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Fragments from the Chronicles of the Land

Year 4160 in The Age of Conflict (author anonymous)

...Order is born out of chaos. Systems establish themselves in the random swirls of the void, unique, never to be repeated. Life is created, exists, then dies. Whole civilisations rise and conquer, then tumble into nothing. These are the patterns.

This world was created, that is all we know for sure; who plucked these elements from emptiness and shaped them into this land, this is not understood. There are many holes in the jigsaw, too many missing pieces for us to comprehend the grand designs. One piece tells us more than any other: the ancient Book of Aran, passed down through thousands of generations, whispering to us the secrets of the Legend of Creation. This is its story.

In a time long before the cruel species crawled from the slime, the Four Lords of Creation shaped the world from the random dynamics of time and space. Their child was not complete, so they bestowed upon it six gifts, that it could grow and prosper in its own perfection. For the gift of Weight they gave a compact ball of the densest metal; for the gift of Land they gave hard, cold rock; for the gift of the Sea they gave water from the skies; for the gift of Breath they gave air, no more; for the gift of Life Abundant they gave plants and animals and spread them across the world like a tapestry; lastly, they built the great Tower for the gift of Magic, a place of creation and understanding. Their gifts bequeathed, they left this humble land forever to write new lines on the page of another Galaxy.

The Age of Peace

...These were the six gifts discovered by the immortal Firstborn as they stepped from the Tower in a time beyond recall. Their kind developed, and for an age lived in absolute balance, ruled by Aran, the first King and potentate of all Magic. It was he who possessed the Keystone of Life set deep into a golden crown; with it he determined the flux of Magical power. He was the chronicle of this world's past, and his chapters are known as the Age of Peace.

Without motion the river stagnates, choking in its own languor. Perfection for the Firstborn was a state of inertia; without fear or hope they drifted inevitably to boredom and apathy, and so to despair. In time, in desperation, they looked inside themselves for the answer - but the body is a casket that should be left locked; it holds the soul, and a soul exposed withers. The Firstborn found the answer in suicide, and they embraced it like art, like culture, like a friend: it gave meaning to the monotony of life.

There are many tales in the Book of Aran recounting the deaths of the Firstborn, tales of beauty and meaning, the most futile thing this world has known - but like all tales they unravel to an end,

waiting for someone else to pick up the threads and reshape them. Aran remained, alone; his was the greatest and saddest death of all.

When there was no more to be done, when there was sand where once there had been a well of hope, Aran's solitude drove him to madness. He wrapped himself, womb-like, in a great cloak of swan feathers, and fell to the earth in despair. His mind, clinging to ritual, urged him to crawl a thousand miles around the land, memories punishing him as each place recalled a past too painfully close to bear. At last he crept exhausted to the Tower, where he drew a mantle of Magic around himself, passing within to the Chamber of Cauldrons deep inside the Tower. Crafting a final entry in the Book of Aran, he placed it in a crystal case to protect his words from the scars of time.

In this primordial place he drew together all the Magic of the Tower into a single point, and penetrated the fabric of time, casting himself back to the First Day, awaiting the Firstborn.

And there he witnessed what no one has ever seen: his own birth, his own self rising from the primeval slime, out of the cauldrons of life into the world. The sight was the fist that cracked the shell: as the young Aran rose to his feet, the old Aran swung an axe of adamant down upon his head. Bone splintered, existence was erased; with it, the Keystone of Life set in the crown of the newborn King was shattered, splitting into uncounted shards which fell and scattered back into the cauldron. Old Aran, torn by the winds of time, ripped apart by forces beyond his comprehension, faded and never was. The pattern was broken before it had begun; the Firstborn never emerged.

The Age of the Four Kingdoms

...Nothing is told of the darkness before the Age of the Four Kingdoms, but life was born again. As rainfall encourages growth from the desert sand where there has been nothing for a thousand years, so an unknown hand urged the seed in the cauldrons to germinate into new life. From these bubbling pools crawled the four Kings of the new races, wearing crowns bearing the main shards of the splintered Keystone of Life. Each had a queen at his side, all wandered from the Tower to build their kingdoms and weave their own tapestry in the world. And in time, other dark and nameless creatures crept from the cauldrons, bearing the tiny shards of the Keystone that created them, following the Kings into a new world.

The four races developed and prospered. All species multiply - slowly, at first, then too quickly; when two plants grow close together, one must give way and wither, or both shall die. As time passed the four territories crossed, and their differences spilled out of the shadows into the light of day. This is how it has always been between Elves, Dwarves, Humans and Orcs.

The Elves are closest in kind to the Firstborn. They are a natural people, loving sunlight and forest shade: a tall, fair and elegant species, always vigilant against attack. Without much ambition themselves, they often proved an easy target for the excesses of other races; but they had one skill on their side - a knowledge of Magic that grew deep and fast. An elf's inner fire burns more brightly

than that of any other creature, and they crafted great artifacts of beauty and power, protecting their culture with the double-edged sword of defence and art. Though they were an unambitious, isolationist people, theirs was the first great empire, sprawling the central forest of Aldarien and the vast tree belt of the Southlands. There are records of woods with Elven settlements even up to the south edges of the Great Plain.

