



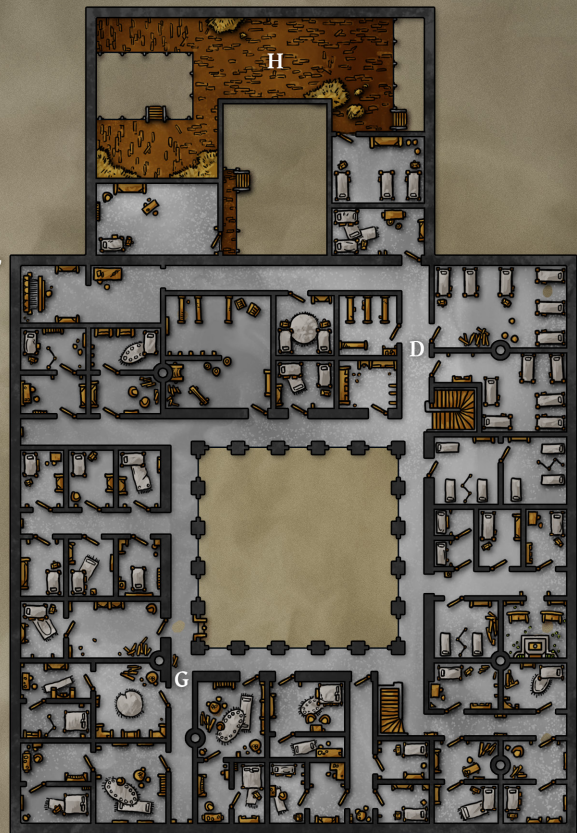
The Dark Eye

CONSPIRACY OF
MAGES

SOLO ADVENTURE



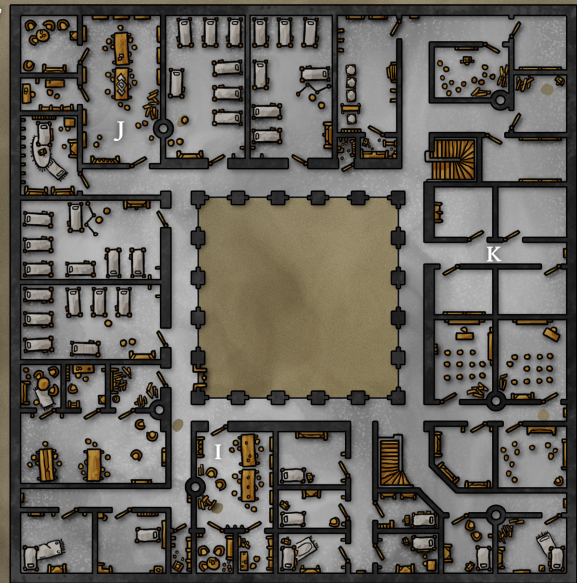
1st Floor



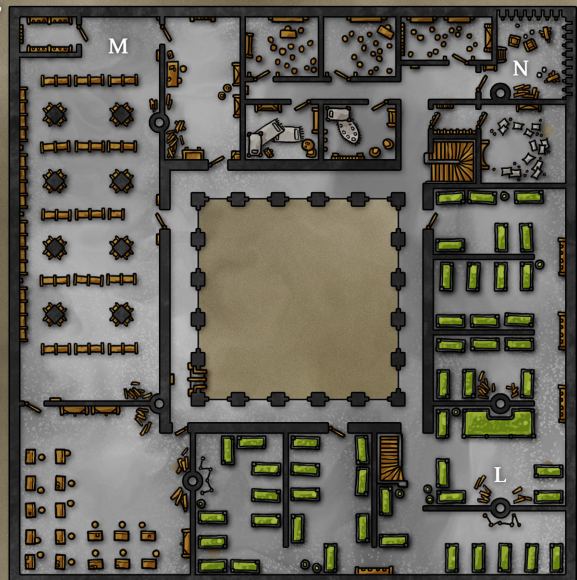
2nd Floor



Cellar



3rd Floor



4th Floor



LOWANGEN ACADEMY OF TRANSFORMATION

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| A Reception Hall | I Infirmary and Studiosi Dormitory |
| B Courtyard | J Eleves' and Novices' Dormitory |
| C Dining Hall | K Classrooms and Offices |
| D Servants' Quarters | L Greenhouses |
| E Common Room | M Library and Scriptorium |
| F Workshops and Stables | N Observatory |
| G Faculty Quarters and Teachers' Lounge | O Laboratories |
| H Hayloft | P Practice and Ritual Chambers |
| | Q Storerooms |

2 Yards
Steffen Dornel

Conspiracy of Mages



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In memory of Jörg Raddatz.

With thanks to all who helped create Aventuria



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Preface

Spellcasters are popular *Dark Eye*® character choices, but only two of the many solo adventures published over the past 30 years focused specifically on mages. Previously, player character mages could only walk *On the Merciless Path* (*Auf dem Weg ohne Gnade*) or wield *A Staff made of Elm* (*Einen Stab aus Ulmenholz*). These beloved adventures are

How to Play This Solo Adventure

Solo adventures do not read from front to back, like most books. Instead, this book divides the story into numbered sections that you follow like a trail of clues. As the story unfolds, your choices and die rolls lead to new numbered sections in the book, building the story right before your eyes. To avoid spoilers, do not read sections unless instructed to do so. When the text sends you to a new section, read that section, follow the instructions, and make any indicated decisions or die rolls. For example, this adventure starts with a special opening scene called *Exam Day* (see below). As indicated in the text, when you finish reading the opening scene, proceed to section 65.

Rules Sidebars

This book includes sidebars that explain the basic rules of *The Dark Eye*® RPG and introduce special rules for playing this solo adventure. For reference, sidebar topics (and their page numbers) are as follows.

| Sidebar | Page |
|--|---------------------|
| Sections with Choices | 20 |
| Circles to Cross Off | 40, 44, 45, 49 |
| Your Mage's Seven Spells | (inside back cover) |
| Attributes and Attribute Checks | 36, 45 |
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| Skill Checks | 55 |
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| Protection Rating | 5 |
| Spell Checks | 55 |

long out of print, so we felt mages deserved another day in the sun. Enjoy!

Conspiracy of Mages is set at a famous school of gray magic called the Lowangen Academy of Transformation. The adventure takes place during final exams—a stressful time at the school. Fame and respect await all graduates, but a shocking crime threatens to end your character's career as a mage before it even starts. Your choices help decide your character's future. Can you unravel this fiendish mystery and still manage to graduate?

While enjoyable by experienced players, this adventure is well suited for novice players with little knowledge of *The Dark Eye*®. Sidebars explain how to play this solo adventure, introducing the basic rules of *The Dark Eye*® RPG as needed. The only exception is the procedure for combat, which appears in the *Appendix*, instead. This book includes a pregenerated character and a handy overview of your character's spells, so you can start playing immediately. Adventure awaits!

Accessories

To play this solo adventure, you need several items, starting with a common 6-sided die (or D6, for short) and a 20-sided die (D20). Both are available at finer hobby stores everywhere. Do not despair if you cannot find dice, as this book provides an easy-to-use die roll generator. Whenever an entry instructs you to roll a die, simply flip through the book and stop at a random page. The bottom corner of each right-hand page shows images of two die roll results—one for a D6, and one for a D20. Simple!

You also need a pencil for keeping track of game elements such as *life points* (LP), *arcane energy* (AE), and the passage of in-game time. If someone already played this scenario, take a moment to leaf through the pages and erase all pencil marks before you start.

Introduction to Aventuria

Aventuria is just one of many continents on the fantasy world of Dere, the ENnie-award winning setting of *The Dark Eye*®. This richly detailed world features many fabulous kingdoms, cultures, and races, each with its own gods, myths, heroes, forms of currency, and units of measurement. Don't worry if a term seems unfamiliar to you at first. Some you can learn from context, some we define in the text, and some we define in this introduction.

The *Middenrealm*, an assembly of duchies and allied provinces, is arguably the most powerful human empire in Aventuria. The city of *Lowangen* lies outside the

Middenrealm in an area called the *Svellt Valley*, a river valley with a temperate climate, good soil, and reliable harvests. Orcs conquered the valley several years ago and now rule it with an iron fist. Lowangen is the only exception. This prosperous city secures its relatively peaceful autonomy by paying a hefty annual tribute to the orc chieftains. The city boasts two famous magical academies, one of which, the *Lowangen Academy of Transformation*, is the backdrop for this adventure. This prestigious school specializes in magic that alters the properties of living creatures. Citizens of Lowangen often incorrectly refer to the academies's students as *scholars*.

Lowangen uses Middenrealmish currency, namely, iron *kreutzers*, bronze *halers*, eponymous *silverthalers*, and gold *ducats*. The exchange rate is as follows.

1 ducat = 10 silverthalers = 100 halers = 1,000 kreutzers

One Aventurian yard of distance equals 36", although one *Middenmile*, the common unit for measuring long distances, is just 1,094 yards long. Many Aventurians worship a pantheon known collectively as the *Twelvegods*. Believers refer to the sun as *Praios' Disc* or *Praios' Eye*, in honor of the sun god *Praios*, who reigns as lord of the gods. The moon is called *Mada's Sign*, after the goddess *Mada*, and people born with magical talent are said to possess *Mada's Gift*. *Boron* is the god of death and of dreams. Undertakers mark graves with his symbol, a broken wheel called a *Boron's Wheel*.



Protection Rating

Protection rating, or PRO, for short, is an abstract measure of the amount of physical damage a suit of armor, a spell, or a shield can absorb without harm to the wearer. For creatures, PRO measures the amount of damage their hide deflects. The higher the number, the better the protection.

Titles

| Name | Notes |
|----------------------|---|
| Eleve | Student, years 1 – 3 |
| Novice | Student, years 4 – 6 |
| Studiosus/Studiosa | Student, year 7 onwards |
| Candidatus/Candidata | Student preparing for the final exam; also used of students who must repeat an upper year |
| Scholarius/Scholaria | Technically, all students of magic, but especially teachers |
| Adeptus/Adepta Minor | Student who passes the final exam, thus earning a guild seal |
| Adeptus/Adepta Maior | Guild mage with 6+ years of post-graduation experience |
| Mage or Magus/Maga | General term for guild mages; specifically, those with 12+ years of post-graduation experience; usually bestowed after an additional exam or in recognition of achievements |

Exam Day

Are you frightened of the empty room, or the prospect of what lies ahead? Either way, your churning stomach doesn't seem to care. The small bowl of millet gruel you ate for breakfast is not sitting well, and you feel nauseated. Magistra Moonhair's cooking might be to blame, but what if this is no accident. After all, she delivered your

breakfast and she never did that before. Did she poison it and make sure you ate it? Does she hate you that much?

"Hesinde's wisdom be with you," a man says softly. Do you detect a hint of concern in his voice, or are you imagining things? You turn in your chair and stare up





at the beaming face of Archmage Elcarne Erillion of Highstone, venerable dean of the Lowangen Academy of Transformation. You greet him in the traditional manner, though perhaps a bit too slowly, and the old man's smile changes to a worried frown.

He sighs deeply and says, "Today is a big day, but you look like a mouse transfixed by a serpent. Fate sometimes takes unexpected turns, but it does not do any good to succumb to doubt, like a young elve who just failed to cast his first spell. A mage must trust in his skills, he stays aware of his situation, looks into his future with confidence and acts as it is in his power."

The old archmage leans in close to you, and several locks of his long, white hair slip out from under his hat. A curled strand tickles your nose, and you suppress a sneeze.

"Do not ever forget this! Act!" he says. Then he straightens up, gives you an encouraging pat on the shoulder, and exits the room, leaving you alone with your thoughts.

Go to section 65.

1
Decide if you want to raise your PRO by 1, 2, or 3 points (raising it by 1 costs 4 AE, raising it by 2 costs 8 AE, and

raising it by 3 points costs 16 AE). Once you decide, roll the spell check to cast *Armatrutz* (SGC/INT/DEX).

If you have less than 4 remaining AE (the minimum needed to raise your PRO by 1), or if the spell check fails, go to section 131. If your spell check succeeds, go to section 105.

2
The world fades from view. Silence reigns. You feel light and heavy at the same time. You drift in darkness, but you sense something approaching. A distant sound of feathery wings soon turns into a howling wind. Then you see Golgari, the raven herald who serves Boron, the god of death. Golgari gently bears your soul away across the Neversea...
The End

3
Knowing Magistra Moonhair's devious plan is one thing; foiling it is quite another matter. School policy prohibits students from opening certain doors in the cellar, and probably with good reason. She might have set traps to deter unwanted visitors. The thought makes you uneasy.

It might be the best to let a teacher search for Archmage Erillion. If you inform Magister Horrigan, the first person any student should approach for help, go to section 61. If you bring your suspicions to Magistra Immenfeld,

Tracking Time

To measure your progress, this adventure requires you to track the passage of time. Familiarize yourself with the Time Tracker at the back of this book. Make sure all 20 circles are empty when you start this adventure (erase any pencil marks left over from previous playthroughs).

Anytime you encounter a section that is marked with a $\bar{x}+$, cross off the indicated number of circles from the Time Tracker. Since you reached section 4 and the header is also marked with $\bar{x}+1$, you need to cross off one circle from the Time Tracker now.

Each circle on the Time Tracker represents the passage of roughly 20 – 30 minutes while your character performs the chosen action. This is a rough approximation of the time and should not be seen as an exact measurement. It reflects the kinds of lucky breaks or unexpected delays that affect your character's general progress.

Always cross off Time circles *before* you read the associated section. If you run out of circles to cross off (meaning you fill in all 20 circles on the Time Tracker), stop reading that section and go to section 111.

someone so rules-bound she would probably need the archmage's permission before rescuing him, go to section 176. If you seek Magister Tienan's aid, even though he is likely to require more help than he can provide, go to section 89. If you choose to act alone, go to section 221.

4 (⌚+1)

You flinch as the courtyard bell rings, striking the hour. Where did the time go?

Your exam starts soon. No time to waste. You put on your robe, grab your pointy hat and plain staff, and hurry out of your room. You arrive at Archmage Erillion's study, wheezing and exhausted, with no time to spare. You straighten your robe, take a moment to catch your breath, and knock at the door.

No response. You do not hear "Come in," "Just a moment," or any of the other replies you expect. You knock again, more forcefully this time. Again, you hear nothing.

If you continue waiting, go to section 175. If you suspect this is part of the test and enter without explicit permission, go to section 101. Of course, you could try to peer through the wall by casting *Penetrizzel*. Students are not permitted to gaze through walls within the school, but this might be an emergency. If you want to try this, go to section 198. On the other hand, a spell would use up

more of your arcane energy; failing the exam because you were tired would be unbearably humiliating, so maybe you should simply peek inside the room through one of the windows (if so, go to section 52).

5

Go to section 185!

6 (⌚+3)

Setting aside any doubts, you follow the twins back to their room—and get a glance at many pleasures, the goddess Rahja bestows upon her followers. You don't think you will ever forget Altuna and Birnja, even if you can hardly remember what exactly you have experienced. It felt like your state of ecstasy lasted for an eternity.

When you finally leave the chamber, the end of your ménage à trois stays very clear in your mind. While you are slightly dizzy straightening your clothes, you still hear the angry bickering of the two. You feel a bit guilty that the harmonious encounter ended in a quarrel. You only had asked, as soon as you rested for a moment and regained your senses, whether one of them had seen Magister Erillion or Magistra Moonhair. They reply they did not see Magister Erillion today. Then, strangely, they began to argue about whether they saw Magistra Moonhair.



Both sisters agreed that they observed the magistra in the dining hall at breakfast. Altuna said she later saw Magistra Moonhair in the attic, but Birnja insisted that Altuna had not been near the attic all day. Birnja added that she met Magistra Moonhair in the cellar while retrieving flour from a storage room. Both sisters then accuse each other of lying. The disagreement escalated from there. Each of them accused the other to try to look more favorable in your eyes. As if you would like to marry a liar.

While you are worried about this aspect in the light of a Travia Bond, you congratulate yourself on getting to the bottom of the rumors. Even though you are admonished to concentrate on finding Magister Erillion again, you find yourself hoping that the two sisters will soon get along again. Return to section 100.

7

You pet Nivia's head, and she responds with a purr. Encouraged by your success, you try to rub her belly. This proves to be a terrible mistake. Faster than you can blink, Nivia rakes your forearm with her claws while simultaneously sinking her sharp teeth into the heel of your hand. The painful attack ends as quickly as it began. Nivia releases her grip and dashes away, disappearing beneath a wardrobe. The stinging cuts will remind you of this encounter for days. Subtract 1 from your LP (unless doing so would take you below 1 LP, in which case, do not subtract anything). Also, subtract 1 from your Dexterity for the remainder of the adventure. You ponder your next action while dabbing at your wounds with your sleeve. Return to section 100.

8

Four new limbs spring from your body as you shrink, and fangs grow from your mouth. You gain the ability to perceive the world via tremors and vibrations propagating through the surface upon which you walk. Your body and legs sprout new hairs that detect the smallest changes in temperature, windspeed, and atmospheric pressure. Briefly you consider running off in search of prey, but your personality reasserts itself and you remain...you. Spiders fascinate you, though you never thought you would someday be one.

Fitting through the hole is easy now. You climb nimbly along the stones, but time seems to slow as you make your way, and you try not to think about the spell fading before you reach the other side. Soon, you exit the hole and take a moment to assess your surroundings. That rounded mountain must be your pile of clothes. A curiously deformed rat stands over your staff and stares at you with a hungry glimmer in its eye. Now you wish frantically to regain your normal shape, but this spell lasts for a prescribed time—no more, no less.



The hulking rat lunges at you, and you dodge its teeth and claws by the thinnest of margins. You must find a hiding place, now! Your clothes, a seam in the wall, a crack in the floor—anywhere will do....

Make a *Stealth (Hide)* check using your spider form's COU/INT/AGI (10/10/16) and SR 8.

If you succeed, go to section 63. If you fail, go to section 182.

9

Magister Brutum occupies a special place within the school. Barely 30 years old, he is the school's youngest teacher. He specializes in the *Paralysis* research. While not well regarded in the academy, this spell is quite popular with students, as most know at least one person they think deserves to spend time as a statue....

You can think of one such person right now—Magister Brutum—and many students would agree with you. Unlike Magister Horrigan, a stern but fair teacher, Magister Brutum fails to inspire. He acts casually and pretends to be everyone's friend...until he turns on them. New students find this behavior entertaining, but they soon recognize the deception. Though not as stern as other teachers, Brutum is unpredictable—except when in the company of Magistra Moonhair, that is. His affection for her is the worst kept secret in the school. You cringe just thinking about it, and you are almost glad that his door is closed when you arrive. Go to section 64.

10

How can you achieve inner peace and focus when you face such an important exam? To be honest, you never attained those things before taking previous tests, and you passed those with honors. This test is no different. You feel confident, which is all that matters.

Go to section 76.

11

“The magistra is not here,” she explains in a patronizing tone that would make a teacher proud. “Move along. Magistra Moonhair wants me to clean her room.” She waves you away as she pulls a key from her apron and unlocks the door.

Maybe all that waiting was valuable, after all. Kulwina has a key to the door!

If you ask Kulwina to admit you into Magister Moonhair’s room, go to section 32. If you prefer to try magic instead of persuasion, go to section 53. If you decide to stop bothering the poor maid, return to section 100.

12

As you feared, the hole is too small, and a sharp projection inflicts a serious cut on your back. You feel stinging pain, and warm blood drenches your fur. Your first instinct is to lick your wound, but you cannot do so while you remain stuck in the hole.

Subtract 6 LP from your total. If this reduces your total to 0 or less, go to section 2; if not, go to section 39.

13

An accusatory ‘meow!’ breaks your concentration and the spell fails. Nivia, the school’s resident housecat, stands at your feet, staring up at you. According to popular rumor, Nivia is a former student who botched an advanced spell and permanently transformed herself into a cat. If this rumor is true, you feel embarrassed to have failed a simple spell in Nivia’s presence. If the rumor is false, you feel embarrassed about feeling embarrassed in front of an ordinary cat. You also feel embarrassed to be wondering *why* you feel embarrassed that your spell failed. Well, doubts won’t help you now.

Subtract 3 AE from your total. If you want to try casting the spell again, go to section 198. If you want to peer in through one of the magister’s windows, go to section 52. If you decide to wait patiently outside the door, go to section 175. If you try to simply open the door, go to section 101.

14

Magistra Moonhair is an impressive fighter. Even though she could blind, burn, or otherwise weaken you with any number of frightening spells, she relies on her fighting skills alone. Or is she only playing with you, waiting to turn you into a newt when you make a mistake? And where is Magister Brutum?

Unexpectedly, your opponent stumbles on an uneven stone. Arms flailing, she loses her balance and falls backwards, dropping her staff in the process. This is your chance. Without her staff, she cannot focus. She is helpless, vulnerable, open to attack. Or is she?

If you lunge at her, go to section 113. If you wait to see what happens next, go to section 191. If you duck out of the way, go to section 71. If you strike at her temple, go to section 41. If you swing your staff above your head to build momentum for a final blow, go to section 144.

15

You focus your mind on a tiny spot and your awareness begins to pierce the surface of the cool stone. The effort is tiring, but you look forward to discovering what lies beyond. The wall’s resistance gives way and your mind breaks through! Subtract 6 AE from your total.

You would never expect that someone so universally disliked would enjoy hobbies or possess an eye for decor, yet the evidence is clear—Magister Brutum’s chamber is furnished quite elegantly. You see a bed, some books, a wardrobe, and a small chest, all of which are probably common sights in any mage’s quarters. You also see a gleaming marble table, a pair of tall, well-proportioned marble chairs, and, displayed throughout the room, stones of many shapes and sizes—large and small, rough and polished, round and square, hewn and unshaped, and in tones ranging from lightest grays to deepest blacks. The arrangement is worthy of an art gallery.

Only someone with a poet’s soul could have curated such a beautiful collection. Strange as it seems, this is the first truly human trait you’ve observed in the magister, and you now regret invading his privacy. Make a *Perception* (*Notice* or *Search*) (SGC/INT/INT) check. If you succeed, go to section 212. If you fail, go to section 43.

16

Magister Tienan eyes you suspiciously, saying, “Do not use that tone with me, Mobshaft. I know what you are doing. This is one of your cruel tricks. I should turn you into the pig you always have been.” Then he starts mumbling quietly. You cannot tell whether he is casting a spell or simply muttering. Most students at the school think of him only as a magical theoretician. Nobody has





ever seen him cast a spell, which may indicate he never learned any. Now, however, you are not so sure, and you see no reason to wait around and find out.

Go to section **100**.

17

The inner door has no keyhole, but it is locked. An indentation resembling a slightly skewed, eight-pointed star sits where the keyhole should be. Magistra Moonhair must use a magic key to secure the inner door. No sense trying to pick the lock with mundane tools. The magistra probably also reinforces the door with magic. Even if you were as strong as Magistra Olja says you should be, you couldn't break through this door.

Return to section **116**.

18

Your nervous stammer does nothing to ease Magistra Immenfeld's suspicions.

"Postponed!" she yells, as if you just uttered a terrible curse. Then you realize that Magistra Immenfeld's tirade is not directed at you.

"What was that man thinking?" she says to the air as she walks away, "Postponed? This is a prestigious school, with a schedule to maintain. If even one wheel slows down, the whole machine can grind to a halt. Postponed, indeed! Everyone just does whatever they want. If he hadn't made *Moonhair* his deputy headmistress, there might have been some hope for this place. But now...."

You realize you survived an encounter with Magistra Immenfeld, but your celebration doesn't last long. Your lie could have serious consequences. You must find Archmage Erillion before Magistra Immenfeld speaks to him.

Return to section **100** and cross off the second selection circle for Magistra Immenfeld.

19

Without making you sound, you deftly pick up what you came for and sneak back to the door, careful to avoid bumping into anything or pushing anything over.

Once again, you knock on the door. Magistra Immenfeld angrily rushed to the door, shoves it open, and jumps into the hallway, holding her arms out as if aiming a combat spell. Of course, the hallway is empty. You slip out before she returns to the teachers' lounge.

When the coast is clear, you open the door to the classroom, get dressed, and wait for the spell to expire. Then you rush to the cellar.

Go to section **42**.

20

Magister Horrigan stands up, beaming with pride, his eyes filling with tears of joy. "Excellent, excellent!" he says, laughing.

Your mind races. You must find and rescue Magister Erillion. Magistra Moonhair deceived everyone, but even though you know the truth about her, you must be cautious. After all, she is powerful enough to imprison an archmage....

"Thank you, Magister Horrigan, you have been most helpful," you say, rising from your seat. As you turn to leave, the magister hands you a small phial containing a healing potion. When imbibed, it heals 1d6+2 LP (up to your maximum of 29). You thank him for the valuable gift as you exit the room. Who would have thought the

worst homework assignment of your life would turn out so well?

Add the phial to your inventory and go to section 100.

