



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



BY MARK THORNTON

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This is a Tunnels and Trolls Solitaire Adventure for use with the 7.5 edition rules (although it is easily adapted for earlier editions). Tunnels and Trolls is a game created by Ken St. Andre and published by Flying Buffalo, Inc. It is the 2nd Edition.

Rule Guidelines



You need to roll up a character for this solo in a most particular fashion because you are to play a 13 year old boy or girl. You will see this character's attributes dice laid out below. You have an additional eight attribute points to distribute as you choose. No attribute should be more than eighteen.

Now I know we often see prefaces to solos saying you can't do this and you can't do that. We all know that this is nonsensical and you can and should do whatever you like – so, if you want to be a L30 Dragon-Wizard-Lord, fine and good luck to you. You can be Gristlegrim himself if you really want! All I'm suggesting is that a character along the lines I've set out is most likely to give you the most fun in Old Man Gruber's garden. *But I might be wrong so do as you please!*

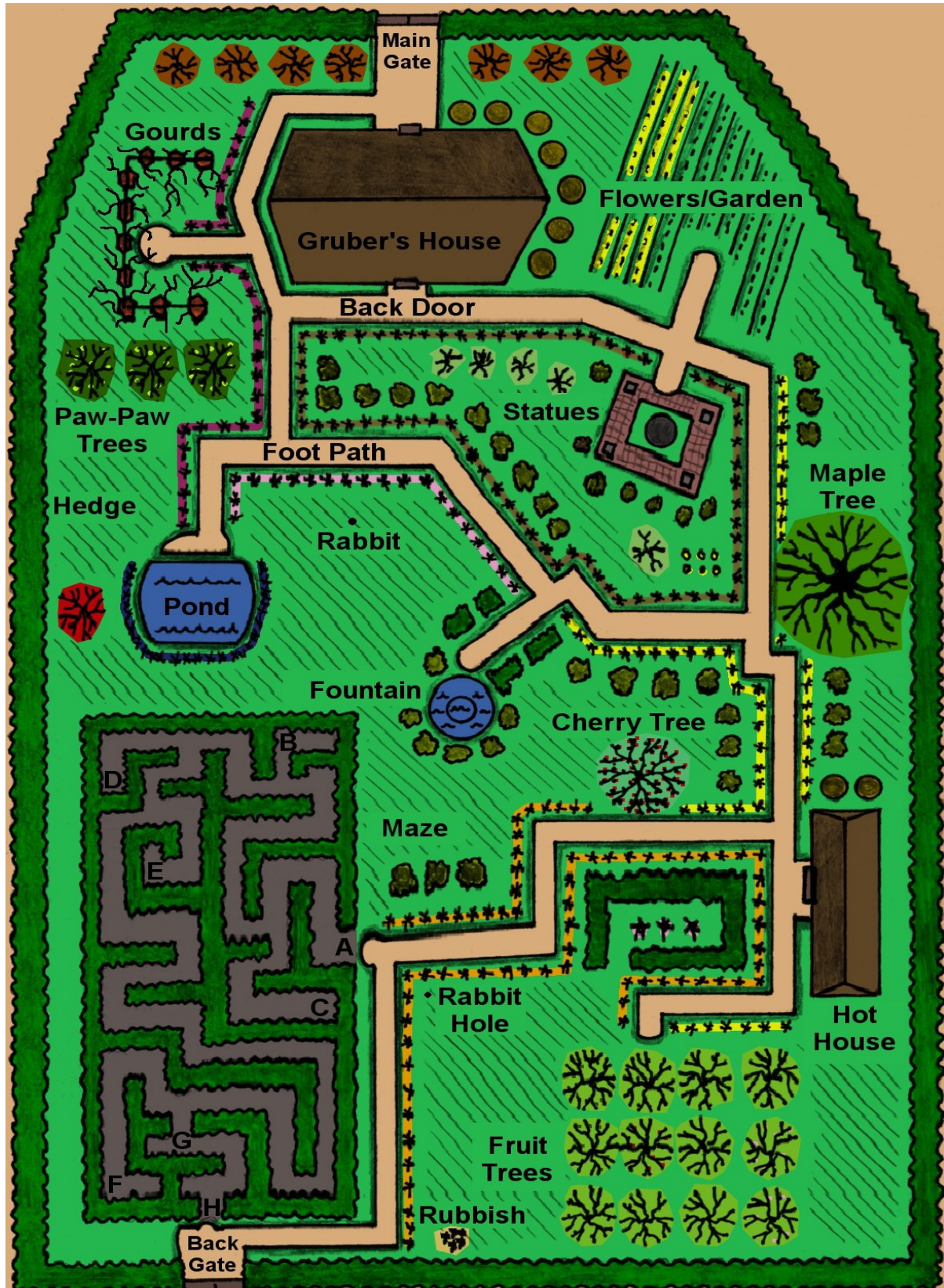
You will find it easier to get the cherries if you follow a certain sequence in the garden; the house is another matter, should you dare to venture within... There is a map of the house to go with this, the Second Edition: I hope it encourages you to enter Old Man Gruner's lair. There reason for the Second Edition is that I made too many errors in the First. If you find more errors, please do email me at mark.findlayrd@gmail.com. It is hard work being editor/play tester as well as writer and I want it to be right!

You need to roll now for your attributes. You may roll 3d6 for WIZ, LK, CHR and SPD but only 2d6 for STR, INT, CON and DEX. TARO and DARO do not apply. If you choose to be a kindred other than human, do not use modifiers. You should not be anything very different to a human in size or capabilities e.g. no flying fairies, no towering giants, no smashing ogres. No magic allowed either and you may not carry any weapons other than a 2d6 dagger nor you may wear armour other than a leather jerkin taking just three hits (you do not get warriors' bonuses for weapons or armour). Of course, no one's going to stop you being a 17th Level ogre wizard but that would call down a most potent curse...

Special thanks to Kamea Cowell for proofreading and playtesting – without this I would probably never have known a second edition was necessary (sorry to all those who suffered with the missing paragraphs of the first edition – you get a free pdf on the second).



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES





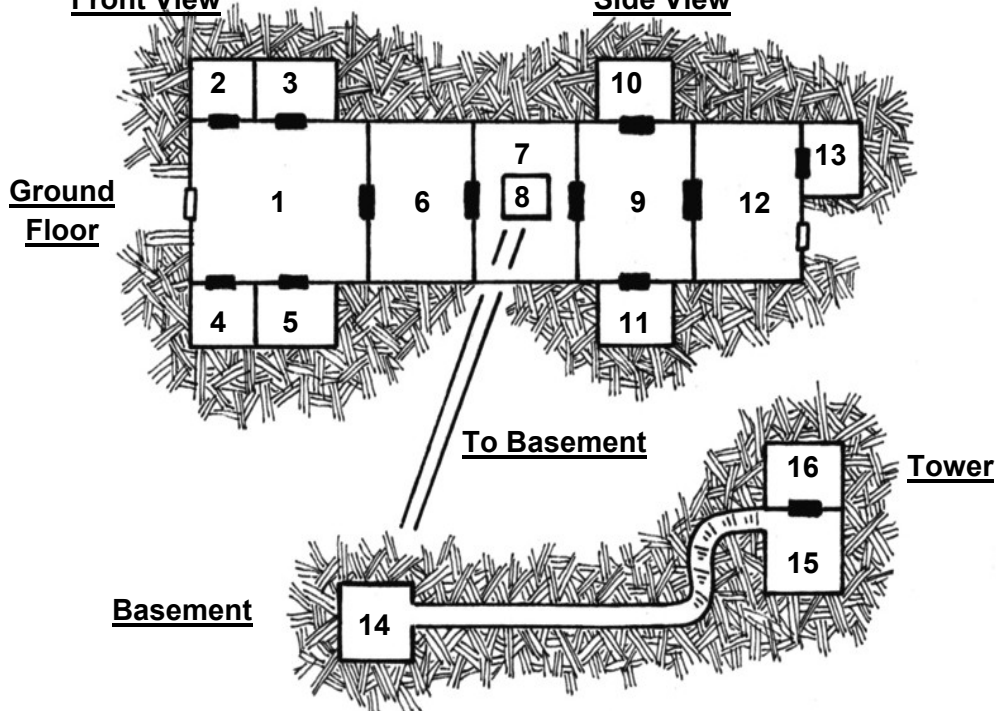
TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

Layout of Old Man Gruber's House



Front View

Side View



Map Key

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Hall (147) | 9) Dinning Room (251) |
| 2) Candles Room (273) | 10) Cold Stone (311) |
| 3) Room of Nails (288) | 11) Sauna (321) |
| 4) Rainbow Room (261) | 12) Kitchen (139) |
| 5) Map Room (271) | 13) Pantry (241) |
| 6) Library (285) | 14) Box Room (219) |
| 7) Drapery (52), (331) | 15) Shower (431) |
| 8) Serpent Rectangle (52) | 16) Tower Room (440) |

(...Who knows about the bed rooms?)

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



The Story

The other kids in the neighbourhood are scared of Old Man Gruber. Not me. I just moved here from Hicksville and I need to prove myself. It's tough being the new kid on the block but Old Man Gruber is my ticket to acceptance. Skeeter and Chip told me that Buzz got his hide whipped red raw when he climbed the fence to steal those ripe juicy cherries that hang there so tantalisingly this time of year. He was the last one to summon the courage to climb over the 6' fence that runs all around the Gruber place. The cherry tree must be on a small hillock for its fruit to be visible – who knows what else Old Man Gruber grows in there? It's wrong of him to have that tree teasing all the kids on this side of the tracks. It's like he wants someone to pluck up the nerve to make the climb...

He has a dog in there. No one's seen it but everyone's heard it. It sounds big and it sounds mean. Buzz was lucky that the old man found him before that dog did. Mr. Gruber's belt bit hard but that dog would have bitten deeper and, once its jaws had fixed on Buzz, it would have never let go. When Buzz told his dad everyone thought Old Man Gruber would be sorry for what he did to Buzz. He was only after those cherries, it wasn't like he was planning to steal his valuables or nothing. Buzz's dad went up to the front door once he'd gone through the big gate in the garden fence. He said he spoke to the old man but he never talks to Buzz or anyone else in his family about what Old Man Gruber said to him.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

Woody told me that I could get one over on Buzz if I got a bag full of those ripe cherries and brought them out to show everyone. Buzz isn't so bad but Skeeter and the twins, Chip and Skid, always try to impress him by putting other kids down and, like I said, I'm the new kid in town so I'm on the receiving end of most of their snarking right now. Woody reckons that dog probably sleeps in the day and patrols the garden at night when the old man is in bed. I don't know which one I'd rather meet if I do go over the wall. Maybe I could take a butcher's bone and throw it for the dog but I don't think that would work on Old Man Gruber. He never goes into town, everything gets delivered to him and left just inside the gate. He must have money for that. We sometimes see his hands reaching up for those big ripe cherries of his but that's about all we really ever see. He's got big, strong, hairy hands. Buzz actually met him but he was facing the other way the whole time, first running, then getting whapped.



I told Skeeter that I was going in and now I just have to. Chip and Skid don't believe me and I can see Buzz is caught in two minds. He doesn't want anyone else to do what he couldn't do but he does want someone to take those cherries from under the old man's nose. It's all round school now. Everyone wants to see if I go through with it. There's no way I can wimp out now, not if I want to ever show my face about here again. The girls are starting to take an interest in me now. Mary Jane and Gwen asked me if I'd like to share a soda with them at Ike's place once I get those juicy red jewels. At least they think I might actually do it and get out alive. Cindy Lou and Betty May keep calling me Pinocchio and Wilma handed me a yellow ribbon to fix on the back of my jacket.



So now I've got to do it. I'm set up as best I can be. Lightweight shoes and hard wearing jeans to give me some protection, a thick jacket to do the same. A cotton bag for those cherries and a pocket knife just in case that I really hope I won't need. Woody reckoned the old man might take a nap in the afternoon so best to go then, when the dog should still be asleep. I would have gone at night but I'm glad I'll be able to see what's coming at me. Nothing I hope and at least this way it won't be my imagination spooking me. Mary Jane gave me her handkerchief to take. It didn't want to ask her why she did that. I hope she doesn't think I'll be needing a bandage.

Like I said, I'm not scared just what you might call apprehensive.

Begin The Quest For Old Man Gruber's Cherries Here

1

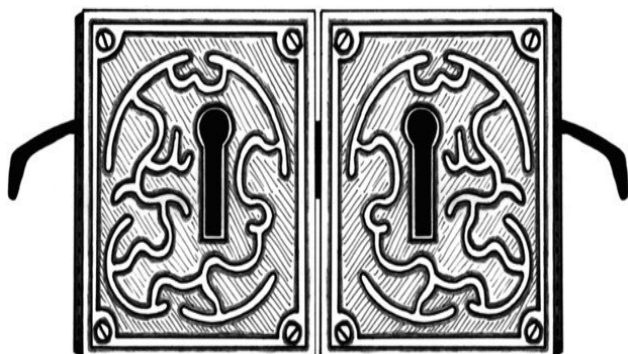
You are standing by the main gate to Old Man Gruber's house and garden. There is no back way in as far as you or anyone else of your acquaintance knows. Do you want to pick the lock, try to shin up over the wall or search for some secret means of ingress? As you think of what might be the best course of action, you must make a L1-SR vs. the average of your LK and CHR and **go to 2**.

2

As you ponder the best way to proceed, Buzz slinks up to you, trying not to be seen. If you made the SR, he warns you about what to expect – **you may take a look at 7** to find out things that just might save your life. If you fail, he just wishes you luck and promises to tell your father if you haven't been seen by dinner time. Now **go to 3**.

3

If you want to search for another way in **go to 5**; if you want to climb over the wall **go to 6**; if you want to have a crack at the lock **go to 9**. NB – if you fail at 5,6 or 9 you may try again but you only get APs the first time and when you succeed. **[If you fail at 5, 6 and 9, you may try again but only take the APs for your first attempt plus any successful roll.]**



4

The strange accessory with the hook at the end does the trick. You hear the lock click. With tremulous fingers you turn the door knob and enter the forbidden garden. **Go to 10**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

5

You search the whole perimeter wall painstakingly. It seems of uniform construction but first appearances can deceive. Make a L1-SR vs. INT. If you make it **go to 8** but if you fail you must **return to 3** and take another option.



6

The wall is not easy to climb. It was designed to keep people out and has done that job resolutely for years. Most people strong enough to scale it would cause the top section to break off as it is crumbling there, perhaps deliberately, but you are light enough to avoid that mishap. Make a L1-SR vs. STR. If you succeed you can shin over the wall and **go to 10**; if you fail, the task is beyond you – **return to 3** and choose another option.

7

Buzz tells you that he saw the old man take a whistle from somewhere in the hedge maze and he heard its shrill blast put that mean old hound back to sleep. He reckons that's what you need to get the cherries. Buzz tells you he made the mistake of going near that maple tree and he's sure it tried to pulp him with its branches and hit him with the swing. Now **go to 3**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

8

Your fingers find a string hanging on a small nail at the back of the wall on the side far away from the gate. Attached to the string is a key. It just might fit the lock to the gate. When you try, it does! Breathing deeply, you enter the garden... **Go to 10.**

9

Like most boys, you carry a knife with lots of gadgets that very seldom come in useful. Perhaps one will work wonders for you now. Make a L1-SR vs. DEX. If you make it **go to 4** but if you fail **go back to 3** and choose another option.

10

Now you are into the garden you can take a moment to look about you. The house looms menacingly over to your left, some 600' away. It is a two story building of wood with a shingle roof. A single tower affords the occupant a commanding view in all directions. To your right, on a small knoll, stands the magnificent cherry tree. It is about 500' away from you and chained to the trunk is a large Rottweiler. How long its chain is may well determine your immediate fate. For now, the dog is resting and appears not to have heard you. As you cast your eyes over the rest of Old Man Gruber's garden, you see a large maple tree with a child's swing hanging from one sturdy branch, a flower garden in full bloom swarming with butterflies, a vegetable patch, a fish pond, a hothouse, an area of tall shrubs forming a hedge, apple trees, pear trees and an ornamental fountain. There are also paw-paws as well as gourds hanging from stems, with small birds busily engaged in reducing the insect population. There is a tiled area with a roof of vines housing a statue of a warrior in each corner. It is a spectacular and well laid out garden and every tree, every plant is laden with fruit and flowers, in robust good health. Old Man Gruber must have green fingers. The only apparent blemishes are the tell-tale signs that a rabbit has recently been on the lawns. At least, it could be a rabbit although it would have to be rather large.

Now you have taken stock of your surrounds you must decide what you will do. Here are your options:

- If you want to sneak up to the cherry tree **go to A**
- If you want to approach the flower garden **go to B**
- If you want to move cautiously to the house **go to C**
- If you want to go to one of the other fruit trees **go to D**
- If you want to examine the gourds **go to E**
- If you want to approach the statues **go to F**
- If you want to inspect the fishpond **go to G**
- If you want to move towards the fountain **go to H**
- If you want to seek the cover of the tall shrubs **go to I**
- If you want to go to the maple tree and the swing **go to J**





TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

- If you want to attempt to enter the hothouse go to K
- If you want to look more closely at the rabbit droppings go to L
- If you want to leave the garden the way you came in, either over the wall or through the door go to ZZ.

11

Stellar stuff! You creep forward with true cunning, panther-guile ensuring your anonymity. Luck goes your way too – maybe Old Man Gruber ate a dodgy curry last night or perhaps he is scaring himself in the mirror. You don't even have to use one of the main doors as you find a trap door leading to the cellars – and the bolt doesn't look rusty. If you want to slip back the bolt and descend go to 109, otherwise go to 147 if you enter by the front door or 139 if the back seems a better bet.

12

Despite your struggles this is not a trap that will permit escape. The Acme company are very proud of their workmanship and 100% success record. After a short but uncomfortable wait bent double your fate shifts. Go to 96.

13

You must have the luck of the Irish! You can leave your sack, brimful of luscious fruits, hidden behind a bush near where you came in and then go back to 10. Take 50 APs for being bold, quick and lucky – a winning combination!

14

There is a secret spot here in the flower garden where Old Man Gruber hides special items he acquires from time to time in his trades with the 'other side', especially when he gets a particularly good deal and fears the buy-back clause will be invoked (the invoker has to physically retrieve the item concerned). You have certainly found something but what?

Roll 1d6 and find out if it pleases you or not:

1 – You unearth a small fire opal in a glass box along with a message that says 'Swallow Me'. If you want to do as the instruction says go to 201; if you prefer not to then go to 10 – you may keep the fire opal and if you get out of here you will be able to sell it for 1d6 x 50 GPs

2 – You uncover a brown paper bag with bitter smelling herbs inside. You can try to eat them or keep them for resale later on – either way, decide and go to 203 if you are aiming to consume them and to 211 if you want to sell them.





TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

- 3 – You dig up a small crystal bottle with what appears to be a djinn inside – **go to 205** if you want to uncork the bottle or **to 213** if you prefer to take it to a wizard later on.
- 4 – You find an old toothbrush – **go to 207** if you want to scrub your teeth with it or **back to 10** if you throw it away.
- 5 – You root up a weed that has little sparkly bits of metal attached to its roots – if you want to detach them **go to 209** or **back to 10** if you don't bother.
- 6 – You excavate a piece of mosaic pottery; this shard has a green pattern on it along with a strange rune – if you want to take the fragment and pocket it **go to 199** or **back to 10** if you throw it away and decide your next step in this perilous project.

15

Fortune favours the bold! Although your stealth is the equivalent of that of an inebriated octogenarian who has broken his zimmer-frame, your lucky star shines bright. The flowerpot you upended goes unnoticed, it would seem, although as we well know things are not always as they seem... You reach the door and the handle is there right before your eyes, ready to be tried. You could go back now if you've lost your nerve as many boys would (**go back to 10** if the prospect of breaking and entering now terrifies you). Otherwise, in you go! **Go to 147** if you are entering via the front door or **to 139** if it is the back door you stand before.

16

The gourd has been touched with curse magic, curse magic more powerful than a mere boy could hope to comprehend or withstand. The sharp pangs you felt were your canines turning into fangs. Your fingernails are claws now and your toenails are destined to break even the stoutest of dwarven nail clippers. You are really quite hairy too. A werewolf? No, not that. A were-ape, more like. You do not require moonlight to be in this monstrous state nor do you need to be especially fearful of silver. Your STR and CON are tripled and your DEX gets a 50% bonus – as does your INT for you have a cunning streak now, if not before. Take 100 APs – that must have been quite some experience!



The biggest drawback of this condition is that you are anaemic. The slightest cut and you will bleed to death if you cannot staunch the flow (or the trickle) within the hour. A Poor Baby would do it or a healing potion; otherwise it takes a L1-SR vs. the average of your WIZ, LK and CHR which you may only try once every hour... Life may never be the same again. You may go for another gourd (**go to E**) or **return from whence you came to 10**.

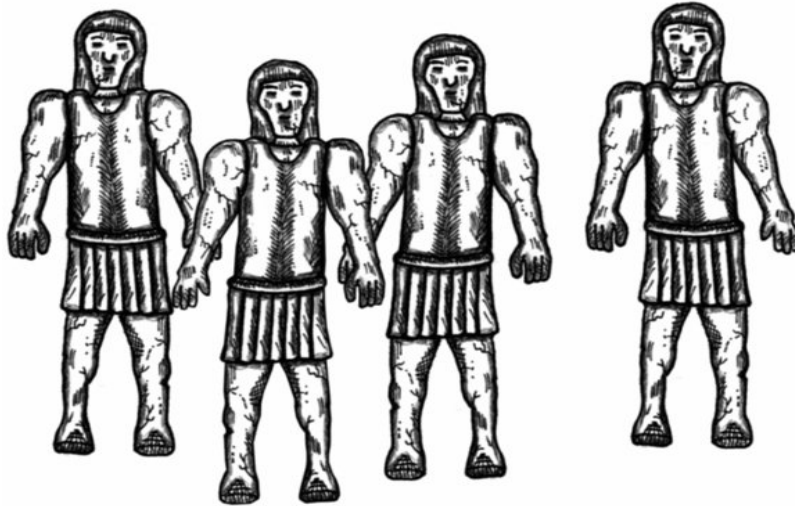
17

You hear footsteps, heavy, ponderous footsteps, as you concentrate on filling your sack. Looks like you did not go unnoticed! Do you want to turn to see what is homing in on you (**go to 104**) or run as fast as you can before you really get into strife (**go to 114**)?



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

You don't need a treasure detector – you're a natural. The sunlight glints dully on something buried in the earth. Do you want to fumble about to retrieve it (**go to 143**) or leave well alone (**go back to 10**)?



18

The four statues come lumbering slowly towards you. They look immensely strong but seem very slow and ponderous. Do you want to bait them by dodging in and out of them (**go to 64**), go for the mould now (**go to 68**) or get out of harm's way (**go to 10**)?

19

Good sneaking – you might make a good spy (if it wasn't for your luck or lack of it!). You could run for it (you can **go back to 10** if you make a L1-SR vs. SPD – if not read on) or you can either accept the sour smelling rag that a figure still hidden from your view is seeking to clamp over your nose and mouth (**go to 77**) or you can fight to the last, determined to best your unknown adversary (**go to 56**).

20

This gourd is primed to release a stinking cloud of smog. You are too close to get away without breathing it in unless you can make a L2-SR vs. CON. If you do, you can **stagger back to 10**; if you don't, you are soon rendered helpless and not long after that you are found... (**go to 96**).

21

So you got away with it. Sneaking the old man's precious produce and he didn't even notice. Huzzah! Take 50 APs. But what did you select from all the gems growing here? If you failed the combination INT/LK SR your beady eyes settle on the old man's ripe, round plums and you nab them; if you succeeded in that roll, instead you opt for the large, succulent paw-paws on offer here in this garden of delights and devils. Either fruit is going to bring you a nice handful of coin at market and you can leave them hidden behind a bush near where you came into the garden. But eating one now is all but irresistible!



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

If you are made of stronger stuff and resist the temptation you can sneak **back to 10**; if you want to tickle your tastebuds **go to 153**.

22

Scream you certainly can but what good might it possibly do you, here in Old Man Gruber's garden? The nearest statue scoops you up, your hand and the mould coming up together, causing you 1d6 damage to CON in the process. It holds you securely in its massively strong arms and carries you, still screaming quite possibly, off in the direction of the house. **Go to 63**.

23

It would seem that you have a propensity for crossing the path of black cats, walking under ladders and shattering mirrors; the crowning glory is that your attempt at avoiding detection might be better executed by an elephant on stilts walking through a packed orchestra pit. You feel someone or something tap you on the shoulder and then a damp cloth, smelling strongly of chemicals, pressed over your breathing apparatus. If you want to struggle and scream, kicking out with all your vitality, **go to 56**; if you submit to these ministrations and play possum **go to 77**.

24

What could be inside? Jewels...a magic ring to make you a king... a genie that will grant you three wishes? Well, it all depends... it's not always the same. These gourds don't grow on trees, you know!

Roll 1d6 to discover its secret:

1 and 2: not good – you release a fire elemental that had been prevented from burning people by Old Man Gruber not out of kindness but because he was saving him up for a visit to the local orphanage (allegedly); the elemental is eager to make up for lost time – you must make L2-SRs vs. CON and SPD or you will be incinerated (if you do escape premature cremation you may **return to 10** or try for another gourd - **go to E** - and take 100 APs either way).



3 and 4: you set free a jumping jack firework; it sputters into life and goes whizzing off round the garden – not so great for someone not wishing to draw attention to himself; make a L2-SR vs. LK: if you succeed you get away with it and may **go to E** to investigate another gourd or **back to 10**; if you flub it you do indeed make a spectacle of yourself and four large stone warriors bear down on you – you are trapped like a fish in a barrel and they slap you about a little to subdue you (**go to 96**).

5 and 6: you find a ring growing inside the gourd; it looks just right for your middle finger; if you want to remove it and slip it on **go to 122** and then return here; if you decide to let sleeping rings lie, read on.

Now you know. They do say that a little knowledge can be dangerous. They might be right! You can **go back to your garden origin point at 10** or try for another gourd (**go to E**).



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



25

Did you make that combination SR? If you did, you judged well and picked Old Man Gruber's precious paw-paws. They're going to fetch a pretty penny in the market – you'll be sucking gobstoppers for months to come! They look so ripe and juicy: they'll be plenty of coin even if you give in to the urge to eat one now... Mmmm! Delicious!

If you failed the INT/LK-SR you still do pretty good – you grab for the old man's plums and they're big and firm with the promise of rich, ripe fruitiness. Ah but either way you buffed the LK roll which means you were spotted... Yikes! **Go to 99.**

26

Radical move, dude! Take 100 APs for desperation and award yourself a +1 talent for field surgery based on DEX. The nearest statue grabs you before you can come near to severing your arm – not at all easy a task.

Make a L1-SR vs. LK. If you fail, you bleed to death very quickly. If you make it, you did not do that much damage (take 2 damage to CON) – the statue lumbers off to the house with you helpless in its mighty arms. **Go to 63.**

27

The jaws snap shut an inch from your feeble flesh. You feel the dog's breath steam cleaning your face and your eyeballs bulge alarmingly. But the chain holds – for now. Take 50 APs for bravado. Now you know how long the chain is you have power, for that precious commodity stems from knowledge. **Return to 10** and decide what to do now.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



28

You watch as the weird gourd flies from your hand, describing a lazy arc until it smashes into the ground, exploding as it hits. Gems cascade out, littering the lawn so that it shines in jewel-adorned glory. Do you want to rush forward to scoop up these riches (**go to 133**) or do you want to leave such treasures to more desperate entrepreneurs and either choose another gourd to examine (**go to E**) or leave this strange nursery (**go back to 10**)?

29

As soon as you push the two buttons, the mould shifts. The stone flows upwards and over your hand, trapping it in the rock. As you pull and realise your hand will not be tugged free, your eyes dart feverishly towards the statues, from which a grating sound now comes. These guardians of the garden are moving, life once more flowing through their marble veins! You can scream (**go to 22**) or you can attempt to hack your own arm off with your knife (**go to 26**) or you can meekly accept your fate (**go to 30**).



30

The nearest statue picks you up like a toy and clasps you tight in its unrelenting grip, marching off to the old man's house. So much for going quietly! **Go to 63.**

31

Where will you hide? The most obvious place is in the large mound of compost no more than 20' away to your right – you probably could burrow in and it doesn't smell too bad from this distance... Otherwise you will have to consider the flower garden or the hothouse but they would mean more time exposed to the searching eyes of whoever is responsible for those heavy footsteps. If you favour the compost **go to 71**, if you want to go for the hothouse or the flower garden **go to 75.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

32

What secret does this gourd conceal? Ah ha, all is about to be revealed! Your eyes go all piggy as you see the gems – diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires. The image of you on a throne may not be too far from your thoughts. That weird sensation is still gnawing and nagging away at you though... Will you ignore it and pocket the gems or sadly conclude it was cherries you came for and scrumping cherries is one thing but half-inching the old man's jewels is quite another? If you take the money and run go to 151; if you leave well alone go to 158.

33

Hoping for the best but possibly fearing worst, you push the button and... You hear the sound of something solid hitting the ground behind you. When you turn to look, you see that the gloves have fallen from the hands of one of the statues. You may either take the gloves and leave (go to 10), push the other button (go to 62) or collect the gloves and then go back to push the other button (go to 66).



34

This old maple tree is home to an evil spirit. It is not trapped here: it likes being here in this garden and has seen many things that have excited its wicked heart over the many year's of its life, having had a hand (or a branch) in many of the nastier incidents. If you failed that SR go to 38; if you made it go to 50.

35

You're not close enough to the gate so it's got to be over the wall. You spot a section covered with ivy – will it be strong enough? You need to be strong enough too! Make a L1-SR vs. both STR and LK and go to 87.

36

Poorly done, indeed. Not that you will ever doing anything poorly again. You did at least get to finger Old Man Gruber's cherries and your shade, should it possess memories of your Trollwolrd-time, will be able to weigh the

satisfaction of this fleeting success with the slightly longer agony of being ripped apart by a violence seldom experienced outside the Demon Plane.

37

As soon as you push the button, the mould shifts, the stone flowing upwards and over your hand, trapping it in the rock. As you pull and realise your hand will not be tugged free, your eyes dart feverishly towards the statues, from which a grating sound now comes.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

These guardians of the garden are moving, life once more flowing through their marble veins! You can scream (**go to 22**) or you can attempt to hack your own arm off with your knife (**go to 26**) or you can meekly accept your fate (**go to 30**).

38

A thick, roiling mist pours from the tree, smelling sickeningly of maple syrup blended unhygienically with the intestinal organs of one-week dead badgers and warthogs. This revolting stench coalesces into an apparition more plant than man. It extends a branch-like hand towards you. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your CON and CHR then decide if you will stand your ground (**go to 57**), grasp the thing coming towards you (**go to 70**) or run for your life (**go to 78**).

39

Make the best SR you can vs. the average of your STR and CON – each level you make indicates one minute of air in your lungs underwater. However, that is not likely to prove relevant as the pond is home to voracious and vicious boy-eating fish. Roll 1d6 – this is the number of d6's damage to CON you must take before you can even begin to react. Probably, you are dead. If not, a L1-SR vs. the average of your STR, DEX and SPD will get you out... out into the waiting arms of what? **Go to 96** to discover the answer to that question.

40

Lapisina is a fetching lass. Her smile is infectious and her freckles give her a look of innocence and of summer. For some, over the hundreds of years of her life, this innocence has been genuine and sustained throughout a rewarding acquaintance (she stays clear of committed relationships). For others, the guileless charm has made way for torrid torments all too quickly. If you made that hybrid SR **go to 121**. If you buffed it **go to 113**.

41

If you want to put on gloves, you will lose valuable time but that still might be worth doing. Decide quickly! Once you have done so, **go to 84**.



42

If you made the STR-SR **go to 73**. If you failed, the serpent-woman wraps her coils about you while her eyes continue to hold you hopeless and helpless. 'You sweet young thing,' she croons. 'You could almost have been my salvation but alas! It is useless trying to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Enough! I will not be cruel to a heart that is true. Your blood will sooth the ravages of time and allow me to hope for another boy, a better boy.' Her voice is hypnotic and you feel nothing as her teeth break your skin at the throat and your blood leaves your body. Ah, what might have been...

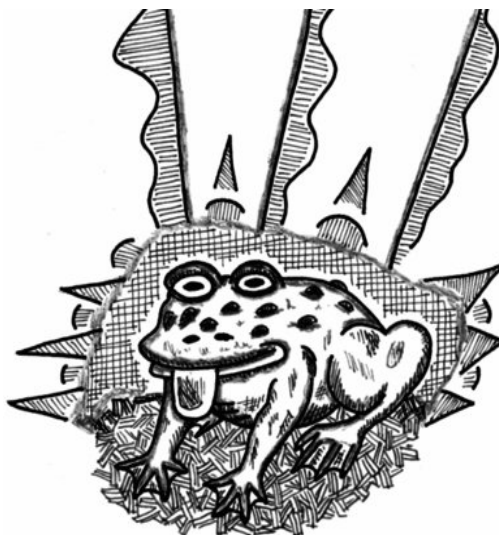
TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

43

You are forced to take a left then another right and then you follow a straight passage in the hedge maze. You can no longer hear anything but you do begin to feel queasy. By and by, you get to a junction. If you opt for the left **go to 74**; if you choose right **go to 86**.

44

You have just chucked up on Lapisina the Prophetess. Even in lamia society prophesising does not pass as good manners. Admittedly, being a stone-shifter, she can wash off very easily but she is not particularly forgiving when etiquette is breached so messily. She casts a spell on you turning you into a toad with a long, broad tongue. Now she has a cleaner in attendance. Your tongue, she thinks, will come in useful as she is bound to this fountain and has much time to while away. Not actually dead but no longer a boy, you too are bound here. Enjoy your new home!



45

When you go to the beach, do you use sunscreen? Here, you really need similar protection. Not from the sun but from the glowstones the old man uses to grow his carnivorous plants. He doesn't set them to be on all the time because that would make the plants grow too large and they would break down the hothouse and might even eat his dog! The glowstones were off when you entered. Now they come on, bathing the place in throbbing orangey-yellow light, casting eerie shadows and making the plant-monsters relax to absorb the radiation. You absorb the radiation too and you might well mutate if you haven't smeared yourself in the ointment Old Man Gruber keeps specially to allow him to work in the hothouse. It repels the plants too – it's top notch stuff. If you have applied it liberally **go to 88**, if you are not warded from the penetrating rays **go to 98**.

46

Good for you! Throwing up on powerful women is never to be recommended. Make a L1-SR vs. CON. If you fail, you are unable to resist the heaving tide that surges about in your guts (**go to 44**). If you make the SR, you have saved yourself from a heap of trouble. The half-lamia looks at you with a new respect and stops the spinning sensation you have been suffering. 'Quite the hero!' she mocks. 'Let's see if you can guess my favourite colour. Quick now, it's not that hard. You can speak, can't you? Cat got your tongue? If you guess wrong, she will have!' Make a guess before Lapisina does something you will regret.

