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Presents a Fighting Fantasy amateur adventure

# Hold of the Heartless



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**Amateur Adventure**

# Hold of the Heartless

Two dice, a pencil and an eraser are all you need to embark on this competition adventure, which comes complete with its own elaborate combat system and a score sheet to record your progress.

It is up to YOU to decide which routes to follow, which dangers to risk and which foes to fight.



## INTRODUCTION

You are about to take the lead roll in an adventure that will make you into a living legend, renowned and respected throughout the world. Before you take part in this quest, you must first determine your own strengths and weaknesses. You use dice to work out your initial SKILL, STAMINA, and LUCK scores.

You use dice to work out your initial scores on an *Adventure Sheet*, which you may use to record details of your adventure. On it, you will find boxes for recording your SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK scores. You are advised either to record your scores on the *Adventure Sheet* in pencil or to make photocopies of the sheet for use in future adventures. Full details governing rules can be found in any of the Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks as well as on the Official website: [www.fightingfantasy.com](http://www.fightingfantasy.com).

### SKILL, STAMINA, LUCK

To determine your *Initial* SKILL, STAMINA, and LUCK scores:

**SKILL** Roll one die. Add 6 to the number and enter this total in the SKILL box

**STAMINA** Roll two dice. Add 12 to the number, box on the *Adventure Sheet*.

**LUCK** Roll one die. Add 6 to the number and enter this total in the LUCK box.

For reasons that will be explained below, all your scores will change constantly during the adventure. You must keep an accurate record of these scores, and for this reason, you are advised to write small in the boxes or to keep an eraser handy. However, never rub out your *Initial* scores, except on those very rare occasions when the text specifically tells you so.

Although you may be rewarded additional SKILL, STAMINA and LUCK points, these totals

may never exceed your *initial* Scores, except on very rare occasions, when you will be instructed on a particular page. SKILL reflects your general expertise in fighting and combat; the higher the better. STAMINA score reflects your general constitution, your overall will to survive, your determination and overall fitness; the higher your STAMINA score, the longer you will be able to survive. LUCK score indicates how naturally lucky a person you are. Luck – and Magic – are facts of life in the fantasy world you are about to explore.

## **BATTLES**

During your adventure, you will often come across pages in the book, which instruct you to fight a creature of some sort. An option to flee may be given, but if not – or if you choose to attack the creature anyway – you must resolve the battle as described below.

First, record the opponent's SKILL and STAMINA scores in the first empty Encounter box on your *Adventure Sheet*. The scores for each opponent or creature are given in the book each time you have an encounter. You should also make a note of any special abilities or instructions, which are unique to that particular opponent.

The sequence of combat is then:

- 1.** Roll two dice for your opponent. Add its SKILL score. This total is the opponent's Attack Strength.
- 2.** Roll two dice for yourself. Add the number rolled to your current SKILL score. This total is your Attack Strength.
- 3.** If your Attack Strength is higher than your opponent's is, you have wounded it. Proceed to step **4**. If your opponent's Attack Strength is higher than yours is, it has wounded you. Proceed to step **5**. If both Attack Strength totals are the same, you have avoided each other's blows – start the next Attack Round from steps **1** above.
- 4.** You have wounded your opponent; so subtract 2 points from its STAMINA score. You may use LUCK here to do additional damage (see below). Proceed to step **6**.
- 5.** Your opponent has wounded you; so subtract 2 points from your STAMINA score.

You may use LUCK to reduce the loss of STAMINA (see below). Proceed to step **6**.

**6.** Make the appropriate adjustments to either your opponents or your own STAMINA scores (and your LUCK score if you used LUCK – see over).

**7.** Begin the next Attack Round, starting again at step **1** with your current SKILL score. This sequence continues until the STAMINA score of either you or your opponent reaches zero (death). If your opponent dies, you are free to continue with your adventure.

If you die, your adventure ends and you must start all over again by creating a new character.

## **ESCAPING FROM BATTLES**

On some pages you will be given the option of *Escaping* from a battle should things be going badly for you. However, if you do run away, your opponent automatically scores one wound on you (subtract 2 STAMINA points) as you flee. Such is the price of cowardice! Note that you may use LUCK on this wound in the normal way (see below).

You may only *Escape* if that option is given to you on the page.

## **LUCK**

At various times during your adventure, either in battles or when you come across other situations in which you could either be Lucky or Unlucky (details of these are given in the relevant pages themselves), you may use LUCK to make the outcome more favourable to you.

