The Heart of Gern

The yells, snarls, and howls brought Tirac over the hill at a gallop.

A pack of wolves in winter would be nothing unusual, but a pack of great wolves, here, in summer—where in the name of day had they come from.

Even as Tirac rode down on the pack, one of their number leapt, knocking the stranger from his saddle; his horse fled at once.

Falling amid the pack, alone he would have been a dead man, but Tirac burst through and scattered them, giving the armoured figure time to come to his feet.

The ensuing fight was bloody and protracted, but the other was certainly no stranger to sword play, and when the last wolves fled more than half of their number lay dead on the grass.

No, it's no good, I can't walk on it.

We can share my horse. We can make it to Lanmar by nightfall if we press on.

If we were allowed to, but even if we were to make it, we would be risking far more than our two lives.

Allowed to? What do you mean? And what risk?

Those wolves, they were great - wolves.

I know.

They didn't just happen by, even in winter they're not common here. They were sent to stop me.

Sent, by whom?

The Brotherhood.

Sun in heaven, what are they doing here. And why are they chasing you?

Does the name 'Gern' mean anything to you?

I have been sent to get 'The Heart' before they do, and take it to High Priest Vertas of Lanmar.

Then surely we must ride with all speed to Lanmar to get help!

Have you not been listening Tirac, do you think the Brother-hood can send wolves from Dagnarth? They are already here! If 'The Heart' is not recovered within a day at most, it will be gone - and in their hands.

How do you know all of this?

I was escorting Doral the Seer.

The Doral.

Yes, We were travelling to Mediam when a vision came upon him; the danger was revealed... and I was sent, as there was no one else to send.

You cannot take your horse into the vault, and I think, if you helped me into the saddle, I could make it to Lanmar for help. It may even be that the Brother-hood will follow me.

Very well. Tell me now, what must I know of this vault, what did the seer see?

The entrance is concealed in a cliff face a few miles north of here. Before the cliff stand two weathered pillars. At dawn you must speak the name of Yandross,

though apparently you must say it at the proper place; according to Doral he saw some kind of portal etched in the cliff face. Find this before you speak.
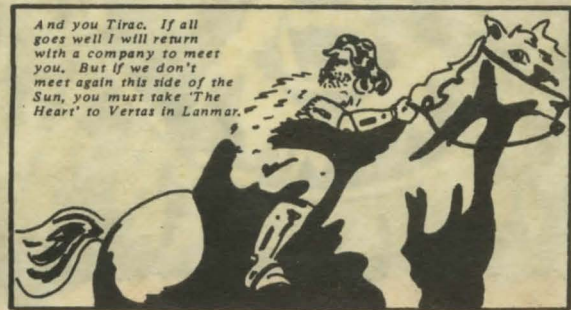
And then?

In halls sit gu
guards hold
In dark slee
on paths sta
witch work
and dreams
witch ways h
await those

And then; no-one knows. But in Doral's vision he heard a voice speak, and in the words given may lie the only guidance you will have.

And you Tirac. If all goes well I will return with a company to meet you. But if we don't meet again this side of the Sun, you must take 'The Heart' to Vertas in Lanmar.

Tirac watched him till he rode out of sight and then began to walk to the cliff, following the directions Basak had given him.

Hail stranger, well fought.

Hail to yourself, and thank you. You chanced by in the nick of time. Are you hurt?

No, I seem to have kept my skin whole, but I fear that you have not been so fortunate.

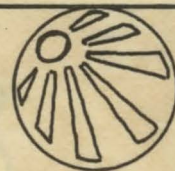That brute got his teeth into my leg.

Sun in heaven! That looks nasty.

You are enlightened?

The Light gives life, the Darkness death.

