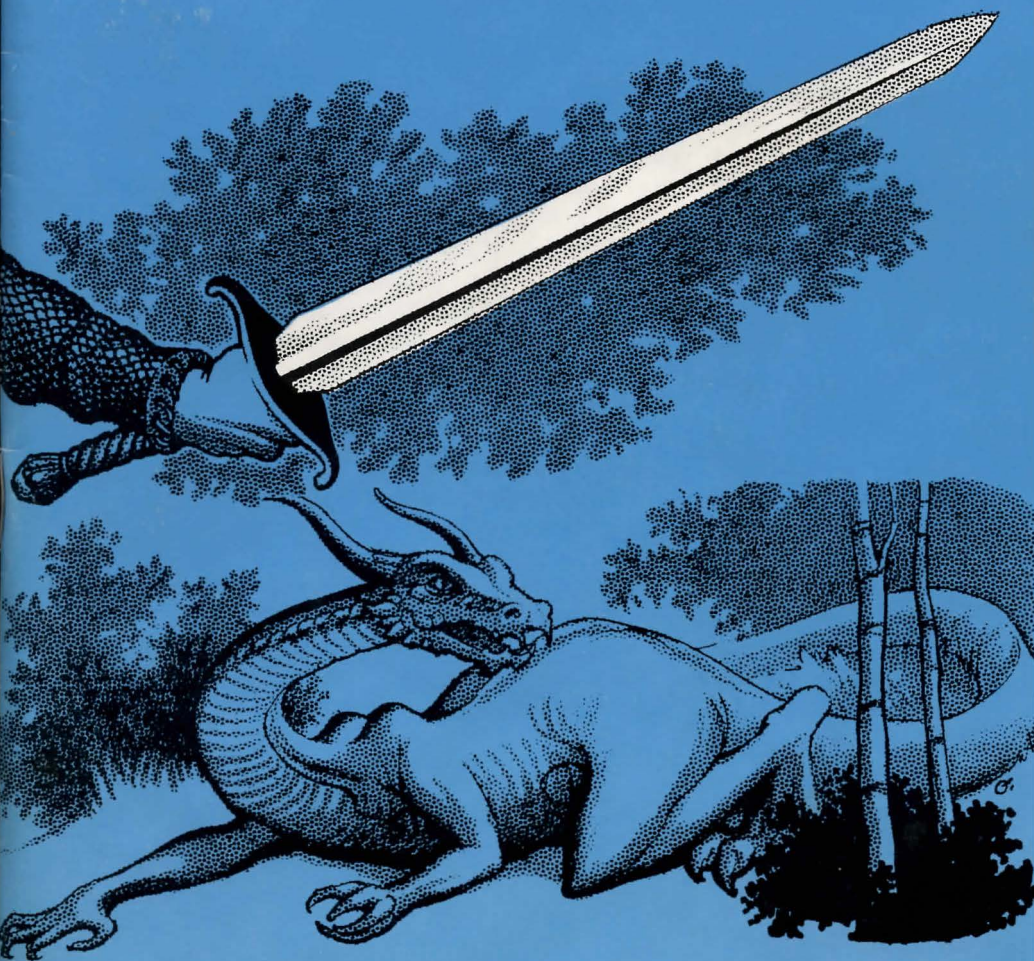


COMPUTER
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Dragon's Eye



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The Mission

Many centuries ago, when science was magic and magic a science, a small kingdom known as the Seven Provinces was united through the rule of an enlightened magician. Through his benevolent powers, schools of magic became centers for education, recreation, experimentation, and celebration. Great works of art combining the skills of craftpersons, scholars, visionaries, and party people drew the inspired awe of most of the civilized world.

Word of these accomplishments eventually reached the Warring Lands that were ruled by an Evil Necromancer, who held court in the Dragon's Lair and repressed people through the awful agencies of his black powers. Golems guarded the gates, and ghosts exacted taxes from human souls. The key to his power was a magic amulet, known as the Dragon's Eye. With it, he held sway over time itself. At his wanton whim, he could shrink or prolong the most intense pleasure or debilitating pain. He could make a day into a lifetime or a lifetime into a single moment.

The Good Magician knew that there was no magic that could confront the magic of time. The power to travel in time is as nothing when compared to the power to change time itself. Using the limits of his powers, the magician foresaw the inevitable. Soon the Seven Provinces would become known as the Deserted Lands. Nothing would be left of the magnificence that had been. The decimation would be complete.

Realizing that the cruel destiny which lay in wait for his beloved kingdom was already sealed, he stole a period of time from the future—the last three weeks remaining to his life—and cast a spell over it, isolating it from the stream of evil inevitability.

You, by entering this fantasy, have stumbled across the keys that unlock the magician's seal. Your victorious foray will vanquish for all eternity the curse of the Evil Necromancer. Should you be able to rid the lands of the menacing hordes of horrid menaces, locate the Dragon's Eye, and return it to Fel City, you will be given the reward that surpasses value. All the cherished treasures will be yours, and you will have avenged and vindicated the Good Magician for all time.

Until the next.

