



RING QUEST



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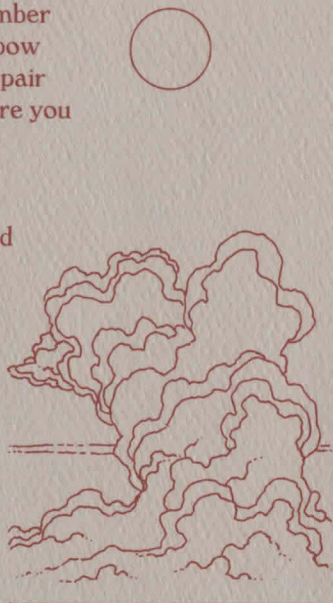
A. You are walking along a beach, listening to the thunderous roar of the surf pounding on the shore. Lost in your thoughts you don't even notice an old beachcomber until you feel a hand grasping your elbow and tugging with seeming urgency. A pair of rheumy eyes catch yours, and before you know it you are spellbound by the old man's words:

"Come, my friend, rest yourself and heed my tale. 'Tis a tale of perilous adventure, of faraway lands, and of beasts best left to the imagination. In my land the poets and bards sing the song of the Rings.

"Few know of the Rings. Of those who do, there are but a few who have seen them. Fewer still have ever worn them and lived to tell of it. Whence the Rings come no one can say. As far back as the eldest elders can recall, the Rings have always been. Legend would have them known as the Ring of Chaos and Ring of Order, and 'tis said that the sum of the parts is harmony, whilst the fruit of the twain is disaster. Power resides in Chaos. There is no Power in Order, save the ability to rule Chaos, but that indeed is true Power.

"This is my tale, not of Here and Now, but of There and Then. Let me take thee on a journey to a world whence thou didst not come, and where thou wilt meet with people thou hast never known. Dost thou wish to embark upon the adventure . . . dost thou dare?"

Decline offer— J
Accept offer— B



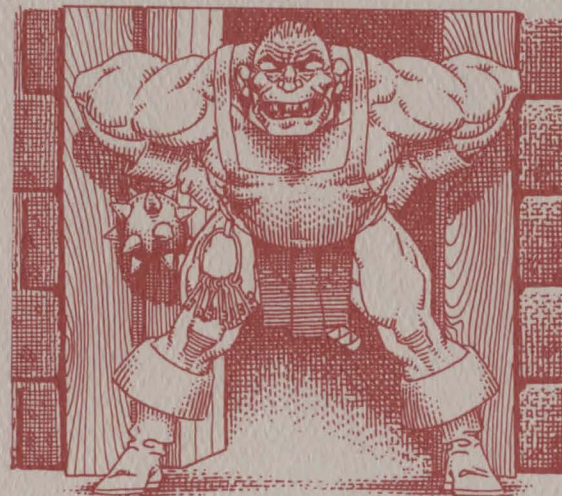
B. As you nod your assent, the old beachcomber smiles malevolently. His grip on your arm tightens with a strength unthinkable from the hands of such a frail old man. Before you can react to the blinding pain, the old man waves his other hand and a wrenching feeling of vertigo overcomes you, causing the old man and your entire surroundings to start to fade. You feel consciousness slipping away . . .

When you open your eyes you are immediately aware of some changes in your surroundings. Gone is the windswept beach and the salty tang of the ocean breeze. Instead, you sit in darkness and the odor of rotting food assails your nostrils. As your eyes grow accustomed to the dim light it slowly dawns on you that you are in a dungeon! Worse yet, your arms and legs are shackled to the wall and there seems to be a great deal of chains involved . . .

No amount of tugging and pulling has any effect on your shackles. However, the rattling and clanging generated by your efforts attracts the notice of the jail-keeper. He is a rather frightening looking fellow, well above average height and weight, wearing a spiked club in his belt alongside a large ring of keys.

"Silence, knave!" he roars, "or I'll put ye in the hole!"

Demand to see your attorney— Turn to C



Hold your tongue— D

C. With a snarl, the jailkeeper unlocks your shackles. He unceremoniously picks you up, slings you over his shoulder and carries you down a torch-lit hallway to a tiny wooden door. Unbolting the door, he dumps you into a cell that is pitch black. After a few moments you begin to hear the rustling of rats as they become bolder and more curious. Occasionally, you slap away some stinging insect that is feasting on you.

