

# The Hills of Phoros

By Andrew Wright

## Introduction

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Welcome to the Hills of Phoros! This is the first in a projected series of fantasy gamebook adventures entitled 'Tales of the Bronze Empire'. It uses a simple rules system that is adaptable to a wide variety of settings. This rules system is called 'Dice With Doom'. Dare you Dice With Doom?

## Dice With Doom: The Rules

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### CHARACTER CREATION

In order to play a Dice With Doom adventure you need to create a character to explore the story. The following steps will guide you through the process of character creation. There is an Adventure Sheet at the end of the rules section. Use it to record your character's creation details.

### Abilities

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Your character has four abilities whose scores determine how well you can explore. These abilities are:

**AGILITY:** How fast, nimble and dexterous your character is.

**AURA:** Your character's magical ability, intelligence, and general luck.

**COMBAT:** How skilled your character is at fighting.

**HEALTH:** How much damage your character can take before dying. If this reaches zero or below, you're dead!

To create your character, split 33 points between the four abilities. No ability can have a score greater than 11 or less than 7.

Example: You want a warrior character. You assign the scores as follows:

AGILITY 8, AURA 7, COMBAT 10, HEALTH 8.

Example: You want a rogue character. You assign the scores as follows:

AGILITY 10, AURA 7, COMBAT 7, HEALTH 9.

### Initial and Current Ability Scores

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Each ability has both an Initial and Current score. The Initial score is your character's starting ability score. The Current score is your character's ability score at any given point in the adventure. Some abilities, such as HEALTH, will have a Current score that changes a lot during the adventure. In some instances, for example when you suffer from a Curse, Disease, or Poison, both your Current and Initial ability scores may change at the same time. It is important to note that except for very rare situations, your Current ability score can never be greater than your Initial ability score.

Example: You have an Initial and Current HEALTH score of 9. You fall down a cliff and lose 6 HEALTH points. Your Current HEALTH score is now 3. You drink a Healing Potion that restores 10 HEALTH points. Your Current HEALTH score is now 9 again. The extra 4 HEALTH points are 'lost' as your Current HEALTH score cannot be greater than your Initial HEALTH score.

Write the Initial and Current ability scores that you have chosen for AURA, AGILITY, COMBAT, and HEALTH, in the Abilities section on your Adventure Sheet.

### Skills

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Your character also knows some skills that may be useful during the adventure. You can choose two skills from the following list:

Archery: Your character can use a bow and arrow during Missile Combat.

Herb Lore: Your character knows the abilities of certain plants and fungi.

Hunting: Your character is a skilled hunter and tracker.

Javelin: Your character can use a javelin during Missile Combat.

Throwing Dagger: Your character can use a throwing dagger during Missile Combat.

Wilderness Lore: Your character knows the wilderness and the obstacles it can present.

As three of these skills are related to Missile Combat it may be worth your time to skip ahead to the Missile Combat rules section so that you understand these skills more fully.

Example: You want a hunter character. You choose the Hunting and Archery skills.

Example: You want a mystic character. You choose the Herb Lore and Wilderness Lore skills.

Write your choice of two skills in the Skills section of your Adventure Sheet.

### Money and Equipment

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The currency of the fantasy lands of the Bronze Empire are gold coins called Crowns. These are used to buy goods and services in most places across the Empire. You start this adventure with 20 Crowns. Write this down in the Crowns section on your Adventure Sheet. These won't go far and you will need to acquire more.

Your character also has some starting Equipment. It is important to know that your character can only carry 8 items of Equipment, including weapons, armour, missile weapons, and other gear. If you have more than 8 items, you must discard your choice of the excess items, unless you find a place within the adventure to store them. Note that Crowns do not count towards your limit of 8 Equipment items.

Your character starts with a weapon chosen from the following list:

Dagger (Damage -1)  
Club (Damage +0)  
Shortsword (Damage +0)  
Staff (Damage +0)  
Spear (Damage +1)  
Sword (Damage +1)

Write down your choice of weapon in the first Equipment slot on your Adventure Sheet.

Your character also starts with a piece of armour from the following list:

Panther Skin (Protection +1)  
Winged Helm (Protection +1)  
Wooden Shield (Protection +1)  
Leather Jerkin (Protection +2)

Write down your choice of armour in the second Equipment slot on your Adventure Sheet.

Note that there is nothing stopping you from picking the best items available (Spear or Sword, and Leather Jerkin). However, you should really think about what kind of character you've created and pick your items accordingly.

Example: You've created a barbarian character. You choose a Club (Damage +0) and a Panther Skin (Protection +1) as their starting Equipment.

Example: You've created a mystic character. You choose a Staff (Damage +0) and a Winged Helm (Protection +1) as their starting Equipment.

Finally, if you chose the Archery, Javelin, or Throwing Dagger skills, you get to add the following to your Equipment list:

Archery: a Bow and a Quiver (6 Arrows: 1 die Damage). These count as two items and it doesn't matter how many Arrows are in the quiver (it can store a maximum of 6 Arrows).

Javelin: a Javelin (1 die +1 Damage).

Throwing Dagger: a Throwing Dagger (1 die -1 Damage).

Example: Your hunter character has the Archery skill. You add a Bow and a Quiver (6 Arrows: 1 die Damage) to the third and fourth slots to the Equipment list on your Adventure Sheet.

Finally...

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You are almost ready. Choose a name for your character and decide whether they are male or female. Note these down on the Name and Sex slots at the top of your Adventure Sheet. Neither will likely have a big bearing on the adventure itself but

they will help you visualize your character better, and thus enjoy their adventures more!

Now you can read through the following rules section to have a better understanding of what may happen to your character during play. Alternatively, you can skip this section and turn to the Background section to begin play immediately. When something happens that you are not sure of, such as Combat, simply turn to the relevant section in the rules for an explanation of what to do. The choice is yours...

## PLAYING THE ADVENTURE

All of the following sections are rules concerning how your character can explore the adventure story. The most frequently-used sections (and thus the most important ones) are Testing Your Abilities, Combat, and Missile Combat.

### Testing Your Abilities

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In many instances you will be told to roll two dice and Test Your AGILITY, AURA, COMBAT, or HEALTH. This is to determine whether your character will succeed or fail at a given task. Generally, if you roll equal to or under your ability score you have succeeded at the task. If you have rolled over your ability score, you have failed. Sometimes there will be modifiers to add or subtract from the dice roll to make it harder or easier for you to succeed. Note that you always Test Your Current ability score, not your Initial ability score.

Example: Your character is swinging from a vine across a chasm. You have to roll two dice and Test Your AGILITY. You can deduct 1 from the dice roll if you have the Wilderness Lore skill. Your character's Current AGILITY score is 8. You roll 9, which would normally be a failure. However, your character has the Wilderness Lore skill. This reduces the dice roll to 8, which is equal to your character's current AGILITY score, and so they succeed in swinging across the chasm on a vine.

### Combat

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Combat is a common occurrence in the lands of the Bronze Empire, where savage beasts stalk the wastes and barbarian tribes do battle against the Empire's legions. On an individual basis, that is, one fighter versus one fighter, the process is relatively simple:

1. The fighter with the highest Current AGILITY score goes first. If both fighters have the same Current AGILITY score, they fight simultaneously.
2. The attacking fighter rolls two dice and adds the result to their Current COMBAT score. They add their weapon's Damage bonus to this result (or subtract it if they have a Dagger (Damage -1)). This is their Attack Roll.
3. The defending fighter rolls two dice and adds the result to their Current COMBAT score. They add their cumulative Armour Protection bonus to this result. This is their Defence Roll.
4. If the Attack Roll and the Defence Roll are the same, or the Defence Roll is greater than the Attack Roll, then the attack has been blocked or parried. Return to step 2 but now the defending fighter becomes the attacker.

5. If the Attack Roll is greater than the Defence Roll, then the difference is subtracted from the defending fighter's Current HEALTH score.
6. If the defending fighter's Current HEALTH score is now zero or less, they have died. Combat is over and the attacking fighter has won. However, if they were fighting simultaneously (because they both had the same Current AGILITY score), then return to step 2 but now the defending fighter becomes the attacker and gets one final attack before they die.
7. If the defending fighter is still alive (with a Current HEALTH score of at least 1) then return to step 2 but now the defending fighter becomes the attacker.

Example: Your barbarian (AGILITY 7, COMBAT 9, HEALTH 9, Club (Damage +0), Panther Skin (Protection +1)) is fighting an Imp (AGILITY 7, COMBAT 5, HEALTH 5, Dagger (Damage -1), No armour (Protection +0)). Both fighters have the same AGILITY score so it is simultaneous Combat.

Your barbarian rolls 10, plus COMBAT 9 for an Attack Roll of 19 (the Club has a Damage bonus of +0 which does not affect the Attack Roll). The Imp rolls 5, plus COMBAT 5, for a Defence Roll of 10 (the Imp has no armour and thus no Protection bonus to affect the Defence Roll). The Imp is slain ( $19 - 10 = 9$  points of damage;  $5 - 9 = -4$  Health for the Imp = death)! However, the Combat was simultaneous, so the Imp gets one final attack before dying.

The Imp rolls 11, plus COMBAT 5, minus Dagger (Damage -1), for an Attack Roll of 15. Your barbarian rolls 3, plus COMBAT 9, plus Panther Skin (Protection +1), for a Defence Roll of 13. The Imp stabs your barbarian for 2 points of damage ( $15 - 13 = 2$ ;  $9 - 2 = 7$ ) so your barbarian's HEALTH score is now 7, and then the Imp dies...

### Dying

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If your character's HEALTH score is ever reduced to zero, or below, they have died. It's sad, but it does happen, and sometimes, unfortunately, quite often. You must immediately turn to paragraph 13 in the adventure itself and follow the instructions given there if your character dies. After you have done that, you can create a new character and start the adventure again.

### No Weapon

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If your character is ever involved in Combat and has no weapon, they must deduct 4 from their Attack Roll.

### Armour

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Armour Protection bonuses are cumulative, as long as they are different kinds of armour. That is to say, you could get a cumulative Armour Protection +3 bonus from having a Winged Helm (Protection +1) and a Leather Jerkin (Protection +2), but not from having a Winged Helm (Protection +1) and a Horned Helm (Protection +2), as you cannot wear two Helms at once.

There are five different kinds of armour, not all of which may be found in this adventure: Helms (for the head), Gauntlets (for the arms), Greaves (for the legs), Shields, and torso armour (Panther Skin (Protection +1), Leather Jerkin (Protection

+2) and so on). Note also that you cannot get cumulative bonuses from a Panther Skin (Protection +1) and a Leather Jerkin (Protection +2) – they are both torso armour.

There is nothing to stop your character wearing a lot of different armour, and thus having a high Armour Protection bonus, but it will eat up your character's precious 8 Equipment slots.