However, beware! Using LUCK is a risky business and, if you are *unlucky*, the results could be disastrous.

The procedure for *Testing your luck* is as follows: roll two dice. If the number rolled is less than or equal to your current LUCK score, you have been Lucky and the outcome will be in your favour. If the number rolled is higher than your current LUCK score, you have been Unlucky and will be penalised.

Each time you *Test your Luck*, you must subtract 1 point from your current LUCK score.

Thus, you will soon realise that, the more you rely on your LUCK, the more risky this procedure will become.

## USING LUCK IN BATTLES

In battles, you always have the option of using your LUCK either to score a more serious wound on an opponent you have just wounded or to minimise the effects of a wound you have just received.

**If you have just wounded an opponent:** you may *Test your Luck* as described above. If you are Lucky, you have inflicted a severe wound; deduct an extra 2 points from your opponent's STAMINA score. However, if you are Unlucky, however, your blow only scratches your opponent, and you deduct only 1 point from your opponent's STAMINA (instead of scoring the normal 2 points of damage, you now only score 1).

**If the opponent has wounded you:** you may *Test your Luck* to try to minimise the wound. If you are Lucky, your opponent's blow only grazes you; deduct only 1 point from your STAMINA. If you are Unlucky, your wound is a serious one and you must deduct 1 extra STAMINA point (i.e., a total of 3 points from your own STAMINA). Remember: you must subtract 1 point from your LUCK score each time you *Test your Luck*.

## SKILL

Your SKILL score will not change much during the course of your adventure. Occasionally a paragraph may give you instructions to increase or decrease your SKILL score, but it may not exceed its *Initial* value unless you are specifically instructed to the contrary.

At various times during your adventure, you will be told to *Test your Skill*. The procedure for this is the same as that for *Testing your Luck*: roll two dice. If the number rolled is less than or equal to your current SKILL score, you have succeeded in your test and the result will go in your favour. If the number rolled is higher than your current SKILL score, you have failed the test and will have to suffer the consequences. However, unlike *Testing your Luck*, do not subtract 1 point from your SKILL each time you *Test your Skill*. Your SKILL score can never exceed its *initial* value unless specifically instructed on a page. Drinking the Potion of SKILL (see later) will restore your SKILL to its *initial* level at any time; except when engaged in a battle.

## Luck

Additions to your LUCK score may be awarded in the adventure when you have been particularly lucky or created your own luck by some other action. Details are given, where appropriate, in the paragraphs of the book. Remember that, as with SKILL and STAMINA, your LUCK score may never exceed its *initial* value unless specifically instructed on a page. Drinking the Potion of Fortune (see later) will restore your LUCK to its *initial* level at any time, and increase your *initial* LUCK by 1 point.

## Provisions

Everyone knows that food is vital as a form of sustenance. The text shall instruct you to eat a meal at certain times in your adventure. This means you'll have to erase one meal automatically without gaining STAMINA! Venturing into any adventure may prove arduous indeed; therefore you need food just to keep your strength up. This then leads to a second possibility: if you have

no provisions and the text tells you to eat a meal, you must reduce your STAMINA by 3 points! Any other time you eat a meal, you may restore 4 lost STAMINA points, except during combat or when performing any other similar action.

## **EQUIPMENT AND POTIONS**

You will start your adventure with a bare minimum of equipment, but you may find or buy other items during your travels. You have a backpack to hold your Provisions and any other items you may come across. You also have a rope and grapple.

In addition, you may take one bottle of a magical potion, which will aid you on your mission.

You may choose to take a bottle of any of the following:

A Potion of SKILL restores SKILL points

A Potion of Strength restores STAMINA points

A Potion of Fortune restores LUCK points and adds 1 to *initial* LUCK

These potions may be taken at any time during your adventure (except when engaged in a battle).

Taking a measure of potion will restore SKILL, STAMINA or LUCK scores to their *initial* level (and the Potion of Fortune will add 1 point to your *initial* LUCK score before LUCK is restored).

Each bottle of potion contains enough for *one* measure; i.e. the characteristic may be restored once during an adventure. Make a note on your *Adventure Sheet* when you have used up your potion.