The Scroll of Contents

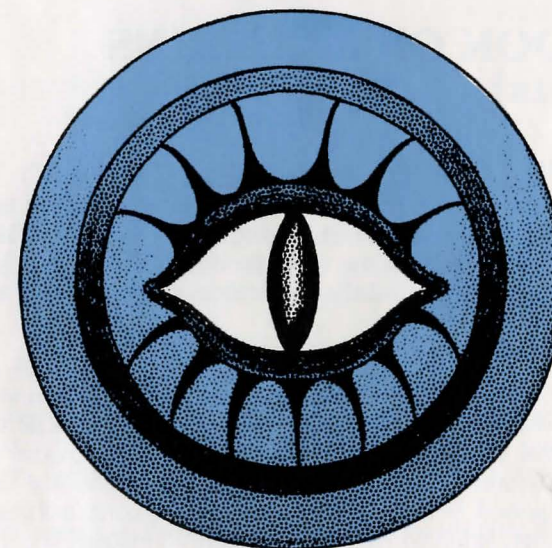
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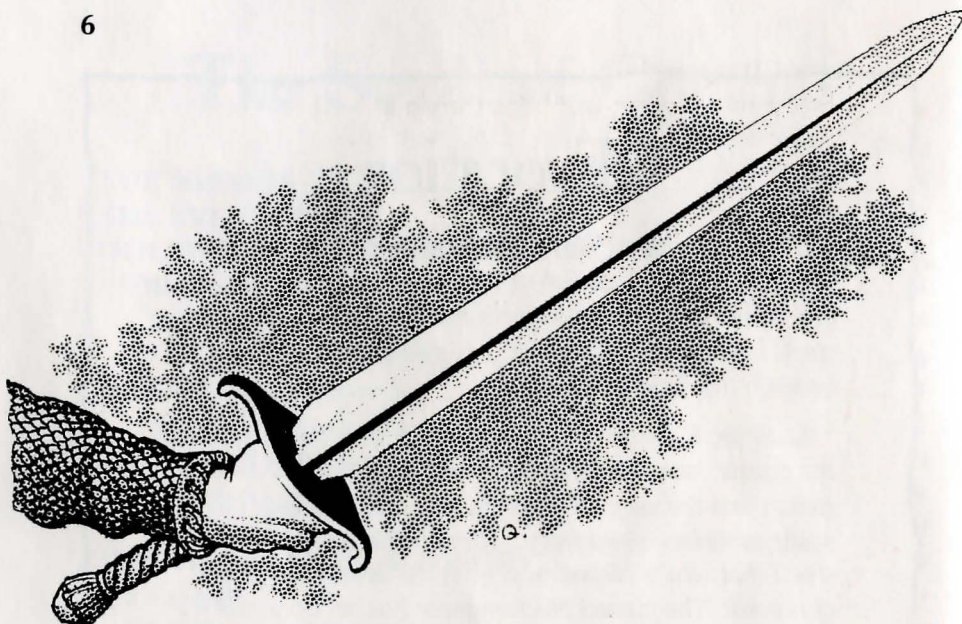
Evocation

I, who am called "The Good Magician," by the power vested in me as Guardian of the Seven Provinces, do hereby and with these words call forth thy distant and nameless spirit. I evoke, summon, and conjure thee that I may beseech thine aid.

Look ye. Even as now I weave the last of my magic into the cosmic loom, the shadow of evil threads its drunken stench into the very fabric of my powers. I, despite the vasty goodness of my magic, stand helpless—unable to shield that which I loved best from the desecrating stare of vile evil. The cursed Necromancer has set upon me the worst of his dread necromancy. The Dragon's Eye hath me in thrall.

The Good Magician





Documents of Immediate Import

THE BOOK OF ILLUSIONS (excerpts)

On Getting Started

"...It is commonly said that 'they who have not read and followed the Document of Special Instructions regarding the mystical procedures needed to do that which is known in the sacred tongue as !LOADING! are those whose eye cannot see beyond the veil of illusion'."

On Establishing an Identity

"... When the spirits ask to know your name, tell them only the name by which you wish to be known. Then, with the key of **RETURN**, press on.

"... When the Tailor of Dreams asks for your title, choose that which best fits the measurements of your imagined presence. In that fashion shall your glory be garbed. In numbers between 1 and 16 only will you be understood. Forget not, when all has been decided, to instruct the Tailor by so pressing (**RETURN**)."

On Selecting a Sword

"... Select wisely your sword, for therein lies the rule by which your monster mangling maneuvers are most meaningfully measured.

"... When selecting your sword, you voice your choice by casting the spelling of your weapon's name. Thus is it that those who choose to use the

GREAT SWORD

do so by pressing the keys of: **G** (as in "Great")

GR (as in "GReat")

or even

GS (as in "Great Sword")

whilst those who choose the

THRUSTING SWORD

press upon: **T** (as in "Thrusting")

TH (as in "THrusting")

or even

TS (as in "Thrusting Sword")

and, in similar fashion, those who choose the

SHORT SWORD

do so with: **SH** (as in "SHort")

or

SS (as in "Short Sword")

while, interestingly enough, the

SCIMITAR

is chosen with: **S** (as in "Scimitar")

or

SC (as in "SCimitar")

"... The Ceremony of the Selecting of the Sword concludes in the following manner: After the Sword Selector seals his choice with the key of **RETURN**, he must then respond to the ritual question in either the key of **Y** or that of **RETURN**, thereby sealing his marriage to his chosen weapon, or in the key of **N**, that the choice of weapon can be made anew.

On The Scroll of Spells

"... There is magic around that can only be fought with magic. But magic is ruled by magical means: by being one with the prevailing Power, by wholeness of Aura, and most of all by knowing how to spell. Therefore is it said,

"Upon the seeing of the scroll of spells, one needs only to see and then, as it is written, to 'Press any key'."

THE KEY TO THE KEYS

OF TRAVEL

Boldly into the Brashness of the Battleready
Cautiously Concealed
Examine for Ethereal Equities
Move Merrily Mapwards
Probe for Potential Points
Quit the Querulous Quest
Repose in Respiteful Rest
Scroll the Scroll of Spells
View the Valuable Vials

OF BATTLE

Berserkly Bepatter Blows
Chop Chastisingly
Duck Decorously
Escape Elusively
Fire a Frightful Arrow
Leap Lengthily
Mobilize the Magic Bolt
Parry Pointedly
Ready the Righteous Rapier
Slash to Smithereens
Thrust Thoroughly Through
Vitalize Vigourously with Vial
> This Way
< That Way
0-9 That Much

The Travellers' Advisory

YE GOAL

Kill the monsters, find the treasures, get back to where you started from in twenty-one days or less, and earn a higher rating than anyone else in the known universe.

