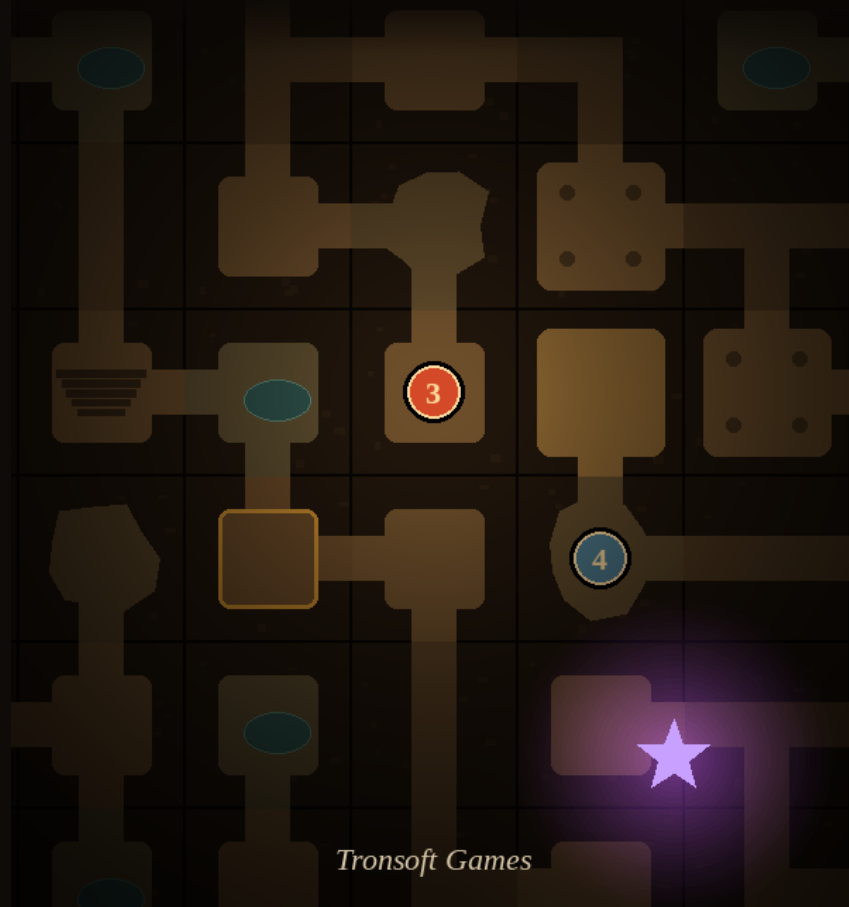


THE SORCERER'S CAVE



Manual · Solo edition · Version 1.2.0

After the 1978 board game by Terence Peter Donnelly · Tronsoft Games

The Sorcerer's Cave

Beneath the hills lies a cave nobody has mapped, because it is different every time. You lead a company of adventurers in through the Cave Mouth. Every step into darkness lays a new cave tile: passages, chambers, great halls, caverns and flooded grottoes on four levels, peopled by monsters, folk who may join you, treasure and magic, and hazards that wound or mislead. Somewhere on the lowest level the Sorcerer waits. Gather what you can and get out before he seals the cave.

This is the **solo edition**: one human player. Up to three rival companies are played by the computer, or you can explore alone. It is a browser adaptation, with extensions of its own, of the 1978 board game designed by Terence Peter Donnelly and published by Philmar and Ariel.

Contents

- Starting a game
- The turn
- Exploring the cave
- Encounters
- Fighting
- Folk and persuasion
- Treasure, magic and carrying
- Hazards and wandering monsters
- The Sorcerer
- Rival companies
- Scoring, winning and losing
- Saving, controls and accessibility

Starting a game

The setup screen opens when the game starts. Name your company (always the red one). For each of the three rival seats choose **Computer** or **None**, and a temperament for each computer rival. Choose the number of rounds (20, 30 or 40) and, if you like, a seed: the same seed and the same choices lay exactly the same cave. Press **Enter the cave**. **Resume saved game** appears when a game is in progress in this browser.

