

Dungeon Master™ II

THE LEGEND OF SKULLKEEP



Interplay™



Dungeon *Master II*

The Legend of Skullkeep

Interplay[™]

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Dungeon Master II

The Legend of Skullkeep

By the bones of the TechMage Fiodor, there it was again!

In the pouring rain, Torham Zed yanked his knife from the sheath at his hip and stalked the movement in the thicket. He walked in a crouch over the muddy ground, arms outspread, dagger at the ready. His heart pounded. For a moment, lightning brightened his surroundings like a bonfire, then as the brilliant light faded, all was plunged back into darkness. It was mid-day, but in the Season of Storms, the thick, unending clouds smothered the sun, drowned it with driving rain, and kept it a half- dead prisoner until the spring.

There again! There was most certainly something in the thicket. Torham crept forward, his knife arm raised, poised and tense. The rain blurred his vision. He swiped at his eyes. He waited, his gaze sliding left, then right, for whatever lurked in the hedge to betray itself. It was no simple animal, no wandering merchant, no itinerant troubadour. It had shimmered strangely, like something made of Magick.

Back in the village of the Ra clan, the rest of his garrison slept in the vaults. They thought it was a huge joke that Torham had, once again, drawn the shortest stick and got himself elected for guard duty. They never seemed to realize that he himself, and not fate, chose the duty so often. It was part of his secret mission, and so he could never tell them that he was not quite the dolt they thought he was.

His fellow soldiers were a rag-tag band of brawlers and tricksters who would rather pick a fight than follow an order. They had no idea that Torham's Uncle Mylius had arranged for their transport to this isolated, forsaken outpost. The old man had hand-chosen each one of them and made the necessary arrangements to send them here secretly, quietly, shielded from discovery by his high position in the World Council. For Torham, the assignment had proved very bitter. To justify shipping him to such a remote province, his uncle had him demoted. And because he had lost rank, Torham's betrothed, Jini, had broken their alliance and wed another, "more successful" man. There was nothing Torham could do about either event. His superiors had been bribed by Mylius to permit his demotion; and his uncle had reminded him that as the head of the House of Zed, he, Mylius, required loyalty and obedience from Torham Zed.

Such qualities did not come easily to Torham. He was a young soldier, a man of action, with hopes and dreams far too big for an old man to understand. He still could not believe that he had been sent to rot in this place—and for what? Some mouldy old machine that lay rusting and in pieces inside the ruins of the fortress on the hill, Castle Skullkeep, as it had for decades? Some mad dreams and strange feelings of a doddering old man that something evil was swarming around the keep, something that would end the world?

"By my head," Torham muttered under his breath. Nothing more moved within the thicket, and he lowered his knife but did not sheath it, and scowled. Better to have something attack him than all this skulking about. It made him edgy. He had not told the rest of the garrison, but of late, he had seen increasingly strange things. Or rather, had almost seen them. Flashing movements, eddying shapes—they eluded him almost as if they were taunting him, urging him to give chase. He wondered if they were natural—marsh gas, the glint of the sun on the thick, rolling clouds; or man-made—some trick of the thieves who lived in the glen, for instance. A Magickal experiment of the Keepers of the Runes, who had built the circles of stones beyond the homes of the Moon Clan. But everyone he queried insisted that whatever he saw was no doing of theirs. Nor had any of them seen anything unusual. Or so they assured him.

But no one much trusted the soldiers of the garrison. They were looked upon as uninvited guests at best—and at worst, as invaders. The inhabitants traded with them and sometimes even drank and sang with them, but they never truly accepted them. The soldiers were a breed apart, and even the thick-headed Uggo and the vivacious Seri knew better than to trust the locals too much.

Torham laid the odd things he saw to brooding and boredom, and reading and re-reading the documents Uncle Mylius had given him, because there was nothing much else to do. He refused to believe that anything his uncle had told him could be true. It was too ridiculous.

"It's too much ale and not enough love, Torham Zed," a saucy wench at the tavern in

town had told him. "You're too solemn. You spend far too much time alone." She had glanced admiringly at his body. "Although I must say all that exercising you do has produced a nice effect."

Now the taverns were practically deserted. Most of the local population had fled the Storm Season to their distant drybuilt homes on the Lylian Plains. The flooded streets were empty save for a few merchants who could not bear the thought of parting from the free-wheeling garrison. There was nothing for the soldiers to do here but eat, drink, and waste their pay on gambling and baubles. They spent their money with far more abandon than the inhabitants, who would be trading now with the Plains merchants in any case. Commerce has no care for weather of any sort.

Torham stopped in the thicket and watched the lightning flash on the trees. Hideous faces flashed over the bark, disappeared. Illusions caused by the shadows, as his uncle's delusions were caused by the creeping shadows of old age across his thinking. Mylius had spoken of a darker time, a danger time, that was coming again. He'd warned Torham that one day, someone would find the four keys that would unlock Skullkeep, and either save the world or destroy it. Torham could still see and hear his uncle speaking of it in the darkest hour of the night, at a secret meeting-place in the wood. How Mylius had trembled, almost weeping with dread:

"You're young, Torham. You know nothing of the evil side of the world. But it swirls around us, unseen and unfelt. There are worlds within worlds, my nephew—worlds of good, and worlds of

destruction. In the old days, we sought to explore those worlds. And we paid dearly for it."

Mylius had slammed his gnarled hand upon the head of his staff of office. "We cannot permit such a thing again! And it is coming. He is coming. I see him in my dreams..."

"Who, Uncle?" Torham had asked. But his uncle had fallen silent, his eyes closed, a look of terror on his face, Torham had waited, but his uncle hadn't spoken again for a long time. Then he whispered, "Torham, I feel him in my frozen old bones. I can sense him inside my mind. He is watching us, and listening to us. He is waiting for the moment when we have grown complacent and ceased to worry about him. Then he will strike!" And his uncle had struck his staff into the earth like a sword.

Shortly thereafter, Torham had been demoted and posted to this place. A small box of documents was placed in with his belongings, and he was sure it was his uncle's doing. But Mylius had not directly contacted him again, and all efforts to communicate with him had proved futile. Torham began to wonder if he were dead. Surely he would hear of the death of the head of his House, even out here.

There! Startled by a glimmering to his right, Torham locked into fighter stance and raised his knife again. He wished he had come better armed. Back in the clan room, he had an excellent speedbow and a thick breastplate and helmet.

Through the rain, he squinted hard at the thicket wall facing him. There was definitely something there. It was large and round, a circle

of light that wobbled as he stared at it. Something seemed to form inside it. His heart hammering, he braced himself for an attack. His empty hand flexed.

Something green glowed, detached itself from the shimmering circle, and hovered. It moved left as Torham moved left. Bobbed backward when he moved his dagger. Then it rose in the air, and flew away. Bewildered, he cocked his head as he lost sight of it. It had looked very like a minion, but clearly was not any sort of minion he had ever seen. They used them in the army for simple work—fetching, carrying, and menial tasks. They were TechMagickal machines that army wizards could conjure up, but they were completely mindless. Of course, there were always rumours that the high command had created minions that were more complicated...and perhaps more dangerous. Could the green orb have been something like that? It had almost seemed intelligent.

Lightning flashed, drawing Torham's gaze upward. In the dark sky thick with churning clouds, he saw a tiny dot of green fly up to the castle on the mountain. Then it seemed to dive into Skullkeep, to disappear inside.

Torham was taken aback. He had assumed, as had everyone else in the garrison, that the single entrance into the Skullkeep was the only entrance there was. Like everyone else before them, they had explored every inch of the stone walls—that they could reach—and curiously examined the entryway.

Torham had memorized the distance from the cavern-like entrance to the double doors

of golden winged dragons, rampant. The large pillars and braziers that upon occasion they found lit, probably by some superstitious locals, or someone following a religion the soldiers knew nothing about. He thought about the strange lock to the left of the doors, called the Clan lock. Clearly, four keys were needed to open it.

For a while, the soldiers had entertained themselves by scouring the surrounding countryside for the keys. They had found nothing. A wizened one-eyed armorer had laughed at them and told them it was all legend anyway, all nonsense and mischief lost in time.

