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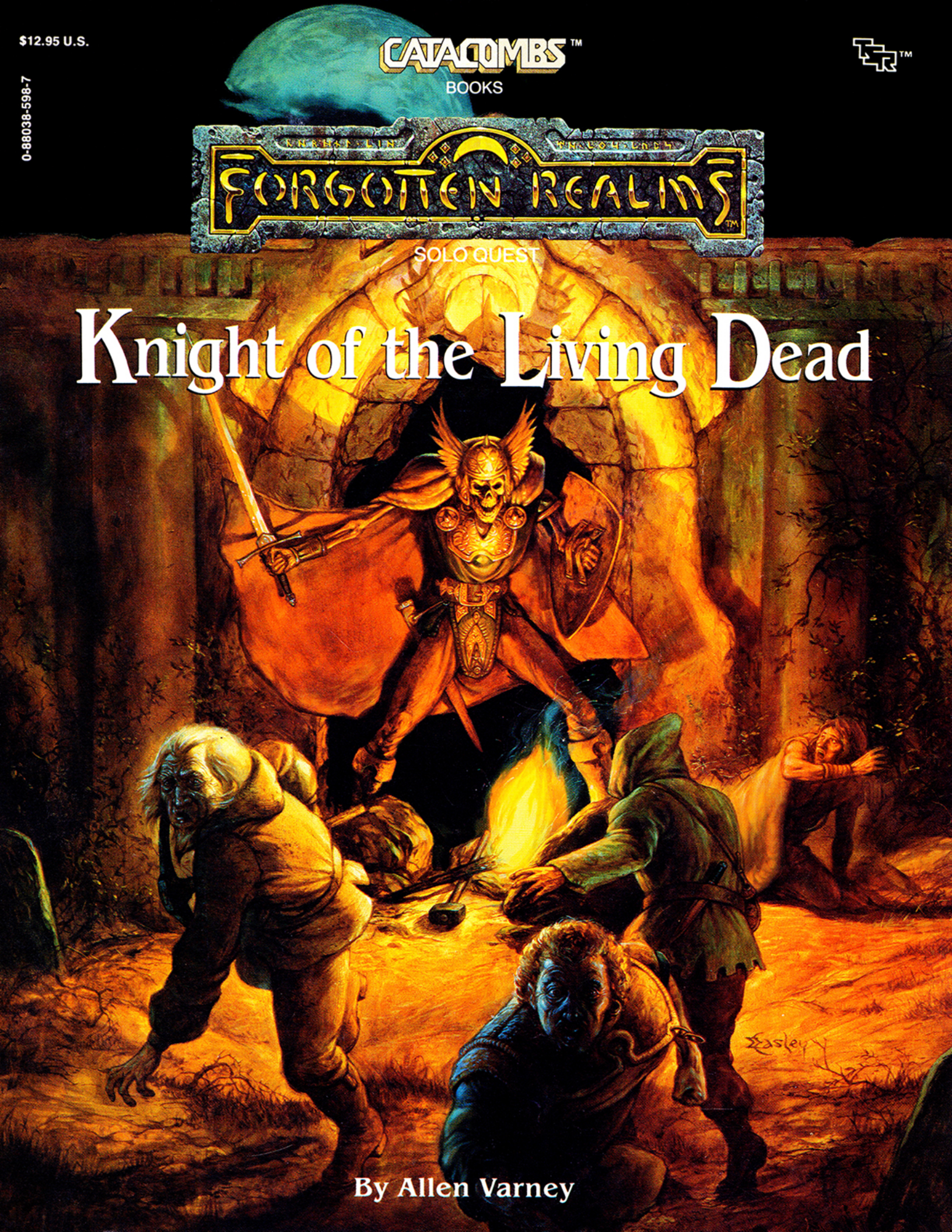


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Knight of the Living Dead



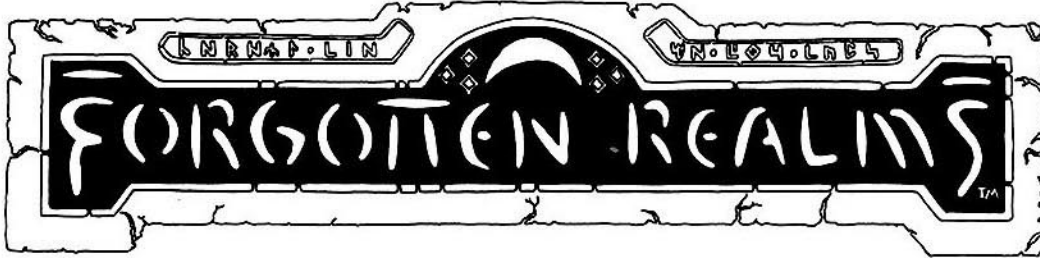
By Allen Varney



WATERDEEP— City of Splendors

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Books



Knight of the Living Dead

By Allen Varney

**Cover Art by Jeff Easley
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Knight of the Living Dead
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INTRODUCTION

The watchers on the city walls did not see the dead. Although two miles off and marching closer, the dead army aroused no alarm. Guardsmen shivered in scale mail on the battlements of Castle Waterdeep. They huddled over bewitched torches that no wind could extinguish, cursed the winter weather, but raised no cry. None, that is, except, "Half on from eleven, all's well!"

It was half-past eleven in Waterdeep, that great coastal metropolis. Proof against attack for centuries, it now slept soundly. Half an hour from ruin, the bored sergeant answered, "All's well, keep on."

In silence, the dead kept on. Now and then one limped, dragging its withered foot over the rocky path, shredding the papery flesh and scratching the bone beneath. Other dead jerked to the left with every step, fighting the twists of their spines. Sometimes a vampire bat flew overhead, and the dead looked up reverently.

"Isn't it beautiful?" said one lover to another, as they both gazed up at the sky. Dense clouds blowing in from the Trackless Sea made the night powder gray. But the young man and woman pretended they saw the moon, Selune.

"Yes," the other replied, "pretty. And so . . . not white, truly. What is that off-white color?"

"Umm . . ." Both fell silent as a lighter walked by, a fat youth wearing a black cap and holding a torch twice his height. The young guildsman headed for the House of the Homeless, not far off in the cemetery. At night, Waterdeep's City of the Dead is dimly lit at best, but the paupers' tomb needed new torches at all hours. In those endless catacombs, day and night meant nothing.

The lovers watched the pudgy lighter, torchbearer in an arena where no living athlete competes, waddle toward the mausoleum. After he passed, they embraced. They kept talking, as though the conversation mattered. Eleven forty-five . . . fifteen minutes left. "And so what is that off-white color, pray tell?"

A mile away now, the dead reached torchlight. It showed the pallor of off-white skin stretched drum-tight over rib cages, dry, sunken eyes squinting in the light, and teeth smiling perpetually without gums or lips to mask them.

Among the flesh-eaters, one had gone mad. It stumbled toward Waterdeep from the Mere of Dead Men, the salt swamp far to the south. On the journey, its hands began to twitch, perhaps in eagerness. Joining the other marchers, the wraiths and zombies and clacking skeletons, the mad ghoul could not control its twitching. It clutched one hand in the other until its claws raked the skin open, but the tremors grew. It pounded its arms against a rock wall, leaving trails of powdered blood, but the tremors grew.

Miles later, the ghoul's limbs were shaking violently. Like a dying animal, it knew that there was no hope, that so near to its goal—less than a mile now!—it would fall. It would not take part in *Cathexis*.

The ghoul then went berserk. It ripped into its fellows with instinctive cruelty, slashing at eyes, tearing just under the jaws, kicking at abdomens. The others fell upon it like jackals, their response equally vicious. They dashed it against a wall, and it lay still.

Such was their eagerness that none of the dead stopped to eat the carrion. Only five minutes now!

"Five minutes and not a moment longer. I told my master I would be back at the guildhall before midnight. And here it is five minutes away!"

The lovers huddled closer as they walked. The crypts in the City of the Dead could not block the biting wind. They wandered

toward the lights around Ahghairon's Statue.

"I just wish we—ahh!" The man started back. "Look out, it's a grave."

"What, in a cemetery?" she laughed. "By the gods, call the watch at once!"

"No, in truth, this looks fresh. They never bury people in the ground here, do they? There's no marker—only a pile of dirt by the path, just under this tree."

"Then how do you know it is a grave? And if it is, what of it? As they say, 'The City of the Dead hides many secrets.'"

"Yes, but—" The man had spent hours walking among a hundred crypts, but to him they were just buildings. Now he stared at the grave, fascinated.

"Come, now," the woman said, pulling him down the path. In the torchlight at the base of the monument, they kissed. He thought his love could never weaken.

Two minutes until midnight.

The lovers walked slowly toward the gate to that gray street called The Coffinmarch. On the path ahead, near the entrance to the House of the Homeless, lay a pile of cloth. They neared it and both realized, with such suddenness that they felt almost calm, that this was the lighter, the stout boy with the black cap.

He lay motionless, except for the rhythm of his slow breathing. His cap lay to one side. And the torch was gone. The woman knelt beside him.

"Assaulted?" the man asked.

"No," she began. Then she looked up, and stopped.

From the crypt wall billowed a cloud of gray smoke, thick in the doorway, and rapidly thinning to invisibility as it approached them. The smoke seeped through the crypt wall, spread like oil across the path, floated as high as the leafless trees, and moved *deliberately* (the word came to the woman unbidden) toward the gates to the city.

From the torchlit tunnels beneath the mausoleum, the armies of the dead moved deliberately toward the surface. Those who could think barely controlled their excitement. Now! they thought. Now, life, destruction, vengeance, *Cathexis*! Everything is exactly right!

Something is wrong, the woman thought. She and the man stepped back as the smoky vapor approached, and the thought nagged at her: What is wrong here? Then she knew it. The wind was blowing in off the harbor in icy gusts. Yet this smoke drifted rapidly toward the buildings below, *against* the wind.

"Run!" she cried. They turned and ran as though pursued by dragons. But the vapor flowed over them easily, curling under their nostrils almost lazily. She smelled vitriol, and her nostrils burned, and then came an overwhelming odor of decay. She choked and fell, but kept going, crawling. She could no longer see her lover.

Crying now, she realized how the torch lighter had fallen, and how he had managed to crawl away from the mausoleum. Her fingers tingled, then she couldn't feel them at all. Lights danced in her eyes, and sounds played in her ears.

Then, worst of all, words seeped into her mind, even as the vapor seeped into her lungs. It spoke to her, or seemed to. *The Effluvium*, said the voice. *Do you like it? It is our weapon of vengeance. All who live are helpless in its influence. We could have killed you, and can yet kill you, as well as all others alive in Waterdeep. But that is not justice.*

Sleep now, and the Effluvium will provide your nightmares. Sleep until we waken you, in time to see your city ruined, demolished, your precious city walls a caldera. Then you will die, and we will live. That is the justice of the unliving.

The woman reached the base of Ahghairon's Statue. Others lay on its steps, lovers and city watchmen and rogues. In the distance, a monument to the city's warriors, a scene of heroic battle, of triumph over hordes of barbarians, hobgoblins, and orcs, loomed through the smoke. Then the Effluvium billowed up stronger than ever, eclipsing her view.

A pit gaped wide in her mind. She fell into worse torture than pain or numbness, the torture of nightmare. With her last conscious thought, the woman despaired. No one alive can fight this, she thought. What hope is there? Who can protect us now?

* * *

Life is gone, death not yet come. And so you wait.

You cannot taste the dirt that clogs your throat. You barely feel the moist trails that worms coil about your fingers. With no coffin to shelter this unliving burial, you cannot move to hear the rustle of leathery skin against armor, nor smell the root-choked earth in your nostrils.

Yet you sense life above you, envied, precious life! You sense the light, rapid footfalls of children, lovers on slow strolls, the halting gait of city elders. You yearn for the life pulsing in their veins. Even the grass over your shallow grave seems to throb with life. And farther above, their life spirits shining in your awareness like fireflies, birds soar. But below them, half a ton of earth weighing on your chest, you suffocate. And wait.

In the first weeks of your burial, you learn to adjust time. You speed your perceptions so that sparrows slide forward in midair, as though swimming, and you have long moments to savor their every heartbeat. Then, slowing your perceptions, you watch plants writhe and grow, while the sun and moon drop across the sky in turn, like beads down a string. All the while, you wait.

Once, the dirt falls away from your left hand. Air, is that air? you think. Clawed feet touch you, the first contact you've had with living flesh in—how long? There's an electric touch! Teeth nip at your flesh, the tainted flesh no worm would eat. It's a weasel!

More dirt falls away. . . . You can move your hand, now. The animal crawls onto your body, its heartbeat as loud as a drum in your ears. When you hasten your awareness, it seems to slow. When its paw trembles like a flower following the sun, you strike!

Your fingers clench on matted fur. The weasel shrieks, twists, bites, but you feel nothing except your own desperation. Life! Here is existence, treasure above all! you think. You cannot bear to let this living spirit depart!

Yet, though you do it no harm, though you slow time until each day crawls by like a century, in the end, the weasel's life escapes you, even when its body could not. So fragile! You once possessed that sweet, fragile gift of life. Or rather, you kept its custody, until it was taken from you.

The weasel lives no more, but you cannot bear to release it. No others come.

Waiting, you speed time to a headlong pitch. Slow thoughts grow like trees in your mind, while real tree roots squirm past you. Groundwater, seeping down from seasonal rainfall, hits your undecaying flesh, and you feel the impact like hard rain. You note distantly that the weasel is now only a skeleton.

And then the weasel speaks to you.

"Quiet down here, isn't it?"

Remarkably, you feel no surprise. So, you think, here it is at last. The darkness, the suffocating closeness of the earth, the endless solitude and paralysis, the constant thirst for a breath of air, at last these tortures have twisted your mind upon itself. Your own subconscious mind speaks! It's fearsome to think how easily your spirit, disciplined for decades in a great cause, shatters after the isolation of . . . what, five years? One year? You try to recall

the nature of that great cause.

"You can ignore me," says the weasel, "but I don't see what good it will do."

This is madness! And yet, why not give in to madness and talk to yourself? Why should half a ruined temple stand apart from the other? You mean to speak, but soil traps your tongue. It does not matter, for thought serves as speech. "What are you?" you ask.

"Just a weasel."

"How can you speak?"

"I don't. You just make me talk in your mind. I guess everyone needs a friend."

"I—I cannot believe that my mind would speak so. This is magic."

"Maybe so," says the weasel. "Maybe some of your magic seeped into me. Does it matter?"

"Magic of mine?"

"Sure. It imitates what you were in life. You must have known you have it. The magic of the *undead*."

So here it is, you reflect again. You avoided thinking the word for so long. How you loathed them—vampires, ghouls, ghosts, zombies, all the rest—most feared of monsters, animate corpses and hideous spirits, travesties of life. Now you lie with their silent legions. You, their lifelong foe, are now one of the undead.

Numb with horror, you rein in your coursing thoughts. Perhaps you can slow your perceptions and avoid facing the truth. But, no . . . clouds and stars hurtle across the sky like meteors, yet you only draw out the torment. And the most dreadful torture is not knowing why.

"How did it happen?" you scream silently to the weasel, to anyone.

"Don't remember, eh?"

You do not. The past hangs there, foglike, just out of reach. Does your amnesia spring from the trauma of death, or from your own mind's refusal to confront its behavior? Perhaps some curse has driven away memory, the same curse that keeps your own death at bay. You must be the toy of some malicious deity.

Yes! A deity. There was a—a god! You served him. You were a great warrior in the cause of justice, a paladin, known for purity and courage.

"And then, pretty obviously, something happened," says the weasel.

You almost crush its skull in frustration. The recollection lingers so close, yet out of reach. In its absence, another idea arises. You could pull the skull to your neck, saw away with its sharp teeth. . . . Dare you end this unlife of yours? Would it even work?

"Give it a try," says the weasel. "Couldn't hurt."

How many days flash by above while you muster your courage? Even in your slowed perceptions, your hand inches up unbearably slowly. For a moment, you experience a stream of sensation, faces and sounds, but you dismiss it as hallucination. Now you dig at the dirt, and the skull's teeth scrape on your breastplate, over your collarbone. You dig away dirt. And now, your neck . . .

The earth on your chest lightens. In your clogged ears, you hear a trumpetlike blare urging you up, up! Like a wakened sleeper, you start in surprise, and your senses slip back to a normal time rate. The dirt of the grave is lifting away. Dust falls on your dry cheeks.

At last, your long wait nears an end!

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

In this adventure, you become a warrior of the undead and fight against other undead. You are the main character in this story. Your decisions govern its course and its ending. All you need to play the game are a pencil, a 12-sided die, and a plentiful supply

of luck and skill. If you don't have a die, a simple alternative will be explained later.

This book is divided into sections with number-letter codes, like "86A" or "138C." DO NOT read the book straight through from section to section. After reading this introduction, turn to Section 8A. Read it, then select the next section from the choices offered there.

Sometimes the text accompanies a picture, usually on the page opposite the section. Study the picture while reading the text. From the illustration, you decide whether to talk to or fight any creatures you see, or examine objects that catch your eye. If something you want to examine isn't listed among your choices, it is of no use to you in your quest.

By making choices, you guide the story to its end. Try to bring about the best possible ending to your adventure. There are many endings, and you may play until you find them all!

Soon you will learn your immediate goal. But your long-range goal is obvious: Send your spirit to a peaceful rest, or return it to true life. Regardless, you must end your torment of undeath.

YOUR CHARACTER

You play a paladin, a warrior knight in the cause of good, who has somehow joined the ranks of the undead. You do not remember how this happened, or anything of your past life.

You actually may choose to become one of two different characters. Their situations are alike, but their pasts are very different. During the story you may learn your character's past, and sometimes the story proceeds differently depending on which paladin you choose.

To choose your character, tear off the folded portion of the back cover at the perforation and gently tear apart the three bookmarks.

One bookmark is a list of possessions, clues, and other records. Set it aside for now. The other two bookmarks show the two different paladins, white and gray. Choose one, and save the other to play the game again, another time.

Use your character's bookmark as you play the game. When you are directed from place to place during the story, move your character's bookmark to each new picture page. You also use the bookmark to keep track of your paladin's status (see the next section).

COMBAT

In your quest, you will encounter many enemies. You do not have to fight them all, but sometimes combat is the only way to your goal. The game uses one 12-sided die to determine a battle's outcome. If you do not have one, the book uses a simple substitute system.

Hitting an Enemy: When you fight an enemy, you roll the die to determine when you strike the foe, or are struck yourself.

The number you need to hit an enemy is given on your bookmark. If you roll *that number or less* on the die, you hit your foe. If you roll a higher number, your blow missed. For instance, the paladin with "Memory Trace A" on his bookmark hits on an 8 or less. If you roll 8 or less on the die, you hit; on a roll of 9 or more, you miss.

Other creatures' "to-hit" numbers are listed on the Combat Table on page 160. If you roll the given number or less for a creature, it hits your paladin. A higher roll misses.

Damage: A successful strike does damage, expressed as "unlife points." Your character's unlife points are listed on your bookmark. Undead enemy characters also have unlife points. Each hit subtracts a number of points from the character's current total. When a character's point total reaches 0 or less, that character is

defeated and out of the game.

Different characters inflict different amounts of damage. The paladin with "Memory Trace A" does 7 unlife points of damage with each successful strike, while the paladin with "Memory Trace B" hits for 8 points of damage. Other creatures' damage numbers are listed in the Combat Table.

The Combat Table: All the undead monsters you may meet in this adventure are listed on page 160. The Combat Table lists the picture page on which you meet the creature, the creature's name, the number it needs to hit you successfully, the damage (in unlife points) each of its strikes inflicts, and the creature's total unlife points.

Fighting: When you fight a monster, refer to page 160 for its combat numbers. Then run the combat in *combat turns*. In a combat turn, you first try to strike your enemy. Roll the die, and if you hit, subtract unlife points from your enemy, according to the damage you inflict.

Then, if the enemy survives, it gets to strike at you. Roll the die for the creature, and if it hits, you subtract points from your total.

If you reduce the enemy's unlife points to 0, you win and may continue with your quest. If your unlife points reach 0 and your enemy wins, you have been defeated and your adventure is over. If neither side wins, continue combat turns until one of you is defeated.

Sometimes you get a chance to escape when losing; this choice is always optional. Any deviations from normal combat will be noted in the text.

Alternative Die Rules: A die face is printed at the bottom left of each left-hand page in this book. When you need to roll a die, flip the pages of the book randomly. Your roll is the die number shown at the bottom of the page you stop on.

THE MEMORY TRACES

Your paladin begins the adventure with no memory of his past. But as he wanders, his surroundings trigger flashes of recollection. These remembrances, his "memory trace," may provide clues or explanations for his situation.

On each paladin's bookmark, you will see the heading "MEMORY TRACE A" or "MEMORY TRACE B." These designate the two different backgrounds of the paladins.

Each Memory Trace is divided into numbered sections. During the adventure, the text sometimes tells you to "read the next section of your Memory Trace." The first time you are told this, turn to the first section number listed under Memory Trace on your bookmark. That section of text will give you a fragment of memory, then will say, "Return to the story." After reading that section, check off the entry on your bookmark, go back to the text where you left off, and continue your adventure.

The next time you are told to read a Memory Trace, turn to the next section listed on the bookmark. Continue in this way throughout the story. *Never skip a section*, and never read more than one unless you're told otherwise. In this way, your character's memory returns gradually throughout his adventure.

TIME AND TRAVEL

You have twenty-four hours to find as many pieces as possible of an artifact called the Staff of Waterdeep. The more pieces you find in that time, the better your chance of defeating the liches who oppose you and putting your soul at peace. But any other information you gain may also help.

You begin your adventure at midnight, and it ends by the following midnight. You spend time by moving from one ward of the city to another, and by exploring at many locations. Remove

the third bookmark and mark down the time as you explore. (A device will tell you how much time you spend at each location.) For convenience, time will be measured in half and whole hours.

In general, visiting and exploring a location in one ward, starting from a location in the *same ward*, takes *one half-hour*. Visiting and exploring a location in one ward, starting from a location in a *different ward*, takes *one hour*.

For this game, the City of the Dead, Waterdeep Harbor, and the surrounding countryside are considered wards of Waterdeep.

Travel time can vary, however. In the large areas of North Ward and Sca Ward, you have to cover a lot of ground, so you may use more than one hour. In the twisting streets of Southern Ward, or near the docks, you may need time to find your way through their labyrinths of buildings.

Likewise, crossing from one ward to another over intermediate wards may take longer than an hour, but going to an adjacent one may take less time.

Remember to keep track of time on your third bookmark.

EVIDENCE

On your bookmark are four "Evidence Boxes," lettered "A" through "D." When you discover something interesting, the text may instruct you to mark one of these boxes. Mark it gently, in pencil, so you can erase it between games and start fresh the next time.

Sometimes the ending of the adventure may depend on the Evidence Boxes you mark during the story.

YOUR POSSESSIONS

Under the unlifed points on each bookmark are spaces for your "POSSESSIONS." Use the spaces to record objects you find on your quest. In general, you may take any item you find. But its owner may have other ideas!

The number of spaces represents your carrying capacity. You may wear up to two magical rings, and carry up to eight other objects. The other objects may be anything except rings. All of these are in addition to the things you get at the start of the adventure.

Write your possessions on the bookmark lightly in pencil. If you acquire more items than you have spaces for, you must leave something behind. When you do so, erase it from your list.

INTRODUCTION (Continued)

Deep, hollow *crracks* resound about you. Tree roots, as big around as your arm, snap like the wings of birds. Earth flies up in a mass, and you feel vertigo while gravity bends. You rise from your grave, armor clinking and joints creaking. But why can't you see anything? Is it dark, or have you gone blind?

Clutched tightly in your fist, the weasel's skull murmurs, "You've got dirt in your eyes."

Oh, of course.

As magical energies deposit you on a bed of soft grass, you reach up with your free hand. Gloved fingers scrape dust from your dry eyeballs. You look up to see a cloudy sky, a leafless oak, and—

—A lich!

You shy back in horror. A lich, a skeletal wizard sustained by necromantic sorcery, most evil and powerful of the undead! And you have no sword, no weapon at all. How will you destroy such a monster?

While you lie frozen in fear, the lich gestures with its desiccated arms. Magical words echo in your mind as though you hear the mage chant them. Its robes, once luxurious but now threadbare and rotting, hang like old curtains. They rustle with every gesture, the only real sound the lich makes. Except for that—rattling?

You locate the sound. It comes from a small carved box strapped to the lich's bony upper arm. Inwardly you shiver to see the phylactery, the telltale sign of the lich's pact with dark forces. That simple box, holding a few strips of parchment marked with runes, sustains the wizard's unlifed. Should you try to tear it away?

"Don't be a fool," says the weasel. "See what's going on first."

The undead wizard completes its spell, then speaks in your mind. "Your will is mine," it begins. "Do as I tell you." The lich seems oblivious to the weasel skull's speech. Just as you thought, the weasel must be your own mind talking to itself, inaudible to all others.

But the lich also seems unaware that you are not under its power. Though you are undead, you have not fallen into undeath's evil grasp. You still long to fight the lich.

You could, even now, launch an attack on it. But such a foolhardy lunge, without weapons, would mean your instant destruction. "Better to let the mage think it controls you," whispers the weasel. "Maybe it'll say something you can use to kill it."

The lich hears none of this. "You are in the cemetery of the city of Waterdeep," it says, "the graveyard called the City of the Dead. It is winter solstice in the Year of the Prince."

How long have you lain below? You remember nothing.

"I am called Abraxa," the lich continues. "I have raised you to serve me. Not long ago I attempted to secure a magical weapon known as the Staff of Waterdeep. In touching it, I triggered its defensive enchantment. It broke apart into its twelve components, and those pieces flew across the city, returning to the points of their construction. They have reverted to their original forms, and I cannot locate them.

"Along with some others, I am engaged in constructing—shall we say—an artifact beneath the city." You hear a sardonic note in the way the lich says the word "artifact." Why does this simple word sound so foreboding? "While so occupied, I appoint you to search the city and find as many pieces of the staff as you can."

Questions fill your mind, but as in the grave, you cannot speak them through your dirt-clogged throat. You try thinking your words. "What artifact? And why choose me? Why—"

"Silence," says the lich, cutting off your thoughts. "Attend to what I choose to tell, and no more. My collaborator, Haurrant, also seeks the staff, but like me is unable to leave the artifact.

"His undead agents seek the pieces, as will you. Unfortunately, Haurrant has more power to spare than I, so his agents outstrip you in strength and numbers. I do not trust Haurrant, and you must not trust his agents. Yet if chance offers, acquire those pieces of the staff that they have found.

"I believe Haurrant has already secured some of the pieces, so you cannot gain them all. But the more you find, the better you serve me."

Bewilderment exceeds hatred in your mind. You feel compelled to ask, "But how can these undead wander the streets of the living?"

The lich sounds amused. "Look around you."

You look. Bare trees and shrubs, marble crypts, wide walkways of mortared brick—you find you recognize the City of the Dead. "But what is that gas?" Clouds of vapor curl as though alive, even permeating the walls of crypts.

"The Effluvium," says Abraxa the lich. "A magical gas that now sweeps over the city, sending all who live into nightmarish sleep. While they slumber, our legions ransack their homes for every magical possession. These items power our construct, far below."

"But—" You have never heard of such magic, and your mind reels. "But if you can do this, what more could you desire? What can your artifact give you that this powerful sorcery cannot?"

"Life! Life, and death! The unliving for a thousand miles

around, perhaps ten thousand, approach Waterdeep to join us. We offer the ultimate reward and the utmost revenge upon the living. In one stroke, we gain true life and, in the same moment, we destroy this city!"

For the first time, the lich's words ring with passion. Awestruck, you realize that this monster is quite insane. And yet you believe, without question, that it speaks the truth.

The lich continues, "But the Staff of Waterdeep holds the power to destroy our plan. Serve me well, bring me the pieces of the staff, and you, too, may return to life. Have you a fonder wish?"

As if in reply, your chest burns more strongly with the need to draw a breath, your eyes scrape within their sockets, you feel the crunch of graveyard dirt in your mouth. Yes, life, sensation, the pulse of blood through your veins, the tastes of apples and cinnamon and ginger, the scents of fog and roses! Life above all, or if not life, then final rest from the longing for it.

But you cannot take part in the lich's plan, whatever the

reward. To you, a paladin, turning to evil is a worse and more final torment than undeath. You must fight this monster, however you may—if not with a sword, then with teeth and fingernails. You gather yourself to leap.

But the weasel says, "Wrong, wrong, wrong! This thing is sending you to find the very article that wrecks its whole scheme. Play along. What are you, suicidal?"

Abraxa pulls several strange objects from its robes. Watching that hideous skeletal form, those unnatural trembling movements, you fight within yourself, against your own nature. Should you fight evil as you meet it, or let it proceed until you can launch a stronger attack?

At last you speak within your mind.

"I will search for the staff," you tell the lich. "I have nothing to help me find its pieces, and no weapon with which to fight for them. But I swear to pursue my mission to its end, or die the final death in the attempt."

Turn to 8A to begin your adventure.

8A The lich Abraxa has raised you from your grave to locate some of the twelve pieces of the magical Staff of Waterdeep. You remember nothing of your former life, but you have not given way to the evil of the undead. Yes, you search for the staff . . . to use it to defeat the lich and prevent the destruction of the city of Waterdeep!

You stand alone with the lich in the City of the Dead cemetery. Your only "companion" is your own subconscious mind, which, in the form of a weasel's skull, communicates only with you.

"These will aid your search," the lich says in your mind. The monster rests a heavy broadsword point-first in the dirt by your grave, while its other hand holds up—a shrunken head?

"This cerebricule will locate and analyze magical energies," says the lich, indicating the shrunken head. "It is most valuable. If you endanger it, you will suffer my wrath!"

You reluctantly take the "cerebricule" by its wisp of hair. "Is it alive?" you ask, examining its wrinkled, dried-apple skin.

"Not enough to matter." The lich continues. "This sword is magical, and will strike down any undead creature—except myself," it adds, while handing you the sword. Though the lich believes you to be in its control, it clearly overlooks no precaution.

You consider testing the accuracy of its statement. But it would be foolish to attack and give up your only advantage: the lich's ignorance of your true nature. Far better to let the monster live, for now, and make it help you defeat its plan.

"Search for the pieces of the staff around and outside

the city," it continues. "It is now midnight. You have until next midnight, when you may join us at the underground artifact and see how our plan commences. There I will give you a further assignment, but for now you need not know what.

"If you have trouble in your search, you may find me at the whirlpool in the harbor. However, I expect results before I will offer you aid."

"Whirlpool? But—" you begin, but the weasel skull whispers, "Don't push your luck. Ask something important." You sort through a hundred questions, then ask, "What shall I do when I have collected the pieces?"

The lich's dry chuckle echoes in your mind. "The cerebricule shall take care of that. Or seek the artifact in the House of the Homeless, nearby. Now, time hastens. What further items or details do you need to perform well in my service? Ask, for I grow impatient."

If you don't wish to ask the lich anything, turn to **20A**.

To ask the lich to tell you about, or give you, the:

	turn to:
cerebricule (shrunken head)	41C
magical sword	78A
ornate ring	88E
simple ring	146B
crown	67A
phylactery (small box)	78D
plot to destroy Waterdeep	128B
whirlpool in the harbor	55B

You may ignore any other items in the picture. They will do you no good.

8B "Well," you begin, "I would think a junk pile should be as neatly piled as possible, having so much to overcome in that way—"

At once a hail of bones, fruit peels, and other garbage flies at you, coming from Jyorlo's direction. "You dom guy, you theenk you know eet all? Maybe I fletten you out, show you! Skovalashnikoor!"

You hurl yourself to one side to avoid the debris, but you are too slow, and take a bellyful of fishbones. From the crushing weight, it feels like enough to feed most of Waterdeep's navy! Subtract 2 unlife points from your current total.

"Just like a plebeian to react violently to fair criticism," Veliks chides. Invisible hands help you up and brush fishbones from your armor. "This fine fellow is the sort we need more of around here, unlike *some* whom we won't talk about."

"Daggalavorshniyok!"

"Don't mind my companion. He's foreign. You should have seen him while he was alive—always grub-

bing through the trash to find things to pawn." Veliks raises its voice so Jyorlo is sure to hear. "Pathetic! A tramp's life and a tramp's death—a pile of junk fell on him. What brings you our way, stranger?"

"I seek the Staff of Waterdeep," you reply.

"Oh. Somebody threw it out? Wait, that's that magical thing all of those odious ghouls were looking for around here earlier. Filthy things! They tossed the trash everywhere, just like"—here the poltergeist's voice rises again—"some others we could name but won't! Didn't find anything, though. I wonder if they wanted that thing that flew in around midnight. . . . Could that have been it, do you think?"

"Flew in! Yes! That's it! Where is it?"

"My! Eager, aren't we? You must really want it. Oh, I have an idea for a fun game. Jyorlo, you'll like this, too! We'll have our friend here play hide-and-seek. Sort of. Oh, this will be so much *fun!*"

Hearing the poltergeist's enthusiasm, you suspect it will not be that much fun for you. Go to **20B**.





G. Barr

IOA "Great ruler," you say desperately "the wizards plan to use the artifact to attack you. I know of a device that recorded their secret conversation. I found it in—"

"Hold," says Orcus. You find you cannot speak. Orcus stares, and you feel an unstoppable probe rummaging casually through your mind. "Ah," says Orcus. "A bird. How quaint."

He snaps his claws, and in a burst of white light, the mechanical bird from the villa appears. Orcus speaks no command, yet the bird automatically replays the conversation it overheard, while the demon listens.

"*The construct is soon done, Abraxa. You have told no one of our ultimate purpose?*"

"*Mind your business, husband, and do not annoy me with senseless rhetorical banter.*"

"*Careful. If the master can weaken and fall, what of your own ability? It is not good to alienate me.*"

"*Nor you me, for we shall need all our combined power to topple him, artifact or no. Think less of sharp tongues, so we may both think more of conquest.*"

For long moments, Orcus sits silently. Its head droops in resignation—or is it disappointment? Then it looks at you with a scowl, an expression you know you can never forget, and speaks quietly. "Well done. I summon the liches forthwith."

Whoosh! In twin clouds of heatless flame, two skeletons appear. Their rich robes and crowns mark them as liches, and you recognize Abraxa. Clearly the other is its partner, Haurrant.

While their robes still swirl about them and their thin-skinned heads turn left and right in confusion, Orcus confronts them. "Did you or did you not speak these words?" it asks in a low, rapid-speaking voice. And it replays the bird's recorded conversation.

The liches start as though struck by a fireball, but they recover quickly. "No, Great Orcus!" "A trick! Foul slander!" "How could you doubt our loyalty?"

"Silence! For wizards, you do not lie particularly well. Be still." It waves an arm, and the liches freeze as stiff as corpses. It scans them up and down. "Your auras betray you," Orcus says. "They speak of treachery. I release you. . . . What have you to say?"

Haurrant and Abraxa snap out of their paralyzes. Instantly they begin chants of magical spells, gesturing rapidly. Shields leap up before them, disks of prismatic light. Lightning flickers around their hands.

"You cannot stop us now, demon!" says Haurrant. "The construct is finished, and our power has grown beyond measure! We have seen that your exertions leave you weak. Submit and allow us to leave peacefully, and we will spare your life."

Orcus digests this in silence. Suddenly it laughs a

short, cutting laugh. "It seldom fails," it says. "I stage a little masque, a display of weakness for my followers. They look at one another and say, 'Orcus grows weak,' and someone is certain to plot betrayal."

"Know, liches, humans, that by weeding traitors from his ranks, Orcus remains strong."

The liches loose their bolts at the demon. Less than a foot in front of it, the lightning simply disappears.

"Strong," the demon repeats. "You open chasms in the earth; Orcus levels cliffs and mountain ranges."

The liches raise fire around the throne and bolts of ice that whip through the air. All disappear.

"You twist tiny whirlpools; Orcus boils oceans."

The liches summon bats, gargoyles, and a night-black dragon, and send them against the demon. Before they can move a yard, the monsters die in agony and dissolve.

"You destroy cities; Orcus sinks continents."

The liches watch their shields fade away like sunsets. They step back, back again, then freeze.

"Know, liches, that you are mere creatures. Orcus is no creature but a force of nature, a statement by the universe. The sun that shines in your sky is nothing to Orcus. There is power in Orcus's claw, or even a drop of his blood, that all the human wizards of a hundred generations would fear to engage. Witness."

Orcus raises a claw, the first time the demon has moved. With the claw, it scratches a long gash down one of its own cheeks. Dark crimson blood wells up.

Orcus flicks the claw casually, and two drops of blood fly forward from it. You slow time to watch them fly, two shimmering globules of blackness.

The drops land on the two liches, and the wizards cry out in agony! The drops burn into their decaying flesh, leaving trails of smoke. The smoke spreads as fire burns behind their eyes, their robes light, and a burning cloud immolates them. In moments, they are dust blowing away on the hot wind of the Abyss.

You turn back to Orcus. Already the cut heals.

"Disappointing," says the demon. "I suppose I must destroy the construct as well. I shall plan for another diversion to distract attention from my main operation in Vaasa. But that is for another day."

The menace to Waterdeep is ended. You have succeeded in your mission! But how long can you enjoy your success? Now Orcus turns to you.

"You have served me well, sleepless one. I reward you fittingly. You shall be my supervisor over the entire City of Lasting Flame. The demons there are rebellious and must be disciplined regularly. You yourself may administer the tortures for all eternity. Never say that dealing with Orcus does not have its rewards."

And with a gesture, Orcus makes it so. Your adventure has come to a ghastly end.

11A "I'm Shalara, and this is my master Kappiyan Flurmastyr," the young apprentice says, wonder in her voice. "Do you understand me?"

"I do."

She continues, "We were preparing a Potion of Giant Strength, at the last midnight. Then these awful hordes of ghosts broke in! We were protected by our wards . . . but nobody else has come to save us, so we've had to resist them alone all this time. It's been terrible! Where is everybody?"

Not pausing for an answer, the breathless apprentice speeds on. "What's worse, Master Kappiyan has been, um, afflicted by a side effect of the potion preparation. His mind has gone a little, well, astray. It happens sometimes."

The wizard says succinctly, "Skazlorl ephemeris gork."

"It's a good thing I can translate," says Shalara. "Master wants you to tell us who you are, and what you are, and why one undead has fought against others to save us."

"My name is . . . not important," you tell her. It might be if you could remember it, of course. "I seek the pieces of the Staff of Waterdeep, not to aid the undead that blight the city, but to destroy them."

Wide-eyed, Shalara stands on tiptoe to whisper at length into Kappiyan's ear. He nods abruptly, looks at you (though he doesn't seem to focus on you), and makes a simple mystic gesture. A pure yellow glow passes from his hand, into you, and back into his hand in the blink of an eye. You felt nothing, but he nods, satisfied. Taking a deep breath, he loudly announces, "Gabingo chowmesh har har abrogate zymak!"

"Master says you speak the truth," Shalara translates.

"I hate to tell you this," pipes up the weasel, "but that's pure gibberish. He's nutty as a pecan cake."

Kappiyan continues, gesturing at the room's wall, at the ceiling, at his nose, and at his left eye. "Zoroastrian bolongo cafcac croquignole and the spleen!"

Smiling, Shalara again translates. "Master says that you're nutty as a pecan cake, because you speak to imaginary rodents, but that your heart is pure. If you save our lives, he will give you the piece he provided to Khelben for the Staff of Waterdeep."

"Imaginary!" the weasel splutters. "What's imaginary? You hear me, you hear them—what's the difference? That way lies solipsism."

"In the next room," continues Shalara, "behind the door as it opens, rap three times on the wall. A secret panel will open. Inside is a wand. If you bring this to us, we can get out of here, and Kappiyan will give you the piece of the staff. Please," she adds desperately.

"Don't do it," sniffs the weasel. "She called me a rodent."

But the rancor of a dead weasel is a small price to pay for a piece of the Staff of Waterdeep. You go to the next

room, rap thrice upon the wall, and retrieve the silvery wand revealed there. Back in the study, you push the wand into the protective circle. It crosses the ward without resistance, and Shalara gratefully takes it.

"Now," she says, "reach into the brazier, and for the next few moments the fire won't hurt you. That's where we put the piece of the staff."

You touch the brazier, fighting back fear . . . and she is right. The flames feel cool to you. You reach in and bring out a section of the staff, made of pure ruby, shining in the light of the brazier's flames.

Check off the ruby piece on your bookmark list when you take it. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to **156A** to find out more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it; but first make a note of this section, **11A**, so you may return here after you are finished there.

"Seismicity hoo-larmoplast gik gik endomorph!" announces the wizard. Shalara translates, "Master says you may have one other item to aid your quest: the wondrous potion he carries, able to remedy the most grievous injury," and then her voice drops to a murmur, "or my little amulet, that mrrhmmhm vrm vmrhm."

"What?" you say.

"Gozwalla teitelbaum!"

"That, um, gives some small protection from attack," the apprentice repeats, a hair more loudly.

If you choose the healing potion, go to **108B**. If you choose the amulet, go to **25D**. If you choose neither, you express your thanks to them, and she expresses theirs to you. Then, with a flourish of the wand, the wizard makes them both—along with the objects within the protective ward—disappear. You wish them well, wherever they went.

A quick turn around the room with the cerebriucle informs you that there's nothing else of interest here. It's time to leave. Go to **65E**.

Perhaps the strange creature can help. "Hallo! Help!" you think, hoping it can hear your thoughts as the undead can. "Fish me out of here!" **11B**

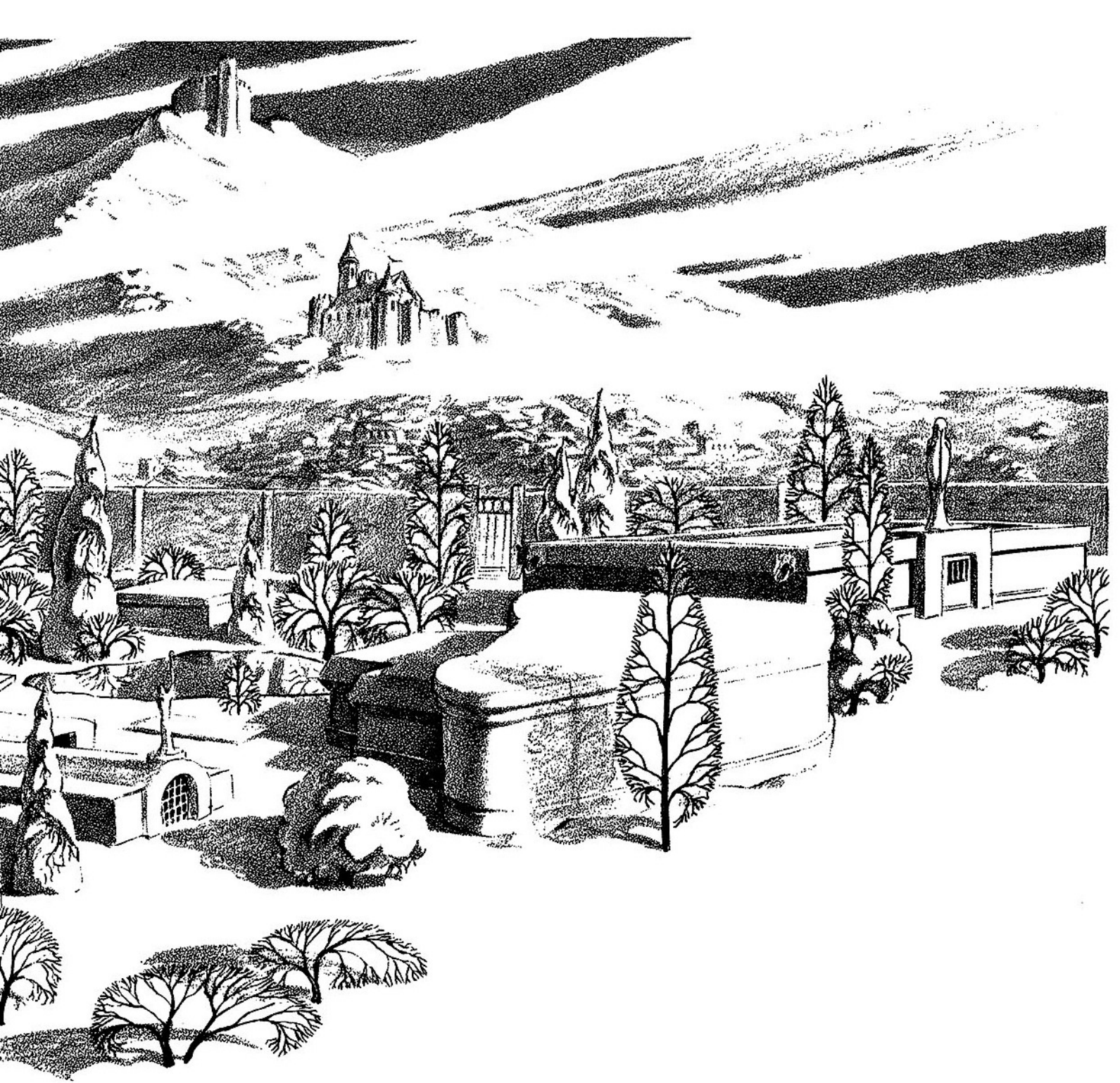
The creature responds in a throaty voice. "What'll you give me?"

Floundering in the current, being swept downstream like a wood chip—it's not the best time to review your possessions. But you run down the list in your mind, trying to think of what the creature might like.

The creature can detect whether you actually have what you offer, so you may only choose something that is actually on your list. If you have some, will you offer jewelry (**107D**), weapons (**123D**), money (**66E**), or fruit (**52B**)? Or you may forget about getting help from the creature and drift over to the bony island (**154B**) or farther downstream (**36A**).



G. Barr



(See art on pages 12 and 13.)

14A The tallest structure in the cemetery is the warrior's monument. You climb over a stone troll, place a foot carefully on a bugbear's snout, hoist yourself up and grab a hero's belt, then sit on the anonymous commander's shoulder. Sixty feet above the brown grass, you look around.

The City of the Dead was never more appropriately named, you think. In the vast cemetery, you hear no sound but the wind, and see little movement but scudding clouds overhead, skeletal tree branches, and patches of the Effluvium. An unholy stillness!

During winter, Waterdeep bundles up, ties down the shuttered windows, and endures months of misery. Nobles and their children evacuate to warmer climates, and commoners stay indoors . . . avoiding others' hot tempers, as well as the frigid wind.

In this northern latitude, the sun crawls above the horizon only briefly, never very high. With the perpetual cloud cover, not even the living find it easy to tell day from night.

But even in winter, the City of the Dead remains a popular meeting place for Waterdhavians. As close to a major park as the city offers, its landscaping and clean walkways make up for the sad sight of crypts and mausoleums.

And some of the buildings are attractive, in a monumental way. Seeing them, you notice their names drifting into your mind. The Hall of Heroes, resting place of Waterdeep's greatest warriors, stands nearby. Alongside it, the seldom-visited Hall of Sages, final home to many of the city's learned scholars.

Beyond both sits the spartan crypt of paupers and outcasts, the House of the Homeless. The lich said you could reach the underground artifact through there. But it would be wise to gain some pieces of the staff of Waterdeep before venturing into the enemy's lair.

You look around at tombs large and rich, small and stolid, all solemn, all ageless. "Perhaps," you say to yourself, "there are other restless spirits here who may help my quest."

If you would like to visit:	turn to:
the Hall of Heroes	140B
the Hall of Sages	154F
the House of the Homeless	31B
Aghairon's statue	47A
your own grave	148A

Or you may go to the wall around the cemetery, climb up, and look out on the city of Waterdeep (82A).

14B The urn in this unlabeled hole is identical to the others in the tunnel network, merely cheap ceramic without identifying features. Inside it you find fine ash and a few bone fragments.

You put the urn back in its niche. At the same moment a tremulous voice speaks in your mind, coming from behind you. "You should be real glad you put that back." Then, a laugh.

Turning, you see a wraith—no. No, this vaporous creature is darker than the wraiths, its features blurry, and shrouded with a shimmering dark aura. The wraiths in line have shied far back on both sides. Even the undead, it seems, fear the power of a specter.

"Yellowknife's my name," says the specter. Under its voice you hear a low chorus of screams and oaths, desperate questions and pleas for mercy: the voices of its victims. Over them, in quavering words, the specter says, "That's me you were holding there. Isn't that funny? Me, in a pot. Yellowknife."

Suddenly you remember Yellowknife. The legendary killer plagued Dock Ward long ago, when the guildmaster rulers brought Waterdeep almost to destruction. Yellowknife strangled thirty prostitutes and barmaids with their own hair, cut from their heads with a yellow-hilted

dagger. Then he vanished. Now he floats before you. People of usual insanity become wraiths, it seems, while the truly fearsome madmen achieve intensity enough to become specters.

"Your hair is dirty," says Yellowknife, drifting closer and raising an arm. "Let me fix it. I like hair. My friends all had lovely long hair."

A finger bone brushes your cheek, and you recoil in agony! The touch of the specter drains energy even from the dead. Inside your armor the cerebriucle moans, and the weasel shrieks in your mind. Your sword is in your hand before you realize it.

You must fight the specter. You may use a rod of lordly might against it, if you have one; otherwise, you use your sword. Find the specter's combat statistics on the Combat Table on page 160. If you lose the fight, your adventure ends here on the rocky floor of the House of the Homeless. But if you win, go to 25A. After the first round of combat, you may try to escape if you wish (131A).

Mark off half an hour and roll the die. On a roll of 1 to 8, go to 32B; 9 to 12 go to 135E. **14C**



15A A lengthy plaque on the tomb of Donalbain describes his birth on the distant island of Ruathym, due west of Waterdeep; his youth as a cabin boy on a merchant trader; arrival in Waterdeep; apprenticeship to a scribe, from whom he learned at a very late age to read and write; and his later speed in mastering the writings of the old philosophers and sages.

You can tell from the dates on the tomb that he lived a long life, the only way to explain the equally long list of works mentioned in the epitaph.

You sit down. Tentatively you think, "Hello?"

"Hmm? Is that you, Bumberly, you lout?"

"No, wise one."

"Oh. Sorry. I gather you are a fellow ghost, then. No one but undead seem able to talk with me nowadays. I deduce that I have become in some fashion undead myself, but of unconventional aspect heretofore unreported. By the way, you didn't give Bumberly some magical thingy, did you?"

"Well—"

"He pulls that on everybody, making them think he's our secretary. He was only secretary to that senile dodderer over there, Scryblom. What brings you to see this old shade?"

You speak with Donalbain for a long time. He proves to be quite clearheaded and stable, though given to interrupting you. In undeath he has found a new opportunity to study the phenomenon.

"No records made by the living ever gave me to believe that undead communicate among themselves, and yet so it is," he says. "It is some form of telepathy, evidently undetectable by living sensitives.

"I have found," he continues, "that the walking dead, as they lack living spirits, cannot perceive beauty in any form. They see masterpieces of painting as mere blobs of color, unable to resolve them into pictures. Listening to melodious music, they would hear only dead, hollow tones. And so on. Vampires are evidently an exception, though I currently lack support for this statement. If true, perhaps it is their regular diet of living blood that produces the difference."

Donalbain has heard nothing of the liches Abraxa or Haurrant, nor of their plan to destroy the city. You bring up another matter that has troubled you.

"Wise one, are not all the undead evil?"

"So the records indicate, or they are unconcerned with the living at best."

"Yet I do not feel evil, and you do not sound so."

"Well, speaking personally, when you lie in a coffin all

the time and think, matters of good and evil cease to apply. Foggy terms anyway. As for you, I can only speculate. Unschooled as I am in necromancy, I can say nonetheless that spells for raising the dead are as intricate as any in magic.

"A single misspoken word, diminution of will, or untoward gesture can bring about unforeseen results. Almost always the results are evil, but if the one who raised you made a mistake in the right direction—if you follow me—you could end up lily-white and pure, for all we know. Or a god could have intervened. And yet, given the source of undeath's energy . . . well. Never mind. I should not talk of such things."

You sense he holds something back. "What, wise one?"

"Well, the conventional wisdom holds that undead derive their sustenance from an alternate dimension called the Negative Material Plane. Hence their ability to drain the life of living things. That may be true as far as it goes, but it does not address the forces that create the conduits between that plane and this. I have come to think—well, again, never mind."

"Please, sir, tell me."

"No. It would be—too hard, too . . . Please go. Now."

Puzzled, you leave the tomb. Donalbain has told you there is no point in talking to another sage. You go back downstairs. Will you return to 22A to keep investigating, or leave the Hall of Sages (149D)?

The rocking horse looks awfully incongruous here. Curious, you approach it. But as you draw **15B** near, Jyorlo the poltergeist calls out, "Hey, guy, watch out for Spot, you know?"

You see nothing suspicious. The toy horse simply lies there, nose down, in a shadowed part of the junk pile. Nothing could be hiding in the shadows, for your undead eyes see clearly in the dark. Invisible? Another poltergeist? "Who is 'Spot'?" you ask.

"He's my pet."

"Dommy! My pet! Spot, he like me most!"

"Oh, you liar!"

They become engrossed in the argument, and you cannot learn any more. It is probably in character if they are teasing you with a nonsense warning, as a prank. Will you approach the rocking horse (76B), or go back to 114A and pick something else? If you decide to pick something else, remember to give the poltergeists another of your possessions and cross it off your list.

16A The monster isn't watching, and Strix has her back to you. You stealthily slip out the flask of holy water.

"Don't do it!" the weasel shouts, so loudly you can't believe that Strix hasn't heard it.

"Vampires are a natural aristocracy," Strix is saying. "We feed on the weak. Can human dukes and princes claim otherwise? We are simply more honest about it."

Brushing her back all the while, you open the container with your other hand. You muffle the moist popping sound against your leg; a trace of water vapor burns you, but you avoid crying out.

"She'll catch you!" screams the weasel. "You're done for!"

"As we vampires are natural rulers, then, who is better suited to control this artifact? What is the use of rampaging across the land, laying waste to everything? Far better to make a few punitive attacks, then terrorize the surviving populace into submission."

Is the creature watching? "Drop it!" urges the weasel. Are the vampires overhead following your every move? "She's toying with you!" the weasel warns. Will the water kill you, too?

I am not alive! you think, and pour the water into the tub.

"Slaves are useful, while corpses— *Aiiyaaa!*" Strix screams horribly. You shove her down into the bath. She struggles to resist, but you manage to hold her down!

Smoke and fumes rise as the holy water burns away her flesh—and yours! The woman's arms and legs beat the liquid into a froth. Drops hit your face and leave steaming pits, but still you hold her down!

The water sears your hands like acid, bringing agony you never knew in life. Your own flesh begins to dissolve. And still, while the blood-water boils and the walls of the pool shake like a severed artery, you hold her down!

Through the diluted blood, you see Strix's eyes, once seductive, now bulging in panic. Her youthful features wither, wrinkle, and age centuries in a moment. Her figure sags, rolls of flesh burst forth and burn away, and you know the woman whose back you scrubbed was actually some kind of bloated monstrosity. With new strength born of fury, you push Strix still farther into the pool.

After what seems an eternity—thirty seconds, perhaps—it is over. Nothing remains of Strix, vampire queen of the centuries, but a small quantity of powdered bone suspended in the blood-water. You have taken 12 points of damage to your current unlife point total. If this reduces you to zero, your adventure ends here. Otherwise, keep reading.

You are afraid to pull out your own hands, but the pain drives you to it. They are completely stripped of flesh, burned to the bone, yet you still have feeling in them. In wonder, you flex your skeletal digits. The fin-

gers move with a slight clack of bone scraping on bone.

You realize this is the same magic that keeps skeletons moving. If your flesh were flayed off, you would continue as one of their number. . . .

The monster, snapping out of its shock, suddenly leaps on you! "Murderer!" it cries in horror. "You killed my beloved! Die!" Claws spring forth, and it tears at you. You must fight this creature, listed on the Combat Table on page 160 as an "adjutant." As noted on the table, it has 15 "unlife points," though actually it is alive.

The creature does not retreat, and neither can you. If you defeat the monster, go to **138A** to look around (you can't look at the monster, of course). Or you may leave. Since the tunnels have grown together behind you, closing off retreat, you must advance farther down the worm construct (**144A**).

Your many questions require answers. "I cannot spin that wheel," you tell the adjutant, "at least until you tell me more of yourself and your purpose here." **16B**

"I supervise the big fellow's interests," says the adjutant. "Much of his power centers on this little particle you call a city, or more precisely just beneath it. I will say nothing more about that. The big fellow might be interested in this gambling phenomenon, though I imagine he already knows everything of it."

"Who is this big fellow?"

"Now, stop being so nosy. I will speak no further on that, either." The creature looks irritated.

Will you persist in questioning (**72B**); attack (**147D**); take the adjutant up on its offer to spin the wheel (**116A**); or ignore the monster and look around (return to **62A**)? Or you may leave (**108G**).

There's something familiar about the croupier. You don't believe you know him personally, or that you would associate with employees of gambling houses in general. But he reminds you of someone . . . who? You ruminate on the idea as you search him, hoping to gain information. **16C**

His clothes are simple. No jewels, nor ornaments, nor weapons. The simplicity reminds you of—

Of Kelivaras! The wise brother in the temple of your god, who taught you the merits of patience and inner strength. From Kelivaras you learned of devotion, and gained some insight on the road to wisdom. If he could only help you now, when that road extends so far you cannot see the end.

Exhilarated at the memory, and frustrated at your inability to remember more, you leave the croupier and turn to other matters. Return to **62A** to look around further, or leave (**108G**).



17A Those eyes. . . . You slump forward, your eyes staring. You feel something ransacking your thoughts like a thief pawing through a jewel case. "Ho! Wake up!" cries the weasel.

You start awake. You find yourself scrubbing Strix's shoulders with the creature's brush. Strix smiles like a lioness whose prey cannot escape.

"So . . . no memory, paladin? That must be inconvenient. I will do you a service and return to you the memories I located before you rudely dismissed me from your thoughts. Then, I hope, you will serve me in return."

Though you avoid looking at her eyes again, you can feel her stare. Suddenly strange images begin to flash in your mind!

Read all of your Memory Trace entries through the next to last, #11. After you have read the entries, check them off and return here (17A). If you have already read this far in your Memory Trace, ignore this instruction and continue reading.

While you wrestle with the memories Strix returned to you, she says, "Abraxa found out about Haurrant's scheme to employ you. She knows he meant you to murder her. Now Abraxa wants you to return that favor—to Haurrant himself.

"I favor Abraxa," Strix continues. "If you have any part of the Staff of Waterdeep, as Abraxa requested, your power may bring us victory. And who knows, brave paladin . . . if it comes to that, you might kill them both. Then you yourself could sit upon the Bone Throne and command the Annelid, with me at your side!"

You almost shudder at the gleam in her eyes. "Why do you wish the lichs dead?" you ask. "How can they command this—Annelid?"

"Only one may sit upon the Bone Throne. That one may control the Cathexis, the group-mind of the undead. The undead animate the worm, and the controller's will animates them. Haurrant and Abraxa each wish to kill the other after the Annelid is finished, so only one remains to command it. but for now, neither can complete it without the other's help."

"You haven't answered my first question."

She sighs pettishly. "So tiresome, you warriors. Unlike the lichs, I do not wish to kill the living."

"Why not?"

"My dear, vampires are different. We depend on the living. I might enjoy seeing them—oh, 'enslaved' is such a nasty word. Shall we say 'scrupulously looked after'? Like cattle, I suppose. That's not as bad as what the lichs want, now, is it?"

While you debate this in your mind, she continues. "I

have a certain item that will allow you to dispose of Haurrant easily. As for Abraxa, you must rely on the staff. Think of it, warrior: Rule over the entire continent. And I beside you as your queen!"

You do not believe one word of this, of course. Even were you one of the evil undead, tempted by the prospect of commanding this monstrous artifact, you could not expect that Strix would allow you to live. Yet this device she speaks of sounds interesting. "What is the device?" you ask.

"No, my dear. Not another word until you say yes."

Will you answer yes (118A), refuse Strix's offer (48B), attack the vampire queen (129A), or run from the chamber (57C)?

"I cannot answer your questions," you say quickly, "but perhaps you can answer mine." **17B**

The monster cocks its head at you. "I know a lot of things," it says importantly. "I am an adjutant. Ask your questions."

"What business have you here?"

"The big fellow requires me to check up on how his magic is used. That is all anyone needs to know."

"But who is this 'big fellow'?"

"If you do not already know that, you have no business knowing. Why don't you go about your business and let me go about mine?"

"But what precisely is your business?"

"I answered that question; I don't repeat myself."

Will you keep asking about the "big fellow" (132B); attack the "adjutant" (54G); return to 52A and look around; or leave (146F)?

You pick up the quill pen, but it springs out of your hand, dips itself into the inkwell, and hovers over the paper, as if poised to write. "Well!" you exclaim, and the pen writes something on the paper—it could be "Well!" You bring the shrunken head close to the pen to sniff out its magic.

"Minor maagic," the head intones, as the pen scribbles what might be its words. "Designed for secretary. Writes words zboken."

"Poor penmanship," the weasel observes.

You try to pick up the pen, to no avail, for it dances away from your fingers. "Znogood," the head tells you, its rubbery lips twitching as it speaks. "Belongs here. Will not work elzewhere."

Shrugging, you move your hand away, and the pen lies gently down on the desk again. Return to 22A to keep looking around, or leave (149D).

17C

18A Entering the Hall of Heroes, you feel sharply that here you dwell among your own. Gazing on the veined marble and vaulted ceilings, on the many carved records of courage, loyalty, and sacrifice, and on the offerings of flowers and wreaths from the living, you feel inspired to continue your quest.

If you have been to the Hall of Heroes before in this adventure, nothing has changed. Continue reading.

To one side, you see the entrance gate to the main vault. Through it you hear the lapping of gentle waves. Another universe lies beyond that doorway, a far dimension holding nothing, it seems, but a sandy shore and a body of water, as vast as an ocean, as peaceful as a lake. On the shore, all who died in battle lie in their final rest. The main hall is reserved for the greatest heroes of the city's history.

Passing through the gate, cast centuries ago by the eccentric mage Anacaster, you see nothing untoward; the spirits here remain at rest. The beauty of the scene is lost to your undead eyes, but you feel reassured that the liches' influence has not spread this far.

Back in the main hall, the only disturbing note is a broken tomb. Rubble litters the ground before it, as well as a skull. You may leave (78F), or look around further.

You may investigate the:	by turning to:
hole in the wall	26B
plaque	126B
skull	152F
other tombs	153E
offerings	117E

18B Whatever you offered Orcus, it is less than trivial to one who rules an entire cosmos. The demon does not even exert itself to sneer. "What means this bribery, O sleepless one? What do you wish of me?"

You give up all hope. "I wished you to destroy the artifact under Waterdeep and stop the liches' plot to destroy the city and all in it."

"What? What are the living to you?" Orcus stares at you, and in your mind its power rifles your thoughts. "Remarkable. Undead, yet corrupted by compassion."

More searching. "Torm did this for you, I see," says Orcus. "Or perhaps to you. Self-righteous little godling. I must dispose of him eventually."

Anger flares in you. "Torm will not rest until all of your undead are wiped out forever!"

"Tosh," says Orcus. "There will always be more undead. You must know the source of their energy."

"I have heard it comes from the Negative Material Plane."

"Hah. A mere fraction of the true energy. Those living races of your Prime Material Plane, they are the true conduit for the forces that drive the undead."

A sick feeling pervades you. "What do you mean?"

"The energies of the Negative Plane are guided by humanity's darkest imagination. When a widower grieves for his departed spouse and wishes her still alive, that psychic energy helps create a ghost. When a girl has a nightmare of dark spirits that drink her blood, somewhere a vampire is enriched.

"Humankind can never eliminate the undead . . . not until its own dark side is vanquished. And that, unsleep-

ing one, will never happen. It is why we must inevitably triumph."

No, it cannot be. You refuse to accept it.

"It doesn't really surprise you, does it?" asks the weasel. "Look at all the wretches who end up as undead. If swine do best at it, you know swine must be creating it."

"And now, manling," Orcus concludes, "I must prevent you from betraying my plan."

Given the horror of your knowledge, the death that Orcus bestows upon you is mercifully quick. Your adventure is over.

This middle ring has very small gems embedded all around it. The cerebriucle sniffs twice. **18C**

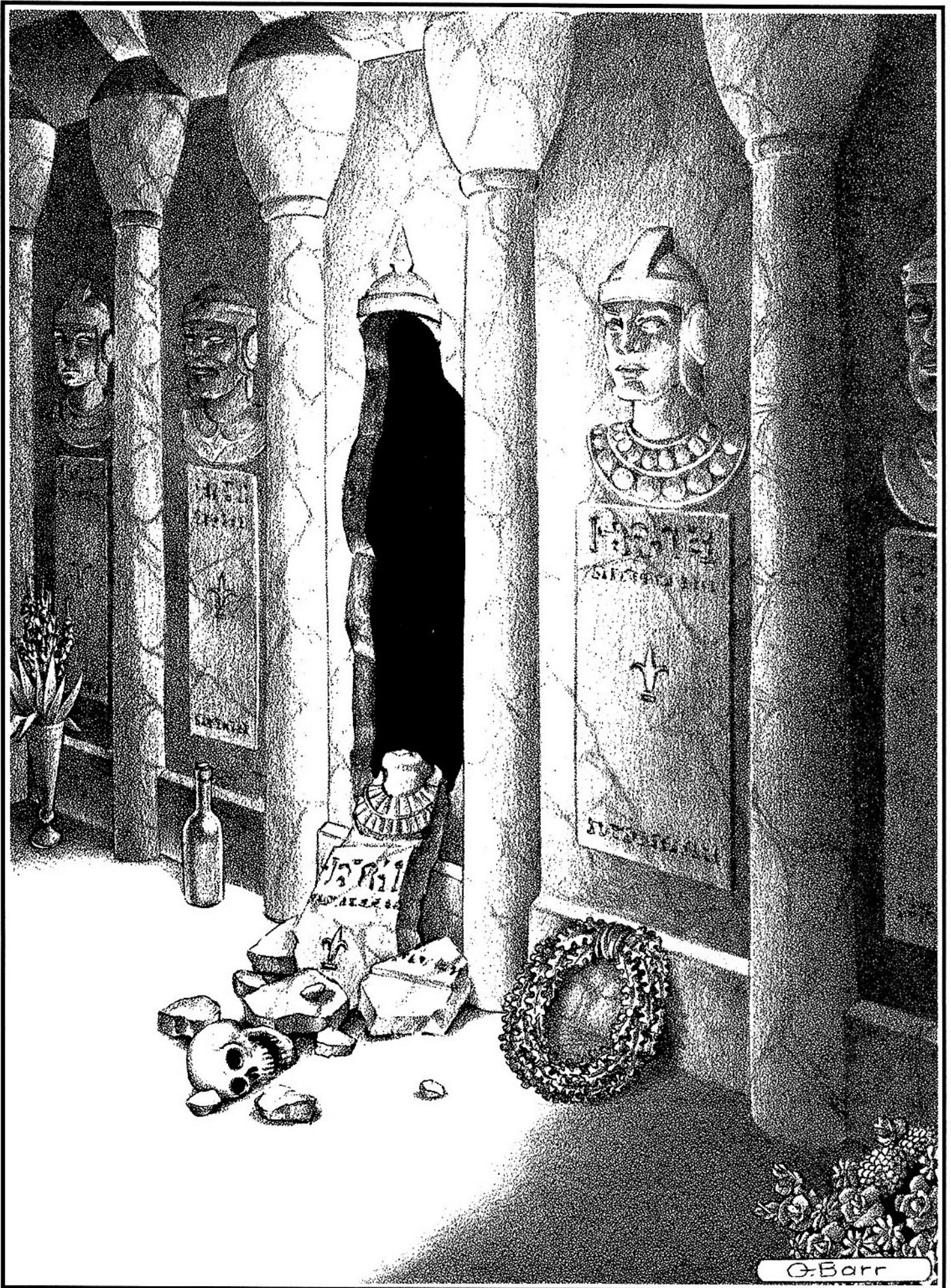
"Ring of regenerazhion," it informs you. "Wearer regains health lozt from wounds ver' fast."

"Excellent!" you say. You try to pry the ring from the bone, but it resists. A long slit opens along the bone, a slit lined with sharklike teeth. "Away, insect! You endanger Cathexis!"

Then the shrunken head, sniffing further, lets the other boot drop. "Workz only for living things."

Frustrated, you think of taking a swipe at the ring, the bones, even the cerebriucle. But you soon control yourself. You ask the bone framework, "What is this Cathexis?" But the mouth has vanished again.

From here you may also look at the upper ring (104C) or the lower ring (40C). Or go back to 120A if you have the chance to look at something else, or drop into the river and float farther down the tunnel (36A).



20A Abraxa raises an arm, its fingers twist curiously, and the burning odor of phosphorus fills the air. Lights form at the lich's fingertips, feet, and crown. In an instant they flicker the length of its limbs and down its robed body.

"Remember," says the lich. "True life shall be yours. Life, and glorious destruction."

In a flash, Abraxa disappears. With a soft *whuff*, air rushes to fill the space it occupied. You stand alone. A cool breeze blows in from the harbor, driving the dust from your hair.

You think of the lich's words. And that name, Haurrant. It rings in your mind, triggering a memory from your former life. *Read the first section of your Memory Trace.* When you are done, return here.

Midnight, the lich said. You look around, noticing that you can see as well now as in daylight. You can exist without food, drink, sleep, or even air. You have 24 hours to stop the liches before they destroy Waterdeep, and you suspect you will need every second.

"Alone against a city of undead," you say to yourself. "No memory. No life. For weapons, one sword and a shrunken head."

"Don't forget your boon companion here," says the weasel skull. "Anything better to do than get started? Or should we stand around moaning awhile longer?"

You wonder whether tossing away the skull would silence your subconscious voice. In the same moment you realize that, however sarcastic the weasel is, you like its company. Tucking the weasel's skull and the shrunken head inside your armor, you walk away from your grave. The City of the Dead stretches before you, and Waterdeep beyond it.

"Somewhere out there," you say to yourself, "somewhere are twelve pieces of the Staff of Waterdeep. Twelve dust motes in a desert. If the lich couldn't find them, how shall I?"

"Stuff and nonsense," says the weasel skull. "You haven't even tried yet. What's the head for, anyway?"

Obviously, the cerebricule can be no help, or the lich would have used it to find the staff. Miserably, you hold it up, thinking to close off that avenue early and move on to other ideas. "Cerebricule," you ask mentally, "where is the Staff of Waterdeep?"

The shrunken head dangles by its filthy hair, twisting slowly in the breeze. It inhales deeply in every direction. Finally it speaks. "Ad leazt one pieze thad way, in North Ward. 'Nother pieze, or more, in Cazzle Ward, alzo in Zouthern—"

It drones a long list; there seem to be pieces of the staff in most wards of the city, along with several in the harbor and countryside. However, it does not name all twelve pieces, so you suspect you will not find these. Even so,

you are shocked. You would swear an oath, if you could recall whom you once swore by.

"Head," you ask, "if you know where the pieces are, why did you not tell your owner, the lich?"

"Piezes only detectable to those good at heart. Good heart uses me, I talk. Pard of enchantment guarding them. Ver' bowerful zbell."

"Amazing," you think. The weasel murmurs, "Good thing the little monster didn't speak up while Abraxa was around. Well, then, you aren't an absolute disaster yet. Where do you start?"

Will you begin your mission by exploring the City of the Dead (14A), or by looking out on Waterdeep itself (82A)?

"Here's our little game," says Veliks. "You must choose one item here that you think **20B** might be your staff. If you're correct, we will allow you to take it, though of course that is an infraction against procedures—"

"Bot, hey, eef you peek wrong, you gotta geev us one of you magic-type theengs, okay? I moch like thees game!"

"Oh, really!" you cry. "What can you possibly want with my possessions?"

"That's what makes it a game, silly."

You realize that by tossing junk on you or stealing your magical items, these invisible nuisances could prevent you from finding the staff on your own, at least in any practical length of time. If you believe a piece of the staff is here, you'll have to play along with them.