Write down your guess (*on the line above*) and **go to 72** (if you have been here before, substitute the guess with a L1-SR vs. INT).



47

You made a number of quick changes of direction: right, right again, left and then right. You can't hear the drumming – all is unsettlingly silent. You do feel a cold shiver run down your spine though. When you get to a junction you have to choose again: **go to 92** for left or **to 102** for right.

48

'What?' she laughs incredulously. Her mocking voice cuts into you like a barbed whip as her stone fists seek to pummel you and her tail writhes around to find you and to crush you. If your combat total is 50 or more, you will take her by surprise and buy enough time to get out of the fountain and run away (**go back to 10**); if it is less, she pulps you with a combination of hammer blows and a crushing death-squeeze. Ah, what might have been!

49

The adrenalin must be surging through your system for you to have broken free – good on you! Take 50 APs. However, your problems are not over yet, not by a long chalk. You remember that question about suitable protection? Good. **Go to 45**.

50

A creature more suited to nightmares pours forth from the maple tree. Less than corporeal but frighteningly more substantial than a ghost, its features form from the ether, glaring malevolently at you. It has more in common with a tree than with humanity but it encompasses the breadth and depth of man's darkest soul in those baleful eyes. It opens its mouth and clumsy, sibilant words creak out. 'Bow down and receive my power, mortal. Prepare to meet thy doom!' If you want to scream your protest and try to run **go to 80**; if you meekly accept that the thread of destiny is leading you on **go to 101**.



51

If you retrieved the gloves from one of the statues, all well and good. As you reach into the water to take hold of the small jar and bring it up out of the water you see silver streaks in the water...fish are keen to nibble your fingers before they leave their aquatic abode. These fish are very fast fish. They have very sharp teeth and they are very hungry. The gloves will protect you and allow you to retrieve the jar unharmed. Without the gloves you lose your fingers and take 1d6 +2 CON damage unless you make a SR vs. SPD, L1 is good enough for you to snatch your hand back with fingers still attached (you can **return to 10**); L2 will let you stay safe and grab the jar. If you do get the jar you should **go to 61**.

52

You wake up groggily. As your eyes begin to focus, you see that you are in a room hung with rich, ruby red drapes. If there is a door, these curtains must be concealing it. The floor is cold grey stone, unadorned save for a rectangle about 7' by 3', drawn with interwoven snakes, etched into the stone. As you stare, perplexed, you realise that your wrists are tied behind your back and your ankles to the high backed chair you sit upon. Make a L1-SR vs. LK – if you make it **go to 202**; if you fail **go to 210 instead**.

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

53

The adrenalin must be surging through your system for you to have broken free – good on you! Take 50 APs. However, your problems are not over yet, not by a long chalk. You remember that question about suitable protection? Good. **Go to 69.**



54

Luring warriors, even ones with solid stone brains, into a garden pond takes cunning and good fortune. Make a L2-SR vs. the average of INT and LK. Make it and all four get wet (they sink and are never seen again actually) – take 150 APs and either **go back to 10** or investigate the pond (**go to G**). Fail that SR and your luring gets you a backhander. You see stars, bleed a wee bit (let's say 1d6 damage to CON) and you **end up at 96** if not dead (and take 50 APs for chutzpah).

55

The hedge maze twists and turns, forcing you through so many lefts and rights you would need a compass to know where you are. You no longer sense anything strange but you do catch the aroma of incense in the air. Sandalwood perhaps. After retreating from a dead end, you are forced to choose – left (**go to 134**) or right (**go to 138**).

56

The stuff on the rag is not a health tonic. Fighting or struggling makes your breathing laboured and so you inhale much more of the chemicals intended only to put you to sleep. Make a L1-SR vs. INT. If you made it, you realised that it resistance was both futile and dangerous and so you take only 1d6 damage to CON; fail and you take in twice as much toxic gas – take 2d6 CON damage. Assuming you are still alive, you slip into unconsciousness much like the Titanic rushing towards the ocean bottom. **Go to 52.**

57

If you failed the CON/CHR SR, the tree fiend oozes into you, pouring through every pore and filling your body with sweet, sticky syrup. As you begin to lose consciousness you are aware of thousands of insects beginning to feast – on you! If you made the SR, the fiend speaks harshly: 'Servitude or punishment – choose now!' If you choose service **go to 152**; if you choose punishment **go to 163**; if you choose neither **go to 172**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

58

The chain is long but not as long as you need it to be. The massive jaws slaver as they open wide to allow the teeth to do their work. As you reel backwards, seeing death staring you in the face you can either scream for help ([go to 181](#)) or attempt a gymnastic contortion to somersault out of the frying pan because even fire seems appealing right now ([go to 187](#)).

59

Do you want to run away as fast as possible ([go to 79](#)) or take a step back and get ready to meet whatever it is that is breaking free from its underground tomb ([go to 83](#))?

60

Did you take French at school? Perhaps you threatened to ‘fetch-la vache’. Your taunting is first rate! The dog gets so frenzied it bites itself to death. The cherries are yours! Take 200 APs. They say that the pen is mightier than the sword and your tongue was certainly as sharp as the mutt’s incisors. Will you try one of these famed cherries now? If you will [go to 196](#) and if you won’t (shame on you!) [go to 206](#).

61

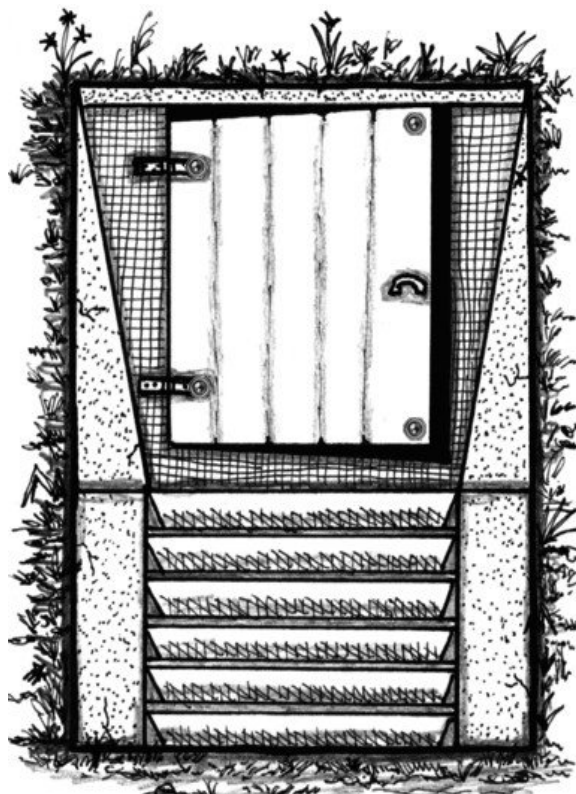
The jar has a greenish paste within and engraved on the inside of the lid is the legend “Plant/radiation repellent (homeopathic) – order more if taken”. You may keep it and use it if you ever find the occasion. Take 50 APs and [return to 10](#).

62

No more gloves fall. Instead, you have managed to set off a trap. You might clap sarcastically at this except that the stone of the mould has slipped round and trapped your hand. One handed clapping is seldom effective! And now (wouldn’t you just know it?) the stone warriors are stirring... These guardians of the garden are moving, life once more flowing through their marble veins! You can scream ([go to 22](#)) or you can attempt to hack your own arm off with your knife ([go to 26](#)) or you can meekly accept your fate ([go to 30](#)).

63

It might be interesting to see inside Old Man Gruber’s house. After all, no other kid on the block can lay claim to that. However, this is not yet a prize to be yours to proclaim as your captor clamps a damp rag over your mouth and you lose your relationship with reality. [Go to 52](#).





TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

64

They are ponderous and would not be likely to excel at ballet. However, there are four of them and that is a factor to be considered. Make a L1-SR vs. DEX and one vs. SPD. Make them both and you're safe. Take 50 APs for bravado. You can either run off back to 10 or try to lure them into the pond (**go to 54**). If you failed one of those SRs, one of them catches you with a weighty swipe and down you go! (**Off to 96**.) If you failed both SRs, no more baiting for you unless you prove able to taunt the garden's worms in a deceased state.

65

Ahem! Look before you leap? If only the title of this epic meant that you got to make that hasty decision all over again... But you do not and, the pond being home to violently carnivorous hungry fish, you do not last long in what proves to be a watery grave. Even your bones get a thorough chewing over.

66

As you reach to pick the heavy gloves up, the marble soldiers grate against their bases as they come to life. Do you want to run or still try to press the other button? If you run, make a L1-SR vs. SPD – if you make it **go back to 10**; if you fail they catch you (unnecessarily roughly, actually – your nose even drips blood) – **go to 96**. If you elected to go for the other button, no worries – you are close enough to push it (**go to 62**).

67

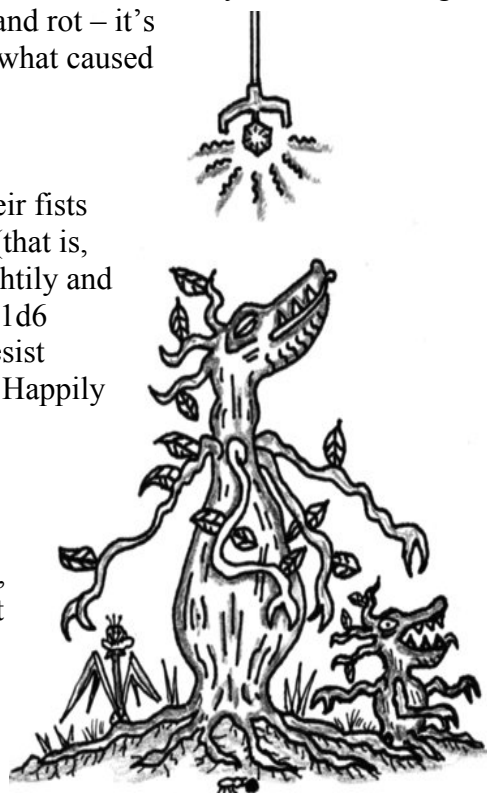
You have just taken 1d6 damage from that mini-earthquake. Ouch! Dust yourself off and grit your teeth (unless you died in which case just lie there and rot – it's good for the garden). You might want to take a look at what caused this devastation... **Go to 83**.

68

Not so hard – they're not light on their feet although their fists may well tell a different story. Make a L0-SR vs. SPD (that is, you need to get to 15). Fail and a warrior cuffs you mightily and your eardrum bursts and bleeds down your cheek (take 1d6 CON damage and **go to 96** – you are in no fit state to resist now); succeed and you make it to the mould – **go to N**. Happily for you, the warriors resume their positions in static if menacing poses.

69

When you go to the beach, do you use sunscreen? Here, you really need similar protection. Not from the sun but from the glowstones the old man uses to grow his carnivorous plants. He doesn't set them to be on all the time because that would make the plants grow too large and they would break down the hothouse and might even eat his dog!





TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

The glowstones were off when you entered. Now they come on, bathing the place in throbbing orangey-yellow light, casting eerie shadows and making the plant-monsters relax to absorb the radiation. You absorb the radiation too and you might well mutate if you haven't smeared yourself in the ointment Old Man Gruber keeps specially to allow him to work in the hothouse. It repels the plants too – it's top notch stuff. If you have applied it liberally **go to 108**, if you are not warded from the penetrating rays **go to 118**.



70

Grasping can be good... but not now. You merge with the tree fiend and feel maple syrup coursing through your veins. Only one of you can survive this union for it is unnatural. If you failed the hybrid SR, it is not you who survives. If you did succeed, the maple spirit wails plaintively as your greater strength and will see it consumed in the fire of your inner being. You are now the maple tree spirit. Take 500 APs for starters. You are stuck here in this form becoming more evil by the day until you are visited by an unsuspecting innocent who might take your place without consuming you! You can either a) make up your own adventure or b) email me at mark.findlayrd@gmail.com and I will twist this tale some more for you.

71

Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your LK and SPD then **go to 81**.

72

'The answer's blue, silly! Just like my eyes and the water I love.' If you got it wrong, whether by an uninspired guess or by failing an INT-SR, **go to 106**; if you got lucky or got a glimpse of her mind, **go to 116**.

73

'Good, you are strong. You will restore me more by your love than with your blood. You may live, my young prince! Is that not something to rejoice in? But now you must embrace me. I, Lapisina, want you in my arms now.' She engulfs you in her being and everything blurs in a pleasant, dreamy haze. **Go to 121**.

74

The smell of burning sweetness grows stronger. It is heady stuff and your mind begins to spin. Suddenly, a Foliage Warrior jumps out from the shrubbery – one second there was nothing, the next a very thorny customer obviously intent on injury, is brandishing spiky arms in your face. Fight or flight. If you waded in, arms flailing windmill-style **go to 144**; if you leg it out of here **go to 148**.

75

Make a L2-SR vs. the average of your LK and SPD then **go to 85**.

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



76

You have the club in hand and you stand to address the dung-ball. A waggle of the club head, a wiggle of the hips and you're ready to swing!

Roll 1d6:

1 and 2 – A horrid hook to the left – **go to 82**

3 and 4 – You're the man! Get in the hole! Straight and true, your drive soars away – **go to 90**

5 and 6 – Oh no! Your stance was too open... you have sliced big time – **go to 94.**

77

Very wise. The first law of holes is when in one stop digging. A passing Wizard-God raises your INT and your LK by 1d6 for such youthful sagaciousness. You can dig that. Take 50 APs. Nonetheless, you are unconscious and a captive.

Go in this enfeebled state **to 52.**

78

Firstly, did you make the hybrid SR? Now make a L2-SR vs. SPD. If you made both SRs, you are strong and fast and you escape the clutches of the Manic Maple Spirit – go breathlessly **back to 10.**

If you failed the earlier SR, you are now too weak to flee; if you failed vs. SPD you are simply too slow. Either way, you can either suffer a fatal heart attack right now or grasp the fiend's outstretched splintery, wispy hand... if you choose to live on **go to 70.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

79

A L1-SR vs. SPD will see you safely **back to 10** and when you draw breath and look round whatever it was is no longer there...

If you do not make a L1-SR vs. SPD you find yourself knocked to the ground as the earth shifts mightily and tosses you contemptuously aside like a feather in a Force 9 gale (**go to 67**).



80

Screamingly pathetically does no good whatsoever. It merely alerts the garden's other denizens to the news that someone is being turned into organic maple syrup by the tree-terror. Pancakes all round probably.

The thing gazes on you pitilessly and curses you. Your body fluids turn to syrup and clog your arteries fatally. A sticky end it is that you have come to.

81

If you failed **go to 91**; if you made it **go to 164**.

82

There is an awful sound of shattering glass – enough to wake the dead! You have whacked the rabbit turd straight into Old Man Gruber's hothouse! There must be a degree off satisfaction, causing such carnage, so you can have 50 APs. However, the dead to wake and hands reach through the grass, grabbing at your ankles.

Make a L1-SR vs. both LK and SPD and **go to 101**.

83

Arising from the mounds of displaced earth is a large white rabbit. It looks too be quite venerable from its whiskers (although you might later wonder what made you a good judge of the age of rabbit whiskers). The rabbit is as big as a Labrador. What options are available to you as the rabbit takes stock of what it has emerged to find within in paw-swipe?

Well, you could:

- 1 – Take a swipe at the big bunny (**go to 89**)
- 2 – Offer it a carrot (**go to 112**)
- 3 – Tug its whiskers (**go to 115**)
- 4 – Stroke it (**go to 119**)



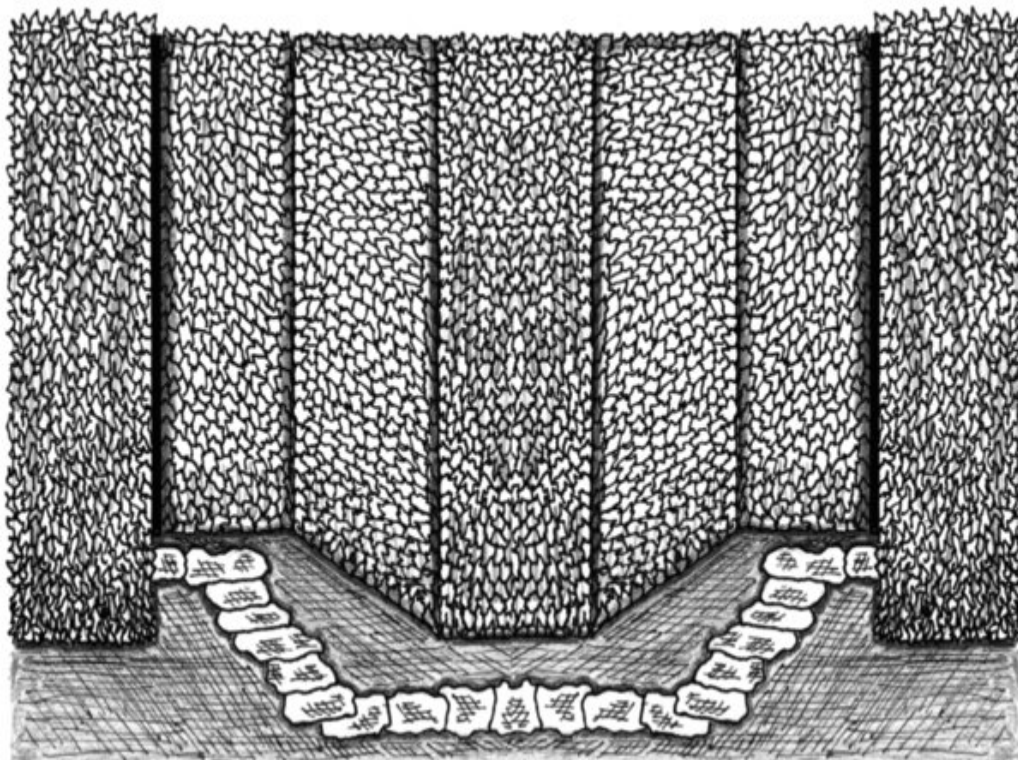
TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

84

Within the depths of the pond lurk fast and ferocious fish. Hungry fish. You need to make a L1-SR vs. DEX not to fall into the pond (if you do, **go to 110**). You need a L1-SR vs. SPD to grab the jar without getting bitten unless you have special gloves on (if you get bitten without the gloves on, you take an instant 1d6 damage to CON from finger loss and you topple into the water – **go to 110**). If you get the jar out, now you need to be lucky and fast because something is definitely coming to get you. See what you can do vs. both LK and SPD and **go to 105**.

85

If you failed go to 95; if you made it then you got away in time without being seen – you can either go to the hothouse (**go to K**) or to the flower garden (**go to B**).



86

The maze gets... well, mazy. You snake left, right and back on yourself. You can no longer sense anything but you do catch a whiff of what? Sandalwood? After looping round again. You have to choose left (**go to 123**) or right (**go to 127**).

87

If you made both SRs, both you and the ivy prove up to the task – **go to 97**; if you fail either or both rolls something went wrong! Either the vines broke or your arms and hands got tired. Either way, you fall.... Life, like love, is unkind, you just ask Donna Summer - **go to 93**.

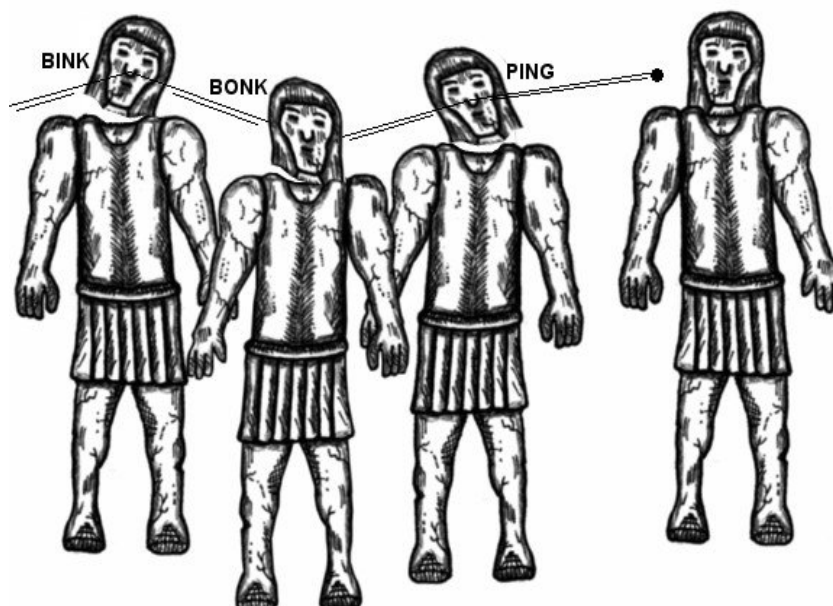
TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

88

Good job! Very prudent. Take 50 APs for being a slip-slap-slop merchant. The potent rays slither off your skin and you come to no harm at all. Now the key is easy to collect. As you take it, you see that it has a tag attached to the circular turning end. The writing is small and spidery and you have to squint to make it out. It reads 'Dog Whistle'. Do you want to give it a blow (**go to 120**) or just pocket it for now (**go back to 10**).

89

A mis-match is what you've provoked. Take 50 APs for recklessness (hard to believe you will get too many more so enjoy these while you may). The rabbit is unphased by your attack and responds in kind. When you come round (having suffered 1d6 damage to CON) you are not alone. **Go to 96.**



90

I say! What a peach of a golf shot. The bunny pellet zeroes in on one of the statues way down at the other end of the garden. You can just about make out it crashing into one of the stone warriors and then ricocheting from one to the other, knocking all fours heads off. Touché! Arriba! Take 50 APs. You can go take a look at what you have done damage-wise (**go to 124**) or you can take another shot (**go to 76**) or you can do something else bunny-style (**go to L**) or you can retrace your steps, keeping the club (a 3d6 weapon) as security (**go to 10**).

91

Neither lucky enough nor quick enough, you burrow into the smelly, damp and worm-ridden pile of rotting vegetation. You get in as far as your ankles when they are grasped firmly by immensely powerful hands. Unceremoniously, you are hauled out and slapped with considerable violence. Blood trickles from an open cut on your cheek and your head throbs. Take 1d6 CON damage and **go to 96.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

92

The marrow-chilling sensation grows more intense. It is heady stuff and your mind begins to spin. Suddenly, a Foliage Warrior jumps out from the shrubbery – one second there was nothing, the next a very thorny customer obviously intent on injury, is brandishing spiky arms in your face. Fight or flight. If you wade in, arms flailing windmill-style **go to 144**; if you leg it out of here **go to 148**.

93

Not immediately unkind, as it happens, because waiting arms catch you and hold you remorselessly in a grip quite literally of stone. You didn't hurt yourself but maybe that's to come later... maybe not too much later. A stone statue of a mighty warrior is marching you in soldierly fashion across the lawn to Old Man Gruber's house, the very house that inspires such fear throughout your neighbourhood. And you look like you're going inside. **Go to 63**.

94

Now that has gone a country mile! Over the garden wall, in fact, and out into the street where you and your chums so often loiter, plotting to steal cherries from Old Man Gruber. Did you hear a scream? Yes, it definitely was the sound of someone in sudden pain...

Roll 1d6 and let's find out who you hit:

- 1 – Buzz
- 2 – Skeeter
- 3 – Cindy Lou
- 4 – Betty May
- 5 – Grizzly Gudgeon, the one-legged nightwatchman
- 6 – Old Nettie Bogroll, the scary grandmother with the scarier black panther familiar

Roll again: 1-3 and you killed them, 4-6 and they're just sorely distressed.



If you killed Buzz, Skeeter, Cindy Lou or Betty May you will need to make a L1-SR vs. the average of your LK and CHR when/if you get out of here or you will be banged up in gaol for reckless use of sports equipment and dung (1d6 months incarceration); if you just winged one of them, you either lose all your male friends or never get a date in this town, depending on who you hit.

If you killed Grizzly or Nettie, you get away with it; if you dented their pride and their skull then you had better hope they never hear it was you that fired that concrete turd – Grizzly will discover the truth, track you down and skin you if he can but that's another adventure; Nettie will try to turn you into a baboon (that may not be much of a change but also another adventure).

Take 100 APs if you killed someone and 50 if you just left them uncomfortably numb. If you are to sally forth on another adventure if/when you escape from this garden you can email me at mark.findlayrd@gmail.com for a push in the right (?) direction. Now **go back to 76** for another shot, **to SS** for more bunny business or **to 10** to move onto another garden game.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

95

Things are not going according to plan! If you were between a rock and a hard place it might be better than the result of your inability to hide... Fate has you marked down for something special and Fate is better known for unkindness than kindness. **Go to 93.**

96

A huge stone statue of a warrior picks you up as if you were a leaf and holds you securely. Your blood is the only colour on the soldier's stone body. Without further malice but without care or compassion, the garden guard marches you off to the ominously waiting house. **Go to 63.**

97

You and Ivy were made for each other. Your hands find the top of the wall and you are just about to heave yourself up and over to safety when unforgiving hands grasp your ankles and begin to pull you back down. So near yet so far! The hands seem irresistible.

Do you want to allow yourself to be captured and possibly avoid broken bones (**go to 103**), squirm round and whack your assailant on the head (**go to 107**) or rather desperately, and in all likelihood in a high-pitched and tremulous tone, call upon Ivy for help (**go to 111**).



98

The photonic force that strikes you has random mutating properties. Maybe you will be turned into a carrot or perhaps you will continue on this mortal coil as a turnip. Roll 1d6 and **go to 130.**

99

Trudging across the freshly mown lawns come the four stone statues – fierce warriors now inspired by your theft into motion! The leader is reaching out for you but he is not quick to react – acts of Herculean strength being more his forte than grabbing quick moving children. Make a L0-SR vs. SPD (you just need to get to 15). You lose most of your fruit haul but if you want you can eat as you run or as you are carried away. Choose either a plum or a paw-paw (write down your choice – no hedging!) and **go to 153.**

100

The marble warrior that has prevented your escape takes back whatever it is that you stole and are now giving up with one hand and tucks you under an unyielding arm with the other. With no fuss and no conversation, the garden soldier carries you into Old Man Gruber's house...

Will you ever emerge alive? Let us see... **Go to 63.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

101

The tree-fiend slithers into your body through your nostrils. It has been seeking someone to possess for many a long year, a someone rather than a something as the tree offers no mobility. It could wreak far greater disasters upon the weak if it could move freely. But there is something about you that it had not expected. Although the presence of such unadulterated evil in your body cripples your limbs and grieves your heart, there is something you have that the fiend fears. You have the ancient curse magic in you. You sense it tingling within, coiling itself about the invader. If you want to let it soak into the foul spirit **go to 129**; if you want to take control and focus it tightly as a destructive force **go to 141**.

102

The maze gets... well, mazy. You snake left, right and back on yourself. You can no longer sense anything but you do catch a whiff of what? Sandalwood? After looping round again. You have to choose left (**go to 123**) or right (**go to 127**).

103

Make a L1-SR vs. LK. If you fail, you take 1d6 damage to CON and are in a pretty pickle – **go to 96**; if you succeed, no harm is done to you and you are asked in a grating voice by your captor if you wish to hand over anything you may have stolen. If you hand something back **go to 100**; if you refuse or have nothing to return **go to 165**.

104

A big, hulking statue of a tough-looking warrior, that's what! And now it is nearly on top of you! You will do well to elude its clutches this late in the piece – a L1-SR vs. DEX and one vs. SPD. If you fail **go to 96**; if you make both rolls, good on you! You even have time to pick up the statue's gloves, which it has taken off to get a better grip on you if you want. Decide if you would like to steal from this rocky guardian of the garden and then scarper **back to 10**. You can leave your sack, brimful of luscious fruits, hidden behind a bush near where you came in.

105

If you were lucky and fast **go to 117**; if you were lucky and slow **go to 137**; if you were fast but unfortunate **go to 166**; if you were slow and bad luck is your middle name **go to 180**.

106

'You really don't have that much going for you, do you? What's your name? No, don't tell me – it really was a waste giving you one. Let's see – there must be something useful you could do for me... Ah, yes! I have it. It would be nice to have a little nymph to brush my hair – it gets frightfully tangled!' Lapisina flicks her wrist casually and splashes water over you while she mutters some arcane lamia incantation. You turn into a stone nymph, about 1' tall, and are given the power of movement whenever Lapisina wants the knots teased out of her hair. Oh yes – you get a very nice tortoiseshell comb too.





TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

107

What are you whacking with? Bare hands, I guess. That is likely to hurt! Stone heads are not known for their vulnerability to boys' knuckles. Still, you might get lucky. Try a L2-SR vs. LK and **go to 132**.

108

Good job! Very prudent. Take 50 APs for being a slip-slap-slop merchant. The potent rays slither off your skin and you come to no harm at all. You survived – although it hardly did you any good coming in here (**go back to 10**).

109

Warily, you lower yourself down into what is clearly a cellar. There are racks containing dusty wine bottles and casks of ancient wood against all the walls. Between two large casks is a door indicating a possible way into the main house. Lying on a table in the centre of the room are a pair of goblets, a large apron and a startlingly large corkscrew which would clearly take both hands to raise up, it being some 4' in length. If you would like to leave by the door **go to 243**; if you would like to avail yourself of any of the items on the table **go to 223**; if you would like to ascertain the contents of the casks or sample some wine **go to 303**.

Please note that should you try to go back up to exit the cellar that the trap door is utterly stuck shut...

110

Can you swim? Well, you can't now. Not without arms and legs. Those razor-toothed fishies have had a bonanza feast courtesy of you. Lucky fishes! Child to eat – juicy organs, energy-rich blood, maybe even some brains. The fishes send invitations to their friends and it is party time in the pond. Welcome to the banquet! Oh, you are the banquet... Not the pond to tumble into really. Finito.

111

At your rather desperate and, I have to say, a little nauseating cry baby act, a leafy lady emerges from the foliage. This is, of course, Ivy. She looks witheringly at the statues that had come to seize you and they trot, much chagrined, back to their normal stations. Ivy turns her attention to you. She is a powerful lass with considerable WIZ at her disposal. She is capricious too and does not always behave as Old Man Gruber would have her. She likes people who possess a certain magical *je ne sais quoi* and who have a smidgeon of charm. Chemistry, that's what you need. Attempt a L1-SR vs. the average of your WIZ and CHR and then roll 1d6.



Now consult the table below to see what Ivy does:



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

Made SR:

1 – Ivy touches you on the hip and ejects you skywards over the wall. Make a L2-SR vs. DEX and if you fail you take the amount you missed it by as CON damage. If you live **go to BBB**.

2 – Ivy places a flowerpot on your head, picks you up and rams the wall with your head! Take 1d6 damage to CON (the flowerpot shatters but acts as a helmet). If you live **go to BBB**.

3 – Ivy smooths your hair, tucks you under her arm and runs to the gate where she let's you out. **Go to BBB**.

4 – Ivy tells you how well you've done. She offers you wizardly training and will, over the next year, teach you how to do all the L1 Guild spells (she raises your INT and/or DEX to 10 if necessary). Then she lets you out. **Go to BBB**.

5 – Ivy is much taken by your pluck and your spark of genius. She is good with genius and her breath over your face instantly doubles your INT. Every time you rise a level, your INT will rise by 1d6. Then she lets you out. **Go to BBB**.

6 – Ivy thinks you are the dog's bollocks (she's not one to mince her words). She wants to keep you as her protégé. After 5 years *protegeing* about the garden under Ivy's tutelage, she will let you loose on the world again. It is quite likely that you will have been declared legally dead. When you get your release, Ivy grants you the ability to become ivy and disguise yourself, cling to walls, strangle things and many other miraculous talents. All your attributes will have risen by 1d6 bar your WIZ – that will be 3d6 higher! Go on to great things, live long and prosper.



Failed SR:

1 – Ivy thinks you're a bit of a wuss really. She Upsidaisy's you on to the swing by the old maple tree. **Go to OO**.

2 – Ivy thinks you would make a nice hedge puppy. She waves her fingers and lisps a few arcane words and you become a quadruped made of foliage. She soon gets bored with you though as your bite is worse than your bark. Your attributes are as before except that your STR and CON are doubled but your DEX is halved. She unleashes you **at 10**. Take 200 APs.

3 – Ivy thinks you are old beyond your years. She weaves a hedge spell about you and your age advances by 2d6 x 10 years. Roll 4d6 and multiply by 10 to find your life expectancy (the magic makes a longer old age possible). If you are over 80 you must reduce your STR, CON, DEX and SPD attributes by 1 for each 5 years over 80. If any of these attributes reaches zero you are dead. Take 200 APs. Ivy places you in a wheel chair and pushes you out of the garden gate down a steep hill...

4 – Ivy decides you have been a very naughty boy and traps you in a hedge prison. You can **escape to 10** if you roll 5, 6 or 6.5 on 2d6 but every time you try to escape and fail your WIZ and your CON reduce by 1 (at zero for either you will die). Take 200 APs if you get out of this mess.

5 – Ivy does not know *Death Spell #9* but she does know *Death Spell #2*. Make a L2-SR vs. LK. You can guess what happens if you fail. If you make it you may take 200 APs and Ivy releases you **at 10**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

6 – Ivy has a small nut. It is very potent... it has the capability of exploding like a Hell Bomb Burst. She wonders what would happen if it went off inside you so she sticks it in your left ear. You may try to get it out but if you fail it will go off (you need to make a L3-SR vs. DEX to remove it). Why would you try? Well, if you get at all wet it will explode instantly. She **releases you at G** by the fishpond and watches for a while in case you fall in. Nice girl, Ivy. Take 200 APs.

112

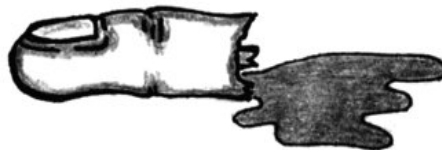
You do not have a carrot (no actual carrots have been mentioned in this adventure, of that I am certain, although the 'find' function does reveal a putative carrot). The vague waving of an empty hand is not designed to impress the rabbit. However, it is not inclined to harm you as it does not see you as a threat (you aren't). You may take 50 APs for bravado and either do more rabbit things (**go to L**) or retrace your steps across the lawn **back to 10**.

113

Lapisina will cavort merrily with you until she grows bored (1d6 times 5 minutes and for each 5 minutes you last just being with her adds 1 to your CHR). You may get to preen if you are capable of walking after she's given you a dose of her magical sense of humour. **Go to 183** to find your fate.

114

The big stone statue that is reaching out for you is not quick to react – acts of Herculean strength being more it's forte than grabbing quick moving children. Make a L0-SR vs. SPD (you just need to get to 15). If you fail **go to 96**; if you succeed you can escape from the warrior and **return to 10**. You can leave your sack, brimful of luscious fruits, hidden behind a bush near where you came in.



115

The rabbit's whiskers are like cheese wires. Roll 1d6 – an odd number means you lose a finger and both 2 CON damage (temporary) and 1d6 DEX (permanent). Take 50 APs for recklessness (hard to believe you will get too many more so enjoy these while you may). The rabbit is unphased by your attack and responds in kind. When you come round (having suffered another 1d6 damage to CON) you are not alone. **Go to 96**.