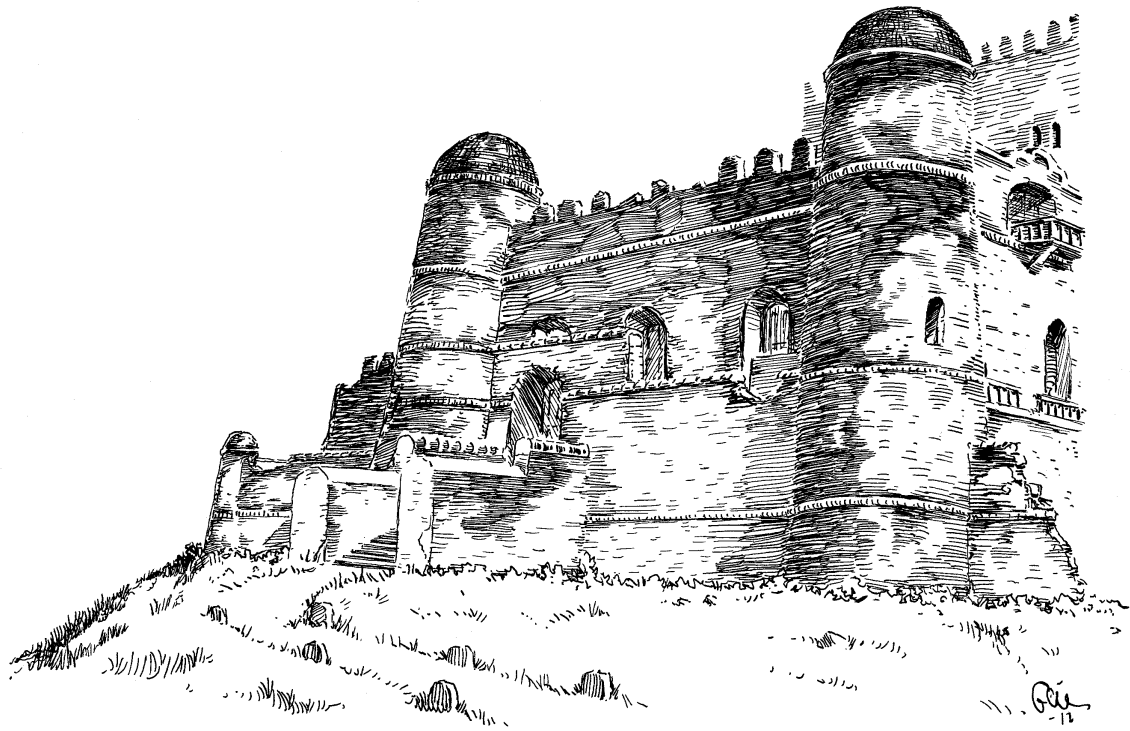
## **BACKGROUND**

Long have you travelled, and many are the dangers you have faced to reach this point... at last you have found the Keep of the Succubus!

You look upon the tall stone wall of the keep grimly, knowing that you must confront the terrible seducer of men and make her pay for what she has done. Once the lines of kings were strong and proud - now there is no king. Once the noblemen trained knights to defend the people. Now there are no noblemen and no knights. All have fallen for her spell, this fell witch, this terrible sorceress.

Turn to **1**

**NOW TURN OVER**



1

You grip your sword tightly as you gaze upon the keep and the huge iron portcullis set into the tall wall that surrounds it. No guards march the battlements, they say that the Succubus that dwells here fears no man and no woman, that none can stand against her, that all fall to her charms. You intend to prove that wrong and rid the world of this evil once and for all.

Do you try to scale the wall (turn to 23) or lift the portcullis (turn to 11)?

2

The door opens silently into a small room. You hear the quiet snoring of a man as the door opens, revealing him to be lying atop a double bed. There is a chest of drawers by the bed and a battle axe leans against it. A suit of metal armour lies in a pile at the foot of the bed.

Abruptly, a helmet atop the pile of armour slides to the floor with a crash!

The man, however, does not awaken. Scanning the rest of the room, you spy a note by the bed and walk across to read it. Still the man does not wake. The note simply reads "Sleep - lightly - to - knight!" and is penned in a female hand.

You decide to leave the man in his torpor and continue on your way. Turn to 9.

### 3

You step over the dead body of some poor unfortunate soul who quite clearly has had his heart removed from his chest, violently. In one of his hands is a glass bottle that seems to glow faintly.

The room beyond is quite unremarkable, having but a single empty shelf within.

If you wish to take the unusual jar, turn to 10. If you would rather leave it behind and continue on your way, turn to 20.

### 4

The door opens into a room that is occupied by some sort of imp-like creature. It hums a merry tune as it hovers over a stove, darting this way and that, grabbing hold of various jars from a nearby shelf and adding pinches of their contents into a very large pot. Something familiar sticks out of the top of this pot.

