BLADES OF AVERNUM

Welcome to the world of Blades of Avernum! You are about to create a band of adventurers and take them out on exciting adventures. You will meet people, accept quests, solve puzzles, and fight many exotic and cunning foes. You will gain wealth and power and, hopefully, fame (or infamy).

Blades of Avernum comes with four large and exciting quests, some for beginning adventurers and some for experienced heroes. And, when you have completed these scenarios, your fun doesn't have to end. You can go to the Spiderweb Software website and download new, free adventures.

You can even, if you are feeling ambitious, get the free Blades of Avernum editor and make adventures of your own! Truly, this is an adventure that needs never end.

Blades of Avernum is designed to be easy for a new player to learn. There is a comprehensive tutorial and ample in-game help. However, like most fantasy role-playing games, it has a lot of detail. Fortunately, if you get stuck, these instructions are here to help you out.

Also, please remember that Blades of Avernum is shareware. The demo only contains the first scenario. To play the rest, you need to get a password from Spiderweb Software. To learn more, read the section titled How To Order.

Finally, have fun! There is a lot to do in here, and many, many places to go.

If you would like information, to order, or to download one of Spiderweb Software's big, free demos, you can contact us at

Spiderweb SOFTWARE

PO Box 85659
Seattle, WA 98145-1659
Phone: (206) 789-4438
FAX: (206) 789-6016
Spidweb@spiderwebsoftware.com
http://www.spiderwebsoftware.com

Chapter 1: How to Order

   The full version of Blades of Avernum is $25 US. Blades of Avernum with the hint book is $32. The hint book by itself is $10. Be SURE to include the registration code when you order. It's on the lower left-hand corner of the title screen.
   A complete order form is available in the file " Blades of Avernum Order Form."

TO ORDER BY CREDIT CARD ON THE WEB: We have a secure registration form on our web site: http://www.spiderwebsoftware.com.

TO ORDER BY CREDIT CARD: (VISA, MasterCard, or AMEX)
By Phone: (206) 789-4438
By FAX: (206) 789-6016
By E-Mail: SpidWeb@spiderwebsoftware.com
(When ordering by E-mail, Send your credit card #, expiration date, name on the card, the card's billing address and the registration code.)

TO ORDER BY MAIL:
Mail your check or money order (made out to Spiderweb Software) to:
Spiderweb Software
PO Box 85659
Seattle, WA 98145-1659
USA

FOREIGN ORDERS: Foreign orders are welcome! Payment can be made by credit card, a money order in US dollars drawn on a US bank (such as Citibank or American Express), or a postal money order in US dollars. Outside North America, add $5 shipping and handling. Please don't send EuroCheques.

Special Avernum Promotional:
   When you order any Spiderweb Software product, you can get the Nethergate CD (fully registered) for $15.

Chapter 2: The World of Avernum

       The surface world is ruled by the Empire. That's what it's called. The Empire. Not the Empire of Something, or the Something Empire. Just the Empire. It's understandable. There's no need for elaborate names when there's only one game in town. And, like all such nations, it grew arrogant in its power.

       For many years, the Empire banished everyone who didn't fit in. Eccentrics, petty criminals, malcontents, all were regarded as undesirable by the Empire. And, for many years, these unwanted citizens were sent into Avernum.

       According to mythology, Avernum is a gateway, the portal leading into the underworld. Avernum is also an actual place. It is a network of hundreds of miles of caves and tunnels, forming an enormous, weblike labyrinth of warrens under the surface of the world. Kept lit by magic, fed by fungus, and populated by the unending stream of humans (and humanoids) from the surface, the people of Avernum struggled by as best they could for many years. Generations of exiles lived and suffered in the underworld for their entire lives.

       When Avernum was established, however, the Empire, complacent and arrogant, made its greatest mistake. It sent down several powerful mages, who were on the wrong side of a political struggle. The winners, Emperor Hawthorne and the archmage Garzahd, were confident that sending down these archmagi would not be a problem. They even thought that maybe their skills could later be harnessed, once they were beaten down by several years rotting in the sunless lands.

Avernum Strikes Out

       They could not have been more wrong.

       Some of the Avernite wizards, like Rone, Solberg, and Patrick, were content simply building a better life for their fellow prisoners. One of them, however, was named Erika Redmark. A harsh and vindictive incantatrix, she enlisted a band of adventurers, made tough by their years below, in a wild, dangerous, and eventually successful scheme. She wanted to assassinate Hawthorne, brilliant Emperor of the surface world.

       Erika created a magical portal and recruited a group of adventurers to help her. She intended to use her portal to drop these warriors directly in front of Hawthorne so they could strike before he could react.

       Her plan worked perfectly. Hawthorne was killed in his own throne room.

The Avernum War

       The response was immediate and vicious. First, the portal into Avernum was closed. Nobody was to be sent through. Second, other portals were created, able to send people on the surface into remote areas of Avernum. Soldiers were sent down there, the finest soldiers in the Empire's army. They had one mission: Vengeance. Not one citizen in this subterranean den of vipers was to escape alive.

       In launching this invasion, however, the Empire made their critical mistake. They discovered a new, bizarre, humanoid race living even farther down in the caves - the vahnatai. These creatures were highly intelligent and resourceful, and very skilled in the use of crystals to perform powerful feats of magic. The vahnatai have the ability to take the spirits of their ancestors and bring them back in crystalline form. These new beings,

the Crystal Souls, were their spiritual guides and the most revered beings among their people.

The Empire, seeing how strange and powerful the Crystal Souls were, kidnapped three of them. The vahnatai, appalled by the magnitude of this crime but unsure of the identity of the perpetrators, attacked Avernum.

Fortunately, aided by the peaceful vahnatai Bon-Ihrno, a group of bold Avernites were able to infiltrate the Empire controlled areas of Avernum, steal the Crystal Souls, and return them to their rightful owners. In return, the vahnatai joined forces with Avernum and used their mighty magic to slaughter the Empire troops. The Empire War finally ended, bloody but victorious for Avernum.

Returning To the Surface

Aided by Erika Redmark and their new vahnatai allies, the Avernites built a mighty teleporter, a magical machine able to instantly send people from the caves to the surface. Avernum slowly and secretly built Upper Avernum, a new network of cave cities just below the surface of the continent of Valorim. The plan was for the Avernites to emerge, in force, and find a way to take from the Empire a chunk of land to use as their own. And they did.

A small band of Avernite spies emerged onto the surface and found a world wracked by war, tormented by plagues of vicious and cunning monsters, created and sent by unknown foes.

These spies investigated and discovered that the monsters had been sent by the vahnatai, a mission of vengeance for the Empire's theft of their prized Crystal Souls. These adventurers met Prazac, the new empress of the Empire, and offered to end the plagues in return for the Avernites being able to return to the surface. Then they found and challenged Rentar-Ihrno, wizard lord of the vahnatai, and destroyed her fortress. She escaped, but the monster plagues ended.

Peace, and Discord

The years since then have been quiet. The vahnatai sulked and planned in their warrens far underground. Some Avernites returned to the surface, while others stayed in their new home.

Empress Prazac continued to solidify her control over the Empire. However, the death of the harsh Emperor Hawthorne emboldened many who wanted to throw off the total control of their Empire masters. Small rebellions and resistance groups began to break out.

The forces of magic continued to create instability in the world. Magical races, like the slithzerikai and the drakes, continued to reappear, despite the Empire's constant efforts to wipe them out.

In this peaceful age, there is still a constant need for adventurers, mercenaries who can travel to remote lands and solve problems too small to merit sending in the army. This is your job. You are troubleshooters, solving problems for the Empire and Avernum for pay.

You have just ended your training. You have stepped out into a large, unpredictable world, filled with mighty cities, great wealth, temporary peace, and occasional chaos and danger. Your job is to help to keep calm and order.

And, hopefully, become rich and famous. Or at least not dead.

Chapter 3: Getting Started
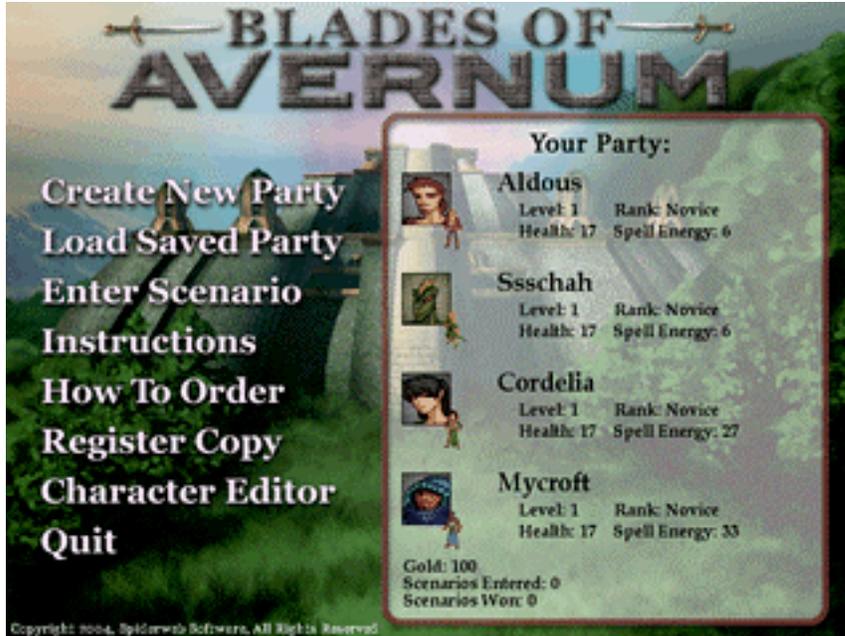
When you launch Blades of Avernum, you will see the starting screen, from which your adventures begin. Select from the following options:

Start New Game - Start a new game. You will be given a band of four pre-generated characters. After you edit them, you will be placed in the Blades of Avernum tutorial. Read the next chapter to find out more about creating a party.

Once you finish the tutorial, you will be back on the title screen, and your party will be loaded and ready to start an adventure.

Load Saved Game - Once you've started and saved a game, press this button to load it. If this saved game was in an adventure, you will be in the adventure. If your party wasn't in an adventure, your characters will appear in the right side of the title screen. Then you can start an adventure.

Enter Scenario – When you are on the title screen and you have created or loaded a party, select this to begin an adventure.

A menu of all the scenarios you have installed will appear. Click on the scenario you wish to begin. If you have more scenarios installed, you can see them by using the arrow buttons at the bottom of this window.

Instructions – See a convenient in-game version of these instructions.

How To Order – Blades of Avernum is distributed as shareware. You can play the first scenario for free. Select this to find out how to pay and play the entire game.

Register Copy - After you've registered, enter the password we give you here to be able to play the entire game.

Character Editor - Stuck? Too weak to continue? Want a few powerful, blessed items? Press this button. Read the chapter on the Character Editor to find out about your options.

Quit - Return to the mundanity of the real world.

Creating Your Characters

After selecting New Game on the title screen, you will be presented with a party of four pre-fabricated characters, created to give a beginner an easy introduction to the world of Avernum. These characters are balanced to give you a good starting group. You can tinker with these characters as much as you want, or generate a whole new party. If you want it, Avernum gives you the power to fully customize your little computer people.

The Party Creation Screen

To edit your party, select from the following options:

Pick New Character Type - Changes this character to a different basic type (erasing all changes you may have made in its skills). There are ten different basic character types in Blades of Avernum, which are described below. After selecting a class, you are free to edit the skills.

Pick New Name - Select a new character name.

Edit Statistics - This brings you to the all-important Character Info screen, where you can edit your skills, see the spells you know, and add and remove traits (advantages and disadvantages).

The skills and traits you can possess are described later in this chapter. To change a skill, press the up and down buttons to the right. The list of traits (good and bad) a character can posses is to the lower right. To add or remove a trait, click on the button to its right. Each skill increase costs a certain number of skill points. When you're out of skill points, you can't improve a character any more without doing some adventuring. To find out more about the things you can do here, read the chapter on the Character Info Screen.

Your characters who are skilled in magic start out automatically knowing some spells. Your character will start out knowing any spell that character has enough Mage (or Priest) Spells skill to cast. However, you can't start out with more than eight mage (or priest) spells.

Delete - If you would like to start out with fewer than 4 characters or if you don't like the changes you've made on one person and would like to start over, press Delete to consign this warrior to the eternal void.

Create Character - This option appears after you Delete a character. Select this to refill the slot with a new character (you choose the starting class).

To change a character's graphic or portrait, click on the graphic or portrait to the left. To change the character's race, press the race button (to the lower left).

There are three different races you can select for your characters:

Human - Most of the people in Avernum are humans, a soft, pinkish species with an internal skeleton. They are frequently found on the surface. Humans have no special abilities and no experience penalties.

Nephilim - The nephilim are a race of feline people. They are fierce warriors and have a strong tribal structure. They were once common on the surface world, until the Empire began a campaign of extermination and deportation against them. They were offered the option of deportation to Avernum. Some accepted. Most refused, and were killed.

The nephilim are skilled archers, and they get a bonus to their dexterity (which increases as they gain levels). However, they also get a %10 penalty to their experience.

