

Fighting Fantasy amateur adventure

Feathers of the Phoenix

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Feathers of the Phoenix

Two dice, a pencil and an eraser are all you need to embark on this competition adventure, which comes complete with its own elaborate combat system and a score sheet to record your progress. It is up to YOU to decide which routes to follow, which dangers to risk and which foes to fight.

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INTRODUCTION

You are about to take the lead roll in an adventure that will make you into a living legend, renowned and respected throughout the world. Before you take part in this quest, you must first determine your own strengths and weaknesses. You use dice to work out your initial SKILL, STAMINA, and LUCK scores. On pages 8 is an Adventure Sheet, which you may use to record details of your adventure. On it, you will find boxes for recording your SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK scores. Write your scores on the Adventure Sheet in pencil so you can erase previous scores when you start again. You may make photocopies of the sheet for use in future adventures.

You use dice to work out your initial scores on an Adventure Sheet, which you may use to record details of your adventure. On it, you will find boxes for recording your SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK scores. You are advised either to record your scores on the Adventure Sheet in pencil or to make photocopies of the sheet for use in future adventures. Full details governing rules can be found in any of the Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks as well as on the Official website: www.fightingfantasy.com.

SKILL, STAMINA, LUCK

To determine your Initial SKILL, STAMINA, and LUCK scores:

- ❖ SKILL Roll one die. Add 6 to the number and enter this total in the SKILL box
- ❖ STAMINA Roll two dice. Add 12 to the number, box on the Adventure Sheet.
- ❖ LUCK Roll one die. Add 6 to the number and enter this total in the LUCK box.

For reasons that will be explained below, all your scores will change constantly during the adventure. You must keep an accurate record of these scores, and for this reason, you are advised to write small in the boxes or to keep an eraser handy. However, never rub out your Initial scores, except on those very rare occasions when the text specifically tells you so.

Although you may be rewarded additional SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK points, these totals may never exceed your initial Scores, except on very rare occasions, when you will be instructed on a particular page. SKILL reflects your general expertise in fighting and combat; the higher the better. STAMINA score reflects your general constitution, your overall will to survive, your determination and overall fitness; the higher your STAMINA score, the longer you will be able to survive. LUCK score indicates how naturally lucky a person you are. Luck – and Magic – are facts of life in the fantasy world you are about to explore.

Skill

Your SKILL score will not change much during the course of your adventure. Occasionally a paragraph may give you instructions to increase or decrease your SKILL score, but it may not exceed its Initial value unless you are specifically instructed to the contrary.

At various times during your adventure, you will be told to Test your Skill. The procedure for this is the same as that for Testing your Luck: roll two dice. If the number rolled is less than or equal to your current SKILL score, you have succeeded in your test and the result will go in your favour. If the number rolled is higher than your current SKILL score, you have failed the test and will have to suffer the consequences. However, unlike Testing your Luck, do not subtract 1 point from your SKILL each time you Test your Skill. Your SKILL score can never exceed its initial value unless specifically instructed on a page. Drinking the Potion of SKILL (see later) will restore your SKILL to its initial level at any time; except when engaged in a battle.

Luck

Additions to your LUCK score may be awarded in the adventure when you have been particularly lucky or created your own luck by some other action. Details are given, where appropriate, in the paragraphs of the book. Remember that, as with SKILL and STAMINA, your LUCK score may never exceed its initial value unless specifically instructed on a page. Drinking the Potion of Fortune (see later) will restore your LUCK to its initial level at any time, and increase your initial LUCK by 1 point.

Provisions

Everyone knows that food is vital as a form of sustenance. The text shall instruct you to eat a meal at certain times in your adventure. This means you'll have to erase one meal automatically without gaining STAMINA! Venturing into any adventure may prove arduous indeed; therefore you need food just to keep your strength up. This then leads to a second possibility: if you have no provisions and the text tells you to eat a meal, you must reduce your STAMINA by 3 points! Any other time you eat a meal, you may restore 4 lost STAMINA points, except during combat or when performing any other similar action.

EQUIPMENT AND POTIONS

You will start your adventure with a bare minimum of equipment, but you may find or buy other items during your travels. You have a backpack to hold your Provisions and any other items you may come across.

In addition, you may take one bottle of a magical potion, which will aid you on your mission. You may choose to take a bottle of any of the following:

A Potion of SKILL restores SKILL points

A Potion of Strength restores STAMINA points

A Potion of Fortune restores LUCK points and adds 1 to initial LUCK

These potions may be taken at any time during your adventure (except when engaged in a battle). Taking a measure of potion will restore SKILL, STAMINA or LUCK scores to

their initial level (and the Potion of Fortune will add 1 point to your initial LUCK score before LUCK is restored). Each bottle of potion contains enough for one measure; i.e. the characteristic may be restored once during an adventure. Make a note on your Adventure Sheet when you have used up your potion.