The Dwarves, too, are a solitary race. They are short and stocky, in harmony with the deep earth; but they were (and are still) few in number. Creatures of habit - mainly miners, builders and smiths - their psyche is governed by a desire to delve forever deeper for the magical core metal of the world. In the old days they learned enough of Magic to fire their forges and build their halls without despoiling the land, and they crafted many fine weapons, some of great power. But they are still a disparate, hostile people, going wherever the mining is good, given to territorial defence. Their main settlements were close to the Tower, the place now known as Naugarth, the Dwarf realm.

Men are the Land's farmers: their struggle is against nature, for control over the beasts and the plants. They breed quickly because their lifespan is short; and this makes them more desperate than most. In their history whole empires have risen and fallen, their leaders overreaching themselves, people suffering. They rejected the power of Magic long ago, choosing instead the path of science, building great engines of might and anger that belched blackness and death across the land. Then, they lived mainly in the southwest, clearing the silver woods to make way for production and progress (this was the cause of the first wars). They have always been an expansionist species, and they soon spread their corruption north into the Great Plain and east into Hardor.

Finally, this world (like many others) hosts Orcs. These, as has been well recorded elsewhere, are warriors: efficient fighting machines who live and die by sword and statecraft, craving power and glory in the blood of battle or the turbulence of politics. In the heart of every Orc lies a true King, and no Orc holds a crown for long. Even bravery is subject to ambition - and for this reason the chronicles of the other races despise them as cowards and despoilers. Orcs captured in battle were always slain, often after hideous torture; but the Orc burns and pillages only to strike fear into the heart of the enemy; it tortures only to extract vital information; it never slays a prisoner if there's a ransom to be gained. An Orc runs from battle when it calculates that the odds are against it: death knows no return, but life holds hope and ambition.

Ambition is a ruthless master, and one that crushes the moral icons of any society - but Orcs are willing to pay the price in return for the reward. First they settled to the west of the Adunram, the range of mountains which separates the Elves of Aldarien from the Men of the silver woods. From here, constant raids by Man and Elf forced many to migrate north to the mountains of shadow and onwards across the Great Plain to the Red Mountains. In time, with patience, they built a great empire, most of it in the barren, inaccessible corners of the land where they could live unmolested by other races - and during that period many of those nameless, terrible fragments of life from the cauldrons settled this infertile place, and made pacts with the Orcs. With weaponcraft of the

highest quality and a shrewd, formidable understanding of Magic specialised in the spells of destruction and stealth, they proved terrible allies.

So the world was divided between the races. The Elves ruled the forests, the Dwarves held the underworld, Men ploughed the plains and the Orcs held sway over wastes and mountains. Their empires grew and knitted, grew and frayed. The Conflict began.

The Age of Conflict

...As woods are destroyed by a spark and the beating of a butterfly's wings can cause a mighty storm, so all wars begin from trivial incidents.

A small band of Men were clearing trees in the silver forest to make way for farmland when an Elven princess, Glaswen, came by. Dismayed by the slaughter she turned on the cutters and bade them stop; but neither culture understood the ways of the other, and the Men simply became angry and refused, bringing brands with which to burn the trees.

Glaswen had no other recourse other than Magic, so she cast a spell of enchantment which so enhanced her charm and beauty that no man could will against her. By chance Vilira, wife of one of the Men, was hunting birds of paradise nearby and stumbled upon the scene: Men, paralysed in their own deception, bearing burning brands, impassive. That same enchantment which had the Men enthralled pierced her only with jealousy and rage; in madness she shot Glaswen through the throat with her husband's bow.

It only takes a toss of the hand to scatter the dragon's teeth, and within days the Elves massed a huge army in the hidden pass to Aldarien, ready for war. The Men were forced to go for aid to the Orcs, who made with them a tryst: in return for sorcery to defeat the Elves, the Men would exchange any item held by their King, whatever it might be. In desperation, they agreed too readily.

The Battle of Agarlad began with Elves and Men matched like balanced scales: Elven Magic was countered by Human engines of destruction, and the Men's weight of numbers was cancelled by the Elves' skill at arms and the quality of their weapons.

When the Orcs struck, the battle, like a boulder poised at the top of a hill, could have fallen this way or that. They had forged many pacts with the dark creatures of the Tower: one such was with the Norloki, the fire dragons from the deeps. Sweeping in a circle of a hundred miles across they torched the forest, creating a tightening coil of fire around the two armies. Fanned by strong winds and Orcish sorcery, the flames swept inward and both armies were lost.

Some Elves escaped the ring and fled southwest ahead of the flames to Gwailon, the Pass to Hardor, which was held by the Dwarves. But the Dwarves, fearing the wrath and fire of the Orcs, closed

their gates and would let none pass. The Elves were burned to death at the Gates of Gwailon, a crime not one of their race has forgiven.

The Orcs had fulfilled their side of the pact: the Elven army was destroyed, and with it almost all of the silver woods and much of the Human territory. Since that battle this desolate region has been known as Bloodwaste, a land shunned by all. Memories may fade, but rituals remain.

When no recompense was forthcoming, the Orcs sent envoys to the king of Men and demanded the Shard of the Keystone from the king's crown. Even though he didn't fully realise the Orcs' fell purpose - to use the gem by sorcery to enslave mankind - the loss of much of his army put him in no mood for bargains. The Orcish emissary was burned at the stake.

So began the Orcs' campaign of retribution. First they dammed the Great River at its cleft and choked the lands and cities below, including Adanost, the capital of Men. Soil turned to desert, livestock starved, crops failed, Men died. The Orcs sent a second envoy to the king, offering him one last chance to keep faith with the pact. This ambassador was tarred and set alight, and goaded screaming through the city streets until at last he found the river bank and hurled himself onto its dry and stony bed. There he died; his body, dismembered as a gesture of defiance, was returned to its own kind in the waste lands.