The poltergeists insist you pay your item in advance. If you find a piece of the staff, they will give the item back. Mark one item off your list of possessions, then go back to 114A to pick what you will look at. Or leave (143D).

Although you have learned nothing that makes you believe the liches plan to betray **20C** Orcus—certainly they could not be that stupid!—the demon probably has a suspicious nature. Appealing to it could overcome mere facts.

"Mighty Orcus!" you say, averting your eyes downward and closing them, to avoid seeing the monstrous illusion beneath you. "I am unworthy to approach you. Only concern for your goals could force me to—"

"Enough preamble."

"Great sir, the liches Haurrant and Abraxa plot to betray your interests."

For the first time, Orcus appears interested. Its whiteless eyes narrow. "I would have thought they knew better. What is your evidence that they betray me?"

If you have marked Evidence Box B on your bookmark, go to 10A. If you have not marked it, go to 75E.

21A To use the Staff of Waterdeep in combat, run the combat in the usual alternating rounds, but instead of swinging your sword, you roll the die and consult the list that follows every time you attack in a round.

Each number you roll indicates a piece of the staff. If you have that piece, you have activated it. Simply apply the effect listed. Then the piece vanishes. If you were adept in wizardry, perhaps you could use the staff without destroying the individual pieces, but there is nothing you can do about that now.

If you do not like the effect listed, you may choose instead to have that piece of the staff *heal you of all the damage you have sustained so far*. Your unlife points return to their starting total.

After each roll, cross off the piece from the list. If you roll that piece's number later in the combat, you may instead choose the next higher, or next lower, remaining piece on the list.

If you roll a piece of the staff you never acquired, your attack this round has failed. *Do not cross it off the list*. If you roll the same number again, you fail again.

If you run out of pieces or wish to stop using the staff, resume attacking with your sword as usual.

- 1) **Dragon tooth**—Inflicts 30 points of damage against each of your opponents.
- 2) **Crystal**—Blinds one opponent (your choice), reducing by 6 its roll to hit for the rest of the combat (for instance, a roll of 11 becomes 5, and so forth).
- 3) **Iron**—Forms a shield, reducing damage by half (round off fractions to next lower number) in all subsequent attacks that strike you.
- 4) **Wood**—Forms a thorn barrier, reducing damage to 4 points total in the next two attacks that strike you.
- 5) **Ruby**—Fires a bright beam that burns one opponent for 40 unlife points of damage.
- 6) **Leaded gold**—You do not have this piece, so your attack automatically fails.
- 7) **Silver**—Strikes for 20 points of damage against each of your opponents; also heals you from 10 points of damage.
- 8) **Ice**—Creates a blinding spray of water, preventing all opponents from attacking you for this round and the next one.
- 9) **Stone**—You do not have this piece, so your attack automatically fails.
- 10) **Ceramic**—Explodes outward, inflicting 20 points of damage on all opponents and preventing them from attacking this round.
- 11) **Ivory**—Creates a bone shield that stops all damage from the next attack that strikes you.
- 12) **Unicorn horn**—Completely destroys one opponent.

This is a fine white steed, hale of build, strong enough to bear any armored warrior. Examining the horse, you find something clutching at your throat. Not knowing why, you struggle to catch your breath, but you still cannot breathe. **21B**

The weasel asks, "It's your horse, isn't it?"

"No, it cannot be!" You have been in the ground for years. The horse must be dead. Verity. Your horse was named Verity. Somehow, the single name brings such sadness of recollection that you wish for tears to bathe your parched eyes. Your memories of riding that fine mount in dozens of battles, with sweat bathing your brow and its glistening flanks alike, the trumpet call to great deeds, trust in your comrades, retribution for the unholy—all bring your loss vividly to mind.

Other memories follow, among them one of curious significance. *Read the next section of your Memory Trace*. After you are done, return here.

You hear a voice. Go to 140A.

You swim forward toward the lacedons, brandishing your sword and ordering them away from their prey. **21C**

The three lacedons break away to turn on you. Then two more come swimming out from the cave . . . and you see more eyes glittering within.

You face five lacedons. Use their statistics from the Combat Table on page 160. Each of them attacks you in every combat round, but you may attack only one per round.

Run one round of combat. If you lose all your unlife points, you perish. The lacedons again fall upon the fleeing dolphin and slay it, too.

But if you survive this round of combat, you spy the terrified dolphin escaping over the nearest ridge. You have saved it from certain death. You only hope it can bring rescuers to save the city!

You have survived one round against the lacedons. To continue fighting, go to 46F. To escape, go to 108F.

22A Somehow you think there would be a good deal of fog in the Hall of Sages even in the best circumstances. The Effluvium, though it has seeped into every cranny of this crypt and then moved on, did not bring with it this hall's stale atmosphere. Or the dust. Or the cobwebs in the corners. Those have most likely been here since the crypt was built, a suitable match for the cobwebbed scholars interred within.

If you have been to the Hall of Sages before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 50E. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

Another new arrival, along with the Effluvium, is the odd transparent figure perched on a high stool and stooped over a high desk. He peers up at you from beneath his visor, then smiles. Launching himself off the stool, he comes forward to greet you.

"Bumberly, sir," he says in a voice that crackles like notepaper. "Bumberly is my name, secretary and scribe to the sages' spirits. Three sages are in today, sir, all a-burstin' with fascinatin' information. Admission to parley with any sage of your choice, one thin magical item, sir."

It's a lot to take in at once, and he speaks none too slowly, either. "What sort of magical item do you want?" you finally ask. "What do you do with them?"

The ghost wrinkles its pellucid brow. "Admission is one item to see the sages, sir."

That follows. Even in your amnesia, you recall that ghosts are single-minded. They follow no logic in undeath, merely parrot the obsessions of their lives. This spirit probably has no more use for the items than any dead person, but it will keep asking for them through eternity.

"I recall no legends that the Hall of Sages is haunted," you say.

"Nor I, sir. Do our best to keep out the haunts. Just me and the sages. Not all of them in at all times, sir, but now and then a body will up and start murmurin', if you take my meanin'. If you want to speak with one, you need to pay now, sir. Pay me."

You dare not give the secretary ghost your shrunken head or sword (and it wouldn't want the weasel). If you have another magical item on your list of possessions, you may give it to Bumberly (135A). Or you may try talking to the sages without paying Bumberly (41B); ignore him and look around (90F); or leave (149D).

When you are free to look around, you may investigate the:	by turning to:
ghost	67F
desk and stool	138C
book	122C
quill pen	17C
paper and inkstand	152B
penknife	156C

22B Bumberly takes you to a tomb not far from his desk, labeled with a plaque describing the brief, enigmatic career of Tenret. It says he designed a navigational instrument important to sailors.

"This sage knows of Abraxa the lich?" you ask, turning to Bumberly. But he is gone.

From inside the tomb, a hollow voice intones solemnly, "What do you wish to know, O supplicant?"

Startled, you sit. "Can you tell me of Abraxa the lich, wise one?"

"Indeed I can, O seeker of knowledge, for nothing is beyond my lore. Abraxa lived many thousands of years ago in the unwritten past, when giants walked the landscape, and people lived in peace and harmony, and, um, and the sun never set. But Abraxis was evil and sought knowledge from a horrible demon, and the demon appeared and turned him into a lich, and Adnaxa lived on as a lich for many years until he was killed by great heroes. Now, in that time grew many interesting wildflowers—"

Hearing this story, that squares so little with what you know of Abraxa, from a supposed expert who can't even

keep his names straight from sentence to sentence, you grow suspicious. You look behind you and see that Bumberly has not resumed his position at the desk.

"O great wise one," you say, interrupting Tenret's discourse on daisies, "what do you know of the secretary Bumberly?"

"Bumberly!" says the sage enthusiastically. "A fine, fine fellow, excellent secretary. He guards us well from cranks and crackpots who try to parley without payin' him. You should reward him for a job well done by givin' over any magical items you might happen to—"

"Come out of there, you dishonorable spook!" you yell.

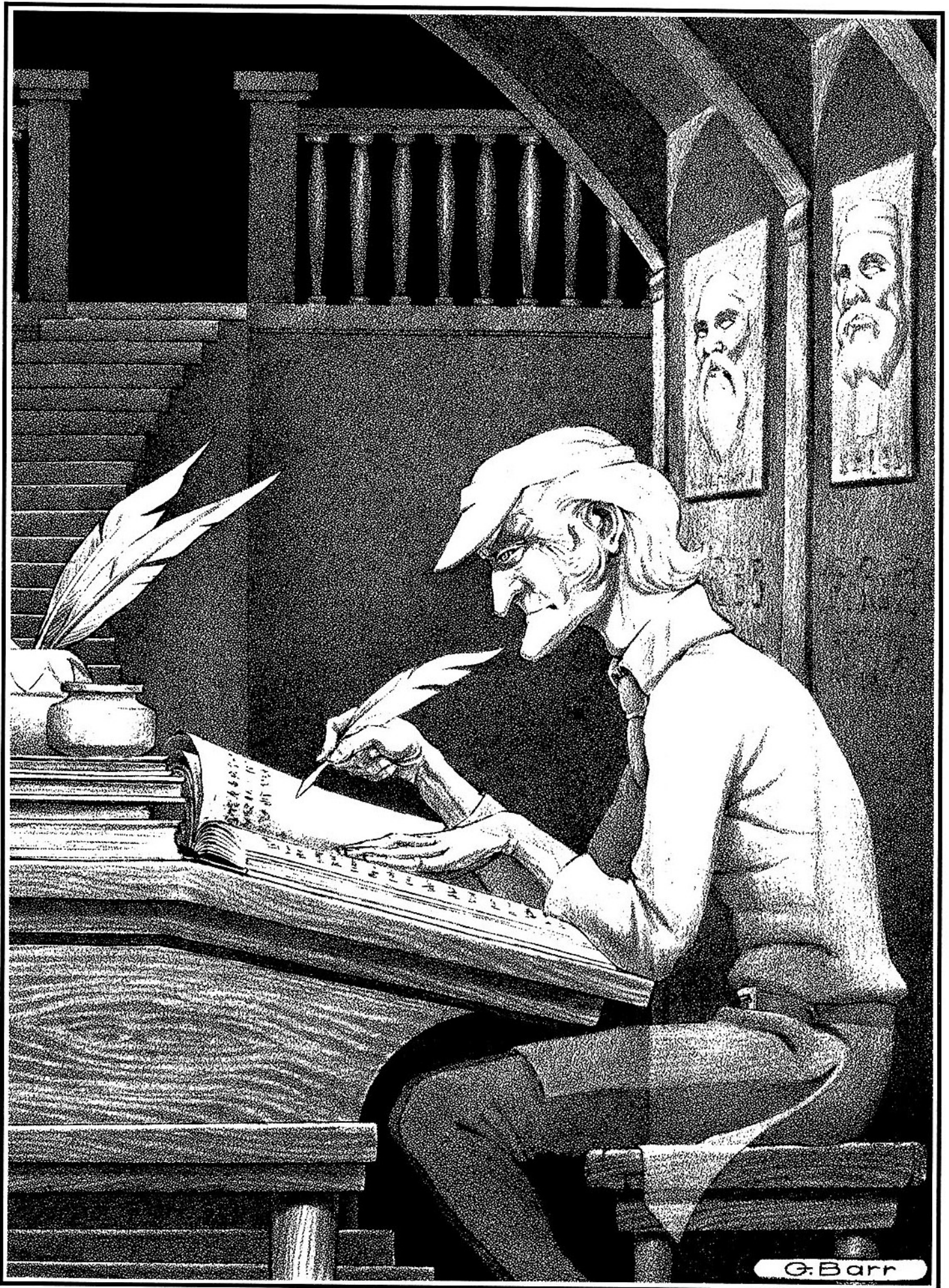
"Uh, um, how dare you speak like that, O importunate one, to Tenret the sage—"

"Tenret the bumbling figment of your imagination. Bumberly, come out and hand back that item!"

A long pause. "Won't," says Bumberly at last.

You kick at the plaque, but the tomb's brickwork is solid. The ghost refuses to emerge. None of his possessions are around either. Frustrated, you leave 149D.





G. Barr

24A *Read all the remaining sections of your Memory Trace. After you are done, return here.*

Blood . . . shouting? Karinna. Hair . . . that noise. Blast it all, don't they know a fellow's trying to get some sleep? It's a sin—

You awake to a voice that could shatter mountains. "Rise, impious one! You have not earned your rest!"

You rise to your feet, aching and tingling in every limb. Cold air stings your lungs. Your neck is stiff, and you wince when you look up at the glow. But the light shining on you does not come from the brightening sky. No matter how you move, it remains just above your field of vision.

"You serve me, warrior! Torm does not release his vassals lightly. You fought well in your recent trial, but the felled oak is not set right as winds grow clement, and you have much to atone. In Torm's service, no one betrays oaths, strikes foul blows, or victimizes innocents. No one gives way to jealousy or allows hatred to rule over friendship. To do so mocks great achievements.

"I weigh your deeds and find a balance. In justice, I give you new life, so that you may redress the scales.

"For what you have done, champion, honor falls upon you. And for what you have done, scoundrel, repent!"

The light fades. You inhale deeply. The air, which you imagined would taste so sweet when you could finally draw it in, carries a chill. You wear the simplest of tunics and carry no weapon. The cerebricule is gone, of course, and the weasel's voice has left you, returning to silence as it should.

You have faced wizards powerful enough to blot out the sun, and legions of undead monsters that would put armies to flight. Armed with but a single sword and with unmatched courage, you alone have saved an entire city from destruction. Honor upon you, champion! But there is blood on your hands. Thinking of Karinna, and even of Korlo, you feel hot tears on your cheeks. They dry quickly in the chill winter wind.

You stand on the High Road north of Waterdeep. The city wall stands on the horizon, and the clouds of Effluvi-um are wafting out to sea and dissipating like morning fog. Slapping your arms for warmth, you set out toward the city, resolved to do better in the future.

Leaving him standing at the even horizon of his beginnings.

—James Childress

Axes. Appropriate, you decide, because you recall that this noble family, the Bross- **24B** feathers, made its wealth in lumber. The axes are ordinary. They remind you of a time when you were a boy, and helped your father to fell part of a woodland.

With a shock, you realize you can picture your father clearly: his kind smile, bright eyes, weathered face. He sent you on the path to your god; he taught you the basic values of life, as well as many useful skills. How he valued goodness and honor! How you admired him, though he was a humble man in many ways.

As you struggle to remember more, the image in your mind's eye fades, and you are left with only a vague idea of who and what he was. But like birds fluttering about a forest cottage, the memories hover on the fringes of your consciousness, and you remember another phase of your life.

Read the next section of your Memory Trace. After you are done, return here.

You may look around further (58A) or leave (117F).

This thing is demonstrably a human rib cage—with no head, arms, or pelvis **24C** attached. Why is it here?

"Cerebricule, tell me the story of these bones," you command. Obliging, the shrunken head looks (or sniffs) the rib cage over, then speaks.

"Hooman fighter. Ver' ztrong. Not ver' zmart. Fought giant frog in zwamp. Fought and fought and fought and fought. Firzt hooman was winning. Then frog was winning. Then hooman. Then frog. Fought and fought and fought and fought. Rezted and bled and fought zome more. Both died."

The head lapses into silence.

"Gripping narrative, just gripping," says the weasel. "Not everybody can tell a story like that."

You ignore the weasel's pointed remarks. The story is as barren as the rib cage. Return to 90A to look around further, or go to 158F to leave.

The battle-axe looks like a fine weapon, you think—until you hold the shrunken head **24D** close to it. "Illusion," it says. "Enjanted to look new, clean, shiny. Aczhuually filthy, ruzted. Owner wanted it over fireplaze but hated cleaning it." So there is nothing magical about the axe, you realize.

You sigh. Clearly the undead were not choosy in deciding what items should power their construct.

If you are being chased by ghouls, stop reading here and go immediately to 120D. If the ghouls are not chasing you, keep reading.

You may take the battle-axe with you, but because of its bulkiness, it counts as two possessions rather than one. In combat, you may strike with it instead of your sword, doing 5 points of unlife damage with each successful blow. Return to 132A to investigate something else, or leave (47F).

25A Though the specter's shadowed expression never varies, Yellowknife fights with a tiger's ferocity. For every thrust from your sword, it retaliates with a swiping cut of its bony hands. If he takes me, you think with terror, I become a specter, too!

The battle frustrates you, because you cannot feel when you have hit the foe. Your magical sword, which Abraxa praised so highly, whisks past Yellowknife's form as through fog. The specter only pauses before attacking again.

Yet the pauses lengthen. The fingertips falter. Suddenly, Yellowknife falls. A trick? No, its form dissolves. You have sent the killer to its final death. "Try not to envy him, all right?" says the weasel.

The wraiths have fled the battle scene. But one floats back, an inch at a time, watching the specter dissolve. "Gone at last," says the wraith, in a rich female voice. The outline indicates a frowsy woman in an incongruous low-cut blouse and frilled skirt. Her head is a vague outline. "Gone, that slug!" she shouts. "Rat! Dog's ear, cockroach, weasel!"

"Ahem," says the weasel.

"You knew this one, then," you say.

"Did I know him? Did I try to show this pantry-ant, this *stranger* a little affection—me a harmless working girl, you know—and did I get strangled for my effort? Did I know him? Haaah!" Her head congeals into higher definition as she speaks, and you see that her hair has been cut to the scalp, while her white throat swells with bruises. Her lips purse, as if to spit.

"Good work, hon," she says. "If only you could do the rest of the men that way. They're all alike, really. He was just more open about it than the rest. Rip out their— their eyes, I say."

"Always nice to rescue a damsel in distress," murmurs the weasel.

The woman points out a burial urn on the wall. "You look like you could use some freshening," she tells you. "Look in there, my urn. One of my clients was so touched by my demise, he tucked away a memento in my ashes. More than he ever gave me in life, pfeh! It's yours, sweet, and thanks again." She departs.

In the urn she indicated, you find a cheap-looking copper bracelet scratched with tiny runes. According to the shrunken head, the bracelet will heal you of 5 unlife points of damage, once during the adventure at any time, except during combat. After that, its magic will be exhausted. Take it if you wish.

Go to 28A to keep looking around, or leave the House of the Homeless and return to the surface (51D).

From outside the circle, the wizard's flask looks like a plain metal container hanging from a plain metal chain belt. You cannot look at it closely or use the cerebri-**25B**

cle on it unless you are within the circle. If the two humans are still protected by their circle, stop reading here and go back to 76A to choose something else. If the humans are no longer protected by the circle, keep reading.

You let the shrunken head sniff the flask on the wizard's belt. "Pozhion for healing," it announces. "Reztores life and health to hurt people."

You may drink the potion (47G) or take the flask as one of your possessions. If you do so, mark it on your list, and write "47G" beside it. Any time during your quest, should you drink this potion, mark your current place, read 47G, and then return to your place in the adventure.

If you want to look around some more, go to 76A. To leave, go to 65E.

The saying goes, "They had a cesspool in Waterdeep, so they put up the docks and made money from it." Dock Ward is as close to a cesspool of humanity as you will find in Waterdeep: home to rogues and killers, center of traffic in drugs, contraband, and dark magic, refuge of the wastrels from more well-to-do wards. **25C**

What vices survive among the undead that infest those winding streets down by the harbor? The cerebri- cule shows interest in a dark, stinking doorway near one broken-down pier (52A) and in one of the docks themselves (48A). The head behaves strangely, not answering clearly about how many pieces of the staff are here, if any.

If you don't want to look into either location, the salt-stained shanties and clusters of slum houses in Dock Ward have nothing to offer you. To go elsewhere, return to 82A and choose again.

"The amulet," you decide. The apprentice bites her lip and looks up at her mentor, who nods sternly. Shalara unhooks the choker and hands you the amulet. "Hope it does some good," she says flatly. "It was my birthday present." **25D**

You exchange thank-yous. With a flourish of the wand, the wizard causes them both—and all the other objects within the protective ward—to disappear.

If you decide to wear the amulet, it counts as a possession. The shrunken head confirms that it is an amulet of protection.

While you wear it, enemies you fight must roll 1 less than the Combat Table says they must in order to hit you. For example, if the chart says a creature hits you on a roll of 8 or less, it actually must roll 7 or less to hit.

Touring the room with the shrunken head, you find that nothing else of use remains. To leave, go to 65E.

26A "I know nothing of your murderer," you tell the revenant, "but—"

At once its eyes return to the sculpture on the library table. With the hideous stare removed, your muscles relax. You had no idea you were so tense.

"But where you work to avenge a murder, I work to prevent a hundred thousand more. Help me, and achieve your peace by—"

But the revenant pays no attention. When you admitted knowing nothing that could help it, you ceased to exist in its world. It scrutinizes the sculpture, a delicate abstract in metal, as though somewhere in the curves its killer's features are engraved. You have seldom felt so alone.

It murmurs to itself while picking up the sculpture and examining it. "Greeme. Brown eyes. Pupils contracted to points, the width of a pinhead, with bright sunlight reflecting on his cheeks from snowdrifts in my camp clearing. Pocked cheeks. Greeme."

The haggard traveler runs wrinkled fingertips over the lines of the sculpture, a kind of caress. Its monologue continues. "Greeme said, 'Porelle wants you to rethink, do more work for him and not the competition.' Greeme said 'Porelle,' absolutely. Porelle, Porelle. 'And not the competition,' Greeme said, and one corner of his upper lip curled up to expose four upper teeth, yellow with receding gums. 'Or it will go bad for you,' he said. Greeme! Bad!"

In explosive fury, the revenant crushes the sculpture. Its fingers press into the metal as though it were wax. In a moment it is a wreck. Yet the revenant has not even looked at it, so preoccupied is it with memory. You cannot look at the sculpture now.

As spooky as this figure is, you sympathize with the murder victim. You are unable to remember anything, while the revenant remembers too well. "Why did Greeme kill you?" you ask.

No reply. The revenant strides toward the door of the library. It strikes you that it must have been handsome in life. Now that appeal has died with its life, replaced by such awful purpose that matters of good and evil hardly seem relevant.

Your curiosity cannot be satisfied unless you make the revenant speak with you. If you try, go to 27A. Otherwise, the revenant leaves without a glance in your direction. Dead as you are, you almost shiver. No wonder the other dead did not interfere in the library! You may look around (return to 38A) or leave (119G).

26B Through the hole in the tomb wall, you spot long, splintered boards, apparently the remnants of a coffin. The boards look very old. There's no trace of a body.

"Cerebricule," you ask, "what of this?"

The head sniffs around the hole's edges like a bloodhound. It remains silent for a long time. Finally it says, "Animate dead zbell cazt here. Day ago, maybe more. Ver' bowerful."

Animate dead! A mage raised the hero in this tomb as an undead monster, and seemingly one of the stronger undead at that. The idea revolts you.

"What kind of undead?" you ask. "More powerful than a zombie or skeleton?" These are the least of the walking dead.

"Yez."

"What kind?"

"Dunno," says the shrunken head.

There are no signs of undead anywhere in the Hall of Heroes, though. Except, of course, for yourself. Return to 18A to continue looking, or leave (78F).

The tusk is ancient and cracked, but it's quite solid. The cerebricule tells you, "Ver', ver' old mammoth tuzk. Creature killed by adventurer, who kept tuzk as proof of his deed. Adventurer dead many years now." **26C**

"How many years?"

The cerebricule sniffs again. "Thirty thousand. Maybe thirty-two."

"Does this tusk carry any magic?"

"Znogood."

The tusk is very heavy and not too portable. Taking it with you would be inconvenient, to say the least. You return it to the pile.

"You haven't found what you seek!" Veliks gloats.

"You gotta geev us somtheeng more, or you gotta go. Ho?"

If you want to keep looking, give the poltergeists an item, mark it off your list, and turn to 114A. Or leave (143D).

Arnat dead, the wizard insane, Celia unconscious in the lich's grasp . . . Holding her by the throat with one bony hand, the monster brandished a dagger in the other. You leaped like a panther, desperate to prevent her murder. You grabbed the good cleric's garment and touched your Ring of Far Travel. **26D**

Two of the travel spells transported you both to safety back in town, even as the dagger struck the spot you occupied. You and Celia whispered thanks to Torm, mourned your lost comrades, and left town posthaste. Only one of the ring's spells remained.

Safety, you think. But why do you keep feeling you met Haurrant again? You cannot think; your memory evaporates.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.



27A "I might help you find Greeme," you tell him. It was heading for the door, but at your words the victim turns on the spot and shines its glare on you once more. You tense, and again an image flashes into your mind from its eyes: A bloodhound, tracking at a dead run, baying to the sky as the trace freshens.

"What do you know of Greeme?" it asks.

"If you tell me of yourself and why he killed you, I can learn something about him. Then I might guess where Greeme may be found."

You visualize the wheels turning in its mind, spinning like flywheels. "That is true," says the revenant. "Greeme, henchman of several, including Porelle, art merchant. I created art for Porelle, earning him much money, and then decided to ally myself with other dealers. So Porelle sent Greeme, who wore a black worsted wool tunic with two coffee stains at the throat, two, and black wool peg-top trousers that bagged slightly above the boots, to kill me, sixteen days and nine hours ago in the snowy hills north of this city. What do you know of Greeme?"

"A moment. What kind of art did you create?"

A long pause. "I do not remember. Unimportant. What do you know of Greeme?"

"Did you have a family?"

"I do not remember. What do you know of Greeme?"

You almost say "Nothing," but then the revenant would ignore you again. Thinking, you offer an idea. "Merchants such as this Porelle often cater to rich clients in the North Ward. If Porelle is rich, he might even live there, or in Sea Ward. Greeme might be with him. But the city is to be destroyed, unless—"

"Where is the North Ward?"

Disconcerted, you give him directions. Do you feel guilty at giving this avenger a possible clue to its prey? You consider, and decide not. If the revenant destroys its murderer, that would be simple justice. You recall having fought for justice in your life, although the cause still may elude you.

Will you volunteer to guide the revenant to North Ward (57B)? You should not do this unless at least an hour of time remains on your mission. You can also let it go while you remain in the library (return to 38A to look around). Or you may let it go, then leave yourself (119G).

Swiftly you draw your sword and assail the mummy nearest you. From its bandages, a **27B** cloud of dust billows up that would choke you if you breathed. Before you can strike again, one of the other mummies lunges at you, and the battle is joined.

They do not fight as well as they might, for they still suffer the effects of their imaginary drugs. But there are three of them. They press in on you from all sides, their lumbering bodies inhibiting your movement, their grimaces revealing rotting teeth, their stench overpowering you.

Proceed with the fight. See the Combat Table on page 160 for the three mummies' statistics. Each mummy gets to attack you on each turn, but you may only attack one per turn. You may try to escape at any time by going to 137E. If you are reduced to zero unlife points, your adventure is over.

If you win, you look around once the dust has settled (literally) and notice that the little monster has vanished. You may leave (146F) or go back to 52A to look around.

"Oh, looky, Veliks, he go for droggen **27C** head!"

"Shush! Stop blabbing, or you'll ruin the game!"

"Who ruin game? You ruin game weeth loud mouth!"

Their argument encourages you to choose the dragon head. But when you pick it up and the shrunken head announces, "Znogood," the dispute gives way to laughter.

"Ho, ho! Fake you out, boy!"

"That trophy has been here for as long as I've worked here—one hundred and seventy-six years come summer! Sorry you failed our little game, but isn't this fun? Why don't you play again?"

The dragon head is useless, and it is too heavy to carry, anyway. If you want to keep searching, give the poltergeists another item (mark it off your list) and return to 114A to choose again. Or leave (143D).

Snuffling at the magnifying glass in fairly disgusting fashion, the cerebri-**27D** cule says, "Look through glazz to dezipher book'z writing. Minor maagic."

When you look at the book's obscure runes through the glass, they resolve into legible words! "Minor magic, perhaps, but dramatic," you say to yourself.

The book appears to be a compendium of data on the many dimensional planes of existence: your own Prime Material Plane and its many alternate incarnations; the four elemental planes; those of ethereal and astral forms; the energy planes; and a selection of the infinite Outer Planes.

You could study the book for hours. Will you take, perhaps, a half-hour (in addition to the usual time you spend exploring the library) to browse through it (107B), return to 38A to look further, or leave (119G)?

28A Having entered the House of the Homeless and passed through the unadorned entrance to its catacombs, you have no feeling of crossing to another universe.

Yet the dimensional gate created by the ancient mage Anacaster has conveyed you imperceptibly to a realm of infinite winding tunnels and porous black rock. They extend to all compass points, as well as up and down, as far as anyone has cared to explore. Air here is always slightly cool, no matter the altitude.

Though you see perfectly in darkness, you have kept to the tunnels lighted by the torches of the Guild of Chandlers & Lamplighters. On a winding route, you passed thousands of urns, the cremated remains of paupers and the outcast. For about three quarters of the urns, the names of the deceased are carved in the rock above their resting holes. The others are anonymous.

Now you stand in one of the main burial chambers of this mausoleum.

If you have been to the House of the Homeless before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 138D. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

Hundreds of ghostly forms stand in line before you. Their outlines blur, dissolve, and reform with each

moment. From your fragmentary memories of dungeon expeditions in life, you recognize these as wraiths. These evil spirits attained such intensity of personality in their lives that death and cremation could not curtail them.

Congregating in small groups or standing solitary, rising from the rock floor or penetrating the walls, the wraiths queue up beside the long rows of burial urns. The spirits fidget, fly up, and chatter to one another, though their telepathic voices do not echo from the walls. You find their air of eagerness, or anticipation, disturbing. It is impossible to choose, from between the row of ash-jars and the row of spirits, which more strongly conjures the aura of death.

But you have no reason to pick a senseless fight here; and the wraiths regard you as a fellow undead, for so you are. You may talk to the wraith on the left (86B); on the right (117B); leave the House of the Homeless and return to the surface (51D); or look around as you like.

To investigate the:	turn to:
top burial hole, "BLUNT"	149A
middle hole	14B
bottom hole, "SHARP"	143A
other wraiths	122A
side tunnel	34A

28B "Well," you begin, "a junk pile really is a junk pile, is it not? The question of neatness can hardly enter into it. At least if it's spread out, it won't fall over on somebody—"

"Heeeeeeeyah! Yez, yez, you so right!" exclaims Jyorlo. "Hey, Veliks, you hear thees? Thees guy, he know wot he talk een!"

Veliks sniffs. "I should have recognized another low-life when I saw him carrying a weasel skull around." The poltergeist's voice diminishes as the spirit moves off. In the distance, you hear strange honking noises that might indicate sinus problems.

"Ho, thet Veliks! He so peevy when he lose, you know, boddy? He always like thet, even when he 'live. Was clean-opper here, bot never he could keep theengs clean. Even now he dead"—and here Jyorlo's voice rises in a taunt—"he no ken keep wan theeng steck on top of 'nother theeng for twenny seconds!"

"Oh, you blackguard!" cries Veliks, rushing back and picking up a broken wagon wheel. "Vagrant! Rogue! Vilifier of character! Go! Just go away, now!" Veliks pitches the wagon wheel at Jyorlo.

The flaw in his strategy is that Jyorlo, like Veliks or any poltergeist, is invisible and insubstantial . . . and you stand right behind it! You barely avoid the wagon wheel as it crashes beside you. "Perhaps you might table this discussion—" you begin.

"You bed-temper guy! Sore loser, borilidarinnika! Take thees, smarty guy!" cries Jyorlo, hoisting a chamber pot and hurling it. Some of the rainwater inside splashes on you, bearing signs of the device's original use.

"Is this conference absolutely—?" you begin.

"Rogue!"

"Dom guy!"

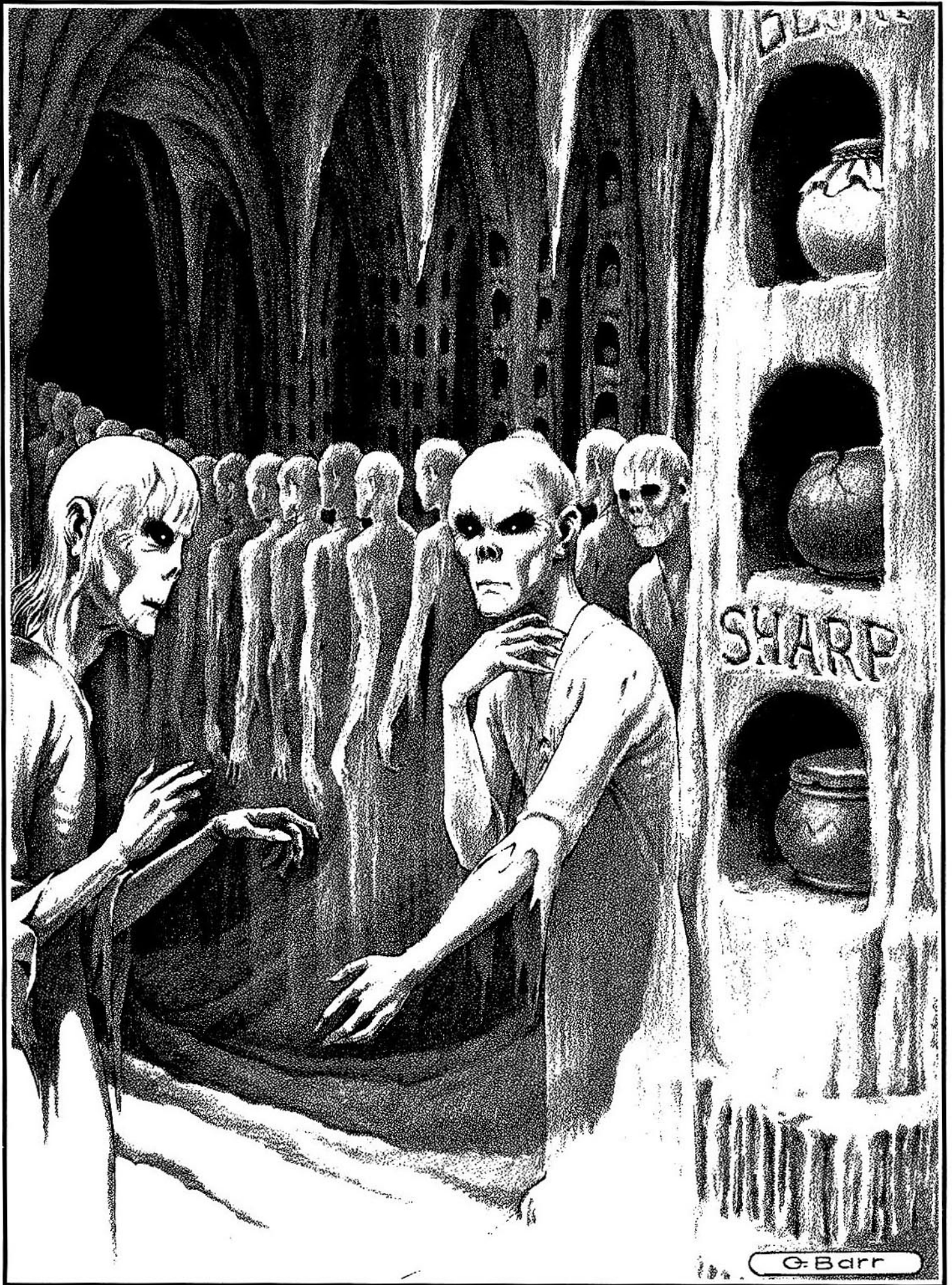
"Knave! Vagabond!"

"Snorilling vontoominor!"

Objects fly back and forth. The situation is hopeless. You cannot get the two to stop arguing, and you cannot ignore them. As soon as you try looking at something, they grab it and throw it. How frustrating!

"It's levelheaded administrators like these fellows that make junkyard maintenance the rewarding occupation it is," says the weasel.

You must give up your search here and leave (143D).



30A After the savage battle against the shadow, you almost forget about the rocking horse. But it was the cause of the fight, after all, so you wearily pull it loose from the pile.

The rocking horse turns out to be a rocking unicorn! The wooden head bears a genuine unicorn horn. Not daring to hope, you grasp the horn. It doesn't change shape in your hand, so you assume it cannot be a piece of the Staff of Waterdeep.

But the shrunken head says, "Ztaff! Pieze of ztaff! Unicorn horn on end of ztaff. Like bayonet, zort of."

This is the piece you sought! Check off the unicorn horn on your bookmark list and take it with you. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to **156A** to find out more about the staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it, but first make a note of this section (**30A**) so you may return here after you are finished.

"Well, congratulations for winning our little game," says Veliks gruffly as the poltergeist returns the magical item you wagered.

"How does this valuable item come to be in a junkyard?" you ask the cerebriucle.

"Ver' interezting ztory," the shrunken head begins. "Zix hundred and forty years ago, in battle of Berun's Hill—"

"Wait. Shorten the story to a few sentences."

The cerebriucle is silent for a minute or more. You begin to think it has given up. But while you decide what to do next, it speaks up. "Undead monzter killed there zuffered memory problemz. Could not remember from one hour to negzt. But zurvived until now. Lich zend it to look for ztaff. It found thiz pieze in zity of Waterdeep, bud then came out here looking for more. Forgot why it had rocking horze. Dropped it."

"There! See how easy that was?" says the weasel.

"Hey, hey! Every time a weener!" says Jyorlo. "Great stoff, an' maybe more peezees steel to find. Wannoo play more—yez, yez?"

Now that you have the piece of the staff of Waterdeep, you feel little need to stay. But if you think there might be another piece here, give the poltergeists one of your possessions, mark it off your list, and return to **114A** to try again. Or leave (**143D**).

30B At that instant, ghouls, driveling for your undead flesh, pour out of the tunnels behind you and leap at you. With nothing but the pouch of faerie dust in your hand, you act automatically. You hurl a fistful of it them!

Your first handful hits the front wave of ghouls. They fall back, blinded, and then begin to flip end over end as

they rise to the roof of the construct! Inspired, you throw another fistful of the dust at the other ghouls as they approach, and they, too, join their comrades floundering overhead in midair.

None too intelligent, the whole pack is soon drifting above you. With the last pinch, you levitate the peg-legged ghastr that leads them. "Ye'll ruhgret thiiiiis!" it cries. The ghouls' screams are lost in the zombies' moaning "Epicidium."

You've solved the problem with your ghoulish pursuers. However, you are also out of faerie dust, so you can't take it with you as a possession. You are free to look around (**132A**) or leave (**47F**).

One of the most arbitrary divisions of the city's districts, Trades Ward happens to be a **30C** cross-section of Waterdeep's light trade and commerce; cobblers, swordsmiths, bowyers, scribes, butchers, metalworkers, wickerworkers, textile workers, and workers of all respectable trades live and practice here.

Dimly, you recall meeting many interesting people in this area. Were you buying armor or weapons? Worshipping at The Plinth, the many-leveled temple of all faiths? Or simply passing time at Virgin's Square, where novices and veteran fighters sit waiting for jobs?

You shake away the recollection. It cannot matter now. The cerebriucle sniffs out just one place of interest in Trades Ward: a taxidermist's shop (**90A**). The shrunken head seems sure this humble place holds a piece of the staff.

If you don't want to visit the taxidermist's, return to **82A** and choose again.

The dagger, not well balanced, has a carved wooden handle painted to look like ivory and inlaid with flashy, cheap stones of red, blue and green. The blade is shiny, and appears to be painted as well—but it is real metal, and sharp enough to cut flesh. **30D**

When you press on the blade, it retracts into the handle, and red liquid pours out all over your hand. The shrunken head sniffs without interest and says, "Cheap theatrical prop. Used to kill many actors."

Suddenly the blade pops out of the handle, and you barely manage to keep it from slicing off your finger. "I see what you mean," the weasel remarks as the blade clatters to the floor. "Really useful in a battle, if you're suicidal."

You see no use for the stage dagger, but you may take it if you like. Return to **42A** to look around further, or **64E** to leave.



31A *Read all the remaining sections of your Memory Trace. After you are done, return here.*

You are so tired. So . . . A journey? Now? I cannot possibly.

A voice speaks. "Walk!"

Who speaks? You are too tired even to look. Nothing to see, just a light.

"Walk!"

The first step. There. Lights under my foot. Memories?

More talk. The voice. "Well done!"

Who remembers? So many things done, who can judge how well? Look at Celia; she almost died . . . may have for all I know.

The voice. "Celia lives. She prizes her memories of you as water in a desert. Walk!"

There. Another step. More lights. Memories . . . water in a desert. Do I feel stronger? The voice—I remember it now. It's Torm's. My liege!

"Noble warrior, you have done the work of a hundred heroes. Walk forward!"

Walk, then. Torm commands it. Honored father, how I have dishonored you, fallen into living death. Another step, more strength, more memories. I drink deep. Arnat the halfling, dead, and the wizard as well! Oh, I have failed, failed—

"Paladin, few in the annals of my service have succeeded as you have. None deserved as much as you a lawful peace. It ill befits you to dishonor your comrades with self-pity. Walk forward!"

Walking. Stronger now. Lights, sparks, flying up at every footstep. Memories, life, childish wonder at the sky, peace in the temple, camaraderie on the battlefield. Sparks shoot up in fountains with every step I take.

"Greatest of warriors, your city is safe. A hundred thousand lives continue; a hundred thousand dead have returned to their graves, all because of you alone. Torm is a just god, paladin. I have no greater reward to give for your long and noble career than what you long for most: the well-deserved quietus of oblivion. Walk forward, and farewell!"

Torm, great being! The thanks of my heart to you. The sparks fall on me in a shower. I burn. I rise toward nothingness. And at the end, I gain the strength to run. . . .

In front of the House of the Homeless, there are no marble columns, and there is no inscription over its doorway. As its residents could not afford lavish housing in life, so they abide in still more humble quarters for eternity. Their ashes go into plain burial urns, placed in plain holes in bare rock walls, in the labyrinth beneath the mausoleum.

You stand before the unadorned, blocky building, thinking of the spirits that might lurk inside. Poor, outcast, mad, shiftless, purged, murdered, and betrayed. All the wretched refuse of Waterdeep ends up in the House of the Homeless. If the liches have enlisted the phantoms of these resentful masses, how strong might their conspiracy grow, fueled by the bitterness of thousands?

Abraxa said this was a way to reach the artifact. You may only wish to look around. Either way, you consider it wise to be well armed before venturing into those catacombs. You may enter the House of the Homeless (28A) or go elsewhere (return to 14A).

One of the stacks of coins glitters unusually brightly. A trick of the light? But your eyes do not require light. You reach for the coins.

—And are astounded when you find yourself holding a shining silver piece of the Staff of Waterdeep!

"As easy as that!" you say to yourself. "But were the pieces emblems of good? How could coins in a gambling casino further the purpose of morality?"

To find out, go to 156A to learn more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it; but first make a note of this section, 31C, so you may return here when you are finished there. Check off the silver piece on your bookmark list when you take it. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions.

You may look around further (62A) or leave (108G).

Do you carry a hand mirror from the Dragon Tower? If so, stop reading here and go immediately to 104B. If you have no mirror, you must do this the hard way.

You brandish your blade, and, in the death-speech only your enemies hear, you cry, "Depart, spirits! These humans are beyond your punishment. If you continue your attack, I will destroy you, strip you of the last vestige of existence."

The buzzing cloud of spirits rises from the protective ward. Eyes, some insectoid, some human, some changing in aspect, regard you.

And then the spirits laugh—hideous, shrill, shrieking laughter, fit to shatter glass.

Then, ignoring you, they return to battering the magical ward. "Not so good," says the weasel. "A nice speech. Dramatic. But they're not buying." Return to 76A and choose another approach.

32A Castle Waterdeep: In a world of teleporting wizards and flying steeds, it has never been breached. The walls, sixty feet thick in places, could stand without mortar. Dwarven stonemasons cut three-ton granite blocks with such precision that you cannot slip a fingernail between them.

Now, Castle Waterdeep has cracked like a walnut.

If you have been to Castle Waterdeep before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 90D. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

Under a dreary winter sky, the castle, once so lively, stands as silent as Mount Waterdeep itself. Dyed silk banners, suspended from the high battlements to mark who knows what occasion, now hang like burial cloths.

Two circular stone towers six stories high flank the entrance gate to Castle Waterdeep. The gate hangs open, one heavy door skewed on its lower hinge. Blast marks and the corpses of many zombies reveal the power of the ward that protected the door. Above, the perpendiculars of the iron portcullis, barb-ended, twist like taffy. These, too, took their price in undead invaders. But the cerebricule assures you that the enchantments are now dispelled; you enter.

Inside, debris litters the ground. People lie everywhere, brought low by the Effluvium. Yet there appear

to be no dead. It may be that the undead, intent on destroying the city and its residents in one swoop, do not bother with murder in detail.

Next to one tower, inside the outer wall, are the castle stables. By the stables, a bizarre and grotesque sight paralyzes you.

Perhaps warned by the ward on the gate, the undead who plunder the castle have avoided the tower doors. With the very bodies of their zombie troops, the commanders have formed a human "staircase" to the tower's second story. Coming down that staircase are skeletons, bearing the body of a living guard. Is he dead? No, you detect a faint life aura.

Zombies and skeletons are mindless undead. They require a commander. But you see no one else. You may go up the "staircase" into the tower (44A); leave (102E); or look around as you wish.

If you want to look at the:	turn to:
zombies	125A
skeletons with guard	88C
skeleton with globe	112D
guard	110C
staff	138B
stables	148D
horse	21B

32B After prowling around the garden for a while, you find a dark recess—a tunnel or cave leading deep into the harbor bottom. It looks unexceptional.

Have you already found a piece of the staff of Waterdeep here? If so, go to 125F. If not keep reading.

From within your armor comes the muffled voice of the cerebricule. You pull it out. "Zmell maagic! Down hole. Bowerful maagic!"

That leaves nothing to do but investigate. In you go, crawling along the tunnel's length . . .

. . . into the longest, darkest passage you have ever encountered. It is pitch-black in this rough-walled tunnel, a natural channel by the feel of it. But the dark vision of the undead still serves you well, even in this absolute blackness. On you crawl, accompanied by the cerebricule's continuing cries of "Maagic! Zmell it. Not far now. Ver' near! Maybe. Pozzibly near. Maagic!"

"All right, you've made your point!"

Ahead, you see light, and a moment later, you find yourself in a small cave with an opening to the surface—still underwater, still in the harbor. You can't be too far from the sunken garden. The hole outside is too small for you to pass through.

The cave is barely large enough for you to turn around. When you do, your boot clinks against something—something crystalline!

Quickly you grab for it. Your hand closes upon an ice-cold section of crystal or glass, several inches long, the right diameter for—yes! A piece of the staff of Waterdeep!

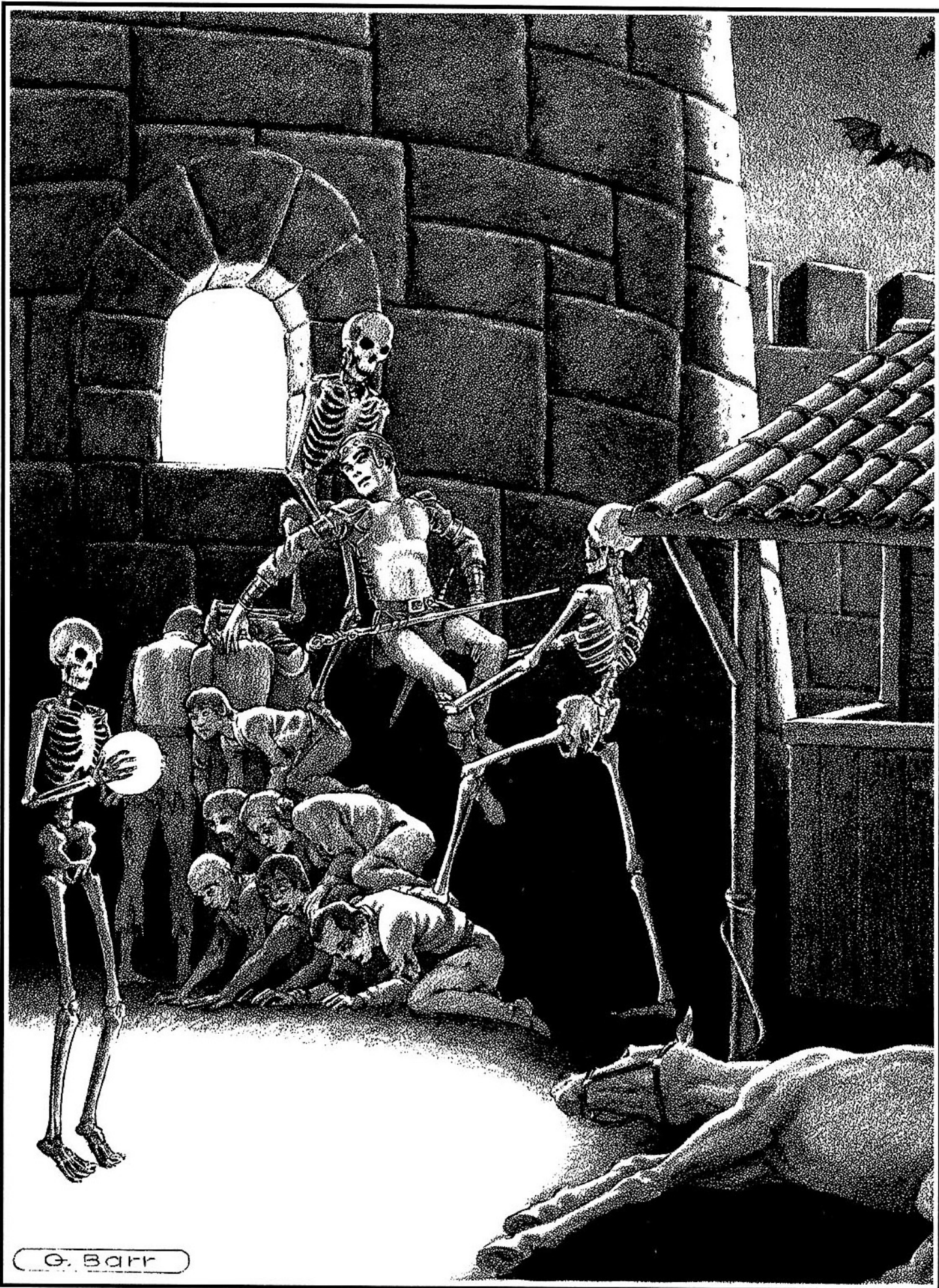
"What a place!" says the weasel. "Weren't these pieces supposed to return where Khelben found them? Odd fellow, to crawl down this fish hole for ice."

But the shrunken head can explain this. The ice piece originally returned to its maker in the underwater lighthouse. One of the undead there, however, found it and touched it, and its protective ward activated again. Under that evil touch, it flew away in a random direction, landing here.

Check off the ice piece on your bookmark list and take it. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to 156A to find out more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it, but first make a note of this section (32B) so you may return here after you are finished there.

Mark off half an hour's travel time, then crawl back through the tunnel to 104A.





G. Barr

34A Striding down the tunnel, you pass by and through endless immaterial figures. The number of undead here staggers you. You ask some of them what they wait for, but never get an answer more helpful than "Life!"

The tunnel grows cooler as you descend. You note absently that you have left the torchlit sections far behind. But you remember that in the catacombs of the House of the Homeless, there should be no difference in temperature in any direction. Wondering, you go deeper. Around you a breeze rises, and the sound of—no, it can't be—a river?

It is. The roar of water grows and the air becomes moist when you reach the head of the line. There, a glowing circle set in a solid rock wall, a magical gate of teleportation, waits to transport the wraiths to an unknown destination.

The entire catacomb is itself in another dimension, and Anacaster's own gate from the House of the Homeless mausoleum brought you here. But you have never heard of another gate in the labyrinth. The deafening waters beyond are another ominous sign.

Wraiths are drifting through the gate a few at a time. "Where do you go?" you ask. "Why do you wait?"

"We go as the liches call us."

"Cathexis."

"—As we are needed."

"Cathexis."

"To resurrection, deep under the city."

"Cathexis."

"Cathexis."

"What is this Cathexis?" you ask.

"Life!"

You get no further help from the wraiths. But the gate gapes before you, the breeze urging you toward it. Life. You feel that if anything awaits you beyond that gate, life is not it. Yet whatever lies beyond is clearly vital to these undead, and to the liches as well. Duties and desires battle within you. Life . . . beyond that gate.

"Do what you want, you know," says the weasel. "But I'll wager that going through there without a good supply of pieces of the Staff of Waterdeep is a really bad idea."

Will you go through the gate (122B), or leave the House of the Homeless and return to the surface (51D)?

The hat is made of fine material and seems brand-new. The feather trails through the air as you turn the hat in your hands. **34B**

Where have you seen a hat like this before? An image of a corpulent face, self-satisfied and smug, appears in your mind. Flashy rings on his fat fingers, rich fabrics in fine fashions on his immense body, and a bejeweled sword, purely ornamental, at his side—a self-serving merchant.

You dealt with merchants amicably in the past, and yet you despised *this* man, who had gained so much wealth and so much power over others, and used none of it to good end, and did nothing but serve his own greed. Still, it is not your place to judge.

Who was the fat merchant? You try and try, and finally you dredge up a name: Lagothrix. Lagothrix Blunt. You remember how unreasonable he was, and are glad you need have nothing further to do with him.

Return to 52A to keep looking around, or leave (146F).

"I must have that figurine," you tell the vampire, "and I will have it. But I would rather trade than wage battle. What will you accept for the figurine?" **34C**

The vampire laughs incredulously. "What could you have that I might possibly want? Not your clothes, surely. A hermit would throw you out of his cave, should you enter wearing those rags." He looks you over in amused scorn . . . and then he becomes thoughtful.

"Now, you do have a fine weapon, though. I will admit to a certain yen for that blade; and I can always tell Haurrant I found nothing. Yes. Give me the sword, and I will give you this ivory statuette." He extends his hand to receive the sword.

Will you give the vampire your sword for the figurine (51F); risk angering the vampire by offering the sword, but demanding he give you the figurine first (129D); or attack (90B)?

You examine the bottle of wine. It's a red wine, from the Calimshan vineyards far to the south. The bottle is not dusty. Presumably the keepers of the Hall of Heroes don't allow such offerings to gather dust long before they are put to good use. **34D**

You find you know nothing about the vintner, nor whether the wine is relatively expensive or from a good year. You don't think you ever knew much about wine.

You hold up the cerebricule. It sniffs the cork and immediately shouts, "Wine! Red wine! Drink, drink!"

"What? I should drink this?"

"Give drink! Me, me! Driiiiink!"

The shrunken head can shout quite loudly. Will you give it a drink to quiet it down (106B), or not (125E)?

35A You take halting steps toward Strix's bathtub. Despite your hazy memory, you're sure you never helped a vampire bathe before! The hot, bloody smell of the bath is incredibly repugnant.

"You are shy, perhaps?" she coos. "So like a warrior, to charge toward final death, yet draw short before a moment's relaxation. I suppose there are many kinds of fear."

She's manipulating you, and your conscious mind realizes it. But the weasel is saying, "You're not afraid! Show her!" and you feel impelled to comply. With the construct's skin yielding beneath your feet, you cross to the pool and kneel beside her.

Strix snaps her fingers imperiously, and the creature presents you with its scrub brush, like a knight offering his sword to his liege. You take it as Strix continues talking.

"I have seen you abroad in the city. Perhaps you saw me as well, flying overhead?"

She speaks in a real voice, as you cannot, but she is able to hear the speech of your mind. "I may have," you answer. You gingerly moisten the brush in the blood and rub it across her back. On the white skin, red rivulets run down like veins. From the corner of your eye, you note the creature gazing at you with envy.

"Very good," she says. "A bit lower. I gather you are heading forward to the Annelid's head and the Bone Throne. Perhaps you are lost or seek the ideal place to merge into Cathexis. Or perhaps"—and here she turns to look at you—"you seek Haurrant."

Disconcerted, you temporize. "Perhaps."

Strix gazes at you. Deep in the pupils of her eyes, you see dark crimson. They are eyes that could tame tigers like kittens. Even in undeath, you almost remember what beauty was. . . . Then she turns away again, arching her back to the brush. You continue scrubbing, as though hypnotized.

"Haurrant will soon be seated upon the Bone Throne, and from there he will animate and take control of the Annelid," says Strix. "Some think this would not be the highest fulfillment of our glorious plan. Abraxa, for instance. . . ."

Do you have a bottle or flask filled with holy water? If so, an idea comes to you while she speaks; go to 75G. If not, Strix turns toward you again; go to 17A.

The lich held one hand aloft, and its fingertips burned. The fires grew, gathered, formed into a sphere, and hurtled toward your friends. No, they must not die! Tired as you were, you threw yourself in the way, and the fireball struck. Your armor held, and you fell, the world a blaze of red. You thought, I'm alive! Haurrant's playing with us, testing our strength.

You staggered to your feet. Arnat, the halfling, lay dead, aged a century in seconds. The wizard babbled incoherently. Where was Celia? "Cleric!" you called. Surely the Brave One you both worshiped would not let her perish! Disaster, and all because you stumbled into this lich's lair by sheer accident!

You saw the lich one moment, Celia the next. She dangled like a baby in the undead monster's grip. He means to strangle her, you thought. You remember touching your ring. What ring? You cannot see it in your mind, nor anything more of the battle.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

The ceramic vase has something of an alien look to it, as though it were shaped in some other culture. From the mists of your faint past float memories of vague legends describing an advanced civilization far away in the unreachable East. What was it called? Kara-Tur? **35C**

You hold the cerebriole up to the vase. It sniffs for a long time. "Vaze not maagic," it says finally, "but maagic zpell plazed on it. Protective ward zpell. Can't tell what. Zomething inzide. Dunno what."

You peer into the vase and spy a thin cylinder about six inches long, made of what looks like stone. Your unbeating heart leaps inside you. Could this be a piece of the Staff of Waterdeep, here amidst this depravity?

Will you reach into the vase, risking the ward (116G); tip the vase to spill the item out (109B); or forget about the vase and go to 126A and choose something else? You may also go to 56E to leave.

This uneven struggle comes to a swift conclusion. In a killing frenzy, the ghouls strike at the vampire. There is nothing of frenzy about the vampire—but when it makes an attack, a ghoul falls. Within seconds, he is surrounded by the still forms of his attackers. **35D**

Now he glares at you. "I didn't need your help," he hisses, "but I shall remember that you did not offer it. And this—" he shakes the white statuette wrapped in velvet—"if you've come for this, you will not have it. I have found it; it is now Haurrant's." He is careful not to touch the figurine with his flesh; he holds it within the velvet cloth.

You may ask the vampire about the figurine (56A); attack the vampire (90B); or ignore the arrogant creature and look around (74E).

36A Helpless in the torrent, you are carried downriver. The bony framework surrounding you thickens by the yard, until nothing of the tunnel is visible. The wind's pitch rises from baritone to a high soprano screech, and the smell thickens until you can almost taste the air.

"Phewwww!" the cerebriucle complains in a rare moment when it finds itself above water.

The source of the stench is what look like curtains of flesh. They grow across the framework like fungus. Long tendrils of dermis creep along each filament, each pulling along veinous sheets of skin behind it. The pseudo-blood of the river pulses in the tissue, but you sense no life spirit in it, only a brown-yellow miasma that mimics life.

"What is this?" you ask yourself. The artifact is now an immense fleshy tube, funneling the river of blood down its length.

The current slows as the tunnel begins to level out. You can guide your progress now, almost swim. The river gives way to a swampy area, where tussocks of skin stick out and the separation of blood and bone is intermittent. Here you climb upon a dermal "sand" bar. You cannot catch your breath or sleep, but you lie down for a while to regain your energy.

You cannot see far ahead, for the curtains of skin block your view, but you wouldn't be surprised if the tube extended a full mile. You estimate that it's far more than a hundred yards across. How long has this lain unsuspected, a mile or more beneath Waterdeep?

You stand up, and the organelle squishes beneath your boots. One glance back the way you came convinces you that swimming against that current would be impossible. Whether you hope to defeat the lichs or merely escape, you must move ahead.

Suddenly Abraxa's words come back to you: *The unliving for a thousand miles around, perhaps ten thousand, approach Waterdeep to join us. We offer the ultimate reward and the utmost revenge. . . .*

"You know," the weasel says as you plod farther into the heart of the artifact, "this can only get worse." Go on to 126A.

36B Carefully you try prying open the hand that holds the pendant, but it proves useless. "What's the sword for, anyway?" asks the weasel. You pull out your sword and begin to chop at the framework, and the entire bony network screams! Mouths erupt from a hundred points, all screaming in agony.

Although you fear the sound will drive you mad, you manage to free the necklace, breaking the chain in the process. Finally the screeching dies down. You wonder

what creatures farther down the tunnel might have been alerted to your presence.

"Will it still work without its chain?" you wonder aloud.

"Yez," replies the cerebriucle. "As long as it's carried cloze to you."

You will suffer no damage from normal or magical fire as long as you carry this pendant. When the text instructs you to subtract from your unlife point total due to a flame attack, you may ignore the damage. Go back to 120A if you are free to look at something else, or drop into the river and float farther down the tunnel (36A).

"Great ruler," you begin, risking all on a **36C** bold move. "Great Orcus, I, one of your unliving army, request a boon to help me fulfill my mission."

"And what mission is that?" Orcus asks.

"To send Waterdeep toward its destiny."

The demon smiles—almost. "Very little is beyond me," it answers. You feel a surge of hope and think about what you will ask for. Information? Strength? An invincible magical weapon?

"But that is because I am not inclined to grant favors to anyone who asks," Orcus continues. These prove to be the last words you hear. Lifting one finger, the demon lord sends you flying over the precipice of its palace terrace.

Reflexively you slow time, hoping to spot some way to survive. But all this does is give you a lingering view of the palace's bizarre architecture, the demon cities that burn eternally, and the flaming river that will soon claim you. Your adventure is over.

You draw slowly toward the slim man, looking for the telltale life aura. His eyes are **36D** closed. Pale, lined skin stretches over the bones of his face—lines of tribulation and terror, not of age. He could almost be a mummy himself. But he is old before his time, while the mummies are old after theirs. So emaciated is this man that his survival would be a miracle.

Alas, no miracles here. He is not breathing, and it is clear that the drugs have sent him on his final journey. Death has come early, and yet perhaps not soon enough for this tortured soul.

The atmosphere grows oppressive in this awful den. You urgently need to escape.

"Go ahead, stick around," urges the weasel. "Drink in the ambience."

No longer caring what else may be learned here, you bolt out the door. Turn to 146F.

37A “Who are you, sad creature?” you ask. “Why do you lie here, weak and in the shadow of great evil, so far from your native plane?”

The elemental stirs. Its voice, a deep but pained bass, resounds from the white gem inside it.

“I am a prisoner,” it moans. “Far away, in the seas that birthed me, I was powerful, a ruler of my kind. But that dark wizard”—it gestures feebly at the lich on the tower—“summoned me and many more of my kind, bound us, and used our energies. It converts great quantities of water into some horrid red fluid, like mortal blood, that drains down deep under the ground. Senseless! Awful!

“Can you help me?” it begs. “Do not let me perish in this dismal dimension, alone and friendless! Remove the dark gem from my person. It binds me here and slowly destroys me. But please, use your blade, not your hand, for the gem would harm you as well.”

Obligingly, you carefully push your blade through its torso, like putting a straw through a soap bubble. Catching the dark gem, you flick it free of the elemental’s body. The gem disintegrates as soon as it reaches the outside water.

“Free!” the elemental shouts in your mind, and the water churns as it swims upward, joyfully, powerfully. “I am indeed grateful. How may I help you, warrior?”

“Do you know anything of the Staff of Waterdeep?” you ask. “I seek it to destroy your former captor.”

“Gladly would I help you with that quest! Yes, I know of a piece of the staff, a piece made of unmelting ice. I saw it plunge into the lighthouse tower, and I escaped to toss it upon the currents. They carried it far from here—to the cave of a moray eel. Come, I will take you there.”

If you have not already found the ice piece of the Staff of Waterdeep, go to 137A. If you already possess this piece, go to 126C. (If you have half an hour or less remaining on your mission, you cannot spare the time to go with the elemental. He swims off, leaving you to look around at 100A.)

37B The designs in the mosaic are colorful and some parts are big enough to stand in. You step inside one of these spots and hold the cerebriucle down near the tile itself. A short sniff is all it needs.

“Minor maagic,” it says. “Waiting for greeting.”

What harm could it do? You knock the hilt of your sword against the fountain.

Instantly a translucent sprite materializes in the air in front of you. “Greetings and welcome, friend,” it says cheerfully in a pleasant tenor voice. Its elfin face smiles, and its wings flutter.

“The Brossfeather family is unable to see you now. If you will give me a message for them, I am sure they will be delighted to see you later.”

The fairy does not focus on you, since it isn’t really there. The apparition is meant only to record the messages of visitors, and nothing more. You step out of the pattern, and the sprite vanishes.

Will you look around further (58A) or leave (117F)?

You pretend you have not heard the poltergeists’ questions and begin looking around **37C** the City of Garbage. That tusk, for instance—

“Hey, guy, you deaf or wat? You leesen wat we say?”

“Of all the rude behavior!” says the other. “We shall not countenance this, shall we, Jyorlo?”

“No, we not containerize one beet of eet!” They pick up wheel spokes and collard greens, driftwood and dead pets, and heave all of it straight at you. In this storm, you can’t look at anything for more than a moment.

For a few minutes, you endure the hail of refuse, thinking the poltergeists will get bored. But after a while, the weasel says, “Gee, this sure is fun. I don’t think they’ll get bored with a great sport like this. Let’s do it for another three hours. What do you say?”

Indeed, the poltergeists show no signs whatsoever of letting up. You must offer an opinion (114A) or leave (143D).

You gaze in the mirror and see—corruption! **37D** Rotting flesh, rotted morals, the death of beauty, the beauty of unreachable death! This is the quintessence of unliving. You drop the mirror and shy back, as though it were a dragon.

You do not need the cerebriucle to tell you: This mirror reflects the worst aspects of the holder. “Why would Maaril want such a ghastly device?” you wonder.

The cerebriucle cannot answer this. But from your subconscious mind comes a potential explanation. “Security,” says the weasel. “If the wizard was suspicious of someone, he’d tell them to look in the mirror, and then he’d know if they plotted against him. Then again, maybe he’s just perverse.”

If you want to take the mirror, add it to your list. Return to 72A to keep looking, or leave (137F).

38A Of the many rooms in Piergeiron's Palace, none has escaped the ravages of the undead. Few of the palace's residents have been killed, perhaps because the undead assume they will all die with Waterdeep by next day. But in their search for magic, of any kind, of all types, the zombies and skeletons and ghouls and ghosts who swept through here left little intact.

One remarkable exception is the library. When you enter, you see the reason.

If you have been to Piergeiron's library before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 100E. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

Amid shelves of hundreds of leather-bound, gilt-edged books (not scrolls but genuine books, an immense treasure!) stands a tall man in traveler's robes. Haggard beyond survival, he casts no life aura. His intensity—you sense inescapably that every action consumes his total attention and passion—marks him as nothing else but a revenant.

You know of revenants, though you think you were lucky enough to avoid meeting one in life. When one of great ability or potential is violently slain, sometimes, as rarely as the sun is eclipsed, the spirit does not fail. By sheer willpower, it remains for a time to stalk its killer and avenge its murder. No cleric can turn the revenant, no obstacle sway it, from its single goal.

Among the undead, none is like the revenant, few are as powerful, and perhaps none is as tragic. But you have no time to reflect on this now, for the revenant in the library gazes up at you. Its bloodshot stare penetrates like a thunderbolt.

Seeing its eyes, you start as an image arrives in your mind: A wolf pack runs a stag to the ground. You hear their howling, see them plunge after the quarry, and smell its fear on the wind. Then the image vanishes, and the revenant speaks in a tight voice.

"He took four steps—short, light, quick steps—that I

heard before I turned. Yes, absolutely true, four steps. He wore leather boots, their tops the color of a dry oak leaf, but darker on the bottom where the snow wet them, and banded with four black strips of leather on the left boot and three on the right, tied in square knots. Four left, three right. There is no doubt."

Puzzled, you look around, but there is no one else present. The revenant is talking directly to you. The weasel whispers, "Excuse me, did I miss something? What is he talking about?"

"What do you know of him?" the revenant continues. "The assassin Greeme, sometime resident of Waterdeep. Greeme, associate of the cleric Sumer, associate of the art merchant Porelle. Greeme, who took one long, deep breath down to the bottom of his lungs after he pierced my upper left abdomen. With his slightly rusted three-pound thrusting broadsword. With the light green, oily coating of the poison known as orvas, spread along the edges to within two inches of the hilt. Two. Greeme, who took that long breath and said, 'That's done him!' in just that tone! Just that tone exactly! 'That's done him!' What do you know of Greeme?"

The revenant stares with frightful intensity. While it waits for an answer, you cannot look around the library at leisure. As far as you remember, you had nothing to do with its murder and do not know anyone named Greeme. Will you talk to the revenant, telling it this (26A); attack it (143B); or leave (119G)?

When you are free to look around, you may investigate the:	by turning to:
sculpture	118D
shelves of books	152A
large open book	130D
magnifying glass	27D
painting	66B
table and chairs	66A

38B You overheard a chat in the temple while you were praying.

"I tell you, Maaril is only putting on a show. He delights in prodding curmudgeons like you into dark suspicions. Look at that dragon head on his home! It's so horrible that it's funny. You can't take anyone who lives in a dragon seriously."

"Maybe he wants you to think that, Mistmyr."

"Oh, bosh!"

"Maskar told me—in confidence, so keep this close—that Maaril said he'd been visiting some of the Outer

Planes. Spoke with one of the Powers."

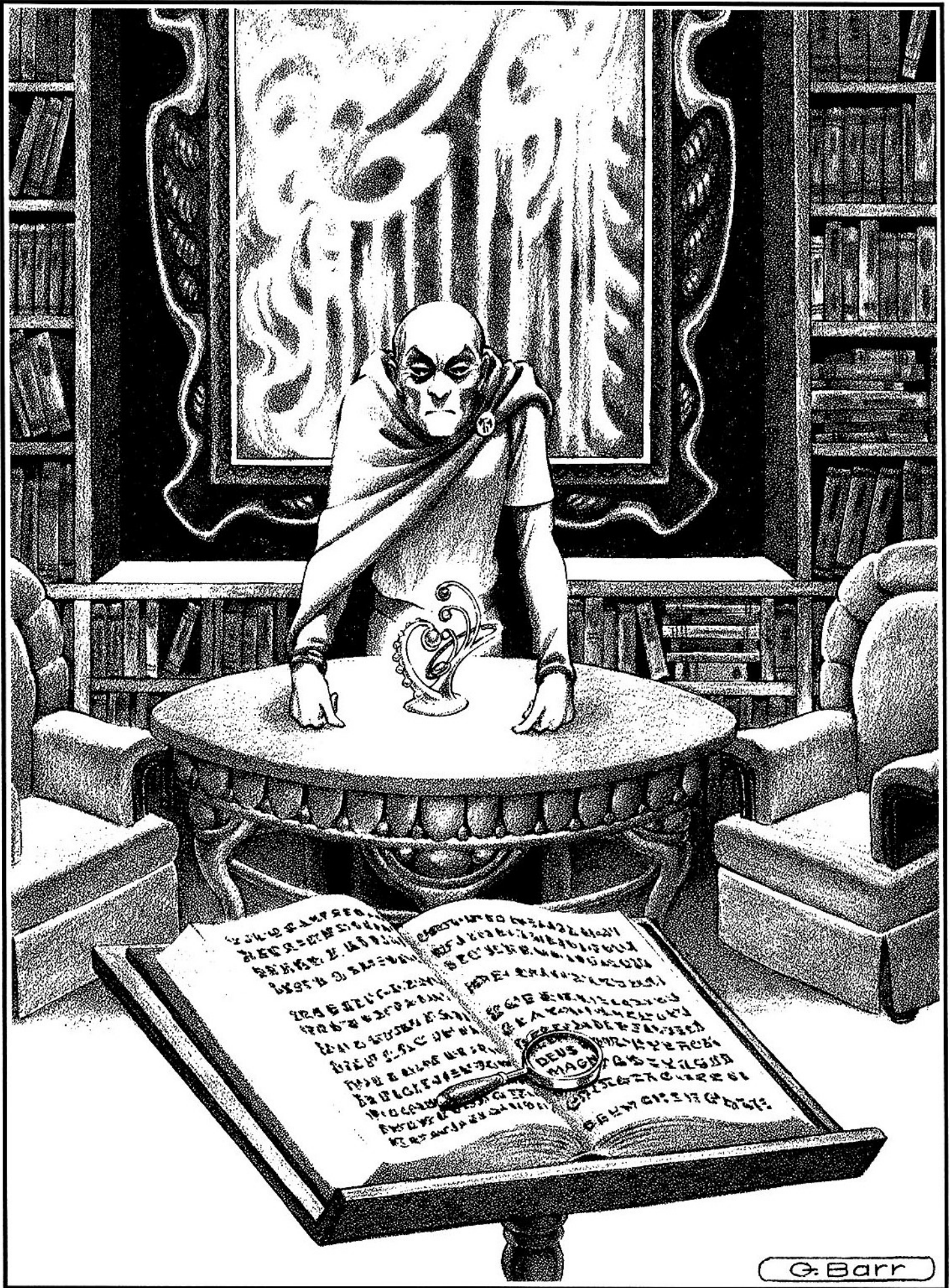
A long pause from the other, a young, thin man. "Really?"