SECRET REFS

When attempting this adventure you must remember that this book is devious beyond belief! If ever you come to a point in the adventure that seems impossible to past beyond, you may require a Secret Ref to help you. Secret Refs are paragraph numbers that can only be reached if you have acquired special knowledge of their existence, but how do you go about finding that knowledge? Play the book and look for it!

HINTS ON PLAY

This adventure is dangerous. You might well fail on your first attempt. Make notes and draw a map as you explore - this map will prove invaluable when making further forays in this adventure, and it will enable you to progress more rapidly to unexplored sections. Remember: when you are travelling through any environment, it is a good idea to make a note of where such encounters lie in the adventure ahead, including useful objects and information to aid you on your dangerous quest.

Be wary about testing your Luck, unless a paragraph instructs you to do this! When it comes to fights, you should Test your Luck only to keep yourself alive if an opponent's blow would otherwise kill you. However, be warned! If you decide to use Luck in this way, be certain your adversary is worth it- Luck points are precious!

You start this mission with very few possessions, but will be given opportunities to collect food, weapons, and items. However, choose your equipment carefully - although many are precious or magical, others are red herrings and of no real value at all.

You will soon realise that paragraphs make no sense if read in numerical order. It is essential that you read only the paragraphs you are instructed to go to. Reading other sections lessens the excitement and surprise during play. The only true way to success in this adventure involves minimal risk; even if your character scores are low, you should be able to find magical artefacts and weapons that may increase your chances of victory in battle.

ADVENTURE SHEET

MONSTER ENCOUNTER BOXES

SKILL
Initial
Skill=

STAMINA
Initial
Stamina=

LUCK
Initial
Luck=

Skill=
Stamina=

Skill=
Stamina=

Skill=
Stamina=

EQUIPMENT
LIST

GOLD

JEWELS

POTIONS

PROVISIONS
REMAINING

Skill=
Stamina=

Skill=
Stamina=

Skill=
Stamina=

Skill=
Stamina=

Skill=
Stamina=

Skill=
Stamina=

Skill=
Stamina=

Skill=
Stamina=

Skill=
Stamina=

BACKGROUND

You press Vincenzo against the wall and punch him across the face again. He gives a short cry of pain and falls to the floor, his mouth drooling blood. You hear Vortigen snickering behind you and you smile as you give Vincenzo a hearty kick in the ribs.

"If you've come to kill me, then finish the job!", he gasps. You give him a cold stare and smile at him.

"If Branno wanted you dead, you would be", you gloat, "but as it happens he doesn't want to lose such a valuable friend as you just yet. Consider this your warning", you finish with another hearty kick in the ribs. Vortigen continues to guffaw at Vincenzo's plight.

Branno, one of Port Blacksand's most powerful and feared crime lords, had asked the two of you to teach Vincenzo a lesson after Branno discovered he had been embezzling some of the money made from burglaries. It strikes you as odd that Branno did not simply wish him dead, he is not known for his mercy and you and Vortigen have killed for him many times before. Perhaps he simply did not want to lose such a competent bookkeeper.

Regardless, the job is done now and Vortigen is eagerly going through Vincenzo's drawers in the hope of finding, what he calls his "Hard Work Bonus". Sadly, there only seems to be a few trinkets of little value, hardly the biggest haul you've ever had.

Disappointedly Vortigen continues his rummage...and finds something. From the very back of a small cupboard he pulls out a red feather, glowing faintly in the dim light. On seeing what Vortigen has uncovered Vincenzo awakens out of his dazed stupor and gives a start.

"Leave that alone!" he cries.

"Why? What is it?" demands Vortigen. Vincenzo refuses to answer and gives you a defiant look. However, the fat bookkeeper has been trying your patience too long and you give him a few good kicks to get him talking.

"You can't kill me!" he cries as your kicks break his ribs, "You said so yourself. I'll not talk. You can only hurt me so much without killing me."

"You'd be surprised what you can live through", you reply curtly, drawing your knife and glancing at his ear menacingly. This is more than the cowardly bookkeeper can bear. He reveals that the feather Vortigen is holding is that of a Phoenix, a legendary bird with supposed powers of rebirth. Apparently if four such feathers are collected, it will reveal the location of the phoenix egg, a treasure much more valuable than any gold, as anyone with a phoenix as their pet will gain eternal life.

