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*Publisher*  
Mike Cook

*Editor-in-Chief*  
Kim Mohan

*Editorial staff*  
Patrick Lucien Price  
Roger Moore  
Robin Jenkins

*Editorial assistance*  
Eileen Lucas  
Georgia Moore

*Art, graphics, production*  
Roger Raupp

*Advertising*  
Mary Parkinson

*Subscriptions*  
Pat Schulz

*This issue's contributing artists*  
Robin Wood  
Roger Raupp  
Dennis Kauth  
Hank Jankus  
Janet Aulisio  
Bruce Mackley  
Joseph Pillsbury  
Dave Trampier  
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## COVER

Robin Wood's third contribution to our cover is a haunting scene entitled "What a Knight for Apparitions." The idea behind the painting, in Robin's words, is this: "A person had been given a geas to present a magic sword to whatever hero won into this area. The geas was so strong that even after she died, she had to stick around and see it through. The place fell into ruin, and still she haunted it, until this young knight got there. He fought his way into the innermost chamber, and broke his own sword in the process. Now they both get their reward."



# Letters

## Roger's reasoning

Dear Roger Moore,

Seeing my article ("Hooves and green hair") in the pages of DRAGON #109 was a great pleasure. Thank you very much — not only for your decision to print it, but for your encouragement and editorial advice along the way.

My players and I were curious about some things that made it into the published version. You may want to answer these questions in your Letters column, because I suspect some other readers might also be wondering.

(1) Ranger/thief has been added to the list of multi-class options available to the half-satyr and half-dryad. However, in *Unearthed Arcana*, page 7, it says that rangers must be of a good alignment, and thieves must be of a non-good alignment. This doesn't seem to leave anything over for the ranger/thief. I seem to remember a comment somewhere that thieves may be allowed to shift toward good alignment as they ascend in level, but this is not mentioned in *UA*, and anyway wouldn't seem to help the hapless half-breed ranger/thief, who must start off with both professions simultaneously.

(2) In the discussion of armor permitted to multi-class half-satyrs and half-dryads, the text reads: "Multi-classed characters may use the armor and weaponry available to either of their classes, so long as the armor does not interfere with the performance of the abilities of their classes. For example, a half-satyr fighter/magic-user would wear no armor . . ." Is this part of a new rule that multi-class magic-users cannot wear armor? Does it apply to elves and half-elves as well? This would represent a major change for such characters.

(3) I was a bit disappointed that you left out magical chain mail as an option for these two races. I had included it (along with elfin chain) on the basis of the fact that it's available to bards, who, with their druidic training, are also "nature-oriented" characters.

Bennet Marks  
Palo Alto, Calif.

1. A large number of gamers prefer to use the earlier ruling, established in the *Players Handbook* (page 27), that thieves may start the game as neutral good. Granted, *Unearthed Arcana* has changed this rule so that thieves may only be non-good (*Unearthed Arcana*, page 7), but Kim Mohan's "Arcana update, part 1" (*DRAGON* Magazine issue #103, page 12) modified this ruling to mean that, though they must start as non-good, thieves may become good later in their careers. This article even noted that assassins could change alignment to neutral or even good status, given time. Furthermore, David Cook noted in *Oriental Adventures* (page 26) that a *yakuza*, an urban underworld character class, may be of the lawful good alignment (presumably starting the game this way). Being good, then, is no problem.

Given the explosion of new class combinations possible for AD&D characters with the *Unearthed Arcana* and "Arcana update" rules

(particularly the surprising neutral good ranger-druid combination for certain elves, elaborated upon by Frank Mentzer in *DRAGON* issue #100, page 9), a ranger-thief is not unthinkable. It even sounds workable and reasonable.

Consider a ranger-thief's abilities and outlook. Here is a powerful scout, one equipped to infiltrate enemy positions, commit sabotage and theft, and rescue kidnapped victims of humanoid armies. He or she is the best alternative to using an assassin when one needs a spy. The ranger-thief is an espionage agent and commando warrior with ties to both wilderness and urban areas. If he or she does not belong to a thieves guild, then the necessary training is gamed through a military or paramilitary force controlled or aided by rangers.

