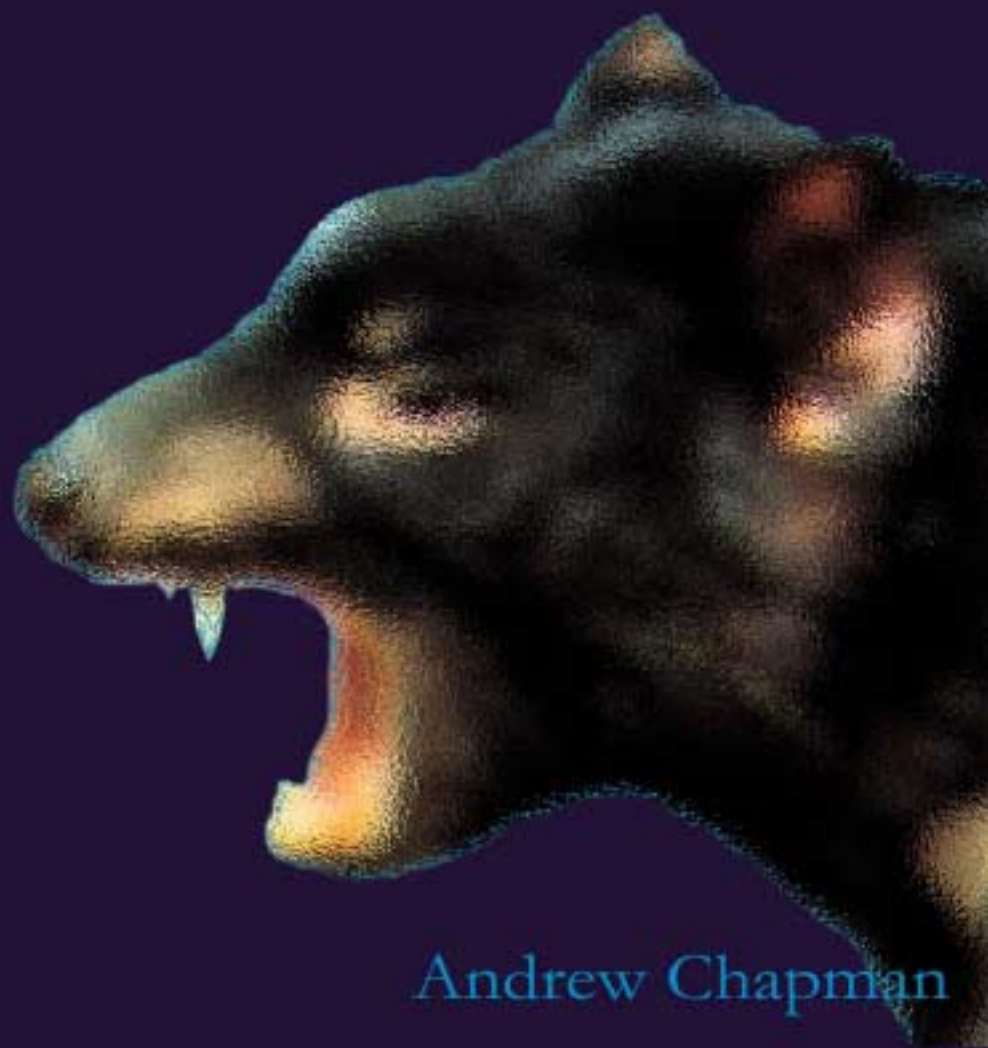
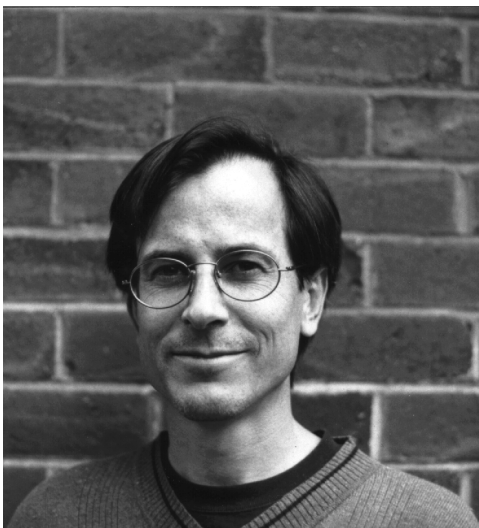


A Science Fiction Gamebook Adventure

# INVADERS



Andrew Chapman



Andrew Chapman has most recently published the fantasy novel *Ashkar the Magnificent*, of which an excerpt is included at this end of this electronic book. He is also the author of five fantasy books in Puffin's highly popular *Fighting Fantasy* series, namely *Space Assassin*, *The Rings of Kether*, *Seas of Blood* and, with Martin Allen, the two volume *Clash of the Princes*. These books have been translated into numerous foreign languages and were published in the United States by Dell. Amongst other short stories, he has also contributed the children's tales *The Drawing of Ixt* and *Rostgoblin Road* to Addison Wesley Longman's *Spinouts* fantasy series.

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# INVADERS

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## **Introduction**

You are one of those rough and ready characters who survive on the geographical fringes of society: in your case, the desert and marginal lands of outback New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia. Your territory is immense and your business, for the moment, is that of a travelling bush doctor and dentist – out here the distinction is blurred and your duties are dictated more by the demands of the moment than the dictums of the AMA.

It is in this role that you arrive in the tiny sheep town of Cabralowie and find yourself confronted by a strangeness that explodes beyond control....

## **Cabralowie**

Cabralowie is a scattered and remote town that you have just added to your territory. As such you are only vaguely familiar with the town's thirty or so inhabitants. There is Old Ces the retired shearer whose false teeth you have repaired and are now returning, Max the pig shooter, Flash the policeman, and Agnes the postmistress. These people you have met. The others are largely unknown.

Your arrival starts in normalcy but things will rapidly change. To help you to cope there are a few things you should know:

## **Special Skills**

To help you survive the following 24 hours and to reflect the long history of diverse occupations and activities of a

seasoned fringe dweller you can select *three* special skills from the following list:

STRENGTH  
SPRINTING  
CRICKET PLAYING  
EXTRA STAMINA  
KEEN EYE  
FAST REFLEXES  
BUSH SKILLS  
SHOOTING  
FLYING  
WINE MAKING

Keep a note of which skills you have chosen as once you start you may not change your selection.

### **Carrying Things**

There will be times when you will need to carry weapons, keys and other objects about with you. All objects that can be carried will have a WEIGHT written next to them. Whenever you come across one of these objects you may 'take' it but be sure to keep a record of its WEIGHT.

The total combined WEIGHT that you may carry is *five*. If ever you pick up an object and find yourself carrying more than five WEIGHT points then you must instantly discard one or more objects to reduce the number of WEIGHT points carried to five or less.

You can throw away anything you are carrying at any time.

As you are a bush medic you start your adventure with a suitable piece of equipment: a Medical Kit whose WEIGHT = 1. Make a note of this and any subsequent finds or losses.

### **Wounds**

As the seemingly normal environment around you is liable to become suddenly dangerous you must expect some physical damage. This is reflected by a loss of WOUND points. You start the book with a total of *five* WOUND points which, if you are hurt, will be reduced. If the number of WOUND points you possess ever reaches zero then you have died and your adventure is over. Keep a record of the current status of your WOUND points.

### **Glossary**

A number of possibly unfamiliar words and terms are used by Australians and are explained below:

**ANZAC** ~ Australian and New Zealand Army Corp, a military force identified with the first and second world wars.

**BONNET** ~ the front part of the car that covers the engine, also sometimes known as a hood.

**FIBRO** ~ fibreboard, once made of asbestos. Typically grey and often used to make cheap houses or holiday homes, hence ‘fibro shack’.

**GRAZIER** ~ a farmer who keeps cattle or sheep.



**KELPIE** ~ a medium-sized breed of dog with short hair. Noted for their intelligence, they are often used as working dogs on farms. A grazier's best friend.

**MALLEE** ~ a small outback tree, but also used as a word to denote an area where these trees grow, such as 'The Mallee', a broad area of South Australia. Remarkable for its fantastically gnarled roots, which also make excellent firewood.

**RAP** ~ to spin the wheels of a car and cause a screeching sound and smoke. Also known as a burnout or 'to burn rubber'.

**SEMITRAILER** ~ a large articulated truck or lorry. A double B semitrailer possesses two trailers. In the outback such vehicles can often have more than two trailers and are known as 'road trains'.

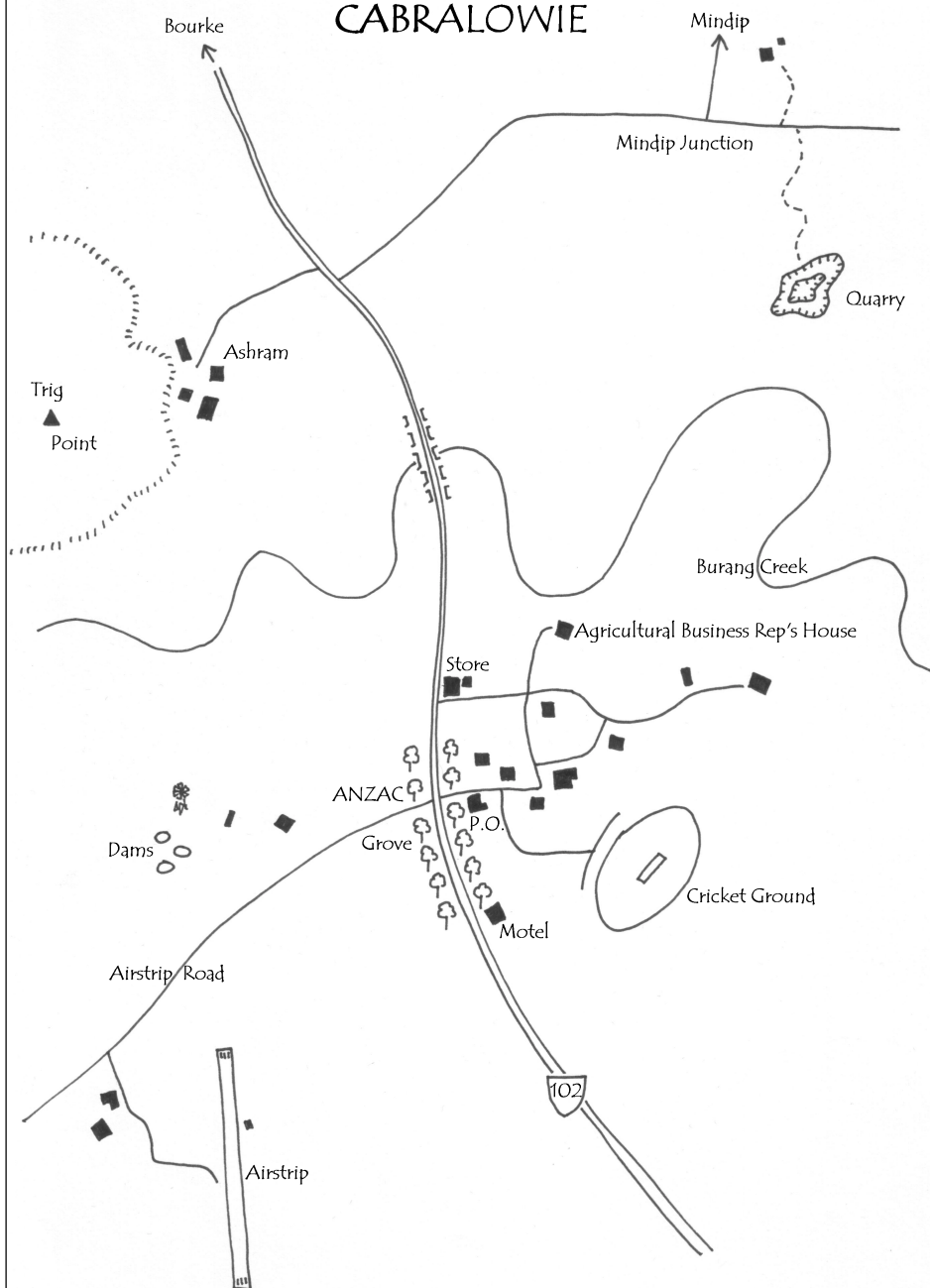
**SHEARER** ~ a person who cuts the wool from sheep.

**TRUCKIE** ~ a truck driver. The same thing as a lorry driver or a trucker.

**UTE** ~ utility truck: a sedan-sized car with a tray top instead of a rear passenger compartment. The same thing as a pickup truck.

**YABBIE** ~ a fresh water crayfish, normally about hand-sized. Quite delicious.

# CABRALLOWIE



## **The Arrival**

The highway thumps along beneath your battered and dilapidated car, speedo on 110, tyres rumbling on the rough bitumized surface, headlights cutting a pallid yellow light through the desert night. This is your third hour out on the empty road. Bourke lies hundreds of kilometres to the rear and now, shifting restlessly in your seat, you begin to feel the weight of fatigue settling on eyes and shoulders.

Perhaps because of this fatigue you miss the first sign of the strangeness. A kangaroo flicks by through your high beam, its head and limbs lolling at some impossible angle, something hideous frozen to its back. It is gone, the numbness of the road letting you see but not register its weirdness. The only thought in your mind is fixed on the lights of your destination coming into view ahead: Cabralowie – and rest.

After checking in at the town's only motel, and while slowly eating a late meal, you miss the second warning of the impending strangeness: a travelling salesman, drunk and nervous, sidles over to your table in the tiny motel restaurant, excuses himself, and begins to complain about the unusual scuttling not-quite-possum sounds coming from under the floor in his room. 'Always thought the little mongrels lived in the roof!' he curses, 'and I've never heard them hiss before. At least, not like this.' He shivers as he pulls away from the table. 'Gives me the creeps.'

After he has gone you spend a few moments pondering tomorrow's engagements: a couple of checkups on some of the town's children, a set of new teeth for Old Ces, and probably a filling or two. Should be an ordinary sort of day, you think. Tomorrow, unbeknownst to you, the strangeness will be here and you will be lucky if you manage to survive, let alone indulge in an ordinary day. Peaceful, in ignorance of your deadly peril, you retire to your room to dream dentist dreams without so much as a thought for the scuttling sounds which will take the drunken business rep away forever or the twisted kangaroo which waits out in the desert for your eventual return.

## 1

The morning is bright and lazy, with a hot sun climbing over the weathered tin roofs of the town. Stepping out of the room to stand beside your car, you stretch and yawn, before noticing that one of your tyres has deflated, the obvious cause being a broken bottle underneath. With a shrug you step forward, kick the tyre, and then continue to the boot, rummaging through the clutter for the jack. Cursing yourself for not noticing the glass when you parked, you set about replacing the wheel. When finished will you:

Go to the garage to have the tyre repaired? Turn to 111

Go to the motel reception and pay your bill? Turn to 178

Set about the business of the day by either:

Going to the hippy commune to see if any of the kids there need a check-up? Turn to 233

Delivering Old Ces' new dentures? Turn to 329

## 2

The eldest son scrambles into a jeep. You fling yourself into the back – landing between a shotgun and a case of whisky. The car starts up and flies down the dusty road toward the centre of town. After you have covered about two hundred yards you are attacked by a couple of cars that had been lurking out of sight in a nearby hay shed. They race up beside your vehicle, gunning their motors and kicking up clouds of red dust as they clash fenders with the jeep. If you have a Can of Kero, you could make a Molotov Cocktail to throw at one of your assailants (turn to 138); otherwise, you could shoot them with the shotgun (turn to 110) or make Molotov Cocktails out of the whisky (turn to 173).

## 3

The coffee smells delicious so you agree to a cup and turn towards the rear of the shop. If you have a KEEN EYE, turn to 62, otherwise turn to 89.

## 4

You hastily stack a bit of furniture against the door then exit the hotel. Turn to 99.

## 5

There is an octagonal door in the western wall and two corridors running north-south as exits. Will you go:

North?	Turn to 389
South?	Turn to 182
Through the door?	Turn to 313

## 6

After you have called out a couple of times, Ces appears from behind a rusty water tank where he admits he'd been having 'a bit of a snooze.' You describe to him your monstrous attacker. He doesn't seem surprised, and tips his head as if to say, 'I told you so.' Believing in safety in numbers, the two of you decide to check out the other end of the water pipe. Turn to 220.

## 7

You open the door and step into a small, dark room. A tiny cry of surprise escapes your lips and then a scream as the floor suddenly gapes open to drop you down a tremendously deep pit. The fall seems to take forever in

## 8—10

pitch darkness before it ends at high speed far, far below.  
Your adventure is over.

### 8

‘We’ve got to escape,’ you implore, grabbing the man by the arm, trying to save him from himself. He is a belligerent fellow, though, and not used to madmen telling him what to do. Touching him is a mistake. He spins and plants a punch on your nose that sends you reeling backwards bloody and stunned – lose 1 WOUND point. He stamps back toward the cab. Turn to 25.

### 9

You enter a Y-junction: honeycomb tunnels proceed to the north, south-west, and south-east. There is little light and the only sound is a terrifying crashing as tunnels collapse under millions of tons of earth and rock. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT.

Will you go:

North?

Turn to 24

South-West?

Turn to 41

South-East?

Turn to 67

### 10

You head towards the nearest house, jogging to conserve energy. At the front gate you are intercepted by a wizened creature who you recognize after a moment as being the local agricultural business rep. He eyes you suspiciously while pointing an antique .303 rifle threateningly at your midriff. After a moment’s careful scrutiny he lowers the gun. ‘There’s been a few too many strange vermin trying to get into my property in the last

half hour. Guess I'm getting a bit too suspicious.' He explains how he's tried calling for help, but no one seems to hear, and now even his radiotelephone is on the blink. Suddenly, a shadow passes over and from above you hear a rush of air and a creak of pinion. A huge bird of prey, eyes invisible and talons dripping a menacing black fluid, is diving toward you. The rep scuttles off into the shelter of his veranda. Will you follow him (turn to 362) or stand and fight (turn to 399)?

## 11

Cautiously, you reach deep into the hole. Your hand closes on something smooth and round. When you draw it forth you find in your hand a blue sphere crisscrossed with yellow lines and stamped with a pattern that looks like the number 76. An alien egg! Its WEIGHT is 1. Turn to 29.

## 12

The door opens into a sitting room. Like the entrance, it slams shut behind you and bulges in its frame. After a menacing pause everything in the room bursts into action at once. The ceiling extrudes a dozen wicked-looking blades, screws and spikes, and begins to slowly bulge down towards you. As if this isn't enough, all the furniture in the room rushes across the floor in a great banging of timber and squealing of casters as they jostle each other in their eagerness to throw themselves at you. A small coffee table manages to bounce between a rolling two-seater and an easy chair to be the first to carom into you. The nasty little thing springs a brace of curved razors and slashes you in the calves – lose 1



## 13—15

WOUND point. Realising your peril, you leap on its wooden tray, jump onto the two-seater, and bounce over to the clear side of the room. If you have any of the following items, you may employ one in your defence, otherwise turn to 327.

Shotgun	Turn to 142
Axe or Chainsaw	Turn to 185
Fire Fighting Equipment	Turn to 269

### 13

The corridor leads you to a small room from which exits yet another passageway. However, some bizarre force in this room exerts a disorienting influence on both you and your compass such that you cannot be sure which corridor is which, nor which directions they head in. Will you proceed down the nearest exit (turn to 132) or the other (turn to 154)?

### 14

Several suitably sized rocks lay scattered about but your aim is woeful and the spider-things easily avoid the projectiles. Their hisses are like laughter as they prance all the more energetically. The rain of boulders becomes heavier. Finally a massive rock hits you in the back and smashes you to the ground. Instantly a dozen other missiles find their target with horrible effect. Your adventure is over.

### 15

The door takes you into a small, featureless room filled with a peculiar odour. Nothing happens and there are no

other exits so you retreat the way you entered only to find that the scenery has altered. Turn to 249.

## 16

The tunnel takes you to a dismal scene: a large party of Fuhuruh block the passage as they commit ritual suicide. Alongside, a small machine – a trumpet on legs – plays a mournful dirge in accompaniment. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. You must turn about and return the way you came. Turn to 275.

## 17

The house is one of those old colonial places with a galvanised iron roof and a wide veranda. High wooden fences and the odd tree delineate a dry yard. A large number of boar and fox carcasses hang from a string of posts. This is obviously the residence of the local pig shooter: Max the Turk. As you approach the house you see that it has been the site of a ferocious battle: pools of grey ooze abound and the yard is littered with bizarre machines alongside the heaped bodies of nightmare creatures not of this world. You enter the gate and cautiously approach the front door. As you step under the veranda, three men – Max and two of his sons – leap forth and douse you with petrol from a four gallon bucket. They wait expectantly for a moment, watching, then greet you warmly whilst apologising for the petrol. ‘Don’t mind the fumes. Destroys the buggers,’ Max says with a sweep of the arm at the bodies in the yard. ‘A bloody dangerous practise, but can’t be too cautious. For instance, the government bloke who picks up me skins comes out here this morning and goes straight for me

throat!’ They tell you that they’re just about out of petrol and ammunition and that they intend to split up, try to reach the highway, and then get out of town. Just as Max is suggesting that you accompany his youngest son, a terrific shaking goes through the house followed by a great up-thrust of writhing branches and vegetable limbs smashing through the floor boards. They seize you and carrying you aloft, pinning you against the ceiling. Somehow you struggle free from the tangle, leaving behind everything you are carrying that has a WEIGHT greater than 1. Dropping to the floor, you pull a muscle in your arm; lose any STRENGTH ability that you might have. ‘Run!’ Max yells as the entire house begins to disintegrate from the combined attacks of even more of the tree monsters coming through the floor. Will you run with:

The ELDEST son?

Turn to 2

Max?

Turn to 44

The YOUNGEST son?

Turn to 81

## 18

In a mad rush, you thrust the barrel of the gun against the creature’s body. It immediately coils a few tentacles around your wrist, causing you unbelievable pain - lose 1 WOUND point. You pull the trigger. The blast tears the creature from both your hand and the lawyer’s neck and flings it into the back of the plane. The lawyer collapses. If you have FLYING experience, turn to 216, otherwise turn to 315.

**19**

You enter a small room from which two corridors lead. You can go either south (turn to 394) or west (turn to 59).

**20**

The owner leads you around to the back of the garage toward a small tool shed in which he has locked his dog. ‘Seems strange,’ he says, unbolting the door, ‘losing all its teeth. Must’ve done it on some wire.’ The door swings open to reveal a most peculiar looking animal: fur short and somehow slick, eyes seemingly all pupil, and – as the man says – not a tooth in its slack, drooling, mouth. Stooping forward to have a closer look sends the animal into a low hissing stance. Convulsions roil along its body like tidal waves as a warning wail issues from its throat. Weird! You retreat with the owner outside where you hypothesize that the animal might have a dangerous and exotic disease. Will you re-enter the shed to have a closer examination of the dog (turn to 137) or recommend that ‘Flash’ the local copper should be sent for so that he can deal with the crisis (turn to 165)?

