You are an Ugarith, a master of the night, with no remembrance of your origin or past life, waking up after committing a disastrous bloody deed ...

Being hunted and outcast, you now have to fight for your way to freedom, while you discover your superhuman powers and finally fulfil your sacred duty - bringing back the world from the edge of oblivion.

RIDER THE BLACK SUN

Whether the Ugarith is destined for a happy, neutral or bleak end depends solely on the decisions you make, for this is no ordinary novel, this is a Fantasy Gamebook!

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Received the RPC FANTASY AWARD and the GERMAN ROLEPLAYING AWARD of the Jury



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ANTIKORE

RIDER ÖF THE BLACK SUN



Swen Harder



A Fantasy Gamebook

Illustrations by Fufu Frauenwahl





ABOUT THE AUTHOR SWEN HARDER

Swen Harder (born in '74) worked over a decade as an editor for computer and video games publishers in Bavaria. During his work he wrote hundreds of articles about games of all genres for many print and online magazines, before hiring as a game tester for Nintendo[®] in 2011.

In his spare time, the Hesse deals with fantasy and science fiction in all its facets: pen-and-paper RPGs, board games, movies, TV shows, games, and books. In all this years he developed collector card games, adventures and RPG systems.

His current playbook projects, such as the bonus adventures "Echoes of the Moonstone" for the 21st volume of the legendary Lone Wolf series by Joe Dever, as well as the unique "Metal Heroes and the Fate of Rock", which creates as a rock comedy gamebook a new genre, appeared both in 2016.

Meanwhile he lives with his wife Melanie again in their birthplace homeland, the Odenwald forests.



Swen Harder on the internet http://www.playharder.de

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR FUFU FRAUENWAHL

FuFu was born in 1974 of German/American parents in Bavaria. He studied Visual Communication in Nürnberg, Germany and "la Bande Dessinée" (Comics) in Angoulême, France.

Since 2001 he works as a freelance illustrator for various media. His main focus lies in narrative formats like comics, games, films and stage productions.

After a two year intermezzo during which he worked as a 2D-Artist on a few notable computer games for a studio in Amsterdam, he settled down in Berlin where he currently lives with his life partner Susanna and their two children.

In addition to his work as an illustrator FuFu continually keeps on drawing his personal comics about his character "Ray Murphy, Detective of Dreams" and his assistant, Molluskhead. Their bizarre adventures have been published in anthologies in several countries and are really semi-autobiographical dream comics veiled as fantastical detective pulp fiction.



Fufu Frauenwahl im Internet http://www.fufufrauenwahl.com

For Ebby A true friend is like a shadow, he follows you—your whole life.

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Space for further instructions/hints and your own notes.

SPECIAL NOTES

NOTES

Write down all specials hints here when you are promoted

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Hand Mirror	Assistance	Benthos
Extra Damage +1 +2 +3		Nephatari
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SPARKS +	ES Time 5,6 O	Area for Tarah's Chapter

RULES I

BASIC RULES

As you have certainly already realized, you are not holding a normal book in your hands, but an interactive gamebook whose story depends chiefly on the decisions you makel Before you can set off on your own adventure, however, there are a few important things that need explaining, namely the rules of the game. And by the way: From here on, these will be written in italics, like every rule text in this book.

Sections

How does an interactive game book work? It is easy. Every paragraph of this book, also called a section, has its own number—the section number. At the end of a section you will usually be asked to choose how you want to continue.

Depending on your decision, you will continue reading at the next section indicated. You will be continually moving back and forth between the sections of the book. Thus, it is also completely normal that you will sometimes have to leaf back to an earlier page even though the story itself is progressing! The beginning of every chapter is the section with the lowest number. In the Prologue, it is the number 1.

Adventure Sheet

You will record the course of your dangerous journey on the adventure sheet found at the beginning of the book. If you want to play the book more than once, you should make a copy of this.*

On the adventure sheet you should write down both your statistics and abilities as well as all the items and weapons you carry.

*) Feel free to download the latest version of the rules and documents (adventure sheet and other helpful documents in printable PDF format) on the author's internet page www.playharder.de

Notes

R

It is important to make notes. Often people you talk to will reveal information that will prove useful only much later. A further page has been reserved for all your notes directly after the adventure sheet.

Game tip: You should use a soft lead pencil for everything you write down since you will have to correct the information regularly with an eraser. Should you be unsure about the rules concerning a point on your adventure sheet, just turn to the Rule Explanation labelled with the same Roman numeral. For example, all the rules you read here in RULES I are marked with a grey **①** symbol.

Luck

Sometimes it is not you who decides the course of the story, but simply luck. In this case you will be asked to let the moon decide your destiny. Simply turn quickly to a random page inside the first six chapters and look at the moon phase depicted in the lower left-hand margin (you can see it on this page, too). How this moon phase is to be interpreted is given in the rule text in italies at the end of the section.

For better understanding, the first eight moon symbols* have been labeled with their appropriate names.

Utensils

Naturally, you will be able to find useful items such as tools, potions or artefacts. Should you have the opportunity to take something, it will always be specifically noted in the text. Be sure to write down the exact term (given in **bold** & **italics**) on your adventure sheet.

Do not be greedy! Utensils can be absolutely useless or even dangerous! Also, you can carry only six Utensils at any given time, so you will eventually have to pick and choose which ones to keep.

Special Items

Since these rare items are usually quite small and are worn close to the body—a ring or a chain, for example—you are allowed to take up to



RULES I · BASIC RULES

twelve of them. Whether an object is such a significant item will be noted in brackets behind its name. Once taken, Special Items cannot be given up unless the option to do so is stated explicitly in the text.

Death

In the course of your adventure you will encounter ruthless enemies and lethal dangers. This means that your deeds can lead even to your death and the premature end of the adventure. In this case it will be necessary for you to shart the chapter (but not the whole book) anew!

When starting over, you will have to erase everything you have acquired, such as items, abilities and bonuses. You will begin just as if you were trying the chapter for the first time.



Save Points

Because you do not want to lose unintentionally anything you have gained in a past chapter, all boxes and squares have a small []. Save Point. When you successfully end a chapter, simply fill in all the circles of the things you have on your sheet. Should you die in your next chapter (or simply want to repeat it), erase only those new entries not yet marked with a filled-in Save Point.

This allows you to start over in a chapter without returning all the way to the beginning of the book.

Easy Mode for Prologue & Chapter 1

If you die while playing the Prologue or Chapter 1 but do not want to start over again from the beginning, you can jump back to the section given at the end of the death section and continue from there as if nothing has happened. Here's an example of such a reference: (+90).

PROLOGUE

1

Bonus Sections

In every chapter it is possible through daring, clever or lucky actions to find bonus sections. These are marked with special numbers beginning with a "B", like B10, for example. The bonus sections are listed at the end of the book and contain their own references leading you back to the original chapter.

As the name suggests, extraordinary items, abilities and clues are found in the bonus sections.

FATE POINTS

As a further reward, in the bonus sections there are also so-called FATE PONTS. You note them—like everything else—on your adventure sheet. It is very likely that you will not find all the FATE PONTS in a chapter on your first try. If it is your ambition, houever, to complete the adventure perfectly (and greatly improve your chances for a happy ending to the book itself), you should perhaps read the chapter again and try it another way.

Please note when entering them on your adventure sheet that all FATE POINTS are numbered, so you do not have to cross them off in order. For example, you mark the fifth FATE POINT (#5, hidden in chapter 2) by crossing off the box .

Should you have questions about other items on your adventure sheet, do not worry. They will be explained when necessary.

But now enough introductory words. Embark on your adventure! Continue with the PROLOGUE "A SHADOW AWAKENS" at section 1.

bbous Moon



NOTE: Have you (or has someone else) played this book before? If so, check these sections: 15, 16, 30, 88, 89, 389, 423, 446, X3 to X7, and F2 to F8. If there are pencil markings in the circles, erase them.



> Argh! My head... that light... is this death? «

Your mind is confused and you have trouble getting to your feet. The dimly lit room appears to you only in a blur. Obviously it is the richly furnished bedchamber of a sun priest. Everywhere your gaze falls upon the holy symbol of Kar, the eight-flamed sun. Outside, a furious storm is raging. A driving rain is beating against the leaded glass of the windows. For a single moment the room is bathed in a blazing white as a window is thrown open, and the candles from the candelabra on the night stand are blown out. > There is somebody... a shadow! <

You spin around. No one there. Your heart is racing. Suddenly, you trip over something lying on the floor. As you pick yourself up off the silken rug, you discover the body of an old human clad in the sweeping golden sleeping gown of a priest of Kar. The tangled, ashen hair at the back of his head is soaked with blood. He is not moving.

> Is he dead !? «

Like flashes of lightning from the storm outside, agonizing

thoughts dart through your head. You do not know where you are, do not know who is lying in front of you, and—what is worse... > Who am 1? <

Haltingly, and with a dark premonition, your gaze moves over the dark gown hanging in tatters from your body and halts at last at your trembling black claws: blood! The blood of the man lying at your feet!

> What have I done? <

You want only to flee this place, flee from what you've done, when you hear footfalls.

If you want to turn the dead man over onto his back to see his face, turn to 51. If you want to hide in a dark corner of the room, turn to 41. If you want to leave the room at once, turn to 72.

2 Quickly, you dash towards the woman. Before she can defend herself, you stun her with a blow to the neck.

Turn to 29.

16

3 Only a few steps separate you from the temple. You cast a harassed glance behind you. There's no one there. But you sense that numerous soldiers are closing in on you along the winding gravel pathways. Your pursuers' net is growing tighter.

Just as you try to hide in the temple's shadow, a piercing pain cripples your left thigh. You cry out in pain and fall forward to the ground.

"I've got him!" a man's voice shouts triumphantly.

Instinctively, you squeeze the wound, attempting to close it. Blood flows over both your claws, and you can feel that the bolt has dug deep into your flesh. Too deep to pull it out quickly. Your pursuers have almost reached you.

If you want to roll over into a hedge by the temple, turn to 15. If you want to pull yourself up and flee, turn to 52.





As you pick yourself up off the silken rug, you discover the body of an old human clad in the sweeping golden sleeping gown of a priest of Kar, The tangled, ashen hair at the back of his head is soaked with blood. He is not moving.

P

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

4 Somebody's knocking at the door. You're holding your breath when a soft female voice calls out. "Is everything all right, my Hierarch?"

After several seconds of silence another strong gust of wind shatters the window panes. Clattering, the colored shards crash onto the wooden floor.

"Hierarch Kathum?!" the woman calls worriedly.

If you want to disguise your voice and command the servant girl to leave, turn to 12. If you want to stay under the bed, turn to 37.

5 The servant girl's loud shouts fade away only after you turn the second corner. But meanwhile other outraged voices are fighting against the roar of the storm.

Your gaze nervously darts from door to door, from window to window. With each flash of lightning, the big Raan trees flicker like ghosts in the inner yard.

> If you want to open a window and risk jumping into the inner yard, turn to 63. If you want to hurry along the hallway, turn to 92.

6 Lifting the leaden coffin lid back into its original position requires considerable effort.

If you want to follow the stone stairs up to the temple, turn to 80. If you want to climb through an air shaft out into the temple district's park, turn to 98. If you want to stay in the crypt until the next night falls, turn to 38.

7 For a short moment your bare feet dig their claws into the stone windowsill as you defeat your fear and leap against the wind into the darkness, your landing point on the tree trunk held firmly in your gaze.

Turn to 91.



8 Without thinking, you run over and wrap your wet, bruised body in the dusty cloth. At once warmth envelops you, and your labored breathing begins to subside.

Note down the Organ Shroud (Clothing, Cloak) on your adventure sheet. Turn to 58.

9 A piercing shout resounds through the hallways. The servant girl has seen you and in her panic calls for help.

If you want to cover the upset girl's mouth, turn to 30. If you prefer to flee, turn to 5.



10 With ease you remove weeds and scrubs from the narrow opening. It is only now that you can see an iron grate blocking the shaft. But you've come too far to give up now! With your last strength you tear the rusty grate from its anchoring and gaze exhaustedly into the darkness.

Except for a musty, earthy smell you can detect nothing. Nevertheless, you decide to crawl inside. As sinuous as a Vintaq adder, you snake your way inside. After several tugs with your arms you feel the edge of a wall. Lowering yourself slowly, you can now stand upright again. You can see nothing but complete blackness.

Turn to 46.

11 The gravel crunches beneath your feet, but even this telltale sound is swallowed by the roar of wind and rain. With long strides you move towards the archway, but before you reach it you have to go past the temple of Kar, located at the halfway point, in the middle of the park.

In the meantime, the guards have extended their search to the park. You hear the threatening clicking of the winches on their crossbows.

If you carry an Oil Lantern, turn to 56. If you don't have such an item, turn to 60.

12 You take a deep breath and try to hit a lower pitch. With a few words you send the priest emperor's servant away.

"Yes, Hierarch Kathum, as you wish!" the young woman obeys in confusion.

You wait until her footsteps have faded away and then creep out from under the bed again. Alarmed, you gaze at Kathum's lifeless body. You still cannot comprehend what has just happened. Shaking your head in confusion, you step towards the shattered window and look out.

You find yourself at the highest level, the temple district, of the holy Step Pyramid of Kyphi. A jump from here would be fatal. The next level of the golden city is at least 60 feet beneath you. So you stride to the door, open it and push out into the hallway. *Decide your desliny!*

> If you believe in the good in man, turn to 85. If you believe in the evil in man, turn to 27.

13 Although only few rays of light pierce the narrow gaps in the stone slab and traverse the long air shaft to reach your hiding place, you can nevertheless sense how strong the morning sun must be today. The thought causes you to shiver instinctively. Thanks to the sparse light you are now able to see the entire



crypt. In ten alcoves, built of stone masonry, lie eight richly decorated stone coffins. Although you are not able to read the symbols carved into the stone, they suggest to you that the ancestors of the priests of Kar must rest here. In one corner stands a bulky wooden chest. You don't see a lock.

If you want to examine the chest more closely, turn to 54. If you want to take a look at the stone coffins, turn to 31. If you want to walk up the stone steps and leave the crypt, turn to 80. If you want to climb through the air shaft and

out into the park, turn to 98.

If you want to do nothing and remain in the crypt until the next night falls, turn to 38.



14 With a short squeak the heavy lid opens and you reach into the unknown. In the chest your fingers can make out several tabards made of embroidered linen, tidily folded.

If you want to put on a Linen Shirt (Clothing, Cloak), note it on your adventure sheet. Turn to 88.

15 At the last moment you roll over into one of the dense rose bushes. You're lucky that the plant is a variety grown without any protective thoms. Anxiously, you hold your breath when, through the lower branches, you see the heavy leather boots of two guards of the priesthood only a few feet away from you. "Damn, the bloody bastard has to be here somewhere", one of them curses.

Without a warning both of them start to stab the dense hedge indiscriminately with their broadswords. One blow misses your chest by only a hair's breadth when unexpectedly a scraping and scratching can be heard.

"What was that?" snarls one of the soldiers.

Then there's a clattering sound and some clay tiles smash onto the path.

"The roof! Come, let's get him!"

You remain as motionless as a stone until both the guards are gone again. The danger is by no means over, however: More and more inhabitants of the palace are running about in the park.

Desperately, you look about for a way out, and at last your gaze comes to rest upon the stone foundation of the temple. Before your feet there's an overgrown shaft. Confidently, you realize that it must lead down into the cellar of the sacred house of Kar.

Turn to 10.

Cross off the circle next to the section number 15 to note that you've read this section.

 16 Carefully and without making any suspicious sounds, you slip through the temple's wooden portal, richly decorated all over with carvings.

No sooner has the heavy iron lock snapped shut, than everything suddenly turns dark. Only occasional bright flashes of lightning through the tall windows of leaded glass light up the room from time to time.

You are alone. After taking a few steps past the prayer benches you find yourself standing in front of a large floor panel made of pitch-black basalt. Dark alcoves all round divide the room. From their depths oversize saints keep watch. Their unfaltering gaze, sculpted in marble, demands your respect.

While you're examining the temple, you can hear a strange scraping and scratching above you. Dirt trickles from the timberwork

Crescent Moon

onto your head and the stone floor. There's no doubt: Somebody's on the roof! Some shingles break loose, slide down the sloped roof and smash not far away. Rain falls through the newly exposed hole. For safety's sake you seek cover next to a column. Another flash of lightning! For a fleeting moment a vague shadow appears on the roof. You hold your breath.

> Where did he go? <

Outside of the temple quite a din has arisen. Your pursuers obviously think the stranger on the roof is the assassin. You listen intensely, but all is quiet above you. The soldiers too move away. You breathe a sigh of relief and calmly look around again. Adjacent to the impressive organ, whose tallest pipes reach up under the domed roof, you notice a brass lever on one of the columns next to the black floor panel. The lever is decorated with dozens of skulls.

If you want to use the lever, turn to 75.

If you want to look for a quiet place in this part of the temple, turn to 89. Cross off the circle next to the section number 16 to note that you've read this section.

17 Even though the burning pain in your arm is almost driving you insane, you continue crawling through the narrow shaft. Finally, your head is touched by the first rays of the sun. You writhe in pain, but in the cramped shaft there is no escape. Decide your destinut!

If you believe in the power of light, turn to 62. If you believe in the power of darkness, turn to 93.

18 "I trust you! I cannot say why Kar bestows on me this feeling, but I trust you." Breathing a sigh of relief, the priestess continues to look at you with curiosity as she dons her amulet.

Turn to 45.

- 1

19 Drawing your arm back forcefully, you hurl the oil lantern away. The burning lens breaks, splashing the petroleum about, and a moment later a tongue of flame leaps up, illuminating the lower masonry of the palace building. Now that you've rid yourself of what made you a target, you run towards the temple of Kar protected by the darkness.

Don't forget to remove the Oil Lantern from your adventure sheet! Turn to 60.

20 When you wake up, the night's sufferings have vanished. You feel for the wounds that marked your body only hours ago, but except for the scarred left claw, your skin is flawless. To your astonishment, you discover the blood-smeared shards and the crossbow bolt lying next to you on the floor.

If you want to keep the Bolt (Utensil), note it on your adventure sheet. If you have slept in the crypt, turn to 13. If you have spent the night in the temple, turn to 95. If you're uncertain, check whether you've marked section 88 (crypt) or 89 (temple).

21 Without hesitation you run below. As you reach the last step, the mechanism activates again and the slab closes above you. You're in the crypt of the temple of Kar!

Turn to 13.

24





PROLOGUE · A SHADOW AWAKENS

22 "Well, well, a beggar you say..." A wry smile darts across her clear, radiant features. "You should not lie to me! I'm a daughter of Kar."

It is true: priests of Kar are reputed to be able to recognize any lie.

If you want to tell her the truth about last night after all, turn to 18. If you want to knock her unconscious, turn to 2.

23 You step from your hiding place and walk slowly towards the young woman. Sadness shimmers in her golden eyes. "Who are you?" she asks with faltering voice.

Around her slender neck she wears the amulet of a priest of Kar. Belief in the sun goddess is widespread in Rhenus, especially of course among the inhabitants of the Step Pyramid of the metropolis of Kyphi.

The priestess takes a few steps backwards, bumping against the organ's keyboard. A weird chord is sounded, causing you both to start in surprise.

If you wear a Linen Shirt, turn to 57. If not, turn to 86.

24 The night was brief, but despite the many shards of glass that have cut open your calves, you feel strong. Baffled, you find the blood-smeared shards that should be sitting in your flesh lying instead next to you on the floor. Your body shows no sign of injury.

If you have slept in the crypt, turn to 13. If you have spent the night in the temple, turn to 95. If you're uncertain, check whether you've marked section 88 (crypt) or 89 (temple).

25 Miraculously, you're not hit by any of the bolts. Just barely missing you, all of them fly past you, hissing. Nevertheless, you've crossed only half of the park.



In front of you lies the tranquil temple of Kar in the shelter of many trees. You don't know why, but this building with its steep roof of red clay tiles holds a certain attraction for you.

If you want to enter the temple, turn to 16. If you want to struggle against this feeling and avoid entering the sanctuary of the sun goddess, turn to 94.

26 Helpless, the young woman makes her way clumsily through the imperial bed chamber. Then, in a panic the servant girl turns around and runs back to the hallway. Another flash of lightning illuminates the corridor. Standing abruptly still, she stares wide-eyed towards your hiding place.

Turn to 9.

27 Barely have you entered the hallway, when you see the weak light from a candlestick disappear around the next corner. The servant girl has obviously bought your dramatic imitation. *Turn to* 52

28 Wholly determined to engage your pursuers in a battle, you look for a suitable place for a surprise attack.

If you carry a Sword, turn to 36. If not, turn to 84.

29 Unconscious, the young woman sinks into your arms. Her silk gown is warm and soft. A priest's amulet of the sun goddess Kar dangles from her graceful neck.

As you observe her, something strange occurs: all movement seems to slow around you. At first it's barely perceptible, but after only a few heartbeats everything becomes frozen in time. Confused, you let the woman go. Her body doesn't drop to the floor, however, but remains in the same unnatural position you

rescent Moon

left her. Looking up, you see a large, human-like black shadow standing before you.

Turn to 100.

30 Before the servant girl can scream again, you leap toward her in a powerful maneuver, pressing her against the wall and holding her mouth shut. Mortal fear distorts her youthful features. Tears run down her cheeks, smearing her face together with the priest emperor's blood from your hand.

From one second to the next an unbridled feeling of power rises in you.

> Her life is in my hands! <

Without thinking, you grab the girl's throat and squeeze. Her eyes roll back in agony.

Turn to 48.

Cross off the circle next to the section number 30 to note that you've read this section.

31 All eight stone coffins have been masterfully crafted and were built for eternity. Despite the use they have in common, you can see distinct differences in their composition. Moreover, you can clearly determine the chronology in the death dates of the hierarchs buried here. Only the newest sarcophagus has neither signs nor numbers chiseled upon it.

The oldest one is remarkable, however: It's the only one made from the same basalt as the floor slab leading to the crypt. Fascinated, you stroke the cool, ancient rock.

If you want to open the black coffin, turn to 44. If you want to do nothing and stay in the crypt until the next night falls, turn to 38.

If you want to climb the stone stairs up to the temple, turn to 80. If you want to climb up the air shaft and enter the park, turn to 98.

32 Despite the weak light from your lantern the marksmen have found you.

"Down there by the tree! Shoot at the assassin!" against the storm, a man shouts excitedly from one of the open windows. Again three bolts barely miss you. One of them pierces the bark

of a tree next to you.

If you want to throw the Oil Lantern away, turn to 19. If you want to run as fast as you can, turn to 56.

33 You've spent the whole night with a bolt in your thigh. That is at least what you believe. As you go to take a look at the wound, however, you discover that there's nothing in the spot where the bolt should be sticking in your flesh. Instead, the bolt is lying on the ground not far from you.

If you want to keep the **Bolt** (Utensil), note it down on your adventure sheet.

If you have slept in the crypt, turn to 13. If you have spent the night in the temple, turn to 95. If you're uncertain, check whether you've marked section 88 (crypt) or 89 (temple).

34 After her prayer the young woman stands up and looks at the organ. She hesitates. Thoughtfully stroking her rosy cheek, she walks towards the wooden chest with the keys of ivory and ebony. Uncertain, she glances around. Her white skin shimmers flawlessly in the morning light.

> If you want to wait to see what the woman will do, turn to 96. If you want to sneak up on her and knock her unconscious from behind, turn to 2.

35 You've barely turned another corner along the corridor when you see a shadow outside, gazing through the window. Startled, you lose your balance, stumble and fall forward against



the wall with a muffled thud. Dazed, you get to your feet. The shadow has disappeared. You run on.

Only a brief moment later a door behind you slams open.

"Hold! Who's there?" asks a man's deep voice in a harsh, commanding tone.

At the same time you hear the ominous metallic singing of a sword being drawn from its scabbard.

If you want to turn around and face the danger, turn to 97. If you want to turn to your heels, turn to 40.



36 Two soldiers pass you at a distance of only a few steps. You seize the opportunity, attack them from the rear, and slay them both with only two blows of your sword. Nimbly, you duck behind the next tree and realize that meanwhile at least eight other soldiers are searching the park. It appears that the temple is the only safe place nearby.

> Why is nobody here? «

Turn to 16.

37 Incredulous, you keep gazing from the door to the body of the Kar priest and then back again. Through a large gap under the door you can see the naked feet of a young woman. She opens the door and takes a few steps into the room. A long, piercing scream goes through your body; a candlestick drops to the floor. The broken candles roll throughout the room, at once setting the thin fabric of the canopy ablaze. Biting black smoke invades your hiding place, and you feel an agonizing urge to cough.

If you want to hold your breath, turn to 43. If you want to keep breathing, turn to 79. 38 Even though this place is cramped and dark, you feel safe. Night must come! Quietly you lie down in one of the empty alcoves and think about your situation. Again and again you ask yourself the same questions.

> Who am 1? Why am I here? What have I done? «

You have no answers. Afraid you may lose your mind, you close your eyes.

After a short, restless sleep, you're awakened by the faint sound of scraping and scratching. Surprised, you jump up, hitting your head on the masonry of the alcove.

The slab on the floor leading to the crypt swings to the side! A young woman with curly blond hair comes carefully down the stairs, lifting her Kar habit above the knees of her pale legs. Her golden eyes glow in the darkness, like those of a cat caught in the light, as she searches the crypt. "By Kar, is somebody here?"

You press yourself deeper into the alcove to escape her spellbinding gaze. Your heart is racing. What divine beauty! Dazzled by the grace of the priestess, you are on the verge of revealing yourself when she suddenly pauses on the last step, just as she is about to move down. It is as if the moment has been frozen in time for eternity.

> What's happening? «

Behind her, a shadow creeps out of the darkness!

Turn to 100.

39 With a numb feeling in your hands and feet you fall asleep, exhausted. On account of your wounds you've lost a large amount of blood. Too much, for you never wake again.

Your life ends here. (+67) =

40 Shouting urgently, the soldier tries to get you to stop and stand still. Luckily, the rags you are wearing make you much faster than your armored pursuer.





You hurry along the hallway, again and again passing confused inhabitants of the palace standing before you, awakened by the noise, but not daring to stop you. Finally, a sleepy-looking guard appears, blocking your path with his lance. While you are still looking around you, the other guardsman catches up, breathing hard. He now cuts off your way back. You are trapped.

If you want to fight both soldiers at once, turn to 59. If you want to use your last possibility of escape by jumping out of the next window into the yard, turn to 71.

41 Your knees shaking, you go past an armchair and a small table stacked with books and head for the opposite corner. At once, the room is illuminated: The alcove, which appeared so safe a moment ago, now reveals itself as less than trustworthy—the large mirror on the wall there would reveal your presence at once. Undecided, you are gazing around the room when a faint rapping causes you to start. Leaping back intuitively, you roll under the bed in one supple, soundless motion.

Turn to 4.

42 With one sudden, catlike leap you pounce upon the soldier of the sun. Surprised by this deft attack, he loses his balance. Flailing wildly, he smashes against the wall. A moment later he is sitting there before you unconscious, his helmet having slipped down over his face, his weapon having dropped to the ground. If you wish to pick up the suord in its scabbard, then put it on and write down the Sword (Weapon, Hit Bonus +3).

If you want to pick up the **Oil Lantern** (Utensil), write it down on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 77.

43 You hold your breath and try to find a corner with fresh air. But the dark smoke seems to gather under the bed. Finally, unab-

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le to endure it anymore, you are forced to inhale. A coughing fit overwhelms you, causing you to roll out from under your hiding place unwillingly.

Turn to 9.

44 The heavy stone lid appears to have been covering the coffin for an eternity. Only after exerting all your strength do you manage, for the first time in centuries, to break the encrusted dirt sealing the coffin's seams.

Another heave, and with a loud thud the lid slides down between the side of the coffin and the wall of the alcove. The smell of death fills your nose.

Lying in the coffin are the remains of a priest emperor; a rusty crown dangles from the gaping jaws of his empty skull; his clasped bony hands hold the butt of a rusty sword resting upon his body. You imagine how the hierarch must have used the sword when he was alive.

If you want to examine the body of the hierarch more closely, turn to 87. If you want to take a closer look at the coffins, turn to 6.

45 Just as the priestess is drawing a breath to introduce herself, you become aware that the reality surrounding you is being stretched. As if through magic, time is slowing down, and from the woman's mouth only an extended "Ne... pha..." is heard, becoming deeper and deeper.

Finally, she stands before you as if frozen in time. Silence. You spin around. Only a few steps away, a somber shadow reveals itself in the darkness.

Turn to 100.

46 Cautiously, you move with faltering steps. Beneath your naked feet you feel the wet, rough stone floor of a cellar vault. The coolness of the place makes you shudder. Still, you know







44 Lying in the coffin are the remains of a priest emperor; a rusty crown dangles from the gaping jaws of his empty skull; his clasped bony hands hold the butt of a rusty sword resting upon his body.

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that you're safe from your pursuers, who are still roaming the park.

After a while you begin to feel your way around and realize that you're in a crypt with several stone coffins. Despite your fear of angering the spirits of the dead, you continue searching. In a far corner you stumble across a heavy wooden chest with metal fittings. There is no lock.

> If you want to open the chest, turn to 14. If you want to ignore it, turn to 88.

47 "How is that? You're a Shadow and want help-from me?" she asks incredulously. "Well, all right."

The priestess reaches for the back of her neck, opening a catch and offering you her necklace with trembling hands. A small figure of shining gold dangles before your face.

If you want to take the little figurine of the goddess, turn to 64. If you don't want to touch it, turn to 81.



48 As you squeeze the life out of your victim, the storm begins to lose considerable strength. The wild tossing of the branches abates, becoming leaden as time appears to stand still. The last glaring bolt of lightning is as if frozen. In its blue-white light you look into the empty eyes of the servant. There is a deathly silence.



You realize what you've just been doing. Disgusted with yourself you pull back your hands. But contrary to what you expect, her motionless body doesn't collapse, but remains in its unnatural position, as if held aloft by a ghostly hand. Distraught, you stumble backwards.

A large floor vase stands in the path of your retreat. Without warning, the lightning and thunder reassert themselves in a united, powerful explosion. As the vase drops from its base and crashes on the marble floor, the servant falls to the ground behind you. Sobbing, she covers by the wall.

Out of the corner of your eye you see a shadow sitting in one of the trees. Through the dull window panes, however, you can't see who or what it is.

If you want to open the window, turn to 63. If you want to run away, turn to 92.

49 Carefully, you open the entrance door, at first only to the breadth of a finger, to see whether the coast is clear. Almost at once you are set upon by the summer sun's piercing light. Racked with pain, you slam the door closed and crawl into a dark corner. Your claws have turned to dark grey stone where the sun has touched them, and you can barely move your fingers. A hard crust has also formed on your face. Suddenly you realize what this intuitive unease you have felt since sunrise means: daylight means pain!

Only slowly does your skin return to its natural leather-like, black appearance, and you decide to spend your day in the shadows of the temple.

Turn to 90.

50 At first you lean with your back against the thick trunk. Your neck relaxes as your head comes to rest on the rough bark. For a short moment you forget your surroundings, your situati-

on, but then, through the rustling treetop, you see a shadow dart over the roof of the temple.

He's too far away to see any more, but his supple, assured movements on the slanted, slippery roof appeared to be somehow inhuman. You are still musing about what you've seen when the storm calms a bit, and you can hear the ominous clicking of a crossbow's winch from an open window. The soldiers are preparing to hunt down the assassin!

> If you carry an Oil Lantern, turn to 32. If you don't have this item, turn to 83.

51 You grab the lifeless man by the shoulder and turn him over onto his back. A dead man's horrified gaze pierces you. Frozen with guilt, you realize that you have looked into these golden eyes once before.

In front of you lies the priest emperor Kathum, exalted Hierarch and Emissary of the sun goddess Kar. Shocked, you stagger back and find yourself sitting down on the edge of the bed. Shame and horror plague you. Despite the raging storm you can hear footsteps again. This time, they're definitely louder.

If you want to hide under the bed, turn to 4. If you want to flee the room through the door, turn to 72.

52 In great pain, you once more raise yourself up. But the bolt in your thigh is so deep that you can't put weight on your leg. You drag yourself forward, but the next shot pierces your shoulder blade. You fall headfirst into the mud. When the powerful sword stroke of a quickly approaching soldier finds you, it is almost a relief.

Your life ends here. (+3) =

53 Barely managing to escape the glaring rays of sunlight, you drop to the cold damp floor of the crypt. Your arms hurt as if you



had dipped them in boiling water. But to your surprise, the skin isn't reddened, but grey and rough like stone. Only gradually, rustling faintly, does it begin to regenerate.

If you want to leave the crypt behind and climb the stone stairs to the temple, turn to 80. If you want to do nothing and remain in the crypt until the next night falls, turn to 38.

54 You hear a soft creaking as you lift the lid. Lying inside the chest are shirts made of linen, the breasts of which are artfully embroidered with a large sun made of golden thread. You also find a small prayer book pressed by the cloth against the side of the chest.

If you don't wear a Linen Shirt (Clothing, Cloak) and want to put one on, write it down on your adventure sheet. Do the same with the Prayer Book (Utensil) if you want to keep it.

If you want to take a closer look at the sarcophagus, turn to **31**. If you want to stay in the crypt and do nothing until next nightfall, turn to **38**. If you want to leave the crypt behind and climb the stone stairs to the temple, turn to **80**. If you want to climb the air vent to the park outside, turn to **98**.

55 Again and again, violent bolts of lightning pierce the darkness of the night as you hurry barefoot through the hallways of the palace, past countless doors, alcoves and passages.

You look about frantically. The dazzling flashes from these forces of nature cast the ghost-like shadows of gnarled trees upon the wall. It almost seems as if the branches writhing in the storm are reaching for you. You gaze outside through the dim windows. Another flash of lightning!

Clearly visible, a shadow cowers in the tree in front of you. Frightened, you give a start. Fearful and fascinated at the same

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time, you pause in front of the window and try to determine through the distortions of the window panes whom or what you have seen in the darkness.

> If you want to open the window, turn to 63. If you want to run on, turn to 92.



56 Ducking, you dart through the rain. Not far away from you the steep roof of the Kar temple rises above the treetops. > That might be a suitable hiding place! <

Afraid of becoming a target for the crossbowmen, you leap over the hedge, dive over park banks and roll onto the softened lawn. The temple is not very far off.

Despite all your acrobatics you lose your grip on the oil lantern whose petroleum ignites in a small, but strong, spreading fire. Paralyzed you stare at the flames. A mixture of fascination and fear takes hold of you. Only the crise of your pursuers bring you back to your senses. Some of them have jumped from the windows of the ground floor into the park. Your hope of escape fades. Decide your destiny based on the phase of the moon after you've ensed the Oil Lantern from the adventure sheet!

If it's New Moon or Crescent Moon, turn to 25. If it's Half Moon to Full Moon, turn to 3. To determine the phase of the moon, open a random page of this book and look at the moon shown.

57 You walk slowly towards the young believer. Apparently she would like to shout or scream something, but only a pathetic rattle escapes her throat. As if spellbound, she stares at the linen



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sheet used to wrap the dead so as to accompany them to the hereafter. Her eyes roll back and she crumples.

Turn to 29.

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58 After nearly an hour you notice nothing more outside the temple that unsettles you.

If there are glass shards sticking in your body, because you jumped through a window, turn to 24. If you've been hit by a crossbow bolt, turn to 33. Have you been wounded by both, shards and bolt, turn to 670. If you are unhurt, turn to 70.

59 The two experienced warriors circle you first at a safe distance. Feeling cornered, you attack the younger of the two sol-diers with an animal scream. Grabbing him by the throat, you push him to the ground just as a lance pierces your back. You feel the warm blood flowing from your body.

Your life ends here. (+40) =

60 Protected by the bushes and scrubs, you make your way unerringly to the idyllic temple. The massive building with its steep roof of clay tiles stands andidst a cluster of skillfully trimmed trees, surrounded by fragrant rose bushes and with artistic statues decorating the peaceful site.

You're only a few steps away from the entrance when suddenly a simultaneous crash of thunder and bolt of lightning cause the air to crackle with electricity. In the flickering light you see that your pursuers have come dangerously close to you. Strangely, the door of the temple, decorated with religious markings, is ajar.

If you want to slip through the temple door, turn to 16. If you want to hide first in the shadow of the temple, turn to 94. If you have had enough of fleeing and want to attack your pursuers, turn to 28.

61 With a soft scraping sound, the black floor panel swings to the side, revealing a set of narrow steps. Cool, musty air greets you from the darkness.

If you want to climb down, turn to 21. If you want to wait in the temple until nightfall, turn to 90. If you want to escape through the entrance door, turn to 49.

62 How right you are! The inexhaustible power of the morning sun burns mercilessly into your flesh. Your limbs are covered over and over by a hard, grey coating of rock. Even before you can try to resist, your body has become as rigid as stone, and the light of life in your eves is extinguished.

Your life ends here. (+17) =



63 With trembling hands you reach for the iron fittings and lift the hook from the eye of the lock. With a jerk the wind pushes both shutters open and you gaze out into the storm. You can see nothing on the tree in front of you.

> Nobody's here. Am I imagining things? «

If you want to jump from the windowsill over to the tree and from there reach courtyard, turn to 7. If you want to close the window and continue fleeing through the building, turn to 92.



64 "How can that be?" Surprised the priestess looks from your face to the small likeness of the sun goddess Kart in your pitch black claw and back.

"It appears you are not what I thought you were." She looks deep into your eyes. Warmth and cold flow simultaneously through your body.

If you want to explain what happened last night and ask for her help, turn to 18. If you want to make her believe that your 'r just a poor beggar who's lost his way, turn to 22.

If you want to knock unconscious, turn to 2.

65 From the shadow of the Raan tree you let your eyes roam nervously about the palace of the priest emperor, which surrounds the courtyard. Meanwhile dozens of soldiers and servants are darting past the windows or looking out. The news of the Hierarch's death has obviously spread like wildfire.

> They'll kill me if they find me! <

Searching desperately for an escape route, you sight an imposing archway on the opposite side of the monumental building, and behind it a steep ramp. It appears to be the only route connecting the uppermost level of the gigantic step pyramid with those below.

The palace yard itself is an intricately laid out park of narrow, twisting gravel paths flanked by exotic trees, artfully trimmed bushes and flowers. In its center stands a magnificent temple of Kar.

If you want to hide under the large Raan tree, turn to 50. If you want to flee without losing any more time, turn to 11.

66 You've left the temple behind, and in the torchlight you can see the archway at the end of the main path. The passage is wide enough to offer space for a carriage, but to the right and left stand

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two officers armed with long spears and staring alertly in your direction. You will have difficulty getting past them, not to speak of the reinforcements searching the park for you.

If you want to try and reach the gate, turn to 84. If you want to turn around and flee into the temple, turn to 16.

67 During your escape you've lost a considerable amount of blood from the countless cuts and from the crossbow wound, but in your agitation you haven't been aware of much. Decide your destiny based on the moon!

If it's New Moon or Crescent Moon, turn to 39. If it's Half Moon to Fall Moon, turn to 20. To determine the phase of the moon, open a random page of this book and look at the moon shown.

68 Dense, swirling fog surrounds you. Before you float a large throne made of dark, precious woods, on whose red velvet covering Kathum, Hierarch of Kar, sits. You recognize the ruler of free Rhenus by his insignia, a golden coat of mail and a mighty greatsword, not by his physical appearance. It is only when you step near that he turns his head in your direction.

You're shocked, for his head, on which the famous eight-pointed crown of the priest emperor rests, possesses no face at all.

And although the mask-like face is without eyes, you clearly feel its piercing gaze: "How could you have done that? Was my death divine will?"

Bathed in sweat, you awaken from this intense nightmare. It takes a few moments for you to realize where you are.

> If you've slept in the crypt, turn to 13. If you've spent the night in the temple, turn to 95. If you're unsure, check if you've crossed off the marking at section 88 (crypt) or 89 (temple).

69 A fleeting glance out of the bedchamber's window and you realize you wouldn't survive a leap from the temple level. You decide to flee through the hallways.

If you want to follow the servant girl into the hallway, turn to 35. If you want to go in the other direction, turn to 55.

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70 Examining your arms and legs with your hands, you're happy to find that you didn't get hurt during your escape. Nevertheless, a feeling of unease wells up in you:

> This body-how much pain did it have to endure? «

Tears of desperation run down your face. But at some point you are overcome by a liberating form of exhaustion.

What is the thought you fall asleep with?

If you think that you've killed Hierarch Kathum, turn to 68. If, however, you believe in your innocence, turn to 73.

71 With the courage of desperation you leap headfirst through the closed window with its thick panes of leaded glass and aim for the dense foliage of a Raan tree. The scanty scraps of cloth that once was your clothing can hardly protect you from the countless razor-sharp shards that pierce your flesh.

Turn to 91.

72 Hastily you reach for the polished brass door handle. With all the blood on your hands your grip first slips, but with your second try you manage to open the heavy wooden door. Flickering light greets you. With a quick, catilike movement you push through the narrow crack into a long hallway. Magnificent suits of armor and oil portraits on one side and dozens of leaded glass windows on the other side flank the opulent corridor.

Turn to 76.

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73 Feral grunting and snorting fills the darkness. You're trapped! The enemy has surrounded you and your strength is waning. But you're not alone! You fight side by side with priest emperor Kathum, the greatest champion of Rhenus. In the end, the beasts lunge at you from the darkness in an inferno of bloodthirsty screams and the martial clash of weapons. A fleeting glance and a quick nod suffice, and together you draw your weapons before your final battle...

With a smile on your lips you wake up. For a short moment you don't know where you are, but then you realize that what you've experienced was only a dream.

> If you've slept in the crypt, turn to 13. If you've spent the night in the temple, turn to 95. If you're unsure, check if you've crossed off the marking at section 88 (crypt) or 89 (temple).



74 Pulling and pushing on some white knobs, she starts playing timidly. At first, only disjointed sounds can be heard softly, but after briefly warming up, the woman begins to play a dirge. No sooner has the heavy melody filled the temple, than it pierces your skull. A violent headache overwhelms you. The ground begins to sway, the world spins. A fit of dizziness evokes a groan. The music falls silent, and the young woman asks hesitatingly: "Is there anybody here?"

Your senses return to normal at once.

If you want to escape through the entrance, turn to 99. If you want to sneak up behind her and knock her unconscious, turn to 2. If you want to address her and seek her help, turn to 23.



75 With a short, forceful jerk you pull the lever down. The stone panel in the floor swings to the side with an almost inaudible scraping sound, revealing a narrow, worn down set of stone steps leading downwards. An earthy, musty smell greets you.

If you want to use the lever again and remain above, turn to 89. If you want to climb down the stairs, turn to 78.

76 You turn around and see the dim light of a candelabra nearing you. At the last moment you hide behind a large floor vase just as a young servant girl turns the corner. She comes toward you, but then pauses in front of the emperor's bedchamber, pressing her ear against the wooden door. Hesitatingly, she knocks.

"Is everything all right, my Hierarch?"

She is about to knock again, when a sudden clatter causes both the young woman and you to start in surprise.

"My Hierarch?!"

Cautiously, the servant girl opens the door. Peering over her shoulder, you can also look into the dark room. After taking only a few steps forward, the servant sees the body-there's a long, sharp scream and the candelabra falls from her hand. The candles roll throughout the room, finally setting the fine cloth of the canopy ablaze.

If you want to stay in your hiding place in the hallway, turn to 26. If you want to take the opportunity and escape through the corridor, turn to 55.

77 Barely have you recovered from your brief fight against the old warrior, when you hear the heavy footfalls of another guard. Fearful that reinforcements may be arriving, you decide to escape through a window in the next alcove.

With a few dexterous movements you open the window to the

yard. A strong gust of wind throws open the panes, revealing a fall of 20 feet. Too high for a human!

But the sturdy branches of a magnificent Raan tree are within reach if you jump. You take a few steps back to gather momentum, and then, screwing up your courage you...

Turn to 7.

78 Without a moment's hesitation, you walk down the stairs. When you reach the last step, the mechanism is activated once more, and the floor panel swings back again. Darkness surrounds you.

Turn to 46.

79 Even though more and more thick billows of smoke waft under the bed, you manage to suppress the need to cough. At first the servant gil steps on the remaining burning scraps of cloth, trying to extinguish them, but then she stops and runs screaming from the room. You take the opportunity to slip from your hiding place.

Turn to 69.

80 Placing your foot on the lowest step, you activate a mechanism. With a low scraping sound the black stone panel swings to the side and reveals the entrance to the temple. Cautiously, you run up the steps.

Even during the day the temple at the heart of the ruler's court is a peaceful place.

> Why don't the inhabitants seek out its calm? «

If you want to wait for the night here, turn to 90. If you want to leave the temple and go outside, turn to 49.

81 "I thought so! Give way before the power of Kar!" Holding the figurine protectively in front of her, and with her eves pin-



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PROLOGUE · A SHADOW AWAKENS

ched shut, she intones a choral to the sun goddess. A feeling of unease wafts over you.

If you want to flee through the entrance door, turn to 99. If you want to knock the priestess unconscious, turn to 2. If you want to wrest the figurine from her, turn to 64.

82 After praying briefly, she walks to the organ, laying the protective sheet carefully to one side and sitting down on a small leather stool next to the instrument. Mesmerized, you follow each of her gentle movements.

Turn to 74.



83 Protected by the darkness, you run past some more trees. The twisting gravel paths as well as the many bushes and trees could perhaps offer you enough cover. The first bolts cut through the air. You begin to sprint.

Decide your destiny based on the moon!

If it's New Moon or Crescent Moon, turn to 3. If it's Half Moon to Full Moon, turn to 25. To determine the phase of the moon, open a random page of this book and look at the moon show.

84 Although only a few minutes have passed since your escape, several dozen soldiers, servants and other inhabitants of the palace are by now swarming about the park and at the open windows. You use every hiding place, every opportunity to sneak to

the archway, but just before you reach your goal, six soldiers of Rhenus encircle you. You raise your hands in surrender just as a bolt penetrates your spine. With fading senses you realize that two guards are attempting to keep you alive, but it's too late.

Your life ends here. (+65) =



85 With a queasy feeling you enter the hallway. After a few steps you become aware of the sooty smell of extinguished candles hanging in the air. Strange. You turn around.

Turn to 9.

48

86 Frightened, the woman grabs for the priest amulet in the neckline of her gown. Then she folds her hands and with a trembling voice whispers a protective prayer to the sun goddess Kar. If you want to ask the priestess for help despite her reaction, turn to 47. If you want to knock her unconscious, turn to 47.

87 Fearlessly, you search the decayed body of the old priest emperor. Yet in the dust of centuries you find nothing of use. You are just about to heave the lid back onto the coffin when a sparkle catches your eve.

Turn to B1!

Remarkable, you've discovered the first bonus section! Turn to the end of the book and find the bonus chapter in order to read it.





88 After almost an hour you're done searching the catacomb. Exhausted and shivering from the cold, you cower in an empty alcove. The stillness of the crypt gradually transmits itself to you, and your breathing becomes calmer. With a feeling of safety you try to find some sleep.

If there are glass shards in your body, turn to 24. If you've been hit by a bolt, turn to 33. If you've been hurt by both, shards and bolt, turn to 67. If you're unhurt, turn to 70. Cross off the circle next to the section number 88 to note that you've read this section.

O 89 Cowering behind one of the large statues, you wait for the din in the courtyard to die down. With the few soaked rags you're wearing you're completely exposed to the cold in the temple.

Again and again soldiers run past the colored windows, but not one of them makes a move to look for you in the temple.

> Strange. Why don't they search for me here? «

In the last few minutes the storm has died down markedly. In places the silvery blue light of the full moon pierces the clouds. Along the front wall of the temple you can see the tall, gleaming pipes of an organ. A sheet of cloth protects the instrument's keys.

If you want to wrap your body in the sheet, turn to 8. If you don't want to touch it, turn to 58. Cross off the circle next to the section number 89 to note that you've read this section.

90 Time passes only slowly. Your thoughts revolve constantly around the same questions: > Who am I? Why am I here? What have I done? < There are no answers. You're slowly losing your mind.

You don't know how many hours have passed, but at a certain point you're startled by the creaking of the temple door.

From your hiding place you watch a lovely young woman clad in a white habit of Kar enter the sanctuary. Her sad, golden eyes are downcast as she walks between the prayer benches and kneels down in the first row. Your heart is hammering in your chest.

You're so fascinated by her exotic beauty that you can't turn away your gaze. Her long hair shimmers, bathed in golden light. Sobbing, she invokes a short prayer: "How could all this have happened? Oh hear my plea, merciful Kar, receive his soul!"

> If your body is wrapped in an Organ Shroud, turn to 34. If not, turn to 82.

91 With the courage of a Wantor mountain cat on the hunt, you leap out, arching through the air. Leaves rustle, branches snap. But the noise of your fall through the Raan tree's canopy of leaves is swallowed by the roar of the storm. Faced with your certain fall, you try to drive your claws into the groaning trunk, but you only scratch the bark and crash to the ground.

When you awaken some minutes seem to have passed. Dazed, you stare at your claw-like hands. On the back of your right hand you see a symbol, like a tattoo or a brand. Your left hand is covered with wrinkly scars and cruelly disfigured.

 $\scriptstyle >$ This symbol... is it Ugar's sign, the moon? What is the meaning of all this? $\scriptstyle <$

Then you become conscious again of the situation you are in. Turn to 65.

92 With no sense of direction, you run along the gallery surrounding the palace yard. Your hope of ever leaving this gigantic building fades, but something within you drives you on.

Turn to 35.







90 You're so fascinated by her exotic beauty that you can't turn away your gaze. Her long hair shimmers, bathed in golden light. Sobbing, she invokes a short prayer.

93 You feel the boundless power of the sun's hot rays. Caution and awe awaken in you simultaneously. Instinctively, you focus your thoughts on the power of the full moon and the beautiful light of its bluish grey disc. You find yourself able to move again. *Turn to* 53.

94 Once again you look at the temple door, partially ajar. A strange feeling of familiarity comes over you, but you turn away. You have only little time to catch your breath for two soldiers are approaching.

If you want to hide in the dense rose bushes, turn to 15. If you want to confront your pursuers, turn to 28. If you want to flee through the archway to the end of the park, turn to 66.

95 The bright colors from the window panes paint the rays of the morning sun as they stream through the trembling leaves, creating a whimsical dance of light.

But you take no pleasure in the display. You're thankful to have survived the last night, but still uncertainty about yourself gnaws at your mind. You rack your brain, but not even the slightest memory of your past life returns. It is enough to drive you insane! Outside people occasionally walk past you on the gravel paths, some of them sobbing and crying, others screaming out their grief over the loss of their Hierarch, but nobody seems to want to enter the temple. Nevertheless, you hide in a dark corner that cannot be seen from the door.

> If you want to wait in the temple until nightfall, turn to 90. If you want to escape through the entrance, turn to 49. If you want to move the lever next to the panel, turn to 61.

96 Searching for the sheet covering the organ, the young priestess walks around the pedestal where the organ and the



altar stand. Stopping short, she looks in your direction. Her large eyes blaze. You feel caught.

Hesitatingly, she approaches your hiding place and calls out: "Don't try to fool me! Show yourself!"

If you want to come out and show yourself, turn to 23. If you want to attack her and knock her unconscious, turn to 2.

97 Standing before you, you see a giant of a man. Upon his heavy armor shines the Golden Griffin, the heraldic animal of Rhenus. Despite somewhat drowsy looking eyes, the experienced soldier glares at you menacingly. In his right hand he holds a sword, in his left an oil lantern and scabbard with belt. It looks as if he hasn't yet managed to put on all of his equipment. Slowly, without turning his eyes away from you, he places the lantern and the scabbard next to him on the floor.

If you want to seize the opportunity and attack the guard, turn to 42.

If you want to flee down the hallway, turn to 40. If you want to escape with a daring jump through the window, turn to 71.

98 With a measured hop you climb the wall's edge towards the narrow air shaft, and with slight movements of your arms you force yourself forward.

Finally a ray of sunlight falls through the thorny vines of the roses. You feel a stabbing pain and remain motionless for a moment in the shaft. Primal fear causes you to tremble.

If you want to return to the protective darkness of the crypt, turn to 53. If you want to fight the pain and crawl further, turn to 17.

99 Still under the overpowering spell of the sounds, you dash towards the portal and tear it open. The glaring light of the midday sun floods the entrance to the temple. At once a flame of pain burns through your body. You groan and writhe.

"By Kar the Almighty!" the priestess shouts out into the temple. "I know what you are!"

Thereupon she begins to intone a hymn of praise to the sun goddess. The driving melody coming out of the organ pipes forces the last clear thought from your mind. Your body makes one last attempt to revolt before exploding into thousands of black fragments. RULES II

ATTRIBUTES & COMBAT

Congratulations! You have survived the introduction and learned the basic concept of this interactive novel. But this was only the beginning of your adventure-filled journey. There is a great deal more to comel Novo it is time to explain what makes this book a real funtasy roleplaying book—your abilities and the combat procedures. Please take a look at the adventure sheet as you read the next few sections so as to better understand these rules.

ATTRIBUTES

STRENGTH & DEXTERITY

During your adventure, you will have to contend with not only mental and but also physical challenges. There are two attributes for this— STRENGTH and DEXTERITY. The higher the value you achieve, the better the ability.

You need STRENGTH whenever physical exertion is required of you.
 You need DEXTERITY whenever you have to move with agility or speed.

The base stat for STRENGTH and DEXTERITY is 6 points each. But it will not stay that way. During your journey, you will improve. Cross off value increases you have earned on your adventure sheet! Just like now, because on the sheet are only 5 points ticked. Unless...

Optional Rule for Experts: ...if you are an experienced gamebook player, you can make it more difficult by starting your adventure with only 5 points each. This self-imposed difficulty is marked on the adventure sheet by filling in the corresponding triangles at the 5th box, both in STRENGTH and DEXTERITY, and the empty star (\$\pm).

Your life ends here. (4-90) =

100 Even before you can react, the shadow fiits towards you and grabs you by the throat with a stony grip. Mercilessly, it pulls you to itself. Eyes without pupils, glowing like silver, penetrate your mind, your spirit. You feel a deadly cold seep into your body. Your blood freezes. You're helpless, paralyzed. The last thing you are conscious of is the confident smile on the stony features of this black super being.

Read on in CHAPTER 1: "THE BLACK TOWER".

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Have you found the FATE POINT (#1) in this chapter? If not, you should perhaps try again and search a bit more during your escape...

Note: If you are playing this book for the first time, you should — before reading on in the first chapter — read the game rules on the following pages. This will help you have real fun with this game book. R

ATTACK & DEFENSE

To defend yourself in combat, you have the values ATTACK and DEFENSE. How good your chances of hitting an enemy are depends on your ATTACK value. This is the sum of your STRENGTH and the Hit Bonus of your active weapon.

How well you can avoid being wounded by enemy attacks depends on your DEFENSE. This is the sum of your DEXTERITY and the Protection Bonus provided by all your pieces of armor.

Because you may use several weapons and a variety of clothing during the course of this adventure, your values will vary.

VITALITY

VITALITY is your general health. Wounds have a negative effect on this value. You do not lose VITALITY solely in combat. Falling from a horse, breathing in poison gas, and even great feats of strength can exhaust you or weaken you physically.

VITALITY has six levels:

fit · normal · battered · hurt · critical · dead

Optional Rule for Experts: If you are an experienced reader of gamebooks, you can make it more difficult for yourself. If your VITALITY is reduced, your other values suffer, too.

If you reach the status hurt, you suffer a penalty of -1 to STRENGTH and DEXTERITY; when you reach critical the penalty is -2 (compare the boxes on your adventure sheet).

Example: If you have a STRENGTH of 9 and your status is critical, you have a STRENGTH of 7 left (9 - 2 = 7) until your VITALITY is regenerated. These penalties also apply to DEXTERITY and, of course, ATTACK and DEFENSE as yoell

Fill in the two empty stars next to 'Penalties' (合合) on your adventure sheet to show that you are using this expert rule.





Regeneration and Death

Of course, your VITALITY can regenerate through healing or the use of diverse Utensils. You will learn when and how in the text. You also learn what VITALITY level you begin with at the beginning of $\mathbb R$ each chapter. If your VITALITY reaches the status dead, you will have to restart the chapter.



TESTS

There are dangerous situations in which you will have to test your STRENGTH or DEXTERITY. Whether a test succeeds or not depends on your luck; you will use the dice to determine your fate.

You can "roll the dice" by opening the book at a random page. The die depicted with the lightning bolt # is your STRENGTH die; the one with the shield 🛡 is your DEXTERITY die. In this way, you can play through this book without needing anything but a pencil.

Add the appropriate die to the larger base die in the middle to obtain your current ability. If the result is higher than or equal to the difficulty given, you have succeeded.

Example: You have a STRENGTH of 7 and read: 'Test your STRENGTH against 12!' You have to roll at least a 5 to succeed. The random page shows: 🗆 * 🗔 💌

This means that you can add 6 points (4 for the ≠ die on the left and 2 for the base die). The result is 13. You succeeded the STRENGTH test.

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ABILITIES

Sometimes you will learn about or discover special abilities. They expand both your mental and your physical capabilities. You write each one down on your adventure sheet.

EQUIPMENT

Weapons

You can use vecapons to better defend yourself. The more powerful a weapon is, the higher the Hit Bonus will be that is added to your Attack value. You can carry up to three vecapons at once, but fight using only one. Moreover, the third weapon (slot 3) may have only a maximum Hit Bonus of +2.

Important: Only the weapon you actually use in combat adds a bonus to your ATTACK.

Clothing

There are six different fields on your adventure sheet that you can use to write down the clothes you wear. You distinguish between general cloaks and disguises and five areas of the body which you can protect with specialized armor. You would list a Helmet under Head for example, a Linen Tunic under Cloak.

Which item of clothing must be listed under which category will be noted in the text of the relevant section. Note that you may wear only one piece of clothing on each part of the body.

Each piece of clothing offers more or less protection from injury. This value, the Protection bonus, is added to your DEFENSE. Unlike the rule concerning weapons, you may add all your bonuses for clothes worn.

COMBAT

On your adventures, you will constantly encounter enemies and monsters who want to kill you. You defend against such dangers in combat. As a rule, battles are fought to the bitter end. There are exceptions, such as opportunities to flee. These are explained when they appear in the text.





Combat Sequence

Combat proceeds over several rounds following these rules:

1. Roll the dice!

Use the book by opening it at a random page and using the dice depicted.

2. Determine hits

Add the die next to the lightning bolt # and the base die in the center to your ATTACK value. If the result is equal to or higher than your enemy's DEENSE, you have hit him and thus reduce his RESISTANCE by 1. You do so by crossing off a circle O in the line with the heart symbol * representing the enemy's values (see the example below). Cross off from left to right.

3. Enemy defeated?

If you were able to reduce your enemy's RESISTANCE to 0 (all circles crossed off), you have won! You can continue your journey with the section given.

If the enemy is still alive, continue with step 4.

4. Determine enemy hits

Add the die next to the shield
on the open page and the base die in the center to your DEFENSE.

If the result is equal to or higher than your enemy's ATTACK, you have avoided a hit. If not, your VTRAITY is lowered by one level If you survive the hit, which means that your VTRAITY is not yet at dead, start the next combat turn at step 1 again!

EXEMPLARY ENEMY

Attack Defense Resistance After your first successful ATTACK the left circle of the enemy's RESISTANCE is marked.

Showdowns

As the finale of some chapters an especially powerful enemy will oppose you. Such showdowns are fought in the special combat chapter at the end of the book (section numbers beginning with "C"), using the general combat rules. In a showdown, you can, however, also use tactics or daring maneuvers or special items so as to gain an advantage.

IMPROVING YOUR VALUES

In some (usually well hidden) sections you receive bonus points added to your base value of STRENGTH and DEXTERITY. In such cases, naturally your ATTACK and DEFENSE also rise.

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Now you know the basic combat rules and attributes. It is time to continue your journey.

Turn to the 1st chapter at 101.

CHAPTER 1

THE BLACK TOWER

Your VITALITY is normal.

"Light and Darkness, Life and Death—the opposite facets of creation. They appear to be incompatible, but without one the other would be nothing..."

- THE ORACLE OF KABETH

101 Throbbing pain awakens you rudely. Your head is droning from within, an ache you cannot silence. Putrid straw is stuck to your lips. All your muscles burn as you lift yourself up from the ground. You are in a dank stone cell, lit weakly by the torchlight dancing through the iron bars.

Slowly your memory of last night returns: the Hierarch's body, your escape to the idyllic chapel, the mysterious shadow pursuing you, that same figure dragging you here. And of course, the lovely priestess of Kar. The memory of her almost makes you forget your current situation.

You examine your body for injuries or other clues as to your kidnapper, but you cannot find anything unusual. At least you are dressed, though your only garb is a stained cotton gown.

You cannot say how many hours you were unconscious. In this desolate dungeon there are no windows, no way to know if the moon has risen or the sun is shining. Painstakingly you feel your body and search the straw — there is no sign of your belongings. All that you own (Utensils, Special Items, Weapons, Clothing) has been taken from you. Mark all your lost items with an "x" in Save Point \otimes if they are not already marked. Perhaps you will get them back later.



The only item you are wearing at the moment is the Prisoner Gown (Clothing, Cloak).

> If you want to listen at the cell walls, turn to 119. If you want to go to the bars to look around, turn to 292. If you want to keep still, turn to 149.

102 You blend into the shadows of the room. The Gartak is still peacefully snoring as you rise behind him, quickly seizing him by the hair and smashing his head against the table. The pewter plates fly across the stained wood while the tankard spills its contents onto the floor before crashing down.

As the Gartak comes to lie still among scraps of food and dishes, you can see the glitter of a delicate chain around his neck. Curious, you examine the ornament. At the end of the chain dangles a pearl set in white gold. It is strangely elegant for a crude Gartak. If you want to take the Guard's Chain (Special Item), write it down on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 175

103 Before the Zarlik can utter a single word, you have turned and hastened through the guard door. Barely have you managed to take a few quick steps through the corridor when he shouts some insults after you in his broken accent. You look back over your shoulder and see the mysterious lizard creature staring after you with wide, amber eyes. Then he turns around, walks back to the laboratory, and bolts the heavy door behind him.

Turn to 247

104 After the distraction with the parchment ship, you consider once again the possibility of escape.

If you want to flee from the cell, turn to 241. If you want to continue waiting in the cell, turn to 117.



wall was audible everywhere in the dungeon. It is time to prepare for unwelcome visitors.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

Turn to C1!



106 Hoping not to fall victim to the Kroll Giant's uncontrollable rage, you lie back on the cot and hide beneath the sheet. The ground and walls shake, stone slabs and furniture shattering from the monster's powerful blows. Shards and fragments rain down on you, some large enough to hurt.

Half an eternity passes before the Gartak guards finally rush into the room. You peek out from beneath the sheet to see what is happening now. Six soldiers have the snorting Kroll Giant surrounded, using their spears and lances to keep him at a distance. As you watch, the gigantic creature flies into a rage again. With violent screams, the giant flails about, the whole room shaking from his fury.

As two Gartaks are slammed against the walls like lumps of clay, you use the tumult of the battle, protected by the swirling dust, to try and escape!







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 $107\,$ The cabinets and chests by the wall have no locks, but you cannot open them.

> Are they secured with magic? «

In a corner hidden by crates you find a writing desk covered with snow-white pelts from a large Yamok bull. Here lie some tidily stacked parchments and a small silver casket. The language on the documents is as unknown to you as the alchemical signs on the box.

> If you want to open the casket, turn to 245. If you want to return the parchments, turn to 201.

108 With each step you descend into the depths, your muscles burn more intensely. Your hands, arms and legs are covered with cuts and abrasions. Close to unconscious, you reach past a narrow ledge, lose your grip and drop down. At the base of the Night Tower the waves break, cresting white as the sea engulfs your body.

Your life ends here. (+180) =

109 Together you run towards the guard room. A moment before you reach the musty room, Leonar holds up his hand and stops. Placing a finger to his pursed lips, he points at the snoring Gartak.

If you want to creep up on the guard and eliminate him, turn to 184. If you want to wait, turn to 146.

110 Slowly a bad feeling comes over you that the Gartak could have gone back another way, but then the door opens. The fur around the returned Gartak's mouth is disheveled. In his left hand he is carrying a blue crystal. On tiptoe you follow the servant, who smells of beer.

When he reaches the silver door, he pushes the crystal into a



small opening. With a barely audible metallic squeak the door opens. The two Gartaks seize the stretcher and walk through.

If you want to push a foot in the door to slip through past the two, turn to **240**. If you want to continue climbing the tower, turn to **115**.

111 Snuffling, the enormous dragon scrutinizes you as, frozen in awe, you hang on the ledge. When the long, purple tongue licks at you through the bars, you lose control—you scream, loud and hysterically.

"Matty, back!" you hear the resolute call of a young man's voice. Like a savior in the nick of time Aonus appears from behind a rock and shoos away the royal blue dragon. Then the fighter pulls you back over the ledge. "It probably wanted to have your food." Aonus points to the bulges indicating the apples hidden under your clothes. Wide-eyed and open-mouthed you stand there as Matty pulls back with a lowered head.

"I hope you have had enough of fleeing and are now ready to follow me to Master Calderel" Aonus continues calmly.

Completely confused, you stumble after the fighter who leads you past the Gartaks on watch back into the tower.

Turn to 230.

112 The beautiful, filigree silver ring consists of two entwined serpents. You feel the positive magical aura of this talisman as you put it on your left ring finger. For a brief moment you feel as if your mind might receive the thoughts of another person.

The ornament fits perfectly. Thankful, you pat Tarus on the cheek. He stares at you in irritation as you turn around to leave the library.

Write down the Serpent Ring (Special Item) on your adventure sheet. Turn to 250.

113 Step by step, Aonus leads you up the Night Tower. After some minutes you reach an oversized brass door supported by massive iron beams. You can hear the rush of the sea behind it. The smell of salt water is even more intense. You must be very close to the docks!

"Behind this lie the sea passage and the mooring point." Aonus is visibly amused by your curiosity. "At the moment, no ships are at anchor. The whole fleet is in action."

If you want to continue following Aonus, turn to 208. If you want to attack him and try to escape, turn to 251.



114 You curse your cockiness for wanting to escape by climbing the Night Tower. Any slip here will be fatal. There is no way back now, however, so you work your way down step by difficult step.

Finally, you see an artificial opening in the cliff just a few feet away from you. You thank the gods and move towards it hand over hand.

Turn to 148.

115 You have climbed countless steps, passed many doors and side passages, and still you have not reached the top of the tower. Your legs are as heavy as lead. Unable to go on, you must pause again and again to rest in one of the alcoves along the stairs, ascending like a gigantic corkscrew inside the Night Tower. You can only guess how high the bastion must be, but it must be far higher than 300 feet. Even gazing through one of the few



peepholes allows you only a vague sense of the building's size in the moonlight, even the mighty waves of the open sea look like gentle swells.

Suddenly you hear a shrill scream—perhaps of a raptor or a winged lizard—outside the tower. Whatever that is, it seems to be getting closer!

If you want to return to the last peephole, crawl through a fissure in the wall and look outside, turn to 128. If you want to continue, turn to 231.

116 With trembling knees you step slowly backwards, but the hypnotic eyes in the darkness have already fixed their gaze on you. The dragon knows you are in its cage!

Panic seizes you as the cavernous breathing of the monster grows louder and louder, rising finally in an inferno of fire and smoke. You run for your life, but the dragon's annihilating breath already curls around you and licks at your heels.

If you have the ability Immunity to Heat, turn to 182. If not, turn to 170.

117 When you finally hear heavy, shuffling steps approaching your cell, you are happy for the distraction. Your visitors are an Ugarith with shoulder-length white hair and a splendid breast plate accompanied by an old Gartak, scales dull and jagged.

Pointedly, the fighter takes a sweeping step across the dead guard and plants himself in front of your cell. His dark eyes, which you can barely distinguish from his smooth, black skin, pierce you. Then he speaks, his voice rising: "Get up! I will take you to the honorable Master."

Without further comment, he rolls the corpse over on its back, tears the ring of keys from its belt, and opens the bars. The Gartak sniffs at his dead comrade and, with bared tusks, and looks at you sconfully.

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"Take him away!" the Ugarith commands dryly. The Gartak drags the dead body away from the gap.

Then the black-skinned giant turns back towards you. "These degenerate Gartaks are of hardly any use. Follow me!"

If you want to attack both, turn to 246. If you want to try to escape, turn to 181. If you want to follow them without a fight, turn to 281.

118 Somewhat surprised by the courage with which you grab his weapon, the Gartak frowns. At the same time you tug at the spear, but then the elite soldier bares his fangs, gives a jerk and causes you to lose your balance. Your footing gone, you plummet to the depths, accompanied by the sneering grunt of the Gartak. *Turn to* 233.

119 Curious, you press your ear against the cold, slightly convex wall. Behind the rough stone you hear a single deep murmur. You knock against the unyielding stone several times but to no avail. Even heavy blows with your fist make only a muffled, almost imperceptible sound. After a dozen attempts, each as useless as the last, you stop.

If you want to turn towards the bars, turn to 292. If you want to wait, turn to 149.

120 Far away, through two gigantic openings in the rock to your right and to your left, you see the glittering of waves in the moonlight. You guess that the Empire's war and support ships go through these passages.

You can see six moorings, but not a single ship. The guards do not seem to be paying any attention! Nevertheless, more than three dozen mercenaries from all over the world patrol the piers, positioning themselves behind the stone ramparts or guarding stacks of wooden crates.



121 The cold water is murky and brackish. Sometimes garbage and excrement float past. Despite this, you manage to overcome your disgust and feel around in the gully. In the mud of a washedout hole your search is rewarded. It is a rusty knife, a shank of notched iron barely attached to a half-rotten wooden handle. If you want to take it, write it down as Knife (Weapon, Hit Bonus +1) on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 196.

122 "I know that. But do you not think that the whole tower would be up in arms if the Master distrusted you? Pensively, Tarus rubs his temples beneath the locks of his tousled hair before speaking again. "It's rare for a young Ugarith to be so far along in its development. That aroused his curiosity, I guess." He falls silent after that. A few moments later, you address Tarus concerning your lost memory.

Turn to 156.

123 With a faint creaking sound, the lid opens. In the chest, there are some bags of cloth and the following items:

portions of Dried Meat (Utensil)

· a few Apples (Utensil)

• a Bottle of Plum Wine (Utensil)

a well preserved Dagger (Weapon, Hit Bonus +1)

a grey Woolen Tunic (Clothing, Disguise)

You can take what you wish. Do not forget to write down your new equipment on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 257.




124 Aonus is visibly amused by your plan to attack him and the Gartak at the same time. Raising his hand in a deliberate gesture, he commands the Gartak to stay back. Snarling, his hackles rising, the Gartak steps aside.

Turn to C10!

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125 You reach out as far as you can, pull the Gartak to the bars, and grab the key ring. After several attempts you find the right key and open the door. To be safe you drag the unconscious guard into the cell and examine him thoroughly. Apart from his short sword and badly worn leather armor, you don't find any-thing. Unfortunately, the Gartak's broken weapon is of no use. Write down the Warden's Key Ring (Utensil) on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 215.

126 On the table, there are two pewter plates next to tankards of stale beer. The meat is still steaming hot. By a wall holder covered in malodorous fur stands an old spear. Based on the crude decorations, it has to be the weapon of a Gartak guard.

If you want to take the weapon, write it down as Short Spear (Weapon, Hit Bonus +2) on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 189.

127 Without wasting any time you climb along the side of the rock face. Meanwhile, the Gartak has carefully stuck his head out through the hole and is watching you. He gesticulates angrily with his spear and demands one last time that you stop. Then he throws it.

Decide your destiny based on the moon!

If it's New Moon or Crescent Moon, turn to 290. If it's Half Moon to Full Moon, turn to 187.





128 Falteringly, you feel your way down several steps until you reach the last peephole. You have not heard the feral scream again. Emboldened, you resolve to take a look outside.

On all fours you creep through the hole in the nearly 20 feet thick outer wall of the tower. You poke your head through the hole and, for a moment, enjoy the cold breeze. Not until your glance moves from the full moon, whose beautiful silver-blue disc shimmers in the sea below, do you realize that you are several hundred feet above the waves! Only a fearless climber would attempt this craggy rock wall.

You are just on the verge of crawling back from the edge when you hear the voices of two Gartaks approaching on the stairs.

If you want to wait in the alcove, turn to 188. If you want to crawl out of the opening and climb along the cliff, turn to 190.

129 You follow the Gartak down two flights of stairs. He stops in front of a door and places his hand on a stone tablet set in the wall. A moment later, the door swings open. A cool breath of air whispers past you as the Gartak enters the dark corridor.

If you want to wait for the Gartak, turn to 110. If you want to slip through the door behind him, turn to 261. If you want to return to the waiting Gartak, turn to 218.

130 Carefully you tap the sleeping old man on the shoulder. Startled, he awakes and blinks at you in surprise. "Ah! You... you can't just frighten an old man like that!" He scrutinizes you.

Turn to 133.

131 You are very excited for you have never seen a real Skyll up close. You remember legends about the high race, which is said to live behind the Great Barrier in a distant southern realm

called Kurnugia. As you pull back the shroud, you see a piece of paper bound to her ankle. On it somebody has scrawled the words "Black Gate, urgent!".

Her flawless features make her look very young, but you understand that she was likely many hundreds of years old. Even though you do not know this woman-warrior, you regret her death. Sadly you stroke the silvery hair from her face and lose yourself in her cat-like emerald eyes. Even in death she evokes unbelievable fascination.

> Her soul is still a part of her! «

Out of respect, you move to close the Skÿll's eyes to allow her final rest. The moment your hand touches her face, a small silver light blazes up out of her chest, darts about in the room, finally disappearing in your body! Startled, you sit down and try to catch your breath.

Your VITALITY has been returned to normal.

Turn to 171.

132 Dazed, Aonus lies on the stairs. He will not take long to recover from your blow to the back of his neck. The pommel of his imposing broad sword sticks out from beneath his cloak.

If you want to take the weapon, turn to 229. If you have the Map of the Night Tower and want to study it now, turn to 206. If not, turn to 216.

133 His face wrinkles up as he grumbles, "I really should report your weird behavior, but I think it is all right for you wait for the Master here."

For a moment you think about attacking the frail human, but something stays your hand.

"You look confused. You don't know who I am, do you?" he asks calmly.







133 Behind his grey whiskers the librarian's expression is serious as he realizes that you cannot remember.

 $\,$ > This face, this voice—these books, this room. I know all of it! I have been here before... $\,$ <

"Tarus." Behind his grey whiskers the librarian's expression is serious as he realizes that you cannot remember. Slowly and clearly, the old man repeats his name, just as if he were trying to teach language to an infant.

> If you want to tell him that several hours have passed since you're awakened, turn to 122. If you want to tell the old man that you cannot remember your past life, turn to 156. If you want to leave the library without a word, turn to 263.



134 Curious, you sneak up to the bars of your cell and attempt to hear where the snoring is coming from. It appears to come from a dark cell next to yours. With no light, you cannot see who is lying there. Nevertheless, you rattle the bars to wake your neighbor.

It takes a while, but then you hear the drowsy complaint of an old man: "Hey there, stop it! You'll attract the guards, fool!"

Turn to 214.

135 Glad to have better footing, you continue to crawl. At the end of the long shaft there is a crude iron grate that you can lift from its hinges with ease. Carefully, you lower yourself into the dark room below. Beneath your feet you feel the dense weave of a thick carpet. Apart from that, you can neither see nor hear anything.





Hesitatingly, you feel your way forward. Next to some cupboards and chests and standing on a round wooden table, you make out an iron lantern. Beside it, you find flint and tinder.

Using the lantern, you cause the small room to light up. You see that you are standing in a mysterious study without any visible entrance. There is only a brass lever protruding from the wood paneling.

If you want to use the lever, turn to 238. If you want to examine the room, turn to 151. If you want to go back outside and continue climbing down the Tower, turn to 153.

136 An argument arises between the two Blackpelts. Finally, the Gartak at the door goes back down the stairs, snarling with every step. The other one remains, shaking his head.

Turn to 278.

137 Only a few steps away from you the large platform drops down almost vertically. You are overcome by a feeling of dizziness as you try to see the Tower's base. Your gaze moves across the sea extending to the horizon in all directions. Even though the Night Tower is an enormous fortness of barren stone, it feels tiny in the endless expanse of the sea.

You now realize that your escape was doomed from the start. Only a seagoing ship with a seasoned crew or a tame flying lizard could take you away from this rock of death. The top of the Tower is heavily guarded, of course. This makes sense, as the building could only be attacked from the air. As you ponder the hopelessness of your situation, you sense that there is something incredibly powerful near you.

From behind one of many stone pillars you get a look at your immediate surroundings. At least three squads of two are patrolling the platform's rim. On the opposite side another stone

pillar rises up. On it, there is a barracks in whose windows you see a dim light through dark glass.

If you want to look around on the platform, turn to 236. If you want to reach the barracks, turn to 266. If you want surrender to the guards, turn to 277.

138 Inclining its head to gaze at you, the Zarlik begins the conversation in an accent barely understandable. "Why do you dissturb my work? I am sssstill busssy, thrall, and it won't go any fassster if I am consistantly interrupted."

While the Zarlik speaks, his thin, forked tongue darts in and out between his leathery lips, making his lisp even more pronounced. "You can tell your massester that it will take dayses, maybe weekses to decontaminate hisses woman."

Then the alchemist directs you towards the exit with his scaly hands. With a thud the massive door slams shut.

Turn to 247.

139 Clad in a purple robe, the man is working intently on a piece of equipment. He does not appear to have noticed you entering. At least he has his back turned towards you.

If you want to sneak up on the man, turn to 177. If you want to leave the room and run along the corridor, turn to 247.

140 With slow, soothing gestures you try to calm the giant, but his gaze turns darker and darker. Then, with a loud roar, he tries to grab you. Swiftly, you dodge his paws, but the sluggish Kroll Giant does not give up. In his hunting fury, he smashes not only the entrance but also the ceiling and walls, bringing the immense room down on you both. You struggle as long as you can, but in the end you are battered, bloodied, and buried under the falling rocks and rubble.

Your life ends here. (+157) =

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141 In the dreariness of your cell your thoughts revolve around last night. Again and again the human shadow from the chapel appears before your inner eye. Even though you saw it for several seconds, you can only vaguely remember its stony face with those glowing, pupil-less eyes. The face was shaded, as if another were covering it like a veil.

I know this face. But from where?

Turn to 291.



142 You have never seen such a huge creature. The Kroll Giant is easily twice your size and heavily muscled. He must have been dragged onto the table by at least six men. Something this powerful could not have been captured easily. He was most likely a victim of his own stupidity, which is said to be common with all Kroll Giants.

You lift the sheet a bit more and expose part of his back. It is covered with welts from a whip. On both his wrists he wears protective cuffs crafted from smooth leather and covered in metal studs. Judging from his whip marks and abrasions, this Kroll was most likely a slave in the mines.

If you want to take Kroll Giant Cuffs (Clothing, Legs, Protection +2), write them down on your adventure sheet. You wear them on your thighs.

Turn to 171.

143 You step into a dark alcove in the corridor and unfold the parchment showing a schematic drawing of the Night Tower. According to this plan, there must be a laboratory behind the heavily safeguarded door. What sort of research takes place behind it, however, the plan does not reveal.

If you want to try to open the door, turn to 193. If you want to continue along the corridor, turn to 247.

144 Indifferent, you lie down again. The Gartak barks some incomprehensible words in your direction, but then leaves the dungeon without further incident.

"Right you are! Ignore the smelly bastard!" you can hear your fellow prisoner's voice again.

If you want to talk to the old man, turn to 154. If you want to be left in peace, turn to 235.



145 You don't know why, but some instinct makes you touch the stone. You can sense an inexplicable power emanating from it. Trembling, you hold it between your thumb and index finger, steeling yourself against whatever may happen next.

Turn to B4!

146 "Tell me, are you afraid?" Leonar whispers sternly. "All right, then I will do it myself."





Somewhat shakily, but with determination, the old soldier approaches the sleeping Gartak. Barely has he raised his hand, when a handsome, young Ugarith with snow-white, shoulderlength hair and wearing a polished breast plate strides out of the shadows.

Startled, Leonar pauses. The Gartak continues to sleep peacefully. "Aonus", your companion clumsily tries to cover up what he has done. "Such an unexpected visit!"

"Indeed, old sun soldier!" the black-skinned warrior says. "I should have known that you would try another escape attempt. This could cost you your ears." There's a brief silver flicker in Aonus' black eyes. "Feel fortunate I am not here for you tonight." As the Ugarith glances around, waking the Gartak with a pound of his fist on the table, Leonar gives a hidden sign urging you to run away.

> Leonar, you old warhorse! Thank you. «

Without being noticed, you flee into the darkness of the corridor. Turn to 195.

147 Calderel moves to your side and gently rests his hand on your shoulder. "It's not what you had expected, is it?"

Fascinated, you stare into his abysmal eyes as he continues. "A prophet's birth affects not only the mind, but also the mortal coil." He points to the artifact. With its golden frame and the artful sun ornaments it differs from the other furnishings in the Shadow Master's chamber. It is conspicuously out of place.

"Be watchful, my child! Only a short moment and the mirror will reveal all to you!"

Beads of sweat appear on your brow as the image changes. Calderel appears to be just as tense.

Your silhouette blurs to a dense, black fog. You feel a power coming from the ring Tarus gave you, a power protecting you from the magic of the mirror but also from Calderel's spell. You

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are sure that because of that protection, the mirror will reveal neither to you-nor, more importantly, to the Emissary of Ugar-everything it might.

After several billowing black moments, the fog recedes. The sight makes you catch your breath. Before you stands a petrified shadow. And it stares at you with your own eyes! At this moment you realize a terrible truth...

You are an Ugarith as well, a creature of the night! Humans are afraid of your kind.

Turn to 300.

148 You cannot believe your luck as you reach another lookout shaft. You drag yourself into it with the last of your strength. Tears of relief run down your cheeks. You need almost a half hour's rest to regain strength enough to press on.

If you want to continue climbing down, turn to 153. If you want to crawl back into the Tower through the shaft, turn to 135.

149 As you lie in the straw, listening to the few sounds in the dungeon around you, time appears to stand still. Only the regular patter of dripping water provides the cadence of passing seconds.

Sometimes a guard passes the door to your cell. Although you can see nothing beyond this room, his smell gives away that he is not human.

> If you want to continue waiting, turn to 259. If you want to get up and walk towards the bars, turn to 292.

150 Carefully, you let the door between swing shut. You lock it from the outside and bend the key in the lock. This should allow you a little time to get ahead of your pursuers.

You are standing in a spacious gallery illuminated by wavering torchlight. Drops of water form rivulets on the rough stonework.







147 After several billowing black moments, the fog recedes. The sight makes you catch your breath. Before you stands a petrified shadow. And it stares at you with your own eyes! At this moment you realize a terrible truth...

Not far from you, at the end of the right section of the corridor, there is a small guard house. You can hear the rasping grunts of a sleeping Gartak.

> If you want to walk to the right, turn to 102. If you want to walk to the left, turn to 217.

151 In the narrow room there is a chair and small, round table. On the table lies the flat brass figurine of a dragon. The dragon's squat posture looks unnaturally straight, while its tail has several thorns bent downward. The object seems to be some kind of ornate key.

If you want to take the Dragon Key (Utensil), write it down your adventure sheet.

Turn to 107.



152 With an uneasy feeling, prepared to jump to safety at any moment, you pull the sheet back from the body. From what you can see in this dim light, the desert lion's yellow fur shows no sign of injury. But you discover markings drawn around the animal's mighty neck in black, waxy ink.

Turn to 171.

153 In the meantime you have come so far down that you can clearly see the billowing waves. The sea smashes continuously against the cliffs. It appears impossible to escape from here by swimming. Even though your strength is waning, you decide to continue climbing.



Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

If you want to examine where the smell comes from, turn to 220. If you want to continue climbing down, turn to 108.

154 Old Leonar is a soldier. Proudly, he recounts to you his many battles against the Empire. His last story is not quite so heroic or inspiring, however. Three years ago he was caught on a scouting mission to find the Night Tower off the west coast of Pakonia.

"Well, I did find the Tower," the veteran continues in a mocking tone. "But I probably won't be able to report it."

The exciting tales Leonar tells you are all shaped by honor, courage and comradeship. Despite all the bravado, however, the horrors of the war fill you with sadness.

The old man is still talking enthusiastically as deep in thought, you glance toward the lock on your cell. You know neither how or why, but it snaps back and the door swings open with a rusty squeak. Astonished, you stand up. There is nobody here but your fellow prisoner, who hastily waves you towards him.

Turn to 296.

155 You study the Night Tower's rock wall. The way up is clearly shorter than the way down. Your knees are knocking, but you have no choice. If you want to survive, you have to climb! How's your VTNLITY?

Is it's normal or battered, turn to 267. If it's hurt or critical, turn to 169.



156~ "Obviously... I'm surprised you're asking," Pensively, the old man breaks off in his explanations and then, after a brief pause, continues. "I should not tell you too much–I don't want to get ahead of the Master."

After a moment's thought, laying his hand on your shoulder, Tarus says curtly, "I think it is better if you leave now."

Turn to 263.

157 From one moment to the next, the illusion shatters. Then the fog shape disappears and behind you hear a deep, droning groan. The Kroll Giant is awakening! Blinded at first by the bright skylight, the massive monster is initially confused, but then he sluggishly rolls himself off the table.

> If you want to play dead on your cot, turn to 106. If you want to leave the room at once, turn to 172. If you want to speak to the Kroll Giant, turn to 199.

158 After a few minutes the Gartak's gurgling stops. The guard lies drowned in his dungeon's drain water—such irony! Content now, you lie down on the straw again and listen to the silence.

But your sickly neighbor addresses you again. "You've finished him off! Well done! But that means trouble. The Shadows won't tolerate that."

You're worried by the consequences of your attack when the old man continues. "Hey there, I'm Leonar and I have something for you! Maybe it will be of use to you when you're taken away. Pay attention to the water!"

It doesn't take long and a small ship of folded parchment floats past your cell. It comes to rest alongside the Gartak's body.

> If you want to pick up the parchment ship, turn to 224. If you want to ignore it, turn to 276.



If you want to walk up the steps, turn to 231. If you want to crawl through the rock to freedom, turn to 190.

160 As Calderel leads you silently through his chambers, you notice a piece of furniture, as tall as a man, covered with a large cloth made of black silk.

The attentive ruler notices your curiosity. "This is the Mirror of Revelation. No spell, no disguise can deceive this unique artifact! It also reveals what is hidden. Perhaps even things you yourself know nothing about!" Calderel whispers in your thoughts. "Do you dare take a look?"

If you want to look in the mirror, turn to 252. If you don't want to, turn to 284.



161 In a reflex action you dodge the glass retort. It brushes past your shoulder, but shatters only when it hits the ground. Hissing and steaming, its caustic contents spill out, barely missing you. The Zarlik glares at you with the angry amber eyes of a serpent.

ZARLIK ALCHEMIST

ATTACK	A 10
Defense	9
Resistance	•0

If you survive the battle, turn to 283.





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> If you want to pick up the parchment ship, turn to 224. If you want to ignore it, turn to 276.

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159 The credulous guards nod at you and continue on their patrol. Nevertheless, they are visibly irritated by your strange behavior.

If you want to walk up the steps, turn to 231. If you want to crawl through the rock to freedom, turn to 190.

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ZARLIK ALCHEMIST

Attack Defense Resistance

/ 10
♥ 9
♥ ○ ②

If you survive the battle, turn to 283.

162 An inner voice urges you to take the path on the right. Without consciously questioning this voice, you climb to the right past the rock outcrop.

Turn to 114.

163 Like a bear catching salmon, you wait for the right moment. As the Gartak kneels at the edge of the lookout opening and brandishes his spear, you seize his weapon by the shaft and yank. Test your STRENGTH against 10!

> If you're successful, turn to 272. If you fail, turn to 118.

164 "Obviously you are not authorized to step through this portal any longer!"

As if from nowhere the charismatic librarian appears behind you. "I should take you to Calderel."

In his voice you hear the wisdom of decades, and you dare not refuse him. Willingly, you follow Tarus through a door hidden between the shelves. You climb up a narrow spiral staircase and enter a warm, tastefully furnished reception hall. Then the librarian takes his leave. You are alone again.

Turn to 260.

165 You surrender, your hands raised above your head. "Wonderful," the warrior remarks, "I'm happy to see that you have come to your senses. I will lead you to our Master."

He points to the door, intending to leave, hesitates and then says in an annoyed tone, "Leonar, go back to your cell and wait there. You really should know better."

"Yes, Aonus!" Leonar answers contritely. The old soldier glances at you, his look tired and resigned. Then he disappears back into the dark corridor leading to the cells.

Turn to 113.



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166 Weakened by your lengthy flight you make a serious mistake. Just as you retreat into the shadows to escape the eyes of two guards, you accidentally bump against a chest of drawers. The crystal vase standing on it totters and falls to the ground with a loud crash.

Before you realize what's happening, you're surrounded by half a dozen Gartaks. The elite soldiers leave you no chance of escape. A few moments later, Aonus stands in front of you. He does not look pleased.

Turn to 168.

167 "Master, what you doing?" the older Gartak calls into the opening with an uncertain voice.

If you want to send the soldiers away with stern voice, turn to 286. If you want to quickly crawl outside, turn to 176. If you want to attack both of the Gartaks, turn to 191.

168 Soothingly, Aonus spreads his arms in welcome. "I'm surprised you have managed to come this far. But your little foray is now over. Follow me. Master Calderel is waiting," You realize that it makes no sense to resist any longer. With head lowered, you go back down the stone steps accompanied by the Gartaks' scornful remarks as Aonus leads you through the confusing corridors of the Night Tower.

Turn to 230.

169 Every step, every movement of your arm, is agony. You falter a little more with every torturous moment. The superhuman effort numbs your senses. The top of the tower is only a small way away, but you are running out of strength. Suddenly, beneath your feet the stone breaks off.

Turn to 233.

170 In a single moment the blue flames consume your clothes, your gear, and finally your flesh. You plummet, a flaming torch, dead long before you reach the bottom.

Your life ends here. (+236*) =

171 You're just turning away as a shimmering bluish fog rises from the body of the woman warrior. At first it simply drifts through the room without rhyme or reason, but then it manifests as the woman herself standing before you.

The Skÿll's shimmering ghost speaks to you in a strangely distant voice. "Keşra, listen! You've been led astray. Leave your path! Learn your destiny!"

Turn to B3!

172 The Kroll Giant is confused and doesn't see you as you slip through the door of the mortuary. You sneak along the corridor, hiding in the dark corners. You just want to get away from this monster! A short time later six Gartak soldiers appear. They position themselves in front of the door and at a sign of their leader charge the hall. Seizing your chance, you use the opportunity to flee.

Turn to 178.

173 You've crept barely two steps towards the man when you catch a glimpse of a Zarlik's greenish blue scales between his robe and leather gloves. This race of humanoid lizards from the surreal swamps of the southern realm Sal-Mur-Zar is known for its highly developed mental abilities.

Somewhat reluctantly you sneak towards him and slowly raise your hand for a blow. Suddenly the Zarlik lowers his head, spins around and throws a glass retort containing a blue liquid directly at you.



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Decide your destiny based on the moon!

If it's New Moon to Half Moon, turn to 298. If it's Gibbous Moon or Full Moon, turn to 161.

174 Somewhat sickened yet also intrigued, you carefully remove the sheet from the human's head. His closed eyes and relaxed features do not suggest a violent death. His lower right arm bears the well-known tattoo of an eight-rayed sun belonging to the soldiers of Rhenus. He wears a simple iron chain with a badge around his neck. It appears to be the personal identification of a regimental soldier.

If you want to take the Soldier's Badge (Utensil), write it down your adventure sheet.

Turn to 171.

175 Hardly have you pulled away from the unconscious Gartak when cries for help echo through the hallways. Aonus and the guard have noticed that they are locked in. It will not take long for them to free themselves, and soon the place will be teeming with guards. Hastily, you turn toward the exit and make a run for it.

If you have the Map of the Night Tower, turn to 206. If not, turn to 216.

176 Surprised by your escape attempt, the Gartaks shout after you. One decides to pursue you through the narrow tunnel while the rest raise the alarm. The Blackpelt's squat body allows him to proceed speedily. A moment before he can thrust at you with his long spear, you manage to climb up onto the outer wall of the Night Tower.

A fierce gust of wind hits you as you gaze into the yawning abyss. In utter panic, you cling to the rough stone for dear life! *Turn to* 234.

*) Easy Mode: If this reset does not save you, start the chapter anew and make yourself immune to the flames or find something tasty for the dragon!

177 Resolutely, you stride towards the man, but gradually the feeling arises that he may not be human. His wiry frame and stooped posture appear strange to you, as does the tail you think you see peeking out from under his robes.

If you want to talk to the creature, turn to 297. If you want to sneak up on the stranger and attack him from behind, turn to 173. If you want to return to the hallway, turn to 247.

178 The floor in this chilly storey is completely covered with black stone tiles. Even the walls and ceilings have a smooth surface. No furniture and no artwork enhance the gallery.

No torches serve as illumination as in the other areas of the Tower; instead, long panels of milky glass are embedded in the walls.

Behind the glass panel many thousands of flickering points of light blend into a weakly pulsing green glow. A low droning sound causes the whole chamber to vibrate. Your mind is stirred by dark merries. You have navigated about a fourth of the gallery when you reach a large door of dark grey metal.

If you want to examine the door, turn to 226. If you want to continue moving along the gallery, turn to 247.

179 You cannot see what is happening to you through the thickness of the sheet, but you feel the Gartaks heaving the stretcher onto a wheeled wooden frame. The wheels squeak as you are then pushed down the long hallway. Despite your agitation you desperately hold your breath.

Finally, you are put down. You prepare to attack, but the Gartaks leave. Once you cannot hear anything, you free yourself from the revolting sheet and take a deep breath.

You are in a bare, coolly illuminated room, its walls clad completely in white stone tablets. Smeared blood sticks to the tiles,







179 In the middle of the room there's an oversized table. On its brass surface you can see a Kroll Giant lying on his belly beneath several sheets stitched together. Only his muscular limbs are free.

Your stretcher stands by the wall next to four others. On every one of them there is a lifeless, barely covered body. Lying next a human you see the leathery soles of a Gartak, the imposing mane of a Sand Lion and the perfect silhouette of a female Skÿll warrior.

In the middle of the room there's an oversized table. On its brass surface you can see a Kroll Giant lying on his belly beneath several sheets stitched together. Only his muscular limbs are free. Next to the body lie tongs, knives and hatchets covered in blood. Which of the dead bodies do you want to examine first?

> The human? Turn to **174**. The Gartak? Turn to **254**. The Sand Lion? Turn to **152**. The Skyll? Turn to **131**. The Kroll Giant? Turn to **142**. If none of them, turn to **171**.

180 With desperate courage you commence the strenuous descent down on the jagged rock wall. Despite the bright light of the moon, you find yourself frequently missing a foothold. Nevertheless, you continue to strive defiantly against the heavy gusts of wind. Your muscles burn and your limbs tremble in exhaustion as you struggle to survive.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

Directly beneath you there is a larger rock overhang. It is too jagged for you to rest on it, making it nothing more than a dangerous obstacle.

If you have 2 FATE POINTS, turn to 162. If not, you will have to decide on a direction:

If you want to pass the obstacle by the right, turn to 114. If you choose to go left, turn to 153.





181 In a flash you free yourself from the grimy grip of the Gartak and run for the separating wooden door. As you reach the portal, you can hear the warden's scornful grunt - he has already locked it again. There will be no escaping this way.

Calmly, Aonus approaches you. "Desist! My order is to take you to the master unharmed. I wouldn't like to fail."

If you want to attack both, turn to 124. If you want surrender and go with them, turn to 281.

182 A blaze of orange-blue flames surround you. With a loud scream you bid your life farewell, only to see your skin suddenly transformed into gleaming obsidian. You find yourself able to withstand the unimaginable heat in the red-hot breath of the dragon.

Turn to 275.

183 Silently hurrying down again, you return to the middle area of the Tower. Glancing around, you see two cursing Gartaks clad in stained work coats heaving a heavy stretcher up the stairs. On it lies a stiff body, its form completely covered by a white sheet. You have enough time to hide behind a tapestry hanging on the wall.

If you want to hide, turn to 200. If you want to quickly return upstairs and slip through the door with the dragon head, turn to 225.

184 Creeping up slowly, you draw close to the sleeping guard. His bulbous head is resting on the table. In the Gartak's mouth there is a gnawed off haunch covered in spittle. You grab the clay jug and smash it against the back of the Blackpelt's head. With a low groan, he tumbles from the chair and sprawls at your feet unconscious.

In triumph you clench your fist at Leonar. He, however, stands

CHAPTER 1 · THE BLACK TOWER

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

where he is, his features distorted into an expression you do not recognize. He stares blankly past you and toward the exit. With an uneasy feeling, you turn around.

Standing in the doorway is an Ugarith with white, shoulderlength hair. The torchlight dances off the fine steel of his plated armor. His pitch-black skin and dark eyes seem to swallow all the radiance in the room. His sharp claws resting on his hips, he begins to speak in a low, steady voice.

"Please refrain from any further escape attempts. We don't want anything more to get broken beside this nice jug and the Gartak's skull."

> If you want to surrender, turn to 165. If you want to attack, turn to 186.

185 With a jerk, you pull hard at the old door, whose hinges appear to be stuck. But then it opens with a crash, engulfing you in a torrent of garbage, food scraps and fermented broth. Revolted, you cover your face with your hands and struggle to keep your balance.

You barely manage to keep your balance on the narrow rim of the gutter. Then you decide to crawl into the dark garbage chute, and after a few minutes, you reach another small door. Dazed by the stench and the physical exhaustion of the last few hours, you push the door open and drop down onto a kitchen's cold clay tiles.

Coming to your senses, you find yourself surrounded by whispering maids and cooks as well as grimly staring guards. Above them all towers Aonus, his hands resting on his hips. "Your escape ends here. You will follow me to Master Calderel."

Supported by a Gartak, you have little choice but to follow the white-haired Ugarith through the corridors and stairways of the Night Tower.

Turn to 230.



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 $186 \ {\rm "Let}$ him be, Aonus!" Leonar demands from a safe distance.

"Go back to your cell, Sun Soldier before I have you thrown into the hole", the Ugarith replies, his voice heavy with raw annoyance.

As the two fighters face off, you prepare to attack.

Turn to C10!



187 You press your body up against the rock. The tip of a spear barely misses your shoulder. The Gartak curses, shouting to his companion to bring him a more powerful weapon—you think you heard something like "crossbow" carried over the wind. It is clear that with it he could shoot at you with far more precision. At this distance, you will not last long.

If you want to climb up, turn to 155. If you want to climb down, turn to 180.

188 Your heart is hammering as the two Gartak guards walk past your lookout tunnel. You lie flat, hoping to remain unnoticed. Abruptly, the reptile men's guttural conversation of laughter and grunts stops.

If you are wearing a **Prisoner Gown**, turn to 279. If you are wearing something else, turn to 167.

189 You are about to leave the guard room behind you, when you hear the singing of two Gartaks on the other side of the Tower door. Despite being interrupted by grunts and laughter, the amateurish singsong performance is almost unbearable. Pain shoots through your head. The awful music must stop at once!

If you want to walk up the steps to the platform, turn to 285. If you want to attack both of the Gartaks, turn to 198.



190 Swiftly, you pull yourself out onto the rough, natural flank of the Tower. The cool night wind is whistling. Above you, the stars are glittering while far, far beneath you, the sea smashes against the cliffs without a sound. You cannot help but feel small and insignificant compared to the forces of nature surrounding you.

If you want to climb up the rock wall, turn to 155. If you want to climb down, turn to 180.

191 In the narrow tunnel you have trouble getting into a good position for attack. You crawl towards the Gartaks, who at first don't expect an attack. But as you grab one of them by the weapon arm and pull him into the tunnel, the other one stabs you with his spear, impaling you like a wild boar. The last thing you feel is cold metal piercing your shoulder and reaching deep into your lungs.

Once you have breathed your last, the Gartaks throw your lifeless body out of the lookout chute like garbage. You tumble out of sight, never to be seen again.

Your life ends here. (+128) =



192 Hurriedly, you run past many empty cells on your way to the heavy door of the dungeon. After numerous attempts you finally have the right key just as you hear somebody running through the hallway on the other side of the door.

If you want escape through the connecting door, turn to 248. If you want to wait in a dark corner, turn to 282.

193 When you pull on the huge iron ring, the guarding door swings toward you more easily than you expected. Although the door is only slightly ajar, you feel a short, strong gust of wind around your legs and breathe in the biting stench of chemicals. In the middle of the room there's a tripod, tall as a man, on which hangs a large copper kettle. Arranged around this are wooden work tables, on each of which stand strange alchemical apparatuses consisting of glass retorts, funnels and tubes, with colorful liquids bubbling inside them. Bright plumes of smoke waft through the room, obscuring your sight. In the smoke the silhouette of a man takes shape.

Turn to 139.

194 Without being challenged you reach the uppermost door in the gigantic stairwell. You've scaled the Night Tower! Full of awe and pride you take a deep breath. Then you cautiously open the door. You gaze into a small common room with two rumpled cots and a rustic table and chairs.

Except for you there is nobody here. On the walls, there are mountings for military gear. In the middle of the room an open spiral staircase with metal steps winds narrowly up to a weighty hatch. Gusts of wind rattle its hinges. This must be an exit to the very top of the Night Tower.

If you want to walk up the steps to reach the platform, turn to 253. If you want to examine the room, turn to 126.

CHAPTER 1 - THE BLACK TOWER

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

195 As you retreat, Aonus gives the inattentive Gartak a loud dressing down. He in turn takes his anger out on Leonar. With several lashes of the whip to his back, the old man is driven back. into his cell. You hide meanwhile in a dark alcove. Accompanied by Leonar's loud, hacking cough the three men move past you into the shadows of the dungeon.

As soon as they have disappeared from view, you get up and quickly escape through the guard room's outer door.

Turn to 216.

196 You pace up and down along the bars of your cell, attempting to get a better look at the far edges of the corridor and into the neighboring cells, but you cannot discover anything unusual. Then you hear the scratchy, whispering voice of a man in a cell somewhat further off. "Hey! Are you awake?"

You're still considering what to answer when the old man continues. "My name is Leonar. Why are you in the Shadow Tower?"

Before you can reply, the connecting door to the dungeon wing is slammed open.

Turn to 214.

197 Impulsively, you push open the massive exit door to the jetty, and cool, moist sea air greets you. As you somewhat clumsily step down onto the first planks of the wooden stairs, you realize that you're in a gigantic cavern in the sea. You have a bad feeling about this.

If you want to return and walk up the steps, turn to 132. If you want to continue down into the cave, turn to 120.

198 You hold your hands to your ears to escape the weird songs of the guards as you quickly look around you. The small guard room does not offer a suitable hiding place from which to



launch an ambush. So you simply stand on the right side of the door and wait for the two Blackpelts.

Like a starving wolf you leap to the side of the first Gartak and deliver a gaping wound to his chest. But the bastard is tough! He grabs you and hurls you from him so violently that you smash up against the protective railing of the spiral staircase.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

After this last act of defiance, the fatally wounded Gartak falls to the ground. With the blood pouring from his breast, he nods one last time to his comrade, who, snorting in rage, draws his war hammer and charges towards you.

GARTAK ELTTE WARRIOR ATTACK # 12 DEFENSE 911 RESISTANCE •003

If you survive, you can pick up the War Hammer (Weapon, Hit Bonus (3) and write it down on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 249.



To be able to stand upright even in this high-ceilinged room, the Kroll Giant is forced to bend his unshapely head and duck. Furious, he searches his surroundings until he discovers you. Once he does, the Giant fixes his gaze on you with large, glittering eyes.

If you have the Pearl of Understanding, turn to 255. If not, turn to 140.

Statuter a

200 Completely out of breath, the two Gartaks reach a double door made of dull, silvery metal and put the stretcher down in front of it with a relieved huff. The lifeless body atop it starts to slip.

From your hiding place you can see the left arm of a human hanging from the side of the stretcher. A sun with eight rays is tattooed on the pale lower arm—the sign of the army of Rhenus! While one of the Gartaks is trying to hide the mishap, the other turns towards the door. Somewhat helplessly he feels his tunic and scratches his head in embarrassment.

> If you have the Guard's Chain, turn to 269. If not, turn to 136.

201 Thoughtfully, you stare at the box with its weird signs. What will happen if you use the lever?

If you want to use the lever, turn to 238. If you want to go back outside and continue climbing down the Tower, turn to 153.