In rage the Orcs unleashed their final act of vengeance: they breached the dam at Belecrist, unleashing the mass of blue waters - a vast lake that had stretched half way across the Great Plain to the Red Mountains. It loosed a colossal wave fifty feet high through the Bloodwaste and into the lowlands. All was carried before it and dumped in the western sea: villages, towns and the great city of Adanost were caught and tossed and crushed like leaves in the wind. A thousand blue veins shaped a delta through mud, swamp and steaming fog to the sea. This was a new territory into which many of the darker creations from the Tower crawled and found a haven - the region that is now known as Durien, the darklands.

Perhaps by sorcery, the king of Men escaped the tragedy and moved north to the Great Plain to gather survivors into a new kingdom. Time is its own balm, and Elven anger against Men had abated, replaced by pity for their plight and wrath against the Orcs. A long and bitter war ensued, battle on fearsome battle, and the Orcs were driven out of Adunram into the Shadow Mountains. The price was this: the glorious might of the Elven empire was spent in that terrible age of conflict.

In fear the Orcs fled to Eredwath, where they killed many Dwarves in claiming new territory. The Elves of Hardor, cut off from their kingdom, declined - and Men moved in, hacking and burning more forest as the generations passed. The new kingdoms of Men on the Great Plain grew slowly, and the city of Adanost was rebuilt in the north-east; but it is no longer a place of power and glory.

A wise man must recognise how appalling it will be when all the wealth in this world stands waste - as even now randomly throughout this land walls are standing, wind-blown, moss-covered, the ramparts storm-beaten. Where have the armies gone? Where the great warriors? Where the mighty kings? In truth, that time has passed away, has grown dark under the helm of night as though it had never been. Storms beat upon heaps of stones, and winter and darkness will fall upon us all.

In this time the Watcher came and settled in the Tower. From warring and poverty all four races have slowly declined, their economies and towns crumbling in unison. Once there were great cities here, now there are villages and settlements; once there were huge nations, now there are dwindling rows of stragglers; once there were empires, now there are memories. People everywhere are very few.

No one knows from where the Watcher came, or why - perhaps he was a missive from the Lords of Creation, a restorer of balance? He has withdrawn the gift of Magic: wizards have no power, and the only sorcery in the land emanates from artifacts fashioned before he arrived. It is a time for union; to this end he has cast a spell of apathy upon the four kings, and spoken this prophesy:

"Where there is chaos there will be order; where discord, harmony will flourish. From the south will come a hero to conquer the land and unite the crowns. Where there were fragments, there will be a whole. Then will a new age begin."

If we do not heed his words, all this foundation of earth will become desolate. The land awaits its hero; it craves balance from instability. It yearns order from chaos.

A HERO'S QUEST

Battlemaster is a fantasy arcade adventure set in a world of myth and feudal strife. The land is in decay; isolated villages, towns and castles are divided by areas of chaotic monster-infested wilderness. Your task is to restore order by conquering the four kingdoms and handing their crowns to the Watcher who inhabits the Tower.

The four main races in the world are Dwarves, Elves, Humans and Orcs.

They do not get on, so bear in mind the subtle politics of their interaction:

Dwarves hate Elves and Orcs

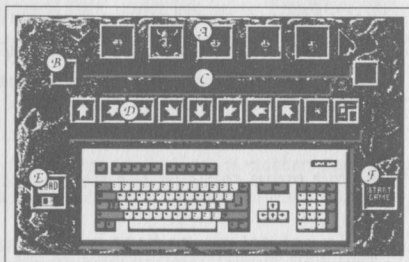
Elves hate Dwarves and Orcs

Humans like no one but despise Orcs most

Orcs hate everyone

GETTING STARTED

- (A) Leader Selection
- (B) Weapon Icons
- (C) Character Description
- (D) Redefine Keyboard Commands
- (E) Load a Saved Game
- (F) Start Game



LEADERS

At the start of the game, you're required to choose a leader from 16 candidates, four from each race. Not all the leaders on the Leader Selection panel (A) are shown at once - there are two arrow icons to scroll through them. Clicking the mouse button on the leader you wish to examine reveals his name and a brief description (C), and the melee/missile weapons he is carrying (B).

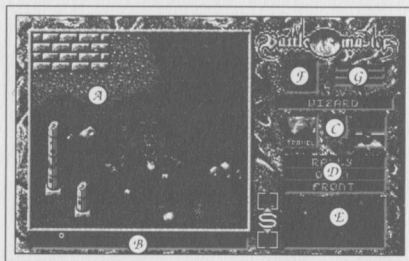
CONTROLS

The game is controlled via keyboard, joystick or mouse. The default keyboard commands use the numeric keypad for direction and fire, with the SPACE BAR selecting the information screens. These controls can be redefined by selecting the function to be changed from the list of icons above the keyboard display, and then selecting the key on the displayed keyboard which is to hold that function, or typing in your preferred alternative (D).

If you already have a saved game, you can load it from this screen (E). If this is your first game, selecting a leader enables the Start Game icon (F). Click on this to load in the initial scenario and the main playscreen.

