

Castle of Spirits

An Entry in the 2014 Windhammer Prize for
Short Gamebook Fiction

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GETTING STARTED

You will need 2 6-sided dice, a pencil and notepad. Once you are done reviewing the rules, read the introduction and set off to paragraph 1 and begin your quest. You will be asked which paragraph to go to next.

EQUIPMENT

You will start your adventure with leather armour, a short-sword, a small lamp and a cloth backpack.

HEALTH

During the entire course of your journey will you have to keep track of your HEALTH. It will go up and down regularly. It is affected during battles, with injuries and fatigue. You can regenerate by drinking a HERBAL POTION.

To protect your HEALTH level, simply attain a piece of armour to get some "Defence". Defence acts as a shield and takes most of the damage in place of your HEALTH. Defence cannot help you against injuries, fatigue or dangers of winter where freezing is concerned. Defence can only help you during battles.

You cannot go past the level of 12 points unless specified to in a paragraph. When your HEALTH reaches 0 you have died.

DEFENCE

Defence is extra armour that a person or creature is wearing. During battle the defence is attacked first until it is reduced to 0. After it has been put to 0 the HEALTH becomes affected. Once defence has been reduced to zero you're armour or item giving you defence has been destroyed. Defence is not affected by fatigue or cold weather only your HEALTH is.

RANGED COMBAT

Ranged combat is with the use of staves, spears, throwing daggers and bows and arrows.

To use a ranged weapon, roll 2 dice. Keep track of the amount rolled. Now roll again and compare to what you rolled earlier. If the amount was lower than the result, the weapon misses and the enemy gets a hit in on you, causing you to lose 1 point from your HEALTH. If the result was equal to or higher than your result the weapon hits the target! Deduct 2 points off the enemy's health. Ranged weapons are not recoverable.

To shoot another round (say per arrow), you must roll 2 dice again, and start all over.

POTIONS, SPELLS

You will come across places where potions and spells can be found. You can only use the spells when instructed to in a paragraph. Your MAGICK will decrease by one point every time you decide to use a spell.

Potions are a one-time-use only item. Once taken the bottle is rendered useless. You don't need to be instructed when to drink a potion. The HERBAL potion, for example, can be taken at any time (even during battles).

HOW TO FIGHT IN BATTLES

Roll 2 dice. Compare it to your enemy's health, which is displayed in the paragraph: if the number you rolled is equal to or higher than your foe's health you win and must subtract 1 point off of its health.

If the number you rolled is lower than the creature's health you have lost a round and must subtract 1 point off your HEALTH (or your defence if you are wearing defence-induced armour).

Keep repeating this sequence of rolling the two dice until either your HEALTH or you're adversary's health is reduced to 0.

Anytime during battle you can use a HERBAL POTION.

DETERMINE YOUR SCORES

HEALTH – Starts at 12

MAGICK – Starts at 3

DEFENCE – starts at 0

SANITY – Starts at 6

Good luck and may the Lords of Everlasting guide your strength.

Introduction

You heard that their suffering came in like a dream of nightmares. You've been on many adventures and now it was a time to rest. You live where the wind takes you and this second you are passing through a small village but notice something odd about their behaviour. They are solemn, distracted and anxious. A castle looms in the distance. You take your chances in a tavern called Horned Claw. You are served onion stew, bannock and bitter ale. You and two other people are here. The others are playing a game of dice and cards. No one takes much notice of you being the stranger that you are.

"He is after the blood, the blood which covers our eyes, fills our cups and drizzles down our throats." One man says, holding three cards up and examining them.

The second man speaks afterward, "He took my daughter, I will never see her again, for her blood will no doubt seep into the river too like all the others before her. You don't know how much her mother sobs..."

You glance over your shoulder and wipe your mouth with the back of your hand and wonder at their discussion. The men look at you unwelcomingly and you go back to minding your own business.

"You will see her again; don't worry; only she'll be coming for your flesh."

"Most of the undead do."

You lower your eyebrows at the peculiar conversation and finish your food in silence. The barmaid comes by and tops your mug. You ask her about the castle in the distance and she suddenly falls pale. "Do you want anything else to eat?"

You inform her that you're full but wonder as to what has gotten into everybody. She sighs and sits opposite you. "Stranger, I prefer that you do your business here in Everlasting and then be on your way. We are all plagued." You ask her what she means. "His lordship has taken unkindly to us folk, he treats us most cruelly. He kidnaps our daughters, murders our children and puts our men to work up at the castle doing ungodly tasks. He never used to be this way, he always kept to himself but lately something has turned in him, I think. He has fallen foul of great evil." You ask if you can help her and she frowns, holding onto her pitcher tightly, she seems eager to talk to you but also afraid. "I'm sure I will be next, there aren't very many of us left. He won't quit until this entire village is consumed. He will surely make mincemeat out of you." You smirk and inform her you've been up against dragons, demigods and sorcerers. "You haven't put your sword against the powers in that castle, I reckon, it will devour you if you go there. Don't try to bother saving us, for we are all doomed. A friend of mine went mad after coming out of that castle; he stabbed out his left eye with a dagger. We all have night terrors about the castle, even if we've never been in it. It haunts our livelihood, robs us of peace and instils a fear so great you wish you were dead." She leans in closer to whisper to you as if something evil might hear. "I have heard creatures of the dead return to the villagers in their homes. Relatives return as hollow forms of themselves, black shadows, as the undead are known to appear to the living. There are also rumours of vampirism and cannibalism. Please, if you are simply passing through, I suggest you keep moving on. Everlasting has come under a curse and you will perish if you stay another night."

You feel bad for her, you want to understand what is happening here, and you want to save this little town. You are completed in your current quests and are aching for another one. You ask her if you go to the castle and solve the mystery if there will be a reward. "Only the reward of us surviving I'm afraid. I have no gold for you. I told you, you best be moving on."

The door bursts open and a strong gust blows in. The bar maid quickly gets up and closes the door and puts the latch on. She buries her face in her palm and starts to cry and you go over to her

to console her. "I want this horror to end. I can't take it anymore! I don't want to die. I fear death. I don't want to go to the grave just yet!"

That puts your curiosity to the test; you will go to the castle and speak to the lord of the place. You ask for a room and she reluctantly hands you a copper key. She whispers, "Please, promise me you will return if you go there." And you whisper back that you shall set out tomorrow morning while everyone is still asleep and when the roosters haven't roused yet.

When the crickets have stopped their music, the moonlight has all but subsided, and the sky turns a wondrous lavender you pack up and head out to the castle. It is a treacherous trek out on the dirt path, and you constantly feel that you are being followed. You sense that you are not alone out here in the slight wilderness. Does the lord know you are coming?

Turn to 1.

1

The odour struck you at first when you entered the village. It was the stench of death, but there were no corpses to identify the smell. But as you approach the castle you soon discover what was causing all the fuss, you have thought too soon, for you see humans erected on poles, sticking out of the ground, unmoving, not breathing. The ground is littered with human heads, hands, feet and eyeballs. Ravens pick gruellingly at the rotting meats and flutter away as your step closer. Someone has made a banquet out of this terror before you, for you spy a clothed table adorned with silver chalices still full with blood and tears. A mean person has sat here dining upon torsos, singing lullabies and warning those who were forced to watch to be careful *how* and *where* they tread. You assume it was the lord of this wretched place and deem now to put a stop to his schemes. How dare he bully such people, he has no right.

The gates to the castle are open as if someone before you made their way in; beyond you see a massive courtyard. The wind blows up from a chasm behind the castle. This place seems deserted, cold and depraved. You take your first bold steps beyond the front gate and peer around. A little boy is playing with a wooden horse, he hasn't noticed you yet, and you wonder where his mother might be. To the right are gardens, dead to the world in shades of brown, black and dark yellow, you see an old man raking a bunch of leaves into a pile. Will you approach the child (turn to 54) or head toward the man (turn to 11)?

2

You bump into someone or something. It is a rather large beast, a watch dog with hairs like razor blades. It is a rather strange thing with its many colourful hairs which glisten in the light available. It slobbers, growls, and slightly backs away as if you scared it just as much as it scared you. But it soon regains its composure and realises you don't belong here. It attacks immediately with its large claws and fangs.

Razor Guardian HEALTH 9

If you live through this you find that the tunnel comes to a dead end. A portcullis blocks the way and no amount of trying to budge it will suffice. You search for any hidden mechanisms but find nothing. You wonder if this is the way you're supposed to go? Surely there must be a way to get beyond the obstruction? You decide to take the other corridor. Turn to 93.