Slithzerikai - The slithzerikai (or sliths, for short) are a race of lizard people who primarily live underground. They are strong warriors and spell-casters. About half of the sliths in Avernum are barbaric creatures who wage constant war against the humans. The rest are friendly and intelligent and want nothing more than to live in peace.

The sliths love pole weapons, especially the two- or three-tined spears favored as weapons by their people. Sliths get a bonus with pole weapons which increases as they gain levels. Slith hides also give them a heavy resistance against fire damage. However, they also get a %20 penalty to their experience.

There are ten basic character templates you can give your characters:

Soldier - Soldiers received excellent military training on the surface, the best the Empire had to offer. They're very good with all sorts of weapons.

Berserker - Berserkers are wild swordsmen from the remote areas of the Empire. Their wildness tends to get them dumped into Avernum. They're extremely hardy and their sword skill is unmatched.

Cleric - A Cleric is a priest in one of the faiths disapproved of by the Empire. They have excellent healing and protective skills, although they often end up having to use them in Avernum.

Sorcerer - Sorcerers are practitioners of the wizardly arts. Their spells are powerful, both on offense and defense. Alas, because of their dangerous research and eccentricities, they tend to be sent down to Avernum.

Rogue - Rogues are nimble, good with swords, and able to handle locks and traps. They also tend to walk off with things they don't own. Unsurprisingly, the Empire loves to send them to Avernum.

Archer - Archers were either hunters or trained members of the Empire army, highly skilled with missile weapons. In the Empire army, a dishonorable discharge tends to mean exile to Avernum.

Rebel - Some people dare to rebel against the Empire. They have to be good at everything if they want to survive, though they don't have the freedom to excel at one thing. A rebel tends to have some skill with weapons, traps, and lore.

Hedge Wizard - Hedge wizards live in the remote villages of the Empire, where they help the locals with their magical skills. This sort of character is good at magery, has a little bit of training in Priest spells, and has had a bit of practice making potions.

Shaman - Shamans are the priests of the back hills. A shaman isn't quite as good at spells as a cleric, but makes up for it with weaponry and knowledge of herbs. Shamans are hardy folk, but their wildness tends to make them run afoul of the Empire.
Custom - Skilled Avernum players can make their own custom characters. Custom characters start with 65 skill points you can allocate to make your ideal adventurers.

Note that your character class only determines a character's starting skills. Nothing else. The class you choose doesn't matter for anything else once you start the game.

When you're first starting out, it's often a better idea to just start with the pre-generated characters. As you play more of Blades of Avernum, you will learn what the skills do and which ones are more useful to you, and you can start over and mess around with your party to your heart's content.

About Your Characters

To you, your characters can be living, breathing things, creatures of subtlety and complexity. In your mind, you can give them fascinating personalities, intriguing backstories, and unusual goals.

To the computer, however, your characters are a bunch of numbers. These numbers are called Statistics, and they determine how skilled you are with weapons and spells, and how capable you are when dealing with the various threats and challenges in the underworld.

As time goes on and you complete adventures, you will earn experience points. Each foe you slay or quest you complete gives you experience. The amount you gain from killing a creature depends on how strong it is compared to you. A weak monster will give almost no experience to a powerful character. A powerful monster will give a lot of experience to a low-level character.

When you gain enough experience, you will gain a level. When you gain a level, you gain more health and skill points, and these skill points can be used to increase your skills. There is no level limit, though when you get to very high levels you will get very little experience from the weaker monsters you slay. You need a base 1000 experience points to gain a level, adjusted up or down based on your race and trait experience penalties.

Increasing your level and skills makes you more powerful and able to fight tougher foes, which, in turn, gives you the strength to fight even nastier monsters, and so on.

Your Skills

The skills in Blades of Avernum are listed below. Each skill has a base cost (in skill points) which you need to pay at a trainer to increase that skill. A few skills (like Potion Making) start with a higher base level based on what other skills you have.

The cost in skill points to increase a skill by one is the base cost, plus half the current level of the skill. The more you buy of a skill, the more expensive it is to increase it further. For example, suppose Mycroft has a Strength of 8. The base cost in skill points to increase strength is 6. Thus, it will cost Mycroft 10 skill points (the base cost of 6 plus half of 8) to buy another level of Strength. That's a lot.

It is rumored that there are some advanced skills in Blades of Avernum, skills that you can only learn when your other skills are high enough. (For example, when you have trained in Dexterity and Defense 6 times, you can train in a skill called Parry.)

Some people in towns can improve your skills for cash. Each trainer can only increase your skills up to a limit (so, for example, one trainer might only be able to increase your Melee Weapons skill up to 8).

Base Skills

Strength (STR, Cost: 5 skill points) - How muscular you are. Influences how much you can carry and how much damage your blows do in combat.
Dexterity (DEX, Cost: 5 skill points) - How fast you are on your feet. Helps you act sooner in combat, hit more often with melee and missile weapons, and be less likely to be hit by foes.
Intelligence (INT, Cost: 5 skill points) - How good you are at thinking things out and solving problems. A character with high intelligence will have much more powerful spells and more spell points available to cast them. Also helps resist charming and mental magic.
Endurance (END, Cost: 4 skill points) - Measures how hardy you are. The more endurance you have, the more health points you'll have and the less poison, disease, and other such afflictions will affect you.

Weaponry Skills

Melee Weapons (MEL, Cost: 3 skill points) - Your base chance of hitting with a non-pole melee weapon (usually a sword) in combat increases by %5 for each level of Melee Weapons skill you have. Each level of this skill also increases your damage with these weapons.
Pole Weapons (POL, Cost: 3 skill points) - Your base chance of hitting with a spear or similar weapon in combat increases by %5 for each level of Pole Weapons skill you have. Each level of this skill also increases your damage with these weapons.
Bows (BOW, Cost: 2 skill points) - Your base chance of hitting with a bow or crossbow in combat increases by %5 for each level of Bows skill you have. Each level of this skill also increases your damage with these weapons.
Thrown Missiles (THR, Cost: 2 skill points) - Your base chance of hitting with a thrown missile weapon (like a javelin) or a sling in combat increases by %5 for each level of Thrown Missiles skill you have. Each level of this skill also increases your damage with these weapons.
Hardiness (HRD Cost: 1 skill points) - Hardiness acts like natural armor. Each level of hardiness reduces damage from enemy weapons, cold, fire, and magic by %1.
Defense (DEF, Cost: 2 skill points) - Defense skill helps you avoid the blows of your enemies. Each level of Defense skill reduces their chance of hitting you in melee by about %3.
Assassination (ASS, Cost: 3 skill points) - Assassination skill gives you the ability to strike particularly damaging blows against your enemies' weak points. As your level grows higher than the level of your target, the chance of doing extra damage increases.

Magical Skills

Mage Spells (MAG, Cost: 5 skill points) - The ability to cast Mage spells. The higher the level of this skill, the more spells you are capable of casting and the more effective those spells will be. Each spell has a minimum Mage Spells skill needed to cast it.

Priest Spells (PRI, Cost: 5 skill points) - The ability to cast Priest spells. The higher the level of this skill, the more spells you are capable of casting and the more effective those spells will be. Each spell has a minimum Priest Spells skill needed to cast it.

Arcane Lore (ARC, Cost: 1 skill point, Base: INT / 2) - This skill measures how knowledgeable you are about magical lore of all sorts. You will need this skill to decode magical inscriptions and spells your party finds. The more of this in your group, the better. You don't need to concentrate all of this skill on one person.

Potion Making (POT, Cost: 1 skill point, Base: INT / 4) - Used for making potions. For a character to use a recipe, his or her Potion Making skill must be high enough. The higher the skill, the better the chance of success. When you try to make a potion, the character with the highest Potion Making skill makes the attempt. Other characters with this skill don't help.

Useful Skills

Tool Use (TUS, Cost: 1 skill point, Base: DEX / 2) - How good you are at working with simple mechanical devices. Used when picking locks and disarming traps. When you try to pick a lock or disarm a trap, the character with the highest Tool Use skill makes the attempt. Other characters with this skill don't help.

Nature Lore (NLO, Cost: 1 skill point, Base: INT / 4) - How much you know about finding your way through the wilderness. Helps you avoid outdoor wandering monsters, navigate through difficult situations, and find potion-making herbs.

First Aid (AID, Cost: 1 skill points, Base level: INT / 4) - You can use the First Aid skill (in the Actions screen) to heal wounded characters. More skill gives more healing. If this skill is low, you may do harm. You need a First Aid Kit (or similar item) to use this skill properly. The higher this skill is, the more damage will be healed. At high levels, you can cure a large amount of damage with this skill.

Luck (LCK, Cost: 4 skill points) - This helps you whenever something random happens around you. Which is often. Gives you a small bonus when doing just about anything.

In addition to these skills, there are eight secondary skills. You can't spend skill points directly on secondary skills. Instead, they depend on the levels of the skills above.

Secondary Skills

Health (Base: 7 + END + (END * Level / 2)) - Probably the most important skill. This determines how much damage you can withstand before you die. Each time you get hit, you lose some health. When your health drops below 0, you die.

Spell Energy (Base: 3 * INT + 3 * MAG + 3 * PRI) - How much energy you have to cast magic spells. When you cast a spell, you lose some energy. It comes back slowly with time when you're outdoors. Otherwise, you need to rest to restore this.

Poison Resistance (Base: END + LCK + HRD / 2) - Helps you resist the effects of poison and disease. Each level of it increases your chance of resisting a poison attack by %5.

Magic Resistance (Base: DEX / 4 + MAG / 2 + LCK) - Helps you resist the effects of magical attacks (like energy bolts). Each level of it increases your chance of resisting magic by %5.

Willpower (Base: INT / 2 + MAG / 2 + PRI / 2) - Helps you resist the effects of charming, paralysis, and other mental attacks. Each level of it increases your chance of resisting by %5.

Resist Elements (Base: DEX / 4 + HRD / 4 + LCK) - Helps you resist the effects of fire, ice, and other elemental attacks. Each level of it increases your chance of resisting by %5.

Item Lore (Level: INT / 2 + MAG / 2 + ARC) - Item Lore helps you identify items you find in your travels. If your Item Lore is high enough to identify an item you are holding or trying to get, it will become identified.

Rune Reading (Level: INT / 2 + PRI / 2 + ARC) - Helps you understand strange runes and writing you find in your journeys. When you find an interesting scroll, the more Rune Reading skill you collectively have in your party, the better your chances of understanding it.

Character Traits

When creating a character, you can choose traits. Traits come in two flavors: Advantages and Disadvantages. These will help (or hinder) your character's performance in the adventure to come. Each trait affects how fast your character gains skill points. The more advantages you have, the more slowly you will gain skill points, and vice versa. These are the 15 traits you can choose from (the number in parentheses is the percentage bonus or penalty applied to your experience when you have this trait).

Advantages

Strong Back (%10 xp penalty) – Enables the character to carry a lot more weight and reduces the penalty from wearing bulky armor.

Nimble Fingers (%15 xp penalty) - You have a natural aptitude for tools, traps, and delicate machinery of all sorts. You will receive a bonus whenever you have to deal with these sorts of objects.

Beastmaster (%15 xp penalty) - Many animals have taken a liking to you, to the extent that they will follow you and help you. Every day, you can summon one beast to your aid. It will fight in your defense. The higher your level, the better a creature will come.

Strong Will (%15 xp penalty) - Certain creatures in Avernum will attempt to use their clever magical powers to cloud your mind. Fortunately, when you have this ability, you are much more likely to resist this trickery.

Good Education (%15 xp penalty) - Before you were banished to Avernum you received the best education the surface world had to offer. You are much more likely to be able to handle situations which require lots of knowledge, such as decoding magical runes.

Toughness (%20 xp penalty) - Your body is very resilient, and your constitution is unusually strong. You are less likely to take serious damage in hostile situations, and disease and poison will have less of an effect on you.

Fast on Feet (%20 xp penalty) - You are very fleet of foot and your reaction time is among the best. You will act much more quickly in combat, and, sometimes, you will receive bonus action points.

Natural Mage (%25 xp penalty) - Some people learn magic. For you, it's a natural skill, as ingrained as walking and breathing. All of your spells receive bonuses, and you can cast mage spells even while wearing encumbering armor.

Elite Warrior (%30 xp penalty) - You were trained in the ways of war almost from birth. When other children were learning to walk, you were learning how to hold a knife. Your skill in battle is unmatched, and these bonuses increase as you gain levels.

Divinely Touched (%40 xp penalty) - One of your ancestors was not entirely human. There is a touch of divine blood flowing in your veins. Everything you do, you do well, and you will have several special abilities, each of which can be used once per day. Small wonder that one as exceptional as you made the Empire nervous enough to send you to Avernum.

Disadvantages

Cursed At Birth (%20 xp bonus) - A mage took an unfortunate dislike to your parents. As a result, you were cursed when you were born. Through no fault of your own, you will sometimes receive penalties to your actions, and some magical effects will harm you more.

Sickness Prone (%20 xp bonus) - You were a sickly child, and this frailty has plagued you even in adulthood. Disease, poison, and similar afflictions will have more of an effect on you.

Sluggish (%30 xp bonus) - You are slow on your feet, and your reaction time is poor, at best. You will receive less action points in combat, and your turn to act will come later than normal.

