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A DRAGONLANCE® ADVENTURE



Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®

ADVENTURE 16 GAMEBOOK

SHADOW OVER NORDMAAR



By Dezra Despain

0-88038-541-3

CHARACTER STATS CARD
SHADOW OVER NORDMAAR



NAME: John (?)

CHAR. CLASS: Unknown

AGE: Unknown

SKILL POINTS: (10 total)

Stealth: _____

Wisdom: _____

Agility: _____

Fighting: _____

Perception: _____

EXPERIENCE POINTS: **8** _____

MEMORY POINTS: _____

HIT POINTS: **22** _____

TIME LINE (DAYS):

0	1	2	3	4	5	6

_____ Cure Light Wounds spell #1 (1d6 + 2)

_____ Cure Light Wounds spell #2 (1d6 + 2)

A DEADLY ENCOUNTER ON THE MOORS . . .

Your search for your lost identity has led you northward, across the boggy wetlands of the Great Moors of Nordmaar.

Suddenly, in a stagnant pool directly ahead of you, the water boils wildly. You grab your companion Lorina, and both of you scramble away from the raging swamp. Then, from the murky depths, surges a creature that nearly defies description.

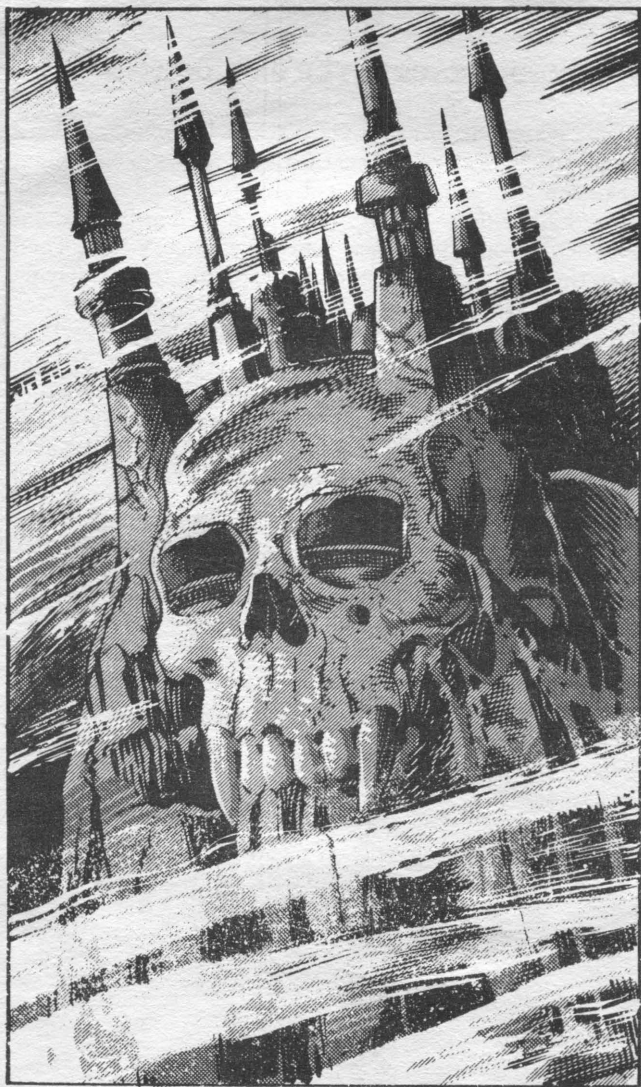
Its warthog-like head snakes toward you at the end of a long, sinewy neck. Its body, like that of some bloated buffalo, hunkers in the mire. Muck and slime stream from its body and drip to the ground. As it bares its rotted, pointy teeth and hisses at you, you gag from the rotten stench of its breath and body. In various stages of decay, its flesh flakes off in chunks, splashing into the water. Its one remaining eye gleams at you. The empty socket of the other eye oozes water and slime.

"It's a catoblepas!" Lorina cries, rolling to one side. "Keep moving, and above all, avoid its eye!"

Can you escape from this nightmarish creature?

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **135**. If it's less than 9, turn to **80**.

Whatever the outcome, only your decisions, and the luck of the dice roll, can help you remove the
SHADOW OVER NORDMAAR

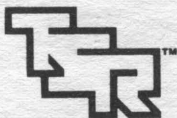


**An ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®
Adventure Gamebook #16**

SHADOW OVER NORDMAAR

By Dezra Despain

**Cover Art by Clyde Caldwell
Interior Art by Mark Nelson**



**TSR, Inc.
PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION™**

**To Mamie, Jack, Lori, Linda,
and Nancy—for oohing and
aahing at the right times**

SHADOW OVER NORDMAAR

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All characters in this book are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

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AN EXCITING GAMEBOOK EXPERIENCE!

Welcome, you who would dare skulk in the Shadows of Nordmaar, to an exciting new concept in role-playing gamebooks.

Based on the popular **ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** Game, this adventure requires two standard six-sided dice, an ample supply of luck—and, most of all, your skill in making decisions as you play the game. If dice are unavailable, a simple alternative, requiring only paper and pencil, is explained on page 12.

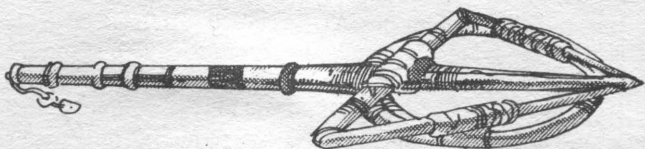
ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Adventure Gamebooks have been designed to read easily, without complicated rules to slow down the story. Once you have read through the simple rules that follow, you should seldom find it necessary to refer back to them. Your options are repeated clearly in the text at each choice point, with occasional reminders about additional options you may wish to consider to improve your chances. Your adventure reads like a book, plays like a game, and offers a thrill a minute—with **YOU** as the hero!

YOUR CHARACTER

In this book, you are . . . well, that's the problem. You don't really know *who* you are. At the outset of the adventure, you can't remember much at all about yourself or

your background. All you *do* know is that you are a young man in your early twenties and a resident of the kingdom of Nordmaar, on the continent of Ansalon, in the world of Krynn.

You *think* your name is Jonn, but even that's a little blurry. You are generally in excellent physical condition—except for the minor fact that you have just nearly been beaten to death by unknown assailants, for unknown reasons. You awaken in a place that is totally unfamiliar, out in the middle of nowhere, without the slightest idea of where you are, how you got there, who you are, or where you were going. A young female cleric named Lorina has brought you back to consciousness. She will accompany you as you attempt to discover your past and fulfill your forgotten quest. It will be imperative that you discover your true identity in order to complete your quest successfully.



LORINA

Lorina, your traveling companion, is a cleric of Mishakal. Throughout your adventure, there will be times when you may greatly benefit from her ability to heal. Whenever this occurs, you will be instructed to restore a certain number of lost hit points to your hit point total. In addition to these instances when you are told you may restore lost hit points, you also have the additional opportunity to take advantage of Lorina's healing ability whenever you choose. Lorina has exactly two of these special Cure Light Wounds spells. Whenever you feel that "Jonn" is in need of them, simply roll one six-sided die and add 2 to the result ($1d6 + 2$). This is the number of points you may add to your hit point total.

There are only two things to remember about Lorina's special Cure Light Wounds spells. First, they may never be used during the course of combat; instead, you must wait until combat has ended, whatever the result. Second, they may be used only twice during the course of the entire adventure. Be sure to check them off on your Character Stats Card (see "ESTABLISHING YOUR CHARACTER").

PLAYING THE GAME

ESTABLISHING YOUR CHARACTER

YOUR "Jonn" will be different from someone else's because YOU will help to create him.

Carefully tear out the removable **Character Stats Card** at the beginning of this book. This card is your record of what Jonn is like. It also doubles as a bookmark.

Since we hope you will play this adventure many times, we suggest that you write on the card in pencil only. That way, your character stats can be erased and changed easily when you are ready to play again. If you have access to a photocopier, you may wish to make several photocopies of the Character Stats Card before you fill it in. Permission is hereby granted by the publisher to make photocopies of the Character Stats Card *only*. Another alternative is to reproduce the card by writing on a 3" X 5" card or a slip of paper.

You are now ready to round out Jonn's individual identity by establishing his strengths and weaknesses. Only Jonn's name has been entered for you, since so little is known of him. Before you fill out the rest of the card, you need to understand the game's scoring system.

SCORING

Playing the game requires that you keep track of four different kinds of points—**HIT POINTS**, **SKILL POINTS**, **EXPERIENCE POINTS**, and **MEMORY POINTS**—on the tear-out **Character Stats Card** located at the front of

this book. Also, since your quest in this adventure must be accomplished within a specific period of time, you will need to keep track of the number of days that pass by on a **time line**, which also appears on the stats card. An explanation of each of these follows.



HIT POINTS

Hit points represent your health, or life force. Whatever it is that you have done up to this point in your life has left you healthy and quite fit. You begin your adventure with 22 hit points.

Whenever you are injured, either in a fight or an accident, you lose hit points. The book will tell you when you lose hit points and how many you lose. Keep track of how many points you have left. If your hit point total ever reaches 0, you die. In that case, your adventure ends immediately, whether the story has finished or not.

On rare occasions, you may have opportunity to recover hit points by being healed by your cleric companion (see explanation under heading "LORINA" earlier). It is important to remember in such instances that you can never recover more hit points than you started with. During the game, do not erase your original number of hit points, since you may need to refer to this record if Jonn is healed.

SKILL POINTS

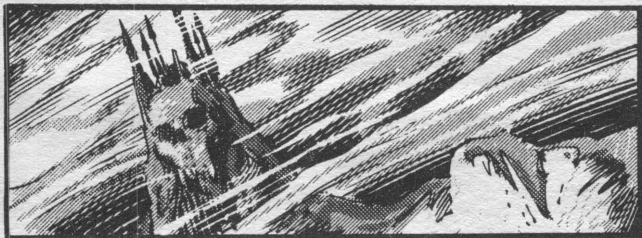
In this book, you will have five basic skills to help you during your adventure—**wisdom, stealth, perception,**

fighting, and **agility**. These skills, and how to use them, are described below.

A number, called your **skill score**, represents your ability in a given skill. The higher the number, the better your skill. You will help determine what your strengths (and weaknesses!) are. Your skill scores begin at 0, but you have 10 skill points to divide among the five skills as you like, subject to the following restrictions:

- 1) You must give either your wisdom or your stealth score (but not both) at least 3 skill points.
- 2) You may choose to give 0 skill points to any one, but not more than one, skill. (In game terms, this means that you may still attempt to use the skill, but you do not have any particular proficiency in it.) Of course, you may still choose to spread the skill points among all five skills if you prefer.

With the exception of the above restrictions, there is no right or wrong way to divide up your skill points. Study the skills below before deciding, then fill in your skill scores on the Character Stats Card. Each time you undertake a new adventure, you may experiment with a different combination of skill scores.



Fighting

Your **fighting** skill score determines your skill with weapons and your physical strength.

The book explains when to make a fighting skill check. To make the check, roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total equals or exceeds the number given in the text, you are successful.

Wisdom

Your **wisdom** skill score reflects your ability to use knowledge you have gained or may remember from your past.

The text will tell you when to make a wisdom skill check. To make the check, roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is the same as, or more than, the number given, you have succeeded.

Perception

Perception is the ability to perceive, or sense, things. This ability encompasses your whole range of human senses, not only sight.

The book will tell you when to make a perception skill check. To make the check, roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total equals or exceeds the number given, you are successful.

Agility

Agility measures physical speed and dexterity—running, balancing, dodging, and so forth.

The text will tell you when to make an agility skill check. To make the check, roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is equal to, or larger than, the number given, you have succeeded.

Stealth

Stealth is the ability to do things without being detected by others—by people, by creatures, or even by inanimate objects.

You will be told when to make a stealth skill check. To make the check, roll two dice and add the result to your stealth skill score. If the total equals or surpasses the number given in the text, you are successful.

EXPERIENCE, OR INSTINCT, POINTS

In real life, experience sometimes increases a person's chance of success because he has encountered a similar situation before and thus understands the possibilities that may occur.

But Jonn cannot remember anything of his experience as he begins his adventure. Fortunately, his bodily and mental instincts are heightened due to his lack of memory. Thus Jonn's experience points may more properly be thought of as instinct points.

Jonn's instinct points may be able to help him out of difficult situations by turning poor dice rolls into successful ones. Jonn begins this adventure with exactly 8 experience, or instinct, points.

To use your experience points, first decide how many points you will spend *before* you roll the dice, then add those points to the result of your roll. No matter how the roll turns out, the points are gone and must be deducted from the total. There is one exception: If you failed to allocate any skill points to a particular skill (see "SKILL POINTS"), then you do *not* have the opportunity to use the instinct point option. To state it another way, if your skill score is 0, you may not use experience, or instinct, points for that skill.

Use your experience points wisely, saving them for what you consider to be crucial situations.



TIME LINE

As you will discover early in your adventure, you need to succeed in your quest within a certain amount of time. For this reason, a time line appears on your Character Stats Card in order for you to keep track of the number of days that have passed. To use the time line, simply draw a line to the end of each day as it comes to a close. The text will instruct you when to do so.

PLAYING WITHOUT DICE

Should you ever wish to play the adventure when dice are unavailable, there is a simple substitute that requires only pencil and paper. Simply write the numbers 1 through 6 on separate slips of paper and mix them up in a container. Without looking, draw one of the slips, note the number, and place it back in the container. Each draw represents one roll of a die. If only one die is called for, draw only one number.

Your character—whoever he may find himself to be—is now complete. Start your adventure on page 13—and good luck!

The cool, predawn air wafted over the young red dragon's wings, lifting it higher into the dark sky. The sun, still well below the horizon, was casting the first fingers of light onto the legions of clouds marching across the skies above Nordmaar. The dragon only had a short while to finish this sweep.

Mile after mile of steaming moor swept beneath the soaring dragon. The Great Moors of Nordmaar were indeed vast—and not at all the type of place his kind preferred. Why in all of Krynn, he wondered, keeping a sharp eye on the ground below, would his Dragon Highlord masters want anything to do with this land? Why, the only thing of any military value here at all was the partially rebuilt city of Valkinord, which the Dragon Highlord Red Dragon vanguard now held. But this was the third reconnaissance flight the young dragon had made over the eastern reaches of the Great Moors in less than two days, and he had still to see anything else of value. In fact, this great swamp could only provide hiding holes for any refugees of the surprise attack on Valkinord, none of which could be allowed to escape and warn the rest of Nordmaar.

The young dragon, whose name was Sear, continued its flight, confused by the workings of its DragonLord masters and only vaguely aware of what had transpired in this land in years past. The men of North Keep, allied with the dwarves from the forested mountain range just beyond the western border of Nordmaar, had driven the Highlords and their dragons from the land some years ago. Now the Highlords wanted it back, claiming some long forgotten treaty rights to the lands between the Great Moors and the Last Coast. Why? Just to control the Miremier, the great bay south of Nordmaar? Young Sear just could not reason it out, but the dragon did its duty just the same.

The red dragon cast its far-seeing gaze northward. It could make out the fortress city of North Keep, resting securely in the dim morning light. It snarled softly at the thought of the humans nestled within its walls. *Soon, the dragon thought, soon they would all feel the withering heat of dragon-fire.*

With that satisfying image in mind, Sear turned its gaze westward. Still enshrouded in mist and shadow, the distant mountain range the dragon sought would be all but invisible to normal eyes. But dragon eyes are truly magnificent, and Sear could see all that was needed. A power of growing evil

loomed out there, a shadow within the shadows. It was a power the Dragon Highlord masters wanted watched. Perhaps they thought to use it to their advantage during the coming invasion. Sear didn't know and couldn't really care less.

Suddenly the red dragon's gaze was yanked back to the ground. Something lay at the edges of the fen below. The dragon dropped its right wing, arched its long body, and immediately turned about. In a second, it was over the spot. Yes, there it was, down there in that small clearing between the birches and swamp. It was a human body.

Sear dropped closer to the ground, curious at seeing a body lying out in the middle of nowhere and cautious lest the dragon be seen by any observers. Its presence, and that of the Dragon Highlords, was not to be known until their entire plan was in place and the time was ripe. But a dead body, still warm according to Sear's infravision, was noteworthy. Sear would have to take it back to Valkinord to see if the masters could learn anything from it. *More important*, Sear thought, swooping swiftly toward the clearing, *breakfast would taste good about now. My masters needn't ever know about the body at all.*

Suddenly Sear's eyes were distracted, stung by the first piercing beam of the rising sun peeking over the eastern horizon. The dragon cursed and spread its folded wings to halt its descent. *Too late for breakfast now*, Sear thought. If the dragon was seen, the Dragon Highlords and its red dragon compatriots would stew Sear alive. With one eye staring longingly at the body on the ground, Sear sped off to the east. Its great red body soon disappeared into the bright red sunrise.

Soon, Sear thought hungrily as it sped homeward. *Soon. Turn to 84.*

2

A bowstring twangs rapidly as you and Lorina dash toward a narrow woods at the western edge of the Great Moors. A volley of arrows plugs the ground where you stood. To your right and your left, arrows plunk into the hard soil. Lorina gasps as an arrow lodges itself in her cloak. You manage to dodge them.

You make it to the edge of the woods and dive into the underbrush, landing heavily on a cold, clammy morass of moldering peat. Lorina restrains you from heading farther into the woods, jerking on your arm harshly. You stop and pull your arm free, then turn and look back toward the clearing, expect-

ing at any moment to see your attacker charge into view. Lorina pulls the arrow out of her cloak.

Nothing happens. The clearing is sprinkled with arrows, but no one comes to claim them.

You wait anxiously, getting angrier with every passing minute, anxious to see who dared attack you. Lorina quietly touches your shoulder and shows you the tip of the arrow that had planted itself in her cloak.

You can see the faint smear where the tip of the arrow had been treated with a dark, sticky substance.

"Poisoned!" she whispers, shivering. "Someone wants you dead, Jonn!"

"So it would seem," you agree as you toss the arrow into the brush. "Come on." You grab Lorina's arm and back into the woods. "Let's get going."

Lorina doesn't budge. "Not in there!" she says. "We will *not* go into Grendar's Grief!"

You stare at her, frustrated at her refusal. "What do you want us to do?" you ask, perturbed. "Walk out there where some maniac is shooting poisoned arrows at us? The only cover we have lies in the forest."

"Jonn, you don't understand!" she pleads. "Grendar's Grief is a Death Forest!" Seeing you confused, still angry glare, she continues. "At the time of the Cataclysm, Grendar, a powerful and miserly wizard, built his home in these woods. To keep intruders out, he devised a powerful, complex Warding spell to cast on this entire forest. Unfortunately for him, the day he cast the spell was also the day all Krynn shook with the Cataclysm. His concentration wavered in midspell, and the power he had thus far conjured escaped, creating utter chaos. The trees, once tall and shimmering like those to the north, twisted and warped into the grotesque things you see now. Even worse, when he entered the forest he never came out again. Minutes in the forest could mean hours, even days, outside the forest. But Grendar didn't know that, and within days he died of old age . . . or so it is believed, for he was never seen again."

Entering Grendar's Grief appears to be just as deadly as walking back out in the clearing. It's all a matter of choice. You can either leave the questionable protection of Grendar's Grief and die by poisoned arrows (142), or you can dare Grendar's Grief and die of old age (97).

3

You leap into the air, aiming your mace at Htrag's skull, but fatigue makes you dizzy and you miss! Feeling your mace skim down his back, Htrag growls. Whipping his sword into his left hand, he swings around, pulling Lorina and her whip with him. With one powerful stroke, his blade enters your neck and slices down to your chest, where it cracks the bone. Blood gushes in spurts from the wound, sending its deadly warmth down your belly and to the ground below. In the few seconds of life you have left, you feel Death take you in her warm, dark embrace. Your last thought is of Lorina. You hope Mishakal . . . will . . . watch . . . over . . . her. . .

You almost made it. Go back to the beginning of the book and try again! ✕

4

You stare at your physical twin, knowing him for what he really is—a doppelganger. He, for his part, notices the change in you. The strength in your eyes brings fear to his. He averts his face from yours and turns away.

"That's right, Majin," you spit at his back. "I know who I am now—Prince Rudol Jonn Greyson, crown prince of Nordmaar. And you need me!"

Indeed they do, you reason quickly. This Majin creature and his Highlord masters need your ring to make their plan complete. Without the ring, the imposter would eventually be recognized as a fraud. And they can't kill you without destroying the ring. They need you alive.

You glare at the guards holding their weapons poised at you. They know it, too, you realize, as one by one they lower their gaze and their weapons. Carefully you move out of their circle of death, thinking rapidly about how you can escape.

"Your plan will never work, Majin!" you say, trying to stall for time. You saunter over to the balcony and look down at the people below. "My subjects will never be fooled." A quick glance shows that the balcony is too high to jump from.

You turn back to face the doppelganger and his guards. They seem to be wavering between the desire to kill you and the need to keep you alive. Behind them all, Lorina simply stares at you dumbfounded, wondering if you're putting on an act. She still has not realized who you really are or the import of what's happening.

Majin eyes you speculatively. You watch the cold glint of malice return to his eyes as he ponders his next move.

"Perhaps you give your people too much credit," he wheedles. "We have succeeded in deceiving them so far. Few suspect there has been any change in Prince Rudol, and those few that did have been eliminated. Your dwarvish friends, for example, surely will never return to your aid. It seems our plan is succeeding very well."

Your heart sinks. You know he is right. His disguise, and whatever others his draconians may be using, is too good. You tremble to think that not only dopplegangers but sivaks, the huge draconian shape-changers, may have already infiltrated high positions in your kingdom. You look quickly at the human and the draconians. What can you do? How can you possibly stop their plans?

Majin and his guards begin to move toward you, stalking you, sensing your flagging confidence. "It's time you stopped fooling yourself, young prince," Majin hisses. "Just gave us the ring. If you don't, we will get it from you in some unpleasant way. Take him and throw him into the dungeons!"

Suddenly, as the three guards close on you, an explosive crack shatters the tense silence in the chamber. Majin screams in agony and drops to his knees. Dark red blood wells abruptly from a jagged tear in his back.

Startled, you look up to see Lorina! So intent were Majin and his guards on capturing you that they forgot their other captive! Seeing her chance, the cleric silently made her way to the fireplace and removed the weapons from the plaque. Armed now, her eyes gleaming with rage, she raises the dragon-hide whip once again.

Another hiss and crack, and yet another rent appears in Majin's tortured flesh. He howls and bolts for the chamber doors, knocking over his two draconian guards in the process.

Strangely, the large human guard makes no immediate move. Instead, he watches with a bemused smile on his face as the two draconians pick themselves up off the floor. Lorina wastes no time. Shouting, "Jonn, catch!" she slides the great bastard sword from the plaque across the floor to you. You bend down and pick it up just as the draconians regain their footing.

You heft the marvelous weapon. Well-balanced, with a finely tooled edge, the shining sword feels like a part of your arm. You swing it tentatively once, then twice. It whistles threateningly



through the air. You can see the words engraved on it now. They read "Courage Pax ist."

A deep rumbling growl and a barked command snap your attention back to the problem at hand. You glance up to see the draconians advancing toward Lorina. She backs farther into the chamber, gaining room to wield the whip as the draconians approach. The lash speaks sharply again and again as the cleric fights to defend herself.

You move away from the balcony to go to her aid, but the large guard steps in your path. He looks at you expectantly, then slowly draws a great two-handed sword from a sheath on his back. It is made of some dark metal and has a wicked, serrated edge. Mimicking your earlier action, he swings it tentatively twice before he speaks.

"I had hoped it would come to this," he growls evilly. "My Highlord masters would prefer to have the weakling doppleganger out of the picture anyhow. And I am perfectly capable of taking his place—and yours!"

Confused by his previous inaction and now by his words, you start to raise your sword to defend yourself, then stop almost as soon as you start. For the man in front of you is changing! His human form seems to convulse and writhe and melt away. His body expands, sprouting a long tail and wickedly clawed talons on hands and feet. His face elongates into a fanged, reptilian snout. Scales begin to form all over his body.

Suddenly you understand, and your stomach tightens inside. In a matter of moments, there stands before your startled eyes a nine-foot-tall, shape-changing siva!

Seeing your expression, the siva hisses with amusement. "I thought you ought to know what you were up against before we started. And now, shall we begin?" And with that, the creature lunges at you, its great sword aimed at your head.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to **87**. If it's less than 10, go to **152**.

5

A strange, silent cry throbs in the still air around you. Is it a cry of pain—or of relief? The vanquished shadow, in its final throes, dissipates until all you see is the dim woods.

From the woods behind you charges Lorina. Her hand clutches the object she used to ward off the shadows. Without breaking pace, you join her and race through the eerie forest.

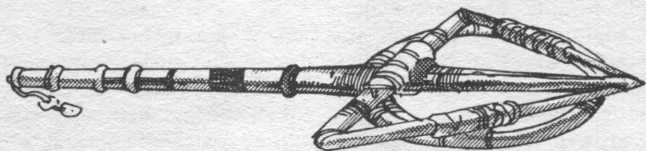
Soon you hear the voice, cold and piercing, screaming behind you, its raucous laughter setting your nerves on edge. "Grendar!" Lorina whispers, her breath panting as she continues to run. You nod your head. Who else?

Before long, the laughter turns to fury. "They're escaping!" it cries. "Catch them!" The shadows increase their speed, but it's too late. You and Lorina burst out of Grendar's Grief into the refreshing night air.

Night is settling over the Great Moors. You tumble to the ground, panting hard. Behind you, Grendar's voice fades away. The woods remain tomblike, brooding.

Lorina flops down at your side, her hand still clutching the symbol that kept the shadows at bay. She sees you looking at it and explains.

"It's my holy symbol," she pants as she puts it away. "Undead creatures fear it. I'll probably need to use it again before we leave the moors."



You nod your head and sit back, letting your strength recover. Strangely enough, the ring finger of your left hand begins to tingle. You shake it irritably, hoping it will return to normal once you're rested.

Overhead, two of Krynn's three moons shine brightly onto the Great Moors. You sigh deeply. Even in the dark, you can see that the moors hold great perils. Turn to 170.

6

Hearing your battle-cry, the monster pauses for a moment, then turns and looks at you. You swing your sword in a vicious arch, only to have it reverberate off the creature's tusk. The creature catches the sword in its tusk and tosses its head. The movement wrenches the sword from your hand, and you watch helplessly as the weapon flies far beyond your reach. At the same moment, the beast's tail slams into your legs, collapsing them beneath you. Subtract 4 from your hit point total.

Stunned, you can only watch as the creature's jaws open wide

to devour you. The stench from its breath assaults you as its lone, ghastly eye stares at you intently. Unable to do anything else, you raise your hands to try to protect your face and cower down. You know that if you could remember your life at this moment, it would flash through your mind as the moment of your death rapidly approaches.

The creature above you roars ferociously as you wait, shivering in your boots, wondering if death hurts. Sounds of water churning about the thrashing creature reach your ears. Bits and pieces of flesh fall around you. Still it roars, wails, screeches . . . and still you wait!

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 8 or more, turn to **130**. If it is less than 8, turn to **181**.

7

The aisle runs the entire length of the room, some thirty feet. You realize that you're standing at the reception end of a small audience chamber. Thick velvet drapes hang from ceiling to floor along the walls of the chamber. Every ten feet or so, they part to reveal a rack of well-burnished weapons—swords, maces, glaives, and the like. Just to the left of you is a large fireplace and hearth. Above the mantle of the fireplace rests a large plaque. On it hang, crossing each other, a beautiful “hand-and-a-half” bastard sword and a priceless dragon-hide whip, relics of some bygone era. Words are engraved in the blade of the sword, but you cannot make them out.

You gaze at the weapons. They seem familiar. . . .

An impatient cough draws your attention to the far end of the room, which is occupied by the two thrones. Sitting on one of the thrones is a man who looks exactly like you! He sits nonchalantly, deep in the throne, one foot pulled up onto the seat, the other stretched out in front of him. He is idly twirling a tassel from the draperies that hang beside him, and when you look up at him, he pauses. He leans forward as you approach, a smile curling his lips. Next to him rests a long, sharp-edged sword. His fingers grasp the hilt as he stands.

Lorina stares at him, then glances at you. Turning back to the man on the throne, she whispers, “Prince Rudol?”

He laughs an evil laugh. “So nice of you to visit me, Majin,” he says, a sly smile on his face. He turns to Lorina and leers at her, then returns his gaze to you. “I shall dispense with the

usual pleasantries," he says coldly. "It's time you returned what you stole from me."

Your eyes narrow suspiciously at this mirror-image of yourself. You have never seen him, that you know. Therefore you couldn't have stolen anything from him, could you?

Your head begins to buzz as recent, half-remembered memories begin to whirl in your brain. Seeing an exact likeness of yourself sitting on the throne in this room makes you dizzy. There's something familiar about the room, too, but . . . but . . . you just can't remember!

"Give me the ring, Majin," the prince says crisply. He gets down from the throne and walks toward you. Quickly your fingers go to the ring on your left hand. Prince Rudol nods, a wicked gleam in his eyes. "Yes, that ring." He stops a few feet in front of you.

Looking into his eyes, you see excitement roiling deep within them, coupled with a lean sort of hunger. He holds his palm out to you insistently. "Give it to me!" he whispers. "Only then will I consider sparing your life!"

Unnoticed by you, the guards have left their posts at the door and have converged around you. Each holds the tip of his sword pressed against your flesh. The buzzing sound in your head gets louder and louder. You close your eyes, pressing your fingers against your temples. *Please, someone help me remember!* your mind screams silently.

"Give it to me!" a voice shouts. You know it's Rudol's voice, but the buzzing won't let you respond. Then Prince Rudol slaps you hard across the face. The pain streaks through your head, clearing your brain and focusing your confused thoughts.

Count your memory points. If you have 5 or more, turn to **81**. If you have 3 or 4 points, turn to **159**. If you have 2 points or less, turn to **74**.

8

"Lorina!" you cry, as you realize the warrior is bound to get free of her cloak any second. "Quick! Into the forest!" The strange, deformed birches to the west are closer than the birch forest directly north of you. You plunge into the grotesque wood as fast as you can.

"No, Jonn!" Lorina shouts from behind you. "Not there!"

Lorina's pleas seem to be swallowed up the instant you enter the forest. Darkness and a morbid pall falls about you. Even

the light from the sun seems afraid to enter this godforsaken place. A shadow, almost palpable, descends around you, insinuating itself into your very being. You shudder uncontrollably as, above you, spidery limbs seem to claw at your face.

You stand for a moment, trying to get your bearings. You have plunged deep enough into the formidable wood to make it impossible to see the forest's edge. Darkened shadows obscure everything. You don't know if Lorina has followed you into the wood or not. Judging from the sound of fear in her warning shout, you doubt that she has.

Maybe I ought to hide until Torreth's gone, you think as you cast furtive glances about you. Even though the trees stand deathly still, the air around you seems to pulse like a dying heartbeat. *Then again, maybe I ought to discover a way out of this wretched place.*

Heeding your second voice, you head north—or at least in the direction you think is north. You haven't gone more than two steps when you hear a twig snap behind you. Whirling around, you fully expect to see Torreth standing there, but you see nothing. You tense, expecting the warrior to jump out at you. Still you see nothing.

Just when you've decided that your imagination is playing tricks on you, another twig snaps. Your eyes search quickly for a place to hide. Then you hear it.

"Jonn," a weird, almost ethereal voice whispers in front of you—or is it behind you? You spin about quickly, but nothing is there.

"*Jonn . . . Jonn . . . Jonn!*" The echoes of your name pound with the heartbeat that throbs in the air around you, moaned and whispered by unseen voices.

"Who's . . . who's there!" you call as you wipe your sweaty hands on your tunic. Your words, like a cold knife, slice through the echoes.

"Jonn," the ethereal voice, a mere whisper, reaches out to you again. "Wait for me-e-e-e. . ."

In such a strange place, what creature would beg you to wait for it, unless . . .

You duck into a small copse and take cover. Lorina's warning stabs into your brain. "Grendar's Grief will suck your life from you," she said just before you entered this eerie forest. What sort of creatures stalk this wood . . . creatures that can suck the life from you? Already you can sense them stalking you!

For what seems like an eternity, you huddle in your hiding place, your eyes straining to pierce the gloom around you. Before long, a shadowy form comes into view. Although your vision is obscured by bracken in front of you, you can tell that the figure carries a sword. Its head darts back and forth, searching for something. Long hair grows down its back. You begin to tremble as it comes nearer and nearer to your hiding place. Your body tenses. You realize that you could possibly take it by surprise by jumping it before it knows you are there, but if you miss, it will surely kill you, for you have no weapon to defend yourself with. However, if you stay in hiding, it might fail to see you and pass you by.

If you decide to leap out at the creature, turn to 14. If you decide to remain in hiding, turn to 41.

9

You close your eyes, willing your mind to remember where you have seen this lock before. Hundreds of locks flicker through your mind—locks of every size and shape imaginable. And always, there you are, studying them, probing them. Suddenly a lock comes into focus—the same lock—only on another door somewhere. But the door isn't important. It's what you see yourself doing in your vision that catches your attention. Sweat beads on your head, and you chew your lip as you slowly insert a small cylindrical shape into the catch. You hear yourself whisper, *Don't touch the sides of the lock. It's a trap!* You hear a click, and you watch yourself slowly extract the small device from the hole. Then the door swings open and the vision's gone. Add 1 to your memory point total.

You shake your head, and relief washes over you. This one small memory jog has helped you remember more about yourself than all the others combined. You're certain now you're a thief of some sort. Now all you need to do is remember the rest of your life—and, more importantly, why you are here, inside Drakart's castle!

"Are you going to break the lock?" Lorina asks, interrupting your thoughts.

You start. "No," you say slowly. "It's a trap." You see the small hole, knowing that if it's jarred, it will explode. Somehow you must disarm it. But somewhere along the way, you've managed to lose your lockpicking tools. You try to think of something you might have that will fit in the lock.

"Lorina, do you have anything small enough to fit in this hole without touching the sides?" You show her the hole, and she studies it a minute.

Lorina shakes her head. "Nothing I have with me now."

You study it a few more minutes. Suddenly you remember. "The feather!" Turn to 146.

10

Although your first impulse is to leap through the scathing wall of fire and save yourself, you pause for a split second. Something, or someone, has freed you and Lorina of your bonds. But where is he? You have only a few seconds to find out. After that, their rescue attempt will have been in vain.

Suddenly a voice at your side whispers, "Hold on to me."

"But—but I can't see you!" you reply, trying to protect your face from the heat.

"I'm here beside you," the voice reassures you. Suddenly you feel a soft, cool body, covered with fur, nuzzle you. Although you see nothing, you immediately reach out and grab hold of it. As you do, protective coolness spreads over you. You climb onto the unseen body and press your face into its cool fur. The body gathers itself beneath you and leaps upward. Startled, you look up to see that you're flying through the air, leaving behind the stunned dwarves staring at the empty, flaming pyre.

Suddenly you remember Lorina. She's back on the pyre! But just as you are about to tell your unseen benefactor to return for her, you see her rising in the air beside you. She sits rigidly in midair, clenching her invisible mount desperately, her eyes closed tight in fear.

Relieved that she is safe, you relax a little. The cool breeze created by your flight through the air quickly cools your overheated body. You lift your face to the wind and relish its refreshing relief as the ground below you speeds by. After a while, you lie down on the broad, furry back beneath you and close your eyes. Turn to 114.

11

Lorina's scream makes you turn. From out of the murky pool, a huge beast raises its head. A foul odor rises above the musty smell of the moors and assails your nostrils. More disgusting than the smell is the decaying body of the beast. Somehow life is present in what should obviously be dead. Flesh flakes off

the huge squatty body, exposing worms feasting on the rotting flesh. A long skeletal neck is barely able to hold the heavy head attached to it. The head, oozing some sickly grayish substance, glides low over the ground toward you, straining its thin neck. Broken tusks grow out of its snout and curl nearly to the creature's eyes.

You shudder at the monster's eyes. The left socket, devoid of eyeball, oozes the same grayish substance that covers the rest of the head. Small worms squirm and wriggle in and out of the socket. Chunks of decayed flesh flake off into the water. The other eye, bloodshot and crazed, stares menacingly at Lorina. A long tail, ending in boney, clublike nodules, whips around behind it.

Lorina ducks and cries out to you, "Don't let it look at you, Jonn! It's a catoblepas!" The creature's lumbering, decayed head glides low over the ground toward you. Lorina continues, "It's look can kill!"

The head suddenly whips in front of you and the catoblepas rivets its one eye on you. You try to dodge its deadly gaze.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 8 or more, turn to 148. If it's less than 8, turn to 93.



12

You and Lorina trek northward through the birch forest. You listen in awe as she tells you about the grotesque forest you so recently encountered.

"Grendar's Grief is a Death Forest," she begins. "Shortly before the Cataclysm, Grendar, a powerful wizard, built his home in these woods. To keep intruders out, he devised a complex Warding spell to use on this forest. Unfortunately, the day he cast the spell was also the day of the Cataclysm. His concentration wavered in midspell, and the power he had thus far con-

jured escaped, creating utter chaos. The trees, once tall and shimmering, twisted and warped into the grotesque things you saw there. And once he entered the forest, he was never to leave again. Minutes in the forest could mean hours, even days, outside the confines of the forest. Grendar didn't know that, and within days he died of old age . . . or so it is believed, for he was never seen again."

Lorina stops talking and shivers. She looks at the ground, lost in thought. You continue your trek in silence, each lost in his own thoughts. At first your thoughts just ramble, not making any sense. Then they begin to focus on a series of questions: *Who am I? Who is this 'Majin'? Am I Jonn, or am I really Majin? What is the purpose of these herbs and the feather I'm carrying?* Something nags at the back of your mind, but you just can't seem to make your memory respond.

The sun has barely had time to advance in the sky before the two of you come to the far edge of the birch grove. Turn to 49.

13

You stare at the barmaid. Deep in the girl's eyes is the same clouded gaze you saw in Lorina's. The pounding in your head grows; the buzzing gets louder. You turn away from the barmaid, grab Lorina, and shake her.

"Lorina!" you yell. "Wake up. There's some kind of enchantment at work here! We must leave!"

Lorina stirs. "Headache—" she mumbles drowsily.

You grab Lorina and hoist her over your shoulders, ignoring the pounding in your head, intent on reaching the gates of the town before it's too late.

You race through the silent streets, holding tightly to Lorina. The dwarven children are still playing dutifully in the yards. Male and female dwarves still stroll mechanically past the houses. No one notices you as you hurry past them and up the cobblestones. You reach the ivy-covered gate and fling it open, stumbling out into road beyond. Instantly the buzzing lessens, the pain begins to subside, but you are nearly drained. Dragging Lorina as far away from the enchanted village as you can, you fall into an exhausted heap beside her. Turn to 63.

14

In your hiding place, you wait as the creature stalks nearer. Slowly your hand searches the darkened ground for some kind

of weapon. Within seconds, you palm a rough stone and curl your fingers firmly around it.

"Jonn . . ." the creature whispers once more. It pauses, cocking its head to listen. Then it moves forward tentatively, and its padded footsteps come within inches of your hiding place. You tense. "I know you're here," the voice intones.

Now! You spring from your hiding place and rush straight at the creature, knocking it to the ground. The sword flies out of its hand and it screams, a high, blood-curdling scream. You grapple with it and smother its wail with your hand. You are surprised to find the creature's skin feels smooth, with an uncanny, almost human warmth to it. It tries to bite you, but you jerk your hand away. The creature screams again.