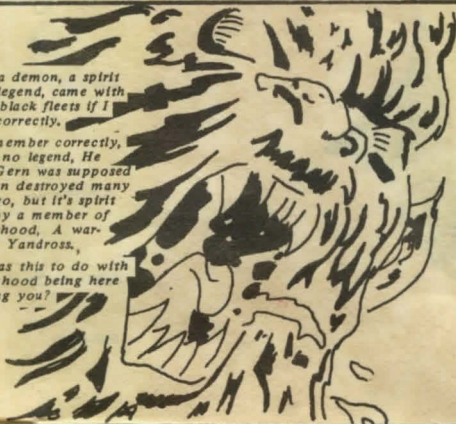Thank the day! My name is Basak!

Tirac, friend.

Tirac produced the Sun Disc from around his neck; a golden disc about three inches in diameter - shining with a light of it's own!

Basak tried to rise. Sweat broke out across his brow, and a stifled moan escaped his lips as he put weight on the injured leg;

Of course, a demon, a spirit wolf from legend, came with one of the black fleets if I remember correctly.

You do remember correctly, but he was no legend, He was fact! Gern was supposed to have been destroyed many centuries ago, but it's spirit was saved by a member of the Brotherhood, A warlock named Yandross.

But what has this to do with the Brotherhood being here now, chasing you?

Gern's spirit was trapped in a jewel, known as The Heart Of Gern, and placed in a secret vault until Gern could be resummoned. That vault lies less than half a day from here. The brotherhood are coming to recover 'The Heart'. It must not be allowed, it would be a black day for the Empire if a spirit wolf was free again.

And you, where do you fit in Basak?

If you speak truly then we are in gravest peril.

I swear by The Light Of Life that it is true.

But what is to become of you, I cannot leave you here, especially in this condition, if the Brotherhood are near.

Then since you cannot go, I must.

I'd prayed you would say that.

ards who keep the time
a key who set the rhyme

guards who must not see
nd guards who yield to truth
s in the stones and walls
surround their ways and paths
old true and deaths cold jaws
men who break their laws

It is clear that the vault will be heavily magiced; do you know aught of such powers?

Only what every child is taught and a little more of the numerology of runes.

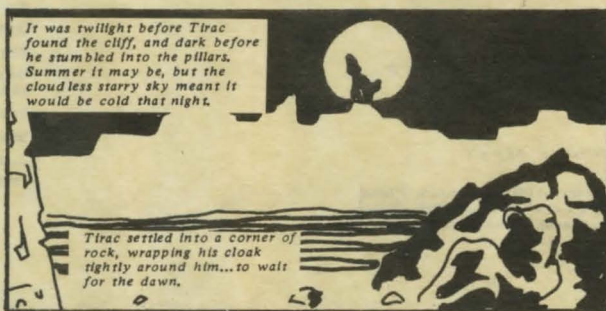I served as a guard to a rune reader for some months.

What about 'The Heart' itself.