**21**

You use the Lock and Chain to secure the door, at least temporarily, against your pursuers who – outraged – start pounding against it with some heavy object. At your feet lies a hand-sized red hemisphere, indented with the digits ‘196’, which you may take if you wish (its WEIGHT = ½). If you have another of these, add the digits indented on the two together and turn to the page that equals the total; otherwise, you leave the hotel. Turn to 99.

**22**

As you are completely defenceless and have nowhere to run or hide, the advancing Fuhuruh soldiers have little trouble in catching and executing you. Your adventure is over.

**23**

Your encounter with the obviously inhuman Flash has been too strange. In a state of confused panic, you flee across a narrow, scrubby field. A motor starts with a roar behind. Twisting as you run, you see the driverless police car bucketing after you across the dusty ground. Gunning its engine, it picks up speed. Will you stand where you are, in an attempt to defend yourself (turn to 318), or keep running (turn to 382)?

**24**

You proceed along the tunnel but find that falling rubble and the bodies of half-formed adolescent Fuhuruh have blocked it. There is nothing to do but turn back and head south. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. Turn to 9.

**25**

You scuttle away. The truckie strolls up to his door and grabs the handle. Instantly, a steel tentacle curls out of the driver side window and coils around his neck. With a strangled cry the man is dragged into the dark cabin through the open window. The last you see of him are his legs thrashing in the air before he disappears in one final jerk.

A few moments later a pair of sinister eyes, glowing red, appear over the dash and the truck roars into life. Gears crunch and the motor hammers as the vehicle begins to accelerate in a wide arc towards you. Will you take off across the surrounding flats (turn to 53) or stand and fight (turn to 78)?

## 26

If you have the quality of STRENGTH, turn to 130, otherwise turn to 295.

## 27

The door leads you into a large chamber with three deep niches set in one of the side walls. The contents are hidden from view. A slight rattling, perhaps of chains, is all you can hear. Will you inspect the:

First Niche?	Turn to 45
Second Niche?	Turn to 61
Third Niche?	Turn to 82

## 28

The shoots continue to twine over the bulldozer, surrounding and slithering into the cabin where they eagerly burrow into your vulnerable flesh. Trapped and defenceless, your adventure is over.

## 29

The room contains nothing of interest, so you return to the conveyor room where you discover the belts going in the opposite direction. You proceed across the room safely and head north up the corridor. Turn to 147.

**30**

‘Turn the valve, thanks, Ces,’ you call. He nods, walks along the top of the bank, and grabs the valve. Instantly, the clanging sounds stop. After a brief pause, during which Ces manages a quarter turn of the wheel, the pipe first shudders, then comes rippling out of the sand. It twists like a snake, the newly exposed end suddenly baring steel teeth in a strangely articulated jaw. With a rapid coiling motion it springs at Ces, bites, and then throws him at your feet. The old man, bleeding badly, staggers to his feet as the monstrous device rears into the air, readying itself to strike. Will you run up the bank into the trees (turn to 238) or along the river bed (turn to 262)?

**31**

Desperately, you look about for a suitable weapon, but it is too late: the bird swoops, lashes your head with its dripping talons and wheels off into the sky. A searing headache grips your skull – lose 1 WOUND point. Turn to 362.

**32**

The shop is tiny and has only two obvious exits: the front door, through which you entered, and a narrow opening into what appears to be a small back room. Will you run for the front door (turn to 79) or the other (turn to 328)?

**33**

You enter another Y-junction: honeycomb tunnels proceed to the south, north-east, and north-west. There is also a dying Fuhuruh here. Resembling a giant vegetable,

it considers you with lambent green eyes. Eventually it grunts and waves a leafy frond up the north-west passage. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. Will you go:

South?	Turn to 334
North-East?	Turn to 288
North-West?	Turn to 119

### 34

Running crouched, you circle behind the shop and then dash toward where your car sits beside the highway. Out of the corner of your eye you see that Flash, having run out of ammunition, has thrown his pistol to one side and taken up a pump-action shotgun from the back of his patrol car. You dive into your vehicle, fumble with the keys, and start the engine. In the rear view mirror you see the two men running toward the rear of your car. Will you slam the car into reverse (turn to 188) or take off forward at full speed (turn to 372)?

### 35

A fist-sized rock lies adjacent. Snatching it up, you hurl it with eye-blinking accuracy at the head of one of the spider-things. It tries to duck but instead tumbles stunned from the ledge to crash at your feet. Another rock and the second Fuhuruh joins it on the ground. The two creatures begin a furious process of reconstruction: their heads are split open but this has evidently only temporarily immobilized them because, as you watch, masses of tissue wave from the wounds and begin to knit skin and bone back together. Perhaps even more bizarrely, you suddenly notice that each creature is draped in a scaled



## 36–38

tunic with deep pockets on front and back. Will you risk looking in these pockets (turn to 90) or just make good your escape (turn to 139)?

### 36

As the sheep bound ferociously over the side of the tray top you smash them back with vicious blows from your weapon. The grazier aims steady shots from the other side of the vehicle while the dog savages anything else that gets through. Most of the sheep you hit fall thrashing to the ground, but oblivious to the most frightful wounds, instantly leap back into the fray. The fight is long and all three of you suffer – lose 2 WOUND points. Eventually, though, the sheep are repulsed. As a single mob they suddenly turn and drag their beaten woolly hides back down the road, disappearing around the corner. Turn to 343.

### 37

You step into a small, complicated room with numerous buttresses and niches, all executed with the greatest precision. In one niche on the western side is an octagonal door while open corridors pierce the southern and eastern walls. Will you proceed:

South?	Turn to 313
East?	Turn to 389
Through the door?	Turn to 19

### 38

After you reach the ashram and drop the hippy into the arms of his wife and friends, it becomes apparent that the man needs urgent medical attention to recover from his

severe wounds. There are only two radios in Cabralowie that are suitable for calling the Flying Doctor: one in Flash the policeman's car and the other at the residence of the local Agricultural Business rep (who lives just across the highway). Will you contact Flash (turn to 91) or the rep (turn to 10)?

### 39

For you there is no escape! The hive continues to collapse and though you can escape the Fuhuruh you cannot escape being buried alive. Your adventure is over.

### 40

The door leads into a desolate room. There is only a hand-sized, red hemisphere — indented with the digits '200' — lying in the middle of the floor. Soft scuttling sounds break out in the ceiling, as if half a dozen possums were playing football up there, and pinpoint eyes glare balefully down at you from several dark holes. A sinister whispering starts up, although you can make no sense of it. You may pick up the hemisphere if you wish — its WEIGHT =  $\frac{1}{2}$  — and then, if you haven't already, proceed either through the other door (turn to 12), or down the corridor (turn to 96).

41

You enter another Y-junction: honeycomb tunnels proceed to the south, north-east and north-west. Large boulders dot the floor, and you are forced to leap a small chasm to continue on your way. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. Will you go:

South?	Turn to 86
North-East?	Turn to 9
North-West?	Turn to 288

42

When you stand on the accelerator, pressing with all your might, the car undergoes an instant metamorphosis: a pair of rocket engines erupt from the boot while stubby, black wings fold out of the rear and front fenders. With an out-of-control roar the engines ignite, throwing the car through the air in a screaming arc over the town and then down, crashing into the sandy bed of the Burang Creek. The impact rips you from the grasp of the metal arms and pitches you through the windscreen into the outside world – lose 2 WOUND points. Dazed, you clamber out of the creek into a wide paddock. Turn to 10.

43

The corridor terminates at a corner; another passage heads off at right angles. Will you go south (turn to 63) or east (turn to 84)?

44

Max takes off across a wide field that lies between his property and the rest of the town. You follow close on his heels, glancing back at the destruction being wreaked

upon his house. ‘Oh, no!’ cries Max, as the ground beneath the two of you collapses away, pitching you straight into a subterranean bowl with smooth metal sides. Triangular plates with cutting edges that glint wickedly in the dim light, spring out of the rim and begin to spin down the sides of the bowl in wide spirals. They will cut you to pieces in a matter of moments. Max quickly recovers his wits. Raising his 10 gauge, he begins to blast everything in sight: triangles and bowl. There is an explosion followed by a prodigious amount of smoke. ‘Come on,’ hisses Max as he drags you through a jagged hole into a rough-hewn passage. Another two machines advance toward you. The larger, three metres high, looks like a tracked garbage disposal unit, a mobile mouth; the smaller, a football sized sphere, is simply a levitating eye sporting a long antenna. Max raises his shotgun again, but there comes the loud click of the hammer falling on an empty chamber. ‘Wouldn’t you know it,’ he growls, looking at the useless weapon with scorn. If you have any of the items below, you may use one, otherwise you’re going to have to think of an alternative, and quickly (turn to 225).

Pistol	Turn to 114
Can of Kero	Turn to 149
Axe	Turn to 181

## 45

In the back of this niche, chained and bloody, is one of Cabralowie’s residents: Max the Pigkiller. He seems definitely the worse for wear and can only signal to you weakly. Will you assist him (turn to 106), or inspect

another of the niches: either the second (turn to 61) or the third (turn to 82)?

**46**

Using a wild, twisting action you break free of the seat, but the effort has cost you dearly. Somewhere, deep in your body, some vital organ has been severely strained — lose 1 WOUND point. Turn to 148.

**47**

You jump into the co-pilot's seat, tentatively taking hold of the controls. You pull a bit here, push a bit there, then die as the aircraft hurtles into the ground at 160 miles per hour. Your adventure is over.

**48**

When you step on the conveyor the black material flows over your feet and pins you fast: trapped! Steadily, you are carried towards the mechanical alien. The device continues to ignore you. By a sheer stroke of good timing, you sweep past it as it pursues its mindless stomping from left to right. When you reach the other end of the room the conveyor releases you with a squishing sound. The door at this end of the room leads into a dark box, empty but for a deep hole in the centre of the floor. Will you reach into this hole (turn to 11) or leave it alone (turn to 29)?

**49**

In one athletic bound you fly over the counter, landing on the dog and bringing it to the ground. It makes no sound and seems to be unhurt. Instantly, though, it rotates its

head and extends its rope-like tongue to seize you by the wrist. The sensation is hideous, being like acid and knives – lose 1 WOUND point. Dropping the shovel you wrench your arm away and retreat to the other side of the counter. Scruff leaps to his feet and trots away into a room at the back of the store. Turn to 364.

**50**

The tunnel continues on an irregular level for a great distance before engaging in a ninety-degree turn. You can go either north (turn to 177) or east (turn to 159).

**51**

Dropping to your knee, you take careful aim and squeeze off several shots at the bird. It explodes in a cloud of feathers. As the shotgun is out of ammunition now, you throw it away. Then, you notice the bird's carcass lying on the ground nearby. Small worm-like limbs have exuded from its wounds and are busy reconstructing the creature: extruding little feathers which slowly unroll, like drying butterfly wings; pulling the buckshot scars together; and, when you get too close in your amazement, spitting poison at you. Turn to 362.

**52**

Turn to 400.

**53**

If you have Max's youngest son with you, turn to 160, otherwise turn to 102.

**54**

The pipe hangs above your head. After a few unsuccessful leaps, it proves to be beyond your reach. Meanwhile, the yabbies continue to snap and bite, severely injuring you – lose 1 WOUND point. Giving up on the pipe, you swim for the bank. Turn to 95.

**55**

As you scuttle behind the bar, Max leaps onto it, grabs a stool and tosses it with a crash through a nearby window. With the creatures hard on his heels he jumps to a table then through to the outside world. Several beasts follow in hot pursuit. Meanwhile, you have crawled into the lounge bar, which appears devoid of all life. If you have a Lock and Chain, turn to 21, otherwise turn to 4.

**56**

The wings flit close by. The filament trails like a great, white rope. If you have a KEEN EYE, turn to 207, otherwise turn to 179.

**57**

You extract the Grenade from a pocket. Whilst arming it, you notice that two buttons are set in one end: a red one and a blue one. Which will you press, the red (turn to 186) or the blue (turn to 352)?

**58**

The two of you flop across the floor, your attacker attempting to envelop your face and you fighting to twist free. With a solid thump you roll into the Carrot, knocking it face first into the machine. With a powerful

shudder the device proceeds to gobble up the vegetable. The Carrot keens horribly. Flicking its tail from side to side, it grabs you with its feet as it is rapidly drawn into the mincer. Only by the most extraordinary luck are you saved: the Carrot's feet have actually taken hold of your attacker, ripping it from your body, and the two of them quickly disappear from sight to the accompaniment of a loud *chop, chop, chop* ....

The door out is welded to its frame. To escape, you must climb through the pantry window. This is such a tight fit that you must abandon any items you are carrying whose WEIGHT is greater than 1. Turn to 169.

## 59

You enter a room constructed of neatly cut stone blocks, stacked regularly and formed into arched openings where two passageways lead into darkness. You can go either south (turn to 258) or east (turn to 19).

## 60

You angle slightly to the right, immediately hearing a loud report and then feeling a stinging in your back. You've been shot! Fortunately, only a few buckshot pellets fired at extreme range have hit you and the wound is neither fatal nor disfiguring: lose 1 WOUND point. Altering course back to the left, you continue to sprint across the open field. Turn to 217.

## 61

The second niche contains the apparently unconscious form of one of Cabralowie's residents: the Post Mistress.



Her breath is incredibly shallow and her complexion an alarming alabaster. Will you assist her (turn to 134) or, if you haven't already, inspect another of the niches: either the first (turn to 45) or the third (turn to 82)?

**62**

Out of the corner of your eye you see the tail of a snake slowly disappearing around the edge of the Post Office counter, endangering Agnes! Close at hand is a long letter knife. Will you act instantly by stabbing the snake (turn to 124) or be more cautious and alert the woman to her imminent danger (turn to 303).

**63**

You follow the passage into a cavernous room whose surfaces bulge inward, quivering as if ready to explode. There are three corridors leading from this room. Will you go:

North?	Turn to 43
South?	Turn to 330
East?	Turn to 101

**64**

The two of you stumble down the hill, with the man leaning on you for support. As soon as you enter the corn field you are set upon by a creature both mystifying and terrifying: a man of corn, looking like a raffia-work human, steps out of cover and seizes the hippy. Long tendrils shoot out of the corn creature's hands and body, twining around the unfortunate man and burying their tips under his skin, eliciting the most horrible screams. Will you try to tear the hippy free with your bare hands

(turn to 314) or look about for a suitable weapon (turn to 395)?

## 65

The Medical Bag contains a number of items: ethanol, anaesthetics, small tools, and numerous papers – nothing immediately useful. While you fumble around in the interior of your case, trying to decide what to use and how, the car approaches with increasing speed. At the last moment you realize your peril. In a complete flap you throw the entire bag plus contents at the speeding vehicle before leaping to one side. The bag catches on the grille, scattering bottles, phials, and folders over the windscreen. Every breakable item smashes into a million pieces. Instantly, the car collapses dramatically into its constituent parts: a fender here, motor there, a couple of wheels rolling away across the field. A cloud of dust rises into the air. Stupefied, you leave your bag in the wreckage and wander off. Soon you become aware of a choice of directions: the road to Mindip lies northwards (turn to 241) while Cabralowie is to the south (turn to 10).

## 66

Leaping from the cabin, you run over the back of the dozer and slash a hole through the twisting shoots, which almost grow faster than you can cut them. With a short run up, you jump to freedom and hasten back to the house. If you haven't already, you could use the Chainsaw (turn to 259) or the Fire Fighting Equipment (turn to 287).

## 67

You enter another Y-junction. This one is in the process of rapid disintegration: parts of the walls have slumped and there is a continuous rain of gravel and boulders from the ceiling. One of these strikes you – lose 1 WOUND point. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. Will you go:

South?	Turn to 152
North-East?	Turn to 275
North-West?	Turn to 9

## 68

Opening the door, you lean into the car and take the papers in hand. Suddenly, something strikes you in the back, knocking you to across the seats. The door slams as the engine starts. With a crunch of gears and a squeal of tyres, the car hurtles out of the car park. Sitting up, you find yourself behind the wheel of a driverless car that is accelerating wildly up Highway 102, toward the centre of town. A pair of articulated steel limbs snakes out from beneath the dash and seizes you by the arms, pinning you to the seat. This is all a bit sudden and bizarre, but you somehow manage to retain enough sense to try to keep yourself alive: will you try to use your body weight to wrestle free (turn to 26) or try to snatch your arms out of the iron grip (turn to 130)?

## 69

When you step on the conveyor the black material flows over your feet and pins you fast. You can't move! Steadily, you are carried forward on an intercept course with the machine. When you are inexorably dragged into

the alien it explodes in an insane fit and slashes you to pieces. Your adventure is over.

### 70

As the sheep bound eagerly over the side of the tray top you spray them with clouds of vile toxins, but all to no effect. You cast the spray aside. Turn to 393.

### 71

You run, but too slowly! The wings accelerate with rapid hawk-like strokes and dart into you. The collision knocks you off balance. You fall, skid, grapple with the edge of the bridge, then plummet to your doom below. Your adventure is over.

### 72

The truck rattles off down the road. Flash starts the car and repeats his request, 'Get in the car.' His irritation is obvious, since he refuses to look at you, even from behind his silvered sunglasses. Will you jump in next to him (turn to 183) or offer to walk back to town so as not to inconvenience him (turn to 298)?

### 73

To your dismay, you find that the jerry can has fallen over during takeoff and leaked its contents all over the back of the plane. The stench of fumes is overpowering. You're desperate though. Seizing the can, you return to the cockpit to find the pilot still struggling desperately with his attacker. Through the windscreen you watch with horror at the heart-stopping velocity with which the ground is approaching. Gathering your nerve, you shake

the open can over the struggling pair, but only a few drops fall out, mainly landing on the pilot. But a dribble falls upon a tentacle, which instantly explodes into flame then shrivels to a tiny nugget. The monster, shrieking, retreats into the back of the plane, relinquishing its hold on the pilot, who immediately collapses. The aircraft is out of control. If you have FLYING experience, turn to 216, otherwise turn to 47.

## 74

You finally make it to the edge of Highway 102. Cabralowie lies about a kilometre to the north while to the south marginal grazing land stretches as far as you can see. However, you notice a large double-B semi-trailer approaching the town up the highway, its driver utterly oblivious of the mortal danger ahead. As the truck draws closer, you step out onto the road and madly wave it down. Exhaust brakes hammer and gears grate as the behemoth comes to an unsteady halt. The driver climbs angrily from the cab and marches at you. A hysterical exchange follows as you try to warn him about the dangers in the town. The man takes you for a complete loony and begins to edge warily back toward his truck. To your dismay, you see several metal darts fly from the roadside scrub to bury themselves soundlessly in the side of the truck: assimilating and leaving no trace. This can mean only one thing. 'Run for your life!' you cry, but the truckie stamps back to the cab, unaware of his peril. Will you try to stop him (turn to 8) or run for cover (turn to 25)?

## 75

The door opens into a long tunnel of roughly blasted rock that spirals up toward the surface. You follow it eagerly and all your hopes are realized when you finally break free into the cool air of the nighttime bush. After a couple of refreshing breaths you take stock of your position: to the west you can make out the dark shape of the trig point, so you figure you must be near the road to Mindip. To the east, only a hundred yards away, is what is obviously Ur-Sheriff Xox's spacecraft. As you approach the vessel you notice a blue field of energy hanging around its perimeter like a thin curtain. Only the multitudes of dead bugs that lie around its perimeter give any indication of its deadly function.

'Halt,' says a loud, artificial voice, 'is that you Xox?'

Will you try to pose as the Ur-Sheriff (turn to 113) or claim only to be his deputy (turn to 145)?

## 76

Pondering on the last few minutes' bizarre happenings, you slowly walk out the front of the store. Suddenly, a series of shrill screams and cries for help attract your attention. You rush over to see that the garage owner has recovered from his swoon and is attempting to murder his wife with his bare hands. He appears to have gone quite mad. Sweat pours from his contorted face and strange inhuman gurgles escape his lips as his wife calls to you in confusion and terror. Your car is parked nearby and from it you could fetch your Medical Kit to administer a sedative to the man (turn to 309), otherwise you could

## 77–80

just leap into the fray to try to physically separate the two (turn to 346).

### 77

When you look up from your fruitless endeavour to halt the vehicle, you notice that it is heading suicidally toward a large gum tree, intent on destroying both itself and you along with it. Seizing the steering wheel, you wrestle wildly with it to force the car to alter course. If you have the quality of STRENGTH, turn to 171, otherwise turn to 144.

### 78

If you have either of the weapons listed below, you may use one, otherwise you will have to run (turn to 53).

Pistol	Turn to 131
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Axe	Turn to 246
-----	-------------

### 79

You grab the door handle and receive a very nasty shock: several clamps extend from the locking mechanism and latch onto your wrist. Not only does the door not open, it proceeds to administer a painful electric shock to your hand! Only by dint of the most strenuous twisting, accompanied by prodigious screams of pain, do you finally manage to break free. Burn marks crisscross your hand – lose 1 WOUND point. Turn to 328.

### 80

After only a short distance the tunnel undergoes a right angle turn. You can go either south (turn to 240) or east (turn to 97).

**81**

Max's youngest son heads south. You trot beside him, crossing wide fields of closely grazed land, and both surveying the surrounding countryside with suspicion. A couple of kilometres pass underfoot without you seeing anything more dangerous than a sparrow (but even then, can you be sure?) With the town safely skirted, you enter a paddock of waist-high Lucerne, tinder dry. Instantly you realise your mistake. The young man gives a sudden cry of pain and terror as masses of grassy tendrils twist from the soil and wrap themselves around his calves. The tips bury themselves deep under his skin and you watch in horror as blood pumps out of his body and into the thirsty weed. Out of the corner of your eye, you see a thin pair of grassy stalks, each terminating in a small optic node, rise out of the lucerne to stare across at you. To free the boy, will you attack the tendrils (turn to 117) or the stalked eyes (turn to 235)?

**82**

This niche contains the unconscious form of the travelling salesman who spoke to you so nervously on your first night in Cabralowie about the noises coming from under his floor. He appears to be in a shocking condition. Will you assist him (turn to 157) or, if you haven't already, inspect another of the niches: either the first (turn to 45) or second (turn to 61)?

