggest you try a very similar establishment to this one at 130.'

With which he drains his glass and sidles off.

Leaving you to decide on another destination on your City Plan.

153

It's a castle - and a very well-guarded castle at that. Pennant banners on the turrets identify it as 'Blogwort Keep' and the whole place is so securely fortified it would take a full-scale army to capture it.



154

There is, however, a steady stream of visitors through the main gates, each one stopped briefly by the palace guards and either turned quietly away or permitted to enter.

Curiously, you join the queue. As you reach the Guards you are asked, politely enough, 'Do you have Palace Tokens?'

Well, do you? If you have any octagonal tokens, turn to 173. If not, you're just going to have to go back to your City Plan and pick another destination.

154

'Not very satisfactory that, is it?' asks the constable sourly, drawing his truncheon with great deliberation. 'I must ask you to pay the fine or accompany me to the Station.'

'How much is the fine?' you ask, wondering at the same time what he is fining you for.

'All the gold you have,' says the constable. 'The alternative is Court.'

If you're prepared to hand over all your gold to this flatfoot, you can return to your City Plan and pick a more pleasant destination.

If you can't or won't pay the fine and opt for the Court option, then you must throw two die. Score 10 to 12 and you will be released with a caution. Score 7 to 9 and any magical equipment you have accumulated (with the exception of EJ) will be taken from you. Score anything else and you will be hanged.

You can, of course, elect to fight. The constable has 15 LIFE POINTS, strikes successfully on 5 and does +2 damage with his truncheon. He will, however, use his first strike to blow his whistle which will call reinforcements from the Station. You must then throw one die to determine how many more dwarven flatfeet come to his assistance. Each has the same statistics as the one you are now facing. If you survive, you may turn to your City Plan and pick another destination. If not, you'll have to do time in 14.

155

The museum building is certainly impressive, constructed in the grand Roman manner with flying buttresses and all sorts of showy trifles. Unlike most museums you have seen, however, it is entirely surrounded by a small army of guards, some sporting brown uniforms, some grey.

As you approach the entrance, a Guard Officer signals you to halt. 'Your Pass?' he asks briskly.

If you happen to have a Museum Pass, you can go quietly to 164. If not, since you can hardly fight an entire army single-handed, you'd better return to your City Plan and pick another destination.

156

As you step on to the floor of the chamber a sudden grinding noise erupts behind you. You swing round, just in time to see the stairs withdrawing upwards, sealing the room

completely and leaving you trapped.

With an oath too obscene and terrible to record here (except in code as follows: LS YOLD!) you turn back to the wall and the scrawled message. It reads:

'Mortal, you have chosen unwisely. Only your wits can save you now. The number you must know is 3. The message is:

ZJDG TFXIT MPTF XE KPKT.'

If your wits can't save you, wait patiently. You will eventually starve to death, at which time you may safely go to 14.

157

A quick glance through the windows of this massive building quickly convinces you that it is a canteen. No-one is inside that you can see and the door is locked. There is, however, a notice stating:

Code 2

WNKGUV TKH NELWR

Maybe you'd better return to your City Plan and pick another destination.

158

There is a momentary silence as the two dwarves look at you.

Then one smiles broadly.

A saint,' he tells the other.

159-160

'Definitely,' the other concurs.

With which they step aside and, bowing, gesture you to enter.

Which you may do at 141.

159

You enter a very rowdy theatre with a chorus line of bearded female dwarves doing a knees-up behind a knockabout comic on stilts apparently doing a take-off of some king or other, to judge from the purple robes and tinsel crown.

'I say, I say, I say!' exclaims the comic. 'Are we blags or are we blogs?'

The audience erupts in laughter.

This is painful stuff, Pip. Even EJ is cringing in his scabbard. Maybe you should stop wasting your time on frivolity and go back to your City Plan to pick a new destination. The only thing is: if you were carrying any pewter tokens, one of them will now be missing - stolen by a pickpocket.

160

'That was well done!' remarks a uniformed dwarf, panting slightly. 'Slippery Sam was a prime nuisance to the Kingdom.'

He fishes out a small octagonal pewter token and hands it across to you. 'Accept this as a token of our esteem.' Engraved on the pewter token are the words:

161-164

PALACE PROPERTY
LONG LIVE KING BLOGWORT

Stash away your reward and see if you can find a less energetic destination on your City Plan.

161

Roll two dice. Score 6 or above and you're free and clear. Take your copper token, turn to your City Plan and pick a new destination. Score less than 6 and go to 177.

162

The dwarf looks up at your approach. 'Is it a job you're after or do you want to join in the Revolution?' he asks.

A fair question. If you'd like a few days honest toil, turn to 131. If the Revolution interests you, go to 146.

163

'Yes, of course I have,' you say confidently.

Any of them copper?' asks the Guard

If you do, in fact, have any copper tokens, go to 166. If you're only carrying pewter, you will be firmly turned away, in which case return to your City Plan and pick another destination.

164

You wander through the inner balls of the museum impressed despite yourself at some of the exhibits. Here, for example, is a vivid tableau of a dwarven hunter in the Wilderness at bay on a

rock totally surrounded by a huge pack of savage vron.

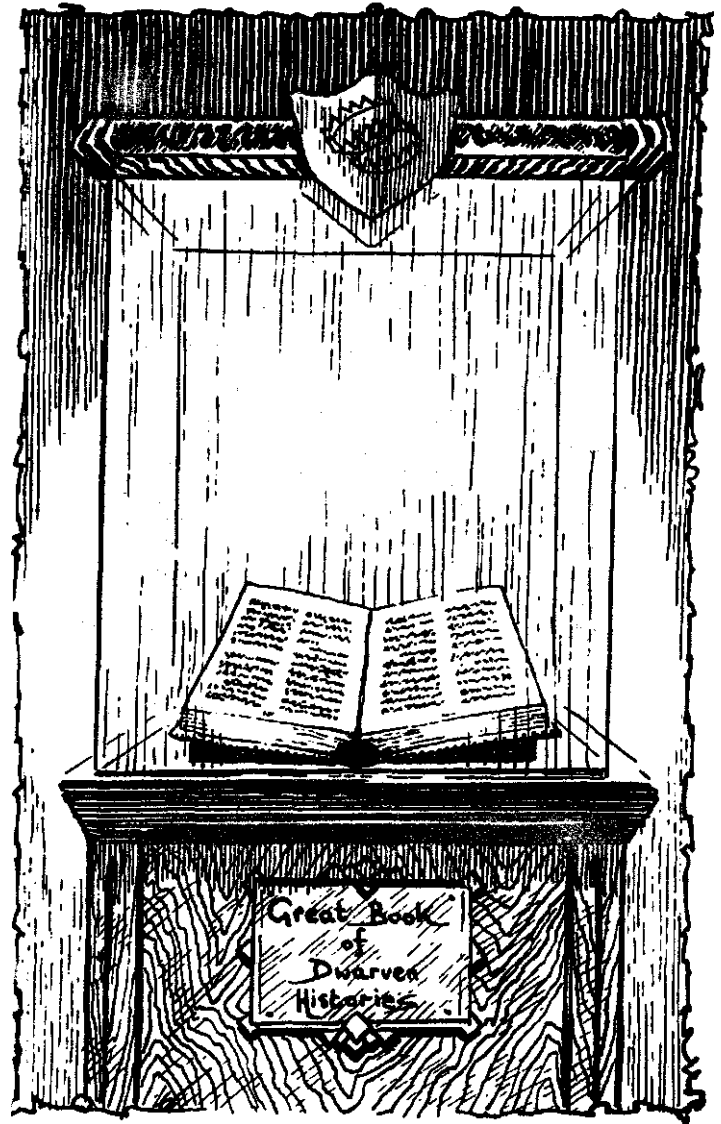
Next, in a gallery of paintings, are two striking family portraits side by side of glowering male dwarves in noble regalia, so similar in appearance that they might be twins. The plaque beneath one identifies him as King Blagwort, while the other is shown to be King Blogwort.

Then, hanging on the wall, is a tapestry depicting Borfax races, the huge beasts straining against the efforts of their dwarven jockeys.

And here - now this is an interesting find — is a glass case with a plaque identifying the exhibit as the Great Book of Dwarven Histories. Inside, there is indeed a great book, a heavy tome, leather bound and open so that two of its pages are exposed to view. You begin to read and discover with mounting excitement that the History begins to make some sense of the situation you have experienced in Scroghollow City.

It appears that Blagwort and Blogwort *are* twins, born of the Scroghollow royal line and so similar in appearance that not even their mother (the late Queen Grizzleguts) could decide which had actually been born first. As a result of this quirk of fate, no-one could decide which was the rightful heir to the throne so that when the time came for one of them to become King nobody could decide which it should be.

This dilemma teetered the country on the brink of civil war until the Sage on the Granite Pillar



A museum exhibit which draws you like a magnet.

decreed that the Kingdom should be divided between them both by the casting of lots. This was duly done so that certain areas fell to Blogwort and others to Blagwort, Both were granted the title of King.

