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THE SEA OF SAND

AN ENTRY IN THE 2015 WINDHAMMER PRIZE FOR
SHORT GAMEBOOK FICTION

WRITTEN BY ANDREW WRIGHT
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A sequel to the 2011 Windhammer Prize-winning entry, Sea of Madness

THE SEA OF SAND

By Andrew Wright

Can you unite the tribes of the vast desert?

In this epic adventure, set amidst the rolling dunes of the Sea of Sand, you play a mighty hero exiled from your tribal homelands and intent on gathering the desert tribes into a bloodthirsty horde to seek vengeance over your oppressors. Pick one of the three heroes below and copy their details onto your Quest Sheet.

P'shebay the Majestic
 Female Warrior
 MIGHT: 5
 SORCERY: 2
 HEALTH: 4
 Weapon: Battle Axe (POWER 3)
 Gear: Javelin
 Gold: 1 talent
 Goddess: The Sun Goddess

Also known as the Warrior-Queen of the Desert, P'shebay is fast becoming a legend in her own lifetime. She has defeated the legions of the Mellenian Alliance, repelled hordes of inhuman Spirullans from the south, and slew one of the great Rukhs of Thrawn. If she were to unite all the tribes of these lands there is no army in this world that could stand against their combined might!

Zeheraz, Binder of Demons
 Female Sorceress
 MIGHT: 2
 SORCERY: 5
 HEALTH: 4
 Weapon: Staff (POWER 1)
 Gear: Shield
 Gold: 3 talents
 Goddess: The Death Goddess

Zeheraz is the dark lady of the dunes, a priestess of the Death Goddess who can summon the shadows themselves to do her bidding. The tribe has followed her out of both fear and awe of her incredible powers, as she has trekked the wastelands seeking scraps of ancient lore. Zeheraz plots to gather the desert clans into an empire of fear that will rule for millennia, guided by her arcane designs and the undying life her goddess will surely grant her.

Baladin of Bhintos
 Male Adventurer
 MIGHT: 4
 SORCERY: 3
 HEALTH: 3

Weapon: Scimitar (POWER 2)
 Gear: Javelin and Shield
 Gold: 2 talents
 Goddess: The Sand Goddess

Baladin was raised an orphan after his family were killed by Sandworms, but despite this he has become one of Bhintos' favored sons. This is due to his cunning and adaptability: knowing when to run and when to fight, when to be merciful and when to grind your enemy into the dust underfoot. Baladin wishes to lead the people of the Sea of Sand in one glorious adventure that will stake both his name and that of his tribe into the scrolls of history for many centuries to come.

HOW TO SURVIVE THE SEA OF SAND

Introduction

It is not necessary to read all the rules before play. If you wish you may just pick a hero and start reading, referring back to the relevant rules section as needed. Alternatively, you could read all the rules beforehand to get a clear idea of how to play The Sea of Sand. Note that there is also a section of Optional Rules at the back of the adventure for creating your own heroes.

MIGHT, SORCERY, and HEALTH

Your hero is defined by three scores:

- MIGHT:** This is a measure of how brawny and strong your hero is. You use this score in combat, and also test it when you're attempting to succeed in a great feat of strength. You also test this score when hurling a Javelin at an enemy. It can have a minimum value of 2 and a maximum value of 6.
- SORCERY:** This shows how skilled your hero is in the arts of magic and wizardry. You test this score when you're trying to cast a powerful enchantment upon a foe or if you wish to engage in Sorcerous Combat. It can have a minimum value of 2 and a maximum value of 6.
- HEALTH:** This represents how much damage your hero can take before dying. It will change a lot as you play The Sea of Sand, and can even go as low as 1. If it reaches zero, your hero has died, and you must turn to **13**.

You can replenish lost HEALTH points by recuperating at various places throughout the Sea of Sand and the lands that border it. You may have to prove to your hosts how heroic you are, but once you have done that, you are able to stay as long as you like and recover all lost HEALTH points back to your original starting total.

Lastly, every melee weapon you use has a given POWER value. This is the number of points deducted from the HEALTH score of an enemy wounded by this weapon.

Testing Your Scores

You will often be told to roll one die and compare the result to one of your scores. The simple rule is that:

- If you roll under your score, you have succeeded.
- If you roll equal to, or over your score, you have failed.

Sometimes you will be told to add a number to the die roll due to the increased difficulty of what your character is attempting.

Example: *Your hero is trying to lift a boulder that blocks the entrance to a cave, and you are told to roll one die and add one to the result, and compare it to your MIGHT score (which is 5). You roll a four, which would normally be a success. However, adding 1 takes it to 5, which is the same as your MIGHT score, and thus you fail in your attempt to lift up the boulder.*

Missile Combat

At the start of a battle, you will often be told “You may hurl a Javelin at your opponent if you have one”. To do this, roll one die and compare the result to your MIGHT score, then:

- If you roll under your MIGHT score, your Javelin has hit your opponent. Deduct 1 point from their HEALTH score, and then start the battle (or if this kills them outright, turn to the next paragraph number indicated).
- If you roll equal to or over your MIGHT score, your Javelin has missed the target. You must fight them as normal. After the battle, assuming you do not die or flee, you may retrieve your Javelin and use it again in your next conflict.

You can only carry one Javelin at a time.

Melee Combat

Fighting is something you will do a lot of while trekking through the Sea of Sand. It takes place using a sequence of events called Battle Turns. Whenever you are told to fight an opponent, use the following instructions for each Battle Turn:

1. Roll one die and add your MIGHT score. This is your total Battle Strength for this Battle Turn.
2. Roll one die and add your opponent’s MIGHT score. This is your opponent’s total Battle Strength for this Battle Turn.
3. If both Battle Strengths are the same, your blows have cancelled each other out. Return to step 1 and start the next Battle Turn.
4. If your Battle Strength is higher than your opponent’s, you have wounded them. Deduct the POWER value of your weapon from their HEALTH score. If their HEALTH score is zero, you have slain them and can turn to the paragraph number indicated. If their HEALTH score is greater than zero, they are still alive and you must return to step 1 and start the next Battle Turn.
5. If their Battle Strength is higher than yours, you have been wounded. Deduct your opponent’s POWER value from your HEALTH score. If your HEALTH score is zero, you have been slain

and must turn to **13**. If your HEALTH score is greater than zero, you are still alive and can return to step 1 and start the next Battle Turn.

Using a Shield

Your hero may start with or acquire a Shield while on their travels. Using a Shield in combat may help prevent you from suffering wounds. Whenever you have been wounded during a Battle Turn, roll one die. On a roll of a 1, the Shield has deflected the blow and you suffer no damage. On the roll of a 2-6, you are wounded as normal. Note that a Shield can only be used in combat if your hero is armed with a one-handed weapon such as a Scimitar or Staff. Weapons requiring two hands to use, such the Battleaxe, preclude the use of a Shield as well.

Fleeing

Should the battle be going badly for you, you may wish to flee the fight. You must deduct one point from your HEALTH score as your opponent gets a glancing blow on your fleeing backside (and this may be deflected by using a Shield; see above). If your HEALTH score is at least 1, you have successfully fled and can turn to the new paragraph number indicated when fleeing is given as an option.

If you have thrown a Javelin at your opponent at the start of combat and then decide to flee later, you must cross the Javelin off from your Quest Sheet as you cannot retrieve it before you flee.

Sorcerous Combat

You do not always have to fight a battle with normal weapons. If your SORCERY score is at least 3 you may wish to use magic against your opponent. For such a sorcerous duel, replace your MIGHT score with your SORCERY score, and note that your POWER score is equal to half your SORCERY score with fractions rounded up. Otherwise all rules are the same for normal Melee Combat.

Gear

You start this game with the bare minimum of equipment, known here as Gear. Your hero has one of the following weapons (see their descriptions above to see which one):

- Staff (POWER 1)
- Scimitar (POWER 2)
- Battleaxe (POWER 3)

The higher the POWER value of a weapon the better! Your hero may also have a Javelin and/or a Shield. Javelins are for throwing (see above) and you can only carry one Javelin at a time. Shields are for protection (see above), and you can only carry one Shield at a time also.

You can carry a maximum of 8 items on this adventure, including your weapon(s), and a Javelin and/or Shield, but not including Gold. There is space on your Quest Sheet for recording any items you might find or buy during the adventure. If you are carrying 8 items already and wish to take or buy another item, you will have to drop and cross off one item from your Quest Sheet before you can record details of your new acquisition.

Gold

The amount of Gold your hero has demonstrates how wealthy they are and is measured in units called talents. Gold can be acquired by raiding, trading, exploring ruins or selling items. You can spend Gold on new equipment, trade goods, the blessings of the gods and hiring mercenaries. Keep a careful tally of your Gold in the Gold box on your Quest Sheet.

The Goddesses

Although a host of minor demigods are worshipped by the tribes of the Sea of Sand, your hero will be a follower of one of the three major deities:

The Sun Goddess: The goddess of the sky and of the blazing sun, who takes the form of a long-haired woman clad in scarlet robes and surrounded by a flaming halo. The greatest temple to the Sun Goddess can be found in the distant city of Shahad.

The Death Goddess: The goddess who waits for all at the end of their lives, and decides whether they should perish or survive. The Death Goddess manifests herself as a girl in a black cloak with white hair and pupil-less eyes. The strange Cliff-Dwellers of Quon host the biggest shrine dedicated to the Death Goddess.

The Sand Goddess: Goddess of the desert, the dunes and the wind that whistles across the barren lands. A mighty deity whose form is of a gigantic woman made entirely of sand, the Sand Goddess is, along with the Sun Goddess, one of the most important deities for any tribe who wander the Sea of Sand. The tribe of Hakar is widely acknowledged to have the most-powerful holy-man of the Sand Goddess.

Each of the starting heroes already has a designated god to follow. Record this detail on your hero's Quest Sheet. You can visit the various shrines and holy-men of these gods to gain Blessings to help you on your journey. However, Blessings for the god your hero worships will be cheaper than those for the gods your hero does not follow.

Tribes

To survive upon the Sea of Sand, your hero will need a tribe of followers. Full details of the tribe that your hero commands at the start of the adventure can be found in 'The Saga So Far...' section below. Record these details carefully on your Quest Sheet. During the adventure you may have the opportunity improve your tribe. A guide to the different kinds of tribes and how many trade units they can carry is listed below:

Tribe type: Band	TRIBE HEALTH: 3 or less	Trade Capacity: 1 trade unit
Tribe type: Clan	TRIBE HEALTH: 4	Trade Capacity: 2 trade units
Tribe type: Horde	TRIBE HEALTH: 5 or more	Trade Capacity: 3 trade units

Your tribe can only carry as much trade units as shown by this chart. So if your tribe loses TRIBE HEALTH points you may have to dump trade units as you can no longer carry them.

Your Tribe

Your tribe is defined by two scores:

TRIBE MIGHT: This is a measure of how strong and skilled your tribe is. You use this score in mass combat (see below), and also test it when your tribe is attempting to succeed in something that requires a degree of skill. It can have a minimum value of 2 and a maximum value of 6.

TRIBE HEALTH: This represents how much damage your tribe can take before they are decimated. It will change a lot as you play *The Sea of Sand*, and can even go as low as 1. If it reaches zero, your tribe are all dead (and likely so are you), and your adventure is over. Turn immediately to **13**.

You can your TRIBE MIGHT and HEALTH points by hiring mercenaries at several of the cities that border the Sea of Sand. Details will be given in the adventure as to how many TRIBE MIGHT or HEALTH points you can restore, and how much Gold it will cost you to do so.

Testing Your Tribe's Scores

You will often be told to roll one die and compare the result to one of your tribe's scores. The simple rule is that:

- If you roll under your tribe's score, you have succeeded.
- If you roll equal to, or over your tribe's score, you have failed.

Sometimes you will be told to add a number to the die roll due to the increased difficulty of what your tribe is attempting to do.

Mass Combat

Fighting is something your tribe may do a lot of while exploring the Sea of Sand. It is nearly identical to Melee Combat (see above), and takes place using a sequence of events called Battle Turns. Whenever your tribe is told to fight an opponent, use the following instructions for each Battle Turn:

6. Roll one die and add your TRIBE MIGHT score. This is your total Battle Strength for this Battle Turn.
7. Roll one die and add your opponent's MIGHT score. This is your opponent's total Battle Strength for this Battle Turn.
8. If both Battle Strengths are the same, your attacks have cancelled each other out. Return to step 1 and start the next Battle Turn.
9. If your Battle Strength is higher than your opponent's, your tribe has inflicted casualties. Deduct 1 point their HEALTH score. If their HEALTH score is zero, your tribe has defeated them in battle and can turn to the paragraph number indicated. If their HEALTH score is greater than zero, they are still undefeated, and you must return to step 1 and start the next Battle Turn.
10. If their Battle Strength is higher than yours, your tribe has suffered casualties. Deduct 1 point your TRIBE HEALTH score. If your TRIBE HEALTH score is zero, your tribe and yourself have

been defeated and must turn to **13**. If your TRIBE HEALTH score is greater than zero, your tribe are still undefeated, and you can return to step 1 and start the next Battle Turn.