**83**

Stooping, you swing the shovel under the counter, eliciting a loud 'crack' and a startled cry. The dog shoots



## 84–86

out from cover, limping, and darts into a room out the back of the store. When you withdraw the shovel you notice it has become covered with a steaming, black substance totally unlike blood. Slowly it etches dark lines into the metal. Turn to 364.

### 84

You follow the corridor for only a short time until you come to a junction of three passages. You can go:

North	Turn to 13
East	Turn to 226
West	Turn to 43

### 85

The two of you fire wildly into the milling sheep as they swarm about the car. Occasionally one or two of the creatures leap into the vehicle and run amok, biting and snapping before you can deal with them, but most are kept at a safe distance. They continue their assault for a few minutes, oblivious to the most hideous wounds, before turning tail and disappearing back up the road. However, you have not escaped unscathed: your weapon is out of ammunition and must be thrown away. Also, one of the sheep managed to give you a nasty bite on the shin – lose 1 WOUND point. Turn to 343.

### 86

You enter another Y-junction. Honeycomb tunnels proceed north, south-east, and south-west. A number of Fuhuruh hatchlings have broken from their cells and are flicking long feelers into the tunnels, searching for food.

Cautiously, you dodge past. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. Will you go:

North?	Turn to 41
South-East?	Turn to 172
South-West?	Turn to 195

## 87

Falling to your knees, you proceed to scoop large handfuls of dry sand away from the pipe end. The hole gets deeper and deeper, eventually hitting metallic bottom about 18 inches down. A small sigh sounds, followed by a tremor through the ground. You draw back, just in time it seems, as a spinning silver disc with flashing silver barbs erupts from the bottom of the hole and flies into the air. The device hovers for a moment, orientating itself, and then swoops to one side, flinging a stinging metal barb into your hand as it goes. Lose any CRICKET PLAYING ability; you'll never throw a ball again. Ces sums the situation up: 'Run!' he cries. Will you flee up the bank into the trees (turn to 238) or along the riverbed (turn to 262)?

## 88

When you step on the conveyer the black material flows over your feet and pins you fast. You're stuck! Steadily, you are carried forward on an intercept course with the machine. When you are inexorably dragged into the alien it explodes in a mad fit and cuts you to pieces. Your adventure is over.

## 89

Without warning, you receive a sharp blow to the head that sends you reeling — lose 1 WOUND point. Tenaciously, you manage to retain consciousness. Slowly you turn to discover the once familiar Agnes totally transfigured by the development of a mass of tentacles in place of her legs. With a shrill, alien cry, she leaps over the post counter to come rushing at you. Turn to 202.

## 90

The Fuhuruh growl as you work your way through their pockets but otherwise remain paralysed. Your blows must have inflicted some extreme damage on their central nervous systems. In one of the pockets you discover a glowing red sphere with 10 pulsing blue bands set about its equator. You may keep this if you wish (its WEIGHT = 1). Turn to 139.

## 91

A short distance along Highway 102 you come across Flash the policeman sitting in his blue Falcon, listening to the footy on the radio. Between gasps from your searing lungs, you explain to him the bizarre happenings of the morning. ‘Get in the car,’ he says as he turns off the radio. As he leans forward, looking into the dash, a huge semitrailer roars past, lights flashing and horn blaring. If you have a KEEN EYE, turn to 227, otherwise turn to 72.

## 92

You grab the creature with both hands, intent on ripping it free of the man’s neck. Instead, it winds a few spare

tentacles around your wrists. The pain is so hideous that you can think of nothing other than struggling free. The pilot, likewise afflicted, pays little attention to the controls. The plane crashes into the ground, killing all but the creature which, though dazed, continues to assimilate your bodies. Your adventure is over.

### 93

You slash and hack into the surrounding shoots, making deep cuts through the abnormal timber. Quite a pile of wood starts to grow beside you, and the work is tiring, but finally an obvious gap presents itself. With a quick leap and a slash to right and left you break free. You run back to the house. If you haven't already, you could use the Fire Fighting Equipment (turn to 287) or the Bulldozer (turn to 311).

### 94

The tunnel leads to a blank wall of stone. Evidently the Fuhuruh terminated their tunnelling here. As there is no possible way forward, you return from whence you came. Turn to 243.

### 95

With a few strong strokes you leave the yabbies behind and reach the bank in safety. Turning to look back at the pool, you realize that the yabbies must have been in terror-stricken flight. Jutting out of the water behind you is a cobalt head, three feet across, flat topped, and stamped on either side with a pair of poisonously yellow eyes. This monstrous creature appears to be examining you with inscrutable motives. Then something brushes

your foot. Looking down, you see a slimy cobalt digit wrapping itself around your ankle. The other end disappears into the water. With a jerk, it drags you back into the pool. Will you kick out wildly (turn to 108) or drag yourself ashore (turn to 174)?

## 96

Cautiously, you tiptoe down the corridor, the chopping getting progressively louder. The passage terminates in a bizarrely modified kitchen: long, steel blades slope from ceiling to floor and all the furniture has been replaced with machinery whose function – on the whole – is utterly incomprehensible to you. Standing in front of a machine with its back to you is a gigantic carrot: long, green fronds stand upright from its flat head while its bandy red legs appear to grow directly from the floor. It is feeding small lumps of material into the machine, which gobbles them up with unnecessarily loud chopping sounds. Without warning, something terrifyingly silent seizes you from behind. Long cords, pulsing with life, spiral around your body and arms. Panicked, you jump to the side but succeed only in bringing both yourself and your unseen assailant to the floor with a loud crash. The carrot carries on about its business, completely oblivious. In your struggle to break free, will you try rolling toward the carrot (turn to 58) or the steel blades that line the walls (turn to 281)?

## 97

The passage twists then begins a series of sharp, dog-leg turns. When you halt to consult the compass, you see that you can go either south (turn to 218) or west (turn to 80).

## 98

You take the scythe in hand and cast it at the bird. The implement arcs past your target and disappears over the roof of the house – lost. The bird, unperturbed, continues its dive – raking your head with its claws. Lose 1 WOUND point. Turn to 362.

## 99

As Cabralowie has become such a dangerous place you head south, leaving the town far behind, and keeping the highway just in sight to the right. No traffic moves along it. After a while you stop to rest in a shallow, dry gully that crazes through the parched saltbush that covers the plains in these parts. You settle into a narrow, shady crack and try to sleep...

A loud *whoomph* jolts you awake. Sitting up with a start, you see in front of you not more than ten yards away a bulky, bear-like creature dressed in what appears to be deep-sea gear. It holds an equally bulky weapon that it is nonchalantly discharging at some un-seen target further up the gully: great gouts of purple energy fly out of sight from the barrel to explode with a static roar. As you try to shrink into the ground the beast turns and sees you. With one bulky paw it points a small device at your quivering form before apparently indicating with a wave that you should approach. Will you do this (turn to 205) or scramble over the top of the gully to escape (turn to 377)?

**100**

You take to your heels, sprinting with all your might towards the thin line of trees that straggle beside the Burang Creek. Suddenly, to the left, you notice the garage owner's dog running at breakneck speed to head you off. Its coat seems to be covered with glistening oil and its ears appear to have disappeared along with its teeth. Will you veer to the right, risking gunfire from Flash, but avoiding the hound (turn to 60), or continue straight on (turn to 217)?

**101**

The corridor leads you straight into a well-lit T-junction. Lights and reflections skitter along the metal walls. All three exit corridors appear to lead into rooms. Will you go:

South?	Turn to 266
East?	Turn to 381
West?	Turn to 63

**102**

With heels powered by fear and desperation you sprint off to the southwest, moving as you have never moved before. Unfortunately, the truck is considerably faster and you have nowhere to hide. You duck, weave, and successfully evade for a few minutes before fatigue – your murderer – brings you to a stumbling halt. The truck blares its horn in victory as it runs you to the ground. Your adventure is over.

## 103

You drop the rock, leap to the side, and scream as the car collects you with a fender. You tumble to the ground, lying in dull agony, able only to watch as the car executes a wide turn to finish you off. Your adventure is over.

## 104

The plasma generator ejects a massive, whirling blob of orange energy that crashes into the cluster of enraged but confused aliens. They disintegrate in a loud and tremendously powerful explosion. A few more pop out of the tunnel and dart in a pincer movement to either side of your position. You fire off a few more shots, displaying a rather poor aim with the unfamiliar weapon but getting most of the creatures anyway because of the incredible explosive power of the plasma projectiles. Yet a couple of machines suddenly rise right beside you and swing long razors at your body. The Ur-Sheriff reappears at this crucial moment and throws himself between you and the aliens. He disintegrates one with a touch from a small, green card but the other manages to strike him before it, too, is destroyed by a touch of the card. The Ur-Sheriff collapses to the ground, red haemoglobin flowing from a two-foot gash in his body. 'I'm done for,' he says, 'but fortune has been kind to me and I have been left a deputy. There will be no shame on Ur-Sheriff Xox... You must get to my spacecraft and put the eggs in the genetic analyser. This will generate the weapon with which you will destroy the Apex of the hive...' He coughs up some blood, his strength waning rapidly.



## 105—106

‘... go through the tunnels to my ship, down and north-east.’ As he dies he presses what is obviously a compass into your hand. To your consternation, though, the plasma generator seems to lose energy as quickly as the Ur-Sheriff, and once he is gone becomes completely useless. Slowly, you rise to your feet and look down at the dead Xox. Then, developing the necessary resolve, you climb over to the saltbush from whence the aliens sprang, find the hidden tunnel, and drop down it.

You slide for a few metres before being ejected into a dimly lit underground cavern whose floor is as smooth as the walls and ceiling are rough. Turn to 398.

### 105

Taking the anaesthetic in hand, you leap up to the trig and give it a jab in the jaws with the needle, which promptly shatters, spilling anaesthetic everywhere. The trig fights you off with another slash of its deadly razors – lose 1 WOUND point. Will you try the Surgical Braces (turn to 155) or the Ethanol and Matches (turn to 193)?

### 106

Max is desperately weak from blood loss and exhaustion. He explains how the creatures in this underground labyrinth have been saving him for purposes unknown but almost certainly dire: every hour or so a mobile surgical apparatus arrives to drain off some blood from him. You loosen his chain from the wall – all too simple – and give him directions to effect his escape. He staggers weakly to his feet and says: ‘Watch out for a room they’ve built under the pub... very dangerous.’ He

totters off, back the way you entered. Will you inspect the second niche (turn to 61) or the third (turn to 82)?

**107**

You press the only button on the cylinder. To your initial confusion, then dismay, the cylinder slowly unfolds into a steaming plate of mixed vegies in a dark, brown sauce. A tinny recorded voice chimes: ‘Another delicious meal brought to you by Syzygotron Auto Food Converters...’ Turn to 22.

**108**

Like a man demented, you kick out and thrash around until you succeed in breaking free. With desperate speed you regain the shore and scramble to safety, leaving whatever it is glaring up at you from the muddy water. Close at hand you notice a pile of eight-inch railway spikes whose purpose here is obscure but which now offer themselves as effective throwing weapons. Will you cast a couple at the thing in the dam (turn to 341) or leave well enough alone and run away (turn to 375)?

**109**

The corridor leads you into a long, narrow chamber occupied by a single machine that continuously walks from the left side of the room to the right in two equal strides, turns, and walks back with two equal strides. It ignores you. From your feet, running the long axis of the room, are three black conveyer belts: all moving to the other side of the room at a walking pace. With each of its strides, the machine straddles one of these conveyer belts with splayed feet. The distance between you and the

## 110—111

device is about five paces. It is standing on the left most conveyer, about to step right. Which conveyer will you walk, or run, down:

Left?	Turn to 48
Centre?	Turn to 69
Right?	Turn to 88

### 110

After pumping a shell into the breach, you blast a rapid series of shots into one of the cars. Since the vehicle appears to be driverless, you aim for the hooded motor. The car takes about ten shots before slowly slewing to one side and coming to a halt, its battered duclo pitted with a thousand buckshot holes. The shotgun is now empty and therefore useless. Turn to 213.

### 111

The small garage is a rundown affair. In addition to rather primitive vehicle repair facilities, it encompasses the town's general store and sheep auctioning yards. The owner, upon being presented with your punctured tyre, shakes his head and tosses the wheel into the back of his shed. 'Sorry, mate. Day after tomorrow.' Oblivious to your outraged demands for immediate action he turns away, disappearing behind a large stack of truck tyres. 'Oi, wait a minute,' he says, head reappearing, 'You're that new dentist, aren't you? Look, the dog's gone a bit funny overnight: lost all its teeth somehow and developed a funny temper. If you have a look at it I might find me way to moving your tyre to the top of the pile.' He leers at you expectantly. Will you agree to look at his dog (turn to 20) or, if you haven't already, either go to

the motel to pay your bill and book what looks like is going to be another night's stay (turn to 178), or deliver Old Ces' dentures (turn to 329)?

## 112

Desperately, you slash and hack indiscriminately into the surrounding shoots. The air fills with the smell of exhaust gases and bleeding sap as you try to cut your way free. It's hard work! As fatigue begins to overwhelm you, you momentarily drop your guard. Instantly, a couple of forked treelets spring through the pile of wood you have created and impale themselves in your legs – lose 1 WOUND point. In a last panicked manoeuvre, you slice through your attackers and dive into the gap created, flailing wildly from side to side with the saw. Free! You stumble back to the house. If you haven't already, you could use the Fire Fighting Equipment (turn to 287) or the Bulldozer (turn to 311).

## 113

A powerful beam of light fixes on you once you have made your reply. Then, in a voice that booms across the flats, the spacecraft intones: 'Intruder, you do not resemble Xox in shape or mind, and though you carry the mark of deputation your deceitful nature reveals you to be a creature of evil.' It pauses, then in the electronic silence it continues: 'By the power of attorney, judgement, and extreme force invested in me by Sector Central I sentence you to disintegration!' It blasts you into the next world with a short zap from a laser. Your adventure is over.

## 114

You fire at the garbage disposal without effect – bullets either ricochet off in dangerous directions or punch ineffective holes in its skin. The ball rushes toward you at high speed and smashes into your stomach – lose 1 WOUND point. If you have either of the items listed below, you may use one; otherwise you'll have to think of an alternative (turn to 225).

Can of Kero

Turn to 149

Axe

Turn to 181

## 115

Fortunately, you still have your Medical Kit on hand. Reaching into this, you come up with a bottle of Ethanol and a Box of Matches. After splashing the Ethanol over the surrounding dry corn, you set fire to it, instantly creating an intense blaze. This seems to strike terror into the mice who turn and flee from sight. A Large Stake lies nearby (its WEIGHT = 2) which you may take to fend off further attacks. Shepherding the children, you return to the ashram, where you discover that the man you left on the trig point managed to rip himself free and return before you. His wounds are grievous and will require hospitalisation. There are two radiotelephones in town that you could use to get help: one in Flash the policeman's car (turn to 91) and the other at the residence of the local Agricultural Business rep, which lies just across the highway (turn to 10).

**116**

The tunnel climbs and dives steeply several times before taking a sharp turn. You can either go south (turn to 177) or west (turn to 218).

**117**

If you have your Medical Kit, you could set fire to the tendrils with the enclosed Matches (turn to 156); otherwise if you have the Can of Fly Spray, you could use this (turn to 187). If you have neither of these, you will have to attack the tendrils with your bare hands (turn to 209).

**118**

The bird is almost upon you when you finally get the aerosol can in hand and let fly with a good long burst of insecticide. Incredibly, the bird explodes into flames, goes out of control, and smashes into the ground before rapidly dissolving into little more than a smoking pool of grey ooze. Perplexed, you read the fine print on the can's label:

Active ingredients:

0.01% Nitropolypeptides

0.7% Ascorbic acid

Propellant: Hydrocarbons.

Which is hardly illuminating! Turn to 362.

**119**

You follow the tunnel only a short distance before you find it blocked by a pile of huge boulders. A persistent

## **120—121**

rumble runs through the walls and ceiling. Suddenly, before you can react, another huge boulder crashes from the ceiling and strikes your body – lose 1 WOUND point. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. You turn around and head back the way you came. Turn to 33.

### **120**

The door opens to reveal the mother lode of them all. Inside is what must be the Apex of the Fuhuruh hive: a vast chamber full of massive aliens strutting grandly about amidst an army of metallic and organic soldiers, workers, and other castes whose functions you can only guess at. Your presence is noted immediately and a weird hooting wail starts up as several hundred nearby guards rush in one body to destroy you. The members of the Apex begin to retreat toward a dozen large holes in the rear of the chamber. Now is the time to release the Biological Toxins! If you have the necessary Gas Grenade, add 7 to the number printed on it and turn to the page that equals the total. If you don't have this weapon, turn to 22.

### **121**

You try to hide in a crack but the Fuhuruh, enraged by the gas, quickly discover you. The plasma projector roars in your hands and a great whorl of orange energy shoots into the nearest alien who explodes into a thousand pieces. The blast is so violent and you are so close, though, that the projector is knocked from your grasp and you are hurled to the ground in a daze. The other aliens that have survived the disintegration of their comrade

throw themselves on your body and tear it to pieces. Your adventure is over.

### 122

The can flies through the air, hits the dog on the chest in mid-leap and cracks open, spilling its contents onto the slick fur. Immediately, the animal crumples and drops to the floor as small clear flames flicker in lazy bursts wherever paint touches fur. With frenzied complaints, the writhing animal begins to dissolve. This is all too strange, so you retreat hastily from the storeroom and bolt the door. Turn to 76.

### 123

The door takes you into a small, empty room. Nothing happens and there are no other exits so you retreat the way you entered only to find that the scenery has changed. Turn to 210.

### 124

With lightning reflexes you snatch the paper knife and dive to the floor, inflicting a deep wound on the snake. Paradoxically, Agnes howls like a banshee. As soon as you stand, you see why: Agnes, once human, has been transformed by the replacement of her legs with a mass of writhing purple tentacles, one of which is bleeding profusely from your knife-inflicted injury. Turn to 163.

### 125

With long strides and a wary eye on the edge of the walkway you sprint to the safety of the other side of the chasm. The wings immediately give up the chase and



## 126—128

return to a rather aimless flapping about the cavern. Turn to 237.

### 126

As soon as you step from cover, the man stops his splicing and turns lambent yellow eyes upon you. You stare at each other, and then he extends his arms. Dry streamers shoot out of his wrists and fly at you, wrapping around your body and sending needle tips questing under your skin for major blood vessels – lose 1 WOUND point. Stumbling back, you rip the streamers loose and beat a hasty retreat. Luckily, the creature has only one leg and it is unable to pursue. Turn to 230.

### 127

You find yourself at a bend in a corridor. A wide, tiled passage heads north, while a darkly crumbling tunnel heads west. Will you proceed north (turn to 192) or west (turn to 348)?

### 128

You fill the pack with Kerosene and approach the closest tree to give it a tentative spray. Instantly it explodes into flames, vigorous blue tongues racing from trunk, to branch, to leaf. In a matter of moments nothing remains other than a largish puddle of stinking, grey ooze. The other trees, seemingly aware of their comrade's fate, begin to move away from you. Taking this as an encouraging sign, you waste no time in dealing death via spitting kerosene to the remaining intruders, wiping them out to the last. Turn to 208.

## 129

The two of you creep into the barn, pick up a couple of jerry cans of aviation fuel each, and then sneak out the back way to avoid the machine. You slowly make your way to the airstrip by a circuitous use of natural and man-made cover. When you finally arrive you discover a lone twin-engined Beechcraft parked beside the dirt strip that serves as the runway. The lawyer scoots over beside one wing, opens a fuel tank, and begins to fill it from his can. He signals you to follow suit. Eventually, once the two of you finish refuelling the plane, you climb inside, fire up the engines and accelerate down the runway. The lawyer takes the pilot's seat. Just as the plane edges into the air you notice some ominous green slime flowing from the locker beside the pilot. 'Hey...' is all you have time to say before a hissing octopus-bat-thing bursts into the cockpit and attaches itself to the lawyer's neck in a strangling and biting hold. All at once, the lawyer tries to scream, tear the beast free, and fly – succeeding at none. The plane starts to bank sharply. There is still some fuel left in one of the jerry cans that you loaded on board, and this may be useful. Otherwise, if you have one of the other weapons listed below, you could use that. Will you use:

A Pistol?	Turn to 18
An Axe or Scythe?	Turn to 380
The Aeroplane Fuel?	Turn to 73
Your Hands?	Turn to 92

## 130

With a tremendous effort, you manage to snap yourself free – ripping one of the steel arms out of the dash as you do so. The remaining arm, deciding to change tactics,

## 131–134

pins both your ankles to the floor. When the car begins to accelerate to an even more dangerous speed you try turning off the ignition but with no success. Will you reach under the dash to pull the ignition wires out (turn to 267) or try putting the gear stick into neutral (turn to 337)?

### 131

You turn to face the truck, pistol in hand. If you have Max's son with you, he keeps running and soon disappears over a slight rise. If you have any SHOOTING skill, turn to 219, otherwise turn to 191.

### 132

Turn to 84.

### 133

You slip to one side as Flash fires. The bullet sings past your ear; the blast temporarily deafens you; your shirt is singed with powder burns; but you are alive! As quick as a mad crab, you scuttle to the rear of the car – using it for cover as Flash emerges, firing wildly. You could pick up a rock and throw it at him (turn to 214); otherwise, if you have either of the items listed below, you could throw that at him:

Iron Spike

Turn to 247

Metal Stake

Turn to 279

### 134

When you approach and lean over her, she suddenly explodes into a mass of writhing tentacles, resembling a gigantic, land-based anemone. Fuhuruh! The monstrous

alien quickly twines its protoplasmic feelers around your body and drags you toward a snapping, five-part mouth. This is desperate! If you have one of the items listed below, you can use it to try to escape; otherwise, as you are defenceless, you are dragged helplessly screaming to your doom and your adventure is over.

Tube of White Paste	Turn to 167
Fire Extinguisher	Turn to 198
Metal Pipe	Turn to 221

### 135

The sheep rush upon the car, milling around, rocking the vehicle, and bleating ferociously. You take the kerosene in hand and splash it about indiscriminately over their woolly backs – intent on torching the lot of them. Before you have a chance to throw a match, though, all the sheep-things that were hit by the kero spontaneously explode into rippling blue flames. They race about in terror as they are quickly eaten away, and soon leaving no trace of their existence other than a number of large puddles of stinking, grey ooze. The remaining sheep set up a terrified babbling and race off in all directions, panic carrying them out of sight. The kerosene container is now empty. Turn to 343.

### 136

When you draw opposite the granitic statue it gives a small wheeze through a single nasal slit and expels a poisonous gas. You stagger under its influence and collapse to the ground as your consciousness slips away. Your adventure is over.