Suddenly the tomb-like silence is broken by the sound of a crackling giggle in a distant corner of the cell. Mastering your fear, you crawl towards the faint sound of

ragged breathing and discover an old, insane man. He is dressed in rags and all attempts to com-



municate with him result in the same haunting cackle. After what seems like hours of kicking rats, swatting insects, and listening to the lunatic cackle, you are startled by the sudden appearance of the old man at your side. He firmly grasps your arm and calmly says, "The sum of the parts is harmony, whilst the fruit of the twain is disaster."

Upon uttering these words, the old man collapses lifelessly to the floor. A few seconds later a dull light begins to envelop one of the old man's hands. It emanates from a ring on his finger . . .

Take the ring— E
Do nothing— F

D. Deciding that the tone of the jailkeeper's voice dictates a cautious approach, you sit quietly in the corner and try to figure out what has happened to you. Several hours pass, during which you are kept busy fighting off some aggressive rats and extraordinarily voracious insects.

Heavy footfalls sound in the corridor and your cell door is suddenly yanked open by the aforementioned jailkeeper. He glances at you and snarls "I thought ye might be lonely, so I brought ye some company." He then shoves a vaguely familiar looking old man into the cell and slams the door shut.

The old man wears chains, but apparently the jailkeeper thought so little of his physical prowess that he did not bother to shackle him to the wall. Your inspection leads you to the same conclusion. The old man looks more than half-starved, and lies right where he first fell, muttering and cackling to himself. Your half-hearted attempts at conversation elicit no response. After a while you give up on trying to communicate and doze off.

You are brought out of your slumber by the sound of a heavy object hitting the floor. You see the old man lying a couple of feet away from you and notice that he has somehow managed to dislodge a stone from the wall, leaving a hole that a grown person could slip through. Slowly the old man turns to face you and says "My time has come. I shall die in this dark hole, but ye need not do the same." He bends over your shackles and mutters under his breath as he fumbles with the locks. Within seconds you are free!

"Go," he says, "but remember that the sum of the parts is harmony, whilst the fruit of the twain is disaster." He then collapses to the floor, apparently in a faint. Your efforts to rouse him are futile, so you do the only thing you can. You climb through the hole.

Beyond the hole is a slope which leads to a ditch filled with sewage. The water flows quite swiftly and

you find yourself being swept along, barely able to keep your head above the water. Thankfully, the smell rapidly loses intensity and, after about 15 minutes, you see daylight ahead. The water is getting cleaner by the moment.

The tunnel abruptly ends as you reach the daylight and you find yourself airborne, plummeting into a river some 30 feet below in a ravine. Fortunately, the river is quite deep and you manage to avoid the rocks . . . By the time you climb to the surface and fight your way to shore, you find yourself on a narrow rock ledge. There is a cave entrance a few feet away.

Enter the cave— Q
Dive back into river— G

E. The Ring's glow slowly increases until you can see the narrow confines of the cell. When you touch it, the glow begins to subside and a feeling of peace washes over you. It slides easily off the old man's finger and feels warm to the touch.

Turn to R



F. The Ring's glow slowly increases until you can see the narrow confines of the cell. The room is perhaps 15 feet deep and seven feet wide, with walls comprised of blocks of moss-covered stone. Behind the old man's body you can see a block of stone that appears to be partially pulled out of the wall. With a good deal of effort and tugging, you manage to pull the block out of the wall and let it slide to the floor with what seems like a deafening crash. Breathless, you wait for the sound of the guard coming down the hallway to investigate the noise, but only silence greets your ears.

As you turn toward the body of the old man you hear a slight popping noise and the room is plunged into darkness once more. Returning to the hole in the wall, you thrust your head and shoulders into the gap and are nearly knocked off your feet by the powerful stench of raw sewage. Gritting your teeth (and holding your nose) you plunge forward into the blackness.