Example: Your warrior has a Panther Skin (Protection +1), a Winged Helm (Protection +1), a Wooden Shield (Protection +1), and Iron Gauntlets (Protection +1). They have a cumulative Armour Protection bonus of +4, but they only have 4 Equipment slots left!

### Missile Combat

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At the start of almost every Combat, you will be told: "You may use a Missile Weapon if you have one". This means you can use a Bow and Arrow, a Javelin, or a Throwing Dagger to inflict some early damage on your opponent before normal Combat begins.

This is done by rolling two dice and Testing Your COMBAT. If you roll over your COMBAT score, you have missed. If you roll equal to or under your COMBAT score you have hit, and can roll for damage.

The amount of damage done depends on the type of Missile Weapon:

Arrow: 1 die Damage = 1-6 points of damage.

Javelin: 1 die +1 Damage = 2-7 points of damage.

Throwing Dagger: 1 die -1 Damage = 1-5 points of damage.

The target also gets to subtract their Armour Protection bonus from the damage caused. The remaining damage is then subtracted from the target's HEALTH score. If the target's HEALTH score is zero or less, you have killed it. If the target's HEALTH score is at least 1, you proceed with normal Combat.

Example: Your hunter character (COMBAT 9) fires an Arrow (1die Damage) at a Rock Panther (HEALTH 7, Panther Skin (Protection +1)). You roll two dice and get 7. This is less than your hunter's COMBAT score, so the Arrow hits the Rock Panther. You roll one die for damage and get 4. The Rock Panther's Armour Protection bonus of +1 reduces this to 3, so you subtract 3 from the Rock Panther's HEALTH score. The Rock Panther now has a HEALTH score of 4, and normal Combat begins...

Assuming you survive normal Combat, you can retrieve your Javelin or Throwing Dagger. However, if you were using a Bow and Arrow, you must cross off 1 Arrow from the amount stored in your Quiver. If you have 0 Arrows left in your Quiver, you cannot use the Bow as a Missile Weapon until you buy or find some more Arrows. Also, if you Escape from a Combat in which you used a Javelin or Throwing Dagger, you must cross it off your Adventure Sheet as you have left it behind when you flee!

It can be seen by now that each Missile Weapon has both positives and negatives, in terms of how many Equipment slots they take up, how much damage they do, and whether they are re-usable. One final advantage is that the Throwing Dagger can often be used underground or indoors, whereas the Bow can't, because it needs two hands and one hand may be busy holding a Candle or Lantern. Likewise, the Javelin can't because it is too unwieldy in confined or indoor spaces. You will be told: "You may not use a Missile Weapon for this combat, except for a Throwing Dagger if you have one" if this restriction applies to your current situation.

Another point about Missile Weapons is that there is nothing stopping you buying and using them, even if you lack the appropriate skill (Archery, Javelin, or Throwing Dagger) for their use. However, if you use a Missile Weapon for which you do not have the skill, you must add 2 to the dice roll when you Test Your COMBAT, as it is more likely that you will miss.

Example: Your hunter character (COMBAT 9) is deep underground and wishes to use a Missile Weapon against a Giant Spider. They cannot use their Bow and Arrow, so they elect to hurl a Throwing Dagger. You roll two dice and get 8. You have to add 2 to the dice roll as your hunter does not have the Throwing Dagger skill. This modifies the roll to 10. Your hunter misses and the Throwing Dagger clatters to the floor. The Giant Spider advances and normal Combat begins...

Bear in mind that some opponents will use Missile Weapons against you! This works exactly the same as the process given above, except that you will roll two dice and Test Their COMBAT score (which will be given in the text) to see if they hit you with their Missile Weapon. If they hit, you then roll for damage depending on what weapon they used, and subtract your cumulative Armour Protection bonus from the die roll. The final result is deducted from your Current HEALTH score. If your HEALTH score is now zero or less, the Missile Weapon has killed you and you must turn to 13 immediately. If not, the text will inform you as to whether you can now use a Missile Weapon, or whether normal Combat begins.

### Escaping

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If your character is taking a beating in Combat then they can flee if they are offered a chance to Escape. However, they must take an Escape Penalty. This is one final attack by their opponent. Your character can roll two dice and make a Defence Roll as normal, but they cannot then retaliate and attack again.

Example: Your rogue (COMBAT 7, HEALTH 5, Leather Jerkin (Protection +2)) decides to Escape from a Brigand (COMBAT 9, HEALTH 10, Sword (Damage +1)). They must take an Escape Penalty in the form of one final attack by the Brigand. The Brigand rolls 8, plus COMBAT 9, plus Sword (Damage +1) for an Attack Roll of 18. Your rogue rolls 6, plus COMBAT 7, plus Leather Jerkin (Protection +2) for a Defence Roll of 15. Your rogue's HEALTH score is now 2 ( $18 - 15 = 3$  points of damage;  $5 - 3 = 2$ ), and they head for the hills!

Also, if you Escape from a Combat in which you used a Missile Weapon such as a Javelin or Throwing Dagger, you must cross it off your Adventure Sheet as you have left it behind when you flee!

### Fighting More Than One Opponent

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Sometimes you will have to fight more than one opponent. You will be told: "You must fight all of the creatures at the same time". This is almost exactly the same as normal Combat, except that you must roll the dice in consecutive order for all the fighters, from the highest AGILITY to the lowest. Once everyone has had an attack, the Combat starts again with the fighter with the highest AGILITY score. Obviously, you can attack only one of your opponents, but all of them can attack you! Pay special attention to simultaneous combat also, as many fighters may have the same AGILITY score.

Example: Your barbarian character (AGILITY 7, COMBAT 9, HEALTH 9, Club (Damage +0), Panther Skin (Protection +1)) is fighting two Rock Panthers (AGILITY 10, COMBAT 8, HEALTH 7, Razor Claws (Damage +1), Panther Skin (Protection +1)). The Rock Panthers have the higher AGILITY scores and so go first. One Rock Panther rolls 5, plus COMBAT 8, plus Razor Claws (Damage +1) for an Attack Roll of 14. The barbarian rolls 7, plus COMBAT 9, plus Panther Skin (Protection +1) for a Defence Roll of 17, which blocks the Panther's attack. The other Rock Panther rolls 8, plus COMBAT 8, plus Razor Claws (Damage +1) for an Attack Roll of 17. The barbarian rolls 6, plus COMBAT 9, plus Panther Skin (Protection +1), for a Defence Roll of 16. The barbarian is wounded ( $17 - 16 = 1$ ) and their HEALTH score is now 8 ( $9 - 1 = 8$ ). Now the barbarian attacks one of the Rock Panthers. They roll 9, plus COMBAT 9, for an Attack Roll of 18 (the Club has a Damage bonus of +0 which does not affect the Attack Roll). The Rock Panther rolls 6, plus COMBAT 8, plus Panther Skin (Protection +1) for a Defence Roll of 15. The Rock Panther is wounded ( $18 - 15 = 3$ ) and their HEALTH score is now 6 ( $9 - 3 = 6$ ). And so the combat continues...

### Codewords

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Codewords are saved points within the story that record what your character has done. It is important to follow all instructions carefully for recording and crossing off codewords, otherwise there may well be continuity errors in your adventure. There is a Codewords section on your Adventure Sheet to record any codewords that your character acquires during the course of their travels.

### Curses, Diseases, and Poisons

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Dying is not the only bad thing that can happen to your character. They may suffer from Curses, Diseases, or Poisons. There is a Curses/Diseases/Poisons section on your Adventure Sheet to note down any afflictions your character may be suffering from, and their effects and penalties. If you can find a cure for a Curse, Disease, or Poison, you can delete it, and its effects, from you Adventure Sheet.

## Gods and Blessings

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The people of the Bronze Empire worship many gods and have erected many temples and shrines as a result. Note that at a temple you may become a follower of a specific god or gain a blessing (among other services), but at a shrine you can typically only gain a blessing. All of these services cost donations in the form of Crowns. Blessings can be especially useful as they may allow you to reroll unfavourable dice rolls or ignore perilous turns of events.

Example: Your character is infected with the Disease known as Tomb Rot. They also have a blessing of Immunity to Disease. You can cross off the blessing and ignore the effects of Tomb Rot – your character was not infected, this time.

There are God and Blessings sections on your Adventure Sheet to record your choice of God (if you become a follower of a specific one) and any blessings you acquire during your adventure.

## Improvement Points

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Improvement Points are a measure of your character's growing experience. When your character gets an Improvement Point it means they have progressed in ability. You can swap an Improvement Point to either increase an ability score or learn a new skill. In order to do so however, you will need to find a mentor within the story who can help you achieve this. This is how your character becomes a better adventurer.

Example: Your character has 1 Improvement Point and meets a sorcerer who agrees to be a mentor. Your character can swap their Improvement Point for a 1 point increase in their Initial and Current AURA score. You cross the Improvement Point off your Adventure Sheet and increase your Initial AURA score by 1 point. You then restore your Current AURA score to this new level.

Example: Your character has 1 Improvement Point and meets a herbalist who agrees to be a mentor. Your character can swap their Improvement Point for the Herb Lore skill. You cross the Improvement Point off your Adventure Sheet and add the Herb Lore skill to the Skills section on your Adventure Sheet.

When you acquire an Improvement Point, note it down on the Improvement Point section on your Adventure Sheet.

## Adventure Sheet

Name:

Sex:

Abilities

AGILITY (Initial/Current):

AURA (Initial/Current):

COMBAT (Initial/Current):

HEALTH (Initial/Current):

Skills:

Crowns:

Equipment:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Codewords:

Curses/Diseases/Poisons:

God:

Blessings:

Improvement Points:

## Background

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The Hills of Phoros: named after a long-dead sorcerer of the Elder Days, these peril-filled highlands are said by some to lie in the exact centre of the Bronze Empire. They are bound by the Shattered Sea to the west, and the humid Blood Leech Swamp to the east; north lies the fertile Heartland – bread-basket of the Empire – whilst to the south are the arid wastes of the Tzelian Desert. The Hills' rubble-filled valleys have long been a refuge from the Empire's armoured Legions, and many have fled to this rocky fastness – inhuman tribes, predatory beasts, loners and malcontents.

The main inhabitants are the mysterious Hill Folk, who came from the east centuries ago and have since established themselves amongst the crags. The centurion Dokos led a crusade against them during the Elder Days but his cohorts were annihilated after a long war. Ruins in the eastern hills still stand testament to Dokos' failed pacification attempt. Now the Hill Folk are famed as hunters and traders, bringing their wares to the surrounding towns and villages for sale.

There are three major settlements to be found on the edges of the Hills of Phoros. In the west is the thriving town of Taradan, a gateway to the rich city-states of the Shattered Sea and a hub of commerce for the region. To the north is the farming village of Karkona, on the fringe of the Empire's fertile Heartland. In the east is the mysterious hamlet of Zelphis, known only for its strange customs and stranger locals.