3

You are on the landing overlooking the main floor. The floor here is decorated with hand woven rugs and the tile work beneath is set in the fainted tint of pearly oyster shells and peachy coral. The wall is adorned with glass murals of Everlasting, its mountains, black pine forests and villages with its settlers garbed in colourful threads and furs. Their expressions are those of hard-working folk and their skin is carefully painted to appear as though they've been working under the hot sun for hours. For a place with a reputation for being so malicious it depicts its people and regions as if very proud of them. There are three doors you can explore here, and there is also a stairwell ascending into the darkness, which no doubt it reaches further into the castle. You wonder where that lord might be sleeping or hiding out. You will find him; your heart is set on it. Which door will you try first? The door named Jezebel (turn to 71), the door called Cain (turn to 99), the door with Typhon written on it (turn to 65), or ignore the doors and go up the stairs (turn to 20)? If you wish to return to the main level, turn to 18.

4

The orb smashes to the floor at your feet and yellow liquid oozes out of it. There appears to be a time lapse and everything is back to where it was before, the Golem has returned to its pedestal as if you never fought it in the first place. His hand holds a blue orb this time. Also all of the blood has vanished into thin air. All that stands before you is an ordinary library. You wonder if you're going insane? You can't get the Golem to react anymore, for he is dead to the world. There is a large ashen wood chest in the far corner of the room, you go and investigate, it is set with elaborate carvings of vines and grape leaves and it has a silver lock on it. Do you possess a SILVER KEY? If so, turn to 42. If not, the lock will not budge no matter how hard you hit it. It is enchanted and only a matching key will open it. There is nothing else in this room, so you take your leave. Will you try the door named Jezebel (turn to 71), the one called Typhon (turn to 65), ignore the doors and go up the stairs (turn to 20)? You could go back downstairs if you feel you've missed something, turn to 18.

5

You decide to head upstairs, this has been enough door-searching for one day. Turn to 20.

6

They give you a ROSE GOLD KEY with the number #63 carved on it. *Excellent*, you ponder, hopefully this aids you in your activities. Do you know what lock will work with this key? Until then what will you do next? You can try that door opposite this room (turn to 82) or return to the corridor (turn to 77)?

7

You have this unsure feeling that this may be your one and only chance to strike. What spell will you cast?

DISPEL, turn to 35.

HOLY, turn to 67.

PROTECTION, turn to 53.

If you'd rather make threats against them, turn to 44.

8

You see a light at the end of the tunnel. Surely, you are not dead yet, it is daylight and the castle interior is sucking in as much of it as it is allowed. There is a door on the right hand side and the wood is carved with faces: some are laughing and some are howling in pain. Will you open this door? If you want to, turn to 52. If you decide against it, you continue down the corridor toward the brightness. Turn to 37.

9

He points above him, and then crosses his arms again. You assume he means he sleeps up on the higher levels of the castle. He peers over his shoulder as if he heard someone calling him then he looks afraid and flies away. You are left there all alone, no longer bullied. *Strange*. You shrug your shoulders and walk up the corridor. There are a few doors here to try. The one on the right is paneled in cherry oak and pastel, the one on the left has a plaque on it which reads Isis. At the end of the hall are double doors. Will you head in the direction of the double doors, turn to 39.

Try the cherry door, turn to 81.

Try the Isis door, turn to 87.

10

You go to move one and hear aloud click. Roll two dice: make a note of the first result, roll again, and compare. If the second result was equal to or lower than the first, turn to 41, if it was higher, turn to 79.

11

An elderly man is raking up leaves into a pile and upon your arrival stops what he is doing. You ask him where you can find the prince of the place. He scowls at you and shakes his head. "Only until all of the maggots have turned into flies will we ever find peace." You wonder what he means by that. He points at the front entrance. "Go through there." You look over your shoulder at the iron tall double doors painted in crimson. When you glance back at the man he has vanished. The rake is on the ground but no one is there. He couldn't possibly have disappeared so quickly. The courtyard is void of life, only you stand there all alone. The only thing to do now is enter the castle. The doors creak as you step through and peer into a massive hall. There are two stairwells which wind to the second storey. Pillars of dark jade decorate the stairs beneath the balcony. The handrails are jet stone and the floor is made up of black and red mosaic. You step down onto the open space and gape at the details...

Above you looms two large rustic black chandeliers complete with lit black candles. Cobwebs mark dusty corners and there is a sense that nobody actually lives here yet every candle in the area is set aflame. It's as though they were prepared just for your arrival, but how can you be so certain? There are two archways with a room beyond each on the main floor. On the second level there are three doors and another set of ascending stairs but you don't know where they go. From where you stand now, the one door on the left has intricate carvings on it. It is made of solid teak. They are wide open and the room on the other side of it is set with a colossal fireplace. The room on the right looks like a dining hall, and you could've sworn you seen a shadow of someone moving in there. In between these rooms is an archway blocked by a gate. Will you investigate the left doorway (turn to 88), the dining hall (turn to 14), the gate (turn to 38), or go upstairs (turn to 3)?

12

The lion transforms into a man. He lies on the floor, his skin completely torn away. All that remains is muscle, vein and sinew. He reaches up to you, "forgive me for attacking you. I wasn't always like this. The master cast an enchantment upon me because I helped some people escape. He tore off my skin and turned me into a lion. Please, for my sake, take this spell. I pray to the Lords of Everlasting that you will live to see tomorrow." He whispers the spell to you. Add DISPEL SPELL to your notes. Before you can ask him any questions he starts to turn to dust. You retrace your steps south. Return to 70.

13

The mace is blistering with a white hot light. The beast attacks you and you swipe at his head with your mace. The mace thuds deep into the side of his head, and light beams from out of the creature's orifices and then he explodes! Ash and sparks fly everywhere and the blast knocks you to the floor but you are unharmed. The mace has been destroyed along with the demon. It begins to snow again and the room takes on a chilly effect.

You walk sometime down another passageway and come to a T-junction. Will you go left, turn to 2, or will you go right, turn to 93?

14

The room is made up of stone, burgundy panels and amber studs. A rectangular table is set in the center but only one chair, placed at the head, is stationed at it. You find all sorts of silver platters piled high with chocolate biscuits, roasted hog, caramelised carrots, honey chicken, baked apples and red wine. The goblets are rather large as are the metal plates; it appears as if an ogre or giant dines here. Someone touches your shoulder and you spin around on your heel, but you are the only one in the room. Then you start to feel nauseas and fall to one knee. The cramps in your stomach worsen, you feel as though you might pass out at any second. Then you see a sinister shadow pass by on the wall heading in your direction. Something is in here with you. Will you rush out of the room (turn to 50) or threaten whatever entity is present (turn to 27)?

15

You are wearing a cursed ring. It despises those who fight in battles and knowing you, you are armed with a weapon, shielded with defence, and ever ready to slay. Now that you put this ring on it will never come off until you can find a smith to forcefully cut it off or you could cut your own finger but do you really have the guts to do such a thing? In battles, when you are supposedly to remove 1 point every time you are hit, you now must remove 2 points instead. This is a bad find, and you put yourself in this dire situation. Hopefully there aren't very many battles in the near future. You can carry on up the corridor (turn to 77) or return to the iron gate (turn to 46).

16

There is a giant mirror set in the middle of the room. A hideous demonic face with greyish flesh hovers within it. It looks through you with fierce eyes. "Do you not see what I can do to you?" It growls. "You can bow, you can fight for your willpower to aid you, or you can die here. I choose what is proper for you. You are in my sphere of influence." You feel a terrible sense of fright and fall to one knee. Your mind is constantly harassed by tormenting thoughts that were never there before. "That's right, bow down, bow down and serve me. I can read your mind, and I can control

it." You feel appallingly frail and try to stay from passing out. "Look at me, mortal! Let me look you in the eyes before I kill you." You force yourself to look into his soulless gaze and see not a degree of mercy only a stare of dread and death. "You are dying...do you feel your heart beating slower and slower?" You sense a tear come down your cheek, it is not so, it can't possibly be the truth. "Give up the war, your time has come, for you have completed your mission. You have encountered the lord of the castle, I am that lord and your time hangs in the balance. Did you think I was a weak old sorcerer? Did you think I was a human? You are very wrong. I am the GOD of Everlasting! It is your kind who brought me into your world, and I can remove you from it. I will remain here for as long as I wish and I will gorge upon all of you." You battle with every ounce of sanity you have left to stand and fight for your life. The floor starts to squirm with snakes, all coming in your direction. If your SANITY is 3 or higher, turn to 56. If it is lower, turn to 49.