A spherical opaque black jewel the size of a fist. It is not supposedly dangerous.
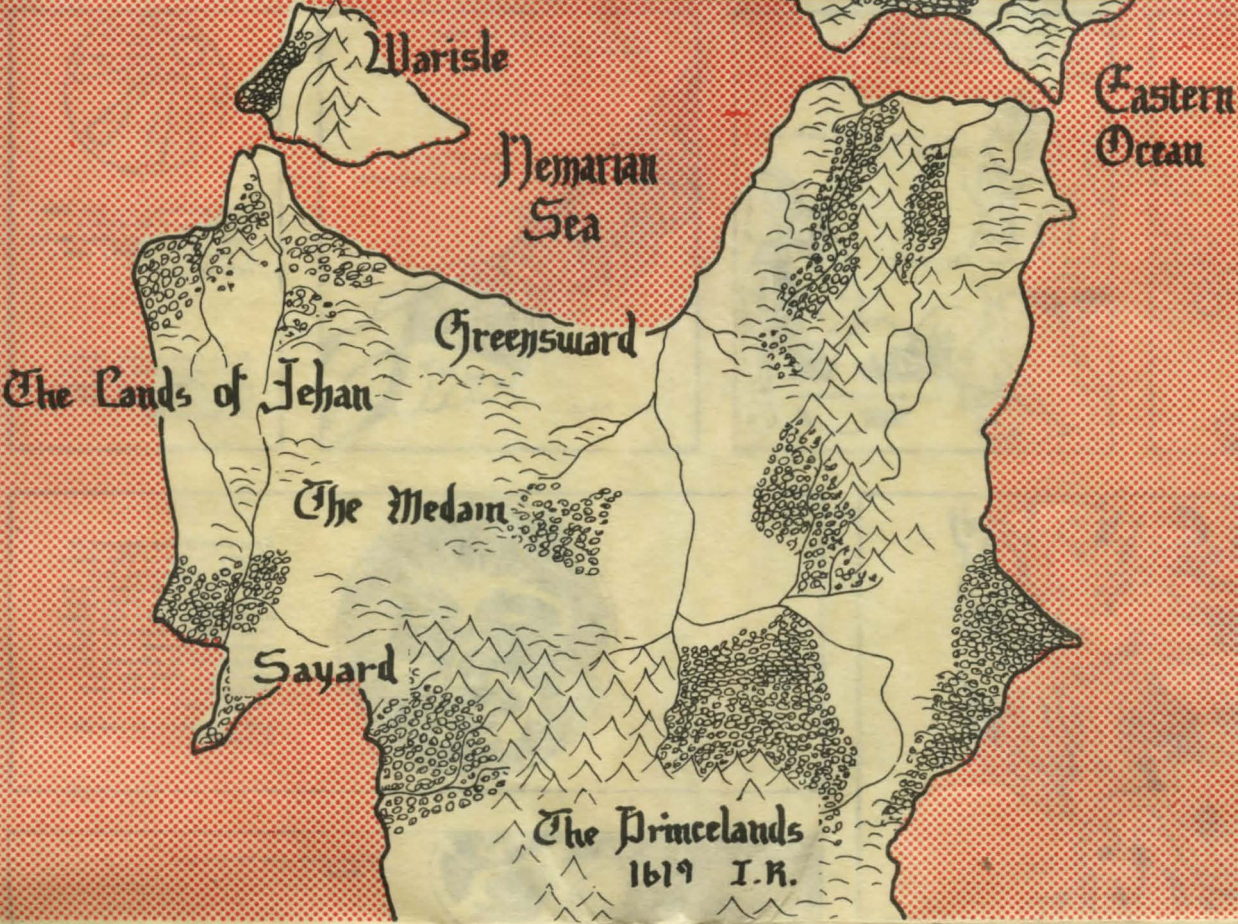
WHOOOWLL

Light go with you Basak,

It was twilight before Tirac found the cliff, and dark before he stumbled into the pillars. Summer it may be, but the cloudless starry sky meant it would be cold that night.

Tirac settled into a corner of rock, wrapping his cloak tightly around him...to wait for the dawn.

TO BE
CONTINUED

IF YOU

DARE

Warisle

Nemarian Sea

Eastern Ocean

Greensward

The Lands of Jehan

The Medain

Sayard

The Princelands
1619 I.R.

A Guide to Playing 'The Heart of Gern.

Over the years, as games of this genre haved developed, certain conventions have arisen. For the novice to adventuring on a computer, this section will attempt to explain a few of these.

Firstly, a general description of how the game works. Basically the computer plays two parts: That of your senses, by telling you what you can see and hear happening; and that of carrying out any actions that you have attempted. For instance, the computer tells you:

'You are in an old dusty library, that looks as though it has been unused for many years. On a large reading table in the middle of the room a book lies open. There is an open door leading to the south'.

You type:

'Examine book'

The computer says:

'Through a thick layer of dust you can make out rows of symbols that appear to be more than letters, but you cannot decipher them.

You type:

'Take book'

The computer says:

'Wiping most of the dust form the volume you close it, and place it in your pack.'

You type:

'south'

.....and the computer moves you through the door and on to what lies beyond

Black Fleets :- The first and second invasion of the Empire by Dagnarth came by sea in the 'Black Fleets'

Brotherhood :- Name given to the religious followers of the wolf-god Fenris. They are reputedly possessed of many powers including that of being able to take the form of wolves.