"I know that one such feather is possessed by the merchant Sylees in Blacksand itself", Vincenzo continues. "I had hoped to acquire all four and get my hands on that Phoenix Egg, but you have put paid to my aspirations." The bookkeeper hangs his head dejectedly and you guess that this is all he knows. With a nod and a cruel smile, you and Vortigen leave his house to the murky Blacksand street outside.

"It appears that we are about to embark on quite a quest", says Vortigen with a devilish glint in his eye. You agree that you should both try to track down the remaining feathers, but one of you should report to Branno first to tell him that Vincenzo has been taken care of for it would not be wise to have an angry Branno on their tails during this enterprise. Vortigen agrees and says he will take the feather and discover the whereabouts of this Sylees, while you report to Branno. You can then meet at the Red Lantern Tavern on

Gallows Street at eleven o' clock to discuss your next actions. You concur, and set off towards Branno's headquarters, eager to begin your hunt for the feathers of the phoenix.

Turn to 1

NOW TURN OVER

1

You stride confidently through the narrow, dark streets of the Noose, an area so vile and dangerous as to make the rest of Port Blacksand look like the paragon of hospitality. Branno's headquarters is situated in the western part of the Noose looking merely like a ramshackle warehouse on the outside, but on the inside it is elaborately decorated with sumptuous silks. The usual group of ne'er-do-wells stand cloistered outside the entrance, but you also notice a rather scruffy looking old man sitting on the street outside. He gives you a grin as you look at him, revealing a sparkling gold tooth. He is Old Jod, one of the best spies and informants in the city port. There is little going on that he doesn't know about. You realize that any information may be useful on your quest so you ask Jod, if he knows of any events going on that you may be interested in. He gives you a short, calculating look and then smiles in a most grotesque manner.

"Two Gold Pieces and I can give you some very valuable information", he wheezes. If you wish to pay for Jod's information, turn to 22. If you would rather carry on into the building to see Branno, turn to 42.

2

The man smiles and introduces himself as Renghis, a monk from Khul. He points to the coloured stones and says that he has been trying to figure out a puzzle, set to him by a friend, but he is unable to solve it. If you are willing he says he will bet up to five gold pieces that you will be unable to solve it. If you do not wish to bet then you say goodbye to the monk and take a seat by the window (turn to 44). If you are willing to play decide how much you wish to stake and read on.

Renghis tells you the stones are all Red, Yellow, Green or Blue. His friend wishes him to work out a sequence of four of the stones where all of the following criteria are true:

1. The first colour is not red or green.
2. One colour is used twice, but the two stones of this colour are not next to each other in the sequence, nor is that colour blue or red.
3. Blue is definitely used, but is not the last colour in the sequence.
4. The last colour is not green.
5. The third colour is yellow.

Once you think you know the sequence allocate each colour in the sequence points. Red is worth one point, yellow two points, blue three and green four. Then multiply these points by the position they come in the sequence. So if green was the second colour in the sequence you would multiply four points by two to get a result of eight points. Finally add all the points together, multiply the total by two and turn to the paragraph with the number of that result. If the paragraph, you turn to makes no sense or you cannot solve the puzzle, then you must hand over your stake to the monk, take your leave and sit down somewhere else. Turn to 44.

3

You rush out into the cold night air. It has begun to rain quite heavily, but you care little. Vengeance is all that occupies your mind right now. You race along the streets of the cityport, their cobbled surfaces slick from the rain. Eventually you reach the Noose and

are almost at your destination. Do you have a golden amulet? If you do, turn to 31. If you do not, turn to 12.

4

You haven't progressed far down the dark street before you see three lowlifes beating a richly adorned man with cudgels. The man has been forced on to the damp ground and is holding out his hand and imploring you for help. The three muggers stop what they are doing to see what you are going to do. Normally you would just ignore a scene like this, but perhaps the man will reward you for saving him. On the other hand perhaps you can join the muggers and they may give you a share of the man's belongings. If you wish to attack the muggers therefore saving the man, turn to 48. If you would rather help the muggers, turn to 17. If you do not wish to involve yourself in the situation, you may walk on (turn to 43)

5

You have climbed halfway along the rope when you see a beaming face peering over the prow of the ship directly at you. Without a word he cuts the rope and you plummet into the water below. Lose one Luck point for this less than graceful demonstration of your subterfuge. It is far too dangerous to make an attempt on Abdul's life now so you must swim back to the dock and take your leave of this place. Turn to 18.

6

With a smile of satisfaction you take all of the money robbed from the victim. Add 20 Gold Pieces to your Adventure sheet. Pocketing the money you set off for the tavern and reach it without any further hassle. Turn to 11.