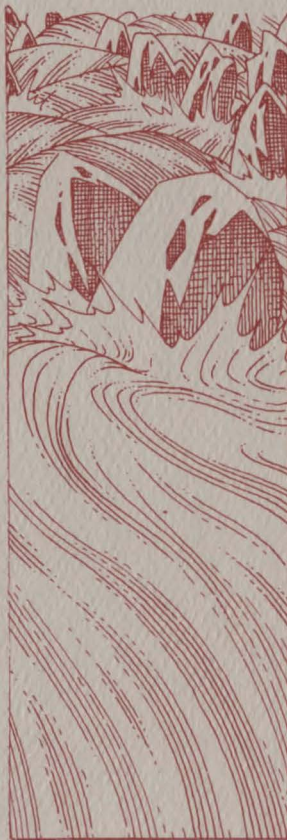
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Enter the cave— Q
Dive back into river— G

G. As soon as you hit the cool water, you realize you have made a dreadful mistake. There is a very strong current here, and you quickly find yourself being rapidly swept along with absolutely no control. In fact, it is all you can do to keep your head above water . . .

After several minutes of panic-stricken travel you notice a cluster of rather large rocks directly ahead of you — rapids! Try as you might, it is impossible to break free of the current's lethal embrace. You manage to push yourself away from the first couple of rocks that you encounter, but the odds are overwhelming and in moments you are battered into unconsciousness . . .



Turn to K

H. Courageously you snarl "Get lost, punks!" and drop into a mock martial arts pose in hopes of frightening them off. Unfortunately, they don't buy it. You quickly feel your arms being swept up in a half-nelson grip from behind and the remaining robbers proceed to practice uppercuts, jabs, round-house punches, and the occasional right (and left) cross on your body and jaw. It takes a few minutes, but you eventually manage to pass out . . .

Turn to K



I. It takes but a moment to recall that some sage or another determined discretion as being the better part of valor. You hand it over politely. The apparent leader of the band, at least the ugliest one of the lot, snatches it rudely and opens it. "Big spender!" he sneers when he finds \$13 in it. "Give the chump the \$13 special . . ." A heavy (and probably blunt) object smashes into the back of your skull and for a fleeting moment you admire the burst of color that seems to override every other thought or image in your mind . . .

Turn to K

J. Having decided to ignore the ramblings of the old fellow, you continue your stroll. Before you realize what has happened, you find yourself surrounded by a group of nasty-looking young fellows who demand that you hand over your wallet.

Do you hand over your wallet?—see I
Resist—see H

K. You wake up lying on another beach near the battered hulk of a wrecked wooden ship. There is a big hole in the side of the ship. Lying next to you on the sand is what appears to be a leather wineskin with writing on the side which reads "From the earth receiveth I fulfillment." Farther off down the beach you can just make out a human form approaching. Upon examining the wineskin, you discover that it is filled with water.

A glance skyward reveals a chilling fact: This is not dear old terra firma as you know it! Gone are the blue skies and soft, white clouds of dear old Earth. Instead, the heavens are purple and the clouds appear as ugly red slashes in the firmament! Staggering to your feet, you decide that you had better do some investigating . . .



Do you enter wrecked ship? — Turn to L
Head away from the figure — Turn to M
Walk toward the figure — Turn to N

L. As you enter the shipwreck, you are hit with an overwhelming animal stench, and, before your eyes can adjust to the darkness, a pair of extraordinarily strong hands grabs you in a rather rough manner and unceremoniously dumps you outside. The odor and the menacing snarls emanating from the hole in the side of the wreck convince you not to try to regain entry. Instead, you:

Head away from the approaching figure —
Turn to M
Walk toward the approaching figure —
Turn to N

M. Turning your back on the approaching figure, you begin walking down the beach away from the shipwreck. You note that the ocean seems rather rough, with fairly violent waves and an occasional black fin cutting through the foam. Rounding a point of land where the beach veers to the left, you encounter a river mouth emptying into the sea. There is a small island across the river, and a good deal of dense undergrowth which precludes travelling in this direction any farther. You turn around and walk back toward the derelict ship.

Turn to N



N. Walking away from the shipwreck, towards the approaching human figure, you soon discover that it is an old man who looks as if he had just crossed the Sahara on foot. He is dressed in rags, quite dishevelled and very, very thin. He spots the water flask you are carrying and begs for a drink of water.

Do you give him a drink of water —

Turn to O

Ignore his pleas and continue walking —

Turn to P

O. "Thank you, O Gracious One!" he says. "May Brohm smile upon you all of your days and repay this kindness with a thousand such acts."