Every company starts at the Cave Mouth with three companions: a Warrior, a Dwarf and an Elf. A company may grow to 8 companions.

The turn

Companies act in order, yours first. A round ends when every company still in the cave has had its turn. At the start of your turn underground a wandering monster may find you (see Hazards). You then have **3 moves**, and between moves you may fight, flee, persuade, recruit, take or drop items, open chests, use magic, heal, trade and attack, in any order. Press **End turn** when you are done. While the computer companies act, the right-hand panel shows *Computer turn*, and the Speed buttons (Normal, Fast, Instant) set the pace.

Exploring the cave

Each move takes your company one square along an open passage. Step through an exit into unexplored rock and the next tile is drawn from a shuffled deck of 68 cave tiles and laid there, turned so that it connects back to you and, where it can, to its other neighbours. A passage only joins two squares when both are open on that side; some ways turn out to be walled off.

A **Stairway Down** leads to the level below (levels 1 to 4). The first company down finds the Foot of the Stair; an up-arrow on the map marks the way back up. Stairways drawn on the lowest level have collapsed. Deeper levels hold richer treasure, stronger monsters, and more encounters. When the deck runs out, unexplored exits are choked with rubble.

Searching. At the very start of a turn, beside unexplored rock, you may spend the whole turn searching for a hidden passage. On a die roll of 4 or more a new exit opens.

The cave tiles

Tile	In deck	Exits	Encounters drawn
Passage	10	2	none (1 in 6 chance of one)
Winding Passage	8	2	none (1 in 6 chance of one)
Junction	7	3	none (1 in 6 chance of one)
Crossways	4	4	none (1 in 6 chance of one)
Blind Chamber	7	1	1
Chamber	5	2	1
Chamber	4	2	1
Great Hall	4	4	2
Cavern	6	3	2
Flooded Grotto	4	2	1
Stairway Down	7	2	none; leads down a level
Sorcerer's Vault	2	1	Sorcerer's guardian, two treasures and a magic item

On levels 3 and 4 a tile that draws encounters has a 35% chance of drawing one more.

Encounters

A newly laid chamber, hall, cavern or grotto draws encounters. Each is a monster, folk, treasure, a magic item or a hazard; deeper levels favour monsters, treasure and hazards. Red badges on the map mark foes, blue badges folk, gold badges items. Hover over a square to see what is there.

Monsters and hostile folk bar the way. While one is on your square you cannot move on, take treasure or recruit. You must fight it, persuade it (hostile folk only), or flee.

Fleeing takes your company back the way it came, or to another clear neighbouring square, and ends your moves for the turn. Each companion risks a parting blow (1 in 6, wounded); a Halfling or Ranger in the company turns most of those aside.

Fighting

Choose a champion from your company. The panel shows the exact sum and the odds before you commit.

Your total = champion's fight value, -1 if wounded, + Veteran (+1) or Champion (+2) rank, + 1 for each other unwounded companion (at most +3), + 1 for each other company on the same square, + 2 for a Magic Sword, + 2 if an unwounded Wizard is in the company, and against the undead + 3 for an Amulet of Warding, + 3 for an unwounded Priest, + 2 more for a Wizard; then add two dice.

The foe's total = its fight value + two dice. Higher total wins.

- **Win:** the foe is destroyed and may drop treasure. Your champion gains a victory: three make a **Veteran** (+1 in every fight), six a **Champion** (+2).
- **Lose:** your champion is wounded. A second wound kills. An Enchanted Shield shatters instead of the wound. A Basilisk's gaze kills outright.
- **Tie:** nothing happens; fight again or flee.

Every clash is recorded on the **fight slate**: each bonus, both pairs of dice and the totals.

Chance of winning by difference in fight values

Difference = your total before dice minus the foe's fight value. Both sides roll two dice.