THE MAIN PLAYSCREEN

- (A) Main Playing Area
- (B) Location Name
- (C) Weapon Icon
- (D) Formation Options
- (E) Scenario Scanner
- (F) Character Icon
- (G) Status Bars



The main playing screen is divided into two areas: the information section on the right and the scenario landscape on the left. A scenario is simply a place on the world map: it could be a village, a castle, a mine or just a place in the wilderness. Each scenario is populated by one of the races, by monsters or by a mixture of the two; but you'll also find traps, puzzles to solve (for example, finding keys to open doors or activating switches to deactivate traps) and miscellaneous objects. These objects include food to improve your hero's health or weapons and magical artifacts to enhance his combat potential.

You move around the world map looting some scenarios and negotiating in others. The ones you loot provide cash either to buy more men to replace any casualties you may have suffered, or simply to increase the size of your army. Only a strong leader with faithful troops will be able to defeat the four kings in the four racial capitals and deliver their crowns to the Watcher's Tower in the middle of a monster-inhabited wilderness.

The Playing Area (A)

The play area is a window looking down on the action from a 60 degree angle, showing the player and his men, nearby enemies and the surrounding terrain. This window scrolls in eight directions as you move, keeping you in the centre of the display. Movement is controlled using the joystick, mouse or cursor keypad; the fire command fires the missile weapon or hacks with the melee weapon, whichever is selected.

The rest of the screen is taken up by an icon strip which allows you to control your men and access the information screens. Control is switched from the play area to the icon strip by pressing the SPACE BAR or the RIGHT MOUSE BUTTON. These icons are as follows:

Weapon (C)

Clicking on this icon toggles the type of weapon your leader is currently using between missile and melee (for example, bow to sword and vice versa). Missile weapons have the advantage of long range accuracy and surprise, but melee weapons are essential for the quick reflexes of hand-to-hand combat.

Formation Options (D)

The troops you buy are so loyal that they follow you around without question and copy your actions. The formation you choose could mean the difference between a successful conquest and total annihilation - so it's worthwhile thinking about your strategy and watching the enemy before deciding how to manoeuvre.

There are a number of formations you can adopt, selected from the three icons here. The top one is Rally: clicking on this recalls troops to their current formation - useful when undisciplined followers run off on the rampage (usually when morale is high), or when slothful members straggle at the back or flee from the enemy (usually when morale is low).

The second icon cycles through the possible troop formations - Single, Column, Line, Wedge, Open and Huddle: it's up to you to decide the best circumstances in which to utilise any tactic. The bottom icon selects your leader's position in the formation - Front, Rear or Wait. Front and Rear are obvious enough - you might be low on strength or not confident of your abilities, in which case you're better commanding the action from behind; or you might want to inspire your troops with strong leadership in a time of crisis, in which case you should charge from the front. If, however, you want your troops to remain standing whilst you explore the territory, select Wait - if you get attacked you can always Rally them into position.

You can control up to 16 troops in this way - enemies tend to congregate and operate in similarly small groups. A good leader will respond to situations as they arise.

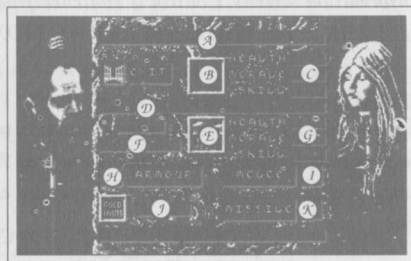
Scenario Scanner (E)

The display at the bottom of the information panel is a wider scan view: the position of your leader on the current level of the current scenario is shown in red, whilst the relative positions of all enemy unit leaders are shown as yellow dots.

Status (F)

This icon appears as a picture of your leader with three status bars (G) next to it. These bars reveal your leader's health, the average health of his troops and troop morale. Clicking on the leader's picture accesses the status screen:

- (A) Location Name
- (B) Leader Icon
- (C) Leader Status
- (D) Name of Leader
- (E) Followers Icon
- (F) Class
- (G) Follower Status
- (H) Armour
- (I) Melee Weapon
- (J) Gold Coins
- (K) Missile Weapon

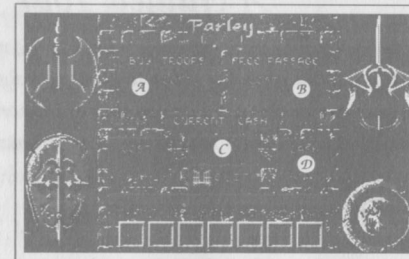


This shows in detail the health, morale and skill both of your leader and his troops. The balance of troop morale is a simple one: it's increased by killing enemies and decreased by being killed! If morale is high, troops confidently act on their own initiative and slaughter at will; if it is low, they become uncertain of their actions and require strong leadership. The type and number of weapons and armour currently in use are also revealed here.

Parley (H)

When you first enter a (non-monster) scenario you have the option to Parley rather than fight. Selecting this icon allows access to the Parley Screen.

- (A) Buy Troops
- (B) Buy Free Passage
- (C) Buy Objects
- (D) Current Cash Level



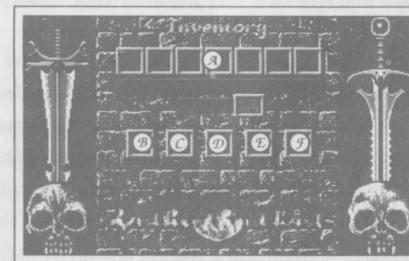
In Parley mode your leader has three main options: he can recruit troops if the race in the scenario is the same as his (A); buy free passage through the scenario if he has enough money (B); or simply purchase items from the area's resident population (C).