As you enter the room to get a better look, the little creature turns and looks right at you! It mouths the words 'Oh no!' and vanishes in a puff of smoke.

Sticking out of the top of the big pot on the stove are two human feet. The legs disappear into the bubbly slop.

Do you head through a small door here (turn to 16) or instead go upstairs (turn to 6)?

5

Try as you might you cannot lift the portcullis. It just will not move for you no matter what you try. You are going to have to scale the wall instead, you realise, and begin to unhook the rope and grapple from your belt.

Turn to 23.



6

The stairs take you to a carpeted hall beneath a beautiful crystal chandelier. You do not have long to admire it however, for charging down the corridor, coming right at you, is a crazed Amazon!

Her eyes are wide and red rimmed. Her lips part for a snarl...  
"Aieeeeeee!"

You must fight her.

Amazon WARRIOR. SKILL 9 STAMINA 10

If you win, turn to 24.

7

An immaculately prepared bedroom that smells of roses greets you. Red petals cover the bedsheets. Flowers sit in a vase on a chest of drawers by the bed.

A note on the chest of drawers reads "For you, my love," and then ends with your own name.

You are unsure what to make of this strange room, backing out of it and closing the door behind you. Turn to 9.



8

You have made it inside the keep. A shadowy courtyard extends around a three-storey building that, oddly enough, has no windows in any of its walls. You quickly prowl around this strange building and identify only one way into it - a heavy set front door made of solid oak.

At that exact moment, the front door crashes open!

An enraged guard leaps over the golden light that spills out from the room and charges right at you!

"You shall not have her!" He shouts angrily. "She is mine! All mine!"

You draw your sword and defend yourself from this madman.

**GUARD. SKILL 7 STAMINA 6**

If you win, turn to 15.

## 9

You move up a flight of stairs beyond a narrow doorway and you are now on a landing. There are two doors here, one of which is open and has a dead body lying across its threshold. The other door is closed and quite plain.

Do you head through the open door (turn to 3) or through the closed door (turn to 20)?

## 10

As you touch the jar, you feel an electric shock surge through you.

If you have the Heart of Darkness, turn to 19.

If you do not, turn to 13.

## 11

You give the huge portcullis a heave and it hardly budge.

You are going to have to give it everything you have got if you want to succeed. Throw two dice. If the total is under your SKILL score, turn to 8. If they are not, turn to 5.

## 12

The cobwebby door opens stiffly, complaining loudly with a long creak as it does so. Clearly, this room has not been entered for quite a while.

You see a room that is piled high with crates and boxes. In places the piles reach the ceiling.

From the doorway it is impossible to see very far into the room, which is quite dark and dusty.

Who knows what could be lurking inside...Do you dare to venture in (turn to 21) or back out and close the door quickly (turn to 24)?

## 13

You feel a terrible pain in your chest that quickly becomes absolute agony. You stagger to your knees, screaming. Flecks of blood fly out of your mouth.

It feels as though your heart is about to be ripped out of your chest by an invisible force - and then suddenly, in a terrifying gory mess, that's exactly what happens.

Moments later, you are dead.

## 14

It is with a superhuman effort that you unlock the box to the Heart of Darkness, having no heart of your own any longer. Yours is now inside the terrible jar that moments earlier you touched. A great shadow wrenches free of the box as it falls to the floor out of your shaking grasp - a shadow that is a pounding heart of formless void that stretches into your chest like a spider of night.

You are alive! You stand, unsteadily, hearing an alien heartbeat in your ears as blood pumps

around your body to an unfamiliar rhythm. You have within you something evil now, something that can feel hate but never fear or love. Should your heart ever skip a beat in the future, simply add five to the paragraph that you are currently reading and continue on immediately from there.

Lucky to still be alive, you continue on your way. Turn to 20.

## 15

Stepping over the dead guard, you enter the building. As you cross the threshold, your heart races - somewhere in here is the wicked Succubus and it is high time for her reign to end.

The room you have stepped into contains a table, two chairs and the bodies of two armoured men. Both have been slain by a bladed weapon.

There is a door on the left, which is slightly ajar and from beyond it you can hear a bubbling sound. The door on the right is closed and from that direction you can make out a low moan.

There is also a staircase that leads upwards.

If you go left, turn to 4. If you go right, turn to 22. If you go up, turn to 6.

