
OOKLE OF THE BROKEN FINGER

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OOKLE OF THE BROKEN FINGER

***Jumblee** (n, pl. 'jumblees') Jumblees are a species of subterranean fey folk, most commonly encountered in the mountain ranges of northern Woomoro. A typical adult jumblee will reach a maximum of five feet in height, although their slouching posture, adapted to a tunnel-dwelling lifestyle, gives them an appearance of being shorter. All members of a jumblee tribe share the same skin coloration – for example, members of the Broken Finger tribe are a uniform dark blue. Jumblees are superbly adapted to their underworld environment; their large, bulbous eyes are able to see in near-total darkness, and their wide noses grant them an excellent sense of smell. Sadly, their low intelligence, coupled with their brutal nature, has allowed many jumblee tribes to fall into long-term servitude, acting as front line fighters, or subterranean guards, for those individuals or regimes able to provide environments and pastimes that satisfy the jumblees' base needs. (See also, 'Jumblee People (Tribes of the)', 'Jumblee People (Origins of the)')*

– Aerondil's Almanac of the Below-Realms (a work in progress)

THE GAME RULES

In this adventure, you take the role of Ookle, one of the jumblees of the Broken Finger tribe of Big, Dark Mountain. This adventure requires the use of two standard six-sided dice.

Ookle has five important characteristics. The first four are:

HITTING STUFF: This modifies Ookle's ability to land a successful hit in combat.

DODGING STUFF: This score represents Ookle's defensive ability, and his agility and reflexes in general.

BREAKING STUFF: This represents Ookle's ability to score damage after striking a successful hit.

THINKING: This characteristic represents Ookle's powers of reasoning, logic and even cunning. It is also used as a measure of Ookle's perceptive ability.

Each of these characteristics start with a value of '2 Dice' (hereafter abbreviated to '2D'). Before beginning the game, you may also add four '+1' modifiers to these values, although no value may increase above '2D+2' at the beginning of the game.

So, you may begin the game with all four characteristics having a value of '2D+1', for example. Or, you may have a value of '2D+2' in Hitting Stuff and Breaking Stuff, but start with the basic '2D' in Dodging Stuff and Thinking.

CHARACTERISTIC ROLLS

A characteristic roll will have a difficulty number. For example, Ookle may have to make a Thinking roll, difficulty 8. In this case, roll Ookle's Thinking characteristic (for example, 2D+1). If he equals or exceeds the number of the difficulty roll, he passes. If he scores lower than the difficulty number, he fails.

Ookle's fifth characteristic is **NOT DEAD YET**. Ookle begins with 20 Not Dead Yet points, and, unless specifically instructed, he may not exceed this maximum score. If his Not Dead Yet points ever reaches zero, Ookle is... dead. You'll have to start the adventure again. Life is hard in Big, Dark Mountain.

COMBAT

Ookle's opponents will also have values for 'Hitting Stuff', 'Dodging Stuff', 'Breaking Stuff' and 'Not Dead Yet' ('Thinking' will normally be omitted).

Combat takes place over a series of rounds. Unless otherwise stated, Ookle attacks first.

At the beginning of each round, Ookle rolls his 'Hitting Stuff' dice, and his opponent rolls his 'Dodging Stuff' dice. If Ookle exceeds his opponent's roll, he has scored a successful blow.

If Ookle has hit his opponent, he rolls his 'Breaking Stuff' dice, and subtracts the result from his opponent's Not Dead Yet points. If the opponent's Not Dead Yet points are reduced to zero, Ookle has won the combat. If not, his opponent may retaliate, following the same procedure as above.

Once both Ookle and his opponent have attacked and defended, one round of combat is finished. If both combatants are still alive, the next round of combat begins.

STARTING EQUIPMENT

Ookle starts with just one item, a Jumblee Hatchet. This adds '+1' to Ookle's Breaking Stuff when used in combat (so, if Ookle's 'Breaking Stuff' score is normally 2D+2, with this hatchet it becomes 2D+3). Note this down under the 'Ookle's Things' section of the character sheet. Ookle may only use one weapon at a time.

Ookle also begins the game with some money: 20 krackels. Note this down on the character sheet as well.

***Krackel** (n, pl. 'krackels') A unit of currency used by many peoples in the Below-Realms. A krackel is actually a tooth; those of most beasts qualify, so long as they are larger than a human adult's molar.*

– Aerondil's Almanac of the Below-Realms (a work in progress)

***Author's Note:** There are quite a few mistakes of spelling and grammar in this gamebook. Just to be clear, that's wholly intentional (it's a character thing).*

OOKLE

HITTING STUFF:

DODGING STUFF:

BREAKING STUFF:

THINKING:

NOT DEAD YET (maximum 20):

OOKLE'S THINGS

KRACKELS:

INTRODUCTION

'Boogley Jon is dead!'

I makes my announcement with an air of importance, and I drops Boogley Jon (I've been dragging him by the ankle for an hour) on the floor of Big Tribal Meeting Hall, in front of lots and lots of folk.

'I thinks it was magick!' I announces, with a similar air of importance. And maybe that's not important enough, so I pulls one of the little golden leech things off Boogley Jon (there are more than thirty-six of them on him; I counted up to thirty-six and then got confused) and holds it up in the air. And it sparkles, and turns into golden dust stuff.

Important Tribal Chief Mackley-Backley examines Boogley Jon, and then he says, 'Yes, Boogley Jon is dead! And that's good, because Boogley Jon was a stoopid div!' And all the other folk in the meeting hall cheer, and they repeats, 'Yes, Boogley Jon was a stoopid div!'

And then Clever-Clever Tribal Advisor Berrininnin shuffles forward (he can't walk fast, because his left foot is gammy) and says, 'Boogley Jon was a stoopid div, but he did have an important job...'

And Important Tribal Chief Mackley-Backley says, 'Did he? What was that?'

And Clever-Clever Tribal Advisor Berrininnin says, 'He was head of JR.' But Important Tribal Chief Mackley-Backley doesn't remember what 'JR' is, so Clever-Clever Tribal Advisor Berrininnin says 'That means Jumblee Resources. And Jumblee Resources is big-time important during the festival of Jumblee-Wumblee.'

And Important Tribal Chief Mackley-Backley says, 'When's the festival of Jumblee-Wumblee?'

And Clever-Clever Tribal Advisor Berrininnin sighs, and says, 'Tomorrow. And Boogley Jon was s'posed to organise the treasure hunt, but was probably too busy being dead because of magic golden leeches to actually go and ask for some treasure. But maybe Ookle can be the new head of JR, instead.'

And I says, 'No thanks. I doesn't want to be the head of JR. The head of JR has to go and ask Big-Big Scary Dragon for the traditional treasure.'

And Clever-Clever Tribal Advisor Berrininnin shuffles over to me (keeping the weight off his gammy left foot) and says proper quiet to me, 'C'mon Ookle, it's just a little job, and if you do it well... I won't tell anybody about the Special Secret Magic Book you're hiding behind your back.'

And Tribal Advisor Berrininnin really is Clever-Clever, because I does have a magic book that's secret and special. And I wants to keep my book, at least until I'm bored with it. So I'm not telling anybody about it, in case they tries to take it away from me.

So I says to Important Tribal Chief Mackley-Backley and Clever-Clever Tribal Advisor Berrininnin, 'Alright, I'll be head of Jumblee Resources, but just for the festival of Jumblee-Wumblee. But I want to spend an hour in the Exciting-But-A-Bit-Scary Mating Pits when I get back.'

And Important Tribal Chief Mackley-Backley says okay, so I goes off to speak to Big-Big Scary Dragon to ask for some treasure.

Turn to 1.

1

So, as I leaves the tribe, I sees Thump-Thump. He's a grunk - huge, and strong, and very, very hard to kill. He's not as clever as what I am, but I thinks I'll probably be a lot safer if he comes along, so I says, 'Thump-Thump, I'm going to see Big-Big Scary Dragon, to ask for some treasure. You wanna come?'

Thump-Thump thinks, and picks his nose, and then says, 'Alright.'

So we walks through the caverns for a few hours, and we has to go a longer route than normal because Thump-Thump's too big to fit through all the tunnels I normally takes. But that's okay, and after a few hours I says, 'Thump-Thump, you ever seen a book?'

And Thump-Thump says, 'I saw a wizard, once. One of those human beings. He had a book.'

And I says, 'What was it like?'

Thump-Thump says, 'Tasted nice. So did the wizard.'

I says, 'Yeah, but did it speak?'

And Thump-Thump looks down at me and says, 'Books doesn't speak, Ookle. You needs to learn how to do reading stuff to understand them. And only stoopid divs learns how to read properly.'

And for a minute I doesn't know if I should tell Thump-Thump about my special, secret book. But then, I decides he'll probably forget about it in a few minutes even if I does. So I says, 'I've got a book. And it speaks.' I takes it out of my little shoulder bag and I shows it to him. And I tries to open it, but it doesn't open right away, so I says, 'Hello?'

And then it opens, and glows bright, and it says:

***Grunk** (n, pl. 'grunks') Grunks are some of the more fearsome denizens of the Below-Realms. They can reach 12 feet or more in height, and are enormously strong. They are also hardy - grunks have been observed to survive impalement, incineration and, on occasion, decapitation. They tend to be grey in colour, very muscular, and covered in patches of shaggy hair. Thankfully, they are not numerous - it has been theorised that they are simply too stupid, too hideous, or too unsociable, to mate with any frequency. Notably, exposure to direct sunlight will turn a grunk to stone.*

- Aerondil's Almanac of the Below-Realms (a work in progress)

'Does it do that a lot?' asks Thump-Thump.

'Quite a bit, yes,' says I.

'Where did you get it?' asks Thump-Thump.

'Boogley Jon was gripping onto it when he died. Maybe it belongs to whoever's gone and killed him.'

'Ask Potion Jimmy about it,' says Thump-Thump. 'He knows about magick and stuff. And he's just a little way past Big-Big Scary Dragon's cave.'

We walks on. And after a bit Thump-Thump says, 'So Boogley Jon's dead, is he? Good. He was a stoopid div.'

Note down Aerondil's Almanac under Ookle's Things, and turn to 53.

2

I shouts out the answer, and Riddling Steven says, 'Yes. Absolutely. That's... remarkable. What's your name, jumblee of the Broken Finger?'

I doesn't really know where I's pulled the answer from, but I tells him my name, and then Riddling Steven goes, 'Well, I'm going to pose another conundrum, just to make sure you truly deserve this prize. A test of both memory and arithmetic. Are you ready?'

I nods.

'Imagine you are driving a great cart between two cities,' says Riddling Steven. 'The cart, which is pulled by two horses, contains ten cows as it leaves the first city. As the cart drives along, it passes two men, each with only one leg. They hitch a ride, and climb into the cart. It continues, until it reaches the home of one of the one-legged men. He gets out of the cart, and trades two of the cows for ten chickens, which are loaded into the cart. The cart continues, until it passes the brother of the second one-legged man. He too climbs up into the cart, and he brings his three-legged dog with him. At last, the city, the cart's destination, comes into sight. Now, jumblee of the Broken Finger tribe... are you ready for my conundrum?'

As this is a test of memory, as well as arithmetic, you may not make a note of any of the information Riddling Steven has given you. When you are ready, turn to 34, and Riddling Steven will pose his question.

3

From nowhere, a little dart hits me in the neck. I plucks it out, and I realises I is feeling a bit queasy.

Ookle has been poisoned. If he has an antidote he may ignore this (any effect that negates harmful potions will work here, too). Cross off the antidote if he uses it.

Otherwise, keep a note of how many game paragraphs you read. Ookle will die when this score reaches 20. Curiously, the only cure for this poison is daylight - if Ookle stands in daylight at any time, this poison is nullified.

For now, turn to 70 (remembering to note this is the first game paragraph you read).

4

There's a bit of a wait at the 'Touch a Famous Jumblee' stand, and as I'm waiting I says to the Cracked Jawbone in front of me, 'Who's so famous we's got to pay to touch them, then?'

And this Cracked Jawbone says, 'We's got three just-a-bit famous jumblees. Bidi-Bidi Big-Belly, Mxztqeesthz the Unpronounceable, the greatest hunter in the land, and Pipsy the Grunk-Slayer.'

'Is that all?' I asks. 'I doesn't know any of them.'

'Oh, and there's the mega-famous jumblee: Dan, the Hero of the Battle of Crying Mothers. That's the one where the glorious Cracked Jawbone tribe smashed the pathetic Broken Finger tribe.'

Who do Ookle and Thump-Thump wish to see?

Bidi-Bidi Big-Belly, at a cost of 2 krackels? (Turn to 68)

Mxztqeesthz the Unpronounceable, at a cost of 3 krackels? (Turn to 30)

Pipsy the Grunk-Slayer, at a cost of 3 krackels? (Turn to 57)

Dan, the Hero of the Battle of Crying Mothers, at a cost of 5 krackels? (Turn to 39)

Or, if they don't wish to pay to see any of these jumblees, turn to 80.

5

Thump-Thump and me makes our way to a big, high wall where the Cracked Jawbones are trussing up some of their prisoners, and slinging them out into open air. As we arrives, an announcer is shouting out, to a few dozen jumblees massed about the bottom of the wall, 'Okay, we's got an interesting wall toss here... We's got two competitors in this next race towards death (by being tied up and tossed from a big, high wall)... The first is a human fella - Adrian, son of Hadrian, son of Dradrian,

son of Neil.'

Adrian son of all those other fellas is hoisted up in front of the crowd, and he screams out, 'Please, I don't want to diiiieeee...' And all the jumblees at the bottom of the wall loves that, and starts laughing.

And the announcer says, 'And our second competitor is a jumblee from the Tooth-Gnasher tribe who, having been inflicted with the curse of eternal gloominess by the Golden Kangaroo Panjambu, has, quite remarkably, come here willingly. I presents to you - Bimple the Downtrodden!'

And Bimple stands in front of the crowd, and gives a little sigh, and manages a little wave. He can't seem to summon more energy than that.

'Bimple has kindly offered to leap from the wall,' says the announcer, 'but competition rules state that he must be tied up and thrown off. Sorry, Bimple.'

Bimple gives a little shrug, but doesn't seem too bothered.

'Now, place your bets, place your bets. Which of these fine competitors will be the first to extinguish the baneful candle that we call life?'

If Ookle wishes to place a bet on which competitor will die first when thrown from the wall, make a note of how many krackels he wagers (up to a maximum of 12), and which competitor he bets on, and then turn to 43.

Alternatively, if Ookle doesn't wish to watch the competition, he may go elsewhere in the festival. Turn to 80.