A problem arose with Scroghollow City, however, where the casting of the lots left King Blagwort in control of the larger richer sector of the city north of Undine Flow, while Blogwort had to be content with the smaller, poorer, southern sector. As a result, citizens of both sectors became very partisan to their particular leader and commerce between the two sectors was limited and restricted by frequent questions designed to test the loyalty of the traveller.

But interesting though it is, all this pales by comparison with the final paragraph of the second page, which tells how King Blogwort decided the only way he could obtain what he saw as his rightful inheritance — a larger slice of northern Scroghollow — was to equip himself with a mighty weapon of war so powerful that his brother would be unable to stand against it.

But there the paragraph ends, leaving you to wonder whether the weapon Blogwort wanted was Excalibur and whether he actually went ahead and stole it from King Arthur. Sneakily you try breaking into the glass case to read more of the book, but it resists your best efforts. While you are trying, however, you notice an octagonal copper token lying on the ground. Enscribed on it are the words:

PALACE PROPERTY
LONG LIVE KING BLAGWORT

Tuck it away safely, then leave the museum for your City Plan and another destination.

165

'Yes,' you say confidently.

'I'll need four of them to let you pass,' says the Guard casually.

Crunch time, Pip. If you've collected fewer than four pewter tokens, you'd better go back to your City Plan and look for some more. If, however, you have four, you can walk with confidence into the castle at 169.

166

'Yes,' you say confidently.

'I'll need four of them to let you pass,' says the Guard casually.

Crunch time, Pip. If you've collected fewer than four copper tokens, you'd better go back to your City Plan and look for some more. If, however, you have four, you can walk with confidence into the castle at 179.

167

As the doorway turns square, you enter the chamber. Within, on a velvet cushion, lies the octagonal pewter token you seek.

Take it quickly, say goodbye to the King, and continue your search for Excalibur on the City Plan.

168

This is not good news, Pip. It seems you got the riddle wrong, which means you will be fighting with one hand tied behind your back.

And that, in turn, means you are going to miss every third strike automatically, whatever the dice say. (And if you happen to be trying a spell or any other magic on that third strike, it won't work either.)

If the Berkwaddle kills you, go to 14

If you slay the beast, go to 171.

169

You pass through the Castle doorway and stop, eyes wide with surprise. You have entered directly into the Throne Room of Blogwort Castle, where King Blogwort himself (looking amazingly like his brother, Blagwort) is sitting nervously on a raised throne beside which, imbedded in a block of Stilton, is the great sword Excalibur. And as if that shock wasn't enough, King Blogwort immediately throws both hands high in the air shouting, 'I surrender! I surrender!'

'You what?'

'I surrender!' repeats the King. 'I give in. Pax.' He lowers his hands cautiously. 'You are Pip, aren't you?'

'Yes,' you agree, 'I am.'

'I knew it!' groans the King. 'I knew it the minute they talked me into stealing this stupid sword.

Mark my words, I told them: King Arthur is going to be furious. He'll send his bravest, most ferocious, most intelligent and best-looking hero after the sword. He'll send Pip the Wizard Basher, Dragon Slayer, Gateway Closer and Saxon Router. And he has and you're here and we're all doomed!'

It seems your reputation has preceded you, Pip. You take a step forward and the King cringes in a most satisfying manner. 'Well, perhaps not exactly *doomed*,' you tell him reassuringly. 'Certainly not if you are prepared to let me have the sword back without any trouble.'

That's just it!' wails the King. 'I can't. It's stuck in this block of Stilton and nobody can get it out unless they solve the Riddle of the Buck and kill the Giant Berkwaddle.'

The Riddle of the . . .? The Giant. . .?' There had to be a catch.

'My chief wizard set it up as a protection,' groans the King, 'then accidentally fell into a portable hole he was creating to store his spells in. Nobody's Seen him since and nobody knows how to get round his protection system.'

Judging by your experience of Merlin, it's exactly the sort of thing a wizard would do. All the same, you stride forward to the sword and give it a sharp tug to make sure. But, as the King said, it is stuck fast in the block of Stilton. You turn away. 'I suppose I shall just have to have a go at solving the riddle and killing the Waddling Whatnot,' you sigh.

'Yes,' says the King enthusiastically. 'Yes, you do that. Come with me and we'll start right away.'

You follow the King from the Throne Room along a corridor and down a narrow flight of steep stone steps. At the bottom is a dungeon door on which has been placed an ornate notice stating:

THE BUCK STOPS HERE
(SOMEWHERE)

The King opens the dungeon door and politely steps aside to allow you to enter. Equally politely, you suggest he enters first. He demurs and insists you precede him. You refuse and insist he takes the lead.

After five minutes of this paranoid nonsense, his nerve finally breaks, possibly because you have placed the tip of EJ's blade gently on his throat, and he walks through the door. You follow to find you have entered a smallish, gloomy cell on the far wall of which four venerable white-bearded dwarves are hanging in chains.

These are my former advisors,' explains the King. Troublemakers every one. It was one of them who talked me into stealing Excalibur. The problem is to find out which one.'

But surely you *know!*' you protest.

I did,' admits the King, 'but I don't now. My chief wizard placed an amnesia spell on me as part of the Riddle. I can't remember which it was.'

But how am I supposed to solve the riddle?'



"Come with me!" says the King

The King sighs. 'You probably won't. Their names are Tom, Dick, Harry and the Reverend Plantagenet O'Rourke. Under the terms of the Riddle, they will all make one statement. We know that three of the four statements will be lies and only one true. The problem is, we don't know which is which, but perhaps you can work it out logically.' He hesitates, then gives you a sickly smile. 'There's another problem,' he adds. 'If you get the answer wrong, you have to fight the Berkwaddle with one hand tied behind your back.'

This sounds like a fate worse than death, but you can worry about that if it happens. You draw yourself up to your full height. 'Let them make their statements!' you say boldly.

'Who advised me to steal Excalibur?' asks the King.

'Dick did!' replies Tom,

'The Reverend Plantagenet O'Rourke did!' exclaims Dick.

'I definitely didn't,' wails Harry.

'Dick is lying when he says I did,' mutters the Reverend Plantagenet o'Rourke.

'Remember,' says the King, 'only one statement is true.'

So who did it?

If you think Tom, go to 172.

If you think Dick, goto 176.

If you think Harry, go to 178

If you think the Reverend Plantagenet O'Rourke, go to 181.

170

'Not a bad little worker,' the foreman remarks as he counts out your pay in glittering new gold pieces. As he finishes, he adds, 'Here's a little bonus for you.' And drops into your outstretched hand an octagonal copper token.

Enscribed on the token are the words:

PALACE PROPERTY
LONG LIVE KING BLAGWORT

Could be a useful enough bonus, Pip. Now abandon the Work Ethic, return to your City Map and let's get on with a little more adventuring.

171

'You did it!' exclaims the King excitedly. 'Now they'll call you the Berkwaddle Slaughterer!'

'Not if I can help it,' you growl sourly, putting away your sword.

You return with the King to the throne room where, to the relief of both of you, Excalibur slips from the Stilton as smoothly as if it were a block of butter.

Please convey my apologies to the good King Arthur,' says King Blogwort contritely. 'And my assurances such a thing will never happen again. I've decided to live in peace with my brother - except for the occasional bit of sabotage, of course

- so things should be a lot better all round.'

'Yes,' you agree.

'One more thing,' says the King. 'I have a little gift to show my appreciation of the fact that you did not do me in as easily as you dealt with the Berkwaddle. One of my prize stallions to carry you safely back to your own land...' He claps his hands and through a side door crashes the terrifying shape of a Riding Borfax, an ornate leather saddle already strapped to its back.

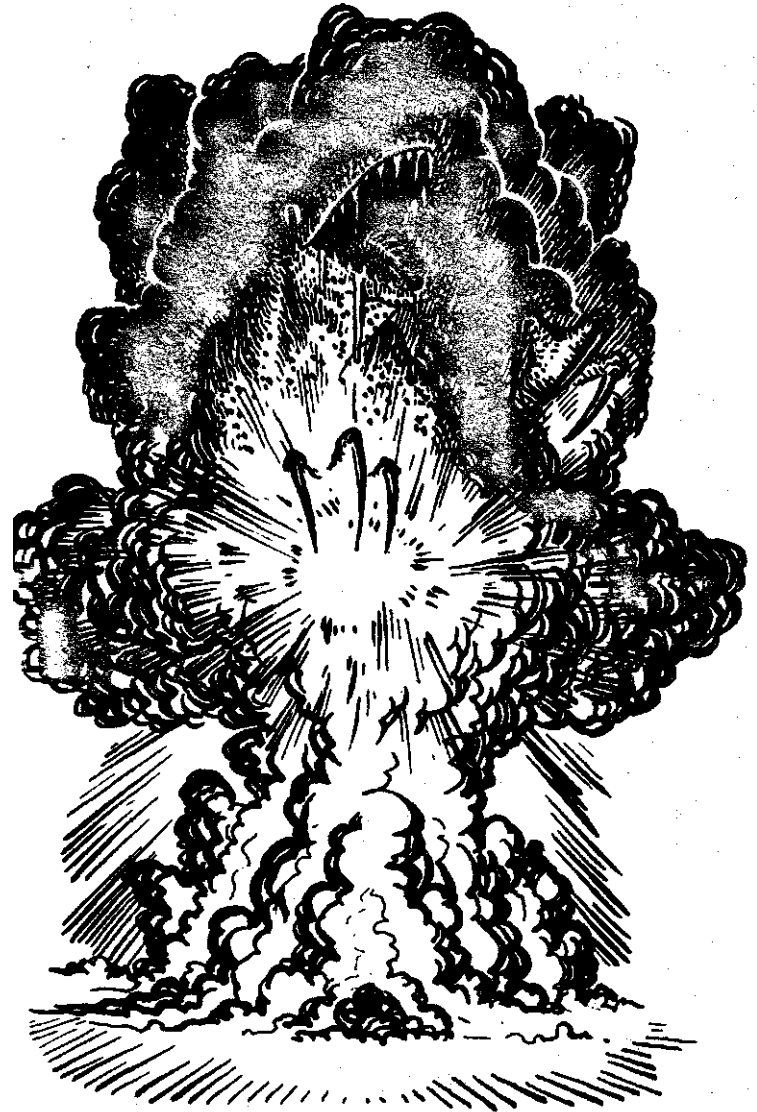
'Don't worry,' remarks the King, 'you'll soon get the hang of riding him and he really has a very pleasant nature.'