This screen is not available in monster-only scenarios, and as soon as hostilities start it is disabled. At the end of a scenario it changes into the Travel icon, which accesses the world map, allowing you to choose another scenario to go to.

Inventory (I)

Selecting this icon allows access to the Inventory Screen:

- (A) Items carried
- (B) Select armour icon
- (C) Select melee weapon
- (D) Select missile weapon
- (E) Eat Icon
- (F) Trash Can Icon



This simply shows the total contents of your inventory, the currently selected armour, melee and missile weapons, and the loot in the current scenario. Icons allow items to be moved from inventory to the trash can and out of the game. There is a limit to what you can carry.

The basic rule for manipulating items is to click on the item, (using the arrows to scroll through the inventory) and then click on one of the icons. To eat an apple you would click on the apple and then on the Eat Icon. To select a wand as your missile weapon click on the wand and then the Select Missile Weapon icon

The World Map

This is only accessible once a scenario has been completed. It allows you to choose which of the adjacent scenarios you want to move to. Once an adjacent scenario has been selected it is loaded and the whole process of combat or negotiation begins again.

Battlemaster

A Guided Tour For Beginners.

You now have all the information you need to become a battlemaster. If you're familiar with games of this type, you'll probably want to plunge straight into the action. For those who would prefer a little more advice this is a guided tour of the early scenarios. Whichever leader you choose either Dorins Delve or Dullham will be adjacent to your home town.

Dorins Delve

Select your leader as described above. Note that different leaders start with different numbers of men. Warriors start on their own. For the purpose of this walk through it's best if you don't pick an elf or human as these races actually inhabit the first two scenarios. Once you have selected a leader, the world map appears and you must select a scenario adjacent to your home town. Choose Dorins Delve (or Dullham). The scenario will then load. If you selected Dorins Delve you will arrive in a rocky landscape. If you are trying Dullham, see the section below. Check the scanner for the position of the enemy (yellow dots) and decide on your party formation. A wedge shape with the leader at the rear is one of the safest while you're still familiarising yourself with the battle tactics.

Analyse where it would be best to strike against the enemy. If there are several groups huddled together wait until they separate. It's much harder to deal with groups of soldiers at once than one at a time. Use bows at long-range but be prepared to switch quickly to hand-to-hand weapons if the enemy comes close. Scan the countryside for suitable cover: enemy arrows can't pass through trees or rocks, so use these to hide behind when things get dangerous. In Dorins Delve they keep a sentry hidden behind some bushes to the west of the path. If you just march straight up the middle he will raise the alarm and Dwarves will arrive in force. If however you sneak up through the bushes as far left as you can get, you can surprise the sentry and will have considerably less enemies to fight at the hidden cave entrance.

Once you've wiped out most of the opposing army you can loot the surrounding countryside. From your starting point continue east until you reach an opening in the crag - pick up the chest carefully keeping close to the wall; there's a pit-trap just opposite the cave entrance.

Walk straight up the path through the centre of the landscape to the north. As you reach the cliff ahead you'll notice that new entrance has appeared in the wall. The fact that you're still alive to step through it is proof that your first campaign of action has been a success.

Dullham

You enter a peaceful scene just at the point where a bridge crosses a river. Use your skills as a fighter and battle leader to kill the inhabitants; attacking the enemy from the southern bank of the river gives you more chance of dodging their arrows, but there are more opportunities for cover on the other bank.

Once you've wiped out the villagers, cross over the bridge (if you haven't already done so) and walk straight up the pathway towards Dullham. Before you get into the centre of the village veer to the left or right (there's a pit-trap right at the end of the path). Enter the village houses and collect any food or loot that you find. In a hut to the north-east or amongst the possessions you've already looted, you should find a key; use it to enter the house with the locked door to the east.

Inside the hut use the stairs just to the left of the door to visit the cellar. Be careful as you're likely to encounter a few die-hard residents. Loot whatever they've left lying around and head off to the next scenario.

If you'd like to practise parleying, choose an Dwarf as your leader from the start and negotiate for more troops or free passage through the first scenario. Alternatively, pick a human and negotiate for passage through the village of Dullham.

These early scenarios are designed to give a gentle introduction to the rest of the game. Use them to practise troop formations, develop your fighting skills and familiarise yourself with the controls. If you find you're dying too often. Try slowing down, there's nothing more dangerous than rushing into battle unprepared: a good commander knows when to watch and wait.

The Book of Monsters

Long has it been told that the Keystone of Life was the device which originally contained the infallible genetic code. When it was planted in the cauldrons in the Watcher's Tower, its inner fire was revived and its myriad patterns began to shape the perfect race - the Firstborn.

However, the King of the Firstborn shattered the Keystone and its shards fell back into the cauldrons, each fragment initiating its own species. The four main shards rapidly developed into the four main species: Humans, Orcs, Elves and Dwarves; but there were other shards. Even the tiniest sliver eventually produced its own life form: the smaller the sliver, the greater the mutation - and the more the thing created slipped from perfection.

The creatures spawned from these fragments were monsters, corrupt in mind and body. Some of the more extreme deviants have perished through natural selection or through lack of numbers. Of those that remain, this list is the one reliable catalogue.

Lesser Monsters

These relatively unintelligent creatures are widespread throughout the land, but provide little serious opposition. They are generally simple species mutated to unnatural size.