## 137

Re-entering the shed you both approach the dog. The owner makes for what used to be the biting end while you circle behind. ‘There, there, Scruff,’ he says, giving a soothing stroke to his pet’s head. Scruff, apparently not himself, extends an oozing tongue that rapidly coils and slithers a couple of feet along his master’s arm; the tip buries itself under the skin of his shirtless armpit. The garage owner screams and slumps unconscious to the floor. Scruff disengages his tongue, winds it back into his mouth, and takes to his heels – flying through the open doorway. Deciding that the animal must be stopped before it can spread its unknown disease, you give chase. Outside, you see your quarry disappearing into the store. Taking a nearby shovel in hand you step into the gloomy interior and cast about for the hidden Scruff. When you stop to listen, you hear the soft click of claws on lino coming from behind the sweets’ counter, obviously the dog. Will you dive over the top, weapon in hand (turn to 49) or hook the shovel under the counter in a cutting arc (turn to 83)?

## 138

After ripping a sleeve from your shirt to use as a fuse, you stuff it in the spout of the can and strike a match to it. As if aware of your intention, the car starts to weave wildly and side swiping the jeep. Your aim is true, though, and you successfully lob the bomb onto the car’s windscreen. With a violent explosion and a flash of heat, the vehicle goes completely out of control and runs directly into the side of the jeep. It explodes with a loud

roar, the blast killing both you and Max's son. Your adventure is over.

### 139

Using the utmost caution combined with the greatest haste, you push the two Fuhuruh into one corner, pile all the boulders and rocks that lie on the floor onto them, then use this pile as a step ladder to jump to the ledge and safety above. Free! Turn to 237.

### 140

You move. Flash's gun goes off with a roar. The bullet embeds itself in your chest and the force throws you to the ground where you lie, unable to move, as consciousness seeps away. Your adventure is over.

### 141

The corridor leads you into a sharp bend. At the very juncture of the two corridors you see an irregularly shaped door. Will you proceed:

Through the door?

Turn to 75

South?

Turn to 162

West?

Turn to 305

### 142

The furniture rushes toward you again, led by a small standard lamp displaying a particularly distasteful zeal. You kick it to one side, evade the chairs and piano, and end up facing the door, which you blast shot after shot until the magazine is empty. The door collapses in its frame, allowing you to break free into the corridor. Without wasting time you block the entrance to the

## 143—144

sitting room with the shattered remains of the door and the now useless shotgun. If you haven't already, you may either go down the corridor (turn to 96) or enter the other door (turn to 40).

### 143

The Ur-Sheriff explains that the Fuhuruh have constructed an elaborate system of tunnels, caverns, and elevators under and around Cabralowie. His intention, at the moment, is to clear out a small nearby section in order to search for some of the necessary alien eggs. 'I'll just drop a canister of MOG-5 gas down the entrance. It doesn't kill them but they sure don't like it! I want you to stay here with this plasma generator and shoot anything as soon as it sticks its head out.' He passes you the weapon you saw him firing earlier and then trots past a nearby clump of saltbush, dropping a small canister under it. A vigorous cloud rises followed by an astonishing number of twisted, anthropomorphized aliens, organic and machine, springing from the hidden entrance and racing up the gully. Will you fire the generator at them now (turn to 104) or let them pass then shoot them in the back (turn to 121)?

### 144

Your efforts to control the vehicle are quite futile and the maniacal thing continues on its way, eventually smashing into one of the trees that line ANZAC Grove – lose 1 WOUND point. The metal arms release their grip and fall to the floor, allowing you to climb – dazed – from the wreck. Once clear, you turn to watch as the car begins to bury itself into the ground, tossing heaps of dirt over

itself until all that remains is a small periscope which rotates to fix its gaze full upon you. Shaken, you retreat rapidly. Turn to 158.

### 145

A powerful beam of light fixes on you. The spacecraft, taking note of your halo, intones: 'Indeed, you bear the mark of deputization. You may proceed to the main airlock.' A break appears in the blue energy field and you hastily advance through. You quickly discover the main airlock and find four numbered buttons inside, as if it is also an elevator. Will you press button number:

- |        |             |
|--------|-------------|
| One?   | Turn to 175 |
| Two?   | Turn to 189 |
| Three? | Turn to 212 |
| Four?  | Turn to 234 |

### 146

Breathing as quietly as possible and tiptoeing through dry twigs, you step closer. If you have BUSH SKILLS, turn to 206, otherwise turn to 255.

### 147

Eventually you arrive at a T-junction: two corridors head north and west while the third disappears into the south. From this southerly corridor you can hear the distant sounds of metal striking metal. Will you go:

- |        |             |
|--------|-------------|
| North? | Turn to 210 |
| South? | Turn to 109 |
| West?  | Turn to 170 |



## 148

Flash tries to punch you in the head while keeping one hand fixed on the wheel. Dodging the blow, you grab the pump-action shotgun that lies between the two front seats, and then dive out the door. Thankfully, the car is still moving slowly so you manage to get away with only being bruised and cut by the rocks on the roadside – lose 1 WOUND point. The shotgun has a WEIGHT = 2, if you wish to keep it. Flash hits the brakes, bringing the car to a screaming halt, and leaps forth, Magnum in hand, firing wildly. You could pick up a rock to throw at him (turn to 214). Otherwise, if you have one of the items listed below, you could use one of these:

Shotgun	Turn to 196
Iron Spike	Turn to 247
Metal Stake	Turn to 279

## 149

You unscrew the lid from the Kerosene and hurl the can into the gaping maw of the advancing garbage disposal. The can smashes a steel tooth before disappearing down the chute without effect. The ball circles and dives into your chest – lose 1 WOUND point. If you have either of the items listed below, you may use one; otherwise, you'll have to think of an alternative (turn to 225).

Pistol	Turn to 114
Axe	Turn to 181

## 150

The door swings open to reveal a low-ceilinged chamber with two doors side by side in the eastern wall. Both look well used. To keep the door open you leave the key here

– cross it from your equipment list. If you want to ignore this room, you can proceed north (turn to 141); otherwise, you can open either the left door (turn to 27) or the right (turn to 7).

### 151

You spin the can toward the dog, hitting it on the snout and removing its head with disconcerting ease. The body skids to a halt, remaining standing on all fours, while the head comes to rest nearby. Stunned, you stare in disbelief as the body begins to grow a pair of eyes on long stalks out of the middle of its back. Not to be outdone, the head sprouts a number of spidery legs and scuttles out of sight behind a biscuit barrel. After a few moments the gaping neck wound on the body resolves into a collection of rasping insectoid mouthparts. This last improbability galvanizes you into action: with one graceful movement you leap out of the room and slam the door shut, keeping the horror on the other side. Turn to 76.

### 152

You enter another Y-junction: honeycomb tunnels proceed north, south-east, and south-west. From one of these tunnels – you cannot be sure which – exudes a refreshing hint of a breeze. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. Will you go:

North?

Turn to 67

South-East?

Turn to 243

South-West?

Turn to 172

**153**

You fill the pack with herbicide before approaching the closest tree and give it a tentative spray. No effect. You keep spraying some more and then notice that the tree is no longer moving, at least not as quickly as before. Encouraged, you set about spraying the others, quickly bringing them all to a grinding halt. Only occasionally will one of the trees give a tiny lurch forward or wave a branch. Will you go find the rep and tell him about your success (turn to 208) or refill the pack with another chemical, either kerosene (turn to 128) or insecticide (turn to 190)?

**154**

Turn to 305.

**155**

Diving back toward the trig, you slip the braces into the metallic jaws, which owing to their liberal coating of blood are quite slippery. With a few deft twists, you lever the mechanical mouth open; the man slides away and collapses to the ground. The trig lashes at you again with its whirling razors, drawing even more blood – lose 1 WOUND point. Turn to 64.

**156**

Scattering matches in your haste, you fumble with the box before striking a light and holding the naked flame to the point where the blood-sucking tendrils emerge from the soil. Instantly, they wither and exude a toxic gas that you unwittingly breathe in – lose 1 WOUND point. Turn to 366.

**157**

When you kneel down next to the man to feel his pulse he jerks into sudden motion. His eyes flick open and from his mouth extends a blue tongue at least six feet in length that slithers around your body and arms with terrifying speed. In a matter of moments you are hopelessly trapped! Then the man's body swells and explodes like a spore ball – covering you with hundreds of infant Fuhuruh grubs that begin to eat you alive. Your adventure is over.

**158**

You head for the nearest building, which is the Cabralowie Post Office and Coffee Shoppe. This establishment also acts as a bank and newsagent, and is run by a friendly middle-aged woman called Agnes. You rush into the cool interior to be greeted by the delicious aroma of brewing coffee. The pot sits on an old kero heater in the coffee shop section at the back. Agnes cries out a loud 'Hello, doc!' She is standing behind the Post Office counter, sorting sheets of stamps. You rush up to the counter, explaining the bizarre happenings of this morning, and then falling silent as you realize that the authorities should be instantly notified. Agnes, wanting to hear more, invites you to sit down in the back of the store to tell your story. Will you take time out for a coffee to calm your nerves (turn to 3) or push on immediately to contact the police (turn to 303)?

159

In a niche in the wall ahead, you see what appears to be a statue of a pile of refuse. Its surface is pitted and granite-like, yet its form is that of a heap of rotten old socks. It is completely immobile. Will you creep past it (turn to 136) or retreat westward along the tunnel (turn to 50)?

160

The two of you run like rabbits, sprinting across the flats. But the truck gains quickly and it soon becomes clear that you will be dead in a very short while. Suddenly the boy stops and turns. In a display of incredible self-sacrifice, he starts to throw rocks at the approaching vehicle. ‘Keep running!’ he cries. You hesitate, but the lad cries out angrily, ‘Get away!’ The truck accelerates toward the boy, giving you time to widen the gap. You run for your life. Eventually the behemoth either crushes the boy or gives up the chase – you cannot see which – and turns once more in pursuit of you. You can keep running (turn to 201) or, if you have either of the items listed below, fight with:

Pistol	Turn to 131
Axe	Turn to 246

161

You walk across the paddock behind Ces’ house toward the windmill. Its fan turns lazily in the breeze. ‘Watch,’ says Ces as he leads you in a wide circle around it. Sure enough, as you walk, the tin blades turn to follow your movement, even against the wind. Figuring that there must be a natural explanation, you approach closer,

noting the water pipe that issues from the pump in the mill's base: one end cuts across the paddock to the creek and the other leads to the dams alongside the road. You might as well check the pipes first. Will you follow them toward the creek (turn to 220) or the dams (turn to 271)?

### 162

You enter a small room of extraordinarily strong construction: steel girders hold back the walls and on the eastern side is a circular steel door that looks like it should belong in a bank. The number 30 is stencilled boldly across its face. If you know how to open this door, you may do so now; otherwise you will have to leave the room by the only exit: north (turn to 141).

### 163

Her intentions regarding your welfare are quite obviously less than positive. You scramble to the other side of the store as the Agnes-monster leaps from the counter in pursuit. Time to look to your defence! If you have an Iron Spike, you could throw this at her (turn to 316), or even throw one of the large jars of sweets that lie close at hand (turn to 331). Otherwise, if you have your Medical Kit, you could try to sedate her with an anaesthetic (turn to 357).

### 164

‘Victory is in our grasp!’ he exclaims as you reveal the sphere. ‘This is a Machine Egg, the rarer of the two types. Keep it safe, and don’t get it too warm or it may hatch.’ That means, of course, that you now need only find an Organic Egg. If you have a red sphere that you

want to show the Ur-Sheriff, turn to 184, otherwise, turn to 143.

**165**

The garage owner goes off in search of Flash while you wait about to keep an eye on the dog. After half an hour, Flash's blue Ford pulls up in a shower of dust and gravel. The two men get out of the car and approach, neither saying a word, both keeping eyes fixed upon you. 'Hi,' you say a little nervously, wondering what's got into them. In response, Flash draws his Magnum Python and opens fire, the bullet ripping through your shirt and grazing your chest. Amazed, but quick off the mark, you dive behind the shed as a hail of bullets follows. Then there is only a silence in which you hear the shed door being opened and paws running on dirt. Will you make a dash for your car (turn to 34) or head cross-country toward the Burang Creek, keeping the shed between you and your assailants (turn to 100)?

**166**

The tunnel past the machine continues for a great distance, dimly lit by sparsely placed light nodes in the ceiling. Eventually it climbs up and terminates in a room. After only a moment's hesitation, Max declares this to be the cold room beneath the Cabralowie Pub; a door in the opposite wall presumably leads out. A sinister machine with a multitude of arms and spidery legs holds a crushed beer keg aloft; amber fluid drips slowly from the barrel onto the device's head and thence to the floor, which is awash with the stuff. The machine remains immobile and apparently inoperative. Slowly, you become aware of

sounds of pursuit rising from the tunnel below: metallic clanking and servos hissing and whining. Will you roll a couple of full kegs down the hole (turn to 360) or leave the room via the door (turn to 391)?

**167**

You pull the tube from a pocket and immediately start fighting off a couple of tentacles that try to snatch it from your grasp. But you get the lid off and squeeze the white contents over the Fuhuruh's slimy body. No effect. The creature jerks you from your feet and bites your life away. Your adventure is over.

**168**

The car is hurtling towards you at eighty clicks by the time you have picked up a few rocks and waited for it to get within range. You hurl the first rock, which bounces from the bonnet and over the roof; your second plummets through the windscreen; and your third, still in hand, never gets thrown as the car is upon you! If you have **SPRINTING** ability, turn to 382, otherwise turn to 103.

**169**

Outside the house, in the driveway, you discover an old Ford Zephyr, keys in ignition and door unlocked. It appears to be quite normal. Will you take this car (turn to 339) or run toward the nearest house (turn to 17)?

**170**

You find yourself in a small, neat room constructed of dressed stone blocks. There are two exit corridors: north (turn to 272) or east (turn to 147).



**171**

With a heroic effort you manage to turn the car from its course. In retaliation, it promptly goes out of control and spins to a standstill. The door flies open, seat tilts, and you find yourself unceremoniously dumped beside the road. With a roar, the car starts up and accelerates along the highway, rapidly changing colour and shape. Its new extensions make it look somewhat like a police car... Turn to 10.

**172**

You enter another Y-junction, but the floor of the southern tunnel has fallen away into what is effectively a bottomless pit: impassable. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT then decide whether you will go north-east (turn to 152) or north-west (turn to 86).

**173**

You rip a sleeve from your shirt to use as a fuse, stuff it in the neck of the bottle, and ignite it. The fuse gutters badly, suggesting that the whisky is not of the best quality. Regardless, you're not going to drink it, you're going to throw it! As you lob it onto the car's hood the fuse is instantly blown out. The bottle smashes and turns into a fountain of glass and whisky. Amazingly, the car literally falls to pieces from this single blow: all the doors and wheels fall off to leave the body of the car to nose dive into the road where the process of disintegration is culminated when the motor flies through the grille and bounces after you. Impressive! Turn to 213.

## 174

With fingers dug deeply into the red clay of the dam bank you try to drag yourself free. To your surprise your hands close upon a buried sphere. Once you've pulled it into open sight, it reveals itself to be a glowing, red colour with six pulsing, blue bands set about its equator. You may keep this if you wish (its WEIGHT = 1). Meanwhile, your struggles are all to no avail. With terrifying ease, the monster in the water gives you a sharp tug and drags you under. Water fills your lungs when you gasp in fear – lose 1 WOUND point. In a fit of hysteria you begin thrashing about wildly. Turn to 108.

## 175

The elevator descends and you soon find yourself in what appears to be the ship's engine room. Machinery of titanic power and massive proportion looms all around you. There are numerous racks and boxes containing large numbers of well-secured tools and instruments whose purpose you can only guess at. Below is a list of the few that you recognise as being potentially useful. You may take as many as you can carry:

ITEM	WEIGHT
Chain and Plumb Bob	1
Circular Saw Blades	1
Fire Extinguisher	1
Metal Pipe	1
Hydraulic Spanner	2
Roll of Foil	1

When you have finished your selection, you return to the elevator and press another button:

Two	Turn to 189
Three	Turn to 212
Four	Turn to 234

## 176

Fearfully, you walk out onto the road, revealing yourself. The grazier views you with no small amount of suspicion, as does his dog, which bares its fangs and growls. After a few moments, during which you fill the man in on the morning's happenings, he relaxes. He returns to replacing the tyre, explaining how overnight his sheep have turned into savage beasts with a blood lust unparalleled by anything in his experience. 'Been shooting them all morning,' he says, patting his shotgun, 'doesn't seem to kill them, but keeps them at a safe distance.' The kelpie suddenly stiffens, ears pricked up, and then leaps to its feet, howling. 'Here we go again,' says the grazier, climbing into the back of the ute, 'you'd better get in.' A soft bleating begins, gradually getting louder and louder. Then, from around a bend in the road, comes a large mob of Killer Sheep: eyes silvery and crazed, blood spattered across fanged mouths. When they see the car they let cry a most horrific cacophony – a blood bleat – before charging. Taking great bounds, nostrils flaring, they quickly surround the vehicle. Time to select a weapon! If you have any of the following, turn to the appropriate page, otherwise turn to 393.

Chainsaw or Axe	Turn to 36
Herbicide/Insecticide Spray	Turn to 70
Pistol or Shotgun	Turn to 85
Kerosene Spray or Can	Turn to 135

## 177

The tunnel leads you into a circular chamber whose rocky walls are punctured on the eastern side by an irregularly shaped door and in the other three directions by passageways. Will you proceed:

Through the door?	Turn to 361
North?	Turn to 116
South?	Turn to 50
West?	Turn to 280

## 178

You head off to the motel reception where you pay the bill and exchange a few pleasantries with the proprietor. As you turn to leave he mentions that the travelling salesman who spoke to you the previous night seems to have disappeared. ‘Strange,’ says the motel keeper, ‘but all his things are still in his room, and his car’s still parked out front. Although...’ he says, scratching his head, ‘I could have sworn that when he checked in last night he was driving something different.’ Anyway, he asks you to keep an eye out for the missing man and suggests that if he doesn’t turn up soon the police will have to be contacted. When you leave the reception and walk past the salesman’s car you notice several papers laying on the front seat, perhaps an indication of what has happened to the fellow? Will you look at these documents (turn to 68) or, if you haven’t already, either go out to the hippy commune to see if any of the kids need a checkup (turn to 233), or go to the garage to have your tyre repaired (turn to 111)?

**179**

Mistiming your grab for the darting wings, you glide past the filament and plummet into the abyss. Though deep, the pit is not bottomless. Eventually the floor of the cavern terminates your flight. Your adventure is over.

**180**

The key explodes in the lock (cross it from your equipment list) and the door does not open. Discouraged, you leave the door and head back through the north exit – turn to 141.

**181**

Flourishing the axe you fall upon the larger machine, smashing into it with decisive strokes. The blade is sharp and your eye is good. After only three blows the garbage disposal grinds to a satisfactory halt; smoke billows from two of the cuts. However, the floating eye does not take the destruction of its comrade lightly and rushes to its defence, striking you in the legs with its body – lose any SPRINTING ability. It circles away, banks, and dives again. This time, though, you intercept it with a lightning fast blow from the axe. It goes out of control and careens down a side passage in a flurry of sparks; it is gone. Max leads the way past the smoking garbage disposal. Turn to 166.

## 182

The corridor leads you to a metal walled T-junction. Three passages fly straight as arrows. Will you go:

North?	Turn to 291
South?	Turn to 356
West?	Turn to 381

## 183

You get in the car. Instantly, articulated steel bands arc out of your seat and wrap themselves around your chest, pinning you. Flash drives slowly down the road, turns his head toward you with a queer motion, and then smiles an eerie, pebble-toothed smile. ‘You will be dead soon,’ he says, ‘you will all be dead... soon.’ With the realization that all is not well in downtown Cabralowie, you struggle against your bonds. If you have STRENGTH, turn to 292, otherwise turn to 46.

## 184

‘Ah,’ nods the Ur-Sheriff sagaciously when you present the sphere, ‘notice the pulsing bands on the side? This is not an egg but a key.’ He explains that the Fuhuruh sometimes make use of circular steel doors to defend strong points in their hives. To use such a key for the purposes of this book, if you come across one of these doors there will be a number printed on it; multiply this number by the number of bands on the key then turn to the page that equals the result. If you have a blue sphere that you want to show the Ur-Sheriff, turn to 164, otherwise turn to 143.

## 185

The furniture rushes forward, but this time you are ready! With heavy blows you carve into the soft timber and upholstery: the two-seater collapses; the coffee table goes in one blow; the easy chair virtually dissolves. The only piece that gives you any real trouble is the upright piano which, charging like a bull elephant and giving off plangent chords like screams of pain when you strike it, backs you into a corner and then almost kills you by falling on top of you. Fortunately, you skip to one side, and then finish it off at leisure, knocking its frame to pieces. Under a pile of debris that you recognize as once being the two-seater, you discover a glowing cobalt-blue sphere stamped with the digits: 300. You may take this if you wish; its WEIGHT = 1. You exit the room. If you haven't already, you may either proceed down the corridor (turn to 96) or enter the other door (turn to 40).

## 186

When you press the button the grenade instantly begins to violently expel a mustard-yellow gas. You lob the weapon into the centre of the chamber and watch with fascinated horror as every one of the grand-looking Apex Fuhuruh dies in convulsions. The several hundred remaining aliens immediately seem to lose track of what they were doing: the soldiers who were charging you halt and begin to commit suicide. The other Fuhuruh either wander aimlessly or fall to attacking each other in paroxysms of violence. Then a great shudder runs through the ground as the hall behind you collapses, completely blocking your exit. The entire warren is about to self-destruct! Nearby, you spot another of the circular

steel doors. This with the number **35** stencilled across it. You dodge your way over toward it, avoiding despairing aliens and collapsing earthworks. If you have the key to open this door, you may do so, otherwise turn to 39.

### 187

The Fly Spray proves itself to be very effective! Upon being sprayed, the tendrils instantly wither. As a bonus, the stalked eyes, which are probably part of the same blood-sucking vegetable, also dissolve into a small pool of ooze. Turn to 366.

### 188

Slamming the gear stick into reverse and putting your foot to the floor sends the car sliding straight back into the two men, knocking both to the ground. You stop and get out, but recoil in horror when you see the bodies: chitinous limbs loop from necks and chests as the remains twist and thrash into new shapes. Flash turns his head and hisses – no teeth, no tongue, a pair of glowing red eyes set in the back of his throat. Retreating from the scene, will you go over to the police car to radio for help (turn to 321) or go into the store (turn to 355)?