Gingerly you approach the borfax, wondering ruefully if you will ever manage Camelot in one piece.

Who knows - although you might like to turn to the section headed PIP TRIUMPHANT to find out.

No sooner have you made your choice than a soundless explosion occurs in the gloomy cell, producing a thick cloud of purple smoke which clears slowly to reveal the most hideous creature you have ever seen.

It stands nearly eight feet tall on muscular hind legs and is totally covered in scales. The long head is very well equipped with fangs and the forefeet end in vicious talons. The overall effect is that of a toad crossed with a crocodile. A barbed tail lashes



A soundless explosion in the gloomy cell . . .

back and forth hypnotically.

Looks as though you've just met the Giant Berkwaddle, Pip. The creature has 100 LIFE POINTS, strikes successfully on 4 or better and does +5 damage with those fangs and talons. The scales act as natural armour, deducting 4 points from any damage done to it. Worse still, it has a high natural immunity to magic of all sorts (except one, which we'll come to in a minute) so that you have to throw 7 or better to use any magic artifact or spell successfully.

The one exception is the Ebony Rod of Kraal, a small rod believed to be hidden somewhere in the Wilderness. This has an indentation in the end into which you can fit a special ruby. If you happen to have found both the rod and the ruby while messing around in the Wilderness, you can use it now to remove 50 of the Berkwaddle's HIT POINTS before the hassle even starts. The rod can, however, only be used once and if you didn't find it (or the ruby) in the first place, you're just going to have to do things the hard way.

*And talking of hard way, you'd better turn to **168** to see if you'll be fighting this thing with one hand tied behind your back.*

173

'Yes, of course I have,' you say confidently.

'Any of them pewter?' asks the Guard.

*If you do, in fact, have any pewter tokens, go to **165**. If you're only carrying copper, you will be*

firmly turned away, in which case return to your City Plan and pick another destination.

174

Things could have been a lot worse, Pip. It seems you got the riddle right so you don't have any handicap in the fight.

*If the Berkwaddle kills you, go to **14**.*

*If you survive, go to **171**.*

175

'Well done, Comrade!' exclaims Comrade Nagaer. 'Never saw anybody stand up to Comrade Alf for so long, which is probably why there are so few of us in the Revolution.'

'How few are we?' you ask curiously.

'You're the third after me and Alf.'

'We won't get much revolting done in that case,' you remark.

'True,' agrees Comrade Nagaer. 'But we can hold ourselves ready. Take this as a token of our bond.' And he hands you an octagonal pewter token encribed with the words:

PALACE PROPERTY
LONG LIVE KING BLOGWORT

Some revolution. You can get back to the real world via your City Plan where you can pick another destination.

176

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the first place, you're just going to have to do things the hard way.

*And talking of hard way, you'd better turn to **168** to see if you'll be fighting this thing with one hand tied behind your back.*

177

As your hand reaches out for the token, a deep, sepulchral voice from the statue intones: 'My faithful, there is a thief in our midst!'

At once the organ stops playing and the rotten faithful turn in your direction.

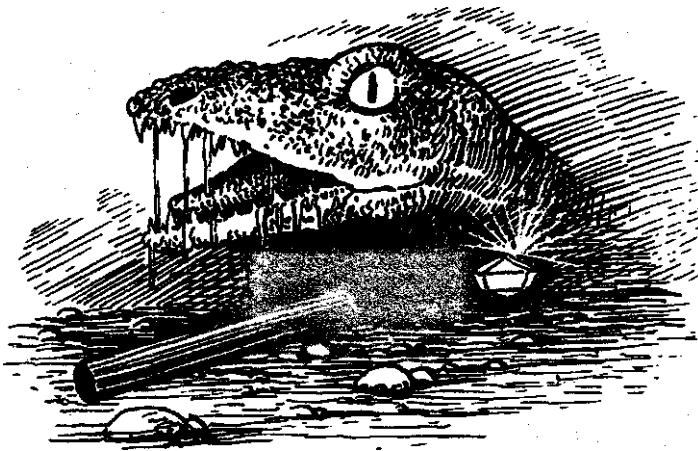
*And fight bravely though you undoubtedly do, you have no chance against such superior numbers. The dwarves overpower you, carry you to the bridge at 85 and unceremoniously dump you over the edge. The nets are still there, but in your present situation you have less chance of climbing up them. Throw two dice. Score 6 or more and you scramble safely back up the nets to **85** on your City Plan, with the dwarves fortunately gone. Score less than 6 and you sink like a stone to **14**.*

178

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And talking of hard way, you'd better turn to 174 to see if you'll be fighting this thing with one hand tied behind your back.

179

Looks as though there's a bit of hooley going on in here, Pip. You enter a great hall filled with revellers and scrubbed pine tables set out with a hearty feast. No wonder so many dwarves were queuing to get in. This must be what the token system is all about: collect enough of them through good behaviour or hard work or what have you and you're entitled to a free nosh-up with His Majesty the King.

You look around you, carefully noting details and especially searching for any signs of the great sword Excalibur, which could just possibly be here whatever the History Book in the Museum suggested. There are waiters waiting, harpists harping, jugglers juggling, singers singing and a whole host of perfectly plebian dwarves stuffing their faces with the finest of fare (roast pork and chips, with ice cream and custard to follow.) At the High Table, beaming benevolently over a

tankard of foaming brew, sits a tall figure - tall for a dwarf, that is. You recognize him instantly from the portrait in the Museum - King Blagwort. Or is it Blogwort? No, here it has to be Blagwort.

Shouldering your way bravely through the throng, you make to approach him, but your way is barred by two dwarven Guards.

'Excuse me,' you say politely enough, but dropping your hand quietly to your faithful sword, 'I wish to see the King.'

'Now what,' asks one Guard, 'would you be wanting to disturb His Majesty for? You just find a table and have some custard instead.'

'Stand aside!' you say, rather more loudly this time. 'My business is urgent!'

'Come on,' says the Guard patiently, taking you by the arm. 'You just come along with me and don't make no more fuss and we'll find you a nice leg of...'

'Unhand me, Varlet!' you roar, half drawing EJ, who takes the opportunity to add, 'Yes, unhand him, Varlet!'

But before the incident can develop into a fight, the commotion attracts the attention of the King. 'Let the stranger approach,' he calls. 'It's not often we have an opportunity to greet our subjects from out of town.'

'Your Majesty,' you say, as the Guards part to let you through, 'I am not one of your subjects. I am an envoy from Camelot, the Court of King Arthur!'

'The heck you are!' remarks the King in a passable imitation of John Wayne. 'What brings you to Palace Blagwort?'

'I seek the great broadsword Excalibur, which was stolen from my liege long since and without which Avalon is going to ruin.'

Ruin . . . ruin . . . ruin . . . Your last word echoes through the hall on account of everything going deathly silent at the mention of the word 'Excalibur'. King Blagwort leans forward, no longer smiling. 'Excalibur, is it?' he asks angrily. 'Then you are in the wrong place altogether for the great sword is hidden in the Keep of my worthless brother Blogwort who stole it to rally his useless subjects in an attempt to seize from me that portion of the Kingdom which is rightly mine!'

A trifle one-sided presentation of the overall picture, no doubt, but interesting and useful information nonetheless. You bow, politely. 'In that case, Your Dwarven Majesty, I shall trouble you no further, but hasten to the Keep of your worthless brother and there seize the sword for return to Camelot.'

At which brave words a ragged cheer rises from the fascinated diners. The King cuts short the noise with a gesture. 'More simply said than done. Worthy Adventurer. There is first of all the matter of entrance to Blogworth's miserable castle. Do you have four pewter tokens?'

Quickly you check your inventory, then shake your head.

'Thought not,' says the King. 'Fortunately I can help you there, for there is one such filthy token locked up in my dungeons which you are welcome to add to your collection. The only problem is, my wizards have placed a magical lock on the room which isn't all that easy to get through. Come with me and I'll show you . . .'