"Gave a very convincing description of—" And here the voice lowered to speak a name.

"Hush!" said the young man. "Do not speak that name in Torm's shrine! Anyway, Maaril has not the power to do such things. I'll hear no more. Let us go."

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.





40A You venture down to the edge of the stage. The clubs, beanbags, and other objects perform amazing gyrations. They twist in air, float up high, drift down, hover like hummingbirds. Some fly up behind the ghostly jester's cap; for the living body, these would be throws behind the back.

"Friend spirit," you begin, "can you tell me—?"

"Hey, listen to this!" the haunt interrupts. "How do you tell when an orc's been visiting the dog pound?"

"I know not, but—"

"He's licking his lips! Yowza! Licking his lips! When the ghoul applied to join the army, why wouldn't they let him in?"

"Really, I—"

"He thought it was a smorgasbord!" The objects continue their steady cascade. "You out there? You know, smorgasbord, a place where you can eat all you— Hey, these are the jokes, folks! What is this, an audience or a wax gallery?"

"No self-respecting waxwork would stay for this," the weasel comments, but the juggling haunt doesn't hear it.

"Yo!" the ectoplasmic funnyman continues. "Hear about the gargoyle with the disgusting personal problem? Gravel! Hey, you people deaf? Gravel! Hey-ohhh!"

You can think of no greater deed than wiping this menace from the landscape of stand-up comedy (attack at 74B), but the ghostly wisecracker may yet tell you something worthwhile. Will you bear up under the routine and (try to) laugh? If so, go to 117A. Or you may ask the ghost to stop the routine (131B), or make the weasel very happy and leave (64E).

Another approach is to ask the immaterial comedian to comment on recent events, a long-standing tradition among comics. If you can endure the wit that may pour forth, you may ask about the Staff of Waterdeep (89A), the other undead wandering the city (158B), or life in show business (113B).

40B Not knowing what to expect, you decide you have nothing to lose by trusting Strix. You pull the wax seal off the vial of yellow powder, and with a wild sweep of your arm, you hurl the vial at Haurrant.

The vial strikes the lich, covering it with the yellow powder. The wizard looks down at itself, puzzled but unaffected. "Ha!" it cries in triumph. "Is that the greatest weapon you have, feeble one? Prepare—"

Snap. The gentle sound seems to overwhelm the echoing noises in the artifact. The lich stops speaking. The leather strap on its arm, rotted by the yellow powder, falls away, and with it goes the small box and its scraps of parchment—the phylactery!

The box strikes the fleshy floor without a sound. Haurrant looks down toward it, then at you. Sparks flare in its eye sockets and from its bony fingertips. The lich begins to shake, as though it were having a seizure.

"Get back! He's going!" the weasel shouts in your mind. You take a step backward, then another, as sheets of white light cascade down Haurrant's skeletal form. Bolts of energy, the energy that sustained the lich's life, leap away like lightning and crackle into nothingness. Haurrant begins to scream.

That scream! The wounded of the bloodiest battle, the victims of unspeakable tortures, animals cruelly beaten by their evil masters—all of them combined could not match the agony of the lich's screech! It is a scream to sink continents. The undead of the conqueror worm, linked with their master, feel its pain, and they, too, begin to scream. You are driven back by waves of sound.

Just when you think your eardrums are about to burst, there is a sharp crack, and a blast of air hurls you to the floor. Silence falls. In Haurrant's place stands a skeleton, charred and smelling of smoke. Before your eyes, it dissolves.

The undead wizard's life force, maintained by the magic of the small box, dissipates, and you feel a wave of cold pass over you. Haurrant, menace of a hundred years and more, destroyed by a pinch of yellow powder! The powder, too, disperses. Cross it off your list.

You climb slowly to your feet. You feel a surge of joy, perhaps the first you have known in undeath. "Wow!" cries the weasel. "Terrific! I wonder why we bothered with the staff, though."

Then a piercing moan sounds from every chamber of the worm artifact, and you soon find a good reason to have bothered. Go to 64A.

"Ver' bowerful maagic," declares the shrunken head when you let it sniff the lowest ring. "Created by lovelorn journeyman wizard, presented as candidate project for mazter ztatuz." **40C**

"What does it do?"

"Makes people fall in love with wearer, if he has maagic ability."

"So he wasn't lovelorn after that, I take it."

"Died of exhauztion two monthz later."

You have no magic ability, but any magic ring might be useful. You tug on it, and much to your surprise, it comes free. "Looks like these skeletons don't feel comfortable with true love," the weasel remarks.

You may keep the ring if you wish, although you have no way of using it yourself.

From here you may also look at the upper ring (104C) or the middle ring (18C). Or go back to 120A if you have the chance to look at something else, or drop into the river and float farther down the tunnel (36A).

41A The walls of Castle Waterdeep, in the heart of Castle Ward, soar upward four hundred feet at their highest point, and the beautiful towers rise many stories above them. They could be as light as smoke or sea-foam, for all the impression of weight they give. Yet the impregnable castle walls are as thick as the height of ten tall men lying head to toe, and honeycombed with rooms and passages. This fortress, indomitable in battle, also hosts ceremonies of pomp and regalia, starring the diplomats of many lands.

Castle Ward is the center of Waterdeep's cultural and social life. Here are half a dozen guildhalls, the tower of archmage Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, studios of master artisans, theaters, nightclubs, temples, barracks and stables for the City Guard and City Watch, and the impenetrable tower of Ahghairon, which undoubtedly will foil even the undead army's efforts to enter. And there is Piergeiron's Palace.

The palace is the many-spired home of Waterdeep's commander, chief diplomat, overmaster of the guilds, and speaker for the secret Lords who rule the city. A fitting residence for a man of such greatness. It is remarkable to think the Effluvium must have brought even Piergeiron low. Or perhaps he has been diverted from the city by some stratagem of the lichs.

So many places. You could spend a hundred days investigating all that might be of help. In desperation you must rely on the cerebri-*cule*. It sniffs out just three places of interest, using criteria only it knows: a duty guardhouse, in one of the towers flanking the gate of Castle Waterdeep (32A); the library of Piergeiron's Palace (38A); and, of all places, an obscure theater not far from the castle (42A). There seems to be at least one piece of the staff among them, and the head suspects more.

Why not Blackstaff's tower, or one of the other power centers of the city? Perhaps the undead cleaned those out first. If these areas sound unpromising, return to 82A and choose again.

41B If there is any information to help you in the Hall of Sages, you intend to find it without wasting time negotiating with ghosts. You stride past Bumberly's desk. The shrunken head snatches one sniff before declaring, "Znogood."

Bumberly hops along behind, squealing, "Wait, sir, wait. You've neglected to pay for parleyin', sir!"

"I do not intend to pay when any citizen may walk the Hall of the Sages for free."

"Oh, sir, very poor attitude, if I may say so!" He scurries behind you, taking three steps to your one, now drawing even, bouncing ahead a bit, falling back. "You sages, see this fellow's iniquity! Goin' to parley with you, and not givin' Bumberly his magical item. Cast out this grievous wretch, sages, cast out!"

From upstairs, you hear two deep voices call in unison, "Bumberly, shut up."

The ghost retreats to his desk, muttering under his breath. When you return, he and all his possessions will be gone. You walk upstairs, to 140E.

"Hold the cerebri-*cule* close to any item you wish to learn about," says the lich, "and let it sniff the odors of magic. It will tell you of the object's function. The head also has some psychometric gifts." **41C**

"What does that mean?" you ask.

"An item's history clings to it like trailing cobwebs: the personalities of those who own it, traces of strong emotion felt in its presence. The cerebri-*cule* can sometimes tell of such things. Speak for your owner, cerebri-*cule*."

The shrunken head opens its mouth. Its lips flop like rubber. The baritone voice that emerges—a real voice, not telepathic like the lich's—amazes you. "'Z ver' nize to meet you. Will zerve you well." How can a head so small have a voice so loud and deep?

"If it speaks too loudly," the lich continues, "tuck it inside your armor. Take care of it, and do not let it drink alcohol. Now I must go." Turn to 20A.

You approach the fountain, shrunken head in hand. **41D**

"Maagic," it says slowly, taking in the details. "In fountain, at baze of ztalue. Zpeaking ztone."

"What's it doing here?" you wonder, reaching into the water and easily finding the stone.

"Friend of noble family, great wizard, left it here, intending to retrieve later. Wizard baranoid. Afraid someone was trying to zteal his zpeaking ztone."

"What happened to him?"

"Killed by people trying to zteal zpeaking ztone."

You may take the speaking stone if you do not already have one. It lets you speak with beings who are not undead. Return to 58A to look around further, or leave (117F).

Moving among the tightly spaced fibers, you watch the faces as they sing their ceaseless song. **41E** The phrasing, flat and listless, rises in volume with the specter's screams, then lowers when his anguished howls trail off.

The zombies never tire, never cease. Their grisly chant will continue until their commander orders them to stop or they die their final death. That death cannot be much different from their existence now.

If you are being chased by ghouls, you have spent too much time looking here already. Stop reading here and go immediately to 120D. If the ghouls are not chasing you, keep reading.

Turn to 99D to examine the specter, or 132A to look at something else. Or leave (47F).

42A This theater, on one of the most fashionable avenues in Castle Ward, seems to have closed down long before the Effluvium arrived.

A handmade sign on the door, lettered in a hurry by the looks of it, says:

CLOZED UNTIL FURTHAR NOTISE

WE APOLIGIZE FOR INCONVINIANSE

WE ARE WORKING TO REZOLVE THE PROBLIM

Under the printed notice some wag has written, "The ghost chased away the good spellers."

You push through the doors (unlocked!) and walk through the plush, gilt-edged lobby. In the theater you gaze up at the ceiling, lighted by a simple spell of continual light, and then down at the stage.

If you have been to the theater before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 65G. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

Amid the clouds of Effluvium that drift in and out through the walls, a performing phantom of some kind plays to an empty house. Only head and hands are visible, along with a dizzying whirl of material objects: clubs, torches, more than you can easily follow. A voice

sounds in your mind, the telepathy of the undead: "Then the worm sticks its head out and says, 'Where's my cookie?' WHAM! Hey, c'mon, that's a surefire laugh! Okay, knock, knock—"

It's telling jokes, and amazingly lame ones, too. No wonder the theater closed down. Probably no cleric could cast a spell of exorcism before these horrendous clunkers laid him low.

The cerebricule sniffs and says, "Maagic here." Not much news in that remark, but perhaps the props the ghostly showman is juggling are worth investigation. However, you can't look at them until you get the ghost to stop throwing them around.

Will you talk to the haunt (40A), attack it (74B), or leave (64E)?

After the ghost has stopped juggling them, you may investigate the:

	by turning to:
dagger	30D
hoop	136E
beanbags	135B
torches	87A
clubs	108D

42B "I'm Shalara, and this is my master Kappiyan Flurmastyr," the girl says, wonder in her voice. "Do you understand me?"

You nod to indicate your comprehension, but cannot speak to her. You sheathe your sword, and try to smile, though it almost makes your face crack. The wizard and apprentice appear to relax.

"You can't speak?" the girl asks. You shake your head. "Sorry," she says. She continues, "We were making a Potion of Giant Strength on the stroke of midnight, when all these dead people came around. Our ward protected us, but we've had to fight the ghosts alone all this time. Until you came. Master Kappiyan has been kind of, I guess you'd say set back a little, from a backfire in our ritual. His mind has gone a little astray."

"Spelunk gunk'l' dunk," says the wizard, with perfect enunciation.

"But I can translate," Shalara continues. "Master says if you're truly concerned with our fates, go into the next room. Behind the door as it opens, knock on the wall three times. A secret panel will open. Inside is a wand. If you bring it to us, it will allow us to escape. I hope you will," she adds desperately.

It's hard to refuse—especially since they will inevitably die if you do. More undead will come eventually. You go to the next room, rap thrice upon the wall, and—

when the secret panel swings open—retrieve the silvery wand revealed there. Back in the study, you carry the wand to the protective circle, and Shalara gratefully takes it.

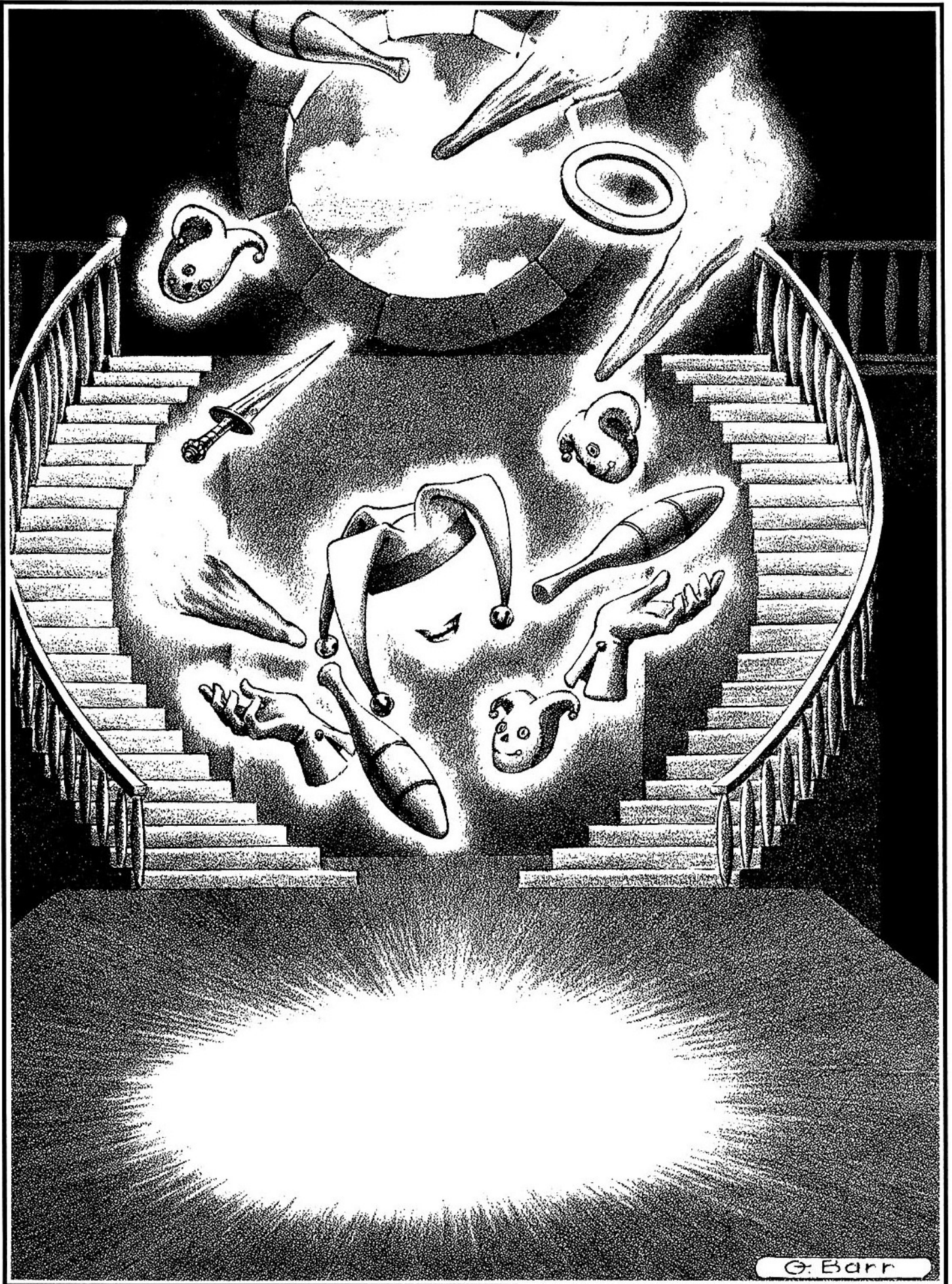
The wizard Kappiyan unhooks the flask from his belt and tosses it to you. "Myhool caftan sisperar imbibe-ment," he announces. Shalara translates, "Master extends you his gratitude and says that this is a potion of healing. Drink it if you are injured."

Then Kappiyan takes the wand, waves it, and he disappears, along with Shalara, all the objects within the protective circle, and the brazier and tripod. You hope that, wherever they have gone, they will be safe now from undead.

You let the cerebricule sniff the flask on the wizard's belt. "Healing botion," it announces. "Reztores life and health to hurt people."

You may drink the potion (47G). Or you may take the flask; mark it on your list of possessions, and mark "47G" beside it. Any time during your quest, should you drink this potion, mark your current place, read section 47G, and then return to your place in the adventure.

A quick turn around the room with the cerebricule informs you that there's nothing else of interest here. Go to 65E to leave.



44A Grisly though the idea is, you think ascending the staircase of human bodies is the safest way into the tower. Perhaps more magical items wait there. Stepping gently on the yielding flesh of a boy, you rise by slow strides toward the tower window. Some backs are as soft as dough, others bony-ridged along the spine and ribs.

Inside is a very large room shaped like half a doughnut, taking up half this story of the circular tower. Smashed furniture and smashed wooden cases cover the stone floor, guardsmen sprawl unconscious over the wreckage, and zombies and skeletons root through the litter. You can hear the zombies reciting their orders: "Find magic, bring to master . . . find magic—"

Some of the dead hold wands or bracers. Clearly these devices were intended as weapons in the event of attack. Interested, you move toward them.

"You with the group?" says a voice behind you. Twisting, you see no figure, but a wand floats in the air at your eye level. Your instinct is to attack, but that seems premature.

"I am with the group," you reply. The answer is not even false, for you are undead. "And what are you?"

"Name's Toby," says the invisible voice. "Just along helping. Toppling chests. Throwing things around. Good at throwing. Watch!"

You have an instant to think, Poltergeist. Then the undead spirit tosses the wand at you. Grabbing it by reflex, you are blinded by a flash of light, the wand and castle vanish, and you appear somewhere else. Mark off the time you spent exploring Castle Waterdeep, if you haven't already, and assume exploring your new locale will require one half-hour.

Where has the wand teleported you? Roll the die. On a roll of 1 or 2, go to 38A; 3 or 4, 42A; 5 or 6, 52A; 7 or 8, 48A; 9 or 10, 58A; 11 or 12, 68A.

44B You gesture for the merman to hold his attack, and you plant your sword point in the muck of the harbor bottom.

The merman looks at you incredulously, considers your action . . . and he charges!

This is a fight to the death. The merman and his steed are faster than you, so escape is impossible. Conduct the fight using the merman's statistics from the Combat Table on page 160. He has 16 "unlife points," though he is alive, of course. His steed has 22 "unlife points."

If you reduce the merman to 6 points or less, he falls back, but his sea horse proceeds to turn its back to you and thrash you with its tail. The merman returns to the fight if the sea horse dies. The sea horse will not flee.

If the merman survives and reduces you to 6 unlife points or less, go to 51C. If you win, return to 94A to look around, or you can leave the harbor altogether. To depart by way of the docks, go to 74D. To travel the rapid harbor currents for a shortcut to the countryside outside Waterdeep, go to 45A.

You reach in and scrape the unguent free. Perhaps you can carry it around on a kelp leaf. **44C**

But you never get the chance. Your hand emerges from the amphora with a thick, tarlike layer of unguent upon it. Swiftly, far too swiftly for you to stop it, the ointment disappears, absorbed into your flesh!

And you feel . . . better! You feel warm and cheery, almost as though a living spirit dwelt within you.

The unguent has healed you! Recover 8 points of unlife, or all the unlife points you've lost, whichever is less. If you have taken no damage, the ointment gives you a momentary, but welcome, feeling of well-being.

The weasel laughs. "So you're leather goods now, eh? Let's find some wood polish and give you a suntan!"

Return to 104A to look around, or leave (108F).

A memory from that time in the grave when the weasel told you of your undeath and you recoiled from the knowledge. A memory of hands lifting you, not bony hands, but fully fleshed ones. Yet how cold, and how long their nails. Rising up from the hole, you glimpsed a full moon and moonlight glinting on exposed fangs. Vampires! **44D**

One, a woman, led the others. They carried you to a new grave in the City of the Dead and buried you again, all in the blink of an eye to your slowed perceptions. Replaying the fragmentary memory, you recall the queen vampire's voice. "Bury him here, until Abraxa has need of him," and then later, "Haurrant will surely appreciate the poetic justice when his own assassin slays him!"

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

You grasp the rod and concentrate on the words of the incantation in your mind, and the next thing you know, you're watching your limbs turn invisible. Mentally repeating the same incantation, you flash back into existence. **44E**

The rod is made of bone. You would rather not think what died to create this enchantment. Take the rod if you wish, then return to 132A to look at something else, or leave (47F).

45A The fastest way out of the harbor is by riding a nearby crosscurrent. Swimming upward, you reach a strong current that carries you southeast over the rocky harbor floor like a flying carpet. In this headlong sweep, you soon approach the gate stretching between the mainland's East Torch Tower and Deepwater Isle's Inner Fort. You pass through the gate's grille like a fly through coarse mesh, marveling at the size of its crossbeams.

In another few minutes, you are carried around the spur of land called Waterbreak, then past some dangerous-looking rocky shoals. When the current is gentle enough, you swim to shore. Mark off half an hour's time for the travel—quite a savings, for a land trip would have taken an hour.

Reaching the shore, you slowly trudge from the surf, salt water dripping off your clothes and plastering your stringy hair to your head. Any living person here would run in horror, for you look like a sailor returning from a watery grave.

But you are alone . . . with a shrunken head, a sharp-tongued weasel, your own gloomy thoughts, and an impossible quest.

"Moan, moan, whine, snivel," says the weasel. "It's impossible. You were buried for who knows how long, but got up to stretch; that's possible. You just took a nice stroll across the harbor; *that's* possible. But this quest, impossible. Might as well lie back down."

You sigh. From here, you can see a rural shrine in the distance (110A) and, in another direction, the infamous Waterdeep dumping ground called the City of Garbage (114A). If you choose either of these locations, mark off another half-hour for travel and exploration time.

If you want to return to Waterdeep instead, the current is against you in the harbor, so you must walk overland. Mark off an hour to reach the city, then turn to 82A to choose a destination.

45B "I understand," you assure the menacing mummy. "I want no trouble." You raise your empty hands.

The mummy sneers at you. "That's right. That's the way to behave, friend." His tone turns even more threatening. "Now, you listen well to me. You want no trouble, you do as I say."

Slowly you nod, uncertain about his intentions, and tense yourself in anticipation of violence. The mummy steps near you, still sneering. His companions watch, no longer listless, eyes bright. One giggles.

"What I want from you—and you'll give it to me if you want no trouble—is a magical item. Is that clear as a crystal, friend?"

If you do not have a magical item, or if you do not want to give the mummy one, you must fight the mummies (27B).

If you do give the mummy an item, mark it off your list of possessions. The mummy grins nastily at you and clutches your offering in greedy hands. All three stand and press in on you. "Time to be on your way," says the leader, and the three hustle you backward out of the den. Go to 146F.

The adjutant's offer to give you a device to defeat Haurrant intrigues you. "Oooh, Strix, **45C** give him the thing," purrs the creature into his beloved's ear.

"What thing?"

"You know—the thing to destroy the lich."

"Oh! That, ah, thing. Of course, little one." Still wearing the glazed expression, Strix opens a catch on her necklace, revealing a tiny compartment containing a vial of yellow powder. She hands you the vial.

The powder grains are so fine that they flow almost like oil. You hold the shrunken head close, and it sniffs. It reports, "Rotz leather."

"Rots leather? How will that defeat the lich?" you ask.

But the vampire and her new playmate wave you away. "Let's leave the happy couple to themselves," the weasel says. You may add the vial to your list if you wish. Not knowing what to think, you go forward to face the lich (144A).

The head of the Staff of Waterdeep is a small dragon's tooth, perhaps six inches long, and quite smooth and shiny. It is inset in a rounded stick of wood, the diameter of a common staff, doubtless for ease of joining with the other pieces of the staff. The wood is smooth and very hard, and gives off an odd, metallic noise when tapped—it, too, has been magically treated, probably to make it indestructible. **45D**

Check off the dragon tooth on your bookmark list when you take it. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to 156A to find out more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it; but first make a note of this section, 45D, so you may return here after you are finished there.

Go to 90A to look around further, or leave (158F).

You edge closer to the bird, stepping carefully, then lunge. The bird sidesteps you, and as you gather yourself to pounce again, it flies off through the archway. **45E**

"Chop it down!" it cries. "Orbul, get your hands off! Twenty thousand and not an ounce more. Who's seen my jerkin?"

You may follow the bird (54E), ignore it and keep looking around (return to 58A), or leave (117F).

46A According to the letters carved in granite over his tomb, near the window on the second floor of the Hall of Sages, Scryblom the Learned lived all his life in a small village near Waterdeep, studying the native flora and writing hundreds of scrolls about them.

From his tomb issues an endless stream of mumbling. "Greetings, wise one," you say, sitting down.

"Ah? What? Oh, hello. Perhaps you've come to talk about flowers."

"Wise one, I seek information that may help me save the city from destruction by an army of the undead."

"Oh. Ah? Well, the undead are in general very bad for flowers. Really. First, they do not decay as quickly as is usual, so the roots cannot absorb their nutrients, you know, and then they dig their way out of their graves, disrupting the topsoil and root structure, and I suppose they also trample about on the blooms a good bit, now that I think on it. The usual flora found around graves in this area include the speckled waxflower, the type with bilobate leaves. . . ."

"Perhaps you know of something that wards off undead," you interrupt, a little desperate now. "I understand garlic is said to protect against vampires, for example."

"Oh, yes, I suppose so. Yes. Garlic, though, is seldom found in this climate, being more often seen as a wild perennial at the edges of the forest of Tethir, in the kingdom of Amn—"

You seem to be getting nowhere. Will you just sit and listen, hoping he eventually says something important (93D)? You note another stream of murmuring at the far end of this floor, from the tomb of Donalbain of Ruathym; will you visit it instead (15A); go back downstairs to look around some more (22A); or leave the Hall of Sages (149D)?

46B A harsh light springs from the gauntlet, blinding you. The shrunken head squawks with fear. The weasel begins to speak, but it is cut off utterly as a thunderous voice echoes in your mind. Torm, your one-time mentor!

"You!" he cries. "How dare you defile my temple? I commanded you to avoid my precincts, faithless one!"

Irresistible strength hurls you back through the doorway! You strike the earth hard, driving a long furrow in the ground outside the shrine. Purifying radiance fills the shrine. You cannot bear to look at it. (Any other undead that remained in the temple are now destroyed.)

For long minutes, you simply sit there, trying to decide how it feels for your god to reject you. You stare at your forearm, torn open in the fall. No blood oozes from the wound. The muscles, dull gray, bulge and slacken as before. (You take no damage.) At last you recognize that, whatever can redeem you, sloth cannot.

Will you leave this area, as Torm commanded (113F), or stay and pray to him for enlightenment (158A)?

The ghost and ghouls give you a fishy look as you head farther into the tunnel, but they do not stop you. Tracing a winding path through the sheets of skin, you leave the appalling scene behind. **46C**

This part of the worm, more fully fleshed out, gives way to a series of tunnels, narrow and red and pulsing with fluid. The channels intersect each other and twist around one another, but they continue to spiral ever deeper into the worm. A moist, steady breeze flows through the passages like blood through veins.

Despite the breeze, you feel oppressed, as though held in a fist. Ahead, you hear moaning sounds, like hideous music.

Thoroughly revolted by this place, you decide that things can't get any worse. Then you discover how wrong you are. Go to 132A.

Better not to rush into anything, in a wizard's home. You tense, eyes fixed on the figure, and wait. The form flickers. The image inside it shifts to whirling bright lights in darkness, then to a wide flaming sky, accompanied by the sounds of burning and screams. **46D**

After some moments, you decide that it isn't alive. To look at the figure more closely, go to 136B. Otherwise, return to 72A to look around, or leave (137F).

With one strike of your sword, you cleave the water elemental in two. Instantly it is gone, its watery body faded away into the surrounding liquid. It must already have been very weak. Go to 140C. **46E**

Your warrior's instinct is undiminished in death. You resolve to exterminate these undead menaces. Continue the combat as before. You may escape after the completion of any full round of combat (108F). If you destroy all five of the lacedons, congratulations! You may now return to 104A and look around some more. But you cannot look at the dolphin or its amulet; they are gone. **46F**

47A You remember Ahghairon, somehow. He governed Waterdeep for two centuries, from the days of log barricades and troll wars up to its early glory as a trading center. He set up the guilds and chose the first of the secret Lords of Waterdeep. Looking up at the tall statue of the robed wizard, you see him as a father. He stretches out his arms to greet you, his son. . . .

No. That isn't right. You strain to remember. Ahghairon has been dead for generations. He had no children; you never knew him. He was called "the father of Waterdeep," that's it. You learned that in—the army? But your father, then, was—think!—was a cleric, a humble temple keeper of little importance. He was so proud when the god chose you for service. The god?

You wander hopelessly in the labyrinth of lost memory, finding nothing else. A voice rouses you. "Ho, wake up!" says the weasel. "Spending all day here?"

The cerebriucle says you have spent half an hour here. You cannot afford to waste much more time in recollection! Quickly you look over the people sprawled unconscious at the statue's base. Now and then they twitch and grimace, troubled by nightmares.

An attractive young woman lies on the highest step, and a young man within an arm's reach of her. Others drape across the concentric steps, or lie stretched like torture victims at the bottom. Their life essences cover their bodies in a brilliant aura that flickers through many colors. In your time as an undead, the life aura is the only beauty you have seen.

The only potentially useful item here is the city watchman's sword. You may add it to your list of possessions, if you wish; it is not magical, but a spare weapon could come in handy. Mark off half an hour. To go elsewhere, return to 14A.

47B You approach the unliving guard—and with a scrape of metal armor on the stone steps, he rises gracefully to his feet!

You have time to feel surprised. You sensed no life in the guard's body. As he rises, you get a good look at his face—and that reveals the answer to some questions. This guard is not alive and never was. Its features have never shown emotion, its eyes never lighted with sentiment.

"It's a construct!" says the weasel. "Sea Ward's not zoned for these things, is it? Arrest it for operating without a permit."

Then there is no more time for your subconscious humor, let alone civic duty. You must dodge the murderous morningstar that the construct is swinging right at you! The wizard Maaril must have commanded the construct to attack anything that approached.

Find the construct's statistics in the Combat Table on page 160. Conduct at least one complete round of com-

bat. If, at the end of any round, you want to try calling a truce with the construct, go to 50D. To try to escape, go to 86E. If you defeat the construct, go to 92E.

Sleeping uneasily on the railing is an ordinary cat. Its collar bears a brass tag reading: **47C** "Frethian. Return to Maaril, Dragon Tower, Sea Ward."

You bring the emaciated head close to the cat, and it starts to sneeze. You quickly take it away.

"Familiar," it says, and sneezes again.

"Does it breed contempt?" the weasel skull asks.

"Will it awaken? Is it dangerous?"

"Will not awaken. (*Tschoo!*) Not dangerouz."

"Can you tell me more about its magic?"

The cerebriucle tries sniffing again, but sneezes overcome it. The cat is useless to you.

Will you look around further (return to 68A), or leave (86E)?

You shake your head at the vampire. "I need this sword," you explain. "To fight Haurrant's legions . . . and monsters such as yourself." **47D**

The vampire is enraged. "You lying swine! Now, to avenge my honor—and that of anyone who makes such an oath—I must slay you!"

The vampire lunges. Go to 90B to conduct combat. But note: you get no attack during the first round of combat, because of the suddenness of the vampire's assault. And check off Evidence Box D on your bookmark.

While you look around the temple, the boy whimpers. You cannot see how he is a danger; he's probably unconscious only because of the Effluvi-um. Nevertheless, his cries draw you over to look. Go to 66C. **47E**

Are you being chased by ghouls? If so, you will only be caught if you try to run away. Go to 120D and make your stand. **47F**

If you're not being chased, you may make your way through the forest of fibers, farther down inside the worm to 138A. But the tensing and contractions of the zombie sinews behind you are closing off the path back up the tunnel. It will not be possible to return that way.

When you drink the healing potion, it burns within you, sending spasms of pain shooting through you; subtract 10 unlife points from your current total! "Must have been intended for living beings," says the weasel with infuriating blandness. Erase the flask from your list of possessions, and return to your original section. **47G**

48A Wooden piers stretch out into the harbor. Warehouses and fish markets and taverns cluster along the shore. On an ordinary day, the docks would be noisy, with fishers bringing in their catches, boats under construction and under repair, and vigorous trading in the markets.

At night, the volume level only increases. Revelry inside (and outside) the taverns; boisterous sailors picking fights on the wharves; indigent musicians rehearsing their instruments at open windows, playing by moonlight to save candle wax.

Now the docks lie as silent as the rest of Waterdeep. The Effluvium crawls over the dock area, wisps of the stuff dancing like ghosts in the chill wind.

If you have been to the docks before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 124G. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

But there's a discordant note—a body lying on the

dock nearest you. Approaching it, you see it is no man. Its pallid complexion, twisted features, and clawlike fingernails mark it as a ghoul.

"Charming," says the weasel. "Looks like someone besides you wants to take the occasional jab at our undead friends."

To leave, turn to 159D.

If you want to look around,
you may look at the:

dead ghoul
spear
burlap bag
necklace
crystal ball
small black pellets
knife
wand
dock and piling

by turning to:

137C
104E
125D
124D
86D
98D
67D
97C
128C

48B "I have no interest in ruling the dead with you or with anyone else," you tell Strix.

She seems to take this surprisingly well. She says, "One more of life's millions of missed opportunities. Well, I look to your welfare nonetheless, warrior. Take the item anyway." Drawing a small object from a hollow compartment concealed within her necklace, she holds it out.

Suspecting a trap, you do not even glance at it. Her eagerness provokes your suspicion, and you start to rise. "Wait," she purrs. She withdraws her outstretched hand, saying, "You need fear nothing from me." The other hand, empty, reaches up. You shy away, but Strix is only reaching to caress your cheek. Her fingertips, soft on your dry flesh, remind you of the life you lost. . . .

Swiftly her razorlike fingernails slash deeply across your throat! With your flesh sliced open, your neck muscles go slack like snapping cords, and Strix thrusts the object into your dirt-clogged windpipe as an animal snarl of satisfaction escapes her lips. Subtract 3 unlife points from your current total.

Rolling away from the attack, you come up with your sword drawn, ready to behead her. Stupid! you think to yourself, and the weasel says, "Kill her!"

But your attack comes too late. Rising from the blood bath is a cloud of mist that has nothing to do with steam. The mist forms into a face, and the face fills the chamber. "You need fear nothing from me, warrior," Strix repeats as the mist forms a smiling mouth. "I think only

of your welfare. If you kill Haurrant, my own path to conquest is made easier. Fare bravely when you stand before the Bone Throne!"

The misty lips pull back into a wide grin, exposing prominent fangs. Then the face dissolves. Overhead, the three hanging vampires dissolve as well, their foul vapors mingling with their queen's. The mist floats off into unreachable chambers of the construct, and the strange monster standing off to one side vanishes in a burst of flame. You are alone.

"Scrubbing her back wasn't such a great idea, I guess," says the weasel, with its notable knack for stating the obvious.

After digging around in your throat, you fish out the object. It proves to be a small vial filled with yellow powder. The shrunken head says the powder rots leather.

You may add the vial to your list of possessions if you like. But how is rotting leather going to help you defeat the most powerful of the undead? Strix obviously means you no good. This must be another trap. Yet she could easily have killed you. Hopelessly confused, you dismiss the pointless speculation.

You may look at anything in this chamber except the monster and the vampires (138A), or you may go down the tunnel to face the lich (144A). The tunnels behind you have grown closed, and you would not retreat anyway. "It's too late to back out now," says the weasel, and since it is the voice of your own subconscious, you can hardly disagree.



50A From your hiding place, you look back at the distant scene. The ghouls rush in—"where angels fear to tread," comments the weasel—and Haurrant turns on them. "Where is the scoundrel who freed my prisoner?" the lich-wizard demands. The ghouls stop short, looking down with servile expressions. "Who will speak?" Haurrant continues. "Or must I torture you all?"

The ghouls shy back, and the peg-legged ghastr commander speaks up. "Uh, sir, we seek th' scurvy knight what got away fr'm us back theer, sir. Dun't see haow he gut away."

Haurrant orders the ghastr to describe you. Then the lich stands silently for a long moment.

It speaks quietly, yet even this far away, you attend each word as though it meant your life. "My paladin," it says. "The one you describe has been raised by another." The lich pauses and thinks again. "Someone intends him to kill me," says Haurrant at last. "Find him and kill him! Do not fail, or it will go badly for you!"

Mark Evidence Box C on your bookmark. Then, because the lich's words trigger a flood of memories, read all your Memory Trace sections up to and including the next-to-last one, #11. If you have already read through section #11 of your Memory Trace, ignore this instruction. After you are done, return here.

You reel under the surge of memory. Beside you, Calperion hisses, "No sound or we are lost!"

The ghouls fan out through the sinews, seeking and sniffing. In this huge field of fibers, they could hardly hope to find you, even if you were visible. But you still feel tense when they creep past, snuffling the ground like hogs rooting for truffles.

After the searchers pass you and enter a distant part of the worm, the lich takes up the search. Go to **70B**.

50B "I have done my duty to you," you say resolutely, and offer one or some of the staff pieces you have found.

"Good," Abraxa acknowledges, looking them over, pleased. With a gesture, it levitates your offering into the water overhead. Then Abraxa closes its fist—and your offering crumbles, destroyed by mighty magic. With a sinking feeling, you see that you have erred, and you can never retrieve these pieces of the staff.

Abraxa turns its gargoyle gaze on you, and a light of suspicion crawls into its eyes. "Cerebricule, tell your master—has this servant spoken the truth? Has he given me all the pieces of the staff he has found?"

"No," replies the cerebricule. "More."

You curse and make a grab for your sword. "No!" the

weasel screeches. "Not the sword, the staff!"

Too late. With a contemptuous sneer, the lich raises its bony finger, points it at you, and snuffs your unlife, as easily as dousing a candle. Your body is torn and scattered across acres of harbor bottom. Your adventure is over.

As you approach the brazier, you can feel the heat from the flames. It seems unnaturally **50C** hot. You think you see something within the flame—but you can't make out what it is.

You try the cerebricule on the brazier. But as you get it close enough to sniff, it screams, "Hot! Hot! Burning uuuuup!" It offers no helpful advice.

Attempts to knock the thing over with your sword or pieces of furniture all fail; it appears that the brazier and tripod are magically rooted in place. You try smothering the flame with a torn drapery, and almost succeed in burning the place down. The flame is magical, and you don't know how to put it out.

Will you reach in to snatch out whatever you see within (**154A**); look around further (go back to **76A**); or leave (**65E**)?

"Peace! Enough!" you cry, asking the construct to put aside his weapon. "I've not **50D** come to war with you."

Do you carry a scepter with an egg-sized gem set in the tip? If so, go to **128E**.

If you do not carry such a scepter, the construct waits a moment, looking you over impassively, then surges forward again and swings the morning star at you.

You must either continue the fight (return to **47B**) or escape (**86E**).

If you chased off Bumberly, he and his things are still gone. Otherwise, the Hall of Sages **50E** remains a dusty, changeless place. Return to **22A** to look around, or leave (**149D**).

Caught in the thick of battle, you manage to evade the last blows by dodging, spinning, **50F** and twisting free. You run—but you realize that you have lost your bearings. You are only a few steps from the archway. It looms ahead of you, and you halt in confusion.

You can hear the skeletons begin their pursuit behind you, the bones clacking and clattering, but a voice ahead of you rings out, "Don't follow—I'll handle him myself." The rigid, commanding tone chills you. Go to **54E**.

Roll the die. If you roll 1-8, go to **116F**; 9-12, go to **148C**. **50G**



51A "Come now," you say soothingly. "You are in no danger here. I am a great warrior; I can protect you and, uh, your child. Please tell me why you grieve."

She gulps back her tears and looks up at you, confusion and loss in her expression. She looks less a monster than a young elf woman whose life and mind were taken by some calamity.

"I am Selasanta," she answers, her terrible voice showing wonder at your interest. "My mate is a great elf warrior. He slays monsters and mocks humans and crafts wondrous jewels. And this is our child." She stares adoringly down at the human boy. "I lost him for so very long. One night, he was so very loud, crying and wailing, and I made him quiet. How did I do that? I—I don't remember." She gazes distantly on the past.

"And then . . . I lost my child. I searched for him. I looked everywhere for him. Sometimes I found him again. But always he would cry, and I would make him quiet, and I would lose him again." She shakes her head. "I must not lose him again."

The sound of the banshee's voice, its power, is painful to you, but you can stand it. The child is obviously hurt. Even in his unconscious state, he moans.

The banshee strokes his hair. "Be quiet now, darling," she whispers lovingly. "Mustn't cry." Her delicate fingers move up to grip his throat, squeezing, cutting off his breath. "Mother can't stand it when you cry. Shush, now." As you watch in horror, she begins to strangle the human child, despite the tenderness in her features.

You cannot do the child any good by talking further. Within moments, he will be dead if you don't act. You draw your sword and bring it to bear on the elf woman. Go to 132C to attack.

51B "I am surprised you opted for this blundering head-on approach, paladin," says the lich, "since Abraxa has appointed you to be my assassin!"

"Uh-oh," the weasel begins, but the lich immediately cuts off your thought with a blast of white energy that burns like phosphorus. The blast sends you plummeting to the flesh beneath your feet, and the floor itself writhes beneath you in pain from the residue of the blast.

Subtract 10 from your current unlife point total. If you have run out of unlife points, your adventure ends here. If you still have points remaining, continue reading.

I'm not dead, you think, too groggy to correct this inaccurate thought. I'm not dead, so he's just playing with me.

The lich's papery lips pull back from its teeth in a grin. "Abraxa has chosen a dismal champion indeed. Rise,

paladin, so that I may continue with this entertainment."

Groaning, you rise to your feet. You must fight Haurrant while the lich is alert and strong (99C).

Weakened by the merman's furious attacks, you falter. What's driving him so? you wonder, in an instant between harpoon thrusts. The only answer is his loathing of your breed. No sooner has the thought struck you than the merman leaps at you and, with brilliant spear technique, disarms you, hurling your weapon yards away. **51C**

His harpoon moving too fast for you to follow, he knocks you off your feet to the muddy harbor bottom, then reverses the weapon, driving its point painfully into your forehead. All he has to do now is apply pressure, and—"He'll crack you like an egg," says the weasel. "Maybe it's time to negotiate."

"Time to meet your true and natural death," the merman pants. His mouth is pulled back in a grimace of satisfaction, revealing pointed teeth.

Do you wear a speaking stone? If so, go to 60B. If not, go to 159E.

You stand outside the House of the Homeless. Even in undeath, you feel the surface world to be fresher, more open than this tomb's cramped confines. Mark off the time you spent exploring. **51D**

Nearby are the Hall of Heroes (140B) and the Hall of Sages (154F). Visiting each of these takes half an hour, as does wandering elsewhere in the City of the Dead (14A). Or you may go to the walls of the cemetery, taking essentially no time, and head for the city of Waterdeep (82A).

The dolphin is gone, as are the lacedons. As for the garden, nets, objects, and the cave full of undead, nothing is different, except what you changed yourself. Return to 104A to look around, or leave (108F). **51E**

You unbuckle your sword-belt and hand the belt, scabbard, and blade to the vampire. He unsheathes the thing, looking it over with an appreciative eye. "A beautiful weapon," he admits. **51F**

Then, with a swordsman's skill, a vampire's strength, and your own good sword, he proceeds to strike your head from your body. Your adventure is over.

52A The docks import raw materials from all the Realms—wood, wool, food, fibers, metal and ore, clays and dyes, parchment and paper in five-ton loads, ambergris and potion ingredients in three-ounce flasks, a thousand products for a hundred thousand workers. In itself, though, Dock Ward consumes little from other lands.

The docks export manufactured goods of every type to destinations in every kingdom. Wagon wheels to Amn, hurricane lanterns to Lantan, spears and swords to the missionaries in the jungles of Chult, pottery to the Moonshaes and the Moonsea, cloth to the Chondalwood and the Winterwood, glass to dwarves, hatchets to elves, scrolls to halflings, everything to gnomes. In itself, though, Dock Ward sends little to other lands.

The docks produce one commodity in great amounts, but it is for its own residents, and seldom leaves the ward: degradation.

You stand before a shadowed building, more obscure than most here. The shadowy entrance is barely visible even to your undead eyes. The door stands ajar. "What is that foul smell?" says the weasel as you approach.

The cerebricule complains, too: "Zdinks! Zdiiiinks! Drugs!" A drug den, as you suspected. Girding yourself for the worst, you push your way in.

If you have been to the drug den before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 71E. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

The den is dark and squalid, but no more so than its inhabitants. The forms on the bunk beds are

motionless—probably unconscious from the drugs well before the Effluvium hit.

The little monster perched on the bedpost is so interested in them that it gives you only a cursory glance; and the mummies, although conscious, seem completely oblivious to your presence. You gaze at the water pipe they share and realize there is nothing in it. Yet the mummies draw on it, and slouch lazily in what seems a drug-induced daze.

Are they reliving past sins? Are they compelled to repeat the self-abuse that plagued their lives? You watch their sluggish movements with disgust. The mummy with the ludicrous hat tries to clap another on the shoulder, and misses—several times. The third giggles, then stops as if in pain, then giggles again.

Will you talk to the mummies (97A); attack (27B); investigate the monster (130A); leave (146F); or ignore monster and mummies, and look around? (But you can't look at anything but the figures on the bunks until you've somehow dealt with the mummies.)

When you are free to look around, you may investigate the:

you may investigate the:	by turning to:
hat	34B
scepter	147E
water pipe (hookah)	142F
bracelet with stones	144C
snake bracelet	61D
sleeping dwarf	158C
sleeping man	36D

52B Maybe the creature's hungry. You have the fruit from the rural shrine. . . .

"How about an orange?" you call.

"You got it!"

The monster swoops down from the framework and picks you up by the shoulders. Awkwardly you pass it the fruit, and it munches away happily.

"Oranges!" it sighs. "I get so hungry down here in the Annelid. Nothing alive to eat, you know. As an adjutant, I have some pull, but where I come from, there's nothing to compare to oranges."

"Where is that?" you ask the adjutant.

But the creature seems reluctant to speak further. It makes no response to any of your questions.

You may look at any and all objects in this part of the tunnel, but the adjutant won't take you anywhere else. Go back to 120A and choose what you will look at. By the time you're done, the adjutant has finished the fruit. Once the last orange seed slips down its throat, the monster drops you unceremoniously in the stream; go to

You take a sudden swing at the creature, but it's ready for you. Even when you speed up your perceptions, you can hardly see it dodge your blade. It's incredibly fast! **52C**

In the slow motion that comes with your hastened sight, you watch twin bolts of lightning grow from the creature's eyes, link together, and arc toward you. Though you see and think more quickly than normal, your body still acts at its ordinary speed, so you can only watch in frustration, unable to dodge, as the lightning strikes you.

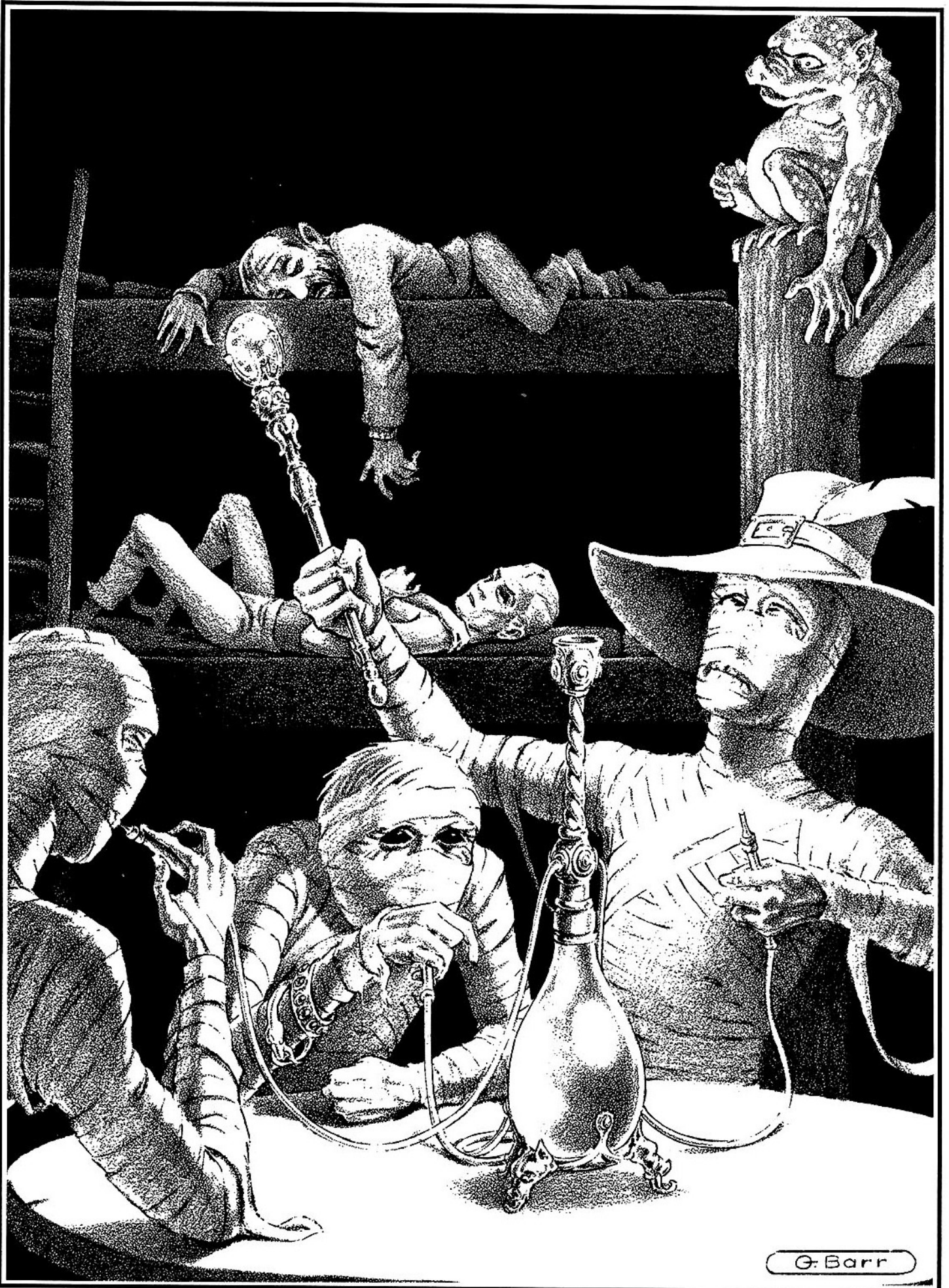
The jolt shocks your perceptions back to an ordinary speed. Subtract 10 unlife points from your current total. You watch as the creature vanishes in an orange-red fireball. And now you have more problems.

"Did you see that?" "Hit the boss's pet, he did!" "That was an adjutant, and he swung at it!"

The ghouls seem aghast, so to speak, at your action. They glare at you and begin to move in closer. Go to 103A.

36A.





54A You place the ring on your smallest finger—it was made for a feminine hand. Truly a fine gem, it reflects the light brilliantly. “But it doesn’t go with your armor,” notes the weasel.

“No maagic,” says the cerebriucle when you bring it near the ring. “Onze belonged to brinzezz.”

“What princess?”

“Lived long ago . . . her name was Arielle. Ring was brezious gift from father, king. Wore it always. Then was kidnabbed by birates.

“Birates held her cabtive on island. She kebt them from notizing her ring through little maagic zbell. Then brave zailor Darias rezcued her in zmall boat. In gratitude and love, she gave him ring.

“Couple drawing cloze to Arielle’s homeland in zmall boat when birates overtake them in big ship. Birate leader throws Darias overboard—but now King’s navy approaches. Birate caztz zbell on himzelf to look like Darias, bretends to rezcue brinzezz, and takes her to king. King gives birate Arielle’s hand.”

“Married the pirate!” exclaims the skull. “That’s life in a nutshell, isn’t it?”

“Wedding day arrives and zeremony about to ztart,” continues the cerebriucle. “Out of zea crawls Darias, confronts birate leader. Arielle recognizes her ring. Great battle enzues. Darias triumphs and weds brinzezz. Live happily many years.”

You consider the ring for some moments. The cerebriucle cannot tell you who the woman is or why she has the ring. It might be important to her. You cannot take something that is not yours, especially not from someone who must cherish it.

You return the ring to her finger. Do you leave (108G) or look around some more (62A)?

54B “What do you mean by Cathexis?”
“New life!” shouts the leader, arms spread wide.

“New life,” echoes his companion solemnly.

“A new beginning! Another chance, lad!” He laughs, and the giggler joins him hysterically. Even the dour one attempts a few chuckles, but they turn into grunts. “Power! It’s all starting again, for us, for everybody!” He jumps up, waving the scepter. “Real life!”

Laughing maniacally, the giggler jumps up and starts to dance. “Life! Life!” he shouts. The other pulls the last to its feet and all three start dancing a jig, bandages flapping, dust flying. You watch with revulsion as they frolic,

full of glee at their prospects. They move toward the door, laughing and shouting, then rush out, the feathered hat flying off in the process.

You may stop the mummies and fight (27B); follow them (64B); or stay, letting them go. If you let them go, you may look at the hat (34B); the dwarf (158C); the man (36D); or leave (146F).

As you gathered, the interior of Castle Water-deep is crawling with undead. Zombies and skeletons, ghouls and ghosts, stalk its halls. You remember the hallways were once lit with enchantments of continual light—how did you know that?—but since many of the dead shy from light, these have been dispelled.

Outnumbered by so many, you avoid confrontation. They see you, but pay you no mind. You wander unchecked through the bedchambers, the stupendous great hall, the kitchen and pantry, and the upper floors. Your worst fears prove true. The invaders have left nothing of value intact. The scenes of degradation revolt you.

After half an hour (mark it off, in addition to the usual time you spend exploring here), you have found nothing worth taking. You must leave the castle (102E).

Orcus has no use for ordinary things, and this is no ordinary request. Your bribe, then, must be extraordinary. What will you offer Orcus as a bribe? What you have of the staff (62B)? The cerebriucle (136A)?

If you have neither item, you cannot offer it. If you have something else you think might work, write it down and go to 18B. If you don’t have any item of worth or don’t want to offer one, go back to 150A and try something else.

Check the time on your bookmark. If it is between 6:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M., go to 82D. If it is before 6:00 A.M. or after 7:00 P.M., go to 64D.

With a strange feeling of bending, a sense that you are skirting the boundaries of existence, you appear on a street in Castle Ward. A theater is nearby. Maaril must have been quite the theater-goer, to want such handy transport downtown.

Mark off the time you spent exploring Maaril’s Dragon Tower, if you haven’t already. Then go to 42A to explore. You will spend only half an hour here, because of the time you saved by teleportation.

If the mummies are still around and conscious—or at least as conscious as they ever will be—go to 98C. If you defeated them, or they have left, go to 89E.

55A You stumbled on the skull, reached the doorway, saw them laughing before the altar to Torm. You thought, She never laughs that way with me—

He pulled her to his side with one hand, and she came willingly. Faithless woman! Neither noticed you as you walked closer, though each footstep boomed in your ears like a drumbeat, rang like a trumpet call. A call to attack!

Your next memory is of Korlo, blood across his back, sliding off your blade with a moist sound. He turned, and in his eyes, you saw his thought—from behind! Staying upright through sheer brute will, he started to stumble toward you, his own sword held high. You ran him through once more, but to no purpose, for by then he was already dead. His blade sank deep in your throat.

Standing over his body, dizzy in—victory?—you gazed with clouding vision down at Karinna. Head bowed, flaxen hair flowing over armored shoulders, she murmured in a low, sweet voice . . . praying . . . praying for Korlo! Faithless woman!

A sudden rage filled you. You raised your sword, and one more spirit perished on that altar. Then your own life gave way to blackness, a cold trembling in your limbs . . . oblivion.

But, no. In that blackness came no oblivion, no rest, only the stern voice of Torm saying, “Linger here, that you may learn mature temper and expiate your crime. The lich shall find and bury you until needed; when you rise, recall your first obedience and serve me.”

The god cursed you then, suspending you between life and death. Not evil, for Torm is a just god. But you would lack peace. For Torm is a just god.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. If you receive any more instructions to read a Memory Trace entry, ignore them. Return to the story.

55B “The, um, the whirlpool in Waterdeep Harbor. That, too, is your doing, great wizard?”

“My greatest enchantment!” says Abraxa with unexpected enthusiasm. “The lives of two hundred apprentices went into that sorcery. I twisted space itself like yarn.”

“Magnificent! Yet what purpose does it serve?”

“The mermaids who patrol the city harbor maintain an underwater lighthouse, to light the depths and warn ships from the shallows. We have taken the lighthouse. In it, captive water elementals transmute the waters of the harbor into the fluid the artifact requires.”

“Fluid?”

“In a way, it is like blood. Its function is similar—” The lich halts. “I babble of matters that need not con-

cern you. Perhaps you will have an opportunity to see the whirlpool. If so, think on the strength of the mage who created it. I shall return there shortly. Quickly, what further question?” Return to 8A to ask the lich something else, or go to 20A if you are through asking questions.

Invisibility is just what you need! Speaking quickly, you invoke the incantation and immediately vanish. **55C**

The ghouls who were pursuing you fan out through the sinews, seeking, sniffing. In this enormous network of fibers, they could hardly hope to find you even if you were visible. But you still feel tense as they creep past, sniffing like bloodhounds. However, the odor is overwhelming; they could not smell a stockyard amid these bloodied fibers.

After some time, the chief ghast gives up and calls the ghouls back to their duties in the framework. Grumbling, they leave the area.

You cannot go back the way you came without meeting the ghouls again. You may only go forward (138A) or return to 132A to look at something else.

Panting with the effort of battle, you regard the pile of bones with satisfaction. You are about to sheathe your sword when a chilling voice calls from the archway. “Very well fought,” it says sarcastically. “But to do more, you must face me.” **55D**

You turn to the archway, but can see no one. Your dry flesh stirs with excitement—or is it fear? Will you go to the archway and meet the owner of the fearsome voice (54E), or flee (117F)?

You should not look up the story of a piece of the Staff of Waterdeep until you actually possess that piece. **55E**

Return now to the text you were reading.

Locate the lich’s statistics on the Combat Table on page 160. They both attack you in each round. These are insuperable opponents in normal battle. If you have a vial of yellow powder and haven’t opened it yet, now is the time (153B)! **55F**

If you have no powder, you must use the Staff of Waterdeep to fight the lich. If you have no pieces of the staff, your cause is hopeless, and your adventure ends with the first pair of spells they cast.

If you have one or more pieces of the staff, go to 21A to learn how to use the staff in combat, but make a note of this section (55F) and return here after the combat is done.

If you win, go to 155A.

56A “What is that figurine,” you ask, “and why are you so protective of it?”

The vampire smiles a smile of pure vanity. “This,” he says, holding the figurine aloft, “is a piece of a powerful device called the Staff of Waterdeep. I doubt one of your station has heard of it. I am doing a favor for Haurrant, a being of great power. Haurrant seeks the staff for his own amusement, and when he said that one piece was ivory, I suspected where to look for it.

“You see, in life I knew an ivory carver, an artist of the old school. My family commissioned work from him while I lived. That must be centuries past, now. Has time fled so fast?”

“But I digress. I recalled that artist had done a figurine of the goddess Lliira, regarded as his masterwork. I might have purchased it myself, had I not been lifted into death about that time. Instead, it went to a temple nearby. As the staff’s creator is a mage of discriminating taste, I imagined he would choose this statuette for his staff. Of course, I imagined correctly.

“It’s a rare piece of information, the sort that only one born and bred in high society would know. Haurrant, for all his power, has not the sophistication one needs for tasks such as this.

“It didn’t take long for me to find the thing. But as I was leaving the temple, those loathsome peasants assailed me . . . as you saw. They thought they might acquire glory through serving Haurrant. But glory finds those who merit it.” He gives you a mocking little bow, his story done.

This vampiric fop has a piece of the staff, and you must have it. Will you attack the vampire (90B) or try to bribe him to give it to you (34C)?

56B With the cloth covering your hand, you grasp the rod of lordly might. Nothing untoward happens, and your tensed muscles relax. Lifting it, you weigh it in your hand. Odd balance, you think.

Then the rod slips. And before you can think about it, you reflexively grab it with your free hand.

“Aah!” you cry when you realize what happened. But there is no reason to shout, for you remain unharmed.

“Berson who is good at heart takes rod, no problem,” says the shrunken head.

“Except maybe for heart failure,” adds the weasel. “Put that thing away before you kill us.”

Add the rod of lordly might to your list of possessions, if you wish. You may use it in one combat during this adventure, to defeat any one opponent automatically, without fighting. Then the rod’s magic is exhausted. The rod will not work on the liches, nor on anything more powerful than a lich.

Go to 140A.

With two sweeps of your magical blade you reduce the skeleton to a pile of bones. They **56C** wriggle in a tentative way across the courtyard flagstones, and you stamp them apart. When all the bones are separated from each other, the animation magic is dispelled.

The globe has dropped to the ground, but did not break. You touch it. Upon the touch of a good person, it reverts to the form of a short rod made of finest crystal—a piece of the Staff of Waterdeep.

Check off the crystal piece on your bookmark list when you take it. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to 156A to find out more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it; but first make a note of this section, 56C, so you may return here after you are finished there. Then go to 140A.

The sword bit deep, and the zombie fell. Foul **56D** creature! Now to head back to the others, besieged in the altar room. Haurrant’s minions attacking, here in Torm’s temple! Hateful!

You turned and stumbled on a skeleton’s skull. Staggering forward to the doorway, you heard deep laughter, and fear struck you. You looked in and saw—

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

You may try to go back up the tunnel the way you came (108E), or farther into the worm construct (46C). **56E**

Evading flying torches, you run from the theater. “Exit, stage rear!” cries the victorious **56F** haunt behind you.

When you are safely outside, the weasel comments, “Maybe we should march on the liches with armed stand-up comics and juggle them to death.”

You cannot return here. To leave, go to 64E.

A woman, kneeling on stone steps. Head **56G** bowed, flaxen hair flowing over armored shoulders. Karinna . . . her name was Karinna! She murmured in a low, sweet voice . . . praying. Sudden rage filled you. The memory vanishes.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.



57A “Ahem!” you begin. “In the matter of junkyard topography, there is much to be said on both sides. The crucial point we must recall is that no one takes a position lightly in this vital matter. Only long cogitation, such as you gentlemen—or possibly ladies?—have lavished upon the topic, can hope to guide the uninitiated to one or the other of the two tenable positions.”

There is silence. Then, “Oooh!” says Jyorlo, and “Bravo! Well phrased, indeed!” cries Veliks.

Impressed by your impartial answer, the poltergeists forget their quarrel and begin to quiz you. When you mention you seek the Staff of Waterdeep, Veliks says, “Why, that’s what those nasty ghouls were looking for here earlier. They found nothing . . . perhaps because the piles were so disorganized.”

“Ahh, wadda you know? They jus’ meesed the right spot. I seen a peeze of eet flying een here jus’ before they arrive. Was small, bright, made of bone, like, or ivory maybe—”

“Oh, yes, indeed, I saw that, too! Except that the item in question was wood, or a tooth or tusk, or otherwise organic—”

“Dommy! Was bone!”

“It was a tooth!”

“Bone!” “Tooth!” “Bone!”

You interrupt. “Where is this object? Tell me!”

Your eagerness is a mistake. “Ooh, interested, isn’t he?” says Veliks. “Well, we know where it is. And you don’t. You know what? Let’s have a game! It’ll be fun!”

The weasel sighs, and so do you. As you expect, it turns out to be no fun at all. Go to **20B**.

57B When you offer the revenant your help, it accepts it without thanks, as though finding Greeme is all that is important to anyone in the world. “Lead me to the North Ward,” it says, “where Porelle maintains his gallery, where Greeme may be.”

Its intensity of purpose carries all before it. You have no chance to look at anything in the library before you go. Mark off the time you spent visiting there.

You venture out of the palace toward North Ward, with the revenant stalking behind. It never looks around. It shows no interest in the scenes of wreckage, as the undead sack every home. Its only goal is to stay five steps behind as you walk across Waterdeep.

You march along the Street of Silks, past shops, cafes, and theaters. Crossing the huge open marketplace in the center of the city, you turn past a pottery booth and see a deserted puppet stage. By day, children sit here on long, wooden benches and watch actors, lineal descendants of those benches, leap and gyrate as though the strings on their shoulders and ankles did not encumber them in the least.

With the revenant steadily behind you, its quest for

vengeance driving you on with an almost physical pressure, you suddenly feel like those marionettes.

The streets rise gradually, but the Effluvium has had no trouble flowing uphill toward North Ward. The old-money district’s prosperous homes are among the hardest hit in town, no doubt because their pampered residents can afford magic in plenty.

The stately buildings of this area make no impact on your undead perceptions; you could not perceive their beauty even were you in the mood. But the people lying exposed on the streets, or hanging out of windows, or sprawled in shops—these life auras are beautiful to you. You resolve afresh to save this city!

The revenant cares nothing for the city, save for that part of it containing Greeme. You reach that part after an hour’s walk from the palace (mark that time off now; this hour includes the time you spend exploring at your destination). You think to head toward a gallery you recall, but as you near it, the revenant halts.

“Hold!” it cries, in a strangled voice. “He is near, Greeme, with hair the color of dried brown grass, Greeme! I sense him!” Seeing the revenant’s eyes, you are struck this time by the most fearsome vision yet: A huge black dragon spreads its batlike wings, the air rushing in beneath them with gusty sounds, its eyes smoldering red, its claws glinting like obsidian. The dragon rises ponderously into the air, flying toward some close destination.

The vision ceases as the revenant barrels off down a cross-street. You manage to keep it in sight, unable to comprehend how it senses its quarry. But you remember that that is the nature of revenants; they hunt their murderers across oceans and burning deserts, if need be, tracking them through some seventh sense.

It lunges through a doorway. Over it, you note a hanging sign depicting a mermaid flopped gracelessly across a wet rock. Following the revenant, you enter the Gentle Mermaid gambling hall. Go to **62A**.

Strix is just too powerful to face, whatever her motives. You rush back toward the tunnel you entered by, but it’s grown together behind you! The walls themselves seem to close in as the construct continues to grow. Scrambling for an exit, you wonder how the vampires intended to leave. But then, with pools of blood here, why would they need to?

The vampire queen laughs evilly. “Not quite the stuff of heroes, eh, paladin?” That stings, but your mission is more important than dallying with this seductress. You spy a tunnel leading deeper into the construct and leap for it.

As you disappear into the moist passage, you hear Strix’s voice behind you. “Be sure to avoid the crystal spheres, my dear!” Again she laughs her evil laugh. Go to **144A**.

57C

58A “It’s just one thing after another,” drones the weasel, its monologue an incessant accompaniment up the High Road. “Get dug up, meet the lich, find the Staff of Waterdeep. Okay, sounds fair, off we go.”

The land rises as you head north. The streets widen, the homes stretch higher and wider, more of them take up entire blocks. This is North Ward, home of the wealthy.

“Haul the sword and the good old shrunken head around the City of the Dead,” says the weasel. “Is the staff there? Not that I’ve heard. Then out into Waterdeep—only ten thousand different places to look. Has the staff decided to confine itself to one small neighborhood? It is to laugh.”

The cerebriucle has guided you almost to Northgate, where the High Road breaches the city wall and heads hundreds of miles up the coast, toward Luskan and the inaccurately named Neverwinter. On the long walk you have not seen one living person, except for the hundreds felled by the Effluvium.

“This mighty wizard, Khelben,” continues the weasel. “Sure is a cosmopolitan sort, isn’t he? Wants to enchant a staff, he doesn’t pop down to the bazaar and tell the woodworker, ‘Make me a nice Staff of Waterdeep, there’s a good fellow.’ Noooooo.”

You have come to one of the city’s largest mansions, the home—as you can tell by the silver-gold crest, shining on each side of the house—of the Brossfeather clan, magnates of lumber and fur-trapping.

The weasel’s tirade continues. “So Khelben embarks on a grand tour of all the really neat spots in the city, recruiting all the good-feeling items right out of people’s hands. ‘Excuse me, is that your prized potato peeler? That should do nicely; hand it over.’ Don’t they have laws against that? People always say, ‘Never meddle in the affairs of wizards,’ but this one sure did his share of

meddling in everyone else’s.”

You enter the courtyard by a brick archway (the gate hangs open by one hinge), and the weasel shuts up.

Water falls gently in the fountain, and a light breeze stirs the foliage. Were you alive, you could not help admiring the building’s elegance and the courtyard’s charm, but now you are unaffected. You feel certain this life is different from the one you lived.

If you have been to the Brossfeather family villa before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 152D. If this is the first time you have been here, keep reading.

These thoughts fly through your mind, like the bird that flies through the courtyard. The creature swoops by you with a *sprrrrat-t-tle* of gears and ratchets, and you recognize it as a mechanism, an automaton.

It lands clumsily on the courtyard fountain, shouting “Chop it down!” Two skeletons, carrying axes by handles thicker than their own bones, are chopping “it” down—a fruit tree, fully leaved even in the dead of winter and bearing many different kinds of fruit. Magical!

As you watch, one of the skeletons swings its axe and strikes the trunk, and the other follows suit. The tree shudders with every blow. “Chop it down! Chop it down!” croaks the bird.

Will you try to stop the skeletons (112E); attack the bird (97F); let the skeletons chop down the tree (107F); or leave (117F)?

When you are free to look around,	
you may investigate the:	by turning to:
tree	112B
fountain	41D
mechanical bird	109F
tile around fountain	37B
axes	24B
archway	54E

58B You approach the chalk circle and look at it. It’s a thick line of powdered chalk, easily brushed aside by a stray footstep or gust of wind. It must be terrifying for the humans to know their fates have depended on this fragile barrier.

The closer you approach, the more magical resistance you feel. You can actually reach across the line, but not more than a few inches. Beyond that, the resistance is too great.

If the two humans are dead or gone, stop reading here and go back to 76A to choose something else. If the

humans are still protected by the circle, keep reading.

If you wish, you may brush a hole in the circle of chalk. You don’t need a wizard or cerebriucle to tell you that this would break the barrier and let the ghosts—and you—in.

“Stay back, foul monster!” cries the girl apprentice, with more panic than conviction in her voice. “Touch that line and we will—will destroy you!”

Will you brush some chalk away and open the circle (119D); just leave this whole situation behind (65E); or look at something else (return to 76A)?





60A Stifling the weasel's subconscious warnings, you send a telepathic call to the lich on the high pedestal. The skeletal wizard whirls to face you, stretches out one bony arm, and you are carried over the skin-covered floor to float before the lich.

"Paladin!" Haurrant cries, its voice crackling like ground glass. Have you marked Evidence Box C on your bookmark? If so, turn now to **51B**. If you have not marked Evidence Box C, continue reading.