17

Your mace strikes home as you hit him over his shiny bald head. He shrieks in pain, falls to the ground, and then vanishes. You carry on down the hall as fast as your feet will take you; your heart is beating fast. Were you scared a bit by the Jinn? Trying to forget your ordeal you count a few doors here to try. The one on the right is paneled in cherry oak and pastel, the one on the left has a plaque on it which reads Isis. At the end of the hall are double doors. Will you head in the direction of the double doors, turn to 39.

Try the cherry door, turn to 81.

Try the Isis door, turn to 87.

18

You arrive back on the main floor of the castle. You have a feeling you are being watched, so you rest your hand on the hilt of your sword for reassurance. Will you investigate the left doorway (turn to 88), the dining hall (turn to 14), go upstairs (turn to 3), or go down to the crypt, turn to 38?

19

They look frightened now. "How can we tell you that? You might harm us afterward. No one really keeps their word around here." You assure them that you mean them no mischief. "Indeed. But why do you want to know where he is? Have you come to kill him?"

Will you answer that *yes* you've come to kill him (turn to 45), tell them you only want to talk to him (turn to 61), or threaten them (turn to 36)?

20

A lantern is needed up here, all of the candles and torches are doused. What light would *want* to exist here? You stand in a stone corridor. Not much thought or detail has been given to it, no portraits, no rugs, and no fancy paneling like the other places. There is a door on the left coloured in black paint; it looks as though it had been charred by fire. The first indication that comes to your mind is a fire spell gone terribly wrong. You listen at the door but hear nothing. Will you enter, turn to 84. If you decide to stroll down the hall, turn to 46.

21

You arrive at yet another long dark corridor. You follow it for some time, peeking into useless rooms as you go along. The furnishings are extraordinary, but worn and dusty. You can smell mould and mildew as you continue down the passage, and then there is a stink of death. It's so

prevailing now that you have to breathe through your mouth. You come to a room at the end and find three maidens sleeping on stone beds. The first one has hair of *ice*, the second one *fire*, and the third *earth*. There is blood all over the floor. You tip-toe through the room and your heart jumps as their eyes flick open. They get up from their rest and with their fangs exposed they grab hold of you gently. "WHO is this in our midst? Have you escaped from the dungeon?" Says the one with brown hair, and she has such a look of delight in her beautiful features. These women are young and garbed in only their nightgowns. Does the cold floor not sting their feet? You start to lift off the ground and find that you cannot move your limbs. Their invisible powers hold you there having not even touched you and it is with such supremacy with which you never knew anyone could possibly possess. "There is not enough blood to go around these days, but now that you're here, there *will* be." She smiles and many snakes start to wriggle from her scalp, up through her black curly hair, her green eyes are demonic now. Fortunately her stare does not turn you to stone, but she becomes enticing enough and you feel as though you should trust her endlessly. You feel safe in their presence now, but when the other girls bite into your wrists you are jolted back to reality for a split second. "You will not make it to the master, I'm afraid, for we will finish you first but they *will* surely take your soul that will be left behind." Her fangs grow longer and now you start to panic, for now you cannot look away from her gaze, and you are being eaten alive by the other vampires! Do you have the spell DISPEL? If you know this spell, take all of your strength to move your tongue and lips, utter it now, and turn to 85. If you don't have this spell written in your notes then your mission ends here. The vampire bites into your neck ruthlessly and severs your jugular. She sucks out your blood and her gulping noises sicken you but soon you pass out never to feel pain ever again.

22

There's no fear in your heart at this moment and you casually walk in and find to your sudden amazement they grab on to you and pull you to the floor. Phantoms rise from beneath the floor and suck the life out of you! What made you think this was a good idea? You swing your weapon intensely but soon black out from loss of blood. When you wake, you see your body lying on the ground, but you are dead. Then black creatures emerge and attack you. You are dragged to the dungeons, to the bowels of the underneath castle to be tormented. This will be a lesson, and your new hell. You will be converted and soon those with a soul still attached to their body who enter the castle will fear you. Until then, your mission is over.

23

The corridor winds to the right a bit and then you hear a heavy portcullis slam down behind you. There is no turning back and there are no hidden mechanisms to open it. You head on straight and come to a room lit by tapers, the room is adorned with leather upholstered furniture, and the air smells of frankincense and myrrh. A weird and wonderful creature stands in the center of the place reading a book. His upper body is that of a man but his lower half is that of a goat. His tail is large and resembles that of a peacock. His head is a mix of human and horse. His ears perk up as you enter. "I thought I heard the portcullis close! You obviously don't belong here. What I will do is give you an ultimatum. If you choose incorrectly, I am free to take your soul to the master. If you guess correctly, you are free to go," You ask him what challenge he has set for you. "It's simple actually. Just answer my question." You ask him what the question is. Then you hear moaning and groaning from the corridor. It is the distinct sound of zombies. "Don't worry about them. I see the look on your face, you are worried, don't be, I can get rid of them with the snap of my fingers.

Now, on to the question..." He slams the book closed. "And don't think I am feeble. I have been given special powers. I can overcome you in seconds. Now, on to the question! It is about the eternity, the infinite portal of a doorway that survives outside of time. When did it open and when did it start feasting on Everlasting?" You argue that you are new here, and unfamiliar with Everlasting's history. You dispute that that question is unfair. "Choose an answer or else." He growls.

What will you reply?

It started its work ages ago, turn to 73.

It doesn't exist, turn to 98.

Attack him, turn to 89.

24

The key does not open the gate. It is no doubt the wrong one. Then the key explodes! Lose 1 HEALTH point. Return to 46.

25

The hall continues into the darkness for quite some time. You can hear moaning and wailing but can't find where it's coming from. Then there is singing. The last time you heard such a handsome voice and clever lyrics was when you were in the cave of a Siren. Then it halts and submerges you into the deathliness of the lifeless castle again. There is a room off to the right without a door. Will you investigate, turn to 69. If you decide you're wasting your time here you can retrace your steps and return to the iron gate. Turn to 46.

26

The man squints at you and sneers. It appears he doesn't want to converse with you. He throws the orb at you and it explodes upon impact! Lose 1 HEALTH point as you are thrown across the room. As you get back to your feet will you cast a spell (turn to 7) or attack him (turn to 44)?

27

As soon as you open your mouth you find that no sound comes out. You try to yell but nothing still. Then something clasps your throat and you can't breathe! It flings you across the room and you land with a hard thump on the stone floor. Lose 1 HEALTH point, for you have severely banged your elbow. You try to scream but discover that you can't. You flail your arms and bring out your sword and swipe at the air. Something chuckles at your struggles. It lifts you up by the neck and flings you onto the table, all sorts of things clutter and crash to the floor. You decide to escape with your life back out to the main hall. You can see the silhouette on the wall following you with great speed. You make out its elongated claws, its twisted horns and ragged cloak. It is an ancient ghost hoping to kill you. Your sword does no damage to it. Quickly you run upstairs, the pain in your gut subsiding thankfully. Which door will you rush to? The door named Jezebel (turn to 71), Cain (turn to 99), Typhon (turn to 65), or ignore the doors and go up the stairs (turn to 20)?

28

"You're a good humoured person and we like you. Simply find the correct iron key and go up the stairs beyond the gate. Fend off the spiders, and take a right at the end of the tunnel-"

"Left, you idiot!"

"No, right."

"Left!"

"Ahhh, take what path you think is correct and watch out for those vampires!"

You shudder. *Vampires*? Now you leave the room. You find a HERBAL potion on a shelf which will grant you 2 HEALTH points. Will you try that door across from you (turn to 82) or will you hurry up along the corridor (turn to 77)?

29

In your light you see an image coming toward you, bracing yourself for something undead you see what appears to be a large white lion with a bushy mane. It snarls at your approach and attacks.

Lion HEALTH 6

If you reduce its HEALTH to 2, turn to 12.

30

He scoffs at you, "I have seen no villagers here. Only *you*." You tell him he lies and cannot be master of the place. He grins terribly and smoke roars from his body, he appears to be a trifle angry with you. Will you stay and fight him? If you do, what will you use against him?