You follow the King out of the dining chamber, along a corridor, down a steep flight of stone steps and along another corridor which ends in a most peculiar door, shaped like a cross. The door, you find, is unlocked and opens easily revealing a small chamber beyond. But the peculiarly shaped entrance simply will not permit you to get through.

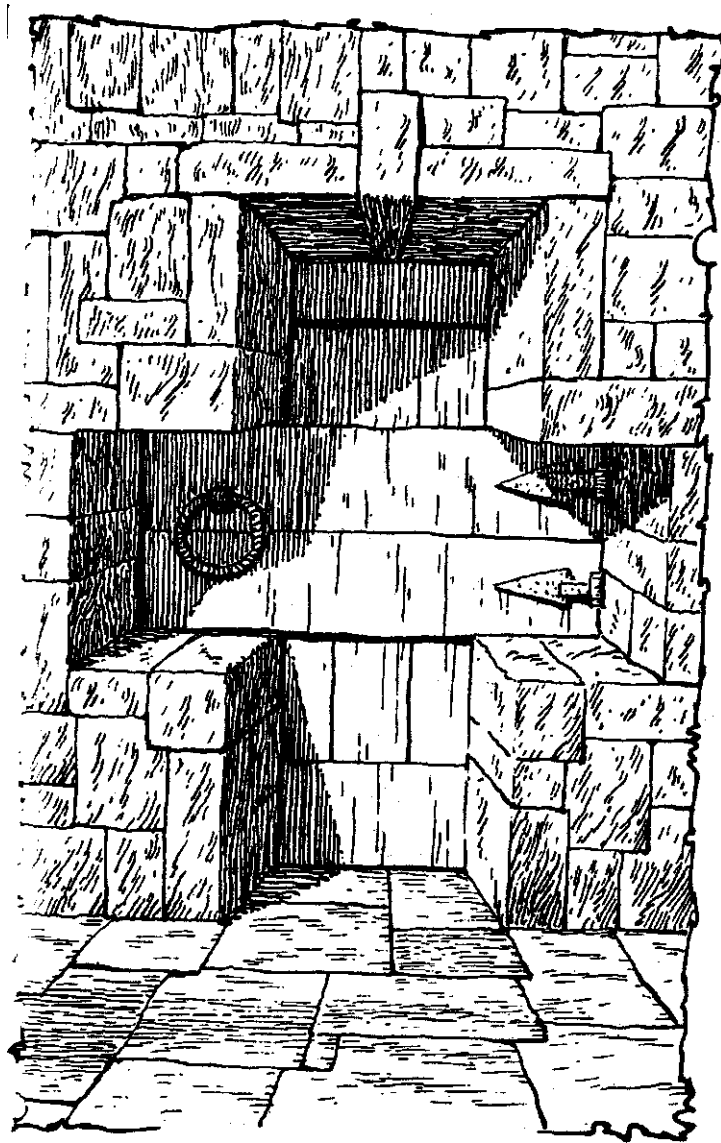
'You see,' says the King. 'That's the magic. Fortunately it's possible to rearrange the whole entrance so that it's shaped like a square and you can go in easily.'

Possible, but not all that simple. Take a look at the diagram on page 223. Cut it out, then cut along the lines so it falls into four parts. Now rearrange the parts to form a square and go to the section number shown.

180

'Take that!' mutters one of the dwarven constables as they rush past after the thief — and he bonks you, en passant, with his truncheon, neatly removing 10 LIFE POINTS.

If this kills you, go to 14. If not, you can nurse



You reach a most peculiar door...

your sore head back to the City Plan and pick another destination.

181

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*And talking of hard way, you'd better turn to **168** to see if you'll be fighting this thing with one hand tied behind your back.*

PIP TRIUMPHANT

All was not well at Camelot. The great castle on the hillside overlooking Glastonbury, once noted for the festive pennants that flew like captive pigeons from its towers, stood gloomy and sombre, drawbridge raised, portcullis lowered, windows shuttered, a brooding silhouette against the dark night sky. And around it stretched the encampment of a siege army close on 7,000 strong.

Inside the castle, in the upper chamber which housed the Table Round, King Arthur sat, head bowed in silent thought, while a depleted complement of knights watched him in expectant silence.

At last the King looked up. 'The problem,' he said slowly, 'is beyond solution. The army without our gates is no invading foreign power, but our own stalwart countrymen, misguided perhaps, but stout English every one. We cannot, in conscience, attack our own subjects.'

'And yet,' put in Sir Galahad, 'they lay us siege.'

'That they do,' Sir Percival agreed. 'And our store rooms are almost empty, our supplies almost exhausted. If we do not fight, Camelot itself will fall.'

'It is,' murmured the King again, 'beyond solution.'

'Unless,' said Sir Galahad quietly, 'Excalibur is found.'

The knights, to a man, turned to look pointedly at the silent white-robed figure seated in a corner in disgrace. Merlin (for it was he) fidgeted uneasily. It always seemed to end up this way, he thought. Whenever anything went wrong, he finished up carrying the can.

Outside, in the encampment, men were stirring. Although untrained to war, these worthies had a natural peasant cunning and sensed the time for mass attack had come. And for that attack they prepared with rude discipline — shouting orders, sharpening weapons, polishing boots. A whispered word went round: attack at dawn! They waited, tense with expectation. The sky lightened in the false dawn ...

On the outskirts of the encampment, a sentry yawned, expecting no disturbance. Were not King Arthur and his knights safely cooped up in the castle?

A sound. The sentry, startled, strained his eyes to the limits of the campfire glow. The sound was louder and moving closer now, a raking, thumping noise interspersed with snorting breaths: Nervously, the sentry called, 'Who's there!'

And into the firelight bounded a creature from his darkest nightmares.

'A monster!'

'A demon!'

'A dragon!'

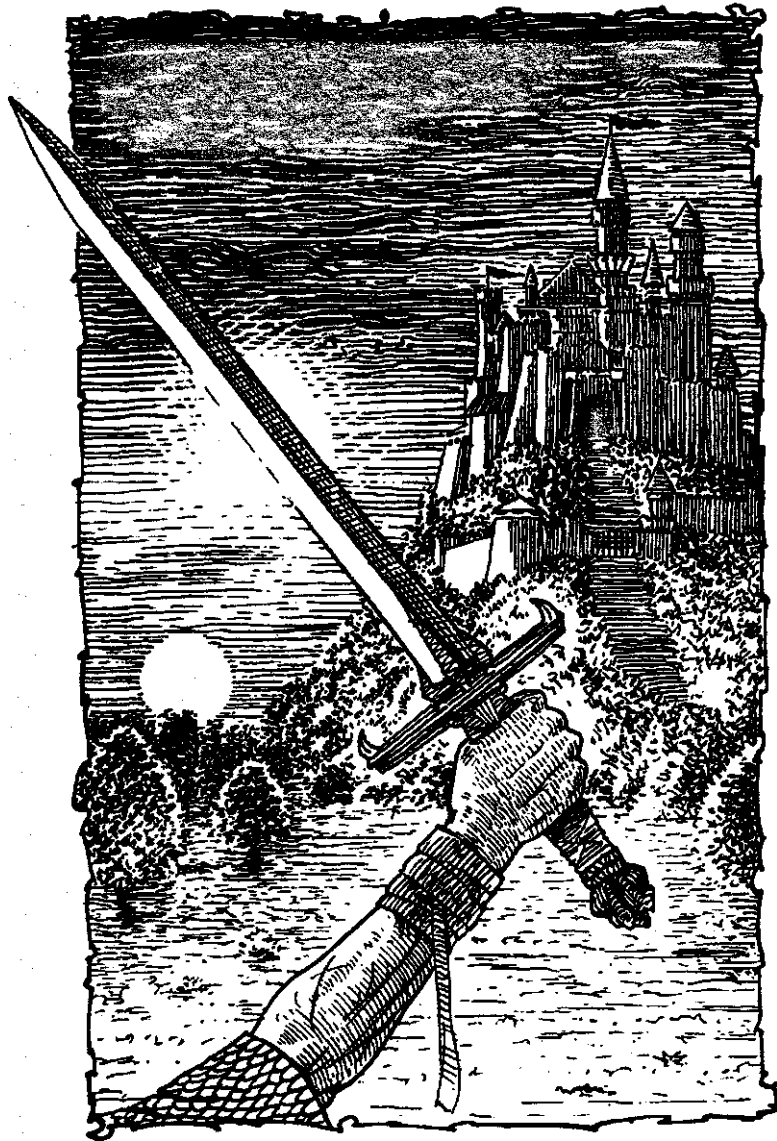
'A creature from Hell!'

But it was none of these things. As dawn broke, the light fell on something never before seen throughout the length and breadth of Avalon — a horrifying mount which trotted on two splayed hind legs, its taloned forelegs at the ready to attack, a mount with three yellow eyes and a whiplash tongue ... And seated on the borkax, a slim, grim, silent figure.

The siege army fell back in panic, splitting in two to allow the rider and the nightmarish mount free passage through. On they travelled, looking neither right nor left, until they reached the moat beyond which lay the great gate of Camelot itself.