6

But then a little light shines out of Panjambu's head, and fixes on the Wii thingy what I took from Graham. And Panjambu says, 'Keying in to available technology. Reconfiguring compatibility... 5%... 11%... 12%... 13%... 71%, 83%, 93%. Compatible with available technology. Please input demand.'

And I says, 'Yeah, we's looking for an Iridellian. Where is he?'

And Panjambu waits a bit, then says, 'Request not recognised.'

'Gimme a go,' says Thump-Thump. I gives him the Wii thingy. Inspired, he makes a jump to the left, then takes a step to the right. Then he puts his hands, and the Wii thing, on his hips. And all the time, he's saying, 'We is looking... for an Iri-wotsit. Iridellian. Where... is he?'

And then Panjambu says, 'Motion sensor recognition activated. Iridellian designated Aerondil made an unauthorised attempt to access memory banks of Golden Kangaroo mainframe terminal #3772 on date 34.41.373. Golden Kangaroo mainframe terminal #3772 inflicted curse of devolution in retaliation, and rebooted terminal.'

Thump-Thump brings his knees in tight, then waves the Wii thingy around and around next to his head. 'And this Aerondil... he's the one... what stole... the potion... from Big-Big Scary Dragon?'

'Potion of Ultimate Restoration, once activated by daylight, is only known cure for curse of devolution. One such example in sufficient quantities exists within scanning range. Previously in proximity to dragon designated Zieryl. Potion currently in cavern designated Big, Main Cavern by Cracked Jawbone tribe of jumblee people. More precise scan not possible at this time.'

'How did you know that'd make Panjambu speak to us?' I asks, watching Thump-Thump as he jiggles around and about.

'An ancient grunk hero once used this mystical dance to escape from a magick time warp,' explains Thump-Thump. 'I thought it might work here, too.'

But then Panjambu says, 'Reactivation of curse motor. Engage cursing in five... four... three...'

'Now's probably a good time to leave,' I says, and we heads for the exit.

Roll one die. On a roll of '6' Panjambu hits Ookle with a curse, causing one of his feet to fall off. This reduces Ookle's Dodging Stuff score to 1D, and it may never rise higher than this.

Then, walking or hopping, turn to 80.

7

I dives under the water, and I sees it's a deep pool - and that there's a bunch of dead folk already at the bottom. I risks a quick breath, and a stone like a grapefruit almost brains me.

I swims under the surface then and grabs the little rat-woman. She's panicked, and can't do much to stop me crushing her little throat - well, just a bit; when she opens her mouth to take a breath, she gets a lungful of water. She wins our little race pretty quickly, after that.

I gets fished out of the water with all the rest once rat-woman's dead. But nobody likes a loser - somebody buffets me about the ear, more because that's all part of the fun of the sport than because I've messed up anybody's bets.

Ookle loses 3 Not Dead Yet points. If he bet on the rat-woman winning the race he may collect a number of krackels equal to his original stake. If he bet on the barbarian or the salamander-woman, he loses his money.

Turn to 80.

8

'No, we ain't got nothing like that,' says I.

'Oh, that's a shame,' says the soon-to-be-dead jumblee. 'If I can't manage to buy Imelda's love, I doesn't know what I can do... Well, keep your eyes and ears and nose open for one; if you does come across one, you'll find me round here, somewhere.'

If Ookle does find a Necklace of Rat Skulls, he may search out the old jumblee any time he is at paragraph 70, choosing a new destination. In this case, turn directly to 42 to look for him.

For now, turn to 80.

9

So, as Thump-Thump and I goes sniffing along the pathway that leads from Big-Big Scary Dragon's lair, the book says:

Zieryl (prop n.) A greater drake, or wyrm, believed to inhabit the mountains of northern Woomoro. Legends dating back three to four millennia speak of a human warlock named Zieryl who sought immortality; evidence that is admittedly rather circumstantial suggests a link between the warlock and the present-day wyrm.

– Aerondil's Almanac of the Below-Realms (a work in progress)

'Chatty little thing, isn't it?' says Thump-Thump. 'Does all books chatter on like that?'

'Maybe,' says I. 'This is the first one I's ever seen.'

Big-Big Scary Dragon splashed a lot of blood over the wall of his cave; whoever was brave enough to go thieving from Big-Big Scary Dragon's lair probably had to limp out of there. I doesn't know what type of blood it is, exactly. Not jumblee, and not human. But the smell of it leads us along towards Potion Jimmy's little cabin, which is good, because I wanted to ask him about the book anyway.

Potion Jimmy lives in a hut made from bent Bulu stems. He's a small fella; his hut is small-fella size. So Thump-Thump stays outside, and I goes in by myself.

Potion Jimmy buzzes up to the ceiling (he's a miribit; he can fly), and says, 'Hello, Ookle, you ignorant chump-chump. Do you want to buy a potion, or can I offer you something really, really

special?'

'Hello Potion Jimmy, you hateful little urgling. You seen any thief-types come by here? Big-Big Scary Dragon wants me to find one, and by the smell of it, I'm not far behind him.'

'I'll tell you if you promise to buy something,' says Potion Jimmy. And I promises that I will, even though I might not. And so Jimmy says, 'Yep. You're looking for an Iridellian - a polymorpher. Saw him floating along towards my little hut, all glowy and stuff... but then, before he got near, he polymorphised himself, and turned into a black-skinned jumblee. Went wandering off towards the warrens of the Cracked Jawbone tribe.'

'Right, right, an Iridellian,' says I, not really knowing what that is. 'A polymorpher,' I continues, not really knowing what that is either.

'So, what're you going to buy from me?' asks Potion Jimmy. 'Just a potion, or something special?'

If Ookle wants to buy something from Potion Jimmy, turn to 54.

If he asks Potion Jimmy about his book, turn to 16.

If he decides to snap Potion Jimmy's little neck, turn to 64.

If he and Thump-Thump leave Potion Jimmy's place, and go on their way, turn to 81.

10

We arrives at the entrance to Cracked Jawbone territory. Now, the Broken Finger and the Cracked Jawbone isn't enemies, exactly - but they isn't friends exactly, either (Clever-Clever Tribal Advisor Berrinninn says that we sometimes has 'skirrimishes'). Anyways, it's a good thing that Thump-Thump is with me, I decides.

So, the Cracked Jawbone tribe is a bit like the Broken Finger tribe, except where's we've got blue skin, they's got black skin. We kills each other sometimes, because of that. The Cracked Jawbones look after the Great Seal of Going Outside, which is the only way for a jumblee to go outside of Big, Dark Mountain. They thinks that makes them special or something. Me, I thinks they just have more work to do.

So we arrives at Great Big Main Cavern of the Cracked Jawbones without much trouble - and we see that they's already started celebrating Jumblee-Wumblee a day early. There's hunnereds and hunnereds of Cracked Jawbone jumblees running around Great Big Main Cavern, and some of them's in costumes and some of them's banging on drums and some of them's squawking poems.

'Can you smell this Iri-wotsit fella, then?' Thump-Thump asks me.

And I sniffs, and I says, 'He's passed this way. I can't be sure which of these hunnereds of black-skin jumblees he is, though - if he's even any of them at all. I thinks we'll have to walk around a bit, and try to smell him or spot him.'

And then a Cracked Jawbone runs up to us, and he's wearing a pink hat, and he says, 'Ooh, are you visitors? My name's Pudding, and I'm head of JR - that means Jumblee Resources, by the way - and I's very happy to tell you all about what's happening for Jumblee-Wumblee.'

'I knows what JR means,' says I. 'Why's you started Jumblee-Wumblee a day early, then?'

And Pudding with the pink hat shrugs his shoulders and says, 'I dunno. Big Important Chief Smasher-of-Enemy-Skulls felt like it, I s'pose.'

'What's you got here then, in terms of celebrations?' I asks.

Which of the Jumblee-Wumblee festivities do Ookle and Thump-Thump wish to observe?

The Bazaar (turn to 89)

The Big Tree What Knows Secrets (turn to 51)

The Great Seal of Going Outside (turn to 83)

Panjambu, the Golden Kangaroo of Misery or Mirth (turn to 41)
The Prisoner Races (turn to 22)
The 'Touch a Famous Jumblee' Stand (turn to 4)
The Treasure Hunt (turn to 35)
The Poetry Squawking (turn to 77)
The Wild-Eyed Future-Looker (turn to 96)

11

As me and Thump-Thump is walking around, I is keeping my ears open for any interesting information.

Roll one die, and turn to the paragraph indicated.

If you roll 1 or 2, turn to 38.
If you roll 3 or 4, turn to 20.
If you roll 5 or 6, turn to 61.

12

The Future-Looker takes my nine krackels, and looks at them hard-like. Then she throws two of them over her shoulder. 'Not big enough. Two more krackels.'

I looks around me and I sees a lot of Cracked Jawbones taking an interest, and even with Thump-Thump with me, I thinks it might be best not to put a hammer in the woman's head.

If Ookle is willing to pay another two krackels for a consultation, turn to 44.
If Ookle won't, or can't, pay another two krackels, turn to 70 to choose a new destination.

13

'The potion you seek to retrieve is curative in nature,' says Big Tree, 'But it will work only in the light of day. The one who now possesses it risks remaining underground, and a worsening of his ailment, because he seeks something that was stolen from him.'

'No, I didn't really understand that,' says I. 'Can you repeat it?'
 But the Big Tree doesn't repeat anything, so I goes on my way.

Turn to 80.

14

'This is a Mirror of Missed Opportunities, a very prudent purchase,' says the Cracked Jawbone vendor. 'I suggest you invoke its power only when faced with failure or death.'

Ookle may use the mirror to create a ripple in time. When used, Ookle may travel into the past, returning to paragraph 10. Ookle's character sheet remains unchanged, though all locations and encounters are treated as if they have never previously taken place (until Ookle experiences them again, of course).

Note the Mirror of Missed Opportunities under Ookle's Things. It is usable just once, and will shatter after it is used.

Turn to 70.

15

I punches Dan, The Hero of the Battle of Pained Parents, in the belly for a bit. And then I gets him on the floor and stands on his neck. And when he gets sick of me doing that, he decides to die. And the Cracked Jawbones watching us goes, 'Yay! Dan's a hero! Dan's a hero!'

And I says, 'No, Dan's the dead one on the floor. I'm Ookle.'

And they all goes, 'Yay! Ookle's a hero! Ookle's a hero!'

And I searches his body while it's still warm, because jumblee law says I can (fact is, if you kill any sort of person or monster these days, a bit of corpse-robbing is expected). And I finds a little bottle that's got a word written on the side. And it takes me a couple of minutes to read it, but that word says, 'Stamina'.

And I goes, 'Stamina? What's that then?'

And Thump-Thump goes, 'It's what folks have still got when they're not dead yet. Keep it.'

I also finds 12 krackels on Dead Dan, and I manages to get back my 5 krackels back that I paid to touch the traitor scum-scum (and touch him I did).

The Potion of Stamina restores 5 Not Dead Yet points when swallowed, though it may not be used in combat. Note the potion and the money on Ookle's character sheet, and turn to 55 (Ookle may not choose to speak to Dan again in the future).

16

When I shows Potion Jimmy my book, it opens up and says:

Miribit (*n, pl. 'miribits'*) *Imagine a fat little naked man, about eight inches tall. Smack him against a wall a few times. Swap his head with a worm's, and stick a couple of piddly wings on his back that have no business supporting that much weight. Revolting things. Still, one of the brighter denizens of the Below-Realms. Some have even mastered a few magic tricks.*

- Aerondil's Almanac of the Below-Realms (a work in progress)

'Ooh, a magic talking book,' says Jimmy. 'Nice, if a bit offensive. If it's not finished my guess is that this bloke Aerondil is the one you're looking for. Is it for sale?'

I thinks, and I shakes my head. 'Not yet,' I says. 'Not until I know more about it.'

Next, if Ookle wants to buy something from Potion Jimmy, turn to 54.

If he decides to snap Potion Jimmy's little neck, turn to 64.

If he and Thump-Thump leave Potion Jimmy's place, and go on their way, turn to 81.

17

I goes back to the circle of poetry squawking, and I watches the poems for a bit, and I thinks about if I wants to do a poem myself.

If Ookle decides to recite a poem, he will have to make a Thinking roll. First, roll one die to determine the mood of the crowd, and the difficulty of the roll.

1 or 2: friendly crowd; difficulty 6

3 or 4: getting bored; difficulty 8

5 or 6: hostile crowd, which enjoys heckling; difficulty 10

Then Ookle makes the Thinking roll, at the difficulty number indicated. If he succeeds, he receives 1D+2 krackels. If he fails, he takes 1D+2 Not Dead Yet points of damage, as the crowd throws things at him as a means of voicing its disapproval.

When Ookle is finished here, turn to 80.

18

A shifty-looking jumblee from the Rotting Gum tribe approaches me, and says, 'Hey, buddy... them's some big teeth in your grunk pal's mouth. How much would it be worth to give him a little sleeping potion, and let us do some tooth-pulling? A tooth in a mouth is just a tooth - a tooth in the hand is money.'

I tells him I'm not interested, but he doesn't like that. Him and his buddies attack us - Thump-Thump fights four of them, and I fight their boss.

HEAD KRACKEL HARVESTER

Hitting Stuff: 2D

Dodging Stuff: 2D+1

Breaking Stuff: 2D+3

Not Dead Yet: 15

If Ookle and Thump-Thump win, Ookle may take 22 krackels, and 3 jumblee hatchets, from his opponents' bodies.

Turn to 70.

19

My eyes is working pretty good by now. My nose is too - and though there's new smells what I've never imagined all around me, I can also smell Aerondil's blood. So when I runs down into the trees, I knows I'm going to find him there.

But I finds a couple of other things there too. A couple of great white dogs, biting at him and pulling at him as he tries to climb a tree. I wonders for a second why he doesn't just fly away with them wing-things he's got on his back. But then I sees that one of them's all ripped.

Aerondil sees me then, and he shouts, 'My good jumblee, please, help me!'

And I wonders if it'll be easier to get Big-Big Scary Dragon's potion off him if he's still alive, or if I should wait until the white dogs kills him.

If Ookle helps Aerondil, turn to 76.

If Ookle backs off, turn to 95.

20

'Has you heard who's at the 'Touch a Famous Jumblee' stand this year?' says an excited jumblee woman. 'Mxztqeesthz the Unpronounceable, the best tracker in the world. He has secret ways of finding people that nobody else knows about.'

Turn to 70.

21

'Just a minute, just a minute,' I says. 'If you needs a candidate for wall tossing, I've got just the fella.' I whips out my Rod of Human Summoning, and I gives it a wiggle and a smack, and then Graham the Skinny Human Warrior appears with an almighty 'POP'.