"Why were you not where I buried you? What has delayed you? Report! Your master commands!"

Read all of your Memory Trace entries through the next to last one, #11. When you are done, return here. If you have already read through entry #11, ignore this instruction and keep reading.

In a flash, you recall that Haurrant slew you, while Abraxa removed you to be Haurrant's assassin. You cannot afford to give Haurrant, who must be intelligent beyond reckoning, the time to think this through. If the lich realizes its partner intends you to be its killer, Haurrant is certain to slay you on the spot.

Following in a split second on that thought, you reason that you could tell Haurrant of Abraxa's treachery yourself, hoping to turn one lich against the other. But would Haurrant believe you? Could you back up the statement?

Whatever you do, you must act quickly. If you have a vial of yellow powder, you may try to open it now (**40B**). If you don't have such a vial or don't want to open it, will you attack Haurrant (**99C**), or tell Haurrant that Abraxa is betraying it (**83A**)?

60B "Wait!" you cry. "I am not your foe!" Startled at the sound of your voice, the merman lowers his harpoon—but he keeps it pointed cautiously in your direction. "Not my enemy?" he asks, in a musical, bubbling voice. "You are the dead that walks, denier of destiny. Food for fishes. The enemy of all who live."

You shake your head. "I have been monstrously changed by living death, but I fight against the other dead. I seek allies and information to use against the liches who brought this horror on Waterdeep—on your harbor! Help me, or tell me of the Staff of Waterdeep. I seek its pieces to use against our mutual enemies."

The merman regards you with wide eyes. "I . . . I do believe you." He sounds as if he cannot believe he is saying the words. "It would have been far easier for you to

slay me from behind than to persuade me with words.

"But I cannot help you. We sea folk are too few in numbers, stretched too thin during this disaster. We sent dolphin messengers, alerting other sea people and human communities up and down the coast to what has occurred in Waterdeep. We patrol and slay the undead when we find them. But that is all we can manage. I cannot abandon my duties.

"Yet I can tell you something of the staff. There—" he points over his shoulder, toward the merman lighthouse that stands at the base of the roiling whirlpool—"that is the home of Salahass. He tended the lighthouse, and he was a craftsman of wondrous objects. Not long ago, he made a piece of the staff from a piece of ice that never melts. His craft impressed us all mightily.

"Now a lich has come. This dead horror took over the lighthouse, slew Salahass, and summoned that monstrous funnel of water into being. I have not dared approach close enough to find out why.

"Before he died, Salahass took his piece of the staff and hurled it out into the sea, I know not where. I heard this tale from a dolphin who witnessed it. But that dolphin is long gone, warning mermen up the coast. She'll not be back for days."

He looks you over again. His lips curl involuntarily, and he shudders with fear of the unnatural. "I wish I had known you in life. You must have been a noble warrior. But now I cannot stand the sight of you. I must leave and return to my duties. But here—" He removes his canteen, shakes out four black pellets from it, and gives them to you. "Tools of my race, these are. We call them 'water blossoms.' Hurl them at a foe. They cannot miss their mark, and will do him no good."

If you wish to take the water blossoms, they count as a single possession. (If you already have pellets from some earlier encounter, all the pellets together count as one possession.) In combat, during any round when you would strike a foe, you may instead hurl one or more of these pellets at him. They explode when they strike, doing 1 point of damage for each pellet you throw. Once thrown, they are gone. Keep track of how many you use.

"May we both reach shore against this current," you say. With a curt nod, he speeds away on his mount.

Return to **94A** to keep looking around, or go to **74D** to leave the harbor and return to the docks. You also think you might save time visiting the countryside by traveling the tidal currents here; go to **45A** to leave the harbor for the countryside.

61A You know you never saw a creature such as this in life. "What do you here?" you ask experimentally.

"Oh, I am an adjutant. But my duties are not pressing, so I simply muse upon the impulse to gamble," says the creature in perfect speech, its modulated voice sounding in your head as undead voices do.

"So alien to my nature," it continues, "though not to my plane of origin. Does the urge to risk spring from a faith that the universe works for the individual's benefit? Or is it merely to add zest to an otherwise humdrum life?"

"Ah, um. I am not sure. What do you—?"

"Do you yourself believe in a beneficent universe?"

The burning in your lungs grows more intense. How you long for a breath of air! How you wish you knew a reason that you suffocate! "No," you answer.

"How much randomness do we want in life? Take yourself, for instance. If the universe does not actively work for good, in your view, then perhaps chance will produce malign results. But it may prove equally favorable. For a demonstration, would you like to spin this wheel? I shall guarantee a truly random happening, for good or ill or indifferent."

"Why? What are you? What sort of happening?"

"Will you spin the wheel, my pessimistic friend?"

You may take this "adjutant" up on its offer and spin the wheel (116A); talk further with it (16B); attack it (147D); or ignore it and look around (return to 62A). Or you may leave (108G).

61B "You have my solemn word that I shall not harm you further, if you do indeed tell me what you promise," you tell the ghost, but you draw the blade back only a fraction, taking no chances.

"The lichs are plotting against their master."

"What master? How so?"

"I know not. Not long past midnight, I was searching the tombs in the City of the Dead for treasure, when I happened on the lichs surveying the undead who tramped into the peasants' tomb. I hid, and they did not detect me as they talked. They plan to take the artifact and attack their master."

If you did not destroy the mechanical bird, *mark Evidence Box B on your bookmark*. If you destroyed it, mark no box.

"What artifact?"

"It is beneath the city. I have not been there yet. The way to it is through the House of the Homeless. It is said

to be large, and brings life to the unsleeping." The ghost knows nothing more of interest.

You swore not to kill the ghost. Will you kill it now (141E), or let it live as you promised (64F)?

The adjutant's curiosity about the shrunken head seems harmless. You hand over the cerebricule. **61C**

Holding the head by its hair, the adjutant peers at its dark skin and withered countenance. "Hmmm," says the adjutant. Then, before your eyes, the monster opens its mouth, pops the head inside, and gulps it down! Mark the cerebricule off your list of possessions.

"Toothsome indeed!" says the adjutant.

"Yaah!" you cry, and leap at it. As startled as you were, the creature sits upright and mouths something you can't hear. Suddenly a red-orange glow surrounds it. Your hands reach the creature at the same instant, and both of you vanish in a blinding flare of light.

You reappear, alone, at 150A.

The snake bracelet is tarnished silver etched in a scaly design. Two tiny emeralds serve for its eyes. You hold up the shrunken head, and it sniffs two short sniffs. "Ver', ver' old." It sniffs some more. "Many owners through the zenturies. Minor maagic—broducts 'gainzt znakebite." **61D**

As an undead, you are immune to poison (your blood does not circulate). The bracelet's magic is useless to you. But you may take it as a possession if you wish. Return to 52A to keep looking, or leave (146F).

Before the ghost turned the wooden piece of the staff into a juggling club, it was part of the quarterstaff of a benevolent wizard known as Deneras, whose home was located where the theater now sits. The cerebricule explains that Deneras fashioned the quarterstaff himself, working as much good magic into it as his powers allowed. **61E**

Although Deneras occasionally performed magic that was not purely good, he reserved the staff for good deeds. When he died, his apprentice followed the tradition of using the staff only for good, and thus the staff passed down through the generations.

When at last a wizard attempted to use it for evil, the staff fragmented into splinters, save for this piece, which retained the nature of the complete staff. Or so Khelben must have believed, and you believe it, too.

Return now to the text you were reading.

62A Though the Effluvium must have hit at around midnight, the Gentle Mermaid fest-hall and gambling house was still crowded when it struck.

Unconscious patrons sprawl at card and dice tables, their bets knocked into one another. Were they awake, you imagine they might regard this as a greater disaster than the destruction of Waterdeep. The croupiers, the attendants who collect bets and pay winnings, also sleep the troubled sleep of Effluvium.

The numbered wheel you assume to be a "wheel of chance," though you think you never saw one in life. Atop it sits a small creature with bright eyes. It looks down at the gamblers with curiosity, suiting its very curious appearance. It glances at you, then returns to its examination of the others.

Is anyone with you (besides the cerebri- and the

weasel)? If so, go to 146A.

If you have been to the Gentle Mermaid before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 117G. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

You may try speaking with the odd monster perched on the wheel (61A), leave (108G), or look around as you like.

If you want to look at the:	turn to:
wheel of chance	106E
woman	92F
coins	31C
croupier	16C
other patrons	142C

62B Your only really powerful device is the staff, or at least what you have of it. With a sinking heart, you offer it to Orcus. "This is the most powerful device of Waterdeep, great lord."

Orcus takes it, and under its evil touch, the staff fragments. Its pieces revert to their original form and fly across the flaming sky. "Oh, no!" the weasel cries.

Only briefly taken aback, Orcus gestures, and the pieces return. They reform before your eyes into the staff, this time held solidly in its grasp. "Interesting enchantment," Orcus comments.

After further study, it adds, "There is something missing." It snaps two clawed fingers, and in a flash of light, the rest of the staff's pieces—those of leaded gold, stone, and whatever others you have not found yet—join with their peers. The staff is complete!

"And after you wandered around all over town!" groans the weasel. "The liches should have asked this one and saved time."

But the demon's scowl indicates why the liches did not wish to trouble Orcus. "This device is the most powerful in the city?" Orcus asks.

"I was told so by the lich, Abraxa."

Orcus tosses up the staff. It hovers, fixed in the air. Orcus scrutinizes it for a moment or two, then waves a hand in a gesture of dismissal.

The staff, the work of Waterdeep's greatest mage, the device that haunted two powerful liches of the Realms . . . the staff disintegrates into powder.

"Bah!" says Orcus. "The liches told me that this Waterdeep was the most powerful city of your world. 'The Jewel of the North!' and 'City of Splendors!' they called it." Its voice rises in anger as it recites the nicknames. "Waterdeep, they said! 'Destroy Waterdeep,

menace the North, and all the land's wizards will flock there! None will remain to obstruct you in Vaasa!' Bah!

"If all this fabled Waterdeep can come up with is trinkets like this staff, where is its power? Where is the power in all your Realms? The conquest of your Material Plane will be easier than I had imagined. I have been deluded. I have squandered my energy on illusionists!"

Orcus's tantrum reveals to you the flaws of its demonic character. Subtle and brilliant though it is, it leaps impulsively to conclusions. It mistakes its supremacy in the realm of the Abyss for equal superiority in the Prime Material Plane, where its power is weaker. And it makes no allowance for the bravery and teamwork of human opponents. Orcus may yet fail to conquer in Vaasa.

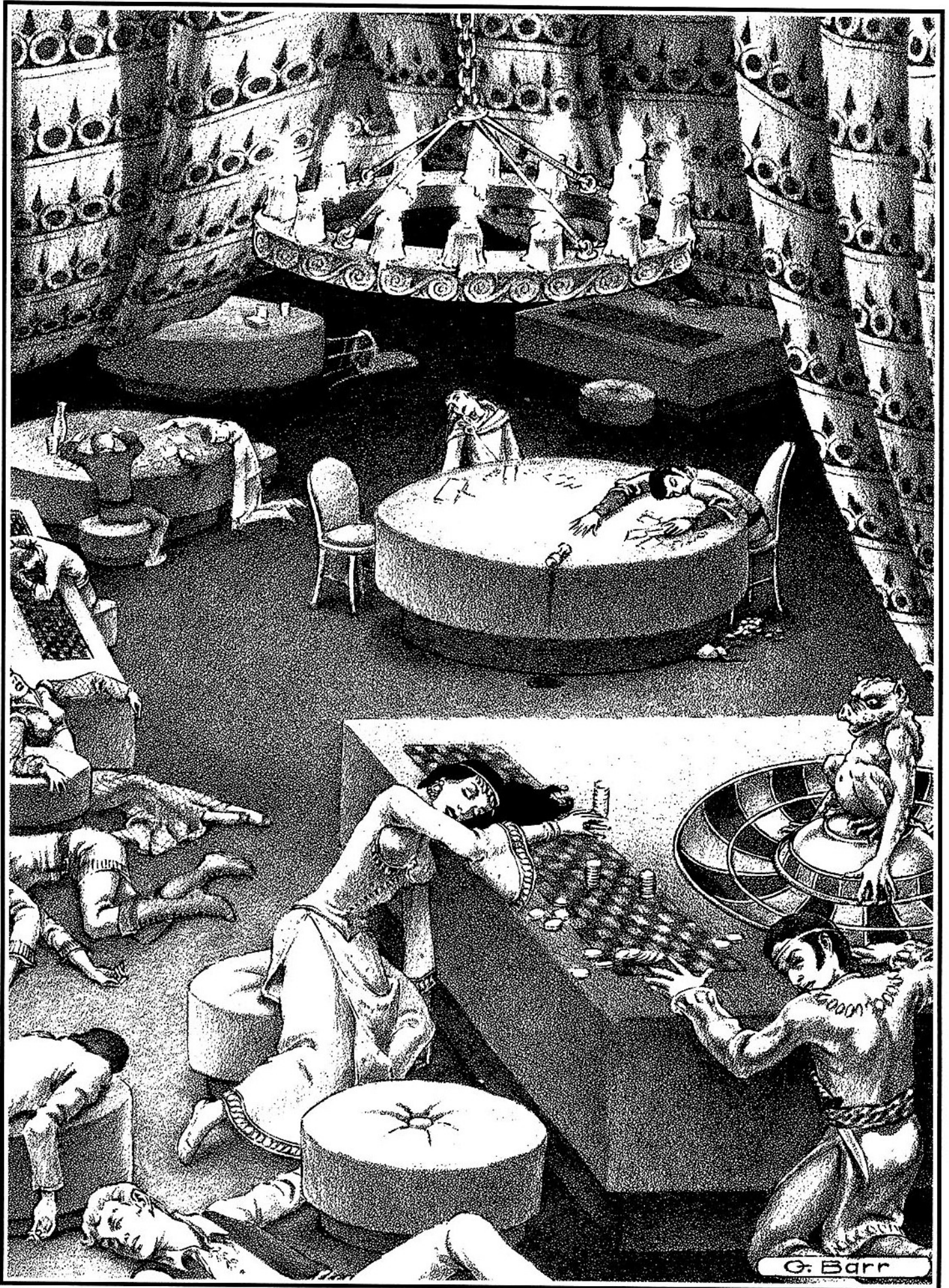
For your mission, these blunders work in your favor. Orcus calls off the plan to destroy Waterdeep, disbands the undead that were building the artifact beneath the city, and sends them on their various ways. The liches it banishes to a far dimension, for deceiving it. "I can always arrange another diversion later," says the demon.

You sigh with relief, your mission accomplished. Though the undead remain to menace Waterdeep in the future, for the moment, you have saved the city!

But your relief turns to panic as your limbs freeze. Orcus has not even looked at you. But it says, "I have not forgotten you, sleepless one. You were able to hold that staff, and that means you are not truly of the undead. You are what those who know little of life call 'good.' This intrigues me."

When Orcus puts you on one of the dissecting tables before its throne, hoping to learn what allowed you to remain good, your screams drown out those of the tormented victims below you. Your adventure has come to a painful and gruesome end.





G. Barr

64A With Haurrant defeated, you feel both exalted and exhausted at the same time. But a burst of cold light signals that your battle is not over. Suddenly Abraxa appears in a cloud of cold flame, shouting, "My husband! What has happened?"

The lich sees the dissolving body that was Haurrant and hears the moans from a hundred mouths in the walls of the chamber. "You! Well, paladin," says the lich, calmer now. "Nicely done. You have completed my second task admirably. Now I shall ascend the Bone Throne and assume command." The lich turns to face the throne, eyes glowing with ambition. Abraxa addresses you absently. "Give me the staff, paladin, and then you may join the construct for—"

Your sword blow takes both the lich and you by surprise. But you will not become part of this ghastly worm!

Biting deep into the wizard's skeletal frame, the sword does indeed work against the lich. Your berserk fury has reduced Abraxa to 70 unlife points instead of the 90 given in the Combat Table on page 160. But the lich survives.

Abraxa twists away, now alert and dangerous. Against Abraxa you have no chance—except for the Staff of Waterdeep. If you have no pieces of the staff, you perish with the lich's first spell, and your adventure is over.

But if you have one or more pieces of the staff, go to 21A to find out how to use them in combat. First make a note of this section (64A). After you finish the combat with Abraxa, return here.

If you win the battle, go to 155A.

64B You let the mummies get a little ahead of you, so they will not notice you following them. They change direction often, wandering through the winding streets like young dandies out on the town, and for quite some time you have no idea where they are headed.

"Nice trip we're taking," says the weasel at one point. "Any idea where to?"

A moment later the mummies turn a corner and enter the City of the Dead. Now you do have some idea, and you pick up your pace.

When they enter the House of the Homeless, you sprint to catch up, for once they are inside, it will be difficult to follow. Indeed, as soon as you descend into the House, you realize how hopeless the chase is now. You find yourself in a seemingly endless labyrinth, and there is no telling where the mummies went.

"Your luck is amazing," mutters the weasel.

It took an hour to follow the mummies here—mark off the time. Will you look around and try to find where they were heading (28A—this takes no extra time); leave and look around the City of the Dead (14A); or go elsewhere in Waterdeep (82A)?

You search, and search further, but find nothing. **64C**

What's worse, while jostling the desk, you dislodge one of the glass eyes. It rolls to the edge of the desk and drops off. Instinctively, you reach out and catch it—but your hand accidentally scrapes across a bone awl, painfully tearing your flesh.

You look at your injury. In life, the wound might have been serious, with much blood. But from your undead flesh no blood emerges. The wound gapes at you, and when you flex your hand you see tendons moving.

Subtract 1 from your current unlife point total. The wound's real pain is its grim reminder of how distant you are now from true humanity.

Return to 90A to keep looking, or leave (158F).

As you approach the archway, a tall, slender form steps out of the shadows. With your night vision you can see it is nearly human; but its slow smile reveals wicked fangs, and you know it for a vampire. Instinctively you avert your eyes from its gaze—and it strikes! **64D**

The vampire commander's statistics are in the Combat Table on page 160. If you reduce it to 7 unlife points or less, go to 142E. If you want to escape, go to 148F. If you lose, your adventure is over.

Near the theater are the glorious Palace of Piergeiron (38A) and indomitable Castle Waterdeep (32A). Since they are both in this ward, each takes just half an hour's investigation time. Or you may go to 82A to go elsewhere in Waterdeep. **64E**

Slowly, you step back, your sword extended, ready for trouble. The ghost scrambles backward until it is several yards distant, then rises, glaring at you. **64F**

"Dunce!" it taunts. "You've not seen the last of me. In Cathexis, I'll have my revenge. Never doubt it." With that it flees from the yard. (If the skeletons are still intact, they leave when their master does.)

Return to 58A to look around, or leave (117F).

The scene is just as you remember it except that the bat has flown off to survey other scenes. Anything you changed is still changed. Return to 68A to look around, or leave (86E). **64G**

65A Is the vampire still holding the cloth? If so, you cannot look at it. Return to 84A and choose something else. If the vampire has been defeated, keep reading.

Deep, deep blue—the velvet cloth is plush and luxurious. Fine gowns for high court ladies and elegant suits for esteemed gentlemen of the nobility are made from stuff such as this.

“Only the best for our friend,” the weasel remarks.

A faint recollection flutters into your mind, like a butterfly through an open window. A procession—royalty returning to court, in exquisite carriages and on magnificent horses. Winter approaches, and among the riders are many in warm velvet—red, purple, gold, green . . . and deep, deep blue. A flowing dress for a pampered princess who rode willfully on a spirited steed. A crowd watches, with awe and respect . . . and you feel disapproval, too, and envy.

Why so much anger? Who projected these emotions you feel so vividly now? A stranger? Surely not yourself! Are you not—were you not—a knight, devoting your energies to higher thoughts? Of course you are not envious . . . and yet the feelings linger.

You cannot help wondering what kind of knight you were. Did you serve your god well? You worry that you did not—but surely you tried?

No answers come. You sigh and let the cerebricule examine the velvet. It finds no magic, and has no story to tell. This is just cloth. Go to 84A to look at something else, or 146D to leave the tavern.

65B Remarkably, this seems to be a children’s book. Bound books are rare treasures, yet some noble had sufficient pocket money to commission this volume, no doubt as a child’s birthday present.

“Golems are big and strong,” it begins. “They look like men, but they are not alive. They can be made of stone or iron or many things, but none of them ever thinks for itself.”

You skip quite a few “Amazing Golem Stories,” but one catches your eye. “In the big city of Waterdeep, a huge stone golem called ‘The Walking Statue’ protects the city. It is more than ninety feet tall! Only the most important humans in the city can command it.

“And what is more than that, the city has six more of them, just like the first, hidden away beneath its castle! No harm will ever come to the big city of Waterdeep while all these giant golems protect it.” The weasel snorts at this.

Mark off half an hour (in addition to the usual time you spend exploring the library). Then go to 152A to look at other books on the shelves, 38A to examine other items in the library, or 119G to leave.

The gold coins on the floor represent much money. Someone was willing to pay someone a lot for something. To fill in the blanks, you hold out the cerebricule. **65C**

“Blood money,” it says instantly. “Fat merchant buying for ztuff to have wife killed.”

Assassination! A reminder that many stories were playing themselves out before the Effluvium disrupted them. You can’t very well kill the assassin on the spot, before the crime is committed and without a trial.

As a stopgap, you gather up the money and throw it on a distant table. When and if everyone wakes up, the assassin won’t kill anyone without his fee.

The pouch—a murder weapon? Go to 119E to look at it, return to 62A to keep looking, or leave (108G).

You swing your sword, and the blade bites deep into the undead forms. Without commands to attack or defend themselves, they simply wait and watch you chop them up. When you cut off a limb, they stare after it without interest. Then you behead them, and their heads stare up from the ground, with no change of quality from that expressed before. **65D**

Finally you stop, disheartened. This is not noble. This is not even dignified. You rest your blade point down on the ground, wondering what to do. Then a voice rings out. Go to 140A.

You depart this sad scene, descending to ground level and leaving the home of Kappiyan Flurmastyr far behind. Mark off the time spent here, if you haven’t already. **65E**

A tavern that interests the cerebricule, The Full Cup, lies within half an hour’s walk in Southern Ward. To investigate it, go to 84A. If you don’t want to find out why a tavern interests the shrunken head, go to 82A to pick another place to visit.

You hold the gift out to the creature and it snatches the item from you, grinning at it appreciatively. Its eyes flash brightly at you, and before you know it, the gem is gone. **65F**

And then the drug den is gone. You disappear in a burst of light. Go to 150A.

Unless you dispelled the juggling haunt, it is still here. It doesn’t remember you or anything of what it said before, and it certainly hasn’t learned any new jokes. Anything that vanished or that you took remains vanished or taken. Return to 42A, or leave (64E). **65G**

66A The table is rich black oak. In its polished top you see your own face, and you feel comforted that you still cast a reflection.

The two chairs are plush, befitting a minister of state. Sitting, you feel the aches in your bones.

The shrunken head accidentally slips out of your armor and falls with a squawk. Rescuing it, you spy a dusty volume under the chair, so you fish it out.

Called *Night of the Black Wind*, the book is a popular historical account of that catastrophe of centuries past. The wizard Haurant (that name!) tried to blackmail Waterdeep, threatening to destroy the city by raising a waterspout in the harbor. The hero Calperion, with several others, broke into his tower. After overcoming many opponents, Calperion slew the wizard in single combat.

Returning to Waterdeep a hero (and the only survivor of his party), Calperion lived a long, productive life, then died many decades ago. But the book's conclusion includes a disturbing footnote: "Rumors persist that Haurant remains active in dark magic. Though evidence of his demise is irrefutable, the reader must recall that among sorcerers of power, death is not necessarily permanent." Recalling that Abraxa's companion is named Haurant, you can verify that opinion.

You look up from the last page of the book, startled at how much time you have spent reading. Mark off half an hour (in addition to the usual time you spend exploring the library). Go to 152A to look at the books on the shelves, 38A to examine other items in the library, or 119G to leave.

66B The oil painting hangs in a fine frame. Staring at it, you can almost make out some kind of image, but the attempt is frustrating. Why, you wonder, would Piergeiron, a man of exquisite taste in art, frame this meaningless batch of colors?

"Not meaningless," says the weasel. Why do its words frighten you so, when they come from your own mind? You learn the reason when it continues. "It's a fine painting—to living eyes. Probably a beautiful scene. But when you don't have a spirit to appreciate it, a painting is just splotchy pigments on canvas."

Without logic, your chest burns again with the futile need to inhale. When you glance away, you feel the dirt in your eye sockets scrape against your eyeballs. All at once the painting has brought back to you, more intensely than ever, what you have lost when you lost custody of the precious loan of life.

"You're getting maudlin again!" the weasel warns,

but you pay it no heed. If it means the destruction of the city, you cannot stay here a moment longer! Disheartened and in agony, you rush from the library and out of the palace (119G).

If you have already dealt with the banshee, the boy sleeps peacefully. You may return to 110A to look at something else, or go to 113F to leave. If you have not driven away or slain the banshee, keep reading. **66C**

"Cerebricule," you say, pulling out the shrunken head, "tell me about this boy."

The shrunken head sniffs at the child. "Name is Hazdur. Has a goat kid. Plays with other jildren. Zleepz 'cause of Effluvium."

Where the banshee grips the boy, she has left marks of seared flesh. The boy will bear some of these scars for life. Much more of this treatment and he will die, unless you act!

Will you attack the banshee (132C)? Or will you speak to her, comfort her, and try to trick the child from her grasp (51A)?

These are ordinary apples and oranges. The shrunken head smiles as it sniffs them. **66D**
"Fresh fruit . . . ver' nize."

On an impulse, you bite into the cool flesh of one of the apples. It tastes like wood. You can feel its cool juices trickle down your throat, but its taste is a pleasure for the living, not the dead.

You may take the fruit if you wish. All of it counts as a single possession. Return to 110A to keep looking, or leave (113F).

Desperately you wonder what such a creature would want. What did monsters seem to collect when you fought them in life? "Money!" you shout to the creature on the framework. "Gold and silver! A fortune!" **66E**

When you surface after another dunking, you see the creature rolling over and over in the air. Guttural barks issue from its snout. Finally you understand that it is laughing hysterically. "Humans!" it cries, and that starts another fit of laughter.

The creature laughs so much at the ludicrous idea that it takes pity on you, pulls you out, and sets you next to three rings, arranged upper-middle-lower along one fingerlike joint of the framework. You may look at the upper ring (104C), the middle one (18C), or the lower one (40C).

But how much of a favor was this? After you're done looking, you realize the creature has disappeared. You try crawling over the framework, but it's hopeless. The only way to get anywhere is to leap back into the stream (36A).

67A “Perhaps your crown could help me in my task,” you say, holding the cerebricula up near the lich’s crown. “Head,” you say, testing the thing’s abilities, “what can you tell me of the crown’s powers?”

The head sniffs. “Moz’ bowerful devize. Lets wearer zpeak with—”

“Silence,” says the lich quietly.

“—the demAAAWGGH!” The shrunken head squalls and jerks in your hand. You pull it back.

Abraxa murmurs a few words, strange words like two voices speaking at once. “Magic,” the weasel warns. Then the same force that pulled you from the ground picks you up like a doll and suspends you in midair!

You hang helpless as the lich brings its glowing eye sockets within a few inches of your own eyes. “Perhaps you need instruction in the decorum of servants. For example, servants do not casually brandish their trinkets in the faces of their betters. Listen closely. You are not alive, yet you can still feel pain. Do you wish me to demonstrate?”

You burn with anger. Yet the weasel’s whisper makes sense: “You can’t do anything to this swine now. Hold on and wait for your chance.” So you reply to the lich, “No. No demonstration needed. I—I apologize.”

At once the lich sets you on the ground. Having asserted its authority, it carries no more grudge than you would feel toward a mosquito. “As for that cerebricula,” it says, “you should know more of its abilities.” Go to **41C**.

67B “Well, now what?” says the weasel. You look around at the magical items still free of bony coverings. Clearly their magic is powering the transformation of skeletons into the cavern’s framework, though the wraiths seem to play some part. Where are the other kinds of undead? You shudder to think of what may lie farther down the tunnel.

Some of these items might help you in your quest, but they are all out of reach from the island. How can you get them?

“Got any fruit?”

For an instant, you think the weasel spoke. Then you realize that the voice in your mind comes from the odd monster slithering across the framework. “I’m an adjutant. I can work a deal for something to eat—fruit in particular. Something succulent. How about it?”

If you have some fruit and want to give it to the “adjutant,” mark it off your list and choose one object from the selection at **120A**.

If you can’t, or won’t, give the creature fruit, you may listen to the voices beneath your feet, inside the bony island (**152E**). Otherwise there seems nothing to do here but watch skeletons grow. After a while, you jump in the current and head downstream (**36A**).

The dark-surfaced mirror reflects nothing—except the worst of its holder. Gazing into it, you see cold eyes, a glare. Yours. You see ragged black hair, scars. A barbarian. Korlo! Korlo, and you see the look in his eyes, the thought in his face: *From behind!*

67C Read all of your Memory Trace entries through #7! If you have already read that far, ignore this instruction. When you are done, return here.

You cannot bear to hold the mirror a moment longer. You dash it down, and it shatters in a hundred pieces! The assault of memory is too much; you must get out, walk the streets of Waterdeep, and try to control your emotions. You rush headlong down the stairs and out of the Dragon Tower (**137F**).

This knife is no weapon, but a jagged-bladed fish-scaler, crusted with scales. Human fishers use these, but markings on the handle identify this as merman work. **67D**

Just to be sure, you hold the cerebricula close to the thing. The shrunken head sniffs once and bellows, “Ztiinkz! Zti-i-inkzz! Fish ztink!”

The weasel pipes up, “Better get the pinhead away from that. Loud enough to wake the dead. Er, sorry.”

Will you look at the other objects on the dock (**48A**), or leave (**159D**)?

The handful of copper coins would be worth a few tankards of beer or loaves of bread in a country inn. You miss the days when you would have enjoyed such simple treats. The cerebricula pronounces them normal, not enchanted. **67E**

“Left by mother worried for her zon. Has not seen him for many years, zinze he was a child. Was taken aboard ship as cabin boy. Ship never returned.”

In spite of the urgency of your mission and the time pressure, you pause for a few moments in silence in front of the coins. You may have passed beyond the joys and sorrows of this world, yet still you are moved by the plight of a stranger. You ask yourself, how dead can you really be?

The coins are useless to you. Return to **110A** to choose another option, or leave (**113F**).

You scrutinize Bumberly closely. His tie is well tied, like the ribbon on a sage’s scroll; his tunic is faultlessly clean, like piles of paper at a scribe’s office; his leggings are creased as sharp as the edge of a page; and his shoes shine like new leather binding. Around his eyes, a delicate tracery of wrinkles forms a cobweb pattern much like the cobwebs at the corners of this hall. **67F**

Those cobwebbed eyes stare back at you balefully. “I think I do not like being studied like a corrupt text, sir,” he says. Go to **90F**.

68A The Dragon Tower of the wizard Maaril is aptly named. Its high, stone peak is carved into the shape of a dragon's head—a green dragon, you judge with your experienced eye. Maaril, a clever and stylish man, has had the tower engineered so that its chimney flues pipe into the dragon's head, and smoke continually issues forth from the dragon's nostrils.

If you have been to the Dragon Tower before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to **64G**. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

Thirteen narrow, steep steps lead up to the tower's main door, about ten feet up the tower's wall. The heavy wooden door, with a foot-wide steel knocking ring upon it, is still in place. No undead has managed to penetrate its defenses . . . yet.

But at least one tried. On the steps lie two men—rather, two corpses that had been men. One is unmistakably a zombie, the dirt of its grave still fresh upon its clothes and skin. Its skull has been crushed by blows from a heavy instrument.

Mere feet away lies the other corpse, a guard. Heavily armored, he must have been fearsome in life. In death,

he still holds the morningstar with which he must have destroyed the zombie. How had he remained awake with the Effluvium washing over the city? Or had this zombie attacked before the Effluvium was released?

Pedestals flank the staircase, and atop each is a gargoyle statue. At least, you hope they are statues; there is no telling what you may find at the home of a wizard. But you know they're not true gargoyles; you sense no life in them.

On the railing to your right, a cat—ordinary, living—lies unconscious, felled by the Effluvium. Overhead, perhaps hoping to feed on it, flies a bat. A vampire bat, of course. It circles and circles, not descending.

You may leave, if you wish; go to **86E**. Or you may look around.

To look at the:	turn to:
guard	47B
zombie	99F
gargoyles	155C
cat	47C
tower door	83D
torch	117C

68B An inspiration strikes you. "Abraxa, Haurrant plots to kill you as well! He has raised a specter and plans to use it against you!"

Haurrant looks at you with astonishment. Abraxa appears surprised as well. "Cerebricule, speak," says Abraxa. "Is this paladin telling the truth?"

"Yez," says the head. "Hero Calperion zlew Haurrant in life. Raised for revenge, alzo to kill Abraggza."

"Betrayer!" cries Abraxa, glaring at Haurrant.

Haurrant tries to grapple with the situation. "You speak of betrayal? Who stole the paladin?"

Both liches fly into a rage. The argument takes on the hateful passion that only long-married couples know. After a few moments, they have forgotten about you, and you withdraw stealthily to a safe distance.

From the edge of the skull, you see the first bolts of energy fly. A rainbow of colored bursts darts between the battling liches, and clouds of gas and fireballs, and monstrous creatures summoned from thin air. In a matter of moments, they have destroyed each other. Go to **155A**.

68C The stage is bare wooden planking. The wings and the curtain in back conceal a variety of theatrical props: furniture, fake greenery, fake weapons, piles of costumes, and so on. You find nothing useful.

A space around the stage provides standing room for the "groundlings" who cannot afford a high admission. Serried rows of hard, wooden seats, elevated above the groundling level, surround the stage on three sides, the

conventional arrangement in Waterdeep.

You spot a few crumpled programs beneath the seats, detailing a production you have never heard of. You think you never knew much about the theater—only about battle, and worship, and now death. All at once you feel very tired.

"Mope on, sir knight!" says the weasel. "Melodrama suits your surroundings."

You are wasting time. Return to **42A** to investigate something else (providing the haunt isn't juggling it), or leave (**64E**).

A memory from that time in the grave when the weasel told you of your undeath and you fled from the knowledge. A memory of hands lifting you, not bony hands, but fully fleshed ones. Yet how cold, and how long their nails! Rising up from the hole, you glimpsed a full moon and moonlight glinting on fangs. Vampires!

One, a dark-haired woman, led the others. They carried you to a new grave in the City of the Dead and buried you again, all in the blink of an eye to your slowed perceptions. Replaying the fragmentary memory, you recall the queen vampire's voice. "Bury him here until Abraxa has need of him," and then later, "Haurrant will appreciate the poetic justice when his own assassin is used against him!"

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.



70A The dull crack, like the snap of a support beam in a temple wall, tells you the assassin's neck has broken. The revenant drops him, and you watch his life aura fade and die.

Justice has been done, you assume . . . but life, precious life, has been wasted. But that life took another's life itself. Thoughts chase one another in your mind. You cannot resolve the conflict here; you shut the thoughts away for now.

The revenant stares down at the body. The monster's searchlight gaze inspects every inch of the victim, as if assuring itself that no part of its killer remains unpunished. Its head rears back, and it delivers a cry such as you have never heard, an exultant roar that brings a new image to your mind: a hurricane, lightening after its assault on the mainland.

Then the revenant's eyelids fall slightly, and its whole posture changes. Limp now, it looks at you. Its eyes bring no new image. They show no emotion, no hope. The eyes are of the dead.

"So it is done," it says. "The world is reduced by the weight of one more spirit. Have I remained in agony so long, for this pointless reward?"

Looking down on the murdered man like a spouse upon his departed mate, the revenant quietly dissolves. Robes, bones, and flesh resolve into a fine powder. It covers the dead man like a shroud. The eyes go last.

You contemplate the tableau. The weasel says, simply, "Yow."

Will you look around now (62A), or leave (108G)?

70B "Where has the specter gone?" Haurrant asks. "Where . . . has specter . . . gone," the zombies echo.

Cursing, the lich gestures. Words of magic echo in your mind, and you think of the enchantment the lich Abraxa used to make herself vanish. Again, one voice seems to speak twin incantations. "I lend you awareness," says Haurrant at last. "Speak of what you have seen here."

The zombie faces speak, the words issuing from first one mouth, then another, many relating the same details. "One in steel" . . . "Broke glass" . . . "Both took rod of bone" . . . "Gone, gone."

"Gone? How?" cries the lich. "Where?"

"Vanished—vanished," the zombies reply.

Beside you, one of the fibers speaks. No, it's not a fiber. It's the specter! Next to you, Calperion is imitating the zombie's hollow voices. "Passed up," he drones loudly. "Flew—through roof."

Cursing violently now, the lich gestures again and shouts, "I return you to your former state!" Then he disappears in a yellow-brown cloud.

Calperion whispers another incantation, and you return to visibility. "Well done!" you say.

"I thank thee, adventurer. Haurrant will return to his monstrous Bone Throne at the head of this Annelid construct, there to enter a clairvoyant trance. We must make haste to strike—to the heart! Destroy! No!" Calperion doubles over, struggling as though trying to master pain. "We—must strike," he groans, "before the mage can locate us and marshal his forces."

"Are you in pain?"

"It is the pain of evil, the taint of necromancy, growing in me. I must fight it, or I will become worse than the lich myself. You, warrior—help me to kill this fiend once and for all, so I may return to my deserved rest!"

Although Calperion appears to have been disturbed by his resurrection and torture, you can hardly argue against this mission. Gesturing for you to follow, the specter creeps farther down the worm construct. "This way lies the foul construct's skull," he whispers back to you. "Haurrant brought me there first, before trapping me here."

The undead hero leads you on a winding route through the labyrinth of fibers. They grow thicker, and the tunnels you encountered earlier appear again—this time, though, they expand and contract regularly, like a beating heart.

All the while, the specter's mutterings grow more intense and violent. He seems to be losing his battle against the inherent evil of specterdom. You wonder exactly what he intends to do when you both reach the "Bone Throne."

"Why did the lich raise you? For revenge?"

"Aye, mainly," Calperion answers. "Revenge! Justice! Urr—no! Revenge, mainly, yet the fiend also mentioned that I should be his assassin and kill his own partner, Abraxa! That at least shall I do, most gladly!"

Mark Evidence Box A on your bookmark.

Finally the specter points down at a moist, narrow passage at your feet. "We must crawl through here to reach the skull. If we still breathed air, we could never survive the passage."

He begins to work himself into the tight channel, which squishes under his grip. "Follow and we shall confront the lich. We may become separated. If I do not meet you again before the Bone Throne, I will still think of you with gratitude for your deed." He wrestles his way in, and you are about to follow . . .

. . . but down another tunnel, not very far from where you now stand, you see what looks like a moving figure. It appears to be a young woman, yet no life aura clings to her.

You must decide. Will you crawl through the passage after the specter (144A), or will you leave Calperion and go alone to investigate the woman in the next chamber (138A)?

71A In Southern Ward one of the longest streets is Caravan Street, which ends in Caravan Court. And nearby are Coach Street, Carter's Way, and Coachlamp Lane. Even visitors of short acquaintance with Waterdeep can guess where the stables are.

Too poor to afford the noble villas of North and Sea Wards, too moral to tolerate the decay of the docks, the honorable poor of Waterdeep squeeze into Southern Ward. They cater to the caravans entering at South and River Gates. They run small shops and manufacture small goods. They sell to each other and eke out a narrow living.

Yet the atmosphere in Southern Ward is homey, peaceful, and friendly. Buildings are clean and freshly painted. Some citizens who gain prosperity above the norm here, such as wizards and guildmasters, live on in the ward, held by friendships and long tradition.

Now zombies and specters roam its streets. What misfortune to befall these people, who can afford little misfortune.

In Southern Ward the cerebricule takes special interest in the home of the wizard Kappiyan Flurmastyr (76A), and an unusually run-down tavern called The Full Cup (84A). There is at least one piece of the staff in the ward, perhaps more.

If you don't wish to visit either of these places, you find nothing of immediate help in Southern Ward. Return to 82A to pick again.

71B "Who is this Strix?"
"You jest!" laughs the first mummy. "Jest," repeats the next mummy, and the third one giggles.

"She's a right powerful vampire," begins the first mummy, then pauses uneasily. "Centuries old," puts in the giggler. "Never a one like her, oh, no!" His hysterical giggle erupts again.

"What do you mean?" But the mummy just laughs maniacally. "What does he mean?" you ask the others.

But the one with the hat rises to his feet, looking at you nervously. He shrugs. "Always at the right place," he tells you, and nudges his depressed companion, who also gets to his feet. They move toward the door, and the third follows, still giggling.

"Hears folks talk. Knows who to be friendly with," he explains, and he laughs a high-pitched bark that nearly pierces your eardrums. Before he can say more, his buddy pulls him out the door.

You may stop the mummies and attack (27B), follow them (64B), or let them go. If you let them go, you may look at the dwarf (158C); the man (36D); or leave (146F).

You pluck the fruit and sink your teeth into it. There is no real taste to it—your undead body cannot enjoy this earthly pleasure—and yet there is a faint, enjoyable sensation. You feel invigorated. **71C**

You are healed of all damage! Your unlife total is now the same as when you began your adventure.

You thank the tree spirit and return to the fountain to bring it more water. "You are most kind," the spirit says. "Though your limbs and bark seem dead, I perceive that your roots are still sound. I only wish I could do more to help you in this blight."

"Ah, thank you."

Return to 58A to keep looking, or leave (117F).

"I choose to go underground, to my ultimate destiny," you inform Abraxa, and the lich nods again. **71D**

"Well said," it says. "As for the last little task, I command you to journey to the head of the construct and destroy my partner, the lich Haurrant. Mark you! Do not let him see you approach, or he will destroy you. Tut-tut . . . no questions. Serve me, and join in Cathexis!"

Before you can ask a question, Abraxa gestures, and you begin to levitate closer and closer to the raging whirlpool. . . . Go to 86G.

The mummies and their treasure are gone. The only thing still here is the hookah. The drugged patrons are still just as they were on the bunks, and the place is just as dark, dingy, and oppressive. Return to 52A to look around, or leave (146F). **71E**

Suddenly the ghouls who were pursuing you appear, and you duck among the zombie fibers. Soon you realize that, at this rate, you'll never escape from the ghouls through this forest of fibers. You must make a stand here. **71F**

Go back to 132A and make one choice, hoping you select an item or action that will dispose of the ghouls. If the choice doesn't immediately help you (or send you to another immediate choice), the ghouls will be upon you, so pick carefully!

Cautiously you approach the lacedons as they tear at their prey. As you get closer, they glare at you with the menace of angry wolves guarding a kill. It's obvious you cannot speak with them. Go to 104A to look around further, or 108F to leave. **71G**

72A Something about this Dragon Tower makes you uneasy.

You recall no evil reputation clinging to Maaril the wizard—yet there are fatal ward spells on most of the doors, and unliving guardians on the steps out front. Not very hospitable even by wizardly standards, you think, as you ascend the stairs.

At the top, an open room—and you recoil, automatically assuming battle stance! You get only a glance at the strange glowing symbols on the wall and the plush furniture, for there is a figure here unlike any you have ever seen.

His shape is more an absence of matter than a presence, for you can see right through him into what looks like another world. The negative-space figure flickers and hums, but has not moved. A guardian?

If you have been to the wizard Maaril's chamber before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 113E. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

Will you attack the figure (89G), watch alertly and wait (46D), approach the figure (136B), leave (137F), or ignore the figure and look around (89F)?

To look at the:	turn to:
left rune	153D
center rune	84D
right rune	124F
chest on shelf	155E
tall bottle	106C
short bottle	134E
mirror	75F

72B “But how do you bestow the power of random happenings on this wheel, and to what end?” you ask the adjutant monster. “Do you—?”

“See here, my man, your inquiries show a lack of appreciation for the sporting spirit. I confess I share that lack, but unlike you, I am willing to attempt a remedy. You desire information; I happen to be a connoisseur of fine weaponry. Herewith I offer a study of the alien psychology of gambling.

“If you will wager a weapon, for you certainly look the sort who carries one, I will wager the answers to all your questions.”

You consider the creature and its offer. “What game?” you ask at last.

“Ah-ah, stakes first, game later.”

This hardly sounds sporting, but you have little choice. You may bet any weapon on your list of possessions except your magical sword; the creature will not accept that, saying “Abraxa bestowed that, and it is not my place to countermand her.” If you have no other weapon besides your sword, you cannot bet. (Poison doesn't count.)

Will you accept the adjutant's bet (147C); go back to 16B and take another approach with it; or give up and return to 62A to keep looking? Or will you leave (108G)?

72C The three sleeping vampires appear quite young, but of course, with a vampire, there is no telling; they could be older than the bricks of Castle Waterdeep. There are two males and a female; but once again, with vampires, the categories lack their usual meanings.

All three hang, completely stupefied, in a sleep that only Strix's command could discontinue. That means it must be daylight above. But wasn't it approaching midnight when you ventured down here? How long have you been here, anyway? The shrunken head, dazed by the saturation of magical energy, cannot keep track of time anymore.

You consider slaughtering these undead monsters while you can. But as much as you want to, this would waste time and energy. If you tried to kill every undead in the worm, it might take a century.

Go back to 138A to look around more. Or you may leave. Since the tunnels are closing up behind you, the only way to go is forward (144A).

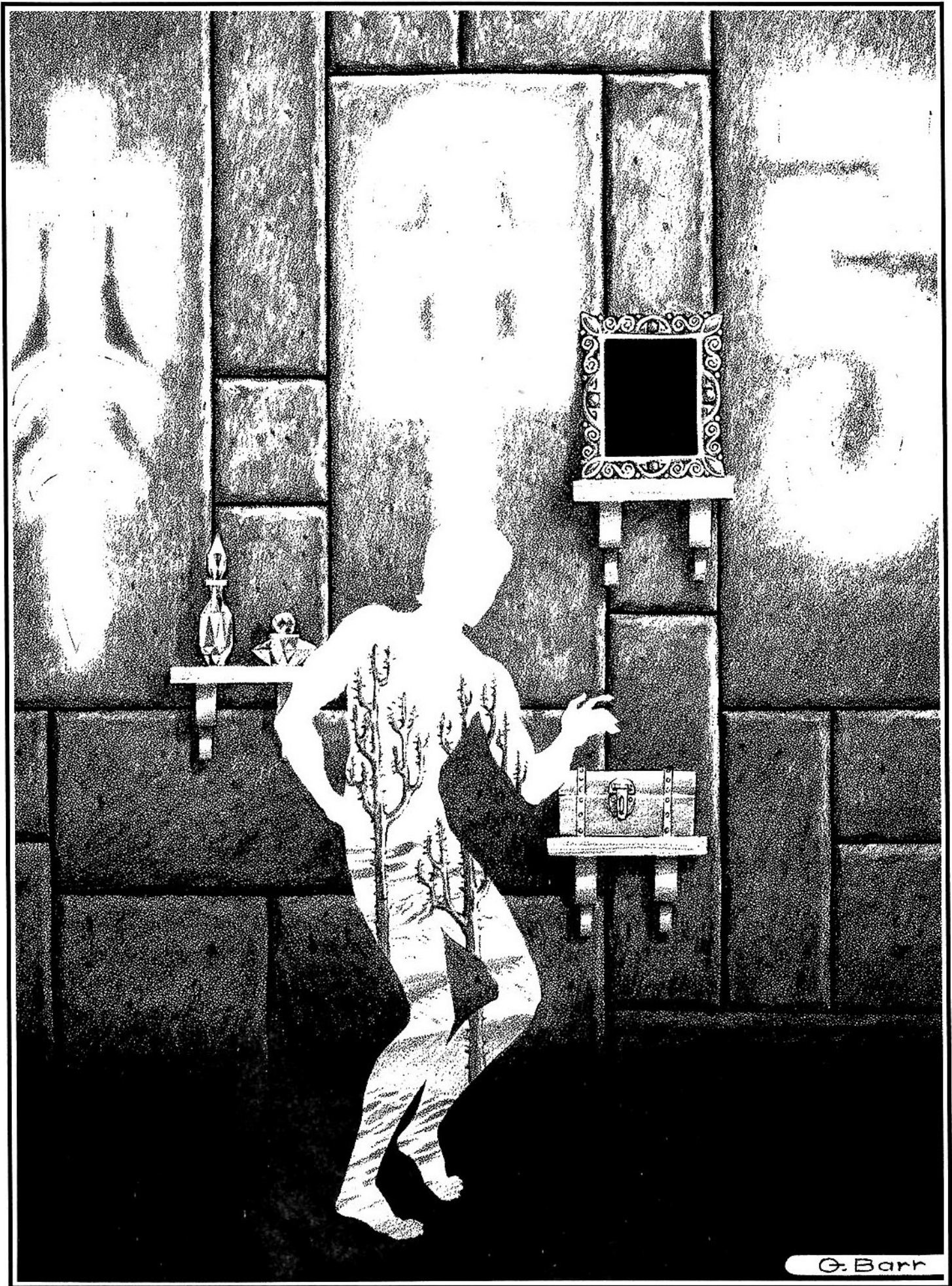
Is the vampire still holding this figurine? If so, you cannot look at it. Go to 84A to choose **72D** again.

If the vampire has been vanquished, you may examine the figurine. Six inches long and carved in ivory, the figurine is the right size and shape to be a section of the staff—and in your hands, it transforms.

The ivory piece of the Staff of Waterdeep! Check off this piece on your bookmark list when you take it. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to 156A to find out more about the staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it; but first make a note of this section, 72D, so you may return here after you are finished there.

Go to 84A to look around further, or 146D to leave the tavern.





74A Looking on as the revenant strangles the man, you feel repelled. Who are the dead, to deprive the living of what they themselves can never have? Does the power driving this creature bring with it an infallible sense of justice? Can the man not even have an opportunity to defend himself?

You had some part in this, but you can still atone. "Hold, murdered one!" you cry, raising your sword. "There is no justice in enlarging a pile of victims!"

Knowing the revenant does not attend, you swing, your perceptions speeding. But you only see your blow being stopped in slow motion, as the revenant's free arm rises to block you. Your muscles, unfortunately, do not react as speedily as your senses. How frustrating, to see your own sword arm striking a blow in vain and be unable to change it!

But the battle goes on. The revenant fights you one-handed while it holds the assassin aloft in the other hand. Therefore, its abilities are reduced to the point that you can fight it. Find the revenant's statistics in the Combat Table on page 160.

You may break off the fight at any time, and the revenant will continue strangling the assassin (go to **70A**). Also, if you are reduced to 6 unlife points or less, you fall back stunned, and the revenant can complete its grisly task (again, **70A**).

If you defeat the revenant, it dissolves into the final death over the body of its would-be victim. Go to **62A** to look around, or leave (**108G**).

74B You don't know whether some facet of your past, or merely a common sense of humanity, makes these stale jokes intolerable. Without trying to analyze your ire, you leap to the stage and draw your sword. "Prepare to defend yourself, dismal jokester, for—"

A wooden club strikes you squarely in the nose. The rest of the objects in the insubstantial comic's pattern fly at you in a barrage, thrown with deadly accuracy. Pelted by clubs and burned by torches, you take 12 unlife points of damage. And you haven't had a chance to swing your sword yet!

The objects circle around and return to the ethereal quipster's hands. "Wanna get rough, eh? I've played tough crowds before, fella! Stick to throwing tomatoes, why don't ya?"

You may still retreat from the stage and let the ghost continue with its lame routine (**64E**). If you want to fight, conduct combat normally, but then you may no longer leave. Find the jester's combat statistics on the Combat Table on page 160. If you win, go to **97D**; or you

may escape (**56F**). If you lose, your adventure ends at the hands (and nothing else) of a comedian who really knows how to kill an audience.

The eerie light glowing in the walls casts a shadow on the sundial. Part of the dial is **74C** inlaid with dark stone—representing the hours of night, you assume. You have never seen a sundial that tells time at night! You also wonder how, in this constant light, the dial can show the time.

The cerebriucle does nothing but confirm your guess. "Maagic," the head intones. "Tells proper time."

"Nothing else?"

"Is all."

You need no timepiece, even assuming you could lift the bulky sundial. Go back to **138A** to look around more. Or you may leave; since the tunnels are closing up behind you, the only way to go is forward (**144A**).

You trudge out of the harbor. As you emerge in Dock Ward, you think you must be a hideous sight. You, a waterlogged corpse! **74D**

You may look around the docks, taking half an hour (**48A**); investigate a peculiar entrance, within half an hour's journey, that arouses the shrunken head's interest (**52A**); or go to **82A** to pick a destination in another ward of Waterdeep. Because the harbor is so close, it will only take half an hour to reach any location in the harbor; you need an hour to reach and explore any other destination in the city.

You ignore the vampire. With a final snarl, he transforms into a bat and flies out the door. **74E**

You may leave The Full Cup tavern (**146D**), or go to **84A** to look around. But you cannot look at the figurine or cloth, for the vampire took them with him.

With a swordsman's flourish and a mighty oath that the living cannot hear, you wade into the undead, swinging, thrusting, parrying. **74F**

As shown on the Combat Table on page 160, this cluster of ghosts fights as one opponent, striking you on a roll of 10 or less. Each time they hit, they drain you of 8 unlife points.

If you successfully strike the cloud of undead five times before you are defeated, you have won. The ghosts and other monsters will disperse, so go to **136D**. If you lose, you become one of their number, possessed by the same rages animating your opponents. Your adventure ends here.

If, after at least one full round of combat, you find yourself overwhelmed by the undead, you may flee, leaving the humans to their fate. Check Evidence Box D on your bookmark if you do so, and go to **65E**.



75A "Hold, spirits!" you cry, in the voice of the undead that only they can hear. "Leave these humans be! They have done nothing to you. They are nothing to you. Depart. Your masters have other duties for you."

The roiling cloud of spirits moves a little apart from the protective ward and stops battering it for a moment. One of the spirits—a grinning skull set atop a flowing, sheetlike body, with white flames dancing in its eye sockets—separates from the cloud and hovers before you. Its jawbone clacks and clatters.

"Nothing to us?" it replies. "They are everything to us—everything we are not, everything we should be! They are alive!" It rises to hover directly over the cowering humans.

"Look at him! Hale and hearty, enjoying the twilight of a prosperous life! And her—oh, wretchedness! See the bloom of youth on her cheek! See the years of life stretching before her! If we do not destroy her now, she will not only live—she may bear young and add to the horrid ranks of the living!

"Join us. Sweep aside their protective barrier. Help us destroy them!" With a wild cry wrenched from the depths of its pain, the ghost again hurls itself against the ward, joined by its intangible allies.

"You'll get nowhere talking to these lunatics," opines the weasel.

Return to 76A and choose again.

75B With Maaril's amulet protecting you from certain destruction, you flip-flop in the maelstrom of positive material, grabbing for the gate. Pulling yourself partway through, you relax long enough to view this deadly dimension with some composure.

Everything in this universe reaches its maximum energy potential. A grain of sand would gather enough energy to demolish a mountain. There is no way anything solid, let alone living, can exist here.

Back in Maaril's quarters, you observe the bright lights of the Positive Plane. You remember hearing that some undead creatures derive their energy from the corresponding Negative Material Plane.

But seeing this half of the pair, you decide no intelligence in its twin dimension could be producing the conduits from that realm to this. You have heard that the Negative Plane is just as deadly as the Positive. What, then, could funnel the negative energy of that universe into yours?

"Good question!" says the weasel. "Let's also spend plenty of time here deciding how many wagon wheels could fit in all three universes. That's just as important for our mission, after all."

You are wasting time. Return to 72A to keep looking, or leave (137F).

You resolve to confront your undead patron, so you swim to the middle of the lighthouse tower. You don't dare approach too close to the top. The currents generated by the whirlpool are too strong, and you'd be torn away by the whirling water in an instant.

"Uhh . . ." the weasel says, "you aren't really going to do what you're thinking, are you? I mean, your lich friend didn't figure out last time that it doesn't control you, but what if it does this time?"

If you heed the warning of your subconscious and decide not to confront Abraxa now, return to 100A and make another choice. Otherwise you proceed to the top of the lighthouse (113C).

You examine the stone head closely, letting the cerebricule sniff the ruby. "Fake," it says shortly.

The poltergeists snicker. You try to lift the head and find it too heavy to carry comfortably. The poltergeists snicker still more.

"Geev op?" asks Jyorlo. "Or wannoo keep play?"

If you want to keep searching, give the poltergeists another item (mark it off your list) and return to 114A to choose again. Or leave (143D).

You have no facts to support your story of betrayal. "I have invested some fraction of my energy in this project," says Orcus. "I do not think the liches would be so unwise— Strike me! I reason with an insect."

Aggravated as much at itself as at you for wasting its breath, Orcus points a single claw and incinerates you where you stand. You do not even receive the dignity of an honorable death. Your adventure ends here.

This hand mirror's glass is dark and apparently nonreflecting. But when you look in it, you cannot believe what you see! If you use Memory Trace A, go to 37D. If you are using Memory Trace B, go to 67C.

You know that holy water is deadly to vampires. You consider pouring the water into Strix's bath.

It might kill her or damage her. Or it might just make her angry. Or, diluted by the blood-water, it might do nothing. "Decisions, decisions," says the weasel.

This is probably the only chance you will have. Will you surreptitiously pour the water into Strix's bath (16A), or will you forget it and let her keep talking (17A)?

76A Among the poor dwellings of Southern Ward, Kappiyan Flurmastyr's home is a small, rich two-story building. It stands as conspicuous as the wizard himself would among a crowd of shopkeepers. The house's front door has been torn from its hinges; it lies on the street, yards from the doorway.

Cautiously, sword in hand, you enter the home. Inside, it is still more obvious that other dead have arrived before you. The house is stripped bare of possessions. Every stick of furniture has been taken, every hanging and painting and decoration on the walls pulled down and carried away. Operating on the assumption that anything in a wizard's house could be magical, the hordes left only litter and wreckage.

If you have been to the wizard's home before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 141D. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

But wait . . . you hear shrieking and wailing upstairs. Still cautious, you ascend the stairs and creep down a hallway. Before you quite reach the open door ahead, you feel invisible waves of magical energy beating at you, feebly trying to force you back. From within your armor, the cerebriucle announces "Warding maagic. 'Gainzt evil undead."

So that's it—undead you are, but not evil. This magic has little effect upon you. Or, you realize as you reach the doorway, upon the ghosts.

This study is lit by a brazier standing atop a tall bronze tripod . . . and the light illuminates a scene out of a nightmare.

At the room's center is an elliptical, unbroken line of chalk, a wizard's protective ward. Outside it, beings of horror circle, screaming. Monstrous things—ghosts, spirits, haunts, the incorporeal undead. Winged skulls with snapping jaws. Faceted insect eyes and rending mandibles. Spindly humanoid things with rubbery

mouths and sharp teeth, uttering cries of hatred.

The two targets of their hate stand within the protective ward. One, a tall, thin man wearing traditional wizardly robes, brandishes his staff desperately against his intangible enemies.

The other, a girl of perhaps sixteen, has an ingenue's innocence in her features. She wears the practical garb of a wizard's apprentice—and an expression of terror.

Given the magical equipment at their feet, you suspect they were engaged in potion research when the Effluvium hit. Their protective ward, intended to confine magical accidents to the boundaries of their own area, served instead to fend off the Effluvium's attack. Their life spirits still glow brightly.

But how long can the ward last? Again and again, the spirits hurl themselves at the invisible barrier protecting the two humans. With each attack, they seem to penetrate a nail's-breadth farther into the barrier. Soon they will break through.

To rescue the wizard and apprentice, the only humans you've seen awake in Waterdeep, you may attack the ghosts (74F), try to chase them away (31D), or try to persuade them to depart (75A).

If you wish merely to stand aside and watch what happens, go to 122E. To depart, leaving these humans to their fate, go to 65E. Or you may look around.

You may investigate the:	by turning to:
chalk circle	58B
wizard's staff	113D
wizard's flask	25B
apprentice's amulet	89B
mortar and pestle	159A
small sacks	134B
brazier and tripod	50C
furnishings in room	112F

76B You lay one hand on the rocking horse . . . and suddenly, from the shadows, something attacks! No, not *from* the shadows—the shadow *itself* animates and pounces!

Claws of solidified darkness rip at your armor, and an animal's growl sounds in your mind. The shadow is one of the least intelligent but most dangerous undead, for—as you have found—it is almost undetectable.

"Ho, looky! Spot got heem!" cries Jyorlo. "Way to go, Spot!"

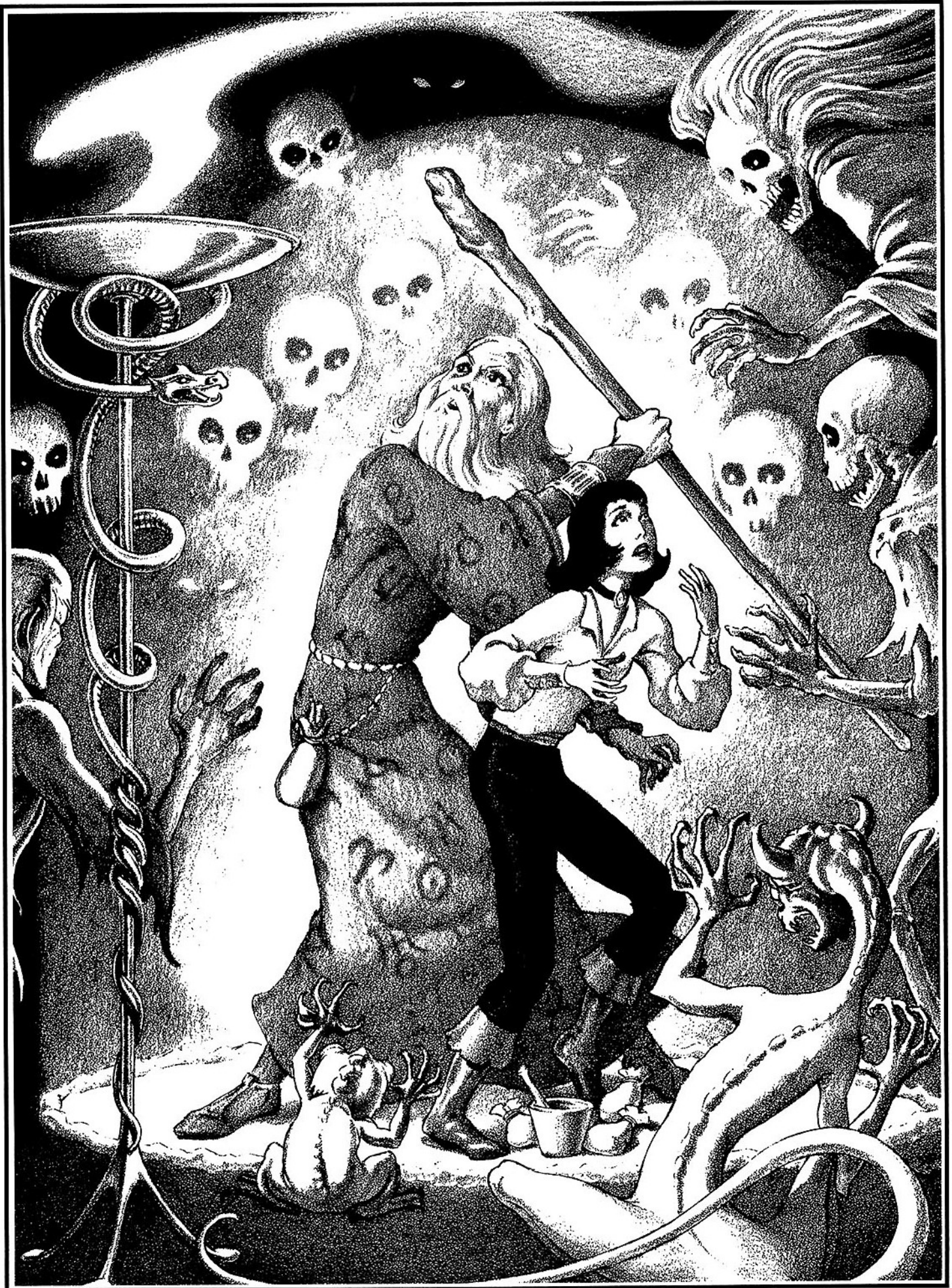
"Now, remember your manners toward guests, Jyorlo," says Veliks. "Don't encourage the beast. Oh, by the way, warrior, you may kill Spot if necessary. He

always muddies up the yard anyway. Perhaps your sword might prove helpful."

Struggling for your unliving existence against this vicious predator, you have already considered this alternative. Wrestling the beast away long enough to draw your sword, you attack!

Conduct combat using the shadow's statistics given in the Combat Table on page 160. If you reduce the creature to 4 unlife points or less, it runs away. If you defeat or chase away the shadow, go to 30A to look at the rocking horse. If the fight is going against you, you may flee from the City of Garbage and go elsewhere (143D).





78A Experimentally, you hold the cerebricula near the blade of your new sword. The head's wrinkled nose wrinkles, sniffs, and its wide mouth opens. "Maaagic," says the head, in an astoundingly deep voice. "Hitz 'gainzt undead monzters. Ver', ver' bowerful."

"Did it say powerful?" you ask the lich. "What is the power of the blade?"

"This sword's native iron," says Abraxa, "was mined from under the northern ice, forged in dragonflame, and quenched in more than the usual quantity of blood. I carried it, still smoking hot, across the borders of the universe.

"There is another reality, known here as the Negative Material Plane. A pitiful name for that maelstrom of energy! This world and all others could vanish into it and vaporize in the tenth part of a second. These living spirits"—the lich looks past the walls of the City of the Dead to Waterdeep beyond—"can never know how thin the revetment that stops annihilation.

"I journeyed to that plane, the source of undeath. In a node of calm magic I bound a part of that realm in this blade, with a sheath of such force that it can cleave the least substantial phantom. Naturally, a sword of this kind grows intelligent after long use, and may go mad. But you will wield it for only a day or so.

"Enough of the sword. What more do you wish?" Return to **8A** to ask another question, or go to **20A** if you're through.

78B In Sea Ward, you can find the most lavish homes, the most fashionable temples, the most eccentric wizards. Not all who live here are noble, but nearly all are wealthy. This is the ward for those who have had the bad taste to earn riches in their own lifetimes, in contrast to the nobility of North Ward, whose money-grubbing is comfortably past.

Although you would have thought that such wealth must include many powerful magical items, as well as pieces of the Staff of Waterdeep, the cerebricula inhales and says "Znogood. No ztuff here." Even the homes of the great wizards, Tessler and Nain and others, hold no interest for the shrunken head. Evidently, they were among the first looted by the undead armies.

The only building that rates more than one sniff is the Dragon Tower of the wizard Maaril (**68A**). "Zomething ver' big habbening there," it says, and sniffs again. "Gate. Travel to other plazes." It says nothing else.

Though you know there is no piece of the staff here, you hope the Dragon Tower might have magic, or some

thing, to help you in some other way. Or you might confine yourself to hunting for the staff, and return to **82A** to pick another destination.

The scroll on your left looks old and ornate. You remember how magical scrolls work. **78C** Some of them only wizards can read, but others can be used by anyone. When you read one, its spell is cast, and then the lettering fades away. Perhaps this one carries helpful magic.

The cerebricula sniffs it. "Maagic zgroll," it says, stating the obvious. "Invisibility. Read it, nobody can zee you. Lartzt ten minudez."

That certainly sounds useful. But when you lift the scroll, the ghouls look at you menacingly. Clearly they don't want you plundering their hard-won items. You may either put the scroll of invisibility back (go back to **126A** and pick again) or take it (mark it on your list and go to **103A**).

"What of this?" you ask, reaching toward the small box strapped to the lich's forearm. At **78D** once a blue feeler of electricity leaps from the box and strikes your finger! You start back in shock, then stare at your smoldering hand. Subtract 1 unlife point from your current total.

Abraxa hasn't moved, but it holds a wary bearing. "Do not concern yourself with such things, or you risk the final death," it says. "Show more awareness in your mission, else your fate—at the hands of your enemies, or by my own hand—will be unhappy." Go to **20A**.

Prudence seems called for. "You may say whatever you wish to me while I remain here," you tell Strix. Though she speaks with a real voice, she is able to understand your undead telepathy. **78E**

Strix chuckles, a low laugh that uncurls like a panther stretching. "So shy, paladin?" she says. "I hoped you'd be less demure, given our previous intimacy."

"What do you mean?"

"It was I who dug you from your grave. One can hardly be more intimate than that, wouldn't you say?"

"You dug me up?"

"Of course . . . to foil Haurrant's plan. You must have known that. How could—hmm. Paladin, attend me."

She gazes at you, suspicion and mischief in her eyes. Those eyes. . . . Go to **17A**.

You're standing outside the Hall of Heroes in the City of the Dead cemetery. Mark off the half-hour you spent exploring within, if you haven't already. **78F**

Will you look around the Hall of Sages (**154F**); the House of the Homeless (**31B**); or elsewhere in the City of the Dead (**14A**)? Each of these visits takes half an hour. Or, spending essentially no time, you may go to the walls of the cemetery and head for Waterdeep (**82A**).

79A This fragile creature is just what you thought, a lifeless pixie being mounted for display. But as you lean closer to it, you hear a faint whisper, the death-speech voice only the undead can hear, issuing from its lips. "Please . . . bury me . . . please . . . bury me . . ." It says nothing else, but does not stop pleading.

"What woeful tale belongs to this pathetic creature?" you ask the cerebriucle. It snuffles over the pixie and is silent a long moment, then speaks.

"Happy bixie named Folderol. Many loves, much mizchief. Crept up to play mizchief on zleeping wizard. But wizard wazn't zleeping. Used nazty maagic mirror do entrap bixies. Later zold them for profit."

Sad as the tale is, it holds no significant clues for you. Reaching down, you pick up the fragile pixie, then search for a place to give it a proper burial. In one of the shop's windows, you spot a potted plant, all but dead itself. You dig a shallow grave in the pot and deposit the pixie's body.

On a whim, you also pour some water on the plant, hoping to bring it back to life. When the water seeps into the soil, the plant immediately turns green, and a flower blooms. From its center you hear a tiny, "Thank you . . ."

"Isn't that special," comments the weasel, urging you to get on with your mission.

Return to **90A** to keep looking, or leave (**158F**).

79B You journey through Trades Ward toward the South Gate and the countryside beyond. Walking past the storefronts facing the High Road, you witness countless scenes of vandalism. The lesser undead, skeletons and zombies, break through windows and doors in their search for magical items. Window glass slices their arms open, but they pay no heed. Doors resist their strength, and they bludgeon them down with punches and kicks, pulverizing their own limbs. You avert your eyes.

You hear the zombies' incessant speech in your mind, their slow repetition of their orders: "Search town . . . find magic . . . return it to master. Search town . . ." The skeletons, brainless, say nothing.

From time to time you see their masters, ghosts and misty specters, shouting orders in the telepathic speech of the undead. Mummies, too, parade the streets, bandages trailing like banners, dust puffing from their joints. "Treasure! Treasure!" they scream in your mind. "Find it, burn the place, kill 'em all! Celebrate!"

Thankfully, the dead appear to avoid humans, for now at least. Few people were abroad when the Effluvi-um hit, so you deduce it struck around midnight, when the lich raised you. The victims in the open are socialites headed for late-night barhopping, or theater-goers headed for home, or derelicts headed for nowhere.

You force yourself to pass them by, though they lie exposed to the winter weather. "They'll be worse off if you haul them all indoors," says the weasel, "and you'll lose so much time that the city will get pulverized."

A ghoulish snort like a horse. The sound calls up a memory: You sit astride a fine white horse, a jewel in your saddle pommel, the charger's armor shining in the sun. Onlookers gaze in admiration. You ride to help a distant town fight a tribe of orcs. A small girl brings you a flower; you reach down and take it with a smile. She looks at you with luminous blue eyes and says—

"Treasure! Burn the living bodies and take their loot! Treasure!" As quickly as you left it, you return to reality.

Finally you reach the Waymoot, intersection of the High Road and the Way of the Dragon. The South Gate rises ahead. Guardsmen, armored in silver, black, and gold, lie across the parapets. One slumps against the mortared stone wall, holding a trumpet in one hand. Defeated before he could sound the alarm, he wears a tormented expression.