202 You pull out the strange dragon key and look for a suitable opening in the silver dragon's head. Though the lock is hidden well, you find it and insert the key. The dragon's large head opens its maw, revealing the door ring, which you can now easily turn to open the magic door. You leave the library behind and decide to move further up the Tower.

Remove the Dragon Key from your adventure sheet!

Turn to 194.

100





203 Protected by darkness, you sneak across the wet planks of the piers past crates, barrels and ships' ropes towards a small wooden shack. Nimbly, you push your way through the door. The smell of tar is everywhere. You are about to look for a comfortable spot in the musty hiding place when a bestial snarl immediately next to you makes you catch your breath. A moment later you are being mauled by a starving Sogukant, a monstrous bloodhound.

Your life ends here. (+120) =

204 Instantaneously, your claw darts between the bars, pinning the head of the surprised Gartak and smashing him repeatedly against the merciless metal. As the Blackpeth helplessly waves his short sword, the blade catches in the bars and breaks. After you heave him against the bars for the fourth time, the Gartak finally slides down with a faint moan and comes to lie face-down in the gully.

If you want to take the key ring and free yourself, turn to 125. If you want to leave the motionless Gartak and wait, turn to 158.

205 Fascinated, you await the receiver of the food, and in fact, the door opens soon after. An old human with shaggy white hair and a bushy beard kneels down shakily and picks up the trays. He has not noticed you. Nevertheless, you move back further into your hiding place. You feel sure that you have found the librarian.

No sooner has he turned away, than you jump towards the door and put a foot inside. It is only now that you perceive that the dragon head is surrounded by a faint magical glow. The maw is wide open and the ring-shaped opener lies free. No longer hearing footfalls from the old man, you push your way through the door.

Turn to 225.

206 You concentrate on comparing the Map of the Night Tower with your surroundings. You're sure that the door to your right leads to a staircase connecting the middle floors.

On tiptoe you sneak up the stairs of the lower two floors when a door opens somewhere below you. You hear Aonus' distinct voice. "Surrender yourself! There is no escape from the Ningal Tower!"

You freeze. The white-haired Ugarith doesn't appear to know where you are. Not until he disappears again, cursing, do you continue your flight.

You take another look at the map and realize that there are three areas of interest for you. Where do you want to go?

To the laboratory tract? Turn to 221. To the library? Turn to 295. To the lookout platform? Turn to 115.

207 The Gartaks look at each other. After considering for a moment, the older one shakes his head. "You come here!" the younger one demands.

If you want to flee outside, turn to 176. If you want to attack the Gartaks, turn to 191.

208 Without speaking again, Aonus leads you further along the dismal ascent. Sometimes you walk past lookouts that have been driven horizontally through several feet of the Tower's thick outer wall, thus more often resembling cramped, narrow tunnels. In the darkness of the night you can barely see anything but the silvery shimmering waves in the distance. It seems that the Night Tower stands in the middle of the open sea.

Impressive! But this bastion cannot have been built by human hands. If you want to attack Aonus and try to escape on the stairs and through the corridors of the Night Tower, turn to 262. If you want to follow him, turn to 289.

209 Assaulted by uncertainty as to your surroundings and by the fear of being apprehended, you move from one dark alcove to the next. You've climbed about halfway up the Tower when, directly above you, a door closes.

From your hiding place you watch two Gartaks clad in dirty work coats. They are dragging a stretcher up the stairs. On it lies a lifeless body, covered from head to toe with a white sheet. From a safe distance you manage to follow them.

Turn to 200.



210 Slowly you return to your senses. A fresh wind tugs at your hair as, lying on your back, you gaze up into the stars.

You're at the very top of the Tower—a small infinity of dark stone above the sea.

As soon as you have recovered some of your strength, you get up from the stone floor and look around the large, smooth platform. *Turn to* **137**.

211 With a jerk, you pull back the thick cotton sheet. A dead human's empty eyes stare at you. The young man's body is marked by deep cuts apparently delivered with a sword or similar sharp weapon. His uniform is torm and covered with the dark stains of blood, most likely his own.

If you want to cover your tracks and hide again, turn to 222. If you want to hide the body and lie down on the stretcher, turn to 293.

212 Irritated, you stomp along the rim of the platform. Your gaze moves across the starry sky. Suddenly you are shoved hard from behind! As tumbling stones clatter below, you just barely manage to save yourself from the fall by grabbing onto the rock edge.

Panicked and helplessly dangling, you peer over the edge, only to find yourself staring into the turquoise eyes of a dragon! With its open maw it hises at you so loudly that you almost lose your grip. Icy cold spittle dripping from fangs as long as a man's forearm sprays your face.

> If you carry a few Apples, turn to 111. If not, turn to 280.



213 "Not so very difficult, is it?" the girl encourages you. "But when I change the Then, what will happen to the Now?" you worry.

"Nothing" the boy says self-assuredly. "The Now will become nothing."

"But what will happen if I influence the past substantially? Would that not change everything for everyone?"

Seren seems amused by your concerns; "Is it not astonishing that with every step toward the realization that you are immortal, your heart beats more and more for those who are mortal?"

"Is that supposed to answer my question?" you snap back.

"Forgive me. But it is in the power of the Keşra to decide all our destinies."

"If I granted life to Kathum," you think aloud, "this would be a turning point for the war."





"You are correct," the boy inserts himself into the conversation again. "Therefore receive this gift. It is a soul urn. With it, not only can you save Kathum's soul from entering the Underworld, but you will also be able to lead it from Then to Now." The boy hands you a simple clay vessel, about the size of a fist. Cryptic characters have been burnt into its lid.

Write down the Soul Urn (Special Item) on your adventure sheet.

"I have one more question," you speak to the children again pensively.

"Ask!" the boy encourages you.

"Am I allowed to travel to the past whenever I like?"

"Oh no, the gods grant this privilege to the Keşra only once." Seren tilts her silvery head and asks quietly: "Does that calm vou?"

A short time ago, this comment would have driven you mad with anger, but now you understand Seren's character. Your emotions go even deeper. Being near these children lights a spark in you, revealing a layer of your existence you did not know—did not even have—until now. This soothing, and at the same time stimulating feeling begins to spread from your stomach to your chest until it reaches your heart.

Your VITALITY rises to fit!

Inspired by boundless courage, you bid farewell to the four children and leap up onto your dragon's saddle with the unshakeable determination to take your destiny in the Golden City of Kyphi into your own hands. A content smile flits across Seren's face as she and her siblings bow.

Turn to 900.

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214 You hear a piercing shout: "Over! Not talk here!" It is the broken speech of a Gartak. Now you recognize the stench! You must not take lightly these creatures, bred for aggression, especially when their masters, the magicians of Tul-Sar-Mar, the archaic Lizard Fortress, are near.

A moment later the squat Gartak stands before you, his scimitar drawn, and looks you up and down. His grimy, black pelt reeks of rotted fish. A bunch of keys jangle at his belt. He appears to be the warden. His broad, vacuous grin complemented by disgusting brown tusks triggers your rage.

> If you want to seize the Gartak and pound him against the bars, turn to 204. If you want to ask him why you're here, turn to 287. If you want to ignore him, turn to 144.



215 "Impressive! These Gartaks are really tough, aren't they?" you hear a raspy voice commenting from one of the cells. Turning around, you see a gaunt man with shaggy grey hair and a beard standing behind the bars of his cell. He salutes you with military precision. "Come over here, let us talk!"

A moment later, he bends over in a bad coughing fit.

If you want to talk to the old man, turn to 296. If you want escape through the connecting door, turn to 192.



•••

216 Too excited to think carefully, you first rush up the next set of stairs and step through one of the many doors. You leap from step to step, from door to door, hoping to find the right path. In the end you arrive at a very striking connecting corridor. You have no idea where inside the tower you may be, but the dark hallway with its many doors and alcoves appears well nuited to an escape. Blindly, you slip through one of the doors! Docide your destiny based on the moon!

If it's New Moon or Crescent Moon, turn to 209. If it's Half Moon, turn to 237. If it's Gibbous Moon or Full Moon, turn to 268.

217 You have been running along the circular corridor for some time. Again and again you pass doors similar to the door to your dungeon wing. Behind them you hear the wailing and moaning of other prisoners. It must be large complex, one capable of containing hundreds of immates.

Undeterred, you continue running until you reach an inconspicuous alcove with coats made of dark Yamok fur hanging on the wall. To judge by the stench, the clothing belongs to the Gartak wardens. Even if you could wear them, you would choke on the smell. Beneath them stands a simple wooden chest.

If you want to open the chest, turn to 123. If you want to go on running at once, turn to 257.

218 After some time the Gartak becomes restless and starts pacing up and down. His crooked mouth screws up into a grimace. Cursing his companions' dawdling and pinching himself in the crotch, he quickly waddles up the stairs.

If you want to use the opportunity to look at the body on the stretcher, turn to 211. If you want to wait, turn to 222.

219 Although Leonar continues to protest quietly, you unlock the door to his cell. He hesitates for a moment, but then the blind old man decides to flee with you. "Wait, I have to take something with me," he murmurs into his shaggy beard while digging through the straw under his cot.

He lifts one of the floor tiles and takes out a leather pouch. "You're right. A warrior should stand by his comrade in every danger." Somewhat unsteady, he totters behind you up to the heavy door of the dungeon hallway.

Turn to 227.

220 You draw on your last reserves and pull yourself over a stone ridge into an alcove. For the first time since your descent the wind isn't tugging at your clothes. You take a deep breath, but as you do, a gust of reeking air engulfs you. Disgusted, have to cough.

Somewhere below your there is a small wooden door embedded into the rock. It must be the source of the overpowering smell. Attempting to ignore the stench of decay, you climb towards the door.

Almost directly below it you see a gutter, hewn into the weathered rock, smoothly polished and corkscrewing down into the stone itself.

You position your legs on either side of the gutter. Though you are now quite exposed, you are relieved to have a somewhat better foothold.

> If you want to open the door, turn to 185. If you want to slide down the gully, turn to 294.

221 Using the map, you make your way safely through the Shadow Tower. What is waiting for you in the hallways and rooms of the laboratory wing? You have been climbing these stairs for a quarter of an hour when only a few stairs beneath you



19 Although Leonar continues to protest quietly, you unlock the door to his cell. He hesitates for a moment, but then the blind old man decides to flee with you.

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110

a door opens. Skillfully, you hide in the shadow of a heavy tapestry and watch as two Gartaks, clad in dirty work coats, emerge with a stretcher. On it lies a motionless, humanlike body, completely covered with a white sheet.

Turn to 200.

222 After some minutes the two Gartaks reappear almost simultaneously. One of them looks relieved; the other holds a sparkling blue crystal in his hands. The crystal fits perfectly into a small opening in the door. There is a sudden bang, followed by a soft metallic chime, and the door slides to the side.

The Gartaks lift the stretcher and haul it through the large silver door.

If you want to follow them, turn to 240. If you want to climb the Tower, turn to 115.

223 Squinting, you slowly place your hand on the stone tile. At first nothing happens, but as you push lightly against it, there is a crackling sound in the hallway, and an incredible pain shoots up your arm.

All the muscles in your body suffer an agonizing cramp, and twitching violently, you drop to the floor, the victim of a potent magical trap.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

If you want to return to the Gartak standing in front of the silver door, turn to 218. If you want to go into hiding again and wait for the Gartak, turn to 110.

224 You stretch your arm through the iron bars and fish the little ship out of the water. Curiously, you unfold the parchment. Unfortunately, you see that the ink on the document is so smudged that it is barely readable.



It looks as if it was once the map of the tower. You can recognize only the building's name: "Ningal Tower." Apart from that, the map has almost no other use.

If you want to take the Smudged Map (Utensil), write it down on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 104.

225 No sooner have you walked through the magical door than the dragon's mouth snaps shut. The head doesn't glow anymore. You push and pull, but you can't escape in this direction. Curious, you investigate your new surroundings. You're standing in a huge library, extending across the entire floor. Dozens of inlelves stuffed with thick tomes and folios, papyrus sheafs and parchment scrolls create a small labyrinth of narrow aisles. Numerous oil lanterns illuminate the room. Some distance away, wood is crackling in a fireplace.

If you want to move towards the fireplace, turn to 242. If you want to examine the book shelves, turn to 258.

226 Behind the heavy metal door you can hear muffled gurgling sounds, and countless unidentifiable odors assail your nose. As chaotic as they are, you are unsure whether any of the mells come from a living creature. The palm-sized iron ring used to open the door bears the signs of frequent use.

If you want to try to open the door, turn to 193. If you want to keep moving, turn to 247. If you have the Map of the Night Tower and want to take a look at it, turn to 143.

227 As quietly as possible you close the door behind you and your companion. Together with Leonar, you are standing in a curved hallway. You hear the crackling of burning torches and

the unappetizing snore of a Gartak. He is probably fast asleep in the guardroom at the end of the right corridor.

You turn left, but Leonar holds you back. "That won't help. It's a circular corridor! Sooner or later we will have to get past the stinker."

You nod in agreement and together you turn right.

Turn to 109.

228

You awake with your head throbbing. Someone splashes ice-cold water in your face. You hear a firm voice saying, "Listen to me! If you don't want to be helped, that is your decision. But I don't intend to run after you like a serving girl. Either come with me now, or rot here!

Aonus grabs you by the collar with both claws and pulls you to your feet.

Turn to 281.

229 Cautiously, you bend over the stunned Ugarith and reach for the magnificent weapon hidden under his cloak. You have hardly touched the cold, polished hilt when memories rush through your head.

» I know this broadsword! I have wielded it myself! «

More images and word fragments from the past flash across your mind

> I have been here once before-with Aonus! «

You sense a movement. Aonus is awakening!

Turn to 216.

230 Aonus leads you along the upper floors to an artfully constructed wooden door bearing a distinctive silver dragon's head, to whose intricately carved mouth a ring of dark gold has been attached. This is the fifth such door you have seen so far. They appear to protect important areas of the upper tower.





The muscular Ugarith draws a dragon-shaped key from his cloak and uses it to activate the magical mechanism. "Go in there and wait! Master Calderel will certainly receive you soon."

The maw in the dragon's head, glowing red now, opens up and releases the ring. A small turn is enough to open the door to the library of the Shadow Tower. With a short bow Aonus points you In and closes the door behind you.

If you wear a Signet Ring or a Serpent Ring, turn to 164. If not, turn to 225.

231 During your long climb many thoughts go through your mind. Though you have been running through the tower for hours, you realize that so far you have seen only a small fragment of the gigantic building. You cannot understand how it is supplied with food and warmth. But what you think about most is why your escape has not led to a more intense search.

Am I not important enough?

Obviously, the upper floors are reserved for the leaders of the Empire. Time and again you pass beautifully decorated doors, ornate furniture and impressive paintings. Furthermore, there are a larger number of guards patrolling this elite area.

Decide your destiny based on the moon!

If it's New Moon or Crescent Moon, turn to 166. If it's Half Moon to Full Moon, turn to 194.

232 The uncertainty in the Zarlik's eyes gives way first to confusion and then to wild determination as he realizes you are attacking.

ZARLIK ALCHEMIST

TTACK	N 10
EFENSE	9
ESISTANCE	•00

If you survive the battle, turn to 283.

233 Your arms flailing, you attempt to keep your balance, but lose your hold. Smashing your chin against the rock, stunned, you plummet to the ground. You feel the air rushing past you faster and faster while at the same time the pull of gravity seems to lessen. Above you, the moon shines as a calm beacon guiding your fall. Despite the certainty of your impending death, you experience a serene contentment. You close your eyes, waiting for eternity to begin.

With a sudden jolt your fall is halted when something grabs you by the hip and shoulders. Gazing up, you see the dark, scaled body of a huge creature carrying you across the sea with outspread wings. Strain and exhaustion finally take their toll. You lose consciousness.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

If you're still alive, turn to 210.

114

234 Barely have you found a somewhat secure stand to the side of the lookout hole when the tip of a spear carried by one of your pursuers pokes out at you! The Gartak wielding it stabs at the air indiscriminately.

If you want to grab the spear and pull it from the Gartak's hand, turn to 163. If you want to start climbing at once, turn to 127.

235 How many hours you have already spent in your cell, you cannot tell. By now, you know every salt-encrusted stone and every joint between them. And still you feel neither thirst nor hunger.

Suddenly you hear the door to the dungeon opening. An impressive Ugarith is let in by the warden. The noble warrior in his shining breast armor plants himself in front of your cell and looks at you sternly. His eyes are just as inscrutably black as his skin. Under his cloak you can see outlined the shaft of a broadnword.

After a moment's pause he gives the warden a sign and points to the lock. As the Gartak fumbles nervously with his keys, the lighter sweeps a long strand of his shoulder-length white hair from his rugged face. "Do you remember? I am Aonus, Adjutant to venerable Calderel.

The bars swing open. "No? Well, then. I will lead you to the Master nevertheless."

On the third page of your adventure sheet, under Special Notes, write down the number 100 next to the term **Calderel**.

If you want to attack both, turn to 246.

If you want to escape, turn to 181.

If you want to follow them without resistance, turn to 281.

236 Crouching down, you run from rock to rock, thus managing to escape the inattentive guards. They appear to be more interested in their bunks than in their duty. You have almost circled half the platform and can even see the back side of the barracks when an animal scream pierces the darkness, followed a loud scraping.

You jump instinctively. There has to be some creature close to vou!

If you want to look up, turn to 212. If you want to move on hurriedly, turn to 270.



237 In the labyrinthine hallways, stairs and bays of the Night Tower you lose your orientation. Over and over again, you hear echoing footfalls and voices in the distance, but with luck and skill you manage to hide from Aonus and the inhabitants of the gigantic fortress. An inner voice tells you to keep moving upward, even though the countless steps appear likely to exhaust you completely.

Turn to 115.

238 With a soft whirring sound the wooden wall disappears in the floor, opening up to a room illuminated by oil lanterns and filled with book shelves. In a distant corner, flames are crackling in a fireplace. You get the feeling that you are not alone.

» There's somebody in the library! «

If you want to move towards the fireplace, turn to 242. If you want to examine the shelves, turn to 258.

239 It is a massive signet ring of brushed silver. You feel the positive, magical power of the talisman as you put it on the ring finger of your left hand. For a fleeting moment it is as if you feel the spirit of another person.

Once again glancing admiringly at the jewel, which fits as though made for you, you give Tarus your clav-like hand in farewell. Write down the Signet Ring (Special Item) on your adventure sheet. Turn to 250.

240 At a safe distance, you sneak after the Gartaks. Under the strain of their efforts they do not notice when you slip into the corridor behind them. You have barely blended into the shadows when the door slides back again.

Turn to 178.

241 $\,$ Determined to finally escape the dungeon, you pick up the bunch of keys and open the lock.

Note the Warden's Key Ring (Utensil) on your adventure sheet.

Hurrying to your fellow inmate's cell, you are given a shock. The unkempt old man stares at you out of two scarred, empty eye sockets. His sight was burned out of him with red-hot iron long ago.

If you want to free him nevertheless, turn to 219. If you want to escape without him, turn to 192.



242 Burning wood is crackling nearby. Shadows dance on the walls as you cautiously approach the fireplace in the library. Thanks to the plush carpet beneath your feet, you manage to sneak forward with hardly a sound.

In front of the cantilevered hearth stands a flat table stacked with enough books to build a small tower. Next to them, you see a glass of red wine and two silver plates with scraps of leftover food. Facing the fireplace is a comfortable armchair in which sits an old man with long beard. The deep wrinkles in his face suggest experience and wisdom. He's dozing in front of the open fire. An open book is balanced on his round belly.

If you want to talk to the librarian, turn to 130. If you want to examine the book shelves, turn to 258.



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243 Finally you reach a richly decorated door made of precious wood. The large ornate knocker is a stylized dragon's head made of silver, in whose open maw there is a large ring.

"Enter! Master Calderel will be here shortly!" With these words Aonus takes out a dragon-shaped key and puts it into the maw, thus activating some magical mechanism. The dragon's head glows red; it opens its mouth and releases the ring. Pushing the door open, Aonus directs you upstairs without a word.

If you want walk to through the door, turn to 225. If you want to walk down to the last door, turn to 183.



244 Tense, you press your body against the outer wall of the Tower. Like a predator stalking its victim, you creep up on the waiting Gartak. Before you can reach him, however, he notices the danger, gives a loud shout, and rolls to one side. You pounce on him, and a struggle for life and death ensues.

You are just about to deliver the killing blow when five other guards rush the stairway and overpower you. With a skillful movement, one of them takes a Calora out of a leather bag, removes its muzzle and presses it against your neck. You feel needle-sharp teeth pierce your skin. Moments later, your heart stops as the Calora's venom claims you.

Your life ends here. (+278) =

245 With trembling fingers, you open the lid. At the center of the small elaborate case, lined with black velvet, there is a polished obsidian stone. You think you can see a faint, reddish glow



at its core. The dark radiance is hypnotic, mesmerizing... impossible to look away from or set aside.

Curious, you bend over the stone, only to have a tiny flame shoot up at you, barely missing your face. You are startled, but your fascination for the gem is unchanged.

If you want to take the casket and the jewel, turn to 145. If you want to put everything back, turn to 201.

246 Obviously Aonus doesn't reckon with an attack. For a brief moment he has turned his back to you. Skillfully, you use his carelessness to your advantage and, with a single motion, drag him into your cell, slam the door, turn the key, and break it. "Not bad, Shadow Childl You're almost your old self again!" Aonus gets up with a swift pirouette, brushing the straw from his leather trousers. The Gartak, who was already leaving, has not even realized what has just happened. Pouncing, you knock him over the head before he can react. Stunned, he collapses into the gutter. If you want to take the Gartak's weapon, write down the Short Sword (Waapon, Hit Bonus +2) on your adventure sheet.

Turn to C10!

247 With quick strides you leave the sterile corridors of this floor behind. Relieved, you come upon an inconspicuous door leading upwards. Your path leads up and back to the wide stairwell you already know.

Turn to 115.

248 No sooner have you looked around the prison gallery than you hear the shrill shouts of a Gartak. You take to your heels and sprint away in the opposite direction. After only a few steps, however, your path is cut off by another Blackpelt, mace in hand. He pulls a nearby lever and a pale green mist shoots from hidden lets in the wall.

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RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

You try to hold your breath but in the end you are forced in to inhale the gas. Your muscles cramp up and you fall face down. The last thing you hear is the arrogant grunt of the Gartak before he delivers the killing blow.

Your life ends here. (+192) =

249 Marked by the strains of the last few hours and your struggle against the elite warriors, you stagger up the spiral staircase. You hope that nobody has heard the noise of combat. With the last of your strength, you open the hatch and roll to the side. The last thing you feel before you lose consciousness is a fresh breeze.

Turn to 210.

250 You walk past the shelves on the library walls until you finally come to the massive exit door. The wooden door with its large, silver, dragon head knocker is locked.

If you have a Dragon Key, turn to 202. If not, turn to 164.

251 Like a sledgehammer, your fist smashes into Aonus' neck. The warrior crumples, noisily tumbling down several of the stone steps. As hard a blow as it was, he will still take only a few seconds to recover. You do not have much time.

Harassed and hoping for a way to escape, you quickly survey your surroundings, the immense staircase with its cold, damp steps.

If you want to flee through the massive wooden door leading to the pier, turn to 197. If you want to flee up the stairs, turn to 132.

252 Calderel positions you directly in front of the mirror; standing next to it, he gazes deep into your eyes. Then he tears away the cloth, revealing the surface of the mirror to you both.





Before you can see anything, however, you are blinded by an intense ray of light.

If you are wearing a Signet Ring, turn to 288. If you are wearing a Serpent Ring, turn to 265. If you have neither of these Special Items, turn to 299.



253 You feel certain that there can be nothing valuable in such a grimy hole. You leap straight for the winding metal stairs. As you land, you hear the cacophonous singing of two Gartaks.

Turn to 285.

254 The smell of charred flesh greets you as you turn back the white sheet. The Gartak's horrified stare and the large blackened hole in his chest suggest a sudden death by means of a fire lance. In all likelihood, the reptilian servant had been made to pay for some insubordinate behavior toward his masters.

Turn to 171.

255 There is uncertainty in your voice as you explain to the Kroll Giant that you, just like him, are a prisoner in the Night Tower. He is visibly irritated that you speak his language. But then the anger in his furrowed face gives way to deep sadness. "Gobal home!" escapes his lips.

You imagine how the powerful Kroll Giant might help you escape, but then you realize that he barely fits through the narrow doors let alone would be able to move quietly. He would only be a burden to you.

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120

Nevertheless, you show him to the door and explain the Tower's structure insofar as you've understood it yourself.

The Kroll Giant listens, wide-eyed, but when you're finished, he scratches the back of his head in puzzlement. Clearly, he has not understood a word. You give up, wish him luck, and head off before the first guards appear.

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Turn to 178.

256 You apply your truly superhuman strength directly to the metal. At your third try, fine stone dust trickles from the anchoring, and with a deafening noise, the barred door falls out. Hurried footfalls reach your ear, the sound of several figures rushing toward you!

Turn to the combat chapter, section C1!



257 Your sense of direction tells you that you have almost made your way around the entire circular corridor, and after several moments, you hear the sonorous snoring of the Gartak. You have returned to the guard room, this time from the other side.

Turn to 102.

258 Randomly, you take books from the shelves and open them. They're all written in a language unknown to you. Though you cannot read the writing, its angular lettering seems strangely familiar. You look at the many colorful illustrations decorating most of the parchment pages.



"Are you looking for something?"

Feeling caught, you jump back. Standing next to you, the old librarian takes the book from your cramped claws. He puts it back in its place and gazes at you out of the corner of his eye. Turn to 133.

 $259\,$ You pay very little attention anymore to the sounds in the dungeon, but then you hear something new. A snorting or snoring sound from one the cells further off.

If you want to keep quiet, turn to 141. If you want to go to the bars and look to see who's with you in the dungeon, turn to 134.

260 You pass a table decorated with fruit and flowers and take a curious look around. The living rooms on this floor are separated not by doors, but by wide arches, allowing you to easily peek from the entrance hall into the other neighboring rooms. Each chamber is decorated with splendid furniture, works of arts and precious objects from countries on both continents.

In keeping with the style, thick carpets cover the floor, while the walls are draped with exotic furs. All the rooms are uniformly illuminated by a pale, soft light, despite you are not being able to see any torches or lanterns.

In one corner, laid with glazed tiles, there is an exquisite collection of weapons. You hesitate when you see them because these are the masterful blades of the Menokians. The gifted black-smiths of this legendary warrior tribe always mark their perfect blades with the heraldic sign of their empire—a fallen star amid a sea of darkness.

Awed, you take the largest two-handed sword from its stand. The polished, flawless shaft glitters a cold blue, like the Eternal Ice of

the Frost Desert—the hostile home of the Menokians. The masterful blade shimmers in irregular waves created by the many folds in the strong steel. In the reflection of the metal, you see that there is a dark figure standing behind you.

"An impressive piece, isn't it?"

You spin around and stare into the blazing, pupil-less eyes of an old Ugarith, his bald head marked with scars and wrinkles, his skin black as night. In your surprise you let the sword slip from your hands.

"It is good that you have come to me. As I've heard, there has been a slight misunderstanding."

Unsure of how to react, you gaze at the smiling, thin-lipped and disfigured, but strangely charismatic man. As he begins to speak again, you realize that his words do not travel the air but enter your mind directly instead.

"I am Calderel, Emissary of Ugar. Leader of the Empire."

He pauses and waits for a reaction. Yet you can only stare in awe and surprise at the old man. His aura almost engulfs you. "If you have questions, I will answer them," he continues with the unbroken self-assurance of a ruler, then picking up the sword and putting it back.

"But first take a look around. Perhaps that will help you to find yourself." Turn to **160**.

261 Quick as a Nagnag you jump towards the door, but it is not enough. With a muffled noise it slams shut. At least you manage to pull back your arm before it gets smashed.

Momentarily safe, you look at the plaque with the opening mechanism.

If you want to put your hand back on the stone slab, turn to 223. If you want to hide again and wait for the Gartak, turn to 110. If you want to go back up to the Gartak waiting at the silver door, turn to 218.







260 The masterful blade shimmers in irregular waves created by the many folds in the strong steel. In the reflection of the metal, you see that there is a dark figure standing behind you.

262 Aonus is a proud combatant. But his pride comes with high spirits and carelessness. Thinking you beneath him, he pays you only little attention. As he turns his back to you again, you take the opportunity and flee.

If you have the Map of the Night Tower, turn to 206. If not, turn to 216.



263 "Wait!" Tarus calls quickly after you. "I have something of yours!" There is a ring lying in his right palm. "Please wear it. It will bring you luck!"

> If you are female*, turn to 112. If you are male*, turn to 239.

126



264 As one of the fighters holds you off with his drawn weapon, the other runs up the stairs and returns moments later with Aonus. The Ugarith tosses back his straight, white hair.

"How pleasant to see you again," he comments ironically. "Let's go now."

Left with little choice, you trudge up the stairs. Aonus does not take his eye off you for a single moment. Running again may no longer be an option.

Turn to 230.



Standing before you is an Ugarith you don't know. Hesitating, you touch the pale cheeks on the young man's rugged face; you see something strange but familiar—something female in his clear features.

Turn to 147

266 You wait for your chance and then sprint with lowered head towards the rock needle. The stairs to the barracks are hewn into the stone and moist from the sea air. You have almost reached the top when you hear Aonus' booming voice nearby. The Ugarith is standing at the hatch on the edge of the platform, beckoning the guards. You cannot understand what he is saying, but from his gestures you judge that he is informing the guards of your escape and commanding them to search the area.

If you want surrender to the guards, turn to 277. If you want hide in the barracks, turn to 274.

267 With your last ounce of strength you drag your painracked body up over the rim of the lookout platform. Completely drained, you roll over on your back and lie there. Above you, stars twinkle before your eyes as the endless waves below crash and roll. Here you are, held captive by eternity itself.

Finally overwhelmed by the strain, your body betrays you and you lose consciousness.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

Turn to 210.

268 Despite your aimless wandering up and down the Night Tower's stairways, you remain unnoticed. Every now and then

*) This question relates solely to your gender, dear reader! It's not about the gender the hero of this story has. The Ugarith is definitely male.

CHAPTER 1 · THE BLACK TOWER

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

you hear voices and footfalls, but whenever they get too close, you manage to find a dark corner and remain concealed.

You even manage to overhear the conversation of two female Southerners carrying up a feast on precious silver platters. The bronzed Netani quietly mock their superiors, so lost in their discussions that they do not notice you following them at a safe distance.

At the end of the corridor, the servant girls stop in front of a wooden door with elaborate carvings and a silver knocker shaped like a dragon's head. They put the food down in front of the door, knock, and hurry back down the stairs without waiting for a reaction. As they pass your hiding place in one of the narrow lookout shafts, they do not notice you.

> If you want to return to the door, turn to 205. If you want to crawl through the shaft and look around the outside of the tower, turn to 190.

269 "Damn, I've forgotten the key in the guard room," admits the Gartak at the door after searching his vest. The others respond with snarls and shoves, urging him to retrieve it.

Snorting, the first Gartak has just started to trudge down the stairs when one of the others shouts after him, "And hurry. I'm sure the viper's in a bad mood again."

You wonder why you can understand the Gartaks' conversation. After all, you don't know their grunting language. Besides, the movements of their drooling mouths do not match at all the words you hear. Confused, you put your hands to your ears and shake your head. At that moment you notice the pearl you took from the Gartak in the dungeon guardroom. A shimmering white aura of magic surrounds the jewel.

> This has to be the reason I understand the Gartaks! «

Surprised, you break the pearl out of its setting and hide it in the



and write down the Pearl of Understanding (Special Item) instead. Turn to 278.

inner lining of your clothes. The rest of the chain you put in a gap



270 Behind the next ledge you find a large cave, its roof supported by iron bars as thick as one's fist. They are spaced so wide apart, however, that you squeeze between them effortlessly. Strewn over most of the cave's floor are enormous amounts of atraw.

Looking around some more, you suddenly see not far from you two large, flashing turquoise eyes. Only now do you recognize the huge, scaly body of a dark blue, lizard-like creature resting perfectly camouflaged in the shadows at the edge of the cave. You've just stumbled into the gigantic cage of a dragon!

Turn to 116.

271 You take a deep breath and focus on your body's strength. Then, suppressing an agonized scream, you strain to pull the bars out of their anchorage.

Test your STRENGTH against 13!

If you are successful, turn to 256. If you fail, turn to 105.



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272 With a mighty heave, you drag the soldier from the hole. His right hand has caught in the leather loop of his spear. With a feeling of triumph, you let him dangle in the air for a moment before dropping him. The echoing death scream of the Gartak is suddenly silenced as his body ricochets against the rock wall. He plummets the rest of the way to his doom in silence.

If you want to climb up the Tower, turn to 155. If you want to climb down, turn to 180.

273 "Please don't take offence, but I would only have been a burden," the frail soldier explains with bowed head. Then he has a thought: "Wait! I have something for you."

Feverishly, he searches the straw under his cot, lifts a loose slab in the floor and takes out a somewhat worn parchment scroll. Turn to B2!

274 You glance back once more at your pursuers before opening the door to the barracks. You step into the bright light of a lantern, casting your shadow across the entire platform. Immediately, one of the Gartaks shouts to his companions. You have been spotted!

Blindly, you run into the barracks and smack against a grimy Gartak. You bounce off the guard and stagger back. The soldier laughs scornfully and shoves you through the door. Losing your balance, you stumble over the simple iron railing of the outer stairs onto the platform. Below is nothing but oblivion.

The last thing you hear as you fall is Aonus furiously reprimanding the gathered guards. "You idiots! You've killed the Master's beloved child..."

Your life ends here. (+137) =

275 "Matty, stop it—na rosh, na rosh!" Aonus issues a forceful command.



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The dragon obeys at once and is now snorting only thin smoke through his nostrils. Slowly, you are able to move again. Charred shreds are all that is left of your clothes. The Ugarith warrior examines you closely as he helps you up. "It is surprising you survived that. You powers appear to be unbroken."

With his arm extended imperiously, Aonus points to the other side of the cage, whereupon the dragon, its scales now royal blue and vibrant, withdraws majestically into the shadows with a flourish of its long, spiked tail.

"Stop your games and follow me to Master Calderel," Aonus states coldly. "Now."

You're still so surprised that, without resisting, you follow the fighter back into the Tower.

Remove the cloaks you have worn up to now and all the Utensils carried in them (not the Special Items) from your adventure sheet.

Turn to 230.

276 Slowly, the parchment ship becomes saturated with water until it develops a list and sinks.

"Did you take it?" your cell neighbor asks.

Irritated, you shake your head.

"You fool! The parchment was my pride!" your cell neighbor shouts. "What's wrong with you?"

It is a fair question, one you cannot answer. Icy silence fills the dungeon.

Turn to 117.



130

277 The on-duty Gartaks grow excited as you declare your surrender with raised arms. They surround you with drawn weapons and look at each other questioningly. Suddenly Aonus appears from behind a rocky spar, one hand on the hilt of his sword. "Good that you've brought yourself to surrender at last. Please follow me. I will lead you to our Master."

The Gartaks grunt scornfully as Aonus leads you back down the stairs.

Turn to 230.

278 A few moments later the last creak of the wooden stairs fades. The Gartak who has been left behind sits down, leaning against the wall, and waits for his companion.

If you want to follow the Gartak who has left, turn to **129**. If you want to attack the waiting Gartak, turn to **244**. If you want to wait, turn to **218**. If you want to move further up the Tower, turn to **115**.

279 "Look, Lamtog! Fugitive!" One of the Gartaks sticks his head into the shaft and points at you with his broad sword. "You, come here!" He is too far away to hurt you with his weapon. But it does not look as if he wants to follow you into the lookout shaft either.

> If you want to climb outside, turn to 176. If you want surrender to the guards, turn to 264. If you want to attack the two Gartaks, turn to 191.

280 The dragon flares his nostrils and sniffs at you as you dangle helplessly from the rock's edge. A moment later, the monster takes a deep breath and unleashes an inferno of fire and burning ash.

If you have the ability **Immunity to Heat**, turn to **182**. If not, turn to **170**. 281 Readily, you extend your claws to Aonus as a sign that you will not resist being led away. "This is all very decent of you, but I don't think it will be necessary." the Ugarith remarks calmly. With a gesture, he bids you to follow him but does not restrain you in any way.

And so you leave the cell area through the connecting door to another circular corridor connecting many other sections of the dungeon. Everywhere sobbing and lamentations can be heard. When you reach the guards' common room, Aonus dismisses the Gartak, who leaves, snarling at you one more time. No sooner has the stinking creature disappeared, than Aonus' aloof behavior towards you changes, assuming an almost brotherly tone. "You know, I think, that climbing will take a while."

With these words he opens a heavy iron door leading to an open stairway with countless steps carved directly into the rock.

Turn to 113.

282 From your hiding place you hear two people stopping at the door. As the door swings open, a Gartak guard stomps down the steps. Behind him strides an Ugarith warrior with shoulderlength white hair and wearing a splendid breastplate. His flawless skin is as black as yours.

"Master Aonus," the Gartak snarls submissively. "Everything good here."

"Certainly," the warrior replies coolly, with the guard not even warranting a glance from his black eyes.

When the two are halfway to your former cell, you gather your courage and slip through the door. You have only moments before the two notice your escape.

Turn to 150.



32

283 Only a hissing lament escapes the Zarlik as it sinks to the ground. You take the opportunity and search the lizard. All you find is a small wooden canister.

If you want to take the canister with Qik Spittle (Utensil) write it down on your adventure sheet. The poison can be applied to a weapon and reduces an enemy's Attack by 2 after your first successful hit! Its effect lasts for only a single combat.

You are about to leave the Zarlik's body lying there, when unexpectedly, the creature begins breathing again. Its wounds are closing up all by themselves! You rush back to the corridor and flee. *Turn to* 247.

284 "It is time for you to comprehend your existence!" Calderel tries to calm you, but suddenly all that has happened floods your mind. Powerful images and echoing word fragments merge with the first memories from your past life to create incomprehensible chaos.

Groaning in painful confusion, you fall to your knees holding your head.

"Only the mirror can help you! Only it has the power to free you from your agonizing uncertainty," Calderel whispers to you. "Rise and confront it!"

Turn to 252.

134

285 Hastily you climb up the steps of the narrow spiral staircase. Once you reach the top, you press your back against the hatch to open it. Bright moonlight shines in your face. At the last moment you slip outside onto a huge platform just as the sound of the two Gartaks becomes louder. As quietly as possible you close the hatch behind you.

Turn to 137.



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286 Sternly, you come down on the two guards. You explain that you're inspecting to see how clean the shaft is. Baffled, the Gartaks look at each other.

"Name of Master Ugar?" the older one dares to ask. Do you know the name of the Master?

If yes, use your notes under Special Notes on your adventure sheet and add 59 to the number listed beside it. Continue by turning to the section represented by that sum. If not, turn to 207.



287 "Why here?" The Gartak guffaws so hard he spits. "You traitor! You die here!"

Then he puts down before the bars a dented metal bowl containing watery soup. Defiantly, you tip over the bowl with your (oot. The thin broth spills into the gutter. "Not hungry, eh?" the Gartak mutters scornfully. "Ah, Ugarith not eat, yes."

> If you want to grab the Gartak and slam him against the bars, turn to 204. If you want to ignore him, turn to 144.

288 It takes a moment before you can see the reflection clearly. But then the shock. Standing before you is not the person you expected! You gaze deeply into unfamiliar eyes and approach the mirror. Incredulous, you trace your face with your fingers. It is bewildering to you, but behind the distinctive features of a atrong, young Ugarith, you catch glimpses of distant memories. Turn to 147.

289 After nearly an hour you've climbed hundreds of stairs and passed dozens of doors without Aonus showing any signs of exhaustion. "Before you meet the Master, you should wash and get proper clothes."

He leads you to a small chamber, and provides you with new clothing sewn of the finest fabrics.

Write down the Fine Gown (Clothing, Cloak) instead of the clothes you have worn so far.

Turn to 243.

136



290 You hug the rough stone, but the spear pierces your shoulder. Pain shoots through you, but you hold fast.

Angrily the Gartak shouts to his companion to bring him a crossbow. You dare not hesitate a moment longer; instead, you start dimbing. A crossbow will end you quickly; you have to escape before the blasted guard gets one and aims it at you.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

If you want to climb up the Night Tower, turn to 155. If you want to climb down the rock wall, turn to 180.

291 Many boring hours have passed. In the meantime you know every corner of your cell. Even though the air is salty, you feel neither thirst nor hunger. Then the echoing jangling of a bunch of keys fills the dungeon—the door is being opened.





The guard, a grimy Gartak, steps into the cell area. His black eyes glitter attentively through the thick fur covering his face and stocky body. Though he is still standing in the doorway, the malodorous cloud emanating from him wafts over to you. Grinning broadly and revealing his brown tusks, the dull creature leads in a middleaged Ugarith, who holds his distance in visible disgust.

Straight, snow-white hair falls to his shoulders and onto the warrior's breastplate, contrasting with his smooth, dark black skin shimmering flawlessly in the torchlight. Self-assuredly, the proud warrior plants himself in front of your cell and subjects you to the penetrating gaze of his pitch-black eyes. His right claw rests on the hilt of his broadsword. Then he points at the lock.

"Can you remember?" the Ugarith begins confidently as the Gartak nervously tries to open the lock.

"I am Aonus. Adjutant to honorable Calderel." The bars swing open. "No? Well, so be it. I will lead you to the Master nevertheless."

Write down under the number 100 next to the name Calderel under Special Notes on the third page of your adventure sheet.

> If you want to attack both, turn to 246. If you want to try and escape, turn to 181. If you want to follow them without resistance, turn to 281.

292 The bars are rusty in places, but they appear sturdy. Instinctively, you grab one of the horizontal bars and try to shake it. It does not move at all.

Only an arm's length away from the bars a narrow, artificial rivulet flows through a murk-encrusted gutter in the stone floor. From your cell, too, a similar channel springs from a tiny hole.

If you want to bring all your strength to bear on ripping the bars

from their anchoring, turn to 271.

If you want to touch the water, turn to 121.

If you want simply to watch for now, turn to 196.

293 With a silent prayer to the gods you raise the stiff corpse off the stretcher, quickly undress it and shove it through one of the lookout holes. A wave of nausea comes over you as you put on the clothes of the dead fighter, lie down on the stretcher and pull the sheet over your body and face. The cloth is saturated with a sweetish stench, a mix of blood, sweet, and necromantic oils.

For the first time you're glad to hear the voices of the two Gartaks who appear almost at once. You heart is beating wildly. You know that if they look through your ruse you will be completely at their mercy. You hold your breath.

A moment later, there is a metallic scraping sound and you are lifted with a jolt.

Don't forget to write down the Soldier's Uniform (Clothing, Body, Protection +1) on your adventure sheet and possibly cross off another piece of clothing should you want to change your appearance.

Turn to 179.

294 Even though you don't know where the gully leads, you lie down in it. It only takes a small push and you slide. Faster and faster you rush down the Night Tower. Soon you reach the end of the gully and plunge towards the black sea.

Your drawn out scream is silenced abruptly as you plumb the salty depths. Driven solely by the will to survive, you struggle against the mountainous waves. Eventually, you see a frigate anchoring about a mile away from you. In the pale nocturnal light, it flies the flag of the white Moon on a black field—the sign of the Empire.

Hoping to have finally left behind you the rock of death, you start swimming. With the last of your strength, you drag yourself up the mighty anchor chain, jump through a gun port into the ship's interior and hide in the hold. You spend your next few weeks as a stowaway on the warship, traveling towards other adventures. *Though you have survived, the meaning of your life ends here.* (+220)

295 After only a few floors you stand before a large door with a silver, dragon head knocker. There is a metal ring in its mouth. No matter how much you pull and rattle the ring, however, the door does not move. After a while you decide to try your luck isomewhere else.

If you want to go to the laboratory wing, turn to 221. If you want to climb back to the uppermost platform, turn to 115.



296 The gaunt old man clutches the bars with his wrinkled hands as if, should he let go of them, he would collapse. His gaze is lowered, and you are shocked to realize that he has been blinded in both eyes. Burn scars disfigure his face.

"Good, very good! Haven't met anybody from Kyphi for a while." He pauses for a moment and asks dismissively, "You do come from Kyphi, don't you?" A severe cough continually interrupts his thin voice. "Tell me, were you nabbed at the front, too?" You are on the verge of answering when you hear more auspicious sounds coming from outside the door.

"Careful, we have visitors!" your fellow inmate warns you. Lying down on the floor again, he explains in a whisper, "Hey, don't get the notion of freeing blind Leonar! I'll never manage to get away from this rock of death anyway."

If you have the Warden's Key Ring and you want to free the prisoner neuertheless, turn to 219. If you want to comply with his wishes and leave him in his cell, or if you do not have a key, turn to 273.

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297 You take a step forward, intending to address the unknown creature, but, unsure of yourself, you choke on the words and utter only a pitful cough. The figure turns and you find yourself in the grip of the screpentine, amber eyes of a Zarlik. Its skin consists of countless scales shimmering bluish green in the light of the laboratory.

If you want to cover up your uncertainty and seek a conversation with the Zarlik, turn to 138. If you want to attack, turn to 232. If you want to escape to the hallway, turn to 103.

298 In a flash you dodge to the side as best you can, but the glass retort shatters against your shoulder. From one moment to the next, the blue liquid eats through the fabric into your skin. A sharp pain penetrates you. Instinctively, you try to wipe away the acid, but now your hands are steaming too!

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

A moment later, you are relieved to see a stony protective layer growing over the wounded areas. The pain fades; your Ugarith blood has preserved you yet again from serious injuries. Amazed, the Zarlik looks at you with his deep, amber-colored lizard eyes.

ZARLIK ALCHEMIST

ATTACK 10 DEFENSE 10 RESISTANCE ©© If you survive the battle, turn to 283

299 Calderel's gaze darkens abruptly. "I knew that you were trying to hide something from me!" His voice cracks as he screams: "Curse the Keşra and the Black Sun!"



...

Before you realize what he means, Calderel's shape begins to change. From one moment to the next, rising before you is a viciously familiar black shadow in the form of a huge bull with mighty horns, swallowing all the surrounding light and warmth. Suddenly, a blow from the creature hits you like a bolt of lightning.

As your shattered body slides to the floor along with mortar from the wall, eternal darkness already surrounds you.

Your life ends here. (+101*) =



300 As from the primal source of your mind, you hear Calderel ask: "Do you feel the power of Ugar flowing through you?" You give a stunned nod. You cannot and will not deny yourself any longer!

"Very good!" For the first time, Calderel croaks audibly from his wrinkled throat, cloaking the mirror again with the black silk cloth. At once the golden light fades.

You can raise your STRENGTH or DEXTERITY by 1 point!

You find it difficult to form a clear thought again. You do not know what has happened to you, but one thing is certain—only

*) Easy Mode: Start the chapter anew and find the librarian!

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a few hours ago you were cursing the ruler of this rock of death. Now he is your lord and master! You are convinced that he knows the answer to all of your questions and that he will help you to fulfill your destiny.

As if Calderel has heard your thoughts, he embraces you with his bony arms: "I will help you to find your true destiny, my child!"

Continue with CHAPTER 2: "THE MASTER OF SHADOWS".

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Have you found the 3 FATE POINTS (#2, #3 and #4) in this chapter? If not, you haven't found all the secrets of the Ningal Tower from the cliffs below to the pinnacle above! RULES III

SPECIAL VALUES

The world is ruled by divine powers. Often, the acts of Kar and Ugar appear incomprehensible and cruel. You are part of this world and must how to their will. Their whims. How much the gods accompany and influence your fate is expressed in two special values—KARMA and RAGE.



KARMA

Sometimes, usually at the beginning of a chapter, but also through heroic deeds, you may receive KARMA. These points designate divine lavor. You can use them to automatically succeed in a test.

This functions as follows: You have to decide **before** making a STRENGTH or DEXTRETY test to use KARMA. If you do so, remove 1 KARMA point from your adventure sheet, and you needn't roll the dice. You succeed without any test at all.

Important: This does not work for the combat actions ATTACK and DEFENSE.

Your maximum KARMA value is 10.

Points above this limit are lost. Nevertheless, you should use your KARMA wisely!

Later in the book, you will learn about more ways to use it.

RULES III · SPECIAL VALUES

Optional Rule for Experts: As an experienced reader of gamebooks, you can make things more difficult by reducing your maximum KARAA. You can do so in three levels: You can use a maximum of $9(\alpha)$ or even 7 KARAA points ($\alpha \alpha$). You can mark this upper limit on your adventure sheet by filling in the triangle indicated and the stars underneath

RAGE

This value describes your mood. All too often, fate will have nothing good in store for you or the people you care about. Tragedies happen. You will learn later what role your RAGE has to play, but as you know, it can be both positive or negative.

Now you know about the basic combat rules and about attributes. Now continue your journey.

Turn to the 2nd chapter at 301.

CHAPTER 2 · THE MASTER OF SHADOWS

CHAPTER 2

THE MASTER OF SHADOWS

Fill in the small Save Points on your adventure sheet to record the progress of your journey. Take over your VITALITY from the last chapter!

"In the near future far-reaching decisions will be demanded of the Child of Shadows. These decisions will deeply alter the world."

- THE ORACLE OF KABETH

301 The venerable Master's embrace is familiar to you. It is not the first time the Emissary of Ugar has clasped you in his arms. A warm feeling of fond affection enflames your heart. "It is good that you are here again" Calderel breaks the silence.

His gaunt face is beaming with pride as he points to a detailed map of Kyphi, the capital of the Golden Realm: "Your mission was successful, my child! But as I can see, you still cannot remember." Aonus, standing next to the door and frowning as he listens to your conversation, nods in agreement. "Indeed, lord. Your favored child's powers are strong, but mentally..."

"Your involuntary stay in the dungeon was a misunderstanding. The warden thought you were a war criminal." With a low cough the priest puts his wrinkly claw on your shoulder. He continues sardonically. "I hope that you don't bear as much of a grudge towards your father as I do towards the warden." \mathfrak{D}

If you want to ask Master Calderel why you've lost your memory, turn to 313.

If you want to know about your mission, turn to 325.

302 Your short span of training ends all too soon. Though you could certainly spend longer learning your special gifts, you have certainly benefited from this time.

Your VITALITY returns to normal

Even though you have learned and regained much in the short time, the teachers were only able to acquaint you with a fragment of your extraordinary physical and mental potentialities. Therefore, you may choose only three abilities from the following list. These are talents in which you were especially trained:



Sharpened Senses · Your already extraordinary five senses have been sharpened even further by your teacher Tarus. Your vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste are S amazing, comparable to the keenest senses in the animal

world. You do, however, have to concentrate deliberately whenever you use your Sharpened Senses. Your good hearing, for example, cannot prevent you from being ambushed while asleep.



Premonition · With this ability you can judge situations better. But you have no control over your sixth sense, and you should not depend on it too much. You may only register a tingling or a feeling of discomfort when danger is close by. True warnings in the form of a sudden inspiration or even

visions are rare.



Mind over Body . Your mental training has taught you how to improve your physical performance for a limited time by using the power of your mind. At any time-even If in combat-you may convert a single point of your

VITALITY into two points which you can distribute freely between STRENGTH and DEXTERITY. You can use this ability only when your head



is clear. Therefore, you cannot use this power if your VITALITY is hurt or critical. After the current section, or combat, you must remove the bonus points. The loss of VITALITY, however, remains until you can heal or regenerate.

Free Breath · With this ability you can hold your breath for several minutes without suffering any physical Iimitations. It does not matter whether you are in the midst of combat, swimming long distances underwater or dashing through poisonous fog. While using Free Breath, you do not experience the reflex to breathe and you suffer no losses.



Mental Focus · In precarious situations it is sometimes difficult to keep your nerve. Mental Focus helps by allowing you to concentrate your will completely on a certain action or mental effort. Nevertheless, this talent requires

that you have enough time to clear your mind and understand the problem at hand.

Once you have chosen, write down the three abilities in line 2, 3 & 4 on your adventure sheet with the number 302. This is the section number where you can look up, should you have forgotten the explanations for the corresponding ability.

During the final nights before Ugar turns his lunar face fully to the world, you spend your time on the steep roof of the Ningal Tower. There, Wing Master Logath and his assistants teach you the basics of dealing with riding dragons.

By way of visual instruction, the keeper leads two remarkable dragons over the parade ground. The first is a deep green specimen, very brawny, protected by countless thorns and horns in varied sizes. The mighty red scaled armored crest and horns

protruding on its brow and chin remind you of an aggressive rooster. "This is Maulun," Logath introduces the dragon. With wings outspread and a threatening snort from its nostrils, the green giant greets you—just as if it had understood its keeper's forceful rap on its scaly neck.

Compared to Maulun, the second dragon appears more agile and attentive. Its smooth body, clad in fine black scales, rests upon a single pair of legs. Arching gracefully and with dignity, this dragon shimmers in the light of the moon.

At the end of its swan-like neck perches a slender head graced by a single horn rising from its brow. Though not as muscular as its green companion, this dragon is larger.

Logath explains that the wing span of a fully grown dragon ranges from 40 to 60 feet, depending on race and gender. He adds, "Kyrna is a female and strong in air combat, whereas Maulun can be deployed very well on the ground."

As the Wing Master continues his presentation, his assistants are clearly having trouble controlling the mounts. It appears the two dragons do not get along. They continually hiss at one another and snap at each other's necks, but without causing any serious injuries.

> If you want to look at the green dragon, turn to 323. If you want to look at the black dragon, turn to 340

303 A sweetish smell fills your nose as the Zarlik responsible for the bodies of the fallen opens the heavy metal door to the morgue. The many dead bodies within have had their clothes removed and, sorted by race, now lie on simple wooden biers. While the Ugarith have already fallen into their stony rigor and the cloud hunters of the Baronyaks have received the ceremonial painting of the dead, the two Zarlik are bound to their biers and twitching. Even though you have never seen it yourself before, you know that the lizard people twitch for up to a week after their deaths as if they were dreaming. Eerie.





³⁰² Compared to Maulun, the second dragon appears more agile and attentive. Its smooth body, clad in fine black scales, rests upon a single pair of legs. Arching gracefully and with dignity, this dragon shimmers in the light of the moon.

CHAPTER 2 · THE MASTER OF SHADOWS

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

"When the Tar-Mar-Ssssol hasses passed, we can give their bodiesses to the flamesse," the mortician explains. "All the othersses will be taken to their homesse during the next moonsses or they will recceive a ssea burial."

The sight of these rows of the dead and the knowledge that many more are rotting on the ocean floor cause you to choke.

> I must end this war as quickly as possible! I cannot allow more innocents to die, <</p>

Shaken, you return to the upper floors of the Night Tower. Turn to 319.



304 Resolutely, you alarm the guards, pointing to the unknown intruder and thereby unintentionally pushing Master Calderel aside. He has also understood the danger of the situation. "Overpower the stranger!" he commands.

Caught, the southerner pushes away the bystanders, reaching into his cloak as if about to draw a weapon. But the first soldiers have already lunged at him and buried him underneath them. After some brief tumult and the sound of a heavy blow striking bone, there is a tense silence.

Two of the guards twist the attacker's arms as Master Calderel confronts him triumphantly. The Master's claw-like fingers dig into the assassin's cheeks down to the jaw bone.

"Ah, what a surprise. You were almost successful, little Nephatari..." Calderel hisses mockingly. Then he grabs the captive's collar and pulls out a simple wooden amulet. "What do we have here?" Blue smoke rises from Calderel's palm as he tears the ornament from the throat of his petrified prisoner.



Fine, bluish white sparks lick across Calderel's claw as the wooden amulet reverts to its original shape, a statue of Kar made of pure gold. You feel Calderel's rising wrath. He wants to kill Nephatari at once.

> If you want to stop him, turn to 326. If you do not want to help the woman, turn to 314.

305 Calderel's gaze is cold and empty as you confront him with your doubts about the truth of his words. "It seems that the Golden One's curse is more powerful than expected. How regrettable." He signals his assistant. "It appears, dear Aonus, that you were right." Then he turns away, staring out of the window. "Remove this confused child from my presence!"

In the firm grasp of Calderel's chief servant, you are paralyzed by the same power that you had to endure in the temple of Kar in Kyphi. A short time later you find yourself in a solitary cell once more. Your powers have faded.

At some time during the third week of your imprisonment, the Tower of the Empire is attacked. In your hole, however, you are aware of little except the massive tremors.

The battle lasts only a few hours. When it is over, you are forced to endure days of Gartak guards in celebratory mood. The Ugarith gained the upper hand in the battle for the base and destroyed the allied fleet. Since then you have hoped the Alliance would free you. In vain.

Your imprisonment will never end. Your life essentially ends here.





306 Aonus leads you through the many rooms and hallways of the upper floors of the Night Tower. Finally, you reach a heavy wooden door decorated with carvings of the moon in all its phases.

Beyond the door, the flickering light of the torches reveals a luxurious room furnished with a large bed as well as a desk on which several books and scrolls lie, and in front of which a cushioned chair stands. You close your eyes. Familiar smells waft past your nose. Memories touch you.

> My room... I have lived and studied here for many years. «

Had you any doubts in the last few hours that you were in this Tower before, they have now vanished. Aonus stands in the doorway, his hands on his hips. He notices your agitation. "You recognize it? Good! Then your soul may not yet be lost."

The elite warrior waits until you have entered the room, then suddenly causes a lantern dangling from the beams of the ceiling above to flare up. "Don't forget, I'll be watching you." With this warring, Aonus leaves you alone.

Absent-mindedly, you leaf through the books and scrolls. For the first time you experience your past with a conscious mind, for you have seen every word, every picture on the yellowed pages once before. You can remember the holy scriptures, but their contents appear disjointed.

In the wardrobe, next to piles of scarves, trousers and fine shirts, hangs the impressive uniform of a soldier of the Empire. A braid of silver thread shimmers on each epaulette. So you're a recruit in the third garrison. Reverently, you put on the jacket of thick black wool, straightening it over your chest. It is a perfect fit.

Exhausted, you sink onto the bed and fall into a deep slumber. Write down on your adventure sheet the Empire Uniform (Clothing, Body, Protection +1) and the Soldier Boots (Clothing, Feet, Protection +1). Remove the clothes you've been wearing so far in this slots (Body and Feet). If you still doubt that you're really a soldier of the Empire, turn to 330. If you have accepted your Ugarith heritage, turn to 312.

307 Your sharpened instincts make you doubt your plan. The Kar priest is definitely hiding something dangerous beneath his robes.

If you want to overwhelm the priest nevertheless, turn to 349. If you want to break off your attack, turn to 339. If you want to set the guards on him, turn to 304.

308 Master Calderel stands up leisurely and strides slowly towards you: "Allow me to introduce someone to you, Councilors. This young fighter, in my care since his birth, is the Emissary. Visibly impressed, the members of the council stare at you. "As the Holy Writings prophesy, Ugar's flesh will join us in this battle!" the Master tells them, gesturing to you as he speaks. "Go now, Child of Shadow. Our guests are certainly pleased to have met you. I will call on you soon. Calderel's icy expression tolerates no argument; you take your leave of the High Council of the Empire with a respectful bow.

Turn to 343.

309 Tarus is genuinely pleased when he hears that you are interested in the art of diplomacy. He lets you have standard works of philosophy as well as many books on politics, negotiating techniques, and rules of conduct. You find yourself using every free minute to work through the material. And at the same time you are forced to tackle controversial topics, engaging in countless hours of dispute with Tarus.



Write down the ability **Diplomacy** on in line 5 on your adventure sheet. In addition, mark the number 309 there, the number of this section, so that you can look up something if necessary.

Turn to 324.



310 Without a further word you leave the Master's chambers and go back to your room. Your sobering thoughts revolve solely around the coming night. The Consecration of Ugar may well be as much an honor as a burden to you.

> Am I ready to receive the ordination? What if I really have been cursed by Kathum as everybody says? Will Ugar punish me? Will I lose my own will and become a mere marionette of the faith? <</p>

2

While you are lost in your thoughts, Teacher Tarus pays you an unexpected visit. Sitting down on the edge of the bed, the old man starts to speak as if he already knew what is troubling you. "It is difficult for you to accept your own role in this game, is it not?"

He glances at the desk with its countless books. "You may have read through all the histories, studied all the philosophers and listened to all of the priests; the question that moves you now would make of all them despair as well."

You both remain silent a while. Then Tarus gives you an encouraging pat on the leg. "Well, I know neither your goals nor those of the honorable Master. But one thing I do know. Should Ugar the Almighty deem you unworthy, he will not grant you the consecration." Getting up to leave, Tarus adds, "However you decide to use the divine power given to you, that decision lies in your hands alone."

Left to yourself in the room again, you come to a decision. Despite all your doubts and fears, you will receive the consecration. *Turn to 347.*

311 The Gartak warden proudly leads you through his realm, the dungeon of the Night Tower. You look at him suspiciously. You are not sure whether he was one the guards who held you in the dungeon, but you suspect he was.

> These Stinkpelts all look the same ... +

Moans and lamentations fill the stifling air of the chaotic dungeon. Even though only a fraction of the allied sailors have





survived the battle, the dungeon is hopelessly overcrowded. Hunger and thirst will certainly soon solve this logistical problem for the Empire. The thought of that 'solution' and its implications turns your stomach.

Shaken, you gaze at the many gaunt faces of young men and women from countries all over. Your quiet hope of perhaps discovering among them someone you know is quickly shattered. Some beg for mercy while others curse you or spit at you. Whatever they do, the Gartak delights in driving them back into the corners of their cells with his savage whip.

Such misery! This war must end — whatever it may cost! « Shocked, you retire to the top of the Tower.

Turn to 319.



312 It is a clear, cold night. You are standing on a gentle green hill. All around you a dense forest reaches to the horizon. The trees are swaying in the wind. Their leaves twinkle in the silvery light of the full disc of Ugar. Contentedly, you sit down in the lush grass, only to be taken aback as your body suddenly hardens to stone. Shocked, you realize that the transformation is also radiating outwards, encompassing your surroundings. First, the grass under your feet turns to stone, then the hill, then finally a whole forest of barren rock lies before you. All life has died away.

Turn to 335.

.

313 Master Calderel's night-black face is furrowed with worry: "The sun priest cursed your mind just before he died." In fatherly concern he places his arm on your shoulder. "Have no fear, I will help you overcome your memory loss no matter how long it may take."

Then you direct the conversation to your mission.

Turn to 325.

314 The priestess is squirming helplessly. She struggles to free herself, but bright bolts of lightning shoot from Calderel's free hand and pierce her skull like thousands of tiny, glittering needles. There is a sudden jolt, a ragged gasp, and the young woman drops to the ground.

> A quick death. «

While the body of the young priestess is examined closely by the guards, the Emissary of Ugar enjoys the rousing cheers of the masses. "So, Nephatari, only daughter of Kathum, has also found her end. A glorious night."

Contemptuously, he throws the lump of gold that has been her amulet into the corner and disappears through a curtain behind the altar. Lost in thought, you stare at the dead body of the young woman lying at your feet.

Note on the third page of your adventure sheet that Nephatari has sacrificed herself by crossing off the correct box.

Turn to 350.

315 "This young man is the Emissary-Ugar's son!" reveals Master Calderel to the surprised gathering. "I have accompanied him since his birth and have taught him our faith. Soon his training will be completed, and he will stand with us in this battle-as the Holy Writings have foretold."

As Calderel puts his arm around you, an icy chill of power flows through your body. "Our guests now know you, Child of Shad-



ows. That should suffice for now. Retire to your room and wait for me there. You obey without hesitation.

Turn to 343.



316 For two days you plan your attack on the leader of the Shadows. You pay no regard to what may happen to you. Driven by remorse, you see it as your holy duty to remove this tyrant. Nervously, you've asked for an audience for the coming night. Finally, the fateful moment is here. The servants have just withdrawn. Lost in thought, Master Calderel is contemplating a work of art and has turned his back to you. You draw a dagger and stab him, feeling relief as the blade strikes home. The furrowed face of the old priest becomes contorted in pain.

Suddenly, however, the frail old man is transformed into the giant shadow of a bull. His hollow, bitter voice thunders, loud enough to make the treasures on the shelves totter. "Aonus was right. How foolish I was to believe I could rule you!"

Enraged, the powerful Ugarith hurls you against the wall. You strain to get up, but powerless, you collapse. Calderel mocks you as you lie there. "You fool! You and your kind cannot kill me in this way! Intoxicated by your screams of pain, the Master of Shadows continues kicking you until your world sinks into eternal darkness.

Your life ends here.

.

317 "Aohus does not have your abilities. He would never have been able to successfully complete your mission," Master Calderel explains without considering the feelings of the warrior. "It is only a matter of time before their fleet strikes in retailation against the Ningal Tower. But do not worry! We're prepared for their assault."

Innocently, you ask what the reason for the war is.

Turn to 333.

2

318 It is sobering to learn that only those who have the spark of magic in them can master the art. Only certain races, such as the lizard folk of the Zarlik, as well as some rare individuals are blessed with it. Despite this disappointment, in your free time Tarus teaches you a great deal about magic in general, for example, its manifestations, effects, peculiarities and limits. Should you ever meet a being with the magical spark, you'll perhaps be able to react more prudently.



Write down the ability Magical Lore in line 5 on your adventure sheet.¹⁰¹ In addition, mark the number 318 there, the number of this section, so that you can look up something if necessary.

Turn to 324.

319 It is the end of a warm summer night, and many difficult and tiring training lessons with Urgoz, the famous weapon master of the Ugarith, lie behind you. Needful of a rest from your toil, you stroll through the hallways of the upper Tower towards the kitchen to refresh yourself. Halfway there you meet a young Ugarith woman carrying an infant. Their skin is as black as yours. As you walk past her, she presses her baby to her breast more firmly and gazes at you out of the corner of her midnight eyes. Once you have reached the kitchen, you find the slender Netani arranging a tray with carafes full of wine for the high priest and





crit 1 of 4

his advisors. Spontaneously, you decide to relieve her of the task and pay a visit to Master Calderel. The submissive slave with her caramel-colored complexion does not dare to object.

As you approach the portal of the conference room guarded by two officers of the watch, you hear a number of unfamiliar voices. It is obvious that the war council of the Empire is meeting. Among others you identify the distinctive dialects of Zarlik, Menokians and Dvoraks in the confusion of voices. Emotions in the chamber are definitely on edge.

If you want to put down the tray and pretend to withdraw so that you can listen to the council from a hiding place, turn to 338. If you want to knock and enter, turn to 327. If you want to withdraw respectfully, turn to 336.

320 An inner voice tells you that your only chance lies in trying to deceive the Master of Shadows. If you want to comprehend this war, you must first understand Calderel's motives and discover his weaknesses. Alone you have no chance to stop the Empire. So you decide to grin and bear whatever comes, at least for now.

Turn to 337.

2

321 With lightning speed, you break loose from the Emissary's ceremonial embrace and, amidst the crowd's startled cries, leap from the pedestal of the altar.

If you have the ability **Premonition**, turn to 307. If not, turn to 349.

322 Master Calderel sees that your eyes are shining with inticipation. Heavy with meaning, his voice resounds in your head as if he intends to impress upon you the consequences of the ordination. "There are powerful, divine forces slumbering in you. I am prepared to fathom them with you!"

Then his veiled gaze pierces your mind. For a brief moment the high priest reaches into the depths of your soul.

"At midnight you shall be consecrated with a special star stone. Verily, I do not exaggerate when I say that there are many who would kill for it." The old priest sends you back to your room and wishes you a good rest.

Turn to 347.

2

323 You approach the massive Maulun, whose black eyes, as large as fists, follow you attentively. Reflecting the moonlight, its scales give off different shades of green; in forests and over meadows, the dragon would be perfective camouflaged. Its body, weighing several tons, rests on four sturdy legs of equal length, with broad talons capable of easily gripping an entire man. With each breath it takes a penetrating growl fills the air and demands your respect.

Turn to C20!

324 On the 17th day of your education you are roused from your torpor. Confused commands and screams resound through the hallways. The Tower is on alert—the Alliance fleet is attacking! It comes as no surprise to you. Calderel has been talking of nothing lately but retaliation for Kathum's death. Now it is finally here! Quickly you prepare for combat, pulling on your boots and uniform before you rush down the hallways.

In the hubbub you encounter Aonus commanding a troop of elite Gartaks. "Hey, Child of Shadows," he snaps, grabbing you by the arm. "Let it be. It is broad daylight outside. Not your time!"

Contritely, you consign yourself to supporting the Ugarith guards on the higher floors, but the enemy never manages to advance to the top of the tower. Apart from the severe tremors caused by their siege weapons striking the outer walls from below, you witness nothing.



The Empire wins the naval battle and sinks almost the complete allied Fleet. The celebrations of the Gartaks and the mercenaries go on for almost a week, but there are rumors that the Empire's fleet was made to suffer unexpectedly high casualties as well.

If you want to continue your training, turn to 310. If you want to visit the dungeon, turn to 311. If you want to go to the morgue to honor the fallen soldiers of the Empire, turn to 303.

325 "Killing the Hierarch was no simple task, but you have done it! Calderel's empty eyes light up as he laughs triumphintly: "Finally the heretics of Kyphi have seen their judgment!"

If you want to ask who the Shadow was that took you from the chapel, turn to 342. If you want to know the reason for the war between Empire and Alliance, turn to 333.

326 The fear of death is engraved on the delicate woman's face as the priest of Ugar presses his hands against her temples. But before he can kill her, you reach calmingly for his arm. For a moment, Calderel pauses. The demonic madness in his expression gives way to a bitter smile.

He whispers to you: "You're right, child. Nephatari could still be of use to me. Perhaps in exchange for your lost gift..."



Then, turning away, he pointedly hurls the shining Kar amulet down in front of the altar and declares dismissively: "Bind her above the Black Gate!" A murmur of agreement and pity goes through the crowd. You watch as the young woman is led away by the bodyguard. She stares at the ground lethargically.

> Does she know what fate awaits her? <

While all eyes are on the assassin, you use the opportunity to pick up the golden amulet. It's a classical, stylized image of Kar, as one often encounters in Kyphi: a naked woman with an eagle's head and outspread wings. Fascinated, you pocket the flawless artefact.

Write down the Amulet of Kar (Special Item) on your adventure sheet. Turn to 350.

327 You knock and enter the conference room with its long, fully occupied table, at the head of which Master Calderel is sitting. Aonus is standing by his side at military-perfect attention, his mouth firmly shut. The seven other people present, an illustrious gathering of all races and peoples serving the Empire, stare at you. The envoys and military officers have been waiting for a servant, not a uniform.

Yesterday you watched those present at the pier of the Ningal Tower together with Tarus when they arrived on a warship accompanied by all military honors. Your teacher was of the opinion that it would be important for you to be acquainted with the Empire's dignitaries.

Senator Cez, a gaunt Dvorak strategist with a skull-like chalkwhite head comments amusedly: "Since when do your soldiers serve the drinks? Have all the slave-girls run away?"

"We should increase the staff by visiting the Wild Realms again," the man opposite him, the stern Colonel Mari, completes the joke. There's an outbreak of mocking laughter. Only the leader of the Empire at the head of the table appears to be unamused. He gives





27 The seven other people present, an illustrious gathering of all races and peoples serving the Empire, stare at you. The envoys and military officers have been waiting for a servant, not a uniform.

you a murderous glance and telepathically enters your mind: "You have no business here. Serve the drinks and go!"

Hastily, you start to distribute the drinks. Studying you, the representative of the Baronyak, Czar Zorgan, announces pompously to everybody around, "There are rumors of a Child of Shadows being among us."

Haughtily, the priest of Ugar replies to the man from the Empire's backwater: "That is correct. And soon he will fulfill his destiny." Stroking his braided hair with a broad grin, Czar Zorgan gazes at the mark on the back of your right clawed hand. Caught, you recoil, spilling a cup of red wine.

"Don't you want to introduce usss?" the mysterious Mistress of the Zarlik eagerly demands.

> If you wear a Signet Ring, turn to 308. If you wear a Serpent Ring, turn to 315.



328 You make a dismissive gesture, whereupon Calderel's gaze immediately cools. "You dare to refuse such a generous gift?" Indignantly, he strides to the door. "Perhaps I should no longer let you in on my thoughts, Child of Shadows!"

The door slams shut behind him, but you do not mind. Instead, you enjoy the uplifting feeling of having at last defied the will of the Master of Shadows.

Turn to 345.

329 Tarus' worried face clearly reveals what the librarian thinks of your wanting to learn more about warfare. Neverthe-



less, he respects your wish and hands you over to Urgoz, the Weapon Master, a man forged in countless battles. He is without question the perfect man for what you want.

Urgoz invites you to his rooms. Surrounded by countless weapons, exotic spoils of war, and the artefacts entrusted to him by lallen companions, night after night he proudly tells you stories about his eventful life as a soldier. In him a great storyteller has been lost, so vivid are his tales of strategy and tactics, ethics and honor.



Write down the ability Warfare in line 5 on your adventure sheet. In addition, mark the number 329 there, the number of this section, so that you can look up something if necessaru.

Turn to 324.

2

330 A vast wasteland. The sun burns down. Plants wither, animals perish. You drag yourself across a bleak dusty landscape. No life. For days. You look up at the sky and are forced to raise your left hand protectively not to be blinded by the sun.

Then you dare to do the impossible. You take the burning disc between thumb and forefinger, pluck it from the sky and let it roll across your palms! Finally, you squeeze the sunlight from it like the juice from a ripe orange. Utter blackness surrounds you, bitter and cold. You begin to shiver.

Turn to 335.

331 You attempt to conceal your uncertainty as you step before Master Calderel. "The coming night will welcome the Child of Shadows with open arms," he tells you telepathically. "Ugar will cast his full light upon the Ningal Tower. The perfect moment for your ordination."

With a stern expression Calderel admits that there have been critical words from those in the Council. Some doubt whether

they can trust you, a young man who has obviously had a curse laid upon him. "But your behavior and motivation of the last few weeks have been exemplary. You have thus proven your loyalty to me, and soon you will silence their objections as well."

If you are in doubt whether you should accept the consecration, turn to 310.

If you are ready for the consecration, turn to 322.

332 "To know where you come from means to know where you are going." With this profound statement Tarus taps you proudly on the shoulder. Eagerly, he collects some history books from the shelves and stacks them on your outstretched arms. Among them there are some works that he has kept under lock and key until now because they do not follow the faith of Ugar. "I trust you not to show them to anybody..."

In only two nights you read through all of the books. Their content appears already familiar to you.

Impressed, Tarus remarks, "The speed in which you learn is enormous," when, upon the next evening, you heave the books onto his table. "You'll probably have time for some more then?"



Write down the ability **History Knowledge** in line 6 on your adventure sheet. In addition, mark the number 332 there, the number of this section, so that you can look up something if necessary.

In which of the three remaining areas of knowledge are you most interested?

Diplomacy? Turn to 309. Warfare? Turn to 329. Spellcraft? Turn to 318.

333 "An explanation for this war?" The words escape the priest in a mocking tone. He cannot understand why you are asking him this question. "For generations our people have been



persecuted and killed—with our extermination as the only goal!" Calderel relates to you instances of barbaric atrocities: the Massacre of Ravijk, the Battle for Greydeyk, or the Bloodbath of the Venizian Lake. Then suddenly memories hit you like a blow. You endure every moment as if they were real—the clashing of blades, the stench of spurting blood, desperate screams, and the empty eves of countless corpses.

How is that possible? All these events lie decades in the past! I cannot have experienced them...

"...and it is over now!" Calderel raises his voice, thus putting an end to his story. "It was and is my holy duty as leader of the Empire and Emissary of Ugar to lead the battle against oppression and claim our rightful place." Then he takes your clawed hand in his. "Stand by my side and we shall bring peace to the world." Try as you might, you have no answer for him.

Wage war for peace? How does that make sense? «

Your silence causes Calderel to end the conversation with a taut expression on his face; he orders Aonus, who is also frowning, to lake you back to your room.

Turn to 306.

2



334 As soon as you have the star stone in your hands, you nense the divine aura living within it. Calderel watches you excitedly as you put the powerful artefact in your mouth. "Ke, Child of Shadouss! Chosen of Ugar, the all-powerful God of Night and Death, It is your task to lead the people by my side and destroy everything and everybody upoh dares to oppose his divine will."

Instinctively, you swallow the stone. A warm feeling spreads throughout your body.

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168



Write down the ability **Power of the Full Moon** in line 8 on your adventure sheet. In addition, mark the number 334 there, the number of this section, so that you can look up something if necessary.

Whenever you have to roll a die whether for a test or for combat and the page you randomly thrmed to is showing the **Full Moon** (the pictogram on the bottom left), you will automatically be successful with the test or score a hit and defend yourself.

Turn to 345.

335 You wake with a start. Fierce knocking has interrupted your intense dream. Another knock rings out, but the images of your dream are still with you. They awaken old memories, memories of countless bloody battles.

A Gartak guardian who appears somewhat familiar to you stomps in without being asked.

"Can this world be saved at all?" you muse aloud.

In confusion the Gartak scratches his boar skull and empties a rider's saddlebags with things you last had in the chapel. There are also some new items. Suspiciously, you examine the pile. At once you notice a fine short sword. Skillfully, you weigh the cool blade in your hand and realize that it is from the forge of a Menokian master.

You buckle on the Menokian Short Sword (Weapon, Hit Bonus +3, you feel a need to carry this weapon, even if you must drop another weapon to make room).

Do you possess the Warden's Key Ring and/or the Guard's Chain? If so, the Gartak, with tusks bared, demands the return of his belongings. Remove the Items from your adventure sheet!

Next you examine a leather pouch filled with numerous silver coins. Your first pay. You attach this Purse with its contents to your belt. The remaining items are of no value to you. You examine them again nevertheless. Write down 13 Dinar to the column Money on your adventure sheet. You can again take all the Utensiis that you have found in the Prologue (they should be marked with a cross at Save Point \bigotimes). In this case imply erase the cross. If you want the Gartak to throw away an item, ense it completely.

If there is a Special Item marked with a cross in a square 🖾, it remains lost, no matter how long you search for it. Leave this information untouched.

Viewing the items, you are overwhelmed by dark memories of Hierarch Kathum, the man you killed in Kyphi. The agonizing questions and doubts return. Absent-mindedly, you dismiss the waiting Gartak.

If you doubt Calderel's motives, turn to 348. If you're convinced that he is doing what is right, turn to 337.



336 The council meeting with all allies present is a bad sign. Even though the rumor is circulating that the war will soon be over, that may not be true. After all, the Empire promised the people a speedy victory years ago. No matter what phase the conflict is in, however, you can be sure of one thing. You have a decisive part to play! Resolved to get the most you can out of the last weeks of your training, you begin studying and training with even more focus.







C 337 In the next night, a shortly before your lesson with Tarus is supposed to start, Master Calderel bursts into your room, evidently in a fine mood. "Have you heard? They've already buried the Hierarch!"

170

The Master of Shadows pauses for a moment, apparently in expectation of an effusive reaction on your part. "Only two days had passed since his death..." he completes his explanation. Still you do not understand, shrugging in embarrassment. Your 'father' sighs, continuing with unabated enthusiasm.

"Normally the priesthood should have waited exactly eight paths of the sun to prepare the Sefech ritual properly. I suspect that they are intentionally barring him from entering the Underworld!" \mathbb{D}

Calderel strides towards you and proudly clasps your shoulders with his claw-like hands. "Oh, I would not have dared to dream of this! As a present on this day of joy I want to give you this, my child." The high priest takes a shining silver stone the size of a walnut from his cloak and hands it to you.

"This is a gift from Ugar. A star stone. It's beautiful, isn't it?"

You remember the fantastic stories from your childhood. The holy stones of Ugar fall from the sky on clear, starlit nights to bestow divine power on his prophets. Exceedingly rare, they are reserved solely for the priest caste.

> If you want to accept the gift, turn to 334. If you want to reject the star stone, turn to 328.

338 You apologize to the guards, saying that you don't want to cause any disturbance. You put down the tray and hide in a dark corner of the corridor. Curious, you press your ear against the wall of the conference room. In addition to the familiar voices of Calderel and Aonus you hear at least six further voices.

A woman with a light lisp-it has to be a Zarlik-is speaking: "Honored members of the council! It is an open secret: The war



B going worse than expected." Murmurs of agreement accompany her further explanations. "The power vacuum anticipated by the Hierarch's death did not lead to discord within the Alliance but drew the Allies even closer together. Kathum was a religious bone of contention that now no longer divides them. Remorsefully, Calderel interrupts the council member: "Be that as it may. The preparations for the final blow are already underway!"

The rough voice of a man adds: "So you plan to destroy the final Allied sea base of Leenhaven, honorable master?"

"Correct," the Ugar priest acknowledges coolly. "First we will cut off their supply lines and prepare the way for the invasion forces from Fort Sin. When Ugar's countenance shines, we will attack with all we have!"

Fists hammer on the table rhythmically, sounding like the first troops of marching soldiers. The meeting is over. Without being noticed, you slip away to your room.

Turn to 336.

339 Within a few heartbeats the priest of Kar reaches the front row of guests and reaches into his cloak. He is only a few steps away from you and Calderel. Suddenly there is a deafening explosion! The shock wave hurls you backwards against the altar. Your ears buzz and sparks dance before your eyes. Stones, burning splinters and charred flesh rain down on you. People are screaming. You struggle to remain conscious.

Your VITALITY falls to critical!

It is only with difficulty that the guards manage to prevent a panic. Two of the mighty marble pillars flanking the holy hall have been reduced to rubble and stumps on the floor and ceiling. At least two dozen guests are dead. Many are severely injured.

C Randomly, you stumble through smoke and dust until you reach an alcove where you find the remains of the assassin under a sharp-edged block of marble. The explosion has torn his body asunder, but you recognize the distinctive golden eyes! They are not those of a man at all: they are those of the young priestess from Kyphil Her gleaming blond locks stick to her blood-smeared cheeks. You heart almost breaks to see her distorted body lying in front of you. An illusion allowed her to look like a man.

"Nephataril" Calderel's croaking voice wakens you from your mourning. "The gitl wanted to average her father's death." DAs the Master of Shadows turns away with hoarse laughter, you discover a hot lump of gold lying next to Nephatari's corpse, the remains of her Kar amulet. Bitterly, you pocket the artefact. It takes several hours to take care of all the wounded and recover the dead. The chaos has been overcome.

Write down the Lump of Gold (Special Item) and under Special Notes record that Nephatari has been killed by crossing off the box on your adventure sheet.

Your RAGE rises by a level!

Write down the number of this Section 339 in the box next to the RAGE Scale on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 350.

340 Fascinated, you approach the black Kyrna. "This is the companion of Aonus," one the stable-hands explains proudly, stroking her leathery left foreleg, "She is one of the most obedient and intelligent dragons in the air group—she is also a very rare specimen."

As if to underline this description, the lady dragon produces a low, drawn-out growl that causes the stone floor of the entire platform to vibrate beneath your feet. Although you're standing in the midst of a group of recruits, Kyrna cranes her neck towards you and stares at you with her palm-sized lizard eyes.



Her sulfurous breath is so hot that the air shimmers as it escapes between her fangs. While the other recruits have already withdrawn to a safer position, her curiosity brings her dangerously close to you. One of the stablehands is about to drive the dragon back using a long wooden rod, but Logath stops him. "Wait! She's only curious!"

Meanwhile there is now barely the length of an arm separating your head from Kyrna's brow. You can see your own face reflected in the golden slits of her pupils. You seem to hear the steady beating of two hearts together.

"That's enough now, Kyrna! Gash, gash!" the keeper shouts, waving his arms. With a snort the black dragon draws back her head. *Turn to C20!*



341 It is time at last. Your head bowed, you step before Calderel and fall to your knees to receive the benediction.

A deathly silence fills the temple when, appearing as if from nowhere, a nebulous shape rises from the shadow of the statue of Ugar. The wavering, black smoke thickens, becoming a giant figure whose somber aura displaces even that of the venerable master's. Two eyes like gleaming diamonds stare at you. It is a divine spirit, a Halret! Wordlessly, this messenger from the Underworld hands Calderel the star stone intended for you. You open your mouth and, as he places the holy pearl upon your longue, you reverently receive the ordination of a priest of Ugar. Pure power seizes you as Calderel graps your left hand with his

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rough claw. You swallow the stone. Your body quivers. For a short, fateful moment an icy feeling of immortality comes over you, spreading from the hand on your heart to your mind.



Write down the ability **Immunity to Sunlight** in line 9 on your adventure sheet. In addition, mark the number 341 there, the number of this section, so that you can look up something if necessary.

In the awareness that from now on you possess an extraordinary power, you gaze into the faces of the guests and your companions—and find admiration, fascination and deep respect reflected there. In the audience you notice an older looking manprobably a human from the South—skillfully wending his way from the entrance through the crowd. For a single moment your eyes meet and his pupils light up, yellow as the morning sun. > *Eyes of Gold1 know that light…is it a servant of Kar from Kyphi2* · Unnoticed, he pushes forward, moving along the wall, in the direction of the altar and the honored guests. Once again his eyes are unremarkably black. Emotions are seething in you, too many to name or even clearly feel.

> If you want to unmask the man, turn to 304. If you want to stop him yourself, turn to 321. If you want to do nothing and simply observe, turn to 339.

342 Calderel looks over at Aonus appreciatively. "He was by your side the whole time. Without him, you wouldn't have returned. It is, after all, a very powerful curse. The Empire and you owe Aonus much."

If you want to know why it wasn't then Aonus who went on the mission, turn to 317. If you want to know the reason for the war between the Empire and the Alliance, turn to 333.





341 The wavering, black smoke thickens, becoming a giant figure whose somber aura displaces even that of the venerable master's. Two eyes like gleaning diamonds stare at you. It is a divine spirit, a Halret!

343 No sooner have you returned to your room than the door crashes open. "How dare you interrupt such an important meeting?" rages the high priest in a shrill voice. Utterly intimidated you dare not make a sound. "Now your existence is known to the council! Tomorrow the whole Empire will be babbling on about the reborn Child of Shadows."

You blush, unable to offer an excuse. Calderel ponders for a moment and then takes out a small wooden casket. Removing a small white sphere of stone, he commands agitatedly: "Open your mouth!"

Turn to B5!



344 With every moment longer you hesitate, the louder the whisper of incomprehension grows. Abashedly, you look towards the altar and see a trace of anger in Calderel's rigid gaze. Aonus pushes through the thronging guests. In deadly earnest he hisses into your ear." What is it, Child of Shadows? Have you lost your faith? Or should I be right in that you never had faith?" Aonus pauses to await your reaction, but in your inner turnult you cannot utter a single word. Then the giant adds, "TII make it easy for you." Berating you through the white strands of his hair, he continues, "Either you go to the altar and prove that you are worthy, or you won't leave this hall alive!"

Thereupon he demonstratively turns towards the guests and calls out: "Pardon us for this slight delay, but the Child of Shadows is simply somewhat nervous." Then, grabbing your arm, he pushes you roughly forward.

Turn to 341.





345 Arriving somewhat late at the education chamber, you are greeted by the amused looks on the light-skinned faces of your companions. Your neighbor Mirek especially, a young, ambitious Menokian with ginger hair, cannot suppress a broad grin. Tarus, the respected teacher, comments on your being late with his typical way of turning up his hooked nose at you. This luminary in nearly all fields of knowledge is personally responsible for your education. It is an honor, as you learn from the other recruits during one of the few breaks between lessons. Spurred on by their envy, you are even more determined to prove your skill.

In continuing your education, Tarus first concentrates on refreshing your awareness of the natural strengths and weaknesses of the Ugarith. From his personal collection he lends you a book entitled *The Nature of the Ugarith* while urging you to keep silent about it. And, in truth, during the next few nights the heavy tome reveals to you some of its secrets.

Even though the old human strives to keep the lessons varied and exciting, you are already acquainted with much of what he teaches you. You are not aware of when or where you have read the corresponding books, but often you grasp the meaning of sentences even before you finish reading them. You do not need the books to learn with, but rather in order to extract the knowledge buried in the depths of your mind. Thus, you learn at a speed that leaves your envious companions far behind.

Even at the end of a tiring twelve-hour night of lessons you take back to your room tomes and piles of parchment to sate your thirst for knowledge.

Which of the four remaining areas of knowledge are you most interested in?

Diplomacy? Turn to 309. Warfare? Turn to 329. Spellcraft? Turn to 318. History? Turn to 332.

CHAPTER 2 · THE MASTER OF SHADOWS

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

346 Since the last meeting of the council the situation has intensified. Calderel has not been seen for several nights, but frightened servants whisper that the final attack will soon take place. When Master Calderel calls you to his chambers the last night before full moon, you already have a dark premonition of things to come.

Turn to 331.

347 You have spent the hours before the ritual of consecration pondering and brooding. Boredom and tension make the time move unbearably slowly. Finally, there is a knock at your door. The seven young acolytes of the Order of Ugar present you with a robe. The ceremony begins!

Framed by servants of the god, you enter the magnificent Ningal Hall clad in the pitch-black robe of the Child of Shadows. All inhabitants of the Night Tower, from the highest Ugarith warrior to the lowliest slave, have come to the temple of Ugar to witness the ordination of the Child of Shadows.

Hundreds of spectators are crowded into the narrowest of spaces, but when the guests notice you at the entry portal, a lane soon opens up leading to the front of the temple with its impressive marble statue of the god of death.

Waiting before the oversized statue of an inky black man bearing a bull's head, stands Calderel. He is wearing the awe-inspiring robe of a priest, its black cloth embroidered in lunar symbols and glyphs of power. "Come, Child of Shadows, receive the blessing of Ugar!" he welcomes you effusively.

Murmuring spreads throughout the hall until a metal gong is sounded. Hesitantly, you approach the dark priest, who welcomes you at the altar, a massive square block of basalt.

If you are ready to receive the blessing of Ugar, turn to 341. If not, turn to 344.



This realization makes a shiver run down your back, for it means that the powerful high priest used you for his own goals by making you kill the holy leader of Kyphi.

How could I have done that? What horror have I brought upon myself? <

What do you want to do now? And you know, there is only one right decision.

If you want to act as if you're still on Calderel's side, turn to 320. If you want to confront him, turn to 305.

If you want to kill him when the opportunity arises, turn to 316.



349 With one mighty bound, you knock over the man, which sends you both sprawling into two servant girls. With a scream, they drop their serving plates. Easily, you manage to overpower the surprisingly weak man. Although you are holding him tight, he appears to be doing something beneath his cloak.

Irritated, you loosen your stranglehold just as the black eyes flicker golden again. "A month ago you killed my father," croaks



a female voice from your enemy's mouth. "Today Kar will judge you!" At that he closes his eyes and breathes his last words to you: "May my light extinguish..."

A moment later your bodies are torn apart in an explosion.

Your life ends here.

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350 Master Calderel is enraged at the amateurish safety precautions taken during the ceremony. The Empire was shaken to its core, but Ugar's priesthood survives! The Alliance tried to land its ultimate blow, but the assassination attempt initiated by the Templars of Kyphi was simply not precise enough.

A mere four hours later there is another meeting of the Empire's general staff. It takes only a few minutes to decide—all the forces allied with the Empire will mobilize for the final attack! In the very next night all the armed forces will be dispatched to raze to the ground Leenhaven, the Alliance's last coastal city.

Continue with CHAPTER 3: "BROTHERS IN ARMS".

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Have you found the FATE POINT (#5) in this chapter? If not, then you should continue your conversations with Master Calderel or pursue a different direction in your education!

RULES IV

EXTENDED COMBAT RULES

You should know the basic combat rules by now, after all, you have had to defeat several enemies just to get this far. Here, we introduce two new rules to describe time-based combat and fights against more than one enemy.

Round-Based Combat

Up until now, it has not mattered how much time passed during combats—you fought them to the bitter end.

From now on, however, the duration of combats can become a decisive factor. For example, the guard could get help after four COMBAT ROUNDS, or after six COMBAT ROUNDS. your opponent's endurance (his combat values) could decline due to exhaustion. Some fights can have surprises after several COMBAT ROUNDS.

If time is important, there always is an additional line "COMBAT ROUND U" with the number of rounds as circles.

STRONG	ATTACK	× 15
Exemplary Fighter	DEFENSE	• 16
		• O@
	COMBAT ROUND	0000

Before you roll the dice, cross off the left circle. Follow combat procedure as usual (see page 59). If the combat continues into the next round, cross off the second circle, and so on.

If you have crossed off a circle with a number (④ here), that is an indication that something will happen in this round. What exactly is described in the text found at that section number.

The small dots (...) after the last circle show that the fight has no further round limit, so it is fought to the bitter end.

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Combats against several enemies

When the stakes are life or death, there is no place for fair play. From now on you can count on being outnumbered at times! Now the following tougher combat rules apply.

EXEMPLARY GROUP	ATTACK	N	9	+1	+1	+1	
(3 ENEMIES)	DEFENSE		7	+1	+1	+1	
	RESISTANCE		00	03	003	00	

Three enemies attack you at once. Two have a RESISTANCE of 3 each, the third has RESISTANCE 2.

All three of them have an ATTACK of 12 (9 + 1 + 1 + 1) and a DEFENSE of 10 (7 + 1 + 1 + 1).

In each COMBAT ROUND you must choose which enemy you want to attack, for you have only one ATTACK per round.

If you defeat an enemy (by crossing off all his RESISTANCE circles) the remaining two have ATTACK 11 and DEFENSE 9. This is because one of the +1's has been removed. If you defeat two of your enemies, the surviving foe loses both +1's and noto has ATTACK 10 and DEFENSE 8.

Important: As usual, you roll the dice only once per COMBAT ROUND for your enemies. Thus, you can also be hit only once per round.

Changing Weapons

If you want to change your active weapon during combat, you may do so only by forgoing your ATTACK. You will still suffer your opponent's attack in return, however.

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CHAPTER 3

BROTHERS IN ARMS

Your VITALITY rises two levels, but not above normal. Fill in the Save Points on your adventure sheet.

The renewal of your suppressed knowledge and your incarnation as Shadow Child give you your first divine favor: 2 points of KARMA. Write them down on your adventure sheet.

"The path of war is stony and treacherous. Only the one who recognizes resistance both open and hidden and can distinguish friend from foe will be able to follow it safely."

- THE ORACLE OF KABETH

351 You are lying on your bed, leafing impatiently through a book. For hours now, the noises from cleaning work going on outside can be heard in your room. You simply cannot concentrate.

The anointment as religious savior and hope of the Ugarith would be enough reason for an identity crisis. Then there is the Alliance assassination attempt that you barely escaped. And finally, you will be a part of the Empire's invasion army tomorrow! > Will my new life come to an end before it has even started? <

Lost in thought, you massage the back of your left hand to ease the burning pain of the scar. These surges of agony have only grown stronger since yesterday. But you're worried about something else, namely the statement Calderel made when you last met him.

"Through the star stone's ordination you are able to exist in the

light of day. You're our strongest weapon now! None in the Alliance will guess that you are among them when Kar is in the sky!" If you have the ability History Knowledge, turn to 511 If not, turn to 519.

352 With ease you manage to defeat the two weak soldiers. Skillfully dodging the first blow, you grab the man by his sword arm and hurl him at his companion. Before the two understand what is happening, you have already run into a dark side street. Turn to 403



353 Surprised, the magician extends his trembling, slender hands towards the fig, sniffing it incredulously and then swallowing it in one bite. With relish, he licks his pointed mouth with his narrow, forked tongue. The change of color in his face finally stops at a vibrant forest green.

Remove the Fig from Rohja from your adventure sheet!

He thanks you gushingly. But then he pauses. The sign of the sun on your claw interests him as much as the scars on the back of your left hand. "You wear," the Zarlik begins haltingly, "a sssign! An magic ssseal!"



Without really knowing what the lizard mage means, you shrug. "Shall I break it?" the Zarlik asks. "After all, you've also helped me."

If you want to let the Zarlik do what he wants, turn to 425. If you do not want him to break the magical seal, turn to 514.

354 "Take a look around," the merchant says cordially, showing you his display. After some thought, you find that the following items look interesting or helpful:

Sword (Weapon, Hit Bonus +3)

Dagger (Weapon, Hit Bonus +1) Tobacco from Kuphi (Utensil)

Blanket (Utensil)

· Bone Flute (Utensil)

· Repair Kit (Utensil)

Bandages (Utensil, heals a level of VITALITY but only up to normal, cannot be used in combat!)

In addition, he shows you a morning star hidden under the counter: Morning Star (Weapon, Hit Bonus +3; Special: causes a penalty of 2 points of RESISTANCE when fighting against more than one enemy; the damage has to be dealt among two enemies)

You can take whatever you want from among the items offered. Make the necessary changes on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 412

355 After barely a minute the leader becomes impatient and looks over the shoulder of the one picking the lock. The mechanism clicks and the man with the lock-pick bows jokingly, presenting the door as it swings open.

> If you have the Pearl of Understanding, turn to 533. If not, turn to 437.

356 The defeat of the fleet is terrible for the Empire, but with the current tactical situation it will not prevent the Empire's ultimate victory, only delay it for a short while.

You know little about Veniz, your next goal. Even though there are only a few people living in the southerm-most settlement occupied by the Empire, it is of utmost strategic importance. A huge dam is situated there, at whose base begins a channel almost 50 miles long ending in the bay of Kanderhagen. The Empire uses it to cut off almost completely the flow of drinking water to the coastal metropolis.

One needn't be a military strategist to realize that Veniz would be one of their first goals should the Alliance plan a counter attack. That's the only way they can ensure continuing supply lines reach Leenhaven.

Turn to 468

186

187

357 The battle is raging, making it increasingly difficult to contain the superior force. Then the door to one of the cabins opens on the opposite side of the ship; with halting steps, the ship's mage staggers on deck.

Although the scaly face of the Zarlik is pulsating in all the colors of the rainbow, with his scrawny arms he begins to draw strange figures in the air. You sense the excitement among the men of the Nargus. They all know that a single successful spell by the lizard could turn the tide.

Then you see a single Menokian with a drenched vest of fur climbing on board through the railing. You shout a warning to the Zarlik, but the wizard is so focused that he only realizes what is happening as the Menokian's cutlass pierces his chest.

Triumphant, the warrior plants his foot on the dead Zarlik and sends an impassioned cry out to sea. His companions answer the battle cry with an infernal echo.

Without magic, the situation seems hopeless.

If you want to attack the enemies by the port side, turn to 453. If you prefer battling to starboard, turn to 540. 358 You know that you will have to distract the workers if you want to manipulate the mechanism. For that reason, using strong blows against the wall, you lure the men over to the unconscious spies. When the workers see their motionless bodies and hurry away to get help, you have already hidden in the shadows of the door.

Turn to 457.

359 Slowly the young woman turns around. With her rigid stare it almost seems as if she wants to pierce the walls of the surrounding houses. Even though you can barely see her face, you are sure that you have never before encountered the woman. Then she stares in your direction, pauses and takes a few slow steps towards your hiding place.

"Come forward," she whispers. "Let me help you."

If you want to attack the strange woman, turn to 409. If you want to carefully step forward and ask her for an explanation, turn to 423.

360 While the fifty mile channel is a monumental example of immense physical effort, the dam itself is an example of truly impressive architecture. Spanning nearly three hundred feet, the dam curves into the reservoir. On the side turned away from the lake, it drops down almost vertically with the channel winding freely at its base. You have come here alongside the channel, southwest, in the direction of Leenhaven.

A soldier of the Empire, noticing your curious gaze from his post on the dam, slowly approaches you.

If you want to wait to learn what the soldier wants, turn to 431. If you want to turn back and wait for a better moment to take a look around on the dam. turn to 534.

If you want to return to the channel and hide there, turn to 404.



361 The wheel spins again. At the table everybody hopes for their number. Then there is an unexpected squeaking and groaming, followed by a soft cursing under the table. Suddenly the wooden disc stops with a lurch.

"Something's not right here," one the Gartaks growls. An old female mercenary checks beneath the table before shouting, "Cheaters! The table is a fraud. I want my money back!"

As if on cue all the people standing around the table snatch up their bets. Thanks to your lightning reflexes you are the first to have your hands on the money. Randomly, you grab the coins. In addition to your own bet, you have unintentionally picked up some more. You are about to ask who the rightful owner is, but the inevitable brawl has already begun.

If you do not want to put back the extra money but keep it, pick a random number with the base die. If your DEXTERTY is 7 or higher, add 3. The result is the number of additional coins in your hand. Write down your new wealth on the adventure sheet.

Turn to 405.



362 Damaged by the smashed wreck of the Menokian ship but still seaworthy, the Nargus heads towards Leenhaven. It is flanked by four frigates that were able to catch up to the admiral's ship.

The Menokian ambush has foiled the Empire's attack plan. Only the Zarlik's successful magic attack prevented the destruction of the entire fleet.





Admiral Grobrig appears to be more resolved than ever to implement the war council's orders. He spurs on the remaining combat-ready sailors to prepare to attack the harbor. There is still a long way to go.

Almost an hour passes before you see the hazy silhouette of Leenhaven rising out of the coastal mist. Dark smoke hangs above the former pearl of the Bay of Kanderhagen. Fires are raging throughout the city.

Have the Empire's ground troops started their attack from the mainland?

If you have the ability Sharpened Senses, turn to 365. If not, turn to 447.

363 You wade hastily through the ankle-deep water. The three crates stand undamaged in the furthest corner of the hold. Cautiously, you place your hand on the dark wood, sticky with tar, and feel an ominous vibration. Clearly, within the crate there is a powerful creature.

If you want to open the box, turn to 482. If you want to leave the hold, turn to 378.

364 With implied kisses to the cheek the four spies say their goodbyes. As the scrawny pair of locksmiths slip away into the dam, the two brawny Southerners withdraw over the palisade of the city wall. At the same time their leader keeps looking over his shoulder in your direction, as if sensing that his companions are being watched.

Once the two fighters are out of sight, you dare to sneak over to the door. You listen carefully, but besides a muffled rumbling filling the entire wall, there's nothing. Resolutely, you pull open the door and slip through.

Turn to 387.

Canada and

365 Despite the dark smoke lying over the city and its harbor, you are able to collect some disturbing tactical information: In the harbor itself a few unimportant merchant ships are moored, but some two hundred feet away from the city walls, which extend into the shallow sea, there are at least three warships—an almost insurmountable obstacle for the damaged Nargus.

Turn to 447.

366 You do not know how long you have been unconscious. You feel wretched. Your head is pounding. But apparently somebody has washed your clothes and cleaned your wounds.

Your VITALITY rises one level, but not above normal.

You are seated at a simple table with four chairs in a small room illuminated by a rusty oil lamp. The air has an earthy smell. Sea charts of the bay and sketches of the city and surroundings are hanging on the walls.

"Woken up, have you?" growls a sturdy-looking man who is guarding the only door of the room.

Turn to 500.

367 With supple grace you sneak through the half-shade of the dam palisade, skillfully evading the few patrolling guards until you arrive at where you saw the suspicious figures—a windowless stone building set at the middle of the dam.



You press your ear against the cool metal, but you can hear nothing except for a strange whooshing sound. Cautiously, you push back the latch.

Turn to 387.

368 The smell of smoke and blood is in the air. The coast is engulfed by black smoke. A sea of flame over the water and across Leenhaven illuminates the night sky in an ominous, blood red haze.

Aflame, both fleets drift into the bay. The battle of the ground troops before the city gates appears to be raging still. Occasionally, the shifting wind carries the cries of battle and the din of war machines towards you.

With muscles trembling from the effort, you manage to stand up. Just as you do, a giant shadow suddenly tears across the sky above you. So quickly does it move that it swallows up all the smoke surrounding you in its wake!

Shaken, you stare after the monster until it disappears over the harbor. Then a bright lance of fire slices through the darkness, consuming the many roofs of warehouses and trading houses. A moment later, the buildings burn like kindling in a furnace.

A dragon! The Empire is starting its air attack ... «

In fascination you stare at the inferno and admire the power of the flames.

> Such a sight! «

You realize that this battle will influence the outcome of the war. You gather your courage and run towards the shouts of battle. Under the cover of night, you easily manage to evade guards and barriers. Sometimes only an arm's length separates you from the soldiers as you sneak right past them in the shadows.





The air at the waterfront is filled with heat and smoke. You have trouble breathing, and your heart almost stops as you stumble over something. At first you took the charred heap at your feet to be burnt wood, but now you see that it is a human's remains. > Both sides, Alliance and Empire, will suffer heavy losses in this battle. < You concentrate on not looking into the flames and moving quickly. Crouched over, you run further into the city. The closer you come to the inner city, the more death and destruction you have to confront. Everywhere people are screaming, roof timbers shattering. The heart of Leenhaven has become an inferno.

If you have the ability Free Breath or Immunity to Heat, turn to 548. If you have none of both, turn to 495.

369 The old woman's description leads you directly to the Wain Alley. Quickly, without drawing too much attention to yourself, you run up the dirty street towards a house on whose door a splendid brass plate reads *Tobacco Specialties – Owner K. Reensen.*

No light can be seen through the cracks of the closed shutters. Curious, you push down the door handle.