YOU have grown up in one of these places, in the shadows of the Hills of Phoros, and long have you dreamed of exploring the weird highlands in search of treasure, fame and glory. Your first choice is in which settlement will you begin your career as an adventurer:

Taradan – turn to 1.

Karkona – turn to 66.

Zelphis – turn to 33.

Make your choice and begin your adventure!

1

Taradan is a large market town on the western fringes of the Hills of Phoros. It consists of many white-washed mud-brick dwellings surrounding a busy central bazaar. The dusty streets of Taradan are crowded with all sorts: townsfolk, traders, caravan guards, pack-animals, farmers, and livestock. The fortified villa of the Ward-Maiden Hespera overlooks the town from the top of a nearby knoll.

You can buy a clay hut in Taradan for 75 Crowns. Owning a dwelling gives you a place to rest and store your possessions. If you buy a hut, cross off the 75 Crowns from your Adventure Sheet, and tick the clay hut option box below.

You can:

Visit the bazaar – turn to 20.

Visit the Broken Shield tavern – turn to 84.

Visit the temple of Uelios – turn to 57.

Visit the villa of Ward-Maiden Hespera – turn to 76.

Visit your clay hut [ ] – turn to 10.

Head east into the Hills of Phoros – turn to 39.

2

You are picking your way through a shattered canyon when there is a distant boom of what could be thunder. A shower of rocks and boulders reveals its true source however – an avalanche! If you have the Wilderness Lore skill, you quickly find shelter beneath an overhang, and wait out the rockslide.

If not, roll two dice and Test Your AGILITY. If you roll equal to or under your AGILITY score, you sprint and leap as fast as you can away from the path of the avalanche.

If you roll over your AGILITY score, you have been crushed beneath a pile of rubble. Roll two dice (deducting any Armour Protection), and subtract the result from your HEALTH score. If your HEALTH score is zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If not, read on.

You have survived an avalanche! Brushing off the dust that covers every part of your body, you continue your wanderings. Turn to 56.

3

Without warning, a grey-furred Rock Panther leaps at you from the top of an enormous boulder. If you have the Hunting skill, your tracking sense enables you to avoid the attack at the last second.

If you don't, roll two dice and Test Your AGILITY. If you roll equal to or under your AGILITY score, you dodge the great cat's sudden lunge.

If you roll over your AGILITY score, you have been badly mauled by the Rock Panther. Roll one die (deducting any Armour Protection), and subtract the result from your HEALTH score. If your HEALTH score is zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If not, read on.

In any case, the Rock Panther snarls and continues to attack!

Rock Panther: AGILITY 10, COMBAT 8, HEALTH 7, Razor Claws (Damage +1), Panther Skin (Protection +1)

You may use a Missile Weapon if you have one. If the Rock Panther reduces your HEALTH score to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If you wish to Escape, take your Escape Penalty, and turn to 58. If you defeat the beast, you may skin it and add a Panther Skin (Protection +1) to your Adventure Sheet. You continue walking through the countryside. Turn to 58.

4

You are walking across a dry river-bed, in a shaded dell between two hills, when a small cascade of rocks down a slope ahead heralds the arrival of strangers. You look up into the luminous green eyes of three Goatkin warriors. These folk have the legs and head of a goat, but the upper torso and arms of a human. They are short and sinewy, but the great curved horns rising from the top of their heads make them appear taller. These three are armed with sharp, flint-tipped javelins and spears. They snort nervously and stamp the ground with cloven hooves.

If you have the codeword Zero, turn immediately to 63.

If you have the codeword Zoo, turn immediately to 30.

Otherwise, will you:

Draw your weapon and attack – turn to 15.

Hold out your hands in peace – turn to 81.

5

Cross the Purple Lotus and the 30 Crowns off your Adventure Sheet. Xeros takes them and bids you to wait in an adjoining chamber full of curios and artifacts, while he disappears into his workshop. ‘Don’t touch anything!’ is his final warning.

‘They’re all booby-trapped!’

A short while later, as you are admiring a papyrus portrait depicting the sorcerer Phoros, there is the sound of a small explosion, and Xeros appears at the door, coughing violently. Clouds of purple smoke billow out of the room behind him. He hands you a vial of balm. Record the Lotus Balm on your Adventure Sheet. You may use it at any time to add a temporary +2 bonus to your Current AURA score (and this is one instance where your Current AURA score may momentarily be higher than your Initial AURA score). For example, you could use it when you have to roll two dice and Test Your AURA. There is only enough Lotus Balm for one use however, so when you do use it, cross it off your Adventure Sheet.

‘Do come again!’ says the alchemist, spluttering into his sleeve.

Turn to 33.

6

The second level is another round stone chamber with stairs on the far side leading upwards. This chamber is full of hideous black scorpions, each the size of your hand, slowly crawling over every available surface!

If you wish to go up the stairs, you will need to roll two dice and Test Your AGILITY. If you roll equal to or under your AGILITY score, you are able to nimbly jump from one patch of floor to another, avoiding the scorpions’ stings.

If you roll over your AGILITY score, you slip and fall into a cluster of the foul creatures. Roll one die. This is the number of scorpion stings you suffer. For each sting, deduct 2 points from your Initial and Current HEALTH score. If this reduces your HEALTH to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If not, note on your Adventure

Sheet that you have been Poisoned, and that you can restore these scores to their previous levels when you find somebody who can cure the Poison.

If you avoid or survive the scorpions and wish to climb up to the third level, turn to 95.

If you want to leave the tower, or you don't want to try dodging the scorpions, turn to 65.

7

Searching through a mess of old bones and pottery shards you find some funerary treasure. Roll two dice and add the result in Crowns to your Adventure Sheet. Turn to 78.

8

If you have the codeword Zebra turn to 53.

If not, read on.

Don't forget to cross the 3 Crowns off your Adventure Sheet.

A large group of despondent farmers are complaining about a marauding Hill Drake – a type of dragon – which is preying on the local livestock. Such is its notoriety that even the normally peace-loving temple of Maeghor has announced a bounty on the fire-breathing beast. According to one old-timer, its lair is a cavern at the summit of Mount Mhool – the tallest peak at the centre of the Hills of Phoros.

'Some so-called heroes have already tried to slay the monster,' the old man says. 'We never saw them again...'

'Well, there were those bodies that turned up in the High Pass,' says a young Hill Folk farmer. 'But they were so badly burnt they could have been anybody.'

You leave the tavern. Turn to 66.

9

The wind whistles eerily through the rubble-choked gullies. You could be the only person alive in the entire Bronze Empire right now, for all you know. Attempting to stave off despondency, you dine on wild grapes from an overgrown vineyard. Add 1 point to your HEALTH score if injured. It is time to move on. Will you go:

South – turn to 39.

Or east – turn to 74.

10

Your dwelling in Taradan is a clay hovel near the bazaar. You can leave equipment and money here to save having to carry it around with you. You can also rest here safely and restore your Current HEALTH score to its Initial level. Record below anything you wish to leave here. Each time you return, roll two dice:

Score 2-9: Your possessions are safe

Score 10-11: A thief! Cross off any Crowns you left here.

Score 12: Burglars! Cross off all the possessions you left here.

When you have finished here, turn to 1.

Items in clay hut:

11

You attempt to convince the Goatkin scout that you are a peaceful wanderer and mean him no harm. Roll two dice and Test Your AURA. You may deduct 1 from the roll if you have the Wilderness Lore skill.

If you roll equal to or under your AURA score, the Goatkin is mollified by your approach. He calms visibly and indicates that he wishes to speak. Record the codeword Zoo on your Adventure Sheet, and turn immediately to 68.

If you roll over your AURA score, the Goatkin is unconvinced by your claims. In a guttural voice, he orders you to leave this land immediately.

Will you:

Leave as he requests – turn to 65.

Draw your weapon and attack – turn to 88.

12

If you have the codeword Zenith turn to 89.

You are wandering the hills when your nose detects the unmistakable odors of cooking meat. You come to a dark cave from which the smells, and wreaths of smoke, are emanating. You will need a Lantern or Candle to explore to cave.

If you want to explore the cave – turn to 29.

If you do not have a Lantern or a Candle, or do not wish to explore to the cave – turn to 78.

13

Unfortunately, you are dead, and the Hills of Phoros have claimed another luckless victim. If you wish to try again, by all means create another adventurer and begin a new adventure. You will need to erase all the details on your Adventure Sheet before you start. Additionally, if your deceased adventurer owned a clay hut in the town of Taradan, you will need to erase any money and possessions stored there (go to 10 to check), and also erase the clay hut tick box option at 1.

Better luck next time!

14

You are in the exact centre of the Hills of Phoros. The peaks around you are more like mountains, though few souls are brave enough to venture this far and make an accurate survey. Roll two dice for encounters:

Score 2-6 – Death from above – turn to 60.

Score 7-8 – Alone in the wild – turn to 56.

Score 9-12 – Avalanche! – turn to 2.

15

As you move forward to fight the Goatkin, one of them runs off up the hill, presumably to warn the rest of the tribe. The other two hurl their javelins at you. Both of the Goatkins have a COMBAT score of 7. You must roll two dice for each of them and Test Their COMBAT. If you roll equal to or under the Goatkin's COMBAT score, its javelin hits you. Roll one die plus one (deducting any Armour Protection), and subtract the result from your HEALTH score. If your HEALTH score is zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If you roll over the Goatkin's COMBAT score, the javelin misses you.

Assuming you survive this, the Goatkin stride forwards to attack!

First Goatkin Hunter: AGILITY 9, COMBAT 7, HEALTH 7, Spear (Damage +1), No armour (Protection +0)

Second Goatkin Hunter: AGILITY 9, COMBAT 7, HEALTH 7, Spear (Damage +1), No armour (Protection +0)

You may use a Missile Weapon if you have one. You must fight both Goatkin at the same time. If the Goatkin reduce your HEALTH score to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If you wish to Escape, take your Escape Penalty, and turn to 26. If you defeat the Goatkin, you may strip their corpses of valuables. Add any of the following to your Adventure Sheet: 1-6 Crowns (roll one die), and 2 Spears (Damage +1). Also, write down the codeword Zero. You decide to leave here quickly before the rest of the Goatkin tribe show up. Turn to 26.

16

The Inn of Zelph lies on the banks of the stream of the same name that flows through the middle of the village. Its welcoming taproom is crowded with locals – mostly humans, though there are some brown-skinned Trollborn lurking here and there. They are all enjoying clay jugs of the local mulderberry brew. A bard is seated by the hearth-fire, picking out chords on a fine-stringed lute. Upstairs are spacious chambers furnished with woollen throw-rugs. Each night you spend here costs 2 Crowns, and you may restore 1 point to your HEALTH score if injured.

Leave the Inn of Zelph – turn to 33.

Pay 3 Crowns and buy the bard a few drinks – turn to 52.

17

You know that the green mushrooms are prized by herbalists and alchemists for their healing properties, and can be used to make restorative potions. However you have never read or heard anything concerning the giant scarlet toadstools.