On the battlements above, an archer raised his bow, then hesitated. There was something maddeningly familiar about that figure on the monster's back. 'Pip!' whispered the archer. Then, with mounting excitement, turned to his companions. 'Pip!' he shouted. 'Pip has returned!'

Below him, Pip's right arm slowly rose, holding aloft a great sword which flamed and sparkled in the blood-red morning sun.



Excalibur returns to Camelot!

'Excalibur!'

The sound was like a thunderclap, rolling across distant hills.

'EXCALIBUR!'

And as the sound reached the upper chamber of the Table Round where the knights had fallen silent in their discussion, the Wizard Merlin suddenly began to smile.

'Your Majesty,' he said, 'it seems the realm is saved.'

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

Running
(See Section 17)

Roll one die.

Score 1 and your enemy/enemies catch up and kill you from behind. Go to **14**.

With any other score, the magic of the Fairy Kingdom comes into play, transporting you to an unknown destination which you may, or may not, have visited before.

Score 2 and go to **87**.

Score 3 and go to **29**.

Score 4 and go to **76**.

Score 5 and go to **99**.

Score 6 and go to **38**.

APPENDIX II

Enemy Statistics

(See Section 17)

To use this section, look for the section number where you encountered the enemy, note the relevant statistics, then return to that section in the body of the book to work out the results of the combat.

17 The Sand Dragon has a massive 55 LIFE POINTS. It strikes successfully on 7 or better since it is somewhat unwieldy, but does +5 damage. Worse still, it is so strong that its natural skin acts as armour subtracting 4 from any damage done against it. A Friendly Reaction is possible; Bribery is not.

19 Each Barbarian has only 12 LIFE POINTS due to lack of food. Each will, however, strike successfully on 5 or better and does +3 damage with his sword. Bribery is possible at a rate of 300 gold pieces per Barbarian, provided you also give them any rations you may have (which means returning to Merlin's House for more). A Friendly Reaction is also possible, but you must roll for each Barbarian individually.

32 The creature in the shrub is a Wolf. It has 25 LIFE POINTS, strikes successfully on 5 and does

+2 damage. The bad news is its speed, which means it can make two strikes for every one of yours. Bribery is not possible; a Friendly Reaction might be. Roll for first strike.

47 What's after you is a pack of hunting Vron, brown, sleek, hungry and intensely dangerous. Each Vron in the pack has 20 LIFE POINTS, strikes successfully on 5 and does +3 damage. The absolute minimum size of a Vron pack is three, but you should roll one die to determine how many *more* Vron there are in this particular pack. If you happen to be carrying a Vron tooth, the creatures will approach quite close, but will not attack, leaving you free to take any of the directions shown in the section. If you don't have a Vron tooth, you're going to have to fight. (In the unlikely event that you win, it's a good idea to extract a Vron tooth as protection against the creatures should you meet them again somewhere else.)

54 Each Man at Arms has 25 LIFE POINTS, hits successfully on 5 and does +3 damage. Their armour is -2.

78 First, the good news. Each witch has only 20 LIFE POINTS. Now the bad news. All three have magic coming out of their ears, Minnie, (the first witch to act against you after you've rolled for first strike) has a Jovian thunderbolt (stolen from the Romans) which she will hurl successfully against you on 6 or better. This bolt removes half our LIFE POINTS but once thrown, cannot be

used again by Minnie. Aggie, the second witch, is carrying a *Kangling*, which is a magic trumpet made from a human thigh bone - she imported it from Tibet. If Aggie sounds this trumpet, which she will do successfully on 6 or better, it causes you to be encased in a cube of gelatinous substance which eats away 10 LIFE POINTS per combat round as long as the fight continues. Scrog, the third witch, is the most dangerous of the lot since she has a packet of 6 Dragonfire pills tucked into her girdle. By swallowing just one of these pills, which she will do immediately her turn to fight arises, Scrog can breathe a fiery plume which will engulf you for the painful loss of 35 LIFE POINTS. A Friendly Reaction is possible against only ONE of the three (your choice). None of the three will accept a Bribe.



86 This creature is an extremely rare example of a Demonspawn, escaped from a totally different reality and locked in the tower by heaven only knows who or what. Fortunately for you it has been severely weakened by its long captivity (768 years, to be exact) and has only 80 LIFE POINTS. It is unarmed and does not use spells, probably because it does not need to. It hits successfully on 3 or better, does +2 damage and very much enjoys slaughtering adventurers. It never gives a Friendly Reaction and can be bribed only with 20 million gold pieces, which probably makes it a bit too expensive to try.

dangerous. Each Vron in the pack has 20 LIFE POINTS, strikes successfully on 5 and does +3 damage. The absolute minimum size of a Vron pack is three, but you should roll one die to determine how many *more* Vron are in this particular pack. If you happen to be carrying a Vron tooth, the creatures will approach quite close, but will not attack, leaving you free to take any of the directions shown in the section. If you don't have a Vron tooth, you're going to have to fight. (In the unlikely event that you win, it's a good idea to extract a Vron tooth as protection against the creatures should you meet them again somewhere else.)

92 + 116 What's after you is a pack of hunting Vron, brown, sleek, hungry and intensely

APPENDIX III

Merlin's House

As you throw your six-sided die, a sudden whirlwind springs up, snatching you away from your current location and spinning you giddily over the Welsh Mountains.

Below, you can see the glistening white cube of Merlin's house, the spots picked out clearly on the roof and sides.

Your die throw determines where you will enter.

1. Not the best of all possible results. Since the 1 spot represents the underside of Merlin's house, you are now trapped in the solid basalt of the Welsh Mountains. If you hold your breath, you may actually survive for anything up to four minutes. After that, you can go quietly to 14.
2. The 2 spot entrance gives you access to Merlin's equipment store; and very useful too. Turn to the equipment list on Page 206. You may choose any TWO items each time you visit this room. (If you need more than two, you'll have to come back again via the die since the spell is only strong enough to



Merlin's weird six-sided house.

permit you to take two items maximum each time.) When you have taken your chosen items, mark them off the list and return to the section you were in when you rolled the die.

3. The 3 spot entrance gives you access to Merlin's stock of magical items, some useful, some stupid, some dangerous and all extremely mysterious. (See page 207) In most instances, only one of the listed item exists, but for a few of them Merlin carries back-up supplies.

You may take *ONLY ONE MAGICAL ITEM* each time you visit this store. For the magic to work effectively, the item must be chosen sight unseen — that is to say, you must pick your item before turning to the instructions about its powers and use on Page 208. In most cases, a clue to the power and use of the item is its name, so study the list carefully. When you have made your choice, take a note of the **NUMBER** of the item, then look up that number on the instructions page.

When you have taken a magical item, it must be crossed off the list. If it runs out in use, you may not pick that item again, unless it is one of the few where the list shows more than one in stock.

Once you have all that sorted out, return to the section you were in when you threw the die.

4. You have entered a dimly-lit warm room with a four-poster bed and goose-down mattress. Beside the bed, on a small table, is a cup of

Horlicks and a chocolate biccie. On the other side, also on a small table, is a shot of 180° proof Bourbon, a chew of tobacco and a spittoon. You may select your nightcap from either table and use the bed to Sleep safely without risk of Dream time.

When you have Slept and calculated your restored **LIFE POINTS**, you should return to the section you were in when you rolled the die.

5. This entrance gives you access to the room with the wicker basket. Despite Merlin's promise to clean it up, this room is still a complete disaster area and there is nothing of any use to you here.

Return to the section you were in when you rolled the die.

6. More trouble! Since the 6 spot is painted on the roof of Merlin's House, you crash through the ceiling for the loss of half your current **LIFE POINTS**.

To add insult to injury, you have landed in Merlin's bathroom which contains nothing more useful than a toothbrush.

Return to the section you were in when you rolled the die.

Dreamtime Sections

APPENDIX IV

Dreamtime

This section is used **ONLY** when you decide to **SLEEP**. If the dice direct you here, follow these rules:

1. You enter the Dreamtime with your **LIFE POINTS** at the exact level they were at when you decided to Sleep.
2. You have no magic, weapons or armour, except those which may be given you in a Dreamtime encounter.
3. You may take nothing back from the Dreamtime.
4. Any **LIFE POINTS** you lose in the Dreamtime must be deducted from your actual **LIFE POINTS**. If you are killed in the Dreamtime, you are really killed and must go direct to 14.

Now enter the Dreamtime by throwing two dice and going to the section indicated by your score.

If you survive, you should return to the section where you decided to sleep.