Retreat

Should the battle be going badly for your tribe, you may wish to retreat from the fight. You must deduct one point from your TRIBE HEALTH score as your opponents get a series of glancing blows on your fleeing backsides. If your TRIBE HEALTH score is at least 1, you have successfully retreated from the battle and can turn to the new paragraph number indicated when retreat is given as an option.

Allies

You will be requested at times to record details of Allies on your Quest Sheet. These Allies will not help you during the course of the adventure, but may prove useful during the final battle, assuming, of course, that you get that far!

Codewords

At certain points in the adventure you will check whether you have a certain codeword on your Quest Sheet, and must turn to a new paragraph number if you do so. Codewords measure what accomplishments your hero has achieved and how they have left their mark on the lands of the Sea of Sand. Make sure you keep a scrupulous record of which codewords you have acquired, because the continuity of your adventure will be compromised otherwise.

The Sea of Sand Quest Sheet

Name:

Sex:

Profession:

MIGHT:

SORCERY

HEALTH:

Gold (in talents):

Gear (including Weapons and Weapon's POWER)

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

Goddess:

Blessings:	Death Goddess	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sand Goddess	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sun Goddess	<input type="checkbox"/>

Codewords:

Other Notes:

Your Tribe

Tribe Name: Bhintos

Tribe Type:

Tribe Trade Capacity:

Trade units:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

TRIBE MIGHT:

TRIBE HEALTH:

Allies:

The Saga So Far...

*“Where now the holy cities,
Where all the ancient holy scrolls,
Where now the Emperor Menelik,
And the Queen of Sheba’s gold.” (Hewson, 2007)*

The war was swift and brutal. Your tribe of Bhintos was defeated by the combined forces of a slave-army led by the ex-gladiator Kartacus and a legion from the city-state of Lopenos, commanded by one of that settlement’s many mighty heroes.

You tried to parley. You attempted to clarify that your tribe and the slaves were both under the yoke of the cruel mercenaries from Mellene, operating on secret orders from the mighty Archon.

No one listened, or cared, and your people were driven into the desert like whipped dogs. These are the details of your tribe:

Tribe Name:	<i>Bhintos</i>
Tribe Type:	Band
Tribe Trade Capacity:	1 trade unit
Tribe trade unit:	Slaves
TRIBE MIGHT:	3
TRIBE HEALTH:	3

Record these details on your Quest Sheet.

Your next steps are very clear. You must lead your tribe through the Sea of Sand and the lands that surround it, acquiring allies and prestige along the way. When you feel that you have reached a sufficient level of power you can then return to your homeland of Bhintos and take your revenge upon those that have oppressed you!

Where will your tribe go to next? East, to the Melloskine Salt-Flats (turn to **25**), north to the Desert of Hakar (turn to **65**), or north-east, into the Sea of Sand (turn to **1**)?

1

The Sea of Sand. A vast dust-blown wasteland that stretches as far as the eye can see in all directions, and of which the prophet Zannizar once said:

“Here, the endless dunes resemble the whims of the gods; inscrutable, unstoppable and ever-changing.”

This is the relentless landscape that your tribe must pick their way across with care, where every dune you surmount is greeted by another that is still yet higher. Roll one die and consult the following table (unless you have a Blessing of the Sand Goddess, in which case you may choose which number to turn to, after crossing the Blessing off from your Quest Sheet):

Roll a 1:	turn to 10 .
Roll a 2:	turn to 20 .
Roll a 3:	turn to 30 .
Roll a 4:	turn to 40 .
Roll a 5:	turn to 50 .
Roll a 6:	turn to 60 .

2

You are about to embark on the holy pilgrimage when several priests descend upon you with outraged expressions, blocking your way onwards.

'How dare you desecrate the journey of the gods when your soul is marked with the vilest of curses!' screams one.

'You have traded with the devil-dogs of Thrawn!' yells another. 'Their stench of corruption lies thick upon your soul!'

'You must go back to the crags and slay the Ghuul!' screeches a third. 'Only by repaying blood with blood will you rid yourself of this curse, and thus be able to become a pilgrim.'

Their ranting has drawn a crowd and you return to the Nameless City before things get really out of hand. Turn to **22**.

3

In an impassioned speech to the desert nomads you explain about your exile from your homeland of Bhintos and how you will guarantee them land and pasture for their camels should they aid you in your quest against the infidels.

Roll one die and Test your MIGHT or SORCERY (you decide which). If you roll equal to or over your chosen score, the nomads reject your entreaties and wander off into the desert. Turn to **80**.

If you roll under your chosen score, the nomads are impressed by your tale and agree to join you in your struggle versus the oppressors. Record the codeword *Alibaba*, and the following details on the list of Allies on your Quest Sheet:

DESERT MARAUDERS: MIGHT 2, HEALTH 2

The marauders will be there during the final battle when you need them. For now, your tribe trek onwards across the Sea of Sand. Turn to **80**.

4

While scrabbling through the ruins you come across a dusty cellar containing clay amphorae that have been used as a treasure cache. Ancient golden coins leak out from the bottom of a cracked vessel. Add 1 to the number of talents in the Gold box on your Quest Sheet.

Satisfied with your good fortune you leave the ruins and rejoin your tribe, before a darker fate may befall you. Turn to **85**.

5

Bhintos: your home. The land of Bhintos is an arid flatland of orange dunes and strange rock formations, where you once were enslaved by Mellenic mercenaries, obligated to provide guards for their copper mines lest they harm the weaker members of your tribe. Since the great slave uprising of Kartacus however, you are no longer welcome in your own homeland. Instead you are forced to skulk through the wastes at night, avoiding the heavily fortified mines and towns garrisoned by crack legionaries of the Mellenic Alliance. May the gods curse these heathen westerners!

If you have decided the time is right and you want to attack your oppressors, turn to **33**. If you want to leave this area and head elsewhere, turn to **89**.

6

'Look out!' screams one of your scouts, but it is too late. An enormous bird dives down from where it was circling far overhead and plucks you up in its claws, carrying you off to a distant nest. Fortuitously, the nest is on a crag overlooking the legendary Valley of Diamonds, but you will have to defeat the

giant avian if you are to claim these riches. The bird is a Rukh, a gigantic vulture-like raptor with a cruelly-curved beak and long sharp claws on its feet. It screeches at you and lunges forward to attack!

THE RUKH: MIGHT 3, POWER 2, HEALTH 2

You may hurl a Javelin at the Rukh if you have one. You cannot Flee from this battle as you are trapped in the creature's nest. If you defeat the Rukh, roll one die; this is the value in Gold talents of the diamonds you take from the valley floor (add this number to the Gold box on your Quest Sheet). Having clambered down from the nest and left the Valley of Diamonds, you are soon reunited with your tribe; turn to **28**.

If the Rukh kills you, your tribe wanders the Crags of Thrawn leaderless and directionless and is never seen again. Your adventure is over (turn to **13**).

7

The nomad horde thunders across the steppes towards your tribe, their archers sending a volley of black-feathered arrows in your direction like a hail of barbed iron doom. From hide-clad battle-howdahs atop their great war-beasts the nomad warriors beat lances against their shields, while their horse-warriors brandish gleaming sabres and short thrusting spears. You must battle for the very existence of your tribe!

GREAT HORDE: MIGHT 4, HEALTH 3

Fight a Mass Combat battle between the nomad horde and your tribe. If you want to Retreat from this battle and flee the steppes, reduce your TRIBE HEALTH by one, and turn to **68**. If your tribe defeats the horde you may capture the survivors (add one trade unit of Slaves to your Quest Sheet) and turn to **68**. If the horde defeats your tribe, they capture all survivors (including yourself). You are now a slave, destined to spend the rest of your days trudging across the frigid steppes of Khaza-Yak, serving your barbarian overlords. Your adventure is over. Turn to **13**.

8

The Temple of the Sun Goddess is a gleaming pyramid of burnished bronze on an estuary island reached only by orange-sailed dhows. Her priestesses wear ochre robes and golden face-masks, and are guarded at all times by eunuch warriors armed with two-handed tulwars.

If you are a follower of the Sun Goddess it will cost 1 talent to make an offering. If you are not a follower of the Sun Goddess, it will cost 2 talents for an offering. Making an offering gives you the Blessing of the Sun. If you do this, cross the gold off your Quest Sheet and tick the Blessing box for the Sun Goddess.

The Blessing works by blinding one Melee Combat opponent with the light of the sun; you may deduct one from their MIGHT score for the duration of the combat. When you use the Blessing, cross it off your Quest Sheet. You can have only one Blessing of the Sun at a time. Once it is used up, you will need to return here to obtain a new one

When you have finished here, you return to the center of Shahad. Turn to **21**.

9

Barterer's Square is bustling with mule-trains, throngs of camels, pack-horses, ox-drawn wagons, and more exotic steeds besides. Most merchants sell their goods directly from the backs of their animals, though more permanent wholesalers have rented out the lamp-lit sandstone buildings that line the square itself.

You can buy and sell trade units at the prices listed below. Each price is for one trade unit.

Copper:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Ivory:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Slaves:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Spices:	To buy: 4 talents	To sell: 3 talents
Pearls:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents

When you have finished here, you can return to the center of the Nameless City (turn to **22**).

10

If you have the codeword *Arrakis*, turn immediately to **80**. If not, read on below.

Your tribe is carefully picking their way across an area of deep sand-drifts and shifting dunes, when enormous creatures rear up before you. They are like gigantic worms, but a mottled grey in color, whose eyeless heads are dominated by cavernous fang-lined maws. Perched on their backs are black-clad desert nomads wielding hooked spears that are used both as weapons and steering tools. You face the legendary Sandworm Riders of the deep desert!

Sandworm Riders are unpredictable sorts and may attack if they feel they are stronger than those they meet. Roll one die and Test your **TRIBE MIGHT**.

If you roll equal to or over your **TRIBE MIGHT**, they decide you are fair game! Prepare for battle and turn to **16**.

If you roll under your **TRIBE MIGHT**, the Sandworm Riders chose to parley with you. Turn to **37**.

11

As a boon companion to Saifuldin, Sheikh of Hakar, you have a guest tent in the encampment where you can relax after your trials in the desert. In the evenings you and Saifuldin recline on velvet sofas, smoke from silver shisha pipes and contemplate the untold mysteries of the stars in the skies above.

'To know the peace between the battles is to appreciate all the temporal glories our fleeting lives have to offer,' says Saifuldin, quoting from the scriptures while chewing on a hunk of lamb.

'One must know balance in one's life else one will be driven mad through boredom,' you rejoin.

You can rest here for as long as you like and restore your **HEALTH** score to its original starting total.

When you are ready to leave, turn to **83**.

12

The Ghuul wish to trade with you. They will offer you 1 trade unit of Copper in exchange for 1 trade unit of Slaves. They cannot trade any more than 1 unit, and they do not want anything except Slaves.

If you do not want to or cannot trade any Slaves, Test your **TRIBE MIGHT**. If you roll equal to or over your **TRIBE MIGHT**, the Ghuul decide to attack you instead. Turn to **87**. If you roll under your **TRIBE MIGHT**, they leave you well alone. Turn to **28**.

Once you have finished updating your Quest Sheet with the results of any deals you have made, you can leave this place and the Ghuul. As your tribe leaves the crags an awful screaming starts up behind you as the Ghuul commence slaughtering the slaves for food. Record the codeword *Iblis* on your Quest Sheet if you did not have it already, and turn to **28**.

13

You are either dead or have been incapacitated in some unfortunate and ignoble fashion. Assuming you

are not keeping a record of your failed would-be heroes, erase all their details from your Quest Sheet (or print out a new sheet), and start again. You can use either the same or a different starting character, taken from the start of this adventure. Alternatively, you may like to have a go at creating your own unique hero or heroine, using the Optional Rules for Creating New Characters at the end of this adventure. The choice, as always, is yours.

14

Your tribe treks away from the quiet and herb-scented valleys of the Mhyrinjian Hills. Several of your warriors are chewing on plant leaves, occasionally pausing to spit upon the ground before shoving another leaf into their mouth.

‘What’s that?’ you ask them.

‘Qat,’ one replies. ‘The leaf of the gods. It heightens our senses and makes us more attuned to the laws of the land. Would you care for some?’

‘Thank you, but no,’ you reply. ‘I need to decide where to take the tribe next.’

You can head south, towards the city of Shahad (turn to **55**), north, to the great escarpment of Quon (turn to **85**), or west, out into the Sea of Sand (turn to **1**).