21

A visit to the gray eminence of the school. You think your stomachache may be returning. Most teachers—yes, even Magistra Immenfeld—are approachable and sometimes act friendly, but you never heard anyone praise old Magister Horge. After all, he yelled at poor Timona, the kindest girl at the school, just for walking on a squeaky floor. You don't speak to Magister Horge; you avoid him. You don't ask him for something, you hope he does not get the idea to give you detention. And now you want to ask him for the key to the forbidden door? You must be insane. But what do you have to lose? And for what other reason have you learned the spell *Bannbaladin*....

You hesitantly approach Magister Horge's room. His door is slightly ajar, as always, and you see him sitting quietly in his rocking chair.

Make a *Magical Lore (Spells)* check (SGC/SGC/INT). If successful, go to section 85. If you fail, go to section 132.

22

You clear your voice and get Magister Tienan's attention, but his reaction is not what you wanted. He looks angrily from the butterfly to you and back, and snarls, "Why are you interrupting me? Can't you see I am busy? The young always think they know what's best. That's your problem, Drudvick—you never learned respect!" While you wonder who the magician thinks you are, he continues his ranting with ever increasing rage.

If you try to calm the magister with gentle words, go to section 112. If you dare trying to calm him with the spell *Bannbaladin*, even though such will be difficult, go to section 77.

23

This must be the answer! The forbidden gate in the cellar. Apart from a few selected teachers, nobody was there when the door was opened last year. Magistra Moonhair may know that there is a way into the flooded basement rooms. Nobody would follow her there, the perfect hiding place for the kidnapped Archmage. Since the door has not yet been bricked up again, the deputy headmistress was able to quietly explore the corridors and prepared vile plans. And thanks to the strict rules not ever look behind that door, she was even able to do it completely undisturbed. You are sure, she must have planned her act from a long time. But you have seen through this ruse.

Go to section 3.

24 (8+1)

You wait for another half an hour...and again, nothing happens. If you continue to wait, go to section 175. If you try the doorknob, go to section 101. If you try using the spell *Penetrizzel* to gaze through the wall into the room, go to section 198. If you try to see in through a window, go to section 52.

25

Except for two maids clearing away dishes, and a young student with boil-covered skin, sitting alone at one of the dining hall's long tables, the room is unoccupied.

If you ask the maids for news of Magister Erillion or Magistra Moonhair, go to section 187. If you ask the student, go to section 206. If you decide not to bother anyone, return to section 100.

26

You return to Magistra Immenfeld's room, but her door is locked, and she does not seem to be present. Casting *Penetrizzel* or another spell on her room is out of the question. You wait for a moment in case she returns, and then quickly search the nearby corridors, but without luck. You have no idea where she is. Maybe you should try again, later. Return to section 100 and erase the mark in the second selection circle for Magistra Immenfeld.

27

"That's quite enough!" Magister Erillion's voice draws everyone's attention. "You pass and may now call yourself *adeptus!*" he continues. His voice is solemn, but he beams with pride.

Bewildered, you look from the archmage to Magistra Moonhair. She smiles happily at you before tending to Magister Brutum's injuries.

"I don't understand," you say. This seems to make the archmage even happier, if such is possible.

"Allow me to explain," he says, waving you closer. "I watched your development with great interest, but also with some concern." You look at him, still puzzled.

"You are among the most talented students we ever taught. Your achievements rival those of Magistra Moonhair when she attended this school. At least in theory. You absorbed every book and scroll, diligently practiced your spells, and obeyed the rules. You exhibited all the qualities we expect from a mage born to a life spent behind a desk, studying theory."

"You make that sound like something of which to be ashamed," you say, still wondering where this conversation is heading.



“Oh, we mean no insult,” Archmage Erillion says. “We merely express some regret. The world is changing. Orcs ravaged the land around us and gather again in the west; demon armies march through the land; the starry sky undergoes unprecedented changes. The very nature of magic is in flux. People need someone like you, but they need you out there, not here in a laboratory, doing something an old teacher like me can handle.”

“You want me to fight armies of orcs and demons?” you ask, incredulous. The archmage clears his throat, glances at Magistra Moonhair, and changes the subject.

“We tailor final exams to the individual. Yes, we often ask students to demonstrate spells they struggled to master. But in your case, such demonstrations are mere tests of theory, which we know you pass with ease. Therefore, we asked Magister Horrigan to poison your food.”

“Magister Horrigan?” you splutter. “But I thought... Magistra Moonhair...?” At this, Magister Erillion claps his hands like a gleeful child.

“That is what we wanted you to think! We planned this long ago, though we refined our plan when workers excavated the forgotten door in the cellar. We convinced you that Magistra Moonhair was envious not only of your successes, but of mine as well. After that, convincing you she poisoned your food was easy.”

“You mean you never intended to test me and all just hid in the cellar?” you ask. Magistra Moonhair grins proudly. “It wasn’t that simple,” she says. “Magister Erillion staged his room while Magister Brutum and I laid out the clues. Then we obtained the groundskeeper’s key to the forbidden door and arranged for Magister Horrigan to assist you with magic potions and a push in the right direction, if he felt you could use the help. We also had to avoid Magistra Immenfeld, as she cannot keep a secret.... We had a busy day.”

“The effort was worth it,” Archmage Erillion says with contentment. “For the first time in your school career, you faced an unregimented lesson. You showed initiative. You helped others, solved riddles, and even dared the unthinkable: you broke school rules when doing so became necessary. The final exam did not test your mastery of spells. It tested your morals.”

“I broke the rules only to save you, and I would do so again,” you say with a firm voice.

“Yes, and I am grateful. You have passed the test, you have shown determination and courage, more courage than in all the years before. And I am incredibly proud of that. Think of today not only as the day of your exam, but above all as a day of developing your character.”

“Then...I’m not being expelled for breaking the rules,” you say, half-relieved and half-wondering if you misheard.

“Well, we do!”

Read *Moving Out*, on page 56.

28

You must force the key into the key hole, and have trouble withdrawing it after realizing it does not work. This is the wrong key. Go to section 42.

29

Your spell’s success is obvious to all within earshot: a squealing piglet now stands before you. It struggles angrily to free itself from the pile of clothes, but once free, it grows terrified and runs off in the direction of the staircase. No need to worry about Kulwina—for now, at least. Wherever she happens to be when the spell wears off, she will come to her senses and find herself naked and confused. Sooner or later, though, she will remember what you did, and she will be quite angry. You have no time to worry about that right now. You slip through the open door and quickly search Magistra Moonhair’s room.

Subtract 16 AE from your total and go to section 116.

30 (8+1)

You wonder what is behind this wall, either the study is quite large, or more than one room lies beyond. Curious, you press your brow against the wall and recite the incantation: “Penetrizzel, Penetrizzel...”

Roll to cast *Penetrizzel* (COU/SGC/INT). If you have less than 6 remaining AE, or if you fail, go to section 108. If you succeed, go to section 219.

31

He seems momentarily surprised. Then a knowing look comes into his eye. “I do not doubt your words,” he says, “but in all my years teaching at this school, nobody ever postponed an exam at such short notice. Are you sure that is what happened?”

What do you say in response?

“Truthfully, all I really know is that my examiner never showed up. Did Magister Erillion mention anything about it to you?” (186)

“Something terrible happened. I think someone abducted Magister Erillion!” (95)

“Magistra Moonhair abducted Magister Erillion! Please believe me!” (122)

32

Trying to sound as friendly as possible, you say, “My dear Kulwina, I must look inside Magistra Moonhair’s room for

a moment. I wouldn't ask if it weren't important, I assure you. Please let me in. I will tell nobody."

Make a check on *Fast-Talk (Begging or Manipulation)* (COU/INT/CHA). If it succeeds, go to section 123. If it fails, go to section 184.

33

Before knocking, you listen at the door and hear Magistra Immenfeld's piercing voice. She appears to be complaining about a troublemaker. Bothering her would probably earn you a reprimand but not get you into the teachers' lounge (or place you in possession of the key).

If you cast the *Visibili* spell, go to section 91. If you decide to look elsewhere for the key of the forbidden door, go to section 120.

34

You knock, but there is no response. If Magister Brutum is home, he does not want to open the door.

Go to section 64.

35

"Yes, Magister Tienan, it is Ludwina," you say, speaking up so he can hear you. "No matter what other people say,

I know the truth. Your eyes miss nothing, and your mind is as sharp as ever."

The mage smiles sheepishly, saying, "You are always nice to me, even though I burden you with demands and rarely thank you for your kindness."

You have seen him get emotional, and you silently hope that this is not one of those times, but then you see the first tear rolling down his cheek. What do you say?

"I am happy to help. There is no shame in growing old and feeble." (81)

"Don't mention it. Your smile is thanks enough." (160)

"You could act a bit more grateful, Magister Tienan." (137)

36

You follow the narrow corridor to an empty doorframe. Something tore the old iron door from its frame and left it leaning on its long side against the wall. You peer through the opening but cannot see much. This seems not only to be a simple room but a two-storey great hall made of the same roughly-hewn stone as the corridor. In the dark and flickering light of your torch it is hard to make out the other side of the hall, though the 15 feet high ceiling is quite visible. You can see silver, rune-like inlays adorn some of the stones along



the walls. Two statues of mages, each holding a staff and a ritual sword, stand inside the room, flanking the entrance. You enter cautiously, wary for signs of danger.

Stairs rise to the second floor along all four walls. Four imposing columns seem to support the rooms above you. Between the columns stairs go down to a sacrificial altar, and upon the altar lies a man with a white beard, bushy eyebrows, and thinning hair. He wears gray clothing and ropes bind his hands and feet. He struggles to free himself. You instantly recognize him as Archmage Erillion!

Briefly you feel elated. You were correct! But your joy at finding Magister Erillion fades quickly. His abductor—the treacherous Magistra Moonhair—must be close at hand. Magister Erillion is still in danger, and so are you.

You just finish this thought when a glowing sphere of a staff enchantment flares up on the opposite site of the hall. You recognize the staff's wielder as Magistra Mayla Moonhair! She stands a mere ten yards away—close enough to stop you from reaching Magister Erillion. You do not see Magister Brutum anywhere. Is he hiding nearby, or is he innocent of this conspiracy?

If you attack Magistra Moonhair, go to section 150. If you wait to see what happens next, go to section 127. If you duck into the shadows and try to hide – maybe she had not notice you yet, go to section 88.

37

You focus on your spell as you recite the magic words. Roll to cast *Salander* (SGC/INT/CON) or *Wolf Paw* (COU/INT/AGI), as applicable.

If you fail the check (or have less than 16/12 AE, respectively), go to section 90. If the check succeeds, go to section 204. If you rolled three 20s, go to section 178.

38

You persist, but your arms give out and you settle to the floor. Though disappointed in your performance, you are not one to give up easily, so you try again.

Make another *Strength* check, this time with a -2 penalty (that is, temporarily lower the target attribute by 2 before comparing it to your roll). If this check succeeds, go to section 117. If it fails, go to section 44.

39

A cat should be free to roam, not fighting to escape a hole. You feel great relief when you finally emerge from

Bonuses and Penalties for Attribute Checks

Bonuses and penalties are a special case. Using your situation as an example, the text says the check you must make here suffers a -2 *penalty*, meaning *subtract 2* from your attribute *before* comparing it to your roll. As before, a roll less than or equal to the target attribute is a success, while a roll higher than the attribute is a failure. *Bonuses* work similarly, except that you *add* the bonus to the target attribute, increasing the likelihood of success. When you determine the outcome of the check, follow the directions in the text as to which section you should visit next.

the other side. Now you must simply wait for the spell to expire....

Suddenly something strikes your left leg from behind. Intuitively, you jump to the side, hiss, and extend your claws. A hulking rat sits where you stood a moment ago. Strange, rubbery growths obscure most of its left eye. The animal motions aggressively and lunges. You must fight for your life! ◉.....

If the hulking rat dies, go to section 96. If you die, go to section 2.

To resolve this combat, use the combat rules in the *Appendix*, page 59



Cat (your transformed character)

COU 12 SGC 12 (a)* INT 13 CHA 12

DEX 10 AGI 14 CON 6 STR 13 (s)*

LP your current value**

AE your current value**

KP - INI 13 + 1D6

DE 7 SPI 1 TOU -2 MOV 10

Claws: AT 14 DP 1D2 RE short

Bite: AT 12 DP 1D3 RE short

PRO/ENC 0/0

Actions 1

Special Abilities: none

Skills: *Body Control* 12, *Feat of Strength* 2, *Intimidate* 2,

Perception 10, *Self-Control* 2, *Stealth* 10, *Willpower* 4

Size Category: tiny

Type: Animal, non-humanoid



Wolf Rat (your opponent)
COU 10 SGC 10 (a)* INT 14 CHA 11
DEX 11 AGI 13 CON 6 STR 10 (s)*
LP 5 AE - KP - INI 12 + 1D6
DE 7 SPI 1 TOU 2 MOV 6
Bite: AT 10 DP 1D3 RE short
PRO/ENC 0/0

Actions 1

Special Abilities: none

Skills: *Body Control* 4, *Feat of Strength* 2, *Intimidate* 2,
Perception 10, *Self-Control* 2, *Stealth* 10, *Willpower* 2

Size Category: tiny

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Combat Behavior: attacks relentlessly

Escape: does not flee



*) a means Animal Sagacity, while s reflects a small creature. These notations indicate the attributes do not compare directly to those of a human, but you still use them for checks.

**) If using *Wolf Paw*, your LP = 5 and AE = n/a

40

Magister Tienan is not in the reading room, so you quickly search the library's many rows of shelves and stacks of books. Clearly, the confused magister is not here. Tis choice was probably too obvious.

Go to section 84.

41

One strong blow against the head. Simple, unexpected, and quick. No chance to parry. You tense your muscles, but before you can swing, something hits you from behind and you slide into unconsciousness....

Go to section 163.

42

The forbidden door couldn't be less obvious. It is seven feet tall and three feet wide and made of iron. Its keyhole implies that it has a lock. The door is rusty but looks quite sturdy.

You have heard of a spell called *Foramen* that unlock doors, but your school teaches students to transform living beings, not manipulate dead matter, and those spells are not in the curriculum. Luckily, you can open this door with a simple key.

Try any key you have in your inventory; cross it off as you do so.

- Big laboratory (go to section 115)
- Observatory (go to section 66)
- v. T. (go to section 124)
- Large hatch, cesspit (go to section 174)
- Small hatch, cesspit (go to section 5)
- Unlabeled golden key (go to section 152)
- Unlabeled iron key (go to section 220)
- Pantry 2 (go to section 196)

If none of your keys open the door, you must find more keys (or at least the *correct* key). Go to section 120.

43

Magister Brutum's room is tidy and neat. Nothing seems out of place. Though his art collection is beautiful, you see no portraits of loved ones, and can find no signs that he has ever had visitors. The room feels cold and dead as stone. Is this a clue to Magister Brutum's behavior? You always assumed he only pretended to be friendly to disguise a cruel thirst for power, but has he simply been desperate for acceptance? Is he lonely?

You feel increasingly uneasy. You've intruded too long. You allow your perception to flow back into your body, and you take a moment to shake the numbness out of your limbs.

Go to section 64.

44

Exhausted, you drop to the floor like a sack of potatoes. Failing to perform even ten pushups is humiliating, and you wonder how your lack of dynamic tonus might influence your spellcasting. You achieved top marks on your final exam in magical theory, and you were not any stronger then. Confident that your spellcasting ability is at least as good, you prepare to take the last exam of your school career.

Go to section 76.

45

Your spell succeeds, but something is wrong. There is too much arcane power flowing through this spell, too strong, too uncontrollable.

Four new limbs spring from your body as you shrink, and fangs grow from your mouth. You gain the ability to perceive the world via tremors and vibrations propagating through the surface upon which you walk. You grow so small that cracks in the floor seem like canyons. Only one task concerns you now: finding prey. You must hunt or risk starving—and so it goes, for the rest of your life.

The End



46

Magister Horrigan stares blankly over your shoulder, in the direction of the teaching laboratory. "I can't tell... I can't tell you..." he quietly mumbles, lost in thought for a moment. Then his face lights up with child-like glee, the way you've seen it do when a student reaches a correct conclusion, or when a complex experiment produces better-than-expected results. *This* is one reason why students love the old alchemist. Before you know it, he leaps off his seat, grabs you by the arm, and practically drags you to the teaching laboratory.

Go to section 74.

47 (8+1)

You must admit that you are curious to see the deputy dean's room. You press your brow against the wall and recite the incantation: "Penetrizzel, Penetrizzel..."

Roll to cast *Penetrizzel* (SGC/COU/INT). If you have less than 6 remaining AE, or if you fail, go to section 94. If you succeed, go to section 60.

48

You focus on Kulwina and speak the incantation.

Roll to cast *Paralysis* (SGC/INT/CON) and apply a -2 penalty. If you have less than 8 remaining AE, or if you fail, go to section 128. If you succeed, go to section 143.



50

People think rats spread disease, but you know better. Rats can crawl through small spaces and go where they aren't welcome, like the other side of this hole. Rats have thin toes, sharp claws, long whiskers, and small eyes that see surprisingly well in dim light and can spot sharp edges in narrow openings....

You reach the other side of the hole in minutes. Now you need only wait for the spell to expire, and... Something strikes you from above! Intuitively, you jump to the side and try to make a threatening sound. A hulking rat sits where you stood a moment ago. Strange, rubbery growths obscure most of its left eye. The animal motions aggressively and lunges. You must fight for your life! • ○

You now have the stats of a rat (see text box). To resolve this combat, use the combat rules in the *Appendix*. If the hulking rat dies, go to section 96. If you die, go to section 2.


• To resolve this combat, use the combat rules in the *Appendix*, page 59.

49 (8+1)

Nivia's ear twitches as she listens to your question, then she jumps down from her throne (the bale of cloth) and runs off through the hallways. You have trouble following her because she takes shortcuts beneath furniture. Sometimes she climbs a tall shelf and makes a daring leap across a room for no discernable reason at all.

You follow her up a flight of stairs to the top floor, then along the corridor to Magister Erillion's room. Purring, Nivia rubs up against the door frame, then rolls onto her back, seemingly expecting more affection. You feel anger well up inside you, but then you remember that you did ask the cat to show you the way to Magister Erillion, and she led you to his room. What more do you expect?

You feel disappointed, but you stroke Nivia's belly anyway. Soon she jumps to her feet and disappears beneath a cupboard. Go to section 100.



Rat (your transformed character)
COU 10 **SGC** 10 (a)* **INT** 14 **CHA** 11
DEX 11 **AGI** 13 **CON** 6 **STR** 10 (s)*
LP your current value**
AE your current value**
KP - **INI** 12 + 1D6
DE 7 **SPI** 1 **TOU** 2 **MOV** 6
Bite: AT 10 DP 1D3 RE short
PRO/ENC 0/0
Actions 1
Special Abilities: none
Skills: *Body Control* 4, *Feat of Strength* 2, *Intimidate* 2, *Perception* 10, *Self-Control* 2, *Stealth* 10, *Willpower* 2
Size Category: tiny
Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Wolf Rat (your opponent)

COU 10 SGC 10 (a)* INT 14 CHA 11

DEX 11 AGI 13 CON 6 STR 10 (s)*

LP 5 AE - KP - INI 12 + 1D6

DE 7 SPI 1 TOU 2 MOV 6

Bite: AT 10 DP 1D3 RE short

PRO/ENC 0/0

Actions 1

Special Abilities: none

Skills: *Body Control* 4, *Feat of Strength* 2, *Intimidate* 2, *Perception* 10, *Self-Control* 2, *Stealth* 10, *Willpower* 2

Size Category: tiny

Type: Animal, non-humanoid

Combat Behavior: attacks relentlessly

Escape: does not flee



*) a means Animal Sagacity, while s reflects a small creature. These notations indicate the attributes do not compare directly to those of a human, but you still use them for checks.

***) If using *Wolf Paw*, your LP = 5 and AE = n/a

51

The upper levels of the dormitory open onto the inner courtyard through rows of columns. Even though little direct sunlight reaches the ground because of the tall buildings, magic ensures that colorful, fragrant flowers bloom here year round.

Students usually spend their free time here, either walking the paths and admiring the flowers or else standing or sitting around in small groups, chatting, gossiping or reading.

Today, however, you only see servants going about their business. As you recall, most faculty and students are off-campus celebrating the end of term. You take a few moments to smell the fresh air, gaze at the beautiful, ivy-entwined gazebo, and enjoy a moment of calm, but alas, you do not find Magistra Moonhair or Archmage Erillion here. Go to section 100.

52

Finding the windows to Magister Erillion's room is not difficult. You follow the narrow corridor, open one of the building's colorful stained-glass windows, and look around outside. The ledge is at least 30 feet above street level. Climbing along the ledge looks risky. You will surely die if you lose your footing, unless you are lucky

enough to land in the straw-filled cart parked below the archmage's window.

If you want to risk climbing on the ledge, go to section 114. If you prefer to continue waiting outside the archmage's door, go to section 175. If you wish to try opening Magister Erillion's door, go to section 101. If you want to try gazing into the room with *Penetrizzel* (a forbidden but less riskier option), go to section 198.

53

You ponder which spell to cast. *Corpofesso* creates blinding pain to incapacitate a target, but you would never use that on her. If you use *Banmbaladin* to befriend her so that she lets you into the room, go to section 97. If you throw caution to the wind (and if you know the spell) and cast *Salander* to turn her into a piglet, go to section 161. If you cast *Paralysis* on her, go to section 48. If you decide to simply leave the old woman in peace, return to section 100.

54

"Because it wasn't necessary," she laughs, mockingly. "You think too highly of your abilities, and you are too easily baited. I manipulated you into coming here—and here is where you die. Haven't I always taught that ours is not the way of combat? We rely on tactics, skill, and intelligence. You are brave, but you are alone."

She snarls and lunges at you, and you raise your staff to ward off the attack. Your noses almost touch as you lock arms temporarily, and you see her grimace in anger. The rage that burns in the half elf's eyes transfixes you. Then she twists away with a graceful sidestep and points her staff at you in challenge.

"Fight!" she hisses.

Go to section 200.

55 (8+1)

You wait for a while, but, except for one bored maid, you see no one.

If you continue to wait, go to section 102. If you stop waiting, return to section 100.

56

Your spell fails, but Kulwina knows what you tried to do. You expect an angry rebuff, but instead she pushes you away and you briefly lose your balance, long enough for her to duck inside Magistra Moonhair's room and lock the door from the inside. This is bad. If Kulwina tells a teacher what you have done, you will be expelled from



the school. Your only hope now is to continue your search for the archmage and pray that Kulwina has some sympathy for you.

Subtract 4 AE from your total and return to section 100.

57 (8+1)

As you head toward Magistra Olja Immenfeld's room, you recall a humorous incident involving another student. One day, while Magister Horrigan was conducting a review of magical theory, a girl named Ronde asked when the class could try something a bit more *exciting*, like summoning a demon. Without hesitation, the professor said, "Ronde, demons are a source of endless suffering. If pain is what you crave, I suggest you take one of Magistra Immenfeld's classes." Magister Horrigan's droll answer still makes you smile.

The school's teachers rarely criticize each other in front of students, but those two professors are well known for their mutual dislike. Similarly, Magistra Immenfeld is still angry that Magistra Moonhair was promoted to deputy headmistress ahead of her. Magistra Immenfeld's well-documented ambition makes her unpopular with students a faculty alike, and just about everyone has reasons to dislike her. Now that you think about it, maybe Magistra Immenfeld isn't the *best* person to ask for help....

Lost in thought, you turn into the corridor that leads to Magistra Immenfeld's room and promptly run right into the gaunt woman, knocking her off balance. Her candle falls from its holder, and a large tome slips from beneath her arm and hits the floor with a thud. You quietly mumble an apology. Her brown eyes spark angrily at you from beneath her pageboy haircut, and even though she is shorter than you, she suddenly seems as large as an ogre.

"Is that what passes for an apology these days?" she barks at you in a voice that could shatter glass. You silently pray that she doesn't turn you into an insect and step on you as she retrieves her book and candle. You make a second attempt to apologize, this time with more conviction in your voice. She eyes you critically for what seems like forever, then gives a dismissive wave.

"Aren't you supposed to be taking your final exam?" she asks, her face resuming its normally stern expression.

How do you wish to respond?

"The exam is, um, concluded." (106)

"The exam was, uh, postponed." (18)

"The exam was meant to take place now, but Archmage Erillion never showed up." (183)



"The exam was supposed to take place now, but Archmage Erillion didn't show up...because Magistra Moonhair abducted him!" (125)

58

You retreat to your room, disappointed but certain that Magistra Immenfeld is right and you have no reason for concern about the archmage's apparent disappearance. You stretch out on your bed and soon fall into a dreamless sleep. You awake around dinner time with your stomach rumbling. This day is disappointing. You hope Magister Erillion returned while you were sleeping, so you can proceed with your final exam.

Go to section 111.

59

The magister turns toward you and squints as if trying to focus on your face.

"Seen Mayla...seen Mayla....," he mumbles. Then his face brightens, and he says, "I saw her at breakfast today. I am sure of that. She was there early, before anyone else arrived. Yes, I saw her in the dining hall."