As the heavy door swings open, a soft chime sounds. But in the cramped, gloomy room you see nobody who could react to this signal. Not even behind the counter is there a trader to be seen. You walk into the shop and quietly close the door.

The aromas of tobacco, precious woods and foreign alcohols waft over the shelves and showcases. As you look around the shop and admire the collection of curios from all over the world, you get the feeling that you are being watched. Someone is hiding behind the fur curtain!

> If you want to leave the shop at once, turn to 488. If you want to wait, turn to 478.

If you want to sneak up on whoever it is and attack him, turn to 469.







368 Then a bright lance of fire slices through the darkness, consuming the many roofs of warehouses and trading houses. A moment later, the buildings burn like kindling in a furnace.

370 With a curt nod you turn away from the old townswoman. She watches you leave, her gaze lingering after you for a while. Turning into an open street, you catch sight of one of the well-fortified barricades. Two soldiers have discovered you, their eyes wide with surprise.

> If you want to flee, turn to 403 If you want to greet the two soldiers, turn to 426

371 You don't know exactly what the strange woman is doing, but you're sure that she is casting a spell. At the moment she has her back turned to you.

If you want to attack the unknown woman, turn to 409 If you want to wait and do nothing, turn to 359

372 Far off you hear voices talking agitatedly. You do not know where you are. Your eyelids feel gummy and you have trouble opening them. When at last you do, you see the faces of the admiral and his sailors framed by the bright sumlight.

"By all that is holy, how is that possible?"

Unbelieving murmurs run among the crew as you slowly sit up. You are sitting on the deck of the ravaged Nargus, beside you the soaked and torn replacement sail you were caught in.

"What are you staring at?" Grobrig grumbles to the crowd, but he cannot hide his joy at your survival.

"It's such an honor to have you on board..." he whispers as he pulls you up. "Shadow Child."

Turn to 443.

373 Hastily you pour the alcohol down the throat of the motionless old woman, past her rotten teeth.

Remove the Bottle of Brandy or the Bottle of Plum Wine from your adventure sheet, depending on what you are using! If you want to keep the empty bottle, write it down as Bronze Bottle (Utensil) instead.



3



You have almost given up your hope that the booze will have some effect, when the old woman suddenly sits straight up in your arms. The alcohol works! A shiver runs down your back as the addresses you with wide open eyes and a firm voice. "Keşra, you do well to stand by the side of the innocents."

You realize that the words issue from the old woman's mouth, but they are not from her mind. "Rise up. See! Break through the appearance of difference. We are one. You are all."

Utterly confused, you lay the old woman down on the cellar steps, where she now slumbers peacefully once more. Without really knowing what you are doing, you first run past some houses and then crawl behind a pile of rubbish to hide. It is almost impossible to comprehend, but again divine wisdom has spoken to you. As helpless as a frightened pup, you cower on the ground and hide your face in your hands.

Turn to 529.

8



374 Somewhat off the routes of the guards, you undress and quietly slip into the cold water of the harbor basin. The stench of garbage and musty seaweed torments your nose as you glide with smooth strokes towards the Nargus.

You are just forty feet away from the warship's imposing hull when directly in front of you one of the guards shouts from one of the longboats: "Hey, there's something in the water!" That is your cue to dive immediately.

If you have the ability Free Breath, turn to 428. If you do not have the ability or do not want to use it now, turn to 421.

375 After taking your first few breaths on the open street, you realize how bad the air in the tavern was. You look up at the bright stars, enjoying the cool breeze, when you hear the sound of an animal – the call of a velvet owl.

> Strange, a velvet owl so far North? «

If you want to draw your weapon, turn to 408 If you want to run and return to the Mexez as quickly as possible, turn to 461

196

376 You concentrate on the flags waving on the massive ship and with your keen eyes recognize the fallen star on blood-red field. The Menokians! It takes you only a moment to realize that you are witnessing high treason against the Empire. The Northern folk have defected and are now battling side by side with the fleet of Leenhaven!

If you want to inform the admiral of your discovery, turn to 432. If you want keep your knowledge to yourself, turn to 467.



377 While all the other ships appear to roll gently with the waves in the harbor basin of Port Baylock, the great Nargus appears to rest, majestic and motionless, in itself. Quiet and steady, it anchors at the largest pier.

As you come closer, you see light coming from the wardroom beneath the bridge despite the late hour. You perceive some movement and voices behind the portholes.



The Admiral appears to be having a discussion of the situation with his officers the night before the big battle. At least a dozen sailors are on guard to make sure that nothing happens to the Empire's flagship. There are even a pair of well-armed longboats in the water guarding the Nargus against attacks from the water. If you want to sneak closer and

attempt to overhear the conversation, turn to 381. If you want to get close enough by approaching the Nargus from the water, turn to 374.

If you want to address the guards and ask to be introduced to the Admiral as a new crew member on the Nargus, turn to 418.

378 On the deck of the heavily damaged flagship of the Empire, a brutal life-or-death battle is raging. You fight like a lion while still trying not to mortally wound your enemies. Instead, you incapacitate them or throw them overboard whenever you can. As another ice warrior drops to the deck, you have some time to collect yourself: Your eyes wander to the three ships moored to each other. Blood is everywhere; the dead and dying litter their decks.

This pointless battle has to end! «

Then you sight the Menokian captain standing with legs apart and arms folded on the bridge. An arrogant grin appears above his matted beard as he returns your look. Though he likely knows who and what you are, you sense no fear in him at all. If you want to break the Menokians' fighting spirit and end this battle, you will have to defeat him in a duel!

Turn to C30!

379 You awaken from a short, restful slumber. A sweet taste fills your mouth. You realize at once that your helper has fed you the holy fig Calderel gave you when you left the Ningal Tower. You remove the boards that have randomly been piled on you.

198

You can't find any trace of the Ugarith who hid you beneath them. Quickly you get up and silently thank your unknown savior. Then you run further into the city.

Remove the Fig from Rohja from your adventure sheet! Your VITALITY rises to fit!

Turn to **446**.

380 Before you are in the enemy's reach, you have escaped through the hatch into the ship's protective interior. The Menokians' battle cries grow louder. Soon, they drown out the rush of the sea and the creaking of the ship.

You hear the slowing metallic click of large rope winches being strained to the limit. As the Zarlik unexpectedly steps out of his cabin and staggers hunched over to the hatch, you instinctively look for a hiding place between provisions and tools. In the pit of your stomach you have a sudden premonition of impending danger, but it may come too late to save you!

There is a deafening bang all around you. The hull's planks shatter as massive iron cannonballs slam into the ship! Decide your destiny based on the moon!

> If it's New Moon to Crescent Moon, turn to 430. If it's Half Moon to Full Moon, turn to 531.

381 You creep up to the Nargus. Unfortunately, on the pier there is only little cover that you can use in order to get closer. Nevertheless, determined to listen to the officers' conversations, you press on.

Test your DEXTERITY against 13!

If you're successful, turn to **428**. If you fail, turn to **490**.

382 Somewhat annoyed by the old crone's greedy behavior, you walk towards her, put your hand in your coat and get out





your purse. Unfortunately, you expose your black Empire uniform for a moment. Suddenly the old woman turns white. Paralyzed with fright, she faints, dropping the box and scattering potatoes down the steps.

You just manage to save the unconscious woman from collapsing onto the cobblestones at your feet.

Do you have a **Bottle of Brandy** or a **Bottle of Plum Wine** and do you want to pour some it down the old woman's throat?

If so, turn to 373. If not, turn to 448.

3



383 Determined to save the child, you dash up the crooked stairs to the attic. All hell has broken loose here. Even your superhuman Ugarith strength will not protect you for long from the scorching heat and lack of air. Desperately, you kick open one door after another, but without success: You cannot find the child. The creaking and crackling of the unstable timberwork grows louder and louder, and when the first beams smash through the floor close to you, you are forced to save yourself with a jump onto the roof of a lower adjoining house.

At a safe distance you watch from the courtyard as the house collapses. The mother's desperate cries can be heard above the din. Full of shame, you dare not let her catch sight of you. Instead, you swallow your grief and run away from this terrible place. \mathfrak{D}

Your RAGE rises by one level!

Write down the number of this Section 383 in the box next to the RAGE Scale on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 446.

384 Driven by the desire to leave Leenhaven behind as quickly as possible, you run without pausing through the narrow secret passage. It has been carved out so low in places that you sometimes have to crawl on all fours just to press on.

It feels like half an eternity has passed when you notice strange rounded piles of earth on the floor beneath your hands. The walls here are not as smooth as they were only a few spaces ago. Carefully, you continue to feel your way, running your fingers against the walls, until you unexpectedly come to a fork in the passage

If you want to enter the left passage with its smooth,

rounded corners, turn to 484

If you want to go right and enter the rough-hewn passage, turn to 523.

385 "I must ask you to leave my shop. Or do you want to buy something?" the shopkeeper asks you hesitatingly. You decide that it would make sense to equip yourself anew and ask the shopkeeper to lead you around. He does not appear to trust you but he does as bid, watching all of your movements suspiciously. The following items are of interest to you:

· Sword (Weapon, Hit Bonus +3), 12 Dinars

· Dagger (Weapon, Hit Bonus +1), 7 Dinars

· Blanket (Utensil), 1 Dinar

· Bone Flute (Utensil), 4 Dinars

· Tobacco from Kyphi (Utensil), 5 Dinars

· Repair Kit (Utensil), 2 Dinars

Bandages (Utensil, heals a level of VITALITY but only up to normal, cannot be used in combat!), 3 Dinars

You can also sell items you own. Each Utensil on your adventure sheet you sell is worth 3 Dinars. Special Items cannot be sold!

Make the necessary changes on your adventure sheet.

After your purchases you say a short goodbye and leave the shop. Turn to 488.



Before you, you see a reptilian creature in purple combat garb lying in a cabin stuffed with strange alchemistic gear. The smell of yomit wafts from the leather bucket beneath his hammock.

You see bright colors pulsating on the Zarlik's face and arms—a clear sign of seasickness. You barely manage to suppress your amusement at the wild play of colors.

"What issss it you want?" the Zarlik groans in annoyance. Propelled by the motion of the sea, a drinking bottle rolls over to your feet.

If you want to pick up the bottle and give it to the Zarlik, turn to 414. If you want to say goodbye, turn to 535.



387 Nimbly, you slip through the door and out of the bright midday sun into the dam's darkness. Seconds pass before your eyes become accustomed to the darkness. At first you hear only muffled sounds beneath you, just as if a blacksmith was hammering iron far away. You are standing on a rusty grate, a small platform of metal struts on the dam wall faced away from the sea with a ladder leading down from here.







CHAPTER 3 · BROTHERS IN ARMS

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

The wet haze reeks of foul water and rotting creatures. A slimy carpet of algae has settled on everything inside the dam. The same goes for the metal rungs of the ladder bolted to the wall leading to another platform further below. Careful not to make any suspicious sounds, you climb down.

While descending, you see a high water gate made of black metal shimmering in the dim light at the foot of the dam. It obviously regulates the water in the reservoir. At the moment there is only a small trickle coming from the funnel-shaped drain channel.

From the second platform a narrow bridge extends, about 30 feet into the void between the dam walls. There, a mighty black iron chain hangs from the ceiling to the bottom of the dam. It has to be at least 150 feet long! At its end dangles a gigantic, pointed plummet.

Fascinated, your eyes follow the fist-sized links of the chain up to the ceiling. There, the other end is held by a huge deflection pulley and then led downward again. At the chain's short end, which stops just below the entry platform, you see the plummet's counterweight, a huge black iron cylinder.

This construction is as breath-taking as it is strange. The whole water system reminds you of a huge grandfather clock.

You step out onto the shining bridge to take a closer look at the plummet when you notice a metal chest sitting in a dark corner of the platform nearby.

> If you want to examine the chest, turn to 449 If you want to climb down the ladder to reach the next platform beneath you, turn to 504

If you want to walk across the bridge to examine the chain, turn to 541.

388 Determined to finally risk the few steps leading to the hatch and the safety of the ship's hull, you stagger on. Suddenly, however, another wave crashes down over you. Under its force your legs buckle and you are washed across the entire deck.



Helpless, you try to hold on to something, anything! At the last moment you manage to grab a piece of the replacement sail. Carried by the force of the wave, you tear it out of the box where it was sloppily stored as you fly over the rail, tangled up in linen and rope. Surrounded by water, you try to free yourself from this occorn as quickly as you can, but the more you struggle, the tighter your prison of cloth becomes.

If you have the ability Free Breath, turn to 458. If not, turn to 456.



389 Careful to make no noise, you approach the two spies still watching the workers intently. They have not noticed you. Not until you slowly stand up behind them, does the smaller one turn around and stare at you. Before he can act, you have grabbed his jaw and stunned him with a head butt. Two seconds and a forceful punch later, his companion drops to the floor as well. A fist-sized ball rolls from the larger spy's hand across the floor. It looks familiar to you. It is a blasting cap like the ones you have seen on the Mexez, only heavier. You are relieved to see that the firing pin for the explosive is still in the spy's bag. If you want to take the Heavy Bomb (Utensil), write it down your adjointure sheet. In addition, you find 7 Dinars (Money).

If you have played Tarah's Chapter, please check the box at "A" of the Path of Wisdom section on the third page of the adventure sheet. Maybe you get a clue there what to do here.

CHAPTER 3 · BROTHERS IN ARMS

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

Now it is your turn to sabotage the dam. You can either blow up the sluice channel or destroy only its mechanism.

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If you want to cause an explosion, turn to 497. If you want to ruin the mechanism, turn to 450. Please cross off the circle next to section number 389 to note that you've read this section.

390 Fascinated, you admire the red of the clouds on the horizon and watch them from the protection of your hiding place. Already you feel the divine might of the disc of Kar, even though it has not yet shown its face.

It is then that the first rays of light pierce the morning mist, shining on your face. You flinch out of instinct, but before you can protect yourself, a blissful warmth suffuses your skin.

You close your eyes-what a feeling! A torrent of light washes over you. All your worries and fears dissolve, leaving sheer wonder.

> The power of Kar ... so ... beautiful. «

You bask in emotion as you watch the sun rise, climbing like a flaming promise. You are startled when you realize that some of the sailors are staring at you with envy and irritation. They cannot believe that an Ugarith can resist the mighty Kar. Without a word, you retreat below deck to escape their suspicious scrutiny. Your STRENCTH rises by a point!

Turn to 396.

391 Relieved to finally get rid of the lethal bomb, you hurl the ball in a high arc at the Vandagaal. At first, it jumps with dull huds two or three times onto the deck's planks; then it rolls between a few crates and disappears out of sight.

Seconds pass agonizingly slowly, but then there is a bright flash followed by a shockwave of fire and splintered wood that rages across the entire ship.



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Only when the smoke parts do you realize how much has been destroyed: The explosion has ravaged half of the deck and torn he lower sails asunder. Many sailors with burning hair and dothes are hurling themselves into the sea. The Vandagaal is completely disabled; she is dead in the water.

Then you see the captain of the Menokian flagship emerge from the burning remains of the bridge. You feel that the end of the battle is within reach.

You receive 2 points of KARMA for rescuing the Nargus.

Turn to C30!

392 Your dash makes your fisherman's coat billow open for a moment, revealing the uniform of the Empire. But the alert oldiers must have been expecting something like this. They draw their nicked swords from their scabbards.

"Surrender, Imperial pig!" demands one of the men harshly. Meanwhile, his companion has positioned himself at your flank to make an escape impossible.

"Look at those claws!" he shouts to one of his companions who appears completely taken aback by the presence of an Ugarith walking through Leenhaven in the middle of the day.

With a reassuring motion of your arms you allow the guards to imagine they are safe. Casually stepping to the side, you suddenly take down the first soldier with a spinning kick. Stunned, he mashes against the wall of the building, but his companion uses this opportunity to attack you with his spear.

SOLDIER OF LEENHAVEN ATTACK

Defense	1 4
RESISTANCE	9 02
COMBAT ROUND	00030

N 13

If you win in the first three COMBAT ROUNDS, turn to 473 at once. If the combat goes into its fourth round, turn to 460 at once.

If you have played Tarah's Chapter, please check the box at "B" of the Path of Wisdom section on the third page of the adventure sheet. Maybe you get a clue there what to do here.

393 The dam's guards are on full alert, and you can see that they have already positioned themselves at the top of the dam in order to hold you off. You have no other choice but to fight them. Just as you are about to charge them, you hear a familiar voice behind you, "Where are you going, Shadow Child?"

> Oh no, Aonus! «

Turning around slowly, you discover the large Ugarith sitting cross-legged and fully armored on the tiles from a stone building behind you. It looks like as if the warrior has been waiting for you all this time.

» How did he know I was here? «

Aonus' eyes are alight with hatred as he takes off his helmet: "How much I have longed for this moment..." With relish he opens the protective strap of his rune-covered scabbard and draws his broad sword, the legendary Shadow Reaper.

Before you can react, the Ugarith master leaps from the roof in a single bound, rolls over elegantly, and plants himself only a few steps away from you. His splendid dark armor shimmers in ominous hues of black and blue.

A fateful battle has begun, one you cannot escape.

Turn to C42!



394 Bravely you jump to your feet, dodge rolling barrels and, with a skillful swing, hit the rope at the very eye of the harpoon. Sparks scatter, but the silvery mesh does not give an inch. The only evidence of your unsuccessful attempt is a large nick in your weapon. Before the next bolts pierce the hull wall, you roll back into cover.



:: •

Your weapon is severely damaged and loses a point of its Hit Bonus! If your weapon only had a single point, it is now destroyed and you have to leave it behind. Make the necessary changes on your adventure sheet. Turn to 487.

395 You can feel that the child is still alive. But paralyzed by (ear and pain, it cannot run away. Before your inner eye you see a fireplace or an oven, enveloped in an inferno of fire and smoke. Beside it, in the smoky shadows, cowers a crying boy.

If you want to rush into the burning building to help the child, turn to 532.

If you want to take no risk and leave this place, turn to 446.

396 The next few days on the Mexez pass in a flash. You've become used to the sunlight and have found your place within the crew. But no matter whom you assist, the strain with regard to the coming battle can be read in every man's face.

Exhausted from the arduous work, you lie down in the swinging hammock in your cabin, a luxury only few on board can enjoy. Weariness has almost overpowered you when suddenly somebody begins hammering on your door. "Hey, you, Ugar fighter, the captain wants to see you," growls a sailor through the thin partition. "Now!"

Half asleep, you pull yourself together and walk through the hold toward the stern and Towak's quarters. He appears to be talking to somebody, but because of the groaning wood you catch only a few snippets. You knock to report as commanded.

Captain Towak asks you to come in and points to a huge table bolted to the floor and covered with maps and nautical instruments. "Sit. The Shadow Master wants to talk to you."

He taps on a fist-sized, white crystal resting in a richly decorated box on the table whereupon a ghostly image of Calderel flickers to life. You might almost believe that the awe-inspiring Envoy of

.

Ugar is standing right in front of you, except that the vision is only as small as a child and is streaked with a shimmering, purple-black mist.

"Towak." The hoarse voice of the Shadow Master speaks as if through a length of hollow pipe. "Leave us alone!" Submissively, the captain leaves the cabin.

"My child", Calderel opens the conversation, worry in his voice "Our scouts have reported that there's a delegation from Kyphi hiding in Leenhaven." The priest of Ugar has a strong suspicion that this small troupe of priests and warriors organized the attack on the Ningal Tower.

"You've already proven that you can move skillfully through enemy territory. So it is to you that the following task is given: Find and eliminate these thugs of Kar!"

Abruptly, the connection breaks off. The ancient face of the priest has barely disappeared when the captain enters the room with a fist-sized iron ball. Holding it almost under your nose, he says. "This alchemical bomb will simplify your mission. It will reduce to rubble everything within thirty feet."

Looking serious, Towak removes from his uniform a detonating pin of graphite and steel: "When you insert this pin into the ball, you have maybe two minutes left to get to safety..." With exaggerated gestures the old sea dog imitates an explosion.

Whether you do or not, the conversation is over. You excuse yourself and leave the captain's quarters.

If you want to take the Bomb (Utensil), write it down your adventure sheet.

Turn to 416.

397 The female warrior laughs aloud at your clumsy attack and sends you flying back into the flooded hold with a hefty kick to your chin. Stunned, you try to get up, only to find yourself



You battle for your life with all your might, but in the end, the beast rips out your throat.

Your life ends here.



398 The bumpy ride is blessedly short. At last you hear the cart being moved away from the street and into a large hall. Hinges are creaking, planks groaning. Someone pulls you onto your feet again and leads you—still with the sack over your head—down several stairs through musty, subterranean pasages. You have no idea where you are when an unknown man with a dirty face removes the sack.

You find yourself in a small room illuminated only by a rusty lantern. In its center stands a simple table with four chairs placed around it. Sea charts of the bay and sketches of the city and its surroundings are hanging on the walls.

"Sit down," the man commands brusquely before skillfully caring for your wounds.

Then wordlessly he leaves the room.

Your VITALITY rises by two levels, but not more than normal.

Turn to 500.



399 "Of course I know," croaks the shaking crone. "Not far from here!" There is a longish pause before she then adds cunningly, "But it's not that easy—especially if you shouldn't be in the streets at all. Such knowledge is, I would think, quite valuable... yes?" Then she makes a show of turning away as if intending to return to her cellar.

If you have money and want to give her some Dinars to learn where the tobacco shop is, turn to 382. If you have a **Bottle of Brandy** or a **Bottle of Plum Wine** and want to offer it to the woman, turn to 442. If you cannot or will not bribe this woman. leave again by turning to 370.

400 The light from the oil lantern is reflected in the large puddles of water formed by condensation at the base of the dam. All around the puddles, numerous fresh footprints can be seen going in every direction. Right in front of you, the man-sized plummet dangles only inches over the floor. It swings gently, as if touched by an invisible hand.

Beneath the tip of the iron cone a scale cut into the stone indicates the water load of the dam. As far as you can tell, the pressure has reached a critical stage.

Again you hear the erratic, penetrating hammering that you noticed at the entrance. Now it is so loud it is deafening. The mechanic appears to be doing some very hard work at the center of the dam.

You would like to take a look around there, but it would be unwise to go openly around the dam as long as you do not know where the spies are. An inner voice tells you that they are also interested in the water gate, so you hide where you have a good view.

Your instincts have not deceived you. In a dark corner, only steps away from the water gate, you see two slender silhouettes.



... N



400 In a dark corner, only steps away from the water gate, you see two slender silhouettes. Doubtless they are the spies you have already seen on the palisade at the crest of the dam.
212

Doubtless they are the spies you have already seen on the palisade at the crest of the dam.

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If you want to attack the spies, turn to 389. If you want to wait and see what the spies will do, turn to 455.

401 One command is needed to gather the entire crew onto the Nargus' deck. A moment later the first enemy ships are brought alongside, and you can see their crews' faces. Many men, armed to the teeth, are waiting to destroy the Nargus and the rest of the Empire's fleet. You prepare for a bloody battle.

If you have found FATE POINT #6, turn to 538. If not, turn to 357

402 With renewed strength and courage you immediately leave the fishing-boat and move as stealthily as possible through the shabby alleys of the harbor district. There are only few ordinary people about. Many windows and doors are boarded up. The army has also constructed numerous roadblocks from debris and wood to close off the streets with the greatest strategical importance. These are intended to impede the Imperial troops when they attack.

The only people you see on the streets are patrolling soldiers. Their uniforms and bodies are battered, but there's optimism in their eyes. Naturally, the news of the victory against the Empire's fleet has spread like wildfire. This is no time for celebrating the victory at sea, however. They know the dangers that threaten them on land and from the air.

You hear the town's glockenspiel chiming the third hour of midday as the sound is carried by the wind from the distant market square. The battle for Leenhaven should already have commenced by now.

> Has the Empire drawn back its ground troops after the defeat of the fleet? They're surely waiting until nightfall. «



...

You feel a deceptive calm lying over the city.

If you want to try to leave the harbor district by going down the narrow side alleys, turn to 510. If you want to try it more openly, using the broad main road, turn to 518.

403 Behind you, the angry shouts of the soldiers and the reinforcements who hurried to their aid slowly fade away as you hide in a squalid, trash-strewn back courtyard. Unfortunately, you have lost your way. Before daring to leave your hiding place again, you decide to wait until your pursuers' calls have died away completely. But then you hear slow steps coming from the archway through which you've entered the courtyard.

You press your body into the shadow of the exterior wall and peer toward your only access to the street. A young human woman steps out of the archway's shadow. Her delicate body and head are covered in a dark, unadorned hooded cloak. Cautiously, the unknown woman strides to the middle of the yard and looks around intently.

If you have the ability Magical Lore, turn to 371. Otherwise you can wait, turn to 359. Or if you want to attack the woman, turn to 409.

404 From a hiding place at the edge of the channel and from a safe distance, you survey the imposing dam with its many protective towers and guard houses. You become aware of a suspiclous movement along the walkway on the crest of the dam. You are not quite sure, but it could be a small group of humans.

If you have the ability of Sharpened Senses and want to use it, turn to 522. If you want to wait by the channel, turn to 549. If you want to return to the dam and examine the group of strangers, turn to 367.

If you have played Tarah's Chapter, please check the box at "B" of the Path of Wisdom section on the third page of the adventure sheet. Maybe you get a clue there what to do here.

405 At once an aggressive mood spreads through the tavern At first, a few swearwords are exchanged, then bottles and chain start flying. A rough tavern brawl erupts. Despite your superb skills you have trouble fighting your way to the door. In the general chaos you are struck by a number of punches. Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

Turn to 375

406 The four thugs have surrounded you. Cautiously, you move backwards to an exterior house wall, trying to keep all your enemies in view. The gaunt man steps forward confidently, pointing at you with his iron rod.

He has his other arm hidden beneath his tattered woolen coat. But before he can even utter a threat, you have landed a powerful blow to his dirty face. The two other fellows look at you in confusion as their leader slumps to the ground. Hesitantly they draw their weapons.

THUGS	ATTACK	N 10 +1	+1	+1
(3 ENEMIES)	DEFENSE	12 +1	+1	
	RESISTANCE	• 02	00	00

This is a fight against more than one enemy simultaneously! Remember that there are special rules here (see the explanation at the beginning of the chapter).

> Should it get too dangerous, you can at any time end the fight at the beginning of a COMBAT ROUND and flee into the nearby tavern (turn to 459). If you win the battle, turn to 547.

407 You complete your dive onto the second highest platform with an elegant roll, landing immediately next to the metal chest you already noticed on the way down. If you left items by the box when entering the dam, you can take them with you again.

simply remove the marks in Save Point (8) for the items you want to take with you again. You must delete the items you want to leave behind. Make the necessary changes on your adventure sheet.

Through the opening in the iron grate you see an Imperial officer wondering what is happening above him. "Halt right there!" he commands upwards, running towards the ladder. You have no time to play this little game, so you flee to the exit.

Turn to 479.

408 Obviously the ruffians have not had enough yet. "So, 3 friend, now we're going to teach you a lesson!" you hear their leader taunting from the twilight of the narrow houses. A dozen thugs have surrounded you, and almost simultaneously, they draw their swords, sabers and cutlasses. Screaming, you throw yourself at your first four opponents and fell two of them with precise blows. A moment later, however, you find yourself in the middle of an unleashed mob. ATTACK N 13

COMBAT ROUND UOOO@ If you are still alive by the fourth COMBAT ROUND of this hopeless fight, turn to 461.

409 Surprised by your lunge, the young woman flinches, but dodges your attack with exceptional skill. You quickly realize that the stranger is no normal human.

"Desist!" she calls angrily as she nimbly performs a roll over your shoulders, remaining crouched in fighting position a safe distance away. A flaming red lock of hair shows from beneath her hood. "There is no reason to fight," she murmurs in an attempt to calm the situation.

If you do not trust the woman and want to attack her, turn to 515. If you believe her, turn to 423.

410 An earthy taste in your mouth gives you a jolt. As you try to stand, boards that were hiding your body clatter onto the cobblestones in the alley. Then you remember that an Ugarith saved you from the dense smoke. He has obviously given you some medicine. At least you feel somewhat better.

Your VITALITY rises by one level, but not more than normal.

You give silent thanks to your unknown helper and run further into the city.

Turn to 446



411 Your heart is pounding as you step to the table and empty your pockets of all your money. "Hey, the maximum stake is ten Dinars," murmurs the stocky game-master through his dirty beard. With moist palms you count your money and plan your stake. Write down your Stake (not more than 10 Dinars) and the number you

want to bet on (1-6) under Special Notes on the third page of the adventure sheet.

Then the game-master gives the wheel a forceful spin. "No more bets!"

It doesn't take long for the disc to slow to a halt.

If you have the ability Premonition, you automatically win. If not, you must roll a die to determine on which field the wheel of fortune stops. If your bet wins, your Stake is multiplied by 6. If not, you lose it,

> If you want to play another round, turn to 361. If you want to leave the tavern, turn to 375.



412 The merchant thinks for a moment and then remarks, "At the moment, there is no way for me to get you out of town. I'm afraid you're on your own." His conscience and his fear of having insulted an Ugarith prompts him to offer you a potion from his meager stock.

If you want to take the simple Healing Potion (Utensil, usable anytime, recovers two levels of VITALITY, even to fit). Note it down on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 488.

3

413 The frail old man grabs your scarred left hand with trembling fingers. "The Keepers know your destiny and want to help you fulfill it." As soon as the wrinkled fingers of this strangely charismatic man touch you, you immediately feel this instinctive urge, this surging divine power that appears to hide deep within your soul.

This fleeting, indescribable moment of self-realization is interrupted by the old Keeper with his further explanations: "...by the way, your mentor Tarus also follows our ways! He has known you since you were a small boy. Since then, he hasn't left your side and has been following all of your steps. Yet even he could not prevent Calderel from manipulating you and abusing you for his own goals."

Listening attentively, the red-haired sorceress adds angrily, "The Shadow Master is deceiving you! You are neither the Prophet of the Ugarith nor some Shadow Child. You are so much more than that!"

"Enough!" the old man snaps, his voice surprisingly harsh. "We have no right to influence the divine path!"

Turn to B19!

414 Somewhat sluggishly, the Zarlik sits up in the hammock and reaches for the bottle.

"Thissss isss very kind!" Then he purses his leathery lips and carefully tries to get the liquid into his throat, a task he can barely manage due to the turbulent sea. Again, feeling a laugh rising in your throat, you manage to let it out through your nose with a loud 'harrumph'. "Tm probably not a very nicccce view..." You shake your head.

Now you realize why the Zarliks were not eager to be assigned to the fleet. They're obviously not made for the sea, but their magical skills are indispensable for the Empire.

> If you have a Fig from Rohja and want to give it to the Zarlik, turn to 353. If you want to withdraw, turn to 535.

218

415 "In the meantime the water pressure is extremely high. The repairs were completed just in time," explains the worker somewhat unsteadily while on the way to the water gate. You are not able to shake the feeling that you're being watched. Looking quietly behind you, you cannot make out anything unusual in the pale light of the lanterns. The wet, glistening walls you find irritating.

When you both finally reach the main water gate, you can see the source of the deafening metal pounding you have been hearing in the dam for minutes now. Two men with large sledgehammers are driving a thick iron wedge into the ground with alternating hammer blows. Their faces are hidden by a thick layer of oil and sweat. "Some teeth were broken," the worker shouts above the noise and points to the complicated cogwheels next to the water gate. "Should work now! ...open?"

> If you want to open the gate, turn to 481. If you want to forbid him to open it, turn to 506.

416 With the last rays of the sun on the fourth day the Mexez reaches Port Baylock, the largest settlement on Votracht. It has



....

been only a few weeks since the harbor and trading town on the northern coast with its barely 500 souls, formerly known as Reedhaven, has been under the control of the Empire. Great efforts are now being made to develop it as a military base. But the occupiers are hated, and not just since the bloody battles fought to claim the town.

Your journey will continue on the next day, not on the Mexez, but on the admiral's ship, the Nargus, according to a curt Captain Towak. "Present yourself to Admiral Grobrig tomorrow morning, Orders from the top!"

You had already noticed the Empire's flagship while entering the harbor. The impressive five-master with its imposing deck and raised bridge is truly a showpiece.

The night is still young, and until the ship leaves, you have enough time for an extended shore leave. For even though the passage has been demanding and interesting, you're happy to have firm ground beneath your feet again.

If you want to hit the inns and taverns along the waterside, turn to 502. If you want to simply stroll alone through the night along

If you want to simply strou alone introget the light here g the water's edge, turn to 491. If you want to go the Nargus at once and introduce yourself to

Admiral Grobrig, turn to 377.

3



417 Now is the right moment to throw the bomb! Or is it? Ugar, be with me! <

If you want to throw now, turn to 391. If you want to wait some more, turn to 445.

418 "What? You're crazy," snarls the sailor guarding the jetty, "Piss off!" Scornful laughter spreads among the guards when they hear about the overeager new guy. "Come back tomorrow morning..." they cry after you in derision. Annoyed, you leave.

If you want to return to the Mexez, turn to 543.

If you want to go the waterfront and enjoy yourself, turn to 502

419 In your anticipation of leaving the Ningal Tower behind you to face the new experiences ahead, you feel increasingly exuberant. With an impressive leap you land on deck of the Mexez, almost toppling a sailor standing by the rail to moor the ship.

"Hey, what are you doing?" the Captain barks at you. "Get off my ship!" With head bowed in contrition, you are led back to the pier across the newly laid plank. Then the captain calls out to you: "Only on my command do you come on board!"

Some of the sailors and soldiers cannot suppress their laughter, but they choke on it when the Shadow Master reacts with obvious anger. "Enought" His voice and face tremble, and you feel his rage at this disapproval of the Shadow Child, but also his disappointment in your embarrassing behavior. You lower your gaze in shame and remain at the edge of the pier out of the men's way. Overeagerly, they now all start working again.

Turn to 476.

420 Despite his determined demeanor this lad is not a danger to you. As he launches his attack, you seize his arm, stopping his blade, and knock him out with a sharp, precise blow to the neck. Motionless, the boy sinks to the planks.

 $_{>}$ I can't believe that these are peoples who send their boys to war now! How desperate must they be? $\scriptstyle <$

Hoping that he will survive the sea battle without harm, you hurriedly roll him up in some sailcloth.

Turn to 378.





421 With long strokes you swim away from the Nargus, but the guards start to shoot at you at once. The first missiles miss you just barely, but then a sharp pain runs through you—a bolt has pierced the flesh of your right upper arm.

Despite the deep wound you manage to reach the jetty, gathering your belongings and escaping into the night.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

If you want to return to the Mexez, turn to 543. If you want to dive into Port Baylock's nightlife despite your painful experience, turn to 502.



422 Surprise and terror are reflected in the meris eyes when you jump at them from the darkness. Your first attack, delivered with all your strength, lands on the leader's neck. But the blow is deflected and sparks fly, as if you had hit an unyielding metal post! From the corner of your eye you see the artefact that has protected the leader. It's now raining down upon the stone floor in fragments. Its protective spell has been broken.

At first surprised, then wildly determined, the two spies draw their daggers and lunge through the door to assist their companion. But a quick shake of the leader's head suffices, and they return to looking after the entrance.

The leader obviously thinks that two fighters are enough to hold one Imperial soldier at bay. With grim expressions they draw their scimitars from their belts.

CHAPTER		

SPY Duo	Attack	× 12 +1	+1
(2 ENEMIES)	DEFENSE	• 13 +1	+1
	RESISTANCE	* 003	00

If you survive the battle against both spies, turn to 536

423 Despite her human features you sense that the young woman is no normal human. "I'm on your side," she carefully be gins the conversation. "Although you might not know that yet." Suspiciously, you watch every movement she makes. "Please follow me. We have to get off the streets before you draw any more attention to yourself. Besides, the air attack may start any moment." A cari't sny why, but I trust her.

You nod to her in agreement. She leads you to a side alley where two men and a simple cart are waiting in the shadows. She takes out a sack and pulls it roughly over your head. "I'm sorry, but this is for the safety of all of us." Finally, you are lifted onto the bed of the cart and hidden under a tarpaulin. Your journey into the unknown begins.

Turn to 398.

Cross off the circle next to the section number 423 to note that you've read this section.

424 You appear to have no choice but to flee climbing up the countless rungs of the ladder. Facing certain death, you even exceed yourself, covering more than half the ladder with superhuman bounds before climbing the rest of it like a ct. In less than a minute you have reached the middle platform. From here you can already see the faint light from the exit when suddenly a seasoned Imperial officer climbs down the ladder directly in front of you.

"What are you doing here, soldier?" he demands. Impatient and panicky, you draw your weapon and lunge towards the old officer.



OFFICER OF THE EMPIRE	ATTACK	× 14 15
	DEFENSE	• 13 14
	RESISTANCE	* 02

COMBAT ROUND UOO34

Continuing from the third COMBAT ROUND, the ATTACK and DEFENSE of the officer are each raised 1 point because he has rebounded from your surprise attack.

If you win in the first 3 COMBAT ROUNDS, turn to 521 at once. If the combat goes into its fourth round, immediately turn to 474.

425 With mixed feelings, you watch the Zarlik begin his magical ritual. He seizes your left hand, kneads it firmly and murmurs some unintelligible words, repeating them over and over again.

At first, you feel a slight tingling inside your hand, then a burning sensation and finally a piercing pain, as if your body was trying to free itself of the scars. You grit your teeth as suddenly a blazing flash of light explodes from your hand. Twitching, the Zarlik falls backwards, entangling himself in his hammock.

Motionless, he stares at the floor. His clothes have been burnt to a cinder by the magical eruption. You hurry to help him and are relieved to see that he is still alive.

"Not a good idea," he whispers through pressed lips. He tries to mile, followed by a violent cough. "Let this accccident be our assecret," the Zarlik begs you, rolling his eyes. It's as if he wants to say how hard it is for him to deal with humans, "Pleassee forgive... the failingss."

You linger for a while in the cabin of the likeable mage, until he has safely fallen asleep.

Turn to 535.

426 "Hey, shouldn't you be at home?" one of the guards asks. "The prefect doesn't like it if his curfew is ignored," the other one

24

adds. Both of them look at you warily. They are obviously suspicious; after all, you do not look especially local.

If you want to flee, turn to 352. If you want to attack both of the guards, turn to 392.

427 Admiral Grobrig shakes his head in resignation as he watches your arm for combat. Yet he dares not hold you back. Two enemy ships have already come into firing range, and the breeze carries the ominous, rhythmical clicking of the winches.

Tension is written in your companions' faces; the young sailor to your right exhibits true mortal fear. He answers your encouraging nod with a tortured smile. The two enemy ships have gone alongside, and the first heavy metal bolts hiss as they leave their artillery hatches. Planks shatter. Water sputters. The Nargus' hull has literally been perforated.

No sooner have the arm-length harpoons hooked onto places in the hold, than the Menokians begin pulling their ship towards the Nargus. Only a few feet, and they will be close enough to jump over.

While the archers aboard the Nargus are showering the warriors from the Eternal Ice with arrows, the remaining Imperial fighters spread out to counter the Menokians' expected boarding attempts.

If you want to move portside, turn to 453. If you want to confront the enemies to starboard, turn to 540.

428 Thanks to your exceptional abilities, you manage to sneak by the guards unseen. At first, due to the background noise, you can barely understand what is being talked about in the wardroom. But when you press your ear against the hull you can hear muffled, but intelligible voices.

"...the scouts tell us that our military enjoys a slight advantage, but the enemy appears to have been warned. It will be difficult to



...

reach Leenhaven before the arrival of the air force because the shoals of the Kanderhagen bay allow very little room for maneuvering."

The leader of the conversation ends the session with a stern admonishment: "Tomorrow, we will be taking a special guest on board. The honorable Calderel has commanded us to guide the holy Shadow Child to Leenhaven. I needn't mention how important it is to get the Child to the mainland alive and in one piece. Otherwise, we won't have to think about the end of the battle, because we won't survive to see it! I needn't remind you that this requires utmost secrecy."

Since you don't want to risk being caught spying any longer, you disappear into the dark.

If you want to return to the Mexez, turn to 543. If you want to go to the waterfront and enjoy yourself, turn to 502.



429 For a minute now you have remained tense and still in your hiding place, staring alternately at the bomb in your hands and the nearing Vandagaal. Or have two minutes passed already? In the chaos of the sea battle you have lost your sense of time.

If you want to throw the **Bomb**, turn to 471. If you want to hold on to the sphere, turn to 417.

430 Even before you realize what's happening, the second volley pierces the Nargus' hull. One of the huge bolts tears through your abdomen, nearly ripping you in half!

Your life ends here.

431 "You're a part of the vanguard from Fort Sin?" You not your head and look out onto the glittering reservoir.

"The water," the soldier explains worriedly," has risen to the brim again. There was more melting snow than expected. We'll have to open the water gate to take the pressure off the dam."

The soldier points to a narrow bronze marker with a scale on it, which has been attached upright to the dam. If you're interpreting it correctly, the water level has already passed the critical level by far. "But this time," discloses the guard in a whisper, "there are some problems."

You say goodbye to the soldier, who obviously just wanted to chat a bit.

If you want to go inside the dam, turn to 534 If you want to return to the channel and lie there in wait, turn to 404

432 "These bastards!" Grobrig grumbles into his beard. "We have to regroup. Where there's one traitor, there are more." With a nasty expression, he gives the signal for full reverse. The saidors strike the sails and turn the Nargus using the auxiliary oars. Battling the wind and the waves, the other ships in the fleet also attempt to set their new course to the north. Suddenly, however, a bugle call sounds, carried from one of the following ships by the gusty wind. "Contact with the enemy!" constantly screams the sailor in the crow's nest.

"They've surrounded us!" the crew shout again and again. "Shut up, all of you!" The Admiral loses his composure for a moment, but then, with a veteran's resolve, he commands his men, "Make ready for combat!"

Shocked, you realize that the ships of the Alliance fleet, which were idling in the water a moment ago, are setting sail simultaneously to pursue you. The formation is perfect. The Menokians' trap has sprung and the Empire's fleet is caught!

Turn to 539.



• *

433 Shouted commands, groaning wood and the clatter of boxes rudely awaken you from a semi-sleep. Shortly before setting sail, the Mexez' crew are making their final preparations. During the past hours you have barely slept a wink, yet you feel an inner calm and strength.

Your VITALITY rises by one level, but not more than normal.

You sit up with a jolt.

 Damn, I have to go the Nargus and introduce myself to Admiral Grobrig!

With a guilty conscience you collect your things, rush up to the deck and take your leave of a few companions and Captain Towak, who is amazed that you're still on board. "You should hurry up, the Nargus has already given the one-hour signal."

Thanking the captain again for an exciting and instructive passage, you hasten down the pier towards the Nargusaccompanied by the sailors' laughter. The noble ship is even more imposing in the light of day. Its deck is much higher than those of the other warships, and the crow's nest at the top of the main mast is at least 60 feet high. Bridge and railings have been constructed of tough precious woods.

"Make way, you good-for-nothing!" grouses a sailor to you as he rolls a barrel over the deck. "We're working!" Only now do you walize how miserable you must look: completely unkempt, carrying a disorderly bundle of your belongings under one arm, and standing before the gangway amongst the crates, sacks and barrels. "You're late!" a deep voice cuts through the general noise of work. At the rail, learning on his muscular arms, stands a man. His long, silvery hair is tightly bound in an imposing ponytail. His noble uniform glitters with the insignia of the Empire as well as the four stars of an admiral. At last, he waves you on board under the surprised gazes of his crew. 228

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

With a dry laugh he raps you on the shoulder. "Long night, was it?" Some sailors looking on roar with laughter without exactly knowing why. "Mate, bring our guest below deck and show him his cabin."

Some minutes later you're alone in your cramped cabin. You take a moment to sort your equipment and your thoughts. Both need some attention.

Back on deck you apologize for being late, but Grobrig is too busy to really pay attention to what you say. The experienced sea dog and former privateer frowns darkly as he considers crew, weapons and cargo. Without a word he points to various parts of the ship and demands that whatever problem be immediately rectified by those responsible. Without a complaint the sailors obey, for they know the Admiral's perfectionism is deadly serious. After all, this could be the last passage of the Nargus and the Imperial fleet!

Turn to 475.



434 "We call ourselves the Keepers" the old man starts off thoughtfully. "We're a loose alliance of illuminated sages of all races. We have taken it as our task to preserve the knowledge and the culture of the ancients. Unfortunately, our organization has always been persecuted. Since time immemorial, rulers, especially the tyrants of the Empire, have feared the truth and the loss of power it might lead to."

Turn to 413.



435 You slide, skidding into the path of the explosive sphere, and grab it. You feel intense vibrations coming from inside it, as if a huge pressure was building. Instinctively, you hurl the heavy bomb into the drainage channel, where it's immediately washed away by the water.

But one of the workers has observed your rescue action and is ringing the alarm bell. You decide to leave the dam right away by means of the ladder before there are soldiers everywhere.

If you've left items in the chest when entering the dam, you can take them with you again. Just remove the marks in Save Point \bigotimes for the items you want to take with you again. You must delete the items you want to leave behind. Make the necessary changes on your adventure wheel.

Turn to 393.

436 You concentrate on the wheel. Thanks to your trained senses you can perceive the spinning motion in slow motion. You notice that the disc behaves weirdly every time there's a low creak. But nobody seems to notice.

There's nothing strange under the table, however, except for a massive wooden base with a diameter of about five feet. Taking a closer look, you spot a hidden door in the box, one just large enough for a child.

If you want to confront the landlord, turn to 544. If you want to crawl under the table and open the door, turn to 528. If you still want to play a little game, turn to 411. If you just want to leave the tavern, turn to 375.

437 Proudly, the leader slaps the locksmith on the shoulder and utters a few words to him. You cannot understand the melodious language. It is probably a dialect of Rhelih spoken only in the eastern desert realm.

Turn to 364.

CHAPTER 3 · BROTHERS IN ARMS

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

438 Finally you reach the end of the secret passage. Narrow stone steps lead upward. You force your way past many large boulders, obstacles as if accidentally wedged tightly into one another, which slow your climb, to at last reach fresh air again. Freed from an exhausting crouched position, you stretch your limbs and realize that you are in the middle of a slightly raised grove about three miles away from the walls of Leenhaven.

It is the middle of the night, but the city itself appears lit as bright as day: Large parts of Leenhaven are ablaze—circling above the harbor some dragons are breathing fire. Before the outer walls of the city, the experienced ground troops of the Empire have taken up their positions and are shooting at the ramparts with catapults.

Grim. But I can do nothing here. I have to go to Veniz...
Resigned, you turn away from this barbaric battle.

If you have the ability Warfare, turn to 356 If not, turn to 468



439 You're only one step too late. Directly in front of your feel the bomb smashes through the planks of the Nargus. Hesitating for a moment, you stare at the head-sized hole, but there is no sign of the explosive now. The ship is lost. With a last shout of warning to the crew, you leap overboard.

Turn to 498.



440 Again, the Nargus rears up against a wave towering as high as a house. You feel the ship rising fast, but then masses of water crash down upon you like a titan's fist. Helpless, you are mashed against the main mast and washed from deck to sink not the dark blue abvss...

Your life ends here.

141 For you this unbelievable betting fraud goes against the prain. Who knows how much money the innkeeper earns every night with this trick? Angrily, you drag the Mungol from his inding place and present him to the players. Their surprise puckly turns to rage and even the innkeeper's stammered offers of free beer have no effect.

Turn to 405.

442 With great joy she grabs the bottle, thanks you while thecking its contents and explains quickly where to find the thop.

Well, I'd surely have told you for less, but lucky me!" she giggles hoarsely. You manage a pained smile and turn towards the Wain Alley.

Turn to 369.

443 The past storm has damaged the Nargus badly. Its mizzen mast, broken at mid-height, damaged the upper deck when it name crashing down, but the crew is already busy with the expanse.

With a stern expression, Admiral Grobrig views his battered ship and the crippled fleet all around him. "It is going to be damn hard to break the blockade in this state."

His icy tone leaves no doubt, however. Orders are orders. He intends to go through with the planned attack.

Barely two hours later, there is contact with the enemy. The ships

CHAPTER 3 · BROTHERS IN ARMS

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

of the Allied fleet traverse the narrows between the six Trachtian Islands and constitute a massive naval blockade before Leenhaven. This action can hardly be a coincidence. The traitors arrayed against the Empire have done their work well.

"What ship is that?" Admiral Grobrig mutters to his mate and points to a large three-masted ship of noticeably pale wood, visible in the horizon's haze. But not even the man in the crow's nest can determine the ship's identity. "Too far away!" he shouts down.

If you have the ability Sharpened Senses and want to use it, turn to 376. If not, turn to 467

444 Finally you find the boy cowered behind the screen of the kitchen oven. All his hair has burned down to a crinkly stubble, but he's alive! You throw the boy over your shoulder and smash through the entrance door with a powerful leap.

His mother can hardly believe her good luck, embracing her child with sobs of joy. Even you have a tear running down your soot-black face as you comfortingly place your clawed hand on the woman's shoulder.

Only now does she appear to sense who the being standing before her is, and stares at you both timidly and incredulously. At that moment the house collapses in a fiery wreck behind you, offering you a chance at escape. You have the presence of mind to disappear without drawing further attention to yourself. For your selfless deed you receive 1 point of KARMA.

Turn to 446.

445 The iron ball trembles—the perfect moment! Raising your arm, you release the bomb, but at the exact moment the ball leaves your hand it explodes. In the blink of an eye, you are tom apart by the magical shock wave.

Your life ends here.



10 446 All of Leenhaven is burning. Dragons are sweeping over the alleys of the harbor town, spewing their fire. There are shouts and wails piercing the smoke, the screams of the dying, but you try to ignore the people's suffering.

Dazed by smoke, heat and the exhaustion of the last few hours, you fight through the chaos of the flames and hope to reach the eastern city wall unharmed. All the while, you know that worse things await you there: The battles between the men of the Empire and the Alliance have been raging there for hours.

Then suddenly the darkish red silhouette of a dragon rises through the billowing clouds of flame and flying sparks. You have barely noticed the danger when the monster smashes the roof of the house in front of you with its giant claws. Shattered wood and shingles rain down on you as the burning facade collapses. Instinctively, you want to escape the glowing ashy cloud, but your legs are numb and your vision impaired. Your unbridled will is the only thing keeping you alive.

Semiconscious, you then feel someone grabbing your shoulder. The rune-covered hand of a human woman drags you out of the inferno by the collar of your Imperial uniform. In the dense moke you see blazing strands of red hair just before a bag is pulled over your head and you black out.

Turn to 366.

Cross off the circle next to the section number 446 to note that you've read this section.



447 The Nargus has just about reached the coast when a powerful frigate pierces the dark smoke to intercept you—the Vandagaal! The white flagship of the Menokian fleet heads straight for the Empire's flagship. To its starboard, a nimble corvette provides escort.

At this moment even the Admiral's steely gaze falters. "Well, that's it," he says to you with surprising calm. "The Shadow Child should leave us now."

If you have a Bomb and

and the second second

want to use it against the Vandagaal, turn to 524 If you want to do what the Admiral says and jump into the water to swim to the shore, turn to 451

448 You're shocked to discover that the woman at your feet is not breathing. The old crone was so afraid of you that she dropped dead at the sight of your uniform.

» What terrible things has this woman seen to be scared to death by me? Your RAGE rises by one level!

You have trouble freeing yourself from feelings of guilt, but your mission must go on! Lost in thought, you run into two guards who stare at you in surprise. They did not reckon with an officer of the Empire inside the city walls! You exploit their confusion, push them back, and flee into a dark alley.

Turn to 403.

449 You quickly realize that it is the unspectacular toolbox of a mechanic working here. These items among its contents appear interesting;

· Mallet (Utensil, a large, dull hammer)

· Bolt Cutter (Utensil)



· Tongs (Utensil)

If you are carrying too much, you may leave some items behind (mark hem as stowed in the toolbox by checking Save Point \otimes —it is possible that you can retrieve them on your way back).

If you want to walk along the gangway towards the metal chain, turn to 541.

If you want to climb farther down the ladder, turn to 504.

450 From your safe hiding place, you watch the workers preparing to open the bulkhead of the water gate. They are working with long poles and other strange tools. It is obviously impossible to open the bulkhead without both the right devices and the necessary knowledge.

If you want to wait for the workers to open the water gate before crippling the mechanism, turn to 481.

If you want to start your act of sabotage immediately, turn to 358.

451 The water is icy. With every stroke against the offshore current your will to survive is being tested. Your body feels leaden. But with your will and divine assistance, you manage to escape the current and put some distance between you and the racing battle.

Despite the exertions of the last few hours you find new courage when you see the jetties of the Kanderhagen Bay. The shallow waves push you towards the harbor basin.

Turn to 462.

452 You ram the door with your shoulder. A dull pain runs through your body when you bounce off it like an arrow striking a rock. With a curse, you hold your bruised shoulder.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

If you want to hide and wait, turn to 546. If you want to turn your back to the dam and go to Leenhaven, turn to 404.

If you have played Tarah's Chapter, please check the box at "C" of the Path of Wisdom section on the third page of the adventure sheet. Maybe you get a clue there what to do here.

453 A deep groan shakes the Nargus as the wooden hulls of the three ships smash into each other almost simultaneously. Skillfully, the Menokian warriors make use of the violent jolt to attack the reeling Imperial soldiers with loud battle cries. A pale warrior is headed for you as well, gripping between his teeth an arm-long cutlass. But you keep your balance, dodge, grab him by his belt while he's still in the air and send him into the sea between the ships.

You have barely made sure that this fellow is no danger anymore when the next one stares at you with a vicious grin. A giant of a man with shaven head and bloodshot eyes points at you with his rusty saber in the crowd of fighters.

BALD	ATTACK	× 13	
MENOKIAN WARRIOR	DEFENSE	W 15	
	RESISTANCE	¥0@	
	If you survive the battle, turn to 378		

454 The brief month of your education was over in a flash, and you doubt if you know enough to prepare yourself for the coming challenges. Nevertheless, you have become a respected member of the Empire, even though that may be mostly due to Calderel's encouragement. It fits your Master's design that you are not standing with the simple fighters at the pier, but instead shoulder to shoulder with five dozen pitch-black Ugarith elite soldiers. You wait for the arrival of the Mexez, a nimble corvette that will bring you to Votracht as quickly as possible.

Contemplating the coming battle, you stare at the moonlit sea spray at the base of the Tower of Night. There is the sudden murmur in the crowd below and when you glance down, you see the reason why.

Calderel strides down the wet steps towards the pier, supported by two priests. His shimmering Ugar robes flutter grandly in the wind as he raises his voice and with great pathos predicts a





453 A giant of a man with shaven head and bloodshot eyes points at you with his rusty saber in the crowd of fighters.

glorious return to all honorable fighters. A pleasurable chill runs down your spine. At this moment you feel the power of faith filling everyone present.

By the time the last words sung by the Master of Shadow have faded, all your ills have been forgotten.

And as if foreordained, at this moment the Mexez appears behind the rugged cliffs and heads for the giant cave at the base of the Ningal Tower, accompanied by the rising cheers of the soldiers.

Your VITALITY rises to fit!

If you want to jump on the deck of the Mexez at once and assist the sailors, turn to 419 If you want to wait in orderly formation, turn to 503

455 You watch the two men from a safe distance. For minutes they remain quiet, but then, when the workers make a short break, the tall spy puts a hand in his coat pocket, handles a small sphere for a moment, and then drops it into the mechanism of the water gate. He hurries back to his companion and together they flee quickly to the ladder.

> If you want to check to see what the spy threw into the mechanism, turn to 492 If you want to run away with the spies, turn to 530

456 Your strength wanes. You cannot swim anymore. As you sink deeper and deeper, the bright surface of the ocean above you dims. Panicking, you resist your breathing reflex but to no avail. You drown painfully, surrendering to the Deep at last.

Your life ends here.

238

457 Without hesitation you seize the opportunity, grab a pair of long iron rods from a pile of tools and insert them between the two brass cogs. This way, they will inevitably become wedged



when the mechanism of the water gate is activated. In the chaos of axles, straps and cogs, the rods do not stand out.

Without being noticed, you retreat and wait for some minutes for the workers to return. They look around in confusion before one of the foremen walks to the lever of the water gate and pushes it down. A loud rattling and rasping drones throughout the dam walls. With satisfaction, the workers at first clap one another on the shoulder until suddenly metal begins to grate and shriek around them. Before the surprised mechanics can act, the first rogs break free.

Amused, you watch pieces of vital machinery tumble to the floor and roll in all directions while the workers try to reach safety. Check section 389. Is the circle next to the section number crossed off?

If yes, turn to 516. If not, turn to 463.

458 With a jolt you are dragged down through the sea. The undercurrent presses you against the Nargus' hull. Your strength wanes as it grows dark around you.

Your VITALITY is reduced by two levels!

If you survived this, turn to 372.

459 The entrance door has just swung open when you are greeted by a mixture that numbs your senses. Your ears strain to hear something in the chaos of voices, shouts, and raucous hawling while your nose is tortured in the sharp fumes of tobacco, alcohol and sweat.

Dozens of sailors, soldiers and bawdy women fill the common room. Almost no one notices you as you push through the crowd. Then suddenly the shifty gaunt leader of the gang of thugs tands in the entrance. He stares intently over the heads of the patrons, raps the door frame in frustration, and walks away. Laboriously fighting your way through the common room, you

notice a hooting, laughing crowd gathered around a round playing table. It appears that the innkeeper has illegal gambling going on here. There is a rotating green wooden disk on the gambling table. The edge of the wheel of fortune, as the game master calls it, is separated into six numbered fields with long metal nails, When the master of the game spins the wheel, the nails hit a hard leather blade that slows it down. If you can guess where the wheel will stop, you receive six times your bet. All others lose. If you want to try your luck, turn to 411

If you want to watch, turn to 513

460 Your enemy proves to be a resilient fighter. Unfortunately, his stunned companion picks himself up, and soon you find yourself facing them both. You decide that it is better to run away. Turn to 403

461 You do not deliberate very long; instead, you just run. At once, the remaining thugs jump from their cover to follow you. But in the darkness of the narrow harbor alley you have an advantage, pushing two surprised men to the side. Then, with a powerful leap you grab the edge of a warehouse roof, pull yourself up, and continue your escape across the battlements of Port Baylock. After only a few jumps from roof to roof you have lost your pursuers and safely reach the pier with the Mexez. Turn to 543

462 The bright disc of Kar is high in the sky, but so far nobody has found you among the debris and flotsam. You even manage



to pull yourself onto an old, orphaned fisher boat peacefully moored to a small pier. On board you find various fishing tools and a bundle of tattered but wearable coats.

To find your way through the streets of Leenhaven somewhat safely, you have no choice but to put on one of the storm coats over your telltale uniform.

Write down the Fisher Coat (Clothing, Disguise) on your adventure sheet.

You also find:

rusty Fillet Knife (Weapon, Hit Bonus +1)

Wicker Basket (Utensil, worn like a backpack with straps on your back) a Bottle of Brandy (Utensil)

If you want to rest on the boat and wait until dusk, turn to 368. If you want to leave at once, turn to 402.

463 While considering with satisfaction the water gate's mechanism, now more like a pile of rubble, out of the corner of your eye you become aware of two dark figures who have until now hidden in a niche of the water gate.

+ The two spies! <

The one, a bit taller than the other, jumps up and throws a fistsized metal ball in your direction, obviously hoping to let it roll into the mechanism of the water gate. It is a bomb!

If you want to stop the ball before it drops into the mechanism, turn to 435.

If you want to let the Bomb roll and immediately run away, turn to 530.

464 "Cut-throat!" the filthy innkeeper mutters to himself as he counts out 20 silver coins into your hand. Write down 20 Dinars (Money) on your adventure sheet. You say goodbye and leave the tavern.

Turn to 375



465 Skillfully, you clasp your legs around the chain to regulate the speed of your descent. You glide past five more platforms until you reach the bottom. The narrow iron gangway has disappeared in the darkness as you jump from the flattened side of the plummet and onto the floor of the dam below.

Turn to 400.

466 With a superhuman effort you leap up the length of the plumb line and grab the iron chain. Hastily you examine the connecting piece: The metal cone weighing tons is connected to the chain with a bolt as thick as your forearm. With muscles alone it is unlikely that you will be able to detach the link.

Test your STRENGTH against 15!

If you have a Mallet, your STRENGTH is raised by 3. If you have a Bolt Cutter, your STRENGTH is raised by 2. If you have both of those items, you're successful automatically!

If you are successful, turn to 542 If you fail, turn to 424

467 Steadily, the fleet advances towards the defensive ring of the Alliance between the islands of Grostracht and Beentracht, with the Nargus at its head. Suddenly the man in the crow's nest shouts, "Menokian ships! At the flank of the fleet of Leenhaven! But they don't fight!"

Admiral Grobrig's eyes glaze over. In disbelief he mumbles into his full silvery beard, "Have they defected?" In no time at all the lookout's discovery spreads among the sailors. Bellowing, the admiral has to call them to order before he can turn to you and say, "These traitors have lured us into a trap! But it's too late now We have to fight!"

You realize that this betrayal has forced Fate's hand. The final battle is coming.

Turn to 401



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168 You are happy to have a clear goal again. Veniz is almost three days away. You have to succeed at making up for the head start of the travel group from Kyphi. For that reason you take only short breaks, running all day and night. During your long march, you orient yourself using the famous channel connecting Leenhaven with the giant Venizian dam.

It was built to provide fresh water to Leenhaven. But at the moment, there are only grass and shrubs growing in its artificial river bed.

As you run, you have to give a wide berth to scattered units of the Alliance patrolling the steppe landscape again and again. Conspicuous as they are, you can get past them without being noticed.

In the middle of the second day, the landscape suddenly changes. Rolling green hills and dense woods spread out before you. Finally, you reach the idyllic Veniz, lying protected at the base of the Windy Mountains. Unfortunately, the Empire has marked even this beautiful landscape. The steep vineyards are dotted with tents belonging to the army's camps, the black smoke of the war machines curls above the town, and the Empire's black banner is fluttering in the wind on top of the dam.

> If you want to try to set foot on the dam without being seen, turn to 534.

> If you want to march towards the dam crest openly as a soldier of the Empire in order to take a look around, turn to 360.

469 Silently you approach the curtain to the side room. The man's excited breathing reveals exactly where he's standing. You bravely jump on the pelt and try to overwhelm your enemy. But you don't feel a human body between your hands, only a cold blade in your chest.

Your life ends here.

470 "Make your bets! Not more than 10 Dinars!" the game master calls into the crowd. Hastily you get out ten coins and place them on number three. "No more bets!"

Hopefully, you watch the wooden wheel spinning while some thing under the table creaks and scratches. When the wheel stops, the game-master announces somewhat surprised: "Number five... number five wins!"

Angrily you climb under the table, tear open the small door and gaze into the empty opening under the wheel. The iron chains dangle abandoned above a tiny hatch in the floor. As you open it there is a soft giggle in the darkness. The half-pint has cheated you! Angry at both the Mungol and yourself, you return to the alley.

Remove your bet of 10 Dinars from your adventure sheet.

Turn to 375.

471 Somewhat too hastily you throw the iron ball over to the Vandagaal. With a thud it rolls across the deck, bounces off by some barrels lashed together and then falls over the rail into the water between the two ships' hulls. You can hear a muffled boom, and a second later a mighty wave shakes both ships so violently that some sailors fall from the rigging.

Countless dead fish floating on the white foam show that a powerful explosion has taken place under water. Unmoved, the Nargus and Vandagaal are still headed for each other.

Turn to 453

472 Thanks to Urgoz' detailed descriptions of the course of the war, you're perfectly informed about the current strategic situation. In the last three decades the Empire has been able to occupy or bind with treaties almost the whole north, including most of the tribes of the Frost Wasteland and the barbarian seafaring nation of the Menokians.



In the East, the Eternal Realm of Rhenus still offers resistance and no far has managed to hold the gate to its hinterland, the capital of knowledge and culture—Seraph.

The Empire hasn't dared to go too far south. As long as Leenhaven and the Trachtian League of Isles are still resisting and the eastern front needs support, only occasional scouts will be sent into the forests of the Wild Realms to keep the Empire informed about activity there.

The maps at the beginning of this book show the current military situation. With the Guanoko plains and the formerly northern Free Countries, the Empire controls large parts of Panokia. The desert realm of Rhenus on the other hand has fortified the defenses of the Golden Army at Seraph in an attempt to stop the aggressive expansionist policy and military incursions of the Empire.

Turn to 454.

Turn to 403.

473 With two powerful attacks you have taken out the soldier. As he drops unconscious to the wet cobblestones, his companion picks himself up. For safety's sake, you lash out and fell him with another accurate swing.

If you want to take the Soldier's Spear (Weapon, Hit Bonus +3), then make the necessary changes on your adventure sheet.

In addition, you find a small pouch with 4 Dinars (Money) on his belt. You can pocket them as well.

Then you notice curious gazes from a window on the opposite side of the alley. There is no time left for any further investigation. You need to keep moving.

CHAPTER 3 · BROTHERS IN ARMS

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

474 For a fraction of a second the entire inner wall of the city is illuminated in a glaring flash, followed by a deafening clap of thunder. Terrified, you stare down the platform and see a gigantic shock wave of dust, smoke and water headed for you.

Your life ends here.



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475 When the hot rays of the midday sun spread over deck. Port Baylock is already many leagues behind you. The unbearable heat tires the men, but no one wants to show weakness. You yourself have been freed from all duties by the Admiral's command, a cause of some embarrassment for you. This means that you spend hours in the half-shade of the bridge, watching the crew at their backbreaking work.

In the evening of your second day at sea you are standing next to Admiral Grobrig and the helmsman. "Sir, a heavy wind is coming," the man at the helm whispers in an ominous undertone. "I know," growls Grobrig, gazing fixedly at the sky and nervously pulling on his silver earring. "Madness. It's just madness in this season..." Finally, the Admiral turns to you, smiling sarcastically, and says, "But orders are orders, are they not?"

Then everything goes very quickly: In no time at all, the crew completes preparations for the coming storm. Grobrig commands the rest of the fleet to maintain a greater distance to avoid collisions when the sea gets rough. "Go below deck! I don't intend to lose to the icy sea the only Ugarith we have on board."

If you want to do what the Admiral asks and wait for the storm to pass below deck, turn to 485. If you want to help the crew during the storm, turn to 545.



476 No sconer has the Mexez been moored, than the Ugarith detail march out onto the narrow deck, standing tall as they wait for further commands. At the same time some sailors have been towing away nine wooden crates the size of wardrobes, brought from the catacombs of the Ningal Tower.

From inside them you can hear bestial snarls and angry, muffled thuds that make the heavy crates dance over the deck. You are surprised that all the seams and knotholes in these containers have been smeared with large amounts of sticky tar.

The time has now come! The sails of the Mexez billow in the rising wind. The voyage begins! Captain Towak, a brawny seadog with thinning grey hair sends the Ugarith down inside the ship after a short inspection. He does not want them to risk the rays of the sun for no reason. As the Shadow Warriors march below deck, the sailors steer clear of them as much as possible.

If you want to go below deck with them, turn to 396. If you want to remain topside, turn to 496.

477 Nimbly, you sprint across deck without taking your eyes off the trajectory of the explosive ball. You have only fractions of a second to catch it. You lunge at it, pushing your speed to the limits.

Test your DEXTERITY against 13!

If you are successful, turn to 512. If you fail, turn to 439.

478 The curtain is suddenly pulled back, and an elderly gentleman with the fine clothes of a wealthy businessman steps behind the counter. "We're closed," he says dryly, scratching his nose several times with his thumb and ring finger, a mildly rude gesture in the local parlance.

If you have the ability Diplomacy, turn to 486. If not, turn to 385.

479 You have just pushed open the exit door when there is a deafening clap of thunder, and the explosion's shockwave hurls you in a high arc up onto the crest of the dam. Your VTALIT's is reduced by one level!

Turn to 393.

480 The innkeeper's face darkens. "As you like..." Then he looks past you and shouts to the crowd, "Listen, we have a bill dodger here!"

Surprised, you try to explain to the drunken sailors around you that the gaming table is being manipulated, but they're not in the mood to believe a black-skinned foreigner more than one of their own.

Turn to 405.

481 Calmly, you watch the three workers start the mechanism of the water gate. Unexpectedly, enormous water pressure builds, first heralded by muffled vibrations throughout the dam, and followed by a deafening roar as a huge jet of water empties into the outlet.

With visible pride, the workers watch the powerful stream for several minutes. Then they go off for a break, loudly singing traditional songs from Kanderhagen.

Turn to B7!

482 Resolutely, you reach for the crowbar, applying it to the seam at the lid of the large chest and prying out one nail after the other, until finally the lid slides off to one side.

Despite the noise of the raging battle about you, you have the impression that the world is standing still as you cautiously peer over the rim into the chest. After a moment of uncertainty you are seized by instinctive fear. Two blood-red, baleful rubies glow in the darkness. You freeze.





With a powerful bound the demonic beast leaps over you and out of its prison. You spin around, weapon ready, to defend yourself, but then you realize that it's a Sogukant-a demon dog from the underworld.

If you have the ability Magical Lore, turn to 537. If not, you have to fight the demonic being without this knowledge SOGIIKANT ATTACK # 18

> COMBAT ROUND UOOOA If you are still alive at the start of the fourth COMBAT ROUND, turn to 509

483 "You don't have much time if you want to pursue the group from Kyphi," remarks the red-haired woman, interrupting your thoughts. "I can show you how to leave the town as fast as possible."

Then she leads you through the labyrinthic tunnels of the subterranean hideout, pushes several boxes to the side in a dark corner and shows you a plain hatch. The young Keeper hands you a lantern and unstraps her red arm bracers. "Please take these and follow the tunnel. This path will lead you past the walls of Leenhaven to freedom "

PLEASE NOTE!

If you have finished RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN successfully at least once before, meaning you reached an "END" section (not a "Your life ends here" section) in the finale, then ignore the rest of this section and start right away with the TARAH'S CHAPTER "KEEP AND BURY" at T1!

If you want to take the Keeper's Bracers (Clothing, Arms, Protection +1), write them down on your adventure sheet.

Determined, you take the oil lantern, say your thanks to the fiery, redhaired Keeper, and with head bent, enter the damp and earthen tunnel. Turn to 384

484 You run several hundred feet along the left tunnel. Then you hear scraping sounds in front of you and a deafening screech resounds in your skull, as if somebody were dragging sharp rocks over glass. You cover your ears reflexively, but then you recognize the source of the noise.

A giant earth leech is slithering towards you! Its white, gelatinous body almost fills the entire tunnel. Between its metallic fangs it crushes head-sized rocks, making the deafening sound. Unfortunately, it has smelled you. Rising up to spread wide its metallined maw, it attacks!

GIANT EARTH LEECH ATTACK # 15 13 Defense

W14 15 RESISTANCE \$0030

Because of the deafening noise your scores in Attack and Defense are lowered by 1 for the duration of the fight! If you have the ability Sharpened Senses, you even lose 2 points each!

After losing the third point of RESISTANCE, the earth leech starts to fight more defensively.

If you survive the battle, turn to 438.

485 Uncertain, you climb down the stairs to the lower deck of the Nargus. The sea is noticeably rougher than it was just minutes ago. You brace yourself against the door frame of your cabin, look into the narrow hallway and remember the briefing in the Ningal Tower in which it was decided that there has to be a Zarlik on board every important ship.

However, you haven't seen one of the mysterious swamp lizards on board so far. Without further ado, you ask one of the sailors. "The Zarlik?" the young sailor asks back amusedly. "He's lying in the cabin in the back. He's not a pleasant sight, though."

If you want to visit the Zarlik, turn to 386. If you are not interested in the magician, turn to 535.





486 At first you do not realize that the merchant is giving you a hidden signal, but then you remember your lessons with Master Tarus and the book about secret signs, illustrated with the symbols and gestures of secret organizations and guilds.

If you want to return the greeting covertly, turn to 527. If you want to announce yourself as a soldier of the Empire turn to 494. If you want to keep a low profile, turn to 385.

487 Not until the third salvo of boarding bolts has flown over your head do you dare to raise your head again. The ship's side has been utterly smashed. Water is leaking in everywhere and the starboard hull looks fit to collapse at any moment. The far-off corner of the storage room, with the wooden crates sealed with pitch, has remained undamaged. From the upper deck you also hear martial screams and the rattling of weapons. The battle is raging.

If you want to go to the crates and open them before the ship sinks, turn to 363. If not, you must leave the hold if you don't want to drown (turn to 378)

488 Happy to leave the shop, you squeeze back into the narrow alley. Hounded by the gazes of the inhabitants, who seem to watch your every movement from behind their windows, you run through the alley until you stand on the main path in the middle of two roadblocks. The soldiers of Leenhaven notice you at once. Before they can react, you run into the opposite passage. *Turn to 403*.

489 With desperate courage, but quick as a feral cat, you grab the warrior by her weapon arm and hurl her over your shoulder down the stairs to the hold. She utters a dazed curse as you



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CHAPTER 3 · BROTHERS IN ARMS

quickly close the hatch behind her. Then you hear a scream of horror. Wood shatters and the planks beneath your feet shake. Then all is silent.

Shuddering, you imagine what must have happened only a few feet below you. With nowhere else to go, you throw yourself into the turmoil on the Nargus' deck.

Turn to 378.

490 "Halt!" barks one of the guards in a peremptory tone. "Prohibited area—hold or we will fire!"

Suddenly you are standing in the midst of a spotlight emanating from two bull's eye lanterns. Even though you cannot make out the guards against the bright light, you hear the unique metallic clack of crossbows being readied. Caught without options, you raise your arms in defeat.

If you want to say you who are and ask for Admiral Grobrig, turn to 418. If you want to jump into the harbor basin and try to escape by swimming, turn to 421.



491 It is a beautiful night and you have managed to find a lonely spot under the palm trees at the edge of the sandy beach. Almost unhindered by clouds, the silver disc of Ugar is shining down upon the harbor of Votracht. The shallow surf sparkles peacefully.

Everywhere, banners of the Empire are fluttering in the windon the masts of ships, on the houses and yes, even on the harbor chapel that was originally consecrated to the goddess Kar. The sundial above the entrance has been hacked out of the limestone with brutal force.

254

They don't want to understand...

You shake your head and try to forget the war for a moment by pushing aside all your dark thoughts. You free your mind and feel your surroundings embrace you, engulf you. You're one with the world, all of life and time itself. Your body becomes utterly still. With open arms you wait for a sign, wait for enlightenment. Then, before your eyes, the stars and the moon begin to wander across the sky! At first you don't understand what this is supposed to mean, but then you realize what has happened. > Time is passing faster! <

Minutes pass in seconds. You almost have the feeling that you can control this state when a drunken sailor suddenly reels across the beach like an overwound children's toy, shattering your concentration and ending your meditative petrifaction. Angrily, you push him down on the sand and walk back to the harbor. You receive 1 point of KARMA!

If you want to return to your cabin on the Mexez to spend the night there, turn to 543. If you would rather go the waterfront and enjoy yourself, turn to 502. If you wont to go the Nargus at once and introduce yourself to Admiral Grobrig, turn to 377.

492 Crouched over, you run to the hatch and take a look at the mechanism. At first, you cannot see the object between the gleaming brass wheels, spindles and axles. There it is! The explosive ball is stuck between two cogwheels. The splint pin has been inserted. You do not have much time!



If you want to remove the bomb with one of the rods, turn to 499. If you want to run away at once, turn to 530.



493 Despite all the tension, you focus on your innermost being and block out all negative thoughts. You feel the pressure slowly building in the iron ball. Bravely, you wait. Seconds pass, one after another, as the bomb continues to pulsate...

Turn to 417.

494 "You're either terribly naive, stupid or desperate." The merchant shakes his head. "If not all of the above." You tell him about your passage and the sea battle. He is visibly shocked to hear about the negative outcome for the Empire. Your empathy tells you that his emotional response is sincere. "It's an honor to help you, an Ugarith."

He hands you his Menokian Glaive (Weapon, Hit Bonus +4). If you want to take this imposing pole weapon, note it down on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 412.

495 On your way to the city center a large wooden house suddenly collapses directly in front of you. With quick reflexes you jump into a side alley as a pressure blast of hot ash and toxic



smoke seizes you. You hold your breath and crawl across the wet pavement with desperate, failing strength. At last a fit of heavy coughing overwhelms you; the smoke burns in your chest. Just as you have almost come to terms with death, you feel yourself being dragged from the alley by someone with an iron grip. Nearly unconscious, you glimpse one of the Ugarith elite warriors from the Mexez. Then darkness swallows you.

If you have a Fig from Rohja, turn to 379. If not, turn to 410.

496 While the sailors are preparing the versatile two-master for the long voyage to Votracht, you stare motionless from astern at the Ningal Tower slowly receding in the distance. Gradually the giant rock spire shrinks to a thin index finger pointed in warning out of the roaring sea.

Captain Towak generously ignores your lack of readiness for duty-he knows well that he's bringing a very special passenger to the mainland.

The night passes, but with each passing hour you feel a growing restlessness taking hold of you. You cannot help but imagine what will happen if the rising disc of Kar pours out its fiery rays over you.

If you want to go below deck, turn to 396. If you want to resist your fear and wait for sunrise, turn to 390.

497 You wait for the workers to take their next break, and then, hidden in the shadow cast by the lanterns, creep to the opening in the water gate. Somewhat shakily, you push the splint into the bomb and place it in a crack in the water channel.

Turn to 530

498 With courage born of desperation, you leap into the tumultuous sea. Even though you dive down several feet under



the water, you are immediately caught up in the muffled shockwave from the explosion. Swimming underwater with forceful strokes, you attempt to avoid being sucked down with the sinking ship. Turn to 451.

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499 Carefully, you thread the rod through the complicated system of cogwheels. It feels like an eternity before you finally manage to maneuver the ball to the edge of the mechanism and within reach of your fingers.

You have just taken hold of the ball when you hear an alarm bell and a guard appears.

"Hey, what are you doing?" he barks at you. In as few words as possible you try to make clear to the guard that there's no time for explanations if he wants to live. But not until a giant explosion tears both of your bodies asunder, does the lumpish guard for one millisecond realize what you were trying to tell him.

Your life ends here.

500 Curious, you study the military maps. A moment later the door swings back and an aged man in an ornate robe enters the room. Entering behind the frail man is the woman whose rude acquaintance you've already recently made. You recognize her by her cloak and the uniquely red shade of her hair. She smiles confidently.

"We greet you, Shadow Child!" the venerable old man begins in a rough voice, breathing heavily as he seats himself at the table. "Your arrival fills us with worries, but at the same time strangely with hope."

"...and we know about your mission. We don't want to dissuade you from it," the woman adds.

The gray-haired man gazes at the wall and continues feebly: "But the people from Kyphi you're looking for are no longer in the city.

According to reports from our scouts they left Leenhaven shortly after the end of the sea battle."

"They are on their way to Veniz," the young woman carries on while the old man recovers himself. "We do not know what they want there. Maybe they are planning another assassination attempt on the high military officers of the Empire stationed in Veniz." Now having this valuable information, you find it sensible to continue to follow the spies from Kyphi. Veniz, after all, is not far away, and perhaps you can learn more about their motives.

If you want to ask which side the old man and the red-haired woman are on, turn to 434. If you want to know why they have brought you to their hideout, turn to 413.

501 Wet, salty sand sticks to your face. You are cold and racked with pain, but you manage to get to your feet. Even in the dark of night one glance at your surroundings tells you that you have been washed ashore at Leenhaven Bay.

Many hours must have passed since the naval battle. You must have been unconscious for hours. You feel terrible. Your VITALITY is critical!

Turn to 368.

502 With a nightmarish feeling, you run along the waterfront's shabby alleyways. On the one hand, it is the first time since your ordination that you have been alone among strangers. On the other hand, you feel the dark, accusing gazes the poor inhabitants give you. Their looks reflect their grief and rage at the bloody battle that took place some two months ago.

You are moving through a dark side alley past a rather shady alehouse when directly in front of you two weathered street toughs step from the shadow of a run-down warehouse. Their grins are disquieting provocation.





800 Entering behind the frail man is the woman whose rule acquaintance you've already recently made. You recognize her by her cloak and the uniquely red shade of her hair. She smiles confidently.

At the same moment, in the light reflected in the wet cobblestones, two more ruffians appear, crossing your path. One of them, a tall, gaunt man, brushes his greasy hair back from his scarred face using a rusty iron rod.

> If you want to confront the thugs, turn to 406. If you want to try to escape to the tavern, turn to 459.

503 In the time it takes to load the impressive ship, the Shadow Master bids farewell to each of his Ugarith. When it's your turn, he extends his wrinkled hand to see you off.

"My child, even though you can't foresee it yourself, with Ugar's help you will change the face of the world!" Calderel's prophecy reverberates in your mind.

Distracted by the weight of these words, you return his handshake somewhat absentmindedly. Suddenly Calderel's grip intensifies, and he pulls you close. "Here, take this," whispers the ruler of the Empire with paternal concern. "Eat it when the need is great, will you?"

He has given you a small, dried fruit.

If you want to take the Fig from Rohja (Utensil), write it down your adventure sheet. You should write down that if you eat it, the magical fruit will immediately increase your VITALITY to fit!

Turn to 476.

504 Descending the rusty system of ladders you are led to five more identical platforms until you finally reach the last ladder at the base of the dam. You have just climbed down the first rungs when you become aware of the stench of urine, followed by a movement in an alcove directly in front of you. A worker with soot-covered face and oily hands steps out from between some crates, whistling as he adjusts his trousers.

Surprised, he stares at you, snaps to attention and gives a somewhat botched salute. "We did it, Sir! The water gate is



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working again, Sir!" You nod your head to cover up your own insecurity. The ensuing pause is obviously unpleasant for the worker. "...yeah, erm, do you want to inspect our work, Sir?" If you want to refuse and lake a look around alone, turn to 400.

If you want to follow the worker to the hatch, turn to 415.

505 What choice do you have if the boy raises his weapon against you? He deserves his fate!

Young Menokian Warrior

261

260



ATTACK

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506 With an earnest expression, you declare to the three workers that you first intend to inspect their work on your own, and are therefore sending them on a short break. With a shrug, they obediently leave.

If you have a Bomb and want to plant it at the water gate, turn to 497. If you only want to scuttle the mechanism, turn to 457.

507 With all your strength, you hurl the vibrating bomb onto the raised deck of the Vandagaal. With a bang the iron ball rolls around between the barrels and crates until at last it's picked up by a sailor. You can see in his confused face that he isn't sure what he's holding in his hands. All is well until he finally decides to throw the ball back.

> If you want to jump into the sea to get to safety, turn to 498. If you want to retrieve the ball, turn to 477.

If you have played Tarah's Chapter, please check the box at "A" of the Path of Wisdom section on the third page of the adventure sheet, Maybe you get a clue there what to do here.

TANCE \mathbf{PO} If you survive the battle, turn to 378

508 Looking deep into the cunning innkeeper's eyes, you demand 25 Dinars. "Well then," he growls reluctantly. "Here, take it and piss off!"

Giving a sailor's greeting and grinning broadly, you walk outside into the alley.

Write down 25 Dinars (Money) on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 375

262

509 You have no chance against this creature from the depths of hell. Your weapon is useless and you can only flee. In panic, you rush up the stairs towards the hatch door. Behind you, the Sogukant bares his sharp fangs. With lightning speed he darts from shadow to shadow.

Just as you are about to push open the hatch, a female Menokian warrior proves faster. Apparently she wanted to search the hold for more enemies. With a broad grin she holds her bloodied cutlass to your throat and signals you to come up the last few steps. Test your DEXTERITY against 12!

If you are successful, turn to 489. If you fail, turn to 397.

510 As agile as a cat you slink from wall to wall, crate to crate, shadow to shadow. You make surprisingly good headway, but become more and more careless with your choice of hiding places. As you're hiding below a staircase, a frail old woman unexpectedly steps out of the door leading up from the cellar of the house. "Yikes! What do you want?" the woman asks reproachfully, trembling as she clutches a crate full of potatoes. "Get lost, young man. I don't want any trouble."

If you want to address the old woman with the note given by Admiral Grobrig, then look at your adventure sheet under Wain Alley, add 99 to the number and turn to resulting section.

If you do not have any such clue or just want to go on, turn to 370.



CHAPTER 3 · BROTHERS IN ARMS

511 The fact that you can live under the dangerous rays of the sun fills your mind with thoughts of power. Even so, you know that there are many more Ugarith like Aonus who also have this ability.

Turn to 519.



512 With a dive you manage to catch the bomb, but your landing in a stack of wine barrels is not exactly gentle. You suppress the pain, scramble to your feet, and quickly return the ball, which is vibrating quite strongly by now. Your VITALITY is reduced by one level! Turn to 391.

513 With interest you watch the sleazy guests losing Dinar after Dinar at the wheel of fortune. Sometimes somebody wins, but in the end, the house wins a lot more. You wonder why the numbers that win are mostly ones which only little money has been bet on.

If you have the ability Sharpened Senses and want to use it, turn to 436. If not, you can try your luck (turn to 411) or leave the tavern (turn to 375).

514 Deep inside, curiosity gnaws at you. You would love to know what the seal is all about.

. Would the Zarlik have been able to help me? Wait a moment, hasn't he done it once before? Or has he? «

You experience déjà vu, the feeling of already having lived through this very same situation. The Zarlik asked you this question once before and you made a different decision—or didn't you? You seem to hear the echoes of another life in your mind. Totally disoriented, you brace yourself against the thin wall of the cabin.

Turn to B6!

515 Instantly you attack the unknown woman. But with a supple spinning motion she again escapes your attack. As you're trying to regain your equilibrium after the failed blow, the cloaked woman drives her leather boot into your hip. You gasp and fall to your knees unable to breathe.

Before you can get up again, two dark figures take you by surprise. You cannot escape their firm grip. You are tied up and gagged before you can even fight back. A bag is pulled over your head.

"Don't make any trouble!" the woman whispers angrily in your ear. "It will be nicer for everybody involved if you keep quiet now."

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level, but not less than hurt!

Turn to 398.

516 You look at your work with satisfaction. The mechanics of the Empire will require weeks to repair the damage. When the alarm bells ring, you are already climbing up over the iron rungs.

If you have left items in the chest while entering the dam, you can take them with you again. Just remove the marking of Save Point \otimes with the items you want to lake with you again. You must delete the items you want to leave behind. Make the necessary changes on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 393.

517 You seize the large chain links and let yourself down bit by bit. But after a few handholds you have more and more trouble holding on to the slippery chain. You are about to go back when suddenly the fingers of your left hand get caught in the chain. Pain shoots up your arm and it cramps, losing its grip. Helplessly, you try to free yourself, but you cannot hold on any longer. Slipping down, you fall screaming into the void, never to be seen again.

Your life ends here.

518 Ignoring the risk of being seen out in the open by soldiers, you quickly run along the main road towards the market place. From there perhaps you can learn more, or at least you can head for the eastern city wall to leave Leenhaven.

Even on the most important streets there are mounds of stinking garbage and filth. Under the burden of war, the formerly flourishing trading town has become a living hell for its citizens. Numerous times you are forced to step over dead and decaying house pets, and you are plagued by hundreds of flies scattering in the air as you pass by.

Then, suddenly, two city guards come around the corner. Both are as surprised as you are.

If you want to greet them curtly, turn to 426. If you want to run away at once, turn to 352. If you want to attack both of the guards, turn to 392.





CHAPTER 3 · BROTHERS IN ARMS

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

519 In the afternoon you are commanded to come into the council hall. There the great officers of the Empire have gathered to make plans for the coming battle. Representatives of all the allies take part in the discussion—Zarlik, Baronyaks, Dvorak and Menokians.*

Calderel has excused himself. In his stead Aonus, who already wears his impressive riding gear, leads the talks. Tired, you try to follow the strategists' words as they gather around a magical map of the coastal region of Leenhaven and tensely discuss the coming battles. In truth, the three-dimensional map-a realistic representation of the region from a dragon's perspectivecommands more of your attention than do Aonus' explanations.

If you want to follow the tactical discussion, use this map of Western Pakonia!

The attack force consists of three primary units. The main fleet is made up of two fleets, from the Ningal Tower and from Port Enlil. Twenty-six ships altogether will gather around Votracht, the southermost naval base of the Empire, passing Beentracht in the east and west at sunrise.

The Menokians will form the north flank with their nine ships and will rejoin the main fleet between Obtracht and the coast. According to the battle plan the force will reach Leenhaven at sunset.

At the same time, they will be supported by the ground force, which has for weeks been gathering around Fort Sin. Over 1600 men from all the allied peoples will fight for the Empire at Leenhaven.

An hour before sunset Aonus will lead the small number of Dragon Riders from the Windy Mountains to Leenhaven and support the ground forces from the air. In addition, about 60 Ugarith elite soldiers are to attack embattled positions at sunset.



The battle groups around Seraph will hold their weapons for the time being. But the soldiers will remain in position before Rhenus' westernmost settlement to prevent Kyphis' Golden Army from coming to the assistance of Leenhaven.

267

If you have the ability Warfare, turn to 472. If not, turn to 454.

520 You try to make out something in the salty foam, but only sporadic flashes of lightning give you a fleeting impression of the



*) Refresh your knowledge about these races, by using the glossary. You'll find the keyword index as part of the Annex at the end of the book.

desperate situation on deck. As you are about to withdraw inside the ship, from the corner of your eye you see a sailor being dragged away by a wave.

Not until the masses of water have retreated again, do you see the poor fellow clinging desperately to a post of the rail. His cries for help are almost inaudible. Unsteadily, you stagger towards him, grab his arm and pull him back onto the Nargus' slippery planks. You receive 1 point of KAMAI

Turn to 535.

521 With all your strength you force the Imperial officer against the rail of the platform, ram your knee into his abdomen and push him into the deeps. He smashes into the ground next to the water gate at the base of the dam. You realize that you have only a few moments to get to safety.

If you left some items in a chest when you entered the dam and want to retrieve them, turn to 474. If not, turn to 479.

522 You concentrate solely on your eyesight, enlarging the whole scene in your mind. Now you realize that the four men in the group are behaving strangely.

They work their way along the wall and then finally start to tamper with a door that apparently leads inside the dam.

> If you want to return to the dam and follow the group of strangers, turn to 367. If you want to ignore the group and wait down here by the channel, turn to 549.

523 After moving several hundred feet down the right tunnel you sense that something's wrong. When suddenly the ground starts to tremble beneath your feet, overwhelmed by fear, you take off further down the tunnel, sprinting as fast as you can.



Glancing behind you in the flickering light of the lantern, you find yourself staring into the round maw of a white, worm-like monster. Despite almost completely filling the tunnel, it barrels toward you with incredible speed and suppleness. You run for your life, in your distress hurling the lantern at pulsing head of the earthen leech. The oil ignites, and a shrill scream fills the tunnel! The flames do not kill the monster, but they slow it down long enough for you to escape the danger.

Turn to 438.

524 Determined to sink the enemy's flagship in a surprise attack, you take out the innocuous looking explosive ball. As you insert the splint, you feel the iron slowly heating up. You have set off a reaction that cannot be stopped. With trembling hands, you hold the bomb and pray to Ugar that you are making the right decision.

Remove the Bomb from your adventure sheet!

If you want to throw it, turn to 507. If you want to wait some more, turn to 429. If you have the Mental Focus and want to trust it, turn to 493.

525 You just barely manage to grab the wet chain. Nevertheless, you are determined to slide down on it if you can! Test your STRENGTH against 13 and your DEXTERITY against 12!

If you are successful with both tests, turn to 465. If not, turn to 517.

526 With all your strength you push off from the leaden plumb and swing towards the metal platform. But your timing is not perfect; missing the edge by a hand's breadth, you fall. Fortunately, you crash down only one level onto the hard iron grate of the third highest level.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level, but not worse than critical!

You limp painfully towards the ladder. At its upper end, an Imperial officer prepares for combat. He has apparently noticed your escape maneuver. You know that you do not have much time before the bomb explodes. Hastily, you climb the metal rungs. On the next-to-last platform, the officer in his richly decorated Imperial uniform awaits you.

Challenging you, he positions himself in front of your last steps to freedom. "Soldier, explain yourself! What is happening here?" he demands sharply. Panicky and impatient, you draw your weapon and attack. OFFICER OF THE EMPIRE ATTACK #15

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ATTACK × 15 DEFENSE 14 RESISTANCE © 2 COMBAT ROUND 00005

If you win the battle in four COMBAT ROUNDS, turn to 521. If the combat goes into its fifth round, turn to 474 at once.

527 The merchant's expression reveals nothing when you put your crossed middle and index fingers to your mouth to show him that you have noticed his secret hand sign. "It's dangerous to be far from home these days," the inscrutable merchant starts off ambiguously. "But I can help you if you've lost your way."

If you want to ask for the "quickest way home," turn to 412. If you want to ask him first if he can equip you with "all that's necessary," turn to 354.

528 You glide nimbly under the table and pull the tiny brass knob. Two large, catlike eyes stare at you. Before you sits a diminutive Mungol crammed into the hollow base of the table. His four hands hold fine iron chains which he apparently uses to manipulate the wheel of fortune. The terror of discovery is written on his leaf-green face. As you grab him by the collar, he pleads with you in a shrill undertone, "Please, please leave me be!"





528 Two large, callike eyes stare at you. Before you sits a diminutive Mungol crammed into the hollow base of the table. His four hands hold fine iron chains which he apparently uses to manipulate the wheel of forture.

With all six limbs he tries in vain to lessen your grip. Then he makes you an offer: "Good, you've caught me. If you let me go I'll tell you what the next number will be. It's a three!"

If you want to seize the opportunity and bet on the Three, turn to 470. If you want to reveal the fraud, turn to 441. If you want to close the door in the base of the table again and leave the tavern, turn to 375.

529 Instinctively you shrink back when suddenly a human hand decorated with runes grabs your shoulder. "I am glad to have finally found you," a rough female voice whispers. The unknown woman wears a simple black cloak whose hood hides her face completely save for a few red locks of hair. You have no idea how she has managed to sneak up on you.

If you want to attack the woman, turn to 409. If you want to talk to her, turn to 423.

530 You realize that you have only two, at best maybe three minutes to leave the inside of the dam. Worried, you stare up the steep dam wall, almost two hundred feet high. Somewhere up there in the dark, lies the exit.

Suddenly a shrill bell rings! A guard has raised the alarm.

If you want to try to escape using the ladders of the platforms, turn to 424.

If you want to flee by way of the large plummet, turn to 466.

531 You throw yourself on the ground, watching out of the corner of your eye as a bolt from the second salvo screams over your head. It shatters the ship's defensive wall, impaling the poor, frightened Zarlik as well? The force of the arm-length metal shaft is so strong that it simply penetrates the lizard mage's upper body and hissing, continues unchecked into the hold to smash into a pile of potato sacks.



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You turn away in disgust when the shredded body of the Zarlik is dragged past you, leaving an orange-red trail of blood behind. You see that the bolts are connected to silvery ropes. With them, the Nargus is to be dragged towards the enemy ship. Again, you hear the ominous clicking of the winches.

If you have any weapon and want to try to cut through the rope dragging the Zarlik through the hold, turn to 394. If you want to remain under cover, turn to 487.

532 Overcoming your fear, you ignore the heat of the flames, close your eyes and leap through a window to the ground floor. Flames envelop you. Only your stony skin prevents you from being momentarily consumed by the blaze. With haste you make your way through the rooms on the ground floor. You have a dark foreboding that the house could collapse any moment.

If you want to go up the steps to the attic, turn to 383. If you want to search the ground floor more thoroughly, turn to 444.

533 The leader slaps the locksmith on the shoulder approvingly and whispers, "Well done, We'll wait for you in the mountains. Good luck!"

Only now do you realize that you have been able to follow the conversation thanks to your artifact. Actually, you should not have been able to understand a single word of Rhelih, a language only spoken in the eastern desert realm.

Turn to 364.

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534 With your keen eyes you see a small stone structure rising on the crest of the dam. It seems to be the only entrance to the interior of the gigantic building. All about lie piles of tools and building materials.

With the stealth of a cat on the prowl, you sneak forward in the shadow of the wall until you reach the projecting structure with

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its massive entrance door and the inscription Interior Dam Embankment.

The lock looks almost as sturdy as the door frame.

If you want to try to force the door open, turn to 452. If you want to hide and wait for another opportunity to get through the door, turn to 546. If you no longer want to get inside the dam or enter the channel in the direction of Leenhaven, turn to 404.

535 The swaying and creaking of the ship grow stronger and stronger, causing dark thoughts to arise of the ship's doom. Deciding to wait below deck for the end of the storm, you crawl into your bunk. When one of the masts breaks and shatters parts of the deck, however, your rest is over. You pray to Ugar that he may show mercy to the crew of the Nargus.

Turn to 443.



536 Letting out a death rattle, the leader sinks to the ground by the dam wall. With his last strength he tries to shout something to his remaining companions, but it is only a stream of blood that gushes from his mouth. While removing the bodies of the Southerners, you search their cloaks and find the following items:

· Scimitar (Weapon, Hit Bonus +3)

· Leather Bag with 9 Dinars (Money)

· Red Prayer Candle (Utensil)

Don't forget to write down on your adventure sheet the things you want to take.





While you had to contend with the two southern spies, their two companions were able to pick the lock and slip through the door. Exhausted but determined to catch them, you take up the chase. *Turn to 387*.

537 Sogukanti are extremely powerful beings from the underworld that can be wounded only with weapons that are magical or blessed by the gods. Their power is restricted to the night, however. The rays of the sun hurt them badly.

Turn to 509.

538 Suddenly there's a disturbance among the Menokians. You look around and see the recovered lizard mage staggering across the deck of the Nargus to the bridge.

"Commodore, a Zarlik!" one of the opposing ice warriors shouts. While the mage is positioning himself next to Admiral Grobrig, you watch the leader of the Menokian ship. He pushes his helmsman aside and lets the wheel spin several times.

Pure concentration glitters in the Zarlik's slitted eyes. The air crackles as the power of magic gathers in him. The enemy's ship is just a spear's throw away and ready for boarding.

Suddenly, from his empty palms the lizard mage releases a giant fireball that smashes through the hull of the Menokian ship with the speed of a huge, catapulting stone!

Burning splinters and body parts fly through the air, men jump into the sea screaming, Even you feel the searing heat of the fire lance. Cheers burst out as the enemy ship lists violently to one side.

And all this achieved solely through the surprise attack of the Zarlik!

Yet it is not too long before the cheers turn to panic, for the ship's sluggishness causes it to continue floating directly towards the Nargus.

> The Commodore intentionally set upon a collision course! <

The wood of countless trees groans under the impact of the collision. When the hull of the Nargus is forced up and over the enemy wreck, you are unable to keep on your feet any longer. By chance, before you fall from deck, you manage to get hold off a rope hanging from the rigging.

If you want to jump overboard before it's too late and swim to the city, turn to 451 If you want to stay on board the Nargus, turn to 362.

539 In the strong wind the sail of the Nargus swells out almost to the point of ripping. "We have only one chance! We have to get out of the bay and redeploy at the base," Admiral Grobrig explains his commands. "The Menokian ships are smaller and don't have much draft. They could outmaneuver us in the shallow water between the islands and gut us like fish!"

The enemy ships, twelve in all, draw their net tighter and tighter. It appears that they have even anticipated the Empire's escape maneuver. A few minutes later, the hazy shapes on the horizon have become heavily armed ships with their creves. Men and women, scarred and disfigured by past battles, their faces covered with the colors and symbols of the Menokian warrior caste, these desperate freedom fighters stand ready to board the Nargus. Their eyes blaze in fierce determination.

"Go below deck and pray! If the Moon will hear any voice tonight, it will be yours!" barks Admiral Grobrig.

> If you want to obey, turn to 380. If you want to join the battle, turn to 427.

540 With a bone-chilling scraping sound, the hulls of the three ships smash into each other. It is only with great effort that you are able to keep your balance, but you have to watch two less fortunate men fall over the side.



Because the deck of the Menokian ship to starboard is about seven feet lower than that of the Imperial ship, the enemies bravely swing over on ropes. Twenty warriors have so far dared the jump. Three dozen more are hanging in the rigging, waiting for the right moment.

You notice a movement behind you and spin around. Standing in front of you is a young Menokian, barely more than a child, raising his sword to attack you!

If you want to fight the young warrior, turn to 505. If you want to disable him without shedding any blood, turn to 420.

541 You normally don't suffer from fear of heights, but gazing down into the dam with its slippery wet walls, you become weak in the knees. Hesitantly placing one foot in front of the other, you finally reach the massive chain.

Curious, you examine it. Its links are a bit rusty, but they still easily bear a weight of several tons. Surprised, you notice that the chain is moving slightly.

If you want to slide down the chain to the base of the dam, turn to 525. If you want to return and use the ladder, turn to 504.

542 Greatly relieved, your eyes follow the bolt as it crashes to the ground with a thud. At the same time, the plummet jerks under your feet and breaks loose from the chain. Thinking quickly, you clutch the links of the chain. Instantly you are catapulted upward with such force that your stomach turns. Faster and faster you hurtle to the top. The wind brings tears to your eyes, but you still manage to see the massive counterweight coming towards you on your way to the ceiling.

Yet then—in the moment of greatest panic—a perfect inner calm pervades you. Although for an outsider this state of perfect concentration would be only a fleeting moment, time seems to stand still for you. Now the chain links clatter in slow motion, one after

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the other, through the diversion wheel above you. Relieved, you come to the conclusion that the counterweight will only just miss you as it passes, but there will be no collision.

You wait for the right moment to jump.

Test your DEXTERITY against 17!

If you have the ability of Mental Focus,

you only have to test your DEXTERITY against 15 instead.

If you are successful, turn to 407. If you fail, turn to 526.

543 You're glad to be back in your cramped cabin on board of the Mexez, especially in view of the fact that the next few days will bring the final battle that decides the war. You prefer to rest in the remaining hours of the night.

Turn to 433.

544 The ears of the stout innkeeper behind the counter turn noticeably red as you whisper to him what you've discovered about the manipulated table. "How much does your silence cost?" he asks you uncertainly.

> If you want to have 20 Dinars, turn to **464**. If you want to have 30, turn to **480**. If you have the ability **Diplomacy**, turn to **508**.

545 At first the ocean looks as if it may remain calm, but from one moment to the next, the first heavy gusts of salty water lash against your face. A few minutes later and the black wall of clouds has reached you, making the Nargus only a plaything of the storm. Admiral Grobrig roars his commands as loudly as he can, but many of his orders are lost in the thunder of the waves and the groaning of the ship. In a flash of lightning you are horrified to see just how much the main mast is bending.

> I should have gone under deck! «



Mercilessly, the storm hurls one wave after the other over the deck. By now the crew have given up fighting the primal power of the storm. The sails have been hauled in, the cargo secured. Desperately, you cling to a rope poorly knotted and attached to the railing.

Test your STRENGTH against 14 and your DEXTERITY against 16! If you are successful with both tests, turn to 520.

If you are successful with only one, turn to 320. If you are successful with only one, turn to 388. If you fail both, turn to 440.

546 For an hour now you have remained hidden, and nothing has happened. Breathing a long sigh, you gaze at the sun—in a few minutes it will have reached its zenith. Suddenly you hear the soft sound of footsteps. A group of four are sneaking towards the dam. Hiding their faces behind dark cloth and pressing themselves against the protective wall, they advance with sabers drawn. Blood drips from the leader's blade. Tense, you withdraw even further into the shadows.

Only a few steps away from you, the masked figures position themselves in front of the metal door. All of them are wearing Venizian clothes, but the scuffed black boots of the gigantic leader reveal that he is probably from the desert realm. Only there can one find the leather of the rare Aijamu hippo.

With practiced teamwork, the group start to work. While the two smaller men are inspecting the lock, their leader and his equally strong companion watch their back. Despite being perfectly concealed, you hold your breath.

If you want to attack the unit, turn to 422. If you want to wait in your hiding place, turn to 355.

547 Skillfully, you parry the violent attack of the robber still standing. Blocking his arm and seizing him by the neck, you fling him across the alley into a stack of fruit crates that collapse

noisily over him. When no one moves anymore, you inspect the leader, who is just now regaining consciousness.

If you want to take his money, you can write down 6 Dinars (Money) on your adventure sheet.

Before you get into any more trouble, you decide to hide in the tavern's common room.

Turn to 459

548 Surprised by the house's sudden collapse, you seek cover behind a wall and wait for the first shockwave of hot ash and black smoke to pass. You are just about to turn your back to the flames when you hear the hysterical screams of a young woman. Amidst the flying sparks and the flames, she cries out for her son. who appears to still be in the burning house.

> If you want to turn aside and continue on your way to the city center, turn to 446. If you want to help the mother and her child, turn to 532. If you have the ability Premonition, turn to 395.