15

The Craggs of Thrawn are the roof the world in these parts; the pillars holding up the heavens of the gods. Their peaks are adorned with caps of glittering snow, and their deep chasms hold many dark secrets. Your tribe is reduced to travelling single-file, spread out along one of the many narrow trails that traverse steep-walled valleys via creaking rope-bridges, and treacherous slopes whose footholds are cut deeply into the rock itself. Several of your warriors suffer from vertigo-induced nausea and wander disconsolately alongside their mounts, retching uncontrollably.

Roll one die to see what you have encountered:

Roll a 1 or 2: turn to **6**.

Roll a 3 or 4: turn to **39**.

Roll a 5 or 6: turn to **51**.

16

The Sandworm Riders have an extremely poor opinion of those lesser mortals they consider beneath them. They drive their enormous steeds through your lines, attacking both human and camel alike, attempting to inspire blind-panic and inflict horrific casualties in their quest for victory. This will be an epic conflict!

SANDWORM RIDERS: MIGHT 4, HEALTH 2

Fight a Mass Combat battle between the riders and your tribe. If you want to Retreat from this battle and flee, reduce your **TRIBE HEALTH** by one, and turn to **80**. If your tribe defeats the Sandworm Riders you may harvest the teeth from the carcasses of the dead worms (add one trade unit of Ivory to your Quest Sheet) and turn to **80**. If the Sandworm Riders win the battle, they feed you and your tribe (both dead and alive) to their carnivorous steeds. Your adventure is over. Turn to **13**.

17

The ruins of the dead city are a crumbling mess of clay-brick hovels, slowly being reduced to dust by the winds of the desert. Your tribe remains on the outskirts, refusing to traverse the labyrinthine streets for fear of ghosts, or worse. You must explore alone; roll one die and consult the table below:

Roll a 1 or 2: turn to **4**.

Roll a 3 or 4: turn to **78**.

Roll a 5 or 6: turn to **31**.

18

Trading with the steppes nomads is a drawn-out affair, requiring a local merchant to act as interpreter, arbiter, and official agent of the Khaness. Still, there are some profits to be made, particularly with ivory, which the nomads collect from both their mammoth battle-mounts and the creatures' wild cousins who dwell in the forested taiga of the far north.

You can buy and sell trade units at the prices listed below. Each price is for one trade unit.

Copper:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Ivory:	To buy: 2 talents	To sell: 1 talent
Slaves:	To buy: 2 talents	To sell: 1 talent
Spices:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Pearls:	To buy: 4 talents	To sell: 3 talents

If you wish to hire mercenaries, it costs 1 talent to raise either your **TRIBE MIGHT** or **TRIBE HEALTH** by 1 point, up to a maximum score of 6 each (so if you spent 2 talents you could raise your **TRIBE MIGHT** by 2 points, or your **TRIBE HEALTH** by 2 points, or both scores by 1 point each).

When you have finished here, you can return to the center of the encampment (turn to **52**).

19

'By all the gods!' yells the Arch-Priest leader excitedly. 'The applicant has allied with the three great tribes of Hakar, Quon and Shahad.'

'Such a display of unity requires a symbol,' says another priest. 'Otherwise the union will not last.'

'Do you have such an artifact?' asks a third priest. 'Is the alliance bound by a powerful token that will rally the people and give them faith and belief?'

If you have the Sword of the Stars, turn immediately to **67**. If not, read on below.

'Alas,' murmurs the leader despondently. 'You possess naught but trinkets and adjuncts. These are not the items required of a successful league of tribes. Seek the Sword of the Stars. It can be forged from star iron by the dwarfish smith Asqar. Do not return unless it is in your possession!' Turn to **22**.

20

If you have the codeword *Alibaba*, turn immediately to **80**. If not, read on below.

Occasionally, nomad tribes feud and splinter, and the smaller groups eke out a marginal living here within the trackless depths of the Sea of Sand. Your tribe has encountered such a band of exiled nomads; clad in ragged cloaks and sitting astride scrawny camels, their scimitars are already half-out of their scabbards before your tribe has even realized it was being watched.

These desert exiles are marauders by nature, and always on the lookout for opportunities to loot and pillage. Roll one die and Test your **TRIBE MIGHT**.

If you roll equal to or over your **TRIBE MIGHT**, they decide you are an easy target! Prepare for battle and turn to **26**.

If you roll under your **TRIBE MIGHT**, the nomad outcasts instead choose to parley. Turn to **3**.

21

Shahad is known by some as the Beacon of the World, a rich and powerful city built from blocks of marble, rough-hewn pinkish coral, and golden sandstone. Originally made wealthy from the quality of

its pearls, drawn from the waters of the Azure Gulf, Shahad now profits largely by trade and its bazaars teem with merchants from many distant lands. Fur-clad barbarians from Thulios rub shoulders with nomads from the desert and silk-robed swordsmen from the Nethermost East. While the majority of your tribe makes camp in the date groves outside the city walls, you and some trusted compatriots enter the city, where you can do any of the following:

- Visit the port to trade goods and hire mercenaries (turn to 44).
- Buy and sell various trinkets in the Grand Bazaar (turn to 32).
- Make an offering at the Temple of the Sun Goddess (turn to 8).
- Call on the Palace of the Emira, the mighty queen of Shahad (turn to 93).
- Or, leave the city and lead your tribe to new horizons (turn to 73).

22

The Nameless City fills the entirety of the Valley of the Gods, a seething mass of humanity drawn from all the lands of the Sea of Sand and beyond, seeking the blessings of the gods in this most holy of places. Your tribe is granted space in the Pilgrims' Allotment, one of the few open areas still left in the valley, and stocked daily with jugs of water, loaves of bread, and fresh fodder for your steeds, all provided by the benevolence of the Arch-Priests. The air is redolent with the scent of temple-incense, and a spiritual cacophony of bells, gongs, drums and throat-singers call the faithful to prayer at a multitude of temples, shrines and chapels. Underpinning everything is the Song of the Gods, a low echoing hum that vibrates off the walls of the valleys and imbues all listeners with a feeling of calmness and spiritual refreshment. You can do any of the following:

- Visit Barterer's Square to trade goods (turn to 9).
- Buy and sell various trinkets in the Great Souq (turn to 90).
- Make an offering at the Shrine of All-Gods (turn to 99).
- Embark on a holy pilgrimage (turn to 43).
- Seek an audience at the Citadel of the Arch-Priests (turn to 54).
- Or, leave the Nameless City and head elsewhere (turn to 74).

23

If you have the codeword *Zumurrud*, turn immediately to 48. If not, read on below.

The Audience Chamber of the Hidden One of Quon is a dimly-lit chamber buried deep within the rocky walls of the cliff. No one knows whether the Hidden One is truly immortal or a sequence of holy beings who all take the same name and vows. From what you can see, surrounded by a hundred fanatical priests of the Death Goddess, is that the Hidden One appears to be a motionless black-robed figure sitting a throne made entirely of bones.

Without warning, the priests grab you and cast you into a sand-filled pit that lies in front of the Hidden One.

'Welcome!' booms a voice that comes from all around, though the figure on the throne remains utterly still. 'You seek our aid. You shall have it, if you can survive the Pit of Death!'

A portcullis is raised at the far end of the pit, and a panther-like shape slouches into the arena, snarling menacingly. It is a tawny-furred Hunting Leopard from the upland plateaus, as fast as lightning and with cruel claws and sharp fangs. Snarling again, it streaks across the sand of the pit floor towards you. You raise your weapon and the battle is joined!

HUNTING LEOPARD: MIGHT 3, POWER 2, HEALTH 2

You may hurl a Javelin at the Leopard if you have one. You cannot Flee this battle; the Hidden One does not allow it as it would sully the name of the Death Goddess. If you slay the Leopard, turn to 41. If the

Leopard kills you, the Pit of Death proves aptly named in your case, and the Quonites order the rest of your tribe to leave their lands. Leaderless, the tribe of Bhintos perishes somewhere out in the wastes. Your adventure is over (turn to **13**).

24

The forge of Asqar is now silent and the diminutive blacksmith is long gone. Everything has apparently been packed up and taken away, and all that is left is a blackened cave through which the wind whistles eerily. Once again your tribe refuses to come any closer and you explore the cave-forge alone.

Well, almost alone. A Ghuul warrior is scavenging here also, and leaps out to attack you, drooling from his hyena-headed face. He swings his scimitar in a vicious arc that nearly decapitates you and it is all you can do to dodge the blow. Defend yourself!

GHUUL WARRIOR: MIGHT 3, POWER 2, HEALTH 2

You may hurl a Javelin at the Ghuul if you have one. If you want to Flee from this battle reduce your HEALTH by one, and turn to **28**. If you slay the Ghuul you can take his Scimitar (POWER 2) if you wish; add it to your Quest Sheet and turn to **28**. If the Ghuul kills you, you die here un-mourned in the desolate Crag of Thrawn, and your tribe flees in terror, never to be seen again among the living. Your adventure is over (turn to **13**).

25

You are crossing a blinding expanse of flattened salt-pans, interspersed with low clumps of red-leaved plants. You must shade your eyes against the sun's glare reflecting off the blazing white plains. These salt-swamps mark the northern edge of the Melloskine Marshes, a trackless expanse of mangroves that forms the delta of a long-forgotten river. Despite the featureless horizon, this region has a fearsome reputation for sudden hidden danger.

'South of here are the lands of the Spirullans,' says a young nomad, spitting contemptuously. 'They are worse than devils, but the salt here keeps them from venturing further afield.'

Roll one die and consult the table below:

Roll a 1 or 2: turn to **63**.

Roll a 3 or 4: turn to **81**.

Roll a 5 or 6: turn to **56**.

26

Your tribe has been attacked by a squalid band of impoverished outcasts; godless scavengers and skulkers-in-the-night to a man. They race down the dunes towards you on tawny camels, waving a motley collection of sabres, spears and spiked clubs. Defend yourselves!

DESERT MARAUDERS: MIGHT 2, HEALTH 2

Fight a Mass Combat battle between the marauders and your tribe. If you want to Retreat from this battle and flee, reduce your TRIBE HEALTH by one, and turn to **80**. If your tribe defeats the marauders you may capture the survivors (add one trade unit of Slaves to your Quest Sheet) and turn to **80**. If the marauders defeat your tribe, they execute you on the spot as a potential trouble-maker, and enslave the rest of your tribe. Your adventure is over. Turn to **13**.

27

Someone has visited the oasis before you. Among the traces of their campsite you find a magnificent woolen carpet dyed lurid shades of green and purple. Strangely, it appears to be hovering about a finger-space above the ground; it is obviously a Flying Carpet! It works by allowing you to Flee from Melee Combat without deducting one from your HEALTH score. If you take the Flying Carpet, note it on your Quest Sheet, and also record the codeword *Hussain*.

When you have finished here, turn to 80.

28

Your tribe wanders away from the shadow-haunted Craggs of Thrawn, keen to leave behind the dark valleys and treacherous trails of the rocky uplands.

'By the gods, how good is it to feel sand underfoot once again,' exclaims a camel-handler as he ascends the first dune of the morning.

Whither are you bound? South, to the great wall of Quon (turn to 85), west, to the lonely scarlet dunes (turn to 75), or south-west, into the heart of the Sea of Sand (turn to 1).

29

If you have the codeword *Dunyazad*, turn immediately to 86. If not, read on below.

You are led inside the royal yurt of the Khaness, who sits upon a golden throne plundered from one of the fabulous kingdoms of the East. A hunting lammergeyer is perched on the back of the throne, its white feathers now gold in the firelight, and a dire wolf lies at the feet of the Khaness, ears pricked and ever-alert. The Khaness is clad in voluminous silks though her face is unadorned and ageless, as she listens to your plea without expression. A nomad factotum acts as an interpreter; a blue spot on his forehead indicates he has the gift of second sight.

'I have heard of these western barbarians, and I would like to help you rid your lands of their scourge' says the Khaness in a quiet and measured tone. 'However, we have traditions that you must uphold. To gain our aid you must prove your prowess to me, to show that you are worthy.'

There is a murmured approval at this news, and the bodyguards of the Khaness begin to beat their cleavers against their shields in a steady rhythm.

A circular space is cleared within the yurt, in front of the Khaness' throne. From the back of the yurt a great hulking shape is led out into the light, chains rattling on its wrists and ankles. It is a Beast Troll from the far north, with mottled brown hide, clawed hands and a perpetually scowling face. A bodyguard steps forward to break the chains with one smite of a hammer, and the Troll hurls itself at you, spittle flying from its tusked maw. This will be an epic conflict indeed!

BEAST TROLL: MIGHT 4, POWER 3, HEALTH 4

You may hurl a Javelin at the Troll if you have one. If you want to Flee from this battle, you give the signal for the Khaness to end the combat and you are escorted away from the royal yurt (reduce your HEALTH by one, and turn to 52). If you slay the Troll, turn to 98. If the Troll kills you, you die here in foreign lands, your blood staining the carpets of the Khaness' yurt. Your tribe is rounded up and enslaved by the steppes nomads and your homelands of Bhintos remain un-avenged. Your adventure is over (turn to 13).

