AVENGER!
by Mark Smith & Jamie Thomson

Gamebook excerpt from the upcoming New Collector’s Edition on Kickstarter October 2013

AVENGER! ASSASSIN! USURPER! OVERLORD! WARBRINGER! INFERNO!
The Way of the Tiger 1

AVENGER!
Excerpt from the limited
New Collector’s Edition

Available now on Kickstarter!

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Our thanks go to our future Kickstarter backers
Welcome to the world of Orb

You are Avenger, a ninja warrior trained in the Way of the Tiger, a lethal master of unarmed combat who must face ultimate evil to avenge the death of your foster-father, Naijishi . . .

This gamebook excerpt is offered completely free of charge in order to promote Megara Entertainment’s upcoming Kickstarter project for the New Collector’s Edition of *The Way of the Tiger* - the first reprinting in almost 30 years, now in full-colour print hardback. The book *Avenger!* is only the first in the six-book series, and with your support the entire series will not merely be edited and reprinted, but also expanded with a ‘book 0’ prequel and the long-awaited ‘book 7’!

If you enjoy the adventure before you, seek out *The Way of the Tiger* on Kickstarter ([www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)) starting September 26, 2013. Our deadline for funding is November 1, 2013. Our page is here:


Take a look at our Kickstarter bid, pledge now if you are able, and help return this classic gamebook series to life - and, no matter what, share this gamebook excerpt with everyone you know who would enjoy a good adventure. Many thanks in advance!
There were ninja in You Only Live Twice, and that was 1967. I know that now, but at the time I probably just thought they were Japanese commandoes. You could read the whole of Sansom’s History of Japan and not find a single mention. So the first time I became aware of them was when I got my teenaged mitts on a copy of The Shadow #6, by comics legends Denny O’Neil and Mike Kaluta. The story was called “Night of the Ninja”, the year was 1974, and it seemed like from then on the chubby chaps in black pyjamas were catnip to writers.

We’ll come back to the ninja. Skipping for a moment to another branch of the Avenger family tree: in the mid-1970s Gary Gygax took some elements of Tolkien and Vance to create Dungeons & Dragons. The next generation was Tunnels & Trolls, and out of the two came the universe of Fighting Fantasy, a kind of restaged The Lord of the Rings with the corners smoothed off. Whatever your reaction to ten-foot corridors and rooms full of orcs and treasure chests, there was no mistaking that Livingstone and Jackson had done for fantasy literature what Vanilla Ice did for rap. No, no, I mean they processed and packaged it for a less demanding but no less enthusiastic audience. Whatever, it worked. Almost too well, in fact, because by 1984 every publisher in Britain was clamouring for a gamebook series or three.
The only trouble was that any attempt to escape from the gravity well of barbarians, dwarves and dungeons was scuppered, if not at the editorial stage, then by the demands of insatiable readers. Mark Smith and Jamie Thomson had already come up with an original gamebook concept in the shape of their Falcon time-travel series, a blending of Strontium Dog, Traveller and the Stainless Steel Rat. Falcon wasn’t nearly as successful as it deserved to be, so when they signed to do a new series, Mark and Jamie thought about how to please their publisher and at the same time bring an innovative spark into the genre.

Mark had already created the world of Orb for the Dungeons & Dragons campaign he ran at school. His players continued to talk about it years later at college, where I met some of them, and they remembered Orb with such persuasive enthusiasm that eventually I managed to convince Mark to let me join a game. The startling thing that sticks in the mind now is that, instead of creating a character as in other roleplaying games, you actually play as yourself, whisked from Weston-super-Mare (or Hove, as it happened) to Harith-si’-the-Crow to be an adventurer in a world that, for once, genuinely delivered the sweep and wonder promised by the word fantasy.

I was a “multi-classed Ranger/Witch” (blessed be, kemosabe) and was given a Chaotic Neutral alignment, which I took to mean something like being a Greenpeace supporter. I couldn’t tell you much else about the game itself as I was killed in short order, but I was deeply impressed by the map and the background books. If Mark had handed me an Orb novel after that one game session, I would have sat up all night reading it.

Calm down. That was just an example. There is no Orb novel. Not yet. So, back to the mid-’80s. Fighting Fantasy is popular, so are ninja. Genius is often just a matter of putting two unlikely elements together for the first time.
One snag: Orb had no ninja. No samurai. Nothing like shugenja either. But with a D&D world it’s a simple matter to add an island, populate it with Japanese people, and bingo – or banzai – there’s your ninja. It’s a little odd that most people today think of Orb as having an Oriental flavour, given that the furthest east it ventured in its original incarnation was with a city called Upanishad. Avenger, the hero of the Way of the Tiger books, was conceived as a kind of Conan meets Kwai Chang Caine, venturing to the (western-style) mainland in search of justice, revenge, and a reliable supply of shuriken. Yet a whole generation of gamebook readers grew up with their imaginations stimulated by this unique mix of northern European myth and martial arts movie imagery, and Orb is now inextricably linked with the Way of the Tiger.

I said it was a stroke of genius. After Fighting Fantasy, Way of the Tiger was probably the bestselling dice-based gamebook series (based on per-title sales, that is, you vigilant Lone Wolf fans) and it would have run and run if Mark and Jamie hadn’t gone off to do the even-more-brilliant Duel Master books. For nearly thirty years, fans have been demanding to know if that giant spider’s web was really the end for Avenger or whether he (or she) could yet escape.

As I write this, that question remains unanswered. Thanks to Mikaël Louys and his team at Megara Entertainment, it’s now possible. Author David Walters has come up with a brilliant plotline, Mark and Jamie have agreed to co-write it, and everything now hinges on whether Kickstarter can mobilize enough interest to bring Avenger back to enjoy still more adventures guaranteed to enthrall old readers and kids alike. And in the meantime, you can put those well-thumbed paperbacks up in the loft as we will have a beautiful new limited edition of colour hardbacks. This is the kind of quality production that Way of the Tiger has always deserved. It took thirty years, but you know what the ninja say: take every opportunity with fullness. Enjoy.

- DAVE MORRIS, WANDSWORTH, JUNE 2013
Ninjas. Today they are everywhere, on TV, in films and comics like some kind of 'level one' bad guys our heroes have to deal with before moving on to the big boss. There's several hiding in my garden in fact, and in my shed. Even inside my house, wedged in the corner of the ceiling or hiding in the attic.

My bodyguards, all of them, in case of attack by my enemies. Well, I hope they all are - one of them could be an enemy ninja in disguise. How can I tell? They're all in black with ninja hoods and that.

Anyway, back in the 80s, when we started writing the Way of the Tiger books, they weren't everywhere at all. In a handful of films with Sho Kosugi that only a few whacked out 70s geeks followed. (Yes, I was a whacked out 70s geek). I had a black cat called Ninja, and I used to worry what people would think when I went out the back garden at night and called her in. 'Ninja, here Ninja!' But I guess most of them wouldn't have known what I was saying. People would ask things like 'A Ninja? What's that?'

Now it's a household name.

(To be continued on next page).
Back then, researching them for the first time was so much fun. There was so much fantastic material for games and stories, it was like opening up some kind of box of delights.

Half mythical, half martial arts superman, masters of the night, deadly assassins for hire - what's not to like? Our new take on the existing game book genre was really an early 'mash up'. Stick 'kung fu ninjas' into 'middle earth', basically. Except our ninjas had to be the good guys, and our middle earth wasn't just any old 'orcs and goblins' Tolkienesque sub set. It was Orb.

Thus started an amazing journey for young Avenger and for us, his creators. We hope these new editions with all the extra content, and all the cool new stuff, as well as the chance for more titles in the series will lead a whole new generation of readers on that journey.

May Fate smile upon you always!

- JAMIE THOMSON, GRANDMASTER OF NINJA (RETIRED).

Jamie as the Dark Lord
It’s great to see this publication with sumptuous full colour and a profusion of art from some very talented artists.

A relief too, after all of this time, that someone has taken the trouble to correct the errors that leaked through the copy editing process first time round. No more confusing and frustrating dead ends.

I’m really excited to see this take shape and very grateful for the labour of love that has brought back the Way of the Tiger in this splendid new incarnation - and I’m now really fired up to extend the series if there is real interest out there.

It seems that after all these decades the flame still burns brightly for the series out there in the fan base. All my life I have been coming across people who enjoyed reading the books and I realise that the series is an enduring one. When you craft a whole world like the setting of Orb it was always a necessary frustration that a world which is full of colour had to be rendered in black and white due to production costs.

At Megara no trouble has been spared to bring colour to Orb and the whole thing has come to life in a way which it never did all that time ago.

-MARK SMITH

Mark Smith is the author of several fantasy gamebooks, including co-authoring two Fighting Fantasy titles (Talisman of Death and Sword of the Samurai), and the series Duelmaster, Falcon and Way of the Tiger, all of which he co-authored with Jamie Thomson, whom he met whilst at school in Brighton. He also wrote two of the Virtual Reality series. He cites his gaming career as having begun with Original Dungeons and Dragons in 1976. Born in Birmingham, Mark Smith was educated in Brighton and went on to gain an MA in Experimental Psychology from Oxford University. Today, he lives in southeast England.
Ninja Character Sheet

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**NINJA TOOLS**

- Ninja Costume
- Breathing Tube
- Iron Sleeves
- Garotte
- Flash Powder
- Flint & Tinder
- Spiderfish
- Blood of Nil

**Starts At**

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On the magical world of Orb, alone in a sea that the people of the Manmarch call Endless, lies the mystical Island of Tranquil Dreams.

Many years have passed since the time when you first saw its golden shores and emerald rice meadows. A servant brought you, braving the distant leagues of the ponderous ocean from lands to which you have never returned. Your loyal servant laid you, an orphan, at the steps of the Temple of the Rock praying that the monks would care for you, for she was frail and dying of a hideous curse.

Monks have lived on the island for centuries, dedicated to the worship of their God, Kwon, He who speaks the Holy Words of Power, Supreme Master of Unarmed Combat. They live only to help others resist the evil that infests the world. Seeing that you were alone and needed care, the monks took you in and you became an acolyte at the Temple of the Rock. Nothing was made of the strange birthmark, shaped like a crown, which you carry on your thigh, though you remember that the old servant insisted that it was of mystical importance.

Whenever you have asked about this the monks have bade you meditate and be patient. The most ancient and powerful of them all, Naijishi, Grandmaster of the Dawn, became your foster-father. He gave you guidance and training in the calm goodness of Kwon, knowledge of men and their ways and how to meditate so that your mind floats free of your body and rides the winds in search of truth.

From the age of six, however, most of your time has been spent learning the Way of the Tiger. Now you are a ninja, a master of the martial arts and a deadly assassin who can kill the most powerful enemies unseen and unsuspected.

Like a tiger, you are strong, stealthy, agile, patient in the stalking of prey and deadly. On the Island of Plenty and the in Manmarch the fabled ninja, known as the ‘Men with no Shadow’, are held in awe - the mere mention of ninja strikes fear into people’s hearts. But you are one of the few who worship Kwon and follow the Way of the Tiger. You use your skill as a bringer of death to rid the world of evil-doers.
At an early age you hung by the hands for hours on end from the branches of trees to strengthen your arms. You ran for miles, your light-footed speed enough to keep a thirty-foot ribbon trailing above the ground. You trod tightropes, as agile as a monkey. Now you swim like a fish and leap like a tiger, you move like the whisper of the breeze and glide through the blackest night like a shade. Before he died Naijishi taught you the Ninja’s Covenant.

**NINJA NO CHIGIRI**

‘I will vanish into the night; change my body to wood or stone; sink into the earth and walk through walls and locked doors. I will be killed many times, yet will not die; change my face and become invisible, able to walk among men without being seen.’

It was after your foster-father Naijishi’s death that you began to live the words of the Covenant. A man came to the island, Yaemon, Grandmaster of Flame. Using borrowed sorcery he tricked the monks into believing that he was a worshipper of Kwon from the Greater Continent. He was indeed a monk but he worshipped Kwon’s twisted brother, Vile, who helps the powerful to subdue the weak, and wicked men to rule fools.

Yaemon slew Naijishi - no one could match him in unarmed combat - and he stole the Scrolls of Kettsuin from the Temple. Once more you knew the pain of loss for you had loved Naijishi as a father.

You swore an oath to Kwon that one day you would avenge his death. You have honed your skills helping the downtrodden on the Island of Plenty but now the time has come to prove yourself to your brother monks at the Temple of the Rock.
THE WAY OF THE TIGER

Winged Horse Kick
Leaping Tiger Kick
Whirlpool Throw

Tiger Kick

Forked Lightning Kick

Dragon’s Tail Throw

Iron Fist Punch
Tiger’s Paw Chop
Cobra Strike Punch

Teeth of Tiger Throw

Kwon’s Flail
(can be learned during the adventure)

WARNING!
Do not attempt any of the techniques or methods described in this book. They could result in serious injury or death to an untrained user.
As a Master of Taijutsu, the ninja’s art of unarmed combat, you have four main ways of fighting. Throwing shuriken (see under skills), kicks, punches and throws.

In general it will be harder to hit an opponent when kicking but a kick will do more damage than a punch. A throw, if successful, will allow you to follow up with a possible ‘killing blow’, but if you fail a throw your Defence against an opponent will be lower, as you are open to attack. Shuriken are a special case and will be mentioned in the text when you can use them.

Whenever you are in a combat you will be asked which type of attack you wish to make. See the Way of the Tiger illustrations for the different types of kicks, punches and throws available to you. Think about your opponent and its likely fighting style. Trying to throw a giant enemy is not going to be as easy as throwing an ordinary man, for example. You will be told which paragraph to turn to, depending on your choice.

When you are resolving combat, you will find it useful to record your opponent’s current Endurance score. A number of Encounter Boxes are provided with your Character Sheet for this purpose.

The combats have been presented in such a way that it is possible for you to briefly examine the rules and begin play almost immediately, but fighting is tactical. Do not forget the rules for blocking and Inner Force (see below), as you will rarely be told when to use these in the text.

**Punch**

When you try to strike an enemy with a punch, that enemy will have a Defence number. You need to score higher on the roll of two dice (an Attack Roll). You get to add your Punch Modifier (see below) to this roll. If the score is higher than his or her Defence number, you have successfully punched your opponent. In this case, roll one more die. The result is the amount of damage you have inflicted on your opponent. Every opponent has Endurance or ‘hit points’. The damage you do is subtracted from your opponent’s Endurance total. If this has reduced your opponent’s score to 0 or less, you have won.

**Punch Modifier:** Whenever you make an Attack Roll to determine whether or not you have successfully punched an opponent, add or subtract your Punch Modifier. This number reflects your skill in using the punches of the Way of the Tiger. Your starting Punch Modifier is 0, as noted on your Character Sheet. This may change during the adventure.
The Enemy's Attack: After you punch, any opponent still living will counter attack. You will be given your Defence number. Roll two dice, and if the score is greater than your Defence, you have been hit. The amount of damage inflicted upon you depends on the opponent and will be noted in the text, in a format such as 'Damage: 1 Die + 1' or '2 Dice' or '1 Die + 2'. Simply roll the required number of dice and add any other number given. This is the total damage inflicted upon you. However, before you subtract this score from your Endurance, you may choose to try and block or parry the attack (see block) to prevent any damage.

KICK

The kick and the Kick Modifier work exactly as the punch, except that a kick will do 2 more points of damage than a punch ('1 Die + 2'). It will often be harder to hit with a kick. If the opponent survives, he or she will counter attack.

THROW

The throw and Throw Modifier work as the punch to determine success. A throw does no damage to your foe; instead, you will be allowed another attack, a punch or kick, with a + 2 bonus to hit (like an extra Punch Modifier or Kick Modifier) and + 2 to damage. (All bonuses are cumulative - a kick normally does '1 Die + 2' damage, so after a successful throw it does '1 Die + 4'.) The opponent will only counter attack against a throw if you fail.

ENDURANCE

You begin the game with 20 points of Endurance. Keep a running total of your Endurance on your Character Sheet. It will probably be the number that will change most as you are wounded, healed etc. When you reach 0 Endurance or less, you are dead and your adventure ends.

Whether your block is successful or not, 2 will be subtracted from your Punch, Kick and Throw Modifier for your next attack only. Remember, you can only block blows, not missiles or magic.
As a ninja, a master of Taijutsu, you have the ability to block or parry incoming blows with various parts of your body, often your forearms. For this purpose, thin lightweight iron rods have been sewn into your sleeves enabling you to block even swords and other weapons. During combat, if you have been hit, you may try to block the blow and take no damage. Roll two dice. If the score is less than your Defence given in that combat, you have successfully blocked the blow, and take no damage. If your score is equal to or greater than your Defence, you take damage in the normal way. In any case, because you have taken the time to block, your next attack will be less effective, as your opponent has had more time to react. Whether your block is successful or not, 2 will be subtracted from your Punch, Kick and Throw Modifier for your next attack only. Remember, you can only block blows, not missiles or magic.