## 16

The small door takes you into a little room. A hunk of meat hangs from a hook, creaking as it strains a rope, for it is suspended above a single slab of stone. The stone has some very suspicious stains upon its surface. Shelves line the walls of this room, containing various curiosities - in one jar you see a floating eyeball while in another is shriveled up tongue. Perhaps most interesting of all, though, is a strange box that will not open no matter what you try and is surrounded by a shadow. The box itself pulses to a strange beat. Written upon its surface are three words: 'Heart of Darkness'. You may take it with you, if you are so inclined, before heading upstairs. Turn to 6.

## 17

Within this room a man lies upon a bed, his arms chained to the bed posts. His head has flopped forwards so he looks downwards, at the bloody bed sheets he lays in. A note by his bed reads

'You are such fun... let's play!'

You feel your resolve to introduce the Succubus to her demise strengthen and continue on your way through this grim building. Turn to 9.

## 18

Alas, your hands are sweaty and the rope slips from your grasp a mere ten feet from the ground.

Lose two STAMINA points.

Pick yourself up, brave hero, then turn to 8.

## 19

You feel a terrible pain in your chest and the beat of the Heart of Darkness, within its shadowy box, grows ever stronger.

The pain in your chest grows to a terrible agony. You stagger to your knees, screaming the place down. Flecks of blood fly from your mouth. It feels as though your heart is going to come right of your chest - and then suddenly - there is a gory explosion as it does!

You scabble frantically at the dark box, unsure why, as your heart floats into the flowing jar and you are too weak to prevent it. The box is locked and will not open for you. On the very edge of death, desperately, you wonder what could have been in the box?

Death comes swiftly.

## 20

Beyond this door is the most beautiful woman you have ever seen. She wears skimpy clothes and great bat like wings extend out from behind her. Your eyes meet hers and you are filled with her ravishing, enchanting image.

"Yes," She says. "Come to me, my new lover. No one can resist me."

At her words, your heart quite literally skips a beat. This is very unusual for you as you don't recall it ever happening before...

You go to her, utterly charmed, utterly powerless. She is everywhere in your heart. You will never let anyone harm her, nor let anyone else have her.

She is wonderful.

You do not live long.

## 21

The door slams shut behind you as you enter the room and your heart almost skips a beat as you are left in complete darkness...

Then you realise it was but a draught and you open the door once more to let some light in. You begin looking inside the crates. You find little of interest except for a key, which you may take if you wish. If you do, and you come across a lock that you cannot open, simply take five from the paragraph number and read from there to use the key.

In the meantime, however, you continue your journey by heading through the long narrow door. Turn to 9.

## 22

Racks of bottles line these walls in this chamber. They also partition the room into a tiny maze of corridors, which you quickly navigate to reach the source of the quiet moaning you heard earlier.



There is a man in here, sprawled in the corner of the room. A leafless daisy lies beside him. He mumbles, almost incoherently, so you lean close to hear his words. "She ... loves... me...(hic!) ... She...loves...me...not"

He says this over and over, his breath reeking of alcohol. A quick uncorking of a few of the bottles confirms your suspicions - they are bottles of wine. You may take one, if you wish. If you do, count it as a provision.

You decide to leave this drunken fool in his stupor. If you head off upstairs, to see what else you might find, turn to 6. If you go into the room with the gurgling noises, turn to 4.

## **23**

You throw a rope and grapple up to the top, which fastens onto the battlements with a satisfying clang. Within moments you are scaling the rope back down the other side.

Test your LUCK.

If you are lucky, turn to 8. If you are unlucky, turn to 18.

## **24**

You are in a nicely furnished hallway, beneath a swaying crystal chandelier.

There are three doors on your right, a tall narrow door directly in front of you and a cobwebby door to your left.

Do you take the first door on the right (turn to 2), the second door on your right (turn to 17), the third door on the right (turn to 7), the narrow door in front (turn to 9) or the cobwebby door on the left (turn to 12).

## **25**

The Succubus' charms have no effect upon you. Holding your sword high, you advance upon her. Seeing her own doom in your eyes, she raises her hands to ward you off. Fear breaks her concentration, for only a moment, dispelling her evil magic.

Her beauty dissolves as she slips into a fighting stance - leaving you facing a hideous part insectoid creature – where her lower human body should have been, you see instead a hundred legs clacking against the tiled floor!

Despite her true form, she is no match for you, fine warrior that you are. It is a great evil that you release this day, saving your people from her tyrannical reign.

Bards will sing this tale, and your name, forever!