But among the documents Torham had in his possession was a sketch of the clan lock, and the words handwritten beneath it: KEYS OF DESTINY, KEYS OF DOOM. All very mysterious and melodramatic. He had scoffed, but for the sake of adventure, he had scrutinized the papers for hints about where to find those keys.

But none of the documents was much help. There was another sketch of bits and pieces of a huge machine, incompletely rendered, and on it written, GO INTO THE VOID. NEVER COME BACK. EVIL. ZO-LINK.

Ah, the dread machine should never have been built, Torham thought sarcastically. More likely, these drawings were simply the ravings of an old man.

Torham sighed. The green thing he had seen was marsh gas, he decided. The fact that it had seemed to follow his movements was coincidence.

He decided to vary his guard route and walk among the Rune Stones. The strangely robed priests and priestesses who every season greeted the sun at Storm's End intrigued him. He had little knowledge of things Magickal, preferring to settle things like a man rather than resorting to book-learned spells. Also, he believed that Magick could turn on you, becoming a threat rather than an instrument of your will.

He paused as he stood by the obelisk carved with the clan signs of the Moon Clan and the Sun Clan. Was that not exactly what his uncle had been trying to tell him? That the machine they had built had proved more dangerous than useful?

Pondering this, he tapped the obelisk absently. In the distance, a Glop slurped and flowed over the ground. Torham made a face. Glops were for the most part harmless, but he found them disagreeable creatures. They smelled. They were very dirty. They did not have such animals back home.

There! Another shimmering! Against the obelisk face, a circle began to wobble and shimmer, then to grow in brightness. Something green popped into the circle, then pushed outward. It was one of the minion-like things.

It hovered not ten meters from him. He held his knife tightly, his gaze steady, watching it. It seemed to do the same. He took a threatening step forward. It flew straight upward, hovering there for a moment, then swooped down on him. Torham shouted and slashed with his dagger. The thing turned in the air and headed straight for the castle.

"Wizard's teeth," he muttered, the very strongest of oaths. He crossed to the obelisk and examined it, running his hands over the surface. He looked for an opening through which these things could emerge. He rapped the obelisk soundly, in case it was hollow.

"I know you," said a voice.

Torham whirled around. A small, hooded figure stood in the rain. It was cloaked in black, and only the vaguest outline betrayed the fact that it was a person.

"Who are you?" Torham demanded in a gruff, threatening voice.

"Mylius, have you come back to save us?" asked the figure. It advanced. Torham stood his ground.

The figure raised its arms and drew back the hood, allowing it to fall onto its shoulders. It was a woman, elderly yet still very beautiful. The insignia on her forehead announced that she was the Headwoman of the Moon Clan.

"I am Torham, nephew to Mylius," Torham said.

The woman inclined her head. "Of course. How foolish of me. Even one as powerful and wise as Mylius cannot stop time. By the wisdom of the High Lords, we all age."

She came toward Torham. He did not let down his guard. She reached out a hand, but something on his face must have stopped her. She lowered her arm.

"He has sent you, then." She waited for his answer. He said nothing. "He knows that the dark forces are gathering. He has had dreams."

Torham frowned. "What are you talking about?"

She smiled gently. "Your expression betrays you, young warrior. You know what I'm talking about." She gestured at the obelisk. "They are coming through the Void. They are being sent into Skullkeep for a purpose." She narrowed her eyes. "Surely you know what that purpose is."

"Headwoman, I do not," he stated boldly. "I have no idea what you're talking about."

Now she did touch him, putting both her hands on his weapon arm. Her touch was light.

"Please, you need not hide your true mission from me. Mylius promised he would send help when the time came. I have waited all this time. I had to know my people would be safe, if in my lifetime he tried to cross the Void again."

"Who? Who?" Torham demanded. "Tell me who!"

At that moment, another circle formed on the obelisk, and from it shot another green orb. It flew at the woman and slammed into her chest. With a grunt she collapsed and fell into the mud.

Torham knelt beside her and lifted her up.

"Tell me who," he said softly.

The green thing seemed to watch them. It was joined by another, and another. In a circle they rose and scurried away.

She grabbed his arm and pointed in the direction they had gone. "You see, they come and come and come. It is the danger time. You must hurry! Put that infernal Zo Link machine back together! Attack him there before he attacks us here!" Her lids fluttered. "Get some help. Don't try alone. Go into the Void!"

Her eyes closed. She was dead.

Torham stared at her, at the obelisk, at the cloud-choked sky. He lifted her up and carried her through the rain to her village, to her home.

Afterwards, Torham returned to the clan room and studied the documents his uncle had sent with him. Pictures of machinery. Zo Link. The old woman had used the word herself. He ran his fingers over the sketches, perplexed. Go into Skullkeep and rebuild the machine?

Go into the Void. Never come back.

Not an appealing prospect.

The storm howled around him. On the wind he almost heard the pleas of the dead woman, the voice of his uncle. He shivered hard. Something was different. He felt it. He knew it.

At the very least, he should investigate. It was his duty, the reason the garrison existed. All right, then, he would order some of his fellows to rise out of their resting chambers in the barracks. Who to take? Or should he take anyone? They might just stand there and laugh

at him. Surely his uncle hadn't selected them for any special gifts they possessed. More likely they were here because they were expendable.

Well, he would go to the sleeping vaults to decide. He would explain to them all he knew, and make it sound like an adventure, when in truth he was beginning to believe it was a deadly mission from which they might not return.

Go into the Void. How? By repairing the machine?

Attack him there before he attacks us here. Who was it who posed such a threat?

As he considered, not one, not two, but a dozen of the shimmering circles formed in the walls around him. The green orbs burst free and surrounded him, moving in a deliberate circle like wolves cutting out a youngling smallbeast. Beads of sweat dotted his forehead; his heart hammered against his ribs. Wizard's teeth, they were evil. He could sense it, almost smell it. They meant to harm him.

To stop him.

Then, as one being, they flew from the clan room and out into the storm. Torham knew exactly where they were going: to Skullkeep.

He began to run. He must hurry. Fiodor forgive him for ever doubting his uncle. Like the waters of the storm, danger was flooding the land.

He must stop it, he and his fellows.

And they must do it soon.

Starting Your Adventure

Overview:

What To Expect

The quest to activate the Zo Link will be long and arduous, with many diversions and complexities to confuse and bewilder even the wildest of heroes. You have the power of tekmagick and your selection of the best heroes of the Zalk to help you accomplish this quest. But as you travel though the realm, stopping in cities, solving fiendishly clever puzzles and interacting with the citizens of the world, never forget that time is dear, and only you stand between peace for the Zalk and the dark and destroying rule of Dragoth.

The Goal

Your goal should always be foremost: to reactivate the Zo Link and go through the portal to destroy Dragoth and his invading armies. Don't allow yourself to be distracted by the many false leads and dead ends you may find in the land of Zalk.

Beware!

But, beware, the world is a violent place, filled with dangerous and malevolent creatures. When trying to fulfill your quest you will find many more enemies than friends: Dragoth's minions have bent the will of many creatures to his evil purposes. The forces of darkness are strong, and your purity of goals are like a candle in the night. Take care that candle isn't extinguished, for the fate of the world rests on your shoulders.

Ye Olde Technical Details

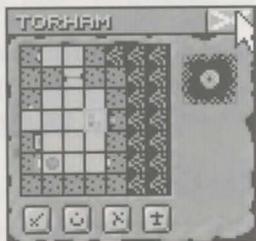
In order to fully realize your quest, the great magickal box that connects your world with Zalk must first be properly fed. The TechMages recommend ... [more in this vein from I-play]

Hall Of Champions

Here in the Hall of Champions is the resting place of the strong and stalwart heroes who will help you with your perilous mission. Each has specific strengths and weaknesses and the entire fate of your ordained quest is in a large part determined by wise decisions in this Hall.