'Oh God, no, not again!' shouts Graham. He runs around a bit, and the Cracked Jawbones all around us jumps on him and drags him to the ground. They ties him up, and he's screaming and screaming, and everybody's happy, because they loves a good show.

I goes over to say hello to Graham, 'cause I'm getting to like the guy. As some of the Cracked Jawbones is roping his hands behind his back, I says, 'Y'alright, Graham? You's looking well.'

And tears is streaming down his face, and he goes, 'Please, just stop... summoning me here. Just let me go back to my normal life.'

And I see that Graham's got a little white thing in his hand, so I gets it off him. 'What's this you got, Graham?' It's smooth, a little like an egg, but a tiny bit bigger and a tiny bit the wrong shape.

'What? That's just the controller of my games console. Please, don't let them hurt me. People saw me disappear this time! They'll know if I don't come back!'

I loses interest in Graham, then. The Cracked Jawbones hauls him up to the top of the wall, and puts him in competition against a little green bogey-dwarf. They slings the two of them off the wall together... and then just as Graham's about to hit the ground, he disappears again with another 'POP'.

The bogey-dwarf wins the wall toss, 'cause he dies first. The Cracked Jawbones is a bit annoyed with me, 'cause my fella didn't even go splat. I leaves before they starts to complain.

Note that Ookle has used one of the charges of the Rod of Human Summoning. Also note the 'Wii Controller' under Ookle's Things. Then turn to 80.

22

If Ookle has already observed the Prisoner Races, immediately turn to 88.

The Cracked Jawbones brings prisoners into Big, Dark Mountain sometimes. It's mostly the Cracked Jawbones what gets to go outside and steal people, because they's the ones looking after the Great Seal of Going Outside. I'm glad I'm not a Cracked Jawbone, and that I doesn't have to go into the Bright Outside whenever my tribal chief says so. Truth is, I finds the bright blue over-ceiling a bit frightful.

Thump-Thump and me wanders over to the Cracked Jawbones' Prisoner Races, and we're standing at the back of a big crowd of jumblees, so I says to Thump-Thump, 'Can you see what's happening there, Thumpy? What races are they doing?'

And one of the Cracked Jawbones standing in front of me hears me and turns round, and he says, 'The prisoners is competing to see which one of them can die first. Right now we's got them racing to see who can die first if we puts them in a big pool of water and throws rocks at them. If you walks a little way over there, you can watch the wall tossing. Same principle, but you throws the prisoners off a high wall, instead.

'What does you think, Thumpy?' I says, looking up. 'You in a gambling mood?'

If Ookle and Thump-Thump wish to watch the 'swimming in difficult circumstances' race, turn to 32.

If they wish to watch the wall tossing, turn to 5.

If they aren't interested in the prisoner races, turn to 80.

23

I glugs down the potion. And Aerondil watches me, and gives a little smile. 'You won't be able to get back inside your mountain now,' he says. 'But then, I think you won't want to.'

There's a big pain in my belly, and I thinks Aerondil's tricked me. I closes my eyes.

When I open them again, Aerondil has expired. He has a beatific smile on his face. His last act, this gift to me, was one that brought him solace, it seems.

I am transformed. I am jumblee no longer. I have become Iridellian - a creature of light, and flight; of reflection, of tranquility. My body is warm, bright. Wings like those of a great, golden butterfly have sprouted from my back. I rise up into the air, then flit a short way up the slope, to what I once naively called the Great Seal of Going Outside.

A voice comes to me from behind that metal portal. 'Ookle? You there? It's me, Thump-Thump. Is something happening?'

How to explain this change to dear Thump-Thump? I run a shining hand over the metal of the Great Seal. No, I cannot return, even with all the gifts now at my disposal.

I think for a moment of my former tribe, the Broken Finger. And I think of the dragon Zieryl's threat that he would exterminate them all if I failed to return with his property. He will or he won't, I suppose; I greet this inevitability with a new tranquility.

I rise up into the air, and take one last look at my once home, this big, dark mountain. And then I am away.

This adventure ends with Ookle's entry into a world of limitless possibility. May he profit from all it teaches him.

24

Now, say what you likes about the Cracked Jawbones, but you gots to admit they're protective of their own. When Thump-Thump explodes that little Pipsy, about two hunnered of them run around us and truss us up real nice (I mean, Thump-Thump kills about thirty of them while they's doing that, but in the end they truss him up).

They has some difficulty killing Thump-Thump. They tries poking him, and burning him, and cutting bits off him. They sticks things in his eyes, but he just giggles like it tickles. At last they decides to throw him in a big, deep hole that he can't climb out of, and just leave him there.

Me, I'm much easier to kill. One of them decides that a couple of long, sharp knives'll do the job - and he promises he'll pass bits of me round to all the jumblee kiddies for a Jumblee-Wumblee treat.

This is the end of this adventure. You may start again with a blank character sheet, if you wish.

25

Thinking fast, I bangs the Rod of Human Summoning against the floor. I's not sure exactly what will happen - but then, with a 'POP', Graham appears. And yet it's the skinny, young, afraid version of Graham, not the older, scary version.

'Look,' says young Graham. 'I've thought about this, and maybe I can offer you something that will make you stop - '

I grabs him, and jumps behind him. Older, mean Graham pauses. 'You understand the principles of time travel surprisingly well, Ookle. You realise that if I kill - '

Then Thump-Thump takes a step towards him, and pulls his head off.

Young Graham realises what's happened, and says, 'But that was... me! You just killed me! You just murdered me in the future!'

I shrugs. 'So don't become a half-machine bent on vengeance. Then it won't happen, will it?'

Then Thump-Thump and me slaps Graham around for a little bit, just for a laugh, until he disappears with another big 'POP'.

Scary Graham's Ultra-Kill-o-Cannon is DNA-coded, and Ookle may not use it. But he may take it along with him if he wishes; add it to Ookle's Things if so (he may sell it for 30 krackels at the bazaar). Then turn to 70.

26

I jumps across the little table what Dan, the Hero of the Battle of Wailing Women, is sitting at, and I gets him by the throat. Then I bangs his head against the table for a bit.

And Dan isn't very strong, and he screams out, 'I'm unarmed! I'm unarmed!'

Now, if I attacked a Cracked Jawbone like that, I'd probably have about a hunnered of his friends trying to kill me. But because Dan's a Broken Finger jumblee, they all wants to watch us fight instead. But then one of the Cracked Jawbones comes forward and says, 'Alright, do a bit of banging and strangling - but no weapons.' Then he points up at Thump-Thump. 'And no help from grunks, neither.'

DAN, HERO OF THE BATTLE OF CRYING MOTHERS

Hitting Stuff: 2D

Dodging Stuff: 2D

Breaking Stuff: 2D-1

Not Dead Yet: 14

Ookle must fight Dan, The Hero of the Battle of Crying Mothers, without using any weapons (though any armour/boots etc. is still permitted). If he wins, turn to 15.

27

So, as we walks towards the caverns of the Cracked Jawbone tribe, I plays with the rod I took from silly little Potion Jimmy. But then I drops it, and there's a flash of light. 'POP!'

And a human is standing there, all skinny and looking frightened. And he's wearing some sort of garment with writing on it that makes me think that maybe he's a wizard (except normally wizards aren't scared of jumblees), and I needs about a minute to read it, because I isn't good at reading (nor writing, nor 'rithmetic), but I thinks it says 'The Stone Roses'.

And all this time this skinny human looks at Thump-Thump, then looks at me, then looks at Thump-Thump again, and at last he screams out and he goes, 'Oh, sweet Jesus Lord this is REAL! Please don't kill me, please don't kill me, please don't kill me...'

And Thump-Thump and me just laughs at that.

And when I stops laughing I say, 'Who is you, human? If you's a big warrior, where's your sword?' I pokes him in the belly with my finger and he closes his eyes and makes a little noise and me and Thump-Thump laughs some more.

And the human goes, 'I'm not a warrior... My name is Graham, and I live in Chipping Norton, and... I don't know what's happening here. But please don't kill me and I'll do anything you want. My mum and dad have got a lot of money, and if you need them to I'm sure they'll - '

But then Graham the Skinny Human Warrior disappears with a flash. And me and Thump-Thump laughs at that, and keeps walking.

Note that the Rod of Human Summoning only has two charges left, and then turn to 10.

28

Suddenly Panjambu, the Golden Kangaroo of Misery or Mirth, appears in the air in front of me. And he says, 'Subject accepted. Curse mode activated.'

He fires a beam of light at me, then vanishes.

Roll one die to determine the effect of the blessing or curse that Panjambu delivers.

1: Poison: Ookle dies immediately, unless he has an antidote.

2 or 3: Enfeeblement: Ookle immediately loses half his Not Dead Yet points.

4 or 5: Strengthen: the next time Ookle hits somebody in combat, he will inflict maximum damage

6: Toughen: Ookle may add 2 points to his maximum Not Dead Yet score, and increase his current score to this new maximum.

If Ookle is still alive, turn to 70.

29

We're still pulling at the door when more sentinels of the Great Seal arrive, and point lots of swords at our throats. They takes us before Big Important Chief Smasher-of-Enemy-Skulls himself, interrupting him as he's competing in Jumblee-Wumblee rat-stomping. He's annoyed with that, and considers smashing in our skulls for a bit. But when we tells him our story, he decides he can't do any worse to us than what Big-Big Scary Dragon probably has in mind.

He gets his people to drag us to the exit to Cracked Jawbone territory, and he goes back to leaping on vermin.

Turn to 63.

30

I is surprised to learn that Mxztqeesthz the Unpronounceable isn't a jumblee at all, but a green-skinned bogey-dwarf. He doesn't speak to people when they come to touch him - he just looks at them, kind of superior-like, and lets them lay a couple of fingers on him.

I comes up to him (after I've paid my krackels and waited a bit), and I says, 'These folks is saying that you is the best hunter in all the world, and that you has special permission to just wander in and out of Big, Dark Mountain as you want.'

And Mxztqeesthz doesn't speak to me, he just looks at me, superior-like. And that gets my goat a bit, and I thinks about bashing him on the head to see how serene he'll be then.

And at last he says, 'I am a 'ranger'. I walk in the wild places. I hunt that which no-one else can catch.'

And I says to him, 'You ever hunt an Iridellian, one of those folks from the city of glasses? 'Cause I'm looking for one of them just now.'

And that gets his interest. He steeple his fingers, and he gives me a couple of sniffs with his big bogey-dwarf nose. And then he says, 'Hunting an Iridellian is no different to hunting any other creature. Do not waste your energy in the chase. I sense that you already possess something that your

quarry dearly desires. Simply make that known, and wait for him to come to you.'

And then he steeples his fingers again, and gives me a calm look, and he doesn't speak any more.

Ookle will bear these tips in mind; if Aerondil's Almanac ever offers information on a 'Gibbering Gypper', you may subtract 40 from the paragraph you are reading at the time to watch for anybody else taking an interest in the book.

Turn to 72.

31

'In fact, I got a question for you, Big Silly Secret-Telling Tree,' I says. 'I hears a little whisper-whisper that I's got to go through the Great Seal, into the Bright Outside. But I doesn't know how to get that open, like.'

And the Tree What Knows Secrets is quiet for a bit, and then it says, 'That's not the sort of thing I can go around telling just anyone. I'll need a special offering for that one. Bring me... um... a catapult. Yes, that'll do.'

If Ookle already possesses a catapult, turn to 69. If not, he may return here when he finds such an item - in this case, you may immediately turn to 69 the next time you visit the Big Tree What Knows Secrets (make a note of this).

For now, turn to 80.

32

With Thump-Thump's help, I manages to jostle my way to the front of the crowd, so's I'm right on the edge of the pool. I gets there just as one of the races begins. It's between a human and a green-and-grey jumblee, of the Insufferable Backache tribe. They both gets thrown in, and then the jumblees all around starts throwing great big rocks at them. Well, it doesn't last long - the green-and-grey jumblee gets cracked across the head by a rock the size of my fist, and his eyes sort of turn up inside his skull, and he sinks to the bottom of the pool. Everyone cheers for him - he's won the race to see who dies first. The human gets fished out, but gets a bit of a beating for losing.

A jumblee announcer steps up and shouts over the din of the crowd, saying, 'Excellent race, excellent race... but now we's got something really special for you. A three-way race to see who can escape the mortal vale first! The first competitor: she's a rat-woman from the northern tunnels, and she's afraid of water! Please welcome Rrriktilit!'

And the crowd claps for Rrriktilit. And she looks terrified, and screeches and screeches, so the crowd claps harder - they loves a bit of showmanship.

'The second competitor, he's a human barbarian from the western forests, and he's only got one arm! Please welcome... the human barbarian who refuses to tell us his name!'

And the crowd claps for the one-armed barbarian, but he just stands there looking all grim.

'And the final competitor... we've found something really special for you - please welcome Amanda the Salamander!'

And he brings out some sort of lizard woman, who stands still and barely seems alive. Folk clap for her anyways, and I tries to remember if salamanders live in water or not.

'The race to escape the pain of existence will begin shortly - please place any bets now with one of our official representatives.'

If Ookle wishes to bet on the race, decide how much he will bet, up to a maximum of 12 krackels, and which competitor he will bet on (the rat-woman, the one-armed barbarian, or Amanda the Salamander). Then, whether

he bets or not, turn to 73.

Alternatively, if Ookle doesn't wish to observe the race, turn to 80.

33

Aerondil holds the bottle up, and a bit of sunlight touches it. The potion inside changes from blue to a shining, golden light.

'There. I've stimulated the potion's active ingredients,' he says.

'Don't make a difference to me,' I says, with a shrug. 'I still needs to stave your head in and take that thing back to Big-Big Scary Dragon.'

'And how will you get back into your mountain, if you do?' asks Aerondil. 'I'm guessing you used some sort of incantation to open the Cracked Jawbones' Great Seal - one that is only effective once? Perhaps if you go back to the seal and knock, the Cracked Jawbones will let you back in. But the Cracked Jawbone chief is the only one that can grant permission to open that seal. I know that chief a little, now, and my guess is that you'll die of exposure long before he makes any sort of decision one way or the other.'

'Maybe,' I says. 'But you must have opened it, to get into Big, Dark Mountain in the first place.'

'And I can open it again,' says Aerondil. 'But I'm dying. I doubt I'll even make it back up to the seal.' It's true - he is doing a lot of bleeding. 'This potion will rid me of my curse, and cure all my wounds, if you let me drink it. And then I'll gladly open that seal for you. But you've saved my life today, jumblee, and so in return I'll offer you the greatest gift you can imagine.'