2. You are at the helm of a great ship on a voyage of high adventure. Your look-out in the crow's nest calls out a warning that your vessel is approaching the edge of the world. Although you know this is impossible since the world is round, you can nonetheless see he is right: a strong current is taking the ship directly to a vast waterfall in the middle of the ocean, a waterfall which plunges down into the starry depths of Space. You swing hard on the wheel, but cannot divert the ship from its course. In minutes, your vessel is plunging over the edge. Roll one die. Score 1-3 and you plunge to **14**. Score 4-6 and you get lucky enough to fall back into the section where you decided to **SLEEP** without loss of **LIFE POINTS**.
3. You are standing before a broad, mist-en-shrouded lake and you know the only way back to the section where you decided to **SLEEP** is across its gloomy waters. The distance is too far to swim, but there is a chance you may be able to call to the Ferryman on the distant shore. As you are about to do so, you are attacked suddenly by a Ragged Rogue armed with a +1 dagger. You yourself are unarmed, but you determine to put up a fight. The Ragged Rogue has 12 **LIFE POINTS**. Both of you strike successfully on a 6 or better; but in

your desperation you get first strike. If the Rogue kills you, go to 14. If you kill the Rogue in three strikes or less, you will be able to call the Ferryman and return to the section where you decided to SLEEP. If you take longer to kill the Rogue, the Ferryman will have departed and you can only return to your adventure via **14**.

4. Although this is totally out of character, you are rather drunk and have just picked a fight with a very large man with 25 LIFE POINTS and a +3 club. Although you are equipped with old EJ (thus hitting on 4 or better and doing +5 damage) you are so unsteady on your feet that you can only get in one strike for every two bashes your opponent gets in. What's more, you take so long getting EJ out of his scabbard that your opponent gets first strike. If you lose this silly fight, you're off to **14**. If you win, you may return to the section where you decided to SLEEP.
5. At the lowest level of an horrendous dungeon, you have found an ornate casket made from transparent crystal. Within it is a glowing blue-green gemstone which you know will give you a double dice roll of LIFE POINTS (a rare thing in the Dreamtime). Your problem is to open the box safely. To attempt to do so, you must roll one die. Score 5 or 6 and you retrieve the gem safely and increase your LIFE POINTS. Score anything else and the box shatters, hacking away 10 of your present LIFE POINTS. If this kills you, go to **14**. If not,

return to the Section where you decided to SLEEP - minus 10 LIFE POINTS.

6. You have fallen through the floor of a ruined castle into the pink marble Crypt of the Poetic Fiend who, you discover, is in a foul mood by reason of a bad toothache (or, more correctly, fangache.) He insists you must write a Limerick beginning 'There once was a Poet called Dan ...' If you can complete the Limerick in less than fifteen minutes, you may return safely to the section where you decided to SLEEP. If not, he will fang you for the loss of 5 LIFE POINTS. (If this kills you, go to **14**. If not, return minus 5 LIFE POINTS.)
7. A sorcerer has given you a scroll containing a GNURLBASH spell. You have no idea what a GNURLBASH spell does, but are determined to find out. The instructions on the scroll suggest you roll two dice. Score 2–6 and the spell calls up a Gnurlbash Monster with 30 LIFE POINTS and +2 fangs which attacks you viciously, getting first strike. If it kills you, go to 14. If you can kill it with your bare hands, go back to the section where you decided to SLEEP. Score 7-10 and the Gnurlbash Monster will appear but wander off, allowing you to return safely to the section where you decided to SLEEP. Score 11-12 and the Gnurlbash Monster will actually accompany you out of the Dreamtime and fight on your behalf against one (but only one) monster in your adventure before disappearing.

8. You have fallen into a gigantic bowl of sago and although the goo is so thick there is little chance of your drowning, you do notice a fin approaching across the surface. Throw a dice quickly. Score 1 to 4 and you're safe: the fin is only a floating cornflake. Throw 5 or 6 and it's a floating cornflake with a shark underneath. The shark has 20 LIFE POINTS and does +4 damage each time it bites you. Good luck with the encounter.
9. Somebody has unscrewed your leg (the left one) and thrown it down a deep well. You are now in the process of climbing down the well to get it back. Throw two dice. Score 9–12 and you succeed. Score 2-8 and you fail. The problem is that if you don't get your leg back here, your real left leg will be numb for three sections after you return to the section where you decided to SLEEP. This means that if you get into a fight, you will automatically miss every third strike, whatever the dice show.
10. On your arrival at a strange village, the peasants decide to burn you at the stake having apparently mistaken you for a witch. You are now bound and gagged, watching the village elders approaching with lighted torches. This worries you, since it is broad daylight. If you can break your bonds, you should be able to run back to the section where you decided to SLEEP. Throw two dice to decide the strength of your bonds. Then throw two more to represent your effort in breaking them. If the second roll is

- higher than the first, you get free. If not, make your singed way to **14**.
11. You have been knocked unconscious during combat, but Merlin, who is a bit short-sighted, decides you are dead and arranges a decent burial. You come to in an extremely comfortable coffin as it is being lowered into the grave. You have only a very short time to attract everybody's attention before your air runs out. You can attract their attention by throwing a 6 on a single die. But unless you manage to throw that six in five or fewer attempts, you're dead from suffocation. Take up your die ...
 12. You are lost in a dense fog which has completely disoriented you. You wander for hours, trying to find your way back to the section where you decided to SLEEP ... while at the same time trying to avoid wandering into the dreaded **14**. Throw one die. Score 1–2 and go to **14**. Score 3-4 and you're back in the section where you decided to SLEEP. Score 5-6 and you're back in the Dreamtime so that you must roll two dice to find which Dreamtime section awaits you this time.

APPENDIX V

Equipment

1. Axe
2. Bandages
3. Boots
4. Breastplate (-2 on damage)
5. False Beard and Moustache
6. Hammer
7. Harp
8. Healing Potion
9. Healing Salve (1 Jar)
10. Knife
11. Lantern
12. Lute
13. Lyre
14. Mallet
15. Map of Fairy Kingdom (page 217)
16. Nails (Half Pound)
17. Parchment (5 Sheets)
18. Pipes of Pan
19. Powdered Ink
20. Pumpkin
21. Quartz Crystal
22. Quill Pen
23. Rations (Week's Supply)
24. Rope (50 Feet Coil)
25. Sack of Grain
26. Sandals
27. Saw
28. Sheepskin Jacket
29. Spikes (One Doz.)
30. String (100 Feet Ball)
31. Tinderbox
32. Waterbag (Full)
33. Wooden Plank (20 Feet Long)

APPENDIX VI

Magic Items

1. Aborigine Pointing Bone
2. Bolt Through Neck Instructions
3. Boots of Speed (2 Pairs)
4. Crystal Ball (Broken)
5. Deathbell of Demonic Summoning
6. Egyptian Death Mask
7. Eye of Horus
8. Indian Rope Trick Instructions
9. Laughing Globe (2)
10. Levitation Tablet
11. Lightning Rod
12. Lightning Wand
13. Lucky Coin
14. Magic Fireball (2)
15. Mask of Friendship
16. Orb of Incredible Destruction
17. Portable Decoder
18. Psionic Helm
19. Rainbow Bubble Pipe
20. Resurrection Wand
21. Sanctuary Scroll
22. Seeker Needle
23. Sleep Globe (3)
24. Smarm Oil (2 Vials)
25. Vorpal Sword
26. Xerox Copy

Magic Item Instructions

1. This item may be used against any human or humanoid enemy (ie anybody the same shape and size as, a human) who DOES NOT have Surprise over you and who is in plain sight and within fighting distance.

Given these conditions, you need only point the item and expend 5 LIFE POINTS (providing you have five left) to kill him outright.

Roll one six sided die to determine how many times you may use the item before its power runs out.

2. Whatever Merlin may have told you, this item can be removed safely by unscrewing it from the left side. If, however, you elect to leave it in place throughout the adventure, you have only to touch the right side briefly before combat to trigger a potentially interesting effect.

Provided you touched the right side before combat (which means, of course, that you were not Surprised by your opponent) any throw of 12 by your opponent will result in his weapon striking the item and absorbing

such a charge of stored lightning that he will be killed instantly.

The effect will hold throughout this entire adventure. But should you ever decide to remove the item, it cannot be used in this way again, even if you subsequently replace it.

3. Wearing this item doubles your speed factor during combat with the result that you will automatically get in two blows for every one from your opponent. Furthermore, you cannot be Surprised, whatever the dice may say.

The bad news is that the item wears out after only three combats. (There is, however, one reserve in Merlin's store if you can get back there successfully ... and haven't already used it.)

4. This item is useless. Since you have it now, you might as well keep it. Maybe you can con some poor sucker to buy it from you for an unbelievable sum of gold. (To do so, pick your sucker and roll two dice. Score 9 or better and he accepts your offer. Roll two more dice and multiply the result by 10. This indicates how much he will pay in gold pieces.)
5. A very powerful and highly dangerous item which may be used only once during your adventure.

To activate, you need only flick the item with your forefinger. This creates a hollow

booming sound which reverberates through the astral plane and calls up a huge demonic entity with talons, fangs, stubby wings, pointed ears and a barbed tail. The creature, whose name is Fred, has 66 LIFE POINTS, strikes successfully on 4 or better and does + 7 damage even without a weapon. Once Fred has been summoned, roll one die. If you score 3-6, he will fight to the death on your behalf. If you score 1 or 2, he will join forces with your current opponent and try to pulverize you.

Fred vanishes after one combat and will not return thereafter, however often you try to use the item. At this stage you may sell the item for 500 gold pieces as a burned-out magical curio.

6. If you place this item over your face, your body functions instantly cease and you will appear stone dead to any monster, enemy or friend. This allows you to avoid a great deal of potential hassle since it means you can move on as if you had won the fight.