The magister chuckles and then breaks into a hearty belly laugh. He slaps his thigh and then falls onto his side,

overcome by some private joke. You are not sure if you believe his story, but what choice do you have?

Go to section 100.

60

Your mind cuts through the stone like a fish moving through water, then your awareness expands, and you can see inside Magistra Moonhair's room as if you stepped through the wall. Precious little light enters through the gaps around the window shutters. All you can see are dim outlines of a wardrobe, a large table, four chairs, and a closed door on the other side of the room. The room's details remain hidden.

Disappointment fills you, as you always imagined the magistra's room to be much more interesting, but *Penetrizzel* only shows only what is there, not what you hope is there.

Your concentration lapses and your awareness flies back through the wall to your body. You pause to catch your breath and sit blinking in the bright corridor for a few moments.

Subtract 6 AE from your total and return to section 118.

61

You expect to find the magister in his cellar laboratories, but he is not here. You look in the courtyard, the dining hall, the infirmary, and his room, but Magister Horrigan is nowhere to be found. You decide to stop looking before your search for Magister Erillion also becomes a search for Magister Horrigan and you gain the distinction of losing two mages in one day.

Return to section 3.

62

Nivia watches you suspiciously as you sit down near her. Make a check on *Animal Lore* (COU/COU/CHA). If you have some slices of sausage to sweeten the offer, make the check as is. If not, apply a -4 penalty. If you fancy yourself a cat whisperer, go to section 195. If you are more of a dog person, go to section 7.

63

The rat is right behind you! You run up the wall, marveling at the way you can determine the rat's proximity via subtle changes in air pressure. Then you somehow lose your grip and fall onto your pursuer's back. The rat twists around in irritation, sniffing. It cannot seem to find you. This is the perfect hiding place!

Then the transformation spell ends. You stretch your limbs and feel your bones growing, growing, growing,

until you stand in the corridor, towering over an opponent that until a moment ago seemed so dangerous.

Surprised by the change of perspective, you raise your foot that entrapped the rat, and it uses the chance to skirt away. You are left alone. You are happy that you did not get bitten by the rat. Rats are creatures of the Nameless One and are known to spread devastating diseases.

No time to worry about possible future infection now. To save Archmage Erillion, you must dress quickly and continue your search.

Go to section 217.

64

You are standing in front of Magister Brutum's door. Nobody else is around. A stone bench sits to one side of the door. What do you do?

- If you wait patiently, go to section 129.
- If you knock on the door, go to section 34.
- If you try to look through the keyhole, go to section 156.
- If you try to gaze through the wall by casting *Penetrizzel*, go to section 192.

When you are finished here, return to section 100.

65

You drop onto your bed, gazing up at the small chandelier you set swinging via the same cantrip you used to close your dorm room door. The chandelier chain creaks slightly. *A mage trusts his skills!* the dean said. You focus on your breathing. Inhale...exhale...inhale.... A mage? Well, that's the problem. You are not yet a mage. Almost, but not quite. *A mage trusts his skills! Inhale...exhale....*

"I trust my skills," you whisper to yourself. You pause to gather the facts, as if describing a new plant in alchemy class. You attend the Lowangen Academy of Transformation, where you are a *studiosus*, an eighth-year student. Well, to be precise, you are a *candidatus*, someone about to take the final exam. When you pass, you will be an *adeptus*, a full-fledged mage.

You focused on your education and showed more ambition than any other student in your class. While others spent their rare free time socializing in town, you took advantage of the peace and quiet in the reading room. While others put forth the minimum effort necessary, you worked harder, studied more diligently, and conducted elective research whenever you had the chance. You felt the sting of your classmates' envy, scorn, and insults (*bookworm* and *morfu slimeball* being the least



offensive examples), but your patience paid off—you will graduate with more points than the school's previous record holder—Magistra Mayla Moonhair. She was the most proficient student in the school's history until you came along. Just one more day until graduation. You remind yourself you have nothing to worry about. Your heartbeat slows as you regulate your breathing.

"I stay aware of my situation," you say to the empty room, ordering your thoughts the way you were taught. You always pass tests with honors, and you always feel nervous beforehand, but today is different. You feel nauseated, of course, but this time you can't blame your excitement. This time, the fault belongs to Magistra Moonhair!

Your trouble started the *first time* you attempted the final exam, two weeks ago.... The final is a practical demonstration of spellcasting, performed for a panel of three professors. Students cast several spells of the panel's choosing, in rapid succession. That day, you felt a rare surge of optimism because you were well prepared and well rested. Then Magistra Moonhair served you a bowl of porridge that made you ill and caused you to miss the exam. At the time, you thought it mere coincidence.

Magistra Moonhair looked upon you with suspicion from the day you enrolled at Lowangen. She always demanded more from you, treated you curtly, and never failed to embarrass you in front of the other students. She is a former star pupil of the school. After graduating, she applied for a permanent position at the school. Her outstanding academic performance secured her the title of *deputy dean*. To put her in her place, you strove to be more talented and more dedicated than she. Your achievements soon challenged her reputation, but you never imagined she would poison your food. Thankfully, Archmage Erillion gave you permission to retake the exam.

Now here you are, lying in bed on the last day of the school year, with one last chance to graduate. Almost everyone else is in town, enjoying a well-earned break. Your exam begins at the tenth hour.

"I look into my future with confidence," you say quietly, watching the chandelier swing gently back and forth. You decide to take a few moments before breakfast to prepare and maybe cast a practice spell or two before reporting to Magister Erillion to take the exam. Today you graduate and earn the title of *adeptus*!

"I act as it is in my power," you say in a determined voice as you climb out of bed.

Sections with Choices

Some sections in this solo adventure let you choose how to proceed. For example, this section (section 65), lets you choose to go either to section 139 or section 181. Other sections simply tell you to go to a specific section.

If you start with physical exercise, go to section 139. If you start by testing your mental focus, go to section 181.

66

Go to section 28!

67

You slip into one of the classrooms and shut the door to avoid being seen while you undress. Speaking the magic words, you watch as your arms become translucent and then invisible, followed by the rest of your body. Subtract 12 from your AE total.

You hide your belongings among the cleaning supplies in a cupboard and sneak back to the teachers' lounge as quietly as possible. You stand flat against the wall, reach over to the door, and knock. Magistra Immenfeld comes to the door, complaining loudly about endless interruptions.



The door flies open so violently that even the wooden face might get a whiplash. The magistra's expression changes from one of anger to one of surprise at seeing nobody. She steps forward and checks behind the door, apparently either worried or hopeful she accidentally smashed whomever disturbed her. You duck inside the teachers' lounge and step quickly to the side to avoid bumping into the magistra when she returns.

You look around and feel somewhat disappointed but also fascinated. The teachers don't recline on fine silk sofas, as you imagined. Instead, they each have uniquely carved, leather-bound chairs. The large chair with a carved unicorn's head over the right shoulder probably belongs to Archmage Erillion. Another chair, with hundreds of carved serpents winding about the legs, no doubt belongs to the deputy dean, Magistra Moonhair.

You see no sign of a demon trapped in crystal, but you see a large clay pot holding an unusual plant. The plant's flower—or, more correctly, its *mouth*—gnaws busily on a half-skeletonized rat. A painting on the wall depicts a snow-covered landscape, probably somewhere in Bornland. Oddly, the image is moving. Snowflakes fall from the sky, conifers sway slightly in the breeze, and you swear you see yellow eyes glinting from behind that bush....

Apart from these wondrous objects, the room contains several shelves, a large wardrobe, and two long tables holding various texts on magic, a bowl of fresh fruit, some blank parchment, a pile of essays, a bottle of red ink, some quill pens, and a marble sphere that changes color constantly. The walls hold a portrait of the school, some sword-length ritual blades, some elven flutes, and a mirror that somehow shows an alternating view of your own reflection and a view from the outside onto the entrance of the academy.

Magistra Immenfeld slams the door, interrupting your thoughts. She stomps angrily through the room, sits in a chair covered with carven birds, and resumes grading a thick pile of essays. Behind her chair, you spot a key rack hanging on the wall. Most keys are labeled, and some are not, as follows.

- Big laboratory
- Observatory
- v. T.
- Large hatch, cesspit
- Small hatch, cesspit
- [unlabeled golden key]
- [unlabeled iron key]
- Pantry 2

You can take any key that is not yet crossed off. When you take a key, write its description in your inventory and cross off its associated circle in the list. You can hide one key in your mouth, where it will become invisible after a short moment. You can also hide one key in each of your hands, though doing so might affect your balance. You cannot carry more than three keys without alerting Magistra Immenfeld.

Once you select the keys you wish to take, go to section **180** to see if you succeed.

68

Some days you dream of being a goblin with excellent climbing skills. This is one of those days. You trip over your robe, lose your footing, and plummet to the street below....

Things could have gone worse. You land in soft straw and suffer a relatively minor injury; subtract 2 LP from your total. If your total is now 0 or less, go to section **2**. If you still have at least 1 LP, you stand up, jump out of the cart, and comb bits of straw from your hair. Go to section **87**.

69

You enter the dining hall, but it is empty. Disappointed, you turn to leave, but then you have a strange thought. You no longer expect to find Magister Tienan here because you just looked here. But since he always turns up where nobody expects to find him, he should walk into the dining hall shortly after you leave.

You decide on an unusual tactic. You pour yourself a mug of water and take a seat in the middle of the dining hall. Now all you need is a little patience....

Go to section **170**.

70

The key doesn't fit the lock. This is obviously the wrong key.

Go to section **42**.

71

Your instincts warn you to duck, and as you do so, the tip of a heavy staff brushes past your head. A moment later, a heavy man stumbles into you, propelled by the momentum of his failed attack. He utters a cry of surprise as you throw him over your shoulder, and he lands on the magistra. They groan with pain as they rise. You would recognize Magister Brutum's scowling visage anywhere. He wipes blood from a minor scalp wound and brandishes his staff like a weapon, pointing it at you challengingly.





You straighten your robe and prepare to fight, doubtful of your ability to triumph against two such powerful foes. Suddenly a voice cuts through the room.

Go to section 27.

72 (8+1)

You look everywhere, but to no avail. You feel precious time slipping by. Nearly an hour has passed since you started your search, and you decide to leave the old magister alone and look elsewhere for clues.

Go to section 100.

73

This must be the answer! The cellar door. Apart from a few selected teachers, nobody was there when the door was opened last year. Magistra Moonhair may know that there is a way into the flooded basement rooms. Nobody would follow her there, the perfect hiding place for the kidnapped Archmage. Since the door has not yet been bricked up again, the deputy headmistress was able to quietly explore the corridors and prepared vile plans. And thanks to the strict rules not ever look behind that door, she was even able to do it completely undisturbed. You are sure, she must have planned her act from a long time. But you have seen through this ruse.

Go to section 3.

74

You stumble as you hurry to keep up with the mage, until he stops in front of...the *Device of Failure*—the experiment with the blue and green liquids that seemed to defy every rule of alchemy; the source of the worst grade of your career as a student at the Academy of Transformation.

“Do you remember your failure...?” the mage asks in a close to friendly tone.

“Of course! How should I ever forget this homework?” you say, bitterness tinging your voice.

“Ah, well, I see, but what matters most is whether you understand the experiment now.” You nod, but the mage isn’t satisfied with a nonverbal reply.

“Explain,” he says. You sigh. This failure brings back many unpleasant memories, but you must answer his question.

“Things were not as they seemed,” you begin. “Nobody could explain the results because you rigged the experiment.”

“Yes, I did!” Magister Horrigan says, laughing happily.

Still bitter about the episode, you continue, saying, “There never were any blue or green liquids. You used only clear liquid. The beakers and tubing were made of

colored glass—but you ordered us to stand on the other side of the room due to the alleged danger, so we couldn't see clearly."

The mage's happy expression only fuels your irritation.

"You wrote a lab report, as I recall?" he asks.

"Yes, we all spent a week writing our papers. And how long did it take you write *Inadequate* on all of them, magister? Half an hour?"

"True. All true," the mage says smugly, and you wonder how he ever became the most popular teacher in the school. "But you revised your report," he continues, resuming a serious tone.

"Only because you forced us to re-write them," you say, still bitter. You came here seeking help, not humiliation.

"That lab experiment is my pride and joy," he laughs. "Every student fails the first time around, and each must write a second paper. You correctly deduced that the experiment was fake—well, the alchemical part, at any rate, but here's the thing: that exercise was part of a larger experiment."

"A larger experiment? You think failure is an experiment?"

"No, it is not about failure. But about *Character*." The alchemicus wheezes, as if shouldering a heavy burden. You suddenly feel like a new student—small and frightened—seeing the school for the first time.

The alchemicus notices this change in your demeanor and softens his tone. He straightens his back, standing up to his full height, and says, "The second essay required no special knowledge of alchemy, physical laws, or the substances in the glass tubing. You think you wrote about your failure to deduce the workings of the experiment, but you mostly wrote about yourself. As I recall, you said something like..." Here, the mage changes his voice to imitate yours as he recites from memory, "The experiment is a deception meant to convince the naive that we can flaunt the rules of alchemy simply by mixing the right substances. Trapped between fascination for the subject and mistakenly believing they witnessed a rare phenomenon, victims of this deception soon think that any result is possible if one simply knows the right formula. This sublime feeling of elation eventually succumbs to a disappointing but inevitable conclusion, namely, that some things are quite impossible."

You try to speak, fighting the lump forming in your throat. A moment later, you manage to say, "You...you remember what I wrote?"

The magister nods eagerly, saying, "I have taught 153 students. I would not recognize some of them today, and I do not know what became of them all, but I remember their names and I remember the words they wrote for that assignment."

"But why did you look so disappointed when you returned my paper?" you stammer, surprised to discover your old wounds never healed.

"There are many ways to express oneself, even in a lab report. I read 153 highly personal essays. Some filled me with joy, some confirmed my suspicions, positive or negative, and some saddened me terribly."

"I disappointed you," you whisper, your voice barely audible. Then realization strikes you like lightning. How could you have been mistaken all these years? You stare into the green beaker, seeking courage.

"I was wrong, Magister Horrigan," you confess, "It may not be possible to break the rules of alchemy, but it is possible to fool 153 people with nothing more than cheap, colored glass! Yes, the experiment was rigged, but that does not excuse my behavior all these years. I should have known better. I also should have learned a second lesson. I should have learned..."

The magister waits expectantly for you to continue. What do you say?

"...that things are not always as they seem." (172)

"...that nobody is immune to manipulation." (20)

"...that anything is possible, especially if you are willing to bend the rules a little!" (135)

75 (8+1)

You climb the ladder to the observatory, a small chamber on the top floor of the school. A comfy arrangement of cushions adorns the floor beneath a large glass skylight. Normally it would afford an excellent view, but the sky today is a dull, uniform gray. You pry open a small hatch and crawl into the dusty, stifling, low-ceilinged attic. The only illumination comes from a small shuttered opening in the roof. You search the whole attic but only find a couple of blankets, a badly hidden bag of intoxicants and two crude drawings of dwarfs in the act of love. Nothing indicates here that a kidnapping took place, but it is merely a testament to the busy behavior of some of your classmates.

You return to the observatory, brushing away the cobwebs and dust clinging to your robes.

Go to section 100.



76

The final exam covers practical magic. You take a few deep breaths and prepare to cast your spell by placing one hand on the wall and forming an image of an exclamation mark in your mind. When you lift your hand from the wall, you see a black exclamation mark emblazoned on the whitewashed surface. This is satisfactory. The mark appears permanent, as if it is painted on the wall, though you know from experience that someone could easily wipe it away.

Go to section 222.

77

You try to ignore the magister's rage and focus on casting *Bannbaladin*, quietly murmuring the incantation. Make a *Bannbaladin* (COU/INT/CHA) check with a -2 penalty.

If you have less than 8 remaining AE, or if you fail, go to section 211. Otherwise, go to section 194.

78

This must be the answer! The forbidden door in the cellar. Apart from a few selected teachers, nobody was there when the door was opened last year. Magistra Moonhair may know that there is a way into the flooded basement rooms. Nobody would follow her there, the perfect hiding place for the kidnapped Archmage. Since the door has not yet been bricked up again, the deputy headmistress was able to quietly explore the corridors and prepared vile plans. And thanks to the strict rules not ever look behind that door, she was even able to do it completely undisturbed. You are sure, she must have planned her act from a long time. But you have seen through this ruse.

Go to section 3.

79

"You think false accusations are funny?" the magistra snarls at you, "I don't have time for such childishness. This will have serious consequences!"

If you intended to anger the magistra, you succeeded (congratulate yourself for a job well done). She points at the exit with one boney index finger, silently dismissing you. For what seems like an eternity, you struggle to escape the clutch of the upholstery.

Return to section 100 and cross of the second selection circle for Magistra Immenfeld.

80

You repeat the magic word again and again. For a moment you feel as if your mind has shrunk to a single tiny spot held against the wall like a nail, then the hammer strikes.

Your awareness enters the wall but stops as an explosion occurs in your mind. You open your eyes, reeling from the sudden headache.

Of course, this is not the first time you failed to cast a spell. You suffered similarly results dozens of times before you learned to cast this spell successfully.

But why *today*, the day of your last and most important exam? Is this a good omen, or a bad one? Don't stage actors sometimes say, "poor rehearsal, great performance?" Your mind swirls with possibilities as you stand leaning against your bedside table, waiting for your headache to fade.

Subtract 3 AE from your total and go to section 4.

81

Magister Tienan's pleasant smile vanishes in a heartbeat, the sad expression in his eyes changing to defiant anger. "Feeble?" he roars. You take a small step back, shocked into silence.

Life Points and Arcane Energy

Your character relies on two important numbers: *life points* (LP) and *arcane energy* (AE). If you are using the ready-to-play character provided in this book, your character starts the adventure with 29 LP and 38 AE. These numbers represent the maximum you can possess in each category.

Certain activities, such as casting spells or suffering wounds in combat, reduce these numbers. Similarly, things such as healing and magical potions may increase these numbers. Either way, you cannot increase these numbers above your character's maximum unless the text says otherwise.

Life points measure your character's vitality. Wounds, whether derived from combat or otherwise, reduce your character's LP total. If LP ever drops to 0 or less, your character dies and the adventure ends (the text instructs you how to proceed in such instances).

Arcane energy measures your character's ability to focus magical power. Each spell your character casts reduces this total by a set amount. Note that you can exhaust your character's ability to cast magic spells. If your character does not have enough AE to cast a spell successfully, the attempt fails—no matter what you roll. If the check succeeds, you still must be able to subtract the appropriate amount of AE from your character's total without reaching zero, or the spell fails. A failed check costs AE as well, but only half as much as a successful spell. If, for example, you fail to cast *Penetrizzel*, subtract 3 AE from your total.

"Everyone thinks I am losing my mind!" the magister growls. His left eyelid twitches several times as he mentions that last word. "I am as capable as ever. Insults will not improve your grades, *Drudvik Mobshaft!*"

With surprising agility, the magister jumps up onto the bench and assumes a defiant pose from a famous play. "Mobshaft!" he yells, shaking his fist at the sky. Then, just as quickly as it began, his anger melts away and he slumps down on the bench, staring at his feet. A moment later, he begins whispering something.

"The reticulum arcanum flows only through the magically gifted," he says slowly, as if speaking to a five-year-old. "The reticulum arcanum separates mages from everyone else."

You gently clear your throat, hoping the magister regained his senses. Instead, he lunges towards you again. You worry that he might fall, but he catches himself with his staff, bellowing incoherently with such malice that you drop to your hands and knees in fear, trying to appear small and non-threatening.

"Mobshaft!" the magister rages on. "I see through your lies. Take your son and go, Mobshaft. You are no longer welcome at my school!"

You slowly crawl backwards, seeking escape from the situation. Rounding a corner out of the magister's line of sight, you try to convince yourself that you had to flee for his sake. After all, who knows how long his heart could have withstood the commotion? You pray that his behavior stems from a malady that can be cured. As for the names he mentioned, you know nothing of Mobshaft or his son Drudvik, and you feel glad you never met them.

Go to section **100**.

82

Even though the teachers have warned you of it, the only way seems to be to make yourself a lot smaller than you actually are. The spells *Salander* or *Wolf Paw* let you shrink down to the size of a cat or something smaller. However, according to your teachers, casting these spells on yourself is dangerous. The hole is small enough to push your staff and clothes through, but way too small for you.

If you have less than 16 AE (for *Salander*) or 12 AE (for *Wolf Paw*), go to section **110**. Otherwise, you undress and push your belongings through the hole in preparation. Roll to cast *Salander* (SGC/INT/CON) or *Wolf Paw* (COU/INT/AGI). If you succeed, go to section **208**. If you fail, go to section **136**. If you botch, go to section **45**.

83

"The magistra is not here," she explains in a commanding tone that would make a teacher proud. "Move along. Magistra Moonhair wants me to clean her room." She waves you away as she pulls a key from her apron and unlocks the door.

Maybe all that waiting was worthwhile, after all. Kulwina has a key to the door!

If you ask Kulwina to admit you into Magister Moonhair's room, go to section **32**. If you prefer to try magic instead of persuasion, go to section **53**. If you decide to stop bothering the poor maid, return to section **100**.

84

Even though your previous encounter with Magister Tienan was unproductive, you again seek his help. Where do you look this time?

If you seek him in his room, go to section **146**.

If you look in the library, go to section **40**.

If you look in the dining hall, go to section **69**.

If you look where you found him last time, in the gazebo, go to section **207**.

If you change your mind about looking for the magister now, return to section **100** and erase the mark in the second selection circle for Magister Tienan.

85

You knock on the doorframe. Magister Horge frowns when he spots you. He jumps from his chair quicker than you thought possible and strides to the door.

"She warned me you would come here," he snarls, an evil light in his eyes. "Be gone with you!"

You shrink back from the doorway and stammer, "Who...who warned you...and why?"

"Ha!" the white-haired groundskeeper says in triumph. "Mayla knew you would say that, too."

"Magistra Moonhair?" you ask in surprise.

"Mayla. My best friend..." the old man muses, his voice softening. Then his rage returns. He grabs a broom in one bony hand and points it at you. "Begone. You will not get the key!"

You understand. Magister Horge is acting this way because you are not the only person who thought to use *Bannbaladin* on him. Magistra Moonhair got here first. No point asking him for the key now.

Return to section **120**.



86 (8+1)

You return to your room for a needed rest, half expecting to find Archmage Erillion waiting for you, but your hope fades as you open the door to find the room standing empty, just as you left it.

Exhausted, you flop down on the bed. Solving the riddle of Magister Erillion's disappearance is taxing, and you need a few seconds to gather your thoughts. The search is not proceeding as well as you expected.

Groggily, you look around and take a mental inventory of the room's contents: wobbly stool, table, water jug, wardrobe, two bottles of translucent blue liquid, notebook... Wait! You do not own any bottles of translucent blue liquid. Upon closer examination, you determine they are magical potions (when imbibed, each restores 1D6+8 AE, up to your maximum amount).

What are they doing here? Potions like these are rare even at a school like the Academy of Transformation, and most students could not afford *one* such bottle. School rules forbid students from entering each other's dorm rooms uninvited, but potions are not illegal, so what reason could somebody have for placing them here? You doubt someone owes you a favor. Regardless, you are grateful for the unexpected gift.

With renewed courage, you store the bottles in your pocket. Maybe Destiny does favor you. Who can tell for sure?

Record the bottle in your inventory and go to section 100.

87 (8+1)

You climb out of the straw-covered cart, thankful you did not break any bones. You return through the school's main entrance—a heavy stone-oak door that stands invitingly open during the day but shut with iron bars at night—and quickly cross the reception hall. You turn left at the courtyard, ascend the stairs, and find your way back to Archmage Erillion's room, where you ponder your next action.

If you wait for someone to arrive, go to section 175. If you decide to enter because you think this might be part of the exam, go to section 101. If you choose to peer into the archmage's room using the spell *Penetrizzel*, go to section 198. If you stubbornly try to enter through the window again, go to section 52.

88

You step quickly behind a column and hold your breath. Magistra Moonhair lets out a ringing laugh that echoes from the walls.

"I can see you," she sneers, pausing for dramatic effect. "Did you really think a mage as skilled as I, successor to our beloved, soon-to-be-*former* dean, would have trouble finding someone like you?"

If you step slowly from between the columns, go to section 127. If you charge from behind cover and attack, go to section 150.

89

You literally run into Magister Tienan just as you turn to look for him, and you almost knock him over. You quickly grab hold of his cloak to keep him upright.

"You are in a hurry," the old man says, laughing hoarsely.

"I am," you agree. "I figured it out. Magistra Moonhair abducted...."

"Yes, good Mayla. She is always in a hurry, too." Magister Tienan smiles. "Haste is for the young. I ran everywhere when I was young."

You nod and continue, saying, "Archmage Erillion is missing, and I need to...." but he cuts you off.

"Oh!" Magister Tienan exclaims. His face seems to freeze for a moment, but a twinkle in his eyes reveals he is simply thinking. Soon he says, "Magister Erillion always used to rush about. He is somewhat calmer now, but a man his age should slow down and stop inventing crazy ideas, don't you think?"