As you lift the heavy crossbar and pull back the gate, you think, Well, there's a lot of countryside. There can't be so much of this gas as to knock out every single living thing between here and—

The gate opens, and a cloud of Effluvi-um rolls in like a fog bank.

Heart sinking, you look out. The gas blankets the countryside, thick and gray. Drifts of it flow between hills to the horizon. It surrounds every farmhouse.

"Hmm," says the weasel.

Still alone, then. Concentrating on the pieces of the Staff of Waterdeep that are hidden out here, somewhere, you venture out, leaving the gate open behind you. For a moment, you worry that the other undead will close it, but the weasel quashes that notion.

"Break into every building, yell arson, plan to destroy the city, and then close the gate politely behind them? Why? When you can knock out a hundred miles of surrounding territory, you don't have to worry about the cavalry."

The countryside looks much as you remember. The winter trees stand bare and black as fire irons. The silence is oppressive. You feel, but are not slowed by, the chilling wind. You walk on.

(If you have not already marked off the hour for your journey outside town, do so now.)

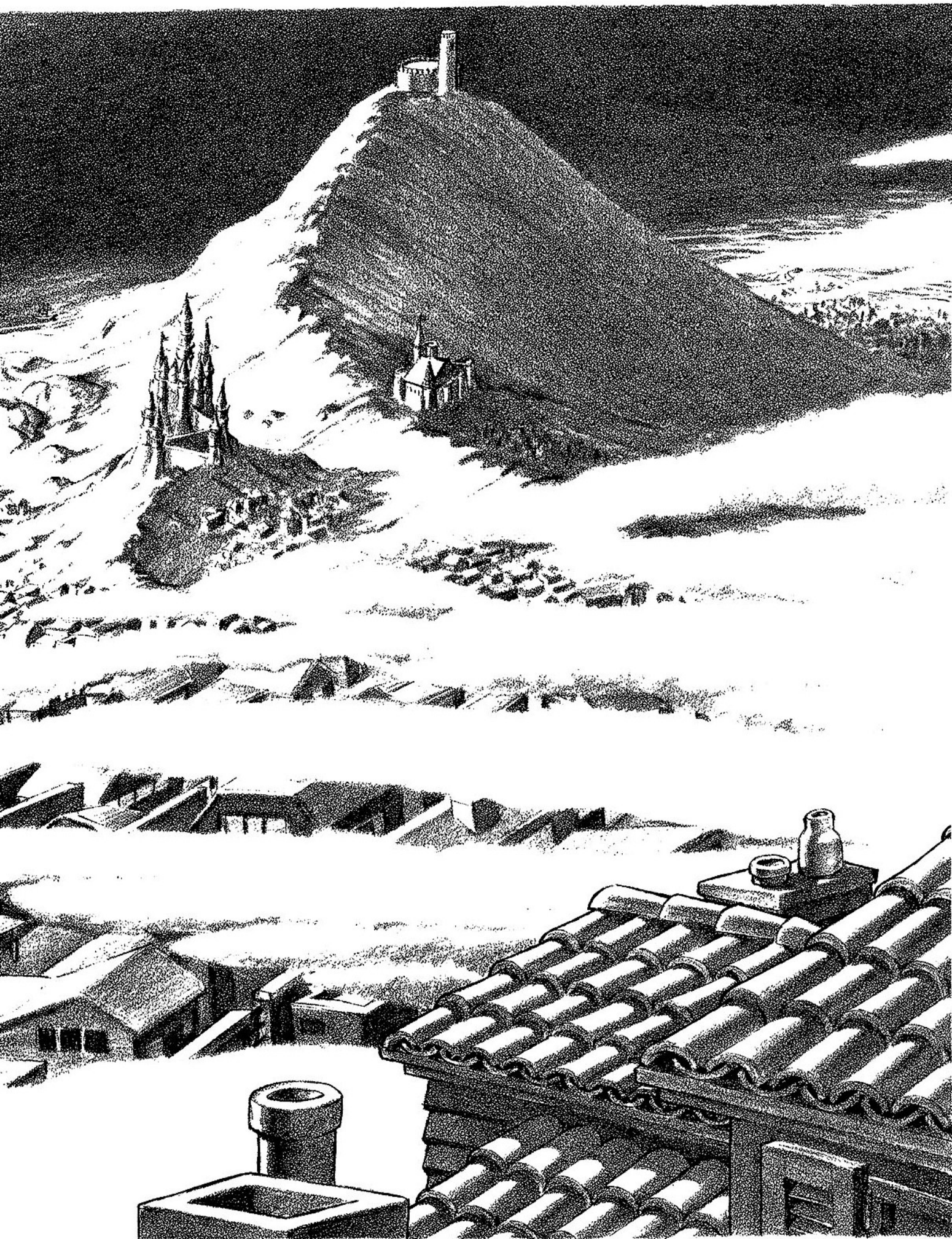
The road is lined with trees on both sides, and they grow particularly dense along one stretch. Your nose tells you first what your eyes then confirm: You approach Waterdeep's notorious City of Garbage, the dumping ground for all the city's trash. The huge heaps of refuse harbor all manner of broken goods and broken creatures . . . including the undead.

But at an equal distance in another direction, you also spy a small rural shrine, such as peasants use for worship. To reach and explore each of these places requires just half an hour apiece.

Will you go to the shrine (**110A**), or the City of Garbage (**114A**)? To return to Waterdeep, mark another hour off for the return trip and go to **82A**.



G. Barr



(See art on pages 80 and 81.)

82A Waterdeep, City of Splendors! City of a thousand years, center of art and commerce in the Forgotten Realms, most prosperous on the continent of Faerun, leader in fashion, trader in a thousand wares, the envy of all, the servitor of none. Home to well over a hundred thousand men and women and children, humans and elves and halflings. Home to merchants, artisans, wizards, moneylenders, scholars, guildsmen of every profession and persuasion, lords, ladies, gentry, thieves, peasants, princes—every character known throughout civilization.

Waterdeep, Jewel of the North . . . and now the walking dead shuffle through its streets, unchecked, like ants on a carcass.

In the winter, famous Waterdeep Harbor ices over. The city shuts down. No traffic moves in or out. What better time could the lichs choose to enact their plan? Should the city perish, few who live elsewhere in the Realms will find out before Greengrass.

From the high, brick wall around the City of the Dead, you look out across the city. Buildings crowd on one another; streets twist like twine. Patches of gray fog, the Effluvium, drift everywhere. And in the harbor, you see the whirlpool. That maelstrom in the once-quiet harbor proves the truth of all the lich told you.

You recall this view from your life, you think, but in

life the wards of the city never seemed to sprawl so large before you.

The Wards of Waterdeep: The city is divided into seven districts, or wards. The City of the Dead, where you now stand, is one such; the others are listed below. Choose a ward to visit, then go to that ward's entry to find out more about it. Each entry lists the places there that the cerebriucle says may hold a piece of the Staff of Waterdeep, or places that are otherwise helpful.

Another way to choose locations is to pick one from the map on the inside back cover. The wards are bounded by heavy lines. Each location within a ward has a section number. Go to that section to visit that location.

Now pick a location to continue your quest. Either choose one from the map on the inside back cover, or choose one of the wards below. If you want to visit the City of the Dead, go to 14A.

If you would like to visit:	turn to:
Castle Ward	41A
Dock Ward	25C
North Ward	148B
Sea Ward	78B
Southern Ward	71A
Trades Ward	30C
Waterdeep Harbor	159F
surrounding countryside	98A

82B “. . . Man bein' carried off, limp as a dyin' dog, by these two spooky types, makin' no sound between 'em. Too dark to see close from where I was up on the Dead Wall, but the one looked like he was smilin'—I mean all teeth, Sir Knight. No right arm but hangin' bone!”

A moonlit night by a low fence, and noises of the countryside around you. A farm boy, tensed like a rabbit ready to run. Companions beside you, shadowy—who?

“Where did they take the man?” you asked.

“Castle ruins, sir, not half 'n hour ago. . . .”

And you all trooped dutifully down into the ruins. That was near—no, it was far away from Waterdeep. Yet you found the lich, Haurrant—or rather, it found you. And in Waterdeep it found you again. What? Two meetings? You cannot recall.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

82C You reach for the sword, but the weasel warns, “Don't touch that. You don't know where it's been!” Perhaps it would be wise to use the shrunken head before you get too close.

“Ancient curze,” declares the head. “Plazed on zword of hero by evil wizard he killed. Wielder muzt kill a hundred men before can led it go.”

How horrible! “Does it work against undead?”

“No,” says the cerebriucle. The poltergeists let out sighs of relief.

“Hey, guy, you play some again, maybe?” asks Jyorlo.

“You must give us something to keep looking, of course,” says Veliks. “That's only fair.”

If you want to keep searching, give the poltergeists an item (mark it off your list) and turn to 114A to decide what else to investigate. Otherwise, you must leave (143D).

As you step toward the archway, a foul stench makes you pause, but you press on. There in **82D** the shadows is a monstrous creature you recognize as a ghastr—much like a ghoul, the undead flesh-eater, but incomparably more intelligent and vicious. It grins nastily at you, and with a growl and a curse, it leaps!

The ghastr's statistics are in the Combat Table on page 160. If you reduce it to 4 unlife points or less, go to 154C. If you want to escape, go to 148F. If you lose, your adventure is over.



83A "Great Haurrant, your partner Abraxa plots to assassinate you! The lich exhumed me from the grave you made, reburied me, then raised me to secure the staff of Waterdeep and kill you."

The lich raises its eyebrows, but it does not seem greatly surprised. You imagine that these liches can easily suspect the worst of one another. "Indeed," says Haurrant simply. Then it adds, "I see you carry Abraxa's cerebri- cule. Creature, does this one speak truth?"

"Yez," says the shrunken head.

"I merely pretended to serve Abraxa," you tell the lich, "but I had no intention of obeying her com- mands." You smile as you realize you speak the truth.

Haurrant is furious. He gestures and shouts, "Abraxa!" In a cloud of cool blue flame, the other lich appears, looking disoriented. "Abraxa, this menial claims you raised him to kill me. The cerebri- cule confirms it. What say you?"

Abraxa, no less resourceful than its partner, composes itself and replies, "Lies! The head has been suborned! They are dull devices at best. I shall exterminate this lying creature if you wish."

Haurrant looks uncertain, perhaps unwilling to con- front its partner in battle with Cathexis so close at hand. Haurrant might well let your statement pass for the moment and allow Abraxa to destroy you!

Have you marked Evidence Box A on your bookmark? If so, go to **68B**. If not, you must attack *both* liches (**55F**).

83B "Prepare to meet thy doom, fiend!" hisses Calperion, who has appeared beside you. Before you can stop him, the specter floats silently up toward the Bone Throne. Descending like a shroud over Haur- rant, the specter attacks!

The lich is taken completely by surprise. You hear muffled cries in your mind as the specter uses his deadly energy drain against his lifelong, and even longer, foe. In sympathy, the whole worm begins to moan! "Glory, do you think he might actually pull this off?" asks the weasel.

But the weasel's hope proves unfounded. From beneath the shroud, brilliant light erupts, rending the specter's body. Calperion falls away, glancing off the pedestal as lightly as a handkerchief as he falls to the floor. In your mind, you hear his dying words. "A curse on the undeath that twisted my mind! Brave warrior, fol- low thou upon my example and finish what I could not. I return forever to my rest!" With that, the form dissolves.

The lich, wavering but still upright, looks at you with open hatred. There is no chance for trickery now. You must fight Haurrant face-to-face. But because Calper- ion's heroic sacrifice has weakened the lich, it now has only 40 unlife points remaining, not the 100 listed in the Combat Table. Go to **99C**.

You turn the desk upside down, almost liter- ally, while searching it. Finding nothing, you **83C** expand your search into the surrounding mess of stuffed animals, workshop tools, and furniture.

But you always left this sort of searching to thieves and wizards while you were alive. You're no good at it. You find nothing. And you've cost yourself half an hour; mark it off your record, in addition to the usual time you spend exploring here.

Do you want to keep searching? If so, roll the die again. On a roll of 1 to 9, go to **86F**; 10 to 12, go to **129F**.

Or have you had enough of this search? If so, go back to **90A** to look at something else, or leave (**158F**).

If you haven't yet investigated the guard, stop reading here and go immediately to **47B**. If **83D** you have already investigated the guard, keep reading.

The heavy wooden door is decorated with an ornate steel knocking ring. The cerebri- cule, held before it, says, "Zmells of warding. Triggered if door is broken. Kind of ward—dunno."

You may knock on the door (**131E**); break the door down (**93A**); or hack open the lock (**116D**). To look around further, go to **68A**. Or leave (**86E**).

You cautiously approach the cluster of floating objects. After a moment, you realize that they- **83E** 're not just floating—they're also supported within a shape, a translucent shape you can barely distinguish from the surrounding water. The shape is large but humanoid, and made entirely of water.

A water elemental! You remember from life, without context, meeting some of these magical beings com- posed of pure liquid. Good or evil? Their personalities differed as much, one from another, as any two human beings. As you regard this one, it weakly lifts its globular head to gaze at you.

Will you attack (**46E**); talk to it (**37A**); ignore it and simply reach inside it for the treasures it contains (to do this, return to **100A** and choose one of the objects); or forget about the elemental and return to studying the lighthouse again (**100A**)?

Why would mermen need a railing around **83F** their lighthouse? No door or window opens there, so it isn't a balcony.

But wait—dangling reins tied to the railing give away its purpose. Giant sea horses, the mermen's mounts, have been tied here in the past. The broken reins also show that the terrified sea horses broke away and fled when the lich arrived.

Return to **100A** to look around, or leave (**119F**).

84A Reaching the corner of Coach Street and Carter's Way—both of them, by their smells, fully justifying the allusion to horses—you choose to enter the premises of one of the Southern Ward's seediest taverns, The Full Cup. You must have seen hundreds like it in life. At least, you think so. You don't remember.

A scarred bar stands against the wall, racks and rows of bottles behind it, stools lined before it. All around the tavern, patrons—living, human patrons—lie slumped, felled by the Effluvium, in positions not so different from those of drunkenness. Many tables and chairs have been smashed, as if in a fight.

If you have been to the tavern before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 112G. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

Check the time on your bookmark. If it is between 6:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M., go now to 140D. If it is before 6:00 A.M. or after 7:00 P.M., keep reading.

A fight is in progress, the type of tavern brawl every adventurer sees during his career—but this one is different. Four ghouls, the ragged corpse-eaters of the legions of undead, are locked in combat with what can only be a vampire, one of the aristocrats of the undead.

The vampire is pale and young, dressed in garments of the most stylish fashion, his face drawn into an expression of rage and animal ferocity. Over his head, beyond the grasping hands of the ghouls, he holds what looks like an ivory figurine, wrapped in dark velvet.

The ghouls bear weapons, while the vampire is unarmed, but it looks like an even fight. With his free hand, the vampire slashes at the ghouls with both ferocity and precision, like a martial artist. In another context, his grace might seem attractive.

You may help the ghouls against the vampire (116B); help the vampire against the ghouls (147B); or attack them all (109A). If you'd prefer simply to watch the fight to its conclusion, go to 35D. To leave, go to 146D. Or you may look at the bottles or painting; anything else is still being fought over.

If you want to look at the:	turn to:
ghouls' weapons	134D
figurine	72D
cloth around figurine	65A
bottles	131C
painting	118G

84B The sea horse is a fine steed, strong enough to bear a full-grown merman for many hours of travel. But the animal, sensing your undeath, is edgy and jumpy around you. It is impossible to get near it. Its power makes you think of your own white war-horse and how proudly you rode into battle upon it, your head held high.

You were a fine warrior, dedicated and brave. On the many occasions when you fought atop your mighty steed, you always gave a good account of yourselves. It was not a pretty sight—the blood, the gore, the cries of agony from friends and enemies alike dying around you—but it was part of your life.

Memory fades, and you return to your surroundings with a sharper sense of who and what you were.

Return to 94A to keep looking around, or go to 74D to leave the harbor and return to the docks. You also think you might save time in visiting the countryside by traveling the tidal currents here; go to 45A to leave the harbor for the countryside.

The temple. You and Celia. The lich Haurrant's attack . . . **84C**

The zombies approached. You cut them down, yet they kept coming closer. Celia leaped in front of you and held her medallion high, and the dead shied away. They crawled back like grubs fleeing from the light.

But the lich stood fast. Around its gold headband, lightning crackled. Against it, the two of you had no hope. You thought of the Ring of Far Travel. One spell left. One of you could get away and live to fight again.

You touched the ring, clutched Celia, invoked the spell, and over her shouted protests, you sent her to safety. Then you faced the lich, head unbowed.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

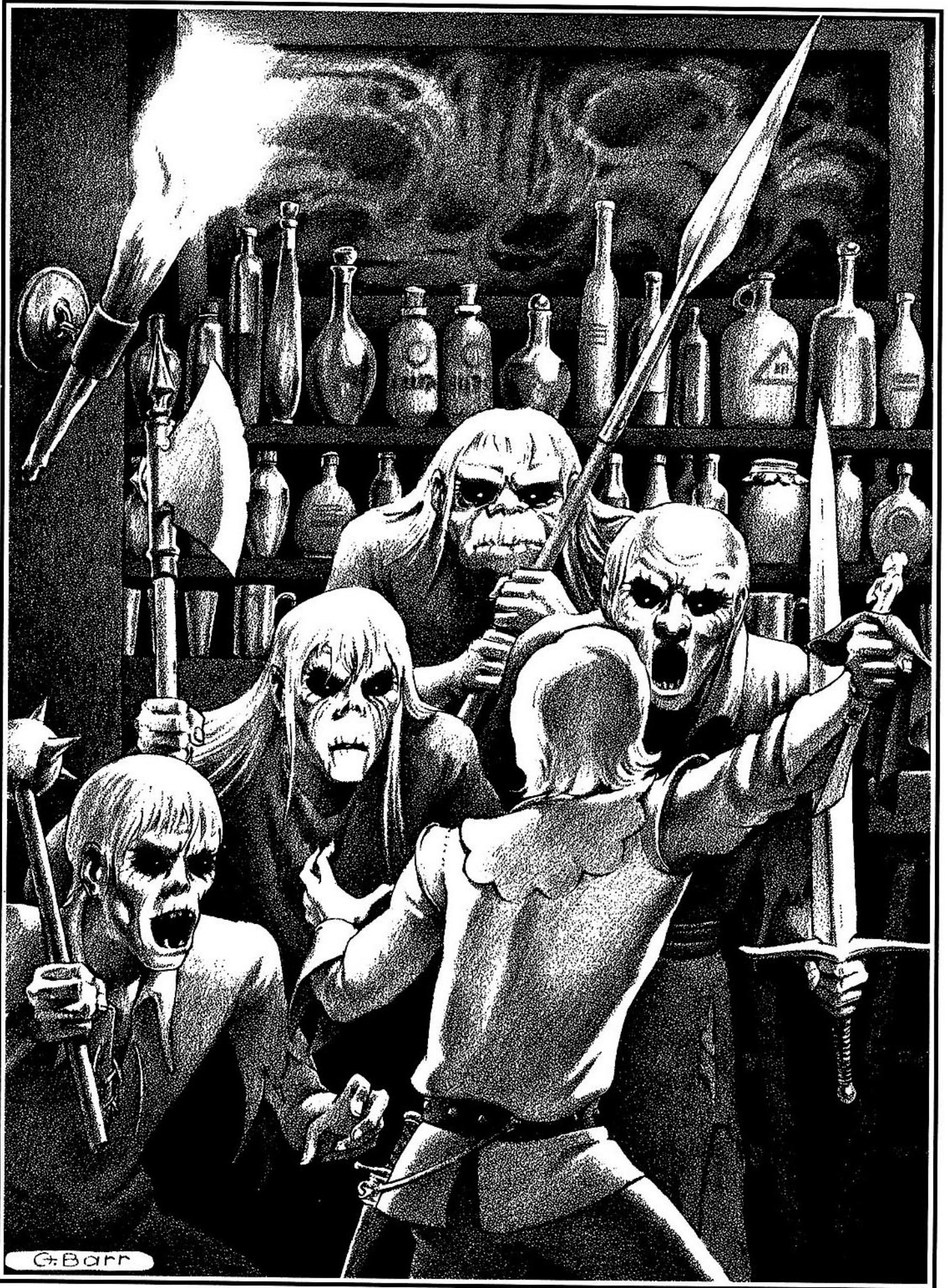
There is nothing familiar about the glowing symbol. You wish you could understand it. **84D**
The cerebriucle sniffs and declares, "Telebordation mark. Will telebord you to 'nother plaze if you touch it."

"Teleport? Where?"

"Dunno."

Will you touch the symbol (54F); keep looking around the room (72A); or leave (137F)?





G. Barr

86A You see that the merman wears an ordinary leather belt, treated to resist water damage. From the belt hangs an ordinary-looking metal canteen. But mermen don't need canteens! What can it contain?

You cannot get a good look at it if the merman is still alive. If he is, go to **94A** to make another choice. But if the merman is dead, keep reading.

The canteen contains a dozen small black pellets. You remember what they are, too—weapons . . . magical weapons. A merman warrior flings a handful of these at a foe and they explode, automatically inflicting damage.

There are a dozen pellets here. To use them during combat, fling one or more instead of swinging your sword. They explode and your enemy loses 1 unlife point for each pellet you throw. You may throw up to eight at a time; keep track of how many you use.

If you wish to take the canteen and pellets, they all count as one possession. (If you have identical pellets from another encounter, you may put them, too, in the canteen, and all still count as one possession.)

Return to **94A** to keep looking around or go to **74D** to leave the harbor and return to the docks. You also think you might save time visiting the countryside by traveling the tidal currents here; go to **45A** to leave the harbor for the countryside.

86B The wraith to your left stares at you with gimlet eyes. "In on the resurrection?" it asks portentously.

"I am not sure," you reply.

"What's not sure? You don't want to live? Those liches are offering real life! Another day, and we'll be out of this festering hole, I'll taste venison again, swim in the sea, enter a temple without fear—"

"I hear they mean to destroy the city above."

"So what! Those wretches have had their turn at life long enough. Besides, I was a healer's aide. I saw all the misery everyone goes through when he's alive. I did people a favor when they came to the healer's home and half the time I could see they were too far gone for help, so I told them she was out on a mission. Just putting them out of their misery, and saving me aggravation in the bargain. Now they'll all be out of their misery, after Cathexis!"

"Cathexis?"

"Cathexis, resurrection, life, life, life!" The wraith is raving. It drifts away, chanting louder, and others take up its chorus, "Life! Life! Life!"

Return to **28A** to do something else, or leave (**51D**).

Though you have no need to breathe, no blood to lose, the illusion of the hands is **86C** more real than reality. With pounding heart (or so it feels) and clammy, sweat-soaked hands (so you cannot help thinking), you throw yourself down on the flagstones of the castle grounds. You barely manage to grab your sword before you crawl desperately away.

Subtract 10 unlife points from your current score because of the shock of the apparition's illusion. If your point total is zero, your adventure ends here. Otherwise, you reach the castle gate and run.

You cannot come back here. If you had the crystal piece of the Staff of Waterdeep, you note that it is gone. And nothing can make you go back in there for it, either. Go to **102E**, ignoring the option to look around the castle.

There's no question that the crystal ball is **86D** magic. It glows with a muted light. Perhaps this is a powerful magical artifact that slew the ghoul! Hope rising within you, you hold the shrunken head close.

The head sniffs for a long time. "Glow," it decides. "Zee in dark. Won't ruin eyes when reading."

"Oh, well," says the weasel.

You may take the crystal ball if you wish. But darkness already means nothing to you. Will you look at the other objects on the dock (**48A**), or leave (**159D**)?

You depart the Dragon Tower, leaving it and its master's mysteries behind you. As far as the cerebri- **86E** can tell you, there is nothing else to interest you in Sea Ward. Return to **82A** to pick another destination.

As you probe the recesses of the desk, your hand accidentally flicks a secret catch. On the **86F** side of the desk, a drawer slides open.

Inside is a dragon tooth. But what could be valuable about a tooth, that the shopkeeper wished to hide it? You retrieve the tooth and hold it up to see.

And as you look at it, it transforms, into the head of the Staff of Waterdeep! Go to **45D**.

As you get close to the whirlpool, you suddenly find yourself seized by its whirling currents. You are pulled in, around and around, and then **86G** down, spinning into dizziness and blackness. Go to **122B**.

87A The torches are no longer aflame, but lie smoldering on the stage. When you pick one up, it ignites once again. Though you need no torch to see in darkness, an instant flame could be helpful in a fight.

You hold the cerebriole as near as you dare to the torch, careful not to singe it in the flame. "Typical wizard trick," the shrunken head says. "Cazt by ver' old mage who loved theater. Gave to juggling woman, Ztella. Wizard loved juggling woman ver' much."

"How do I put out the flames and carry it?"

"Hold torch upside down. Flames vanish. To make flames return, hold ubright."

You may take a torch with you if you wish. In the time it takes to draw your weapon, you may have it upright and aflame. You may strike with the torch instead of your sword. You cannot change weapons in the middle of combat unless you give your opponent a "free" chance to hit you, without retaliating.

Against zombies, skeletons, mummies, and other physical beings—the "corporeal" or solid undead—each successful strike does 9 unlife points of damage. Against such non-corporeal monsters as ghosts, banshees, and wraiths, the torch does no damage. Spectres flee before its light; treat this as victory in combat with them. But liches sneer at such a feeble weapon.

Return to 42A to look around, or 64E to leave.

87B Inside your armor, the cerebriole pipes up, "Midnight! Midnight! Muzt go!"

You recall that Abraxa gave you until midnight to complete your mission, and that soon thereafter the city would be destroyed. Whether or not you have found all the pieces of the Staff of Waterdeep, you cannot afford to delay any longer.

If you are in the House of the Homeless now, go to 34A, but you cannot choose the option given there to leave; you must go on to 122B. If you are not in the House of the Homeless, keep reading.

You drop what you are doing and leave. In the open air, the shrunken head sniffs and bellows, "Thiz way!" Holding it aloft like a lantern on a dark evening, you let the head guide your steps through the city.

The city is now deserted. No undead remain to ransack the homes and shops. They have left nothing but destruction in their wake.

Now and then you make what seems a logical turn,

but the head shouts, "Wrong! Wrong!" Soon you realize it is guiding you toward the destination Abraxa mentioned twenty-four hours earlier. "Seek the artifact in the House of the Homeless."

In the City of the Dead, there is no sign of destruction. This place, already dead, must have held little interest for those who should by rights inhabit it. You enter the House of the Homeless, the mausoleum of the forgotten.

Inside the archway, near the portal that leads to the underground catacombs, you spot a lone ghoul. Narrow in the chest, hunched in its movements, it prowls like a jackal. In each hand, it holds a long cylinder wrapped in rags. One is of dull granite, the other grayish gold.

"Ztraff of Waterdeep! Two piezes!"

You leap at the ghoul, but as quick as a hyena, it launches itself into the tunnel maze. Racing after it, you barely notice that you are passing through a magical gate erected by the ancient mage Anacaster.

The portal bridges two universes, connecting this one with a realm of infinite tunnels. Only a small section of that labyrinth is used as a crypt. The weasel cries, "If you let that thing get too far ahead—"

"I know!" you shout back. You sprint after the creature, sword held high. Black tunnels twist downward, past endless rows of burial urns, past bare rock, past all torchlight. But your undead eyes serve you well, and your ears trace the footfalls of your quarry.

You run downward, legs pounding, undead endurance carrying you far beyond human limits. Your chest burns more painfully with every step, yet you keep going.

Your worst fears are realized, however, for the ghoul has lost you in the maze. "Blast!" exclaims the weasel.

Suddenly you hear a splash! You hear a body strike—water? But there is no river here. Running toward the sound, you come upon another gate. Cold air rushes through it to a tunnel beyond. You hear the thunder of water. A cataract of red liquid splashes below.

"Through here! Here!" yells the shrunken head.

"Where does it lead?"

"To tunnel under Waterdeep! Through here!"

The weasel asks, "Is that such a good idea?"

But there is no getting around it. The shrunken head says there is no other route. To reach the artifact, you leap through to the water below. Go to 120A.

88A The vase is full of trash. You sort through it and find rags, chicken bones, a smashed wooden toy, bits of glass, dead flowers, a banana peel, some broken dishes, and a string of wooden beads, but no staff. The poltergeists giggle as you search.

Perhaps the vase itself? The cerebri- cule sniffs and sniffs. "Part of Ztaff of Waterdeep," its voice booms. "Good concealment zpell. Try rubbing vase."

You rub the vase, cleaning off the dirt, and in your hand, it transforms into a short rod—a piece of the staff!

"We win!" the weasel cheers.

Check off the ceramic piece on your bookmark list and take it with you. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to **156A** to find out more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it; but first make a note of this section (**88A**) so you may return here after you are finished.

"Congratulations," says Veliks stiffly.

Jyorlo adds, "Hey, maybe thet not only peeze here, you know? Wanna play again?"

Now that you have the piece of the Staff of Waterdeep, you feel little need to stay. But if you think there might be another piece here, give the poltergeists another of your possessions (mark it off your list) and return to **114A** to choose. Or leave (**143D**).

88B Swinging your sword, you strike a heavy blow to the framework near the object you want. The blade sinks deep, but it fails to cut through the bone. You start to pull the blade back to try again—

"Aaah!" you cry. The bone is growing around your sword blade! It's trapped! You pull harder, but to no avail. You know you have no chance to succeed without that sword!

You brace your feet against the framework, grab a bone strut for support, and ready yourself for an enormous effort. A shooting pain in your hands and feet stops you. Looking down, you scream again. The bone is growing over your limbs! Long white tendrils, as hard as rock, form a sheath around your legs and one arm.

You strike at one with your other arm until your fingers break under the stress and your dried blood flies out in a powder. But you cannot stop the quick march of bone up over your shoulders and hips, around your torso, up your neck. A white mass rises over your widened eyes. You find yourself entombed once more, and your mission has ended as it began.

Against your will, you merge into the enormous frame that forms the construct. By the time it rises to destroy Waterdeep, your individuality will be lost, and you will join in the destruction with enthusiasm.

The skeletons move silently, as you recall from facing them in life. Even as an undead, **88C** you hear no speech from these mindless frames. The two skeletons bearing the living guard have reached the bottom of the zombie staircase and set him down, none too gently. They await further commands. As of now, no commander is around.

Their mindlessness disturbs and, somehow, infuriates you. What rest is there in death, when one's bones may be turned to the purposes of others? Talking to these monsters is pointless, but perhaps you should destroy them, just to put them out of their (and the human race's) misery.

Will you destroy the skeletons (**65D**), leave (**102E**), or return to **32A** to look at something else?

The unicorn that bore this horn was a valiant animal that died fighting to protect an innocent named Lila from a band of brigands. **88D** The cerebri- cule explains that when the unicorn died, it tossed its head, and the horn flew to Lila's hand. As long as she held it, the brigands found they could not come near her. They were held back by some invisible force.

Eventually Lila married a wealthy merchant, who had the horn mounted on a rocking horse for their children. In later years, the magic wore off, but the horn remained a prized possession.

Return now to the text you were reading.

You decide that anything that might strengthen you and weaken the lich is worth trying. **88E** "Would that carved ring on your finger help me serve you?" you ask Abraxa.

For a long moment the lich peers at you. Does it suspect? The weasel whispers, "I think maybe you've bungled this one."

But just as you are convinced of your failure, Abraxa speaks. "Very well. I suppose a good warrior looks for any weapon to help his cause. Lose this and you perish." With ragged, dark fingernails, the lich removes the ornate ring and hands it to you.

Testing the cerebri- cule, you hold the ring under its nose. The head sniffs, its eyebrows lift, and it speaks in a deep, gravelly voice. "Ver', ver' maaagical ring! Putz up invisible zhield, makez wounds lezz."

When you wear this ring, an enemy's successful attacks do 1 less unlife point of damage than they ordinarily would. You put on the ring. Mark the shield ring on your list of possessions.

"You have taken too much of my time," says the lich. Go to **20A**.

89A “Friend, do you know of the Staff of Waterdeep?”

“Funny thing happened on my way to the theater,” says the phantasmal funmaker. “Guy asks me, ‘How can I get the Staff of Waterdeep?’ I tell him, ‘Invite them over for a party and they’ll do anything for you!’ Get it? Staff, like an office staff—

“But seriously, folks,” it continues, “those pieces of the staff do get around, don’t they? I was juggling yesterday, and wham! In through the door of the theater flies this wooden stick. ‘Whoa!’ says I. ‘I’ve heard of letting the chips fall where they may, but this is *ridiculous!*’ Turns out to be a piece of the Staff of Waterdeep, and lemme tell ya, folks, as a juggling club it ain’t bad. You might say—I *can’t keep my hands off it!* Yowza!”

The ghostly hands brandish one of the wooden clubs between them. It seems to flicker: one moment a club, the next a short wooden dowel. “Ztaff of Waterdeep,” says the cerebriucle. “Dizguised with illusion.”

You must have that piece of the staff! But the spectral monologist is still cascading it with the other objects. How will you try to get the wooden piece? Will you attack the jester (74B); ask it to stop juggling (131B); try to bribe it (93B); or just wait, trying to get on its good side by laughing at its jokes (117A)?

89B You look at the apprentice’s amulet. From outside the circle, it looks like a small carved stone attached to a velvet choker. You cannot look at it closely or use the cerebriucle until you enter the protective circle.

If the two humans are still protected by their circle, stop reading here and go back to 76A to choose something else. If the humans are no longer protected by the circle, keep reading.

The amulet is pale green, slightly luminescent, and warm from the heat of the apprentice’s body. Close examination reveals numerous tiny etchings on the stone—or is it ivory? Green ivory? You don’t know what to make of it, and the etchings are unfamiliar to you.

The cerebriucle looks the amulet over, snuffles at it, and pronounces judgment: “Made by wizard epezpecially for apprentice. Protectz wearer. Makes it harder to hit you.”

While you wear this amulet of protection, enemies you fight must roll 1 lower than the Combat Table says in order to hit you. For example, if the chart says a creature hits you on a roll of 8 or less, it actually must roll 7 or less to hit. If you wear the amulet, it counts as one of your possessions.

Return to 76A to look around, or leave (65E).

The shrunken head tells you that the dragon who grew this tooth was a decent golden creature named Ktar, who lived in harmony with the village near its cave for many generations. **89C**

When a huge, ruthless black dragon attacked the village and threatened its lair, Ktar fought the more powerful beast valiantly and managed to defeat the invader, but died in the process.

Out of respect to Ktar, a village wizard had the tooth mounted. Over the course of many years, the tooth finally found its way to the taxidermist shop, as an example of the art. Khelben found in it an example of heroism, courage, and compassion, the qualities he wished to embody in the staff.

Return now to the text you were reading.

You reach over to take the floating white gem, and suddenly the water roils as the nearly invisible water elemental that surrounds the gem twists, writhes . . . and attacks you. It’s moving slowly, though. **89D**

The water elemental strikes out at you, a slow, ponderous swing you duck beneath easily. Your return stroke with the sword drives straight through the strange creature. In a trice, it is gone, its “body” merged with the surrounding water, and the gems and bottle within float down to the harbor floor. The being must have been very weak to perish so easily. Go to 140C.

You draw your sword with a sure hand and strike at the monster. Grinning, it jumps the blade, then shoots an unerring dart of flame at you. Before you can even react, the creature disappears. Subtract 6 from your current unlife point total, due to the flame’s damage. **89E**

“Hot shot,” says the weasel.

Reeling from the attack, you plod slowly toward the exit, struggling to collect yourself. Go to 146F.

Your lack of attention to the figure results in a total lack of reaction. After a few moments, you recognize it as a travel portal, shaped like a human figure. It is no threat, unless you step through it, perhaps. Return to 72A to explore, or leave (137F). **89F**

Hoping to defeat this adversary before it can attack, you leap at it, bringing your blade down fiercely. You strike empty air—and everything moves. You feel yourself whirling through nothingness. **89G**

“Not a statue, champ,” says the weasel, just before you arrive in another universe. “A portal.”

Roll the die. On a roll of 1 to 8, go to 112C; 9 to 12, go to 150A.

90A The taxidermist's shop, a dark and dusty building with the shop on the ground floor and living quarters above, sits on a corner where two of the dingier streets in Trades Ward meet. Windows face both streets; in the windows, stuffed animals stare and snarl and growl at passersby. But no one passes except you.

If you have been to the taxidermist's shop before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 141F. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

Inside, the shop is musty (you still smell dust and decay quite well), dim (lit by a single oil lamp), and cluttered. It is like an animals' graveyard, where the dead are forced to stand on display rather than rest.

The room is dominated by a large desk that also serves as a workbench. A vice is clamped on one side, and tools are strewn over its scratched top. More tools and materi-

als, as well as scrolls and papers, fill the desk's cubbyholes.

Scattered all around the shop are stuffed animals—and more than animals. On the desk is a pixie, still in the process of being stuffed, glass eyes open, staring blindly. Next to the desk stands a huge, stuffed frog, one of the ancient amphibian-human hybrids that used to menace human settlements.

You may leave (158F) or look around.

You may investigate the:	by turning to:
stuffed pixie	79A
clutter in cubbyholes	107E
scrolls and papers	119A
stuffed kobold	135D
medusa's head	102C
rib cage	24C
stuffed frog	98E

90B "I have need of that figurine. Defend yourself, monster!" So saying, you stride forward, swinging your blade. The vampire hisses, baring fang and claw, and responds in kind. The fight is on.

While he has been talking, the vampire has rapidly regenerated the damage it sustained from the ghouls. It now lacks 8 unlife points from the figure given on the Combat Table on page 160, due to the attacks of the ghouls, but it is still very strong.

Run this fight to its conclusion. At the beginning of every round, the vampire gains back 1 unlife point—it quickly regenerates damage. (It will not regenerate above its starting total.)

If you wish to escape the fight, go to 146D, but only after a full round of combat, when the vampire has made its attack on you. If you reduce the vampire to zero unlife points, its form dissolves into a white cloud of mist. The fog fills the room, then fades away. Go to 90E.

90C When you lunge for the bone filament at your right, you realize from its swaying motion that the thing must be hollow. Inside it, you hear a *shooshing* sound. The tube is drinking the blood, funneling it into the structure!

Clinging to the filament like a sailor adrift, you consider how to climb onto the structure. As you do, something moves beneath your arms. You see a mouth and teeth growing out of the bone beneath you! "*Release us, hateful creature!*" cries the mouth. Frantically you shift

your arms as terror burns through you like acid. The teeth clamp on your hand!

Panicking, you pull loose, leaving a patch of your flesh behind. Subtract 4 unlife points from your current total. You plunge into the river and float downstream. In the hot blood-water, you feel quite cold. Go to 36A.

The zombies and skeletons have gone, as have most of the rest of the undead plundering the castle. The tower rooms have been cleaned out. The guard they were carrying still lies on the ground, unconscious, but the staff is gone.

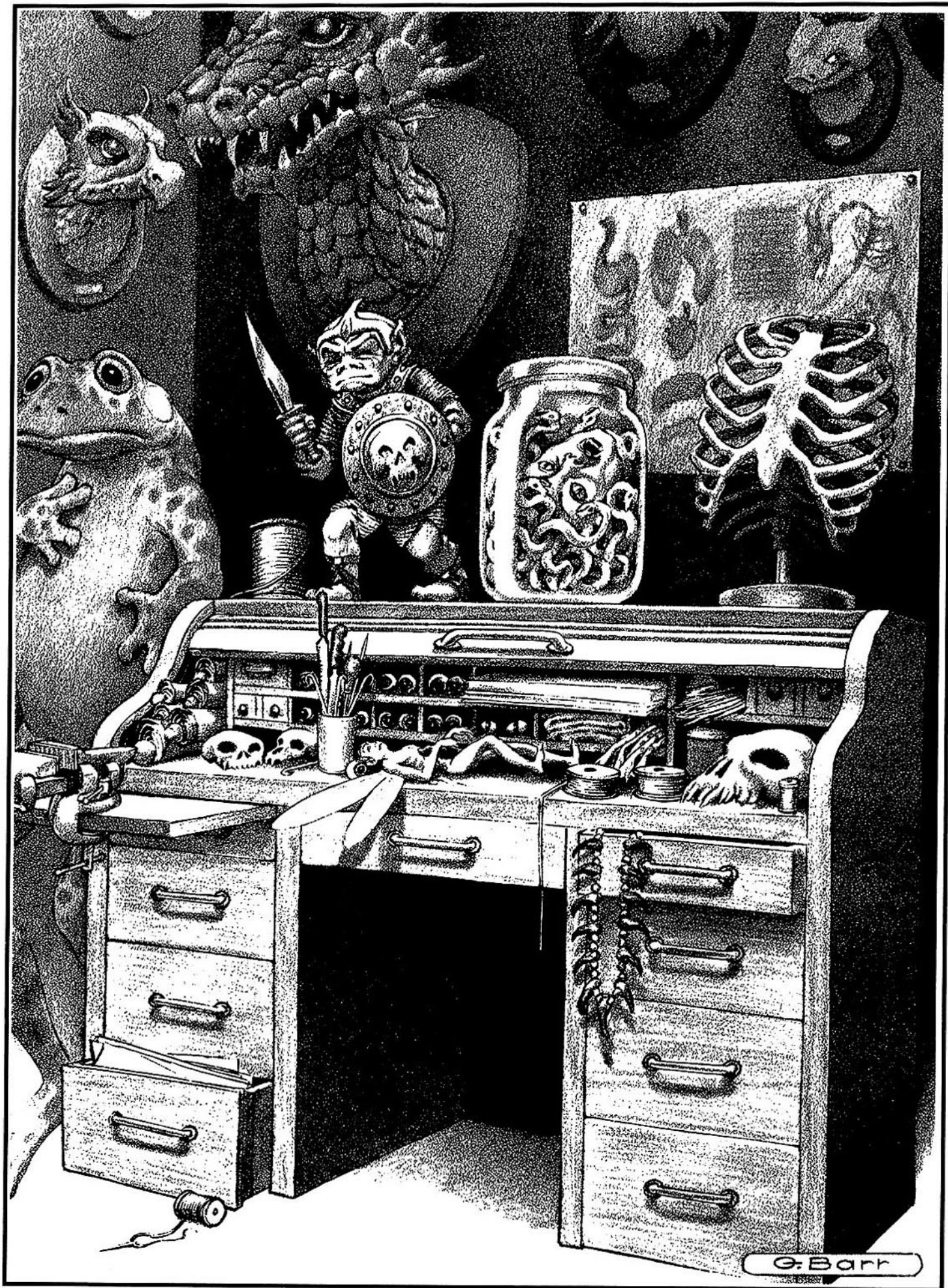
There is nothing left to look at but the horse (21B), if you haven't investigated it already. Then you must leave (go to 102E but ignore the choice of looking through the castle).

Wearily, you stand over the bodies of your enemies. You permit yourself a brief feeling of triumph. **90E**

"You fight like a mad weasel," opines the weasel. "Not bad. Now, what is that thing they were fighting over?" Go to 72D.

In a snit at your behavior, Bumberly and his desk vanish. The heavy book plops to the floor, raising a little cloud of dust. You may look at it if you wish (122C); everything else is gone. Or will you go upstairs and look around on the other floors (140E); or leave the Hall of Sages (149D)? **90F**





G. Barr

92A When you approach, the monster sighs, a moan that seems to rise from its toes. "Isn't she wonderful?" it asks rhetorically. "There's no one like her where I come from."

"Where is that?" you ask.

"Oh, I mustn't say. The big fellow instructs his adjutants to keep strict confidence. He probably wouldn't like my dallying in this fashion, either. But no one can contact him except us—and the lichs."

You ask more questions about "the big fellow" and these other "adjutants" the creature mentions, but it refuses to answer.

"Oh, when I think of the wasted life I have led and the new ways of living she could teach me!" declares the adjutant with a sigh. "Yet it can never be; I am not deserving of her. Like the desert shrub that drinks no rain, I root in the graveled base of life without requital."

"Pretty, but it doesn't scan," the weasel says.

Does this adjutant's plight touch a responsive chord in you? If you have a ring or other device that lets the user make another fall in love with him, you may give it to the creature (108A).

If you don't have such a device, or if you think giving it to the creature isn't a good idea, go back to 138A to look at something else. Or you may leave; since the tunnels are closing up behind you, the only way to go is forward (144A).

92B Your curt refusal to give Blunt any loot infuriates the wraith. "You will be sorry you angered me, sirrah," it says. "Here, as above, I am a man of influence."

It turns to the line of wraiths. "Friends!" it shouts. "This armored dolt says he's going to the lichs and telling them not to allow us into Cathexis!"

Shocked reactions arise from the spirits. "What?" "Why not?" "What business is it of his?"

"That's not true—" you begin, but Blunt shouts you down.

"Are we going to sit idly by while this fiend steals away our chance at life, at true sweet life, and revenge against the living? Can you permit him to plunder your fulfillment?"

The wraiths are clamoring now. "Don't let him get away!" "Put him in an urn!" "Rip his head off!"

You try to calm them and explain the truth. But it's too late. Blunt has turned them into a mob. The merchant turns to you; a smug smile is plastered across his face. That is the last sight you see before you have to run back to the surface (51D). You cannot return to the House of the Homeless for at least half an hour, until the wraiths have settled down.

"But have you forgotten your oath?" Karinna asked. Young Karinna, with her hair pale yellow, like summer sunshine! **92C**

"My oath does not forbid love, or what would Torm have me fight for?" you replied. Her gentle laugh, her warm embrace, festival noises around—Midsummer Night.

Musty, looming weather that year, you recall. A bad omen, but the couples chasing one another through the woods paid it no mind. You hunted her all night, and at last she relented. Two months later you met Korlo.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

Falling! You grabbed the pit edge and caught Karinna an inch above the spikes. Her breath came in short, loud gasps, hot against your arm. "Korlo . . . is Korlo all right?" she asked you. **92D**

"He didn't get a scratch." In your mind, the sudden thought, Stupid, stupid! If anything still dwells in this ruin, it's sure to find us now! Should have taken the left path, as I wanted. But precious Korlo . . . The memory slips away.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

The construct is a worthy opponent, but it feels no emotion. You, driven by a desperate desire to save the city and its inhabitants, don't allow yourself to fail. The construct collapses on your sword. No blood marks its passing. **92E**

Searching its body, you find a key at its belt—a key with a head shaped like a dragon's upper body and wings. The shrunken head shows no interest in it, but you find that the key fits the lock on the Dragon Tower's door.

What now? If you wish to turn the key and enter the tower, go to 129E. If you'd prefer to look around a little first, return to 68A—but mark "129E" on your bookmark, and go directly there when you're ready to enter the tower. If you just wanted to defeat the construct, you may simply leave (86E).

You decide the woman would be beautiful to living eyes. Your own undead perceptions find her mere physical details less wonderful than the aura of life surrounding her, a glittering array of colors. The same aura surrounds every patron here, and every living being you have seen. The truest beauty, the only real beauty, is that of life—and you had to die to find out! **92F**

The woman wears a ruby ring. You may try on the ring (54A), look around some more (62A), or leave (108G).

93A A battering ram, something to batter the door with . . . Your gaze falls on the construct's body, now as stiff as a board. Shouldering it, staggering a bit under its weight (what is this thing made of?), you charge.

Just before you hit, you hear the shrunken head yell inside your armor: "No! Protective zpell! Wait—"

Too late. You hit.

As the construct's head smashes into the wood, a blast of freezing, foggy air envelops you, issuing from the door-ring. Fatally cold, it stiffens your limbs . . . but only a little. Though this is powerful magic, it has little effect on one already dead.

Your first blow cracked the door. You assay another couple of blows, punctuated by the freezing mist from the door-ring, and the door crashes down.

You become aware of a clattering, clacking noise within your armor. You pull out the head; its teeth are chattering uncontrollably. It sneezes twice and grimaces, but it says nothing.

Will you enter the tower (129E)? If not, you can look around some more; return to 68A, but the next time you look at the door, go directly to 129E (mark this on your bookmark so you do not forget.) To leave, go to 86E.

93B "Ho, ghost!" you call. "What will you take for one of those clubs?"

"What will I take? He asks me what I'll take. A lot of abuse, if I drop one! Heh!"

"What may I offer in exchange for a club?"

"Hey, hey, audience participation! Tell you what, got anything to juggle? Toss it to me, and I'll pass you a club at the same time. It'll wow the crowd!"

You consider your possessions. You will not part with the cerebriole or your magical sword, and the haunt cannot juggle a weasel skull. Do you have anything long and sticklike, such as a rod of lordly might, a wand, or a fish-scaling knife? What about a sphere (hand-sized or larger), such as a crystal globe? The haunt will not take weapons or jewelry.

If you have a suitable item, mark it off your list and pass it to the ghost; in the exchange it will throw you the wooden piece of the Staff of Waterdeep. ("The balance was lousy anyway," the ghost comments.)

If you have no suitable possession, or don't want to give it up, you may attack the ghost (74B); ask it nicely to stop juggling so you can bargain (131B); or you may wait, hoping to ingratiate yourself with the haunt by laughing at its jokes (117A).

93C This preposterous volume cites legends that claim the deep reaches of the planet once harbored tremendously large worms, the so-called "Great Annelids." These creatures, said to be nearly a mile long,

burrowed tunnels through the ground that could hold an army, and the book claims that the tunnels are still there, many miles below the surface. The book says the worms' food source was believed to be lava pools deep underground. This is silly stuff, you decide.

Mark off half an hour (in addition to the usual time you spend exploring the library). Go to 152A to read other books here, 38A to look at other items in the library, or 119G to leave.

Scryblom soon seems to forget you are here. His monologue meanders through growing **93D** seasons, watering schedules, early frosts and late thaws, planting depths, seed dispersion, buds, bulbs, pods, fruits and nuts, fungi, diseases, worms, flowering annuals, and century plants. When he wanders to the subject of dormancy, you feel keen sympathy and rise in disgust.

Mark off half an hour, in addition to the usual time you spend exploring here. Will you go back downstairs and look around some more (22A); or leave the Hall of Sages (149D)?

This glazed amphora was probably used to transport oils, wines, perfumes, and other liq- **93E** uids across the sea. You see a black, smudgy stain at its bottom.

"What did this carry?" you ask of the cerebriole.

The shrunken head sniffs at the thing, uninterested in its outside but slightly more intrigued when held over the opening. "Minor maagic. Unguent, used by nobles and wizards. Repairs clothes and leather, like new. Good for antiques."

If you wish to take this unguent of repair, you may. You will have to reach in and scrape it out by hand, as the amphora is too large to carry around. To do this, go to 44C. Otherwise, return to 104A to keep looking around, or leave (108F).

It's a conventional wreath of interwoven holly **93F** leaves. A few branches winding through it bear colorful berries. The cerebriole sniffs them and says, "Ver' tazty berries." A long, serpentine tongue slips out and licks its wrinkled lips.

Tasty, it said. Well, you wouldn't give them to the shrunken head in any case. Will you eat some of the berries (146E); forget about them and leave (78F); or return to 18A to keep looking around?

94A Standing among the docks, you look out over Waterdeep Harbor. No wind is blowing, and the only motion in the water should be a faint ripple of waves . . . but far out in the harbor, you see an indistinct turbulence—Abraxa's whirlpool.

You walk between the docks and march straight down into the water. It's an eerie sensation. As one of the living dead, you know that exploring under the water will not harm you. Since you do not breathe, you cannot drown. And yet you pause, with a twinge of apprehension held over from life, just before you plunge yourself fully into the harbor.

The weasel, the spokesman of your subconscious, voices your worry. "No! Don't go down there! We'll drown!" You cannot quite rid yourself of life's fears.

Still, you have a mission. Submerging yourself fully, swimming and walking along the harbor bottom, you press on. After a few minutes, the weasel says, "Hmmm. Guess I haven't adjusted to being dead yet. It's all in the thinking, you know."

Air bubbles forth from the shrunken head's mouth, and you peer down at it. With the telepathy of the undead, you ask, "Are you all right?"

"Zalty. But 'zall right."

The world below is bizarre and fascinating. Schools of fish, unaffected by the Effluvium, dart here and there, feeding. Some, bolder fish, sidle up and nibble at you, but your undecaying flesh has no attraction for them; they swim off, uninterested.

The harbor bottom is free of large plants and utterly devoid of the trash typically found at the bottom of harbors. You dimly remember that merman hired by the city keep the harbor clean. Still, it's better to swim than walk. A thin layer of mud coats the harbor bottom, and walking only stirs it up. You can see in these depths nearly as well as in the air above, but mud still obscures your vision.

At the edge of a gravelly slope above deeper water, you almost wish for blindness as you spot the whirlpool.

In the distance, a veritable tornado of water descends

from the water's surface to touch the harbor bottom. Ice floes from above spiral down the length of the funnel to the whirlpool's narrowest point, where it touches—a lighthouse! Built much in the human fashion, the lighthouse stands on the harbor bottom, tall, simple, and elegant, topped by an enclosure for its magical light. This is the merman's lighthouse, guiding the merman patrols that guard the entrances to Waterdeep Harbor, while at the same time providing a subsurface beacon for ships above. But its light is now eerily shrouded.

Beside the lighthouse is a garden, something of a park for the mermen, where underwater plants grow and rare sea life prospers.

If you have been here before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 154D. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

You are not alone in observing the whirlpool. A few dozen yards from you, toward the lighthouse, floats a sentinel—a merman astride his steed, a giant sea horse. You can see a little of his expression at this angle; it's unhappy, worried. What does he know of the danger above? Would he help you, or would he take you for the enemy?

You may approach the merman in a friendly fashion (123F); attack him from behind, although you can recall this wasn't your usual practice in life (96D); or alert him to your presence and attack openly (103B). Or you may leave the harbor altogether, returning to the city proper (82A) or the docks (74D), or emerging in the countryside outside Waterdeep (45A).

When you are free to look around, you may investigate the:	by turning to:
harpoon	96E
sea horse	84B
belt and canteen	86A
lighthouse	100A
sunken garden	104A

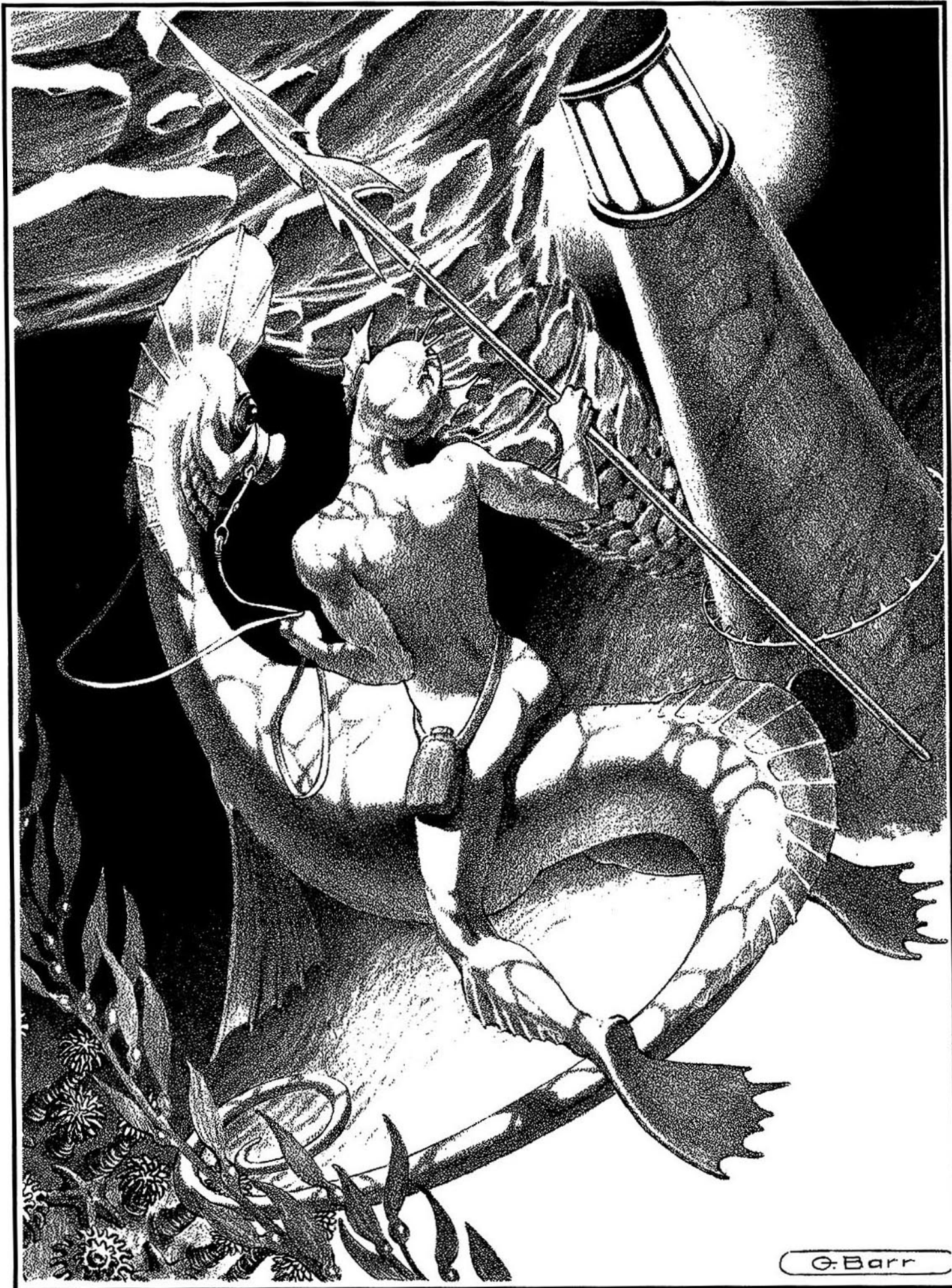
94B You browse through the book for some time, until one sentence almost jumps off the page at you. "In the North, many paladins, the knight-clerics who crusade for justice, worship the demigod Torm, called 'the True' or sometimes 'the Brave One,' embodiment of duty, loyalty, and obedience in the pantheon of law and justice."

The name rings like a carillon of bells. Seeing the gauntlet, symbol of Torm, reproduced as an illustration,

you feel yourself swept back through the years of your career. *Read the next section of your Memory Trace.* After you are done, return here.

Mark off half an hour (in addition to the usual time you spend exploring the library). Do you wish to keep reading in the book? If so, go to 122D. Otherwise, go to 152A to look at other books on the shelves, 38A to examine other things in the library, or 119G to leave.





G. Barr

96A Fearful of a trap, you drive your sword deep into the specter's black outline. Your blade encounters no resistance, but the being screams and the zombies scream as well! The whole area resounds with howls.

If you are being chased by ghouls, the noise alerts them to your position. Stop reading here and go to **120D**. If ghouls are not chasing you keep reading.

Amid the cacophony, you notice that the specter is not resisting. You hear his whimpering in your mind. You drive your blade in once more, and the noise from the forest of zombie fibers redoubles. The specter begins to murmur something.

As you prepare to strike still another blow, you realize he is thanking you.

"Kind creature," he gasps. "Put an end to my torment. . . . Ah, my family, friends, joy in nature . . . all gone. Now, swordsman, do the deed!"

You pause. The specter's voice sounds richly human. "You identify with him, don't you?" asks the weasel.

It's hard to say whether rescue or murder would be more merciful now. Will you administer the *coup de grace*, killing the specter (**142A**)? Or will you smash the mirrors in an attempt to rescue him from the torture (**147A**)?

96B Haurrant. Tall, skeletal, dressed in ocher robes, a gold headband circling a misshapen skull, ruby and emerald rings on withered fingers. You remember Haurrant. The lich incanted a spell, gesturing broadly over you while you looked up, helpless.

In your mind, you heard its voice. "Rest not. Come forth from death and serve me as my slave!" It was not a request but a command. Dying there on the altar, you knew the greatest terror of your life. Black waves surged up, heat washed over you, your pulse pounded in your ears, and then it stilled.

In cold, black emptiness you floated. Insensate, you felt awareness of nothing except the pain of life's departure. But a sense of universal warmth and comfort came to you, the feeling that Torm was with you.

You heard no voice, only felt an emotion of reassurance. The knowledge grew in your mind like a beautiful flower. You would not give way to the lich's evil! Torm could not rescue you from the lich's spell, on pain of disrupting the balance of the gods, but since you perished on his altar, he saw that you could still serve the cause you served in life.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. If you receive any more instructions to read a Memory Trace entry, ignore them. Return to the story.

You do not remember dying. But after your death, you saw the lich, Haurrant, once **96C** more. The undead wizard gestured to its zombie minions, and you heard its voice in your mind. "Bury him until I have need of him. This one could defeat Abraxa if any can." You stared up with undying eyes, and later you saw the clods of dirt fall upon your face as they began to bury you.

The rest is darkness. But Haurrant did not raise you. Abraxa did! And how could Haurrant curse you with undeath, yet allow you to remain good at heart? You have no answers.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

With the silence of the undead, you sneak up behind the merman and his steed. One single, savage thrust of your sword, and he slides from his saddle, dead. The sea horse bolts in panic and flees to safety. **96D**

You look down at the fallen soldier, envy of his death warring with guilt over your cowardly attack. "Brave soldier," says the weasel to you. "Too bad you have no children to beat up."

Mark Evidence Box D on your bookmark. Then return to 94A to look around. (Note that you cannot look at the sea horse now; it has fled.)

You cannot examine the harpoon unless the merman is dead. If the merman still lives, **96E** return to **94A** and make another choice, or leave (go to **45A** to explore the countryside or **74D** to return to the docks). If the merman is dead, however, keep reading.

The harpoon is an ordinary weapon—the cerebricule says there is no enchantment on it. It inflicts 8 points of damage with each blow, but you are unfamiliar with its use. Your die roll to hit with the harpoon is reduced by 1 from the roll you need when using your sword. If you wish to take it, it counts as a possession.

Return to **94A** to keep looking around or go to **74D** to leave the harbor and return to the docks. You also think you might save time in visiting the countryside by traveling the tidal currents here; go to **45A** to leave the harbor for the countryside.

97A "Greetings," you say tentatively—after all, how does one strike up a conversation with a mummy?

"Ho there," says the one in the hat, and the others follow suit. You wonder if his bizarre headwear is supposed to mark him as a leader.

"What news?" you ask.

"Don't you know?" All three focus on you, at least a little. The leader nudges his companion, and this time he doesn't miss. "He doesn't know!" he exclaims, amused.

"Know what?" you prompt.

"Cathexis. Time to celebrate!"

"Celebrate," echoes his dour friend, and the third mummy giggles hysterically.

"Resurrection for us all, friend! Down under the ground. New life! Didn't you know? A grand celebration there'll be."

"Strix will see to that," puts in the giggler, with another maniacal laugh.

You may continue talking to the mummies if you like, although you know better than to mention the Staff of Waterdeep (since they are probably looking for it, too). Will you ask about their possessions (125B); about "Strix" (71B); about the coming resurrection (54B); about the little monster (120B)? You may go back to 52A to look around, or leave (146F).

97B Looking around this area of the "worm," as the ghost called it, you shudder at each new sight. The ghouls soften into boneless blobs and stretch thin across the framework, their organs visible as lumps in the doughy flesh. Gaping mouths gibber with—pleasure? Or pain? Eyes drift apart, as though floating on melting wax. And what a look of mingled horror, ecstasy, and madness in those eyes!

"Ye wretched beast, have ye nuhwhere else t' guh?" cries the ghost to the strange creature looking on. "Your piercin' stare is gettin' un me nerves!"

"I'm so glad you told me, Silas," says the creature in an amicable baritone. "Shall I report to the big fellow that my supervision is annoying you?"

"Ach! Nuh, nuh, sorry, I meant nuh harm." The ghost, Silas, backs away and seems to search for something else to do—and quickly. Its eyes fall on you, and it glares menacingly. If you haven't already talked to the ghost, you may talk with it now (128A); brush it off by talking to the creature instead (119C); or try to gain the ghost's favor by attacking the creature (52C). Whether or not you have talked with the ghost already, you may also leave (56E).

97C The wand is about a yard long, striped, with a round, painted ball at the end. The jagged base shows it has been broken. Several feet away is a pil-

ing where the wand apparently was mounted. You can see its base there.

The head, sniffing at the wand, announces, "Protection. Protectz from heavy waves. Waves cannot deztroy dockz when thiz is in plaze."

There are few waves in protected Waterdeep Harbor. The wand looks old; perhaps it was mounted after the Night of Black Wind, when a wizard tried to destroy the city with a waterspout.

You may take the wand if you like. Will you look at the other objects on the dock (48A), or leave (159D)?

As your last sword blow strikes home through the jester's cap, the cascading objects fall to the stage. Cap and gloves vanish. A long dwindling moan tells you of your victory. **97D**

You gaze down at the juggler's objects. You can hardly feel proud of this victory, although goodness knows the world needs fewer bad humorists. Disposing of these is always unpleasant, for their intent is noble even when their ability is pathetic.

"Oh well," says the weasel. "What's that saying, about crying on the inside?"

Go to 42A to look at the objects as you wish, or leave (64E).

With the lich thoroughly unaware of your presence, you raise your sword. At that moment, you begin to doubt this method of attack. Abraxa stated that the sword would not work against it; perhaps the same enchantment applies to its partner. **97E**

You cannot afford uncertainty now! You bring the sword down solidly. The lich stumbles, but it doesn't fall! Haurrant turns, and by pure reflex, it throws a bolt of lightning, but the blast flies wild. The bolt strikes the wall of the skull, and throughout the worm, thousands of undead scream with one voice!

You must fight Haurrant face-to-face. But because your blow has weakened the lich, it has only 60 unlife points remaining, not the 100 given for it in the Combat Table. Go to 99C.

You stride up to the annoying plaything and swing your sword. The delicate mechanical bird flies to pieces. "Chop it—awrrrk!" The metal clinks and clatters and scatters everywhere, springs sprung. The skeletons pay no attention and keep chopping at the tree. **97F**

"Bright move," comments the weasel. "Now we can stop the skeletons by throwing that bird's innards."

You shake your head ruefully. You cannot examine the bird now. Return to 58A to make another choice, or leave (117F).

98A Outside Waterdeep, you recall, the countryside advances up and down the Sword Coast in gently rolling hills. Peasants grow staple crops on small farms, paying produce or livestock to the city's granaries in return for protection from bandits and the occasional wandering troll. Some larger homesteads are farmed collectively, and protect themselves. You hope the people out there have avoided the Effluvium.

Much of the countryside is wild. Evergreen forests stretch above and below the city to the east. To the north are mountains, but the cerebricule sneers in that direction. The only points of importance to your quest lie to the south, along the so-called High Road. But they are too far away to identify; all the cerebricule says is, "Ver' bowerful zmall of ztaff that way. Two piezes at leazt, maybe more."

If you journey to the South Gate and outside into the countryside, mark off one hour on your time record to make the journey, then go to **79B**. You will also need to spend an hour returning to the city, in addition to the usual travel and exploration time visiting locations outside town.

If you decide not to leave Waterdeep right now, return to **82A** to pick another place to go.

98B "I order you to stop this immediately!" you command with all the authority you can muster. The skeletons halt their work and turn to you. Their axes hang motionless in their hands.

It worked! "What morons!" snickers the weasel. "They'd chop at each other if you told them to."

Nonsense, you think, but you regard the skeletons—mindless servants, really—with hope. Could it hurt to try? Preparing to draw your sword if necessary, you point to one skeleton and, in a commanding tone, shout, "You! Chop him up!" As the one raises its axe, you turn to the other and command, "You! Chop *him* up!" It, too, obligingly raises its axe. The two skeletons face each other and start chopping.

You watch in amazement as axes come crashing down on bone. The skeletons tumble, hacking until they can hack no more. The bones lie twitching in the courtyard, skeletal hands still trying to clutch the axe handles. Triumph rises in you.

But a fearsome voice from the archway calls to you. "Very clever. Of course, had I not been involved in duties elsewhere, I would have prevented your actions. To do more, you must face me."

What blood you have left in your body turns colder than ever. Will you go to the archway and meet the unknown voice (**54E**), or run from the place (**117F**)?

You draw your weapon and slash at the monster, swift as a gust of wind—but the creature jumps over the blade as if you had swung in slow motion, then vanishes. You turn to the mummies and see them staring, horrified. **98C**

Without warning, all three attack.

Find the three mummies' statistics on the Combat Table on page 160. All three of them attack you first, before you can attack them. Thereafter, each mummy gets an attack on you in a turn, and you may only attack one at a time. You may try to escape at any time by going to **137E**. If you lose, your adventure is over. If you win, return to **52A** to look around, or leave (**146F**).

Scattered on the dock are black pellets, an even dozen of them. You don't need the shrunk head to tell you what they are. They're weapons—explosive balls used by the mermen of the ocean around Waterdeep. **98D**

You may take the pellets. When you are in combat, you may throw some of these spheres instead of attacking with your sword. You may throw up to eight at a time, doing one point of damage to your foe for each pellet you throw—automatically, without having to roll. After throwing one, mark it off your supply. All twelve pellets count as one possession.

Will you look at the other objects on the dock (**48A**), or leave (**159D**)?

You pause to give the giant frog a good look. It's mounted on its hind legs, as though beginning a jump; the frog's expression suggests comic alarm and worry. But though it's a humorous effect, you know these creatures can be deadly. A lacquered but very dusty board serves as its stand. **98E**

The dust has been scraped away just behind the stand. It looks as though the frog display has been shoved to one side in the recent past.

Effortlessly you move the giant frog and find, underneath it, a hollow in the floor. Within the hollow are a sack of coins and a scroll.

What use have you for coins? After verifying there is nothing useful with the silver, you toss the sack to one side. You may examine the scroll (**109D**), though you remember that some scrolls are cursed to guard against intruders. If you want to leave the scroll alone, return to **90A** to keep looking around, or go to **158F** to leave the taxidermist's shop.



99A The point of the spear is gilded, the wood of its haft mahogany. As a warrior, you are impressed by this fine weapon. You hold the cerebri-*cule* up to it for whatever information it can give you.

"Ztrong maagic. Fashioned zenturies ago in great forezt by ver' bowerful wizard to give to young warrior. Warrior fought thousands of evil orcz, zaved forezt."

"Thousands! I don't believe it."

The head sniffs again. "Hundreds. Pozzibly zeemed like thousands."

"What precisely does the spear do?"

"Attackz that are not maagical can't hurt you."

Invulnerability! You try to pull the spear from the monstrous hand that grips it, but the hand won't let go. In a bony nodule nearby, two eye sockets form, and another node creates a wide mouth, lined with needle-like teeth. "*Menace our growth at your peril, swineherd!*" cries the mouth.

"They sure know how to make a fellow feel welcome here," says the weasel. "Why not unlimber that sword and cut the spear loose?"

Will you attack the framework (88B)? You may also go back to 120A if you have the chance to look at something else, or drop into the river and float farther down the tunnel (36A).

99B You carefully poke your sword blade into the cave, cautiously scraping around the walls for the staff.

Suddenly the cave's occupant lunges out at you. You swing wildly to block the bite of a huge moray eel . . .

. . . except it is merely a small hermit crab that scuttles out of the cave. It quickly scurries away from you. You sense no other life within the cave. If you had a living spirit, you would probably laugh.

"Great!" says the weasel with asperity. "I almost died all over again, you were so startled!"

Now that it's safe to reach inside, you grope for only a moment or two before your hand closes on something smooth, hard, and cold . . . and you pull out the ice piece of the Staff of Waterdeep!

Check off this piece on your bookmark list and take it with you. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to 156A to find out more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it, but first make a note of this section (99B) so you can return here after you are finished.

Will you go to the sunken garden that is within a few moments' swimming distance (go to 104A and lose no time); or will you go elsewhere (119F)?

99C Haurrant the lich has a century of experience and an arsenal of the most powerful magic

known. Find its statistics on the Combat Table on page 160.

Against this awesome opponent, you have no chance—except for the Staff of Waterdeep. If you have no pieces of the staff, you perish with stunning speed against the powerful wizard, and your fate is best left undescribed. Your adventure is over.

