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An ENDLESS QUEST[™] Book #12

LIGHT on QUESTS MOUNTAIN



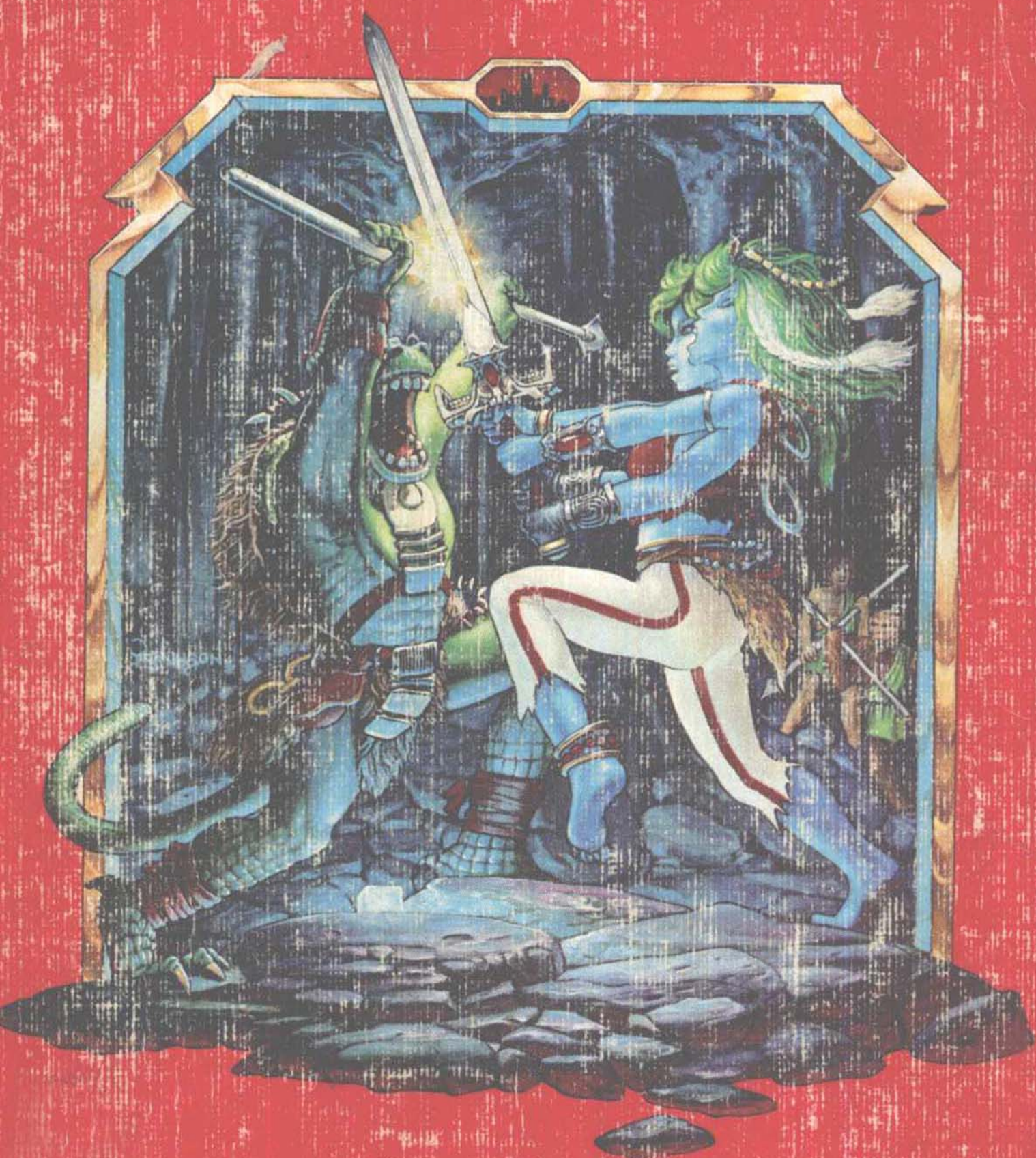
BY MARY L. KIRCHOFF and JAMES M. WARD

GAMMA WORLD[™] Adventure Book

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game

An **ENDLESS QUEST™** Book #12

LIGHT on QUESTS MOUNTAIN



MARY L. KIRCHOFF and JAMES M. WARD

GAMMA WORLD™ Adventure Book

Pick A Path to Adventure™

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE!

On an earth made hostile by nuclear war, you and your tribe live a primitive, danger-filled existence. Now you must prove your readiness for adulthood by undertaking a perilous quest.

Your task is to discover the source of the mysterious light atop Quests Mountain.

What will YOU do?

The perils you face are many, and the choices are yours!

Will you journey through the burning Sand Lands, risking your life against menacing desert beasts and uncontrolled machines of the Ancients?

Or will your quest lead you through the weird, mutated forests and lurking dangers of the dreaded Green Lands?

Action and adventure are yours in every **ENDLESS QUEST™** book. You will find yourself returning again and again to experience new paths of excitement.