You roll with the creature until you are able to push its face into the ground and silence its screams. Then you raise the rock you've been holding high above its head.

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **184**. If it is less than 9, turn to **116**.

15

The water boils wildly. You grab Lorina, and both of you scramble away from the raging swamp. Then, from the murky depths, surges a creature that nearly defies description.

Its warthog-like head snakes toward you at the end of a long, sinewy neck. Its body, like that of some bloated buffalo, hunkers in the mire. Muck and slime stream from its body and drip to the ground. As it bares its rotted, pointy teeth and hisses at you, you gag from the rotten stench of its breath and body. In various stages of decay, its flesh flakes off in chunks, splashing into the water. Its one remaining eye gleams at you. The empty socket of the other eye oozes water and slime.

"Keep moving!" Lorina cries, rolling to one side. "Avoid its eye!"

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **108**. If it's less than 9, turn to **80**.

16

Lorina whispers again, "I can stop them, Jonn! This piece of iron I found is all I need for a spell to do it."

You nod. Although you might be able to convince Prince Rudol that you aren't Majin, you can't afford to take the chance.



Lorina raises the small piece of scrap iron and closes her eyes in concentration. Seeing the movement, the large guard yells, "Stop her!"

Lorina mumbles a simple word, then opens her eyes. All three guards are rooted to the stone floor in an attack position. "There!" Lorina mutters, satisfied. "That should hold them until we're far away from here."

You stare at the frozen guards. "What did you do to them, anyway?"

"I used a simple Command spell. I merely ordered them to stop." Lorina takes your hand and pulls you around the magically held guards. You gasp as you get a closer look at two of the guards. Beneath their cloaks gleam yellow reptilian eyes. Lorina shudders. "Draconians!" she breathes. "What are they doing here already?" On the way out, she retrieves her whip from the large guard.

"The spell won't last long," she whispers, "but at least we'll have a good head start."

You race down a dank corridor lined on either side with more cells. At the end of the hallway, an open stairwell leads up to the next floor. You climb the steps two at a time until you reach a landing entering another long hallway. The cells are far behind you now, and the dankness has disappeared. With Lorina close on your heels, you speed down the hallway until you come to a corner.

Flying around the corner, you halt abruptly, surprised to discover you've gone through a large open doorway leading outside. Spread before you is a courtyard crowded with peasants. Quickly you recognize it as a small outdoor market. Robed guards are scattered throughout the courtyard. On the far right side stands a castle.

"The castle of North Keep!" Lorina informs you.

You stare at the castle, noting the crenellated turrets and smooth stone walls. It's not very large as castles go, but it looks formidable. Flying high over the gate is a flag with a crest on it. You glance at the ring on your finger and see the same crest engraved there.

"Come on, Lorina!" you say, firmly grabbing her hand. "We're going inside the castle!"

Roll two dice and add the result to your stealth skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to **65**. If it's less than 10, turn to **104**.

"Lost!" you choke. "In here? In Grendar's Grief, the 'Death Forest,' of all places? Oh, wonderful!" You stare at Lorina incredulously. "Now what are we supposed to do?" She doesn't answer. Stooping, Lorina busily searches for something. The constant, subtle thumping of what sounds like a dying heart deep inside Grendar's Grief reminds you that time—and your life—is passing by quickly.

Still stooping over the ground, Lorina straightens up and wipes her brow.

"I can't find a single clue that shows which way we came in. We can always pick a direction, but if we pick the wrong one, we could travel for days in this place—and end up dead."

You drop to your knees. "Keep searching, Lorina. I'll help you."

You realize quickly that you're not much of a tracker. In the dark, you can see nothing nor feel anything that shows which way you came into Grendar's Grief.

Just as you are about ready to give up, your hand traces an indentation in the ground. A footprint, perhaps? It's better than nothing. "Lorina, I think I've found something!"

She groans.

"What's wrong?" you ask, surprised at her reaction.

"I think I've found something, too," she tells you. "Only it's over here, opposite you."

Both of you stand and move together to consult.

"I've got a broken twig," she offers. "We could have broken it coming in."

"And I've got a possible footprint," you reply. "Are there any prints by your twig?"

"Ground's too hard," she answers shortly. "How about any broken twigs by your print?"

"No foliage," you mutter.

"Hmmm."

"Yeah. Hmmm."

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score (even if it's 0). If the total is 10 or more, turn to **158**. If it's less than 10, turn to **60**.

You try to recall where you've seen this lock before, but nothing comes to mind. Shaking your head, you study it more in-

tently. The more you look at it, the less it reminds you of anything. In a few moments, you put the whole thing out of your mind.

"Somehow we've got to get past this door," you mutter, jiggling the lock. Drakart's ring, now clearly visible on your finger, starts to tingle.

"We can always bash it in," Lorina suggests. She touches the mace you're holding.

"That's an idea," you reply. You raise your mace to pound on the lock, then pause, realizing that bashing the door down will make enough noise to alert Drakart that you're here. But how else can you enter? Besides, he probably already knows you're here. And sooner or later, you're going to have to confront him.

If you decide to bash the door down, turn to **169**. If you decide to find another way to enter, turn to **132**.

19

The something that gives is your cloak. Torreth deftly feints to the right. As you raise your spear to parry, he suddenly springs back to the left. His whistling sword rips into the cloak around your arm and leaves the cloak trailing in shreds. Your heart leaps to your throat when you see your adversary's gloating smile.

"You're dead, Majin!" He laughs and brings his mighty sword down. You fling your arms over your head and leap out of the way in a desperate attempt to save yourself. With irresistible force, the sword rips into the tattered cloak, entangling itself in its folds, but manages to graze your ribs. You feel the warm trickle of blood oozing down your side. Subtract 3 from your hit point total.

The feeling of warm blood unleashes a feral rage in you. With a sudden twist of your arm, you entangle the sword in the cloak. A quick jerk yanks your opponent forward. Off balance, Torreth tumbles to the ground, and the sword slips from his grasp. You seize it and stand over him. He looks up at you pleadingly as you press the tip of his own sword against his throat.

Then his eyes harden. "Go ahead, Majin!" he rasps. "Kill me! What's one more death to you?"

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to **94**. If it's less than 10, turn to **52**.

You decide against investigating the groaning noises behind the door. Whoever is in there might call the guards. You hastily pull Lorina past the door and creep down the hall until you come to an ornate double door, where you pause thoughtfully.

Suddenly the door flies open and the same three guards you escaped from earlier leap out into the hall. A wicked gleam lights their eyes.

The large human chuckles contemptuously. "I suppose you wonder how we got here so fast, Majin. Surely you must realize that old castles are simply full of secret passageways." He moves toward you threateningly as he continues. "We knew you'd show up here sooner or later, so we thought we'd form a little welcoming committee for you. And how convenient—the prince is waiting for you right inside this room."

Instinctively you and Lorina turn to flee, but the guards are incredibly quick. The large guard grabs Lorina, and the two draconians leap onto your back and wrestle you to the floor. Then, twisting your arms behind your back, they pull you to your feet. The large guard grunts an order, and you and Lorina are pushed through the double doors into the room. They follow and close the doors behind them. Then the human takes position directly in front of the doorway, while the two draconians take station on either side, their tails flickering nervously beneath the robes that cover their scaly bodies.

Taking your eyes off the hideous reptiles, you examine the room's lavish velvet furnishings. To the right, a large balcony overlooks the courtyard, where you can hear people milling about below. But when your eyes travel up the aisle on your left to the two thrones at the end of the room, you gasp in amazement. Turn to 7.

The goblins, sensing easy prey, charge recklessly. Overconfidence, however, is a terrible thing—as they soon find out. You wait until the first goblin gets close enough before you swing the mace. It connects, and a horrible crack fills the air. The goblin you hit howls with pain and clutches its shattered arm.

You sidestep around the next goblin and swing. The mace catches it with its back to you, and a deathly thud knocks that goblin lifeless to the ground. Another goblin maneuvers behind you. You turn with lightning speed and deflect its sword.

In and out you weave, now using the mace more as a shield than as a weapon.

As you fight, you begin to realize that you are more successful against the goblins when you catch them with their backs to you. A shiver courses through you each time your mace pounds the back of a goblin. It's almost as if you've done this many times before, but you have no idea if you ever have.

One goblin, furious that he can't kill you, goes berserk and charges. You beat it soundly over the head and shove its inert body against another, who also is rushing you. While the second goblin is struggling under the dead weight of its companion, you turn to fend off another two, but you can't manage to maneuver them.

Wearied of fighting, you miss a block and take a slice in one arm. You let go of the mace and hold it shakily in the other hand. Blood spurts from the wound. Subtract 5 from your hit point total. The goblins press closer when they see your weakened condition. You swing, but with little accuracy. The unfamiliar weight of the mace throws you off balance. Before long, the goblins have you prostrate on the ground, their blades pinching your neck.

"Die, human scum," one hisses. "Your attempt to steal Drakart's pegasus has failed." It laughs cruelly and raises its sword for a death stroke. Turn to 151.

22

Concentrating intently, you let the name "Prince Rudol" sink into your mind. You bear the ring of the royal house of North Keep. And now Storr has called you Prince Rudol. Can this be the missing connection?

At last a scene flits across your mind. You see a man wearing a crown giving you a ring . . . the ring you wear! His face is vaguely familiar, but you cannot place him. You place the ring on your finger as thousands of people raise their fists and beat the air. They yell something that you can't make out. A furious roar goes up.

The scene ends almost as fast as it began. Despite the vision, questions still whirl in your head. That you received your ring from someone in the royal house now seems certain, at least. (Add 1 to your memory point total.) But to what end? And did you, Jonn, receive the ring from Prince Rudol, or are you in reality Prince Rudol himself, rightful bearer of the ring?

The whirl of unanswered questions forces your eyes open just as one of the hill dwarves shoves Lorina at you. Now she, too, is bound. Apparently the dwarves will not be placated by anything but your death, which they fully intend to bring about unless you do something to stop them. Turn to 32.

23

The mace whistles through the air and strikes the creature square in the chest. It writhes in silent agony and backs off. You smile, but not for long, as the creature moves in again with incredible swiftness. You lash out again with the mace.

Roll two dice. If the total is 8 or more, repeat this section. If it's less than 8, turn to 138. Once you have repeated this section three times, turn to 5.

24

Htrag lunges at you, and you parry his blade with your mace. He counters with a slash, but you dart to the side.

If I can only get behind him! you think. You lunge to come up behind him, but he flips around to face you. Sweat beads on your brow. You swing your mace, but the giant blocks it. Back and forth you dance, waiting for the right opportunity. Finally it comes.

You leap through the air, flying past Htrag, landing in a roll. Then, springing to your feet, you whip a vicious backhand stroke at Htrag's back, but he turns just in time to block it with his sword. Reaching out, he grabs you by the throat and pulls you in close to his hideous face.

If this is the first time you've read this section, turn to 143. If this is the second time you've read this section, turn to 42. If this is the third time you've read this section, turn to 76.

25

Lying beside the weeping Lorina, you think about the shape-changing Morlan and his draconian cutthroats.

"I nearly beat you to death before; I am about to do it again," he had said, hinting that he knew you. And he called you 'Majin,' as Torreth had. But why, if your name is Majin, do you call yourself Jonn? Why do they want your ring? And what is the significance of the feather or the herbs hidden in your clothes? The questions roll round and round in your head, with no plausible answers. Subconsciously you feel Lorina relax in your

arms. Her trembling stops, and with it your thoughts. You relax and drift into a fitful sleep. Turn to **59**.

26

Some skill from your unknown past carries you stealthily away from the disturbing voices. Soon they grow dim in the mist-shrouded boulders behind you. You hurry quickly over the rocks and continue your journey up the mountain. Turn to **156**.

27

You stare thoughtfully at the feather. Then, excitedly, you fumble at the hem of your tunic. In a moment, you pull out the feather you've been carrying in your clothing all this time. Holding it up to the one in Lorina's hand, you see that they are practically identical. The only difference is that yours is larger and more regal-looking.

"I wonder why I have this feather?" you muse aloud. At once, something nags at the back of your mind.

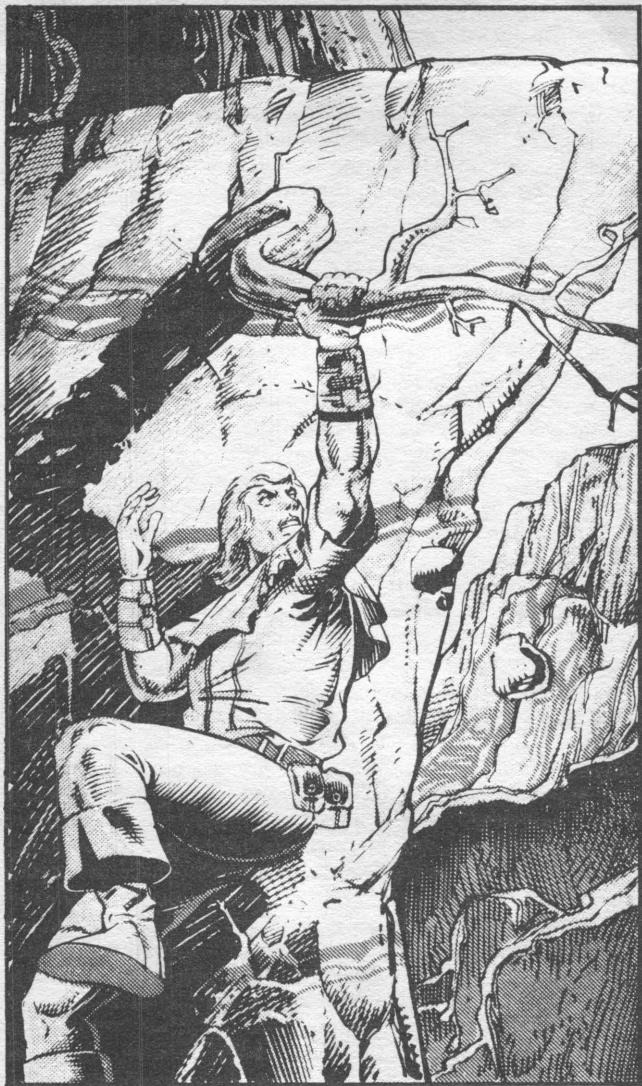
Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **154**. If it's less than 11, turn to **51**.

28

You try to fight Torreth off your back, but without success. He seems glued to your back. You continue to twist and writhe beneath the warrior's weight, seeking the opportune moment to escape, but it never comes. With a vehemence born of hatred, Torreth raises his sword and plunges the blade deep into your back. Someone screams, but you can't tell if it is you or Lorina. Stars burst through your eyes, exploding into tiny pinpoints of light. Then all is dark. You will never find out who you really are. ✠

29

You can't think of anything to stop your slide down the mountainside to your death. Suddenly you see a small bare tree hanging tenaciously to the cliff edge. Desperately you reach out—and grab the tree! Your body tumbles over the edge of the cliff, but you manage to hold onto the tree and keep from falling to the jagged depths below. You rest for a moment to catch your breath, your legs dangling in space.



Suddenly the tree begins to give. You start to pull yourself back up to the cliff edge. You struggle with every ounce of strength you have left. Your head aches, your hands bleed, and your body screams with pain, but you finally pull yourself up onto the ledge and lie for long moments on your belly.

Subtract 10 from your hit point total. If your hit points are 0 or less, you have died from your tumble down the mountain. If you still have hit points left, turn to 153.

30

As soon as you jump into the clearing, the arrows begin to fall around you, as if your attacker knew you were coming. Instinctively you dodge, first right, then left.

A memory of another time, another place, flashes across your mind. You're running through a crowded marketplace, carrying a pouch of some kind, and someone's chasing you. But the memory is gone as quickly as it came.

Add 1 to your memory point total.

Within seconds, you're out of range and you cease your deadly dance. Winded, you crash into the birch wood, then slow down. You hear someone gasping and look up to see Lorina, leaning against a tree. Her eyes are closed as she draws in deep gulps of air.

You examine her closely for the first time. Dressed in a brown tunic, with leggings to match, Lorina could easily blend into any barren landscape. Her long, brown hair, now matted to her finely chiseled face by perspiration, and her warm, brown skin blend with her attire. Girded about her waist is a belt that holds several pouches of various sizes and shapes. Strapped to her right hip is a whip. A mace, partially hidden by her cloak, is tucked neatly behind her belt on her left hip.

Suddenly conscious of your gaze, she opens her eyes and looks at you. Lorina is all warmth and earth . . . until it comes to her eyes. They are as blue and cool as the sky—a gentle, but startling, contrast.

You smile at her. "We made it!"

Lorina smiles back, then quickly sobers. "Hadn't we better get going?" she asks. "Whoever is out there wants you dead, and standing here will help him accomplish that."

"Of course," you reply, your eyes darting back to the clearing from where you came. Taking a cue from your words, Lorina turns and moves north into the trees.

"Hey! Wait for me!" you cry when you realize she's gone, and you hurry after her. Turn to 117.

31

You grab Lorina and throw her against the cliff just as the huge boulder smashes by on the pathway where you were standing. Rocks and smaller boulders hurtle over the cliff edge and continue their descent down the mountainside.

Lorina chokes as dirt and loose rock jarred loose by the tumbling boulder cascade down around you. Dust fills the air. You push Lorina closer against the cliff face as a large rock plunges down and strikes you, bruising your shoulder and knocking you against Lorina. You wince with pain but manage to flatten your body against the cliff.

Finally you feel it's safe to move up the trail to flat ground. There you examine your bruised shoulder and look down at the rockslide that blocks your way back down the mountain.

You bite your lip as pain throbs in your shoulder, then mutter, "Lorina, I think that rockslide was deliberate!"

Lorina nods. Then she inspects your shoulder and wraps it with some gauze from one of the pouches at her waist.

"Someone wants us dead," you continue. You and Lorina look at each other.

Lorina whispers, "Do you suppose it's the same person who shot arrows at us a few days ago?"

You nod. Grabbing Lorina's mace, you grip it tightly and stand up. "I'm going to be ready for him next time, though," you tell her. Together, you and Lorina start up the pathway once more. Your eyes flit from side to side, expecting another ambush at any moment.

Subtract 3 from your hit point total. Turn to 137.

32

Storr stands near the awaiting stake. His eyes, burning with vengeance, eat into you. Suddenly he barks out an order.

"Tie them to the stake!"

Dozens of hands grab at you, pulling at your hair and clothes, scratching your face and arms. Lorina cries out in terror. You try to fight the dwarves off, but the dwarves around you hold you firm. Then suddenly you notice the bird-beast again, circling in the sky above you. Oddly enough, this time it has a companion, another of its kind. But as always, just as you see it, it's gone!

“Burn him! Burn him!” the dwarves cry. They carry you to the stake and dump you in the pile of straw and wood. All around you, torches flare brightly.

You continue to struggle, but four of the dwarves grab you and tie you, struggling, to the stake. Lorina is bound to the other side of the stake, behind you.

Storr climbs up the pile of wood and checks your bonds. Then he looks up at you, his face flushed with triumph. “There, Prince Rudol!” he hisses. “Now you will discover what it’s like to die by fire!” And with that, he leaps down from the pyre and signals the waiting mob.

With vengeful glee, the dwarves set the wood around you ablaze. You struggle with your bonds, but to no avail. Furious, you cry out, “Leave the girl out of this! Your quarrel, though unjust, is with me! She has done nothing!”

You hear Storr through the crackling flames. “That matters not to me, butcher! You killed fifteen of my clan. Do you think I will stop at only two of you? You are but the first to die. We will return from our homes in the mountains with hundreds of dwarves, and we will avenge ourselves on North Keep—that is, if the Dragon Highlords don’t destroy it first!”

The fire begins its slow, murderous climb toward you. The heat from the flames scorches your face. The roar from the fire almost, but not quite, drowns out the roar of the dwarves. With their fists raised above their heads, they seem to beat the air and chant, “Burn! Burn! Burn!”

All around you, flames lick the air. As the heat and smoke assault your face, you start to cough, and the angry mob cheers the fire on. You turn your face away from the flames to avoid the scorching heat, but no matter which way you turn, there’s no relief. Your lips begin to crack as the flames suck the moisture from your body. You rub your scratchy tongue over your dry lips, but it doesn’t help.

Flames lick at your feet, and your hair shrivels from the fire. Suddenly, just when you think you can’t stand it anymore, you feel something tearing at the ropes that bind you to the stake. You look around, but you see nothing but Lorina, choking and praying behind you.

Then, by some unknown power, your bonds fall off!

Roll two dice and add the number to your perception skill score. If the total is 8 or more, turn to **10**. If it’s less than 8, turn to **141**.

Lorina is forgotten as you and Morlan wrestle for the sword. Both of you struggle to your feet, locked in combat. Morlan's sword arm is locked desperately in your right hand. He has your free arm locked in his other hand. You strain against each other for some slight advantage.

Then a thought comes to you. Slowly you allow Morlan to force you down, pretending to sink to your knees in defeat. He almost crows in triumph as he leans over you to apply more pressure. You give a little more and sag to the ground. Sensing your defeat, he relaxes his grip and leans forward even farther—just what you hoped. Suddenly you stand with all the force of your bunched-up legs and throw your head up and back. Morlan is caught off guard as your head slams into his chin. Stunned, he collapses to the ground in a heap. Only slightly shaken yourself, you wrench the sword from his hand and thank whatever gods that may be for your hard head.

A cry brings you quickly to your senses. You turn to find Lorina in serious trouble, but you are so shocked by what you see that you momentarily freeze in your tracks, for the draconians surrounding Lorina have shed their cloaks to reveal wings!

Lorina lashes out desperately with her whip, her back to one of the bogs at the edge of the moor. The draconians prance around her on all fours, using their wings to float about and stir up dirt and dust to blind her. Kapak has recovered and hovers above her, wings outstretched and sword slashing down at her. As she lashes out at one, the others press their advantage. She can't last much longer. You have to help her!

Even as you step toward Lorina, an almost animal howl spins you around. Morlan has regained his feet and glares at you, hatred burning in his eyes. You crouch to await his onslaught but are totally unprepared for what happens. Instead of attacking you, Morlan begins to change before your very eyes! You watch in stunned silence as his features melt away until he no longer looks human! In a mere instant, all that is left of his face is a gaunt, almost skeletal visage with barely enough skin to cover it. Its thin cut of a mouth crooks into a evil grin and its huge, bulbous, almost luminescent eyes glower with feral intensity. Thick folds of pulsating flesh cap its bony skull like an exposed brain.

Astonished, you back up and drop your guard. The shape-

shifting Morlan instantly rushes you, leaving you no time to help Lorina. He deftly steps under the ill-timed blow you aim at him, throws his sinewy arms around your body, and grabs you in a bear hug. Your left arm is pinned tightly to your side. You strain to free your sword arm as Morlan's bear hug brings his grotesque face close. His foul breath almost smothers you as he hisses, "I nearly beat you to death before; I am about to do it again. Only this time I will show no mercy—to you or to your accursed woman!"

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 8 or more, turn to **164**. If it's less than 8, turn to **92**.



34

You try to draw out the memories you know are hiding in the secluded recesses of your mind, but they refuse to come. All you know is that the red-robed man is lying in a heap at your feet. You're certain that you know the man, but you don't know why. Turn to **100**.

35

You hesitate only a moment. Then the quivering spear convinces you. You turn and run, scrambling with Lorina to reach cover.

Suddenly, from behind you, a rough voice shouts, "By Paladine, I will kill you yet, Majin, you murderer!"

Almost immediately, you hear the spear whistling through the air. You try, too late, to dodge it. Its pointed head bites into your flesh, and you stumble to the ground. Subtract 5 from your hit point total.

You hear Lorina scream your name. She turns and rushes back toward you.

"Run!" you manage to gasp. "This isn't your affair!" Your hand gropes to pull the deadly spear from your shoulder. Lorina bends over you, placing her hand on your forehead and

closing her eyes. She begins to mumble words you don't understand, as you slip into unconsciousness. Turn to 55.

36

You and Lorina move swiftly over the rocks, making sure to keep your heads down. Suddenly a small rock dislodges and clinks against the other rocks as it rolls down the mountain. You stop and hold your breath, but the voices continue, drowning out the noise from the rock.

Just when you think you're safe, you step on a small mound of rocks. Your weight is too much for them, and they crumble beneath you, making a loud rumbling sound.

A deep voice cries out, "Who's there?"

Instantly a giant of a figure leaps on top of the boulder beside you. Dressed in a heavy leather jerkin and leather pants, he glares down at you. Three livid scars angle down his cheek and across his mouth, making him appear lipless. His nose bulges from having been broken many times. His eyes hide behind large bushy eyebrows. On his back is a crossbow. In his hand, he wields a sword. You realize instantly that he's the same man you saw at the gate of the village far below.

Mists swirl about his head and feet, making him look like a figure out of a nightmare. Then, from out of the mists behind him, a woman appears—only it's not a woman. Nature has made some kind of horrid mistake, for although it has the upper torso and head of a woman, the rest of it is in the form of a vulture. The birdlike figure hovers wildly above your heads.

"A harpy!" Lorina shouts as she drops to the ground.

"Get her!" the giant cries and leaps off the boulder. "Htrag will finish this one off!" Immediately he lunges at you.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to 91. If it's less than 9, turn to 179.

37

You and Lorina start to run. As the black circle closes about you, Lorina raises her hand. Something smooth and round glitters inside it, reflecting what little light the forest offers. Suddenly the dark shadows recede, apparently repelled by whatever magic Lorina's symbol wields.

You see an opening between the shadows and head toward it. You don't get far before a shadowy figure steps in your path. You try to dodge aside, but the thick undergrowth tangles your

feet, and you fall headlong into the shadow. You scream as cold electricity courses through your body, leaving you weak. Subtract 5 from your hit points total. You barely manage to roll out of its way before it reaches out to touch you again. Your fist tightens on the mace Lorina gave you and as the shadow draws near, you lash out with your weapon!

Roll two dice and add the result to what's left of your fighting skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **23**. If it's less than 9, turn to **138**.

38

Quickly you count at least fifteen dwarves rushing toward you! There are simply too many of them to fight out here in the open. You've got to find some cover. You don't even have time to ponder why they think of you as a "Bloody Prince." Quickly you turn and hurry headlong into the charred remains of Edgemoor. Soot and ash is deep here and puffs out from under you as your feet race along. The dwarves follow you like wolves after their prey, but with their short legs, the soot and ash hamper their running, and some of them begin to fall behind, floundering and gasping in the ash. Nevertheless, the three at the front of the pack manage to stay right with you.

As long as I can stay ahead of them, I might have a chance, you think as you run. Luck is with you, and you manage to keep your lead. In seconds, you find a small, half-melted wall, the remnants of what was once a house. It barely reaches your waist, but it might be tall enough to hold off the three dwarves who come pounding up behind you until you or Lorina can think of something else. One dwarf tries to round the wall to reach you, but you quickly scoop up a handful of ash and throw it in his face. He falls back, choking and wiping his eyes. The other two glower at you speculatively from behind the wall.

One of the dwarves speaks up, stretching on his toes to be heard over the wall. "You'll never get away from us, Rudol!" he hisses, spitting into the black ashes.

You start for just one moment at the name thrown at you. Rudol? First it was "Bloody Prince" and now "Rudol." Isn't that the prince Lorina mentioned? Do they think that I'm this Prince Rudol? If so, why?

Your thoughts are interrupted as suddenly you catch a glimpse of the strange birdlike creature you spotted earlier, hovering above a nearby hill. You turn for just a second to gape

at it, but as you do, it disappears from sight. *What in the name of the Abyss is that thing?* you wonder.

There is no time to finish your thought. Four more dwarves join the first three. The dwarf that spoke earlier snarls, "Rudol, you murderer! You burned half our delegation at the stake when we offered to help against the Dragon Highlords. I know not how fate has put you into our hands, but our vengeance will be swift and sweet. You shall burn like our comrades!" As three more dwarves join the seven already before you, the first dwarf shouts, "Get him!"

A chorus of angry curses rises from the dwarves. Swords and axes slash at you over the wall, pinning you down as several dwarves charge around the wall to surround you.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to 147. If it's less than 10, go to 61.

39

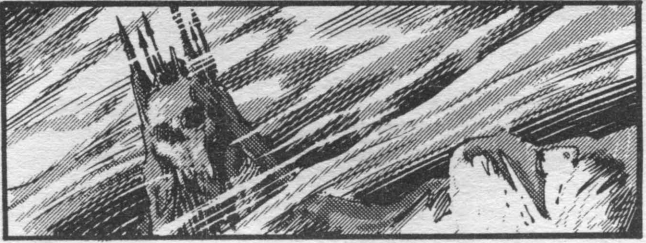
Majin's draconian henchmen close in and surround you. Back to back, you and Lorina make a desperate stand, but there are simply too many of them. Even as you slash one draconian down, another takes its place. Suddenly, with wings flapping and claws scratching, they close the circle and bear you to the floor. Majin's evil laughter echoes through the chamber.

"Take him to the dungeon and lock him up until he decides to give me the ring!" the doppleganger cries. "And take the girl away, too. I'm sure the Highlords will find some use for her. Why, she might even help us show our young prince here the error of his ways."

You struggle, but to no avail. Two giant sivaks twist your arms behind your back and force you out of the chamber. Lorina is dragged behind you by a handful of smaller draconians.

They march you through the castle and down into the dungeons. When you reach the dungeons, you are led off one way and Lorina another. They shove you into a darkened cell, where you are left to ponder your fate—and Lorina's. They may well torture her to force you to relinquish the ring. If they do that, then all is lost, and Nordmaar will fall under the Highlords' shadow at last. You slide down the wall in despair and begin the long wait.

You were so close! Go back to the beginning of the book and try again. ✠



40

You manage to catch a light nap without falling off the pegasus. All the while, Lorina clings tightly to your waist, never daring to open her eyes, especially when the sun peeks over the horizon and lights up the ground flying by beneath you. Already the moors lie far behind you. Ahead loom great, towering cliffs, overshadowed by dark, roiling clouds. In contrast, the grass below blows quietly in the wind. You breathe deeply in the cool morning air and Lorina stirs behind you.

"Lorina?"

"Hmmm? . . ." Lorina mutters.

"Where do you think we're going?"

"I don't know," she mumbles. Then, twisting behind you, she asks, "Do you want me to find out?"

"Can you?" you ask incredulously.

"I think so." You hear her mumble strange, arcane words. All of a sudden, she breaks out into a loud whinny!

"What the—" you start to exclaim, but immediately the pegasus whinnies back, cutting off your words.

For several minutes, Lorina converses with the pegasus in its own language. Finally she clears her throat.

"He says he's taking us to the nearest village. Unfortunately for him, it's directly below the mountain where Drakart lives. He says it's the least he can do for someone who saved his life. Drakart planned to turn him into an undead steed. He's deeply grateful to us."

You nod your head. Lorina snuggles up to your back, sighing deeply. "Jonnn, don't ever take me flying again," she mumbles, swallowing hard. You chuckle.

It's not long before you spot the village in the distance. Soon the pegasus starts his descent. Lorina clutches you tightly,

muttering prayers to her goddess. The pegasus seems to stall in the air momentarily far outside the village, then glides in for a smooth landing.

You help Lorina off the beast and wave good-bye as it takes off and roars off to the south.

"Thank goodness that's over!" Lorina mutters. She plops to the ground and puts her head between her knees.

You look around as you wait patiently for Lorina to regain her composure. Nestled innocently below the cliffs and churning clouds lies a small village surrounded by a high wall. Rounded roof tops peek out above the wall.

You've been watching for several seconds when a large, burly figure steps out through the gate in the wall and runs his palm over a long blade in his hand. Strapped to his back is what appears to be a huge bow, though at this distance, you can't see clearly so you're not certain. His eyes scan the horizon until he looks in your direction. Then he stops for a moment as he stares, apparently straight at you. Suddenly he's gone. Apparently he stepped back through the gate, though you didn't notice. Something about the figure gives you the chills.

Soon Lorina is on her feet and by your side and it's time to decide what to do next. You can enter the village, despite your uneasiness about the figure you saw, or you can bypass the village and head for the cliffs. If you decide to enter the village, turn to **162**. If you decide to investigate the cliffs and search for Drakart's castle, turn to **171**.

41

You just can't bring yourself to spring out of hiding and tackle some unknown, undead monster, especially since you have no weapon. So you sit perfectly still as the creature slowly stalks out of sight. Its hollow voice continues whispering your name until it finally fades into the distant heartbeat that seems to be ever present.

With the creature gone, you step out of hiding. All around you, shadows seem to close in, dark and foreboding.

I'd better get out of here and find Lorina, you think. Careful not to go in the same direction the creature took, you set off to look for a way out.

You look for a long time, but the paths that you follow twist and turn on themselves, never quite leading to the edge of Grendar's Grief.

Hours pass, and still you wander. You notice that a beard has begun to grow on your face, but you ignore it as you search for a way out of the malformed woods. Sometimes your eyes close from sheer exhaustion. But each time you awaken, you find it harder and harder to stand. Your bones ache. Your muscles and vitality seem to sag. If you don't get out soon, you realize, you'll be too tired to move at all. You pick up a stick and lean heavily on it, grateful to take the extra burden off your aching bones.

At last, by some stroke of luck, you see a faint glimmer in the distance. There are trees outlined against the light beyond it. You hurry toward the light as fast as your aching frame will allow, but even as you move toward it, your body gives out, and you collapse to the ground.

Pressing your hands against the earth, you try to push yourself up. Strangely, you just don't have the strength. You rest your head on your hands for a moment, hoping to regain some strength—enough, at least, to get out of this accursed place. But when you lay your head on your hands, you feel something unusual. Your skin feels dry and leathery, like an old boot! You look at your hands and are shocked to see the skin folded over in scores of wrinkles. You press your fingers to your face. It, too, is covered with wrinkles. The beard that you noticed earlier, silvery gray now, hangs long and scraggly down on your chest. You pull a lock of hair from your head and hold it in front of your eyes to examine it. It, too, is silvery gray.

A shudder wracks your body. *I've grown old!* you think in despair. You look to where the light shines into Grendar's Grief, not more than a hundred feet from where you lie, too weak to move. Lorina's warning pops into your head. "Grendar's Grief is a Death Forest," she said. You struggle to rise, but fail. Weak and exhausted, you close your eyes and fall into an eternal sleep—one more victim of this accursed forest! ✕



Htrag pulls you in close again. Tiny sweat beads form on his brow and drip down his cheek, running in small rivulets along the scars angling down across his mouth. "Nice try, whelp!" he sneers, "but you have no idea who you're up against!" He licks the sweat from his missing lips and growls at you. "I want that ring!" he hisses. "You'll never use it to get to Drakart's chamber, because I'll kill you first! Once you're dead, Drakart will elevate me to a powerful position in his new kingdom. I'll make the Dragon Highlords look like gully dwarfs!"

He shoves you away, raises his sword, and lunges.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **24**. If it's less than 9, turn to **173**.

You step into the dim light of the The King's Retreat. Small clusters of customers, mostly dwarves but a few humans, sit at the tables, talking in low, hushed voices. There's something not quite right about the atmosphere of the inn. A dwarven barmaid walks woodenly to a table occupied by a group of apparent ruffians and takes their order, then moves on. No one looks up as you enter.

"I don't like the feel of this," you whisper to Lorina. The buzzing in your head persists.

"It's—it's as if they're not here, even though they are," Lorina replies in hushed tones. She rubs her temples again to soothe her headache.

"Maybe someone at the bar can tell us something," you add. "Besides, I'm starved. I hope they have good food."

You move toward the bar, but Lorina stops you. "Jonn," she says. "I don't have any money. Do you?"

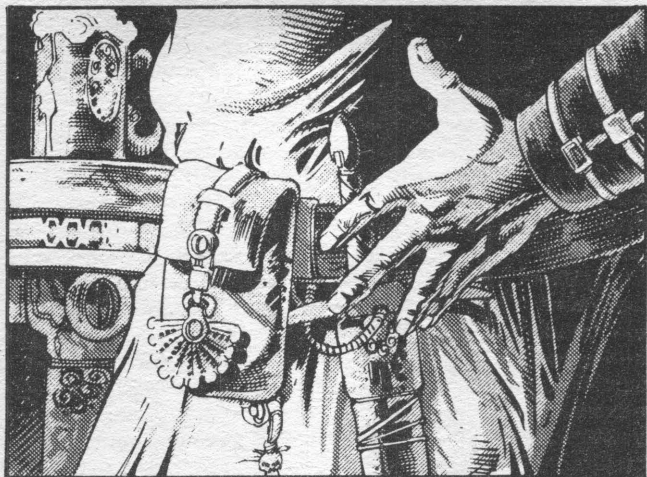
You stop. "No," you say slowly. But then you remember your earlier conversation with Lorina on the pegasus, when she pointed out that you seemed to know how to do what a thief can do. That gives you an idea. Quickly you scan the inn until your eyes come to rest on a man slumped over the bar. At the waist of his long red robe is a fat pouch. There should be plenty of coins in there, and it should be easy enough to lift. . . .

"Stay here," you tell Lorina, motioning her to stay back. "I have an idea."

You glide quickly, silently, toward your victim. When you are a few feet away, you stop suddenly. A cold shiver runs down

your spine. You stare momentarily at the robed man's back, trying to subdue the fear you feel. Then you move in.

Roll two dice and add the result to your stealth skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to 145. If it's less than 10, turn to 134.



44

The castle guards lower their weapons toward you as they hear the shouts from the onrushing prison guards. You grab Lorina and bolt for the courtyard, knowing that your masquerade has been discovered. Pushing through the crowd, you manage to lose the guards—for the time being.

But you weren't counting on the peasants' reaction. Hearing the cry, "Majin!" they begin to converge on you.

You dodge and duck as best as you can, but there are simply too many of them. Before you've gone far, they drag you to the ground. You curl into a ball to try to protect your face from the fingers gouging your flesh and ripping your clothes. You grit your teeth to keep from screaming.

Roll one die and subtract that number from your total.

Suddenly the clawing and scratching stops. Rough hands grab your shoulder and jerk you to your feet. You stand to face the large guard from the prison cell.

"If the prince didn't want you alive," he growls fiercely, "I'd kill you on the spot!"

Lorina stands disheveled between the two robed guards, her hair in wild disarray from being pummeled by the mob.

The guards lead you into the castle. Ascending a staircase, they usher you down several long corridors. At last they come to a stop in front of an ornate double door. They fling the door open and shove you and Lorina into a large room. Then they follow you inside, close the doors, and take position as sentinels, the large guard in the middle and the smaller, robed guards on either side of the door. Once inside the room, the smaller guards pull their robes back from their heads to reveal long reptilian snouts and gleaming yellow draconian eyes.

You tear your eyes from the draconians and stare at the rich velvet furnishings throughout the room. The wall on your right opens onto a balcony that must overlook the courtyard, because you hear market noises below. Then your eyes travel down the aisle on your left to two thrones at the end of the room, and you gape in amazement. Turn to 7.

45

Lorina's scream jolts you back to reality. Gathering your strength and willpower, you close your eyes and mentally push the gyrating images from your mind. You squeeze them farther and farther away, laboring hard, for they refuse to go. The harder you push, the more agitated the bloodshot lines become. Pressure builds inside your head until you feel as if you'll explode. You try harder, willing the wild images from your mind. Then, just when the pressure seems too much to stand, the images explode and melt away. You gasp and sit up.

"Jonn!" Lorina screams again. "Look out!"

The creature's long prehensile tail whips around, careening toward your head. Instinctively you raise your hands to protect your face. Turn to 189.

46

Better to kill him than to give him a chance to kill me later, you think as you glare at your helpless opponent.