7

Deduct the amount you wagered from your adventure sheet. To the cheers of the crowd, the two fighters attack each other with renewed fury.

MAN-ORC Skill: 8 Stamina: 8

STREET THUG Skill: 7 Stamina: 14.

Conduct the fight between the two yourself. If the combatant you bet on wins then collect twice your stake from the dwarf. If not you will have to leave without your stake. Either way you must continue on to keep your appointment. Turn to 32.

8

When you refuse her offer Jakina countenance undergoes a remarkable change. She is no longer smiling amicably, but is giving you venomous look of undiluted hatred. She draws her sword and commands you to do the same. However this might not be the best course of action. If Jakina is trying to kill you she must have been hired by someone and will therefore probably be quite happy to reveal her employer and leave you alone for a suitable bribe. You reckon you would need at least fifteen gold pieces to convince her

though. If you wish to try bribing her with fifteen gold pieces, turn to 46. If you would rather fight her, or you do not have fifteen gold pieces, then read on.

Drawing your sword you prepare for battle. The barmaid shrieks and runs into a backroom, the bald man merely watches you with a bemused look on his face.

JAKINA Skill: 10 Stamina: 11

If you reduce her stamina to 3 points or less, turn to 47.

9

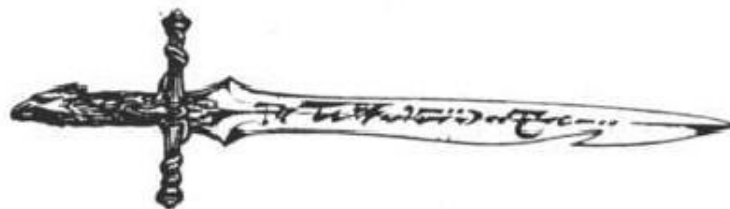
A quick search of your would-be assassin's body reveals nothing of interest. Knowing that time is precious you waste no more time here and hurry on. Turn to 31.

10

The harbour is quite quiet at this time of night, most of the sailors have retired to the nearby Blue Lobster Tavern, and perhaps the roughest place in the whole city port. Creeping behind some barrels you spy your quarry: The Halvedar nestled next to The Fat Crab, the ship of Captain Ahab, the famous leviathan Hunter. You are about to make your move towards the ship when you hear the unmistakable sound of approaching footsteps. You turn your head to see three city guards, their distinctive demonic helmets glistening in the moonlight, heading your way. You unfortunately have a bounty on your head and the usually negligent guards may make an exception in your case for the reward. They have not seen you yet so you may try sneaking off to a better hiding place (turn to 45) or you may stay where you are in the hope that you may be able to bribe them to leave you alone for the night (turn to 13).

11

You arrive at The Red Lantern somewhat earlier than the appointed time and Vortigen has not arrived yet. The Red Lantern, while not as rough as some of the other dives in Port Blacksand, is not the safest place to relax in. That said it seems fairly quiet now, the only customer, being a robed man with a shaven head studying some coloured stones, his face the very definition of contemplation. Behind the bar a pretty serving wench is cleaning the pumps. Will you sit with the robed man (turn to 2), approach the bar and chat with the serving wench (turn to 14) or will you just take a seat and wait for Vortigen (turn to 26)?



12

As you are racing along, a man in dark robes slides out of a nearby alleyway and draws a cruel looking curved sword.

"Branno does not have time for those who disobey his orders", he snickers and then in one fluid motion he brings his sword to bear on you. You must fight this assassin.

ASSASSIN Skill: 11 Stamina: 9

If you win, turn to 9.

13

The guards spot you and give a low snicker. They stride confidently towards you, their demonic helmets especially frightening at nighttime. They raise their spears and you are uncertain whether they mean to attack or not. The captain talks:

"Well, look who we have here. Do you know you've got quite a heavy bounty on your head after you robbed that emissary come to see Lord Azzur? However, the lads and I are in no hurry to fight one such as yourself. Give us three gold pieces each and we'll forget we saw you." If you are willing to give the contemptible guards nine gold pieces, turn to 39. If you do not have that much gold or you will not part with it, you must refuse. Turn to 19.

14

When you are up close to the barmaid you realize with horror who she is. It is Gwynn, whom your brother left at the altar two years ago to join up with Captain Bloodaxe's pirate crew (a course of action that came to a sticky end for your brother). She has obviously recognized you and from the rather angry glare she gives you she has not forgiven your family for her disgrace.

"I was hoping I wouldn't see any you ever again", she snarls, " but obviously them red-garbed southerners that were asking where you was didn't manage to kill you."