Why did I place it in your article? This is harder to answer. I fear that on occasions I may tinker with certain articles, adding new material that seems appropriate to the nature of the topic and, in my feeling, that makes the articles more complete and enhances their usefulness. For example, I added half-(aquatic) elves to the mariner NPC class (*DRAGON* issue #107) and additional information on "broken arrows" to the "Agents and A-Bombs" article in issue #108. I try to avoid gilding the lily, so to speak, and I confine my tinkering to minor additions.

Given the nature of half-satyrs and half-dryads as outlined in your article, the ranger-thief combination seemed very reasonable for them — which it does (to my way of thinking) for elves and half-elves as well.

2. This point is very confused in the AD&D rules. The *Players Handbook* implies that elves (page 16) may apparently use armor and cast magic-user spells at the same time, and even implies that gnome and half-elves may do the same with their illusionist and magic-user talents, respectively. Yet the book also specifically forbids magic-users from wearing any sort of armor, "for martial training is so foreign to magic-use as to make the two almost mutually exclusive" (page 25). Yet again, the *Monster Manual* (page 39) notes that a multiclassed elf has a chance of using magical armor. And yet again, *Unearthed Arcana* (page 13) repeats the ruling that magic-users and illusionists cannot wear armor. The "Arcana update" article (*DRAGON* issue #103, page 16) says that a multi-classed character may use any armor and weapons available to any one of the classes without harming that character's performance. Finally, *Oriental Adventures* forbids the use of armor by *wu jen* (sorcerer) characters.

In short, I did my best to interpret the rules as they stand. If my ruling is incorrect, which it could very well be, it may be easily altered to allow multiclassed spell-casters to wear any armor they are able to use. Call it as you see it!

3. About magical chain mail: Half-satyrs were noted, in the article, as being opposed to the use of metal armor. This bias appeared to be a deeply rooted cultural one, so mention of magical chain mail was clipped to make the race more consistent. Elfin chain was kept for reasons noted in the article (*DRAGON* issue #109, page 58). — RM

## How I spent my summer

This was going to be the summer that I acted like a normal person. I was going to take some vacation time, take it easy, and maybe even get a suntan for the first time since I became responsible for putting food on the table. Things were going to be different this summer.

Well, I was right about that — I just didn't realize *how* different this summer was going to be. I immersed myself in the great outdoors, but I did it sitting at a computer terminal instead of lying on the beach. If it was possible to get a suntan from the glow of a screen filled with little letters, my face would be permanently bronzed by now.

From early April until just about the time you're reading this, I spent practically every spare hour I had on the creation of the *Wilderness Survival Guide*, the latest hardbound book in the AD&D® game system. Visions of blizzards, deserts, and overloaded mules danced through my head. I learned more about how to get along in the wide open spaces than I ever thought I would need to know, and I did my best to translate all that knowledge into rules that work within the context of the AD&D game.

I'm not after sympathy here. I did it because I wanted to. In fact, I practically leaped at the chance. It's an honor of the highest order to join the small group of people who can point to an AD&D rule book and say, "I did that."

The point I want to make, and which I'm finally getting around to, is that this kind of writing is not easy. Now that I've done a rule book, I have even more respect for my predecessors and more understanding of why their books aren't perfect — just as *Wilderness* is far from perfect. It's impossible to think of everything that could be covered, and it would be impossible to contain all of it in a book of manageable size anyway. It's not easy to be sure that what you said on page 32 is consistent with a related piece of information on page 97. Churning out words is one thing; making all of those words interlock and support each other is something else.

I won't say the book is good; that's for you to judge, not me. I will say that it's the best I could do, and even when you start picking it apart and pointing out the errors (you *will* do that, won't you?) I'm going to be proud of the mistakes I didn't make.



# The World Gamers Guide

If you live outside the continental United States and Canada, you can be included in the World Gamers Guide by sending your name and full address, plus your gaming preferences, to World Gamers Guide, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

Abbreviations in parentheses after a name indicate games in which that person is especially interested: AD = AD&D® game; DD = D&D® game; CC = CALL OF CTHULHU® game; GW = GAMMA WORLD® game;

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11 Dallow Place  
Henderson Auckland 8  
New Zealand

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2 Arbuthnot Rd.,  
1st floor, front block,  
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P.J. Juster (AD,DD,T)  
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P.O. Box 326  
Karmiel, Israel 20101

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Atherton 4883  
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I. W. Hansen (AD,DD)  
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On Lok Garden Mansion  
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Kwun Tong, Kowloon  
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Jeremy Phillips (AD,T,GW)  
2 Bryan Ave.  
Kilkenny 5009  
South Australia  
Australia