"But he was abducted!" you yell, aghast.

"Yes, yes," he snorts, "Crazy ideas, like I always say! Nobody is safe with him." Magister Tienan may be a brilliant professor, but this is getting you nowhere.

Return to section 3 and try something else.

90

You feel magic flow through you as you focus on turning yourself into a cat. Hair grows from your skin, and your teeth get sharper. Then the flow of magic stops unexpectedly, and you are human again. Grumpily, you think this day could not get any worse!

Subtract 8 (or 6) AE from your total and return to section 100.

91

The plan is simple. First, cast your spell in one of the empty classrooms. Then, nude but invisible, sneak back to the teachers' lounge and knock on the door. When

someone answers, slip past them, find the key rack, steal the key you need, return to the classroom, wait for the spell to expire, get dressed again, and go open the door.

You foresee only a few minor problems. You have to pass the door to the teachers' lounge, so you have to hope that the door will open long and wide enough. You are invisible, but you still make sounds and can bump into objects. So it will not be easy to go unnoticed, even if you will stay unseen. At least until the spell ends. If that happens in the staff room, the situation is extremely embarrassing for you - especially since you are not only there illegally, but also naked. Wearing your robes would dress you and free you from this embarrassment, but since your clothes are not being transformed as well, they would be clearly visible all the time. That would run counter to the idea of invisibility.

If you have less than 12 points of AE, go to section 158. Otherwise, roll to cast your *Visibili* spell (SGC/INT/CON). If the check succeeds, go to section 67. If the check fails, go to section 210.

92

You inhale deeply and exhale slowly, letting stress to flow from your body. You fill your mind with calming images as you focus on your task....

You open your eyes. You feel serene, but you can do better.

Make another *Intuition* check, this time with a -2 penalty. If you succeed, go to section 218. If you fail, go to section 10.

Bonuses and Penalties for Attribute Checks

Bonuses and penalties are a special case. Using your situation as an example, the text says that the check you must make here suffers a -2 *penalty*, meaning *subtract 2* from your attribute *before* comparing it to your roll. As before, a roll less than or equal to the target attribute is a success, while a roll higher than the attribute is a failure. *Bonuses* work similarly, except that you *add* the bonus to the target attribute, increasing the likelihood of success. When you determine the outcome of the check, follow the directions in the text as to which section you must visit next.

93

The two of you sit in silence, watching the butterfly until it floats away on the breeze. Magister Tienan watches it go and then smiles at you.

"Thank you for sharing this moment. Few people take time from their lives to sit with an old man." Guilt tugs

at your heart, and you open your mouth to speak, but the magister continues.

"You did not come out here to talk about a butterfly. What brings you to me?" You briefly explain your urgent need to find Magistra Moonhair. Magister Tienan looks at you with terrible sadness in his eyes.

"You know the state of my mind. I cannot trust my memories. I believe I saw Mayla twice today—once in the dining hall, and later, near the stairs to the cellar, but...I may be wrong." You hear desperation in the old magister's voice, but nevertheless you think his mind is sharper than it has been in years.

You take his hand and thank him for his invaluable help. The worry in his features melts away and he beams at you, his face full of joy. As you turn to leave, the butterfly returns and briefly alights on the magister's outstretched hand.

Go to section 100.

94

You focus your mind on a tiny spot and your awareness begins to pierce the cool stone. You wonder what you will discover within. Just as the room is almost within view, the wall's resistance proves too much, and your mind is thrown back. Exhausted, you slump down in front of the wall to catch your breath and wait for the numbness to fade.

Subtract 3 AE from your total, return to section 118, erase the mark in front of the option for *Penetrizzel*, and either try casting the spell again or choose another action.

95

Worry flickers across Magister Horrigan's face, and he asks you to have a seat in the research laboratory. Unlike the teaching laboratory, which is a model of the magister's vision of order and safety (at least that which he teaches his students), this lab is quite messy. Stacks of heavy tomes lean precariously, threatening to topple over and crush unwary passersby. Large cobwebs darken every corner. Shelves groan under the weight of too many glass instruments. Open containers of volatile alchemicae litter the room, and foul-smelling liquids drip from untended spills on the tables. The magister seats himself and then turns to face you.

Go to section 209.

96

You barely have time to savor your victory before you transform into your normal form. Your fur disappears



When you think you know where to find Magister Erillion, go to section 145.

101

Heart pounding, you turn the doorknob, but the door remains closed. If it has a mechanical lock, twisting the knob would prove fruitless, but you doubt Archmage Erillion would rely on a mundane lock. After all, this is not a school of the White Guild, where teachers view magic with such awe that they focus on theory and ignore application. The thought makes you shudder. You wonder if this puzzle would arise at the Black Guild's schools, where demon summoners and other crazy people are commonplace. They probably feel no need to lock their doors, as intruders get decapitated and flayed by summoned monstrosities.... You set these absurd thoughts aside and return to the matter at hand, namely, finding Archmage Erillion.

If you continue to wait patiently outside the door, go to section 175. If you try gazing through the wall using your *Penetrizzel* spell, go to section 198. If you want to peer into the room via an outside window, go to section 52.

102 (8+1)

Persistence is a positive trait, and you are nothing if not persistent. Great words to put on your diploma and your letter of recommendation. What would the faculty at the school in Punin say after reading those words? Would they say, *Finally, someone qualified to watch dust accumulate on ancient tomes? Someone to copy our largest books? Someone to take inventory?* And why not engrave it on your Boron's Wheel as well, to last for all eternity?

Now that you think about it, persistence plus futility equals *a tremendous waste of time*. You missed your appointment, but you may yet graduate if you can find Magister Erillion. You decide to look for him elsewhere.

Return to section 100.

• Cross off the circle in front of your choice before going to that section. You cannot revisit a choice unless it has another unmarked circle in front of it. Note that some choices are followed by two or more section numbers in parentheses; when you initially choose such an option, go to the first section listed there. If you choose that option again, go to the next section in the list, and so on.

Incidentally, section 100 is a good place to pause the adventure when you wish to take a break. Also, if you forget why you have some of these choices, re-read the text in section 167.



103

You push open the door to your room, and immediately notice a phial of translucent blue liquid on your table. Whomever placed it there put a little bow on it, to indicate it is a gift. And what a gift! This is a magical potion. You quickly drink it and soon feel a surge of arcane energy (regain 1Dd6+8 AE, up to your maximum). Refreshed, you return to the teachers' lounge to put your daring plan into action.

Go to section 91.

104

You focus your mind on a tiny spot and force your awareness to pierce the stone. You wonder what you will discover within.... The room is almost in view when the wall's resistance proves too much. Your mind is thrown back. Exhausted, you slump down next to the wall to catch your breath and wait for the numbness to fade.

Subtract 3 AE from your total, return to section 64, erase the mark in front of the option for *Penetrizzel*, and either try casting the spell again or choose another action.

105

You feel a tingling sensation in your skin, a good sign that the spell worked. Increase your protection (PRO) by the amount you selected. The spell remains in effect until you leave the cellar. Remember to spend the appropriate amount of AE for the spell (4 points of AE for +1 PRO, 8 AE for +2 PRO, or 16 AE for +3 PRO).

Happy with your decision, you continue along the corridor. Go to section 36.

106

Your nervous stammering does nothing to ease Magistra Immenfeld's suspicions.

"Already over," she repeats slowly. You cannot tell if this is a question or a statement, so you nod quietly.

"Well, then," she says sharply, "Congratulations are in order." Without waiting for a response, she turns and walks away. You start breathing again, thrilled to have survived an encounter with one of the most feared creatures in the school.

Return to section 100 and cross off the second selection circle for Magistra Immenfeld.



107

How often have students found themselves standing outside the imposing door of the teachers' lounge with their hearts pounding? Everyone knows only teachers may enter this room, and teachers do not like to be disturbed for petty reasons.

All solicitors must address the eerie face carved into the door and ask, clearly and politely, whether the mage they seek resides within. The door always answers in a creaky voice that matches its wooden visage.

Instead of wading through the list of teachers to find one who might be here, you decide to simply ask if *anyone* is inside. The door's reply is simple but sounds no less terrifying: "NoooOOOoo!" it wails.

You suppose finding the archmage here would have been too convenient. Disappointed, you try another option.

Return to section **100**.

108

You fail to cast the spell. Your awareness barely managed to pierce the wall, let alone break through it. You now feel ill, but you are not sure why, and you rest a moment to recover. Is the wall shielded with magic?

Subtract 3 AE from your total, return to section **116**, erase the mark in front of the option for *Penetrizzel*, and either try casting the spell again or choose another action.

109 (8+1)

Nivia's ear twitches as she listens to your question, then she jumps down from the bale of cloth that serves as her throne and runs off through the hallways. You have trouble following her because she takes shortcuts beneath furniture and sometimes climbs a tall shelf and makes a daring leap for no discernable reason at all.

You follow the cat up down many flights of stairs, all the way to the cellar. Nivia runs straight towards an intersection of hallways, slows to a walk, and then stops, pricking up her ears. She raises her head and tenses her muscles, fixing her gaze on something—a wardrobe...or something beneath it. Suddenly she lunges at whatever is lurking there. Two mice flee for their lives in opposite directions, squeaking shrilly. At first you think both will escape, but the cat appears a moment later and catches one of the hapless rodents in her paw. She strikes it three times and then bites down hard its neck. Fascinated and disgusted by the spectacle, you watch as Nivia swiftly dispatches her prey. Satisfied that it will not run off, she turns and races after the other mouse.

You examine the bloodied mouse. Why did you think Nivia could lead you to Magister Erillion? Disappointed, you debate your next move. Return to section **100**.

110

Exhausted, you slump down against the wall. Your magical powers are drained. If only you could have saved Magister Erillion. Defeat feels worse than you imagined. The walls seem to loom above you, and you feel small in the darkness. Then you realize that you are small—and getting smaller by the second!

You sniff the air and smell something unpleasant, and your tail twitches in disgust. A naked tail? You sit back on your hind legs and look at your small claws. A quiet *squeak* escapes your lips. You are not sure how this happened, but you changed into a rat!

Go to section **50**.

111

You decide to stop at the dining hall to see if anything remained from dinner. Though in a hurry, you take your usual shortcut across the garden. Praios's Disc hangs low in the sky, casting long shadows in the courtyard. Deep in thought, you fail to notice somebody approaching until they tap you on the shoulder. You turn around and catch only a glimpse of someone wearing a gray cloak and hood. A hand darts forward and touches your forehead, and you hear words spoken softly. Then your consciousness drifts away....

You wake in your own bed, shortly after sunrise. The previous day is a blur. You recall leaving your room to take your final exam, and you know you failed, but you cannot remember how! Puzzled but undeterred, you return to your studies and await the next chance to take the exam, more determined than ever to prove you are a great mage.

The End

112

You worry about the old man. Anger seems to rule much of his life. Do his faulty memories hold him prisoner in a world of fear and uncertainty? You search your mind for the right words to say, but nothing comes, and you must rely on your intuition.

Make an *Empathy* (SGC/INT/CHA) check with a -4 penalty. If the check succeeds, go to section **93**. If it fails, go to section **155**.

113

You rush to attack, but your robe snags on something, holding you back. You stumble and almost fall. As you

struggle to free yourself, Magistra Moonhair steps near, her wry expression changing to one almost of regret.

“You came this close, but you failed,” she says. Then something hits you on the head and you slip into unconsciousness....

Go to section **163**.

114

You push open the window and face a cold breeze. As you climb onto the ledge, you are suddenly reminded of an old assignment concerning the die analogy. One day during class, Magistra Moonhair waxed philosophical about an icosahedron, that is, a 20-sided die. “Each side is basically identical, except for the numbers,” she said, “and each roll of the die usually produces different results.” You learned that rolling a die twenty times does not guarantee that all 20 numbers will appear. During your experiment, the number 14 turned up three times. Your lab partner obtained five results of 7. You never obtained those results, even though you conducted the experiment two additional times. The teacher assigned an essay linking the die with fate, magical talent, and the circumstances surrounding peoples’ births.

You defended the hypothesis that the gods allow fate—essentially, the roll of a die—to determine the course of everyone’s lives, starting from birth. Statistically, every human has a chance of exhibiting magical talent, but few possess the gift. Fate favors some people and ignores others, and nobody has yet discovered a way to look inside a person and know which it will be.

You argued in your essay that even a goblin with no magical talent still develops other abilities, such as swimming or climbing. You wrote that trained mages are sometimes less skilled than goblins in many ways, though you pointed out that this matters little because mages solve problems with magic, and what use is something like climbing skill compared to that?

The Moonhair witch may have given you a passing grade for her class, but she did not award you the honors you expected. Crouched here outside the window, you realize why your final exam might lead to your doom, as you have no spells that grant the ability to climb, fly, or teleport. Your grandfather was right: the most valuable skill in the world is the one that helps you live to see another day. Perhaps he should also have mentioned that mages are ill-suited for climbing because their robes get in the way.



You take a deep breath of cool air to calm your nerves and then look for the archmage’s window. It is to your left, about six feet away along a ledge one handspan wide.

Make a *Climbing (Walls)* check (COU/AGI/STR) with a -2 penalty. If you succeed, go to section **215**. If you fail, go to section **68**.

115

Go to section **28**!

116

You ponder your options for searching Magistra Moonhair’s room.

- If you take a quick look around, go to section **201**.
- If you open the door to the study, go to section **17**.
- If you use *Penetrizzel* to gaze through the door to the study, go to section **159**.
- If you use *Penetrizzel* to gaze through the wall next to the study door, go to section **30**.

If you wish to leave the room and try something else, return to section **100**.



117

You manage *seven* push-ups altogether, and you feel elated! Satisfied with your physical training, you proceed to your next task.

Go to section **76**.

118

You stand in front of Magistra Moonhair's room, listening for sounds of activity within. Nobody else is around. What do you do?

- Wait for Magistra Moonhair to appear (**205**).
- Knock on her door (**98**).
- Try to peer through the keyhole (**154**).
- Gaze through the wall with the spell *Penetrizzel* (**47**).

When you finish here, return to section **100**.

119

You go to Magistra Immenfeld's room, but her door is locked, and she does not seem to be present. You wait for a moment and are just about to leave when the gaunt woman comes hurrying around the corner. She waves at you with all the joy and excitement of a six year old sharing her discovery of a dragon's egg with her best friend—something you never expected to see in her.

The magistra looks in all directions, as if checking for spies, and then whispers conspiratorially, "I think you are right. I learned Brutum and Moonhair recently spent an unusual amount of time in the cellar. My sources saw the two disappear behind the crate at the intersection several times."

You nod slowly, secretly doubting the mage has any sources. Who willingly speaks with her? Of course, *willingly* may have nothing to do with it. She is scary even when exhibiting childish glee, and people might answer her questions out of pure fear. A shiver runs down your spine, and you thank her for the information.

She concludes by saying, "I cannot help you further, but I think that is for the best." Her features then resume their customary gruffness, and she quickly ducks inside her room, all pretense of sociability gone. However, as the door slams shut behind her, you think you hear her utter a quiet "Good luck!"

Go to section **100**.

120

What do you want to do?

- If you visit old Magister Horge, the groundskeeper, go to section **21**.
- If you try to search the teachers' lounge, go to section **199**.
- If you visit Magister Horrigan, go to section **168**.

121

"Magister Tienan, I'm not Ludwina. My name is..." you say, but the magister interrupts you.

"Ludwina, I knew it!" he declares with a grin. "People say my eyes are weak and my mind is slipping, but that is not true. I recognized you."

You don't have the heart to argue with him. You are a student of the prestigious Lowangen Academy of Transformation. If it makes the old professor happy, you can pretend to be Ludwina for a little while.

Got to section **35**.

122

Worry flickers across Magister Horrigan's face, and he asks you to have a seat in the research laboratory. Unlike the teaching laboratory, which is a model of the magister's vision of order and safety (which he demands from his students), this lab is quite messy. Stacks of heavy tomes lean precariously, threatening to topple over and crush unwary passersby. Large cobwebs darken every corner. Shelves groan under the weight of too many glass instruments. Open containers of volatile *alchemicae* litter the room, and foul-smelling liquids drip from untended spills on the tables. The magister seats himself and then turns to face you.

Go to section **157**.

123

For a moment, all suspicion leaves the maid's face. Then she shakes her head and says, "You know I cannot allow it. Not without Magistra Moonhair's permission." She turns back to her work. Friendly words do not seem to be helping....

If you try to cast a spell, go to section **53**. If you decide to stop bothering the maid, return to section **100**.

124

Go to section **185!**

125

Magistra Immenfeld's usually stern expression briefly changes to one of curiosity. She leads you back to her room and asks you to take a seat in an unexpectedly comfortable chair, which she no doubt had to import from someplace far away, like Vinsalt. While she secures an uncomfortable wooden chair for herself, you take the opportunity to quickly glance around her room.

All the magistra's possessions—shelves, table, cupboard, bed, curtains, and even writing supplies—speak of wealth and luxury, but none of them are warm and inviting. Her golden quill is bent, her expensive curtains are ugly, and the carvings on her square table, though exquisite, are rather boring. Magistra Immenfeld's furniture shows sophistication and taste, but you sense it gives her no enjoyment.

You soon realize that your chair is far from comfortable. At least the magistra's chair forces her to sit upright. Your chair's soft, fluffy cushions offer no support at all, and you struggle to avoid falling over. From your nearly horizontal position, you feel very small next to the magistra. She reminds you of a bird of prey sitting on a high perch, ready to swoop down at any moment.

"So," the magistra begins, "You think *Magistra Moonhair* has something to do with your predicament?"

If you nod your head, signifying *yes*, go to section 213. If you shake your head *no*, go to section 79.

126 (8+1)

You wait for half an hour, but all you see is a mouse that dashes past your feet. At first you think it is running from Nivia, the school's resident housecat. According to rumor, Nivia is a former student who became stuck in the shape of a cat. No cat appears.

If you continue to wait, go to section 175. If you impolitely try turning the doorknob to enter the room, go to section 101. If you try to gaze through the wall via the spell *Penetrizzel*, go to section 198. If you want to try peering into the room through one of the outside windows, go to section 52.

127

"How nice of you to join us," Magistra Moonhair intones somberly. "And just in time, too." She pats the archmage on the head before continuing, "The ritual needs more than just *his* body. It needs *yours*, too."

If you ask, "Which ritual?" go to section 171.

If you ask, "Why me?" go to section 214.

If you ask, "Why not simply abduct me as well?" go to section 54.

128

Your spell fails, but Kulwina knows what you tried to do. You expect an angry rebuff, but instead she kicks you in the shin and you briefly lose your balance, long enough for her to duck inside Magistra Moonhair's room and lock the door from the inside. This could be bad. If Kulwina tells a teacher what you have done, you will be expelled from the school. Your only hope now is to continue your search for the archmage and pray Kulwina shows you some sympathy.

Subtract 8 AE from your total. Also, subtract 2 LP from your total (but do not go below 1 LP). You limp all the way back to section 100.

129 (8+1)

Patiently, you sit down on the stone bench next to Magister Brutum's room. Today is supposed to be your graduation day, but instead all you seem to do is sit around waiting. You do not have time for this. While you wait, your thoughts begin to wander. Soon you realize the word *wait* resembles the word *wart*. 'Witches have many warts,' as the common folk say. Witches... warts...waiting... You try to think of something else, but your mind soon wanders to curses, diseases, pyres, and the Middenrealm's brutal Inquisition, which killed hundreds of innocent people. Depressingly, some people in Lowangen think all witches are evil....

You follow your gloomy thoughts for a time but soon grow tired of waiting. You want to act. Go to section 64.

130 (8+1)

Nivia's ear twitches as she listens to your question, then she jumps down from her throne (the bale of cloth) and runs off through the hallways. You have trouble following her because she takes shortcuts beneath furniture and sometimes climbs a tall shelf and makes a daring leap for no discernable reason at all.

You follow her up a flight of stairs to the top floor, then along the corridor to Magistra Moonhair's room. Purring, Nivia rubs up against the door frame, then rolls onto her back, seemingly expecting more affection. You feel anger well up inside you, but then you remember that you did ask the cat to show you the way to Magistra Moonhair, and she led you to the magistra's room. What more did you expect?

You are disappointed, but you stroke Nivia's belly anyway. A few moments later, she jumps to her feet and dashes beneath a cupboard.

Return to section 100.



131

You cast your spell, but you do not feel the familiar tingling sensation that always accompanies it. As a test, you cut yourself on a sharp stone, proving your spell failed. Subtract the appropriate amount of AE (2 points of AE if you tried to gain 1 PRO, 4 AE for 2 PRO, or 8 AE for 3 PRO) from your total, even though you gain no protection at all.

If you try again to cast the spell, go to section 1. If you decide to save your AE and continue with the search, go to section 36.

132

You knock on the doorframe. Magister Horge frowns when he spots you. He jumps from his chair quicker than you thought possible and strides to the door.

"She warned me you would come here," he snarls, an evil light in his eyes. "Be gone with you!"

You shrink back from the doorway and stammer, "Who... who warned you...and why?"

"Hal!" the white-haired groundskeeper says in triumph. "Mayla knew you would say that, too."

"Magistra Moonhair?" you ask in surprise.

"Mayla. My best friend...," the old man muses, his voice softening. Then his rage returns. He grabs a broom with his bony hands and points it at you. "Begone. You will not get the key!"

Magister Horge is acting strangely. Magistra Moonhair must have enchanted him and taken the key for herself. No point asking for his help now.

Return to section 120.

133

Nothing involving Magister Tienan is ever boring. Despite Magister Horrigan's advice, you look for the old mage at the gazebo, but he is not there. Looking further will cost you time.

If you continue searching, go to section 162. If you give up looking for him, return to section 100.

134

Maybe a little rude, you withdraw your hand. Even if they both are serious, and you are not certain they are, now is not the time to give you carnal desires. The two sisters, of course, seem to see it differently. Shortly they try to convince you, but you remain steadfast. The two instantly resent you as they see the futility of their attempts to seduce you. While Altuna just gives you a withering look, Birnja adds snappishly that you've missed something that others would have given an arm or leg for. Then the

two step away so hasty, that you forget to ask them both about Erzmagus Erillion. However, you would not have expected an answer either.

You take a moment to calm your breathing, sort yourself out, and let the dizziness pass. Then you remember the other student, whom you hope did not witness this embarrassing exchange. You look around, but he is nowhere in sight. The dining hall is empty.

Return to section 100.

135

Magister Horrigan stands up, beaming with pride, his eyes filling with tears of joy. "Excellent, excellent!" he says, laughing.

Your mind is racing. Before today, nobody would believe Magister Erillion would ever miss an exam. There must be a reason, and you decide to find it, though part of you worries a mere student is ill-equipped to face someone with the power to abduct an archmage....

"Thank you, Magister Horrigan, you have been most helpful," you say, rising from your seat. As you turn to leave, the magister hands you a small phial containing a healing potion (when imbibed, it heals 1d6+2 LP, up to your maximum of 29).

You thank him for the valuable gift as you exit. Who would have thought the worst homework assignment of your life would turn out so well?

Record the phial in your inventory and go to section 100.

136

The spell always worked during practice sessions. Now, knowing Archmage Erillion's life might rest in your hands, you have trouble concentrating and your casting attempt fails.

Subtract 8 AE from your total and return to section 82 to try again.

137

"You are right," the old mage says quietly. Then he starts sobbing. you pat his shoulder, but he seems intent on drowning in self-pity. You worry that your impatience is causing trouble for Ludwina, a friendly and caring person who deserves better. Between sobs, the old magister begs for your forgiveness. He gives no sign of calming down any time soon. Nobody likes young upstarts who upset old professors, so you tell him that everything is alright and leave before anybody sees the two of you together.

Go to section 100.

138

The door is magically shielded. No surprise there. After all, you are trying to gaze into a teacher's sanctum. Lowangen's professors safeguard their private research; Although mages often cooperate on projects, they remain rivals of sorts and compete for recognition for their independent work. Discoveries make careers, and mages reveal their findings only when they feel confident they will receive the proper recognition for their achievements.

Magistra Moonhair's study is simple and orderly. A comfortable-looking chair sits under a window covered by green curtains that darken the room. Next to the chair is a table carved with countless hunting scenes. You are certain a door lies hidden beneath the green curtain on the opposite wall, to your left. A tall bookshelf holds many volumes and scrolls, and above it hangs a sturdy-looking ritual sword.

The room holds no clues regarding the mage's current research. The desktop is bare except for an inkwell, a quill, and a few sheets of blank parchment. The books are all standard textbooks and teacher references, and you see no curious items Magistra Moonhair might use for research.

You admire the impressive tidiness of her room, but regret finding nothing that hints at her work. Spitefully, you wonder if she has difficulty performing research by herself. These thoughts cancel your spell prematurely, hurling your awareness back through the door to your body. The sudden termination of the spell makes you nauseous, and you need a moment to rest.

Subtract 6 AE from your total and go to section 116.

139

As you perform your warm-up exercises, the words of Magistra Olja echo through your mind.