I picks a bit of wax out of my ear, and I says, 'What's that, then?'

He holds up the potion. 'This. You're under a curse as well, jumblee. This potion that I managed to lift from your patron dragon's hoard will cure you as easily as it will me. You won't be a jumblee any more. You'll be... an Iridellian, like me.'

I shrugs. 'No thanks.'

Aerondil smiles. 'Don't dismiss this offer too quickly. There's so much in the world that you've never seen, that you can't even imagine - art, music, cuisine. Ludwig's Seventh Symphony. The paintings of Van Damme. Fjords and deserts and rainforests. There are a thousand, thousand cultures, in this world each with a thousand, thousand ideas you've never imagined could exist. This world is immense - it is so, so much bigger than the dark little caves you live in. And this one golden potion will make you a better person, and grant you utter freedom, so you may go where you will, and do whatever you desire to. What do you say?'

If Ookle drinks the potion, turn to 23.

If Ookle lets Aerondil drink the potion, turn to 84.

If Ookle takes the potion from Aerondil, but he doesn't want to drink it, turn to 78.

34

Riddling Steven asks his question at last. He says, 'What's the name of the driver of the cart?'

If you know the name of the driver, convert it into numbers using the system A = 1, B = 2, C = 3 etc. Then turn to the paragraph that is the same as this number.

If you do not know the answer to the question, Ookle is disqualified from the treasure hunt, amid much booing and jeering. Turn to 80.

35

Ookle may only enter the treasure hunt once. If he has already taken part in this event, turn back to 70.

The treasure hunt is a tradition for all the jumblee tribes during Jumblee-Wumblee. It's ain't really a 'hunt' these days - it's more like a series of several events, each one eliminating some of the jumblee competitors, until you's got just one jumblee left at the end who qualifies for the secret 'grand prize'.

Me and Thump-Thump enters, so's I can get some tips for the treasure hunt I'm s'posed to organise tomorrow. We does well in the opening rounds, the hound-stunning and pixie-slapping. But Thump-Thump gets cut when it comes to the orchid arranging - his 'starburst' display fails to bring the requisite four tears to the judges' eyes.

So, at last, I is left with just a few others, and we comes to the 'mental agility' round. A wizened Cracked Jawbone (with the long, white beard that all truly wizened folk must sport) comes out and presents us with a riddle. He goes:

'My name is Riddling Steven,
And I seeks a number shrouded in rhyme.
A number equal, fair, even.
A number important, a number prime.'

That one's a head-scratcher, I decides. I has to think and think about that one.

If you know the answer to Riddling Steven's conundrum, turn to the paragraph that has the same number as the answer. If not, Ookle is eliminated from the treasure hunt, and must visit a different area. In this case, turn to 80.

36

As we walks around the various stalls of the Jumblee-Wumblee festivities, I suddenly catches a faint smell of blood - the same blood that the Iridellian potion thief left on the wall of Big-Big Scary Dragon's cave.

'Thump-Thump,' I says. 'I've got a scent.'

Roll one die to determine where the trail leads.

If you roll 1 to 9, turn to 97.

If you roll 4 to 6, turn to 47.

37

The last thing I sees is the inside of the barrel of Graham's Ultra-Kill-o-Cannon, all blinding and unbearably hot. The last thing I thinks before he fires is, 'I bet this really, really hurts.'

This adventure ends with Ookle's obliteration. You may start again with a new character sheet, if you wish.

38

'Has you seen the prize that Riddling Steven is offering in the treasure hunt this year?' one Cracked Jawbone asks another. 'None of the other tribes' Jumblee-Wumblee celebrations will be able to offer anything like that...'

Turn to 70.

39

I's surprised to see that Dan, the Hero of the Battle of Crying Mothers is not a Cracked Jawbone jumblee, but a Broken Finger jumblee, just like me (and not a very big one, either). I waits in the line, and when I gets to the front, I says, 'How come the Cracked Jawbone thinks you's a hero of the Battle of Wotsit, when you was fighting *against* them?'

And Dan shrugs his shoulders, and he says, 'Because I'm a Broken Finger traitor, and I gave the Cracked Jawbone lots of secret-secret information. That's what won the Battle of Crying Thingy.'

'You're a traitor?' I says. 'My brother died in that battle!'

And he says, 'So did mine. Though that's probably because I stabbed him...'

If Ookle decides to seek revenge by attacking Dan, The Hero of the Battle of Crying Mothers, turn to 26.

If he decides it's wiser not to pick a fight with a war hero, it's best he leaves. Turn to 55.

40

This encounter may only take place once. If it has already taken place, turn directly to 70.

If Ookle has a Rod of Human Summoning (whether or not it has any charges left) turn to 94. If he doesn't have this item, turn to 85.

41

Some folks thinks that Panjambu the Golden Kangaroo of Misery or Mirth is a world-maker, up there with The Grand Mudshaper, who made the whole world from a big ball of mud floating through the starry black over-ceiling, or Magda the Whistler, who walks the world even today, and everywhere she goes she whistles a little song that turns into mountains and trees and animals and birds.

But the Broken Finger tribe knows that Panjambu isn't a world-maker. We has stories of Umberto the Long-Wanderer, the jumblee who first met Panjambu in the deep, deep caves of Nearly-Never-Come-Back. And we has the stories of what Umberto said to Panjambu that day.

Umberto the Long-Wanderer did look upon the golden face of Panjambu, and say, 'What are you, strange beast that shines in the dark?'

And Panjambu looked upon Umberto the Long-Wanderer and said, 'Welcome to the Golden Kangaroo mainframe. Please enter username and password to proceed. (Don't have a username? Select 'new user' from the menu of options)'

And Umberto said to Panjambu, 'You speak in words both strange and profound, and you glitter like a magnificent golden ghost. Are you a world-maker, like Magda the Whistler, or Clive the Swamp-Squelcher?'

And Panjambu did regard Umberto, and he said, 'Error 404. Inquiry not recognised.'

And then wise Panjambu cursed Umberto the Long-Wanderer so that one of his legs fell off. Panjambu's quirky like that.

These days, Panjambu lives in the caverns of the Cracked Jawbone, because they robbed him off of the Broken Finger in one of our wars. That was okay. We was getting sick of him cursing people and making their legs fall off.

I takes Thump-Thump into the side cave where Panjambu lives. And it's a great big cave, that just has a little, little statue of a kangaroo in the middle, what comes up to my knee (there are no other kangaroos in Big, Dark Mountain; it was Panjambu what taught us what one of those was).

'If we's looking for somebody,' I says to Thump-Thump, 'maybe Panjambu's the fella to ask. Real clever bloke.'

And as we gets near the little statue, it shines all golden and glowy, and then suddenly it's about as tall as Thump-Thump (but a bit flickery, and ghostly-like), and it says, "Welcome to the Golden Kangaroo mainframe. Please enter username and password to proceed. (Don't have a username? Select 'new user' from the menu of options)'

If Ookle wishes to ask a question, turn to 49.

If he thinks it's wiser to leave, turn to 80.

42

Now that we's got a necklace of rat skulls, I look for the old jumblee fella I spoke with earlier. Happily, he hasn't died yet - I finds him pestering a few more folks about getting hold of some jewelery.

'Oi, oldie,' I says. 'I gots that necklace of rat skulls you wanted.'

'You has? Oh, wonderful, wonderful. Clementine will be so delighted.'

'Clementine?' says I. 'I thought you said this was for Imelda.'

'Oh, yes! Imelda, that's right. Clementine is just my backup, you see. Now, how much did you want for it?' He's carrying a little bag, and he puts it on the floor and opens it up. 'Well, I've got... a little stone knife, and... a catapult, and... seven... no, eight krackels. Which do you want?'

'Which?' I says, with a little chuckle. 'I'll take it all, thanks.' I scoop up the bag, and toss him the necklace. 'Hope your great big girlie likes it.'

Note the Stone Knife (+1 to Ookle's Hitting Stuff), Catapult and 8 krackels on Ookle's character sheet, and remember to cross off the Necklace of Rat Skulls. Then, turn to 80.

43

The two fellas, the human and the jumblee, is thrown from the high wall, and they fall at exactly the same speed. But then, with a great 'OOOMPH,' the human slams into Thump-Thump's head, and rolls off him, and slides down onto the ground.

Bimple the Downtrodden is much better at this self-destruction lark, I guesses. He splats onto the floor real nicely, and I'm sure I sees a little grin on his face in the microsecond before he lands.

Adrian, son of all those other fellas, is rolling around on the floor, moaning, not quite dead, but not as happy as you think he'd be.

'Er... well, I suppose that Bimple has won the race,' announces the announcer. But a bunch of angry Cracked Jawbones is surrounding Thump-Thump, saying that now he should be tied up. 'Actually, yes...' says the announcer. 'Competition rules do say that if anybody interferes with the race, they are themselves forced to take part in the next round. Of course, no grunks have ever been forced to take part in this kind of competition before...'

If Ookle bet on Bimple, he receives krackels equal to his original stake. If he bet on Adrian, he loses his stake.

If Ookle is happy for Thump-Thump to take part in the next wall toss, turn to 93.

If he refuses to let Thump-Thump participate, turn to 50.

If he has a Rod of Human Summoning, and wishes to use it, turn to 21.

44

'Okay, that's enough,' says the Future-Looker. 'You comes inside the tent with me. Lumpy stays outside,' she says, pointing at Thump-Thump.

The Wild-Eyed Future-Looker takes me inside the tent, and she lights a couple of candles, and does a dance and she screams for a few minutes. And then at last she sits down and scratches her head. And she says, 'You'll need to go through the Great Seal of Going Outside, Broken Finger. And not just anybody can go through that. You'll need some magic words.'

But she doesn't know what those magic words are, so I says thanks for that, and I goes back outside.

If Ookle wishes to ask somebody what magic words are needed to pass through the Great Seal, he may do so when you are reading a paragraph that contains the phrase, 'I steps in bird muck'. To do so, subtract 20 from the number of the paragraph you're reading at the time, and turn to this new paragraph.

For now, turn to 80.

45

Me and Thump-Thump bumps into a little snotling carrying a crossbow, and wearing a big crucifix around his neck. 'Hey, you,' he says to us. 'You seen any vampires around here?'

'No,' says I.

'Me neither,' he says. Then he leans closer, and whispers, 'Truth is, I'm a pro vampire hunter, but I don't think there's a single vampire in Big, Dark Mountain. I've had to sell all my anti-vampire gear at the bazaar just to keep a little cash in my pockets. Actually... Forget what I just said. Do you want to buy some holy water? I'll give you a discount price of five krackels.'

Note down the Vial of Holy Water under Ookle's Things if he decides to buy it, then turn to 70.

46

'You again,' says the Future-Looker. 'Did you finds your magic words yet?' But she doesn't lets me answer, and right quick-like she says, 'So, you want a bit more future-looking, do you?' She does another little dance, and she bangs her head against the floor for a couple of minutes, and then she says, 'If you can get your dirty hands on a necklace of rat skulls, you can probably find somebody who'll give you something good in exchange for it.'

And I says thanks, and as I goes outside, she says, 'Here's another bit of future-looking for you: if you comes back here I'll just say the same thing, again and again.'

Note that Ookle may not return to the Future-Looker a third time (or rather that, if he does, he'll just hear the same prophecy over and over), and then turn to 80.

47

The scent leads me towards the prisoner races. 'The Iridellian, he's been here... and very recently. Left traces of his blood all over the place - he might be able to disguise his face, but he can't disguise his smell.' I sniffs a little more. 'Take a look around, Thump-Thump. He might still be nearby.'

If Ookle and Thump-Thump wish to visit the prisoner races immediately, turn to 22.

If not, turn to 70 to choose a different destination.

I keeps my magick almanac open as I'm looking over the gibbering gypers - it tells me a little about gypper sporting statistics, and what to look for when I'm choosing a runner. But then I remembers the ranger fella's advice, that I just has to leave out some bait for the folk I'm hunting, and wait for them to come to me.

I glances about me, all surreptitious-like, and I sees one of the Cracked Jawbones taking a whole lot of interest in me and my book. He's following us about, trying to be sneaky about it - but I'm guessing he ain't even a real jumblee, and jumblee sneaky is the best kind of sneaky.

Yeah, I gets in close to him, and I manages to get a good sniff of him. And he's about as much a jumblee as Thump-Thump is. There's a good whiff of blood about him, too - the same kind of blood what was left on the wall of Big-Big Scary Dragon's cave.

I spins round then, and I gets the false jumblee by the throat. And I says, 'You's got a potion that I wants back.' And I shows a bit of tooth as I says it.

'Ah, but you also have something of mine,' he says. 'The book I'm writing. Normally I'd suggest a simple swap - but, sadly, I must make my exit from here with both artifacts.'

'You're Aerondil, are you?' I says. 'You speaks funny. Keeps speaking like that, and I'll bite one of your ears off. And don't think about shouting out for help, neither. These Cracked Jawbones think to take a good sniff of you, and they'll know exactly what you isn't.'

He frowns at that. Then he gives a chesty cough, and his tongue lolls out, and I'm suddenly not sure I should be gripping him so close to me. But he recovers, and says, 'Well, I should be away. I've found this whole sojourn rather bracing - except for the curse, and being batted about by a dragon, and whatnot.' And then, with a great, big flash Aerondil transforms into a floaty, glowing jellyfish - except giant, with about fifty tentacles, and four big floaty wings. He slips two of them tentacles around my throat, and suddenly I'm the one getting strangulated. And a couple more of them tentacles reaches inside my little shoulder bag, and he thieves away the book I've been carrying around.

Then he throws me away. With a little luck, I hits something fairly soft and fleshy - Thump-Thump, it turns out.

Now, the Cracked Jawbones ain't stupid, and they's spotted this floaty, glowy jellyfish monster. So they runs at it with swords and axes and pokey-sticks. But Aerondil takes about thirty tentacles, and just goes 'whap - whap - whap - whap - whap - whap - whap - whap - whap - whap', and then the Cracked Jawbones is all either lying on the floor or running away from him.

Aerondil's four big, floaty wings starts buzzing real fast - like a wasp's, I thinks. And then he zips away into one of the tunnels.

I thinks for a second about what Big-Big Scary Dragon will do to my tribe if I doesn't get his potion back. Then I jumps up onto my feet, and says, 'Thump-Thump, he's making for the Great Seal of Going Outside! Come on!'

Remove Aerondil's Almanac from Ookle's character sheet, and turn to 60.

'We's looking for an Iridellian,' I says to the glowy kangaroo. 'Does you know where we can find one? Inside of Big, Dark Mountain, I means.'

And Panjambu says, 'Rebooting. // Terminal was not shut down correctly. Scanning internal systems and hard drives. Currently at 37%.'