### 189

The elevator opens to reveal the night-covered plains north of Cabralowie. If you wish to leave the spacecraft, turn to 254, otherwise press another button:

One	Turn to 175
Three	Turn to 212
Four	Turn to 234



**190**

You fill the pack with insecticide and walk into the trees, spraying from left to right. There is no immediate effect, so you spray a bit more, then again a bit more. Suddenly, a loud rumble sounds through the air followed by the eruption from the ground, at ten-foot intervals, of fully-grown trees. Waving their branches insanely, they tear through the earth and set upon the rep's house, turning it into a pile of matchwood and corrugated iron. What have you unleashed! In terror, you race through the rampaging trees, being torn by a branch here, a root there, and stumbling in the furrows – lose 2 WOUND points. Eventually you break free of the newly created forest. After casting a glum look back at the remains of the rep's house – wondering what has become of him – you set off into Cabralowie, running for the nearest house. Turn to 388.

**191**

As the truck bears down on you, the glowing red eyes are fixed and glaring, presenting a suitable target. You fire a series of shots and produce a number of bullet holes in the windscreen but none seem to have deadly effect. Turn to 102.

**192**

You enter a tiny room of triangular shape. The walls are apparently made from old fibreboard that has been dragged down from the surface. There are two exit corridors: will you go south (turn to 127) or west (turn to 210)?

## 193

Keeping out of range of the trig's razors, you splash it with some Ethanol, intending to set it alight with the matches. To your surprise, and the hippy's relief, the alcohol seems to first paralyse, then disintegrate the device: all the joints and moving parts come undone and collapse into an untidy pile on the ground. Turn to 64.

## 194

In a terribly athletic display, you jump on the bar, leap across to a table, then bound through a plate glass window, cutting yourself to ribbons. Collapsing on the ground outside, you quickly bleed to death. Your adventure is over.

## 195

You enter another Y-junction: honeycomb tunnels proceed to the south, north-east, and north-west. From the southern tunnel a wan light emanates alongside a continuous sound of falling gravel. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. Will you go:

South?	Turn to 229
North-East?	Turn to 86
North-West?	Turn to 334

## 196

You raise the shotgun, pump a round into the breach, and fire. The blast punches a hole through Flash's chest and knocks him to the ground. Tentacles – each six inches long and bile green to boot – thrash from the wound. Flash calmly raises his head to look at you and says, 'I'll be right in a moment, then we'll continue.' The tentacles

## 197—199

cease flaying about wildly and begin to rebuild the wound. Weird! Turn to 23.

### 197

As you run up, the man grabs you and throws you to the ground. He dives down beside you, keeping a wary eye upon the machine that is busily dismembering your car. He explains that he is a lawyer from Pitt Street, Sydney; he probably runs the property you are on as a tax dodge. He goes on to tell you that he flew up to Cabralowie today only to discover that all his sheep had developed psychopathic tendencies. In addition, his station hands had devolved into axe wielding maniacs. 'Not to mention finding that in the shed!' he exclaims as he points to the agricultural machinery devouring your motor vehicle. He wants to fly out but needs your help to carry the aircraft fuel to the airstrip. 'It's just inside the barn,' he says, grinning. Will you trust him (turn to 129) or not (turn to 242)?

### 198

The Fire Extinguisher is not a Fire Extinguisher after all: when you point it at the Fuhuruh and pull the trigger it unfolds and reveals itself to be a container full of fine tools of the most intricate nature. 'Oh, no!' you scream as the creature wrenches you forward into its snapping maw. Your adventure is over.

### 199

The bottle arcs through the air and smashes against the animal's shoulder. Instantly, it bursts into fire: small, clear flames flicker over its coat, penetrating like acid.

Taking a nearby fire extinguisher you spray the dog with carbon dioxide, but all to no avail. Slowly it dissolves away to leave nothing but a sticky pool of viscous, grey sludge that stinks of burnt cinnamon. Strange! You saw no sparks. And besides, nothing burns down to... to that. Bemused, you exit the storeroom. Turn to 76.

## 200

The key explodes in the lock – cross it from your equipment list. If you have another key you could try to open the door with this, otherwise your adventure is over.

## 201

If you have a KEEN EYE, turn to 228, otherwise turn to 102.

## 202

She pounces: her arms squeeze your torso while tentacles and tails twine through and around your legs. Her face, becoming less recognizably human by the instant, leers inches from your eyes. Snapping and snarling, she makes several death bites at your neck. Things are getting desperate! You have just enough leeway to twist a bit or slam your weight against hers. Will you:

Elbow her in the midriff? Turn to 222

Bash her against the nearby banking grille? Turn to 265

Trip her over the coffee furniture? Turn to 285

## 203

SUCCESS! The door swings into the roof to reveal a broad subterranean pool of clear water. Once you step into the room you notice the most refreshing odour of

## 204—205

ozone. You test the water, scattering a few drops from your fingers onto your tongue. Eventually you drink deeply and wash the worst of your cuts and bruises. To your astonishment, all fatigue drops away and you feel whole again: recover all your WOUND points. After one last swig of liquid you go back through the door and up the stairs. Turn to 266.

### 204

You enter the room on tiptoe, glancing from left to right. With a rush silent as death, the dog bounds at you from behind the furthest row of shelves. In a panic you grab the nearest thing to hand and throw it at the animal. Did you throw a:

Can of Paint?	Turn to 122
Can of Beans?	Turn to 151
Bottle of Turpentine?	Turn to 199

### 205

Cautious: you slowly ease yourself toward the creature until you are just out of arm's reach. Your heart leaps in your chest when the beast quickly steps forward and slaps a grey device the size of a matchbox onto your head. But your alarm soon subsides as you hear speech injected straight into your brain from the box: 'Relax, fellow sentient creature. I am the authorized Ur-Sheriff for this sector,' here it performs a short dance, possibly a salute. 'The situation, though critical, is under control.' It fumbles in a deep pocket and pulls forth a spiky ball that it tosses toward you. The fist-sized device hits you in the chest, changing to a bright red colour, then begins to orbit around your head like a halo. The Ur-Sheriff says,

‘You have been deputized in the defence of your planet against the Fuhuruh, who I am sure you are quite familiar with.’ The Ur-Sheriff then gives you a short lecture concerning the menace that has fallen upon Cabralowie: The Fuhuruh are a space-borne hive culture of twin sexes – one organic, the other mechanical (the arrangement. is somewhat complicated) – whose eggs drift in deepest space, occasionally falling onto an unsuspecting planet and wreaking catastrophic damage if left unchecked. When dried and crushed the eggs have a mild hallucinogenic effect upon certain rich, space-faring species. The Ur-Sheriff conjectures that this is how the monstrous Fuhuruh were brought to Earth. ‘Probably some young rocket-head bringing his she-and-it beast out here to smell some egg dust, sit in the backseat, and watch the *yurdle furd*. The sheer irresponsibility!’ he curses, the grey box not translating. The Fuhuruh are completely without sentience or moral sense and behave in much the same way as ants or bees. To destroy them the Apex of their society, several ‘Kings’ and ‘Queens’, must be eliminated, thereafter the rest of the hive will spontaneously commit race suicide. Unfortunately, the creatures are incredibly resilient to even the most punishing physical maltreatment and the only sure way of exterminating them is to perform a detailed genetic analysis of a couple of their eggs (as the creatures spontaneously mutate from one generation to another their genetic material alters) to derive some suitable biological toxins with which to attack them. ‘So,’ says the Ur-Sheriff, ‘our task is to find a couple of eggs – one mechanical, the other organic – and get them back to my spacecraft for the genetic analysis.’ These eggs, he tells

you, usually look like bluish-coloured spheres and are difficult to find. If you don't trust this creature, turn to 377. Otherwise, if you have a bright red sphere, you could show it to the Ur-Sheriff (turn to 184), or if you have a bright blue sphere, you could show him this (turn to 164). If you have neither, or wish to keep them concealed until later, turn to 143.

**206**

When twenty yards away, you can hear the grazier cursing under his breath – between turns of the wheel brace – about his 'damn sheep going all strange' and bewailing the fate of his faithful hound. Will you continue to creep closer (turn to 255) or step out onto the road so he can see you (turn to 176)?

**207**

With one deft leap you grab the filament a foot above where it joins the wings. To your discomfort, you discover that it secretes a clear acidic fluid that badly burns your hands (but, as you're dangling over a bottomless pit, you hold on regardless) – lose 1 WOUND point. The wings fly hither and thither but eventually bring you close enough to the exit on the other side for you to drop to safety. Turn to 237.

**208**

The rep is pleased to see you with your pack on your back and a triumphant gleam in your eye. 'That should hold the buggers!' he cries gleefully. After a brief discussion, the two of you decide to round up as many of the local residents as possible, assemble at the rep's

place, and conduct a systematic attack on the invaders. Straws are drawn and it is left to you to go in search of help. If you wish to keep the Pack it has a WEIGHT=2. There are three obvious directions in which to go:

The nearest house	Turn to 388
The only other house in sight	Turn to 17
The Mindip Road	Turn to 241

## 209

You grab the tendrils with your hands. To your horror, the blood sucking vegetable extrudes a whole brace of new tendrils that waste no time in winding themselves around and up your arms; a few even reach your neck. All bury their tips under your skin; all drink. You feel yourself slipping away, a new, invasive element intruding into your mind, making it its own. Your adventure is over.

## 210

You enter a large, circular chamber whose walls are carved directly from the living rock; the finish, though, is quite smooth. There are four corridors flying to the four quarters of the compass. Will you go:

North?	Turn to 313
South?	Turn to 147
East?	Turn to 192
West?	Turn to 249

## 211

You leap to the man's aid, trying to prize the jaws apart with your hands. The trig fights you off with several whirling razors that slash out of its triangular carapace

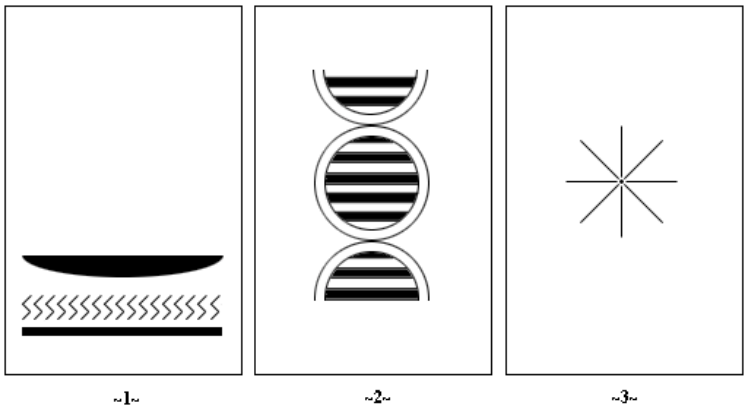


into your arm – lose 1 WOUND point. Fortunately, you have your Medical Kit under arm. After having a quick search, you come up with three items that may be of some use in rescuing the man. Which will you employ:

- A Hypodermic of Anaesthetic? Turn to 105
- Surgical Braces for Mouths? Turn to 155
- Ethanol and Matches? Turn to 193

212

The elevator opens onto what appears to be a sort of lab or maybe even living quarters: there is a large chair, a huge bunk, several monitors, and a whole host of delicate instruments, machines, and devices of dubious function. You enter the room and after a detailed search discover three small devices scattered around the place that fit in a general sort of way the machine described by Xox as being necessary for the manufacture of the anti-Fuhuruh biological toxins. Each device has a different pictorial label (you can’t decipher the flowing script written on each); these are:



If you do not have both of the alien eggs you will have to return to the elevator (turn to 387). Otherwise, select which device you will put the eggs in:

One	Turn to 268
Two	Turn to 310
Three	Turn to 332

### 213

The other car, driving on the opposite side of the jeep, veers in and sideswipes your vehicle. A complicated set of robotic arms erupts through the thin skin of a rear door to grab Max's son from where he sits behind the steering wheel and then tosses him into the back seat of the car. He disappears from view with hardly a sound. Your jeep begins to veer out of control. Having finished with the young man, the robotic arms are now reaching for you! You dodge their chromium talons, jump into the recently vacated driver's seat and gun the motor to avoid your attacker. You are heading at speed for the crossroads over ANZAC Grove: a long line of trees stretches across your path. Will you attempt to force the other car into one of these trees (turn to 251) or attempt to evade it (turn to 297)?

### 214

With one swift motion you sweep down, grab a boulder, and cast it at the policeman. Your missile strikes him in the shoulder and completely removes his arm, gun and all. Flash, nonplussed, sways uneasily and looks down at his detached limb. The arm, incredibly, rapidly sprouts a number of spindly insectoid legs and two limpid eyes on stalks. This mini creature scuttles toward you, firing the

## 215—217

gun as it comes, still clasped in Flash's bloodless hand. Fortunately, its aim is poor and only one of the bullets hits you, grazing your arm – lose 1 WOUND point. Turn to 23.

### 215

The remaining invaders advance quickly in a series of hops, bounds and slithers. You have no obvious weapon to employ and even one of the creatures would be enough to kill both of you. Discretion seems to be the better part of valour in this case: you run. Will you dive through a window (turn to 194) or exit through one of the side doors (turn to 55)?

### 216

You take the controls on the co-pilot's side of the cockpit and pull the plane out of the dive. The octopus-thing, which has been only temporarily disabled, comes hopping and flying out of the rear cabin in a rage to attach itself to your shoulder. The tentacles snake out and the pain becomes unbearable. You cannot keep the plane under control. There is very little time and nothing in sight other than a fire extinguisher and a medical kit. Which will you hit it with: the extinguisher (turn to 286) or the kit (turn to 239)?

### 217

The dog, looking less and less dog-like by the moment, narrows the gap. Finally, it leaps upon you and brings you to the ground. Instantly its tongue extends a good eighteen inches, wrapping around your arm and probing with its needle tip for a major vein or artery. Will you hit

the creature (turn to 257) or try to lever its tongue off your arm (turn to 379)?

## 218

You enter a large cavern to immediately find yourself under bombardment from an unknown number of squealing little critters all lodged in cracks and holes in the ceiling that pelt you with rocks. One strikes you a nasty blow on the head – lose 1 WOUND point. There are four exits, so will you proceed:

North?	Turn to 97
South?	Turn to 280
East?	Turn to 116
West?	Turn to 394

## 219

The truck approaches at speed and continues to accelerate. Thick fumes pour from its twin exhaust. You fire two shots: the first punches a neat, star shaped burst in the windscreen; the second does likewise but succeeds in taking the red eyes with it. The truck gradually veers away, turning tighter and tighter, until it jack-knives and rolls. The vehicle immediately sets about reconstructing itself, so you take the opportunity to quietly slip away unseen. Turn to 99.

## 220

The two of you follow the water pipe toward the Burang Creek. Passing a thin line of trees, you descend into the dry, sandy bed. The pipe, thin and rusty, has its intake buried in the sand while the control valve sits level with the bank. Clanging sounds of metal on metal can be

## 221—223

heard rushing through the pipe. To investigate these noises, will you dig up the buried end of the pipe (turn to 87) or turn the supply valve (turn to 30)?

### 221

You pull the pipe out, intent on bashing the creature, then hear a faint – possibly telepathic – voice whisper: ‘Blowpipe.’ Distracted by a sudden, tugging wrench from the Fuhuruh you ignore the voice, but when you raise the pipe overhead the voice becomes unmistakable: ‘Blowpipe.’ Taking this as a hint, you raise the pipe to your mouth and blow down it: a long, lusty puff of air. A ferocious spate of iridescent pink spheres exudes from the open end and fall upon the monster, reducing it to a pool of grey ooze in an instant. Free, you notice that there are two doors in the back of the niche. Will you open the left door (turn to 252) or the right (turn to 307)?

### 222

You perform a snap twist, rolling in her arms, and sink your elbow into her sternum. Astoundingly, her chest caves in as if constructed of paper; your arm sinks from sight. A horrible snapping follows as a pair of enormous jaws formed in her chest and hidden beneath her clothes snap shut on your arm, ripping it to shreds. You collapse in her grip, overcome by pain, shock, and blood loss. Your adventure is over.

### 223

Since you are substantially slower than the kangaroos, their vanguard is soon on your heels. You slide to a halt and spin to defend yourself but the creatures are too fast.

Merciless, they slash with talons and gore with fangs until you are dead. Your adventure is over.

## 224

After a few minutes the process is complete and the device shoots a jet-black cylinder into a silver tray ready for your collection. Possibly it is a Gas Grenade. The number 100 is stamped on its case. If you wish, you may take it (its WEIGHT=1). Turn to 387.

## 225

Hypothesizing that the darting smaller machine is a scout – literally an eye for the larger – you decide that this should be destroyed or incapacitated first. Will you strike it with Max's empty shotgun (turn to 293) or use your bare hands (turn to 260)?

## 226

You follow the corridor until it undergoes a sharp turn. Just at this point, you discover a narrow, octagonal door set back in a niche. Will you proceed:

Through the door?	Turn to 381
North?	Turn to 305
West?	Turn to 84

## 227

The truck rattles off down the road. When you turn back towards Flash, you notice that his ears seem to be somewhat pointier than you remembered them, and that his skin appears to have an unnatural blue cast to it. He sits rigid in the seat, staring straight ahead through impenetrable sunglasses. 'Get in the car,' he says slowly,

as if having difficulty with the words. Will you do as he says (turn to 183) or refuse (turn to 298)?

**228**

The truck is right behind you and death is only an instant away when you notice a deep ditch to one side, partially hidden behind some saltbush. The trench's purpose is not clear and its depth unknown, but you fling yourself into it regardless. With a victorious blast from its horn, the truck drives straight over you. One of the front wheels plummets into the ditch, showering dirt over you. For a heart stopping second the tread hangs only inches from your face, but the impact on the truck sends it completely out of control. It bucks as the wheel lifts out of the trench, skids, and then jack-knives and flips over with a terrific crash. After what seems an eternity of dust and shrieking metal, it comes to a jagged halt on its side. Shaken, you climb unharmed from the hole to discover the vehicle busily reconstructing itself. Fortunately, it has been sufficiently disabled to allow you time to escape. Turn to 99.

**229**

After only a short distance you find your way completely blocked by the body of a truly tremendous Fuhuruh. Its bloated, putrescent body – glowing feebly – fills the narrow tunnel while its one exposed limb mindlessly lashes at the walls, tearing rocks and gravel free. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. You head back north. Turn to 195.

**230**

Pursuing the children, you hear their cries for help becoming even shriller. After a moment you stumble upon a few of them brushing frantically at their bodies, which are covered with tiny, squirming creatures that you soon realize are mice. But what mice! Somehow the rodents have developed huge fangs that they are greedily sinking into the kids. And their eyes... their eyes are like the eyes of no animal of this earth. Will you try pulling the vampiric mice from the children's bodies (turn to 385) or cast about for an alternative (turn to 115)?

**231**

The two of you synchronize your plans, then jump to the beer taps and begin to spray the amber fluid around the crowded room. The creatures appear to be completely impervious to it, but the effect on the machines is impressive: all begin to disintegrate. A large proportion instantly collapses into piles of useless scrap while the remainder go completely berserk and start cutting up everything in the room. This has its pros and cons: most of the creatures in the room are ripped to shreds, but in their frenzy the machines also attack you – lose 1 WOUND point. Eventually, all the machines are destroyed and only some of the creatures remain. Turn to 215.

**232**

You pour the Vodka into the pool then taunt the crab beasts to approach. They flick their paddle-shaped rear legs and sluice across toward you, instantly disintegrating when they come in contact with the alcohol. Triumphant,



you enter the pool. Make a note that the *Water Number* = 5. Turn to 5.

### 233

You drive north along the highway, leaving the town. As you approach the turn-off to the hippy ashram you notice 'Flash' – the local copper – sitting in his blue Ford and zapping passing trucks with his roof-mounted radar. You wave and nod, then turn off, bumping along the rough dirt track. When you arrive, you discover that the hippies are about to set off on a short expedition to the trig point on the hill overlooking the commune. Evidently the children have recently become frightened that the place is bewitched. One even claims to have been bitten by the trig marker. One of the parents, a tall amiable man with hair and beard almost to his waist, is about to take all the kids up to the trig to show them there's no reason to be afraid. He invites you along, saying they'll only be half an hour and that you can give the kids their check-up when you get back. Will you go with them (turn to 371) or, if you haven't already, either go to the motel reception to pay your bill (turn to 178) or deliver Old Ces' dentures (turn to 329)?

### 234

The elevator rises and opens into a cramped chamber dominated by a mammoth crash couch and several banks of inscrutable instruments. A small locker to one side has several items in it that may be of some use to you; they are listed below and you can take as many as you can carry (keep in mind that your maximum WEIGHT allowance is 5).

ITEM	WEIGHT
Uncharged Power Gun	1
Sticky Mine	2
Tube of White Paste	1
Map of Stars	1

The only other thing of interest in the room is a large red hemisphere set in one arm of the crash couch. You can take this if you wish (turn to 326), otherwise you return to the elevator and press either the first (turn to 175), second (turn to 189), or third button (turn to 212).

### 235

Employing a gigantic bound, you stomp onto the stalked eyes and kick them into broken twigs. You can't help noticing that they immediately start to reconstruct themselves with a writhing frenzy. However, the boy has been freed, since the eyes are obviously part of the same organism as the tendrils. More tendrils erupt from the ground, this time at *your* feet. If you have FAST REFLEXES, turn to 264, otherwise turn to 312.

### 236

With flagging strength you clear the fence and land in the tall grass, nearly breaking your ankle on the ploughed furrows that crease the dry ground. In despair, you hobble away. Revving its motor and blaring its horn in delight, the car races through the barbed wire fence and into the field, only yards behind you. Fortuitously, the same furrows that have hobbled you remove the car's front wheels with a *crash*. It slides nose down in dirt and

grass to a devastatingly sudden halt. Its motor growls aggressively and showers of dirt spray up from its spinning rear wheels, but otherwise the vehicle remains completely crippled. Warily, you limp away from the wreckage until it is out of sight. You have two choices: northwards, the road to Mindip is in sight (turn to 241), or southwards lies Cabralowie (turn to 10).

### 237

You walk down a short corridor and into a large hall whose ceiling appears to be constructed from the foundations of one of Cabralowie's buildings. The whole thing is saved from collapse by a series of roughly pitted columns of rock running around the walls. The hall is full of the mechanical variety of Fuhuruh, clicking and whirring. Upon seeing you, they spring into immediate and hostile activity. Several tall creatures on articulated steel legs scamper in a pincer movement to entrap you, while a variety of steel spheres roll directly forward. If you have one of the items listed below, you may employ it in your defence, otherwise turn to 392.