Moving About

Regardless of which control device you have selected, there are six basic directions to send your adventurers in: forward and backward one space, turn left or right on the same space and sidestep left or right without changing facing. By clicking on the direction keys shown on the screen, your party of fierce champions will move in the appropriate direction. The keyboard arrows can also be used. More information about movement and control is found later in this tome, but this is enough to get through the Hall of Champions.



Collisions

Even in the relative safety of the hall, the fledgling party can be damaged by careless movement. Trying to move into a space occupied by any large solid object results in 1) a few bruises and 2) complaining "oof"s from the two members closest to the impassable space. Example: when facing a solid wall, trying to move into it causes 1 point of damage each to both of the front-line adventurers; attempting to back into it does the same to the two in the rear; sidestepping into it damages one in the front and one in the rear on whichever side made the attempt. The other two adventurers who do not take damage have time to stop themselves after seeing their comrades painfully fail to become non-corporeal. Therefore, you should be mindful of the directions you give your party because, although the damage is minor, it slowly erodes their health.

Choosing Champions

Now comes one of the most crucial tasks in the game: Choosing your Champions. Although it is possible to venture out with fewer than four, most of the hostile creatures will appear in large numbers, so having a full group will help weigh the odds of survival in your favour. This also allows a party specialized in melee skills, sorcery, or a mix of both. Be advised, however, that once a champion is awakened, it cannot be replaced or returned to stasis. Walking over to and facing a chamber allows you to see the sleeping individual within, but their appearance is usually not enough to determine their skills. Clicking on the window of the chamber with the left mouse button allows further examination of their current belongings and abilities (or lack thereof).

Choosing the "X" icon in the upper right or pressing the right mouse button returns the view to outside the chamber, and selecting the large lever adds the Champion to your party.

Detailed Examination

Before clicking on the lever to awaken a Champion, you will want to further examine their attributes and skills by clicking on and holding down the Eye icon in the upper left of the viewing screen. This information is primarily what determines how well they perform and learn new skills in particular areas. You may also examine the objects they carry by clicking on the object, moving it onto the Eye icon, and holding down the left button. Note that these objects cannot be removed from the chamber unless the occupant is awakened. The Mouth icon beside it is for eating and drinking.

Clicking on this icon with the pointer only shows their current level of satiation. These bars shorten with time, and later you will need to find sustenance to restore them.

Understanding The Numbers

As can be seen, there are many numbers associated with each Champion to help better decide which have the nimble wits, quick blades and true hearts to help complete your task. Spending a moment to peruse this section can help in deciding which Champions best suit your high task.

Statistics

- Health:** This is a measure of how much pain and suffering an adventurer can take before dying. Many things like monsters or falling into pits cause physical damage. The first number is their current health level, and the second represents their maximum. Health is regained by drinking healing potions, sleeping, or simply existing over time. The latter is the slowest method of rejuvenating your adventurer.
- Stamina:** This represents an adventurer's ability to overcome fatigue. Fighting, walking, moving heavy objects, hunger, and thirst all erode an adventurer's stamina over time. Allowing it to go below zero results in damage to their health and decreased skill performance. Stamina is regained slowly over time, and by sleeping or drinking stamina potions. Remember, however, it is hard to rest when starving or dehydrated.
- Mana:** This is the amount of raw Magickal energy an adventurer has to cast spells. Each spell syllable will require a certain amount of Mana, so spellcasters need as much as possible to cast increasingly difficult combinations. Note that having large amounts of available Mana will not guarantee the success of a spell, but it is a very necessary component. Mana is regained by sleeping, drinking costly Mana potions or slowly over time.

Load: All material objects have weight, and in reality one can only carry a certain amount relative to one's strength. These numbers represent the total weight of all objects carried, and the maximum amount allowable without a serious loss of stamina. Later you may see these numbers turn yellow or red; yellow means that the adventurer is carrying a heavy load that their fatigue is increased somewhat. Red means that they have exceeded their ability to function normally under so much weight, resulting in a serious strain on their stamina and abilities if they attempt to do much more than stand still. Heavy armour is the most common contributor to load.

Skills and Titles

Each adventurer starts with a certain amount of skill in at least one of four primary classes:

- Fighter:** Able to smite foes with strength and melee skills. Fighters are most effective with large hand-to-hand weapons.
- Ninja:** Fights with small or no weapons, and relies on speed and accuracy rather than brute force. Ninjas also work well with bows and thrown weapons.
- Priest:** Skilled with potions and protection spells. Clerical Magick always benefits the party in some way.
- Wizard:** Uses Mana for more destructive purposes, sending Magickal energy outward rather than inward. Wizards also create light and are skilled with artifacts.

Each skill has a range of titles that reflect the general level of ability in that class: Neophyte, Apprentice, Novice, Journeyman, etc. As your adventurers gain experience in the world, they will earn new titles far above what they already know. Increased skill allows fighter types to strike more effectively and add different attacks with weapons, and spellcasters find it easier to weave increasingly difficult spells. Greater skill rewards the adventurer with higher stats and attributes in areas appropriate for the skill being used.

Attributes

Attributes and skills increase as the character gains more experience, resulting in increased physical and mental ability. Fighters who frequently use their weapons or fists will soon find themselves with stronger arms, quicker reflexes, and better physical endurance. Likewise, those who practice the arts of Magick gain sharpened minds and greater awareness of the ways of Mana.

Strength: This is a measure of one's muscular development. It allows adventurers to carry more, throw farther, move heavier objects, and put more muscle behind melee attacks. As with all attribute statistics, the first number is current and the second is the maximum.

- Dexterity:** A combination of many things like reflexes, accuracy, speed, and muscle control. All classes benefit from higher dexterity, since it plays a part in avoiding or reducing physical damage, as well as helping all types of weapons strike their intended target.
- Wisdom:** This also represents a combination of several abilities, such as mental acuity, Magick awareness, and depth of insight. Vital to all spellcasters, wisdom provides a better chance to master arcane knowledge, and faster recovery of Mana.
- Vitality:** Vitality determines how quickly one heals, regains stamina, and resists poisons. Vitality helps reduce damage and repairs the nasty results faster.
- Anti-Magick:** As the name suggests, it allows one to deal with the ill-effects of Magickal attacks. Whether by minor forms of reflection or absorption, enemy Magick fails or causes less damage to the individual with high numbers in this attribute.
- Anti-Fire:** Again, a measure of resistance to elemental fire. The individual suffers less damage from flames directed at them.

The Champions

With an understanding of the numbers involved, you must now choose wisely among the various Champions stored in the Hall. To save time and help make your decision easier, important information on each one is compiled here.

Note: the Attributes category lists only their two highest numbers for easy reference.



Name: Torham (The Player Character)
Stats: Health 83, Stamina 77, Mana 14
Skills: Apprentice Fighter, Neophyte Ninja, Novice Priest, Novice Wizard
Attributes: Wisdom, Dexterity
Carrying: Dagger, Leather Jerkin, Leather Pants, 1 Emerald, 3 Gold, 1 Silver.



- 1) **Name:** Kol Del Tac
Stats: Health 94, Stamina 36, Mana 0
Skills: Apprentice Fighter, Novice Ninja
Attributes: Strength, Dexterity
Carrying: Club, Blue pants, 4 gold.



- 2) Name: Het Farvil
 Stats: Health 32, Stamina 47, Mana 33
 Skills: Novice Ninja, Apprentice Priest
 Attributes: Dexterity, Wisdom
 Carrying: Black Top, Tabard, Leather Boots, 3 Gold, 3 Silver.



- 3) Name: Equus
 Stats: Health 95, Stamina 85, Mana 2
 Skills: Neophyte Fighter, Apprentice Ninja
 Attributes: Strength, Vitality
 Carrying: Wood Shield, Torso Plate, Fine Robe, Black Boots, Money Box containing 2 Gold, 1 Silver, 2 Copper.



- 4) Name: Bane Blade Cleaver
 Stats: Health 91, Stamina 80, Mana 3
 Skills: Journeyman Fighter
 Attributes: Strength, Dexterity
 Carrying: Sword, Leather Jerkin, Leather Pants.