She refuses to serve you and will not tell you anything more of these southerners, so you take a seat feeling her malevolent glare on you the whole time. You sure hope Vortigen gets here fast! Turn to 44.

15

You run as fast as you can to the Red Lantern hoping that Vortigen is still waiting for you. You are almost there when you hear a soft sound coming from one of the upper floor windows of the tavern. A crossbow bolt flies into your chest and buries itself deeply in your heart. You give one shallow gasp and then fall to your knees never to know who killed you or why.

16

You believe you are just about to get clear of their sights when you stumble on a loose cobblestone. The guards look up and, seeing you trying to escape their attentions, reach for their crossbows. You try to dive into the safety of the sea, but the guards are good shots and soon three crossbow bolts have lodged themselves in your body (lose 1 Skill point and 6 Stamina points). Pretending the wounds were fatal you let yourself fall into sea and then hurriedly swim away while the guards investigate whether you really are dead. Eventually you reach a part of the harbour far enough away from the guards and pull yourself out. It would be far too dangerous to attempt an assassination of Abdul the

Butcher now so you make your way to Gallows Street with all haste eager to keep your appointment with Vortigen. Turn to 11.

17

With your assistance the man is soon beaten into a bloody mess, his once sumptuous robes now drenched in crimson fluid. The muggers waste no time in looting the body and share out his gold. The leader hands you two gold pieces muttering his appreciation. However, you can see that he and his cronies are getting a much bigger share of the profits. Guessing what you are thinking the leader snarls angrily: "Your help while appreciated was uncalled for and unneeded. You do not deserve any more than these two gold pieces and be thankful we are allowing you them." If you wish to attack the muggers in order to get all the gold, turn to 41. If you would rather take the two gold pieces and bid the muggers farewell, you soon reach Gallows Street and the Red Lantern Tavern. Turn to 11.

18

You pull yourself on to the wharf to find two red-garbed warriors standing over you. Judging by their dark appearance and their scimitars, a weapon unusual for Western Allansia, you surmise that they are from Southern Allansia, though what they would be doing in the City of Thieves is anybody's guess. One of them nods at the other and they draw their scimitars. Whatever their purpose for being here your death seems to be a part of it. You must fight them both at once.

FIRST RED GARBED SOUTHERNER Skill :8 Stamina: 7

SECOND RED GARBED SOUTHERNER Skill:9 Stamina: 6

If you slay this odd pair, turn to 25.

19

Annoyed at your refusal to comply, the guards ready their spears and advance at you. You must fight all three of them together.

FIRST GUARD Skill: 7 Stamina: 6

SECOND GUARD Skill: 6 Stamina: 8

THIRD GUARD Skill: 6 Stamina: 7

If you defeat the three guards, turn to 29.

20

You land successfully on the deck and although there is a lookout on the far side of the ship, he does not hear you. Stealthily you creep down the nearby stairs to the cabins. You ignore the worn doors below decks which doubtless contain naught but drunken pirates and concentrate on a gilded door in the starboard side of the ship. Opening it softly you see your quarry. Abdul the butcher lies sleeping softly. You draw your knife and quickly slit his throat from ear to ear; he never even has the chance to scream. Snatching his golden amulet as proof of the deed you quietly return to the deck and leap into the water and swim for the dockside. Turn to 18.

21

Branno is overjoyed to see you return with the Golden amulet and embraces you warmly.

"You have restored honour to my family and shall be rewarded richly", he says, presenting you with fifty gold pieces. You take the money and thank Branno, but explain to him that you must be going. He quite understands and does not tarry you a moment longer. You set off to the Red Lantern, pleased to have the money, but with the knowledge that you will probably be late for your meeting. Turn to 15.

22

He snatches the two gold pieces, bites them to ascertain that they are genuine, and with a smile of satisfaction, imparts his information:

"Captain Ahab, the leviathan hunter, and all his crew have been taken prisoner by Lord Azzur's guards. It seems Ahab made a rather ribald joke about his lordship's mother in front of someone he shouldn't have been in front of, y'know what I mean?" You nod understandingly. The amount of spies Lord Azzur employs is phenomenal; perhaps Old Jod himself has worked for his lordship in the past.

"Anyway", continues Jod, "this means his ship, the Fat Crab has been abandoned, meaning anyone can get inside to get at the captain's riches." With this, Jod gives a wink and waddles down the street, no doubt to spend his money at the nearest public house. You are somewhat disappointed in this information, you doubt it will be much use to you right now, but information is still valuable in a place like Port Blacksand where there are many lowlifes trying to make a quick gold piece out of another's misfortune. However, now is not the time to dwell on such things. You must report the outcome of your mission to Branno, before he gets impatient. Turn to 42.