"Do it, Majin!" Torreth whispers, provoking you.

You stare at him, your mind filled with questions. *Who is this 'Majin' he raves about? What does he have to do with to me? Could I really be Majin and not Jonn? Why does this warrior*

want Majin—or me—or whoever—dead? Why can't I remember who I am?

Lost in thought, you relax your guard. The sword point moves away from your foe's throat. The momentary lapse is all Torreth needs. Suddenly he pulls a hidden dagger from a sheath behind his neck and lunges at you. You barely have time to knock aside his dagger with your sword. Then, with a quick backhand move, you slash into his head, piercing his skull. He jerks once and lies still.

"Jonnn!" Lorina cries, shocked.

You avert your eyes, but not before you see the cold, hard eyes freeze into the vacant stare of death.

You move over to Lorina. She steps back, her eyes wide with shock as you try to explain your actions.

"I had to do it, Lorina," you say. "If I hadn't killed him, he would have killed me!"

Lorina is silent for several long moments. Then she blinks and lowers her head. "I suppose you're right," she whispers, looking up at you. Then, in a small voice, she says, "We must find out who you are, and soon, before you lose yourself completely." She takes your hand and leads you north toward the towering birch woods.

Subtract 1 from your memory point total and turn to 12.

47

A thought, a memory of some kind, screams for release. You know that you must let it loose, but how? Closing your eyes, you try to clear your mind of all thoughts. *Let it flow!* you tell yourself. *Just let it come!*

All at once, scene after scene flows into your mind. You see yourself standing next to a tall, regal man—this man!—on a balcony, with a cheering crowd below. Then you are hunting with this man. You see yourself sitting on a large, stately chair next to him. Then suddenly the tall, regal man becomes sickly and helpless, thrashing on a bed. Next to him you see a physician, helpless to do anything. "Herbs," the physician whispers to you.

Suddenly your eyes fly open.

"Lorina!" you cry. "I think I—"

But you never finish your sentence. At that moment, three guards burst into the room. You recognize them as the same ones you escaped from in the dungeon!

The large human steps forward and smiles at you contemp-

tuously. "I thought we might find you here!" he chortles. "Prince Rudol has made it clear that no one was allowed in this room—especially you, Majin! Take him!"

With one last look at the fever-ravaged man on the bed, you try to leap away, but it's too late. The two robed draconians scurry across the room and knock you to the floor. Within seconds, they have your arms securely clamped in their scaly claws and force you out the door. Lorina follows, held in the grip of the large guard.

They drag you down the hall until you come to a large, ornate set of double doors. Flinging them open, they push you inside, follow you in, close the doors, and take position as guards against them, the human in the middle and the draconians on either side of the doors. The draconians remove their hoods, revealing long, reptilian snouts and gleaming yellow eyes.

"The prince will see you now," announces the human with mock dignity. The draconians laugh their inhuman, hissing laugh.

Wrenching your eyes from the repulsive figures at the door, you examine the room they have brought you to. You see at a glance that it's lavishly furnished, with rich burgundy velvets. The wall at your right opens up onto a balcony—the same balcony you saw in your recent vision! Below, you hear the voices of the peasants in the courtyard. But when your eyes travel up the aisle on your left to two thrones at the end of the room, you gasp in amazement.

Add 1 to your memory point total. Turn to 7.

48

As you start to slide the shaft of the feather into the lock, your palms begin to sweat. Perspiration beads on your upper lip. You lick at it, unaware of the salty taste. Your hands begin to shake.

"Lorina," you whisper, suddenly afraid. "It's not going to work!" Your hands begin to shake uncontrollably. The feather touches the side of the lock.

An explosion rocks the doorway, and your limbs are torn from your body as you hurtle through the air. Crashing against the far wall, you fall in a heap on the floor of the cave, Lorina beside you. You have only a second of life to whisper, "I'm . . . sorry . . . Lorina." Then everything goes black, and waves of dark death swallow you. ✕

Beyond the birch grove, the land gives way to rolling plains. The sun, burning down from overhead, is approaching the noon position. To the east and north, for as far as you can see, are grassy hills, gently rising and falling, stretching on forever—or so it seems. The Great Moors lie foreboding directly to the west; Grendar's Grief is now behind you. The smoky cloud that had drawn you northward earlier has dissipated to a thin wispy haze that faintly obscures the northern horizon. But you can still see thin fingers of smoke rising from the ground to the sky, their origins covered by the haze.

Lorina darts a quick glance toward the eastern sky, then gazes intently in the direction of the northern haze. You see a visible shudder shoot through her body.

"No," she mumbles. "It can't be! They couldn't be this far north so soon. We would have seen them!" She shakes her head and continues to stare northward.

"What's the matter?" you ask, concerned by her sudden distraction. "Is something wrong?"

"I—I'm not sure, Jonn," she answers, "but I feel an awful dread in the pit of my stomach." She pauses and swallows quickly before she continues. "Near the northern tip of the moors lies a small town called Edgemoor. It is peopled by good men and their families. I had hoped to stop there to find food and shelter on my journey, but now I'm deeply afraid. . . ." She pauses, shuddering again. "I fear," she continues, her voice trembling, "that the haze in the north could be coming from Edgemoor."

She turns suddenly. You see fear and horror in her wide eyes. A knot of dread tightens your own stomach. "Oh, Jonn," she cries, "if the Dragon Highlords have pushed this far north, if the dragons and their draconian minions have raided the town . . ." She grabs your hand and pulls you northward. "Jonn, we've got to help those people! It'll take at least two days to get there. We must hurry!"

The next several hours are arduous. Alternately running, then walking rapidly to preserve your strength, you push on. The rolling plains melt rapidly behind you. You stop and eat only once along the way.

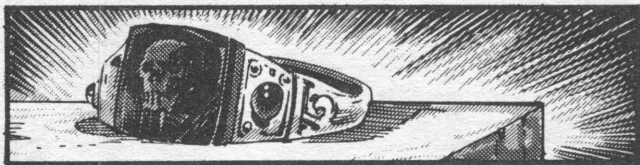
The afternoon trek is even more arduous. The sun beats down mercilessly, and the hills seem interminable. Finally, as the sun begins to set in the west, your bodies reach their limits.

Nearly twenty miles or more of grassland lie behind you. You are both completely exhausted and barely take time to eat a small portion of Lorina's dried jerky before bedding down for the night.

Lorina immediately falls into a deep sleep, but somehow sleep does not come to you quickly. As the darkness gathers, you gaze northward into the smoky haze, your thoughts spinning chaotically through your mind. The urgency to reach Edgemoor has not quieted the questions that remain about your identity.

Who am I? Why do I carry these herbs and this feather? You gaze at the ring on your finger and wonder how it came to be there. The answers must lie in North Keep, but what are they? Surely someone there can tell you who you are, but can you reach that distant place before the Dragonlords raze it to the ground? And where do the herbs and feather fit into all this? Solinari is well overhead before you are able to calm your troubled thoughts. Lunitari breaches the horizon as you drift into sleep.

Mark one day off the time track on your Character Stats Card, then turn to 126.



50

You charge the goblin, swinging Lorina's mace viciously, but you are unfamiliar with the weapon. You miss the goblin entirely and slam into the pegasus, dropping the mace. You fall to the ground, your breath knocked out of you. The goblin shouts for help and jumps on top of you, smashing you soundly in the face. Subtract 3 from your hit point total. Lorina yells and charges out of hiding, throwing her cloak over the goblin's head. Then she picks up her mace and clobbers the flailing creature at the base of its skull. It wobbles for a moment, then sinks to the ground.

You wipe blood from your nose and stand, dazed.

"The pegasus!" Lorina whispers loudly. "Hurry!"

Still recovering from the blow, you stumble to the stakes and begin working them loose. Behind you, the hoarse cries of the goblins tell you they are onto your trick. The net falls off the pegasus just as the goblins reach you. The flying horse spreads its wings and with one mighty tug, it tears the stakes from the ground and sails upward and disappears into the night sky.

You have no time to watch its escape for the goblins are upon you!

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to **79**. If it's less than 10, turn to **174**.

51

The nagging feeling in the back of your mind irritates you. You shake your head and it passes.

"I'm sure someday all this will make sense," you mutter, "but I'm getting a little irritated at not being able to remember who I am."

Lorina caresses your arm. "I'm sure we'll find out soon. Let's get going."

Turn to **135**.

52

Torreth glares up at you, daring you to kill him, but you won't give him that pleasure.

"Lorina!" you call to the cleric, your eyes still riveted on the warrior. "Bind this man!" His eyes widen in surprise, then harden again.

"You'll never get away with it, Majin!" he growls as Lorina secures his hands and feet with cord from one of her pouches. "There will be others to stop you. And by all the gods of good on Krynn, they *will* stop you!"

You ignore his taunts and order Lorina to gather her belongings. When she's ready, you lift the sword from Torreth's neck.

"Thanks for the sword, Torreth." Wiping the blade with the hem of your tunic, you turn to Lorina. "Let's get out of here before he wriggles free." You grab Lorina's arm and, without a backward glance, enter the tall, shimmering birches to the north.

Turn to **12**.

Your mace arcs silently through the air and thuds soundlessly into Drakart's side, throwing him off balance. Unable to cast spells in the silence pervading the room, Drakart flicks a dagger out of his sleeve. He scrambles to his feet and begins to stalk you. Lorina remains huddled on the floor, her fingers caressing her holy symbol.

You dance in and out, feinting with your mace. The only way you can think of to beat Drakart is to club him to death, unless there's something that Lorina can do. But Lorina lies huddled on the floor in pain. Maybe if you can just keep him occupied long enough for Lorina to get to her feet . . .

Drakart lunges at you, and you sidestep. You twist your body and lash out with the mace. Another hit! Drakart leaps back, not slowed at all by your blows, but you're holding him at bay. He'll have to get in close in order to do any real damage with his small dagger. Drakart circles you, ready to strike. That's when you notice the discolored blade of the dagger. Poison!

All Drakart has to do is nick your skin and you're dead. You back away, leading him away from the cleric. *Lorina!* you call silently. *What can we do?*

As if she heard your voice, Lorina slowly struggles to her feet. Drakart closes in on you, his eyes dancing with pleasure as he cuts his dagger through the air in anticipation. As you back up against the bed, Drakart leaps in. You tumble across the bed and roll on the other side. Drakart lunges after you, hampered only a moment by the bed coverings.

Lorina rises and takes a deep breath. Pain and determination fill her eyes as she slowly crosses the room, her holy symbol held firmly in her hand.

You hold your mace up and continue to back away from the lich. If he so much as scratches you, you're dead. You back up against a wall, and Drakart grins. He says something that is lost in the silence of the chamber.

The mage raises his dagger. Sweat glistens on your face as he lunges. You duck to the floor, rolling toward Lorina.

Looking up, you see Lorina's pain-filled face confront Drakart. He soundlessly laughs at her, and she raises her holy symbol. As her eyes pierce the lich, he stops laughing. She advances within inches of him, and he drops his dagger, flings his arms over his head, and backs away. She follows as you rise to your feet. Drakart cowers from Lorina, backing away until

he reaches the bed, where he tumbles onto it. He scrambles across it and leaps off the other side. Suddenly he darts to the locked door, and at his touch it opens.

Drakart stumbles into the outer hall with Lorina following behind, her holy symbol still raised high above her head. He glares at her venomously. Stepping into the hall, you leave the Silence spell behind you.

"I am not finished with Krynn yet!" Drakart hisses. "I will return some day and exact my vengeance on you!" Then he mutters an arcane phrase and disappears.

You stare at the empty hall, amazed. "Where did he go?"

Lorina slumps beside you. "Help me, Jonn," she whispers. You pick her up and start down the hall, away from Drakart's chamber. Suddenly the walls begin to sway; the floor beneath you begins to crumble. A loud rumbling fills the hallway.

"The castle is coming apart!" you cry. You shift Lorina's weight in your arms as bits and pieces of the floor crumble beneath your weight. You leap across a widening crack, Lorina in your arms. The walls start to cave in behind you as you reach the door and press Drakart's ring against the lock. It slides open, and you stumble into the stairwell. Suddenly the ground bulges high, hurling you forward. Losing your footing, you plunge down the stairwell with Lorina, and everything goes black. Turn to 191.

54

You cower behind your upraised hands, realizing that they are little protection from the lashing tail. Suddenly a beam of searing red light sizzles outward from your left hand, striking the beast square in its face and melting the decayed flesh. The acrid stench of burned flesh fills the air. The catoblepas rears in agony as red fire consumes its face, which flakes off in ashes before your eyes. The flame sizzles and crackles its way down the neck until it reaches the body, where it continues to consume the creature.

Lorina rushes to your side and huddles next to you as you both watch in horrified amazement.

When the last of the creature is consumed, the ground below you begins to tremble and shake, and you grab Lorina to keep from falling. The ground pitches and rears as the pool closes. Then all is silent. All you are aware of now is a slight tingle in your left hand.

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to 189. If it's less than 9, turn to 163.

55

Eventually the lights behind your eyes recede. You groan and stretch your aching body. A dull pain throbs in your head as soft fingers gently brush your hair away from your face.

"Jonnn?" The voice is Lorina's. You blink open your eyes.

A small stream of light from high above barely illuminates the dark cell. Four walls, splotted with blackened mold, enclose you. On one wall stands a plain door, devoid of even a handle. Except for a small bed encased in a broken iron frame, the room is empty and unwelcoming.

Sitting up, you moan loudly. "I feel as if I've been to the Abyss and back," you manage to say thickly.

"We might as well be in the Abyss," Lorina says. "At least this is as close as you'll find on Krynn."

You shudder, then ask, "Where are we really?"

Before Lorina can answer, the door is flung open, and three guards stride into the small cell. The faces of two of the guards remain hidden beneath their cloaks. They stay near the door, making odd little hissing noises. The third guard, an exceptionally large and gruesome-looking man with yellowish eyes, strides toward you.

Stopping a few feet away, the huge guard faces you, flicking Lorina's whip in front of your face. His lips curl into a snarl as he speaks. "Prince Rudol requests the pleasure of your company, Majin," he says sarcastically, then starts to laugh. The hooded figures near the door hiss loudly. Turning to Lorina, he bows mockingly. "And you, also, my fine lady witch," he growls.

With fire dancing in her eyes, Lorina glares at the guard. Her hands instinctively go to her pouches, searching for components for a spell, but the pouches are gone. Noting her movement, the guard only laughs all the harder. "You'll have to do without your trinkets, witch," he grunts, advancing toward her with a nasty grin. "The prince doesn't want any unpleasant surprises from you."

Lorina backs away from the guard and bumps into the bed, nearly tripping over it. Then she hurls herself onto the bed and hides her face in the dirty bedclothes. The guard, apparently

satisfied for the moment, turns and starts toward the door, laughing heartily. Just then you see Lorina's hand scoop up something from the floor. She scrambles to her feet once more and moves over to your side.

"I can stop them now, Jonn," she whispers. Secretly she shows you the piece of iron she found by the bed.

"Here, here, we'll have none of that!" the big guard booms. He motions to the two cloaked figures behind him. "You two take Majin. I'll take the girl." The smaller guards move away from the door and advance toward you.

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to **16**. If it's less than 10, turn to **96**.

56

Torreth snarls triumphantly as his sword stroke begins to fall. But the blow never strikes. Instead, an acid hiss and a resounding crack fill the air.

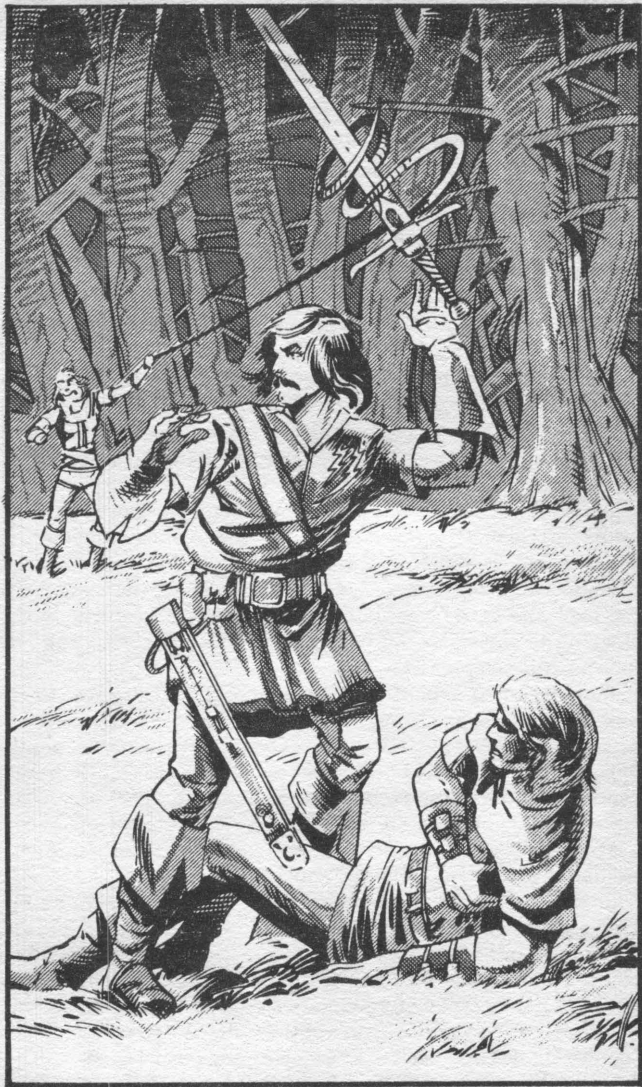
Cursing, Torreth suddenly scuffles away from you, kicking up dust and dirt. You choke as some of it finds its way down your throat. You open your eyes just in time to see Lorina pulling sharply on her whip, yanking Torreth's blade right out of his hand. Catching the sword deftly in her left hand, she hurls it far behind her. Torreth lunges after it, but Lorina cracks her whip once more. This time she catches him on the neck and opens a nasty tear in his flesh. He recoils, cursing her loudly and wiping the blood that trickles from his new wound.

"I suggest you leave while you still can," she admonishes coolly, flicking the tail of the whip in front of him. Her voice, as cold as steel, sends chills through you. You clench your teeth in pain, fascinated by this new side of Lorina.

"You dare ally yourself with this—this murderer?" Torreth sputters, advancing toward the cleric.

She cracks her whip again, scant inches in front of Torreth's face. He jumps back, his hands flying up to protect his eyes. From within her cloak, Lorina quickly pulls out a mace. "I said *leave*," she cries, "before I wrap you in my whip and bludgeon you to death!"

Seeing the hardness in her eyes, Torreth retreats slowly toward the birches to the north, the fight gone out of him. At the edge of the woods, he stops and turns to face you again. "You will not succeed with your evil plans, Majin!" he calls threateningly. "If I don't stop you, someone else will. We know you're



coming." He turns and disappears into the woods. Lorina, firm and unyielding, watches until he's out of sight.

You struggle to sit up, but the pain forces you back down. Lorina hurries to your side.

"Lie still, Jonn," she whispers as she examines your wound. Her eyes reflect fear and concern. She pulls several pouches from her belt and begins tending to your wounds. Within minutes, the pain begins to ease in your side and only a dull ache persists. "There!" she mutters, tenderly patting her handiwork. "That should hold you for a while."

Add 1 to your hit point total.

"We must be on our way," you say.

She nods in agreement. "But first, you must regain some strength. We'll rest for a while in the protection of that stand of birches," she says, pointing to the north. "Do you think you can walk that far?"

You rise unsteadily to your feet. Lorina retrieves the sword she jerked out of the warrior's grip and hands it to you. "At least now you'll have a weapon."

You smile at her halfheartedly. Without another word, she takes your arm, puts it around her shoulder, and leads you into the birches. As you lean against a tree, Lorina gathers some branches and constructs a small lean-to. You crawl inside, biting back the pain from your wound. As Lorina returns to the clearing to cover her old firepit, you close your eyes and fall into a fitful sleep.

Your dreams torment you. Images of Torreth's face, fierce and accusing, burn through the painful red fog of your unconscious mind, alternating with images of Lorina's soft, gentle visage. Above all looms the crest on your ring. Gentle hands reach out of the fog and touch you. Then the images vanish, the pain abates, and you fall into a deep, untroubled sleep.

After some time, you awaken with a start as those same gentle hands shake you none too gently.

"Jonn . . . Jonn!" whispers a voice insistently. "Wake up. We've got to get moving!"

You force open heavy eyelids. Lorina kneels beside you, fear etching hard lines into her soft face. She glances anxiously above her then looks at you again.

You struggle to sit up, aware of the dull ache in your side. "Is something wrong?" you ask, ignoring the pain.

"Yes," she answers. "I'm afraid I've let you sleep too long."

The dragons are broadening their patrols. This morning I saw one not far from here. We have to leave—now!”

You crawl out of the lean-to. Then you notice that the sun is shining warmly, well along its path toward the evening horizon in the west. You must have slept for several hours. At least your side doesn't ache as much as it did earlier. You slowly stand, careful of your wound.

“How—how long have I been asleep?” you ask as Lorina breaks camp and gathers up her belongings.

She pulls a piece of dried jerky from one of her pouches and hands it to you as she answers, “Since yesterday morning, Jonn. We really must go!” She turns quickly and starts off through the birches.

Yesterday morning! You hurry to catch up with her, and together you make your way through the woods.

Mark 1 day off the time track on your Character Stats Card, then turn to 12.

57

Majin's dagger slices through the air, aimed directly at you. You steel yourself for the blow, knowing that your death will foil the Dragonlords' plans.

But someone else apparently knows it, too. A sword blade whistles past your ear—from behind you! You watch in dumbfounded amazement as the large human guard parries the doppelganger's enraged blow and knocks the dagger to the floor. Stunned, Majin stumbles backward, his face contorting in all-consuming rage.

“Remember what our Highlord masters said!” rumbles the human guard as he sheathes his sword. “Killing the prince could spoil our plans—until we have the ring, that is.”

“Yes, I know,” shrieks Majin furiously. “I know.”

He steps back and tries to regain his composure. After a few seconds, he moves in close again. His hot breath washes over you as he clenches his teeth and hisses. “As long as I need the ring, it seems you must live—for now.” Suddenly his face lights up, as though a new idea has occurred to him.

“On the other hand, perhaps the ring will be unnecessary,” he croons. “I thought I needed it to convince the people of North Keep that I am indeed you. As it is, however, I'm finding it rather easy to deceive your people without the ring.” He turns away and moves to the balcony that overlooks the court-

yard. "Granted, it may take longer to set myself up as ruler, and the Dragon Highlords did want to be in control as soon as possible," he continues, "but that's something they'll just have to work around. I promised them Nordmaar, and I'll deliver them Nordmaar. The day will come when I'll rule Nordmaar for them." He suddenly whips around and glares at you. "And when that day comes," he hisses, "you will die!"

Majin motions to the guards. "Take him to the dungeon and do whatever you have to do to get me that ring." His voice drops, and he grins wickedly. "But don't kill him." The human guard and one of the draconians rush you to the door. As they shove you out the door, Majin turns to Lorina and you hear him say, "Now, wench, what use can I find for you?" The door slams shut, but not before you hear Lorina's terrified moan.

You are taken to the dungeon, where daily Majin or one of the draconians comes and tortures you. Occasionally Lorina comes to talk to you, but you're never quite sure if it's her or a dopple-ganger in disguise, so you resist her entreaties. You keep hoping that your resistance will forestall the Dragon Highlords' plans until you can escape.

But your hopes are futile. Eventually the day comes when Nordmaar is conquered by the Dragon Highlords. On that day, Majin comes to your cell and, laughing hideously, puts an end to your hellish imprisonment.

Sorry about that! Go back to the beginning of the book and try again. Better luck next time! ✖

58

You rush headlong into the skeletons, swinging furiously. The skeletons are slow to respond, which gives you the chance to clobber them from behind. You take out nine before they can respond. Then your fighting skill takes over. Swing. Bash. Parry. Block. Jump. Kick. Swing. Turn. But how long can you hold out? As many skeletons as you destroy, more stream through the unseen doors.

Suddenly Lorina calls out from somewhere across the room. "Jonn!" she cries, grunting as she pushes a skeleton away from her. "I think I know where there's a door that your ring will open!"

You twist away from an arching blade, hearing the deadly whoosh by your head. "Where?" you yell back, deflecting a blade with your mace.

Lorina bashes a skeleton over the head with a hand that contains a vial of holy water. Water trickles down the bones, disconnecting each as it passes until the skeleton lies disassembled at her feet. "Take that, vermin!" she cries. Turning, she raises her whip, and holding it between both hands, she thwarts an attack by another skeleton. She yells back at you, "Look over by the far wall. The skeletons are avoiding a large area. It could be an invisible wall." She cracks her whip and beheads the skeleton nearest her.

You look at the place she indicated after clobbering another skeleton. Sure enough, the skeletons seem to skirt the area. You swing at another skeleton. Raising your voice so Lorina can hear, you cry, "I'll meet you there!"

Inch by inch, you fight your way toward the far wall. You can see that Lorina is moving in the same direction. When you get close enough, you grab a skeleton and hurl it toward the space. Just as Lorina suspected, it hits an invisible wall and crumbles to the ground.

Lorina moves in beside you. "I'll hold them off while you find the lock." You nod, dispatching another walking pile of bones. Lorina raises her symbol again and calls on Mishakal's aid. You press yourself against the invisible wall, the ring on your finger pulsing wildly. With the face of the ring, you probe the wall until you hear a soft click. A door opens before you, and you tumble into a dark chamber. Lorina ducks in after you and closes the door.

She sighs and slumps to the floor. "At last!" she sighs.

You close your eyes, waiting for them to adjust from the bright lights to the darkness you find yourself in. As soon as the blinding glare in your eyes subsides, you open them. Turn to 125.

59

Lying on the boggy ground of the moor, you drift in and out of consciousness for an indeterminate time. The cold, mushy earth seeps slowly through your clothes, chilling you to the bone, but you ignore it. Lorina curls close to you. Although her trembling has stopped, her body is tense. Finally she pushes herself to a sitting position.

"I'm sorry for losing control back there," she mumbles, absently smoothing the wrinkles in her tunic. "I ran like a frightened deer, but I was never taught to fight, Jonn. I was only

taught to defend myself. Those—those creatures!” Her face contorts into a mixture of fear and loathing at the thought of her tormentors. “They frightened me like nothing else I’d ever seen.”

You nod and sit up, recalling your own terrible shock when you first saw the draconians. “Don’t let that bother you,” you say consolingly. “If you hadn’t come along when you did, I’d be without an arm right now—and probably dead to boot. You saved us from a tight spot.”

Lorina nods sullenly and breathes a heavy sigh, apparently comforted for the moment. You glance around, trying to get the lay of the land. You notice small, rolling mounds of peat and bog. Occasionally a low tree or two reaches its deformed limbs toward the gloomy sky. The sun doesn’t seem to want to share its warmth with this sodden place, and you don’t blame it.

You stand and pull Lorina to her feet. “If you’re up to it, I think we’d best get out of here. North Keep must still be a few days away.” You beckon her toward the woods.

Lorina pauses. “Uh—Jonn,” she says slowly. You turn toward her. A glint of fear touches her blue eyes. As you step toward her, she continues. “If you don’t mind, I’d rather stay on the moors. I know how to fight the undead.”

You gulp. “Undead? What undead?”

Ignoring the fear in your voice, Lorina says, “That’s probably why we weren’t pursued onto the moors. Anybody in his right mind would stay away from here. Although I might not be very good at fighting live draconians, I’m confident in my ability to make sure the dead remain dead. Besides, traveling on the moors may turn out to be the safest and fastest way to North Keep. We can use the bogs and brush to hide from any passing dragon or draconian patrols.”

Ignoring your misgivings, you accept Lorina’s preference. After all, you tell yourself bravely, what’s the difference between the living and the dead in battle?

You turn and follow Lorina as she begins to make her way carefully through the bogs. The wet, mushy ground seeps through your boots and squishes between your toes. You strain your eyes against the gloom, nervously trying to see if any undead stalk you and cautiously eyeing the damp ground for pot-holes or sinkholes filled with fetid water. When you talk with Lorina, your voices are hushed and whispered. But mostly you hurry along in silence.

"If we're lucky, we're close enough to the edge of the moors to avoid the undead altogether," Lorina whispers once. "They spawn in the heart of the moors and prefer to stay there, since that's where they're strongest."

You journey some hours before anything unusual occurs. Suddenly the ground beneath you seems to be harder and drier. Lorina stops and kneels, examining the earth. "The ground seems firmer here," she says, relief coloring her voice. "We must be closer to the northern edge of the moors than I suspected."

She pulls you forward at a faster pace. You look ahead, straining to see anything that faintly resembles an "edge" to the Great Moors, but all you see are the bogs and mounds stretching out as far as you can see.

"I don't know, Lorina. I don't see any sign of—"

"We've got to be near the border!" Lorina interrupts. "Why else would the ground be more solid?" She rushes forward, only to have the "solid" ground disappear beneath her!

For a split second, you see the alarm on Lorina's face. Her arms flail out desperately. Then she disappears into the ground, and you see only murky water where she once stood.

"Lorinal!" you cry, running toward where you last saw her, but you notice a subtle change in the ground here. Undisturbed ages of decaying matter and debris cover the murky water. The covering is thick enough to appear solid, but as you move, it rolls and humps beneath your feet, the foul-smelling water licking your boots.

Suddenly a hand pops through the debris. Then Lorina's head emerges. "Jonn!" she cries frantically. "Help me!" Once more the water claims her, but you manage to grab her hand before it disappears completely. With a great heave, you pull her out of the water and stumble backward, landing with a squish, Lorina on the peat next to you, half in and half out of the swampy water. Stinking debris covers her face and clothes. She coughs and wheezes, spitting the foul liquid out of her mouth. Then, with your help, she pulls herself onto the bank and falls on her back.

"Th-thanks, Jonn," she manages to whisper. She coughs up more of the putrid liquid and struggles to sit up. Her face has a slight tinge of green to it.

You are just about to reply when the water beside you seems to explode! Turn to 15.



60

By the gods! you think. *Again we're in a quandary. Do we follow Lorina's twig lead or my footprint?* The indentation in the ground must be a footprint. What else could it be? And as far as you can tell, only you and Lorina have been in this forest recently.

"Let's go," you tell Lorina, while pulling her along. "Who else would make that footprint unless it was us?"

You trudge through the brush, brushing aside tree limbs that dangle in your face. All the while, the hollow heartbeat throbs through the trees and reverberates in your ears. Whenever Lorina touches your sleeve to beg you to slow down, you hush her, saying that you're certain the clearing is just a little farther. But after a long while—fifteen minutes? twenty?—you begin to doubt your decision. It took you only seconds to plunge into Grendar's Grief. It surely shouldn't take you forever to get out—should it?

"Jonn?" Lorina's voice is low. You hesitate. "This is the wrong way, isn't it?" You're about to admit it when a loud cackle screeches through the pulsating woods.

"More!" it cries. Its high laugh shivers your spine and freezes your heart. "More guardians for my foresssssst! Come, little ones. Come meet your new friendssssss!" The voice splits into a terrible cacophony of laughter. From out of the woods, shadows, darker than the darkest abyss, spill forth and begin to encircle you.

"Lorina!" you mutter under your breath. "What—what are those?"

Lorina grips your arm tightly, her hand fumbling with something at her waist. "Those are shadows of the souls of men! They—they've come to make us one of them."

"I can barely see them!" you wail. All around you, the dark, misshapen forest grows black.

"They are the ink in the darkness around us. . . . Ah!" Quickly she pulls something from her belt. Handing you her mace, she says, "On the count of three, I want you to run through the hole I'm going to try to make in their circle. If any get too close, hit them with the mace. One . . . two . . .

"Hey, wait a minute!" you cry. You don't know the first thing about maces.

"*Three!*" she shouts. You're going to have to learn fast.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **69**. If it's less than 9, turn to **37**.

61

The wall between you and the dwarves acts as a shield and protects you from most of them. But some of the dwarves rush around the wall to attack you. With a flick of your hand, you wipe a thick cloud of soot off the melted wall and into one attacking dwarf's face. He falls back, choking into his beard, but that doesn't stop the rest. Before you can grab another handful of soot, two more dwarves rush you, one thrusting at you with his spear, the other hacking at you with his ax.

Dodging the spear, you manage to parry the ax blow. Soon more and more of the dwarves surge around the wall, surrounding you. Although you are more nimble than they are, they are doggedly determined.

You dance back and forth in the ashes, trying to parry the weapons that slash at you. But there are just too many of them. In minutes, you are too weak to keep your guard up. The dwarves shout with glee and press in with renewed vigor. One lunges under your blade and slashes at your sword arm. Unable to parry the blow, you cry out as he opens a large gash in your arm. Subtract 3 from your hit point total. You drop your sword and are soon overcome by the rest of the dwarves. Tying your hands behind your back, they lead you out of the town and to their leader, who glares at you as he flashes a twisted smile. Turn to **161**.

62

You pause as you look to the east. Somehow it seems more promising than the other directions.

"I think I'll go east," you declare.

Lorina's blue eyes suddenly cloud over. "I don't think you want to go there, Jonn," she says, a frown creasing her brow. "The only place to the east is Valkinord, and I just came from there. It is—it *was*—my home. Now the dragons and their Highlords have taken it over." She pauses as she momentarily considers her next words, then continues, "Why don't you come with me to North Keep? I was one of the fortunate to escape the invasion of my homeland. Now I'm heading north to warn the people up there of the invasion of the dragons. I could use some company."

Shaking your head, you reply, "No. I feel I must go east. But thanks for the offer."

Lorina bites her lip. Then, sighing, she replies, "Then go with Mishakal's blessing." She gathers her belongings, then turns to leave. Pausing, she looks at you, her eyes pleading you to come with her. You shake your head, and she hurries off.

Minutes later, you head eastward. The trek over the rolling plains is fairly easy. It's not until the next morning, though, that you run into trouble. Before you can even open your eyes to the morning sun, great talons pluck you from the ground. Your eyes fly open, and you find yourself soaring above the grassy plains—in the claws of a huge dragon!

It takes the dragon only a few hours to travel what would have been a full day's journey for you. Soon you see the city of Valkinord far below. The dragon circles down and dumps you at the feet of two large reptilian-looking creatures. Your hands are bound instantly, and they lead you to a dungeon that smells of dead fish, where they leave you to await your fate.

It looks as if you've made a bad decision right off the bat! Go back to the beginning and try again! ✖

63

Stretching your arms wide, you open your eyes. Low on the mountains, the clouds continue to roil in turbulence. You notice that the buzzing sound in your head has stopped as you sit up. Lorina stretches lazily beside you, then blinks her eyes against the afternoon sun.

"Jonn?" she mutters. "What happened?" She sits up suddenly, remembering.

You glance at the peaceful-looking village below the stormy clouds. "The village is under a spell of some kind," you reply. "We almost fell under its enchantment."

Lorina gulps and shakes her head. "What am I going to do now?" she asks as she stares at the village. "I was planning to warn the hill dwarves of the invasion."

You smile sympathetically. "I'm sure there are other dwarves around here that you can talk to," you reply, hoping to cheer her up.

She sighs. "You're probably right," she replies. Then she looks up the mountain and the strange clouds. "Drakart," she mutters, shuddering. "He's the cause of it." She glances at you. "Are you sure you want to go up there?"

"Is that where his castle is?" you ask, following her gaze.

Lorina nods. "Where else?"

"Then that's where I must go."

"I wish I could talk you out of it," Lorina says.

You sigh. "So do I, Lorina. But I have to go there. I've got some herbs and a feather, but I don't know what they do. And I've got a ring—his ring—that keeps fading in and out. For some reason, I feel that once I find out why I have these, then I'll find out who I am!"

"I hope you're right," Lorina answers. "It just seems so dangerous."

You stand and help Lorina to her feet. The two of you plod through the grassland until you come to the base of the craggy mountain. Up close, it looks far more formidable than it seemed from a distance. Turn to 115.

64

You turn away from Morlan's body as Lorina screams again. Quickly you see that she is in dire straits.

Kapak hovers above her as Lorina tries to keep the small draconians at bay with mace and whip. She lashes upward at Kapak, who simply lets the lash wrap around its body, then plummets down at her. The smaller draconians dart in immediately and wrestle her to the ground. Kapak lands upright, astride her prone body.

Lorina twists in their clutches, her whip hand weighed down by one draconian, the arm with the mace held by the other. Kapak pulls out a dagger and licks the blade, drooling profusely. Drops of spittle drip onto Lorina's clothes and burn small holes in the fabric. It's acid!

The fear in Lorina's eyes spurs your body forward. Bellowing loudly, you charge toward the draconians. Kapak whirls to

face you and snarls something in draconian. One of the smaller draconians leaps to its feet and attacks you, sword in hand. Unfortunately for Kapak, this leaves Lorina's mace arm free.

Lorina is quick to take advantage, slamming her mace into the head of the second draconian, still holding her down. Surprised, the creature curses and lets go. Kapak turns to see what has happened just as Lorina swings her mace in a long arc into the larger draconian's knees. Kapak shrieks in agony and falls, howling. Lorina struggles to get to her feet, but the draconian she hit with her mace grabs her legs and she falls to the ground with a cry, the draconian on her back.

Hearing Kapak's howl, the draconian charging you slides to a stop and spins to help Kapak. You charge, plant yourself quickly, and swing your sword. The creature doesn't even feel the blade slice through its neck. Its head flies off its shoulders, and the body tumbles to the ground.

You leap over the corpse and race toward Lorina. Kapak is trying to scramble to its feet, hissing venomously. The other draconian has Lorina by the hair, pulling her head back cruelly, its dagger held in its claws. You charge by Kapak into the second draconian. The draconian holding Lorina looks up in surprise just as you slam into it. The force of your charge knocks both of you to the ground on either side of the girl.

Kapak snarls a command, and the small draconian leaps to its feet and helps its leader stand. But Lorina is now on her feet, weapons held ready. You scramble upright, ready to continue the battle, but the draconians hesitate. Has the fight gone out of them?

You never find out. Suddenly you are yanked backward, toward the moors! Lorina has grabbed your arm and is pulling you toward the bogs! Confused, you can only follow her lead. In seconds, your feet are pounding through the boggy peat. You stumble for a few steps, then recover your pace. In front of you, Lorina races madly, as if something from the Abyss were chasing her. You hurry to catch up with her, to stop her headlong dash through the bogs. Suddenly she trips and falls to the soft ground. Fast on her heels, you trip over her and land with a squishy thud beyond her.

Lying in the cool bog, you try to catch your breath, listening intently for some sound that the draconians might be following. You hear nothing. You stand slowly and look about, but they are nowhere to be seen. Satisfied, you collapse to the

ground once more. Next to you, with her face pressed to the cool earth, is Lorina. Her breathing is irregular and comes in shuddering gasps. Her eyes are closed, and tears course down her muddied cheeks. She is trembling violently. Crawling over to her, you put your arms around her trembling body and pull her close. Then, curling up next to her, you close your eyes, relax your body—and think.

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **157**. If it is less than 11, turn to **25**.

65

You manage to make your way through the peasant crowd without being noticed by the guards in the courtyard. When you reach the castle, you turn away from the sentinels posted at the front gate and hurry along the outside wall until you round a corner and are out of sight of the crowd.

Running in a low crouch, you follow the stone wall, looking for a side entrance that leads into the castle.

"Jonn!" Lorina hisses suddenly. "Over here!"

Lorina stands beside a small, sturdy door. Just then a guard in the courtyard yells, "Majin and the girl escaped! Find them!" Immediately there's a roar from the crowd.