And I says, 'Your words is no doubt wise, but a bit unclear. An Iridellian. Where is one?'

And Panjambu says, 'Rebooting. // Terminal was not shut down correctly. Scanning internal systems and hard drives. Currently at 37%.'

And I looks up at Thump-Thump, and I says, 'I swears, he's normally a lot more knowledgeable

and fearsome than this.'

Thump-Thump gives a little shrug. It takes a lot to vex him. And he says, 'Maybe if we come back later he'll be feeling a bit better?'

If Ookle has a Wii Controller, turn to 6.

Otherwise, he and Thump-Thump leave. Turn to 80.

50

'No way is my grunk buddy getting thrown off that wall,' says I. 'It's not his fault if them fellas at the top of the wall threw that human bloke onto his head. It's them fellas up there that should be thrown off, not him.'

I argues pretty well, I thinks, but there's a lot of jumblees around who don't like to see Broken Fingers and grunks messing with their favourite sports. At last, I has to agree to give them a bunch of my krackels just so they'll be quiet and let us go. Greedy Cracked Jawbone swine.

Ookle loses half his krackels (rounding odd numbers up). Then he and Thump-Thump decide to go elsewhere in the Jumblee-Wumblee festivities. Turn to 80.

51

The Big Tree What Knows Secrets is a big tree. Some says it knows secrets. It can talk, anyways, which is more'n most big trees can. It's giant and blue, and it stretches all the way up nearly to the ceiling of Great Big Main Cavern, and to get a secret from it you has to crawl down into the spaces between its roots.

I steps in bird muck as I goes to see the Big Tree what Knows Secrets, because in its big branches there's Big Birds What Do Plop-Plops. But I doesn't mind that so much, because you doesn't get to see a lot of birds in Big, Dark Mountain (you doesn't get to see a lot of trees either, what with there being no yellow-sun).

We has to wait a bit (with our hands over our heads) because there's some jumblee-kiddies down in the roots. But when I gets bored with waiting I drags them out and bites one of them on the ear, and they runs away. So I crawls down into the roots, and Big Tree What Knows Secrets sort of glows up a bit, and then says, 'The lower being wishes to receive the wisdom of the Root-Fathers, though it will understand but one grain of sand on all the beach. Make an offering of acorns from the Over-Realms, and listen well.'

And I sees little bags of baby-tree stones (which is 'acorns', I s'pose) all around me.

If Ookle wishes to offer one bag of acorns, cross it off and turn to 66.

If Ookle wishes to offer two bags of acorns, cross them off and turn to 13.

If Ookle wishes to offer three or more bags of acorns, cross them off and turn to 74.

If Ookle has no acorns, or doesn't wish to offer any, he leaves. Turn to 80.

52

A half-dozen grunklings - grunks no bigger than I is - runs up and starts hugging Thump-Thump. 'Daddy!' they says. 'Daddy, it's been so long since we've seen you! Tell us, daddy, have you got some money for us?'

'Are these sprogs yours, Thumpy?' I asks.

'Uh, I think so,' he answers. 'I know that two of them is, for sure. Ookle, old friend, has you got some cash we can give 'em?'

Ookle decides to give them 25% of the money he owns. Reduce Ookles krackels by this amount, and then turn to 70.

53

And so we arrives at Big-Big Scary Dragon's great big cave. We walks inside, real carefully like, and we see that Big-Big Scary Dragon's already awake, and moving around, snuffling through his treasure piles (which is a small surprise, because he can sleep for months, sometimes).

And I puffs out my chest and I says, 'Big-Big Scary Dragon. My name is Ookle and I am representative of the Jumblee Resources department of the Broken - '

'I do hate that name,' says Big-Big Scary Dragon. 'My name is Zieryl, and I have worn it for nearly four millennia, as both man and wyrm. I know that you silly jumblees have difficulty keeping a notion inside your small little brains, but do try to remember. A childish moniker, such as the one you insist on imposing on me, makes me... ravenous.'

'Uh, yes,' I says. 'Well, Big... uh... Zeer... I am here as representative of the Broken Finger tribe of Big Dark Mountain. Now it's traditional for you to offer us a treasure in appreciation of our loyalty, which we can then use as the prize in our annual Jumblee-Wumblee treasure - '

'I've been burgled,' says Big-Big Scary Dragon, cutting me off (which is okay, I s'pose, because he's big-big and scary). 'A little wizard-thief came in here not two hours ago and stole one of my potions. Some transformation thing or other.' And Big-Big Scary Dragon looks at me, and says, 'Actually, you... Bogle Jon, or whatever your name is...'

'I'm Ookle,' says I. 'Boogley Jon is dead.'

'Whatever. You jumblees with your big noses are fine trackers, and you have an easier time moving through these tunnels than I do. I'll tell you what - you bring me back my transformation potion, and I'll give you some decent treasure for your silly little hunt. I've left some of his blood for you on the wall over there. Sniff, sniff. And if you can't find him... well, I'll massacre your whole tribe.' And Big-Big Scary Dragon gives a big, scary smile.

'We needs weapons!' says Thump-Thump, suddenly. 'If you could only wound this thief, what chance does we got?'

And I wants to thump Thump-Thump when he says that (though I s'pose he's got a point).

But Big-Big Scary Dragon says, 'Yes... well...'. And he picks out some bits from his treasure piles, and he says, 'You can take two of these... lesser pieces, to help you.'

You may choose two of the following items, and add them to 'Ookle's Things'.

Scimitar of Head-Cutting-Off (*adds +1 to both 'Hitting Stuff' and 'Breaking Stuff' when used in combat*)

Potion of Keeping Folk Alive (*may be used once to restore Ookle's 'Not Dead Yet' points to maximum*)

Boots of Keepy-Away (*adds +2 to Ookle's 'Dodging Stuff'*)

Bag of Krackels (*contains 25 krackels, which may be added to Ookle's wealth*)

So I decides to do what Big-Big Scary Dragon wants, because my tribe will die if I doesn't.

Turn to 9.

54

Potion Jimmy offers the following concoctions:

Potion of Red Rage (+1 to *Breaking Stuff* for one combat): 5 krackels

Jimmy's Special Mixture (*when drunk, note down the number of the paragraph you are currently reading, and turn to 75*): 14 krackels

Guts-Back-In Potion (*restores 5 Not Dead Yet points*): 6 krackels

Ultimate Don't-Be-Sick Universal Antidote (*cures poison*): 6 krackels

Jawbreakers (*may be swallowed in combat; adds +2 to Hitting Stuff and +2 to Breaking Stuff for one attack; does not work against opponents that don't have heads - or jaws*): 3 krackels each (3 available)

Except for the jawbreakers, only one flask of each potion is available; note any potions that Ookle buys under 'Ookle's Things'.

'I've also got a magick item for you,' says Potion Jimmy. And he takes out a stick with a couple of feathers attached to it. 'This is a genuine Rod of Human Summoning. When you use it, it'll summon up a fearsome human warrior to fight for you. No, I can't demonstrate it - it only has three charges, see...'

Potion Jimmy won't accept krackels for the Rod of Human Summoning; he'll only swap it for one of the items that Big-Big Scary Dragon offered Ookle. Note it down under 'Ookle's Things' if he decides to take it.

If Ookle asks Potion Jimmy about his book, turn to 16.

If he decides to snap Potion Jimmy's little neck, turn to 64.

If he and Thump-Thump leave Potion Jimmy's place, and go on their way, turn to 81.

55

As we leaves the 'Touch a Famous Jumblee' stand, a dodderly little Cracked Jawbone comes up to us, a walking stick in each hand, and he looks at Thump-Thump with little squinty eyes, and he says, 'Is that you, my darling Imelda?'

And I says, 'No it's not. And if your Imelda looks anything like my lumbering buddy here, I hopes I never, ever has to meet her.'

And the dodderly, squinty old jumblee says, 'Maybe you can help me. I said I'd get Imelda a necklace of rat skulls as a special present for Jumblee-Wumblee. Does you know where I can find one?'

If Ookle has such a necklace, and wishes to give it to the old jumblee, turn to 99.

If Ookle doesn't have a Necklace of Rat Skulls, or doesn't wish to give it to the old jumblee, turn to 8.

If Ookle has already given the jumblee a Necklace of Rat Skulls, turn to 90.

56

I rubs at the Rod of Human Summoning, and then bangs it against the floor for a bit, and at last with a flash and a pop Graham the Skinny Human Warrior appears, all dressed in black and white.

'Oh, no,' he says. 'Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no.'

And I gives him a wicked little grin and I says, 'Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.'

'No, this can't be happening today,' says Graham. 'Today's my wedding day. Please, you have to

send me back. Oh, God, if Karen's parents find out I'm being... summoned... by little blue imps.'

'Calm yourselves down, Graham you spineless worm,' says I (and then later I thinks that all worms is spineless, so it's not a very good insult, but it's intimidating enough for the moment). 'Does you know anything about poetry?'

Spineless Graham blinks once or twice, then he says, 'Yes. Actually, I studied English Literature at Keele Univ - '

'Yes, yes, yes. Well, goes and stands in that circle then,' I says. 'And tell us all a good poem.'

'Or I'll EATS ya,' adds Thump-Thump (who's been a bit quiet, in view of how much he loves bullying little people).

So Graham nods, and he goes and stands in the middle of all the Cracked Jawbone jumblees, and he goes, 'Uh... okay... This is a poem called 'The Windhover', by Gerard Manley Hopkins. It takes as its theme - '

'Manly!' shouts one of the jumblees in the crowd.

'Humanly!' shouts another, and there's lots of laughing.

'Tell us a poem!' shouts another.

And Graham the Human Goon says, 'Yes, well. Okay then, "The Windhover..." Then he pauses, and he says, 'Oh, God. I can't remember how it goes.' And with that, he starts crying.

And amazingly, the jumblees around him loves it! They's never seen such spectacular weeping, and they's all just laughing and laughing, until they's near-crying too.

And Graham disappears with a pop, then, so the crowd gives me all the money and present they wants to give him (because I'm his handler, see).

And Thump-Thump says to me, 'I thinks I'm really starting to like our little Graham. What do you thinks he tastes like?'

Ookle is presented with 15 krackels, and a Necklace of Rat Skulls. Note these on his character sheet, and turn to 80.

57

Pipsy the Grunk-Slayer is just a pipsqueaky little fella, and as we's waiting in line, we hears him saying to a little girlie jumblee, 'Yes, well grunks have the strength and the size, that's true... But they don't have the brains, or the speed of a jumblee. That, dear woman, is why the truly devoted warrior will always best them.'

And then we gets to the front, and I guesses Pipsy hasn't been paying attention because he looks up - and up, and up - and he sees Thump-Thump for the first time. And Pipsy loses a bit of colour, and he goes, 'Yes... well...'

And Thump-Thump doesn't like people talking bad about grunks. Because then he goes, 'Thump-Thump... THUMP!' And he splats his fist down on Pipsy the Grunk-Slayer. And pipsqueaky Pipsy explodes, and I gets his guts all down the front of me.

And there's lots and lots of Cracked Jawbones standing all around us, and they doesn't like that at all.

Ookle must make a Thinking roll, difficulty 7. If he passes, turn to 91. If he fails, turn to 24.

58

I gives the correct answer, and Riddling Steven is shocked, and a bit annoyed. But he says, 'Well... yes, then... take your prize.'

He gives me a glass ball with a picture of a little city inside, though it all seems a bit grey and lifeless, even when I shakes it about. 'It's a snow globe,' he says. 'That's the legendary city of glass,

inside.'

I examines it for a bit, until Thump-Thump wanders over to me, and says, 'That was some good thinking you did just now, with them questions.'

'Yeah,' I says. 'T's a real intellectual.'

Note the Snow Globe under Ookle's Things, and turn to 80.

59

A little old Cracked Jawbone touches my sleeve, and says, 'Ah, a wanderer from another tribe. I possess two artifacts that may interest you. The first is a katana - very old, and very good at cutting down enemies. Plus, everybody looks cool with a katana. The second is a mirror, which is more remarkable still. Each item is 60 krackels, and cheap even at this price.'

The Katana adds +4 to Ookle's Hitting Stuff, and +4 to Breaking Stuff. Note it under Ookle's Things if he decides to buy it.

If Ookle buys the mirror, turn to 14. If not, turn to 70.

60

We runs along the tunnel that leads up to the Great Seal of Going Outside, and up ahead I hears that noise again, 'whap - whap - whap - whap - whap - whap - whap - whap - whap - whap'. And when we gets in sight of the Great Seal, it's already standing open, and about thirty of the Cracked Jawbone sentinels who protect the Great Seal is all lying on the ground, bleeding or unconscious or dying or dead.

And Aerondil the big floaty jellyfish is there too, in the middle of all this carnage. And as we approaches, he transforms again. He shrinks down, and now he's a thin little man with white skin, and a couple of see-through wings sticking out of his back. 'Ah, it's good to be back in my own skin,' he says, as he finishes changing. In his own skin or not, the bloke looks sick - his skin's got patches of blue and grey all over it, and he's got a pair of ears that're too big for the sides of his head, and a nose that's too big for his face.

He sees us, then says, 'Ooh, pursuers. I'd like to stay, but I'm a bit scared of physical conflict. Ta-ta for now.' Then, before we can reach him, he steps through the Great Seal into the Bright Outside, and shuts it behind him with a great, big 'CLANG'.

We reaches the Great Seal then, and we pulls on it and pulls on it, but it won't open.

If Ookle knows the magic words to open the seal, add the number of words to the number of this paragraph, and turn to this new entry.

If Ookle cannot open the seal, turn to 29.

61

'I never goes to the preliminary events at the prisoner races,' says an old Cracked Jawbone. 'If you want to make any real money, you have to go over there later on...'

Turn to 70.

62

I swigs the potion. And then there's a big pain in my belly, and I thinks Aerondil's tricked me. I closes my eyes.

And when I open them again, I am jumblee no longer. I am transformed. I have become Iridellian - a creature of light, and flight; of reflection, of tranquility. My body is warm, bright. Wings like those of a great, golden butterfly have sprouted from my back. I run a shining hand over that metal portal I once naively called the Great Seal of Going Outside.

I think of dear Thump-Thump, and of my tribe, the Broken Finger. How to explain to them what has happened to me? I could no longer enter the mountain to do so even if I so wished. I think too of the dragon Zieryl's threat to exterminate my tribe, if I failed to return with his property. He will or he won't, I suppose; I greet this inevitability with a new tranquility.

I rise up into the air, and take one last look at my former home, this big, dark mountain. And then I am away.

This adventure ends with Ookle's entry into a world of limitless possibility. May he profit from all it teaches him.