116

Lapisina is flattered that you got it right. 'Was it when I gazed into your eyes?' she asks, batting her eyelids. When you return her smile it seems she is receptive to some form of amorous activity. Lucky you! **Go to 121**.

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

117

Whatever it was setting its sights on you must have given up as you moved smoothly away. You are far enough away from the pond now to be able to relax a little. You may **return to 10** and continue on with your garden exploration.

118

The photonic force that strikes you has random mutating properties. Maybe you will be turned into a carrot or perhaps you will continue on this mortal coil as a turnip. Roll 1d6 and **go to 140**.



119

The rabbit likes being stroked. At its advanced age, it enjoys having its aches and pains relieved. Take 100 APs for kindness. The rabbit does not speak but it will accompany you while you are in the garden. It is a tough old coot and can hold its own with anything in this garden bar the dog. It won't go into the hothouse, the fishpond, the house, the fountain or the hedge maze but if you get into trouble out in the open it will buy you the time you need to get **back to 10**.

You can go there now and review your options. You get a warm glow of greater security and a permanent uplift of 1d6 to CHR (it's a kinda magic!).

120

There are many things you can blow but not a key. This is a futile occupation. Even if you suck it hard nothing will happen. **Return to 10** with the taste of something slightly unpleasant in your mouth.

121

Lapisina is in love with you! (Her crushes don't last very long - she grows bored rapidly (1d6 times 5 minutes). When she tires of you as a plaything she brushes you off and **sends you back to 10** but not before she gives you a parting kiss which bestows a special favour (see the table below). You can take 100 APs too.

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

Roll 1d6:

- 1 – You gain 2d6 CHR.
- 2 – You gain 1d6 to the attribute of your choosing.
- 3 – You gain 1d6 to two attributes found at random.
- 4 – Your STR and SPD double.
- 5 – Your WIZ, INT and DEX all increase by 10 and you get a certificate admitting you to Wizards' School if you can get out of this garden.
- 6 – You are now extremely lucky. Your LK is raised to 30 + 1d6 and you have a talent for being lucky which means you can roll vs. LK for any SR you are called upon to make if you so choose.



122

As you slip the ring on, a voice in your head bids you to 'Think Magic!' Make a L1-SR vs. WIZ and **go to 157**.

123

A feeling of desolation seeps through your veins, an icy finger stabbing at your heart. Every time the wind stirs a leaf you come close to jumping out of your skin. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your CON and your CHR. If you fail, doubles will not roll over for you and sixes must be re-rolled until (if!) you leave the hedge maze. A cloying, decaying smell wisps up into your nostrils and you begin to doubt your grip on sanity! **Go to 74**.

124

The soldiers don't look like they will be winning any more medals, a sorry lot they are in their decapitated state. You see that one of the headless warriors is wearing a pair of gloves that are not stone – some sort of mail. You may take them if you like. Now **return to 90** and make another choice that will determine your fate one way or another...



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



125

Despite your mutation shock, you remember the key you saw. No problem snaffling it now – you might as well. As you take it, you see that it has a tag attached to the circular turning end. The writing is small and spidery and you have to squint to make it out. It reads ‘Dog Whistle’. Do you want to give it a blow (**go to 120**) or just pocket it for now (**go back to 10**).

126

The passion fruit vine is thick with dark purple treasures, the shiny skins looking like jewels amidst the greenery. Fortune is smiling! The plant is solid enough to take your bodyweight and it offers easy handholds. However, peril lurks in all too many corners in Old Man Gruber’s garden. Make a L2-SR vs. DEX. If you fail, you dislodge one of the purple fruits. As it hits the ground, it splits open and a heavy, sickly gas founts upwards. Make a L2-SR vs. CON. Fail that and your mind loses all traction. The last things you take in are your nose beginning to bleed and thumping footsteps approaching. Then you black out. **Go to 96**. However, if you made either of those saving rolls, you escape this fate – maybe you avoiding knocking a passion fruit off or your lungs held enough air not to breathe the gas. In any event, you can have 50 APs and **go to BBB**.

127

The smell wafts all about you – its overpowering stickiness begins to makes your eyes water and as you wipe them clear you wonder if there are shapes moving towards you. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your INT and your CHR. Fail and you see monsters everywhere! In your paranoid condition doubles will not roll over for you and sixes must be re-rolled until (if!) you leave the hedge maze. A cloying, decaying smell wisps up into your nostrils and you begin to doubt your grip on sanity! **Go to 74**.

128

When you find the hole, hidden by a rusty old lawn roller, you might be forgiven for thinking it must be the entrance to the lair of some Hypberborean wyrm rather than a rabbit – a Labrador would be able to walk down that tunnel. The more pertinent question is: do you want to? You can retreat to the rabbit droppings (**go to L**) or retrace your steps **back to 10** or you can screw up your courage and step inside (**go to 136**).

129

Wise beyond your years! This force you possess is doing its work and it needs no interference from you. It penetrates every fibre of the fiend’s essence and kills it stone cold dead. You shudder with relief. There is something you have gained from its presence and death inside you though, something that emerges from the combination of your innate curse magic and its.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

In your mind's eye, you see that you now have the ability to become gaseous and enter another to kill them and drain 1d6 WIZ, LK and CHR from your victim (that's 1d6 added to each of these three attributes) – however, if the being you invade makes a L2-SR vs. WIZ it is you who will perish. What is more, you may only attempt this feat once per month. Take 200 APs and **return to 10** to choose another way forward.

130

You mutate according to the table below (and take 200 APs):

1 – You are now a toadstool, bright red with a yellow underbelly and very toxic

2 – You are now a human centipede. You get 98 more legs but the only human part of you is your head, neck shoulders and arms. You have a leg-related DEX of just 1d6, same for SPD. Your STR and CON are tripled. Off you go, **back to 10** and watch out for cobblers – your shoes are going to be expensive from now on.

3 – You are transformed into a stinging nettle. If you have a mean streak in you this may well come to the fore now unless the old man fancies making some nettle tea.

4 – You are changed into a jellyfish. This is not a good place to become a jellyfish –there is no water and the atmosphere is dehumidifying. You can't actually move but you can quiver.

5 – You metamorphosis into a plant-man. Your STR and CON are doubled but your SPD is halved. You do badly when burnt (triple damage) but you can put out roots and hold your ground to the value of five times your STR. You can also send out shoots that will strike accurately anything within their 10' range, doing 1d6 d6 damage (if the shoots are severed, you take 1d6 CON damage).

6 – You morph into a polar bear. You have very warm fur and you are very white. You can still speak all languages you knew as a human. STR and CON are tripled but manual DEX is just 1d6. Your SPD gets a boost of 50%. Your fur takes 6 hits and you get double your attack roll is you are fighting on ice. Oh yes, you can swim superbly too.

If you are capable of perambulation you can **go to 125**, if you have been rendered immobile then that's that as far as your young life is concerned.



131

Not so hard to get into the wheelbarrow and cover yourself up. Now you can take a deep breath and pray. The wheelbarrow's contents includes many different weeds and grass stalks replete with seeds... do you have any allergies? Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your LK and CON. If you make it **go to 173**; if you fail **go to 184**.

132

If you failed the LK-SR you skin your knuckles and a few crack – take 1d3 CON damage (use 1d6 and adapt!).



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

Your blood leaks out and you must **go to 96**. If you succeeded then you must have hit the emergency 'Off' switch! You will probably find a four leaf clover next. If you do want to look for one **go to 168**; otherwise you can **escape to BBB**.



133

As you close in on these untold riches, each gem flies from where it lays to coalesce into the all too solid form of a Strate-gem, a multifaceted tactical fighting fiend. Too late to get away, you have to decide how to combat this hard carbon monster. Do you want jab your fingers into its ruby eyes (**go to 170**), punch it on its sapphire nose (**go to 174**), stamp on its emerald toes (**go to 178**) or knee it in its diamond bollocks (**go to 182**)?

134

Frustrated, you begin to feel like clawing your way out of this mess of privet, despite its impenetrable thickness. The incense makes you woozy and you stagger under its influence.

Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your INT and CON. Fail and in your fired-up state doubles will not roll over for you and sixes must be re-rolled until (if!) you leave the hedge maze. A cloying, decaying smell wisps up into your nostrils and you begin to doubt your grip on sanity! **Go to 74**.

135

Old Man Gruber's spirit infuses the gnome. It is under his control. Perhaps it dimly remembers a life free of his dark, brooding mind but it would be hazy, lost in the mists of memory. The gnome is therefore rather sluggish, even robotic, in its movements. It gets 1d6 plus 15 adds and has a CON of 20.

If you survive one round, you may twist away from it with a SR vs. the average of your DEX and SPD. A L2-SR vs. either of those attributes will get you a free strike. If you evade the gardener, you may **run away to 10** or try another way **out of here at ZZ**. Take 75 APs if you are not slain by Nobwhacker the Gnome.



136

You grope your way in the dark until you come to a junction. You can turn left where there is a chink of light far off in the distance and where the air seems to be colder (**go to 146**) or you can branch to the right which is warmer and from whence you can hear a gentle snoring (**go to 154**).

You can of course think better of this exploration of this dark passage and go back to more bunny activities **at L** or to the place you entered the garden **at 10**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

137

As you retreat from the water's edge, a mean old pike leaps up at you. This is being lucky? Yes! It could have been far worse... You were too slow to get a safe distance and now you need to fend off the pike. It gets 2d6 DARO for its attack, which can only last one round. If you survive you may take 20 APs and **go back to 10** for the next stage in your cunning plan to pilfer cherries.

138

You start to doubt that you will ever get out of here. Your mind is triggered into thoughts of hunger and then starvation as the incense trickles through your nostrils and seeps into your bloodstream. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your STR and your INT. Fail and the craving for food and the fear that your belly will stay empty means doubles will not roll over for you and sixes must be re-rolled until (if!) you leave the hedge maze. A cloying, decaying smell wisps up into your nostrils and you begin to doubt your grip on sanity! **Go to 74**.

139

Venturing in as coily as a church mouse, you see that you have found the scullery. A table is laden to groaning point with vegetables and a large pig lies gutted alongside them. A thin woman in a bonnet and a black full length dress stands at the sink scrubbing at some clothes, suds spilling over and onto the floor. A mop and bucket stand nearby – she seems to expect some cleaning of the floor. There are two doors, one of which may lead on onto the house proper, the other which could well be a pantry door, as sacks, possibly holding grain, are leant next to it. If you would like to speak to the maid or attack her **go to 214**; if you would like to hide under the table **go to 224**; if you would like to sneak across the scullery and open one of the doors **go to 234**.

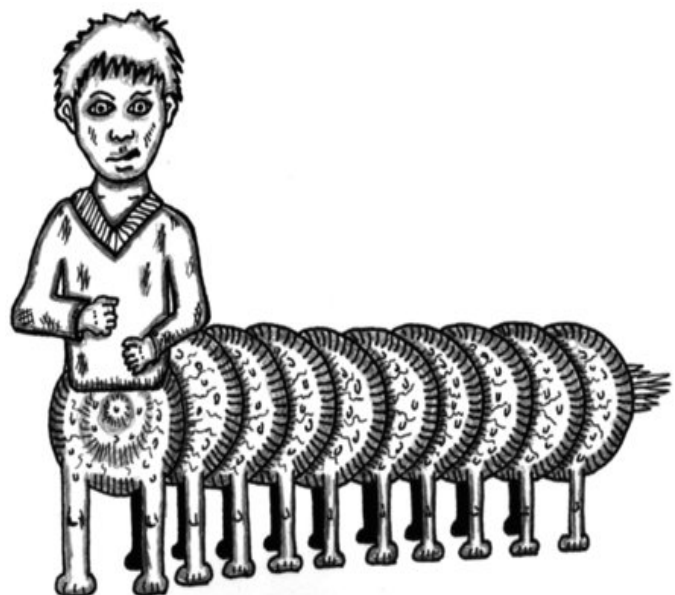
By the way, should you think of leaving by the back door you are going to be disappointed... at your approach it slams shut and seals itself against all and any attempt to open it or get through it...

140

You mutate according to the table below (and take 200 APs):

1 – You are now a toadstool, bright red with a yellow underbelly and very toxic

2 – You are now a human centipede. You get 98 more legs but the only human part of you is your head, neck shoulders and arms. You have a leg-related DEX of just 1d6, same for SPD. Your STR and CON are tripled. Off you go, **back to 10** and watch out for cobblers – your shoes are going to be expensive from now on.





TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

3 – You are transformed into a stinging nettle. If you have a mean streak in you this may well come to the fore now unless the old man fancies making some nettle tea.

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If you are capable of perambulation you can **go to 10**, if you have been rendered immobile then that's that as far as your young life is concerned.

141

This force within you is not something to be toyed with. You have no expertise in it. As you seek to manipulate it, you comprehend its fundamental instability – it explodes into deadly destruction within you, destroying the intruder absolutely, eternally. It is dead. And you?

Make a L2-SR vs. the average of your WIZ and CON. If you fail, it kills you too. If you have it in you to survive such a psychic maelstrom, you may take 200 APs and **go to 10**, where you will recover surprisingly quickly and may choose another course to follow.

142

It is easy to climb up using the nails... easy but fraught with peril for they are equipped with sensors and if a secret button is not deployed a trap is sprung! From other parts of the wall directly in line with your body more nails spring out! Oh dear...

Make a L1-SR vs. each of LK, DEX and SPD and **go to 185**.



143

You have just touched the trigger mechanism of a boy-trap, not as lethal as a man-trap, at least in the short term. This trap is designed to snap a steel loop over the wrist that sets off the trap. Reaction time is critical here.

Make a L2-SR vs. SPD – if you make it you can run off counting yourself lucky **back to 10** but if you fail **go to 12**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

144

The Foliage Warrior is nasty. His prickliness means that he does 1d6 damage if he rolls a 5 or 6 on his combat dice (he gets just one) and no adds. His CON is 12 and he will battle until he is mulch. If you make a L1-SR vs. DEX after your combat roll check, you manage to break a branch off and do him 1d6 damage. If he kills you, you make very effective compost; if you win you can **go to 160**.

145

Nobwhacker the Gnome has a problem - Old Man Gruber's spirit infuses him and he is under the old man's control. He does dimly remembers a life free of that dark, brooding mind but it is lost in the fog of time and hypnosis. But money was what he lived for, did Knobwhacker. He loved to run his little hands through the stuff! If you can make a L2-SR vs. the average of your INT and CHR you can make him shrug his tormentor aside and he will take money and fruit. You can take 75 APs if you succeed. If you fail then you must fight Nobwhacker the Gnome. **Go to 135** or **to BBB** if you seduce him with cash.

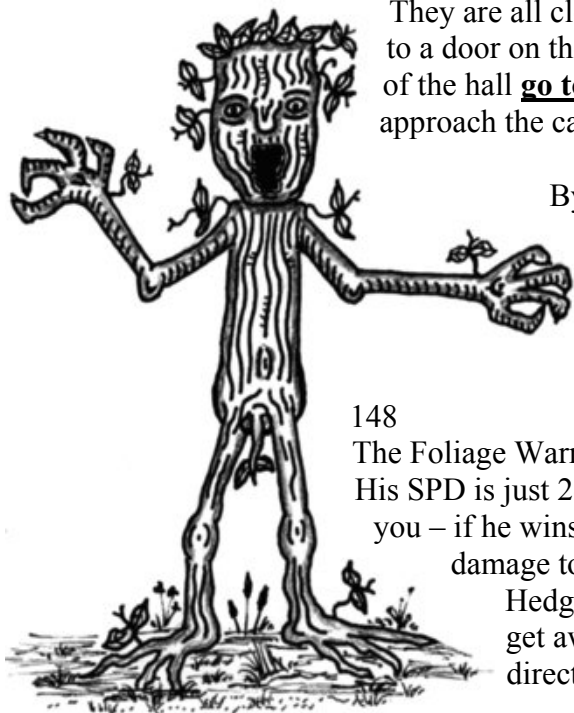
146

It really is getting nastily cold now. Unnaturally so, perhaps. Do you want to press on (**go to 161**) or retreat **to 136**?

147

Interesting that door opens so easily... is someone expected, perchance? You step over the threshold into a short hallway. A grandfather clock ticks pendulously while a black cat gazes out at you from behind a chaise longue, overstuffed with horsehair evidently, as the stuffing is leaking out in places. There are five doors, two to each side and one at the end of the hall.

They are all closed. To go to a door on the left **go to 215**; to go to a door on the right **go to 225**; to approach the door at the end of the hall **go to 235**; to sit on the chaise longue **go to 245**; to approach the cat **go to 255**; to examine the clock **go to 186**.



By the way, should you think of leaving by the front door you are going to be disappointed... at your approach it slams shut and seals itself against all and any attempt to open it or get through it...

148

The Foliage Warrior is not fast as his feet tend to put down roots. His SPD is just 2d6 (no DARO). Make a SR vs. SPD for both of you - if he wins, he whips you thornily and you take 1d6 damage to CON. Then you are in combat with Privet the Hedgeman. **Go to 144**. If you beat him on SPD, you get away but at the cost of losing your sense of direction again. Make a L1-SR vs. INT and **go to 156**.



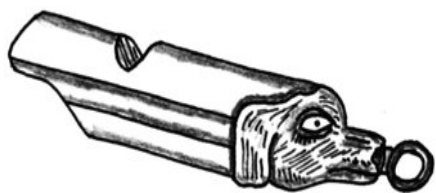
TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

149

Your suspicions were not baseless! Waiting for you, hands twitching malevolently (invisible until this moment!), is a garden gnome, a gaudy little fellow. He bares his teeth and snarls and flourishes his fishing rod with gusto. Do you want to fight him (go to 135), attempt to bribe him (go to 145) or run away from him and find another way out (go to 155)?

150

If you blew the whistle found in the tin, this is very, very good. If not, go to 162 and start fighting (roll those dice!). The whistle is specially tuned to put the hellhound to sleep faster and for longer than a *Rock-a-Bye* or a lull-a-bye could do. With the mutt snoring like a chainsaw on heat you can harvest cherries to your heart's content. Take 150 APs. The dark, luscious fruits looked primed with sweet delights. Want to sample one? If you will go to 196 and if you won't (shame on you!) go to 206.



151

Oh no! Heavy stuff, man! Those gems carry a curse... Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your WIZ, LK and CHR. If you make it, the curse fizzles in your ears but does not stick – take 50 APs for a narrow squeak; if you failed, this curse causes you to faint at the sight of a drawn blade (dagger, sword, bread knife, doesn't matter what, you collapse and are unable to defend yourself or escape until the blade is sheathed, scabbarded or drawered, as the case may be). Take 100 APs if you were cursed – it is after all not an everyday experience. Now you can retrace your steps and go to 10 or try another gourd (go to E).

152

The tree fiend grins, maple syrup spitting out at you as it does so (take 1d6 CON damage as this stuff is very corrosive when exposed to air and added to skin). 'Servant, kiss me!' the fiend from the tree commands. It doesn't wait but leans forward and plants a kiss on the top of your head. Did you make that hybrid SR? If you failed, the kiss proves lethal – your skull splits and your brain explodes messily outwards at great velocity, landing in a sparrow's nest and thereby providing both comfort and nutrition to its babies. If you were successful, the fiend's kiss confirms that you are able to do its will. 'A good servant is only as good as the punishment its master dishes out,' it observes nastily and with obvious relish. Go to 163.

153

You must be here because you have a sweet tooth – eating on the run! A plum will do nothing for you except satisfy that craving for sweetness but the paw-paw is a different kettle of fruit entirely! Old Man Gruber grows magical paw-paws – they have a most beneficial effect on looks and personality (the old man never touches them as he likes to remain salty and sour). Eating a paw-paw doubles your CHR. A new, improved you emerges, a butterfly from a cocoon.

If you failed the SPD-SR and were caught go to 96; if you succeeded you can escape from the warriors and return to 10.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

154

The heat is cranking up now – unhealthily so. If this was a kitchen, you’d know what to do. Do you want to forge ahead regardless (**go to 167**) or reverse **back to 136**?

155

The gnome is rather sluggish, even robotic, in its movements because it is little more than an automaton controlled by Old Man Gruber. If you make a L1-SR vs. the average of your STR and SPD (for sprinting) you get away - you may **run away to 10** or try another way **out of here at ZZ**. Take 75 APs. If you don’t get away you must fight Nobwhacker the Gnome – **go to 135**.

156

If you made the SR vs. INT you escape out of the hedge maze and make your way **back to 10**. Take 50 APs. If you fail, you get hopelessly lost. Not good. Eventually you have to sleep and when you do a Hedgeman picks you up and takes you out of the maze to the waiting owner of the horror house... **Go to 63**.

157

The ring is a ‘Teacher’ – it has a sometimes benevolent, sometimes malevolent demon named ‘Mr Quelch’ trapped inside. Mr Quelch enough summons a lightning bolt doing 20d6 damage to those who fail a L1-SR vs. WIZ when they first try the ring on (maybe you got fried?) or he grants them a spell of their choice of their level(s) and gives a new one every time they rise a level – even warriors get this benefit (casting costs and INT-SRs are normal but there is no INT or DEX requirement). In addition, Mr Quelch has a gimlet eye and will spot danger to him or the wearer of the ring – he will fire a *TTYF* doing 1d6 x 10 damage at anyone intending harm for 1d6 rounds (i.e. up to six consecutive *TTYFs*). Mr Quelch as WIZ of 60 for khremm resistance purposes. If you have not been toasted by Mr Quelch you may either **go to E** for another gourd or **to 10** to explore more of the garden, taking 150 APs.

158

You know, sometimes discretion really is the better part of valour. You just passed a rite of passage – take 100 APs. You can go for another gourd (**go to E**) or retrace your steps (**go to 10**).

159

That deserves a drum roll! In lieu of such percussive celebration, take 100 APs. You dance past the most destructive canine power this side of Cerberus and grab and handful of the luscious cherries. It is one thing to get the cherries but quite another to make good an escape with them. Do you want to eat one, just in case it is the last thing you do? Decide and commit! You are still most definitely in dog territory and the dog in question is out to make good its failure. Luck and speed are called for – try a L1-SR vs. both and **go to 179**.





TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

160

Take 50 APs for beating Privet to a pulp. You see that where he sprang from has concealed a solid metal box no bigger than your hand. It is locked. If you have the key you may open it (**go to 169**). If you have no key you may take the box and **return to 10** once you rewind your steps and find the exit to the garden.

161

Don't say you weren't warned. As you make your way forward a loud crash behind you informs you that a stout portcullis blocks your means of escape. You are stuck in an inhospitable, cold place. Brrrr! Make a L1-SR vs. CON and take 1d6 damage if you fail. Assuming you live, you might as well keep going to the source of the light.... There is an iron ladder going up towards a glowing red light source – and more importantly, a source of much needed warmth. **Go to 171.**

162

What did you muster? More than 10? Scary – you must think you're fighting for your life. As it happens, you're not because you are remarkably rapidly deceased. There is a lot of blood on the lawn that might be mistaken for cherry juice. Not that it matters any more. Nothing does to you.

163

The tree fiend grins, maple syrup dribbling from what passes for its mouth. 'Bring it on, dude!' it wheezes. Without touching you, it sucks you into the old tree. If you made that hybrid SR you survive this rite of passage. If not, you die in a most mangled and painful fashion. Let us assume you live. Now for your punishment. Turns out that the tree fiend loves playing D&D. Your task is to learn and become fluent in all the rules. You must stay here being mercilessly punished until you make a L10-SR vs. INT (which you may try once per day). Each time you fail, you suffer the loss of 1 point of CON through boredom.



If you somehow master the rules thoroughly you end up boring the fiend to death and you get out of the tree, which splits as it dies (take 100 APs in addition to your SR APs and **go back to 10**).

164

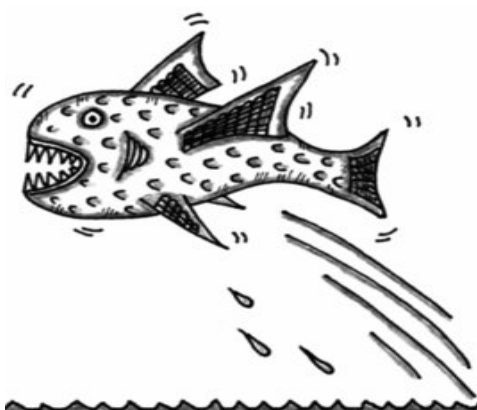
The compost heap is warm inside. You made it! Take 50 APs. You are in the company of many, many earthworms. It is they that make the soil of Old Man Gruber's garden so friable, so rich and productive. It is possible they will do something for you.

Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your WIZ, LK and CHR. If you make it you may roll 2d6 and distribute the dice roll amongst those three attributes as you so choose. There is no penalty for failure. After a few minutes, you hear the footsteps of those seeking you retreating into the distance. You are now free to leave – **go back to 10.**

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

165

The marble titan holds you by an ankle and shakes you upside down before banging your head hard on the lawn. Take 1d6 damage to CON. You lose your grip on whatever you had or it falls from your pockets. If you are still alive, the warrior marches you briskly (for a stone statue) to the door of Old Man Gruber's house and throws you within, where you land in an undignified sprawling heap. **Go to 63.**



166

Your fleetness of foot may yet mitigate your misfortune. Flying fish home in on you as you back away. Roll 1d6 to find out how many come. They are related to piranha – not at all good! You may evade each one with a L1-SR vs. any of LK, DEX or SPD but if you fail you must face a 2d6 DARO attack. Survive and you escape **back to 10** where you can pursue cherry-theft some more.

167

You have walked open eyed into the lion's den, figuratively speaking. As many might have expected, the heat becomes life-threateningly ruinous. To make matters worse, an ear-splitting crash behind you alerts you to a heavy portcullis having come rapidly down, preventing your means of retreat. Yikes! Make a L1-SR vs. CON and take 1d6 damage if you fail. If you live through this cooking process, you might as well carry on in the direction the snoring was coming from. Was. It has stopped. You hear movement instead and soon you feel something touching you in the blackness... **Go to 177.**

168

You're on a roll! As soon as you look you find one. There is just one and it is yours! If you want to pick it **go to 175**; if you think it might be unwise to push your luck you can get out of here now – **go to BBB.**

169

As the lid lifts up under your anxious fingers, you see a whistle lying on a blue velvet pad. There is a yellow ribbon to hang it round your neck with and under the whistle is a slip of paper that reads, 'Rock-a-bye Fido, from the tree top when the ...' the last few words have smudged and are impossible to read. You will eventually find your way out and get **back to 10.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



170

Those eyes burn! You now have two fewer fingers than before you attacked the Strate-gem. Not that you have long to miss them. Two fists strike either side of your head simultaneously and if there is vegetable you now resemble (if re-assembled) it would have to be a squash. Au revoir.

171

The ladder begins to get hot as you climb! Good grief – feast or famine! You don't have much choice other than to go up because it is too cold below. Make another L1-SR vs. CON – fail and your hands are going to be too sore for gripping anything for a day or too (you will need to factor this in as you proceed). When you get to the top, you see you must crawl out into a boiler room with an open furnace belching out heat. **Go to 200.**

172

It matters not a jot if you made that SR or not, given your choice. The maple monster shrieks with delight. 'I like you! Neither? Both, I think!' It snakes about your, misty tentacles syringing syrupiness into your every orifice. You feel fire raging in your veins and ice freezing your heart. Your will melts and snaps at the same time. You do not die but are in endless thrall to the tree fiend which uses you for all its dirty work. Its dirty work is very dirty indeed. Eventually you will be burnt out, useless and replaced. Roll 10d6 to see how many attribute points you lost as a suffering slave. You may choose what to reduce and then **go to 10** and continue. Oh yes... 1d6 years will have passed and your friends may not recognise you if you do get out.

173

Well done! No hay fever problem for you. The only trouble is the wheelbarrow starts



moving! You are about to be gardened! Do you want to stay put (**go to 191**), make a scary wailing sound and hope to frighten the gardener (**go to 192**) or leap up and try to whack the gardener on the noggin (**go to 197**)?

174

Aiming for the nose was a mistake. The Strate-gem jumps and your fist disappears down its throat, followed by your arm then the rest of you. Adios.

175

Nothing mean is going to happen now. It is a very lucky little leaf and it adds 2d6 to your LK. Take 100 APs for persevering in rich optimism. Now you can escape the clutches of Old Man Gruber's garden – **go to BBB.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

176

How did you do on CHR? Did you wow them in the aisles and have them begging for more? It really doesn't matter though because your failure to qualify vs. INT and LK means that you are perforated with teeth marks and have no body fluids or bone marrow left just a few short seconds after oozing the charm. The dog probably thought you were tasty though.

177

You find yourself being pulled clumsily forwards towards a large, furry creature. The rabbit! At least it is warming to snuggle up to. The rabbit does not speak but can certainly see in the dark. It is an old rabbit and is quite lonely. The rabbit has the idea of keeping you as a sort of slave-companion in its dotage.

Choices are:

- 1 – To accept your lot and to enjoy life with the old white rabbit in this fruit-filled garden where you will never go hungry (that would mean the end of the adventure)
- 2 – To be as unpleasant as you possibly can be with bodily (mis)functions, incessant chatter, that sort of thing (go to 190)
- 3 – Start fighting for your life (go to 194)
- 4 – Beg for mercy (go to 204)
- 5 – Make a proposition to the rabbit, offering something better than your company (write it down and go to 208)



178

Toes are very important. You try walking without them as the Strate-gem now must do. On second thoughts, don't try it, just take my word. The jewel fiend totters and then falls over, crashing and breaking up into those enticing gems once more. Take 100 APs. You may also fill your pockets with valuables (let's say 500 + 1d6 x 100 GPs worth – nearly as good as a hen that lays a golden egg and less trouble to clean up after). You may go for another gourd (go to E) or go back to your point of origin in this garden of delights (go to 10).

179

Did you eat a cherry? Having done so will make things go much better, in all probability. The first cherry anyone eats from that tree, provided that they're in Old Man Gruber's garden, adds 5 to both LK and SPD! So - did you make those SRs? (The +5's were to be added.) If you did not (aw, shucks – a critical fumble can happen even to newly stacked up dudes) then you are on the mutt menu and you don't really want to know any more details... If you made those SRs, you get away with the uneaten cherries! Hallelujah! Take another 100 APs – they're raining down on you! Now – what next? A dash for the wall to show your plunder to your buddies? Or are you going to grab some more? Maybe you want to sneak into the house? You can go back to 10 to mull it over, go straight to the house (go to C), try and scale the wall (go to ZZ) or get greedy and make a second strike (go to LL).

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

180

Even if you have the gloves on you are not safe. Misfortune decrees that what attacks you from the pond's hidden heart are flying fish. They like noses and ears. You do not react in time to have a chance of evading their attack. They gorge themselves on boy-meat. The only upside is that they leave your skeleton intact. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your WIZ and LK. Fail and there is no tomorrow. Make it and you rise again as a Living Skeleton. Your STR and CON are boosted by 50%, your WIZ is doubled but your LK and CHR are halved. Take 150 APs and **return to 10**.

181

Make a L2-SR vs. CHR. Make it and a whistle splits the heavens and the earth with a shrill blast. The dog freezes on command and you find yourself paralysed with blood trickling from your ears, which are still able to pick up the thump of heavy footsteps (**go to 96**). If you fail, there is no whistle, there is no help and, more to the point, there is no you. The dog dines dutifully on boy chops with all the trimmings.

182

Many of us are vulnerable to such an attack but not so the Strate-gem. His nuts are solid as. Assaulting him in this underhand fashion has left you open to retribution and the fist that smashes down on your cranium not only shatters it but also drives your head down to the space your heart just vacated. Arriverderci.



183

Lapisina sometimes does weird things to those she tires with but she is old now and her magic is rather wobbly. Plus, she doesn't that much care and loses concentration...

Roll 1d6 and see below:



- 1 – She gives you an extra pair of legs. When you run you may achieve a benefit akin to the *Little Feets* spell but if you roll a 5.5 fumble (less than 5) your feet get muddled and you fall over, helpless for 10 seconds.
- 2 – She converts your two legs into one. It is a very strong leg and is capable of doing 10d6 stomping damage but your DEX and SPD are halved (re DEX – this is not so for manual tasks).
- 3 – She gives you retractable claws. These are wickedly sharp and do 3d6 damage each. They are so tough that they can hold their own with steel.
- 4 – She permanently muffles your ears. You are stone deaf and will never hear bird song or the wind whistling again.
- 5 – She gives you permanent double vision. This will be very confusing to you in moments of stress such as battle or making saving rolls – you will need to make a SR vs. INT: if you roll a 5.5 fail (i.e. less than 5) you will fight with half combat total and SRs will be one level higher.
- 6 – She gives you toes like fingers. You can no hold anything you can hold in your hands with your feet. You can write with your feet; you are very good at climbing trees; you get on well with monkeys.

You may **return to 10** now for more garden japes.

184

Aaaa-tchoooo! That sneeze would wake the dead... You feel hands groping about in the weeds and grasses. You feel fingers pinching your cheeks...

Do you want to lie doggo (**go to 195**), make a frightening ghostly wail (**go to 193**) or jump out and lay into the whatever it is (**go to 198**)?

185

You must take 1d6 damage for every SR you missed. If you are unhurt you may scale the wall and escape the garden (**go to BBB**). If you died, enough said frankly!

If you were impaled, punctured or otherwise rendered sieve-like, you must make a L1-SR vs. STR – if you fail you faint (**go to 52**); if you succeed you haul your sorry carcass over the wall and sink to the ground on the outside (you are free of Old Man Gruber's clutches – **go to BBB**).

186

The grandfather clock is a beauty: the case is polished to a high gloss finish and inlaid with ebony, ivory and gold; the face has gem-encrusted numerals and platinum hands while the pendulum is over 4' long and shimmers with sheer power. It is a clock to make time itself dance to its beat! As you watch, time standing still for you at least, a white mouse darts down the pendulum shaft and then back up, before wrestling at the hands with its tiny paws.

If you want to open the face and reach for the mouse **go to 218**; if you want to watch some more **go to 228**; if you have had enough and would take another option **go to 238**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

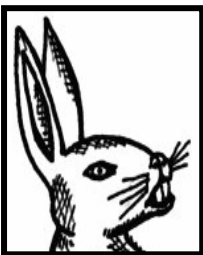
187

This is a dire emergency, my lad! Those dice better be kind or your dancing days are done. You need a L2-SR vs. the average of your DEX and SPD to pull this death-defying stunt off. Fail and you are dog chow. Succeed and you may take a bonus 100 APs and retreat, tail between your legs, **to 10** to reflect ruefully on a rather reckless risk.



190

Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your CON and your CHR. Fail and so does your attempt at getting out of this scrape. Go back to 177 and choose again. Succeed and the rabbit decides it does not really want to keep you after all. Take 100 APs for a miraculously escape and masterful control of bodily functions. The rabbit dumps you outside (it can operate the portcullis mechanisms) and you may either **go back to L** to do more rabbit-related stuff or **retreat to your garden entry point at 10**. Something good does become of this unlikely foray into the rabbit's warren – some of the big bunny's natural magic rubs off on you and you get an attribute enhancement (roll 1d6: 1 and 2 = 1d6 to CON, 3 and 4 = 1d6 to CHR, 5 and 6 = 1d6 to both CON and CHR).