23

The ship appears to be completely deserted; perhaps Ahab and his crew have had a run-in with the city guards? You care little though as it suits your purposes just fine. You should be able to jump onto the Halvedar's deck without too much trouble. You take a run-up and prepare to leap. Test your Luck. If you are Lucky, turn to 20. If you are Unlucky, turn to 40.

24

It is no good. Your mule just cannot keep up with Vortigen's superior mount and you watch glumly as Vortigen rides off into the countryside, taking all your hopes of finding the phoenix and immortality with him.

25

A quick rummage through the Southerners' belongings yields only a sling and three bullets which you may take if you wish and a severed human finger which you throw away in disgust. More interesting however, is the symbol each man has tattooed on his left shoulder: a drawing of a phoenix feather! Perhaps these men are also interested in finding the phoenix and were trying to kill you in order to get their hands on the feather. However, there is little time for contemplation now. If you were successful in killing Abdul you may go report to Branno. He said that this was unnecessary and in doing so you might miss your appointment, but you are likely to be richly rewarded for your accomplishment tonight. If you wish to see Branno, go to 21, if you would rather make straight for the Red Lantern, turn to 11. If you have not killed Abdul, then you would be

wise to steer clear of Branno and you should make your way to the Red Lantern post haste, turn to 11.

26

You can hear a large amount of commotion coming from up the street; unusual for this time of night when respectable people are in their beds and unrespectable people are trying their best to keep quiet. Gazing up the street you see why. A large crowd is forming around two combatants, a Man Orc and a large street thug, who are doing their best to kick seven bells out of each other. A dwarf, small even by his race's diminutive standards, is asking for people to place bets. You go up to him and inquire about the details.

"Quite simple my friend. Bet up to five gold pieces. Your boy wins, you double your stake, if not I keep your money." Sounds simple enough. If you wish to bet, decide how much money you wish to wager and whether you want to back the Man Orc or the street thug and then turn to 7. If you would rather not waste time here you may continue on to the tavern, turn to 32.

27

The bullet smashes into the side of Vortigen's head and sends him flying off his horse. Riding up to your sprawled adversary you draw your sword aiming to kill the man you thought was your friend and cohort. Disembarking from your mount you give Vortigen an evil smile as you prepare to deal the deathblow. His face the very image of fear Vortigen thinks of his one chance he has of getting out of this alive. He throws his belt pouch at your face and using this distraction runs off into the urban maze of Port Blacksand. You are not over disappointed though as you have a feeling that you know what is inside the belt pouch. Turn to 50.

28

You know you have only one chance to hit him with your sling, after that he will be too far out of range. Letting go of your mules stirrups you place a bullet in the sling and swing it round your head letting go of the sling strap at what you hope is the precise moment. Test your Skill. If you succeed, turn to 27. If you fail your bullet misses, turn to 24.

29

A rather hasty rummage through the guards' pockets reveals four gold pieces. Pocketing this meagre treasure, you leave the corpses before anyone sees you. Turn to 49.

30

You drink the ale and it tastes good, very good. Jakina starts conversing with you about her latest exploits, but you just cannot pay attention to what she's saying. In fact your whole mind feels clouded. You lie back in the seat and look around, but all the shapes seem indistinct. In fact you feel like you can barely turn your head anymore. Your eyelids become droopy and you come to the slow realization that you have been poisoned, but at least you will die incredibly comfortably.

31

You reach the home of Vortigen's brother Dolgern and with an angry kick you break his door down, both your sword and your knife drawn. Dolgern was obviously sitting in his armchair having a quiet drink when you entered, as he seems to have spilt the contents of his mug all over himself at your rather undignified entrance. Seeing that you mean business he grabs a nearby wooden stool and prepares to defend himself with it.

DOLGERN Skill: 8 Stamina: 8

After two attack rounds the stool breaks under the force of your strokes and Dolgern collapses into a gibbering wreck.

"It's no good. I won't talk", he bleats, "Vortigen will kill me if I talk."

"I'll do a lot worse", you sneer and with that you grab his nose and with one clean swipe of your knife you cut off its tip.

"Now unless you want anything else cut off you'd best start talking", you shout.

Whimpering more than ever now Dolgern reveals that Vortigen has arranged to meet Sylees at the city gates under the pretext of buying the feather from him. He plans to kill him and take the feather. You need to hear no more. You run outside, grab Dolgern's mule which he has tethered by the side of his small home and set off at full gallop for the city gates. Turn to 34.

32

Leaving the noisy crowd behind you turn east into Gallows Street and eventually come to the Red Lantern Tavern. Turn to 11.