63

Thump-Thump and I makes the long walk all the way back past Potion Jimmy's place, right to Big-Big Scary Dragon's cave. 'You should wait somewhere well away from here,' I says to Thump-Thump. 'Even as strong as grunks is, you don't want to be around Big-Big Scary Dragon when he's angry.'

We says goodbye near the cave, me and Thump-Thump. I wonders if I'll see him again. Truth is, I even thinks about running away, maybe going down into the caves of Nearly-Never-Come-Back, and hope that Big-Big Scary Dragon won't find me. But that's a silly idea - Big-Big Scary Dragon's got magick and monsters and all sorts of folk helping him. If he gets it into his head to find you, he will.

I enters Big-Big Scary Dragon's cave, and I finds him sleeping on his big pile of treasure. But he hears me a-creeping in, and he opens one of his big eyes.

'Ah, yes, my little jumblee detective,' he says. 'What was your name, again?'

'Ookle,' says I.

'I sent you to retrieve a purloined potion, didn't I? How was that? Do you have it with you?'

'Ah, no,' says I. 'I didn't get it.'

'I see. I said I'd massacre your whole tribe if you failed, I seem to recall,' says Big-Big Scary Dragon.

'Yes, but it's not my fault I doesn't got the potion,' I says. 'It's because an Iridellian -'

'Don't worry,' says Big-Big Scary Dragon. 'I'm feeling magnanimous. Forget about what I said. Call it a Jumblee-Wumblee gift, from me to you.'

'That's... wonderful,' I says. 'Thanks for that.'

'You're welcome. Yes, I'm more than happy to consume just *you*, instead,' he says. And then he reaches forward, and snaps at me.

This adventure ends in death and digestion. You may start again with a blank character sheet, if you wish.

64

I makes a grab for Jimmy, but he skitters up to the ceiling where I can't get at him. 'You little swine,' he says. 'Do you think I'm not protected against people like you?' From one of the gaps in his ceiling, he pulls out a little pouch, and sprinkles black powder into the air. I starts sneezing - and then the stuff's swirling around me, knocking me about!

PEPPER BEAST**Hitting Stuff: 1D+3****Dodging Stuff: 2D****Breaking Stuff: 1D+2****Not Dead Yet: 11**

(Not that if in any round the Pepper Beast has a 'Hitting Stuff' roll of 9, it induces a sneezing fit that imposes -2 to Ookle's rolls for the following round only)

If Ookle kills the Pepper Beast, it's a fairly simple matter to catch hold of Potion Jimmy and snap his neck. Make a note of the number of this paragraph, then turn to 54 to see what treasure Ookle can loot. He may take an additional 9 krackels from Potion Jimmy's corpse, and can retrieve any krackels or items he has previously given Potion Jimmy.

So I kills Potion Jimmy, and I takes his stuff, and then it's time I goes.

Turn to 81.

65

The jumblees sort of roll Thump-Thump off the wall, rather than throwing him off. To makes things fair, they rolls Darwin the Eternal off the wall as well.

Thump-Thump and Darwin hurtle groundwards at high speed, and then they hits the rock. And the noise the two of them makes is THUMP - THUMP.

(I've seen a few of these competitions in my life, and it's my experience that competitors tends to fall at the same speeds, all the time. Some would say that wall tossing isn't the exciting sport it's s'posed to be - but in truth, a lot of the excitement comes from the moments after impact, when you's judging to see if one competitor can survive his wounds a few seconds longer than the other.)

Neither competitor makes a big splat when they hits the ground, so there's a few moments of silence from the crowd, as they tries to see if one of the folks is dead and the other alive. And then Darwin the Eternal says, 'Well, I'm still here. You okay, chum?'

And Thump-Thump goes, 'Yeah, I's okay.'

And the crowd isn't very happy with a draw, so Darwin and Thump-Thump is dragged back up to the top of the wall, and then thrown off again. And they survives that too. So a few Cracked Jawbones pokes at them with sticks and blades and stuff, to see if they can bleed the life out of them that way. But no - Thump-Thump and Darwin just laughs the whole thing off. Hard folks to kill, those two.

At last, the announcer says it's a draw, and he's shutting down the wall tossing for a bit, and everybody wanders away a bit disappointed.

'Good performance, I thought,' I says to Thump-Thump, as I cuts the ropes off of him.

If Ookle bet any money on either Darwin or Thump-Thump, he loses his stake. Now turn to 80.

66

Big Tree What Knows Secrets is quiet for a time, and at last I says, 'Well? What secrets does I get?' 'You should have brought more acorns,' says the Big Tree. 'There's a secret for you.'

Turn to 80.

67

I steps into the circle, and I thinks for a second, and then I invents a poem. And it goes like this:

'Do ants dance?
Does rats and bats wear silly hats?
Do trees sneeze?
Jumblees has got big ears; is this why we are here?
And big ears has got lots of wax; should jumblees relax?
This poem is my invention. I thanks you for your attention.'

And they loves it! Little jumblee kiddies and big jumblee women run into the circle and they gives me lots of little presents and krackels. And even Thump-Thump (who's a bit thick, and who hasn't got any appreciation of what's pretty) thumps his hands together, all happy-like.

Ookle receives 3 - 18 krackels (roll three dice), and a Necklace of Rat Skulls (note it under 'Ookle's Things').

Turn to 80.

68

Bidi-Bidi Big-Belly is a Cracked Jawbone jumblee that's wider'n he is tall. The fella is fat. I mean, in you sliced him down the belly you wouldn't be too surprised to see two smaller fellas jump out of him (while I'm waiting, I think about doing that, actually).

'What do you do then?' I asks Bidi-Bidi Big-Belly when I gets to touch him.

'I eat a lot.'

'Is that it? My grandma Sissi Sausage-Fingers eats a lot, and I doesn't have to pay two krackels just to touch her.'

'Yeah? Well I can eat more than any jumblee alive. Tell you what, why don't I tell you how to make it so that you can eat or drink anything nasty without it hurting you? Is that worth two krackels?'

The next time Ookle consumes food or drink that is harmful, Bidi-Bidi's advice will allow him to negate any negative effects. He receives this boon only once - the very next time he eats or drinks something that proves damaging to him.

Turn to 55.

69

I looks up at the Big Tree What Knows Secrets, and I says, 'Okay, I gots this catapult for you. Now tell me how I gets through the Great Seal.

'One more thing, first,' says the Big Tree. 'Can you kill some of those birds up in my branches? I'm sick to death of them making a mess all over my trunk.'

I shrugs, and picks up a few stones off the ground. And I misses the birds the first couple of times I fires. But then I clocks one in the head, and it falls down dead. Thump-Thump likes that, and the birds is so stoopid they doesn't even move, so he reaches up and crushes one just like that.

After a bit, some of the birds is dead, and Big Tree says, 'Okay, that'll do. Leave some alive, and I'll ask the children to kill some more when they come along. They never bring any acorns anyway.'

'Right, what about my magick words so I can get through the Great Seal?' says I.

'No problemo,' says the Big Tree. And I needs a while to learn them all, but he teaches me the eleven magic words needed to get through the Great Seal.

Cross off the catapult, and make a note that Ookle has learned 11 magic words. Then, turn to 80.

70

Me and Thump-Thump wanders around Big, Main Cavern a bit more, and we thinks about whereabouts in the Jumblee-Wumblee celebrations the potion thief might be hiding.

Where do Ookle and Thump-Thump wish to explore next?

The Bazaar (Turn to 89)

The Big Tree What Knows Secrets (Turn to 51)

The Great Seal of Going Outside (Turn to 83)

Panjambu, the Golden Kangaroo of Misery or Mirth (Turn to 41)

The Prisoner Races (Turn to 22)

The 'Touch a Famous Jumblee' Stand (Turn to 4)

The Treasure Hunt (Turn to 35)

The Poetry Squawking (Turn to 77)

The Wild-Eyed Future-Looker (Turn to 96)

Unless otherwise noted, Ookle and Thump-Thump are free to return to any areas they have already visited.

Alternatively, if Ookle and Thump-Thump have thoroughly explored the Cracked Jawbones' Jumblee-Wumblee festivities, and have failed to find the thief, they must admit defeat. In this case, turn to 63.

71

I starts saying the words I learned, but Thump-Thump stops me. 'If the light from the yellow-sun touches me, I'll turn into a great big rock,' he tells me. 'Old Mummy Slap-Thump always told me so.'

So I waits while Thump-Thump goes back down the tunnel, then I says the words that will open the Great Seal.

It opens, and for the first time in my life, I steps out into the light of the yellow-sun, which hangs up in the big blue over-ceiling. And it burns my eyes, so I just stands there for a bit with my hands over my face, and I looks through a little hole that I makes between my fingers, and then I makes that hole a bit bigger, and a bit bigger.

We has trees in Big, Dark Mountain, of course. But not like the trees that stands around me now. They's giant and green and pointy, and they reaches high, high up to the big blue over-ceiling. I'm standing on the side of a big slope, and when I look out across the land, I sees another Big Mountain on my left, and another Big Mountain on my right, and a group of Big Mountains off in the distance.

I turns around, and looks back into my Big, Dark Mountain. But it's dark inside, and my eyes isn't working as good as normal. 'You okay in there, Thumpy?'

'I'm here,' I hears. And dimly, dimly, I sees a little movement off in the dark, like a hand waving.

Then the Great Seal swings shut, with another huge 'CLANG'.

'Thumpy? Is you in there?' I shouts. 'Did you do that?'

'I didn't do a thing,' he says, and he's run up close to the other side of the door.

'Get back down the tunnel,' I says. 'I'm going to try to open the door again.'

He goes back off down the tunnel, and I says my magic words. But nothing happens. The door stays closed.

Just then I hear a shouting and a screaming, from further down the slope, off behind some trees where I can't see what's happening.

'Stays where you are, Thumpy,' I shouts through the metal door. 'I'll be back in just a moment.'

Turn to 19.

72

As we wanders away from Mxztqeesthz the Unpronounceable, Thump-Thump says to me, 'I think I'd like to be a ranger.'

And I says, 'Not possible. Y'see, you and me, Thump-Thump, we've had the misfortune to be born into a situation what limits our choice of vocations. If we wants, we can grow up to be warriors. And maybe thieves. Rogues, probably, because that's sort of half-and-half between warrior and thief. But rangers? Nah. We doesn't got the educational opportunities what are required.'

'What about being a wizard?' says Thump-Thump. 'I'd like to be a wizard, I thinks.'

'No chance,' says I. 'Wizards, bards, clerics, paladins... We just doesn't got the background that allows that kind of profession. Stick to what you're good at, Thumpy - hitting people until they stops moving, and then putting them in your mouth.'

We walks on around the Jumblee-Wumblee celebrations for a bit, and then Thump-Thump goes, 'Warrior Monk?'

And I says, 'I'm not even sure what that is.'

Turn to 55.

73

The three of them is thrown into the pool at the same time, and it starts well. The rat-woman squeals as she tries to stay on the surface of the water, so it looks like she might win. But then the barbarian gets hit on the head by a chunk of basalt, and then he slips below the water for a few seconds.

And then, what with all the jumblees all pushing to get a better look, I suddenly gets an elbow in the back, and I goes into the water. It takes me a couple of seconds to get my head above the surface, and I hears the announcer going, 'And we have a surprise entrant, a mysterious visitor from the Broken Finger tribe!' And then folk starts lobbing rocks at me too.

Ookle must make a Dodging Stuff roll, difficulty 8. For every 2 items he possesses, he should subtract 1 from his roll. He may discard whichever items he wishes before making the roll (except Aerondil's Almanac, which he must keep).

If he succeeds, turn to 7. If not, turn to 79.

74

The Big Tree thinks for a bit, then says, 'The wyrm that you serve desires the return of its stolen potion, but only through pride. Substitute it for another treasure you have found, and you may escape the beast's wrath.'

'Is that it, then?' I says. But the Big Tree's gone quiet, so I wanders off.

Turn to 80.

75

Make sure you have noted down the number of the previous paragraph you were reading.

JIMMY'S SPECIAL MIXTURE

Note that if Ookle has killed Potion Jimmy, this potion acts as a virulent poison that slays him instantly. It's sensitive like that.

Otherwise, its effects are determined by the roll of two dice.

2: Keep a note of how many paragraphs you read; Ookle will explode after you have read five more paragraphs. This is terminal, and inevitable.

3: Ookle grows a tail. He may make an extra attack with this each combat round, with a Hitting Stuff and a Breaking Stuff score of 1D+1.

4: Ookle's hands transform into thorny claws. These grant +1 to Hitting Stuff and Breaking Stuff, but he may never wield a weapon again.

5 - 6: restores 7 Not Dead Yet points, if Ookle is wounded

7: provokes burping (no other effect)

8: increases Ookle's maximum Not Dead Yet points by 2, and restores them to this new maximum

9 - 10: Ookle may add +1 to one of his characteristics, permanently

11 - 12: Ookle may add +2 to one of his characteristics, permanently

If Ookle is still alive, turn back to the paragraph you were originally reading.

76

I jumps in and smacks one of the dogs across the head, just as the other one gets a grip and pulls Aerondil down from the tree. So I goes for that one.

WHITE DOG

Hitting Stuff: 2D+2

Dodging Stuff: 2D+1

Breaking Stuff: 2D

Not Dead Yet: 14

If Ookle wins the fight, turn to 82.

77

If Ookle has previously attended the Poetry Squawking, turn to 17 immediately.

Now, not many people knows that jumblees have a long tradition of poetry. The jumblee poet Spittlespitter is probably most well-known, and his most famous poem is, 'I Thinks My Brown Tooth Is Going To Fall Out... Yes, I Just Poked It A Bit, And I Thinks It Will Fall Out Any Day Now.' It's probably what kicked off the whole 'Bodily Function Realism' movement.

Thump-Thump doesn't knows who Spittlespitter is, so I gets my secret magic book out to see what it can tell him. And it says:

***Spittlespitter** (n, unc.) Believed to be a method of torture popular amongst jumblee interrogators. (This article is a stub; please help to expand this article by contacting the author with more information.)*

- Aerondil's Almanac of the Below-Realms (a work in progress)

'That don't sound completely right to me, Thump-Thump,' says I.

The Cracked Jawbones have made a big circle for their poetry squawking and a little black jumblee is squeaking out a poem as we arrives. It goes:

'I saw a jumblee woman,
 And she made strange thoughts come into my head.
 I thinks this might be how jumblee babies start.
 But I've just looked at her again, and she might not be a woman.
 Or, indeed, a jumblee.'

And after that, the crowd loves the little fella, and some of them gives him money and presents and things like that.