- 5) Name: Cletus
 Stats: Health 100, Stamina 70, Mana 5
 Skills: Apprentice Fighter, Novice Ninja
 Attributes: Anti-Fire, Strength
 Carrying: Club, Illumulet, Leather Pants, 1 Gold.



- 6) Name: Tresa Vulpes
 Stats: Health 47, Stamina 67, Mana 17
 Skills: Apprentice Ninja, Novice Wizard
 Attributes: Dexterity, Anti-Fire
 Carrying: Jewel of Symal, Bandanna, Black Top, Black Skirt, Black Boots, 3 Gold.



- 7) Name: Seri Flamehair
 Stats: Health 43, Stamina 72, Mana 32
 Skills: Journeyman Priest, Neophyte Wizard
 Attributes: Wisdom, Anti-Fire
 Carrying: Bodice, Gunna, Sandals, 3 Silver, 3 Copper.



- 8) Name: Uggo the Mad
 Stats: Health 88, Stamina 65, Mana 10
 Skills: Apprentice Fighter, Novice Ninja, Neophyte Wizard
 Attributes: Strength, Anti-Magick
 Carrying: Club, Scale Hauberk, Blue Pants, 7 Copper.



- 9) Name: Aliai Mon
 Stats: Health 65, Stamina 75, Mana 12
 Skills: Neophyte in all four.
 Attributes: Wisdom, Strength
 Carrying: Scale Hauberk, Leather Pants, Leather Boots, 2 Gold, 3 Silver.



- 10) Name: Anders Light Wielder
 Stats: Health 28, Stamina 47, Mana 36
 Skills: Novice Ninja, Apprentice Wizard
 Attributes: Dexterity, Vitality
 Carrying: Torch, Fine Robe Top, Scale Leggings, Black Boots, 1 Gold, 1 Silver.



- 11) Name: Cordain Dawnkeeper
 Stats: Health 57, Stamina 68, Mana 22
 Skills: Novice Fighter, Apprentice Priest, Neophyte Wizard
 Attributes: Anti-Fire, Anti-Magick
 Carrying: Rapier, Scale Hauberk, Leather Pants, Black Boots, Money Box with 2 Gold, 1 Silver.



- 12) Name: Graen Ozbor
 Stats: Health 35, Stamina 47, Mana 40
 Skills: Neophyte Ninja, Novice Priest, Apprentice Wizard
 Attributes: Wisdom, Dexterity
 Carrying: Fine Robe Top, Leather Pants, Sandals, Rope, 1 Gold.



- 13) Name: Saros Shadow Follower
 Stats: Health 72, Stamina 50, Mana 29
 Skills: Neophyte Priest, Journeyman Wizard
 Attributes: Wisdom, Dexterity
 Carrying: Staff, Cloak of Night, Leather Pants, 1 Gold, 1 Silver.



14) Name: Jarod Nightwielder
 Stats: Health 62, Stamina 85, Mana 20
 Skills: Novice Ninja, Apprentice Wizard
 Attributes: Dexterity, Wisdom
 Carrying: Leather Pants, 1 Gold.



15) Name: Odo Alu Kailo
 Stats: Health 60, Stamina 55, Mana 24
 Skills: Novice Fighter, Apprentice Priest
 Attributes: Strength, Vitality
 Carrying: Staff, Cape, Blue Pants, Sandals, Bota, Shank, Flask (empty), 1 Gold, 1 Silver.

Controlling The Champions

Surrounded by the hard evil of the world, fast action is imperative. Not only must one be possessed of quick wits, but also nimble fingers. Nary a hesitation must be evident in issuing the orders that can mean the difference between life and death, success and failure. Understanding the issuing of orders is paramount, if the quest is to be fulfilled.

There are four main areas where commands can be issued: Champions, Inventory, Action and the View Screen.

The Champions Area

Along the top of the Main screen are four boxes which contain the first Name, Items held in each hand, and Vital Signs bars of each Champion in the party.



Champions/Name

Clicking on a name with the left button will switch you to the Inventory screen of the selected Champion. The right button will take you immediately from the Main screen to the Inventory screen of the current Party Leader whose name is highlighted yellow, regardless of where the pointer is at.

Champions/Items

Weapons, potions, and artifacts cannot be used unless they are placed in an adventurer's hand first. The two icons representing the left and right hand in each Champion's box show you what each of them are holding, if anything. These are the same icons that are found on the Inventory screen, placed here for convenience. Clicking the left button on a held item will pick it up for moving, and clicking left again will place it.

Champions/Vital Signs

The three bars shown here show the current level of each Champion's primary stats. The first is Health, second Stamina, and the third Mana. A full bar means that particular stat is currently at maximum. The actual numbers they represent can be seen in each Champion's Inventory screen. Also, any object dropped in this area (rather than into an empty hand) disappears and places itself in the first open slot of that Champion's inventory. If their inventory is full, you will have to find someplace else to put it. Keep reading to see how to organize carried items.

Inventory area

From the Main screen, after clicking left on an adventurer's Name or clicking the right button to select the Party Leader, you will see a familiar screen, the same one from the suspension chambers. Champions and Action areas remain in their Main screen positions, while the View Screen and message areas are replaced by Body, Backpack, and Stats info. Here you will also find additional icons: Eye, Mouth, Disk options, and Sleep.



Inventory/Champions

You will now see a portrait of the Champion whose information is shown, instead of their name and two hand icons which are now in the Body area. Clicking on another first name will change the information and the portrait to the selected adventurer. As before, dropping an object on any empty hand icon, or any of the Vital Signs status bars will place it in the inventory of the respective Champion. This makes moving items from one person to the next much faster.

Inventory/Action Hands

This area is the same as in the Main screen in all respects.

Inventory/Body

Here is where Champions gird with armour, wield weapons, and carry small items outside the Backpack. Armour is ineffective unless worn, and weapons do no good packed away, so you will want to place them on or in appropriate places. If a person has taken a large amount of damage, one or more of these spaces may turn red and show a bandage if no item covers it. This represents a grave injury to that body part, one that reduces abilities and cannot be healed by rest alone. A Cleric can provide the remedy for such wounds.

Inventory/Backpack

An extension of the Body area, this is where items not currently in use are placed and carried. This tends to fill up quickly and possibly slow down the bearer, so check here frequently and try to distribute the items among all party members.

Inventory/Stats

For a detailed description of the various stats, please see the Hall of Champions (page 11). You will see one major difference: instead of the lever to open a stasis chamber, there are now bars showing their current level of satiation from food and water. As time passes these bars shorten, representing increased hunger and thirst. Therefore it is necessary either to find easy access to nourishment or bring it along. Otherwise the bars turn yellow, then red, taking a serious toll on the victim's stamina and overall performance. Below these bars you will find the Load being carried by that particular Champion.

Inventory/Eye and Mouth Icons

In the upper left above the Body section are two familiar icons, the Eye and Mouth. Just as in the stasis chambers, clicking on and holding down the left mouse button on the Eye icon shows skills and attributes. Picking up items with the mouse, moving them to the Eye, and holding down the left button will show more detailed information about objects. Viewing an object always reveals its weight, and viewing a chest or bag shows its contents. However some objects, like weapons, may show one or two bars. These represent the approximate quality of the item being viewed, or for Magickal items, the approximate amount of stored Mana left in it. Food, water, and potions dropped on the Mouth icon are ingested, assuming the item is edible. Your Champions cannot make a meal of such things as rocks, armour, and weapons, regardless of their courage.

Inventory/Save Options

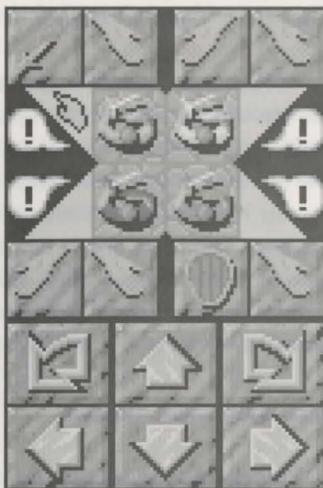
On the right side of the Inventory area is the Disk icon. Selecting this pauses the game and lets you Save, Quit or Resume the game in progress by selecting the appropriate icon. Quit does exactly that, and returns you to DOS without saving the game. Resume leads to the Inventory screen. Choosing Save gives another screen which lists up to ten saved games with a one line description for each, another Save icon, and a Cancel icon which returns to Disk options. To save the game, a filename isn't required; simply click on a slot with the left button to highlight it. To change the description, click on the bar beneath the list, backspace over the old description and type in whatever the new description, up to 31 characters, and press Enter. Then click on the Save icon at the bottom to save the game to that slot. You will then return to the Inventory screen where Disk Options were first selected, and the game resumes immediately.