Winfried Eller (AD,CC,DQ)  
Silbegasse 43  
6901 Wilhelmsfeld  
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Impasse de Mon Idee 3  
1226 Thonex  
Switzerland

Bianca Jung (DD,AD,SF)  
Neuer Kamp 13  
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Martin Winstrand (T)  
Perstorsv. 1  
S-310 70 Torup  
Sweden

David Baker (AD,DD)  
55-457 Moana St.  
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Jason Cashill (DD,AD,RQ)  
P.O. Box 10962  
c/o ARAMCO  
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Edwin Berkhout (AD,DD,GW)  
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Chiba-Ken  
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DRAGON® Magazine (ISSN 0279-6848) is published monthly by TSR, Inc. The mailing address for all material except subscription orders is DRAGON Magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147; the business telephone number is (414)248-3625. DRAGON Magazine is available at hobby stores and bookstores throughout the United States and Canada, and through a limited number of overseas outlets. Subscription rates via second-class mail are as follows: \$30 in U.S. funds for 1 year (12 issues) sent to an address in the U.S. or Canada, \$55 for 12 issues sent by surface mail to any other address, and \$95 for 12 issues sent airmail to any other address. Payment in full must accompany all subscription orders. Methods of payment include checks or money orders made payable to TSR, Inc., or charges to valid MasterCard or VISA credit cards. Send subscription orders with payments to: TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 72089, Chicago IL 60690. A limited quantity of back issues are available from the TSR mail order department, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. For a copy of the current catalog listing available back issues, write to the mail order department at the above address. The issue of expiration of each subscription is printed on the mailing label for each subscriber's copy of the magazine. Changes of address for the delivery of subscription copies must be received at least six weeks prior to the effective date of the change in order to assure uninterrupted delivery. All material published in DRAGON Magazine becomes the exclusive property of the publisher, unless special arrangements to the contrary are made prior to publication. DRAGON Magazine welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork; however, no responsibility for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. Any submission accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size will be returned if it cannot be published.

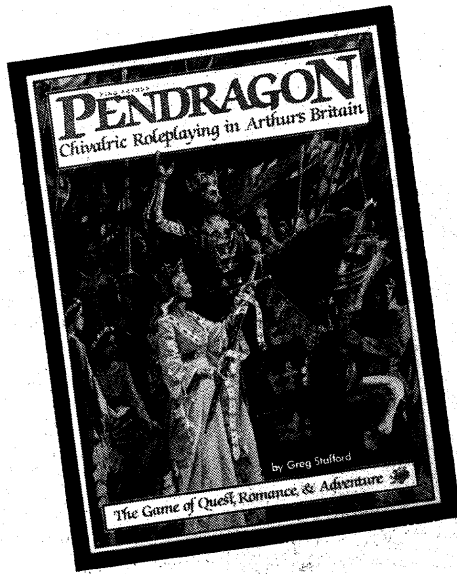
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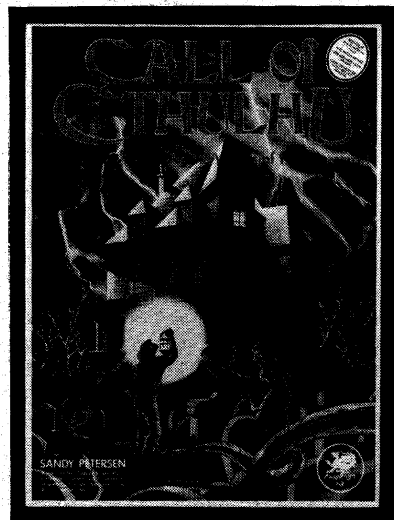
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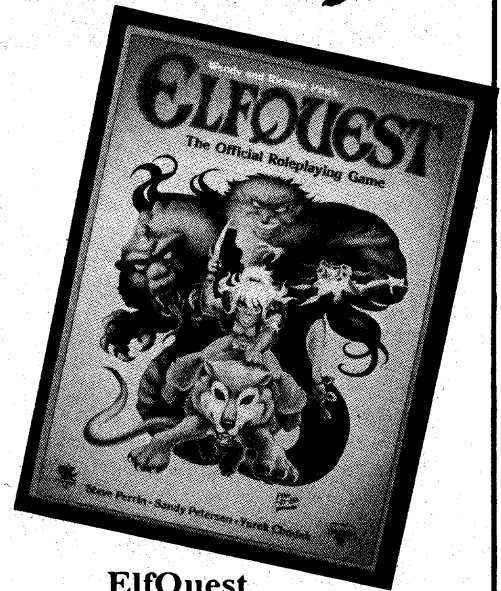
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# The forum

## Rules and reasons

To put things in alignment terms: The Forum has been rather chaotic since it began, but now it's going to start exhibiting some lawful tendencies.