Chain and Plumb Bob	Turn to 324
Circular Saw Blades	Turn to 294
Sticky Mine	Turn to 263

### 238

Old Ces leads the way up the bank, surprisingly nimble for a man in his condition. Once at the top you notice silvery shapes, low and silent, slithering between the tall gum trees. You hesitate, caught between the machine behind, which is advancing up the bank via clumsy bounds, and the unknown yet certainly menacing things

in front. Suddenly, one of the silver shapes springs from a tree and lands on your shoulders. Instantly it slashes you with metal talons. Its eyes, red machine nodes encased in an iron shell, glare inches from your face. Blood flows freely from your arm – lose 1 WOUND point. Ces, proving himself to be a man of action, picks up a stick and knocks the device from your shoulder. He leads you stumbling back down into the riverbed. Turn to 262.

### 239

The medical kit is useless: its soft plastic case bounces harmlessly from the creature's leathery skin. Unconsciousness sweeps over you as the pain becomes too intense. The plane, once again out of control, soon crashes into the scrub below. Your adventure is over

### 240

The passageway ejects you into yet another rough-cut chamber: this one with a black, crystalline floor and three exit tunnels. Which will you enter? The:

North?	Turn to 80
South?	Turn to 322
West?	Turn to 258

### 241

You stalk across the fields toward Mindip Junction, glancing warily from side to side and hoping for sight of one of the few farmers that live out this way. When you finally reach the road, you see a car parked on the verge some distance ahead. You approach warily, keeping to the sparse cover that grows in an uncleared strip beside

## 242—244

the road. When within thirty yards, you see it is a grazier replacing a flat tyre on a battered old Holden ute. Beside him lie two kelpies, one apparently dead and the other wounded by a deep gash in a forepaw, but keeping a suspicious watch. Will you approach cautiously, keeping to the scrub (turn to 146), or step out onto the road and declare yourself openly (turn to 176)?

### 242

Ignoring the man, you sprint off towards the house in the vain hope of eluding the machine. It pursues with disheartening speed and steel-gnashing enthusiasm. Eventually it snatches you with a gigantic pincer, hoists you in the air, and deposits you in a mouth-like grinder set in its top. Your adventure is over.

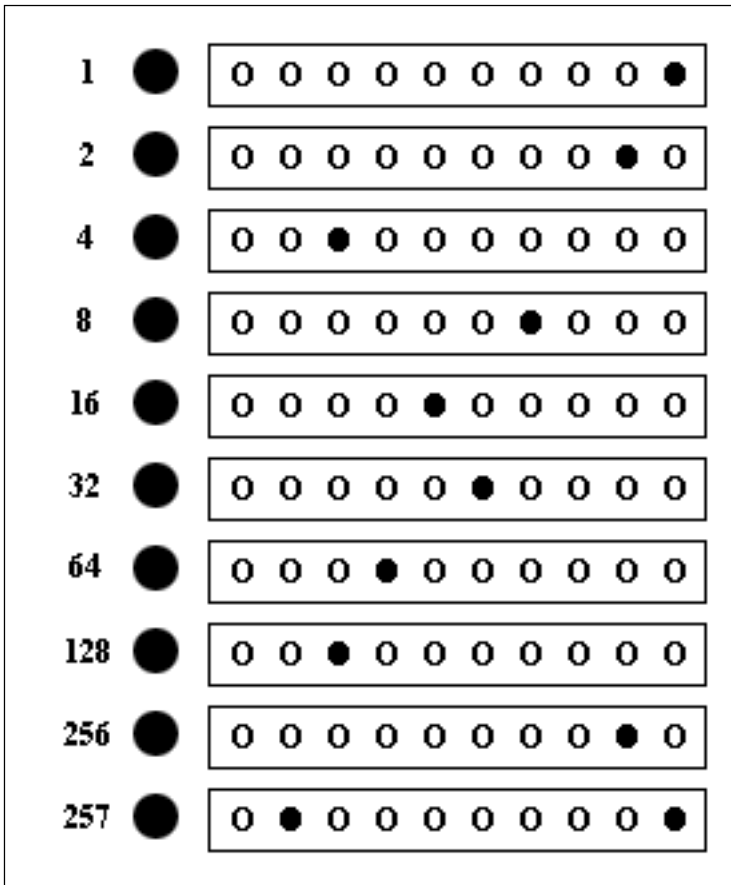
### 243

You enter another Y-junction: honeycomb tunnels proceed south, north-east and north-west. The breath of fresh air is even stronger here, although its direction is still indefinable. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. Will you go:

South?	Turn to 94
North-East?	Turn to 317
North-West?	Turn to 152

### 244

You pull hard on the wheel, exacerbating the already pronounced left hand roll of the car to such an extent that the vehicle flips, rolls, and then smashes into a tree – crushing both cabin and you in it. Your adventure is over.



## 245

The stairs go down about thirty feet until blocked on a metallic landing by a copper door. Next to this door is a panel of buttons: each with a peculiar set of dots, boxes, and a number next to it (see illustration). To open this door it seems you will have to push a certain number of buttons. The dots may be a clue; in fact one set of dots at

the bottom do not have a button at all! When you have decided which buttons to press, add up the numbers next to all of the buttons you have selected and turn to the page that *equals* the total. If the section you turn to does not start with the word SUCCESS, then you have made an incorrect selection and are destroyed immediately by a powerful electric surge from the door. If you do not care to try to open the door, you may return the way you came – turn to 266.

### 246

You toss the axe lightly from hand to hand as you turn to face the oncoming truck. If you have Max's son with you, he keeps running and soon disappears over a slight rise. If you have CRICKET PLAYING ability, turn to 383, otherwise turn to 308.

### 247

Taking a spike from your pocket and still dodging shots, you fling it at the policeman. Flash doesn't even attempt to evade the missile, letting it land square between his eyes where it embeds itself in his skull like a gigantic rusty pin. He laughs and tries to shoot you again, but somehow the spike in his head seems to have put his aim off and he just fires, stiff armed, into the air. 'Damn,' he curses, looking at his errant arm and struggling to pull it down with his other. Extraordinary! Turn to 23.

### 248

Max grabs a couple of bottles of Scotch while you take the Vodka. With a nod to each other, you leap to your feet and hurl the bottles indiscriminately into the

crowded room. The alcohol-filled missiles don't appear to harm the creatures (other than an odd bruise, perhaps) but the effect on the machines is devastating: most instantly collapse into piles of useless scrap while a few go completely berserk and wreak a horrible carnage upon the organic creatures in the room, ripping most of them to pieces, before finally disintegrating. As the Vodka appears to be useful, you may keep a bottle for later use – its WEIGHT = 1. Make a note that it is stamped with the large gold numerals: 200. All of the machines are destroyed and only some of the creatures remain. Turn to 215.

## 249

You enter a chamber whose walls are made of neatly cut stone blocks. There are no doors apparent, only three corridors leading straight as arrows into darkness. Will you proceed:

North?	Turn to 394
East?	Turn to 210
West?	Turn to 272

## 250

Easing your way through the thin stands of maize, you come upon a curious sight: sitting on the ground, splicing himself together with long sheaves of dry leaves and husks, is a man constructed entirely of corn plants. One leg lies thrust before him while he works on weaving the other together, having completed the thigh but with still the lower part of the limb to go. Will you approach this creature (turn to 126) or retreat and resume your pursuit of the hippy children (turn to 230)?



**251**

By employing a series of vicious twists of the steering wheel, forcing your jeep to collide with the car, you successfully force your attacker into one of the stately pines that line ANZAC Grove. The machine disintegrates into a pile of fenders and rolling hubcaps. Things are not all tea and bickies for you, however, as the collision has bashed you around badly – lose 1 WOUND point. You continue west along the road, which you soon realize is taking you toward the airstrip. Turn to 339.

**252**

The door opens into a passage which you follow until its termination in a small room. On the other side of this room is a miniature train, about ten feet long and a foot or so high, but large enough to sit on comfortably and resting on miniature rails that disappear to left and right down a couple of tunnels. The train appears to be getting up steam, so will you climb aboard (turn to 282) or return to the niche and open the right hand door (turn to 307)?

**253**

The car is doing about eighty clicks by the time you have raised the gun to shoulder and taken aim. You let fly six rounds in quick succession, destroying the windscreen, puncturing a tyre, and pitting the car's body with buckshot. The vehicle swerves slightly, owing to the shredded tyre, but maintains its deadly pace. You throw the empty shotgun away and turn to run. Turn to 382.

**254**

You climb down a short ladder and walk through the gap in the energy field. Now, unfortunately, you must return to the labyrinth below to continue the fight against the Fuhuruh! You find the corridor that brought you to the surface and, re-entering it, spiral deep down into the earth. Turn to 141.

**255**

One of your steps is misplaced and elicits a sharp *crack* from a breaking twig. The grazier's dog leaps to its feet and barks hysterically. Quick as a flash, the grazier drops the wheel brace, snatches a shotgun from under the car, and lets fly several quick blasts in your direction. If you have FAST REFLEXES, turn to 300, otherwise turn to 273.

**256**

As you stand, preparing for the onslaught, it becomes clear to you that there are too many of the creatures. Your fate is certain and within minutes is fulfilled: your broken body lies on the ground and the not-quite-kangaroos stand about, discussing in their own guttural tongue what to kill next. Your adventure is over.

**257**

With hysteria induced strength you punch wildly into the animal, breaking it in two. Dumbfounded, you watch as the rear half – standing on two thin and shaky legs – begins to grow a spindly set of arms, a couple of stalked eyes, and a large nose. Likewise, the upper half transforms what used to be the dog's forepaws into a set

## 258—260

of hands and arms while the mouth, forgoing its improbably long tongue, starts to develop an impressive set of fangs. The front part grabs you with its brand new hands and sinks in the teeth – lose 1 WOUND point. You shake the little creature off and continue with your flight toward the river. Turn to 10.

### 258

You stumble along the tunnel for a while until you reach a T-junction. Rough, blasted passages disappear into darkness. Which way will you go:

North?

Turn to 59

South?

Turn to 296

East?

Turn to 240

### 259

The chainsaw you select is in a battered but working condition (its WEIGHT = 3); the fuel tank is full. You start it up and walk out toward the trees, attacking the nearest and driving the saw deep into its trunk. The tree shudders, halts, and then falls to one side with a crash of breaking limbs. Ha! Easy. Revving the motor, you turn towards the next but suddenly find yourself surrounded by twisting lithe shoots that spring from the ground at your feet. They grow with such speed and in such profusion that you quickly become trapped. If you have EXTRA STAMINA, turn to 93, otherwise turn to 112.

### 260

You launch a tackling dive at the sphere, taking it by surprise and clutching it to your chest. It protests vigorously; servos whine and small puff jets buffet you

as it tries to break free. Eventually, as a last resort, it rakes you with a searing jet of burning hydrocarbons, probably using up its fuel reserves but certainly inflicting excruciating pain on your body: lose 1 WOUND point. However, it's too late to save itself. Still smoking, you stumble up to the three-metre tall garbage disposal and hurl it down the chute. As soon as the eye disappears from sight the larger machine becomes completely inactive and grinds to a halt. Max leads the way past it. Turn to 166.

### 261

The door takes you into a small empty room. Nothing happens and there are no other exits so you retreat the way you entered only to find that the scenery has changed. Turn to 170.

### 262

The two of you head off along the sandy bed. You affect a stumbling gait while Ces scuttles ahead. His speed proves to be his undoing; suddenly the sand beneath his feet falls away, revealing a deep hole. Ces plummets into this pit and disappears from view with an unnatural haste, almost as if he has been dragged under. A soft hum vibrates through the ground. Will you stop and try to free the old man (turn to 325) or run for your life (turn to 351)?

### 263

The Sticky Mine is a sphere of glass with a long metal handle attached to one side. You (hopefully) arm it by twisting a ring switch in the handle. Will you throw it

## 264–267

into a gaggle of Fuhuruh who are quite near (turn to 342) or at the ceiling of the hall (turn to 368)?

### 264

As you were expecting the worst, the plant does not take you by complete surprise and you are able to escape without so much as a scratch. Turn to 366.

### 265

With a tremendous hop and thrust of your body, you manage to send her stumbling against the bars. She grunts, presumably in pain, and loosens her grip, but this is only so she can get her teeth into your shoulder – lose 1 WOUND point. There's no more leverage to be got out of the banking counter, so will you push her toward the coffee furniture (turn to 285), or elbow her in the midriff (turn to 222)?

### 266

You step into a small stainless steel room. There are two exit corridors and a narrow staircase leading down, and from which arises a rather dank odour. Will you go:

Down the stairs?	Turn to 245
North?	Turn to 101
West?	Turn to 330

### 267

Leaning forward, you reach under the dash, grab a fistful of wires, and pull. A huge shower of sparks erupts into the car's interior, setting fire to your trousers. You quickly beat the flames out but not before you have been sorely burned - lose 1 WOUND point. Turn to 77.

**268**

You open the device and place the eggs inside; a light comes on when you close the door. After a while this light goes off and a soft chime sounds. When you reopen the machine something small and hideous, all teeth and antennae, leaps out into your face. The infant Fuhuruh's surprise attack is swift and deadly: your life departs and this is the end of your adventure.

**269**

If you have **STRENGTH** and **FAST REFLEXES** and a **KEEN EYE**, turn to 353, otherwise turn to 327.

**270**

The door takes you into a small empty room. Nothing happens and there are no other exits. Fearful of the Puffer-fish, you reluctantly retreat the way you entered only to find that the scenery has changed. Turn to 37.

**271**

The pipe terminates over one of the dams, hanging limply in rusty decline above a muddy pool of water a few feet below. There is nothing apparently wrong here other than some dry, metallic gasping sounds coming from the open end of the pipe, but this may be quite normal. Will you try to look in the end of the pipe to see if anything is blocking it (turn to 306) or leave the dams to inspect the river end of the pipe (turn to 220)?

272

The corridor carries you straight and smooth into a T-junction. Two other corridors shoot away from the intersection. Will you go:

North?	Turn to 65
South?	Turn to 170
East?	Turn to 249

273

You try to take cover, but aside from the grazier being an excellent shot you are too slow. One of the blasts hits you full in the chest and fatally wounds you. You collapse, hearing your last sounds: the grazier's voice, 'Good dog, we'll stop those vermin yet...' Your adventure is over.

274

You crunch gears, wasting time, and rap the car in reverse. Your plan half succeeds as only the front half of your car is crushed by the raging mechanical behemoth as it drives straight over the bonnet. The car stops dead and you climb free. From beside the barn you see what appears to be a man waving at you. Will you run towards him (turn to 197) or towards the house (turn to 242)?

275

You enter another Y-junction. The soft sound of a melancholy tune comes drifting from the northern passage. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT.

You can go:

North	Turn to 6
South-East	Turn to 384
South-West	Turn to 67

**276**

Fighting the wheel, you manage to regain enough control to steer the car off the road and between a pair of dusty native pines. The vehicle comes to rest in a slight depression. Crawling out, you see that a large semitrailer that had attempted to avoid your fish-tailing vehicle has itself left the road, careered across the front of the garage, and come to rest embedded in the side of the police car. Flash and the garage owner have been crushed in the smash. The bodies, hidden under the twisted wreckage, are not immediately retrievable. The owner's wife appears and together you decide that the proper authorities must be immediately contacted. She informs you this can only be accomplished by using the radiotelephone at the Agricultural Business rep's house – the nearest dwelling to the store. Turn to 10.

**277**

You spring to your feet and splash kero from left to right in a wide arc. The creatures instantly explode into flames, especially the one footed things, their screams filling the room. As the horrors die, the remaining machines – which are completely unaffected by the kerosene – leap at you ferociously. They brandish a diverse collection of slashing and stabbing instruments and waste no time in cutting you to pieces. Your adventure is over.

**278**

You trot along the edge of the gully, following it first to the east and then to the south. A dust cloud appears ahead and soon you see the forms of a large mob of kangaroos



## 279—281

bounding toward you. As they get closer you see that these animals, like just about everything else in this wretched town, have been substantially modified: long talons curve from their strangely hand-like front paws, and their teeth are long fangs. Will you run (turn to 223) or fight (turn to 256)?

### 279

With a wide swing, you cast the stake across the car toward Flash. It hits him and bounces off with a soggy *thud*. Flash laughs out loud as if smacked by a feather. Now that he has a clear view of you as you try to retreat back behind the vehicle, he fires again. The bullet strikes you in the chest and kills you instantly. Your adventure is over.

### 280

You enter a rough-hewn room whose ceiling appears to be constructed from the chassis of a large car. Nothing springs out at you though, so you continue on your way. There are three tunnels. Which will you proceed down:

Northern?	Turn to 218
Eastern?	Turn to 177
Western?	Turn to 322

### 281

Your efforts to break free are completely fruitless. The attacker remains strapped about your body. Then it slides a noisome flap over your face, which begins to extrude slimy tendrils into your nostrils and mouth: insinuating themselves into your bronchial passages, cutting off all

air and threatening to suffocate you. If you have EXTRA STAMINA, turn to 369, otherwise turn to 335.

### 282

True to the nature of things lately, the train proves itself to be less than friendly. When you sit over the first class section of the lead carriage the engine glares at you with a single angry red eye and blasts you with a jet of steam – lose 1 WOUND point. To your dismay, the train begins to disassemble itself, no doubt constructing a more dangerous version of itself. Retreating with prudent haste, you return to the niche and proceed through the right hand door. Turn to 307.

### 283

You lean against a shelf and begin rocking it until, at the right moment, it slowly topples forward. The row falls onto another, knocking that over, which in turn takes the next with it and so on until the room is a chaotic profusion of smashed shelves and goods. Kicking about in the debris you come across the dog, a sight that makes your blood freeze. Crushed under a shelf of cans you notice tentacles and thin bony limbs working feverishly through the broken fur: reconstructing...

In seconds you are back in the store proper, a bolted door between you and whatever it is that lies crushed in the room beyond. Turn to 76.

### 284

The corridor takes a ninety-degree turn. You can either go north (turn to 381) or east (turn to 356).

## 285

You jump and throw yourself against her solidly constructed body. The two of you stagger into a chair, bounce from a table, then collapse onto the kero heater, tipping it, the coffee, and yourselves over the floor. If there is any broken glass on the floor (from your previous manoeuvres) then you cut yourself badly and lose 1 WOUND point. But the Agnes-monster has been dealt a serious and possibly fatal blow: she writhes on the floor, small blue flames racing across and through the thousands of hairline cracks that have appeared across her skin, tentacles and all. In horror, you crawl to your feet. Turn to 32.

## 286

The fire extinguisher is heavy and the intense pain has made you so weak that you can hold nothing. The device drops from your grasp and falls to the floor with a loud *clunk*. The force of the fall sets it off and the cabin fills with a white gas. Almost miraculously, the creature dies from these fumes: it scrunches up, relinquishes its grip, and falls to the floor like a dead bug. You regain control of the plane and bring it down to land on Highway 102 – fortunate that traffic is so rare in these parts. As you are unable to navigate the aircraft, you taxi it off the road and abandon it. Turn to 99.

## 287

The Fire Fighting Equipment consists of several pack-sized pump-action spray units, all empty. Nearby,

however, are several large drums of assorted chemicals with which you could fill the sprays instead of water.

Which will you try:

Kerosene?	Turn to 128
Herbicide?	Turn to 153
Insecticide?	Turn to 190

## 288

You enter another Y-junction only to immediately plummet into a deep pit that opens under your feet. The fall is not too serious, though, since you are not killed outright – lose 1 WOUND point. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. There are three directions you can go:

North	Turn to 358
South-East	Turn to 41
South-West	Turn to 33

## 289

You pursue the children down into the cornfield where they disappear from view, although their screams continue to be audible to front and left. To the right, though, there is silence punctuated by an odd thrashing sound, as if some wounded creature lies disabled in the corn. Perhaps one of the kids has tripped and fallen? Will you continue after the sounds of terror (turn to 230) or investigate the thrashing noise (turn to 250)?

## 290

After a while the room bursts into activity: most of the mucous-sliding creatures slither out of the bar and into the poolroom where they disappear down a wide tunnel.

## **291—293**

The machines follow in a clattering shambles. The remaining creatures converse for a while in low growling voices before all throwing their empty soft drink bottles behind the bar. ‘Jeez, yow!’ you hiss as one of bottles bounces from your head to the floor. The invaders instantly leap to their pseudopods and come hopping toward your position. Turn to 215.

### **291**

You enter a large hall whose floor surface is dominated by a shallow lake in which float two alien machines cunningly wrought to represent gigantic crabs. If you have already destroyed these creatures, turn to the ‘Water Number’ now, otherwise continue: they consider you with solid, ball bearing eyes and slowly work their mandibles. It would be folly to enter the water, which is obviously what they are hoping you will do. If you have the bottle of Vodka, add 32 to the number that was stamped on it then turn to the page that equals the total, otherwise you will have to retreat north (turn to 389).

### **292**

Your bonds are strong, but poorly anchored. By applying leverage in the right spot, you manage to burst free, tearing a couple of the steel bands from the chair at the same time. Turn to 148.

### **293**

If you have CRICKET PLAYING ability, turn to 347, otherwise turn to 304.

**294**

Like a ninja, you spin the sharp blades at the advancing Fuhuruh: shearing an arm off here, a leg there, and occasionally even cutting one of the machines in two. Eventually you run out of missiles and the remaining Fuhuruh – goaded into a blistering rage – tear you to pieces. Your adventure is over.

**295**

You heave and strain against your mechanical bonds, but all to no avail; the arms hold you as tight as ever. To your horror, a couple of long electrodes spring out of the steering column and light up with in sudden arc of bright blue electricity, burning you – lose 1 WOUND point. In mad desperation to escape, it occurs to you that your legs are free and as such could be used to either step on the foot brake (turn to 390) or the accelerator (turn to 42).

**296**

After a considerable distance you come across a large hexagonal door set in the eastern side of the tunnel, which continues to cut a rough path to the north and south. Will you proceed through the door (turn to 322) or along the tunnel, either to the north (turn to 258) or south (turn to 374)?

**297**

Using skills born of feverish desperation, you manage to keep yourself at a reasonable distance from the attacking car, all the while continuing toward ANZAC Grove. Having other things on your mind, you do not notice that you are heading directly for one of the massive pines that

line the road just ahead until it is almost too late. At the last moment you see it and stand on the brakes. In a screech of tyres and burning rubber, you slide to a halt with only millimetres to spare. Your pursuer, horn blaring triumphantly, attempts to ram you but appears to lack brakes and fails to slow down enough to effect the necessary turn. It flies past your car and runs straight into a tree with a terrific crash of metal, the ensuing collision bending it like a banana. You continue west along the road, which you discover is taking you toward the airstrip. Turn to 339.