30

The sky goes dark as a great orange cloud billows across the horizon, heralded by racing winds and dust devils that dance across the dunes. In the blink of eye, visibility is reduced to nearly nothing, and your tribe is blasted from all sides by a skin-flaying hail of sand and grit.

'Sand storm!' screams a warrior above the howl of the wind. 'The goddess is angry! Do something quickly!'

If you have a Blessing of the Sand Goddess, cross it off your Quest Sheet and turn to **80**.

Otherwise, you will have to use your sorcerous powers in a bid to placate the sand demons and abate the storm. Roll one die and Test your SORCERY. If you roll under your SORCERY, you succeed in spellbinding the sand storm and bringing it under control. Turn to **80**.

If you roll equal to or over your SORCERY, you fail to control the storm. Wave after wave of sand rains down upon your tribe, deadening all noise but for the endless moaning of the wind. After several hours the storm blows itself out, leaving in its wake a desert now trackless and pristine. You have lost some of your tribe who have either been buried under the sands or have wandered off into the desert, never to be seen again. Deduct one point from your TRIBE HEALTH, unless it is 1 already, in which case there is no effect. You also lose one trade unit if you have any (you get to choose which trade unit you lose and must cross it off your Quest Sheet).

'I thought we would surely perish,' says a grizzled warrior, his face caked with a layer of ochre dust. 'Perhaps we should make offerings to the Sand Goddess as thanks, the next time we visit her shrine...'

You wander onwards, across the lone and level sands. Turn to **80**.

31

If you already have a Copper Flask, you find nothing more in this part of the ruins; turn immediately to **85**. If not, read on below.

You are investigating an ancient hall of crumbling pillars, with what looks like a simple altar at one end. On it rests a copper flask of ancient design, whose stopper is inscribed with an unknown glyph and attached to the flask by means of a finely-wrought chain. You may add the Copper Flask to your Quest Sheet if you wish; it has no intrinsic value but may prove useful in future. Turn to **85**.

32

The Grand Bazaar is one of the biggest markets you have ever seen; a glittering panoply of tents, wagons, caravans, stalls, huts and carts all selling almost everything ever conceived of under the watchful eye of the Sun Goddess. The traders here use rapid movements of their fingers to communicate everything from price to quality, while keeping up a friendly street-sider patter to draw ever more customers towards the wares they are selling.

You can buy any of the items listed below as long as you have enough gold to buy it and space to carry it. You may also sell any items you own that are listed below, for the price stated. Don't forget to update your Quest Sheet in either case. Items with no purchase price are not available locally.

Weapons:

Staff (POWER 1)	To buy: 1 talent	To sell: 1 talent
Scimitar (POWER 2)	To buy: 2 talents	To sell: 1 talent
Battleaxe (POWER 3)	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Javelin	To buy: 1 talent	To sell: 1 talent

Armour:

Shield	To buy: 1 talent	To sell: 1 talent
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Other Gear:

Healing Potion	To buy: 2 talents	To sell: 1 talent
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One use only: restores your HEALTH to its starting level.

Enchanted Amulet	To buy: -	To sell: 3 talents
Flying Carpet	To buy: -	To sell: 3 talents
Drums of Doom	To buy: 4 talents	To sell: 3 talents
<i>Allows your tribe to Retreat from Mass Combat without deducting 1 from their TRIBE HEALTH score.</i>		
Scroll of Creeping Death	To buy: -	To sell: 1 talent

In addition, an ancient wanderer is selling what he claims is a Treasure Map to the Lost City of Djazil for 5 talents. If you wish to buy this (and can afford it!), cross 5 talents from the Gold box on your Quest Sheet and note down the Treasure Map.

When you are ready to venture elsewhere in the city of Shahad, turn to **21**.

33

This. Is. War. You, your tribe and your allies (if you hopefully have some), decide to attack the mines and towns of the invaders from the west!

If you have the codeword *Sinbad*, turn immediately to **96**. If not, read on below.

At first, things go very well. You destroy several mines, and ransack a few townships, routing the guards and offering the populace a choice between death or allying with yourselves. Then, however, things begin to unravel. The riches of the towns tempt your warriors. Cracks appear between families, clans and tribes. The forces of the Mellenic Alliance regroup and strike back, annihilating your armies. You are slain personally by Kartacus, cut down with his mighty axe, while his ex-slaves rout your warriors and scatter them to the four winds. Bhintos, the land and its people ceases to exist. The oppressors become the sole occupants and the legacy of your former tenancy is lost in the mists of time. Your adventure is over. Turn to **13**.

34

The merchants of the Hakari dwell at a separate camp somewhat apart from the rest of the tribe, to ensure their many pack-beasts do not soil the main water-hole of the oasis. The tents are made of hemp-cloth and (except for slaves, who are housed with the rest of the tribe) full of sacks that spill forth a multitude of trade-goods.

You can buy and sell trade units at the prices listed below. Each price is for one trade unit.

Copper:	To buy: 4 talents	To sell: 3 talents
Ivory:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Slaves:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Spices:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Pearls:	To buy: 2 talents	To sell: 1 talent

When you have finished here, you leave the tents of the merchants and return to the main encampment of the Hakari (to **83**).

35

The Mhyrinjian Hills are splayed across the horizon like the folds of a woolen blanket, burned by the blazing rays of the afternoon sun. The hillsides are rocky and overgrown with herbaceous bushes and shrubs. Legend has it that hidden in the valleys are sacred groves of cinnabar trees tended to by a mysterious people known only as the Jakalli.

‘I don’t like this place one bit,’ says a grizzled warrior with one eye. ‘It feels like we’re being observed by a thousand hidden watchers.’

No sooner has he uttered these words than a series of loose stones go skittering down a hillside

up ahead.

Will you leave this area (turn to **14**), or make contact with the Jakalli (turn to **66**)?

36

Since you conquered the Dyenna, the ruins of the Lost City of Djazil have become even more run-down and decrepit, as if the guardian demon's magic was the only power holding the crumbling buildings together. Other creatures have taken up residence; the air is rank and heavy with the stench of offal and decay. A pack of Hamadryad Baboons now live here, storing their kills within the buildings and using the rubble-strewn colonnades as latrines. On seeing you, the large males bound down a shattered avenue, baring massive sabre-like fangs and screeching hideous battle-cries. Defend yourself against this rabble of primates!

PACK OF BABOONS: MIGHT 2, POWER 2, HEALTH 3

You may hurl a Javelin at the Baboons if you have one. If you want to Flee from this battle, reduce your HEALTH by one, and turn to **58**. If you slay the Baboons, roll one die; on a roll of a 6 you find 1 talent of Gold in their stinking lair which you may add to your Quest Sheet (and then turn to **58**). If the Baboons kill you, they devour your body and your tribes wanders leaderless out into the crimson dunes, lost to the dusts of time. Your adventure is over (turn to **13**).

37

Standing atop your tallest steed you shout up at the Sandworm Riders, promising them carnage and plunder beyond measure if they should help you in the battle to free Bhintos from the grip of faithless heathens.

Roll one die and Test your MIGHT or SORCERY (you decide which). If you roll equal to or over your chosen score, the Riders reject your blandishments as the idle words of weaklings and slither off into the deeper desert. Turn to **80**.

If you roll under your chosen score, the Riders are inspired by your epic tale of struggle against overwhelming odds, and agree to help you. Record the codeword *Arrakis*, and the following details on the list of Allies on your Quest Sheet:

SANDWORM RIDERS: MIGHT 4, HEALTH 2

The Sandworm Riders will be there during the final battle when you need them. For now, your tribe continues to wind its way through the dunes of the Sea of Sand. Turn to **80**.

38

The Cliff-Dwellers of Quon live in circular cells cut directly into the rock-face, and accessed via a complicated series of walkways, rope-bridges, ladders, and even a pulley-system of wicker-baskets that bob up and down the cliff like aerial skiffs. Quon has been ruled since time immemorial by the Hidden One, who occasionally deigns to talk with outsiders. Your tribe camps on the valley-floor below, and you ascend into the city above with several companions, where you can do any of the following:

Visit the Caverns of the Traders (turn to **94**).

Buy and sell equipment at Tinkerers' Hall (turn to **79**).

Make an offering at the Fane of the Death Goddess (turn to **62**).

Seek an audience with the Hidden One of Quon (turn to **23**).

Leave the Cliff-Dwellers and visit the ruined city (turn to **17**).

Or, leave the Great Wall of Quon entirely and venture elsewhere (turn to **53**).

39

If you have the codeword *Solomon* turn immediately to 24. If not, read on below.

Your tribe comes across the dwelling of a most remarkable fellow. He lives in a cave that has been turned into a forge of sorts, with an anvil, furnace and bellows all present. This strange blacksmith however is only half the size of a man, with red-brown skin, copper-colored eyes and a scruffy black beard. Your tribe fears magic and do not approach any closer, though you bravely stride up to the smith.

'Greetings,' he says. 'My name is Asqar. What may I forge for you?'

Asqar can improve the quality of your weapon. If you pay him 1 talent of Gold he can increase the POWER of the weapon by 1 point. He can only do this once per weapon, and it does not work for Javelins.

Also, if you have a trade unit of Copper, Asqar can forge it into a Bronze Breastplate at a cost of 1 Gold talent. The Bronze Breastplate allows you to deduct 1 from your enemy's POWER score in Melee Combat, down to a minimum of 1. You cannot use it with Carapace Armour however (if you already possess that item). Don't forget to cross the Copper trade unit and any Gold talents you spent off from your Quest Sheet.

In addition, if you have a chunk of Sky Metal and wish Asqar to fashion something from it, turn to 70.

If not, you bid Asqar farewell. Turn to 28.

40

After several days of extreme heat and blue cloudless skies, a tribal water-diviner comes to you with anxiety in his voice.

'Water supplies are low,' he says. 'The tribe is beginning to mutter about our prospects of survival out here in the Sea of Sand.'

Unfortunately he speaks the truth. Many of the tribes' canteens have been 'sweating' water through their skins in the heat, while many more were destroyed when several camels that were carrying them rolled awkwardly down a dune, flattening the lot. How will you solve this problem?

If you have a Blessing of the Sand Goddess, cross it off your Quest Sheet and turn to 59.

Otherwise, you will have to use what sorcerous powers you have to find a hidden well nearby. Roll one die and Test your SORCERY. If you roll under your SORCERY, you succeed in finding such a well, allowing your tribe to replenish their canteens, and can turn to 80.

If you roll equal to or over your SORCERY, you eventually come across a muddy waterhole, but not before some of your tribe have met with a terrible and thirst-wracked end. Deduct one point from your TRIBE HEALTH, unless it is 1 already, in which case there is no effect.

'I thought we were going to slowly die,' says a huntress, her face wrinkled and eyes bloodshot from dehydration. 'We must visit a shrine of the Sand Goddess and make blessings in her name!'

You trek onwards across the dunes of desolation. Turn to 80.

41

Record the codeword *Zumurrud* on your Quest Sheet.

You slay the Hunting Leopard but your victory is greeted by absolute silence. Several priests descend into the pit, pick up the animal's body and place it before the Hidden One.

'Yes, you are the Chosen One that the Goddess spoke of,' says the voice, once again booming all around the chamber. 'Step forward and receive the first of your gifts.'

As the priests help you clamber out of the pit, a glowing nimbus of blue light surrounds the body of the Hunting Leopard, healing its wounds and smoothing out its ragged fur. To your surprise, the animal gets up, licks a paw, and then slinks around the pit to sit at your side.

‘The Death Goddess grants you a companion, Chosen One!’

You now have a pet Hunting Leopard as a follower. It will accompany you and fight in place of yourself in the next Melee Combat you face. The animal’s ability scores are as follows (make sure to note them on your Quest Sheet):

HUNTING LEOPARD: MIGHT 3, POWER 2, HEALTH 2

If the Hunting Leopard dies during the battle you will have to take over and finish the conflict. If the Hunting Leopard defeats its opponent, it will wander away into the desert. In either case, cross it off from your Quest Sheet.

‘My priests will also aid you when you attack the western infidels,’ says the voice of the Hidden One. ‘This coming conflict will wash the wastes with blood, and my Goddess demands her most faithful followers be present for the final reckoning.’

The black-clad priests of the Death Goddess are not especially well-trained for battle, but they are both numerous and fearless. Record the following details on the list of Allies on your Quest Sheet:

PRIESTS OF DEATH: MIGHT 2, HEALTH 4

For now, you are led out of the presence of the Hidden One and back into the rest of the Quonite community. Strangely, your hand contains a scrap of parchment but you cannot remember how it got there. ‘Seek Asqar the Smith in the Craggs of Thrawn’ is all it says. Turn to **38**.