191

Old Man Gruber has problems with an ornery critter, one that has made a sizable hole in his lawn. Nobwhacker the Gnome is a diligent gardener and sets out to fill the hole with garden refuse – including you! You find yourself dumped unceremoniously down a rabbit hole...

You can hear Knobwhacker whacking away above your head – probably best to move on and explore. **Go to 136**. All that is worth a bonus 50 APs.

192

How would you feel if a spooky wail was coming from a wheelbarrow full of garden waste? Maybe you would run for your life and maybe the gardener will do too...

Make a L1-SR vs. CHR – if you make it when you emerge you find the coast is clear and you may **go to ZZ** and choose another option; if you fail you are about as intimidating as a constipated budgerigar and must **return to 173** and make another choice (no time to lose!).

193

The possible menace you might have mustered is more than a little undone by the sneeze that preceded it. Not many terrifying monsters begin their horror show with a nostril explosion, were-elephants excepted. The gardener, a gnome named Knobwhacker, uses his trusty knobwhacker (a club of serious knobliness) to whack you.

The garden waste acts as armour, thank goodness, and you only have to take 1d6 damage if you fail a L1-SR vs. LK. The blow tips the wheelbarrow over and you stumble to your feet to face the angry gnome. It's fighting time! **Go to 135**.

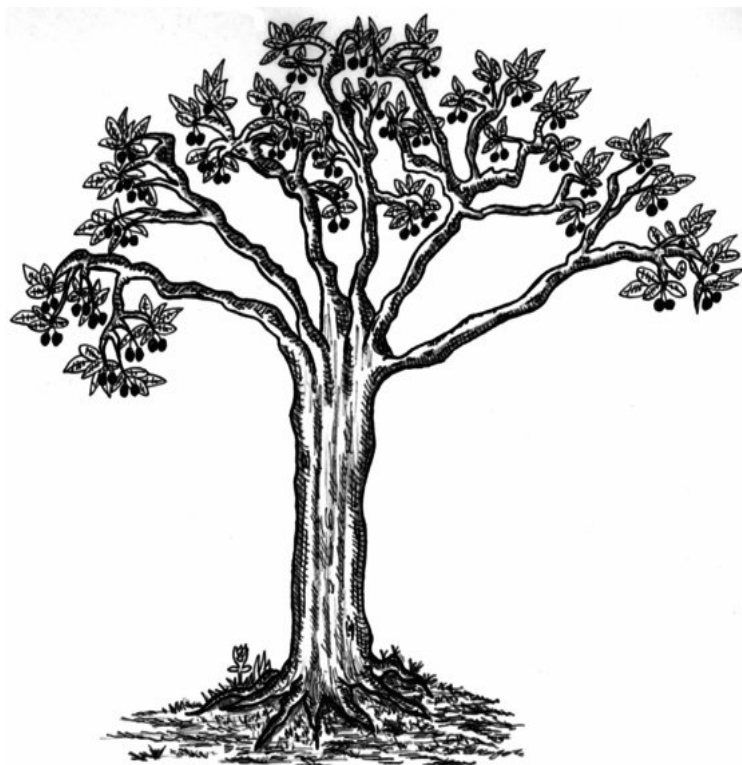
TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

194

Roll for combat. The rabbit may be old but it is a formidable fighter. It gets 6d6 plus 25. It gets to add 50% again to its combat total because you are fighting blind effectively. Your combat total is halved because it already has its paws on you. You must have died! If not, you can eat the rabbit and then you starve to death. Pick on someone else's rabbit next time!

195

No the best plan – far short of cunning even by Baldrick standards. That sneeze was not quiet. Hands, strong hands, haul you out by the scruff of the neck. You suspect you are in a smidgeon of trouble now. **Go to 149.**



196

Have you ever tasted a cherry so sweet? The first cherry anyone eats from that tree, provided that they're in Old Man Gruber's garden, adds 5 to both LK and SPD! You must be feeling super-human! What next, Gunga Din? You can **go back to 10** to mull it over, go straight to the house (**go to C**) or try and scale the wall (**go to ZZ**).

197

Even though leaping out of a wheelbarrow full of garden refuse is not easy (and certainly not easy to do with style!) you have the element of surprise. You may double your combat total if you nimbly make a L1-SR vs. DEX or with lightning reflexes make a L1-SR vs. SPD – otherwise you just get a 50% bonus. You are in a fight with the gardener! **Go to 135** and do battle with the garden gnome.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

198

With that giveaway sneeze-blast (a claxon on an ocean-going vessel would be less obvious) you have not opportunity to take the gardener by surprise. In fact it is only that the garden gnome thought you might be a shade from the Pits of Despair that prevents him from creaming you before you emerge and ready yourself for action. You are in a fight for your life! **Go to 135.**

199

The fragment feels... weird and wonderful in your hand but when you put it in your pocket the sensation fades. If you slip your hand into your pocket, you get that feeling of potent necromancy again. You should **go back to 10** now but if you ever feel that things are just too much for you then you should **go to AAA.**

200

You have got inside but, remember, if you can't stand the heat get out of the boiler room (too many boiler stokers spoil the broth). An imposing bust of a Medusa is set in an alcove within one wall. There is a large furnace with a heavy, dull red door. It seems hot. There is also a large pair of gloves, a welder's mask and a 3' long pair of tongs all hanging on pegs on one wall. A door in the far wall suggests a way into the main part of the house. If you want to leave now by the door **go to 212**; if you wish to open the furnace door **go to 222**; if you want to examine the bust **go to 304**; if you want to help yourself to the items left here **go to 232**. Oh yes... one more thing. If you do want to leave the way you came in, too bad. There is now what surely must be a magical, invisible barrier in place preventing this. There can be no retreat now.

201

The fire opal enters your system and your body's defences fall and dissipate like chaff to the wind before its might and majesty. Your eyes now glow with fire – you can see in the dark and fire off fiery blasts to a range of 50' doing 3d6 damage. Now **return to 10.**



202

As you recover, a grinding, grating sound arises from the depths below the strange rectangle. A stone box the same size rises from somewhere underneath the house and the lid slides to one side. The ropes fall from your hands and feet. Then all is silent once more. When you pluck up the nerve to look inside, you see that the box is empty for all save your name written in a dark red cursive on the bottom of the box. Do you want to get inside the box (**go to 220**) or search for a way out of here, pulling back the drapes (**go to 250**)?

203

The herbs are bitter and not at all easy to eat. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of CON and CHR to see if you can force them down. If you fail you can't eat enough to get a 'high' out of them. Make it and you are steaming!



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

Your body and mind now refuse to believe in minor wounds. No damage of less than 10 in one 'happening' impacts upon you. The power of positive thought! Now **return to 10**.

204

The rabbit does not understand. **Go back to 177** and choose again.



205

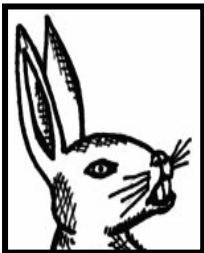
As it happens, the djinn is on the look out for a new master (he's a co-dependent sort of fellow). Could be that you're the one written in the starry heavens for him... Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your WIZ, LK and CHR. If you fail, it was not destined to be you. The djinn sets about eating you and does so within 1d6 minutes. If you succeeded then the djinn loves you! All eight attributes are 20 except for CON which is 10 x 1d6. The djinn's name is Krampon. Krampon can't grant wishes but he can fly and carry objects up to the size of a human for up to an hour. He will fight for you whenever you cry out 'Up yours, ugly!' The djinn can hurt ghosts and most other creatures generally only harmed by magic. **Go back to 10** and choose again with Krampon at your heels. (Oh yes, he needs to sleep in his receptacle 1d6 hours out of every 24 or he gets yanked back to djinn-land, a place he really does not want to return to because he gets bullied horribly there by the big djinns.)

206

How could you resist? You missed out on a blessing worthy of the Trollgod. A cherry would have added 5 to both LK and SPD! But the moment of magic has passed. Too bad! What next then, Einstein? You can **go back to 10** to mull it over, go straight to the house (**go to C**) or try and scale the wall (**go to ZZ**).

207

Not overly concerned with infectious diseases or just fastidious about dental hygiene? It does taste a bit yuck actually. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your WIZ and CON. If you fail, the magic brush dissolves your teeth and leaves you a mumblar. Lose 1d6 CHR as a result. If you make the SR, the brush transforms your teeth into durable, poison-coated weapons. They do 2d6 damage and inject a poison on a roll of an odd number on 1d6 whenever you bite someone or something. The poison causes paralysis if a L10-SR vs. CON is failed (lasting 2d6 (DARO) minutes – you are immune. You may keep the brush. **Go back to 10** and choose again.



208

The rabbit does not understand. Take 50 APs for trying and **go back to 177** to choose again.

209

Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your INT and DEX. Fail and the tiny little things get jostled too much as you remove them... Khaghbboommm! Your atoms are scattered all over the galaxy and you never get to appreciate the extent of the explosion.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

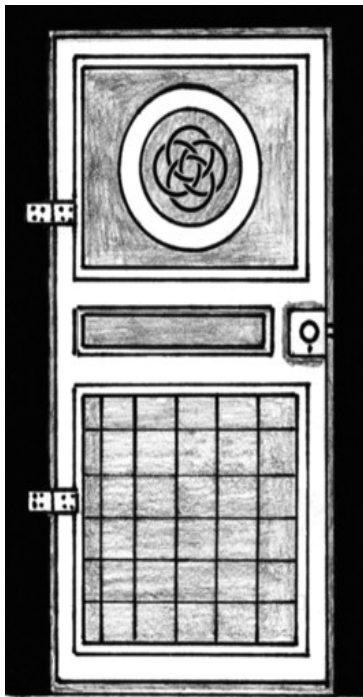
Succeed and you have 100 little death bombs – each does 10d6 damage and they need only to be agitated to be triggered. They get anything in a 50' radius. Use them wisely (and with extreme caution). Now **return to 10**.

210

As your senses settle and your apprehensions fail to materialise, you suddenly hear the grinding of gears. The rectangular stone slab with the exotic outline descends smoothly into the hidden depths below. Then your bonds loose themselves and drop from your wrists and ankles. When you summon the wherewithal to look down there, you see steel cables disappearing into the darkness. Do you want to climb down the cables to explore the inner secrets of Old Man Gruber's house (**go to 240**) or search for a way out of here, pulling back the drapes (**go to 250**)?

211

Make a L1-SR vs. LK. Fail and they are worthless. Succeed and you may be pleased. Roll 1d6: 1 = you get 50 GPs for them, 2-4 = you get 100 GPs for them, 5 = bingo! You hit the jackpot with these much sort after and illegal 'medicinal' herbs and you net 500 GPs, 6 = keys to Fort Knox time! As they prove to be magical and very rare (as hen's teeth) and you score 1d6 x 1,000 GPs. Now **return to 10**.



212

The door is locked and heavy, too heavy to think of breaking it down. If you have a key **go to 242**; otherwise **return to 200** and think again.

213

Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your INT and LK. Fail and you do not pick your wizard wisely – a little research would have been good. The wizard steals the bottle from you, djinn and all. Make a L1-SR vs. CHR – fail that and the wizard casts *Hold That Pose* on you and then slits your throat so you won't get ideas about revenge or the law. Too bad! Make the CHR SR and he merely strips you, binds you and has you dumped in a clump of gorse bushes – you can take 100 APs for that and we'll say you survived unscathed. If you made the INT/LK SR,

the wizard will pay you 500 x 1d6 for the bottle – you don't get any APS though. This all happens if/after you get out of the garden (I admit it would be weird playing on knowing that later you got your throat cut! Email/trollmail me and I'll offer you a way out of that paradox...). Now **return to 10**.

214

What will it be? Sweet talk and lively conversation (**go to 221**) or mindless violence and body blows (**go to 231**)?



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

215

As you creep forward the cat rushes at you and hisses, claws extended. Do you want to dodge past it to one of the doors (**go to 281**) or show the moggy who is boss (**go to 291**)?

216

If you failed that combination SR you are no more eloquent than a stammering jellyfish. The maid begins to scream loudly and grabs her mop. **Go to 256**. If you made it, there is a chance you can convince her that you are someone of substance, a person to pay heed to. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your INT and CHR and **go to 266**.

217

The cat meows plaintively and wends its way to the chaise longue which it starts scratching in an agitated fashion. It is beginning to tear a hole in the upholstery. When the hole is about as big as your fist the cat turns away and arches its back as if to say its work is done. If you would like to feel inside the hole **go to 274**, to look inside **go to 284** or to make the hole bigger with your bear hands **go to 294**.



218

You will have to be good to catch this mouse. Make a L1-SR vs. DEX and a L1-SR vs. SPD. If you make both **go to 305**; otherwise **go to 315**.

219

As you get out from box you see that you are in a short passageway which turns sharply to the left after 25'. It is quite clean and it is plain that it is often used. When you make your way to the end of this short passage and look to the left you see no more than 10' ahead of you a spiral staircase. It does not go down, only up. **Go to 434**.

220

Once you are inside, the lid slides back to cover the box. It is impossible to stop it closing. You can feel that the box is descending once more. It moves slowly down. It quickly becomes fuggy inside as you have to breathe in air you have just exhaled. Then it begins to get warmer. Soon the warmth is replaced with heat to an unpleasant degree. Make a L1-SR vs. CON and **go to 229**.

221

As you begin your soliloquy, the maid turns, showing almost no lips and prominent yellowed teeth in swollen red gums. As for her face, it is more that of a fleshless skull than a kindly old bottlewasher. Her appearance is such a shock that it might put many a budding orator off his stride or even cause her to topple off her soap box! Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your STR and CON and then **go to 216**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

222

You feel the heat of the boiler suddenly! Did the furnace ignite, instantly to peak temperature? The door is hot. If you want to try the handle, glowing redly before your eyes, **go to 252**; if you back off, **return to 200** and think afresh.

223

An intriguing selection... if you would like to don the apron **go to 260**; if like to take the goblets **go to 270**; if you would like to pick up the giant bottle opener **go to 280**.

224

Make a L1-SR either vs. LK or some form of sneaking talent (maybe the average of INT and DEX?). If you fail **go to 248**; if you succeed you are under the table and the maid appears to be still busily occupied in her work. Do you want to wait to see if she leaves or something interesting happens (**go to 258**) or would you like to jump out and grab her by the ankles and take her prisoner (**go to 268**)?

225

Which door will you try? The nearest (**go to 261**) or the further away (**go to 271**)?

226

If you dodged the rancid butter you are atop Fannie. Roll your combat dice – you may have your way with her. If you failed, the butter catches you splat on the nose and your mouth fills with the foul dairy projectile and your eyes clog. Fannie sees her chance and pounds at you with her mop. You must make a L1-SR vs. the average of your INT and your LK to avoid being mopped up. If you get mop-whacked you take 2 points of damage. Assuming Fannie's mop does not kill you, **go to 236**.

227

If you failed the cat does not take to you – there just is no chemistry. It leaps from the chaise longue which then scorches up to the ceiling – you need to make a L1-SR vs. DEX to avoid taking 1d6 damage from this rocket trip (if you survive you can **go back to 109** where the cat watches you balefully and will make it quite clear telepathically that it will give you a shockingly bad scratch if you go near it again (this action would send you **to 52**). If you made the SR, the cat rubs against you affectionately and causes the chaise longue to sink gracefully back to the ground. It then asks you with exquisite manners if you would catch the mouse in the clock for it. If you agree **go to 186**; if you do not wish to pander to a feline **go to 109** with the enmity of the cat (see above).

228

The mouse exerts every ounce of its meagre strength in its determination to shift the clock's hands but in vain! Trembling, it clings to the minute hand and is clearly exhausted. Either open the clock door and try to catch the mouse (**go to 218**) or **go back to 109** and make another decision.





TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

229

If you failed, the heat saps your STR and it will remain at just 50% of its normal value for the next 24 hours. 24 hours? Do you think you have 24 hours remaining to you? Gradually, mercifully, the heat reduces and the box comes to a halt and stays both still and shut for more minutes than your mind can manage to bear... Make a L1-SR vs. CHR – fail and you go mad, literally barking and raving. If you are insane, you must reduce your INT by 50% for the next 24 hours. To your great relief, the lid of the box eventually slides off and you can breathe freely once more. Take 100 APs for this hell-ride and step out and **go to 219**.

230

If you failed the SR, you fail to hold on securely as you descend and you take one point of damage to your hands. The metal fragments now embedded into your skin begin to irritate and you see your hands are flecked with dark black spots when you reach the bottom and look at them in the pale blue light of the glowstones set in the wall for eerie illumination. You now must attempt a L1-SR vs. CON – fail and your system reacts allegically to the foreign material circulating through your body (this means you froth, foam and bark rabidly until your heart gives up the ghost...). If you made the saving roll vs. DEX, you descended with accomplishment and are good to **go to 219** (as you are if you avoided rabies with your sore mitts).



231

Seeing your malicious intentions, the maid, a spinster given the name Fannie Arbuckle, picks up a pat of warm butter and hurls it at you. You need to make a L1 SR to get out of the way. **Go to 226**.

232

What do you want to take? If you want everything **go to 262**; if you want something specific or just to omit taking one specific item, record it and **go to 272**.

233

You see a silver key in one goblet. You may take the key. If you would like to fill a goblet with wine **go to 300**; if you would like to fill a goblet with whatever is in the casks **go to 290**; if you would like to try the door **go to 243**; if you want to pick up the king sized corkscrew now **go to 280**. For still more options **return to 109**.

234

What's it to be then? Decisions, decisions! It would be a pity if the maid turned round now... Choose either the door that might have a pantry behind it (**go to 241**) or the one that is likely to allow you further into the house or perhaps just back where you just came from (**go to 251**)?



235

The door creaks melodramatically as you try the handle. It is not locked but it has made a noise that might wake Rip van Winkle. Do you want to peer through the door (**go to 285**) or move back sharply (**go to 295**)?

236

Fannie gets 1d6 -4 for her mop and has no personal adds. If you defeat Fannie you may take 5 APs. If she still lives and you wish to question her **go to 266**; if you killed her **go back to 139** and replot your destiny.

237

You may be ignoring the cat but the cat does not ignore you. Make a L1-SR vs. WIZ. The cat has just tried a low-powered spell on you it thinks of as 'Hypno-Purr'. The purring noise it is making cannot be heard by the human ear but will put many into a deep trance. The chaise longue sinks back down to the ground. If you failed the SR, you are catatonic and the cat claws your leg deeply enough to leave a permanent sign of its dominance over you, to knock your CON down by one point and to leave you unconscious because of the toxin on its claws – **go to 52**. If you made the SR it does not follow through with the spell, sensing your innate magical reserve, and instead telepathically requests that you open the clock's door. If you do as it asks **go to 186**; if you decline **go back to 109** where you will be kept under the cat's scornful glare.

238

Just as you are starting to turn, the mouse scrabbles at the glass and opens its little mouth as if pleading with you not to turn your back on a fellow creature in need. It seems to send a thought directly into your mind – "Catch me, catch me, catch me..." If you do turn your back, paying no heed to its doleful begging, **go to 348**; if you will indeed open the door and try to catch the mouse **go to 218**.

239

The apron is ensorcelled. You understand this, whether intuitively or through magical communication, who can say? While you wear this you will be invulnerable to arrows, spears and the like as well as to fire-based attacks. It will also give you a protection value of 20 in battle. It is not easy to wear though and it will impede you. While you wear it both DEX and SPD are down by 2. Now **return to 109** and determine your next course of action.

240

The cables are both rough and sharp – tiny pieces of metal grate against your palms and flake off. Make L1-SR vs. DEX and **go to 230**.

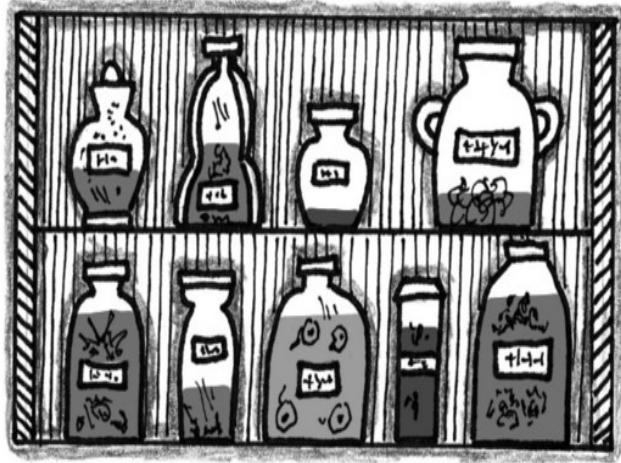
241

Quite right! It is a pantry. Do you want to shut the door quietly so no one will be able to see you inside this larder? You decide – and remember! As your eyes become accustomed to the dull light cast by the purple glowstone set in the back of the door, you see before you wooden boxes neatly stacked, mostly square shaped.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

To your left are shelves groaning with pots marked with the names of common and exotic herbs and spices. There are labels identifying cumin, coriander, nutmeg, fenugreek and paprika – it seems that Old Man Gruber likes his food to have a zing to it. There are also jars marked with more foreboding names such as belladonna, arsenic and ‘myxymatosis’. Not so enticing. To your right the shelves are stocked with larger jars containing a clear fluid and pickled body parts – internal organs, eyeballs and other ‘things’ hard to put a name to, some of them squirming inside their glass prisons. You may **return to 139** if you don’t like the look of the old man’s pantry or you may add a liberal dose of something poisonous to the jars with the wriggling ‘things’ in them (**go to 301A**).



242

As you turn the key in the lock, a face appears on the door, first as an outline, then the hideous demon features fill in the canvas and finally the face pops out into three dimensions. A great tongue protrudes, the eyes flicker mockingly and flames leak from the nostrils. The mouth opens to reveal not teeth but hundreds of tiny skeletons each bearing pikes. The stench of rotting flesh and stale beer washes over you. The mouth hisses out a question as the skeletons reach out to skewer you – but they do not have the reach to punish you. “What is the password, foolish mortal?” If you have an answer **go to 282**; otherwise **return to 200** and think of a plan, Stan!

243

The door will not open without a key. If you have a key **go to 253**; if you do not **return to 109** and think again.

244

The maps are indeed artistically drawn cartographic renditions of the different continents on Trollworld. In the corner of each one is the name; underneath each one is a brass panel, which one might expect to carry an engraving – these are blank. If you would like to look more closely **go to 302**; otherwise **return to 271**.

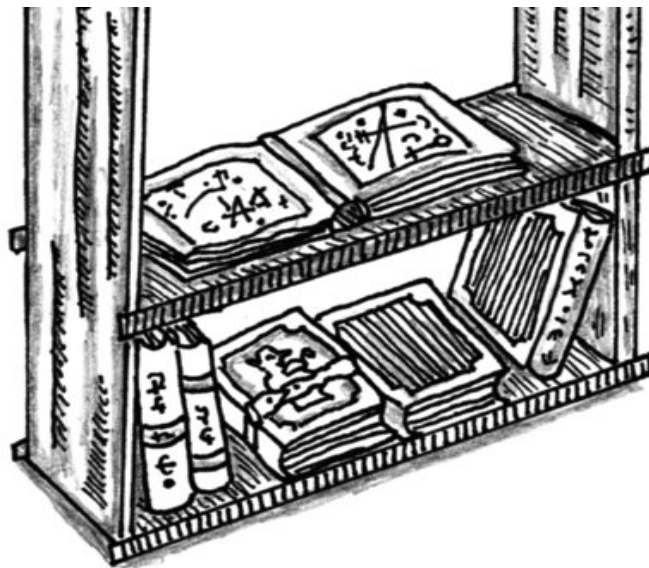
245

As you sit down, the couch stirs! It begins to rise off the ground. The cat leaps aboard with feline grace. Will you stay on the floating chaise longue (**go to 275**) or jump off and reconsider your options (**go to 147**)?

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

246

It's a quick task either with a sleeve or just a finger licked and wiped regularly. As you remove the dirt and reveal the letters you find a total of twelve letters. They are: a, e, t, e, l, n, y, o, b, s, n, r. If you can rearrange them into one or more words that might be significant and say them aloud, as intuition prompts you, then go to 407; otherwise return to 261.



247

Old Man Gruber has a book collection to rival anyone you might care to name. There are books on werewolves, books on vampires, books on demons, zombies and mummies, alongside dusty tomes of curses and thick manuals on the theory of magic. Intriguing... If you would like to select a book you may do so - go 359 to for a book on werewolves, to 361 for vampires, to 363 for demons, to 365 for zombies, to 369 for mummies, to 371 for curses and to 373 for magic theory. Or you can return to 285.

248

Not much chop at hiding, are you? The maid turns and you see her bony, almost skeletal face – it is quite frightening! The maid begins to scream loudly and grabs her mop. She advances on you with a curse and a scowl that would sink battleships. Looks like there's no avoiding a scrap with the old scrubber. Go to 256.

249

As you touch the viscous remnants to your tongue, your whole mouth starts to tingle and this sensation rapidly spreads to your larynx, to your entire throat. Whether by magic or intuition, you realise that you have acquired the Gift of Tongues – you are able to speak the language of any sentient being on Trollworld. However, you cannot understand what is said to you in any language you have not mastered through study! You may try the other goblet's contents (go to 259) or return to 109 to make further progress.

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



250

As searching goes, it is not too hard. There are two doors, one with a scroll etched deeply into the wood, the other with a goblet, this too etched into the timber. If you would like to open the door with the scroll **go to 269**; if you prefer to enter the one with the goblet **go to 251**. You may change your mind about going down – **go to 240**.

251

You are gazing out into a dining room. There is a large oval table made of white, blue-veined marble ringed by fourteen wing-backed chairs of burgundy leather and dull iron studs. The places have been set with solid silver cutlery: three knives and three forks, the smallest on the outside, and a soup spoon and a desert spoon. There are two fine crystal glasses at each setting, one a flute, the other a generous bowl of a glass. There is no food on the table so it would seem that dinner is some way off yet. In the centre is a large oval platter, again of silver, with a long carving knife and fork laid beside it. The table is set for ten. There are three more doors, one in each of the walls. If you like, you can retreat into the open kitchen (**go to 139**) or you can open one of the other doors (**go to 311** for the one to your left, **go to 321** for the one to your right or **go to 331** for the door back to the room with the drapes).

252

If you are not wearing the gloves, your fingertips melt as you touch the door. You pass out – **go to 52** if you are still alive after suffering two points of CON damage and a permanent reduction to DEX by two. If you are wearing gloves, very good so far! **Go to 283**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

253

As you turn the key in the lock, a blinding flash of light erupts from the lock. Fortunately, the effect barely lasts ten seconds but when your eyes once again feed information to your brain you realise that you must have been teleported because things are not as they were... This is all too much, your head is spinning, you feel nauseous and your knees buckle... You collapse into obliviousness. **Go to 52.**

254

Most of the scrolls are meaningless to anyone other than the most erudite of scholars. There are a number that catch the eye though because the tags attached with ribbon giving the subject matter are blank. As you look and ponder, the letter 'R' appears on the tag of a well-worn scroll in a red leather case. You may look at something else if you wish (**go to 271**) or you may continue to watch to see if any other letters appear (**go to 299**).



255

The cat looks familiar... As you draw near, it hisses a warning. Do you want to try to pet it (**go to 265**) or will you back off (**go to 147**)?

256

The skeletal old maid gets 1d6 -4 for her mop and has no personal adds. If you defeat Fannie you may take 5 APs. If she does for you, be thankful your friends are not here to witness this base humiliation! You hear footsteps coming from somewhere within the unseen depths of Old Man Gruber's house – well, she did scream! Do you want to duck under the table (**go to 276**) or fight the whoever/whatever too (**go to 286**)?

257

All the scrolls seem to be blank. Weird – does the old man plan to do a lot of writing? Maybe his memoirs? Now, they could be a scary read! You can **go back to 285** and select another option or you can try licking a scroll to see if you uncover invisible ink. If you do this strange thing **go to 372**.

258

The most interesting thing that happens is that she finishes doing the dishes and sits down and takes a nap. You can come out now, o mighty warrior! **Go back to 139** and choose again (if you attack the maid you get a free attack – if that doesn't do for her, the prospect of you ever punching your way out of a wet paper bag must be remote).

259

The effect on your lips and tongue is sharp as you taste the dregs left in the goblet. You feel movement in your mouth – your gums to be precise. Rapidly, you lose four front teeth, two at the top, two below.



No sooner have they dropped to the floor than four more begin to push through. You feel whole large and sharp they are with the tip of your tongue. You know what has happened – you now have fangs!

In close combat you get 2d6 for these gnashers in addition to anything you get for your fists or weapons. It is possible, you find, to hide these new teeth with your lips if you keep your mouth firmly shut. You may try the other goblet's contents (**go to 249**) or **return to 109** to make further progress.

260

The apron is stiff and starched. It has old, dark stains deep within the fabric, so old it is impossible to identify them for sure but a safe guess would be that they are blood stains. The apron is clearly intended for someone considerably larger than you but it will do at a pinch. If you would like to put it on **go to 239**; if you think it would be too cumbersome to walk about wearing such a coverall **return to 109** and select another option.

261

The door is not locked. As you turn the brass skeleton head knob, it opens inwards to reveal a sitting room covered with thick, grimy cobwebs. You can make out several armchairs encased in the dusty cobwebs, as well as a right-angled couch. You can also make out figures wrapped up in the webs. Pictures hung on every wall show scenes of leprechauns cavorting under and on rainbows. Each rainbow has a crock of gold at the end embossed with a letter but it is hard to make these characters out because of the dirt that has settled onto the artist's work.

If you would like to back out **go to 147**; if you would like to investigate the figures shrouded so miserably **go to 287**; if you would like to study the artworks more closely **go to 297**.

262

That was smart and warrants 50 APs. Now **return to 200** for the next step in the journey.

263

"Ah, that's better!" she observes as the door shuts out the light. To compensate, Molly fires up the leprechaun version of the Will-o-Wisp spell that they like to call 'Moonshine' – there is now a distinct smell of whisky in the jar. "Look, listen and learn, laddie," she says sweetly. "This house used to belong to the Little Folk and we want it back. It's been too long and we miss it awful sore. I was born here and I shouldn't have to be cooped up in a sherry cask to enjoy a little bit of nostalgia. Old Man Gruber knows too much about the Little Folk for us to take the house from him but he doesn't know much about you!"

Will you do as I bid you and follow our plan, so help you?"

If you agree to do as Molly urges go **to 301**; if you tell her it's not your business and politely but firmly decline **go to 333**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



264

The desk is scattered with letters in foreign scripts, a stack of envelopes, an inkpot and quill pen, a blotting pad, a letter opener (worth 1d6 +3 if you want it) and a thesaurus (don't worry, it doesn't bite!). Make a L1-SR vs. INT or vs. LK and **go to 341** if you succeed or otherwise **back to 271**.

265

Make a L1-SR vs. CHR. If you fail the cat scratches at you. You need to make a L1-SR vs. SPD to avoid the loss of one point of CON (this proves to be a permanent loss). If you make it, the cat purrs and rubs round your legs – **go to 217**. You may try to stroke the cat again but the saving roll is now at L2. You may also **return to 147** to think anew.

266

The names of the great orators roll off the tongue, don't they? (That is a rhetorical question.) Demosthenes, Mark Anthony, Lincoln, Mensa the Dwarf – all have done what you just did. The maid is all ears (and skin and bone). What is that you would have her tell you? If you want to know where to find Old Man Gruber **go to 306**; if you want her to divulge the location of his treasure chest **go to 316**; if you want her to tell you the meaning of life **go to 326**.

267

As you approach this mirrored door, your reflection stops replicating your movements and holds up a hand to halt you. It speaks. "One of us is unworthy – let us see who it is." You feel a surge of khremmatic energy crackle through every nerve ending in your body and you know that this is an examination you cannot afford to flunk.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

You must test yourself against your reflected self on your eight prime attributes in the following order: STR vs. SPD, WIZ vs. CHR, INT vs. DEX, LK vs. CON. (You roll first and then your opponent-self.)

If you win at least two of these tests all is fine and you may **pass through the door to 331**. If you lose three or more of these assessments then you lose permanently one point from each of the attributes you lost on. (If you come to the mirrored door again, you will be tested again but this time you will have to reverse the attributes e.g. SPD vs. STR. Win, lose or draw you take 100 APs.

268

You may rely on STR, INT, LK, DEX or SPD – all you need is a L1-SR to overpower the maid (if you fail you will be in a fight – **go to 256**). Assuming you bagged the old bag, you must decide what to do with her... Let's see... You could interrogate her and worm out Old Man Gruber's secrets (**go to 358**), you could march her round with you and use her as a shield/trap detector (**go to 362**) or you could ask her to marry you (**go to 366**).

269

You may have expected to find trouble but if trouble it be it is in the form of a room. **Go to 285**.

270

Both goblets have traces of their last contents clinging stubbornly within. More sticky than wet by the looks of it. Neither substances have any odour – one is a velvety nut brown in colour, the other a greenish ichor... If these are not for you to test and taste you may **return to 109** to take a different direction but if you are in the mood to take the persona of a guinea pig and experiment... for the nut brown dregs **go to 249**; for the olive ichor **go to 259**.



271

The ivory handle has been shaped into an elephant head with large ears and tusks. The tusks seem quite blunt so you need not worry. The door itself opens inwards noiselessly to reveal a map room with charts on every wall. There are maps of the Dragon, Kraken and Eagle continents as well as one in the shape of a wolf. Scrolls litter the floor and an exquisitely carved roll-top desk occupies a little alcove with a red-shining glowstone above it and a revolving green leather chair before it. There are several little drawers, one of which holds a tiny golden key in its lock. If you would like to enter the room and examine the maps on the walls **go to 244**; if you like to pick up a scroll and

flatten it out **go to 254**; if you would like to go to the desk **go to 264**. You may also **return to 147** if thence you came or **to 312** if you came from a room with red drapes.

272

As you turn away you here a popping noise and when you look back you see that there are no items left on the pegs now. Whatever you chose not to take is no longer there. **Back to 200** for the next step in your master plan...



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

273

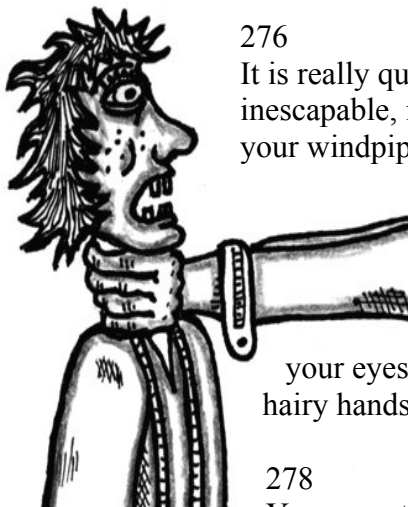
“You foolish fool!” she cries with feeling. “Safe it certainly is not! Get your skinny butt in here or make your won luck and shut me back safe and snug within.” You can get inside with Molly ([go to 263](#)), shut the lid and leave her to it ([return to 109](#)) or stick to your guns and demand she comes out ([go to 333](#)).