OF POINTS AND QUITTING

There are those who must know of their ranking, for they are fierce competitors and need to have swift and sure measure of their mighty prowess. Thus has it been ordained by the College of Spectral Sports-casting, here in the heart of fabulous Fel City, that instant and irrefutably impartial prowess-analysis be made available to those who, having met the necessary residency requirements, press upon the key of **P**.

It is said that those who have gathered great treasures; slaughtered many monsters; and conserved a trove of unused spells, arrows, magic bolts, and time—these are those who earn the most pleasing plethora of points. Know, however, that none escape the harshness of the final judgment.

The Table of Ratings

Terrible	less than 100
Poor	100-499
Fair	500-999
Good	1000-1499
Very Good	1500-1999
Excellent	2000-2499
Master	2500-3999
Grand Master	4000-5999

It is written that as **P** is to Points, so is **Q** to Quitting. It is also written: "Tis better to quit because you find yourself ahead than it is to quit because you find yourself dead."

Travellers should be cautioned to mind their P's and Q's while in Fel City, because *they won't be minded anywhere else*.

ADVANCED MAP READING

Finding Thyself

Behold the artful etching depicting that which is called "The Map." See the Provinces Seven, known by such names as: Fel City, Ley Land, Deep Chasm, Lofty Mountains, and the Plains (East and West). See the Notation Arabic and its use in labelling the Lesser Locations. In the center of it all, behold Fel City itself. Cast your glance at the Lesser Location that can be only rightly called Fel City Five, or, in the Code Appropriate: FC5. Know, therefore, the wisdom of the saying: "No roads lead to EP7 or DC5 or even DF2." Know that this saying is not altogether true.

The Map:



Note now thy location upon thy map—this wisdom made available to you through the courtesy of the local Sojourners Support Group and by correct interpretation of the code that follows the word “POSITION.”

Knowing Thyself

Note therefore the words upon the top left. It is with these that you may reveal to yourself the inner map in which your shadow is metaphorically cast. Here, at the instructively labeled ① do you learn of the number of your numbered days and of the period of DAY in which you metaphysically dwell. Below this will you find, in terms mathematical and precise, the exact analysis of ② STRENGTH, ③ HEALTH, and ④ magical AURA of your electropasmic self. Note now the upper right. See there how you have been made privy to the subtleties of the ruling mystical POWER ⑤, as well as the day-lengthening and day-shrinking WEATHER ⑥. See also there how you might derive precise knowledge of your POSITION ⑦ within the mystical geographies of the Deserted Lands, were you but able to deduce the meaning of the cunningly cryptic cartological code. See even the manner of MOVE ⑧ which your shade is prepared to manifest, lest you otherwise command. Observe, ultimately, the potent portent on the bottom, through which the Spectral Sportcasters make known their readiness to transmit your any COMMAND ⑨.

MOVING ON

Now, therefore, press truly upon your key of **M** and see the words MOVE TO appear on the bottom of your veritable vision. Know, then, that your moving utterance has been heard and that all that is lacking is your evocation of the code of your desired destination and your subsequent pressing upon the key of **RETURN**.

Using the code suitable to such occasion, do thou therefore indicate a Lesser Location that lies along the road and immediately next to your point of departure. Look ye now to the word “POSITION” and see how, immediately upon your pressing upon the key of **RETURN**, the change transpires, and your new location is revealed unto you.

The Movement Bold

Should you be plucky of spirit and whole in strength and health, and should you therefore be desirous of making much battle against the evil beings that lurk smirkingly nearby, then you can choose to Broadcast Brashly the Boldness of your Being with the mere pressage of the key of **B**. In so doing, do you proclaim and maintain your readiness to do Battle with the Brutish Beasts, your Blade Brazenly Beckoning all the Blazing day long, your shade somewhat fleetier of draw and feet.

The Movement Cautious

Should you be of the wisely CAUTIOUS persuasion, the mystic sounding of the key of **C** will Cause you to become Concealed in a Cloak of Cunning Carefulness whilst you tiptoe in slow and secret stealth through the languid lairs of lucrative lust. Know in the fullness of Carefree Confidence that, though the monster be nigh, you will pass by, probably. Know also that you may choose even to Cast aside your Cloak, and, with the key of **F** for “Fight,” Face again your Fetid Foe, catching it and yourself unaware.

The Movement Normal

Should you choose not to choose, even that choice is given you this day. Which is to say that unless you notify us differently, we will assume that, upon rising each day, you wish to conduct your affairs in the manner to which you are NORMALLY accustomed. Confirmation of your decision or lack thereof shall be indicated as above by the ubiquitous Sign of the Move Normal.

The Movement Non

This movement, called “The Movement Non as Performed by Those of the Changed Mind,” is said to cause time itself to hold its heavy breath, and is achieved by those who, after having pressed upon the key of **M** and before pressing upon Keys of Consequential Code, press nothing. Those who wish to release themselves from the Movement Non therefore press **RETURN** or something else.



The Resting

Those who press upon the key of **R**, render themselves thereby to the Rapture of Relished Rest. For greater, longer-lasting relief and the healing consequent to same, Repeated Rest is Richly Recommended.