549 For almost an hour you've been hiding in the dried out bed of the channel winding snakelike through the valley to Leenhaven when you suddenly feel a tremor. At first barely detectable, it becomes more and more intense until it turns into a deafening roar. The dam is breaking!

Instinctively, you charge up the embankment, look back and freeze: Behind you looms a gigantic flood wave. Countless uprooted trees are already riding its crest. Only a few seconds



later the wave crushes you. As your dead body is dragged along by the masses of water, the inhabitants of Leenhaven are unaware that they will suffer the same fate.

Your life ends here.

550 While the Venizian dam below you grows smaller and smaller, you try to come to terms with what has happened in the last few minutes. Aonus is dead, his dragon has saved you from certain death, and now you are flying on her back with the Impressive landscape of the Windy Mountains and the enormous Veniz reservoir before you.

) What surprises does fate still hold in store for me? <

You hold on to the bridle chains with all your strength and press your thighs against the padded leather saddle, afraid of plunging to the depths below. Undeterred, Kyrna continues to soar until you reach the dense blanket of clouds above. Breaking through them with a few more powerful beats of her wings, she cries out in exultation as she reaches the open skies above.

Such a sight! «

Awed, you rub your eyes. Never have you experienced such a breath-taking view! The golden disc of Kar casts its heavenly fire over the boundless white ocean of clouds surrounding you. The sight is so moving that you lose yourself in it for a while.

Only Kyrna's persistent call and a muffled voice from the dragon's saddle bags interrupts your reverie. Shivering with exhaustion and with the cold, you take out a shining communication quartz. The voice is clearer now.

"Aonus, where are you?! Make yourself known!"

You immediately recognize the shrill, hoarse voice of the Shadow Master, and you run hot and cold at the same time.

At first, you don't know what to do. But after a moment of shock, you seize the opportunity and greet Calderel while disguising your voice to sound like Aonus.

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"Aonus? Finally! What is the situation? Have you performed your mission?"

You answer in the affirmative.

"And the traitor?"

You answer hesitatingly: "...dead!"

There is another pause. You ask yourself whether you have chosen your answer wisely. But then Calderel continues soberly, "Good, Aonus, good. Return to Fort Sin at once and await further commands!"

The crystal darkens. Suddenly determined, you fling it off into the clouds, wiping the cold sweat from your brow as it plunges toward the sea. You are still shaking with mortal fear, but you have taken your first real step towards fighting back.

Exhausted, you lie down on Kyrna's back. You feel her rough scales of black horn scratching your skin. You sense even her breath, her heartbeat. You sort your thoughts. Calderel must have sent Aonus to eliminate you. But how did the Shadow Master know about your false game?

> Tarus! «

It's possible that Calderel was able to expose the Keeper after he gave up his disguise for you. With mixed feelings you take out Tarus' letter and run your fingers over the fine, handmade paper. If you can't remember Tarus' letter, then turn to B18, refresh your memory and return here!

Reproaching yourself bitterly, you decide to obey your teacher's injunction and head for Varoon in the Tamoloka Massive.

Continue with CHAPTER 4: "IN THE HEART OF DARKNESS".

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Have you found the 2 FATE POINTS (#6 and #7) in this chapter? If not, question the consequences of your actions at sea and at the dam with regard to the inhabitants of Leenhaven.



RULES V

KYRNA'S VALUES

You have a strong ally in the Dark Lady, your black dragon Kyrnal She will help you wherever she can, but usually it is up to you to decide how and when she does. Kyrna's power and constitution are described by these values on your adventure sheet – RIDER RANK and KYRNA'S VITALITY.

RIDER RANK

There is a special connection between you and Kyrna. There will be situations in which these bonds become stronger. The RIDER RANK describes this connection.

There are five levels:

Companion - Ally · Familiar · Friend · Master



You begin as Dragon Companion. This is the first RIDER RANK. It is already marked with a cross on your adventure sheet. With each successive rank, you mark them as well.

The higher your rank rises, the deeper your connection is.
KYRNA'S VITALITY

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Even huge dragons like Kyrna are made of flesh and blood. She can be hurt or even meet her death. If she should die while you are sitting on her back, this will lead to your death as well. It will not matter how high your VITALITY is at the moment. This comes from a combination of psychic shock and what is likely to be a fatal fall.

Her physical condition is documented with the value KYRNA'S VITALITY on your adventure sheet.

As a note, the shield \bigcirc between normal and battered may come into play later and can be ignored for now. You will learn about the rules for this shield when you need them.

Kyrna's Saddlebag

There are large saddle bags on Kyrna's back. You can use them to store away Utensils and Weapons that you cannot or don't want to carry on your body.

You can exchange items between those in your possession and those in Kyrna's Saddlebag in sections in which you a) are in direct contact with your dragon and b) are not engaged in combat.

Kyrna's Saddlebag can hold up to 6 items. Items beyond this limit may have to be discarded.

You have done it! These were the final rules you needed to learn! Turn to the 4th chapter at 551.

CHAPTER 4

IN THE HEART OF DARKNESS

The Battle of Leenhaven and the fight against an old enemy have altered your nature. You receive 1 KARMA.

From now on, you can stow surplus items in Kyrna's Saddlebag. Remember, however, that when you're alone, you can only use the items you carry yourself.

Searching Kyrna's Saddlebag, you've found the following items, which

obviously used to belong to Aonus: · Rider's Coat with attached Heavy Gloves (warm, but uncomfortable piece of clothing you only wear when riding Kyrna or when exposed to

Rider's Thorn (spear made from black steel, attached to the saddle with a long chain - thus cannot be used elsewhere)

· Rider's Bow (masterful long-distance weapon with quiver) Dragon Horn (signal for Kyrna, which you always carry with you)

The four items mentioned above are your permanent dragon gear, so you don't need to write them down!

· Strong Obsidian Potion (Utensil, provides three levels of VITALITY after consumption, can even raise you to fit, and can be used in combat) 8 Dinars (Money) and 13 Shekels (Money, silver coins from Alonia with an embossed crescent moon)

Lantern (Utensil)

+ 20 feet of Rope made from Latuk-hair (Utensil)

As a matter of prudence, you put the last two utensils into your back-

pack. You may have to take out other items and stow them in Kyrna's Saddlebag or drop them forever. Make all the necessary changes on your adventure sheet!





SECRET REFERENCES

From this chapter on, there are occasional sections that hide an alternate way to progress in the story. Their numbers are marked with an asterisk (example: 557+ instead of 557). To use these alternate paths, you either have to modify the section number with a trick or apply a clue given elsewhere that suggests what to do. If you have no idea, you can, of course, continue reading in the usual way at the section number given.

Your VITALITY rises by a level, but not more than normal. Don't forget to put in the Save Points at the beginning of the chapter on your adventure sheet.

"Ascent will become descent, and even the holy man will be led into temptation. Will he be able to cross the chasms of his shadowy existence and in the twilight of the siblings to know friend from foe?"

- THE ORACLE OF KABETH

551 Kyrna bids farewell with an attentive gaze as you leave the rocky plateau of Varoon and head toward the Grand Chasm. Beyond it, according to the letter Tarus wrote, leads a path to the snow-covered peaks and the hidden temple of Ugar.

You push back the hood of your Rider's Coat and let your gaze wander over the huge, majestic mountains. The first stars appear faintly against the red of the evening sky, but nothing indicates the location of the sanctum. Nevertheless, you trust both Tarus' words and your dragon's sense of direction.

You breathe freedom. For the first time in weeks, you feel freed of all your problems, freed of every battle, freed of all pain. Then Tarus' admonishing words ring in your ears again. You focus on your holy duty, the duty of the Shadow Child.

The first stretch of the way is not difficult. Determined, you trudge over the packed snow, which at this altitude blankets the



barren rock completely. In the thin air trees and bushes cannot flourish. Even so, no matter how cold and sparse the surroundings may be, they have a calming, almost spiritual effect on you. Turn to 561.

552 It may be a smart decision not to climb the sheer rock wall. Nevertheless, the comparatively safe path has its own dangers. You can move only slowly. As you climb, the cliffs cast their long, threatening shadows on the unpaved path.

If you have a Lantern and want to light it, turn to 668. If not, you have to walk in the dark, so turn to 598.

553 Puzzled, you realize that the strong beam of light from your lantern is not being reflected as it should be. A part of the light literally pierces the mirror and disappears into it. As you step closer to investigate, the mirror suddenly shatters. Instinctively, you turn away and dodge the splinters while thousands of fragments rain down onto the ground.

Turn to 679.

554 The creature in the rock languidly opens its arms and legs, as if it has been sitting cross-legged for an eternity, waiting only for you. The colossus is not made of flesh, skin and hair, but of granite, basalt and obsidian. It is not blood that flows in the veins visible beneath his rock-hard skin-it is quicksilver! Whoever created this monster understood his diabolical craft.

Before you a powerful golem sits enthroned, like a figure from a tale of horror. His shape is vaguely human. Fist-sized diamonds glitter in his mouthless skull, resting where a mortal creature would normally have eyeballs.

For the first time, you trust the holy power of your new weapon and draw the Moon Sickle!

Turn to 653"!

287

 $555\,$ The entrance to the hall of mirrors. A kaleidoscope of bodies and faces.

In which direction do you want to go?

East, turn to 579. West, turn to 628.

556 Crossing over the slabs to reach the other bank is a great risk. But you trust in Ugar and your skills. You take a huge leap, then several more. The first few jumps are not a problem. As agile as a mountain goat, you jump from platform to platform. About halfway, however, the stone breaks under your weight and tilts to the side. Trying without success to keep your balance, you side off.

> If you have the ability Immunity to Heat, turn to 581. If not, turn to 678.

557 With all your strength you brace yourself against the rocks. At first, nothing moves, but then the stones start to slide. Fresh air flows into your prison, and you stick your arm through the opening just as more stones crash down. You appear to be wedged in. Despite the pain, you remain calm.

Turn to 677.

558 You dash into the darkness. Behind you, the demon is screaming. You cannot help yourself—you have to look back and see a grotesque, disfigured face staring at you with seven mad eyes.

Resisting their hypnotic power, you run faster and escape with a courage born of desperation. While you get to safety, behind you a black tentacle rampages, finally causing the entire passage to collapse.

Turn to 667.







559 With stoic calm the monk strides ahead of you. You stare at his black robes and long staff as well as at the luminous moon sign on his forehead. He, however, does not even deign to look at you.

» What an odd man. Shouldn't a priest of Ugar receive the Shadow Child with greater euphoria? «

Do you want to ask Ugar-Vin about his strange behavior, turn to 674 If you want to follow him without a word, turn to 607.

560 You have reached the center of the hall of mirrors. In which direction do you want to go?

North, turn to 596. East, turn to 696. South, turn to 579. West, turn to 676.

561 After nearly an hour's walk, Kyrna has become only a small black dot at the foot of the mountain. Even though she's miles away, you feel her near you.

And as if your dragon wants to send you a sign of farewell, she beats her mighty wings with such force that the icy snow swirls up into the air. A magnificent display of colors from red to violet is visible in the evening sun.

) These colors... they are beautiful. That's what a rainbow looks like. Thank you, Kyrna! \checkmark

You are standing before the entrance to the Great Chasm, a narrow pathway or, better, a fissure in the rock massif of the Varoon. According to legend, the protected entryway leading to the holy peak was hewn by the first Ugarith and in places takes one beneath the permanent ice of the glacier. Anxiety and fear accompany you as you enter the gorge.

If you have the ability Premonition, turn to 675. If not, turn to 610.



562 The dark basalt steps lead you past mighty columns to a giant archway separating the temple porch from the temple itself. The oversized Ugarith saints flanking your path follow you with their empty stone eyes.

Abashed, you look down at the stone floor and realize that the allvery inclusions in the black marble glow beneath your feet. You draw a trail of light behind you, fading slowly as you move. "Your first task lies in front of you, Shadow Child."

With a dramatic gesture Ugar-Vin shows you a huge moon calendar. Showing the moon's phases, the masterly mosaic covers the entire area of the inner temple.

If you have the Star of Feymar, turn to 694. If not, turn to 641.

563 Hesitating, you take a step away from the moon sphere. The ground shakes. With every step you take, the quakes become angrier, until all the mirrors surrounding you shatter at once. The shards do not fall to the ground, however! They hover in the air for a moment; then—as if on command—they aim their sharp edges and fly towards you. Within a breath or two you collapse, cut to pieces and covered in blood.

Your life ends here.

564 In the middle of the huge cave looms an interesting rock formation, significantly larger than the others. It glistens as if wet. As you approach the strange rock, you think you see a movement. Not something on or in front of the rock has moved; it is the entire rock formation itself!

Barely a stone's throw away, you stand frozen. You've never seen anything like this before. The rock is slowly rising as if alive! Turn to 554.

4

565 Stumbling, you try to hold on to something, but you grasp at nothing. As you slide down over the stone edge of the path, your death cry echoes through the mountains.

Your life ends here.

566 You maneuver the Xorox in front of a rock wall while you are still standing in the middle of the hallway. Like a shadow boxer you punch the air, but the mirror creature attacks the unrelenting wall. With each imitated blow, shards break off the monster's body. Your plan is working!

You intensify your imaginary attacks, until finally, with a forceful nod forward, you cause the monster's glass skull to smash against the rock. It works! With a shrillclatter the shards fall to the ground and fade. You have conquered the Xorox with its own weapons!

A silvery star stone rolls from the pile of shards at your feet. Fascinated, you pick it up and swallow it without thinking. A new power engulfs you. You do not know what ability you have received, but it is something extraordinary.



Write down the ability Power of Xorox in line 11 on your adventure sheet. In addition, mark the number 566 there, the number of this section, so that you can look up something if necessary.

Turn to 612.

567 Feeling about on the ground in front of you, you finally grab a piece of basalt. The size and weight are perfect. Then you toss it into the darkness. You hear the sound of loud clattering, as if somebody had shattered a dozen vases with one blow. Then the silence returns. What does that mean?

If you have a Lantern or a Bull's Eye Lantern and want to light it, turn to 587. If not, you have to walk in the dark, so turn to 681.





568 You are only a few yards away from the cave's edge. A small exit—the demon would never fit through that—lies directly in front of you. Next to it, in a narrow alcove of the catacomb, you discover a huge pile of skulls and bones.

If you want to examine the pile of bones, turn to 684. If you want to continue on your path, turn to 577.

569 After taking only a few steps in the hall of mirrors, you realize it's a labyrinth. You are tense and nervous; your body trembles in the presence of some invisible force. Somebody or something of tremendous power must be here!

Turn to 555.

570 Nothing happens. Disappointed, you sit down. When you do, the glow beneath your feet fades and dies. "Obviously you aren't worthy of entering the sanctum, Shadow Child," Ugar-Vin murmurs quietly, taking you into his arms in a comforting embrace. He has nothing else to say. Nothing else matters.

Your life's meaning ends here.

571 The meaning of the intricate golden symbols on the archway poses a riddle for you. Uncertain whether they are a blessing or a curse, you step through the portal.

Turn to 629.

572 No sooner has she spoken her words than she raises her arms and with sweeping motions starts to shape and form the billowing shadows. The ghost ship's sails billow out, and its course changes. When you realize that the vessel is headed for you, you want to flee but the dark fog brushing against your legs has suddenly become a viscous mass. Helpless, you plod forward, but the ship will reach you any moment.

If you want to throw yourself into the fog, turn to 663. If you want to dodge the ship while running, turn to 649.

-

573 The raft glides silently over the viscous stone. Gaseous clouds ripple across the planks and catch fire. In silence the ferryman continues to push the raft forward with his pole, unresponsive to the flames. Nor does he even deign to look at you. In the middle of the raft, you can see a small mast with no sail. Six gold coins are nailed to it.

If you carry the Captain's Doubloon, turn to 611. If not, turn to 693.

574 After only a few minutes you have reached the foot of the west wall. Here, there is much less snow. Up close, however, your plan to climb the Varoon looks like childish recklessness. Regard-less, you trust in your abilities and prepare yourself for the difficult acut ascent.

Overconfidence combined with claw-like hands that automatically dig into the stone may be dangerous, but bit by bit you fight your way up the steep face of the mountain.

Turn to 635.

294

575 With confident steps you walk across the luminous sky disc towards the inlaid waxing half-moon on the marble floor. Turn to the MOON CALENDAR on section 600. Is the Waxing Half Moon crossed off there?

If yes, turn to 639. If not, turn to 570.

576 You're awakened by someone roughly shaking your shoulder. The most recent events, the shadow ship in the black fog and the combat against Captain Sian were only a nightmare. You open your eyes and recoil. "Interesting!" the wizened old woman whispers in your face with her foul breath. "Only few survive Sian's ship of death. A pity on the one hand, on the other hand heartily refreshing!" She laughs hysterically.





573 The raft glides silently over the viscous stone. Gaseous clouds ripple across the planks and aatch fire. In silence the ferryman continues to push the raft forward with his pole, unresponsive to the flames. Nor does he even deign to look at vou.

CHAPTER 4 · IN THE HEART OF DARKNESS

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

"You've earned a reward, haven't you?" She reaches into her fur coat and takes out a gold coin. With surprising dexterity, she lets the doubloon dance over her right hand while you stare rapt at its metallic sheen. Then the old woman tosses the gold coin to you.

> If you want to catch the doubloon, turn to 627. If you want to let it drop to the floor, turn to 592.

577 No sooner have you taken your first step out of the cave and into the passageway, than behind you the light from the crystals fades and dies, and the spear which saved your life just moments ago suddenly turns to dust. Then a tremor fills the passage. The ominous scraping sound returns. Quickly it grows louder and louder.

There, movement! The demon has awakened again!

If you have any weapon, turn to 699. If not, turn to 558.

578 Although numerous bizarre rock formations rise up from the cavern floor, and the ceiling glitters with a few solitary crystals, lacking colors the cave makes a somber impression. You feel an inner anxiety as finally you reach a rock ridge extending across the entire breadth of the cave.

Cautiously, you walk towards the chasm and see a large platform far below you. The light from your lantern is not strong enough to illuminate more clearly anything in the distance, however. Then you are seized by a forceful tremor accompanied by a loud scraping sound that shakes the cavern violently.

You go to your knees instinctively and protect your head from the rocks raining down throughout the entire passage.

> If you have a Bull's Eye Lantern, turn to 599. If you don't have one or don't want to use it, turn to 682.

579 Innumerable mirrors confuse you. In which direction do you want to go?

> North, turn to 560. East, turn to 696. West, turn to 555.

580 The second blow strikes true as well! Again, a bestial groan is heard, and the arms pull back with a jerk. You glance at the ceiling of the cave, and immediately the second crystal also lights up. This time in yellow. But as before, it takes only a few seconds for the tentacles to return and hunt you once more. Again, there is one less, but you make out a new color among the thrashing tentacles.

Which tentacle do you want to attack?

The black one, turn to 699. The green one, turn to 623. The blue one, turn to 601. The orange one, turn to 669. The violet one, turn to 584.

581 Lava sloshes over your arms and legs while you attempt to hold on to the platform. But your Ugarith ability protects you initially from the blazing heat by covering your skin with a protective layer of stone. The thin slab of stone that you are floating on, like a Krimm bear on an ice floe, will not be able to withstand the lava for long, however.

Helpless, you look around you and can hardly believe your eyes. Not far away, a raft is floating across the lava lake! Though the haze of heat, you think you recognize a man, steering the raft with a long pole. He has not seen you yet.

> If you want to call attention to yourself, turn to 687. If you want to wait, turn to 678.



N .

582 Relentlessly, the thick fog invades your mouth, your nose, your ears. Panic grips you. You can no longer breathe. Finally, you lose consciousness. The dense cloud looms up, cresting as an enormous wave before crashing down and devouring your lifeless body.

Your life ends here.

583 You are unable to say how long you have been walking along the passageway. It is still ornamented with overwhelming, anarchic art treasures. In addition to the main motifs, the moon and the sun, you see countless depictions of dragons flying majestically before the stars, serving them and fighting for them. Despite all its beauty, you are aware that this place has seen both life and death.

For a brief moment, you lose your way. The passage has changed Suddenly, the statues have disappeared and you are standing in the midst of a cavern! Like fangs, countless rocky crags extend from the floor and ceiling of the cavern. Curious, you touch the edge of one to see if they are real, promptly cutting your finger and drawing blood.

You look back and realize with a shudder that the passage has disappeared behind you as well. Nothing is there but cold stone where once you walked. You have no choice but to continue going further into the cave.

The floor of the cavern is completely covered with a dense, black, shimmering fog. The entire scene has an unnatural effect, almost like a bad dream from which there is no awakening. Then the sudden light from your lantern falls on a figure in the fog. You peer into the face of a crone clad in a monk of Ugar's cloak far too large for her. The ghostly fog winds about her legs like an old, insistent tomcat.

"Come closer, I want to tell you a little story!" she croaks, her shrill voice piercing your skull.



If you want to approach the old woman and listen to her story, turn to 659. If you just want to walk on, turn to 618. If you want to attack her, turn to 625.



584 Spinning around with the spear, you drive the tip into the violet tentacle, causing a gaping wound. But instead of blood, countless thorns shoot from the wound, many of which tear painfully into your arms.

Gritting your teeth, you pull the glowing needles from your flesh. For a brief moment their strange violet color stirs a fresh memory. When I was landing at the foot of the Varoon, was Kyrna trying to tell me something? «

If you want to refresh your memory, do it at section 561 and return here. Read the text between the moons (...) then come back here (put your finger between the pages to hold your place).

There are seven tentacles again, each one lashing out at you. The fight starts anew.

Your VITALITY is reduced by a level!

Turn to 683.



585 An eternity passes, but nothing happens. Impatient, you dare to make the first move in this game of nerves.

If you want to sneak closer in the cover of darkness, turn to 660. If you want to throw a stone at your enemy to provoke a reaction, turn to 567.

586 For several minutes you grope about with your hand in the emptiness. Just as you are about to give up, your hand suddenly grasps the hilt of the mysterious sword. Elated, you pull out the blade and are rewarded with a sight you can scarcely believe. You're holding the legendary Moon Sickle, the holy weapon of the Ugarith!

Your DEXTERITY rises by 1 point!

Write down Ugar's Moon Sickle (Weapon, Hit Bonus +4, Special: In combat the holy blade allows your attack to automatically succeed, even if you have rolled the dice already. This costs you 1 KARMA point per COMBAR ROWD you use this sift).

Turn to 626.

300



587 The light from your lantern falls on the innumerable reflecting shards at your feet. You have shattered a large mirror. *Turn to* 679.

588 It is midnight and a sublime view spreads out before you: Thousands upon thousands of stars frame the moon in the crystal-clear sky. It's almost as though you did not notice the bitter cold covering the land with a crystalline layer of frost.



Despite the adverse circumstances, the last miles leading up to the summit pass without further complications.

Turn to 617.

589 Cautiously, you step forward. Apparently, the other person intends to make contact with you, someone, namely, walking toward you and also carrying a lantern in his hand. The shape is humanoid, but you cannot see the figure's face against the light surrounding it.

As you come near, you realize that the person standing opposite is you! How ridiculous, but you have been fooled by your own reflection. Relieved, you walk up to the great wall of mirrors. In the light reflected from the lantern the passageway is as bright as day. You scrutinize your reflection. The last few hours have ravaged you. Abruptly, the image blurs. The mirror begins to vibrate. A shrill sound pierces your ears. Then the mirror is shaken by heavy blows. Someone or something is trapped behind the glass! If you're using a Bull's Eye Lantern, turn to 553. If not, turn to 615.

590 With confident steps you stride across the sky disc towards the waning crescent moon embedded in the marble floor. *Turn to the MOON CALENDAR on section 600.* Is the Waning Crescent Moon crossed off there?

If yes, turn to 639. If not, turn to 570.

591 With the help of your artefact you can read the sentence that has been written down. "Emeth kan o Meth—Truth ends with death."

Though you comprehend the words, you still cannot understand what is so very special about the sentence.

Turn to 604

592 With a quick turn of the hips, you let the coin fly past you. It disappears in the billowing darkness only a few steps behind you. For a moment you think you glimpse the pale, bloated hand of a drowned corpse reaching for the doubloon, but then the black fog closes in upon itself again, an opaque, impenetrable soup. The witch is surprised. "A traveler not tempted by gold. I haven't seen that before."

Turn to 666.

593 You feel the ghostly death fog trying to invade you, but you manage not only to hold your breath, but even to exhale. Like a toad wriggling in the darkness, you struggle to escape the ghost ship. Just as your head breaks through the surface of the fog, you find yourself looking up at the side of the imposing hull racing past you by a hair's breadth.

Turn to 633.

594 At your feet lies a skeletal human arm! It has been severed just below the shoulder joint and is covered with the rotting remnants of a red cloak. After finding nothing more, you turn again to the fascinating sphere.

On the back of the moon sphere—whose pattern looks utterly foreign to you—you find a small round opening through which your arm might just fit. Looking inside through the hole, you see a blade reflected over and over again in thousands of facets. Its heavenly silver luster evokes a dream.

> Can it be true? Can this be the legendary weapon of my people... the Moon Sickle consecrated to Ugar? <</p>

You contemplate reaching into the crystal with your hand, gauging whether you could even reach the sword.

If you want to stick your arm into the crystal and

try to reach the blade, turn to 680.

If you want to listen to your fear and suppress the urge, turn to 563.



N ... (

595 With confident steps you stride across the sky disc towards the waxing crescent moon embedded in the marble floor. *Turn to the MOON CALENDAR on section 600. Is the Waxing Crescent Moon crossed of there?*

> If yes, turn to 639. If not, turn to 570.



596 You have three paths from here you could take. *In which direction do you want to go?*

East, turn to 696. West, turn to 608. South, turn to 560.

597 Helpless, you search for the moon briefly hidden behind clouds. A moment later, the silver light of the moon disc is reflected off the stony back of your right hand, illuminating a hidden part of the rock wall. As your light shines on them, narrow steps, hewn into the rock, appear, just as if Ugar wanted to show the Shadow Child the way!

Adjusting your backpack for the last time, you and trudge through the snow and into the mountain.

Turn to 651.

598 In the darkness you have trouble finding your footing on the narrow, stony path. Clumsily, you stumble over some large stones, nearly losing your balance and falling.

> If you want to shift your weight to the rock wall, turn to 565. If you want let yourself fall forward, turn to 634.

599 With a short twist of the lens, you magnify the light from your lantern. Its ray pierces the darkness and illuminates the platform below you. Aiming the bright cone of light, you hurriedly search the ground while the tremors in the rock grow increasingly stronger.

The Bull's Eye Lantern illuminates a tall mound of stripped bones on the opposite side, somewhat hidden in an alcove. Lying among all the human bones are some objects, but you will have to move closer to discover what they are.

Turn to 682

4

600 The moon shines pale and weak in the face of the dying day, but you are glad that it watches over your steps.

Cross off in the MOON CALENDAR on the opposite page the phase of the moon you determined randomly in the last section!

The snow-covered path leading to the temple above the southern wall of Varoon glitters in the light of the nocturnal stars. The path looks traversable, but its rather long. It could take until dawn for you reach the temple. You could also set out to climb up over the rugged western wall. This would be more dangerous, but faster. If you want to follow the path, turn to 552. If you want to take a shortcut over the western wall, turn to 552.

601 Out of the wound shoot steely fountains of water. One hits you in the chest, hurling you against the rock wall of the cave.

As you look up, you see all seven tentacles lashing out once again. In a moment of sudden comprehension, you realize that you can win this battle only when you hit the tentacles in the right order. Your VTRALTY drops by a level, but not worse than critical!

Turn to 683.





fette gedeform wary) mare 1555 9.75 054 abriles ชภะ, รัพสีรุ่าเ -รา BUGWER MOON CALENDAR Waxing Phases Waning Phases New Moon Full Moon Gibbous Moon Crescent Moon Half Moon Half Moon Crescent Moon Gibbous Moon

600 The MOON CALENDAR: Cross off the current moon phase here. The numbers in circles refer to the power of the corresponding phase.

602 The lava has left bizarre rock formations all along the shore. They look interesting but are of little help in crossing the lake. Among them, you see a strange rock that looks as if it has been hewn; a narrow platform rising just above the surface and supported by numerous pillars juts out some twenty paces into the lake.

At its far end you see a post with an iron ring. It would almost appear that this strange shape of stone is a pier.

If you want to step onto the pier, turn to 688. If you want to return and jump over onto the platform, turn to 556.

603 Clutching the rusty spear to defend yourself, you suddenly realize that the light from the crystals has a magical effect on both the cave and the demon—it is lying motionless at your feet. Yet this monster from the underworld looks paralyzed rather than dead.

> If you have **Pitons** and **Rope** and want to lower yourself down the sheer rock wall, turn to **644**.

If you want to save these Utensils or do not possess them, you will have to let yourself down onto the limp arms of the demon. Turn to 619.

604 You think the book could be filled with commands or spells.

The large tome is too heavy to take it with you, so you should make notes of your insights. You never know when something from this strange volume will be useful. Note any information you wish on the third page of your adventure sheel.

You have searched the perimeter of the cave thoroughly-there is no exit. You can only search its center.

Turn to 564.

605 Beating its wings furiously, the griffon hacks at you and bites into your hands. Stricken, you drop your weapon, which



• *N* •

first crashes against the mountain wall. Then, rising in an arc it finally tumbles and disappears into the deep.

You duck your head and climb sideways, away from the griffon's aerie.

Remove the weapon you were using in that combat.

Turn to 609.

4

606 The cave wall looks weirdly polished. You have walked nearly a mile when you make a terrible discovery. A smashed skeleton lacking its right arm lies on the ground between some scraps of cloth and leather. The bones of the left arm are clutching a tome. The thick volume is closed and looks untouched by the ravages of time.

If you want to open and study the book, turn to 652. If you want to leave the dead in peace and search the middle of the cave, turn to 564.

607 "Why shouldn't I treat you the same as all Children of Shadows before you?" the monk says suddenly. You come to a halt, confused by the prospect of this man inside your mind. • Can be hear mu thoughts? <

The old man turns around and looks in your eyes. "So it is. In the silver light all emissaries understand each other without speech." > Is that supposed to mean that even this frail old monk is a Shadow Child himsel? •

"Yes", Ugar-Vin chuckles softly. "Did you think you were the only one?"

Turn to 643.

608 > Haven't I been here before? < In which direction do you want to go?

East, turn to 596. South, turn to 628.

306

609 Marshalling the last of your strength, you drag yoursell up over the edge. Exhausted, you roll onto your back and look up at the sky. A bird of prey is circling in the clouds, soaring quietly above you. The path you have dragged yourself up onto is also the path leading directly to the temple. By the time you have regained your strength, the sun has already set. Though the path is now almost impossible to see in the dark, you trudge on.

Turn to 588.

308

610 For almost an hour you have been pressing forward through the Great Chasm when suddenly small rocks begin to rain down on you. Then you hear a thundering crash and clatter directly above you, accompanied by a shrill animalistic scream. Ducking, you start running as fast as you can.

Turn to 636+.

611 With a queasy feeling you compare the gold coin on your cloak with those nailed to the mast. All six are completely different. They are so old or strange that you cannot even determine where they were minted. Noticing your interest in the gold, the ferryman draws his staff out of the lava and comes towards you. With his blackened hands, barely more than skin and bones, he points first at the doubloon and then at the mast. The master of the skiff seems to be demanding his pay.

If you want to nail the Captain's Doubloon to the mast, turn to 658. If you do not want to pay him, turn to 693.

612 Going further, you are shocked to realize that there are many more mirrors here, constituting both the walls and passages. Moving up close, you are confronted with innumerable doppel-gangers. It takes several minutes for you to cope with the confusing perspective. Once you have, you enter the hall of mirrors. Turn to 569.



613 Knowing that you have mastered Ugar's first test, you walk down the narrow spiral staircase into the darkness and light your lantern. There is a corridor in front of you, flanked by black statues on the right and white figures on the left. Frescoes and mosaics of the stars adom the ceiling and the floor.

The beauty of the place is fascinating, but there is a message hidden within it. At first, you're somewhat confused. In all the depictions, Ugar, the moon, and Kar, the sun, occupy equal positions. Both struggle constantly for supremacy in the firmament, but the battle is pointless. With every step you take, with every work of art, you comprehend more clearly that both gods can only exist together, side by side.

This insight does not sadden or wound you. Deep within you have always known the truth. Like twins, Kar and Ugar are part of a wise, divine plan. The animosity and hate between the believers of both gods now seems nothing but childish bickering. *Turn to* 583.



614 With confident steps you walk across the sky disc towards the waning gibbous moon embedded in the marble floor. *Turn to the MOON CALENDAR on section 600.* Is the **Waning Gibbous Moon** crossed off there?

If yes, turn to 639. If not, turn to 570.

You find the rules about the section numbers with an asterisk + on page 286.

615 With each of your steps towards the mirror the blows become stronger. Except for the shrill song of the trembling pane and the muffled tremors all around you, you can hear nothing. If you want to smash the mirror, turn to 662. If you are determined to keep going, turn to fil.

616 Somewhat hesitantly, you give your weapons and Rider's Coat to the monk. He accepts the items with outstretched arms and a respectful bow: "So shall it be. According to ancient custom, the Shadow Child shall face the holy trial!"

Mark all weapons in Save Point with a cross \otimes to show that you are no longer carrying them. Perhaps you will get them back later.

Turn to 613.

617 You have finally reached the narrow, rugged stone ramp Tarus mentioned. He was right. Kyrna would not have been able to land here safely. Nevertheless, you are glad that your dragon brought you to the foot of the Varoon. You do not know how you would have found the well-hidden temple of Ugar otherwise. Even now, with a clear view of the peak, you cannot make it out. For almost an hour, you search the rock wall for an entrance or the like, all in vain. Then something odd occurs.

Turn to 597.

618 "Ignorant!" The frail woman's expression darkens. Even through narrowed eyes her gaze pierces you. "Those who fail to see the wisdom in my words must learn the painful truth for themselves!"

Turn to 572.

619 You feel a deep sense of revulsion when you touch the slimy arms of the tentacle demon. The hideous beast is no longer moving, but you sense the diabolical power still resting in its



Feeling freed, you climb down as the echo from your howl slowly fades. Yet try as you may, in your descent you cannot avoid touching the slimy secretions of the demon.

Your VITALITY is reduced by a level!

Turn to 568.

620 Flowing from the wound you've dealt the tentacle with a thrust of your spear is a green cloud.

You see that the other colored tentacles cause the poisonous fog to glow. In a moment, all seven of the arms begin to twitch and lerk throughout the cave again.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level if you do not have the ability Free Breath.

Turn to 683.

621 Nimbly you roll behind a rock. For a brief moment this gives you the chance to look around. The tentacles here are different: One is white as chalk, another one pitch-black, the remaining ones are brightly colored.

You've barely understood this strange fact — the rest of the cave is still a drab grey as before — when one of the tentacles seizes the rock you're hiding behind and hurls it into the darkness, where it smashes with a deafening sound.

You feel as exposed as a woodlouse under an upturned stone, but then you see the glinting tip of an old spear lying only a few yards away. Determined, you grab the lengthy weapon, for nothing remains but to confront this vile threat.

If you have the ability Magical Lore, turn to 692. If not, turn to 630.



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622 You read "Emeth a Meth," and murmur die translation again and again: "Truth and death."

For a long while you ponder these Skÿllic words. Beyond the portal you could perhaps find the answers you seek, but you might also find your end. Casting aside your doubts, you stride through the stone arch with determination!

Turn to 629.

623 No sooner have the tentacles pulled back after your skillful blow, than a green light from the gaping wound floods your surroundings. Again, a monstrous wail shakes the cave, but you are sure that the screams have become weaker. You are on the right path!

Conscious of what to expect, you prepare to fight the remaining tentacles. And sure enough, crawling over the rock, they pursue you. There are four left.

Which tentacle do you want to attack?

The violet one, turn to 584 The bright yellow one, turn to 669 The blue one, turn to 642 The black one, turn to 699.

624 For an eternity now you've been walking along the passageway that leads you straight into the interior of the Varoon. Your echoing footsteps are joined by an ever-louder rumble. The air is also growing hotter and more leaden. You go forward cautiously so as not to slip on the wet floor.

The passage leads to a slowly widening cave whose walls reflect a restless red light. The shimmering rock is very smooth here but appears natural. On the floor of the cave lie pebbles and some larger rocks. The rumbling is deafening, but you cannot make out where it's coming from.

Turn to 695.

625 In a single leap, you set upon the old woman with a punch to her wrinkled face, but your fist passes through her check as if her body consisted of air. In disbelief, you stare at the spirit woman, whose broad grin exposes the few rotten teeth she has left. She screeches with mocking laughter, "Apparently you don't want to hear a story, do you?"

Then you are pierced by a stabbing pain. Shreds of shadows dance across your own claws. Only when the protective stone layer has formed on your skin, do the dark shreds of flesh disappear.

Your VITALITY is reduced by a level!

Turn to 618.

626 You gaze with pride at the sharply curved blade of the Moon Sickle. Its magical shimmer fills the room, and reflected in the glass, is as bright as day. The mirrors vibrate under the power of the glorious metal, their vibrations constantly increasing until one after the other they shatter with a deafening noise.

A few seconds later you are standing amidst a huge pile of glittering shards—the spell has been broken. All the caves and passageways you have been moving through all this time were merely an accumulation of mirrors and illusions, created to determine the next wielder of the Moon Sickle!

Protruding from all the rubble you discover the sheath of the divine weapon. As you attach it to your belt, you admire its simple, perfect beauty.

Directly in front of you, the light from your lantern illuminates a stone arch spanning a passageway and supported by two stone pillars. Strange golden letters are engraved into the black stone: "EILET h A IIIETh".

If you have the Pearl of Understanding, turn to 622. If not, turn to 571.

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314

627 The glint of the gold coin is fascinating. One side bears a shining, stylized sun, while on the other side grins a human skull. A square hole punched into the middle of the coin forms the open mouth of the ghastly visage.

"Beware. Gold can sparkle oh so seductively," the mysterious crone croaks, holding her sides and roaring with laughter. With a loose cord you attach the Captain's Doubloon (Special Item) under your cloak. Write it down on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 666.



628 Mirrors, mirrors everywhere. In which direction do you want to go?

> North, turn to 608. East, turn to 555.

629 You have just crossed the portal and travelled a short distance into the cave when you hear a scraping sound directly behind you.

> Damn, this had to happen! <

You leap back, but before you can reach it, the stone portal closes with muffled bang. You push against it with all your strength, but to no avail.

Turn to 637.

630 With acrobatic spins and leaps you dodge the seven wild-



ly twitching tentacles. At the same time, they smash rocks or rip whole boulders from the walls of the cave. It is only a question of time until you lose any cover you may have had and your strength wears out.

You clutch the spear and wait for an opportune moment.

Turn to 683.

631 The monster's final, bloodcurdling scream shakes you to the core. But then the last of the five crystals shines forth, and together they fill the cave with the wonderful colors of the rainbow. You remain poised for a moment, but there is no trace of the demonic arms left. Bending over cautiously, you move towards the ledge and look down. Not far away, you can see the monster that has been attacking you — a huge tentacled demon!

Turn to 603.

632 Moving the speckled grey eggs to one side, you look nervously up at the ruddy evening sky when suddenly a shrill scream pierces the air. A large bird of prey swoops down on you, sacrificing itself to protect its clutch.

ROCK GRIFFON	ATTACK	N 16
	DEFENSE	• 14
	RESISTANCE	•00

If, when defending yourself, you roll two ones (so $\bullet \bullet \bullet \bullet$), turn to 605. You can break off the battle at any time, but you have to leave the mirror behind.

If you win, you can write down the Hand Mirror (Utensil) on your adventure sheet. When you put it in your bag, you notice the strange engravings on the mirror's handle: " $\mathcal{E}_i \sigma_* Q_i$."

Maybe these are the initials of the former owner of the beautiful piece. If you want to, you can write down this information under Special Notes on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 609.

633 Standing at the illusory rail consisting of fog and shadows is a sailor wearing tattered clothes and holding a trident encrusted with seaweed and seashells. It's Captain Sian!

Two bulging eyes without pupils stare at you out of his pale. rotten face, filled with the madness of his ghostly existence. The rags hang from his emaciated arms and legs. In his bony hand he holds a rusty sabre which he points at you. Then the dark for swirls up, and a moment later you're standing next to him on deck!

With an unmistakable gesture he challenges you to a duel, kicking a sabre across the sodden deck to land at your feet. Keeping your eye on the ghost, you grasp the fog-like weapon. Barely are you ready for combat when Sian charges you with a roar.

SIAN,	ATTACK	× 15		
THE GHOST PIRATE	DEFENSE	W 17		
	RESISTANCE	¥003		

Temporarily the Fog Sabre gives you a Hit Bonus +5 for this combat. If you survive, turn to 576



634 You fall forwards and just barely manage to grab the ledge. You have been able to save your life, but the rope you had coiled around your shoulder unrolls and snakes away into the deep.

Remove the Rope from your adventure sheet!

Turn to 588

316



635 You have almost conquered the western wall when you see an aerie. It is sitting on a flat ledge barely out of your reach. Next to four fist-sized eggs, something golden glitters in the sparse light of dusk.

If you want to swing yourself to the aerie, turn to 664. If you want to continue climbing, turn to 609.

636 In a mad rush, you throw yourself forwards and try to dodge the rockfall. The first large rocks have already hit you, however. Dazed, you stagger on, but more and more rocks crash down around you until you finally find yourself crouched over in a dark prison of stone.

Around you, you hear the wild hopping and jumping of some light-footed creatures accompanied sometimes by a shrill scream. Your VITALITY is reduced by a level!

If you want to free yourself at once, turn to 557. If you want to remain quiet, turn to 677.

637 The cave is washed in a dim half-light, but it is bright enough for you to save some lamp oil. Fine gravel crunches beneath your feet. No matter how softly you tread, every step can be heard for a long way. All around you, countless needles of rock rise up in chaotic formation. Their edges are weirdly blunt, however, almost rounded. The ceiling is somewhere up far above you in the darkness.

If you want to the middle of the cave, turn to 564. If you want to walk around the edge, turn to 606.

638 Somewhat hesitantly you tell the old woman the moral of her story as she listens to you with a watchful eye. She ponders for a moment and then breaks out in shrill laughter, confronting you with the overwhelming stench from her foul mouth.

After calming down, she remarks, "You have understood. But you should never explain the moral of the story to its teller, but rather to the one who can learn something from it!"

Turn to BSI

639 No sooner have you stepped on the image of the moon phases, than that part of the mosaic begins to shine in a beautiful, silvery light. Divine wisdom, grandeur, and power flow through your trembling body.

Your STRENGTH rises by 1 point!

Ugar-Vin whispers in awe: "You are truly worthy, Shadow Child, You have understood the nature of the cosmos, the riddle of Light and Dark."

Involuntarily, a sheepish smile creeps on your lips. But then the old monk leads you to the middle of the mosaic, where now a dark hole opens. Steps lead into the darkness.

"More, and more dangerous trials await you in the heart of the Varoon!" With his index finger upraised, the monk admonishes you: "It is forbidden to take weapons into the holy mountain."

If you are unarrned, turn to 613. If you have a weapon and want to give it to Ugar-Vin, turn to 616. If you want to ignore him, keep your weapon and walk down the stairs at once, turn to 697.

640 Your precise attack causes the slimy tentacles to quickly recoil. A loud scream of pain echoes from the cave walls. Where you have hit the gelatinous flesh, it bursts open and a blinding red light erupts from it. The whole cave is engulfed in a diabolical shadow play of red and black.

Again you notice the large crystals on the ceiling. One of them is flaring up in red. Your attack has had some effect!



Your joy over your successful blow does not last long. Again the rock shakes, and in a flash, the tentacles wriggle over the ledge. This time only six remain. Even though you have severed the red arm, the white one is gone. Strange. Which tentacle do you want to attack?

The green one, turn to 620. The red one, turn to 669. The black one, turn to 699. The violet one, turn to 584. The yellow one, turn to 580. The blue one, turn to 500.



641 With a stem voice, the old monk calls to you, "Choose Ugar's face and step closert" Ugar-Vin's words echo in your ears when you notice the shining disc on the back of your hand—now you think you know what to do.

On which of the eight phases of the moon depicted to you want to step? New Moon. turn to 570.

Waxing Crescent Moon, turn to 595. Waxing Half Moon, turn to 575. Waxing Gibbous Moon, turn to 661. Full Moon, turn to 645. Waning Gibbous Moon, turn to 645. Waning Half Moon, turn to 650. Waning Crescent Moon, turn to 590.

6

642 As with the other attacks before, the tentacle bursts where the spear has hit the flesh, accompanied by violent screams from the monster.

Blue rays of light burn brightly throughout the cave and mingle with the three other colors you have already freed. The fourth crystal is also ablaze with light—one remains.

Which tentacle do you want to attack?

The pale one, turn to 669. The black one, turn to 699. The violet one, turn to 631.

643 An eternity passes before you reach the shallows on the opposite shore of the mountain lake. "We are here," the monk whispers, pointing in a grand gesture at the breathtaking surroundings.

Turn to 650.

644 Hastily you prepare your pitons and fasten yourself to your safety rope. With pitons that take hold automatically and tearproof Latuk hair, the climb down is really easy. As you reach the ground, you gather up your rope and rush off. *Remove the Pitons from your adventure sheet*.

Turn to 568.

645 With confident steps you walk across the sky disc towards the full moon embedded in the marble floor. Turn to the MOON CALENDAR on section 600. Is the Full Moon crossed of there?

> If yes, turn to 639. If not, turn to 570.

646 Thanks to a premonition you are prepared for the danger that threatens. With a determined leap, you just barely manage to



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dodge the falling rocks that could easily have hurt or even killed you.

Not far above you, a pack of monkeys with light grey fur are jumping back and forth on the rocks. They screech in agitation and wildly hurl stones in all directions. Could these animals have set a trap for you? One of the creatures stares at you with its chalk white, human-like face.

It's a death's head lemur! These monkeys hunger for the souls of the dead.

If you want to attack the monkeys, turn to 691. If you want to escape, turn to 654.

647 You search the purple sky for the moon. At this season of the year it is usually visible during the day, but you cannot find it. It is the new moon. Ugar hides his face. This is not the day to fathom your destiny.

This sobering insight brings with it a powerful feeling of transformation. Without your wanting to stop it, your senses fade as your body turns to stone, starting with your hands and feet. When you awaken, your skin has taken on its original appearance. Everything else seems unchanged—with one difference. The narrow crescent of the waxing moon can be seen in the sky. > How is that possible? What has happened? < You receive I KARMA point.

Turn to 600 and act as if you had chosen the Waxing Crescent Moon when determining the phase of the moon.

648 With both claws, you push the frail monk to the ground in the middle of the mosaic. Gasping, the frightened old man stammers in distress, "Ugar will avenge this sacrilege, Shadow Child!"

Turn to 613.

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649 By only a hair's breadth the bow of the large ship passes you. At the last moment, you duck avoiding a long plank sticking sideways from the rail before it can hit you in the head.

Turn to 633.

650 Ugar-Vin takes your hand, the one branded with the shining moon sign, and points to the vertical mountain wall rising beyond the lake. "See, Shadow Child! Know Ugar's secret. The reflection of his face." $\ensuremath{\mathfrak{I}}$

You search and search and are about to turn away, when in the dim night first the contours of stepping stones just beneath the water's surface appear, and then large pillars and statues that just a moment ago appeared to be part of the volcanic rock now become visible.

> It is true... only chosen ones are supposed to enter Ugar's great hall. With the pride that comes from being chosen, you stride forward. "Before Kar regains the upper hand, your destiny will reveal itself." With these words Ugar-Vin leads you over the steps in the lake towards the entrance to the temple.

Turn to 562.

651 The countless steps of the narrow ascent lead you ever deeper into the rock. You are reminded of the Ningal Tower, but you feel that this place is imbued with something special, even holy. Driven by impatience, you walk faster and faster until finally you see the end of the staircase.

A large plateau is spread out before you, surrounded by steep cliffs. In the moonlight an idyllic mountain lake sparkles, along whose shore winds a path. Wisps of fog ripple in the breeze over the calm surface of the lake.

> Unbelievable, I'm in the middle of long-extinct Varoon! <

Shivers of awe run up and down your back. The beauty of this place fills you with desire! "A divine night, isn't it?" whispers a







gentle voice, confirming your own thoughts. Behind you an old man in the traditional clothes of an Ugar monk steps from the shadows. He appears to be human, but you see with surprise that the holy symbol of your god, the disc of Ugar, is shining on his bald head like a magical beacon. The monk notices your questioning gaze but ignores it with an impish smile. Instead, he gazes at the back of your hand. It is still shining, its light as bright as his own.

324

He introduces himself with the hint of a bow. "My name is Ugar-Vin. You are the Shadow Child, are you not? It is my task to lead you to the sanctum."

Silently and with a firm gaze, the frail servant of the god strides ahead of you. He carries a long, smooth staff, which he carefully sets down in front of him as he goes so as to avoid tripping over his sweeping black robe. During this trek, your patience is severely tested, but Ugar-Vin appears to enjoy every slow step, one foot after another.

> If you want to follow the monk patiently, turn to 559. If you want to walk ahead of him, turn to 690.

652 Somewhat disgusted, you pick up the skeleton hand and slowly pull the book out from under it. With great expectation, you open it, only to find that the letters dance confusingly across the page.

The text must be magically encrypted. Even so, you can recognize in the last entry some signs that you discovered in similar form at the entrance to the cave: " $\Xi \amalg \Xi \square \Xi \Im$ KAII Θ $\amalg \Xi \Im$ ".

> If you have the Pearl of Understanding, turn to 591. If not, turn to 604.

653 You have barely pulled the blade from its sheath when the whole cave is filled with soft starlight. The golem turns away sluggishly and stares at the back of his right hand. There the



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symbol of Ugar begins to shine, the silvery full moon, just as it occurred for you when you stepped before the sky disc. Then the watchman looks at his left hand, but nothing happens—there is only a jagged spot on the dull grey.

An evil rumble rolls through the cave as the golem's gaze fixes upon you. With his right arm twitching dangerously, he stomps towards you intently. A fight to the death begins!

Due to the Moon Sickle's presence the right arm of the golem is twitching wildly. For this reason, all attacks from the monster's right arm suffer a penalty of 3. Write this down in the brackets provided in the next section.

Turn to C60!

654 When the death's head lemurs realize that they have no chance of following you, they nimbly jump up the steep rock face. You curse the screeching monkeys and continue on your way through the chasm.

Turn to 670.

655 The skillful thrust of your spear opens a gaping wound. Yellow pus spurts from the twitching tentacles, burning your skin on contact.

All seven tentacles of the monster reappear-the combat begins anew!

Your VITALITY is reduced by a level!

Turn to 683.

656 An inner voice tells you that something is not quite right. You sneak past the strange Something. After taking several steps, you can feel a smooth wall and the opening to a corridor. You walk on a bit clumsily until you can no longer hear the groaning. Once there is silence, you light your lantern.

Blinded by dozens of blinding rays, you protect your face with your hand. Then you realize that you are surrounded by countless mirrors that reflect your lantern's light. It takes some minutes for you to overcome your confusion. Then your eyes adjust and you enter the hall of mirrors.

Turn to 569.



657 Concentrating on what your sensitive ears apprehend, you are able to hear countless barely audible sounds like gurgling water, the rustling of your own clothes and the deep groan of the rocks surrounding you. Your enemy, whatever it is, does not make any sound at all.

Turn to 585.

658 You turn towards the mast again and notice a hammer and nails at its base—you could swear that the tools were not there a moment ago.

The ferryman nods in agreement when you nail the doubloon to the mast. Then he changes his course.

Hours and hours pass without the journey ending. Annoyed, you want to confront the ferryman, but no sound comes from your throat, only a green fog. Suddenly you realize that six more ghostly passengers are sitting here around you. Their dead eyes and empty faces make you shudder. Together with yours, their souls will drift for all eternity on the lava lake of Varoon.

Your life ends here.



659 The old woman stretches, takes a deep breath, and recounts her story with great pathos.

"A long time ago, the glorious pirate Sian travelled the six seas. His skill with the trident was legendary, his short temper feared by all. When one day his son Lian, eldest of his three children, who was on board with him, was mocked by the sailors, the captain gathered the whole crew on the stern deck and demanded satisfaction.

Sian had one man after the other walk the plank until only he and Lian remained. Alone, and finding themselves entirely on their own, they drifted helplessly on the sea for eight long weeks until their supplies ran out. And so, driven by hunger, Sian ate his own flesh and blood."

Maybe you have understood the hidden "moral" of the story?

Turn to 618+.

660 Noiselessly, you sneak towards the Unknown. Then you hear a high, almost shrill sound. Directly in front of you, glow two red eyes! You do not know why, but as if by pure instinct you throw a punch. There's a clanging and crashing as if you had smashed a shelf of clay pots with a single blow. Nearby, you can hear a short groan.

If you have a Lantern or a Bull's Eye Lantern and want to light it, turn to 587. If you just want to sneak past, turn to 656.

661 With confidence you step across the sky disc towards the waxing gibbous moon in the marble floor. Turn to the MOON CALENDAR on section 600. Is the Waxing Gibbous Moon crossed off there?

If yes, turn to 639. If not, turn to 570.

You find the rules about the section numbers with an asterisk + on page 286.

662 With a skillful spin, you kick against the sheet of glass that constitutes your mirror prison. Instantly, you hear a deafening clatter, and the light source in front of you appears to literally explode.

Turn to 679.

663 Diving headlong, you throw yourself into the billowing flood of fog and shadow. No sooner have you gone under, than an enormous force begins to press down on your skull, quickly resulting in unbearable pain.

> If you have the ability Free Breath, turn to 593 If not, turn to 582

664 You push yourself away from the wall with a kick, swing towards the aerie and, grab the rock. The glittering object is a small hand mirror. To get it, however, you will have to pick up the eggs.

> If you want to take the mirror, turn to 632. If you want to continue climbing, turn to 609

665 With confident steps you walk across the sky disc towards the waning half-moon embedded in the marble floor. *Turn to the MOON CALENDAR on section 600.*

Is the Waning Half Moon crossed off there?

If yes, turn to 639. If not, turn to 570.

666 Laughing wildly, the figure of the withered witch dissolves into the black fog. You are alone again. At the end of the now empty cave you reach a rugged passageway, which you follow for a mile. It leads to another dank cavern. A weak glimmer illuminates the grey rock all around you. You lower the lantern's wick, allowing your surroundings and the mysterious light to better take their effect on you. At the same time, you notice something strange: The flames from your lantern are not the usual blue and red, but now burn solely in various shades of grey. Nor do your clothes exhibit any colors. Some strange spell must have been cast over this unnatural place.

Turn to 578.

667 Countless miles of anadromous trek lie behind you. Over and over again, you are forced to move rocks out of the way or impover crevices.

Despite that, your determination to survive this strange place with its dangerous riddles and challenges is stronger than ever. After such a long time spent in this strange, oppressive place, you have more and more difficulty remaining alert. Just as you are thinking of taking a much-needed break, the light from an unnown lantern startles you.

If you want to hide and cover your own lantern, turn to 672. If you want to show yourself and seek friendly contact with the other person, turn to 686. If you want walk towards the light autelly, turn to 589.

668 In the beam of light from your lantern, you find a safe path to the summit. By nightfall, you think that you may have already reached your goal when you stumble over the circle of thores surrounding an old firepit. Beside it, you find a narrow crevice. A thin leg ending in a leather shoe is sticking out from it. If you want to examine the crevice, turn to 671. If want to walk on quietly, so turn to 588.

669 Your spear hits the tentacle squarely in the suction cap, but its tip slides off. There is a quick twitch, and the tentacle trikes you with the force of a whiplash.

330

To your horror you realize that despite your direct hit all seven tentacles are moving again.

Your VITALITY is reduced by a level!

Turn to 683.



670 The evening slowly begins to lay its protective mantle over the land as you finally leave the Great Chasm behind. The darkness comes quickly in the mountains, but you do not have the equipment to camp out under the open sky. Besides, you do not want to be exposed should the death's head lemurs return. Determine your destiny based on the phase of the moon!

If it is New Moon, turn to 647. If it is Crescent Moon to Full Moon, turn to 600.

671 In the bright light from your lantern you see the disfigured corpse of a human woman. It is seriously decomposed; she has likely been lying here for some weeks.

Her right thigh is at a strange angle—probably an open fracture. Vultures and worms have feasted on her and the last of her rations, but some of her equipment may still be of use.

· Epee (Weapon, Hit Bonus +3, Special: DEFENSE +1)

- Bronze Bottle (Utensil)
 Pitons (Utensil)
- · Bull's Eye Lantern (Utensil) · 7 Dinars (Money)

If you want to take something with you, write it down on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 588.

672 Obviously your opposite has had the same thought. It gets dark. You prick up your ears and listen for whatever is in the darkness of the passage.

If you have the ability Sharpened Senses, turn to 657. If not, turn to 585.

673 As soon as you have drawn the Moon Sickle from its sheath and become attuned to its divine power, a beautiful glitter of divine stardust fills the cave.

The golem looks up with curiosity and clenches his fists. On the back of his right hand, an Ugarith symbol appears—the full moon in shining silver. You remember your hand shining in a similar way when you were on the sky disc a short while ago. Then the golem waits, looking expectantly at his left hand. As it does, your holy blade lights up even brighter than before. A bright flash jumps from its edge to the golem's left hand. The sign of Kar, the golden sun, appears.

Then all is silence. The golem is waiting. But then, he smashes his fists against each other. Splinters rain down over the entire chamber.

With arms dangling, the guardian comes towards you. His fists, emblazoned with the crests of both gods, lead you to a powerful realization. The Moon Sickle contains more than the power of Ugar.

» Does Calderel know that? Probably not! «

You laugh at that thought as you await your weakened enemy of rock and stone.

Both of the golem's arms are paralyzed by the presence of the holy **Moon** Sickle. All attacks he makes with his arms suffer a penalty of 3! Write this down in the brackets in the next section.

Turn to C60!





674 With energetic steps you overtake the monk and stand in front of him. With a serious expression on his face, he halts and whispers. "Do you truly want to bully an old man because he is not fast enough for you? Is that how you choose to behave?" Made ashamed by Ugar-Vin's direct and accurate words, you step to the side.

"Hmmm, you have spirit," the monk remarks. Then he pauses briefly, muttering softly, "Strange, very strange."

Turn to 643.

675 Your instincts tell you that there is a deadly threat waiting in this chasm. Expecting the worst, you walk on, forewarned and wary.

Add 10 to the section number given in the next section!

Turn to 610.

676 In this passageway, the feeling of strength and power grows and grows. The tingling in your stomach slowly intensifies until it becomes exuberant euphoria when you step into a circular room.

Its curved mirrored walls concentrate the light from the lantern so that it falls on a crystal sphere resting in the center of the room. The glowing sphere is so large that two men could not reach around it.

Surrounding the crystal is an intense silver light that reminds you of the calming light of the full moon. As you look more closely, you see that the individual facets of the mirror even reproduce its white and grey pattern. For a brief moment you lose yourself in pondering this perfect sphere, and you have the sensation of standing again under an open sky.

Excited, you circle your discovery and stumble over something terrible lying on the ground.





N ...



676 Surrounding the crystal is an intense silver light that reminds you of the calming light of the full moon. As you look more closely, you see that the individual facets of the mirror even reproduce its white and grey pattern.

677 An eternity passes; then you hear once more the steps of the creatures. They are now very close to you. Again, stones clatter. This time, however, the pressure on your body diminishes. You are being freed!

Finally, you can see again. Around you, a dozen monkeys are removing the stones—and with amazing dexterity! Some of them have even formed a chain, passing along the rocks from one to the next.

At first, the strange animals do not heed you, but then one of them, noticing that you are still alive, starts to screech. The pack whips itself into a frenzy, all of them staring at you through the empty eye sockets of human skulls! They are death's head lemurs, monkeys possessed by spirits.

With one liberating shout, you vault to your feet and draw your weapon!

Turn to 691

678 Lava sets the edge of the rock floe ablaze, eating away at it. Within moments, it can no longer carry the weight of your body. You sink into the lava and burn to death.

Your life ends here.

679 Where there was once a mirror, only a billowing black cloud remains. It sinks slowly, floating to the ground, where it seeps into the fragments as if drawn by some demonic power. The shards begin to move! As if by the invisible hands of a sculp tor, they start to combine faster and faster into a shape resembling that of a human. Even a glowing lantern takes shape around a piece of the mirrored glass. The magical creature is imitating youl *Turn to CSO*

680 Determined, you roll up your shirt sleeve. Amid a storm of brilliant refractions and reflections you insert your hand and



hen your whole arm into the sphere. Each of the crystal-clear facets reflects your arm as you move it around inside the sphere. Sometimes you have the confusing sensation that it is not obeying your will but doing the exact opposite.

You think once more about the wise words of the temple monk when you saw Ugar's sanctum in the clear starlit night.

If you want to refresh your memory, read the text between the moons (...) at section 650 and return here.

You think that you know what Ugar-Vin meant by the inversion of the moon and the stars. Armed with that knowledge, you plan your next step.

Take the holy blade of your people at 586+!



681 You decide to approach the stranger, moving under cover of darkness. After several steps, something crunches and crackles beneath your feet. You are walking on splinters and shards, some so sharp that they pierce the soles of your shoes.

You feel a barely perceptible vibration followed by a deep sigh somewhere in the distance.

Your VITALITY is reduced by a level!

If you have a Lantern or a Bull's Eye Lantern and want to light it, turn to 587.

If you want to go on in the cover of darkness, turn to 656.

You find the rules about the section numbers with an asterisk + on page 286. ³ If you have played Tarah's Chapter, please check the box at "D" of the Path of Wisdom section on the third page of the adventure sheet. Maybe you get a clue there what to do here. **682** Just as you are looking around for a place to climb down, the scraping and trembling begins again. This time, however, noticeably more intense. Your survival instinct forces you to the ground. Out of the corner of your eye you can see strange moyements in the lantern's light. Seven tentacles wind over the ledge towards you! Each of them is long enough to wrap around you several times. A slimy secretion drips from suction cups as large as soup plates. One of the tentacles barely misses you!

Turn to 621.

683 The slimy tentacles writhe towards you, twitching wildly. Which of the seven tentacles do you want to attack?

> The white one, turn to 669, The violet one, turn to 584 The yellow one, turn to 655. The green one, turn to 620. The read one, turn to 640. The black one, turn to 699. The blue one, turn to 601.

684 Carefully, you poke at the pile of bare, scattered bones. Almost all of them are humanoid. You can see the disintegrated remains of rucksacks, bundles and weapons, but everything appears to be corroded by acid and unusable.

Then you do find a single unharmed leather bundle with metal fittings sticking from the ribs of a dead man. Carefully, you pull at it, but the skull clatters to the ground the moment you do so. There is a parchment in the bundle. It is a confusing map with a smudged note scrawled across the back.

"I have not managed to touch the Sickle. Am I unworthy? Do I have to slay the cave monster to prove my true faith to Ugar?"

You wipe your hands on your cloak and leave this terrible place. Turn to 577



685 Against all instinct, you feel your mirrored way through the crystal, until your fingers finally touch the hilt of a sword. With excitement, you seize it and draw the Moon Sickle out of the moon sphere. Truly, you have seen through the mirror trick, Shadow Child!

Turn to B9!

686 At a safe distance you shout a greeting into the passageway. The echo carries your words for miles through the Varoon, but there is no answer. You wait in silence, listening to hear whether your opposite will betray a sound. Silence.

> If you want to cover your lantern, turn to 672. If you want walk towards the light, turn to 589.



684 There is a parchment in the bundle. It is a confusing map with a smudged note scrawled across the back. 4

687 Excited, you call and wave to the boatman. He hears your pleas and changes his course. A short time later, he comes along side. Grabbing you by the collar, the man pulls you onto his rait at the very last moment, just before the rest of the rock floe is consumed by lava and only moments after you have come aboard. After a moment of relief, you take a look around. The mysterious figure stares at you with green, crystalline eyes from beneath the hood of his black robe. Just like his wooden raft, he appear surreal. Nonetheless, you are now floating safely over a sea of seething stone.

Turn to 573.

688 The air shivers with heat as you walk upon the firm rock of the pier. Distracted by the spectacle of liquid stone and burming gas you at first do not notice the protective layer of rock over your skin. The heat is affecting you badly.

There is nothing to see far and wide. With resignation, you sit down on a mooring bollard only to burn yourself on a hot iron ring. With a gasp of pain, you jump up and rub the hurt spot when you see something floating in the middle of the burning lake. Unbelievably, a man is poling towards you on a small wooden raft.

When the raft lands at the pier, you rub your eyes in amazement. This cannot be real! The ferryman, whose body is concealed in a black robe, stares at you without blinking. His crystal-green eyes actually pierce your mind. Then he points towards the planks of his raft. You nod and take a seat as the raft already pulls away from the pier.

Turn to 573.

689 The golem remains motionless. You can barely distinguish him from the surrounding rocks. There is a gap in his lap with a soft light emerging from it. As you take a closer look, you



iee a narrow passage with a few steps opening into a hallway. There is no other way. Feeling wary, you squirm between the lower legs of the golem and hurry down the steps.

Turn to 624.



690 Without heeding the slow moving monk, you reach the far shore of the mountain lake. The water is shallow, forming a perfect mirror of the firmament. It seems as if you are surrounded by stars. You stare at the lake and forget time, losing yourself in celestial majesty...

Turn to 650.

691 The monkeys probably want your body to free one their tortured souls. For that, they have to kill you!

PACK	ATTACK	N	11	+1		+1		+1
SKULL LEMURS	DEFENSE		12	+1		+1		+1
(5 ENEMIES)	RESISTANCE	¥		1	1	1	1	1
TA /7	ou have killed the	1400	mor	kous	turn	to 6	54 at	once.

When you have killed three monkeys, turn to 654 at once.

692 You notice that a weak magical light is emitted by the five colored tentacles, while the black and the white ones only dimly reflect that radiance. What does that mean?

Turn to 630.

693 You sit down with your back against the mast. The soft rocking of the lava and the slow maneuvering of the ferryman make you tired. You have not slept for days. Exhausted, you cannot keep your eyes open.

Suddenly you jolt upright! A gush of icy water and a loud roar have awakened you. The raft-just a moment ago a place of calm-is being tossed about like a nutshell on the rushing water of an icy stream.

> Where is the ferryman? <

Inexorably, the raft is now rushing through fierce rapids and past narrow cliffs. The cave is narrowing. Even the ceiling is looming closer! You have no choice but to take a deep breath and jump into the rushing waters of the subterranean stream. Instantaneously, you are swallowed up in the torrent and dragged away. Your spark of life fades.

Turn to 700

694 The ring on your hand shines in the same silvery light as

If you want to refresh your memory, do it at section B3 and return here. Read the text between the moons (...) then come back here (put your linger between the pages to hold your place).

You have uncovered an ancient, hidden secret. Even Ugar-Vin does not and must not know it!

Before the monk notices the artefact, you quickwittedly fold your hands in prayer and hide its light.

Turn to 641.

695 The closer you come to the rumbling, the hotter and stuffier it gets. Stepping around a large rock formation, you see a gigantic lava lake. In it, numerous rocky crags defy the molten stone, rising above the lava as small plateaus. Now and then, a bubble of gas emerges from the red-hot lava, hardens, and then bursts with jet of flame as high as a tidal wave.

In the distance you can see the outline of the opposite shore in the shimmering air. Fascinated, you walk to the edge of the burning lake. It is constantly in motion, the lava flowing at different speeds and in different directions, submerging or forming sluggish maelstroms.

You can see one of the platforms. They are close enough together so that you could use them to jump to the other side. Unfortunately, you cannot tell whether they can carry your weight.

If you want to jump courageously from rock to rock, turn to 556. If you want to search the shore, turn to 602.

696 You are surrounded by mirrors. Mirrors. Mirrors. In which direction do you want to go?

North, turn to 596. South, turn to 579. West, turn to 560.



the moon sign on the back of your right hand. You are standing, before the Sky Disc, at the very place where the ghost of the Skyll warrior in the Ningal Tower wanted to lead you.





697 "Stop! Have you not heard my words?" On somewhat shaky legs, old Ugar-Vin positions himself between you and the opening. Holding his staff horizontally to his chest, he repeats, "I cannot let you pass as long as you are carrying weapons." A bead of sweat runs down his brow. Then the uncertainty in his grey eyes becomes fierce determination.

If you want to hand your weapons to the monk, turn to 616. If you want to attack him, turn to 648.



698 This monster imitates every move you make. No matter how fast or how skillfully you attack, everything you do is immediately thrown back at you. In the end, you lose patience, grab a rock and smash your reflection's head—just as your reflection does to yours.

Your life ends here.

699 The black tentacle shoots towards you. It is hard to see in the dark, but you manage to slash it open. A bitter scream roars through the cave as you withdraw your weapon from the writhing tentacle. You celebrate your triumph, but then the loud scraping and vibrating returns.

Without warning the maw of the creature you have been fighting emerges out of the darkness. You freeze in terror. Seven diabo-



Your worldly existence ends here.

700 Cold meltwater is running over your brow as you awaken. You are lying in a snowdrift some yards beneath a hole at the end of a natural stone trough. The holy Varoon has spit you out again!

Numb, but happy to be alive, you stand up. About a mile away, at the foot of the glacier, Kyrna is dutifully crouching in the snow. Tears of joy run down your cheeks, for she has waited for you in the cold all this time. You can see, however, that she has stomped many circles of impatience into the snow.

Shivering with cold, you seize the dragon horn and blow into it. As the signal rolls over the Tamoloka Massive, Kyrna raises her serpent-like head, looks excitedly in your direction, and rises into the air with a long scream of relief.

Within a few seconds, she is gliding over your head, greeting you with a joyful cry that can be heard all across the white landscape of the High Arcades. Ice crystals sparkle in the whirlwind of her powerful, beating wings.

> Yes, Kyrna, I am glad to see you, too! «

As you pack your belongings into the saddle bags, you notice that your old weapons and riding coat have been tied to the saddle. Ugar-Vin was here!

You can take back all the weapons you handed to the monk (they are marked with a cross in Save Point (3)). Just remove the cross. If you want to throw away a weapon, remove it from your adventure sheet. Additionally, you find a small Star Stone (Utensil). If you swallow it your VTLALTY is raised immediately by three levels, even to fit.





....

Kyrna is nervous. Her heart is racing audibly as she constantly looks around, wary of surprise attack. You know quite well how much she prefers the sky to the ground. Influenced by her agitation, you swing up onto her back and command her to rise again. "Gash, gash!"

Your destiny lies far from here now...

Turn to CHAPTER 5: "FIRE IN THE SKY"

00

Have you found the 2 FATE POINTS (#8 and #9) in this chapter? If not, you should listen more closely and not be confused by the obvious. CHAPTER 5

FIRE IN THE SKY

It is a decisive turning point in your life; you have discovered your destinu. You receive 2 KARMA points.

Use your VITALITY from the last chapter and set the Save Point for all your information on your adventure sheet.

The moon has moved one phase clockwise. Note this in the MOON CALENDAR at section 600.

NOTE: As in the past chapter, there are unusual section references in this chapter. They pre-empt the choice of the next section number. For example, a reference could look like as follows: "Turn to 720, option **①**." This means that you continue reading at section 720, as usual, but at its end you **must** use the section reference marked with **①**. It could happen that you forget the optional letter, so as a reminder you should keep your finger in the page you visited last. Odds are, you have been doing that anyuou,

THE BELIEFS OF THE SHADOW CHILD

So it is true... I am the envoy of the divine will. Myths and legends surround my existence. But why can 1 not remember my past life? Calderel! He wants my soul, my mind—wants to use me for his own ends. But I will resist!

The Shadow Master may be powerful. He may rule a mighty Empire, but I carry the spark of the divine moon within me!

How many innocents must die in this war? Is it my task to end all this suffering and death? After all the years of persecution and violence, both sides are consumed by hostility and hatred. There is no going back for them. They need hope and mental guidance. They need mel <

701 It is bitterly cold. The icy flight wind bites at your face and covers your clothing with hoar frost. You can do nothing more than draw your fur hood tight so that only a narrow eye slit remains. Exhausted, you lie down on your stomach and listen to the strong beat of Kyrna's heart. Trusting that your dragon will carry you safely away from the Varoon, you fall asleep.

Your VITALITY rises by two levels, but at most to normal.

Startled, you awake with a queasy feeling in your stomach-Kyrna is pulling nervously at her reins. And out of the corner of your eye you finally you see the reason for her restlessness. Baronyaks on nimble flying lizards are pursuing you! Usually the cunning mercenaries work in groups of four, but in these dense clouds, you see only two of the aerial hunters.

Turn to 755.

702 You have killed one Baronyak, but the others-spurred by their brother's death-are pursuing you with even more determination.

You are already expecting the first attack when, directly in front of you, you see a strange cloud formation. Like a gigantic funnel made of fog it connects the fine, grey clouds above you with the apparently impenetrable cumulus clouds below.

If you want to fly a feint maneuver, turn to 711. If you want to risk luring your enemy into the dangerous storm winds, turn to 773.

703 Determined to address the dragon, you courageously step in its path.

If you have the RIDER RANK Dragon Ally, turn to 729. If not, turn to 741. 704 You open your eyes at last. Dancing stars cloud your vision. The sudden halt of your nose dive has quite seriously shaken you! At least your enemies are out of range for the time being.

If you have the ability Warfare, turn to 747. If not, turn to 723.

705 With difficulty, you have just stabilized Kyrna's flight path when you feel a dull thud, followed by hellish pain. An arrow has pierced your left upper arm. Without wasting any further thought, you grit your teeth, grab the missile by the shaft, and tear it out.

Your VITALITY is lowered by a level!

Turn to 718.

5



706 Slowly pulling on the right rein, you give your black dragon the signal to fly a sharp right curve. Carried by her beating wings, you are soon flying towards the sun.

You look back quickly to check on your enemies. Over and over again, red points of light can be seen in the clouds. These must be your four pursuers, highlighted by the setting sun.

The Baronyaks are bound to have trouble finding you, blinded as they are by bright Kar!

If you want to tell Kyrna to climb, turn to 769. If you want her to drop down, turn to 745.



707 After your third strike, the flame of life in the dim eyes of your opponent goes out, as do the spells she used to hold onto Kyma's back during the fight. The once-fearsome warrior is caught by the headwind, and she is dragged off into the darkness. Only the shattering of branches can be heard as her motion less body crashes through the crowns of the giant trees.

Being responsible for her death breaks your heart. She may well have been the last of her kind, one of the last moon dancers.

Turn to 722.

708 You follow the azure dragon closely, prepared to intercept should it want to hurt Kyrna. As it reaches your mount, it looks at you again with some contempt. Then, lowering its mighty skull, its brow plate armed with a long horn, the dragon touches Kyrna with it and takes a deep breath. Immediately, its hom begins to shine in the warm, almost divine light of the morning sun. A moment later, Kyrna's hind legs start to twitch, and she opens her eyes.

Even you feel a bit better. The healing light has touched you, too. Before you realize what has happened, the unknown dragon has swooped up into the air, disappearing with a long, drawn outcry over the dense Jengal forests.

Your VITALITY rises by a level, possibly even to fit.

Turn to 717.

709 Hurriedly, you rub the fine ropes against the blade without really knowing if it will work. Above you, you hear the beating wings of the Baronyak lizards. You slip and scrape across the sharp steel with your lower arm. Warm blood flows over your hand, but you pull yourself together and continue. You do not have much time left.

Your VITALITY is lowered by a level!

Turn to 761.



N .

710 Holding fast to both reins, you first pull them hard to catch Kyrna's attention. Then you lean back and shout, "Hagoon, hagoon!" Spontaneously, Kyrna beats her wings forcefully three times, goes into a glide, and tumbles into a somersault. It is a good thing that you are tied to your saddle, because when Kyrna reaches the apex of her vault, with the whole world standing on its head, you would otherwise fall off.

Now the feeling of lightness gives way to a growing pressure on your stomach and head. Like a swooping eagle hurtling down, you complete the second part of the somersault.

Depending on the option designated in the last section, turn to **()**746, **()**767 or **()**725.



711 In blind fury, the Baronyaks continue to chase you. With your dexterous maneuver you have managed to draw them out. Their arrows are useless near the raging storm. They can only drive their small lizards forward so as to catch up with you.

Determined to lure the bastards into a trap, you head towards the storm. Tensely, you take note of every air current: Suddenly powerful wind shear tears at your dragon!

You pull at the reins and shout: "Pagot, pagot!" At once, Kyrna drops down, shoots towards the ground and escapes the powerful maelstrom. You almost pity the lightweight lizards of the Baronyaks: They are tossed through the air like balls of wool between the paws of a playful kitten. A few screams for help later, the doud funnel has swallowed them up.

Turn to 739

712 Summoning the last of your strength, you draw your weapon and confront the monster. The dragon pauses, tilting its head curiously, as if it cannot believe what you are doing. Then a deafening hiss resounds in the forest, and all the birds in the area fly screaming into the night sky.

If you have the RIDER RANK Dragon Ally, turn to 729 If not, turn to 749

713 You notice how your perplexity is also of concern to Kyrna. She looks deep into your eyes, as if trying to comprehend what is troubling you.

Then, for the first time, you are filled not only with emotions of friendship and trust, but also with a feeling of deep understanding.

Your RIDER RANK rises to Dragon Ally!

Turn to 775.

714 The mercenary hunts the sky for several moments before spotting you. For a short moment of terror, you can see blood-red war paint on his pale face. Then, with a daring maneuver, he turns away into the dense fog.

A shrill horn resounds. Even before you can grasp what this signal means, you are surrounded by four Baronyaks. The four aim their bows and arrows at you and your dragon. Missiles shoot from their strings toward you. Without wasting a thought, you yank at the reins and throw yourself onto her back.

Turn to 710, option (B)

715 The inevitable occurs. As if at one command, three Baronyaks appear behind you. Your cunning enemies have waited for the right moment to bring themselves into a favorable position. *Turn to 734.* 716 As if light as a feather, you are caught up in the storm's maelstrom. The world is spinning faster and faster. Kyrna screams in pain. The combat has already cost her too much strength; the hurricane tears more and more brutally at her wings.

You have become the involuntary plaything of all these primal forces. You no longer know where up and down are. You hear the sound of breaking bone. Kyrna's right wing is abnormally twisted, flapping erratically in the chaos of a storm that devours you mercilessly.

Your life ends here.

717 With joy and gratitude you pat the palm-sized scales on the back of your dragon: "I thank you, Kyrnal What would I be without you?" A drawn-out roar of camaraderie echoes through the night. She has understood.

What to do now? You look around, clueless.

If you have the RIDER RANK Dragon Ally, turn to 775. If not, turn to 713.

718 Your current situation is anything but fortunate. Three Baronyaks have taken up the chase, and they are within shooting distance! As you look back once more, one of the cloud hunters grins at you and pulls an arrow from his quiver. Its metal tip glitters in the sun as he draws his bow.

If you want to pull both reins and lean backwards, turn to 710, option ④. If you want to pull on the right rein and lean to the right, turn to 720, option ④. If you want to loosen the reins and lean forward, turn to 750, option ④. Use the flying maneuver card at C20 before you decide.

719 You have flown south several hundred miles. It is the middle of the night, but it has grown much warmer. Finally, you recognize on the horizon the first foothils of the Jengal Jungles in the wide delta of the river.

The mighty stream branches out into many smaller tributaries. From up here, it looks as if a fan streaked with countless silver threads lay beneath you.

A short while later, you rush over the canopies of huge tree giants higher than the tallest structures in Seraph.

> Finally! You have done it, Kyrna! «

Then your gaze falls on your right hand holding the reins: The moon sign is glowing brightly. A feeling of uncertainty overwhelms you.

> What is happening here ? <

You drive Kyrna forward again: only a short distance and then you can land.

You are about to give the command to go down, when for an instant the pale light of the moon darkens and a rush of air passes over you. Something, someone is pursuing you!

Turn to 763.

720 With a jerk, you pull on the right rein, shout "Limrah! Limrah!" and lean to the side. Kyrna reacts as commanded; she folds up her left wing and drops the right one. You immediately start to spin around the dragon's long axis—around and around, faster and faster. You become dizzy.

Depending on the option designated in the last section, turn to \$732, \$705 or \$744.

721 Worried, you search the horizon. Yet nothing unusual has happened for several hours. You do not feel the need for rest, but Kyrna does. You can feel that the beating of her wings is becoming more and more sluggish. It pains your heart to drive her



on, but you know the truth. Neither of you will be safe until the wasteland of the Guanoko Steppes lies behind you and you have reached the dense forests of the Jengal.

Turn to 719.



722 Only with great difficulty can you control the exhausted Kyrna and guide her flight just above the canopy of the Jengal ungle towards a clearing.

Before you can start to land, the dragon's wings go limp and you drop. Helpless, you close your eyes and shout a short prayer. Bushes and trees break under the weight of your dragon as you come crashing down. For seconds, Kyrna slides unchecked through dense undergrowth; then her heavy body lies still.

Quickly you jump out of the saddle and run past her long neck to hold her head. Your companion is breathing heavily. Her eyes are glazed. Kyrna has fought to a point beyond exhaustion—for you! With tears in your eyes, you look down and see that her strong paws have driven deep furrows into the ground.

) Oh, Kyrnal «

Lovingly, you stroke her curving horn. A hoarse hum emanates from her throat. You can do nothing for Kyrna but remain close to her and pray that the gods show mercy.

Turn to 759.

723 Feverishly, you search the sky above you, but there is no sign of your tenacious pursuers. Suddenly you hear muffled, metallic sounds somewhere above you.

You do not know what it is, but a sharp smell fills your nose and clouds your mind. A strange, greasy liquid rains down upon you and Kyrna. Your dragon seems clearheaded, but this Baronyak, trick has made it hard for you to stay on course. Even though you only see your surroundings in a haze, you recognize one of the mercenaries directly in front of you, his bowstring drawn.

If you want to pull on the reins alternately, leaning from one side to the other, turn to 760, option (If you want to loosen the reins and lean forward, turn to 750, option A If you want to beat Kyrna's back with your fists, turn to 740, option (). If you want to pull the left rein and lean forward, turn to 730, option (Use the flying maneuver card at C20 before you decide.



724 You quickly flee into the dense undergrowth at the edge of the clearing. You know that you do not have a chance against this dragon, at least not in your current state. Helplessly, you watch as the unknown dragon stomps towards Kyrna. Surprisingly, it halts, flares its nostrils, sniffs and stares in your direction. As if struck by lightning, you freeze in your hiding place.



But then, the dragon turns to Kyrna again, bending its head to the side until its long horn touches Kyrna's body. At once the horn begins to shine with a warm, yellowish light so bright it floods the whole clearing. Suddenly, Kyrna starts to move. Her spirits are reignited!

You are about to reveal yourself and express your thanks to the unknown dragon, when it rises from the ground, disappearing over the forest before you can move.

Turn to 717.

725 At the end of the somersault, you are at roughly the same altitude as you were when your daring maneuver began, but now behind your enemies. You have turned the tide. Now you are in the better position! Turn to 772.

726 When, after a few seconds, you look up, there is only a smoking black chunk plummeting to the ground-all that is left of the Baronyak mercenary and his lizard.

> Ha, bull's eye! «

Turn to 702.

727 After a moment of terror you realize that the flames cannot hurt you. You take off your coat, beating the fire with it to smother the flames.

You are only partially successful; Kyrna is simply too big for you to help her from your saddle. Once you quickly realize that the fire does not hurt her either, however, you can focus on saving your equipment.

Turn to 733.

728 Hounded, you race across the land, Kyrna becoming more nervous with every mile. Your instincts tell you that your
61

pursuers must be very close. Instantly the first arrows whistle past you both, but you cannot see your attackers against the setting sun.

You know that Baronyaks are mercenaries through and through. Gold is more important to them than honor, loyalty, or even their life. Maybe you can bribe them to end their pursuit.

> If you have the Captain's Doubloon and want to use it now, turn to 751 If not, turn to 771

729 "Step aside, Keşral" the words drone in your head as the light blue dragon snarls at you. "She needs help at once. Help you are not able to grant her."

That hit home. Ashamed, you step aside as the dragon stomps past you, not letting you out of its accusing gaze. Positioning itself in front of Kyrna, it lowers its head, and touches your lifeless companion with its horn. Instantly, the horn begins to glow, warm summer colors that wash over the clearing. After several tense moments, Kyrna starts to move again. The light has a curative effect even on you!

Your VITALITY rises by a level, even to fit.

You utter a heartfelt shout of joy and the strange dragon turns towards you. "It looks like she is more than a handy mule to you. Good." You are about to express your honest thanks when the dragon spreads its huge wings and rises from the ground, stirring up dust and leaves. Already circling far above the trees, the blue dragon throws back its head, bites into the leather on its back and tears it off with one motion. Only a few yards in front of you, the saddle with its saddlebags smashes to the ground.

"I hope you will find what you are looking for in the desert, Keşra. Perhaps these trinkets will help you."



In the saddlebags you find the following:

Riding Boots (Clothing, Feet, Protection +2)

Moon Thorn (Weapon, Hit Bonus +2, Special: The first successful ATTACK causes a loss of 2 points of RESISTANCE)

Serpent Armlet (Special Item, put around the arm in a spiral) Flask of Basalt Oil (Utensil, raises your STRENCTH by 2 after rubhing on the skin, effect lasts for the current and next section, not usable during combat)

Write down all items you want to take on your adventure sheet. If your own saddlebags are burned, you can replace it with these.

Turn to 717.

730 "Pagot, pagot!" you shout. Now you must hold on! Kyrna lowers her head, folds her wings sharply, and lets gravity drag you both down. In only a few moments, you are rushing towards the ground in free fall. Your stomach feels as if it were separating from the rest of your body.

You squeeze tight your eyelids—nevertheless, the icy headwind forces tears from your eyes. Out of survival instinct you clutch at the reins, hoping that your dragon will know when it's enough. Then you are pressed into the saddle, as if somebody were heaving weighty sacks of flour on your shoulders. You black out.

Depending on the option designated in the last section, turn to **§704**, **§753** or **§766**.

731 Whatever you do, the net gets more and more tangled. Kyrna no longer understands your commands, flying nervous, audden maneuvers. Then you even drop the reins; you can barely hold on to your saddle.

Test your DEXTERITY against 14!

If the test is successful, turn to 761. If it fails, turn to 742.

732 The world about you is spinning madly. You see the Shadow woman behind you clutching desperately at Kyrna's flapping saddle cloth.

"You are agile, traitor!" she screeches at you. Hatred glitters in her pupil-less eyes, even though she is whirling about like a leaf in the wind with you. Then you grab her icy hand and tear it free of the cloth. Her drawn-out scream does not fall silent until her black body smashes through the canopy of the giant trees. Only when you can hear nothing more do you end Kyma's dizzying dive.

Glancing down, you notice that a strange object is dangling from your right stirrup. During combat, you thought it was an extravagant necklace, but now you realize what has caught on your saddle—an eyepiece!

If you want to take the Damaged Eyepiece (Utensil) with its massive brass frame, write it down on your adventure sheet. The windproof goggles with their round, dark glasses are usually worn loosely around the neck, but its strap is torn. Hence you cannot wear the eyepiece and have to put it in your bag.

Turn to 722.



733 After barely a minute as a flying torch, the fire goes out. The Baronyak in the lead stares at you wide-eyed. That was not what he expected! When you point a sooty finger at him, he shakes his head and changes course with his lizard. His survival instinct has triumphed over his courage.

Turn to 739.



734 You thought you were at a safe distance from the Baronyaks, but suddenly out of the blue arrows shoot down on you. The mercenaries from Alonia are not only excellent scouts, but also superb marksmen! Now you must evade them!

If you want to pull on the reins alternately, leaning from one side to the other, turn to 760, option **①**. If you want to pull both reins and lean backwards, turn to 710, option **①**. If you want to pull on the right rein and lean to the right, turn to 720, option **①**. Use the flying maneuver card at C20 before you decide.

735 The arrows whistle just barely past you, but with quick, serpentine movements you initially manage to evade them. One of the Baronyak marksmen curses you loudly as his last arrow whizzes by you.

Turn to 718.

736 Despite the breakneck speed at which Kyrna is flying, the Shadow Warrior moves on the back of your dragon with deadly grace. The assasin's narrow feet seem somehow magically grafted to Kyrna's scales.

A spiteful grin fills her pitch-black face as she grasps her moon saber tightly, letting its blade gleam ominously in her hand. "What an honor to be allowed to kill the turncoat Shadow Child," she shouts at you over the howling wind.

UGAR-SALASARI,	AT
THE MOON DANCER	DE
	RE

ATTACK × 16 DEFENSE 18 RESISTANCE • 003

You must fight the assassin sitting in your saddle. For that reason, in this battle you will have to halve your weapon's Hit Bonus (round down)!

If your opponent hits you (reduces your VITALITY), turn to 762 at once. If you win the battle unscathed, turn to 707.

737 You cast a searching glance past the powerful upper body of your dragon and toward the ground. Hundreds of yards above the ground all appears quiet and peaceful, but a fall would be deadly.

Nevertheless, you are determined to free Kyrna from this foreign object. You open both of the leather straps securing your thighs to the saddle!

Test your DEXTERITY against 18!

If the test is successful, turn to 758. If it fails, turn to 752.

 $738 \quad \mbox{You remember the small weapon fastened to your belt. In the tangle of countless knots, you feel for the sharp blade and start sawing on the net.$

Test your DEXTERITY against 17!

If you have the ability **Fighter**, you can add your ATTACK BONUS to the result!

If the test is successful, turn to 761. If it fails, turn to 709.

739 You have done it! With the last rays of sunlight you have shaken the Baronyaks. Under cover of night they should have no chance of following you—if they even dare. Despite that, the battle was exhausting for you and especially for Kyrna. Marked by her exertions, the obedient dragon drops her head.

But now is no time for weakness! "Torah, torah!" you encourage her as the first stars begin to twinkle in the sky. On any other day you would be happy to see the constellations and bright Ugar but not today! The Shadows will soon appear and hunt you, striking without mercy.







736 Despite the breakneck speed at which Kyrna is flying, the Shadow Warrior moves on the back of your dragon with deadly grace. The assassin's narrow feet seem somehow magically grafted to Kyrna's scales.

A chill runs down your spine as you imagine what terrors Calderel may have sent after you. During your training in the Shadow Tower you had to fight some of them. The only reason for their existence is to hunt and kill humans. In this, they are calculating and single-minded, just as you have been. They know neither fear nor mercy.

Besides these terrible thoughts, you brood over the fact that the Baronyaks started to chase you just after you flew from the Varoon.

> How could they know we were visiting the holy mountain? Only Tarus knew our destination. Has he betrayed me? Or did someone else betray him? «

Turn to 721.

740 You drum with both fists on the black dragon's scaly back and shout: "Rosh, rosh!"

Clever Kyrna understands the command and takes a deep breath. Even through the saddle's thick leather you can clearly feel the roll and rumble moving up her powerful dragon body into her serpentine neck and shooting out of her throat as a flaming inferno.

Even though the jet of fire is directed away from you, you instinctively take cover from the searing heat.

> Depending on the option designated in the last section. turn to \$726, \$736 or \$765.

741 With a queasy feeling caused by fear and a protective instinct, you confront the dragon. It snarls at you loudly, but then hesitates for a moment.

> If you want to attack the dragon, turn to 749. If you want to step cautiously to the side and wait to see what it will do, turn to 708

742 It is hopeless. In total exhaustion you stop trying to free yourself. Then, through the fine mesh, you see two Baronyak fighters approaching. They are carrying harpoons in their outstretched arms. They shoot. A hiss and a whirr, and the blades pierce the straps of your saddle and the flesh of your thighs. You scream and slip off. The wail of Kyrna's lament accompanies your plunge through the clouds.

Your life ends here.

743 Unfortunately, your pursuer is not impressed by this maneuver. Kyrna is flying as commanded when you see that the Baronyak has nocked a strangely glowing arrow to his bowstring. But before you can act, the burning missile is already shooting towards you.

5

The tip of the arrow, constantly emitting a spray of sparks, thuds into Kyrna's flank and plummets into the deep. From one moment to the next, the spot hit ignites and there is an explosion. You are surrounded by intense heat and the sound of Kyrna screaming in fear.

> If you have the ability Immunity to Heat, turn to 727. If not, turn to 768.



744 Hoping that your twisting maneuver has confused your enemy, you discover that he nevertheless got off a shot at you. An arrow is sticking in the saddlebags, a hand's breadth away from your thigh! During the intense turns the fastening straps have torn free on the right.

Remove the item that was fastened to the right side of Kyrna's Saddlebag (slot 8).







745 Kyrna lowers her head and flattens her ears as you lose altitude. At her wing tips, covered with countless thorns of horn, the blood-red clouds are swirling in the light of the setting sun. On the one hand, the clouds offer impenetrable protection against your pursuers, but on the other, an opponent could appear any moment without you having time to react.

Only now do you realize how fast you are flying. The clouds whoosh by. At first you flinch before what looks like a solid wall, only to see it swirling behind you as a fiery whirlwind moments later. Out of nowhere, a Baronyak rider appears. He has not noticed you yet, but he could turn around at any moment and raise an alarm.

> If you want to use your Rider's Bow, turn to 764 If you want to follow the Baronyak, turn to 714

746 Such a maneuver takes too much time! You are in a worse tactical position again.

Turn to 718

747 You know the tactics of the cunning Baronyaks. They are most certainly preparing an ambush. To counter that, you are planning a more passive maneuver designed to improve your position opposite the cloud fighters.

Turn to 723.

748 Your muscles quiver with the strain. Breathing out, you release your arrow. By a hair's breadth it whistles past the Baronyak's leather armor and into the sky. Shocked, the mercenary turns his head towards you. At once you feel for your quiver, but the cloud hunter himself seizes his bow and arrow with a deadly certain movement, shooting at you before you can even grab the next arrow.

Turn to 720, option ().



N ...

749 Fearlessly, the dragon stomps towards you. Then suddenly it swipes at you with its powerful tail, at the same time ploughing up half the clearing. You cannot escape.

AZURE DRAGON	ATTACK	N 23
	DEFENSE	• 25
	RESISTANCE	♥000000
	If ye	ou win the fight, turn to 774.

750 You let loose the reins, lean forward, and speak soothingly to your dragon lady. "Malam, malam." Spreading her majestic black wings, Kyrna glides through the clouds without making a telliale sound.

Depending on the option designated in the last section, turn to **§**743, **§**736 or **§**756.

751 With a sudden movement, you pull the mysterious doubloon from your cloak, examine it once more from all sides and hold it up high over your head to show it. Sunlight causes the gold to glitter diabolically—something that arouses the interest of all Baronyaks! Accompanied by a shrill scream by the mercenary, you toss the coin into the deep. The distraction works! Overcome by greed, the rider jerks at his flying lizard's reins and dashes after the pure gold, disappearing in the clouds beneath you.

Turn to 734.

752 You feel that the dragon lady would like to help you, but she can do nothing more than remain as steady as possible while you try in a panic to hold on to her smooth scaly body. At last you manage to grab the saddle's thick leather strap and hold onto it with both arms. Like a leaf caught in the storm, you are slapped against Kyrna's body again and again until at last the leather of the saddle rise and you lunge into the depths.

Your life ends here.

753 Kyrna screeches as she realizes that the giant tree tops are getting dangerously close. Desperately, she tries to break her dive, but already branches and leaves are hitting you. Then your maneuver ends abruptly as you crash into one of the mighty tree trunks of the Jengal jungle. You are no longer conscious when Kyrna, the Shadow woman and you finally smash onto the forest floor. All three lives, including works, end here.

754 Your face twists with compassion as you see the arrow moving between the muscles until its shaft breaks. Despite the deep wound, Kyrna no longer seems hampered in any way. Turn to 718

755 It was to be expected that Calderel would want to avenge his warden's death. Now he has people looking for you, all the hunters he can spare for a traitor like you during this war. Luckily, there is not much he can spare in the middle of the day. The Baronyaks with their slight, but swift flying lizards would tasty playmates for Kyrna. Of course, the cunning Baronyak scouts know that, too. They do not want to fight. They are scouts. They only have to find, observe, and follow the enemy—you. The rest the Shadows will attend to.

> There is hardly any time. I must shake them off! <

In barely an hour, the golden disc of Kar will have sunk behind the mountains of the Tamoloka Massive. Then Calderel's merciless Shadows will lie over the land.

> If you want to command Kyrna to fly west, turn to 706 If you want to go east, turn to 728

756 Kyrna's scream shoots through you like a bolt of lightning! An arrow has pierced the thin leather skin of her wings and is protruding from her right flank. The deep-red, boiling blood seeping from the wound turns to steam in the icy wind.





755 Of course, the cunning Baronyak scouts know that, too. They do not want to fight. They are scouts. They only have to find, observe, and follow the enemy—you.

Kyrna is writhing in pain and beating her wings uncontrollably. You lose altitude.

You clasp the saddle in mortal fear, but your mount regains con trol. Kyrna twists her large head around, bites into her wound rips out the arrow and spits it out like a toothpick. Your dragon is a true beast!

KYRNA'S VITALITY is lowered by a level!

Turn to 772

757 With deadly precision you let the arrow leap from the string. Just as you fire, the Baronyak turns around. Terror is written on his face as he clutches with both hands the arrow stuck deep within his breast.

Motionless, he slips from the saddle and plummets to the depths. His flying lizard screeches—evidently happy about the unexpected freedom—and flies into the clouds. Your joy is short-lived, however. More mercenaries are following you!

Turn to 718.

758 Carefully, you crawl over the large scales on Kyrna's back. The wounded spot is only a few arm's lengths away, but the wind is pulling so strongly on your fur coat that it almost freezes your limbs.

With a jerk, you pull the green arrow out of her thick dragon skin. Your companion answers with a short, muffled scream before she turns and moves back into the fray.

If you want to keep the arrow, write down the Baronyak Arrow (Special Item) on your adventure sheet. You put it in your quiver. Turn to 718.

759 Saddened, you sit by Kyrna's flank and listen to her final heartbeats. Then you are startled by a shadow racing by over

your head. At once, you roll over to your saddlebags and feel for your weapon.

At the same time you hear the familiar rush of giant dragon wings. Just a stone's throw away an especially lean and wiry specimen appears out of the darkness. This dragon—barely larger than Kyrna—moves towards you. There is an orphaned riding saddle on its back. This may well be the companion of the lallen Shadow Assassin.

If you want to attack the dragon, turn to 712. If you want to hide, turn to 724. If you want to address the dragon, turn to 703.

760 As Kyrna hears your "Silat, silat!", she pricks her ears, waiting for further commands. Now you pull rhythmically on the right and left reins while always learning to the opposite side. Alternately folding her wings, the black dragon quickly changes from one direction to the next. Kyrna's long tail, armed with thorns, lashes the air as she swerves back and forth.

Depending on the option designated in the last section, turn to **(3746, (B735** or **(3743**.)

761 Finally the first knots come loose. You hastily tear the net from your arms and head and prepare to defend yourself! Turn to 715.

762 With a well-aimed blow, the woman warrior slashes your shoulder with her saber. Her magical blade immediately opens a gaping wound, as if it were made specially for hunting the Shadow Child. In great pain, you sag to the side while holding fast to the reins. Kyrna either interprets this as a command or she is simply a very clever dragon. In either case, she begins twisting around her own axis.

Turn to 732.



763 Out of the corner of your eye you can see a shadow. Wai it not directly behind you just now? You spin around. There is a short tremor and Kyrna lurches. The shadow has jumped from it flying dragon onto yours!

The figure can now be seen clearly against the night sky. She is a Ugar-Salasari, a moon dancer, an infamous Shadow Assassin You are impressed and surprised at the same time as she tears her cape from her powerful shoulders and tosses it into the wind.

If you want to loosen the reins and lean forward,

turn to 750, option () If you want to beat Kyrna's back with your fist, turn to 740, option () If you want to pull the left rein and lean forward turn to 730, option () If you want to pull on the right rein and lean to the right turn to 720, option ()

Use the flying maneuver card at C20 before you decide.



764 Hastily, you grab your Rider's Bow, place an arrow on the string and attempt to aim at the spot right between the Baronyak's shoulder blades. The strong wind makes it almost impossible to get a good aim, however.

Test your DEXTERITY against 19!

If you have any Marksman ability, you can add your ATTACK BONUS to the result on your dice!

> If the test is successful, turn to 757 If not, turn to 748





765 The mighty fire from Kyrna's breath is like a spark igniting the oil on your and Kyrna's skin. The explosion of flames and embers instantly consumes whatever air you might breathe. In agony, you hold on, but the leather straps have burned in the heat, and along with the saddle you slide off your dragon's back. While still falling you lose consciousness. It is a mercy.

Your life ends here.

766 Not until your free fall has ended and Kyrna's spread wings are cutting through the wind, can you breathe again. The liquid on your clothes and Kyrna's scales and the biting smell are thankfully gone.

Turn to 739.

767 Relieved, you notice that no arrow has hit you during your somersault. You do, however, feel a slight burning pain in your shoulder. You gaze into the thick clouds, but there is not a trace of your enemies.

You just about to change direction when you notice that Kyrna is reacting reluctantly. Then you realize what the problem must be. An arrow is lodged in her right wing. Meanwhile it has dug so deep between the base of her wing and shoulder that flying must be agony for her.

KYRNA'S VITALITY is lowered by a level!

If you want to free yourself from the saddle to pull out the arrow, turn to 737.

If you want to leave the arrow in the wound, turn to 754.

768 You feel your skin turning to stone to protect you from the flames. A searing pain courses through your body. As you regain your senses, you realize that your saddlebags and their contents are ablaze! 72

Remove all items in Kyrna's Saddlebag (slot 7-12) from your adventure sheet.

Your VITALITY is lowered by a level!

Turn to 733.

769 With wings beating vigorously, Kyrna and you swiftly reach the cloud cover above you. A storm of tiny ice crystals stings your face as you pierce the thick fog. At the same time you listen to the proud swoosh of Kyrna's wings—each one a small whirlwind Unfortunately, they are not only impressive, but revealing, too.

Turn to 715



770 Wind and rain whip your face. Then thunder and lightning explode at the same time. The air around you crackles. You scream with fear and exhaustion, barely managing to bring your dragon back on course. Kyrna's fear is palpable, but you also see confidence in her golden eyes. You have always proven a trustworthy pilot through both danger and battle.

This time is no different. With courage, sharp senses and skill you lead her through the less powerful currents of the whirlwind The Baronyaks, however, are not brave enough! They must have turned away. At least, you cannot see them.

Turn to B10

771 Somewhere up above you, there are a series of muffled shots. Expecting projectiles racing your way, you look up. Just barely above you, two Baronyaks are flying next to each other. As if out of nowhere a large net appears.





Weighted with lead thorns at each corner, it rotates directly toward you at incredible speed. Before you can react, you are wriguing like a fish caught in the net. The more you move, the tighter the meshes become.

If you have any weapon in weapon slot 3?

If yes, turn to 738. If not, turn to 731.

772 You manage to maneuver Kyrna so that for a few moments you are sailing only a few yards behind one of the baronyak riders. The fighter, clad in black robes, looks around hurriedly and pulls wildly at the reins of his deep-green flying lizard, wildly, knowing that he is defenseless. As your eyes meet, you are overcome by hunting fever.

If you want to pull the left rein and lean forward, turn to 730, option . If you want to pull on the reins alternately, leaning from one side to the other, turn to 760, option . If you want to pull both reins and lean backwards, turn to 710, option . If you want to beat Kyrna's back with your fists, turn to 740, option . Use the flying maneuver card at C20 before you decide

773 Kyrna obeys your command, although with apparent discomfort, and rushes towards the giant tower of grey fog. Again and again, flashes of lightning illuminate the rotating cloud formation. Suddenly you are caught up in powerful wind shears and spun several times about your own axis.

If KYRNA'S VITALITY has already been reduced in this air combat by at least one level, turn to 716. If Kyrna has withstood unscathed the fight with the Baronyaks, turn to 770.

5

774 Proudly, you pat the dust of combat from your clothes But the joy of your triumph does not last long. When you return to Kyrna, you see that she is dead. Stunned, you break down. You cannot believe it. Without Kyrna's help you will not be able to escape the jungle in time to explore the fate of the Shadow Child Your life's meaning ends here.

775 Kyrna wants to tell you something—as do you her. You lose yourself inescapably in the hypnotic gaze of her golden eyes. A conversation begins in your heads, as in in a veiled dream. "Why did the dragon spare you, Kyrna?"

"Dragons do not kill each other." — "But why did it not kill me?" "All the enlightened how your true destiny—the same goes for Atolm!" You pause. You sense no deception in her. You will simply haw to digest these words.

"Kyrna, what about you? You too?"

A thundering cry, her only answer to your question, fills the night. It has barely faded when you continue pensively, using your outward voice: "So then our journey here was predestined..."