274

You feel something cylindrical – paper perhaps. As you begin pulling it out you feel something moving inside the couch... Time to pull your finger out – and your hand! Make a L1-SR vs. SPD. If you fail the denizen of the chaise longue bites a finger off and eats it at its leisure. You take two points of damage to CON and a permanent loss of one point of DEX (it was only a pinkie and you get 50 APs for losing it). If you make it the unknown enemy goes hungry. Either way you manage to remove the item the cat lead you to. [Go to 354](#).

275

If you want to stroke and befriend the cat you need to make a L1-SR vs. CHR ([go to 227](#)); if you ignore the cat [go to 237](#).



276

It is really quite a pathetic hiding place. Hands reach for you, strong hands, inescapable, invulnerable hands. They take hold of your neck and squeeze your windpipe until it closes and does not open... [Go to 52](#).

277

You have set off a burglar trap and were not quick enough to jump out of the way. Everything goes black as something drops over your head and consciousness slips away. When your eyes open, things are pretty grim. Old Man Gruner has his big, hairy hands round your neck. [Go to 480](#).

278

You open the door inwards and look out over the Candle Room. If you count them there are 666 lit candles arranged in a spiral on the floor of this room. You can shut the door and [go back to 147](#), you can start to blow all the candles out ([go to 408](#)) or you can walk to the centre of the spiral ([go to 413](#)).

279

There is a verse written on the scroll:

*“He who holds the eldritch crown
Often wears a bitter frown
Take the chance to knock if off
When he gives his tell-tale cough
Always keeping both eyes down.”*

You may take the scroll and [return to 271](#).



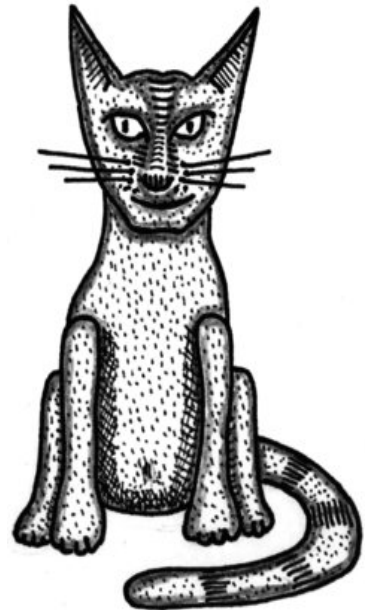
TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

280

OK, so now you have a giant corkscrew! Yay, you! What are you going to do with it? It would get 3d6 in combat but only if you have STR of 18 or more. **Return to 109** and take the next step...

281

The cat seems to shrug and goes to sit at the front door. You can open the first door (**go to 278**), the second door (**go to 288**) or go back to the front door to keep the cat company (**go to 147**).



282

The only answer that will suffice is “Skullhalla”. If this is not what you uttered in answer to the demon head’s question it breathes a noxious gas over you and all – for you – goes pitch black and still. You take 1d6 damage to CON and also 50 APs. If you are not slain by this halitosis attack go to 52. If you did speak the right password, the demon head looks at you with utter contempt and then vanishes back into its wooden prison. Take 100 APs. You may now open the door with the key... **go to 292**.

283

As you open the door there is a flare of white light and a fearsome eruption of scorching heat. If you are not wearing the welder’s mask the violent heat partially melts your eyeballs. You must suffer three points of CON damage and a permanent loss of three points of DEX as your sight is now far from perfect. If this does not kill you, you pass out – **go to 52**. If you were wearing the welder’s mask you are adequately protected. **Go to 293**.

284

You see a cylindrical object– paper perhaps. As you look more closely you see something moving inside the couch... Time to blink – and shut your eyes tightly! Make a L1-SR vs. SPD. If you fail the denizen of the chaise longue pokes you in any eye with a bony finger. You take two points of damage to CON and a permanent loss of one point of DEX (you have a detached retina – you need a Poor Baby spell to secure it again - but you get 50 APs for not losing an entire eyeball). If you make it the unknown enemy is frustrated and retreats back into the couch. Either way you manage to remove the item the cat lead you to. **Go to 354**.

285

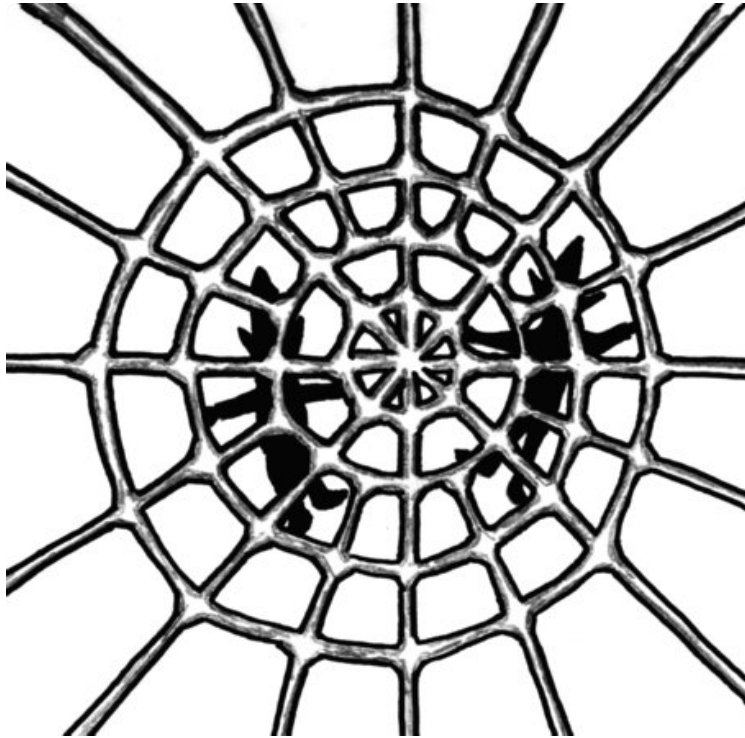
You see a library with many books upon shelves free from dust. There are also racks of scrolls and a door with a full length mirror set into it.

You may enter the library and examine books (**go to 247**), scrolls (**go to 257**) or the door and mirror (**go to 267**) or you may retreat to the front door to reconsider matters (**go to 147**).

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

286

Roll your combat dice. You might have enough spirit to summon the demon within... any 6 you roll gets re-rolled so there is no limit to the damage you might do. **Go to 296.**



287

Upon careful scrutiny it is clear that the shrouded creatures are most likely leprechauns. They are out of reach though if you have any thoughts of freeing them. You could try climbing the cobwebs... If that is your choice **go to 353**; otherwise **return to 261** and exercise another option.

288

You are about to enter the Room of Nails. The floor, ceiling and all four walls are covered with nails – a good four inches of steel sticking out towards the centre. If you want to walk inside **go to 409** or you may just shut this door and **return to 281**.

290

Each cask is fitted with a little tap. They all look the same so it doesn't seem to matter much which one you choose to turn to fill the goblet. Make a L1-SR vs. LK. If you make it **go to 310**; if you fail **go to 320**.

291

That presumably means you attack the cat in some fashion. Roll your dice for combat and also attempt L1-SRs vs. each of LK, DEX and SPD. Now **go to 298**.



292

The turning of the key in the lock followed by the turning of the door knob without the second secret word of power activates a teleportation spell. That is what you have just done. The teleportation is not gentle on a body and you lose consciousness instantly. **Go to 52.**

293

There in the magma at the bottom of the furnace lies a key! If you have the tongs and make a L1-SR vs. SPD you can get it before it melts! With the key rescued from a molten ending, you may wait for it to cool and **return to 200.** If you fail the roll and you cannot obtain the key that is a pity – a real pity. As the key turns to nothingness within the awful furnace, reacting miserably to the inrush of oxygen your opening the door permitted, it emits a high pitched cry of anguish – enough to disrupt your consciousness and instantly sedate you. **Go to 52.**

294

The cat has done the hard work – it is easy to enlarge the hole. In no time you see that you have uncovered something cylindrical – paper perhaps. As you begin pulling it out you feel something moving inside the couch... Time to back off – discretion is the better part of valour! Make a L1-SR vs. SPD. If you fail the denizen of the chaise longue bites a chunk of one of your hands (roll a dice – odd = left, even = right) and eats it at its leisure. You take two points of damage to CON and a permanent loss of one point of DEX (you get 50 APs for learning a painful lesson). If you make it the unknown enemy retreats and goes hungry. Either way you manage to remove the item the cat lead you to. **Go to 354.**

295

Make a L1-SR vs. LK and SPD. If you make both you are free to **go back to 147** to think things over. If you fail either or both rolls **go to 277.**

296

The thing that comes for you is deft and powerful... and it seems to know what it is going to have to deal with. A dark shape, sometimes solid, sometimes incorporeal, writhes about you, settling its unforgiving hands on your neck. You can have APs equal to your combat roll for mixing it with this unknown horror from a darker dimension. It chokes the will to resist from you until you stop moving. **Go to 52.**

297

You really will have to wipe away the grime if you want to read the letters. If you begin the cleaning job **go to 246,** otherwise **return to 261.**

298

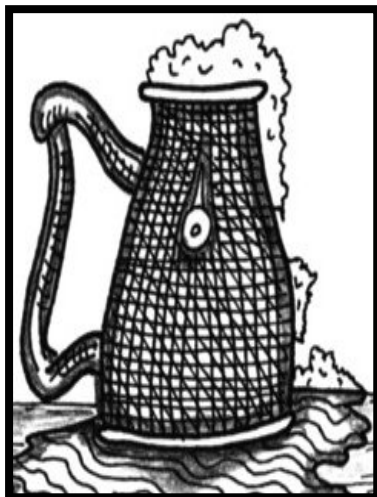
The cat is like a whirlwind when it fights. If you missed any of those saving rolls, you don't even see it coming and take 6d6 in claw strikes. Death is probably fast in coming to collect you. If you made all three SRs you are fighting a feline that has a MR of 50. You have to make those three SRs each round of fighting. If you somehow win, take 200 APs but then you faint as the ghost of the cat rises and enters you. **Go to 52.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

299

Your hunch is rewarded! As you wait, the letter ‘U’ appears on the tag of a dusty brown deerskin-wrapped scroll. You may look at something else if you wish (**go to 271**) or you may continue to watch to see if any other letters appear (**go to 329**).



300

The moment you will the goblet, a gong resounds somewhere nearby. Then a great booming voice announces your presence – your name included. So much for making your way stealthily onwards... Do you want to taste the wine from the goblet now? If you do, **go to 308**; if you think sobriety would be the best course you may **return to 109**.

301

“You’re a good lad, you are right enough. Perhaps you have some of the shamrock spirit in your blood.” She gets all teary at the thought of what a good lad you are (even if you are female – she’s a little short sighted, is Molly). She fishes about in her mouth and pulls out her teeth. “Here – take these! My

magic teeth – I’ve had them since I was a wee slip of a lass and they’ve bitten their way through some mighty powerful folk, so they have. You put them in your pocket and keep them safe. You don’t want Old Man Gruber to see them before you’re ready to bite him. You wait until you get a chance to sink those magical molars into him then he’ll be sorry. We’ll show him who really is the boss round here!” Once you have pocketed the dentures Molly waggles her fingers, hips and lips at you. “Let’s get you further on your journey. I’ll just Wink-Wing you closer to our glorious tomorrow. Fare thee well – may the road rise with you!” That said, you promptly disappear – and reappear standing before a closed door, knob in hand. **Go to 261.**

301A

Much like shooting fish in a barrel, you poison a number of wriggling things. Roll 1d6: 1 or 2 means you make one wriggling thing explode with fatal consequences for everyone; 3 or 4 means nothing happens except dead wriggling things; 5 or 6 means that a wriggling thing ‘squirts’ out its khremm as it dies and adds 1d6 to your WIZ. **[If you get a 1 or 2, you can make L1 SR on either LK or SPD to avoid death – that will save you from Mad Roy-style egregious cheating.] Go to 139.**

302

As you look more closely words appear on the brass plates. After a moment’s thought you see that each word is the name of a continent reversed – *Nekark*, *Nogard*, *Elgae* and so on. If you would like to speak these words **go to 345**; otherwise **return to 271**.

303

If you would like to examine the casks **go to 313**; if you are more of a wine connoisseur **go to 323**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

304

The Medusa head has very prominent lips as well as the standard snaky tresses. They look made for kissing but they also look poised to speak. If you want to give the bust of the gorgon a kiss [go to 314](#); if you would like to command it to speak [go to 324](#); if you would like to press your ear to its lips [go to 334](#). You could also just back up – [go back to 200](#).

305

Wow! Fast and nimble – just as a mouse should be. Take 50 APs. Now you have the mouse in your hand, what do you want to do with it? Crush it ([go to 322](#))? Feed it to the cat ([go to 332](#))? Talk to it ([go to 342](#))?

306

“I am glad I can oblige you, young personage,” she rattles, teeth chattering unmuffled by much in the way of cheeks. “My name is Fannie and the Master will be pleased that I made your acquaintance. You may find him in the crypt at this time of an evening. Would you like to go there now?” If you say that you would [go to 336](#); if you say that you are not yet ready, Fannie goes back to her washing up and turns her back on you. You may [go back to 139](#) to contemplate your next move.



307

As you swing back the lid you peer inside the cask and see a leprechaun huddled within. Before you can say anything the little woman urges you to clamber inside and join her before anyone comes and finds you here. “My name is Molly. I won’t bite! Why, you’re just a wee slip of a thing, to be sure! Maybe you and I can find out if we have anything in common...” Not that many people get to meet female leprechauns – the menfolk get out and about but they are a very traditional kindred and believe a woman’s place is in the kitchen. Which makes it all the more strange to find one in a barrel...

You can accept Molly’s invitation ([go to 263](#)), you can tell her to come out and that it is quite safe ([go to 273](#)) or you can slam the door shut and talk to her through the lid ([go to 343](#)).

308

The wine fizzes in the goblet and silvery scum rises to the bubbling surface. If the wine and the goblet so conjoined effervesce in this fashion what effect will they have on you, the imbibor? Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your CON and CHR and [go to 318](#).

309

You think you hear the word ‘Skullhalla’, nothing more. [Return to 200](#).



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

310

A wine-like liquid sluggishly flows out into the goblet you hold. Well and good. Now the million gold piece question: will you drink it? If you will **go to 335**; if not **return to 109**.

311

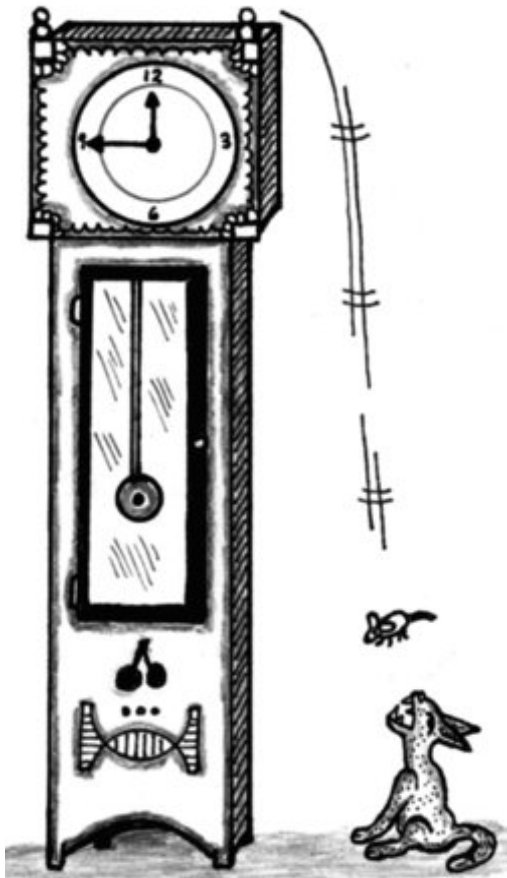
As your hand grasps the handle you feel a jolt of distinct cold – not enough to cause you injury or to freeze your hand to the door but it would seem that the metal handle is conducting cold from the other side. If you want to go ahead and open the door **go to 330** or you may turn round and seek a more appealing prospect (**go to 251**).

312

As you touch the door handle, there is an explosion in your brain. All the light goes out of the world. **Go to 52**.

313

All the barrels are stamped in heavy type with the legend ‘Blood-red, full-bodied with a meaty, satisfying after-taste’. It seems that the contents are not for the faint hearted. A thorough examination reveals that three of the casks have lids that are hinged. A simple catch seems to be all that needs to be dealt with to inspect the contents. If you would like to open the first one **go to 307**, for the second **go to 317** or for the third **to 327**; you may reconsider the best course – **go back to 109**.



314

I guess you know the story of Sleeping Beauty. Not that she is a beauty.

Make a L2-SR vs. CHR and **go to 344**.

315

Too slow, too clumsy, too whatever... The mouse leaps out of the clock case – straight into the jaws of the waiting cat. The cat disappears with a ‘Pop!’ and soon no living creature bar you, not even a mouse, is left in this atrium. Much has been lost... **Go to 109** once more and chose another path to walk.

316

“His treasure chest? What is his is mine and what is mine is his! If you would rifle through his treasure chest just unlace my bodice and help yourself.” The maid grins at you coyly – at least it might seem coy were it not for two of her teeth falling out.

If you want to explore her hidden treasures **go to 346**; if you think there must be better ways to get rich you may **go back to 139** and decide a new course to plot.



317

The open barrel allows sight of a tunnel sloping down at an angle of about 45 degrees quickly disappearing into the gloom. It is not a large tunnel by any means, certainly no good for a troll. A formidable serpent would perhaps enjoy slithering along it and a pixie might saunter with room to spare. You a crawler would have to be. You may shut the lid and **return to 313** or you may begin crawling (**go to 410**).

318

If you failed, the wine makes you woozy very quickly. You find holding your balance an impossible proposition. As your knees buckle, everything spins like a child's top. You blackout. **Go to 52**. If you made the combination saving roll, the drink does not deprive you of your senses and your consciousness. Make a L1-SR vs. WIZ and **go to 328**.

319

You think you hear the word 'Trollhalla', nothing more. **Return to 200**.

320

As it turns out, it did matter. Very much, in fact. The cask you open the valve on is booby-trapped. It is designed to catch wine thieves. As you turn the tap head through 45 degrees, the lid disintegrates and a flood of foul-smelling liquid explodes out – straight at you. Do not fear! It is not acidic, nor is it toxic. It does cause temporary paralysis though and it does bring on a short-term coma... At this range, you have no chance to avoid being splashed – more like soaked! **Go to 52**.

321

The room you are about to enter is a sauna. It is very plainly furnished with no more than a bench against the opposite wall and a brazier, still glowing from recent use. The air is dry and hot. A towel hangs from a rail with the monogram 'G' embroidered in an elegant, curling script. As you look, the monogram twinkles and continues to do so. If you would like to examine the towel **go to 340**; if you think it wiser to back out **return to 251**.

322

Uhhh! Gross... You now have mouse mush oozing from your fingers. Actually, it was not a good mouse. You can take 50 APs for dealing with this unidentified threat. **Return to 147**.

323

Under scrutiny, the bottles turn out to be identical – all labeled "Blood-red, full-bodied with a meaty, satisfying after-taste". However, as soon as you pull one from the racks to take a closer look, a small table shimmers into visibility. It has two goblets sitting on it. You might wonder that you did not bump into it before but perhaps it wasn't actually there before...

You may back off (**return to 109**) or you may go take a good look at these newly arrived curiosities... **Go to 233**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

324

You most imperious efforts fall on deaf ears. There is a stony silence in response. Clearly you have not rocked her boat. Worth 20 APs for the effort though. **Go back to 200** and have a second bite at this cherry...

325

You get the weirdest feeling. It is if everything is frozen. Not cold though, just motionless. Time itself has stopped. The mouse squeaks another thought at you. "I am free to act now, to release a prisoner who should never have been locked up here. Do your best to get out of this place. I cannot help you because I must strike while the iron is hot or the moment will be gone!" If you get out of this house, come look for me by the cherry tree. Don't worry about any danger – I will make it safe. My name is Luoni. Just think my name as hard as you can when you get there." Take 100 APs for freeing the mouse. If you get out of Old Man Gruber's house and want to do as Luoni bids you **go to 355** (make a note of this). Now **return to 109**.

326

She beckons you close and presses her wafer-thin lips to your ear... and then sticks her tongue inside. She seems to have found something to her liking, something chewy for it takes her a while to clear her throat. When she does, she whispers a word of power to you, a secret word known to only the Elect. Make a L1-SR vs. INT – if you succeed you will never forget the word; conversely, if you fail you will never be able to remember it. The special word duly shared, the maid sheds what little skin she has left to her and sprouts a pair of feathery wings as her feet begin to burn. 'Farewell!' she cries as she soars intangibly through the plasterboard. 'Fannie is free at last. Long live liberty!' Alone in the scullery, you must **return to 139** and find another way forward.



327

Ahhh... and 'Uh-ohhh!' You have opened the dregs cylinder, much longer and more capacious than an ordinary cask. It contains tens of thousands of gallons of sour, vinegary wine which is now flooding the cellars very rapidly. You have, not to put a finer point on it, been tsunnamied!

Let's start with 2d6 stun damage (to CON) unless you make a L1-SR vs. STR (if you are stunned, you drown in wine – some would say you were lucky, some maybe not). If you live through the initial eruption you must find a way out of here quickly. That means L1-SRs vs. both INT and SPD to remember where they way out to the garden is in the midst of this alcoholic maelstrom and to get there before your lungs fill. Fail either and you die. Make it and your **back to 11** with 100 APs for the salutary experience.



328

If you made the SR vs. WIZ, the magic created when wine met vessel met you weaves its rich potency over your spirit. Your LK is the beneficiary as is your WIZ. You may roll 1d6 and add the number rolled to both attributes permanently. In addition, you now have the power to snap yourself out of inebriation at will. You may act drunk, you may even get drunk but you can choose to sober up instantly. Now **return to 109.**

329

As you wait for the next letter to show itself, not one but two characters appear: 'N' followed by '!'. Uh oh... Make a L1-SR vs. SPD as you detect a noise from above you. **Go to 349.**

330

The cold store has small bodies stacked against the left and the right hand wall on shelves. Whoever the unlucky individuals are, they must be little folk. There is a small pick axe hanging from the far wall.

You can **retreat to 251** if you want (unless you were teleported here, in which case you must make a L1-SR vs. full CON to take that option if you fail you must take the difference in lost CON and try again; if your CON falls to zero or below you will not make it out alive...); you may go to take the axe if you want (**go to 411**). It is more than a little nippy in here.

331

You see before you a room hung with rich, ruby red drapes. The floor is cold grey stone, unadorned save for a rectangle about 7' by 3', drawn with interwoven snakes, etched into the stone. As you stare, perplexed, you realise that your wrists are tied behind your back and your ankles to the high backed chair you sit upon.

Make a L1-SR vs. LK – if you make it **go to 202**; if you fail **go to 210 instead.**

332

The cat sniffs haughtily at your offering. Then it swats the mouse with a paw and proceeds to consume it. As you watch, the cat grows in size until it is on a par with a panther. It thinks at you. "Thank you. I needed that. You have released me from the spell that bound me. I am forever in your debt and will be your companion if you would permit me. I will lay down my life for you if that is what it takes to preserve yours. Will you accept me?" You find that you can think back at the cat. The telepathic link is strong. Assuming you will accept the cat's offer **go to 352** (if you don't, the cat will just sit and watch you – **go back to 109**).

333

"You king-sized clot! You addle-pated nincompoop! I told you once and I'll not be telling you again, you great clodhopper!" She points a finger at you and casts a respectable version of the *Rock-a-Bye* spell, known to the Little Folk as 'Guiness Goodnight'. You keel over, comatose. **Go to 52.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

334

Let's see if her bark is worse than her bite... No, she does not possess teeth, nor is she that much of a dog. Listen carefully – she is trying to tell you something... Make a L1-SR vs. INT. If you make it go to 309; if you fail go to 319.

335

This stuff Old Man Gruber drinks so much of is not fermented for ordinary folk. Some can take it, many can't. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your STR and INT. If you make it, you may add or subtract 1 to the roll you now need to make on 2d6 before you consult the table below to find out how this rare vintage affected you (afterwards you should return to 109 – this beverage will not produce an affect if consumed again).



2 – you shiver as the thick red liquid burns its way down to your stomach – and somehow keeps going down... your legs begin to kick wildly... you cannot seem to stop them... out of control, they smash into casks, bottles, walls, anything they can reach... your toes break, then your ankles and you fall over into an suffering heap... still your legs flail manically... finally, your heart has had enough and the engine that drives your life seizes and stops... a doctor would without doubt declare you officially deceased

3 – you choke on the wine and then settle as it settles in your stomach – your stomach swells until you are quite bulbous in shape – this new inflated you is able to float a short distance above the ground – this may prove useful but if you get stabbed in the stomach you will pop like a balloon and come to a sudden and most definite end!

4 – you tremble as the wine slips down your throat – your vocal chords are coated and they are changed – everything you say from now on comes out as a loud howl

5 – you shudder at first but then your body adjusts and changes – you now can drink nothing but blood, any mammal's blood will do (you need at least a cup each day)

6 – it causes a slight headache – you lose one point of INT permanently

7 – it causes a grumbling stomach - you lose one point of CON permanently

8 – it causes a vague feeling of nausea - you lose one point of STR permanently

9 – you feel invigorated – your STR has increased by 1d6

10 – you feel on top of the world – your INT has increased by 1d6

11 – you feel like a god! – your STR and your INT have increased by 1d6 (roll separately)

12 – you feel omnipotent! – all your attributes increase by 1d6 (roll for each separately)

336

Something behind you thwacks softly but firmly, rather like an iron billiard ball in a velvet stocking, so that you see both stars and little birds above your head until everything goes quite dark. Go to 52.

337

You have pushed the 'Charmless' button. Your CHR is halved.

If you wish to push the 'On' button go to 357, otherwise go to 264.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



338

You see the evilly sparkling eyes of a wolf-sized spider scuttling across to you. If you failed the SR vs. LK, it looks very grim indeed – your combat total is just one third of what it would normally be so unless you have a special way out of this scrape it looks as if the spider's MR of 40 will account for you. If you made the LK-SR go to 360.

339

Old man Gruber is used to intimidating people, young people especially. His reactions aren't what they used to be either. Make a L1 SR on SPD. If you make it, go to 475 but if you fail, go to 480.

340

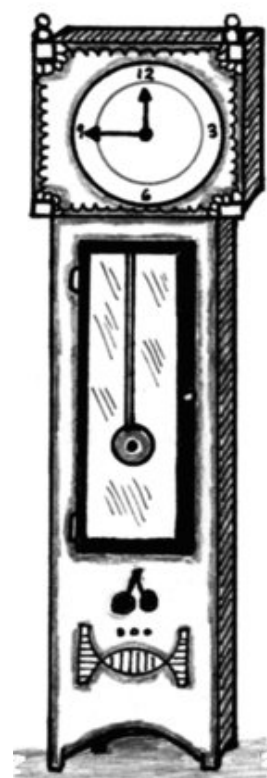
The towel is starched and stiff but it is the monogram that transfixes you. The door to the sauna suddenly slams shut and when you check it is, of course, locked. Then the temperature begins to rise and it all becomes painfully uncomfortable. You eyeballs begin to sizzle. The 'G' on the towel is still glittering in a most persistent manner. Then it catches fire. Do you want to put the fire out, perhaps by stamping on it, or will you let it burn? Go to 412 for the former or to 417 for the latter.

341

You spot two buttons under the desktop, out of sight on the right. One is labelled 'Off' and the other is marked 'On'. If you would like to push a button go to 351, otherwise to 271.

342

The mouse seems to regard you appraisingly. It thinks at you. "Thank you. I needed that. You speaking to me has released me from the spell that bound me. I am forever in your debt and need you to let me go now. You did the first part of granting me salvation when you opened the clock up. Now let me shift the time to one o'clock. Pretty please?" If you do as the mouse asks go to 350; if you think it unwise go back to 305 and decide on another option. The mouse does not add any more to its telepathically transmitted message but goes into a "Please release me" mantra.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

343

She is clearly still speaking – yelling, more like – but you can’t hear her words of wisdom through the barrel’s lid. You can open the door again ([go to 333](#)) or you can leave her to her rantings and take another step into the unknown ([return to 109](#)).



344

If you made it you bring the Medusa to life (well, half-life as she is just a head and shoulders). She fixes you with a stony stare. Your future is looking rocky. Most people would be petrified. Some would even vomit and pebbledash the floor. You? You are now a candidate for being added to the garden statuary. Over and out, amigo. If you failed the SR nothing happens. That’s the good news (plus you garner 50 APs for the thrill of it all). The bad news? There is none to report at this stage. [Go back to 200](#) and try again...

345

Make L1-SRs vs. WIZ and vs. LK – if you fail you are teleported to the scullery ([go to 139](#)); if you succeed you are teleported to your home continent as soon as you speak its name backwards (take 200 APs – your time here ends now).

346

One by one, the buttons pop open, as does the bodice, to reveal to large rubies. “They belonged to my old mum, they did. “Fannie,” she said, as she bounced by on her knee, “you take these, they’re no use to me now.” You can have them – they’re of no use to me neither now.” If you want her rubies and take them, [go to 356](#); if you think it might be better not to take possession of her jewels then you may [return to 139](#) and think of what Katie might do next because what is good enough for Katie will suffice for you.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

347

You have pushed the 'Charm' button. Your CHR is doubled. If you wish to push this button again **go to 367**; if you wish to push the 'Off' button **go to 406**; otherwise **return to 264**.

348

There is curse magic in the air.

Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your WIZ, LK and CHR. Fail and you lose permanently one point from each of the eight prime attributes. **Go back to 109**.

349

Precisely two seconds after the appearance of the 'N' to complete the word 'RUN' and the exclamation mark (a sure fire indicator of urgency), a section of the ceiling gives way dropping a sheet of lead peppered with iron spikes your way. If you failed that saving roll there is no saving you. Splat is the word. If you made it, you see above you, within reach and hanging from a silver thread, another scroll.

If you wish to take it (along with the 100 APs you get for avoiding a messy death) **go to 279**; otherwise **return to 271**.

350

"Thank you, thank you so much!" thinks the mouse at you. It races up the clock, dragging first the hour hand then the minute hand until the grandfather clock is set at one o'clock. The mouse quickly scurries down and slips into your pocket.

The clock chimes one... **Go to 325**.

351

If you push the 'Off' button **go to 337**; if you push the 'On' button **go to 347**.

352

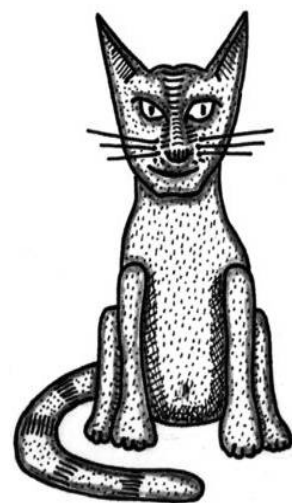
The cat's name is Aquilla. Aquilla has a MR of 40. She has these attributes:

STR – 16	WIZ – 22	INT – 14	LK – 17
CON – 40	DEX – 18	CHR – 19	SPD – 17

(Hence adds of +20)

She has seven of her nine lives left (she vanishes on dying and reappears one day later at her home); Aquilla will stay with you and obey your commands, although she can think for herself so if you give bad orders she may well do something more sensible.

Now **go back to 109** and take the next step.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

353

The cobwebs are easy to climb to start with but then you find they begin to cling and stick. Very soon, you're all gummed up. It will take a L2-SR vs. STR to get free as struggling tends to make it worse. From your vantage point you can now see that what is wrapped up in the nearest cocoon is a leprechaun. Looking about, you perceive this is so with all of the parcels. Then something begins to stir from the other side of the ceiling... If you broke free you may drop down to safety (go to 261); if you are trapped, make a L1-SR vs. LK and go to 338.

354

You are holding a scroll. When you unroll it you see that it contains a sheet of paper with small rectangular holes cut in it. These are clearly not random holes but ones carefully cut out with a sharp implement – the thing must have a purpose. You may keep it or you may discard it. Back to 147 for the next step in what you must hope proves to be the right direction.



355

Luoni and Khaghbboommm at the cherry tree...

356

The rubies are the mythical Eyes of the Bird That Burns. The old maid is called Fannie, as was her mother. She takes this auspicious moment as her chance to leave Old Man Gruber's house. She simply flies through the wall, unimpeded by its molecular structure. The rubies transfer themselves to your eyes. It stings!



Were you to look in a mirror, you would not see them. What powers do they possess? You do not yet know... but you may find out! **Go to 139** and let the dice take another tumble.

357

The 'On' button restores CHR to normal value at the cost of one point of LK. **Go back to 264.**

358

Her teeth fall out as soon as she starts to talk. There are clearly false. Do you want to pick them up and put them in her mouth (**go to 370**), give up on this and do something else with her (**return to 268**), tie her up with some washing line handily placed nearby and get on with more pressing business (**go back to 139**) or put her teeth in your mouth (**go to 374**)?

359

The book is laid out in simple, clear sections – the main headings are: killing werewolves, controlling werewolves, becoming one and defending against one. If you would like to read a chapter on killing go **to 375**, if you prefer reading about controlling go **to 383**, for becoming a werewolf go **to 391** and for defending for **to 399**. You can of course **return to 247**.

360

The nearest figure shrouded in webbing winks at you! The little man is not dead after all. He reaches out towards you... it is a struggle so tightly is he parcelled up but he manages to touch your arm and he teleports you down to the ground. Phew! Take 50 APs and **return to 261**.

361

The book is laid out in simple, clear sections – the main headings are: killing vampires, controlling vampires, becoming one and defending against one.

If you would like to read a chapter on killing go **to 376**, if you prefer reading about controlling go **to 384**, for becoming a vampire go **to 392** and for defending for **to 400**. You can of course **return to 247**.

362

All fine and dandy but she will take some watching. At the end of every third paragraph you must make a L1-SR vs. LK – fail and she manages to elude you and attacks with no thought of surrender (Fannie gets 1d6 -4 for her mop and has no personal adds; if you defeat Fannie you may take 5 APs). If you are in the middle of doing something difficult her attack will make any SR one level higher. As long as she does not attack you, she can successfully protect you as a 10 hits shield (after ten hits she collapses and dies) and you may get her to go first for the purposes of making saving rolls (all other attributes are 8).

Go back to 258 if you have other ideas for Fannie or **to 139** to do more scullery deeds.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

363

The book is laid out in simple, clear sections – the main headings are: killing demons, controlling demons, becoming one and defending against one. If you would like to read a chapter on killing go to 377, if you prefer reading about controlling go to 385, for becoming a demon go to 393 and for defending for to 401. You can of course return to 247.

364

Doubtless there were moments when you were tempted by things not permitted to you, almost certainly there were times when you were uncertain what it was that you needed to do but, nonetheless, you have passed this trial with flying colours! Take 100 APs. Old man Gruber has you come to him (he meets you at the gate with a grin) three times every week. By the time you are 21, all your attributes will be in the 20s; when you are 33, you will inherit the house and garden – and the cherry tree – when the old man shuffles off this mortal coil. For now, go to BBB and do your best to keep your new role a secret from your friends.