This is no time to hesitate, you decide. You burst through the small door, only to stumble over pots and pans littering the floor. You land with a thud in the middle of a tiny, unkempt room. A brown and black cat hisses and spits at you. Then it takes a swipe at your face and leaps into the lap of an old woman seated at a table. Her face, wrinkled with age, stares straight ahead, and her eyes are wide with fear.

She pulls the cat against her chest and cries, "Who's there?" She stares blankly straight ahead, listening to, but apparently not seeing, your every move. She's blind.

Lorina pulls the door closed, then says, "Please don't give us away. They want to kill us."

Hearing Lorina's soft voice, the fear leaves the woman's face. Repeating her demand, she asks, "Who's there?"

Lorina motions you to stand up. She goes over to the woman and replies, "I am Lorina of Valkinord. My friend, the one who just fell into your pots, is called Jonn."

The woman's eyes suddenly light up and she releases the cat. She tries to stand, but she's too feeble.

"Jonnn?" she cries. "Jonnn, is that really you? My child, have you come back to me?"

You pull your foot out of a pot and stand up. "I—I'm here," you manage to say after casting a puzzled glance at Lorina, "but I don't know if I'm your child."

"Of course you're not!" she says with a soft laugh. "But I tended you as though you were. Come. Let me touch you."

You sigh with relief and make your way over to the woman. With trembling hands, she reaches out and catches yours. Rubbing her dry, scaly fingers over your hands and face, she stops when she comes to the ring on your finger. Gently caressing it, she breaks out into a sob.

"Jonnn!" she sobs. "Jonnn, I knew you'd come back. I knew he was an imposter. But nobody listens to me."

Indescribable relief overwhelms you, and you fall to your knees before this feeble old matron. She can tell you who you are! Just as you open your mouth to ask a stream of questions, someone pounds on the door.

"Magda! Open up!" a gruff voice calls. "We're looking for Majin." He pounds again, louder this time. "Open up, Magda!"

Lorina glances at you and then at Magda. The old woman, realizing your danger, whispers, "Go through my closet door. There's a secret door in the back wall that leads into the castle." She squeezes your hand one more time. "I knew someday you'd come back, Jonnn. Now, go!"

Quickly you and Lorina dart into the closet and close the door behind you. A split second later, you hear the sound of the outer door bursting open.

"Magda, you're safe!" the gruff voice exclaims.

"Of course I am, you big oaf!" Magda's voice replies.

"Have you seen Majin?"

"That's a pretty silly question to ask a blind woman, Gerral. Of course I haven't seen Majin."

As you push through a door in the back of the closet, the voices trail off. Turn to 166.

66

You see a large, musty chamber filled with frayed, decaying tapestries. A large four-poster bed with black and yellow silk coverings drawn meticulously over a flat mattress dominates the wall directly in front of you. A layer of dust on the coverings suggests that the bed hasn't been used for years. To the

left crackles a fire, which strangely adds no heat to the room. To the right sits Drakart himself.

"I've been waiting for you," he purrs in a hollow voice. He stands behind a desk strewn with tomes, wearing a plain black silk robe. His face is hidden behind the mask of an ashen skull. A pale yellow scarf flows down his back. "I doubted that my skeletons would destroy you, but they were an interesting diversion, don't you think?" Slowly he moves out from behind the desk.

Lorina enters behind you. The door closes with an almost imperceptible click as it locks.

Drakart pads across the room to the fire, where he idly coaxes it into a roaring flame. "It would seem you're at a disadvantage here," he muses from behind his mask.

"What do you mean?" you return, keeping your eyes on him.

"Well," he chuckles hollowly, "it seems that I know why you're here." He pauses, turning his hollow mask eyes to you, then continues. "And you don't."

You take a step toward him, then stop. "How do you know that?" you ask.

"It's quite simple," he continues. "You have my ring. I have a viewing stone that follows that ring wherever it may be. I see and hear everything you say and do. You are here only because you feel somehow you should be. You don't know why." His hollow voice mocks you as he talks. "But since you've been kind enough to come to my humble home with my ring, I'll strike a bargain with you."

You set your teeth, not trusting this skull-clad madman.

He continues. "You give me my ring . . . peacefully, and I'll let you go . . . peacefully."

Lorina whispers behind you, "Don't do it, Jonn! There's some reason he needs that ring!"

Drakart stands erect and snarls angrily. "By Chemosh!" he cries. "You will shut your mouth, pathetic cleric! You are lucky to be alive and standing here in my hallowed chambers at all. Since Wyrllish, I have not set eyes on another cleric whom I allowed to live, and I've sworn never to do so again. You are alive here only by my good humor!"

"Wyrllish?" she asks, trying to control her trembling voice, meanwhile pumping Drakart for information. "But if Krynn's history books are correct, Wyrllish was the cleric that worked closely with you in turning the good dragon eggs into dracon-

ians during the War of the Lance! You couldn't have done it without him!" Lorina cries, startled at the man's hatred. "How is it you hate him—hate all clerics—so?"

Drakart stands silent for just a second. Then, with a shriek of rage, he whips his mask off his face.

Lorina gasps, and her face goes pallid.

"Because this is what that pathetic fool did to me!" he yells, surging forward. You are horrified by what you see. Where once a man's face was, you see only decayed flesh. Teeth protrude sharply from a lipless mouth. The nose, long gone, is a mere hole in the grotesque face. But the most haunting of all are his eyes. Red, glowing embers burn within empty sockets. You turn quickly away.

"A lich!" Lorina breathes, her mouth barely forming the words.

Drakart laughs. "Yes, a lich. When the Queen of Darkness was banished from this world twenty-five years ago, she left me in the tunnels below Neraka with that fool cleric, Wyrllish. The walls tumbled down on us, and I was killed. However, Wyrllish, with no help from the queen, took it upon himself to resurrect me. This is the result. I am neither dead nor alive." Drakart stops for a moment before he continues, his voice lowered to a fierce whisper. "I killed Wyrllish for his stupidity!"

Calming himself, Drakart stops and breathes deeply. "Now I serve Chemosh, the god of the undead. It was Chemosh who allowed Wyrllish to resurrect me. Chemosh knows my powers, wants my powers." His twisted smile makes you shiver. "Together we will defeat the Queen of Darkness so that Chemosh rules all and I rule Krynn!" He looks at you intently. "But not until I get my ring back."

"You're wrong!" Lorina cries, starting forward. Drakart glares at her. Under her breath, she mutters, "Jonnn, do something. Otherwise he'll kill us!"

"What am I supposed to do?" you ask. Everything you have done up to this point seems to indicate that your business is here with Drakart. But what must you do?

"I don't know," Lorina whispers back. "Think!" Then she raises her voice again. "You're wrong, Drakart!" You see her hands grip the symbol she used to destroy the skeletons in the room below. "Chemosh knows you only as a fool, as was your companion, Wyrllish. He only plays with you."

Drakart trembles with fury. "That's quite enough, cleric! I

will wrest your mind from you as I did from that bumbling mage who gave you my ring in the first place—as I did the whole village that housed the imbecile!”

Your mind begins to reel at the mention of the mage. Thoughts tumble through your head. You close your eyes. You know your memory is right there where you can grasp it, if only you can make the connection!

Look at your memory point total. If you have 4 or more memory points, turn to **149**. If you have less than 4 memory points, turn to **112**.



67

Determined to see if your ring contains some sort of dweomer, you clench your fist and shake the ring in the beast's face. It screeches and writhes before you. Suddenly, armed with new courage, you step forward. The monster wails again, then sinks back into the water, its head and neck undulating back and forth as it descends.

Now that the monster is gone, the ring no longer glows. Distant memories tickle the corner of your mind. Closing your eyes, you relax, trying to help the memories come forward.

As if begging to come forth, clipped scenes flash in and out of your mind. A man, much like you only older, proudly presents a younger version of you with a ring similar to the one you now wear. As you put the ring on, you can barely contain the excitement you feel. Later, grown into a young man, you see yourself wielding the ring against a host of skeletons. Still later, at a feast of some kind, you are presented before a hundred score of people. The ring is raised in recognition of . . .

Suddenly the visions stop as quickly as they came. Your eyes fly open, and you shake your head clear as you wonder what the visions mean. Someday you know you'll remember. You must! And soon!

Turning slowly, you walk to where Lorina is beginning to stir, struggling to shake off the effects of the blow from the catoblepas. Add 1 to your memory point total. Turn to **136**.

Some undefinable pride and anger wells up inside you. You won't run from this man! You will stand and fight!

Quickly you grab the spear from the ground, just as the swordsman strikes. Holding the spear firmly, you raise it in time to ward off his first blow. Hardened steel and spear meet with a rattling clash. Not surprisingly, the steel proves the stronger, and your spear snaps at the force of the blow. Quickly you toss the useless bottom half of the spear aside as Torreth grins in anticipation. He swiftly raises his sword and brings it down again. You manage to parry his assault with the short top half of your spear and push him away from you.

Torreth eyes you. Taking in your shabby appearance and puny weapon, he laughs disdainfully. "You are doomed, Majin! You will never take Jonn's place now!" He growls and begins circling you, looking for an opening. You follow him, your spear ready to thrust through any opening. Suddenly, like a cat, he lunges at you.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to **139**. If it is less than 10, turn to **128**.

As you begin to run, the shadows advance toward you. Suddenly Lorina raises a round glistening object in the air. The meager light reflects from it. Immediately the shadows retreat, repelled by the magic in the symbol. You see an opening in the inky black shadows and run toward it with Lorina following. She continues to hold the symbol high above her head. The forest sparks with tension. The dying heart beat pounds with excitement as you run.

Then, with no warning, a shadowy figure steps in your way. You twist with catlike agility to avoid bumping into the thing, then whirl and swing the mace. The weapon slams into the creature's chest. Though it utters no sound, you feel its agony echoing in the air.

"Lorina!" you shout. You hear footfalls behind you as she rushes to catch up, and you shout, "Careful!"

She hears your shout and twists around in time to flash her warding device at the creature you just struck. It writhes in agony and melts into the shadows. Grabbing your hand, Lorina pulls you through the darkened woods.



The cackling voice echoes once more. "Glide, my little ones!" it screeches, laughing. "Make these intruders one of you!"

"It's the voice of Grendar," Lorina manages to gasp. You nod your head and squeeze her hand. Together you manage to evade the shadows that pursue you, Lorina turning them with her warding symbol, you bashing any that get by her.

The unholy laughter turns to rage, and you realize you are nearing the edge of Grendar's Grief. "Stop!" it rants. "No one escapes my forest! Stop!" The voice shrieks pitifully and dies in the distance.

Suddenly you burst out of the treeline into the open. You are free, at last, of Grendar's Grief!

You emerge into the darkness of night. Overhead, two of Krynn's three moons shine brightly over the Great Moors. Lorina collapses to the ground, and you follow, gulping down the stale moorish air and relishing every bit of it.

Before long, your breathing slows again and you sit up. For some reason, the fingers on your left hand begin to tingle. Absentmindedly you scratch them, but the tingling persists. You ignore it and look out over the Great Moors.

Your heart sinks. Even in the dark, you can feel the bleakness that spawns from the barren land. Far in the distance roil the red, billowing clouds you saw earlier. Lorina sighs.

"From one evil to another," she whispers, and you shudder. Turn to 170.

70

You dodge to the side to avoid the plummeting boulder, but you're too slow. It grazes your head, knocking you to the ground. Stars burst in your eyes. Somewhere Lorina cries out, but her voice sounds muffled. Dirt and debris cascade down around you, covering your inert body until it lies buried beneath a thick layer of rock. Somewhere above you, a high, maniacal laugh sounds as death claims you.

So close yet so far! Go back to the beginning of the book and try again. Better luck next time! ✚

71

You continue to slash at the undead catoblepas. Either it dies now, or you and Lorina die. Just when you think you can't dodge its lashing tail or swing one more time, the creature rears its now almost skeletal head and roars loud enough to

wake the dead. Its remaining eye spurts out of its socket and falls at your feet.

The blinded creature shakes its head from side to side and wails piteously. Sightlessly, harmlessly, it flails its tail. Then, with a final roar, it crashes down into the mire from where it came, rolls lifelessly onto its side, and sinks into the swamp.

Gasping and retching from the exertion and the stench, you collapse to the ground. Turn to 136.

72

You look where Lorina is pointing. In the distance, barely discernible, you see the outline of a city.

"North Keep," Lorina whispers.

The name sends chills down your spine, knowing that the answer to your identity may lie in that city. You turn away and thoughtfully resume camp preparations for the night. You feel certain that North Keep will be the end of your quest. But will that quest end with the secret of your identity or your death? Only tomorrow will tell.

Lying on the ground, thinking about tomorrow, you finally drift off to sleep. Mark off 1 day on the time track on your Character Stats Card.

Your sleep is a troubled one, however. You seem to toss and turn endlessly. Visions of your face, suddenly that of Majin yet somehow remaining yours, taunt you. Finally Majin takes over your dream completely. His face contorts and twists into an evil grin. His high, maniacal laughter shrieks in your ears, sending chills through your soul. Finally all you see is his huge maw, opening up to devour you, to crush you in his powerful jaws.

You sit bolt upright. Suddenly something dark and rancid-smelling descends over your head, and you cry out. Is this real, or merely part of your dream? Before you can tell, a powerful blow strikes your head, and you are knocked into oblivion. Turn to 55.

73

Your blow connects, and you knock the goblin's sword out of its hand. It rushes you, but you sidestep it. Ducking its lunge, you twist under its arms and come up behind the creature.

With the goblin's back to you, you cry out, "Hah!" and crush its skull with the mace. A shiver courses through you, and an

odd feeling, as if you've fought like this before, tugs at the back of your memory.

The goblin gasps and falls, blood trickling from its mouth. You stare for one split second at the dead goblin. It seemed too easy! But before you can think more about it, another goblin attacks, and you turn around and swing.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is less than 9, turn to 178. If it's 9 or more, repeat this section. When you have repeated this section a total of three times, turn to 111.

74

The buzzing ceases, and your thoughts grow calm. You open your eyes. The snarl on Prince Rudol's face makes you cringe. The swords pressed against your ribs are persuasive. Toying with the ring, you make a difficult decision.

Slowly you pull the ring off your finger. It isn't doing you any good. If it can save your life, you're better off without it.

"No, Jonn!" Lorina cries. At that, the human guard grunts a brief command. One of the draconians turns and slaps Lorina hard across the face with the flat side of its claw. She falls into a heap on the stone floor.

As soon as you have worked the ring loose, Prince Rudol snatches it out of your hand. "Now the change is complete!" he cries in triumph. With a last venomous look at you, he commands the guards: "Kill him!"

You choke in agony as the guards plunge their swords through your flesh. Spine, sinew, nerve, and will are torn asunder, and you fall to the ground. As your already limp head slams to the floor, a brief explosion of light is the last thing you see before the eternal blackness of death envelops you.

Go back to the beginning of the book and try again. Better luck next time! ✕

75

You are momentarily taken aback as you watch Torreth struggle with the cape. Then the whip strapped to Lorina's belt gives you an idea. You snatch it from her side and dart toward the thrashing warrior. You uncoil the whip and wrap it around him again and again. Once he is bound reasonably securely, you kick the sword from his trussed-up hand and give him a hard shove. He thumps unceremoniously to the ground.

"There!" you exhale as you pick up the sword. "That ought to hold him for a while." You walk back to Lorina, massaging your bruised body.

"Thanks," you say. "I thought I was a dead man there."

"I guess that's two you owe me." She laughs at your baffled expression. "I've saved your life twice now, Jonn. You are indebted to me." She rummages through a large pouch at her belt. Pulling out some silken cord, she hands it to you and says, "The first thing you can do is bind this man and retrieve my whip."

You cast a dubious glance at the still struggling warrior. Then you take the cord and proceed to bind Torreth's legs. You flop him over onto his stomach and unwind the whip. Finally you secure his hands behind his back.

Wiping your hands on your pants, you say, "We'd best be going." Stooping to help Lorina gather the rest of her belongings, you add, "He'll get free from those cords eventually, but we'll be well away from here."

Lorina gathers the eating utensils and puts them in a small pack. Then, after strapping her small horseman's mace to her belt, she heads back toward Torreth, struggling to free his head of the cloak. You catch her by the hand.

"My cloak!" she exclaims.

"Leave it," you advise. "Let's not push our luck."

She looks wistfully at her cloak and sighs. Then she turns away and starts north into the grove of tall birch trees, with you right at her heels. Turn to 12.

76

Once more Htrag pulls you in close. His eyes, nearly hidden by bushy brows, flare with anger. "Do you think you can pull that trick a third time?" he yells at you. In the distance, Lorina's whip cracks and the harpy screeches. Htrag continues, his voice venomous, "You are a fool to fight me, and a fool to think that the pitiable herbs you carry will destroy Drakart! He will rule Krynn and all the pathetic creatures living here! Prepare to die!"

He shoves you away from him. You stumble, at your limit of endurance, and fall to the ground. Htrag laughs evilly, and a wicked gleam lights his eyes. He raises his sword. You see bright metal glinting, streaming down at you. You close your eyes and wait for death.

Lorina's whip cracks again, only this time the harpy is silent. Instead, powerful oaths stream from your assailant's mouth. You look up in time to see Lorina's whip wrap itself around Htrag's throat and pull him back.

Now's my chance, you think, while he still thinks I'm down! Wrapping your fingers tightly around your mace, you take a deep breath and leap into the air.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 8 or more, turn to **165**. If it's less than 8, turn to **3**.



77

Almost as quickly as Lorina yells for you to run, you are on your feet, but your body, still sore from last night's beating, protests and you fall.

A volley of arrows showers around you. Luckily only one grazes your right arm. You leap to your feet. Lorina has already concealed herself in the far western edge of Grendar's Grief as you stagger after her.

Suddenly you feel drowsy. You look among the deformed trees to see Lorina offering you frantic encouragement. But she starts spinning. The woods around her begin to spin, then tip precariously. Soon the ground rushes up to meet you. You push it away, trying desperately to keep moving, but to no avail. You stumble to the ground.

You aren't far from Grendar's Grief, but it seems to be moving away from you rapidly. You hear Lorina calling your name, but she seems so far away. Suddenly someone grabs you under your arms and hoists you up. You're surprised to look into Lorina's frightened face. She says something . . . your name? The words are faint and barely reach your ears. When Lorina realizes you aren't responding, she throws your arm around her shoulders and pulls you into the shadowy recesses of a twisted stand of trees.

You smile weakly at her, then close your eyes.

"Poisoned!" is the last thing you hear her say as the poison takes hold of your heart and stops the lifeblood from coursing

through your body. Death takes you before you can even begin your search for your identity. Go back to the beginning of the book and start over. ✕

78

You glance idly at the feather Lorina handed you, then toss it away. "I wonder what kind of creature that was?" you ask, pulling Lorina to her feet.

"I don't know," she replies, "but whatever it was, I'm certainly grateful that it showed up when it did!"

"So am I," you reply. You pull Lorina forward. "Come on," you urge her. "We've got to get to North Keep."

You continue northward until the evening sun descends beyond the western horizon, blanketing Nordmaar in shadowy obscurity—a shadow much like that covering your mind. Crickets chirp as you crest a rolling hill, and you decide to camp near a small thicket of trees.

While you prepare for the night, Lorina looks out over the northern horizon. Suddenly she gasps. Turning, she calls, "Jonk, come here and look!" Turn to 72.

79

With a feral look on its hideous face, the first goblin to reach you swings its sword in a vicious arc. You dodge aside easily, then swing the mace.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to 73. If its less than 9, turn to 178.

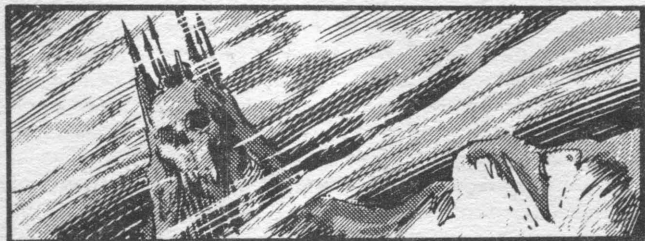
80

Lorina's warning cry about the creature's eye draws you to it like a magnet. Involuntarily your eyes lock onto the creature's single bloodshot eye. Maggots and worms squirm out of the empty socket next to it and swarm down its long, hoglike nose, disappearing beneath one of the creature's tusks and into its mouth. The monster's head, too heavy for its thin neck, sways just above the ground before you, its one bloodshot eye holding you riveted in place.

Suddenly the veins in that eye begin to swirl and dance, until your vision is enveloped by them. The dancing, swirling lines seem to capture you as you feel the moving, swaying motion permeate your body.

Soon the rhythm picks up, and the gyrating veins flutter un-

controllably. They increase their motion until you find yourself gasping. You press your hands to your head, but the deadly vision continues its mad whirl. You hurl yourself to the ground, unable to control the wildness unleashed inside you. All thought of Lorina or Majin or whoever you might be is gone, undone by the mad energy screaming inside your head. Finally the dancing reaches a frenetic climax—and explodes. The blood in your head boils, and you die, caught in the deadly gaze of the catoblepas. ☿



81

The blow from the man who claims to be Prince Rudol clears your head and focuses your thoughts. Like a prisoner suddenly set free, your past floods over you. You see yourself for who you really are: Prince Rudol Jonn Greyson, named after your father, King Rudol Greyson. In order to avoid confusion, your father called you Jonn, as did everyone in the castle. Only those not intimately connected to you ever referred to you as Prince Rudol.

You also see yourself as you were only a few days ago, standing over your ailing father. You hear the royal physician instruct you to find the Lammasu tribe that guards the magical herbs that are your father's last hope.

You see your trek to the Lammasu tribe and the race against the Lammasu king himself—the race in which you won those herbs. But the Lammasu king was snared by a draconian trap. With the herbs in sight, you turned, instead, to free the king. He, in turn, gave you the herbs plus a feather from his great wing, with the admonition to use it only if trouble arose. If you released the feather while you were in danger, it would call him to your side. He also warned you of the fragile qualities of

the herbs, that they must be used within a fortnight to be effective. You thanked him and took your leave.

On your way home, Morlan and his draconians ambushed you. They took you to their lair in the Great Moors and beat you to try to force you to give them the magical ring given to you by the mages from the Tower of High Sorcery. The ring signifies your power and can only be taken off your finger by the hand that put it there—your very own.

You refused their demands, knowing the ring could help them to take your place, usurp your power, and bring Nordmaar under subjection of the draconians and their Highlord masters. Eventually they turned from beating to torture, which was more than you could bear. To protect your sanity, your subconscious stripped you of all memory. How you escaped is still a mystery, because the next thing you remember is waking up with Lorina by your side.

All this flows through your mind in a few fleeting seconds. Opening your eyes now, in full command of your memory and your being, and with draconian swords surrounding you, you glare at the imposter who stands before you.

Turn to 4.

82

“No, Jonn,” Lorina whispers, pointing. “Look!” You stare across the room where Lorina points, as a skeleton wielding a long sword materializes from the wall. Beside him appears another skeleton. Behind these two emerge a third and a fourth, all wielding swords, all moving straight toward you.

You scramble to your feet, hastily replacing the ring on your finger, and grip your mace.

“Jonn!” Lorina cries and pulls you toward the center of the room just as two more skeletons emerge from the wall. She fumbles in one of her pouches and pulls out her holy symbol. Raising it high above her head, she holds it out toward the skeletons nearest you and cries, “Blessed Mishakal, aid us!” The skeletons wither and collapse against the wall. Unfortunately, more skeletons pour into the far side of the room behind you.

“Jonn, I can’t destroy all of them!” she whispers, not letting her eyes stray from the skeletons she holds at bay with her holy symbol. “What are we going to do?”

Furious at having been caught like a mouse in a trap, you re-

ply, "Fight! What else?" You raise your mace over your head and charge into them.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 8 or more, turn to **58**. If it's less than 8, turn to **176**.

83

The shadow's frigid grasp sucks the last of your strength from you, and you fall like a limp doll. Your flesh instantly crumbles into dust and seeps into the ground. Then your skeleton melts into oblivion. An all-consuming appetite burns your shadowy soul. Cold and hungry, you crave the warmth and strength of human flesh.

Through the trees crashes a figure. It radiates the warmth you crave. You creep slowly toward it. It looks like Lorina. Before she even knows you're there, you reach out and touch her and feel her life force begin to ebb into your shadowy form. . . .

It looks like you failed—this time. Go back to the beginning of the book and try again. ✚

84

A long, low groan escapes your lips unbidden. "What—what happened?" you moan as you shake yourself awake. Your tongue feels thick and dry. Your body, bruised and sore, protests as you struggle to sit up.

"Shhhhh," a soft voice whispers. Firm hands force you to lie back down. "Hold still for just a minute and I'll have you feeling better," the soft voice continues. Smooth fingers gently caress your brow, slowly drawing the aches and pains from your body. You open your eyes, blinking against the morning sun.

Above you kneels a young woman, her eyes shut tight in fervent prayer. She raises her face towards the heavens while silent words form on her lips. About her shoulders tumbles honey brown hair, wisps of it blowing softly in the warm morning breeze. She apparently finishes and sits back on her calves, opening her eyes. The coolness of her blue eyes contrasts sharply with her warm skin.

"There. You should feel better now," she says. Her voice, as soft and soothing as her touch, trembles with concern. "Whew," she sighs heavily. "I—I thought I'd lost you there for a while. You were in pretty bad shape when I found you. Whoever beat you up did a thorough job." Her eyes flicker over your body, taking in your disheveled appearance. She looks at you



quizzically, tilting her head to one side as if waiting for an explanation, but you have none to offer. Your mind is shrouded with a thick, foggy blankness that smothers your thoughts.

When you don't reply, she speaks again. "My name is Lorina. I'm a cleric of Mishakal. By her grace, I've been given the gift of healing. What's your name?"

You stare at Lorina, your brows knitted. *My name?* you think thickly. You shake your head, trying to clear it of the dull throbbing that clouds your thoughts. Somewhere in the recesses of your mind, you know you have a name, but for some reason it eludes you.

Lorina, understanding at once, stands and moves to a small smoky firepit, still smoldering from recent use. "I'm sorry," she says as she rummages through a dark brown cloak lying near the fire. "I should have realized that you might need something to drink. . . . Here." She holds a waterskin out to you and smiles. "Have some of this. It should help loosen your tongue and clear your mind."

You take the bag from her fingers and fumble with the cap. In seconds, the cool, sweet liquid relieves your parched throat. It also helps to clear your mind.

You look about, growing more distressed as you realize you don't know who or where you are. All around you, tufts of long grass and weeds sprout randomly on the dusty ground. To the east of you, beneath the still rising morning sun, the grass thickens until it merges into brush that blankets low, rolling hills. To the north, not too far distant, a grove of tall, straight birches rises from the ground to meet the sky. The grove runs west and south until, abruptly, the trees become twisted, into grotesque facsimiles of themselves. The deformed birches then curl around to the southeast and behind you.

None of it, however, appears even slightly familiar to you. Puzzled, you turn toward Lorina, who is now sitting near the firepit, busily preparing breakfast.

"Where—where am I?" you mumble.

Lorina looks up from gutting one of several fish lying beside her and studies you briefly. "As near as I can tell," she answers, "those deformed woods to the west of us are Grendar's Grief. They form part of the eastern border of the Great Moors of Nordmaar. We're three, maybe four days south of North Keep and about two day's journey west of Valkinord . . ." Her voice falters, and she casts a furtive glance eastward, scanning

the horizon. Even in your confused condition, you see fear and dread in her eyes as they search the eastern skies for . . . what?

"Is something wrong?" you ask. "Are you all right?"

Her attention snaps back to you immediately. "Y-Yes," she stammers. "I'm fine. It's just that . . . well . . . I'm just a bit edgy right now. I—I have much to do, that's all." She pauses again, then returns to her breakfast preparations. "Where are you bound for?" she asks, changing the subject.

You cast a blank look at Lorina, puzzled that you don't remember where you're going. Raising your hands to your face, you press your fingers firmly against your temples, as if you could squeeze the answer out.

"I—I don't remember!" you stammer in frustration.

Lorina looks sharply at you. For a second time, the young woman kneels by your side. She touches your forehead once more with her gentle fingers.

"What do you remember?" she asks.

Something flickers in the back of your mind, but it's gone almost as soon as it comes. A name?

"J—" you stammer uncertainly. "I—I think my name is . . . Jonn." It sounds familiar, but you're not sure. Your memory seems to have vanished completely.

"Jonn," Lorina repeats, sitting back on her heels. "I like that." She brushes a dark curl away from your forehead. "Is there anything else you remember, Jonn?"

"No . . . not a thing," you mutter.

"Well, Jonn," she says, "I believe you have amnesia."

A cold knot of fear settles inside you as the weight of her words hits you. "No!" you protest loudly. "That can't be!" But even as you protest, you know it's true. The knot in your stomach tightens as you realize that you are a stranger to yourself!

Lorina bites her lip and tries to assuage your fears. "After the state I found you in last night, you're lucky you just have amnesia," she says. "At least with amnesia you have the chance to regain your memory." She cocks her head and gazes at you. "Perhaps you are carrying something that will offer a clue as to your identity."

You nod. Standing unsteadily, you begin to search your clothing. Lorina turns to look eastward before she sets out the food she has been preparing.

First you check your ragged tunic, quickly searching its few pockets. Nothing is there. Next, you beat the dirt off your

pants and check the two pockets there. Again nothing. Whoever attacked you apparently took everything you owned. Finally you pull off your dust-covered boots, poking an empty boot sheath that might have hidden a dagger. Still nothing. You slip the boots back on and stand once more, double-checking everything.

Frustrated, you plop down on the ground next to Lorina. "Nothing!" you exclaim. "I have nothing that gives the slightest clue as to who I am!"

Lorina mumbles something about learning how to cook someday and hands you a charred piece of fish. You don't notice, however. You're too concerned with who you are.

"Are there any hidden pouches?" Lorina asks. She picks up a piece of hot, blackened fish from her plate, squeals in pain, and lets it fall to the ground.

"Not that I know of," you answer. Automatically one hand pats your chest, then slides down over the tunic.

Suddenly you feel something. Barely detectable in the hem is a tiny lump. You set your piece of fish down and excitedly rip the poorly sewn hem open. You see something poking through the opening. Deftly you pull out a large black feather. As you continue searching, a long, thin pouch falls into your lap.

You sigh. Neither seems likely to reveal your identity.

You examine the large black feather. It hangs limp at the top, possibly broken inside your tunic. The feathery part is all matted together. You try to smooth it out with little success, then eventually you set it aside.

You glance at Lorina. She shrugs her shoulders. "The feather could mean something," she comments, "though I don't know what. Let me see the pouch."

Lorina removes the pouch from your hand, looks inside, and gasps. "These are magical herbs," she cries, "the most potent one can find! I've only seen these once in my life." She looks at you with a mixture of awe and respect.

"There must be some great quest you're fulfilling. Maybe you were attacked because of it . . ." Her voice drops. "Or these herbs," she whispers, patting the pouch. Then she closes the pouch, apparently lost in thought. Her eyes drift to the east once again, and her brows knit. Suddenly she leaps to her feet, grabs your arm, and struggles to pull you to your feet.

"Come!" she urges. "We shouldn't be idling away precious time. These herbs are powerful, but their magical properties

do not last long. You must find out who you are and finish your quest before the herbs become useless. And I must continue my own errand. Besides, whoever attacked you knows you're here. They might be back."

"But . . ." you begin, scrambling to grab the feather as Lorina pulls you to your feet, "I don't have any idea what I should do, or which way to go." You are surprised to see that she is nearly as tall as you are!

"Think hard!" Lorina urges, fiercely intent. "Look in each direction and think hard! Does one seem familiar somehow?"

Sensing Lorina's urgency, you stand rigidly and struggle to recall. You face the east, trying to gaze beyond the grassy plains stretching out before you. Then you slowly turn to the south. Dark, malignant birches rise threateningly against the soft blue sky. As you turn to the west, you see more of the deformed trees crowded together, plus red, roiling clouds churning above their murky recesses. You close your eyes against their ugliness and turn to the north. A distant cloud of smoky haze rises beyond the tall, shimmering birches there.

You turn to face Lorina, your mind a blank. Only your innate abilities and instincts can direct you now.

Roll two dice and add the result to each of your skills. If the total is 11 or more in fighting, turn to **86**. If it is 11 or more in wisdom, turn to **101**. If you get 11 or more in stealth, turn to **177**. If the total is 11 or more in any two or all three of these skills, you may choose which skill you want to use and turn to that section. If you receive less than an 11 in all three skills, turn to **119**.

85

You chastise yourself for dreaming that your ring bears such power. A small ring like yours can't possibly have enough magic in it to repel a huge beast, even though it seems to beg you to use it. Ignoring the thoughts that tug at your mind, you suddenly dive for the sword.

Grasping the blade firmly in your hand, you wield it brazenly at the monster. The creature begins to lower its head slowly back into the water, as if it's tired of playing this game. You stand there for a moment, feeling rather foolish as you threaten empty air.

Lowering the blade, you head toward Lorina, who is struggling to regain consciousness. Turn to **136**.



86

Something about the deformed birches to the south prompts you to choose that direction, though your feelings are rather unclear. "I think I should go south," you say, not really sure if that's where you want to go.

Lorina frowns. "I can't imagine why you'd want to go that way," she replies. "All you'll find is swamp and morass until you come to the Bay of Nord. And the only place to cross the bay is at Valkinord, which is to the east."

Her information seems to justify your hesitation about the choice you made. "But none of the other directions seems to hold much promise, either," you say.

"Then you'll just have to guess which way you must go." She looks around and sighs. "Take your pick. Which way?"

If you want to go east, across the grassy plains, turn to **62**. If you want to investigate the haze to the north, go to **101**. Or if you think you want to go west, toward the reddening sky, turn to **177**.

87

The sivak's blade whistles through the air as you dodge under the blow and scramble around behind the creature. A quick spin and slash, and your sword cuts deep into its scaled shoulder, sending out a shower of blood. The draconian hisses in pain and rage, then whirls about, and you face off again.

A crack resounds through the air, followed by a shrieking draconian howl. *Lorina must be holding her own*, you think, but you have no time to savor it. The sivak, enraged by its wound, attacks you again.

It presses you without mercy, slashing with the huge two-handed sword. You parry blow for blow, but the draconian wades in and gives you no opening, wielding its heavy blade as if it were made of wood. Soon the sivak is forcing you up

against the wall. Suddenly, with a quick twist and spin, it feints in, turns, and slams you in the chest with its tail. You're caught by surprise and hurled up against the wall.

Hissing loudly, the sivak lunges and brings its sword down. But you aren't finished yet. Quickly you raise your sword over your head, and with a reverberating clash, you catch the sivak's sword in midair and hold it from your body.

The draconian presses down relentlessly, its greater height giving it the advantage. Closer and closer comes the huge blade, until it's only inches from your face. You strain mightily to hold it back, but you're weakening swiftly. Will you give out before you can defeat this beast? The reptilian face almost gloats as the sweat beads up on your forehead.

Suddenly light from the window strikes your sword and reflects off it. Your eyes are drawn to the blade. The words engraved there flash into your brain. "Courage Pax ist"—"Peace is Courage." All at once, you remember their significance. Torreth, your swordmaster, taught them to you as a youth, and they come to your aid now.

Slowly, deliberately, you raise your eyes to the face of the sivak. You gather your thoughts and calm your mind. With a power born of your newfound inner peace, you gather your strength and heave upward.

The draconian is caught unaware. It staggers backward, dumbfounded. Before it can recover and renew the attack, you are all over it. Slashing, feinting, dodging, parrying, cutting, and slashing once more, you harass your opponent mercilessly. Soon the sivak is bleeding from numerous wounds. Your bastard sword has cut deep gashes in the creature's scaly arms and legs, and its tail is nearly severed from its body.

The sivak makes a desperate lunge at you, trying to skewer you on its blade, but it is too slow. Instead, it only stumbles past you as you dodge aside. You duck, spin, and slice low. Your sword bites cruelly into one of its legs, taking it right out from under the creature. It crashes to the floor and lies still.

Another shriek fills the room. You spin about to see Lorina's dragon-hide whip virtually decapitate her last draconian opponent. You quickly turn to deliver the death blow to the fallen sivak who had hoped to replace you.

As you raise your sword above the fallen draconian, the doors at the end of the room burst open, and into the chamber pour at least a dozen more draconians and humans. Majin en-

ters behind them, pain and rage contorting his face.

"Seize them!" he screams. "Tear them apart if you have to, but get his ring!" The draconians immediately leap at you, and you fall back toward Lorina. If the two of you can only get back to back, maybe . . .

Your hopes are dashed as the humans begin to change. They're more sivaks! You can't possibly hold out against them without some help. But where will it come from? You look at Lorina. She smiles bravely, but you see fear in her eyes. It looks as if this is the end—unless . . .

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **186**. If it's less than 9, turn to **39**.

88

The anger and frustration you feel toward Torreth is overwhelming. You glare at the helpless man lying at your feet. The sword itches in your hands. You press it firmly against his neck until it draws blood. Torreth doesn't flinch. He glares back at you, daring you to kill him.

Something in that look arrests you. Those eyes, cold and defiant, seem to melt into warm, laughing eyes. You shake your head as distant memories try to rush forward—memories of bygone days when a man much like this one gave you hard but necessary lessons in swordsmanship and the use of weapons in self-defense. Could this be the same man?

Suddenly the anger and frustration you feel drains out of you. You don't know what it is, but something inside won't let you kill your opponent.

"Lorina," you call, not taking your eyes off Torreth, "come and bind this man." Then, dropping your voice, you whisper almost inaudibly, "I cannot kill him."

Lorina pulls two stout leather thongs from one of her pouches. Torreth's eyebrows raise. He stares foolishly for a second, his mouth opening to say something, but he clamps it shut as Lorina ties his hands and feet.

"Let's go," you say quietly, taking Lorina's arm and gesturing to the north. "He'll free himself eventually, but by then, we should be well on our way."

Without looking back, but with imprisoned memories trying to break free in your mind, you and Lorina head for the woods to the north.

Add 1 to your memory point score, then turn to **12**.



89

Your eyes stare at the man lying in a heap on the floor. Red robes . . . a pouch that screams . . . Drakart. All of a sudden, memory washes over you. Once before, not too long ago, you tried to steal the very same pouch from this very same man. The pouch cried out, and you were caught. The inn was filled with people, laughing, talking, enjoying themselves, far from the wooden scene it is now. The man proved to be a mage, and he threatened to turn you into a gully dwarf unless you . . .

Unless what? You squint your eyes, trying to remember what he wanted you to do, but you remember nothing more except that he gave you something. The memory is fleeting, incomplete, but finally you see him giving you the pouch of herbs and the feather. And he gave you something else, something you put on your finger. A ring? But why?

Then a haunting voice whispers in your mind, and somehow you know it's the voice of Drakart himself! Add 1 to your memory point total, then turn to **100**.

90

Prince Rudol. You force your mind to concentrate on the name, but nothing happens. It's as foreign to you as that of Majin. The only name that makes any sense to you is Jonn. You must be Jonn—not Majin; not Prince Rudol!

Somehow you must find out what is happening, and why you are continually being mistaken for Majin and Prince Rudol, but first you must escape from these dwarves.

You open your eyes just as one of the dwarves shoves Lorina at you. Now she, too, is tied up. Her blue eyes are dark and confused, baffled by the hostility of the hill dwarves she thought would help to rid Nordmaar of the Dragon Highlords once again. Apparently the dwarves' revenge will not be placated by anything but your death, which they fully intend to bring about unless you do something to stop them. Turn to **32**.