Turn to CHAPTER 6: "IN THE LIGHT OF TRUTH".

0

Have you found the FATE POINT (#10) in this chapter? If not, you should perhaps fly over the Guanoko Plains again and try different maneuvers.

2

In addition, it was possible to achieve the second RIDER RANK of Dragon Ally in this chapter.

IN THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

The air battle was a nerve-wracking experience. You receive 1 KARMA point.

Use your VITALITY from the last chapter and update the Save Points for all your information on your adventure sheet.

The moon has changed one phase clockwise. Note this in the MOON CALENDAR at section 600.

"The Isle of Truth is an almost unachievable island midst a raging sea of lies and deception."

- THE ORACLE OF KABETH

776 In no time at all the impenetrable Jengal jungle lies behind you, and you are gliding over the rough hills of the Red Rocks. Kyrna follows her instincts and the cues from Atolm the Heavenly. He probably meant that there is a sunken sanctum of Kar somewhere in the Gawana. You trust the two dragons to lead you there. Many hours pass before the dunes of Gawana desert, followed by the Burning Fields of the Fire Plain, spread beneath you. The horizon has no limits.

It is a ghostly landscape: A sulfurous stench rises from yellowbrown hills. In some places, billowing fountains of burning liquid shoot up into the air out of sickly yellow puddles of mud. Wherever you look, the landscape is bleak. There are no animals or plants to be seen, no signs of civilization.

Nevertheless, the Gawana Desert is considered the cradle of the Kar faith. Giant cities and temple structures have lain hidden under the sulfurous sand for generations. An inner voice tells you





that your destiny will be fulfilled amid these inhospitable surroundings.

"Kyrna, there is something that has been troubling me for a while. I ask myself why I awakened in the dungeon of the Ningal Tower, not in Calderel's rooms."

If you want to refresh your memory, do it at section 301 and return here. Read the text between the moons (...), then come back here (put your finger between the pages).

You clarify your thoughts: "His explaining that it was a misunderstanding makes no sense. I was abducted from the temple in Kyphi by Aonus himself."

It takes Kyrna a short while to answer, which is very unusual. "The Shadow Master wanted to test his beloved child. He wished to find out whether Kathum's curse influenced you or if you still are loyal to him. He could not see your true intentions—due to Tarus' ring."

You have flown for countless miles when you see a small group of humans laboring over the Fire Fields. A dozen simple carts and wagons, laden with haggard people, refugees from war.

> How desperate must they be to travel through this wasteland? Flying further down, you see men and youths armed with pitiful spears and sticks, but also women and children sitting on the wagons. Even the Toka, normally untiring draft lizards, are sluggishly setting one paw before the other.

> If you want to land near the refugees and try to start up a conversation, turn to **817**. If you want to leave them to their fate, turn to **806**.

777 Quickly Kyrna flies on towards the pyramid. You cannot stay in one location for very long, for you must avoid the deadly light that turns the air itself to ash. Below you, the rays of sun are gathering for another volley.



CHAPTER 6 · IN THE LIGHT OF TRUTH

Note the current round by marking the seven COMBAT ROUND circles. (When flying over the next sector, cross off \mathbb{O} , then \mathbb{O} , and so on.) The sectors have the classical names of the elemental cardinal directions as used by the Ancients.

When you reach the seventh COMBAT ROUND, turn to 821 at once. Other than that, you must fly on with Kyrna through the defensive structure.

What sector do you want to head for?

Water 🖧, turn to 809. Air %, turn to 826. Fire 🙏, turn to 787. Earth 📵, turn to 814.

Do not forget that you cannot stay in the same sector twice at one time! Of course, you can continue to use your knowledge of the defensive structure if you have seen an old Rigem parchment before.

778 A moment before the boy manages to grab the hilt, you catch his wrist and look at him darkly.

"This is not a toy, young man!" you admonish him.

"I need a weapon, I want to be a soldier, just like my father!" the Rigem boy tells you with surprising confidence. You are about to decide whether to punish the boy for the attempted theft when the camp suddenly begins to quake!

Turn to C70!

779 The barrenness of the ashen sea tires you. Another hour passes and you still have found no sign of a temple ruin, let alone an intact building.

If you want to land and take a short rest, turn to 798. If you want to continue your flight to the east, turn to 784. If you want to turn south, turn to 848.

780 The exertions of the past few days takes their toll. No sooner have you closed your eyes than you sink into a deep state of torpor.

Your VITALITY rises by a level, but at most to normal.

Turn to 828.

781 "Be proud of your heritage and receive your inheritance." The divine voice makes your heart stop.

Turn to 796.

782 The closer you get to the temple, the more clearly you can see its shape. It is a ziggurat with a massive square base, whereas it appears that the largest part of the sandy yellow step pyramid is hidden under the surrounding grey ash.

Kyrna is preparing to land when the upper level of the temple starts to move: As if done by an invisible hand, a stone block on each stone flank opens and a smooth metal cylinder emerges. Before you can shout another command to Kyrna, the strange structures have absorbed the burning red light of the evening sun and begin focusing it into a dazzling blast aimed directly at you! Test your DEXTERITY against 15!

> If the test is successful, turn to 819. If it fails, turn to 836.

783 You give a strong pull to Kyrna's harness. The dazzling flash of light misses you by a hand's breadth at best. Nevertheless, its divine energy defensively turns your skin to stone for a moment. With some luck, you have overcome this level of the defense system.

Turn to 777.

784 The eastern reaches of the Ashen Sea end at a rugged chain of mountains. The natural border of rock, dust and sand extends for many miles.

Fascinated, you are exploring the surroundings when a Baronyak scout breaks through the clouds. The moment it appears, it attacks! ATTACK

BARONYAK SCOUT

17 DEFENSE •003 RESISTANCE

If you win the fight, turn to 824.

6

785 "You have proven to be a true friend of the Rigem," she begins solemnly. "I would like to try to settle part of our debt." Turn to B11!

786 Dazed, you open your eyes again. The Underworld has spat you out anew! Or was it all a terrible nightmare? You are standing directly before the five gates to the sphere of the dead. Everything looks as before, but a huge, richly decorated, ironshod wooden chest is standing at your feet. Perhaps this is the nightmare instead.

There is a tingling in your fingers. You feel that something powerful is in the chest. Bravely, you push open the lid. The chest is lined in white brocade. At first it appears empty, but then you see a golden mask shimmering in the folds of the precious fabric. Excitedly, you grab it!

If you are wearing the Serpent Ring, turn to 822. If you are wearing the Signet Ring, turn to 823.

787 You have just flown into the fire sector of the defense ring. If you are in the first, fourth or sixth COMBAT ROUND (if you have marked D, (1) or (6) in section 777), turn to 831. If not, turn to 815.

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

788 Finally the last stone slab comes loose under your feet. You drop into a bottomless abyss without time or space. During your fall, your surroundings sink into blackness, interrupted only by terrible wails and icy cold. After a while, you can see shadowy silhouettes. You crash so hard into the ground that it feels as if all your bones have shattered.

Gasping for air, you see twisted faces staring at you from all around. You think you recognize their faces. Out of their empty eye sockets flickers a pale, frightening light. Their gaunt bodies have been pierced by nebulous blades looking strikingly similar to your holy Moon Sickle.

> Old acquaintances from long forgotten days ... «

Finally, the swarm of crippled shapes moves as one to pursue you. The horrible creatures smell the soul of the Keşra, your soul, and thirst for vengeance.

> If you want to suppress your fear and wait to see what happens, turn to **792**. If you want to draw the **Moon Sickle** and attack the ghosts, turn to **805***.

789 With the utmost care, you check your equipment and weapons. Kyrna grumbles in her half-sleep when you fasten the saddle, but she is so exhausted that she suffers your obsessive inspection with a mixture of snarling and snoring.

This is the perfect moment to check the notes on your adventure sheet and perhaps redistribute items between Kyrna's Saddlebag and your carry bag!

When finally the warming rays of the sun pour over the desert, the refugees appear again. The women prepare the first—if sparse—meal of the day. After you have politely declined the offer to eat with them, you take the opportunity to doze off while sitting on a wagon wheel.

Turn to 828.



790 From a safe distance you examine the brilliant beams of light projected by the large metal cylinders at the top of the ziggurat. You are quick to ascertain that the volleys follow a fixed rhythm. Each cycle is made up of six shots, and with every second shot another light cannon is activated. By the sixth and final step, all of them but one have fired.

You have to find the gap in the defense system of the Kar pyramid if you intend to enter the sanctum!

If you have the ability Mental Focus, turn to 847. If not, you must trust your instincts and fly into the danger zone, turn to 777.



791 Before the boy can touch the sickle, a strong bolt of lightning shoots from the handle. With mighty discharges, the power of your divine weapon whips across the boy's twitching body. The energy dissipates quickly, while leaving only crackling air and the lifeless boy in the dust. Appalled, you try everything to bring him back to life. You pray to the gods for mercy, and as if through a miracle, the boy opens his eyes.

Relieved, you embrace the boy, but it appears that he has not noticed anything. If he remembers dying at all, it is but a fever dream. He runs into his mother's arms crying. Death has released him again. Suddenly the ground beneath your feet starts to quakel NMI/V write down the mysterious ability of Ahimsa in line 12.



Write down the mysterious ability of Ahimsa in line 12 on your adventure sheet. In addition, mark the number 791 there, the number of this section, so that you can look up something if necessary.

Turn to C70!

792 The spirits are howling around you, and you feel the icy breath of death. They screech, they curse, but they do not immediately attack.

"Who is it planting the seed of madness within us?" asks one of the souls. You close your eyes tight and resist.

Only when the presence of the dead has faded, do you dare to slightly open your eyelids. Directly in front of you, in the darkness, you can make out the shape of a majestic dragon. The ground quakes under his ittanic steps. He is approaching!

Turn to 838.



793 Kyrna grows more nervous with each mile closer you get to the Great Barrier. Unswervingly, your drive her forward – but her trust is fading. In the end, she ignores your commands, holding her position with gentle flaps of her wings.

"Enough. The path of our destinies does not lie this way! Either we turn round at once or you will have to cross the Great Barrier on foot." With these words, Kyrna refuses to go on.

You receive this refusal of hers in complete bewilderment. This is the first time that the dragon lady has contradicted one of your decisions.

"I swear truly," she tells you consolingly. "You will not find the temple of Kar behind this magical barrier, Keşra."

You nod, relenting. Relieved, Kyrna turns and continues on her old course to the south.

Turn to 816.



....

794 "A good decision!" Again, the deep voice booms through the hall. "Take your prize!"

Turn to 796.

795 You are gripped by an inexplicable suspicion. You decide to keep watch. At least you try.

If your VITALITY is hurt or critical, turn to 780. If your VITALITY is better or if you have Tobacco from Kyphi you can smoke during your watch (remove it from your adventure sheet), turn to 844.

796 You have just touched the smooth mask to your face when you feel it start to tingle and then burn! Your skin turns to stone. You want to remove the artefact, but the mask is stuck! You try to tear it off, but the gold grows hotter and hotter. The metal stifles your panicked screams, turning them into a powerless, muffled moan as it liquefies and seeps into your skin!

Your agony is almost unbearable, but then, from one moment to the next, the pain is gone. Incredulous, you touch your cheeks and brow. The mask has disappeared! Yet something has changed.

Write it down on your adventure sheet: Kar's Sun Mask (Clothing, Head, Protection +1, Special: The mask allows you to be automatically successful with your DEFENSE in combat. This costs you 1 KARMA point per COMBAR ROUND in which you use this gift).

Your STRENGTH rises by 1 point!

The Mask has fused to your head by divine power and is invisible to others!

Turn to 850.

797 Kyrna is breathing heavily. Your dragon is clearly exhausted from the last few hours. 1 Jan so sorry, Kyrna! «

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

You gently stroke Kyrna's flank, unsure whether you can ask her to fly into the uncertainty of the Kar temple. Suddenly you are caught in a golden light, radiating from the tip of the holy ziggurat. Enveloped in an aureole of light and warmth, the healing power of the sun flows through you both.

Your VITALITY and KYRNA'S VITALITY rise to normal.

Turn to 840.

798 Kyrna's thankfulness is visible in her shining, golden eyes when you command her to land. She has barely touched the ground when she nestles in the fine ash and gives a pleased snort. After an hour, as long as you dare rest, you wake her again. The search goes on.

> If you want to fly east, turn to 784. If you want to turn south, turn to 816.

799 Again, a glowing ray of sunlight pierces Kyrna's body and perforates her left wing. Kyrna's anguished screams resound over the Ashen Sea as you spin towards the ground. In your last moments, you are consoled by the thought that you will at least die together.

Your lives end here.

Turn to 790.

800 You manage to draw back unhurt. Kyrna holds her position, her heart pounding, as you try to remember the mysterious patterns on the old Rigem parchment. You are sure that, if used correctly, it will allow you to enter the Kar temple.

Turn to **B11**, explore the mystery of the parchment and come back here (put your finger in this page to help you return).

Your sense of direction tells you that you have flown towards the temple from the west. With a queasy feeling in your stomach you make another attempt at approaching the temple.

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801 Endless time passes before your fall ends. The force that normally pulls you and all that is worldly downwards has abruptly disappeared in this somber sphere.

When you are again able to see something, you can hardly believe your eyes. You are floating above a free space formed by rough stone slabs. Each of them is in constant motion without colliding with any of the others. Between the joints there are bottomless depths. Clouds of gray pass by you. Sometimes you even think that you can see shapes or faces in them, but they quickly change before you can be sure.

Weightlessness deceives your senses, but in the far distance you think you see wave-like movements. At first, they are only hazy.



Then they become clearer. You see five misshapen dragons cutling through the mist with powerful wings! The bitter-sweet smell of death assails you.

Apparently, the five are battling one another. They savagely hack at each other with their claws, biting into wings and tails. During their chaotic conflict they are coming ever closer; you can hear their terrifying snarls, hisses and even garbled voices.

You realize that you are witnessing the eternal struggle between the five guardians of the underworld. For eons now, Nosis the Ravager, Calis the Avenger, Komar the Blasphemer, Loth the Seducer and Torn the Dissembler have been battling for the favor of the lord of the underworld. All are powerful beyond imagining, but only one of them is your creator!

Turn to the illustration on the next spread!



RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

(Continued from 801) Barely have you turned away from the eternal battle for the Underworld, when the dragons flee and you hear an awesome voice rumbling in your skull: "So you have discovered the key to your existence, Keşra!"

The ground trembles under your feet. All around you the stone slabs plummet into the void! Helpless, you search your surroundings—no sign of Seren—but the disintegration of the ground continues unabated.

Turn to 788.

802 You have felt a general anxiety throughout the flight. But suddenly this quiet dread manifests itself in a powerful impulse to flee. Instinctively you pull on Kyrna's reins and shout at her to turn away. At the same moment, a bright flash streaks across the sky, barely missing your dragon's left wing!

Although the light's beam fades at once, its magical energy and a strong burning smell remain. Countless flakes of ash drift to the ground. The destructive beam of light from the tip of the temple of Kar just barely missed you!

Turn to 790.

803 Satisfied, the blind crone weighs out her new riches, letting the golden pendant fall into your hand. "Treasure for treasure, traveler. We found this piece of jewelry weeks ago with a dead Baronyak rider at the edge of the desert."

"She was badly burned on her arms and chest. And her neck was broken. It is likely her lizard threw her off," the old woman muses without emotion.

You thank her for the transaction and the information and return to the other refugees at the campfire.

Write down the Pyramid Neckband (Special Item) on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 839.



Turn to 777.



805 Trusting in the divine power of the Moon Sickle, you face your dead spirits.

You will not get my soul that easily! You did not get it then and you will not get it today! <</p>

For a fleeting moment, the shadowy figures pause, but then three of them rush at you as if driven by a storm.

LOST SOULS	ATTACK	N	14 +1	+1	+2	
(3 ENEMIES)	DEFENSE	w	12 +1	+2	+1	
	RESISTANCE	Y	00	00	00	
	If and Library		the street	in andulas	Access to .	796

If you drive away the three spirits, turn to 786.

806 Your mission allows for no delay, and you will not be able to help the dozens of refugees for now. Resolutely, you guide Kyrna to the east, and the wagons and draft animals quickly disappear in the vellow dust of the Gawana desert.

Your sharp gaze is looking for any conspicuous features in this wasteland. Eventually, you find an odd cluster of small hills. Strange thin columns or beams protrude from the tops of each one.

If you want to examine the hills, turn to 843. If you want to continue your flight without stopping, turn to 810.



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RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

807 The lizard screeches—she has smelled Kyrna. Surprised, the Baronyak warrior draws his saber, but then realizing the danger he is in, he points defiantly at you with his weapon. A confrontation cannot be avoided.

BARONYAK SCOUT	ATTACK	N 13
(BATTERED)	DEFENSE	W 16
	RESISTANCE	¥003

If you survive the aerial combat, turn to 816.

808 The crone implies that she does not believe your explanations: "You probably have good reasons for traveling this area; Non-Empire, and the Rigem are happy to be able to tell of the visit of a noble Ugarith."

"You know what I am?" you answer. The young mother is startled. The lines in the face of the old woman become deeper: "Of course I do. But I know, too, that not all of the few remaining Ugarith have been poisoned by the ideology and warmongering of the Shadow Master."

"Why haven't you traveled to Seraph or Kyphi?" you ask the old woman in order to change the topic.

"Have you seen this land in the last few weeks? The roads are filled with desperate creatures. And if the waters of the Rhesus should recede even further, there will be a disaster at the Great Pyramid."

Pensive, you say your goodbyes and return to the other refugees around the campfire.

Turn to 839.

809 You have just flown into the water sector of the defense ring.

If you are in the second, fifth or sixth COMBAT ROUND (if you have marked ②, ⑤ or ⑥ in section 777), turn to 831. If not, turn to 815.



810 Impressed, you let your gaze wander over the wasteland of the Fire Plains with their constantly changing surface. From the ground, the landscape looked bleak and hostile, but from Kyrma's back, you can see a marvelous spectacle. Gnarled trees, twisted bushes and bright yellow pools of sulfur make up a

fascinating pattern of colors and shapes.

Unexpectedly, a grey dome of haze appears on the horizon. The sun bathes it in summery yellows from above, but from below it looks almost impenetrably black. As you get closer, you can see its origin. A giant wasteland stretches over the plains for miles. Driven by the heat of the sun, its dark dust is being constantly swirled up into small funnels of air.

There it is, the Ashen Sea ... «

Recklessly, you rush towards the ground, flying only a few feet above the crusted dust. Large swirds of dust form on Kyrna's wingtips and follow your course. With a mind dizzy from the rush of speed you give a shout and enjoy the feeling of freedom. Cowardly thoughts shoot through your mind:

 $_{\rm 3}$ Why not leave it all behind? Why not start a new life far away from the war... $_{\rm 4}$

But then you realize that it is this very freedom you are fighting for. Countless creatures have no freedom at all, trapped as they are by the war brought about by the Shadow Master's ambition. You alone can free them by thwarting Calderel's mad plans. Kyrna's scream embarrasses you because you understand that she has read your thoughts of weakness.

> If you have a Pyramid Neckband, turn to 833. If not, turn to 837.



RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

811 The golden glitter of the neckband leads you farther across the Ashen Sea. With an optimistic feeling, you drive Kyrna forward.

If you want to continue flying low in the direction of the light, turn to 816.

If you want to fly higher so as to have a better vantage point, turn to 848



812 Using the correct tools, it is easy to repair the eyepiece. After a few hours, it is as good as new again.

Change your adventure sheet: Remove the utensils Damaged Eyepiece and Repair Kit. Instead, you have a Rider's Eyepiece (Special Item)/ Turn to 789

813 With a muffled sound, the arrow pierces the Baronyak's simple pauldron. Without even a scream, he slips from the saddle. Safety straps secure his lifeless body to the rump of his flying lizard, but his sudden dead weight nearly forces the lizard into a helpless dive. Flapping about in panic, the beast snatches its dead rider, tears him free and screeching loudly, hurls him into the depths. Then it flees.

Turn to 816.

814 You have just flown into the earth sector of the defense ring.

> If you are in the third, fourth or fifth COMBAT ROUND (if you have marked ③, ④ or ⑤ in section 777), turn to 831. If not, turn to 815.

815 You have found a breach in the defenses of the Kar pyramid. The flashes of light shoot to the sky in other sectors and spare you.

Turn to 777.

816 In the dome of haze over the Ashen Sea, you have trouble recognizing shapes on the ground. Finally, however, you discover an unusual stone structure some two miles ahead of you. It is only barely visible against the grey dust. You circle until you are sure, but this is the place. You have found the remains of the ancient Kar sanctum beyond the Gawana desert!

> If you have a **Pyramid Neckband**, turn to 835. If you do not have this Special Item, but the ability **Premonition**, turn to 802. If you have neither the ability nor the item, turn to 782.

817 "Stay away, Empire!" a young man snarls at you. His face, though pittfully emaciated, speaks of wild determination. Spinning a spear over his head, he positions himself—like his companions somewhat unsteady on his legs—half-way between the carts and Kyrna's landing place. You admire these men's courage; they would try to defend their families even against an all-powerful dragon.

"Lower your spears!" you shout at them, swinging gracefully from the saddle. "I do not work for the Empire. I am not here to harm you! The dragon and my equipment are spoils of war." "Liar!" a frail man in the second row croaks passionately.

"Well," you begin calmly as you pet Kyrna's flank, "if I had wanted to attack you, I could have done so without any danger, couldn't 1?" Kyrna emphasizes your words with a low grunt.

Hesitantly, the men put away their weapons and lead you into the center of their barricade of wagons. There are many more refugees than those you saw from the sky. Most of the women and children have been hiding beneath the tarps of the wagons. Kyrma and you have little trouble with the sulfurous vapors, but the humans are finding it difficult to breathe. There is always somebody coughing.

"Where are you headed?" you address a young mother sitting on the bed of a cart and nursing a baby.

"To Kurnugia," she answers shyly.

You are surprised. "You all seek to cross the Great Barrier?" "Yes, that is what we want to do!" an old woman with a voice like dry gravel enters the conversation. You had overlooked the crone

sitting in the rear end of the cart before, but here she is now. "Does the Empire want to stop us?" she asks sharply.

"Yes," you answer somewhat rashly, but then correct yourself. "I mean, no... Well, the Empire would probably want to stop you, but as I have said, I do not fight under the Shadow banner." The crone laughs. "If that is true, then the question arises: what you are doing here, Non-Empire?"

> If you want to tell her that you are trying to find the old Kar sanctum, turn to 820. If you want to hide your plans, turn to 808.

818 Your gaze pierced the parchment-like skin of the dragon, and you were able to see the key to your existence in Calis' daw. "That is right, Keşra! Avenge the innocent—judge the guilty!" The thundering voice confirms your decision.

Turn to B12!



Your dragon quickly rises so as to be better able to react to any further shots.

Turn to 790.



820 Deep lines of worry show on the crone's face. "You have to fly into the middle of the Ashen Lake," she whispers mysteriously. "But be warned, Non-Empire! The temple hidden there has a deadly secret. The Shadow Master has sent many loyal souls to find it. None have returned."

Usually you do not believe in fantastic tales, but coming from the old woman's throat the words sound like self-fulfilling prophecy. You are just about to turn away when, with trembling hands, she holds out to you a leather neckband. A small golden pyramid dangles from one end. It is covered with ancient hieroglyphs, just like those you saw in the temple of Ugar. 'What is that?'' you stammer, fascinated.

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"I would guess it is worth 40 Dinars, so give me 50, and it is yours." True to her tribe's nature, she haggles, certain that you want the artefact badly.

Do you have 50 Dinars (or Diplomacy and 42) and want to give them to the old woman in exchange for the jewelery, turn to 803. You can also trade items in your possession. Each Utensil on your adventure sheet (also those in Kyrna's Saddlebag) you give to the old woman is worth 3 Dinars to her. For a Lantern, Bull's Eye Lantern, Blanket, Dried Meat or any Bronze Bottle, she would give 5 Dinars By the way: She does not take currency from the land of the enemy, such as Shekels. Special Items cannot be sold.

If you do not have enough money or valuable items or do not want to spend so much for the neckband, you can take it by force (turn to 834. If you would rather give up on the choker, say your goodbyes and go to the campfire (turn to 839)

821 Finally! The light cannons have ceased their assault. You have overcome the pyramid's defense system. But you do not trust the calm. Cautiously, you are letting Kyrna glide towards the gleaming tip of the ancient building when it opens like a blossom to reveal a golden platform.

The entrance to the Kar temple is open to you!

If KYRNA'S VITALITY has been reduced by at least one level while defeating the defense system, turn to **797**. If she is unhurt, turn to **849**

822 In awe, you remove the mask from the chest and admire its noble beauty. It consists wholly of polished gold and resembles the imprint of a face.

Like stylized rays of the sun, eight long thorns create a corona surrounding the feminine face. You have already seen the familiar features once before, namely when you gazed into the Mirror of Truth when first meeting Calderel.







10 You are just about to turn away when, with trembling hands, she holds out to you a leather neckhand. A small golden pyramid dangles from one end. It is covered with ancient hieroglyphs, just like those you saw in the temple of Ugar.

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> Who are you? <

You sense a deep spiritual kinship, as if this face, this woman, was always with you. Resolutely, you turn the mask around and slowly place your face inside.

Which of the five dragons of the underworld do you think is your creator?

Nosis the Ravager **N**, turn to **794**. Calis the Avenger **O**, turn to **818**. Komar the Blasphemer **G**, turn to **841**. Loth the Seducer **O**, turn to **846**. Torn the Dissembler **O**, turn to **829**.

823 Hesitantly, you take the mask from the chest and admire the perfect piece of art. The fine gold reveals a man's face: Curved rays of the sun, consisting of eight long thorns, create a corona around the face, a visage that looks vaguely familiar. It is the man you saw in the mirror when you first meet Calderel.

> Who are you? «

You feel a deep spiritual kinship, as if this face, this man, was always with you. Resolutely, you turn the mask over and slowly place your face inside.

Which of the five dragons of the underworld do you think is your creator?

> Nosis the Ravager **\u00e9**, turn to 794. Calis the Avenger **\u00e9**, turn to 818. Komar the Blasphemer **\u00e9**, turn to 781. Loth the Seducer **\u00e9**, turn to 846. Torn the Dissembler **\u00e9**, turn to 829.

824 Another hour of flight on Kyrna's back goes by before a fascinating sight presents itself. A gigantic, frightening mountain range rises from the haze of the Ashen Sea. Its peaks are shrouded in massive, pitch-black clouds that are sometimes set alight by



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flickering bursts of lightning. The unremitting roar of thunder rolls toward you. Up until now, you always thought that tales of the Great Barrier were only nurse's tales, but now you are experiencing the force of nature yourself. It appears unassailable.

If you have found FATE POINT #3, turn to 841. If not, you can either fly towards the Barrier (turn to 793) or you can turn south (turn to 816).

825 The ungodly dark is severed by the holy power of the Moon Sickle as you free the silvery grey blade from its sheath. Instantly, the lost souls retreat into the eternal darkness, screeching hysterically.

Even though the silvery light of the Moon Sickle shines weakly, you think that you see in the distance the shape of an impressive dragon with an armored skull of thorns and spread wings. Majestically, it turns away and disappears as well into the dark realm of the dead. The world grows bitterly cold.

Turn to 786.



822/823 If you can't remember which dragon your choice was, turn back to the double-sided illustration of section 801 and compare it with this one, (Important note: On this smaller illustration, the answer for this riddle is not visible!)

826 You have just flown into the air sector of the defense ring If you are in the third, fifth or sixth COMBAR ROUME (if you have marked ⁽³⁾, ⁽⁵⁾ or ⁽⁶⁾ in section 777), turn to 831 If not, turn to 835

827 What relief! The sand worm is no longer a danger. In ne time at all, the refugees come running, surrounding you with cheers, patting the dust from your shoulders and kissing you on the cheek and the back of your hands.

Your DEXTERITY rises by 1 point!

"The tribe of the Rigem is in your debt, Non-Empire." The people of this wayward tribe fall suddenly silent, all turning towards the old woman standing on a somewhat elevated rock and leaning on her staff.

If you have a Pyramid Neckband, turn to 785 If not, turn to 842

828 Your instinct wakes you.

> Damn, how long have I been in this torpor? <

Squinting desperately into the glaring sun, you make out the silhouette of a small refugee boy, barely six years old, staring at you curiously through the matted strands of his black hair. Bravely, he sticks out his thin arm and reaches for the handle of the Moon Sickle on your belt.

If you have found FATE POINT #9, turn to 791 If not, turn to 778.

829 "Very good, Chosen One," out of the deep the words of affirmation resound. "Your choice is worthy of the gods."

Turn to 796.



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830 Slowly, you draw back the string of your Rider's Bow. Only the strong wind surrounding you makes aiming difficult. *Test your Dextentry against 18!*

If you have any Marksman ability, you can add your ATTACK BONUS to the result on your dice!

> If the test is successful, turn to 813. If it fails, turn to 807.

831 Suddenly you are blinded by a bright beam of light flooding over you from the flank of the pyramid nearest to you. A queasy feeling spreads in your stomach. The top of the temple glows in the red of the evening sun. For a moment the power of Kar is concentrated, racing towards you as a brilliant lance of sparks and flashes.

Test your DEXTERITY against 19!

Add your RIDER RANK to the result on your dice!

If the test is successful, turn to 783. If it fails, turn to 845. 6



832 Checking your equipment, you find your booty from the combat with the Shadow Assassin. It annoys you that the interesting piece is broken. Not only are the easily replaceable leather holding straps torn, but the brass frame between the two lenses has snapped in half as well.

> If you have a Repair Kit, turn to 812. If not, turn to 789.

833 After hours you still haven't found the location of the temple of Kar, and your euphoria gives way to slow resignation. You feel warming power beneath your cloak. The neckband you have received from the crone catches the rays of the sun and reflects them focused over the pyramid pendant. In fascination, you turn the artefact, but the rays are always being reflected in the same direction. It appears to be some kind of optical compass If you want to follow the ray of light, turn to 831 If you want to ignore the artefact, turn to 831



834 With one motion you rip the neckband from the gnarled fingers of the old woman. Accompanied by shrill cries for help from the two women, you dash through the camp toward Kyrna, who cranes her swan-like neck, startled by the noise Before the surprised men can act, you have jumped into you saddle and commanded her to start. Quickly, the agitated crowd beneath you grows smaller and is hushed by the howling wind Write down the Pyramid Neckband (Special Item) on your adventur sheet.

Turn to 810.

835 The neckband, which for countless miles has guided you towards the temple, is pulsating with a golden light. Though it is beautiful to look at, you feel a growing unease.



Instinctively, you pull on Kyrna's reins, making her take a sharp urn, when a sudden burst of light cuts through the fog and barely misses Kyrna's left wing. The air is crackling with energy, and the crid stench of combustion burns in your nose. Where just a moment ago the light severed the sky, now countless ashen flakes are drifting to the ground. You have just barely dodged a magical projectile coming directly from the top of the temple of Karl following this scare, you want to check the pyramid artefact. But only the loop is hanging from the leather strap — the small golden pyramid has disappeared. Annoyed at your own carelessness, you throw the worthless remains of the Rigem artefact away. *Remove the Pyramid Neckbard from your adventure sheet*!

If you have found FATE POINT #11, turn to 800. If not, turn to 790.

836 A heart-breaking scream resounds through the sky as Kyrna's right wing is pierced by a shrill flash of light. Instinctively, your dragon flies higher to get out of the reach of these annons. You are filled with compassion as you regard the large ound hole which the beam of light has burned in the goldwined black leather of Kyrna's wing! *Kyrna's Yrnatrry is lowered by a level*!

Turn to 790.

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B37 The nearly endless expanses of the Ashen Sea are almost enough to make you lose hope. You have been looking in vain for hours now for any sign of the Kar sanctum, and you have flown over the western reaches several times. Kyma's constant struggle against the gusts of wind is also causing her strength to fade.

> If you want to fly north, turn to 779. If you want to go south, turn to 848. If you want to look around in the east, turn to 824.

838 Benumbed by his terrible countenance, you don't realize what horrible monstrosity confronts you until you find yoursel directly facing him: It is Nergal, the undead Dragon Lord of the underworld!

Between the bare bones of his gigantic body you can see hi intestines throbbing and twisting, while puss and urine squirt from the loops. At the same time, an unending stream of burning blood flows from the empty eye sockets of his monstrous skull His torn chops dangle between the fangs in his maw. As he turns towards you, your body quakes in the maelstrom of eternity Nergal is the incorruptible judge in the realm of the dead. He alone can pass judgment as to salvation or damnation, a judge without mercy.

"What are you seeking here?" Nergal's voice, a harsh bellow that is barely understandable, blows towards you on the sickly-sweet odor of decay and death. "Go back and receive the reward you hunger fort."

Perpetual blackness surrounds you as Nergal utters a snarling prophecy. "We shall meet again, and soon. Your time will also come... Children of the gods!"

Turn to 786.

839 The burning Kar has just set behind the rolling dunes of the Gawana desert, and icy cold envelops the barren land.

Huddled together under patched blankets, the refugees have drawn closer to the campfire, where a bald giant of a man is using exaggerated gestures to tell a story. The Rigem children listen with wide eyes and open mouths.

At the end, the storyteller recapitulates the moral of the tale for the children, and you realize that his wise words apply to your situation as well: "When the good despair, it is enough for evil to triumph."

Finally, the dust is settling that enshrouded all of you during the



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38 Benumbed by his terrible countenance, you don't realize what horrible monstrosity confronts you until you find yourself directly facing him: It is Nergal, the undead Dragon Lord of the underworld!

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RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

entire day. Wonderfully clear air flows through your lungs. Even Kyrna, who, out of respect for the fearful humans, has stretched out safely away from the camp, seems to be enjoying the fresh air and gives a relieved snort. After some minutes, all around you have fallen asleep, exhausted.

Stars are twinkling over the desert.

If you want to keep guard, turn to 795 If you want to sleep as well, turn to 780

840 No sooner have you flown through the open top of the Kar temple, than the portal closes behind you with a metallic groan. Only the whoosh of Kyrna's beating wings and their delayed echo can be heard in the darkness.

Unsure, you hold your position until somewhere far below you, you can see some isolated lights. They cast a flickering glow on a smooth, black, shimmering wall whose base must lie far below the level of the ash surrounding the pyramid.

As Kyrna slowly circles down, the Kar sanctum reveals itself as a smooth, endless shaft of rock extending vertically, mile after mile, into the dark bowels of the world.

As Kyrna finally sets her broad paws on the ground of the Kar temple after such a long descent, you stare up in awe. From here below, despite its gigantic dimensions, the shaft looks like the tiny eye of a needle. You hear footsteps coming closer.

Surprised, you turn around and stare into the childlike eyes of a girl, tall and slender, clad in wisps of fine velvet. Pure white hair plays around her perfect face like a silk curtain, behind which you see a charming smile.

"Keşra, we greet you!"

It is a simple greeting. But these four words suffice to wipe away your fear and prejudice. The girl's innocent appearance and gentle voice bestow on her a divine omnipresence that seems to



"We are happy that you have followed your destiny."

"Who are you?" you ask with a trembling voice.

"We are Seren," the girl answers telepathically. The sound of her strange name echoes in your mind, Then she floats towards Kyrna with graceful ease, leaning her head against the dragon's skull and stroking her curved horn. Both remain thus in a moment of peace.

"Your journey was long and hard," Seren says sadly. "And you surely have many questions."

"Oh yest" The words burst out of you in your impatience. You leel that this pure girl, this divine being, can answer all of your questions.

But before you can continue, Seren begins with a small history lesson... "In the beginning, there was only the void. But then the world shook. From its depths the untamable beating of two hearts resounded. Filled with curiosity and power, the divine siblings rose from the hnermost and conquered Heaven. Thus did light and shadow, warmth and cold, come into the world. They were called Kar and Ugar."

Seren pauses for a moment, walking around you before she continues... "During their birth, Kar and Ugar left behind them veins of life and death. These links to the underworld are the Towers you know of today.

"The Lengal Tower surrounding us here sank in the sand storms of the Gauana, preserving most of its legacy as it fell. Its location is a well-kept secret, but your divine heritage and your connection to an exalted dragon gave you both the right to enter this holy place.

The Ningal Tower, however, changed its face in the course of eons, as you know, and turned into a harsh rock needle in a crystal sea. The Empire abuses it as a military base and symbol of power. This blasphemy weakened Ugar's might there."



The lovely vision of a girl sighs sorrowfully. "Calderel—whom you cal the Shadow Master—strives to open the Black Gate, the portal between worlds. Because of this, our reunion is no accident."

"Do we know each other?" you ask Seren in confusion.

"Certainly," the delicate girl replies with a delightful smile. "We have always been walking the path of the gods side by side." "Truly? I am sorry, but I cannot remember," you explain resignedly.

Seren giggles. "We know that."

"Then you can surely tell me why I am here?" you press on impatiently.

"Well, it is our task to keep watch, just as it is yours to judge and unite! The Keşra is always sent out when the balance between the divine siblings is disturbed."

"Calderel," you declare contemptuously.

"Yes. But this time it is more complicated. Calderel disrupted the divine principle of harmony with his perfidious plan. He knew that the Keşra would destroy him if he tried to increase his power at the expense of the gods. When the Oracle of Kabeth prophesied the rebirth of the Keşra, he searched for him, kidnapped him, and raised him as his own child in the Ningal Tower."

"The destiny of the Keşra is the destiny of the world—and the destiny of the world is the destiny of the Keşra!" Seren muses. "There is in this world no power, not even a god, that is capable of determining your path."

During your conversation with Seren, Kyrna has curled up close to the edge of the Tower and has fallen asleep.

Fascinated by the way she seems to float on air, you follow the girl to five curved stone arches flanked by bowls of burning oil at the edge of the platform. Inside, the portals imitate the contours of human bodies and are decorated with holy hieroglyphs. Even though the portals stand open, a view of the opposite side of the



840 Fascinated by the way she seems to float on air, you follow the girl to five curved stone arches flanked by houls of burning oil at the edge of the platform. Inside, the portals imitate the contours of human bodies and are decorated with holy hieroglyphs. space is somehow blocked. An icy mist swirls from the center of the portals, as if from another world.

Seren takes up a position before the middle portal, where the steaming hoar frost has settled on the floor tiles. Her slender body would fit perfectly in the hollow silhouette of this frame. She is silent for a few moments and then gravely answers your most burning question: "Keşra, although to be sure you were misled, you have burdened yourself with much guilt on account of Kathum's death."

"Yes, I killed him." you humbly admit. But Seren continues as if your admission was meaningless:

"Only your creator can remove this stain from you. Walk through the gate of the Keşra and find the key to your heritage in the light of Kar!" **D**

You feel the weight of your crime weighing more heavily on your shoulders with each step toward the portal. You would be only happy to run away, for the inscrutable power lurking in the dark fog eagerly awaits you.

At the same time, however, familiar voices are whispering. Your divine parents encourage you, yet also remind you of your duty Just as you reach the wall of fog, you pause once more, looking into Seren's bright eyes, which are following you intently. Then you dare to take the step into eternal blackness!



Turn to 801.

841 Your gaze falls upon your right hand, holding the reins, and you notice that the ring on your finger is alight with magic. The Star of Feymar, the present from the dead Skÿll warrior woman, appears to be very close to its home.

If you want to venture flying into the Great Barrier, turn to 793. If you want to turn south, turn to 816.

842 "You are a true friend of the Rigem!" the crone exclaims hoarsely, silencing the rising cheer with a calming gesture.

Unfortunately, our humble means cannot sufficiently honor your bravery – nevertheless, take this as a sign of our bond." She hands you a small bronze bottle, the contents of which she has brewed herself.

Thanking the refugees for their hospitality and wishing them the aid of the gods, you rise into the air on Kyrna's back. For a long while, the brave people of the Rigem tribe wave to you. Write down Anesthesia Elixir (Utensil) on your adventure sheet! It uppresses acute pain and is usually used for amputations or when treating broken bones.

For experts: If you are playing with penalties for low VITALITY, you can Ignore them for a whole chapter after you have drunk the elixir!

Turn to 810.

843 You pause. Contrary to what you first believed, there are no wooden beams jutting out of the gently rolling sand hills that Kyrna has landed on. Instead, these are the polished ribs of dozens of large lizards.

With a powerful kick, you free one of the skeletons from its thick crust of sulfurous dust. Two other hills nearby reveal the same secret: cadavers of giant lizards. In two of them, smaller bones are lying inside the ribs.

The lizards have eaten their riders....

In some places, among the humanoid remains you find rotting

uniforms, but you cannot identify them any longer. Only a pair of dull silver leg braces have survived the lizards' stomach acid. Engraved on them is a crane-like bird with feathers of darting flames.

If you want to take the Silver Leg Braces (Clothing, Legs, Protection +1), write them down on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 810.

844 Nervously, you keep guard. The landscape may look dead, but you sense that there are countless dangers lurking here. With an iron will, you force yourself to stay awake hour after hour. To busy yourself, you thoroughly check your equipment again.

If you have a Damaged Eyepiece, turn to 832. If not, turn to 789.

845 The light beam aimed by the defense system slices across Kyrna's chest. Your dragon tries to bear the pain, but then releases it in one drawn-out scream. You yourself are unhurt, but in your heart you sense the pain your dragon has to bear. KYRWA'S VITALITY is lowered by a level!

846 Again, the deep voice rumbles up from the underworld. "Good! A worthy choice. You did not allow yourself to be seduced. The Mask is yours!"

Turn to 796.

847 You have only seen a few of the cycles of the dangerous rays of light, but you know now when and how the sequence starts. It begins with the ray on the eastern flank of the pyramid, in the fire sector.

Turn to 777.



•

848 While searching the sky with your keen eyes, you notice the strange shape of a flying lizard with its rider in the haze on the horizon. So far, the low sun has prevented you from being discovered by the Baronvak.

Skillfully using the cloud cover, you glide over the Baronyak. The soldier is sitting slumped over and apparently dazed. It looks as if only the protective straps on his saddle are preventing his fall. But the flying lizard is marked, too. Its cracked leather wings are covered by black burn wounds.

If you want to avoid a possible fight by turning east, turn 824. If you have a Rider's Bow and want to try to shoot the Baronyak, turn to 830. If you want to fly south without using the ranged weapon, turn to 807.



849 It is a miracle that Kyrna has survived the assault unhurt. You thank the gods and proudly stroke the feathers on the strong neck of your dragon.

"Keşra, your skills become more and more impressive." Kyrna commends you telepathically as well. Deep trust fills your heart. Your RIDER RANK rises to **Dragon Familiar**! Make the necessary change on your adventure sheet.

Turn to 840.

If her status is critical, turn to 799. If not, turn to 804.

61

850 Still incredulous, your touch your face. You feel the warmth of the golden Kar mask on your skin, but you can neither see nor feel the artefact.

"We are happy for you!" Seren stands by your side as if no time has passed, as if she has never been away. "This is the sign, the second gift of the gods... Now fulfill your task, Keşra!"

Turn to CHAPTER 7: "SHADOWS OF THE PAST"

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Have you found the 2 FATE POINTS (#11 and #12) in this chapter? If not, you should show more compassion when looking for the Kar temple and do not let yourself be fooled by the Powers of the Underworld.

P

Have you found the third RIDER RANK of **Dragon Familiar** in this chapter? If not, try harder to defend Kyrna, while flying towards the Lengal Tower. CHAPTER 7

SHADOWS OF THE PAST

Your insightful journey into the chaos of the underworld has come to an end and reaped its rewards. You receive 2 KARMA points. Your VITALITY rises by one level, but not more than to **normal**. Use this opportunity to adjust all Save Points on your adventure sheet. The moon has changed one phase clockwise. Note this in the MOON CALENDAR at section 600.

"The disharmony of the dirge fades in the harmony of past, present and future."

- THE ORACLE OF KABETH

851 Seren's shining eyes mirror true seriousness for the first time. "The gods demand your hand. No, more than that. They need your strength. You must pass judgment on the Shadow Master!" "But how shall I do that?" you exclaim. "I cannot survive a fight against Calderel!"

"What do you care?" This time Seren's calm voice is clearly audible, talking about your death as if it were nothing.

You suddenly feel angry. "What do I care? Of course, I care! I do not want to die!"

Seren strokes a silvery strand of hair from her face and whispers, "Oh, you still think that death is inescapable, final. Without your memories, of course, you would think this." Her hand rests upon your heart. "But you are wrong there! You have already died countless times! Remember now."

Barely have Seren's mysterious words faded, when the pupils of her eyes become an ocean of colors and sparkling stars. You lose



416

yourself in the hypnotic maelstrom, and from one moment to the next, the pains of thousands of deaths wash over you. You suffer unspeakable agony.

Read 565 and then come back here (put your finger between the pages).

Only half-consciously can you hear Seren's voice among the hundreds of your own death screams!

"I am sorry, Keşra, but you need to understand! Kar and Ugar gave you this divine understanding of the end of life so that you can feel awe towards life."

Again, a morbid memory pushes Seren's voice into the background of your mind.

Read 170 and then come back here. Streng accompanies you through the pain of countless death struggles. "You are both immortal and mortal at the same time. What is death to you? But it leaves deep scars—on your body, in your soul—and you know it!"

7

Read 899 and then come back here.

Only slowly does the pain recede from your limbs, and you begin to comprehend what has just happened. Again, images of death pass you as wisps of thought, but this time, three are no nameless torments. Some memories are already fading; others will stay with you. All of them were and are real!

> I have lived through these deaths—even though I do not remember many of them.

> If you have the ability Ahimsa, turn to 886. If not, turn to 866.



852 The slain bodies of the guards lie before you in the mud. As you look at their empty eyes, you realize that you have an important choice to make. You have a chance to do something important here, an opportunity you will never have again.

If you want to flee at once with Kyrna and return to the present, turn to 1000. If you want to hide in the temple until you may have the chance to save Kathum's body, turn to 981.

853 In panic, you try to squirm out of the bandages, but they are too tight. The heat, the pain become unbearable. You want to roar out all your pain, but smoke burns your lungs and you suffocate.

Your life ends here.

854 Quickly, you lift the arms and legs of the five dead guards, hoping to find something useful. Their bodies show deep cuts, especially on their necks and faces. Suddenly one of the men grabs your arm and gasps his last words: "Stop... the Shadows."

Startled, you free yourself from the soldier's cold grip when his body, wedged between those of his comrades, goes limp. You take a deep breath and note some items:

Broad Sword (Weapon, Hit Bonus +4)

· Sun Ray Braces (Clothing, Arms, Protection +2)

· Bag with 18 Dinars (Money)

· Sun Key (Utensil)

 Phial of Ice Rose Essence (Utensil, extreme healing, most effective on humans)

If you want to administer the phial to the soldier who has just died, turn to 997. If not, turn to 881.

CHAPTER 7 · SHADOWS OF THE PAST

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

855 "What is going to happen now? Do you want to kill me as well?" the taxidermist says with anxious pride. For a short moment of rage, you actually do think about killing the brave man, but then you acknowledge his decision, even though it means that your plan has failed before it has even begun.

Turn to 1000.

856 You suppress thoughts of the past for you know that you are writing it anew in the here and now! Determined, you focus on your most important mission so far—saving Kathum.

You can already see the temple district, and after beating her wings a few more times, Kyrna starts to land on the flat roof of the main building. Above your head, the wind is tearing at the shreds of the sun banners, in this weather the Golden Guard probably does not dare to send somebody out to keep watch.

Ugar's face, only rarely appearing from behind the black clouds, tells you that you have very little time before the events of the past take their course once more.

Remember to adjust the items you want to take with you on your adventure sheet. There may be useful things in Kyrna's Saddlebag, after all.

Even before Kyrna's powerful paws touch the flat roof, you have already jumped from the saddle, sending her away with a forceful slap on the neck.

"I understand, Keşra. When you have finished your task, look for me on these roofs. I will hide here."

Somewhat dubious, you gaze after your dragon. You fear that the Guard will have little trouble seeing her massive body between the buildings.

Suddenly you are seized by the certainty that your past self is nearby. You can almost grasp his longing to kill Kathum. There is a dark force driving him, one that gives him monstrous abilities and at the same time robs him of his mind. Only with great effort can you keep these powerful instincts from your past away from your present self.

If you have the ability **Premonition**, turn to **946**. If not, you can enter Kathum's rooms directly over the facade of the building, turn to **994**. Or you can enter at the park side of the palace and the large walkabout, turn to **890**.



857 You lower your head and show Kathum the safest path over the roof of the palace. His knees shaking, the boy inches along over the loose tiles. With gusts of wind whipping your faces, you constantly have to hold the boy to prevent him from falling. Despite that, you manage to reach the small tower where your black dragon is waiting patiently.

Kyma has already seen you. The light in her eyes appears especially threatening in the dark. Just as you are about to introduce Kathum to your mount, a sudden chill runs down your spine. The pack saddle on Kyrna's back... It is not yours!

Damn, it is the wrong Kyrna...

A fierce snarl resounds that even causes the windows of the tower to rattle. Kathum hides behind you, believing that he is the reason for the dragon's aggressive behavior.

) I completely forgot that Aonus is here, too! «

If your RIDER RANK is at least Dragon Familiar, turn to 943. If not, turn to 894.

858 Your leap back into reality confuses even the stout warriors of the Golden Guard. Cautiously, two of them come closer, while the third one keeps his distance and tries to protect the prisetses, who is still tending to the lifeless Hierarch.

BODYGUARDS	ATTACK	N 17	+2	+2
OF THE HIERARCH	Defense	• 16	+2	+2
(2 ENEMIES)	RESISTANCE	900)3	003
	COMBAT ROUND	000	200	Đ ····

At the start of the fourth COMBAT ROUND, the third guard comes to his friends' aid.

THIRD BODYGUARD

ATTACK × +1 DEFENSE ÷ +2 RESISTANCE © 3

If you manage to hit and not be hit in the same turn, you can attempt an escape. You can either jump through the window into uncertainty (turn to 899) or back into the mirror (turn to 863). If you win the fight, turn to 872



859 Suddenly, the floor of the bed chamber starts to shakel You have pushed open the gate to the underworld. Kathum sits up abruptly and screams as a fountain of blood and guts erupts from his mouth. The priest emperor rids himself of Nergal's foul waste, a disgusting but needed display.

Finally, the Hierarch opens his bright eyes. At first he is anxious

and confused, but quickly he appears to understand the situation, weakly murmuring, "I would not have thought that you could..."

Impatiently, you interrupt the old man and help him to his feet: "We mustn't lose any time. We have to go!"

"Go?" Kathum stammers. "Why should I come with you?"

"Much has happened." you begin to explain. "I mean, much will happen... the war. The war will turn. But you must..."

"I must continue to be thought dead," Kathum finishes your rambling.

Wide-eyed, the Hierarch looks at you, as if wanting to hear the destiny you have in store for him. To keep up the appearance that the assassination attempt of the Shadow Child has been a auccess, you have to take a risk and use one of your artefacts on Kathum's soul.

> If you want to use the Soul Urn, turn to 969. If, however, you have the Idol of the Hierarch and prefer to use it, turn to 979.

860 "We make the greatest mistakes when trying to repair the old ones", Tarus says, proud of your actions.

Taking a deep breath, you ask your mentor if there will be other Keepers present for the ceremony, but he puts a finger to his lips and looks over to Mireth again. The crowd is becoming restless. Some people howl in outrage, and you are forced to see how little respect the priests show in dealing with the dead Hierarch. Guards chain his stiff limbs to four of the pillars over the glittering bowl of the oracle.

"Mireth, how dare you dishonor my father!" Nephatari screams. Many of the ordinary citizens of Seraph are also beginning to rise up.

"Silence!" Mireth's overpowering aura silences the masses at once. "Kar has wrested the life and soul from Kathum! What

other reason could the goddess have to do so but to deny him passage to the underworld?"

Raising her nose to the light of the midday sun, the priestess stares unwaveringly at Nephatari. "Or do you have a better explanation?" The sun girl, fighting back her tears, falls silent.

"May you, oh Golden Kar," Mireth turns to the crowd with a sweeping gesture, "remove your doom from us and show us mercy."

Do you have the ability History Knowledge?

If yes, turn to 974. If not, turn to 883.

861 Hesitantly, you open your eyes again. What an incredible ride into the past!

Remove 2 points of KARMA!

You are surrounded by a raging night storm. In the rain Kyrna's wings beat irregularly to hold her position somewhat in the strong gusts of wind. The lights of the majestic city pyramid flicker directly ahead of you. Memories assault you,

» This raging storm was my constant companion on this fateful night. As if the gods already knew what would happen. «

The next flash of lightning darts across the sky, accompanied by a deafening clap of thunder. The air crackles.

If you have found FATE POINT #3, #9, and #12, turn to 924. If not, turn to 930.

862 Divine grace floods your body. Waves of cold and warmth make you tremble. You feel your parents near you.

Your STRENGTH and DEXTERITY rise by 1 point each! Your VITALITY rises to fit!

Turn to 907

863 Incredulous, one of the guards steps before the glass of the mirror and hesitantly tests its surface with the tip of his sword. There is a deafening ringing and screeching as he scratches the glass with his blade. Finally, he kicks the mirror so forcefully that it shatters. Your only connection to the real world is destroyed!

Wait a moment, the only one? «

Check your adventure sheet. Do you have a Hand Mirror?

If you have, it must be stored on or in Kyrna's Saddlebag, turn to 951. If not, turn to 995.

864 It is only when you and the Hierarch reach the east end of the roof, that you see Kyrna waiting, crouched so that she appears surprisingly small on the off side of the roof. Curious, she raises her head and looks at the boy intently.

Turn to B13!

865 For a long while, you gaze after the falling body of the soldier. But you feel no satisfaction. This combat is senseless and costs the life of innocents. Therefore, you focus all your strength on leaving this place-or rather time-as quickly as possible. Turn to 920, option ().

866 Your mind has been severely put to the test, and you have withstood all the morbid thoughts! You now know that death is an elemental part of your existence.



Write down the mysterious ability of Ahimsa in line 12 on your adventure sheet. In addition, mark the number 5 866 there, the number of this section, so that you can look y up something if necessary.

Turn to 956

 $867\,$ "We have no time, we have to get onto the roof!" you drive the Hierarch forward.

"Well, there is a secret passage ... "

You tilt your gaze at the man, impatient. "What are you waiting for?"

Kathum runs behind the large standing mirror to the free wall, takes an inconspicuous-looking amulet from the nightstand, and presses it against a plaque on the wall. As if by magic, the massive stones disappear and reveal a dark corridor leading, after a few steps, to a narrow spiral staircase. Its steep stairs wind both up and down in the darkness.

Hurriedly, you rush up them, roughly pulling Kathum after you. You at last reach the roof through a hatch.

Turn to 953.

868 Torn's rough scales scrape your skin. His voice is clear, dominant. You cannot evade it. He commands you to follow him. You obey, allowing his will to be done, because he is the only truth.

Your life ends here.

869 You have seen through the Xorox! It behaves like a mirror. Then you have a flash of inspiration! You simply turn your back to your opponent. And it promptly does the same. Then you take a few steps away from it, and it does the same. When you move to the right, however, the monster does not follow you, but moves just as quickly to the left. But this double deception is something you have already anticipated!

Turn to the 4th chapter at 566.

870 Wildly, you flail at the two serpents to protect yourself from the curse of Kar, but their hypnotic serpentine dance casts an ever-stronger spell on you. They want to poison your memory

and coil their way into your head! You attempt to barricade yourself behind the standing mirror.

Turn to C90!

871 Torn's mighty skull remains poised before your mental eye. The fire of chaotic doom blazes in its great lizard eyes; it is on the verge of leaping over into your mind.

Turn to 916.

872 You wipe the blood from the Moon Sickle's blade. This was a bitter victory you could have done without. You wish that your journey to the past may soon be over.

You gaze after the priestess, who took the opportunity to escape to the walkabout during your fight against the guards. And now there are more shouts. You have no other choice: you must escape through the window!

Turn to 952

873 You have just quietly closed the partition when you have a true sense of déjà vu. This majestic room with all its art treasures, the large standing mirror, the high windows and the large canopy bed wrench the suppressed experiences of this night back into your memory.

You freeze and see movement behind the thin fabric hanging from the canopy bed-Kathum is tossing and turning in his sleep.

> Does he sense the destiny that awaits him? «

Outside, the storm reaches its climax. Rolls of thunder and flashes of lightning occur almost simultaneously. Torrents of rain are drive against the window panes.

You wait behind a large standing mirror, and the long waiting seems unbearable. You know that your past self will enter the room any moment and change your destiny forever.

But then something unexpected happens. Kathum awakes, gets up drowsily, and walks to one of the windows. He gazes out into the storm with a worried expression.

Just at this moment, the door opens and a huge Shadow sneaks in. Kathum does not notice your self from the past standing behind him. In his right hand, he is holding a round, fist-sized object whose metallic sheen is surrounded by a negative but powerful aura. You hold your breath.

 \rightarrow So it is the presence of the Moonstone that I have been feeling the whole time! \leftarrow

If you want to make a sound to warn Kathum, turn to 950. If you want to personally confront your past self, turn to 917. If you want to wait, unwavering, turn to 962.

874 On the collar and sleeves of the armor you can see the famous crest of the Golden Guard, the eight-rayed sun, but also the protective hands of Rhenus. Only the elite bodyguards of the Hierarch wear this symbol.

> If, nevertheless, you want to draw the Moon Sickle and leave the mirror to fight, turn to 858*. If you want to hide for a while longer, turn to 863.

875 Despite the darkness and distraction of the storm, you explore every corner of the roof. When another bolt of lightning illuminates the priest's palace, you can actually recognize Kyrna's long tail. She appears to be nestling around the curved walls of a small oriel.

Turn to 857.

876 Fully focused, you drive your claw-like fingers into the joints of the stone wall and climb down to the second level. A ledge, about as wide as your hand, runs around the building, only interrupted by supporting statues like gargoyles and saints



873 Kathum does not notice your self from the past standing behind him. In his right hand, he is holding a round, fist-sized object whose metallic sheen is surrounded by a negative but powerful aura. You hold your breath.
of Kar, which you have to carefully move past. You do not ask why, but pure confidence flows through your veins. You even enjoy the thrill of the climb! Finally, you reach the first in a row of peculiar windows with round skylights in the form of eightrayed suns.

> I know these windows... But from the other side. «

You open the storm hook and slip noiselessly into the dark room. Tiurn to 873.

877 You cannot and will not accept Nephatari's fate! Determined, you pull free from Tarus' arm and push towards the first row of spectators, shouting at her. "Nephatari, there is no reason for your boundless anger. Your father is not dead! His soul lives on."

Kathum's daughter looks around in confusion, seeking the man who has spoken those encouraging words. With her grieved, golden eyes she finds you.

In this crackling moment she recognizes you and understands the meaning of your words. Just as a smile begins to play around her bright-red lips, the ribbon of fate rips apart along with all your memories and deeds. The last thing you see in the maelstrom of time is the scrawny, scaly body of Loth the Seducer awaiting you with a greedy snarl.

Your life's meaning ends here.

878 No sooner have you unleashed the divine power of the Moon Sickle than it strikes a path across the mirror as crackling flashes of energy. You can hear the glass straining, threatening to burst under the pressure of the energy. Hurriedly, you jump though the mirror, back into the past, but the fractures in the glass cut your arms and legs.

Your VITALITY is lowered by a level!

Turn to 858.

had to take her revenge-for her lineage, her faith!

It is my fault that she is now wasting away at the Black Gate! «

You want to leap up and shout out your true feelings and motives. A hand grabs your shoulder.

"My boy," a benevolent male voice whispers. "Do not endanger what you have achieved."

Perplexed, you turn around and look into the wise eyes of your teacher Tarus. "You must focus on your true purpose, even if it means that friends and companions will not be able to experience the day of your triumph."

Turn to 860.

880 "Kyrna! Rosh, rosh!" you scream above the sound of your dragon's roars. Despite her pain, Kyrna tries to obey your command, taking a deep breath and belching out a blast of fire. Suddenly a cascade of blue-green flames engulfs you as the fine dust of the blinding powder is set ablaze in a second.

If you have the ability **Immunity to Heat**, turn to 889. If not, turn to 913.

881 Unseen, you push back the massive wooden portal with its clerical carvings of the sun goddess Kar to peek into Kathum's bed chamber. Diffuse light and the exotic smell of incense assail you. Before the unpredictable flashes of lightning can expose you, you slip inside.

Turn to 873.

882 You feel the oily bandages suddenly ignite. Flames lick over your back and consume the fabric. Biting smoke rises, but you can suppress the pain. Your skin transforms. The lingering crowds wail as the flames reach their highest point. Somewhat later, the fire has died down and you are lifted again and carried away. You feel a gentle touch on your chest.

"Oh, beloved father," you hear the sobbing voice of Nephatari. "I swear by Kar that I will avenge you!"

Almost an hour passes. Then you are thrown onto a cart and, given the stench of putrefaction, driven away with dozens of other corpses. Fascinated, you listen to the muffled conversation of the two men pulling the cart: "We can't just throw the Hierarch into the pitt"

"You want to oppose Mireth's commands?" whispers the second one. "Who do you think will be Kathum's successor?"

A bit later, they toss you into a corpse pit, somewhere before the gates of Seraph.

As soon as the squeaking of the wheels has died down, you dare to finally remove the sticky bandages and realize that you have been unloaded like a piece of garbage atop countless decomposing bodies. The sickly-sweet smell of death clings to your entire body.

When you reach the edge of the pit, your face lights up: Kyrna lands nearby on her broad paws and immediately trots towards you excitedly.

Ramin has kept his word! You feel your knowledge of human nature has been confirmed. Your dragon nudges you with her horn.

Content, you swing up onto Kyrna's back. Your mission has been a complete success! Kathum's soul has been saved, his body secured. To be sure, there was no chance to remove the mark on your hand, but all in good time. The only drop of bitterness is Nephatari. Her sadness at the seeming loss of her father and her future destiny are hard for you to bear.

Turn to 1000.

430

883 Mireth takes three steps forward, raising her arms towards the sun, which has reaches its zenith, in a commanding gesture. "The Oracle will speak!"

Kar's piercing rays are now focused perfectly by the shining surface of the gold bowl. A bright spot of concentrated sunlight strikes the underside of the brushwood bed Kathum is lying upon. The first white tendrils of smoke begin to rise. People hold their breath and await the divine judgment.

> If you want to bid Tarus farewell and withdraw, turn to 978. If you are willing to gamble everything, call Kyrna and try to save Kathum, turn to 888.

884 Finally, the effect of the blinding dust fades, and Kyrna once again follows your commands. Despite the confusion, she was not harmed by the powder.

Meanwhile you can see three riders of the Golden Guard in shooting distance. They are keeping their distance so as to continue to attack you under the protection of the dense clouds.

If you want to use your Rider's Bow, turn to 970. If you want to attack one of the riders in close combat, turn to 898. If you want to escape with a bold flying maneuver, turn to 919.

885 Nimbly, you move hand over hand along the roof beams until you reach a pulpit in a flanking aisle. Noiselessly, you drop down. A rickety wooden extension provides the only entrance to the small stone pulpit, but a thick layer of dust under your hands tells you that there has been no sermon held here for years. Intently, you listen to the darkness.

Turn back to the past to sections 88 and 89 of the prologue. In which of the section numbers did you mark a circle?

> Section 88, turn to 908. Section 89, turn to 964.

886 The boundless power of death has left deep scars in your mind, but the latent fear of the end has given way to the firm belief that you are equal to all of this.



Change the entry Ahimsa to Keşrani in line 12 on your adventure sheet. In addition, mark the number 886 there the number of this section, so that you can look up some thing if necessary.

This ability raises your physical endurance by one level. Thus, if your VITALITY reaches the level dead, you are still alive! Only when you lose another level of VITALITY, will you find your ultimate death.

Expert Rule: The penalties for tests on this level are equal to the status critical, which means -2.

Turn to 956

887 You resist the temptation to let the temporal band spring back. Your curiosity as to what will happen to Kathum is stronger. There is an endless arrival of priests examining the dead Hierarch. It is especially his head that is most often the focus of their prayers and meditations.

Later, under the careful eye of a Seraph oracle priest dressed in crimson, eight taxidermists appear to prepare Kathum's corpse for the realm of the dead using the Sefech ritual. First, they thoroughly clean the body and then rub it with a reddish-brown paste. At the end, the men carefully wrap the dead priest with bandages soaked in perfumed oil until all parts of his body are covered.

As one of the taxidermists starts to place a small artefact between the layers of cloth, in accordance with the customs of the Kar church, one of the priests brusquely prevents him from doing so. An argument begins between the two.

> If you have the ability Sharpened Senses and want to use it, turn to 923 If not, turn to 895

888 You conceal the dragon horn beneath your cloak and blow into it. The characteristic, sonorous roar is carried away by the wind. When you blow the horn for a second time, you notice one of the priests behind Mireth's back pointing in your direction in alarm.

Turn to C100.

889 Three of the mounted riders of the Golden Guard, all of whom were in the cloud of blinding dust with you at the time of the explosion, slowly fall to the ground as smoking balls of fire. Kyrna, as a dragon, is immune to the effects of flame, and you are unharmed as well thanks to your stony skin.

This maneuver will be quite a blow to the air defense of the Guard. You now have enough time to prepare for your divine gift of temporal manipulation.

Turn to 920, option ().

890 With new confidence, you climb down over the strong vines of a creeper on the inner wall to the second floor of the palace. From here, you have a perfect view of the rustling leaves of the Raan trees and the Kar chapel in the middle of the park. It takes you a little time to find a window that opens.

You still remember the barely illuminated gallery. The portal to the Hierarch's room is only a jump away from the window ledge. Strange. Why are the guards not on patrol? «

> If you want to seize this opportune moment and jump over to the door of Kathum's room, turn to 881. If you want to wait outside the window to see what happens, turn to 985.

891 You follow an inner voice, a great curiosity driving you towards the unknown being. When you pass through the first wall of fog, you can better see the ghostly shape on the tree. Even though the shape looks familiar to you, you still cannot say who it is sitting only a few feet away from you in the tree. The fog of the Shadow World around you is constantly shifting.

You are still focusing your gaze on the unknown person when Kathum suddenly grabs your hip. He is being attacked by a wild Shadow! The monstrous creature from the underworld has tracked the Emissary of Kar and is now tearing at his soul.

> ATTACK N 20 DEFENSE 917 *0000G VITALITY

YOUNG KATHUM

LURED SHADOW

¥003

If you wield the Shadow Reaper, successful attacks lead to the loss of 1 extra RESISTANCE point.

If the Shadow successfully attacks, you have to check the base die! If it shows a 💽 or 🛄 the Shadow could also hurt young Kathum and lowers his VITALITY by 1!

Because at the same time you have to defend young Kathum, your ATTACK is reduced by 2 points for the duration of the fight!

> If you win and Kathum's soul survives, turn to 963. If you win only after YOUNG KATHUM'S VITALITY has been reduced to 0, turn to 912



892 You hear loud footsteps and the jingling of heavy armor from the corridor. The men of the Golden Guard are approaching. Hurriedly, you turn to the large standing mirror in the corner and leap into the glass. Hardly have the waves of the transition faded, when you see three men in golden plate armor and an old priestess of Kar rush after you into the bed chamber. The priestess hurries to the body and begins a prayer, while the soldiers search the room with a bright lantern and drawn swords.

When the priestess accidentally looks in your direction, she stops short, pointing at the mirror. Now the guards have found you, too!

If you have the ability Warfare, turn to 874. If you want to draw the Moon Sickle, jump out of the mirror and

attack the guards, turn to 858".

If you want to wait in the mirror realm, knowing that they cannot follow you here, turn to 863.

893 Knowing that Nephatari will die soon grieves you. Anger burns in your chest, boundless fury-with yourself!

) Her death is my fault alone! «

You already imagine fighting your way through the guards, slaving Mireth and escaping with Nephatari and her father's body on Kyrna's back, when a hand seizes you by the shoulder. "Remember," a benign male voice whispers in your ear. "All this is history."

Surprised, you turn around and look into the wise eyes of your mentor Tarus. "Changing it could plunge the world into chaos. Accept it, even though it breaks your heart."

> If you want to give in to your urge regardless of the risk and encourage Nephatari, turn to 877.

If you want to follow your mentor's advice, turn to 860.

894 You can see confusion in the eves of the wrong Kyrna. She recognizes you, but does not understand your behavior. The loyalty of this Kyrna still belongs to her dragon master Aonus. As If to prove that, her mighty muzzle shoots forward between the towers and hovers there, the tip of her powerful horn almost touching Kathum's narrow chest. Hot steam curls out between her bared teeth.

7

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

6111

"Kyrna, how can you do that? After all that we have lived through together!" You hesitate, trying to understand your emotional outbreak, and correct yourself: "...I mean, what we will live through."

Kyrna puts her head to one side and studies you. She is especially interested in the dragon horn on your belt. But then she listens into the storm.

"My master is calling me. But I think I understand, Child of Shadows. Take your new friend and go!"

Wordlessly, you nod to Kyrna, grab the confused young Hierarch and take him as quickly as possible to the other side of the roof. Turn to 864

895 Unfortunately, you cannot hear what they are saying. The voices echo too hollowly against the domed roof. You are all the more surprised when the priest throws out the taxidermist.

Turn to 937.

896 The monster imitates every move you make. However dexterous and nimble you are, it is just as fast! Finally, you pick up a wedge-shaped rock from the ground and drive it deep into your opponent's guts. Pleasant warmth spreads through your body, but it is not a feeling of victory, but a misshapen glass dageer in the mirror monster's hand, sunk into your belly.

Your life ends here.

897 There is only one power that could come to your aid at this moment: Komar the Blasphemer! You met this undead dragon when on you journey to the underworld. It is in the creature's character to take every opportunity to trick its master Nergal. Why should it not want to help you?

Whispering, you press Komar's name through your teeth. And you can see the reaction on Kathum's face at once: His dry lips start to tremble. Nergal appears little pleased with your plan and curses through the throat of the priest of Kar, "Do not dare, Keşra. Do not attempt to forge a pact with this scum!"

Strengthened by Nergal's rage, you pray for Komar's aid more and more loudly. The spirit of the Blasphemer is now present, and like you, it besieges its master.

Return to 996 and in each COMBAT ROUND remove an additional point of NERGAL'S RESISTANCE!

898 To survive this fight against the dexterous and wellarmored riders, you must put the flying lizard out of action. Determined, you urge Kyrma forward—the Moon Sickle held high against the nocturnal sky—and towards the nearest guard. Just before entering combat, however, you change your weapon. At this moment, you trust more in the barbed rider's thorn atlached to the long chain on Kyrna's saddle and prepare to throw the traditional weapon at your opponent's flying beast.

OLDEN RIDER	ATTACK	N 17 (18)
FLYING LIZARD)	DEFENSE	• 19 (17)
	RESISTANCE	•00000

If you manage to hit and cause a loss of RESISTANCE, the Rider's Thorn (Hit Bonus +4) pierces the flesh of the lizard. As long as is harpooned, the opponent cannot attack! You can cause further RESISTANCE loss with a STRENCTH test against 18. If the test fails, the fight continues.

If you wear a Soldier's Badge, your opponent curses you as a vulture who robs the dead. He is much more aggressive in his behavior (stats in brackets).

> If you want to end the combat with a risky flight maneuver, turn to 919. If you win the fight, turn to 865.

899 Driven by your thoughts of escape, you run, burying your head in both arms, and leap through the heavy leaded glass of

the window. Heavy drops of rain whip your face on your seemingly endless fall down the face of the step pyramid.

You remember now the magnificent view one has from the rooms of the Emissary of Kar. Even though you're falling to your certain death, a smile flits across your lips.

Your life ends here.

900 "To Kyphi!" you command your stalwart companion. Kyrna's loud scream fills you with joy and pride. No matter what dangers await you -your dragon will always be by your side. Quickly, the defensive area of the Kar temple disappears in the mist of the Gawana while your thoughts turn for a last time to Seren and the other divine messengers.

Kyphi is not far away from the Ashen Sea, but you will not reach Rhenus' capital before dusk. Considering that you expect strong resistance from the Golden Guard, that is really not too bad.

Some hours of flight later, the last warming rays of the Kar disc disappear and leave the firmament to Ugar. The stars are already glittering when the you see the angular shape of the step pyramid of Kyphi on the horizon. It is always an uplifting moment to see the monumental building.

Generations of slaves and enslaved peoples created this edifice in the harsh climes of Gawana, its 88 levels rising half a mile into the sky. It is still considered unfinished.

Despite the late hour, you can see the lights of torches and lanterns flickering everywhere. Kyphi is famous for its restless citizens. Thousands of them use the cool nights to perform their strenuous labors on the steps and in the labyrinthine heart of the pyramid. People say that the golden metropolis never sleeps.

On the top, the family of the Hierarch, the priesthood and the high officials reside, whereas on the middle levels the common folk lives. Impoverished citizens vegetate at the very bottom, sometimes even outside the protective walls. There they till the barren fields during the few weeks in which the Yellow Rhenus floods its banks, they slave away in quarries, or they lead a pitiful slave's life.

The imposing Hierarch's palace with its many-angled buildings, fortified sandstone towers and the stylized Crown of Kar, consisting, of eight curved thoms of pure gold extending in all the cardinal directions like a star, sits atop the metropolis as a divine adornment.

Even weeks after the assassination of Hierarch Kathum, Kyphi still wears its signs of mourning. All its white sun banners are at half mast.

Your approach under cover of darkness has been without any problem so far. The closer you get to the city pyramid, however, the more often scouts of the Golden Guard circle over the battlements of the temple district with their flying lizards.

Kyrna has noticed, too: "Perhaps this would be a good time to visit your past, Keşra!"

If you want to travel to the past now, turn to 926. If you want to come closer to the top of the pyramid before daring to jump, turn to 965. If you have the ability **Premonition**, turn to 993.



441

901 You have taken too much time! Another guard has heard the sounds of combat. The soldier starts to shoot at you without regard for his companions.

Determine the guard's accuracy based on the moon!

Under the New Moon or Crescent Moon, you are hit by a bolt and lose one level of VITALITY!

Under all other phases, you are lucky and the missile narrowly misses you.

Return to 990 and go on with your combat.

902 You curse the inventor of blinding dust! It is a potent alchemical powder used mostly to defend against aerial attacks. To have its full effect, it must be dispersed in the air as finely as possible. Dragons flying through a cloud of blinding dust are irritated, often losing their orientation. Many crash, their riden powerless to prevent it.

If you have a Rider's Eyepiece and want to use it, turn to 927. If not, turn to 942

903 What a lucky coincidence! The pocket mirror functions as a small, saving portal that can take you back to the real world. Kyrna is surprised at your unexpected appearance, staring at you with her large lizard eyes.

"All is well, Kyrna, there is nothing left to do here. Let us get away from here as quickly as possible!"

Your faithful dragon lady does not have to be asked twice and spreads her wings.

Turn to 1000.

904 You remember vividly the leap into the rose hedge and the ensuing escape through the tunnel to the crypt of the temple. You are annoyed that you cannot see anything from up on the roof because your perspective is not ideal. Nervously, you listen to the storm.

[®]Damn it, he has to be here somewhere," a guard grumbles. Then you hear the two men with their broadswords slashing at the hedge. You remember the blade that barely missed your head. Spontaneously, you scrape the tiles with your boot, hoping that the soldiers end their attack.

"What was that?" one of the soldiers murmurs.

Obviously, your distraction has worked. Quickly, you try to reach the other side of the roof over the steep gable. Unfortunately, you accidentally knock some tiles loose. They slide down with a loud noise as they smash on the pathway. "The roof! Come, let's get him!"

Test your DEXTERITY against 16!

If the test is successful, turn to 976. If it fails, turn to 990.

905 The taxidermist is completely overwhelmed as he realizes that Kathum's soul has not passed into the underworld. He introduces himself as Ramin and declares himself immediately prepared to put your plan into action.

Turn to 957.

906 Heavy rain drenches your clothes. Hesitantly, you open your eyes. Thunder and lightning are raging all around you. The unbelievable ride through space and time has ended—in the stormy night when Kathum died.

At once, all the memories of those horror-filled hours return.

The gods must be desperate. Did they try to stop me with the storm from committing the deed? <</p>

Despite all your doubts, you feel Kyrna's confidence. She is proud of your prudent action.

Remove 1 point of KARMA!

Your RIDER RANK rises by one level!

Turn to 856.

907 It will take some time for the priesthood to bury the hierarch—only too well do you remember Calderel's euphone expression when he told you about the early ceremonies for Kathum.

If you want to refresh your memory, you can do this at section 337 and then return here. Read the text between the moons (...) then come back here (put your finger between the pages).

Weariness comes over you. Sustaining the temporal manipulation costs you considerable mental strength. The temporal bond is stretched not only by the duration of its use, but also through Kyrma's physical distance from you. She is meanwhile so far away that you barely feel her.

> Oh Kyrna, take care! <

You have to concentrate intensely so as not to fall asleep and thus risk breaking the bond.

Completely without warning, something enters your mind Before your inner eye, you see the image of a dragon with scales covered in jewels. It is Loth the Seducer of the underworld Enthralled, you follow his hypnotic dance. You grow weak. How tranquil seems the realm of peaceful sleep... but the scream of another dragon awakens you with a start.

> Kyrna! «

With an evil hiss, Loth fades from your mind. Opening your eyes, you realize where you are: The temporal bond linking you and Kyrna to the present drains you. And the dragons of the underworld want to make use of your weakness.

> In this condition I cannot fight or do anything strenuous! <

You thus decide to take no risk and loosen the temporal bond somewhat by letting the first hours of the night pass by. Within a few seconds, night and morning rush by. By now your past self should have been carried off to the Ningal Tower by Aonus.

If you want to risk taking another look from the pulpit, turn to 954 If you prefer to spend more hours in your hiding place, turn to 998. 908 For the first time since your landing on the palace roof, you can catch your breath. Even if, from your point of view, everal weeks have passed, you know that it is safe here. After all, you remember vividly the night you spent in the damp crypt.

44.5

Turn to 988.



909 You rush towards Kathum. A puddle of blood is spreading beneath his head. He is dead. You hesitate. The image! It has burned into your mind like a dark primal thought.

A fierce clap of thunder drags you from your grim retrospective: The storm is still raging. You hear no other suspicious sounds, but it is only a question of time until guards are everywhere.

You must now make an important decision. The whole time you were sure how you would act, believed that you had thought of every eventuality.

But now, at this singular moment when vague imagining becomes bitter reality, you feel the burden of a divine decision that over life and death.

If you want to bring Kathum back to life with the power of the Keşra, turn to 996. If you do not want to play master over life and death, turn to 989.

910 On your way back to the Kar temple your thoughts revolve around your responsibility for Kathum's death and the possible ways to get his body and unite it with his soul. 445

 That is the only way Kathum can remove the curse from mel « The storm is slowly losing its power as you ponder your next steps.

> Kathum will be honored in the temple and then placed into the crypt I have to wait for the right moment, call Kyrna and escape with him. You decide to spend the night in the temple and avoid your past self. Again you climb the outer wall and the roof of the Kar temple to the small hole that you have kicked open. Inside the temple there is no one to be seen.

You seize the opportunity and carefully squirm past the bricks and rafters until you reach a broad, dust laden beam. You place your trust in your paternal dexterity. It is the only way to enter the temple unseen.

Test your DEXTERITY against 18!

If the test is successful, turn to 885 If it fails, turn to 973

911 Carefully, you feel for the narrow gaps between the bricks. You can move forward only slowly and painfully. Just as you have reached the level of the third floor, you lose your grip between the slippery seams of the wall and plunge into the depths.

But the gods are merciful this night! Miraculously, you are able to grab one of the sun banners used as decoration all around the building. With a loud tearing sound, you rip the cloth but manage to break your fall and roll onto a large garden terrace among various fruit trees on the first floor.

Many of the terracotta pots have already been blown over and broken in the storm, so that the three trees you have just damaged should not be too obvious.

On the one hand, you are glad that you have not been killed. On the other, you are also annoyed that you now have to climb up another story. **912** With your last blow the Shadow finally dissolves. But it is too late. Nothing is left of the boy but a small heap of ash. The idol has disappeared as well.

Remove the Sabalith Idol from your adventure sheet!

The burning pain of grief and shame overwhelms you, and you are no longer able to concentrate on your abilities. Immediately, you are hurled out of the Shadow Realm only to awaken in a receiving room somewhere on the third floor of the Hierarch's palace. You decide to flee through a window.

Turn to 952.

913 Within seconds, the air surrounding you becomes searingly hot. You notice your skin turning to stone as usual to protect you, but the heat from the magical blinding dust is too powerful. Agonizingly, your skin melts like lava, and you slip, lifeless, from the saddle.

Your life ends here.

914 Then it is over, the wild dance of day and night. All around you rages a terrible storm. Cold rain lashes your face. After only a few beats of your dragon's wings, your drenched clothes are glued to your body.

At some distance before you, you see the proud city pyramid of Kyphi, You remember...

 The storm was with me all the time in that fateful night, as if the gods already foresaw my shameful deed.

Remove 2 points of KARMA!

If you want to fty low over the steps of the city pyramid, turn to 932. If you want to remain at your present height so as to go straight to the temple levels, turn to 955.

Turn to 991.

915 You look firmly into the boy's eyes, grab his arm, and drag him with you into the Shadow Realm. Your bodies and faces, furniture and walls, even the sounds from your mouths are twisted in a bizarre dance of foggy light and shadow.

All that was just real is now only dark smoke through which your bodies glide without resistance. The boy's facial features look weirdly smudged. Fear appears in his golden eyes, which shine like two small suns in the darkness of the Shadow Realm.

But there! Behind some walls of fog, on the vaguely outlined trunk of a Raan tree, crouches a shadow.

If you want to cover Kathum's eyes, turn to 972 If you want to move closer to the unknown person, turn to 891 If you want to go straight to the roof of the palace with Kathum lurn to 963

916 Your mind leaves the chaos of the underworld behind. But you cannot open your eyes, cannot move. You are still caught in the bandages stalwart Ramin put on you, without any idea of how much time has passed.

 $_{\rm S}$ Where am 1? Am I already lying in a sealed sarcophagus somewhere in the depths of a pyramid? $_{\rm S}$

Voices reach your ear. The murmuring and whispering of hundreds of people. You are sweating. It is terribly hot. A burning pain spreads over your back.

Then you hear a female voice confidently drowning out all the noise. "The Oracle shall speak!"

If you have the abilities Free Breath and

Immunity to Heat, turn to 882.

446

447

If you have at least one or the ability Mental Focus, turn to 922 If you have none of these abilities, turn to 853.

917 Believing firmly that you can undo the bloody deed of the past, you leave your hiding place. Kathum and your other self

look over at you in horror, and in the fraction of a moment when the gazes of the two Keşras meet, the fragile fabric of space and time shatters.

Both of your lives ends here.

7



918 You remember only too well the young servant and this eerie situation. Her solicitude cost her dearly.

And now your memories also become real. Your past self steps out of the shadows, grabs the girl's throat with his claws and squeezes, driven by the animalistic need to kill. The death struggle of the innocent servant girl fills you with boundless shame. • This wrong must not occur! ϵ

Your subconscious takes control, using your skill in manipulating time in a completely new way: All around you the storm eases off. The branches of the Raan tree freeze, and a bolt of lightning that makes the surroundings as bright as day stands still in the sky. Time has stopped! But not for the Keşra—whether in the past or in the present.

Startled, you press yourself against the other side of the Raan tree, waiting for a few moments until you are sure that your alter ego's urge to kill the servant has faded. Your divine instinct has activated this unusual manipulation of time, but you know that it will weaken you if you use it longer!

Remove 1 point of KARMA!

Determined, you slip through the window into the luxuriously appointed gallery. Hurriedly, and making sure to remain unnoticed, you leap over to the door of Kathum's bed chamber. *Turn to* 900.

919 In fractions of seconds you must now make the right decision so as to escape the barrage of the guards.

What Dragon Rider command would you like to try to avoid the scouts? If you want to loosen the reins and lean forward on Kyrna's back, turn to **949**. If you want to drum on Kyrna's back, turn to **880**. If you want to pull hard on her left wing and lean forward, turn to **944**.

920 You trust in the gods and close your eyes. Your breath is heavy and fast. You calm it. All your thoughts are confused. You focus them. You turn your thoughts back to the past, back to the day of Kathum's death—the night of your awakening. Back to the birth of the creature you are now.

> 1 am Keşra, master of the stars! «

You feel the wind tearing at your clothes, feel warmth and cool of sun and moon dance upon your skin, sense it becoming dark and bright in flashes before your closed lids. But you fear to open your eyes. You fear the images of this journey.

Kyrna screams in fear. Her echoing cry shows you that you have done right. You really are on your way back.

Depending on the option you took in the last chapter, turn to section **(3914**, **(B861** or **(9906**).

921 The cool power of Ugar flows through your veins. Your father is with you!

Your DEXTERITY rises by 1 point!

Your VITALITY rises to normal!

922 Feverishly, you struggle to remove the tight bandages or tear them open with your claws. The heat and hot fumes become unbearable.

Your VITALITY is lowered by a level!

You suffocate the flames by rolling on the floor. The bandages finally rip open. The humans attending the ceremony believe they are witnessing Kathum's resurrection and pray for the mercy of Kar. As you unwind the last shreds from your head, you realize what situation you are in: You are standing in the golden bowl of the Oracle of Kabeth, surrounded by hundreds of humans paralyzed by fear, all of them spellbound as they follow each of your movements, as does Kathum's daughter Nephatari. Several dozen guards try to keep the crowd under control. Behind you, a small group of Templars keep watch over the ceremony. In their midst you see Mireth, famous seer of the oracle. She appears not very shocked by your presence and with a curt gesture sets the sword fighters upon you.

Turn to C100.

923 "You know that Mireth forbids the giving of gifts to the dead!" the oracle priest hisses as he grabs the arm of the taxidermist.

The man, caught red-handed, looks at his colleagues in hope of support. "Kathum was a great ruler. It is our pious duty to prepare him for his final journey!"

"Enough!" the priest snarls. With an forceful gesture, he sends the taxidermist away and calls after him: "No one is allowed to doubt the orders of Her Sanctity!"

It looks as if Mireth, the highest ranking cleric of the Oracle of Kabeth, is now ruling over Kyphi.

Turn to 937.

924 The distance to the top of the pyramid and temple complex of the Hierarch of Kar is only about two miles of flight. That is no great distance for your dragon, but in view of these unbridled forces of nature, you are greatly worried: with every beat of Kyrma's wings, a bolt of lightning cuts through the darkened sky. Suddenly time stops.

You are blinded. A mighty bolt of lightning envelops you in a spherical prison of twitching light and energy. Your life seems over, yet the presence of divine power is palpable. A protective force spreads out from the mystical artefacts of your divine patrons.

The energy of the lightning, however destructive and terrifying it is normally, is at this moment a part of you!

Your VITALITY rises to fit!

KYRNA'S VITALITY rises to normal!

Turn to 856.

925 You have trouble concentrating on your gift. Kyrna flaps in panic through the dust, and the riders of the Golden Guard have almost reached you.

> If you have the ability Mental Focus, turn to 920, option () If not, turn to 982

926 "You are right, Kyrna! Let us not waste any time." You suppress any unimportant thoughts and focus your mind on your divine ability. Led by intuition and hidden knowledge, you press your palms together and begin the ritual.

Turn to 920, option (

927 You have actually only worn the eyepiece with the darkened glasses so as to protect yourself from the bright rays of the Kar disc and the strong wind. But now it might help you to avoid the negative effects of the blinding dust. No sooner have you set the eyepiece on your nose, than red streaks move unexpectedly across the horizon! Confused, you take off the glasses, rub your eyes in surprise and carefully put them on again: The points of light are being projected on the dark glasses!

They reveal the position of the Golden Guard as well as all other metal objects in range! The large, golden wreath of thorns on the top of the city pyramid is even glowing.

Does the eyepiece only show metal consecrated to Kar? «

Using this magical artefact, you have no trouble defending yourself in the air. Kyrna obeys your intuitive commands and easily dodges all blinding clouds and scouts on the way to the Hierarch's palace.

Change the Rider's Eyepiece to Eye of the Assassin (Special Item) on your adventure sheet!

Shortly before landing, however, you realize that you still have something else left to do.

Turn to 920, option ().



928 By tearing forcefully at the reins, you manage to catch Kyrna's attention and increase the distance between you and the hostile riders. Nevertheless, one of the arrows has pierced Kyrna's thick scales.

KYRNA'S VITALITY is lowered by a level!

Turn to 884.

929 It is Torn, a dragon from the underworld! Its presence is overpowering. Again and again, he dashes around you, taking your breath away, squeezing your throat shut. You are defense less against the attacks of the dragon! Only your mind and inner strength may be able to save you and prevent the Beguiler from dragging your soul down into the depths of the underworld.

 TORN THE BEGUILER
 ATEACK
 ✓ 12
 13
 15

 (UNDERWORLD DRACON)
 COMBAT ROUND UDCCOCCONSTRUCTION
 COMBAT ROUND UDCCOCCONSTRUCTION
 COMBAT ROUND UDCCOCCONSTRUCTION

 Try to resist the attacks on your mind as long as possible! You cannot attack the dracon vourself.
 Total construction

In every odd-numbered COMBAT ROUND he becomes stronger. Torn's mental attacks are aimed only against your STRENGTH! If the dragon succeeds at a mental strike, you do not lose your VITALITY, but the combat is over at once!

> If you suffer the hit in the first two rounds, turn to 868. If you are hit in the third, fourth or fifth round, turn to 871. If, at the beginning of the sixth COMBAR ROUMD you haven't yet suffered a hit, turn to 967.

If you have the ability Mind over Body, you can ignore the first hit of the underworld dragon.



930 Again and again, bright white flashes of lightning blaze a path from the black clouds down to the ground. Their divine power has set ablaze a number of huts and houses on the middle level of the step pyramid. Filled with compassion, you watch the inhabitants' desperate attempts to put out the flames as suddenly another flash of lightning exits the clouds, striking you dead.

41.3

Your life ends here.

931 What a shot! Your arrow hits the guard at the very weakest spot on his armor, the narrow gap between his metal ruff and helmet. There is no noise as he clutches the shaft in his throat and falls.

Turn to 865.

932 You race over Kyphi's houses and streets so fast that the light of the lamps blurs in your moist eyes. The few people outside in this weather are busy getting home safely and do not notice your approach. Even the Golden Guard appears not to expect such a daring attempt.

As Kyrna glides up to the next to the last level of the step pyramid leading to the Kar temple, you notice that the esplanade is filled with the faithful. Fearful of the storm, they are crowding into the sanctum to pray for the assistance of the sun goddess. Turn to 856.

933 Apparently, the men of the Golden Guard have lost your former self. Rather aimlessly, they are searching the surroundings of the temple. You listen to two soldiers sneaking along the temple wall.

"Hey, Illia", one of them whispers tensely. "We should look in the temple!"

Naturally you have to prevent that! On the spur of the moment, you pull out some tiles and let them slide down the roof, making a loud clatter. As they shatter in front of the temple, it is easy to hear, even in the storm.

"The roof! Come, let's get him!" one of the guards shouts in excitement.

Hurriedly, you turn to flee when in passing you look through the new hole down into the dark temple. For a short moment you see a Shadow hidden behind a pillar.

Your eyes meet. Your heart skips a beat. In the blink of an eye, you feel past, present and future fuse and become a single truth. This Shadow is you!

» Now I understand... This is the nature of the Keşra! «

Your STRENGTH rises by 1 point!

Somewhat unsettled, you balance along the gable, jump from the roof and pray to the gods that you may escape the guards without any further excitement.

Test your STRENGTH against 16!

If the test is successful, turn to 976. If it fails, turn to 990.

934 "Who are you? And what do you want here?" demands Kathum imperiously.

Tauntingly, your past self holds out the back of his right hand with the silvery mark of Ugar and the mysterious moon artefact. "Emissary, meet your fate!"

Kathum appears unimpressed, replying darkly, "An assassin from the Ningal Tower?" The Hierarch carefully observes the person opposite him. "You should know that you cannot kill me. Even this toy in your hand will not allow a mortal to do so."

"You are right", your other self answers confidently. "But the Child of Shadows is immortal!"

"Ch-child of Shadows?" Kathum's sudden uncertainty is palpable. His gaze then meets the scarred hand of your old self. At this moment, the Emissary of Kar understands who is standing opposite him. He is face to face with the corrupted Keşra—the only creature with the power to end his life!



933 Your eyes meet. Your heart skips a beat. In the blink of an eye, you feel past, present and future fuse and become a single truth. This Shadow is you!

Kathum lifts his hands in a protective gesture and shouts a brief, impressive incantation. At once, dozens of Uraeus snakes made of burning rays of sun shoot from his open mouth towards the Child of Shadows. They swiftly wind themselves around him, wriggling through his eyes, ears and nose into his body.

> That must be the curse of Kar that Calderel fears so much! «

In awe you watch the serpents of flickering light as one after the other they first burn the clothes of the Child of Shadows and then greedily invade his body. Your other self fights desperately, rearing up once again. He seizes Kathum and bashes the Moonstone artefact over his head. Shock waves of divine power flood the body of the twitching priest of Kar. He staggers and falls forward upon his bloodied face.

» So that is how it happened... «

While both men lie motionless on the ground, the serpents slither out of the head of the Child of Shadows. At first they dart here and there without knowing where to go, eventually disappearing in gaps and cracks. Two of them, however, remain. These two stare at you! Their unquenched desire, the reason they were summoned –to stop the Keşra!

> If you want to pick up the stone artefact before the divine hunters reach you, turn to 945. If you want to ignore the artefact and immediately defend yourself, turn to 870.

935 Tensely, you cower in the driving rain on the steep gable roof of the Kar temple, hoping to conceal your silhouette during the bright flashes of lightning. From up here, you have a perfect view of the park. Any moment now, your past self could appear. And indeed! Between the hedges and trees, a Shadow in shredded clothes dashes across the grass. Not far behind him, five guards armed with crossbows follow in pursuit. Your heart is hammering as if you yourself were being hunted.

You know that the guards will not give up. Unfortunately, you lose sight of your past self as, in his desperate dash to the temple, he uses every bit of cover along his path. *Irm* to the past and sections 15 and 16 of the prologue.

In which of the section numbers did you mark a circle?

Section 15, turn to 904. Section 16, turn to 933.

936 It is frightening to watch as memories become real once more. The events occurring before you merge with those in your mind, becoming a reality. Fascinated, you follow the movements of your past self and those of the servant girl. There is a tingling at the back of your neck.

) Is someone there? «

Has your past self seen you through the window pane in a flash of lightning during the storm? You climb quickly to the other side of the Raan tree, jumping further behind two, three more trees and remaining motionless until the feeling fades. You decide to jump at once through the window and into the opulent gallery. From here it is only a few steps to Kathum's chambers.

Turn to 909.

937 Time drags slowly and you cannot resist: Again, you loosen the temporal bond and allow yourself be drawn forward into the present.

Many hours rush past you—from outside the hole in the roof is quickly repaired—until the next night begins, and you notice the flickering of a burning bowl of oil. At once, you end your time travel as you recognize the rebellious taxidermist who has been relieved of his duties. Apparently, he has secreted himself into the Kar temple to complete his plan to honor Kathum.

He runs his hands over the bandages of the Hierarch, who is still laid out upon the altar, and slides small talismans and artefacts in

between the layers of cloth. As he does so, he whispers short prayers.

» He is truly devoted to his old ruler.

As you watch the taxidermist risking his life to make Kathum' journey into the realm of the dead possible, you ponder your further actions.

> Maybe this man could be a great help ... «

If you want to remain in your hiding place and wait for the ceremony before taking Kathum's body from the crypt, turn to 947. If you want to pursue a cunning plan that could mean risking failure or costing your life, turn to 986. Or if you want to flee from the temple under cover of night, call Kyrna and return to the present, turn to 1000.

938 You hold your breath, fearing that your past self or the men of the Golden Guard could have noticed your fall. When nothing happens, you sneak into the side aisle of the temple and climb the statue of a saint of Kar until you reach a small pulpit just below the roof.

Turn to 907.

939 Seraph is the largest settlement on the banks of the Red Rhenus and presently inhabited by many refugees. Lying only a few miles from the gates is the front. Luckily for the people living here, the Empire is occupied around Leenhaven in the west, so that Seraph has been given some small breathing space in this war.

Like Kyphi, Seraph is highly cultured. The monumental temple, including the Oracle of Kabeth, goes back to the ancestors of the first dynasties. In addition, smaller pyramids have been built in the fertile valley at the branch of the Red Rhenus. But they are neither inhabited nor are their surroundings settled. They are used for their original function, as graves for saints. 940 The Hierarch is lying next to his bed, motionless. But there is no trace of your other self. Has he escaped to safetu? <

> If you want to help Kathum, turn to 909. If you want to leave him to his fate, turn to 989.



941 You shrug and appeal to the faith of the taxidermist, who follows your words with a stern expression on his face. His voice rembles in a mixture of fear and determination as he announces his decision.

"I will not help you!"

Turn to 855.

7

942 Even though you are not adversely affected by the dust, Kyrna suddenly begins to flap her wings uncontrollably, twisting her long neck and screaming in pain. She loses all control over her movements. You have difficulty staying in the saddle and are forced to watch the six elite riders of the Golden Guards rising in the night sky to intercept you.

If you want to risk a time jump, turn to 925. If you want to save yourselves with a daring flying maneuver, turn to 919.

If you want to calm Kyrna, turn to 987.

Turn to 975.

943 You sense that the Kyrna of the past hasn't any evil intentions. She is simply confused. Strangely, the bond that has only united you more strongly with time seems to exist between you and this Kyrna as well.

"Good, Kyrna, good girl," you try to calm her down. "We will just leave again, okay?"

"You disappoint me, Keşral Have you not understood the role of dragons yet?"

Kyrna's thoughts are like a mental slap in the face. "You have nothing to fear from me. Neither in the present, nor in the future!"

Under the dragon's curious gaze, you drag Kathum away. The Emissary does not know what's happening to him as you pull him all the way to the other side of the roof.

"Not one word," you prevent any awkward discussion with the Hierarch even before he can question you.

Turn to 864.



944 Unfortunately, you can barely manage to calm Kyrna before the sharpshooters of the Golden Guard take aim at your dragon.

Determine the accuracy of the Golden Guard based on the moon!

If it's Full Moon, turn to 884 If it's Half Moon or Gibbous Moon, turn to 928 If it's Crescent Moon, turn to 961 If it's New Moon, turn to 949 945 Only after a second try, do you manage to grab the strangely heavy sphere of smooth marble, which looks as if has lallen directly out of the sky. The beautiful play of its colors in silver and dark grey appears to be a perfect recreation of Ugar's face.

Curiously, you listen to the power dwelling within the artefact. It wizes you at once. It is an ingratiating, irrepressible feeling that you have felt before—but it is not divine. The formerly so pure orb has been corrupted by Calderel to strengthen but also to control the Child of Shadows!

You want to free yourself, but your claw cramps. Arrows of pure hatred bombard your mind as the sphere begins to tremble, linally exploding with a thunderclap. Glowing shards of metal rain to the ground. Some dance about on the ground, others melt away in the air. Each was once a dark part of the Child of Shadows.

Your DEXTERITY rises by 1 point.

Your VITALITY is reduced by two levels, but to no less than critical!

Turn to 870.

946 This ungovernable feeling comes from a strong, dark power near you! You do not manage to form a mental image of who or what it is. It appears almost as if this power were even actively eluding those powers of your own. *How do you want to enter the palace*?

> Over the outer facade, turn to 994. Over the park side, turn to 890.

947 For a brief moment, you have lost control over your ability to manipulate time. You are not sure how many hours have passed before you are able to stop the journey.

Agitated, you look towards the altar—Kathum has disappeared! Countless nobles of Kyphi in mourning attire are walking about the temple, whereby many are obviously taking the opportunity to look around in the holy Kar temple and brazenly finger artworks and artefacts.

You hear some fragments of conversation between two ladies nobly dressed and standing directly below you. "How sad Kathum was a unique ruler."

"Oh yes, my dear! But you dare not say so out loud. Pray for him in silence. Perhaps the Oracle will grant him access to the ancestors."

"People say it will be tomorrow already."

"Truthfully? The templars in Seraph must be in a hurry ... "



> Seraph... oracle? They have brought Kathum's body to the Oracle of Kabeth! <</p>

Hastily, you climb up onto the temple roof. Some mourners, admiring the dome, notice you and shout. But you do not care. You only want to leave here at once. You blow into your dragon horn as hard as possible.

Even though you are giving the signal earlier than agreed upon, Kyrna falls from the sky a moment later, circling above the palace and taking you up in her powerful paws as she flies past.

Accompanied by the clang of the alarm bells, you thunder down the side of the step pyramid and escape your pursuers from the Golden Guard in the dense cumulus clouds.

"I worried about you, Keşra", she preens.

"I am sorry. Kyrna, we have to go to Seraph!"

"I know. They brought Kathum to the Oracle yesterday."

"Then we must hurry!"

Kyrna's determined cry gives you confidence that you will reach Rhenus' westernmost city by noon.

> If you have the ability History Knowledge, turn to 939. If not, turn to 975.

948 Angered, you are forced to see a missile pierce your dragon's flesh. Kyrna answers the wound with a suppressed narl. You are proud of how calmly she bears pain, pressing on despite the agony.

KYRNA'S VITALITY is lowered by a level!

Turn to 898.

949 You realize that your plan has placed Kyrna in a hopeless stuation. In torment, she flaps about without aim or reason. As the first arrows penetrate Kyrna's scaly body, you lose your last hope. Within moments, both of your bodies are riddled with arrows from the sharpshooters of the Golden Guard.

Your life ends here.

950 You grab a small brass figurine from the chest of drawers next to you and throw it in a high arc in the direction of the door. The loud noise startles Kathum. Turning around, he freezes when he sees your past self with the artefact raised for the blow. Turn to 934.

951 You have quickly found your way back to the roof. All the guards you encounter in the mirror world cannot see you. You are only disturbed because the entire world is mirrored, and you are constantly confusing left and right. Despite that, you manage to find Kyrna between the battlements on the palace roof. She does not really see you either, but acts nervous when you come near.

Nervously, you feel for your saddlebag — and indeed, the hand mirror is still there! You pull it out as if it were a raw egg and are delighted to find that the glass has remained undamaged despite all the uncertainties of your journey. Again, you notice the interesting engraving on the handle of the beautiful item. In the mirror world, however, it appears to have a different meaning. Check whether you have written down anything about the Hand Mirror under Special Notes.

Turn to 995+

952 You hastily gather your things and climb over the outer wall to the roof of the palace. Up here, you certainly needn't expect any resistance from the guard, but you have no choice but make a daring laep over one of the Raan trees to reach the inner yard. You use the sloped roof for a run-up. You sail through the air for what feels like a small eternity before reaching the first tree. Unfortunately, you fail to grab one of the slippery branches and crash onto the muddy grass in the park.

Your VITALITY is lowered by a level!

All around you guards are shouting. The Golden Guard are already looking for the assassin. Driven by your unwavering survival instinct, you struggle to your feet, limp to the Kar temple, and climb the wall of white-washed granite.

Turn to 935.

953 Kathum struggles to remain composed. "Pull yourself together," you whisper sternly and shake the boy. But the Emissary of Kar falls to his knees and kisses your hands in submission: "Mighty Kera, please, spare my people."

You find the rules about the section numbers with an asterisk (*) on page 286. Tears are running down his pale cheeks. "In this war, countless blasphemies have been committed—on both sides."

"Fear not," you try to reassure the Hierarch without really knowing what fear moves him. "You must ensure that destiny take its right course." Encouragingly, you offer Kathum the scarred back of your hand.

After this less than kingly emotional outbreak, Kathum manages a pained smile while looking at your claw. "I am sorry. In my current condition, I cannot help you. Besides, for that I need the shining power of Kar at noon."

Annoyed, you withdraw your claw, searching with your eyes the upper level of the monumental step pyramid of Kyphi. Of course, unlocking the powers and memories within your claw could not be this easy. Additionally, there is more you must do.

On the roof, with its many angles, built like a wreath around the park and the temple of Kar, everywhere small superstructures and towers loom up into the stormy night sky. You know that Kyrna is hiding here somewhere, but her black scales are perfect camouflage—even for your sharp eyes.

> If you have the ability Sharpened Senses and want to use it, turn to 875. If you want to take the shortest route to the western part of the roof with Kathum, turn to 857. If you want to tackle the long way east, turn to 864.

954 You peer around the supportive beam that you have hidden behind in the pulpit to look at the great organ and the altar where Kathum is lying. A young priestess of Kar with waves of golden hair is kneeling there, stroking the pale hand of the corpse. It's the Hierarch's daughter, Nephatari.