42

Your tribe ventures away from the black sands and rocks of the Hakar Desert, past spiny acacia bushes and small cairns of stones denoting grazing lands for camels and goats.

‘They say that though you may leave the Desert of Hakar long behind, it will never leave you!’ exclaims a tribal herder in exasperation, attempting to remove fine dark grit out from one of his leather boots.

From here you can head south, to the Wastes of Bhintos (turn to **5**), north, to the Valley of the Gods (turn to **95**), or east, into the Sea of Sand (turn to **1**).

43

If you have the codeword *Iblis*, turn immediately to **2**. If not, read on below.

The holy pilgrimage of the Nameless City is a week-long ceremony. On the first day, you remain within your tent, spending the entire day in prayers to the gods. On the second day you trek across the plains that surround the entire Valley of the Gods. On the third day you shave your head and sacrifice a goat, donating its meat to the poor of the city. On the fourth day you place seven pebbles on the great wall that surrounds the Shrine of All-Gods while walking around the Shrine seven times. On the fifth day you lodge a petition at the Citadel of the Arch-Priests, asking them to intercede on your behalf in your communication with the gods. On the sixth day you release seven doves over the skies of the city, from the tallest cliff in the valley. On the seventh day you enter the Shrine itself, and petition the gods directly by blowing through great conch-horns arraigned throughout the worship-hall.

At the end of the week you are granted a green sash denoting that you have successfully completed the pilgrimage. Record the codeword *Maruf* on your Quest Sheet and turn to **22**.

44

The port of Shahad is a bewilderingly busy series of docks and wharves, covered in awnings where traders gather to sell goods from foreign places, both near and distant. Moored at anchor by the port are the white-sailed dhows that ply the trade routes of the Azure Gulf, along with more exotic vessels, including triremes from the city-states of the Mellenic Alliance, and trading-junks from the Distant East. Occasionally you also spy groups of warriors of various sorts, decamped in Shahad and looking for new pay-masters.

You can buy and sell trade units at the prices listed below. Each price is for one trade unit.

Copper:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Ivory:	To buy: 4 talents	To sell: 3 talents
Slaves:	To buy: 4 talents	To sell: 3 talents
Spices:	To buy: 2 talents	To sell: 1 talent
Pearls:	To buy: 1 talent	To sell: 1 talent

If you wish to hire mercenaries, it costs 1 talent to raise either your TRIBE MIGHT or TRIBE HEALTH by 1 point, up to a maximum score of 6 each (so if you spent 2 talents you could raise your TRIBE MIGHT by 2 points, or your TRIBE HEALTH by 2 points, or both scores by 1 point each).

When you have finished here, you can leave the port and return to the center of Shahad (turn to 21).

45

The Steppes of Khaza-Yak are an endless dusty expanse of scraggly grasses and scattered boulders that resemble the forgotten dice of the Death Goddess. Occasional shallow streams flow northwards to far-distant frozen wastes. While filling your water-skins at one such stream, you keep a careful eye out for the nomads of Khaza-Yak; horse-riding infidels who are constantly engaged in interminable wars between themselves and the other tribes.

'My brother married a woman of the steppes,' says a grizzled hunter, chewing thoughtfully on a date.

'How does he like this place?' you ask.

'I don't know. We never saw him again,' he replies, spitting out the date-stone.

Do you wish to make contact with the nomads (turn to 76), or do you want to leave this area (turn to 68)?

46

The Arch-Priests note your green pilgrim's sash with approval. 'Let it be known that the applicant has already petitioned the gods,' remarks the priests' leader.

'The next step is to consider who you have approached for aid,' says another. 'Our lands are often riven with strife and discord, but there are three great tribes present in these lands in addition to your own.'

'Have you asked them for help?' asks a third priest. 'What did they say?'

If you have the codewords *Sheba*, *Sheherazad* and *Zumurrud*, turn immediately to 19. If not, read on below.

'Aha!' exclaims the leader, excited to have exposed a hole in your defence. 'You lack the necessary references. You cannot claim to speak for all the tribes. Begone! And do not return until you have received confirmation from the people of Hakar, Quon, and Shahad.'

You are ushered out of the citadel. Turn to 22.

47

The Jakalli are delighted to trade with you. They will offer you up to 2 trade units of Spices in exchange for up to 2 trade units of Copper, in a one for one deal (so trading one unit of Copper with the Jakalli will get you one unit of Spices). They cannot trade any more than 2 units, and they do not want anything except Copper.

Once you have finished updating your Quest Sheet with the results of any deals you have made, you can leave this place, bidding the Jakalli farewell. Turn to **14**.

48

As the designated Chosen One of Quon you are given a surprisingly luxurious cell near the top of the cliff, with a view over the desert sands that stretch far away to the west. Every day you are supplied with fresh fruits and spring-water from the uplands, and wherever you go you are greeted with the sight of Quonites bending towards you in supplication. As a relatively simple child of the dunes it takes some getting used to.

You can rest here for as long as you like and restore your HEALTH score to its original starting total.

When you are ready to leave, turn to **38**.

49

As a close confidant of the Emira of Shahad you are granted lodgings in the Guests' Wing, a series of luxurious apartments surrounded by fountains and lush gardens, where servants continually pass by with trays of sweet-meats and beakers of nectarine wine. Every evening is spent in the great hall of the palace, and here yourself and others earn your keep, regaling the Emira with tales of high adventure and dark sorcery in distant lands far from Shahad.

You can rest here for as long as you like and restore your HEALTH score to its original starting total.

When you are ready to leave, turn to **21**.

50

Your tribe clambers to the top of a particularly high dune, to see, down below you in the haze, what looks like a fabulous oasis where verdant palms grow around a pool of water. Could it be true, or is it simply just a mirage?

'Careful,' cautions a holy-woman of the tribe. 'Sometimes the desert hides from us that which she thinks we do not deserve.'

If you wish to ignore the oasis and travel onwards, turn to **80**.

If you wish to venture into the oasis, roll a die and Test your SORCERY. If you roll under your SORCERY, turn to **59**.

If you roll equal to or over your SORCERY, you stumble into the oasis only for it to vanish as if made of smoke. Turn to **40**.

51

You are ambushed in a deep valley by a ragged tribe of strange creatures with the bodies of men and the fanged faces of cave-hyenas. Though they are clad in tattered hides and carry primitive flint-tipped spears, each warrior of their band is a head taller than yourselves.

If you have the codeword *Iblis*, you can turn immediately to **12** (or you can read on below if you wish). If you have the codeword *Vathek*, turn immediately to **87**. If you have neither codeword, read on below.

'The Ghuul!' whispers one of your more experience warriors. 'Cannibals and worse!'

However, instead of attacking, the Ghuul part their ranks allowing their chieftain to step forward; a magnificent beast clad in lion-skins and armed with a bronze sword. He holds up a tawny paw, motioning for you to parley.

Will you talk with the Ghuul (turn to 12), or will you fight (turn to 87)?

52

Your tribe is welcomed into the encampment of the steppes nomads; a great city of tents and yurts festooned with the plunder of a hundred successful raids. By your standards the people of these grasslands are infidels and they do not worship the deities of the south. However you may trade in their bazaar, an open field of stalls where merchants hawk goods from all points of the compass. You may also visit their leader, the Khaness, who dwells in a gigantic yurt of red and golden silk, guarded by one hundred steel-eyed warriors bearing spiked shields and serrated war-cleavers. Where will you go?

Visit the bazaar to trade (turn to 18).

Call upon the Khaness (turn to 29).

Leave the encampment (turn to 68).

53

You lead the tribe away from the great escarpment of Quon, and the Cliff-Dwellers who live therein. Several members of the tribe have converted to the worship of the Death Goddess, which involves shaving their skulls and smearing their faces with ash from the morning camp fires. This has provoked some discussion from the more conservative tribal elders.

'All gods are equal under the eyes of people,' you remind them. 'Only a fool would claim that one deity outranks another.'

Where are you bound next? South, to the Mhyrinjian Hills (turn to 35), north, to the Craggs of Thrawn (turn to 15), or west, into the Sea of Sand (turn to 1).

54

If you have the codeword *Sinbad*, turn immediately to 69. If not, read on below.

The Citadel of the Arch-Priests is an impressive fortress whose plastered walls glow in the golden light of the afternoon. The Arch-Priests are the final arbiters as to the words of the gods, and they reside in a great hall within the citadel from whence they dispatch justice according to the laws of those above. They listen carefully as you present your case, outlining the atrocities that have befallen your tribe since you were exiled from your homelands by those western dogs.

If you have the codeword *Maruf*, turn immediately to 46. If not, read on below.

'That is all very well,' says the leader of the Arch-Priests, in a reedy yet powerful voice that travels the length of the hall.

'However, you have yet to undertake a pilgrimage here in the Nameless City!' exclaims another priest.

'How can you demand a mandate from us when you have not listened to what the gods have to say on the matter?' splutters a third.

'Leave now,' says the leader. 'Do not return until you have completed the pilgrimage. Then, and only then, can we begin to consider the complexities of your case.'

If you want to embark on the pilgrimage now, turn to 43.

If you wish to return to the Nameless City, turn to 22.

55

You have reached the fabled city of Shahad that lies on the western-most coastline of the Azure Gulf's crystal-clear waters. Of Shahad, the great poet Adulazar once said:

"Her pearly lamp-lit towers are the beacons that beckon me homewards across the vast sable fields of the night."

Over a low stone causeway that separates the city from the mainland, you can see the minarets of Shahad gleam brilliantly in the midday sun. Will you enter the city (turn to 21), or not (turn to 73)?

56

Suddenly the salt-crusted ground erupts from beneath your tribe in a rain of dirt and clay. Clambering forth from under the surface is an enormous creature, a gigantic crab, bone-white in color, whose immense carapace is studded with a profusion of sharp spikes. It is a Macroïd Claw and its tiny blood-red eyes dart about on short stalks seeking the source of the foot-falls that disturbed it. Spying you, it scuttles forward, waving immense pincers armed with crushing claws. Your tribe will take no part in this battle; as leader you must face the beast alone!

Because of the creature's armoured shell, you must reduce your weapon's POWER score by 1, to a minimum of 1, for this combat.

MACROID CLAW: MIGHT 4, POWER 2, HEALTH 3

You may hurl a Javelin at the Macroïd Claw if you have one. You cannot Flee from this battle as the gargantuan predator is much too fast for you to escape from. If you defeat the Macroïd Claw, turn to 92. If the Macroïd Claw kills you, it goes on to massacre your tribe and feast on their bodies. Your adventure is over (turn to 13).

57

If you have the codeword *Sheherazad*, turn immediately to 11. If not, read on below.

Saifuldin, Sheikh of Hakar, holds court with his most notable warriors in a richly-decorated tent in the center of the camp. He is a true son of the desert; gray-bearded and heavily scarred, but he is also a sage of sorts, trading in holy scriptures, ancient parchments and obscure scraps of ancient lore.

'My friend, I really wish to help you,' he says in a deep melodious voice. 'However, I need to be convinced as to the veracity of your mission. Are you seeking vengeance for the right reasons, or are you merely bent on a personal quest for individual glory?'

'What do you propose?' you ask.

'You must read aloud the sacred scrolls of Feraz the Visionary,' says Saifuldin. 'The words of Feraz are such that only those of both the purest mind and aims can intone them.'

The scrolls are brought forth; huge rolls of papyrus on which are inscribed a venerable calligraphy that is barely legible. Roll one die and Test your SORCERY.

If you roll under your SORCERY score, turn to 91.

If you roll equal to or over your SORCERY, you stutter and stumble over the archaic pronunciations contained therein. Saifuldin takes this as proof that your heart is not quite in its right place. 'I'm sorry my friend, but I cannot help you now,' he says. 'Go back out into the world and rediscover your sense of purpose. Return only when you are sure as to the righteousness of your cause. The gods alone demand it.' Turn to 83.

58

The early morning sun casts long shadows upon the crimson sands as you lead your tribe away from the Scarlet Dunes. One of your warriors holds a broken clay brick he found out in the desert.

'A relic from Djazil, or perhaps a forgotten city yet more ancient,' he muses, wiping dust from the surface of the brick.

'Or maybe it comes from the hut of a goat-herder,' teases his friend.

Where to next? South, into the Sea of Sand (turn to **1**), east, to the Craggs of Thrawn (turn to **15**), or west, to the Steppes of Khaza-Yak (turn to **45**).

59

You stumble into an oasis of undreamt splendor. Ripe dates hang in bunches from brilliant green palm trees, which grow around a refreshing pool of crystal-clear water. The tribe eagerly fills their canteens and their bellies while your pack-beasts graze contentedly upon the grassy shores. You feel invigorated by the rest and may restore your HEALTH score to its starting level.

If you do not have the codeword *Hussain*, turn immediately to **27**. If you do, read on below.

'This is surely paradise,' says a young warrior, tossing dates into his mouth with a lazy flick of his wrist.