Inventory/Sleep

The Sleep icon is a frequently used option. It allows the entire party to rest quietly, in order to regain vital stats: Health, Stamina, and Mana. Be warned that time goes by faster, lit torches burn out, and Champions cannot see with their eyes closed. The option to Wake Up appears, and clicking on it returns to the Inventory screen. While asleep, monsters can sneak up to attack but, fortunately, the party wakes up immediately if that happens.

Action Area

This area contains many icon functions: party Movement, Marching Order, choosing Party Leader, attacking with or using Held Items, changing individual Facing to ward off attacks from the side or rear, and Spells.



Action/Movement

In addition to using the mouse on the direction icons on the screen, keyboard directions for movement can also be given with arrow keys, or a number keypad with Num Lock off. With arrow keys: up and down control forward and backward movement, while left and right turn the party facing on the same spot. With a keypad: 5 and 2 control forward and backward, 4 and 6 change the facing, and unlike the arrow keys, 1 and 3 control sidestepping left or right one space without changing facing.

Action/Marching Order

For each member of the party there is a coloured icon to represent their position. The colour for each one is the same as the colour of their Vital Signs bars in the Champions section. To move their positions, left click on one of the icons to pick it up, move it over an occupied space, and left click again to drop it. The Champion so moved now occupies that space, while the former occupant moves to the empty space left behind. Notice that the Held Items icons that relate to each Champion have moved along with the Marching Order icons. The purpose of this is to place stronger, better armoured warriors in front of weaker ones.

Action/Party Leader

To the left or right of each Marching Order icon is a white triangle. Clicking on any of them will move the Party Leader icon, a hand with a pointing finger, into the triangle. Notice that the Name of that adventurer in the Champions section has turned from white to yellow to highlight it. The Party Leader manipulates objects in the View Screen like throwing items and pressing switches, and whenever the right mouse button is pressed on the Main screen, theirs is the Inventory screen that pops up. Any of the Champions is worthy of this honour, except those valiantly killed in battle (or ignobly killed by stupidity).

Important: Anytime the pointer is represented by a picture of a pointing hand, commands are assumed to be carried out by the current Party Leader. An arrow represents a general command, for example in the Action area. With practice these differences will not be noticed, however those unfamiliar with the interface might be confused by it.

Action/Held Items

After a useable item is placed in the hand of a Champion, a grey silhouette of that item appears in this area, in the corresponding hand nearest the small, coloured Champion icon it belongs to. If no silhouette appears, then that object has no active function, and is best put away in a backpack. An open hand in this area is indeed an empty one, but it still has uses in combat. To activate an item, left-click on it in this area. You will now see the entire Actions area replaced by four things: the name of the Champion performing the action, an X icon to abort the command, large icon bars (up to three) showing the available actions, and at the bottom, the option to change the facing of that particular adventurer. Clicking on an action bar performs that action and returns the Action area to normal, however you will notice the Held Item icon used darkens briefly. This represents the time it takes to actually perform the action. For example, a wide swing with an axe takes much more time than a quick punch.

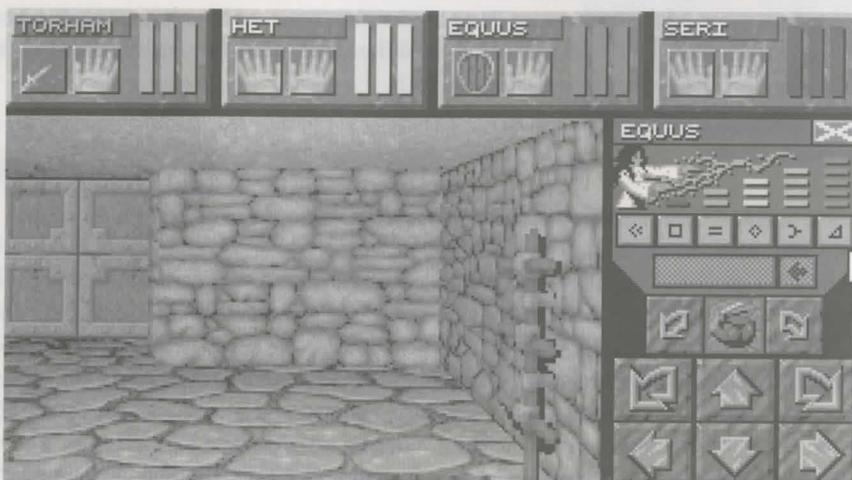
Action/Facing individuals

After clicking on a Held Item icon or choosing to cast a spell, you have the option of turning that individual left or right to face any direction. Then, when you perform an action such as throwing a dagger or thrusting with a sword, it will go in the direction faced rather than the one shown in the View Screen. This allows a party surrounded by enemies to launch outgoing attacks in several directions at once, as well as turning shields to fend off incoming attacks from the side or rear. Note that this tactic works only for a party standing still; if a normal direction command is given, all members will again turn to face in the direction shown by the View Screen.

Each white triangle is bordered by a black one, with a white "I" icon within. Clicking on this icon is the first step in the process of casting Spells, which is covered extensively in the Magick section.

View Screen

Here is where your Champions interact with the grim world in which they have been awakened.



View/Items

Other items that may be encountered are chests, sacks, quivers and other similar items. To view and/or manipulate the items that may be contained within, pick up the object like you would any other one and place it in one of the hands in the character status bar. You will see that the item has reappeared in the held item section for that character. Click on it to reveal what is contained in the object. Items can be placed in the opened object or removed by clicking on the appropriate slot. Some of these are specialised like the coin purse which can only hold money or a quiver that can only hold arrows.

There are also some very special items you may find called Magick Maps and Minion Maps. These can be of great assistance. They can be readied like a chest weapon or a chest and are

activated by clicking on the held item section. Further explanations can be found in the Magick Maps section of Magick.

Smaller items encountered in your travels are easily acquired by left-clicking on them. You need to be within one space in order for your Party Leader to pick it up. Once obtained, there are several things which can be done with the item: it can be placed in any Champion's inventory or empty hand, placed back where it was gotten, or thrown by "dropping" it in the upper half of the View Screen. The same applies to items picked up from a Champion's inventory.

View/Obstacles

Some larger items that cannot be carried can be moved instead. Walk up to the obstacle and left-click on it with an empty hand. Notice the direction icons in the Action area have now changed colour, indicating the obstacle is ready to be moved. Moving the pointer within the lower half of the View Screen now causes Direction icons to flash. Choose the desired direction to move the obstacle and left-click again. Moving the pointer outside the View Screen aborts the action, and the Direction icons return to normal. If the obstacle cannot be moved in a certain direction because of another obstacle, then the Arrow icon for that direction will not flash. Remember your party may reposition themselves and change their facing to finish moving an obstacle to a new position. The party repositioning will be automatic.

View/Switches and Keys

Most doors have a switch nearby to open and close them. Simply left-click on the switch to operate the door. If it will not budge, then a key is required to free the mechanism. Look for a keyhole nearby, and if you have the right key, pick it up and "drop" it in the keyhole. A key that does not fit will not go in. To retrieve the key, click on it again, but remember that most switches will not operate unless the key stays in the lock.

View/Illumination

This is a grim and dark world, where even daylight cannot filter through the thunderstorms constantly boiling overhead. Torches or lanterns set in the wall light some areas, but otherwise you will need to carry a light source to see more clearly. Important items or clues often hide in the obscuring shelter of the shadows.