Brittle Bones (%30 xp bonus) - On the surface, there is an unfortunate childhood ailment which causes all who suffer it to have very brittle bones. Unfortunately, you were counted among its victims. Going into combat is a very bad idea for you. The blows of enemies will be devastating.

Completely Inept (%40 xp bonus) - The adventuring life is a completely bad match for you. You freeze up when creatures attack you. The slightest chill causes you to catch cold. Enemy blows are devastating to you. You stumble a lot. Every day is a struggle just to keep moving.

Chapter 4: The Blades of Avernum Screen

When you've started a new game or loaded an old saved game, you will see the Blades of Avernum screen.


The Blades of Avernum Screen

The Blades of Avernum screen is divided into seven areas.

The Terrain Area **-** You'll probably spend most of your time looking here. You can see your adventurers and everyone trying to kill them. To move your group around, click on the terrain area in the direction you want them to move. Hold the mouse button down to keep moving. You can also use the keypad or arrow keys to move (this is usually a much easier way to move around than using the mouse). In the terrain area, north is to the upper right, and east is to the lower right.

If you press the arrow buttons in the corners of the terrain area, the view will shift. You can use these buttons to look at or target things just out of sight.

When you're looking, targeting a spell or missile, or doing something else which requires selecting a target, letters will appear on the creatures/items/whatever you can choose. To select something to look at/talk to/disintegrate, type the letter on it or click on it.

The Character Area - Displays the portraits of the members of your group. You can also rearrange them and look at their statistics.
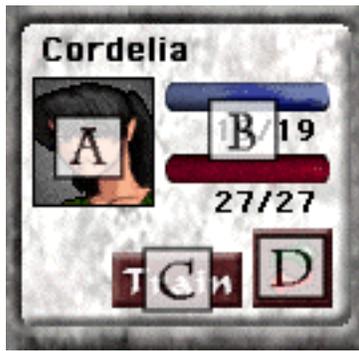
A - Portrait
B - Health and Spell Points Bars
C - Character Info/Train
D - Switch Places

The Character Area

You can click on this area to do a variety of useful things.

The Portrait - When you click on a character's portrait, that character becomes active (you can also do this by typing '1'-'4'). When you try to cast a spell or get items, the active character will be the first person who tries. When you're casting a spell on one of your characters, click on the portrait to pick the target.
Switch Places - To have two characters switch places, select the Switch Places icon for one of them and then the other.
Character Info - Brings up the Character Info screen. This screen is very important - it's where you see your character's statistics, do training, and see all the spells, recipes, and special items your party has. The Character Info screen is described in more detail later on.

When you're in a place where you can do training, this button changes from Info to Train.
Health and Spell Point Bar - The two numbers below your character's portrait are his/her current health and number of spell points. The longer the bar to the left of the number is, the more of your points remain.

When a character is affected by some sort of special effect (such as poison or disease), an icon will appear by that character's portrait. For a description of these conditions, look at the end of this chapter.
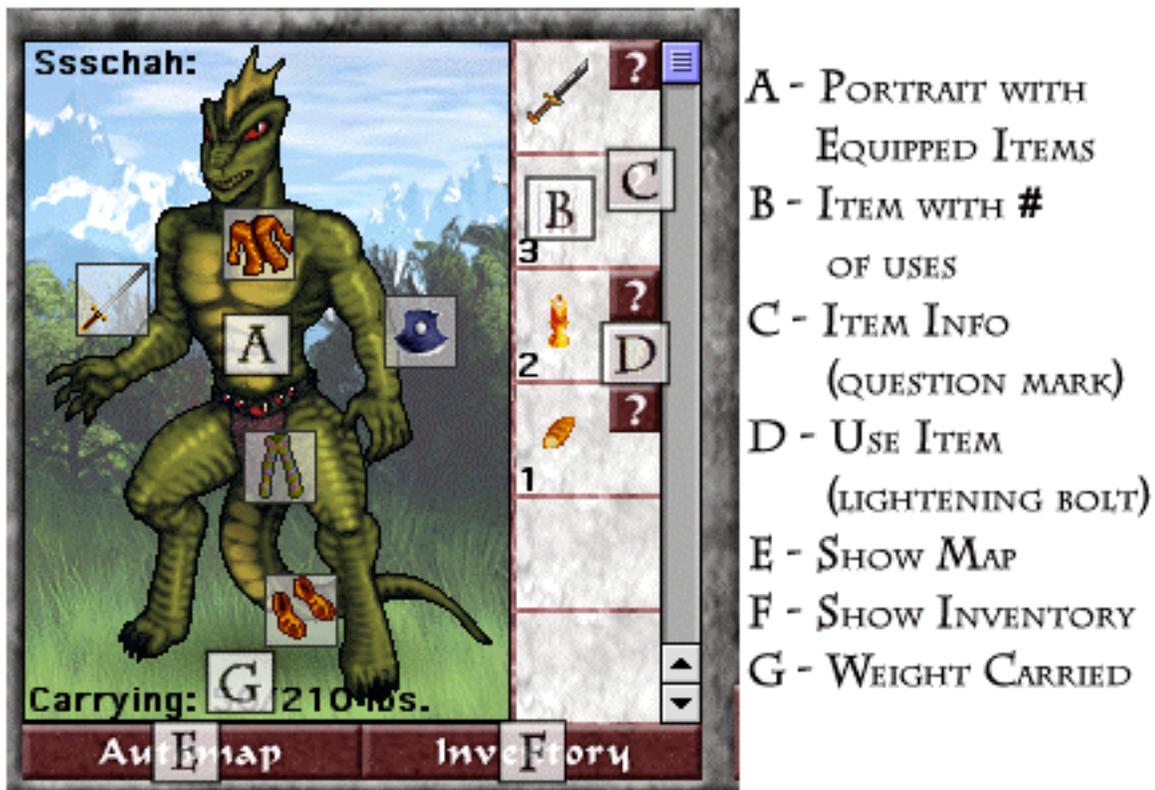
The Inventory/AutoMap Area - Displays either the active character's inventory or the map of the area you're currently in. Press the buttons at the bottom to toggle between the two.

When in AutoMap mode, you will see a top-down drawing of the area you're exploring. To see your inventory in this mode, press the inventory button to the right of a character's portrait.

On the inventory bar, items your character is wearing appear on the picture of the character, and items the character is just carrying around are listed in the area to the right.

To find out how to equip/remove/give/drop/use items, look in the chapter Dealing With Items.

The Game Buttons - There will be up to twelve buttons in this area, each of them enabling you to do something very important. Move the cursor over a button to see what it does. The description appears above the text area. Each button has a keyboard shortcut. The buttons will change from time to time, depending on which mode the game is in (outdoor, town, or combat). The different buttons (plus the modes you can use them in and what they do) are:

Look/Search/Use (any mode, eye or 'l') - When you press this button, letters will appear on anything interesting on the terrain view (monsters, chests, items, etc.). Click on (or type) the letter and a description of what you see will appear in the text area.

If you are standing next to a container when you look at it (such as a barrel, crate, box, desk, etc.), you will search it. Sometimes you will find items or special things inside.

If you are standing next to a door when you look at it, you will close the door. If you're next to a sign, you will read it.

Sometimes, you will find wheels and other machinery. Search them to use them.

Cast Mage Spell, Cast Priest Spell (any mode, lightning bolt or 'm' for mage, ankh or 'p' for priest) - The active character will try to cast a spell. Learn more about this in the Casting Spells chapter.

Rest (outdoor mode, tent or 'r') - You will stop for awhile and rest. If no hostile monsters are nearby, time will pass, and you will recover some health and spell points.

Warning - if you do this too often, more wandering monsters will appear to harass you.

Wait (any mode, clock or 'w' or 5 on keypad) - In combat, this character will wait until the end of the round, after all enemies have taken their moves, to act. Any other time, this action simply causes a little time to pass.

If you are on horseback, press this button to dismount.

Sometimes, your characters will get webs on them, hampering their actions. When you wait, some of the webs will be cleaned off.

Talk (town mode, balloon or 't') - You will attempt to talk with someone nearby. Learn more about this in the Things To Do In Town chapter.

Get (town or combat mode, hand with item or 'g') - You will attempt to pick up some nearby items. If hostile monsters are nearby, you will only be able to pick up items within reach. If no nasties are in sight, you can pick up any item within four spaces.

To pick up an item, click on it (or type its letter) in the Getting screen. You will pick it up. To give that item to a character, move it onto that character and press the mouse button again.

Some items will be marked with an NY (for Not Yours). This is an item which doesn't belong to you and which its owner wants to keep. If you pick up an item which isn't yours when someone can see you, the town will turn hostile.

Start Combat (town mode, dagger or 'f') - Draw your weapons and attack! You will now be in combat mode, Learn more about this in the chapter on Beating People Up.

Parry (combat mode, shield or 'd') - This ends the current character's turn, and he or she will get a defensive bonus when monsters attack later in the round. The more action points you have left, the higher the bonus.

One/All Active (combat mode, party or 'o') - When you press this button, the currently active character will become the only character who does anything. All other characters will automatically skip their turns until you press this button again.

Fire Missile (combat mode, bow and arrow or 'f') - If you have a missile weapon (such as a sling or javelin) equipped, when you press this button you will be asked to select a target to shoot or fling it at.

AutoCombat (combat mode, 'fighter or Command-a on Mac or Control-a on Windows') - This is a handy time-saving feature. If you find yourself in a combat you are easily powerful enough to win, press this button and your party will immediately set about devastating your foes with no need for commands from you.

Your party will end AutoCombat when one of your characters gets very wounded, there are no more foes in sight, or you click anywhere in the game screen. When your characters are in AutoCombat, they will usually only use melee attacks (not spells or missiles).

End Combat (combat mode, peace symbol or 'e') - In town, you will attempt to reform your party and put your weapons away. You can only leave combat in town when all of your characters are within 5 spaces of your lead character and you have space to form in a line.

Outdoors, you will attempt to depart whatever battlefield you've found yourself in. You can only do this when all of your foes are dead. Please note, if there are items to get after an outdoor combat, you must get them before you leave combat mode.

Use Ability (any mode, outspread hand or 'u') - During your adventures, your characters can gain certain special abilities (like healing themselves once a day). Access them by pushing this button to bring up the Actions Toolbar. The Actions Toolbar's other actions are described below.

You can use special abilities you gain when in town or combat mode. Using a special ability during combat doesn't cost any action points.

Read Game Notes (town or outdoor mode, scroll) - Brings up your journal, where you can see all of the information you've assembled from special encounters and talking. Press the delete button next to the message to remove unneeded entries and make room for new ones. You can only store 200 things in your journal.

Help Menu (any mode, book or '?') - Brings up the instructions for Blades of Avernum. Select a topic to the left to read about it.

File Menu (any mode, disk or escape key) - Brings up the Disk Menu, described below.

The Text Area - A running transcript of whatever happens to you will appear in the text area below the terrain area.

The Description Bar - Reminds you what area you're currently in and tells you the current date. This is also where descriptions of the game buttons together with their keyboard shortcuts appear.

The Blades of Avernum Menus and Actions Toolbar

When you push the Help or Disk Menu button, you will bring up a menu with a variety of options:

The File Menu

Open - Open a previously saved game. You will be instantly transported to wherever you were in the game when you last saved.

Save - This will save your current status and position in the game to your hard drive. This command automatically writes your progress over the last save file you opened.

Save Game As … - This will save your current status and position in the game to your hard drive, creating a new file. You will be asked for the name of the new save file. We strongly recommend keeping several saved games around, each at a different point in your progress. Then, if you get stuck, you can always go back to an earlier point.

Main Menu - Returns you to the starting screen, where you can create a new group or use the character editor.

Create New Character - If you have an empty space in your four character slots, you can fill it with a new character. To do this, select this option while you're in a major city (like Fort Emergence or Krizsan). You will be given a chance to customize the new character's skills. When you've finished this, use the Pick New Character Graphic and Pick New Character Name options in the Actions toolbar to set the character's name and appearance.

About This Scenario – See credits and comments for the current scenario.

Quit - Return to the real world.

Preferences - Lets you change a variety of settings which determine how the game runs. These are the options in the preferences window:

<u>Preferences Window Options</u>

Difficulty - Goes from easy to very hard. Determines how powerful the monsters are and how easy it is for you to hit in combat. If you find yourself getting killed a lot, don't be afraid to switch to Easy.

Game Speed - Setting this to faster speeds makes certain time-consuming special effects go away and changes the length of the pauses in the game.

Play Special Effects - If Blades of Avernum is very slow on your machine, turn special effects off to make things snappier. Note that, on older machines, Blades of Avernum may always be a bit slow no matter what.

Play Sounds - Turns sound effects on and off.

Put Game Area in Center - Normally, the game area of Blades of Avernum is in the middle of your monitor. On large monitors, you might want to turn this option off. Then the Avernum game area will move to the upper left corner of the screen.

Give Tip Of Day - Turns the Tip of Day window that appears at the beginning of the game on and off.

Show Instant Help - Turns the Instant Help windows that appear occasionally on and off.

Reset Instant Help - Press this to make all Instant Help windows reappear, just in case you need a refresher on how to do things.