And if your quest is successful, you will discover the startling source of the
LIGHT ON QUESTS MOUNTAIN



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LIGHT on QUESTS MOUNTAIN

BY MARY L. KIRCHOFF and JAMES M. WARD

A GAMMA WORLD™ ADVENTURE BOOK

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To England,
the land from which
the best within us springs.

LIGHT ON QUESTS MOUNTAIN

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YOU MUST SURVIVE IN A DEVASTATED WORLD!

In *Light on Quests Mountain*, you are Ren, a young boy living in a possible world of the future. In this world, man has been forced to live much as he did when spears and survival were a way of life. The people of this primitive society are both helped and confused by the remnants they find of a civilization far more advanced than inhabitants of the twentieth century can imagine.

Legend says that long ago, so long that no one you, as Ren, know was living then, terrible wars swept the civilized world, leaving vast wastelands where no man can live.

Before the wars began, man was ruler of the earth. But one result of these terrible wars was that creatures rose from the ashes of the bombs. The genes of the earth's animals and plants were altered, until strange, new creatures arose—creatures of awesome power and fierceness and often great intelligence.

A courageous member of your village has returned from the far north to boast of an intelligent race of lizards, which is starting to build its own civilization. Two members of a fifteen-member Southlands expedition have returned with evidence that huge machines are building a city from the ashes of an old one. Robots function in a way no man ever put into their circuits.

Villages like yours have sprung up in areas least damaged by the wars.

Man no longer rules. He must share the land. With caution and luck, he exists.

"That's it! No more school!" shouts Chark, bounding out of the brick and thatch building that serves as your school.

"I'm almost sorry to see it end," says Sars slowly. "I think I'll ask Merel if I might work as a teacher's apprentice."

"All I can think about is beginning our quest tomorrow," you say.

You are Ren, youngest son of the chief of the village of New Hope. Tomorrow, you and your two friends begin the journey that every graduate of the school must face. You must venture to Quests Mountain and face whatever dangers you encounter. Only then will you overcome your fears and be accepted as adult members of your village.

You, Sars, and Chark will have an important additional purpose on your quest. Recently, villagers have spotted a strange light atop Quests Mountain. The village elders have asked you to try to determine the source of that light.

"They sure don't waste any time, what with having us leave the very day after we graduate," Chark says dryly.

"No point in prolonging the inevitable," says Sars, always the reasonable one.

"Why does he have to talk that way?" Chark asks you.

You sigh, ignoring the question. Chark really expects no answer. Teasing each other is a game your two friends have always played. Fortunately, it is just a game.

You glance at your tall friend. Although Sars's scaly skin and features are those of a lizard, he walks like a man, and his hands and mind function as well as a human's. You've learned to take his slow, deliberate speech seriously, since he often notices things that others don't.

Sars wears his glasses—rare in your world—with pride, but they don't prevent his terrible fear of darkness. You know that he will have to try to conquer this fear if your quest is to be a success.

Your eyes stray to Chark, and you think how different your monkey friend is from Sars. Skinny, hairy Chark seldom thinks things through as Sars does. Chark has led you and Sars on many a merry adventure, but you hope he'll be more careful on your quest. Even more, you hope he'll be able to overcome his deep fear of water.

You find it hard to admit, but you are nervous at the thought of your upcoming quest. You will be the leader, and you fear making a wrong decision that might risk the lives of your friends. You come from a family of great leaders, and you wonder if you can live up to them. Your thoughts turn to Jor, your closest brother, who was to have succeeded your father as chief. The entire village mourned when he went to the desert on his quest and never returned.

With a strong effort, you snap your mind to the present. "Go home, you two, and check

your gear once more. We'll meet in the village square early tomorrow morning," you say as you start to leave.

You awaken to a bright, clear morning. You check your gear one last time, hug your sisters, and set off for the square with your parents. A crowd of well-wishers has gathered there to send the three of you off on your quest.

Your father claps his hands and everyone falls silent.

"As you all know, it is our custom to send our young graduates to Quests Mountain before becoming adult members of our village.

"It is also our custom to present each young person departing on a quest with a special gift. Ren, Sars, Chark: these fine metal spears are given to you in the hope they will serve you well on your journey." One by one, you examine your spears wonderingly as they are presented. Spears with metal heads are rare enough in the village, but weapons made entirely of metal are very special indeed.

Each of you mumbles his thanks, with a promise to try to be worthy of such an extraordinary gift. Sars's mother hugs him impulsively, and he blushes deeply, his green skin turning murky brown.

Your father speaks once more. "Go now, young ones. Return to us as proud men."

With the words of your father ringing in your ears, you set off for the main gate of the village. Once outside the village, the three of you pause to talk over your plans. You've

discussed your quest many times, but even now, at the last minute, you're still debating your course of action.

"I say we head straight north, right for the mountain," says Chark.

"Chark, you know the Great Northern Wastelands stretch between our village and Quests Mountain. And you know that no one who has entered the Wastelands has ever returned," Sars reminds him.

"Sars is right," you say. "We must go around the Wastelands."