'Careful,' you caution him. 'Those who take the glories of the gods for granted often suffer more than the infidel heretics that deny their very existence.'

When you have finished here, turn to **80**.

60

Your tribe chances across a bizarre region of the desert, where the sands have been blasted into marbles of inky glass, and a great crater dominates the landscape, smoking gently from its core. You send some of your bravest warriors down into the crater to see what lies at the center.

If this is the first time you have found the crater, your warriors bring back a great chunk of Sky Metal, which you can add to the list of Gear on your Quest Sheet.

If this is the second or subsequent time you have found the crater, your warriors bring back enough Copper for one trade unit which you can add to your Quest Sheet if you have space for it. If you do not, you will have to drop another trade unit (cross it off your Quest Sheet) to make room.

Your tribe takes this as an omen of good fortune from the gods. With their spirits lifted they wander ever onwards through the dunes. Turn to **80**.

61

Record the codeword *Sheba* on your Quest Sheet.

So incredible is the tale of your adventures to date, the great hall is as silent as a mausoleum as the Emira and her massed ranks of courtiers hang on your every word. In fact, they are so disappointed when you finally finish your story, the Emira immediately orders the palace scribes to transcribe every word so that she and her followers can hear it again.

'How can we not aid a living legend such as which stands before us?' exclaims the Emira. 'Dispatch my best troops at once. We must teach these western dogs a lesson in manners that they will not forget in a hurry!'

You now have the Legion of Shahad on your side. They are a crack unit of heavy cavalry, mounted on war-camels and armed with lances and swords. Record the following details on the list of Allies on your Quest Sheet:

LEGION OF SHAHAD: MIGHT 4, HEALTH 3

The Legion of Shahad will begin their trek across the dunes and be there when you need them during the final battle. For now, you are feted in the palace as both a mighty hero and a master storyteller; that rare person who has both exotic adventures and the ability to entertain others with their retelling. During the festivities, the vizier of the Emira seeks you out. He is a wily old character and knows much of these lands. 'It is of course none of my business but word has it our court sorcerer Yazeel the Impetuous has lost his flying carpet,' says the vizier. 'Apparently he left it at an oasis somewhere in the depths of the Sea of Sand but, being a city-bred magician, cannot now return there to find it. Yourself, on the other hand...'

Turn to **21**.

62

The Fane of the Death Goddess is a pitch-black cavern in which no light is allowed lest it illuminate the sacred carvings that can only be touched by the priests themselves. The priests have shaven skulls and grey robes, and request all penitents to wear an ash-smeared blindfold if they wish to make an offering to the goddess.

If you are a follower of the Death Goddess it will cost 1 talent to make an offering. If you are not a follower of the Death Goddess, it will cost 2 talents for an offering. Making an offering gives you the Death-Cheater Blessing. If you do this, cross the gold off your Quest Sheet and tick the Blessing box for the Death Goddess.

The Blessing works by allowing you to ignore one instance where your HEALTH score would drop to zero; instead, cross the Blessing off your Quest Sheet and leave your HEALTH score at 1. You can have only one Death-Cheater Blessing at a time. Once it is used up, you will need to return here to obtain a new one.

When you have finished here, you return to the central meeting area of Quon. Turn to **38**.

63

The Salt-Flats are known to conceal treacherous quicksand, where a thin crust of crystals lies above a sucking quagmire of stinking black mud. Unfortunately your tribe has stumbled across such a place, and shouts go up and down the line of camels as animals and their handlers founder and are dragged under to an agonizingly slow death. Quickly, you organize ropes and attempt to pull the stricken nomads to safety. Roll one die and Test your TRIBE MIGHT.

If you roll under your TRIBE MIGHT, your people manage to extricate themselves from the quicksand with few casualties and continue on your journey. Turn to **92**.

If you roll equal to or under your TRIBE MIGHT, you lose several key warriors and their mounts who are pulled beneath the foul sands, never to be seen again. Reduce your TRIBE HEALTH by one point, unless it is at 1 already (in which case there is no effect). Turn to **92**.

64

Record the codeword *Aladdin* on your Quest Sheet.

You have conquered the mighty Dyenna and are free to loot the treasures of the Lost City of Djazil! Roll one die. This is the number of talents of Gold you find. Also, there is one magical treasure of great value. Roll one die and consult the table below to see what you have discovered.

Roll 1: an Enchanted Amulet

(Deduct 1 from the die roll every time you must Test your SORCERY)

Roll 2 or 3: a Healing Potion

(One use only: restores your HEALTH to its starting level)

Roll 4 or 5: a Scroll of Creeping Death

(One use only: The Scroll of Creeping Death adds 1 to your TRIBE MIGHT during one Mass Combat)

Roll 6: Drums of Doom

(Allows your tribe to Retreat from Mass Combat without deducting 1 from their TRIBE HEALTH score)

Once you have added this booty to your Quest Sheet, you descend from the mesa and lead your tribe away from this place of dead souls and foul sorcery. Turn to **58**.

65

The Desert of Hakar is a wasteland of hardened lava-flows, spewed forth from the earth at some great indeterminate time long-gone, and now blasted into mind-flaying shapes by the forces of the wind. Here and there are stretches of black sand, interspersed with occasional oases of feathery-leaved chirza trees. This is the territory of the Tribe of Hakar.

'The Hakari are our brothers and sisters in blood,' declares one the falcon-handlers of the tribe, with a fierce glare in his eyes. 'They will surely welcome us with open arms and help us seek vengeance against our oppressors!'

Will you make contact with the Tribe of Hakar (turn to **83**), or will you leave this area (turn to **42**)?

66

In a hidden glade deep with the hills you meet with a tribe of Jakalli. If you have the codeword *Jafar* turn immediately to **84**. If not, read on below.

The Jakalli are a tall race of iridescent-scaled snake-men, clad in simple leather togas and armed with bows and barbed spears. They have long forked tongues that dart incessantly from fang-lined jaws, and their unblinking eyes are burnished gold in color.

'I do not like the look of these fiends!' says a comrade-in-arms, whispering urgently in your ear. 'Anyone with serpent-blood has a well-earned reputation for treachery!'

Will you parley with the Jakalli (turn to **47**), or will you fight them (turn to **84**)?

67

Record the codeword *Sinbad* on your Quest Sheet.

Upon seeing the Sword of the Stars in your possession, the leader of the Arch-Priests is so overcome with emotion that he collapses from his dais, red in the face and gargling soundlessly through foam-flecked lips. Minor acolytes rush from everywhere to ensure his survival. You are ushered from the hall to a nearby vestibule. Sometime later however, the leader has recovered and is propped up upon his chair with cushions, and surrounded by a phalanx of healers and other Arch-Priests.

'My apologies for before,' says the Arch-Priest leader weakly, mopping his brow with a cloth. 'Never in my lifetime did I expect to see one such as yourself gather all the necessary requirements to unite the tribes of these lands. This is unprecedented within recent history.'

'So can you help us?' you ask the priests.

'You misunderstand,' says the leader, almost apologetically. 'We do not provide aid. We merely try to ensure that you have the tools for success.'

'What, so will I succeed?'

'We cannot even answer that,' he replies. 'All we can say for sure is that you have a sound platform for victory, but even then this rests within the laps of the gods. In life, as with any game of chance and skill, the best response to bad odds is to try harder. Good luck and Gods' speed!'

Turn to **22**.

68

You are leaving the monotonous flatlands of the Khaza-Yak Steppes behind, venturing onwards to pastures new. The wind whistles disconsolately across the grasslands as if announcing your departure, and endless armies of clouds drift across the grey skies above.

'A man could go mad out here,' says a warrior of your tribe, sharpening his sabre on a whetstone. 'The sound of that ghostly breeze heard every day would surely drive me into insanity.'

Where is your tribe travelling on to? South, to the Valley of the Gods (turn to 95), east, to the Scarlet Dunes (turn to 75), or south-east, into the dust-laden embrace of the Sea of Sand (turn to 1)?

69

You are most welcome in the Nameless City as an honoured worshipper of the gods. You are given a chamber in the Holy Hermitage that lies near both the Citadel of the Arch-Priests and the Shrine of All-Gods, to appropriately reflect your status. You are expected to lead prayer sessions for the teeming faithful but this is a mere formality for one such as saintly as you.

You can rest here for as long as you like and restore your HEALTH score to its original starting total.

When you are ready to leave, turn to 22.

70

Record the codeword *Solomon* on your Quest Sheet.

'Ah, iron from the heavens!' exclaims Asqar joyously when he sees the lump of Sky Metal that you have brought. 'The most noble of all metals!'

Asqar takes the Sky Metal and spends some time fashioning it into a great curved blade, adding many strange ingredients from sundry vials and flasks, and etching mystical sigils into its hilt. After it has cooled he presents it reverentially to you.

Note the Sword of the Stars on your Quest Sheet. It has a POWER score of 4, and increases both your MIGHT and SORCERY scores by 1 if you wield it in combat. It is a two-handed weapon however, so you may not use a Shield.

To your surprise, the strange smith refuses all payment for such a marvelous weapon.

'Please, to create such a thing is payment enough!' he wheezes. 'A lifetime's work in every hammer's stroke, in every bellow's breath. The honour is all mine.'

You leave the forge of Asqar. Turn to 28.

71

There is a lull in the fighting as the two opposing forces pull back, bloodied and battle-weary. A great voice screams out across the battlefield: 'A challenge! I challenge the leader of you desert dogs to stand before me and fight to the death!'

It is the slave-leader Kartacus, a massive-shouldered man, clad in bronze plated armour and armed with a gore-encrusted battle-axe. He sees you and charges across no-man's land, howling a battle-cry to his heathen war-god Morez. Defend yourself!

Because of the bronze armour that Kartacus wears, you must reduce your weapon's POWER score by 1, to a minimum of 1, for this combat.

KARTACUS: MIGHT 5, POWER 3, HEALTH 5

You may hurl a Javelin at Kartacus if you have one. You cannot Flee from this battle. If you defeat Kartacus, turn to 88. If Kartacus kills you, you collapse upon the sands of Bhintos, breathing your last, and the great rebellion you have organized dies with you as the Mellenic Alliance regroups their forces and slaughter your troops. Your adventure is over (turn to 13).

72

The Holy Man of the Sand Goddess can be found on a sun-blasted hilltop above the campsite. He is clad in white robes, and wears a strip of black cloth across his eyes, denoting blindness. An apprentice holds a wicker parasol over the Holy Man's head, providing him with shade as he seemingly counts the individual grains of sand upon the hilltop: 'A million and three, a million and four, a million and five...' (These numbers may be slightly different if you have been here before.)

You humbly request a blessing from the Holy Man. He gives a long-suffering sigh, and the apprentice steps forward with a large bronze offering bowl.

If you are a follower of the Sand Goddess it will cost 1 talent to make an offering. If you are not a follower of the Sand Goddess, it will cost 2 talents for an offering. Making an offering gives you the Blessing of the Desert. If you do this, cross the gold off your Quest Sheet and tick the Blessing box for the Sand Goddess.

The Blessing will prove useful if you plan on exploring the very heart of the Sea of Sand. When you use the Blessing, cross it off your Quest Sheet. You can have only one Blessing of the Desert at a time. Once it is used up, you will need to return here to obtain a new one.

When you have finished here, you return to the Hakari encampment.

The Holy Man recommences his counting, once again picking up single grains of sand between forefinger and thumb: 'One, two, three, four...'

Turn to **83**.

73

Your tribe begins the long trek away from the fabulously wealthy port of Shahad. Ahead lie the desolate wastes that your doughty warriors call home.

'Those townfolk are as soft as over-ripe melons,' says one of your scouts. 'Were they not our kin, we should surely plunder their riches for our people!'

Where are you heading? North, to the Mhyrinjian Hills (turn to **35**), west, to the Melloskine Salt-Flats (turn to **25**), or north-west, into the limitless Sea of Sand (turn to **1**)?

74

Regretfully you lead your tribe away from the Valley of the Gods, holiest of places for the people of the desert. Indeed, several junior members of your tribe have snuck away to become temple attendants for a time, sweeping the sands away from the courtyards of the great shines in order to be closer to those who rule from above. No doubt you will meet them again, upon your next visit to this most magnificent of the gods' glories.

For now though, where are you going? South, to the Desert of Hakar (turn to **65**), north, to the Khaza-Yak Steppes (turn to **45**), or west, into the Sea of Sand (turn to **1**).

75

The Scarlet Dunes mark the forlorn northern edges of the Sea of Sand. They ripple across the landscape like a seething mass of crimson waves, frozen momentarily in time. Deep within the Scarlet Dunes is reputed to be the Lost City of Djazil, swallowed up by the desert when its people blasphemed against the gods.

'No one who searches for Djazil ever returns,' says one of your water-diviner women. 'To quest for the Lost City is to embrace a madness from which there is no escape.'

If you have a Treasure Map, and wish to search for the Lost City, turn to **97**.