Difference	Win	Tie	Lose
-6	3%	3%	95%
-5	5%	4%	90%
-4	10%	6%	84%
-3	16%	8%	76%
-2	24%	10%	66%
-1	34%	11%	56%
+0	44%	11%	44%
+1	56%	11%	34%
+2	66%	10%	24%
+3	76%	8%	16%
+4	84%	6%	10%
+5	90%	4%	5%
+6	95%	3%	3%
+7	97%	2%	1%
+8	99%	1%	0%

Folk and persuasion

Friendly folk join your company when you meet them, if there is room. **Wary** folk must be persuaded: roll two dice and add your persuasion (+1 for each unwounded Elf, +2 for a Ring of Persuasion); meet or beat their number and they join. **Hostile** folk bar the way: persuade them and they slink off; fail and they attack at once. Each company gets one try at each group.

Companions

Companion	Fight	Carries	Notes
Warrior	3	2	A steady fighter.
Swordsman	4	2	A skilled blade.
Dwarf	3	3	Carries three treasures.
Elf	3	2	+1 to persuasion.
Halfling	1	2	Opens chests safely; steadies a retreat.
Ranger	3	2	Opens chests safely; steadies a retreat.
Wizard	1	1	+2 to every fight, +2 more against the undead.
Priest	2	2	+3 against the undead; may heal once a turn.
Hero	6	2	A champion of legend.
Freed Prisoner	1	2	Weak, but a strong back.

Folk you may meet

Folk	Attitude	Persuade on	Fight	Levels
Warrior	wary	7	3	1–3
Dwarf	wary	7	3	1–4
Elf	wary	8	3	1–4
Halfling	friendly	joins	1	1–3
Swordsman	wary	8	4	1–4
Ranger	wary	8	3	2–4
Wizard	wary	9	1	2–4
Priest	friendly	joins	2	1–4
Freed Prisoner	friendly	joins	1	2–4
Hero	wary	9	6	3–4
Brigands	hostile	9	4	1–4
Sorcerer's Apprentice	hostile	10	6	2–4

Monsters

Monster	Fight	Levels	Notes
Giant Rat	2	1–2	may drop treasure
Vampire Bats	2	1–3	-
Goblin	3	1–3	may drop treasure
Orc	4	1–3	may drop treasure
Grey Wolf	4	1–3	-
Skeleton	4	1–4	undead
Giant Spider	5	2–4	may drop treasure
Ghoul	5	2–4	undead
Troll	7	2–4	may drop treasure
Ogre	7	3–4	may drop treasure
Wraith	7	3–4	undead
Minotaur	8	3–4	may drop treasure
Basilisk	8	4–4	deadly gaze: a loss is death
Dragon	10	4–4	guards a hoard

Treasure, magic and carrying

Take items from the floor when no foe bars the way. Each companion carries a set number of items (see Companions); if a death leaves the company over its limit, the least valuable items are left behind. Only treasure scores. Unopened chests and magic items score nothing, but magic can be decisive.

Ancient chests must be opened. Without a Halfling or Ranger, a trap may wound a random companion (1 in 3). Inside is treasure from the level below, or sometimes a magic item.

Treasure

Treasure	Value	From level
Silver Coins	5–10	1
Gold Coins	10–20	1
Ancient Chest	opens to treasure or magic	1
Jewelled Goblet	20	2
Gemstones	25–30	2
Golden Crown	40	3
Sceptre of Kings	50	4

Magic items

Item	Effect
Magic Sword	+2 to your champion in every fight.
Enchanted Shield	Shatters to save a losing champion from a wound.
Amulet of Warding	+3 against the undead.
Ring of Persuasion	+2 to persuasion.
Healing Potion	Heals one wounded companion.
Scroll of Escape	Carries the whole party to the Cave Mouth.

Hazards and wandering monsters

- **Concealed pit:** each companion may be wounded by the fall (1 in 6) and the company drops to the level below; a rough shaft leads back up. On the lowest level a pit becomes a rockfall.
- **Rockfall:** each companion may be wounded (1 in 6).
- **Choking vapours:** the company stops for the turn, and each companion may be wounded (1 in 6).
- **Sorcerer's illusion** (level 2 and below): the passages twist and the company finds itself on another explored square of the same level.
- **Wandering monsters:** at the start of each turn underground, if no foe is already present, a monster from that level may stumble on your company. The chance is 2% per level plus up to 6% more as the rounds run out.