33

Zalgros beckons you along, and you cannot help but notice that he is shaking slightly. Whether this is due to excitement, agitation or plain nerves from his ordeal is unclear, but you decide to keep an eye on him in case he does anything unpredictable. His house is not far from when you saved him and by the time you approach the front door his shaking has increased tenfold. He hurriedly unlocks the door and beckons you to enter. You put your foot in the doorway...and suddenly cannot move it! In fact your whole body seems to be frozen. With a demented grin on his face Zalgros rubs his long hands together in glee.

"Now you shall receive your gift." he chuckles, "You shall live as part of the greatest invention ever: a golem of unequalled power. Your brain is perfect to complete my golem."

He pulls forth a long knife and begins to sever into your head. There is nothing you can do to stop the demented scientist from extracting your brain for his sick experiments. Your adventure ends here.

34

You round the corner to see Vortigen stabbing a man, who you assume is Sylees through the chest. Grabbing something from the dead man's body, Vortigen mounts his black

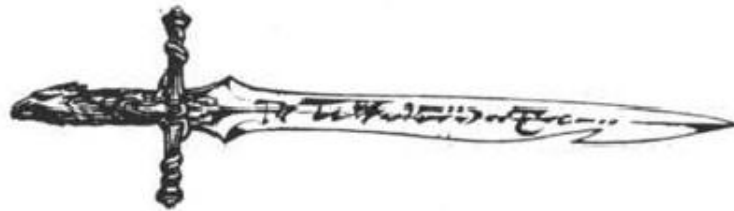
stallion and heads towards the gates. You know you must catch him now if you hope to lay your hands on the feathers. Urging your mule into a gallop you give chase, but it is clear that you stand little chance of catching him. Do you have a sling? If so, turn to 28, if not, turn to 24.

35

You manage to creep to the back of the warehouse and give a sigh of relief as the guards walk past your hiding-place. Once you can no longer hear their footsteps you head back towards the ships to complete your task. Turn to 49.

36

"Amazing!" says the monk. "As your reward you may have either money equalling that of your stake or," he adds with a dramatic flourish of his robes that reveals a previously hidden felt box with sequined question marks in it, "whatever is in this box." if you wish to take the box, add however many gold pieces you staked to your amount of treasure, and take your leave of the monk (turn to 44). If however, you are unable to resist the temptation of the mystery box, turn to 38.



37

You offer the man your hand and help him to his feet. After dusting off his clothes he gives you a smile and thanks you profusely.

"I thought that was the end of me there, a real shame it would be for me to die now when I'm so close to a breakthrough. But I am being impolite. My name is Zalgros and I am a researcher...of sorts. If you would like to accompany back to my home I can reward you with a great gift for saving my life."

There is a somewhat odd glint in his eye as he says this. If you wish to go with him to his house, turn to 33. If you would rather decline, Zalgros does not insist and you make your way to the Red Lantern. Turn to 11.

38

You open the box hurriedly, clumsy from anticipation. What could be inside? A magic ring? An enchanted talisman? Perhaps, dare you hope, one of the Phoenix feathers? When you finally open it up you peer in eagerly to see...nothing? Thinking that the item inside must be invisible you reach in, but there is indeed nothing inside whatsoever! Lose 1 Luck Point. You glare angrily at the monk, but he merely smiles disarmingly at you.

"Do not be disappointed friend, for you have received the best gift of all. In receiving nothing, you will cherish what you do have so much more."
Somehow you fail to see it his way and throwing the box away in disgust you move to another table, vowing never to gamble with a monk ever again. Turn to 44.

39

Pocketing you money, the guards lower their spears and head off to complete their rounds. "Behave now", laughs the captain as he and his unscrupulous companions disappear from sight. Relieved to be rid of the bothersome guards you head towards the ships and your quarry. Turn to 49.

40

Unfortunately, you slip on a wet patch on the deck just as you are about to make your bold leap. You fall head over heels and fall into the water with an almighty splash. Knowing that this will reveal your presence to all aboard the ship you swim quickly to the dockside knowing that Branno will not be pleased with this failure. Turn to 18.

41

The thieves quickly rip out their cudgels again. They will not give up their newly acquired wealth without a fight.

FIRST MUGGER Skill: 7 Stamina: 7

SECOND MUGGER Skill: 5 Stamina: 4

THIRD MUGGER Skill: 8 Stamina: 6

If you win, turn to 6.