91

As the giant lunges toward you, you leap out of his way and scramble back to the path. He follows fast on your heels, slipping once or twice on the rocks and cursing as he nearly falls. You reach the path ahead of him and turn. He glares ferociously at you as he bounds onto the path behind you.

Already you can hear the crack of Lorina's whip and screeches from the harpy as it finds its mark. But you must put her battle out of your mind as you face the biggest, most dangerous opponent you've ever met.

"This time I'll get you," he rasps. "To the Abyss with you!" Raising his sword, he lunges at you.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **24**. If it's less than 9, turn to **173**.

92

You twist desperately in Morlan's arms, but he's too strong for you. Lifting you up bodily, he tosses you to the ground, jarring the sword out of your grasp! Instantly he jumps on top of you, knocking you breathless. Claspings his hands together in a double fist, he swings them down into your face. You feel a sickening crunch as pain rips through your head. Subtract 2 from your hit point total.

With pain ringing through your head, you flail blindly with your fists. Surprisingly, you make contact with Morlan and knock him from you. He falls heavily to the ground as you roll free and stagger to your feet. Blood trickles from your mouth. You wipe it aside and snatch up your sword, but before you can direct the blade against Morlan, he lunges at you once more and grapples you tightly.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 8 or more, turn to **164**. If it's less than 8, repeat this section. Keep repeating it until you get 8 or more. Remember, once your hit points reach 0, you're dead.

93

The catoblepas hovers, its eye riveted on you. You duck as it moves suddenly, but not soon enough. Caught in its gaze, you stare at the rotting beast. The bloodshot eye seems to spin, reeling you closer and closer to it. Your blood courses swiftly through your body. Somewhere outside your being, someone screams, "No, Jonn!" Suddenly your gaze is wrenched from the

creature's eye, and you land with a thud on the ground, your breath knocked out of you. The impression of the swirling bloodshot eye stays with you, though, and you continue your death-locked stare.

Lorina shakes you, screaming, "Jon! You can't die!" but already the gyrations have your blood pounding, your heart beating rapidly.

Lorina pleases fervently with her god. "Mishakal, please save him!" Then she screams as the catoblepas knocks her away with its flailing tail.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to **45**. If it's less than 10, turn to **124**.

94

The warrior who lies beneath you knows something about you, and you are going to find out what it is!

Pressing the blade to his neck, you demand, "Answer my questions. Then *maybe* I'll let you go!"

The warrior just lies there, glaring at you.

You continue, "Tell me first about this person you call 'Majin,' then about Jon. Who are they?"

The warrior dares to swallow, but the movement causes the blade to press into his skin. You can almost see the sweat beading up on his brow. He knows you hold his life in your hands. You let up enough to allow him to speak.

A look of confusion flits across his face, as though he can't understand why he's still alive. Then, all of a sudden, his face hardens and his eyes narrow again. His glare is even more vehement than before, as if he'd somehow figured out the answer to some mystery and hated you all the more for it. He spits at the blade.

"Do you think I would tell you what you want to know?" he hisses through clenched teeth. "I'd rather die! May Paladine take my soul even as he curses yours!"

Rage rises in you again. Torreth could provide you with a clue to your past, but he refuses to do so. You see that you will get nowhere with him. Maybe you should kill him to make sure he doesn't attack you again.

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **88**. If it is less than 11, turn to **46**.

As you search the cliff above for movement, you suddenly become aware that one of the huge boulders is rocking. Small stones begin to tumble down around you.

Suddenly you grab Lorina's hand. You realize that's no mountain goat up there!

"Look out!" you shout and pull Lorina aside just as the boulder dislodges and plummets toward you, an avalanche of loosened debris tumbling along with it. You manage to escape the boulder, but you're bombarded by rocks and dirt. You press Lorina against the cliff wall and shield her with your body as debris and dirt cascade all around you, stirring up a cloud of choking dust. Finally, when the only sound is from a few pebbles making their belated way down the cliff, you open your eyes and look around.

Through the settling dust, you see a large pile of rocks and dirt sealing off the narrow passageway below you, making it nearly impossible to retreat even if you wanted to. You duck as a few more pebbles tumble down beside you, then look up just in time to see a figure move away from a ledge above you.

"That was no accident," you tell Lorina as you pull her away from the debris.

"You mean someone did that on purpose?" Lorina asks, incredulous. You nod your head. "But who?"

"Someone who wants me dead," you answer. You and Lorina stare at each other.

"Jonn, what are we going to do?" Lorina asks.

You scan the cliff top overhead. Then looking at Lorina, you brush the dust from your clothes and reply, "We'll continue on up, but we'll be more careful. Now that we know someone's up there, we'll have to keep alert."

You take out Lorina's mace and clutch it tightly, then move along the path up the mountain. Your eyes flit from side to side, watching for any sign of ambush. Turn to 137.

Lorina whispers again, "This piece of iron is all I need to stop them! I can use it as a spell component!"

You shake your head. "Let's go meet this Prince Rudol first. I'm very curious about him. Besides, once he finds out I'm not Majin, maybe he'll let us go." Your voice drops to a bare whisper. "I hope."



As Lorina sighs, the two guards grab you, and you let out a gasp. Beneath the hooded cloaks of both guards gleam yellow reptilian eyes. Scales cover the hands that move you roughly out the door, and a long reptilian tail flicks back and forth beneath the cloak. Draconians! Repulsed by the dry, scaly claws that grasp your arms, you try to pull free. One of the draconians hisses in your ear and digs his claws into your flesh. You flinch and stop struggling, but your body remains tense.

Cells line both sides of the narrow corridor that you and Lorina are herded down. Eventually the corridor ends at the bottom of a stairwell. The guards shove you up the stairs until you come to another corridor. The cold stones echo beneath your feet. The draconians take you through several more corridors, and up more flights of stairs. It isn't long before you've lost your sense of direction completely.

Finally the guards stop before an ornate door. Without ceremony, they fling the door open and shove you and Lorina inside. Then they close the doors firmly and take position on either side of the doors as sentinels.

You glance around the spacious room, noting the rich velvet furnishings. To the right of you, a huge open window leads out onto a balcony. Then your eyes travel down the long aisle on your left to the two thrones on the other side of the room and you gasp. Turn to 7.

97

Caught between poisoned arrows and death in an enchanted forest, you opt for the forest. The unknown is always more exciting, you reason. And if you have to die, you might as well die of old age . . . even if that comes tomorrow.

You turn and ask, "How deep is Grendar's Grief?"

"I—I really don't know. It couldn't be more than an hour's walk—if there was no curse, that is." Lorina stares at you. "Jonn, you can't really be thinking of going in there!"

You don't answer.

"Jonn! No! I refuse to allow it!"

You grab her hand and pull her into Grendar's Grief. She quits struggling as a thick darkness settles heavily about you. The misshapen trees, shrouded in obscure blackness, throw grotesque shadows into the air. Long, fingery limbs dangle listlessly in your face. And deep from within the belly of the woods, you feel, more than hear, a low throbbing pulse, like the

sound of a heartbeat.

"The life-stealer!" Lorina whispers, pulling herself close to you.

"Stealer, stealer, stealer!" The words echo in front of you, then behind you, pounding maddeningly. You cast furtive glances about you, expecting to see some creature of evil jump out at you, but nothing happens. Huddling together, you and Lorina silently make your way deeper into the forest. Turn to 113.

98

As the herbs spill over Drakart, he stands rigid, waiting for them to kill him. Lorina leans against you, her lips moving silently. Suddenly Drakart whirls around and stares at you, malevolence gleaming in his red eyes. Lorina pushes away from you and slumps to the floor, her fingers clutched in fervent prayer. The magic in the herbs is gone!

Flexing your fingers, you grip your mace, and as Drakart approaches, you yell soundlessly and swing your mace.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to 53. If it's less than 10, turn to 182.

99

Slowly and gently you pour the herbal liquid into your father's mouth, a little at a time. At first he chokes on the brew, but soon he manages to sip down a little. When he is through, you lay him gently back down on the bed and send the physician for a pillow and warmer blankets.

As the physician departs, your father's eyes flicker open. He looks up at you and smiles weakly. His once noble visage is shriveled with sickness and death. When he speaks, his voice is dry and husky.

"I—I knew you would come, Jonn," he breathes, then breaks into a severe fit of coughing. The physician returns with the pillows and blanket and comforts the king. When the coughing has subsided, your father continues. "But I fear you are too late. Death has won out over me. So it must be. I hereby transfer to you the rule of the kingdom. You are now the king, my son. Rule well. If only . . . you . . . had come . . . soon—"

The rattle of death follows the king's last words. His eyes fix into a wide, lifeless stare, and his mouth gapes wide. The physician glances at you for a moment, then collapses into his

chair, his shoulders heaving with sobs. You can only stare wide-eyed in disbelief. Tears fill your eyes. The herbs failed; you took too long to get them home!

You turn away. Lorina, white-faced from her confrontation with the draconians, stands behind you, her eyes full of sorrow and compassion. She brushes a tear from your cheek and turns toward your father's body. Uttering a quiet prayer to Mishakal, she softly closes the dead king's staring eyes.

Even as she does, the full weight of your new responsibility hits you. Now it will be you who must lead Nordmaar against the Dragon Highlords. It will be you who must reconcile the hill dwarves to fight against the Highlord invaders. You know that won't be easy; your father could have done it with far fewer obstacles. Now it may never occur. If not, you could be fighting a war on two fronts—a war that North Keep could not endure.

And so it is that you come to the end of your quest, having gained something but lost much more. You and Lorina will have to lead Nordmaar against the growing shadows of the Dragon Highlords by yourselves. ✠

100

After staring for several long seconds, you kneel beside the robed man and turn him over. His breathing is irregular, but he's still alive.

Standing, you call for help, but no one responds. The occupants of the bar continue their stilted conversations, seemingly unaware of what has happened.

Suddenly Lorina touches your arm. "Jonn," she says, her voice pained. "I've got a horrible headache. I feel as if my brain is being scooped out of my skull! I think I need to eat something."

You look at Lorina. Her blue eyes cloud over, and you see the same pain that was in the robed man's eyes in hers. You're once again aware of the buzzing in the back of your head, which has grown to a slow constant pounding inside your brain. It seems to be getting stronger.

You put your arm around Lorina and help her to a seat, throwing a quick glance behind you at the man on the floor. You don't know what to do about him.

"Barmaid!" you call out as Lorina groans. The girl walks, trancelike, to your table. "Something to eat for the girl," you

mutter. The barmaid simply stands there, gazing straight ahead. "I said I want something to . . ." You pause, wondering what's going on.

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to 13. If it's less than 9, turn to 167.

101

You gaze northward for several moments as Lorina waits for your decision. The smoky clouds, thirty or forty miles distant at least, seem to draw you to them. An old saying comes to mind. *Where there's smoke, there's fire. And where there's fire, there's . . . there's . . .*

Try as you might, you can't remember the rest. An ominous sense of foreboding fills you as the unfinished adage tumbles about in your head. Still, the distant smoky haze prompts you to make a decision.

"I must go north," you tell Lorina at last.

"Good . . . excellent!" Lorina says with a sigh of relief. "Not only do you have some feelings about which way to go, but the direction makes some sense, too."

You look at her quizzically. "Some sense?" you ask.

"Yes," she replies. "If you went east, you'd run into Valkinord . . . my home." She pauses, then continues. "I *know* you're not from around there. And south . . . well, that's just plain impossible."

Again you are puzzled. "Why is it impossible?"

The cleric looks at you in wonder. "You really *don't* remember a thing, do you?"

She stoops and begins to trace out a crude map in the soft earth. "We are here, on the eastern edges of the Great Moors." She marks an "X" near a roughly diamond-shaped area on her map. "Over there to the west of us," she says, leaving her map and pointing to the twisted and deformed wood you noted earlier, "is Grendar's Grief, which some call the Death Forest. Believe me, you don't want to go in there. As many travelers as not have died before they got out of Grendar's Grief."

The ominous finality in her tone sends a slight shiver down your spine. That shiver brings a knowing smile to Lorina's lips. Satisfied to have impressed you with the danger of Grendar's Grief, she returns to her map. "To the west of Grendar's Grief lie the Great Moors . . . all out here." She shades in a

diamond-shaped area. "Beyond that is the Khalwilde, a forested mountain range in the middle of Northern Estwilde . . . here." She points beyond the Great Moors. "The vast southern reaches of the Great Moors are here, below us," she explains. "And south of them is the greater part of Miremier, the bay that forms the southern boundary of Nordmaar. Both the bay and the southern moors are clearly impassable."

She pauses, and you look at her expectantly. Her geography lesson doesn't seem to be helping. She shrugs, then continues, but her voice is hushed, full of dread.

"And south of Miremier," she whispers, adding to her map, "on the peninsula of Kern, are the dragons."

Her tone sends a chill down your spine. Some primeval fear touches your heart at the mention of dragons.

She continues, her voice trembling. "In the twenty-five years since the War of the Lance ended, the peoples of Nordmaar and the hill dwarves of the Khalwilde have managed to push the flaming dragons and their masters that far south."

She looks up at you, fear in her eyes. "But now . . ." she continues, fighting to hold back tears, "now they are back!" Suddenly the tears begin to fall silently. She turns from you, her shoulders tense and shaking. Sighing deeply, she continues her narrative, her voice tight and drawn.

"The foul Dragon Highlords and their flaming lizards attacked Valkinord two days ago. They swept in from the sea and across Miremier from Kern. They were on us before we knew it, and we were completely cut off—surrounded. Several others and I managed to escape. We decided to split up and head for North Keep or the Khalwilde to warn the others of the attack. That's why I'm headed for North Keep . . . to warn King Greyson and Prince Rudol."

Lorina stops and looks at you sidelong. You stare at her, eyes wide with wonder at her tale. Slowly shaking her head and brushing her tears away, she says, "But enough of history. Did any of that jog your memory?"

"No," you reply softly. "I'm sorry about your home."

She smiles fleetingly. "My home was still intact when I left. I only hope I can reach North Keep in time to warn them." She stands. "And since I'm going to North Keep anyway, and since we're both headed in that direction, I think we should travel together."

You look at the cleric in appreciation, thinking how much

easier traveling will be with a companion.

"Of course. Why not?" you answer, smiling. "Now let's get back to breakfast. I'm starved."

You reach out to pick up your plate, and suddenly Lorina gasps. She grabs your hand firmly in hers. There, resting snugly around your left middle finger, where neither of you had noticed it before, is a ring. It gleams in the morning sun.

"This ring, Jonn!" she exclaims. "It could tell who you are!"

You look down at the thick gold band on your finger. A milky white stone, engraved with a crest, shines from the top of the band. You see runes carved into the gleaming metal.

Lorina looks intently at the ring. "These runes are magical. I don't understand the nature of the magic, but I recognize that crest," she exclaims. "It belongs to the royal house of North Keep. How is it that you have it? Could you perhaps be a servant of the king?"

You stare at her uncomprehendingly. A frown crosses your face as you struggle to answer her question. "I just . . . can't . . . remember!" you exclaim in anguish.

Sensing your frustration, Lorina turns and picks up her cloak. She wraps a belt laden with pouches of various sizes and shapes around her waist and straps what appears to be a whip to the belt. "We must be on our way," she says. "My errand to North Keep cannot wait, and the magical qualities of the herbs in your pouch won't last long." Her nose wrinkles as she tosses the forgotten, blackened fish to the ground. "I don't know about you, Jonn, but I don't really want any more of that fish."

Gratefully you toss the remains of your charred fish into the firepit. At that moment, a spear thumps into the ground just inches in front of you.

Lorina rushes to you and grabs your arm, pulling you toward the birch woods to the north. But as if some force or thought holds you, you hesitate.

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to 110. If it is less than 9, turn to 35.



You can't stop your pell-mell slide down the mountain. You are hammered mercilessly against the rocks. You grope for something that might stop you, but you feel nothing.

Suddenly your body starts to bounce off the edge of a cliff! Scrambling for a hold on the ledge, you miss and go over the edge. For a long time, you plummet through the air, with the wind rushing by you. The mountainside speeds by as you hurtle toward the ground. Fear squeezes the breath from you, and you can't even scream. If you could remember your life, you're sure it would be flashing before your eyes right now. All you can do is watch as the ground rushes up to meet you, crushing the life out of you.

Go back to the beginning of the book and try again! ✕

Your sleep is troubled by disturbing night visions. Arrows fly at you from every quarter. You dodge and duck frantically, but to no avail. You slump to the ground, arrows sticking out of every part of your body. Suddenly a headless, faceless shadow—your unseen assailant—stands over you, chuckling in a deep, rumbling voice. You're relieved when Lorina finally wakes you to take your watch.

You pull yourself to a sitting position as Lorina hunkers down beside you. "If you need my help, wake me," she says as she closes her eyes.

Suddenly you feel uncomfortably alone. Your eyes quickly adjust to the ethereal light from the moon above, and you become one with the stillness around you. You scratch nervously at your finger, glancing occasionally at it to see if a rash has appeared, but you see nothing.

Shadows move and writhe in the distance; ghostly figures seem to float across the horizon, only to disappear when you squint to see them better. The ground undulates softly, almost as if a living essence moves beneath it.

The night passes by without incident. As dawn approaches, you stretch your legs, grateful that you can be on your way soon. The ground below you still undulates in a strange, living way. As the sun begins to shed its weak light onto the moors, the undulations seem to increase. It's time you left.

Shaking Lorina awake, you whisper loudly, "Lorina! We've got to get out of here!"

Lorina opens her eyes. She sits up and stares at the trembling ground. "Jonn, what's happening?" she asks.

"I don't know, but I don't like it. Come on."

By now, the ground is trembling uncontrollably. You start to run, but the tremors are too wild and you stumble. Lorina falls beside you. You struggle to your feet, then help Lorina get her bearing. Suddenly the ground bursts asunder, and you grab Lorina to keep her from tumbling into its depths. Water fills the chasm, bubbling and churning as it pours from unknown sources into the hole. Then all is still.

You grab Lorina's hand and turn away from the newly formed pool. Although it lies in your path to the west, you can skirt around it and continue your journey.

"Let's go," you whisper urgently. Lorina needs no urging, and together you hurry around the murky pool.

Suddenly Lorina screams. Turn to 11.

104

As you make your way across the crowded courtyard, you try to keep well away from the guards. You're so preoccupied with avoiding their scrutiny that you fail to see a woman struggling with three heavily laden market baskets. Ducking quickly to avoid the gaze of a guard, you bump into her and knock her down, spilling the contents of the baskets on top of both of you.

She curses as she scrambles out from under the baskets. Turning on you, she raises an angry finger to begin to tongue-lash you—only to drop it suddenly and gasp.

Bending in a deep curtsy, she murmurs, "I—I'm truly sorry, m'lord. I—I didn't realize it was you."

You stare dumbly at her for a second, uncomprehending. Other nearby peasants follow her lead. They bow or curtsy, staring at you in awe. The commotion attracts the attention of a nearby guard who begins to push his way toward you.

Suddenly Lorina grabs your hand and says, "Come, m'lord. We must be getting back to the castle."

Turning your back to the guard headed your way, you and Lorina hurry through the crowd, which quickly opens up to let you pass. A few cast curious glances at you before they bow, while others simply stare. One woman even dares to touch you, then jumps back, giggling.

Under your breath, you whisper to Lorina, "I think they mistake me for their prince!"

Lorina nods. "Let's just hope you can convince the guards at the gate."

You gulp as you approach the sentinels at the castle gate. Holding your head high, you walk up to the portcullis and wait for the guards to open it. Nothing happens. Feeling the perspiration beading on your forehead, you turn to the guard on the left.

"Well? What are you waiting for, dolt? Open the gate!" you demand.

Without looking at you, he replies, "I need the password, m'lord."

Lorina clenches your hand, but you continue, "Since when does your prince need a password?" Perspiration begins to run in a tiny rivulet down your temple.

"Since you expressly commanded it, m'lord," the guard says soberly.

"But I'm the prince!"

"Or Majin." He faces you, squarely. "And since you didn't use the password—"

Suddenly a loud commotion from behind you interrupts the sentinel. A quick glance tells you that the guards that Lorina placed under her spell are now free.

"Stop him!" You recognize the voice of the large human guard, who is trying to force his way across the crowded courtyard. "That's Majin!"

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 12 or more, turn to **172**. If it's than 12, turn to **44**.

105

You stand rigid, expectant, waiting for Drakart to die. The mage screams soundlessly. Lorina leans against you, her eyes wide with horror. You watch as Drakart starts to crumble before you. First his hands and arms disintegrate into a flurry of ashes that drift to the floor. Then his body begins to dissipate, the ashes floating in the air. Slowly, inch by inch, Drakart's body turns to ashes.

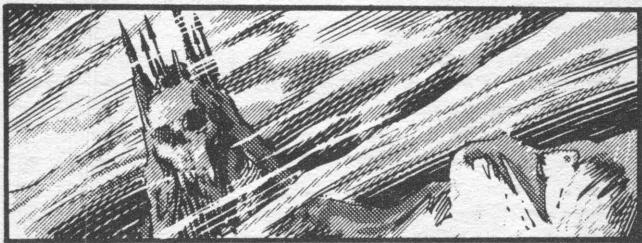
As it does, his face changes first from fear, then to hatred. He tries to lunge forward, but his feet won't move. Consumed by the powerful concoction of the herbs, the mage's body turns to ashes, until all that is left are the two glowing embers of his eyes. At last they, too, are snuffed out.

As the last of Drakart melts into a mound of dust, the walls of

his chambers begin to tremble, and the floor underneath you heaves violently. You grab Lorina and herd her to the door, clicking it open with Drakart's ring.

You step out into the hall, where suddenly a rush of sound pounds your head. Everywhere rocks are crumbling as the hall floor shifts and splits. You race with Lorina through the hall. Now that Drakart no longer exists, his force no longer holds the castle together. You leap over crevices in the floor, barely managing to avoid falling into a yawning hole. You manage to make it to the door that hides the stairwell. Then, using Drakart's ring to open it, you stumble to the top of the staircase.

Suddenly the whole room lurches, and you fly forward. You tumble head over heels down the stairwell, with Lorina right behind you, and everything goes black. Turn to 191.



106

You leave Lorina behind as you creep up to the goblin camp. Luck is with you. Darting in and out of the shadows, you make your way to the camp unseen. Settling down behind a small clump of vegetation, you strain to hear the conversation in the camp.

At first, you don't understand a word they say. But as you listen further, your ear picks up on the thick goblin accent, and you begin to make out words and phrases. It isn't until one goblin mentions Drakart that you hone in on that particular conversation.

"Brrrrr!" the goblin hisses. "These moors are enough to give an ogre the chills!"

"Shut up, Goruf!" another comments in its hissing voice. "Drakart promised us fair passage. There ain't nothin' to fear."

"I'm not sure, Fingulp," Goruf mutters. "I don't trust him. My guess is he'll kill us all before we get back."

"Don't be stupid, Goruf!" Fingulp raises his voice. "He wants the pegasus, don't he? He says he needs to make a steed worthy of his new powers. If we don't come back alive, he don't get no pegasus. It's as simple as that!"

"That's another thing," Goruf says. "I don't like dragging that flying horse around. What if it gets loose?"

Fingulp hisses. "Stop yer blatherin', Goruf! Drakart gave us that magical net to keep its wings covered. As long as they stay wrapped in that net, it don't go nowhere! Now shut up and get some sleep. Yer on second watch tonight."

A *pegasus!* you exult silently. A horse that can fly! What a find—what a prize!

Having heard all you need to hear, you creep back to Lorina. You wince when you hear the pegasus cry out in pain as the goblin whips it once more. *That won't be for long!* you think as a plan formulates in your mind.

Startled at your sudden appearance, Lorina nearly screams as you creep up on her, "Shhhhh!" you whisper. She sinks to the ground, breathing rapidly.

"Don't do that again!" she chastizes you. "I—"

You cut in before she finishes. "The horse is a pegasus," you whisper. "The goblins are taking it to Drakart. The bundle of feathers on its back is its wings, tied up in a magical net to keep it from flying off. I've got a plan to free it, and maybe it will help us out of here. How good are you with your whip?"

"I—I was trained with it," Lorina stutters, still not quite following you.

"Good! Come on!" You grab Lorina and make your way nearer to the pegasus, being careful to keep hidden in the brush. You stop a good thirty feet from the pegasus and explain your plan to Lorina in hushed whispers.

Lorina smiles and, at your urging, helps slap wet mud and muck from the ground over your body. You wrinkle your nose at the stench.

"There!" you whisper when the last slop of mud is plastered to your body. "How do I look?"

Lorina giggles under her breath. "Ugly. You look just like one of those goblins!"

"Thanks!" you say with a sneer.

"Hey, it's your idea!" Lorina counters.

"All right, all right. Now let's go!"

You move nearer the pegasus and pause. Lorina hunches ner-

vously by your side, slipping her whip into her hand. She gives you her mace. It isn't long before the pegasus makes the move you've been waiting for.

Rearing against the ropes that hold him, he whinnies and snorts. The goblin near him jumps up and flicks out his whip.

"I said shut up!" he yells at the horse.

"Now!" Lorina cries as she lashes out. Her whip snares the goblin before he can harm the pegasus.

"What the—" the goblin yells as it's pulled around. Its eyes widen as it sees you charging in with the mace.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 7 or more, turn to **180**. If it's less than 7, turn to **50**.

107

Remembering Lorina's warning about the creature's eyes, you roll aside. The flailing tail slams harmlessly into the ground. Twisting to your feet, you swing your sword with all your might. If you can hit it enough times, you think desperately, it has to die—doesn't it?

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is less than 9, turn to **6**. If it's 9 or more, turn to **144**. If you find that you are sent back to this section, once you have repeated this section four times, turn to **71**.

108

The creature's hoglike head slides closer as you dodge alongside Lorina. Suddenly she gives you a shove.

"Move!" she cries.

You stumble forward, just as the creature's huge tail pounds the ground where you were standing. It flicks back and arches over the creature's body, poising to strike again. Whipping forward with incredible speed, it nearly smacks Lorina before she manages to twist out of its way.

"What is that thing?" you shout, dodging yet another blow from the creature's tail. Rotted flesh flies from the tail and spatters against your chest. The monster's rancid odor, coupled with the smell of rotting flesh, sweeps over you. Your knees almost buckle from the stench.

"It's a catoblep— Oof!" The tail, swifter than Lorina, crashes into her back, and she flies through the air and lands with a wet thud on the soft ground.

"Lorina!" you yell. "Are you all right?" No answer.

Lying unconscious on the ground, Lorina is easy prey for the monster. Its huge head slithers toward her, momentarily forgetting you. The skin on the creature's face wrinkles into grotesque folds. Two large tusks protrude from its putrefying mouth. Its single, evil eye blinks at the helpless cleric.

Clutching your sword in your hand, you bellow a battle-cry and charge.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to **144**. If it's less than 10, turn to **6**.

109

The high, shrill voice sends chills up and down your spine. It whispers of an agony too dreadful to remember, an agony you don't want to remember. You shake your head, dispelling the memories that threaten to surge forth. The memories subside, but the uneasiness persists.

"Jonn?" Lorina's whisper barely reaches your ear.

You turn toward her. "Let's get out of here," you mumble so low she barely hears you.

Roll two dice and add the result to your stealth skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **26**. If it's less than 11, turn to **36**.

110

You look at the spear, still quivering in the earth not three inches in front of you. Lorina tugs desperately on your arm, urging you to run. You hiss her to silence.

"If whoever threw that spear wanted me dead, he wouldn't have missed," you whisper. "We'll wait to see if its owner shows himself."

You turn to face the woods where the spear came from. Just as you expected, in a short time a man strides out of the birches. He wears a hauberk with a rich green tunic covering it. A brown stripe runs diagonally from right shoulder to waist. Emblazoned above the stripe, golden lightning bolts arch over his left shoulder. In his hand he wields a gleaming sword. His eyes, narrowed and grim, glare at you in recognition.

Stepping in front of Lorina, you yell across the clearing, "Who are you and what do you want with me?"

His eyes widen slightly, then narrow again.

"Do you not recognize me?" he growls sarcastically. "You, who are supposedly Jonn? I am Torreth, Captain of the Guard of North Keep—*your* guard!" He laughs, a low, menacing



chuckle. "A guard you will never see! I know who you are, Majin! And what I want should be quite clear. You will not succeed in your evil plans. I will rid Nordmaar of you permanently!"

"You told me your name was Jonn," Lorina whispers.

"It is Jonn. At least, I think it is." Then you raise your voice to the warrior across from you.

"You are confused, sir," you shout. "I am not this 'Majin' you speak of. My name is Jonn."

The warrior's face turns red with fury. "You lie!" he cries as he darts forward. "You lie, just as they said you would. You are not Jonn. By Paladine, I will kill you!" And he rushes at you.

You are not surprised by his sudden attack. Quickly, you realize that you can either grab the puny spear to fend off his attack (68) or you can grab Lorina and run for cover (121).

111

Your swing connects, but you're beginning to tire. There are just too many goblins. Even with Lorina nearby, cracking her whip and disarming a few, they continue to converge on you. If only the pegasus had stayed! Its mighty hooves could have defeated these goblins in no time!

The weight of the mace bogs you down. You find that, instead of using it as a weapon, you're using it as a shield. You barely manage to deflect blows that would otherwise kill you. Lorina no longer cracks her whip. Instead, she dodges the swords thrust at her. Her eyes show signs of tiring. Finally you stumble and fall at the feet of a furious goblin. It cackles evilly.

"It's death for you, human swine!" it gloats. "And once you're dead, it's the girl's turn next!" It raises its sword for a death blow.

Suddenly, out of the silvery light of Solinari, a huge shadow swoops down and strikes the goblin in the head. Brains splatter everywhere.

"The pegasus!" one of the goblins yells. "Quick, get the net!" Forgetting you and Lorina, the goblins race toward the net. The pegasus glides in and whinnies, throwing its head back.

"Jonn!" Lorina cries. "Mount him! Hurry!" She runs toward you, and you hesitate a moment. The pegasus stamps its feet as the goblins race back with the net.

Realizing the pegasus wants you to mount him, you leap onto his back. Lorina climbs on behind you just as the goblins hurl the net over the pegasus, but as they do, the pegasus rears, and

the net falls to the ground. Unfortunately, so does Lorina.

Fear overcomes the pegasus. He stomps around for a moment, then hunches to take off.

“Jonn!” Lorina cries. “Help me!”

Grabbing a thick handful of mane and digging your knees into the pegasus for support, you reach out and grab Lorina’s hand just as the pegasus takes flight. Lorina’s weight wrenches you sideways, but you manage to hold on. Below you, the curses of the goblins fill the night air.

Lorina grabs hold of you with her other hand. “Jo-o-onn!” she cries, her feet dangling below her. “I’m afraid of heights!” She scrunches her eyes shut.

You groan. “Now you tell me!” you shout back. “Hold on while I try to pull you up!” You shift your weight against the pegasus and pull mightily, struggling to pull the flailing Lorina up on the horse’s back.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **187**. If it’s less than 9, turn to **183**.

112

Try as you might, you can’t think of anything that will save you from Drakart.

Lorina flashes her holy symbol at the lich. “Blessed Mishakal,” she cries, “hear me. Thy—”

Lorina’s entreaty to her god is cut short as Drakart spreads his fingers and utters a word that sends searing bolts of light sizzling from his fingertips. Lorina screams as they crackle into her chest, knocking her across the room, where she moans and writhes to the floor. Drakart laughs maniacally.

“You’re mine now, cleric,” he snarls. “You will be my companion in death!” He pads quickly to where Lorina lies moaning on the floor, ignoring you completely, and places one skeletal hand upon her head.

You stare dumbfounded at first. A sense of fear wells up as you begin to understand Drakart’s intent. He plans on making Lorina an undead like himself! Gripping your mace firmly in your hand, you shout, “Stop, fiend! Leave her alone!”

Drakart whirls around and points a bony finger at you. “You fool!” he snarls. “I am done with you. *Die!*”

The single word grabs your heart and crushes it like an empty shell. The last thing you see as death overtakes you is the glowing embers of Drakart’s eyes laughing at you. ✕

After a long, silent trek through darkness, you say, "I thought you said dangerous creatures lurked in Grendar's Grief." As if in answer, a low wail rolls through the trees, gradually growing into a loud, inhuman laugh. You stop and clutch Lorina to your side. The laugh changes to a cold, cackling voice, crying, "*More! More* guardians for my forest! Come, my little ones. Come meet your new playmates!"

Immediately shadows, darker than the darkest abyss, flow silently from the grotesque woods. Against the dark of the trees, you see them as inky blots, gliding out to meet you.

"What are *those*?" you ask as the forest echoes with laughter.

"Shadows of the souls of men," Lorina whispers. "Men who dared enter these woods, now turned to shadows who want to make us like them." She fumbles with something at her waist, then thrusts her mace into your hands and says, "On the count of three, start to run. I'll be right behind you. Use the mace if you have to. One . . . two . . ."

"But I don't know how to use a mace!"

"*Three!*"

You'll have to learn quickly.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **69**. If it's less than 9, turn to **37**.

Your rest is cut short as a gentle thud awakens you. Your unknown invisible benefactor has landed.

"This is as far as we can take you," a soft voice says. Your rescuer has flown you to the pinnacle of a hill, out of sight of the burned town. The sun, partially obscured by clouds, indicates that it's midafternoon. Reluctantly you slide off the invisible creature's back.

Within seconds, Lorina is beside you. You notice that she looks a little green, as if the flight didn't agree with her. Immediately she sits down and bends over, tearing absentmindedly at a tuft of grass in front of her. "I don't like heights," she whispers, concentrating intently on the ground.

"Good-bye, Jonn," the soft voice says suddenly. "We may yet meet again." You feel a sudden movement beside you, and then the invisible creature is gone.

"Remember the feather!" another voice echoes. You look up into the clouded sky as the two bird-beasts wink into sight over

your head. Their strong, lionlike bodies are covered with glossy fur. Beautiful, strong black wings beat steadily as they hold stationary above you. Their nearly human faces smile down warmly, almost gratefully, at you. They look so very familiar; if only you . . . But even as the thought enters your mind, they lift their paws in salute and fly off into the sky.

You watch as they soar gracefully out of sight. After a few moments, you look down at Lorina. She is still hunched miserably over the ground. She looks up at you and smiles wanly. "I feel terrible! I clutched that . . . that thing so tightly that I pulled some of its feathers out. I got a whole handful before it told me to hold on to its neck." She picks a feather off the ground. It's long and slender and black. . . .

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 7 or more, turn to 27. If it's less than 7, turn to 78.

115

The craggy cliffs and jagged face of the mountain range loom before you. Huge boulders lie everywhere at your feet, dislodged from the high peaks above. You look up, awed by the sight. Other rocks tower precariously above you, as if waiting for someone to topple them over. You shudder at the thought of one of those monoliths tumbling down and . . .

"I'd hate to have one of those rocks fall on me," you say to Lorina. "Let's see if we can find a way up."

You move among the boulders, climbing over occasional small rockslides, scanning the craggy mountains above for a way to reach the top. The sun hides behind the clouds overhead, leaving the crags dark and shadowy. The mountain face is steep and treacherous, and it seems obvious that it's too dangerous to attempt without ropes.

You're about to tell Lorina that you'll need to find ropes somewhere when she calls, "Look, Jonn! A passage!"

You scramble over rocks until you reach her side. Sure enough, between two towering monoliths is a small, narrow passage, hidden from view from any other angle. You scan the mountain face and see that it seems to go all the way up. Not as steep as the surrounding slopes, the passage twists into a small valley enshrouded by rocks and boulders. The pathway works its way in and out of the boulders until it disappears in the clouds far above you.

You step cautiously onto the path and hesitantly touch the monolithic boulder that marks the trail's beginning.

"I guess this is it, Lorina," you say. "We just follow the path straight to Drakart's front gate. He'll let us in, tell me who I am, and we're home free!" You laugh ruefully. You both know there'll be a lot more to it than that.

"Well, let's get started!" she agrees.

At first, the trek up the mountain goes swiftly. The gravel path is relatively smooth, although obviously unused. Tall weeds grow intermittently along the trail. Occasionally you must climb over small rockslides, but these present no big difficulty. The trail winds up the mountain at an almost leisurely pace, although your pace is far from leisurely. You hurry up the trail with as much speed as you can muster.

The day passes slowly as you make your way up the slope. You stop once to look down at the valley far below. Huddled within its ivy-twined walls is the village, small and remote, seeming no larger than a small coin. Beyond the village, as far as you can see, stretch the plains of Nordmaar. If you squint, you think you can even see the edge of the Great Moors themselves. After a short rest, you continue your upward trek. You are already visibly closer to the billowing clouds above.

About three quarters of the way up, Lorina stops you, her breath labored from the continuous hike. Tiny fingers of fog swirl around your feet. Soon you will be swallowed by the tumultuous clouds.

"Jonn!" she pants. "I... must... rest. My feet are... getting blisters." She plops herself down on the dusty path and removes her boots. She sighs as she wiggles her toes. "I didn't realize how much effort this would take!" she continues. "I'm beat!"

You take the opportunity to look around you. The trail is lined with boulders perched precariously on the side toward the mountain. A steep cliff rises above you, with rocks and boulders poised atop its peak. Above the peak churn the ever-darkening clouds.

Lorina puts her boots back on while you continue scanning the mountaintop. Occasionally through the clouds you see the top of the mountain. While you're studying the peak and wondering just where Drakart's castle might be, you see a movement behind the rocks overhead. A few pebbles cascade down the trail, stopping nearby. Lorina stands up.

"A mountain goat, perhaps?" she asks, shaking the dust from her tunic.

You continue to watch the trail where you caught sight of the movement. Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to 95. If it's less than 9, turn to 188.

116

The creature struggles to escape. *Now or never!* you think, and with one powerful blow, you strike the undead monster with the stone. It slumps limply to the ground.

Rolling off the creature, you lie prostrate on the ground for a moment to catch your breath. Then slowly, deliberately, you turn the thing over.

"Lorina!" you gasp. Quickly you place your fingers on her pulse and search desperately for some sign of life. After several seconds, you feel a weak pulse. You sigh with relief, but not for long. Blood trickles down her neck from a wicked gash at the base of her skull.

You search her pouches and locate some gauze to stop the bleeding. Finding a strip of cloth in another pouch, you tie the gauze securely to the gash. In the darkness of the wood, you peer closely at the wound. No blood is seeping through your makeshift bandage. Bending over Lorina's unconscious form, you gently slide your arm under her to pick her up, when your fingers touch something cold and hard. Being careful not to disturb the bandage, you pull a long, slender object out from under her. It's the sword that Lorina was carrying. You grip the hilt of the weapon, then carefully lift Lorina up. Cradling her in your arms, you move through the eerie wood.

Long, wispy tendrils of branches hang across your path, brushing against your face and leaving stinging scratches. You duck your head, trying unsuccessfully to avoid their painful touch. Brambles tear at your ankles, leaving small rivulets of blood where they break your skin. Raised roots and trailing vines catch at your feet, making it difficult to walk, especially with Lorina growing heavy in your arms. You begin to hope that Lorina's god is watching over you; it may be the only way you'll get out of this place.

And perhaps she is, for soon you step out into a wide clearing. A few dozen yards to the north is the same tall birch forest you remember seeing before you entered Grendar's Grief. You

squint as the sun blazes down on you, then quickly scan the trees for signs of Torreth. He is nowhere to be seen.

You look at Lorina, lying unconscious in your arms. Your eyes quickly check the bandage wrapped around her head. A small spot of blood stains the gauze. Further inspection, though, reveals that the bleeding has stopped.