If not, all you can do is leave this desolate area (turn to **58**).

76

A fearsome horde of steppes nomads gathers on the horizon, warriors riding small yet fast horses, armed with short-bows and wearing lamellar armour sculpted from the bones of their enemies. Here and there are heavy cavalry, mounted on shaggy-haired rhinoceros and great tundra-mammoths, the beasts' tusks and horns augmented with beaten copper spikes. Waving their weapons in the air and uttering the battle-scream of the steppes, the nomads pour across the grasslands towards your tribe!

If you have the codeword *Dunyazad*, turn immediately to **52**.

'We need to convince them we are as mighty as them,' you shout at your tribe, raising the sons of the desert into a battle fury. Roll one die and Test your TRIBE MIGHT.

If you roll equal to or over your TRIBE MIGHT, the steppes nomads are unimpressed by your pitiful excuse for a tribe and attack! Turn to **7**.

If you roll under your TRIBE MIGHT, the steppes nomads pull up short from their charge, awestruck by your tribe's formidable appearance and battle-hardened demeanor. Their heralds sound notes on ibex-horns and lower their battle standards, indicating that you should parley. Turn to **52**.

77

You recognize the Copper Flask as the sort of enchanted receptacle that may safely imprison a magical creature such as the Dyenna. The difficulty will be whether your sorcerous skills are up to the task. Quickly, you intone the words of binding, ignoring the screams of rage emanating from the Dyenna as it struggles against the mystical bonds you have created.

Roll one die and Test your SORCERY. If you roll equal to or over your SORCERY, the creature proves too strong and your enchantments fail. Turn immediately to **82**.

If you roll under your SORCERY, your magical prowess proves greater than the demon, and its gaseous form is sucked into the Copper Flask. Quickly, you stopper the sigil-inscribed lid. You have captured the Dyenna!

Cross the Copper Flask off from your Quest Sheet and replace it with the Dyenna In A Bottle. In order to obtain its freedom, the Dyenna will provide you with one wish. You can wish for one (and only one) of the following wishes, at any time you like. As soon as you have used a wish, you must cross the Dyenna In A Bottle off from your Quest Sheet, as both the Dyenna and the Copper Flask vanish in a puff of purple smoke. The wishes available to you are:

Riches: Roll two dice and add the result to the Gold box on your Quest Sheet.

Power: Raise your MIGHT, SORCERY or HEALTH score to 6 (your choice as to which score to increase).

Luck: You (or your tribe) will automatically succeed at either one Test or win one battle.

After you have noted down these details on your Quest Sheet, turn to **64**.

78

Disaster! While scavenging through the ruins you disturb a Giant Scorpion that comes skittering out of a dark crevice which must be its nest, waving ebon claws menacingly while flexing a venom-laden tail-sting. Defend yourself!

GIANT SCORPION: MIGHT 3, POWER 2, HEALTH 3

You may hurl a Javelin at the Giant Scorpion if you have one. If you want to Flee from this battle, reduce your HEALTH by one, and turn to **85**. If you defeat the Giant Scorpion, roll one die; on a roll of a 6 you find 1 talent of Gold in its nest which you may add to your Quest Sheet (and then turn to **85**). If the Giant Scorpion kills you, your body lies forgotten in the ruins. Leaderless, your tribe leaves Quon and perish in the desert; Bhintos remains un-avenged. Your adventure is over (turn to **13**).

79

Tinkerers' Hall is a large open chamber with many smaller caves leading off from it to the forges of weaponsmiths, the workshops of alchemists and the libraries of magicians. As such, the place is cloaked in smoke and noise, from the clanging of hammer against anvil to the occasional boom as a delicate experiment goes completely awry. The ceiling of the hall is heavily braced with supporting columns, testifying to the very real fear of a potential cave-in!

You can buy any of the items listed below as long as you have enough gold to buy it and space to carry it. You may also sell any items you own that are listed below, for the price stated. Don't forget to update your Quest Sheet in either case. Items with no purchase price are not available locally.

Weapons:

Staff (POWER 1)	To buy: 1 talent	To sell: 1 talent
Scimitar (POWER 2)	To buy: 2 talents	To sell: 1 talent
Battleaxe (POWER 3)	To buy: -	To sell: 2 talents
Javelin	To buy: 1 talent	To sell: 1 talent

Armour:

Shield	To buy: 1 talent	To sell: 1 talent
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Other Gear:

Healing Potion	To buy: 2 talents	To sell: 1 talent
<i>One use only: restores your HEALTH to its starting level.</i>		
Enchanted Amulet	To buy: -	To sell: 3 talents
Flying Carpet	To buy: -	To sell: 3 talents
Drums of Doom	To buy: -	To sell: 3 talents
Scroll of Creeping Death	To buy: 2 talents	To sell: 1 talent

One use only: The Scroll of Creeping Death adds 1 to your TRIBE MIGHT during one Mass Combat.

When you are ready to venture elsewhere in the cavern-dwellings of Quon, turn to 38.

80

You lead your tribe out from within the dust-swept vagaries of the Sea of Sand. Unfortunately, the howling winds and endless dunes all conspire to bewilder the most seasoned of travelers, and there is no telling where your tribe may have ended up.

Roll two dice and consult the table below for the paragraph number of your next destination (unless you have a Blessing of the Sand Goddess, in which case you may choose which number to turn to, after crossing the Blessing off from your Quest Sheet):

- Roll a 2 or 3: turn to 25.
- Roll a 4: turn to 45.
- Roll a 5: turn to 35.
- Roll a 6: turn to 65.
- Roll a 7: turn to 95.
- Roll an 8: turn to 85.
- Roll a 9: turn to 55.
- Roll a 10: turn to 75.
- Roll an 11 or 12: turn to 15.

81

If you have the codeword *Gherib*, turn to **92** immediately. If not, read on below.

Out on the baking expanse of the salt-flats your tribe comes across the carcass of a Spirullan, one of the much-feared mollusk-men from the marshes to the south.

'Must have been exiled from his tribe,' says one of your hunters, prodding the corpse with the tip of his spear. 'I've heard their shells are strong enough to turn the strike of a blade.'

Indeed, you may attempt to forge the creature's spiral carapace into a suit of armour. Roll one die and Test your SORCERY.

If you roll equal to or over your SORCERY, your powers have no effect and the carapace shatters into fragments. Record the codeword *Gherib* on your Quest Sheet and turn to **92**.

If you roll under your SORCERY, your enchantments have worked; you have created a suit of Carapace Armour and can add it to your Quest Sheet. Carapace Armour allows you to deduct 1 from your enemy's POWER score in Melee Combat, down to a minimum of 1. Record the codeword *Gherib* on your Quest Sheet and turn to **92**.

82

The Dyenna is amused that you are attacking it. It conjures up a mighty flaming steel scimitar and advances towards you, swinging the blade about in a series of fiery circles. This will be the toughest battle of your life!

DYENNA GUARDIAN: MIGHT 5, POWER 3, HEALTH 4

You may hurl a Javelin at the Dyenna if you have one. You cannot Flee from this battle; the Dyenna is too fast. If you defeat the Dyenna, turn to **64**. If the Dyenna kills you, it spies your tribe waiting in the dunes below the mesa and descends to the desert to slaughter them as well. Your adventure is over (turn to **13**).

83

The main camp of the Tribe of Hakar is along the banks of a spring-fed wadi, providing an oasis of fresh water. Tents have been pitched beneath date-palms and livestock barricaded behind brush fences. The majority of your tribe sets up camp in the Guest Quarter; a pleasant glade on the encampment's outskirts. You and several warriors wander among the dwellings of the Hakari, watched by silent children and black-clad swordsmen. You can do any of the following:

Trade with the merchants (turn to **34**).

Seek out the Holy Man of the Sand Goddess (turn to **72**).

Pay a visit to Saifuldin, Sheikh of Hakar (turn to **57**).

Or, leave the Hakari and venture elsewhere (turn to **42**).

84

Record the codeword *Jafar* on your Quest Sheet if you do not have it already.

The Jakalli hiss with fury as you draw your weapons. 'Traitorous human scum!' snarls their leader. 'You will not leave these hills alive!'

You face an angry mob of scaly serpentmen armed with spears and bows. They attack from all sides; descending from the hills, jumping off the tops of boulders, and crawling out from dark caves. This will be a desperate battle!

JAKALLI SERPENTMEN: MIGHT 3, HEALTH 3

Fight a Mass Combat battle between the Jakalli and your tribe. If you want to Retreat from this battle and flee, reduce your TRIBE HEALTH by one, and turn to **14**. If your tribe defeats the serpentmen, the survivors flee to the hills and you may loot their riches (add one trade unit of Spices to your Quest Sheet) and turn to **14**. If the Jakalli defeat your tribe, they slaughter all survivors and string your corpses up on wooden crucifixes as a warning to other people not to tangle with the serpentmen. Your adventure is over. Turn to **13**.

85

The great wall of Quon is a mighty stone escarpment that runs across the eastern horizon, separating the Sea of Sand from the rocky uplands beyond. Here live the Cliff-Dwellers of Quon, in an astounding vertical community built into the side of the plateau wall. On the desert floor are the ruins of the Cliff-Dweller's original ancient settlement, a dead city by a dying river.

'Legend has it that the Sun Goddess dried up the river when the Quonites ceased to maintain her temple,' says an old and much-travelled lady of your tribe. 'Now the people of Quon worship only the Death Goddess in those dark caverns they bore into the rocks.'

If you wish to visit the Cliff-Dwellers, turn to **38**.

If you wish to explore the ruins, turn to **17**.

If you wish to leave this area, turn to **53**.

86

As an honoured guest of the Khaness you have your own yurt in the encampment where you can rest and recuperate. Many of the nomads still talk about the time you slew the Beast Troll within the Royal Yurt and clap you on the back appreciatively, offering you clay gourds of their most potent fire-water.

You can rest here for as long as you like and restore your HEALTH score to its original starting total.

When you are ready to leave, turn to **52**.

87

Record the codeword *Vathek* on your Quest Sheet if you do not have it already (and delete the codeword *Iblis* if you had it).

The Ghuul welcome your aggressive attentions. 'More food for the tribe,' howls the leader, his bronze blade glinting in the sun as he brandishes it above his head. The hyena-men may not be numerous but they are physically strong and know this rocky terrain well. This will surely be a difficult battle!

THE GHUUL: MIGHT 4, HEALTH 2

Fight a Mass Combat battle between the Ghuul and your tribe. If you want to Retreat from this battle and flee, reduce your TRIBE HEALTH by one, and turn to **28**. If your tribe defeats the Ghuul, the survivors flee to the hills and you may loot their riches (add one talent to the Gold box on your Quest Sheet) and turn to **28**. If the Ghuul defeat your tribe, you are all dragged off to their lair to be consumed, dead or alive (the Ghuul are not fussy about such matters). Your adventure is over. Turn to **13**.

88

You may have slain the ex-slave leader Kartacus, but further troops begin to reinforce the western lines, their helmets, spears and shields gleaming in the sinking afternoon sun. You begin to realize that the

westerners have known for some time you were planning a retaliatory strike, and their reserve forces are very formidable. Can you carry the day or will you be ground into the dust underfoot? Fight, once more!

MELLENIC LEGION: MIGHT 3, HEALTH 4

LEGION OF LOPENOS: MIGHT 4, HEALTH 4

ARCHON'S ELITE: MIGHT 5, HEALTH 5

Look at the list of remaining Allies on your Quest Sheet. Number them starting from the number 1 (so if you have three Allies left, you would number them from number 1 to number 3). The Allies will fight a Mass Combat one at a time, in the order you have numbered them, and your own tribe will fight last, if all of your Allies have been defeated. If your Ally defeats a force, they will then fight the next force listed above. If your Ally is defeated, the next Ally on your list (or your own tribe) will take over the battle.

You cannot Flee from these battles. If you defeat all the forces listed above, turn to **100**. If the forces listed above defeat all of your Allies and your tribe then you have failed, despite coming within a whisker's breadth of victory. Your adventure is over. Turn to **13**.

89

You trek disconsolately away from your ancient homelands of Bhintos, whose orange sands and rocky spires are stamped forever upon the very being of your soul.

'Cheer up!' says one of your warriors with a bloodthirsty grin. 'One day we will return and slay our oppressors until their blood stains the sea-shore upon which they will utter their last breath!'

Where are you going now? East, to the Melloskine Salt-Flats (turn to **25**), north, to the Desert of Hakar (turn to **65**), or north-east, into the Sea of Sand (turn to **1**).

90

The Great Souq is a colorful market whose trade is predominantly in garishly-hued devotional clothing, religious artifacts and keep-sakes, and sundry worship-related paraphernalia. This because the Nameless City is a community of peace, and largely forbids the purchase of weapons and armour, other than staves for pilgrims. Having said that, you may still find some bargains here!