If you want to pick some of the fungi – turn to 38.

If you want to leave the valley – turn to 54.

18

Becoming a worshipper of Maeghor gives you the benefit of paying less for the blessings of the goddess. It costs 30 Crowns to become a worshipper. You cannot become a worshipper of Maeghor if you are already the worshipper of another god. If you choose to become a worshipper, write Maeghor in the God box on your Adventure Sheet – and remember to cross off the 30 Crowns.

To renounce the worship of Maeghor, you must pay 20 Crowns to the priestesses of the goddess by way of compensation. If you are determined to do this, cross the money off and delete Maeghor from the God box on your Adventure Sheet.

When you have finished here, turn to 66.

19

This southern region is called the Land of Pillars by the neighboring desert nomads. It is an apt name – the landscape is a maze of natural stone columns, some crowned by boulders and some in the process of slowly collapsing into the sandy valley floors. Vegetation is limited to bramble bushes, and weird animal calls echo through the broken canyons. Roll two dice for encounters:

Score 2-6 – A titanic helm – turn to 85.

Score 7-8 – A tower of stone – turn to 77.

Score 9-12 – A Goatkin scout – turn to 42.

20

The bazaar of Taradan is bustling with activity and noise. Caravans of camel-trains, ox-drawn wagons, and long lines of pack-mules arrive from all points of the compass and unload wares for sale. When not yelling out goods and prices, merchants haggle fiercely with potential customers, the complex gesticulations of their hands and fingers forming a trader's argot in its own right.

The following items can be bought and/or sold:

Panther Skin (Protection +1), Buy: 40 Crowns, Sell: 30 Crowns  
Leather Jerkin (Protection +2), Buy: 60 Crowns, Sell: 50 Crowns  
Winged Helm (Protection +1), Buy: - , Sell: 30 Crowns  
Horned Helm (Protection +2), Buy: - , Sell: 50 Crowns  
Iron Gauntlets (Protection +1), Buy: - , Sell: 30 Crowns  
Wooden Shield (Protection +1), Buy: 40 Crowns, Sell: 30 Crowns  
Dagger (Damage -1), Buy: 10 Crowns, Sell: 5 Crowns  
Club (Damage +0), Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns  
Staff (Damage +0), Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns  
Shortsword (Damage +0), Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns  
Sword (Damage +1), Buy: 50 Crowns, Sell: 40 Crowns  
Spear (Damage +1), Buy: 50 Crowns, Sell: 40 Crowns  
Scimitar (Damage +1), Buy: - , Sell: 40 Crowns  
Bow, Buy: 10 Crowns, Sell: 5 Crowns  
Quiver (Holds 6 Arrows), Buy: 10 Crowns, Sell: 5 Crowns  
Arrow, Buy: 2 Crowns, Sell: 1 Crown  
Throwing Dagger, Buy: 10 Crowns, Sell: 5 Crowns  
Javelin, Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns  
Candle, Buy: 2 Crowns, Sell: 1 Crown  
Lantern, Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns  
Rope, Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns

Items with no 'To buy' price are not available locally, though you can sell one if you have it. When you have finished here, turn to 1.

21

If you are using a Candle, cross it off your Adventure Sheet.

The cavern is actually a wide, bone-strewn tunnel, blasted by fire and reeking of sulphur. Enormous claws have gouged deep furrows into the tunnel floor. Large black circular scales are everywhere – in fact you may add some Dragon Scales to your Adventure Sheet if you wish. (Count them as one item.) You can:

Advance further down the tunnel – turn to 86.

Return to the surface – turn to 40.

22

Searching through a mess of old bones and pottery shards you find some funerary treasure. Roll two dice and add the result in Crowns to your Adventure Sheet.

Unfortunately, you are also stung by a large black scorpion that was hiding beneath the debris! You have been Poisoned. Note this on your Adventure Sheet, and deduct 2 points from your Initial and Current HEALTH score. If this reduces your HEALTH to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If not - you can restore these scores to their previous levels when you find somebody who can cure the Poison. Crushing the scorpion under your foot, you storm out of the tomb. Turn to 78.

23

The eastern Hills of Phoros are a monotonous series of turf-covered mounds, some of which are topped with the fallen rubble of ancient megaliths. The vales between them have small streams flowing through stands of holly and upland yew. At night, howls and screams ring out across the eerie landscape, as the spirits of its previous inhabitants rise from their graves to haunt the few herders and cottars that dwell here.

Roll two dice for encounters:

Score 2-6 – The restless dead – turn to 97.

Score 7-8 – A hole in the earth – turn to 12.

Score 9-12 – A ruined tomb – turn to 43.

24

If you are using a Candle, cross it off your Adventure Sheet.

Somehow, the door to the tower senses the presence of the Twisted Crown and slowly grinds open. You enter the tower.

The first level is a round stone chamber with stairs on the far side leading upwards.

The entire floor is covered in broken bones and cracked skulls. As you take your first faltering steps across the chamber, many of the skulls suddenly animate into flying, chattering undead monstrosities. You are assailed on all sides!

Roll two dice and Test Your COMBAT. If you roll equal to or under your COMBAT score, you manage to beat them all off without suffering injury. If you rolled over your COMBAT score, you have been mauled by the flying skulls. Roll two dice (deducting any Armour Protection), and subtract the result from your HEALTH score. If your HEALTH score is zero or less, turn immediately to 13.

If you survive the skeletal assault, you have a choice:

Ascend to the second level of the tower – turn to 6.

Leave the tower and head elsewhere – turn to 65.

25

The Grey Goat tavern is a low, smoke-filled longhouse on the edge of the Karkona commons. Enormous haunches of goat-meat are grilled on a blazing fire at the entrance to the building. The meat is then served on wooden skewers to patrons – all human – along with copious amounts of dark ale. Curtained stalls line the back of the tavern, where travellers and locals can rest after feasting. Each night you spend here costs 1 Crown, and you may restore 1 point to your HEALTH score if injured. If you have the codeword Zebra however, you can stay here for free!

Leave the Grey Goat tavern – turn to 66.

Pay 3 Crowns and buy a round of drinks – turn to 8.

26

In your wanderings through the southern hills your skin becomes dusty and your throat is parched. Fortunately, you spot a clear pool of cool water at the bottom of a nearby

valley, and gratefully slake your thirst. You can restore 1 HEALTH point if wounded. Where will you head to now in these dry marches?

North-west – turn to 39.

North-east – turn to 14.

East – turn to 19.

27

These dank, reed-choked valleys are a place of ill-repute. You pass boulders covered in spongy green moss, and strange lights twinkle in distant misty dells. Roll two dice for encounters:

Score 2-6 – The vale of mould – turn to 90.

Score 7-8 – All is still... – turn to 54.

Score 9-12 – A tiny lake – turn to 71.

28

Becoming a worshipper of Uelios gives you the benefit of paying less for the blessings of the sun-god. It costs 40 Crowns to become a worshipper. You cannot become a worshipper of Uelios if you are already the worshipper of another god. If you choose to become a worshipper, write Uelios in the God box on your Adventure Sheet – and remember to cross off the 40 Crowns.

To renounce the worship of Uelios, you must pay 30 Crowns to the priests of the sun-god by way of compensation. If you are determined to do this, cross the money off and delete Uelios from the God box on your Adventure Sheet.

When you have finished here, turn to 1.

29

If you are using a Candle, cross it off your Adventure Sheet.

The cave connects to a dark tunnel that winds down through the earth to a subterranean chamber. The chamber is lit by a cooking fire on which a hideous crone is roasting a haunch of meat. You are shocked to see it is a human leg!

The crone sees you and cackles: 'Aha! More blood for Heka!'

She pulls a stained knife from her torn smock and advances around the fire towards you.

Will you fight the crone – turn to 46.

Or will you flee – turn to 67.

30

The Goatkin greet you as a friend of their tribe. You share a meal of flatbread and olives with them – add 1 point to your Current HEALTH score if injured. You can also buy up to 2 Javelins from them for 10 Crowns each. If you do so, note your purchases on your Adventure Sheet and deduct the Crowns.

One of them advises you to beware any caves in this immediate area as they are full of disease-carrying creatures called Bloodfangs. If you do find yourself fighting a Bloodfang however, the Goatkin recommends Wild Garlic as a partially effective repellent.

When you are ready to leave here, turn to 26.

31

If you have the codeword Zebra turn immediately to 50.

If you have the codeword Zealot and a Dragon's Head, turn to 100.

Otherwise, read on.

The High Priestess of Maeghor is a tall, blonde-haired woman called Inimystra. Her hair is kept in place with a silver circlet, and she wears a long, green robe of shimmering silk. On seeing that you are a wandering adventurer, the High Priestess Inimystra says: 'You must help us! A ravaging dragon from the hills is carrying off people and farm animals from the lands surrounding Karkona. We cannot offer much in the way of riches but we can offer a token bounty and the thanks of our goddess if you should succeed in slaying the Hill Drake. Please – we urgently need your help!'

If you wish to accept the High Priestess's quest to kill the Hill Drake, record the codeword Zealot in the Codeword box on your Adventure Sheet.

When you have finished here, turn to 66.

32

You recognize the flowers as the mystical Purple Lotus, which can be used to make potions to enhance magical potential. However, these blooms are often jealously guarded by nature spirits, who may not take kindly to your intrusion.

Will you pick one of the flowers – turn to 83.

Or will you journey elsewhere – turn to 54.

33

The quiet hamlet of Zelphis lies along the willow-lined banks of a small stream. Its stone huts are roofed with dark slate, and lit at night by glass globes full of emerald fireflies. The people of Zelphis are a mix of Hill Folk and others from the Bronze Empire's eastern borders. They are quiet and introspective, and concern themselves with tending herb-gardens and brewing mulderberry wine. You can:

Visit the Inn of Zelph – turn to 16.

Visit the workshop of Xeros the Alchemist – turn to 44.

Visit the Healer – turn to 87.

Visit the shrine of Tzalgot – turn to 62.

Head west into the Hills of Phoros – turn to 23.

34

You come to a long crevasse between the hills that rends the landscape in two. It is not especially deep, but there appears to be no way to cross it, other than attempting a heroic leap of faith.

Roll two dice and Test Your AGILITY. You may deduct 2 from the roll if you have the Wilderness Lore skill. You may also deduct 1 from the roll if you have some Rope.

If you roll equal to or under your AGILITY score, you have successfully jumped across the crevasse and may continue on your way.

If you roll over your AGILITY score, you fail to negotiate the jump correctly, and hit the far cliff face before falling screaming down the crevasse. Roll two dice (deducting any Armour Protection), and subtract the result from your HEALTH score. If your HEALTH score is zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If not, read on.

If you have succeeded or survived crossing the crevasse, you may now keep wandering through the Hills of Phoros. Turn to 26.

35

Don't forget to cross the 3 Crowns off your Adventure Sheet.