The Examining

The key of **E** denotes Examine, Explore, Exhume Exhaustively. Much use is made of this insofar as there is much to be sought for within the Deserted Lands. There is no map that can guide you. Your mindless spirit must meander through the rubbled muck of the miles that lay within the Lesser Location, ready to grab anything grabbable—treasures, vials of healing fluids, amulets that strengthen, signs that give knowledge, bundles of arrows, scrolls of spells, hidden paths. The list of goodies and the good these goodies do can be merely hinted at.

Let it not be assumed, however, that a place examined in an afternoon, or morning, or so short a time as that is a place that is now empty. A day—even more than a day—can be passed in the very same place before all that might have been overlooked is looked over. It is said that the more time spent in examining, the greater the chance of finding something. This truth loses some of its strategic significance when you take into account the possibility that the place you are examining might be very well devoid of anything worth examining for. That is not to say that those who return to examine again that place which they have examined before examine purposelessly.

It is said, further, that though the act of examining consumes time, it restores enthusiasm and affects positively both mental and physical health.

MOVING WEATHER

From the SONGBOOK OF FREDDY THE KNAVE

*Time and weather dwell together.
In weather SUPERB and undisturbed,
The DAWN comes up like laughter,
As do also MORNING, DUSK, EVENING, NOON
and AFTER.*

*The weather that is FINE
Has all but EVENING time.
The day that's known as merely FAIR
Has neither EVE nor DAWN to spare.*

*Cloudy weather passes almost soonest,
Being the MORNING, NOON and AFTERNOONest.
Alas for the weather STORMING
To have but AFTERNOON and MORNING.*

TESTIMONY OF THE TERMINAL TREASURER

To all that read these words, seeking to know thereby the Totality of the Treasury:

The Ten Treasures of Incalculable Value—insofar as those who are in possession of these treasures experience a directly related increase in wisdom, health, strength, and a variety of magic as well as war-like abilities—are deemed, as their name implies, to be of a value that cannot be calculated. Insofar as treasure-possessors also experience certain directly relatable negative side-effects, assessment of the actual value represented by these items is beyond the scope of this report.

The aforementioned ten treasures are listed below:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Alchemist's Potion | (unused) |
| 1 Dragon's Eye | (fully functioning) |
| 1 Magician's Hat | (magical) |
| 1 Medallion | (multi-purpose) |
| 1 Secret Key | (secret) |
| 1 Seeking Sword | (sharp) |
| 1 Silver Cross | (radiant) |
| 1 Troubadour's Harp | (with amplifier) |
| 1 Witch's Cauldron | (not so hot) |

V IS FOR VIALS,

By NORMAN THE NAMELESS

*Death be not smug; though my strength or
health or something else might fail,
still I smile,*

*Knowing I can always take a swig from my
healing vial.*

*I just press right on the key of V
And have my whole collection waiting there for me.*

*And then I press the letter first
In the name of the vial for which I thirst.*

*Or if there's nothing for which I yearn,
I press upon the key **RETURN**.*

*And, since health is the only vial I start with,
It may be the first one I cautiously part with,
Since if my health falls below zero
I'll be a dead hero.*



The Battle Code

*He who moves into battle cold
Moves out of battle dead or BOLD.*

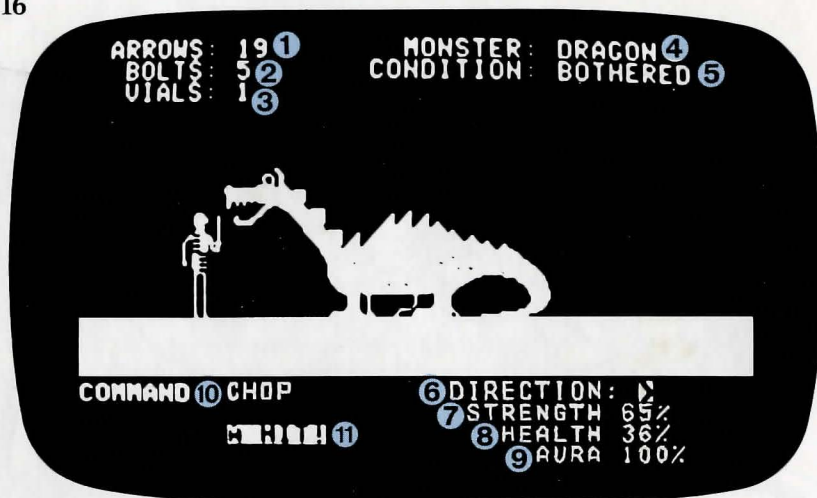
*He who cautiously runs away
Stays CAUTIOUS for the day.*

Unless he decides not to.

(Anonymous)

When it comes to pass that you must do battle furious against your frightful foe, your vision will transmogrify accordingly. You will become instantly transported, traversing, in the merest morsel of a moment, the vast distance twist map and monster. You will suddenly see your shade, itself, confronted by some ill-meaning monster. Through the veil of time that flutters between your reality and this and through the cunning cleverness of the Protoplasmic Programmer, you see in full animated form your very own image garbed in the garment that bears emblazoned in field rampant the chosen title upon its coat of arms. Forget not to notice the menacing monster that waits thereby to do you thoroughly in.

But take heed, lest you forget that you look not with naked eye upon this sartorial scene but through a glass magically. All is not what it seems nor is what it seems all that it is.



See also the inscriptions cryptic that decorate your vision with knowledge:

LEFT UPPER

Revealing unto you the currentmost updated tally of the supplies at hand, in terms of ① ARROWS, ② BOLTS of the magic type, and ③ number of VIALS remaining.

RIGHT UPPER

In which the name of the MONSTER ④ is made known and the CONDITION of its tempers ⑤ commented upon by those cosmic kibbitzers, the Spectral Sportcasters themselves.

RIGHT BELOW

In which the guardians remind you of the DIRECTION ⑥ in which you are prepared to fight and of the degree of wholeness left to your STRENGTH ⑦, HEALTH ⑧, and magic AURA ⑨.