SPIKED MACE (if you have one), turn to 17

Your sword, turn to 55

Run away down the corridor, turn to 34

31

You walk over the pit, nothing lost, and nothing gained. In the pit you can see movement but dare not stick around to find out what it might be. You head in the direction of the torch lights. Turn to 59.

32

The Hellish beast growls as you hold the mace in your grasp. He informs you that he will fight you later on, and then with that he withdraws. You are left all alone and then the torch goes out smothering you in obscurity. Your mace stops glowing thankfully. But you can feel someone breathing down the back of your neck. Then the mace starts to glow again, lighting up the room a bit. You see countless faces in the shadows watching you, their eyes are missing, and their teeth are jagged fangs. Will you back out the door slowly (turn to 5) or intimidate them with your newly found weapon (turn to 68)?

33

His eyes penetrate into yours as you come nearer. There is evil in this room and it's trying to get to you. Do you have the HOLY SPELL written in your notes? If so, turn to 51. If not, you find that you cannot look away. A portion of the wall opens and a dagger and a chalice floats out of a cavity. You cannot move to defend yourself. The dagger plunges into your throat and the cup takes in your blood. You fall to your knees, now the man in the portrait is grinning. Your adventure in the Castle of Spirits comes to an abrupt halt.

34

Lose 1 SANITY point for being such a coward. The Jinn does not follow you, probably because you might have to go back that way. You carry on down the passage; your nerves are rattled a bit. There are a few doors here to try. The one on the right is paneled in cherry oak and pastel, the one on the left has a plaque on it which reads Isis. At the end of the hall are double doors. Will you head in the direction of the double doors, turn to 39.

Try the cherry door, turn to 81.

Try the Isis door, turn to 87.

35

He laughs and so does the face in the mirror. The spell has done nothing to them. A beam shoots out from the man's hand and hits you square in the chest. Lose 2 HEALTH points. If you still live you get up and ready your weapon. When you go to strike him he lifts up his arm to shield his face and your weapon is shattered into thousands of pieces as it hits. From behind someone with inhuman strength wraps a rope around your neck and strangles you to death. So close, yet so far, but it just wasn't good enough. Your assignment has ended.

36

They start to laugh at your immediate actions, and produce a blow pipe. This will be an interesting battle. Roll two dice, then roll again and compare. If the second result is equal to or lower than the first result you block the poisonous dart with your weapon. If the result was higher then the dart thuds into your throat and the effects start to kill you. If you blocked the dart then they start to negotiate with you in fear for their lives. They offer you a ROSE GOLD KEY with the number #63 carved on it. You wonder what lock this will fit? You grab the blow pipe angrily from their grasp and warn them not to mess with you. You take your leave of their trembling company. Now will you try the door opposite this room (turn to 82), walk up the corridor (turn to 77), or return to the iron gate, turn to 46?

37

The brightness your eyes ache for is daylight. The sun is out in a cloudless sky. The corridor veers right, but you arrive at a balcony of sort which runs along the hall. Vines are growing wildly everywhere. There is a courtyard below with dead flowerbeds and dried up quartz fountains. You spy a throne too made out of silver, white gold and black diamonds. You wonder when this castle had some respect this area would be where the royals spent their afternoons and had their oolong tea while being fanned by slaves. Just as you're pondering this a creature with the upper body of a human and the lower half dust springs up. He is very muscular and crosses his arms over his wide chest. He is bald and his stare is annoyed by your presence. He is a Jinn, no doubt, a pesky demon come to play tricks on you. "Confess what you are doing here or else." He says. If you have a mace is it glowing white hot. Will you tell him you are only exploring (turn to 74), tell him you are looking for the lord of this place (turn to 91), or bring out your sword and tell him to mind his own business (turn to 76)?

38

You examine the gate and find it unlocked. You slip down the stairs -sword ready- and arrive at a large crypt. All of the covers on the coffins are removed but there are no corpses. You light a torch so you can see better and even further into the room. A six-armed skeleton carrying a scythe-

like blade in each claw comes into view, it swipes at your head and you duck just in the nick of time! It howls as sparks fly off the stone wall where it hit. This skeleton is larger than the average human and it is determined to finish you. Have you already fought this creature? Turn to 70. If not, prepare for battle.

Skeletal Menace HEALTH 10

If you survive, turn to 92.

39

The room beyond has a large collection of armour and weapons. You may take a sword if you like. There is a small bow and 30 arrows and a quiver. There are also plated gauntlets (defence 1), chain mail (defence 4), and an ivory horned helm (defence 1). This is a good find.

Now will it be the door marked Isis (turn to 87), the cherry wood door (turn to 81), or will you leave this corridor altogether and return to the iron gate at the junction (turn to 46)?

40

You are given a pair of leather boots which walk on air. You notice an auspicious rose gold key on their desk and ask them about it. They put the key in a drawer, "you don't want that, it leads to utter destruction. Take your boots now and go." Will you threaten them, turn to 36. If you decide to let them be will you examine the door across the hall (turn to 82) or go up the corridor (turn to 77)?

41

The click you just heard was the portrait. You decide not to touch any of the other models just in case they trigger a trap. You go over the painting, pull it aside, and find a scroll and a white elixir behind it in an alcove. The paper has a spell written on it.

Whisper me only once, and I shall protect you from the cursed eye and death

Write down a PROTECTION SPELL in your notes. The elixir is a HERBAL potion and will grant you 2 HEALTH. You decide it's time to exit this room. Turn to 21.

42

The chest opens and in it resting on a purple velvety cushion is a SPIKED MACE. This is no ordinary weapon; it will glow when you are in the presence of pure evil. You leave the library now. Where will you search next? The door named Jezebel (turn to 71), the door called Typhon (turn to 65), or ignore the doors and go up the stairs (turn to 20)?

43

You don't see your own reflection facing you but a man with a goatee, who has charred skin and eyes as dull as crimson, biting deep into your neck in some distant place. You watch yourself struggle as your blood spurts across the air; you are helpless against this predator that is gluttonous on your veins. You glance over your shoulder but see nothing, and then look back and witness a face appear screaming from beyond the scene. A bolt comes out of the mirror and strikes

you in the chest! You are flung across the room like a rag doll and slam into the wall. Lose 2 HEALTH points. If you are still alive you see a key floating in the dark looking glass. The angry face has vanished. You get up and reach in to take the key. It is made of iron and has the number #72 engraved on it. You put it in your pocket and decide to head back to the iron gate. Return to 46.

44

The man turns to vapour as you approach and grabs hold of you with his new form. He can touch you but you cannot touch him. With immense brutal strength you are thrown head first into the seventh mirror. You go right through it and find yourself in a dark cloudy place. Of all of the battles you have endured, of all the villains and magic you have overcome, you have met your match in this castle. You never expected to be outsmarted like this, Everlasting is suffering, and you now fear this evil will spread beyond that village and there is nothing you can do to stop it. There are powers and entities in the world far greater than you and today you have learned the hard way. You float on nothingness for a few seconds before you are greeted by a large creature with massive bat-like wings. His teeth are sharp like knives. He grinds them and the noise nearly deafens you. Sparks fly from his mouth and fire explodes from his eyes. "Now you die." He thunders and grabs you by the throat with such ferocity you feel extremely weak against him! You sense your soul ebbing from your body, in fact, you see it leaving and drift into his being. You have died in another dimension. You will be trapped like all the other spirits and nobody will come for generations to save you.

45

They pause for the longest time as if you said something atrocious. Then they start to chuckle uncontrollably. "Let the fool get passed the gate to oblivion! Surely it will finish this poor wretch!" You ask them what they mean by that. "Oh, there is the master, yes, but there is another master who is much stronger. You will not get far, for no one has ever dared stand against their might. We run the procedures for kidnapping the villagers, you see, and you coming here to do as you promised will not happen." You ask why. "Because you are a human and we don't like humans, for they are as good as cockroaches." You threaten them and they simultaneously point at something behind you. You spin around to see a black Minotaur breathing down the back of your neck. Before you have time to react it bull rushes you with its massive shoulder, knocking you into a shelf. The shelf falls over and makes a big mess of books and other debris. Lose 1 HEALTH point, for the wind was knocked from your lungs and you have trouble breathing now. With shaky legs you rise to defend yourself before you end up on the pointy end of one of its horns.

Minotaur HEALTH 6

If you win, you notice the reptile has vanished. You find a ROSE GOLD KEY on its desk with the number #63 carved on it. Now you return to the hallway. Will you try that door now (turn to 82) or will you carry on down the corridor, turn to 77.