"But which way?" asks Chark. "If we head east, we must pass through the Sand Lands. The dunes of the Sand Lands conceal many hidden dangers. If we head west, we must travel through the Green Lands. Fearsome creatures are said to inhabit the forests and foothills of the Green Lands."

"Ren, didn't your brother Jor head through the desert?" Sars asks.

"He said he was going to, but we don't really know for sure."

Chark fidgets. "The trail through the Green Lands is shorter. Let's go that way."

"But it might be interesting to retrace Jor's steps," Sars says thoughtfully.

"Perhaps," you say, trying to weigh the advantages of each route.

Straight ahead, dust and decayed bones mark the beginning of the Great Northern Wastelands.

To the west, you see the leafy roof of the

dangerous Green Lands. Turning to the east, you face the perilous Sand Lands, the path your brother followed.

It is time to decide. Which way will you lead your friends?

- 1) If you decide to journey through the Sand Lands to reach your destination, turn to page 28.
- 2) If you would rather travel through the Green Lands to reach the mountain, turn to page 51.



“Let’s explore the cave,” you decide, nudging Chark as you pass him.

Chark, lost in thoughts about how to politely refuse a meal of small, furry rodents, hasn’t heard a word.

“Come on, you lazy monkey, we’re going exploring.” Chark comes to his senses and joins you. You find some torches in brackets on the wall just inside the cave entrance, and you each light one.

Inside the cave, you quickly come upon a shallow, murky stream. In the middle of the stream stand a number of stone statues. The edges of some are worn smooth by the flowing water.

“I wonder how they got here,” muses Sars, echoing your own thoughts.

The heat from the torches in the dampness of the cave has turned the air hot and sultry. You notice that Sars’s glasses have fogged over. You see him stumble, alarmingly close to the bank of the stream.

“Be careful, Sars. It’s pretty slippery here,” you caution him, running a sandaled foot gingerly over a slime-covered rock.

Standing back a bit from the edge, Chark leans over and peers into the water. He begins to say, “Hey, I think there are fish—” Suddenly Sars loses his footing and slides into the stream. Instantly his torch goes out with a hiss.

You dash to the edge of the stream to find Sars, but instead you see large, fierce-looking

fish. They're erts! Their bite turns their victims to stone!

"Sars, get out of the water! Hurry!" you yell, thrusting your hand out to him.

Sars seems unable to get his bearings. He flails his arms helplessly. "Help!" he pants weakly.

Sizing up the situation instantly, Chark dives into the water and swims desperately upstream against the strong current toward Sars. In horror you see that it has become a race between Chark and the erts.

Chark catches at Sars's arm as he gropes in panic. For a moment, the helpless lizard fights the monkey boy. Then fear for both of them gives Chark the extra strength to overcome Sars's struggles, and he pulls Sars toward the bank. From shore, you see a large ert coming up fast just behind Sars's heels. You pick up a rock and hurl it at the ert with all your might, but it misses.

Finally Chark shoves Sars to the bank. You reach out and grab Sars under the arms and pull him up onto the bank. Chark's feet clear the water just in time, and there is a terrible crunch as the ert's savage jaws snap closed, only inches behind your monkey friend.

Exhausted, you drop onto your knees next to Sars.

"I'm sorry," he finally says after he gets his breath. "I couldn't see very well, what with my glasses fogged. Thank you, Chark."

Chark rolls his eyes and quickly changes

the subject. "Where are your glasses, Sars?"

Sars puts a hand up to his face. "I don't know. . . . They must have fallen off in the water."

The three of you hunt for the glasses, all the while keeping a constant lookout for more erts. But it's soon clear that the glasses are gone forever.

"Well, that settles it," you say resignedly. "We've got to return home. We can't lead Sars day and night. At least, each of us has come a long way toward conquering his fears."

Your friends look both pleased and sad at the same time.

"We can return another time to discover the cause of the light at the top of Quests Mountain. But now, let us proudly return to our village as men of New Hope."

THE END

“It will be difficult for Sars to move in the dark, but I think we must go,” you say. “It’s very dangerous here.”

Not liking to be a burden, Sars notes, “The desert will be very hot during the day. We can make more progress in the cool of the night.”

“Then it’s settled. I’ll help guide Sars. Chark, you scout a little way ahead of us and look for anything of interest. I really don’t think we’ll have to face many more of these hills before we reach the real desert. The air feels warmer and drier already,” you say.

“You mean this isn’t it?” asks Chark, horrified.

“No, Chark, this is only the beginning. The desert itself is much flatter and sandier,” answers Sars.

Shrugging, Chark skips ahead.

Soon you say, “Brrr. The wind is getting stronger.”

“Yes, I’m getting a lot of sand in my eyes,” says Sars, rubbing at his glasses with the back of a scaly hand.

“And I’m getting a lot in my mouth,” says Chark, spitting. “But I haven’t seen any rocks or boulders for a while. We’re definitely in the desert now—my sandals are filled with sand, and it’s slowing me down. The sand’s cool enough now for bare feet,” he says, slipping his shoes off and stuffing them in his pack. You and Sars remove yours, too.

With sandals off, you walk faster. Chark skips farther ahead. Trudging through the