365

The book is laid out in simple, clear sections – the main headings are: killing zombies, controlling zombies, becoming one and defending against one. If you would like to read a chapter on killing go to 378, if you prefer reading about controlling go to 386, for becoming a zombie go to 394 and for defending for to 402. You can of course return to 247.



366

She will marry you if you make a L1-SR vs. CHR. She has a ring that will do the deed as well as any priest could. Once you put it on you are married and Fannie slips on an identical band of gold. She will defend you to the point of death now – she attacks with her mop (1d6 -4) and all her attributes are 8 except for CON which is 10). She will never attack you now. The rings do not come off unless one of you die –there can be no divorce (she is 58 by the way). Go back to 258 if you have other ideas for Fannie or to 139 to do more scullery deeds.

367

Your CHR is and your LK is reduced by one point. Return to 264.

368

Make a L1 SR on DEX. If you fail, you miss your mark (go to 480); if you succeed, you feel your hand hit the crown and the old man croaks horribly (go to 492).

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

369

The book is laid out in simple, clear sections – the main headings are: killing mummies, controlling mummies, becoming one and defending against one. If you would like to read a chapter on killing go to 379, if you prefer reading about controlling go to 387, for becoming a mummy go to 395 and for defending for to 403. You can of course return to 247.

370

As you pick up the teeth they try to bite you (no surprise there). Make a L1-SR vs. SPD – if you fail you take 1d6 bite damage. If you want to try again go to 398; if not return to 358 and go for Plan B.

371

The book is laid out in simple, clear sections – the main headings are: general curses, specific curses, hexes and jinxes. If you would like to read a chapter on general curses go to 381, if you prefer reading about specific curses go to 388, for hexes go to 396 and for jinxes for to 404. You can of course return to 247.

372

Make a L2-SR vs. LK and a L1-SR vs. CON and go to 390.

373

The book is laid out in simple, clear sections – the main headings are: combat, conjuration, cosmic and metabolic. If you would like to read a chapter on combat magic go to 382, if you prefer reading about conjuration go to 389, for cosmic magic go to 397 and for metabolic magic for to 405. You can of course return to 247.





TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

374

The teeth take root over the top of your teeth. There is not enough room for two sets of teeth. When you try to speak you will sound as if you are mumbling Double Dutch. However, they do allow you to latch on and bite your way through iron (4d6 if you get a good bite on someone). It takes a L5 *Dis-Spell* to remove the teeth and you must halve INT, LK, CHR or whatever whenever you are called upon to make a SR involving speech. Plus you need to stick to soups for nourishment. Take 100 APs for the lesson learned. Now **return to 358** for more fun with the maid or **to 139** for a different scullery experience.

375

This section begins with the skull and cross bones and carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on strength and wizardry. Fail and you die!” You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you’re up for a life or death challenge, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. STR and then WIZ. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to slay werewolves with a mindbolt (it fizzles weakly if you fail a SR vs. the average of your STR and WIZ at their level and you slip unconscious for 1d6 minutes). **The return is to 247.**



376

This section begins with the skull and cross bones and carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on strength and charisma. Fail and you die!” You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you’re up for a life or death challenge, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. STR and then CHR. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to slay vampires with a mindbolt (it fizzles weakly if you fail a SR vs. the average of your STR and CHR at their level and you slip unconscious for 1d6 minutes). **The return is to 247.**

377

This section begins with the skull and cross bones and carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on strength and luck. Fail and you die!” You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you’re up for a life or death challenge, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. STR and then LK. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to slay demons with a mindbolt (it fizzles weakly if you fail a SR vs. the average of your STR and LK at their level and you slip unconscious for 1d6 minutes). **The return is to 247.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

378

This section begins with the skull and cross bones and carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on strength and intelligence. Fail and you die!” You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you’re up for a life or death challenge, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. STR and then INT. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to slay zombies with a mindbolt (it fizzles weakly if you fail a SR vs. the average of your STR and INT at their level and you slip unconscious for 1d6 minutes). **The return is to 247.**

379

This section begins with the skull and cross bones and carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on strength and constitution. Fail and you die!” You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you’re up for a life or death challenge, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. STR and then CON. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to slay mummies with a mindbolt (it fizzles weakly if you fail a SR vs. the average of your STR and CON at their level and you slip unconscious for 1d6 minutes). **The return is to 247.**

380

This time you manage to pick them up without getting bitten. As you put them in her mouth, teeth and maid try to bite you in unison. They are desperate. Make a L2-SR vs. SPD. If you make it she tells you she knows nothing (if you want, you can torture her but she will not reveal anything even to death itself) so you must **return to 358** for Plan B; if you fail, the teeth sink in and her Pit Bull jaws go to work – she eats you in fact. Burp!



381

This section begins with a black cat walking under a ladder and carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on wizardry, luck and charisma. Fail and you die!” You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you’re up for a life or death challenge, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. WIZ, then LK and then CHR. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to pronounce a death curse on a person with a single word (the sound of mocking laughter echoes about you if you fail a SR vs. the average of your WIZ, LK and CHR at the level of your intended victim and you slip unconscious for 1d6 minutes). The victim will die the next time they see whatever it is that you have named, if the curse works, unless they eat the heart of an elf. **The return is to 247.**

382

This section begins with a man dressed as a wizard being struck by a bolt of lightning and carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on wizardry, intelligence and strength. Fail and you die!” You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you’re up for a life or death challenge, commit now! Attempt a L5-SR vs. WIZ, then INT and then STR. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to cast any combat magic spell you have the WIZ, INT and DEX to cast (but if you fail a SR vs. the average of your WIZ, INT and STR at the level of your target the spell misses and there is just a wet farting noise and you slip unconscious for 1d6 minutes). **The return is to 247.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

383

This part of the werewolves book starts with a picture of a werewolf (big, black and terrifying) dragging a man on a lead. There is a warning: 'Do not become the biter bit! You will be tested on intelligence and charisma – fail at your peril!' You may return to 247 if this is too rich for you. If you're up for a game of Russian roulette, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. INT and then CHR.

If you fail you will have no means to resist any werewolf you meet, at the mercy of its commands; if you succeed, you will be able to hypnotise (Spirit Mastery in effect) any werewolf you can lock eyes on who fails a SR vs. the average of INT and CHR at your level. **The return is to 247.**

384

This part of the vampires book starts with a picture of a vampire (dark, sinister and horrifying) dragging a woman by her hair. There is a warning: 'Do not become the biter bit! You will be tested on intelligence and luck – fail at your peril!' You may return to 247 if this is too rich for you. If you're up for a game of Russian roulette, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. INT and then LK. If you fail you will have no means to resist any vampire you meet, at the mercy of its commands; if you succeed, you will be able to hypnotise (Spirit Mastery in effect) any vampire you can lock eyes on who fails a SR vs. the average of INT and LK at your level. **The return is to 247.**

385

This part of the demonology book starts with a picture of a demon (red eyes boring into you menacingly) toasting a hobbit on a fork over wickedly licking fire. There is a warning: 'Do not become the biter bit! You will be tested on intelligence and constitution – fail at your peril!' You may return to 247 if this is too rich for you. If you're up for a game of Russian roulette, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. INT and then CON. If you fail you will have no means to resist any demon you meet, at the mercy of its sadistic whims; if you succeed, you will be able to bind (Spirit Mastery in effect) any demon you can give a jackass name too (that's pretty humiliating for a demon!) who fails a SR vs. the average of INT and CON at your level. **The return is to 247.**





386

This part of the zombie book starts with a picture of a zombie (green-grey flesh peeling off, putrefying) biting a chunk out of a centaur's flank. There is a warning: 'Do not become the biter bit! You will be tested on intelligence and wizardry – fail at your peril!' You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you.

If you're up for a game of Russian roulette, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. INT and then WIZ. If you fail you will prostrate yourself at the feet of any zombie you meet, just waiting to be devoured; if you succeed, you will be able to command (Spirit Mastery in effect) any zombie you can spit on (safer with a prevailing wind!) who fails a SR vs. the average of INT and WIZ at your level. **The return is to 247.**

387

This part of the mummy book starts with a picture of a mummy (green-grey flesh peeling off, putrefying) biting a chunk out of a centaur's flank. There is a warning: 'Do not become the biter bit! You will be tested on intelligence and strength – fail at your peril!' You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're up for a game of Russian roulette, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. INT and then STR. If you fail you will enter any pyramid you come across, offering yourself as a willing victim for bandaging; if you succeed, you will be able to command (Spirit Mastery in effect) any mummy you throw earth or mud on who fails a SR vs. the average of INT and STR at your level. **The return is to 247.**

388

This section begins with the image of a shattered mirror and carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on wizardry, luck and charisma. Fail and you die!" You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're up for a life or death challenge, commit now!

Attempt a L3-SR vs. WIZ, then LK and then CHR. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to pronounce a misery curse on 1d100 people with a single word (the sound of snorts of derision crackle about you if you fail a SR vs. the average of your WIZ, LK and CHR at your level and you slip unconscious for 2d6 minutes). The victims will be too despondent to work, attack or plan, if the curse works, unless they bathe in milk. **The return is to 247.**

389

This section begins with a woman on a broomstick juggling stars and carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on wizardry, intelligence and charisma. Fail and you die!" You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're up for a life or death challenge, commit now!

Attempt a L2-SR vs. WIZ, then INT and then CHR. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to cast any conjuring magic spell you have the WIZ, INT and DEX to cast. **The return is to 247.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



390

Scrolls are not normally meant to be licked. If you failed the CON-SR you get an upset tummy from tonguing the manuscript (a big mess and the loss of one point of CON and one of STR until you get a good night's sleep. If you failed the LK-SR **return to 285** and try something else; if you made it, you discovered Old Man Gruber's teleportation scroll. Take 50 APs. You may go to the scullery (**139**), the atrium (**147**), the cellars (**109**), the boiler room (**200**) or to the hot house in the garden (**K**) anytime you choose so long as you have this nicely licked scroll.

391

This section shows a woman in the middle of her transformation into a lycanthrope. There is a warning: 'There is no turning back! You must be strong to survive the metamorphosis!' You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're determined to go through with this, sign in blood now!

Attempt a L2-SR vs. LK and then STR. If you fail your heart gives out before the change is complete. If you succeed then you undergo a tremendous series of bodily shifts which are like electricity as they mutate your cellular structure. You are now a werewolf (see the Rulebook for modifiers and do a little research perhaps to work out the details of the new path ahead of you). The next thing that happens is a shift back to human form, a change equally jarring. Seems like Old Man Gruber's house is not the place to let out the beast in you. **The return is to 247.**

392

This section shows a man standing over another man, this one with puncture marks in his neck. There is a warning: 'There is no turning back! You must be tough to survive the metamorphosis!' You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're determined to go through with this, sign in blood now!

Attempt a L2-SR vs. LK and then CON. If you fail your heart gives out before the change is complete. If you succeed then you undergo a tremendous series of bodily shifts which are like electricity as they mutate your cellular structure. You are now a vampire (see the Rulebook for modifiers and do a little research perhaps to work out the details of the new path ahead of you). The next thing that happens is a shift back to human form, a change equally jarring. Seems like Old Man Gruber's house is not the place to let out the beast in you. **The return is to 247.**

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

393

This section shows a horned creature with cloven hooves and a barbed tail surrounded by flames. There is a warning: 'There is no turning back! You must have a reserve of khremm to survive the metamorphosis!' You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're determined to go through with this, sign in blood now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. LK and then CON. If you fail your heart gives out before the change is complete. If you succeed then you undergo a tremendous series of bodily shifts which arc like electricity as they mutate your cellular structure. You are now a demon (see the Rulebook for modifiers and do a little research perhaps to work out the details of the new path ahead of you). The next thing that happens is a shift back to human form, a change equally jarring. Seems like Old Man Gruber's house is not the place to let out the devil in you. **The return is to 247.**

394

This section shows a man rising from a grave. His complexion suggests that he has been dead quite a while. There is a warning: 'There is no turning back! You must have a strong mind to survive the metamorphosis!' You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're determined to go through with this, sign in blood now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. LK and then INT. If you fail your heart gives out before the change is complete. If you succeed then you undergo a tremendous series of bodily shifts which arc like electricity as they mutate your cellular structure and your flesh begins to rot.



You are now a zombie (see the Rulebook for modifiers and do a little research perhaps to work out the details of the new path ahead of you). The next thing that happens is a shift back to human form, a change equally jarring. Seems like Old Man Gruber's house is not the place for rotting flesh to wander about. **The return is to 247.**

395

This section shows a woman on a slab being wrapped in bandages. There is a warning: 'There is no turning back! You must have a personality that will see you through great adversity and vilification to survive the metamorphosis!' You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're determined to go through with this, sign in blood now!

Attempt a L2-SR vs. LK and then CHR. If you fail your heart gives out before the change is complete. If you succeed then you undergo a tremendous series of bodily shifts which arc like electricity as they mutate your cellular structure and your flesh turns to dry desert dust. You are now a mummy (see the Rulebook for modifiers and do a little research perhaps to work out the details of the new path ahead of you).



The next thing that happens is a shift back to human form, a change equally jarring. Seems like Old Man Gruber's house is not the place for bandaged bandits to roam freely. **The return is to 247.**

396

This section begins with the image of a gathering of townsfolk in a hall, all with umbrella up - and it carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on wizardry, luck and intelligence. Fail and you die!” You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're up for a life or death challenge, commit now! Attempt a L3-SR vs. WIZ, then LK and then INT. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to pronounce a poverty hex on 2d100 people living in the same town with a single word (howls of derision will ring out if you attempt to hex a place and you fail a SR vs. the average of your WIZ, LK and INT at your level and you slip unconscious for 5d6 minutes).

The victims will lose 90% of their worldly wealthy within one month, if the curse works, unless they sleep under a walnut tree for three consecutive nights. **The return is to 247.**

397

This section begins with an image of an elven sorceress creating a pool of liquid mud in front of a pack of charging trolls - it also carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on wizardry, intelligence and charisma. Fail and you die!” You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're up for a life or death challenge, commit now! Attempt a L4-SR vs. WIZ, then INT and then CHR. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to cast any cosmic magic spell you have the WIZ, INT and DEX to cast. **The return is to 247.**

398

The teeth do it again. They snip at you, they clack and they gnash. It is clear that they are intent on harm. You must make a L1-SR vs. SPD. If you fail you get bitten spitefully (1d6 damage to CON). You may try a L1-SR vs. DEX to safely take hold of them after that. If you fail you are back to having to be fast enough again (the SPD-SR) or quitting (**back to 358**). If you get them you can hide them, smash them or try to shove them into the maid's mouth (**go to either 422, 427 or 432**).

399

This section shows a hobbit driving a werewolf backwards until it teeters on the brink of a cliff. There is a warning: ‘Magnets work in one of two ways! You must be quick to catch on as these pages will self-destruct five in twenty seconds!’ You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're sure the risk is worth taking, give your oath now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. SPD and read as quickly as you can. If you fail you get caught in the compact explosion that occurs twenty seconds after your begin your speed reading. If you succeed then a jolt of comprehension surges through your cerebral cortex. You now have the power to turn back a werewolf (this is akin to an *Oh Go Away* spell that works if you make a SR vs. CHR at your target's level). A useful knack to have. **The return is to 247.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

400

This section shows a leprechaun swinging a string of garlic like a bola with a cowering fanged woman in front of him. There is a warning: 'Magnets work in one of two ways! You must be quick to catch on as these pages will self-destruct five in twenty seconds!' You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're sure the risk is worth taking, give your oath now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. SPD and read as quickly as you can. If you fail you get caught in the compact explosion that occurs twenty seconds after you begin your speed reading. If you succeed then a jolt of comprehension surges through your cerebral cortex. You now have the power to turn back a vampire (this is akin to an *Oh Go Away* spell that works if you make a SR vs. CHR at your target's level). A useful knack to have. **The return is to 247.**

401

This section shows an old woman with a bright lantern scourging a grovelling demon with no ore than the light cast by her lantern. There is a warning: 'Magnets work in one of two ways! You must be quick to catch on as these pages will self-destruct five in twenty seconds!' You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you.

If you're sure the risk is worth taking, give your oath now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. SPD and read as quickly as you can. If you fail you get caught in the compact explosion that occurs twenty seconds after your begin your speed reading. If you succeed then a jolt of comprehension surges through your cerebral cortex.

You now have the power to banish a demon (this is akin to an *Oh Go Away* spell that works if you make a SR vs. CHR at your target's level). A useful knack to have. **The return is to 247.**



402

This section shows a child with a rag doll yelling at a zombie causing the undead monster to flee before the child's righteous wrath. There is a warning: 'Magnets work in one of two ways! You must be quick to catch on as these pages will self-destruct five in twenty seconds!' You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're sure the risk is worth taking, give your oath now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. SPD and read as quickly as you can. If you fail you get caught in the compact explosion that occurs twenty seconds after your begin your speed reading. If you succeed then a jolt of comprehension surges through your cerebral cortex.



You now have the power to frighten a zombie (this is akin to an *Oh Go Away* spell that works if you make a SR vs. CHR at your target's level). A useful knack to have. **The return is to 247.**

403

This section shows a mouse squeaking at a mummy so scared that its bandages are falling off. There is a warning: 'Magnets work in one of two ways! You must be quick to catch on as these pages will self-destruct five in twenty seconds!' You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're sure the risk is worth taking, give your oath now!

Attempt a L2-SR vs. SPD and read as quickly as you can. If you fail you get caught in the compact explosion that occurs twenty seconds after you begin your speed reading. If you succeed then a jolt of comprehension surges through your cerebral cortex. You now have the power to terrify a mummy (this is akin to an *Oh Go Away* spell that works if you make a SR vs. CHR at your target's level). A useful knack to have. **The return is to 247.**

404

This section begins with the image of a plethora of objects all with the number thirteen hidden on them somewhere - and it carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on charisma, luck and intelligence. Fail and you die!" You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're up for a life or death challenge, commit now! Attempt a L3-SR vs. CHR, then LK and then INT. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to pronounce a bad luck jinx on an object by writing the number thirteen somewhere on it out of plain sight (hoots of laughter will sound from your rear end if you try to jinx something and you fail a SR vs. the average of your CHR, LK and INT at your level and you will slip unconscious for 3d6 minutes). Anyone touching the object will have their luck halved instantly, if the curse works, and it will remain that way unless they chant the thirteen times table thirteen times within ten minutes of midnight. **The return is to 247.**

405

This section begins with a picture of a bald dwarf in white robes placing his hands on the leg of a minotaur with a badly gashed thigh – it also carries a warning: This learning carries great risk – you will be tested on wizardry, intelligence and charisma. Fail and you die!"

You may **return to 247** if this is too rich for you. If you're up for a life or death challenge, commit now! Attempt a L2-SR vs. WIZ, then INT and then CHR. If you fail you die; if you succeed you now have the power to cast any metabolic magic spell you have the WIZ, INT and DEX to cast. **The return is to 247.**

406

You CHR is halved and your LK is reduced by one point. **Return to 264.**

[E B N L O A T R S N Y E = Blarney Stone]



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

407

The letters can be rearranged to form the two words ‘Blarney Stone’. This is something precious to the leprechaun folk. If you came up with anything else, good for you – take 50 APs for creativity but upon uttering your formula you black out (**go to 52**). If you got it right, more power to you! As you say the words aloud beams of pure gold burst forth from the paintings and enfold you in a warm glow of leprechaun magic. Your LK and your CHR both double and you can do the Wink-Wing spell just as a leprechaun can – take 100 APs and **return to 261**. (The *Wink-Wing* spell is not easy to handle in solos so you will have to adjudicate what happens (you need to make a L1-SR vs. INT to cast it and it costs 4 WIZ – if you don’t know where you are going remember you could end up rematerialising inside rock...))

408

As you blow out the first candle a cold chill runs down the length of your spine. If you want to blow out a second candle **go to 418**; otherwise **return to 278**.

409

Things are not always as they seem. Then again, sometimes they are. Make L1-SRs vs. LK and then DEX. If you make the LK-SR **go to 414**; if you fail on LK but make it vs. DEX **go to 419**; if you miss out on both **go to 424**.

410

Not to make too much of it but you are in the dark unless you have a means of making light. Before you light a match, should you have one, you take note that you feel as you crawl hard objects you are sure must be bones and a powdery substance. Your options are: to reverse-crawl sharpish (**go to 415**); to light a match (**go to 420**); to keep going in the dark (**go to 425**).

411

The pick axe is iced to the wall and will take a L1-SR vs. STR to get free. Every attempt you make will cost you one point of lost CON to freezing damage. You may give up and **return to 251** but if you keep going until you succeed **go to 416**.

412

The flames go out but the heat grows fiercer and the ‘G’ is now shining like the sun. Out from the letter pops an apparition – the old man! “What are you doing in my house?” the ghostly figure demands. “Am I to have your blood on my hands? No! It shall not be!” The spectre sends a flaming ‘G’ your way – it stings as it settles on your forehead and then you are whirled outside of space itself, teleported away from this heat. You black out. **Go to 52**.

413

As you reach the centre you hear a roaring in your heart followed by echoing laughter in your skull. Take one point of CON damage. You can run for the door (make a L1-SR vs. SPD and **go to 428**) or you can roar and laugh back (**go to 433**).





TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

414

You trod on the pressure point that makes the nails draw inwards. You are left to yourself in an empty room. Well, not quite empty. Hanging on the wall is a cloak. If you would like to take it and put it on **go to 429**; otherwise **return to 288**.

415

Make a L1-SR vs. LK.

If you make it **go back to 313**; if you fail **go on to 430**.

416

Now you have the chipping axe you may either start murdering the little folk or trying to free them. If you feel hard-hearted and murderous **go to 421** but if you feel magnanimous and start chipping ice away from the first prisoner then **go to 426**.

417

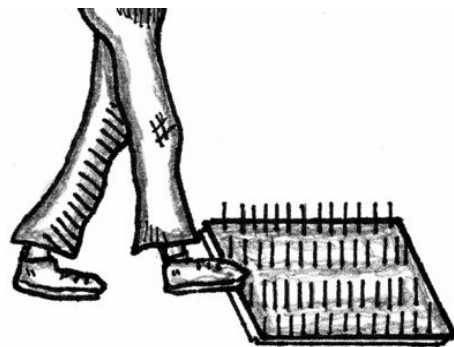
The flames seem to fed by the heat of the sauna for the air begins to cool quite noticeably – relief! The monogram becomes incandescent and emits the form of a spectre – the old man! “Thief! Intruder! Shall I have you to add to my list of transgressions? Not here, at any rate! Away!” The ‘G’ moves swiftly from the towel to your forehead and you feel yourself shifting beyond the confines of space. You blackout. **Go to 52**.

418

The chill becomes icy. Your CON drops by one point. If you want to blow out a second candle **go to 423**; otherwise **return to 278**.

419

You trod on the pressure point that forces the nails out a further 4 inches! However, you nimbly stepped back without being harmed. **Return to 288**.



420

The powdery substance was gunpowder... Khaboom! (as they say on Khaghtch'an). There is very little of you left.

421

Your victims are leprechauns. Almost helpless, it is true but still able to send a curse before they die. Take 200 APs, partly for doing what most (thankfully) would not do but chiefly because you are going to need them... You have been cursed to require a minimum roll of 6 for all saving rolls from now until you somehow get the curse lifted. Shame on you! **Go to 251** when you have finished your massacring.

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

422

Are you going to blindfold her? What with? Maybe it's better just to take them with you and put them in your pocket... but it would be dangerous to take them out again. Common sense must prevail – **back to 398** with you!

423

The iciness becomes intolerably glacial. You lose 1d6 points of CON and are teleported **to 330** (take 50 APs for a frigid lesson).

424

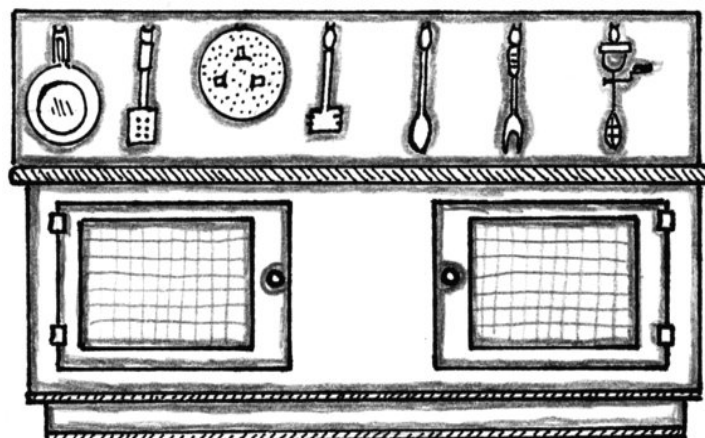
You trod on the pressure point that forces the nails out a further 4 inches! What's worse, in trying to get out of harm's way you stumbled over, head first on the nails. You are now full of holes and leaking blood badly. Trying to rise just makes it all much, much gorier. That's that for you...

425

You here a noise, a slithering hissing noise. **Go to 430**.

426

The little folk (and all 12 are leprechauns) vanish once their hands are freed. Presumably they are grateful because the first one raises your LK by one point. Each time you try to save a leprechaun after the first one you must make a L1-SR vs. your full CON – if you fail you pass out in the extreme cold and never wake up. You get another one point raise in LK if you make a L1-SR vs. LK each time after the first one you save. And you get 100 APs for each leprechaun you allow to escape its icy coffin. If/when you quit this mission of mercy, **return to 251**.



427

You can use something in the kitchen to smash them – it's not like they're made of steel. The maid starts sniffing, then sobbing and is soon hysterical. How would you feel if someone smashed your teeth? **Go back to 398**, you blackguard!



428

If you made it, take 50 APs and **return to 278**. If you failed, you have been possessed by a demon. You soon do some very terrible things to some poor, unfortunate people, many of them sick, old or still in their cribs. Then you visit another plane and spend eternity burning in agony. That's it, you're done.

429

The cloak is a wonder indeed. Very plain to behold, it's dirty brown serge not nice on the skin and heavy to wear but it has woven into it a portable *Protective Pentagram* spell, keeping out magic up to Level 5 (or your Level if higher) and warding off all physical attacks, whether they be arrows, swords, fire or something similarly destructive).

A good find for sure! **Return to 288** with 50 APs too.

430

The Maker of Bones is coming!

A L1-SR vs. SPD will get you **back to 313** with time to close up the cask; failure takes you **to 435**...

431

As you enter the shower cubicle the door slams shut and the shower head jets out water. It smells like carbolic soap. After 5 minutes the water stops and warm air jets out from vents which open, drying you efficiently. You have no choice but to leave the cubicle when the door opens again and as the stairway has disappeared you really must go through the other door in the small chamber you have returned to.

At least you are clean now. **Go to 440**.

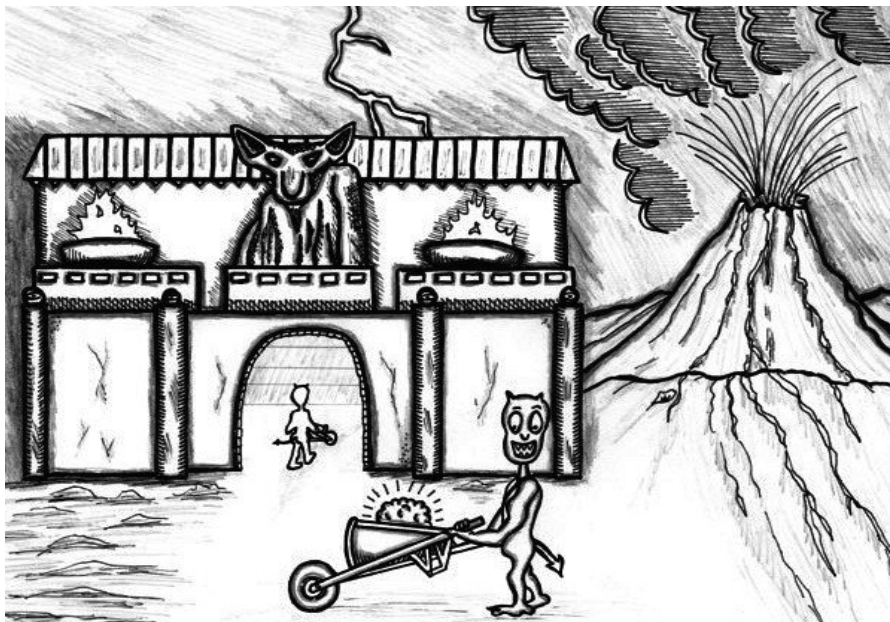
432

Not smart... when you shove them back in your either going to get bitten or choke her.

Make a L1-SR vs. LK to see who it that suffers from this most capricious act. If you fail, she bites you (one point of CON damage); if you succeed she gags and then turns blue and dies on you.

Now **return to 398**.

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



433

Make a L1-SR vs. CHR. If you make it you are summoned to the demon plane and given a thorough apprenticeship under the tutelage of an arch-demon. Take 10,000 APs – you’re out of here! If you failed, you have been possessed by a demon. You soon do some very terrible things to some poor, unfortunate people, many of them sick, old or still in their cribs. Then you visit another plane and spend eternity burning in agony. That’s it, you’re done.

434

You climb stolidly, step after step until you reach what must be the level of the roof. The tower! Old Man Gruber’s house has a tower. As you stand at the top of the staircase, a door flicks into being and then it creaks open. Beyond is a small circular chamber with two more doors, one to the left, the other to the right. The door to the left is open and you can see a shower. If you would like to go through this door **go to 431**; if you would prefer to open the other door **go to 440**.

435

Something flicks out and touches you... something closes around you... you are pulled inside... and eaten.

436

‘I’m a trader, I suppose. A trader and a custodian. You will have observed many interesting items in my house as well as my garden, I think, And many fascinating beings stay here too. I trade for them, both inanimate and sentient and once I have acquired them I am their watcher, their guardian. My guests this evening are those with whom I trade. They may want to trade for you. You are not the sort I normally offer them. I stick to a certain kindred as a rule. I cannot abide them, you see. They think everything is a game, everyone is here for their amusement. I took this house from them a long time ago, after they were criminally admitted



to decent society. However, if I do have ‘problem children’ of my own kind, my guests will not scruple – they will delight in a different offering! You are a problem child, I think... My guests tonight are known as Kleft, Terju, Esbax, Gort, Arsh, Zandbak, Drileez and Hurpik. You will not like them, I am certain. They are not to be liked for they are demon lords. You will do well to be on your mettle, young friend!’

The old man wheezes and his eyes narrow as he scrutinises first the table then you. **Go to 439.**

437

Maybe you’re testing him out? His capabilities, his patience, his reputation? Take 50 APs for foolhardiness. Before you get within a millisecond of harming the old man, he rolls his eyes and they turn deep red. Beams of energy reach out for you and hold you and you lose consciousness. **Go to 444.**

438

There are many things you might seek to employ. Bombs, fangs, transmuted eyes... You may have someone or something with you. Naught avails. Old Man Gruber turns his eyes on you. The eyeballs become completely red and he washes you with a steady beam of energy not of this world.

You blackout. **Go to 444.**

439

‘Take your seat. They will be here very soon. They arrive en masse, directly into their seats, always the same seat, so do not sit where one of these dark lords will sit or you will be squashed! We are in the habit of putting our agreements in writing. It is a wise and necessary precaution for they will inevitably seek to cheat. It is in their nature, if anything can be said to be natural about them. I sign in blood, they in ichor. This is then a binding contract. You must examine any contract they offer very carefully for I suspect they will seek to include you in the balance of trade. I will offer only leprechauns. My eyes are not as adept as theirs at reading demon script although you will have noticed that they are now, after all these years, far from human. You must read too and together we may preserve your place on this world. But enough! I sense them. Only speak when you are spoken to!’

With that, Old Man Gruber takes his seat, his big hairy hands in front of him, resting on the table. **Go to 441.**

440

As you enter you see a bookcase revolving to decant a sinister figure. He walks forward unsteadily and sits on a cushioned wicker chair from which Old Man Gruber is able to survey his garden. You cannot help but notice his hands. They are very hairy and look as if they would have a grip like a vice. He studies you and the door behind you closes heavily.

Silence hangs thick for a few moments and then he speaks. **Go to CCC.**

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

441

In a flash (a pretty acrid one, actually) and a whiff of sulphur (a pretty strong one, definitely), the eight demon lords appear in their seats, variously slavering, slobbering, seething and snorting. Some seem to be doing all four simultaneously. Although these are not arch-demons, they are major league hitters and Old Man Gruber is either playing a very dangerous game or has something up his sleeve along with his elbow.

An invisible servant pours the wine – a Jeeves, conjured freshly – and claret is the preferred tittle of demon lords, it is clear. Once the demons have smacked off the first glass and are settled in with a refill courtesy of the tireless Jeeves, Old Man Gruber begins the introductions. “Here is Kleft, the Lord of the Realm of Earthquakes, a most mighty demon indeed. And by him is Terju, Master of the Realm of Fire, a fearsome lord of incineration. Next is Esbax, whose Realm of Thunder is never anything but deafening. He is seated beside the Lord of the Ceaseless Rains, Gort. Moving round is Arsh the terrible tyrant of the Realm of Disease and then Zandbak, whose Realm of Ice is awful in its freezing cold. Then we come to Drileez, Lord of the Realm of Winds and finally to Hurpik, Lord of the Realm of Sulphur, whose reek penetrates across the planes. My Lords, you are well come.



This youth has gate-crashed our dinner gathering and I have had place laid for I imagine our unexpected guest will be of interest to you. As normal, I can supply you all with leprechauns, whose luck will desert them and amuse you in your foul dominions. I ask now what you have for me and we shall see if this rash intruder shall be added to our contract!’ It seems as if Old Man Gruber means to offer you up on a silver salver – and there is one there in the centre of the table! **Go to 443.**

442

‘You will have been put to considerable trouble to reach me, I fear, and you will have many tales to tell your friends. That is your chief motivation, I believe, is it not? Some tales are better left untold. Perhaps we will come to agree on this point, youngster. Have you showered? If you have had anything to do with that pesky rabbit you really should do before we meet my business partners.’ {If you want to take a shower now you can do so before the old man resumes his soliloquy.)

‘I mean you no harm. You may or not believe that – it is not for me to bring about. But now you are here and have seen so much, there is no turning back! Come – I shall lead you to the table and you shall learn more than anyone has of my activities.’ He extends a big, hairy hand to you. If you want to take it **go to 445**; if you decline **go to 447**.

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

443

The demon lords eye you with evident greed – you are undreamed of treasure that all covet but only one may have. One by one they rise to speak of what they can exchange for the leprechauns and each in turn hands Old Man Gruber a scroll confirming the offer. He reads the terms and the details briefly before handing the scrolls to you along with a note, unseen by his dinner guests. The Jeeves continues to supply the out-worlders with fine wine and they feel no shame in ripping into the meat and ignoring the vegetables. The note asks if you have the cipher from the chaise longue with you and states that you should use it to re-read each scroll if you have it. It warns you that these demons write coded traps in their contracts and the other letters will fall away, leaving only the terms they want to have signed off. The old man tells you that he is leaving it to you to save yourself. If you have a cipher **go to 449**; otherwise **go to 451**.