Conceal Grid During Combat – Turns off the grid that appears on the floor during combat.

Don't Play Background Sounds – Turns off the constant ambient sound that plays in the background while you explore.

<u>The Help Menu</u>

Bring up the complete instructions for the game, helpfully included inside. Select topics to the left to read about them.

<u>The Actions Toolbar</u>

Make Potion - The active character will try to make a potion. Learn more about this in the Things To Do In Town chapter.

Use First Aid - Has the character with the highest first aid skill attempt to heal the current active character (select an active character by clicking on his or her portrait or by typing '1'-'4').

Delete a Character - Deletes this character. How sad.

Pick New Character Graphic - Select a new character icon and portrait.

Pick New Character Name - Select a new name for your character.

Ritual of Sanctification – In some scenarios, you can learn this ritual. You can access it from the actions toolbar. Use it when you are standing next to an evil altar and maybe something will happen.

Trait Special Abilities – Some traits, like Beastmaster, give you an ability that can be used once per day. Access these abilities here.

Custom Abilities – Some scenarios will give you unusual magical abilities. These can be

Status Screen Symbols

🍀	Poison	✝ᴮ	Blessed	✝ᶜ	Cursed
🚶	Slowed	🐍	Invulnerable	⊚	Webbed
🐌	Diseased	😁	Berzerk	⚕	Paralyzed
🐚	Acid	✝	Sanctuary	🔮	Divinely Touched
🗡	Resistant	📜	Enlightened	😵	Enfeebled
🧴	Regenerating	🪶	Featherfall	🥾	Safe Travel
👟	Hovering Feet	🗡	Weakened	🍺	Drunk
🗡	Shielded	✒	Magic Resistant	👐	Nimble Fingers
🏃	Hasted	z²²	Asleep	🪶	Flying
😵	Charmed	🛡	Martyr's Shield	😧	Confused
?	Dumbfounded	😨	Terrified	⊕	Forcecage
😱	Scared				

used from the actions toolbar.

What the Conditions Mean

Here are explanations of all of the little symbols that appear on the roster screen while playing.

Poison - Will occasionally take damage until the poison wears off.
Blessed/Cursed - Bonuses/penalties to hit and damage in combat.
Hasted - More action points in combat.
Slowed - Miss every other action in combat.
Invulnerable - Briefly immune to all damage.
Webbed - Covered with webs. Will get less action points. To remove webs, wait (press the wait button or hit '5' on the keypad).
Diseased - Has an unpleasant disease, which is slow to wear off. Will do occasional unpleasant things to the character.
Berserk - Easier to be hit by enemies, but blows in combat are much stronger.
Paralyzed, Asleep - Can't act until it wears off. Taking damage will wake up an asleep character.
Acid - Takes lots of damage very quickly.
Sanctuary - Other characters can't attack or target with spells.
Divinely Touched - Very powerful for a short time.
Resistant - Takes much less damage from fire, cold, and magical attacks.
Enlightened - Temporarily smart. Helps with some special encounters.
Enfeebled - Much weaker in combat.
Regenerating - Health restored quickly.
Featherfall - Can fall without taking damage.
Safe Travel, Hovering Feet - Can walk over damaging terrain types safely.
Shielded/Weakened - Harder/Easier to hit in combat.
Drunk - Clumsy in combat.

Magic Resistant - Magic has less of an effect.

Nimble Fingers - Lock picking and trap removing skill temporarily increased.

Flying - When outdoors, can pass over water and pits.

Charmed - Will fight allies.

Confused - Every other turn, will fight allies.

Martyr's Shield - People who strike in combat take damage.

Dumbfounded - Magical skill reduced. Goes down very slowly. Healers can cure.

Scared - Dexterity reduced, much harder to hit in combat.

Terrified – Flees during combat. The more intelligence you have, the faster this will fade.

Forcecage – Trapped in a magical box. Can't attack or be attacked. The more strength you have, the faster this will fade.

Chapter 5: Learning About Your Characters

Click on the Info button next to a character's portrait. This brings up the Character Info screen, which tells you everything you want to know about your characters.
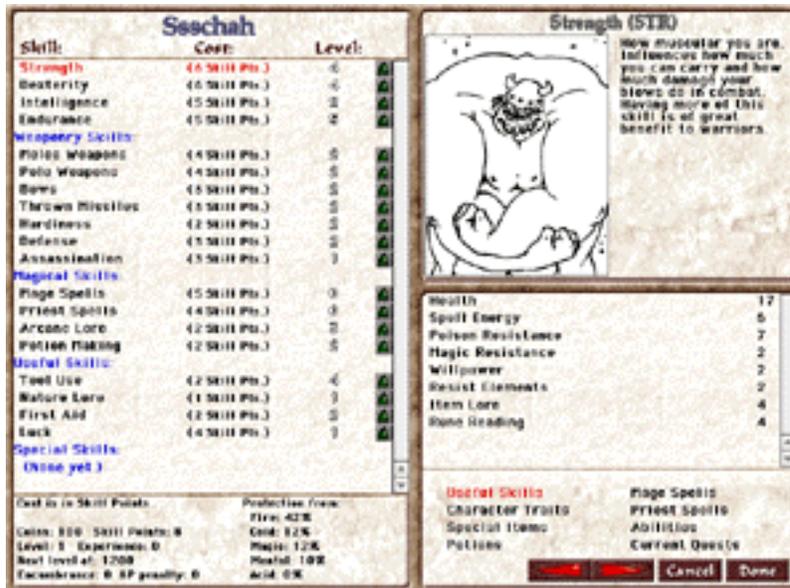
The Character Info Screen

These are the areas of the Character Info screen:

Name - This is the name of the character you are currently looking at.

Skills List **-** Your character's skills are listed at the left half of the screen. Click on the name of a skill to see a description to the upper right. The first column tells you the name of the skill. The second column tells you how many skill points it will cost for the next level of the skill. The third column says how many levels you've bought.

When you're in a town or dungeon and you have some unspent skill points, the skill names will have up and down arrows appear to the right. Use these buttons to buy more levels of the skill. The number of skill points you currently have to spend are at the bottom, along with the how much money you have, your level, your total experience points, how many experience points you need to earn for the next level, and what your reputation currently is.

Description Area - Whenever you want to know what anything is, select it and a description of it will appear in this area.

Other Stuff - All of the other things about your character are described in this area. Click on any of the options at the bottom (Useful Skills, Potions, etc.) and you will see a list of what you have. The topics are:

Useful Skills - Lists the 8 secondary skills (such as Health and Spell Energy) and their values.

Character Traits - This character's advantages and disadvantages.

Special Items - The special items you've found during your adventures, such as keys and rare artifacts. When you are in a place where one of these items is relevant, you will use it automatically.

Potions: The potion recipes you have found. Recipes you know are in dark letters.

Priest Spells - Spells you know are in dark letters. The number of gems shows the level at which you know the spell. Spell names will be all gray for non-spell casting characters.

Mage Spells - Spells you know are in dark letters. The number of gems shows the level at which you know the spell. Spell names will be all gray for non-spell casting characters.

Abilities - You may not have any special abilities, you may gain some throughout the game.

Current Quests - A helpful reminder of all missions you have recently been given. Also descriptions of any courier jobs you have accepted. Very useful for keeping track of what you should be doing.

The large left and right arrows at the bottom let you scroll through your characters. When you're through with the Character Info screen, select Done.

When you gain experience, it is very important to train your characters. If you started with the prefabricated characters and didn't edit them in any way, each of your characters will start with five skill points. You can spend these to improve your characters' skills. Gaining levels (by killing enemies and completing quests) also gives you more skill points. When a character can increase its skills, the Info button by its portrait will change to say Train.

You can train whenever you are in a town or dungeon. Press the Train button to begin. Arrow buttons will appear to the right of the skills on the left side of the screen. Press an up button to spend skill points to increase a skill. You can spend and take back your current skill points as much as you want, but once you press Done, you can't go back and make changes.

In the beginning, you can't improve many skills. Five skill points don't go far. To get more skill points, you need to get more experience by going out on adventures. Looks like it's time to go out on a mission.

Chapter 6: Things To Do In Town

You will spend most of your time in Blades of Avernum indoors, either in towns (settlements of friendly people who sell you stuff and give you quests) or dungeons (dark, dangerous places full of unfriendly monsters). Blades of Avernum has over a hundred towns and dungeon levels, of various sizes and levels of hostility.

To move around, click on the terrain screen in the direction you want to go or use the keypad or arrow keys (the keypad tends to be the easiest way to move around).

There is a lot to do in town...

Town Buttons:

Look/Use/Search	Wait	Start Combat
Cast Mage Spell	Talk	Use Ability
Cast Priest Spell	Get Items	Read Your Notes
Main Menu	Help Library	Read Journal

Doors, Locked Doors, and Secret Doors

You will often need to pass through doors to go places. To open a door, walk into it. Easy enough.

Sometimes, however, doors are locked. When you walk into a locked door, you will be asked if you would like to pick the lock or try to bash the door open. If you select Pick Lock, your character with the highest Tool Use skill and a lockpick will try to unlock the door. (If nobody has a lockpick, you can still try to pick the lock, but with a huge penalty.) If you select Bash, the character with the highest strength will try to knock the door down. The character doing the bashing will take damage.

Each locked door has two values representing its strength and lock difficulty. When trying to bash it, you will only succeed if your strength value is higher than that of the door. Similarly, you can only pick the lock successfully if your lock picking skill is higher than the door's lock difficulty.

Some doors are magically locked. To be able to unlock them, you first need to cast the Unlock Doors spell while standing next to them. Once the magical protection is gone, they can be picked or bashed normally.

Finally, some doors are so securely locked that you can only pass them if you have the correct key. When you approach such a portal, you will be told if you need a key to open the door and whether you were able to unlock it.

Secret doors are special doors made to look like ordinary walls. To search for a secret door, walk into a wall. If there's a secret door there, you'll pass through. Sometimes people or special encounters will give you clues about where to look for a

secret door. Other times, you just have to check all of the walls. Keep an eye on your automap. If you see a large, unexplored area and you haven't found a way into it, try searching for secret doors.

Searching Things, Traps

To search inside a dresser, desk, barrel, etc., stand next to it and look at it (press the look button or type 'l', and then click on the item to search). You will then carefully examine it, and, if there are items inside, you will be given a chance to take them.

Some passages and boxes are trapped. When you find a trap, you will be given the chance to have your character with the highest Tool Use skill remove the trap. Each trap has a number representing its difficulty. You will only successfully disarm the trap if your Tool Use skill is higher. Otherwise, the trap will go off.

Sometimes, you fill find machinery and controls that can only be used when you search them (like the wheels that are used to open gates).

Crates, Barrels, Magic Barriers, and so on

You can find a variety of interesting things scattered among the towns...

Crates and Barrels - You can push these around by walking into them. These often have items inside. To search a barrel or crate, stand next to it and look at it.
Webs - When a character walks into a space with webs, he or she will be covered with them. Press the Wait key to clean off webs. Webs may cover up things.
Blood Stains, Slime, Bones - These are just background details. They don't do anything.
Magic Barriers - Some magical barriers will prevent you from moving through them. Others inflict magical damage when you walk through. There is a certain magical item which can destroy a magical barrier, or you can use the spell Dispel Barrier.

Light and Darkness

Some areas are dark. You won't be able to see more than a space away from you without using a light source (like a lamp or candle) or casting the spell Create Light.

Magical Beams

Some dungeons are trapped with networks of magical beams, reflected by mirrors. Some mirrors are fixed, while others can be pushed around. Sometimes, the beams can be walked through (taking much damage in the process). Other times, the beams block all movement. Little else is known about these strange and dangerous magical creations.

Talking

To obtain information, get quests, and shop, you will need to talk to people. Lots of people. To talk to someone, press the Talk button (or type 't') and click on the man/woman/hideous monster with whom you wish to converse. If this is someone who will talk with you, you will go to the talking screen.

Commander Terrance

You meet the commander for Fort Talrus. He looks like he was once a dashing, razor sharp soldier of the sort the Empire prides itself on. What ground him down into the weary bureaucrat you see before you you can only guess at.

He spends his time pacing around his office, trying to come up with a decent idea or two. He says, in a weary voice, "I am Terrance, commander of Fort Talrus. It is nice to get some help out here."

1. What is your job?

2. I have come here to help you.

3. Can I get any training here?

4. I am here and eager to get started. Where should I go for instructions?

Record   You have 100 gold.   Done

The Talking Screen

During a conversation, you will be given a menu of questions to ask the character about. Different questions appear in different circumstances. You won't ask someone where a special artifact is until someone has told you that the artifact exists. When you run out of questions, you are given the choice between starting a new conversation or saying goodbye.

Characters sometimes offer you quests. Completing these quests may earn you a better reputation or a rich reward. Talk to everyone. Anybody might have a quest for you. When you've completed a mission, you usually get your reward by going back and talking to the person who gave you the mission. If you can't remember what quests you've learned about, look on the Character Info screen. There is a quest list there.

There are two buttons at the bottom of the talking area. The Done button ends the conversation immediately. The Record button saves what this person just told you in your journal.