And then somebody else comes into the circle and says, 'Next volunteer to squawk some poetry, please. What about you, our visitor from the Broken Finger tribe?'

He means me.

If Ookle doesn't want to participate in the poetry squawking, he leaves; turn to 80.

If Ookle has a Rod of Human Summoning, and wants to use it, turn to 56.

Otherwise, if Ookle wishes to participate in the poetry squawking, he must make a Thinking test, difficulty 8. If he passes, turn to 67. If not, turn to 86.

78

I thinks about what Aerondil has said, but I also thinks about what Big-Big Scary Dragon will do to my tribe if I doesn't take the potion back. So I gives Aerondil a little smile, and then I bashes his head in. And then I takes his potion, and his book.

I wanders back up to the Great Seal of Going Outside, and I knocks on it. 'Thump-Thump,' I says. 'You there? I got the potion.'

'Aye, I am,' says Thump-Thump. 'I can't get this door open.'

'No worries. Go and get somebody who can, then.'

'S'okay,' says Thump-Thump. 'Somebody's coming now.'

There's a pause, and I hears Thump-Thump talking with somebody else, though I can't hear the words, and then somebody else speaks to me. 'You out there, of the Broken Finger tribe.'

'Yeah?' I says.

'Passing through the Great Seal of Going Outside without proper authorisation is a serious crime. We will take this before our Big Important Chief, and then decide how to proceed. Possibly we'll open the Great Seal and send our trackers out to find you. Possibly we won't.'

'It's cold out here,' I says. 'Can't you just let me in, and then decide?'

'Couldn't if I wanted to,' says the voice. 'Only Big Important Chief knows how to open the Great Seal.' Another pause, then it says, 'Bye then.'

'Bye. Thumpy? You still there?'

But he doesn't answer me. He's been taken away, I guesses.

I sits on the side of Big, Dark Mountain. Yellow-sun starts to drop down behind the ground. And I really starts to get cold.

If Ookle drinks Aerondil's potion, turn to 62.

If he prefers to wait, turn to 98.

79

I ducks and I dodges and I weaves, and then I has the idea that I should drown one of the other competitors, as that'll finish the race. So I swim for the rat-woman, as she seems small and weak.

But I guess I'm not the only one who thinks that way. I'm so busy dodging bits of stone that I doesn't see the barbarian swimming up behind me - until the last moment, that is, when I see his big fat hand coming down on my head.

'Glub, glub, glub,' I goes, as I sinks.

Poor Ookle is dead. If it's any consolation, he at least won the race to see which swimmer would die fastest. You may start again with a blank character sheet.

80

As we wanders around the Jumblee-Wumblee celebrations, all sorts of unexpected things is happening around us.

Roll two dice, and consult the list below to see if Ookle and Thump-Thump run into any significant encounters.

- 2: *A rare opportunity (turn to 59)*
- 3: *A family reunion (turn to 52)*
- 4: *A vampire hunter (turn to 45)*
- 5: *Krackel harvesters (turn to 18)*
- 6: *A whiff of blood (turn to 36)*
- 7: *No encounter (turn to 70)*
- 8: *A rumour (turn to 11)*
- 9: *A visitation from Panjambu (turn to 28)*
- 10: *A breach of copyright (turn to 87)*
- 11: *A warrior from another dimension (turn to 40)*
- 12: *A poisoner (turn to 3)*

81

So Thump-Thump and me walks on from Potion Jimmy's place, and I says, 'Jimmy thinks that were looking for an Iri... Iri... gation? Something what can change from one thing to another.' And Thump-Thump doesn't know what that is, but my book opens up and says:

***Iridellian** (n, pl. 'Iridellians') One of the fey peoples originally stemming from the Forest of Fizziwyl, the Iridellians migrated to Iridel, the City of Glass, and have since earned the appellation, 'Angels of Words and Music'. Now capable of only limited flight, the Iridellians do have the curious ability to completely transform their appearance. They may maintain this transformation for several hours at a time, but are limited to only three transformations per day. A few truly daring Iridellians have braved the Below-Realms in the name of study and knowledge; they are almost never found there, otherwise.*

- Aerondil's Almanac of the Below-Realms (a work in progress)

'So Jimmy says this Irri-wotsit transformed into one of the Cracked Jawbone tribe?' says Thump-Thump. 'Well, we'll just go to their caves and find it, then.'

'Yeah,' I says, 'and it's probably already used one of its transformations to get into Big-Big Scary Dragon's place, so it can only transform one more time.'

Thump-Thump stops then, and looks at me with something like amazement. 'Crikey, Ookle. That's some impressive thinking.'

If Ookle has a Rod of Human Summoning, turn to 27. If not, turn to 10.

I kills one of the big, white dogs, and then I turns and gives the other one a clout so hard it runs off. Aerondil's lying on the ground, doing some bleeding. He's got his eyes closed, so I takes a good look at him. He's got a weird thin face, though his ears and nose seems to big for his skull, and he's got white skin - at least, most of it is white; there's blotches of blue and green and black on him, here and there. Even if he hadn't been chewed up by the big dogs, he'd look a mess.

'I'm transforming,' he says, and then opens his eyes. 'I'm devolving.'

'What's that mean, then?' I asks, keeping a weapon handy in case I needs to suddenly smack him.

He gives a funny little smile, and with a bit of effort he manages to take out the magick book what he stole from me. Then he goes, 'Almanac, show entry for 'Jumblee People, Origins of'.'

***Jumblee People (Origins of the)** (main entry: 'jumblee') Jumblees are one of the few known races whose origins lie in spellcraft rather than natural selection. In the year 411PD, the Iridellian settlement of Aer'Ityell angered the extra-dimensional entity Panjambu the Golden Kangaroo (it is believed that High Elder Eir'On'Dydh repeatedly referred to Panjambu as 'Skippy'). Panjambu consequently imposed a curse of devolution on all 918 members of the settlement - their thought processes and physiology were limited to the most brutish levels. Within four generations, the 'jumblees', as this splinter group of Iridellians now referred to themselves, had become the most widespread magically-created race in the world. The etymology of the word 'jumblee' is unclear - though in the last legible writings of Eir'On'Dydh himself, he makes several mentions of 'jumbled thoughts'.*

- Aerondil's Almanac of the Below-Realms (a work in progress)

And Aerondil smiles. 'Your whole race is a punishment, jumblee. And, because I tried to investigate a little too deeply the facet of Panjambu that exists within your caves, I've been afflicted with the same curse that afflicted my people all those centuries ago. I'm becoming stupid, brutish.' Then he puts his hand inside a bag and takes out a little blue potion in a glass bottle. 'Though this is the elixir that may cure me.'

Turn to 33.

The Great Seal of Going Outside is all the way along a long, long tunnel that slopes up as we goes, and it isn't really big enough for Thump-Thump, so he has to duck his head down as we walks.

And I says, 'I hears that the Great Seal of Going Outside has teeny, teeny holes in it, just big enough so's that you can put your eye against it and see the yellow-sun and the big blue over-ceiling, and everything.'

And Thump-Thump says, 'Does it? Well, I isn't going anywhere near it in that case. Old Mummy Slap-Thump always told me that the yellow-sun will turn me into stone if I lets it see me. That's what happened to Daddy Slap-Thump, she said.'

'Your daddy went out into the Bright Outside?' I asks, surprised.

'Well, his head did,' says Thump-Thump. 'Him and Mummy Slap-Thump had a big fight, and she cut his head off, but it wouldn't stop talking. So she threw it outside, and turned it to stone, just to shut him up. That's what she said, anyways.'

'Did she go through the Great Seal, or did she find another way?' I asks.

But then we arrives at the Great Seal, and we sees that there's about thirty navy SEALS standing in front of it (Sentinels of Exiting and Admittance, with Lots of Swords). One of them comes up in front of us and says, 'We've had an unauthorised incursion lately. Nobody goes near the Great Seal until we've verified there's no more possibility of security risks. Why doesn't you and your grunk turn

around and go back the way you've come?'

'Fair enough,' I says. Then I asks, 'Why's you all painted yourselves that shade of blue?'
But nobody answers me.

Turn to 80.

84

'Thank you,' says Aerondil. 'For a second time, you have offered me my very life. Simply... thank you.'

He drinks the potion, and a bright light seems to pass over him, from the top of his head, right down to the tips of his toes. All his cuts and bleeding bits disappears; those nasty mottled sick-looking bits is cured, too. He's bright, and fairyish, and glowing.

He rises up into the air, and he says, 'Please, jumblee of the Broken Finger tribe, tell me your name.'
'Ookle,' says I.

He takes out the magic book what I's been carrying around, and with a great 'POOF' a writing feather appears in his hand. He scribbles in the book a few seconds, then says, 'Almanac, display entry for 'Ookle.'

Ookle (prop n.) A jumblee of the Broken Finger tribe, Ookle is a fine example of the greater virtues that, though well-hidden, remain present in that race. It has been speculated that values such as generosity, bravery and self-sacrifice were eliminated by the Panjambu's curse of devolution, that created the jumblees from their Iridellian ancestors. Ookle's behaviour clearly demonstrates that such speculation is wholly incorrect.

- Aerondil's Almanac of the Below-Realms (a work in progress)

'Thanks for that,' I says.

Seems like Aerondil ain't finished. He flits back up to the Great Seal, and I trots after him. There, he speaks a few magick words, and the Great Seal goes 'rumble-rumble-CLANG,' and it's wide open.

'Thanks for that too,' I says.

'No, noble jumblee Ookle,' he says. 'It is I who cannot thank you enough. Now, I cannot remain - I have no more disguises left in me at this time, and this most recent brush with self-extinction has caused me to prize my own mortality rather highly. I must be away.'

He gives a little nod, then rises into the air. I watches him go, until I can't see him no more.

Then I passes through the Great Seal of Going Outside, back into Big, Dark Mountain. I walks a little ways along the tunnel there, and I finds Thump-Thump waiting for me, safely away from where the yellow-sun might touch him.

He's got a hopeful look on his face, but I shakes my head. 'It's bad news, Thumpy,' I says. 'I didn't get the potion.'

If Ookle has a Snow Globe, turn to 92.

If not, turn to 63.

85

Just then, the air seems to tear open in front of me, and from the grey-black space inside that hole, a man dressed all in black somersaults out. And he says, 'I am Ninja Bob, and I seek the head of a blue jumblee as tribute to Molo, the Ancient God of Plot Contrivances!' He sees me, and he says, 'Yours will do.'

Thump-Thump goes to crush him, but Ninja Bob does a fancy little move and jabs him with his fingers, and Thump-Thump goes rigid and falls over. 'He'll be okay in just a few moments,' says Ninja

Bob. 'Though that'll be long after you're a headless corpse!' Then he spins his awesome ninja sword around his head a few times, and attacks me.

NINJA BOB

Hitting Stuff: 2D+1

Dodging Stuff: 2D+3

Breaking Stuff: 1D+2*

Not Dead Yet: 11

* = Any time Ninja Bob inflicts damage, roll 1D+2 as normal, then roll a second die. If it comes up 5 or 6, he uses his ninja magic, and may double his damage for this attack.

If Ookle wins, he may take Ninja Bob's sword. Add the Ninja-to to Ookle's Things (it adds +2 to Hitting Stuff and +2 to Breaking Stuff), then wake up Thump-Thump and turn to 70.

86

I steps into the circle, and I thinks for a few seconds, but thinking is sometimes hard. And then I says this:

'A jumblee woke up one morning,
And the cave walls was brown as brown can be.
Brown like mud, brown like wood, brown like ploppies.
Brown like the brown in your head when a pretty jumblee woman doesn't talk
to you.
Brown, brown, brown... Brown, brown, brown.
And then he did a pee.'

There's a few moments of silence, and I thinks maybe they're impressed. But then they starts shouting at me, and they throw stones and bits of food at me, and one jumblee kiddie starts hitting himself on the head to try to make his memory of the poem go away.

I runs off, and I sneaks up to Thump-Thump a bit later, and I'm still rubbing at a big bump on my head. 'Somebody threw a big stone that bonked me right here,' I says to Thump-Thump.

'Yeah, that was me,' he says.

Ookle loses 1D+1 Not Dead Yet points. Turn to 80.

87

A freaky little animal thing, like a dog but with brown and yellow fur, and a thick, ribbed tail, comes up to me and says, 'Snarf, snarf... What are you doing, snarf, snarf? Can we be friends, snarf, snarf?'

It annoys the hell out of me, so I decides to hit it for a bit.

SNARF

Hitting Stuff: 1D

Dodging Stuff: 1D

Breaking Stuff: 1D-3

Not Dead Yet: Special*

* = *It only takes one hit to kill this weird animal thing. But if Ookle prefers, he may hit it again and again, until he decides to kill it. Call it stress relief.*

When Ookle is done here, turn to 70.

88

We goes back to the prisoner races, me and Thump-Thump, but we finds that both the 'throwing rocks at folks in a pool' and 'wall tossing' events is closed until the next day. Only one prisoner race is still open, so we makes our way over there.

A Cracked Jawbone announcer says to the crowd, 'We's lately managed to get hold of a couple hunnered gibbering gypers, so we's going to run a dozen of 'em through the bunticore warrens, and see which one comes out alive first. If any of 'em does, that is.'

'What's a gibbering gypper, then?' I asks Thump-Thump. But before he has a chance to answer me, my magick glowing book opens up and says:

Gibbering Gypper (*n, pl. 'gypers'*) *Spindly humanoids that reach a height of ten centimetres, and are predominantly hairless, save for a ball of thick hair that completely covers the head, and that possess animal-level intelligence. Their name derives from the gypers' constant chattering ('gypping'); it has been theorised that this 'gypping' is in fact a form of echo location, similar to that of bats. They have been observed in a number of habitats that they should find neither hospitable nor even accessible. Extra-planar travel is suspected. (See also, 'Gibbering Gypper, athletic capabilities of')*

- Aerondil's Almanac of the Below-Realms (a work in progress)

'And what's a bunticore?' asks Thump-Thump.

Bunticore (*n, pl. 'bunticores'*) *A cross between a bunny and a manticore. Terminally aggressive, when not napping.*

- Aerondil's Almanac of the Below-Realms (a work in progress)

'Handy, that book is,' says Thump-Thump, appreciatively. 'Keep it out - maybe it'll help us pick the best runners in the gypper race.'

So we goes over, Thump-Thump and me, to look at all the different gypers, see which one's the favourite, and decide if we wants to place a bet.