But if you have one or more pieces of the staff, go to 21A to find out how to use them in combat, but first make a note of this section (99C). After you finish the combat with Haurrant, return here.

If you win the battle, go to 64A.

You bend down between the mirrors and speak to the dark figure. "What is your **99D** crime? Whom do you serve?"

The specter makes no reply. Lost in agony, it doesn't hear a word. But what causes its pain?

"Haur—aah!" the specter cries suddenly. Its voice jolts you, for the tone is clear, full, and human. "Foul wizard—nnh! Your Night of Black Wind is ov—rrngh!"

Have you been to the Hall of Heroes in the City of the Dead cemetery? Or have you read a book in this adventure called *Night of the Black Wind*? If you have done either of these, go to 104F; if not, go back to 132A and pick again.

The boy's bruises faded at your touch. How the crowd cheered! You blushed with pride. **99E** Not humility—the memory shames you now—but pride.

Some stammering fool approached—the town's mayor. He called you here—what was the name of the village? No matter—to heal the boy, who was run over by an oxcart. A nuisance, you thought.

Then the fool had to make a long speech—"Laying on of hands . . . gratified to witness this miracle . . . accept this token of our eternal gratitude"—and then he handed over a Ring of Far Travel. Good pay for a small job.

"It will work three times," said the crusty village wizard.

Three! How you wish it had been four! But you cannot remember why.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next *Memory Trace* entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

There is nothing remarkable about this body. **99F** Tall and (of course) gaunt, it retains in death a schoolmasterly air. Its gape-mouthed expression seems to say, "This guard on the steps has misbehaved badly!" Other than ragged and decaying garments spattered with grave dirt, it wears and carries nothing. Will you look around further (return to 68A), or leave (86E)?

100A You approach the merman's lighthouse beneath Waterdeep Harbor. Although maintained as a beacon for merman patrols, no light issues from it now.

Instead, it has become an instrument of your undead enemies. A gigantic whirlpool writhes and roils next to the lighthouse, stretching from the surface to the structure's base. Great floes of ice whirl down its length. As you watch, one great chunk of ice strikes the lighthouse and explodes! Pieces tumble in all directions.

And standing on the flat roof of the lighthouse is Abraxa, your so-called patron. Even from here, you can see the lich gesturing, directing the whirlpool. All Abraxa's attention is on the whirlpool. You can probably move about in the water beneath the tower without being discovered.

If you have been to the mermen's lighthouse before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 116E. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

The lighthouse tower has an entrance at the bottom—an entrance not made for humans, but round, better suited to a swimming entry. Above it, a railing girdles the tower.

Nearer to you, three objects float unsupported above the harbor bottom. But what holds them up?

You may swim up to the lighthouse roof to talk with Abraxa (75C); leave this area (119F); or investigate the cluster of floating objects (83E). Or you may look around, but you cannot examine the first three items on the list until you go to 83E.

You may look at the:	by turning to:
white gem	89D
dark gem	153A
bottle	123C
lighthouse entrance	144B
lighthouse railing	83F
whirlpool	86G

100B How incongruous the olive branch, symbol of peace and life, looks in the grip of death! Its leaves, you notice, are wilting. Small wonder!

"Branch of immortal olive tree," explains the shrunken head. "Prolongs life, bestows good health."

"Not here it doesn't," notes the weasel.

"Much maagic, but fading."

Even as you watch, the branch droops. Soon the leaves wither, and you suspect that, given time, the wood will turn to dust. At the merest touch of your finger, it crumbles. The unlife forces that surround it—including your own unlife—are simply too much for it.

The branch is not useful, but it renews your resolution to defeat the undead menace. Go back to 120A if you may look at something else, or drop into the river and float farther down the tunnel (36A).

100C Grudgingly, you hold up the sword and begin the oath. "I swear before all the gods of law that, if you give me that figurine, I will then gift you with this good blade."

As you speak, the words come forth automatically, ceremonially, surprising you. What oaths did you make in your forgotten past? "May my name be enrolled in the annals of infamy, my corporeal being punished by the upholders of good, my spirit consigned to the tortures of every demon of Chaos, should I foreswear this solemn, holy, and unbreakable oath."

The vampire scowls. You think he almost hoped you wouldn't agree. "Very well," he grumbles. "I, too, am a man of my word." He hands you the precious figurine, still wrapped in velvet cloth.

Now is the moment of crisis. Will you give the vampire your sword, as you promised (51F)? Or will you break your holy oath and keep your weapon (47D)?

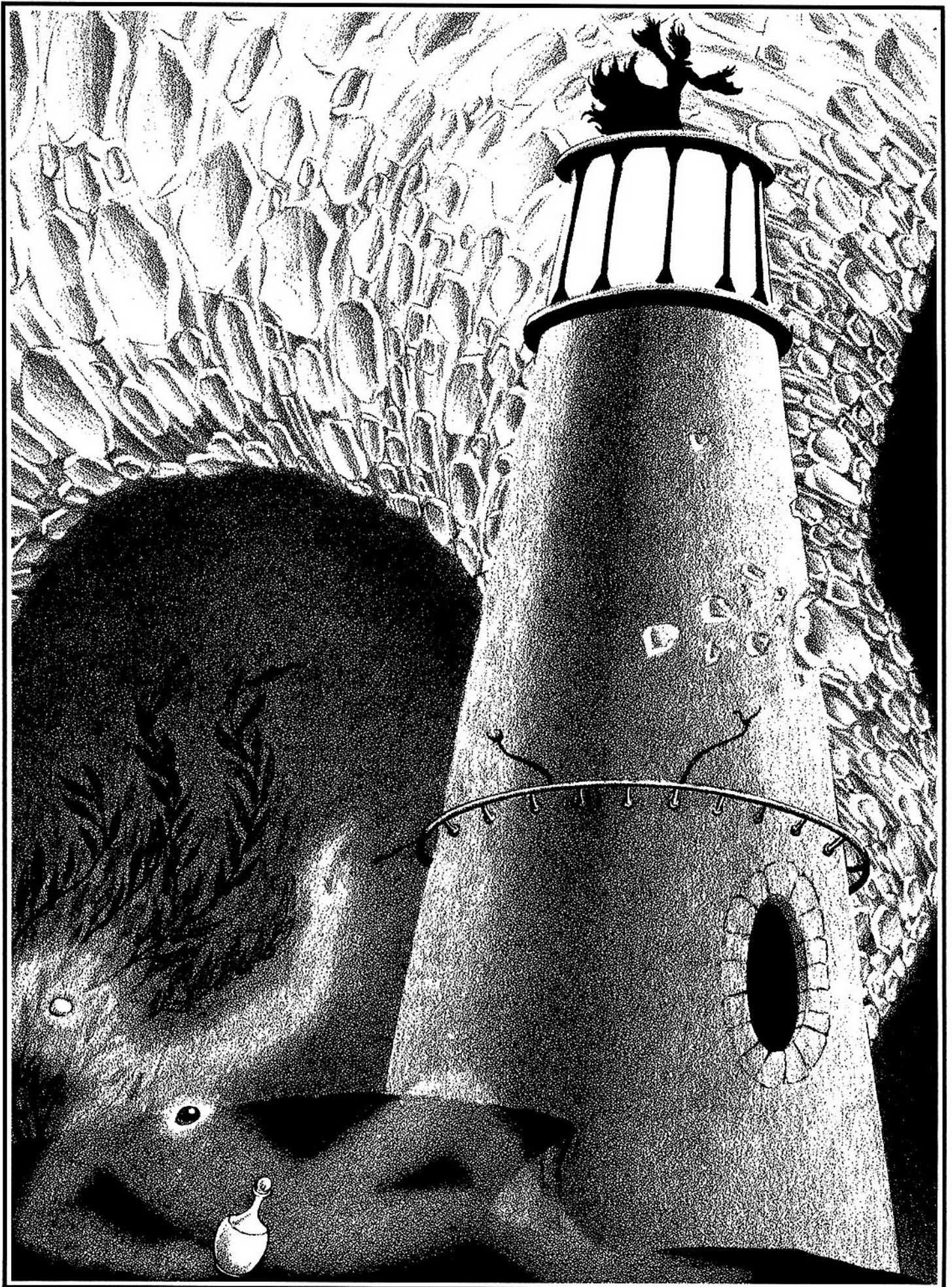
Before you pick up the glowing rod, you hold the shrunken head up to it. In **100D** this area, rich with magic, it seems to have trouble concentrating, but after many sniffs, it says, "Makes holder invisible." More prolonged sniffs. "Incantation is 'Shavak sholat.'"

Are ghouls chasing you? If so, go to 55C. If not, go to 44E instead.

The revenant is gone, and that was the cue for the rest of the undead to demolish the library in search of magical devices. Nothing remains intact. What a disaster! You hope that, should the city survive, Piergeiron's powerful mages can restore that magnificent library to its previous condition. Time to leave (119G). **100E**

You watch the lacedons make short work of the dolphin. They cut free the band holding the amulet and toss it far to one side, then dive into their grisly feast. **100F**

You may approach the lacedons (71G); ignore them and look around (104A); or leave the garden (108F).



102A You gain the attention of the creature perched atop the mirror and ask it how things are progressing, hoping to learn more.

"Oh, the torture goes nicely," says the monster. Its eyes gleam with interest. "Haurrant is pleased. Ordinarily the big fellow frowns on petty motives like revenge in a project of this scale, but using torture to energize the animation spell was a brilliant stroke. Calperion make the most awful screeches!"

"Why does Haurrant wish to torture the specter?"

"Tut-tut. I see you have not kept abreast of things. The specter is Calperion, the do-gooder who killed Haurrant years ago, when they were both human. Now that Haurrant is back, he felt it only fitting to bring back Calperion, too."

The specter moans with anguish. The detestable creature perched above it purrs with pleasure.

The figure is no evil undead. You recall Calperion as a great hero in the history of Waterdeep. Now, resurrected, he appears to struggle against the evil of undeath. Sharing his plight, you feel great sympathy.

Even if you're being chased by ghouls, you have time to make a decision. Will you try to persuade the creature to free the specter (159B), attack the creature (137D), or attack the mirrors (147A)?

102B This short book recounts the conventional lore of vampires, the undead who feast upon living blood. It dwells with disconcerting fascination on their great strength, ability to transform into bats or clouds of mist, and other powers.

You look for something new in the list of their weaknesses, but find only the usual ones: sunlight, holy symbols, holy water, stakes through the heart, need for blood, and so on.

The book details the career and infamy of the region's notorious vampire queen, Strix. Centuries old, she is said to retain her sinister loveliness by bathing in blood. She has attained power over lesser vampires through ruthlessness, as well as a gift for choosing sides correctly in struggles between the greater evil powers.

The thought occurs to you that Strix must be among the undead enlisted in the scheme to destroy Waterdeep. If so, she may well involve herself in the conflict between the two liches, Haurrant and Abraxa.

Mark off half an hour (in addition to the usual time you spend exploring the library). Then go to 152A to look at the other books on the shelves, 38A to examine other things in the library, or 119G to leave.

The inverted medusa's head stares **102C** blindly out at you, but you feel the creeping chill that is (so you have heard) the first symptom of being turned to stone. As an undead, are you immune to this paralysis?

Perhaps, but you will not prove it with this medusa. On the side of the bottle is a label reading: "DENATURED. Safe for home or workplace. Guaranteed not to transform flesh to stone, or double your money back!"

The shrunken head says only, "Znogood."

This medusa's head is powerless, useless, and too large to carry around as a possession. To keep looking around, return to 90A. Or leave the shop (158F).

The cerebriole sniffs at the sword in the treasure pile. "Maagic," it says. "Hitz **102D** 'gainst dragons." Dragons! You would not have thought matters could get worse, but if a dragon were to show up, they certainly would be. Perhaps this sword would be useful then. You look around, lost in thought. But this hardly seems the territory for a dragon to haunt.

When you lift the sword, the ghouls look at you angrily. Clearly they don't want you plundering their hard-won items. You may either put the dragon sword back (go back to 126A and pick again) or take it with you. (Mark it on your list and go to 103A.)

Looking on the courtyard of Castle Waterdeep, you see undead monsters everywhere: on the battlements, in the doorways, on the steps, through the windows. They must be ransacking the castle for all the magic they can get. **102E**

Your own prospects for finding anything in this anthill are slim. The castle has more than a hundred rooms, not even counting its many towers. If you want to look through the castle, go to 54C—but make sure you can spare at least half an hour to search.

If you don't wish to go into the castle, mark off the time you spent exploring here, if you haven't done that already. Piergeiron's Palace (38A) and a small theater (42A) are both in Castle Ward, each within half an hour's journey. Or you may return to 82A to go elsewhere in Waterdeep.

103A The ghouls close in on you soundlessly. "You have a gift for finding trouble, you know that?" says the weasel.

Fighting so many ghouls is hopeless. You look about for some way of escape, some diversion. The creature that was observing? No, it has disappeared. Then, just as the ghouls appear ready to lunge, inspiration strikes.

You raise your sword, and with a roundhouse sweep you slash wildly at the wall of flesh. Screams ring out as a hundred rubbery mouths wail in agony. "Children!" shouts the chief ghost. "The worm cries! We must save it! Think o' Cathexis!"

Like a sailor on a sinking ship, the ghost starts ordering its ghouls to patch the wound and replenish the blood supply. You take the opportunity to run back up the tunnel, but the ghouls have blocked off the route. They scream oaths of hideous anger and hatred after you as you turn and escape farther into the construct. You know that when they finish patching the wound, the whole pack of ghouls will come after you.

You rush through a fully fleshed part of the worm, filled with winding red tunnels that pulse with fluid. The channels spiral ever farther into the worm. A moist, steady breeze blows through the passages. Ahead, you hear moaning sounds that might almost be music. The ghouls chase you to 132A.

103B You strike your sword on the rocks beneath you, loud enough for the merman to hear. With a curse, he wheels his sea-steed around and glares at you. You salute him with your sword, and he contemptuously returns the salute with his harpoon, then digs his heels into his sea horse's flanks and charges at you.

Your fight with the merman is a battle to the death. His hateful expression tells you he despises your kind. And both he and his steed swim faster than you; you cannot escape.

As shown on the Combat Table on page 160, the merman has 16 "unlife points," though he is alive, of course. His steed has 22 "unlife points."

If you reduce the merman to 6 points or less, he collapses—and his noble steed continues the fight for him, thrashing you with its tail. The merman will return to the fight when the sea horse dies. If you kill the merman before you kill his steed, you must fight the sea horse to the death. The sea horse will not flee.

If the merman survives and reduces you to 6 or less unlife points, go to 51C. But if you defeat both opponents, you may return to 94A to look around, leave the harbor and return to the docks (74D), or travel the rapid current from the harbor to the countryside (45A).

Encrusted with jewels and glittering brightly, the pendant swings at your touch. The cerebriole sniffs for a long time, its rubbery nose wrinkling. **103C**

"Maagic," it declares at last. "Prodectz 'gainzt fire of any kind—naatural or maagical."

You tug on the pendant, but the bony hand that holds it clutches it fiercely. A fanged mouth appears above the wrist and shouts, "*Begone, annoyance!*"

Will you try to cut loose the pendant (36B)? If you decide to leave it alone, go back to 120A if you have the chance to look at something else, or drop into the river and float farther down the tunnel (36A).

How strange to find a piece of the staff in a gambling hall! You notice that these **103D** coins, though, are quite old. The shrunken head confirms your suspicion. These silver pieces have ascended from the realm of legal tender to the more exalted one of collectibles.

The owner of the Gentle Mermaid, an avid coin collector, kept these coins on display and polished them lovingly. The beautiful silver pieces afforded visitors a few moments of pleasure and contemplation amid the hubbub of the casino. This imbued the coins with the high psychic energy that Khelben sought for the staff.

Return now to the text you were reading.

"What is this 'Cathexis?'" you ask Silas Ten-Miler. **103E**

"Life!" cries the ghost. "Ev'ybuddy helpin' build this construct—'at's what the liches call it, melts into th' big group, y'see? All thinkin' alike, all t'gether! Then Haurrant, that lich up front, annamehts it, an' th' worm crawls up to th' surface an' destriys the city!"

"All th' livin' up there die together, their spirits fly loose, we absoorb 'em, an' we get resooected to true life, jined in one glorious livin' worm mind! Cathexis!"

Nauseated at the idea, you ask, "And then what?"

"Arr, who knuhs? Nut my concern. Speakin' o' which, me lad, you shud be flowin' unto the frehmwoork y'self naow."

The ghost tries to usher you over to the line of ghouls. You may claim an engagement elsewhere and leave (56E), but to stay and look around you must refuse (152G).

104A The mermen's sunken garden is a long, scrupulously maintained bed of kelp, decorated with underwater ferns, sea anemones, and many other aquatic plants, flowers, and animals, the likes of which you do not recall ever seeing in life. The garden would no doubt look gorgeous . . . to the eyes of the living.

A large ship anchor has been set up as a sort of monument, and fishing nets are draped about as a backdrop. Many objects hang in the nets, including the skeleton of a huge moray eel and a colorful amphora—one of the large porcelain jars that traders use to transport oils and wines.

One net has been draped as a sort of canopy over a small, dark cave nearby. You can see eyes staring out at you from the cave, but you sense no presence of life. These are undead eyes.

If you have been to the sunken garden before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 51E. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

104B You think of the dark-surfaced mirror from the Dragon Tower. In it you saw your own pain and torture magnified. What would this do to these undead?

You pull out the mirror and extend it in their direction. The cloud of ghosts, buzzing like a swarm of giant mosquitoes, changes its tone as the mirror comes into view. First they make a buzz of inquiry; then curiosity turns to shrieks of dread, rage, and hatred.

Some of the monsters, the hardiest of them, fly away. The rest, two-thirds of them, simply evaporate, melted away by the force of their own wretchedness.

You pocket the mirror and turn to face the people you have saved. Their expressions—relief, mixed with astonishment and fear of you—show they have no idea what to make of you.

Do you have a speaking stone? If so, go to 11A. If not, go to 42B.

104C The ring that is highest up glows slightly on close inspection. The bone that holds it, however, seems most unwilling to let go. A round mouth lined with molar teeth appears near your hand, shrieking, "You meddle with our great union, manling! Leave or perish!"

Taken aback, you decide to let the shrunken head examine the ring. "Maagic," the head announces. "Letz wearer zee ver' far."

That would indeed be worth the bother. You try with all your strength to pull the ring loose, but to no avail.

Will you attack the framework with your sword (88B)?

Nearby, a dolphin struggles madly against three lacedons—ghouls of the deep-seagoing flesh-eaters. The dolphin wears a band around its midsection, with an amulet attached to it. What could it signify? Is the dolphin an ally of the mermen? It is clearly an enemy of the lacedons, and that makes the dolphin your ally.

You may watch the fight between the dolphin and the lacedons (100F); swim forward and help the dolphin (21C); or leave (108F). Or you may ignore the battle and look around.

If you want to look at the:	turn to:
dolphin's amulet	116C
starfish	110B
eel skeleton	149E
vase	93E
helmet	156D
cave entrance	108C
garden foliage	130E

If not, you may look at the middle ring (18C) or the lower ring (40C). Or go back to 120A if you have the chance to look at something else, or drop into the river and float farther down the tunnel (36A).

The grotesque faces on the Bone Throne's pedestal show expressions of **104D** horror . . . or perhaps ecstasy. You cannot tell which. They murmur incoherently to themselves.

Their distorted hands form steplike projections, and cradled in each hand is a large crystal sphere. In the spheres, you can see moving images. Go to 113A to look at the spheres more closely, or return to 144A to do something else.

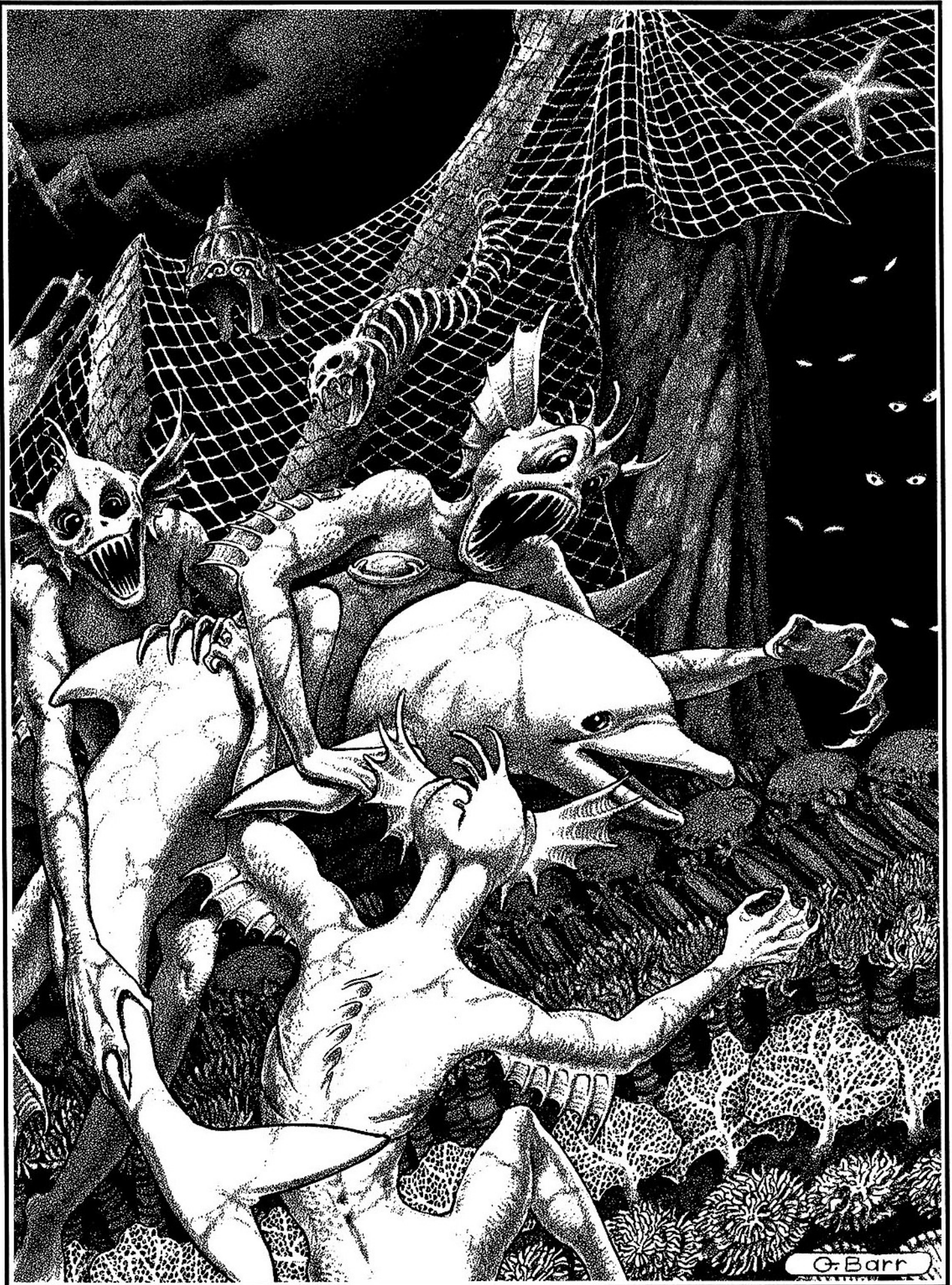
This isn't a human soldier's spear. It's a harpoon, of unusual design—a merman's **104E** weapon. You recall that a small contingent of these finny humanoids patrol Waterdeep Harbor. Are they immune to the Effluvium?

Will you look at the other objects on the dock (48A), or leave (159D)?

Hearing the specter's tortured babble, you recognize him as the shade of the hero **104F** Calperion, who slew the wizard Haurrant on the Night of Black Wind! Haurrant, now returned as a lich, must have raised Calperion to enact his revenge.

This specter, whatever his appearance, is not evil. You resolve to smash the mirrors and try to rescue him. Go to 147A.





G. Barr

106A Though these flowers probably appear colorful to living eyes, to your undead perceptions they are only dead blooms, withering day by day. You smell them, but detect nothing. Without a living spirit to comprehend it, you cannot sense beauty in any form.

"Careful," warns the weasel. "Sounds like you're about to get maudlin."

To divert your mind from depression, you ask the head, "What can you tell me of these flowers?"

It sniffs and says "Ahhh. Ver' interezting ztory."

"Interesting?"

"Woman wanted to bay her rezbecks to debarted hero. He rezcued her from orc on wildernez trip, but died fighting. But when she came back to town, she was zo late returning from journey that she had lozt her job. Zo she went to her friends, but they had no money to zbare for flowers. She tried relatives, tried to talk to Piergeiron himzelf, nothing zucceeded. Zo next—"

"Wait," you say. "How long is this story? Does it have anything to do with my quest?"

The shrunken head says nothing. The weasel says, "I think value judgments like that are beyond it."

The story sounds completely irrelevant. Will you hear it all (143E); forget it and leave (78F); or return to 18A to continue looking around the Hall of Heroes?

106B You uncork the wine. Not knowing what to expect, you pour a small dollop of liquid down the cerebricule's throat—that is, into its mouth. The wine spills out either corner, but the lips turn up in a broad grin.

"Gibba liddul mo," it croons.

"What?"

"Mo! Mo!" Grasping the request at last, you pour it some more. It twists gleefully by its hair, then begins to sing tunelessly. "Oh, waddle we do wizza dronggen dra-a-a-gon, Now it's bin to A-a-a-glaron' . . ."

"Stop that!" you tell it.

"It drinks its wine inna ten-quart fla-a-a-gon, Twen-ny vinyuds done an' gooooooone . . ."

The screech is deafening. You shove the head down inside your armor, where you can feel it trying to lick your breastplate.

"I'll tell you," says the weasel. "I've never yet met a shrunken head that could hold its liquor."

Unless you wait here one hour to let the cerebricule sober up, you won't be able to examine anything in your next location, because it's too stupefied to help.

You can't look at anything more around here. Whether or not you mark off an hour, leave the Hall of Heroes (78F).

The liquid in the tall bottle is dark green, and when you tilt the bottle, it clings thickly to the side. Its smell is sickly sweet, not pleasant in the least. **106C**

A sniff doesn't seem to bother the cerebricule. "Ver' strong potion. Guaranteed cure."

"Cure? For what malady?"

"Wartz."

You almost laugh, an incredible feeling for an undead. You put the stopper in the bottle. Since you are immune to disease as an undead, the potion is useless to you. Of course, you may take the bottle if you wish; it counts as a possession. Return to 72A to look at something else, or leave (137F).

You pull on the magician's staff. Even in death, he grips it tightly. But you give it a powerful yank. It slips free— **106D**

—And explodes deafeningly, driving splinters of wood into your body and battering you. Any object in the room that you haven't already collected is destroyed. Your own possessions are unhurt. But that is more than you can say for your body; subtract 10 unlife points from your current total! If you have run out of unlife points, your mission has failed.

If you still cling to this post-mortal coil, you're too shocked to do anything but stagger out of the house. Go to 65E.

The wheel of chance is a gaudy apparatus. The sums numbered around its edge sparkle like alluring will-o'-the-wisps. You are sure you never bet on one of these in life. But you also seem to recall that this gave the poorest odds in the house. How could you know that? Perhaps your companions were less rigorous in their morality. **106E**

Examining the table, you find a suspicious bulge in the carpet beneath the croupier's foot. Pulling it back, you discover a hidden treadle. It's obvious that the game was fixed!

Before you know it, you have angrily drawn your blade and smashed the treadle. "Now, what prompted that burst of temper?" the weasel asks. But the question is rhetorical, for it continues, "Something to do with a brother at the temple, perhaps?"

Indeed, you have a vagrant memory of temple officials, angry over a subordinate's loss. He only wanted to earn more for the cause, he said. You cannot remember whether you took his side. But you know you were not pleased.

You recall no more. Go to 62A to keep looking around, or leave (108G).



107A Thinking to send the haunt to its rest, you beat your hands together madly, and shout, "Bravo! Well done! Bravo!" Is the lie dishonorable, you wonder, when told in a good cause?

"Oh, thank you!" cries the juggler. Clubs, torches, beanbags, hoop, and dagger land in the hands in flawless sequence, and the cap dips in a deep bow. "Thank you! You're too kind! No, really! Thank you! You're wonderful! Give yourselves a hand! Oh, thank you!"

It goes on an awfully long time. But finally the haunt vanishes, and its objects fall to the stage.

You say to yourself, "Well, that's over with—"

The haunt reappears. "Thank you! You're so kind, I'm back for an encore!" The objects fly up and the pattern resumes. "These two rust monsters walk into a bar—"

You hold the cerebriole before your glaring eyes. "You said it would rest!"

The head makes no reply. It cannot converse, only analyze.

It has never been wrong before. If you can endure further misery, perhaps the comedian will indeed vanish for good. Will you continue to laugh (117A); go back to 42A to try another approach to the haunt; or give up and leave (64E)?

107B So many dimensions, each a universe. The book devotes a few pages apiece to the near planes, a page to some of the more important ones farther away in the continuum, and a few paragraphs to many, many more, trying to capture whole galaxies of a billion worlds in a hundred words. And as thick as the volume is, it covers only an infinitesimal fraction of the multiverse.

In the half-hour that you spend reading, you cannot hope to digest very much. You learn of the popular theory that the Negative Material Plane, the realm that energizes your magic sword, is also the source of energy for many types of undead. The Positive Material Plane, on the other hand, would mean instant destruction for any living or unliving creature that ventures into it.

While some of the Outer Planes hold good beings of enormous power, you learn of no way to reach them. Then there are the planes of the Abyss, where demons of consummate evil dwell. These eternal powers, such as Demogorgon and Orcus, wage constant war against the good. You feel no desire to contact these powers!

Mark off half an hour (in addition to the usual time you spend exploring the library). Then go to 152A to look at the books on the shelves, 38A to examine other items in the library, or 119G to leave.

Like all undead, you are able to move in absolute silence. You approach the massive pedestal of the Bone Throne soundlessly. Haurrant, oblivious to your presence, stretches its arms wide, as though wishing to embrace the worm. "Soon!" the lich croaks. "Soon Cathexis, command, power, destruction! And, Abraxa, you, too, shall know destruction. My specter shall see to that!"

The specter being tortured between the floating mirrors . . . Haurrant plans to use it to kill its partner lich! *Mark Evidence Box A on your bookmark.*

Return to 144A to choose what to look at.

"Jewelry!" you shout to the creature when your head breaks water again. **107D** "Bracelets, gems . . . glub!" You are pulled back under.

The monster considers while you float downstream. At last, just when you are sure you will miss a chance to explore this area, it says, "Well, that's probably worth the trouble."

The monster levitates down and fishes you out of the river of blood. It sets you on the bone framework. Give the creature one item of jewelry and mark it off your list. Then go to 120A and pick one item to investigate. But after you're done looking at that item, you'll have to drop back into the river to get anywhere (36A).

The cubbyholes hold an amazing mess. **107E**

A pile of marbles—no, glass eyes, all staring accusingly at you. Various types of needles and threads. Piles of feathers, sorted (none too neatly) by color and size. Uncountable coils of copper wire. Porcupine quills and rabbits' pelts and bear claws and frog legs and stuffing and padding and cloth and fur and leather. This desk is a cornucopia . . . for taxidermists.

Do you want to subject this desk and this mess to a thorough search? There is so much junk here that this would take quite some time.

If you want to search and have at least half an hour remaining on your mission, roll the die. On a roll of 1 to 8, go to 64C; 9 to 12, go to 86F. Or you may go to 90A to look at something else, or leave (158F).

The skeletons make quick work of the tree, and as you watch, it falls over with a **107F** crash. Then, with amazing swiftness, the tree withers, its leaves crumbling and the fruit rotting before your eyes.

You may look around the courtyard while they drag the tree away (58A), although you may not examine the tree now. Or you may leave (117F).

108A You may have an episode of unrequited love in your own past. In sympathy, you hand the monster your love ring. "Use this and Strix will be yours," you whisper.

The creature grabs the ring and gazes wonderingly at it. "Dare I? Is it honorable to use this? Would it not cheapen my love, make it shoddy manipulation?" The adjutant is momentarily lost in thought.

"Oh, who cares?" it declares after several seconds, then slips on the ring. "Strix, my sweet, you are mine!" it shouts, bounding to the vampire queen's bath.

"Don't bother me, you little—oh!" says Strix, her eyes widening and glazing slightly as she sees the adjutant. "Come here, little one. Tell me all about yourself." She giggles like a child with a new pet as she splashes the adjutant with blood from her bath.

"Ah, young love!" says the weasel.

"I'm the happiest adjutant in this dimensional plane!" cries the creature as Strix hoists it aloft and shakes it playfully. "How can I repay you?"

You wanted to know where the adjutant came from. The creature can send you there in a burst of light (go to 150A). Or, instead, it can give you something to defeat Haurrant (go to 45C), unless you already have this device.

If you don't want either of these rewards, return to 138A to look around, or leave through the only passage still open (144A).

108B "The flask," you say. The wizard, agreeable, unhooks it from his belt and tosses it to you.

You express your thanks to them, and she expresses theirs to you. With a flourish of the wand, the wizard begins an incantation—and then suspends it, suddenly looking at you strangely. "Kaflango machicolation fargoday seizure," he announces.

"Oh!" says Shalara. "Master has just remembered you're one of the living dead. He says the potion will harm you if you drink it. So don't. But you can give it to a living person and it will help him."

Then Kappiyan finishes his gestures, causing them both—and all the other objects within the protective ward—to disappear. You hope that their destination is beyond the effects of the Effluvium.

You may take the flask with you; it counts as a possession, of course. If you take it, mark it on your list and write "47G" beside it. If you decide to drink it, note the section you're on, go to 47G to see the results of the potion's use, and then return to your current section.

A quick trip through the room with the cerebricule informs you that there's nothing else useful here. It's time to leave. Go to 65E.

As you approach the cave entrance, you see many pairs of yellow eyes within, and you hear the whispers of undead mind-speech. **108C** "Yes, come closer . . . closer . . . food . . ."

The cave is full of lacedons, and they are hungry—hungry enough not to be particular about what they eat. You could be today's dinner. It would be extremely foolish to enter the cave, even if it held every piece of the Staff of Waterdeep! Fortunately the cerebricule sniffs demurely and tells you, "Znogood."

"I could have told you that," says the weasel. Return to 104A to look around further, or leave (108F).

Two of the clubs are ordinary, but the cerebricule inhales deeply over the third. **108D** "Wooden pieze of Ztaff of Waterdeep!" it says. You touch the club, and in your hand it changes into a dowel about six inches long.

Check off the wooden piece on your bookmark list when you take it. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to 156A to find out more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it; but first make a note of this section, 108D, so you may return here after you are finished there.

Return to 42A to look at something else, or leave (64E).

"Here, here! Where d'ye think ye're headed?" says the peg-legged ghost as you **108E** turn to go back the way you came. "Nuhb'dy allaowed that way but skeletons. Orders."

You must head farther down into the worm construct (46C), or go back to 126A to keep looking around. Or you may still try going back up the tunnel, risking the wrath of the ghouls (103A).

You leave the sunken garden; nothing follows you. You are half an hour's walk, or **108F** swim, from the underwater lighthouse (100A). Or you may ride the rapid currents out of Waterdeep Harbor for an express trip to the nearby countryside (45A). Or go to 82A to pick your next destination.

The only other location in North Ward that arouses the cerebricule's interest is a **108G** villa owned by some noble family, within half an hour's journey (58A). Or pick somewhere else to visit at 82A.



109A You jump into the fray, swinging your sword at anything that moves.

This is a hard fight. You and the vampire are at opposite sides, battling your way through the ghouls to the middle. You can't get to the vampire until the ghouls are all dispatched.

Run your combat fighting two ghouls; the other two are fighting the vampire. As shown on the Combat Table on page 160, each of the ghouls has 7 unlife points. Each of the two strikes at you each round, but you may only strike at one per round. If you destroy the two ghouls, keep reading.

As your second ghoulish opponent falls to the floorboards, the vampire strikes down his second foe. Now you and this lord of the living dead face one another alone.

You must fight the vampire. The Combat Table shows that he usually has 40 unlife points. Now he has lost 12 points to the attacks of the ghouls, but he is still very strong, with 28 points.

Conduct this fight to its conclusion. At the beginning of every round, the vampire gains back 1 unlife point—he regenerates at a fearsome rate.

If you reduce the vampire to zero unlife points during the fight, he instantly transforms into a bank of fog, filling the entire tavern . . . then slowly fades away.

You may escape the fight (146D), but only after the vampire has attacked you. If you win, go to 90E.

109B When you tip the vase, the object spills out—but so does an endless stream of green fluid. It spills on your hand, and searing pain rips through you. Acid! Subtract 5 unlife points from your current total.

Before you can tip the vase back upright, its protective ward has poured out a gallon of the acid. The vitriol hits the fleshy floor, and the whole length of the worm resounds with an endless scream! Smoke rises from the scalded wound beneath you, and in the walls of the cavern, a thousand mouths screech in agony! "Children!" shouts the chief ghost. "The worm cries! Save it! Think o' Cathexis!"

Like a captain ordering his crew to batten the hatches during a bad storm, the ghost orders its ghouls to heal the wound and replenish the worm's blood supply. Seeing their anger, you decide to flee. Almost absently, you note that the stone object from the vase is not a piece of the staff. It is completely worthless to you, and you toss it aside.

Within moments, the ghouls will finish patching the wound, and then they will be after you. The only way out is to run farther down the worm construct, into a winding network of tunnels where the walls pulse and the wind flows like blood. With the entire pack of ghouls chasing you, you run toward a distant sound of groaning (132A).

You pointedly ignore Strix and cast your gaze around the chamber. After the vast spaces you have seen in the worm, this enclosed room seems small, even suffocating. What do the vampires do in this construct? Are they the aristocracy of the undead, feasting on the labor of the underlings?

Strix shows irritation at your neglect. "You are too rude to be a true paladin," she says. The insult, coming from one of the most evil undead, makes you turn to face her. You are staring directly into her eyes when she says, "Look at me."

You look. And you feel yourself being slowly drawn into those astonishing eyes. . . . Go to 17A.

You unroll and look over the scroll. The preliminary description claims it sets up a circle of protection around the caster that will annihilate any undead creature in it.

"Oooh," the weasel remarks. "That's handy. A scroll of protection from undead. Do you feel like killing yourself? No, don't. I'd be lonely."

Yes, using the scroll would destroy you. But you can take it along with you if you wish. It counts as a possession.

You've seen all there is to see of the frog and the hollow it concealed. Return to 90A to keep looking around, or go to 158F to leave.

If you have already talked with Strix, you may immediately enter the passage at the back of the chamber (144A). If you have not talked with her, continue reading.

The vampire queen calls after you, "I have something that will allow you to destroy Haurrant and Abraxa." The words stop you in your tracks. She smiles and says, "Come back and we shall talk."

Obviously I cannot trust Strix, you think. But the possibility is enticing. If she intended to kill you, she could have done so several times by now. Temptation sways you.

Will you scrub Strix's back (35A), stand and talk to her from a safe distance (78E), or run away back down the tunnel you entered by (57C)?

The bird is a mechanical plaything that only the rich could afford (or want). "Where's my rake?" it asks. "Have a cup of tea? Chop it down! Who wants a crumpet?"

Evidently it repeats things that have been said to it. When it said "Chop it down," it was just repeating the order given to the skeletons. (Then who gave the order?) "Keep warm, love. Chalmers, bring my cloak. How lovely the moon!"

So far it has been amusing, but not particularly helpful. You may try to catch the bird (45E), look around further (return to 58A), or leave (117F).

110A This small temple building looks modest from the outside. You enter and survey the interior.

In the main temple, a low railing surrounds an upraised shrine. In the shrine stands a large metal gauntlet. Curtains frame the shrine, once-fine draperies now somewhat threadbare and decorated with many dozens of little iron pins, so many that the curtains sag from their weight. At the base of the railing are offerings from the peasants who worship here.

If you have been to the shrine before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 154E. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

A woman kneels beside the shrine, her garments more rich and exotic than you expect to see in this humble setting. She is dark, delicate, and—to living eyes—beautiful, but her face is lined with suffering. Tears roll down her cheek. Every moan that escapes her lips brings you pain. You flinch at her despair.

With your undead perceptions, you can see she is not alive. The dark, elven features, the pain brought on by her voice—a banshee! This spirit of an evil elf woman can kill with her wail. But she doesn't appear evil now, merely mournful.

She clutches a young boy about five years old, a peasant by his dress. He does not move, but his radiant aura tells you that he still lives.

The banshee suddenly opens her eyes and regards you with intense suspicion. She clutches the little boy tighter in protection.

"Get out, foul spirit!" she cries. The power of her voice sends a wave of pain washing over you. In the temple, glass panes shatter, the iron pins tremble in the draperies, and your teeth seem to rattle in your mouth. "This is a temple for the living!" she says. "It's for me and my son, not for your kind. Begone!" Even the child, unconscious, winces at her cry.

The human child the banshee holds cannot be related to her. She is a dark elf—and how many years dead? Her delusions endanger the boy.

You may obey the imperious cry of the banshee and leave (113F); attack the banshee (132C); or risk trying to comfort her with well-chosen words, hoping for some way to get the child from her grasp (51A). Or you may ignore her command and look around; go to 47E.

When you are free to look around, you may investigate the:	by turning to:
boy	66C
flowers	136C
coins	67E
fruit	66D
flask	118C
draperies	137B
gauntlet	143C

110B The starfish appears perfectly ordinary. But as you lean in for a closer look, it moves with startling speed, gripping your cheek, then clinging to your face with all five arms—and surprising strength!

It doesn't hurt . . . but it won't let go.

"You meet the most charming friends," the weasel says as you struggle with the starfish. "Wear it to town. It might start a fashion trend."

Finally you manage to pull the thing loose and hurl it from you. It slithers off into the kelp garden and disappears.

Curious, you hold the shrunken head up where the starfish clung to the net. After a few deep sniffs, it announces, "Ordinary starfish. But friend to mermen. All zea life here is supposed to attack intruders. But much zea life here is already dead."

Return to 104A to look around, or go to 108F to leave.

The guard is deeply unconscious, perhaps dying. You have no way to help **110C** him. A memory flashes in your awareness: You once healed the wounded, merely by laying your hands on their bodies and praying. Their wounds closed in the space of three long breaths. People cheered you for the deeds.

Yet without life, without a god, you can do nothing like that now.

You realize the skeletons carried the guard as they would a basket, so as not to touch the staff lying across his abdomen. Now that the skeletons have reached the bottom of the zombie staircase, he is lying on the ground. His armor, black and silver and gold, does not gleam in this lightless day.

On his belt, you notice a ring of keys, but they have been crushed into a wreck by bony hands. Return to 32A to keep looking around, or go to 102E to leave.



112A "What need have you for all this magical treasure?" you ask Silas Ten-Miler.

"They tell me th' doohickeys power th' woorm," replies the ghost. "An' the transmootin', such as ye see, an' the animehtin' when Haurrant, up front, funnels th' energy foorwud t' his Bun Thrun"—you have to think a moment to realize it means Bone Throne—"an' toorns the woorm into a crawlin' beauty t' destriy the city."

"But—but that's beyond the power of any magician!"

"See foor y'self." The ghost gestures at the tremendous artifact. You cannot argue with facts; but you are sure that no mortal enchanter, however powerful, however undead, could harness such power. Then what is the source?

"Aye, moost o' th' items suh far have woorked well," Silas continues, "though one is stupid indeed. Nuh one can put his hand un it! Looks like it's bruhken uff some stuhn rud."

"Stone rod?"

"Aye, that's what I said—stuhn rud."

This sounds like it could be the stone piece of the Staff of Waterdeep! But it couldn't be in such an awful place, could it? "What . . . what does this item look like?" you ask, trying to sound casual.

In response, Silas Ten-Miler grabs a nearby ceramic vase and hands it to you. Go to 35C.

112B The tree is laden with fruit of all kinds—apples, pears, plums, and some you do not recognize. You let the shrunken head tell what it smells.

"Maagical tree. Gift to Brozzfeather family from wizard friend many years ago, for family's preztige in community and kindnezz to wizard. Has zpirit, life."

"Indeed I do," says a gentle voice inside your head.

"But at the moment, I am in pain, sir."

"What can I do for you?"

"Water from the fountain will heal my wounds. Would you kindly bring me some?"

You do as the tree bids, splashing a double handful of the fountain water onto the bark where the axes had bitten. As you watch, the wounds close, and the bark looks smooth and perfect.

"My thanks," says the gentle voice. "Allow me to offer a token of my gratitude." And before your eyes, the tree grows a fruit, a fist-sized sphere of iridescent green. It bobs gently on the branch.

You reach for it, but hesitate a moment. The tree seems pleasant enough, but might it hold a grudge

against all undead for the wrongs it has suffered?

Will you eat the fruit (71C); refuse it and return to 58A to look around; or leave (117F)?

You step into the humanoid portal. It expands to accommodate your form. **112C** When you have brought your body entirely inside it, you shift to your destination. And light explodes around you!

This is the Positive Material Plane, a seething universe of heat and radiance. Do you have an amulet that protects against damage here? If so, go to 75B.

If not, the Positive Plane works its effect on you. All the atoms in your body achieve their maximum energy potential. You feel a surge of power that grows to overwhelming proportions. Within a second, you fall unconscious. Within three seconds, you explode brilliantly. Your adventure is over.

As you draw near the skeleton carrying the globe of crystal, the cerebriucle pipes up **112D** from within your armor. "Wuffa! Kruffa Zduffa Wutta-dupp!" You pull out the head, and after a gasp for breath, it repeats, "Cryztal Ztaff of Waterdeep!"

"The globe?" You recall Abraxa mentioning that the pieces of the staff had reverted to their original forms. This piece must have been made of crystal. You must get that globe.

You draw your sword to strike the skeleton, and then a thought strikes you. The skeleton mindlessly obeys the commands of its master. Will you attack (56C), or try commanding the skeleton to hand you the globe (141C)?

How can you stop these wretches from destroying this rare tree? You may attack them (159C), or try commanding them to stop (98B). Otherwise, they chop it down (go to 107F). **112E**

You look over the room's furnishings—divan, chairs, books, rug, and so on. The cerebriucle seems uninterested. "Znogood." **112F**

You could probably spend an entertaining five or six years reading all the scrolls here. But whatever magic they tell of, the cerebriucle says they're not magical themselves. And as you unroll a few, you find they are written in a strange, unreadable language.

Return to 76A to look around, or leave (65E).

This scene is as you remember it—except everything of interest is gone. Only the painting and the tavern's sleeping human patrons remain. Otherwise, The Full Cup is quite empty. Go to 146D to leave. **112G**



113A Looking into the crystal spheres, you see the life stories of the individuals who gained the high honor of being transformed into the pedestal beneath the Bone Throne.

Conquerors, despoilers, plunderers, corrupters, torturers—it's a rogues' gallery of every human vice! What evil individuals these were, and all in the service of the wizard Haurrant, both when he was alive and after he passed on to lichdom!

And in their memories, you see another face, still more horrifying—long of fang and snout, bleak of gaze, with goat horns and bat wings, a huge belly, and hooved feet. Orcus, demon lord of the undead!

It was Orcus who provided the liches with the magic to create this vast construct, the Effluvium, the gate in the catacombs beneath the House of the Homeless, and all the other details of this fiendish plot. For Orcus, it is merely a diversion. He plots to conquer the Realms and establish a base in this dimension, starting with the nation of Vaasa, far to the east. That land's Great Glacier is the focus of his scheme.

The demon hopes that by destroying Waterdeep, he will lure powerful magi away to the west, leaving him to develop his main plan free of their interference. And all this would be brought about by a mere fraction of Orcus's power!

There are even greater stakes here than you supposed. Return to 144A to look around more or approach Haurrant.

113B "Don't talk to me about life in show biz," says the haunt. "It's tough. *Real* tough."

The voice pauses, while objects continue to shower down toward either hand. At last you realize the reason for the delay. With dust choking your throat—the urge to breathe as painful as a torch in your chest—dirt scraping every joint and bone—you speak to the haunt in leaden tones: "How, um . . . how tough is it?"

"Hoo, I wanna tell ya, it's so tough, you go on stage, people turn and run from the theater! I kid you not. I've heard of tough audiences, but this is ridiculous! Is it so much to ask for a simple round of applause? Is that so hard?"

The haunt speaks with intensity; for once the snappy patter seems to have been completely forgotten. On a hunch, you whisper to the cerebriole, "What does this restless ghost desire?"

The head sniffs at the stage. "Haunt," it says. "Zpirit of entertainer who failed. Fired, took his own life. Cannot rest until he gets acclaim of audience."

"He'll be around a long time," the weasel says.

Will you applaud the ghostly entertainer (107A); go back to 40A to ask something else; or leave (64E)?

You drift up to the roof of the lighthouse. Abraxa is there, waving its arms over the whirlpool like a conductor to an orchestra that only the lich can hear. **113C**

Suddenly Abraxa spots you out of the corner of one glowing eye socket. The wizard glares at you.

"You!" it exclaims. "Why do you bother me now? Never mind. Just give me all the pieces you have found of the Staff of Waterdeep."

If you tell the lich you have no pieces, go to 129C. If you have one or more pieces and give them all to the lich, go to 118B. If you have some pieces but only give part of them to the lich, go to 50B.

The wizard's staff is plain wood. You cannot look at it in detail or use the cerebriole on it unless you're within the protective circle. **113D**

If the two humans are still protected by their circle, stop reading here and go back to 76A to choose something else. If the humans are no longer protected by the circle, keep reading.

You hold forth the shrunken head. It sniffs at the staff and announces, "Zophizticated maagic. Zome kind of guarding zpell."

Do you wish to take the staff? If so, go to 106D. If not, go to 76A to look around further, or 65E to leave.

The wizard's chamber, now that you have opened the way to it, has been plundered by the undead. All the objects you did not take have been taken. The furniture has been ripped to shreds and splinters. However, the negative-space portal still stands here, and the symbols on the wall still glow with magic. **113E**

Go back to 72A to look at the portal or the symbols. Or leave (136B).

You stride from the temple. From here you can barely see the notorious City of Garbage, the dumping ground of Waterdeep. You may walk there and look around in half an hour's time (go to 114A). Or you may mark off an hour to return to the city, then choose some other destination (82A). **113F**

Opening the pouch, you find that it is filled with dust, pale blue and sparkling. "Faerie duzt," says the shrunken head after a brief sniff. "Duzt yourself, fly 'round." **113G**

If you are being chased by ghouls, stop reading here and go immediately to 30B. If ghouls are not chasing you, keep reading.

You may add the faerie dust to your possessions if you wish. Return to 132A to look at something else, or leave (47F).

114A There is no mistaking the City of Garbage. It is the giant dumping ground for all Water-deep's trash, located, out of sight of the tourist routes, south of the city. Huge piles of litter, dust, dirt, spoiled food, carrion, debris, offal, and rubbish suffocate the landscape. And you recall from the mists of memory that the City of Garbage holds another kind of refuse. The piles of junk harbor many undead.

Silhouetted against the twilight sky, rolling hills of junk stretch away to the horizon. In darkness, they might even be attractive to living eyes, though the stench would destroy the illusion of pleasant foothills.

If you have been to the City of Garbage before in this adventure, stop reading here and go immediately to 118E. If this is the first time you have been here in this adventure, keep reading.

You notice one big pile near you, towering like a giant anthill (presuming the ants that built it showed no discrimination in selecting their materials). From the pile hurtle many objects, flying in all directions, trailing tendrils of ghostly mist. "Poltergeist!" warns the weasel.

You cannot recall encountering these invisible undead in life, but the memory might well be trivial if you did. Poltergeists are the weakest of the undead, able only to throw objects around, interested in nothing but random troublemaking. One might be a nuisance in a kitchen, hurling pots and pans until it was exorcised, but it would hardly bother a warrior like you.

You do remember, though, that poltergeists never talk. Yet with your undead perceptions, you clearly hear an argument. Two airy, high-pitched voices are shouting heatedly. Two poltergeists!

"Wadjoo mean, jonk look batter een piles!" screams one. "Eet look lousy—lousy, lousy, lousy—steck-opped in piles! Skovalashnikoor!"

"Don't call me that, you foreign miscreant!" shouts the other, equally high-strung. "I don't expect someone of your taste and social background, if you can call it that, to appreciate the aesthetics of a neat, orderly, pris-

tine waste pile. But the least you can do is move on, as you vagrants do, and allow me to carry on my duties efficiently!" This poltergeist throws junk back onto the heaps as fast as the other can remove it.

"Sounds like one big, happy family," whispers the weasel.

"Oh, look!" shouts the second poltergeist. "A visitor! Welcome, sir, to my humble abode—with due apologies for the mess. Honestly, I can't get this illiterate bumpkin out of my hair long enough to clean up and sort the furnishings."

"Sort, shlor! Look moch batter flettening out! I fletten, he stop me! Wadoo I do, you wanna tell me? Theenk maybe I keel him! Wheech do you like more batter, boddy, steck-op or flet?"

"Indeed, sir, tell us whose side you support. Tell this uncouth scoundrel what civilized people already know, that—"

"Do not you be pooting een words to hees mouth! Let heem speak! Wheech you like: me, Jyorlo—very plizz to meet you—or heem, rat-breath Veliks? Speak, boddy!"

Violence is not called for here, you decide. The poltergeists seem willing to do it upon each other. Will you agree with Veliks, who likes neat junk piles (8B); with Jyorlo, who likes things flattened out (28B); speak without offering an opinion (57A); or ignore the poltergeists and look around (37C)? You can also leave the City of Garbage and go elsewhere (143D).

When you are free to look around,

you may investigate the:	by turning to:
wooden hobgoblin	114B
vase	88A
dragon head trophy	27C
stone head	75D
sword	82C
rocking horse	15B
tusk	26C

114B As you approach the wooden hobgoblin, the poltergeists begin to snicker.

"Looks like you picked wrong," says the weasel.

Nevertheless, you examine the hobgoblin closely. Its craftsmanship leaves something to be desired; there would be no mistaking it for a real hobgoblin.

"Help, help, I'm so scared," sniffs the weasel, yawning.

The cerebriucle sniffs out no magic. "Znogood. Was

zet outzide tobacco ztore to attract cuztomers."

"Well, obviously you haven't found what you seek," says Veliks.

"You play again?" asks Jyorlo. "You geev us sometheeng to make eet worth our while, yez?"

You may leave (143D), or you may give the poltergeists another possession (mark it off your list), return to 114A, and try again.





116A "I have many questions," you tell the adjutant, "but if it will satisfy you, I shall spin the wheel."

"Oh, fine, excellent, most fine indeed," says the monster, leaping onto the betting table and clapping its various limbs together. "Give it a whirl, sir."

You pull hard on the near side of the spoked wheel, and it makes a whirl and a blur as it spins.

"What sort of event will occur?" you ask.

The creature makes no reply. The razzing sound slows and slows, becoming a metronome's *chikchikchik*, slower and slower. *Chik. Chiik. Chi-ik.*

The wheel stops. "Travel," the adjutant says.

And the casino disappears.

A moment of gray, and a new place springs into form about you. Mark off the time you spent at the gambling hall, and assume you will spend half an hour at your new location. Where have you reappeared? Roll the die to find the section you turn to.

If you roll 1, turn to 18A; 2—32A; 3—42A; 4—48A; 5—68A; 6—90A; 7—94A; 8—110A; 9—76A; 10—52A; 11—122B; 12—150A.

116B You wade into the fray, going after the toughest opponent, the vampire. You may not have to worry about the ghouls, because it looks like the vampire is laying waste to them.

You get four "free" attacks at the vampire—because, on each of the first four rounds of the combat, he attacks and destroys one ghoul.

If you reduce the vampire to zero unlife points during the fight, the creature's body evaporates into a cloud of white mist and flies away.

If you haven't driven him off by the fifth round, you and he face one another, alone. You have not taken any damage from him. On the other hand, he has lost 12 unlife points from the ghouls' attacks, plus whatever damage you have inflicted upon him by then. Yet you can see him already beginning to regenerate the damage.

Run the combat to its conclusion. Use the vampire's statistics from the Combat Table on page 160. At the beginning of every round, the vampire gains back 1 unlife point, regenerating damage at a fearsome rate. You can escape (146D), but only after a full round of combat (that is, after the vampire attacks you this turn).

If you win, and at least one ghoul survives, go to 146C. If you win, and you alone survive, go to 90E.

116C Is the dolphin still alive? If so, you cannot look at the amulet. Return to 104A and choose something else.

If the dolphin is dead, you may look at the amulet.

You hold the shrunken head up to it. "Ztone for zpeaking. Wear it, thoughts become zpeech. Dolphin wore it to let hoomans underztand it."

If you already have a speaking stone, this is of no use to you. If you do not, you may take it (it counts as a possession). Now, only the undead can understand you; when you wear the stone, living beings can comprehend you.

Return to 104A to look around, or leave (108F).

You take a good two-handed grip on your blade and bring it down on the door lock. **116D**

The blade does not bite. It clangs off, doing no damage. But a blast of blue flame climbs up your sword and washes over you, charring you! Subtract 10 from your current unlife point total. If that brings you to zero unlife points, your adventure is over.

If you still survive after the protective ward's blast of flame, you may try some other approach to opening the door; go to 83D. If you prefer, you may return to 68A and try something else entirely, or go to 86E to leave this frustrating, dangerous place.

The floating objects, the gems and bottle, **116E** are gone. But the whirlpool, the lighthouse, and the lich are still here. If you have already spoken with Abraxa here, you decide it would be a terrible idea to visit the lich again. Return to 100A to look around, but you may not look at the gems and bottle. Or you may leave (119F).

Like all undead, you can move in complete **116F** silence. You cross the fleshy floor, climb the grotesque pedestal, and approach the Bone Throne. The lich stands unaware, in rapt contemplation of its mastery of the worm.

You may open a vial of yellow powder, if you have one (40B); otherwise you must attack with your sword (97E).

Perhaps the vase's ward only affects the **116G** living. You reach inside . . . and suddenly fluid gushes from nowhere, searing your flesh! You smell the sickening odor of your own skin burning. Subtract 12 unlife points from your total. If you have run out of unlife points, your adventure has come to an abrupt end.

Despite the pain, you manage to pull the stone object from the vase. With sinking spirits, you realize that it is not part of the staff. The cerebricule sniffs it and pronounces, "Ritzhual prayer object. Like worry beads. Znogood." It was valuable enough for its owner to go to great lengths to protect it, but on your mission it would be useless. Discouraged, you decide to leave (56E).



117A "Oh, oh, oh," moans the weasel. "This is really horrible."

The supernatural joshers' jokes continue for an endless half-hour. (Mark off the time, in addition to the usual time you spend exploring here.) Riddles. Knock-knock jokes. Dreadful impersonations of notable Waterdhavians. Bawdy stories to which the spooky farceur cannot remember the punch line. And, outstripping the rest in sheer audacity and ignorance of any standard of civility, puns.

The worst of it, the torture of it, is that you have to laugh. You quickly find that as an undead you cannot laugh, except with great pain. But though every guffaw wracks you and each chuckle is a stab to your groin, you persevere. Subtract 2 unlife points from your total!

At long, long last, the unearthly standup exhausts its supply of jokes. You applaud their end with sincerity. After many bows and many thank-yous, a sound escapes the jester's cap, a little sound as light as a baby's sigh. Cap and hands vanish in a flash, and the clubs and other juggling objects crash to the stage.

The haunt has achieved its only goal in unlife and proceeded to its final rest. If only it were that easy for you! The weasel remarks, "If the next ghost we meet sings songs or does magic tricks, I vote we head for the hills and leave the city to its just fate."

Go to **42A** to investigate the dropped objects, or **64E** to leave.

117B The wraith to your right has heard interesting gossip. "Some big character behind the liches is pulling their strings," it says slyly. "Wants to make Waterdeep live up to its name—put it about thirty fathoms under."

"Who is this?"

"Don't know, don't know. Or at least"—its head angles toward you, slipping a bit on its ectoplasmic neck—"at least I wouldn't let on if I did. Understand? A fly on the wall, that's me, and I hear a lot. Heard more about the defense of the city than anyone else, back in my days alive. Yes. I was big with Glashnakh, the orc army commander, if I say so myself."

A spy! You suppress a flare of anger. "Are you buried here?" you ask.

"No, no. Out on the battle lines, where Glashnakh killed me, the filthy beast. No, I just wandered down here when the liches sent out the word they needed lots of undead. Some kind of device under the city. We were supposed to bring all the magical items we could find, but I happened not to have any with me. At least"—his head angled—"I wouldn't say so if I did. Understand?"

You cannot bear to talk with the spy anymore. Return to **28A** to keep investigating, or leave (**51D**).

If you haven't yet investigated the guard, stop reading here and go immediately to **117C** **47B**. If you have already investigated the guard, keep reading.

The torches burn brightly and smoothly, with no popping of wooden knots. The wood under the flames is not scorched or consumed.

The cerebricule grumbles a little as you hold it near the torches, but it sniffs and speaks anyway. "Minor maagic. Burns all the time. If removed from holder, goes out."

Well, you don't need such a torch; you see in the dark anyway. Look around further (**68A**), or leave (**86E**).

"Oog," says the weasel. "I never did like **117D** teleporting."

In a flash, you have vanished from the wizard's home and appeared outside a small dwelling in Southern Ward. It is another wizard's home. In fact, the dwelling of Kappiyan Flurmastyr, the potion specialist. He and Maaril must have met frequently, if Maaril needed such rapid transport to his compatriot's home.

Mark off the time you spent exploring Maaril's Dragon Tower, if you haven't already. Then go to **76A** to explore. You will spend only half an hour here, because you saved time by teleporting.

Some of the heroes in the Hall were entombed within living memory, and relatives or grateful beneficiaries of their deeds still leave offerings under their tombs. Looking around the hall, you see typical specimens. **117E**

Will you investigate a small bouquet of flowers (**106A**); a wreath (**93F**); a bottle of wine (**34D**); return to **18A** to keep looking; or leave (**78F**)?

You depart the courtyard and look around you to regain your bearings. The only other place nearby that arouses the cerebricule's interest is the Gentle Mermaid gambling hall, within half an hour's walk in North Ward (**62A**). Or go to **82A** to pick somewhere else to visit in Waterdeep. **117F**

The monster that crouched on the wheel of chance is gone; all the silver coins in front of the wheel of chance are gone, too. Anything that you (or any companion) changed remains changed; otherwise, it's all the same. Return to **62A** to look around, or leave (**108G**). **117G**

118A You decide to word your assent carefully. "I promise to do everything in my power to defeat Haurrant and Abraxa," you tell the vampire queen. This is no lie.

"Excellent," she replies. The gleam in her eye takes on the character of a fisherman who has landed a prize trout. "And now, the key to your victory," she says, opening a catch on her necklace. From a hollow compartment inside one of its pieces, she draws forth a tiny vial filled with a fine yellow dust.

"This powder rots leather in an instant," she says, handing you the vial.

"That's supposed to help me defeat the lich? How?"

"I shall not tell you, paladin," she says with a smile. "I expect you to trust me. After all, I am to be your queen. We must begin our alliance with complete faith in each other."

You hold the shrunken head near the vial, and it confirms that the powder does indeed rot leather. If Strix is sending you to your doom, she is being remarkably subtle about it.

"It's too late to back out now," says Strix, and you agree. The weasel adds, "How can a lich stand against us, when we carry this amazing yellow powder? Maybe he'll sneeze to death."

Add the vial to your list of possessions if you wish. Then you may look around at your leisure (138A), or you may go forward to face Haurrant (144A).

118B "I have served you well," you say ingratiatingly, proffering all the pieces of the staff you have found.

The lich's eye pits gleam over your offering. "Good, good!" it murmurs. With a gesture, it levitates the pieces into the water above you. With another gesture, it blasts them with streams of black energy . . . and you watch them shatter, utterly destroyed.

Had you the breath of life, it would catch in your throat. You realize you cannot undo the mistake you have just made. Those pieces of the staff are forever gone. Mark them off your list of possessions.

Abraxa's eyes fix on you, a suspicious light appearing within them. "Cerebricule, answer your owner. Has this wretch spoken honestly? Has he given me all he has found?"

"Yez," the shrunken head replies.

Abraxa nods. "You have done well. I will allow you a great boon: freedom of choice. You may continue looking for pieces of the staff, or you may take your reward and descend to help construct the artifact beneath Waterdeep. I will give you one more trifling task to do

there, as well. What is your choice?"

Will you keep looking (119F) or go see this artifact (71D)?

This looks like an ordinary glass drinking-flask, the sort used to carry small amounts of potent liquors. But the cerebricule identifies it—**118C**
"Holy water. Ver' holy. Bad for undead. Nazty! Nazty!"

You may take it if you wish; it counts as a possession. In combat, you may hurl its contents at one undead opponent; the blessed water hits automatically, costing its victim 20 points of unlife. You must throw all the water at once. Be careful, though, for it can harm you just as easily.

Return to 110A to look around, or leave (113F).

If the revenant destroyed the sculpture, stop reading here. Return to 38A to choose again. **118D**

Otherwise, you note that the sculpture is a conventional *objet d'art* such as rich dwellings contain. At the base of the sculpture you find a tiny, tasteful plaque that reads: "Porelle Galleries, Copper and Sulmoor Streets, North Ward, Waterdeep." This looks like the clue that provoked the revenant's interest. However, it does not relate to your own mission.

The revenant has left. You may also leave (119G), or return to 38A to look at something else.

They're still at it. The poltergeists have moved everything around pointlessly. Otherwise, the City of Garbage is completely unchanged, except for what you changed yourself. **118E**

Too stupid to remember you, Veliks and Jyorlo begin to bicker at exactly the same point in precisely the same argument. You may go back to 114A to get involved, or you may leave (143D).

Leaded gold is a transitional state that alchemists sometimes achieve when they are trying to turn lead into gold. **118F**

Remember, you should never look up the story of a piece of the Staff of Waterdeep until you actually possess that piece.

Return now to the text you were reading.

You gaze at the painting mounted above the bar, seeing nothing but blobs of color. **118G**
Perhaps you could resolve them into a picture, appreciate the art, and feel some emotion—if you were alive. But without a living spirit to interpret beauty, any painting is nothing but random pigments on canvas.

"All right, we're not studying art here," says the weasel. "Get on your way. Time passes."

Go to 84A to look around further, or 146D to leave.



119A Most of these papers are simple assignments: "Dear Sir: Would you be so kind as to make for me a diorama of two vultures squabbling over a bit of carrion? I would be most grateful if you could have it ready by the fourteenth of next month, as it is intended as a birthday present for my wife. Your servant, Hiryam, Hiryam's Cloth Goods, Burnt Wagon Way."

Some notes are bills, many of them old and unanswered, such as one from a carpenter, requesting payment for "certn. addtnl. drawer, concd., to desk."

But one scroll, the most ornate of the lot, tied with an expensive ribbon and bearing an intricate wax seal, is a commission from one Khelben Blackstaff. This scroll requests the taxidermist to prepare a dragon's tooth with certain ointments and rituals, described in excruciating detail. The tooth is to be one component of an item to be called the Staff of Waterdeep!

"Say!" the weasel exclaims. "If it was put together here, then the dragon's tooth returned here!"

Do you want to search the desk and premises intensively? Looking around at the mess, you realize this would take a while. If you can spare an additional half-hour and want to search, roll the die. On a roll of 1 to 8, go to **86F**; 9 to 12, go to **83C**. If you prefer, you may return to **90A** and look around some more or go to **158F** to leave.

119B When you pick up the bottle, liquid sloshes inside. Why do you have this strange fear of it? You master your fear and hold the cerebricule close. It sniffs, then shouts, "Holy water!"

Around you, ghouls shy back in panic. "How'd that get here?" "Ninny! You brung that!" "Get rid of that stuff!"

Holy water—water blessed by a cleric, deadly to every corporeal undead, including yourself. You drop the bottle, and it hits the flesh below with a squish.

"Nuh, ye dun't get rid o' that thing suh easy, lad!" says the peg-legged ghast, from a safe distance. "Mark me waords. Ye faound it; ye must get quit o' it!"

The threat in the ghast's tone persuades you to pick up the bottle. You must leave behind one of your other possessions if necessary.

"Naow, lad, take that vile stuff foorwud, past th' head o' this woorm. Dump it in yon tunnel, far away. Dun't let any'un here knuh ye have that stuff, either, or they're likely to brain ye aout o' fear."

Several ghouls push you farther down the tunnel, against your protests. You must be careful not to drop the holy water while in the construct. Go to **46C**.

You approach the curious creature that is watching the scene. Its expression shows fascination. "Flesh," it muses as you draw near. "Moist and delectable flesh. 'Toothsome' may be the word. I developed a taste for it back home."

"Where was that?" you ask.

"Oh, I'd best not say. But as an adjutant, I have certain standards to maintain. Can't just go nibbling around, you know."

Repellent, ghoulisn beast! If you can stand to talk further with it, go to **129B**. Or you may attack (**52C**), or walk away and return to **126A** to make another choice. Or you may leave (**56E**).

Ignoring the apprentice's obvious bluff, you brush aside enough of the chalk that the circle is now broken. **119D**

For a moment, the scene is frozen in your mind. The sudden hatred flaring in the eyes of the wizard, the utter despair in the eyes of the girl apprentice.

With the last action of his life, the wizard points his staff at you and utters a spell—a curse. Fire erupts from the end of the staff and washes over you, bringing pain and searing damage. Subtract 20 unlife points from your current total! If that reduces you to zero, your quest is over.

If you survive, go to **122E**.

Inside the leather pouch, you find a fine blue powder. The cerebricule sniffs it and coughs. "Boison." Proof that these shady-looking characters were indeed up to something shady. **119E**

The poison doesn't affect you or the shrunken head. You may take it if you wish; it counts as a possession. You may look at the coins on the floor (**65C**), return to **62A** to look at something else, or leave (**108G**).

Mark off the time you spent exploring here, if you haven't already. From here, you can see the merman's sunken garden in the distance (**104A**). Or you can go back to the city (**82A**) or ride the swift harbor currents on a rapid journey to the countryside (**45A**). **119F**

The view of Castle Ward from Piergeiron's Palace would be beautiful, if you had the ability to appreciate beauty. Castle Waterdeep (**32A**) and a small theater (**42A**) are both within half an hour's journey. Or go to **82A** to visit another ward of Waterdeep. **119G**

120A You lose track of time. (You no longer have to keep track of the time remaining on your mission.)

Floating like driftwood on the sluggish river of blood, you see the walls of the tunnel grow rougher. For a while, you were starting to think something had burrowed it out. . . .

The tunnel becomes much larger above and ahead of you, wider than the High Road in Waterdeep. The ceiling may be a hundred feet up, possibly more. You have no way to estimate. A wind, cold compared to the blood-water, sounds a deep bass note as it rushes down the tunnel, and you think of an organ pipe. Steam rises in clouds from the crimson fluid. A dank, meaty smell rises with it.

Through the steam, you see bones lining the tunnel. Bone filaments crawl up the walls like ivy on a church, stretch across the ceiling, and grow thick down the other side. The vast structure is shot through with holes, and it bulges in spots with protrusions that resemble human skulls and limbs. At the filament ends, hand and finger bones hold many items, and the bone grows to cover them while you watch.

Animated skeletons crawl over the filament ends, suspending themselves in contorted positions. Wraiths, insubstantial spirits now barely recognizable as human, wrap their ectoplasm around the skeletons. They chant words you cannot understand. The skeletons melt, flow, and merge with the larger framework, binding the wraiths with them.

120B You point to the odd creature watching the drugged mummies. "What is that, and what is its business?"

All the mummies shrug lazily. "No idea," mutters the one in the hat, and another one giggles. "Been everywhere of late. Lots of 'em, crawlin' all over the place below. Keepin' an eye on the progress."

"For whom?"

"Haven't the faintest."

"The faintest," drones the quiet one.

"You fight one—it disappears. Not supposed to attack 'em, anyway, or the big bosses get mad. You talk to it, it gets all smart and superior on you. Quick little buggers, but real bores."

The mummies stare blearily about, unfocused. A giggle erupts from one, then he is quiet again, in pain. They evidently know nothing more.

You may go back to 97A to ask something else, or leave (146F).