Shopping and Identification

Some people in towns run shops, which buy and sell items. When you talk to a shopkeeper, one of the conversation options will be to start shopping. Shops mainly sell items, spells, or potion making recipes. Select a character's portrait to have that character start shopping. Click on an item or spell to buy it. The button to the right of an item's name gives a description.

When a shop sells spells, you can sometimes spend money to increase your skill with that spell. Shops that sell spells and skills can only increase them up to a limit (which varies from store to store).

The Shopping Screen

Most shops also buy items, although some give better prices than others. An item must be identified before it can be sold. When you sell an item, it will appear in the shop's item list. It will probably still be there when you return to the shop later, although someone might buy it while you're away. To sell an item, push the button with the coins icon next to the item.

When you're through shopping, press the Done button.

Some people can identify your unknown items. For a fee, they will tell you what your items are. When you find someone who can do this (such as Levy in Fort Emergence) and ask about identification, 'ID' buttons (buttons with little scrolls on them) will appear by unidentified items in your item list. Press the ID button next to the item to find out what it is.

Healers

Some people are healers. For a price, they can restore characters to pristine condition (even if you are dead or turned to stone). Using a healer will also remove the curse on any cursed items in your inventory.

Getting Horses

Some people in towns sell you horses. The horses can be found nearby. When you pay the salesman, you will gain the ability to mount one of the nearby groups of horses. Walk into a horse to mount it. Press the wait button (or type 5 on the keypad to dismount).

Horses halve the time it takes to get anywhere outdoors and make it easier to evade wandering monsters. This is very useful since, in Blades of Avernum, speed is important. Horses can't be ridden indoors.

Making Potions

During a long, grueling adventure in a hostile area, there is nothing more refreshing than a nice, long swig of healing potion or energy elixir. Fortunately, if you obtain the right knowledge and the right ingredients, you can make powerful potions yourself before going on a long journey. This can be very important in large dungeons, since you won't recover spell points while underground.

It is possible to find seventeen different potion recipes. To make a potion, you first need to know the recipe (you start knowing the first two potion recipes). Then you need a high enough Potion Making skill. You can find the minimum skill by going into the Character Info screen, selecting a type of potion (in the Potions section) and reading the description in the upper right hand corner.

Finally, you need the proper ingredients. There are six sorts of potion ingredients: Healing Herbs, Spiritual Herbs, Energetic Herbs, Toadstools, Graymold, and Mandrake. When you have everything you need, press the Use Ability button and then select Make Potion. The character with the highest potion making skill will attempt to make the potion (so you only need to buy this skill for one character). Select the desired potion and you'll be told whether or not you succeed. If it works, a new potion will appear in your inventory!

The ingredients for potions are scattered through Avernum and the surface. There are often places to find ingredients hidden in the outdoors, though you may need a high Nature Lore skill to detect them.

Getting and Using Items

Ah, wealth. What could be more useful? Items are scattered everywhere in Avernum: on the floor, on tables, inside dressers and chests. To get nearby items, press the Get Items button (or type 'g'). To take items out of a container, stand next to it and look at it.

Each character can equip a maximum of 12 items and carry up to 28 non-equipped items. Some objects (like armor) are heavy. Each character can only carry so much weight. The higher the character's strength, the more he or she can carry.

To move an item, click on it. Your cursor will turn into that item and you can drag it around. Press the mouse button again to drop it. To give it to a character, drop it on that character's portrait. To put it in the active character's inventory, drop it on the item list. To have the active character equip it, drop it on the inventory area (full body picture). To drop the item, drop it on the terrain. (To switch the active character, click on the character's portrait when not dragging an item, or type '1'-'4').

Some items are actually stacks of a lot of little items (like a pile of 20 arrows). To split up a pile, hold down the Option key (on Windows, the Control key) while you click on it.

Some items are cursed. When you equip a cursed item, you won't be able to take it off! To remove the curse on an item, find a healer in one of the towns. Shops never buy cursed items.

Some items, such as candles, can be used without being equipped. Click on the lightening bolt to activate the item. Most items can be used by everyone.

When you have an identified item you don't need, find someone who will buy it. Many stores buy items, but not all of them pay equally good prices.

Finally, if you leave an item in a town, the item will still be there when you return. Be careful, though. If you leave a scenario, all items left behind in the towns are lost forever.

Chapter 7: Outdoors and Miscellany

Things To Do Outdoors

You will spend a lot of time outdoors, traveling from cities to dungeons and back. Sometimes you will explore the plains and forests of Valorim, sometimes you will roam the enormous caverns and tunnels and Upper Avernum, and sometimes you will find yourself in odd, unknown lands.

Outdoor Buttons:

Look/Use/Search	Rest	Read Your Notes
Cast Mage Spell	Wait	Main Menu
Cast Priest Spell	Use Ability	Help Library

Wandering Creatures – Frequently, you will meet groups of people or creatures wandering outdoors. Sometimes they will talk to you, sometimes they will avoid you, and sometimes they will fight you. One way to build up some cash and experience points is to find monsters to fight. It's also another way to die young. See 'Beating People Up' if you want to know more.

Boats - You can get boats in several places. Use a boat to get to places you can't reach on foot. Rowing a boat is just like walking, except on water. Don't forget where you left your boat.

Remember, if you drop items outdoors, they are gone for good. The exception is while in fight mode. If you drop something while fighting, you can still pick it up before you end the fight. You can also pick up your enemies' dropped weapons and items to use or sell.

Miscellany

Towns and Memory – When you commit crimes in a town, the town will become hostile and the guards will attack you. If you leave town and return, they will still be mad. You should think twice before you let anyone see you engaged in thievery.

When you kill creatures in dungeons, leave, and return, those foes will probably still be dead. However, some dungeons have the ability to gain reinforcements.

Fortunately, when you leave a scenario, all crimes you have committed will be forgotten.

Food and Resting - You will often want to rest while traveling in the outdoors. Resting when outdoors restores a large portion of your spell points and health. When you're damaged while exploring a dungeon far from civilization, you may want to walk outside to recover.

To rest requires food. Each time you rest, you will consume one unit of food in your inventory. When you're out of food, you won't be able to rest until you return to a town.

You can also rest in towns by finding an inn or a special encounter which lets you rest. Also, health and spell points will slowly return to you when you walk around outdoors. However, you won't regenerate spell energy while exploring a dungeon. You'll need to escape and rest or carefully conserve your spell energy.

Special Encounters and the Journal - When exploring towns and the outdoors, you will come across many special encounters. These events will tell the story of what's happening in Avernum and help or harm you in a wide variety of ways.

When you're talking to people or have stumbled upon a special encounter, you can record the text for future reference. To do so, press the record button (which looks like a book) in the lower left-hand corner.

To read your journal, press the Read Journal button when outdoors or in town. Your journal can only carry 200 entries, so you may need to clean them out from time to time. Do this by pressing the Delete button when reading your journal.

Gaining Allies – Sometimes, people in towns will offer to join you. They will travel with you, fight, and sometimes change how other characters react to you.

To target an ally with a healing spell, type '5' or '6'. You can usually get rid of unwanted allies by traveling back to where you met them. They will offer to leave.

Leaving the Scenario – At some point in an adventure, you will have done everything you want to do there. You will want to leave.

Every scenario has a place where you can leave it. Usually, you can find the exit by returning to the area where you entered it. (For example, in Valley of Dying Things, you can exit the scenario by leaving Fort Talrus to the south.)

When you leave a scenario, your party will be returned to the title screen. You can then select Enter Scenario and begin a new adventure.

When you leave a scenario, you may lose some items in your inventory. Some items are specific to a scenario and can't be taken out of it. One example of this is the map of Skylark Vale in Valley of Dying Things.

Chapter 8: Beating People Up

While diplomacy and stealth can be useful, in the end, most of your progress in Blades of Avernum will be made through battle. A lot of critters are going to attack you. You'll need to know how to defend yourself.

There are two ways to get into a fight. First, you can enter a town containing hostile characters. Second, you can encounter a band of wandering monsters when walking outdoors.

Combat Buttons:

Look/Use/Search	Parry	One Character/ All Active
Cast Mage Spell	Get Items	Fire Missile
Cast Priest Spell	Delay Action	AutoCombat
End Combat	Use Ability	Help Library

How To Attack

When in town, you can enter combat mode by pressing the Start Combat button (or typing 'f'). When a fight starts while outdoors, you enter the battle in combat mode. Now, all of your characters can act separately, one at a time.

To attack someone, you should first equip a weapon (by dropping it onto your character picture). To attack a foe, walk into it.

In town, you don't need to enter combat mode to have your lead character attack someone. Just walk your lead character into an enemy to attack.

Rounds and Action Points

Action Point Cost:

Move 1 Space	1	Equip/Unequip Item	1
Cast Spell	5	Drop Item	1
Attack	4	Give Item	1
Parry	All	Trade Places	1
Fire a Missile	4	Look	0
Get Items	4		

Combat is divided into segments of time called rounds. Each round, each character gets around 4 action points with which to act. Each action eats up some of your action points, and, when you reach 0, you can't do anything else that round. When nobody has any action points left, a new round starts, and another, until combat ends. To see how many action points each action costs, look at the chart above.

During a round, the fastest characters act first. The fastest character is usually the one with the highest Dexterity, although other factors (like being hasted or slowed) can play a part.

If you want, one of your characters can wait to act until after all of the monsters have used up their action points. To do this, press the Wait button (or type 'w'). If you don't want your character to do anything that round, press the Parry button (or type 'p' or hit 5 on the keypad).

When you're knocked below 0 health, you're dead. If you're hit hard enough, you're turned to dust. Also, some creatures have the magical ability to turn you to stone. Any character luckless enough to die or be turned to stone will be out of action until you can get back to a healer or cast a Return Life spell. Also, if you're really desperate, the character editor can heal people.

Health and Damage

When one of your characters takes a blow which would knock him or her below 0 health, it will be at zero health (and at death's door). This will give you a chance to move that character to safety or apply healing. If your character takes a blow while at zero health, he or she will die.

There are several ways to restore a character's health. When outdoors, damage will be slowly healed over time. Several priest spells can cure damage, as can healers in towns. If you have a first aid kit, you can use the Use First Aid command (in the Use Abilities menu). However, you can only use first aid on a character once a day, and your first aid kits will be slowly used up over time. You can also make potions which cure damage.

Killing Everything Off

When you're in town and don't want to fight any more, press the End Combat button. You will reform as a group and return to town mode. All of your characters need to be within five spaces of your lead character for this to work.

If you got into the fight outdoors, you can use the End Combat button after all of your foes are dead (be sure to pick up any loot first). You can also flee an outdoor combat. If you move a character far enough away from the fight, it will be removed from battle. Once all characters have fled, battle ends.

When you kill something in a town, it stays dead. If you kill ten goblins in a cave, when you return to that cave, they will still be gone. Note, however, that sometimes they can get reinforcements.

Conserving Your Strength

You can't rest or recuperate spell energy while in a hostile place. This means that, if you don't conserve your energy, you could find yourself running low when you reach a big fight. You can restore your spell energy by drinking potions or going outside to rest.

Remember: creatures you killed will still be dead when you return.

Chapter 9: Casting Spells

Magic is one of the most powerful tools available to you in Blades of Avernum. Weapons are great, but nothing produces damage faster or more reliably than a good magic spell. Without magic, you will have a very difficult time succeeding.

Barbecuing some bugs.

Mage and Priest Spells

There are two different sorts of spells: Mage and Priest. Mage spells call upon powerful forces to reshape reality and are good at dealing damage and affecting physical things. Priest spells call upon unseen beings to provide supernatural aid and are better at healing people and affecting the minds of foes.

To cast a spell, you first need to learn it. Most spells are bought in towns or learned from scrolls you find on your adventures. In addition, you must have a high enough level of the appropriate skill (Mage or Priest Spells skill) and enough spell points.

To have the active character cast a spell, you press the Cast Mage Spell (or Cast Priest Spell) button, select the spell, and select the target(s). As always, to change the active character, click on a portrait or type '1'-'4'.

Blades of Avernum has three playing modes (town, outdoors, and combat). Some spells can only be cast in certain modes (Bolt of Fire, for example, can only be cast in combat).

You can't cast any Mage Spell beyond the first five while wearing any sort of encumbering armor. You'll have to take off your armor to cast those spells.

Learning New Spells

When you make a new party, you start out with all mage and priest spells you have the skill to cast (up to 8 spells of each type). This will, of course, be only a small fraction of the spells in the game. To find the rest, you'll need to look around.

All of the spells can be learned in towns. Other powerful spells are given as rewards for doing missions, so be sure to talk to powerful people you meet in your travels.

Spell Skills

You have a skill with each spell, which measures how adept you are at casting it. When you first learn a spell, you know it at skill one. Some spell merchants can increase your skill with a spell for money, and some special encounters will also increase your skill.

The higher your skill with a spell, the more effective it will be. Blessings will last longer, heal spells will cure more, and damage spells will affect more targets and do more damage.

Targeting Spells

Some spells are cast on a character in your party. To select the target, click on the character's portrait (or type '1'-'4').

If a character is traveling with you, you can target it by typing '5' or '6'.