Healing

A Healing Potion heals one wounded companion completely. An unwounded Priest may pray once a turn to heal a wounded companion (succeeds on 3 or more). Resting at the Cave Mouth at the start of a turn heals every wound but uses the whole turn.

The Sorcerer

The Sorcerer is hidden on level 4. Each time a company lays a chamber, hall, cavern, grotto or vault on that level there is a growing chance he is there: 35% for the first, 55% for the second, and so on. He has fight 9 and a purple marker on the map. Defeat him and his Orb (worth 80) and two magic talismans fall to the floor, and the company that slew him earns +20 glory when it leaves the cave. Lose to him and, besides the wound, his spell hurls your company back up to level 3.

A **Sorcerer's Vault** is a sealed treasure room with a guardian from the deepest level, two rich treasures and a magic item.

Rival companies

Computer rivals play by exactly the same rules as you. Their temperament changes how much risk they take:

Temperament	Fights when	Heads home with	Depth
Cautious	only with better odds	about 110 in treasure	shallow
Steady	at fair odds	about 180 in treasure	middling
Bold	even at worse odds	about 260 in treasure	deep

When your company shares a square with another, the controls panel lets you **give** it an item, **offer a trade** of one item for one (a computer rival accepts when it values what it receives at least as much), or **attack**. In an attack each side's best champion clashes; the loser is wounded and a winning attacker seizes the loser's most valuable item. Attacking ends your moves and is not allowed at the Cave Mouth. Companies sharing a square also stand together against monsters: each other company present adds +1.

Scoring, winning and losing

Return to the Cave Mouth and press **Leave the cave**. The page shows the score you would bank and asks you to confirm. Your score is the value of the treasure you carry, plus 2 for each companion still with you, plus 20 if your company slew the Sorcerer. When every company has left, perished or been sealed in, the game ends and the end screen gives a verdict.

- **Victory:** your company has the single highest score. Alone in the cave, any escape with a score counts as victory.
- **Defeat:** a rival scored higher, or tied you; your whole company was slain; or it was still underground when the last round ended, when the Sorcerer seals the cave and everything inside is lost.

The end screen also shows the **expedition record:** tiles each company revealed, its deepest level, the foes it slew and the treasure it found.

Saving, controls and accessibility

The game saves automatically after every action, in this browser only, under the keys `tronsoft_sorcerers_cave_save` and `tronsoft_sorcerers_cave_sound`. Choose Resume saved game on the setup screen to carry on; a finished game clears its save. Single-player saves from version 1.1.0 resume; hot-seat saves from 1.1.0 and saves from 1.0.0 do not. New Game returns to the setup screen at any time.

Action	Mouse or touch	Keyboard
Move	Click or tap an amber-outlined square, or a Move button	Arrow keys or W A S D
Stairs	Down / Up buttons	Page Down / Page Up
Fight	Choose a champion, press Fight	F
End turn	End turn button	E
Pan / zoom	Drag; wheel, pinch, or the + – buttons	+ and –
Other levels	Level tabs above the map	—
Buttons	Click or tap	Tab to move, Enter or Space to press

Accessibility. Every control is a real button reachable with Tab and shows a visible focus outline. The map, zoom buttons and level tabs carry labels for screen readers, and status messages are announced. When your system asks for reduced motion, tiles appear without fading, company tokens move without gliding and the active-company ring stops pulsing. The Sound button sets effects volume: Off, Low, Medium or High. Sounds are synthesized in the browser; the game is fully playable silent.

Credits

Original board game: The Sorcerer's Cave, designed by Terence Peter Donnelly (Philmar / Ariel, 1978). Browser adaptation, rules extensions, programming, artwork and sound: Tronsoft Games, developed with AI assistance (Claude, by Anthropic). No artwork, text, tiles or cards from the original game are reproduced. Copyright © 2026 Tronsoft Games. See LICENSE.txt and docs/credits.txt.