Through meditation and rigorous training you have mastered the ability to unleash spiritual or inner power through your body in the same way as the karate experts of today break blocks of wood and bricks. In any combat, before you roll the dice to determine if you will hit or miss an opponent, you may choose to use Inner Force. If you do, deduct one point from your Inner Force score. This is used up whether or not you succeed in striking your opponent. If you are successful, however, double the damage you inflict - first make your roll for damage and add any bonus (e.g., '1 Die + 2' for a kick), then double the result. When your Inner Force is reduced to 0, you can no longer use Inner Force - so use it wisely. You begin the game with 5 points of Inner Force.

Luck plays its part and the goddess Fate has great power on the world of Orb. Whenever you are asked to make a Fate Roll, roll two dice, adding or subtracting your Fate Modifier. If the score is 7-12, you are lucky and Fate has smiled on you. If the score is 2-6, you are unlucky and Fate has turned her back on you. You begin your adventure with a Fate Modifier of 0. Later on, this might go up or down, as you are blessed or cursed by Fate.
Starting Ninja Tools

As well as any equipment you may take depending on your skills (see next), as a ninja you have certain tools with you from the beginning. These are:

**THE NINJA COSTUME**
During the day you would normally be disguised as a traveller, beggar or suchlike. At night when on a mission, you would wear costume. This consists of a few pieces of black cloth. One piece is worn as a jacket covering the chest and arms, two others are wound around each leg and held in at the waist. Finally, a long piece of cloth is wrapped around the head, leaving only the eyes exposed. The reverse side of the costume can be white, for travel on snowy ground, or green, for travel in woods or grasslands.

**IRON SLEEVES**
Sewn into the sleeves of your costume are four thin strips of iron, the length of your forearm. These allow you to parry or block blows from swords and other cutting weapons.

**BREATHING TUBE**
Made from bamboo, this can be used as a snorkel allowing you to remain underwater for long periods of time. It can also be used as a blow-pipe in conjunction with the Poison Needles skill, for added range.

**GARROTTTE**
A specialised killing tool of the ninja, this is a length of wire used to assassinate enemies by strangulation.

**FLASH POWDER**
This powder, when thrown in any source of flame, causes a blinding flash. You have enough for one use only.

**FLINT AND TINDER**
Used for making fires.

**SPIDERFISH**
Salted and cured, this highly venomous fish is used as a source for the deadly poison used in conjunction with the Poison Needles skill, and as a useful way of removing any guardian beasts or animals.

**THE BLOOD OF NIL**
You also carry one dose of the most virulent poison known on Orb. This venom is extremely difficult and very dangerous to collect for it is taken from the barb of a scorpion son of the God, Nil, Mouth of the Void.
Ninja Skills

You have been trained in ninjutsu all of your life. Your senses of smell, sight and hearing have been honed to almost superhuman effectiveness. You are well versed in woodcraft, able to track like a bloodhound, and to cover your own tracks. Your knowledge of plants and herb lore enables you to live off the land. You are at the peak of physical fitness, able to run up to 50 miles a day and swim like a fish. Your training included horsemanship, a little ventriloquism, meditation, the ability to hold yourself absolutely still for hours on end, perfecting your balance, and ‘The Seven Ways of Going’ or disguise. The latter skill involves comprehensive training so that you can perform as a minstrel, for instance, if this disguise is used. However, a major part of this training has been stealth, hiding in shadows, moving silently, and breathing as quietly as possible, enabling you to move about unseen and unheard. You begin the game with these skills.

There are nine other skills. One of these, Shurikenjutsu, is always taught to a ninja in training. This you must take, but you may then choose three other skills from the remaining eight, and note them on your Character Sheet.

SHURIKENJUTSU

You begin the adventure with five shuriken. The type you specialise in are ‘throwing stars’, small razor sharp star shaped disks of metal. You can throw these up to a range of about 30 feet with devastating effect. If you throw a shuriken, you will be given a Defence number for your target. Roll two dice, and if the score is higher than the Defence number, you will have hit your target. The text will describe the damage done. You will be told the result. You may find yourself in a position where you are unable to retrieve a shuriken once you have thrown it. Keep a running total in the box provided on your Character Sheet, crossing off a shuriken each time you lose one. If you have none left, you can no longer use this skill.

ARROW CUTTING

Requiring excellent muscular co-ordination, hand and eye judgment and reflexes, this skill will enable you to knock aside, or even catch, missiles such as arrows or spears.

ACROBATICS

The ability to leap and jump using flips, cartwheels, etc, like a tumbler or gymnast.
**IMMUNITY TO POISONS**

This involves taking small doses of virulent poisons over long periods of time, slowly building up the body’s resistance. This enables you to survive most poison attempts.

**FEIGNING DEATH**

Requiring long and arduous training, a ninja with this ability is able to slow down heart rate and metabolism through will power alone, thus appearing to be dead.

**ESCAPOLOGY**

A ninja with this skill is able to dislocate the joints of the body and to maximize the body’s suppleness, allowing movement through small spaces, and escape from bonds and chains by slipping out of them.

**POISON NEEDLES**

Sometime known as Spitting Needles, with this skill you can place small darts, coated with a powerful poison that acts in the bloodstream, onto your tongue. By curling the tongue into an ‘O’ shape and spitting or blowing, the dart can be propelled up to an effective range of about 15 feet. A useful surprise attack, the source of which is not always perceptible.

**PICKING LOCKS, DETECTING AND DISARMING TRAPS**

The ability to open locked doors, chests etc. With this skill you would carry various lockpicks in the pockets of your costume, including a small crowbar or jemmy. You are also trained to notice traps and to use the lock-picking tools to disarm them.

**CLIMBING**

Comprehensive training in the use of a grappling hook and hand and foot clamps, or cat’s claws. The padded four-pronged hook has 40 feet of rope attached to it. Used to hook over walls, niches etc, allowing you to pull yourself up the rope. The cat’s claws are spiked clamps, worn over the palm of the hands and the instep of the feet, enabling you to embed your claws into a wall and climb straight up like a fly, and even to crawl across ceilings.

With these skills and weapons at your disposal you are now a ninja warrior and ready to take the first step in the Way of the Tiger.

When you’re prepared, turn to 1.
The dawn rays of the sun greet you as you begin your preparations for the time of trial. Today you will become the youngest ever to challenge for the title of Grandmaster of the Five Winds. When your foster father, Naijishi, was murdered by Yaemon, the second Grandmaster stepped into his place. Now, many seasons later another of the Grandmasters has died and the position is open once more for there must always be five who lead the order. You have been invited to challenge for it because of your consummate mastery of the Way of the Tiger.

At the appointed hour you walk, alone, across the sands to the Temple of the Rock. It is a huge pillared hall built into the side of an enormous boulder of red granite brought to rest on the Island of Tranquil Dreams by the ice floes of the age of snow, which carved out the Great Valley Reaches of the far north. As you approach the Temple, you see that the monks and a large number of villagers have assembled to watch the combat between you and the other challenger, Gorobei.

Like you, Gorobei is an Initiate of the Inner Circle, a devout worshipper of Kwon and a capable fighter. He is older, heavier and stronger than you. But he has been unsuccessful in one previous challenge, although he is a skilful wrestler. You walk into the Temple and bow to the Grandmaster of the Dawn, a man who looks younger than his fifty years, slim and taut with piercing dark eyes. Beside you, Gorobei also bows, his face a mask showing no emotion. He is clad only in a loin cloth and his rippling muscles gleam with an oil that will make it difficult to keep a grip on him. You must defeat him in unarmed combat in order to be allowed to undertake the spiritual test which will show whether you are ready to become a Grandmaster. Gorobei turns to you and bows, and you return the courtesy. The Grandmaster of the Dawn reminds you that this is not a fight to the death and you cannot use Inner Force. He signals for you to begin. Gorobei advances warily across the polished granite floor, his big hands ready to grapple you. Will you:

Use the Leaping Tiger kick (turn to 17)?
Use the Cobra Strike punch (turn to 35)?
Use the Whirlpool throw (turn to 61)?
Or, if you have the Acrobatics skill, somersault to Gorobei’s side before attacking (turn to 80)?
1. Gorobei by Dominique Gilis
3
The hook catches the castle wall and you leap towards the far side of the moat. You hit the water with a splash and begin pulling yourself up to the wall as fast as you can. The water boils around you as the Floating Mouths streak towards their prey - you. Two fix their mouths on you as you pull yourself out. Lose 3 Endurance as they tear at your flesh. If you are still alive, you sweep them away and, standing up, look around. The Dark Elf is nowhere to be seen, lost in the swamp, and the knight lies spread-eagled on the sand but the man in blue and gold robes is floating across the moat on a small ice floe.

Turn to 372.

4
The knights of Nemesis rush to the edge of the river and one of them catches sight of you and points. They begin to throw off their plate mail.

Are you skilful with Poison Needle Darts? If you are and would like to use one, turn to 419. If you are not or would, in any case, rather swim powerfully away upstream, turn to 12.

6
You pass through the archway of purple-black glass and on into the city of Doomover itself. You cannot remember ever having seen so many buildings, solid and tall, their roofs made of sloping slates, not thatch, and there are shops everywhere, selling fish, wine, grain and so on. There is even a slave market.

Near the Obsidian Gate a town-crier begins to ring his bell. He is dressed in orange and green to attract attention, and he starts to shout loudly about a brave adventurer who lived in Doomover who has reaped rich rewards and found a secret way into the death-city of Mortavalon, having entered a cave in the hills which encircle that city. Next he proclaims loudly that the army is paying well for recruits, although there is no war but men are needed for manoeuvres on the Plain of Feet. There are rows of barracks not far from the harbour. Do you:

Enlist in the army to see what information you can gain? Turn to 16.
Ignore the town crier and walk on through the city? Turn to 408.
You swim upstream but as you go they begin chanting again. You feel their spell taking effect - suddenly you find that you cannot move your limbs. You float gently downstream, into their welcoming arms and they bind you securely. If you have a Ring they take it from you - cross it off your Character Sheet.

Are you skilled in Escapology? If you are, turn to 21. If you are not, turn to 37.

You try to leap up and lock your legs around the Cobra Man’s neck as he strikes, to twist and throw him to the ground, but his speed still surprises you.

COBRA MAN
Defence against throw: 7
Endurance: 10

If you have thrown the Cobra Man you may now either attack using the Tiger’s Paw chop (turn to 42) or the Winged Horse kick (turn to 25), adding 2 to your Kick or Punch Modifier for this attack only, and 2 to the damage if you hit. If you have failed to throw the Cobra Man turn to 412.

You walk to the barracks and join a queue of people, some young and fit, others older, looking a little down on their luck. You are chosen with a few of the others to demonstrate your skill with the sword, which you manage adequately but not well, never having been trained in sword play. You are grouped together and given drill practice for some hours before being marched to your night barracks. You manage to discover that the Legion of the Sword of Doom is going to attack the people of the Spires of Foreshadowing but that there is plenty of time to be trained for battle, because its leader, Honoric, has left the city and journeyed north. As you all settle down to sleep, they begin to talk of pillaging the Spires and the loot that they will bring home. The barracks are guarded in case any of the new recruits think better of joining up but you decide that there is nothing more of interest here and try to desert in the quiet hours before dawn. You wrap your black ninja headgear around your head until only the slits of your eyes are visible and don your black costume.

If you have the skill of Climbing and would like to leave the barracks from the roof, turn to 75. Otherwise, you decide to creep up behind the guard whilst the others sleep. Turn to 86.
You step forward as if to punch and then, leaping in the air, you lash the ball of your foot towards Gorobei’s head with a speed that defies belief. But Gorobei, although not quick, knows your style of combat.

GOROBEI
Defence against Leaping Tiger kick: 6
Endurance: 14
Damage: 1 Die

If you have defeated Gorobei turn to 110. If Gorobei is still conscious he attacks you; your Defence against Gorobei’s Cobra Strike is 7. If Gorobei has defeated you turn to 95. If not, will you punch (turn to 35), throw (turn to 61) or kick again (return to the top of this paragraph)?

The Aquamarin’s huge oars are each manned by two men. At your side a rower, until recently free but now roped by the Reavers to the oar shaft, stares blankly at you. You can tell by the white scars on his back that he is one of the two who has been in slave galleys before. His upper body is huge, his chest unnaturally deep and his legs squat and tapering to small feet, giving him the appearance of a toad. He tells you that he had been enslaved as a boy and knows no other life than that of the oar deck. He groans quietly at the savage twist of Fate that has befallen him and tells you that he was the only one on his last slave ship to live longer than a year. The buccaneers appoint an Overseer and two whip hands to patrol the Aquamarin’s oar deck. It seems they are going to sell her and her crew at some lawless port.

Are you skilled in Escapology? If you are, turn to 126. If you are not, turn to 115.
The knights camp in the hills which encircle Mortavalon, near a cave-mouth, overhung with rock. After they have eaten round a small fire, two of them walk over to where you lie. Instead of giving you food they tell you that they are taking you back to the dungeons under the cathedral to Vasch-Ro, in Doomover, where you will rot. Intrigued you ask them why they are taking you there instead of to their own temple at Mortavalon.

‘Because Manse the Deathmage, a servant of Nemesis and the most powerful sorcerer of them all, is journeying north to meet Honoric and Yaemon, he of the order of the Scarlet Mantis, to work a great magic which will plunge the world into darkness and bring nearer the day when we, the followers of Nemesis, will rule everything on Orb.’

‘Yaemon will betray him,’ you say.

They laugh and reply that the Deathmage knows the thoughts of all men and can see them plotting from afar. With that they leave you, preparing themselves for sleep. For some hours you wrestle with your bonds, loosening them until you can hook your thumbs inside the chafing ropes. At last you are free and you decide to creep into the cave, lest they use spells to snare you once again.

Turn to 275.

The Cobra Man’s strike is as fast as your own as you turn sideways on and drive your heel towards his chest.

**Cobra Man**
Defence against kick: 7
Endurance: 10

If you have killed the Cobra Man, turn to 394. If your kick has missed, he strikes home (turn to 412). Otherwise will you use the Tiger’s Paw chop (turn to 42), try the Teeth of the Tiger throw (turn to 13) or kick again (return to the top of this paragraph)?
By midday of the next day, the *Aquamarin* has left the islands behind and ahead of you looms the Greater Continent. You turn north and hug the rocky coast for some days - you may restore up to 10 points of lost Endurance as you rest, gliding over the still calm seas. It begins to rain slightly on the next day, as you follow the shore of a vast bay. Glaivias comes to talk to you and points to a large estuary where the Greybones empties into the sea. He tells you that his home city, Tor, lies up river. You ask him whether there is a temple to Kwon there and he shakes his head but freely tells you that his goddess is the All-Mother, Preserver of Life. You ask him of the cities which lie beyond Tor on the Greybones river but a look of pain passes over his face.

‘Let me tell you, instead, of Doomover, for that is our port of call,’ he says. ‘It is one of the largest cities in the Manmarch, perhaps four hundred thousand souls, and it is ruled by the Legion of the Sword of Doom. Most spit when they hear the name but they are one of the best armies on Orb. They worship the war god, Vasch-Ro, He who sows for the Reaper, and they spread fear about them in battle. There are temples to other gods but the Cathedral to the war god overshadows them all. The Marshal of the Legion of the Sword of Doom is Honoric, a black-heart who has never been defeated in combat. It is said that he once slew a storm giant, single-handed. He is without doubt a peerless swordsman. The order of the Scarlet Mantis has a temple there too. They send their acolytes to the Far Snows for training, where they become used to hardship of all kinds. Yaemon is the greatest warrior they have ever had to lead them. They use the cross of Avatar, the Supreme Principle of Good as a symbol, but with a serpent twining round it. In this way you may know one if you see one.’

On the next day, you sight the fortified harbour walls of Doomover and two long blackwood ships dart out to meet you. They fly the flag of the Barbican League, the Doomover navy. As they approach, a tall man in black ringed mail orders you to heave to. The captain obeys and the sails are slackened. He answers various questions but when the naval commander asks what business he has at Doomover, he looks nervously at Glaivias, licking his lips. Glaivias answers for him, saying that he has come to sell galley slaves.