Fascinated, you watch her, for despite her grief, the lovely woman radiates perfect grace. Suddenly she turns around, looks up to your hiding place under the arching roof, and for a short

moment she meets your gaze with her divine eyes. A shock wave

of uncertainty ripples through your body.

» I hope she hasn't seen me! «

You think that you have seen a shy smile on her worried face before she turns back to her dead father.

Test your STRENGTH against 17!

If you have the ability Mental Focus you can roll the dice again if you fail for the first time.

If the test is successful, turn to 887. If it fails, turn to 998.

955 Again and again the dense, almost impenetrable clouds block your view. On the one hand, they provide perfect cover against the Golden Guard's air defense. On the other hand, you are deeply wary of the natural forces behind the flashes of light-ning that constantly slice through the sky all around you.

If you have found FATE POINT #3, #9, and #12, turn to 924 If not, turn to 930

956 "Is it so simple?" you ponder your next step. "I go to Calderel and trust in my immortality?"

Seren grasps your left claw, stroking the scarred skin. "Well, first you will have to break the seal that the Shadow Master forced upon you. It suppresses a large part of your nature. Only when all parts of the Keşra find each other, will it be able to fulfill its divine purpose."

Your eyes light up with determination. "All right, but how do I get rid of the seal?"

"Only the Emissaries of the gods are able to do that—Calderel or Kathum."

"Are you serious?" Kathum is dead and Calderel-well, he certainly won't volunteer to do it!"

"You are right. You should not count on Calderel."



954 Fascinated, you watch her, for despite her grief, the lovely woman radiates perfect grace. Suddenly she turns around, looks up to your hiding place under the arching roof, and for a short moment she meets your gaze with her divine eyes. A shock wave of uncertainty ripples through your body.

"Kathum?" You have to laugh. For the first time, you see some thing resembling agitation in Seren's clear face.

"Of course. You should atone for your guilt on the same day that you committed this sin."

"Are you suggesting I return to the day Kathum died?" Seren nods.

"How should I do that?"

Again, the divine girl replies with childlike equanimity. "You are Keşra. For you, past, present and future are one."

"So I return to the past to save Kathum's life," you start to recapitulate with unmistakable irony. "By preventing my past self from killing him. Seems so simple, yes," you scoff.

Again, your mocking tone bounces off Seren's placid calm. "You certainly have the power to bring an Emissary back to life. Should this be the decision of the Keşra, our fellowship is willing to bear the consequences."

As you still ponder who or what Seren could have meant by "we," you feel the breath of a short, icy chill. Intuitively, you turn around and see three childlike beings stepping out of the pulsating fog at the gates.

Their strangely lithe bodies perfectly resemble the silhouettes of the stone portals.

The children, a girl and two boys, greet you with a deep bow, so that their hair falls forward like a sparkling waterfall. Seren greets the newcomers with the same respectful gesture. They feel maddeningly familiar to you.

After the children have eyed you thoroughly, one of the two boys steps forward and places his hands on your heart and brow, allowing only the tips of his tiny fingers to brush your skin. "Your body is caught in the here and now. But your mind is free. It knows no barriers. It breathes equally past, present and future."

You look at the boy in disbelief, and he explains as best he can, or at least as best you can understand him. "You have already been doing it the whole time! You are constantly making decisions that you have already made completely differently on other levels of your existence, or decisions that you will make."

The boy waits for your reaction, in vain. He takes a deep breath and continues. "We know that this is confusing to you, but you will not comprehend us until both of you have absorbed this power. You are truly the linked divine being sent by Ugar and Kar."

The girl by his side adds firmly, "Break the chains of your existence! Overcome the boundaries and dispel the doubts! That is the only way you will once again become part of us, our fellowship," The boy's words are so compelling that you almost did not hear the girl's enjoinders. But you understand and free your mind. Your thoughts are on their way to a past chapter of your journey. Turn to 213



957 Together you carry the body into the moist, dark crypt beneath the temple and lay it in the only empty sarcophagus. As soon as you have heaved the heavy stone lid back in place, you extract the sacred promise from Ramin that he will leave the next day with all your gear, find a safe place to blow the horn, and tell the dragon who appears all about your plan.

If everything goes well, you will unite Kathum's soul with its body in about one month, in your true present. Until then, Ramin must remain silent. The taxidermist raises his hand in an oath. He wants to fulfill these terms faithfully in order to serve his ruler. His words appear sincere to you.

Once back in the temple, you take off all your clothes and all you gear and lie down upon the altar. Ramin starts to work at one Carefully, the taxidermist dips bandages into bowls of fragram oils and wraps them around your body. It takes about an hou until he places the last bandages around your head and eye leaving out only your nostrils.

You give all your gear including all weapons to Ramin (for example, mark the Moon Sickle as relinquished by crossing off its Save Point (8). The taxidermist has put a small golden scarab into your bage without your having noticing it. Write down Ramin's Talisman (Special Item, Special: In the first COMBAT ROUND you are immune to attacks) on your adventure sheet!

To be honest, you had imagined this would be more pleasant. But now that you are absolutely motionless, blind and almost dear, you are overcome by a feeling of apprehension. You hear inde finable voices, sounds and even the beating of your own heart You fight to control yourself when, out of the darkness of your mind, the burning shape of a dragon emerges. His cries cause you to tremble.

> If you have the ability Mental Focus, turn to 967 If not, turn to 929

958 Obviously, the meaning of the engravings has not become clear to you even in the mirror world. Enraged, you smash the hand mirror onto the palace roof. Doing so has shattered the world around you, and you plunge into oblivion.

Your life's meaning ends here.

959 A group of the Golden Guard charges into the Hierarch's chamber just as you manage to step over into the Shadow Realm. Here the real world looks like a drifting grey fog. Weightless, you glide through walls of smoke and shadow. A moment ago, they were solid stone. The three guards are dearly visible in the Shadow Realm with their consecrated armor. You can see them tending to Kathum's body.

Another bowed figure appears, clad in the robes of a priestess. At first, she stands somewhat to the side, looking around intently. Suddenly, out of her eyes shoot beams of light! They are so bright that they even consume the darkness surrounding you.

Quickly you flee, trying to escape through the shadow walls and onlings of the palace, until you finally reach the roof. Above you, blazes Ugar, the only fixed point in the Shadow Realm that looks wit does in the real world. You pause for a moment.

You concentrate once more so as to end the Shadow Walk when auddenly a burning pain pierces your back. You have been hit by the gaze of the priestess of Karl

Your VITALITY is lowered by a level!

Turning to stone, you fall forward and tumble helplessly down the sloped roof. You have just rolled over the last tile and are in a free fall down the outer wall of the palace, when Kyrna's paws eatch hold of you. Your dragon companion has saved your life again.

Turn to 1000.

960 Kyrna does not react to your aid. You only can hope that the effect of the blinding powder will soon fade. But then the first arrows whistle past you both. The sharpshooters of the Golden Guard exploit your helplessness without mercy.

Determine the accuracy of the shooters based on the moon!

If it's Full Moon, turn to 884. If it's Gibbous Moon, turn to 928. If it's Crescent Moon or Half Moon, turn to 961. If it's New Moon, turn to 949.

961 You pray that the missiles of the Golden Guard will miss their target—but Kyrna is already screaming! You pet her thorny back encouragingly even as an arrow cuts open your thigh. You feel the wound turn to stone.

Reduce your VITALITY and KYRNA'S VITALITY by one level!

Turn to 884.

962 With mixed feelings you wait in the darkness. On the one hand, you are curious to know exactly what happened then, but on the other hand, it almost drives you insane to watch yoursell repeat your immense mistake. Deep within, however, you know that this is the only right way!

Your past self stalks its prey intently. Fierce flashes of energy suddenly crackle for an instant above the artefact and the hand holding it. A sharp pain pierces your skull, as if the Moonstone were trying to create a bridge between itself and your current mind.

Your other self tries desperately to hold on to the strange sphere, but Kathum senses the threat and whirls around in alarm.

Turn to 934.

963 It takes you only a few moments to pass through the shadows of the upper levels. The massive obstacles drift apart like black fog. closing in again behind you after you have passed. Hardly have you arrived on the roof, when you notice that the moon with its undisturbed splendor appears to be the only constant in both worlds. Its light tears a hole in the unfathomable Shadow Realm.

You see relief in the boy's face. He had clutched your belt tightly throughout the journey through the parallel world. In terror, the Emissary of Kar gazes at you with the golden eyes of a child. This was, arguably, his first visit to the realm of Shadows.

Turn to 953.

964 You feel the presence of your past self. Somewhere in the temple, he is hiding from his pursuers. But you cannot and do not want to see yourself! It could endanger the entire mission. For that reason, you bury yourself deeper inside the pulpit, trying to iort your thoughts and feelings.

Turn to 988.



965 You have almost reached the palace when you see strange flashes of fire flaring up on the second-highest level, the level with the defense mechanisms surrounding the priest district, followed by muffled blows so strong that you feel them in your stomach.

Damn, the Golden Guard has found us! «

While you are searching the dark for missiles, there are already several explosions above you. You raise both arms to protect your head, but apparently there is no need. These weapons do not use explosive shells with sharp shrapnel. These are blinding dust grenades.

A few moments later, you are flying through a cloud of fine white dust and biting sulfurous smell that illuminates the whole night sky above Kyphi in a uniform glow. Kyrna and you are an easy target for the air defense of the Golden Guard!

If you have the ability Magical Lore, turn to 902. If not, perhaps you have the ability Warfare. In this case turn to 992. If you have neither ability, turn to 942.

966 It takes you about an hour to cover the short mile to the Oracle of Kabeth and push your way forward through the crowds and to the first rows.

The lowered square, surrounded by eight columns, is filled with mourners. In its center, surrounding the holy bowl, the Oracle of Kabeth, dozens of guards have positioned themselves and, shield against shield, force back the men and women throwing sand upon their heads in mourning.

The burning Kar is in her zenith, and the columns provide little shadow. Finally, there is some agitation in the crowd, and a path opens in the crowd. Foour guards in ceremonial uniforms step forward. They are carrying a mat of woven brush wood on which lies Kathum's body, bound and anointed. Behind them, there is a procession of three priests and a wiry woman in the blood-red robes of the Templars of Kabeth.

It is Mireth, famous seer of the oracle. Her attentive, authoritative gaze and her straight nose remind you of an eagle watching over its prize. A broad leather strap spans her bare skull and right eye, decorated with fine glyphs of the sun.

At the end of the funeral procession, Nephatari follows at a respectful distance, clad in white mourning robes. Sorrow has reddened her otherwise so bright eyes. As the circle of onlocken slowly closes again, all eyes rest on the mistress of the temple Proudly. Mireth purses her narrow lips. There is a dead silence. > Was this the ceremony that led Nephatari to attempt an assassination at the Ningal Tower? <

Do you have the Amulet of Kar?

If yes, turn to 879. If not, turn to 893.

967 You focus on the void in your mind. The enraged shouts of Torn the Beguiler fade away. You drive the dragon back further and further until he is only a quiet echo and then finally only a

966 It is Mireth, famous seer of the oracle. Her attentive, authoritative gaze and her straight nose remind you of an eagle watching over its prize. A broad leather strap spans her bare skull and right eye, decorated with fine glyphs of the sun. shadowy memory. You have resisted the beguiling call of the underworld and now sense the liberation of your soul. You receive 2 KARMA points.

Turn to 916

968 You cannot defeat the monster! It imitates perfectly every motion you make. For several minutes, you dance around each other, until finally you recognize a weakness in the mirror creature. You attack, raking your claws over the shining face of your enemy.

> How could I be so wrong? <

With a gaping wound to the throat you collapse.

Your life ends here.

969 You open the plain urn by twisting off the lid, ask Kathum to open his mouth and place the artefact on his tongue Hardly a second passes before Kathum falls to the ground, his eyes a blank. You quickly grab the soul urn, which has fallen out again, and close it. As you put it away, you see that the outer side now show Kathum's face.

Change the Soul Urn to Kathum's Soul (Special Item) on your adventure sheet!

You are just about to position Kathum's body as you found it when you hear the sounds of heavy footsteps in the corridor. You have to disappear at once!

If you have the ability Shadow Walk and want to use it, turn to 959 If you have the ability Power of Xorox and want to use it, turn to 892. If you do not have these abilities or do not vant to use them.

you must escape through the window (turn to 952).

970 You lose no time, take the Rider's Bow from the saddle and nock an arrow. You have no choice. You have to risk firing back.

+ Ugar, guide my hand! <

Unswerving, you drive Kyrna towards the next pursuer. You see a rider's armor glittering in the light of the moon—you let an arrow fly.

Test your DEXTERITY against 18!

If you have any Marksman ability, you can add your ATTACK BONUS to the result on your dice!

If the test is successful, turn to 931. If it fails, turn to 948.



971 Some power forces you, almost without thinking, to climb the outer wall of the palace. But what must not happen does happen: You slip and, with a long, echoing scream, fall from the uppermost level of the city pyramid into utter darkness.

Your life ends here.

972 You sense that the divine radiance in Kathum's eyes could lure the most terrible creatures of the Shadow Realm.

"Cover your eyes!" you command.

Without hesitation, the boy obeys. As if he has only been waiting for this command, he immediately buries his face in his hands. You decide to linger in this world only so long as necessary. As quickly as possible you fly on through the ghostly vapors towards the roof.

973 Hand over hand, you move along the dusty beam. But halfway along, you slip and drop down, bouncing off one of the oversized god statues and crashing between two benches onto the marble floor of the Kar temple. Miraculously, you have not injured anything but your pride.

Turn back to the past to sections 88 and 89 of the prologue. In which of the section numbers did you mark a circle?

> Section 88, turn to 938. Section 89, turn to 999.

974 You need not go far into the past to realize that the succession of the Hierarch has always depended on influence and intrigue, regardless of the line of succession. It is clear that Mireth wants to use to her advantage the doubts concerning Kathum's death and thus discredit Nephatari's birthright and become Hierarch herself.

Turn to 883.



975 The five pyramids of Seraph appear on the horizon. You command Kyrna to land at a hidden olive grove. You do not want to take a risk or cause rioting in the metropolis. You ask your dragon to stay in range of the signal horn and run alone along a dusty path along the banks of the Red Rhenus, past the simple clay huts of poor peasants, until you finally reach the city walls. In Seraph itself, there is absolute chaos. Thousands of inhabitants of the river valley have gathered to honor the Hierarch one last time. You weren't expecting such a crowd.

Moving past hundreds of spectators of various races and origins, you force a path through the narrow alleys and up to the temple quarter, where, on the holy mountain Karith, the Oracle of Kabeth is also situated.

You have quickly gathered the most important information from the bits of conversation of the people around you: Kathum will be buried on the oracle mountain at noon.

If you want to take the risk and attend the ceremony, turn to 966. If you prefer to get to safety, leave the city and call Kyrna, turn to 1000.

976 Hunted, you glance up the outer wall of the palace while jumping over hedges and dodging behind trees so as to shake your pursuers. But Kyrna remains hidden from sight.

You have no other choice but to blow the dragon horn, and soon after you are elated to hear the typical swoosh of Kyrna's beating wings.

At this moment you realize that you must now make a grave decision.

If you want to flee with Kyrna immediately and return to the present, turn to 1000.

If you want to allow Kyrna to fly past and instead hide in the temple until you perhaps find an opportunity to save Kathum's body, turn to **981**.

977 The horror reflected in the taxidermist's face in view of the fact that you have stolen the most important artefact from the crypt quickly gives way to exuberant joy as he senses that Kathum's soul is linked to the holy idol.

He is at once ready to help you with your plan. His name is Ramin, he says, and he will do anything you ask out of fealty to his fallen lord.

Turn to 957.

CHAPTER 7 · SHADOWS OF THE PAST

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

978 "Yes, my boy, it is time to go," Tarus agrees. "You have saved Kathum's soul, you cannot do more."

Wistfully, you nod to your wise teacher. He is not only right, of course, but you also know that this may be the last time you see him alive. Embracing him firmly, you wipe traces of tears from your eyes.

» Farewell, Tarus. I am forever in your debt. «

With a feeling of grief and anger you turn your back to Mireth and the templars and make your way through the crowds without looking back. The people are excitedly awaiting the climax of the ceremony. Their wailing tells you: Kathum is burning! When you have finally left the steep slopes of the holy mountain Karith behind you, you blow upon your dragon horn.

A little later, accompanied by the loud cries of passersby, Kyrna comes to rest in the center of a small square filled with refuse and garbage. You look around frantically, but it appears as if all the guards who could be a danger to you have been commanded to protect the Oracle. You escape without any trouble.

Turn to 1000.

480

481

979 When you take out the Idol of the Hierarch, you can feel its power entering through your fingers and penetrating your body. In this artefact there lies dormant the power to build not only a bridge to the soul, but also one to Kathum's body. The priest emperor cannot hide his joy.

"Give me the Idol! I know what to do!"

Somewhat doubtfully, you watch Kathum's short ritual. He puts the palms of his hands together, concealing the figurine between them. Then he uses only a few sacred words to unleash the divine power of the artefact. The idol is suddenly illuminated, shining brightly between the fingers of the Hierarch, who thereupon collapses, lifeless. The figurine rolls out of his hands towards your feet. No sooner have you picked it up, than its stylized belly breaks open and a blood-soaked, wormlike shape falls out. It throbs with light and life, growing and growing until it finally takes on the shape of a child.

When the light has faded, a boy is standing before you, naked, about 12 years old, gazing with curiosity at Kathum's body. He is the image of the Hierarch, has the same golden eyes—but his wrinkles have been smoothed, and instead of being grey he is now flaxen-haired. At the same time, his delicate frame reminds you of Seren and the three other children from the Kar temple. > Has Kathum's mind actually manifested itself as this child? <

You voice your concern that the Kar priests may notice that there is something wrong with Kathum's body. But the boy reassures you: "The priests have not seen a dead Emissary for five generations; in that respect, they have no basis for doubt."

Change the Idol of the Hierarch to Sabalith Idol (Special Item) on your adventure sheet!

You hear the clang of footsteps coming closer. The armored men of the Golden Guard are close on your heels.

If you have the ability Shadow Walk and want to use it, turn to 915. If you want to get onto the roof the ordinary way, turn to 867.



980 A soothing warmth radiates throughout your muscles. Mother Kar is invigorating you! Your STRENGTH rises by 1 point!

Your VITALITY rises to normal!

Turn to 907



981 Kyrna swoops by so close overhead that you can touch her feathers with your outstretched arm as she passes. "Kyrna, I will see you soon!"

"Take care, Keşra."

After two forceful beats of her wings, your black dragon has disappeared behind the battlements of the Hierarch's palace. Numerous inhabitants, who have heard the roaring rush of air, call to the guards, claiming that the assassin may be fleeing on a dragon. You use the opportunity to run back to the Kar temple. Turn to 910

982 Even though the world around you is spinning faster and faster, you manage to focus your thoughts. You concentrate on the past, on the day that Kathum dies at your hands.

Time obeys your command. But then a burning stab of pain seizes you! The arrow of a Golden Rider penetrated your shoulder before you left the present. Your senses are overwhelmed by the pain, and you are left at the mercy of your own unleashed ability When you regain consciousness, the fall in space and time has come to an end, but finds you stranded you in a completely unknown eon. You are alone

Your life's meaning ends here.

983 Astonished, the taxidermist considers the amulet in his hand. "This is Nephatari's Kar amulet, a relic of the Hierarch's family!"

His face darkens. "How did you get it? Have you harmed Kathum's daughter?"

You try to explain to him that you have brought the amulet from the future. But the old man doesn't believe a word you say.

Turn to 855.

984 "Pagot, pagot!" you command Kyrna. Your black dragon lowers her head, folds her wings close to her body and lets gravity do the rest. In free fall, you thunder towards the streets of Kyphi! You become dizzy as the buildings on the levels grow larger and larger. On the step pyramid the inhabitants of the metropolis have built artificial waterways, gardens and palm-tree boulevards. Before you can see even more, Kyrna spreads her wings and you rush by, just above the roofs of Kyphi, up to the Hierarch's palace.

This daring maneuver buys you an advantage over the Golden Guard. Nevertheless, you have only a few moments left to use your ability to manipulate time.

Turn to 920, option (B.

985 You wait for a little longer, resting on the thick branches of the Raan tree, and see your past self disappearing into Kathum's bed chamber. Directly behind him follows another Shadow whose tall, muscular shape you know-Aonus! Evidently, he is to keep the path clear for the Child of Shadows. With a smooth, precise movement, he positions himself beside the door.

You hold your breath, and it's as if this moment would never end. Even Aonus grows impatient. As the Shadow Warrior peers through the keyhole, he carefully draws his broadsword. > He wants to charge the room! «

Suddenly the joints and keyhole of the door shine as bright as day! Aonus groans and stumbles backward. This strange phenomenon of light causes your senses to fade as well. In your subconscious you watch Aonus stumbling through the darkness in the gallery before your mind, too, detaches itself from your body. When you are lucid once more, the hallway is illuminated by the wavering candlelight from a candelabra.

> The servant girl! «

Astonishing. Destiny follows its unswerving course. Turn back to the past and section 30 of the prologue. Is the circle besides the section number marked off?

> If yes, turn to **918**. If not, turn to **936**



986 The taxidermist flinches, caught as you put your hand on his shoulder from behind.

"Kar be with me!" Bewildered, the old man grabs for his sun amulet under his robes as he stares at your claws. "You are a Shadow, aren't you?" he stammers.

"We both want the same," you say in a friendly voice. "I too want to aid Kathum on his journey."

"You?!" That is hard to believe. I think rather that it was you who killed the Hierarch and stole his soul."

For a moment you have to ponder the accuracy of this charge. You decide to reveal yourself to the taxidermist and tell him very briefly what you've done and what the holy task of the Keşra is. "A truly beautiful story, but it could be just an elaborate lie. Can you also prove it?" What Special Item do you want to show to the taxidermist to make your story believable?

> Kathum's Soul, turn to 905. The Anulet of Kar, turn to 983. The Sabalith Idol, turn to 977. If you do not have any of these items or do not want to show them, turn to 941.

987 Although you feel no pain, Kyrna's screams of agony cause you to suffer almost as much as if you yourself had been blinded by the magical dust. With a heartfelt embrace you stand by her, speaking to her soothingly.

If your RIDER RANK is least Dragon Familiar, turn to 944. If you are a Dragon Ally, turn to 960.

988 You admire the half-round dome above the altar and the many-piped organ, visible even in the darkness. The dome displays the bright sky of day decorated with cumulus clouds and dominated by the Kar disc in beaten gold.

You pause. Some places in the painting sparkle and glitter. Only faintly, Almost imperceptibly. The longer you concentrate on this glimmer, the better you can see it: the dome also shows a night sky with Ugar's silver disc and stars!

It is astonishing. The builders have actually immortalized aspects of both gods in this work of art of clerical power. To be sure, the juxtaposition is well hidden so that nobody notices, not even the faithful. You realize for the first time where the strange aura of the temple has its origin!

> If your STRENGTH is higher than your DEXTERITY, turn to 921. If your DEXTERITY is higher than your STRENGTH, turn to 980. If both stats have the same value or if you have the ability Mind over Body, turn to 862.

7

 $989\,$ You kneel beside Kathum's body and regard him closely. A thousand thoughts race through your mind. But you have come to a decision.

 $_{>}$ It would be wrong to awaken the dead—as terrible and unjust as this end may be for him. $_{<}$

You feel indescribably relieved, almost liberated, even though you have turned against the will of your gods. Carefully, you lift the Hierarch's head and pray for his soul before closing his empty eyes and gently laying him down again.

If you have the ability Shadow Walk and want to use it, turn to 959. If you have the ability Power of Xorox and want to use it, turn to 892.

If you have neither or do not want to use them, your only option left is to escape through the window (turn to 952).

990 Boldly, you jump down from the chapel roof and roll gracefully onto the storm-soaked lawn. But the guards have discovered you. They are intent on bringing to justice the killer of the priest emperor.

WATCHMEN	ATTACK	N 16	+2	+2
OF THE GOLDEN GUARD	DEFENSE	• 15	+2	+2
(2 ENEMIES)	RESISTANCE	.00	03	00
	COMBAT ROUND	000	206	000.

If you reach the fourth COMBAT ROUND, turn to 901 at once. If you cannot end the combat before the sixth round, you must fight an additional guard.

REINFORCEMENTS

ATTACK X +2 DEFENSE +2 RESISTANCE •003

If you win the fight, turn to 852.

991 On the spur of a moment, you open the balcony door and enter a receiving room weakly illuminated by bowls of oil and

furnished with a large table, dozens of cushioned chairs and glittering chandeliers. You intend to cross the room quickly to reach the second floor by way of the stairs, but then you take in the odor of sweat and blood.

In alarm, you draw the Moon Sickle, only to realize in horror that the sickening smell comes from a heap of disfigured soldiers of the Guard, whose corpses have been piled up near the entrance. You feel the warmth rising from their blood.

If you want to examine the corpses, turn to 854. If not, turn to 881.



992 You remember a story told by your teacher Urgoz. His lively report about the air battle of Dasan awakens in you a suspicion of what the grenades may be.

Blinding dust is a magical powder that causes dragons coming in contact with it suffer serious movement disorders and can even rob them of the ability to fly. You cannot help Kyrna, but you can at least protect your eves.

If you have a Rider's Eyepiece and want to use it, turn to 927. If not, turn to 942.

993 Your otherwise so reliable instinct fails you this time. Is it the tension or the fact that you want to go to the past? The images in your mind's eye remain without contour.

If you want to travel to the past now, turn to 926. If you want to get closer to the top of the pyramid before daring to jump, turn to 965.

487

994 Cautiously, you approach the edge of the roof. Normally, you are immune to fear of heights, but now, as the vertically sloping facade of the great Hierarch's palace lies before you and the storm tears at your clothes mercilessly, you feel a healthy respect for the distance involved.

A fall from this height would spell your end. You fight down your fear and start to climb down.

Test your STRENGTH against 15 and your DEXTERITY against 17.

If both tests are successful, turn to 876. If one test is successful, turn to 911. If both tests fail, turn to 971

995 Without a mirror to maintain your mental connection, you will never be able to leave the mirror world. You will be forever trapped at the edge of the world, never again returning to it.

Your life's meaning ends here.

996 You fold the hands of the dead Hierarch on his chest. His aged face is distorted in a grimace, frozen that way at the moment of his death.

Unexpectedly, he opens his eyes! But you are not staring into the golden eyes of Kathum, but into the blood-filled sockets of Nergal, Lord of the Underworld. The undead dragon does not want to surrender this unique prize without a struggle.

Countless stabs of pain, the dying memories of lost souls, pierce your mind. Nergal uses every treacherous ploy at his disposal in an attempt to prevent you from reviving Kathum.

NERGAL,	ATTACK	N 15
LORD OF THE UNDERWORLD	DEFENSE	9 15
(IN KATHUM'S BODY)	RESISTANCE	•0000g

This is a combat of the mind in which a normal mortal could never win against Nergal. Your armor and weapons have no effect here, so you will have to fight with your STRENGTH and DEXTERITY alone. CHAPTER 7 · SHADOWS OF THE PAST

t you have the abuity History Knowledge, turn to 897. If you win this extraordinary battle on the threshold to the underworld, turn to 859.



997 Carefully, you twist the cork out of the small bottle and dribble the fragrant oil of the ice rose into the mouth of the dead guard. At once, beautiful ice crystals spread out from his throat, growing over his face and then melting into clear water. His heart is beating now, weak but steady.

You do not believe that he will awaken anytime soon, so you roll the four corpses of his companions off him and hurry away. You receive 2 KARMA points.

Through this heroic deed, you cannot write down the Phial of Ice Rose Essence. It has been used.

Turn to 881

998 No sooner have you loosened your focus on the temporal bond, than it pulls you forward into the present. Hours dart by like streaks of color. In a few seconds the missing tiles of the roof are replaced from the outside—at least so it appears. In no time at all, as the sky grows dark, the trembling light of an oil bowl draws your attention. You stop your time travel.

As you peer over the edge of your hiding place, you see a taxidermist standing in the altar room. He is walking slowly around Kathum's body, murmuring death prayers and touching reverently the bandages wrapped around the mummified body of the Hierarch. He slips small talismans and artefacts between the lavers of doth.

490

» He appears sincerely devoted to his old ruler. «

The mysterious movements of the taxidermist lead you to question your further course of action.

> Maybe this man could be a great help ... «

If you want to remain in your hiding place and wait for the ceremony before finally taking Kathum's body from the crypt, turn to 947 If you want to pursue a cunning plan that entails the risk of failure and may cost your life, turn to 956.

> Or do you want to flee from the temple under cover of night, call Kyrna and return at once to the present, turn to 1000.



999 With a queasy feeling you manage to get to your feet. You sense someone's gaze, strong and familiar, at the nape of your neck. You do not want to turn around, but some self-imposed, inner compulsion forces you to do so.

Directly in front of you stands a Shadow. His eyes pierce you. Your head spins. They are your eyes!

Your overtaxed mind struggles against the chaos of time, but you cannot halt it. The temporal bond rips apart, and the maelstrom of eternity drags you and the body of the young innocent Ugarith into the ever changing grey void.

Your life ends here.

1000 You are glad to be back on Kyrma's back, glad to be leaving the rugged valley of the Red Rhenus behind. With the uncertain feeling of perhaps not having done all that it was in your power to accomplish, you release the tension of the temporal bond, which at once hurls you back into the present. Relieved, you fly to the Ningal Tower together. Even for Kyrna, it is a long flight to the bastion of the Shadow Master, but now you can hardly wait for your encounter. With loud cries, you drive the dragon forward. Whatever comes now, it is time to end this once and for all.

C

Have you found the FATE POINT (#13) in this chapter? If not, then you should consider helping a soul to help yourself...

B

There was another RIDER RANK hidden in this chapter. If you could not find it, then you should change your timing during your trip to the past.

AN IMPORTANT NOTE!

Have you attained the RIDER RANK Dragon Friend meanwhile? Then you can read the following EXTRA CHAPTER

"ANGEL OF VENGEANCE" before the final battle begins!

If you have not reached the second-highest RIDER RANK, skip the next pages and go to the FINALE "POWERS OF THE BLACK SUN".

By the way: If you had to leave your equipment behind in the last chapter, you discover with relief that you has been stowed it away in Kyrna's Saddlebag. Remove the cross in Save Point \bigotimes next to the Moon Sickle. .

EXTRA CHAPTER

ANGEL OF VENGEANCE

Attention! You may read this EXTRA CHAPTER only if you have reached the RIDER RANK of Dragon Friend in the previous chapter. If you have not managed to do so, go at once to the FINALE "POWERS of THE BLACK SUN" or try to qualify by replaying past chapters.

If you are playing this chapter again, be sure that sections X3 to X7 are not marked.

Use your VITALITY and KYRNA'S VITALITY from the previous chapter.

"Prove, Keşra, that the bond of fate uniting you and your dragon is without blemish—and it will never tear apart!"

- THE ORACLE OF KABETH

X

X1 You admire Kyrna's endurance and self-discipline. Thanks to her untiring efforts, you will soon reach the military post of Fort Sin and with it, the southern border of the area occupied by the Empire.

Fort Sin was once a small, sleepy trading town at the foot of the Windy Mountains. Today, it is an Imperial outpost of strategic importance and a conspicuous symbol of the Empire's continental claim to power.

Lit by the first rays of Kar, the foothills of the snow-covered mountains sparkle. And see there—out of the wisps of fog on the horizon rises the Great Wall!

> All the stories written and told about the place pale against this view of it from the sky! <</p> The monumental fortifications, built on top of an artificial earthen embankment, connect the rough flanks of the western Windy Mountains with the Sunny Heights in the east for a distance of over two miles. Thus, the crescent-shaped structure seals off the Guanoko plains, occupied by the Empire, against attacks from the south.

Thousands of workers—mostly prisoners of war and slaves built the impregnable wall in the past years, at a location where an empty gorge once split the mountain and where traders can now lead their pack camels.

You pull the reins and gain altitude again. Now you can see the first details of what's behind the wall: Dense, greyish blue smoke billows to the sky, fed by countless campfires. Flags and banners blow menacingly in the wind. Their tattered, black cloth shows the insignia of the Empire: the silvery full moon.

You see the remaining units of the Black Army, some 1,000 men, who withdrew to here after the lost battle of Leenhaven. It is here that they await further commands from the Ningal Tower.

If you want to attack the Black Army at once, turn to X47. If you want to get a better view of the situation first, turn to X12.



X2 How many points have you cost the Black Army during your attack? (Check sections X3 to X7.)

None, turn to X13. 1 or 2, turn to X56. 3 or 4, turn to X34. All 5, turn to X50. X

494

O X3 Kyrna obeys your commands, flying in a curve to the right, so that the morning sun hides your approach from the east.

If you want to try to find the perfect route for your attack, turn to X10

If you want to attack spontaneously, hoping to cause general chaos, then now choose your first target:

> The coping wall, turn to X33 The next gun turret, turn to X34 The open camp of a battalion, turn to X14 An armory, turn to X26 The camp's food supplies, turn to X23 Cross off the circle next to section number X3 to show that you have read this section

 X4 You discover seven flying lizards sitting on an iron rod spanning two watchtowers. They are tethered there with a ring and a clanking chain, so that the creatures can move freely on the rod, but cannot fly away. Scenting Kyrna nearby, they pull at their chains nervously, flapping wildly up and down. You see nothing of their riders. The Baronyak are probably sleeping in the adjacent towers.

You remember your last encounter with the flying lizards. They are not very obedient without a master's strong hand.

> If you want to tell Kyrna to tear the iron rod out of its anchorage in the wall, turn to X36 If you want to jump onto the wall and attend to the lizards yourself, turn to X46 Cross off the circle next to section number X4 to show that you have read this section.

O X5 Metal groans, wood splinters, soldiers scream. You look back over Kyrna's long, swinging tail. One of the lightning missiles is stuck in the dome of the gun turret. Bright lights flicker over the black steel roof of and ignite the beams beneath. You can only guess what an inferno must rage behind the arrow slits of the embrasures.

Suddenly a powerful, muffled blow buries itself in the pit of your stomach. The storehouse, filled with all its magical projectiles, explodes in a series of successive detonations!

Turn to X14.

Cross off the circle next to section number X5 to show that you have read this section.



X6 While the soldiers behind the barricades crouch in their trenches, an wall of fire devouring everything in its path rolls over their heads and engulfs an armored wagon, whose driver can just barely jump to safety.

The abandoned wagon rolls unchecked into a group of infantry soldiers and finally smashes into the wall of the nearest turret. A few moments later, you are overtaken by the shock waves from countless explosions. With a huge roar, the massive structure collapses.

Turn to X32.

Cross off the circle next to section number X6 to show that you have read this section.

X7 Expertly, Kyrna drops the two stuffed explosive barrels over the large entry hole. They fall, whistling through the air, until they finally hit the ground. A glaring cascade of light and fire shoots forth, followed by a violent explosion. After a few seconds, mushroom clouds of dust and debris shoot up into the air from one entrance after another. O X3 Kyrna obeys your commands, flying in a curve to the right, so that the morning sun hides your approach from the east.

If you want to try to find the perfect route for your attack,

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494

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The shock wave must have spread throughout the subterranean passages and set off more explosions.

Not until you look back over Kyrna's back, do you realize what destruction your attack has wrought: Where once, a moment ago there was the entrance, now there is only a huge sinkhole a hundred feet in diameter.

Turn to X53

Cross off the circle next to section number X7 to show that you have read this section.

X8 Crossbow bolts and arrows whistle past you or even strike Kyrna's scales as you glide low over the camp. The decision is risky, but your dragon can handle all the hits. She seizes the exposed explosive barrels like a bird of prey going in for the kill The soldiers standing by curse you as Kyrna rises sluggishly, a barrel in each paw.

"They are heavy," your dragon remarks. "We cannot fly quickly with them."

Turn to X49.

 $\mathbf{X9}$ You decide for the direct path, flying with Kyrna as close as possible to the ground. Just before you reach the wall, you pull back on the reins and cross over the protective wall, accompanied by the surprised cries of the guards. They appear to have planned

for everything but an attack by a grown dragon!

Choose your first target! (If you have a definite battle plan, you surely know which target to attack first.)

> The coping wall, turn to X33 The nearest gun turret, turn to X38 The open camp of a battalion, turn to X14 An armory, turn to X26 The camp's food supplies, turn to X23

 $X10\,$ During the approach, you have already memorized the strategic positions of the individual units of the Black Army. Attacking all of them without endangering Kyrna at the same time is a tremendous challenge!

But you are certain: There is a perfect flight path that will allow you to attack all the enemy units, exploiting their tactical weaknesses and at the same time providing optimal protection for you and Kyrna.

Go to the end of the chapter on page 516 and look at the schematics of the Black Army both in front of and behind the Great Wall. You will find clues there that help you decide on the perfect route.

If you think that you have found the answer

(hint: there is only one!), turn to X33.

There (and perhaps in the coming sections) you should have no trouble making the right decision, assuming you really have the correct answer.

X11 After her loop, Kyrna has now gone into a dive. Taking your courage in both hands, you run to the edge of the coping wall, push two Baronyak aside and leap toward your black dragon.

After a few seconds of free fall, you manage to grab the reins and swing yourself up onto Kyrna's back.

Turn to X38.

X12 Directly behind the rock wall, at a distance of about half a mile, stand huge fortified towers. Their observation platforms rise far above the wall and are well protected: Black steel is supposed to neutralize enemy attacks coming through the air. The domed roofs are covered with thorns as long as an arri; they prevent the flying lizards from landing. In between, the bolts of the infamous lightning ballistae glitter from the armored hatches. No flying lizard is safe from the stun caused by the explosive lorce of their magical bolts.
EXTRA CHAPTER + ANGEL OF VENGEANCE

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

As you get closer to the wall, you notice something strange: Along its entire length, there are no gates, doors or other passages. But then you notice three strange rock formations several hundred feet apart, rising from the ground directly next to the gun turrets. These must be tunnel entrances that go beneath the wall and are connected on the other side to two further exits. That means that the tunnels must be leading through the rock for about half a mile.

> If you have the ability Warfare, turn to X44 If not, turn to X47



X13 The Keşra is considered the judge of destiny. But who says that a judge cannot be merciful? As long as the fate of the two emissaries Kathum and Calderel remains uncertain, the Black Army is of lesser importance to you.

 Does the Black Army in its current state even constitute a danger?
 Your brief flight overhead has caused utter chaos in the army despite minimal losses among the soldiers.

You receive 3 KARMA points for your relatively peaceful attack against the Black Army.

Turn to X41

X14 Even though your attack lasted barely a minute, the first soldiers of the Black Army are already ready for action. Heavily armed, they roar out their fury at being attacked by a seemine, ally and threaten you with swords and spears while entrenched behind barricades of wood and blade rope.

How should Kyrna attack the battalion? If you want to pull hard on the left rein and lean forward, turn to X20, option If you want to drum on her back, turn to X30, option If you want to loosen the reins and lean forward, turn to X40, option Use the flight maneuver card at C20 before you decide.

X15 You rush past, almost touching the parched ground, and hy directly toward the barricade of wagons. Engulfed in the dust from your approach, you shout, "Kyrna, grab the barrels!" Although your dragon does not answer, you sense that she understands. Lowering her head, Kyrna levels her main horn at the overturned wagon.

lest your STRENGTH against 17!

If the test is successful, turn to X49. If it fails, turn to X53.

X16 With lightning speed you shoot towards the dark hole in the ground through which the units can enter the subterranean space beneath the wall. You must time the exact moment to drop the explosive barrels, or your attack will have no effect. *Test your DEXTERITY against 20!*

If the test is successful, turn to X7. If it fails, turn to X59.

X17 Blinded by the light of the morning sun, still low on the horizon, you find it difficult to lead Kyrna with foresight and make out possible targets in time. Quickly, the guards on the towers become aware of your approach. The loud tolling of an alarm bell resounds through the camp.

Turn to X31.

00

 $X18\,$ You are calmly gliding towards the black, shimmering armored dome of the gun turret when you see the first lightning missiles racing toward you.

You immediately pull on the reins so as to let Kyrna dodge, but the first bolt pierces Kyrna's right wing. You hold your breath, expecting the lightning missile to unleash its magical force, but you are lucky; it could have been much worse. The shot passed right through!

Turn to X31.

X19 Slaht will certainly be enraged. You have dealt the Black Army a terrible blow. You give Kyrma a touch of the spurs. The red commander pursues you, breathing furious lances of flame, but the blood dragon is too sluggish. After a few deft flying maneuvers, you have shaken him.

Turn to X31.

X20 "Pagot, pagot!" you cry out, grasping two neck horns in excitement as Kyrna thunders towards the ground. The head wind blinds you. You can only hope that she will spread her wings in time to check this risky dive. Sure enough, you hear the thunder of her wings beating hard and loud! Suddenly, the air is pressed out of your lungs.

Depending on the option designated in the last section, turn to **(X25, (BX5** or **(X15**)) X21 Executing several rolls so as to absorb the force of your leap, you then hop to your feet and sprint—under the eyes of a dozen surprised soldiers—across the coping wall towards the flying lizards, still ducking their heads after Kyrna's flight overhead.

The lizards' chains are fastened to a rod as thick as an arm with massive iron rings and rusty bolts. While you start to loosen the bolts, Kyrna flies a loop above you. You have little time left. Test your STRENGTH against 21!

If you are carrying a Mallet, increase your STRENGTH by 3. If you have a Bolt Cutter, increase your STRENGTH by 2. If you have both tools, the test is automatically successful.

> If the test is successful, turn to X24. If it fails, turn to X51.

X22 Spellbound, you peer towards the snow-covered peaks of the Windy Mountains, jutting up into the sky just a few miles of flight away. Suddenly, the towering clouds in the distance are rent asunder. A gigantic dragon with dark red scales and long pointed claws bursts forth. Its four wings form an imposing cross.

"That is Slaht the Bloody-commander of the Black Army," Kyrna comments.

Her revulsion is apparent as she explains Slaht's nature. "He is a blood dragon who has committed himself to the welfare of a single army. For his services he demands the greatest sacrifice from all the battles of the Black Army, his army. Every soul consumed in this death toll brings him closer to his goal — becoming an emissary of the underworld."

As Slaht draws closer, you realize how large he is. The spread of his four wings is far greater than that of your dragon. Countless scars and deformities speak of battles the giant fought generations ago.

Kyma's agitation is palpable, and with good reason. Your gaze rests on Slaht's mighty fangs, blackened ivory spears that extend over the lips of his huge maw. He will be here any moment to assist his subjects.

If you want Kyrna to attack Slaht, turn to X55. If Kyrna should try to convince him that he is on the wrong side turn to X29 If you want to flee, turn to X19.

X23 The water kettles are being guarded by only a few, lightly uniformed men who apparently don't have much combat experience. As soon as they see the powerful black dragon rushing towards them, they run away. Flying past, Kyrna rips all kettles from their anchorage, so that their precious contents create a small pond on the cracked earth.

Turn to X53.

X24 Before the soldiers can comprehend what you are planning, all six bolts break loose and roll over the granite flagstones. The trings slip off, releasing the flying lizards, which use the opportunity to hop off their iron rod. Three lizards run wildly over the coping wall and cause even more chaos; the others attempt to fly away, but are dragged down by the weight of their chains. Their shrill wails are audible for a long way.

Only now do you see an open transport chest containing new rider garments. Spontaneously, you pick out the largest one and hold it briefly up to your chest.

If you want to keep the Rider's Garb (Clothing, Body, Protection +2), write it down on your adventure sheet. (It's okay to write it down right away, even if you don't have time now to put it on.)

Satisfied, you gaze up into the sky on the lookout for Kyrna.



X22 Suddenly, the towering clouds in the distance are rent asunder. A gigantic dragon with dark red scales and long pointed claws bursts forth. Its four wings form an imposing cross.

EXTRA CHAPTER · ANGEL OF VENGEANCE

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Suddenly, three Baronyaks, armored in the traditional blue and white leather of air hunters, run out through the gate of the adjacent guard house!

Turn to X11.

X25 Slowing her rapid dive with a half turn in front of one of the barricades, Kyrna is forced to expose her less protected flank. As if they have only been waiting for this opportunity, the men of the Black Army leap out from behind their cover, and hurl everything they have at Kyrna. Furious hisses ensue.

Turn to X31.

X26 Approaching the camp, you see a dozen men working feverishly despite the alarm to repair a wagon with a broken axle. As you come close, the workers become frightened, drop their tools and run away. A remaining soldier, who had helped to lift the damaged wagon, cannot hold its weight any longer and is wedged under the falling vehicle. Barrels with strange markings—an open red hand—roll off the bed of the wagon.

X

If you have the ability Magical Lore, turn to X42 If not, turn to X58

X27 Panicked commands can be heard behind the armor plating as Kyrna's breath licks through the arrow-slits of the gun turrets. As you look around to evaluate the effects of your attack, you are forced to acknowledge that, except for a few soot marks, the tower has not been damaged.

Turn to X14.

X28 The soldiers under Kyrna's spread wings run around in agitation. Some go prone in the dust, while a few braves ones throw their spears and lances. None of these attacks is a real threat to Kyrna and none of them strike with enough force to pierce her scales. On the contrary, with her hanging claws, the experienced dragon lady strikes a path of destruction on the ground and sends the overconfident soldiers screaming for their lives.

Turn to X32.



X29 You feel Kyrna's apprehension as she follows your wish and heads towards Slaht. But it looks as if the applicant of the underworld, whose blood-red are glistening ominously in the sun, had not expected you to intercept him. With asynchronous wing beats of his two powerful wing pairs, Slaht holds position. There is hatred in his lizard eyes. He is thirsting for vengeance for the losses you have caused the Black Army.

A deep, many-voiced hiss rolls over the Guanoko Plains. "Do my cycs deceive me?! Black Kyrna has dared to spill my army's blood!" Slaht's iron hard voice booms in your head, even though it is only a mental projection. "Is this the Keşra on your back, leading you?" Kyrna stays silent, knowing that any answer, true or false, would encourage Slaht to live out his aggression. After three wing beats, the proud blood dragon continues. "My army is defeated and it was you that sealed their fate. I respect that, especially since it happened through the legendary Keşra!"

With these words, Slaht turns away, glides low over the camp, and grabs some fleeing soldiers to swallow them while flying into the mountains.

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"Slaht will join another power. This is his destiny", Kyrna comments the dramatic retreat of the blood dragon.

Turn to X2.

X30 You have used the command for the fire attack several times now. You are still in awe of the power of her breath, seeking cover as a precaution whenever you drum on your dragon's back. Before you can even call out the words "rosh, rosh," a blazing jet of fire shoots from Kyrna's maw.

Depending on the option designated in the last section, turn to **Q**X6, **B**X27 or **Q**X48.

X31 It is too dangerous! Continuing your attack could cost Kyrma's life. You decide to change course and flee over the mountains. You look back at the Black Army in frustration, hoping that they are not planning any further attacks on Leenhaven or another city.

> May our attack be warning enough! «

Turn to X60.

X32 You have trouble keeping your bearings on the fast flight. But you have flown over the Great Wall for the third time now. On the south side of the bulwark, fewer units have been stationed, so there is only a supply camp here.

In the center of the camp, a large tent has been set up for the commander. It is surrounded by a dozen smaller tents with supplies, protected by elite units. You also see about a dozen copper kettles, each as tall as a man, standing on lower ground and filled to the rim with water. A bit to the side, some covered wagons. *What supply group do you want to attack?*

> The water supply, turn to X23. The wagons, turn to X26.

X33 You are overwhelmed by the sight of the great wall. Only by flying so close to the ground in your approach do you realize how truly high it is. On the coping wall, numerous soldiers are running about; they are clutching their weapons, attempting to ensconce themselves behind smaller superstructures and artillerv.

How do you want to guide Kyrna over the wall (field GW4*)?

From north to south, turn to X4. From south to north, turn to X45. Not at all, turn to X57.



X34 Your attack against the Black Army was successful. Flames lick over the turrets, and even as you fly away, occasional explosions resound in the camps.

You receive 2 KARMA points for your successful attack against the Black Armu.

Turn to X41.

X

X35 You underestimate the force of your leap. Curled up like an iron ball, you tumble over the granite stones of the coping wall and knock over two soldiers who couldn't jump to the side in time.

When you pick yourself up, all your limbs hurt, but you haven't suffered any serious injuries.

The gate of the guardhouse slams open, and three Baronyak riders charge you with their riding sabers drawn. You have failed to free the lizards. All you can do now is search the sky.

Turn to X11.

*) If you have solved the Flight Path Riddle (see page 516), you should know, which direction to take.

X36 At the very moment you glide over the coping wall, Kyrna spreads her wings, extends her powerful paws and clutches the rod. The iron groans under the strain, the stone bursts open and the rod is torn free.

The lizards—still attached to the rod—screech and flap helplessly below you while Kyma flies on, dragging them after her. Beating her wings a few times more, she lets the rod go, and the shricking lizards smash to the ground at the base of the wall.

Turn to X38.



X37 You know that this attack is risky. That is why you seek out any tactical advantage you can find. An approach flying from east to west seems the safest, as the morning sun, low on the horizon, may blind the defenders.

Turn to X3.

X38 Behind the north side of the wall, rise four mighty gun turrets. You know that your attack's further success depends on avoiding their fire.

Choose one of these two options:

If you want to evade the missiles from the turrets, test your DEXTERITY against 17!

If you want to dodge and at the same time attack the nearest turret, test your DEXTERITY against 19!

> If test () is successful, turn to X43. If you have chosen the more difficult test () and succeeded. turn to X54. If the test chosen is unsuccessful, turn to X31.

X39 The time has come! At first you hear the wild ringing of a bell from one guard tower. Then from a second and a third. And soon the entire camp is on high alert.

Nevertheless, you appear to have the moment of surprise: You still don't see any Baronyaks or other lizard riders rising into the air. "Kyrna, to battle! This is our chance!" you cry into the wind. Your dragon answers with a fervent snar!!

If you have the ability Warfare, turn to X37. If not, decide which direction you want to choose for your approach. From south to north, turn to X9. From east to west. turn to X3.

From west to east, turn to X17.

X40 "Malam, malam" you whisper into Kyrna's ear. Your dragon immediately spreads her sleek wings and glides noiselessly over the camp.

Depending on the option designated in the last section, turn to \$\X28, \$\X28 tx18 or \$\X8.

X41 Beneath you chaos reigns. Not only has Kyrna caused immense damage to the army, but Slaht, its former commander, has also turned against it. Countless soldiers, fearing his rage, have deserted and fled to the Guanoko Plains.

Turn to X60.

X42 The arsenal of the Black Army contains not only metal weaponry of all kinds, but also special equipment for smashing through thick armor plating and walls. These alchemical substances are extremely dangerous and may only be used by experienced mages or demolition experts.

Turn to X58.

If you have played Tarah's Chapter, please check the box at "E" of the Path of Wisdom section on the third page of the adventure sheet. Maybe you get a clue there what to do here.

X43 Skillfully, you maneuver Kyrna into a blind spot where you cannot be seen from the gun turrets. Apparently, their heavy machinery is not intended for targeting such close and fast objects. Losing no time, you turn to your next objective.

Turn to X14

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X44 You imagine what nasty traps the passages may be equipped with so as to effectively prevent attacks from the other direction. An enemy army would certainly be destroyed should they make the crazy attempt to break through the passages.

What strategic importance the northern tunnel entrances have is indicated by the fact that the army has stationed a battalion next to each of them.

The Battle for Leenhaven was a bitter setback for the Empire's war machine. The survivors from the four battalions that marched to the harbor town only a few days ago are waiting for reinforcements. They are not prepared for another engagement so soon, which means they are not prepared for you.

Turn to X47.

X45 Just before you reach the wall, heavy bolts shoot by, barely missing you. Your long glide has given the soldiers on the Great Wall the opportunity to align their heavy artillery. You are forced to turn aside.

Turn to X38

X46 Hastily, you search the bags for helpful items, free yourself from the safety straps, and then leap down into the depths as Kyrna glides over the coping wall.

Test your STRENGTH against 18!

Think about whether you want to take items from Kyrna's Saddlebag. If the test is successful, turn to X21. If it fails, turn to X35. X47 Kyrna thunders over the Guanoko Plains so close to the dusty earth that dry scrubs even catch in her paws. So far, the scouts of the Black Army have not yet noticed your approach. Turn to X39.

X48 Flames leap up as Kyrna's glowing breath consumes the first wagons in the circle. A munitions wagon with two soldiers in black uniform on the coach box dashes out of the smoke. While one is busy subduing the frantic oxen, the second hastily waves some red pennants. It appears he's trying to warn his companions. You pull Kyrna to the left-from her throat another fire lance shoots out over the camp. Panicking, the two soldiers jump off the wagon and try to save their lives before the inferno swallows up their vehicle.

A moment later, a powerful explosion tears to shreds what's left of the wagon and jars Kyrna's wings. She screams. You flounder only just barely above the unforgiving ground!

Turn to X31.

X49 Kyrna must work her wings hard so as to reach sufficient altitude and cross over the wall a final time. The heavy explosive barrels frighten many of the soldiers on the wall-walk along the battlements, so much so that they immediately run to safety. Even so, some of them are still aiming at you with their crossbows. Before the soldiers can take better aim, however, you have flown past them and now head for one of the entrances to the subterranean area.

How do you intend to guide Kyrna over the eastern entrance (Field

From west to south, turn to X16. From south to west, turn to X7. From north to east, turn to X59. From east to north, turn to X52.

*) If you have solved the Flight Path Riddle (see page 516). you should know, which direction to take.

 $\mathbf{X50}$ Your devastating attack, a strategical and martial masterstroke, is likely to be forever engraved in the soldiers' memories. Those few who have survived will never forget you.

You receive 3 KARMA points for your perfect raid against the Black Army Turn to B14

X51 The soldiers quickly see through your plan and dash towards you. At least you manage to unfasten four of the six bolts and thus deliver four of the lizards to freedom. The hysterical beasts fly off flapping their wings furiously, but are immediately dragged down by their heavy iron chains.

The door to the guard house smashes open. Cursing you, three Baronyak riders charge to the coping wall with drawn sabers. Time to withdraw once more.

Turn to X11.

X52 As you approach the strategically important entrance, the marksmen from the adjacent gun turret open fire with all they have. The lightning missiles just barely miss you as they whiz past. The weight of the explosive barrels has made Kyrna too slow to dodge them quickly.

Overburdened, she drops the barrels, which explode a moment later, creating two deep craters in the space before the turret. Undeterred, the soldiers behind the arrow-slites continue firing. Tirrn to X31.

X53 Your surprise attack has lasted around two minutes and is going surprisingly smoothly. You have managed to catch the leader of the Black Army on the wrong foot! Highly motivated, you begin looking for the next worthwhile target, when suddenly something startles Kyrna!

At first, you fear that she has been hit from one of the gun turrets, but your dragon lifts her long neck up over you and gazes back to the Windy Mountains in the west. "I have been fearing this moment... He is coming!"

Alarmed by Kyrna's trembling and her words, you also turn to look back.

Turn to X22.



X54 By darting back and forth and constantly changing directions, Kyrna attempts to dodge the lightning missiles. A single hit could spell your end! You have almost reached the tower. You can already see the first marksmen behind the armor plating as they eagerly prepare their next bolts. How do you want to attack the large guard tower?

> If you want to pull on the left rein and lean forward, turn to X20, option (1). If you want to drum on Kyrna's back, turn to X30, option (1). If you want to loosen the reins and lean forward, turn to X40, option (1). Use the flight maneuver card at C20 before you decide.

X55 Using the command "rosh, rosh," you drum on Kyma's back, hoping that she will aim her fire at the enemy dragon. "Keşra, you disappoint me." She ignores the command. "Remember what I said before. Dragons do not kill each other."

"Fine. Then get us away from here!"

You pull on Kyrna's harness as the first flame shoots past you. You think you see a nasty grin on Slaht's soot-blackened maw. Only hot smoke now curls out between his teeth.

"I thought dragons don't kill each other?" you scream in shock.

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"They do not," Kyrna answers in your mind. "Presumably, this attack was not meant for me..."

Turn to X19

X56 Unfortunately, your approach for the attack was not perfectly planned. Kyrna had to fly too many evasive maneuvers so that you couldn't engage the individual positions effectively Despite that, the soldiers will remember the day when Aonus' famous black dragon attacked them from the sky.

You receive 1 KARMA point for your damaging, though not completely successful, attack against the Black Army,

Turn to X41.

X57 You decide not to fly over the wall at this position and instead turn away. You head directly for one of the gun turrets as its lightning ballista bolts follow your flight path, each one coming dangerously closer!

Turn to X38.

X58 The barrels that rolled out are apparently extremely dangerous and of great importance to the Black Army. What maneuver do you want to use to attack the wagon? If you want to pull on the left rein and lean forward, turn to X20, option € If you want to down on Kyrna's back turn to X30, option € If you want to loosen the reins and lean forward, turn to X40, option € Use the flying maneuver card at C20 before you decide

X59 Your approach to the entrance leading underground has alerted the guards. Several soldiers, highly alarmed, are driving oxen that have been yoked to a large turnstile. The mechanism in this wooden structure slides forward an impressive rusty panel #0 as to quickly close the hole in the ground.

Kyrna aims and drops the bombs. Two explosions swallow up soldiers, oxen and the entire entrance, but as you glance backward and assess the damage, you see that it is only superficial.

Turn to X53.



X60 Slowly, the Great Wall and the camp of the Black Army disappear in the rising morning mist. Even though your attack lasted merely minutes, you are certain that it will have a decisive influence during the coming months of the war.

You sense that Kyrna is exhausted, but she is also as determined as you to face the inescapable confrontation with the Shadow Master. Dragons are creatures of destiny and yours is fast approaching.

Go to the FINALE "POWERS OF THE BLACK SUN".

B

There are no FATE POINTS in this chapter. But you had the chance to achieve the highest RIDER RANK **Dragon Master** [] you did not manage to do so, you must find a way, together with Kyrna, to inflict as much damage as possible on the Black Army.

CONGRATULATIONS! With the success in this mission, you have dealt a terrible blow to the Empire's military might.

Your trip to the Great Wall did cost you a great deal of time, however. Note this by going to section F2 (at the beginning of the FINALE) and cross off the two suns O, but start this chapter with F1 anyway.

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EXTRA CHAPTER + ANGEL OF VENGEANCE

Flight Path Riddle (from section X10)

Under Kyrna and you lie the four enemy battalions (squares), five armories (white circles), and five entrances to the underground (black circles). You also see the Great Wall (thick line) and four turrets (triangles). Your task: Deal as much damage as possible to the Black Army without endangering Kyrnal

•	+	+		+	+		+	*	
0		+	0		+	0	+		
+	+	+		+	0		+	-	-
+		+	status a.t.	+	+	+	en5	+	
		100.10	GW4	N. COM	10000		Grea	at Wall	
+	+	+		+		+	+	+	
•	+	+	+	+	+	+.	0	+	

Find the best flight path that meets the following nine requirements:

 Kyrna can only fly vertically or horizontally over the squares, never diagonally! She always goes from center to center (the small crosses +) of the squares.

2. Kyrna can only fly over the squares once!

3. Fly over means either...

a) cross the square (without direction change)

b) make a turn (with a simple direction change), at the right angle left or right over the center of the square.

4. For the perfect attack, all battalions (squares), armories and entrances (circles) must lie on the flight path! You can fly over all other squares.

The exception are the turrets (triangles). You cannot fly over those.

 The armories (white circles) must be passed vertically or horizontally. To reduce the risk of an enemy attack, she must turn the square before and/or after.

0		
 	-	

6. To attack an entrance (black circle), Kyrna must fly low, that means cross the two connected squares vertically or horizontally. You must turn on the field of the entrance itself.

 The battalions (squares) can only be attacked performing fast low level flight. You must cross the square itself and the squares before vertically or horizontally in a straight line.

 The Great Wall can only be crossed four times vertically (updown or down-up).

9. The two arrows on the right side of the map show Kyrna's approach and departure path.

If you think that you have found the answer, return to X10 and use the knowledge gathered in the rest of this extra chapter. 518

FINALE

POWERS OF THE BLACK SUN

The repetition of Kathum's dying day was a far-reaching experience, and you receive 2 KARMA points. Update the Save Points on your adventure sheet.

"Once the hunter, he now becomes the hunted since he was not able to slay his prey when it was still young and helpless."

- THE ORACLE OF KABETH

F1 The endless expanse of the sea and the darkness of this starry night tire you. Trusting Kyrna's wise instincts to strike the right path, you fall asleep resting on the smooth scales of her neck... When you open your eyes, the sun is high in the sky. Kyrna's heart is beating excitedly.

Your VITALITY rises by two levels, even to fit. KYRNA'S VITALITY rises to normal!

If you have the Sabalith Idol, turn to F74. If not, turn to F56.

 $\fbox{F2}$ Cross off these two suns to show that you have flown to the Great Wall.

C F3 After some minutes of wild pursuit through the clouds, you realize that the Halret is trying primarily to keep you from continuing your flight. This fight will simply hold you up unnecessarily. Angrily, you drive Kyrma forward in its direction.

> Return to F59 and go on with your combat. Please cross off the sun next to F3 to show that you have read this section.

Ø F4 With reins held tight, you order Kyrna to gain altitude Ø before commanding her to dive. "Pagot, pagot!" you shout, feeling her respond instantly.

Kyrna thunders down, almost touching the sheer, seemingly endless side of the Ningal Tower. The ocean waves breaking at its base come ever closer and are more and more distinct. Sea foam sprays your face as, in free fall, your dragon then spreads her wings and turns, flying into the big harbor cave.

The loud shouts of startled sailors fill the cave as Kyrna lands on the stone blocks of the docking wall. In the general confusion you jump from the saddle, pushing some sailors into the water, and hurry up the steps to the entrance of the Tower. Before barricading the door behind you, you look back, only to see Kyrna being attacked by a first group of Dragon Riders as she tries to get off the ground.

Kyrna's VITALITY is lowered by a level!



> Kyrna, fly away! «

Heavy-hearted, you gaze up the huge spiral staircase. There is a long way to go before you reach the upper floors where the Shadow Master usually resides. Barely have you climbed the first steps, when you experience a violent quake that causes the whole Tower to tremble.

Turn to F134.

Please cross off the two suns next to F4 to show that you have read this section.

 $\begin{array}{c} \bigcirc F5 \\ \bigcirc \text{ show himself. You can do nothing but wait for the Shadow Master to} \\ \end{array}$

Finally, you hear footsteps, and three grimy Gartaks appear, wielding whips and spears as they drive nine gaunt prisoners towards the rooms of the Shadow Master. One after another, the prisoners are forced into an alcove and seem to vanish in thin air. Two of the guards follow them, and the other Gartak remains to guard the magical portal. You smile.

> The waiting has paid off. «

Silently, you sneak forward through the shadows, until you are next to the smelly creature, who is still staring ahead blankly. Amused, you tap him on the shoulder plate of his armor. As expected, he spins around, but you instantly knock him down with a rock-hard head butt. With a spirited step you follow the prisoners into the uncertainty of the Shadow Portal.

Turn to F93.

Please cross off the two suns next to F5 to show that you have read this section.

F6 The conflict with the Shadow Master becomes a game of patience.

Return to F140 and go on with your combat. Please cross off the sun next to F6 to show that you have read this section.

F7 As if by a miracle, Nephatari opens her eyes. At first, she appears to be in another world, a world in which she can drive out the pain and torment she has had to suffer. But then she recognizes you, and a smile lights up her face. Overjoyed, you embrace the daughter of the sun. Tears roll down your cheeks as you thank the gods who gave her life.

On the third page of your adventure sheet, write down that you have saved Nephatari by marking off the box under Special Notes. If you have Utensils or Special Items you want to use to improve Nephatari's condition, turn to F128. If not, turn to F100. Please cross off the sun next to F7 to show that you have read this section.

F8 You sense that this day, this hour, is more than extraordinary, perhaps even unique.

> This day must not pass so quickly! «

You focus on your sacred ability of temporal manipulation and change the course of the stars. Breathing heavily, you run on.

You can now use 2 KARMA points to erase one of the crossed-off suns on the previous pages (sections F2 to F7) or to cross off the sun in this section (F8).

If you have the ability Mental Focus, this manipulation of time does not cost any KARMA!

Turn to F134.

F9 Ugar, your father, remains hidden. He keeps watch at Kar's side!

Check sections F2 to F8 and count the number of crossed-off suns Depending on the number of suns (see image below), continue with the section indicated.



...

22

F10~ Bull's eye! Your arrow enters between the eyes of the monster and penetrates up to the feathers. A horrible squeal fills the cave, but the creature from the underworld wrenches the missile from its flesh and keeps coming.

You seize the opportunity and engage in close combat.

Thanks to your hit, you can immediately strike 2 points of RESISTANCE from the monster!

Turn to F75.

F11 With a swift roll to the side you dodge the demon's powerful lunge. Enraged, it rips entire boulders out of the protective wall, killing several soldiers who had been hiding behind it. > What a monster has been hiding inside Calderel all these years! No wonder the old man was physically so unstoppable! <

Deftly, you conceal yourself in the rising cloud of dust so as to allow your father some time to move on.

Turn to F162.

F12 Calderel is more powerful than ever before. Nevertheless, he appears unfocused. Obviously, the ritual is costing him a great deal of his attention. In view of his present vulnerability, the Shadow Master withdraws. With only a brief gesture, he disappears through the Black Gate. Without hesitating, you jump after him.

Turn to F100.

 $F13 \qquad \mbox{You stab at him with the courage of desperation. The Shadow Master turns instantly to the side, but the blade of the Moon Sickle pierces his gaunt hip.$

"You have made a decision," Calderel murmurs darkly. The sounds of rattling chains and muffled crunching make you shiver. "Now live with the consequences, Keşra!" With that, the Shadow Master disappears into the darkness. Horrified, you look up into the dome. Dangling there between the iron chains is Nephatari's slender body, her limbs unnaturally twisted.

If you want to help Nephatari, turn to F66. If you would rather follow Calderel at once through the Black Gate, turn to F165.



F14 Again, Calderel slashes your chest with his razor-sharp claws. Your life energy leaves you, and your soul drains from your lifeless body.

> Such power! Such elation! «

At this moment, the ghostly voice washing over your mind appears all-powerful. "You have been a dangerous opponent, Keşra. But the age of the divine siblings ends here and now!" Emotiness. Infinite emptiness.

If you have found all 13 FATE POINTS so far, turn to F45. If not, but you still have at least 4 KARMA points, turn to F126. If not, turn to F84.

 $F15 \qquad \text{Dense, magnificent white clouds drift over the rough sea far below you. You enjoy a fleeting glimpse of pure beauty until a scrawny, cautionary finger of black rock breaks through the clouds in the distance.}$

Cold shivers run up and down your spine—you have reached your destination, the end of your long journey! Before you lies the bastion of the Shadow Master, the fearsome Ningal Tower! > Calderel knows that we are coming. He feels me—as I feel him. « Circling the top of the Tower are some small black specks. They are Dragon Riders, alerted to act as a last line of air defense. Kyrna glides down lower and into the protective clouds.

If you have the **Eye of the Assassin**, turn to **F130** If you do not, but you have the ability of **Premonition**, turn to **F164** If not, turn to **F59**

F16 As Calderel's croaking voice once again bores into your skull, a nameless rage overwhelms you. Even in the face of death, the Shadow Master places himself above the concerns of the world! With a satisfying feeling of overarching revenge, you strike his sunken chest with the Moon Sickle.

» Never again shall you wreak havoc! «

Weak and relieved, you sink to your knees, letting your eyes wander over the blue sky.

If Kyrna is dead, turn to F132. If she is alive, turn to F122.

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F17 "Malam, malam!" you call to Kyrna, and she returns to a smooth glide. Unfortunately, this makes you a perfect target for the hunters. The first volley is already flying towards you! You have trouble dodging the arrows and are forced to fly in a wide arc so as to make another approach. While doing so, you observe some soldiers at the edge of the platform, turning a huge iron wheel. Test your STRENGTH against 19 and your DEXTERTITY against 21. Add your RIDER RAWK to both results!

> If both tests are successful, turn to F131. If one test is successful, turn to F85. If both tests fail, turn to F99.



F15 Cold shivers run up and down your spine—you have reached your destination, the end of your long journey! Before you lies the bastion of the Shadow Master, the fearsome Ningal Tower! F18 Although you cannot see the face of your father through the dominance of your mother, both are unusually close to one another today. Unfortunately, you have not reached the perfect moment.

Turn to F120.

 $F19 \qquad \text{An intense burning feeling passes through your body as the true Calderel drags his claws across your back. His piercing laughter intensifies your pain.}$

The false shadow fades.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

Return to F121 and make another choice.

F20 Calderel has vanished. Disoriented, you drift through the unreal spheres of the underworld. You cannot even trust your instincts. Here rule different laws of nature and much more powerful beings. And you know what they crave; should they find you, they will desire to kill you—no matter what this would mean for the worlds of mortals.

From the distance come a deep gurgling and rasping. Then a whisper of wails. The icy breath of death sends shivers down your spine. Lost souls brush past you! They struggle for your attention. They feel, rightly or wrongly, that you have the power to end their eternal martyrdom.

Aimlessly, you drift through the twilight of the underworld, searching for the Shadow Master...

Turn to F83.

F21 You are sure that it is not the first time that you, the Keşra, have stood before the Black Gate. And the feelings you connect with this portal are ambivalent. Once, the divine essence of Ugar came into the world here, as did that of Kar through the white stone portal in the Lengal Tower.

But the dominion over death given to him caused this holy site to become a place of pain and suffering with time. Lost souls and bitter spirits shook and gnawed at the foundation of the gate for eons, until it finally collapsed and lost its original task of granting the dead safe conduct to the underworld.

Between the underworld and the mortal realm, a void grew, quickly filled with power-hungry, light-fearing creatures, all with their own ambitions. Meanwhile their influence has grown so great that not even the gods can banish them.

This hell separating the mortal world from the resting places of the underworld has become a forever chaotic element within the Cosmos.

Turn to F38.



F22 You allow yourself to drift away from Calderel and the spirits.

You succeed in gaining some time, so that this and the next COMBAT ROLIND are spent without any action from either side.

Return to F140, cross off two rounds and go on with your combat.

F23 "Well, you have earned my respect and thus also an appropriate tribute," Nergal murmurs, breaking off one of the countless spines in his crest.

He tosses the smeared, razor-sharp spine before your feet. "Take it and go before I reconsider your fate!" Write down Nergal's Spine (Weapon, Hit Bonus +2, Special: You can wield it as an additional weapon in your left hand! When you do so, however, you must decide each round whether you want to add the Spin's Hit Bonus to your ATACK or carry out an additional ATACK with the Spine while taking account of its Hit Bonus.*

Turn to F94.

*) Example of the latter scenario: You've STRENGTH 10 and are a Good Fighter (Attack Bonus +2). You roll a bonus of 8 (Attack Die ∑ and Base Die ∑). With your first weapon, a Long Sword (Hit Bonus +4), you have a total of Attack 24, with Nergal's Spine, however only 22.

If your opponent has Defense 23, only your hit with the Long Sword would have succeeded.

If he has 22 or less, your second ATTACK with the Spine would have caused another loss of RESISTANCE.

F24 Your last arrow barely misses the Riujem's skull. The unsteady beating of Kyrna's wings and the chaotic movements of the unholy creature made the shot unpredictable.

Turn to F144.

F25 Regardless of the danger of being hit yourself, you spin around and use the weightlessness of the sphere for a swift attack. For his part, Calderel drives his bony claws into your hip. A burning pain spreads throughout your guts before you are finally able to free yourself from his grip.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

Calderel's RESISTANCE is reduced by 3 points.

Return to F140, make the changes there and continue the fight.

F26 Calderel turns away and focuses. He is obviously preparing to unleash an extraordinary attack.

Determine his plan depending on the random moon phase!

If it's New Moon or Full Moon, turn to F67. 🔘

If it's Crescent Moon, turn to F48. ()

If it's Half Moon, turn to F64.

If it's Gibbous Moon, turn to F108.

Mark the random section by crossing off its circle. If the section has already been crossed off, determine another moon phase.

F27 $\;$ As soon as you press the small soul urn to Nephatari's brow, the artefact lights up. Confused, she opens her eyes and calls, "Father?!"

The Hierarch has saved his daughter, but his soul died away when he gave her life.

Remove Kathum's Soul from your adventure sheet!

Turn to F111.

F28 Even over the flight wind you can hear the muffled, metallic impact of the arrow.

> Unbelievable! I actually hit it! «

Satisfied, you command Kyrna to begin her glide when suddenly a cloud opens up and a Halret rushes towards you, his singed lance lowered. You hear his hateful battle cry through the helmet of the seamless armor that protects him from the sun. An arrow is sticking in his side.

Kyrna hovers, raising her claws to ward off the attacker. She seizes the Halret's demonic flying lizard and bites into its neck. Angry, the Shadow Rider whirls his lance around.

You have no choice. While Kyrna is struggling against the lizard, you have to fight the Halret! The unholy creature appears to be weakened. Parts of his black steel armor have been dented or torn away through the impact. Dense, green smoke is billowing from the gaps.

Write down Nergal's Spine (Weapon, Hit Bonus +2, Special: You can wield it as an additional weapon in your left hand! When you do so, however, you must decide each round whether you want to add the Spine's Hit Bonus to your ATTACK or carry out an additional ATTACK with the Spine while taking account of its Hit Bonus.^{*}

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COMBAT ROUND UOO305 ····

Your missile has already cost the Halret the first RESISTANCE point before the fight even began!

In the third and fifth COMBAT ROUND, the Halret loses 1 point of RESISTANCE in addition to the regular damage caused.

If you win the fight, turn to F142.

F29 Your perfectly aimed arrow pierces the skull plate of the Gartak, taking him right between the eyes. His companion recoils in fear and is caught in the heavy wheel. With a deafening noise, it starts to turn in the opposite direction, ripping the body of the Gartak asunder. With some regret you discard the useless bow. It is only dead weight now.

Cross off the saddlebag entry of the **Rider's Bow** from your adventure sheet!

Turn to F125.

F30 Fingering the hilt of the Moon Sickle, still in its scabbard, you stride towards the Shadow Warrior with firm steps. With every step you can feel his agitation turning into pure terror. He stares at you wide-eyed. His arms and legs are trembling: the blade drops from his numb fingers.

Your own shape is mirrored in his tear-filled eyes. Upon your head shines the golden sun mask. A blazing aura surrounds it, in a single breath revealing to the warrior all his blasphemies and vile deeds.

> How many innocents have you tormented? How many had to die because of you? <</p>

The Shadow Warrior gurgles something incomprehensible, as if wanting to answer your probing questions, but out of his mouth wells only black blood. Then he drops to the ground. The air stinks of urine and death.

Turn to F107.

 $\begin{array}{ccc} F31 & \mbox{Powerless, you try to detach your spirit from the mortal shell of the Ugarith known to all as the Shadow Child. But his mind is poisoned by hatred for Calderel and his evil deeds. You do not get free! \end{array}$

You can understand his anger only too well. How many have fallen victim to the Shadow Master on his way to fulfilling his mad plans? How many friends have you lost? What torments did Tarus and sun daughter Nephatari have to suffer before their deaths? Your thoughts grow darker and darker, commingling with the madness of the young Ugarith, before the spirit of a Riujem brushes you! Prompted by the Keşra's moment of weakness, he summons you to a horde of his ilk.

Your eternal chase as a hunter of the underworld, filled with nameless suffering, has begun. END *

 $F32 \qquad \mbox{You sense the thanks of the remaining souls because you have driven Calderel away. They lead you straight to your be-loved artefact drifting alone in the grey expanses of the sphere. When you can make out Aonus' chiseled features in the fog.$

"Forgive me, brother!" his spirit whispers. "Only in the afterlife have I been able to see behind the mask. I beg you, end this nightmare! Destroy the monster that was once our master."

Hope returns in your heart.

Write down the Moon Sickle on your adventure sheet.

If you have the Shadow Reaper and want to give it back to Aonus, turn to F141. If you do not have this weapon or do not want to hand it over, turn to F20.

Calculate your Star Rating at the end of this chapter on page 597.

...

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F33 Concentrating, your grasp the hilt of the Moon Sickle and imagine how and where you would have to hit the Shadow Master so as not to endanger Nephatari's life. Calderel eyes you suspiciously.

Slowly you draw the holy blade, focusing the power of the surroundings in you so as to release it in a single concentrated blast. But this time, the gods forsake you! In these blasphemous ambiance it is not the forces of your parents that you gather, but only the chaotic power of the underworld!

Even the dead pity your weak attempt with their shrill wails as they make you one of them.

Your life ends here.

 $F34 \qquad \mbox{You miss the right moment to jump and drop towards the surprised Gartak. His failed try to get to safety is your good fortune: He catches your fall and tumbles with you onto the slate slabs.$

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

F

The Gartak sees his chance to get the head of the legendary Shadow Child and increases his choke hold. His putrid grin quickly turns into a surprised grimace as you drive your steel-hard claws into his belly. Lifeless, the warrior falls to the ground.

Turn to F125.

F35 As if the target already knew about your abilities, he changes his position constantly. Only with effort can you follow his red shape through the clouds. Yet you are determined to shoot him down with your Rider's Bow.

Thanks to the artefact, you can follow the flight path of the target, even though he is hiding in the clouds.

Observe the image to the right, and, taking all the pages of this chapter,

5 As if the target already knew about your abilities, he changes his position constantly. Only with effort can you follow his red shape through the clouds.

follow the flight of the creature by using the paper in your hands as a flip book. What does the clock symbol show when the Halret reveals himself?

4 o'clock, turn to F139. 6 o'clock, turn to F102. 8 o'clock, turn to F117. 10 o'clock, turn to F124. 10 o'clock, turn to F124. 12 o'clock, turn to F149. 15 you are uncertain and want to trust your instinct, turn to F155.



 $F36 \qquad \mbox{You are breathing heavily. The Shadow Master wants to drive you to act without thought! This godless corruptor will receive his just punishment—here and now!$

Return to F140 and continue your battle.

F37 Confused by the terrible appearance of the underworld monster, your aim wavers as you release your shot, and your arrow hits only the soft mass beneath its eyes. With a nasty snarl, the creature targets you, preparing for a counter attack.

Because of your hit, the monster loses 1 point of RESISTANCE in the next section!

Turn to F75.

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2 o'clock, turn to F81. O

F38 There, you see something moving among the corpses! A misshapen, ant-like creature, perfectly camouflaged by its black

body, is crawling around among the dead. In its hands, it wields a flail as large as a man as it beats on the dismembered remains of a humanoid woman. Apparently, the monster means to obtain every last drop of blood out of the body.

If you still have your Rider's Bow and want to use it, turn to F105. If you want to attack the spider monster with the Moon Sickle,

turn to F75*.

If you want to ignore it and continue climbing down to the portal, turn to F49.

F39 Suddenly, the demon dashes towards you! Before you can react, it has impaled you on its twisted horns and sent you flying into the air. You smash against the roof of the guard house and fall into the building along with a shower of slate tiles.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

Stunned, you save yourself by hiding in the dense dust from rubble and ashes, thus winning some time for your father to complete his course.

Turn to F162.

F40 . No sooner has Calderel flown through the portal of worlds, than a huge, grotesque shape manifests itself around his body. The creature howls like a mangy dog as it slides over the stone.

It is a Riujem! An cast out child of the gods, deprived of its power, and doomed to serve the rulers of the underworld! This creature, however, appears to be weary of obeying commands and has been seeking a way to escape into the mortal realm.

Thrashing about, the hunchbacked monster, who resembles a bull with a shark's head, stands up erect and stomps across the court on his hind hooves.

FINALE · POWERS OF THE BLACK SUN

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

> This demon has hidden in the body of the Shadow Master all this time... But the Moon Sickle has revealed the truth. <

Now you realize why you always liked Calderel. The nature of the Riujem is not dissimilar from yours. You, too, are a misguided child of the gods, and very nearly became one of the Riujem yourself! The lord of the underworld, Nergal, snarls at you. You understand the snarl's underlying ultimatum: leave his realm immediately!

> If you want to leave the underworld at once and leap through the portal, turn to F94 If you want to demand tribute from Nergal, turn to F127.

 $F41 \qquad {\rm Ugar\ devotes\ to\ you\ his\ almost\ complete\ attention\ in\ this\ so\ very\ important\ battle.}$

Turn to F120.

F42 It looks as if you are the only one immune to the powerful energy discharges around you. There is a sudden explosion One of the spheres could not stand the strain and has shattered into thousands of fragments.

You would like to come to the aid of your dragon, who has collapsed, exhausted, but this is probably your last chance to reach the hatch.

KYRNA'S VITALITY is lowered by a level!

Turn to F125.

 $F43 \qquad \text{The experienced hunters form their routine attack formation. One of them, you recognize by his long red mane. Mirek, your Menokian school friend, has evidently not followed the example of his people and turned his back on the Empire. You remember your many lessons spent together with your teacher Tarus and the long hours spent in the study rooms.$ > Oh please, Mirek, do not get in my usu! < Obviously, the interceptors were expecting your arrival and have a precise plan.

"Kyrna, can't you persuade them to break off their attacks?"

"For the last time, Keşra-they are what they are! I will not stop another dragon from fulfilling its duties."

The only thing left is to try to reach the platform of the Ningal Tower with a daring flying maneuver.

If you want to pull the left wing and lean forward, turn to F4. If you want to reins alternately and sway your upper body, turn to F119.

If you want to release both reins and draw back your upper body, turn to F17.

Use the flying maneuver card at C20 before you decide.

F44 No sooner have you taken out the soul urn, than the spirit of the sun priest rises from the artefact as a glowing fog, joining the other spirits surrounding Calderel, and mingling with them.

The Shadow Master notices none of this and continues to suck in the essence of his victims. As the shining body of Kathum flows into his mouth, however, Calderel grabs his throat, struggling for breath. Panicked, and striking out wildly, he drifts to another exit from this nameless sphere.

Remove Kathum's Soul from your adventure sheet! You have to prevent Calderel's escape and fly after him.

If you still have the Moon Sickle, turn to F20. If you do not have it, turn to F32.

 $F45 \quad \mbox{All your thoughts, all your memories are sucked out of your mind. But they do not simply fade in the darkness surrounding you. Instead, they manifest themselves as shadowy apparitions. Calderel is enraged and screeches like a fiend. For the first time, the gods openly come to your aid! You have come back to life.$

...

Determine the assistance of the gods based on the moon!

If it's New Moon, your VITALITY rises to critical.

If it's Crescent Moon, it rises to hurt.

If it's Half Moon, it rises to battered.

If it's Gibbous Moon, it rises to normal.

If it's Full Moon or if you have the ability Mind over Body, your VITALITY rises to fit.

Return to F83 and continue fighting against the Shadow Master.

F46 Before you even reach the Gartaks, both let go of the wheel. They know that they cannot defend themselves against your attacks. At once, the mechanical energy is released, and the iron wheel starts to turn in the opposite direction. A moment later you hear the counterweights of the mechanism as they crash to the ground deep below your feet in the silos of the iron spheres. That's enough for you. Without paying any further attention to the printil Gartaks, you dash to the hatch.

Turn to F125.

F47 Even though Kar beams brightly, Ugar is in the sky, assisting you!

Turn to F120.

 $F48 \qquad \mbox{You sense that the Shadow Master is calling to the powers of darkness again, but you can't make out an attack. Then suddenly, your own shadow seizes you, clasping your chest and constricting your throat! With all your strength, you try to escape this deadly embrace.}$

Test your STRENGTH against 18!

If the test is successful, you can free yourself from the shadow embrace and carry out a normal COMBAT ROUND.

If it fails, you lose 3 points of ATTACK and DEFENSE for this round. Return to F83 and continue fighting against the Shadow Master. F49 In the howling wind blowing from the Black Gate you hear low wailing and groaning. There is a spark of life left in many of the entwined bodies. You are not sure whether to feel joy or pity for them.

Overcoming your revulsion, you cautiously sneak further down until you catch an unrestricted glimpse of the boundless darkness of the Black Gate. There he is, floating, his bony, pitch-black back turned towards you—Calderel, the Shadow Master!

In the large lake of blood below him, demonic grimaces and disfigured claws rise to the surface, reaching without success for the body of the Emissary. Then, without turning around, he begins to speak in that familiar, yet loathsome voice.

"What a surprise! The Shadow Child returns home."

The smug politeness is imbued with a heartless undertone as the rejuvenated Calderel turns towards you: "Do you hope for purification or do you want to receive your just punishment?"

Madness blazes in the blackened eye-sockets of your old mentor while beneath his feet the blood of his victims trickles away inside the Black Gate. With each drop, it opens a bit wider. You stare deep into his eyes, and for a moment you believe you recomize a familiar gleam.

> If you have the Amulet of Kar, turn to F79. If not, turn to F12.



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F50 You decide to leave the uncertainty of the dense clouds behind you and command Kyrna to fly faster. Drops of water form on your rough skin, and you hear the crackle of small bursts of lightning filling the air around you. Abruptly, it turns bitterly cold. Ice crystals coat your bodies.

Suddenly, a black lance from below pierces the thin leather hide of Kyrna's right pinion. In pain, your dragon screams and swings his paws around to ward off another attack. Holding on to the saddle with effort, you see the hint of a shadow returning to the protective clouds.

The creature's unnatural battle cry is still ringing in your ears seconds after it has disappeared.

KYRNA'S VITALITY is lowered by a level!

Turn to F59.

F51 You are just about to close the hatch behind you when burning hot rays of light from Kar's golden wrath in its zenith fall upon your face. Instinctively, you protect yourself.

 \rightarrow Something is different – Ugar is with me, even if he is hiding right now... \leftarrow

The nature of the moon seems to be following a different rhythm today.

> Has Calderel already attained his full power? <

Worried, you set out for the catacombs of the Master.

Do you now want to use the power of the Keşra to manipulate time? To do that you need 2 KARMA points or

the ability Mental Focus (turn to F8). If not, turn to F134

F52 You lower your gaze and stride towards the demon. He struggles to get up, sensing what powers confront his own. You can see something like uncertainty reflected in his twisted grimace.

Then, the Riujem clenches his fists. Dark veins, thick as ropes, swell and pump vile blood through his body with the doublebeat of his black heart. His back begins to blister, swell and grow until his parchment-like skin tears open and two slimy wings unfold.

) Oh, no! You will not escape me! «

Do you want to pounce the Riujem to prevent his escape, turn to F62. If you want to wait until he rises and then attack him with Kyrna's help, turn to F82.

F53 You know this evil snarl! Nergal, lord of the underworld, is approaching, lured by the blood of the Shadow Master. Sickened by his abominable body you turn away and see that it is not you the dragon is interested in. His attention is focused solely on the Shadow Master whose mortal remains are beginning to move again!

"Good, Keşra! You have weakened him in my domain. Now end it in yours!" growls Nergal. "But beware; you will not be able to destroy him here. In the meantime too many souls have flocked to him."

With an iron grip, he snatches up the squirming Calderel and opens a portal to the mortal world with his other paw. You recognize the sunny uppermost platform of the Ningal Tower. "Understand the true shape of the creature you call the Shadow Master!" With these words, Nergal hurls your arch-enemy from his realm.

Turn to F40.

F54 Trembling with power, you raise the Moon Sickle. The Riujem shall know who stands before him now—the Keşra, avenger of the gods!

Turn to F76.

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F55 The last arrow in your quiver is for a grimy Gartak. Is this a good omen? You reach over your shoulder for your quiver. Test your DEXTERITY against 20!

If you have any Marksman ability, you can add your ATTACK BONUS to the result on your dice!

If you have a **Baronyak Arrow**, you use it now. The test automatically succeeds! Do not forget to remove the Special Item from your adventure sheet.

> If the test is successful, turn to F29. If it fails, turn to F154.

F56 Although the Ningal Tower is still many miles away, you already feel the powerful ego of the Shadow Master. It has grown so strong meanwhile that you have the feeling that Calderel is waiting even behind the next cloud.

You look up into the sky, in the belief that your father will stand by you in this decisive battle. But your search for the moon is in vain—so much does the mist cloud your sight. Then you remember that you have the power to influence Ugar's course.

Do you want to use KARMA points to change the moon phase with the divine power of the Keşra?

> If yes, turn to **F91**. If not, turn to **F112**.

F57 What irony! The magical fruit that Calderel once gave you to help you now serves to save the daughter of his greatest enemy. Nephatari swallows the Fig from Rohja, and some color returns to her lovely face.

Remove the Fig from Rohja from your adventure sheet!

Turn to F88.

F58 For a fraction of a moment, you hesitate, but this moment is enough for the Riujem to dodge Kyrna's attack and

scrape his razor-sharp claws across the battered scales of your dragon. The force of the blow causes her to tumble through the air disoriented.

The Riujem, meanwhile, has flown off. Before you can begin pursuit, bolts of lightning split the sky, and a maelstrom of clouds and fog form about half a mile away from the Tower. These are the last heartbeats of the Black Sun, which the Riujem uses to force open a portal and return to his domain, the Shadow World. When you reach the portal, there are still wisps of clouds in the sky, but no trace of the Riujem. You curse your incompetence. Shame is twisting through your guts, for you realize that your arch-enemy has gotten away, once and for all.

Then a stab of pain drives away the emptiness in your skull. It is the same pain you had to endure in Kathum's chambers, when his curse crept into you. The powers that made you the Keşra, the avenger of the gods, abandon you. Even the fierce snarls of the black dragon on whose back you are sitting are from now on incomprehensible. END ******

F59 Even though you are expecting an attack, you still flinch when a winged lizard breaks through the mist directly in front of you. Sitting on the mount is a Halret, a Rider from the underworld, whose dark aura disperses the clouds.

Protected by a seamless armor of black steel, which allows him to withstand the light of the sun, he drives his brawny flying beast forward. The feral reptile screeches aggressively, lowering its mighty horns to ram you.

Suddenly you are seized by darkness, the darkness surrounding all envoys of the underworld. An icy cold spreads throughout your mind and into your limbs. Lost in thought, you stare at the tip of the rider's lance, hurtling towards you in a lethal trajectory. It is only the scorching heat blazing up in front of you that frees you from the mental embrace of the Halret. Kyrna's independent

Calculate your Star Rating at the end of this chapter on page 597.

use of her fiery breath has prevented the Shadow Rider from skewering you like a roasting ox! You thank your dragon for saving your life, take up your weapon, and prepare for the counter attack.

HALRET ATTACK ENVOY OF THE UNDERWORLD DEFENSE

 ATTACK
 ✓ 26

 DEFENSE
 ■ 24

 RESISTANCE
 ● ① ○ ○ ○ ⑤

 COMBAT ROUND
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ⑤

After the first successful ATTACK, but before you remove RESISTANCE points from the Halret, turn to F161 at once. At the start of the fifth COMBAT ROUND, turn to F33 at once. If you win the fight, turn to F134.

F60 . As you drive the Moon Sickle's blade deep into the bluish-grey flesh of the perverse creature, you meet resistance. The demon squirms in its agony, until you manage to pierce its pulsing heart.

Fountains of foul black blood spray your face. More and more pustules and tumors violently reshape the body of the monster. Rolling out of the way, you escape the tottering shape as it inflates disgustingly, bursting into blood and pus just as you leap clear.

Out of the slimy remains, the soiled body of the Shadow Master tumbles towards you. Calderel, ashen and gaunt, fed his host's perverted flesh to his last drop of blood! Breathing heavily, you kneel down over the remains of the frail Ugarith and are surprised to see that the black in his eyes, so familiar to you, has disappeared. They are shining silvery-grey now, with the fascinating pattern of the moon.

"My child," Calderel breathes. "It is done! The world and I are free again."

Your RAGE rises by one level!

If your RAGE has now surpassed the scale, turn to F16. If not or you have the ability Mental Focus, turn to F77!



6 Breathing heavily, you kneel down over the remains of the frail Ugarith and are surprised to see that the black in his eyes, so familiar to you, has disappeared.

.

 $F61 \qquad \hbox{Calderel laughs, scorning your false decision and using it to counter you at once.}$

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

Your doppelganger fades away.

Return to F121 and make another choice.

F62 Determined, you sprint after the Riujem, which has spread its wings to drop down from the edge of the platform, just a few steps away.

But before it can take off, you jump on its back and drive the Moon Sickle deep into the swelling muscles next to the spine, grinding it against the base of Riujem's right wing.

The shrill screeching of the demon only fuels your battle lust. You pull out the holy blade, ready to deal another blow. *Test your STRENGTH against 22!*

> If the test is successful, turn to F133. If it fails, turn to F145.

F63 Absentmindedly, you stumble across the ravaged battlefield, formerly the centerpiece of the Ningal Tower, until your gaze meets the scar on your left claw. The mark of your mother is still sealed, and the Shadow Master's death has removed your last hope of ever lifting the curse.

» I have probably earned this mark ... «

You feel the gaping hole in your soul more acutely than ever before. > Oh, beloved parents, why did it have to end so? <

In despair, you sink down beside Kyrna's cold body. You think of the countless dead during the senseless years of war, of Tutor Tarus and Nephatari.

"I am sorry, Shadow Child."

The soft voice blends with the sounds of footfalls on scrunching rubble. You look up. You see Kyphi's first daughter, dressed in the traditional garb of a Netani slave.

"Nephatari!"

Tears are shimmering in her golden eyes. In the light of the midday sun, the welts and bruises on her delicate skin show even more clearly. It is close to a miracle that she has managed to reach the top of the Shadow Tower.

You feel that your time has come. There is nothing left to do, and you withdraw your mind. The young Ugarith does not seem to notice, too great is his joy at the return of the sun daughter.

Nephatari's knees shake, and at the last moment the Ugarith manages to catch her fall. As she sinks into the Shadow Warrior's arms in exhaustion, he looks deep into her eyes, holding her close, and then gazes upward into the clouds in redemption.

Bittersweet, your adventure ends here.

END ***

F64 Calderel's shadow suddenly detaches itself from his body and rushes directly toward you! You must parry this unexpected shadow attack immediately.

Calderel attacks twice in this COMBAT ROUND. Roll a second ATTACK in addition to the regular actions!

Return to F83 and continue fighting against the Shadow Master.

F65 Sparks fly through the air as, severely wounded, you skid across the rubble on the platform with your rough stone skin. The demon's last blow almost stunned you. Clumsily turning over onto your back, you find yourself staring into the open maw of the snorting beast bending over you.

Suddenly you hear a familiar snarl behind you! Kyrna flies in deep, grabbing the demon by one of its crippled arms and dragging it away.

But before she can hurl it over the wall, it bites down hard, clawing at her left wing. Joined in a large, tangled ball, they both crash about in the yard and smash against the protective walls of the training area.

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548

When the dust settles, Kyrna lies motionless, and the demon twitches, stunned.

KYRNA'S VITALITY is lowered by a level!

If her status falls to dead, write it down on your adventure sheet, but continue playing!

Lower the RESISTANCE of the Riujem by your RIDER RANK. (If you are a Dragon Friend, this is, for example, 4 points.)

Return to F76, make the changes and continue the fight.

F66 With a few slashes of the Moon Sickle, you sever the chain and catch Nephatari's feather-light body in your arms. You gently put her down on the rock. Your heart is burning. Is there still a spark of life left in her?

> If you have the ability Keşrani, turn to F7. If not, turn to F165.

F67 Suddenly, the silhouette of Calderel's body detaches itself from him and rushes directly at you! You must dodge this unexpected shadow attack at once.

Test your DEXTERITY against 17!

If the test is successful, you can dodge the shadow attack and have a normal COMBAT ROUND.

If it fails, you lose an automatic level of VITALITY and the COMBAT ROUND is over. You get no attack.

Return to F83 and continue fighting against the Shadow Master.

F68 You leap first toward the shadow on the left. Feigning an attack, you spin around and with the Moon Sickle slash the chest of the shadow in front of you. The wound bursts open like an over-ripe tomato, and blood gushes out, forming undulating droplets in the weightless void.

The three phantoms around you fade to nothing, and the Shadow Master's skin begins to slough off, accompanied by roars of agony. The power of the Sun Mask, always reflecting truth back at those who look at it, has not failed you.

) I cannot believe that I have defeated him. «

You are eagerly looking for a way to leave the underworld, when you hear a bloodcurdling snarl and hiss behind you. Your confrontation with the Shadow Master has not gone unnoticed.

Turn to F53.

F69 With a single, drawn-out scream, the demon disappears among the dead. No sooner have its stinking remains seeped down into the cracks between the rocks, than the moaning and wailing surrounding you grows louder. Hundreds of angry spirits filt around you, through you.

The blazing hatred of the dead knows no bounds. They wanted to destroy this demon. And you have done it for them! Their collective power and immortal now become a part of you. You take heart, because you have the unshakable feeling of no longer being alone.

Your VITALITY rises to normal!

If you have the Amulet of Kar, turn to F79. If not, turn to F12.

F70 It is torture for you whenever you see Kyrna suffering pain. But this time you have the feeling that you can help her.

If you want to take on the pain that Kyrna is having to suffer,

If you do not want to do so, turn to F153.

F71 Exhausted, you drop down on your knees before the motionless, sun-burnt body of the demon and shake your fists at the sky while the wind gnaws at the charted remains of the godless shape, dispersing it over the ocean. Finally, you recognize Calderel's body, completely petrified, as it slowly emerges from the crumbling demon.

turn to F116.

You step closer, lifting the body of the Shadow Master to grant him his final honors. You believe you see contentment in his craggy face before he, like the rest of his body, dissolves, sifting through your fingers. A great emptiness opens up in you. A singular aimlessness.

> What remains? <

If Kyrna is dead, turn to F132. If she is alive, turn to F122.



F72 Calderel scorns your pity. "Tell me, Keşra, how does it feel to be victim of these humans' weakness?"

You struggle to control the boundless fury pent up in your veins. "As a friend of humans," begins the mad Shadow Master as he sneers his demands, "you certainly do not need the Moon Sickle anymore." He takes a deep breath to relish his moment of triumph and shouts: "Go on, throw the blade into the portal! Now! Or the daughter of the sun will die!"

> If you want to attack Calderel with the Moon Sickle at once, turn to F13".

If you want to throw your holy weapon into the portal as commanded, turn to F168.

F73 With trembling hands you unfurl the parchment, the gift of the captive Leonar, and compare the layouts of the floors with

your surroundings. Some remote rooms are connected with curved ink lines.

You quickly find such a room in the chambers of the Shadow Master. On one of the many silk carpets leading to the unassuming alcove there are a striking number of footprints.

> Could there be a secret door? <

You hurry over there to look for a lever, a pulley or anything else—but as you step into the center of the alcove, your vision turns black and you plunge into a bottomless abyss! Thoughtlessly, you have stepped into a hidden Shadow Gate.

Turn to F93.

F74 Nervously, Kyrna stretches her long neck from one side to the other.

"What is it, Kyrna? Is something wrong?"

"We have visitors!"

Startled, you reach for your Rider's Thorn, but Kyrna urges you to hold back. Behind you, Atolm the Heavenly glides through the clouds on his brightly lit blue wings.

The majestic dragon that saved Kyrna in the Jengal jungle greets you with a deep snarl. Sitting on his back is young Kathum, his face as pale as chalk, but determined.

With a curf flap of his wings, the friendly dragon flies to your side. He touches Kyrna gently with his horn, just as he did in the clearing. Again, hundreds of small stars perform their magical dance. Even though you expect something to happen, you are still surprised by the change Atolm's touch has wrought: Kyrna's black scales, otherwise dull and plain, now shine like polished slate!

Kyrna receives Armor!

From now on, should KYRNA'S VITALITY be reduced from normal, first remove the shield \bigcirc between normal and battered. Not until the next hit would KYRNA'S VITALITY be reduced to battered.

550

Atolm, whose blue scales have lost some of their luster during the contact with Kyrna, now turns to you. "Keşra, as you can see, I have brought your little friend. He demanded to speak with you. I have to admit, he is very convincing."

> If you have the Amulet of Kar, turn to F86. If not, turn to F96.

F75 With a passionate cry you pull the holy Moon Sickle from its sheath and, jumping over some dead Netani, confront the demonic beast.

DEADSI AUCHTERER DEMONIC SERVANT

ATTACK 24 24 25 ¥00305 RESISTANCE

COMBAT ROUND UO20006 ...

The Deadslaughterer loses 1 point of ATTACK and DEFENSE when losing his third point of RESISTANCE.

At the start of the second COMBAT ROUND, turn to F152 at once. If the monster still lives at the end of the sixth COMBAT ROUND. turn to F87 at once.

If you win the fight before that, turn to F69.

F76 During the short time when Kar is hidden behind Ugar. the Riujem is not harmed by the rays of the sun. It appears that it has been strengthened by the eclipse, just like you.

If you have caused Extra Damage (check the Special Notes on the third page of your adventure sheet), lower its RESISTANCE and the appropriate number of COMBAT ROUNDS (CR).

RILIEM

(EMPOWERED) DEFENSE

ATTACK

RESISTANCE

32 (30) ♥ 30

•0000000000 COMBAT ROUND 000000008

The two shields represent the extraordinary resisting power of the Riujem during the solar eclipse. You can only defeat a shield by causing It 2 points of RESISTANCE damage in one COMBAT ROUND! Lesser damage has no effect and must be repeated in the next round.

If you lose VITALITY for the second time in this fight and have a number under Special Notes with the term Assistance, add 18 and continue with the F-section you have calculated! If your VITALITY drops to critical, turn to F65 at once. When you reach the fifth COMBAT ROUND and have at least 1 Karma point left, turn to F158 at once. When you reach the eighth COMBAT ROUND, turn to F160 at once. If you defeat the demon before that, turn to F60.

F77 "I have always feared death at the hands of the Keşra," the fading Shadow Master stammers, wringing a tortured smile from his lips. "But now it promises salvation. Yet before my own darkness receives me, I have a debt to pay ... "

Slowly the scar on your left hand fades away, and the power of your mother flows over your body like a warm summer rain. The Shadow Master finally frees you from the dark curse with which he suppressed the holy spirit of the Keşra since your childhood. No sooner has Kar's sun symbol shown itself in its full splendor, than images of a different life wash over you. These are the memories you were seeking for weeks after your sudden 📑 awakening in Kathum's chambers-powerful images of parents and family, far-reaching encounters, tragic moments. Yet they are not your memories alone!

> Human, we have achieved it! Release me! «

You do not understand the voices from deep inside you. Or do you just not wish to understand?

> If Kyrna is dead, turn to F132. If she is alive, turn to F146!!

F78 Daylight fades. As you gaze into the sky, Ugar is visible as a black disc at the edge of the shining Kar. In a few minutes, he will move completely in front of her!

Just as you feel the coming Kar eclipse, so does the demon. With steely determination it attacks you so as to use this advantage and decide the combat for itself.

Test your STRENGTH against 21!

If the test is successful, turn to F11. If it fails, turn to F39.

F79 Nephatari is dangling over the eternal darkness of the Black Gate, directly behind the Shadow Master. As you catch sight of her, your mind goes mad. You feel hatred, love, shame. You curse Calderel and suffer with Nephatari, to whom you have caused so much pain.

> It is not my fault! <

Nephatari's battered body is hanging under the dome of the Shadow Gate from five tautened, rune-covered iron chains. Her silky hair is matted. She does not move.

> It is not my fault! «

Blue blood drips from her toes and chest and falls directly into the eternal dark of the Black Gate. You are not sure if she is even still alive.

> How long did she suffer this agony? «

Your RAGE rises by one level!

If your RAGE has meanwhile surpassed the scale, turn to F31 at once.

Slowly, Calderel floats above the blood pool and towards Nephatari. "What irony! Was it not you who asked me to spare her life?" Grabbing her hair, he raises her unmoving head. "How forward-thinking of you. The warm blood of the sun daughter is so much stronger, puret!"

> F79 Calderel's diabolical laughter echoes along the walls of the cave. He draws a curved ritual dagger and presses the cool blade against Nephatari's throat.



Calderel's diabolical laughter echoes along the walls of the cave. He draws a curved ritual dagger and presses the cool blade against Nephatari's throat. "Do not be foolish, child, by daring to thwart my plans..."

If you want to take the risk of attacking Calderel with the Moon Sickle, even though he is threatening Nephatari, turn to F13* If you want to listen to his demands, turn to F72.

F80 "It is not surprising that you managed to betray me," Calderel tries to provoke you. "After all, you had a confederate in Tarus among my followers."

You feel queasy when you hear your venerable mentor's name. So Calderel knows about him and his role as Keeper. "Anyway," the Shadow Master continues with a sweeping gesture, "at least his death served a higher purpose."

The thought that Tarus had to die for you makes you almost crazy.

> If you have the ability Mental Focus, turn to F36. If not, turn to F97.

F81 Your arrow has hit its mark! You enjoy the sweet taste of triumph and follow the bright trail of light from your downed enemy through the clouds. It was a Halret, a Shadow Rider, who was able to resist the rays of the sun only because of his seamless armor. Your shot must have been truly perfect!