LEFT BELOW

In which is recorded the COMMAND ⑩ that is being heard above the din of time and battle.

BELOW LEFT BELOW

An occasional comment on your success and failures ⑪ courtesy of the ever-present Spectral Sportscasters.

Know then that these are but reminders of the unbreachable wall of time behind which the battle must be fought. Though you see your own image, it has not your own will. It obeys only what it hears, and, while it obeys, it hears nothing. You may speak only between strokes while your loyal but mindless image awaits your word and the monster marches menacingly closer until, with flashing screen, it pounces perfidiously.

It is said that there are subtleties involved in combat that make it quite difficult for the uninitiated to survive their initiation. It is recommended that you limber up before engaging the monster, making full use of the great variety of swordplay at your command: parrying, ducking, thrusting, smashing, favoring those strategies that are best suited to the weapon of your choice, trying, perhaps, a leap-smash-chop sequence or something as profound as the quickly-typed L9STPD, the leaping forward of nine metasteps and the smashing, thrusting, parrying duck.

The Key to the Battle Keys Key

B instructs your mindless apparition to Berserkly engage in a random series of self-selected strategies, including perhaps a chop, followed by a smash or even a quick parry. Thus, berserk though it may be, it no longer has to wait for you to make up your mind about which of its many maneuvers to manifest.

C causes your shade to Chop with blade from left to right or right to left, and is thus known to some as "the horizontal, waist-high monster-waster."

D of Duckage, if properly timed, can serve to avoid mortal manglement.

E causes your shade to Exit the scene, as it were, if it can, and to then resume its merry way along the veritable map. It is an excellent choice for those who know the strategic value of running away—and an even better choice for those who don't. (See, also, the Anonymous ditty under the Battle Code.)

F forces into flight a feathered fate of which you have only twenty. It is much appreciated for its use in avoiding hand-to-hand combat, yet those who make too frequent use of this favored **F** are destined to early arrowlessness.

L lets you Leap the specified amount of spaces in the specified direction and, upon landing, lash out with the stroke of your choice. Should you press the **L** alone, without immediately thereafter pressing either the keys of direction or those of distance, those decisions will be made for you.

M of the Magic bolt causes your shade to make an aura-eating effort to cast forth a monster-eating missile. If you are poor in health, strength, or mystical aura, **M** might mean miss.

P of the riposte-like Parry is to defend more than it is to attack, to attack more than to evade, and yet to evade more than to rest, depending upon the weapon chosen.

R renders you Ready for battle. However, as is commonly known, readiness for battle is an inevitability; if you don't choose to make yourself ready, you will become ready, ready or not. But, if you do it before it's done to you, it will be done better.

S signifies the Smashing blow—that mighty downward stroke which causes cleavage from head to toe. Great though the might might be, your might is mightily taxed. The fact that the Smash is Said to always Satisfy cannot be too lightly stressed.

T, of course, refers to Thrust, the running thoroughly through with the blade.

V is a vial quaffed in haste, thus saving your shade from certain demise, depending on the contents of said vial.

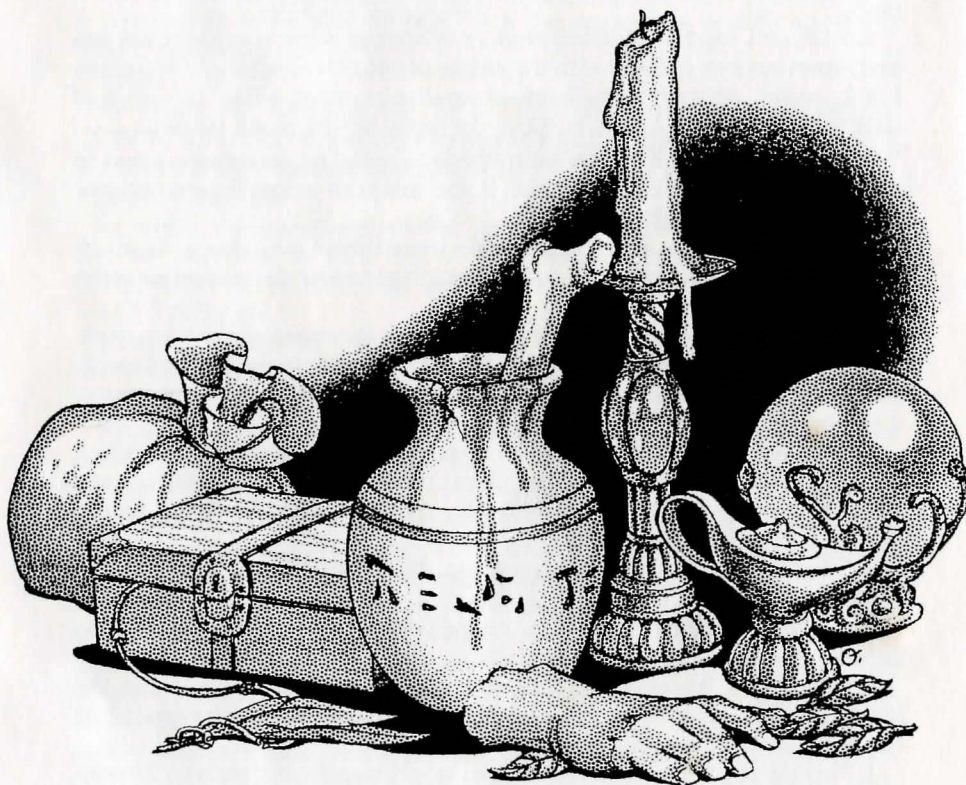
< denotes the backward or, visually speaking, leftward directed leap, the key that is best used when you wish not to leap in the direction denoted by the **>** key.