With these words the old man, who looks vaguely familiar, pulls a pouch out of his shirt and extracts an ivory ring. "I have naught to offer ye but this ring. Please accept it as a token of my gratitude." The old man then grasps your hand and slips the ring onto your finger before you can say a word.

Turn to R



P. As you try to brush past the old man, he curses you strangely, saying "May the Ring of Chaos seek ye out and devour thy soul as it is devouring the soul of the enchantress Lisa at this very moment."



As if on cue, the air is filled with the shimmering image of a beautiful woman who points at the old man and snarls something about betrayal. With a look of terror, the old man grabs a small pouch from inside his shirt and begins to fumble desperately with the drawstring.

The woman laughs and utters an incomprehensible phrase, at which point the old man bursts into flames and is consumed in an instant, leaving only a pile of charred bones and this strange-looking ivory ring (which is glowing, of course). The woman then speaks to you saying, "Take the ring, otherworlder, and carry it to the farthest ends of the earth or I shall cause you to perish in the flames of Chaos as did the old fool."

The image shimmers in the air for a brief moment, then vanishes. It occurs to you that the old man was trying to get the ring out of the pouch as if he thought it might protect him. You decide to put it on.

Turn to R

Q. As you near the cave entrance you hear the sound of labored breathing. Upon entering the cave, you are greeted with the sight of a young man dressed in hunter's garb sitting on the ground with his back propped up against the stone wall. His leg is caught in a rather vicious looking steel trap and it is apparent that the force of the trap's jaws has shattered the bone. There is a good deal of blood about.

The young man notices your entrance and quickly nocks an arrow to the longbow he clutches and draws aim at your chest. A moment later a look of weariness crosses his features and he lowers the bow without releasing the arrow.

"Thou art not from this timewhen, sojourner," he says. "Thou hast not the lean and hungry look of the men-that-are-beasts who pursue me. In sooth, thou must be the new Ring-bearer. 'Tis well that thou art here, then, for my brief span as Bearer of the Ring is bridged and I needs pass it on to thee. Take it, but leave me my weapons that I may send a few of the vermin who ensnared me to meet the hellspawn that created them."

So saying, the hunter offers you an ornate ivory ring that seems to glow as he slides it from his finger. You realize that it is not polite to refuse the request of a dying man, no matter from what delirium his request springs, so you take the ring from his hand.

"Put it on, otherworlder, for it shall afford thee protection from the flames of Chaos and stop the enchantress Lisa from doing thee any major harm."

Turn to R



R. As the ring slips on your own finger, a sensation of tranquility intensifies until you feel your eyes close as if by their own accord. Awareness slips away . . .

When you open your eyes, you find yourself in a small room, lying on a thick rug made from the skin of an unknown creature. The walls of the room are covered with exotic tapestries of figures engaged either in the hunt or in war. Standing in front of you is a rather large, well-muscled fellow wearing blue trunks, a blue cape, boots, and a dangerous-looking longsword. Next to him, hovering about three feet above the ground in a cross-legged position is a very old fellow with a beatific grin of his face. The old man looks strangely familiar.

"Gorn," says the old one. "did I not say the Ring would find a way to come hither?"

"Gloat to thyself Zandorf," retorts the warrior, evidently known as Gorn. "tell this otherworlder what needs to be known so that we may be on our way."

Looking directly at you the old one speaks: "Listen carefully, otherworlder, for time is of the utmost importance. The ring ye wear is known as the Ring of Order. Thy Ring is seeking its counterpart, the Ring of Chaos, which hath our own noble sorceress, Lisa, under its evil sway. The Ring of Chaos, using Lisa's own powers against her, has taken her to another plane. From there it seeks to disrupt the very fabric of all the planes." Gesturing toward the giant beside him, Zandorf continues: "Thou must accompany Gorn, the Champion of Balema, and find Lisa in order to save her, and indeed to save us all, from the destructive power of the Ring of Chaos. Only with the Ring of Order can this difficult task be accomplished."

Zandorf's eyes close for a moment. Before you can utter a sound he opens them and exclaims, "Quickly Gorn. Move close to the Chosen One. I can feel the forces of the Ring shifting. Fare thee well, brave ones. May Brohm be with you!"

Gorn hurriedly steps to your side. Once again, a strange dizziness overcomes you and darkness envelops you . . .

Let the RingQuest begin!!