46

The corridor halts at a T-junction. At the head of the junction is a heavy gate with an ascending stairwell behind it but it is locked. Do you possess an iron key? If so, turn to the number etched on it. If not, no amount of brute force will open this enchanted lock. You must find the key. Will you head west (turn to 58) or will you go east (turn to 8)?

47

You pick up the shiny object and find it to be the other half of a disk. Surely you have the other half? Pleased with your find you decide to retrace your steps. Return to 70.

48

Behind one of the mirrors on the wall you find a lever and pull it but nothing happens. Wondering what the lever was for, you decide to leave this room; there is an eerie feeling that you are being watched. You might not be alone here; this feeling gives your stomach butterflies. Relieved to be back in the corridor you ponder where to go next. Will it be the door marked Isis (turn to 63), the double doors (turn to 39), or will you depart this hallway and return to the iron gate at the junction (turn to 46)?

49

You bow down, and touch your forehead and nose to the floor. This creature is your master now, and you will go to the village tonight and kidnap more people so that you can sacrifice them to your new lord. Now that you've lost your mind, your journey ends here.

50

You can see the shadow on the wall following you with great swiftness. You make out its extended claws, its twisted horns and tattered cloak. It is a primeval ghost hoping to destroy you. You take a stance and show it you're not afraid. With your sword ready, you prepare yourself for anything that is to come. Now it peels off the wall, takes on a dark form, and glides in your direction. You can hear it whispering and moaning as if in pain. You swipe at it and it retracts from pursuit but not for long for it comes back to attack.

Ancient Ghost HEALTH 5

When you have won three rounds it will vanish, but it may return to get you should you come back down here. Now you head upstairs. Which door will you go through? The door named Jezebel (turn to 71), Cain (turn to 99), Typhon (turn to 65), or ignore the doors and go up the stairs (turn to 20)?

51

Deduct 1 point off your MAGICK status. You blink away and back off from the picture. It is a cursed piece and you will not be one of its victims. Will you examine the model of a ship resting on a shelf (turn to 10) or will you depart this place (turn to 21)?

52

You can hear whimpering as you peek inside to a bare room, there are people in here on the floor, tattered and afraid of your lantern. They start to wail in succession of each other very piercingly and shield their faces. Then their skin rots in seconds and their eyeballs ooze out of their sockets. Black blood gushes from their mouths. Deduct 1 SANITY point. They try to attack you but they are shackled to the wall by their bony wrists. Your flesh is what they want, and it is a pitiful sight then you see a key hanging off the wall behind them. Will you gain your willpower and threaten them (turn to 94), stroll in boldly and take the key (turn to 22), forget the key, leave the room alone, return to the corridor and approach the light ahead (turn to 37)?

53

Deduct 1 point off your MAGICK status. The man drops the orb and covers his eyes; he appears to be in a lot of pain. The face in the mirror goes berserk. The man's eyes burn up into a blazing inferno as he starts to holler and claw at his face. You quickly stab him in his ribcage with the silver tipped stake seeing that his fangs start to protrude from his front teeth; you will not give him the chance to counterattack realising now that is a some sort of vampire. The scene behind the face turns to black and grey clouds. A loud angry voice booms all around like thunder. "You... you may have defeated the lord of the castle but I am the master! Your death will be a slow one. I don't intend to keep you around either." Do you have two parts of a DISK? If you possess these, turn to 100. If you do not then the room starts to spin all around you. Only you and the seventh mirror stay in one spot. As the robed man falls to the floor, the eyes of the face turn into fire. You feel yourself being sucked in. Your waking nightmares arrive. You are set aflame and the beast keeps his word, you do die a sluggish death, and it is one you are glad to expire from.

54

He is humming to himself and trotting the little toy along the ground. You make sure to slightly dig your heels into the dirt as you walk so he hears you coming, but he doesn't look up. You clear your throat. The boy looks up at you and all you see in place of his iris are black slits. He opens his mouth and you can see the universe in it. The view in his mouth is like the night sky. A loud screech comes out and it causes your heart to jump a bit. The noise breaks the eerie stillness of the place. Then he vanishes, like a cloud of dust, and all that is left is the little wooden horse. Deduct 1 SANITY point. This experience has slightly startled you. You decide to head to the gardens and speak to the old man raking leaves. Turn to 11.

55

You pull out your sword and swipe at him but he catches the blade in his hand and crumbles the thing as if it were an old clay pot. You tell him to get lost and he titters. "I think it's time you've met your death." What will you do now that you've lost your weapon? Run down the hall (turn to 34) or tell him you're not afraid of him (turn to 86)?

56

You scream aloud and push the mirror over, it shatters into millions of pieces. You have overcome the mind-controlling lord, but still have not found a way to destroy him or know exactly where he hides. But you will locate him; you will just have to keep searching. Your strength returns to you and you feel a new wave of courage arise in your heart. You feel you can avenge the slain villagers at all costs. You WILL find this lord and kill him. There are another set of doors across from you. You decide to go to them and open them carefully. On the other side is a tall, fat balding man carrying a sack and a sceptre. On the floor are three people crying out in pain but shown no mercy. He puts the tip of the sceptre to their mouth and a glowing sphere comes out of their body. You assume now that this man is extracting the souls of the victims. You open the door and threaten him. He turns to you and you see that his eyes are missing their iris. His eyes are as white as moonstone. He puts the spheres in the sack and walks down a corridor. You decide to follow him. He goes up another set of stairs, enters a crypt-like room, and places the bag inside a sarcophagus. Then he turns to you and brings out his scimitar. He attacks!

Mason HEALTH 7

If you live after this ordeal, you find a silver tipped stake inside the coffin. You can take the

scimitar too if you like. Now you head through another door, and walk down a long dark tunnel. Turn to 75.

57

The key does not open the gate. It is definitely the wrong one. Then the key explodes! Lose 1 HEALTH point. Return to 46.

58

The tunnel stretches for a long time. It is dark, cold and mouldy. You come up to a door on the left. It has an iron grate on it so you can peer in. You see people in there sitting on the floor but they are not moving. On the right is a massive archway with a room behind it. You can see bookshelves and shelves piled high with junk. Will you open the door, turn to 82.

Go through the archway, turn to 90.

Continue up the passage, turn to 77.

59

The walls as you can make out are ebony marble and scarlet rock. There are pillars lining the walls and they are twisted like an old willow tree. The floor is set in dark blue and grey stones. The hall soon opens up into a massive chamber. What is most odd is that it is lightly snowing in it, as if the ceiling were clouds. *Sorcery* no doubt. You step in and ready your weapon. Then a creature manifests before you, his lower body is that of a serpent and his head and shoulders are a mass of black snakes. His features are like those creatures from Hell. If you've met him earlier, you are not happy to see him again. He points at you. "Now it is time to die, you have come far enough." Do you own a SPIKED MACE, if so, turn to 13. If you do not, the snow turns to flames all around, ashes fall too. Fire bursts in all directions so you cannot escape. The monster laughs. "I don't believe you will even survive the spirit kingdom. No. You will not awake as a ghost. You will never wake again as anything. It's only the pitch darkness for you." And with that the flames engulf you at his command. You burn to death on the spot.

60

The iron key is marked with a sacred number; it has #97 on it. You put it away. Now you decide to venture toward the light. This place is starting to get to you. Why is everything once good so evil now? Turn to 37.

61

"About what? The colour of his underwear?" They both start to laugh. You can take out your weapon and threaten them? If you do this, turn to 36. If you'd rather laugh with them, turn to 28.

62

In your torchlight you arrive at the end of the corridor. Four people stand there, unmoving, staring at up the ceiling. You clear your throat and they lower their heads. Their eyes are white as pearls, their skin rotten and their clothing still fresh looking as if they just put them on yesterday. These are village people no doubt but former specimen of themselves. Will you stay and fight? You notice something glimmering on the floor and decide the only way to get to it is to get through these zombies. You could run back up the passage but that wouldn't make you much of a warrior now would it? You decide to stay and clash with them.

1st Zombie HEALTH 4

2nd Zombie HEALTH 3

3rd Zombie HEALTH 3

4th Zombie HEALTH 4

If you are still alive, turn to 47.