1 through the **9** are those keys used to change the distance of the leap which, if not otherwise indicated, is assumed to be somewhere between a giant step and a baby stride.

The Book of The Almost Dead

ON DYING

From time to unfortunate time it will come to pass that you, brave and fearsome warrior, regardless of your bravery or the amount of treasures and spells at your command and through no apparent fault of your own, appear to be suddenly and undeniably dead. You see your image thoroughly fallen, your awesome weapon struck point-down into the bitter ground of dirty defeat, as if to shield your astral face from its final shame. You note further that despite the possibly satisfactory condition of your goodly strength and aura, your very own and centrally significant health has crossed the line of positivity and fallen into the abyss of the Negative Percentile. This is clearly and without question not good.



You see the voice of the bottom line. It tells you to press any key so that those who lie beyond might pass judgment over you. Be not faint of heart nor weak of kidney, but press on. The Good Magician shall not utterly abandon you in this the time of your final need. Though he may be unavoidably detained by matters relating to his own personal lack of existential validation, he'll do what he can to help you with yours.

ON BEING REBORN

As soon as you have pressed the key of your choice, the Scroll of the Spectral Sportscasters will unroll before your yet-living eyes. On it you will read of what has transpired between the time of your untimely demise and the Good Magician's regretfully belated appearance on the scene of your final resting place. You yourself must intervene, summoning your powers in the act of once more pressing upon a chosen key. You will then behold the Mage's magnificent image, prepared to cast its healing spell upon your broken and battered bod. Still once more upon your chosen key you press. The Mage's image magically casts its spell, commanding your spirit to arise and resume the fray, saying unto it "Revive." This particular commandment is one which, due to circumstances beyond mutual control, your spirit may or may not be able to obey. Bizarre and cunningly contrived visual effects will transpire, and the decision of the Spectral Sportscasters will be made known to you. If and though you arise from death, the terrible tax must still be taken. The likelihood is that you will arise to find yourself half the warrior you once were. (The other possibility is that you will find yourself dead.) Thus, though the price demanded of your strength, health, and goodly aura is profound and prolongingly punishing, it could be worse. It could be permanent.

In the words of Max the Minimum, "The first maxim is not necessarily the maximum; nor is the maximum." That which is called your Maximum is best looked upon as a passing incapacitation which is subject to natural restoration. Know, though, that unless you resort to certain special spells or have in your possession some less-certain magical treasures, you may be for some time forced to suffer the handicap of the recently revived. On the other hand, you may be beyond help.

The Magicopia Itself

Know ye now that what you have learned hitherto is, compared with the seas of magic powers in which this video-envisioned vessel of your fantasy floats, likened unto a puddle. Though it be true that you already have set sail upon the ocean of your ignorance and sallied forth somewhat successfully, without the knowledge contained herein you are as one caught in the currents of chance. Prepare, because you who have turned away from the Fell Circumstances long enough to read these words have won for yourself access to wisdom that will lead you profoundly beyond. Behold below:

OF AURA AND MAGIC WINDS

Take note of the Power that blows aside the veil of illusion, lest your spell be blown away. Know that the well-spelled spell is ruled by the flighty forces of witlessly wandering magical winds. This is as it should be, for such is the nature of true magic that it too abides by the forces whole and natural; that it weakens when wantonly used; that it gains its power, not from the caster of the spell, but from the relative potency of those various and godlike winds whose ways to all those but the fully initiated appear random and without reason.

Heed you therefore the names by which these winds are made known and the order thereof:

DIVINATION
CONJURATION
THAUMATURGY
NECROMANCY

Know that even in the order of their listing is there a circularity of significance that can be used by those who must oppose the winds. As it is said:

"The power that holds the day in sway
Is the kind of spell that will sway the day."

And, as it is also, but not as frequently, said:

"When things are NECROMANTIC, despite your willful
urging,
Your luck might hold you long enough to succeed with
THAUMATURGING.
And if you're quite enduring
You can even try CONJURING.
But sad to hear the whining tragic
If you try to cast a DIVINING magic."

Such is the nature of naturally good magic that, like all natural phenomena, it is subject to ecological balances and counterbalances. Thus, as your capacities in mortal battle are reflected by the varying degrees of your health and

strength, so too is your ability to succeed in magic acts related to the wholeness of your magic aura. This aura is the strength of your magic abilities, and its measure reveals the chances that a spell will actually succeed. Like the physical being, it becomes weakened if it is used without rest. Hence the popular saying: "Spell a spell, rest a spell."

SPELL CASTING

When the map is unfolded and the **S** of Spell Casting is pressed, the Scroll of Spells is splendiferously unfolded. Behold, and you will be told the following:

The name of the wind-like force that holds sway over your spell selectability (the top right in brackets).

The sentence that declares your rightful ownership over the spells subsequently listed (immediately below and to the left).

The call number and name of the spell, followed by a numerical tallying of the amount of such spells currently on metaphysical hand, followed, in turn, by the name of the power within which this spell is most likely to succeed. With this knowledge alone the seasoned sorcerer can make many a significant decision and lay strategies profound, knowing therefrom which spell is best to use and how to use it (the graph-like array immediately below).

(CONJURATION)

you have these spells:—

	##	Name	Qty	Power
	1	Caution	1	Conjuration
	2	Cure Self	1	Necromancy
	3	Eradicate	1	Necromancy
	4	Flying	1	Conjuration
	5	Health	1	Thaumaturgy
	9	Protection	1	Divination
	10	Readiness	1	Conjuration
	11	Strength	1	Conjuration
	13	Time Travel	1	Thaumaturgy

WHICH SPELL TO CAST ■

The decision point. To decide, simply make manifest the call number of spell of your choice, and cause the pressing of the not-so-symbolic **RETURN**. If no choice pleases you, simply **RETURN**. (The bottom line.)