Some spells are cast on your enemies. If a spell damages, say, three foes, click on all three of them. This will make target symbols appear. Click on a target again to cancel the selection. If you don't want to use all of your targets, hit the space bar to launch the spell.

Here are lists of all of the mage and priest spells in Blades of Avernum, along with the minimum skill to cast them and their cost in spell energy.

With many of the spells are descriptions of their effects at each skill level. In these descriptions, B is the spell's bonus. Your bonus for casting mage spells is your Mage Spells skill plus your intelligence. Your bonus for casting priest spells is your Priest Spells skill plus your intelligence.

Mage Spell List:

Bolt of Fire (Min. Mage Spells skill 1, Costs 2 spell energy) - This is the most basic of the damage-dealing Mage spells. It strikes one foe for a small amount of fire damage. As you gain skill with the spell, it will do more damage, eventually becoming quite an efficient damage source.
*Effect: Does 2-8 * skill + B points damage.*
Light (Min. Mage Spells skill 1, Costs 1 spell energy) - This spell is a great comfort in places of darkness. It creates a floating light source which follows you around, enabling you to see better. . As you gain skill with the spell, the duration of this spell increases.
*Effect: Gives light for 100 + 100 * skill + 10 * B turns.*
Call Beast (Min. Mage Spells skill 2, Costs 4 spell energy) - This is the first of the summoning spells. It summons a single beast to aid you in combat. As you gain skill with the spell, the quality of the creature summoned and the duration it hangs around increase.

Spray Acid (Min. Mage Spells skill 2, Costs 5 spell energy) - Covers a target with a large, magically summoned globule of corrosive slime, which damages it over time. As you gain skill with the spell, more damage is done.
*Effect: Inflicts 4 + 4 * skill + B / 2 levels of acid on the target. Each level of acid does about 1-4 points of damage.*
Haste (Min. Mage Spells skill 3, Costs 6 spell energy) - This extremely useful spell increases the target's number of actions in combat for a short time. As you gain skill with the spell, the duration increases.
*Effect: Hastes for 1-3 * skill + B / 4 turns.*
Slow (Min. Mage Spells skill 4, Costs 7 spell energy) - Slows several of your enemies, causing them to only act every other combat round. As you gain skill with the spell, it affects more of your foes.
Effect: Slows targets for 2-4 + skill + B / 5 turns. Affects 1 + skill + B / 10 targets.
Ice Lances (Min. Mage Spells skill 5, Costs 7 spell energy) - This damage-dealing spell is a great improvement over Bolt of Fire. The lances of cold it fires do more damage and to a number of targets. As you gain skill with the spell, it will do more damage to more targets.
*Effect: Does 2-8 + 2-8 * skill + B cold damage. Affects 1 + skill + B / 8 targets.*
Unlock Doors (Min. Mage Spells skill 6, Costs 15 spell energy) - Some doors are magically locked. This spell can remove the magical protection, enabling the lock to be picked normally. At higher skill, the chance of success increases. This spell, at a very high skill, might even unlock normal locks.
Create Illusions (Min. Mage Spells skill 6, Costs 10 spell energy) - This spell summons several illusionary monsters, which fight at your side. Illusions function just like normal creatures, except that they have a chance of disappearing when they take any damage. As you gain skill with the spell, it summons more and more powerful illusions.
Effect: Summons 1 + B/8 weak illusions.
Far Sight (Min. Mage Spells skill 7, Costs 15 spell energy) - This spells sends out a roving eye which explores the indoor area around you. The terrain in your immediate area is added to your AutoMap. As you gain skill with the spell, it can map a larger area and even work when you are outdoors.
Lightning Spray (Min. Mage Spells skill 8, Costs 10 spell energy) - This spell sprays lightning at your foes, doing considerable damage. As you gain skill with the spell, this spell does more damage.
*Effect: Does 2-16 + 2-16 * skill + B magic damage. Affects 1 + skill + B / 8 targets.*
Capture Mind (Min. Mage Spells skill 9, Costs 13 spell energy) - This spell attempts to take control of the mind of one of your enemies, causing it to fight on your side for a short time. This spell only works on creatures who have minds. Higher skill with this spell increases the duration.
Simulacrum (Min. Mage Spells skill 10, Costs 20 spell energy) - This spell creates a copy of one of the enemies attacking you, which will fight on your side. If the creature is too powerful, the spell might not affect it (higher skill increases the range of foes you can affect). As you gain more skill with this spell, the creature stays around longer.
Dispel Barrier (Min. Mage Spells skill 11, Costs 30 spell energy) - When cast, this spell has a chance of destroying all magical barriers adjacent to the party. As you gain skill with this spell, you can affect stronger barriers and your chance of success improves.
Summon Aid (Min. Mage Spells skill 12, Costs 15 spell energy) - This powerful summoning spell summons several creatures to aid you. As you gain skill with the spell, the quality of the summoned creatures increases.

Effect: Summons 1 + B/12 creatures.
Forcecage (Min. Mage Spells skill 13, Costs 15 spell energy) - Encases a target in a cage of magical energy, which prevents it from taking any action for several turns. The number of targets affected equals your skill with the spell. The higher a target's strength, the sooner it can escape. As you gain skill with the spell, its effect increases.
Fireblast (Min. Mage Spells skill 14, Costs 15 spell energy) - Shoots out powerful and damaging lances of fire, searing several of your foes. As you gain skill with the spell, it affects more targets and does more damage.
*Effect: Does 2-24 + 2-24 * skill + 2 * B fires damage. Affects skill + B / 8 targets.*
Arcane Summon (Min. Mage Spells skill 15, Costs 25 spell energy) - This is the first of the three Arcane spells, spells of unmatched difficulty and power. It summons one huge, dangerous creature to fight for you. As you gain skill with the spell, more creatures are summoned.
Effect: Summons a number of creatures equal to your skill plus 1.
Arcane Shield (Min. Mage Spells skill 16, Costs 25 spell energy) - This Arcane spell places a powerful magical shield around the target, making him or her very difficult to damage As you gain skill with the spell, it can even make the beneficiary invulnerable for a short period of time.
Effect at skill 1: Shielding and magical resistance for 1 character for 8 + B/6 turns.
Effect at skill 2: Also gives a martyr's shield (damages attackers).
Effect at skill 3 and above: Also gives brief invulnerability. The higher the skill, the longer this lasts.
Arcane Blow (Min. Mage Spells skill 17, Costs 25 spell energy) - This is the most powerful spell available to mages. It throws intense, searing waves of energy at your foes. Damage from this spell is very difficult to resist. As you gain skill with the spell, the damage increases.
Effect: Does 2-36 + 2-36 * skill + 2.5 * B magic damage. Affects skill + B / 12 targets.

Priest Spell List

Healing (Min. Priest Spells skill 1, Costs 2 spell energy) - This spell heals damage. As you gain skill with the spell, this amount increases.
*Effect: Heals 3-12 * skill + 2 * B damage.*
Curing (Min. Priest Spells skill 1, Costs 2 spell energy) - This spell cures poison and disease afflicting the target. At skill 2, also cures acid. At skill 3, also cures dumbfounding. The higher the skill, the greater the effect.
War Blessing (Min. Priest Spells skill 1, Costs 4 spell energy) - This spell blesses and shields the recipient, enabling him or her to hit more often and do more damage in combat. At skill 2, also shields the target. At skill 3, also hastes the target briefly. At skill 4, also provides magic resistance. The higher the skill level, the longer all of these effects last.
Terror (Min. Priest Spells skill 2, Costs 6 spell energy) - Terrifies the target, causing it to flee in panic from nearby enemies. As you gain skill with the spell, the duration increases. The lower the intelligence of the foe, the longer the duration.
Repel Spirit (Min. Priest Spells skill 3, Costs 3 spell energy) - Priests can do great damage to the undead and other otherworldly creatures. This spell deals a sharp blow to a single undead target. As you gain skill with the spell, it will affect more targets. At skill 3 or above, this spell also affects demons.

*Effect: Does 3-18 * skill + B damage. Affects skill + 2 targets.*
<u>Smite</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 4, Costs 6 spell energy) - Fires a powerful bolt of ice at one of your foes, doing good damage (plus more as your bonus increases. As you gain skill with the spell, it will fire more bolts and do more damage.
*Effect: Does 3-12 * skill + B cold damage. Affects a number of targets equal to your skill.*
<u>Summon Shade</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 5, Costs 9 spell energy) - Summons a shade to fight for you. It will disappear after helping you for a while. As you gain skill with the spell, it will summon stronger shades to fight.
<u>Enduring Barrier</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 5, Costs 13 spell energy) - Increases the health of the target, even taking them above the character's normal maximum. The spell doesn't work if the character's current health is already above the maximum. As you gain more skill with this spell, more health is gained.
*Effect: Increases health by skill * 10 + B.*
<u>Unshackle Mind</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 6, Costs 5 spell energy) - This spell cures someone who has been scared or put to sleep. At skill 2 or above, also cures charming. At skill 3 or above, also cures paralysis. At skill 4 or above, also cures enfeeblement and terror. The higher the skill, the more these effects are weakened.
<u>Move Mountains</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 7, Costs 15 spell energy) - Some walls in towns and dungeons are cracked and fragile. This spell destroys these walls, hopefully revealing interesting things behind them. When cast, affects all walls in spaces adjacent to a party member. As you gain skill with the spell, more different terrain types are affected.
<u>Mass Healing</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 8, Costs 10 spell energy) - This spell functions exactly the same as Healing, but benefits the entire party.
<u>Mass Curing</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 8, Costs 8 spell energy) - This spell functions exactly the same as Curing, but benefits the entire party. At skill 2, this spell also weakens forcecages, and at skill 3 or higher, it also reduces the effects of being scared.
<u>Radiant Shield</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 9, Costs 10 spell energy) - This is a powerful defensive spell. It dramatically increases your group's magic resistance. At skill 2 or above, also shields the recipients from blows. At higher skill, provides more beneficial effects.
<u>Divine Fire</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 10, Costs 15 spell energy) - One of the strongest offensive priest spells. Fires several powerful bolts of fire. As you gain skill with the spell, the damage will increase.
*Effect: Does 3-24 * skill + 1.5 * B fire damage. Affects skill + B / 8 targets.*
<u>Control Foes</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 11, Costs 15 spell energy) - This spell will cloud the mind of the target, confusing it and maybe even causing it to fight on your side. As you gain skill with the spell, it will have a better effect, eventually even charming your foes.
Effect at Skill 1: Enfeebles and terrifies one foe.
Effect at Skill 2: Confuses one foe.
Effect at Skill 3 and above: Charms one foe. The higher the skill, the longer the duration.
<u>Cloud of Blades</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 12, Costs 10 spell energy) - Creates a cloud of magical, whirling blades around one (or more) targets. They immediately damage the target and continue to hang in the air, doing damage, for a while. The number of targets equals the skill of the spell.
<u>Return Life</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 13, Costs 50 spell energy) - If you have Balm of Life (found in dungeons or made using Alchemy), you can use this spell to restore the life to your fallen comrades. At the lowest level, it can revive someone who's been turned to

stone. As you gain skill with the spell, it can cure people who are Dead and then, even Dust.

When you resurrect a character with this skill, he or she loses some experience. The higher your skill with the spell, the lower the penalty.

<u>Divine Retribution</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 15, Costs 25 spell energy) - Strikes your foes with bolts of negative energy, draining their life essence. Only affects living enemies. As you gain skill with the spell, affects more targets and does more damage.

*Effect: Does 3-30 + 2-20 * skill + 1.5 * B magic damage. Affects 1 + skill + B / 12 targets. At skill 2 or above, also enfeebles targets. At skill 3 or above, also terrifies targets.*

<u>Divine Restoration</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 16, Costs 25 spell energy) - This is the most powerful healing spell known. It heals all damage and cures all negative effects. As you gain skill with the spell, it can even increase its target's health over the normal maximum, giving a great advantage in combat.

<u>Divine Host</u> (Min. Priest Spells skill 17, Costs 30 spell energy) - This awesome spell summons a host of powerful shades, who fight to protect you from your foes. As you gain skill with the spell, more and stronger spirits will come to your aid.

Effect: Summons 2 + skill shades.

Chapter 10: Installing or Making New Scenarios

So you've finished the four scenarios that came with Blades of Avernum. You're ready for new adventures. Well, Blades of Avernum is an adventure that need never end. You can download new, free scenarios off of the Internet, or you can make your own adventures.

Getting New Adventures

To get new scenarios for Blades of Avernum, fire up your web browser and go to

http://www.spiderwebsoftware.com/avernum/blades/scen_list.html

All of the user-made scenarios are there, waiting for downloading. Note that you can only play these scenarios if you have registered Blades of Avernum.
Here's how to install your new scenario:

1. Download it. This is usually accomplished by clicking on the Download link in your web browser. Be sure to select the Mac version if you're using a Mac or the Windows version if using Windows.
2. The scenario will be brought down onto your computer. Your browser should uncompress it on its own. The scenario will be a folder full of files.
3. Drag that folder into your Blades of Avernum Scenarios folder. It is inside the Blades of Avernum folder. Be sure to drag the whole folder. Don't take the files out of it.
4. Run Blades. Load a party that's not currently in a scenario.
5. Select Enter Scenario. Use the arrow keys at the bottom of the window that comes up to flip through all of your scenarios, and click on the scenario you want.
6. Enjoy!