Lorina stirs, reminding you of the extra weight you carry. You gently set her down, relieved to feel the blood rush back into your arms. You massage your limbs as you sit down beside your female companion.

After checking the bandages on her head, you are reassured that the blood has stopped flowing. Coagulated blood mats her hair. Gently you untie the bandage and inspect the gash. You wince at the sight of raw, exposed flesh peeking through a blackened crust of blood. You quickly clean it with water and rewrap it with a fresh cloth. Lorina moans but doesn't awaken.

Your eyes stray upward, noting that the sun lies low in the western sky. Suddenly you jerk upright. Wasn't it morning when you entered Grendar's Grief just a short while ago? You weren't in the gruesome grove that long, were you? How could the entire day have passed by so quickly?

Your questions go unanswered as your stomach begins to grumble. You make sure Lorina is safely hidden from view in a clump of brush. Then, with some of the fishing gear from one of her pouches, you go hunting for a stream. If you are lucky enough to find one, all you have to do is remember how to fish.

Night falls before you return. Solinari, the brightest of Krynn's three moons, lights the way as you make your way back to Lorina. Lunitari, another of Krynn's moons, tinges the tops of the birches pink. Nuitari, the last of Krynn's moons, broods silently in the black sky.

By dumb luck or Mishakal's blessing, you find a stream and catch two small fish, enough to abate your growing hunger. After checking Lorina one more time, you cook and eat your dinner, then bed down for the night. You hope your luck holds and nothing happens in the night.

Mark one day off the time track on your Character Stats Card, then turn to 150.

117

The birch grove isn't more than a few hundred feet wide before you emerge on the other side—it's almost like a splinter off

Grendar's Grief. Stretched out to the right and in front of you for as far as you can see are grassy hills, gently rising and falling into the distance. The Great Moors lie exposed and foreboding to the west, with Grendar's Grief now behind you, over your left shoulder.

Lorina scans the eastern horizon. Your eyes follow her gaze, but you see nothing in particular.

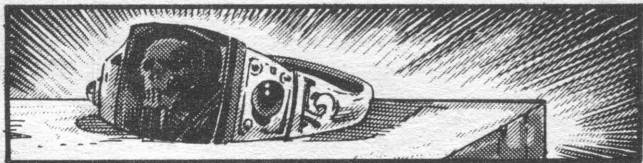
"What are you looking for?" you ask.

Lorina shivers and turns back to you. "Dragons," she replies. "I don't want to be caught unaware if one happens to fly overhead."

With one final glance at the eastward sky, you turn and step onto the moors. At once the air, thick and stale, settles heavily around you. The ground beneath you oozes and issues forth a fetid smell. The entire atmosphere is decidedly morose and unpleasant. Oddly enough, your only distraction is an unusual itching on the fingers of your left hand that gets worse as you travel deeper into the moors. You imagine some sort of grotesque fungus has infected your skin, but you can see nothing when you inspect it. Scratching brings no relief. Soon you simply ignore it as if it's part of the miserable landscape that you are trudging through.

As the day drags on, you begin to wish there was another way westward. The day is hot and muggy. Your clothes stick to your skin. Your feet, soaked from the mushy ground, plod ahead. All around you, the moors seems to writhe with a will of their own. Occasionally you sidestep small creatures that slither out of the soft ground and scurry away. It's only when the sun has set and darkness falls around you that you stop for the night.

Lorina takes the first watch while you make a makeshift bed on the cold ground and fall asleep. Mark one day off the time track on your Character Stats Card and turn to 103.



Still trying to recover from the shock of seeing the blood well up on your chest, you're not prepared for Htrag's next blow. He slices into your belly. You grab the sword, cutting your fingers on its sharp blade, and stare at the assassin. Htrag laughs a deep, sinister laugh.

"Sweet dreams!" he says, his evil eyes shining. Then, with a flick of his wrist, he jerks up on the sword, disemboweling you. You gasp and collapse into a heap at his feet.

So close to the end, yet so far! Go back to the beginning of the book and try again! ✕

"I'm sorry, but I just can't seem to make up my mind," you tell Lorina. Your hand sweeps the landscape as you mutter, "It all looks so foreign to me."

Lorina frowns. "Then you'll just have to guess which way to go." She sighs. "Take your pick. Which way?"

If you want to go east, across the grassy plains, turn to **62**. If you choose south, through the grotesque trees, turn to **86**. If you want to investigate the haze to the north, go to **101**. Or if you think you want to go west, toward the reddening sky, turn to **177**.

You pause and press your ear against the door. In a moment, you hear another loud groan.

"It sounds as if someone's dying in there," you whisper. She presses her ear against the door next to yours.

"Perhaps I could help whoever it is," she murmurs.

Suddenly the groaning changes character. It starts out as a low mumbling sound, then quickly rises to a hoarse whisper. Whoever is behind the door is calling your name!

Without hesitation, you fling the door open and rush inside the room. There, lying half-naked on a bed bereft of pillows, a frail old man thrashes about feverishly. His gray hair lies tangled and matted against his sunken face. Spittle streams unnoticed into his grizzled beard. Next to the bed sits a dejected-looking man, rocking back and forth, his face covered by his hands.

As you enter, the man next to the bed looks up, his bloodshot eyes staring grimly from a haggard face. "It's about time you

came, you ingrate!" he says accusingly. "Ever since you failed your fool quest, you've avoided him. He should have disowned you long ago, but instead he keeps calling out for you. You should be ashamed of yourself!" The old man then rises from his chair and moves to the other side of the room, keeping a sharp eye on you.

Overcome by compassion and stung by the old man's words, you kneel down by the unconscious man on the bed. He continues to thrash about and call out your name. You reach out and take one of his hands in yours. With your other hand, you try to calm him.

"Jonn?" he rasps.

"Yes. I'm here," you answer soothingly, wondering who this person is. Something tugs at your memory.

The old man tries to rise, then falls back on the bed.

Quickly you check his pulse. You locate it, but it's thin and weak . . . too weak. Lorina lays her hands on his head. After a few short words of supplication, she shakes her head.

"He's too far gone, Jonn," she says sadly. "There's nothing I can do for him."

Trembling, you continue holding the old man's hand. Something tugs at the back of your memory.

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **47**. If it's less than 11, turn to **133**.

121

Something tells you that a spear is just no match for a sword in the hands of a trained—and angry—warrior. Without a more substantial weapon, you know you don't have a chance against him. You grab Lorina and dash toward the deformed, grotesque woods to the west. At once aware of your destination, Lorina struggles to hold you back.

"No, Jonn!" she cries, her fingers tugging at your viselike grip. "Not there! Grendar's Grief will suck your life from you! You can't go in there!"

You turn pale at Lorina's reminder of the Death Forest and pull up short. You look desperately at the twisted woods and then back at Torreth, who is closing the distance between you rapidly. "Death awaits me out here, too," you yell and continue running toward the woods. "I'll just have to take my chances in the forest!"

Lorina claws desperately at your fingers. "I won't go in there, Jonn!" she screams.

"Then don't," you yell. It isn't her the warrior is after anyway. You let her go and bolt for the woods.

Behind you, the warrior grunts as his feet thud against the dirt. You can almost feel his breath on your shoulder, his hand reaching out to grab you. Your legs carry you swiftly toward the misshapen trees, your pulse racing.

Ahead, the twisted, deformed trees hungrily await your arrival. A stench, cold and rancid, assails your nostrils. You begin to doubt your decision, but there's nowhere else to run. The warrior blocks your escape to the north. Nothing in the east can hide you. The south is as foreboding as this wood. Grendar's Grief is the only logical choice.

You leap toward the wood. The trees seem ready to devour you. Suddenly something thumps into your back with incredible force, knocking the breath from you. You tumble to the ground just short of the malignant birches. On top of you rolls the heavy bulk of Torreth.

You twist under his weight, trying to throw him off, but he pins you down, his lips curling into a snarl. "It's no use, Majin!" he hisses. "You will not complete your evil plans. I'll kill you first." He struggles to sit up while he holds you down. You hear metal scrape against rock as he pulls his sword from where it fell under his feet. Knowing this man means to kill you, you thrash desperately under his weight, fighting to find a way to escape.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to 175. If it's less than 9, turn to 28.

122

You creep cautiously through the swirling mists. The ring on your finger twitches as wisps of fog make contact with it. You realize that the voices come from somewhere off the main path. Picking your way carefully, you climb onto the stones away from the path until you are hidden by a large rock. The voices come to you clearly.

"I ask you again, Ragma. Help me get the ring!" a deep voice whispers fiercely. "The master has ordered it!"

A high, whining, voice replies. "The last time you came to my lair and asked me to help, I had to carry that bloody fool back down the mountain to you!"



You shudder violently. The whiny voice touches a chord inside you that freezes your bones. The voice continues.

"And now you tell me you think he's back again. You aren't even sure if that landslide killed him! I should have gouged his eyes out and eaten him alive the first time we had him. But, no! You said you had plans for him. If I didn't like you, Htrag, I'd tear you apart this instant!"

Htrag growls. "How was I to know that fool cleric would rescue him while I was away hunting food? Well, she's dead, too, if that rockslide did its job. Drakart wanted them both dead and his ring returned! I need your help to get the rocks off them so I can get that blasted ring!"

Lorina gasps beside you and you hush her quickly.

The one called Ragma laughs hideously. "Sure—anything for you, Htrag. But remember what my payment is. You still owe me from last time!"

Htrag makes a gagging sound, then quickly recovers. "When we're done—if you're still alive, that is."

"What did you say, Htrag?" screeches the voice.

Your head spins. There's something familiar about that voice . . . something that sends chills down your spine.

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 8 or more, turn to **129**. If it's less than 8, turn to **109**.

123

You count at least fifteen dwarves rushing toward you! You raise your sword to ward off the attack as the first dwarf slashes wildly with his sword. Unfortunately, as you do, your foot catches in a tuft in the ground, and you fly forward, off balance. You slam into the dwarf and knock him off his feet. He curses as both of you thud to the ground, arms and legs entangled.

Before you can disentangle yourself, the rest of the dwarves surround you. One dwarf grabs your sword, then presses his own blade against your back. You stop struggling as soon as you feel the point of the cold steel between your shoulder blades.

"Storr wants to see you!" The dwarf prods you with his sword's tip until you unwrap yourself from the dwarf beneath you and stand up. Quickly two more dwarves catch your hands and strap them behind your back. Reluctantly you make your way past the rest of the dwarves until you face Storr, the dwarf with the twisted smile. Turn to **161**.

For a second, Lorina's entreaties seem to have a calming effect, but the gyrating eye persists until you can no longer resist it. Your blood pounds. Soon the red lines begin to dance, wriggling in such a frenzy that you can't help but get caught up in them. Faster and faster they dance. Faster and faster your heart beats. Blood rushes to your head, your fingers, your toes. Faster and faster it goes—until suddenly, it bursts. You scream in pain as blood explodes inside your brain. Then, just as suddenly, a coolness washes over you. Then darkness. The last thing you hear before death takes you is Lorina sobbing. ✕

You are in another small chamber with another set of stairs leading up, only this time they're spiral stairs. The ring on your finger continues to pulse wildly.

Standing up, you pull Lorina to her feet. "Here we go again!" you mumble as you place your foot on the bottom stair. Together, you and Lorina climb the long spiral staircase.

Winded, you finally reach the top. A long, narrow hallway leads away from the staircase. At the end of the hallway is a door. Something tells you that behind this door lies the root of your quest.

"This is it, Lorina!" you whisper. You hurry down the hallway until you stand before the door. Then, taking a deep breath and bracing yourself, you open it. Turn to 66.

Despite your troubled thoughts, you sleep surprisingly well. If you have any dreams, they're too deep to be remembered. As the sun rises over a small hill near your camp, you stretch your arms and yawn—then suddenly freeze.

A sharp blade is pressed against your neck.

Your eyes spring open. You immediately wish they had remained shut. Above you towers a lanky man, his scraggly hair matted in unruly clumps against his head. Clothes fit for a beggar hang loose on his body. Three other figures, heavily cloaked and hooded, stand close behind him.

"Well, well, if it isn't Majin himself," the lanky man's gruff voice says. "Our prince will be pleased with today's catch. We've been looking all over for you, Majin." He laughs evilly as he taps the blade on your throat. His three robed companions

chuckle, but it is a strange, inhuman hissing sound that escapes the folds of their hoods.

You grope for your sword, only to realize that the man above you is holding it to your throat. "By the way," he chortles, "thanks for the gift, Majin. I was in need of a new sword." He presses the blade firmly against your neck. You gulp. Then, remembering Lorina, you dart a quick glance toward where she lies. She's gone!

The man hands your sword to one of his cronies and grabs you roughly by the scruff of your neck. He jerks you to your feet and draws you close, until you smell his stinking breath. Then he reaches down, grabs the hand that bears the ring of the royal house of North Keep, and pulls it up in front of your face. The ring gleams in the morning sun as he hisses, "Give me the ring now, and perhaps I'll spare your life!"

You pull your fist away, ready to strike him. Suddenly the robed figures surround you. A blade presses sharply into your back, and two others poke your rib cage on either side. Slowly you lower your fist.

"Do that again, slime, and you'll end up skewered," the man in front of you spits. "Kapak," he continues, nodding to the hooded man on your left, "take his ring!"

Kapak grabs your hand before you can retract it.

"No!" you cry, trying to pull your hand away, but one hooded figure has you in a viselike grip. You try to struggle against his relentless grip and are shocked into numbness. You can't believe what your eyes are telling you.

The hand that grips your wrist is like something out of your worst nightmares. It is more like a scaly, taloned claw than a hand. You stare in disbelief up the scaled, tightly muscled arm into a horrible caricature of a human face with a long, lizardlike nose, half-reptilian, half-human. Its lipless snout parts to reveal sharp fangs and a snakelike tongue. It hisses an eerie, inhuman laugh and pulls back its hood.

Your eyes widen even more as you see the rest of its visage. Two short horns protrude through a black leather helmet that rests on top of its flat head. Yellow, reptilian eyes glint wickedly at you through two slits in the helmet. From beneath the helmet, back below the creature's horns and fringing the back of its jaws, hang long strands of almost-human hair.

As the figure lowers its hood, the creature's cloak parts, and you glimpse the rest of its body. It's entirely covered by fine,

tiny scales. The creature wears a black breastplate, strapped on by a black leather harness. A wide belt around its waist carries two sheaths, holding a sword and dagger and securing a leather breechclout to its body. Beneath the hem of the robes, a long, reptilian tail with hardened leather plates strapped to it twitches incessantly, like a cat's tail. Its three-clawed feet anxiously paw the dirt.

Two other sets of dragonlike hands hold your arms tightly. Startled, you look around and realize the other two robed figures are also dragonmen, though smaller than Kapak. They wear no helmets and have bony ridges adorning their scaly, lizard-snouted heads.

A malevolent chuckle snaps your head back to the front. The man before you looks at you, puzzled. "Surely you remember my draconian friends from down south," he hisses in your face. "Of course you do . . . especially Kapak. You met them at our little party a few nights ago." Your eyes widen at the mention of this "party." Dim but horrible memories try vainly to reach the surface of your brain but fail.

He grins crookedly, confusing your attempts to remember. "I see you do recall. It was a pity you had to leave early—the fun was just beginning. But not to worry. We'll just pick up where we left off. Now, the ring!"

Suddenly Kapak twists your wrist, forcing your hand open. Clawed fingers grab the ring and yank with such force that you gasp, but the ring refuses to budge.

"It won't do no good, Morlan," Kapak hisses. "It's jussst like when we had him before. It ain't gonna come off—not like thisss."

"Then cut it off!" Morlan screams, maniacal rage erupting within him. "I refuse to pamper him this time!"

"But you can't do that," complains Kapak in his hissing voice. "The ring will disap—"

"An old wives' tale!" shrieks Morlan. "Do as I say, *now*, or would you rather I inform the Highlords of your refusal to finalize the North Keep arrangements?"

Kapak snarls vehemently at Morlan's mention of the Dragon Highlords, then snaps something to the smaller draconians in a guttural, unknown language. They stretch out your arm, holding it even more tightly as you struggle. Morlan still grips you firmly by the neck. Kapak smiles cruelly as he pulls out a sword and raises it over your arm. You cringe as premature

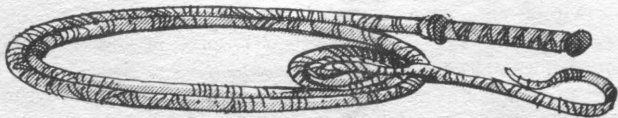
pain courses up your arm. You try to jerk your hand away, but the draconians hold it firmly. Kapak growls savagely and Morlan laughs insanely as the blade slices swiftly downward.

You convulse with fear, but the blade never strikes! Instead, a sizzling hiss pulses through the air, followed immediately by a loud crack. The draconian's growl turns to a howl of pain as the lash of a whip rips a gash across the creature's right eye. It staggers backward, half-blinded. Morlan and his draconians release you as they spin about to face their unknown opponent. You turn around in time to see Lorina lash out once more with her whip and jerk Kapak's sword out of the draconian's dangling claw. The weapon clatters to the ground near her feet as her blue eyes flash a cold warning to your tormentors.

Forgetting you for the moment, Morlan orders the smaller draconians to capture Lorina. As they converge on her, you quickly, almost instinctively, size up the situation. Four against two—not bad odds, if only you had a weapon. Immediately you spot the sword Lorina jerked out of Kapak's hand lying on the ground close to her. "Lorina!" you yell. "The sword! Throw it to me!"

Alerted by your shout, one of the draconians lunges for the sword, but Lorina scoops it up and lobs it over the creature's head—and yours! It clatters to the ground behind Morlan, who gloats as he whirls to pick it up. Quickly you scramble after it, tackling him in the process. You and your tormentor roll in the dirt, fighting for possession of the sword. You can hear Lorina's whip cracking viciously behind you. The draconians hiss and curse foully, but there's no time to worry about Lorina now. . . .

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 10 or more, go to 33. If it's less than 10, go to 92.



127

Lorina finally settles down, clinging fearfully to your waist. Closing your eyes, you lean forward against the pegasus's

strong neck, feeling the cool night air around your body. Far below you, the Great Moors speed by.

Lorina wriggles uncomfortably. In a choked voice, she whispers, "Talk to me, Jonn. Help me forget where I am."

You try to think of something to talk about. You remember something odd that happened while you were fighting the goblins. Maybe telling Lorina about it and hearing what she thinks will shed some light on it.

"I've been thinking about that fight," you begin.

Lorina takes a deep breath. "Mm-hmmm?" she mutters.

"There was a time or two when I clubbed a goblin who had his back to me and I—I felt . . . strange," you continue. "It was almost as if I'd done it before. And what's more, every time I hit one from behind, he just fell down—dead. It was just too easy."

Lorina squirms. After a moment's pause, she manages to say, "It just sounds to me as if you're good at fighting."

"Lorina, do you think I could be a fighter of some sort?"

Lorina pauses before replying, then answers carefully, "I don't think so, Jonn. I think it sounds more like the qualities of a thief."

"Wait a minute! Are you saying I'm a thief?" you demand.

"No," Lorina replies quietly. "I'm saying that you seem to know how to do things that a thief can do. It doesn't mean that you *are* a thief." Lorina squirms again. "Jonn," she mumbles. "I'm going to try to sleep. Maybe that will settle my stomach. Please make sure that I don't fall . . . please?"

You nod your head. You've got a lot to think about. Contrary to what you think you should feel, you're rather pleased with the idea that you might be a thief. You've probably led a very full and exciting life. In fact, it's probably because you're a thief that you're even going to Drakart's castle. There's probably a lot of jewels and riches there, just ready for the taking. And who knows, perhaps the herbs and feather were things you stole from someone to help you ply your trade!

You close your eyes and dream of jewels and treasure and fabulous tapestries that will make you as rich as a king.

Subtract one day from the time track on your Character Stats Card and turn to 40.

128

Torreth lunges at you, catching you off guard. You dodge to the side, hoping to ward off the blow, but his cold blade grazes

your fighting arm. Leaping back, you lash out, ignoring the warm blood trickling down your arm. Torreth lunges once more. You parry, but the light spear is at a distinct disadvantage against the heavier sword. Torreth's blade slices through your tunic, nicking your flesh. You swing high, hoping to catch your opponent across the face. Instead, Torreth sees the opening and thrusts viciously at your unprotected body.

Cold steel bites deep into your right side. You gasp, your hands quickly clutching the bleeding gash. You drop your spear, barely aware of doing it. Gritting your teeth against the searing pain that lances through your chest, you collapse face-down on the ground. Subtract 9 from your hit point total.

You moan, plunging your fist deep into the wound to try to ease the pain, but it's no use. It's as though a white-hot sword has thrust its way into your very soul.

From the corner of your eye, you see Torreth's boots plant themselves within inches of your face. Towering above you, he rants, "Now, Majin! Now you will die!" The shadow of his sword rises above your head, and you close your eyes, awaiting the deadly blow. Turn to 56.

129

You close your eyes and concentrate on Ragma's voice. Suddenly memory floods your mind. It's at this very spot on the mountain that you see yourself, bloodied and bruised, cowering below a wild birdlike creature, who darts in and out at you. You see large talons raking your face, your chest, ripping into them as a vulture tears apart its prey. You relive the horrible agony in silence.

The birdlike body, covered with foul-smelling feathers, hovers above you. You slash at it hopelessly with a small dagger. The grotesque creature, with a woman's filthy upper torso and a human head growing from the feathery body, screams foul obscenities at you while it attacks you.

As quickly as the memory comes, it dissipates, leaving you shaken. You realize that the thing on the other side of the rock practically tore you to pieces once before, rendering you unconscious and leaving you devoid of memory.

"Jonn," Lorina whispers. "What's wrong?" She cradles your shaking body against hers.

"That—that *thing*!" you stammer, waving your finger wildly at the rock that conceals you from the monster on the other

side. "I was here before, and it—it nearly killed me!"

Lorina doesn't say anything. Instead, she strokes your forehead until you calm down.

Finally you push away from her, calm once more. "Let's get out of here," you whisper.

Add 1 to your memory points. Then roll two dice and add the result to your stealth skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **26**. If it's less than 11, turn to **36**.

130

The creature continues to wail as you crouch behind your hands. When several seconds have passed and it hasn't devoured you yet, you steal a glance between your fingers.

Amazingly, the monster is cowering from *you*, tossing its head and wailing piteously. You slowly bring your hands down, amazed at this strange turn of events. The minute your hands are lowered, the monster seems to regain its will to fight and once more assails you.

Reflexes bring your hands back to your head for protection. The creature rears and seems to curse you with low moans, then cowers again. You straighten up, remembering to keep your hands perched above your head.

Then you notice it. Glowing faintly in the dim light, your ring emanates a strange light. You wonder if there's some sort of magic contained in the ring. Something, a vague thought, tugs at the edge of your memory.

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to **67**. If it's less than 10, turn to **85**.

131

You dash out into the clearing. As if on cue, the arrows begin to rain around you. You dodge to the left, then to the right. Your heart skips a beat as one whizzes close by your ear. Stumbling, you fall into the path of an arrow and cry out as it grazes your arm.

"Lorina!" you call as you frantically grab your forearm. Maybe if you slow the blood by squeezing your arm, Lorina can heal you before the poison spreads. "Lorina! I've been hit!"

In seconds, Lorina is by your side. The arrows have stopped flying temporarily, but as Lorina tends to your arm they begin again.

"Curse him!" Lorina whispers as she shoots a quick glance

across the clearing. Then she returns her attention to your arm, her eyes furrowing in concern. "Jonnn," she says, "it looks like we'll be meeting Grendar's Grief face to face." She pulls you to your feet. You are already wobbly from the poison entering your veins. "You could be dead before we reach the northern trees, and I've got to get you under the protection of some cover in order to heal you." Pulling you sharply back from an arrow whizzing by, she hurries you toward the deformed woods. "Perhaps we'll be all right if we don't stay too long," she mutters as you enter the dark forest.

Thick underbrush impedes your movement as silence falls around you, and darkness seems to swallow you up. From somewhere deep within the woods, you feel more than hear a slow, mesmerizing pulse—like the beat of a dying heart.

"The life-stealer!" Lorina murmurs, answering your thoughts. She then returns her attention to your wound.

Suddenly you gasp, sucking in air that doesn't come. Your hand grabs at your throat. "Lorina!" you croak, barely able to breathe. "The poison . . . ahhhhh! . . ."

You drop to the ground, clawing, trying to open your throat for precious air. Your eyes feel as if they've burst, and a bloody wetness clouds your vision. You try to scream, but you only manage to gurgle. All this time, Lorina remains kneeling beside you, holding you firmly to keep you from thrashing about. She murmurs soft words that are indiscernible to you. Then, just as you feel you must surely die, a numbness washes over you. You fall limp in Lorina's arms, grateful for the release. Lorina lets out a long, heavy sigh.

"You're a difficult man, Jonnn," she says, her voice seeping slowly into your muddled mind. "One of these days, I might just let you die." But she rests her hand on your shoulder to comfort you.

Minutes pass before you are able to sit up. You listen to the subtle pounding of what Lorina called the "life-stealer" throbbing in the dark recesses of Grendar's Grief. You can't see Lorina clearly in the darkness that surrounds you, but you sense that she sits rigid, tense.

"I was a fool, Jonnn!" she quietly hisses, berating herself. "I almost killed you. Bringing you here with poison in your system was as good as signing your death warrant. This evil forest kills by rapidly speeding up time. I was barely in time to save you." Standing, she looks around at the dark, shadow-laden

trees, "Let's get out of here!" she urges emphatically.

You pull yourself to your feet, brushing a long, fingery limb from one of the trees away from your face. You shudder as the slow pulsing deep within Grendar's Grief beats its relentless rhythm. Shaking your legs to get the circulation going, you say, "Okay, I'm ready." Then you start out of the forest.

"Hey! Where do you think you're going?" Lorina's surprised voice stops you.

"Out!" you answer, perturbed. You pause and look around you. "At least I think I am. Isn't this the way we came in?"

"No." Lorina pauses. "At least I don't think so." She spins around, looking through the nether light between the thick boughs of twisted trees, trying to spot something familiar. Then, cursing lightly, she says, "I think we're lost, Jonn." Turn to 17.

132

There's something about bashing the door down and alerting Drakart to your presence that makes you feel uneasy. You lower the mace.

"What's wrong?" Lorina asks.

"I don't know," you reply, wiping your hand over your brow. "There just must be some other way of doing this." Just then you notice the pulsing of the ring on your finger. It glows eerily in the dark stairwell. You hold it up so Lorina can see it. "Wouldn't it be great," you muse out loud, "if all I had to do to open this door is touch the lock with this ring?" As you speak, you demonstrate to Lorina by touching the ring to the lock.

You jump in total amazement as the door silently swings open. Lorina clutches your sleeve. You look at her, wondering if the fear on her face is mirrored in your own.

Carefully, quietly, you step through the door. Turn to 160.

133

You allow the persistent tug of memory to fade. It means nothing to you. You stare at the sunken-faced old man. After a few minutes, you stand up to leave.

"I wonder who he is," you murmur under your breath, turning to leave. Lorina takes one last look at him, then starts to follow you.

Suddenly three guards burst through the door! You recognize them as the same three you escaped from in the dungeon. The

large human guard steps forward, smiling wickedly. "I thought we might find you here," he growls. "Prince Rudol has made it quite clear that no one was to enter this room, especially you, Majin. Take them!"

Before you can react, the two robed draconians leap on top of you. Their claws bite into your arms, pinning them to your sides. Then they twist your arms cruelly behind your back and force you out the door and down the hall. Lorina follows in the grip of the human guard.

Soon you reach a set of ornate double doors. The guards fling them open and shove you through, then shut the doors. The human takes position at the center of the door, and the two draconians move to either side.

"The prince will see you now," the human announces with mock dignity. The draconians laugh their hissing laugh.

At first you don't notice the lavish velvet drapings hanging about the room. Your gaze goes instead to the large balcony on the right wall. Below, you hear the murmur of peasants in the courtyard market. But when your eyes travel up the aisle on your left to two thrones at the end of the room, you gasp in amazement. Turn to 7.

134

Silently you sneak up toward the robed figure and flex your fingers, ignoring the strange buzzing that fills your head. Your hand reaches out, and slowly, carefully, you reach out and grab the pouch. As you do, your fingertips inadvertently touch the man's waist.

"What the devil!" The man sits up suddenly.

You drop the pouch and whirl about, yelling, "Run, Lorina!" and together the two of you hurry out of the inn.

"Hey!" the red robed figure yells. "Come back here!" But you keep running at a fast pace, and soon the inn is far behind you.

"What were you trying to do?" Lorina asks accusingly when you finally slow to a walk.

"Well, you thought I might have thieving abilities," you reply. Lowering your head rather sheepishly, you continue, "I thought I'd check it out. I failed."

"I should hope so!" Lorina glares at you. You sigh, depressed. Softening her expression, she says, "I'm sorry, Jonn. You just took me by surprise. I forgot for a moment that you're still trying to find out who you are."

"Uh—yes. Well, it didn't work." You press your temples, annoyed at the strange buzzing that has continued to build since you entered the village.

Lorina nods as she watches you stroke your temples. "You feel the buzzing, too? Ever since we entered this village, my head's been pounding. Jonn, I don't like it here. Something's not right about the way the people act. It's as if they're in a trance of some sort."

You watch a dwarven man and woman walk by. Even though they look at each other, their eyes look cloudy and seem to be focused on something far away. You shudder.

"Jonn," Lorina whispers. "I'm not feeling very well. My mind feels like it's being scraped from my brain."

You stop suddenly. Lorina's metaphor describes what you feel perfectly. It feels as if your mind is being scraped out of your brains! Grabbing Lorina, you look into her eyes.

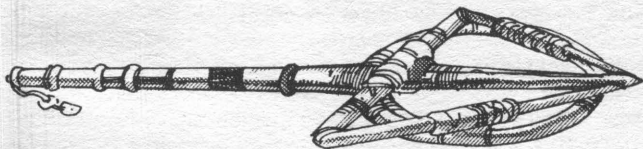
"What's wrong?" she mutters. Deep in her eyes, the same cloudy gaze the dwarves had begins to appear.

"You're turning into one of them!" you exclaim. You wrap your arm around Lorina's waist to keep her from falling. "Lorina, this village is enchanted! We've got to get out of here!" You pull the cleric reluctantly along beside you.

"Hey, slow down!" she pleads. "It hurts my head!"

You ignore her pleas. The pounding and buzzing in your own head is steadily increasing, making it difficult to run. You've got to get out of this village before you and Lorina are trapped by the enchantment!

Suddenly Lorina slumps to the ground. You pick her up and hoist her over your shoulder. Stumbling through the streets, you finally come to the cobblestone pathway. You race to the gate and pull it open, then you stumble through the gate and into the fields beyond. Quickly you get as far away from the village as you can. As you do, the buzzing inside your head recedes and the pain eases. Finally, weary from your ordeal, you drop to the ground and pass out. Turn to 63.



You replace your feather in the hem of your tunic, then descend the hill. You have no idea how far north your rescuers brought you, so you set out at a good pace, determined to make up for lost time. The low, rolling fields of grass are cooling, and the trek is fairly comfortable. Most of the distance you pass in silence, keeping vigilant for any signs of dragons, draconians, dwarves, travelers—anything or anybody that could slow your quest.

When the sun begins to set and the crickets burst into full song, you decide it's time to find a place to sleep. At the top of a rolling hill, you decide to stop. It's while you're preparing for the night that Lorina, scanning the northern horizon, calls out to you.

"Jon! Come here! Look at this!" Turn to 72.

You're relieved to see Lorina moving. You weren't sure whether the blow from the catoblepas had killed her or not. Sitting beside her, you gently wipe away some of the sweat and dirt caking her forehead. You see no sign of permanent damage. Lorina opens her eyes and sits up.

A few minutes later, you are both chewing some hard jerky she removed from one of her pouches.

"I—I'm sorry about what happened," she mumbles. "I should have tried to turn that thing instead of getting—"

You squeeze her hand in reply. "Don't worry, Lorina," you reassure her. "After all, we're still alive."

She looks at you and smiles wanly. You take Lorina's other hand and pull her to her feet.

Lorina stretches, relieved to find that her back has suffered little from the attack. Satisfied that she's all right, she hurries away from the murky pool with you.

You check the ground carefully as you travel the rest of the day, trying to avoid similar mishaps. The smoky haze to the north looms above you, casting a pall over an already depressing landscape and adding a degree of urgency to your trek. Somehow you feel certain that the smoke bodes you and your quest no good.

It's a dreary march. To take your minds off the bleak surroundings, you and Lorina discuss what has transpired since you met, trying to make some sense of it all. You recall what

Morlan, the shape-changer, said about an "affair in North Keep." What, you ask over and over again, could a dopple-ganger and draconians possibly have to do in North Keep? And why did they want you and your ring? A sense of uneasiness grows within you, fed by the rising smoke to the north. But you have come to no concrete conclusions by the time you reach the northern edge of the Great Moors.

A downpour of warmth and light from the sun beams through the smoky pall and marks the end of the moors. It seems as if ages have passed since you saw the sun. The rolling mounds of bog and bracken give way to gentle swells of grass, shrubs, and small thickets. You squint against the late afternoon sun and look into the distance as you walk.

Lorina suddenly stops you. "Look, Jonn!" she whispers, pointing up at the sky. There, not far in the distance and above you, flies . . . what? A large bird? "What kind of bird is that?" Lorina mutters softly, voicing your thoughts.

You peer at the large form hovering in the sky. At this distance, its body seems to be about the size of a lion. Huge, powerful wings lift the creature higher into the air. Long, mangy



hair covers its head. To your relief, it doesn't appear to be a dragon of any kind. It seems to turn toward you, then instantly winks out of sight. The sky is as empty as though nothing had ever been there.

Taking Lorina's hand, you hesitate, unsure whether your mind is playing tricks on you. "I don't know what it is . . . or was," you reply, "but it was hovering out there for quite a while. I felt it was watching us." You let a few seconds pass, scanning the sky for further signs of the birdlike creature, but it doesn't reappear.

"Jonn?" Lorina's voice sounds edgy. You look at her, expecting her to be watching the sky where the strange creature was hovering only moments before. Instead, she is anxiously searching the horizon. "Jonn," she begins again, fear tainting her voice, "I—I don't see the town of Edgemoor. It should be nearby, but I don't see it! Just . . . smoke—too much smoke. I've got to get a better view!" She looks at you, her eyes grim. Suddenly she hurries up the slope of a nearby rise.

"I don't like this, Jonn," she calls nervously as you run to catch up. "That town should be within sight right now. I have a terrible feeling that . . ." She stops suddenly at the crest of the rise and gasps.

"No!" you hear her whisper as you reach her side. She brings her hands to her face, her eyes wide with horror.

Your eyes follow hers. At first, you don't see anything but the grassy plains rolling gently away in the distance as far as you can see, broken by occasional trees. The sun shimmers down, making the distant images appear to dance on the plains. Then, as your eyes accustom themselves to the sun, you see a black spot marring the grassy horizon. It doesn't look like much, other than perhaps a few trees burned by a summer fire. Unless . . .

"Lorina," you say quietly. "Is that Edgemoor?"

She nods her head slowly, almost painfully. "Yes," she chokes. "Edgemoor has been razed. We're too late!"

Razed—burned to the ground, you think in awe. You recall the haze you have seen for the last few days, curling toward the sky. But who would do such a thing?

As if sensing your questions, Lorina says, "The Highlords and their dragons must be farther north than I thought. Only the flaming breath of a dragon could have wasted Edgemoor like that." She turns to you quickly. "Jonn," she continues,

"North Keep is only a day away. We've got to hurry to warn them of the dragon invasion!" Her voice drops to a whisper as she scans the blackened horizon. "If the dragons haven't already reached North Keep, that is. We might be too late already!"

You and Lorina hurry northward, stopping briefly to survey the charred remains of Edgemoor. Now nothing remains of the town, not a spire from a church nor a chimney from a house. All lie in a blackened rubble, with only a few walls melted into slag to mark where someone lived.

"I hope the people escaped," Lorina mutters. But the sorrow in her eyes reflects the doubt in her heart. You realize there were probably no survivors.

Lorina drops to her knees in the ashes and begins to utter a prayer to Mishakal. She finishes in a few moments and starts to rise. But even as she does, a strange noise reaches your ears through the otherwise deathly silence—the familiar clank and clatter of armor and weapons! *Trouble!* you think immediately. You look around quickly for someplace to hide, but you see nothing. You're trapped! You and Lorina turn northward again, weapons drawn, half-expecting to see draconian troopers led by some Dragon Highlord.

What appears instead is an immense relief, for around a small knoll at the edge of the scorched town near where you stand marches a large group of dwarves. Immediately aware of your presence, they fan out, neatly blocking your northward passage. Outfitted in light mail with spears and swords drawn, they face you in deadly earnest. You hold your weapon at the ready and face them, expecting anything.

Lorina's sudden cry startles you. "Hill dwarves!" she exclaims and starts forward. "They were our allies when we drove the dragons from Nordmaar. . . ."

Lorina's words drop to a whisper as a loud baritone voice slices through the air. The dwarf standing in the middle of the column raises his sword and yells, "Behold, men, how the gods answer our prayers! The Bloody Prince himself is here, unguarded by his minions. Capture him and bring him to me! It will be my privilege to kill the scum that butchered half my men!" He lowers his sword as a twisted smile curls on his face. Dwarves surge all around him, ignoring Lorina as they rush headlong for you!

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **38**. If it's less than 11, turn to **123**.

137

You continue your ascent up the mountain, and soon you enter the banks of roiling clouds. You feel an undercurrent of excitement flowing through the swirling mists. You round a bend . . . and see up ahead the place where the boulder that toppled down on you stood. You stop to inspect the ground.

"Whoever it was must be big to push that thing over by himself," you mutter. The ring on your finger pulses rapidly as the mists touch it. You stand and continue upward.

It isn't long before you hear voices in the mists ahead. Pulling Lorina close, you motion her to be silent.

"I'm going to try to sneak up on them," you whisper into Lorina's ear.

She nods. With barely a whisper, she replies, "I'll be right behind you."

Keeping your ear tuned to the muffled voices ahead, you both slink silently through the mists.

Roll two dice and add the result to your stealth skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **122**. If it's less than 11, turn to **36**.

138

The mace whistles harmlessly through the air. You missed! The creature strikes out at you, making contact with your bare flesh. Coldness runs through you again, ebbing your strength from you. Desperately you swing the mace once more.

Subtract 5 points from your hit point total, then roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **23**. If it's less than 9, repeat this section. If you reach 0 hit points, turn to **83**.

139

The captain of the guard's blade strikes out at you with incredible speed. Deftly you block Torreth's lunge and slide out of his way. Your grip on the broken spear tightens as you bring it up to parry another blow. Then you quickly swing the spear in a vicious arc, but the warrior springs out of its path. Instinctively you pull back, regaining your balance. Sensing an opening, Torreth lunges once again, but his blade slashes empty space as you dodge out of its way and scramble over to Lorina.

"Give me your cloak!" you rasp. Before she can reply, you tear it from her and wrap it around one arm.

Not much of a shield, but better than nothing, you think as you dodge another blow. Then you turn on the warrior. Your arm blurs with your onslaught as you thrust, slash, lunge, and parry. Torreth, surprised at the ferocity of your attack, retreats momentarily. Finding himself up against a worthy opponent, he pinches his lips into a grim smile and presses his own attack.