The commander grins, ‘I was going to confiscate your ship but as you bring men we have need of, you may pass through the Barbican.’ With that you are allowed on your way.
The Barbican itself is a huge gatehouse, like a fort which spans the ends of the harbour walls in an arc. The ship glides beneath it and is tied up at the busy wharf. You thank Glaivas for his help and jump lithely to the land. He is returning to Tor to organize the defence against the forces of Vile should your mission fail. He throws you a pouch containing gold and silver pieces, saying, ‘Here, you need this. May Fate smile on you, ninja.’ You pocket the pouch and turn to the city.

Two gates stand side by side. The larger is a huge arch of black obsidian like a rainbow of dark glass. The other, much smaller, consists of two pairs of white marble pillars topped by a portico on which the words ‘Portal of the Gods’ are written in gold leaf. Which gate will you choose to go through, the Obsidian Gate (turn to 6) or the Portal of the Gods (turn to 208)?

27
The girl looks at you scornfully, as if you were in some way unworthy. The old man screams at you, ‘May Fate never smile on you again.’ He has cursed you. Subtract - 1 from your Fate Modifier. You leave the chapel quickly and decide to pass through the Obsidian Gate into the main part of the city.

Turn to 6.

33
You leap from the boat, high into the air, and arc gracefully towards the far side as the crowd gasps in awe.

Make a Fate Roll. If Fate smiles on you, turn to 382. If Fate turns her back on you, you fall short, into the moat - turn to 64.

34
Crash! The Captain’s head hits the deck on the way down and his skull is staved in before the waves engulf him. The news spreads quickly through the Reavers and they break off the battle, jumping back to the Watery Grave to begin fighting amongst themselves to decide who shall become the new tyrant captain. You dive from the stern castle and swim strongly towards the Aquamarin which is already underway. Your lungs bursting, you catch onto a moving oar at last, and haul yourself up over the side.

Turn to 26.
35
You crouch as if to wrestle with Gorobei who tenses, ready to throw his extra weight against yours, but then you jab unexpectedly towards his midriff. Gorobei’s reach is long and he is skilled in punching and blocking, though not as fast as you.

GOROBEI
Defence against Cobra Strike punch: 7
Endurance: 14
Damage: 1 Die

If you have defeated Gorobei turn to 110. If Gorobei is still conscious, he attacks you. Your Defence against his Tiger’s Paw chop is 7. If Gorobei has reduced your Endurance to 0 or less, turn to 95. If none of the above, will you now kick (turn to 17), throw (turn to 61) or punch again (return to the top of this paragraph)?

36
The seer is shuffling towards a porch at the entrance of the small wooden chapel that lies beyond the temple to Béatan the Free. He turns towards you and beckons you inside. The chapel is small and dark but to your surprise it is clean and well kept. Scrolls are neatly stacked in racks along the walls. The old man calls a girl’s name and his acolyte appears, a surprisingly pretty girl of no more than eighty seasons. Whilst you wonder what she is doing with the stooped old man in a chapel that is too small to hold more than twenty people, he produces a long and wicked looking sacrificial knife. In the darkness of the chapel his features look more gaunt and powerful than they did when he raved at the priests. He tells you to lie down on what looks like an altar with a silver ewer beside it. The young girl reaches to guide you to it.

If you trust them and allow her to guide you, turn to 50. If you decide to take your leave hastily, turn to 27.
Try as you might you cannot loosen your bonds. You overhear the knights talking and it seems that they worship Nemesis, the Supreme Principle of Evil. Somehow word of your exploits in Doomover has travelled ahead of you, but you cannot puzzle out why the knights of Nemesis are in league with the monks of the Scarlet Mantis and the Legion of the Sword of Doom who follow the war god Vasch-Ro. They return you to Doomover where you are taken to the dungeons below the cathedral to Vasch-Ro and manacled to the wall. The jailer does not bother to bring you food or water and you are dead within days.

As the Cobra Man’s lidless eyes watch, warily waiting for you to commit yourself, you drive the back of your hand towards the swaying neck. It will be difficult to beat the snake man’s whip-like strike.

**COBRA MAN**

Defence against Tiger’s Paw chop: 7
Endurance: 10

If you have killed the Cobra Man, turn to 394. If you have failed to chop his swaying head, turn to 412. Otherwise will you use the Winged Horse kick (turn to 25), try the Teeth of the Tiger throw (turn to 13) or punch again (return to the top of this paragraph)?

As you try to run at the knights their spell takes hold and your legs and arms turn to lead. Your body quivers as, with a great effort of will, you struggle a few steps further but they have no trouble in knocking you to the ground and tying you securely. **If you have a Ring, they take it from you, cross it off your Character Sheet.** Are you a skilled Escapologist? If you are, turn to 21. If not, turn to 37.

You duck the Captain’s swirling morning star, then dodge as he tries to surprise you by driving the heavy gold rings on his left fist into your face. Before you can attack him again a chain net descends upon you and you fall, struggling, to the boards. Two buccaneers had seen you attacking their Captain, and being his favourites they rushed to his aid, flinging a chain net from the stairway. They tie you up and drag you back to the *Aquamarin* where your ninja tools are taken and you are roped to an oar. Turn to 19.
'We are always ready to help a follower of the Preserver of Life,' says the priest. You ask him if a monk, a follower of Vile, called Yaemon is in Doomover. The priest tells you that the talk of the town is that Honoric, the Marshal of the Legion of the Sword of Doom, left the city a ten day since, just when his men were expecting him to lead them in battle against the people of the Spires of Foreshadowing. He continues, ‘I don’t know why he left so suddenly but it must be important.’

‘But what of Yaemon?’ you ask.

‘Ah yes, well, the monks of the Scarlet Mantis have always been on good terms with the reverencers of Vasch-Ro the war god. Yaemon went with him on the road to Mortavalon.’

He can tell you no more other than that they rode out together and were alone. You thank him and leave the temple.

Go through the Obsidian Gate: turn to 6.
Leave Doomover out of the harbour gate and head for Mortavalon: turn to 65

50
The girl takes your hand in hers and leads you to the marble slab. The old man explains that he must let some of your blood into the silver chalice if he is to show you the future. He cuts a vein in your arm and the blood pumps into the ewer. You look at him in alarm as he lets it flow until you have lost half a pint and your arm begins to tingle. Subtract 2 from your Endurance (though not if it would kill you). Then he seals the wound with a spell. The girl pours a green potion into the ewer. You feel faint and obey him when he tells you to look at a mirror which hangs on the wall above you. He begins to chant and produces a crystal prism which he holds over the ewer. The blood in the potion bubbles and the seer’s chanting grows louder.

A picture forms in the mirror of two men leaving a city on horseback. The larger is dressed in black plate mail and carries a black shield upon which is emblazoned a silver sword hanging from a silver thread, the Sword of Doom. His face is arrogant and cruel. The other is dressed in the clothes of a martial arts monk, scarlet with a thin black belt. They are riding towards you in silence and the monk’s piercing black eyes gaze unwavering into yours.
The seer informs you that the vision shows Yaemon, Grandmaster of Flame, riding with Honoric, Marshal of the Legion of the Sword of Doom, north from Mortavalon. He tells you that they are travelling to the Pillars of Change, each to speak a word which will imprison a god and a goddess in Inferno. Honoric seeks to rule the whole of the Manmarch. You fall into a trance and when you wake up you find yourself outside Doomover, walking on the road to Mortavalon. You wonder what the seer may have done to you whilst you were entranced. Has he told anyone of the vision? At any rate, the vision suggested that Honoric and Yaemon were far ahead. You realise that you must travel to Mortavalon to find out where Yaemon and Honoric are.

Turn to 65.

55
Your blow sends the last one of them collapsing backwards to the ground. You have pummelled them all to death. You notice that one of them was wearing an Amulet. The Amulet is a bright crystal set in a gold disk which carries magical runes, as well as an inscription: ‘My wearer can withstand the Finger of Death’. You slip the Amulet around your neck; note it down on your Character Sheet. Searching their bodies you find a battered scroll case and, muttering a prayer to Kwon to protect you from curses, you open it. The papyrus inside identifies its bearer as a priest of Nemesis, ‘The Supreme Principle of Evil, he who would return all to The Darkness.’ It carries a description of you. It was no accident that they attacked you - and word has somehow travelled ahead of you for their temple to Nemesis is in Mortavalon. You walk on into the hills which encircle Mortavalon, puzzling as to who could have contacted the temple of Nemesis about you and why, until, turning a bend in the hills, you notice a cave overhung by rock in the hillside above you.

Will you continue along the road to Mortavalon (turn to 283), or enter the cave (turn to 275)?

56
He asks you to give the sign of the ‘many ways to freedom’ but you cannot. He prepares to cast a spell, but you beg his pardon and, saying that you will seek help elsewhere, quickly leave the temple. The seer is nowhere to be seen so you walk out of the Sanctuary and through the Obsidian Gate.

Turn to 6.
57
You hurl your grappling hook and rope at the castle wall. Make a Fate Roll. If Fate smiles on you, turn to 3. If Fate turns her back on you, the hook misses and you sink into the water before you can retrieve it. In this case, turn to 64.

58
The buccaneer Captain falls to the planks, dead. Two of his men are on the stairway behind you but seeing that you have single-handedly killed the man they feared the most, they back away, calling the news to the other Reavers. The pirates abandon the Aquamarin, returning to the Watery Grave, and begin fighting amongst themselves to decide who shall become the new tyrant captain. You dive from the stern castle into the sea and swim strongly towards the Aquamarin, which is already under way. Your lungs bursting, you catch onto a moving oar at last, and haul yourself up over the side. Turn to 26.

61
You raise your foot as if to kick Gorobei in the chest but spin to his side instead and take hold of his arm to pitch him over your hip in the Whirlpool throw. You rapidly learn your mistake, however, as your grip slides on the oil which covers him and he uses his skill as a wrestler to grab you and lock your arm behind your back whilst he grips you around the throat with his other hand. His strength is enormous. You try to twist backwards past him and break the grip but he is ready for you and pins you to the floor before delivering a heavy blow. You lose 10 Endurance; if your Endurance is reduced to 0 or less, turn to 95. If not, you are stunned but still able to roll out of range and get to your feet. You shake the grogginess out of your head, warily circling your opponent, who grins back at you. Will you use the Leaping Tiger kick (turn to 17) or the Cobra Strike punch (turn to 35)?
You leap feet first at one of the knights, trying to wrap your feet around his head and twisting violently, to throw him to the ground. You may choose which one to attack.

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<th>1st KNIGHT</th>
<th>2nd KNIGHT</th>
<th>3rd KNIGHT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defence against Teeth of the Tiger throw</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
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If you are successful, you try to use the Tiger’s Paw chop on the prone knight, who desperately tries to roll aside. His Defence is 3, and if you hit him, add 2 to the Damage Roll. If you kill him with the Tiger’s Paw, and he was the last knight alive turn to 55. If he is still alive or you failed to throw him at all, any of the knights left alive try to attack you separately. If 3 are alive, your Defence is 7. If 2 are alive, your Defence is 8, and if only one is left, your Defence is 9. You may block only one of the attacks. If you survive, you may now use the Cobra Strike punch (turn to 82), or the Forked Lightning kick (turn to 71).

As soon as you hit the water it seems to boil around you as the Floating Mouths race to latch onto their prey. You struggle, but it is useless. Within a minute, your skeleton has been stripped bare of its flesh. Your adventure ends here.

As you leave the forbidding towered walls of Doomover behind, the sun climbs in the sky, ripening the corn and barley which rustles in the breeze. The fields do not stretch for far and you are soon on the edge of a low plain, the Plain of Feet, on which several thousand of the Legion of the Sword of Doom are practicing for the forthcoming war, smart and efficient. The smooth plain gradually gives way to a wilderness of trees and vines. Will you continue along the road to Mortavalon (turn to 212) or strike north of the road, into the wilderness (turn to 235)?
Make a note of how many times you try to attack the Reaver. Before the morning star makes contact you snap your leg upwards, driving the ball of your foot at the Captain’s face.

BUCCANEER CAPTAIN  
Defence against Leaping Tiger: 6  
Endurance: 12  
Damage: 1 Die + 2

If you have defeated the Captain, turn to 58. If he is still alive after four attacks, turn to 45. Otherwise, he attacks you with his morning star. Your Defence against the spiked ball and chain is 7.

If you are still alive, you may now try the Teeth of the Tiger throw (turn to 87), a Cobra Strike (turn to 77) or kick again (return to the top of this paragraph).

You try to drive the heel of your foot into the armour gap at the groin of one of the knights and then whip it up to his face. You may choose which one you wish to attack.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defence against Forked Lightning kick</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

If you have defeated them, turn to 55.

If any are left alive, they attack you. Each makes an individual Attack Roll. If there are 3 of them, your Defence is 7. If there are 2 of them, your Defence is 8. If there is only one of them left, your Defence is 9. You may only block one of their attacks.

If you survive, you may try the Teeth of the Tiger throw (turn to 63), the Cobra Strike (turn to 82) or kick again (return to the top of this paragraph).
You row the boat across the slime-covered swamp, towards the moat, but from the moment that you climb into it water pours in through the cracks and, as you float out across the moat, the boat begins to sink. To your horror you see that the water is infested with Floating Mouths, voracious fish, all teeth and elastic belly.

If you are skilled in Climbing you may try to throw your grappling hook onto the wall of the miniature castle and hope to climb up the rope (turn to 57). If you are skilled in Acrobatics you may wish to attempt an enormous leap to the far side of the moat (turn to 33). If you do not wish to use these skills, or do not possess them, you dive into the moat and strike out for the castle (turn to 64).

You climb to the ceiling using your cat’s claws and noiselessly open a trapdoor that leads to the roof. You climb out under the eaves and onto the slates of the barracks roof before jumping down to the street below.

Make a Fate Roll. If Fate smiles on you, turn to 94. If you are ill-fated, turn to 125.

Make a note of how many times you try to attack the Reaver. Before the morning star connects you drive your fingers at the evil Captain’s throat.

**BUCCANEER CAPTAIN**
Defence against Cobra Strike: 6  
Endurance: 12  
Damage: 1 Die + 2

If you have defeated the Captain, turn to 58. If he is still alive after four attacks, turn to 45.

Otherwise, he attacks you with his morning star. Your Defence against the ball and chain is 8.

If you are still alive, you may now try the Teeth of the Tiger throw (turn to 87), the Leaping Tiger kick, (turn to 67) or another straight fingered jab (return to the top of the paragraph).
You step forward to attack but then somersault suddenly, landing at Gorobei’s side as his fist flails the air at the spot from which you leapt. He turns but you have surprised him and will find it easier to attack him than if you merely stood before him to trade blows. You may add 2 to the dice when rolling for your first attack only. Will you:

Use the Leaping Tiger kick (turn to 17), the Cobra Strike punch (turn to 35) or the Whirlpool throw (turn to 61)?

Your fingers jab like rods of steel towards one of your assailants, as you hope to catch him in the armpit where his armour provides less protection. You may choose which one to attack.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defence against Cobra Strike punch</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have defeated them, turn to 55. If any of the knights are still alive, they try to swing their weapons at you. If there are 3 still alive, your Defence is 7, if there are 2, your Defence is 8 and if there is only one left, your Defence is 9. You may only block one of their attacks. If you survive their attacks, you may try the Forked Lightning Strike (turn to 71), the Teeth of the Tiger throw (turn to 63) or jab again (return to the top of the paragraph).

You slink soundlessly as a black panther towards the unsuspecting guard who is leaning against the door post lost in thought. You have no qualms about killing a member of the dread Legion to make your escape. Will you creep along the wall and garrotte him (turn to 116) or send a shuriken spinning towards his throat (turn to 105)?
Make a note of how many times you try to hit the Reaver. First ducking beneath the flailing ball and chain, you jump into the air, try to clamp your feet around his neck and, by twisting vigorously, throw him into the sea.

**BUCCANEER CAPTAIN**  
Defence against throw: 6  
Endurance: 12  
Damage: 1 Die

If you have successfully thrown him, he is whipped over the edge of the stern castle and into the sea. Turn to 34. If this is your fourth attack and the Reaver is still alive turn to 45. If you have failed to throw him he attacks you with his morning star and your Defence is 7. If you are still alive, you may now use the Cobra Strike (turn to 77) or the Leaping Tiger (turn to 67).