First, the rules. To have the best chance of being published, a letter to The Forum should be no longer than about 250 words, or roughly one page of double-spaced typewriting. You should make your point clearly and briefly. If you exceed the 250-word limit, you must be able to convince us (by the content of the letter, not by some sort of cover letter) that you couldn't avoid going over.

We will publish your name and full mailing address if you put that information at the bottom of the letter; otherwise, we'll refer to you by only your name and home town (as we have been doing for everyone up to now). Whether you want it published or not, you must include your full mailing address somewhere on the first page of your letter. We will not publish a letter signed with a name that we suspect is not your real name (such as "Lord Babbalon"), and we will not print a letter from a writer who requests that his name be withheld.

Don't try to cover more than one subject in a single letter, even if you think you can handle two topics and still stay within the word limit. We will give preference to letters that concern only one topic — so if you have more than one thing to say, write more than one letter.

We reserve the right to edit letters for the sake of fitting our space limitations, but we will not edit a letter to make it more comprehensible or less offensive. We won't print letters that, in our opinion, don't make sense or are abusive, insulting, or overly sarcastic in tone.

Now, the reasons. Although The Forum has been generally appreciated by our readers, the ones who don't like it frequently complain that letters are too long, too stuffy, or too snotty. By establishing and enforcing a word limit, we hope to solve the first two problems: If you only have a certain amount of space to get your point across, you're going to be more direct and you're going to avoid wasting words on incidental information . . . aren't you? By stating and emphasizing something that has always been an unwritten and understood rule (no nastiness), we hope to solve the third problem as well. You can say that you think someone is wrong, but you can't say he's stupid; you can say that someone has failed to exam-

ine all the sides of an issue, but you can't call him prejudiced. You can advance your own point of view on a subject, but not by running down someone else's opinion or effort.

We think The Forum is a nice, if not necessary, part of the magazine. It gives you the incentive to tell us what you think, but more importantly it can put you in touch with the immense community of people who — regardless of whether they agree with all of your opinions — have one important thing in common with you: They enjoy role-playing games, and they want to learn how to enjoy and appreciate them even more. Your letter to The Forum may be the spark that ignites an idea in someone else, whether he agrees with you or not. The Forum will continue as long as you continue to make it possible by sharing your thoughts with us, so that we can share them with everyone else.

The letters in this edition of The Forum don't follow the new rules, because obviously the writers couldn't have known the rules before they wrote. And we'll probably print a few "illegal" letters for another issue or two out of our supply of letters we've already received. But any letter we get that's postmarked after Sept. 15 should follow these guidelines to have the best chance of being used. Now, this month's opinions and observations:

I realize that this letter may be a little late, but when I finally got around to reading Lenard Lakofka's article in issue #108 I discovered what I consider to be several fundamental problems. I have nothing wrong with the idea by itself, it is an excellent idea and I will probably use parts of it myself, but other parts don't seem to use all the facts.

First of all, every monster in the AD&D game has hit dice, except unique and one-hit-point animals, so when you roll them you come up with a variable number of hit points. It has long been a belief of mine that this was not done accidentally. Instead, every animal has a range of hit points to encompass not only the general hardness of that breed of monster, but to allow for varying constitutions and age. If you do use Lenard Lakofka's system, then you can end up with seven- and sixteen-month-old tigers that both have thirty hit points. Even if he doesn't know how fast a tiger matures, it just doesn't make sense. A sixteen-month-old tiger should have a lot more hit points than a seven-month-old. I must say, however, that I approve of the variations in damage and attacks; varying these things allows for the natural growth process and to me is quite acceptable.

The table for aging animals is definitely unrealistic. Almost all animals live in a survival-of-the-fittest world. If you give them extra hit

points to begin with, you are, as I said before, adding to what has already been taken into account by the hit dice. But when an animal goes over the hill, the rest of the animals will know it and will be camped on its doorstep ready to devour it at the first opportune moment. So realistically, an animal would never live long enough to see venerable age, considering everything that could happen in one day.