You spend time drinking with a group of horned Goatkin who work in the bazaar as animal-handlers. They tell you there is a sizeable community of Goatkin in the southern reaches of the Hills of Phoros. You have to approach the wild Goatkin cautiously though, as they dislike strangers. Apparently they exist in eternal conflict with a rival tribe of beasts called Bloodfangs.

'Vampires!' mutters one of the Goatkin darkly, his bestial snout sneering in contempt. You leave the Broken Shield tavern – turn to 1.

36

You come across a heavily-guarded mule-train of Hill Folk traders, slowly picking its way down a stony track. The guards, armed with bows and swords, relax visibly when they see you are not one of the usual bandits from these parts. You are brought before the bearded Trade Chief, who puffs on a smoking-weed pipe and invites you to consider his wares.

The following items may be bought here:

Winged Helm (Protection +1), Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns

Dagger (Damage -1), Buy: 10 Crowns, Sell: 5 Crowns

Shortsword (Damage +0), Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns

Throwing Dagger, Buy: 10 Crowns, Sell: 5 Crowns

Candle, Buy: 2 Crowns, Sell: 1 Crown

Rope, Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns

The Trade Chief is not interested in anything you may want to sell. When you have finished here, turn to 9.

37

At the summit of a high crag you come across two Hill Folk hunters skinning the carcass of a Giant Ibex that they have recently slain. The goat-like creature's pelt is much valued in the lowlands, whilst its great, ridged horns decorate the battle helmets of the Hill Folk warriors. The hunters offer to sell you a previous trophy – a Panther Skin (Protection +1) for 20 Crowns. If you wish to buy it, cross the 20 Crowns off your Adventure Sheet and note down the Panther Skin (Protection +1). When you have finished here, turn to 98.

38

You bend down to pick some of the glowing mushrooms. Add Green Fungi to the Equipment list on your Adventure Sheet.

Immediately to your horror, several of the scarlet toadstools sprout chitinous arms and legs and drag themselves out of the ground! Three of gangly toadstool creatures advance towards you on scrawny limbs. They have a trio of golden eyes on the main stalk beneath their scarlet caps, and a long vertical slit-like mouth. Reaching out to grab you with arms more like pallid claw-tipped tentacles, the creatures attack!

First Mushroom Man: AGILITY 5, COMBAT 7, HEALTH 6, Fungal Claws (Damage +0), Chitinous Exoskeleton (Protection +1)

Second Mushroom Man: AGILITY 5, COMBAT 7, HEALTH 6, Fungal Claws (Damage +0), Chitinous Exoskeleton (Protection +1)  
Third Mushroom Man: AGILITY 5, COMBAT 7, HEALTH 6, Fungal Claws (Damage +0), Chitinous Exoskeleton (Protection +1)

You may use a Missile Weapon if you have one. You must fight all three Mushroom Men at the same time. If the Mushroom Men reduce your HEALTH score to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If you wish to Escape, take your Escape Penalty and turn to 54. If you defeat all three Mushroom Men, you look around and see other scarlet toadstools beginning to stir! You decide to quickly leave the valley. Turn to 54.

39

The western Hills of Phoros are rolling downs of orange clay, dotted with stands of twisted olive trees and spiny acacias. Flocks of black sheep graze on distant slopes, and the air is full of both the hum of cicadas and the scent of wild herbs. Roll two dice for encounters:

Score 2-6 – Hill Folk shepherds – turn to 64.

Score 7-8 – A pleasant stroll – turn to 58.

Score 9-12 – Ambushed! – turn to 3.

40

You are at the summit of Mount Mhool! From here, the Hills of Phoros are covered by an unending cloudscape, through which the tops of the larger crags occasionally protrude. A dark cavern burrows into the mountain peak ahead of you. If you wish to enter the cave you will need either a Candle or a Lantern. Otherwise, after admiring the view, your only choice is to descend the mountain.

Enter the cave – turn to 21.

Climb back down – turn to 99.

41

The market of Karkona is a lively affair of local merchants hawking all manner of wares. Most of it is inherently useless to an adventurer of any stripe, but you do spot some bargains.

The following items can be bought and/or sold:

Leather Jerkin (Protection +2), Buy: 60 Crowns, Sell: 50 Crowns  
Wooden Shield (Protection +1), Buy: 40 Crowns, Sell: 30 Crowns  
Dagger (Damage -1), Buy: 10 Crowns, Sell: 5 Crowns  
Club (Damage +0), Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns  
Staff (Damage +0), Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns  
Shortsword (Damage +0), Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns  
Bow, Buy: 10 Crowns, Sell: 5 Crowns  
Quiver (Holds 6 Arrows), Buy: 10 Crowns, Sell: 5 Crowns  
Arrow, Buy: 2 Crowns, Sell: 1 Crown  
Throwing Dagger, Buy: 10 Crowns, Sell: 5 Crowns  
Javelin, Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns  
Candle, Buy: 2 Crowns, Sell: 1 Crown  
Lantern, Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns  
Rope, Buy: 20 Crowns, Sell: 15 Crowns

Wild Garlic, Buy: 2 Crowns, Sell: 1 Crown

Items with no 'To buy' price are not available locally, though you can sell one if you have it. When you have finished here, turn to 66.

42

You are wandering through a garden of petrified trees when you are challenged by a goat-headed humanoid armed with a spear, and riding a Giant Ibex. The creature demands to know your business in the area. Its huge, horned mount brays in annoyance and begins warily cropping a tuft of grass.

If you have the codeword Zero, turn immediately to 73.

If you have the codeword Zoo, turn immediately to 68.

Otherwise, will you:

Draw your weapon and attack – turn to 88.

Hold out your hands in peace – turn to 11.

43

Under the shade of a lone cypress you stumble across the marble tomb of one of the long-dead legionaries of Dokos. It has already been smashed and looted, but you may still search it to see if any valuables have been left behind.

If you wish to leave the tomb alone – turn to 78.

If you wish to search the ruined tomb, roll one die.

Roll 1-4 – turn to 7.

Roll 5-6 – turn to 22.

44

The workshop of the alchemist Xeros is an ornate stone house on the outskirts of the village. You have to walk through an overgrown vegetable patch to get to the front door. Xeros is a gaunt but cheerful fellow, with yellow-stained hands and a shock of grey frizzy hair. 'What service do you require?' he says.

Xeros can create some magical artifacts for you – at a cost – but he does need basic ingredients to begin. You need both the ingredient and the correct amount of Crowns for him to start.

You have Purple Lotus and 30 Crowns – turn to 5.

You have Dragon Scales and 50 Crowns – turn to 69.

You have Green Fungi and 20 Crowns – turn to 91.

If you have none of these, or you wish to leave – turn to 33.

45

When it sees you draw a weapon and advance, the Hill Drake sighs, and breathes a stream of flame at you. Roll two dice and Test Your AGILITY. If you roll equal to or under your AGILITY score, you dodge the Hill Drake's fiery breath.

If you roll over your AGILITY core, you have been severely burned by the Hill Drake.

Roll two dice (deducting any Armour Protection), and subtract the result from your HEALTH score. If you have a Dragonscale Shield, you may halve this damage, rounding all fractions down, before subtracting it from your HEALTH score, as the magical nature of the shield protects you from most of the blast. If your HEALTH score is zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If not, read on.

If you dodge or survive its fiery breath, the Hill Drake bounds off its hoard to attack!

Hill Drake: AGILITY 9, COMBAT 10, HEALTH 14, Huge Teeth (Damage +3), Thick Scales (Protection +3)

You may not use a Missile Weapon for this combat, except a Throwing Dagger if you have one. If you have a Dragonscale Shield, you may halve any damage you suffer in combat, rounding all fractions down, before subtracting it from your HEALTH score, as the magical nature of the shield protects you from the Hill Drake's attacks. If the Hill Drake reduces your HEALTH score to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If you wish to Escape, take your Escape Penalty, and turn to 21. If you defeat the Hill Drake, record the codeword Zone on your Adventure Sheet. You can take the dragon's hoard! Add any of the following to your Adventure Sheet: 500 Crowns, Horned Helm (Protection +2), Iron Gauntlets (Protection +1), Scimitar (Damage +1). You can also take the Dragon's Head as proof of your heroic deed! When you are finished here, turn to 21.

46

Before your eyes, the old hag turns into a tall, proud woman with a twisted crown of thorns, like a Witch Queen of old. Her knife becomes a bronze sword covered in glowing runes, and her rags are now a glittering panoply of obsidian-studded armour. She smiles grimly at your shocked expression. 'Heka the Horrible will now claim your soul!' she says, raising the rune-sword to deliver a mighty blow. Defend yourself!

Heka the Horrible, AGILITY 11, COMBAT 11, HEALTH 11, Rune-sword (Damage +2), Obsidian Armour (Protection +3)

You may not use a Missile Weapon for this combat, except for a Throwing Dagger if you have one. If Heka reduces your HEALTH score to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If you wish to Escape, take your Escape Penalty, and turn to 67. If you slay Heka the Horrible, turn to 93.

47

The race of Bloodfangs are carriers of a contagious wasting malady called Batpox. It is transmitted through blood and open wounds, and as you have been injured by one of the creatures, you too have been infected. If you have a blessing of Immunity to Disease, cross it off your Adventure Sheet, and turn immediately to 26.

If not, write Batpox in the Disease box on your Adventure Sheet. Halve both your Initial and Current HEALTH scores, rounding fractions up, and write these new scores on your Adventure Sheet also. Note that your new Current HEALTH score can never be higher than your new Initial HEALTH score. If you find a cure or someone who can heal you, you can restore your HEALTH score to normal.

In the meantime, feeling weaker with every step, you stagger out of the cave and onwards through the hills. Turn to 26.

48

The Ward-Maiden Hespera is an imposing black-haired Hill Folk woman wearing leather armour, with twin sheathed shortswords at her belt. She recognizes you as a warrior of some standing.

She will act as a mentor if you require any further combat training. She can also instruct her legionaries to teach you some of their skills.

If you have an Improvement Point, you can swap it here for either 1 point of COMBAT, or the Archery skill, or the Javelin skill.

If you choose the COMBAT option, increase your Initial COMBAT score by 1, and restore your Current COMBAT score to this new Initial level. If you choose the skill option, record either the Archery or Javelin skill on your Adventure Sheet, but you will have to buy the weapons yourself from the bazaar.

Don't forget to cross the Improvement Point off your Adventure Sheet if you use it. When you have finished here, turn to 1.

49

The arid southern hills are riddled with deep crevasses and dusty caves, and covered in clumps of spiny grasses and the occasional thornbush. The sun is a blazing orb in a cloudless blue sky. You mop your brow and ponder a way onwards. Roll two dice for encounters:

Score 2-6 – Goatkin hunters – turn to 4.

Score 7-8 – A crack in the earth – turn to 34.

Score 9-12 – A deep, dark cavern – turn to 96.