The wild lands give way to the meadows of the valley of the River Fortune. You find many tracks of strange, unfamiliar beasts everywhere. Skirting a dense and gloomy wood, you find a wide swathe trampled in the meadow grass. Bending down to examine the tracks you see that they were made a few days ago by a large band of Orcs, returning, perhaps, to the Rift. As you sniff the air, a man staggers towards you, out of the waist high grass. He is old and wears a blue robe that is in tatters but it is his face that holds your attention. It is encrusted with blood for his eyes have been gouged out. You call to him and he sits down suddenly, saying that he has no gold and that he has a terrible disease that you would catch if you ate him. You reassure him that you are not a cannibal and ask him what happened. He tells you that he is a monk from Fiendil. He is losing track of time but he thinks that he has felt the sun on his face four times since a man called Honoric had him blinded for spying through a keyhole. ‘He was with a Grandmaster of our order, a fine man named Yaemon and I saw them planning a journey north on a map but Yaemon heard me and I was caught. Help me, I’m starving. Which way is the river?’ You tell him too walk downhill if he wishes to find the river, and taking pity on him, give him some nuts that you have gathered. He remembers only that they were planning to meet a third man who they called the Deathmage. There is nothing further you can do to help him, so you journey on towards the city of Fiendil.

Turn to 421.
94
You drop head-first towards the ground twenty feet below and, turning in mid-air, land on your feet like a cat. No one has noticed you and you glide through the night to the city gate like a shadow. At the gate, you distract the attention of the guards by throwing a stone which shatters a pane of glass near a thief who thought he was unobserved. You slip out of the city at the first rays of dawn, as the guards turn to arrest the thief. Turn to 65.

95
Gorobei has used the Iron Fist, punching you so hard in the back of the neck that you slump to the granite floor, senseless. A young village boy is pouring water onto your forehead when you regain your wits. A few of the younger acolytes murmur condolences as you rub your neck. Two monks tend to your injuries and you may restore any Endurance you lost in the fight with Gorobei. An hour later Gorobei returns from the robing chamber and you applaud with the others as he is ordained as a Grandmaster. Turn to 191.

96
You are among them before they come finish whatever fell incantation they had begun but they attack you with their weapons instead. They are in full plate mail, well protected but slow. Will you use the Teeth of the Tiger throw (turn to 63), the Cobra Strike jab (turn to 82) or the Forked Lightning kick (turn to 71)?

97
One of the buccaneers has seen you and he creeps along the deck of the Watery Grave intent on severing your hands from your wrists with his cutlass. The faintest jingling of his many ear-rings alerts you and you nimbly vault over the rail onto the deck and catch his arm with your left hand as he swings the cutlass. Then you use the Whirlpool to hurl him over the side. Turning, you run up the stairway to the stern castle from where the pirate Captain is directing his men. You bound up the last steps to appear as if from nowhere before him. He steps back in surprise but soon regains his composure. He is a large man, with a grizzled beard and gold armbands which cause the veins of his massive arms to stand out like cords. He swings his morning star at you as you move in to attack. Which move will you use:

The Leaping Tiger (turn to 67)?
The Cobra Strike (turn to 77)?
The Teeth of the Tiger (turn to 87)?
As you wade through the swamp the Shaggoth turns with a horrible slurping sound and the Dark Elf fights her way free of the suckered tentacles. She smiles her gratitude, her eyes, like huge almonds, narrowing. You turn to face the Shaggoth together but you are suddenly pitched forwards into the folds of its putrescent flesh by a blow from the Elf’s sword. Laughing cruelly, she wades to the boat as you vainly try to free yourself from the slime beast’s grip. It sinks slowly into the swamp, pulling you with it, and your nose and lungs fill with filth as you struggle helplessly. When the swamp dries out not even your bones will remain.

You turn and run but as they finish their fell incantation your movements slow, your limbs feel as heavy as lead, and it is only by a great effort of will that you can get them to move at all. You stagger to the river and duck out of sight in some bullrushes. Will you slide into the river and duck down below the surface, using your slender bamboo tube to breathe through (turn to 4) or roll a boulder into the river and crawl slowly away through the bullrushes (turn to 123)?

The shuriken finds its mark. The guard throws his hand to his throat and screams before collapsing to the floor, dead. Realising the alarm may have been given, you run out of the barracks towards the city gate, leaving your throwing star behind (cross it off your Character Sheet).

Turn to 125.

You swing up over the rail unseen and run up the stairway to the stern castle from where the pirate Captain is directing his men. You bound up the last steps to appear as if from nowhere before him. He steps back in surprise but soon regains his composure. He is a large man, with a grizzled beard and gold armbands, which cause the veins of his massive arms to stand out like cords. He swings his morning star at you as you move in to attack. Which move will you use:

The Leaping Tiger (turn to 67)?
The Cobra Strike (turn to 77)?
The Teeth of the Tiger (turn to 87)?
Your last blow sent Gorobei tumbling senseless to the granite floor. A ripple of applause greets your victory and the Grandmaster of the Dawn compliments you on your fighting prowess as two monks tend to your injuries. You may restore any Endurance you lost in the fight with Gorobei. When they are done, the Grandmaster beckons you into the ceremonial robing chamber. You step beyond the Temple Hall through silken drapes into a small dark room, completely bare of furnishing save for two enormous copper chests. Incense is burning in a censer which swings from the ceiling like a pendulum. The room is lit by white candles. You kneel on the rush matting facing the four Grandmasters who stare ahead, unseeing, waiting for you to break the silence which you are determined to keep. After an hour-candle has sputtered its last, during which time none of you has moved so much as a muscle, the Grandmaster of the Dawn looks into your eyes and says, ‘Kwon knows that in your heart you desire to serve him but I must ask you two questions. Do you truly desire to serve Kwon above all other things or do you desire to avenge the death of your foster-father, Naijishi, more even than to serve your God? And what should a ninja fear most - the failure of a mission or capture by an enemy who will use torture to gain your secrets? You know that in your heart of hearts you would rather avenge Naijishi than anything else in Orb but a Grandmaster should dedicate his life to Kwon. As for the second question, you can only let your good sense guide you. Do you answer:

‘I desire to serve Kwon above all else and I fear only failure of a mission’ (turn to 139)?
‘I desire to avenge the father who loved me and I fear torture above all’ (turn to 151)?
‘I desire to avenge the father who loved me and I fear only failure of a mission’ (turn to 177)?
‘I desire to serve Kwon above all else and I fear torture above all’ (turn to 128)?
The Snow Yeti falls onto the ice with a crack, unmoving. Its blood stains the frosty surface a rosy pink. Panting for breath, you look around and see that the knight lies dead, poisoned by the Cobra Man who is now chasing the man in blue and gold robes. You move to the moat side of the ice and manage to break a small ice-floe away from its edge. You give it a great heave towards the castle and jump on to it. Looking into the moat you can see it is infested with Floating Mouths, voracious fish that are all teeth and elastic belly. As you float gently across, the man in blue and gold robes grabs a long pole and, using magic, rises gently into the air, to the applause of the crowd. He pushes himself towards the castle with the pole, and you arrive at the other side of the moat together.

Turn to 372.

After nightfall you strain at your bonds but the only reward for your efforts is ‘the kiss of the whip.’ Exhausted, you fall asleep before dawn and awake to find iron manacles around your wrists and a girdle around your middle by which you are chained to the oar. They are heavy and unbreakable and will not be struck off until your body is spent and lifeless after years at the oars. You have failed.

Silently you pause behind the guard - readying yourself to strike. With blinding speed, you wrap the garrotte around his throat. The Guard dies without a sound as the wire slices neatly through his windpipe. You slip out of the barracks and glide through the night like a shadow. At the city gate, you distract the attention of the gate guards by throwing a stone that shatters a pane of glass near a thief who thought he was unobserved. You slip out of the city at the first ray of dawn, as the guards run to arrest your decoy.

Turn to 65.

You grab the small boat as the Shaggoth sinks slowly into the mire, dragging the struggling Dark Elf with it. She gives vent to a bubbling scream as she sinks slowly beneath the surface. To your dismay you discover that the boat is full of cracks and holes and has let in a great deal of swampy water.

Will you jump in and try to row it to the moat (turn to 73) or abandon it and drag yourself over to the desert dunes (turn to 134)?
The knights rush to the river’s edge and stare into the water at the point where the boulder splashed. The sluggishness wears off and you glide through the bullrushes and away, as they peer in. One is casting away his plate mail ready to explore the depths of the river as you vanish into the hills that ring the city of Mortavalon. You rejoin the road and, rounding the corner, espy a cave overhung with rock in the hill-side above you.

Will you continue straight on to Mortavalon (turn to 283) or enter the cave (turn to 275)?

You glide through the night towards the city gate but someone has spotted you. The alarm sounds at the barracks as you approach the gate, and torches flare on the gate tower, some of which are thrown down into the street nearby. You hear the unmistakable twang of crossbow springs and spin towards the sound.

Do you have the skill of Arrow Cutting? If you do, turn to 201. If you do not, turn to 136.

Using your Escapology skill you know to tense your body and hold your limbs so that, though the buccaneers bind you tightly, when you relax the ropes are loosened. That night you wriggle and twist, using the amazing suppleness of your body to loosen the bonds further. Dislocating a shoulder, you succeed in freeing an arm and then quickly dispose of the ropes which confine you before clicking your shoulder back in place. In this darkness you are thankful for the ninja training diet which has given you unusual powers of seeing in the dark. The duty guard doesn’t hear you as you steal past the sleeping bodies at the oars, until you are close enough to wrap a handy piece of chain around his neck and choke him into unconsciousness. He crumples without a sound and you step over his body to the locker where they have stowed your ninja tools and retrieve them. One by one you free the crew and tell them to wait quietly for your signal whilst you go to the main cabin to see if the buccaneer Captain is sleeping aboard his prize. Silently, you climb the stairs to the main deck and wait for the moon to pass behind a cloud. You reach the door of the main cabin unnoticed.

Are you skilled in Picking Locks? If you are and you wish to do so turn to 153. If you cannot or do not wish to, you can instead try to smash the door open, using Inner Force if possible (turn to 137).
128
The Grandmaster shakes his head. ‘You have answered neither truthfully nor wisely. You cannot hide your wish to avenge Naijishi, who loved you and taught you to love our Lord Kwon, from we who have known you near all of your short life. It is not wrong that you should wish to avenge Naijishi but you must wait patiently for your time to come and never forget that the service of Kwon is the helping of all mankind. As for torture, it is only through failing a mission that a true ninja could be captured and there is always time to bite one’s tongue from one’s head and bleed to death rather than risk betraying secrets. You need fear only the failure of a mission. You have failed the spiritual test and you are not yet worthy to become Grandmaster of the Five Winds. Go back to the Temple Hall and ask Gorobei to come in to us.’ Dejectedly, you return to the main temple and there is a low moan from the villagers as you ask Gorobei to go into the robing room. He places his arm on your shoulder and says, ‘Next time,’ before moving past the silken curtain. An hour later he returns and you applaud with the others as he is ordained as a Grandmaster. Turn to 191.

129
The horse, too, is affected and it slows to a plodding walk, whinnying shrilly in terror. Your body quivers as you strive to move but you cannot. The knights, seemingly able to cast priestly magic, knock you from the saddle and tie you securely. If you have a Ring, they take it from you – cross it off your Character Sheet. Are you a skilled Escapologist? If you are, turn to 21. If you are not, turn to 37.

134
As you near the sunken platform that separates the swamp from the desert, near the arena wall, there is a bubbling in the mire ahead of you. You change direction and, planting your foot on a mossy hummock, launch yourself into the air and up over the high fence of iron spikes, drawing another gasp from the crowd. You land on your feet and survey the arena for a moment. The Dark Elf and the Shaggoth are nowhere to be seen. The man in blue and gold robes has slain the Snow Yeti but the knight in armour lies in an awkward position on the dunes, with the Cobra Man towering over him. A long thin pole is propped up in a dune over the knight’s body. You decide to attack the Cobra Man to gain the pole, hoping to vault across the moat. The Cobra Man’s head sways hypnotically above yours; he is waiting to strike.

Will you use the Tiger’s Paw chop (turn to 42), the Winged Horse kick (turn to 25) or the Teeth of the Tiger throw (turn to 13)?
The knights dismount and, walking slowly towards you, begin a fell incantation. Your limbs begin to feel heavy. Will you run to attack them (turn to 44), run to the river and, hiding in the bull rushes roll a boulder in before crawling away (turn to 123) or run to the river and, diving in, stay submerged using your bamboo tube (turn to 4)?

You try to roll aside but a crossbow bolt slams into your side and you sprawl flat on the ground. Lose 4 Endurance. The gate guards charge towards you as you spring to your feet. Are you skilled in Acrobatics? If you are, turn to 144. If not, turn to 285.

You stand, legs apart, in front of the door, taking three slow deep breaths. Then, when you are ready, you use the Iron Fist with a grunting cry. If you have any Inner Force left, cross one point from your Character Sheet. Even if you do not, you suspect Kwon is lending you strength, for there is a crash and the door flies off its hinges.

You leap over it as it falls to the floor. The buccaneer captain is inside, having forsaken his ship for the comfort of the Aquamarin. Woken from his sleep by the crash of the door, he rolls off the bed, pulling his cutlass from under the pillow, and tries to throw some blankets at you to buy himself time. You whip out a shuriken and, with a deft flick of the wrist, send it hurtling towards him before he can cry out.

Make an Attack Roll. The captain’s Defence against the shuriken is 5. If you succeed, turn to 164. If you fail, turn to 175.
The Grandmaster smiles and shakes his head. ‘You have answered cleverly but not truthfully. You cannot hide your wish to avenge Naijishi, who loved you and taught you to love our Lord Kwon, from we who have known you near all of your short life. It is not wrong that you should wish for revenge on Yaemon but wait patiently for your time to come and never forget that the service of Kwon is the helping of all mankind.

You are right, though, to say that a ninja need only fear failure, for to endure torture one must first endure failure. There is always time to bite one’s tongue from one’s head and bleed to death rather than risk betraying secrets under torture. I shall not say that you have failed, rather you are like a whetted blade straining in the sheath needing only the wisdom of years to hone you to perfection. I shall not keep such a potent weapon sheathed - you have passed the test.’

They lead you back to the Temple Hall where the monks and villagers have waited to see whether you would pass the test. Prayers to Kwon are offered up as part of the ceremony at which you are ordained as Grandmaster of the Five Winds. Gorobei applauds with the others. For now he remains an Adept of the Inner Circle but his time will come, for he is a great warrior and a good monk. Should you die he will probably take your place. Turn to 191.

You wait, apparently dejected, for the guards to take you prisoner but then somersault high in the air over them and sprint through the gate as the first rays of the dawn break the horizon. The astonished soldiers run after you but you sail down the road like the wind and they soon give up the futile chase. Turn to 254.
You lose your balance and your foot slips on the treacherous ice as the talons of the Snow Yeti descend upon you. Lose 6 Endurance. If you are still alive, you somehow manage to regain your feet as the crowd howls with blood-lust. You attack again using the Iron Fist, striking upward from your crouched position at the white hulk.

**SNOW YETI**
- Defence against punch: 5
- Endurance: 22
- Damage: 1 Die + 3

If you have killed the Snow Yeti turn to 111. If the Snow Yeti is still alive its talons rake at your face. Your Defence against this great sweep of its arm as you fight for your balance on the ice is 6. If you are still alive you may use the Forked Lightning kick (turn to 184), slide beneath its flailing arms and use the Dragon’s Tail throw (turn to 202) or punch again (turn to 160).

The Grandmaster smiles and shakes his head. ‘You have answered truthfully. It is not wrong that you should wish to avenge Naijishi, who loved you and taught you to love our Lord Kwon, but you must wait patiently for your time to come and never forget that the service of Kwon is the helping of all mankind. But as for torture, it is only through failing a mission that a true ninja could be captured and there is always time to bite one’s tongue from one’s head and bleed to death rather than risk betraying secrets. You need only fear the failure of a mission. I shall not say that you have failed the spiritual test, for never has one mastered the Way of the Tiger so ably as you and we would not keep our sharpest weapon forever sheathed. You have passed the test.’

They lead you back to the Temple Hall where the monks and villagers have waited to see whether you would pass the test. Prayers to Kwon are offered up as part of the ceremony at which you are ordained as Grandmaster of the Five Winds. Gorobei applauds with the others. For now he remains an Adept of the Inner Circle but his time will come, for he is a great warrior and a good monk. Should you die he will probably take your place. Turn to 191.
153
It is the work of a few moments to pick the lock with a small file. It clicks quietly and the well-oiled hinges make no sound as you open the cabin door. Inside the buccaneer Captain is sleeping, having forsaken his own cabin for the comfort of the Aquamarin. He is snoring heavily, dead drunk. Taking your time, you smear poison on the lockpick before jabbing it into his jugular vein. Turning, you shout the signal for the crew to break out as the Reaver captain is wracked by death spasms. You lead the attack and the rum-sodden pirates are taken by surprise. Many jump into the sea, forgetting that their ship is a mile away in darkness. You are glad to see Glaivas, freed by one of the crew, despatching an ugly pirate who was proving troublesome. The few remaining alive surrender to Glaivas and he orders them put to the oar, for a taste of their own medicine. In the morning, you set sail again and make good speed.