For dragons, the new system makes almost no sense. If you have to give players the exact size of a dragon, you have problems. When I play an encounter with a dragon, my players don't bother asking for the size because most of them don't have the *Monster Manual* to begin with, and to those that do know I won't give anything more than a generalization. This original system also provides for making sure that an ancient dragon doesn't have less hit points than an adult. If you are interested in making dragons more formidable, use the article in *The Best of DRAGON*, Vol. III, but make sure you don't tell anyone the exact size of the dragon.

All DMs fudge on dice. It's probably a law of the universe by now. If you want a hard monster there, then pick its hit points and put it there. Whenever you roll twice for the same thing, you're probably putting yourself in a bad position. Every time a DM wants something he didn't get, he'll roll over and over until he gets it. Why not just pick it yourself?

Last but not least, I come to the experience points. When figuring out the experience points for a monster, one must take into account more than the hit points. One of the major things is the amount of damage done. If you roll a young troll, then it will either do the same damage, or less if you use the growth tables. If you are using less damage, then by all means use the new experience point system, but if your weakling does the same amount of damage as the supertroll, then use the old system.

In summary, everything except damage has already been taken care of by the current system; to use the variations in damage, etc., simply use this system. Subtract any added bonuses from the hit points (e.g., 5+5 to 5) and divide this by the number of hit dice, rounding all remainders. This will provide you with the average amount of hit points for die, and will give you the age level of the animal. For experience points, use the amount of hit dice shown in the left hand column, but never use it for anything else.

Bruce Lowekamp  
Baltimore, Md.

In his letter to The Forum in *DRAGON* #111, Jaldhar Uyas missed the points of my article, "Locals Aren't All Yokels," which appeared in #109. I probably should have made them explicitly, instead of purely giving examples. At any rate, four reasons for not abusing the peasants are:

(1) In a dangerous region, it's reasonable to assume that the people who live there are good enough to handle the dangers. If you're looking for those who can't, try the cemetery.

(2) The AD&D rules for high-level characters setting up a castle mean that the local authorities, who have retired, are higher level than the adventurers who haven't yet.

(3) In a reasonably strong kingdom, the central government will react strongly against anyone who overthrows the local authorities. In other words, if you win a fight under (2) above, you may soon wish you hadn't.

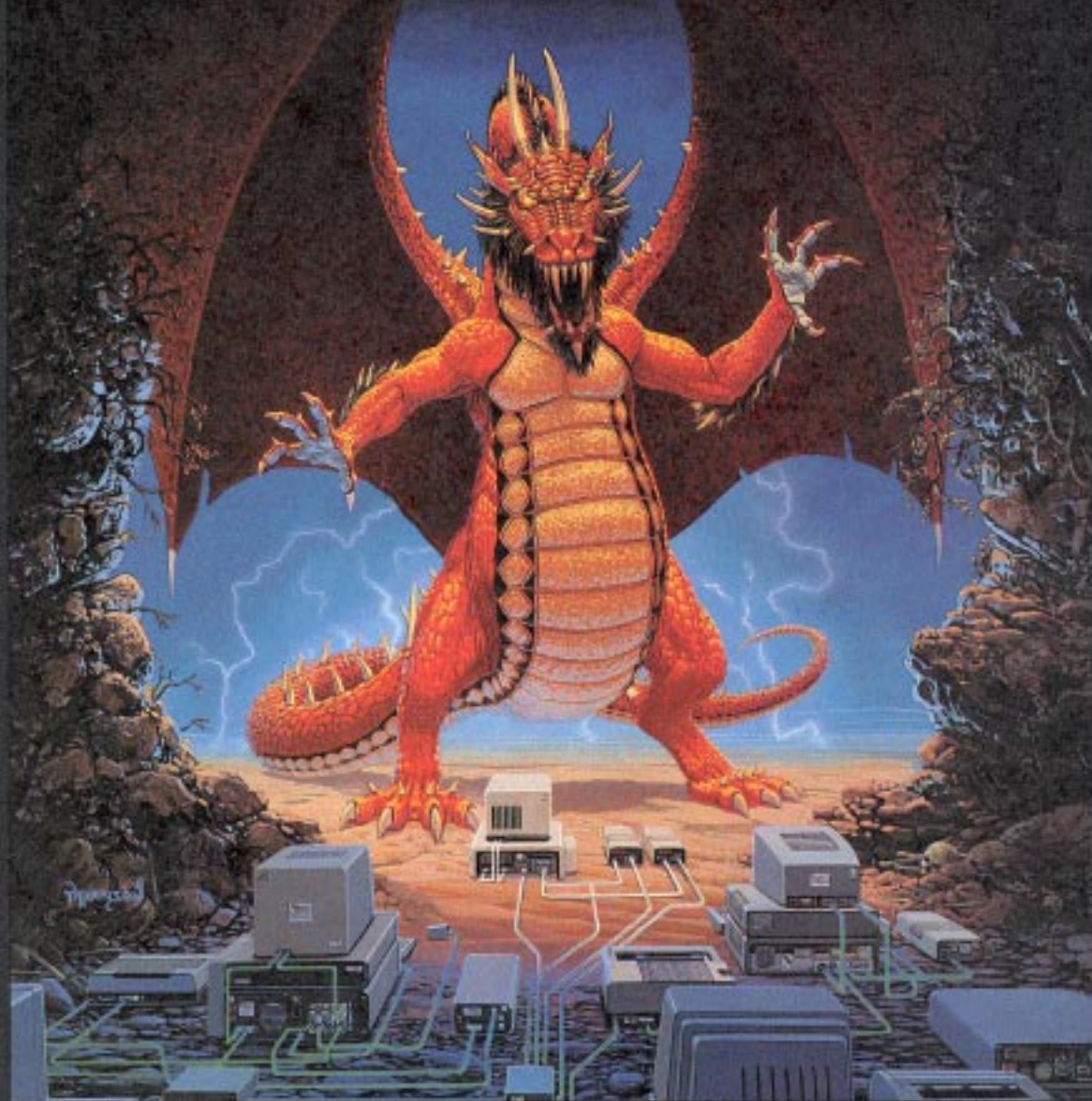
(4) Finally, a DM who wishes to can certainly think of other good reasons to have an occasional high-level character among the local