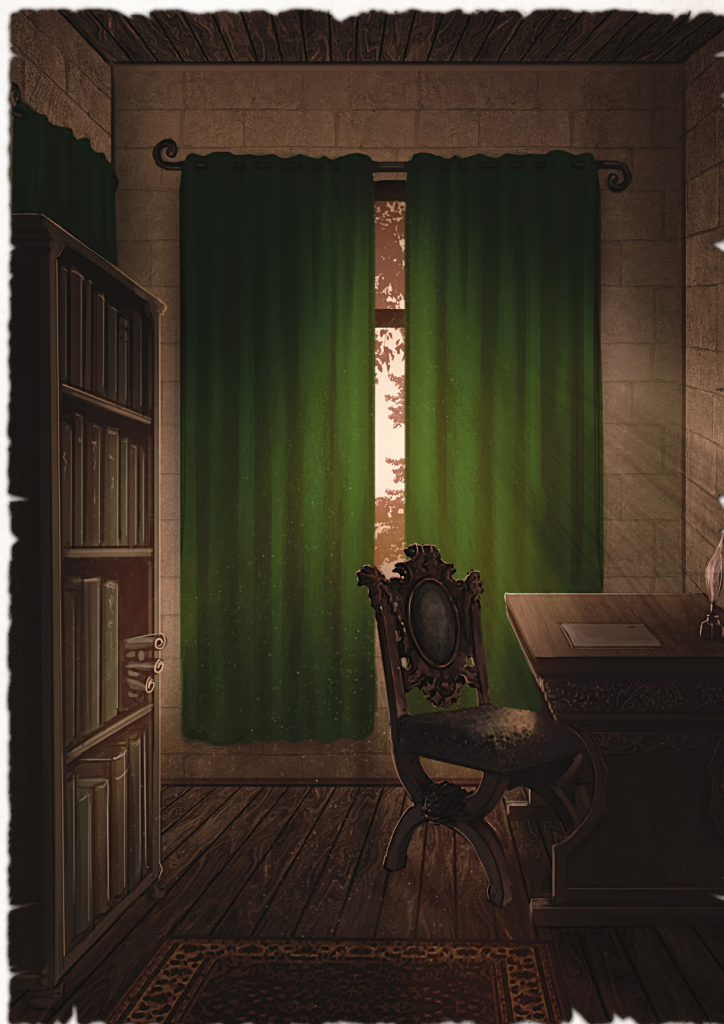
"A healthy mind lives in a healthy body," she taught. "Without dynamic tonus, you cannot perform spellcasting gestures. An unfit body cannot maintain a spell."

Considering how well you performed on your previous exams, your body must be healthy. You are quite sure you have sufficient muscle mass to perform transformation magic, but you doubt that *dynamic tonus* is your specialty. If you believe your classmates' taunts, you are *as thin as a beanpole* and it is a *miracle that a runt like you survived to adulthood*. This may be true, as Lowangen sits in a rough corner of Aventuria, and orcs live right outside the city gates. They rule the entire region, ignoring Lowangen only because its

human and elf residents pay them a hefty tribute. A girl named Brinja once tried to boost your self-respect by saying you were *born slender because orcs do not look for foes behind saplings*. Though you appreciated the sentiment, you never found that explanation particularly flattering.

Something catches your eye through your little dorm window overlooking the street outside the school, and you pause to examine it closer. Glints of sunlight reflect from rain puddles in the road, reminding you of candles and happy memories from long before you enrolled at the school. You clear your mind and try to focus on the day ahead.

As you turn away from the window, you spy your own reflection in the thick pane of glass. You hold up one arm and make a muscle, half-jokingly posing like an athlete. With a sigh, you admit you are not a perfect physical specimen. Brinja was right when she said you could hide behind a sapling.



Attributes and Attribute Checks

As with *The Dark Eye*® RPG, this solo adventure lets you make most decisions for your character, such as deciding where to go and what to do. Success is not always guaranteed. This is where your character's *attributes* and *skills* come into play. Each attribute has a corresponding three-letter abbreviation: COU stands for Courage, SGC for Sagacity, CHA for Charisma, INT for Intuition, DEX for Dexterity, AGI for Agility, CON for Constitution, and STR for Strength.

Each attribute also has a numerical value. The larger the number, the better your character performs. For example, a character with high STR and low SGC is strong and not particularly intelligent. A character with high INT and low COU is empathic and cowardly.

Whenever an action's outcome is unsure, you must make a *skill check* or, as this section requires, an *attribute check* (to determine whether your character performs several pushups). While this check involves your character's STR, the section tells you which check to perform.

To make an attribute check, roll one 20-sided die (1D20, for short) or use the random number generator supplied with this book, and compare the result to the relevant attribute. To succeed, the result must be less than or equal to the target attribute. If the result exceeds the attribute, the check fails. The character provided with this book has a STR of 10.

Instead of feeling sorry for yourself, though, you brim with confidence. You *will* pass today's exam with honors, and you *will* prove that you deserve a prestigious research and teaching position at the school. First, though, you must do everything you can to prepare. Ten pushups will prove that you have *dynamic tonus*, whatever that means. You assume the proper starting position for a pushup, lower yourself to the floor, raise yourself up again....and feel your arms start to shake.

Make a *Strength* check. If it succeeds, go to section 202. If it fails, go to section 38.

140

Patience is a virtue, and it is every student's duty to exhibit virtue—but you cannot stand waiting any longer! Now you must decide on a course of action.

If you boldly try to open the door, go to section 101. If you use the spell *Penetrizzel* to gaze through the wall, go to section 198. If you wish to try peering in through one of the windows, go to section 52.

141

"You don't belong here. This is Magistra Moonhair's room," she explains in a patronizing tone that would make a teacher proud. "Move along. Magistra Moonhair asked me to clean her room." She waves you away as she pulls a key from her apron and unlocks the door.

Maybe all that waiting was valuable, after all. Kulwina has a key to the door!

If you ask Kulwina to let you into Magister Moonhair's room, go to section 32. If you prefer to try magic instead of persuasion, go to section 53. If you wish to stop bothering the poor maid, return to section 100.

142 (8+1)

Roll one die. If the result is even, go to section 26. If the result is odd, go to section 119.

143

Your spell's success is obvious, as the maid effectively turns to stone. You once experienced this effect yourself in class. You remember the disturbing sensation of being unable to move a muscle, not even to blink your eyes. You feel no discomfort or pain, but panic sets in quickly.

When the effect wears off, the maid will remember what you did. She will be unhappy—and rightfully so, you must admit. With no time to lose, you slip through the open door and quickly search Magistra Moonhair's room.

Subtract 8 AE from your total and go to section 116.

144

A classmate named Volgana won every sparring match she fought in staff-fighting class. She always celebrated her victories with this outlandish maneuver. Everybody hated her smugness, and you feel embarrassed just for thinking of copying her move. Nevertheless, you raise your staff, swing it behind you...and hear a crunch.

You glance quickly around and see Magister Brutum sprawled on the floor, unconscious. Obviously, he failed to anticipate your dangerous, boastful attack as he snuck up to hit you from behind. No time for celebrating now; You must still deal with the magistra.

As you list your staff again to strike, a voice cuts through the room. Go to section 27.

145

Write down the name of the location you wish to explore more thoroughly. Convert each letter of the name (ignoring articles) into a number, using the chart below. Then, add (or subtract if the number is negative) those

numbers. If your deduction is correct, the sum indicates the section where your search continues.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|---|-----|
| a | b | c | d | e | f | g | h | i | j | k | l | m |
| 2 | -15 | 2 | 8 | 5 | -8 | -5 | -3 | -2 | 10 | -6 | 1 | -11 |
| n | o | p | q | r | s | t | u | v | w | x | y | z |
| 5 | 15 | -6 | -4 | 12 | -1 | -7 | 9 | -12 | 3 | 11 | 7 | -10 |

If the section at which you arrive starts with the words *This must be the answer*, congratulate yourself for deducing the correct path and read on!

If the section at which you arrive does not begin with *This must be the answer*, do not read it! You made a mistake. Cross off two circles from the Time Tracker and return to section 100.

146 (8+1)

Visiting Magister Tienan in his room is easier said than done, as you never learned its location. You try searching the teacher's wing, but to no avail. Then you remember the best way to find Magister Tienan is to look where you least expect him.

After wandering around for a while, you find yourself at the dining hall. Ludwina, one of the school's maids, is here tidying up. You ask her for help, and she happily shows you to the magister's room, which is near the library. Surprisingly, finding Magister Tienan's room proved easy. All you had to do was ask.

You knock, but the magister's door is locked. Ludwina explains that he locks the door only when he leaves the room, and that she ought to know because the magister relies on her help. She suggests you look in the courtyard, as the magister enjoys sitting in the gazebo while he composes his lectures. Even if you knew this, you would not think to find him there, as the school year is over.

If you look for Magister Tienan at the gazebo, go to section 207. If you want to look somewhere else, go to section 84.

147

Out of habit, you ask for Magister Erillion and Magistra Moonhair, but in both cases, the wooden face utters a drawn-out "NoooOOoooo!" Its rattling voice is so unpleasant that you refrain from asking about other teachers and knock, instead. Anyone in the room will hear you.

Soon the door opens and Magistra Immenfeld's head appears. She eyes you suspiciously and asks, "Who is

bothering me?" even though she has known your name for years. Spoken by her, the question sounds more like an accusation.

You try to answer, but she interrupts you. "Well?" she barks.

On second thought, she sounds busy. Besides, she would never give a key to a student. What were you thinking?

"I am sorry," you stammer. Magistra Immenfeld glares at you and slams the door. Your plan is not working.

If you give up, go to section 120. If you try again, this time while invisible, go to section 91.

148 (8+1)

As one of the friendliest and most respected mages in the academic community, Alchemicus Magister Horrigan is always willing to talk outside of class with his students. Even when not teaching, he prefers to spend his time in the cellar, in the school's laboratories. Classes are over for the term, so both labs are empty when you arrive. Being here reminds you of all the times you stood at one of these stone-covered tables, performing experiments under the watchful eye of Magister Horrigan....

The magister insists that students obey safety precautions, but he also knows that some students learn best by *doing*, not simply by listening. This divergent philosophy manifests in the appearance of the two school laboratories.

On one hand, the teaching laboratory is clean and orderly, and numerous blackboards display important safety rules, such as *always stand while working*, *always wash your hands upon entering and before leaving the room*, and so on. After each lesson, two assistants would gather up unused alchemicae, sweep the floor, and thoroughly scrub the tables.

By contrast, the research laboratory, which is smaller and separated from the teaching lab by a heavy door, is far less organized. The research lab's door stands open, and you can see a jumble of glass equipment piled on the tables. A small candle still burns, heating a flask containing a viscous liquid. Obviously, somebody is ignoring the safety rules. No wonder students half-jokingly refer to the research lab as the *Realm of Chaos*.

You recognize one of the glass assemblies from an experiment Alchemicus Horrigan assigns to all his first-year students. When you were a new student, your first lab lesson began with Magister Horrigan warning about



the great danger inherent in the experiment. Make one mistake, he said, and the whole device might blow up—*Bang!* For this reason, he explained, students had to remain at a safe distance. Next, he revealed a glass assembly holding two boiling liquids: one green, the other blue. The green liquid rose through a glass tube and dripped into the flask of blue liquid, which sat above a larger flame. Steam rose from the blue/green compound, winding its way through more glass tubes until it condensed into a clear distillate that the magister collected in a bowl.

At regular intervals, Magister Horrigan poured this distillate back into the flask of blue liquid. Surprisingly, the blue liquid never changed color. Everything the students knew about liquid concentration and the combination of alchemical substances indicated the mixture should have become several shades lighter when thinned. Instead, it unfailingly retained its deep, rich hue.

For more than a week, you struggled—and failed—to explain the underlying reason for this result. You failed even to identify the two boiling liquids. Now that you think about it, your lab report deserved the disappointing grade of *Inadequate*.

Every student in the class received one more week to revise their lab reports, and even though your second effort received a minimal passing grade, you remember the magister shaking his head in disappointment as he returned your paper. Upon the conclusion of this lesson, Magister Horrigan ordered every student to remain silent about the experiment so as not to spoil the surprise for future classes.

“What are you doing here?” a friendly voice says, interrupting your reverie.

“Good morning, Magister Horrigan,” you say reflexively as the magister’s round, smiling face and famously unruly white beard appears at the door to the research laboratory.

“Shouldn’t you be attending your final exam?” he asks. What do you say in response?

...“My exam was, um, postponed. But I have a question, do you know where Magister Erillion is?” (go to section 31)

...“Nobody showed up to administer my exam. Did Magister Erillion mention anything about it?” (go to section 186)

...“Something terrible happened. I think someone abducted Magister Erillion!” (go to section 95)

...“This may sound crazy, but I think Magistra Moonhair abducted Magister Erillion!” (go to section 122)

149

You pause to evaluate the result. You have soft fur, a pointed nose, and a long tail. Something itches behind one of your round ears, and you scratch it furiously.

A small mouse in a dark cellar is fitting, somehow. You quickly duck into the hole, scamper a few dozen steps, and emerge from the other side, next to your belongings. You sit down and wait for the spell to expire, but something grabs you by the neck! You feel sharp claws and teeth dig into your flesh....

Go to section 2.

150

You rush angrily forward. Even if you knew a combat spell, you would stand little chance of defeating a mage as powerful as Magistra Moonhair. Instead, you must rely on physical means. You swing your staff high overhead and lunge at her. She raises her staff and deflects your blow, but only barely. Your noses almost touch as you lock arms temporarily, and you see her grimace in anger. The rage burning in the half elf’s eyes transfixes you.

“Haven’t I always taught that we do not charge blindly into combat?” she snarls. “We rely on tactics, skill, and intelligence. You are brave, but you are alone.” She twists away with a graceful sidestep and points her staff at you.

“Fight!” she hisses.

Go to section 200.

151 (8+1)

Now that you need to find Nivia the cat, she is nowhere to be seen. Eventually you spot her on the third floor, curled up on top of a bale of cloth next to the tailor’s door. As you approach, she rotates an ear in your direction and then slowly raises her head as if trying to decide whether you deserve an audience. For a few seconds, her green eyes stare at you with an intelligence that reminds you of the rumors of her true nature, but then she stretches and rolls onto her back, batting at the air with one paw.

If only Nivia could talk! You are certain that she could lead you to Archmage Erillion! Students and magisters alike have tried to reverse Nivia’s supposed transformation countless times through the years. Their failures are a sad yet colorful chapter in the school’s history. But all hope is not lost. Sometimes Nivia reacts to simple sentences and seems to understand every word, as if she really is a human trapped in animal form. You cannot change her into something capable of speech, like a parrot, but you can try changing yourself into a cat...

If you try simply speaking to the cat, go to section 62. Casting a *Salander* or *Wolf Paw* spell to transform yourself into a cat requires at least 16 AE or 12 AE, respectively. Also, while transformed, your experiences are dreamlike and difficult to recall after the spell expires, but if you try this more daring plan, go to section 37.

If you choose to not to disturb the cat, do the following: erase the mark you placed on the Time Tracker when you arrived at this section, return to section 100, and erase the mark in front of the option to look for Nivia, At least you now know where to find her if the need arise again....

152

Go to section 28!

153

You close your eyes, take a deep breath, and exhale slowly. Feeling your mind clear, you inhale again, but this time something goes down the wrong pipe and you choke. This is not the path to relaxation....

Make another Intuition check, applying a -2 penalty. If you succeed, go to section 218. If you fail yet again, go to section 10.



Bonuses and Penalties for Attribute Checks

Bonuses and penalties are a special case. Using your situation as an example, the text says that the check you must make here suffers a -2 *penalty*, meaning *subtract 2* from your attribute *before* comparing it to your roll. As before, a roll less than or equal to the target attribute is a success, while a roll higher than the attribute is a failure. *Bonuses* work similarly, except that you *add* the bonus to the target attribute, increasing the likelihood of success. When you determine the outcome of the check, follow the directions in the text as to which section you should visit next.

154

You kneel and peer through the lock. Inside, the room is dark, and all you can see is the outline of a chair and part of a table. At least you did not lose an eye, and you certainly did not see a demon staring back at you. Neither event would have surprised you, considering who lives in this room. Return to section 118.

155

“Magister Tienan, I apologize for bothering you,” you begin, “but I must find Magistra Moonhair.” For a moment, the magister seems to grow calmer, then his rage returns with a vengeance.

“The impertinence!” he yells. His anger grows by leaps and bounds, and he raves with such animation that you must suppress a laugh to avoid escalating the situation. With a calming gesture, you retreat to section 100.

156

Like any other door to a teacher’s office or private room, this door has a keyhole...but you cannot see through it. A stone-like substance blocks it completely. You do not know how Magister Brutum bypasses it to unlock his door, but you have seen crazier things within these walls. It certainly is a good deterrent. Go to section 64.

157

“Magistra Moonhair abducted Archmage Erillion?” the alchemicus asks.

“I am certain,” you say, queasiness building in your stomach. “It sounds insane, but there is no other explanation.” You fully expect Magister Horrigan to dismiss you altogether. Instead, he leans back and stares blankly over your shoulder, in the direction of the teaching laboratory.



“Abducted...,” he mumbles quietly, lost in thought. Then his face lights up with child-like glee, the same way it does when one of his students discovers a correct answer, or when a complex experiment produces better-than-expected results. This is one reason why students love the old alchemist. Before you know it, he leaps off his seat, grabs you by the arm, and practically drags you to the teaching laboratory.

Go to section 74.

158 ○

You feel too exhausted to cast this spell. You must rest, so you retreat to your room.

If this is the first time you arrived at this section, go to section 103. If this is the second time you arrived here, go to section 177.

Circles to Cross Off

One or more circles appear next to some section numbers. Each time you visit one of these sections, cross off one circle. If you visit that same section again, or run out of circles to cross off, follow the instructions in the section’s description (usually, the text sends you to another section).

159 (⌚+1)

Entering Magistra Moonhair’s room is risky enough, but entering her private study? Your heart beats faster as you imagine what it might conceal. You press your brow against the wall and recite the incantation: “*Penetrizzel, Penetrizzel...*”

Roll to cast *Penetrizzel* (SGC/COU/INT) and apply a -3 penalty. If you have less than 6 remaining AE, or if you fail, go to section 189. If you succeed, go to section 138.

160

“As always, you are too lenient with an old man,” he says, wiping away tears with the back of his hand. “It must be time to eat. Would you like to sit with me in the dining hall?”

You shake your head, saying that you have other duties to perform and anyway you are not hungry. The old magister nods, but you see a hint of disappointment in his eyes.

You try a different approach, saying, “Magister Tienan, I have an important question. I must find Magistra Moonhair. Have you seen her?”

“Mayla,” the magister says distantly, “I often see Mayla, yes.” He then nods to himself and falls silent. You gaze at him expectantly but soon realize he has answered your question. Patience running thin, you ask a more precisely worded question.

“When and where did you last see Magistra Moonhair?” you ask. Make a *Willpower* (COU/INT/CHA) check with a +3 bonus if you can keep up your sweet voice.

If the check succeeds, go to section 59. If it fails, go to section 16.

161

You speak the incantation and concentrate on changing Kulwina’s shape. Roll to cast *Salander* (SGC/INT/CON) and apply a -2 penalty.

If you have less than 16 remaining AE, or if you fail, go to section 128. If you succeed, go to section 29.

162 (⌚+1)

You think about where you expect to find Magister Tienan and briefly consider whether to search only that location, but you decide to look everywhere. You try the dining hall, the library, the courtyard, his room—anywhere he might be—but you find no trace of him. Magister Tienan is also missing!

If you continue the search, go to section 72. If you give up the search, return to section 100.

163

You wake up the next morning with few memories of the previous day. How did you fail your exam? You do not remember making any mistakes, but then again, you do not remember anything, not even the exam itself.

Strangely, Magistra Moonhair greets you warmly when you pass each other near the dining hall. Her sudden friendliness puzzles you, as you always believed she envied your performance at school.

These questions are of little concern, for the school grants you another chance to take the exam, and you resume your studies, more determined than ever to prove you are a great mage.

The End

164

You return to Magister Erillion’s room and knock, but nobody answers.

If you try another option, go to section 100. If you wait for the magister to return, go to section 55.

165

You pause to evaluate the result. You now have a long tail, whiskers, silky brown fur, and sharp claws. Also, your new eyes grant excellent vision in the dark corridor. A cat's shape is a good choice, though you now realize the hole is smaller—and the edges are sharper—than you estimated.

But go on you must, so you squeeze into the opening.

Make a check on *Body Control (Squirm)* check using (AGI=14/AGI=14/CON=6), with SR 12. If you succeed, go to section 39. If you fail, go to section 12.

166 (8+1)

The dining hall is unoccupied, except for a lone mouse. Curiously, the staff seem to have overlooked a small bowl of leftovers from breakfast. It contains three slices of sausage. If you wish, you may add this treasure to your inventory. You wait around for someone to come by, but nobody does.

Tiring of waiting, you decide to try another plan to find Magister Erillion. Return to section 100.

167

This is crazy. Instead of taking your exam and looking forward to graduation, here you are, searching the halls of the school for clues to Magister Erillion's whereabouts. You fervently hope that this decision will not come back to haunt you, but you are determined to succeed, so you pause to consider your options.

The wisest course of action would be to inform the teachers and let them handle it. Many of the school's students and instructors went into town today to celebrate the end of the school year, but some always remain behind. Venerable Magister Horrigan is probably in his office. Most students would approach him first, as he is competent, friendly, and trusting. Magistra Immenfeld probably stayed behind as well, but she is mistrustful and a stickler for the rules. You wonder whether she would help or make the situation worse.

Seeking Magister Tienan's advice is more difficult but less risky. He is a brilliant theoretician, though he is even more unworldly than the elves, and his mind often seems to be...someplace else. An unsympathetic person might call him *insane*.

You never searched Magister Erillion's room, so a return trip might be in order. And of course, you might benefit if you search Magistra Moonhair's and Magister Brutum's rooms.

Maybe you could learn something about the archmage's recent activities by asking the school's clerical and housekeeping staff. You could also try the teachers' lounge, the dining hall, or the courtyard. You doubt you would find any instructors in the attic or the cellar today, but if you did, they might have the information you seek. How will you know unless you try?

Speaking of chances, you suddenly remember a potential witness who always turns up at the most inconvenient of times—Nivia, the school's resident housecat. Her animal instincts and razor-sharp senses let her perceive things that humans cannot. According to rumor, she is a former student who became trapped in an animal shape years ago. If this is true, she must be able to communicate with you.

Of course, you can also retreat to your room to rest and consider your options, at least for a while. Sometimes the answer finds the seeker...

Go to section 100 and make your decision.

168

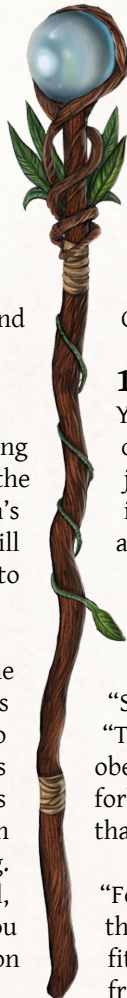
You find Magister Horrigan near the stairwell, in the cellar. He sits down on a stone bench and asks you to join him while you explain your suspicions. He listens intently, and when you finish, he strokes his beard for a moment and gives you a disconcerting gaze.

"I thought you were made of different stuff," he says. You did not expect this reaction.

"Smart, diligent, ambitious, precise," he continues. "The faculty like you, not least because you always obey school rules. And now you want me to unlock the forbidden door for you?" He laughs so loudly and long that his face turns red and his sides begin to ache.

"Forgive me," he says after composing himself, "but that is funny!" Your questioning expression incites new fits of laughter. "That is the craziest thing I ever heard from you. Or, to be more precise, that is the *first* crazy thing I heard from you! You, of all people! My colleagues would never believe it if I told them."

When he finally calms down again, he continues, "I do not know if your suspicions are true, but I admit I have not seen Magister Erillion all morning. And I will not be able to convince anybody to look for our cherished dean until this evening, so I guess you must walk your path alone. You know I support my studiosi, especially in difficult times, but...to open the forbidden door? As much as I might want to help, I do not have a key."



Magister Horrigan shrugs in resignation. Then he looks around, smiles, and winks at you, saying, “Only four keys exist, and they are well guarded. Magister Erillion, Magistra Moonhair, and our groundskeeper, Magister Horge, each have a copy—and one dangles from a hook in the teachers’ lounge. It is labeled, ‘Large hatch, cesspit.’ I trust you will keep this knowledge to yourself.” He winks his eye again.

“Thank you,” you say, happy and grateful for the unexpected aid. As you rise and turn to leave, Magister Horrigan’s expression turns serious.

“Remember,” he says as he rises and walks away, “A steep, rocky path is better than a well-groomed lawn with no trail at all. Even if they might prove troublesome, follow the paths that open before you. Do not hope for ones that do not exist.”

Return to section 120.

169

You chant the magical words over and over, pushing your mind forward like a nail driven by a hammer, until you can see beyond the wall. You look out upon the city. Light from Praios’s Disc pierces the lifting fog, and clouds of chimney smoke curl above the rooftops.