Turn to 26.

157
The blow is so heavy that it sweeps through your guard and catches you on the side of the head. Lose 10 Endurance.

If you are still alive, the pain is terrible as you fold to the ground. If you able to slow your metabolism and Feign Death, you may turn to 376. If you cannot or will not, you pick yourself up and stagger towards the river. Turn to 103.

160
The white-furred Snow Yeti tries to sweep you to the ground with its great curved talons. You drive your fist at its groin.

SNOW YETI
Defence against punch: 5
Endurance: 22
Damage: 1 Die + 3

If you have killed the Snow Yeti turn to 111. If the Snow Yeti is still alive its talons rake at your face. Your Defence against this great sweep of its arm as you fight for your balance on the ice is 6. If you are still alive you may use the Forked Lightning kick (turn to 184), slide beneath its flailing arms and use the Dragon’s Tail throw (turn to 202 or punch again (return to top of this paragraph).
The mace rings on your iron sleeves like a hammer on the anvil and you grab your attacker’s wrist, dragging him from the saddle. He falls awkwardly and rolls aside dead. The three others dismount and they begin to chant. It seems that these knights have spell-casting abilities.

Will you attack them (turn to 96) or run (turn to 103)?

The spinning shuriken takes the pirate Captain in the throat and the shout which was on his lips dies to a bloody gurgle as he slumps lifeless to the planks. You shout the signal and the crew rush up from the oar deck whirling lengths of chain and the cutlasses of their guards.

You lead the attack and the rum-sodden pirates are taken by surprise. Many jump into the sea, forgetting that their ship is a mile away in darkness. You are glad to see Glaivas, freed by one of the crew, despatching an ugly pirate who was proving troublesome. The few remaining alive surrender to him and he orders them put to the oar, for a taste of their own medicine. In the morning, you set sail again and make good speed.

Turn to 26.

You stroll through the arch and bid good-day to the labourers. As you walk on through the quiet streets of this dead city your heart is lightened by the sight of a rose garden and trees. You turn into the bower and find a small monastery dedicated to Kwon. Happy to find a safe haven where you may meditate and seek help, you walk into the temple and kneel at prayer. A monk kneels at your side in the bare temple and intones the psalm of Kwon the Redeemer.

Turn to 221.

As the first knight charges, swinging his weapon down at you, you try to sweep the heavy mace aside with your forearm. Your Defence for this block is 8. If you succeed, turn to 163. If you fail, turn to 157.
172. Shaggoth by Antoine Di Lorenzo
172
You leap into the slimy green swamp and sink nearly to the waist. The bog sucks at your feet as you fight your way towards the boat which rocks gently in the middle of the morass of mud and slime. The Dark Elf is also bent on gaining the boat, but out of a sudden eruption of mud and slime bursts a featureless mass of blubber and threshing tentacles, surging in the water before her. It is a Shaggoth or slime beast, which wraps its stinking tentacles around the shrieking Dark Elf. You briefly catch sight of the desert, where the knight is battling the Cobra Man.

Will you:

Go to the aid of the Dark Elf (turn to 98)?
Make a grab for the boat (turn to 121)?
Wade on past and drag yourself out into the desert (turn to 134)?

175
The Captain shouts for help as the shuriken is caught in the blankets. He throws them at you as you leap to attack. You cast them aside and duck a cutlass swipe before hearing a sound behind you. You whirl and block but are too late to catch the throwing knife of the Reaver’s first mate. It lodges in your heart and you know no more . . .

176
You pay no attention but the insults continue and soon half of the soldiers in the room are shouting at you to fight. You decide that it is wise to leave the tavern and stride towards the door. The drunken young Captain lurches to his feet and draws his sword. It seems to glow as it leaves its sheath and a pall of fear descends upon you. You stop, the hairs bristling on your scalp. Grimly, you recite the Ninja’s Covenant, the Ninja No Chigiri, under your breath and courage returns. You move towards the door but the Captain and two of his friends decide to attack you with their swords. You must defend yourself.

Will you use the Winged Horse kick (turn to 256), the Iron Fist punch (turn to 248) or the Whirlpool throw (turn to 237)?
The Grandmaster of the Dawn smiles and says, ‘You pass the test for you have answered both truthfully and rightly. It is not wrong that you should wish to avenge Naijishi, who loved you and taught you to love our Lord Kwon, but you must wait patiently for your time to come and never forget that the service of Kwon is the helping of all mankind. It is only through failing a mission that a true ninja would be captured and there is always time to bite one’s tongue from one’s head and bleed to death rather than risk betraying secrets under torture.’ He continues, ‘We have never seen one who shows such promise nor one who has mastered so ably the Way of the Tiger. I am going to recite to you the secret Litany of the Ninja Grandmaster - remember it, for one day it may be of use to you.

I AM NINJA
My parents are the Heaven and the Earth
My Home is my Body
My Power is Loyalty
My Magic is Training
My Life and my Death is Breathing
My Body is Control
My Eyes are the Sun and the Moon
My Ears are Sensitivity
My Strength is Adaptability
My Ambition is taking every Opportunity with Fullness
My Friend is my Mind
My Enemy is Carelessness
My Protection is Right Action
My Weapons are Everything that Exists
My Strategy is One Foot in front of the Other
My Trust is in Kwon
MY WAY IS THE WAY OF THE TIGER’

His words are etched in your memory. Note this paragraph number down so that you can refer to the Litany again if you should need to do so. Next, he pulls an Opal Ring from his finger and passes it to you. ‘This may be of use to you,’ he says and you slip it onto your own finger. Note it on your Character Sheet. When the echoing words of the Grandmaster have died away they lead you back to the Temple Hall where the monks and villagers have waited to see whether you would pass the test. Prayers to Kwon are offered up as part of the ceremony at which you are ordained as a Grandmaster of the Five Winds. Gorobei applauds with the others. For now he remains an Adept of the Inner Circle but his time will come, for he is a great warrior and a good monk. Should you die he will probably take your place. Turn to 191.
182
You crouch on the ground and the horses thunder over you. Turn to 135.

183
The priest replies, ‘Even if we were not busy with healing we would not help you, for those who follow the strict laws of a monastery, as you must, hinder freedom and prevent paradise on Orb.’ You realise from the look of zeal in his eyes that theological argument would not sway him. Will you:

Tell him of your quest and ask for his help again (turn to 297)?
Leave the temple and the Sanctuary and pass through the Obsidian Gate into Doomover (turn to 6)?

184
You lash your left foot at the great mound of white fur twice in quick succession, aiming for its side and temple, but almost lose your footing. Make a Fate Roll. If Fate smiles on you read on, but if Fate turns her back on you turn to 146.

SNOW YETI
Defence against Forked Lightning kick: 6
Endurance: 22
Damage: 1 Die + 3

If you have killed the Snow Yeti turn to 111. Otherwise the Snow Yeti tries to crush you with a swipe from its taloned claw. Your Defence as you strive to keep your balance on the ice is 5. If you are still alive you may slide beneath its flailing arms and use the Dragon’s Tail throw (turn to 202), the Iron Fist punch (turn to 160) or kick again (return to the top of this paragraph).

186
The young soldier sneers and calls you a plague ridden sewer rat. You sit in a corner ignoring him. Your heightened sense of hearing enables you to eavesdrop on their conversation rather than the countless others in the crowded tavern. It seems they are waiting for the leader of the Legion of the Sword of Doom, Honoric, to return before they march against the Spires of Foreshadowing. It seems he has left the city with Yaemon, heading north. One of the drunken soldiers at the next table starts to insult you and then tells you that if you want to live you should leave the tavern now. Will you stay in your seat (turn to 176) or take a room upstairs for the night (turn to 225)?
After the ceremony you all file out of the temple onto the golden sands and there is frugal feast of rice and fruits shared by the villagers and the monks. You eat sparingly and take your leave early, wishing to meditate before you sleep. Relaxed from the meditation which frees your spirit from the shackles of your aching body, your eyes close as soon as you lay yourself down on the straw-filled sacking that is your bed. You drift into a deep but troubled sleep. You see a sleek-oared ship setting sail from the Island of Plenty. A tall resolute looking man is on the high stern castle, his legs braced against the swell. He wears a thick cloak of dark green against the weather, and the sun flashes so vividly on the buckle of his sword belt that you believe this is not a dream but a vision. A sailor calls him by name, ‘Glaivas’, and he turns to look at you but then the vision fades and the brilliant blue sky is replaced by sombre purple clouds against which a large and dark castle looms. Three turrets on a great black Keep seem to pierce the clouds. You are walking towards it, bent on completing a difficult and important mission.

When you awake you remember the dreams as if they were pictures painted on the wall of your monastic cell. You are walking towards the Temple when there is a commotion on the beach and two fishermen run up to you with the news that a ship is riding at anchor offshore. A man rows himself to the beach and steps out, as the Grandmasters walk to the strand to greet him. He introduces himself as Glaivas and, bowing respectfully, he asks to talk to the Grandmaster of Grandmasters.

‘You may address us all,’ says the Grandmaster of the Dawn, ‘for we have no secrets on the Island of Tranquil Dreams.’

‘Not since you lost the Scrolls of Kettsuin,’ Glaivas returns darkly.

‘What do you know of the Scrolls of Kettsuin?’, asks the Grandmaster. The monks wait tensely as Glaivas looks around carefully before replying.

‘The Scrolls of Kettsuin hold the secret to the Word of Power which will bind Kwon himself in Inferno if it is spoken at the Pillars of Change in the great Snow Wastes of the north. Yaemon, Grandmaster of Flame, of the order of the Scarlet Mantis stole it from you many years ago and he has deciphered the Word.'
It is the month of All-Mother Splendour and for three days the moon will turn red during the Great Conjunction of the Planets - something that occurs only once every five hundred years. If the Word is spoken at the Pillars of Change at this time your God, Kwon, will be imprisoned in the bottomless pit of fire, leaving the monks who worship Vile free to spread their dominion over the lands of men.

At the mention of Yaemon’s name there is uproar but as Glaivas continues an unnatural quiet descends.

‘Yaemon is preparing to set out even now from the city of Doomover on the long journey to the ice-wastes. Though a Ranger long used to patrolling the wilderness on the edge of the Rift, I am no match for such as he. Is there one among you who will try to stop him?’

As Glaivas spoke you felt the burning need to be revenged on Yaemon flare within your breast. Your dream of Glaivas, for it was he you saw astride the deck of the ship which now rides at anchor near the sands, has convinced you that you are destined for this quest and you step forward saying, ‘I shall stop him.’

‘You are young,’ says Glaivas, ‘can you succeed where I, a Ranger Lord, would fail?’

‘I am ninja,’ you reply.

Glaivas starts. The Grandmaster of the Dawn sighs and says, ‘Yes, I rename you Avenger, for if anyone can succeed, and you must for the sake of all mankind, it will be you.’ With that he turns towards the Temple, and prayer.

The city of Doomover lies on the western coast of the Manmarch and Glaivas gifts you a map which shows the many cities and strange lands that stretch north to the Snow Wastes. You spend the rest of the day preparing, lacing the iron sleeves to your dark hued costume and gathering together the tools of the ninja, before spending some hours in quiet meditation. You board Glaivas’ ship in time to sail on the evening tide. You must find Yaemon and kill him before he reaches the Pillars of Change or all will be lost. Turn to 232.
192
As the lions charge you, you make the most incredible leap; the crowd gasps as you somersault over the roaring beasts and then sprint for the swamp. The lions check and turn with startling speed and you reach the murky green just as the lions are snapping at your heels, but they pull up, fearing to jump into the unnatural greenness of the slime-covered water. Turn to 172.

194
You sit at his table and he calls for a hogshead of mead. He smiles at you, lids lowered, as the mead arrives and he plunges two mugs into the brimming bucket and places one carefully before you. You raise the mugs together and drain them. There is a cheer as you slam the mugs back down together. The young captain dips them into the bucket again and again a cheer answers your efforts. Do you have Immunity to Poisons? If you do, turn to 214. If you do not, turn to 206.

195
You sidestep the swinging mace and spring up behind the knight, landing on his horse. The horse rears and you try to chop him to the ground as he twists in the saddle to mace your face. His Defence against your Tiger’s Paw is 5. If your blow lands, turn to 387. If you fail to hit him, turn to 407.

196
You walk up the steps and into the Temple. The wooden pews seem to be placed at random within, but the roof is pierced with rose-windows and the inside is bright and cheerful. Crystals reflect the sun’s rays against a painting showing a demolished castle, and soldiers and peasants dancing in the meadows before it. There is no sign of the decapitated priest or the young warrior. One of the priests walks towards you and you ask him if he can help you with some information. He asks you whether you are a worshipper of Béatan. Which god will you say you worship? Kwon (turn to 183), the All-Mother (turn to 46) or Béatan (turn to 56), or would you rather hasten from the Temple to follow the old man who called himself a seer (turn to 36)?

201
You use the side of your hand to chop the quarrel aside before it hits you and then roll out of the torchlight. You lie low, motionless, until you hear a shout from a side street. ‘Stop thief,’ someone cries, as a man carrying a dagger runs into the torchlight. He squeals in fright as the city guards charge after him and you slip unnoticed out of the city gate at the first rays of dawn. Turn to 65.
The crowd gasps as you slide beneath the grasp of the white furred colossus and, wrapping your legs around its, twist your body in an effort to throw it to the ground. Though more sure-footed in these conditions than most, the Snow Yeti still finds the ice slippery, but its legs are as wide as your chest.

**SNOW YETI**
- Defence against Dragon’s Tail throw: 6
- Endurance: 22
- Damage: 1 Die + 3

If you have thrown the Snow Yeti successfully you may either use the Forked Lightning kick (turn to 184) or the Iron Fist punch (turn to 160), adding 2 to your damage and Kick or Punch Modifier for this attack only, as you leap to your feet, ready to aim a blow as it struggles upwards. If you have failed to throw the Snow Yeti, it tries to stamp on your head as you roll aside, trying to get to your feet as quickly as possible. Your Defence against this is 7, and you find yourself with no time to block. If you survive you may use the Forked Lightning kick (turn to 184) or the Iron Fist punch (turn to 160).

The barman had mixed Spirits-of-Ra into the mead and it was stronger than you realized. The alcohol passes into your bloodstream quickly and you stand up to leave but pass out. You wake up in the morning, lying muddied in the gutter. Some of your gold coins have been taken, but you had hidden a few upon your person, which you still have. If you had an Opal Ring, you notice that has also been stolen. **Cross it off your Character Sheet.** You decide to head north in case Yaemon arrives at the Pillars of Change before you, and leave the city on the road to Mortavalon. Turn to 65.
As you step between the pillars of white marble a voice speaks as if from the stones, ‘Welcome to the Sanctuary, draw no swords here.’ You can’t see anyone nearby, but ahead of you a huge young warrior clad in russet and grey is crawling painfully up the steps of a temple.

A priest in yellow robes comes out to help him but, as he leans down, a mounted knight in a black surcoat rides up the temple steps and lops the priest’s head off.

Another priest casts a spell, the horse rears backwards and then two other horsemen wearing the same coat of arms, a silver sword hanging by a silver thread on a black background, ride up and take the reins from their friend. He curses the young warrior in a rage but seems helpless as they lead him past you and gallop out through the marble gate. Priests carry their decapitated colleague and the young warrior, who has left a trail of blood on the steps, into the temple.

As they do so a wizened, stooped old man with a necklace of crystal which clicks as he sways, croaks, ‘I foretold it but did you heed me, the seer? No! Will Béatan the Free smile on you now, false priests?’

He turns and shuffles towards a small wooden chapel. The dead priest served Béatan whose followers seek to bring nearer paradise on Orb by living lives of capricious goodness mocking all laws that constrict the free spirit. Do you:

Follow the priests into the temple of Béatan the Free (turn to 196)?
Leave the Sanctuary and pass through the Obsidian Gate (turn to 6)?
Follow the old man who claimed to be a seer (turn to 36)?

As they spring together you leap and kick, but they instinctively claw your foot aside. One smashes you to the ground and before you can roll out from underneath, it buries its teeth in your neck. The crowd howls in frenzied glee as the lions tear at you ferociously, until you welcome the relief of Death’s embrace.
You trot along the road, passing the occasional traveller on horseback or on foot, and an occasional trading caravan, gathering berries and nuts at the side of the road as you go. You sleep away from the road. You may restore up to 5 Endurance as you continue on, hoping to reach Mortavalon at dusk on the second day. The road winds upwards into a range of hills which encircle the city of Mortavalon, and it is afternoon when you hear a strange hissing and a sudden scream around a corner ahead. You move stealthily forwards to see a black-skinned man with the swaying neck and head of a cobra, tethered to a wagon on which there is a large cage. The Cobra Man has grabbed a young man and is about to kill him. The two men who are on the wagon look too terrified to do anything. Will you leave the young man to his fate (turn to 357) or run and kick the Cobra Man (turn to 315)?