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populace — not the “every third one” Mr. Uyas thought I meant — one every ten towns should be enough to keep the players honest.

To these, we should add Mr. Uyas’ suggestion, which I should have thought of but didn’t:

(5) Don’t abuse the locals because they may not help you later when you need it. Of course, this only works if you are likely to meet the same locals again later; in many exclusively underground dungeon campaigns you won’t meet them. Add to this one afterthought of my own:

(6) If you do abuse the locals, you’d better inspect all your equipment very carefully. Material components for spells bought locally may turn out to be fake, the blacksmith may rig the new shoe he puts on your horse so it falls off at the most dangerous place on your next day’s journey, and so on. If you anger the local alchemist, you’re really in trouble — he’ll get together with the local vintner to give you something that tastes wonderful, but costs you a level a sip.

Ralph Sizer  
Providence, R.I.

I would like to make a few corrections to the article, “Going for a Swim?” in the ARES section of issue #110.

In the sections about chances for contracting the bends and nitrogen narcosis, this could not happen when a character is wearing an AGS, because it filters oxygen from the water; to get either of the above maladies, there must be nitrogen in the gas mixture the character is breathing (normal air is about 78% nitrogen and 22% oxygen). Furthermore, a character cannot dive beyond 10 meters breathing pure oxygen because of oxygen toxicity; pure oxygen is poisonous below this depth. It will not kill, but will make the character go into convulsions. A way to offset all of the above problems is to add a container of nitrogen to the AGS to make the character’s air mixture equal to that of normal air. The chip in the suit will control the flow rate; the container should last about 3 hours.

The maximum safe depth should be 50 meters. Nitrogen narcosis will then begin to affect the characters.

Characters do not take pressure damage from water (except in certain instances regarding gas spaces, discussed below). This is because body tissue is composed primarily of liquid; about 70% by volume. These liquid portions of the body present no difficulty with regard to pressure changes, because at the depths the characters will be operating, liquids are considered to be incompressible.