Giant Spiders

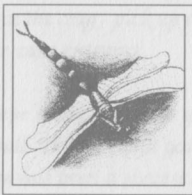
Appearance: Spiders, mainly black, 3 feet long
Armour: Soft skin
Attacks: Bite; some spit poison gas
Magic: None
Rating: Southern species are relatively harmless; Northern variety are dangerous



Giant Spiders have only animal intelligence: they're just one of those nasty little things you meet in the wilds. They prefer underground places but have been known to infiltrate forest areas.

Dragon Flies

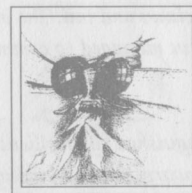
Appearance: Multicoloured dragonflies, 3 feet long
Armour: Soft skin
Attacks: Bite
Magic: None
Rating: Mostly harmless; can get nasty when defending their territory



More fly than dragon, these creatures pack a nasty nip. Found near water in out-of-the-way places.

Firedragon Flies

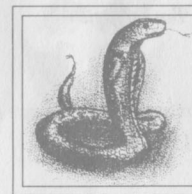
Appearance: Multicoloured dragonflies, 3-6 feet long
Armour: Soft skin
Attacks: Bite
Magic: Fire Breath
Rating: Dangerous



More dragon than fly, they're very similar in appearance to their lesser cousins. They're very aggressive, always attack and are keen on nasty surprises: massed groups of them have been known to open up with fiery blasts without warning. Found near water in out-of-the-way places. Sometimes bred as guards to crisp unwanted visitors.

Snakes

Appearance: Snakes, 3-6 feet long
Armour: Skin
Attacks: Poison bite
Magic: Rarely
Rating: Varies from harmless to very dangerous



Snakes come in many classes: some are completely harmless but others spit poison - and there are even a couple of very rare magic-using varieties which are very dangerous. Found throughout the land.

Giant Monsters

More advanced forms of life possess greater intelligence and strength - and are therefore much more accomplished adversaries. Travellers must tread cautious steps and plan carefully if they are to survive such encounters unharmed.

Scorpions

Appearance: Scorpions, 8 feet long
Armour: Skin with bony plates
Attacks: Spit poison gas; hack with pincers and stinger
Magic: None
Rating: Very Dangerous



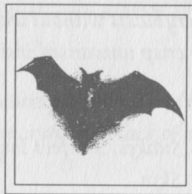
A large shard created these creatures, so they almost qualify as a race. However, they are socially very different to the main races: as a hive society they have little individual will or intelligence. This makes them all the more dangerous, since they know no fear, and the combined intelligence of the

hive can be surprising. In combat they are devastating, their plated skins protecting them whilst they attack with claws and tail. They inhabit desert areas exclusively: but rumour has it that in the north the Orcs have managed to communicate with them sufficiently to establish a form of pact.

Animals are distinguished by a resilient skin and reliance on instinct. Some shards distorted common forms into gross, warped echoes, many times normal size. These can cause serious trouble for the unwary.

Giant Bats

Appearance: Black bats, 4 feet long and larger
Armour: Skin
Attacks: Bite
Magic: None
Rating: Bothersome



Very large and particularly aggressive bats which live underground. Often confused with Vampire Bats, but not for long.

The Undead

Non-corporeal entities have long been a part of the Land, though there have been additional species generated since the arrival of the Watcher. Their unnatural appearance strikes fear into all forms of life - and, at their worst, they can kill.

Ghosts

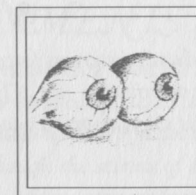
Appearance: Standard white-sheet ghosts
Armour: Non-corporeal
Attacks: By weapon type
Magic: Rarely
Rating: Varies: mostly harmless to dangerous



Ordinary by undead standards, these creatures are simply your common or garden spook, found in places where people once died (violently).

Ghost Eyes

Appearance: Large disembodied eyes
Armour: Non-corporeal
Attacks: Drain health on contact
Magic: Lightning bolts
Rating: Trouble



These monstrous beings have only been seen since the arrival of the Watcher, and this has led people to believe that he is responsible. However, no one has yet been willing to stake their reputation or life to prove the point.

Grinning Ghosts

Appearance: Disembodied mouths, 3 feet wide
Armour: Non-corporeal
Attacks: Bite
Magic: Yes; type varies
Rating: Varies: generally dangerous



These smiling spooks are said to be the undead spirits of those who perished without having a chance to speak the awesome last words they had in mind at the time. They are found wherever battles have been fought (ie, in most places), and wise people steer clear of the regions they haunt.

Vampire Bats

Appearance: Black bats, 4 feet long and larger
Armour: Non-corporeal
Attacks: Bite
Magic: Yes
Rating: Very dangerous



These are not bats at all, but Human mages who have chosen the ways of the undead as a path to immortality. Since the arrival of the Watcher they have lost their ability to shapechange and are trapped in bat form.

Magical Creatures

Magic is a powerful and mysterious force, occasionally harnessed and channelled into a vibrant form which can barely be described as 'life'. Elementals are the most prevalent manifestation, but the most elusive and potent is the fearsome Dragon.

Fire Elementals

Appearance: Small, mobile orbs of fire with a comet-like tail

Armour: Non-corporeal

Attacks: None

Magic: Fire attack

Rating: Trouble



Fire Elementals are either free-willed or bound by a mage. The free-willed variety occur near sources of natural fire; the bound variety act as guards or servants for a powerful mage, occurring wherever he dictates.