Your training with the ingestion of small quantities of poisons also included large amounts of alcohol and you can drink almost anyone under the table. The young Captain begins slurring his words and the pace of drinking slows. You tell them that you are a monk who worships Vile and they treat you as one of them. The young Captain asks you about the journey that Honoric, leader of the Legion of the Sword of Doom, is making with Yaemon. You tell them that Yaemon is journeying north on important business. They laugh at this and begin to joke with you that Honoric’s business is more important. You gather that he too knows a word which will bind a goddess in Inferno and that they are journeying to the Snow Wastes. After a time you pretend that you are overcome by the mead and take a room for the night in the tavern for which you pay two pieces of gold. You sleep lightly, senses alert, but are not disturbed. You wake in the morning, mildly refreshed. Restore up to 2 Endurance. You leave and walk out of the city on the road to Mortavalon. Turn to 65.

You run to the ice and leap onto it, sliding away from the lions. They charge after you but lose their footing on the treacherous surface, the look on their faces quite comical as they experience something completely unexpected. You manage to negotiate your way past them, using your excellent sense of balance. Each time they lunge for you their feet slip and they fall flat. You sprint across the plain and leap into the swamp. The lions, gaining the grass, again snap at your heels but pull up short at the edge of the unnaturally green slime. Turn to 172.
As you meditate in the temple your body and soul seem filled with the harmony of Kwon the Redeemer. You may restore up to 3 points of Inner Force, as the God lends you his power. The monk, Bartholdy, recognizes that you have the favour of Kwon and asks you to preach to his brothers in the refectory before dinner. You decline, telling him instead of your quest. Upon hearing that you are ninja he agrees that only he and the local Grandmaster should know of your mission. The Grandmaster, Bartok, a frail old man, wise but weak, is filled with fear at your news. He has heard, however, that Yaemon has passed through Mortavalon eight days since, perhaps, he thinks, heading for the monastery of the Reverencers of Vile in the city of Fiendil. He advises that you strike north towards Fortune Pass, so that you may come to the lands of snow before the Grandmaster of Flame.

He continues, ‘There is a man who lives in the mountains, a mystic, but a follower of the Way of the Tiger. He is older than I but, by the grace of Kwon, he has remained fit and strong. His name is Togawa and, long ago, he was the Grandmaster of the Dawn on the Island of Tranquil Dreams. He lives on Mount Gwalodrun and from there he sets his mind free to roam all the planes of existence. He may be able to tell you where you can find Yaemon.’

You dine alone in a small monkish cell and your sleep refreshes you. Restore up to 5 points of any lost Endurance. On the following day you leave the monks to prepare against the day of darkness, should you fail your mission. You have not caught up with Yaemon yet and so you leave the city through the northern arch in the morning. Will you strike across the wastelands towards Fiendil (turn to 421), head due north to Storm Giants’ Causeway (turn to 421) or head north-east to Fortune Pass and the mystic, Togawa (turn to 421)?
You jog along the road, passing a few travellers on horseback or on foot, and an occasional trade caravan, gathering berries and nuts at the side of the road as you go. You sleep away from the road. You may restore up to 4 Endurance and continue on, hoping to reach Mortavalon at dusk on the second day. Around mid-day another small caravan of about four wagons, approaches. There are four caravan guards on horseback, dressed in plate mail and carrying maces and swords. You jog on, wary now, when suddenly one of them cries, 'The ninja!' and they charge towards you, swinging their weapons. As they close, you see that their shields bear the black whirlpool symbol - they are not caravan guards at all, but Knights of Nemesis! If you are an Acrobat you may wish to try to dodge aside and leap up behind one of your attackers (turn to 195). If not, will you Block the first mace blow with your iron sleeve and try to topple your assailant from the saddle (turn to 171), or duck to the ground knowing that their horses will avoid trampling you (turn to 182)?

You give the barman two pieces of gold for the room and go upstairs. You sleep lightly, senses alert, and you are ready when three drunken soldiers burst in. It is the work of a few moments to knock two of them unconscious with deft kicks and the third operates in surprise and then runs from the room. You sleep little for the rest of the night, but gain 2 Endurance if you have lost any. In the morning you leave the city on the road to Mortavalon. Turn to 254.

The Cobra Man hisses, squirming on the end of his leash as the young man escapes to safety whilst the Cobra Man was distracted. The two men, hulking fat brutes who resemble the ox which pulls their wagon, tell you that they are taking the Cobra Man to the zoo in Mortavalon.

'We found him living alone in a cave not far up the hill there,' says one, pointing to a dark hole in the hillside overhung with rock. 'We didn’t dare venture too far in but there’s treasure to be had, I’ll warrant.'

With that, they whip the ox onwards, dragging the hissing Cobra Man behind them. The young man, sitting on the back of the wagon, calls, 'Thank you for saving me - don’t shake hands with the young magician!' The men laugh and you are left to ponder the meaning of his strange words. Will you overtake the ox-cart and go straight to Mortavalon (turn to 283) or enter the cave (turn to 275)?
As the lions charge, you realise that even you are no match for them, nature’s perfect killers as they are. The crowd goes quiet.

Are you skilled in Acrobatics? If you are, turn to 192. If you are not, turn to 211.

The ship which Glaivas has chartered, the ‘Aquamarin’, has a hundred oars and two masts. The winds are kind to you as you scud across the azure plain. The sea is so calm that after two weeks without the tang of salt spray on your lips you forget that it is composed of water at all. The oarsmen row for ten hours a day but they are free men, not chained to their oars. Two bear the scars of a pirate’s persuader; captured by buccaneers, they are of the lucky few who have lived to see the sky again. All of them have the heavy upper body of the oarsman, some who turned to the sea for their livelihood too young are squat and misshapen, moulded by life at the oar into grotesque travesties of the mountain dwarves.

The Island of Plenty passes to the south and you are in sight of the Isle of the Magical Goddess when the lookout cries a warning. The helmsman steers a new course and the drum-beat quickens as the oarsmen redouble their efforts. The ship that is approaching is long and low, painted green and red and flying a red pennant at the top of its mast.

Glaivas, standing next to you at the rail, says, ‘That ship is from Port o’ Reavers, we’ll never outrun it.’ So saying, he draws his sword. The oarsmen strain, sweating with effort, but they cannot match the pace of the slaves on the Reavers’ ship, galvanized into a frenzied spurt by the barbed whips of their overseers. At last the Captain gives the order ‘prepare to repel boarders’ and you ready yourself for combat. The pirate ship carries a spiked ram but they obviously intend to take the Aquamarin as a prize for they grapple and come alongside. The Reavers carry scimitars and chain nets and are led in their rush to attack by a nine-foot monster - an Ogre with a large spiked hammer. The Aquamarin’s crew look no match for the battle-scarred buccaneers.

Will you:

Leap into the rigging and hurl a shuriken at the Ogre (turn to 257)?
Attack the Ogre as it comes aboard (turn to 280)?
232. Ogre Pirate by Mylène Villeneuve
You gather grapes and nuts aplenty, living off the land, as you jog through the wilderness, checking your position by the position and height of the sun. You cover the ground quickly and come to a range of low hills crowned with cypress trees. Climbing up into one, you pass an untroubled and restful night. You may restore up to 3 Endurance. If you wish to continue through the wilderness and pass north of Mortavalon, turn to 341. If you wish to rejoin the road near the city to Mortavalon, turn to 212.

You attempt the Whirlpool throw on one of your assailants. He is sobering up but still quite drunk.

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<th>YOUNG CAPTAIN</th>
<th>1st SOLDIER</th>
<th>2nd SOLDIER</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defence against throw</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage</td>
<td>1 Die + 3</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
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If you throw him, turn to 296. If you fail to throw him you will be attacked by whichever of your assailants is alive. Your Defence against them is 7 if three are alive, 8 if two are alive, or 9 if only one remains alive. Each one will make an individual attack upon you and you may only block one of them. If you survive the attack, you may use the Winged Horse kick (turn to 256) or the Iron Fist punch (turn to 248).

He tells you that he is a monk who worships Kwon and invites you to go with him to his monastery in the Gardens of Redemption. The temple is set in a rose garden and you are happy to find a safe haven where you may meditate and seek help. You kneel at prayer in the bare temple and, beside you, the monk intones the psalm of Kwon the Redeemer. Turn to 221.

As you step onto the plain the man in blue and gold moves onto the ice lake. The lions, slavering, rush towards you; they are large and strong. You cannot help admiring their speed and power.

Will you meet them on the grass (turn to 231) or retreat onto the ice lake (turn to 220)?
In the blink of an eye your fist flashes out at one of your attackers. You may choose which one.

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<tr>
<td>Defence against punch</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage</td>
<td>1 Die + 3</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
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</table>

If you have defeated them, turn to 268. If not, each of the enemies who is still alive will attack you individually. You cannot block more than one and your Defence against each is 7 if three are alive, 8 if two are alive, and 9 if only one remains alive. If you survive, will you use the Whirlpool throw (turn to 237), the Winged Horse kick (turn to 256) or punch again (return to the top of this paragraph)?

The ice is treacherous and only your fine sense of balance allows you to keep your footing as the Snow Yeti bears down on you, waving its black talons. You cannot see its eyes but from its aggressive bearing you realise you will have to fight the white-furred colossus.

Will you launch yourself into a slide across the ice and use the Dragon’s Tail throw (turn to 202), dart forward and use the Iron Fist punch (turn to 160) or try the Forked Lightning kick (turn to 184)?

Your punch is so powerful that despite the magical field of force which protects him the magician folds and a Winged Horse kick sends him flying through the air into the moat. The water boils as the floating Mouths latch onto their prey. Within a minute his flesh has been stripped to the bone. You climb up towards the Hobgoblin in his tower. The beast is showing off to the crowd, confident of another victory, beating his chest - which is twice as broad as yours - and twirling the trident in one hand. The tower is roughly built with many hand-holds and you move around it, keeping the Hobgoblin confused as to your precise position. Then, holding an outcrop of stone with your hands, you swing up into the tower behind him. He whirls round and you attack him with blinding speed.

Will you use the Leaping Tiger kick (turn to 281), the Whirlpool throw (turn to 267) or the Tiger’s Paw chop (turn to 293)?
252. Snow Yeti by Antoine Di Lorenzo
254
As you leave the forbidding towered walls of Doomover behind, the sun climbs in the sky, ripening the corn and barley which rustles in the breeze. The fields do not stretch for far and you are soon on the edge of a low plain, the Plain of Feet, on which several thousand of the Legion of the Sword of Doom are practicing for the forthcoming war, smart and efficient. The smooth plain gradually gives way to a wilderness of trees and vines.

Will you continue along the road to Mortavalon (turn to 223) or strike north of the road, into the wilderness (turn to 235)?

255
The man turns aside, as if he had made a mistake, and you make your way out of the press of bodies as quickly as you can. You have become well known in Mortavalon; your exploits in the arena are on everyone’s lips, and you decide that it is prudent to leave this city with its preoccupation with violent death. You leave by the northern arch, disguised as someone who works the land. The gate guards ask you where you are going, as it is the day of the games, a holiday, but you ignore them and they let you go.

Will you strike north-east across the wastelands to the city of Fiendil (turn to 421) or head due north to Storm Giants’ Causeway, in the Mountains of Vision (turn to 421)?

256
You step forward onto your right foot then bring your left foot up, spin to the right and lash your left heel high into the air, at one of your attackers’ heads. You may choose which one.

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage</td>
<td>1 Die + 3</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
<td>1 Die + 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have defeated them, turn to 268. If not, each of the enemies will attack you individually. You cannot block more than one and your Defence against each is 7 if three are alive, 8 if two are alive, and 9 if only one still lives. If you survive, will you use the Whirlpool throw (turn to 237), the Iron Fist punch (turn to 248) or kick again (return to the top of this paragraph)?
Your shuriken glints in the sun as it hurtles towards its mark in the Ogre’s chest. As you leap down from the rigging a volley of arrows is let loose from the stern castle of the Reavers’ ship. The Ogre grunts with pain as the shuriken lodges in its chest. Throw one die and take the score from the huge beast’s Endurance of 16. One of the pirate’s arrows is coming at you.

Do you have the skill of Arrow Cutting? If you have, turn to 380. If you have not, turn to 396.

The floor of the arena is divided into sections (check the map on the next page). In the centre a huge Hobgoblin, brandishing a trident, stands at the top of a miniature castle which is surrounded by a large moat. The circle outside the moat is divided into four sectors by fences of iron spikes. The sector to your left is small plain of grass, to your right is a frozen lake, created magically. Beyond the plain is a lurid green swamp and between ice and swamp is a desert of sandy dunes. You are standing on a platform between the grass and ice.

At the opposite side of the arena a man in silver armour, his face hidden by his visor, stands on a similar platform. Between you both and to your left is a Dark Elf, waving her blacksteel sword defiantly, and at the edge of the arena to your right stands a young man in flowing blue and gold robes.

On the ice lake stands a Snow Yeti, ten feet tall, and two roaring lions roam the plain. You can see nothing but a boat in the swamp and in the desert waits a man with the swaying head and neck of a cobra. As you look around you the platform begins to slide down towards the ground and you will soon be within reach of the lions or the Snow Yeti. Indeed, they can now move freely into each other’s area. The walls of the arena are sheer and lined with the spears of soldiers.

The man in armour steps onto the dunes as the Dark Elf wades into the swamp. The man in the blue and gold robes waits, still.

Will you move to the plain and take your chances with the lions (turn to 243) or step onto the ice lake (turn to 252)?
Plan of the Mortavalon Arena

- Tiers of seating for the spectators
- Swamp
- Sand dunes
- Descending platform
- Grass
- Ice
- Mock castle
- Sense of spikes

The Arena, Mortavalon
The Hobgoblin tries to shovel you up on the end of his wickedly barbed trident as you dance sideways and try to grab its shaft so that you can whirl his heavy body over your hip.

**HOBGOBLIN**

Defence against Whirlpool throw: 6  
Endurance: 18  
Damage: 1 Die + 3

If you throw him successfully, you see him roll and come to his feet, but you attack him while he is rising. You can punch (turn to 293) or kick (turn to 281), adding 2 to your Kick or Punch Modifier and damage for that attack only.

If you fail to throw him he elbows you in the ribs with bone cracking force (lose 2 Endurance). If you are still alive, he tries to spit you with his trident. Your Defence against this thrust is 7. If you are still alive, you may punch (turn to 293) or kick (turn to 281).

**268**

Your three assailants lie around you, dead or unconscious. There is an awed silence in the tavern and nobody will meet your eye. Realising that word will spread that a monk who does not fight in the style of the Scarlet Mantis is in Doomover, you decide to leave the tavern and the city as soon as possible. A young soldier follows you as you leave but you give him the slip in a maze of back streets and make your way quickly to the city gate. You pass through before word comes to stop all strangers. Turn to 254.
The crowd cheers as you throw the Hobgoblin’s trident into the moat, and the castle itself begins to sink into the ground. Searching the vile body of the swart beast you find a phial marked ‘Magic Potion’; the Hobgoblin’s prize for winning in the arena, it had been his most prized possession. Removing the stopper, you detect the unmistakable odour of Essence of Firenewt, not a magic potion at all. The Hobgoblin had been tricked, but you may find a use for it and decide to keep it. Note it on your Character Sheet.

The castle disappears from the view of the ecstatic populace of Mortavalon, whose blood-lust you have temporarily sated, and a passage leads you to the street outside. A press of people gathers round you. An aristocrat’s butler offers you a job as a bodyguard as you are both showered with rose-blooms. You try to get away from these unwanted attentions but a man tugs at your iron sleeve. You turn, ready to Cobra Strike, but he says, ‘Do you come from the Island of Tranquil Dreams?’ Do you admit that you do (turn to 242) or say that you have never heard of such an island (turn to 255)?