50

High Priestess Inimystra welcomes you as the slayer of the Hill Drake of Mount Mhool. She will act as a mentor if you require any training. She can also contact the local hunters to teach you some of their skills.

If you have an Improvement Point, you can swap it here for either 1 point of HEALTH, or the Hunting skill, or the Wilderness Lore skill.

If you choose the HEALTH option, increase your Initial HEALTH score by 1, and restore your Current HEALTH score to this new Initial level. If you choose the skill option, record either the Hunting or Wilderness Lore skill on your Adventure Sheet. Don't forget to cross the Improvement Point off your Adventure Sheet if you use it. When you have finished here, turn to 66.

51

Two wiry men in animal skins jump out from behind a rocky outcrop. Their bodies have been blackened with charcoal, and they wield spiked clubs. One of them grins, revealing hideous teeth that have been filed to sharp points.

'Your money,' he says in a guttural accent, 'and your flesh!'

You must fight these cannibal brigands!

First Bandit: AGILITY 7, COMBAT 6, HEALTH 5, Club (Damage +0), Panther Skin (Protection +1)

Second Bandit: AGILITY 7, COMBAT 5, HEALTH 6, Club (Damage +0), Panther Skin (Protection +1)

You may use a Missile Weapon if you have one. You must fight both Bandits at the same time. If the Bandits reduce your HEALTH score to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If you wish to Escape, take your Escape Penalty, and turn to 9. If you defeat the Bandits, you may strip their corpses of valuables. Add any of the following to your Adventure Sheet: 1-6 Crowns (roll one die), 2 Panther Skins (Protection +1), 2 Clubs (Damage +0). When you are ready, turn to 9.

52

Don't forget to cross the 3 Crowns off your Adventure Sheet.

The bard – whose name is Trion – is an older man clad in dyed-green trail leathers. He tells you that the hills around here are notorious as the haunts of undead spirits, faerie folk, and misanthropic hermits.

'There's a witch called Heka who lives to the west' says Trion. 'She curses all who disturb her peace. Many wayfarers have been hexed by her and then died unmourned in the hills. Folks round here call her Heka the Horrible. Some say she was the consort of the sorcerer Phoros in the Elder Days, but I dispute that. No one can live forever! Personally, I think you'd be wise to leave her well alone!'

Trion the bard, now suitably refreshed, resumes playing delicate melodies on his lute. You leave the Inn of Zelph – turn to 33.

53

As the slayer of the Hill Drake of Mount Mhool, you are warmly welcomed in the Grey Goat tavern, and bought many rounds of drinks. (You don't have to cross 3 Crowns off your Adventure Sheet!) However, life in Karkona has now returned to normal, which means that for an adventurer like yourself, there is little to do. A trader from the market catches you stifling a yawn of boredom.

'The Hills of Phoros are named after a mighty sorcerer of the Elder Days,' she tells you. 'Some say his ruined tower – which is full of fabulous jewels – still lies in the southern hills, beyond Zelphis. Perhaps that will interest you!'

You thank her and leave the tavern. Turn to 66.

54

Accompanied by the occasional croaks of unseen toads, you wander onwards through marsh-bottomed gullies and stands of whispering bulrushes. If you have the Hunting skill, you catch a Swamp Vole, which you can cook and eat - add 1 point to your HEALTH score if injured.

Where will you venture now?

South – turn to 23.

West – turn to 74.

55

Corpse-Dwellers are infected with a hideous disease called Tomb Rot, and as you were wounded by the creatures, you have also contracted it. If you have a blessing of Immunity to Disease, cross it off your Adventure Sheet, and turn immediately to 78. If not, write Tomb Rot in the Disease box on your Adventure Sheet. Deduct 2 points from your Initial and Current AGILITY, AURA, COMBAT, and HEALTH scores. If this reduces your HEALTH score to zero or less, you must turn immediately to 13. If not, you must find a cure or somebody who can heal you, and then you may restore your AGILITY, AURA, COMBAT, and HEALTH scores to their original Initial values.

Feeling sickened beyond despair, you lurch ever onwards through the dales. Turn to 78.

56

You are in the centre of the Phoros highlands, where grey crags point accusingly at a storm-lashed sky. Towering above them all is the mighty eminence of Mount Mhool,

its lofty summit perpetually wreathed in clouds. If you have the Hunting skill, you find the eggs of a Boulder Goose, which you can eat - add 1 point to your HEALTH score if injured.

If you have the codeword Zealot and wish to climb Mount Mhool, turn to 99.

Otherwise, where will you head to now?

North – turn to 74.

East – turn to 23.

West – turn to 39.

South-west – turn to 49.

South-east – turn to 19.

57

The temple of Uelios is an impressive clay building with a polished copper roof-dome. Uelios is the patron sun-god of the Empire, and his dominion also includes wealth, luck, and trade. Priests of Uelios wear orange robes and each carries a wooden staff topped with a copper orb – the symbol of their god. You can:

Change your worship status – turn to 28.

Obtain a blessing – turn to 94.

Leave the temple of Uelios – turn to 1.

58

Nothing disturbs your reverie as you traverse the western hills. If you have the Herb Lore skill, you find a clump of Wild Garlic, which you may add to your Adventure Sheet if you wish. Where are you headed now?

West to the town of Taradan – turn to 1.

East to Mount Mhool – turn to 14.

To the south-east – turn to 49.

To the north – turn to 82.

59

It costs 25 Crowns to obtain a blessing, or 10 Crowns if you are a worshipper of the goddess.

If you buy the blessing, cross off the money and write Immunity to Disease in the Blessings box on your Adventure Sheet. The blessing works by allowing you to ignore the effects of any one disease you may contract. It is only good for one use. When you use the blessing, cross it off your Adventure Sheet.

You can only have one Immunity to Disease blessing at any time. Once it is used up you must return to any temple of Maeghor to purchase a new one.

When you have finished here, turn to 66.

60

If you have the codeword Zone turn immediately to 79.

If not, read on.

You are struggling up a mountainside when an enormous shadow falls over you.

Looking up you see a black-scaled dragon-like creature swooping towards you on leathery wings. A gigantic Hill Drake! It opens a snaggle-toothed maw and breathes a tongue of flame which you dive to avoid. If you have the Hunting skill, your tracking sense enables you to evade the attack at the last second.

If you don't, roll two dice and Test Your AGILITY. If you roll equal to or under your AGILITY score, you dodge the Hill Drake's fiery breath.

If you roll over your AGILITY score, you have been severely burned by the Hill Drake. Roll two dice (deducting any Armour Protection), and subtract the result from your HEALTH score. If you have a Dragonscale Shield, you may halve this damage, rounding all fractions down, before subtracting it from your HEALTH score, as the magical nature of the shield protects you from most of the blast. If your HEALTH score is zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If not, read on.

Regardless of whether you dodge the blast or survive it, the Hill Drake flaps off in search of easier prey, screeching in frustration as it does so. You shake your fist in anger at its now-distant silhouette! Turn to 56.

61

As you scramble up a rocky hillside, there is the barest warning of a loud hiss before a banded serpent strikes at your outstretched arm when you reach for a handhold. It is a lethal Stone Krait and its fangs contain potentially deadly venom! If you have the Hunting skill, your sixth sense enables you to avoid the snake's strike at the last second.

If you don't, roll two dice and Test Your AGILITY. If you roll equal to or under your AGILITY score, you dodge the reptile's sudden lunge.

If you roll over your AGILITY score, you have been badly bitten by the Stone Krait. Roll one die, and subtract the result from your HEALTH score. If your HEALTH score is zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If not, read on. You have been Poisoned. Note this on your Adventure Sheet, and deduct 1 point from your Initial and Current AGILITY, AURA, and COMBAT scores. You can restore these scores to their previous levels when you find somebody who can cure the Poison.

Regardless of whether you dodge the strike or survive it, the Stone Krait slithers off among the rocks. Turn to 98.

62

The shrine of Tzalgot is a compact stone pavilion in the centre of the village. Tzalgot is an obscure eastern deity who takes the form of a many-armed hermaphrodite sitting cross-legged in contemplation. The domain of Tzalgot extends to the moon, sorcery, and the untapped potential of the human mind. You cannot become a worshipper of Tzalgot here as there are no priests present to record your conversion. You can however obtain a blessing by leaving an offering at the altar.

It costs 30 Crowns to obtain a blessing, or 15 Crowns if you are a worshipper of the god Tzalgot.

If you buy the blessing, cross off the money and write AURA in the Blessings box on your Adventure Sheet. The blessing works by allowing you to roll again when you make a failed Test Your AURA roll. It is only good for one re-roll. When you use the blessing, cross it off your Adventure Sheet.

You can only have one AURA blessing at any time. Once it is used up you must return to any temple or shrine of Tzalgot to purchase a new one.

When you have finished here, turn to 33.

63

The Goatkin recognize you as an enemy of their tribe. They shake their javelins and yell at you to begone. Will you:

Leave as they request – turn to 26.

Draw your weapon and attack – turn to 15.

64

You come across a small group of Hill Folk shepherds, resting in the shade of a stand of myrtle trees. They are eating a simple meal of goat cheese and olives, washed down with rough red wine, and invite you to join them. You can restore 1 HEALTH point if wounded.

One of them points to the north. ‘Bandits!’ he says, shaking his head. ‘Eat people!’

The midday meal is over. Thanking the shepherds, you journey onwards. Turn to 58.

65

The Land of Pillars is a labyrinthine terrain of weird rock formations that all look extremely similar. Even when you think you do know where you are going, inevitably your way will be blocked by impenetrable thickets of thorny brambles. You are certainly relieved to be heading elsewhere!

North-east – turn to 23.

North-west – turn to 14.

West – turn to 49.

66

The village of Karkona is a thriving settlement of farmers and herders on the northern slopes of the Phoros Hills. Its quaint cobbled paths are lined with neatly-trimmed hedgerows. All roads lead to a central commons which is roughly split into a green grazing sward for livestock and a series of market stalls. The people are either black-haired Hill Folk traders and shepherds, or pallid Heartland farmers in leather longcoats. You can:

Browse through the market stalls – turn to 41.

Visit the Grey Goat tavern – turn to 25.

Visit the temple of Maeghor – turn to 80.

Head south into the Hills of Phoros – turn to 74.

67

‘You may run, wanderer!’ howls Heka as you flee up the tunnel. ‘But you will not escape the Hex of Heka!’

Roll two dice and Test Your AURA. If you roll equal to or under your AURA score, you resist the curse using your strength of will and innate magical ability. If you roll over your AURA score, you have been cursed by Heka the Horrible. Write Hex of Heka in the Curse box on your Adventure Sheet. From now on you must double all HEALTH score losses. (So if you were wounded in combat and lost 3 HEALTH points, you would actually deduct 6 points from your score. Also, if you are ever told to halve your HEALTH score, you would actually quarter it if you are suffering the Hex of Heka!). This is a lethal curse and you must find a cure as soon as possible! In the meantime, turn to 78.