Roll one die to find out how often you can use the item before its power runs out. Each usage costs you one LIFE POINT.

7. This item, if charged with 10 LIFE POINTS will instantly place a human opponent in an hypnotic trance long enough for you to take six consecutive hacks at him without response.

The item may be used only three times before its power runs out.

8. The words 'Booga Samblatt', when spoken aloud with your right index finger placed on the tip of your nose will cause a rope to rise straight up in the air and become sufficiently rigid for you to climb up it.

You must, of course, have a rope to use the spell.

After the third usage, pronouncing the words 'Booga Samblatt' aloud will remove one PERMANENT LIFE POINT each time.

9. This glass item shatters when thrown on the ground and will release a gas which causes up to three opponents (simultaneously) to laugh so much you can get in three strikes (each) before they recover.

Obviously the item can only be used once.

10. This item must be swallowed with a drink of water. It permits you to levitate upwards to a maximum of 50 feet. But only straight up: you can't go flying off or anything exotic like that.

The item has only one usage.

11. This item, if carried in the left hand, will absorb the full charge of any lightning bolt, magical or otherwise, thrown against you. It does, however, mean you cannot use a shield at the same time.

Throw one die to determine how often the item can be used before it becomes so full of lightning that it breaks.

- 12.** This item discharges lightning bolts at an enemy. The bolt never misses and will cause a double dice roll of damage.

The item has eight charges before its power is exhausted.

- 13.** This item enables you automatically to win one game of chance. Having been used in this way, it may be further used an additional six times to add 2 to any dice roll you may make. After that, its power is exhausted, but it may be sold for gold equivalent to a double dice roll multiplied by five.

- 14.** This item if thrown does a fearsome 75 points of damage to an enemy. But only if it hits its mark, which requires a roll of 6 or better on two dice. Whether or not it hits, the item may only be used once (although there is a back-up in Merlin's store if you can get it.)

- 15.** This item, when worn, guarantees an automatic Friendly Reaction from anything you may meet in the section *following* the one you are in. The item must be put on *before* entering the new section and uses up one of its charges by so doing.

The item has 7 charges in all.

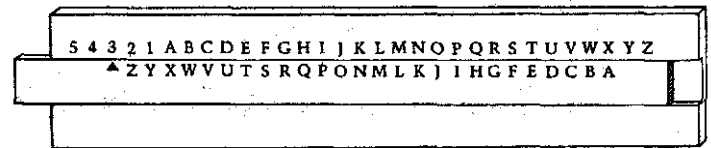
- 16.** Probably the most dangerous item in the store - as much to you as to your enemies. Throw it to use it and roll one die. If you score 4, 5 or 6 it will completely wipe, out

any group of enemies, however large and monstrous.

If you score 1, 2 or 3, it will wipe you out as well.

Fortunately the item has only one charge per adventure.

- 17.** This item is somewhat similar to a slide rule. It bears the following inscription:



If you can figure out what the inscription means, you can use it to decode secret messages you may find during your adventure.

(Once you have the item, it is a good idea to copy down the inscription carefully on a separate sheet of parchment and carry it with you at all times.)

- 18.** This item, when worn, amplifies your brain waves to such a degree that you can severely weaken one opponent for seven consecutive combat rounds by discharging a horrifying blast of mental energy. While in this weakened state, your opponent will score only HALF the damage shown by his dice rolls.

Roll one die to find out how many times you can use the item before it scrambles your own brains and sends you witless to **14**.

19. This item produces vast quantities of rainbow coloured bubbles. They look very pretty, but no-one has ever found a practical use for them, except possibly Merlin who, however, has neglected to mention what it might be.

20. This item requires a charge of 15 LIFE POINTS before use. It also requires you to throw a 9 or better on two dice in order to succeed in using it.

Given that you manage both, you may use it to resurrect one dead body, which returns to life with original LIFE POINTS intact.

You may also, oddly enough, use it on yourself to avoid the dreaded 14. In this case, you must, of course, have charged the item with 15 LIFE POINTS *before* you were killed.

Throw one die to discover how many times the item may be used before its power runs out.

21. This item may be used up to three times before its power runs out. The magic creates an impermeable (and invisible) bubble around you which absolutely prevents any attack causing you damage during a fight. Unfortunately you will have to break the bubble after four combat rounds, otherwise you will suffocate.

22. This item may be used ONCE ONLY.

Provided you know the name and current

location of an opponent, you may discharge the item at any time, without cost to your LIFE POINTS or any need of a dice roll. It will magically seek out the named person and remove half his current LIFE POINTS.

23. This item shatters when thrown and releases a cloud of gas which will put one enemy to sleep for 12 combat rounds or 12 enemies to sleep for one combat round or six enemies to sleep for two combat rounds or three enemies to sleep for four combat rounds or two . . . Well, you get the idea.

Obviously, the item may be used only once. (But there are some replacements in Merlin's store if you haven't already used them.)

24. Anointing yourself with this item ensures a Friendly Reaction from any human or human monster of the opposite sex to your own. There is enough oil for 2 anointments. (And a duplicate of the item back at Merlin's store if you haven't already used it.)

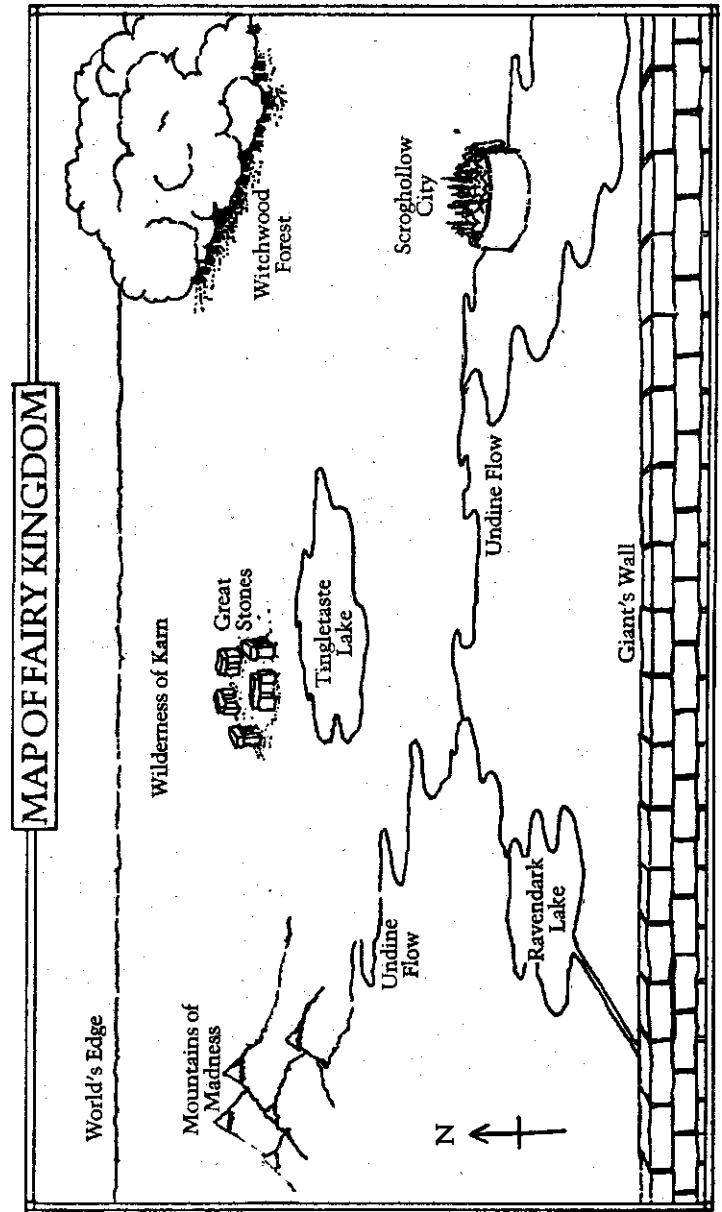
25. This item gives you no plus on damage and you need to roll a 6 or better to hit with it. However, if you manage to roll a natural 11 or 12, you will kill your opponent outright.

For every use you make of the item, EJ will become increasingly jealous and refuse to fight for the next one, two, three etc combats successively.