As you pass by the tavern, its door swings open - raucous noise and the reek of stale sweat washes over you. You walk on by and casually examine the monastery. Beautiful towers and arches adorn it. Its cloisters are well-guarded and the edges of its roof are barbed with spikes. Behind it is a refectory and sleeping quarters. You decide to use your skills as a ninja to gain entry at night and hunt for information. Is Yaemon somewhere within? Will you reconnoitre the monastery to find the safest way of entry (turn to 323) or spend the day in a hostel practicing the Way of the Tiger (turn to 303)?
The cave is dark but light filters down into it from a narrow crack in the ceiling. As you inch your way along the uneven floor you hear footsteps behind you and hurry on into the darkness. Steps lead down and, as you descend, a curious noise like the grinding of metal cogs sounds above. Suddenly a torrent of water cascades down the steps and you run on through the darkness, feeling the wall with your hand. You are soon knee-deep and beginning to wonder if there is any way out at the end of the tunnel when a portcullis slams to the floor behind you. The level of water drops and you find yourself trapped in an iron cage. There is no escape and you languish in the cage for some hours, using the time to relax and meditate. Suddenly the cage is filled with light as a door at the end of the tunnel is flung open. You are under the seats of a huge circular arena which is slowly filling with people. The huge crowd cheers as a trumpet sounds and the front of the cage collapses to the ground. A group of soldiers come to the back of the cage and motion you to step out into the arena, poking spears through the portcullis. ‘May Fate smile on you,’ says one. ‘Only one of you can become the king of the castle, and live.’

You step out into the sunlight to another cheer from the crowd and the cage is pulled up behind you. You cannot go back. Squinting in the sun you look around. Turn to 261.

The Ogre tramples the wooden rail of the ship and raises its hammer to smash you as you land nimbly before it. A volley of arrows from the pirate ship’s stern-castle whistles above you. Do you:

Try to deliver a Winged Horse kick (turn to 332)?
Attempt the Iron Fist punch (turn to 310)?
Slide across the deck and try a Dragon’s Tail throw (turn to 345)?
281

The Hobgoblin tries to transfix you with his wickedly barbed trident as you jump into the air and lash out with the ball of your foot, hoping to take him in the throat.

HOBGOBLIN

Defence against Leaping Tiger kick: 6
Endurance: 18
Damage: 1 Die + 3

If you kill the Hobgoblin turn to 272. If the Hobgoblin is still alive, he jabs the trident at your stomach. Your Defence against this jab, as you dodge in the confined space atop the turret, is 8. If you are still alive after his attack, you may try a Tiger’s Paw chop (turn to 293), the Whirlpool throw (turn to 267) or the Leaping Tiger again (return to the top of this paragraph).

283

The road winds down from the hills and you see the city of Mortavalon nestling in a bowl of green pastures and cornfields. The entrance to the city is through a large triumphal arch dedicated to a victory won by the Empire hunters who follow the god of Empire, Moraine, against the Soldiers of Fate. It is evening and you fall in with a group of peasants who have been working the land. Explaining that you are a stranger you ask them about their city. It seems that the largest temple is to the god, Death, but the priests seldom interfere in daily life, as long as no-one quibbles over the occasional disappearance. They practice child-sacrifice . . .

Tomorrow is to be a holiday for there is a combat in the arena. It seems they are looking for a champion who may win a fabulous fortune. If you would like to follow one of them to visit the Master of the Arena, turn to 290. If you would rather walk on through the city turn to 169.

285

You try to somersault over the guards but you are too slow and one of them slashes you with his sword as you pass overhead. You fall to the ground and before you can get up one of them plunges his sword into your back, forcing you down to the muddy road. He has ruptured your liver and you die. Your adventure ends here.
287
You fall backwards from the Hall of Webs onto the flagstones of the courtyard below, breaking your neck. You have failed.

290
The peasant who has been leading you stops outside a grand white building and points inside. You thank him and enter the cool marble-floored building, striding confidently towards a warrior dressed in a blue and gold toga. Suddenly the floor opens up underneath you and you are pitched downwards to the floor of a dark tunnel below.

The man in the toga shouts down after you, ‘Hurry friend, to the arena. If my men catch you first they will kill you.’ You can see no way out save down the tunnel ahead of you.

Turn to 275.

293
As the Hobgoblin whirls the butt of the trident towards your side, you chop the side of your hand down into his warty shoulder.

HOBGOBLIN
Defence against Tiger’s Paw: 5
Endurance: 18
Damage: 1 Die + 1

If you kill it, turn to 272. If the Hobgoblin is still alive, you must try to leap over the flailing butt of his trident. Your Defence against this great sweep is 8. If you are still alive, you may use the Leaping Tiger kick (turn to 281), the Whirlpool throw (turn to 267) or the Tiger’s Paw again (return to the top of this paragraph).

295
You grab the Two-headed Giant around the thighs but it weighs well over a ton and you find yourself unable to throw it. The monster drops its colossal club and grabs you, throwing you to the rock underfoot and trampling you. Your head splits like a ripe melon as the force of its heel grinds downwards. You have failed your mission.
296
You manage to dodge underneath the sword cut of one of the soldiers, grab his arm, twist, and whirl him around your hip. You bring him down onto a small table with a splintering crash.

Someone comments on your unusual fighting style. You hurdle the heap of broken bones and wood and you are out of the tavern before anyone else can move against you. You are not followed and decide to sleep in a hostel for the night at a cost of one gold piece. In the morning, you decide to set off north, lest Yaemon reach the Pillars of Change before you, and leave the city on the road to Mortavalon.

Turn to 254.

297
You tell the priest of your quest to stop Yaemon causing the imprisonment of your god, Kwon, in Inferno. His brow is furrowed as he says, ‘I would not be so worried if it were not for the fact that Yaemon’s monks of the Scarlet Mantis are in league with the accursed Legion of the Sword of Doom.’ He goes on to say that Honoric, Marshal of the Legion, has left Doomover just when his men were expecting him to lead them in battle against the people of the Spires of Foreshadowing. He left with Yaemon and they rode alone, towards Mortavalon. ‘Surely you don’t think that you alone can stop them. Honoric slew forty men, battle-hardened veterans, at the battle of the Hollow Tower. Three Tools of Fate died beneath his Eldritch blade, Sorcerak, that day. You have no weapons. No man can stand against Yaemon in unarmed combat, he has been Grandmaster for a hundred seasons.’

‘What you say may be true, but I have sworn to try.’

He can tell you no more but he gives you a small flask containing a clear blue liquid. It is a Potion of Healing and you may use it once, at any time when you are not in combat, to restore up to 10 lost Endurance points. Note it on your Character Sheet. You thank the priest and, intent on catching up with Yaemon, leave the temple. Will you:

Leave the city by the harbour gate and head for Mortavalon (turn to 65)?
Go through the Obsidian Gate into Doomover (turn to 6)?
298
You manage to grab the rope in mid-air and slow your fall, dropping the last five yards and landing on your feet when the monk dislodges the grappling hook. You sweep it up and disappear into the city before he can give the alarm. You lie low until morning and leave the city, disguised once more as a beggar, intent on making sure that Yaemon doesn’t reach the Pillars of Change before you. Turn to 254.

303
It is well after midnight when you emerge from the hostel into the cool night air, dressed in your black costume and hood. Approaching the monastery, you can see that the climb to the roof of the hallway which connects the refectory to the hall of worship is an easy one because barrels of wine have been stacked against the wall. You gain the roof and descend into a very small courtyard. Turning a corner of the courtyard wall, you are faced with a dead end. The only way out which you can see is a small passageway leading off to the left.

You edge carefully down it but snap an unseen thread, as thin as spiderweave, which sets a bell jingling in the refectory. You run on down the passageway which turns left again only to find another dead end from which there is no escape. The passages are specially designed to lead an intruder to an inescapable hole and that is where you now find yourself. Several monks appear behind you and you frantically try to climb the wall, only to find that it is coated with a slimy web to which you stick fast. You are helpless and can only kill yourself before they take you, by biting off your own tongue so that you bleed to death. Your adventure ends here.
You enter the Black Sword tavern, a long drinking hall with a blazing fire that burns even at Harvest time, in the month of All-Mother Splendour. There are forty or so drinkers, all men and mostly soldiers. There is not a single sailor to be seen even though you are still close to the harbour. The soldiers have brought their weapons into the tavern but many have loosened or discarded parts of their armour in the sweltering heat.

The reek of stale sweat is overpowering. A man who must weigh twenty stones or more ambles up and down the long bar, slamming mugs of mead on the counter and pocketing silver. You buy a mugful and listen to the conversations. They are shouting from table to table about the campaign they are going to fight against the people of the Spires of Foreshadowing. At one table a man of twenty-five or so is particularly loud. He demands mead and two of the soldiers with him grab his mug, fighting for the privilege of buying his drink. He ignores this and, spotting you, challenges you to a drinking bout.

Do you accept (turn to 194) or decline (turn to 186)?

310
Your clenched fist audibly parts the air as you drive it towards the Ogre’s body.

OGRE
Defence against punch: 4
Endurance: 16
Damage: 2 Die

If you have defeated the Ogre, turn to 360.

If the Ogre is still alive, he tries to crush you with his spiked hammer. Your Defence against his ponderous blow is 8.

If you are still alive, you can now spin sideways and use the Winged Horse kick (turn to 332), try to sweep the Ogre’s legs from under him with the Dragon’s Tail throw (turn to 345) or use the Iron Fist again (return to the top of this paragraph).
311
The small dart speeds past his ear, and the magician’s eyes widen in surprise. Just as you are about to attack the magician again he points his finger at you and speaks words which seem to leech you of your strength. You totter feebly as the Hobgoblin bounds down from his castle tower. The magician retreats and watches as the Hobgoblin advances on you, waving his trident. You are too weak even to run and he drives the trident’s barbs into your stomach, before lifting you on the tines of the trident and trailing you in the moat. The water boils as the Floating Mouths come to feed and within minutes your flesh has been stripped to the bone.

314
You turn down a side street so that you can approach the Hall of Webs from the back and, covered in black from head to toe in your ninja costume, slink stealthily through the night, your breathing as quiet as a bird’s. You stop absolutely still as you catch sight of a monk coming down the otherwise deserted street towards you. He too stops, seeming to sense danger. Are you skilful with Poison Needles? If you are and would like to use one, turn to 329. Otherwise, turn to 334.

315
The Cobra Man looks up as you launch yourself into a flying Leaping Tiger kick. The Cobra Man can strike with the speed of a snake however and his Defence against your kick is 6. If you hit the Cobra Man, turn to 227. If you fail to kick him, the Cobra Man bites your ankle, injecting a deadly venom. If you do not have Immunity to Poisons, you die painfully, and your adventure ends.

If you do, however, the men goggle in surprise as you pick yourself up while the young man scrambles to safety. Turn to 227.
The Two-headed Giant is dull-witted and slow, but very strong. You will need to strike it several telling blows whilst avoiding the colossal club with which it is trying to flatten you.

TWO-HEADED GIANT
Defence against Leaping Tiger kick: 4
Endurance: 25
Damage: 2 Dice + 1

If you win, turn to 336. Your Defence against the monster’s tree trunk is 8. It is impossible to block due to its enormous size and weight, but relatively easy to dodge, due to your comparative smallness and speed, as you try to flip, leap and cartwheel out of its path. If you survive the attack will you use the Iron Fist punch (turn to 325), the Whirlpool throw (turn to 295) or kick again (return to the top of this paragraph)?

You take some fish scales from one of your pockets and place them on your eyeballs. You can see through them reasonably well but they give you the appearance of a blind man. Sitting down to beg near the entrance to the monastery, you overhear enough to convince you that the monks who worship Vile are steeped in evil, but it is a woman in a black cloak covered in the pattern of green spiders’ webs who most claims your attention. She is walking towards the monastery flanked by two monks dressed in scarlet, and it seems they are having an argument.

She is bartering a price for a spell which they wish her to cast in the ‘Hall of Webs’. She points out that if this is their only defence against spies in the corridor which joins the refectory to the sleeping quarters then the Webs of Nullaq spell is worth more than three hundred golds. You pick up your hood with its meagre haul of copper coins and pad slowly away before lying low until darkness falls. You decide to take advantage of your knowledge that the Hall of Webs has only one trap, the webs of the witch you saw earlier.

Do you have the Climbing skill? If you do turn to 414. If you do not, or prefer not to climb in, turn to 314.
The cumbersome Giant is slow but very strong. You will need to strike several blows to fell it, avoiding the tree trunk club it wields while you do so.

**TWO-HEADED GIANT**  
Defence against Iron Fist punch: 3  
Endurance: 25  
Damage: 2 Dice + 1

If you win, turn to **336**. If not, your Defence against the colossal club is 8. It is impossible to block due to its enormous size and weight, but relatively easy to dodge, due to your comparative smallness and speed, as you try to flip, leap and cartwheel out of its path. If you survive the attack will you use the Leaping Tiger kick (turn to **316**), the Whirlpool throw (turn to **295**) or punch again (return to the top of this paragraph)?

**326**  
You slam your fist towards the magician’s midriff, but he touches the golden disk which hangs at his chest and the air around him takes on a greenish tinge. He has created some sort of magic shield, and it slows your blow. His Defence against your Punch is 6. If you succeed in hitting him turn to **253**. If the field of force stops your blow turn to **311**.

**329**  
You make an ‘O’ shape with your tongue and place one of the poison needles carefully within it in one deft movement. You exhale and spit it out. The needle has embedded itself in the monk’s eye before he realizes what you are doing. The poison takes effect - he doubles up, convulsing in the muddy road, and dies. Wasting no time, you strip him of his scarlet uniform and put it on over your ninja costume. Walking with calm assurance you enter the sleeping quarters of the monastery unchallenged and make your way to the Hall of Webs. Turn to **368**.
You spin and drive the outside of your foot towards the Ogre’s throat as it tries to swat you aside with its hammer.

**OGRE**
- Defence against kick: 5
- Endurance: 16
- Damage: 2 Dice

If you have defeated the Ogre, turn to 360. If the Ogre still lives, it tries to bludgeon your head with its heavy hammer. Your Defence against its clumsy blow is 7. If you are still alive, you can use the Iron Fist punch (turn to 310), the Dragon’s Tail throw (turn to 345) or kick again (return to the top of this paragraph).

To your dismay the moon chooses this moment to come out from behind a cloud and the monk catches sight of your shadow. ‘Who are you?’ he asks tensely. Will you walk up to him and attack (turn to 359) or use a shuriken (turn to 347)?

The Two-headed Giant crashes to the ground, cracking the rock. Saliva flecked with blood covers its lips. You move on, and in the mist see the cave which was its lair. Investigating carefully you find a selection of cracked open bones which have had the marrow sucked out of them, and a small sack full of copper pieces.

The Giant’s treasure is worthless to you, too heavy to carry, but you do find a black leather gauntlet sewn with delicate silver thread. It carries the virtue of magic, a **Gauntlet of Striking** and you put it on. **Note it on your Character Sheet.** It adds +1 to your Punch Modifier. You continue on through the hills as the mist lifts and head into the wild wastelands towards the city of Fiendil. Turn to 93.
The needle buries itself in the magician’s cheek. He claps a hand to it as the deadly poison takes effect. He begins to rock on his feet and then topples into the moat. The crowd is hushed for they were not able to see the needle and they think you are a warlock. The water boils as the Floating Mouths latch onto their prey.

Within a minute his flesh has been stripped to the bone. You climb up towards the Hobgoblin in his tower. The beast is showing off to the crowd, confident of another victory, beating his chest - which is twice as broad as yours - and twirling the trident in one hand. The tower is roughly built with many hand-holds and you move around it, keeping the Hobgoblin confused as to your precise position. Then, holding an outcrop of stone with your hands, you swing up into the tower behind him. He whirls but you attack him with blinding speed. Will you use the Leaping Tiger kick (turn to 281), the Whirlpool throw (turn to 267) or the Tiger’s Paw chop (turn to 293)?

You strike north from Doomover until you come to a marshland called the Greenfen. You skirt this, crossing the river which flows out of the dank mires and trot for a few days, hunting and foraging at need and sleeping in trees. After several days you turn north-east and warily cross the track which leads north from Mortavalon to the city of Sundial and climb into the wild and windswept hills known as the Barrow Swales, heading for the city of Fiendil. You may restore any Endurance lost so far on this journey.

On a day which dawns strangely cold, a mist lies heavily around the hills and you find yourself in a narrow gully. A boulder thuds dully towards you from higher up the hill but you leap agilely out of its way, to be faced by a great Two-headed Giant waving a thorny club which looks like the trunk of a small tree. The club whistles through the air towards you and you duck low beneath it. The Giant roars in frustration. Will you use the Leaping Tiger kick (turn to 316), the Iron Fist punch (turn to 325) or the Whirlpool throw (turn to 295)?

He leans forward as you thrust up the rope towards the window and, ready for you, delivers an Iron Fist punch into your face. Lose 4 Endurance, and if you are still alive, the force of the blow sends you falling backwards into space. Are you skilled in Acrobatics? If you are turn to 298. If you are not, turn to 287.
341. Two-headed Giant by Dominique Gilis
345
To the surprise of the dull-witted Ogre you crouch to the deck and try to sweep its legs from under it. However, its legs are stocky and powerful and it is huge and strong.