Magick

The ways of Magick are long and arduous, but much reward comes to those who follow the old ways with careful attention to the needs of mind and mana. Slow to develop, the powers gained through Magickal studies can warp the fabric of reality itself; either for good or for ill. So beware, while Magick can be a strong force for those pure of heart, in the hands of those of dark intentions, it can bring shadow and chaos to the land in great measure.

Prerequisites

There are three basic requirements to use Magickal forces: mana, practice, and studies of the Priest or Wizard ways. Missing any of these three parts of the mystical triangle, the ways of Magick will be closed to the aspiring supplicant.

Mana

Knowledge of the ways of Mana is required for even the simplest spell. The amount of Mana available to each adventurer is a good indication of their overall level of spellcasting skill, because Mana increases with knowledge of the Arts. Each symbol of any incantation requires a certain amount of mana, so beginners are limited to simple spells until their awareness expands.

Practice

Having large amounts of available Mana will not guarantee the success of a new spell, even if the caster is adept with similar ones. Each individual spell requires practice with weaker forms before it can be invoked with higher Power. Successfully casting a spell increases experience much faster than chanting correct combinations with no result. For example, wizards who attempt a moderately powerful lightning bolt for the first time are very likely to see it fail, however a few successes with weaker ones provide a much better chance to invoke it with more potency.

Priest/Wizard Differences

Although the same set of symbols is used to invoke both clerical and mage spells, the end result determines which sphere of influence it conforms to. Potions, protection, and healing belong to the clerical sphere, and most of the rest are aligned with wizardry. This is important to know when attempting a new spell. For example, the chances of successfully casting a new priest

spell are slightly better when one already has advanced skill in that area, and priests will have to practice frequently with weaker forms of wizard spells before they become proficient with more difficult ones.

Magick Map

Magick maps allow wizards and priest the ability to view the surrounding environment. The maps are powered by the Mana of the person holding it. To operate a Magick Map it should be readied like any weapon and then you should click on the action button that has it readied. The map will activate.

The basic map only shows stationary objects surrounding the player. There are more advanced maps with several buttons along the bottom. Each one spells out a specific function. The first button on the left reveals hostile creatures on the map. These creatures will show up as green dots on screen. The second button reveals mana-laden items, and the third button projectiles thrown by hostile creatures.

Magick Minion

Magick Minions are the standard workers and fighters for those powerful mages who can conjure them. The Minions can be classified into three basic types: Scouts, Porters and Fighters. For a true Mage, mastery of Minions could be the most important task ever undertaken.

Methods and Means

Know ye that the power of Mana is a power of nature harnessed by the mind. What the mind can conjure, the power of Magick will carry out. Yet, this power is not gained by mere imagining. It requires a knowledge of the true order of things. Our mind must do more than imagine fire to summon it. It must look beyond and see instead the true nature of fire. From this need was born the art of spellcasting.

A spell is a visualization and recitation that focuses the mind on a specific task and channels Mana to carry it out. A spell is made of symbols which have both form and name. The beginning spellcaster learns to pronounce the name as the symbol is seen in the mind. Each symbol must be recited in the proper order to produce the intended effect. However Magick is not commanded easily. Even with sufficient Mana and proper recitation, a spell may fizzle if the spellcaster lacks the experience to cast it. To gain experience, the spellcaster should first master the simpler spells before attempting those more difficult.

Power

The Power symbols are the starting point for all spells. Where the other symbols give substance to spells, these symbols impart strength. Starting from the weakest symbol, LO, up to the most powerful, MON, the spellcaster may control the power of a spell to suit the situation. Each step on the scale is equal, so the additional Mana needed for a specific spell of the next level should always be the same.



LO << The shrinking pattern of LO elicits an effect opposite to MON by drawing power away from the other syllables in the spell. The resulting spell is weaker, but easier for the neophyte Magick-user to control.

UM □ UM controls and directs the forces of stupidity and lethargy. Its weakening effect on other syllables is less drastic than LO, so spells of this power require more experience to cast safely.

ON = The effect of the syllable ON is that of equality. The natural strength of the other syllables in the spell determines the power of the finished incantation.

EE ◇ A subtle opposite to UM, the tilted square appears balanced on a point, poised for movement in any direction. UM's dull sides have become the sharp points of the symbol EE. Speed and intelligence are the forces that combine to make spells of this symbol more powerful (and costly) than normal.

PAL) The basis for the symbol PAL is still being debated by scholars, but the effect of the spell symbol is much better known. Its ability to increase the power of a spell is second only to MON.

MON △ Tapping the strength that builds mountains is the greatest of the power symbols, MON. Only a well practiced Magick-user can control spells of this size and power.

Element

After Power, the influence of Element is called upon to give substance to the spell. Many useful spells require only Power and Element. The Magick torch spell, usually an apprentice's first, invokes first Power and then calls upon the Element FUL to bring light from fire. As the novice gains experience with this spell, As the novice gains experience with this spell, he can attempt higher and higher power symbols giving greater and more steady illumination.

YA ⊞ Solidity and structure are the main components of the symbol YA, used to represent the Elemental influence of earth. A useful syllable, YA is the basis of many protection spells.

VI ~ Water is the most precious of the Elemental influences, for, more than a thirst quencher, water can both restore health and give life. The syllable VI petitions the aid of this least abundant Element.

OH ∴ The Elemental influence of air is conjured with the spell syllable OH, and the properties of gasses are often imparted to the result.

FUL ≡ The syllable FUL invokes the Elemental power of fire. It extracts the essence of heat and flame from the air and all nearby substances and temporarily concentrates them under the control of the Magick user. Further syllables can bottle this power or send it flying, before the inherent instability of the concentrated energy explodes into a devastating fireball.

DES ○ The sun burns the desolate plain of the symbol DES. Like the barren desert it represents, this syllable invokes destitution, desolation, absence, the void. The power of the void is one of the few that can damage creatures of vapour and denizens of the Ethereal plane.

ZO ∞ The most dangerous of the Elemental influences is not fire, but the negative material ZO. However, a great deal of Mana must be expended to keep this essence under control, for negative material can absorb the matter from any material object or being in an instant.

Adding the influence of Form to a spell channels it into a specific direction. The invocation of the form KATH, as an example, imparts explosive force to the selected element. Form is not required for all spells, but its influence greatly increases the versatility of a spell.

VEN  The queen of venom, the black widow spider brandishes a single spot of colour on her otherwise jet-black form. Hourglass shaped, she seems to warn that time will soon run out for the unfortunate soul she bites. In the symbology of Magick, the hourglass represents the syllable VEN, which encompasses and conducts all things poisonous.

EW  EW depicts the head and arm of a beast. This syllable is used to fashion the Elemental component into the form of a creature. Though the conjuration of Elementals is still only a theoretical possibility, the syllable is still useful to "sculpt" a spell to affect only the monsters targeted.

ROS  The symbol for ROS depicts a hand reaching for an object of value, and, as such, is the abstraction for a syllable that involves all aspects of the thief and his art.

KATH  The expanding lines of the symbol KATH characterize the shockwaves emanating from a single source. This follows, for the syllable KATH imparts explosive force to spells which already involve energetic elements such as light or air.

IR  IR abstracts the arc of a wing, and appropriately, imparts the ability to float or fly to cast a spell. By giving motion to the completed incantation, the spell can be sent travelling through the air.

BRO  The reciprocal arms of the symbol BRO represent the mutual support and honesty of true friendship. However, recent usage of this construct has drawn upon its power for the creation of beneficial potions.

GOR  Constructed from components of fire, lightning, and the spear, the jagged line of the symbol GOR combines to invoke the attributes of an enemy. Like its opposite, BRO, recent usage has broadened the power of GOR to the creation of dangerous potions.

The influence of Alignment connects nature with the world of man: his professions and his concepts of good and evil. Thus, these influences are less predictable and require a great deal of Mana to control. The novice would be well advised to leave this influence to the master.

KU  The sword of the fighter is clearly symbolized by KU, the evoker of all things martial.

DAIN  DAIN depicts the spell leaving the caster's raised staff, and in turn conjures the realm of the wizard and draws around the skills and power of their art.