You can buy any of the items listed below as long as you have enough gold to buy it and space to carry it. You may also sell any items you own that are listed below, for the price stated. Don't forget to update your Quest Sheet in either case. Items with no purchase price are not available locally.

Weapons:

Staff (POWER 1)	To buy: 1 talent	To sell: 1 talent
Scimitar (POWER 2)	To buy: -	To sell: 1 talent
Battleaxe (POWER 3)	To buy: -	To sell: 2 talents
Javelin	To buy: -	To sell: 1 talent

Armour:

Shield	To buy: -	To sell: 1 talent
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Other Gear:

Healing Potion	To buy: 2 talents	To sell: 1 talent
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One use only: restores your HEALTH to its starting level.

Enchanted Amulet	To buy: 4 talents	To sell: 3 talents
<i>Deduct 1 from the die roll every time you must Test your SORCERY.</i>		
Flying Carpet	To buy: -	To sell: 3 talents
Drums of Doom	To buy: -	To sell: 3 talents
Scroll of Creeping Death	To buy: -	To sell: 1 talent

When you are ready to venture elsewhere in the Nameless City, turn to **22**.

91

Record the codeword *Sheherazad* on your Quest Sheet.

Your recital of the sacred words of Feraz the Visionary brings silent tears to the eyes of Sheik Saifuldin. Several of his followers begin to weep openly such is the power of the words upon these ancient scrolls.

'My friend!' says Saifuldin, clapping you on the shoulder after he has managed to compose himself. 'How could I have ever doubted the sincerity of your quest? Our tribes shall now be as one, as we seek out the injustices done to all children of the desert and measure out the appropriate retribution!'

Record the following details on the list of Allies on your Quest Sheet:

TRIBE OF HAKAR: MIGHT 3, HEALTH 2

The Tribe of Hakar will be there when you need them the most during the final battle. For now, both tribes celebrate their common bonds, united in their hatred of the oppressors. In addition, Sheikh Saifuldin lets you consult his compendium of secret lore concerning the Sea of Sand and the lands that surround it. Apparently, shooting stars are a common occurrence in the night sky of the desert. They are rumoured to herald good fortune, and some nomads even claim to have found the remains of such celestial bodies that have crashed to the ground, deep within the Sea of Sand. Turn to **83**.

92

You lead your tribe on the long trek out of the Melloskine Salt-Flats, across glittering white plains and under a brilliant azure dome of sky, lit mercilessly by the one-eyed stare of the Sun Goddess.

'I'll not be sorry to leave this place behind,' says one of your camel-herders in somewhat muffled fashion, his face covered in cloth to avoid the blinding glare of the crystalline salt-pans. 'I've got pains in my head like the kick of a mule.'

From here you can go west, to your homeland of Bhintos (turn to **5**), east, to the city of Shahad (turn to **55**), or north into the trackless depths of the Sea of Sand (turn to **1**).

93

If you have the codeword *Sheba*, turn immediately to **49**. If not, read on below.

The Palace of the Emira, Queen of Shahad and all its surroundings, is surely the most magnificent building you have ever set forth within. It is at the center of a garden-compound so immense the pink marble blocks of the palace shimmer indistinctly in the heat-haze of the day as you venture down the path towards it. Inside, there is wealth untold; silken tapestries and obsidian mirrors cover the walls and the flagstones are of blue jade and crystal.

The Emira is to be found in a cavernous throne-room, surrounded by courtiers and seated upon the legendary Pearl Throne, said to be carved from an enormous bauble dredged from the Azure Gulf by her distant ancestors. She is a tall lady whose black hair is streaked with silver and she wears an

elaborate robe made from cloth of gold.

'Hallowed guest,' she says, after you have been introduced by her vizier. 'I have heard of your troubles to the west and wish to help.'

'That would be most welcome,' you reply.

'Not so fast!' the Emira answers with a smile. 'Life here in the palace is comfortable but somewhat tedious. I'm sure you have had many exciting adventures! Perhaps you could enliven the proceedings with a tale or two?'

With a hundred or more eager courtiers pressing all around, and even the Emira leaning forwards on her throne in interest, you begin an epic saga, fashioned entirely after the heroic deeds of your tribe, and yourself of course. Roll one die and Test your MIGHT.

If you roll under your MIGHT score, turn to **61**.

If you roll equal to or over your MIGHT, you story fails to entrance, or even entertain the audience. The vizier has to gently nudge the Emira with a peacock feather to awaken her from a light slumber.

'What? Oh, yes, well, I can hardly be expected to help every distraught camel-herder that wanders into these halls,' she says. 'Return here when things have become a little more exciting!' Turn to **21**.

94

The Caverns of the Traders are located close to the foot of the cliff, to allow for ease of access to the merchant caravans whose pack-beasts graze contently on the sparse grass of the valley floor. Each cavern specializes in a particular kind of merchandise, and features half-a-dozen vendors hawking their wares to all-comers.

You can buy and sell trade units at the prices listed below. Each price is for one trade unit.

Copper:	To buy: 4 talents	To sell: 3 talents
Ivory:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Slaves:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents
Spices:	To buy: 2 talents	To sell: 1 talent
Pearls:	To buy: 3 talents	To sell: 2 talents

When you have finished here, you can return to central meeting area of Quon via a precipitous series of ladders and walkways (turn to **38**).

95

The Valley of the Gods is a jagged gouge across the landscape; a holy canyon teeming with the mud and clay hovels of the faithful, and ruled by the Arch-Priests from their sacred citadel next to the shrines of all the gods. According to the much-learned sage Ibarras, the acoustics of the valley's walls echo with a continuous drone of low sound that wraps all who hear it in the ethereal armor that is the song of the gods.

As soon as you reach the edge of the valley you and your tribe dismount and prostrate yourselves upon the ground, offering supplication to the Sacred Valley.

'Can we make the pilgrimage, chief?' several of your more devout younger warriors ask. 'To visit the Valley of the Gods and express devotion to those above is to be glorious in the eyes of all!'

If you want to leave this area, turn to **74**.

If you want to visit the Nameless City that occupies the Valley of the Gods, turn to **22**.

96

You have managed to assemble a formidable and united host of forces. You sweep down into the lands of Bhintos meeting little in the way of opposition. Soon however, the call goes out, and troops begin to

marshal upon the western horizon. The following armies line up on the orange sands of Bhintos, ready to repel your attacks:

BHINTOS IRREGULARS: MIGHT 2, HEALTH 2

COHORT OF KARTACUS: MIGHT 3, HEALTH 2

Look at the list of Allies on your Quest Sheet. Number them starting from the number 1 (so if you have four Allies, you would number them from number 1 to number 4). The Allies will fight a Mass Combat one at a time, in the order you have numbered them, and your own tribe will fight last, if all of your Allies have been defeated. If your Ally defeats a force, they will then fight the next force listed above. If your Ally is defeated, the next Ally on your list (or your own tribe) will take over the battle.

You cannot Flee from these battles. If you defeat all the forces listed above, turn to **71**. If the forces listed above defeat all of your Allies and your tribe then you have failed, despite your best efforts. Your adventure is over. Turn to **13**.

97

If you have the codeword *Aladdin*, turn immediately to **36**. Otherwise, read on below.

Following the directions on the Treasure Map that you bought in the markets of Shahad, you lead your tribe on a winding trek through the Scarlet Dunes. The trail culminates at a crumbling mesa that sticks out over the desert like the tabletop of a god, and upon it is the Lost City of Djazil! Your tribe waits below in fear while you explore the ruins, all of which are made from cyclopean blocks of rough black stone.

Wandering down an avenue lined with shattered basalt pillars, you are shocked by the manifestation of an enormous humanoid, apparently made entirely of purple smoke. It is a Dyenna, a guardian demon of this place, and it gazes down contemptuously at you with blazing scarlet eyes.

'Foolish mortal,' it rumbles in a voice like thunder. 'Enjoy the last moments of your life while you can...'

If you want to fight the Dyenna, turn to **82**.

If you have a Copper Flask and wish to use it, turn to **77**.

98

Record the codeword *Dunyazad* on your Quest Sheet.

A cheer goes up all of those who have crowded into the royal yurt to witness your climactic struggle with the ferocious Beast Troll, as your final blow causes it to collapse upon the carpets, breathing its last. The Khaness holds up her hand for silence, which is instantly obeyed, and several bodyguards struggle to carry the body of the Troll outside.

'You are indeed a mighty champion,' says the Khaness. 'My warriors will be only too glad to fight alongside such a hero. You may consider our aid to be given, and we will be there to help you defeat the western devils.'

Record the following details on the list of Allies on your Quest Sheet:

NOMAD HORDE: MIGHT 3, HEALTH 3

The steppes nomads will be there during the final battle when you need them. For now, the revelry continues long into the night as the encampment recounts the details of your epic battle. During a conversation with the Khaness' factotum you discover an obscure scrap of lore. Apparently there is a

ruined city full of demons in the northern reaches of the desert. A shaman from the steppes ventured there once and survived only when he managed to entrap one of the fiends in a metal flask. Interesting... Turn to **52**.

99

The Shrine of All-Gods is an immense lamp-lit edifice that dominates the skyline of the Nameless City and is almost as high as the valley walls that surround it. Pilgrims to this holy place must perambulate around the shrine seven times before being allowed to make an offering to the gods. The great hall within the shrine houses altars to all the gods of your pantheon and a hundred more besides.

If you are a follower of the Sun Goddess it will cost 1 talent to make an offering. If you are not a follower of the Sun Goddess, it will cost 2 talents for an offering. Making an offering gives you the Blessing of the Sun. If you do this, cross the gold off your Quest Sheet and tick the Blessing box for the Sun Goddess.

The Blessing works by blinding one Melee Combat opponent with the light of the sun; you may deduct one from their MIGHT score for the duration of the combat. When you use the Blessing, cross it off your Quest Sheet. You can have only one Blessing of the Sun at a time. Once it is used up, you will need to return here to obtain a new one.

If you are a follower of the Death Goddess it will cost 1 talent to make an offering. If you are not a follower of the Death Goddess, it will cost 2 talents for an offering. Making an offering gives you the Death-Cheater Blessing. If you do this, cross the gold off your Quest Sheet and tick the Blessing box for the Death Goddess.

The Blessing works by allowing you to ignore one instance where your HEALTH score would drop to zero; instead, cross the Blessing off your Quest Sheet and leave your HEALTH score at 1. You can have only one Death-Cheater Blessing at a time. Once it is used up, you will need to return here to obtain a new one.

If you are a follower of the Sand Goddess it will cost 1 talent to make an offering. If you are not a follower of the Sand Goddess, it will cost 2 talents for an offering. Making an offering gives you the Blessing of the Desert. If you do this, cross the gold off your Quest Sheet and tick the Blessing box for the Sand Goddess.

The Blessing will prove useful if you plan on exploring the very heart of the Sea of Sand. When you use the Blessing, cross it off your Quest Sheet. You can have only one Blessing of the Desert at a time. Once it is used up, you will need to return here to obtain a new one.

When you have finished here, you return to the center of the Nameless City. Turn to **22**.

100

You are victorious! Your forces have reclaimed the lands of Bhintos and those enemies that are too proud to surrender are pushed back to the shoreline and cut down among the breaking waves, until the sea runs red with blood. Not only have you defeated the hated oppressors of your people for a generation, but you have also unified the fractured tribes of the Sea of Sand and its surroundings, forging an empire of unshakeable belief in the mighty righteous wrath of the gods. None dare oppose you now, and all seek to pay you tribute. You are truly a master of your own destiny and your name will be echoed through the scrolls of history for millennia to come, as a byword for unity in the face of tyranny, justice for the weak, and honor for the poor and wretched. You truly are the divine ruler of the Sea of Sand...

T H E E N D

OPTIONAL RULES

After you've played through The Sea of Sand a couple of times with the different starting characters, you might like to use the following optional rule.

Creating New Characters

This is extremely easy to do, using the following process:

1. Split 16 points among the following:
 - a. MIGHT (anywhere from 2 to 6)
 - b. SORCERY (anywhere from 2 to 6)
 - c. HEALTH (anywhere from 2 to 6)
 - d. A weapon from the following (cost in points equals POWER score):
 - i. Staff (POWER 1)
 - ii. Sword (POWER 2)
 - iii. Battleaxe (POWER 3)
 - e. Any of the following extra equipment at 1 point each:
 - i. A Shield
 - ii. A Javelin
 - f. 1 to 3 talents of Gold (1 point per talent)
2. Choose your character's Sex and give them a Name.
3. Choose your character's Profession. If they have a high MIGHT score they are a Warrior. If they have a high SORCERY score they are a Sorcerer or Sorceress. If all their scores are around the same, they are an Adventurer. Profession has no impact on game-play but simply helps you better visualize your character.
4. Pick a Goddess to follow: Death, Sand, or Sun.
5. Give your character a colorful background, and release them into The Sea of Sand!