The half-timber houses across the road crowd each other as if seeking support after a night of revelry. Servants crowd the streets, conducting their shopping. A woman goads an ox that refuses to pull her overloaded cart. Several children try to catch an escaped piglet. Two old men share the day’s gossip. A battle-scarred woman checks her sword’s edge while a sharpener waits nervously for his payment. A well-dressed city councilmember steps into an alley to avoid a mud puddle, unaware of the woman above him preparing to empty her chamber pot....

This look at the honest hustle and bustle of life outside the school refreshes your spirit, but you feel the spell draining your strength. Wistfully, you gaze quickly around once more, then you withdraw your awareness, forcing it through the wall and back to your body. You open your eyes and lean against the wall while you recover.

Subtract 6 AE from your total and go to section 4.

170 (8+1)

Time crawls. You pour a second mug of water, then a third, and even scandalously drink from the water pitcher, just to relieve the monotony. Then a new thought occurs to you. By expecting to find the magister in the dining hall, you unintentionally made the dining hall the last place he would go—you changed the conditions (and therefore the expectations) of your

search. Berating yourself for failing to solve a simple logic puzzle, you place your mug in the wash rack and leave the dining hall.

Go to section 84.

171

“Ah, the folly of youth,” Magistra Moonhair says. “This is no tale of Knight Rondramir, where the villain reveals his plan before the final confrontation. You are going to die. Haven’t I always taught that we do not charge blindly into combat? We rely on tactics, skill, and intelligence. You are brave, but you are alone.”

She snarls and lunges at you, and you raise your staff to ward off the attack. Your noses almost touch as you lock arms, and you see her grimace in anger. The rage that burns in the half elf’s eyes transfixes you. Then she twists away with a graceful sidestep and points her staff at you in challenge.

“Fight!” she hisses.

Go to section 200.

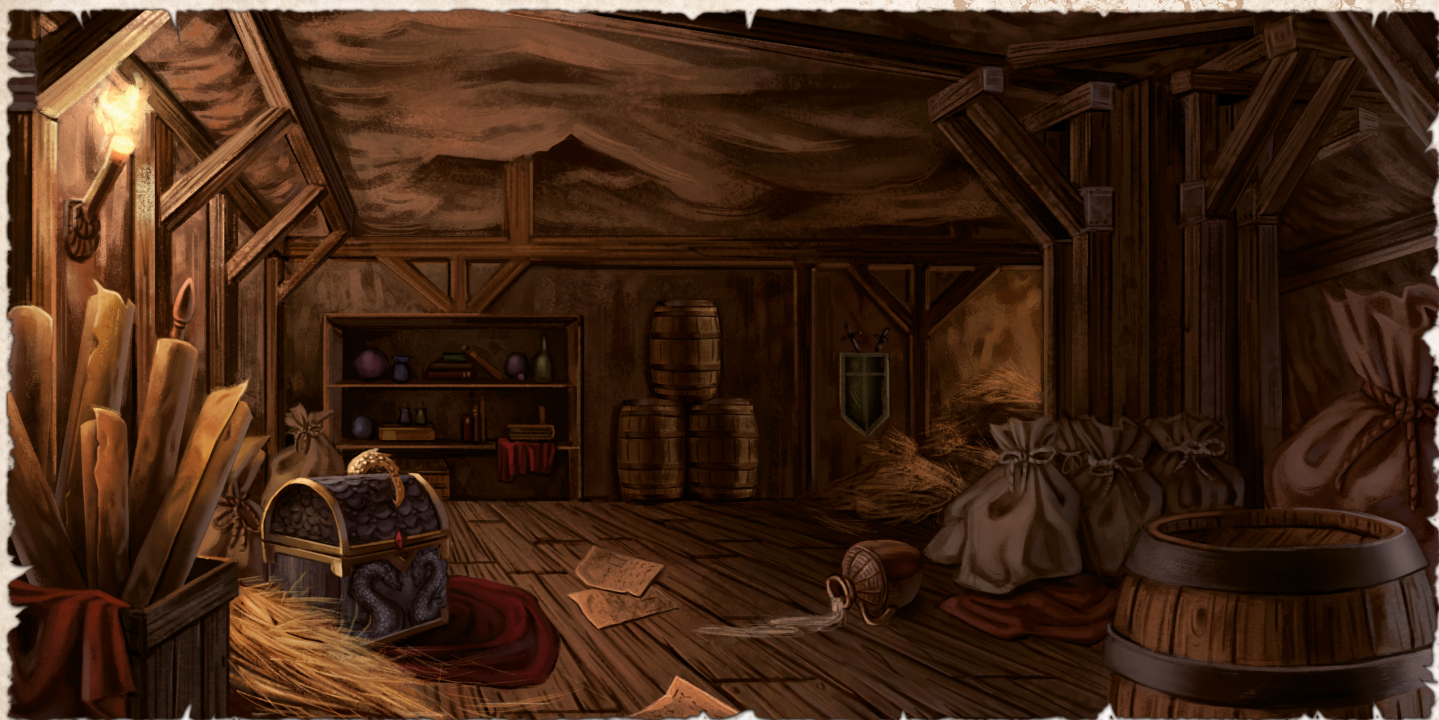
Life Points and Arcane Energy

Your character relies on two important numbers: *life points* (LP) and *arcane energy* (AE). If you are using the ready-to-play character provided in this book, your character starts the adventure with 29 LP and 38 AE. These numbers also represent the maximum you may possess in each category.

Certain activities, such as casting spells or suffering wounds in combat, reduce these numbers. Similarly, things such as healing and magical potions may increase these numbers. Either way, you cannot increase these numbers above your character’s maximum unless the text says otherwise.

Life points measure your character’s vitality. Wounds, whether derived from combat or otherwise, reduce your character’s LP total. If LP ever drops to 0 or less, your character dies and the adventure ends (the text instructs you how to proceed in such instances).

Arcane energy measures your character’s ability to focus magical power. Each spell your character casts reduces this total by a set amount. Note that you can exhaust your character’s ability to cast magic spells. If your character does not have enough AE to cast a spell successfully, the attempt fails—no matter what you roll. If the check succeeds, you must be able to subtract the appropriate amount of AE from your character’s total. A failed check costs AE as well, but only half that of a successful spell. If you failed to cast *Penetrizel* in this instance, subtract 3 AE from your total.



172

Magister Horrigan stands up, beaming with pride, his eyes filling with tears of joy. “Excellent, excellent!” he says, laughing.

Your mind is racing. Why could make Magister Erillion miss an exam? There must be a reason, and you decide to find it, though you wonder if it is wise to follow someone with the power to abduct an archmage....

“Thank you, Magister Horrigan, you have been most helpful,” you say, rising from your seat. As you turn to leave, the magister hands you a small phial containing a healing potion (when imbibed, it heals 1d6+2 LP, up to your maximum of 29). You thank him for the valuable gift as you head out the door. Who would have thought the worst homework assignment of your life would turn out so well?

Record the phial in your inventory and go to section 100.

173 (8+1)

You cannot imagine an abductor hiding Archmage Erillion in the cellar. Villains like to have multiple escape routes, and the cellar has only one way in or out—namely, a lone staircase to the first floor. However, people act in all manner of irrational ways, so perhaps you should take at least a quick look around.

You light a candle and follow the stairs to the cellar. This floor is silent, as most students and teachers went into town for the day. You expect to meet only the alchemicus, Magister Horrigan, puttering around in his laboratory classrooms. You head there first, but those rooms are vacant.

You backtrack to the stairs and continue west along the corridor. The doors for both the small and large ritual rooms stand open; you can see those rooms and the connected storage room are vacant. Nearby, other storage rooms (for food and other consumables) are also vacant. You know these rooms well from your duties over the years. You spent many hours here taking inventory or fetching items from various crates, chests, phials, sacks, and barrels.

One door sends shivers down your spine. The room beyond contains a large pool for practicing the spell *Breathe Water*—a spell you have not yet learned. You try to suppress an image of Magister Erillion floating face down in the water as you open the door and peer inside....

To your relief, the room is vacant, and the same is true for the bathing room and the laundry with its connected storage room. You really seem to be alone down here. A bit disappointed, you sit down on a pile of shattered brick—debris left after workers excavated an old, walled-off door last year. You look at the thick oak portal, which students jokingly refer to as *the forbidden door*.

The faculty hoped it concealed hidden knowledge, but a flood collapsed the corridor behind the door, ending plans to explore what lies beyond. Magister Erillion placed a magic lock upon the door and proclaimed it off limits, but this only fueled students’ curiosity and resulted in no end of mischief. Eventually the door earned its ominous nickname. For unknown reasons, nobody tried to wall it off again.

You suddenly view the forbidden door as a symbol of your failure. For centuries, nobody bothered to explore what



lies beyond. When people finally wanted to try, however, no amount of expectation or enthusiasm could prevent their failure. Just like your search for Magister Erillion....

No, you do not accept that. You did not fail, and you will not give up, but the cellar has nothing more to offer. Return to section 100.

174

The lock opens with a soft click and the door swings open, groaning loudly. A narrow corridor lies beyond. You see no debris or other evidence of a cave-in, and no signs of flooding. The corridor is intact, clean, and made from the same dark, gray, roughly polished stone as the rest of the cellar, except the walls, ceiling, and floor contain countless tiny specks that glow with a soft, blue light.

Nobody seems to notice you, and you see no rats or mice. Gathering your courage, you step through the portal and close the door behind you.

While your eyes grow accustomed to the dim, blue light, you carefully put one foot in front of the other—and kick a small phial, which spins across the floor. The phial appears to contain an arcane potion that restores arcane energy (up to 16 AE, but no higher than your maximum).

Taking the phial, you follow the corridor carefully, conscious of the threat of traps, but you encounter nothing. Eventually you come to a dead end. The corridor contains no intersections and no obvious doors or other passages through which you might squirm. You search and find only a small hole near the junction of the wall and floor. To fit through that hole, you would have to be no larger than a cat. And who knows what lurks on the other side?

Go to section 82.

175 ○ ○ ○

Nothing like sitting nervously outside the archmage's office....

If this is the first time you arrived at this section, go to section 126. If this is the second time you arrived here, go to section 24. If you arrived here more than two times, go to section 140.

Circles to Cross Off

One or more circles appear next to some section numbers. Each time you visit one of these sections, cross off one circle. If you visit that same section again, or run out of circles to cross off, follow the instructions in that section's description (usually, the text sends you to another section).

176

You catch up to Magistra Immenfeld in a second-floor corridor, hurrying on her way. She says she must get to an appointment in the teachers' lounge and thus has no time to stop and chat. She then expresses concern over your final exam. You start to explain your dilemma, and thankfully she agrees to listen as she speeds along. Just as she opens the door to the teachers' lounge, you reach the part about your suspicion that Magistra Moonhair hid the archmage behind the forbidden door in the cellar.

You fear Magistra Immenfeld might disappear into the teachers' lounge without another word. However, she turns, raises her right index finger as she pauses to think, and then says, "Assuming your unproven deductions are true, what, pray, should I do about it? Find the key to the forbidden door, open it, and enter unprepared? Should I take you with me? You do realize the door is forbidden, right? Or should I wait and discuss your suspicions with the faculty tonight when they return? If Magister Erillion is still absent tomorrow morning, then, and only then, will we discuss and organize a search. For now, I suggest you return to your room and ignore this business, assuming there is any business, that is."

For a moment, the magistra seems to take pleasure in the look of sheer abashment on your face. Then she turns and enters the lounge, shutting the door behind her.

If you do as she says, go to section 58. If you still wish to pursue other options, go to section 3.

177

This time, no gift awaits you in your room. Worn from exertion, you lean your staff against a corner and stretch out on the bed. Soon you fall into a dreamless sleep.

You wake at dinner time. Well, your stomach rumbles so loudly that you think it must be dinner time. This day is disappointing. You hope Magister Erillion returned while you were sleeping, so you can proceed with your final exam.

Go to section 111.

178

You focus on turning into a cat...and succeed! Your clothes seem to grow and fall around you, and your vantage point changes. You feel an annoying itch behind your right ear and casually scratch it with your right hind leg. Then you lick your front right paw and start cleaning yourself. You want to look your best; this is her territory, and you want her to accept you.

This does not prove easy. For several months, you follow her as she prowls throughout the school. You even share your mice with her. Initially the mages were very interested in you. They examined you, waved their silly sticks, and muttered dull sounds at you, but they soon grew bored and focused on other things. You eventually gain Nivia's favor, and the two of you start a growing cat family and life comfortable cat lives within the halls of the school.

The End

179

"This is a beautiful butterfly, Magister Tien..." you say, but the mage interrupts you with a harsh gesture.

He looks angrily from the butterfly to you and back, and snarls, "Why are you interrupting me? Can you not see I am busy? The young always think they know what is best. That's your problem, Drudvick—you never learned respect!"

If you try to calm the magister with gentle words, go to section 112. If you dare to calm him using the spell *Bannbaladin*, even though such will be difficult, go to section 77.

180 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

The soft carpeted floor has made it much easier for you to sneak to the key board, but removing the keys will be a critical moment.

Make a *Pickpocket* (*Steal Item*) check (COU/DEX/AGI). If you take only one key, you receive a +4 bonus. Taking two keys imposes no modifier. Taking three keys incurs a -2 penalty. Also, your skill check suffers a -1 penalty for every circle crossed off when you arrived at this section (remember to cross off a circle for this visit before you leave). Note: if, after applying all modifiers, your net bonus is +4 or greater, your check succeeds automatically.

If your skill check succeeds, go to section 19. If it fails, go to section 203.

Circles to Cross Off

One or more circles appear next to some section numbers. Each time you visit one of these sections, cross off one circle. If you visit that same section again, or run out of circles to cross off, follow the instructions in that section's description (usually, the text sends you to another section).

181

You are one of the school's top students. If Magistra Olja's words—"A healthy mind lives in a healthy body"—are true, then your body seems healthy enough. You were

skinny growing up, and if you believe your fellow students' teasing, you are still rather thin. This is surprising, given your upbringing....

If you believe your classmates' taunts, you are *as thin as a beanpole* and it is a *miracle that a runt like you survived to adulthood*. This may be true, as Lowangen sits in a rough corner of Aventuria, and orcs live right outside the city gates. They rule the entire region and ignore Lowangen only because its human and elf residents pay the orcs a substantial tribute. A girl named Brinja once tried to boost your self-respect by saying that you were *born slender because orcs do not look for foes behind saplings*. Though you appreciated the sentiment, you never found that explanation particularly flattering.

Something catches your eye through your little dorm window overlooking the street outside the school, and you pause to examine it closer. Glints of sunlight reflect from rain puddles in the road, reminding you of candles and happy memories from long before you enrolled at the school. You clear your mind and try to focus on the day ahead.

Attributes and Attribute Checks

As with *The Dark Eye*® RPG, this solo adventure lets you make most decisions for your character, such as deciding where to go and what to do. Success is not always guaranteed. This is where your character's *attributes* and *skills* come into play. Each attribute has a corresponding three-letter abbreviation: COU stands for Courage, SGC for Sagacity, CHA for Charisma, INT for Intuition, DEX for Dexterity, AGI for Agility, CON for Constitution, and STR for Strength.

Each attribute also has a numerical value. The larger the number, the better your character performs. For example, a character with high STR and low SGC is strong and not particularly intelligent. A character with high INT and low COU is empathic and cowardly.

Whenever an action's outcome is unsure, you must make a *skill check* or, as this section requires, an *attribute check* (to determine whether your character performs several pushups). While this check involves your character's STR, the section tells you which check to perform.

To make an attribute check, roll one 20-sided die (1D20, for short) or use the random number generator supplied with this book, and compare the result to the relevant attribute. To succeed, the result must be less than or equal to the target attribute. If the result exceeds the attribute, the check fails. The character provided with this book has a STR of 10.



As you turn away from the window, you spy your own reflection in the thick pane of glass. You hold up one arm and make a muscle, half-jokingly posing like an athlete. With a sigh, you admit you are not a perfect physical specimen. Brinja was right when she said you could hide behind a sapling.

Instead of feeling sorry for yourself, though, you brim with confidence. You *will* pass today's exam with honors, and you *will* prove that you deserve a prestigious research and teaching position at the school. For now, you need serenity. You sit cross-legged on your bed, close your eyes, and try to empty your thoughts.

Make an *Intuition* check. If you succeed, go to section **92**. If you fail, go to section **153**.

182

You run this way and that, ducking under the staff and sliding past the mountain of cloth. You even try to flatten yourself alongside a large stone and remain still, but the rat grabs you with its sharp claws....

Go to section **2**.

183

"Never...showed...up?" the magistra asks slowly, as if verbally tightening thumbscrews. "What do you mean?" You stand transfixed by her gaze as you struggle to think of a satisfactory answer. What do you say?

"I, um, I think the exam was...postponed...maybe?" (18)
"Well, um, I am convinced, um, that Magistra Moonhair is involved, somehow." (125)

184

The maid looks at you with stony features and yells, "Nice try. Now, leave!" Then she turns the key and opens the door.

Friendly words are not helping. If you try to cast a spell, go to section **53**. If you decide to stop bothering the maid and leave, return to section **100**.

185

The key fits the lock but does not turn it. This is the wrong key.

Go to section **42**.

186

Worry momentarily flickers across Magister Horrigan's face, and he asks you to have a seat in the research laboratory. Unlike the teaching laboratory, which is a

model of the magister's vision of order and safety (at least that which he teaches his students), this lab is quite messy. Stacks of heavy tomes lean precariously, threatening to topple over and crush unwary passersby. Large cobwebs darken every corner. Shelves groan under the weight of too many glass instruments. Open containers of volatile alchemicae litter the room, and foul-smelling liquids drip from untended spills on the tables.

"That is unlike him," the alchemicus mumbles, taking a seat himself. "What could have happened?" he wonders aloud, scratching his beard.

What do you say?

..."I don't know. I was hoping you could help." (46)
..."Magister Erillion was abducted!" (209)
..."I know Magistra Moonhair abducted Magister Erillion!" (157)

187 (8+1)

The maids do not react when you enter the large room. You know little about them beyond their names, Altuna and Birnja, and that they are twin sisters. They are about the same age as you, and you know they started working at the school last winter. You've had little to do with them so far, but the rumors about the beautiful twins have painted a very clear picture. You have heard they worship the love goddess Rahja and allegedly both are very passionate to pursue the goal of securing a well-situated future - mostly in the beds of older Studiosi.

While you're still wondering if you're really the only one who never felt like joining the courtship of one of them, they're already taking notice of you. Clenching their lips vigorously to provoke a stronger red, Altuna plucks her dress down to emphasize her lush cleavage, while Birnja strives to achieve the same effect by perkily heaving her breasts upwards.

"Handsome man, is there something we can assist you with?" Asks Birnja, while Altuna winks at you with her eyes and has a broad, faux smile on her lavish lips. Inevitably, you feel the heat rise to your face as the two move even closer. You are getting more and more uncomfortable. "Well," you stammer, as Altuna puts her right hand on your arm. "I wanted..." The two are giggling - and your face is burning like fire. "I like it when men are coy," whispers Birnja softly. Altuna just gives you a passionate look, then her sister continues, "Whatever we can help you with, I'm sure we can do a lot better in our room."

You try to swallow, but your throat is dry. What kind of situation did you just stumble into? You have never had anything to do with ladies in the manner suggested. You

feel pressured and insecure. The offer is tempting, and the rising and falling breasts in front of you underline it with every breath. But you also know this should not be the time to do it, and you also have the very plausible concern that you might be the butt of a nasty joke here. Why are the two trying so hard to seduce you? There has to be some evil ulterior motive - or are Phex and Rahja just blessing your way?

"Come on," urged Altuna, "we only bite a little." Then she takes your hand and leads you on.

Are you following her, go to section 6, or are you pulling your hand away and bring some distance between you and the two, go to section 134?

188 (8+1)

Magister Storde Tienan is a living legend, respected the world over for his brilliant insights into magical theory. Sadly, his mind suffers from the ravages of time and old age, and he often gets lost on his way to class. This does not bother him in the least, however, for he just as often forgets where he is going. This malady affects every aspect of his life except his knowledge of magic, which remains as solid and dependable as ever.

As Magister Horrigan would say, if you want to find Magister Tienan, look where you do not expect to find him. Thus, you skip his room and the library, and you also ignore the laboratories and the scriptoriums. Instead, you start with the gazebo in the courtyard—and lo, you find him! The ancient man sits alone on the ground, clad in a white robe. As you draw nearer, you notice that he is lecturing to some doves about the topic of arcane energy.

"...The *flux maximus* permeates us all," he says, "its fine web unfolding like a network of arteries and veins. However, instead of the red stuff of life, power flows through that pulsing web. This power is intrinsic to every creature on Dere but controllable only by those with the magical gift. You are fortunate, not simply because you are part of the *reticulum arcanum*, but because you can *control* it."

The magister pauses to let his words sink in, but the doves show no visible reaction. Eventually one twitches its head, and then all the birds start running to and fro, cooing excitedly.

Magister Tienan tries to regain their attention, but the birds refuse to listen, and he sits down on his bench in defeat.

"Magister Tienan? Am I interrupting anything?" you ask softly, trying not to startle him.

The mage turns toward the sound of your voice, his cloudy eyes straining to see you, and then his face lights up. "I know you," he beams. "Dinner time already, Ludwina?"

If you admit that you are not Ludwina, go to section 121. If you try to impersonate Ludwina (a rosy-cheeked maid with a limp), go to section 35.

189

It might be the magical reinforcement on the door, or it might be your excitement, but no matter how hard you try, you fail to cast the spell. Disappointed, you sink to the floor and try to catch your breath.

Subtract 3 AE from your total, return to section 116, erase the mark in front of the option for *Penetrizzel*, and either try casting the spell again or choose another action.

190

The dining hall is empty. If you wait around for the maids, the young student, or even Magister Erillion to appear, go to section 166. If you decide to look elsewhere, go to section 100.

191

You resist the urge to lunge at the magistra. She watches you passively, her expression changing to one almost of disappointment. What is she planning for you? As you ponder your options, Magistra Moonhair shakes her head almost imperceptibly.

"Careful," she says. "Can you afford to make any more mistakes?"

Something hits you on the head, and you slip into unconsciousness.

Go to section 163.

192 (8+1)

School rules forbid students from using *Penetrizzel* to gaze through walls into other peoples' rooms. Like many students, you obey the rules. Why would anyone in their right mind risk expulsion for something so puerile? Before today, you would never have considered risking expulsion to look inside Magister Brutum's room. However, special situations call for special actions. Besides, the risk of accidental discovery is lower now than ever before. You press your brow to the wall and recite the incantation, "*Penetrizzel, Penetrizzel...*"

Roll to cast *Penetrizzel* (SGC/COU/INT). If you fail the check or have less than 6 AE, go to section 104. If the check succeeds, go to section 15.



193

The spell succeeds, and grumpy Kulwina now considers you her best friend. *Of course*, she will allow you into the room, *of course* she won't tell a soul, and *of course* she is happy to run and fetch you some bread and cheese from the kitchen.

You breathe easier when she leaves, but you feel sorry for her. Does she have any real friends at the school? Students have not acted kindly towards her over the years, and your behavior is no exception. She has good reason to mistrust you all.

Vowing to make amends for it later, you light a candle and enter the room. Subtract 8 AE from your total and go to section **116**.

194

It is harder to influence a chaotic mind. You concentrate and step into Magister Tienan's mind, temporarily restoring order to the chaos within.

"Magister Tienan," you begin, "I have an important question." The magister looks at you with a friendly smile.

"How may I help you?" he asks, speaking with such subservience that you feel shame for bewitching him.

"When and where did you last see Magistra Moonhair?" you ask.

The mage looks up at the sky, places a thumb and index finger to his chin in thought, and hums softly. His features briefly light up in joy but then quickly fade back into sadness and self-doubt. "I think I saw Mayla twice today—once in the dining hall, and later, near the stairs to the cellar—but now I am not so sure. You know the state of my mind. I cannot trust my memories."

The magister shrugs his shoulders, but you feel oddly confident in his answer. Magister Tienan's mind seems as clear as ever. You take his hand and express your heartfelt thanks. His mood improves at once and he opens his mouth to say more, but you quickly say goodbye and hurry away. You do not wish to be near him when the spell expires.

Subtract 8 AE from your total and return to section **100**.

195

Nivia lets you rub her belly, then she rolls around and looks at you expectantly. Again, you feel like you are looking into human eyes.

You have Nivia's attention.

If you ask, "Where can I find Magister Erillion?" go to section **49**.

If you ask, "Where is Magistra Moonhair?" go to section **130**.

If you ask, "Where are Magistra Moonhair and Magister Erillion?" go to section **109**.

196

Go to section **70**!

197

Even though you have never had reason to visit the deputy dean's room, you know it is near Archmage Erillion's room, and you quickly find it. Go to section **118**.

198

"Penetrizzel, Penetrizzel...", you murmur repeatedly while pressing your brow against the wall of Archmage Erillion's room.