Dagnarth :- Land of darkness (Lit. Dark-Earth) Kingdom ruled by Yamal last of the greater Demons.

Doral the Seer :- Semi legendary individual from Medlam given to prophetic fits.

Empire :- The Empire of Galmain, Empire of the Bright Sword. Collective name for all the human lands between the rivers Alath and Alal.

Enlightened :- Term used to describe a member of the church of light.

Great Wolves :- Pony sized wolves of unprecedented ferocity. Common in Dagnarth, occasionally found in the Medain.

Lanmar :- Largest kingdom within the Empire, also the name of the capital city of same state. Nominal capital of whole Empire, but tradition favours Rachlan instead.

Runes :- Word symbols representing numeric series, which in certain sequences, can be used to tap or trigger magical power.

Spirit Wolf :- Evil spirit of considerable power inhabiting a (usually very large) wolf body.

Sundisc :- Religious symbol of the church of light. A sundisc will shed light when in the hands of a true believer.

Witch :- (masc. and fem.) Human being with innate natural magic.

Warlock :- (masc. and fem.) Witch who has found some focus for their magic thereby increasing their power many fold.

'Sun in heaven!' :- Exclamation with religious connotations, (partic. church of light). Also 'Name of the day!'

Finally, a few useful commands to use to help you on your way:

Redescribe (or 'r'): This will redescribe the place that you are currently in - useful if the initial description has scrolled off of the screen, and you have forgotten it's gist.

Inventory (or 'i'): This will give a list of your current possessions.

Examine: this command used in conjunction with other words allows you to 'look closer' at anything. For instance a more detailed description, or if the most detailed description has been given, the message 'You learn nothing new'.

Test: This is similar in use to the above command, but is actually a great deal more rigorous, and involves pressing, poking, touching etc., the object. Warning - test, will not actually give a more detailed description, only the result of 'testing'.

Save/load: At certain times you may wish to stop playing for one reason or another. At these times it would be useful to 'save' your current position to microdrive or floppy disc. This can be achieved by typing 'save' - instructions are then given on screen. To get back to this position from scratch, first load in the game, then type 'load'. Again instructions are given on screen.

Movement: To move from one area of the game to another you normally type compass directions i.e. North, South, etc; These can be abbreviated to their initial letters, though some directions, namely NW, NE, SW, SE, must be entered in abbreviated form.. Sometimes other words can be used if it is obvious what they should accomplish at a specific location. These words include Up, Down, forward, back, enter etc..

(Note: it is not normally necessary to move about within an area to do something - it is implied in the command, i.e. 'examine door' assumes that you walk over to it to examine it.)

Other commands are available, and the best way of trying to do something is to type in what you want to do, and if it doesn't have the desired effect - experiment. Good Luck!

Dear Adventurer,

*Welcome to 'The Heart of Gern'. This is the
first of what will hopefully be a series of such
adventure games, set in the Princelands. This
is a consistent fantasy world which has been
developed over some years of continuous
play. We hope you enjoy adventuring here
as much as we have enjoyed creating it.*

*Within the scope of the 'Princelands'
this senario is set in a very magical place,
but despite that, the rules of consistency
still apply, and it might be helpfull to
know that whatever happens, will happen
for a reason and not just at the whim of
the designer. Of course this does not
mean that within this scenario you will
be able to understand why everything
happens, simply that there will be a
logical rationale. After all the hero, Tirac,
doesn't know much about magic in the
world either.*

*If at some point in this adventure you find
yourself completely stuck, first think over
everything you already know and see if that
helps. If you are totally lost however, then
feel free to phone or write and we'll give
you a hint or two. We'd very much like
to hear from you anyway, so let us know
what you liked, and more importantly,
what you didn't like about this game.*

*Finally, remember that the vault was built to
keep people out and that if the Brotherhood
had sent someone, they would have known in
advance exactly what to do, Tirac however
has to 'sus' it out for himself.*

*Good luck, and may the Sun shine ever on
your path!*