**298**

His reaction is both instantaneous and unexpected. You find yourself looking down the barrel of his police issue .357 Magnum Python. ‘Get in the car,’ he says, turning to face you for the first time. You notice that his tongue has a pronounced fork in it and that his teeth are strangely rounded, as if somehow not real. Will you do as he says (turn to 183) or dive aside to avoid the gun (turn to 367)?

**299**

The choice you act upon is incorrect. When you step forward, thinking the monster is going for another entrance, it suddenly lashes out and strikes you with a hooked claw – lose 1 WOUND point. You stagger into the room. Turn to 340.

**300**

Thankfully, you see his reaction before he starts firing and so you have just enough time to drop to the ground; the buckshot passes uncomfortably close overhead. ‘Hey,

don't shoot!' you exclaim, 'I'm harmless.' The grazier, justifiably wary, commands you to stand up. Turn to 176.

### **301**

The Wombat is fast but you waste no time in quickly scrambling up the steep sides of the gully to safety. The beast seems disinclined to follow; instead, it starts a low penetrating howl whose purpose is not at all clear. Turn to 278.

### **302**

The two of you lie quietly on the floor, listening to the howling and growling as the creatures talk, or sing, or whatever they're doing to each other. Suddenly, there is a loud knocking under the floor. You start back and then cry out in sheer terror as a pair of gigantic steel claws rips through the floorboards. The cold optic sensors in their carapaces consider you malevolently before the giant steel jaws suddenly lunge forward to seize your body and crush the life from you. Your adventure is over.

### **303**

Before you can utter a word, Agnes gives a weird hooting cry reminiscent of a tortured owl, and then displays a nimbleness rarely seen in a lady of her age by leaping onto the counter! Your mind bulges in outraged astonishment when you notice that Agnes' lower half has been replaced by a mixed set of purple tentacles and diamond-backed snake's tails. She hisses at you through slitted mouth and pebble teeth; a couple of tentacles flick menacingly. If you have FAST REFLEXES, turn to 163, otherwise turn to 202.



**304**

Taking the shotgun, you jump forward and strike the ball a killing blow. As the sharp edge of the butt penetrates its iris, the little machine spews out smoke and drops to the ground with the velocity of a flying brick. Cackling, you hand Max his gun and step over the hulk. While you're in mid-stride the ball violently explodes, propelling you into the ceiling and ending your days. Your adventure is over.

**305**

You enter a room of typical steel construction with a single irregularly shaped door in the northern wall and three exit corridors in the others. A squeal attracts your attention. As you turn toward the sound, something akin to a terrestrial puffer fish leaps from a hidden recess and latches onto your face with needle sharp fangs – lose 1 WOUND point. You free yourself with a sharp slap, sending the horror flapping and sliding across the floor. Time to flee. Will you proceed:

Through the door?	Turn to 270
South?	Turn to 226
East?	Turn to 141
West?	Turn to 13

**306**

The pipe projects some way past the side of the dam and requires considerable dexterity to lean out on; more than you possess. You slip and tumble into the scummy water below. Astonishingly, it starts to boil violently around you as a host of abnormally large yabbies begins to climb over your body, pinching with three-inch claws. To

escape this painful assault, will you leap for the pipe overhead (turn to 54) or swim to the lowest part of the bank (turn to 95)?

**307**

The right hand door opens into a long passage, which you follow. Eventually it runs into the side of another passage whose branches disappear into the murk to left and right. Will you go left (turn to 363) or right (turn to 338)?

**308**

The truck roars up towards you. When it is at the very edge of throwing range you toss the axe at it. The silver bladed weapon spins through the air and buries itself in the vehicle's grille, eliciting a cloud of steam. The truck shifts gear but does not change course. Turn to 102.

**309**

Jumping to your car, you extract an ampoule of general anaesthetic and a hypodermic with which to administer it. The owner, otherwise engaged with leaping up and down upon his wife, does not notice when you approach and has no time in which to react when you grab him by the arm and inject the serum. He collapses to the ground, immediately unconscious, and seems to casual inspection to be quite dead. His wife, who looks like she's about to accuse you of murder, suddenly steps back aghast with wordless horror written over her face. Contrary to normal human practise when dead, the man begins to undergo a frightening transformation: clear flames race across brittle cracks that begin to craze through his skin; slowly, as if settling down into the ground, he dissolves into a

## **310—312**

shapeless pool of grey muck. ‘The police,’ whispers his wife, ‘we must get the police.’ Will you suggest that she go to get Flash the policeman and you notify the nearest neighbours (turn to 10) or vice versa (turn to 91)?

### **310**

You open the device and place both the eggs inside. Cross them from your equipment list. Add the numbers on the eggs together and turn to the page that equals the total.

### **311**

The bulldozer is probably the newest piece of equipment here, no more than ten years old. It starts instantly, and after a few moments of familiarization with the controls you roll off toward the trees. The dozer picks up speed as you lower the scoop and aim for the nearest intruder, ripping it from the ground with a tremendous crash. The response is instant: hundreds of lithe shoots spring from the ground and surround your machine. Some twine around and through the motor, removing essential parts, and bringing you to a clattering halt. Time to get out! If you have an axe, scythe, or chainsaw, turn to 66, otherwise turn to 28.

### **312**

The tendrils slither as quickly as electric eels and attach themselves to one of your feet with alarming ease. Needle sharp tips sink greedily into your ankle, and your blood begins to flow down into the earth – lose 1 WOUND point. Fortunately, your other leg is still free

and you manage to use it to apply some leverage to break free, ripping the tendrils from the ground. Turn to 366.

### **313**

You find yourself in a long corridor that stretches out of sight to the north and south. Will you go north (turn to 37) or south (turn to 210)?

### **314**

Jumping to the man's aid, you tear at the tendrils binding him to the corn creature, ripping bloodstained suckers from the man's flesh with your bare hands. The monster tries to fight you off with a large clump of fibres that penetrate the skin of one of your arms – lose 1 WOUND point. Eventually, the corn man finds the two of you too much to handle and begins to loosen its vampiric grip. Taking advantage of its confusion, you manage to pull yourself and the other man away to safety. You sprint down the hill. Turn to 38.

### **315**

You jump into the co-pilot's seat. Tentatively pulling at the controls, you have no idea how to steer the damn thing. It's all over in moments as the aircraft flies into the ground at 160 miles per hour. Your adventure is over.

### **316**

You toss the spike, hitting the Agnes-monster right in the middle of its chest, but the blow apparently has little or no effect. She hisses as she sinks down on her coiling limbs, then springs across the sweet counter at you, tentacles stretching for your neck. Turn to 202.

## 317–320

### 317

You enter another Y-junction: honeycomb tunnels proceed north, south-east and south-west. Again, there is fresh air to breathe! Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. Will you go:

North?	Turn to 384
South-East?	Turn to 52
South-West?	Turn to 243

### 318

You slide to a halt and spin to face the accelerating vehicle. Will you use:

The Shotgun?	Turn to 253
A Rock?	Turn to 168
An item from your Medical Kit?	Turn to 65

### 319

When you step forward, thinking the monster is going for another entrance, it suddenly lashes out and strikes you with a hooked claw – lose 1 WOUND point. You stagger into the room. Turn to 340.

### 320

The bar does not have any obvious weapons of deadly force. If you have a can of kerosene, you could splash this over the creatures (turn to 277), otherwise you'll have settle for throwing bottles of spirit at them (turn to 248) or spraying beer around the room from the taps behind the bar (turn to 231).

## 321

The police car proves to be more than it seems. When you approach, it suddenly lashes out with a spidery metallic arm that issues from the door handle and seizes you by the leg. Long razors slide out of its claws to lacerate your skin – lose 1 WOUND point. Struggling and bleeding profusely, you reach through the open window to grasp a spare revolver that Flash had left lying on the dash, and open fire into the car door. The arm relinquishes its grip, allowing you to escape to a safe distance, pistol still in hand (you may keep this; its WEIGHT = 1). Turn to 355.

## 322

You enter a large rough-hewn chamber from which lead three broken looking tunnels. Also, an irregularly-shaped steel door is set in the western wall. Will you proceed:

Through the door?	Turn to 15
North?	Turn to 240
South?	Turn to 398
East?	Turn to 280

## 323

The three of you run toward Cabralowie. The dog and grazier set a cracking pace, even though the animal is wounded. Eventually you are left behind. Alone, with the sheep bleating close at hand, you decide to drop everything you are carrying which has a WEIGHT greater than 1. You pick up speed and the sheep are left behind, and soon the town comes into sight. Will you approach a nearby house (turn to 17) or continue south

## 324—326

and skirt around the town to reach the highway (turn to 74)?

### 324

You swing the Chain and Bob overhead like a medieval morning star, smashing your way left and right through the advancing machines, denting carapaces, smashing optic sensorium and twisting antennae. But eventually your weapon becomes entangled in one of the tall alien's legs and you find yourself suddenly defenceless. The Fuhuruh waste no time and pounce upon you ferociously. Your adventure is over.

### 325

You dive to your knees, scooping madly into the sand where Ces disappeared. In response to your efforts, the ground shudders sickeningly before collapsing beneath you as it did for Ces. You slide down through a large iris lock and into a dark space full of stabbing hypodermics and rending steel talons. Your adventure is over.

### 326

You discover that the hemisphere cannot be detached and is, in fact, the launch button for the spacecraft. A great shudder runs through Xox's craft as the engines ignite with a titanic roar. Before you can blink, you're no longer on Earth but accelerating away out of the solar system to a destination unknown! The Earth is doomed and you are helpless. Your adventure is over.

## 327

You have nothing adequate with which to either defend yourself or actuate your escape. The furniture eventually backs you into a corner and pins you to the wall. The piano takes an obvious delight in this as it strikes up a stirring rendition of *God Save the Queen* when the roof finally bulges down far enough to skewer you with a couple of blades. Your adventure is over.

## 328

You retreat into the back room, discovering an open door to the outside world and a clutter of possibly useful objects. After this morning's events it occurs to you to grab a weapon of some kind, but in your haste to leave the Post Office you snatch only one item. Select one of the items from the list below.

ITEM	WEIGHT
An Axe	1
Three Cans of Paint	2
Can of Kerosene	1
Bundle of Wire	1
Lock and Chain	1
Insect Spray	1

Once you have done this you dash out the door and into a dusty Cabralowie street. There are two houses at convenient distances from the Post Office. Will you go to the first (turn to 10) or the other (turn to 388)?



## 329

You drive out along Airstrip Road, stopping at the battered fibro shack that is Old Ces' home. The ancient shearer, gnarled and brown as mallee, ambles out the front door and greets you in the yard. 'G'day, doc,' he says, mincing toothless on his words. 'Got me new choppers have yer?' You hand over his new teeth and make sure they fit properly before stopping for a bit of a chat. It seems Ces has been troubled by the pump that fills his dams from the Burang Creek. 'I've been around bores 'n pumps for forty years,' he says, 'but I ain't ever seen one act like this.' Evidently, the fan of the windmill has been turning to follow him, even against the wind. Sounds like sheer senile paranoia to you, but the old man is quite insistent that the windmill is turning to look at him. He even asks you to go look for yourself, daring you to make a liar of him. Will you humour him by having a look at the windmill (turn to 161) or, if you haven't already, either go to the store to get your flat fixed (turn to 111) or go out to the hippy commune to drum up some business (turn to 233)?

## 330

The corridor brings you into a cubicle-sized room. Two of the walls are completely replaced by entrances to passageways and another of the walls is completely filled by an irregularly shaped door. Will you go:

Through the door?

Turn to 261

North?

Turn to 63

East?

Turn to 266

**331**

You grab a jar of boiled sweets and lob them at her head. She ducks to one side, letting your missile sail harmlessly by to smash on the floor; shards of Broken Glass scatter widely. She hisses as she sinks down on her coiling limbs, then springs across the sweet counter at you, tentacles stretching for your neck. Turn to 202.

**332**

You open the device and place the eggs inside; cross them from your equipment list. Subtract the smaller of the numbers stamped on the eggs from the larger then turn to the page that equals the result.

**333**

You take the scythe and slash into the corn creature, cutting through it with dry strokes and rapidly dismembering it until all that remains of the monster are a number of small clumps of interwoven corn strips. Then you notice a small movement as one of the clumps sends out a tendril to an adjoining bit of corn, pulling it in and weaving it through its own structure. The hippy, though weak from blood loss, points out in a stammering voice that all of the clumps are behaving alike, slowly reconstructing... Both of you take off down the hill. You may keep the scythe (its WEIGHT = 1). Turn to 38.

**334**

You enter another Y-junction, but because one of the tunnels entering it has entirely collapsed, you can only proceed in one of two directions. Subtract 1 from the

## **335—338**

amount of TIME LEFT then decide whether you will go north (turn to 33) or south-east (turn to 195).

### **335**

In a very short time you run out of air: brain and heart bursting for life. Unconsciousness sweeps over you as you feel the first growths of the tendrils merge with your flesh, assimilating and making you their own. Your adventure is over.

### **336**

As this Wombat is considerably larger than its more normal hairy-nosed brethren, it is correspondingly faster. In a trice it has you spiked on its antlers and thrust into the ground, where it fatally gores you. Your adventure is over.

### **337**

You take the gear lever in both hands and pull, wrenching the unfortunate mechanism clean out of the floor. A few grinding noises follow but no slackening of speed. Turn to 77.

### **338**

You follow the passage until it bursts into the side of a gigantic cavern. From below your feet springs a very narrow walkway that crosses over a pit so deep and so dark that you cannot see the bottom. From the roof of the cavern hangs a long white filament reaching almost to the bridge, and which terminates in a large pair of seagull's wings. These wings fly about the cavern, tethered by the filament and seemingly without purpose, but at great

speed. Will you attempt to walk across the bridge (turn to 378) or grab the wings (or filament) and use this to convey you across the pit (turn to 56)?

### 339

You drive along Airstrip Road until a large new house appears on your left. A sign with 'Airport' on it points up the access road that passes in front of this house. Taking the turn-off, you drive past the house and the huge barn that stands behind it. When you draw level with the barn you bring the car to a halt so that you can inspect the surrounding countryside. With a crash and a roar of turbines, a massive machine that seems to be loosely based on a tractor – but several times larger – launches itself through the door of the barn and races down to crush you. Will you slam the car into reverse (turn to 274) or accelerate forwards (turn to 386)?

### 340

Which exit will you take from the room:

North?	Turn to 19
South?	Turn to 249
East?	Turn to 218
West?	Turn to 365

### 341

You snatch up one of the spikes, turn, and throw it as hard as you can at the monster, striking it on the head with a hollow sort of clunk. The creature appears stunned and slowly sinks from sight, leaving only a string of bubbles. You may take several of these Spikes for future protection (WEIGHT = 2). Turn to 375.

**342**

You cast the mine, striking one of the tall Fuhuruh on the chest. The glass sphere breaks and exudes a sticky substance that instantly glues the mine to the alien. The Fuhuruh tries desperately to wrench the weapon free, but after a few seconds the mine explodes with incredible violence. The ensuing blast reduces several of the machines to twisted scrap, but the survivors waste no time in pouncing on you and tearing you to shreds. Your adventure is over.

**343**

The sheep have been beaten off. The grazier and his hound, though both slightly wounded, are still with you. Unfortunately, the car was also a victim of the sheep attack. The little horrors are obviously smarter than their grass-chewing cousins and have punctured all the remaining tyres. Escape by vehicle is now impossible. To your dismay the dog begins a low wailing. Sure enough, the soft sound of angry bleating comes drifting on the wind. Sheep! Time to run. If you have any **SPRINTING** ability, turn to 323, otherwise turn to 373.

**344**

You correctly anticipate the monster's next move and jump into the room without being harmed. The creature seems unaware of your presence and continues mindlessly reaching for the exits. Turn to 340.

**345**

If you rolled a beer keg down the tunnel in the cold room, turn to 290, if not turn to 302.

**346**

You dive on the man, bringing him to the ground. For the next few minutes you both roll about in the dust beside the highway, trading punches and grappling for holds. In his insane desperation he manages to bite you on the arm – lose 1 WOUND point – but finally you manage to get him under control and bundled into the shed which formerly housed his equally demented dog. You slam the door behind him and bolt it securely. He obviously needs urgent hospitalisation and to arrange this you will need a radio: you could use ‘Flash’ the policeman’s (turn to 91) or the local Agricultural Business rep’s who, the owner’s wife informs you, lives in the nearest house to the store (turn to 10).

**347**

Taking the shotgun, you step forward and hit the ball with the flat edge of the butt, employing your best cover drive. The ball flies out of control and straight into the mouth of the mobile garbage disposal, which mindlessly swallows it before becoming instantly inoperative. Success! Max retrieves his gun then leads the way past the huge machine. Turn to 166.

**348**

You enter a rough-hewn chamber with tunnels running into it along its east-west axis. Set in the northern wall is a large hexagonal door. Will you proceed through the

## 349–351

door (turn to 280) or along a tunnel - either east (turn to 127) or west (turn to 398)?

### 349

Using giant strides, you reach the fence and leap over it cleanly before pounding off toward the nearest flock of sheep. The car, moving ever faster, smashes through the barbed wire with a loud *twang* and runs into you from behind, sending your body spiralling over its roof. Your adventure is over.

### 350

The door swings open to reveal what are obviously the breeding chambers of the hive: honeycomb cells, each as large as a coffin, make up walls, floor and ceiling. The process of destruction continues even here: large chunks of rock fall from the ceiling, littering the floor, and enormous cracks craze in all directions with a chilling abruptness. Time is running out! Write on a piece of paper the words TIME LEFT and under this the number 10. This is how many units of time you have in which to find your way to the surface and safety. If TIME LEFT reaches zero then you are instantly killed and your adventure is over! You head off south into the breeding chambers. Turn to 9.

### 351

You take to your heels, dodging from side to side as other holes identical to those that swallowed Ces appear in front of you without warning. After a hundred yards of this you finally break free of the creek by running up a culvert and onto the bridge that carries Highway 102 over

the Burang. You stop for a moment, catch your breath, and then start walking along the road toward Cabralowie. Turn to 91.

### 352

When you press the button, the can instantly breaks down into three parts and changes colour to an off-white. A mechanical voice chimes, 'Biological weapon MOG-1201 disarmed.' Oh no! Desperately, you try to screw the pieces back together but it is too late. Turn to 22.

### 353

Displaying several rare qualities simultaneously, you seize the weighty pack in both hands, lift it over your head, and dash it through the heavily meshed front window. The pack splits open (rendering it useless – cross it from your equipment list) but the hole it has created is large enough for you to dive through. But as you jump, a small standard lamp seizes you with its electrical cord and you become jammed in the hole. In your efforts to break free and scramble through the window you are hurt – lose 1 WOUND point. You are also forced to drop everything you are carrying whose WEIGHT is greater than 1. Turn to 169.

### 354

The sides of the gully are pitted with deep holes, which you use as steps to climb to the bottom. Once you reach the sandy floor you hear a low snuffling sound which is quickly followed by the appearance of a monstrously distorted Wombat: it is at least eight feet long, and bizarre antlers grow ten feet across from its massive



head. Hunger fills the herbivore's eyes when it beholds you, but now it obviously wants meat! Will you flee down the gully (turn to 336) or climb back up to the plain (turn to 301)?

**355**

Retreating towards the store, you run into the garage owner's wife. She's obviously alarmed by the recent furore and has come out to see what's been happening. Outraged, she demands that you immediately go to the house of the local Agricultural Business rep and use his radiotelephone to call for help from Bourke. After she points it out as being the nearest house to the shop, she sends you on your way and then rushes to attend the wounded. Turn to 10.

**356**

The passageway runs only a short distance before ending in a turn. As you pause to consider which direction you should go, a large spike shoots out of one of the walls and stabs you in the leg – lose 1 WOUND point. The spike laughs in glee and rolls its metallic eye at you, and then comes back for a second try. Leaping to one side, you avoid its thrust. You take to your heels. Will you go north (turn to 182) or west (turn to 284)?

**357**

As you fumble with your bag, trying to get an ampoule of anaesthetic in hand, the Agnes-monster leaps onto you and grips you in a suffocating embrace. Eight or nine tentacles pin your arms as you struggle to manoeuvre the needle into her arm and inject the serum. The result is

both sudden and hideous: her grip instantly slackens as she collapses in spasms to the floor, where to your increasing horror she undergoes a rapid series of improbable transformations, firstly into a wolf creature, then a squid, and finally a knotted heap of barnacle things. Turn to 32.

**358**

You follow the tunnel for only a short while before finding your way blocked by a large number of dying Fuhuruh. These have vast segmented bodies and lie twisted together like gigantic poisoned caterpillars, with their legs feebly twitching and foam running like water from mouths slack with pain. You turn and head back to the south. Subtract 1 from the amount of TIME LEFT. Turn to 288.

**359**

You take the stake and run at the straw creature, impaling it and knocking it to the ground. Its blood-soaked tendrils are ripped from the man's body. Yet, after only a short moment the creature stands up as if hardly affected. With deliberate strength, it slowly slides the stake from its body, leaving no sign of scar or injury. With a rustling but fluid motion it flings the stake back at you, grazing your chest – lose 1 WOUND point. Wasting no time, you seize the now wounded man by the arm and stumble away down the hill. Turn to 38.

**360**

Max slides past the machine to tip a keg over to the floor. He flicks a hand at you and together you roll the barrel

## 361—362

back to the tunnel. With a loud, ‘Go!’ you send the beer plummeting down, where it disappears before crashing against something hard. There is a muffled explosion followed by a pall of smoke shooting into the cold room. Silence. Satisfied, if unable to breathe, you head for the door. Turn to 391.

### 361

The door takes you into a small room, empty but for a peculiar odour. Nothing happens and there are no other exits so you retreat the way you entered only to find that the scenery has changed. Turn to 192.