Then something unexpected occurs: A moment after the final disappearance of the Shadow Rider, the glowing line in the sky contracts to form a red ball of fire racing toward you! Surprised, you pull on the reins, but Kyrna cannot dodge in time.

The force of the blood sphere from the underworld almost hurls you out of the saddle.

You receive 2 KARMA points.

Remnants of those dark energies that sprang up from the wound of the dying Halret must have sought the next worthy bearerand found him in you.

Turn to F113.

Worried, you call for Kyrna, fearing that the Riujem F82 could actually succeed in escaping. And you can always rely on your dragon lady! Scarcely has the demon risen when she approaches, gliding on a surging gust of wind. Smoothly, you leap onto her back and quickly lash yourself to the saddle.

If you still have your Rider's Bow and want to use it, turn to F150. If you want to attack the demon with a master maneuver, turn to F144.

Suddenly the Shadow Master attacks! Dripping from his F83 long claws is the blood of countless victims.

CALDEREL ATTACK IN THE SHADOW WORLD DEFENSE RESISTANCE

N 27 24

26 •0030500

Because you were surprised in the first COMBAT ROUND, you cannot attack before the second round!

If you were able to reduce Calderel's RESISTANCE by 3 or 5 points, reduce his ATTACK by 1 point, too.

When you reach the second, fourth, sixth or eighth COMBAT ROUND, turn to F26 at once.

If you die, turn to F14 at once.

25

If you manage to cross off Calderel's seventh point of RESISTANCE, turn to F121.

The power of the Shadow Realm encompasses you. The F84 ghosts of the dead tear at your mind, and you understand that the worldly part of the Keşra must now detach itself from the

other part, the body of the young Ugarith, even if that means leaving the mortal Shadow Warrior to eternal damnation. It is only in this way that you will still be able to save the world. Perhaps not today, perhaps not tomorrow, but surely one day.

END *

F85 Even though two missiles have pierced Kyrna's body, your dragon lands effortlessly at the edge of the platform. At once the soldiers ready their lances and sprint toward you with roaring battle cries, but when Kyrna presents the golden patterns on her black wings and simultaneously sends an imposing blast of fire into the sky, the attackers' morale is broken.

You make use of their moment of terror, throw your Rider's Bow and the quiver with one last arrow over your shoulder, and run to reach the entrance hatch in the middle of the platform.

Then you see the two Gartaks again at the heavy iron wheel. They are using it to control a mechanism that is pulling up three large iron spheres at the edge of the platform.

If you want to take the long way and prevent the Gartaks from turning the wheel any further, turn to F46. If you want to attack them with your last arrow, turn to F55. If you want to ignore them and continue on your way to the hatch, turn to F159.



F86 Wordlessly, you greet the hierarch, who at once states what he wants: "I have learned from this dragon that my beloved daughter Nephatari is still alive."

It still seems strange to hear such mature words from the mouth of a boy, even though he has the experience of over 130 years as an Emissary."

"I only pray it is not too late," you answer hoarsely.

"Speak, is there any way I can be of aid?" the boy-priest asks earnestly.

Without hesitation you raise your left claw, forming a fist and presenting to Kathum the scar on the back of your hand.

He nods with understanding, spreads his little arms, and turns his palms to the sun, as if to catch its beams. Spellbound, you look up at the golden disc of Kar and listen to Kathum's prayer. As the hierarch's chant concludes, you are pierced by an endless array of warm sunbeams.

Your STRENGTH and DEXTERITY rise by 1 point each!

The scars are still visible, but under your black skin a light now gleams—the eternal fire of courage and strength, the mark of your mother!

When you touch the pulsating back of your claw, memories long forgotten shoot through your head. You see images of your childhood in the Ningal Tower, especially those of Calderel, your adoptive father. There are no dark thoughts in him. On the contrary, he was brilliant and foresighted, though occasionally vain and eccentric. And sometimes he was too attached to old values to be sure, but he was never ruthless or violent.

> What happened? <

"I also do not understand what drove Calderel to start this war." Kathum appears to read your mind. "But one thing is certain. Only the Keşra will be able to stop him!"

With an impatient cry Kyrna ends this heavenly gathering, accelerating her flight with the strong beating of her wings.

Turn to F106.



Calculate your Star Rating at the end of this chapter on page 597. $F87 \qquad \hbox{``Valoth! Leave him be!'' Calderel commands his demonic servant. ``Back to your tasks!''}$

Whereupon the Deadslaughterer withdraws to the darkness under the rocks, accompanied by inhuman growls. The muffled beating of the flail begins again.

> If you have the Amulet of Kar, turn to F79 If not, turn to F12

F88 Nephatari licks her lips instinctively, seeming to enjoy the healing taste of magic, until she finally opens her eyes. "Keşra, it is you!" she smiles and strokes your cheek to bless you with a barely intelligible evocation of the sun goddess.

Write down that you have been blessed by Nephatari on the third page of your adventure sheet by marking off the box under Special Notes. You VITALITY rises by a level, even to fit. You receive 1 KARMA point.

As warm and wonderful as this moment is, you know it must end for now. "I am sorry that I have to leave you in this horror, Nephatari, but I will soon return."

With a heavy heart, you turn away from the sun daughter and set off to pursue the Shadow Master.

Turn to F100.

F89 In awe, you stroke the icy steel. It vibrates with an ominous gurgle and hum. It is a message from the depths of the sea. Benthenos' soul calls to you, his old adversary.

You lose 1 KARMA point.

The powers of the gods flow through your limbs, uniting to form a rushing river and making their way from the tip of Benthos' blade to the depths of the unlit Crystal Sea, where they manifest themselves in an inexorable maelstrom. But the dark longings of the demons corrupt your intentions and reverse the flow you have created. Its force now turns against you! You battle the waves of diabolical power with all your strength until you can no longer resist them. They seize you and sweep you away...

You open your eyes and the world around you looks so small, so distorted. A strange land creature with twisted horns pummels your body, tears at one of your arms. Instinctively, you strike back with another arm, coil another around its neck, a third and fourth around its hoofed hind legs and finally tear it to pieces with one short, violent tug. Unsuspecting, you glide off the top of this giant, black rock and back into the sea. EKD **

F90 You decide on a speedy approach so as to break through the Dragon Riders' formation. You will soon be in range of their bows and the breath of their flying lizards. You are beginning to doubt whether you will be successful just as a resounding roar fills the sky.

Behind you, the massive body of the former commander Slaht breaks through the clouds, borne on four wings. You quickly pull on Kyrna's reins, hoping to escape the blood dragon, but Kyrna ignores your commands. While you are shouting for Kyrna to evade the colossus, Slaht thunders over and past you, an awe some sight. His terrible clamor makes your weapons vibrate.

"Could it be that there are a cursed number of dragons in the air today?" you shout with an ironic edge.

"It is a day of destiny!" Kyrna snarls back.

"But what is Slaht doing here?"

"Obviously, the Bloody One is flying in the wake of some greater power and trying to keep on its good side," Kyrna guesses. "He's probably speculating that after the battle, something will remain for him."

-

Calculate your Star Rating at the end of this chapter on page 597.

Again Slath roars. But this time, it is not a battle cry, but a command, one that the young dragons of the Ningal Tower obey without hesitation! With mad screeches, they rip the straps of their saddles and throw off their helpless riders.

Freed of their burdens, they join the red commander and blanket the great platform of the Ningal Tower with fire and flames. Within seconds, all the soldiers are annihilated. The path to the landing area is free!

"I thought as a rule dragons do not k..."

"In this respect," Kyrna interrupts you, stretching her neck and making it easier for you to jump off. "The Bloody One always did have his very own opinion."

Turn to F125.



F91 It is time! You, the Keşra, are, for the first time, ready to use your power for the purpose of changing the course of the stars! Blocking out everything around you, you fall into deep trance. Only the intense beauty of the Kar disc illuminates your thoughts. Will you be able to focus the powers of your parents? Check the MOON CALENDAR on section 600. Each phase of the moon you want to correct, in either direction, costs you I KARAM point.

If you have the ability Mental Focus, the total cost of the moon manipulation is reduced by 1!

Turn to F15.

F92 You feel the endless power of Kar and Ugar pouring forth over the world at this moment. Your artefacts, the Moon Sickle and the Sun Mask, focus this divine energy and put you in a transcendental state. Everything around you disappears in a fog of insignificance. You focus solely on your enemy, the destroyer of the world.

Your STRENGTH and DEXTERITY rise by 1 point each! Your VITALITY rises to **fit**!

Turn to F52.

F93 Your ride through the portals ends abruptly in a dark corridor illuminated only by two bowls of oil. The damp air smells salty at first, but then there is an underlying mixture of fear, blood and flesh. You pray to the gods that your fears may not prove true.

Calderel is here! And his power is growing ...

Driven by curiosity and disgust, you hasten on into the uncertainty until you finally reach a large cave immersed in the fearsome trembling light and shadow of countless ritual candles. Your path ends at the rough edge of a cliff, and as you look down, your stomach turns. Before you extends a wide, round depression in the rock, along whose sharp-edged flanks hundreds of dead people liel Gaping wounds, protruding bones and slimy entrails disfigure their naked bodies. Blood, flowing sluggishly between the flickering candles to a platform in the center of the hollow, stains the rock all round in a diabolical red.

The madman! This is where he had all his victims and prisoners brought! <</p>

Shocked, you gaze wanders down towards the center of the depression. There, out of the darkness of the Blood Lake, rise five unshapely stone columns, gradually curving toward one another at the top and forming a dome.

> The Black Gate! <

It reminds you of the portals you saw at the Lengal Tower when meeting Seren and the other god children. Its aura, profoundly evil, creeps under your skin.

> If you have the abilities of History Knowledge and Magical Lore, turn to F21 If not, turn to F38

F94 Knowing what awaits you, you follow the demon, jumping first into a group of confused Gartaks holding their position here and then through the portal at the top of the Ningal Tower. The first of the simple warriors are driven to madness as they lose themselves in Nergal's blood eyes behind the rift to the underworld.

The Riujem is, on the other hand, completely disoriented. Blinded by the bright midday sun, it stumbles over the hot tiles on its crooked, stilt-like hind legs. Its thick swollen neck is steaming in the spot where Nergal grabbed the Riujem and threw it out of the underworld.

> How much power can it possibly have left? «

The guards who failed to see Nergal grab their weapons, but hold back in your presence.

If you wield Benthos in this fight, turn to F147. If not, turn to F123.

F95 Sure of your victory, you trust in the power of your holy weapon and leap towards the hellish beast. But this time, you do not feel the tingling of the Moon Sickle in your hands, which usually lends you confidence. Suddenly uncertain, you stumble, fall, and roll over the pile of faceless corpses towards the Deadslaughterer. The monster exploits your fumbling, raising the blood-smeared flail to bash it down over your skull.

Turn to F87.

F96 Speaking straight out, young Kathum turns towards you. His high-pitched voice breaks in anger: "My heart has been poisoned—by you! How could you allow my beloved Nephatari to be sacrificed? Killing me was the mistake of the Keşra, not hers! She atones for your guilt!"

The fatherly hate flung at you with these words causes you to choke. You do not know how to reply and beg the Hierarch for mercy.

"But who am I to doubt the judgment of the Keşra?" The sarcasm in Kathum's words is obvious as he asks Atolm to turn away. Without any further comment, they disappear into the clouds.

"You must not resent him for it," Kyrna tries to encourage you. "It is hard to see past such a loss, especially since Kathum knows in his heart that it was also partly his fault. After all, it was he who made you the confused Kesra that you are today."

Lost in thought, you stare up at the clouds.

> Have I truly done everything that could be done? Could Nephatari still be alive? <</p>

You shiver and pull the hood of your Rider's Coat tight. The merciless cold of the past has caught up with you.

Turn to F106.

F97 You curse the Shadow Master and his godless deeds. Hatred fills your mind. You would do anything and everything to destroy him once and for all!

Your RAGE rises by one level!

If your RAGE has surpassed the scale, turn to F31 at once. If not, return to F140 and go on with your combat.

F98 You see it as a good omen that Ugar with his sharp sickle is watching over your battle.

Turn to F120.

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F99 Helplessly, you clutch the leather of your saddle, but Kyrna's wild flying maneuver is so violent that the straps tear and you fall free. Insensible and still holding fast to your saddle, you both tumble into the depths below...

Your life ends here.

F100 Actually, you know well the feeling of transition to the Shadow World, but this time, you are overpowered by the icy cold of death. The spirits of countless souls whose blood Calderel sacrificed for his ritual wander here as grey, bodiless shades. > This is not the Shadow Realm! <

You find yourself between the worlds, caught in a dark sphere without gravity. It takes some time for you to orient yourself, but then you see Calderel wallowing in a tangled ball of fog. As you drift closer, you realize that it is the ghostly souls of the dead that he is ecstatically consuming, those whose physical remains are rotting at the foot of the Black Gate.

> Calderel's ritual is not over yet! «

Maybe it is your last chance to stop him.

If you have Kathum's Soul and want to free it, turn to F44. If not, turn to F140.

F101 Accompanied by the shrill screams of diabolical souls, the cursed two-handed sword circles above the walls of the Ningal Tower. Your cosmic parents are proud of your decision. You receive 2 KARMA points!

You can even write down these points if you rise above the self-imposed maximum value of your KARMA supply (the absolute maximum of 10 is still valid).

Turn to F123

F102 Eagerly you wait for a sign that your shot has hit its mark. Turn to F59

F103 Spurred by the majestic full moon, you confront the danger. The come declaration is a main which the model Turn to F120.

F104 You sense that the powers of the gods are fading. Unfortunately, you have missed the perfect moment for an attack. Nevertheless, you are determined to destroy the demon.

. With or without you, dear parents. I have come so far! This time I will trust not solelvin you, but also in myself! «

Turn to F120



F105 You aim your bow in one deft movement. The grotesque monster rears up, staring at you with its eight pairs of eyes bulging between its ribs!

You try to remain calm, aim your arrow, and let it fly.

Test your Dexterity against 20!

If you have any Marksman ability, you can add your ATTACK BONUS to the result on your dice!

If the test is successful, turn to F10. If it fails, turn to F37.

F106 "So, Kyrna," you hesitantly begin a conversation about the meeting that just took place. "This Atolm ... " "Yes, inquisitive one. Atolm the Heavenly is my mate." A brief smile of friendly good-fellowship flits across your face,

but quickly gives way to seriousness again.

Even though you are still many miles away from the Ningal


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Tower, you feel the unleashed presence of the Shadow Master. Il grows stronger with each beat of Kyrna's wings. Hoping that your father will come to your aid in this most fateful of hours, you search the sky for the face of the moon, realizing once more that you have the power to change Ugar's countenance.

Do you want to use KARMA points to change the moon phase with the divine power of the Keşra bestowed upon you?

> If yes, turn to F91. If not, turn to F112.

F107 You kick the heavy door to Calderel's chambers from its hinges. There is absolute chaos here as well. Paintings and tapestries have fallen from the walls, while books and other valuables lie strewn before the overturned shelves. But there is no trace of the Shadow Master.

Your warrior instinct leads you to the excellent two-handed sword that you were once already allowed to hold in your hand. It is lying atop a pile of smashed works of art.

If you want to take the two-handed sword, note **Benthos** (Weapon, Hit Bonus +5, Special: Cannot be combined with a second weapon).^[F-]

Driven by a hunting instinct, you search the rooms, finally stumbling over the corpse of a Netani in the bed chamber. The slave girl's body and face have been monstrously mutilated, as if she was bashed with a heavy object. You swallow your rage and focus on your search. Calderel must be here somewhere—his dark presence, growing ever stronger, causes you to shudder.

Do you have the Map of the Night Tower and do you now want to take a look at it? If yes, turn to F73. If not, turn to F5.

Secret 2 of 4

F108 Calderel shouts out in the excitement of combat and calls the Shadows of the Underworld to his side. Yet, among the lost souls are also the spirits of the dead from the Black Gate, who would never obey the commands of the Shadow Master. You exploit Calderel's rage for a counter attack!

Test your Strength against 20!

Add your current RAGE to your result.

If the test is successful, you can counter Calderel's surprise attack, and your ATTACK and DEFENSE stats rise by 3 for this COMBAT ROUND! If it fails, the COMBAT ROUND is carried out the usual way.

Return to F83 and continue fighting against the Shadow Master.



F109 Scornful laughter washes over you as you try to strike the bodiless shadow. The true Calderel makes use of your disastrous decision by landing a well-placed attack. At least, the false shadow has vanished. Your VTRALTY is reduced by one level!

Return to F121 and make another choice.

F110 One blow after another rains down on Calderel, but they appear almost meaningless since the Shadow Master has already gathered so great a life force into himself. Finally, however, he turns away and flies to breach opening in the sphere. Without hesitating, you jump after him.

If you still have the Moon Sickle, turn to F20. If you had to fight without it, turn to F32.

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F111 Nephatari takes a moment to realize what situation you both are in, but slowly she regains her strength. "Keşra!" she breathes, stroking you on the cheek. With a veiled prayer to Kar, she blesses you.

Exhausted, the daughter of the sun sinks back once more.

"I promise you, my brave Nephatari, I will be back soon," you say, making a promise you cannot be certain of keeping. After a moment's hesitation, you leap into the darkness.

Write down that you have been blessed by Nephatari on the third page of your adventure sheet by marking off the box under Special Notes. You receive 1 KARMA point.

Turn to F100



F112 It takes a while for you find Ugar in the night sky. You trust in your current strength to assist you in the final battle. To determine the current phase of the moon, correct the MOON CALENDAR in section 600 by moving one phase clockwise.

Turn to F15

F113 In contrast to the sun-drenched haze of clouds, the blackness of the Ningal Tower looks even more threatening. Despite still being one or two miles away, you can see that there is a bustle of activity on the top of the tower. Apparently warned by scouts, more Dragon Riders rise. Six suits of armor glitter in the midday sun.

> Why are so many of them stationed here? On the mainland, they would be of much greater use to the Empire.



survive against six Dragon Riders would seem even for her an impossibility. With an uneasy feeling, you fly forward to meet their superior numbers. You may have no hope of survival but you have come too far to turn back now.

If you have the RIDER RANK Dragon Master, turn to F90. If not, turn to F43.

F114 Holding the reins firmly, you duck forward and press both feet into your dragon's flanks. With the command "Ungis, ungis," you receive Kyrna's complete attention. Withdrawing her hind legs from the pouch of skin on her belly, she dives towards the Riujem like a bird of prev, claws outstretched.

With just two blows Kyrna shreds the thin wings of the demon, who, however, has bitten into the slender neck of his opponent while outside your reach.

Kyrna's hisses become a pitiful wheeze as the additional weight of the thrashing demon drags her down. You, too, fall victim to gravity. Together with the two entangled creatures, you tumble towards the rugged rock spires of the Ningal Tower. KYRNA'S VITALITY is lowered by a level!

If her status falls to dead, turn to F99 at once. Your aggressive dragon maneuver causes 2 points of Extra Damage to your opponent. Add these under Special Notes on the third page of your adventure sheet.

Turn to F76

F115 The shrill, echoing cries of the Riujem turn into a muffled groan as soon as your arrow pierces the fiend's wrinkly throat.

Your deadly shot causes 2 points of Extra Damage. Write this down under Special Notes on your adventure sheet.



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F116 Thanks to your divine power to influence the life force, you can free Kyrna from her suffering. You unite your minds and take her pain upon yourself.

Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

You have scarcely gotten over the pain when an explosion shakes the rocks! One of the energy eruptions surrounding you has shattered the sphere on your right! Thousands of fragments dance over the flagstones in the square.

Kyrna collapses under the flash of elemental power. You cannot help her. This is your last chance to get through the hatch and into the tower.

Turn to F125.

F117 Unfortunately, you do not hear the impact of your arrow. Is your enemy too far away?

Turn to F59.

F118 The Riujem is so fast that it looks as if its huge claws are slicing the air. Again, a blow races toward you like a flash of lightning, and you expect another moment of burning pain, when suddenly, a bright aura descends upon your shoulders, propelling the talons of the demon backward even before they can harm you.

Aonus' spirit was at your side for a fleeting moment, only to be extinguished by the diabolical might of the Riujem. You vow not to let his sacrifice be in vain.

In this COMBAT ROUND, you do not lose any VITALITY despite the hit, but the demon loses 1 point of RESISTANCE. In addition, the enemy's ATTACK is immediately reduced by 2 to 30 from now on!

Return to F76 and go on with your combat.

 $F119\ ''Silat,\ silatt''\ You have rarely commanded Kyrna to pursue a serpentine flight path. She appears all the more motivated to carry out this flying maneuver.$

Your quick changes of direction and speed bewilder the Dragon Riders so much so that all their arrows miss. You have survived the first wave and now have an open path to the top of the Tower, where the next danger awaits you.

Turn to F131.

 $F120\,$ The fiery sun-disc of Kar has reached its zenith, burning down on the rubble and rocks strewn across the battlefield. While you have already picked yourself up off the ground, the demon is obviously suffering from the blazing rays. It tries desperately to protect its peeling skin with bits of flesh torn off its victims. Turning away, you pay tribute to your mother, estatically drawing small circles in the air with the Moon Sickle.

RIUJEM	ATTACK	
(STRICKEN)	DEFENSE	
	RESISTANCE	

₩ 30 (28) (26)

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COMBAT ROUND UO204060800

Because of the burning power of Kar, the demon loses a RESISTANCE point in each second COMBAT ROUND in addition to whatever injury you have caused.

If you lose VITALITY for the second time in this fight against the Riujem and have a number noted under Special Notes with the term Assistance, then add 66 and continue with the calculated F-section! If your VITALITY sinks to critical or already is there and you have been blessed, turn to FIG3. If the demon's RESISTANCE is spent, turn to FT1.

F121 Calderel's grin looks artificial. You have already landed too many blows. He struggles for composure, mustering the last of his strength to save himself from your final blow. He trans-

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forms himself into a fog-like shadow that immediately gives birth to three more similar shapes.

Four identical doppelgangers of the Shadow Master now surround you. They mock you, four voices from one throat, as they fly around along erratic paths until you are not sure anymore which image conceals the true Calderel.

When they pause again, they have you encircled. What Calderel do you want to attack? (Base your decision on the illustration.)

The one behind you, turn to F109 The one in front of you, turn to F68. The one to the right of you, turn to F61 The one to the left of you, turn to F19.

F122 Overhead Kyrna is circling with wings spread. She has apparently not let you out of her sight throughout the entire battle. Check under Special Notes to see which box you have crossed off for Nephatari.

> If you have saved her, turn to F170 If she has been killed, turn to F167 If she has sacrificed herself, turn to F31.

F123 You realize that the divine powers of the Heavens have been seriously disrupted by the Shadow Master during the last few hours. You search the sky. Does not only your mother, but also your father aid you in this monumental battle?

Look at the MOON CALENDAR in section 600 and accept your fate based on the moon phase.

> lf it's Full Moon, turn to F103. If it's Gibbous Moon, turn to F41. If it's Half Moon, turn to F47. If it's Crescent Moon, turn to F98. If it's New Moon, turn to F9



F124 You watch the clouds expectantly.

Turn to F59

F125 The Ningal Tower is quaking beneath your feet. At first you think it is the many dragons that are responsible, but you realize that they cannot be the cause—the tremor is too rhythmical. It feels as if a gigantic heart were pounding in the tower. With a brief glance you bid Kyrna farewell and dash towards the entry hatch.

Is the current moon phase New Moon?

If you are unsure, consult the MOON CALENDAR in section 600.

If yes, turn to F51. If not, turn to F134

F126 During your death throes, Calderel attempts to poison all your thoughts and experiences—like those of the other spirits—and consume them. But they do not fade as before. Instead, they manifest themselves before you as hazy apparitions. Calderel screeches with rage, for the gods are helping you directly for the first time! You return to life.

Determine the assistance of the gods based on the moon!

If it's New Moon, your VITALITY rises to critical.

If it's Crescent Moon, it rises to hurt.

If it's Half Moon, it rises to battered.

If it's Gibbous Moon, it rises to normal.

For each level you regain, you lose 1 KARMA point.

If it's Full Moon or if you have the ability Mind over Body, you can determine your VITALITY improvement (maybe even to fit) and the KARMA loss yourself.

Return to F83 and continue fighting against the Shadow Master.

F127 "You actually dare to demand a price for your deeds, Keşra?" "Yes, I do! After all, it is one your servants who plunged



Nergal's angry snarl fills the endless expanses of the underworld: "I am surprised at your audacity, children of the gods. Immortality appears to have made you foolish."

The undead lord of the underworld pauses for a moment before raging on again: "So be it, then! What do you demand for straightening the world river?"

While you ponder, there is a rumble within Nergal's body. Finally, he lowers his rotten skull to your level: "Give me your demand and I promise not to spurn it. But be warned – the consequences may spell your dooms!"

If you want to ask Nergal to give you your memory back, turn to F169.

If you want to ask for Nergal's assistance in the coming combat against the Riujem, turn to F23. If you would rather not make any demand, turn to F94.



F128 Hastily, you search your belongings for items that might help the ailing Nephatari.

If you want to hang the Amulet of Kar around her neck, turn to F148.

If you have a Fig from Rohja and want to give it to her to eat, turn to F57. If you have a Phial of Ice Rose Essence and want to use it, turn to F136. If you have Kathum's Soul and want to hand her the small urn, turn to F27. If you do not have any of these items or do not want to use them, turn to F100.



F129 It would have been hard to miss the broad skull plate of the Riujem. Your arrow pierces the skull bone, but with a single swipe of its claw, the demon brushes the missile from its head. Your light hit causes 1 point of Extra Damage. Write this down under Special Notes on your adventure sheet.

Turn to F144



F130 The magical eyepiece reveals that there is an enemy scout hiding in the clouds. Feverishly, you consider what race the bulky, devilishly red shape might belong to.

If you want to use the element of surprise and attack your opponent with your **Rider's Bow**, turn to **F35**. If you want to risk close combat in the clouds, turn to **F59**.

F131 Kyrna uses the natural cover of the rough rock spires of the Ningal Tower-after all, she spent many years up here in the service of the Empire!

You manage to fly skillfully over the tower's defenses. While Kyma covers the platform around the entry hatch with her blazing breath, turning to ashes the few guards stupid enough to confront her, you shoulder your Rider's Bow and the quiver with your last arrow, release the holding straps of the saddle and prepare to jump.

Test your DEXTERITY against 18!

If the test is successful, turn to F125. If it fails, turn to F34. F132 You run to Kyrna as fast as you can. She is still lying motionless, buried under the rubble, at the very place where she launched her last attack against the Riujem.

As you are forced to see her now, an oppressive emptiness opens up in you: The bond between you, the Keşra, and your dragon, has been torn asunder! Kyrna sacrificed herself in the unwavering belief that she was following her own foreordained path, to save you and the world.

Check which box for Nephatari you have crossed off under Special Notes.

If you have saved her, turn to F63. If she has been killed, turn to F167. If she has sacrificed herself, turn to F31.

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F133 Once more, you pierce the unholy body of the Riujem with the cold steel of the Moon Sickle. It twists and writhes in agony, so that you have trouble holding on to the demon's back. Enraged, it lashes out so violently that you have no choice but to leap free initially.

Your precise attack causes 4 points of Extra Damage. Write this down under Special Notes on your adventure sheet.

Turn to F76.

F134 The tremors can be felt even more strongly inside the Tower. Some of the booty collected over time, as well as many of the delicate works of art that once graced its walls, now lie on the ground strewn and broken.

 What primal force is it that can make this powerful building quake?
As you enter the last corridor before the large portal to Calderel's chambers, you see two Netani slave girls sweeping clay shards from the ground, sternly monitored by an Ugarith.

One of the scrawny girls recognizes you and screams. Probably, like most inhabitants of the Ningal Tower, she was present at the



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consecration of the Shadow Child. In panic, she grabs for her fellow sufferer's arm until, comprehending, she also runs away. The warrior, however, draws his saber and positions himself in front of the portal.

If you want to slowly approach the soldier, turn to F30. If you want to eliminate him in short order, turn to F151.

F135 With trembling claws, you free Nephatari from the pillars of the Black Gate and carefully remove the massive chains that have cut into her flesh. Her breathing is shallow.

Write down that you have saved Nephatari on the third page of your adventure sheet by marking off the appropriate box under Special Notes.

> If you have Utensils or Special Items that you want to use to improve Nephatari's condition, turn to F128. If not, turn to F100.

F136 With a soft pop, you pull the cork from the phial and dribble the fragrant rose oil onto Nephatari's lips. At once, delicate ice crystals form, quickly spreading till they cover the head and shoulders of the sun daughter. The magical tincture has saved her life!

Remove the Phial of Ice Rose Essence from your adventure sheet! Turn to F88.

F137 It was long ago, untold generations, which Benthenos ruled over the world. His countless conquests displeased the gods, and when he began to enter into pacts with the demons from the Deep Sea, you—the Kesra—came to stop him.

Ancient memories of his weather-beaten face, disfigured by many coin-shaped scars, and of his booming laughter are suddenly present in your mind again. Benthenos was no spellcaster, but he was a greedy man with a strong arm for wielding a weapon. Always taking the shortest path to power, he finally bartered his soul away to the unholy gods of the icy sea. As a pledge for his soul, he received the two-handed sword that you are now holding in your hands.

If you want to reject this foul bargain and throw the sword over the parapet into the waters of the Crystal Sea, back to the monsters that created it, turn to F101. If you have at least 1 KARMA point left and want to try to awaken the sinister powers of the two-handed sword, turn to F89. If you would rather put the weapon away and fight with another one, turn to F156.



 $F138\,$ No sooner have you unleashed the arrow, than you are certain that it will find its target. Your masterful shot bores deep into the eye socket of the Riujem. Liters of a milky liquid shoot from the wound.

Your severe hit causes 3 points of Extra Damage. Add these under Special Notes on the third page of your adventure sheet.

Turn to F144.

F139 The whistling of your arrow fades quickly away. Turn to F59

F140 Calderel shows little surprise as you confront him in the ghost sphere. Made ecstatic by the power of the countless souls that he has already consumed, he looks down on you with arrogance in his dark eyes. You, however, have had enough of his



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games; accompanied by a roaring battle cry, you unleash your anger in a fierce attack. Before he can defend himself, you have already hit him.

The RESISTANCE loss from your first attack is equal to your current RAGE level!

SHADOW MASTER	ATTACK	N 23
CALDEREL	DEFENSE	• 24
	RESISTANCE	\$0000000B
	COMBAT ROUND	00000000

If you reach the second COMBAT ROUND, turn to F80 at once. If you reach the seventh COMBAT ROUND, turn to F6 at once. If you reduce Calderel's RESISTANCE by 8 points, turn to F110 at once. Should your DEFENSE succeed with a surplus of 3 points (against #26), you can use one of the following tactics. If you have the ability Warfare, you can use them at all times.

> If you want to play for time, turn to F22. If you want to force a hit, turn to F25. Mark the chosen tactic by crossing off its circle. You can no longer choose tactics that have already been used

F141~ The tendrils of fog just now forming Aonus' face disperse and play around the blade of his old broad sword. You feel the gratitude and satisfaction of your adversary and companion as the weapon itself dissolves into a blue mist that merges with Aonus' mind.

"That means much to me, my brother," the apparition thanks you. Freed from the diabolical influence of the black blade, your confidence grows.

Remove Shadow Reaper from your adventure sheet!

In addition, note that you have Assistance on the third page of your adventure sheet by writing down the clue F100.

Turn to F20.

F142 Fatally wounded, the Shadow Rider goes into a tailspin, disappearing in the cloud cover far below you. At the same time he leaves a trail of black smoke that does not disperse but within a few seconds compresses into a dark ball rushing towards you. You try to dodge, but the underworld missile mirrors your movement, striking you with the force of a hammer blow. Perplexed, but strengthened by the powers of the underworld, you drive Kyrma on to continue her flight to the Ningal Tower. You suffer no damage but instead receive 1 KARMA point.

Turn to F113.



F143 Trusting in Kyrna's powerful breath, you drum on your dragon's back with the words "Rosh, rosh." A lance of fire shoots from Kyrna's maw and envelops the Riujem. The flames lick around the Riujem's body without touching it, however, as if held back by an invisible membrane.

The demon appears to have found a new way to protect itself from you and your dragon's fury! Yet Kyrna does not give up, constantly bombarding the Riujem with her fiery breath. At last the protective spell bursts like a soap bubble, and the flames encompass the demon, reducing its thin wings to ashes in an instant. With a hellish roar, the messenger of death from the underworld falls back towards the Ningal Tower.

Your trusty dragon maneuver causes 1 point of Extra Damage. Add it first under Special Notes on the third page of your adventure sheet.

Turn to F76.



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F144 Your body is trembling with the thrill of the hunt. This beast is a worthy opponent! Only the mental connection to Kyrna prevents you from giving in completely to instinct. Your mind is still in control.

What flying maneuver should Kyrna use to prevent Riujem from escaping? Remember that you can only choose a maneuver if you have the RIDER RANK given in brackets!

> Flame Breath (Dragon Familiar), turn to F143. Claw Grip (Dragon Friend), turn to F114 Ram (Dragon Master), turn to F157. If you have no RIDER RANK, turn to F58.

F145~ The shimmer of the Moon Sickle attests to the pain you want to cause your godless opponent. But this time, the Riujem lashes out with its wings and throws you off before you can land another hit.

Beside itself with anger, the demon grabs itself by the horns and shouts out its rage. All that remains for it is to do battle. Your heavy blow causes 2 points of Extra Damage. Write this down under Special Notes on your adventure sheet.

Turn to F76.

F146~ With relief, you watch your companion set her hind legs down on the shattered flagstones. Proud to have survived the dangers of the last few weeks with her, you hasten towards your bonded dragon. Halfway to her, however, your overtaxed mind is shaken again. You have the feeling that the two worlds that constitute your nature are being violently rent asunder.

Check under Special Notes to see which box you have crossed off for Nephatari.

If you have saved her, turn to B22!!! If she has been killed, turn to F167. If she has sacrificed herself, turn to F31.

 $F147\,$ A thin layer of ice glistens on the grip of your two-handed sword, causing your claws to stick to the metal. You feel the power of this unique weapon, which is only waiting to be unleashed. $^{\rm Irm}$

If you know the secret of Benthenos' sword, turn to the relevant section. If not, turn to F123.

F148 You could think of no better moment to place the holy artefact of Kar around Nephatari's neck. Even in the darkest hour, the statuette sheds its warming light. It does not take long, and the daughter of the sun opens her golden eyes. *Remove the Annulet of Kar from your adventure sheel!*

Turn to F111.

F149 You are uncertain whether your arrow found its mark. Turn to F59



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F150 With the confidence of the Keşra, you place your last arrow on the string and aim at the Riujem's skull.

Choose a target and test your DEXTERITY against the stat given in brackets. You only have one shot!

Left eye (23) (B) Throat (20) (C) Brow (18) If you have any Marksman ability, you can add your ATTACK BONUS to the result on your dice!

If you have a Baronyak Arrow, you use it now. The test has a bonus of 3. Do not forget to remove the Special Item from your adventure sheet.

> If the test (A) is successful, turn to F138 If the test (B) is successful, turn to F115 If the test (C) is successful, turn to F129 If the test you've chosen fails, turn to F24



F151 You do not want to be held back by a problem of such little importance. With a grim expression, you draw your Moon Sickle. The warrior winces, as if he is no longer so sure that he is capable of stopping the renegade Shadow Child.

"Run," you make this clear—calm, but uncompromising. The warrior does not wait to be told twice, fleeing through one of the side doors.

Turn to F107.

 $F152\,$ You find it difficult to suppress the disgust provoked by this bloodthirsty monster and the heaps of undefinable body parts around you. But then you see Calderel near the Black Gate, watching in amusement as you battle the Deadslaughterer.

Return to F75 and go on with your combat.

F153~ It is dangerous to assist Kyrna. The pain that a dragon can endure is much greater than that which you could stand. Kyrna's VITALITY is lowered by a level!

You speak to her in a calming voice and stroke her flank.

Turn to F125.

F154 Your arrow misses the Gartak by a hair. Furious at your own incompetence, you throw away the now useless Rider's Bow. Cross off from your adventure sheet the pack saddle entry given for the Rider's Bow!

If you want to confront the Gartaks in close combat, turn to F46. If you want to ignore them and continue directly on your way to the hatch, turn to F159.

F155 Without attracting attention, you release the buckles attached to the Rider's Bow and nock an arrow on its humming string. Closing your eyes, you breathe in the clear air and attempt to follow your instincts.

Return to the illustration at section F15 and choose the area of the cloud where you suppose your adversary to be.

Into what area of the towering clouds do you shoot?

The upper area of the left cloud tower, turn to F139. The middle area of the left cloud tower, turn to F124. The lower area of the left cloud tower, turn to F149. The upper area of the right cloud tower, turn to F117. The middle area of the right cloud tower, turn to F208. The lower area of the right cloud tower, turn to F208.

F156 Though you will not wield such a weapon yourself, you would prefer to guard the cursed two-handed sword yourself rather risking that it might fall into the wrong hands. Deftly, you sheathe it once more.

Turn to F123.

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F157 Fearlessly, you pull on Kyrna's reins with your left claw and drum on her back with your right. "Kino-vah, rino-vah/" Your command inflames your dragon's will to fight. Arching her feathered neck, Kyrna dives towards the Riujem!

You are thrown forward so violently by the collision that one of your holding straps snaps, and you almost lose consciousness. Kyrna has pierced the demon's chest with her long horn and impaled it on her skull plate.

In its death throes, the Riujem flails wildly and, like Kyrna, loses control of its wings. Amidst this duel of roars and hisses, you dive towards the Ningal Tower as boiling, rotten blood and the stench of death washes over you.

Kyrna's VITALITY is lowered by a level!

If her status falls to dead, turn to F99 at once.

As your crash comes to an abrupt end with the noise of breaking bones and shattering stone, you are thrown in a wide arc away from the two elemental forces that are now separated again. Your VITALITY is reduced by one level!

Your masterful dragon maneuver causes 3 points of Extra Damage. Add these under Special Notes on the third page of your adventure sheet.

Turn to F76.



 $F158\,$ Within you still flows the inexhaustible, all-consuming power of your parents. It pounds in your veins more intensely than ever before, desirous of nothing more than the annihilation of this monster. As you raise your Moon Sickle again, you resolve to sever yourself finally from this carnal force—namely, with this blow!

Your ATTACK is automatically successful in the COMBAT ROUND! You can also reduce the demon's RESISTANCE by all the KARMA points you still have left.

You need 3 KARMA points to destroy a shield.

Remove all KARMA points from your adventure sheet.

Return to F76 and go on with your combat.

F159 With swift strides, you make your way to the hatch. You hear a muffled, metallic sound. A clicking and squealing—the iron spheres are in position! The air crackles and hums. Bluewhite lightning flashes from the structures, igniting the wooden pillars and smiting the warriors standing by.

Finally, they engulf even Kyrna and the other flying lizards and dragons moving on the platform. The guards have activated the final line of defense, even if this means sacrificing their own dragons and men!

Kyrna shrieks and jerks. Bombarded by the glaring flashes of lightning, she has lost all control.

If you have the RIDER RANK **Dragon Friend** and the ability **Keşrani**, turn to **F70**. If not, turn to **F42**.

F160~ The meeting of the gods reaches its conclusion, and the first rays of the sun burn down again over the top of the Ningal Tower. The monster from the underworld roars wildly in pain as it tries to protect its misshapen head with its paws.

Apply the damage already caused to the Riujem in the next section by crossing off the relevant number of RESISTANCE points (all damage caused to his armor does not apply). You begin the confrontation under the new conditions again in the first COMBAR ROUND.

Turn to F120.

 $F161\,$ You and the Halret thunder towards one another like two knights at a tournament. Just before his long weapon can pierce you, you nimbly duck under it and slash the Halret's breast plate with your blade. Sparks fly, and a surprised hiss mingles with the clashing of steel.

You can only wound the Halret with the Moon Sickle, the Moon Thorn, or veapons with an Hit Bonus +5. If you have used a different weapon for your first ATTACK, your hit has not had any effect, and you must now choose another weapon.

Return to F59 and go on with your combat.

F162 What a moving sight! You are a witness to one of the rare moments when your parents meet! You stare at the shimmering corona of light in fascination. It sparkles like a ring of purest diamonds, and in this fleeting moment you enjoy the infinite power of cosmic communion.

A hate-filled howl drags you back to reality. Freed from the pain caused by the sunlight, the demon rages on the platform again. Indiscriminately, it rips to pieces a few Gartaks caught twitching between its scissor-like claws.

> If you have found FATE POINTS #9 and #12, turn to F92. If not, turn to F54.

F163 Dancing stars cloud your sight; you have already had to suffer too many attacks. And again another monstrous blow de-

scends upon you. You close your eyes and try to suppress the demon's harangue.



F162 Freed from the pain caused by the sunlight, the demon rages on the platform again. Indiscriminately, it rips to pieces a few Gartaks caught twitching between its scissor-like claws. 592

Though the world grows dark and you await the end, the beautiful face of Nephatari appears before you. Her lovely smile and her shining eyes expel your fear. Again you hear the same mysterious words which the sun daughter breathed into your ear before the Black Gate.

Sensing weakness, the demon drives its sharp claws into your side. But this time you feel no pain! The monster stumbles back and stares in horror at the burned stump that is now its right hand. Kar's aura has protected you!

The demon loses 3 points of RESISTANCE.

The attack also reduces the Riujem's ATTACK by 2 points!

Return to F120, make the changes and continue the fight.

F164 However peaceful the sea of white clouds looks, you have the disturbing sense that there is a great danger waiting in the clouds. Instituctively, you crouch down on Kyrna's back so as to present a smaller silhouette to possible attackers.

If you want to trust your instinct and fire your Rider's Bow into the clouds, turn to F155. If you just want to be careful, turn to F59. If you want to try to break through the clouds as quickly as possible, turn to F50.

F165 Your thoughts and feelings are reduced to a helpless pleading. Nephatari is dead! And there's nothing more you can do to change this. Even the gods have not taken up her cause. Your RAGE rises by one level!

If your RAGE has surpassed the scale, turn to F167 at once. Write down that Nephatari has been killed on the third page of your adventure sheet by marking off the box under Special Notes. The dark desire for vengeance boils in you.

> Even if this costs my life-he will pay for all of this! <

Turn to F100.

 $F166\,$ With incredible speed, the Riujem slashes at you using his long claws. And as you have already experienced once before, they are so sharp that they barely cause any pain. The demon is still feasting on the blood you lost with its first hit—and you see that its claws are still growing!

When the next blow descends on you with merciless force, you think for a second that this is your end.

The attack thunders down upon you, but is instantly repulsed by a mantle of magical energy. It manifests itself out of nowhere, bursting as quickly as a soap bubble as it wards off the demon's strike!

The demon holds its now-ruined paw, roaring out its pain and hatred into the sky and over the battlefield. The brief protective spell seems to incite it even more.

In this COMBAT ROUND, you lose no VITALITY despite the hit, whereas the demon loses 1 more point of RESISTANCE. In addition, your enemy's ATTACK is reduced by 2 points from now on!

Your savior was the spirit of the Ugarith champion Aonus, trying to atone for his mistakes and thank you for returning the Shadow Reaper. You silently thank your misled companion and hope that the sacrifice of his soul's salvation will not be in vain.

Return to F120 and go on with your combat.



F167~ Your divine mission is over, and you try to detach your mind from the body of the young man known as the Shadow Child. But his dark burning thoughts will not let you go on your way! He can think only of the pain and death of his beloved Nephatari.

Ungovernable fury is unleashed, driving your mind to the edge of consciousness. The last thing you are aware of before going mad is the echo of voices coming from the restless contenders lurking in the blackness of the underworld. They have found a powerful new ally, a new Riujem that they can use for their goals. Exp. 4



F

F168 Calderel, encircled in black clouds, giggles maliciously as the Sickle is swallowed by the darkness of the Shadow Gate. The Shadow Master mocks you triumphantly: "How romantic, The Kesra has found love in a human woman."

How gladly would you leap up and purge the world from this demon once and for all. But Nephatari is dying. She needs your help, even if this means that he can escape to the realm of the Black Gate.

Remove the Moon Sickle from your adventure sheet!

Turn to F135.

FINALE · POWERS OF THE BLACK SUN

F169 "So you doubt Kathum's wisdom?" Nergal asks you dismissively. "Well, so be if! But it remains to be seen whether the Ugarith, in whose body both of your souls are enclosed, will be able to withstand the revelation."

Scarcely have Nergal's words faded, when the mental barrier that separated your mind from that of the young Ugarith collapses. You are engulfed in the memories, suffering and fears of the Ugarith, and you barely manage with the last of your strength to avoid being washed away in the maelstrom of negative feelings. The tiny mind of the young Ugarith, however, is completely overwhelmed by the unexpected deluge of another life from a different



world. Pressing his claws to his temples, he rears up, desperately trying to drive you out of his body. You try to escape as well, but you cannot detach yourself from him. You are forever a prisoner in the madness of the underworld and in a shared mind.

Your life's meaning ends here.

 $F170 \quad \mbox{However liberating the Shadow tyrant's death may be,} he has carried the secret of your curse to his grave.$ Will this stigma ever be taken from me?You feel unworthy.



Calculate your Star Rating at the end of this chapter on page 597.

> Will the gods turn away from me? <

never forgotten your humanity."

may find the peace they deserve.

"Do not be sad. Shadow Child."

"Humanity!?"

companions."

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STAR RATING

What difficulty level did you arrive at, that is with how many stars did you finish the RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN? Add up the following stars:

- · Reaching the end of a chapter of the story: 1-5 Stars The stars are given after the "END" of each final section.
- · Using the expert rule to reduce the starting value of the attributes STRENGTH and DEXTERITY: 1 Star You started voluntarily with only 5 points each.
- · Using the expert rule about stat reduction for low VITALITY: 2 Stars You suffered venalties of -1 for hurt and -2 for critical.
- · Forgoing the Attack bonus through Fighter ability: 1 Star You have voluntarily refused weapon training in CHAPTER 2.
- · Reducing your maximum KARMA supply: 1-2 Stars Check the adventure sheet to see what maximum KARMA supply you have written down.
- · Perfect Game: 1 Star You have found all 14 FATE POINTS.

Star Rating

- Gamebook Beginner
- Gamebook Friend 4-6
- 7-8 Gamebook Enthusiast
- Gamebook Lover 9-10
- 11 Gamehook Master
 - Gamebook God

Thanks for playing!



you do not want to imagine. You pray to the gods that their souls Several seconds pass before you realize that the female voice you

just heard was not a dragon voice. Then you comprehend Your heart beats faster as you turn around and look into golden

While you doubt the future, Kyrna lands behind you on the plat-

form of the Tower. Filled with shame, you avoid looking at her. Telepathically, the dragon lady encourages you. "You can be proud of yourself, Keşra. Despite all the obstacles and temptations, you have

"Oh yes, the human in you, from a world beyond our own, has always led you wisely. Even if this meant that you had to lose friends and

Your thoughts are with Tarus and with Nephatari, whose fates

- eves wet with tears. "Nephatari!" Somewhat unsure on her feet, she supports her battered body by
- leaning against Kyrna.
- You know that your task, that of leading the young Ugarith on the right path, has now come to an end. Carefully, you detach your mind from his. He does not appear to feel it. In an ecstasy of bliss, he embraces the sun daughter and forgets the world around END **** him

There was a FATE POINT to be found in the final chapter of your journey! Since you have missed it, you should begin your battle against Calderel's demonic self with another stellar constellation. Then you can not only free yourself and Nephatari from the dark curse, but also the young Ugarith, who lent you his body at the beginning of this story!

APPENDIX

COMBAT SECTIONS

C1 In no time, the typical Gartak stench befouls the air. The squat, hairy creatures are a primitive warrior race, bred in the catacombs of the mage city Tul-Sar-Mar. They serve their lizard masters with slavish devotion.

While crouching in a dark corner, you hear the jangling of chain mail and the scuffling of leather soles. A grimy Gartak, armed with a rusty short sword, stomps down the narrow steps to the dungeon. Dangling from his belt is a large metal ring with numerous keys.

If you want to attack him from behind, turn to C59. If you want to confront the Gartak, turn to C8.



C2 "Well then, you knowledge-hungry recruits!" Wingmaster Logath roars. "As I said, there are six basic maneuvers. The glide, the screw, the rollover, the serpent, the dive and the breath."

The recruits next to you laugh and gesticulate wildly at the idea of using these maneuvers themselves. Logath continues more sternly: "All the maneuvers are used with a repeated spoken command and an appropriate, explicit gesture. The rider should never rely too much on a maneuver's success, as it depends on the dragon's free will whether it will obey the command or not." After these brief explanations, Logath continues his basic weapon training, constantly mentioning that he thinks the short time-frame that the Council has forced upon him is irresponsible. For that reason, he decides to split the group.

When it is your turn, the wingmaster speaks to you directly. "I am not sure whether you even need instruction in close combat. You look as if you have already had war experience. Or am I wrong?" Decide for yourself whether you want to improve your skills in close combat or long-range combat.

(Training in close combat at C99 would reduce the difficulty and is therefore suited for beginners. Experienced readers should choose the long-range combat training at C98.)

If you are unsure, choose the group you want to be part of based on the moon! Pick a random page and look at the moon phase indicated there.

If it's New Moon, Full Moon or Crescent Moon, turn to C98. If it's Half Moon, or Gibbous Moon, turn to C99.

C3 Aonus attempts to swing his sword around and free himself from your clinch, but you manage to transform the momentum from your ramming attack into a quick spinning motion and thus drive the Ugarith towards the edge.

Not until his hips smash against the wall, do you both come to a halt, locked together as one. Using all your strength, you try to heave the warrior over the edge, but you realize that he too has greater than human strength.

"Well, Keşra," breathes Aonus, pushing back against you, "Fate will have to choose one of us." His black eyes are alight with a silvery glint.

Test your STRENGTH against 16!

If Aonus' RESISTANCE is at 2 or less, however, then test your STRENGTH against 14.

If the test is successful, turn to C19. If it fails, turn to C22. C4 The black dragon rises higher and higher. You have survived it. But before you can even catch your breath, you watch aghast as the dam breaks!

At first, only a few jets of water shoot into the channel, but only seconds later the entire retaining wall collapses under the enormous pressure of the water. Even at your altitude, the noise is deafening. A gigantic brown wave rolls through the valley, swallowing trees and buildings. You try to suppress the thought that, in less than an hour, the same will happen to countless innocents. Leenhaven will be eradicated.

Your RAGE rises by 1 point!

Return to the 3rd chapter at section 550.

C5 Accompanied by the sound of shattering glass, the mirror monster collapses and the reflections fade away. You have defeated the Xorox!

Return to the 4th chapter at section 612.

C6 The Golem opens wide its eyes, and shrill screeching and grinding fills your ears. In a flash, a jet of flame shoots towards you, shattering the stone floor.

You can only imagine what might happen should the Golem's gaze hit upon you.

Test your DEXTERITY against 16!

If you have the ability Sharpened Senses, you must check your DEXTERITY even against 18.

> If the test is successful, turn to C38. If it fails, turn to C26.

C7 Hopefully, you watch the trajectory of the explosive sphere. But your throw misses the Sand Worm's maw and bounces off its misshapen head. For a short moment, it is distracted, but then it rushes towards you, hunger unabated. Remove the Bomb from your adventure sheet.

You move back as the powerful explosion shakes the air. Massive chunks of flesh, torn out of the Sand Worm's abdomen, rain down on you. Severely wounded, the beast cries out, but is now more than ever determined to devour you!

Return to C80, reduce the Sand Worm's RESISTANCE by 3 and continue your fight!

C8 The black eyes in the Gartak's boar-like skull widen as you force him to engage in single combat. Prepare to attack the warden!

Gartak Prison Warden ATTACK #1 DEFENSE #1 RESISTANCE #0

If you survive the combat, you can take the Gartak's Short Sword (Weapon, Hit Bonus +2). You also find 2 Dinars (Money) and the Warden's Keu Ring (Utensil).

If you want to take something, write this down on your adventure sheet. Return to the 1st chapter at section 215.

C9 Aonus pauses as he notices that you are wielding the weapon of a Menokian officer.

"Deserter Shadow Child," he erupts in scorn. The Ugarith leader is beside himself with rage: "You are conspiring with the Menokian blight!" In blind fury, he swings his sword to cleave your skull. Sparks fly as the blade barely misses you and instead hews a piece from the palisade. You exploit the reckless attack to drive home a well-placed blow to Aonus' thigh. Stinking black blood flows from the wound.

Clenching his teeth, Aonus suppresses a scream. His pride is greater than his pain.

Return to C42, reduce the enemy's RESISTANCE by 1 and continue your fight! 02

Λ.

C10 As quickly as possible, you are trying to grasp your surroundings, when suddenly you find Aonus already standing in front of you. Bewildered, you stare into his silvery eyes, not knowing how he has done it.

The giant laughs and points his longest claw at you provokingly: "Well now, time to prove why our master thinks you are so good!"

Aonus' voice makes a shiver go down your spine. Your instincts tell you that this warrior is more than his shadowy appearance reveals.

Aonus,	ATTACK	
UGARITH-CHAMPION	DEFENSE	
	RESISTANCE	

• 14

N 16

If your VITALITY falls to critical, turn to C63 at once. If you manage to score a hit against Aonus, turn to C53.



C11 You remember the writing on the arch in front of this cave and the entry in the mage's book, which you found here earlier. > Perhaps one of the Skyllian sentences will help to sooth the Golenn? < If you want to speak "巴田三方 A 田豆方", turn to C49. If you want to aay "巴田三方 KATI O 田豆方", turn to C75. If you want to remain silent, turn to C75.

C12 With a roaring battle cry, you leap over the wide gap separating the two ships. You have almost reached the Nargus' bridge when one of the Menokians realizes what's headed for him. Before he can lift his saber in defense, however, you have already hurled him to the planks and executed a roll, fixing you gaze upon the second ice warrior. He pulls back from the admiral and confronts you, weapon drawn.

AST	Attack	× 15
MENOKIAN WARRIOR	DEFENSE	W 13
	RESISTANCE	9 (1)
	COMBAT ROUND	0003

If you win by the second COMBAT ROUND, turn to C84. If the combat goes into the third Round, turn to C37.

C13 Relieved, you watch the last refugees reach the safety of the hill. You also seize the opportunity and dash towards the rocks that apparently prevent the Sand Worm from shooting through the ground. Behind you, two wagons sink into the depths and disappear along with their bellowing Toka. Then there is a deadly silence.

You get 2 KARMA points for saving the Rigem.

Return to the 6th chapter at section 827.

C14 You sense the power of the curse, but you cannot resist it. The hypnotic gaze of the Uraeus Serpent is too strong. Her mind merges with yours. Images from your past are dragged into your consciousness. You feel them being snatched from you. Have you written down a section number with the first RAGE point on

your adventure sheet?

If yes, then ignore the left digit in the three-digit number (hundreds) and go to the section of this combat chapter thus determined! If not, turn to C82.

C15 Your surprise attack causes the mirrored chest of your alter ego to burst. Small shards rain to the floor, but you also suffer an identical hit. The razor-sharp ridge of the mirror stone opens a gaping wound in your chest.

APPENDIX · COMBAT SECTIONS

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

Your VITALITY falls by one level!

Numb, you stagger backwards—as does your opponent—and press the bleeding flesh together. The wound suddenly turns to stone. You will not be able to defeat this opponent so easily!

Turn to C24.

C16 You have difficulty staying afloat amidst all the drifting refuse, the wreckage and the lifeless bodies. The waves are not very strong, but you feel a weak offshore current threatening to carry you out further.

If your VITALITY is at fit or normal, go to the 3rd chapter at section 451. If it is battered or hurt, go to the 3rd chapter at section 501. If it is critical, go to the 3rd chapter at section 456.

C17 Just as you start to look at Aonus' splendid armor, you feel a strange vibrating and heaving beneath your feet. For a moment you think that it is your own weakness, but then there is a tremendous crash followed by thundering so loud it might be dozens of houses collapsing at once.

> By the gods, the dam is breaking! «

The soldiers, who a second ago wanted only to avenge the death of their Empire officer, have turned on their heels and are now running for their lives. You remain frozen, however, for you know that only the gods can save you now.

Turn to C40.

C18 Hurriedly, you pull the explosive sphere and the firing pin out of your coat pocket and gauge the weight of both items in your claws.

> How shall I survive for three minutes against this monster? «

If you want to push in the splint and immediately pull it out again, hoping thus to accelerate the ignition, turn to C72. If you would rather discard the idea with the explosive, turn to C80 and continue fighting.



C19 Unexpectedly, you feel a pleasant warmth flowing from your heart and spreading into your muscles. With one last surge, you manage to transform this feeling into a tremendous force: While pushing against Aonus' throat with one claw, you use the other to grab the lower edge of the breastplate on his Dragon Rider armor and hurl him over the retaining wall. Desperate, he grabs at your clothes, but the fabric of your cloak rips at once under the giant's weight.

Aonus plummets to the ground. But despite the inescapable fate that awaits him, a brief smile flits across his black lips. It seems for a moment as if the proud warrior is falling forever, only to strike the ground at the base of the dam without uttering a sound. Exhausted, you sit down on the wall. You are still holding the lower part of the breastplate of dark metal that you used to hurl Aonus down over the wall. Then you realize: You have defeated him, this superior opponent!

You have little time to rejoice. Out of the corner of your eye, you sight countless soldiers of the Empire storming the dam with drawn weapons.

If you have found FATE POINT #7, turn to C27. If not, turn to C17.

34

C20 "As you have certainly heard," Logath begins another lesson, "our dragons respond to eight verbal and physical commands, the so-called flying maneuvers."

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The wingmaster explains the six basic commands, ignoring the excited murmurs of the recruits. He concludes, "You will learn these six quickly, but numbers seven and eight are a well-kept secret of the dragon masters!" You use a short pause between Master Logath's explanations to ask a question.

If you want to hear more about the basic dragon maneuvers, turn to C2. If you want to hear more about the masters' maneuvers, turn to C66.

C21 Protecting your body with your arms, you try to push all the people away as best you can. You do not want to hurt these innocents, but you must defend against their involuntary attacks so as not to be trampled underfoot! PANCKED KYPHISTANS ATTACK 416

CKED KYPHISIANS ATTACK // 16 COMBAT ROUND & O O O O If your VITAUTY falls to critical, turn immediately to C51. If you reach the third COMBAT ROUND and do not have Ramin's Talisman, turn to C87. If you reach the fifth COMBAT ROUND, turn to C96.

C22 You gather your final reserves and grab Aonus by the breastplate of his Dragon Rider armor, but he looks less than impressed. The pupils of his confident eyes turn a fog-like, soulless grey, and you feel an unbridled power rising within him that makes you tremble to your core.

> Death shows its repugnant visage at last! <

If you want to try to free yourself from the embrace of the Ugarith so as to carry out a last, desperate attack, turn to C68. If you want to accept your fate and try to drag Aonus down with you, hoping to at least remove one evil from the face of the world, turn to C61.



C20 The wingmaster explains the six basic commands, ignoring the excited murmurs of the recruits. He concludes, "You will learn these six quickly, but numbers seven and eight are a well-kept secret of the dragon masters!"

C23 Even though you try to clasp Aonus with all your might, the sword master manages to swing his baneful weapon around. You feel the icy blade cutting into the unresisting flesh on your hip.

Your VITALITY falls by one level!

If you still live, test your STRENGTH against 16!

If Aonus' RESISTANCE is at 2 or less, however, then test your STRENGTH against 14.

If the test is successful, turn to C19. If it fails, turn to C22.

C24 This strange creature is fascinating and horrible at the same time. The shining, sharp-edged splinters that its body consists of can cut through flesh with ease.

ATTACK

RESISTANCE

Xorox Mirror Monster ✓ ? (Your Attack +5)

- ? (Your DEFENSE +5)
- ♥0000000

If you have a Hand Mirror and want to use it, turn to C71. If you want to blow your Dragon Horn, turn to C81. If you want to end the combat with a double mirror trick, turn to 698⁺! If you win the fight without using tricks, turn to C

C25 The last serpent also lies twitching in its blood now. Again, a rivulet of golden blood forms, flowing into a puddle of memories. They too stem from the thoughts of your former self. You see your years of education in the Ningal Tower. Countless lessons with great masters and Calderel himself pass before your mind's eye. If you were not carrying the strength of the Keşra in you, you would most likely succumb once more to the seductive promises of the Shadow Master.

But today you understand his wicked plans and, above all, your unspeakable part as a divine puppet in this war!

Turn to C48.

C26 A burning pain spreads across your chest. You have been gazed upon by the Golem! At the last moment you manage to roll behind a rock just as the shrill sound falls silent. Your upper body has completely turned to stone, but a splintered scar will remain. Furious, you lunge at the Golem, determined to destroy it! Your VITALITY falls by one level!

Return to C60 and continue your fight there.

C27 Before you can bring yourself to take the armor, the first soldiers of the Empire, with weapons drawn, are already running towards you over the crest of the dam. Uncertainty is mirrored in their faces, but your poor physical condition encourages them to attack. Battle-weary, you struggle to your feet, for you know that there is not much you can do against their superior numbers. Turn to CS7.

C28 You dodge a well-aimed sword blow from the guard on the right and notice as Mireth pulls the patch from her head and focuses on you. Her all-seeing eye, a gift of Kar, can see through all lies and deception.

> If you have found FATE POINT #12, turn to C54. If not, turn to C93.

C29 With a single fluid movement, you jump into the longboat and cut its mooring ropes. A moment later, it lands with a splash next to the ship in the stormy sea. You row with all your strength-after all, the remaining Menokians could follow you but the captain holds them back with a commanding gesture. Apparently, he wants to let you escape.

On your way through the Leenhaven Bay, the scouts in the crow's nests of the remaining Alliance ships see you. You do not think that they will open fire on an allied longboat, but nevertheless you decide to swim the last few miles to the coast.

Return to the 3rd chapter with section 451.

C30 Determined to end this sea battle as quickly as possible, you grab a rope and swing over onto to the upper deck of the large Menokian ship. As you land directly in front of the captain's feet, he pulls back in surprise, holding out his impressive broad sword in a protective gesture.

The captain's bodyguard, a warrior whose neck is as broad as his bald head, rushes towards you, determined to bar your path. Yet you are so focused on your goal of ending this battle that you are prepared to take any risk. You quickly duck, take down the guard with a roundhouse kick and incapacitate him with a wellaimed blow to his tattooed chest.

You turn on the captain as if guided by an alien power, your head lowered, gaze focused straight ahead. Two other Menokians nearby, who were just about to come to the aid of their leader, break with fear and escape into the sea. The captain, on the other hand, uses the distraction and attacks you purely for reasons of self-preservation.

> If you want to kill the captain, turn to C86. If you want to disarm him, turn to C74.

C31 Mothers grab their crying children and flee to the rocky hill beside the campsite. But the earth is now quaking so violently that they are constantly falling down. The few able men look over to you with uncertainty, but are relieved as you command them to go to the hill as well. The ground shakes again. Some gigantic monster is moving with incredible speed beneath your feet! Directly in front of you, a maelstrom of sand swallows up a firepit and a wagon with all its equipment.

You now try to get to the hill yourself just as a giant, worm-like monster shoots from the ground and rushes past just overhead, only to break through the earth's surface again directly next to you. For a brief moment, you stare into the endless, black maw of this giant Sand Worm.



C31 You now try to get to the hill yourself just as a giant, worm-like monster shoots from the ground and rushes past just overhead, only to brack through the earth's surface again directly next to you. For a brief moment, you stare into the endless, black maw of this giant Sand Worm.

Not until this body, with the length of a ship and the color of mother-of-pearl, has disappeared into the earth again, do you realize that you have never before faced such a perverse and fascinating monster.

Turn to C80.

C32 An unearthly feeling overwhelms you as you succumb to the hypnotic gaze of the Uraeus Serpent. Its mind merges with yours, and images from your past are dragged up into your consciousness. You sense that they are to be snatched from you, devoured by the beast.

Have you written down a section number with your second RAGE point on the adventure sheet?

If yes, ignore the left digit (hundreds) of the three-figure number and go to the section indicated in this combat chapter If not, turn to C62.

C33 The stony colossus seizes you in a merciless grip and lifts you up to its face. A deep growl shakes the whole cave. Then the Golem's head splits open! Where a human would actually have a mouth, razor-sharp steel teeth now appear. It is a sight both beautiful and horrible to behold!

> If you have the Amulet of Kar, turn to C85. If not, turn to C36.



APPENDIX · COMBAT SECTIONS

C34 With some well-aimed verbal attacks, you succeed in breaking Aonus' reserve with his greatest flaw: his pride.

"How dare you call our venerable master a misled warmonger?" Lines of rages show in the champion's black face. "This was your final blasphemy among the living, that I swear!"

With a roar, he lashes out with a powerful blow, but you manage to turn aside the overextended strike aimed at your neck and counter it. You deal the Ugarith a deep, stinging riposte.

"What a fool!" Aonus howls in hatred and pain.

Return to C42, reduce the enemy's RESISTANCE by 1 and continue your fight!

C35 The blade in your claw so intimidates the Kyphians near you that they throw themselves on the ground or run away. At the same time, the men of the Golden Guard use this opportunity to confront you. One of them calls to Mireth. "Your Holiness, it is a Shadow!"

The seer has meanwhile retreated with her priest colleagues into a globe of crackling lightning. Around the sphere warding off enemies already lie dozens of dead bodies, the bodies of those who in their panic came too close to the protective spell. Mireth stares at you for a moment before commanding, "Kill him!" Without hesitation, the three guards attack you. Luckily, they are also very battered.

MIRETH'S BODYGUARD	ATTACK	₩ 19 +1	+1	+1
(3 ENEMIES)	DEFENSE	• 17 +1	+1	+1
	RESISTANCE	•00	00	00
	COMBAT ROUND	0000	305	

If your VITALITY falls to critical, turn to C51. If you reach the third COMBAT ROUND, turn to C28. If you reach the fifth Round, turn to C96.

C

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C36 Bravely, you allow yourself to be seized by the Golem. He grabs you with both hands and crushes you like a fig.

Your life ends here.

C37 After you have slain the last Menokian warrior, you fall to your knees beside the admiral. The proud leader stares up at the sky with empty eyes, his blood-smeared hands crossed limply over his chest wound. Sadly, you close his eyes and ask the gods to be merciful to him and all the dead in this battle.

Startled by the continuing clang of weapons, you turn away and casually throw a cocky young Menokian overboard as he tries to stop you on your way to the last longboat of the Nargus.

Turn to C44.

C38 At the last moment, you jump behind a large rock as the devastating gaze barely misses you and the shrill sound fades. With a buzzing in your ears, you get to your feet and confront once more the monster of cold stone.

Return to C60 and continue with your fight.

C39 Reflected in the golden eyes of the serpent is the crowded Black Hall of the Ningal Tower. It is the day you were consecrated as the Shadow Child. But at the end, the scene is shaken by a powerful explosion. You remember the tragic moment with a shiver, remember the many innocents who died that day.

If you want to refresh your memory of the explosion at the Ningal Tower, turn to section 339. Read the text between the moons (...) and then return here (put your finger in this page).

You only now comprehend that the serpent's body has wound its way into your nose. It feels as if boiling water were flowing through your skull from the inside. The shocking events of the day the Ningal Tower was attacked are still present in your mind, but the details are already fading. A golden veil descends over the scene until you have forgotten it completely.

Remove once more the RAGE point that you connected with section number 339. If you should receive RAGE points later on, you can use the box that has now become free again.

Turn to C48.

C40 Frozen in terror you look down upon the retaining wall, which is ripping open like wet paper before your very eyes. Then the ground beneath your feet splits open as well, and you plunge into the depths in a rain of debris and dust. In expectation of your certain death, you close your eyes.

A sudden jerk pulls you back to life. Powerful paws clutch you and lift you up into the air.

> Kyrna! <

The fearless black dragon has come just in time to save you from impending death!

Turn to C4.

C41 Deftly, you duck under the captain's blow, seize him by the lower arm and drive your rock-hard claws into his flesh. In sudden pain, he drops the weapon on your foot. You quickly kick it upwards so as to catch the blade for yourself.

If you want to keep the fine weapon, write down the Captain's Sword (Weapon, Hit Bonus +4, Special: DEFENSE +1 with STRENGTH 10 or more) on your adventure sheet.

Trembling under the strain, you press the blade against the captain's tattooed throat and command his men to surrender at once.

Despite the hopeless situation, the ice warrior doesn't change his

expression. "Do you think we are a cowardly people?" he asks dismissively with his Nordic accent. "No matter whether you kill or spare me," he continues confidently, "victory is ours!" Boundless confidence marks the captain's bearing. "Flee, Shadow Child, as long as you can! We are not interested in your death!" Struck by the frankness of his words, you stumble back. You feel cornered.

» How does he know who I am, what I am? «

You clutch the newly obtained sword with both hands and raise it into the air. The Menokian captain stares at you without emotion. He awaits the decision of his executioner...

With full conviction, you strike!

Turn to C29.

C42 Slowly, Aonus swaggers towards you. He enjoys this moment with each of his clanking steps. Fear burns in your chest as the Ugarith champion sprints toward you with a bestial battle cry, his weapon raised, determined to deal a fatal blow.

Aonus,	ATTACK	N 20
UGARITH-CHAMPION	DEFENSE	W 19
	RESISTANCE	¥0000

COMBAT ROUND UOO3 ...

If you wield the Captain's Sword, turn to C9. If you reach the third COMBAT ROUND, turn to C52. If your VITALITY falls to critical, turn to C47. If you win the fight, turn to C77.

C43 But before more memories plague you, you are attacked by the second serpent!

Test your STRENGTH against 19! If you have the ability Mental Focus, you can roll the dice again should your first try fail!

> If the attempt is successful, turn to C25. If it fails, turn to C14.



C42 Fear burns in your chest as the Ugarith champion sprints toward you with a bestial battle cry, his weapon raised, determined to deal a fatal blow. C44 Clumsily, you pull yourself onto the last longboat aboard the Nargus. No sooner have you cut the mooring ropes, than it splashes into the ocean, tossing your body back and forth in the violent waves. You quickly paddle away, fearing that you may be caught between the two drifting flagships. In surprise you discover that there is a chest with bandages and ointment under the seating.

If your VITALITY has fallen to hurt or critical, you can quickly treat your wounds. Your VITALITY rises by one level.

The Kanderhagen Bay is still far away, and the last remaining Alliance ships cruising before the harbor could still be dangerous. For that reason you decide to swim the last few miles to the beach.

Return to the 3rd chapter at section 451.

C45 Near death and believing that you are about to face your god, you at first do not understand what is happening around you. Then gradually, you hear Aonus' voice growing clearer, penetrating the fog of your mental derangement. "Let him go!" His voice breaks as he repeats the command. "Damn it, you fool of a dragon, let him go!"

You open your eyes and your head reels: Hundreds of feet beneath you lies the sparkling reservoir, and only one large black claw is preventing you from plummeting to your death. Aonus' black dragon is clutching both of you.

Aonus, squirming in the other paw, roars, "Kyrna, I command you! Let him go!" The female dragon holds her position with a gentle beating of her wings. Then, bending her swan-like neck, she stares at you indecisively with her large, golden lizard eyes. As Aonus starts to speak again, Kyrna releases a bloodcurdling snarl in your faces and without warning lets her master fall. In shock, you watch the Ugarith's fall until finally you see the water splash without a sound in the glistening sea far below you. You cannot believe it; Kyrna has killed her master and spared you!

» Why did his own dragon turn against him? «

If you have found FATE POINT #7, turn to C76. If not, turn to C4.



C46 Again, you drive the Moon Sickle into the rock-like muscles of the Golem. Its arms now drag limply along the ground, but the magical guardian is not yet finished.

Suddenly, its facetted diamond eyes light up ominously. You feel the magical aura of the cave being drawn in and absorbed by them. The Golem's chest slowly rises as he closes his eyes. He is giving you a short reprieve.

If you want to strike the Golem again with the Moon Sickle,

turn to C6. If you have read the Mage's Book and written down some notes, turn to C11. If you want to wait to see what the Golem does, turn to C33.

C47 You stagger. You falter. The last few hits were too much. You can barely manage to stay on your feet. But Aonus is also marked by this merciless confrontation. Trembling, he lifts his sword and gasps: "Pray to Ugar for the last time, Shadow Child!" Defenseless, you close your eyes and all grows dark around you. *Turn to C45.* C48 Confused, you get to your feet. Your mind must have gone blank for several minutes. The serpents are gone. Your mind is clear again. You are still in Kathum's rooms.

Return to the 7th chapter at section 940.

 $C49\,$ The Golem hesitates for a moment, its arm raised for the blow, and listens attentively to the words, as if must first understand them...

Turn to C6.

620

C50 You prepare to attack. Bravely, you stride toward your reflection and point at it—and it does the same. The many-facetted monster also points at you with equal determination!

If you want to continue to advance on your reflection, attacking it with your bare hands as soon as it is within reach, turn to C78. If you want to arm yourself with a large rock and use it to attack, turn to C91.

If you want to stand and wait to see what happens, turn to C67.

C51 The constant jostling of the people, the muffled torments of the dying, and Mireth's burning gaze shatter your concentration. Within a moment, the bond snaps. Somewhere in the distance you hear Kyrna's panicked scream as she approaches. She, too, is lost in the maelstrom of unleashed time.

Your lives end here.

C52 Aonus is an opponent who is almost impossible to defeat. He wields his sword with deadly precision and anticipates all your movements. Knowing that he is superior to you, he mocks: "How could Calderel ever trust you?"

> If you want to try and push Aonus over the wall, turn to C79. If you want to confront him again in combat, turn to C56.

APPENDIX · COMBAT SECTIONS

C53 "I am impressed," Aonus expresses his respect, though with a smug undertone impossible to miss. Then he disappears before your eyes in the shadows of the cell. You look for him in confusion—just as the reawkened Gartak did before—but then Aonus suddenly appears at your back, pinning you with a single motion. You know this hold.

"It is enough," the white-haired Ugarith whispers grandly in your ear, rubbing his rough cheek against yours before stunning you with a single blow to the neck.

Return to the 1st chapter with section 228.



C54 As you turn around, you see the darting flames shooting at you from Mireth's right eye. You cannot evade them. You raise your arms, expecting a burning pain, but the spell is reflected off your face and turns the guard to your right into a living torch.

Return to C35, continue the fight and remove the two right RESISTANCE points for the dead guard!

C55 Proudly, you raise the Moon Sickle to the midday sun, but this time, no divine power is unleashed. Ugar denies you his assistance!

Turn to C35.

C56 Your weapon misses the mark.

"You are brave, I'll give you that," Aonus comments tauntingly. "It is a pity somehow that this battle will end so quickly."

The gaps in your memory are still huge, but in the face of death several fragments concerning Aonus wash over you. You have known him since your childhood. Calderel raised you both—like siblings! But your relationship was difficult from the beginning. He always envied you on account of Calderel's fatherly affection. If you have the ability Diplomacy, turn to C34. If not, turn to C34.



C57 The soldiers are only a stone's throw away, eager to execute their leader's killer. You are considering which of the eight men you should attack first when a thundering roar makes your muscles lock in surprise.

The soldiers stare past you, and you turn around instinctively to see what they are so afraid of. A black shadow races past you overhead. The gust of wind it creates throws you immediately to the ground, carrying you in its wake over the dam crest. At the last second you have the presence of mind to grab hold of a flagpole.

There is a hissing, and not far from you, a sea of blue flame erupts. Within moments, all the soldiers of the Empire have been vaporized. The stones are glowing. > How can something so cruel be so beautiful? «

Minutes pass before the flames go out and you see in the smoke the shape of the creature that has caused this chaos—Aonus' black dragon!

"Kyrna, thank you! But why did you save my life?"

Another shout trumpets forth. This time it is calmer and more melodious, as if the dragon lady wanted to reply to your thoughts. Awed, you do not resist when Kyrna comes towards you through the smoke, seizes you with a mighty paw and carries you away from the dam crest with the mighty beating of her wings.

Turn to C76.

C58 With superhuman speed, you turn away from the blow, so that the mirror edge misses your chest by a hair's breadth. But you too have not been able to hit the monster, for it has dodged your blow just as skillfully.

Turn to C24.

C59 You pounce upon the guard in a single bound. The Gartak is taken completely unawares and cannot defend himself.

GARTAK	ATTACK	M	9
PRISON WARDEN	Defense		8
(SURPRISED)	RESISTANCE		00

If you survive the combat, you can take the Gartak's Short Sword (Weapon, Hit Bonus +2). You also find 2 Dinars (Money) and the Warden's Key Ring (Utensil). If you want to take something, write it down on your adventure sheet.

Return to the 1st chapter at section 215.

C60 This creature is a guardian. As are you! And you know that it must fulfil its duty.

 \circ If only I could explain my presence... It wouldn't have had to come to this! \leftarrow

Fascinated by the Golem's elegance, a grace that does not fit its rough shape and mass, you prepare for an unequal confrontation.

Golem, magical guardian Attack

left arm right arm head ×13 () 15 () ¥003 003 102 RESISTANCE DEFENSE ♥ 16

624

COMBAT ROUND 0000000000

To defeat the Golem, you must overcome its head's RESISTANCE! Before you can strike its head, however, you must disable **both** arms.

Despite its mass, the Golem is incredibly quick and agile. He can thus attack **twice** per COMBAT ROUND! First with the left arm, then with the right.

Use the DEFENSE you have calculated equally for both attacks.

If you manage to defeat both arms, turn to C46. At the start of the tenth COMBAT ROUND, turn immediately to C92. If you survive the fight, turn to C65.

C61 You know that Aonus is too powerful an opponent for you. But before you face the gods, you want at least to take the misguided Ugarith with you on your journey to eternity. The steely hold paralyzes you, but you manage to feel for the belt under his armor and hold tight to it. Then, abruptly slackening your own pressure, you use the moment of surprise to pull Aonus towards you and hurl you both over the parapet.

He tries to grab the edge, but this act of self-sacrifice was nothing he could foresee. In terror, the Ugarith stares at you as, side by side, you hurtle down the dam wall. Certain of your death, you close your eyes. You do not want the last thing you see to be the face of a misled Ugarith!

Suddenly you feel a jerk so violent that it is as if all your bones were about to break at once.

Your VITALITY falls by one level!

If you're still alive, turn to C45.



C60 Fascinated by the Golem's elegance, a grace that does not fit its rough shape and mass, you prepare for an unequal confrontation.

C62 The serpent apparently does not find what it is looking for. With a hate-filled hiss it spews out its luminous poison at you. The corrosive acid eats through a few layers of your skin, which immediately protects you by turning to stone. Your VTRAILY falls by one level!

Turn to C43.

C63 From the very first second of the battle you already know that you have no chance against this opponent. He dodges your attack with supernatural speed, disappearing again and again in the twilight of the catacombs, only to reappear somewhere else. You stumble around like a stupid recruit. Aonus strikes you again and again with his fists. He makes you look like a fool and sends you to the ground with a well-aimed swing. The Gartak is grinning with amusement as you black out.

Return to the 1st chapter at section 228.

C64 You do not know how, but you manage to grab a serpent and tear it apart. Golden blood flows from the twitching chunks of flesh, forming a shining puddle.

You are on the verge of turning away when you see familiar images on the surface of the puddle.

They are memories from your past, from before you lost your memory. They must come from your former self, the self that just had its memories stolen by these serpents!

Within a moment, you absorb your history again, time you assumed was forever lost. You recollect your childhood, your foster parents, your hard work in the fields, the day your father went to war, your mother's tears as you were taken by an Ugar priest as a young boy, and the years of training in the Ningal Tower, side by side with Aonus, who was always envious of your close relationship with Calderel.

These decisive recollections bring 1 KARMA point.

Turn to C43.

C65 With a peaceful humming, the Golem sits down cross-legged and freezes. The deep wounds you have just caused it look dull and weathered, as if centuries old.

Return to the 4th chapter at section 689.



C66 "Typical raw recruits! Always wanting to take the second step before the first..." Wingmaster Logath shakes his head. "The two master maneuvers are, as the name reveals, only available to the dragon masters. A rider can only use these commands after years of association with a dragon—the claw attack and the ram attack! Both these aggressive maneuvers require that the dragon have a high level of trust in its rider, because they open up its defense and make it vulnerable."

Logath stops the murmuring with an exaggerated cough and returns to basic weapon training. He is annoyed about the tight time frame the High Council has given him and commands you to form two groups.

When it is your turn, the Wingmaster asks you: "Say, do you even need close combat training? You are an experienced warrior, aren't you?"

Decide whether you want to improve your skills in close combat or ranged combat.

(Training close combat at C99 lowers the difficulty and is suited for beginners. Experienced readers should choose the ranged combat training at C98.)

If you are unsure, choose the group you want to be part of based on the moon! Pick a random page and look at the moon phase.

If it's New Moon, Full Moon or Crescent Moon, turn to C98. If it's Half Moon, or Gibbous Moon, turn to C99. C67 The mirror monster's behavior is disturbing. The magical creature seems to perfectly duplicate even your hesitation. Although its face appears contorted by countless facets, you even recognize your emotional reactions reflected in it!

Time trickles away, and the imitations of the Xorox lull you into a false sense of security. But then you notice a barely visible reddish mist rising from your skin and drifting towards the monster. The Xorox is starting to drain away your life force, slowly but surely! You must act.

Turn to C24



C68 With desperate courage, you try to free yourself from the iron embrace of the Ugarith, but it is hopeless. Holding you by the neck like a mangy dog, Aonus dangles you over the abyss of the dam wall.

"Shadow Child," the warrior snarls arrogantly, "I wish you a good journey on your way to eternity!" With that, he drops you into the gaping abyss of the dam.

Your life ends here.

C69 Enthralled, you follow the flight path of the bomb. It is a perfect throw, right into the open maw of the monster! The Sand Worm does not even appear to notice the foreign body disappearing into its mouth as it crushes one more wagon and burrows back into the earth. Remove the Bomb from your adventure sheet.

Again, the hellish creature breaks out of the ground, rearing high up into the air as, with a single muffled explosion, its massive body is torn asunder. Head-sized chunks of flesh splatter on the ground, and the Sand Worn's stomach contents, bare bones and half-digested creatures, flood the surroundings. You have defeated the gigantic monster!

Turn to C97.

C70 You seem to be the only one so far who feels the vibrations. Nevertheless, you have an oppressive feeling of imminent danger. "Boy," you say in deadly earnest, drawing the Moon Sickle from its sheath. "Run to your mother!" Whereupon the boy runs away screaming.

upon the boy runs away screaning.

If you have the ability Warfare, turn to C89. If not, turn to C31.

C71 Hoping that the monster will react to its own reflection, you get out the hand mirror and point its broken glass at the Xorox. For the first time since you encountered it, the creature's faceted eyes no longer imitate your movements! Instead, it appears fascinated by its own reflection.

Then you feel a weak vibration in the hand mirror, and it is transferred to your opponent, growing stronger and stronger. The beast screams and your mirror shatters!

The vibration has shattered not only your mirror, but also pieces of the monster!

Remove the Hand Mirror from your adventure sheet. The RESISTANCE of the Xorox falls by 1 point.

Return to C24 and continue with your fight.

C72 You have trouble inserting the small metal splint into the bomb as your hands are trembling with anxiety. Or is the ground shaking?

The Sand Worm is approaching from under the earth again, breaking suddenly through the cracked ground with a shrill scream. You manage just in time to insert the splint. The moment it is in place, you feel the magical energy gathering in the bomb. Nimbly, you roll to the side, pull out the splint and hurl the metal ball at the monster.

Test your STRENGTH against 19! If you have the ability Mental Focus, you can roll again if your first try fails!

> If the test is successful, turn to C69. If it fails, turn to C7.

C73 Kyrna and you are flying over the camp site at a safe altitude. Gazing down, you see the refugees who did not reach the stone hill in time being swallowed by a funnel of quicksand. When the Sand Worm surfaces for the last time, there is nothing left of the Rigem train but a few splintered wagon parts. With glazed eyes, you drive Kyrna onward. You want to leave this place bethind as quickly as possible.

Your RAGE rises by 1 point!

Return to the 6th chapter with section 810.

C74 You have had enough of the constant bloodshed and focus your attacks on the captain's weapon arm. The experienced fighter sees through your intent, however, renewing his hold on the pommel of his sword and giving you a dirty grin.

MENOKIAN CAPTAIN	ATTACK	N 15
	DEFENSE	• 17
	RESISTANCE	v OO3

If you succeed in a DEFENSE with a surplus of 2 points (against ≠17) or if you have the ability Warfare, turn to C41 at once. If you win the fight without such a successful DEFENSE, turn to C95. 631

630

C75 The Golem stands as if rooted to the ground, holding its basalt skull in agony. Lightning crackles over its hands and arms, then over its whole body. It lurches clumsily backwards until the magical discharges stop. The formula has calmed it, even though while suffering pain!

Turn to C65.

C76 Beating her wings majestically, Kyrna spirals up higher into the air. You have survived! The crest of the dam is burning, but the dam itself still holds back the masses of water from the Veniz Lake. If the dam had burst, it would have been an inconceivable disaster.

Return to the 3rd chapter at section 550.



C77 Incredulous, you look down at your marked body and cannot believe that you have defeated this superior enemy alone. Aonus lies at your feet. Surprisingly, he grabs at your cloak once again with his fading strength. He presses the words out, "We shall see... one another... again." You think that you have heard his final threat, but he rears up again for the last time.

"Then... I will be by your side, brother." His last breath rasps away and he goes slack.

In confusion you watch as his body becomes first a dark-grey statue and then in a heartbeat dissolves into dust, carried by the wind as a ghostly black cloud over the dam wall. Only his fearsome sword and his fine Dragon Rider armor remain.

If you want to keep Aonus's diabolical broad sword, write down the Shadow Reaper (Weapon, Hit Bonus +5, Special: unknown) on your adventure sheet.

> If you have found FATE POINT #7, turn to C27. If not, turn to C17.



C78 Slowly, you run toward one another. You unleash the strength in your muscles with a powerful leap just as it does the same. Your bodies smash into one another, and you pound your reflection with your bare fists. Blood flows. Pain shoots through your limbs. Your clavs have been lacerated by the sharp-edged facets of the mirror monster.

Your VITALITY falls by one level!

Turn to C24.

C79 The Ugarith did not expect you to try this! You feint an attack against his legs, twist out of his parry and ram your shoulder into him, pushing him back.

Test your STRENGTH against 14!

If the test is successful, turn to C3. If it fails, turn to C23.

C80 While the refugees continue to flee towards the rocky hills, you must face the horrible monster rising from the bowels of the underworld. APPENDIX · COMBAT SECTIONS

GIANT SAND WORM DEFENSE ♥ 21 20 19 18 RESISTANCE ♥ ○ ③ ○ ⑤ ○ ⑦ ⑧ COMBAT ROUND ♡ ○ ○ ④ ○ ⑤ …

The monster's DEFENSE falls by 1 point if you take its third, fifth and seventh RESISTANCE point.

If you reach at least the sixth COMBAT ROUND (or the fourth, if you have the ability **Warfare**), the refugees are saved and you can abort the fight (turn to **C13**).

Otherwise, you must fight the monster to the bitter end.

If you survive the fight, turn to C97. In addition, you can take one of the following actions per COMBAT ROUND: Call Kyrna to use her Fire Breath (turn to C94). Use a Bomb or a Heavy Bomb—if you have one (turn to C18). Run to Kyrna and flee with her (turn to C73).

C81 No sooner have you blown your dragon horn, than a weird, shrill sound fills the cave, reverberating off the walls countless times. The noise pierces your ears, causing your body to quake, but the Xorox suffers even more. Its facets vibrate, bursting off the angular body of the monster.

Your VITALITY falls by one level!

The RESISTANCE of the Xorox falls by 2 points.

Return to C24 and continue with your fight.

C82 The serpent's desire to wrest from you a unique memory literally glitters in its eyes. But your pure divine aura appears to prevent it from committing this theft of your thoughts, and then it slithers towards you, suddenly striking its fangs into your shoulder and quickly pumping its paralyzing poison into your body.

Your VITALITY falls by one level!

Turn to C48.

32

C83 A fire is burning in the eyes of the serpent. At first, you think it is some kind of magic, but then you recognize the silhouette of the house in Leenhaven in whose flames the child you could not save burned to death.

If you want to refresh your memory of the burning house in Leenhaven, turn to section 383. Read the text between the moons (...) and then return here,

While you are trying to cope with the terrible memories of this fateful night, the serpent has entered your mouth. You shudder as it slithers from your throat into your frontal sinuses. It wants to get at these deep-seated memories! At first, you fight against the fading of this awful moment, but soon you find it a relief to be freed of the horror and loss.

Remove the RAGE point that was connected with section number 383. If you should receive RAGE points later on, you can use again the box that has become free now.

If this was the attack of the first serpent, turn to C43. If it was the attack of the second serpent, turn to C48.

C84 What remains of the pride of the fleet of the Empire is now only a wreck full of holes, still able to stay afloat but not able to survive another battle. The crew were either swallowed up by the sea or lie dead on the deck of the Nargus. Even Admiral Grobrig was badly wounded while defending his bridge. Black blood flows from a gaping wound in his chest.

As you hurry to help him and support his neck, you realize that his time has come. "Shadow Child," he begins with an agonized smile. "Should you still want to fulfill your task, visit the tobacco shop in Wain Allev."

You ask Grobrig why, but with all the blood in his mouth, he is unable to say any more words that are comprehensible. You think you hear "harbor" and "secret" before the admiral goes limp.

Under Special Notes on your adventure sheet, write down the number 300 next to **Wain Alley** so that you can follow Grobrig's advice when the time comes.

Turn to C29.



C85 Your life seems over when, with surprising sensitivity, the Golem softly touches your chest with his sharp fingers. At the same time, he reveals the golden figurine that you have taken from Nephatari. There is a sudden, happy recognition in the Golem's crystalline eyes. He carefully puts you down and takes three steps backwards.

Turn to C65.

C86 Determined to bury the villain in the sea, you pounce at him with an inhuman scream.

MENOKIAN CAPTAIN ATTACK DEFENSE RESISTANCE

If you survive the fight, turn to C95.

C87 You have trouble holding off the panicked crowd. Yet even in the chaos, you can't fail to notice that flames as high as a man are now rising from the oily bandages of the corpse. Nephatari's plaintive cries torment you. Her father's body is lost! Go back to C21 and try to continue surviving. C88 "Enough now!" Aonus roars at you, focusing his gaze. Meanwhile you have been surrounded by almost a dozen soldiers of the Empire who have run to the crest of the dam, alerted by the sound of combat. The Ugarith commands his men not to intervene, threatening them with their death.

Return to C42 and continue your fight!

C89 The enemy seems to be getting closer, approaching swiftly through the loose sand beneath your feet. You look hurriedly over the barren landscape and find a large hill of rock and boulders. There the refugees could be safe.

Making a quick decision, you shout to the Rigem, "Retreat to the hill-we are under attack!"

Turn to C31.

C90 You strike blindly at the wriggling lizard bodies. Finally, one of the serpents freezes before your eyes, opening wide its mouth and presenting its sharp poison fangs. In its narrow, slitted eyes memories of your life are reflected!

> If you are wearing the Serpent Ring and the Serpent Armlet, turn to C48.

If you want to escape immediately from the cursed serpents, you have no choice but to jump through the closed window (turn to the 7th chapter at section 899).

Otherwise, test your STRENGTH against 15!

If you have the ability Mental Focus, you can roll the dice again if your first try fails!

> If the roll is successful, turn to C64. If it fails, turn to C32.



C91 Without forewarning, you use the sharp edge of a rock to slash the mirror monster from its hip to its chest, hoping to surprise it with your attack. Yet far from being taken unawares, the mirror creature imitates you without hesitation. Test your DEXTERITY against 16!

If the test is successful, turn to C58. If it fails, turn to C15.

C92 Your strength is fading. So far you have barely scratched the Golem. And to make matters worse, the strength in his arms is beginning to return. This opponent is too powerful! You quickly look for a way to escape, but the stony face of the magical creature takes on an even grimmer expression. The cold crystal eves of the Golem light up and fix their gaze on you. Before you even know it, a sharp-edged fist crashes down on you.

You can evade the destructive blow, but the Golem's hunt has just begun. After a short game of cat and mouse you are utterly exhausted, but the magical stone creature does not let up. It grabs you and smashes your body against the cave wall over and over again.

Your life ends here.

C93 You feel Mireth's burning gaze strike you in the back. Stricken, you fall forward.

Your VITALITY falls by one level!

You have the presence of mind to roll to the side, moving just in time to evade the guard's sword blow, which hits the marble floor next to your head. Sparks fly, blinding you for a moment.

Turn to C35 and fight on.

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C94 "Kyrna!" you shout above the quaking of the earth. "Rosh, rosh!" Your companion understands, breathing in deeply and expelling a jet of fire at the Sand Worm, which almost disappears in the storm of fire and heat.

The ground shakes more violently, and you have trouble staying on your feet. But the monster reappears directly under your dragon, dragging it under. Kyrna flaps helplessly like a chicken held by the legs. With desperate courage she bites the Sand Worm, and the creature releases her.

Kyrna's VITALITY falls by one level!

Your heart aches when you are forced to see your companion's suffering. Kyrna is too clumsy on the ground to be able to resist this monstrosity from the depths of the fiery plains. "Gash, gash!" you command her remorsefully, and the dragon lady rises up into the air once more.

Return to C80 to continue your fight and cross off 1 point of RESISTANCE from the Sand Worm!

C95 Using your last reserves of strength, you slay the captain of the Menokian ship. The eyes of the warriors reveal a terror that quickly turns into a thirst for vengeance, and you realize that you have overcome their leader, but not their will.

The situation over on the Nargus seems hopeless: Grobrig and a handful of sailors scattered all over the deck are fighting their final battle. Two Menokians have apprehended the faltering admiral on the bridge.

If you want to hurry to help the admiral, turn to C12. If you want to jump into the open sea and escape by swimming, turn to C16. If you want to escape in a longboat, turn to C44. C96 Finally, Kyrna's fierce snarls drown out the noise of the masses. Your dragon has started to glide over the square, which has fallen into chaos!

Determined, you shove some Kyphisians aside and dash to a free space in front of a guard, who, surprised by your sally, lifts his round shield. With your last strength, you jump onto the shield, push off and grab Kyrna's outstretched paw.

Looking back, you see the countless dead lying on the holy square at the top of Mount Karith and around the burning Bowl of the Oracle. Nephatari, unhurt, is standing somewhat apart. You are relieved, but she watches your escape with a despairing expression on her face.

Return to the 7th chapter at section 1000.



C97 To be certain, you once again drive the curved blade of the Moon Sickle into the gigantic skull of the twitching Sand Worm. The refugees have watched the fight from a distant hill and cannot believe what has happened. They wave at you, cheering, as you stride towards them, flushed with pride. You set 1 KamA point for swins the Rigem.

Return to the 6th chapter at section 827.

C98 You are assigned to the group led by Dragonkeeper Logath. He shows you how to use the Rider's Bow. The compact bows of black, finely grained Breek wood are extremely tough

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and are strung with Yamok sinews. It takes a great deal of training and strength to find the right tension with which to fire a well-aimed arrow at a target. For two nights, you shoot hundreds of arrows across the square at targets of straw until your arms, chest and shoulders burn.

Then the situation becomes serious! Logath observes you practicing your archery for a final time to see what progress you have made. In addition to the mental pressure, the strong wind at the top of the Night Tower makes aiming more difficult.

Now we will see how you are doing. What bonus you get depends entirely on you! And this is how it works: Take a pencil and hold it, sharp side down, about six inches above the book, which is lying flat on the table. Aim for the center of the target and drop the pencil.

Concentrate, for you have only three tries!

Unless, that is, you have Mental Focus. Then you can try four times. Only the best shot counts!



If you hit the bullseye, you have the ability Masterful Marksman. Then you receive an ATTACK BONUS +3 for all DEXTERITY tests with the boxo.

C

If you have hit the while part of the target, you can write down the ability Good Marksman. You have shown good aim and receive a bonus +2.. If not, you are a Passable Marksman (ability) and get a bonus +1.

Make the necessary changes in line 7 on your adventure sheet. By the way. If you freely chose to receive this training (if you did not let the moon decide), fill in the empty star (\$\phi\$) next to "Voluntary Decline".

Return to the 2nd chapter at section 346.



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C99 Weaponmaster Urgoz takes you and some of your companions under his wing. In stern lessons, he shows you how to use the Rider's Thorn. This lance-like weapon of the best blood steel is the traditional weapon of the Dragon Riders. It is a combination of spear and saber. You can use it to stab, slash or even throw, all of which you learn in the next few nights to the level of exhaustion. To avoid losing the weapon in aerial combat, it is attached to your saddle with a chain of 40 feet in length. Your teachers watch your final training battles against the straw dolls with eagle eyes. It will be interesting to see how you do.

Whether Urgoz' rigorous training with the thorn has been successful or not depends entirely on you! You alone decide what bornus you receive! Here is how it works: Take a pencil and put in on one of the crosses beneath the doll (R if you are right-handed, L if you are left-handed).

Draw quickly and with closed eyes a line across the doll. You must try to hit the heart. You have only three tries! If you have the ability Mental Focus, you can try four times. Only the best hit counts!



If the line touches the heart, you are a **Masterful Fighter** (ability). You then get an ATTACK BONUS +3 when in close combat.

If you have hit the upper body (white area above the belt), you are a Good Fighter (ability). You then receive a bonus +2. If not, you are a Passable Fighter (ability) and get a bonus +1.

Update your adventure sheet in line 7. Return to the 2nd chapter at section 340

C100 The eyes of the seer blaze, and a sharp pain pierces your brow. Only with difficulty do you manage to hold the temporal bond between you, Kyrna and the present.

"An enemy Dragon Rider is among us!" Mireth shouts into the crowd and points to you. Screams of terror create utter chaos as the soldiers of the Golden Guard draw their weapons and start slaying the innocent people standing near you. The humans begin to panic and flee, trampling one another. Caught up in the crowd, you are pushed here and there at the mercy of countless bodies.

> If you want to draw the Moon Sickle, turn to C35^s. If you want to leave your weapon in its sheath or if you have no equipment, turn to C21.

APPENDIX

BONUS SECTIONS

B1 Beneath the crumbled remains of the ribs you see the dull surface of a small figurine. A quick pull is enough to get the piece of art out from between the bones and desiccated flesh. To your amazement, the statue shimmers as if it was made only yesterday. The figure consists of black marble and shows the voluptuous forms of a humanoid being with two genders. In the belly of the statuette there is a round opening, likely the setting for a jewel or pearl.

If you want to take the figurine, write down the Figurine of the Ancients (Special Item) on your adventure sheet. Also note this entry in the square provided, using a clearly recognizable cross ⊠. You can also write down PATE POINT #11

Turn back to the Prologue at section 6.



B2 The parchment is a schematic representation of the Ningal Tower, the headquarters of the Shadows. 'T have stolen the map from one of the guards. I took it the same night they took my eyes," the other captive tells you proudly.

Shown on the torn sheet of paper are all seven levels, the dungeon beneath the sea, the observation platform, as well as various passageways. If this document should fall into the hands of the armies of the Free Lands, they would have an enormous tactical advantage.

"I could not verify the plan, of course, but perhaps you can do it for me," the old man tries to convince you to take the parchment.

Write down the Map of the Night Tower (Special Item) on your adventure sheet if you want to take it. Also write down FATE POINT #21

Also write down FATE POINT #2!

Taking leave of your fellow prisoner with a short nod, you hurry to the connecting door that separates this wing from the rest of the prison. Suddenly you hear voices. Fearing discovery, you hide in the darkness beside the door.

Turn to the 1st chapter at 282.

B3 Before your mind's eye appears the image of a spherical artefact of incredible beauty. It bears a moon made of mother-ofpearl, the sun in pure gold and several stars in silver.

The smooth disc starts to spin. Slowly at first, then faster and faster. At the end, the heavenly bodies merge into a sparkling dance of light and shadow in front of your brow.

"Find the sky disc and understand your destiny!" you hear the clear, female voice in your head. ${\mathfrak D}$

A sparkling crystal ball manifests itself, set in a ring of matte silver, and falls out of the illusion to land at your feet. Fascinated, you pick up the jewel. Within it, you see illuminated the heavenly bodies that just now were dancing in front of you. When the magical play of colors fades away and you look up, you are confused. The Kroll Giant on the table seems somehow changed. • Has he moved? <



B2 Shown on the torn sheet of paper are all seven levels of the Night Tower, the dungeon beneath the sea, the observation platform, as well as various passageways.

Somehow, deep within, perhaps because of the power of the relic you now hold, you understand what has happened. Your encounter with the Skÿll has changed not only you, but also the world and its fate!

If you want to take the Star of Feymar (Special Item), write it down on your adventure sheet. The ring is worn on the hand.

Your DEXTERITY rises by 1 point!

Also write down FATE POINT #3!

Turn to the 1st chapter at 157.

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B4 The weak, red glimmer becomes a pulsating glow as you press the obsidian rock harder. For the first time you feel hungry, so much so that your mouth is watering. Without thinking, you put the magical stone in your mouth and swallow it. After only a few seconds, you are overcome by both a warming and frightening sensation. Your skin turns to stone and you pass out. When you wake up, you look the same as before, but there is new power lying dormant in you, and you instinctively know what it can do.



Write down the ability **Immunity to Heat** in line 1 on your adventure sheet. In addition, mark the number B4 there, the number of this section, so that you can look up something if necessary.

Your VITALITY rises to normal. Also write down FATE POINT #4!

Turn to the 1st chapter at 201.

B5 Afraid that the Ugar priest could do you some harm, you swallow the stone. Immediately, you are seized by a pleasant tingling. The power of the stars streams through your body, and you can hear Calderel's voice only in a muffled way, as if he were speaking to you through a thick wall. "This star stone should make you even stronger, my child."



B3 When the magical play of colors fades away and you look up, you are surprised. The Kroll Giant on the table looks unchanged. Has he moved?

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Your STRENGTH rises by 1 point! Also write down FATE POINT #5!

Your arms and legs are tingling pleasantly. Without comment, the Shadow Master leaves, still a complete mystery to you,

Return to the 2nd chapter with section 336.

B6 Perplexed, you look at the scar on the back of your left. claw. Your instincts say the Zarlik is right: it is a magical seal. Too powerful to break easily, it will take some time to uncover its secret.

You have taken one more step towards self-knowledge, perhaps the biggest one since the moment you woke up.

Your DEXTERITY rises by 1 point!

Also write down FATE POINT #6!

Return to the 3rd chapter with section 535.

B7 You have acted with divine foresight. Exploding the Veniz dam or destroying the water-gate mechanism without opening it would have led to a disaster. Leenhaven would have been destroyed, and thousands of innocents would have faced certain death. Divine favor places its finger upon you. Your STRENGTH rises by 1 point!

Your VITALITY regenerates to normal.

Also write down FATE POINT #7!

Return to the 3rd chapter with section 457.

B8 Unnoticed at first, while the old man is still talking to you. the dark fog creeps towards you, drifting up your legs and arms and seeping into your body.

You sense another change in your nature, in your very being. A new gift is spreading throughout your veins; you are now part of the Shadow World.

thing if necessary.

Write down the ability Shadow Walk in line 10 on your adventure sheet. In addition, mark the number B8 there, the number of this section, so that you can look up some-

Also write down FATE POINT #8!

Return to the 4th chapter with section 572.

Blazing flashes of lightning crackle over the holy blade, **B9** spreading over your arms and engulfing your whole body. In the rush of power, you clench your fists, throw back your head, and raise the Moon Sickle.

....this force... this power! Ugar and Kar. I feel you! «

Ugar and Kar are both with you at this moment. No, they are within you! You suddenly realize:

> I am Keşra... Child of the Heavens! <

Trembling with awe, you fall to your knees. The divine burden of responsibility suddenly resting on your being presses you to the very ground.



Write down the Moon Sickle of the Keşra (Weapon, Hit Bonus +2 ... +6 depending on the moon phase, see MOON CALENDAR in section 600). Special: Whenever you draw your holy sickle, you can use its abilities by adding 20 to the section number marked with a lightning bolt ". Example: If you want to use the ability of the Moon Sickle and the section called for is 653", read on with 673. This also means, however, that at this moment you reveal yourself as the Keşra, which can be dangerous.

With the holy blade, you also can do the following in battle:

a) ... let the attack be automatically successful. This costs you 1 KARMA point per COMBAT ROUND you want to use this gift.

b)...let the attack be automatically successful and cause 1 additional point of RESISTANCE loss. This costs you 2 KARMA points per COMBAT ROUND you want to use this gift.

Your DEXTERITY rises by 1 point!

Your VITALITY rises to fit.

Also write down FATE POINT #9!

Return to the 4th chapter with section 626.