Sweat trickles down your brow as you continue to ward off blow after deadly blow. Your spear, for what it's worth, has managed to rip a few holes in the warrior's tunic. The cloak around your arm has saved you from deep slashes, but fatigue is slowing your reactions. Torreth appears to be tiring also. *Something must give, you realize, and soon! Turn to 19.*



140

You insert the shaft of the feather into the lock, careful not to touch the sides of the hole. Your palms start to sweat, and perspiration gathers under your lip. Slowly, steadily, you probe the hole, looking for the catch that will disarm it and unlock the door. Lorina holds her breath, watching you intently.

Your arm begins to tire from holding it still, and your thoughts start to wander. Panic seizes you. You're certain that Lorina will say something at a critical moment, or if she doesn't say something, she'll move suddenly.

Your hands start to shake, and sweat begins to trickle down your cheeks. You lick your salty lips. Just a little bit farther . . . You feel something! It's the catch! Anxiously, you tighten your grip on the feather and gently—oh, so gently!—push. You hear a soft click. Now to extract the feather.

The beauty of this particular lock is that most people think they have disarmed it once they have removed the catch. They get careless, not realizing that full disarmament only comes

about after the lock is empty. So going in and coming out must be done with extreme care.

Lorina sighs, and you dart her a warning glance. Even though she can't see in the dark, she tenses, realizing you're not done yet. Slowly flexing your fingers, you grip the feather again and pull it out.

You collapse on the stairs. "Done!" you gasp. "We can go in now." You both remain on the stairs a moment, willing your bodies to relax before you attempt to enter.

Finally, after what seems several eternities, you stand up and pull Lorina to her feet. Holding your breath, you slowly open the door and step through. Turn to 160.

141

Your only thought is to get off the blazing pyre. With both of you now freed of your bonds, you shout for Lorina to leap through the flames. Your clothes catch fire, but you hit the ground, tuck your head between your legs, and roll around until they stop burning. Your skin, tender and raw, cries for relief. Behind you, the crackling of the fire roars to a climax. You turn to see if Lorina has escaped, but she is nowhere to be seen!

Suddenly the roar of the fire is replaced by the roar of the dwarves. Converging on you, the angry dwarves raise their torches. Dumbfounded, you realize, too late, that although you saved yourself from the flames, the dwarves will not allow you to escape. You collapse under the crowd that pounces on you. Mercifully, before the trampling and beating can make you suffer further, death overtakes you, its dark sleep devoid of your true identity forever.

You have failed to learn who you are. Go back to the beginning of the book and try again. ✖

142

Caught between Grendar's Grief and the clearing, you make a quick decision. If you're going to die, you might as well die bravely. Besides, what's a few poisoned arrows, anyway? You turn to Lorina, a plan already formulating in your mind.

"We just might have a chance," you tell Lorina quickly. "The arrows seemed to be coming from this same forest, only to the south of us. If we keep close to the edge of Grendar's Grief, our attacker might not be able to get a clean shot at us. Once we reach those trees to the north, we can hide in there." You stare

at the tall birch trees just a few hundred yards away, a welcome contrast to the deformed trees you're hiding against. You only hope the two of you can reach them safely.

Lorina looks at you with concern, but seeing your determined expression, she nods her head in agreement.

"Okay," you whisper. "On the count of three. One . . . two . . . *three!*" Lorina leaps out, and with the ease and grace of a doe, she bounds toward the trees. You follow close behind.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **30**. If it's less than 11, turn to **131**.

143

Htrag draws you close to him. His rancid breath assaults your face. "Do you think that I, Htrag, Drakart's high assassin, will let you continue your foolish quest?" He laughs in your face. "You're badly mistaken," he barks. Then he lowers his voice. "I should have finished you off when Ragma first brought you to me. But, no, I had other plans for you. I was going to sell you to the minotaurs of Mithas for their sport and my gain. This time I won't be so stupid!" He flings you away from him, then raises his sword. With one deft movement, he lunges.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **24**. If it's less than 9, turn to **173**.

144

Hearing your battle-cry, the catoblepas turns and stares at you. Your sword whistles through the air and cleaves the monster's head, just below its one good eye. Chunks of flesh fly off, releasing an incredibly foul odor.

The monster hisses and snarls vehemently. Raising its head, it tries to lock you in its gaze once more. Its tail swishes through the air at you, and you realize you've got to best this tireless beast before it kills you.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **107**. If it's less than 9, turn to **168**.

145

You reach out toward the man slumped over the bar, his pouch dangling temptingly at his waist. With nimble fingers, you grab the pouch, amazed at the ease with which you per-

formed the task. He doesn't even look up. Something tugs at your memory, screaming to be released. You pause for a moment before you ease silently away from the man.

Suddenly the pouch cries out! "Master!" it shouts. "Help!" Cold sweat breaks out on your forehead. You drop the bag, staring at it as if you were some fool in a trance. It continues to cry loudly for help. Something pulls at a lost memory.

You look around you, certain that the cries have alerted the other customers in the bar. No one responds. They don't even look up!

"Aw, shut up!" the man in the red robes calls out from the bar. He pats at his side where the pouch is supposed to be. "There is no one here to steal you—not since I sent that thief—" His voice stops abruptly when he discovers the pouch missing.

He jumps to his feet and whirls around. Your eyes lock for one brief moment. You gasp as you realize that you know this man! But how?

The man's eyes grow wide with disbelief, then narrow as they lock on you. "Did you use the herbs?" he cries. You stare at him, wondering if he's referring to the herbs in your tunic. "Tell me, man," he continues wildly, "did you use the herbs?" He lurches forward.

You step back toward Lorina. Your hand goes to the hem in your tunic where you carry the herbs.

"I—I—" you stammer. The man staggers toward you, his eyes wild and filled with pain.

"Have you seen Drakart?" he rasps. He massages his temples, as if to assuage the pain. "Tell me!"

"N-No," you reply.

The man stops. "No! That can't be! You promised!" His hands grasp his head in agony and despair. "Then I've failed the test. I failed Krynn!" His pitiful wails pierce your ears. Suddenly the man slumps to the floor.

Your mind reels. You've seen him before! But where?

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 8 or more, turn to **89**. If it's less than 8, turn to **34**.

146

You remember the feather, with its slender cylindrical shaft! Fumbling in the dark, you pull the feather from the hem of your tunic. Sure enough, when you hold it up to the lock, you

see at a glance that it will fit through the hole.

"Whatever you do, Lorina, don't touch me," you caution the cleric beside you. You kneel down in front of the door. "If I so much as tickle the sides of this hole, we'll be blown to pieces." You rest one hand on the door to steady yourself and slowly, carefully, insert the shaft of the feather into the lock.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to 140. If it's less than 9, turn to 48.

147

The dwarves are furious, but their strategy is weak. They continue to beat at you from across the wall. Letting the wall serve as a shield, you turn your attention to the three that charge around the wall to attack you.

You dispatch the first one with a familiar move. He stumbles back, choking behind his beard as the soot you throw at him catches him full in the mouth. A second dwarf sees the tactic. He shields his mouth with his free hand and aims a nasty blow at your legs with his ax. You barely manage to parry his blow as you try to grab a handful of ashes to throw at his eyes, but another dwarf catches your hand under his thick-soled boot. As he grinds it viciously into the ground, you scream and yank your hand free.

Subtract 2 from your hit point total.

Pain burns through your limp hand and enrages you. Now just as furious as the dwarves, you lash out fiercely. You twist away from an ill-timed ax blow from the second dwarf and deliver a solid kick at the dwarf who just stomped your hand. Your booted foot catches him square in the chest, and he staggers backward. Almost simultaneously, you come down with your sword on the ax-bearing dwarf. Your blade gets past his guard and cleaves his skull, and he falls, lifeless, to the ground.

There is no time to savor your triumph. More and more of the dwarves begin to pour around the wall and converge on you. Your blade is flying feverishly now. The dwarves, though not nearly as nimble as you, are sturdy and persistent. As you smite one down, another presses the attack. You find your sword arm weakening from fatigue, your crushed hand throbbing with pain.

You clamber up onto the wall, hoping your added height will give you some advantage over the remaining dwarves, but they take the opportunity to aim at your legs. You find yourself

dancing up and down to avoid the jabs and blows the dwarves aim at you. Nearly spent, you dance your way to where the wall ends just short of joining the "T" with another segment of wall. Crouching for a split second, you vault off the first wall, trying to land behind the second wall and gain some respite from the dwarves.

Just as you leap into the air, you hear a furious flapping sound, and something brushes lightly under your feet. You land with a startled thud in the middle of the air on top of some sort of invisible, living platform! Frantically you grasp for a handhold on this thing that is now carrying you through the air. Your hands find thick folds of warm, furry skin, almost like an animal's pelt.

You gasp as you rise swiftly into the sky. Angry dwarf curses reach your ears. You look down and see the startled, furious faces of the dwarves as they watch you glide out of sight. But you are even more startled than they when, with a piercing shriek, Lorina sails up into the air from the side of the hill where she had been standing, unguarded. In no time, she is flying alongside you, sitting rigidly in midair, clenching her unseen mount desperately, her eyes closed tight with fear.

Soon you have left the dwarves and the ravaged village far behind. With time to think, you feel the invisible body beneath you and try to determine just what sort of beast it is. Your hands move along the body of the creature, up its neck and into a mangy tuft of hair. You reach out to touch the wings and feel long, soft feathers. The bird-beast! The mysterious, elusive birdlike beast you saw earlier must be your invisible benefactor! But why? And what kind of creature is this?

You are too tired to worry about the answers. Sheer exhaustion overtakes you, and you slump forward on the beast's broad back. Closing your eyes against the swift passage of the ground below you, you twist your arm into the creature's hairy mane to keep your balance and drift off to sleep. Turn to 114.

148

With incredible agility, you leap away from the stinking head of the catoblepas. It howls a raging, rasping noise and follows you. You continue your dodging, rolling dance. All the while, your left ring finger burns intensely, but you ignore it as the snakelike tail whips around and strikes at you again. You raise your hands instinctively to ward it off. Turn to 54.



You close your eyes and force yourself to remember everything that has happened to you. Lorina continues talking to the lich, trying to stall for time while you try to remember what it is you're supposed to do.

Suddenly memories start coming back to you, slowly at first. Then more and more memories flow through your mind, until all at once, you remember everything!

You see yourself in the small village at the base of the mountain. You have no money, not uncommon since your biggest joy is to spend what little you do have. You aren't concerned, though. Money always seems to find some way into your pocket—only this time you aren't so lucky.

You spot a red-robed man slumped over the bar as your target. Assuming he is drunk, you make your way over to him and perform one of the easiest tasks of a thief. You merely jostle him, at the same time pilfering a pouch dangling at his waist. Then you apologize for being so clumsy and turn to leave. How are you supposed to know the pouch is alive!

The minute you turn away, the pouch cries out for its master. Too shocked to run, you stand there staring at the pouch until the red-robed man grabs the back of your neck and whirls you around to face him.

"Let's talk," is all he says. He herds you to a table and pushes you down onto a seat. It is there that he convinces you to take a small bag of herbs and sprinkle them on Drakart, a mage who lives at the top of the mountain. At first the offer doesn't sound too appealing, but when you learn that the alternative is to be turned into a gully dwarf, you decide you'd better do it. The mage then gives you a feather and tells you to place the herbs on the feather, say a few words to trigger the magic in the feather, and run. The herbs are truth herbs. Once they touch Drakart, he will know the truth—that he is dead. He will then die, and Krynn will be rid of him forever. "But you must use

them within five days or the magic is gone," the mage warns. He gives you Drakart's ring, never explaining how he got it, and tells you it's the only way you can enter his chambers.

You leave the village and find the passage up the mountain. Almost at the top, you encounter a harpy who nearly does you in. You lose consciousness and awake lying on the edge of the Great Moors, with Lorina hovering over you. How you got there, you can only guess.

Now you face Drakart himself. You still have the herbs. You still have the feather. And now you know what to do!

Lorina's voice cuts into your thoughts. "You belong with the dead, Drakart!" she cries, her fingers clasping her holy symbol. While Drakart's attention is focused on Lorina, you quickly extract the herbs and the feather. Lorina continues, "And I will send you there!" She flashes her symbol and cries, "Blessed Mishakal, help me, thy ser—" Suddenly she screams.

"You will be *my* servant!" Drakart intones, and his fingers point at Lorina as he chants a brief spell. Bolts of light sizzle out of his hand and streak across the air to strike Lorina. The impact knocks the cleric across the room, where she falls to the ground in agony. You nearly spill the herbs on the floor. You want to race to Lorina's side and help her, but you know if you don't get the herbs on Drakart, there's no help for anyone!

Drakart advances toward Lorina, his red eyes glowing with hatred. Lorina mumbles words you can't hear, her eyes filled with pain. You sprinkle the last of the herbs on the feather and chant, "*Nobris cummin Drakart!*" To your great relief, the feather pulls out of your hand and flies toward Drakart.

"Run!" the mage had advised you. *But not until I save Lorina!* you think desperately. You grip your mace and leap across the room, clubbing Drakart soundly on his back. He whirls around and points a skeletal finger at you. Lorina raises her voice to barely a whisper and finishes the chant she started.

Drakart mouths the word "Die!" but it is lost in the silence that encompasses the room. Your ears hum in the deathly quiet as Drakart wheels about, furious at Lorina for interrupting his spell. But he stops short when he sees the feather with the herbs heading straight for his face. Opening his ugly mouth in fear, he screams, but his screams are lost in the deathly silence. The feather wafts into Drakart, dumping the herbs over his body.



Check your Character Stats Card to see how many days you've been traveling. If you have marked off 4 or more days, turn to **98**. If you have marked off fewer than 4 days, turn to **105**.

150

Lady Luck and Mishakal both must be smiling over you; the night passes without incident. You awaken the next morning before Lorina; she seems to be resting peacefully. After checking to make sure she's all right, you head back to the stream to try for more fish. When you return with two modest-size fish, Lorina's up already and has a fire going. She sits with her back to the fire, facing you, her eyes closed and drawn together, her hand gently massaging her neck. Her lips move silently. As you near, you hear words of supplication. Within seconds, the pain eases from her face, replaced by an expression of relief. She unties the bandage and lets it fall to the ground. Then she opens her eyes and gazes at you, apparently fully healed.

Approaching her, you drop the fish next to her and say, "I'll understand if you decide not to travel any farther with me. I'm deeply sorry I attacked you like that yesterday."

Lorina doesn't respond. Instead, she turns and jabs at the fire with a short stick. Tossing the stick into the fire, she turns back to face you, her eyes clearing.

"Jonn," she says finally, "it's clear we both need to go to North Keep, and quickly—you to find out why you carry those herbs and wear a ring of the royal household, and I to warn them of the Dragon Highlord invasion. I see no reason why we shouldn't continue to travel together. Two sets of eyes are better than one when it comes to spotting trouble, and trouble there's bound to be." She pauses, glaring at you meaningfully. "Just promise me one thing."

Relieved to hear she'll continue the journey with you, you blurt out, "Anything! I'll do anything you ask, Lorina!"

She softens her gaze and smiles. "Just promise not to kill me before we get there," she says, "or, failing that, at least to warn Prince Rudol and his father about the invasion."

You return her smile and chuckle, relieved that her good humor has returned and she has forgiven you for the previous day's misfortune.

After a satisfying breakfast, you gather your things and set off north into the birch woods. Turn to **12**.

You close your eyes and wait for the blade to end your life. You hear a scream, then a thud and a thump, but you feel no pain and the scream wasn't your own! Opening your eyes, you see two goblins lying dead on the ground. The third one is fleeing. Above you flies the black pegasus with Lorina on his back. There is a flutter of great wings, and the magnificent beast lands beside you.

"Hurry, Jonn!" Lorina urges. "Get on before the others get here."

You scramble to your feet and mount the pegasus in front of Lorina. "What—what happened?" you ask, amazed at Lorina's sudden appearance on the pegasus.

The horse launches itself into the air as Lorina explains. "When I realized we could escape on the pegasus, I lured the goblins toward it, hoping to be able to free it," Lorina explains. "I cast a Holding spell on the three guarding the pegasus. With my whip, I disarmed three others who were chasing me. That scared off the rest, and I had time to get the net off the pegasus's wings. Once free, he tore the stakes out of the ground and started to attack the goblins from the air with his hooves. They didn't last long after that. He let me mount him, and, well, here we are!"

You sigh with relief. "You don't know how grateful I am that you came when you did!"

Lorina squeezes you. "I can imagine," she replies. "But . . . uh, there's only one thing wrong." She clears her throat roughly.

"What's that?" you ask, holding tight to the mane of the pegasus.

"Heights make me sick," she mumbles weakly.

You hear a small coughing sound from behind you. "Jonn," Lorina whispers weakly. "I'm sorry."

"That's all right," you reply. "Next time, just find a better place to toss your dinner."

Lorina nods and clutches you tightly. Turn to 127.

The sivak's huge blade whistles harmlessly through the air as you duck and step around it. Your sword slashes out and bites into the draconian's shoulder. The creature snarls angrily and turns to face you again.

Suddenly a shriek resounds from the other end of the room. Lorina! You are momentarily distracted, concerned for her safety. That is all the time the sivak needs. It sees an opening and swings its sword. You recover rapidly and twist out of the way of the blow, but not before the serrated edge cuts a red gash in your arm.

Subtract 2 from your hit point total.

You scramble frantically, but the sivak is very quick and instantly slashes at you again.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **87**. If it's less than 9, repeat this section. Remember, once your hit points reach 0, you're dead and your quest is over.

153

Exhausted, you lie on the edge of the cliff with your eyes closed. You gulp deep, ragged lungfuls of air, trying to calm the fear that grips you. But you don't get long to rest. You hear the sound of flapping wings overhead, and a terrible stench assails your nostrils, and you look up.

Hovering above you is the harpy. Too weak to do anything, you close your eyes and resign yourself to your fate. The harpy has come to finish what your fall down the mountain failed to accomplish.

Landing beside you, the harpy mutters obscenities under its breath. You squint your eyes, waiting for death to come. Instead, the harpy reaches under your armpits and pulls you up. Then it takes off with you and flies you back up the mountain.

"I should kill you now, wretch," she mumbles. "but Htrag says you have something he wants. I should kill him, too, but . . ." Her voice trails off, and she sighs.

In a few moments, she drops you on the trail in front of Htrag. He tosses you Lorina's mace. "Htrag fair," he says, his lipless mouth curling in a sneer. You swallow as your eyes fall on the huge two-handed sword he holds. "I want you to know I killed you fairly." He chuckles. "Though how that will profit you in the Abyss, I don't know." Without taking his eyes off you, he shouts, "Ragma, you dispose of the cleric. This one's mine!" and lunges at you.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **24**. If it's less than 11, turn to **173**.

You close your eyes and give in to the nagging feeling, knowing that it might reveal something of the past to you.

"Remember the feather!" the strange creature had called just before it took flight.

The feather! Slowly a scene begins to take shape in your mind. You see yourself running, panting, some unseen goal almost in sight. Running beside you is a creature, larger and more magnificent than the two bird-beasts that rescued you. With the grace and agility of the lion he resembles, he easily pulls ahead of you. The flush of victory lights its face. You groan, knowing that whatever you race for is now lost to you.

Suddenly a trap springs open. The Lammasu—for now you remember what it is called—stumbles into an outstretched net. Entangled in the netting, the Lammasu cries out plaintively. The net begins to sizzle, entrapping the magical creature in some kind of magical force. With the goal scant yards away, you abandon it and turn to the aid of the Lammasu.

Cold to the touch, the net nevertheless burns its icy cords into the entrapped beast. The noble Lammasu, weakened by the strange magic, loses consciousness.

The next thing you see is the Lammasu, still weak but alive, handing you a feather and telling you something. You listen closely, but the words are inaudible. Maddening!

Lorina's voice disturbs your reverie. "Jonn? What is it, Jonn?" she asks.

Shaking your head, you stare blankly at her. "I almost remembered something—something important," you mutter, trying to recapture the memory. But it's gone.

You take Lorina's hand, quietly storing what little you just remembered with everything else in your mind. "Come on," you say. "Let's keep going." Add 1 to your memory point total, then turn to 135.

You sneak among the brush on the bogs, hoping to get close enough to hear the goblins. Unfortunately, Solinari shines high and bright in the night sky, illuminating the bogs and making it hard to find shadows to hide in. When you dash from one small mound of moss over a large clear space to another small mound, the goblins spot you.

"An intruder!" one cries and draws its sword.

"It can't be!" another protests. "We were promised safe passage by Drakart!"

"Guard the pegasus!" yells another. Two goblins run to the horse, while the rest scramble in your direction.

Realizing you have no weapon, you race back to Lorina, who crouches behind the bushes a good fifty feet behind you.

"Lorina!" you cry. "They know we're here!"

You hear soft cursing just in front of you, and suddenly Lorina stands up. "Here!" she shouts, tossing you her mace. "We'll have to fight." Lorina pulls out her whip.

Deftly catching the mace, you spin around. Your eyes pop open as a score of furious goblins charge toward you, waving their swords frantically in the air. Lorina runs to the left, whipping any goblin that comes near her. Her tactics draw half the creatures after her, but you're still faced with the other half.

Roll two dice and add the results to your fighting skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to 21. If it's less than 10, turn to 185.



156

The dark mists swirl around you as you make your way up the last stretch of the mountain face. Although the air is cool and thin, a certain electricity hidden in the swirling clouds pumps your blood and makes you feel unnaturally warm.

The ring on your finger is pulsing warmly. You discover as you hold it up that you can see the shapes of rocks through the thick, dark clouds. It also lights the pathway that leads you to the foot of a large crenallated castle. You soon discover that Lorina is unable to see the ring's magical light.

"Lorina!" you whisper. "Look! The castle!" Through the mist, you see a castle built to look like a skull set into the mountain. Jagged turrets jut out into the mists above it, form-

ing an evil headdress for the skull. Two hollow, cavelike balconies form the skull's eyes, and a large, hollow entrance marks the mouth.

"I can't see a thing, Jonn!" Lorina replies.

"Be glad that you can't," you answer. You shiver as you stare at the weird skull. "It's enough to frighten Chemosh himself!" The sky suddenly erupts with lightning, and Lorina screams. A low rumble reverberates through the misty shrouds. Deep in the mists, you hear someone laughing. Looking up quickly, you see a figure retreat into the right eye of the skull.

"What was that?" Lorina shivers, clutching you tightly.

"Drakart himself, no doubt," you mumble under your breath. You stare hard at the skull, but you see no more movement. Taking a deep breath, you pull Lorina forward. "Let's go before I change my mind."

Much to your relief, no one guards the dark, mouthlike opening and you pass easily into the castle. But your easy entrance also worries you. Someone who employs no guards probably doesn't need them—for one reason or another.

You emerge from the mists into deathly stillness. Blackness smothers you, and only when you raise the ring in front of you do you see the cavernous chamber you have entered.

"I can hardly see a thing!" Lorina whimpers. Her voice echoes in the vast regions of the cave, shattering the palling silence. "Where are we?"

You look around you. "It appears we're in a cave," you answer her. "It looks natural, not man-made. The castle seems to have been built around it." You take a few more tentative steps into the cave. Forgetting that Lorina's vision isn't aided by the ring, you point to a wooden door directly across from you. "That must be the castle entrance."

You pull Lorina toward the door. Lost in the recesses of the cave, it, too is unguarded. "I think I know why no one is guarding these doors," you mumble as you fiddle with the handle. "Only the dead would dare enter this place. . . ." The handle creaks until suddenly there's a click and the door slowly swings outward. "There!" you mutter. You step through the door into a small anteroom, guiding Lorina until you come to some stairs leading up.

"I see light up there!" Lorina cries, pointing up.

At the top of the stairs, light streams under a closed doorway. Crouching close to the wall, you climb the old wooden stairway

until you come to the door. Putting your ear against it, you listen. Silence. You try the handle. This door is locked.

"What now?" Lorina asks, trying the door herself.

You study the door. Something about the locked door sets you thinking. Looking closely at the lock, you feel you recognize it somehow. Searching your mind, you try to recall where you have seen this lock before.

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 9 or more, go to 9. If it's less than 9, go to 18.

157

Lying beside the weeping cleric, you think about the shape-changing Morlan and his draconian cutthroats. You know you must have seen him before. You concentrate on his strong, hawklike face with the matted hair. Then your mind zeroes in on his cruel, mad eyes. You feel as if you're falling into their depths, into your past. . . .

From some vague, faraway place, a horror begins to mount. You remember his sarcastic reference to the "party a few nights ago." Your flesh prickles, and in your mind, you feel little tiny feet scurrying over your body. The madness of Morlan's eyes seems to echo the mad pace of the rats racing over your body. With ravenous hunger, they gnaw at your flesh. You hear Morlan laughing in the background. All around you loom dark, dank walls. "Give me your ring!" Morlan cries wildly. "Then the transformation will be complete!" Suddenly the scene changes, and you find yourself running through brush and wood. You flee as though the jaws of the Abyss were opening up at your heels. Finally you stumble and crash into the ground, where you remember no more. . . .

Your eyes fly open, dissipating the disturbing images. Holding your ring in front of your eyes, you study it curiously. You were imprisoned and beaten, perhaps even tortured, by Morlan and his draconian henchmen for this ring. Why? What did he mean by a "transformation"? And why can no one remove it from your finger but yourself?

Morlan also mentioned an "arrangement" in North Keep. He even called you Majin, the same name Torreth used. Who is this Majin? Are you Majin? If so, then why does "Jonn" feel more like your name to you? If not, what do Majin and this mysterious "arrangement" have to do with you and North Keep? Then there's the feather and the herbs. Do they have

anything to do with this? After all, they were hidden on your person. Why weren't they important to Morlan—or is it that Morlan didn't know about them?

Questions whirl round and round in your head, but there are no answers. Only one thing seems clear: You must get to North Keep. That must be the key to the mystery of your identity. Surely there you will find some answers.

Lorina stirs, then relaxes in your arms. Her trembling stops, and with it your rambling thoughts. You drift into semiconscious sleep. Add 1 to your memory point total, then turn to 59.



158

By the gods, you think. Again we're in a quandary. Do we follow my footprint lead or Lorina's twig? You return to the footprint and run your hand over it. The shape is too irregular to really be certain it's a footprint, so you move back to the twig and examine it.

The twig protrudes sharply from a small bush. The tip is broken, but it's still held securely by a sturdy strip of bark. From the way it is bent, it looks as if you could have entered the woods from the direction Lorina previously indicated—though what that is, you can't tell, since you have lost all sense of direction in this deformed wood.

"Come on, Lorina," you announce as you grab Lorina's hand and pull her past the broken twig and start through the misshapen trees. "If I'm not mistaken, this is the way we came in."

"What?"

"It's like this," you explain. "I'm not certain that what I felt was a footprint, but I do know that the way we came flying into this place would definitely snap a twig. My guess is that we came in this way."

Sure enough, within minutes you plunge out into bright sunlight. You press your hands against your eyes to shield them as you take a deep breath. How much of your life has passed since

you entered Grendar's Grief? It's hard to tell. You don't feel any older. Perhaps only a year has passed . . . maybe six months.

Slowly you open your eyes, blinking rapidly until they adjust to the light. Long shadows spread grotesquely before you. You're not surprised to see the sun sitting low in the west. Lorina touches your sleeve.

You look at her, quickly scanning for any signs of age. But Lorina looks the same as she did before you entered Grendar's Grief.

"Jonnn," she says, as she points to where you were camping before your mad dash into the woods. "Look. My gear is still over there."

You follow her finger to a small dark bundle. Cautiously Lorina enters the clearing. You follow slowly, remembering the archer who forced you into the woods. Luckily no arrows assail you. When you reach the bundle, Lorina gasps.

"Jonnn!" she cries, excitement edging her voice. She rushes to pick up the plate she had been eating from—how long ago? She shoves it under your nose. "Look! It's still fresh!" You wrinkle your nose. Old dead fish. Ugh! "Don't you see?" she persists. "It's still today! Only it's tonight, not this morning!"

You're about to ask Lorina what ale she's been drinking when what she's saying finally sinks in. You're not one year older, nor even six months older! You're only a few hours older! What a relief!

Lorina quickly gathers everything together. "Let's get out of here," she says. Both of you hurry to the northern birch trees, hoping to skirt Grendar's Grief before you turn westward and disappear into the birches' depths.

Turn to 117.

159

The painful slap from the man who calls himself Prince Rudol is enough shock to jolt some memory back into you. Of course! How could you have been so blind? *You* are Prince Rudol—Prince Rudol *Jonnn* Greyson! You were named after your father, King Rudol Greyson! To avoid confusion, your father called you Jonnn, as did everyone else in the castle. Only those not intimately associated with you referred to you as Prince Rudol.

And the ring, of course, is magical. Given to you by the mages of the Towers of High Sorcery to combat any resurging

evil in Krynn, it grew to symbolize your position and power. It can only be removed from your finger by the person who put it there—you. And if you are killed, the ring will disappear, a fact not commonly known but suspected by many.

Which is why you now believe this man—or more likely, this doppelganger—glaring at you—Majin, you suspect—doesn't dare to kill you. He needs the ring to complete his plan, some mad attempt to take your place and usurp your power. But for whom?

Suddenly something clicks. Of course! The presence of draconians in your kingdom pretty well answers that question. Who else but the Dragon Highlords could be responsible for such perfidy?

Squaring your shoulders, you confront the imposter with all the dignity of your station. "You'll never get the ring from me, Majin," you announce. "The ring stays where it belongs—on the true prince's hand. And none other shall have it. I am Prince Rudol Jonn Greyson, not you!"

Lorina gasps, shocked by your words.

Majin screeches in fury. Turning on his heels, he stalks to the balcony in a rage, cursing you. Then he spins back to face you, his eyes smoldering with hatred. "I'll get that ring from you if I have to cut it from your hand myself!" he hisses. And with that, he pulls a long, gleaming dagger from his belt and lunges at you, his eyes glinting with mad rage.

Surrounded as you are by his guards, with no weapon to defend yourself, it looks as if he may try to kill you after all. Turn to 57.



160

As soon as you step through the door, you expect to see Drakart standing before you. The light from the room blinds you momentarily. You blink several times until your eyes adjust to the unaccustomed light. Slowly focusing on the room, you're surprised at what you see.

The chamber, large and spacious, is empty. There's not a chair to sit on, not a painting on its plain white walls. You feel the hollow emptiness of the chamber surround you. Even as you look at the room, you realize that it is the mirrored opposite of the black cave below.

You move into the room, with Lorina beside you, your heels clicking dully on the bare floor. At once the door closes behind you . . . and instantly disappears, becoming just like the rest of the wall.

Lorina throws herself against the wall, groping for the door handle. When she doesn't find it, she turns to you, her face ashen. "What do we do now?" she whispers, her voice echoing in the hollow silence around you.

You shrug your shoulders, trying not to show the fear you feel. "I guess we look for secret doors." You look at the wall you just came through. "You see nothing—not a bump nor a crack to delineate it. The only thing that even suggests the door was there at all is Drakart's ring, pulsing steadily on your finger. The minute you move away from the door area, the ring stops pulsing. You try pressing the ring on various places where you think the lock should be, but nothing happens.

"Well, Lorina," you say as you lean wearily against the wall and study the ring. "It looks like this ring has something to do with why we're here. I just don't know what."

Lorina looks at the ring with you. "Perhaps it won't work on that door from this side," she offers. "But maybe it works on another door in here." Suddenly excited, she leads you along the wall. "Feel the walls, Jonn." She presses your hands against the wall. "If the ring responds, we may have found another door we can try to open."

For the next half hour, you and Lorina feel your way along the walls of the white chamber, probing whenever the ring pulses. You find several invisible doors, but you can't open any of them with the ring. It's not until you reach the point where you started that you slump to the floor in frustration. You remove the ring from your finger and stare glumly at it.

"Cursed ring!" you mutter. You could almost swear that the hooded skull engraved on the ring was laughing at you. Clenching it tightly in your fist to muffle the imagined mocking laugh, you prepare to hurl it across the room. Suddenly Lorina stops you.

Turn to 82.

The dwarf smiles crookedly. His beard, long and gray, is tucked neatly into his belt. A shiny plate of armor peeks out from under the earthy brown clothing he wears.

"I am Storr," he says gruffly, a decidedly unfriendly tone in his voice. "I lead what remains of my people." His hands part as he indicates the fifteen or twenty dwarves surrounding you. "I came to you in North Keep with the men of my clan because we had heard the rumors; we had heard that dragons were again in Nordmaar. We wanted to pledge our help to rid Nordmaar of their presence."

His voice drops to a whisper, rich with venomous hatred. "But you, Prince Rudol—you chose to humiliate me and destroy my clan. Without giving us so much as an audience to speak with you, you drove us out of North Keep—but not before your men had murdered half my people."

Storr's mouth curls once again into the twisted smile. Angry vows of vengeance move through the crowd of dwarves. "Now it's my turn to murder you, Prince Rudol!" He spits at your feet and turns away, shouting orders in some guttural dwarvish language.

Eagerly several dwarves begin to raise a stake out of some charred fallen timbers nearby. Others pile tinder around its base.

Shocked by what Storr has just told you and by the name he has called you, you can only stare after the dwarf leader. *Prince Rudol? How can that be? you think desperately. Why does this dwarf think I'm the prince? And if I am, why did Torreth and Morlan call me Majin? And why am I somehow convinced that my name is Jonn?*

You close your eyes and think. There's got to be some clue that will help you discover who you are!

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 12 or more, turn to **22**. If it's less than 12, turn to **90**.



"Come on," you say to Lorina. "Let's go to the village and see what we can find out about Drakart's castle."

Lorina looks up and smiles wearily. She extends her hand, and you grab it and pull her to her feet.

A short time later, you reach the gate where you saw the strange, burly figure. A heavy oaken door, engraved with ornate runes, opens readily at your touch. You shiver suddenly as it pushes open to reveal a cobblestoned pathway lined with shrubbery. Ivy grows thick along the stone wall. Small blue flowers lie scattered among the shrubbery. For some reason, you have a peculiar feeling about this place.

"Lorina," you whisper, a low buzzing beginning at the back of your head. "I don't like this at all." You shiver, again. "There's something strange about this place." The fingers of your left hand begin to tingle.

Lorina looks quizzically at you. "Have you ever been here before?" she asks.

You close your eyes, but nothing comes to your mind. "I—I don't know," you reply. "I don't remember anything. I just have this strange feeling. . . ."

You walk swiftly down the cobblestone pathway until you come to a brick street. Keeping your eyes peeled for anything unusual, you hurry along the street, which is lined with small, cozy houses.

Suddenly Lorina gasps. "Jonn!" she cries excitedly. "This is a village of the hill dwarves! I can warn them about the dragon invasion in Valkinord, and they'll be able to help us drive them from Nordmaar!"

You look around you. Sure enough, you spot a few dwarves strolling nearby. An occasional dwarven child plays dutifully in a yard. No one seems to notice your fast pace, compared to their slow, deliberate manner. In fact, no one even looks at you.

"Jonn," Lorina whispers, "there's something wrong here. These dwarves aren't quite . . . right." She rubs her temples. "And I'm getting a strange headache."

You nod, noticing that the odd buzzing in your own head has increased. It seems to fill your ears. Suddenly you notice that the ring on the ring finger of your left hand is pulsing wildly. First it glows brightly, then fades until it is almost invisible. "Lorina, look at this!" you say excitedly. You show her the engraved ring. She scrutinizes it as it fades in and out.

"Chemosh!" she whispers. "That symbol—the death's-head skull and stars—is Chemosh's symbol! It's said that Drakart is in league with Chemosh. Could this be his ring?" She looks at you anxiously. "How did you get it?"

"I—I don't know," you reply, trying to remember where the ring came from. "Let's find an inn," you reply. "This headache is killing me. Maybe a rest will help and we can learn something there."

You round several corners until you find yourselves in what appears to be the center of town. A large fountain with mold growing down the sides graces the center of the brick-laid street. Dwarves pass by, speaking in low, dispassionate voices, ignoring your presence. You grab Lorina's arm and pull her toward the only inn you see.

A large sign hangs above the door. It reads, "The King's Retreat—Best Ale in Rhyon." You push the door open and walk in. Turn to 43.

163

The lingering stench of the consumed catoblepas fills the air. Without a second glance, you turn away from the spot, anxious to leave it behind.

It isn't until late that evening that you and Lorina decide to camp. You are about to settle near a bog covered with twisted shrubbery, when unexpectedly you hear the gibberish of a group of creatures of some sort. You duck quickly behind a stand of brush nearby. Then, carefully peering out, you observe a most unusual scene.

Not far from you, you see goblins sitting around a small fire, talking in their garbled language. Occasionally you catch phrases you recognize, but not enough to make out whole sentences. Close by, a black horse stands tethered to at least six stakes pounded into the ground. A bundle of feathers is strapped to its back. Occasionally it rears and neighs, but a goblin nearby lashes it with a stinging whip, raising bloody welts. The horse then whinnies and lowers its head dejectedly.

You turn to Lorina and whisper, "I want to hear what they're saying."

You keep in the shadows of the brush that surrounds their camp. Unfortunately, Solinari shines bright in the night sky, making cover difficult to find. You flit, almost naturally, from shadow to brush, dodging moonbeams.

"Jonn!" Lorina rasps through the darkened night. "Don't!" But you ignore her. You're more interested in finding a way to steal their horse.

Roll two dice and add the result to your stealth skill score. If the total is 8 or more, turn to **106**. If it's less than 10, turn to **155**.

164

Morlan crushes you tightly, trying to break your back. Somehow you manage to wrench your sword arm free and slam the hilt hard into the base of his skull. He cries out, loosening his grip. With strength born of rage, you shrug out of his grasp and chop with the sword. The blade tears into Morlan's neck with a sickening crunch, severing his spine. Morlan's eyes slowly roll back into his head, and he falls limp to the ground. Immediately the rest of his body begins to transform. His clothes, arms, everything, turns to formless, fluid putty and begins to reshape itself. Soon all that remains is a vaguely humanoid figure lying in a pool of blood.

You blink twice at the figure on the ground. Faint memories trickle back. Distant images dance in your head, images begging to be forgotten. You've seen this creature's face—or what used to be its face—before, but where?

Suddenly Lorina screams. The images die as you are yanked back to the present. Fatigue washes over you, but Lorina's cry pulls you back to combat. Turn to **64**.

165

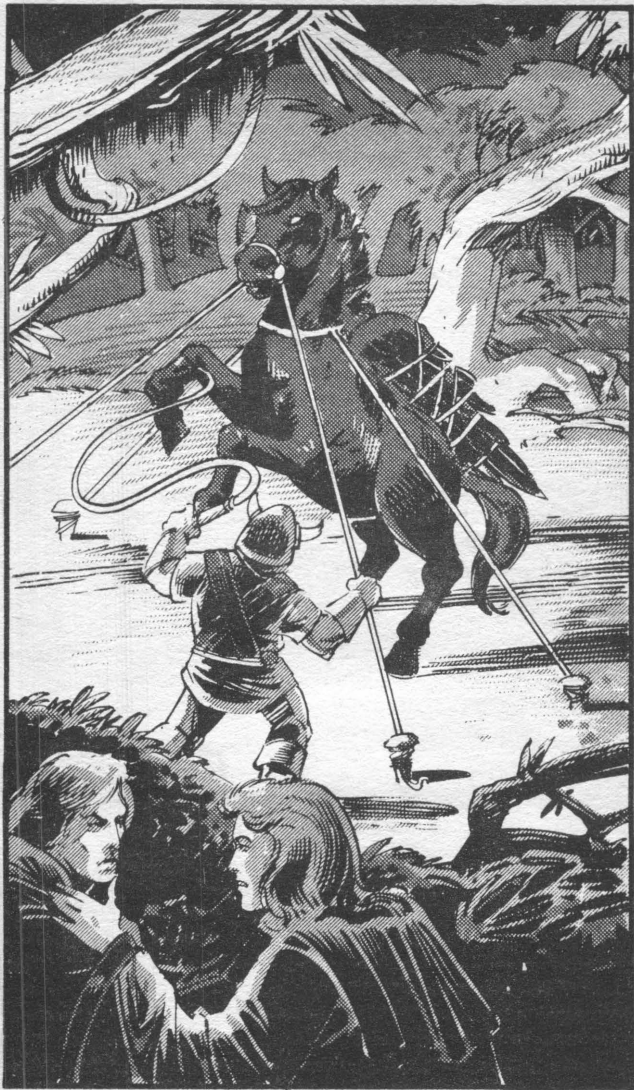
You leap into the air, aiming your mace at the base of Htrag's skull. With all the power you can muster, you bring the mace down. A resounding crack echoes through the mists, and Htrag gasps, then slumps to the ground. His sword clatters to the stones beside him.