42

You stride into Branno's richly decorated audience chamber. You allow yourself a grin as you notice no-one has informed Branno that "less is more" (understandably given his volcanic temper) as the room is so filled with luxurious curtains, chairs and tapestries that the overall effect is rather tasteless. Branno sits upon his (rather tacky) gold throne and smiles as he sees you enter. He is a tall man with a receding hairline and a pencil-thin moustache. Despite being quite old, he has lost none of the fire he had from the days when he was a simple mugger.

"So you have returned then", he says in his whispery voice, "Vincenzo will think twice before trying to steal from me again. Now I have another task for you." You protest that you have important plans of your own, but he waves away your arguments with an angry gesture of his hands.

"I care nothing of your plans. You are my tool and I will use you when I want. I wish you to go to the harbour. There is a ship from Tak there: The Halvedar, captained by one Abdul the Butcher, apparently quite infamous in Khul, but that matters not. I want him dead. He dared to make insulting gestures to my daughter." You shudder at this. You know how over-protective Branno is of his only daughter. Branno continues:

"Kill him and get his golden amulet as proof of the deed. But I am not without a heart. Do this task for me and you can carry out your business without reporting to me first.

However, do not expect a reward unless you come to me. Now this audience is at an end." You bow to the crime-lord and leave the hideout. Still considering your options you leave The Noose and cross over the bridge to the north side of town. Now you must make your decision. It is only 10 o' clock. So you may have time to carry out Branno's mission and still keep your appointment. If you wish to do this then head west down Harbour Street (turn to 10). If you would rather not risk missing your appointment with Vortigen you may head directly for the Red Lantern Tavern (although this will likely incur Branno's wrath). There are two ways to get there. You may head north up Garden Street (turn to 26) or east through Candle Street (turn to 4).

43

You ignore the man's cries for help and the muggers, intent on finishing him off, allow you to pass. The man's death screams bother you little as living in Port Blacksand desensitises you to such acts of violence. Eventually you reach Gallows Street and the Red Lantern Tavern. Turn to 11.

44

Eventually the door opens, but it is not Vortigen who enters, but a woman with long blonde hair dressed in leather armour and carrying a heavy crossbow on her back. You recognize her as Jakina, a bounty hunter who Branno occasionally employs, but you've never particularly liked her. On seeing you she seems somewhat alarmed, but then gives a glimmering smile and offers to buy you a drink. If you accept her hospitality, turn to 30. If you refuse, turn to 8.

45

You crouch low and tiptoe quietly towards some nearby warehouse which would offer good cover. Test your Luck. If you are lucky, turn to 35. If you are unlucky, turn to 16.

46

Jakina accepts the bribe and pockets the money, sheathing her sword afterwards. "I was sent by Vortigen to kill you", she says. You start at this: Vortigen has betrayed you!
"Where is he now?" you demand.
"I know not," she replies, "but if anyone knows it will be his fool of a brother. You know as well as I do that Vortigen does little without first informing him."
You know this is good counsel and without a second glance at Jakina, who is busy picking at her nails with a dagger, you stride out of The Red Lantern to head for the Noose and the home of Vortigen's slow-witted sibling. Turn to 3.

47

With your last blow you sent Jakina's sword from her hands and bring the point of your own sword to her throat, bringing a thin trickle of blood from it as you do so. Jakina gets on her knees and begs you to show mercy.
"I was sent by Vortigen to kill you", she whines. You start at this: Vortigen has betrayed you!

"Where is he now?" you demand.

"I know not," she replies, "but if anyone knows it will be his fool of a brother. You know as well as I do that Vortigen does little without first informing him."

You know this is good counsel and without a second glance at Jakina, who is busy getting a drink from the bar to steady her understandably shaken nerves, you stride out of The Red Lantern to head for the Noose and the home of Vortigen's slow-witted sibling. Turn to 3.

48

The muggers, outraged at your interference, lift their cudgels and try to batter you into subjugation. Fight all three of them together.

FIRST MUGGER Skill: 7 Stamina: 7

SECOND MUGGER Skill: 5 Stamina: 4

THIRD MUGGER Skill: 8 Stamina: 6.

If you win, turn to 37.

49

With the inconvenience of the guards dealt with, you return your attention to the docks. The obvious route on to the Halvedar is to climb up the rope mooring it to the dock. A possible alternative is to go onto the possibly less well guarded Fat Crab and leap from there on to the deck of the Halvedar. Both routes come with their risks and you must choose carefully. If you wish to go straight to the Halvedar, turn to 5, if you would rather gain entrance via the fat Crab, turn to 23.

50

You pull back the drawstrings of the pouch and are pleased to see two shining feathers, lying inside, their fiery brilliance seemingly intensified now that the two of them are together. Where the other two feathers are you do not know, but you are another step closer to finding the phoenix and the immortality that comes with it.