Roll to cast the spell *Penetrizzel* (COU/SGC/INT). If you succeed, go to section **216**. If you fail, go to section **13**.

199 ○

The teachers' lounge is the most secretive room in the school. Only teachers may enter freely; students with business here must stand in front of the heavy oak door and ask an ugly, wooden face whether the teacher they seek is present inside. With a creaking voice, as only old wood can make, the answer then rolls through the corridors, so that it is known whether the one you are looking for is inside.

No student knows what lies beyond that door. This led to a lot of rumors about the inside of this room. While the school's students live in spartan austerity and eat nutritious though relatively bland food, here teachers can relax in comfortable chairs from the Horasian Empire, drink expensive wines from Almada, and dine on sweet fruit from the Lands of the Tulamydes. The students tell stories of weird or creepy furniture—things such as a drum made with human skin, an orc skull that sings on command, a taxidermized dwarf, or a demon trapped in crystal.

Even if these rumors are true, you suspect the lounge also contains stacks of essays awaiting review, boxes of the blood-red ink mages seem to love, and, of course, keys to every room in the school.







If you visited this section previously and crossed off the circle, go to section **33**. If you knock on the door and address the wooden face, cross off the circle for this section and go to section **147**. If you decide to look for a key elsewhere instead, leave this section's circle unmarked and return to section **120** to choose a different option.

Circles to Cross Off

One or more circles appear next to some section numbers. Each time you visit one of these sections, cross off one circle. If you visit that same section again, or run out of circles to cross off, follow the instructions in that section's description (usually, the text sends you to another section).

200

Magistra Moonhair does not yield, and surrender would mean your *death*. You do not have time to cast *Armatruz* now, but if you successfully cast it earlier, remember to raise your PRO accordingly.

If you survive six combat rounds, or if the Magistra's LP drop to 10 or less, go to section 14. If your LP drop to 0 or less before either of these occur, go to section 99.      

201

Magistra Moonhair's room is nicely furnished, though the four small chairs look lost next to the massive wooden table that dominates the room. Maybe she used to own more chairs?

A quick peek inside her wardrobe reveals magical gowns, cutlery, plates, a sewing kit, a slender hunting knife, a box of candles, and an unusually large cache of food, considering that the school serves three good meals a day. You are surprised also to find weather-proof clothes and hiking boots. Does Magistra Moonhair have interests outside her research at the school? You know that elves feel a close connection to nature, but from all the mud on her boots, the cobwebs on the sleeves of her suede jacket, and the streaks of dust on her trousers, you suspect she spends her free time exploring caves.

Two unadorned boxes draw your eye. One contains a skillfully-carved flute made from a lightweight wood you cannot identify. The other contains almost a dozen roughly-carved wooden figurines of unknown purpose. You place everything back where you found it and close the wardrobe doors.

Return to section 116.

202

You manage one push-up, then a second one, and even a third. Feeling confident, you try for a fourth.

Make another *Strength* check, with a -2 penalty. If you succeed, go to section 117. If you fail, go to section 44.

Magistra Mayla Moonhair

COU 14 SGC 10 INT 14 CHA 15

DEX 13 AGI 13 CON 12 STR 11

LP 32 AE 40 KP - INI 13 + 1D6

DO 7 SPI 3 TOU 1 MOV 8

Mage's Staff (long): AT 13 PA 9 DP

1d6+2 RE long

PRO/ENC 0/0

Actions: 1

Special Abilities: none

Skills: *Body Control* 4, *Feat of Strength* 3, *Intimidate* 4, *Perception* 10, *Self-Control* 11, *Stealth* 6, *Willpower* 12


Size Category: medium

Type: Intelligent creature, humanoid

Combat Behavior: fights until her LP = 10 or less

Escape: Magistra Moonhair does not flee



 To resolve this combat, use the combat rules in the *Appendix*, page 59



Bonuses and Penalties for Attribute Checks

Bonuses and penalties are a special case. Using your situation as an example, the text says that the check you must make here suffers a *-2 penalty*, meaning *subtract 2* from your attribute *before* comparing it to your roll. As before, a roll less than or equal to the target attribute is a success, while a roll higher than the attribute is a failure. *Bonuses* work similarly, except that you *add* the bonus to the target attribute, increasing the likelihood of success. When you determine the outcome of the check, follow the directions in the text as to which section you should visit next.

203

You almost had the key, but then it slipped and fell to the floor with a clunk. Certain that Magistra Immenfeld heard the racket, you try to turn around—and discover you cannot!

You cannot even look away from your hands—you are trapped in your own body. Magistra Immenfeld must have cast *Paralysis* on you.

Eventually, you become visible again. Magistra Immenfeld's face comes into view, and her expression is quite clear. You see anger, rage, disappointment, and, surprisingly, pity. Then your consciousness drifts away....

You wake in your own bed, shortly after sunrise. The previous day is a blur. You recall leaving your room to take your final exam, and you know you failed, but you cannot remember how! Puzzled but undeterred, you return to your studies and await the next chance to take the exam, more determined than ever to prove you are a great mage.

The End

204 (⌘+2)

You focus on turning into a cat...and succeed! Your clothes seem to grow and fall around you, and your vantage point changes. You feel an annoying itch behind your right ear and casually scratch it with your right hind leg. Then you lick your front right paw and start cleaning yourself. You must look your best; this is Nivia's territory, and you want her to accept you.

When your mind is once again your own, you are sitting naked in a supply closet. Luckily, you are near the tailor's room, where you left your clothes. Your body is covered in scratches, you are exhausted, and your skull aches. Your memories of the previous hour are vague. You recall hazy images of running through the school with Nivia, visiting the interior courtyard,

the cellar, and...and is that the taste of raw *mouse* in your mouth? Yuck! Unfortunately, you did not learn the whereabouts of Archmage Erillion, but then again, why did you expect Nivia to give a clear answer to your question?

You dress quickly and pick up your gear. Subtract 16/12 AE from your total and return to section **100**.

205 (⌘+1)

You wait patiently in front of Magistra Moonhair's room, the whole time asking yourself why. The longer you wait, the more meaningless it seems. The magistra would never return to her room with an accuser waiting for her. This is admittedly not the best place to stage an ambush, given the rather public location of the door. You begin to hope she does not appear, after all.

When you finally tire of waiting, a maid named Kulwina trundles down the hall with her cleaning equipment. Kulwina's grumpy demeanor and perpetually squinted eyes are bad enough, the large wart on her chin renders her especially creepy in the eyes of younger students. Older students often dare each other to waste her time with frivolous requests, and you understand now why she remains suspicious of students.

Instead of greeting you, she snarls, "What are you doing here?"

If you reply, "Me? Well, nothing, I just happened to be walking by," go to section **83**.

If you answer, "I seek Magister Erillion," go to section **141**.

If you say, "I wish to speak with Magistra Moonhair," go to section **11**.

206 (⌘+1)

Like many students your age, you have been busy studying for exams these past few months. Even if you were interested in chatting with other students, your duties and your research project left you little time to do so.

The student sitting in the dining hall looks eleven or twelve, at most. Seeing him reminds you of your first day at the school. Leaving home was difficult for you, and you have not seen your family for nine years. Your *eleve* years (your first three years at the school) were the hardest. You felt terribly homesick, but you gradually adapted to your new life. During your *novice* years (your next three years), you proved to be one of the most promising students in your class, and you looked forward to each lesson in the magical arts. Your obsession with excellence only increased during your proud *studiosus* years (the past two years), and you showed no interest in your fellow students—or their opinions.

You seat yourself across the table from the boy, who shivers with fever. He motions to move away out of consideration for your health, but you smile encouragingly; if he did have a dangerous disease, somebody would have quarantined him in the infirmary.

“Your name is Storve, am I right?” you say, trying to start a conversation. The boy nods shyly, perhaps embarrassed that he does not know your name.

“I seek Magister Erillion or Magistra Moonhair. Have you seen either of them?” you ask in a friendly tone.

He coughs to clear some congestion and croaks the word “No,” shaking his head. Now that you think about it, the poor lad was probably asleep in his room until a short time ago. How could he have seen anything?

You look around for the maids, but they already left the room. You thank the boy, get up, and exit the dining hall. Return to section 100.

207 (8+1)

As soon as you enter the courtyard, a realization hits you that makes you smile. Magister Horrigan, popular with all his students for his caring nature, has always earned great respect for his wisdom and advice. While with other teachers, especially in the last few years of school, you like to ask what they are trying to convey, Magister Horrigan's wisdom always seems unassailable. And at that moment, you realize that not wisdom - or, as some say, the gift of clairvoyance - is the source of his advice, but shrewdness.

Magister Horrigan's advice to seek out Master Tienan where you cannot expect him can never be wrong. Once you have heard this advice, you always think about where the confused mage might be. Thanks to Magister Horrigan's advice, however, you immediately reject this thesis and search in the most impossible places. If you do not find him there, you always explain this with the fact that you expected him there. And if you do find him, it's because you did not expect him there in the first place.

The old mage is still sitting under the gazebo in the courtyard and attentively watching the playful flight of a butterfly. For any other resident of the academy one would have taken it for granted to search for them again, where you had last seen them. But thanks to Magister Horrigan's wisdom, you cannot do this with Magister Tienan. Now that the mage is still sitting here, this seems to you to be the most unlikely case, and that it would have been more likely if the scatter-brained mage had just disappeared.

As you approach the gazebo, you recall something you heard the archmage say here in the courtyard when you first arrived at the school: “Young students admire their professors and accept their teachings, but old students tend to question and doubt. You will prove you are ready for your final exams when you can look past your professors' demeanor and acknowledge and honor their lifetime accomplishments.”

You certainly admire Magister Horrigan, a popular, caring, and respected professor, but Magister Tienan is difficult to fathom. The often-confused magister shows no reaction when you sit down next to him. He stares at the butterfly, a boyish grin on his face.

If you clear your throat and try to draw the magister's attention, go to section 22. If you comment on the butterfly's beauty, go to section 179.

208

You concentrate, speak the magical formula, subtract 16 AE or 12 AE (depending on the spell) from your total, and turn into:

A nimble cat (go to section 165).

A tough rat (go to section 50)

A tiny mouse (go to section 149).

A swift spider (go to section 8).

209

“Who would try such a deed? And, more importantly, who could succeed?” the alchemicus asks himself. You shrug with uncertainty, expecting Magister Horrigan to dismiss you altogether. Instead, he leans back and stares blankly over your shoulder, in the direction of the teaching laboratory.

“Abducted...” he mumbles quietly, lost in thought. Then his face lights up with child-like glee, the same way it does when one of his students discovers a correct answer, or when a complex experiment produces better-than-expected results. This is one reason why students love the old alchemist. Before you know it, he leaps off his seat, grabs you by the arm, and practically drags you to the teaching laboratory.

Go to section 74.

210

Visibili never was one of your favorite spells. You always felt humiliated performing it in front of teachers, though probably this had more to do with your own self-consciousness regarding your physical fitness. Your failure comes as no surprise. But you must try again.

Subtract 6 AE from your total and go to section 91.



211

The spell fails. Subtract 4 AE from your total. For a moment you expect the worst, but Magister Tienan apparently failed to notice your attempted casting. Nevertheless, his anger grows by leaps and bounds, and he raves with such animation that you must suppress a laugh to avoid escalating the situation.

With a calming gesture, you retreat to section 100.

212

Magister Brutum's room is tidy and neat. Nothing seems out of place. Though his art collection is beautiful, you see no portraits of loved ones, and can find no signs that he has ever had visitors. The room feels cold and dead as stone. Is this a clue to Magister Brutum's behavior? You always assumed he only pretended to be friendly to disguise a cruel thirst for power, but has he simply been desperate for acceptance? Is he lonely?

You feel increasingly uneasy. You intruded too long. You allow your perception to flow back into your body... Then, right in front of your nose, so obvious that you didn't notice at first, you see a letter tucked beneath a stone. Part of the letter is obscured, but you can read it easily enough.

Your mind races. What does it mean? Clearly Magister Brutum intended to hide that note beneath the stone, but why bother if nobody can enter the room? These questions play havoc with your concentration, and



the spell matrix collapses, ejecting your mind from the room and hurling your awareness back into your body. Overcome with nausea, you fall to your knees and retch. As it passes, you wipe your mouth with your sleeve, take a moment to shake the numbness out of your limbs, and climb back to your feet.

Return to section 64.

213

"These are serious accusations," Magistra Immenfeld says, her voice uncharacteristically softening. She sits silently for a long moment with hands folded, cradling her chin with her thumbs, her index fingers covering her nose as she stares at one of the paintings on the wall.

You find the painting greatly disturbing. The scene is one of darkness pressing in from all sides, drowning the sickly yellow glow from a small candle that reveals a mage with crazed eyes, performing a summoning. A crown of bones, a bizarre amulet, and several long, bloody talons sit on the table before him. What inspired the magistra to buy such a thing?

"This makes sense," Magistra Immenfeld whispers to herself. "It fits!" Turning to you, she says, "I believe you. This secret stays between us, for without proof, we can do little. Be careful. Magistra Moonhair is a powerful woman, and few students can stand in her way."

You agree, even though you cannot say whether you intend to follow her advice. Magistra Immenfeld is probably right, but you sense things are not entirely as they seem. Does the magistra want to prevent you from solving the riddle of the archmage's disappearance?

"Return to your room," she continues. "I will ask around. Visit me again later. With luck, I will have learned something useful."

You nod and wait for her to say more, but then you realize that the conversation is over. It is time for you to go. You extract yourself from the upholstery with some difficulty and leave Magistra Immenfeld's room.

Go to section 100.

214

"Because you overestimate yourself," she says, smiling mockingly. "You are naïve, gullible, easily manipulated—and soon to be dead. Haven't I always taught that we do not charge blindly into combat? We rely on tactics, skill, and intelligence. You are brave, but you are alone."

She snarls and lunges at you, and you raise your staff to ward off the attack. Your noses almost touch as you lock arms, and you see her grimace in anger. The rage that burns in the half elf's eyes transfixes you. Then she twists away with a graceful sidestep and points her staff at you in challenge.

"Fight!" she hisses.

Go to section 200.

215

As cumbersome your mage's robe might be, you cross the ledge with the skill of the school's resident cat, Nivia, whom people believe was a former student who accidentally and permanently transformed herself into a feline. You grip the wall like a mountain goat as you peer through Magister Erillion's window. You have never seen his room, but you have heard tales. Compared to your dorm room, it is a mansion. His opulent bed, covered with blue veils, sits in one side chamber, and you think you can see a cast iron bathtub in another side chamber. What luxury! And this is not all.

An eye-catching piece of furniture—Archmage Erillion's huge, impressively carved desk—dominates the room. It sits between two 9-foot shelves stuffed with books and rolls of parchment. Only a true artist could have given form to the creatures carved into the desk's surface. You see a dragon, a cyclops, a demonic shruuf, a fantastic winged serpent, and many others.

With a start you realize the carved figures are moving! Two armed dwarves wage an eternal struggle against a type of dragon called a wyvern. They advance and retreat several inches across the surface as they fight. Nearby, the winged serpent avoids blasts of magic fire hurled by a mage. Then it lunges forward, fangs poised to strike, but the mage dodges nimbly and fires another blast of flame at the serpent. Their scary, lifelike, and fascinating battle continues, and you find it hard to look away.

Hanging on a wall you see three long magic staves, one of which is pitch black and cracked in the middle. Next to them you see two crossed, slender, ceremonial swords, their pommels shaped like roaring lion heads and their cross-guards shaped like lion paws. Most exciting of all is the polished ball that looks as if was made of glass filled with slow-moving gray fog. The ball rests on a six-fingered hand and scaly forearm that rises out of a dark gray column anchored to the stone floor.

The only thing you do not see is Magister Erillion. You also do not see either of your two proctors—that inscrutable half elf, Magistra Mayla Moonhair, and Magister Brutum, whom most students secretly refer to as *Mayla's Shadow*.

Disappointed, you start to climb back when you notice something else. One of the carpets is askew. One corner is rolled up, and another is pushed up against one of the chairs. Magister Erillion's desk is messy, a fact that seems out of place for a room that is otherwise so orderly. Then you spy other things you failed to notice before: a crushed piece of chocolate candy on the floor; an overturned vase and a puddle that nobody bothered to wipe up; a row of books leaning at an unusual angle on a shelf, revealing four deep, almost-parallel scratches in the wood.

Something is wrong, you are certain! These are signs of a struggle, and someone tried to hide the evidence. Who could have fought here? Nobody can enter Archmage Erillion's room without permission, so the mage must have admitted his attacker—or attackers—into the room.

A thrill of danger runs down your spine. You feel like an agent of the Imperial Garethian Information Agency on a secret mission, investigating a crime.

What happened to Magister Erillion? You see no traces of blood. He may have been abducted, but whom would be so bold, and why? You need answers, but where to find them? Your exam is likely to be cancelled, which means you will not graduate today. Magistra Moonhair would jump for joy if she knew.

Wait! Magistra Moonhair... Your exam... It all fits! You have a suspect and a motive! Anger wells up inside you, and you almost lose your footing. You quickly climb back through the stained-glass window and return to the safety of the corridor, already planning your next move. You must find Magister Erillion and gather evidence against Magistra Moonhair!

Go to section 167.

216

Your mind feels swallowed by the wall, as if pressed through a keyhole that suddenly appeared in the stone. Then your awareness explodes into the archmage's room.

You have never been here before, and it takes you a moment to orient yourself. Magister Erillion's room is huge compared to your humble quarters. His opulent bed, covered with blue veils, sits in one side chamber, and you think you can see a cast iron bathtub in another side chamber. What luxury! And this is not all.

The room is dominated by an eye-catching piece of furniture—Archmage Erillion's huge, impressively carved desk—which sits between two 9-foot shelves stuffed with books and rolls of parchment. Only a true artist could have given form to the creatures carved into the desk's



surface. You see a dragon, a cyclops, a demonic shruuf, a fantastic winged serpent, and many others.

With a start you realize the carved figures are moving! Two armed dwarves wage an eternal struggle against a type of dragon called a wyvern. They advance and retreat several inches across the surface as they fight. Nearby, the winged serpent dodges several blasts of magic fire hurled by a mage. Then it lunges forward, fangs poised to strike, but the mage dodges nimbly and fires another blast of flame at the nimble serpent. Their scary, lifelike, and fascinating battle continues, and you must expend some effort to look away.

Hanging on a wall you see three long magic staves, one pitch black and shattered in the middle. Next to them you see two crossed, slender, ceremonial swords, their pommels shaped like roaring lion heads and their cross-guards shaped like lion paws. Most exciting of all is the polished ball that looks as if was made of glass filled with slow-moving gray fog. The ball rests on a six-fingered hand and scaly forearm that rises out of a dark gray column anchored to the stone floor.

The only thing you do not see is Magister Erillion. You also do not see either of your two proctors—that inscrutable half elf, Magistra Mayla Moonhair, and Magister Brutum, whom most students secretly refer to as *Mayla's Shadow*.

Disappointed, you start to climb back when you notice something else. One of the carpets is askew. One corner is rolled up, and another is pushed up against one of the chairs. Magister Erillion's desk is messy, which seems out of place for a room that is otherwise so orderly. Then you spy other things that you did not notice before: a crushed piece of chocolate candy on the floor; an overturned vase and a small puddle that nobody bothered to wipe up; a row of books leaning at an unusual angle on a shelf, revealing four deep, almost-parallel scratches in the wood.

Something is wrong, you are certain! These are signs of a struggle, and someone tried to hide the evidence. Who could have fought here? Nobody can enter Archmage Erillion's room without permission, so the mage must have admitted his attacker—or attackers—into the room.

A thrill of danger runs down your spine. You feel like an agent of the Imperial Garethian Information Agency on a secret mission, investigating a crime.

What happened to Magister Erillion? You see no traces of blood. He may have been abducted, but whom would be so bold, and why? You need answers, but where to find them? Your exam is likely to be cancelled, which means you will not graduate today. Magistra Moonhair would jump for joy if she knew.

Wait! Magistra Moonhair... Your exam... It all fits! You have a suspect and a motive! Anger wells up inside you, and you almost lose your footing. You quickly climb back through the stained-glass window and return to the safety of the corridor, already planning your next move. You must find Magister Erillion and gather evidence against Magistra Moonhair!

Subtract 6 AE from your total and go to section 167.

217

The air is cool and moist, and dark moss nearly obscures the blue-shimmering stones, but you have no trouble finding your way in the cellar. The path leads to an open archway ten yards ahead. You see no other routes. Yellowish light shines through the archway. Your path seems clear.

If you proceed immediately, go to section 36. If you take time to prepare, first (an *Armatrutz* spell would help protect you against ambushes...), go to section 1.



Skill and Spell Checks

Characters have a list of *skills* in addition to their eight basic attributes. Your character sheet includes mundane skills such as *Climbing*, *Singing*, and *Self-Control*, and magical skills, which in your case are known as *spells*. If you use the character provided with this adventure, your mage knows seven spells (for more about these spells, see the inside back cover).

Skills and spells often rely on complex knowledge, sophisticated physical sequences, and time-consuming actions with multiple components. To use a skill successfully, you must make a *skill check*.

To do this, find the *skill rating* (SR, for short) and the stats for the attributes associated with that skill. For example, pretend your character wants to cast *Penetrizzel*. According to your character sheet, your SR with this skill is 7, and the three associated attributes are COU, SGC, and INT. A skill check basically comprises three separate attribute checks, one for each attribute associated with that skill. Skill checks succeed if all three of these *partial checks* (checks for the component attributes) succeed.

If you fail one or more of these partial checks, *The Dark Eye*® offers a failsafe that can help you succeed—this comes in the form of *skill points* (SP, for short).

Whenever you make a skill check, you gain access to a pool of skill points equal to the skill rating. You can spend SP to convert failed rolls into successes, as follows. When you fail a partial check, calculate the difference between the die roll and the number needed for success (the target attribute). If you have enough SP, spend them as needed, on a 1-for-1 basis, to convert a failure into a success. To do this, simply subtract the SP you spend from your die roll. For example,

pretend you roll a 16 for the partial check against your COU attribute of 13. This is three points higher than you wanted, so you may spend 3 SP to adjust the die result to 13, thereby making it a success! Remember to subtract any SP you spend from your total.

You may spend SP as needed (up to your total for that skill) for each partial check you fail. Your skill check succeeds if you change all failures into successes, even if you must spend all your SP to do so. However, if you spend all your SP and still cannot change all failed partial checks into successes, your skill check fails. The good news is that your pool of SP refreshes completely for your *next* skill check with that skill!

The following exceptions apply to all checks for attributes and skills.

- ☞ If you roll an unmodified 20 on at least two partial checks, you suffer a *botch*, a result that often has additional negative consequences for your character (see the *Core Rules* for details). Botches occur regardless of how many SP remain in your pool.
- ☞ Sometimes the text instructs you to apply a *bonus* or *penalty* to an attribute or skill check. Bonuses and penalties modify target *attributes*, NOT die rolls. If the text says you gain a +1 *bonus* for a check, its associated attributes temporarily count as one higher, thus making success easier to achieve. Similarly, penalties temporarily decrease associated attributes, making skill checks more difficult. For example, if someone distracts you and taps you on the shoulder while you try to cast *Penetrizzel* you would gain a -3 penalty to the check, your character's new, temporary target numbers would be 10/12/11.

218

Ah, peace and quiet. You relax, focusing on the task before you. Whatever may come, you are strong, you are smart, and you can handle any challenge.

You look around your room. Are you focused sufficiently? You do not know, but to be honest, tests always make you nervous, and you never had trouble with them before. This test is no different. You feel confident, which is all that matters.

Go to section 76.

219

Your awareness penetrates the wall and you see...a bed, some billowing green curtains on the window on the far wall, and a curtain to your right that appears to be covering the entrance to a neighboring room, probably the mage's private study.

The simple wooden bed is wide and looks comfortable enough. It has a thick straw mattress, a pile of warm blankets, and many pillows of various sizes. Almost everything on the bed is green in color, creating the impression of a mossy landscape. Alas, nobody is here. What a disappointment! The spell expires, and your awareness returns to your body.

Subtract 6 AE from your total and go to section 116.

220

Go to section 70!

221

This started out to be such a promising day... Magister Erillion needs your help, but adventuring is not in your nature—or at least that is what you used to think. You always focused on your studies and obeyed school rules. On the other hand, without the dean's support, you



might not have lasted until graduation day. If none of the teachers want to help, you must be the one to do so.

This brings back memories of the first time you cast a spell. Magic seemed impossible then, and you kept reminding yourself that you could succeed.

Confidence is all you need, though a good plan couldn't hurt. How about, *Unlock the forbidden door and look for Archmage Erillion?* Simple. But how should you proceed?

All locks have keys, and the dean would probably make two or three copies—one for himself, and one for his deputy, Magistra Moonhair, at least, but they are already on the other side of the door. Magister Horrigan might have a copy, but if not, perhaps the groundskeeper has one. You might also try the teachers' lounge.

To begin your search, go to section **120**.