You grab his sword. With a mighty thrust, you shove it through his neck and twist. Blood gurgles out onto the ground and seeps through the small rocks to the dirt below.

Lorina's face turns ashen. "Did you have to do that?" she croaks, looking away.

You nod. "Either that, or have him stalk us the rest of our lives. He's an assassin, Lorina."

You notice that Lorina's tunic is torn and she has several gashes on her right shoulder. She pulls bandages from her



pouches and prepares to dress her wounds. Beyond her lies the harpy, unconscious and convulsing. Every inch of her wings is torn and stripped of feathers, and blood oozes over raw, open welts on her torso.

"She won't be attacking anyone for a long time," Lorina whispers. You nod again, then you glance down at the bloodied point of Htrag's blade. Disgust overwhelms you, and with one strong heave, you fling the blade over the mountainside, listening as it tumbles to the rocks far below. Gripping the mace in your hand, you weigh it carefully. Satisfied that you now feel comfortable with it, you smile at Lorina and motion her to follow you. You continue your upward journey. Turn to **156**.

166

Inside the castle, you and Lorina move stealthily down elegant hallways. Finally Lorina stops you.

"What are we looking for, Jonn?"

You stop and sigh. Looking down at the ring on your finger, you reply, "We're looking for someone or something that can tell me about this ring!"

Lorina knits her eyebrows together. You smile encouragingly. Taking her hand in yours, you softly caress it. "Don't worry," you whisper. "I think we're getting close."

Together you move down the hallway, keeping alert for anything. You ascend staircase after staircase and explore several long hallways, wondering where everyone could be. It's not until you pass a large, ornate door that you hear the sound of groaning from inside the room.

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to **120**. If it's less than 10, turn to **20**.

167

You look closely at the barmaid. Though she's standing right in front of you, she isn't looking at you. Her eyes, cloudy and cold, remain fixed on nothing.

"What's happening here?" you cry out. You grab the barmaid, leaving Lorina slumped over the table. Shaking the barmaid, you shout, "Look at me!" She remains undisturbed, her eyes focused elsewhere, yet nowhere.

You push her away from you in frustration. The pounding inside your head grows. The buzzing gets louder. You stumble to

the chair next to Lorina, who suddenly sits up, but she doesn't look at you. She speaks in the same dull, monotonous tones of the rest of the customers in the inn, yet you can't make out what she is saying because of the excruciating pain in your head. It's as Lorina said. It feels as if your mind is being scraped out of your brain. The pain has grown unbearable now, and your eyes roll back into your head and you slump to the floor.

When you come to, you join Lorina in the same trancelike state. You have succumbed to the evil spell that is eating the life from the village of Rhyon. You'll never know who you are or what your quest was . . . or how important it was to the future of Nordmaar.

You came so close! Go back to the beginning of the book and try again. ✕

168

You try to dodge the creature's flailing tail, but it connects with your legs, crushing them, and you crash, stunned, to the ground. The warthog head of the undead catoblepas locks on you instantly, and you feel its bloodshot eye beginning to overpower you. As the veins begin to swirl and dance, you find yourself musing oddly about the swarms of maggots pouring from the empty socket of the monster's other eye. Soon the swirling overpowers even that morbid thought, and you want only to join the gyrating veins in their death dance. Each vein pounds and twists until it becomes one with you. Then the dancing becomes frenetic, and the energy builds and builds until finally you fail to contain it. And as it bursts, the blood in your body boils, and you fall, lifeless, to the ground.

Your quest for memory and identity, and all that hinged upon them, ends tragically in the miasmal depths of the Great Moors of Nordmaar. ✕

169

Meeting Drakart now or meeting him later really doesn't make much difference. Perhaps the sooner you meet him, the sooner you can discover what it is you're here for. So you raise the mace high over your head, and with one powerful blow, you bash in the lock.

Instantly the door explodes, tearing your limbs from your body and knocking you through the air. You scream and slam

into the far wall, then slide to the ground. Lorina, beside you, moans, and then there's silence. Your shoulder joints scream with pain. Another blast from the door sends rocks crashing down on top of you, and the life is crushed out of you as piles of stones bury you forever on Drakart's front stoop. You've failed.

Go back to the beginning of the book and try again! ✕

170

You turn away from the moors and glance at Lorina. "How long do you think we were in Grendar's Grief? Is there any way to tell whether it was a month or a day?" you ask.

Lorina gazes upward, searching for something. Finally her eyes light up, then narrow in concentration. Pulling you close, she points to a configuration of stars and says, "There's my goddess, Mishakal." You nod, looking at the constellation she's pointing at. She draws an imaginary line across the heavens to another batch of stars. "And over there is Paladine, warring with the Dark Queen."

Lorina turns to you. "Mishakal is in almost the same place as she was the night I found you in the clearing. Either we've been gone a whole year or even several years, or we've only been gone a couple of nights." She pauses, then continues. "Let's look at the herbs and see if they're still useful. That should tell us."

You pull the herbs out of your tunic. After careful examination, Lorina declares that they're still magical. Both of you heave a sigh of relief. At least you haven't lost a whole year! But how many precious days have slipped by while you were in Grendar's Grief?

You are too tired to care. Lorina volunteers to take the first watch. You no sooner lie down on the cold ground than you fall into a deep sleep.

To determine how many days you lost while you were in Grendar's Grief, roll one die. If the total is 1 or 2, mark off one day on the time track. If it is 3 or 4, mark off two days. If it is 5 or 6, mark off three days. Then turn to **103**.

171

You decide to ignore the village. Nervously you look up the mountain, to the storm clouds overhead.

"Does Drakart live up there?" you ask Lorina, pointing toward the clouds. Your notice that your finger tingles.

Lorina follows your finger with her eyes and nods. "Where else?" she mutters. Then she looks thoughtful. "Jonnn, point up there again," she says excitedly as she scrambles to her feet. Grabbing your arm, she looks at your fingers. "Look there!" she says. On your finger, a gold ring set with a black stone, with what looks like a death's head and stars, fades in and out of view. Lorina squints at it. "Chemosh's symbol!" she whispers, touching the ring. "Chemosh is Drakart's god." Putting her hand on your arm, she turns you to face her.



"Jonnn, are you sure you want to go up there?"

You look into her eyes. Deep inside lies an intense fear that she tries to hide from you. You reach up and gently rub her temples, as if you could massage the fear away.

"Lorina, I must," you reply finally. "It seems that I have magical herbs that I'm supposed to use somehow. I'm also carrying a feather that means nothing to me but it must mean something. And then there's the ring. That, if nothing else, convinces me that my destiny lies up on that mountaintop. Once I find what all these things mean, I'll find out who I am."

Lorina sighs.

"Come on. We've got to find a way up that mountain."

You take Lorina's hand, and together the two of you make your way through the grasslands until you reach the base of the craggy mountain. It looks much more formidable from up close than it did from a distance. Turn to 115.

172

Between the guards and the peasant crowd, you realize there is no chance for escape—unless . . .

Before the closest guards can grab you, you rush out a short way into the courtyard, point to the castle wall, and yell, "He's over there! Stop him!" The peasants immediately turn their attention to where you point. Lorina gives you a quick wink and joins in. "It's Majin! He's over there! Grab him! Don't let him

get away!" The crowd immediately surges toward the castle wall. The prison guards try fruitlessly to push their way through the surging mob to get to you, but it's obviously hopeless.

Confused by the commotion, the guards at the gate get caught up in the excitement and join the mob, leaving the gates unattended. Immediately you raise the portcullis and rush into the castle, with Lorina right behind you.

Once inside, Lorina starts to giggle. Then she bursts out laughing. "That was very creative, Jonn," she manages to say between fits of laughter.

You smile sheepishly. "It was, wasn't it," you agree. "But it never would have worked if it weren't for the high caliber of guard they have around here." Taking Lorina's hand, you pull her into the shadows of the entryway. "Let's not lose our advantage. They won't be fooled for long."

As the commotion continues outside, you and Lorina make your way farther into the castle. Turn to 166.

173

You dart away from Htrag's blade as the giant lunges at you, but you're not quick enough. It slices through your tunic and leaves a trail of blood welling up on your chest. Subtract 3 from your hit point total.

Momentarily shocked, you stare at the blood as it trickles down your chest. Htrag laughs, a deep, sinister laugh. His shadow flickers on your chest, bringing your attention back to the battle at hand. You look up in time to see him raise his blade again.

Remember, once your hit points reach 0, you are dead.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to 24. If it's less than 10, turn to 118.

174

With a feral look on its hideous face, the first goblin charges you. Quickly you start to dodge out of its way, but you aren't quick enough. The goblin takes a slice at your left arm, and a deep gash opens up. Blood flows warmly down your sleeve. Subtract 3 from your hit point total.

You let go of the mace Lorina gave you and double over, clutching the wound, but there's no time for pain. Deftly you

pick up the mace with your other arm and swing wildly.

Roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to **73**. If its less than 9, turn to **178**.

175

The sound of steel scraping against stone sends shivers through you. You . . . must . . . get . . . free!

Above you, Torreth raises his sword, his legs tensing against your body. But desperation brings hidden reserves of strength to your aid. As Torreth raises his arms, you arch your back violently upward. Caught off balance, the warrior catapults from your back and lands with a thud on the ground several feet away. His blade flies out of his hand, leaving him weaponless.

As he springs for his weapon, you tackle him short of his goal. With catlike agility, he twists in your arms and grapples with you. His hands inch toward your neck to throttle you. You push off him and roll aside. Scrambling to your feet, you face Torreth once again. Your fists clench and unclench as you circle around him. *I need to get between him and his sword*, you think feverishly.

His eyes pierce yours and his mouth twitches spasmodically as he glares at you. He leaps to his feet and stalks you, lunging periodically to test your reflexes, feinting left and right to confuse you. Before you know it, he has maneuvered himself between you and his sword!

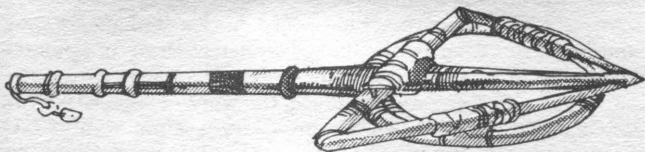
"Lorina, his sword!" you yell, not taking your eyes off the warrior. But Torreth is too fast for Lorina. He dives for the sword and lands next to it before she can move. Grasping it firmly in one hand, he rolls and leaps back to his feet. Immediately he charges you.

You manage to dodge out of his way. Growling ferociously, he lunges toward you. You sidestep his charge and leap on his back. Pinning his arms to his side, you try to force him to the ground, but he shrugs you off and swings his sword up, trying to gut you. You stumble backward, and the blade slices harmlessly through the air. Bellowing in rage, he leaps at you and knocks you to the ground. Your eyes widen with fear as the long, gleaming blade slashes down at you again.

Suddenly Lorina's voice cuts through the sounds of battle. "No!" she screams as she vaults through the air past Torreth's shoulder. Both you and Torreth had forgotten about Lorina momentarily. Surprised, the warrior turns to face his new

opponent—just in time for the cleric to fling her cloak over his face. She tumbles to the ground behind him as the cloak enwraps the warrior's head and shoulders. Torreth struggles to free himself, but his fury only entangles him all the more.

Roll two dice and add the result to your wisdom skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **75**. If it's less than 11, turn to **8**.



176

You charge into the small army of skeletons, swinging your mace furiously. Bones crack on impact and shatter to the floor. You swing again, and down goes another skeleton. A third skeleton slices through the air with its blade and slashes you in the arm. Red-hot pain shoots through you. You cry out and turn on the skeleton, bashing it to the floor. Subtract 3 from your hit point total.

Lorina's whip cracks behind you. Almost a dozen more skeletons sink to the ground before her holy symbol. Pain flows through your body, and blood flows freely from the wound. Undaunted, you continue to fight, but the loss of blood makes you woozy. Dozens of skeletons swarm around you. It's all you can do to parry their blows. You begin to tire, letting your guard down. Skeletons prick you with their swords, trying to cut you down.

Suddenly a skeleton moves in close enough that you can see small ridges and pockmarks on its skull bone. You try to raise your mace to beat it off, but the effort is too much. If the skeleton could smile, you know it would. It raises its sword and swings.

Before the skeleton can sever your head, it collapses in a heap at your feet, its bones disconnected. Lorina runs up to you and puts her arm around you to hold you up. Taking a small vial of water, she hurls it at a skeleton pressing the attack. The vial bursts, sending water shivering down its bones, disconnecting them as it goes.

"I think I know where the door is that your ring will unlock," Lorina shouts urgently. "Over there is a spot the skeletons

seem to be avoiding. If I'm not mistaken, there could be an invisible wall or something." She drags you through the skeletons, warding some off with her symbol and tossing vials of water at others.

"I'm running out of vials," she says quickly. "I only hope my theory is correct." She helps you to the far right wall, leaving a trail of blood as you move across the room. Skeletons are everywhere, except for a small clearing in the middle of the floor, not more than four feet from the wall. It seems that the skeletons are avoiding this particular spot.

Stopping just before the empty space, Lorina reaches out and touches an invisible wall! "Jonn!" she cries, leaning you against the invisible wall. "Find the door! Hurry!" She turns and continues fighting off the skeletons.

Mustering up what little strength you have left, you press the ring against the wall. The ring pulses. Moving slowly against the wall, hoping Lorina can hold off the dozens of skeletons surrounding you, you probe quickly with the ring. Sure enough, at one point the ring pulses wildly. Pressing it against the invisible wall, you hear a click. From out of thin air, a door opens, and you fall forward into blackness. Lorina follows close behind and shuts the door, leaving the skeletons behind.

Groping in the dark, Lorina finds your bloodied arm, and with gentle proddings and soft prayers, she works her healing upon it. Add 2 to your hit point total. You sit up, rubbing your arm gently, and look around. Slowly your eyes adjust to the darkness. As soon as you realize where you are, you groan.

Turn to 125.

177

The red clouds continue to swirl and churn above the dismal, grotesque forest on the edge of the moors to the west. Within their roiling billows, you sense something ominous. But even more, you somehow sense a great urgency to travel in that direction.

"I will go west," you say with more confidence than you feel. You must find out who you are, even if that leads you onto the Great Moors of Nordmaar.

Lorina turns sharply to face you.

"West!" she exclaims. "Jonn, the moors are filled with all manner of monsters! And if you even think about entering Grendar's Grief, you might as well just ask me to kill you

now!" She grabs your hand, pressing it with great urgency as she continues. "To the west lies the domain of Drakart, a wizard said to be in league with the undead god Chemosh himself! *No one goes there!*"

You turn and stare at the young cleric. It's clear that she's frightened. Her warm, brown skin blanches as she pleads silently with her eyes. Deep in her blue eyes is an intense anxiety. Could it be that you are making a mistake in going west? You scan the western horizon again, hoping to get some indication that you were wrong in your choice, but as you stare into the unholy woods, the urgency you felt before flows through your body once more.

Gently extracting your arms from Lorina's tight grip, you say firmly, "I must go west, Lorina! That's where I feel certain I'll find myself!"

Lorina bites her lower lip and gazes to the west. Her eyes faintly reflect the red hue of the tormented sky. Her brows knit in consternation as she thinks about what you have said. Then her eyes travel eastward as she searches the horizon that way, too.

Then, making some inner decision, Lorina states, "I will go, too." She sets her mouth and looks at you. Although anxiety still shows in her blue eyes, her skin regains its normal color.

Your eyes open wide. "You will not!" you exclaim. "This isn't your aff—"

"It is too my affair," Lorina cuts in. She grabs your shoulders and looks deep into your eyes. "What you don't understand, Jonn, is that I must either go north to North Keep or west to the hill dwarves who live in the Khalwilde, the mountain range Drakart has chosen to use as his evil stronghold. I am from Valkinord, a fishing village that lies to the east on the edge of the Miremier. Nearly twenty-five years ago, shortly after the War of the Lance, the Dragon Highlords invaded Nordmaar and took control of Valkinord. It was only through the combined efforts of the people of Nordmaar and the hill dwarves of Khalwilde that we were able to thwart the Dragon Highlords. We were able to push them south of the bay of Miremier, where they have been contained all this time."

Lorina drops her hands from your shoulder and turns to the east, toward Valkinord. She continues, her voice trembling. "However, th—they're back. Already my homeland is being ravaged by red dragons! Only a few of us managed to escape,

by splitting up. Since none of us wanted to brave the moors to inform the hill dwarves of the invasion, we were all heading for North Keep, to warn Prince Rudol."

She turns to face you, her eyes steady. "But now I will go west—with you. I will find the hill dwarves and warn them of the invasion, and I will help you to find yourself. You need me more than ever, Jonn," she whispers fiercely. "There is evil in the moors. The undead walk with no restriction. They kill and eat with no compunction. Your living flesh will only remind them that theirs is dead . . . and they will seek to make you one of them! The only chance you have to come out of that place alive is with me, a cleric. I will not let you go alone!" Without waiting for your answer, Lorina turns away and hurries back to resume eating her now cold fish. "Let's finish breakfast," she says without looking at you, "then we'll go."

You glare at her, angry that she insists that she accompany you, and angrier still at the relief you feel.

Your eyes turn to the west, and you stare at the menacing clouds, watching as they roil and billow like untamed horses. Stuffed in your pockets are the feather and herbs. Why do you have them and what are they for? You hope the west will bring the answers.

As Lorina finishes her fish, discarding the charred skin, you stand to stretch. You are thinking anxiously of the trek ahead and what you'll need to do to regain your memory when an arrow whistles through the air toward you! It slices through the space where you were just sitting and is lost in the brush.

"Run, Jonn!" Lorina cries, darting quickly for the edge of the woods.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to 2. If it is less than 9, turn to 77.

178

Your mace sings harmlessly through the air. You missed the goblin! Instantly it takes advantage of your bad aim and slices in, leaving a trail of blood on your skin. Another goblin joins its partner. You quickly raise the mace again and swing once more.

Subtract 1 from your hit point total. Then roll two dice and add the result to your fighting skill score. If the total is 9 or more, turn to 73. If it's less than 9, repeat this section until you're successful. If you reach 0 hit points, you're dead.

As the giant leaps at you, you sidestep, but you're too slow. He nicks you in the shoulder with his sword. Already balancing precariously on the mountainside, the blow is enough to make you lose your balance.

Waving your arms wildly to try to keep from falling, you start to topple down the mountain. Your head bashes into rocks, and your body rolls over scrub brush. You flail out with your hands, trying to grab something that will stop your uncontrolled tumble down the mountain, but nothing is there. You hear Lorina scream above you, and heavy footsteps hurrying down the mountainside behind you. A deep voice cries something about a ring, but you have no time for anything but trying to save your life.

Roll two dice and add the result to your perception skill score. If the total is 11 or more, turn to **29**. If it's less than 11, turn to **102**.

180

You smash the mace into the goblin's face, giving it no chance to scream. It falls in a heap at your feet. Your momentum, however, keeps you going, and you smash into the pegasus and fall to the ground, dazed.

The pegasus, startled by your sudden appearance, rears again. His hooves paw over your head. Your eyes widen with fear as they come down. At the last minute, you roll away and leap to your feet. The pegasus rears again.

"Whoa!" you hiss. "I'm on your side!" You pull a stake from the ground to show the pegasus that you want to free him from the ropes. The pegasus stops and watches warily.

However, the commotion alerts the other goblins, and one of them stands up. "Hork! You need help?" he yells as he moves in your direction.

Remembering that, although you're disguised as a goblin, the disguise is probably only effective at a distance, you hunch your body and turn away.

"Nah!" you grumble in a hoarse voice, waving the goblin off. Mistaking you for Hork and noting that you have the pegasus quieted down, the goblin goes back to the camp and resumes its place. It watches you for a few minutes, then returns to what it was doing. When you're certain that nobody's looking, you motion for Lorina to approach.

"It worked!" you whisper, a satisfied smile on your face. "You get the net off him while I pull up the rest of the stakes. We'll have him free in no time!"

Lorina cautiously moves close to the pegasus. By this time, the horse realizes that you're helping to free it. You quickly loosen another stake.

Suddenly, with only two stakes left to pull, someone yells, "Hey! The pegasus!" Startled, you look up to see the goblins converging on you rapidly.

"Hurry, Lorina!" you cry.

At that moment, the net falls to the ground. Spreading its wings, the pegasus tears the last two stakes from the wet bog and flies into the air, disappearing into the night! You don't even have time to watch it fly majestically away as you turn to face the furious goblins.

Roll 2 dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to **79**. If it's less than 10, turn to **174**.

181

The monster's spine-chilling screeches split the air. You continue to cower behind your hands. A long time passes, during which thoughts of your death flit through your mind. When the screeches finally do stop, you aren't immediately aware of it. It's only when a deathly pall settles around you that you dare to lower your hands.

The creature is gone. The water from which it sprang lies still and calm, once again appearing like solid ground. Why didn't the monster kill you? You were easy prey, having lost your sword.

Maybe it ate Lorina! you think frantically. No, she's still lying there, trying to shake off the effects of the blow she received. Whatever the reason, you're relieved that the monster decided to leave you alone.

You pick up the sword the creature wrenched from you and make your way to Lorina's side. Turn to **136**.

182

Your fury, coupled with your fear of Drakart, makes your adrenalin race. Blinded by the fury and fear, your vicious swing arches through the air—and misses!

Drakart reaches out and clutches your arm. No one ever told you about the chilling touch of a lich. His cold, skeletal touch

shoots a sudden frost up your arm and into your heart. You stand paralyzed, staring into the hot embers of his eyes. He touches you with his other hand, sending a second wave of ice through you, his lipless mouth twisting into a malevolent grin as he flicks a small dagger from his sleeve.

Paralyzed with cold, you stand directly in front of Drakart and watch as he lifts your left hand and slices your ring finger off. Pain shoots through your stiff limbs as Drakart removes his ring from your dismembered finger and puts it on. Then he tosses your finger aside and raises his dagger. Words form on his lipless mouth, but you can't hear them.

Lorina struggles to her feet and grabs at you from behind, brandishing her holy symbol, but it's too late. Already the mage's dagger has found your heart. You fall lifeless at Lorina's feet as abysmal cold and ancient steel leave you in Death's embrace. ✠

183

You pull with all your might, struggling to get Lorina up on the back of the pegasus. Lorina flails her legs, whimpering, as the moors pass by below her.

Gradually your grip on the long, hairy mane begins to slip. You struggle to pull Lorina up. "Lorina!" you call frantically. "My grip is slipping!"

"Hold on, Jonn!" she cries frantically.

The last little bit of hair slides out of your hand and Lorina's weight jerks you sideways. Your knees slide from their position on the back of the pegasus. The next thing you know, you're falling through the air!

"*Lori-i-n-a!*" you cry. The ground speeds up toward you rapidly. Lorina screams. Before you can grab another breath, you slam into hard ground, and your breath is forever stilled.

Go back to the beginning of this book and try your luck and skill again! ✠

184

The creature continues to struggle, but something about its smooth skin and its long, soft hair causes you to pause. Its body convulses beneath you. With the rock held ready to strike, you turn the undead monster over.

Peering through the darkness, you are shocked at what you see.

"Lorina!" you gasp, scrambling to your feet. "I—I didn't know it was you!" You let the rock fall to the ground. Sheepishly you nudge it away with your foot.

"D-D-Don't you *ever* do that again, Jonn!" Lorina stammers, wiping the dirt from her face. "You scared me practically to d-d-death!" You help her up, aware that she is still trembling. She snatches her hand away and forces herself to stand erect. "I should leave this place behind and you with it," she mumbles. "Some gratitude!" She turns away.

"No, Lorina, don't go!" You grab her shoulder and she stops. "I—I thought you were a creature that had come after me." You feel extremely embarrassed. "I was only trying to protect myself."

Lorina studies you through the dim light. Then, without a word, she turns and retrieves the sword she had carried with her. She thrusts it at you.

"Here," she says. "I took it from Torreth before he freed himself." The sword feels comfortable in your hand. Lorina, her hand still trembling, grips yours and pulls you through the blackened wood. "Let's get out of here before something else happens."

"What about Torreth?" you ask, suddenly remembering the warrior whose blade you now carry.

"He won't follow us in here," Lorina says confidently. "Nobody comes in here." She pauses, and her hand clasps yours even tighter. "Do you feel it, Jonn?" she whispers. "Do you feel the pulsation through the trees?"

You nod your head, aware of the low, almost indiscernible pounding that carries with it your name.

"Grendar's Grief is a Death Forest! At the time of the Cataclysm, Grendar, a powerful wizard, had built his home in these woods. To keep intruders out, he devised a powerful and complex Warding spell, which he planned to cast over the entire forest. Unfortunately, the day he cast the spell was also the day of the Cataclysm. His concentration wavered in the middle of the spell, and the power he had thus far conjured escaped, resulting in chaos. The trees, once tall and shimmering like those to the north, twisted and warped into the grotesque things you see now. When he entered the forest, he never left again. Minutes in the forest could mean hours, days, outside the forest. Grendar didn't know that, and within days he died of old age . . . or so it is believed, for he was never seen again.

We need to leave at once before the same fate befalls us!"

With that, the two of you push on through the deformed wood. Within minutes, the twisted forest gives way to tall, shimmering birch trees. Lorina breathes a sigh of relief.

"We're out now," she says, looking up through the birch leaves at the sun. "According to the position of the sun, we only lost a few hours. It's afternoon now!"

Sure enough, the sun has coursed through the eastern sky to a point midway to the western horizon. You shield your eyes against its bright afternoon rays, then drop your gaze. You look around you at the tall birch trees growing everywhere. You must be in the grove of trees just north of the clearing where you and Lorina were camped.

Gripping Torreth's sword firmly, you continue through the wood, falling into a thoughtful silence as questions whirl about in your mind. *Who am I—Jonn or this 'Majin'? Why was I beaten until I lost my memory? And what sort of enemy would do that? What purpose do the herbs and feather have? Will I ever find out?*

These unanswered questions continue to occupy your mind as you continue through the birches. Turn to 49.

185

The goblins converge on you relentlessly. You swing the unwieldy mace and miss. Instantly a sword tip slices across your back. You wince in pain. Turning, you swing again and score a hit, but another sword slashes your arm. You manage to connect with a sickening crack to a goblin's head. It falls dead, but that leaves you open, and another goblin slams its sword into your belly. Blood spurts from the wound. You grab the gash, and with one last gulp, you fall to the ground. All goes black as death claims you.

Too bad. You did well to get this far. Go back to the beginning of the book and try again. Better luck next time! ✕

186

The draconians surround you, their long, reptilian faces fairly gleaming with malice. You and Lorina stand back to back, prepared to make a last desperate stand.

"The ring, Greyson!" Majin hisses from beyond the perimeter of the circle. "Give it to me, and the Dragon Highlords may spare your lives." A rustling hiss from the circle of draconians

tells you that Majin's lying.

Then, just as everything looks bleak, you remember the feather! The Lammasu king gave it to you to use when you were in trouble, and you're certainly in trouble now!

Lorina tries to hold the draconians at bay while you fumble with the hem of your tunic. The reptilian creatures begin to close in on you just as you pull the feather free and toss it into the air. With one brief, scintillating sparkle, it vanishes. Then you are buried beneath the scaly bodies of the draconians.

"Take him to the dungeons!" Majin's muffled voice calls. The guards claw at your arms and face, until finally one grabs hold of your neck, choking you. Lorina cries out as another sinks its claws into her shoulders.

"I've got him!" your captor hisses.

"And I've got you!" a deep, unfamiliar voice replies.

Suddenly the draconian clutching you is brusquely torn away. Other draconians start to fly through the air and land in a surprised heap in front of Majin. When you see what's happening, you are completely confused. The guards are being flung across the room by what seems to be an invisible force!

A warm breath caresses your ear and whispers, "Your father needs you, Prince Jonn." You look to where the voice comes from but see nothing. It continues, "Remember the herbs. We'll take care of these scum for you. With this, my debt is repaid. Now, go!"

And there, in the proverbial wink of an eye, appears the Lammasu king! He has come to your rescue, just as he said he would! He stands between you and the draconians, his hairy mane radiating an almost golden aura. The muscles in his massive lion-body ripple as he paws the floor in front of him. Suddenly on either side of him, appear the two Lammasu on whose backs you flew earlier. They form a formidable wall between you and Majin's draconians.

The draconians are neither slow nor cowardly. Quickly they leap to their feet and rush to the attack, the giant sivaks with their huge double-handed swords in the lead.

But this time they have no idea of what they are now facing. The Lammasu rarely fight, but when they do, the results are staggering. As you watch, the Lammasu king coughs an explosive sound—that carries an awesome holy word. Like a wall of force, the sound moves through the room and slams into the line of charging draconians.

The sivaks are stopped dead in their tracks, paralyzed by the king's spell. For the smaller baaz draconians bringing up the rear, it is even worse. The power of the spell hits them like a scythe cutting through wheat. In a line, they fall to the floor, gasping, writhing, and choking out their last breaths as the spell snuffs out their lives. Majin, outside the spell's effect, can only stand slack-jawed as he sees his draconian guards die.

Momentarily stunned by the display of power, you gather your senses and remember the Lammasu king's command. You jump to your feet and rush for the door past the dying draconians. Beside you are the other two Lammasu. They tear into the paralyzed sivaks with their claws, ripping open their throats and killing them on the spot. They have already finished their grisly work when you reach the door.

"Stop him!" Majin shouts, but none of his minions are alive to hear. With a bound, the Lammasu king is across the room. Majin screams as the beast hits him squarely in the chest and knocks him to the floor. With two powerful swipes of his claws, the king tears the doppleganger's head from his body. Majin's piercing death scream is cut short in a bloody gurgle. As you leave the chamber, his dead body reverts to its disgusting original form, losing forever its resemblance to you.

You hurry into the hall. Running as fast as you can, you fly through the door into your father's chambers. His thin, frail body lies cold and nearly lifeless on the bed.

"Quick, get me some water!" you yell at the physician attending the dying king.

He hesitates, but when he sees you pull out the herbs, a smile lights his face and he rushes to the next chamber. Within seconds, he returns with a mug of warm water. You sprinkle the herbs in the water, desperately hoping that their healing qualities have not vanished.

With the help of the physician, you raise your father's head long enough to administer the healing drink.

Count the days you marked off on the time track. If you have marked off 4 or more days, turn to **99**. If you have marked off less than 4 days, turn to **190**.

187

You clench the mane of the pegasus even tighter as you twist and try to pull Lorina up. Inch by inch you hoist her flailing body up toward the beast's back.



"Stop struggling, Lorina!" you grunt. "It only makes matters worse!"

Lorina whimpers below you. You're able to twist your body in a way that keeps you reasonably secure on the horse's back while you pull. Finally Lorina is able to clutch your leggings. You reach down and grab her breeches and with one last mighty effort, you haul her onto the back of the pegasus, then fall forward, panting.

Lorina catches a sob, then chokes. Finally she says weakly, "Uh. . . Jonn, I think I'm going to throw up."

You sigh. "Well, just be sure to lean way over the side." You close your eyes and ignore Lorina's retching. Soon she resumes her position behind you and clings to your waist. Turn to 127.

188

You inspect the cliff above you, puzzled by the small pebbles falling at your feet. A large boulder tilts precariously above you, but that's not unusual on this trail. You search the trail above with your eyes, but you see nothing.

You turn to Lorina, who is leaning against the cliff straightening her breeches out over her boots. "Lorina," you begin, "I don't—" But a sudden rumbling cuts your words short.

"Look out!" you cry as you see the boulder careening down the path toward you.

Roll two dice and add the result to your agility skill score. If the total is 10 or more, turn to 31. If it's less than 10, turn to 70.

189

You stare at the smoldering body of the catoblepas. Something incredible just happened, and apparently you caused it. But how? The tingling in your left hand persists, then slowly diminishes. Realizing that the strange feeling might have something to do with the tingling, you raise your hand in front of you.

"Lorina! Look!" you cry as you watch a chunky gold ring on your finger slowly disappear. Lorina grabs your finger, and both of you catch a quick glimpse of the image of a skull and stars, engraved in a black onyx rock, embedded in the gold band. Then it fades out of sight.

Suddenly a scene appears. An image of a man, dressed in long red robes and darting furtive glances about as he presses something into your palm, dominates the scene. He leans close

and whispers, "Drakart!" Then the scene ends.

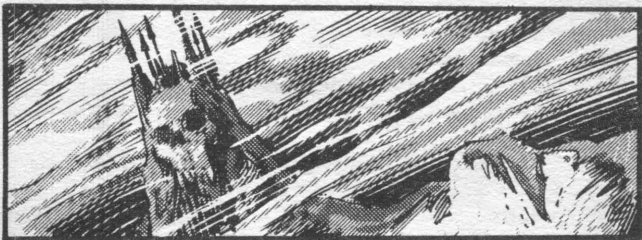
You stare at Lorina. "Drakart lives to the west of here. Tell me again, who is Drakart?" you ask.

Lorina glances at you, startled. "Drakart?" Fidgeting nervously as she looks around the barren moors, she finally whispers, "Twenty-five years ago, during the War of the Lance, Drakart, along with an evil cleric named Wyrllish, served the Queen of Darkness. However, after the queen's defeat, Drakart and Wyrllish fell into disfavor and disappeared. I don't know what became of Wyrllish, but recently Drakart's name is being whispered in dark places once more. It seems he has made his unholy home in the crags of the mountains on the western border of Nordmaar. It is rumored he now serves Chemosh, one of the lesser gods of evil—the god of all undead." Lorina shudders. "In fact, the ring you wear bears Chemosh's symbol."

You nod. "Then it is to Drakart I must go!"

Lorina gulps. "I wondered but I hoped it would not be so," she whispers.

"Let's be going," is all you can say. Add 1 to your memory point total and turn to 163.



190

Weeks and months roll by and summer arrives at last. The birds sing their summer songs in the trees. You and your betrothed, Lorina, sit at the head of the feasting table. All around you, the citizens of North Keep and Valkinord sing and dance in revelry, feasting from the large table spread with your betrothal dinner. King Rudol, now strong and healthy, thanks to the herbs you gave him, sits on your right. Lorina's father, the ruler of Valkinord, sits on her left. It has been a wonderful day.

It was a day you thought would never come. It was only natu-

ral that you and Lorina should be betrothed, especially after your harrowing journey to North Keep following the initial Dragon Highlord invasion. But there were times during the bitter fighting that followed when you thought you might not live to see the day. The Highlords and their dragons had proved formidable enemies. Only the aid of the hill dwarves of the Khalwilde had turned the tide for your people. And if it hadn't been for King Rudol's intervention, plus the gift of the doppleganger's and draconians' heads on pike staffs, the dwarves would have attacked you, too! All would have been lost.

But you had won! The Highlords were driven back across the Miremier into Kern. You and Lorina were to be wed and form an alliance between North Keep and the reborn city of Valkinord. Together your peoples, along with the hill dwarves, would stand against the Dragon Highlords forever.

King Rudol spreads his arms wide. "Hear me, my people!" he calls majestically. Slowly the laughing and singing die down. When all eyes are on the king, he continues. "As you know, the union between Prince Jonn and Princess Lorina is for the good of Nordmaar—to keep it united against any possible resurgence of the Dragon Highlords in our land." Cheers rise from the crowd. "So," King Rudol shouts, "for the good of Nordmaar, I am abdicating the throne in favor of my son, King Jonn."

The silence is immediate. Everyone gapes at the king.

"But, father!" you cry. "*You* are the king!"

He hushes you with a firm look. "I will continue to serve at King Jonn's side as his foremost counselor," he says to the crowd, "but with the Highlords turning their attentions to Nordmaar, we more than ever need a strong, vigorous king and queen to rule us in wisdom." King Rudol pulls you to your feet. "Long live King Jonn!"

The crowd goes wild. Raising their fists in the air, they cry, "Hail, King Jonn! Hail, King Jonn!"

And thus, you become the king of a soon-to-be-united Nordmaar, ready to face the challenges of a bright but difficult future with the fair Lorina at your side. ✕



Snow piles drifts high against the King's Retreat Inn, and the night air ebbs its chilly way through the cracks of the doors and around the windows. But the small group of listeners are oblivious to the chill. A fire crackles and pops in the large hearth, flashing oddly distorted shadows on the barroom walls.

You sit near the fire in a high-backed chair and chug another swig of ale. "And that, my friends," you sigh, "is how, six months ago, I rid Krynn of another growing evil."

A small wide-eyed child, his hair pulled into a topknot, exclaims, "Way to go, Jonn! You're almost as good a storyteller as my uncle Tas. Why, I remember the story he told about defeating the Queen of Darkness in the War of the Lance. Have I ever told you about that?"

"Yes!" everyone exclaims. You sigh again. Everyone knows that once a kender starts telling stories, he never stops. And this particular kender, Lister, has a penchant for telling "Uncle Tas" stories that everyone has heard again and again.

"I was just checking," Lister replies wanly, his smile gone.

You down another swig of ale.

"Tell me, Jonn," a young dwarf speaks up skeptically. "If you fell down those stairs, how is it that you're here today to tell your tale?"

You smile. The ale is making your head a bit light. "Remember the red-robed mage? Well, when he realized that I had defeated Drakart, he teleported Lorina and me to this very inn before the castle crushed us."

The dwarf shakes his head. "Sounds incredible to me."

You jab him in the arm and grunt. "That's 'cause you don't believe in magic."

"So whatever happened to Lorina?" someone else asks.

You glance at him with sad, doleful eyes. "Ah, yes—the beautiful Lorina." You take another swig of ale. "Well, the poor thing was magically whisked away by the red-robed mage to North Keep to deliver her warning about the invasion of the Dragon Highlords. The prince of North Keep fell in love with her and convinced her to marry him. He said it was the only way they could ever unite North Keep with Valkinord. I tell you, she cried and cried before she got married. You see"—your voice hushes to a whisper—"she really wanted to marry me. But she felt it was her duty to unite Nordmaar against the

Dragon Highlords, so she dutifully married the prince to bring the two cities together."

You sit back, accidentally spilling some ale on your breeches. While you try to wipe the liquid off, you continue. "She's up there right now, pining her poor heart away, wishing it was me she wed." You sigh deeply again.

You gulp down the last of your ale, then stand to leave. Another fellow pipes up, "What happened to Drakart's ring? Do you still have it?"

You shake your head. "Nope! The red-robed mage took it from me. 'Just in case,' he said. So . . ." You stagger across the room to the stairs leading up to the inn's sleeping rooms. Looking back at the small group, you wave. "Pay my tab, will you, gentlemen?" Then you turn around and wander off to bed, leaving still another group of barflies to wonder, *Was all that real? Or did he just make it up?* They may never know. ✠

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