68

The Goatkin greets you as a friend of his tribe. You share a meal of dried mushrooms with him – add 1 point to your Current HEALTH score if injured. You can also buy a Javelin from him for 10 Crowns. If you do so, note your purchase on your Adventure Sheet and deduct the Crowns.

He tells you that a Trollborn hermit lives somewhere in the vicinity. The Goatkin regard him as a kind of holy mystic as he has the ability to dispel curses. His services however, are not cheap!

When you are ready to leave here, turn to 65.

69

Cross the Dragon Scales and the 50 Crowns off your Adventure Sheet. Xeros takes them and bids you to wait in an adjoining chamber full of curios and artifacts, while he disappears into his workshop. ‘Don’t touch anything!’ is his final warning.

‘They’re all booby-trapped!’

A short while later, as you are peering at a scale model of some sort of bronze colossus (minus the head), there is the sound of raised voices, and Xeros appears at the door, one hand restraining a tiny, red-skinned imp that is chittering angrily.

With his other hand he gives you a magnificent shield of burnished dragon scales.

Record the Dragonscale Shield (Protection +2) on your Adventure Sheet. As well as providing a Protection bonus during combat, the Dragonscale Shield will also allow you to halve any damage you may suffer from a dragon’s attack, rounding all fractions down. (So if you were gored by a dragon for 7 HEALTH points of damage, you would actually only lose 3 HEALTH points.)

‘Return by all means!’ says the alchemist, dragging the imp back into the workshop.

Turn to 33.

70

What was once the lair of the Hill Drake now just contains its slowly decaying carcass. There is nothing else here of interest to you. Turn to 21.

71

In a deep, bowl-shaped dale, you find a still pond whose surface is covered with lily pads and beautiful purple flowers. If you have the Herb Lore skill, turn to 32.

If not, will you pick one of the flowers – turn to 83.

Or will you journey elsewhere – turn to 54.

72

The Healer recognizes you as a fellow herbalist. She will act as a mentor if you require any training in the mystical arts. If you have an Improvement Point, you can swap it here for 1 point of AURA. Increase your Initial AURA score by 1, and restore your Current AURA score to this new Initial level. Don’t forget to cross the Improvement Point off your Adventure Sheet if you choose this option.

When you have finished here, turn to 33.

73

The Goatkin recognize you as an enemy of his tribe. He shakes a javelin and yells at you to begone. Will you:

Leave as he requests – turn to 65.

Draw your weapon and attack – turn to 88.

74

The northern hills of Phoros are undulating grazing lands where glades of dwarf pines have been twisted into strange shapes by the ever-present wind. The hilltops are marked with stone cairns to denote different herders' territories. The further south you travel, the wilder the countryside becomes. Roll two dice for encounters:

Score 2-6 – Hill Folk hunters – turn to 37.

Score 7-8 – A brisk walk – turn to 98.

Score 9-12 – Hissing among the rocks – turn to 61.

75

If you are using a Candle, cross it off your Adventure Sheet.

You are on the threshold of a vast cavern, of which your flickering light illuminates only a tiny fraction. The floor is covered in bones, debris, and what looks like bat excreta. You look upwards...

And wish you didn't! Crowding the cavern ceiling are a roosting horde of horrible pale creatures that look like a cross between man and bat. Thankfully, most are slumbering, but one that isn't flutters down to attack you. With its leathery wings and fang-filled maw, it surely resembles some terrifying angel of death! You must fight...

**Bloodfang:** AGILITY 9, COMBAT 10, HEALTH 6, Talons (Damage +2), No armour (Protection +0)

You may not use a Missile Weapon for this combat, except a Throwing Dagger if you have one. If you have any Wild Garlic, its smell will disturb the Bloodfang, and you may deduct 1 point from the creature's COMBAT and AGILITY scores. If the Bloodfang reduces your HEALTH score to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If you wish to Escape, take your Escape Penalty, and turn to 26. If you are not injured, or turn to 47 if you are injured by the Bloodfang. If you defeat the Bloodfang, and it injured you, turn to 47. If you defeated the Bloodfang and it did not injure you, read on. You hurriedly leave the cave and continue your trek through the hills. Turn to 26.

76

Ward-Maiden Hespera is the appointed representative of the Bronze Empire for Taradan. Her hilltop villa is surrounded by a spiked wall and is heavily guarded by halberd-wielding warriors. Gaining entry to see the Ward-Maiden will prove difficult! You attempt to convince the guards that you are a mercenary adventurer of no small fame.

Roll two dice and Test Your COMBAT. If you roll equal to or under your COMBAT score, you are successful – turn to 48. If you roll over your COMBAT score, you are unsuccessful and must return to Taradan – turn to 1.

77

You see a bizarre structure in the wastes. It is as if one of the rock columns has been hollowed out from the inside and turned into a tower. There is a stone portal at the bottom of the pillar, and an amber-coloured glass dome at the top. Curiously, there are no windows. You step up to the door. It is a featureless slab of granite and you see no way to enter.

If you have a Twisted Crown (and a Candle or a Lantern), turn to 24.

If not, or if you wish to leave, turn to 65.

78

These hills are not for the squeamish. At one point you rest by a pile of timber, only to realize, upon finding a yellow skull, that it is actually a fallen gibbet. Another time, you plan to stop at a small stone hut but instead keep moving when you see that its walls are covered in bloody hand-prints. Where to now?

East to the village of Zelphis – turn to 33.

West to Mount Mhool – turn to 14.

North – turn to 27.

South-west – turn to 19.

79

Now that the Hill Drake has been slain, other predators have moved into the area. You are traversing a rocky incline at dusk when a hideously twisted thing, part bat and part man, darts down to attack you. It hovers on great grey wings, as it tries to ensnare you with taloned hands and feet. Although the blood of a previous victim is splattered all over its bestial face, the fiend seeks further sustenance. You must fight the Bloodfang!

Bloodfang: AGILITY 9, COMBAT 10, HEALTH 6, Talons (Damage +2), No armour (Protection +0)

You may use a Missile Weapon if you have one. If you have any Wild Garlic, its smell will disturb the Bloodfang, and you may deduct 1 point from the creature's COMBAT and AGILITY scores. If the Bloodfang reduces your HEALTH score to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If you wish to Escape, take your Escape Penalty, and turn to 56 if you are not injured, or turn to 92 if you are injured by the Bloodfang. If you defeat the Bloodfang, and it injured you, turn to 92. If you defeated the Bloodfang and it did not injure you, read on. You continue your trek through the mountains. Turn to 56.

80

The temple of Maeghor is a marble hall whose many pillars are festooned with ivy. Maeghor is the goddess of crops, fertility, and the soil. In this fertile corner of the Bronze Empire, wealthy farmers are only too happy to make rich offerings to the goddess! The priestesses of Maeghor – for her clergy are all female – wear green and brown vestments and laurel-leaf crowns. You can:

Change your worship status – turn to 18.

Obtain a blessing – turn to 59.

Seek an audience with the High Priestess – turn to 31.

Leave the temple of Maeghor – turn to 66.

81

You attempt to convince the Goatkin hunters that you are a peaceful wanderer and mean them no harm. Roll two dice and Test Your AURA. You may deduct 1 from the roll if you have the Wilderness Lore skill.

If you roll equal to or under your AURA score, the Goatkin are mollified by your approach. They calm visibly and indicate that they wish to speak. Record the codeword Zoo on your Adventure Sheet, and turn immediately to 30.

If you roll over your AURA score, the Goatkin are unconvinced by your claims. In a guttural voice, one of them orders you to leave their lands immediately.

Will you:

Leave as they request – turn to 26.

Draw your weapon and attack – turn to 15.

82

The hills in these parts are ragged, boulder-strewn scarps. Goat trails wind their way across the slopes. Occasionally you pass an abandoned vineyard, or a ruined stone hut.

The sense of desolation is palpable. Roll two dice for encounters:

Score 2-6 – Bandits! – turn to 51.

Score 7-8 – A solitary walk in the wilderness – turn to 9.

Score 9-12 – A merchant caravan – turn to 36.

83

You pick several of the flowers. Add the Purple Lotus to the Equipment list on your Adventure Sheet.

Almost immediately, a spindly humanoid with green skin arises from amidst the lily pads, glowing eerily with violet light. Hovering cross-legged above the surface of the lake, this mysterious being floats through the air towards you. Slowly it raises one hand in a languorous wave, and speaks:

‘Wanderer! Know that you have desecrated the Lake of the Lost, and for this transgression you must suffer punishment! I, the Lotus Sprite, curse you with a noxious bane! Begone!’

Roll two dice and Test Your AURA. If you roll equal to or under your AURA score, you resist the curse using your strength of will and innate magical ability. If you roll over your AURA score, you must suffer the curse! Write Faerie Curse in the Curse box on your Adventure Sheet. Halve both your Initial and Current AURA scores, rounding fractions up, and write these new scores on your Adventure Sheet also. Note that your new Current AURA score can never be higher than your new Initial AURA score. If you find someone who can remove the curse, you can restore your AURA score to normal.

Regardless of whether you succumb to the curse or not, the Lotus Sprite vanishes in a cloud of sparkling violet fireflies. Turn to 54.

84

The Broken Shield is a popular tavern on the edge of the bazaar. It is surrounded by merchants’ wagons, and the pitched tents of nomad traders. Inside, the place is full of humans from all corners of the Bronze Empire, talking, eating, and most importantly, drinking. There are also scattered groups of non-humans present: some furry Goatkin here, a few reptilian Qeng there, and even the odd Trollborn nursing a drink at the main bar. There are small rooms upstairs where travellers can sleep. Each night you

spend here costs 1 Crown, and you may restore 1 point to your HEALTH score if injured.

Leave the Broken Shield tavern – turn to 1.

Pay 3 Crowns and buy a round of drinks – turn to 35.

85

You come across an enormous bronze helmet the size of a house, and now stained vivid green with age. Sitting on a bench in front of the helmet is a wizened Trollborn hermit in tattered robes, playing a solitaire game of dragonbone chess. He looks up at you with golden eyes, his long white hair held in place behind pointed ears with a turquoise band. ‘Yled of Yurgos at your service!’ he says pleasantly.

Yled can remove any one Curse that you are suffering from per visit. This costs 50 Crowns. If you choose to have a Curse removed, cross the Crowns off your Adventure Sheet and delete the effects of the Curse. Yled cannot cure any Poisons or Diseases you may be afflicted with.

When you have finished here, turn to 65.

86

If you have the codeword Zone, turn immediately to 70.

The tunnel winds downwards and opens out into an enormous chamber. There are bones and corpses everywhere, and resting on a bed of golden coins in the centre of the chamber is a black-scaled Hill Drake. The beast flexes its huge wings and lazily opens one red staring eye at you.

‘Begone, pest!’ it rumbles in a leaden voice. ‘I have eaten already this day!’