444

You recover to find yourself standing with the old man in the dining room. ‘You see,’ he says, spreading his hairy hands wide, ‘I had a place laid for you just in case you found your way to me, as you did. All the fruit and the vegetables we will eat this evening will be from my garden. You have seen that it is bountiful. I love my garden very much and it recompenses me for the work I do. You might understand why I do not want children coming in and taking my harvest!’ Old Man Gruber claps his hands thunderously and food appears on the table until the table is groaning at the weight it now has to bear. ‘My guests have large appetites, as perhaps you do too. They will be here soon. Take your seat here, next to me. It will be safest if you stay close to me. Perhaps you have questions? Permit me to answer some as yet unasked questions you may well have.’ He draws a breath and proceeds, his big hands clasped over his stomach. **Go to 436**.



445

Old Man Gruber leads you gently but firmly to the bookcase. You can feel scarcely believable power in his grip, certainly not something one so venerable should possess. He steps into the cavity that is the reverse side of the bookcase and pushes a hidden button which causes the wooden structure to pivot through 180 degrees before beginning its descent.



After a scant few seconds it stops smoothly and he leads you out into the dining room. **Go to 444.**

446

Make the best SR vs. SPD you can muster. You may be fast but you are not fast enough. Old Man Gruber fixes you with his eyes, which are now utterly red. Rays of otherworldly energy transfix you and you fall into a deep sleep. **Go to 444.**

447

‘I can’t leave things as they are. Let me be quite clear about that. The choice is not yours to make, my young adventurer.’ His eyeballs become a sea of red and he holds you in a sweep of ethereal energy. Consciousness fades from you. **Go to 444.**

448

Kleft is the first demon lord to rise, the table shaking ominously as he rises to his cloven feet. “Here is written my offer, Gruber, and here too my terms. It is a strong offer and you will be unwise to decline. I will take this youth in place of 20 leprechauns! Now, let me test the youth’s vigour.” Kleft extends a clawed hand for you to grasp. His touch is enough for you to know he could grind your bones to dust in a trice and your knees turn to jelly. Make the best SR you can vs. STR and note the level. **Now go to 452.**

449

You will be able to detect the treachery of all the demons by placing the cipher over their words and seeing what they have written by setting up only certain letters that will not disappear. You will be given the opportunity to benefit from this soon enough. **Go to 448.**

450

Perhaps you lost concentration and could not figure out what to do or maybe you just couldn’t resist those cherries. Whatever went wrong, you have dismally failed and Old Man Gruber has no reason not to dispose of you... **Go to 480.**

451

You do not have the cipher and so the demons’ trickery will not be detected through your efforts. On with the show... **Go to 448.**

452

The second demon lord to leave his seat is Terju. The room seethes with hatred as he speaks. “Here is written my offer, Gruber, and here too my terms. It is a very special offer and you will be unwise to decline. I will take this youth in place of 25 leprechauns! Now, let me test the youth’s magic.” Terju seizes your hand by mental control. It is quite plain that you are as putty in his hand and that he could get you to walk to hell and back if he chose.

Make the best SR you can vs. WIZ and note the level. **Now go to 453.**



453

Third to speak is Esbax, his rumbling thunderclap of a voice making you feel more foolish than ever before. “Here is written my offer, Gruber, and here too my terms. It is a strong offer and you will be unwise to decline. I will take this youth in place of 30 leprechauns! Now, let me test the youth’s mental faculties.”

Esbax makes you feel more foolish than you could have possibly ever have imagined. Make the best SR you can vs. INT and note the level. **Now go to 454.**

454

Next up is Gort, saliva spewing from his lips as he speaks, sweat pouring from his horned brow. You feel wretched, as if you were cursed at birth as you listen. “Here is written my offer, Gruber, and here too my terms. It is a strong offer and you will be unwise to decline. I will take this youth in place of 35 leprechauns! Now, let me test the youth’s lucky star.”

Make the best SR you can vs. LK and note the level. **Now go to 455.**

455

Fifth of the demon lords to make his pitch is Arsh. He looks as if he is ridden with small pox and thriving on it. Steam rises from his great craggy head as he speaks and he makes you feel sick. “Here is written my offer, Gruber, and here too my terms. It is a strong offer and you will be unwise to decline. I will take this youth in place of 40 leprechauns! Now, let me discover what sort of stuff this youth is made of.”

Make the best SR you can vs. CON and note the level. **Now go to 456.**

456

The demon lord next to rise to make his offer is Zandbak, Lord of the Ice realms, Lord of Despair. His head is laden with icicles and clouds of steam flow from his mouth as his frosty breath meets the warmer air of the dining room. It is impossible not to feel forlorn as you listen to him. “Here is written my offer, Gruber, and here too my terms. It is a strong offer and you will be unwise to decline. I will take this youth in place of 45 leprechauns! I require this youth to reveal to me his agility, his nimbleness, his accuracy for these are qualities I prize above all others.”

Make the best SR you can vs. DEX and note the level. **Now go to 457.**

457

Drileez surges to his feet, the air stirring malevolently about him. What he says sounds eminently plausible but his twisted features scarcely conceal lines of deceit. You almost lose your sense of what truth is and where fiction begins. “Here is written my offer, Gruber, and here too my terms. It is a strong offer and you will be unwise to decline. I will take this youth in place of 50 leprechauns! Now, let me see who this youth truly is, what traits and talents lurk in the dark recesses of the personality behind the mask.”

Make the best SR you can vs. CHR and note the level. **Now go to 458.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

458

Last to speak is Hurpik. Smaller than the other lords, every movement he makes seems to blur and this strain of his being induces a deep sensation of fear in you as you hear him gabble his words at the old man. “Here is written my offer, Gruber, and here too my terms. It is a strong offer and you will be unwise to decline. I will take this youth in place of 60 leprechauns! That is a better offer than all of the others. Let me test this youth’s reactions for I do not want a slug – there is no sport in a quick capitulation to the sufferings I have in store!” Make the best SR you can vs. SPD and note the level. **Now go to 459.**

459

You have heard from all the demon lords. What a thoroughly nasty bunch they are! You have also had the chance to read their offers. If you have the cipher you will have been able to alert the old man to the treachery contained within each offer – **go to 465.** If you did not have the cipher **go to 460.**

460

What attribute did you make your best saving roll on? Old Man Gruber will accept the offer from that demon lord. In the event of a tie, he accepts the offer of whichever demon lord offered to take you in place of the most leprechauns. Unfortunately for him, the contract changes as he signs it in blood – the swap of you for the leprechauns disappears so he has to pay you and the leprechauns for objects and being he takes as his consideration. Unfortunately for you, you have been sold a slave to a demon lord! Your new master leans over to grab you as the other demons hiss, snarl, rant and belch in their wrath. **Go to 461.**

461

Old Man Gruber shrugs helplessly. “Too bad!” he sighs. You showed some spunk.” You have one chance now to cause enough of a stink to try to escape. If you have the bombs from the flower garden you should throw the lot of them in the midst of the demon; if you have the maid, cat, the djinn or any other sentient being with you as an ally now is the time to get them to make the ultimate sacrifice (you need to make a L1-SR vs. the average of your LK and CHR to cajole them into laying down their life for you). **Go to 462.**

462

If you threw the bombs or got a friend to help you out I your time of trial, you do have a chance. “Quick, get out as fast as you can!” shouts Old Man Gruber. “They cannot leave this room without my permission.” Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your DEX and SPD – make it and you **get out to 464.** If you had no friend and had no bombs or if you did but were not quick and nimble enough to avoid clutching demon claws, you are doomed to spend a torrid time in another dimension – **go to 490.**





463

Make a L1-SR vs. LK. If you fail, a nasty look appears on the old man's face. "Cherries for you?" he sneers. "I think not. No, you would be better added to my garden." He comes towards you, big hairy hands reaching for your arms.

Time to attack (**go to 471**) or to run (**go to 472**). If you made the LK SR **go to 473**.

464

Dashing through the dining room door, you hear Old Man Gruber shout that he has unlocked all the doors. He's not such a bad sort after all. No time to dawdle, out through either the front door, back door, cellar or boiler room. Then to the garden gate. He unlocked that too. Thank Trollgod! You are out, out into the street out into the light. **Go to 488**.

465

"Oh ho!" cries Old Man Gruber. "I know your wily ways of old – you have not found me in my dotage yet! This youth is not for sale. Be gone! I shall invite you again in a week's time and you had best come prepared for fair trade lest I turn the tables on you!"

With a great deal of sulking, cussing and threatening, the demon lords leave with a hiss and a roar. The old man turns to you and smiles. "Good job. Now how shall I treat with you, I wonder? Do you want to go home now with a bag of cherries? Do you want to work for me? Perhaps you would like to be my apprentice in this demon-trade?" Think what is you want and **go to 466**.

466

As you get ready to answer him, you see the old man put on a crown of gleaming red metal, matching his eyes, which he focuses intently on you.

If you want to spring for him to knock his crown off his head **go to 339**; if you say you want to go home with a bag of cherries **go to 463**; if you tell him you would like to become his apprentice **go to 469**; if you have teeth from Molly and would like to try to bite him **go to 470**.

467

If you failed any one of those saving rolls, something bad (for you) happens – **go to 493**; if you made them all, hallelujah! If, au contraire, you moved every mountain, the world is now your lobster. Gruber goes down under your vicious biting assault and the crown rolls from his head and, as your teeth sink ever deeper into his neck, his eyes grow dim and his heart beats its last – **go to 495**.

468

Old Man Gruber has weak lungs. They plagued him as a boy and he was ridiculed by his schoolmates and always picked last at games. Maybe that's why he can be so brutal. At any rate, his health is fine today, worse luck for you. **Go to 480**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

469

“Work for me, would you? Hmmm, I could use some help – my bones ache in the morning until they get some sun on them. Are you obedient? Can you keep your hands to yourself? I’ll give you a chance. Do what I tell you and do it well and you are on the first rung of the ladder to success. Stray from the path and you’re in for a very nasty fall indeed.” Old Man Gruber writes out a list of jobs for you to do, some in the house but mostly in the garden. **Go to 479.**

470

The teeth are a formidable weapon – they do 4d6 damage and, being leprechaun teeth, they are posionous to Gruber so they do double damage. You need to make L1 SRs on STR (to overpower him), DEX (to get to a soft spot), SPD (to slip under his defences) and CON (to not be poisoned yourself by his juices). **Go to 467.**

471

Do you have the teeth from Molly the Leprechaun? Did you read the rhyme about the crown? You can go for a bite (make a L1-SR vs. both DEX and SPD and **go to 484** if you fail or **to 481** if you succeed) or go for the crown (make L1-SRs vs. both STR and SPD and **go to 485** if you fail or **to 482** if you succeed) or attack him with any means you have (fiery eyes perhaps) – **go to 483.**

472

There is nowhere to run to. The big, hairy hands take hold of you and, with surprising strength and agility, Old Man Gruber marches you out of the house and into the garden. When he finds a rabbit hole, he stands you by it and petrifies you into living stone. Next, he takes control of your will and commands you to watch for the rabbit and to attack it if you see it before giving your stone the power of movement. Finally, he arms you with a carrot-mace to smash the rabbit with.

“There! A nice new statue and a working one too! My but this garden just keeps getting more fascinating year after year!” He sighs, polishes your nose for luck and turns back to his house, whistling cheerily. A bird soon lands on your head. At least you have company.



473

His black mood passes and he shakes his head as if to clear it. “Well that is quite capital! I don’t let many people have my cherries but you have earned them! What did you make of that demon bunch? A rum lot! It’s a long story as to how I came by this house and how I came to keep them in check. They say every story has two sides and I am certain this one does. Perhaps I do wrong by some but I preserve the greater good. I am the cause of suffering, I admit, but on the other side of the ledger I have forestalled countless woes. But I shall not yoke you with my burden! Those cherries... Come with me!” And out into the garden he leads you, to the tree, calming the great dog with his whistle if necessary, picking you a generous quantity which he deposits in a brown paper



bag. “Eat some now,” he tells you. Have you ever tasted a cherry so sweet? The first cherry anyone eats from that tree, provided that they’re in Old Man Gruber’s garden, adds 5 to both LK and SPD! You must be feeling super-human! Old Man Gruber places a big, hairy hand on your shoulder and leads you to the gate, seeing you through it and telling you it is best to forget all that you have seen for memories of this house and garden have a way of becoming haunting, stalking nightmares. It is clear that he is deadly serious. Take 1,000 APs for achieving the rare distinction of being ushered kindly from the garden. Now **go to BBB** – there may be more APs in store.

475

Did you hear him cough first? No, you did not. The crown stays put atop his head and the old man scowls and then laughs. “Precocious, aren’t you? I wonder... you might have what it takes but then again most flatter to deceive. Safety first, I think.” He frowns and his eyes begin to turn red. His big hairy hands twitch and your neck starts to feel tender. Make a L1 SR on LK. If you make it, **go to 477**; if you fail, **go to 468**.

476

You wake up to find yourself lying outside the wall that keeps people like you away from the cherry tree. Although you feel sore, you have suffered no lasting harm. Lying on your chest is a bag full of juicy, ripe cherries with a note telling you never to come back. Seems as if Old man Gruber has a soft centre to his iron heart. **Go to BBB**.

477

Old Man Gruber suffers from weak lungs. They plagued him as a boy and he was ridiculed by his schoolmates and always picked last at games. Maybe that’s why he can be so brutal. Today turns out to be a day when his lungs let him down and begins to cough. Realising that he will need medication soon, he turns his eyes on you with a desperation that may give you heart.

Do you want to stare him down and take a whack at that crown (**go to 491**) or keep your eyes downcast and swing hard to knock the crown from his head (**go to 368**).

478

Starved of oxygen, your brain dies. Your body fares no better. Old Man Gruber shakes his head sadly. “What a waste,” he thinks and then gets on with the job of digging the hole by the cherry tree to drop your corpse into to feed the tree that grows the cherries that will attract the next walking bag of compost...

479

There are certain rooms you must not go into in the house; there are places you have to approach very carefully in the garden such as the cherry tree itself and the old maple tree.

Make a L1 SR on INT to show that you can follow the instructions and another on CHR to resist temptation! If you make them both, **go to 364**; if you do not, then **go to 450** instead.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

480

You have over-stretched yourself. The old man's eyes turn red and unleash a beam of throbbing energy which paralysises you. His big hairy hands fasten on to your neck. He chokes you until you blackout. Make a L1 SR on CON. If you make it, **go to 476** but if you fail, **go to 478**.

481

"Where did you get those teeth from?" Old Man Gruber yells as you leap for him. He is too old now, too rickety to get out of your way (or you have had a rush of controlled adrenalin). "Get off me. ...aggghhhh!" You sink Molly's teeth into his neck and the old man rolls his eyes. He subsides rapidly, accepting his boat has come in, that it is time to pay the ferryman. He does not taste at all nice and it is hard not to gag. As his eyes glaze over, you hear a hearty huzzah! behind you. Spinning, you see a lollygaggle of leprechauns rushing in through the door from the library with Molly at their head. Many of them are hoisting large tankards of dark ale while others are swigging hard from bottles of Bushmills. You hear Molly toasting you and a chorus breaks out with your name raised to the rafters. **Go to 486**.

482

Let down by the weight of the years he carries, the old man is too slow to retain his crown. As the red metal coronet falls from his pate, his face takes on a deathly grey pall and his skin shrinks on his bones until it cracks open and a rusty dust spills out from the leathery sack that is all that is left of him. The crown glows alluringly. It could be considered yours by right of conquest. If you want to take it **go to 487**; if you prefer to leave it well alone **go to 489**.



483

"Those tricks don't work on me, whippersnapper!" he trumpets as you see him hold up his big, hairy hands and absorb, deflect or demolish whatever you throw at him. "Bad mistake, school kid!" he hoots as you make one last ditch attempt to get away from Old Man Gruber, his horrible house and his grotesque garden. **Go to 484**.

484

"Not so fast, youngster!" the old man crows as he steps aside and your jaws gnash on empty air. He brings his big, hairy fist down on your head and your knees buckle as you brain reels in pain and shock. "You could have been a contender if you hadn't been so darned mule-headed! I'm more than a match for sprats like you. What's to be done? You've seen too much, heard secrets that need to be kept, that's for sure. Better just add you to the collection!" The big, hairy hands take hold of you and, with surprising strength and agility, Old Man Gruber marches you out of the house and into the garden. When he finds a rabbit hole, he stands you by it and petrifies you into living stone. Next, he takes control of your will and commands you to watch for the rabbit and to attack it if you see it before giving your stone the power of movement.



Finally, he arms you with a carrot-mace to smash the rabbit with. “There! A nice new statue and a working one too! My but this garden just keeps getting more fascinating year after year!” He sighs, polishes your nose for luck and turns back to his house, whistling cheerily. A bird soon lands on your head. At least you have company.

485

He sways and your lunge misses badly. His hammy, hairy fist smashes into your temple and you drop like a sack of millet. “Like poetry do you? Too bad you can’t make the verse come true. Too bad for you anyhow! You’d better get up earlier in the morning if you’re going to catch old Gruber!” His gloating is not pretty to behold.

“You could have been a contender if you hadn’t been so darned mule-headed! I’m more than a match for sprats like you. What’s to be done? You’ve seen too much, heard secrets that need to be kept, that’s for sure. Better just add you to the collection!” The big, hairy hands take hold of you and, with surprising strength and agility, Old Man Gruber marches you out of the house and into the garden. When he finds a rabbit hole, he stands you by it and petrifies you into living stone. Next, he takes control of your will and commands you to watch for the rabbit and to attack it if you see it before giving your stone the power of movement. Finally, he arms you with a carrot-mace to smash the rabbit with.

“There! A nice new statue and a working one too! My but this garden just keeps getting more fascinating year after year!” He sighs, polishes your nose for luck and turns back to his house, whistling cheerily. A bird soon lands on your head. At least you have company.

486

The leprechauns have their house back, after many, many years of being supplanted by Old Man Gruber. How they celebrate! It is the stuff of legends in itself and long, lyrical ballads are composed this night, placing you at the epicentre as the hero of the hour. Molly, who it transpires is the Queen of the Little Folk, offers to make you a honorary leprechaun. You will, should you accept, share with them the task of searching for the gold at the end of rainbows, you will be taught the Wink-Wing spell as leprechauns know it and your LK will be doubled. You will have the keys to this house and garden too and will have the ability to drink without limit and to sober up in a flash. If you decline their offer, you still have a bunch of riotous friends for life. Take a well-deserved 1,000 APs as well. You decide when you’re good and ready – the party will go on for a while yet. When you are all set **go to BBB** to reconnect with the world as you used to know it.

487

Your fingers throb with demonic forces as you pick up the crown. Your skull pounds like the wild surf as it nestles on your head. You see visions of the Eight Hells and of the Arch-Demon Ashgoeth. You *know* that it has fallen to you to run this house and garden and that you will never leave here alive. All your attributes are multiplied by 1d6 instantly (roll for each in turn). You have a spellbinding life ahead of you and cherries aplenty. What you do not have is family, friends or a free future.



There may be questions asked but you will be able to deal with meddlers, just as Old Man Gruber did. Even the deeds to the property in their darkened bank box alter to show your name. Many strange things are in your power now and you are in the power of many strange things too...

488

Things got pretty close to the wire in there just now, didn't they? An award of 500 APs is yours. What will you do with the knowledge you possess of what lays beyond the garden wall and what lurks within the house, of what it is that Old Man Gruber does too keep a roof over his head? While you ponder that, it is time to reconnect with the 'real' world. **Go to BBB.**

489

As you turn your back on the eldritch crown, you hear a hearty huzzah! behind you. Spinning, you see a lollygaggle of leprechauns rushing in through the door from the library with Molly at their head. Many of them are hoisting large tankards of dark ale while others are swigging hard from bottles of Bushmills. (The leprechauns were the owners of the house before Old Man Gruber and they are mightily pleased that he has met his end.) You hear Molly toasting you and a chorus breaks out with your name raised to the rafters. **Go to 486.**

490

Which demon lord caught you? Roll for each attribute in turn – if you get a critical fumble that is likely to be telling but in the event of ties you roll again until there is a clear loser. This is how it pans out: worst roll STR = you go to Kleft's Realm of Earthquakes; WIZ = Terju's Realm of Fire; INT = Esbax's Realm of Thunder; LK = Gort's Realm of Rain; CON = Arsh's Realm of Disease; DEX = Zandbak's Realm of Ice; CHR = Drileez's Realm of Wind; SPD = Hurpik's Realm of Sulphur. You may have 2,000 APs but there can be no hoe of escape. There can be no hope at all. There will be only misery.

491

His eyes fix you and the look of triumph inform you in an unmistakable lesson that you have made an awful error... **go to 480.**

492

As the crown falls from his head, Old Man Gruber falls and clutches at his chest. Lack of breath causes his chest to constrict and the heart attack he suffers is fatal. You have the house to yourself! You need to decide your strategy now: to be bold and attempt to run the place yourself (**go to 494**) or take the cherries you will find in the larder and make your getaway before you encounter something you can't handle (**go to BBB**).

493

The teeth fall from your mouth, biting you on the lower lip as they drop, and the old man punches you squarely on the nose, which explodes in a river of blood. Old Man Gruber looks at you with a sly look in his blank eyes, weighing your value in the scales of his judgement – **go to 480.**



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

494

There are a number of things you have to do to take control:

- ❖ Find the whistle to control the dog
- ❖ Learn how to command the statues
- ❖ Show Knobwhacker the Gnome that you are the new boss
- ❖ Stay on top of the leprechauns
- ❖ Oversee the staff
- ❖ (the most challenging, this) – Mastermind business dealings with the demon fraternity

You need to get all your ducks in a row to succeed and grow rich and powerful – L1 SRs on all the non-physical attributes: WIZ, INT, LK and CHR. Pull that off and you're in clover! By the age of 21, all your attributes will be in the 20s. You can read every paragraph in this solo adventure to know what is yours. The crown gives you laser eyes (20d6 damage) and big, hairy hands (4d6 each). For now, take 500 APs and go see your friends with a big bag of luscious cherries (**go to BBB**).

If you failed those four saving rolls, you bite off more than you can chew and what you bite off poisons you. Death comes to you and it gets you all too easily.

495

With the old man quite still, a sorry, silent figure in death, you need to decide your strategy now: to be bold and attempt to run the place yourself (**go to 494**) or take the cherries you will find in the larder and make your getaway before you encounter something you can't handle (**go to BBB**).





A

The dog looks enormous. It seems to be sleeping...seems to be. It's snoring is a low, dark rumble, shaking the lower branches of the cherry tree, the succulent red orbs dancing to the beast's tune. If you scrunch up your eyes and squint, you might just see plumes of smoke billowing from its nostrils. The thick lips are not thick enough to prevent two gleaming white, razor-sharp points protruding from them. If you have some means of dealing with the dog, **go to JJ**. If you want to rely on speed or agility and hope to get past it and grab at least a few cherries, **go to LL**. If you want to back up, **go to NN**. If you want to taunt the dog at what you dearly believe and pray to be just beyond its jaws chained as it is, **go to PP**.

B

The sweet smell flowing from the flower heads is like a heady perfume. The old man must have green arms as well as green fingers because these beauties would be enough to make an ambitious young fellow dream of opening a scent manufacturing business. Your nostrils flare wide as they drink in the heady bouquet of the blooms. Make L1-SR vs. both CON and DEX as you see tiny spores drifting your way on the gentle breeze. If you make both SRs, **go to BB**. If you make just the CON SR, **go to DD**. If you make just the DEX SR, **go to FF**. If you fail both SRs, **go to HH**.

C

Do you want to go round to the back or to the front? You can see the front but not the back. There is some cover but if you go for the front door you will have to leave it sooner than if you go further to get to the back. **Go to RR** for the front approach or **to TT** for a foray at the rear.

D

Mmmm! That fruit looks ripe for the plucking! There's way too much for that mean old man to eat...it'd be more of a sin to let it fall and rot or to leave it for the birds. What do you want? The pears look juicy and his plums are big and round. The peaches look firm and keen, the paw-paws would maybe fetch a good few cents at someone's kitchen door and the apples are crying out to be dipped in boiling toffee. What do you want to do? Grab what you can and get out of there or sneak about methodically taking the cream of the crop? If you want to make it a hit and run job, **go to CC**; if you want to take the best and leave the rest, **go to EE**.

E

The gourds vary in size, of course, depending on maturity but the largest is as big as your head. They are stripy: lime greens, yellows, and creams streaked amidst the darker greens. As your eyes take in a plethora of data, deleting much as unnecessary for memory or evaluation, you see that three gourds have zippers set down the seam. Very peculiar! Now maybe peculiar sends you scurrying away or maybe it piques your curiosity. You can turn tail smartly (**go to 10**) or you might pick one of these oddly germinated gourds and open it! One has a canine tooth etched under the zipper, another has a candle while the third has an alien rune that looks rather like this: \$. To open the first, **go to GG**, for the candle gourd, **go to II** and for the third, the runic gourd, **go to KK**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



F

The warrior statues are 8' in height and are armed with pikes and spike shields. The sculptor must have been highly talented as the features make you feel as if these guards are watching your approach; despite the years of weathering they have withstood from sun, wind and rain alike. The pikes and shields are real, not sculptures. They look battle-ready. The centre tile of the marble floor has a hand print set in it. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your INT and LK. You may press your hand into the mould of a hand in the centre tile. If you make the SR and try the indented hand go to N. If you fail the SR and press your hand down into the mould go to P. If you make the SR but ignore the mould go to R. If you ignore the mould and fail the SR go back to 10 and make another choice. You will not have another chance at the INT/LK SR until you have visited at least another 3 locations.

G

The ornamental fishpond is situated some 50' from the back of the old house. If Old Man Gruber happens to be looking out from a window he will be bound to spot you out here. Make a L1-SR vs. LK. If you fail, you catch a glimpse of a face at the window glaring at you before it disappears. The fishpond is oval-shaped, about 30' long and 10' wide. Golden carp swim lazily, occasionally darting for an unwary insect meal. The pond is generously matted with lily pads and frogs sit watchfully in comfort. Suddenly, a fish surges towards a frog, opens its mouth to reveal a row of evil-looking teeth and bites the amphibian in two!

Make a L1-SR vs. INT. You never know, you just might spot something of interest apart from the cold-blooded murder you just witnessed. If you fail the SR vs. INT but made the SR vs. LK you must go back to 10 and make another choice. You will not have another chance at the INT-SR until you have visited at least another 3 locations. If you made the SR vs. INT and the one on LK go to M. If you made the INT-SR but failed the LK-SR go to O. If you failed the INT-SR and the LK-SR go to Q.





H

The bowl of the fountain is some 20' in diameter. It hosts the statue of a winged mer-lamia, her face so lovely it is hard not fall head over heels in love with her, spouting sparkling liquid the plays musically as it splashes into the bowl 10' below. The fountain is carved from a grey-white block of marble. As you look on this entrancing sight, captivated by the tinkling melody, you must make a SR vs. the average of your INT and CHR. The beautiful creature carved in marble undulates as you stand awestruck in her presence. She smiles beguilingly and breathes sweet nothings at you that you ears cannot quite grasp.

If you make a L3-SR you are free to withdraw (go to 10) or you may go forward to join her (go to T), splashing into the water. If you make a L2-SR you are impelled to go to her regardless of any qualms you may feel (go to V). If you make a L1-SR, her eyes lock onto yours and your mind spins like a child's top whirling towards the edge of the kitchen table (go to X). If you fail L1 the creature leaps from the fountain and descends upon you (go to Z).

I

As you creep your way gingerly forward, sweat beading your brow and doubt pervading your heart, you see that these shrubs hide the entrance to a hedge maze. It can't be very big, surely, occupying just this portion of the garden? You can hide here with a high chance of staying safe from beady eyes but that won't get the job done! Either retrace your steps (go to 10) or pluck up courage and step inside the hedge maze – you can go left (go to Y) or right (go to AA).

J

The maple tree reeks of old age – the bark is coated with lichen as are the branches. Unlike the other trees in Old Man Gruber's garden, this tree has leaves that are autumnal – it is easy to believe that summer shuns this tree. As you contemplate the archaic life form rooted before you, the child's swing, glossy with its patina polished by countless years, creaks as it moves towards you. You know you didn't feel a gust of wind but there must have been one...

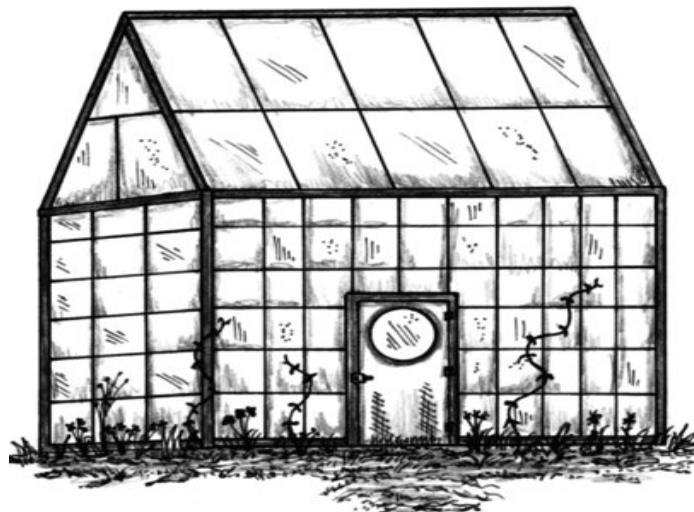
You can run back from whence you came (go to 10), you can catch the frayed ropes of the swing (go to MM), you can attempt to leap on to the seat (go to OO) or you can try to climb the tree (go to QQ).

K

The hothouse is well away from the house and you are unlikely to be observed but you never know... It is constructed sturdily of stout timbers but the panes of glass are covered with lichen. Insects are clearly attracted to the warmth of the building. The door is unlocked – why would the old man need to lock his hothouse when his garden is so well protected by its walled surrounds? Now would be a good time to take any particular precautions that may have occurred to you from any discovery you have made. As you enter, the steam makes your eyes water and the half-light takes some time for your eyes to adjust to. When they do register what lives within, you recoil with horror as you make out man-sized plants reaching snake-like tendrils towards you, their appetites obviously carnivorous and their menus clearly featuring you. How quickly can you recover and react?



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



Make a SR vs. the average of your CON and SPD. Also make a SR vs. the average of your INT and LK. If you make both go to S. If you fail both go to U. If you make the CON/SPD roll but fail on INT/LK you manage to back out of the lethal hothouse in the nick of time - go to 10 and make another choice. You will not have another chance at the INT-SR until you have visited at least another 3 locations. If you fail the CON/SPD roll but make the one on INT/LK go to W.

L

There are rabbit droppings all over the place and they are too big to miss. Why, if you had a set of golf clubs with you these hardened spheroids would make deadly projectiles! Say, that's an idea – maybe the old man has some clubs in a shed somewhere. If you would like to search for a three wood or a pitching wedge, go to SS; if you would like to just pocket some of these potentially lethal lumps, go to UU; if you would like to search for a rabbit hole, go to WW; or you can just think over-sized rabbit droppings are not to be messed with and try something else – in which case go to 10.

M

All seems as silent as the grave... Maybe you haven't been spotted. Yet. As you count your lucky stars, you see something glistening just below the surface of the water. It seems to be a small glass jar and you guess the old man must be concealing something of interest within it... Do you want to reach for it as fast as you can, mindful of the killer fish in the pond? If not, just go back to 10. If you do, go to 51, deciding before you go if there is any particular precaution you wish to take.

N

As you press your hand into the mould, your probing fingers gently locate two small studs, one at the end of the index finger, the other at the tip of the ring finger. You may push them both (go to 29) or push the left (go to 33) or the right (go to 37) or you may withdraw your hand and get out while the going is good (go to 10).



O

Your sharp eyesight enables to catch a glimpse of something sparkling just below the surface of the water – a small jar. At the same time, you hear a shout from the old man, high up in the tower! The words he yells are ominous in the extreme – “Guards – intruder alert!” Then you hear great thumping footsteps from way over in the far side of the garden.

Do you want to hide ([go to 31](#)), to try to get out of the garden ([go to 35](#)) or to make a grab for the jar, alert for fish that might fancy your fingers for supper ([go to 41](#))?

P

Your inquisitive fingers feel two tiny studs, one at the end of the index finger, the other at the tip of the ring finger. Inadvertently you push both of them... The mould shifts, the stone flowing upwards and over your hand, trapping it in the rock. As you pull and realise your hand will not be tugged free, your eyes dart feverishly towards the statues, from which a grating sound now comes.

These guardians of the garden are moving, life once more flowing through their marble veins! You can scream ([go to 22](#)) or you can attempt to hack your own arm off with your knife ([go to 26](#)) or you can meekly accept your fate ([go to 30](#)).

Q

You hear a voice bark out a command from the tower window. For one so old, Gruber manages a sharp and compelling tone. All your hairs stand up on end. Before you can move, you hear heavy footsteps coming from the far side of the garden, clearly someway off still.

Do you want to hide ([go to 31](#)) or dive into the water and hold your breath before the nightmare truly unravels ([go to 39](#))?

R

You must have felt a fear somewhere inside that these guard statues might spring to life and attack you... A sixth sense makes you look up from the mould to the statues and you see the eyes of each one opening.

Do you want to flee before they begin to move ([go to 10](#)) or will you back up a little and see what they do ([go to 18](#))?

S

You are quick enough even in this muscle-sapping atmosphere to get out of the way of the grasping plants. Not only that you spot a key on a window ledge. It will be tricky to grab without the plants grabbing you. You may withdraw and breathe a great sigh of relief ([go to 10](#)) or you may make a bold dash for the key.

If you choose to make the daring snatch, [go to 45](#).

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



T

This creature, Lapisina, is kept here for Old Man Gruber's pleasure – she would much rather be free of the spell that confines her here. There is something about you that she is quite taken by – your boyish smile, perhaps, or your puppy-like earnestness.

Whatever, she squeals with delight as you join her in the water, wrapping her snake tail about you. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your WIZ, your LK and your CHR and we shall see if the magic she weaves about you is ill-starred or if it bathes you in a boon that is rare indeed.

Go to 40.

U

The clutching tendrils wrap themselves about you – you were just too slow to get out of the way in this steamy environment which has left you sluggish. They carry a contact poison and you must take 1d6 +2 damage unless you have smeared yourself liberally with Old Man Gruber's special Hothouse Ointment (maybe you found it and made use of it!). If the poison expunged your barely-begun life, the plants eat you – if not, they may still do. You must make a L1-SR vs. STR to break free or you get dragged within reach of the mouths of these carnivorous plants and they always clean their plates. If you make the STR-SR **go to 49.**

V

This water creature eyes you with some interest, mixed with a degree of scepticism – it is a long time since any visitor offered anything more than promise. Her eyes bore into you, squeezing something deep within you with a vice-like grip. Make a L1-SR vs. STR and **go to 42.**

W

Your gimlet eyes spot a key on a ledge. The problem is that the plants have grabbed you! Either they were too quick or you were too slow – it amounts to the same outcome, namely pain and danger of death!