In the paragraph about AGS malfunction, it states that a character must hold his breath until he can reach the surface. This is the worst thing he can possibly do. When pressure increases, the volume of a gas will decrease, and vice versa. If a container was filled with three cubic meters of air at the surface, at a depth of ten meters, the volume of the air would be 1.5 cubic meters. Characters breathe air at the pressure of the water surrounding them; the greater the depth, the greater the amount of air they breathe. So, if a character filled his lungs at a depth of ten meters and rose to the surface without exhaling, he air in his lungs would double in volume, his lungs would rupture, and he would most likely get an air bubble in his bloodstream that would kill or paralyze him. To prevent this, the character should make a controlled out-of-air ascent, which involves continuously exhaling until he reaches the surface. Due to the expanding air in his lungs, he will not run out of air before he reaches the

surface (this does not apply to Dralasiltes, since they have no lungs; they will take damage as described in the article).

I hope this information will help referees in creating more realistic and interesting underwater adventures.

Mike Johnson  
Chattahoochee, Fla.

After reading Scott Maykrantz’s letter in The Forum of issue #111, I got the impression that he had only read the first 25 pages of *Unearthed Arcana*. He said that he would not buy the book because the races and classes are not to his liking.

While I completely agree with his opinion about the gray dwarves, drow, and deep gnomes, I find his comments about the cavalier misleading to those who do not have *Unearthed Arcana*. A cavalier is more than a fighter with a set of honorific codes. Cavaliers also have greater combat abilities while mounted than any fighter, and are better at handling steeds of all kinds. While these skills may be taught at the special guilds that exist in Scott’s world, they cannot be taught in worlds without such guilds, and must be learned as part of the character’s profession. Cavaliers are also the only fighter class in which elves can excel without having incredible ability scores.

But there is still more to *Unearthed Arcana* than new classes and races. The book presents almost 150 new spells, not counting cantrips, as well as new weapons, armor, and magic items. There are also sections that go into further detail of things such as barding, spell books, and the effects of darkness on combat.

In the appendices, there are two separate hand-to-hand combat systems to choose from; one complicated, the other simple. There are some descriptions of types of non-lethal combat, like disarming and subdual, as well as descriptions of the demi-human pantheons that non-human PCs might worship.

While I do not use certain parts of *Unearthed Arcana*, such as most of the new races, the social class and rank system, and three or four of the new spells I do not like, I still feel the book was well worth the money I paid for it.

Scott also said that TSR should leave material from DRAGON where it is so that AD&D players could decide what classes and races to allow. I feel that *Unearthed Arcana* is an excellent source of information for all those who do not have all the back issues of DRAGON or who are just starting to play the game. For those that do have the back issues, it is a compilation of all those articles they use packed into a hardcover, 128-page package. If one does not want to use any of the rules presented in the book; then he shouldn’t buy it; but one shouldn’t base this decision on the first 25 pages, not all of which, by the way, cover only new races and classes. Some of them expand upon the old ones.

For those of you who have not yet bought *Unearthed Arcana*, and read Scott’s letter instead, you should realize that the book is much more than he makes it out to be.

Danny Kretzer  
Ho-Ho-Kus, N.J.

I have been reading all this stuff about justifying the AD&D magic system. It seems to me that since it is a game, it doesn’t have to be rationalized. Gamers out there refuse even to use vs. AC-type modifiers, from what I’ve read. But here goes. (I use “rank” as character level and “power” as spell level to clarify matters.)

Magic-user spells must be known by the user. This does not mean they have to be memorized.

To know a spell, you must memorize the somatic components and magic words. Anybody could do this, given time. But you also need to understand the metaphysical components, such as probability, loci, energetic fields, mobility vectors, and anything else the DM can come up with. Also, to fix these in your mind, you must copy all of these factors in magic ink on magic paper. This effectively “burns” the pattern into your brain.

When you memorize a spell, the magic ink, coupled with your understanding of the spell, charges the spell pattern with energy. When the spell is cast, the energy leaves the pattern. Magic users with low intelligence cannot comprehend high-power spells, nor can they know many of the magic patterns of a particular power (via Maximum Spells per Level). They also do not grasp spell concepts easily. If you fail your Chance to Know Spell roll, that is it. You cannot understand the spell.

As a magic user rises in rank, he is able to handle more charges in the patterns of his brain, as well as the ability to comprehend high-power spells.

On to clerics. They do not study magic, and therefore have no permanent spell patterns, therefore their deities can grant them any spells. This also means that their spells have a chance of failing. Those of high wisdom make up for their lack of magic knowledge with faith in their deities and with faith in themselves, and thus do not fail. The gods deem it right to give these devout persons extra spells. This is also the reason higher-rank clerics gain more spells; because they have proven themselves worthy.