Ookle may place a bet on the gibbering gypper race. Ten gypers are released into the bunticore warrens for each race. Ookle may bet on up to 3 gypers in each race, and each bet costs 4 krackels (cross off the krackels before each race)

- Gypper 1: traditionally the 'lame gypper', which is released into the warrens first just to increase the bunticores' bloodlust. Not possible to bet on this gypper.*
- Gypper 2: rank outsider; those who bet on this gypper win a victory purse of 25 krackels, if he wins.*
- Gypper 3: victory purse of 18 krackels*
- Gypper 4: victory purse of 13 krackels*
- Gypper 5: victory purse of 11 krackels*
- Gypper 6: victory purse of 9 krackels*
- Gypper 7: race favourite - victory purse of 6 krackels*

- Gypper 8: victory purse of 7 krackels, plus one free bet on the next race
 Gypper 9: victory purse of 9 krackels, plus one free bet on the next race
 Gypper 10: victory purse of 10 krackels, plus two free bets on the next race

Roll 2 dice for each race to determine which gypper wins. If the dice come up 11 or 12, all the gypers have died in the bunticore warrens.

Ookle may bet on the gibbering gypper races for as long as he wishes, until he has no more krackels. He and Thump-Thump may return here whenever they wish to continue their gambling, of course.

When Ookle is finished here, turn to 80.

89

The bazaar is about two hundred little stalls and shops. Most of 'em sells food, or Jumblee-Wumblee souvenirs - teddy bear version of Big Important Chief Smasher-of-Enemy-Skulls, for instance, or Panjambu the Golden Kangaroo key rings. Thump-Thump and me wanders round a bit, to see if we can find anything good to buy.

The following items are for sale at the bazaar:

ITEM	PRICE	NOTES
Bag of Acorns	5 krackels	-
Jumblee Long Sword	10 krackels	adds +2 to Hitting Stuff and +1 to Breaking Stuff
Jumblee Chain Mail	18 krackels	adds +2 to Dodging Stuff
Woolly Hat of Deep Thought	15 krackels	adds +2 to Thinking
Adamantium-Clawed Gloves	17 krackels	add +3 to Breaking Stuff
Battleaxe	10 krackels	subtracts -1 from Hitting Stuff; adds +4 to Breaking Stuff
Egg Mayonnaise Sandwich	3 krackels	restores +2 Not Dead Yet points; smelly
Can of WD-40	5 krackels	eliminates squeaks
Amulet of Protection	8 krackels	next curse has no effect
Silver Mirror	9 krackels	-
Crucifix	9 krackels	-
Silver-tipped wooden stake	12 krackels	-
Peg Leg	8 krackels	Allows one-legged jumblees (only) to increase Dodging Stuff by +2

Ookle may also sell some of his possessions, if he wishes to raise some money.

Jumblee Hatchet	6 krackels
Scimitar of Head-Cutting-Off	13 krackels
Boots of Keepy-Away	12 krackels
Ninja-to	15 krackels
Potion of Keeping Folk Alive	11 krackels

<i>Vial of Holy Water</i>	3 <i>krackels</i>
<i>Bag of Acorns</i>	2 <i>krackels</i>
<i>Stone Knife</i>	6 <i>krackels</i>
<i>Rod of Human Summoning</i>	7 <i>krackels per remaining charge</i>

When Ookle and Thump-Thump are finished here, they leave. Turn to 70.

90

I looks up at Thump-Thump, and I realises that the old coot's memory is so bad that he's forgotten that we's already given him one. 'Give me something shiny, and I'll tell you exactly where you can find your nasty little necklace,' I says.

The old fella goes, 'Uh... okay.' And he takes a little bag of acorns from his pocket, and gives it to me.

I leans over him, and I lift the necklace of rat skulls from where he'd hung it, on the back of his belt. 'Here you go,' says I.

'Oh, thank you, thank you,' he says. 'My lovely Imelda will be so happy.'

'Glad we could help. Give your girlie our love.'

Note the Bag of Acorns under Ookle's Things, and turn to 80.

91

I shouts out, 'All of you, stops right there! This was just a test, see!' And they's not sure what's happening, but they stops, so I carries on, 'My name is Ookle, of the Broken Finger tribe, and I work for the FBI - the Fraudulent Butchery Investigators. Now, this bloke Pipsy says he's a Grunk-Slayer... and yet how is it that he can't stay alive for three seconds when I put him in front of this grunk what I brought 'specially for the occasion?'

And Thump-Thump says, 'What? I thought I just... Oh, yeah... Yeah! I'm a special test-grunk!' And he chuckles and chuckles.

'Lady jumblees and gentle-jumblees,' I says. 'This devil Pipsy spoke with a forked tongue!' And the Cracked Jawbones ain't sure what I means, and neither am I, so I says, 'He was a big fibber! But now I has exposed that big fib! Thank you, thank you. You're welcome. Tipping isn't an obligation in this sort of situation, but it is expected...'

I doesn't get any money out of the stoopid Cracked Jawbones, but I manages to convince one of Pipsy's fans to give me a head massage for exposing the big liar, and that does me the world of good.

Ookle may restore 3 Not Dead Yet points for the head massage. Turn to 55 (you may not choose to speak to Pipsy a second time, of course)

92

Thump-Thump and I makes the long walk all the way back past Potion Jimmy's place, right to Big-Big Scary Dragon's cave. 'You should wait somewhere well away from here,' I says to Thump-Thump. 'Even as strong as grunks is, you don't want to be around Big-Big Scary Dragon when he's angry.'

We says goodbye near the cave, me and Thump-Thump. I wonders if I'll see him again. Truth is, I even thinks about running away, maybe going down into the caves of Nearly-Never-Come-Back, and hope that Big-Big Scary Dragon won't find me. But that's a silly idea - Big-Big Scary Dragon's got magick and monsters and all sorts of folk helping him. If he gets it into his head to find you, he finds

you.

I enters Big-Big Scary Dragon's cave, and I finds him sleeping on a big pile of treasure. But he hears me a-creeping in, and he opens one of his big eyes.

'Ah, yes, my little jumblee detective,' he says. 'What was your name, again?'

'Ookle,' says I.

'I sent you to retrieve a purloined potion, didn't I? How was that? Do you have it with you?'

'Ah, no,' says I. 'I didn't get it.'

'I see. I said I'd massacre your whole tribe if you failed, I seem to recall,' says Big-Big Scary Dragon.

'Yes, but the reason I doesn't got it is - '

'Shush!' snaps Big-Big Scary Dragon. 'What's that?'

With his snout, he's pointing at my bag, and I sees a golden light shining from it. I opens it up, and takes out the snow globe I won. It seemed grey and boring before. Now it's shining bright - the same kind of shining that Aerondil did when he drank that potion, I realises. Looking into the globe, I can see the City of Glass, where the Iridellian people comes from - and, with the smallest little shake, flakes of gold begin spinning round and round the city, until at last they settles down on the buildings, and on the streets.'

'That's just lovely,' says Big-Big Scary Dragon. 'In fact, forget the potion - I'll have the globe instead. Not that you could stop me taking both, if I wished it...'

'Thanks,' I says. 'It's just that... as head of Jumblee Resources...'

'Of course!' exclaims Big-Big Scary Dragon. 'It's almost time for your silly little festival, isn't it? And traditionally, I have to give you some sort of gift, tokens of appreciation and all that. Fine. Take your little globe. My gift from me to you. Happy Jumblee-Wumblee. Now, go away. I'm busy sleeping.'

Turn to 100.

93

Thump-Thump gives a little shrug like he doesn't care what the Cracked Jawbones does to him. He climbs up the wall, and the jumblees up there ties him up. Then the announcer comes out and speaks to the crowd again. 'And now we have a most unusual contest,' he says. 'Our two contestants being thrown from the wall are a grunk, uh...' He leans in close to Thumpy. 'A grunk whose name is Thump-Thump, apparently.'

And the crowd claps a bit, but they isn't too enthusiastic, really. Maybe they's still angry about him messing up the last competition.

'And our second competitor,' says the announcer, 'is...uh... No, not him... Get the other one... It's Darwin the Eternal, a one thousand-year-old gin genie cursed with immortality, who says he's travelling the world searching for a means of self-annihilation!'

Darwin the Eternal is a little red fella with a turban. Even from the bottom of the wall, he stinks of booze. He holds up his little red hands and goes, 'Hello one and all. It's just an absolute pleasure to be here with you today. Maybe this is the big one for me, eh? Eh?' A couple of jumblees goes forward to tie him up, but he holds up a hand to stop them. 'Just a sec.' He takes a couple of swigs from a hip flask, then goes, 'Okay, rope me up.'

Thump-Thump and Darwin the Eternal is put on the edge of the high wall.

If Ookle wishes to place a bet on which competitor will die first (Thump-Thump or Darwin the Eternal), make a note of which competitor he bets on, and how much (up to a maximum of 12 krackels). Then turn to 65.

94

Just then, there's a big blinding flash in front of me, and my eyes goes all spotty. I rubs at them, and when I stop, there's a human standing in front of me - but a human with a metal leg, and a piece of red glass instead of an eye, and a great big glowing cannon thing on one of his arms.

'Ookle, you piece of filth,' he says. 'I've crossed timelines and dimensions to pay you back for the way you mistreated me. Have you ever felt a blast from an Ultra-Kill-o-Cannon?' And the cannon thing on his arm starts to pulse and whine with power.

And then I recognises him. 'Graham, you spineless goon! What's happened to you?' Because Graham the Skinny Human Warrior looks all grizzled and grey-haired, and half-metallic. Not at all like he did the last time I saw him.

'You did,' he says, and points the cannon at me.

If Ookle's Rod of Human Summoning has any charges left, turn to 25. If not, turn to 37.

95

I retreats a bit up the slope, upwind of the dogs, and I watches the show. One of the white dogs jumps high enough to get a firm grip on Aerondil, and pull him down to the ground. He doesn't last long after that. He screams and screams for a bit - I chuckles at that - and then he's dead.

I waits an hour or so, until the dogs have finished their business with him. Then I wanders in to get Big-Big Scary Dragon's potion. But I doesn't find any potion - I finds only a glass bottle that's been smashed while Aerondil was all busy thrashing around.

I lifts the bit of bottle out of the mess that was Aerondil, and I walks back up to the Great Seal of Going Outside. I taps on it. 'Hello? Thump-Thump? Anybody there?' But nobody answers, now.

The yellow-sun goes down, and I starts getting cold-cold. And I taps away on the Great Seal, but those stoopid Cracked Jawbones must be telling people to keep away, because nobody comes near enough to hear me.

And then I smells more of the big white dogs, coming near to me. Looking around the dark mountain, I sees maybe ten white shapes as they comes out of the trees, and starts padding towards me.

Tap-tap-tap, I goes on the Great Seal. 'Hello? Anybody there? Now would be a really good time to open this thing...'

This adventure ends in a most bloody way. You may start again, if you wish, with a new character sheet.

96

Every kiddie jumblee knows the stories of the jumblee baby girls who're born with pink eyes, and how the kiddies get the magick sight when they's older. Well, the Cracked Jawbones has a girlie with the pinkie eyes, and the magick sight (and a moustache).

She sits in front of a little tent, like, and as me and Thump-Thump goes near her, she says, 'Want some destiny? Nine krackels.'

If Ookle is willing to pay nine krackels to consult the Future-Looker, and this is the first such consultation, turn to 12.

If Ookle has already consulted the Future-Looker, but pays nine krackels for another consultation, turn to 46.

If Ookle doesn't want to consult the Future-Looker, turn to 70 and choose a different destination.

97

The scent leads me towards the cave of Panjambu, the Golden Kangaroo of Misery or Mirth. 'It's caught his trail. Not blood, now. More... sweat, body smell. This Iridellian's been to Panjambu's cave. Not recently. Not in the last day or so. But he's been there.'

*If Ookle and Thump-Thump wish to visit Panjambu's cave immediately, turn to 41.
If not, turn to 70 to choose a different destination.*

98

I hugs myself to keep warm, and I tries to get some sleep. But then I see about ten white shapes coming out of the trees - more of the big white dogs what attacked Aerondil.

I tries to drink Aerondil's potion, then - but my fingers is too cold. I can't get the top off the bottle, and then I drops it, and it breaks.

The first of the big white dogs comes for me while I'm crouching down, trying to lap up the golden potion I've spilled all over the side of the mountain.

This adventure ends in a most bloody way. You may start again, if you wish, with a new character sheet.

99

'It just happens to have one right here,' I says, and I holds it right up to his dim little eyes, so that even he can see it. He grabs at it, but I pulls it away. 'Hang about, hang about,' I says. 'What's this worth to you?'

He's carrying a little bag, and he puts it on the floor and opens it up. 'Well, I've got... a little stone knife, and... a catapult, and... seven... no, eight krackels. Which do you want?'

'Which?' I says, with a little chuckle. 'I'll take it all, thanks.' I scoops up the bag, and toss him the necklace. 'Hope your great big girlie likes it.'

Note the Stone Knife (+1 to Ookle's Hitting Stuff), Catapult and 8 krackels on Ookle's character sheet, and remember to cross off the Necklace of Rat Skulls. Then, turn to 80.

100

The big yellow-sun rises into the blue over-ceiling up above my mountain home, and down inside the caverns the night-mould grows dim, and the day-mould gets bright. This new day brings celebration - for the Broken Finger tribe, this is the first day of Jumblee-Wumblee.

And we celebrates. From morning until night, we does the foot-stamping and hand-shaking. There's some dancing, too. Important Tribal Chief Mackley-Backley gets drunk on dwarven ale (because he doesn't realise it's the good stuff, made from the purest dwarves), and volunteers for the sword-swallowing event. He wins it, too. But then he gets carried away, and shows us some lance-swallowing and battleaxe-swallowing, as well. He does a bit of belly-bleeding, but I's told he'll be fine tomorrow. Clever-Clever Tribal Advisor Berrininnin shuffles over to me (keeping the weight off his gammy left foot), and he's snacking on a bag of orc scratchings that he's won in the poetry squawking. And he puts a hand on my shoulder (his hand's a bit gammy too, I sees for the first time) and says, 'You've done a truly excellent job with this festival, and with everything else, Ookle. I know now I was right to nominate you as head of JR. I'm hoping to win that remarkable globe you've brought back in

the treasure hunt later.' And he smiles at me again, and shuffles off.

And I'm most delighted to see that Thump-Thump comes along, too. He gives me a big, friendly hug, which dislocates a couple of my shoulder bones, and he says, 'Great party, Ookle. Fun little adventure that we's been on.' Then he picks a parasite out of his armpit, and goes to chat up a terrifying pink grunk woman.

I look out at all the jumblees of the Broken Finger tribe, eating and dancing and gorging and fighting and laughing, and I'm happy with what I've done. I decide it's good to be a jumblee, down in Big, Dark Mountain.