You can only have 30 scenarios installed at once. If you try to put more in the Scenarios folder, you'll have to take more out first to be able to play them all.

Designing Your Own Adventures

The Blades of Avernum Editor is a free program you can use to create your own fantasy adventures and share them with others. It is a very complicated program, with many features. It will take time to learn it. However, with patience, you can make marvelous and complicated adventures. Then, if you send them to Spiderweb Software and they more or less work, we will put them on our web site and the whole world can enjoy your tale!
To get the Blades of Avernum editor, it can be downloaded at

http://www.spiderwebsoftware.com/avernum/blades/scen_workshop.html

The workshop also contains articles on how best to use the editor, updates warning you of bugs and problems, and links to custom graphics you can use. To meet the community of other Blades designers, go to

http://www.ironycentral.com/cgi-bin/ubb/ultimatebb.cgi

When you download the editor, be sure to read the file "READ ME FIRST - Getting Started". It explains how to install the editor and gives some useful advice for getting started.

Chapter 11: The Character Editor

Sometimes, you get in trouble. You get trapped, or you aren't strong enough to get where you want to go, or you just want a really nice sword. Fortunately, with only a few mouse clicks, you can get just about anything you want.

With one quick application of the editor, you can heal and recharge your party and give them a few magic wands for good measure. Or just teleport them out of the dungeon, if that would be easier.

The character editor is a very handy subprogram which can change your party in a variety of useful ways. When Blades of Avernum is unregistered, it can do a few things. When Blades of Avernum is registered, it can do much, much more. Also, if you think this is cheating and you don't want the temptation, you can turn the editor off permanently.

One warning before you begin. If you do the wrong thing (like reset all of the boats, leaving yourself stranded on an island), it's possible to mess up your party. It is **strongly** recommended that you back up your saved game before you edit it.
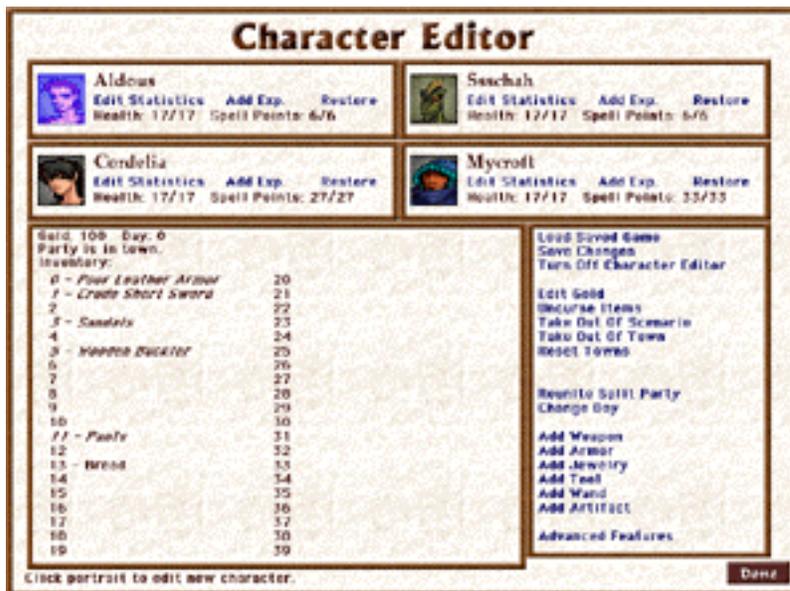
The Main Character Editor Screen

Once you're on the main character editor screen, select Load Saved Game (to the right) and choose a saved game. You can now edit that party to your heart's content (although, if Blades of Avernum is unregistered, you won't be able to use all of the features).

You will now see the characters in your party. Each character can be edited individually. There are also three options to the right of each portrait:

Edit Statistics (Blades of Avernum must be registered) - Brings up the Character Editor screen, as if you were about to do training. However, you can spend as many skill points as you want to improve your skills.

When you look at the lists of traits and recipes, each will have a button to the right. If you know that recipe or have that trait, it will be lit. If the button is dark, select it to light it. For spells, click on the buttons to the right of a spell name to change the level you know the spell at.

When you're through, press the Done button.

Add Exp. – Lets you add experience to this character. The base amount of experience to gain a level is 1000 (adjusted up or down by your advantages and disadvantages). Note, however, that you don't gain the levels immediately. You will gain the levels when you enter the game and kill something.

Energize - Restores this character to full health (even if he or she is dead, dust, or stone). If the character is poisoned, diseased, paralyzed, etc. this heals those conditions too. Also restores all of a character's spell points.

You can also edit a character's inventory. To select an adventurer, click on its portrait. You will see his or her items below. Equipped items are in italics. Unidentified items will be gray. Select an item to identify it. There are several commands which add items to the active character's inventory.

To the lower right, you will see a list of the character editor commands. They are:

Edit Gold - Lets you set how many coins your characters own.

Uncurse Items - Removes any curses on the items you're carrying.

Take Out of Scenario - If this saved game is currently playing in a scenario, you can pull them out. You can do this if you are completely stuck or trapped, or just tired of that adventure. Note that any progress you have made in that adventure is forgotten, and any items you left on the ground are lost forever.

Take Out Of Town - If your adventurers are in town and you use this command, when you next load the save file, they will be outdoors. You won't see them at first (they are still standing inside the town). Move away from the town, and you will see them again.

This option is provided in case you're completely trapped inside a town and can't get out. Try to avoid, if at all possible, using this command. Jumping out of towns can cause the plot to take unexpected turns.

If your group is split up, you need to use the Reunite Split Party command before you can pull them outside.

Reset Towns - If you anger a town, it will be mad at you, and it won't forget your offenses. Select this option and all angry towns will forgive you. People in these towns which you killed will be restored to life.

Reunite Split Party - If you sent a character by him or herself into an area of a dungeon, this option pulls that character back to the rest of the group.

Change Day – As time goes on, events will happen, towns can crumble, and people may die. Select this option to shift the day of the scenario around to give yourself more time (or less). Note that, if a town is destroyed and you shift the day to before it was destroyed, odd things can happen.

Add Items (Blades of Avernum must be registered) - There are six different Add Items options, each of which lets you select a different kind of item. The selected item is given to the active character.

Advanced Features - These are powerful features which enable you to alter practically any aspect of your saved game. Unfortunately, they can also completely mess your game up. You should only use them when Spiderweb Software tech support tells you to.

Turn Off Character Editor - If you just don't like having the character editor around, select this. After you give a confirmation, the character editor will be permanently turned off.

There is, actually, a secret way to restore the editor if you come to regret its loss. To find out how, look on the Avernum web site (http://www.avernum.com).

Save Changes, Load Saved Game - Lets you save your changes and import a new group to edit.

Chapter 12: Hint Book For the Demo

Your nice new party is getting stomped. Again and again. It's humiliating. You can't find anything good to fight. The monsters are slaughtering you. You can't get money. What can you do?

This chapter contains some good advice for getting started and a walkthrough and hints for getting through the demo. There is hope for you.

Advice For Building A Strong Party

1. Be sure to search all of the rooms and containers in Fort Talrus. Lots of supplies have been left for you.

2. At early levels, magic will keep you alive. Use bless and haste spells, and get a character who can cast Ice Lances as soon as possible.

3. Some skills are more important than others for building strong parties. Endurance increases health. Buy lots of it. Melee and Pole Weapons skill increases your damage output. Buy lots of it for your melee fighters.

4. From beginning to end, your warriors will be the best at killing things. Get used to putting your warriors in front to grab the attention of monsters. Have your priests and mages stand back and heal, bless, and haste the warriors.

Walkthrough for The Valley of Dying Things

The introductory scenario to Blades of Avernum presents you with an enormous underground school to explore. It's full of magical creatures, some friendly, most not. And there is a horrible secret within, slowly poisoning the unsuspecting valley above it.

This walkthrough will frequently refer to maps of the more important dungeon levels. These maps are at the end of this chapter.

Getting Into the School

Sample Questions: How do I start investigating the problem? Where should I look? What's this school people are talking about? How do I get into the school?

You begin the scenario in your room in Fort Talrus. Leave your room and walk down the corridor to the south. Commander Terrance is in his office in the southwest corner. Speak with him to learn what's happening in the valley. If you explore the fort, you can find some supplies.

Leave Fort Talrus to the north, and travel up to Sweetgrove. Once inside, talk to Mayor Crouch (she's in a building in the center of town) to find out about the valley's troubles, and then talk to Axel to find out about the old library. You can talk to other people for side quests and other information.

To enter the school, you need to find a black opening stone. There are three that can be found. North of the school (to the northeast), you can find a group of kobolds wandering around. If you speak with them, you can pay to get a stone.

There is a beggar named Kharl in the center of Sweetgrove. If you speak with him, you can pay for an opening stone.

Finally, Axel suggests you should speak with someone named Avizo. He is in Fort Talrus, in the room next to where you started. After Axel tells you about Avizo, Avizo will tell you where his opening stone is. Avizo's store is in the center of town. Break in and search the potted plant in the back room.

Now it's time to start investigating the School of Magery. It's north of Sweetgrove. There's a large mountain up there with four entrances, north, south, east, and west (to get to the west entrance, walk on the stepping stones over the river). Enter from one direction and approach the gate. When prompted, choose to insert the stone in the depression. Leave the school, enter it again from a different direction, and approach the gate again. This time, when you insert the stone, the gate will open for you.

When you enter, a wisp will float up and communicate with you, but not say anything interesting. There are monsters and treasure in the side rooms of the top floor. You can do some hunting before you head down.

The School of Magery - Upper Half

Sample Questions: What do I do in the upper levels of the school? What do I do in the Holding Cells/Storage areas? How do I help the dragon? How do I pass the blocked wall at the south end of the Administration level? How do I pass the glowing gates?

The stairway down from the School Entry level is in the center of the level. Go down to the Visitor's Quarters (map is in Maps chapter). You will start at A. The west half of this level is infested with goblins. The east half contains the dangerous Altered Beast, which starts at B on the map and hunts you if you get too close to its lair. If the Altered Beast tracks you down and you aren't strong enough to beat it, flee. It won't chase you into the west half of the dungeon.

There are two stairways down on that level, one to the Holding Cells (at C on the map) and one to the Storage Areas (D on the map). To get to the east half of the level, there is a secret door at E. Go down to the Storage Level first.

There are several places on the levels to come that have closed, glowing gates. Ignore them for now. You'll get the item to open these much later.

Once on the Storage level, walk south down the central corridor until you feel the presence of Pythras in your mind. Enter the area to the west and find Pythras. Talk to her about her imprisonment until she asks you to free her. Go back up to the Visitor's Quarters and down to the Holding Cells.

The controls to Pythras' cell are at the east side of the Holding Cells level. Go climb the stairs to the platform at the east end of the level, and then enter the chamber there from the south. Sit at the control panel in the northwest corner and, when asked, enter "Quark."

Pythras escapes the school by going down to the Administrative level. Go back to where you met Pythras, and then climb down the stairs at the south end of the long central corridor.

Administration has been wrecked, but you can still make your way through it (map is in Maps chapter). For now, fight your way south to A on the map. You can either

fight the queen platebug and her annoying insect spawn, or just flee the area to the south. There are other things to do here, but first you need to visit the lower half of the school.

The School of Magery - Lower Half

Sample Questions: What can I do about the pollution in the cave below the upper half of the school? What do I do at the Major Waste Depository? How do I get into the lower half of the school? How do I reach the stairway down from the Student Quarters? How do I get into the school library? What can I learn from the Vahnatai? How do I exit the Experiment Halls to the south? The people of Marralis want a scepter - where is it?

When you leave the Administration level, you will find yourself in a huge cavern filled with pollution and filth. This is the cause of the Valley's problem. This huge cavern has several interesting things in it. There is a tunnel up to the surface to the west, which will provide a useful shortcut. To the southeast is the Major Waste Repository. You can explore it a little if you want, but you can't do anything there yet.

Instead, enter the lower half of the school. You will be in the Student Quarters (map is in Maps chapter). The entrance is at the southwest corner of the large cave. You will meet many hostile gremlins. Kill them. Search the bookshelf at A to get a key. Return back around to B to unlock the door. There is a nasty undead creature at C. Kill it, but beware the friends it will summon when it's weak.

There is a scepter hidden at D on this level, which some people on the surface want. It can also cure your disease. You might want to keep it - this is very useful later on.

When you're through on this floor, go down the stairs at E. (The other stairway goes to the Lecture Halls. There are monsters and treasure there, but you don't have to visit to win the scenario.)

You will be in the School Library. The library is closed off by another glowing portcullis. You can't enter it yet. Instead, walk across to the east side of the level, find the room full of rubble, and go down the cave slope to the east (there are stairs down to the south, don't go down them yet).

You will be in the Vahnatai Caverns. Go east until you meet the vahnatai. Talk to them. In particular, talk to Baia-Tel until he tells you that Zereen has the stone of power and that some spiders have a useful artifact. Talk to Zereen and ask him to give you the stone of power. Finally, Baia-Tel will tell you that a bitter person on the surface has a copy of the instructions to the school controls.