NETA  The cross is unmistakable in the priestly character NETA. But, unlike the syllables of the other classes, NETA is influenced far less by the natural forces. Instead, the power of this symbol is related to the Magick-users standing with his or her god.

RA  RA is the most energetic and powerful of the spell syllables. The light and heat of the sun and stars are the sources tapped with this syllable. Fortunately, it happens to be a somewhat cooperative form of energy and is relatively easy to channel once the Magick-user has learned how to draw it forth.

SAR  SAR is the effective opposite of RA. The symbol depicts the head of a demon. The demon stands for darkness and evil and the guardian of the night, the moon. The power of darkness is great, but unruly, so Magick-users must expend more of their own Mana energy when attempting to control it. Evil owes no allegiance, and is therefore an inherently dangerous element to include in a spell.

Casting

Syllables

Now that you are familiar with the components, all that remains is to put this knowledge to use. Choose the Spell icon (!) for any Champion from the Action command area. The upper section concerns the syllables themselves, and choosing one automatically changes your choices to the next sphere of influence. Notice that each selected Symbol is then displayed in the Cast bar beneath it. To form the syllable combinations into a completed spell, click on the Cast bar containing the selected Symbols. If you happen to make a mistake, the Arrow icon beside the Cast bar will backspace one syllable. And as always, the X icon aborts the action.

Forming each syllable requires both concentration and Mana. Fortunately, once a syllable is formed, the potential for casting it remains, even if the caster decides to abort casting and perform some unrelated task, like sleeping or fighting. Unfortunately, if you decide to correct a mistake, the Mana spent to form that particular syllable is lost, and more Mana must be expended to form the new syllable.

Results

There are four possible outcomes after choosing to Cast any combination. The ideal result is a successful spell, with the desired effects taking place immediately. However in practice this is not always the case. The reward of an incorrect combination is brief confusion, represented by a vision of question marks, and the now uncontrollable Mana simply fizzles, returning to its origins. A correct combination invoked by the inexperienced also results in the dissipation of the Mana involved, but a very small amount of experience is gained in the attempt. In this case a brief glance of the sphere of influence invoked is shown, either DAIN or NETA. This suggests that a lesser Power should be used as the first syllable, in order to learn the origins of the spell.

Discoveries

Since your Champions do not come equipped with a compendium of spells, new combinations will have to be discovered through costly experimentation, or by studying items already empowered with Magick. These items are the result of exhaustive research and practices whose origins are lost in the mists of the past. However much knowledge can be gained from them, and the spells they invoke can be duplicated with practice. Therefore, learn as much as you can from the items you encounter and your repertoire of spells will increase with time.

Survival

Violence and Evil run rampant in the world, and more than one hero of pure heart has perished rapidly, ignorant of the ways of survival. However, even a small amount of knowledge of what lies outside the doors of the Chamber of Heroes is often enough to let a fledgling party last long enough to carve some good result in the dark world.

Hostiles

Allies in this world are hard to come by, but foes certainly are not. Virtually every creature you meet will attack if provoked, and many need no provocation at all; simply standing in the way of a mobile creature is often enough. Some will even attempt to steal held items, and others will call for help. If you wish to avoid battle, it is best to tread lightly and quickly. Only the shopkeepers will quietly stand guard over their wares, but their patience quickly turns to rage if any sort of violence is used against them.

Monsters are not your only adversary, as you will soon discover. Dangerous pits and traps await to crush the unwary, doors close onto the party producing rather unpleasant results, and even natural lightning from the storms can turn the unlucky into piles of smouldering ash.

The Peculiar Ways of Tyme

Unless the game is paused, events take place constantly whether you are aware of them or not. Hunger and thirst increase, light sources slowly burn themselves out, monsters roam about looking for easy targets. It is therefore important to make every second count. Even while doing inventory maintenance, a creature can sally up and do hideous damage while adventurers rummage in their packs.

Sleeping not only blinds Champions from outside events, it greatly speeds the passage of time. While this time may be necessary to recover vital stats, you can be sure that the forces of chaos are also using it to further their cause. Food and water are also consumed at accelerated rates and, where these are scarce, there is no guarantee that more can be found to ward off the effects of starvation and dehydration.

Death

If a Champion should suffer an untimely death, the party has not failed in its quest. Remember that these are Chosen heroes and heroines, and death is merely an inconvenience as long as the entire party has not perished. In the rooms above the Hall of Champions you will find an altar of VI, the symbol of life. This is where to bring the bones of a fallen Champion for resurrection. Place their remains on the altar and they become whole again, but with weakened health and no possessions. However, all their experience gained up to the point of death is retained. Try to bring along their equipment, and have a couple of healing potions ready to get them back into action as quickly as possible. Remember that you cannot replace a dead adventurer with another from stasis.

Life

As with all living creatures, being functional requires keeping vital signs as high as possible at all times. Health is more valuable than steel or gems because the dead have no use for such things. Sleep will help restore life energies but wastes valuable time, so whenever possible resort to healing potions to mend broken bones. These are fairly simple to create, assuming there are enough empty flasks to store them in. Having a healing potion handy is very often more effective than even the best weapons when combat occurs, because staying alive to finish a fight prevents enemies from running away to heal, or worse, come back later with reinforcements. Remember, if you find yourself in a tight spot with no easy way to heal, it is best to retreat from battle and gather your strength before trying again.

When sleep is necessary, find a safe place where an ambush is unlikely. One such place is in the Hall of Champions, but remember that adventurers gain little experience staying at home, and often the walk back is prohibitively long or dangerous. Take note of seldom travelled areas where battle-weary Champions can get uninterrupted sleep.

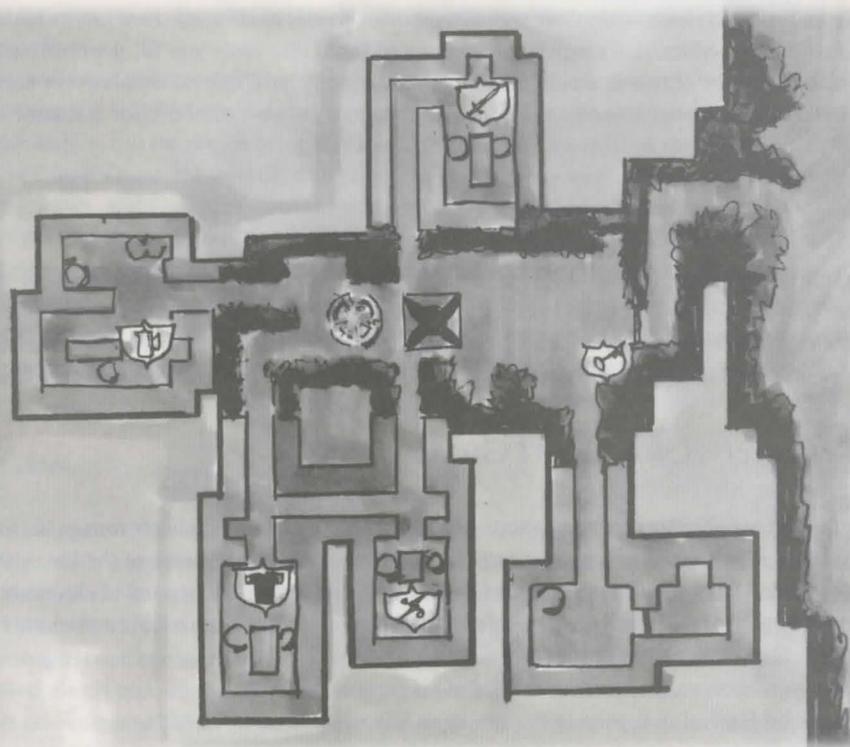
Food and water are also necessary for survival, but pausing in the middle of battle to savour a juicy steak will only cure a growling stomach. Mundane foods offer no Magickal healing, but instead are necessary to fight fatigue and malnutrition. It is best to carry a healthy supply at all times, and keep the party as well-fed as possible.