Light Elementals

Appearance: Small, scintillating stars

Armour: Non-corporeal

Attacks: None

Magic: Lightning

Rating: Trouble



These elementals are more difficult to bind than Fire Elementals, so most of those you encounter will be free-willed. In this form they are also known as 'Will o' Wisps': they are playful spirits inhabiting swampy areas, leading unwary adventurers to untimely ends with a combination of combat and quicksand.

Ball Servants

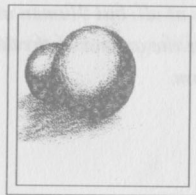
Appearance: Bouncing green balls, 4 feet across

Armour: Thick skin

Attacks: Bounce

Magic: None normally

Rating: Bothersome



The ball monster has for many years been a domesticated pet favoured by all the races: they are loyal, friendly and fun to play with. They are also quite aggressive against intruders and their bounce can be painful or even fatal.

THE BOOK OF ARMAMENTS

During these years of strife and chaos which have visited terrible waste upon the land, there have been few major records of armour or weaponry. This list is the most complete, as it details many of the great artificers and weaponsmiths and provides a compendium of their major works. Amongst these, seven can truly be said to be masters of their art: though the secrets of their design and techniques are now lost forever, their artifacts remain. Some of the weapons (such as Sulrandir's wands) bestow magical powers, replacing the wielder's skill with a skill of their own; more conventional weapons such as the axes and swords fashioned by Baglin or Feadil's armour add to the skill of the warrior using them, increasing his glory in battle. The forges are gone, the tools have crumbled to dust, but these works sustain the memories, and are a link with our common past. Those seeking power will do well to study this book wisely.

CURANDRIL'S RINGS

The greatest of the artificers was Curandril, Elf smith of Brilmar, who wrought the Elemental Rings which give the wearer control over the elements. These rings have for many ages helped to guard the Elven forests from the incursions of the dragons. Nendil and Gondrim had such control over the elements of earth and water that they allowed the wearer to bypass rivers and pits.

Normellon +30 vs fire (Firefriend)

Sulrandir +30 vs gas (Windwanderer)

Nendil Waterwalking (Lover of Water)

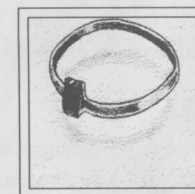
Gondrim Pitwalking (Stonemarch)

Firearmour +20 chainmail, +20 vs fire (special)

Lightarmour +20 chainmail, +20 vs Ltng (special)

Curandril's +20 (Ring of Battle)

Ring



BAGLIN'S BLADES

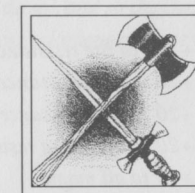
Also noteworthy is Baglin Axemaker, a Dwarven smith of great renown whose skill in weaponcraft was unrivalled. Although axes were his speciality he also made a number of swords which were given to the Men and Elves as part of a peace bid: a war was fought over these weapons when the Dwarves demanded their return. The Dragon-slaying blade, Norbane, was one of these. His battleaxes led the Dwarves to many victories against the Orcs: the great axe, Orcruth, is said to be capable of slaying any Orc with a single blow.

Orcruth +30 Orcslaying Battleaxe

Baglin's Blade +10 Orcslaying Battleaxe

Norbane +10 Dragonslaying Broadsword

Lokrist +0 Dragonslaying Longsword



SULRANDIR'S WANDS

Sulrandir the Great was an Elf mage whose speciality was enchanted wands. He focussed and bound much power into these items, and their ability to cast the combat spells of old still persists, even since the arrival of the Watcher.

Firefinger	+20
Lightfinger	+20
Firehand	+40
Lighthand	+40
Firefist	+60
Lightfist	+60
Firehammer	+80
Lighthammer	+80
The Hand of Sulrandir	+100 fire
Sulrandir's Fist	+120 lightning



FEADIL'S ARMOUR

An artificer of great repute was Feadil, who specialised in the crafting of armour. Whilst chainmail was his preferred medium, his greatest works were in dragonskin, which bestowed upon the wearer all the defensive advantages of the Dragon without the social drawbacks which being a Dragon usually caused.

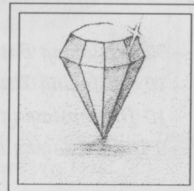
Dragonskin Armour	+0 Dragonskin
Feadil's Bladewall	+20 Dragonskin
Bladebane	+30 chainmail
Bowbane	+25 chainmail shirt



THE GEMS OF MALELDIL

The third most famous Elven smith was Maleldil, the finest worker of the power of gems. Her greatest piece was the Diamond Star, a talisman which gave the wearer total immunity to the effects of fire. It is, alas, believed to have been destroyed by the Dragon of Mount Fang, who feared its power. The Ruby Star, its lesser sister, still exists for certain.

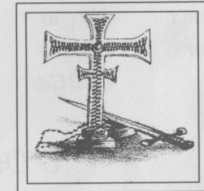
Diamond Star	+100 to fire resistance
Ruby Star	+20 to fire resistance
Emerald Star	+20 to gas resistance
Sapphire Star	+20 to lightning resistance
Maleldil's Gem	+15 to all magic



HOLY WEAPONS

Edmund of Westhaven was a Human cleric who founded the Church of Man, a religious order based on a fanatical hatred of all things non-Human. It was for some time very popular and developed a huge following: the power of the prayers of most of Humanity was channelled through his hands, such that his blessings were of great strength and his curses filled their victims with awe. It is said that it is his blessing which still lingers in the sword known as Peacebringer, a fabled holy weapon which has brought eternal rest to many a wayward soul. Since the fall of Old Adanost, it has been used in many crusades to free the Bloodwastes of the undead spirits of those who perished in the Dragonfire. Despite these efforts, the Plain remains a place of ghosts.