63

The door opens into a room filled with corpses. A woman is bound by her wrists to the ceiling; she looks as if she's been through hell. Her bloodshot eyes open and she stares at you for a second as if you are there to hurt her. You assure her you are an ally and she sighs in relief. "Stranger, how did you get in here? Did you not encounter the monsters of this evil pit?" You inform her that no monster can stop you. "Then you must be very brave." You ask her how she came to be here. "I was kidnapped right from my bed by a genie. I was tortured, and then brought here. These ill-fated souls amongst me are my family members....or *were* my family. I may join them soon, for I feel my strength leaving me even as I speak to you. This castle brings nothing but disease and pestilence, it should be burned to the ground, but only those with fire in their bellies inhabit it." You ask her where the lord is and she shakes her head. "He is very dominant, I hope you meet him and finish him, but I do not know how you can find him. I do have a spell I can teach you, it may aid you in your endeavour against these unholy spectres." She mutters something and immediately you can hear her in your thoughts, you have been instilled with a HOLY SPELL. Every time you use it mark 1 point off your MAGICK status. Her eyelids droop and she starts to nod off, you fear the worse for her. Footsteps are heard outside in the corridor; you yank out your weapon and prepare for whoever is coming but the footsteps halt at the door. There is only silence now. You open the door and peek out in the corridor, no one is present. Did you imagine this? The girl however has died, hanging there by her wrists. There is nothing else in this room. Will you try the cherry door (turn to 81), the double doors (turn to 39), or will you leave this passageway altogether and return to the iron gate at the junction (turn to 46)?

64

Without any hesitation you smash the mace across the surface of the sphere and hear a blood curdling screech! The orb ceases to glow and falls to the ground then green and crimson liquid ooze from it. You take a breather and realise how close you came to death but that is all over now. You discover a latch on the wall and pull it. You hear the portcullis lift and head back to the T-junction. If you haven't gone the right way, you can do so now by turning to 62. If you'd rather skip that option or you've already been that way you retrace your steps and walk back to the four-way junction. Return to 70.

65

You enter an extravagant salon of sort; there are upholstered chairs and couches arranged in certain sections of the room, some stationed by a marble fireplace. A creature sits in the center of the room watching you. The room is lit by a single torch which slightly illuminates the charred creature. What catches your attention about him is that he has a fiery upper body of a human, and a hundred serpents sprouting from his shoulders. His lower body ends in a snake tail which he rests upon and rises on as you enter. His face is like that from bad dreams, it's void of all good features but that of Hell and demons. A wispy vapour rises from his being. He speaks to you with

a malicious tone, "So, you are the foretold one, come to vanquish our might? Do you not see what powers we have? You are only a inhabitant upon this earth, you eat, you breath and you die. That is all you're good for." You tell him that he may yet taste the blade of your sword and he chortles. "What makes you think you can harm something not of this world?" If you possess a MACE you find it starting to blaze brightly. "Tonight, you will never leave this castle, for I will make sure that your spirit dwells here forever." You inform him that you're not afraid and intend to end his existence. If you indeed own the SPIKED MACE, turn to 32. If not, you must rely on your ordinary weapon, turn to 80.

66

"Oh! The keys!" One head exclaims. "We've seen many keys. Some are in the western hall. Some are in the eastern hall. Some are downstairs. They're all over the place! Why do you want to know?" You tell them that the gate is locked. "Surely you don't want to go up there, there are spiders lurking everywhere." The other speaks, "Oh yes, big spiders. The master likes spiders, big hairy ones with large venomous mandibles." You tell them that you're not afraid of spiders. "You will be, trust us, you will be very afraid."

"Why don't you tell our guest about...?"

"Shush!"

They start to read a book then glance at you. "Are you still here? What do you want from us?" You ask them if they have anything useful. "That we do, but it will cost you."

They want to trade with you. What will you give up? If you so choose pick an item from your list and roll two dice: keep track of what was rolled, roll again, and compare. If the second amount was equal to or lower than the first amount, turn to 6. If it was higher, turn to 40. If you do not wish to trade with them, then you must leave their company and continue up the passage. Turn to 77. You *could* risk attacking them? Turn to 36.

67

He smiles as he reverses the spell on you. The spell burns you all over until you reduced to ashes. Your quest has ended rather quickly and harshly.

68

They don't like your new weapon and scamper further into the shadows. You are free to examine the room. You find a tiny vial of HERBAL potion on a table which will grant 2 HEALTH points. Now you decide to leave this wretched room and go upstairs, turn to 20, or go back downstairs, turn to 18.

69

When you enter, you find the room littered with bones and skeletons still in their clothing and leather armour. Their skulls are fractured and some have holes in them. A door slams down and traps you in the room! Then you hear grinding from above and sharp spikes come out from the ceiling and floor. You desperately try to open the door but it is made of stone and cannot be broken. In minutes you will suffer just like the victims before you, but in years you will be identical to them should another adventurer wander by and dig through your belongings. For years you will haunt this place never wanting to leave.

70

You are travelling north. Do you wish to leave the crypts? If so, retrace your steps south and turn to 18. If you are still searching you arrive at a crossroads: to go west (turn to 96), to go east (turn to 83), to continue north (turn to 29).

71

The room is black as tar and the door slams shut behind you! You feel around and touch something, it is a person, but what you feel is a wetness and warmth on him or her. It pushes you against the wall and something splatters across your face. You can taste a metallic coppery substance on your lips. Then there is a wail so loud it nearly deafens you. Lose 1 SANITY point. You swing your sword frantically and hit a solid object, more liquid spews on your face. It stings your eyes and the taste of it nearly causes you the vomit. You recognise the flavour as blood. You open the door to escape and tumble out the room with a zombie on your back. She appears to have been a village girl, once innocent, but now raving mad, undead, and aching to take a bite out of your skin. You dare not feed her insatiable hunger. She is bleeding from the mouth, had she already eaten? Quickly you hack off her head and watch it roll down the stairs. Even with a severed head her body still moves, searching for you. You wipe off your face and back away. In the black room she was in you see human eyes watching you but don't come into what light you have to see. Hurriedly you reach in and close the door as hard as you can. Will you now open the Cain door (turn to 99), the Typhon door (turn to 65), ignore the doors and go up the stairs (turn to 20)? If you think you've missed something you could go back downstairs, turn to 18?

72

The key opens the gate. You make your way up the stairs and come to ancient cobwebs so thick you have to use your weapon to break through them. Did you pull a lever somewhere? If so, turn to 95. If you did not, you sense something is amiss. You feel as though you are being hunted. Ahead torches are burning from the walls letting in some light mercifully. Something lands on top of your head! You brush it off and scamper to see what it was. It is a giant hairy tarantula. More arrive. You have stumbled into a nest of spiders. Then a large one comes out from a broken part of the ceiling and sprays you in the face with sticky silk. You step on the smaller ones in desperation. You're covered in bugs and being stalked by their queen. You take out your weapon and prepare to fight your way out of this mess.

Queen Tarantula HEALTH 5

If you kill her, you race out of the nest and into the light of the torches, turn to 59.

73

"Surely it did, but you won't have the date on you by any chance?" You shake your head and confirm that you don't. "That is too bad for you then." You ask him what he means by that. "I can't let you out of this area; I assume you are here to threaten the master of this place. You will be made into a mindless wonder." You take out your weapon and the creature laughs. "Such diminutive items you humans feel so dominant with. You might as well fight me with a small stick." You inform him that you are the most cunning swordsman that ever lived. "I highly doubt that, now that you're here in this castle, you will start to lose all of your willpower to live. You do not know what you have stirred up. Many of the rooms are alive and they ache to consume your soul. But I

will not let them have that privilege, for the task will fall to me alone." You tell him to stop talking and get ready for battle. You could swear there is a smirk on its horse-like face. It transforms right before your eyes and the result is something that sends shivers down your spine and causes the skin beneath your scalp to quiver. It takes on the form of you. It's as if you are looking right into a mirror but there is something more sinister about your double, for its face has a stare of one that is demented. The double raises a sword, one identical to your own. Add your own health below and begin combat with yourself.

You HEALTH ?

If you win, you find a latch and pull it. You hear the portcullis lift. You head back to the junction. If you haven't gone the right way, you can do so now by turning to 62. If you'd rather skip that option or you've already been that way you retrace your steps and walk back to the four-way junction. Return to 70.