### 362

‘Hurry up, over here,’ says the rep, motioning from the house, ‘there’s no point in fighting the birds; they only get thicker in the air.’ You run after him, gaining shelter. The two of you quickly discuss the appalling strangeness that seems to have fallen like a night curse upon this sleepy town. Together you resolve to make the rep’s house a bastion until help arrives. ‘Good,’ he says, reloading his rifle, ‘You go out the back and stop the trees from coming closer. You know, I’ve lived here for fifty years and there’s never been a tree growing closer than a hundred yards, and then this morning I wake up to find the damn house in the shade!’ He slams the bolt into the breech and heads for the gate. ‘Get moving, use whatever you can find.’ You stroll out to the rear of the house where you are confronted by a forest of gum trees. Well, not quite gum trees, as these trees are moving towards you with a tortured gait, tearing their way through the soil and leaving ploughed furrows stretching

back to the creek. The rep's yard is full of the most bizarre junk, new and old, but all agricultural. After a quick search through the cleanest looking quarter (and thus, you hope, the most serviceable), you discover three possible weapons:

Chainsaw	Turn to 259
Fire Fighting Equipment	Turn to 287
Bulldozer	Turn to 311

### 363

You walk only a short distance before the floor collapses under your feet and pitches you into a dark chute. Slime exuded by some unimaginable creature facilitates your long slide to the bottom, where you emerge into a high ceilinged room. Suddenly, a boulder crashes with a dull *thud* on the floor beside you; a smaller rock follows. Looking up, you see two spidery Fuhuruh scuttling along a narrow ledge some fifteen feet above you. Occasionally one of them pauses to drag a rock or boulder to the edge and then cast it down at you. It is only a matter of time before they hit and kill you. You decide that your only hope is to throw some rocks back at them. If you have any CRICKET' PLAYING ability, turn to 351, otherwise turn to 14.

### 364

Cautiously, you approach the doorway into the other room, listening carefully but in vain for the soft clicking of dog claws on the floor. You observe that the room is a storeroom: tall shelves stacked with paint cans, sacks of flour, bottles, and other supplies fill the small area in neat rows. If you feel reluctant to follow the animal into this

## **365—368**

room, you could try pushing one of the shelves over and hope that the resulting domino effect might catch and crush it (turn to 283), otherwise can you step into the storeroom to look for it (turn to 204).

### **365**

The passage continues straight for a short time before depositing you at a sharp bend. You can go either south (turn to 272) or east (turn to 394).

### **366**

The two of you stumble onwards, skirting around the town to avoid anything that might be even remotely alive, and eventually coming to the southern branch of Highway 102. Turn to 74.

### **367**

If you have FAST REFLEXES, turn to 133, otherwise turn to 140.

### **368**

You cast the mine at the ceiling. The glass sphere breaks on impact and exudes a sticky substance that glues the bomb to the concrete. A few seconds later a tremendous explosion follows and tears a huge hole in the roof. To your surprise, from this fracture pours a large amount of beer, broken beer kegs, and bottles of liquor; obviously, you're under the pub! The alcohol has an instant and dramatic effect upon the metallic Fuhuruh standing below the cascade, utterly reducing them to scattered piles of steel and aluminium. Thinking on your feet, you jump into the pool of beer that has spread across the floor

and thus avoid the few Fuhuruh that have managed to survive, their fear of disintegration outweighing their desire to destroy you. On the other side of the hall is a large circular steel door. The number 20 is stencilled across its face. If you can open this door, do so; otherwise you are trapped in this room and your adventure is over: the Fuhuruh by the other exit are just waiting for you to step from the beer to finish you off.

### 369

With a mad effort you wrench the flap off your face, all the while biting and snapping at the tendrils to keep them at bay. Your arms are still pinned and you're still on the floor. Will you try rolling toward the Carrot (turn to 58) or the blades again (turn to 397)?

### 370

The choice you act upon is incorrect. When you step forward, thinking the monster is going for another entrance, it suddenly lashes out and strikes you with a hooked claw – lose 1 WOUND point. You stagger into the room. Turn to 340.

### 371

The hill in question climbs around a hundred feet behind the ashram with a straggling and very dry cornfield covering its flanks, an unlikely crop in this part of the world. The group spends about fifteen minutes slowly weaving its way to the summit. Some of the children giggle nervously at the prospect of meeting the 'ghost.' 'There,' says the hippy to the kids when everyone is finally at the summit, 'see, nothing to be afraid of.' He

steps forward and slaps a hand onto the angular black trig marker, giving it a good shake to show how safe it is to touch. Immediately, a set of metallic jaws spring from a hidden recess in the trig's post and latch onto the man's hand, the razor teeth sinking in deep and holding tight. The children dissolve screaming down the hill, running in sheer terror. Will you try to help the man break free (turn to 211) or pursue the children to make sure that none of them come to grief in their panic (turn to 289)?

### 372

You throw the car into gear and accelerate wildly onto the highway. Flash fires off several shots into the back of your vehicle, shattering windows, destroying tyres, and sending you hopelessly out of control. The car fishtails from one side of the road to the other before veering sharply to the right, threatening to roll into the trees of ANZAC Grove that line the highway here. As you fight with the wheel, will you try to turn the car left (turn to 276) or right (turn to 244)?

### 373

The three of you run toward Cabralowie. The dog and grazier set a cracking pace, despite their wounds, and you are soon left behind. Alone, with the sheep bleating at your heels, you decide to shed some weight – lose everything you are carrying *except* for 2 items, both of which must have a WEIGHT = 1 or less. Lighter now, you begin to out distance your pursuers. Then the town comes into sight. Will you approach a nearby house (turn to 17), or continue south and skirt around the town to reach the highway (turn to 74)?

**374**

The tunnel continues at an irregular depth for a short distance before engaging in a ninety-degree turn. You can go either north (turn to 296) or east (turn to 398).

**375**

Leaving the dam, you stride back toward the windmill. Ces is nowhere in sight. Will you look for the old man (turn to 6) or head back into Cabralowie to tell somebody about the fantastic creature you've just had a run in with (turn to 158)?

**376**

The device hums and rattles a bit, and shortly the process is complete. The door on the machine opens and inside you find a hand-sized cylinder of jet black steel: a Gas Grenade with the number 50 stamped on it. Its WEIGHT = 1. Turn to 387.

**377**

You leave the creature in the gully and continue your lonely trek to the south. After a few minutes you come across another gully that is much wider and deeper than the other, and cuts directly across your path. Will you enter this gully (turn to 354) or try to skirt around it (turn to 278)?

**378**

After a dozen paces onto the bridge you notice that the wings have taken a sudden and alarming interest in your presence. They have circled behind you and are now



diving with the obvious intent of striking and knocking you over into the abyss. You'll have to run for it! If you have **SPRINTING** ability, turn to 125, otherwise turn to 71.

**379**

Desperately, you grab the animal's saliva coated tongue and prize it free of your arm, all the while keeping the hypodermic tip at a safe distance. With a savage kick you bowl the creature over and turn to run, noticing as you do that the dog has begun to transfigure itself horribly: a vast tooth-lined maw opens in its chest while a dozen eyes and poisonous barbs pop up at seemingly random intervals around its body. At high speed and with terror nipping at your heels, you continue across the field. Turn to 10.

**380**

The weapon you have selected is not really suitable for this kind of work, but you make a few tentative cuts at the creature anyway. It becomes irritated and spits a great gob of poison at you – lose any **EXTRA STAMINA** ability. Finally, though, it gets so irritated that it lets go of the lawyer and grabs your blade, intent on climbing along it to reach you. Without hesitation you throw both into the back of the aircraft (cross the weapon from your equipment list). The lawyer has collapsed across the controls. If you have **FLYING EXPERIENCE**, turn to 216, otherwise turn to 315.

**381**

You enter a large room whose walls appear to be constructed entirely of stainless steel. You can see your reflection in the mirror like surfaces: a tattered and bloody human being, alone against a race of mindless, homicidal aliens. There is an irregularly shaped door in the north wall and three exit corridors in the others.

Will you proceed:

Through the door?

Turn to 123

South?

Turn to 284

East?

Turn to 182

West?

Turn to 101

**382**

You sprint away from the car, although it continues to gain rapidly. Only a short distance directly ahead are two fenced off fields: one is flat and bare, obviously used for grazing sheep, the other is waist high with tinder dry lucerne. Will you run across the sheep paddock (turn to 349) or the other (turn to 236)?

**383**

You wait for the truck to approach to within a comfortable throwing range before sending the axe spinning through the air. The silver blade and long wooden handle arc toward the cabin and smash straight through the windscreen into the glowing red eyes. The vehicle immediately goes out of control, turning slowly at first, then faster and faster until it jack-knives and rolls with a scream of twisting metal. As the dust clears, you see that it is busy reconstructing itself! Time to clear out. Turn to 99.

**384**

You enter another Y-junction, but when you stop for a moment to decide in which direction to proceed, the ceiling suddenly gives way without warning and thousands of tons of rock rain down with brutal force, crushing you to death. Your adventure is over.

**385**

You grab the nearest child and start brushing the mice from her back, only to find the horrible little critters grabbing onto your arm and racing over your body, biting and clawing as they go – lose 1 WOUND point. You drop the girl and start beating at your attackers. Turn to 115.

**386**

With wheels spinning and gravel shooting from the rear, you lurch out of the behemoth's path. To your consternation, though, the ground beneath your vehicle's front wheels collapses to reveal a deep pit. The car falls and bends when it hits the bottom. You smash your head on the steering wheel and receive a nasty gash over one eye – lose 1 WOUND point and any KEEN EYE skill. The massive machine that launched itself at you wheels ponderously about and takes hold of the rear of your car with several massive steel claws. It starts to drag you out of the hole, the boot of the car disappearing into the machine's interior accompanied by showers of sparks. As you jump free of the wreckage, you see what appears to be a man waving to you from beside the barn. Will you run towards him (turn to 197) or towards the house (turn to 242)?

**387**

You enter the elevator. Which button will you press:

- |       |             |
|-------|-------------|
| One?  | Turn to 175 |
| Two?  | Turn to 189 |
| Four? | Turn to 234 |

**388**

You approach the house and knock on the door, which you discover is unlatched. Slowly it swings open to reveal a gloomy corridor. Hesitantly you call out, 'Hello, anyone home?' Taking careful steps, you slowly enter the house. The door immediately slams shut and bolts itself with an ominous finality. When you turn around you find it displaying the most undoorlike behaviour: it bulges in its frame, exerting a fierce pressure, and what appear to be a pair of nuggety eyes glare at you from a central ridge. Steam issues from several cracks as the door groans from the pressure. You don't dare approach it and can only go deeper into the house. But at this moment you become aware of a terrifying chopping sound coming from the other end of the corridor. Will you:

- |                               |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Enter a doorway to the left?  | Turn to 12 |
| Enter a doorway to the right? | Turn to 40 |
| Go down the corridor?         | Turn to 96 |

**389**

The corridor proceeds straight and then executes a ninety-degree turn. You can head either south (turn to 291) or west (turn to 37).

**390**

You stand on the brake pedal with both feet, trying to push it through the firewall. In response, the car locks all four wheels, drops its gearbox onto the road, and then spins wildly out of control. A second later it smashes into one of the trees that line ANZAC Grove – lose 1 WOUND point. The metal arms release their grip and fall to the floor, allowing you to climb dazed from the car. Once free, you turn and watch as the car begins to bury itself into the ground, throwing heaps of dirt over itself until all that remains is a small periscope that rotates to fix its gaze full upon you. Shaken, you retreat rapidly. Turn to 158.

**391**

The door opens onto some stairs that lead you up behind the main bar. Sounds of activity on the other side make you climb with caution. Once upstairs, you risk a peek over the bar to discover that the drinking area is full of equal numbers of deadly machines and the most foul looking creatures: some are blobs with one or two legs while others are solid clam-like horrors sliding on mucous membranes. The machines are standing isolated and inactive while the creatures lie about on the floor as if torpid and lazy, all with two-litre bottles of soft drink clutched in their claws or held to their vile orifices by nearby machines. You slide out of sight behind the bar, which you notice is well stocked with a wide range of spirits. Will you remain where you are (turn to 345) or launch a surprise attack on the invaders (turn to 320)?

## 392

As you are completely defenceless, the Fuhuruh have little trouble in capturing you. They are utterly merciless and as such waste no time in putting you to speedy death. Your adventure is over.

## 393

Desperately, you look from side to side in search of a suitable weapon. Alas, none is to be found. The sheep, smelling blood and victory, leap high over the sides of the car, biting and snapping, and tearing at life and limb. They carry you from this world into the next. Your adventure is over.

## 394

The passageway leads you into a square hall constructed of neatly piled bricks. However, from the ceiling hangs a monstrous spidery creature. Its blind sack of a body clings to the roof with four legs while its other four limbs snake out at different times to grab anything that might be entering the hall through one of the four corridors that terminate here. There appears to be a pattern to its blind gropings, and you pause to watch which leg moves and when. The creature reaches for west-east-south-north-north-west-east-south. Which entrance will the creature go for next:

North?	Turn to 370
South?	Turn to 344
East?	Turn to 319
West?	Turn to 299

**395**

Lying close at hand you see a large Metal Stake and next to that a small hand Scythe used to cut ears of corn. Will you use:

The Stake?	Turn to 359
The Scythe?	Turn to 333
Your Bare Hands?	Turn to 314

**396**

The two hemispheres slot together to form a red sphere. The digits fade to be replaced by five pulsing blue stripes. The sphere has a combined WEIGHT of 1. You pocket the strange device, and with your pursuers already breaking the door down, you exit the pub. Turn to 99.

**397**

Once again your efforts to escape meet with failure, and once again the stinking leathery flap slides over your face and insinuates tendrils down into your lungs. Turn to 335.

**398**

You are in a small dimly lit cavern with rough looking tunnels heading off in three directions. Will you go:

North?	Turn to 322
East?	Turn to 348
West?	Turn to 374

**399**

If you have any of the following weapons you may use one, otherwise turn to 31.

Shotgun

Turn to 51

Scythe

Turn to 98

Insect Spray

Turn to 118

**400**

The tunnel leads into a dead end, but the ceiling is cracked wide open and from here air and dim light filter down from the outside world. The sound of the destruction of the Fuhuruh hive reaches a crescendo behind you as you climb up the broken wall and through the ceiling. After a few moments you break out onto the surface. There is a pre-dawn glow in the sky and a heady crispness in the air. There comes a final tumultuous sound of destruction and a vast mushroom cloud of red dust billows from a thousand collapsed holes that carpet the plain as the Fuhuruh hive is completely destroyed and the last of the aliens are vanquished. Without pausing to congratulate yourself, you slap the dust from your limbs and then limp slowly back toward where you can see the low rooftops of the township against the dawn horizon.



# ASHKAR

THE

# MAGNIFICENT



A E CHAPMAN

## Prologue

### Morkain's Triumph

After five years Morkain contrived to steal the final and fatal ingredient. It was an act of pure audacity, since it exposed him to the full force of Ashkar's attention and, potentially, his magical powers. But desperation and lack of inspiration for alternatives forced him to it.

It happened exactly as he planned. At midmorning, right on the tower guard's calling of the fourth hour, Morkain left his sumptuous chambers in the palace and limped slowly along the grand colonnade. Almost immediately his brother came into view at the far end, pacing thoughtfully toward him. Ashkar was a tedious fool, exact in his habits, predictable in all his actions, yet utterly dangerous.

The supreme ruler of Lagash gave no hint of his power. In his simple garb, a white burnoose, and with his solemn demeanor, Ashkar approached his brother down that sun-punctuated walkway like a simple monk.

But Morkain did not underestimate him. Morkain's limp was real. If he had attempted to fake it Ashkar would have seen through him instantly and wrested the truth of the long five years out of him with a single spell. Instead, Morkain had been forced to the utmost extremity. Each evening he had bound his calf against his thigh, straining his knee into the long hours of the night until he was mad with the pain. Now he hobbled.

Ashkar appeared to pay him no heed as they approached. Stuck in his meditations already. Midmorning. Time for Ashkar to ascend his golden tower and meditate for exactly three hours over the great panorama of the city. Who knew what mysteries he pondered up there? Morkain didn't. And didn't care. He cared only that Ashkar should die.

They met in the center of the vast colonnade, open on one side to a marbled square and sealed on the other with a wall punctuated with braziers whose purple flames never died. Ashkar did not deign to glance at his brother and would have swept by without a word. But just at that moment Morkain's bad leg gave way and he lurched into his brother as if by accident. Instantly Ashkar caught him in a grip that was impossibly strong and sure for a man older than two hundred years.

"Brother," he said in a voice full of care, "you are not well. I have noticed that leg of yours bothering you. It has gone from bad to worse."

Morkain said nothing, but looked up into the other's youthful-seeming face, with its strong nose and piercingly dark eyes. He breathed deeply as Ashkar spoke, but he said nothing.

Ashkar looked at him for a moment, then set him back upright. Morkain bowed his head, as if ashamed. But behind the curtain of golden curls that fell across his face, he tried to hide the mad gleam of triumph in his eyes. He had done it. He had stolen it, at last.

"Come and see me this evening," Ashkar said. "I will fix that leg of yours, then we shall dine together as brothers should. It is too long since you entertained me with your ribaldry."

Morkain nodded. Then, lowering his head once more, he turned and began to hobble away. Nothing strange in that. Ashkar was used to Morkain ignoring him. And indeed, the ruler of Lagash turned away, his face untroubled, already thinking his lofty thoughts. His mind was no doubt already turned to the problems that he would dwell upon high in that golden tower.

Morkain hurried away. He had begun holding his breath the moment he had inhaled Ashkar's own precious words but he dared not do what must be done next until his brother was well out of sight, which was the entire length of the colonnade. Morkain's head was pounding and his lungs bursting when at last he turned the corner at the end. How he hoped that Ashkar would not hear the rushing of his blood and suddenly see through him.

Stumbling around the corner at the end of the colonnade he swiftly reached into this robe and snatched forth a doll of carved flame-wood. Holding it to his mouth he breathed out that precious, stolen breath, the air of his brother's lungs. He breathed out over the doll until his breath could come no more and his head swam with the effort.

"Live," he hissed. "Live. I name thee Ashkar."

Panting now, recovering, a delirious joy overcame him as he held the vibrant totem at arms length and stared at it with unbelieving eyes. Five years, five years it had taken him to collect everything at last. Each had been done in the proper order: the timber grown from a tree whose seed had been planted in soil excavated at midnight from the very spot of Ashkar's birth. At the instant of planting he had had to water it with a drop of Ashkar's saliva, almost impossible to retrieve. Then the

thread of Ashkar's smock, woven about its neck as a noose. Then the single strand of hair. This snatched from a man who knew the power of life and death inherent in that simple thing and guarded it with the care it deserved. Oh, Ashkar knew his magic, knew it better than Morkain a thousand times over. That hair had taken a year of waiting, of careful planning and an insane, drunken party trick where Morkain had risked everything by playing the fool his brother thought him. And the other parts, one by one, he had taken, or even once stumbled across with simple dumb luck. Now the last: Ashkar's own breath, stolen in an act of pity, and used to breathe life into his own doom. The doll was charged with its stolen vitality, ready to release it force.

Morkain could not restrain a nervous giggle. He whirled about and glared up at Ashkar's tower with its radiant golden dome more than a hundred yards overhead. Enough time had passed. Already Ashkar would be about his morning meditation, no thought for his brother and the peril below.

Yet Morkain hesitated, suddenly overcome with a pang of fear. What if he had done something incorrectly, left some element undone, forgotten to speak a necessary charm? He risked death if he had.

But then he remembered all the humiliations Ashkar had visited upon him. With his plump face flushing red, like a child that expects at any moment to be admonished and struck, he thrust the doll into the flames of a brazier burning in its scone alongside. Straightaway the flame-wood hissed with the bite of the heat, then in a flash it was alight and burning with the incandescence of the sun. Morkain turned away. And

there, from Ashkar's golden tower, a sudden banner of smoke vomited out from the ring of arches supporting the dome. Was that a scream? Morkain nearly laughed with the hope. But it was too great a distance.

The wind caught the smoke, curled it around the gilded pinnacle of the dome, then sucked it away. Trembling, Morkain giggled once more. Slowly he began to limp towards the tower. Behind him, in the brazier, the doll was no more.

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So Ashkar was dead.

Morkain stood hidden in the shelter of an arch, surveying the floor where it spread out under the towering ceiling of Ashkar's golden dome. Through the series of airy arches that enclosed the chamber, he could see the panorama of the palace, and beyond the walls the city of Lagash and its massive fortifications. His attention was held, though, by an object in the center of the marble floor, at the point where the carefully etched geometric patterns and motifs, so necessary to Ashkar's meditations, seemed to converge.

It was a slipper. A thin wisp of smoke curled out of the ankle, and also from the toe, where a hole had recently been burned. Ash and signs of blast spread out across the floor for a couple of yards in a great starburst, and the air smelled of something acrid. Burned flesh?

Morkain moved his mouth in an expression of wry but almost unbelieving amusement. It had worked exactly as the demon Balgoth assured him it would. He had not thought it really possible, not at the deepest level of his heart, not in that unexamined and unspoken part of his soul. How could he, Morkain, have done this to his

brother, Ashkar – the supposedly Magnificent, the ruler of Lagash – now just a black patch on the floor and a bad smell in the air. Not that he felt remorse about the deed. No, it was more a technical disbelief than a moral qualm. Ashkar was – no, had been – the mightiest of mages, skilled in all the magic arts. Yet Morkain, who was not so vain as to consider himself anything other than a dilettante, a dabbler, had somehow contrived Ashkar's death by magic. With some assistance of course. And Balgoth would be warmly praised for his advice.

Morkain shook his head uncertainly and stepped across the floor toward the slipper. As he approached he saw that it pulsed with a sinister radiance and began to fume more vigorously. He paused, holding his breath, but the smoke rapidly dissipated and the radiance guttered, flared, and died.

Puffing his cheeks, Morkain let out a long breath and nudged the slipper with his toe. Nothing. He kicked it across the floor. It slid, tumbled through an archway, and fell from sight. Morkain finally allowed himself a genuine smile and a whoop of self-congratulation. He strode to the window through which the slipper had so recently departed and looked admiringly out at the view. Below him were the palace and city, a hundred thousand souls, and a realm which extended beyond the horizon – a thousand towns, how many men, women, and children? And what enemies? None. All the great cities were too far away, and the pirates of Tak had been held in awe by Ashkar's magic and would remain in awe of Morkain's, slight as it was.

He paused for a long moment, letting it all sink in to a satisfying depth, before turning away and making his

way down the tower. He must tell Balgoth – the demon would be impressed – and then... well, he must consolidate his hold upon the city. There were certain things it was going to provide him, and a firm grip would be necessary to extract them.

He laughed. Yes, Ashkar was dead. Lagash was his. The divine plan could now proceed, and proceed to a triumphant conclusion, and absolutely nothing, and no one, could stop him.

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If you would like to read more of Ashkar the Magnificent, please visit the author's website by following [this link](http://www.users.bigpond.com/andrew.chapman/page3.html), or pointing your web browser to [www.users.bigpond.com/andrew.chapman/page3.html](http://www.users.bigpond.com/andrew.chapman/page3.html)