And when you have done that which need be done, you will see the Spectacle of the Spell Casting. The map will once again artfully unfold, and in the lower right final finality is writ. Your magic has either succeeded or failed, and the rest of your journey awaits.

YE SPELLING DICTIONARY

These are the spells ephemeral—a selection of bonafide magic acts, some short-lasting, some outlasting, each of which being fully guaranteed to have significant, temporary, and non-returnable value to the caster thereof, especially if said caster knows how, when, and what to cast. In order most alphabetical:

CAUTION—Should your impetuous spirit find itself too eager to rush into the fray, and should you tire of the effort and time required to hold your spirit at bay each day, you need no longer dismay. Cast but this spell and your shade will rise to remain in the move **CAUTIOUS**, for a while.

CURE SELF—If you are recently revived and wish to defy the Maxim of Maximums imposed by your untimely demise, know here the spell that can return you to the potential of your first coming. It is central to your use of this spell that you discriminate successfully between the actual and the potential, for only one of the two is cured, and it is the subtler.

ERADICATE—Name but the province and all the monsters therein shall be obliterated to smithereens and beyond—for the time being.

FLYING—Should you, in your finite wisdom, find yourself to be other than where you wish to be found, you need but use your terrible swift finger to inscribe into the electronic winds that code which names the exact location of your chosen deliverance. Behold as your shade is thereto delivered, more or less, and probably not exactly. As the Deep Chasmites used to say: “Just be sure you know where you want to go before you go trying to go there.”

HEALTH—If you deem one who bears your crest in these imagined lands ill suited to a decaying health that is far beneath your advertised potential, cast forth therefore this spell and behold the restoration thereof.

KILLING—Should your shadow find itself too frequently heir to painfully long ordeals, while battling Monsters of Lesser Priority, this spell is almost all you need to guarantee yourself a relatively pointless but clearly rewarding victory the next time your image encounters the specified beastie. The more of these spells you successfully cast, the more monsters you can so confidently meet.

KNOWLEDGE—When it becomes beneath your imagined needs to spend a day's worth of your ineffable time, or maybe even longer, looking around in the same place only to discover that there wasn't anything around that was worth looking for in the first place (or the second), this spell adds significantly to the likelihood that you will find the hidden treasure eventually. For a while. It is said that in the repeated casting of this spell even greater knowledge is gained thereby.

LOCATE EYE—Provincially speaking, “Eye-wise, this spell will tell you where it's at.”

PROTECTION—Surely, though you seek to commit your shade to rightful and rewarding battle, it is even more rightful that you offer it protection from the malevolent ministrations of the monster of your choice. But do not hope thereby to cheat the wrongful monster of its rightful due. Nor should you hesitate to cast this spell, should you have more than one, against more than one.

READINESS—Should you desire to keep your shade upon its metaplastic toes, improve its draw, and speed its way into the thick, why then should you take the time, each and every morn, to so prepare it? Cast then this spell, and notice in the days that follow (closely) the preparedness that is prepared for you.

STRENGTH—Suffer not this woeful weakness. Cast forth your spell that your potential might become actual thereby, your shadow once again dwelling within the maximum of its metaphysique.

TELEPORT—Of valued consequence to those who discover the need to be precisely somewhere else, but of markedly minimal meaning to those who do not know precisely where.

TIME TRAVEL—Should you no longer wish to suffer the wanton whims of time, cast then this spell, that you may free your shade from the laws that bind it to that which is the Twenty-One Days. Indicate but the direction of travel (**B** for Back or **F** for Forward in time); cause **RETURN**; indicate then the number of days to be therein implied; and **RETURN** again to those thrilling days of yesteryear (or morrowwhen).

TREASURE—Why, therefore, should you, firm in the belief that there are more riches hidden than have yet met your all-seeing eye, not then cast this spell so that that which is within might be revealed without? Cast this spell and, upon the returning of the Mode of Map, behold the revelation of the Right-hand Lower.

WEATHER—Should you deem yourself prepared to confront those who determine the weather, cast therefore this spell that you might name the weather. Do not presume to protect yourself thereby from judgment of the day that follows.



The Adventures of Willy the Wake

DAY 1, dawn. My location, Fel City 3. Weather, superb. Power, Thaumaturgy. Feeling as good as new. A little upset to be starting out from this dump again. A real nowhere. Nice if you're into rubble and monster droppings. Not a house, not a wall. Mud, garbage, rocks. Must've been a real Golem Gala here. Decide it's not even worth my time to check the place out for hidden goodies. Here's what I got, spell-wise: Caution, Cure Self, Flying, Killing, Locate Eye, and Strength. Not a bad selection. Wish I could use that Locate Eye spell first off. Don't want to risk it, though. It's a Divination-class spell and it's Thaumaturgical today. Better to wait till the magic winds blow me a better choice, power-wise. Could be worth my while to get in a little fighting. Not sure how to use this beauty of a sword I picked. Might as well find out while I'm still healthy enough to experiment. Think I'll make myself Bold for the day and then mosey over to the Lofty mountains, seeing if I can encourage some beastly curiosity along the way.

DAY 2, afternoon. Stormy. Taking a rest before I figure out my plans for what's left of the day. Killed a Vampire and a Skeleton on the way. so I'm feeling pretty feisty. Fine piece of steel I chose. Overdid the killing and maiming bit, though. Didn't even make it out of Fel City 2. Well, better here than in 3. This place must've gotten hit first. Picked clean. Necromancy's the thing today so I still haven't used any spells yet. Think maybe it's time to do some treasure hunting. Never can tell what's around if you don't take time hunting for it. Not as relaxing as plain old resting. Night's coming.