Now that you know that the spiders have something you need, go back up to the Administration level. The spider caves start at B on the map. Talk to different spiders until you meet their chief, and ask him where you can find the pretty rock. It will offer it to you in return for some eggs and give you a password. Talk to the spider at C, tell it the password, and go north.

The eggs you need are at D on the map. Get several and go back to talk to the chief spider. Give him the eggs and he will tell you where the Opening Stone is. Walk to the rubble at E to get it. When you use this stone, all glowing portcullises near you will open. This will be very useful. Go back down to the Library level.

Use the Opening Stone to open the front gate of the library. Wander around inside searching. The most interesting room is the one in the northeast corner. There are strong hints that the golem there wants a textbook.

There are several textbooks in the school. To find one, go back to the Student Quarters level, enter the meditation cells area, and go through the secret door at F. There is a textbook in the box. Return to the library, have the character with the book stand on the rug with no books on it, and drop the book. (There are also textbooks at A and B on the Experiment halls map.) You will be rewarded with a key.

You now are ready to start ending the Valley's Curse. First, you need to return to the surface. Return to the Library level and go down the stairs at the southeast corner of the level. You will be at C on the Experiment Halls map. There is a shortcut up to the surface at D.

Ending the Curse

Sample Questions: What do I do at Pangle's Hut? How do I talk to Pangle? How do I get to (and through) the School's control chambers? What do I do at the Major Waste Depository?

Once on the surface, you need to get the instructions scroll from Pangle. However, he won't want to talk to you. Tell him that you want to learn about the School of Magery, and then that it is occupied by monsters. Question him to learn that he scavenged some papers from the school. He will sell them to you for 500 coins. Alternately, he will give them to you if you kill some hydras for him. You can find these hydras by stepping on the swamp at A on the outdoor map.

When Pangle has what he wants, he will tell you to search the box in his supply shed. Get the instructions to operate the school control. You're now ready to solve the valley's problem. Go back down to the Experiment Halls level.

Go to E. You can use the key from the library golem to unlock the doors. Then leave the level to the south. You will be in the caves under the school. Fight your way through them to the southeast corner, where you find a tower. Enter it.

You will be inside the Control Chamber. Use the Opening Stone to open the glowing gates and get inside. Find your way through to the control chambers on the east side (there are several mines on the way, but you can find ways around them). A wisp will approach, speak with you, and tell you a lot about the situation in the school. There will be three control rooms. Enter the north one and sit in the chair. The controls to clean up the waste will be activated. Unfortunately, entering this chamber activated some guards at the entry to the tower. You will need to fight your way out.

Finally, travel back up to the giant cavern between the Upper and Lower halves of the school and enter the Major Waste Depository (at the southeast corner of the cave, there is a map of it in the Maps chapter). Walk through the gates at A, then B, then C, then D, then E, then F. There are lots of things to fight along the way. Kill the Controls Defenders and sit in the chair at G. Choose to push the switch and insert the crystal. Run out of the control room towards the exit, and the vahnatai will teleport you to safety. Enjoy your victory!

The Maps

These are maps of the outdoors and key dungeon levels for The Valley of Dying Things. Here is the key for the outdoor map:

1. Fort Talrus

2. Sweetgrove
3. Blinlock
4. Marralis
5. Upper half of school.
6. Lower half of school.
7. Major Waste Repository.
8. Control Chamber.
9. Pangle's Hut.
10. Vale Infestation.
11. Fungal Cavern.
12. Steamy Tunnel. (Leads to lower half of school.)
13. Small Cave.

Valley of Dying Things

Skylark Vale

Huge cavern   Under School
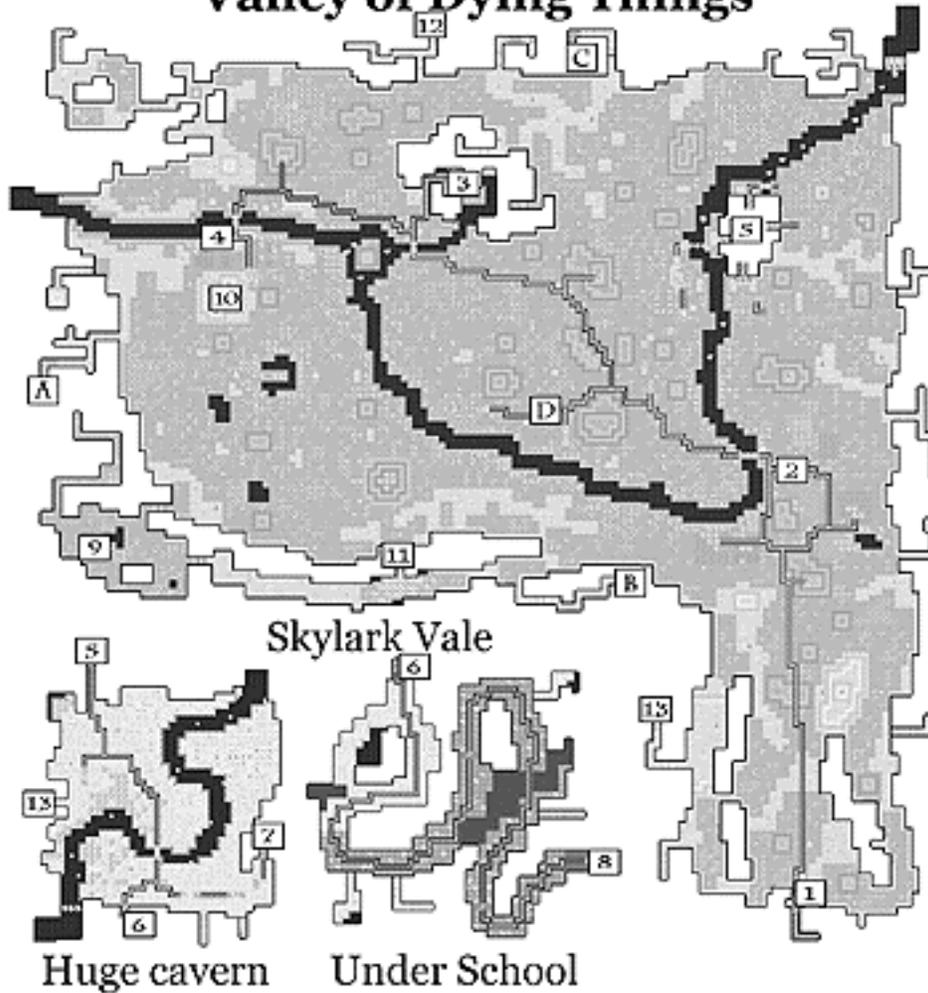
Outdoor Map

Valley of Dying Things Maps

Visitor's Quarters

Administration
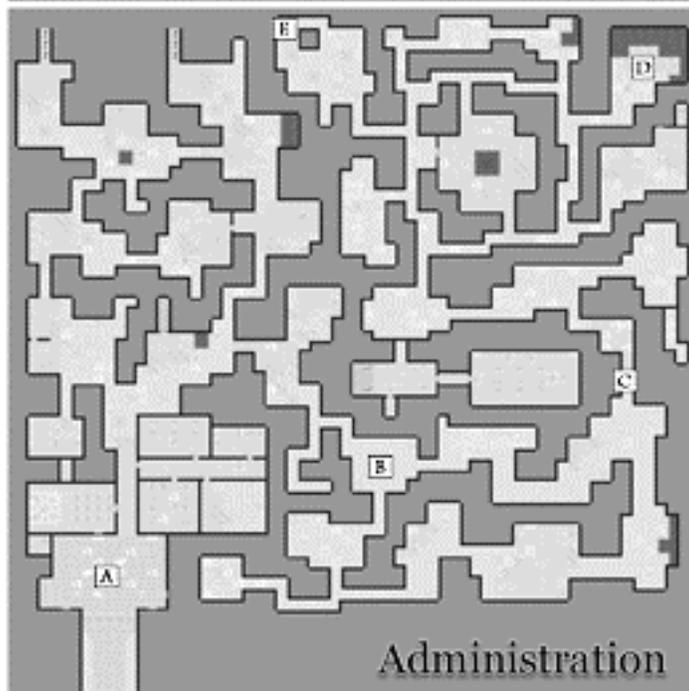
Student
Quarters

Experiment
Halls

Major Waste
Repository

Chapter 13: Blades of Avernum Credits

Concept, Design, Programming: Jeff Vogel
Icon Design, Opening Screen: Andrew Hunter
Business Manager, Design Assistant: Mariann Krizsan
Office Manager, Editor: Linda Strout
Line Art: Phil Foglio
Sound Design: Jeff Vogel

Beta Testers: Listed in the Read Me file.

Artist Contact Info

Several of the fine artists who did work for Avernum are available for freelance work.
Please give them work!

Andrew Hunter
Wormius@aol.com

Phil Foglio
http://www.studiofoglio.com

Thanks To:

Mariann Krizsan and Linda Strout - For invaluable support and assistance.

Cordelia Krizsan Vogel – Our toddler, who came downstairs to scream at me frequently during the development of this game.

Paying Customers - For giving me a reason to do this.

Television – The soothing balm which lubricates the shareware development process. Of special note … The Daily Show, Lou Dobbs, Letterman.

Everquest – For giving me somewhere to escape to.

Led Zeppelin, David Bowie, Johnny Cash, Joni Mitchell, Tori Amos, Indigo Girls, Ben Folds Five, They Might Be Giants, The Beatles, Neil Diamond, Bruce Springsteen, Neil Diamond - Background Music. And if you have anything snide to say about the last entry on this list, keep it to yourself. Don't be dissin' the Jewish Elvis.

Pagliacci Pizza – Now and forever, the Official Fat-Based Food Product of Spiderweb Software.

About Blades of Avernum and Blades of Exile:

Those of you familiar with our games know that Blades of Avernum is a complete, ground-up rewrite of a game which came out in 1997: Blades of Exile. Blades of Exile was a very popular game, and it developed a large, dedicated, and skilled fan base. Many scenarios were developed for it, and the designers squeezed every possible bit of potential out of its rather simple engine.

However, when I wrote Blades of Exile, I knew a lot less about how to design a computer role-playing game than I do now. I have always been bothered by the weaknesses in the old system, and its lack of versatility.

Thus, Blades of Avernum. This game has a far more powerful, far more versatile system. Scenario designers will be able to do a lot more. It is possible to have more elaborate special encounters, more complex plots, and to do many more interesting things.

Writing this game took a long time and a lot of work, but I think that, in the end, I have achieved my goal: it will take quite a few years for scenario designers to squeeze all the ideas out of this system.

I can't wait to see what people come up with.

- Jeff Vogel
February, 2004
Keeper of Avernum (and Exile)
Spiderweb Software, Inc.

Spiderweb Software Order Form

Mail this completed form with payment to:
Spiderweb Software, Inc.
PO Box 85659
Seattle, WA 98145-1659
USA
OR Phone: **(206) 789-4438** (We're open M-F 10-6 Pacific time.)
FAX: (206) 789-6016
OR E-mail the information below to: spidweb@spiderwebsoftware.com.
OR use our secure registration form at:
http:// www.spiderwebsoftware.com

Non-U.S. orders welcome! Pay with a check or money order in US Dollars drawn on a US bank, or a postal money order in US Dollars. For orders outside North America, add $5 shipping and handling.

Please print clearly!

Last Name_____ First Name_____ _____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____ Country_____

E-Mail Address:_____

If you're registering an Avernum or Geneforge game, give your registration code: _____

I would like to order:
Blades of Avernum and hint booklet ($32) ...._____
Blades of Avernum ($25) ...._____
Blades of Avernum hint booklet ($10) ...._____
Avernum 3 and hint booklet ($32) ...._____
Avernum 3 ($25) ...._____
Avernum 2 and hint booklet ($32) ...._____
Avernum 2 ($25) ...._____
Avernum and hint booklet ($32) ...._____
Avernum ($25) ...._____
Geneforge 2 and hint booklet ($32) ...._____
Geneforge 2 ($25) ...._____
Geneforge and hint booklet ($32) ...._____
Geneforge ($25) ...._____
  (Don't forget to write your registration codes above.)
Get the full game on a CD-ROM ($4 extra per game) ...._____

Special Avernum Promotional:
At the same time as you order a Spiderweb Software product, you can get the Nethergate CD (fully registered) for $15.
Promotional Nethergate CD ($15).................................._____

CD-ROMs:
Avernum 1-3, all 3 games sent on CD ($55) ...._____
Avernum 1-3 hint books ($20) ...._____
The Exile Trilogy CD-ROM (all 3 Exile games and editors) ($45)..._____
Exile Trilogy Hint Books (all 3 Exile hint books) ($15).........._____

Spiderweb Demo CD-ROM (all demos and Blades scenarios) ($12)....._____

Other games:
Galactic Core ($15 Macintosh only) ...._____
Lost Souls ($15 Macintosh only) ...._____
Ocean Bound ($15 Macintosh only) ...._____

Shipping: $2 in North America, $5 outside ...._____

Total Due ...._____

Exile Avernum Discount
If you registered Blades of Exile, you get $10 off Blades of Avernum.
To get this discount, give the name and address from which you ordered
Blades of Exile:
_____
_____