222

Making an exclamation mark appear on the wall is a first-year student's magic trick, a simple form of magic called a *cantrip*. Today's exam will test your spellcasting ability. You focus your thoughts and cast *Penetrizzel*, which, as it happens, is the first spell you learned. Adepts must master seven spells to graduate and earn the title of *adeptus*, and the first spell

students learn at this school is special not because it lets the caster look through walls, but because it is the only one that does not directly affect someone's mind or body. Failing to cast *Penetrizzel* correctly simply means you fail to see through a wall. Casting a transformation spell incorrectly, however, can lead to terrible consequences.

You know that every student's connection with *Penetrizzel* goes beyond looking through walls. It opened your eyes to a new world. When you learned this spell, you felt arcane energy flow through your body for the first time in your life. It was not spontaneous and uncontrolled like when you were a child, and neither was it an emotional burst of magic unleashed by rage or anger. *Penetrizzel* showed you could master magic. You felt in control of your life for the first time.

You have no skill in hunting, flirting, or making things. Your talent lies in magic, and you are confident about today's exam. You face the outer wall once again, close your eyes, and speak the incantation, "*Penetrizzel. Penetrizzel. Penetrizzel....*"

Roll to cast *Penetrizzel* (COU/SGC/INT). If the check succeeds, go to section **169**. If the check fails, go to section **80**.

Moving Out

You wonder how many people sat on this stone through the years, gazing at the scenery below.

The stone is flat, somewhat polished, and unexpectedly comfortable. You set out from Lowangen barely one hour ago, and already your feet hurt. Luckily you found this inviting rock at the top of the rise.

You look across the Svellt Valley and its eponymous river. The city of Lowangen is visible enough, though even the large school is difficult to discern from here.

The academy.... You are still unsure of your feelings. You are sad you are no longer welcome there, at least not until Mada's Sign has appeared full in the sky 24 times (a number favorable to the gods). You had planned to remain with the school after graduation and continue your studies, but Magister Erillion's talk aroused your curiosity. What might you find outside the school, far beyond the familiar walls of Lowangen?

You certainly feel grateful towards the old mage. You never would have dared take that first step, even though it now seems most wise. The school will always be there. For now, you are young and have many sights to see....

"Excuse me?" you hear a young man say. Something taps you on the shoulder, and you look around, blinking your eyes. You see a tall, heavily-muscled and tattooed Thorwaler carrying a huge axe on her shoulder. Next to her is a dwarf with an exceptionally long beard and an equally large axe. Nearby are a tall female elf, and a lad who looks to be around 18 or 19, like yourself.

"Excuse me," he repeats. "Do you know the way to Yrramis? Can you tell us anything about a girl named Alrike who went missing from that village?"

Instinctively you shake your head. You have never heard of Yrramis, or of a girl named Alrike.



“My apologies for disturbing you,” the lad says. “But if you want my advice, you should be more careful. Daydreamers do not live long in this world.”

The tattooed woman motions with her head, and the group departs. You watch them until they disappear around the bend. How did they meet? Does someone pay them for their services, or do they help others out of the goodness of their hearts? Are they traveling together because it improves their chances of survival, or are they friends?

You cast a wistful look back towards Lowangen. Just a few days ago, you could have obtained these answers from several wise teachers. Magister Horrigan, for instance, seems to know the answer to everything. You might even have found the answers in a book. The school offers many paths to knowledge. Maybe you could stay just a little longer....

But no. You push those thoughts aside, stand up, and don your backpack. Out here, you cannot rely on knowledge

alone—you need friends to show you how to survive, so you run to catch up to the group of travelers before they get too far ahead....

Congratulations for completing the adventure! As a reward, your mage character receives 15 *adventure points* (AP, for short), with which you can improve your character’s stats and skills. Also, the school gives all graduates a little starting capital; your character receives 80 silverthalers and a magical potion (it restores 1d6+6 AE, up to your maximum).

To learn more about *The Dark Eye*® RPG, read the *Core Rules*, which contains all the rules you need to play the game. For an in-depth explanation of the peoples, cultures, and kingdoms of Aventuria, see the *Aventuria Almanac*. To learn more about magic in the world of *The Dark Eye*®, see the *Aventuria Magic* sourcebook. If you enjoyed this solo adventure and wish to try another, look for *The Vampire of Havena*, wherein you play the role of a good-hearted rogue embroiled in a sinister plot in the exotic port city of Havena.



Epilogue

Thoughts can be such sweet poison! How often has a simple idea sparked a fire in the mind and led a determined person to undreamed-of success?

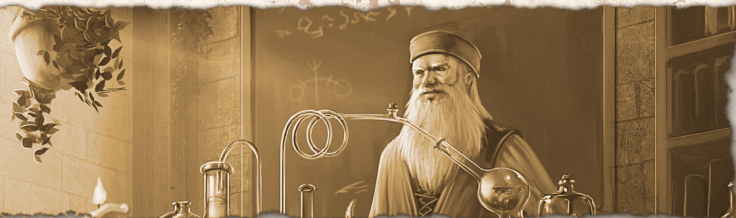
One such idea dances at the edge of your awareness—a vision of an academy, led, not by old Erillion, but by someone strong. A good leader who is knowledgeable, influential, and powerful. You know such thoughts such as these fan the fires of ambition. And the larger

these fires grow, the greater their allure, until at last all scruples vanish.

Expressionless eyes stare back at you from the mirror. Is a thought like this burning in your mind? Are you frightened...or thrilled? Will this thought fade, or will it escape its prison of the mind and stir the hands to action? Only time will tell....



APPENDIX



Combat

The *Dark Eye*® RPG can simulate quite complex combat situations. This solo adventure simplifies the combat rules a little. You are not facing more than one enemy at a time, the opponent always acts first (unless the text says otherwise), and nobody possesses special combat maneuvers. Unlike with group adventures, you roll dice for enemies as well, but this helps you quickly learn the rules.

Combat rounds (CR) consist of two phases: your opponent's action, and your action.

First, find your opponent's attack stat (or AT, for short). Treat this like an attribute. When your opponent attacks, make an unmodified AT check. If this check fails, the opponent's attack misses your character. If the check succeeds, the attack *might* hit; you can choose to dodge out of the way or perhaps try to parry the attack with your weapon (if you have one).

If you wish to dodge, make a skill check using your unmodified Dodge stat (DO). If you wish to parry, make a skill check using your character's unmodified Parry stat (PA). As with other skills, the larger the stat, the better your chance of success. And as with stat or skill checks, roll 1D20. To successfully dodge or parry, you must roll less than or equal to your DO or PA stat, as applicable. If you roll higher than the relevant stat, your attempt fails, and the opponent's attack hits your character. Note that animals have a Defense stat (DE) in place of Dodge. DE works the same as Dodge.

Whenever an attack hits, determine the resulting damage. First, find the attacker's DP stat. For purposes of illustration, imagine your attacker has a DP stat of 1D6+2. Whenever the opponent's attack hits, your character takes a *base damage* of 2 points *plus* the roll of 1D6. Protection (PRO) reduces this amount as follows.

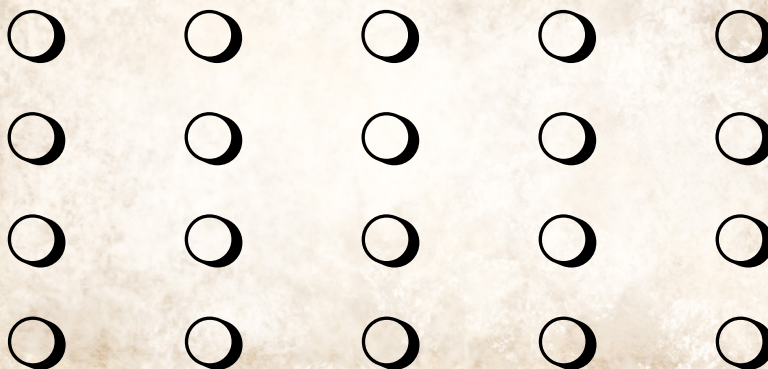
Find the Protection stat (PRO) on your character sheet. When someone suffers damage from an attack during combat, subtract the target's PRO from the opponent's base damage to determine the *suffered Damage Points* (sDP). Subtract the sDP from the target's *life points* (LP). Many mages study the spell *Armatrutz*, which provides magical protection from attack (by reducing damage in the same manner as physical armor).

Combatants die when their LP drop to 0 or less. The text tells you what to do when this occurs. Healing takes time. Depending on the situation, an injured character may rest, drink a healing potion, or seek medical attention. Sometimes a character does not have time to heal and must continue without rest.

When you complete the opponent's half of the combat round, your character may attack. A combat round ends when both participants finish their portion of the combat round. If all combatants survive, determine whether the opponent meets the conditions described next to **Escape** in their stats. If the opponent does not flee or surrender, begin a new combat round. For more information about combat in the exciting world of *The Dark Eye*®, see the *Core Rules*.

TIME TRACKER

If all circles are crossed off and you need to cross off another circle, instantly go to section 111.



Character Sheet

Personal Data

Name _____

Gender _____

Race Human

Date of Birth _____

Age _____

Hair Color _____

Eye Color _____

Height / Weight _____



Profession Gray Mage (Lowangen Academy of Transformation)

Culture Svellt Valley

Social Standing Free/Guildmage

Place of Birth _____

Family _____

Characteristics _____

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| COU | SGC | INT | CHA | DEX | AGI | CON | STR |
| 13 | 15 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 10 | 12 | 10 |

Advantages

Increased Arcane Power III, Rich I, Spellcaster

Disadvantages

Negative Trait (Curious)

Obligations II (Academy of Transformation)

General Special Abilities

Area Knowledge (Lowangen)

| | Stat | Bonus/ Penalty | Bought | Max |
|---|------|-------------------|--------|-----|
| Life Points <i>(Racial Base Stat + CON + CON)</i> | 29 | | | 29 |
| Arcane Energy <i>(20 for Spellcaster + Primary Attribute)</i> | 35 | 3 | | 38 |
| Karma Points <i>(20 for Blessed One + Primary Attribute)</i> | | | | |
| Spirit <i>(Racial Base Stat + (COU+SGC+INT)/6)</i> | 2 | | X | 2 |
| Toughness <i>(Racial Base Stat + (COU+CON+STR)/6)</i> | 1 | | X | 1 |
| Dodge <i>(AGI/2)</i> | 5 | | X | 5 |

Fate Points

| Stats | Bonus/ Penalty | Max | Current |
|-------|-------------------|-----|---------|
| 3 | | 3 | |

Experience Level

Experienced

| AP total | AP available | AP spent |
|----------|--------------|----------|
| 1100 | 6 | 1094 |

Character Sheet

Game Stats

Encumbrance

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| COU | SGC | INT | CHA | DEX | AGI | CON | STR |
| 13 | 15 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 10 | 12 | 10 |

SKILLS

| Skill | Check | ENC | Impr. | SR | R | Notes | Skill | Check | ENC | Impr. | SR | R | Notes |
|--|-------------|-------|-------|----|---|-------|---|-------------|-----|-------|----|---|-------|
| Physical Skills COU/AGI/STR p. 188-192 | | | | | | | Knowledge Skills SGC/SGC/INT p. 201-205 | | | | | | |
| Body Control | AGI/AGI/CON | yes | D | 2 | | | Astronomy | SGC/SGC/INT | no | A | 0 | | |
| Carousing | SGC/CON/STR | no | A | 0 | | | Gambling | SGC/SGC/INT | no | A | 0 | | |
| Climbing | COU/AGI/STR | yes | B | 0 | | | Geography | SGC/SGC/INT | no | B | 4 | | |
| Dancing | SGC/CHA/AGI | yes | A | 0 | | | History | SGC/SGC/INT | no | B | 4 | | |
| Feat of Strength | CON/STR/STR | yes | B | 0 | | | Law | SGC/SGC/INT | no | A | 0 | | |
| Flying | COU/INT/AGI | yes | B | 0 | | | Magical Lore | GC/SGC/INT | no | C | 5 | | |
| Gaukelei | COU/CHA/FF | yes | A | 0 | | | Math | SGC/SGC/INT | no | A | 4 | | |
| Perception | SGC/INT/INT | maybe | D | 4 | | | Mechanics | SGC/SGC/DEX | no | B | 0 | | |
| Pickpocket | COU/DEX/AGI | yes | B | 0 | | | Myths & Legends | SGC/SGC/INT | no | B | 4 | | |
| Riding | CHA/AGI/STR | yes | B | 0 | | | Religions | SGC/SGC/INT | no | B | 4 | | |
| Self-Control | COU/COU/CON | no | D | 2 | | | Sphere Lore | SGC/SGC/INT | no | B | 3 | | |
| Singing | SGC/CHA/CON | maybe | A | 0 | | | Warfare | COU/SGC/INT | no | B | 0 | | |
| Stealth | COU/INT/AGI | yes | C | 0 | | | Craft Skills DEX/DEX/CON p. 206-213 | | | | | | |
| Swimming | AGI/CON/STR | yes | B | 0 | | | Alchemy | COU/SGC/DEX | yes | C | 4 | | |
| Social Skills INT/CHA/CHA p. 193-197 | | | | | | | Artistic Ability | INT/DEX/DEX | yes | A | 3 | | |
| Disguise | INT/CHA/AGI | maybe | B | 0 | | | Clothworking | SGC/DEX/DEX | yes | A | 0 | | |
| Empathy | SGC/INT/CHA | no | C | 4 | | | Commerce | SGC/INT/CHA | no | B | 0 | | |
| Eitquette | SGC/INT/CHA | maybe | B | 1 | | | Driving | CHA/DEX/CON | yes | A | 2 | | |
| Fast-Talk | COU/INT/CHA | no | C | 0 | | | Earthenraft | DEX/DEX/STR | yes | A | 0 | | |
| Intimidate | COU/INT/CHA | no | B | 0 | | | Leatherworking | DEX/AGI/CON | yes | B | 0 | | |
| Persuasion | COU/SGC/CHA | no | B | 0 | | | Metalworking | DEX/CON/STR | yes | C | 0 | | |
| Seduction | COU/CHA/CHA | maybe | B | 0 | | | Music | CHA/DEX/CON | yes | A | 0 | | |
| Streetwise | SGC/INT/CHA | maybe | C | 2 | | | Prepare Food | INT/DEX/DEX | yes | A | 0 | | |
| Willpower | COU/INT/CHA | no | D | 3 | | | Pick Locks | INT/DEX/DEX | yes | C | 0 | | |
| Nature Skills COU/AGI/CON p. 198-200 | | | | | | | Sailing | DEX/AGI/STR | yes | B | 0 | | |
| Animal Lore | COU/COU/CHA | yes | C | 4 | | | Treat Disease | COU/INT/CON | yes | B | 4 | | |
| Fishing | DEX/AGI/CON | maybe | A | 0 | | | Treat Poison | COU/SGC/INT | yes | B | 4 | | |
| Orienteering | SGC/INT/INT | no | B | 2 | | | Treat Soul | INT/CHA/CON | no | B | 0 | | |
| Plant Lore | SGC/DEX/CON | maybe | C | 4 | | | Treat Wounds | SGC/DEX/DEX | yes | D | 4 | | |
| Ropes | SGC/DEX/STR | maybe | A | 0 | | | Woodworking | DEX/AGI/STR | yes | B | 2 | | |
| Survival | COU/AGI/CON | yes | C | 0 | | | | | | | | | |
| Tracking | COU/INT/AGI | yes | C | 0 | | | | | | | | | |

Attribute Modifiers

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | +1 | +2 | +3 |
| COU | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| SGC | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| INT | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| CHA | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| DEX | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| AGI | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| CON | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| STR | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |



| Skill Points | Quality Level |
|--------------|---------------|
| 0-3 | 1 |
| 4-6 | 2 |
| 7-9 | 3 |
| 10-12 | 4 |
| 13-15 | 5 |
| +16 | 6 |

Languages

Garethi III (native tongue), Oloarkh I,

Rogolan I, Isdira I, Bosparano I

Scripts

Kuslik Signs

Character Sheet

Game Stats

8 29 5 12 2 1
 MOV LP DO INI SPI TOU

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| COU | SGC | INT | CHA | DEX | AGI | CON | STR |
| 13 | 15 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 10 | 12 | 10 |

| Combat Techniques | Primary Attribute | Impr. | CSR | AT/RC | PA |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------|-----|-------|----|
| Bows | DEX | C | 6 | 8 | X |
| Brawling | AGI/STR | B | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Crossbows | DEX | B | 6 | 7 | X |
| Chain Weapons | STR | C | 6 | 8 | X |
| Daggers | AGI | B | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Fencing Weapons | AGI | C | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Impact Weapons | STR | C | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Lances | STR | B | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Pole Weapons | AGI/STR | C | 8 | 9 | 4 |
| Shields | STR | C | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Swords | AGI/STR | C | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Thrown Weapons | DEX | B | 6 | 8 | X |
| Two-Handed Impact Weapons | STR | C | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Two-Handed Swords | STR | C | 6 | 7 | 3 |

Combat Special Abilities



Close Combat Weapons

| Weapon | Combat Technique | Damage Bonus | Base DP | Overall | AT/PA Mod. | Reach | AT | PA | Weight |
|------------------|------------------|--------------|---------|---------|------------|-------|----|----|----------|
| Mage Staff, long | Polearm | AGI/STR 16 | 1d6+2 | 1d6+2 | -1 / +2 | long | 8 | 6 | 1.5 lbs. |
| Brawling | Brawling | AGI/STR 14 | 1d6 | 1d6 | 0 / 0 | short | 7 | 3 | |



Ranged Weapons

| Weapon | Combat Technique | Reload Time | DP | Ammunition | Range | Ranged Combat | Weight |
|--------|------------------|-------------|----|------------|-------|---------------|--------|
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |



Armor

| Armor | PRO | ENC | Add. Penalties | Weight | Travel, Combat, ... |
|-------|-----|-----|----------------|--------|---------------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Shield/Parrying Weapon

| Shield/Parrying Weapon | Structure Points | AT/PA Mod. | Weight |
|------------------------|------------------|------------|--------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

Life Points

Max 29 Current

| | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 22 | 14 | 7 | 5 |
| 1/4 lost (+1 Pain) | 1/2 lost (+1 Pain) | 3/4 lost (+1 Pain) | 5 or less (+1 Pain) |

0 or less = Hero is dying

| Condition | Level I (-1) | Level II (-2) | Level III (-3) | Level IV (Incapacitated) |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Confusion | | | | |
| Encumbrance | | | | |
| Fear | | | | |
| Pain | | | | |
| Paralysis | | | | |
| Rapture | | | | |
| Stupor | | | | |

Character Sheet

Spells & Rituals

AE Max 38 Current

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| COU | SGC | INT | CHA | DEX | AGI | CON | STR |
| 13 | 15 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 10 | 12 | 10 |

| Spell/Ritual | Check | SR | Cost | Casting Time | Range | Duration | Property | Impr. | Effect | p. |
|-------------------|------------------|----|---------------------------|--------------|---------|----------------------|----------------|-------|--------|--------|
| Armatruz | SGC/INT/DEX | 5 | 4/8/16 AE | 1 action | self | QLx3 minutes Healing | Healing | C | | 287 |
| Bannbaladin | COU/INT/CHA -SPI | 4 | 8 AE | 4 actions | 4 yards | QLx3 minutes | Influence | B | | 288 |
| Corpofesso | SGC/INT/CHA | 6 | 16 AE | 2 actions | 8 yards | QL x 2 CR | Transformation | C | | 289 |
| Paralysis | SGC/INT/CON -TOU | 6 | 8 AE | 2 actions | 8 yards | QLx2 minutes | Transformation | B | | 295 |
| Penetrizzel | COU/SGC/INT | 7 | 4 AE + 2 AE per minute | 2 actions | Self | Special | Clairvoyance | B | | 295 |
| Salander | SGC/INT/CON -SPI | 7 | 16 AE | 8 actions | Touch | QL x 3 hours | Transformation | C | | 296 |
| Visibili (Elvish) | SGC/INT/CON | 4 | 8 AE + 4 AE per 5 minutes | 4 actions | Touch | Special | Transformation | B | | 298 |
| Wolf Paw | COU/INT/AGI | 7 | 8 AE + 4 AE per hour | 8 actions | Self | Special | Transformation | C | | MI 148 |
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Property (-ies)

Primary Attribute

Sagacity _____



Tradition

Guild Mage _____

Magical Special Abilities

Binding of the Staff _____

Cantrips

Signature _____

Your Character's Seven Spells

Your young mage knows seven of the eight magic spells listed below (you must choose either *Salander* or *Wolf Paw*, as your character does not know both). Spells in *The Dark Eye*® RPG have additional stats—such as range, casting time, duration, and cost to sustain—but do not worry about those, as they do not come into play in this adventure. If your character casts a spell, the text for your current section reminds you of the cost in arcane energy (AE) and the attributes to use for the spell check. Familiarize yourself with these spells before you play; also, keep a running total of your AE so you do not unexpectedly run out.

Armatrutz

Effect: The target's skin gains a supernatural layer of armor. When cast, the spellcaster decides whether to increase the target's PRO by 1, 2, or 3 points, and spends AE accordingly.

Check: SGC/INT/DEX

AE Cost (successful spell): 4, 8, or 16

AE Cost (failed spell): 2, 4, or 8

Reference: *Core Rules*, page 287

Bannbaladin

Effect: The target's feelings toward the spellcaster change to ones of deep friendship or even love, inspiring the target to aid the spellcaster in any way possible.

Check: COU/INT/CHA

AE Cost (successful spell): 8

AE Cost (failed spell): 4

Reference: *Core Rules*, page 288

Corpofesso

Effect: The target suffers intense pain.

Check: SGC/INT/CON

AE Cost (successful spell): 16

AE Cost (failed spell): 8

Reference: *Core Rules*, page 289

Paralysis

Effect: The spell effectively transforms the target into an unmoving statue.

Check: SGC/INT/CON

AE Cost (successful spell): 8

AE Cost (failed spell): 4

Reference: *Core Rules*, page 295

Penetrizzel

Effect: The spellcaster sees through a wall as if it is not there.

Check: COU/SGC/INT

AE Cost (successful spell): 6

AE Cost (failed spell): 3

Reference: *Core Rules*, page 295

Salander

Note: Choose either *Salander* or *Wolf Paw* (see below); your character does not know both.

Effect: This spell transforms the target into the shape of a smaller creature (a human could become a cat or a dog but not a horse, for example). *Salander* costs more AE to cast but maintains the target's original LP after transformation. *Wolf Paw* costs less AE but limits the target's LP and other stats to those of the chosen animal.

Check: SGC/INT/CON

Cost (successful spell): 16

Cost (failed spell): 8

Reference: *Core Rules*, page 296

Visibili

Effect: The spellcaster (but not clothes or possessions) turns invisible. The effect does extend to items enclosed by a hand or held in the mouth.

Check: SGC/INT/CON

AE Cost (successful spell): 12

AE Cost (failed spell): 6

Reference: *Core Rules*, page 298

Wolf Paw

Note: Choose either *Salander* (see above) or *Wolf Paw*; your character does not know both.

Effect: This spell transforms the target into the shape of a smaller creature (a human could become a cat or a dog but not a horse, for example). Upon changing, the target gains the chosen animal's stats. *Salander* costs more AE to cast but maintains the target's original LP after transformation, regardless of animal shape. *Wolf Paw* costs less AE but limits the target's LP and other stats to those of the chosen animal.

Check: COU/INT/AGI

AE Cost (successful spell): 12

AE Cost (failed spell): 6

Reference: *Magic of Aventuria*, page 148

AVENTURIA

Conspiracy of Mages

by Sebastian Thureau

After years of homework, tests, and a life dedicated to becoming the best mage who ever graduated from the prestigious Lowangen Academy of Transformation, you now face one last hurdle: the final exam. Today you demonstrate your mastery of the arcane arts—at least, that's what you expected when you awoke this morning. Now you are not so sure.

Your professors wield unimaginable power and command great respect in society, yet all is not well. Some cast envious eyes upon each other's achievements and status, and a foul plan is afoot. Without even trying, you stumble into a web of intrigue and treachery that threatens to ruin the school's reputation and end your career before it even starts.

Something sinister haunts these learned halls. As a young student of magic facing an unexpected challenge, can you solve this mystery and still manage to graduate?

Conspiracy of Mages is a solo adventure for *The Dark Eye*® RPG. This book includes a pregenerated character and all necessary rules. For more about the world of *The Dark Eye*®, see the *Core Rules*, the *Aventurian Bestiary*, and the *Aventuria Almanac*.

Adventure awaits!



A solo adventure for a young inquisitive mage.

Genres: Mystery, Conspiracy

Prerequisites: none

Location: Lowangen

Date: 1038–1040 FB

Complexity (Players/GM): low / -

Suggested Character Experience Level (if using your own character):

Inexperienced to Skilled

Useful Skills

Craft Skills



Physical Skills



Combat



Living History



Familiarity with the setting or further publications are not required. To play, you need a pencil. 1D6 and 1D20 recommended. For more about magic in the world of *The Dark Eye*®, see *Magic of Aventuria*.



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