74

"Wanderers are more than welcome," he says, "because we get to do many things to them and no one will dare come looking for them." You ask him what he means by that and soon acrid smoke starts to bellow around the both of you. "If you have a god to pray to, you might want to pray to that entity now." You pull out your sword and swipe at him but he catches the blade in his hand and breaks the thing in half as if it were a mere twig. You tell him to be gone and he chortles. "I enjoy bothering you; it brings me pleasure to see you suffer." Do you have a SPIKED MACE, if you own one, turn to 17. If not, what will you do? Run down the hall (turn to 34) or tell him you're not afraid of him (turn to 86)?

75

The corridor soon merges with a large observatory. There is a glass globe hovering in the center of the room. You go and spin it and see where your finger lands. The room has all kinds of charts on the walls and models of golden three-mast ships sitting on shelves. There is also a royal portrait of a young man with long black hair on the far wall. He sports a pointed goatee and moustache and is dressed in fancy military garb. His sable eyes pierce into yours and you feel as though the painting is *looking* back at you. The floor is quite a magnificent spectacle for it is made up of a gold and Lapis Lazuli. Rather beautiful and it is obvious that that man must be the person behind all of this. Will you examine the picture more closely (turn to 33), look at the models (turn to 10), or leave this room by the door opposite (turn to 21)?

76

The Jinn lets out a laugh that alarms you a bit. "Poor fool, we are free to go in and out of these walls like lions. Choose how you wish to die?" You don't want death to come to you and inform him if he wishes to die, you'll oblige, and he laughs again. Suddenly smoke rises from his body and surrounds you until you can barely breathe or see. Do you possess a SPIKED MACE? If so, turn to 17. If not, you are lifted off your feet, taken to the sky, and then dropped. The Jinn bellows out laughter as you plummet. When you hit the ground, there is no telling if you will be even able to walk. Your adventure ends.

77

The corridor stretches for a very long time; you search rooms and find nothing of value. Nothing that will guide you in your adventure that is. There are many things you could steal and you'd be rich should you sell off the items at a town but you don't care to be weighed down. You come to a room with a black and white marble floor. A doorway continues on the other end of it. There is a large diamond studded mirror in here. Do you wish to look into the mirror? Turn to 43. If not, you walk daringly across the room toward the doorway, turn to 25.

78

He rubs his chin and scoffs, "I am Jinn, and my master is that who rules over the flames and tortured souls." You exclaim that he cannot possibly be master here if he has a master already. "Do not mock my intelligence, I can end you this very moment, but I like to keep you around so that the suspense kills you. Tell me, how do you wish to die when I tire of your antics?" You inform him that you're not afraid of him and he moans. "You are surely a different type of species, for most are afraid of my kind. You must fear me!" You take out your weapon and warn him with it, you tell him that he should be afraid of his own self for if he has such great powers he must flee from himself. "How do you mean?" And you declare that a being such as him shouldn't be meddling with petty humans but intimidating those with likewise powers. "You are correct." Smoke comes out of his body and you are hoisted off your feet by it and thrown into the wall. Lose 1 HEALTH point as you have struck the back of your head. He lets out a laugh. "Do you like that for supremacy? I can kill you now." You decide it's best not to talk to this thing anymore and race down the corridor. Turn to 34.

79

The doors slam shut and trap you in, then a green vapour starts to fill the room. There are windows here but they are too narrow for you to climb through. The gas becomes intense and you won't be able to escape it much longer. You die in that very room, but there is life after death, and soon you will rise as a ghost to haunt in your new world.

80

Your sword does absolutely no damage to it whatsoever, the blade merely passes through. The room starts to spin faster and faster as the creature moves in on you. "A mortal such as yourself should have stay in the village and awaited your turn." A cloud of sulphur and fire explodes from its mouth and eyes and smashes into your face. You're knocked unconscious. The last thing you hear is the creature laughing at your demise. When you wake, you are no longer attached to your body. You drift vulnerably throughout the castle, a helpless victim to its many evil spirits and wicked powers. Your adventure ends here.

81

You have entered a room full of mirrors. Yellow and orange sapphire encrusts the walls and there is a faint smell of decay and orange blossom oil in the air. Roll 2 dice: make a note of the first result then roll again and compare. If the second result was equal to or lower than the first result, turn to 48. If it was higher, you look around the room and hear the door slam hard behind you. There is a spectre floating about, going in and out of the mirrors. If you have a mace, it starts to glow fiercely. The thing in the room with you burns then dissipates then it appears in front of you. It is enough to distinguish its skeletal features. It lashes out at you!

Spectre HEALTH 8

If you survive, you race out of the room and figure out what door to look at next. Will it be the door marked Isis (turn to 87), the double doors (turn to 39), or will you leave this corridor altogether and return to the iron gate at the junction (turn to 46)?

82

You look through the barred window again and notice the people in there haven't moved from their positions. You spot something shiny on one of the bodies, and shiny things seem to attract your attention most of the time. You open the door and step in; the first thing that hits your nostrils is the scent of decomposition. The bodies are bloated, black and leaking red fluids. The shiny thing is a silver ring. Do you want to put it on? Turn to 15. If not, you drop it back on the corpses, depart, and return to the corridor. Turn to 77.

83

After walking down the tunnel for a bit you come to a T-junction. Both ways are swathed in blackness. To go left (turn to 23) or to go right (turn to 62).

84

The room is a bed chamber, an emperor sized bed sits against a wall, and drapes hang down from a majestic canopy. The theme is emerald green. Old Persian carpets and pine furniture decorate the room. You also notice somebody in the bed under the fur covers but under closer inspection you find it to be a corpse. "Do you not see what has become of me?" This voice roars over the silence. If you have a mace, it does not glow. You spin around and see an apparition hovering a few inches above the floor in the corner. He is dressed in a long white gown just like the dead body. "The prince of this place, my brother, has murdered me in my sleep. The coward!" You ask him why he was slain. "I am a traitor. I tried to help villagers escape, some succeeded, and I hope they made it to the mountains to other towns, but some did not make it beyond the courtyard. You are a stranger here, yes?" You nod and place your hand on the hilt of your sword expecting somebody to burst through the door at any moment. "If you want to get very far you will have to find keys. The master of this forsaken place has locked everything in his state of lunacy. He has awoken something that he cannot even control." You ask him where you can find the keys. "They are scattered throughout the castle unfortunately. I am convinced there is a certain key in this place that will advance you, but it is not in this room. Do take care not to stay here long, many go mad, many succumb to the dark powers, this place is not set for the living, only the dead." You heed his warning and watch him vanish. You are glad to have discovered him. Now you must set out and find those keys. You return to the corridor. Turn to 46.

85

Deduct 1 point from your MAGICK status. The creatures scream and cower behind their beds. They won't even look at you. You quickly get up, escape from the room, and run down through a lavish salon and then an extended hallway lit up by golden and dark blue candles in iron candelabras. The stench is overbearing, as if some animal has been dead for weeks. There is a large door ahead with the symbol of a dragon on it. You open it and look in. The room beyond has six mirrors, and a seventh which is larger. A face is in it, it is a most horrifying specimen. A man

wearing a long cloak and high collar stands before the seventh mirror clutching a glowing orb. His hands are wretched claws and his chin is adorned with a pointy goatee. He glances over his shoulder slowly as if he knew you were coming. Perhaps he knew all along? The demon in the mirror growls upon noticing you. In the other six mirrors are lost souls. They are crying and scratching at their necks in agony. They are trapped and a few orbs like the one the man is holding are floating in and out of the mirrors. You step in and prepare yourself. What will you do as your first move? The world in this castle has its eyes upon you. YOU are the guest of honour, didn't you know?

Talk to them, turn to 26.

Attack the man immediately, turn to 44.

Cast a spell, turn to 7.

86

"You should be, you ought to be very frightened for I possess great powers and a mortal such as yourself with your measly weapons cannot hurt me! I am a guardian; I am an entity to be prayed to, for I am JINN." Smoke starts to surround the both of you and you realise he's about to do something awful to you, so you decide it's time to run away. You hurry down the corridor. Will you ever meet him again? Only time will tell that. Turn to 34.

87

The door is locked. It has a rose gold lock on it. If you possess a matching ROSE GOLD KEY turn to the number etched on it now. If not, you will have to search elsewhere. Will you head in the direction of the double doors (turn to 39) or the cherry door (turn to 81)?