120C This ceramic vase found its way to the junkyard when an undead creature carried it from the ducal castle in Daggerford, the outpost on

"It's built of undead!" you realize tardily, astounded. "Thousands of skeletons . . . tens of thousands!"

Still flowing fast, the river carries you past acres of the skeletons. Bones extend as far ahead as you can see. "What can this be?" you ask yourself. "Is it some kind of a shield guarding the artifact?"

Your subconscious, though, already realizes the answer you cannot face. Even the weasel sounds impressed as it says, "This is the artifact . . . part of it, anyway."

Dwarfed by the structure's size, a peculiar creature hangs from the bone framework, gazing with as much curiosity as your own.

You are being carried along quite rapidly. If you want to halt here and take a look around, will you try to grab on to the long filament reaching into the water at your right (90C); run aground on the bony island ahead (154B); or ask the strange creature for help (11B)? Or you may just continue to float on down the tunnel, into the artifact (36A).

When you are free to investigate, you may look at the:

by turning to:

spear	99A
pendant	103C
upper ring	104C
middle ring	18C
lower ring	40C
olive branch	100B

the Trade Way south of Waterdeep.

The undead rose from its crypt beneath the castle, then made its way upward, killing or frightening away the residents. Under cover of night, it stole the vase and made its way north as far as the City of Garbage, where other undead fought with it for the possession of vase. All died, and the vase lay there until you discovered it.

The cerebriule tells you all this, and also why Khelben ventured so far south for a piece of the Staff of Waterdeep. In fact, the vase originally came from Waterdeep. It was sculpted by one of the city's finest artisans and presented to the Duke of Daggerford as a gift. How much pride all concerned took in this fine piece!

Return now to the text you were reading.

Whatever item you investigated, whatever tactic you tried, it has not worked. **120D** The ghouls are coming closer. You hear their savage cries echoing through the blood-swollen tunnels. In moments, they will be upon you.

Do you have a scroll with an invisibility spell? If so, pull it out, mark it off your list of possessions, and go to 55C. If you have no such scroll, go to 150C.





122A You venture among the wisps of personality, asking questions, seeking clues or devices. In the line of wraiths, you meet the betrayed and unrecognized, the wrongly convicted consumed by resentment, the escaped felons cackling their mirth. Suicides bewail wasted lives, exiles curse the whole living race, hanged thieves still clutch their throats, and elderly shades who froze in dock dwellings now burn with the fever of madness.

None of these wraiths ever plotted to destroy the world, or enslave whole cities, or burn infants on altars. Yet in speaking with them, you sense in every one a distorted mind. Some facet of their lives consumed them, and they neglected those around them. In undeath none feels remorse. Yes, they are evil.

Overlying their mania, anticipation and excitement. From many you hear a new word, "Cathexis." Asked what it means, the wraiths give vague responses of "life" and "resurrection." But you get no further information, even though you wander far down into the side tunnel.

"Let's get out of here," the weasel says at last. "This crew makes me want to wash."

Mark off half an hour of talking to the wraiths, in addition to the usual time you spend exploring here. You can go farther down the side tunnel (34A), return to 28A to keep looking, or return to the surface (51D).

122B You plummet through cold air and strike warm water. Pulled under at once, you stretch out arms and legs, fighting panic. If I hit a wall, you think, I'm finished. . . .

You flounder to the surface, hit a rock, slide free into hard rapids, twist and turn, and struggle to make sense of a hundred different glimpses of the tunnel. Probably dark, you think, although in undeath light and dark are alike to you. You catch a view of unnaturally smooth, circular walls. Then the current pulls you down again. Thudding against the river's bottom, you feel thankful, almost, that you do not breathe.

The river eventually widens, its slope flattens, and you can stay afloat. The water is growing warmer now, and thickening. You finally note its dark color, and recall its "taste."

The weasel states what you dare not think with your own, conscious thoughts. "This isn't water, is it?" the skull asks matter-of-factly. "It's blood."

As you sweep farther down the smooth tube of this tunnel, toward the artifact that can destroy Waterdeep,

you feel a stab of fear. And like the river of blood, the fear thickens and grows as you head deeper underground. Go to 120A.

Bumberly had closed the book, but when you lay your hand on it, it springs open **122C** to the point where the ghost was writing in it. The ink is still wet, but you cannot make head nor tail of this scribble. However, turning back a page, you recognize words and figures, written in a different hand. They seem to be accounts: "25 for Volume on Undead; 2 for new bottles of Inke; 10 for informant on A; 16 for collection of daf-fodils . . ."

"So, taking an interest in bookkeeping, now?" asks the weasel.

You scan farther down the page, but learn nothing more. When you draw back your hand from the ledger, it slams closed. Return to 22A to keep looking around, or leave (149D).

Perusing the book of religious customs, you learn of many fascinating practices. **122D** For instance, in some rural shrines to Torm, worshipers with ailments purchase tiny iron pins cast in the shape of body parts—arms, legs, hearts—that represent the afflicted parts of their bodies. They pin these talismans to large cloths around the altar, while praying for relief. Interesting . . . but you do not see how this helps you.

Mark off half an hour (in addition to the usual time you spend exploring the library). Then go to 152A to look at other books on the shelves, 38A to examine other items in the library, or 119G to leave.

The ghostly spirits smash through the invisible barrier and swarm over the two humans, clawing, biting, grabbing. **122E**

Within moments, the two humans collapse to the floor, brought by ghostly touches to death of old age. Each looks two hundred years old.

Abruptly, with a soft *pop*, the brazier disappears. "Guess where some valuable trinket was," the weasel murmurs. "Probably gone on to some new caretaker. I think maybe you should have helped the humans. Not that you ever listen to me, of course. Nooooo, don't listen to the weasel."

Shrieking with joy at their momentary victory, the ghosts, spirits, and haunts dance around their fallen foes, then fly upward through the ceiling and into the sky beyond. *Mark Evidence Box D on your bookmark.*

Return to 76A to look around. The magical ward is shattered; you may examine all the objects belonging to the wizard and apprentice. But you cannot examine the brazier—it is gone. You may also leave (65E).

123A "Could you tell me about this artifact?" you ask.

"What, ye dun't knuh?" Silas Ten-Miler exclaims. "This cherwilliger we build here is a Gr'at Annelid, made to destroy the city above!"

"A Great Annelid?"

"Aye. Giant woorms that used to eat thro' the ground in days long past, when hoomankind was not e'en a dream. One o' them formed this tunnel, in fact. A mile long, they were! 'Tis said they're gone now. I hup suh. This is what the liches call a construct, a copy o' one o' those Gr'at Annelids from long aguh."

"But it is being built from—undead?"

"Aye, aye. We are bein' exalted! Powered by magic dinguses from the city, y'see. Once th' Annelid is built, that lich Haurrant will animeht it, up a' the front un his big Bun Thrun"—the weasel translates, "Bone Throne"—"an' then look out, Waterdeep! Hee-hee!"

Monstrous! This huge worm could easily destroy the city, especially with all its citizens asleep. "But where could liches gain such enormous power?"

"Nuh idea . . . nut my concern. Nut complainin', either. Naow, myte, it's time ye flow unto the woorm yourself."

You may claim pressing business elsewhere and leave (56E). But if you want to stay and look around more, you will just have to refuse (152G).

123B Tremendous mistake, disastrous mistake venturing into those ruins, not knowing what you would face. The halfling dead, the wizard a feeble idiot, and Karinna who knows where? You and Korlo were fighting skeletons when you heard the scream, turned, and saw—

Haurrant, a mummified figure in rich robes, held a dagger poised to strike Karinna, dangling unconscious in its grip. How could you have forgotten the horror of that sight? You and Korlo escaped the skeleton fighters, and you both rushed in with screams of rage. Threaten Karinna? The sin of sins!

Korlo, the dumb ox, attacked the lich. Useless wretch! you thought. You touched him, touched Karinna, invoked the ring's Far Travel spells. All three spells, gone in an eyeblink!

Appearing in the inn back in town, you argued with Korlo. Karinna took his side. How you resented wasting that third spell to rescue him! Especially a month later, at the temple—

Your anger washes like blood over the memory, sweeping it away.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

You reach out and grab the bottle floating there . . . and suddenly the water churns. **123C** The nearly invisible water elemental, in whose body the bottle floated, writhes and strikes out at you.

It's moving slowly—you may escape rather than fight (go to 119F and choose to ride the current). If you want to fight, keep reading.

The elemental grabs at you, but you evade its grasp easily. With a lightninglike backstroke of your sword, you shear its watery head from its body.

Abruptly, the elemental is gone, its body merged with the surrounding waters. It must have been nearly dead already! The bottle and gems float down to the harbor bottom. Go to 140C.

"What about—" down you go, then bob up again—"a weapon?" you finish, gazing desperately at the creature on the framework. **123D**

"Weapons! Who needs them?" The creature sneers. "There's a spear right across from me. Do you see me diving for it? No. Surest way to tell a fighter. Convinced the multiverse revolves around his talking sword or magic morning star—"

You hear no more as you are swept down into the opaque fluid. "A pacifist, no doubt," gurgles the weasel underwater. Coming back to the surface, you see that you have a chance to clutch at the bony island in the river (154B). Or you may just drift downstream (36A).

Carved from special "ice that never melts" by Salahass, a merman artisan, this section **123E** of the staff is etched with elaborate snowflake designs. You wish you had the spirit to appreciate the work that must have gone into it.

The ice staff's original form was that of a many-faceted teardrop. When carrying the teardrop, the cerebricule explains, a water-dweller could travel on land and communicate with the people there.

Anyone who initiated violence within sight of the teardrop became paralyzed instantly until the teardrop was out of range, so of course no one in possession of the teardrop ever started fights. In this way, the teardrop fostered good relations between water- and land-dwellers. Salahass was deeply honored to donate it to Khelben for the staff.

Return now to the text you were reading.

As you carefully and obviously move into his view, the merman whirls his sea-steed **123F** around and glares at you. His heels dig into the sea horse's scaly flank, and he raises his harpoon to attack.

Do you wear a speaking stone? If so, go to 60B. If not, go to 44B.

124A The water is unusually murky, and clouds of the Effluvium move over it. To see better, you plunge your upper body into the water and look around.

The experience is eerie. You feel no panic as you hold yourself under. You do not feel the air growing short in your lungs, at least no more than usual. You are reminded again that you are no longer living—no longer human.

Far out at the limits of your vision, toward the harbor's center, you see a silhouette, not human, not fish, rising to the surface. You pull yourself out of the water—just in time to see a handful of black pellets rain down on you.

Like small, painful bolts of lightning, the pellets explode on and around you. Subtract 4 points from your current unlife point total!

When the haze of smoke clears, you see your assailant out in the water: a merman, riding a giant sea horse—no wonder his silhouette was a confusing one. His scales ripple in the cold winter light, just as the harbor waters ripple. Even from here, you see that his face wears an expression of scorn and disgust . . . directed at you. At the undead. With one last gesture of contempt, he and his mount dive back into the harbor, where the water grants immunity from the Effluvium.

If the 4 points of damage bring you to zero unlife points, your adventure ends here. If you survive the attack, you may look at the other objects on the dock (48A) or leave (159D).

124B When you open the chest, you hear a faint snapping sound. Wham! You get hit full in the face with a coarse, white powder. Inside your armor, the cerebri-cule coughs. After a tense moment, you decide you are not going to fall over, at least immediately, and so you pull out the shrunken head.

"Ahh-choo! Kahh-chooo!" coughs the head. "Boison! Znogood!"

Surprisingly, you relax. As an undead, you feel no effect of poison. Tricky, that the trap was not magical!

You examine the interior of the chest. Inside is a small, opalescent gem set in gold, on a slender gold chain. Its glow marks it as magical. "Protectz 'gainzt damage," says the cerebri-cule, "in 'nother dimenzion." Sniff-sniff. "Positive Material Plane."

"Oh, boy," says the weasel. "Just what I've always wanted." Now, why would Maaril need—your eyes go back to the gate, where you see bright whirling lights. The Positive Material Plane!

You may take the amulet if you wish; it counts as a possession. Go to 136B to step through the portal, 72A to keep looking around, or 137F to leave the Dragon Tower.

The ruby was found in a perilous **124C** dungeon by an adventurer called Kerian, who treasured it above all other possessions. The cerebri-cule relates how, when Kerian's adventuring companion and longtime friend took ill, Kerian unhesitatingly offered the ruby as payment to the wizard who cured him. Recognizing its inestimable value, the wizard felt honor-bound to refuse the ruby, but Kerian insisted.

The wizard took the stone, but he felt he could not rightly keep it. He therefore turned it into a healing stone, here in what is now Kappiyan's home, and gave it to an order of healers. There it was used to heal many people.

Return now to the text you were reading.

The necklace is a thong with a stone shaped like some sort of fish—plain, **124D** unornamented, valueless. But the cerebri-cule doesn't agree with you. "Enchanted," it says. "Put it on, breathe water like air."

Now, that's handy. When worn, the necklace lets you breathe water just as easily as air. You are actually putting it on before you recall that you do not even breathe air anymore.

You may take the necklace if you choose, but as an undead you can already survive—if that's the word—in water as easily as air.

Will you look at the other objects on the dock (48A), or leave (159D)?

The cerebri-cule snuffles a moment, then **124E** replies, "Has found piezes."

"Lying worm!" Abraxa hisses. Betrayed, you grab for your sword, but you cannot match the lich's speed.

Abraxa's spell grabs you, paralyzes you, and sends pain shooting through your body as you are slowly, agonizingly destroyed. Your adventure is over.

The cerebri-cule sniffs the glowing rune for only a moment. "Telebordation mark," it **124F** informs you. "Transborts you elzewhere when you touch it." It sniffs some more. "Dunno where."

Will you touch the symbol (117D); keep looking around the room (72A); or leave (137F)?

The ghoul's body and its loot are gone. With undead swarming thickly over the **124G** city, nothing of any value stays unclaimed long. As for the ghoul itself—you shudder to think what its fellow cannibals may be doing with it now.

There's nothing left to do here. Go to 159D to leave.

125A These are animated bodies of the freshly dead. You recall fighting zombies in life. They were the decaying corpses of strong men, warriors. These—you shudder.

Plump, matronly women wearing shrouds like veils. Young expressionless boys in ragged trousers. Once-pretty debutantes, now with dull eyes in sunken sockets. Rich, young, poor, fat, old, thin. People you would see on the street or in a coach, but pale, with eyes askew and clothes hanging like drapes and hair falling out in patches.

“Brrr,” says the weasel. “You do find the fun people in town, don’t you?”

Most horrid is their lack of will. In your mind you hear their telepathic speech, incessant repetition of their last instruction. “Form staircase . . . bear the weight on your backs . . . wait. Form staircase . . .” They will remain here, immobile as though still trapped in coffins, until their commander returns. No commander is in sight now. If one never shows up, the zombies could crouch here until they decay into skeletons, like those that use their backs as steps.

These spiritless bodies would work at a job without thought, without questioning orders or purposes, lacking any will to improve or urge to seek new horizons, simply work through the days of their existence until the ultimate death. What a travesty of human potential!

Will you try talking to the zombies (149B), destroy them (65D), leave (102E), or return to 32A to look at something else?

125B “What’s that you have there?” you ask politely.

The mummy raises his scepter with pride. “This is true magic, here, I can tell you! And we all need a real magical item to get in, or the high-and-mighty lads down under won’t let us have a thing to do with them.”

“Mighty lads,” says the quiet mummy resentfully.

“What does it do?” you ask, with what you hope is polite curiosity. The third mummy laughs, a demented shriek of a laugh.

“Why, it gives you some sort of power—” He stops abruptly and glares at you suspiciously. “Here, why so curious, friend?” he says, distinctly unfriendly.

You shrug and begin to reply, but the mummy cuts you off. “What are all the questions about, eh? Are you trying to push your way in on us?” He stands and glowers at you. “You just watch your step, *friend*, or you’ll walk right into trouble. Understand?”

The mummy is obviously bristling for a fight, and his companions seem ready to join him. Do you want to fight (27B), or will you try to appease them (45B)?

A month after your flight from the lich’s lair. A large temple, complete with marble pillars and echoes from the ceiling. You and Celia worshiped at the altar, bound together in common service to your deity. You loved her—yes, loved her like a sister. **125C**

A noise behind you, the crash of a falling vase. Hearing Celia’s gasp, you turned and saw a pack of zombies, and behind them, Haurrant. In your mind, a spectral voice. “I do not take defeat lightly.”

The zombies approached. And the rest is too painful to remember.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

The burlap bag looks like an ordinary cloth rucksack, with straps allowing you to wear it across your back. But the cerebricule, held before it, blinks and sniffs. “Maagic,” it affirms. “Baag of holding.” **125D**

A bag of holding! You recall these devices from your life. Its carrying capacity is amazing. An anvil placed inside one feels as light as a horseshoe. If you take the bag, it counts as a possession—but you may carry up to four more possessions in it “for free.” They won’t count against your carrying limit.

Will you look at the other objects on the dock (48A), or leave (159D)?

“Dri-i-i-nk! Dri-I-I-INNNNK!” shouts the head. The weasel makes a comment, but you can’t hear it—you literally can’t hear yourself think! You wonder what kind of visitors the racket might attract. **125E**

You put the shrunken head inside your armor, but it keeps shouting and tries to bite. It’s impossible to look around with such a distraction. You must either let it drink (106B) or leave the Hall of Heroes to calm it down (78F).

You crawl into the dark, narrow hole and confirm that it leads to the place where you found the ice piece of the Staff of Waterdeep. There is nothing else of interest here. To keep looking around, go to 104A. Or leave (108F). **125F**

126A You walk a quarter of a mile down the tunnel of flesh. More large sheets of damp, red skin stretch across the bone braces. Wind vibrates the membranes like drumheads. The smell of blood moistens and thickens the air. You feel like a corpuscle within a corpse.

"Are we looking for a way out or some way to blow up the whole works?" asks the weasel. When your own subconscious doesn't know, what can you answer? But you feel impelled by morbid curiosity to discover the plot that will destroy Waterdeep.

Your chief wonder is the source of the skin. Arriving at a large chamber in the curving tunnel, you suddenly see the answer.

Ghouls, the eaters of flesh! Countless ghouls, hundreds, are flowing onto the framework of bone. Before your eyes, undead beings liquefy and ooze like molasses onto the struts. Their bodies clothe the naked bone with flesh, wrapping it like an infant in swaddling clothes.

"No," you say stupidly, unable to grasp the sight. "No, I do not work for good. I am gone in an afterlife of torment, where gods dance me like a puppet. In a world that permits this, there can be no good."

"Buck up," says the weasel, though even it speaks with a strained voice.

"Yare, children!" calls a grating voice. The speaker appears to be one of the ghouls near you, a ragged specimen with a peg leg of bone. But its coherent speech and the gleam of reason in its eyes mark the creature as not a ghoul, but the commander of ghouls—a ghast, more dangerous than a dozen of its charges.

"Yare!" It repeats the Waterdeep sailor's command for haste. "Ye cannut make a woorm thro' slogg'rdness!

Cathexis, my children! Think o' Cathexis!"

The ghast is collecting items from a long line of ghouls, as if charging admission to flesh out the framework. From what you've seen so far, it's easy to deduce that the items must be magical, plundered from the city above to energize the construct. A strange monster looks on from nearby.

Watching the scene, you feel numb with horror and incredibly tired. How can you alone combat evil of this scale?

"Come on, back to work," chides the weasel. "If you stand around much longer, you'll probably get sucked up onto the bones yourself. The ghast is already suspicious."

Indeed, the ghast is looking at you with what may be a threatening look. You feel the urge to run it through on the spot. But to attack here, against hundreds of ghouls, would be suicidal, and you cannot think of dying inside this atrocity. "Back to work," you sigh.

Will you talk to the ghast (128A); talk to the strange monster instead (119C); attack the monster (52C); ignore both of them and look around the area (97B); or leave (56E)?

You may also look at the:

sword
scroll at left
scroll at right
vase
bottle
shiny black sphere

by turning to:

102D
78C
149F
35C
119B
158E

126B The plaque reads, "Here lies Calperion, beloved of family and city, who in single combat slew the wizard Haurrant, saving Waterdeep and the world from sorcerous tyranny." The plaque lists Calperion's dates of birth and burial, far apart but both over a century old.

The name finds a berth in your vacant memory. In the days after Ahghairon passed away, but before Khelben Arunsun became archmage, a wizard had tried to destroy the city with a waterspout from the harbor. The Night of Black Wind, it was called. Calperion and a band of adventurers entered the wizard's tower, overcame many guards, and Calperion vanquished Haurrant, ending the menace—a story told to children to this day.

"But wasn't Haurrant the name of that other lich, Abraxa's collaborator?" asks the weasel. The coincidence is too close.

Return to 18A to keep looking around, or leave (78F).

"I already have that piece," you admit wearily. "Do you know of some other **126C** clue that might help me?"

The elemental shakes its head, then cries "Wait!"

It reaches within itself to pull free the white gem. "I give this to you. It may help you. It allows beings not suited to the odd speech methods of this plane to converse with living beings. Carry it and you may speak to humankind.

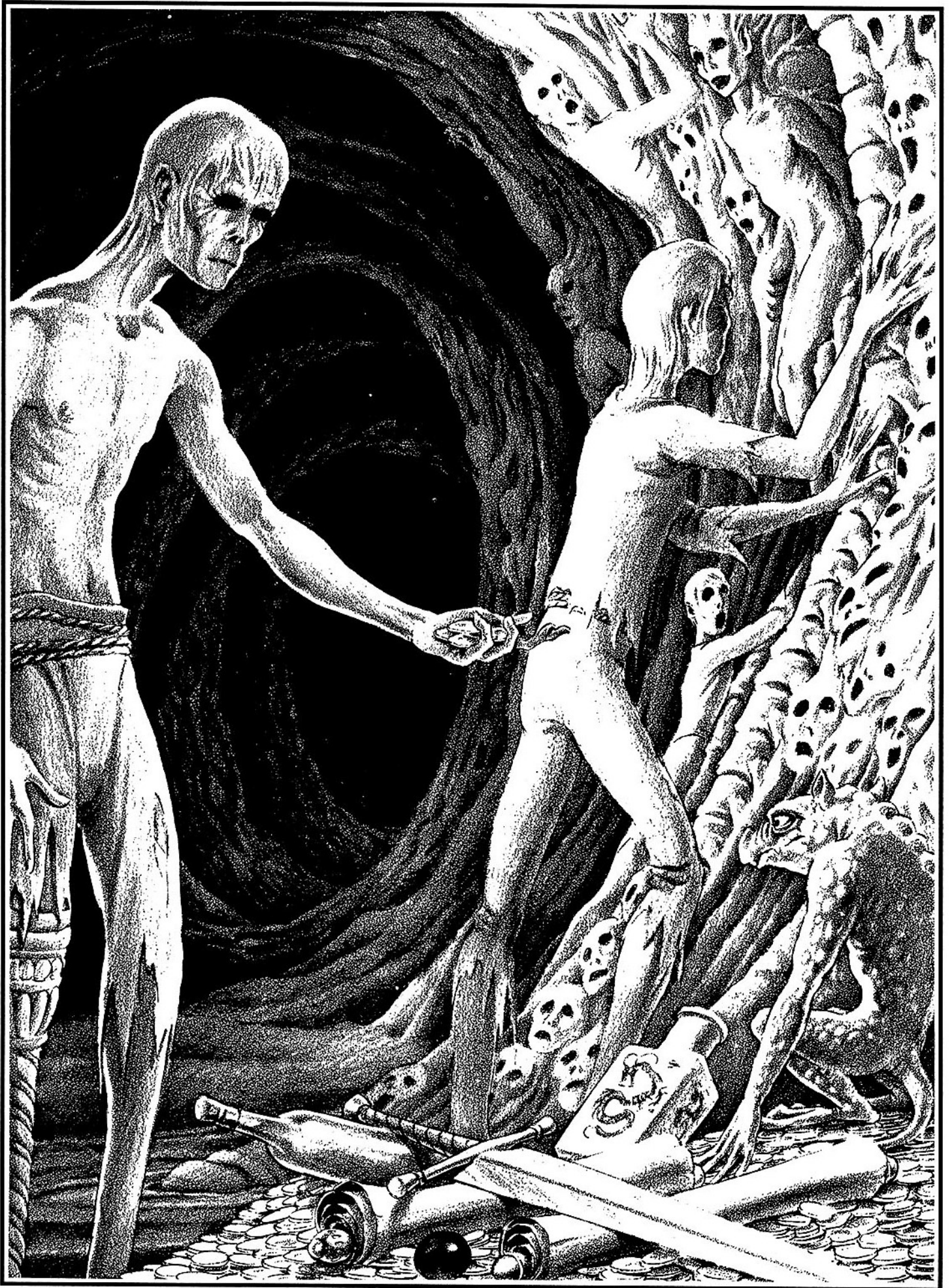
"Now I must depart. I feel the call of my own world. Farewell, and many thanks!"

With a faint popping noise, the elemental disappears. The gem floats into your hand.

If you wish to take this speaking stone, it counts as a possession. If you already have a speaking stone, you do not need another.

Go to 100A to look around further, or leave (119F).





128A You approach the ghost, trying not to look threatening. After raking you with a stare, it relaxes. "Aye, here f'r Cathexis, then? Well, hand uvver your magic an' jine the rest of 'em."

"One moment." You think about what to ask that will not arouse suspicion. "Who are you?"

"Me? They call me Silas Ten-Miler. I run th' woorks in this section o' the woorm. Ye've not hoord o' me, then? Well, I was cast adrift at sea after a typhoon hit me vessel. Me an' foor others in a lifebut, an' unly me fit t' row. I coonut row that lifebut more'n ten mile a day, an' so th' rest o' that scoorvy lut gav me that nickname."

"We were far uff the usual rootes, an' no help came. Sixty-foor days at sea, an' nuh food! Th' rest soon died, an' at last I made my meal o' them. With them helpin', as ye might say, I rowed ten mile a day and made it to shoor, though me leg had rotted by then."

"But you survived?"

"Nuh . . . I dinnut say that. But made it to shoor, aye. Found I had d'veloped a taste foor me friends an' relations, too. With a pack o' me children here"—it gestures at the ghouls—"I became a landlubber, an' have done well."

Silas Ten-Miler appears, if not exactly friendly, at least garrulous. Perhaps the ghost will answer further questions. Will you ask about the artifact you are in (123A), "Cathexis" (103E), or the magical items and other treasure (112A)? Or you may ask nothing and just look around (return to 126A) or simply leave (56E).

128B Tact here is paramount. "Great wizard, how did you defeat the forces that protect Waterdeep?" Names float to you out of the darkness of amnesia. "Khelben Arunsun, the sorcerer called 'Blackstaff.' And the secret lords of Waterdeep. And . . ."

"I know the names better than you ever will," Abraxa says, cutting you off. "All have been neutralized, or will be before another moon rises. Khelben and the other magi have been decoyed on a dozen wild-hare chases through other realities. The rest of the powers of the city, for all their abilities, are merely the living. The Effluvi-um has sent them a sleep from which they will not waken for some time. Or our undead armies will defeat them through strength of arms."

So, you truly are alone. "It sounds so simple," you say.

"Simple!" the lich exclaims. "It has been the work of decades! You cannot imagine how long we have planned this day, what resources we invest, what powers support us. Not ten magicians in all the Realms could bring this large a scheme to fruition. So regarding, time presses. I will tell you of the cerebricule, and then you must begin your mission." Go to 41C.

The dock looks like any dock; except for the one piling where something seems to have been broken off. It looks like a stick has been permanently mounted here. Runes of warding have been carved into the piling below it. **128C**

Of course, this is where the wand lying beside the ghoul came from. It must have protected the dock somehow. If you wish, you may replace the wand here, tying it fast with scraps of cloth and leather thongs.

From here, you can look over the side, into the water, to try to catch a glimpse of whatever attacked the ghoul (124A). Or will you look at the other objects on the dock (48A), or leave (159D)?

The ivory figurine represents the goddess Lliira, a kind, wise, tender deity of joy and contentment. **128D**

A devout worshiper carved the statuette for his temple, where the vampire must have found it. There the statuette was worshiped for centuries by people seeking consolation and peace. The figurine is said to work miracles, for more than one worshiper asking for help at the temple found what he sought.

That Khelben could obtain the figurine for his staff is a measure of the esteem Waterdeep has for him.

Return now to the text you were reading.

As you speak to the construct, the scepter warms in your hand. The guard draws back a step and regards you; then, with no expression of any kind, it lets its weapon arm go limp at its side. **128E**

"Good trick," says your weasel companion. "Saves wear and tear. Wonder if there's a whole series of scepters, sold by category?"

"Guard am I," says the construct, in a dull, slow voice like gravel rolling around in a barrel. "That you say, I do. But only three functions have I: Open door. Slay what approaches door. Or pass what approaches door. Beyond that you may not command me."

Oh, well, so much for a traveling companion. Will you order the construct to open the door (129E); or make it stand idly by while you look around (68A)? (If you look around, mark "Tower—129E" on your bookmark; when you wish the construct to open the door, go directly to 129E.) Or you may leave (86E).

129A A powerful vampire is a foe in any case. Pulling your sword, you run straight at Strix. Many things happen at once. The monster standing off to one side vanishes in a burst of flame, Strix leaps from her pool with catlike agility, and she snarls a command in some language you cannot understand. Instantly the three vampires overhead wake up and land before their queen.

You must fight all four vampires. You cannot escape. Find their statistics on the Combat Table on page 160. If you have a rod of lordly might, you may use it against one of them. If you have one or more containers of holy water, you may throw them. Each flask will destroy one vampire.

However, using the rod or the holy water counts as your attack in a turn. And in the same turn, each of the surviving vampires gets to attack you! Fortunately, Strix will not join the battle until you have defeated two of the lesser vampires. Unfortunately, you cannot attack Strix until she joins in, for the others guard her.

Against these overwhelming odds, the Staff of Water-deep may be your only hope. You do not want to use this unless you must, for each use weakens its power, and you have not yet faced the liches. But if you want to use the staff in combat, go to 21A to learn how to do so. First make a note of this section (129A), so that you may return here after combat.

If you win, you may look at anything in the chamber except the vampires and the monster (138A). Or you may stagger forward to 144A.

129B "But what is your purpose here?" you ask the adjutant. "Where do you come from?"

"I supervise the liches' use of the power bestowed on them, if you must know. The big fellow has invested a certain amount here, allowing the liches to stage a diversion to draw attention from operations elsewhere, and my fellow adjutants and I were sent to see that it is used effectively. Thus far I have seen no problems. As for where I come from, I think I'd best not say."

"Who sent you? A diversion from what?"

"Now, now, you must stop this quizzing. It's rude." The creature's bulbous eyes flicker across your breastplate. "I see you carry a cerebricule inside your armor. Unusual to see humans carry them. I'll tell you what. If you allow me to examine your cerebricule, I shall let you speak with the big fellow and ask all the questions you like."

"What do you want the shrunken head for?"

"My, my, you are inquisitive! I'll treat it well, never you worry. Is it a bargain?"

You may give the cerebricule to the adjutant (61C), attack (52C), leave (56E), or go back to 126A to look at something else.

"I beg your indulgence," you say. "I have found many clues, but as yet no pieces of the staff."

Abraxa draws back, standing tall and ghastly. "None? Incompetent oaf! You represent an investment of my time and power, noble warrior. If you cannot justify these, I shall loose those magical energies and expend them on one more useful."

Suddenly the lich's gaze becomes suspicious. "Cerebricule! Speak to your creator! Has this wretch told the truth? Has he indeed found no pieces of the staff?"

If you told the truth, go to 131D. But if you lied and have found pieces of the staff, go to 124E.

"I will make this trade," you allow, "but only if you give me the figurine before I hand you this blade. I wish to encourage no cheating."

The vampire loses his smile, and he considers. "Very well," he replies. "I will give you the figurine first. But only if you will swear a holy oath, by all the gods of law, that you will obey your word and give me the sword, once I have given you the figurine."

What a dilemma! You may swear his oath (100C), or refuse and attack the vampire (90B).

You enter through the doorway and find yourself in a large antechamber or waiting room that is broad, round, and lighted by torches in wall sconces. The torches look like the ones outside. Several heavy wooden doors, all closed, lead from the room, and an open staircase climbs upward.

You hear something. "Ahhh . . . choo! Ahchoo!" Sneezes sound explosively from within your armor. "Muuch maagic," complains the cerebricule. "Too much! Zmell it everywhere! Ahchoo!"

You take a turn around the room with the overwhelmed shrunken head. Between sneezes and gasps, at each door it has the same message: "Deadly waarding maagic! Open it, kills you! Stay 'way!"

But it has no such warning concerning the staircase. And, even from here, you hear an eerie humming noise coming from somewhere upstairs.

Will you go up the stairs (72A), or leave (86E)?

Nothing. You find nothing. Having torn the desk apart, slashed open every stuffed creature, ransacked the shop's files, and overturned every object, you decide there must be nothing here to find.

You've wasted your time, and wrecked this humble shop. Mark off another half-hour (in addition to the usual time you spend exploring here), and go to 158F.

130A This is a bizarre creature, and you are certain it is not a common sight in the ordinary life of Waterdeep. You address it politely. "Greetings. What goes on here?"

"I've just been asking myself the same question," the strange fellow replies, its speech precise, its voice resounding clearly inside your head. "What really happens when one partakes of a mind-altering substance? What drives these embalmed ones to their stupor? Is it a basic dissatisfaction with their lives? Or do they seek existence in an alternate world?"

The creature fixes its bright eyes on you. "As an adjutant, I come from such an alternate world myself, and I fail to see the attraction it might hold for them. What do you think?"

"I—well." You do not understand the attraction this poison holds for some. "It is possible—"

"Perhaps they don't know, themselves. Perhaps they only know the stupor. It becomes their only reality."

"What is this other world, and why are you—?"

"These mummies are surely beyond all pleasure in life, and yet they return to their life patterns of behavior, even though they lack the actual substance of their addiction. Is it a habit that cannot be broken, even by death?"

Frustrated, you can find no reply to the "adjutant." Will you keep talking to it (17B); attack it (54G); go back to 52A to do something else; or leave (146F)?

130B In the floating disks, you see visions—not scenes of horror, but vistas of blue skies, families walking in parks, sunsets in spectacular orange and gold, people picnicking, children running, zoos, parties, music-making, bustling bazaars, all the scenes of life.

Gazing on these vignettes, you feel a wave of nostalgia, painful in its intensity. No emotion in life tore at you as this does. You can understand why the specter is moaning.

"Gone . . . everything!" the specter sobs. "Haurrant—scheme is over . . . prepare to . . . but it failed. I thought I had— Oh, Calperion, how happy you once were!"

Calperion! You recognize the name—the hero of Waterdeep's past. He killed Haurrant the wizard, and now Haurrant, returned as a lich, has resurrected him to exact revenge.

This specter is no evil undead. Whether or not ghouls

are on your trail, you know you must free Calperion from torture. You could smash the mirrors in an effort to rescue him (147A). But what existence awaits him as a specter? Could it be more merciful to kill him (142A)? You must decide quickly.

The shrunken head informs you that this ornate chalice has been ritually enchanted. The head says the cup's lining absorbs the excess energy of magical liquids, but the cerebri- **130C** cule cannot say what purpose this serves.

"Belonged to advenzhurer who zought zomething underground," it tells you, then sniffs again. "Fountain of Youth, maybe. Pozzibly."

If you are being chased by ghouls, stop reading and go immediately to 120D. If ghouls are not chasing you, keep reading.

You may take the chalice as one of your possessions if you wish. Then return to 132A to look at something else, or leave (47F).

Totally incomprehensible! You wonder why this large volume occupies a prominent place in the library, when it is written in no script you have ever seen. **130D**

Still, the book appears well thumbed. Perhaps Piergeiron is a student of other languages. Suspicious, you have the cerebri- cule sniff the book. "Zno—wait," says the head, and sniffs further. "Book, znogood. Glazz, hold clozer."

The cerebri- cule's interest centers on the magnifying glass lying atop the book. Will you look at the glass (27D), return to 38A to try something else, or leave (119G)?

The garden bed of kelp sways gently in the "breezes" of underwater currents. Its dark green fronds are decorated with colorful anemones and darting fish in many bright hues. Small starfish curl and crawl among the leaves, and tiny, bright squid dart among the plants. **130E**

It's all very—what's the word? "Beautiful," says the weasel. Yes. But you're impatient with beauty. It means nothing to you anymore. You can appreciate only ugliness—that, and results.

And this huge body of kelp, however beautiful, delays those results. You could search it for hours and find nothing. On the other hand, the shrunken head seems interested in the garden, but cannot say why.

If you have at least half an hour remaining in your mission, you may search the garden (14C). If you don't have time or don't want to search, go to 104A to look at something else, or 108F to leave.

131A Yellowknife proves even more formidable in death than he must have been in life. Thinking of your mission to save the city, you retreat up the tunnel, fencing all the while. When the moment is right, you turn and run.

The specter pursues, the same fixed smile on its blurry face. But on legs, you move faster than it can float, and you outdistance it.

"Hey, everybody," Yellowknife calls in that trembling voice to the wraiths ahead, "if my friend goes away with dirty hair, I wouldn't like it. At all."

At once a hundred hands clutch at you! The wraiths' faces merge into one another, becoming a single vision of fear. Ectoplasm solidifies around you, like branches slowing you in a forest. The forest of arms grips you at neck, chest, arms, and ankles, at every point up and down your body. You hurtle forward, white wisps streaming after you.

And eventually you break free. Scratched all over your exposed flesh and through your armor, you must subtract 1 unlife point from your current total, along with the damage you suffered from the specter.

Reaching the surface, you lean against a pillar. Never have you felt more keenly the yearning to draw a breath! And even in undeath you can grow tired.

You must wait at least half an hour before returning to the catacombs beneath the House of the Homeless, to give the wraiths time to calm down—and, you hope, give Yellowknife time to depart for whatever destination the wraiths have queued up to reach. For now, go to **51D** to pick another destination.

131B "Excuse me," you say to the juggler. "Might I have a word with you?"

"Don't bother me, fella, I'm on," says the voice. "Very happy to be here, folks. I just got back from a flying carpet ride. It's hard to flap when you're holding a rug! Heyohh! Wanna buy a kobold?"

"There is no one to hear you but I, friend ghost. Could you perhaps—?"

"You're getting on my nerves, buddy. I've almost got 'em on my side now, and you're queering the pitch."

"There is no one there!" you shout.

The floating hands catch the cascading objects, one by one. The cap turns toward you, and the disembodied smile is gone. The cap turns slowly to view the whole theater, row upon row of empty seats. Then, without warning, the haunt and its possessions vanish!

You expect the weasel to offer a sarcastic comment. But your subconscious mind need not belabor so obvious a mistake. Now you cannot investigate anything but the stage and seats (**68C**). Then you must leave (**64E**).

As you approach the rack of bottles, the cerebricule's nose sniffs urgently. You wait, anticipating some discovery of magical qualities in these bottles. **131C**

The cerebricule opens wide its mouth and bellows, "Driiiiink! DRI-IH-INK! Want drink! Must drink! Give me drink! *Hu-u-urry!*"

The racket it makes, even stuffed inside your armor, is so great that you literally cannot hear yourself think. You have an idea it would be very bad to let this bibulous head drink, but you can't shut it up while it smells the liquor. You must leave!

The cerebricule will not quiet down until you reach your next destination. Go to **146D** to choose.

"He zpeakz the truth," says the shrunken head. **131D**

The lich's eyes narrow. "I despise failures," it announces, pointing a shaky finger at you.

Fire erupts from the finger—fire unimpeded by the water, fire that washes over you and scorches you. Subtract 5 from your current unlife point total.

"That was just a warning," Abraxa hisses. "The next time we meet, be prepared to please me. Now depart!" With a gesture, it levitates you from the tower and out into the harbor. Go to **119F**.

You raise the heavy steel knocking ring and pound it once, twice, thrice against the door. Your blows boom and echo off the faces of nearby buildings. How silent the city has been! **131E**

Nothing happens. No one answers. Return to **83D** and try something else.

Believing itself alone, the lich stretches its arms toward the gaping eye sockets of the worm skull and the blackness beyond. "Soon," it murmurs, in a voice as dry as crackling firewood. "Soon there will be union in Cathexis, and command. But first the specter must be sent against Abraxa." **131F**

The specter being tortured between the floating mirrors . . . Haurrant intends to use it to kill its partner lich! *Mark Evidence Box A on your bookmark.*

Glorying in self-importance, the lich twists back and forth, as though its outstretched arms could embrace the worm. As it does, it sees you and freezes.

You have only an instant to decide. Will you approach the lich, pretending to be its humble servant (**60A**), or attack (**99C**)?

132A Do the dead sing?

Ahead in the construct, you hear hollow groans, perhaps words. They sound strangely like singing. You make your way through a quarter-mile of tunnels that grow bloodier with each step, and the groaning gets steadily louder. When you come to the source, you realize that your wildest suspicion is true.

You came upon the ghouls while they were fleshing out the skeleton of the worm artifact. The zombies here have already been transformed when you arrive. They stretch from floor to ceiling, pulled like victims of torture on the rack, forming the construct's tendons and muscles. No trace of human form remains, save for the dead faces emerging from the sinews, which vibrate in the breeze with a low thrum.

Paralyzed with horror, you finally realize the source of the groaning noises.

The zombies are singing, but you can hardly call it music. Flat and without intonation, their dirge grates on your ears and echoes in your mind. It is the song of the dead, the *Epicidium*:

*Gift spent. Souls dead.
Loathed, though once great.
New breath. How? The Bone Throne.
Dead revenged. How? The Bone Throne.*

*Death fades. Waste, wane.
Flesh spreads. Grow, surge.
Worm's life. Where? The Bone Throne.
Life's doom. What? The Bone Throne.*

*Who calls? Haurrant, Abraxa.
Who heeds? Speak not.*

The zombies sing it mindlessly, incessantly, repeating it without interest. In that apathy, you find as much of death as anything else you have seen on your mission.

In the zombies' midst, a dark figure floats between two mirrors positioned above and below it. Its moaning accentuates the *Epicidium*. A sinister creature perched above the top mirror sees you and shouts, "Things proceed well! The specter is aiding the enchantment nicely."

A spell, then. You might have guessed. Subconsciously you sense its purpose. "They're—they're bringing this thing to life!" exclaims the weasel, its usual composure gone. But why does the specter, one of the most powerful of undead creatures, moan in such torment?

Are you being chased by ghouls? If so, stop reading here and go immediately to 71F. Otherwise, keep reading.

The specter clearly is no friend of the undead. But does a specter, almost a definition of evil, deserve mercy? Can it help you? Perhaps you wish only to escape this artifact, or perhaps you seek something farther on. But whatever your motive, this evident torture bothers you.

You may talk to the specter (99D), talk to the monster perched above it (102A), attack the specter (96A), attack the mirrors (147A), leave (47F), or just look around.

To investigate the:	turn to:
zombie fibers	41E
mirrors	130B
battle-axe	24D
rod	100D
chalice	130C
leather pouch	113G

132B "I wish you would tell me who you work for," you say.

The monster regards you for a moment with what looks like mild annoyance. "Why ever should I do that? Will you make it worth my while?"

"Greedy little cretin," notes the weasel.

"I might."

"Well, then, I'll tell you what I'd like. A gem. Or jewelry. Something shiny and bright, that reflects the light. A thing of beauty! If you have one such precious bauble to bestow, I'll do better than tell you about my boss. I'll take you to him."

If you do not have a gem or piece of jewelry, or do not want to give one to the monster, you may go back to 52A and look around; fight the monster (54G); or leave (146F). If you decide to give the creature what it asks for, mark it off your list and go to 65F.

No use reasoning with this mad spirit. You raise your sword and move in on the **132C** banshee.

She leaps up with a hideous wail, full of pain and sorrow rather than hatred, a wail that rattles the roof and shatters more glass. She drops the child, standing before him to protect him, and returns your attack.

Due to her wail, subtract 8 from your current unlife point total. Only then can you begin combat with the banshee. Use her statistics from the Combat Table on page 160. On the first through fourth rounds of combat, she uses her claws; on the fifth, she wails again, and you again lose 8 unlife points. Every fifth round after that, she wails again.

If you reduce her to 8 unlife points or less, she wails her misery and despair, doing no more damage to you, and flies with amazing speed out the door. You can hear her crying as she departs. Go to 66C.





134A After a pause, Torm continues. "You have conducted yourself in unlife as you did in life. I salute your discipline. You were a worthy warrior, and Torm helps the worthy, be they alive or dead."

The glow filling the temple centers on you. You feel warm, healthy, even alive—for a moment. And Torm has healed you! If you have lost any unlife points in the adventure up to this time, you regain them all.

With a scrape of metal on metal, Torm's giant gauntlet turns around on its base. It points at one section of the draperies surrounding the shrine.

The pin there flies straight to the gauntlet's palm. This pin, unlike the others, is a small, plain bar. As you watch, it grows, transforms, and becomes a bar of iron, the right diameter for a fighting staff. Torm has given you the iron piece of the Staff of Waterdeep!

His voice sounds again in your mind. "I wish you well, unsleeping warrior, but I can help you no further. The powers of the multiverse may move planets and suns, but in the affairs of humanity, they rely on the strength of humanity. Persist in your quest, for the fates of a hundred thousand living spirits hinge on your deeds." With that warning, voice and glow both fade.

Check off the iron piece on your bookmark list and take the piece with you. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to **156A** to find out more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it, but first make a note of this section (**134A**) so you may return here after you are finished.

Then go to **113F**.

134B You look at the three small sacks lying within the circle. From outside the circle, they look like ordinary felt sacks closed by drawstrings. But you cannot look at them in detail or use the cerebricule upon them unless you're within the protective circle.

If the two humans are still protected by their circle, stop reading here and go back to **76A** to choose something else. If the humans are no longer protected by the circle, keep reading.

The cerebricule sniffs at the closed sacks, but says, "Open!"

You open the sacks and dump out their contents: small dehydrated snakes, chunks of pumice, sulfur, patches of fur that are strangely warm to the touch, various unidentifiable powders, dried meat strips, and hard candies.

The cerebricule smells them. "Mozt are potion ingredients. Could be for many things. Not maagic yet. Rezt is for znacking."

"And me without a lower jaw," grumbles the weasel.

Return to **76A** to look around some more, or leave (**65E**).

The cerebricule tells you that the crystal globe is an ancient seeing stone, made **134C** before Waterdeep had even been established and used long ago by a cult of good magicians. They never used the crystal for evil, but worked only good with it.

Over a period of time, the globe's power altered, and it became impossible to use it malevolently. The cult of magicians dwindled to only a few, but no evil could conquer them or the crystal. One touch of the benevolent globe turned an evildoer's heart to good and set him on the road to righteousness. When the last wizard went to his long-postponed rest, he bequeathed the crystal globe to the defense of Castle Waterdeep.

Return now to the text you were reading.

Are any ghouls still active? If so, you cannot get a good look at their weapons; **134D** return to **84A** to look at something else.

If all the ghouls have been dispatched, though, you can look at the weapons. One ghoul carried a spear, one a mace, one a sword, and the last an axe. You may take any of these; each counts as a possession.

Each of these weapons inflicts 6 unlife points of damage with each blow you strike. None is as good as your own sword, and the cerebricule says none is magical. Return to **84A** to look at something else, or go to **146D** to leave.

Something about the consistency of the dark fluid in the squat bottle makes you **134E** think of blood. You hold it up to the light—it is indeed red. You open it and sniff, but you can't tell anything. But someone can.

The rubbery face sniffs for a long time. "Ver', ver' ztrong," it says at last. "Bowerful elixir. Maaagic."

"Is it human blood?"

The cerebricule sniffs again. "Blood, yez. Not hooman. Potion heals conztracts."

"Heals what? Conztracts?"

"Conztracts, conztracts! Alzo undead. Rub it on zkin, repairs damage."

An excellent find! Yet you feel disturbed, somehow, that Maaril takes so much trouble with the welfare of constructs and undead. You may take the potion as a possession. At any time except during combat, you may use it to heal all your damage, up to your original unlife point total! Return to **72A** to look at something else, or leave (**137F**).

135A Give the ghost the magical item you choose, then mark it off your list of possessions. The item vanishes in Bumberly's clutches. "Very pleasin' to do business with you, sir!" it says, with the exultation of ghosts gratifying their obsessions. "Now, which of our gentle scholars will you be parleyin' with today? Are you interested in wildflowers, perhaps?"

"Have you any sages wise in the lore of the undead? Or familiar with Abraxa the lich?" you ask.

"Oh, certainly, sir! But you're sure you wouldn't be more interested in wildflowers?"

"What sages are, as you say, 'in' today?"

"Well . . . you did say undead. Donalbain of Ruathym is accorded a certain respect in undead matters, although to tell the truth, sir (and you never heard this from me), he tends to be a mite crotchety. And then, what was that other? Oh, yes, our sage Tenret can tell you all about Obnoxa—"

"Abraxa."

"—Abraxa the lich, and we are most pleased to have Scryblom the Learned, born and died right here in the fields outside Waterdeep, perhaps the leading authority in the world on wildflowers, really he is, sir!"

Which sage will you talk to: Donalbain of Ruathym, sage of the undead (15A); Tenret, who knows of Abraxa the lich (22B); or Scryblom the Learned, wildflower expert (46A)? If you decide none of these sages would be useful to your quest, Bumberly will grudgingly return your magical item, and you may either look around (return to 22A) or leave the Hall of Sages (149D).

135B The beanbags are bright and shiny satin, embroidered with fancy designs. You bend to pick one up. Suddenly, the beanbag shoots into the air. Its companions follow, and the three start juggling themselves, slamming hard onto the stage and shooting back into the air again.

You manage to catch them, and they stop juggling themselves. The head tells you this is minor magic.

"Going into the entertainment business?" the weasel wants to know.

"Magic is magic," you murmur.

"Useless is useless," replies the skull.

The argument shows you are of two minds about whether to take a beanbag. Nevertheless, any magical item may come in handy. You tuck one of the beanbags away, setting the others gently down on the stage. Unfortunately, as soon as you start to walk away, the other two beanbags follow, slamming on the floorboards in apparent agitation. You realize you must take all three if you take any at all.

The beanbags count as three possessions. Mark them on your list if you take them. Return to 42A to look around, or 64E to leave.

You do not remember dying. But after death, you saw the lich, Haurrant, once **135C** more. The undead wizard gestured to its zombie minions, and you heard its voice in your mind.

"Bury him until I have need of him. So distorted a spirit. Appropriate for Abraxa's assassin." You stared up with undying eyes, and later you saw the clods of dirt fall upon your face when they buried you.

The rest is darkness. Haurrant did not raise you, Abraxa did. And you feel sure that Haurrant did not kill you, either, or curse you with undeath. But what happened then?

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

This kobold is posed in a fearsome battle stance it probably never assumed in life. **135D** You well remember the little blue monsters, especially from the early days of your career, when you and your comrades stood side by side, turning back wave after wave of the ugly things.

A memory! You just remembered something from your life. And that sparks other memories, as well. *Read the next section of your Memory Trace.* After you are done, return here.

There's nothing more to learn from this dead creature. Go back to 90A to look at something else, or leave (158F).

You search endlessly through the annoying greenery, and after half an hour—mark off **135E** the time—your search is rewarded. Your hand closes on a coin, a gold coin showing the face of some long-forgotten governor of Waterdeep. The coin seems strangely warm to your hand.

"What is this?" you ask the shrunken head.

Your device wrinkles its already shriveled nose, then offers an opinion. "Good luck jarm. Ver' weak now. Letz you hit enemy you would mizz. Onze."

If you wish to take this charm, mark it down as a possession. If you miss an attack in combat (roll too high on your die), you may use the good luck charm to strike when you would have missed. But after one use, the magic from the charm disappears forever, and it becomes useless.

Go to 104A to look around further, or leave (108F).

136A You cast about for some item that might be valuable. Then you recall that Abraxa said the cerebri-*cule*, the little withered head, is quite rare.

Not knowing what to hope—perhaps that the cerebri-*cule* could charm Orcus into letting you go—you pull forth the head and dangle it by the hair. “Behold, great Orcus,” you begin, not without anxiety, “this cerebri-*cule*, a wondrous device for analyzing magic.”

Orcus appears less than overwhelmed by this revelation. Invisible forces pull the cerebri-*cule* gently from your grasp and float it over to the demon’s hand. Orcus, ruler of an entire universe and would-be conqueror of your own, gazes eye to eye at a head the size of an apple.

You encourage the head. “Say hello to your new own-er, cerebri-*cule*.”

It appears dazed by all the magic here. “Hullo.”

Orcus turns to look at you. “Is this a joke?”

“No, great Orcus!”

Behind the bone grillework beneath your feet, the tortured faces of men and women and children change instantly into hordes of cerebri-*cule* heads, as big as horses, as small as grapes. “Hullo—hullo—hullo,” they chant in a deafening clamor.

Suddenly they disappear. “I can manufacture these by the millions,” says Orcus, as though stifling a yawn. “Have you anything else to offer me?”

Go to **62B** to offer the Staff of Waterdeep, or **150A** to try something else.

136B It seems safe enough to let the shrunken head examine the figure. You hold it up and it sniffs one sniff.

“Dimensional gate,” it says. “Different viewz repre-*sent* different plazes. Other planes.”

“What dimensions?”

The cerebri-*cule* sniffs for a long time, while the views through the portal change in steady repetition. “Dun-*no*. Two of them. But dunno.”

Travel through dimensions! Alternate universes! Is there any greater adventure? You can hardly imagine where Maaril, who must have created this gate, would want to visit. Looking at the views the gate clicks through, you can tell nothing, except that neither of them looks very inviting.

“Don’t go gallivanting off through the dimensions!” says the weasel. “You could be gone for hours. Days! You have a job to do right here.”

Indeed, it is very risky. But if you wish to enter the por-*tal*, choose your moment, then step through to one of the two universes: whirling bright lights (**112C**), or a

flaming sky, screams, and sounds of burning (**150A**).

Or you may return to **72A** to keep looking, or leave (**137F**).

Arranged in a simple bouquet are hardy **136C** winter flowers, found in abundance around Waterdeep at this time of year. How often did you bring flowers to the shrine of your god? As you wonder, an image of a lovely young woman, kneeling before a shrine and offering flowers such as these, flashes into your mind. With the image comes a deep, inexplicable sadness.

The image fades all too quickly—you cannot even recall her face. But the emotion is still there, the sense of loss, of parting, and the sadness is so strong it borders on anger.

The memory jars you, and the uneasiness stays with you as you continue to look around this shrine. Turn to **110A** to investigate further, or leave (**113F**).

Your sword tears through the ghosts’ **136D** immaterial flesh, destroying them one by one. As you drive them back, small magical bolts of energy erupt from the protective circle, annihilating still more spirits. The wizard and his apprentice are helping you! Moments later, most of the spooks are destroyed; the rest flee, still screaming.

You turn to face the living. By their expressions, hope and gratitude warring with doubt and suspicion, they don’t know quite what to make of you.

Do you have a speaking stone? If so, go to **11A**. If not, go to **42B**.

The hoop looks like gold, but you suspect **136E** it’s a painted prop. However, close examination reveals that it *is* gold, and you hope it is magical as well.

The cerebri-*cule* sniffs a moment, its rubbery nose drawing back grotesquely. “Maaagic ring of healing,” it drones. “Agquired by legendary actor, Rodnim, from giant. Rodnim was ver’ charming, ver’ wily. Convinzed giant to give him ring as payment for performanze, and legend grew in theater.”

“Must have been a great performance,” comments the weasel dubiously, “or a great gyp.”

“Actoîr willed ring to theater he loved zo well. For each perzon who plazes it over head, will work onze.”

Once during the adventure, you may use this hoop to cure 10 unlife points of damage. It will then be useless to you, except as a gift to bestow on another. Return to **42A** to look around further, or **64E** to leave.

137A The elemental swims along slowly, to accommodate your less skillful progress, toward the distant merman garden. "The lacedons—foul carrion-eaters!—have scoured the whole harbor looking for the staff. If they have found it, we are lost. Hurry, for our goal is just ahead."

Mark off half an hour's travel time.

Near the sunken garden of the mermen, the elemental comes to a halt and points out a hole in the harbor bottom—a hole large enough for a moray eel, but not for you. "There is where the piece of the staff disappeared. One last thing—"

The elemental reaches within its own body and pulls out the white gem, extending it toward you and dropping it in your hand, but still touching it. "This is a speaking stone," the elemental says, its voice now coming from the stone in your hand. "It will allow you to converse with mortals and living beings. I hope it is of use to you. Now my own dimension calls me!"

With that, it disappears.

If you already had a speaking stone, another will do you no good. If you don't have one, you may take this one. It counts as a possession.

Now the moray eel hole gapes before you. You can sense life within it—probably the eel.

"Uh, you're not going to—" begins the weasel.

"No!" you say, moved by the sheer folly of the idea to answer your own subconscious mind. A moray eel could bite your arm clean from your body.

But you could, at less risk, probe with your sword (99B). Or you may investigate the nearby sunken garden (you have already spent the travel time you needed to reach it; go to 104A), or leave (119F).

137B These draperies, once the finest velvet but now ragged, are festooned with many dozens of iron pins. As you look more closely, you see that each pin represents something, usually a human body part—an arm, leg, torso, head, heart, and so forth. Some represent animals—cattle, goats, dogs, cats, horses. You also see full human figures, male and female.

You have heard of something like this in a distant port. Supplicants come to a shrine. A man with a bad knee might purchase, for a copper coin, a pin showing a leg. He pins it on a drape and prays for his knee. The pin is said to help relieve the affliction.

Some pray for the health of farm animals, or to meet the man or woman of their dreams. Some pray to have healthy children. There are pins for nearly every purpose. In the time you have been dead, the custom must have come to Waterdeep.

You reach over to pluck a piece from the drape nearest the gauntlet in the shrine. . . . If you are using Memory Trace A, go to 148E. If you are using Memory Trace B, go to 46B.

You advance cautiously toward the ghoul. **137C** It might be feigning death in order to surprise you. But when you get close enough, you see that this ghoul is dead—or rather, truly dead, its spear-wound fatal. The creature is dripping wet, and must have recently been down in the harbor. You recall from the haze of amnesia that mermen patrol the harbor.

The ghoul is ugly, its features twisted into an appalling mockery of human expression. Will you end up looking the same?

You hold up the cerebriole. The head wrinkles its nose and twists away by its hair. "Murdered. Ver' rezent. Did not expect attack."

Will you look at the other objects on the dock (48A), or leave (159D)?

As you lunge, you're astonished at how quickly the monster leaps over your **137D** onrushing blade! The adjutant vanishes in a ball of flame, but not before peppering you with quills that shoot from its hand. The spines pierce your face and limbs, even punch through your armor and into your chest! Subtract 10 unlife points of damage from your current total.

Carefully you remove a quill from your eye and are relieved to find you can still see. "Bad move," says the weasel, unnecessarily. You must free the specter yourself by smashing the mirrors that trap it (147A).

With a desperate lunge, you break free of the mummies, but not before each gets one **137E** final strike at you. Each surviving mummy inflicts 5 unlife points of damage to your current total.

You run out of the den, and keep running. The mummies are too slow to catch up. "Safe!" you murmur as you try, yet again, to catch your breath.

"Yeah," agrees the weasel, "those guys are too wrapped up in themselves to worry about us."

Go to 146F.

You depart the room and find your way out of the tower. The smoking dragon looms **137F** behind you as you descend the steps. The cerebriole tells you of no other place in Sea Ward of interest. Go to 82A to find somewhere else to visit in Waterdeep.

138A The tunnels here, a quarter-mile beyond the zombie fibers, pulse slowly, and the wind rises and falls in a regular beat. They remind you of a human heart. You enter a wide area of the tunnel—a chamber of that heart?

“Welcome,” says a throaty voice. “I am Strix.”

The speaker is a woman, and she appears to be bathing in a fleshy hollow of the chamber, a pit filled with the blood-water that nourishes the construct. In life, you might have thought her beautiful, though now you can hardly remember why. Her pale complexion . . . a glimpse of a long, bright canine tooth, a fang . . . the name, Strix. You recognize the name. She’s the infamous queen of vampires!

Strix’s atrocities are legendary. You vaguely recall accounts of her vampire followers wiping out whole villages, even the livestock. Although she is at least three centuries old and more ruthless than any human despot, Strix gazes at you now with the wide-eyed charm of a society debutante.

“You have caught me in my bath, I’m afraid,” she purrs. “Given your rude intrusion, the least you can do is . . . scrub my back.” She adjusts her position, sitting a trifle higher in the blood-water.

Off to one side, a lovesick sigh escapes the peculiar creature who stands watching her, scrub brush in hand—or, rather, claw. The vampires hanging above pay no attention.

“My friends are asleep,” continues Strix, indicating the vampires. “You are at present my only company, paladin. Does Abraxa know, I wonder, what her servant is doing?” She laughs lightly. Her words shock you, for she seems to know as much about you as you do of her!

You cannot trust Strix. That much is clear. But it is equally clear that if she wanted to kill you, she could have already done so; you are obviously no match for a vampire queen. Given her high status among the undead, perhaps Strix knows or has something that would prove useful in your mission.

“Scrubbing backs, now?” says the weasel in disbelief. “You’ve done a lot of strange things, but this—well, go on, do it. If you don’t, you’ll always wonder what would have happened—assuming you survive the next two minutes, of course.”

Will you scrub Strix’s back (35A); stand back and converse at a safe distance (78E); attack Strix (129A); escape, either the same way you came or through the tunnel at the back (109E); or ignore Strix and look around (109C)?

When you are free to look around, you may investigate the:	by turning to:
strange monster	92A
sundial	74C
sleeping vampires	72C
vampires’ possessions	153C

138B The skeletons make no move to keep you from looking at the staff. Since they went to such pains to avoid touching it, you decide to look from a distance.

The shrunken head inhales the odor of magic and declares the staff a “rod of lordly might. Ver’, ver’ bowerful. Deztroys evil beings who grazp it.”

A rod of lordly might! You recall hearing in life that one such unmatched staff was kept under guard in the castle. This could be a powerful weapon in your mission. But how to touch it, when an undead like yourself risks destruction?

You consider tearing away a piece of the shroud cloth from one of the nearby zombies. “Might work,” the weasel suggests. “What have you got to lose?”

Will you try taking the rod in this way (56B), leave the rod alone and return to 32A to look at something else, or leave (102E)?

138C That’s odd. When the ghost was at the desk, you could have sworn he was seated on a stool—but now, as you step around the desk, you find

no stool there. You look down at the floor and see nothing but polished wood.

The desk is translucent, and you can see into the drawers. They contain bottles of ink, stacks of paper, and old ledgers. Yet it is not quite clear, for on closer examination you see a rich wood-grain finish.

You step up to the desk, and *zoop!* The stool pops up out of the ground, and you find yourself seated very comfortably on a soft cushion, at the perfect level to work at the desk. And—is it your imagination? Or did the desk move, too? When you step away, the stool drops back into the floor.

“Efficient,” the weasel observes. Will you return to 22A to keep looking, or leave (149D)?

The wraiths in this chamber are gone. You look at the burial urns on the wall, but **138D** learn nothing of interest. Apparently, the spirits went on to whatever they were waiting for. You can hear chatter from the side tunnel, so some must still be waiting. Will you go down the tunnel (34A), or return to the surface (51D)?





140A "Hello," says a voice from the darkness of the stables. There floats a luminous, skeletal figure wrapped in flowing pale robes. The hood is empty. You are hardly surprised that this apparition casts no shadow.

"Please don't bother my troops," it says. The voice in your mind sounds strikingly ordinary. This floating horror could be any living human asking for the time of day or directions to an inn. "I hate it when they get confused and I have to order them all over again. They're quite stupid, you know."

It's a girl's voice, you realize. A young girl.

The hood turns to one side. "What?"

"I said nothing," you say.

"Not you. I was talking to my friends. . . . Really?"

The apparition turns back to you. "My friends say you shouldn't be here. They don't like you."

At once, hands lock around your throat.

Your eyes widen and your hands reach up to pull them away—nothing! And you've dropped your sword! The invisible, intangible hands are strangling you, while the apparition looks on from the darkness.

"They talk to the people they don't like, too," says the girl's voice. "I wish they wouldn't say things the way they do, but that's how it is about friends, you know."

Then the voices start, terrible dry whispers in your ears, chanting rhymes. "Slice your eyes and pull your nails, flay off skin and twist entrails, wind your tongue about a shoot and wrench it, jerk it by the root. . ." The voices chill you as burial could not, and in the hands' unbreakable grip, you struggle as futilely as a landed trout.

Roll the die. On a roll of 1 to 8, go to 141A. If you roll 9 to 12, go to 86C.

140B The Hall of Heroes, a tall marble-columned tomb, towers among the smaller family crypts like a warrior prince amid a crowd of admirers. Trees and shrubs, now bare of leaves, stand protectively around it, spreading their branches like guarding hands.

Here are buried the fighters, generals, and champions of every battle in Waterdeep's long history. The inscription above the marble doorway reads:

STRIVE TO MAKE THEIR MEMORY
AS PRECIOUS AS THEIR LOSS

Your joints grind as though sand were poured in them, your tongue lies dead in your mouth, and always

your chest arches and flattens as the lungs try futilely to draw breath. I have lost both, so I know, you think. There is no memory as precious as the life they lost. But you honor their sacrifice.

Perhaps one or more lie awake, as you did, and you can enlist their aid. Will you enter (18A) or go elsewhere (return to 14A)?

Now is your chance to study the three **140C** objects that once floated within the water elemental. Rather, two objects—for even as you watch, the dark gem crumbles into dust and washes away.

You bring out the shrunken head and hold it in turn over each of the remaining objects.

When it sees the white gem, it says, "Ztone of zpeak-ing. Wear thiz . . . living hooman beings underzstand your zpeech."

Of the bottle, it adds, "Minor maagic. Is filled with water. Zpecial water . . . food for water elementals."

You may take either or both of these items. Each counts as one possession. Return to 100A to approach the lighthouse, or go to 119F to leave.

"Cerebricule," you say, "what prompted your interest in this tavern? There is **140D** nothing here."

The shrunken head sniffs the air, while you look at the human patrons twitching in nightmare sleep at their tables. "Vampire was here. Big fight with ghouls, over—" sniff, sniff—"some bowerful maagic. Vampire left before sunrise."

You have missed your chance to obtain whatever it was the vampires and ghouls fought over. There is nothing of interest here now. Mark off the time you spent getting here, then go to 146D to leave.

Moving upstairs in the Hall of Sages, you pause at the window of the second story to **140E** look out on the lake below. A clouded mirror, it reflects nothing but the overcast sky. To your undead eyes, the City of the Dead looks equally gray at all hours, night or day. You would not even know whether it is day or night, but that the cerebricule is keeping track of time for you.

"Pretty view," says the weasel. "Let's spend ten or twenty hours standing here looking at it, shall we?"

Groaning inwardly, you move up to the second-story landing. This floor is much like the one below, except that you hear muttering from two tombs, those of Scryblom the Learned (46A), and at the other end, Donalbain of Ruathym (15A). If you don't wish to talk to either of these sages, go back downstairs and leave (149D).

141A In the invisible grip, you writhe in terror, confronting final death. Your heart pounds, perspiration beads your forehead, tears leak from tightly shut eyes, and—

You think, This can't be happening.

"You're dead already," says the weasel. "What is this beat of the heart, sweat of the skin? Your eyes have no more tears than two glass marbles. Wake up." Its voice drips with sarcasm.

Mastering yourself, you shut out the illusion. Though it seems you must choke, you reach down and grasp your sword. Though at any moment you feel the murmuring spirits will tear your head off, you stride toward the motionless apparition.

"Wait! What are you doing?" asks the girl voice.

You thrust through the white wrap. In your mind the girl screams! The hands release you, and you almost fall, chest burning with the need to breathe.

The girl's voice gives way to a hollow hiss. In a trice the apparition vanishes. The skeletons and zombies, commanded by their leader, also leave.

If you have not already obtained the crystal globe from the skeleton, you grab it as it departs. The skeleton puts up no resistance. In your hand, the globe turns into a crystal piece of the Staff of Waterdeep.

Check off this piece on your bookmark list. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to 156A to find out more about the staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it; but first make a note of this section, 141A, so you may return here after you finish there.

There is nothing more to do here. Time to leave (102E).

141B This dusty tome, some dusty scribbler's life-work, contains nearly seven times as much about pipe smoking as any living being could want to know. You page through it, marveling not so much at the thorough treatment as at what people can spend their lives doing.

The only fact in this tedious text that relates to the undead concerns mummies. The book documents, at laborious length, a single incident of a mummy's attack on a small town in the last century.

The author mentions that the mummy showed a passion for smoking drugs in water pipes. "No doubt this predilection for the illicit substances indicates an addiction to the foul stuff during its presarcophagal existence. Evidently the mere prospect or suggestion of its desired drug could induce the associated stupor in the undead monstrosity."

Intriguing, perhaps, but trivial. You have been wasting time. Mark off half an hour (in addition to the usual

time you spend exploring the library). Then either go to 152A to look at the books on the shelves, 38A to examine other things in the library, or 119G to leave.

"You, O pile of bones," you intone. "Give over the globe to my care, and wait for further commands." **141C**

Without pause, the skeleton hands you the globe, then stands motionless. "Easy as binding a bootlace," the weasel remarks. "With this luck, you'll never need to pull your sword."

The globe transforms at your touch into a short rod of purest crystal. Check off this piece on your bookmark list when you take it. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to 156A to find out more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it; but first make a note of this section, 141C, so you may return here after you are finished there. Then go to 140A.

Did you help the humans escape this place? They're still gone . . . and so is every scroll and every stick of furniture left here. Obviously, the scavenger crew has been here again, finishing the job it left earlier. **141D**

Did you leave the humans fighting ghosts—or help or watch the ghosts get at them? If so, they're still there—the humans, that is; they are two shrunken, pallid corpses who look as if they'd died at age two hundred or so. The ghosts who drained them of life are long gone, as are all the furnishings and books.

In either case, there's nothing more to be done here. Go to 65E.

This disgusting creature does not deserve to go on, mocking life with its very existence. You plunge your blade into its throat. Its eyes bulge, and it collapses on the ground at your feet. **141E** *Mark Evidence Box D on your bookmark.*

If the skeletons are still intact, they fall to pieces when their master dies. Return to 58A to look around, or leave (117F).

You remember prowling through the taxidermist's shop. But it's not as you left it. **141F** The other prowling undead have wrecked the shop! No piece of furniture remains intact, and every stuffed animal has been torn to shreds. "Well, now they've achieved their final rest," says the weasel, "in a manner of speaking."

Nothing to look at here. To leave, go to 158F.

142A The zombies resume their dirge. The specter lies at your feet. Certain that the evil undead must perish, you bring down your sword in a final blow.

The Epicedium swells to a deafening volume, and you cannot hear the specter's last words. Then it becomes motionless, and at that moment the song stops.

As the specter begins to dissolve, you pause to decide on your next course of action, but before you can, a figure appears beside you in a nauseating cloud of vapor. The skeletal frame, the rich but rotting finery, the crown and phylactery—Abraxa! No, wait, it is another. Haurrant!

"Now! Now!" cries the weasel. You grab frantically for your weapon, for your pieces of the staff, for anything that will save you. But when the lich's glowing eye sockets turn upon you, the battle is already lost.

"Be still," Haurrant whispers, and iron bonds spring from nowhere to encircle you. Struggling helplessly, you watch as the lich approaches you. "I raised that specter for my own good reasons. Who are you to interfere?"

Then it looks more closely at you. "Why, you are the paladin I raised," it says, with mingled surprise and amusement. "I wondered what happened to you." It falls silent, pensive. You are too surprised to speak. "I understand now," says the lich at last. "Abraxa's plot against me, I imagine. Well, I'll put a stop to that now."

The lich speaks words of magic, but you hear nothing after the first few syllables. The iron bands stretch, widen, and flow together, and you find yourself entombed in a steel shell. In that trap, you spend the rest of your brief existence, knowing that your mission has failed.

142B Space folds, your surroundings vanish, and the wizard's cozy chamber is replaced by a large, echoing temple.