They carry a contact poison and you must take 1d6 +2 damage unless you have smeared yourself liberally with Old Man Gruber's special Hothouse Ointment (maybe you found it and made use of it!). If the poison expunged your barely begun life, the plants eat you – if not, they may still do.

You must make a L1-SR vs. STR to break free or you get dragged within reach of the mouths of these carnivorous plants and they always clean their plates. If you make the STR SR you can grab the key and **go to 53**.

X

You feel queasy and your breakfast threatens to revisit the world, reconstituted and considerably less appetising in form. Bile rises and you feel the creature toying with you, measuring your worth. You can give way to the urge to chunder (**go to 44**) or hang on grimly, gritting your teeth as you fight to stem the swelling tide within (**go to 46**).

Y

Moving stealthily along the left hand branch of the maze, you take a right turn, then a left and then two rights in a row before you get to a junction. To the left you can hear a faint drumming sound while to the right you can smell sulphur.

If you go left then **go to 43**, if you take the right path then **go to 47**.

Z

Things look pretty bleak for you as far as breaking out of puberty is concerned. This feminine agent of death is a split second from shredding you with her suddenly-sprouted claws and sinking her teeth into your succulent young flesh. A last roll of the dice...you can twist aside and leave her frustrated and howling if you make a L2-SR vs. the average of your DEX and SPD. If you make it you can run away and take a breather (**go to 10**); if you fail, roll for combat and **go to 48**.

AA

Moving cautiously along the maze, the greenery pressing you in, you take a left, then a right and then two more lefts before you get to a Y-shaped choice – to the left you can see something shimmering through the leaves, while to the right you can sense something peculiar, something that wouldn't exist in the world you know... **Go to 86** if you veer left and **to 55** if you take the right branch.

BB

As you approach, you see a yellow-headed flower open wide its velvety petals, displaying countless spores – it fixes a bead on you and fires them out at high speed! Not one to be caught napping, you leap aside and even though you breathe in a few spores your system handles them without distress. Take 50 APs. You are free now to search the flower beds as the murderous plant has emptied its payload. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of INT and LK and **go to YY**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

CC

Have you got a sack with you? Uh oh... Of course you have! Filling it takes SPD and the picking takes DEX. Make the best SRs you can on both of those key attributes. There is, though, the chance that penetrating eyes will spot you stealing fruit from his garden... A very good chance, actually. Make a L2-SR vs. LK. You may add the levels of those other two SRs to your dice roll. If you succeed **go to 13**; if you fail **go to 17**.

DD

As you close in on the beauty arrayed before you, you see yellow petals open wide, displaying countless spores – the plant lines you up and shoots them out at high speed! It would be nice to think that you have the poise and athleticism to avoid the cloud of toxins but that would be a gross misrepresentation of the facts. You get caked! Every cloud has a silver lining, so they over-optimistically claim, and this lining is actually the one in your stomach, which is able to process the spores without your system suffering. Score one for your cast-iron guts! Coughing and spluttering, you may retreat and go for something less heady (**go to 10**) or search the flower beds for who knows what the old man may have hidden here (make a L1-SR vs. the average of INT and LK and then **go to YY**).

EE

What's best then? Maybe you have a better idea than me...make a SR vs. the average of your INT and LK and we'll see what you get. Old Man Gruber watches his cherry tree most avidly but his eagle eyes do skim over the rest of his garden regularly. Make a L1-SR vs. LK. If you make it **go to 21**; if you fail **go to 25**.

FF

As you draw near a yellow-headed plant wide its silk petals, displaying countless spores – it then takes aim at you and expels them out at a speed not quite that of light but certainly faster than dark! Not one to be caught with your trousers down, you leap aside. You may search for interesting items Old Man Gruber may have hidden here (make a L1-SR vs. the average of INT and LK and then **go to YY**) or sneak back to a safe-ish spot and consider your options (**go to 10**).

GG

As you take the gourd, you are washed over with a wave of magical power. Dizzy, you suck in air and sway wildly, your legs now like jelly and your brain the consistency of mush. You feel a sharp pain in your mouth. It's as if your gums were on fire. Then your lips feel a jabbing sensation. Finally, your head stops throbbing enough for you to understand what this demonic gourd has done to you. **Go to 16**.

HH

Tiny spores are fired out at sneeze-like velocity from a yellow-headed flower, whose petals open out wide, revealing millions of specks of poison. It is not the sort of poison that will kill you, fortunately, unless you ingest the flowers are well as the spores.





To your credit, you do see the plant shoot its load at you. However, you are not sufficiently adroit to hop or skip out of the way. Nor is your body blessed with natural resistance to the sleep-inducing properties of the spores. One last chance – make a L2-SR vs. the average of STR and CON. If you fail **go to VV**; if you succeed **go to XX**.

II

The gourd with the candle gouged into it squirms at your touch, writhing in your hands. Suddenly, it seems very slippery and determined to get away from you. Then it begins smoking, the fumes pouring from the zipper. Do you want to throw it away (**go to 20**) or open it (**go to 24**)?

JJ

If you have something to blow, **go to 150**; if not, whatever else you may have will not work and is obliterated by a force beyond comprehension. The massive dog licks its lips and salivates in anticipation of bones crunching in its heavy jaws – yours! You are now in a fight with a hound from hell. Roll your dice for combat and **go to 162**.

KK

This gourd is strange – you get a shuddering sensation than chills your spine as you take hold of it. Then it starts bulging and contracting rhythmically. There must be something inside it, something that wants to get out! Will you throw as far from you as possible, not trusting it's contents (**go to 28**) or will you steel yourself and pull back the zipper (**go to 32**)?

LL

The dog's size and strength does not come at the expense of its reactions or agility. As you move, it moves. As you twist, so it adjusts its attack plan, a mean, destructive intelligence glistening behind eyes that show no hint of mercy. Make a L2-SR vs. the average of your DEX and SPD. If you fail **go to 36**, if you succeed **go to 159**.

MM

Catching the rope is not hard at all but the moment you take hold the rope whips upwards with frightening ferocity.

Make a L1-SR vs. SPD to let go of the rope before you suffer a burn to your hand unless you have found a glove and put it on. If you are burned by the rough hemp rope you suffer 1d6 damage to CON. If you survive, you may either **retreat to 10** or **go to J** and choose another option.

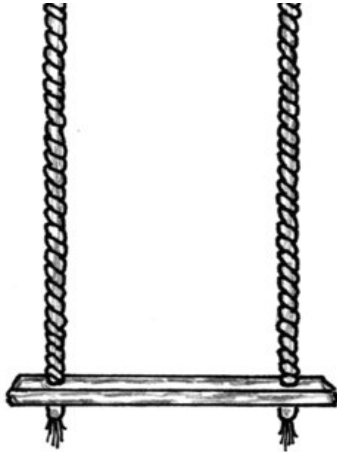
NN

Oh, that chain... How much slack is there in it? What is its weakest link? You? Make a L1-SR vs. LK and pray...

If you make it **go to 27**, if you fail **go to 58**.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



OO

You have probably sat on many garden swings and enjoyed the pleasant experience but you are unlikely to have ever sat on a swing like this and the experience will not prove pleasurable. The swing jerks violently into motion, quickly gaining altitude and velocity. To jump off at a safe height you must make a L1-SR vs. the average of your DEX and SPD. If you fail the swing loops the loop and catapults you upwards and away towards an unturned garden rake that you didn't notice before (was it there before?). Landing on the rake means you suffer 2d6 damage to CON. If you survive, you may take 50 APs and either leave the maple tree (**go to 10**) or **return to J** and chose another option.

PP

Let us start by awarding you 200 APs for standing here, in Old Man Gruber's forbidden garden, in front of his beloved cherry tree, ready to steal fruit to impress your peers, kept safe only by a chain of uncertain length and strength. And, on top of all that, as if that wasn't quite spunky enough, you are now taunting the savage beast that has struck terror deep into the hearts of all who have laid eyes on it. Now – you must make a L2-SR vs. the average of your INT and LK with regard to the chain and the best SR vs. CHR you can with regard to the taunting. If you fail the INT/LK SR **go to 176**, if the dice are favourable **go to 60**.



QQ

As you come within reach of the tree trunk, you shiver violently. Make a L1-SR vs. the average of your WIZ, LK and CHR and **go to 34**.

RR

This is a bold strategy. Old Man Gruber spends much of his time when inside gazing out over his beloved garden and his most precious treasure, the old cherry tree. Still, he does answer calls of nature and sometimes goes down to the kitchen to make his favourite apricot jelly, peanut butter and banana sandwiches. Make a L2-SR vs. LK and another one on Stealth (the average of INT and DEX). If you make both **go to 11**; if you make just the LK SR **go to 15**; if you make just the stealth SR **go to 19**; if you fail both **go to 23**.

SS

Make a L1-SR vs. LK. If you fail, you do not find what you are looking for. Either try something completely different (**go to 10**) or choose another option regarding these rabbit droppings (**go to L**). If you make the LK SR you do indeed unearth the golf club you hoped to discover, propped up against the garden wall behind a lavender bush – seems like Gruber has a playful streak. **Go to 76**.

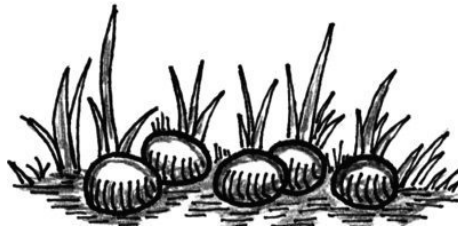


TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

TT

Sticking close to the wall and making the most of the bushes growing there, you sneak up to within sight of the back door. It looks standard issue but it is closed.

Make a L2-SR vs. LK and another one on Stealth (the average of INT and DEX). If you make both go to 11; if you make just the LK SR go to 15; if you make just the stealth SR go to 19; if you fail both go to 23.



UU

You now have two large lumps of rabbit poo in each pocket. Very soon you will begin to smell even if you discard these unlovable objects. Your CHR is reduced by 2 until you can have a bath. If you wish to jump in the fishpond now you should go to 65. Otherwise, you are good to go. As you contemplate your next move, the earth shifts beneath your feet...

Earthquake? No. There is no thunderous sound accompanying the moving earth. But something is rising up from the ground. Go to 59.

VV

The toxin seeps into your cells and when a message of distress is transmitted to your brain, it does the kindest thing it can and shuts down all internal systems and functions. External functionality is unencumbered. The plants' tendrils drag your ailing body to ravenous, expectant mouths and you are consumed in a short space of time. Your disappearance is a mystery which the local law enforcers fail to ever have explained adequately by Old Man Gruber but, hey, it's not a perfect world and there are lots more kids where you came from, dice-boy.

WW

If there were burrows made by rabbits capable of outputting such formidable droppings you would think they would be easy to find, would you not? But no, easy it is not but then so little that is worthwhile ever is.... You are probably the persevering, dogged type or you wouldn't be here now, would you? That being so, you can try a L1-SR vs. the average of your INT, LK and CHR. If you fail, nothing doing – either give up on rabbits and go back to 10 or take another approach to the mystery, returning to L; if you make that hybrid SR go to 128.

XX

Somehow – no doubt you have a good few Herculean genes – you shake off the effects of the toxins and see something interesting as the tendrils momentarily relax. You now have a little time to discover any hidden treasures. With the saving roll under your belt go to YY.



YY

If you failed the SR your searching is not rewarded in any way that is likely to make you feel the effort was worthwhile. After grubbing about and disturbing some earth worms, upsetting a few aphids and marvelling at the intricate beauty of the webs spun by the resident spiders you have to give and think of something else to occupy yourself with (**go to 10**). If you made the SR, **go to 14**.

ZZ

Getting out is no easier than getting in because Old Man Gruber does not want secrets of his garden carried off into the big, wide world. The walls look slick and steep and then there are the eyes... There must be eyes turned your way from all quarters – the old man must know you're here by now. Quick! No time to lose. You can try to get out the same way you got in or there is a passion fruit vine that looks thick and sturdy that might bear your weight. There's also a wheelbarrow full of mulch near the wall that you could use as a step up or there is a section of wall with nails pointing inwards that could be used for footholds. If you would like to use your way in to get out **go to 149**, for the vine **go to 126**, for the wheelbarrow **go to 131** or for the nails **go to 142**.

AAA

Mommy isn't here but something almost as efficacious is! As you think on the pottery fragment, a little silver imp flashes into being in front of your eyes. "My name is Mercurius and my intention is honourable, if calculating. I can send you home and heal you if you want. Not for nothing, of course! We'll toss a coin – heads you win, tails you lose. Losing means I suck out your soul and your empty husk is worm-fodder." If you accept take 200 APs then roll 1d6: 1-3 means you get teleported home, 4-6 means you are drained of all energy and spirit. Go back to the paragraph you came from if you win or decline the imp's offer.

BBB

Outstanding! You got out alive! Was it a richly rewarding raid or did you come away empty handed with your tail between your legs? Maybe you got the cherries! Don't eat them all – your friends need to see the evidence to be willing to acclaim you and laud you with all due pomp and circumstance. Perhaps you missed out on the cherries but came away with other luscious fruit – you will still be bathed in the adulation of Buzz, Skip, Woody, Skeeter, Chip, Skid and all the gang, not to mention the string of dates you'll have lined up with Cindy Lou, Wilma, Betty May, Gwen and Mary Jane. Happiness is a warm gun! If you got the cherries, take 1,000 APs and a free pass to Warriors' School, Wizards' School or whatever Guild takes your fancy – you have a ticket to ride and the devil's in the saddle. If you came away with other fruit you get 500 APs and you get to be top dog until you have to get a job – enjoy your youth and make sure you mis-spend as much of it as possible. Any other result means that you always get a place by the campfire and everyone wants to hear the story of how you went over the wall and lived to tell the tale – take 250 APs. That's the end of this little adventure – what a mean old man!



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

CCC

“So you are scared of me, are you?’ As Old Man Gruber turns to face you, you see that his cheeks are sunken and his eyes bulge alarmingly, red veins radiating out from the irises. “I suppose that is inevitable. I have quite a reputation, don’t I?” The skin is drawn so tautly over his skull that it is easy to imagine that any sudden change of expression might split his whole face open. “I wonder if you know the risk you have run in coming here?” He takes a step towards you and his hands move out ahead, questing for some part of you to take hold of.

If you have something you would employ to ward him off, now is your chance – take it out of your pocket and go to 438; if you want to attack the old man go to 437; if you want to dodge past him for the revolving bookcase he emerged from go to 446; if you stand stock still, either fearless or paralysed by a morbid dread go to 442.



THE END

TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



About the author:

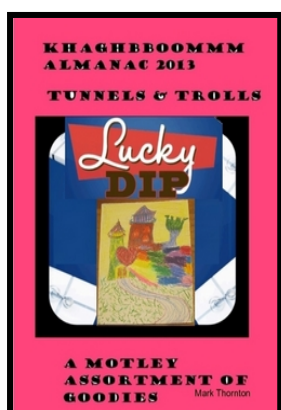
I began playing Tunnels and Trolls in England back in 1979 – a friend discovered it at Sheffield University and we played it through the Christmas holidays, drinking copiously, seeing in the dawn and losing scores of characters. I lost touch with the T&T universe after about five years and then looked it up online maybe five years ago to introduce it to my son. What a rich treasure trove of ideas I found! Not just Ken but many others had woven their magic into the Trollworld tapestry!

I live in New Zealand now, where I teach and have a small farmlet. I don't find adults to share this passion with but fill that void with the exuberance of teenagers and mix into the blend many cyber-friends from the Trollhalla community. My daughter began playing at the age of six so there's a going to be rubber burnt on the roads for some time to come. Skype is a great addition to the Games Master's toolkit – the world is our oyster!



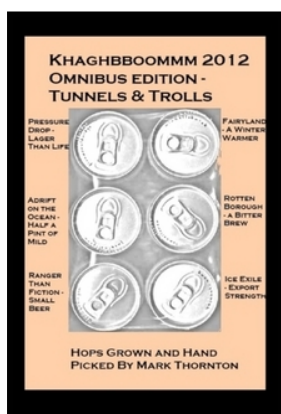
TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

Tunnels and Trolls Solo Adventures, GM Adventures and Oddities from Khagbboommm Press available either as books via Lulu Publishing [Lulu.com] or as pdfs via Drive Thru RPG [DriveThru.com].



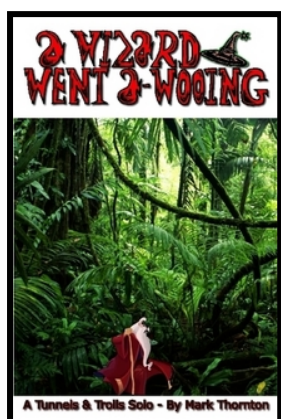
Khagbboommm Almanac 2013

A fascinating and random collection of stories, house rules, GM notes, maps, artwork and other trivia for the afficianado...



Khagbboommm 2012 Omnibus Edition

Featuring a solid six pack of adventure – five solitaires and one GM setting for Tunnels & Trolls. Pressure Drop – a journey into the body and out the other side Ranger Than Fiction – a chance to win the Trollworld title against stiff opposition with those awesome ranger powers of bowmanship Rotten Borough – Election Special now with new Dirty Tricks options – do a Florida special, run a smear campaign or even assassinate your political rival as you strive to become mayor of Stoneydaze on the far-fabled Kraken continent Fairyland – put the world of childhood back to rights as you struggle with legendary characters from everyone's earliest memories Adrift on the Ocean – look up the Raft of the Medusa by Gericault – your predicament is just as bad and your companions are not ones to hang around for long with Ice Exile – A GM adventure with fire giants trying to get home.

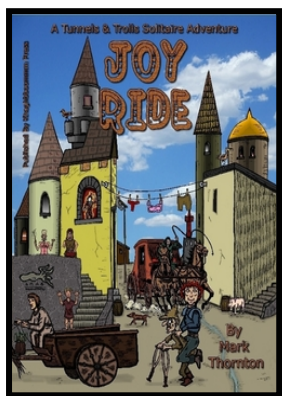


A Wizard Went A-Wooing

An epic novel/game in which you can either play different wizards adventuring in the mythical Jungles of Phantog, seeking a bride or advance the same character through all six adventures. Learn about the mysterious Kraken Continent, Khaghtch'an, and experience a vast range of challenges and spells. Filled with new artwork and much humour as well as intense gaming.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



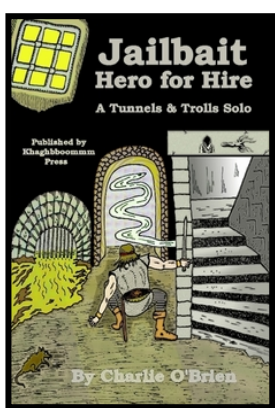
Joy Ride

There's something strange happening in the city of Caerthaeph't and you are the very fellow to get to the bottom of it. You may meet some strange citizens and have to evade death on several occasions before you get to the heart of the drama. You and the dice decide what fate will befall you in your daring adventuring!



Sorcery & Swords

Your chance to take the role of a young hero, to fight your way out of a tight corner, to learn magic and to set out on the adventure of a lifetime. All you need is dice, pencil and paper - although imagination and a sense of humour are good to add to the mix! With new artwork to set the scene and easy step-by-step rule introduction, you'll be up and running in five minutes and when you work your way to victory and want more? There's a wealth of adventures out there waiting for you!



Jailbait: Hero For Hire

Take the role of a would be hero offered the chance to earn good money by busting a prisoner out of jail. Are you up to it? Not easy to get in and even tougher to get out if you do get past the guards... and watch out for the security systems and the other prisoners. Good luck - you'll need it!



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



Deception: Strangebrew's Chambers of the Unknown

A Tunnels & Trolls solitaire adventure with Games Master option. Bring down the mad potion master or join with him to beat the city's champions and seize absolute power! Includes new art by established artists and newcomers. Get ready for Deluxe Tunnels & Trolls in Summer 2014!



Twelve Labours of Herakles

A Tunnels & Trolls GM setting and a history/mythology lesson to boot. Do you have a mighty warrior in your stable of heroes? Good! The demi-god Herakles needs some time out for family reasons and he's paying handsomely for a stand-in. If you have a friend to be your second and your advisor, that would be a wise precaution but don't let him/her interfere and take over. Remember, these labours are yours and yours alone.

Good luck and may the gods be with you...



Deathbed

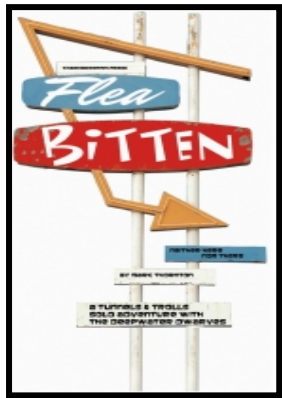
This one is quite different...starting with a bump in the night and then things only go downhill from there! You can play whoever and whatever you like, just not expect things to stay the way they started...still, where there's a will there's normally a way (just that it's a bit creepy).

Nice guys won't prosper if they act nice!

You'll find a twist to the rules and something that you can play over again and easily add to if you feel like stirring the pot or putting flowers on the grave...



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



Flea Bitten

A fast flowing Tunnels and Trolls solo underwater adventure for those who are not inclined to pomposity!

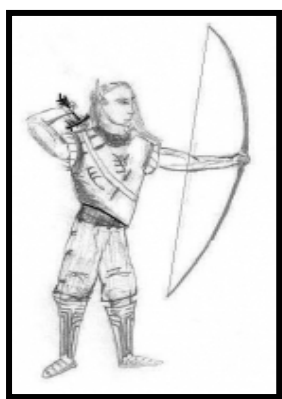


Constant Vigil

Can you follow orders unquestioningly? Unquestionably not! This is the story of the Hurricane, the man the authorities came to blame. If you like your merchants rich then Davor Pisk is worth risking terminal brain damage for, just as his mincetaur bodyguards would do without question. Watch out for Wizard Control - they shoot to kill.

54 paragraphs of headlong fun you hardly need shake a rulebook at.

If you have never played Tunnels & Trolls, make this the first day of the best part of your life!



Ranger Than Fiction

Ever wondered what it would be like to be a world champion archer?

It's the longest day of the year and you get the chance to make those trolls dance, clap and sing to your prowess with the bow. Can you beat the other contestants?

Give it your best shot, champ!



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



Rotten Borough - Election Special & Fairyland

Rotten Borough is set in the Trollworld town of Stoneydaze. A new Mayor is about to be elected and you are one of the two candidates. Go through 20 debates picking up an ever growing share of the voters and eventually triumph! No fighting, no magic just charisma and luck saving rolls as game mechanics.

Fairyland is a reworking of several well known children's tales over 20 make you or break you paragraphs. It first appeared on Charlie Flemming's wonderful Hobbit Sized Adventures.



Khaboom Wizards' Guild Spell Book (Free Edition)

The Wizards' Guild in Khaboom has recently overhauled its spell books. All Level One spells are taught to wizards who graduate from Wizards' School. Spells above Level Six are taught by negotiation; lower levels are available to be taught without appointment. Strictly no credit given.



The Longest Night

Some creatures prefer the night to hunt, to loot and to lay waste. Some very old creatures rarely bother to do these things – but if they do then their preferred day to do once more the things they did in their youth is the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year. Whether or not the moons cast their twin lights over the Trollworld makes no difference, for such creatures do not deign to hide once they are about. On such nights, it is best to stay home abed or to shrink under stone. But do not think that such precautions will save your lives, ye who steal what belongs to the masters...

This is a 50 paragraph Tunnels and Trolls Solitaire Adventure for use with the 7.5 edition rules.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



Obscured By Clouds

A sprawling tale of innocent lovers, demonic devastation and heroic endeavour to fight the good fight with all their might. Set on Trollworld, the home of the classic fantasy role playing game Tunnels & Trolls, super-powered stalwarts Samos Treek, Donk Bonku, Kaitlin Kloot and Brazi Tardani shoulder the brunt of the burden, setting out to save the gentle Feigh Folk from the clutches of the Arch-Demon Ashgoleth, as their guardians the Cloud Giants go to sleep on the job. Add in the lovelorn innocents, Cornelius Allen and Nikkolia Baker, then throw in a great chunk of the manic troll-wizards, Khagbbboommm and Yordamma Vrash, with a generous splash of a crazy old man and his resourceful grandchildren and you get an idea of the chaotic journey that climaxes in an epic ending of Hollywood proportions. The character cast is too extensive and expensive for this to ever see the silver screen - except in that luxurious movie theatre that is your imagination. Remember - if you want to learn magic, read a book!



Two Bites At The Cherries

Here's a chance to relive your childhood and act like a big kid.

This 510 paragraph Tunnels & Trolls solo casts you as a young boy, new to the neighbourhood. You need to prove your worth fast if you are going to get to hold your head high and impress the guys (and the girls). Old Man Gruber's garden presents the chance of glory. Grab it with both hands. All you've got to do is do what no other kid has been able to do - get over the wall and steal the cherries from the big tree towering, tantalisingly, above the wall. But what lurks within? Are the stories about the old man true?

Screw up your courage and hold on tight for another plunge into the unknown from Khagbbboommm Press.

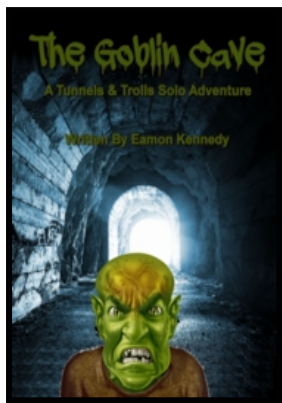


The Poisoned Chalice

You should select a warrior, a rogue and a wizard and after that you have a free hand. If one of your characters has over 100 combat adds, fighting will be easy and over very quickly; if characters have very low combat adds, life will be rough and – maybe – short. You can amend opponents if they prove way to powerful or, conversely, too puny. You will have to adjudicate much more if you play a fairy but that is your call.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES

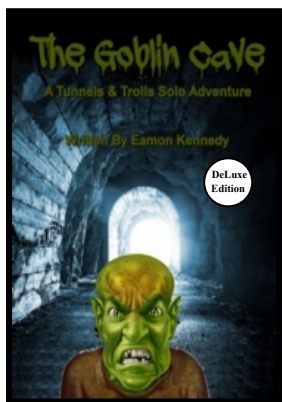


The Goblin Cave

Do you remember when you were 13 and how the world seemed a simpler yet more wondrous place? Here is the first offering by a new player who wanted to take the reigns and do something more interesting than his classmates for an English project.

If you think the odd saving roll is too demanding, take the advice of the legendary Mad Roy Cram and cheat egregiously!

Khagh



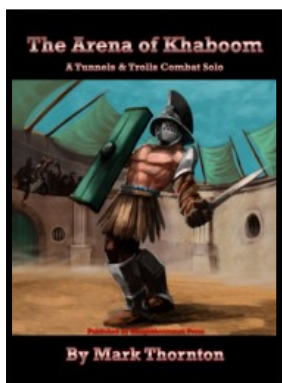
The Goblin Cave - DeLuxe Edition

This was a short adventure by a 13 year old first-time solo writer, made available free of charge. Thanks for the many comments and encouraging words for Eamon.

Now Mad Roy Cram has revised it and while it really is Eamon's adventure, the hand of an old master has woven in some magic touches.

See youth and worldly wisdom weave together for a wild, warped trip!

Khagh



The Arena of Khaboom

A Tunnels & Trolls solo adventure for warriors, wizards and rogues of all levels 2, 311 total entries. 72 foes, new spells - this is a bestiary and combat manual as well as solo with endless replay value.

Fight as a champion on a full contract or as a challenger for just a handful of death matches; risk your life for rewards of money and magic.

The Arena of Khazan is legendary and on the Kraken continent the Arena of Khaboom is second only to Pentagon Square itself. You may be ready to face the roar of the crowd against a goblin but can you keep their support until you are ready to face a dragon?

Richly illustrated by Stanley Ditko.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



Zyrian Atrocities

See if you can stop the world going to rack and ruin. There are plenty of unethical types out there ready to try to overthrow democracy. Someone has to stand up to them and that someone is you!

No dice needed, no rulebooks but a GSOH is a pre-requisite.

Don't get mad, get even.



The Kindred Stone and the Heart of Oak

Fantasy world Olympics! Find an individual champion, find the dominant kindred. Full rules for both contests, endless replayability - make your own legends!

Designed for solo play or for groups.

Let the combat begin!



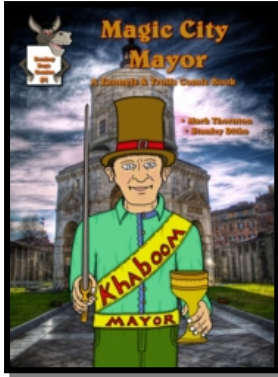
Send in the Army

Deep in the heart of a desolate, disturbed forest is a castle that claims the lives of young people from the nearby village. Now the son of the lord of the nearest city is slated to go with his beloved into the merciless hands of the werewolves that rule the forbidding castle and its terrifying crew of monsters. The lord's vizier hires you to lead an army to demolish the castle stone by stone so that no one ever suffers the awful fate facing the prince. Are you up to leading a force of dwarves, elves, ogres and wizards to get the job done?

This is a GM adventure.



TWO BITES AT THE CHERRIES



Magic City Mayor #1

What would it be like to be Mayor of a city where magic is commonplace and wizards rule the roost? How would you cope with an influx of immigrant goblins? Is it really worth shooting for re-election? What would the bribes cost?

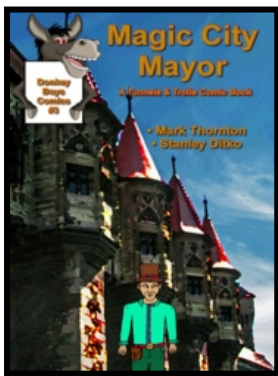
All these questions and much, much less answered in the Donkey Brothers' first and finest Tunnels & Trolls meets Marvel comic book.



Magic City Mayor #2

Issue #2 of the life and times of the Mayor of Khaboom, a democratically elected leader of a city dominated by powerful wizards.

With an influx of immigrant goblins, a disloyal right hand, a bodyguard gone mad and a rampaging minotaur on the loose, who would even dream of running for re-election?



Magic City Mayor #3

The third issue of the only comic that puts a magic city and its mayor under the microscope.

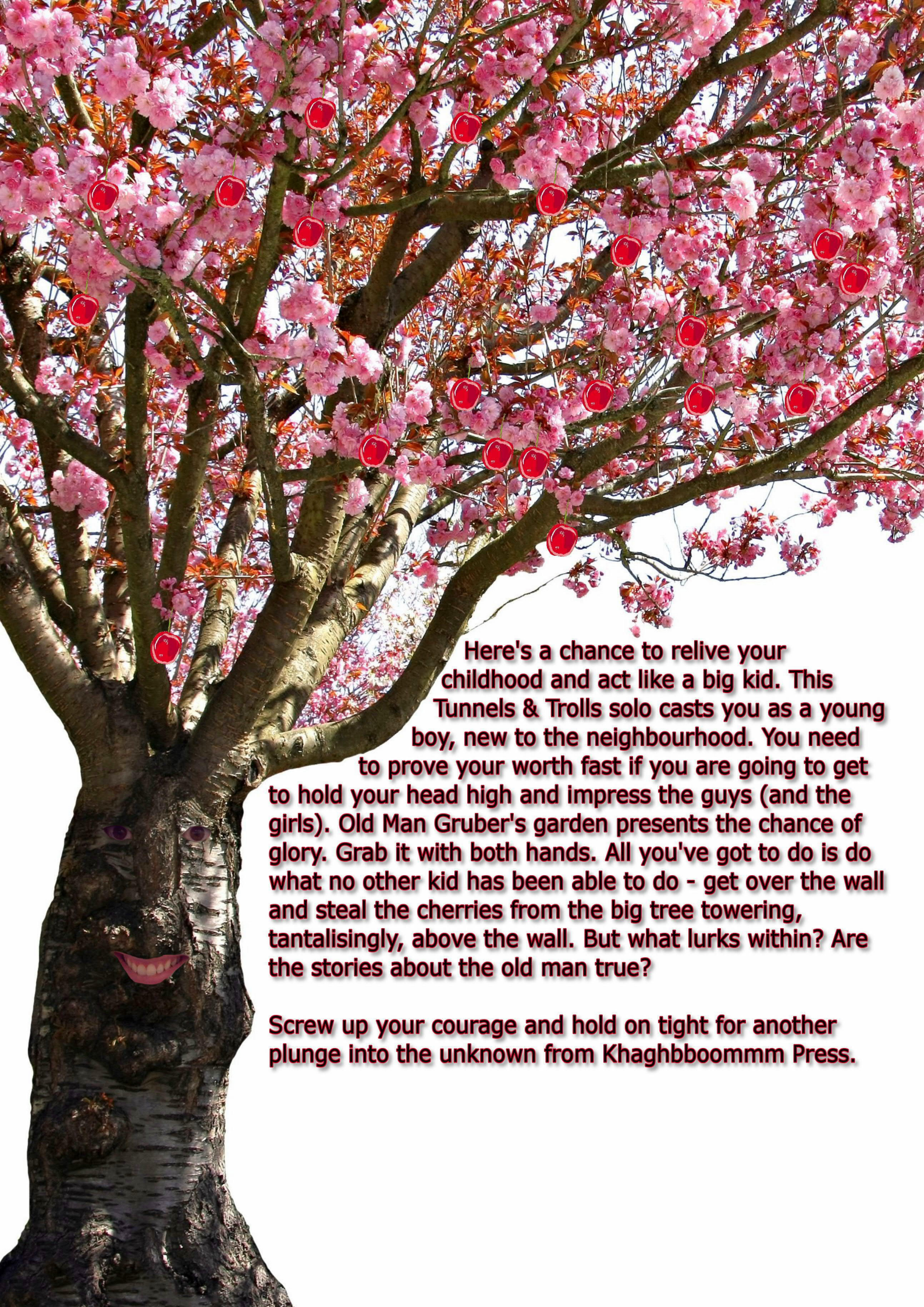
More woes for the Mayor as he faces an election hot on the heels of an influx of goblin immigrants while the Wizards' Guild, his deputy and a demon in the shadows queer his pitch. The Goblin King loses his crowd, Samos Treek continues to run round like a headless chicken and Murgatroyd's misery leads to many heads being lost...



Missing Inaction

A Tunnels & Trolls solo adventure is still in the works. It is huge, with over 2,000 entries. So huge that the book might just explode, hurling words in all directions!

Definitely illustrated by Stanley Ditko.



Here's a chance to relive your childhood and act like a big kid. This Tunnels & Trolls solo casts you as a young boy, new to the neighbourhood. You need to prove your worth fast if you are going to get to hold your head high and impress the guys (and the girls). Old Man Gruber's garden presents the chance of glory. Grab it with both hands. All you've got to do is do what no other kid has been able to do - get over the wall and steal the cherries from the big tree towering, tantalisingly, above the wall. But what lurks within? Are the stories about the old man true?

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