88

This room is majestic set with upholstered furniture and fancy wooden tables; the brick fireplace is black with soot as if there was a large out-of-control fire in it. Hanging from the beams are six people, hanging off a noose by their stretched necks. They fade away when you blink your eyes hard. Did you really see that or did you imagine it? The room is dark, having black velvet drapes over the tall windows, the view outside is another courtyard but you see no way of getting to it. Suddenly a fire starts up in the fireplace, the flames bellow in blue hues, and then goes out. You assume now that this room is cursed. It gives you the creeps. You listen to the silence and can hear someone crying then it stops altogether. You wonder where to search next when a candle on a desk lights up all by itself. You are drawn to the desk; you find charts and a diary on it. In blood, you assume, are scrawled words that send shivers down your spine:

I split their bodies wide open...drank their blood...put their heads on display... took their eyes out so I can peer into the depths of their very soul...the master is pleased with the flesh gifts I gave him. Soon, more will come and I will do the same to them.

This makes no sense but you presume that this place is no doubt evil. What will the lord be like? You find a SILVER KEY attached to a sky blue string, but find nothing that it might open, so you put it in your pocket for now. Will you go to the dining hall (turn to 14), the gate (turn to 38), or go upstairs (turn to 3)?

89

In frustration that you will not comply with his wishes he alters his appearance to that of a bright glowing orb. Electricity flies from it and strikes you in the forehead! Lose 2 HEALTH points. You've never felt so weak after such a blow but you get to your feet and prepare to protect your life. Do you possess a SPIKED MACE? If so, turn to 64. If you do not then the orb keeps zapping you until you can no longer stand. Your blood boils beneath your flesh, then he strikes your heart and it is one horrific death.

90

There are dusty carpets and animal heads lining the walls, at one point it might have been a splendid room, but now it is falling into ruin. You can hear someone talking and taking out your weapon you slip into the shadows. At the far end of the room is a wide desk, and seated at the desk, is an orange reptilian creature with two heads. It appears to be chatting with itself. As you approach it stops speaking and watches you for a few seconds. "My dear, it appears we have a rat in our midst!"

The other replies, "A rat? Didn't we set out traps?"

"No, you fool, over there, prowling in the shadows like some rogue come to steal all of our rubies and aquamarines."

"Ha! He won't get far."

"Could be a girl, ya' know?"

"Does it matter?"

You step into their light and let them see you plainly. They both gasp in awe at you. Will you ask them where the lord of the place lies at night (turn to 19) or ask them where to find the keys to this place (turn to 66)?

91

"There is no lord of this place." You tell him surely there is and you intend to find him and won't believe in mischief. "I am lord of this place." He proclaims and you laugh a little and wonder if that's true? What will you ask him to prove he is lord here?

Why are you killing the townsfolk? Turn to 30

Who is your master? Turn to 78

Where do you sleep at nights? Turn to 9

92

Around the neck of the creature you find half a DISK with pointy edges. It is an odd and rare piece and you decide to keep it. You wonder where the other half could be? You move further on into the crypt. It's cold, it's humid, and it's putrid down here. It's like the odour of fresh blood on an open wound, salty and coppery. You arrive at a room and recognise the barmaid from Everlasting. She is holding a severed head and her mouth is swathed in burgundy stains. She smiles and chuckles a bit. "Do you want to try some?" She shows you the head and you see part of its skull is cut away. She is devouring its brains. Then the image disappears. Lose 1 SANITY point. You are in a cylinder-shaped room which looks like it's made of obsidian. You can hear crying but can't pin-point where it's coming from. You can taste blood on your lips, something is whispering in your ear, "death to us all." This area is no doubt haunted. You enter another long, winding corridor and find rooms filled with ghosts of people you met at the tavern and the village, but they are not real, still their bizarre representation here gives you're the chills. You replace your torch with a fresh one and set further into the bowels of the castle. Turn to 70.

93

Something runs up behind you and you spin around but nothing is there. Blood starts to seep from your skin, but with no cause as to why it is happening. It drips all over the floor and down your armour. Lose 1 SANITY point. Walking on, the blood eventually halts, but now you feel very weak. Lose 1 HEALTH point. You hope to encounter the lord of this place very soon because you don't know how much more you can take, this place is draining you to the very soul, and you don't know why. You come to large double doors with a large triangular symbol on them. Listening to them you can hear whispering, but can't understand what is being said. You enter the room quietly...turn to 16.

94

All three of them are hoisted into the air by some unforeseen force and they transform into rotten beasts, a former shell of what life was left in them. Little do you know that your light, which has been cast upon them, has sealed their demise. They break the shackles and reach for you with hungry claws. You're backed out into the corridor, weapon ready, (if you have a spiked mace it glows bitterly). You can't escape this battle; they are desperate to pursue you, for they want you to join in on their pain. If you die, you will become like them forever.

1st Phantom HEALTH 4

2nd Phantom HEALTH 3

3rd Phantom HEALTH 5

Should you survive, how bad you feel for them, for they were no doubt town folk. You now take the key and examine it. Turn to 60.

95

The floor gives way beneath as if expecting you to step on it. Are you wearing boots that walk on air? If so, turn to 31. If not, you fall down, but luckily you grab on to the ledge. If you have a mace it dangles off your belt, ready to fall into what appears to be a pit of large black widows. Roll two dice: make a note of the first result, roll again, and compare. If the second amount was equal to or lower than the first result, you pull yourself out of the pit and retain your mace. If the amount exceeded then the mace falls down, you pull yourself out of the pit but refuse to retrieve it now. You head in the direction of the torch lights. Turn to 59.

96

You light a torch and set down the gloomy corridor. You see movement ahead and ready your weapon. It is not a vampire or a zombie but skin. Skin, walking on whatever feet it has. Its cavity hollow of muscle and blood. Its eye sockets void of eyeballs and its mouth emptied of teeth. You quickly burn it with your torch and watch it go up in flames. The thing tries to lunge at you as if the fire causes no pain. You step back and watch it burn. It claws at the air and scampers frantically all around the room. It's an ugly sight to behold and you end up losing 1 SANITY point. You see an iron key on the floor. After the skin has been immobilized you go and pick up the key. The number #57 etched into it. You also find a HERBAL potion which will grant you 2 HEALTH points. There is nothing further but a dead end here. Retrace your steps and return to 70.

97

You turn it but it does not open the gate. The key must be cut incorrectly. Then the key explodes! Lose 1 HEALTH point. Return to 46.

98

It laughs and shakes its head. "If it doesn't exist then this castle wouldn't be standing. You have answered incorrectly." He pulls a lever on the wall and you hear the portcullis lift. Then there are moans coming nearer and near, louder and louder. He snaps his fingers and vanishes. You are met with countless zombies; you bravely hack your way through them but are outnumbered and they drag you to the floor. You are bitten all over and torn to pieces in minutes. Your last living memory is in the Castle of Spirits.

99

The room beyond is a large library, lit by many red candles in silver candelabras. Old hand woven rugs mark the floor as large as other carpets in citadels and fortifications you've been in. Animal heads with long antlers line the walls with portraits of ancestors of the place. The walls and floor are of the darkest of woods. But what is odd about this place is the blood, blood stains everything and it is still fresh. Ahead is a statue of a bronze man holding a smoky quartz orb in his right hand. The expression on his face is a grim one, as you step further into the room the sphere he clasps starts to throb, then his eyes blink and he steps down from his pedestal. He pulls out a dagger concealed in his boot and charges in your direction. You must defend yourself against the Golem; you must use the hilt of your sword to dent his armour.

Golem HEALTH 6

If you win, turn to 4.

100

In front of the mirror is a jagged lock, a perfect fit to the discs you are carrying, quickly you place them in and twist it. The mirrors in the room shatter and all of the spirits come out and escape through the roof. The demon in the seventh mirror shrieks in defeat and explodes, sending you hurling across the room. He vanishes and the dark imagery behind him turns into the Everlasting Village. All around you the castle starts to crumble. You jump into the mirror, and come out on the soil of the little town. In the distance you watch as the castle falls down. Village folk come to you, help you to your feet, and brush you off. You are thanked greatly but there is still a sadness remaining. All those who went to the castle will never return but they have been put to rest at last. The barmaid from the tavern approaches you and hugs you. "I prayed for you, I prayed you'd come back and I am honoured that you survived. Thank you so much for releasing those poor souls." You see spirits flying through the sky, they seem happy to be free. It's another adventure down and possibly many more to go. You and the maid return to the tavern and everyone gathers around you to hear your tales of what went on in that place. They buy you a few drinks and that night you sleep well knowing you have succeeded once again in a quest.