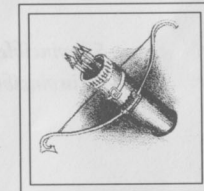
Peacebringer	+30 Holy
Repentance	+10 Holy
Absolution	+0 Holy
Holy Necklace	+10 vs monsters
Magicbane	+10 vs magic
Faith	Does nothing



LONGBOWS

The Green Hunter was a Human magician of some standing who studied with the Elves and learned much of their craft. He shaped many fine longbows, including Vilira's bow, which was used in the slaying of Glaswen.

Vilira's Bow	+20 Longbow
The Hunter's Bow	+10 Longbow, +30 vs monsters
Greensfletch	+0 Bow, +20 vs monsters



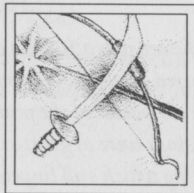
ORC WEAPONRY

The Orcs have produced few great artificers, and those that they have spawned have specialised in weapons of destruction. They generally favoured the scimitar as a melee weapon and the heavy crossbow for ranged combat. Headbringer, Skullsplitter and Throatmangler are among the more imaginative and graphic names given to these weapons: they have their place. Orc mages tended to specialise in the manipulation of poisonous gases (and still do so), and so the Orcish Battle Wands that survive are usually of the gas-throwing variety. The most infamous of these was Deathbreath, which was employed in many great battles.

Headbringer	+20
Skullsplitter	+15

Throatmangler	+15
Gizzard Jobber	+10
Spiney Elfslicer	+10

Elf Shafter	+20
Grum's Bow	+15
Geek Bow	+10
Dwarf Nailer	+10

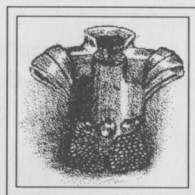


Orcish Wand	+20 Gas
Skirmisher Wand	+40 Gas
Orcish Battle Wand	+60 Gas
Orcish Rankbuster	+80 Gas
Warmaster	+100 Gas

OTHER ARTIFACTS

There are a few other legendary artifacts whose makers remain unknown, and whose name is drawn from the reputations of their wielders. Dogrin was a Dwarf whose father was killed by an Orcish arrow in the 7th Battle of Angaglir. He became so obsessed by the danger of crossbow bolts that he commissioned a set of armour to make such attacks a thing of the past. Naugar, then the King of the Dwarves, was so impressed by the results that he commissioned the still unknown smith to create an even better suit for himself.

Dogrin's Armour	+5 invincible vs arrows
Naugar's Armour	+30 invincible vs arrows



A further unique item is the armour of the Brown Mage, which consists of a leather suit covering the wearer from head to foot. It magically provides him air to breathe and so renders him immune to gas attacks; it also means that the wearer cannot drown. However, the armour is so heavy that swimming is rendered impossible, making it a dubious advantage to possess such a suit.

Brown Mage's Armour	+5 invincible vs gas
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The origin of Elrin's hunting bow is similarly anonymous, but its effectiveness against some of the more warped creatures of the land is legendary.

Elrin's Hunting Bow	+15, +30 vs monsters
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MUNDANE ITEMS

These are items of varying power fashioned by unknown weaponsmiths in times long past.

Dwarven Breastplate	+25 Breastplate
Dwarven Plate Armour	+30 Plate Armour
Dwarven Chainmail	+15 Chainmail
Dwarven Chain Shirt	+10 Chain Shirt
Dwarven Battleaxe	+10 Battleaxe
Dwarven Runeaxe	+15 Battleaxe
Dwarven Crossbow	+10 Crossbow
Dwarven Heavy Crossbow	+15 Crossbow

Elven Platemail	+20 Platemail
Elven Breastplate	+15 Breastplate
Elven Chainmail	+10 Chainmail
Elven Chainshirt	+5 Chain Shirt
Elven Longsword	+10 Longsword
Elven Runesword	+15 Longsword
Elven Bow	+20 Bow
Superior Bow	+5 Bow
Fire Ring	+10 vs fire
Lightning Ring	+10 vs lightning
Lesser Battle Ring	+10 Ring of Battle
Ruby Necklace	+5 vs fire
Emerald Necklace	+5 vs gas
Sapphire Necklace	+5 vs lightning

Orcish Leather Jerkin	+5 Jerkin
Orcish Leather Armour	+10 Leather Armour
Orcish Battle Armour	+20 Leather Armour
Orcish Bolt Thrower	+5 Crossbow
Orcish Heavy Bolter	+10 Crossbow
Orcish Scimitar	+5 Scimitar
Orcish Battle Blade	+10 Scimitar
Masher	+15 Club

Blue Steel Broadsword	+5 Broadsword
Black Steel Broadsword	+10 Broadsword

Magic is after all magic. The true power of the magical items described above is that they enhance not only the powers of the wielder, but also those of his followers. So if a wizard wields the wand "Firefist", not only does he cast balls of fire, but the arrows of his followers also turn to fire. This has given magic greater importance in the battles of past times, and makes it invaluable to you.

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