OGRE
Defence against throw: 8
Endurance: 16
Damage: 2 Dice

If you succeed, you may use a kick (turn to 332) or a punch (turn to 310) adding 2 to your Modifier and damage for this attack only.

If you have failed to bring the Ogre crashing to the deck it tries to drive you through it with its hammer. Your Defence against the falling hammer is 7 as you try to roll backwards into a handstand and then flip onto your feet. You have no time to block the heavy blow. If you still live you may use the Iron Fist punch (turn to 310) or the Winged Horse kick (turn to 332).

347
The shuriken hurtles towards him, glinting in the moonlight. He tries to dodge aside but it catches him in the arm, instead of the throat as you had intended. He cries the alarm and falls back, clutching his arm. You will not be able to retrieve the shuriken - cross it off your Character Sheet.

You decide that to remain would imperil your mission and you lose yourself quickly in the side streets, lying low in a burnt-out bakery for the night. You reflect that the monk may have recognized you were a ninja and you decide to leave Doomover, intent on making sure that Yaemon does not arrive at the Pillars of Change before you. Using the disguise of a beggar, you leave the city in the morning. Turn to 254.

351
Seeing that you will not clasp his hand, the magician begins to chant a spell. If you have the skill of Poison Needles, you may wish to use one (turn to 389) or you may wish to attack him with an Iron Fist punch (turn to 326).
352
You run a few steps along the *Aquamarin’s* deck before leaping the rail and landing against the side of the pirate ship, hanging from the scuppers by your hands. You wait for a moment before edging your way, hand over hand, towards the red stern of the *Watery Grave*. Make a Fate Roll to see if one of the Reavers spotted you jumping onto their ship. If Fate smiles on you, turn to 107. If Fate turns her back on you, turn to 97.

356
Your fist is slowed to almost nothing - it is as if you were trying to punch your way through treacle. The magician points his finger at you and speaks words which seem to leech you of your strength. You totter feebly as the Hobgoblin bounds down from his castle tower. The magician retreats and watches as the Hobgoblin advances on you, waving his trident. You are too weak even to run and he drives the trident’s barbs into your stomach, before lifting you on the tines of the trident and trailing you in the moat. The water boils as the Floating Mouths come to feed and within minutes your flesh has been stripped to the bone.

357
The young man screams as he dies and the men crack the whip over their ox and drive off, dragging the Cobra Man behind them.

There is a cave overhung by rock above you in the hillside. ‘That way to Mortavalon,’ one of the men shouts, pointing up at the cave with a smirk. Will you continue along the road (turn to 283) or investigate the cave (turn to 275)?

359
You step towards him and without warning unleash a flying Winged Horse kick at his throat. If you decide to use Inner Force, turn to 395. If you cannot or will not, turn to 403.
The Ogre buckles at the knees and topples backwards between the two ships. A plume of spray rises from where he plummets into the water. If you have used a shuriken it is lost with the Ogre. Looking quickly around you can see that the scimitar wielding Reavers are more than a match for the crew of the Aquamarin. Glaivas' swordsmanship is startling but they are slowly penning him in.

With a punishing sidekick you knock a new attacker to the floor, where he lies inert. Another huge wart-faced Halvorc lunges at you with his cutlass. With incredible speed, you clap your hands together, trapping the blade between them, inches from your face. He has time to gape in astonishment before you smash the top of your right foot into his temple. Now will you:

Try to fight your way through to Glaivas (turn to 371)?
Jump to the Reavers’ ship to attack the pirate Captain (turn to 352)?

As you grasp his hand it tingles and then a shock of electricity galvanises your body. Lose 7 Endurance.

If you are still alive, you overcome the pain which would have crippled most people - your training has often brought worse - and use the Iron Fist punch, striking him in the abdomen and then, spinning, use the Winged Horse kick, hammering your foot into his face, catapulting him into the moat. The water boils as the Floating Mouths latch onto their prey. Within a minute his flesh has been stripped to the bone.

You climb up towards the Hobgoblin in his tower. The beast is showing off to the crowd, confident of another victory, beating his enormous chest. He twirls the trident in one hand.

The tower is roughly built with many hand-holds, enabling you to move around it, keeping the Hobgoblin confused as to your precise position. Then, holding onto an outcrop of stone with your hands, you swing up into the tower behind him. He whirls round but you have the drop on him and attack. Will you use the Leaping Tiger kick (turn to 281), the Whirlpool throw (turn to 267) or the Tiger’s Paw chop (turn to 293)?
The Hall of Webs is an arcing corridor, like a hump-back bridge, which connects the upper floor of the dwellings to the refectory where the monks take their meals. The door opens to reveal a room dimly lit by two flickering candles. Forewarned, you notice the glint of many threads as slender as a spider’s web, criss-crossing the floor.

Some of them, you guess, will be attached to bells or traps which will give you away or kill you. Bending down, you do a handstand and walk carefully into the room on your hands. You are able to balance on one arm whilst with the other you delicately test the floor ahead for strands of web. It takes you half an hour to slowly cross the room but you manage it without breaking any of the strands. You reach the door and, neatly flipping onto your feet, open it soundlessly.

You are on the balcony above the refectory and the dining hall. Crouching behind the balcony, you overhear the information you need, as the monks drink wine late into the night. It seems Yaemon has left for Mortavalon, accompanied by Honoric, Marshal of the Legion of the Sword of Doom, a ten day since. Before you leave, you catch sight of a scroll that details some of the kicks, punches and throws used in the Way of the Mantis, the fighting style of the monks who worship Vile.

You may increase your Punch Modifier by one as you learn some useful techniques. They are skilled in punching. You also notice that they have no knowledge of the Forked Lightning kick. This may be useful to you whenever you must fight a monk who worships Vile. You manage to get out the way you came without difficulty and lie low in a burnt-out bakery for the rest of the night. In the morning, you leave Doomover intent on catching up with Yaemon and Honoric. Turn to 65.
371
You fight on, killing two more of the swarthy buccaneers. But the crew are rapidly being overpowered; some fools are even surrendering. You are surrounded but no one can close with you past the flashing blows of your fists and feet. Suddenly one of them looks above you and grins. Turning your eyes to the heavens you see the rigging collapsing on you. One of them has shinned up the mast and cut the rigging down. You can hardly move beneath it and a torrent of pirate bodies bears you to the ground. You are carried below. Your ninja equipment is taken from you and you are roped to one of the Aquamarin’s oars. Turn to 19.

372
The robed man steps towards you - he is young, no older than yourself and his eyes twinkle merrily. A golden disk hangs in front of his chest on a necklace of coral. The Hobgoblin watches, thumping his trident in the castle tower. The young man speaks.

‘Greetings, fellow combatant. I will not ask what crime you have committed that the people of Mortavalon sent you into the arena. Instead let me make a suggestion to you. I am a magician, my spells are potent and deadly.’ You notice that his golden and blue robes are unruffled as he continues, ‘I have killed many foes and I could kill you but then I would have to kill that too,’ he points at the Hobgoblin, ‘and if I died, not one of us would have survived. Let us make peace and kill that foul beast together, then let the crowd decide which of us shall live. Here, clasp my hand on it.’

He offers his hand. If you wish to accept his hand either to throw him into the moat or to join him, turn to 363, or if you would rather attack him in some other way turn to 351.
You manage to cling to the flints of the Hall of Webs as the monk throws the grappling hook to the flagstone below, and you throw your voice, like a ventriloquist, so that the monk hears what he believes is a groan of pain from the courtyard below. He chuckles and then leans out of the window to look down but cannot see in the darkness. He pulls back and you inch slowly up the wall to the window and, pushing off with your feet, swing down and into the window to land silently behind him as he walks away. He seems to sense you and is turning his head when you throw your garrotte-wire around his neck. He dies soundlessly. The hall is dimly lit by two flickering candles but your sharp eyesight can see the glinting of webs which criss-cross the floor. Reaching up from the window ledge, you bury your cat’s claws into the plaster ceiling and slowly cross it to the door, hanging upside down like a fly. You drop to the floor and quietly open the door. You are on the balcony above the refectory and the dining hall. Crouching behind the balcony, you overhear the information you need, as the monks drink wine late into the night. It seems Yaemon has left for Mortavalon, accompanied by Honoric, Marshal of the Legion of the Sword of Doom, a ten day since. Before you leave, you catch sight of a scroll that details some of the kicks, punches and throws used in the Way of the Mantis, the fighting style of the monks who worship Vile.

You may increase your Throw Modifier by one as you learn some useful techniques. You also notice that they have no knowledge of the Forked Lightning kick. This may be useful to you whenever you must fight a monk who worships Vile. You manage to get out through a window off the balcony and climb down to the courtyard where you pick up your grappling hook before lying low in a burnt-out bakery for the rest of the night. In the morning, you leave Doomover intent on catching up with Yaemon and Honoric. Turn to 65.
You lie unmoving on the grass as they dismount to examine your body. You stop breathing almost completely and concentrate so that the blood stops flowing to your skin and your heart rate drops to a minimum. When they touch you it seems you are already growing slightly stiff and when, after a few minutes your brow feels cold, they ride off and leave you. As they mount up they are deciding to return to their temple, that of Nemesis, Supreme Principle of Evil.

‘Manse will be pleased,’ says one.
‘Yes, and those strange monks of the Mantis,’ says another.

When they have left you continue warily, wondering how news of you had travelled ahead so quickly and why the knights of Nemesis should be in league with the monks who worship Vile. After a time you enter the hills that encircle Mortavalon and remember that you have heard of a sorcerer who worships Nemesis, Manse the Deathmage, supposedly one of the most powerful beings on Orb. Your musings are interrupted when you see a cave in the hillside above you.

Will you continue along the road to Mortavalon (turn to 283) or enter the cave (turn to 275)?

The arrow reaches you as you are in mid-air between the rigging and the deck but you whip your hand up and snatch it out of the air inches before your chest and throw it aside. The Ogre, enraged, raises its spiked hammer to smash you. Will you:

Try the Winged Horse kick (turn to 332)?
Attempt the Iron Fist punch (turn to 310)?
Slide across the deck and use the Dragon’s Tail throw (turn to 345)?

Your magnificent leap is enough to carry you to the island and you land nimbly on your feet as the crowd cheers loudly. You look around. The Dark Elf is nowhere to be seen, lost in the swamp, and the knight lies spread-eagled on the sand, but the man in blue and gold robes is floating across the moat on a small ice floe.

Turn to 372.
Your foot slams into his solar plexus with incredible force, cracking a rib and driving the breath from his body. He doubles up, unable to move, and you lash out with a Forked Lightning kick, slamming your foot into his midriff again and then up to his throat in one swift fluid movement. He drops dead to the muddy street three seconds after your attack began. Wasting no time, you strip him of his scarlet uniform and put it on over your ninja costume. Walking with calm assurance you enter the sleeping quarters of the monastery unchallenged and make your way to the Hall of Webs. Turn to 368.

The mail-clad rider stiffens as you chop his neck and falls sideways off his horse. You balance on your hands and move yourself forwards into the saddle, grabbing the reins as the horse bolts. You are an accomplished horseman and you manage to turn the frightened beast towards the hills that circle Mortavalon. The others thunder after you, and are still behind you as you enter the hills. They begin to shout a fell incantation and you feel a sluggishness overcome you. Will you spur your horse on faster (turn to 129) or vault from the horse and run into a cave which you see in the hillside above you (turn to 275)?

In one swift movement you place a poison needle on your tongue and then spit it towards the magician’s face. He tries to dodge it - his Defence against your needle is 4.

If you succeed, turn to 338.
If you fail, turn to 311.

The cobra man lies spread-eagled on the sand, dead. The crowd roars with approval, as you pluck the pole from the nearby dune. You grab one end and, holding it out before you, sprint to the edge of the desert. Planting the pole in the sands, you vault over the wide moat which you notice is infested with Floating Mouths, voracious fish that are all mouth and elastic belly. You land at the base of the castle, just in time to see the man dressed in blue and gold floating across the moat on a small ice floe which has broken away from the edge of the ice lake. Turn to 372.
The monk is tensed for an attack from his dark assailant. His Defence against your Winged Horse kick is 6, as you grunt with an explosion of Inner Force. If you hit the monk, turn to 384. If your attack fails, turn to 403.

Before you reach the deck an arrow pierces your thigh and you stumble. You pull the barbed arrow from your flesh but the muscle is badly torn. Lose 4 Endurance. The enraged Ogre raises its spiked hammer to smash you. Will you:

Try the Winged Horse kick (turn to 332)?
Attempt the Iron Fist punch (turn to 310)?
Slide across the deck and use the Dragon’s Tail throw (turn to 345)?

The monk is an expert in unarmed combat. He steps back and slaps your foot aside with his forearm, and then cries in panic, ‘NINJA!’ , giving the alarm. You decide that to remain would imperil your mission and you lose yourself quickly in the side streets, lying low in a burnt-out bakery for the night. You reflect that the monk recognized you were a ninja and decide to leave Doomover, intent on making sure that Yaemon does not arrive at the Pillars of Change before you. Using the disguise of a beggar, you leave the city in the morning. Turn to 254.

You are not fast enough and the heavy mace catches you in the face before the chop lands. Lose 8 Endurance. If you are still alive, the pain is terrible and you are knocked from the horse, landing in a heap on the ground. If you are able to slow your metabolism and Feign Death, you may turn to 376. If you cannot or will not you pick yourself up and stagger towards the river. Turn to 103.
You walk past the slave market where a captain of the Legion of the Sword of Doom is bidding unopposed for men to pull the oars of the ships of the Barbican League, Doomover’s navy. Most of the townspeople seem to give the place a wide berth and you hurry past. You come to the largest building in the city, and you stop to stare in amazement. You guess it must be the temple to Vasch-Ro. It is a great cathedral built of blocks of basalt, with a great square embattled tower, stark and unadorned, which stretches two hundred feet above the surrounding buildings.

Behind it is Honoric’s manse, more a fortress than a palace. You continue on your way towards a tavern whose sign shows soldiers with spoked wheels on their shield cowering before a black sword which hangs in the air. It stands inside a fork in the street and beyond it to the right you catch sight of a monastery built of dark stone with bright red shutters at its windows. It can only be a temple to Vile, the twisted brother of your God, Kwon. Might Yaemon be within? Will you:

Try the tavern as a likely source of gossip (turn to 307)?
Attempt to steal into the monastery (turn to 273)?

The Cobra Man’s strike is blindingly fast and his fangs sink into your arm, pumping a deadly venom into your veins. If you have not developed Immunity to Poisons during your training, you find it suddenly difficult to breath. You fall back onto the sand and die as the roaring of blood in your ears mingles with the roar of the crowd. Your adventure is over. However, if you have Immunity to Poisons, the venom has no effect. The Cobra Man’s fangs still cut your skin, and you bleed - lose 2 Endurance. If you are still alive, you may use the Winged Horse kick (turn to 25), the Tiger’s Paw chop (turn to 42) or the Teeth of the Tiger throw (turn to 13).
You stare up into the night sky until you can see in the dark as if you were an owl, then, squeezing through the narrowest of gaps between two buildings, you make your way towards the Hall of Webs. The Hall is in fact a large hump-back bridge thirty feet up. It connects the upper floor of the sleeping quarters to the balcony of the refectory where the monks eat their meals.

Standing below the window in the centre of the arch, you fit your cat’s claws to your hands and feet and take the small grappling hook and rope from one of the inner pockets of your costume. You fling the padded hook into the open window and pull the rope taut before climbing it hand over hand, like a monkey. You are just below the window when you see a man’s hands on the hook above you.

Will you try to scramble the last yard up the rope before he can dislodge the hook (turn to 342) or try to dig your claws into the flints of the bridge and climb to the side of the window (turn to 375)?

You thrash around in the water pretending that you cannot sleep and when they are close blow a poison needle through your breathing tube at the face of one of the knights. It slaps into his cheek. He thrashes in the water and dies in convulsions. The spell that had made you so sluggish is broken. You swim across to the other bank and disappear into the bull rushes. They cannot keep up with your sure-footed speed and you re-cross the river and enter the hills that encircle Mortavalon. You rejoin the road and, rounding a corner espy a cave, over hung with rock on the hillside above you.

Will you continue straight on to Mortavalon (turn to 283) or enter the cave (turn to 275)?
What destiny awaits? This gamebook excerpt of *Avenger! New Collector’s Edition* contains less than half of the material in the full book. Yaemon still lives, and the choices you have made will determine the path you tread in seeking his destruction. To visit the Kickstarter page for *The Way of the Tiger: New Collector’s Edition*, search on Kickstarter ([www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)) between September 26 and November 1, 2013.

Please help make this new edition and expanded series a reality!