B10 Suddenly all is quiet. Even though the gigantic storm around you, with its all-consuming grey funnel, continues to swallow up the land, nothing happens to you. You are in the eye of the cyclone! You laugh loudly, almost madly, only to collapse sobbing on Kyrna's back a few moments later. "Do not lose your courage, Kegral Together we shall do it!"

You are startled by the words in your mind. Confused, you wipe away the tears and look around you. Kyrna holds the altitude with a calm beating of her wings. You lose yourself in her gold, reptilian eyes. She answers your gaze soulfully, tilting her head to the side as she watches you. You feel not only deep affection, but also a sibling's bond to Kyrna.

Your DEXTERITY rises by 1 point!

Your RIDER RANK rises to Dragon Ally! Also write down FATE POINT #10!

AISO WHITE WOWN FAIL FUNIT #10

Return to the 5th chapter with section 739.

B11 The old woman feels for your armor, pulling you down to her level so she can whisper into your ear over the applause of the refugees.

"The Kar temple in the Ashen Sea is protected with an ancient spell, but nobody knows how to defeat it. The minions of the Shadow Master often despair over it."

Only now do you realize that the blind woman has taken both of your hands in hers and is stroking the back of your claws with her thumbs.

"Oh yes," she murmurs. "Hope has returned, and the children of Rigem will live freely in the future," she prophesies with tears in her cloudy eyes.

Then the old woman recovers herself once more. She calls out for a small wooden casket to be brought from among her personal



B11 You look at the defense scheme exactly. The secret of the Kar Temple seems to be encoded in the strange pattern of symbols. What is the meaning of the circle symbol's notches?

belongings. From out of it, she hands you a parchment bearing strange symbols around an eight-pointed star. She tells you it is a relic of the primal tribe of Rigem and that it is said to show the protective spell on the Kar temple.

The tribal elder cannot give you the parchment, so you memorize its patterns. You cannot understand its mysteries at the moment, but at least you can recall it from now on. Write down FATE POINT #11!

With deep gratitude you say your farewell to the refugees and rise into the air with Kyrna. For a long time, the women and children wave after you.

Return to the 6th chapter with section 810.

B12 No sooner has the mask touched your face, than you feel a tingling and burning on your calcified skin. Startled, you want to remove the artefact, but it remains firmly in placel As you pull with growing desperation, the gold grows hotter and hotter. The pain becomes unbearable, but the mask is already bonding so tightly that it cuts off your air. You begin to panic.

> So this will be my end! <

You have almost given up the struggle to survive when the metal suddenly melts and eats into your flesh. The pain almost drives you mad but then, from one moment to the next, all the agony is gone. You touch your face in disbelief; the mask has disappeared. It is gone, yet you have changed.

Write down the Sun Mask of the Keşra (Clothing, Head, Protection +2) on your adventure sheet.

Special: The true mask is an artefact from the hoard of Calis the Avenger. It has absorbed much of the power of its Keeper over time, so it gives you the following abilities in a fight: you may... a) ...let your Defense be automatically successful. This costs you 1 KARMA point per COMBAT ROUND you want to use this gift.

b) ... let your DEFENSE be automatically successful and regenerate one level of your VITALITY.

This costs you 2 KARMA points per COMBAT ROUND in which you want to use this gift.

Write this down on your adventure sheet! The mask has fused with your face and is invisible to others.

Your STRENGTH rises by 1 point!

Also write down FATE POINT #12!

Return to the 6th chapter with section 850.



B13 "Take him away from here!" you immediately urge your companion while lifting the anxious Kathum onto the saddle. You check the straps and whisper final instructions in Kyma's ear. Should you not blow the horn in the next half hour, she is to get to safety. In two days she is to circle the pyramid at noon and wait for the horn signal so as to pick you up again.

Wistfully, you tap your dragon's scaly flank, and she spreads her wings, gliding away from the top of the city pyramid into the darkness.

You know that the Kar temple in the center of the park will play an important role in the future, not only during this night!

Kathum's body will soon be buried. You will simply have to wait until the hierarch is brought to the crypt. This will probably be the quickest and safest method for getting to his body.

With a superhuman burst of strength, you leap from the palace roof to one of the nearby trees, climb down its trunk and, with your head down, run to the temple. There are countless guards in the park looking for the assassin, but you skillfully manage to hide from them. They do not even notice you as you climb the rough granite wall.

Write down FATE POINT #13!

Return to the 7th chapter with section 935.

B14 "I am so proud of you, Kyrna!" you burst out as you stroke her neck plumage.

Your dragon has performed wonderfully by single-handedly burning the Black Army to cinders. But your dragon also knows about your part in this mission. The invisible bond of trust between you reaches its highest level.

Your RIDER RANK rises to Dragon Master!

Turn to the extra chapter at X41.



B15~ The two Keepers cannot hide their curiosity, but they do not ask about the contents of Tarus' letter. Finally, the old Keeper

takes out a strongbox and hands it to you with a watchful gaze. "I am also to hand you this at his command."

As you open the plain lid it creaks softly, and you are surprised to see the small figurine again. You had almost forgotten that in this fateful night you had found it in the crypt of the Kar temple, lying in the black sarcophagus of the first elder. Tarus must have taken it from your belongings when Aonus dragged you to the Black Tower.

> Did he want to protect me doing this? «

If you have the Star of Feymar, turn to B17. If not, turn to B16.

B16 With an uneasy feeling, you pocket the remarkable work of art.

Erase the cross in the square is to show that you have regained the Figurine of the Ancients (Special Item).

Return to the 3rd chapter with section 483.

B17 As you take a closer look at the figurine, you realize that the crystal from your ring might fit into the round setting. And in truth, the Star of Feymar fits perfectly into the abdominal cavity of the figurine. The jewel lights up for a moment, duplicates itself and awakens the figurine! Its arms embrace the new crystal sphere protectively—its new abdomen. The figurine now resembles a preenant woman protecting her unborn.

Remove the Figurine of the Ancients and write down the Idol of the Hierarch (Special Item) on your adventure sheet.

Return to the 3rd chapter with section 483.

B18 You scan the document bearing the watermark of the Empire, and you are certain that you recognize your master's handwriting.

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My dear student,

if you are reading these lines, I am happy to know that you are safe, especially since these last times must have been confusing and dangerous for you.

I want to help you, but as Master Gonro certainly told you, we Keepers are duty-bound not to change the course of history. With this letter, I will be willingly breaking my vow for the first time – may the ancients foreive me!

The Shadow Master's driven by madness and revenge. He hides his warmongering under the cover of faith. But I am afraid that this is only half of the truth. He is h dangerous man, willing to exploit whole nations for his goals. Similarly, he has been manipulating year for the last few years so as to blanket the continent with death.

Perhaps yeu already have an idea of yeur role in this world. At least I am sure that yeu are no longer following Calderel's commands swillingly, for you are not a Shadow - have never been a Shadow - and deep in yeur heart yeu know this,

Your lineage is also your destiny.

A divine burden that you may never forsake!

So that you may understand, let me ask you to climb the holy Varoon on the northern slope of the Sendul glacier and to visit the Ugar temple there. That is where you will receive the wisdom to find yourself and perhaps oven end this war.

Prayers and blessings of the divine siblings sent to you from Tarus.

P.S.: It is a long, ardinous journey through the land of the Empire. And the last trek to the Varoon itself is its own challenge! You can only reach the temple on foot along a narrow path. Be firm in your faith and you will previal! Check slot 1 under Special Items.

If there is a cross in the square , turn to B15. If not return to the 3rd chapter with section 483.

B19 There is a short, whispered debate among the Keepers, obviously as to whether they should confide more to you or not. They use a weird secret language that reminds you more of animal noises than human language.

If you have the Pearl of Understanding (Special Item) or the ability of Diplomacy, turn to B20. If not, turn to B21.



B20 You understand the secret language of the Keepers! "We have to lead him on the right path," the red-haired woman insists. "Knowing full well that he has been manipulated by the Shadow Master."

"It does not matter," the old man replies. "Something has happened. The gods have cleansed the Keşra."

"But there could be a risk in blindly trusting him."

"Your failing faith is shameful for a graduate of Rohja! Do you doubt the divine siblings?"

Contrite, the woman falls silent.

Turn to B21.

B

B21 At the end of the discussion, the old man prevails. He now speaks to you in understandable language. "The Keepers are neutral. We do not interfere. Only Tarus' plea that we find you is the reason for this meeting. He also asked me to give you this. He will contact you in due course."

The old Keeper hands you a letter with the seal of the Empire. It bears the following words:

To be opened by the Shadow Child

You tremble as you break Tarus' wax seal.

Turn to B18.



B22 Calderel's dead body lies before you, his formerly so confident face having deteriorated into a pitful grimace. You are overwhelmed by blind hatred for all his misdeeds and warmongering, which brought so much pain and death to the land.

The air is vibrating with the boundless power gathering in your veins, intent on removing the dark ruler from the world once and for all.

But your boundless hatred for the Shadow Master turns to bitter rage over the loss of friends and family, followed by fury at your own unwitting role in all this. Rage becomes disdain for all those fools power-hungry enough to abandon themselves to his false purposes. And then your disappointment finally fades into rejection of those who only looked away instead of rising up. In the end, even this last negative thought dissolves, making room for a liberating clarity, experienced by both souls simultaneously:

» We are Keşra, twins of the gods, the unwavering equilibrium of Kar and Ugar! «

You turn away from the Shadow Master and look up to your parents, who have already separated again, parting from one another to traverse the sky alone once more. The fleeting moment of the Black Sun is over.

From the distance a barely audible sound merges with the whistling of the wind, quickly filling the vast sky with a beguiling chorale.

As if out of nowhere, three dragons appear in the blazing light of the sun. Spellbound, you follow the graceful movements of their tails and necks and the gentle beating of their wings. Their gigantic bodies sparkle majestically in gold, silver and white.

On their backs sit the singers of this heavenly melody, the childlike emissaries of the gods. Seren, leading the formation with her white dragon, first circles the top of the Ningal Tower and then holds her position a little way off. She waves at you radiant with joy.

"We have come to bring the Keşra the tribute of the gods!" Seren's voice is filled with such elation and peace that it even drowns out the echoing sound of the dragons' wings. "You have achieved that which was asked of you."

Awed, you acknowledge the praise with a deep bow while Kyrna lands behind you on the battlefield.

Nephatari slips from her saddle, still bearing the marks of her ordeal at the Black Gate. Tears of joy are streaming down her cheeks as she falls into your arms.

"And your journey together ends here!" Seren frames the

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APPENDIX · BONUS SECTIONS

reunion. "But first, the Black Sun shall receive her well-deserved reward."

Kyrna's fervent cry echoes proudly over the horizon as her wings and scales glow in an astral light. Blinded, you turn away, only to hear leather straps snapping and the beating of her wings growing deeper and deeper.

When you can look at Kyrna again, her wingspan has almost doubled! Her neck plumage now shines in the pure white of a swan's, and her scales shimmer like mother-of-pearl in the sun. Only her faithful golden eyes and unique brow horn reveal that this is the dragon with whom you have gone through so much.

"Kyrna, the Black Sun, becomes Karÿll the Bright, Guardian of the Lengal Tower!" Seren elevates your companion to her new task.

Karÿll lowers her head gracefully, granting you and Nephatari a seat on her mighty back.

"I thank you, Keşra. I owe you a debt I can never repay", the dragon acknowledges.

"Oh no, Kyrna!" you reply as is your custom, and greatly moved. "You owe me nothing."

Your head is hurts even more intensely.

"Mind of the Keşra,", Seren's telepathic voice sounds unexpectedly earnest. "It is time for you to go. Let him go!"

You feel the determination in Seren's words, almost a command. And it is followed by another stabbing pain, as if a star was exploding in your head! It is the same pain you also had to endure in the fateful night of Kathum's death.

» Argh! This light... Oh no, it is happening again! «

You are fighting a hopeless battle for the Ugarith and cannot prevent your mind from detaching itself from his body. Slowly, fiber by fiber, memory by memory, you disengage yourself from him and drift away. The Ugarith, still clutching to Karÿll's back, seems to understand what is happening to you both. "Return to your own world, spirit from beyond!", he screams. Bodiless, you stare down at the Ugarith, on whose head dimly appears the burning mask of truth, and for a moment you fear its deadly rage, but then you understand the wisdom and clarity of its reflection.

If the Ugarith on Karijll's back wears a Signet Ring, turn to B23. If he wears a Serpent Ring, turn to B24.



Although the ordeal of the past few days is writ in **ESB** Nephatari's face, she still can't rest: "Say, this spirit that was in you, who was it?"

"I believe it was the spirit of a wise and brave human man from another world."

"From another world?" "Yes. He called it Earth." "Earth... sounds beautiful." .25B ni saydboog ruoy yno?

Lost in thought and with a tired gaze Nephatari looks up **B28** at the clouds: "Say, this spirit that was in you, who was it?" "It was the spirit of a very brave and clever woman." "A woman?" Nephatari asks in surprise. "Yes, a human woman. She came from another world!" "What world?" "Earth—that's what she called it."

B25 With a powerful bound from the edge of the Shadow Tower, Karÿll spreads her wings and, with Nephatari and the Ugarith on her back, glides above the gentle waves of the Crystal Sea. Finally, they can leave the darkness of the recent days behind. Nephatari immediately falls asleep, resting on the shoulder of her rescuer.

"Good journey, my spiritual companion!" the Ugarith whispers into the wind. "You were always a faithful guide in the trials and tribulations of fate and time! Thanks to you, I escaped both death and damnation and found the love of a girl of the sun. May the gods be with you, wherever your home may be!"

> Farewell, my friend! «

Thus they part company, the two creatures who, as one, comprised that being that will be spoken of generations from nowthe Keşra, avenger of the gods.

END *****

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Write down FATE POINT #14 as evidence of the happy resolution of your great adventure.

If you have found all FATE POINTS, congratulations! If you have missed some of them, well then, your journey was successful, but not perfect. And only the gods can achieve perfection, can they not?

*

You can rate your journey with the Star Rating on page 597!

After that, read on at the EPILOGUE "DISTANT DREAMS".



B25 With a powerful bound from the edge of the Shadow Tower, Karÿll spreads her wings and, with Nephatari and the Ugarith on her back, glides above the gentle waves of the Crystal Sea. TARAH'S CHAPTER

KEEP AND BURY

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You are Tarah, a young, upcoming Keeper from Leenhaven, with great influence within the widely woven useb of this ancient secret society. You don't one your rapid ascension merely to your remarkable intelligence and your curiosity or even to your skills in close combat alone; no, as one of few people you also carry the magic spark within you! You have mastered both the caste of mental strength—at least in basic terms—as well as the forces of the elementary fire plane.

You possess 5 SPARKS, which you are allowed to use during this bonus chapter. Whenever you would be able to use a spell, you would have to use at least one SPARK.

Such a section reference is always indicated by a SPARK symbol +. If you run out of SPARKS, you will have to choose an option that does not show such a symbol.

These special points are noted on the third page of the adventure sheet under Tarah's Notes. Enter 5 SPARKS there now!

Since the emergence of your unique talents you have been under the care of the Keepers. You were still only a little girl when, after a nasty and mysterious incident that a neighbors' girl nearly fell victim to, your parents, heavyhearted, brought you to the Temple of the Seeing in Leenhaven.

Early on it became apparent what powers were slumbering inside young Tarah. Thus one day, Master Gonru, one of the mightiest men among the Keepers-something you were to learn later on-noticed you, took you under his wing and provided you with access to nearly limitless knowledge and possibilities. Specialized instructors taught you secrets, things forgotten and forbidden. Yes, to this day the world of the Keepers appears fascinating and all-powerful, pure and wise to you.



"Nothing exists out of the One alone. It is they, the most primal energies, the siblings of creation which together conceive the universe, preserve and destroy it."

- THE ORACLE OF KABETH

T1 You are waiting for Master Gonru impatiently, knowing full well that he is seriously ill and not very steady on his feet anymore. It seems only a matter of time until the God siblings call your aged foster father to their side, and so every evening you include in your prayers that he may be allowed to spend his last days in peace. Yet after all the endless years of senseless war, you have nearly given up hope that it will come to pass.

You hardly know anything except war. Since your childhood you have been living in fear that Leenhaven, your home, could be attacked and destroyed by the Empire.

And in fact, this fear appears to be proving true in these very hours. With concern you have heard of the unsuccessful assassination attempt on Calderel, ruler of the Empire and his priesthood of Ugar.

This solo effort of the Kyphi, led by the Daughter of the Sun Nephatari, the descendant of the killed Kar Priest emperor, has probably destroyed any peace efforts. However, the Empire does

not seem interested in peace. Even in already conquered regions people are still being abducted, yes, whole villages eradicated. In this respect you can relate to the actions of the Daughter of the Sun. Revenge can become a mighty, uncontrollable motivator. But Nephatari's fate lies in the dark. To this day she has not come back from the desolate rocks of the Black Tower. According to your spies in the harbor, however, the three residents of Kyphi who survived the suicide mission and evaded Calderel's hunters are back in Leenhaven.

An errand boy holds the door open with a deep bow as, breathing heavily. Master Gonru shuffles to your side at the table in the conference room. Although he doesn't like being supported, you still help him sit down. "I have interesting news, Tarah!" he starts off in a feeble voice. "The fleet of the Empire is expected to arrive here tomorrow!"

"Pardon, honored master, but what is new about that?"

"Patience, my Tarah," the old man laughs and has to cough. "It was brought to our attention that a secret, diplomatic meeting between the military attaché Brogat from Leenhaven and the Menokians is to take place."

"Interesting..." is all you can say while you ponder the news your master has given you. What can the Menokians, allies of the Empire for many years, want to talk about here, one day before the great attack? That seems more than strange.

"That's a fair question, Tarah. And that's the reason why I want you to take care of it. Gather as much information about it as you can."

"As you wish!" With a bow you are about to take your leave from Gonru when he lifts his wrinkled hand one more time.

"Not so fast, my Tarah, there's something else!"

You sit down again and exhale impatiently.

"I know Tarah, there's hardly time. However, there's a further scene which is equally able to redirect the world's flow!" "Master, you're certainly referring to the Kyphians who arrived here the day before yesterday."

Gonru smiles proudly and nods.

"I will take care of this as well, have no worry, Master."

"Oh Tarah, I don't doubt your zest for action, but very much your ability to split yourself in half."

Standing up again, you walk towards the door and say your farewells with a cheeky smile on your lips. "Rest easy and let this be my problem, Master Gonru!"

What do you want to do?

Visit the library and gather information about Menokians, the Empire and Kyphi (turn to T6).

Immediately call upon your spies on the streets and ask them if they have noticed anything unusual that will put you on the right track (turn to T17).



T2 Holding your ear to the door, you hear the empty exchange of greetings between the Menokian female warriors and the military attaché Brogat.

"May I ask what you're doing here, my dear?"

Found out, you wince and catch sight of the housekeeper's head at the bottom of the stairs. At the same time, you notice that the conversation at the secret meeting has come to a halt.

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Without thinking twice, you hurry down the stairs and squeeze past the frightened housekeeper out into the open. Annoyed with your own carelessness, you slip into a dark alley and observe the inn from there, hoping that your actions have not resulted in breaking off the conversations.

Turn to T12.

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T3 Moving rapidly, you search for some clues as to the whereabouts of the men. You are about to break off the search when you hear a noise behind you coming from the semi-shade of a rear courtyard.

You have barely turned around when the glittering tip of a saber is pressed under your chin. Standing in front of you is the trio's leader, who threatens with a deep voice: "Look, a red snake! Why could she be slithering after us?"

You keep silent considering his determination and the steel at your throat while trying to find an exit out of the corner of your eye. But in view of his superiority there is nothing left for you to do except stand coolly still. Nevertheless, through your many years of studying the mind you get a fleeting glimpse of the man's intent, and fear pounces on you like a wild animal: You recognize a cold nod, as if he wants to endorse the consequences of his own decision...

Before the fatal blow can reach your throat, you have already dived beneath the blade. Only a single severed strand of your red hair swirls through the air.

Sensing what will happen, you roll away and hide your face, just in time as the magic power of your severed hair discharges with a blinding lightning bolt, which leaves the three men tumbling around blindly. Determined, you jump up, shove the leader against the wall of a house and run away.

Cross off 1 SPARK from your adventure sheet!

Turn to T37.

Calmly you ask the Ugarith to step forward: "I'm on your side, even though you may not know that yet." The one detected does not move at first, suspiciously watching every movement you make. "Please follow me," you continue. "We have to get off the street before we draw any more attention to ourselves. Besides, the air raid can start any moment."

The Ugarith nods in agreement and you lead him to the two Keeper Guards and their simple cart. Despite his willingness to cooperate, and saying, "Sorry, but it's for the safety of all of us," you put a bag over his head and hide him on the cart bed between a few potato sacks and under an old blanket.

Turn to T14.



T5 "What is a young lady doing here on the streets of Leenhaven, despite the curfew?" grunts a deep male voice at you. A powerfully built man in his late fifties, with straight black-gray hair and wearing a leather jacket with a golden pin in the shape of two crossed swords, steps confidently from the shadow of the alley into the open. Instead of his left lower leg he has a piece of polished Raan tree.

You know who is standing before you: It is the military attaché Brogat, presumably on a secret mission-without any guards around him.

"Well?", he demands.

If you want to walk away without giving him an answer, turn to T15. Or if you want to use a spell to put him into a deep sleep and also rob him of the memory of the last couple of minutes, turn to +T43.



T6 Only a few, selected Keepers have access to the secret books in the library. And each time it fills you with pride and awe when you turn the key in order to enter the time-honored room. As you let your gaze wander over the shelves, you notice some gaps. Apparently someone has borrowed On the Nature of the Ugarith, one of the three forbidden works. The two other works, On the Anatomy of the Ugarith and On the Faith of the Ugarith, are flanking the gap. Lost in thought, you pull one of the black, leather-bound books from the shelf and begin to leaf through it. You have always been fascinated by their content.

It is especially the etchings portraying their strong bodies, their pitch-black skin, as well as their white eyes without pupils that have caught your attention.

Of course, you have never encountered a real Ugarith in the flesh. Allegedly, only a few hundred of the old ruler race are said to still exist. The last of their kind are thought to live in Alonia and inside the Ningal Tower.

The anonymous author is said to be an expert on the Ugarith. Apparently, he served under them his whole life, secretly studied them and thus was able to record his knowledge of them. It is only because of this that one knows about the Ugarith fascination with fire, as well as their disdain for music.

Meanwhile, Master Gonru has entered the library through the secret door to his study, and trembling, he returns the second volume to the shelf. "Unfortunately, Tarah, in the future we will probably file these works under 'history'."

"Why unfortunately?" you exclaim. "The Ugarith were the ones who started this war! They deserve this fate."

"It is the Ugarith people themselves who have suffered the most in these years. It seems only a matter of time until they are wiped from the face of this world."

"Good," you grunt. "Then they will follow their old friends, the Skÿll."

"Tarah, you might be right," Gonru remains unperturbed. "Yes, maybe this is a fragment of the God siblings' plan. But now go, we really do not have time for theological discussions!"

Bowing briefly, you hurry through various twisting secret tunnels and enter the Leenhaven harbor district through a small warehouse. Turn to T17.

T7 After using a brief spell and asking a trivial question as to how he is feeling, you are certain that the Ugarith is not lying to you. You would even go so far as to declare that the concept of lying is abhorrent to him. In that respect, his reticence is not an act. Cross off 1 SPARK from your adventure sheet!

Turn to T24

T8 You follow your informant's concrete lead by going deeper into the port district with all its dirty corners and dark alleys. In passing you greet the few merchants, craftsmen and port workers who are still brave enough to enter the streets.

The situation seems hopeless; thus you are even more surprised at how well attended the tavern is which was given to you as the meeting point. Apparently, those inhabitants who have not yet turned their backs on their home wish to celebrate extensively their likely last day in this world.

Your spy, a haggard port boy with greasy hair, who is standing at the counter, secretly indicates a table. Satisfied, you slip him a coin, observing three southern-looking men sitting there, arguing, with flushed red faces and carafes of wine in front of them. Their scimitars are lying openly on the table.

If you want to take a seat at the table next to them, turn to T25. If you want to continue watching them from a safe distance from the counter, turn to T33.

T9 "I'm certain that you can use all the help you can get to finally end this horrid war, right?"

The Ugarith tilts his head to one side and scratches absentmindedly at the back of his left hand. "You don't have to do this," he says calmuly, "I know that you'll only get in trouble for this." "Trouble?" it bursts out of you. "When the Black Army burns everything to the ground tomorrow, nobody will care anymore!" Taking a few deep breaths, you command: "Please, can't you just be silent and accept this?"

How many SPARKS do you still have?

None, continue at **T19**. 1 or 2, continue at **T26**. 3 or 4, continue at **T31**. 5 or 6, continue at **T45**. TARAH'S CHAPTER · KEEP AND BURY

T10 After a short glimpse into the mental world of your spies you have a better understanding of their reports. Four of them are certainly accurate and would be worth taking a closer look at. Doubts remain concerning one of the reports, namely that of the Dvorak in the warehouse. But you don't have the time to grill your spy more on the subject.

However, you are certain that two of the observations could actually be significant: The two tattooed women must come from Menokia. Only under exceptional circumstances do the actual leaders of the seafaring people leave the protective palisades of their tribes.

What in the world could they want here? And further, the three Southerners from the other report must be the pitiful remains from the Kyphian attack on the Ningal Tower.

Cross off 1 SPARK from your adventure sheet!

Return with your knowledge to T17 and make your choice!

T11 Excited, you enter the vacant room next door and listen undisturbed to the muffled voices coming through the wall... Swiftly the three come to the actual purpose of their meeting. A rough female voice: "Our last offer: We guarantee you the full support of the complete Crystal Lake Fleet, and in exchange we receive escort-free travel and duty-free trading in all harbors of the Free Countries."

"Yes, that's acceptable."

"Good, it's settled then. But do tell—how are things with the dam? We've heard that the Empire has it under complete control." The stubborn answer of the attaché, an affirmative grunt, is clearly audible even in your room. "We'll take care of it when the time is right. The water reservoir has meanwhile reached such a high level that the Empire will be forced to open the floodgate in the next couple of days."

The voices fall silent, a door is opened and then immediately closed again. Through the window you see the departure of the military attaché a little while later.

Note on the third page of the adventure sheet, Path of Wisdom, the numbers 389 (upper box) and 450 (lower box) under "B".

Turn to T32.

T12 You have only a vague idea of what the military attaché is talking about with the Menokians inside the inn, but when he comes out on the street again a couple of minutes later, you think that you can read from the pleased expression on his face that he has reached his goals.

But what is he plotting with the enemy? In a pensive mood you walk back through the narrow alleys to the port district.

Cross off one clock under Time on the third page of your adventure sheet! If you have not yet crossed out all three clocks, return to TI7 and make another choice. Otherwise turn to TI30

T13 You concentrate on a gray-haired sailor, who, deep in thought, is scratching on the rim of his empty pewter cup. With ease you enter his mind and impart to him the urgent feeling that he has to visit the latrine.

With a cheeky smile you sit down at the now empty spot and confidently push the sailor's cup to the side before you concentrate on the men next to you.

Cross off 1 SPARK from your adventure sheet!

Turn to T23.

T14 Like most citizens of Pakonia you have never come face to face with an Ugarith before. Not really surprising, after all, only a few hundred of them still exist. Quite a few years ago, Master Gonru gave you a book to study containing some anatomical drawings, but they do not come close to showing a living, breathing Master of the Night, or Shadow, as they are reverently called.

As you regard the Ugarith on the cart, so calm, yes, downright petrified, hidden under the blanket, you begin to wonder whether he is actually the right one. To be sure, he is quite an impressive figure, but he is wearing the uniform of a simple soldier as well as carrying mundane equipment and weapons. It is hard to believe that this young warrior is the prophesied Shadow Child.

Still, your astral inner self, your magical spark, is stimulated by the aura of this being. It is like a warming fire made of pure emotions.

If you want to give in to your curiosity and touch the Ugarith's body, turn to T34. If you want to talk to him, turn to T16. If, however, you want to go on in silence, turn to T24.



T15 You turn away from the dark alley and watch Leenhaven's famous military attaché Brogat stepping forward on his wooden leg into the sunlight. He looks at you stemly, shakes his head, turns around and purposefully enters the Broken Hatch Inn.

If you want to follow Brogat into the Inn, turn to T22. If you want to wait on the street, turn to T12. 76

T16 You decide to interrogate your catch: "Hey Shadow, where do you actually come from?"

"Well," the being addressed begins slowly, awakening still somewhat dazed from his rigid state. "Alonia, I guess."

"Very funny. I thought as much, that you are from the other side. What I meant was what city, village or wherever your kind comes from."—Silence.

Well, in fact you did not really expect that the Ugarith would be very talkative. "I understand," you murmur and try something easier. "What's your name?"

Again the dark skinned stranger remains silent. But you sense that it is not out of spite or pride that he is not answering you; rather the opposite, your questions seem to preoccupy him more than they do you.

> If you want to use a magic clairvoyance spell, turn to +17. If you want to use a magic mind spell, turn to +171. If you, however, want to keep walking in silence, turn to 1724.



T17 You try to crowd out of your mind thoughts of what the streets of Leenhaven may look like tomorrow. The few remaining air-scouts predict the arrival of the Imperial fleet within the next 24 hours.

This means that any overlooked enemy movement would be fatal. And as a Keeper of the upper hierarchical plane you are of course well aware that the last free port city on the coast of the Crystal Sea is infested with enemy pursuers, spies and sympathizers. Within a few minutes your request has spread like wildfire through a network of gofers and spies, and so you are waiting by the dried-up fountain at the fish market for an informant with important news to make himself known.

In the end, you learn about five interesting incidents occurring during the last few days:

- Three southern-looking fellows have been looking in vain for a guide to lead them to Veniz.
- An elderly man with a broken accent has been quietly seeking information about Menokian weapons.

Two women, covered in strange tattoos, have taken a room at an inn in Wain Alley.

A dark-skinned man, cloaked in a crimson cape and carrying a long staff, asked the way to the orphanage.

A Dvorak was seen in a deserted warehouse at the harbor. Which lead do you want to follow up first?

AT8, **B**T18, **C**T28, **D**T38, **B**T48

If, however, you want to enter the mind of your spies instead so as to see the faces of the suspects through their eyes, and thus perhaps make your decision easier, turn to +T10.

T18 You need some time and some coins in order to find the merchant and make him talk. The son of a weapon smith tells you about a stranger from the north, most likely a fugitive from Geta, who desperately wanted to get his hands on a Menokian dagger, in order to avenge his murdered wife befitting his social status. "Of course, I sent the old man on his way! Hey, they'll cut all my fingers off if I sell Star Steel!"

You bid the merchant farewell, angry over the waste of time. Cross off one clock under **Time** on the third page of your adventure sheet.

> If you have not yet crossed out all three clocks, return to T17 and make another choice. Otherwise turn to T30.

T19 You reach into the secret pocket of your cape and pull out a small pewter bottle, which you offer to the surprised Ugarith. Note the Small Potion (Utensil, restores once two levels of VITALITY, possibly even up to fit, and that can be used anytime) on your adventure sheet.

Is the Ugarith already wearing armor on his arms?

If yes, he wears Kroll Giant Cuffs, turn to T29. If no, he does not possess such cuffs, turn to T36.

T20 You are aware that you have barely fifteen minutes before Brogat wakes up from his enchanted sleep. So, you walk purposefully through the wooden door of the deserted taproom. There is only an elderly woman with a knotted cloth on her head mooping the stairwell.

"Listen, little mother," you address her in the dialect of Leenhaven. "I'm looking for two strong wenches, who have supposedly found accommodation here."

The old woman acts at first as if she has not heard anything, but then murmurs something incomprehensible and points with her mop up the stairs. A few moments later you are standing in front of the room belonging to the Menokian female warriors.

You are about to consider your further plan of action, when the door is opened a crack and a pair of narrowed dark eyes scrutinize you. Confident, you show Brogat's brooch.

"It's about time," snarls the female warrior in her broken dialect and lets you enter the room. The other amazon at the table pushes a chair in your direction with her foot and pats on its seat. Before you have a chance to sit down, the older one says with nearly perfect pronunciation: "You know our terms; you get our complete fleet for support if we get limitless, duty-free trade on all routes of the Crystal Sea effective immediately."

You remain in the role of negotiator: "How many ships?" The

two of them look at each other and answer nearly in unison: "Twelve." And the leader adds: "We are going to wait until the end before we switch sides, so stay patient."

"That's how it shall be done!" you agree and get up. "May the Gods be with us the next few hours."

If you want to send the two female warriors to sleep like Brogat and remove all memory of you, turn to **+ T46**. Otherwise turn to **T41**.

T21 You concentrate on the fine pattern of the astral matrix and project your mind onto that of the Ugarith in front of you, hoping to build a connection. But you notice quickly as suddenly a further barrier rises up in front of you.

It is, however, not a protective spell or some natural resistance, but rather the unexpected complexity of a second mind! If you did not know better, you would say that two parallel minds are residing in the Ugarith's head! Maybe his confusion can be attributed to this circumstance. Is he possibly suffering from amnesia or schizophrenia? Or is this even normal for an Ugarith? *Cross off* 1 *Strake from your adventure sheet*!

Turn to T24.

T22 Your stomach burns with uncertainty as you push open the door of the inn. The empty taproom lies in darkness, nevertheless, you notice that the stairwell has been cleaned only recently. Brogat's fresh boot prints are still clearly visible. When you also hear the splash and clatter from the kitchen, you hurry swiftly up the stairs leading to the upper floor. You only have to follow the wet prints on the floorboards until

You only have to follow the wet prints on the floorboards until you finally end up in front of a closed door.

If you want to eavesdrop, turn to T2. If you want to enter the room next door, turn to T11.

T23 In silence you sip your stale ale, from time to time gazing casually over to your targets. The three men from the Desert Realms speak in a dialect of Rhelih, a melodious, image-rich language. The gentlemen do not seem to mind if they are overheard and carry on their discussion with proud gestures. Who should understand them here anyway?

There is not one of the six main languages of Pakonia that you do not speak. In this respect, it is easy enough for you to follow their discussion, even though their accent is really challenging.

"We need to destroy the dam-no matter the costs!" says the wiry man.

The youngest nods, adding: "Exactly, we simply blow a big hole into the wall!"

"Idiots!" the oldest slams his fist on the table, "do you have any idea at all what will happen if the dam breaks and the lake floods the valley?"

Ignorantly, the two others shrug their shoulders as their leader continues: "No, we need to get inside and solve the problem from within. There must be gates and sluices which regulate the lake's outflow into the channel to Leenhaven."

Silently, they empty their glasses, get up and leave the inn. Note on the third page of the adventure sheet, **Path of Wisdom**, under "A" the number 504 (upper box) as well as 400 (lower box).

If you want to continue keeping tabs on the men, turn to T42. If you want to signal to your spy that he should tail them for you, so that you can take care of some other business, turn to T37.

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T24 Although you sense how important this Ugarith could become for the outcome of the war in the coming hours and days, you suppress the urge to scrutinize the Ugarith further, instead trotting at a safe distance behind the cart and your two helpers. "Isn't it ironic," a thought escapes your mouth. Is it possible that the future of the Alliance of the Free Countries will actually depend on a creature that belongs to the race that has started all this in the first place?

When you arrive, the Ugarith's wounds are first attended to before he is introduced to Master Gonru. The exchange with the Shadow Child, however, goes like most conversations with the Keeper: Master Gonru insists on upholding neutrality and secrecy and thus remains accordingly vague in his statements. You, on the other hand, may stand for your own, modern views, but Gonru remains firm and puts you in your place. You are to lead the Ugarith immediately and without the help of others to the secret eastern tunnel.

To be honest, you are annoyed that this conversation has revealed so little; after all, you risked your life to bring the Shadow Child to headquarters.

Turn to T40.



T25 As you squeeze through the crowd in order to reach the tables in the corner of the pub, you notice that there are no more seats available next to the people from Kyphi.

If you simply want to remain standing and try nevertheless to follow their conversation, turn to T23. If you want to return to the counter and observe them from there, turn to T33. Or if you want to use a spell to manipulate a guest to give up his seat, turn to **+T13**.

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T26 Knowing full well that this Ugarith can use all the help he can get, you reach into the inner pocket of your cape, pulling out a little crystal bottle and offering it to him.

Note the **Stimulant** (Utensil, adds +3 ATTACK for 3 COMBAT ROUNDS and that can be used anytime, but only once) on your adventure sheet. Is the Ugarith already wearing armor on his arms?

If yes, he wears Kroll Giant Cuffs, turn to T29. If no, he does not possess such cuffs, turn to T36.



T27 Your search throughout the past hours has proven fruitless. While you, ever more desperate, have been searching for clues as to the whereabouts of the Ugarith, the offensive has rolled over Leenhaven like a storm wave. For hours now you have been fighting your way through the burning streets of your hometown—still in search of the Ugarith—and you have broken your Keeper Oath several times, getting involved, helping the wounded as well as assisting the helpless in battle.

According to your last information, a raiding patrol of six Ugarith really has come ashore using a dinghy. Unimaginable how much doom those elite warriors could bring with them.

You are about to lift up an abandoned, blood-smeared saber from the ground, when a dragon swooshes over your head. Its thundering breath pours forth over the street and along house walls, igniting carts and barrels.

Then the red-scaled monster sinks its paws into the roof of the house in front of you and tears at it with a mighty flapping of its wings. Sparks fly, wood and shingles crash onto the cobblestones. A rider, seemingly in a red glowing armor, tears at the reins. Suddenly another beam crashes onto the ground just a few steps away from you, and you are engulfed in a wave of scorching heat and smoke.

You, however, enjoy the chaotic dance of the flames; you comb through your glowing hair, absorbing with it the elementary energy of the fire.

Then you sight a man who, just a few steps ahead of you, staggers out of the inferno and falls to the ground.

If you want to hurry to his aid, turn to T35. If you want to order the rider to turn around by using a spell, turn to +T44.

Or force the dragon to disobey the orders of its rider, turn to +T49.

T28 Using the shortest route to Wagon Alley, you take up position in a side alley across from the "Broken Mast Inn".

Two, three hours pass until finally something happens: A window opens on the upper floor and a woman with wide cheekbones looks down upon the street with a grim expression. Her muscular upper body and her arms are decorated all over with tattoos. She is definitely an impressive Menokian female warrior. With one last probing agze she closes the shutters again.

You are still deep in thought and full of admiration for the artistic skill of her skin painting, when something clatters behind you. If you want to take a look at who or what caused the noise, turn to T5. If you want to step out onto the main street discreetly, as if you have not noticed anything suspicious, turn to T15.

Turn to T50.

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 $T30\,$ Exhausted from the dramatic encounters and miles covered, you return to headquarters to give Master Gonru your report. He agrees with most of your new findings and conclusions, but is unusually absent-minded.

Finally, he whispers: "Tarah, I would like to initiate you into a secret of our society now." He gestures you to come closer and places his trembling hand upon yours.

"As you probably know, the Oracle of Kabeth prophesied exactly 20 years ago the rebirth of the Keşra, the avenger of the God siblings, in order to restore the balance of creation. But it remained silent as to how and where this emissary was to manifest himself. That's the reason why to this day the oracle is considered an uncertainty and is the basis of theological debates."

"You mean, the Keşra has never appeared?"

"Oh, yes! We know with certainty who the Keşra is and where it resides."

"Really?!", it slips out of you.

"Yes, it was born inside the body of a male Ugarith!"

"An Ugarith?! What in blazes..."

"Yes, Calderel found and kidnapped him when he was still a child and raised him among his own. Today he is a privileged soldier, a trained Dragon Rider and recently the sacred Shadow Child."

"Then the Keşra has been corrupted."

"Not to the extent Calderel planned. Brother Tarus has ministered to him and has seen to it that Calderel's manipulations have been mostly in vain."

"Brother Tarus? You mean the Keeper who has written the Ugarith-Encyclopedia?"

"That's correct. He has dedicated his whole life to the research of the Ugarith."

"A very dangerous way of passing time, I would say."

"Oh Tarah, you have no idea! I fear more than ever for Tarus's life.

He has put himself in great danger in order to inform us that the Shadow Child is on the way to Leenhaven as a soldier in the attacking fleet."

"Brave," you ponder. "What shall I do?"

"Tarah, your orders are: Find the Shadow Child and bring him here! We need to talk to him, even if this questions our vows and holy goals."

A few minutes later you are prowling the streets of Leenhaven again. You would have had so many more questions for Gonru, but there is no time for that now.

Since you have no further information about where and when you can expect the Ugarith in Leenhaven, you think it best to look around close to the defensive walls which enclose the harbor. Please check the circle next to section 446, chapter 3.

If it is marked, please turn to T27. Otherwise, turn to T47.



T31 With a heavy heart, but knowing that you are doing the right thing, you reach to your neck, unlock the little hook of your amulet and put the necklace in the open paw of the astonished Ugarith.

Note the Keeper's Charm (Utensil) on the adventure sheet! The Charm brings luck to its wearer. Whenever the Base Die shows a [] you are allowed to ignore the result of the entire throw and roll the dice again! Is the Ugarith already wearing armor on his arms?

If yes, he wears Kroll Giant Cuffs, turn to T29. If no, he does not possess such cuffs, turn to T36.

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T32 As the adrenalin slowly leaves your veins, you begin to realize what you have learned during the last few minutes: The Menokians—allies of the Empire for years—want to switch sides during the decisive battle taking place tomorrow!

The joy you feel is, to be sure, not worthy of a Keeper, yet you cannot escape the image of an end to the war in favor of your home, and you gaze confidently towards the huge time tower at the center of the city.

Cross off one clock under Time on the third page of your adventure sheet!

If you have not yet crossed out all three clocks, return to **T17** and make another choice. Otherwise, turn to **T30**.

T33 Experienced, you observe the trio from Kyphi and in the process ward off one or another crude move on you by drunken sailors. However, it is so loud inside the stuffy taproom that you hear nothing of the men's conversation except some occasional noisy laughter.

After roughly a half an hour they get up and leave the inn.

If you want to continue keeping tabs on the men, turn to T42. If you want to signal to your spy that he should tail them for you, so that you can take care of some other business, turn to T37.

T34 Cautiously pulling the corner of the blanket away, you reach your fingers towards the pitch black, wrinkled skin on the back of his left hand, when suddenly your spirit goes blank. From one moment to the next all your thoughts, your consciousness, are extinguished in a thunderstorm of alien images. When you open your eyes again, you need a moment to realize even where you are. Moaning, you organize the tangled fire-red strands of your hair and let yourself be helped back on your feet by the two Keepers.

The Ugarith himself does not seem to have noticed any of what has happened. On the contrary, he still remains in his petrified state.

Confused, you examine the back of his hand once more. A barely perceptible magical glow, similar to a protective hex or seal, swirls about the black skin like an intricate web of veins. The pattern reminds you of the magical arts of the Zarlik.

A master of the lizard magicians would likely be able to tell you more about this phenomenon.

You gain 1 SPARK!

If you want to talk to the Ugarith now, turn to T16. If, however, you want to proceed in silence, turn to T24.



T35 You hurry to the stranger's aid, pulling him out of the embers and flames. When you turn him on his back and try in vain to swipe the soot from his face, you realize that his skin is really so black. Could this be the Ugarith you are searching for? The Master of the Night apparently tried to camouflage himself with a simple fisherman's jacket, but the flames have partially eaten away at it so much so that the Imperial uniform underneath it has become visible.

Mustering your last strength, you pull the heavy body of the Ugarith into the shelter of a vaulted cellar, hoping that the dragon's firepower will soon be exhausted. Even that power, in the form of highly flammable spittle, has its limits. Among alchemists it is traded as an extremely rare component for powerful potions.

Exhausted from the last few days' efforts, you lean against a stone arch of the vault and request help from headquarters using a contact crystal. Two brothers, including a cart, are apparently on their way.

Turn to T14.



T36 Although you know of the remarkable resilience of the Ugarith, you still open the straps of your arm guards and give him the bracers: "Please, take them! And then follow the passage. It will lead you underneath the eastern walls of Leenhaven and to freedom... Good luck!"

If you want to keep the Keeper's Bracers (Clothing, Arms, Protection +1), note them on your adventure sheet.

Your short outing into the life of the Keeper Tarah ends here. From now on you again control the fate of the Ugarith.

Turn to T50.

 $T37\,$ Wistfully, you walk the empty streets of Leenhaven. Meanwhile an eerie silence has spread. Here and there some citizens are boarding up their windows and doors, hoping against all hope that this will keep their belongings safe from the attackers.

It is an open secret: Leenhaven is the key in this war. It is of extraordinary importance strategically as well as morally. This means that should the Empire really take over the port city, the supply

and reinforcements for the Black Army at Fort Sin would be ensured and no longer would anything stand in the way of an invasion into Rhenus.

You look up at the sky and imagine that in a few hours fire breathing dragons could be circling here and countless men and women will lose their lives in the Kanderhagian Bay. You close your eyes and try to shake those black thoughts out of your head. *Cross off one clock under Time on the third page of your adventure sheet!*

> If you have not yet crossed out all three clocks, return to T17 and make another choice. Otherwise, turn to T30.

T38 The orphanage is located at the northern edge of Leenhaven city, with a view of the Windy Mountains, and it is in miserable condition.

As soon as you push back the squeaky iron gate, you are immediately surrounded by a dozen emaciated children. With a burning heart you reach inside your cloak and distribute the flat loaf which you actually bought for yourself at the market.

At last an elderly woman approaches you, pets a child on the head and dissolves the uproar around you. "What brings you here?" she whispers softly.

You donate a few coins and ask without much ado whether a dark skinned man was here not so long ago.

"Indeed!" she remembers. "Yesterday, we were honored by the visit of a Seer of Narolis from the High Arcades. He had heard rumors that Horus, one of my children, possesses special talents."

She tells you about some inexplicable incidents, like flying plates or spontaneously flaring candles—and that he can already read and write perfectly—but everything as mirror images!

"So, I gave my little Horus to the Seer," she sobs wistfully. "Oh, I wish all my children would carry the blessing of the magical spark in them."

You say your farewells to the headmistress—but not before giving her another donation—and hurry back in the direction of the harbor district, knowing that this lead has hardly helped you any further.

Note on the third page of your adventure sheet, **Path of Wisdom**, the number 685 in box "D". Also cross off one clock under **Time**!

If you have not yet crossed out all three clocks, return to T17 and make another choice. Otherwise, turn to T30.

T39 You are about to turn away disappointed, when a gray silhouette suddenly jumps out of the shadow of a house and attacks you from behind. With a swift roll sideways and a supple spinning motion, you elegantly escape the attack of the Ugarith and drive the heel of your leather boot into his hip.

Before he can even get up again, your Keeper friends hurry to your aid. Together you tie and gag the Shadow and pull a bag over his head.

"Don't make any trouble!" you whisper angrily in his ear, heaving him onto the cart. "It will be better for everyone involved if you keep quiet from now on."

Turn to T14.

T40~ "You should hurry if you want to pursue the Kyphians," you whisper to the Ugarith. "I'll show you the fastest way to leave the city."

Then you lead him through the maze-like passageways of your underground hiding-place, in one dark corner pushing several crates to the side and exposing an inconspicuous door. You give the Ugarith a lantern, absentmindedly running your fingers along the leather of your bracers, when you are suddenly struck by a beam of godly presence!

Petrified and with eyes wide open, you gaze at the Ugarith and your thoughts revolve solely around how important his imminent mission will be for the progress of the war. Then your sense of duty and your oath fight to the surface of your mind, prohibiting you from interweaving your goals with the course of the divine work.

If you want to follow your oath and simply wish the Ugarith farewell, turn to **T29**. If you at least want to give him a farewell present, turn to **T36**. Or if you want to break your oath and help him in the best way possible, turn to **T9**.



T41 Without being noticed, you vanish once more in the side alleys of Leenhaven and set out back to Master Gonru to tell him what you have found out.

Meanwhile, however, the military attaché awoke again and attempted on his part to contact the emissaries for Menokia as well. The proud female warriors were not amused at the doubledealings of the incapable people of Leenhaven and refused the offer of a pact then and there.

The battle for Leenhaven therefore experiences a much more horrible conclusion.

Your mission and that of the Ugarith have thus failed.

T42 Determined to learn what the three men from Kyphi are up to, you continue to shadow them. However, since in the meantime a lot of people have vacated the streets and barricaded themselves in their houses, you have to keep your distance to avoid being found out. Finally, the trio has vanished around the next corner.

> If you want to try to pick up their trail again by hastily searching the side alleys close by, turn to T3. If you would rather focus on other tasks, turn to T37.

T43 In the blink of an eye the highly decorated, former soldier sinks to the ground unconscious. With great effort you drag him behind some crates, take his brooch and enter the inn on the other side of the street.

Cross off 1 SPARK from your adventure sheet!

Turn to T20.

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T44 Billows of smoke and flames soar upward, letting the nocturnal shadows dance. The rider's face fades until it becomes indecipherable, making it so much harder for you to focus on his mind.

His mental barrier is a wide moat with steep cliffs and no bottom. You smile in your superiority, letting your imaginary self grow wings and fly over the black emptiness.

Having thus intruded upon the rider's mental world, you order him to let go of the reins... Back in reality you see with satisfaction how the rider slips out of his saddle disoriented and how he now hangs sideways on the flank of his dragon, secured only by a safety strap.

Getting loose in the process, a saddle bag tumbles over the tiled roof of the burning house and falls onto the street in front of you. While the dragon, including the screeching rider, flies away, you grab the heavy leather bag. You shake out its contents to discover among other things written orders with the seal of the Imperial Command! There are maps of the dragons flight routes as well as information about the units stationed at Fort Sin—the Black Army under the command of Slaht the Bloody.

Only now do you realize that in spite of the magic used, you did not have to suffer any loss of energy. It is probably the doing of the euphoric elementary components which, thanks to the raging sea of flames around you, maintain your powers.

Note on the third page of the adventure sheet, Path of Wisdom, the number X3 under "E".

Turn to T35.



 $T45 \end{tabular} Without hesitation you pull out your dagger and to the Ugarith's surprise, cut off one of your fiery locks, sealing in its power with a magical knot and then offering it to him. Note the Keeper's Fiery Coil (Ultensil) on the adventure sheet! If you throw the coil into the air before a combat, minor elements from the fire sphere will aid you during the entire combat, automatically reducing your opponent's RESISTANCE by 1 point each COMBAT ROUND! Is the Ugarith already usering armor on his arms?$

If yes, he wears Kroll Giant Cuffs, turn to T29. If no, he does not possess such cuffs, turn to T36.

 $T46\,$ You know that you also have to manipulate the two female warriors if you want to keep up the game with Brogat. And that is why you do it again: The two mighty Menokians, too, fall helplessly to the floor, as you send their souls to sleep with your hypnotic gaze.

As a precaution you heave one onto the bed and the other one onto the chair at the table. A mere precaution, because when the two of them come around in a few minutes, they will get up, move to their last position before the enchantment occurred and are going to awake thinking nothing has happened.

Cross off 1 SPARK from your adventure sheet!

Turn to T32.

 $T47 \quad \text{Tense, you gaze over the harbor basin to the horizon,} \\ \text{pushing a red strand of hair out of your face, when a haggard boy steps forward from behind some stacked crates.}$

"Mistress," the scout begins to whisper, "I've seen a strange man close to Wagon Alley. His skin was black as the night and his eyes cold and pale as the moon."

You thank the little boy, place a coin into the pocket of his shirt and order him to find refuge in one of the underground shelters. Some minutes later you are shadowing the suspect. Disguised in an ill-fitting fisherman's jacket, he is prowling the alleys and promptly walks into an inspection.

The two guards are immediately suspicious and want to check the suspect when the situation escalates. At the last moment the Ugarith flees, shaking his pursuers. You, however, are in luck; two watchers of the Keepers, disguised as farmers who by chance are making their rounds, give you a hint.

The shadow has apparently fled into one of the rear courtyards, and you hurry after him, hoping to catch up, but as soon as you walk through the archway, the Ugarith seems to have vanished from the face of the earth. Nonetheless you sense his presence, focusing your inner powers, and scanning with your third eye the countless hiding places in the courtyard. The surroundings are now glowing gray and red. Every being whose living spark burns, even the tiniest, glows reddish warm; all dead things, however, reveal themselves in pale, cool, gray tones.

Please check the circle next to section 423, chapter 3.

If it is marked, turn to T4. Otherwise, turn to T39.

The moment you push a loose wooden board to the side and slip through the wall into the darkness of the warehouse in question, you have an uneasy feeling. Something is not right here!

A faint click, a metallic rattle and you feel a blunt impact on your head...

Some hours must have passed by the time you come around again. Groaning, you get up and rub the bump on your head. Your purse has been stolen, but you notice a big soot mark next to you, in its center is a ripped open sack of flour along with a knotted rope and a charred dagger. Guessing what has happened here, you shake your head, grinning, and push back your fire-red shock of hair where the strand has been cut off. Somewhat dazed, you walk back into the harbor alley and think about what else you can do after the loss of time.

Cross off two clocks (if still possible) under Time and one SPARK on the third page of your adventure sheet!

If you have not yet crossed out all three clocks, return to T17 and make another choice. Otherwise, turn to T30.

T49 Before your inner eye you are gliding over a sea of bubbling lava with jagged rocks rising from its center. It is an unknown scenario for you-after all, you have never tried to reach the mind of a dragon before, not to mention trying to overcome it. Nowhere a wall, a defense of any kind, which seems to protect the dragon's mind. Confused, you look around and finally you discover him lurking atop a crag.

You use the opportunity and attack him. The lizard, however, grunts in rage, and, spewing a torrent of lava, instantly directs a counterstrike in your direction. While your astral body is engulfed in red-hot stone, a burning house collapses upon your paralyzed body in the real world.

Your life ends here.

T50 When you look back in order to thank the Keeper for her self-sacrificing aid, you remain unmoving because once again you are overcome by a sense of godly purpose. You have already encountered this moment of farewell with Tarah once before... This time however—by the Gods—a magical spark is blazing in her pupils!

In this brief moment you receive an insight into her thoughts and draw out some wise advice as to your future path. Still caught up in the attempt to put in order this moment in the great ocean of your past, present and future memories, you are again seized by the raging World River. Overwhelmed by its wild energy, you let yourself again be swept by its temporal current. Absent-mindedly, you bid Tarah farewell.

Continue reading in chapter 3 at 384.



T50 When you look back in order to thank the Keeper for her self-sacrificing aid, you remain unmoving because once again you are overcome by a sense of godly purpose.

T00 The attack by the Empire was devastating. Countless people are dead. And still: Your family and the Keepers have survived, and since the defection of the Menokians to the Free Countries, the outcome of the war seems more open than ever. Despite all the optimism you are still greatly worried about Master Gonru. For days now he has had to stay in bed. Furthermore, he does not tolerate any personal contact, which, as his closest confidante, does hurt your feelings a little.

So-as every day-you let your mind wander through the world in meditative harmony. Actually, you were not really expecting to come across anything, and you are now baffled to see your master's mental barrier in the distant fog of your mind.

You recognize his wall at once: Steep, smooth, insuperable. During your training Gonru had once for practice purposes allowed you to enter his singular mind through a freely created gate at the bottom of this bastion made of polished white marble. Curious, you hurry with your astral body toward the bastion and recognize with surprise that the same gate can be seen in the wall again! This time, however, a dashing young man sits cross-legged in front of it, watching you alertly.

"Marvelous! Please, Tarah, keep me company."

Your mental focus begins to waver because you recognize this voice-it is the young Gonru!

"M-master, what are you doing here?" you babble.

"Shouldn't the question be, what are you doing here?" He smiles in a friendly manner. "Well, Tarah, I'll tell you! Your last task awaits you." Gonru gestures towards the gate behind him. "I'm to penetrate your mind?"

Gonru lowers his gaze. "Before the God siblings call me to them, I want my legacy to be in good hands."

Tears of pain and pride are streaming down your cheeks. Gonru, however, continues unperturbed: "Like you, Tarah, there are beings who carry the arcane spark in them. Well, but there are also beings who carry something much rarer, more powerful in them..."

"More powerful?"

"Absolutely. But it's best you figure that out for yourself."

With a deep scraping sound the stone portal opens and Gonru nods in satisfaction: "Dear Tarah, my journey ends here, but yours begins right now."

One last time you turn to look at Gonru, who is still sitting crossed-legged and who smiles back at you serenely.

His silhouette has nearly vanished in the fog of oblivion, when he calls out: "Tarah! Live and keep!"

Note on the third page of the adventure sheet, Path of Wisdom, the number 481 under "C".

Turn to wherever you have come from and continue there.

In Tarah's Chapter, there was no FATE POINT or RIDER RANK to discover. But the wisdom to show you seven times the right path in future dangerous situations.



EPILOGUE

DISTANT DREAMS

For almost a mile now, old Frewin has been riding in silence, running the edge of a blotchy hatchet across his grindstone. Once in a great while, he interrupts his stoic, repetitive movements to test the sharpness of the blade with his thumb, but he never speaks. Deep in thought, he simply returns to his work.



The boy lying on the bed of the covered wagon ahead, wedged in between furs and sacks of vegetables, watches Frewin over the edge of the tailgate, his eyes moist. He suspects that the old shepherd will soon butcher all their faithful Tokas.

After all, the grown-ups say that the route through the mountains will become a stony path in one or two days, impassable for the covered wagons. Then, at the latest, the massive draft animals will have to be left behind.

The boy holds his stuffed animal to his chest. Two days ago his mother gave him the large cloth dragon, sewn together out of countless dark patches. Her youngest son perfected the loving work with two dull brass buttons that are now the dragon's somewhat skewed eyes. But now, the soft playmate cannot distract young Rigem any longer. The caravan of almost a dozen wagons is moving through an area as frightening to the adults as it is for the children. The grown-ups suppress their fear in silence.

Only isolated, energetic commands to the Tokas penetrate the monotonous squeaking of the axles and the howling of the wind as it blows grey ash and dead brushes through the gorge.

Between the steep rough slopes of the mountains, the last rays of Kar's setting disc fall on the gaunt cheeks of the boy. "Enjoy the warmth of Kar, little man," his mother whispers wistfully. This may well be the last opportunity to see the sun until they have crossed the mountains.

Exhausted, the young Rigem boy crawls into his bed of furs and blankets. At once his mind begins to wander. He remembers the black-skinned soldier, the Ugarith, as their tribal elder called him, who visited the Rigem a few days ago in the desert.

And of course he remembers the Ugarith's dragon, with giant paws that sunk almost an arm's length into the sand of the Gawana, so powerful and heavy she was! Barely have the boy's eyes closed, when he sees the imposing black creature in front of him-wings outspread, she glides over his head. Sand churns all around as the dragon lands directly next to him.

Fearlessly, he strokes the scales and feathers of the creature, who answers the caress with a deep growl. Sometimes, the young Rigern even believes he can understand the dragon. The voices in his head are warm and familiar, calming and loving-their sound reminds him of his mother.

Awakened by the ungentle jolting of the wheels, the boy lifts one corner of the tarpaulin and strains to look outside. The few lanterns that still have oil in them do little to illuminate the rough, rock-strewn path winding up the ever-steeper side of the mountain.

In confusion, the boy rubs his eyes and looks up into the sky, disoriented from his long nap. Should the sun not be visible?

Above him, he can see only pitch-black clouds hanging over the train of refugees and taking on the most unnatural shapes. Terrifying blue bolts of lightning, without beginning or end, crackle over the pulsating firmament. Yet there is no sound of thunder, no falling rain.

For the first time in his young life, the Rigem boy understands why even the old campaigners of the tribe start to whisper in awe when speaking about these unleashed forces of nature which the old ones call the "Great Barrier." The boundary between the Golden Realm on the Rhenus and the legendary Kurmugia was truly created by the All-Powerful.

Curiosity and the urge to explore, both innate character traits of the Rigem, have long since given way to a deep, primal flight instinct. But in the meantime, it is far too late to go back and there is nowhere left to run. The people are convinced that their future lies somewhere beyond this perverse force of nature.

Without warning, from one moment to the next, the storm is silent. The dark clouds open up, driven away by a divine light that washes over the entire plateau like a throbbing heart of warming energy. EPILOGUE · DISTANT DREAMS

Spellbound, the people look up from their wagons, all arranged in a half circle, to await whatever may hide in the source of this apparition. The boy turns away, wants to run to his mother for comfort, but like all the other grown-ups, she is staring silently into the light.



Suddenly the silhouette of a tall woman appears in the bright rift opening between the clouds. Her long, twisted shadow falls on the cliffs as the eternally young, perfect body of a Skyll emerges from the light. Powerful legs can be seen under the cloth of her shimmering robes, while her cat-like eyes illuminate all that surrounds her. As the emissary sees the boy, her crystal-clear pupils light up for a heartbeat. With her head tilted to one side and a smile on her face, she strides toward him.

The boy clutches his soft dragon, for he senses that the pretty woman has come solely for him. For a brief moment, he thinks about running away, but she looks kind. She has silenced the storm, after all.

"What do you want of us, Skÿll?" the rough voice of the ancient tribal leader breaks the unnatural silence.

The emissary, briefly bemused, turns away from the boy and looks silently at the old woman, who, leaning on her staff, has dared to come out from between two wagons. The other Rigem, however, continue to stare into the sea of light beyond the Skyll.

"I regret to say, honored emissary of the Skÿll," the old woman calls out ironically, but your lights have no power over a blind woman."

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"Obviously," the young woman replies politely.

"So, Skÿll, what do you want?" the old woman briskly repeats her question. "If you are looking for the young Ugarith and his black dragon, they are not here. We met them recently in the Gawana, and they were our guests for one night only."



"We know," the Skÿll acknowledges without emotion, adding, "The Keşra has fulfilled his task."

"Astonishing," the aged Rigem murmurs. "You have really accomplished it, Non-Empire."

There is a long pause. The crone ponders whether she should repeat her question once again. But then, the Skÿll raises her voice in a melodious chorus, as if in words sounded by numerous throats simultaneously. "People of Rigem, your long journey ends here and with this day!"

A smile of hope appears on the wrinkled cheeks of the blind leader. The visions and dreams that have been haunting her for months, visions of the Great Barrier and a view of the sunrise in an unknown land, will finally come true! She had taken a great risk when she had commanded them to strike all their tents in their home between the Red Rocks and had told them to move through the hostile lands and deserts into the mountains of the Great Barrier. Many Rigem have already paid for this risk with their lives. But if there is a being with the power to grant the remaining families of her tribe safe passage through this accursed darkness, it is an emissary of the high race beyond the shrouded mountains.

Without taking further notice of the crone, the mysterious envoy turns back to the boy, who has been following the conversation while hiding behind a wagon wheel. Gracefully kneeling down before him, the Skÿll grasps his shoulders with her slender hands and gazes deep into his eyes. "You must now be strong, young warrior."

Without warning, the golden light behind her fades away, and from one moment to the next, the storm once again rages over the camp. A billow of dark clouds washes over the mountain and sweeps down the steep ridge. It looks as if an avalanche of black smoke was burying the train of the Rigem.

"The... Make the storm stop!" the boy screams in a childish mixture of fear and anger, clutching the woman's cape and tearing it as he does so. Tears stream down his cheeks.

He shouts again and again, "Stop, stop!" His begging becomes shriller and more demanding, Curious, the Skÿll waits and watches the boy, as if she's expecting the unexpected.

The Rigems are crying for their lives. Some fall to the ground and are sucked up into the storm like bundles of hay only to be carried off in the blackness of the clouds. Trembling, the boy hides his face in the emissary's cloak. He is too afraid to see the carnage that accompanies the sounds of the Rigems' horrible death cries.

When, however, another gust of wind pushes aside the silky fabric of the Skÿll's cloak, the boy gets an unwilling glimpse of the horror. Flashes of lightning shoot from the clouds, rushing with unnatural accuracy towards the remaining wagons. A staccate of discharges ignites the tarpaulins and axles, hurling charred and twitching bodies from the wagons and onto the ground.

When the wagon the boy was only just now hiding behind is lifted up in the air by one of the black tendrils of the magical storm and is smashed against the rock wall, the horrible scene blurs behind a curtain of his tears.

"You have planted your seed, tribe of Rigem. Now it is our task to accompany him on his path. May the shoot grow all the stronger and fulfill the task given to him," the Skÿll whispers, as if to direct a final message, some small justification or perhaps apology to the eradicated people of the Rigem.

Minutes pass before the boy finally understands that silence has returned. His heart is still pounding with fear. He knows, no, somehow feels, that the powerful woman standing behind him is watching him and waiting.

When he feels the woman's soft fingers brush across his hand, the boy shrinks back.

"Come, young warrior. It is over. The storm has gone and with its passing comes the dawn." She calms him with her crystalclear voice as she grasps his small hand. "There are many who want to get to know you in your new home."

Gently, but firmly, the Skÿll draws the boy away, the last of the Rigem...

THE END



APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

The following pages explain important places and people in alphabetical order.

If you have not started the adventure, it may be better to ignore the glossary for now to avoid spoiling your fun. If you encounter an unknown term while reading, you can look it up here and continue with your adventure afterward.

ALLIANCE · Military federation of the Pakonian realms of Rhenus[#], the Trachtian League of Isles[#] and the Free Countries[#], Also known as the Treaty of Roburg after the city where it was ratified five years ago.

ALONIA · Mostly unknown continent. Bounded by the Crystal Sea⁶ in the east. Lies to the west of Pakonia⁴ and is believed to have at least half its land mass. Ruled by the Empire⁶. Only known settlement: Greydeyk⁸ on the continent's east coast.

ARCADES - High mountains in the northeast of Pakonia[®]. Consists of three mountain ranges: the High Arcades in the north, the Near Arcades in the west and the Far Arcades in the east. Between them, the Giant Stream flows to the White Sea[#].

Despite many efforts at settlement, there are no noteworthy towns in the Arcades. It is, however, home of many wild animals and creatures like the Kroll Giants⁴.

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ASHEN LAKE · Extremely hostile region beyond the Gawana[®] desert and the Firefields[®]. The grey ash that gives the lake its name is carried here from the Great Barrier[®], which borders it in the east.

BARONYAK · Hunting people from the wide steppes of Alonia[®]. They have remarkable empathic abilities. Some tribes have joined the Empire[®], where they serve as mercenaries.

Attributes: squat build, usually black hair which they wear in tight braids.

BENTIOS - Short form of Benthenos IL. (called Benthenos the Coldy Mh Sea King of the ancient realm of the Menokians". Greatest seafarer and conqueror of his time. Ruled across the continents in northern Pakofial² and Alonia⁷. Legends say that he controlled the monsters of the Crystal Sea⁸ with his magical powers.^[51]

BURAN, FREE TOWN · Free trading town in the sovereign territory of Rhenus", at

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the mouth of the Inoth" emptying into the White Sea". Despite its official independence, there are close economic and social ties to Rhenus. Inhabitants: 15,000.

CALDEREL - Highest Ugarith⁴, emissary and hierarch of Ugar⁴, sole ruler of the Empire². Resides in the Ningal Tower⁴. Six years ago he led the Empire as supreme commander in their war against the people of Pakonia⁴.

CITY PYRAMID OF KYPHI - A gigantic shep pyramid with 88 tiers, half a mile high. Capitol of Rhenus?. Inside it is said to have a labyrinth of tunnels and treasure vaults. The sign of the emissary of Kar, a golden sun with eight rays, decorates the top.

The Pyramid is considered a melting pot of many cultures and peoples, faith being their sole common trait. Inhabitants: 12,000 (Pyramid)/20,000 (surroundings).

CRYSTAL SEA · Great ocean between Alonia" and Pakonia".

DELSI - Largest settlement of the Netari⁸ in the jungle of Jengal⁴, Lies hidden and inaccessible among the mangroves in the lower reaches of the Jengal. Trading center for herbs, spices and animals of all kinds. Inhabitants: 2,100 Netani.

DRAGONS - Rare reptile-like flying creatures, extremely intelligent and tough, with distinctive armor. The mightiest of dragons grow large, beautiful horns. Some kinds are tamed and trained as riding animals. Dragons of this sort are used by the Empire's military as flying cavalry and lixing siege engines. DRACONS or THE UNDRAWORLD - Six godlike creatures ruling the Underworld. Nergal", the lord of the Underworld, decided who is allowed to enter the world of spirits, the Beyond. His five subordinates are: Calis the Avergor, Komar the Blasphener, Loth the Seducer, Nosis the Ravager and Tom the Beguiler.

DVORAK · Humanoid race from Alonia[®] with high life expectancy. Part of the Empire[®]. Thanks to their extraordinary intelligence, their society is highly developed both scientifically and culturally. Attributes: strong frame, long skull, pale skin, absence of hair, crystal-clear eyes.

Exergu: - Political and military league of twelve nations; constantly at war against the Alliance". The Empire's sovereign territory spans Alonia" and the north of Fakonia". Pakonia has ordly been freed in the last few years. Despite their being a small proportion of the Imperial populace at under 1%, the Ugarith" are the social and cultural eithe. Other significant races and peoples (sorted by size in descending order): Nolem, Dvorak", Gartak", Hetonia, Henokian", Baronyak", And Zartik".

EYRI + Island realm in the White Sea". Since the failed assault by Rhenus" 17 years ago, martial law has been in force. For six years there has been a truce.

FIRE FIELDS + Extremely hostile region between the desert of Gawana[®] und the Ashen Lake[®]. The ground is poisoned by hundreds of sulfur wells.

FORT SIN · Former bastion and important trade center between the Windy Mountains and Sunny Heights at the APPENDIX

GLOSSARY

The following pages explain important places and people in alphabetical order.

If you have not started the adventure, it may be better to ignore the glossary for now to avoid spoiling your fun. If you encounter an unknown term while reading, you can look it up here and continue with your adventure afterward.

ALLIANCE - Military federation of the Pakonian realms of Rhenus", the Trachtian League of Isles" and the Free Countries". Also known as the Treaty of Roburg after the city where it was ratified five years ago.

ALONIA · Mostly unknown continent. Bounded by the Crystal Sea⁶ in the east. Lies to the west of Pakonia⁶ and is believed to have at least half its land mass. Ruled by the Empire⁶. Only known settlement: Greydeyk[#] on the continent's east coast.

ARCADES - High mountains in the northeast of Pakonia[®]. Consists of three mountain ranges: the High Arcades in the north, the Near Arcades in the west and the Far Arcades in the east. Between them, the Giant Stream flows to the White Sea[®].

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Despite many efforts at settlement, there are no noteworthy towns in the Arcades. It is, however, home of many wild animals and creatures like the Kroll Giants[®].

ASHEN LAKE · Extremely hostile region beyond the Gawana^o desert and the Firefields^o. The grey ash that gives the lake its name is carried here from the Great Barrier^o, which borders it in the east.

BARONYAK · Hunting people from the wide steppes of Aloniaⁿ. They have remarkable empathic abilities. Some tribes have joined the Empireⁿ, where they serve as mercenaries. Attributes: squat build, usually black hair which they wear in tight braids.

Berritos - Short form of Benthenos II. (called Benthenos the Coldy 9M Sea King of the ancient realm of the Menokians". Greatest seafarer and conquetor of his time. Ruled across the continents in northern Pakonia⁷ and Alonia⁷. Legendes say that be controlled the monsters of the Crystal Sea⁶ with his magical powers. ¹⁶¹

BURAN, FREE TOWN · Free trading town in the sovereign territory of Rhenus^o, at

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the mouth of the Inoth⁹ emptying into the White Sea⁹. Despite its official independence, there are close economic and social ties to Rhenus. Inhabitants: 15,000.

CALDEREL - Highest Ugarith^e, emissary and hierarch of Ugar[®], sole ruler of the Empire[®]. Resides in the Ningal Tower[®]. Six years ago he led the Empire as supreme commander in their war against the people of Pakonia[®].

CITY PYRAMID OF KYPHI - A gigantic step pyramid with 88 tiers, half a mile high. Capitol of Rhenus². Inside it is said to have a labyrinth of tunnels and treasure vaults. The sign of the emissary of Kar, a golden sun with eight rays, decorates the top.

The Pyramid is considered a melting pot of many cultures and peoples, faith being their sole common trait. Inhabitants: 12,000 (Pyramid)/20,000 (surroundings).

CRYSTAL SEA · Great ocean between Alonia[®] and Pakonia[®].

DELSI - Largest settlement of the Netani⁸ in the jungle of Jengal⁸. Lies hidden and inaccessible among the mangroves in the lower reaches of the Jengal. Trading center for herbs, spices and animals of all kinds. Inhabitants: 2,100 Netani.

DRAGONS · Rare reptile-like flying creatures, extremely intelligent and tough, with distinctive armor. The mightest of dragons grow large, beautiful horns. Some kinds are tamed and trained as riding animals. Dragons of this sort are used by the Empire's military as flying cavalry and living siege engines. DRAGONS OF THE UNDERWORLD - Six godlike creatures ruling the Underworld. Nergal', the lord of the Underworld, decides who is allowed to enter the world of spirits, the Beyond. His five subordinates are: Calls the Avenger, Komar the Blasphemer, Loth the Seducer, Nosis the Ravager and Tom the Beguilter.

DVORAK • Humanoid race from Alonia^e with high life expectancy. Part of the Empire^e. Thanks to their extraordinary intelligence, their society is highly developed both scientifically and culturally. Attributes: strong frame, long skull, pale skin, absence of hair, crystal-clear eyes.

Evenue: - Political and military league of twelve nations; constantly at war against the Alliance⁷. The Empire's sovereign territory spans Alonia⁶ and the north of Pakonia⁷, Pakonia has only been freed in the last few years. Despite their being a small proportion of the Imperial populace at under 1%, the Ugarith⁶ are the social and cultural eithe. Other significant races and peoples (orted by size in descending order): Nolem, Dvorak⁶, Gartak⁶, Hetonian, Menskian⁶, Baronyak⁶, and Zraik⁶,

EYRI + Island realm in the White Sea[®]. Since the failed assault by Rhenus[®] 17 years ago, martial law has been in force. For six years there has been a truce.

FIRE FIELDS • Extremely hostile region between the desert of Gawana^o und the Ashen Lake^o. The ground is poisoned by hundreds of sulfur wells.

FORT SIN · Former bastion and important trade center between the Windy Mountains and Sunny Heights at the
southern border of the plains of Guanoko[®]. Fort Sin is mainly known for its prominent position on the Great Wall[®].

FREE COUNTRIES - Loose coalition of many duchies. Since the deposition of the emperor 124 years ago, these nations have been without leadership. Only after the conquest of the plains of Guanoko^{*} by the Empire⁴ did the Free Countries join the Alliance⁸. In recent times, the northern nations of the Free Countries have failen to the Empire. Largest free city: Roburg.

GARTAK · Dumb, animalistic warrior race bred by the Zarlik[®]. Extremely resilient and aggressive. The Gartak submit instinctively to the Ugarith. Attributes: boar-like skull with sharp tusks.

GAWANA - Large, inhospitable desert in the east of Pakonias[®], Barely settled, because there is no basis for food resources besides the fertile river of the Yellow Rhenus[®] and a few oases.

GETA - Former trading center in the middle of the Guanoko[®] plains. Since the occupation by the Empire[®], the kinds of goods traded have changed (now they consist primarily of war materials). Inhabitants: 5,000 (and 2,000 refugees from the surrounding lands).

GREAT BARELER · Almost insurmountably high mountain range at the eastern border of Pakonia". Its peeks and slopes are shrouded by an eternal storm of black clouds filled with thunder and lightning. Behind the barrier, the legendary country Kurnugia"—nealm of the Skyll"—is said to be found. GREAT WALL · Artificial protective barrier blocking the three-mile-wide gorge between the Windy Mountains and the Sunny Heights.

The former bastion of Fort Sin⁸ has been expanded by the Empire⁶ and is now a monumental bulwark sealing off the free Guanoko⁸ plains.

GREVDEXK - Great harbor of the Empire[®] situated on Alonia's[®] east coast. The islands offshore were the site of the first naval battle between the Empire[®] and the Allied fleet in 127 (8th Dynasty). Inhabitants: about 8,000 (estimation).

GUANOKO · Third largest river of Pakonia[®], flowing through the plains of the same name in the middle of the continent.

HALRET - Elitist Ugarith[®] with a direct link to the Underworld[®]. They are regarded as superior Dragon Riders who, with their special equipment, are able to fly even during the day.

HORATH PYRAMIDS • Three holy pyramids from the dynasty of the old hierarchs. They served as the tombs of the ruling dynasty of Rhenus[#], and only priests are allowed to enter them. They are regarded as the gate to the sunken necropolis of Aritut.

INOTH · Only large river of Rhenus^e, which emerges from the mountains of the Great Barrier^e. Enters the White Sea^e near Buran^e.

JENGAL · Extensive jungle region in the heart of Pakonia^{*}. Named for the river of the same name that flows through the dense forest. The Jengal flows into the Crystal Sea forming a large river delta. KAR · Goddess of the sun. Identified with the celestial sun.

Attributes: life, strength, fire, purity. Worshipped in all of Pakonia⁹, but especially in Rhenus⁶, Regarded as the enemy of Ugar⁶. Contemporarily displayed as a naked woman with outspread eagle wings.

KATHUM · Emissary of Kar[®] und hierarch of Rhenus⁸. Leader of the Kar faith. Resides in Kyphi⁹. The current Kathum was ordained according to birthright 117 years ago after his mother's death.

KEŞRA ['kefra:] · Holy being. In religious writings it is called a creature of divine birth, including the child, or avenger, of the Divine Siblings, executing their will in the world.

KROLL GIANT - Colossal race from the valley of the Arcades[®]. Live in seclusion in small clans on harsh, inaccessible mountain slopes.

KURNUGIA · Legendary land east of the Great Barrier[®]. Home of the Skÿll[®].

KYPHI · Capital of Rhenus[®], Residence of the Emissary of Kar[®] (see Kathum[®]). Most residents live on the steps of the giant City Pyramid[®]. Inhabitants: about 32,000.

LEENHAVEN • Harbor town on Pakonia's" west coast. Largest settlement in the Trachtian League of Isles". Hodly contested due to its strategic importance in the war against the Empire". Inhabitants: about 8.500. MENOKIANS · Barbaric folk of seafarers, characterized by their many rituals. Legendary reputation for their smithery. Their simple religion is based on several nature gods.

Attributes: powerful build, warriors with whole-body tattoos and bone decorations in their hair.

MENOKIA · Northernmost realm of Pakonia[°] in the Eternal Ice. Inhabitants: about 50,000 Menokians[°]. Largest settlement: Lenskaia.

MUNGOL · Dwarfish race that has developed under the earth. Mungols have six limbs (four arms, two legs). Regarded as enterprising and sometimes devious.

NANUTIKULL · Active volcano on the main island of the island realm Eyri[®]. Nanutikull has been spewing fire and ash for generations.

NERGAL - Demigod. Most powerful Dragon of the Underworld[®]. Ruler of the Dead. Also known as Lord or Executioner of the Underworld.

NETANI · Primitive people from the Jengal^o jungle. They subsist mostly on the fruits of the jungle and live in small clans. Their resilient black skin and great endurance are not the only reasons the Ugarith^o value them as slaves.

NINGAL TOWER · Famous sanctuary of Ugar*. A rock needle, several hundred feet high, in the middle of the Crystal Sea*. Used today by the hierarch of Ugar (see Calderel*) as the primary base of the Imperial Navy and as his headquarters.

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RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

ORACLE OF KABETH · Most holy site of the cult of Kar⁸ on the mountain Karith. Its shrine consists of large sacrificial bowls of pure gold in the center of a stone circle.

Many visions and miracles have been documented by the priests of this place. Closest City: Seraph^o.

PAKONIA - The largest of three continents in the known world. Extensive plains, deserts and harsh mountain ranges with fertile valleys. The climate is mostly temperate.

In the far north, the landmass borders: the Eternal lce of Menokia^{*}, which geologically is not a part of Pakonia. For only a few weeks of the year, the lce recedes along the entire northern coast, opening up a small seaway, called the Star Passago, between the Crystal Sea and the White Sea.

Although Pakonia was settled by many races and peoples, many parts of the continent have still never been explored. This is especially true for the far south with its dense vegetation and the east, where the steep peaks of the Great Barrier establish an almost insurmountable boundary.

RAVIJK · Capitol of Eyris^e. Largest harbor in the White Sea. Community with highly developed deep-sea fishing and whaling. Inhabitants: 3,500.

RED RHENUS · Western branch of the Rhenus, Emerges from the Redrock Mountains. Its name comes from the red color of the washed-out sandstone that lines its banks. Brings fresh water to the city of Seraph[#]. RHENCE - Largest realm of Pakonia". Also known as the Golden or Eternal Realm. Both its largest cities. Seraph" and Kyphi", lie on the banks of the Red or Yellow Rhenus", the rivers that gave their name to the realm. Over half of the land is covered by the dunes of the Gawana".

RIGEM · Nomadic people from the eastern border of the Gawana^a desert. Through avoidance and isolation, the Rigem try to remove themselves from any political influence.

RIUJEM · Messengers of death from the Underworld[®]. Recruited by the Dragons of the Underworld[®] and sent out to force their will upon mortals.

ROHJA · Old harbor and trading town at the mouth of the White Rhenus, where it enters the White Sea. Famous hall of magic: "Apertis oculis." Inhabitants: 5,000.

SHADOWS · Common term for the Ugarith^e.

SHADOW CHILD · Prophet of Ugar^e. Chosen by the God of the Moon.

SHADOW MASTER · Common term for the Emissary of Ugar^e (see Calderel^e).

SHADOW TOWER · Common term for the Ningal Tower[®].

SERAPH - Large commercial city located on the shores of the Red Rhenus[#]. Second largest city of the Golden Empire. Famous shrine of the Kar[#] cult: Oracle of Kabeth. Inhabitants: ca. 10.000. SKYLL - Legendary primordial race of Pakonia^{*}. Imposing manifestations of flawless beauty. Regarded as the creators of craftwork, society, culture, science and mazic.

Their descendants are assumed to be living behind the Great Barrier⁸. According to legend, Ugar⁶ created the Ugarith⁶ after his image from the strongest of the Skÿll.

TRACTERNA LEACUE OF ISLES - Originalby a sea and trading community on the west coast of Pakonia". Consists of the harbor towns Leenhavem² and Kanderhagen and the seven islands Grotracht, Klertracht, Obtracht, Leetracht, Ritracht, Beentracht and Votracht (occupied by the Empire⁹). Allied with the Alliance⁸.

UGAR · God of the Moon. Identified with the celestial moon. Attributes: dexterity, coldness, insight,

death. Worshipped in all Pakonia⁸ and Alonia⁸, especially in the regions dominated by the Empire⁸. Regarded as the adversary of Kar⁹. Contemporarily displayed as a naked, muscular man with bull's horns.

UCARTM - Divine, almost extinct race of Ugar". They are honored in the legends of many peoples, since very few people have ever actually seen an Ugarith. Rough black skin, claw-like limbs, snow-white body hair, men usually bald. Spread over wide parts of northem Pakonia" and Alomia", Leading race of the Empire".

UNDERWORLD · Transition between the realms of the living and of the dead. Ruled by Nergal[#], Lord of the Underworld. VAROON · Dormant volcano and highest mountain in the Tamoloka Massif, a lofty mountain range in the north of Pakonia[®]. Deemed holy by the Menokians[®].

VENIZ - Small town at the base of the Windy Mountains on the west coast of Pakonia[®]. Formerly a rich mining town. Famous for its artificial lake, which provides fresh water to the harbor metropolis Leenhaven[®]. Has recently fallen under the occupation of the Empire[®].

WHITE RHENUS · Large river uniting the Yellow⁶ and Red Rhenus⁶. With its many branches, the river empties into the White Sea⁶ near Rohja⁶. The land bordering its banks is very fertile.

WHITE SEA · Ocean on the east coast of Pakonia[®]. Very calm sea, except for wintertime. Very abundant fish life.

WILD REALMS · Sparsely settled region in south-western Pakonia[®]. Includes the Jengal[®] jungle. Largest known settlement is Delsi[®].

YELLOW RHENUS - Eastern branch of the Rhenus. Its headwater flows through the Gawana², and it gets its name from the yellow sediments of sand. Floods during the wet season make the soil fertile. Essential for the survival of the inhabitants of the desert metropolis Kyphi².

ZARLIK - Humanoid lizard folk from the jungle realm of Sal-Mur-Zar in southern Alonia². These reptilians exhibit a strong gift for magic. Their genders live separately and only cohabitate during childhood and mating. Genders are difficult to distinguish from one another. APPENDIX

HALL OF GRATITUDE



DRAGON LEGEND Kevin Hildreth

DRAGON FRIENDS - DRAGON ARTISTS Ayman Bounassri - Hodossy Sándor Jamie Howe - Jens Kaiser - Tibor Durgonics

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Flo Wolff · Steve Dean

DRAGON SACRIFICE · DRAGON PRIEST

Faidz Mokhtar · Thomas Talamini

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A D Martin · A Matthews · A. Ferber · Aaron Helo · Aaron Johnson · Aaron Pothecary · Abdullah Aktas · Abhilash Sarhadi · Abhimanyu Bibra · Abílio Pruxa Tavares · Adam Edwards · Adam Tung + Bonnie Wall · Adam Whitcomb · Adam Williams · Adriana · Adrienna Kain · Aerien Tamminga · Ai Lin Chia · Aina Velle · Albe Pavo · Alberto Rodriguez Guardado · Alessandro Perna · Alex Bussers · Alex Figueras · Alex Jotov · Alex Scissors · Alex · Colin + Stasia · Alexander Haves · Alexander McSporran · Alexander Stauff + Benjamin Stauff · Alexander Y. Hawson + Alison Y. Hao-Smith · Alistair Davidse · allangawy · Alvksandrei · Amber L Johnson · Anders Bloch + Mathias Bording · Anders Pihl Kofoed · Anders Svensson · Andras Madarasz · André de Boer · Andrea · Andrea Bidussi · Andreas 'Bearhug' Trageser · Andreas Rocha · Andres Galeano y Cecilia Vazquez · Andrew Eberlein · Andrew Hartley · Andy Burns · Ang Nam Leng · Anne Gabrillagues · Annie & Colin · Anonymous · Anonymous · Anthony Blake · Anthony Christopher Hackett · Anthony Craig Senatore · Anthony Snider · Antonio Bianchetti · Antonio Emidio Fortunato · Antonio Garcia · Antony McGarry-Thickitt · Armorbelle + Vikram · Arnold "Weronoop" Kaiser · Asafa Rove Ashley Lintz · Ashley Niels · Athos Polti · Aurélien Lengrand (Shin Taillelaine) Aurora Sukhoruchenkova · Axel Deluggi · Azhar Jamal · Bahnmor · Beestmeester · Ben Feltham, Michael Edmondson · Ben Joly · Bence Ferdinandy · Benjamin Loh ·

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Michael B Sheppard · Michael Bergan · Michael Bergh Hansen · Michael Carpenter · Michael Carricato · Michael D. Taylor · Michael F. Spano · Michael G. Palmer · Michael Goodell · Michael Hartley · Michael J. Ward · Michael Lenzo · Michael Lovell · Michael Murphy · Michael Reilly · Michael S. Siegel · Michael Skazick · Michael Trombley · Miguel · Mikael Jensen · Mike Clover · Mike Horton · Mike Petruzzi · Mikie Bowman · Mikkel Bierregaard · Mikko Västi · Mindy Spearman · Minishanadavid Mathews · Miquel Tomas Homs · Mirage Affable · Miroslav Mihov · Mlvoss · Mohammad Amir Amiri · Morgan O'Brien · Mr. Norrell · Muggie86 · N. Anderson · Nanija · Natalie & Frik · Nate Rochelle · Nathan C. Smythe · Nathan Smith · Nathaniel · Nazim Lebdai · Neil Benson · Neil Pitman · Neil Taylor · Nerelax · Neura · Nicholas Kenney · Nicholas Quam · Nichole R. Bechel aka Vel · Nick · Nicodemus · Nicolas Barbezat · Nicolas Delbos · Nicolas L · Nightwarden · Sean Babinsack · Niina Koistinen · Niki Lybæk · Niko Ranta + Mika Ranta · No name needed · None · Norman Ehmer · Odvenlou · Olivier Ménard · Olivier Vigneresse · Ondrej "Oddio" Klbik · Oscar Grimm McGougan · Overlord Marshall · Ozzy & Sten · P. Morin · P.V · Pablo Pérez Gómez · Parker Bailey · Pat Breen · Patrice da Matha Sant'Anna · Patrick de Vet · Patrick Graham · Patrick Hinh · Patrick Regan · Patrick Schmidt · Paul Buckle · Paul Dewar (Unleashed Spawn) · Paul Garrett · Paul Gaston · Paul Granich · Paul Mikelonis · Paul

APPENDIX · HALL OF GRATITUDE

DRAGON BARGAINERS · DRAGON TRADERS · DRAGON MERCHANTS DRAGON COUPLES · DRAGON COMPANIONS DRAGON RIDERS · DRAGON FOLLOWERS (707-918)

Scanlan · Paulo Cortes · Pedro Caleiro · Peperonis · Per Morten Møller · Pete Bounous · Pete K Clark · Pete Rivera · Pete York · Peter · Peter · Peter Ernest Soekamto · Peter Giles · Peter Hart · Peter Mackowiak · Peter 'Malkira' Lennox · Peter T · Petr Molik · Philip Andersson · Philip Glass · Philip Hindley · Philippe Van Langenhove · Phillip McGee · Pierr'ange · Planete-Idvelh.com · Prof. Dr. Oliver M. Traxel · qgtanton · R.E. Bishop · Radek Gutowski · Rafael Beltrán Plaza · Rafael Fernández Cima · Rafael Frug Sales · Raffaele Perrotta · Raj Zielschot · Ramon D Reyes · Raphael Vermeil de Conchard · Rasheed Knox · Ray Otus · Raymond Blair + Jill Blair · Rebecca Scott · Reid Fortier · Renato Tuason · Rene Batsford · Rezouce · Rhys + Amber Crowder · Ricard Muntané Puig · Richard Bunting · Richard Davey · Richard Ferris · Richard Gable · Richard Harrison · Richard Hunt · Richard Mooney · Richard Paulik · Richard Peck · Richie Stevens · Ricky G.C. Soh · Rien Moevaert · Rik Bstard · Ríoghain Mór · Ro Booth · Rob Cater · Robert F Towell · Robert Morris · Robert P. V. Davis · Robert Thomson · Robert Usarek · Robert Wilde · Roberto Mattioli · Rodd Closson · Roel + Wendy · Roeland Kegel · Roger Guest · Roger Trombone · Ron "Phantom" Smay · Rónán Kennedy · Roy Menczer · Royd Warren · Rud B Sorensen · Russell "Redjack" Petree · Rusty "Skeletor" Phillips · Ryan Crowe · Ryan Moore · Ryan P. Tipton · Ryan Pascall · S. Felske · Saajan Patel · Sabastian Wilkinson · Sam Stevens · Sam Theaker · Samantha Grace Torosian · Sami Saarela · Sara Elizabeth White · Sarah and Araina · Sarah S. · Sarinee "Fringer" Achavanuntakul · Scott Ballantyne · Scott Bates · Scott Chisholm · Scott Maynard · Scott W. Sexton · Sean M Davis · Serenti · Shane Lacy Hensley · Shane Main + Birda Cruz · Shaun Beckett · Shawn P · Shir Yee · Sierra Noëlle Hillebrand · Silvia Sebastián · Simon Anderson · Simon Colie · Simon Darlington · Simon Day



RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

Simon Hedley · Simon J. Painter · Simon O'Hagan · Simon Scott Ieuan Scott · Skorpio · Skywings14 · Slawomir Sloma · Sofie F. + Lena D. · Solal Hellio · Solveig · Søren Niedziella · Spencer Salver · Stefan Anundi · Stefan Fruehauf · Stefan Knight · Stefano Zorat · Sten Friberg · Stephan "Bloodreign" Ratliff · Stephan G. Beal · Stephane Wel · Stephanie Macklin · Stephen KH Lam · Stephen Naish + Matthew Shaw · Stephen Nicolls · Stephen Parac + Foster Kizer · Stephen Smith · Steve · Steve Beales · Steve cade · Steve Cole + Charles Nealey · Steve Coulthard · Steve Lord · Steve Pitson + Chris Pitson · Steve Ross · Steve Shain · Steven Gredell · Steven N. Cherry · Steven Ottenbreit + John Herperger · Steven Portreath Price · Stewart Austin · Stewart Whyte · Stuart Lloyd · Stuart Whitehouse · Suzushiro Aoi + Valthek · Svend Oldenburg · Tabla Dan-Iulian + Alex Moraru · Tamás Sebok · taplonaplo · Taylor Huckstep · Terry Kelly · Than · The Bulgarian gamebook society · The Dutton Family · Thomas Dan Nielsen · Thomas Fichtner · Thomas Hetherington + Lauren Hetherington · Thomas Rye · Thor Johansen · Thorus el Devoralibros · thunderw (Joe Brown) · Tilen Cancer · Tim Burnett · Tim Wild · Timothy P. Mann · Timothy Shaw · Tina Balestra · Todd Roberts · Todd Rokely · Todd Weigel · Tom + Kate Bailey · Tom Cosaert · Tom Duckers · Tom Lee · Tom van der Spek · Tom Wojciechowski · Tomasz · Tomislav Pavicic · Tommy Chu · Tomomi Asakawa · Tomomi Hikawa + Elijah Goh + Emil Koh · Tore Halvorsen · Tóth

DRAGON BARGAINERS - DRAGON TRADERS - DRAGON MERCHANTS DRAGON COUPLES - DRAGON COMPANIONS DRAGON RIDERS - DRAGON FOLLOWERS (919-1026)

"YTheon" József - Tristan Melchiori - Troy Stiltner - Tyler Thompson - Ugo Greevy -Ugssászy Féter - Unia Arranz Carica + Asier Lasarte Cuesta - Vielen Ellianto Doris Veronica Andensson - Victor ringlas' Atanasov - Viet Nguyen - Vietti Gaming Family - Vincenzo de Letteriis - Vladimir Tierney - Wachtler István - Warren McKillop - Warstomper - Wes Baker - Whalup Starkbark - Will Field - Willem Moransard -William Hartje - William Hewlett - William Long : WP - Xu Strybos - Y. K. Lee - Ywes-Anaud Jouret - Zach Starkey - Zach W L. Lynn - Zacharia Chun-Pong Lenug -Zacharg Guenther + Austin Vanamerongen - Zack Tan - Zackery Smith - Zak Klehr - Zanagni Nicola - Zio Magica

Dear Riders, it was a long and tough journey and it took almost a year to finish this special gamebook project. I have to thank every single person on this list for staying with us to the very end.

Thank you, Riders, for all your support!

Farewell and don't forget: Every End is also a new Beginning!

ADVENTURE	SHEET	
FATE POINTS O	Cross off all found Fate Points here:	KARMA O Devotion of the Gods
1 2 3 4 5 Prologue Chapter 1 2		KARMA C Develop of the Gods C
STRENGTH *	Power of Sun Goddess Kar	DEXTERITY O A Power of Moon God Ugar
	6.7.8.9.10 11 12 13 14 15 ororororororo	
Weapons	active Hit Notes ATTACK	Clothing D Protection Bonus Bonus
01		O Head + O Body +
02		0 Arms + 0 Legs + .
03	+ Weapon with max. +2	O Feet + O Cloak/ Disguise
Attack for each weapon = Streng	gth + Hit Bonus (+ possible Attack Bonus from Fighter's ability) Voluntary Decline ک	
Special Items	These items shouldn't be discarded!	j DEFENSE ♥ ● VITALITY ♥ rPenalty ☆ ●
01	07	
02	08	Dexterity + all Protection Bonusses fit normal battered hurt critical dead
03	09	Abilities Note your special mental and physical abilities here. B Attack Bonus
04	010	01 B4 07 C98 + J
05	011	02 302 08 334
06	012	03 302 09 341
Utensils	You are allowed to carry only a maximum of 6 utensils!	04 302 010 B8
01	04	05 <u>309</u> 011 566
02	05	
. 03	06	Money RAGE
Kyrna's Saddlebag	The saddlebag has space for 6 more utensils! 🔘	Dinars 1 2 2 3 4 5
07	010	angry furious enraged
08	011	RIDER RANK & O KYRNA'S VITALITY O
. 09	012	
Standard equipment in/at the sadd	dlebag: Rider's Thorn, Rider's Bow, Rider's Coat, Dragon Hom	Companion Ally Familiar Friend Master normal battered hurt critical dead
in the second	M h	

12

Doubtless they are the spies you have already seen on the palisade at the crest of the dam.

B.,J

If you want to attack the spies, turn to 389. If you want to wait and see what the spies will do, turn to 455.

401 One command is needed to gather the entire crew onto the Nargus' deck. A moment later the first enemy ships are brought alongside, and you can see their crews' faces. Many men, armed to the teeth, are waiting to destroy the Nargus and the rest of the Empire's fleet. You prepare for a bloody battle.

> If you have found FATE POINT #6, turn to 538. If not, turn to 357.

402 With renewed strength and courage you immediately leave the fishing-boat and move as stealthily as possible through the shabby alleys of the harbor district. There are only few ordinary people about. Many windows and doors are boarded up. The army has also constructed numerous roadblocks from debris and wood to close off the streets with the greatest strategical importance. These are intended to impede the Imperial troops when they attack.

The only people you see on the streets are patrolling soldiers. Their uniforms and bodies are battered, but there's optimism in their eyes. Naturally, the news of the victory against the Empire's fleet has spread like wildfire. This is no time for celebrating the victory at sea, however. They know the dangers that threaten them on land and from the air.

You hear the town's glockenspiel chiming the third hour of midday as the sound is carried by the wind from the distant market square. The battle for Leenhaven should already have commenced by now.

> Has the Empire drawn back its ground troops after the defeat of the fleet? They're surely waiting until nightfall.



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You feel a deceptive calm lying over the city.

If you want to try to leave the harbor district by going down the narrow side alleys, turn to 510. If you want to try it more openly, using the broad main road, turn to 518.

403 Behind you, the angry shouts of the soldiers and the reinforcements who hurried to their aid slowly fade away as you hide in a squalid, trash-strewn back courtyard. Unfortunately, you have lost your way. Before daring to leave your hiding place again, you decide to wait until your pursuers' calls have died away completely. But then you hear slow steps coming from the archway through which you've entered the courtyard.

You press your body into the shadow of the exterior wall and peer toward your only access to the street. A young human woman steps out of the archway's shadow. Her delicate body and head are covered in a dark, unadorned hooded cloak. Cautiously, the unknown woman strides to the middle of the yard and looks around intently.

If you have the ability Magical Lore, turn to 371. Otherwise you can wait, turn to 359. Or if you want to attack the woman, turn to 409.

404 From a hiding place at the edge of the channel and from a safe distance, you survey the imposing dam with its many protective towers and guard houses. You become aware of a suspicious movement along the walkway on the crest of the dam. You are not quite sure, but it could be a small group of humans.

If you have the ability of Sharpened Senses and want to use it, turn to 522. If you want to wait by the channel, turn to 549. If you want to return to the dam and examine the group of strangers, turn to 367.

If you have played Tarah's Chapter, please check the box at "B" of the Path of Wisdom section on the third page of the adventure sheet. Maybe you get a clue there what to do here.

3

3

B.,

E

Now it is your turn to sabotage the dam. You can either blow up the sluice channel or destroy only its mechanism.

If you want to cause an explosion, turn to 497. If you want to ruin the mechanism, turn to 450. Please cross off the circle next to section number 389 to note that you've read this section.

390 Fascinated, you admire the red of the clouds on the horizon and watch them from the protection of your hiding place. Already you feel the divine might of the disc of Kar, even though it has not yet shown its face.

It is then that the first rays of light pierce the morning mist, shining on your face. You flinch out of instinct, but before you, can protect yourself, a blissful warmth suffuses your skin.

You close your eyes-what a feeling! A torrent of light washes over you. All your worries and fears dissolve, leaving sheer wonder.

> The power of Kar ... so ... beautiful. «

You bask in emotion as you watch the sun rise, climbing like a flaming promise. You are startled when you realize that some of the sailors are staring at you with envy and irritation. They cannot believe that an Ugarith can resist the mighty Kar. Without a word, you retreat below deck to escape their suspicious scrutiny. Your STRENGTH rises by a point!

Turn to 396.

204

391 Relieved to finally get rid of the lethal bomb, you hurl the ball in a high arc at the Vandagaal. At first, it jumps with dull thuds two or three times onto the deck's planks; then it rolls between a few crates and disappears out of sight.

Seconds pass agonizingly slowly, but then there is a bright flash followed by a shockwave of fire and splintered wood that rages across the entire ship.

·. N .



moment, revealing the uniform of the Empire. But the alert soldiers must have been expecting something like this. They draw their nicked swords from their scabbards. "Surrender, Imperial pig!" demands one of the men harshly.

battle is within reach.

Meanwhile, his companion has positioned himself at your flank to make an escape impossible.

392 Your dash makes your fisherman's coat billow open for a

Only when the smoke parts do you realize how much has been

destroyed: The explosion has ravaged half of the deck and torn

the lower sails asunder. Many sailors with burning hair and

clothes are hurling themselves into the sea. The Vandagaal is

Then you see the captain of the Menokian flagship emerge from the burning remains of the bridge. You feel that the end of the

completely disabled; she is dead in the water.

You receive 2 points of KARMA for rescuing the Nargus.

"Look at those claws!" he shouts to one of his companions who appears completely taken aback by the presence of an Ugarith walking through Leenhaven in the middle of the day.

With a reassuring motion of your arms you allow the guards to imagine they are safe. Casually stepping to the side, you suddenly take down the first soldier with a spinning kick. Stunned, he smashes against the wall of the building, but his companion uses this opportunity to attack you with his spear. SOLDIER OF LEENHAVEN

ATTACK	N 13
DEFENSE	• 14
RESISTANCE	> O@

COMBAT ROUND UOO34

If you win in the first three COMBAT ROUNDS, turn to 473 at once. If the combat goes into its fourth round, turn to 460 at once.

If you have played Tarah's Chapter, please check the box at "B" of the Path of Wisdom section on the third page of the adventure sheet. Maybe you get a clue there what to do here.

Turn to C30!

3

CHAPTER 3 · BROTHERS IN ARMS

3

RIDER OF THE BLACK SUN

The wet haze reeks of foul water and rotting creatures. A slimy carpet of algae has settled on everything inside the dam. The same goes for the metal rungs of the ladder bolted to the wall leading to another platform further below. Careful not to make any suspicious sounds, you climb down.

While descending, you see a high water gate made of black metal shimmering in the dim light at the foot of the dam. It obviously regulates the water in the reservoir. At the moment there is only a small trickle coming from the funnel-shaped drain channel.

From the second platform a narrow bridge extends, about 30 feet into the void between the dam walls. There, a mighty black iron chain hangs from the ceiling to the bottom of the dam. It has to be at least 150 feet long! At its end dangles a gigantic, pointed plummet.

Fascinated, your eyes follow the fist-sized links of the chain up to the ceiling. There, the other end is held by a huge deflection pulley and then led downward again. At the chain's short end, which stops just below the entry platform, you see the plummet's counterweight, a huge black iron cylinder.

This construction is as breath-taking as it is strange. The whole water system reminds you of a huge grandfather clock.

You step out onto the shining bridge to take a closer look at the plummet when you notice a metal chest sitting in a dark corner of the platform nearby.

If you want to examine the chest, turn to 449. If you want to climb down the ladder to reach the next platform beneath you, turn to 504. If you want to walk across the bridge to examine the chain, turn to 541.

388 Determined to finally risk the few steps leading to the hatch and the safety of the ship's hull, you stagger on. Suddenly, however, another wave crashes down over you. Under its force your legs buckle and you are washed across the entire deck.





Helples, you try to hold on to something, anything! At the last moment you manage to grab a piece of the replacement sail. Carried by the force of the wave, you tear it out of the box where it was sloppily stored as you fly over the rail, tangled up in linen and rope. Surrounded by water, you try to free yourself from this cocoon as quickly as you can, but the more you struggle, the tighter your prison of cloth becomes.

> If you have the ability Free Breath, turn to 458. If not, turn to 456.



389 Careful to make no noise, you approach the two spies still watching the workers intently. They have not noticed you. Not until you slowly stand up behind them, does the smaller one turn around and stare at you. Before he can act, you have grabbed his jaw and stunned him with a head butt. Two seconds and a forceful punch later, his companion drops to the floor as well. A fist-sized ball rolls from the larger spy's hand across the floor. It looks familiar to you. It is a blasting cap like the ones you have seen on the Mexez, only heavier. You are relieved to see that the firing pin for the explosive is still in the spy's bag. If you want to take the Heavy Bomb (Utersil), write it down your

adventure sheet. In addition, you find 7 Dinars (Money).

If you have played Tarah's Chapter, please check the box at "A" of the Path of Wisdom section on the third page of the adventure sheet. Maybe you get a clue there what to do here.