Combat

Having armed yourself with vast amounts knowledge, you must now take up the gauntlet and do battle with the minions of chaos. Whether by sword or sorcery, a basic knowledge of tactics will prove to be more valuable than even the best weapons.

Marching Order and Movement

The first concern is marching order. Regardless of which Champions are chosen, the two in front that normally fight enemies are going to take a lot of abuse, and the two behind will be unable to assist with melee weapons lest they accidentally strike their comrades in the back. Lend the best available weapons and armour to those who do the most fighting, and concentrate on keeping enemies in front, one at a time.



Entry town map

Unfortunately, most of the creatures in this world are not mindless and prefer to be creative about ripping adventurers to shreds. Instead of standing still and having it out, most of them attempt to move around to the side or rear where the party is less protected. This becomes a serious problem where more than one enemy is involved. Try to use the terrain to your advantage by standing between or near solid walls, or, attempt counter-movements by sidestepping or manoeuvring to strike their weak sides as well.

Ranged Weapons

Ranged weapons, whether spells or arrows or daggers, are an effective method of dispatching foes while avoiding direct engagement. Weapons such as bows require two hands to operate: one

is required to fire, and the other to reload ammunition. Fortunately, the task of reloading arrows is made simple by the use of a quiver. In the Body section of each adventurer's Inventory screen there is a four-slot section devoted to holding spare arrows and daggers, and if one is thrown or fired from the hand nearest, another will automatically ready itself in the now empty hand.

As with any conflict, don't expect adversaries to stand idly while you fill them with pointed objects. At distances of two or three spaces, enemies usually have time to simply move out of the way of even a well-aimed lightning bolt. Further distances are only effective for stationary target practice.

Combat Magick

Spellcasting during combat tends to be cumbersome and time consuming, so it is wise to prepare potions before battle, and keep them handy. Time will not pause for Champions to dig through bags and chests, while creatures are trying to make a meal out of them. Also, choosing the syllables of a spell without casting it before conflict allows it to be invoked much faster later.

Adventurer's Quick Start Guide

Attention players: This section contains specific hints not immediately obvious in the game. If you prefer to discover things on your own, this information may spoil some of the fun. Although it is only a small glimpse of the vast areas to explore, the intent is to help puzzled players on their way to ridding the world of chaos. The information is more or less sequential so read only as far as needed, then explore this advice in the game.

Leaving the Hall

Once a party is assembled in the Hall, climb the ladder into the dwelling above it by clicking on the ladder with an open hand. Here you will see many things: two doors with switches, a torch, a cold fireplace, a chest, a table with a couple items on it, and a painting on the wall. One of the doors is locked, and no amount of strength or sorcery will open it without a key. The second door, however, needs only a press of the button to operate it. Within the next room are two more torches set in the wall, a window, and an altar with a scroll on it. Go near the altar and left-click on the scroll to pick it up. Now right-click to bring up the Party Leader's inventory screen, and move the scroll over to the Eye icon. Holding the left button down on it reveals that this altar is for the resurrection of fallen Champions. The scroll may be kept, but it is not Magickal and has already served its purpose of providing information.

Now you need to gather the useful items provided in the first room, and venture out into the world. First, go to the chest sitting on the floor, and pick it up. Place it in any empty hand in the Champions area near the top of the screen, then move the pointer to the Action area, and click on

the silhouette of the chest. The contents of the chest are revealed: two healing potions. Move these into any Champion's inventory for quick retrieval. Select the X icon in the chest inventory to close it, and move the chest from the Champion's area to one of the stronger adventurers to carry since it is rather heavy, but also holds a lot. Next, walk over to the table and retrieve the bota and gold coin from it.

You will need to move the table in order to get to the Sun Crest painting behind it, for behind the painting you will find more items. It is possible to destroy the table instead by hacking on it for quite awhile, but for now moving it is much simpler and faster. Face the table, left-click once on it, then slowly move the pointer down until the Down Arrow icon in the Action section flashes. Left-click again, and your party moves backward one space, dragging the table with them. In this fashion the table is moveable in almost any direction you like as long as it isn't blocked. The way is now clear to reach the painting. Move in front of it and pluck it from the wall to reveal a hidden niche behind it. Drop the painting or keep it if you like, then retrieve the items: a bag containing several food items, a Magick Map that when activated shows an overhead view of the immediate area, a money box to organize coins and gems in, and a solid key with which to open the locked door.

Shops Area

Before opening the door to leave, be warned that danger lurks nearby. Have the Marching Order arranged, weapons readied for combat, and a held torch for illumination. Drop the key into the keyhole, and open the door. Down the corridor to the outside you will likely face a hostile Glop. These creatures are dangerous but not extremely so, giving the party a challenge and a chance to gain combat experience. Remember that the resurrection altar is nearby, so if a Champion gets killed simply pick up their bones and bring them back to life rather than restarting the game. Use this advantage to kill as many Glops as can be found, for gaining skill levels and to make the area reasonably safe.

Once you have time to look around, this area has many interesting things. Minor weapons, coins and debris are scattered about but often are picked up by the Glops, which is why they often leave items behind when killed. In the centre of the open area are two notable landmarks: a mysterious, black and red star pattern on the ground, and a fountain. The former reveals its purpose much later, but the latter is more obvious and usable immediately. Botas placed in the churning water come out filled, and it also contains a few hidden coins. Nearby on the ground is likely to be a very useful item, a staff. Spellcasters who hold it gain five points to their maximum Mana, since the staff is capable of storing small amounts, and it also allows unlimited casting of weak Magickal torch spells. The second spell on the staff has only one charge, an incantation to open or close a door from a distance. Take note of the symbols they use, for they can be duplicated.

Each shop has a sign outside its entrance depicting the wares they deal in, and near the Hall is yet another locked door. As before, opening it requires a key rather than force.

Once inside one of the shops, you will discover several things. Each one has a guard posted to deal with would-be thieves and murderers, and you can be sure they do their job very efficiently when necessary. Tread lightly by them, and walk up to the specialized display window between two large tables. Here you may inspect the wares available. In the window is a picture of the item, which is changed by clicking on the upper or lower half of the window, cycling through the inventory. Above and below the window are two bars: the top one, with an arrow pointing to the right, represents the selling price in gems and coins, and the bottom one pointing left is the buying price if you wish to sell that item. Once a selection is made in the window, sidestep to the right to make a purchase from the shop owner across the bartering table.

The owner will approach and place the requested item on his side, and wait for payment. You may pay with coins, gems, or even other items assuming the owner is interested in having it. The selling price in the window is not necessarily what he will accept, and placing less on your side of the table allows him to consider the offer. If he accepts, the table spins, bringing you the purchase, and him the payment. If you placed more than the asking price on the table, then he also places "change" with the purchase before closing the deal.

The other table is used for selling items to the shop, and for money conversion. Placing a money box on this table allows the shop owner to convert your currency to the lightest and most valuable forms possible. Eventually in your travels the money box will weigh heavily with coins, which have the following value: 4 coppers = 1 silver, 4 silvers = 1 gold, 4 gold = 1 emerald, and so on. Gems are much lighter and easier to carry, not to mention easier to make purchases with a few gems instead of doling out hundreds of coins.

It is very important not to anger or threaten the owner or the guard, because doing so is likely to cause the deaths of all party members. When placing any item or object on the table, remember that dropping it on the upper half of the View Screen is the command to THROW the item rather than drop it. Many foolish adventurers have died from this small mistake, as the shop owner is very quick to protect his belongings, regardless of what is thrown at him. Hurling gifts are not graciously accepted. Be also advised that there is no known way to steal anything from behind the bartering tables.

Leaving the Shops Area

As soon as possible, you need to venture toward the dark keep on the horizon. In the shop that sells food items, furthest from the Hall in this area, there are several tables as well as a small fountain set in the wall. Clicking on the fountain allows the entire party to drink their fill without botas, and on one of the tables nearby is the key necessary to leave. Take it to the lock near the door, drop it in, and press the switch. More creatures await outside, so ready your weapons and go with courage into this hostile world. You have now completed the first step in a long and dangerous quest...

Good luck!

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