DAY 3, noon. Divination, finally. Examined my way right into a Golem yesterday. Used up three Magic Bolts and eight arrows and didn't finish him off until I got into some heavy hand-to-hand. Almost killed myself in the meantime. Should have cast a Killing Spell on Golems. Mean customers. Well, it wasn't the right time, power-wise, so what else could I do? Fine day, though. Maybe I'll just cast my Locate Eye spell and spend the rest of the day resting.

DAY 6, dawn. Found out the Eye was in Ley Land. And there I was in the other end of the world. In case you can't remember what happened these last three days, I was spending that time sprawled in the sunny ditches of FC 2. Killed by a Ghost, no less. I knew I should have been moving Cautiously, especially with my health as bad as it was after my heroic struggles with the marauding masses. Found by the G.M. and restored to 50% everything. Luckily, Necromancy is in today. Plan to toss me a little Cure Self spell and spend the rest of the day getting myself back together.

DAY 7, afternoon. Took me this long to get back to 100%. Still have two weeks to go, though. To Ley Land, as planned. No rest or even a pause to look for treasures until I get there.

DAY 10, noon. Made it. Had a fight with another Ghost and wasted another seven arrows. Hoping not to have to use up my strength in any more sword play. Had to rest up. Superb day for treasure-seeking yesterday. All I found for the effort was a bent penny and a gumboot. It occurred to me this morning that I should have flown to Ley Land instead of walked. Plan to fly back to FC by maybe Day 18 or so, giving myself a couple of days extra in case it isn't Conjunction. Sure could use a Knowledge spell. Maybe I've been looking too long in the same place. This examining and finding nothing is getting to me.

DAY 14, dusk. Four days of patient examining and still no Eye. Found a Scroll of Spells though and a nice Medallion. I know the Eye's in Ley Land, so I'm just going to keep on looking around here until I find the blasted thing.

DAY 19, dawn. Three silver pieces, a torn sack and some dried blood. That's the total reward I get for five days of diligent searching. Escaped a dragon and thought maybe he might have been guarding the Eye, but I didn't find it. Decided to give it up and just fight my way back, seeing what kind of extras I can earn until it's time to fly back.

DAY 20, dead. Done in by a dragon. Killed six monsters, found two treasures worth noting and rated as a "Poor Player". Ah, the harshness of it all. Didn't even make it back to Fel City. Hated to disappoint the goodly mage like that. Let it be said of Willy the Wake that, though he died, he will surely return.

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CONCERNING KNOWLEDGE:

An Epistle to the Scholar

Office of the Dean, Magister Ludi College of Spectral Sportscasters

There are those who take comfort in the knowledge that all this is but a game—a carefully wrought illusion bearing no relation to the real pursuit of life itself. There are others for whom such knowledge is a disquieting burden that leads to ponderous concern over lack of higher purpose. “The time that is spent,” they argue, “is not an illusion. Why, therefore, should it be so thoroughly consumed in the pursuit of the illusionary ‘Higher Rating’?”

Do not yourself be taken aback by the noisome worries of those who seek purpose. There is purpose enough. This is no pointless pursuit but one of deep challenge to the mind itself. Powers are being exercised and developed that are enabling you to engage in increasingly complex computations, developing skills that surpass serendipity. Albeit a game, this is no game of idle chance, but a game of deep subtlety whose secrets lead yet to other secrets which are found only by those who have read all that there is to read, who have deduced the clues, who have observed carefully the web of circumstances in which they are caught, and who have learned to unstick their minds from preconception.

A game, yes. A joyous complexity that demands painstaking observation and experimentation. Battle is no mere spectacle. It involves complex correlation and interpretation of rapidly changing data: the condition of the monster, your condition (health, strength, aura), your readiness, the command being executed, the effects of the command, the changes in your position. Some of this data is in words, some in images, some in numbers—all of which change rapidly and at different rates. Thus you are called upon to exercise several isolated mental processes simultaneously—to forge a link between them and bring them into a new synthesis. Though you have access to all the data you need to determine the optimum strategies, you will have fought and lost many a battle before you have learned how to interpret and use that information. You will have observed and experimented and died many times before you understand which of the many options to use. You find, eventually, that your choice of sword significantly affects your choice of successful battle tactics. In order to deduce just that bit of information, you have to observe not only the effects of a particular piece of swordplay, but also its efficacy in relation to your previous and subsequent commands. You do this by remembering the sequence of your commands, observing the change in monster condition brought about by each command, and taking note of the change in your condition while discounting the commands that “miss.”

It is also possible that the effectiveness of certain commands varies, depending on the monster fought. So, before you can draw any conclusion, you must take into account yet another variable, relating what you learn about the effectiveness of your sword to what you learn about the nature of the beast. Should you happen to find a treasure, you must then take into account the possibility that it, too, has an effect on your success in battle. Since it is the nature of these various treasures to affect variously your health, strength, and aura, and since their effects vary depending upon the monster, the calculations that you make in deducing the significance of your choice of weapon are of extraordinary complexity—qualifying you beyond question as one who has engaged in profound challenge to the intellect.

And all this is but a shadow of the monumental challenge that is herein constructed for those who seek to exercise the light of reason. There is treasure to be found. There are spells to cast whose workings are subtle and pervasive. And, for those who pretend to the brilliance of mastery, there are questions that have not even been asked yet: What of the score? How much does it benefit you to quit early? How much is it worth to kill? Which monster? How? How many points for an unused spell? Magic bolt? Arrow?

Woe be to them who are so dulled to the intricacies of this game and to the significance thereof that they dare deem this profound pursuit pointless.

Magister Ludi

COMPUTER
GAMES
THINKERS
PLAY