Stone walls, huge tapestries, marble columns, open sky seen through skylights. Above the altar is a blue-white eight-pointed star set in a circle.

You recognize this as a temple dedicated to Mystra, the great goddess of magic. You seem to recall having been here in life; the temple is located in Sea Ward, not many blocks from Maaril's Dragon Tower. Maaril must worship here, and he has set up handy transportation to it.

There are some unconscious worshipers in the temple, but no undead. Whatever magic was here has already

been plundered. Footsteps echoing, you walk out through the front colonnade.

You emerge on Pharra's Alley in Sea Ward. Mark off the time you spent exploring Maaril's home, if you haven't already. You may go back to the Dragon Tower (68A), but it will take half an hour to find your way and explore again, because you have been disoriented by your teleportation. Or go to 82A to find somewhere else to visit in Waterdeep.

Most clients here are conventional upper-class dabblers in games of chance. All lie **142C** unconscious, carried into nightmare by the Effluvium.

Even in sleep, two characters at a back table strike you as suspicious. The one is well dressed and somewhat rotund, his hands pale and doughy. The other hardly seems a conventional companion for this dandy. He's obviously a seasoned fighter, tall, slim, saturnine, and smelling of poison.

At their feet lie a small pouch and many gold coins. They must have been exchanging them under the table when the Effluvium knocked them out. You may investigate the pouch (119E) or the coins (65C); return to 62A to look at something else; or leave (108G).

The cerebriucle tells you that when **142D** Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun created the staff, it struck him that good comes from people hoping for good things to happen, not to themselves, but to others.

Here at the shrine, he found pins offered up by individuals who were pure of heart, generous, and giving. Many of the pins represent a prayer by one person for the health, well-being, good fortune, or recovery of another. These pins Khelben rendered into this piece of the staff.

Return now to the text you were reading.

As you bring your blade down for another blow, the vampire swiftly dissolves into **142E** foul mist. It draws away as if on a breeze. The voice still sounds from the elusive mist, "Strix will hear of this." (If the skeletons are still intact, they flee when their commander does.)

Return to 58A to look around, or leave (117F).

The hookah is well made but also well used, and it shows signs of corrosion. You **142F** let the cerebriucle sniff it.

One sniff and the shrunken head starts coughing violently! You pull it away from the water pipe, but it continues to hack and choke. There is nothing to do but to remove the shrunken head from the den. You may examine nothing more, and must leave (146F).

143A The bottom burial niche holds an urn exactly like the rest in these catacombs, a plain pot holding plain ash and bone, all that's left of someone named "Sharp."

Or not quite all that's left, for as you return the burial jar to its niche, a wraith detaches itself from the crowd and drifts toward you. "Takin' an interest in my sole existin' evidence, eh?" it asks. "Yes indeed, that is me, or I. Woonsocket Sharp, at your service. Say, you, Master Armor-Clad and Marble-Checked, you look much like one of those holy-terror paladins. Yet you are unrestful like us, or we, eh?"

"That is so."

"Aha, aha, I thought so. Killed by one of 'em, were you? Or cursed by some god?"

"I would rather not say."

"I can spot an undead. I used to run construction, back when the docks were buildin', and found it economical to hire a necromancer, raise some zombies, presto! Instant labor corps. Work 'em all day, all night, no breaks, no sick, just they eventually fell apart is all. That wizard, hoo! what a grimface. I was inquirin' of him once, I said, 'Wiz . . .'"

Hearing this Sharp prattle on about atrocities committed for profit, you suddenly recall a necromancer in your own past. One who struck you with undeath? No, you remember now. This was long ago.

You and a party of mercenaries ventured into a ruin to rescue some children who had vanished there. Foul monsters lurked there; for some reason there were always monsters. You killed many, found the children, then had to face the wizard in a forgotten graveyard. Twenty pairs of bony hands rose from the graves at his feet. . . .

You remember little more. Sharp soon departs. Return to 28A to keep looking around, or leave the Hall of the Homeless (51D).

143B Thinking that such a powerful creature may imperil your mission, you bring up your sword to strike the revenant. The blade descends, and the revenant stands there watching it with the same intensity it gives to everything.

At the last possible moment, its arm flashes up, so fast that you can barely see it even when you slow time, and locks on your forearm. Its grip holds you like an iron cuff. You kick out, and the revenant grabs your leg above the ankle with the same unbreakable grip.

Calmly, it asks again, "What do you know of Greeme? Did you aid him? If so, I must kill you."

Helpless, you answer, "No. I did not aid him. I know nothing of Greeme."

The revenant lets you go and instantly appears to for-

get you ever existed. In its universe of Greeme, you do not figure.

Fighting the revenant looks useless, even pointless. You may try talking to it (26A), leave (119G), or, since it ignores you and soon leaves, you may look around the library (return to 38A).

The gauntlet is of finely crafted iron and too large to fit a human hand. It is **143C** mounted upright, its palm facing the door, fingers outstretched. You recognize it as the symbol of Torm, demigod of duty, loyalty, obedience, and those who face danger to protect innocents. That's important to you somehow. . . .

You served Torm! You remember now. In your life, you served this demigod. And you remember more. *Read the next section of your Memory Trace.* After you are done, return here.

Prompted by an impulse you hardly understand, you reach out to touch the gauntlet. . . .

If you are using Memory Trace A, go to 148E; if you are using Memory Trace B, go to 46B.

You leave the City of Garbage gladly. Even with the Effluvium covering the countryside like a shroud, the rest of the landscape looks—not beautiful, for you cannot perceive beauty. But compared to the garbage dump, it is a definite relief. Mark off the time you spent here if you haven't already. **143D**

In the distance, you see a small rural shrine (110A) about half an hour's walk away. Otherwise, mark off an hour to return to Waterdeep, then go to 82A to pick a new place to visit.

". . . And so when she reached shore dragging the ship's captain behind her, she **143E** revived him, he fell in love with her, they married, and he always zaw to it that she bought a bouquet of flowers to but beneath the hero's tomb, each anniversary of her rezcue."

You wait for more, but there is none. "That is the whole story?" you ask, with some asperity. "Five schemes to raise money, failure, a voyage, a shipwreck, a rescue, and that is the end?"

"Yez." The shrunken head seems slightly hoarse with all its talking. "Ah, the power of a great narrator," the weasel remarks.

As you suspected, the story turned out to be totally irrelevant to your situation. What's more, you have lost half an hour of time, in addition to the usual time you spend exploring here! Return to 18A to continue looking around, or leave (78F).

144A Veins pulse in the walls. Groaning music of zombies echoes far away. You crawl through the passage, which has tightened around you, crushing you. Pushing forward as though reenacting birth, you emerge in the final chamber. Ahead you see nothing but the empty blackness of the tunnel.

Farther back in the construct, you thought you faced the heart of evil. Now, at the end of your journey, you have reached something worse—evil’s guiding intelligence, its mind. Here in the cavernous skull of the worm stands the Bone Throne, the control nexus for the entire artifact!

Huge though this skull is—perhaps seventy feet across—and as repellent as its throbbing, fleshy walls may be, you can comprehend this more easily than the previous monstrosities. Evil has been abstracted, removed from the horror of flowing skin and singing muscle. Refined and concentrated, it stands before you on the Bone Throne. Haurrant.

“You may tell Orcus that all goes well,” the lich is saying. It is speaking to a monster perched behind it, but it does not look at the monster. Tell the master that everything proceeds on schedule. The artifact is complete. I sit on the throne within minutes, and Cathexis begins.

“Not long ago, a ghoul delivered to me two of the pieces of the device that has threatened the plan. You, adjutant, report their removal to your master.”

The monster nods and vanishes in a burst of light.

With these words, Haurrant levitates two short cylinders from behind the throne until they float before it.

One is dull, a gray granite, the other gold banded with gray. Stone . . . leaded gold . . . the Staff of Waterdeep!

You almost launch yourself forward. “No! Foolish!” hisses the weasel, and you heed the subconscious warning. It takes less than a second for the lich to gesture, surround the staff pieces with green, smoky light, and dissolve them into nothingness. You cannot gain the leaded gold or stone pieces. Cross them off the list.

If anyone has been with you besides the cerebricule and the weasel, stop reading here and go to **83B**. Otherwise, keep reading.

Here is the linchpin of the plot to destroy your city. If you can defeat this lich and its partner Abraxa, you will fulfill your mission. Perhaps you have little strength and feel you cannot face Haurrant. Yet when strength is weak, stealth or trickery may prevail.

Will you announce yourself, pretending to be Haurrant’s loyal servant (**60A**); sneak up to attack Haurrant (**50G**); wait and watch (**131F**); or look around silently (**107C**)? Or you may sneak back to the fleshy tunnel behind you, to the “neck” of the worm (**148C**). Choose carefully, for any of these options may prove risky—and your mission may depend on your decision!

When you are free to look around, you may investigate the:	by turning to:
pedestal	104D
walls	148C
the crystal spheres	113A

144B From the outside, all you see is a pitch-black oval entrance, large enough to accommodate a merman.

You sneak up to the tower’s base, avoiding Abraxa and the base of the whirlpool. You sense no life within the lighthouse, but that does not mean no enemies are within. Carefully you drift up to the oval opening and peer inside.

You are looking into a cylindrical room, with a hole at the top leading upward. Quickly you search the lighthouse from bottom to top. It has been ransacked by Abraxa’s minions—each item of clothing, each tool, each weapon, each stick of furniture has been taken. All that remains is the exit at the base—and a hatch in the ceiling of the top floor.

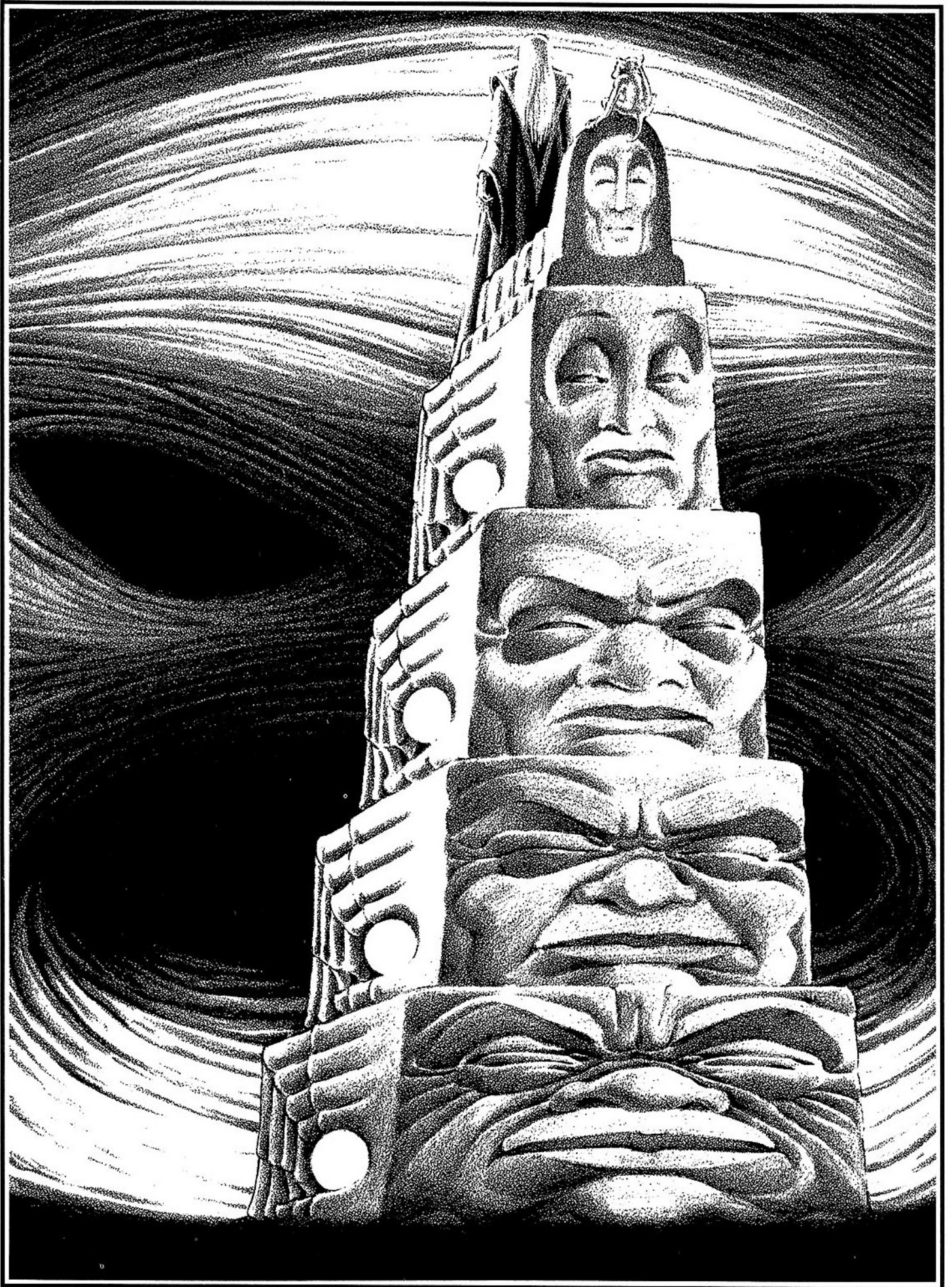
Will you descend again and look around outside (**104A**); or will you throw the hatch open and climb onto the roof to speak with Abraxa (**113C**)?

The jewels in the bracelet reflect the dim light with the fire of true gems. The gold **144C** is real, too, and etched in fine detail. The cerebricule sniffs out no magic, and discovers no history. But it does not take an expert, nor even a sense of beauty (one you lack now) to see that it is very valuable.

Of course it is too small to fit over your large, square warrior’s hand. But wouldn’t it look fine on the delicate wrist of a lady? You try to recall a love in your life, whose honor you upheld. Do you remember a beauty with flowing hair and luminous eyes? Or did you devote your life entirely to your god?

It is no use. Pleasant memories will not come in this frightful place. You may take the bracelet as a possession, but it is too small to wear. Return to **52A** to keep looking around, or leave (**146F**).





146A You see a blur of motion, and by reflex you speed your perceptions to match. The revenant is hurtling toward a back table, where two men lie asleep.

Even unconscious, they look suspicious to you, huddled at the darkest table they could find. The pouch and many coins that are scattered on the floor must have been passing between them under the table, dropping when the men fell asleep. A covert payment, obviously.

The revenant reaches these men far ahead of you. Even with speeded senses, you only move at a normal rate. You feel you are swimming through air as thick as gelatin. When your undead companion speaks, you fall back to normal perception.

"Greeme!" it shouts, just standing there before the unconscious men. Its scream is not the telepathy of the undead, but a real voice, hoarse and as dry as a desert sandstorm. "Awaken and face your victim, Greeme! Your victim, and now the instrument of your fate! Wake up! Why won't you wake up!"

It grabs one of the two, a tall, thin man with a sword at his belt. The revenant grabs him by the throat, one-handed, and lifts him high overhead. Its fingers clench. The unconscious man begins to gag.

Watching this drama play before you, you think of your own role. You led the avenger here, thinking you served justice. Given a revenant's uncanny ability to trace its killer, this probably is indeed the murderer. But is being killed in one's sleep fair retribution? Or savagery perpetuated?

"Tough call," says the weasel. "Don't expect me to help."

You remember serving justice in life. You cannot tell what would serve justice now. Will you watch, allowing the revenant to kill this man (70A), or try to stop it (74A)?

146B You note an unadorned gold band on the lich's finger. "Perhaps that ring might aid my quest," you say, and hold the cerebricule close to determine its power.

The shrunken head sniffs, then speaks in a bullfrog voice. "Znogood," it says tersely.

Paper-thin flesh peels back from Abraxa's teeth in a grin. "And you suppose, then," the lich asks, "that you may avoid trouble by displaying the wedding ring that my husband placed there?"

More than anything you have seen yet, this leaves you speechless.

"That ring is a sign of misjudgment, nothing more,"

the lich continues. "In life, Haurrant attracted me, and we wed. Such foolishness is the curse of the living, even for a sorceress such as I. This misjudgment carried itself beyond life. But do not think I regard the Haurrant of today with more respect than I would show a misshapen barnacle. You will learn much more of him when I disclose your next assignment, beneath the ground. Have you anything else to ask?"

Return to 8A, or go to 20A if you are through asking questions.

The vampire's mist has barely disappeared when a ghoul shouts, "The **146C** statue!" A survivor snatches up the cloth-wrapped figurine and bolts for the door.

Do you want to stop it? If so, you must attack it and all the remaining ghouls. In every round, each surviving ghoul gets an attack against you, while you may only attack one at a time. If you are reduced to zero unlife points, you have been defeated and your mission is over. If you cut them all down, go to 90E.

If you prefer not to interfere, the ghoul reaches the door and escapes. Return to 84A to look around, but you may not look at the figurine or cloth. Or go to 146D to leave the tavern.

Outside the wrecked tavern, bodies of **146D** ghouls litter the twisting street. The vampire was far outnumbered, for whatever good that did the ghouls. The struggle has guaranteed that The Full Cup, should it ever return to business, will be leaking for a while.

Mark off the time you spent here, if you haven't already, and decide where to go next. The cerebricule says the only other place of interest in Southern Ward is the home of the wizard Kappiyan Flurmastyr (76A). Or you may return to 82A to pick some other destination in Waterdeep.

You eat some of the berries. The juice flows across your dry tongue, washing away the dirt of burial. But you taste no sweetness, no pleasant tart flavor. You will never taste the flavors of food while you lack a living spirit to appreciate them.

Return to 18A to keep looking, or leave (78F).

You emerge from the dark den with relief. **146F** The docks are nearby, and you may look at them by going to 48A; or you may walk right into the harbor from here (94A). Each of these choices takes half an hour for travel and exploration. Otherwise, go to 82A to go elsewhere in Waterdeep.

147A You raise your sword, fired in the energies of the Negative Material Plane, and bring it down with a mighty stroke. The top mirror shatters into a thousand pieces, and the creature atop it vanishes in a burst of flame. Shards of glass fly outward and lodge in the surrounding fibers and the floor's skin. Gouts of blood spurt from the wounds.

Around you, the fibrous faces launch into a hideous uproar, their song forgotten. When you destroy the other mirror as well, the racket increases. The specter falls to your feet, more dead than undead.

"I—I thank thee, swordsman. I must—kill! No! I must see thou dost not fall to the lich, as I did. With the mirrors destroyed—destroy! Burn! Murd— Aah! No, no!" The specter falls silent for a moment, his hunched posture and jerky movements indicating a mighty inward struggle.

"With . . . the mirrors . . . destroyed, the lich has been alerted. We must . . . make haste to hide!" The specter grabs a glowing bone rod resting nearby, shoves one end into your hand, murmurs a quick incantation, and at once both of you turn invisible!

Clumsy because you cannot see your own limbs, you allow the specter to lead you along toward one of the distant fibers. This area could hold a fair-sized farmer's market, you think with bizarre irrelevance. "Things moving a bit fast for you, eh?" says the weasel.

Far behind you, where the mirror fragments have pierced the zombie fibers, you hear an explosive *whoosh*. Firelight shines on the strands ahead of you, and you detect an odor like sulfur. "Where is Calpe- rion?" cries a shrill voice. "Who frees the object of my vengeance?"

Haurrant has appeared, obviously seeking you. Are you being pursued by ghouls? If so, go to **50A**. If not, go to **70B**.

147B This is no fight; it's butchery. With each blow, the vampire strikes down a ghoul. With each blow, you strike down a ghoul. In a matter of seconds, the two of you, undead paladin and vampire, stand regarding one another, surrounded by the corpses of corpses.

Roll the die. On a roll of 1 to 4, you have lost 4 unlife points. On 5 to 8, you have lost 2 unlife points. On 9 to 12, you were unhurt during the fight. If this damage reduces you to zero unlife points, your adventure is over. If you survive, keep reading.

The vampire's lip curls as he regards you. "You needn't stand around awaiting my thanks. I didn't need your aid. What do you want, staring at me with those sunken, sallow eyes of yours? Oh, I see."

He clutches the velvet-wrapped ivory object closer to himself. "You mayn't have it. It's mine. Go find your own." He is careful not to touch the figurine with his hand; the velvet cloth is wrapped carefully around the figurine.

Will you ask the vampire about his bundle (**56A**); attack (**90B**); or ignore him and look around (**74E**)?

"Ah! Excellent!" chirps the adjutant **147C** monster when you accept its offer. The dice game it proposes seems almost anticlimactic. Roll the die for yourself first, then for the adjutant. If the two rolls tie, roll again. Whoever rolls higher wins the bet.

If you lose, the adjutant takes your weapon and teleports it away with a word. Mark it off your list. You may play again if you have another weapon. Otherwise, return to **62A** to keep looking around. Or leave (**108G**).

If you win, the adjutant says, "Oh well. Now you will talk to someone who can answer your questions." It gestures, and you vanish in a curl of smoke. You reappear before the adjutant's master, at **150A**.

Suspicious of this adjutant creature's **147D** behavior, you make a sudden lunge with your sword. But the creature seems to know your action before you do it, and leaps over the blade.

In a puff of smoke that looks much like the Effluvium, the adjutant vanishes—but not before squirting a stream of orange acid that strikes you with unerring accuracy. Subtract 6 unlife points from your current total! If you have run out of unlife points, your adventure ends abruptly.

If you survive, go to **62A** to look around the casino, or leave (**108G**).

The opalescent gem in the scepter's tip is as large as an egg. It must be priceless, to the **147E** living. But why would the mummies care for it? Suspicious, you hold up the shrunken head. "Maagic," it intones. "Control for conztracts. Bower limited to golems, myrmidons, and beings of zuch zize."

You may take the scepter if you wish, unless a mummy still holds it. Return to **52A** to keep looking, or leave (**146F**).

The sword bit deep—no blood, of course. **147F** Now to head back to the others. You turned, but you stumbled on a skull. Staggering to the temple doorway, you heard—

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

148A Morbidly fascinated, you return to your longtime dwelling place. The shallow grave looks fresh. Tumbled clods of earth, still damp, lie strewn across the gray-brown bricks of the path.

"But I remember lying there so long," you think. "How can the grave be fresh? I spent months . . . no, years. . . ." Thinking back on your solitary prison, you find that an undead body cannot shiver. But you recall the long agony vividly.

"Oh, excuse me, is it time to moan again?" says the weasel. "I forgot. Can we play a dirge here, please?"

"Why is the grave fresh?" you ask desperately.

"You had a lot of time to yourself down there. Maybe you imagined days into years. All that about life spirits wandering by overhead, seasonal rainfall—"

"No!" You could not have imagined that. Even now you sense the oak tree's life nearby, a slow, slumbering principle coiled within the trunk, waiting for spring. And from your sketchy memories of the City of the Dead, you think that one or two of the crypts are new. They were not here when you lived.

The weasel itself is the proof. It could not have decayed to bare bones in a matter of days.

Perhaps you were moved. In that long nightmare after you learned of your undeath, you retreated into the dark recesses of the mind. Anything might have happened, too quickly for you to notice. But when? Who?

"If I were you, and I am," says the weasel, "I would stay here and meditate on it for, oh, hours and hours. After all, you do have an entire day to stroll around the city and pick up those pieces of the staff. Let's waste some more time here."

It's disturbing to think your own mind can be so sarcastic. You walk away from the grave once more. Go back to 14A and choose where to go.

148B More northeast than north, so-called North Ward is large, spacious, prosperous, and above all, respectable. Here live the noble, exquisitely refined descendants of those revered entrepreneurs who plundered their neighbors, murdered the peasantry, and sacked the battlefields of centuries past, then had the good sense to purchase baronies with the loot. Their offspring have achieved status they could never know.

In this well-heeled district you can find many villas, all masterpieces of architecture, or at least of conspicuous consumption. Most of these roosts have been abandoned for the winter, their residents flown south. One particular villa seems to interest the cerebriule, though, and you may visit it at 58A.

Catering to the remaining clientele are a number of shops that sell furs and pastries and dragonskin boots. And there is the Gentle Mermaid fest-hall (62A).

At least one of these places holds a piece of the staff, says the shrunken head. If you don't want to visit either one, go back to 82A and choose another ward.

As you turn from the pedestal to act on your decision, a nodule on the wall **148C** catches your attention. The interior of the worm skull is covered with thick, blistered layers of flesh, ropy veins, and throbbing membranes. This nodule of flesh, one of countless knobs and vesicles, contains a small glowing object. A jewel? A piece of the staff?

You decide you dare not risk using the cerebriule here where the lich is within earshot of its booming voice. You peer closely at the nodule.

Suddenly skin tears away beneath it! A fleshy knob bursts forth, and on the end of the knob is a mouth. The mouth screeches, "*Intruuuuder!*" and Haurrant whirls around and spots you. You must fight! Go to 99C.

In the stables, the horses lie as unconscious as the humans elsewhere in the castle. You see roans and dappled mares built for speed, and heavy chargers with their own barding hanging by their stalls. In your nostrils, the aroma of hay, which invigorated you in life, is now only dampness and cloying warmth. **148D**

In the darkness, as light to you as day, you see something white. But you cannot make out details—strange. Will you approach it (140A), return to 32A to keep looking around, or leave (102E)?

A soft glow suffuses the temple, and a voice speaks in your mind—the deep voice of **148E** Torm, your mentor.

"Greetings, vassal. I well remember your services to me. Have you behaved as a servitor of Torm, in all honor? Open your mind, and I shall see."

Have you checked Evidence Box D on your bookmark? If you have, go to 158A. If not, go to 134A.

Your enemy fights with speed and fury, and it takes all your skill to parry its blows as you attempt to disengage. But you break free, sustaining one final blow. Subtract 5 from your current unlife point total. **148F**

As fast as your feet will take you, you flee the courtyard. Go to 117F.

149A The urn in the top hole, containing the remains of an individual named "Blunt," is identical to the many others throughout the labyrinth: cheap unpainted ceramic, turned out in quantity by journeymen and apprentices of the Guild of Stonecutters, Masons, Potters, & Tile-Makers.

Is that something behind the base? You move the urn. No, only a knob of rock. But from the line of wraiths, a stout outline moves forth and flies toward you. "Here now! What are you looking for there, my man?"

You look over the wraith. It is a male, pouchy of cheek and chin, and broad across every measurement of the torso. The legs vanish in vapor, and the whole frame joggles and wobbles in and out of reality. "Who is it that asks?" you respond.

"I am Lagothrix Blunt, sirrah, an honored and successful merchant in my time. That appears to be more than you can say, you in your stained armor and dented greaves. What right have you to disturb my remains?"

"I—"

"This insult can only be remedied through just compensation. We are told to provide magical items, sirrah, to power the whatever-it-is these liches claim to be building. You will hand over such an item to me, as damages for the mental anguish your meddling has caused me. Tut-tut! No arguments. At once, if you please."

Blunt's ghostly hand extends toward you. Considering your options, you decide you could fight this wraith if it came to it. But there are so many others in the cavern, and you have no idea whether they would support this "merchant." Blunt might just be posturing.

You cannot afford to offer Blunt your cerebriole or magical sword, and the wraith is not interested in the weasel. Anything else on your list of possessions will work, if it is magical. Will you give the wraith an item (152C) or not (92B)?

149B These dead may know something useful—who their master is if nothing else. "Hello," you say, approaching.

You face a stout, tall woman who appears to have died in middle age and been buried in a rich gown. Her back, marked by a pronounced dowager's hump, forms one of the widest "steps" on the staircase. She looks up at you, wattles of skin wobbling beneath her chin. "Form staircase," she says. "Bear weight on your backs."

"Who commands you so?"

She continues to stare. "Wait. Form staircase. Bear weight on your backs. Wait."

"I order you to answer my questions."

She halts. "Answer my questions."

"Who is your commander?"

"Answer my questions . . . answer my questions—"

Telepathically, you shout. "Tell me!"

The other zombies, staring at you, repeat the command tonelessly. "Tell me—tell me—tell—"

Frustrated, you turn. You hear a voice. Go to 140A.

The sword bit deep, and the zombie fell. Foul creature! Now to join Karinna and Korlo. Besieged in the altar room, they must be in bad shape. Korlo wounded, maybe. Mortally, perhaps.

Daydreaming so, you stumbled on a skeleton's skull. Staggering forward to the doorway, you heard deep laughter, and fear struck you. You looked in and saw them—he laughing in victory, surrounded by bone piles and dismembered limbs; she joining in, a hearty laugh you'd never heard before. First you thought, She never laughs that way with me—

But you do not remember, will not remember, what you thought next.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

You stand outside the Hall of Sages. You only wish you could breathe, or else smell something beautiful, for the musty odor of dust hangs in your nostrils.

If you haven't already, mark off half an hour for the time spent in the Hall. Will you look around the Hall of Heroes (140B); the House of the Homeless (31B); or go elsewhere in the City of the Dead (14A)? Each of these takes half an hour apiece. Or you may go to the walls of the cemetery and head for the city of Waterdeep; this step takes essentially no time (82A).

Approaching the skeleton, you feel more than a little relieved when it remains motionless. One of the many creatures you have seen that looks dead, it is.

The shrunken head says there is nothing magical about the eel skeleton. You wonder whether you would have found this decoration attractive, even in life. Return to 104A to keep looking around, or leave (108F).

You reach for the scroll on your right, unwind it to look at its runes, and immediately regret your haste. It's a curse! As the spell takes hold, your eyes are forced to travel down the document. With each new rune you behold, the pain in your limbs grows more acute. By the time you reach the sorcerer's final malediction, your fingernails have split and your knees are trembling as though your own bone shards have pierced them.

Were you alive, the scroll might well have killed you. As an undead, you subtract 5 unlife points from your current total due to the curse.

The peg-legged ghastrump over to check on you. If you haven't talked with the ghastrump, it starts talking with you now; go to 128A. If you have already talked with the ghastrump, return to 126A instead and pick again, or leave (56E).

150A You appear in a burst of light beneath a flaming sky. Sheets of orange fire sweep overhead, down to a distant horizon, where mountains rise and tumble back like ocean waves. Wind scorches your skin, and odors of smoke and burning thicken the air. Somewhere flutes and clarinets squeal discordantly, almost drowning out the sound of nearby screams.

You float over a bone grillework, like the crossbeams of a street gate. Beneath you, spirits shriek. They press against the bars like fish in a net. Every face expresses nothing but pure torture. An arm reaches up toward you. You bend down to grasp it, but your hand strikes an invisible barrier, and the faces wobble and distort like reflections in a pool of water.

It must be an illusion, you decide. You stand on a solid floor, disguised by magic. You hope the vision beneath you is equally illusory, and not a clairvoyant sight of an actual chamber somewhere.

This is a giant open terrace, you decide. And this chaotic realm matches the descriptions you heard in life of some of the Outer Planes, faraway dimensions of upheaval. But where are you?

"Turn to face me, sleepless one," says an inhumanly deep voice. At the sound, you turn. In one glance, you realize your cause is hopeless.

Before you is a huge throne. On it sits a bloated humanoid demon that looks like a fat satyr, pig-faced, goat-footed, ram-horned, bat-winged, shark-eyed, and utterly depraved: Orcus.

Orcus, supremely powerful lord of the undead. Orcus, one of the most evil beings in the multiverse. And you face it alone!

Now you know where the liches obtained the awesome magical power needed to overcome Waterdeep. Now you realize where the strange little monsters around the city came from, and in whose interest they supervised things. Now you know, and it is too late. You stand no chance against Orcus, who could pluck the moon from its orbit with nary a thought.

Beside it lies the infamous Wand of Orcus. Said to hold power that would make scholars redefine their notions of what is possible, the Wand of Orcus cannot help you. Beside its owner, it might as well be on the other side of this dimensional plane, the Abyss.

"None bear weapons before me," says the demon. It makes no move, but your magical sword leaps from your hand and vaporizes before your eyes! "Your aura states that you come from that city—Waterdeep? Yes, Waterdeep. No doubt you help my plan there. How goes the effort?"

"Umm—" You dare not hesitate! "Great Orcus, the undead legions even now overwhelm the city. By the next midnight, the liches say, the city will perish."

Orcus ruminates on this, speaking to itself. "Tolerable. As long as the magi go to Waterdeep to battle the construct, they do not flout me in Vaasa and Bloodstone Pass. Soon I will finish my portal and enter the Realms." It takes notice of you again. "The liches could have reported this themselves. What brings you to me?"

Too late—or perhaps not. In mere prowess, you are nothing compared to Orcus. But apparently it has not bothered to read your mind. With cunning, you might turn the demon against its minions or even escape to continue your mission.

That mission depends on what you say to Orcus now. How will you approach the challenge? Will you pretend ignorance, saying you arrived here by mistake and wish to go home? Or will you invent a story, telling Orcus that the liches plan betrayal? You might also try to request a favor of Orcus or offer a bribe to keep it from destroying Waterdeep.

To use this approach:

pretend ignorance
invent a story
request a favor
offer a bribe

turn to:

150B
20C
36C
54D

150B "Great one!" you say, falling to your knees above the bone grillework. "I have stumbled onto your realm by mistake. I am not worthy to look upon you. If I may only be returned to Waterdeep, I may continue to work for your plan's success!"

Orcus says, "You wish to return to Waterdeep? My involvement there must remain secret."

"Of course, my lord. I shall swear any oath you like, or you could erase yourself from my memory—"

"You speak as though your existence holds importance," drawls Orcus. As casually as if it were scratching its ear, it points one claw at you and snuffs out your existence in the blink of an eye.

After you dwindle to a smudge, those who clean up your remains speak of you with respect. After all, you held the attention of Orcus for several seconds, and it favored you with several dozen words. Unfortunately, this high honor means nothing to you, for your quest has failed.

Against the pursuing ghouls, you have **150C** no weapons except your sword and your fighting spirit. But though you send many of the monsters to their final death, sword and spirit prove no match for their numbers. You fall under a horde of bodies. The weasel shouts something you cannot hear amid their screams, and your mission ends here.





152A You feel sure you never saw so many books in your life. The selection is wide and fascinating. But many of the titles look like dense political treatises, customs of far-off lands, or arcane volumes about the history, law, and economy of Waterdeep.

Among these many tomes, several catch your interest. You may pick one by going to the section indicated:

<i>Legends of the Annelids</i>	(93C)
<i>On Pipe Smoking</i>	(141B)
<i>A Treatise on Vampires</i>	(102B)
<i>Religious Customs in Northern Faerun</i>	(94B)
<i>Amazing Golem Stories</i>	(65B)

Or you may go back to 38A to look at something else, or leave (119G).

152B The inkstand looks ordinary, as does the parchment. On the paper, you can barely make out, in thin, spidery handwriting: "New cony-catcher: Try Hall of Sages. Get marks to pay you to let them see sages!"

"That sounds like our scheming ghost," you murmur. "Not my ghost," the weasel skull assures you.

Next on the paper there is some illegible scribble, but you *think* one of the words is "Abraxa." Out of the cryptic scrawl that follows, you can discern: "Use old doddering fool . . . if anyone believes it" and "wildflowers more useful." The rest is so amazingly sloppy you wonder if the writer suffered a spasm while putting it all down.

There is nothing else interesting about the paper. Return to 22A to keep looking around, or leave (149D).

152C Lagothrix Blunt takes the item you offer, scans it with an experienced eye, sniffs, and floats away. Mark off that item from your list of possessions.

"Wonder whether he'll offer it to the next wraith in line at a nice markup," says the weasel.

Return to 28A to keep looking, or go back to the surface (51D).

152D If you did not prevent the skeletons from chopping down the tree when you were here last, the tree, the bird, and the skeletons are all gone. There is nothing of interest left here; you may leave (117F).

If you prevented the tree's destruction, it is still here, but the bird and skeletons are not. Go to 58A to look around, or leave (117F).

Kneeling and placing your ear against the bone, you hear within the island a chorus of many voices speaking as one. You strain to make out the sounds, but only a few words emerge distinctly: *Unison. Revenge. Haurrant. Bone Throne. Cathexis.* The sound is fascinating, like an ocean. You strive to hear more. And more.

"Ho!" cries the weasel. "Wake up!"

"What?" You start. Somehow you feel you have been here a long time. Looking down, you are horrified. Your own fingers have begun to grow into the island! The same spell that is turning the skeletons into the cavern's framework is working its enchantment on you!

With the strength born of panic, you rip your hands loose from the island. Pieces of your flesh fly off and splash in the water. Subtract 2 unlife points from your current total.

Staggering backward, you fall off the island into the river and are carried downstream (36A).

You pick up the skull and cradle it in one hand, thinking of life and unlife. Perhaps the spirit ripped from this mass of bone has left a trace of recollection. You bring out the shrunken head. **152F**

It smells around the eyes and jaw line, then over the fractured brain case. "Bain," it says at last.

"What? Pain?"

"Great bain. Zurprise. Vengeanze. Zomething 'bout an azzazzination plot." More sniffs. "Abraxa." It says nothing more.

"Sounds like a laundry list," the weasel says.

While you try to put all that together, *mark Evidence Box A on your bookmark.* Then return to 18A to look around the Hall of Heroes, or go to 78F to leave.

At your refusal, the ghastr's eyebrows rise. "Naow, lad, what reason could you have nut to jine in?" Like any evil mind, Silas at once suspects the worst. "See here, naow . . ." it begins, raking you in with its stare. **152G**

But it says nothing more to you. Instead, it calls to the ghouls. "Children!" Its gesture toward you speaks volumes. The ghouls draw together and approach, their fishy eyes intent on you. Go to 103A.

You decide to let these humans deal with their own problems; your own mission involves the rescue of more than a hundred thousand others. If you had to waste time with individuals, you tell yourself, you would fail. *Mark Evidence Box D on your bookmark,* then go to 65E. **152H**

153A You reach over, grab the dark gem, and pull it toward you. Suddenly a stabbing pain lances behind your eyes, assaulting your mind, dropping you to your knees.

Subtract 8 unlife points from your current total. If this leaves you with none, your adventure is over. If you survive, keep reading.

The water roils as the nearly invisible water elemental, in whose body the dark gem had been floating, begins moving about, vital and powerful.

"Thank you, not-dead human," its bass, ponderous mental voice resounds in your mind. "You have freed me, and I am grateful. I wish you had spoken to me, though, for I could have warned you of the damage done by that stone. You could have pried it free with your blade. Pity."

Now free of its magical restraint, the elemental floats upright. "Now that I am free, I soon will return to my own plane. But before I do, you have done me a service, and I will return your favor. How may I help you?"

Recovering from the pain, you open your hand, only to see that the dark gem has disintegrated into black ash that floats away. "I fight the lichs and their minions," you answer, pain still lingering in your head. "I seek the Staff of Waterdeep, which may destroy them."

The water being considers. "I know of this thing. I saw an icy shaft hurled from the tower. It floated far away, into a cave. Only powerful magic could have made it fly so. Come, I will take you there."

Your headache begins to subside as you consider the elemental's words. Do you already have the ice piece of the Staff of Waterdeep? If so, go to 126C. If not, you may go with the elemental to seek that piece (137A). (If you have half an hour or less remaining on your mission, you cannot spare the time to go with the elemental. He swims off, leaving you to look around at 100A.)

153B You hope fiercely that this will work as you scrape away the waxen seal of the vial and scatter the yellow powder over the lichs.

They back away several paces, startled but unharmed. "What is this?" asks Haurrant, and Abraxa laughs incredulously.

"A weapon of fools!" Abraxa says, and they both raise their arms to gesture.

From their arms, the leather straps fall away, rotted in an instant by the powder, and with the straps go the lichs' phylacteries. The carved boxes, with the strips of parchment inside them, fall to the floor of the chamber. The lichs have time to exchange a stare of disbelief.

"He's won . . . hasn't he?"

"Possibly. But I'll stay longer than you, my dear."

The first lich dissolves away silently. The second emits a sigh of satisfaction at outliving its mate, then it, too, disappears into dust.

"Splendid!" cries the weasel, but its voice is almost lost amid the screams of the artifact. Go to 155A.

The three vampires each hold timepieces. The primitive hourglasses and time-candles marked with the hours contrast with the expensive mantelpiece clock, an elaborate mechanism any artisan in Waterdeep would be proud of. **153C**

But according to the shrunken head, none is magical. Evidently the vampires use these devices to keep track of day and night while they are deep underground in the construct. Given a vampire's notorious vulnerability to fire, it's no wonder these three have not found the nerve to light the time-candle.

Go back to 138A to look around. Or you may leave; since the tunnels are closing up behind you, the only way to go is forward (144A).

The arcane rune is intriguing, but the cerebricule can tell you nothing of its significance. However, it calls the glowing rune on the wall a "telebordation mark." **153D**

"Teleportation? What does it do?"

"Touch it, get transborted to 'nother plaze."

"Where?" But this the cerebricule cannot tell you.

Will you touch the symbol (142B); keep looking around the room (72A); or leave (137F)?

The other tombs, all intact, hold many of the most famous figures in Waterdeep's history. **153E**

Baeron, who overcame the corrupt guildmasters that took control after Ahghairon's death, then restored rule by the secret Lords; Nymara Dalzor, a humble nanny who was stranded in a boating accident with two dozen children (attending her noble ward's birthday party), and led them three hundred miles through savage territory back to safety, then died just within the city gates; Athar, the famous "Shining Knight," father of Piergeiron and servant of the god Tyr. . . .

There's something in that name, Tyr. Not quite the right name, you think, struggling to remember. You cannot grasp the fact you sought, but another recollection floats out of the fog.

Read the next section of your Memory Trace. After you are done, return here. Then go to 18A to look around some more, or leave (78F).

154A Steeling yourself to bear the unnatural heat of the flames, you quickly reach into the brazier and grab what lies within. And—

With a noise like a thunderclap, flame blasts out of the brazier, engulfing you, engulfing the hovering cloud of undead, and burning away the invisible barrier of the humans' magical ward. You are hurled across the room, horribly seared.

Subtract 15 unlife points of damage from your current total! Your armor and gear are charred. If the damage you have taken brings your total to zero, you have failed in your quest. If you still cling to unlife, keep reading.

(If the ghosts are still in the room, they evaporate in the magical flames. And the two humans, taking advantage of the diversion, snatch up their possessions and race in terror from the room in the moments before you rise.)

The cerebriucle is so charred that you could call it a cerebriquette. But after a long moment, its mouth opens, and it coughs smoke. "Hot!" it announces peevishly.

The rest of your possessions are undamaged. "Present and accounted for," says the weasel. "Let's leap into hot lava next. That should be even more fun."

And still, in your hand is what you were reaching for—a section of the Staff of Waterdeep, made of pure ruby. Check off the ruby piece on your bookmark list when you take it. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to 156A to find out more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it; but first make a note of this section, 154A, so you may return here after you are finished.

A walk through the room with the cerebriucle informs you that there's nothing interesting left here. (If they were still here before, the humans have disappeared, and the cerebriucle informs you that it "zmells of telebord" in the next room. You hope the teleportation spell has taken these two humans to safety.)

To leave, go to 65E.

154B Angling across the current, you strike the bony outcropping and clamber onto it. After the exertion, you feel, more than ever, the desire to breathe deeply.

You remember the shrunken head. When you pull it out, it sputters droplets of blood, then begins to babble. "Maagic . . . maagic . . . zo much everywhere . . . maagic—"

No help there. You look around. The island is smooth bone. Crooked seams cross it, like the sutures in a—"No! Oh, no!" groans the weasel. "This is a skull, isn't it?"

You prepare to leap off, but nothing moves, and after a few minutes, you decide your subconscious hunch was mistaken. Just then you hear murmuring voices, just

below the level of intelligibility, beneath your feet. You lean down to listen more closely.

The voices sound like the wind in the tunnel. *Oooohhh*, you hear. *Caaaathexissss. Liiiife*. There seems to be more, but you can't make out much. Will you listen more closely (152E) or not (67B)?

Your last blow brings the ghost to its knees, and it raises both its pale, scaly arms to protect itself. "Stop, please—don't kill me, I beg of you." **154C**

You stay your sword at its groveling, then bring the edge close to its throat. "And why should I not?"

"I know things—things of value," it gasps. "Haurrant and Abraxa—I know things about them. Spare me and I'll tell you, I vow I will!"

"Speak," you tell it.

"First you must swear not to kill me," it says, hedging. "Give me your word."

Will you swear not to kill the ghost? If so, turn to 61B. If not, continue the fight. If you win, you may return to 58A and look around, or leave (117F).

The harbor is much as you remember it. The merman's lighthouse still stands beside the sunken garden, the two of them untouched by the writhing whirlpool. But the merman is gone. **154D**

You may investigate the lighthouse (100A) or the sunken garden (104A); head back to the city to choose another goal (82A); leave the harbor for the nearby Dock Ward (74D); or ride the rapid underwater currents out of the harbor, to the shoreline fronting the countryside (45A).

The banshee and boy are gone. Nothing else here has changed, except what you changed on previous visits. **154E**

You may leave again (113F), or return to 110A to look at the things you have not yet examined. (If you previously read a Memory Trace while here, you cannot do so again.)

The three stories of the Hall of Sages overlook a peaceful lake. The pundits, gurus, and learned instructors who rest in this narrow building would enjoy the view. The lake reflects the sky, and the universe beyond it; they always professed that the entire universe was their realm of study. **154F**

The Hall of Sages is perhaps the most exclusive tomb in the City of the Dead. Only a fewscore scholars have been deemed worthy to join its august company upon death. But it is seldom visited for all that.

Yet if any of the spirits there rests less than quietly, he may give you help or information. Will you pass under that granite arch inscribed with the simple legend, KNOWLEDGE, and enter the Hall of Sages (22A), or go elsewhere (return to 14A)?



155A With both liches gone, you have accomplished your mission. Waterdeep is saved! "Great job, sport," says the weasel, the only compliment you recall it ever making to you.

Judging by what Haurrant said, Orcus, the demon lord of the undead, actually promoted this conspiracy as a mere diversion from a greater scheme elsewhere in the Realms. Now Orcus must work without the diversion, and you hope your efforts allow other fighters to stave off that scheme, wherever it may be.

For it appears that you yourself will not survive. You heard the worm construct moan, then scream as the liches perished. Now, without their binding magic, the Bone Throne collapses like a bursting sack. The Cathexis of the undead has collapsed. The engine of Waterdeep's destruction is being destroyed.

The wails of pain from a hundred thousand undead mouths deafen you. Veins in the walls burst like pipes, spraying blood over everything. The bone framework begins to fall apart into its individual skeletons; wraiths are torn away with screeches of pain; liquefied ghouls writhe bonelessly.

"Out! Get out!" you hear the weasel shout over the cerebri-*cule's* yammering. You rush for the nearest tunnel, but it has already collapsed! Turning, you race for the worm skull's enormous eye sockets. Beneath you, the floor tilts and cracks as the ceiling falls. The entire mile-long construct, and the tunnel holding it, fall with a roar like the end of the world.

You end your adventure as you began it, buried beneath the earth, but now you have thousands of companions. Amid this squalor, it is almost a relief when your unliving energy departs and consciousness slips away.

Have you marked Evidence Box D? If so, go to **24A**. If you have not marked this box, and if you are using Memory Trace A, go to **31A**. If you have not marked the box or are using Memory Trace B, go to **24A**.

155B A tourist approached you in Virgin's Square. His jowls wobbled with fat, and his smock was stained with perspiration from Waterdeep's summer heat.

"Excuse me, honored knight," he said. "Can you tell me the whereabouts of the City of the Dead, specifically the Hall of Sages and the tomb of Scryblom, the leading botanist?"

You pointed the way to the cemetery, but you could not help in locating Scryblom. The tourist wouldn't leave just then, though, for he wanted to discuss—what was it?—wildflowers! This sage was said to be the greatest scholar of flowers in the field (so to speak).

By the time you pried yourself away from his inane eulogy, you had decided this man was well suited for a visit to the Hall of Sages. Nobody but a dead man could

put up with endless talk on wildflowers! No doubt that Scryblom was equally dull.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

You hold the cerebri-*cule* up to one of the gargoyles. You never know—it may come to life and attack. You seem to recall many such episodes from life. "Hardly found a statue that didn't feel like getting out and about," says the weasel.

One sniff and the shrunken head drones, "Ztatue." Another long sniff. "Was onze alive, ver', ver' long ago. Ver' great wizard captured it. Zdead now. Zno way to bring back."

"Rotten luck," puts in the skull. "No mighty creatures to help you. You're on your own."

I've got you, you sigh to yourself, your eyes still on the gargoyles. Determined, you bring the cerebri-*cule* to the other statue, just in case. "Zame," it says.

Will you look around further at **68A** or leave (**86E**)?

Haurrant. Tall, skeletal, dressed in ocher robes, a gold headband circling a misshapen skull, ruby and emerald rings on withered fingers. You remember Haurrant. The lich incanted a spell, gesturing broadly over you while you looked up, helpless and tired. Where? What was the spell? Your memory slips away again.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to section 20A or wherever you came here from. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

The chest is small, finely made of dark wood, and appears to be unlocked. But you are leery of magical traps in this wizard's den. You let the cerebri-*cule* sniff to make certain.

"Maagic inzide." You ask if there are traps, and it replies, "None maagical"—not totally helpful. Will you open the chest (**124B**), leave it and look at something else (**72A**), or leave (**137F**)?

155C

155D

155E

156A The Staff of Waterdeep is the most recent creation of the archmage of Waterdeep, Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun. This good wizard has produced powerful items in times past, but in the staff, he has surpassed himself.

The cerebriucle tells you of the staff's history. Khelben heard from an oracle that a major peril threatened his city—danger from "those who sleep not." Presuming that this meant the undead, the wizard created a rod able to destroy or resurrect the undead, among the most powerful effects of necromantic magic.

To prepare the staff, Khelben collected materials representing the best of life: love, honor, piety, bravery, joy. Each of the items he gathered embodied these virtues, and in addition they imbued the staff with the mystical power their histories had accrued.

Khelben kept his staff in his own tower, thinking it impenetrable. But he did not reckon on the wizardry of the liches, Haurrant and Abraxa. On the night the Effluvium was to permeate the city, they lured Khelben away on false pretexts, then assaulted the tower with all the strength at their command. Though hundreds of their undead servants perished against Khelben's defenses, Abraxa managed to lay its hands on the staff.

Then Khelben's brilliant guardian enchantment came into play. At the touch of an evil being, the staff broke apart, and its components reverted to their original forms and flew across the city to their old locations. The liches could not foil the concealment spell that hid their whereabouts.

Thus Abraxa charged you to find the pieces, while Haurrant, mistrustful of its partner, employed its own seekers. Abraxa thinks that, like most undead, you are a servant of evil. The lich assumes you will secure the pieces without touching them directly.

There are twelve pieces of the Staff of Waterdeep, each made of a different material, each about six inches long. To learn the history of a piece you have found, go to the section indicated. Do not look at a section until you have found its piece!

The cerebriucle states that neither it nor you can learn of the staff's abilities, or how to use them, until you wield the staff in combat. When the need to use it in combat appears, the text will tell you what section to read in order to learn how to use the staff.

To learn more about the piece

made of:	turn to:
dragon tooth	89C
crystal	134C
iron	142D
wood	61E
ruby	124C
leaded gold	118F
silver	103D
ice	123E
stone	55E
ceramic	120C
ivory	128D
unicorn horn	88D

156B The ring glowed like a cat's eye in darkness. Your prized Ring of Far Travel—you remember now. A stout and stuttering mayor of a nearby village called you to an urgent mission of healing. A boy had fallen off an oxcart and gotten hurt.

He was a ghastly sight. You cleared your mind and thought, Torm, can you allow this unjust misery to continue? Again, as always, you felt fear that you would not prove worthy in Torm's eyes and thus innocents would suffer for your failure.

When you touched the wounds, they closed like torn fabric under the seamstress's needle. No scars. The good townfolk rewarded you with the ring, though you protested. "Use it with care, for it carries only three traveling spells," they cautioned. You cannot remember whether those proved to be enough.

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to the story. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

156C The penknife is ornate, with a jeweled handle and delicate etchings on the blade. The cerebriucle sniffs a long moment before telling you,

"Gift from a lover. No magical bower."

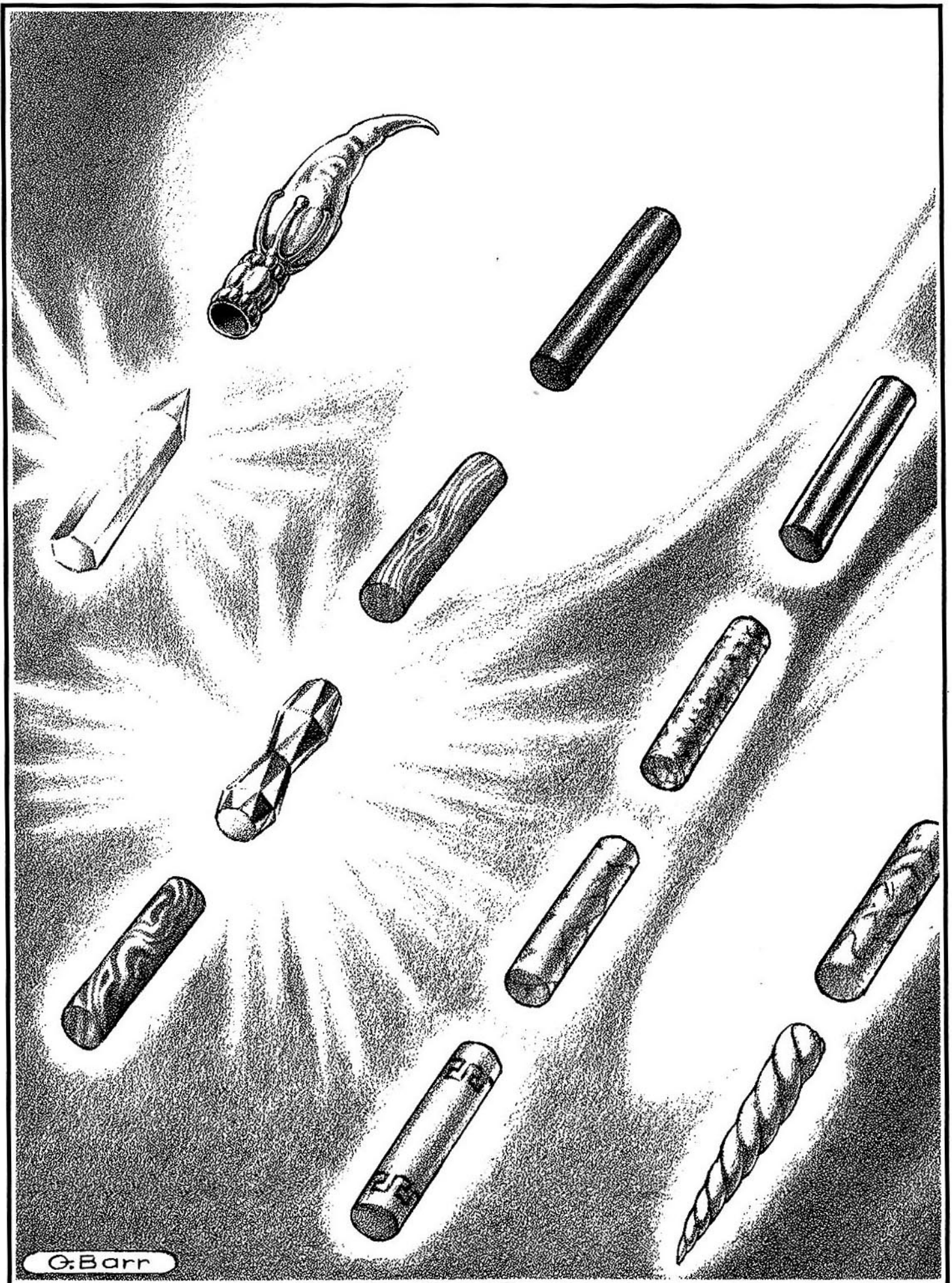
A sudden memory assails you: A crowd of townspeople shout and praise you, and hail you as their hero. You feel deeply gratified to have helped these kind folk, for in doing so you have truly served the greater glory of your god. You were so young then. . . .

Out of the crowd comes a young woman, fresh and lovely, with flowers in her hair. She holds out the "key to the city," and you take it. She kisses your cheek, her eyes bright.

The memory fades, and, try as you will, no further thoughts of your past come to you. You shake your head and return to the matter at hand. Return to 22A to keep looking around, or leave (149D).

This is a knight's full helm, once a crested symbol of nobility and prowess, now rusted and worthless. You wore several such in your career. Now, though uncorrupted in the past, the helm lies in decay, an ugly mockery of its glorious past. **156D**

You cannot bear to look at it. Even the weasel is mercifully silent. Go to 104A to look at something else, or 108F to leave.



158A Torm's voice, stern and uncompromising returns to your mind. "You do ill. I am displeased! Pray here for an hour to cleanse your spirit of bad deeds. And do not seek to deceive, for I see into your very heart!"

And so you kneel at the shrine's altar and pray, for victory, for the safety of Waterdeep, for Torm to wash away the sins you remember and those you do not. Though your thoughts stray to one intense desire, you dare not pray for it. You cannot seek eternal rest, for your mission is vital.

Mark an hour off your time, then erase Evidence Box D on your bookmark. (If this takes you past your midnight deadline, pray only until midnight.)

At the end of the hour, you rise from your kneeling position, your knees creaking, and Torm speaks again. "Hold out your hand."

The curtains full of iron pins begin rustling and clinking as every pin vibrates. The din of the rattling pins is incredible. One pin flies from the drapery to land in your hand.

This is a plain iron bar, unlike the other pins. As you watch, it grows into the iron section of the staff of Waterdeep!

"You sought this," Torm says brusquely. "It may aid you in your duty. Know, vassal, that a trick of Destiny, whom even the gods flout at their peril, has cast the fate of many lives into your bloodless hands. I can do no more to help you, nor can any deity.

"You must be better than you were. Go forth and conduct yourself as a paladin should, and perhaps you may gain the peace you dared not ask for. Now, begone!" Torm's light vanishes.

Check off the iron piece on your bookmark list and take the piece with you. It does not count against your limit of eight possessions. Go to 156A to find out more about the Staff of Waterdeep and this piece of it, but first make a note of this section (158A) so you may return here after you are finished.

Intoxicated by your brush with immensity, you reel away from the altar toward the door. You cannot come back to the shrine. Go to 113F.

158B "What do you know of the undead walking the city?" you call from stageside.

"Hoo-boy, what a lousy audience!" says the eerie entertainer. "My act has died sometimes, but this time the audience beat me to it. No, seriously, undead are some of my favorite people. Any undead in the audience tonight? Huh, are there?"

"Uh, yes."

"Give yourselves a hand! Yeah! I mean it!" You dutifully clap for a few seconds. "All right! Undead are funny people, aren't they? Looking all over town for magic stuff, 'Where-is-it, where-is-it,' and always talking about 'Cathexis.' I heard one say 'Cathexis' and I said 'Gesundheit!' But really, you ask 'em about this Cathexis, and they say 'eternal life.' Big deal. What's eternal life without applause? All I want out of life, or unlife, is a little applause. How about you?"

Will you applaud the haunt (107A), return to 40A to ask it something else, try to get on its good side by laughing at its routine (117A), or leave (64E)?

Alive, but in a stupor caused more by opium than by the Effluvium, the dwarf **158C** sprawls limply on the bunk. He is filthy and pale, and he reeks of a stench so foul it would turn a live man's stomach. Even his life aura appears stunted, like a guttering flame.

You rummage through his ragged clothes, hoping to discover something useful. You turn up a purse that contains a few copper pieces, a dagger, and a filthy pipe. You begin to feel like a thief.

"Ah, noble knight," says the weasel. "What high and worthy deed are you about?"

Disgusted at the den, the dwarf, the filth, and even yourself, you draw back from the motionless figure. You badly want to leave this place. Do you follow this impulse (146F), or stay to look around further (52A)?

Haurrant. You ventured down beneath the ruins of an ancient castle, seeking—what? **158D** A beautiful woman beside you, wearing a medallion with the sign of a gauntlet. Others behind, a muscular thug, a bearded man in robes, and a short, silent one, barefoot, dim in the shadows. They're dead now. Haurrant . . . Haurrant killed them!

Check off this entry on your bookmark. Return to section 20A. Read your next Memory Trace entry only when the text instructs you to do so.

As soon as you touch the sphere, you sense its evil. A tingling in your limbs betrays its necromantic energy. This sphere would have paralyzed a living man, but since you are undead, you are immune to its effects. Unfortunately, since everyone you may fight here in the worm is also undead, the sphere is worthless to you.

Go back to 126A to look around, or leave (56E).

You leave the dust and must of this depressing shop behind you. Mark off the time you spent exploring within, if you haven't already. **158F**

The cerebriule says there is nothing else of interest in Trades Ward. Return to 82A to select another spot in Waterdeep to visit.



159A You look at the mortar and pestle lying within the circle. From outside the circle, they look like ordinary implements used to grind ingredients for medicines and potions. You cannot examine them closely or use the cerebriucle unless you enter the protective circle.

If the two humans are still protected by their circle, stop reading here and go back to 76A to choose something else. If the humans are no longer protected by the circle, keep reading.

There is nothing extraordinary about the mortar and pestle—no markings, no aura. There is a little dust in the bottom, apparently traces of a substance that was ground not too long before. On the chance that it is magical, you let the cerebriucle take a sniff. “Znogood,” it says.

The utensils are common, much like those used by cooks to grind spices. Your mother used one—

Your mother! You see her using a mortar and pestle, like the one you are holding, to grind nutmeg. She is baking some sweet, mouth-watering treat for you and your friends, and she laughs and chases you out of her kitchen when you pester her. You try to recall more details—the stone floor of the modest house, the old wooden beams, the guests laughing in the next room—

But all you are left with is the golden glow of the evening. Return to 76A to look around, or leave (65E).

159B An entreaty for mercy cannot influence this heartless monster. Perhaps a bribe would work. . . .

“The penalty for freeing this spirit from its agony would be steep indeed, I should think,” you say.

“Steep hardly begins to describe it,” the creature replies.

“What treasure could possibly induce one to commit such a deed, I wonder. . . . What treasure that I might have about me, perhaps?”

The monster’s expression changes from surprise to suspicion and craft as it senses your meaning. “You speak nonsense,” it says. “I am an adjutant, here to oversee the liches’ magic, not to compromise it.”

“Well, then, what of—”

“No! I’ll hear no more of this bandying about. The big fellow could have me on his dissection table for even permitting such words to be spoken.”

If you are being chased by ghouls, you have already wasted too much time arguing; go to 120D. If the ghouls are not chasing you, keep reading.

Persuasion and bribery appear hopeless. You may attack the adjutant (137D) or take matters in your own hands and smash the mirrors (147A).

159C As you rush at the skeletons, sword drawn, a voice from the archway rings out, “Defend yourselves!” Now the skeletons, who had been oblivious

to your attack, bring their axes up to fight you. Your sword crashes into bone, shattering the free arm of one of the skeletons—but not hindering it a bit.

Proceed with the fight, using the skeletons’ statistics from the Combat Table on page 160. Each skeleton has a mere 7 unlife points, for these are the lowest of the undead. But each of the skeletons can attack you in a turn, while you may only attack one at a time. You may try to escape at any time by going to 50F.

If you win, go to 55D. If you lose, your adventure ends here.

Mark off the time you spent on the dock, if you haven’t already. Nearby is what looks **159D** like a tavern. Noises occasionally emerge, too faint for you to interpret. It will take only half an hour to reach and explore it (52A).

Or you may move a couple of piers down to avoid whatever might be lurking under this pier, then enter Waterdeep harbor; go to 94A. (Because you are crossing from Dock Ward to the “ward” of the harbor, mark off just half an hour because it is so close.)

Finally, you may return to the city and investigate another area; go to 82A.

“Wait!” you cry—but you have no speaking stone. The merman cannot understand your **159E** protestations.

He puts his full weight behind the thrust and skewers you. You feel yourself lose control of your limbs as your unlife slips away.

Faintly you hear the weasel’s cry: “Don’t go! You’re leaving me alone forever . . . forever . . . forever. . . .” But its voice trails away. Your adventure is over.

That marvelous harbor, which gives the **159F** town its name. In your life, you recall, it looked lovely. But now, with your undead perceptions unable to comprehend beauty, you see only ice floes drifting in slush. And that whirlpool, a maelstrom a hundred feet across! It makes a travesty of the harbor’s reputation for shelter from storm.

“At least one pieze of ztaff out there,” mutters the shrunken head.

Looking again at the whirlpool, thinking of the power it required, you shrink at the prospect of facing the lich that created it. And Abraxa said its partner, Haurant, had more power to spare! You hope the Staff of Waterdeep is as mighty as the liches seem to think, or your quest is hopeless.

“Right, right,” says the weasel pointedly. “Going in or not?”

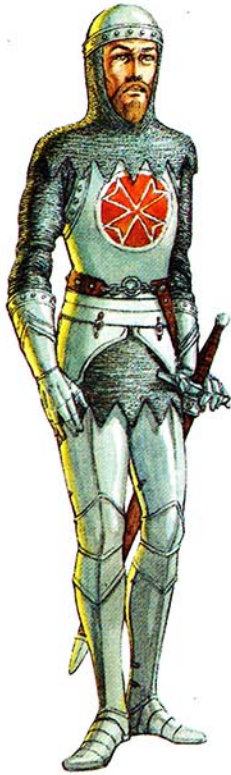
Since you do not breathe and are immune to cold, you can walk underwater as easily as on land—or rather, with the same agony. To enter Waterdeep Harbor, go to 94A. Or go back to 82A to choose a new destination.

COMBAT TABLE

The paladin with Memory Trace A strikes on a roll of 8 or less, does 7 points of damage with each strike, and has 40 unlife points.

The paladin with Memory Trace B strikes on a roll of 7 or less, does 8 points of damage with each strike, and has 50 unlife points.

Page #	Foe	# or Less to Hit/Damage	Unlife Points
28A	Specter (Yellowknife)	8/10	30
42A	Juggling ghost	9/4	20
52A	Mummies (3)	5/5	20
58A	Skeletons (2)	4/4	7
58A	Ghast commander	7/8	25
58A	Vampire commander	9/8	35
62A	Revenant	9/7	40
68A	Guardian construct	6/9	20
72A	Negative-space figure	9/4	10
76A	Ghosts, wizard's home	10/8	5 hits
84A	Ghouls, tavern (2 or 4)	6/6	7
84A	Vampire, tavern	9/8	40
94A	Merman	7/8	16
94A	Sea horse	5/5	22
94A	Lacedons (5)	6/3	7
110A	Banshee	5/7	32
114A	Shadow	6/9	25
138A	Strix	10/11	60
138A	Guardian vampires (3)	8/8	35
138A	Adjutant (monster)	7/6	15
144A	Lich #1 (Haurrant)	11/13	100
144A	Lich #2 (Abraxa)	11/12	90
various	Generic adjutants	7/6	15



MEMORY TRACE A

Read these sections in order, one at a time, when the text tells you to read them. Check each section off as you read it.

- 1. 155D ___ 5. 156B ___ 9. 84C ___
- 2. 82B ___ 6. 155B ___ 10. 96C ___
- 3. 35B ___ 7. 26D ___ 11. 68D ___
- 4. 38B ___ 8. 125C ___ 12. 96B ___

Weapon:

Sword. Strikes on a roll of 8 or less, inflicts 7 points of damage with each strike.

Unlife Points:

- 40 39 38 37 36 35 34 33 32 31 30
- 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19
- 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8
- 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

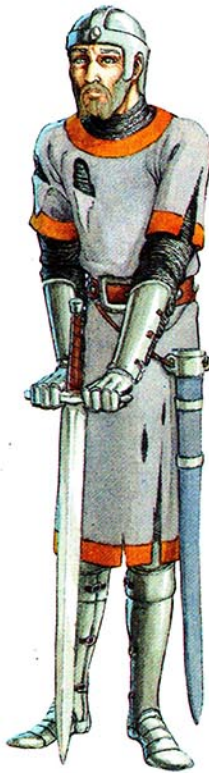
Possessions:

Cerebricule
Magical sword
Weasel skull

Ring #1 _____
Ring #2 _____

Other Possessions:

- #1 _____
- #2 _____
- #3 _____
- #4 _____
- #5 _____
- #6 _____
- #7 _____
- #8 _____



MEMORY TRACE B

Read these sections in order, one at a time, when the text tells you to read them. Check each section off as you read it.

- 1. 158D ___ 5. 92C ___ 9. 135C ___
- 2. 56G ___ 6. 99E ___ 10. 149C ___
- 3. 92D ___ 7. 123B ___ 11. 44D ___
- 4. 147F ___ 8. 56D ___ 12. 55A ___

Weapon:

Sword. Strikes on a roll of 7 or less, inflicts 8 points of damage with each strike.

Unlife Points:

- 40 39 38 37 36 35 34 33 32 31 30
- 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19
- 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8
- 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Possessions:

Cerebricule
Magical sword
Weasel skull

Ring #1 _____
Ring #2 _____

Other Possessions:

- #1 _____
- #2 _____
- #3 _____
- #4 _____
- #5 _____
- #6 _____
- #7 _____
- #8 _____

ADDITIONAL RECORDS

TIME

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| 12:00 P.M. _____ | 12:30 A.M. _____ |
| 1:00 A.M. _____ | 1:30 A.M. _____ |
| 2:00 A.M. _____ | 2:30 A.M. _____ |
| 3:00 A.M. _____ | 3:30 A.M. _____ |
| 4:00 A.M. _____ | 4:30 A.M. _____ |
| 5:00 A.M. _____ | 5:30 A.M. _____ |
| 6:00 A.M. _____ | 6:30 A.M. _____ |
| 7:00 A.M. _____ | 7:30 A.M. _____ |
| 8:00 A.M. _____ | 8:30 A.M. _____ |
| 9:00 A.M. _____ | 9:30 A.M. _____ |
| 10:00 A.M. _____ | 10:30 A.M. _____ |
| 11:00 A.M. _____ | 11:30 A.M. _____ |
| 12:00 M. _____ | 12:30 P.M. _____ |
| 1:00 P.M. _____ | 1:30 P.M. _____ |
| 2:00 P.M. _____ | 2:30 P.M. _____ |
| 3:00 P.M. _____ | 3:30 P.M. _____ |
| 4:00 P.M. _____ | 4:30 P.M. _____ |
| 5:00 P.M. _____ | 5:30 P.M. _____ |
| 6:00 P.M. _____ | 6:30 P.M. _____ |
| 7:00 P.M. _____ | 7:30 P.M. _____ |
| 8:00 P.M. _____ | 8:30 P.M. _____ |
| 9:00 P.M. _____ | 9:30 P.M. _____ |
| 10:00 P.M. _____ | 10:30 P.M. _____ |
| 11:00 P.M. _____ | 11:30 P.M. _____ |

12:00 midnight: Turn to section 120A.

EVIDENCE BOXES

- A B C D

THE STAFF OF WATERDEEP

Check off each piece as you gain it. Pieces do not count against your limit of eight possessions.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dragon Tooth | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaded gold |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stone | <input type="checkbox"/> Crystal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood | <input type="checkbox"/> Ceramic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iron | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ivory | <input type="checkbox"/> Unicorn horn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ruby | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice |

ENTER THE WORLD OF THE UNDEAD!

Dirt fouls your nostrils and mouth as you reach the inevitable conclusion: You yourself, once a holy paladin, have become one of the hateful undead! But you have no idea who you are or how you got here. . . .

One thing is certain, however: Before you can escape your present state, you must stop the legions of undead, who even now labor feverishly to complete a monstrous underground construct that will spell doom for the entire population of Waterdeep and possibly all the Realms!

In *KNIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, you enter the world of a visual maze, full of sinister surprises! As an undead paladin, you recover the pieces of the wondrous Staff of Waterdeep, but to complete the staff, you must explore underground tombs where fearsome undead creatures lurk around every bend! A unique feature of this book is your need to discover your Memory Traces, which will not only tell you who you are, but also may provide clues in your desperate hunt!

CATACOMBS™ Books represent the ultimate challenge in role-playing adventure. Through lavish illustrations, you journey from chamber to chamber in search of the precious object of your quest. Your analytical powers are tested to the utmost as you must decide how to deal with the weird and wondrous creatures and artifacts you encounter.

*Tear-out bookmarks
and Memory Traces Included!*

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