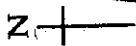
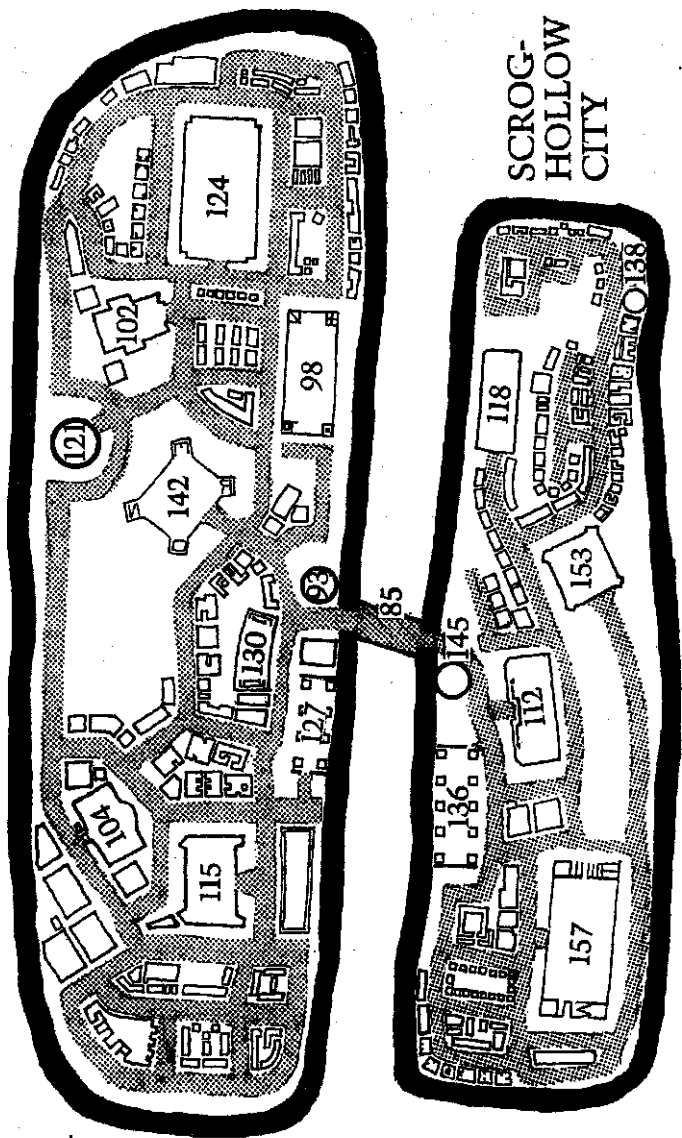
26. This item produces an exact replica of you (in three dimensions, full colour and natural

sound) during a combat. The result is that your confused opponent will be able to strike the real you only every other round, whatever the dice might indicate.

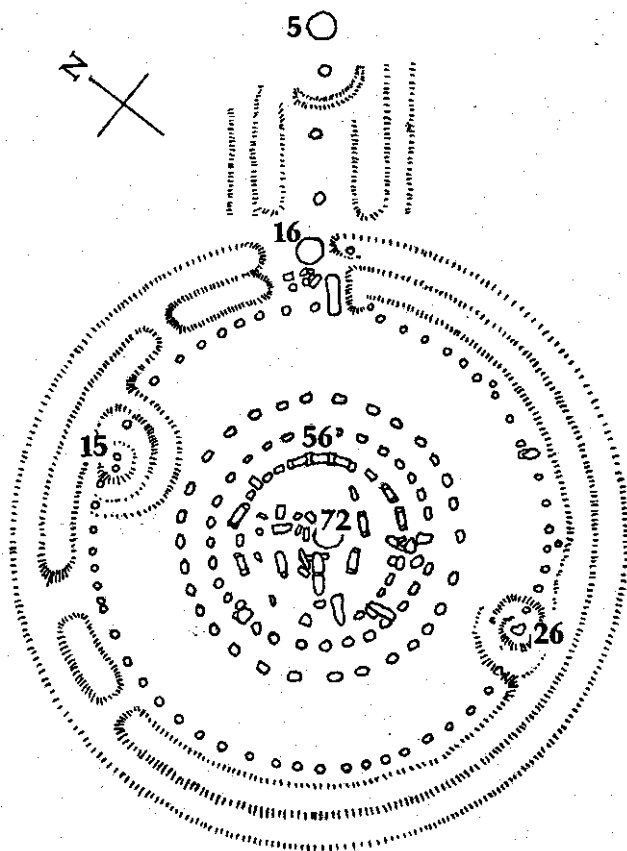
Roll one die to discover how many times you can use this item before its power runs out.



SCROG-
HOLLOW
CITY



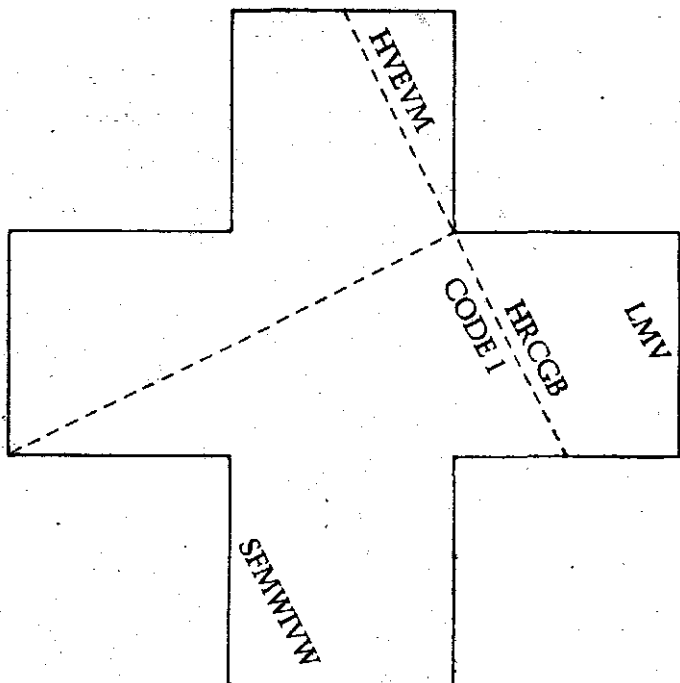
GIANT'S DANCE



MAGIC DOOR TO DUNGEON

(Section 179)

Cut out shape, then cut along dotted lines,
form shapes into square, then decode message



Rules of Combat

(see Section 1)

To Find Your Starting LIFE POINTS

1. Roll two dice and add the scores together.
2. Multiply the result by 4.
3. Add any PERMANENT LIFE POINTS gained in other *GrailQuest* adventures.

To Strike an Enemy

1. Roll two dice for yourself and your enemy to see who gets first strike. Highest score strikes first.
2. Roll a 6 or higher on two dice to strike a blow.

To Damage an Enemy

1. Check how many points you rolled above the number needed to strike.
2. Subtract this from your enemy's LIFE POINTS.

To Knock Out an Enemy

Reduce his LIFE POINTS to 5.

To Kill an Enemy

Reduce his LIFE POINTS to 0.

Your enemies use the same method to attack you, as you throw dice for them.

Armour & Weapons

1. Using armour subtracts from damage scored against you.
2. Using weapons increases the damage you score.
3. You are permanently equipped with EJ, who needs a roll of only 4 on two dice and strikes at +5 damage.

Magic & Equipment

Apart from items you may find, loot or steal during your adventure, the only way to get magic or equipment is via Merlin's House. You may visit Merlin's House at any time by throwing a single die and turning to page 196. Each die roll allows you ONE visit. A throw of 2 brings you into the Equipment Store where you may pick TWO items per visit. A 3 brings you to the Magic Store, where you may pick only ONE item per visit.

To Avoid Fights

a) *To Test for a Friendly Reaction*

Roll one die *once* for your enemy and one die *three* times for yourself. If you score *less* than your enemy, he is friendly. Proceed as if you had won a fight.

b) *Bribery*

1. *Bribery* is only possible in Sections marked *B. The number of asterisks indicates the amount of Gold Pieces (or object of equal or higher value) your enemy will accept. *B = 100 GPs. **B = 500 GPs. ***B = 1,000 GPs. ****B = 10,000 GPs.
2. To offer a bribe, roll two dice. If you score 2-7, your bribe is refused. If you score 8-12, proceed as if you have won a fight.
3. Whether or not you are successful, subtract the bribe amount from your gold store.

c) *Running*

In certain parts of this adventure it is possible to Run from trouble. Roll one die. If you score 1, you are caught and killed. For other results, see the Running Instructions on page **191**.

To Restore Lost LIFE POINTS

1. *Sleep*: You can sleep any time except when fighting. Roll *one* die. If you score 1-4, turn to *Dreamtime*. If you score 5 or 6, LIFE POINTS are restored equal to rolling two dice.
2. Other LIFE-restoring methods are given through the adventure.

LIFE POINTS cannot be restored to above your Starting total — except through Experience.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

1. 1 EXPERIENCE POINT is gained for each fight or puzzle won or solved.
2. 20 EXPERIENCE POINTS = 1 PERMANENT LIFE POINT. 10 of these can be taken into future adventures.

Repeat Journeys

In this adventure, enemies previously killed do *not* remain dead in repeat journeys, but they have only *half* the LIFE POINTS they had in your first encounter. Any items collected are lost unless you are told otherwise.

Quest Journal

PIP'S LIFE POINTS

Starting:

Current:

EXPERIENCE POINTS:

(20 = 1 PERMANENT LIFE POINT)

EQUIPMENT

Healing Potions:

Gold Pieces:

BATTLE SCORES

Enemy: Section: Enemy LIFE POINTS:	Enemy: Section: Enemy LIFE POINTS:	Enemy: Section: Enemy LIFE POINTS:	Enemy: Section: Enemy LIFE POINTS:
Result:	Result:	Result:	Result:
Enemy: Section: Enemy LIFE POINTS:	Enemy: Section: Enemy LIFE POINTS:	Enemy: Section: Enemy LIFE POINTS:	Enemy: Section: Enemy LIFE POINTS:
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