What will you do?

Leave the dragon’s lair – turn to 21.

Attack the Hill Drake – turn to 45.

87

The Healer of Zelphis is an ancient nameless woman with wrinkled, nut-brown skin and long white hair, who lives in a willow-bark lean-to upstream of the main hamlet. She is constantly tending to a sheltered clay oven, around which are arranged numerous pots, jars, and beakers. Pleasant-smelling herbs lie on wooden trestles, drying in the sunshine.

The Healer can cure you of any one Poison or Disease per visit. Each cure costs 40 Crowns, or 20 Crowns if you are a worshipper of Maeghor. If you choose to be cured, cross the Crowns off your Adventure Sheet and delete the effects of the Poison or Disease. The Healer cannot remove a Curse.

When you have finished here, turn to 33.

If you have the Herb Lore skill, turn to 72.

88

As you move forward to fight the Goatkin scout, he quickly hurls a javelin at you. The Goatkin has a COMBAT score of 8. You must roll two dice for him and Test His COMBAT. If you roll equal to or under the Goatkin’s COMBAT score, his javelin hits you. Roll one die plus one (deducting any Armour Protection), and subtract the result from your HEALTH score. If your HEALTH score is now zero or less, turn

immediately to 13. If you roll over the Goatkin's COMBAT score, the javelin misses you.

Assuming you survive this, the Goatkin urges his mount forwards to attack!

Giant Ibez: AGILITY 9, COMBAT 6, HEALTH 12, Huge Horns (Damage +2), No armour (Protection +0)

Goatkin Scout: AGILITY 9, COMBAT 8, HEALTH 8, Spear (Damage +1), No armour (Protection +0)

You may use a Missile Weapon if you have one. You must fight both of them at the same time. If they reduce your HEALTH score to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If you wish to Escape, take your Escape Penalty, and turn to 65. If you defeat the Goatkin and his steed, you may strip his corpse of valuables. Add any of the following to your Adventure Sheet: 1-6 Crowns (roll one die) and a Spear (Damage +1). Also, write down the codeword Zero. You decide to leave here quickly before any more of his kind show up. Turn to 65.

89

All that remains of the lair of Heka the Horrible is a pile of fallen rubble to denote where the entrance to her cave once lay. A small green lizard skitters across the scree and upwards, over the hill. You follow. Turn to 78.

90

You enter a sheltered valley that is full of the most incredible fungi. The ground is carpeted with tiny, glowing green mushrooms. Enormous scarlet toadstools stand here and there like parasol-shaped guardians.

If you have the Herb Lore skill, turn to 17.

If not, you can try picking some of the fungi – turn to 38.

Or, you can leave this place instead – turn to 54.

91

Cross the Green Fungi and the 20 Crowns off your Adventure Sheet. Xeros takes them and bids you to wait in an adjoining chamber full of curios and artifacts, while he disappears into his workshop. 'Don't touch anything!' is his final warning. 'They're all booby-trapped!'

A short while later, as you are inspecting an intricately twisted crown of thorns hanging from a wall, there is the sound of breaking glass, followed by some swearing in a language you don't know, and Xeros appears at the door with newly-bandaged hands.

He gingerly gives you a small green bottle. Record the Healing Potion on your Adventure Sheet. You may use it at any time, except during combat (though you can drink it beforehand), to restore your Current HEALTH score to its Initial level. There is only enough Healing Potion for one use however, so when you do use it, cross it off your Adventure Sheet.

'Please come back!' says Xeros, inspecting his bandaged fingers.

Turn to 33.

92

The race of Bloodfangs are carriers of a contagious wasting malady called Batpox. It is transmitted through blood and open wounds, and as you have been injured by one of the creatures, you too have been infected. If you have a blessing of Immunity to Disease, cross it off your Adventure Sheet, and turn immediately to 56.

If not, write Batpox in the Disease box on your Adventure Sheet. Halve both your Initial and Current HEALTH scores, rounding fractions up, and write these new scores on your Adventure Sheet also. Note that your new Current HEALTH score can never be higher than your new Initial HEALTH score. If you find a cure or someone who can heal you, you can restore your HEALTH score to normal.

In the meantime, feeling weaker with every step, you stagger onwards through the mountains. Turn to 56.

93

You have slain Heka the Horrible! Record the codeword Zenith on your Adventure Sheet. She collapses, an almost peaceful look on her face, before reverting to the old crone you saw before. Then she is consumed by black shadows, and nothing remains of her save a few shattered fragments of obsidian, her twisted crown, and her rune-sword.

You may take the Rune-sword (Damage +2) and use it as a weapon if you wish. Every time you kill something in combat with the Rune-sword, it will transfer some of their life-force to yours. This is represented by rolling one die and adding that number of HEALTH points to your Current HEALTH score after a successful battle. However, as long as you have the Rune-sword, you may never Escape from a battle. Note the Rune-Sword and its abilities on your Adventure Sheet. You may also take the crone's Twisted Crown.

A piece of rubble strikes you on the shoulder. The chamber is collapsing! You have time to grab one other treasure before Heka's lair is destroyed. Roll one die and add the following to your Adventure Sheet:

Roll 1 – a Panther Skin (Protection +1)

Roll 2 – some Purple Lotus flowers

Roll 3 – a bag of 50 Crowns

Roll 4 – a bunch of Wild Garlic

Roll 5 – some Green Fungi

Roll 6 – a Lantern

Now you must escape the cave before it buries you! Roll two dice and Test Your AGILITY. If you roll equal to or under your AGILITY score, you escape the cave before its destruction – turn to 89.

If you roll over your AGILITY score, you have been crushed beneath a pile of rubble. Roll two dice (deducting any Armour Protection), and subtract the result from your HEALTH score. If your HEALTH score is zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If not, somehow you manage to dig your broken body out from the debris. Turn to 89.

94

It costs 25 Crowns to obtain a blessing, or 10 Crowns if you are a worshipper of the sun-god Uelios.

If you buy the blessing, cross off the money and write COMBAT in the Blessings box on your Adventure Sheet. The blessing works by allowing you to roll again when you make a failed Test Your COMBAT roll. This includes a COMBAT Attack or Defence

Roll during Combat. It is only good for one re-roll. When you use the blessing, cross it off your Adventure Sheet.

You can only have one COMBAT blessing at any time. Once it is used up you must return to any temple of Uelios to purchase a new one.

When you have finished here, turn to 1.

95

The third and final level of the tower is enclosed by a domed roof of amber glass, giving everything in the room a strange golden glow. In the centre of the chamber is a crystal shard fashioned from an enormous topaz and embedded into the top of a stone plinth. Gems and jewels are encrusted everywhere else!

Suddenly, there is a single baleful pulse of light from the topaz shard. Roll two dice and Test Your AURA. If you roll equal to or under your AURA score, you can resist the effects of the shard's pulse.

If you roll over your AURA score, you have been afflicted with a magical malady. (If you have a blessing of Immunity to Disease, you may cross it off your Adventure Sheet now and ignore the following.) Write Wasting Palsy in the Disease box on your Adventure Sheet. Deduct 4 points from both your Initial and Current AGILITY scores. When you find someone who can cure you of this disease, you may restore your AGILITY scores to normal.

By way of reward, you prise out a selection of gemstones from their settings. Roll one die and multiply the result by 50. This is the amount of Crowns worth of gems that you can add to your Adventure Sheet. (So if you rolled 4 you would add 200 Crowns to your Adventure Sheet.)

You leave the tower. Turn to 65.

96

At the base of a hill in front of you is a pitch-black cavern from which comes a terrible stench. There is also a series of loud snuffling noises, like the snoring of many creatures. Rocks at the edge of the cave are spattered with bizarre guano that both looks and smells like rust. If you wish to enter the cavern, you will need a Lantern or a Candle.

Entering the cavern – turn to 75.

Leaving this area – turn to 26.

97

You are camping near a ring of weathered stone stelae, when the ground beneath you erupts, and out shamble a trio of Corpse-Dwellers, outraged at your intrusion into their territory. They take the form of the long-dead rotting carcasses of slain travellers, animated into undeath by minor evil spirits. You must fight the risen dead!

First Corpse-Dweller, AGILITY 5, COMBAT 6, HEALTH 8, Filthy Claws (Damage +0), No armour (Protection +0)

Second Corpse-Dweller AGILITY 4, COMBAT 7, HEALTH 7, Filthy Claws (Damage +0), No armour (Protection +0)

Third Corpse-Dweller AGILITY 4, COMBAT 7, HEALTH 8, Filthy Claws (Damage +0), No armour (Protection +0)

You may use a Missile Weapon if you have one. You must fight all of them at the same time. If the Corpse-Dwellers reduce your HEALTH score to zero or less, turn immediately to 13. If you wish to Escape, take your Escape Penalty, and turn to 78 if you are not injured, or turn to 55 if you are injured by the Corpse-Dwellers. If you defeat the Corpse-Dwellers, and they injured you, turn to 55. If you defeated the Corpse-Dwellers and they did not injure you, read on. You continue your journey across the hills. Turn to 78.

98

You wander through desolate dales accompanied only by the wailing wind and the smell of crushed pine needles that are trampled underfoot. If you have the Herb Lore skill, you find a circle of Edible Mushrooms, which restore 1 HEALTH point if you are injured. Where are you headed now?

North to the village of Karkona – turn to 66.

South to Mount Mhool – turn to 14.

To the west – turn to 82.

To the east – turn to 27.

99

Climbing up or down Mount Mhool is the same long and difficult process. You must roll two dice and Test Your AGILITY three times. You may deduct 2 from each roll if you have the Wilderness Lore skill. You may also deduct 2 from each roll if you possess some Rope. Each time you roll equal to or under your AGILITY score, you have emerged unscathed from a section of the climb.

Each time you roll over your AGILITY score, you have slipped and fallen. Roll one die (deducting any Armour Protection) and subtract the result from your HEALTH score. If your HEALTH score is reduced to zero or less, turn immediately to 13.

Assuming you either succeed or survive, which direction are you heading in?

Up – turn to 40.

Down – turn to 56.

100

With a flourish you present the Dragon's Head to the High Priestess Inimystra. Cross it and the codeword Zealot off your Adventure Sheet. Record the codeword Zebra instead.

Inimystra is overjoyed! 'Thank you!' she says. 'The people of Karkona thank you!'

Word soon spreads and before long the temple of Maeghor is full of grateful villagers all trying to get a look at the heroic dragon-slayer.

In a simple ceremony, you are presented with a bounty of 100 Crowns and blessed by the High Priestess herself. Add the Crowns to your Adventure Sheet, and also note down that you now have a blessing of Immunity to Disease (if you didn't have one already), and 1 Improvement Point. You can 'spend' the Improvement Point at certain places to either increase your ability scores or learn a new skill. One such place is here at the temple of Maeghor.

If you wish to do this – turn to 50.

If you want to leave the temple – turn to 66.