Because clerics depend on the gods for magic, you may elect to give them extra spells in times of emergency, but only if they are the only hope of the world.

To define misunderstood terms: to know a spell is to be able to memorize it. The exact amount you can know is under Intelligence in the *Players Handbook*. Clerics do not need to know spells.

To have a spell in your spellbook is self-explanatory. The amount you can have in a book is in *Unearthed Arcana* under “Spellbooks.” Clerics have no books.

To have memorized a spell is to be able to act it when you need to; then it is gone. The amount of spells you can memorize is under your character class in the *Players Handbook*.

Jeff Klein  
Spring Lake, Mich.

Can a medieval fantasy world be sheltered? Several of DRAGON’s recent articles have said that features of the middle ages, such as disease, poverty, and overcrowding need not exist in AD&D. Magic would replace technology. Through spells, the average character could be healthy and pampered. It might be nice if such a world existed. But AD&D is an adventure game; you cannot adventure in luxury. I am reminded of a cartoon in a recent DRAGON where two warriors face a box. On the box is written, “Contains one minotaur. For 300 XP insert sword in slot.” One warrior says, “Kinda takes the fun out of it.” He is right. The point of most scenarios is to overcome difficulties.

In a primitive world, the game need not end when the dragon is dead. Everyday life presents adventures and complications. The PC must work with corrupt governments or evade them. They must deal with teeming mobs, avoid or help beggars, and strive for every comfort they desire. Long journeys might be made to avoid a plague. More scenarios, and more exciting ones

(Turn to page 95)



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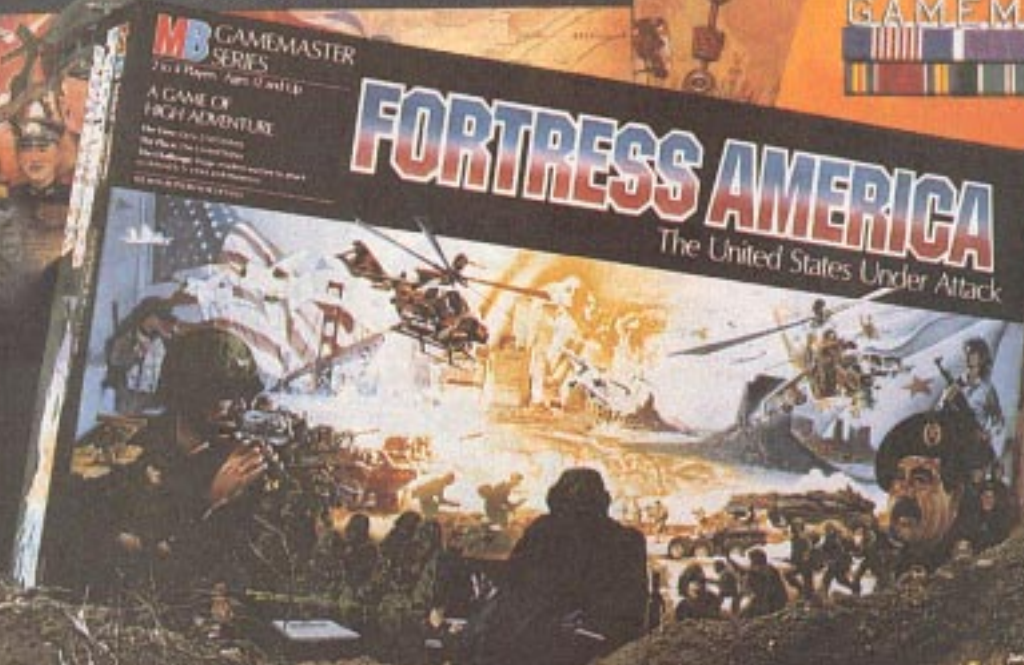
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# Welcome to HADES

The term "Hades" in AD&D® game parlance refers to the entire Outer Plane of absolute neutral evil alignment, and, as the *Legends & Lore* book states, the plane is "(named for) its most powerful ruler." This article deals only with that section of the plane under the direct domination of Hades himself, and most of the information is adapted from Greek mythology. Because the object of this manuscript is to establish a playable environment for AD&D game characters, alterations (or omissions) have been made from the original legends so as to mesh with established "facts" from the game rulebooks. Some areas are purposely left vague or undeveloped to allow individual Dungeon Masters to integrate the material into their own campaigns. (Reading the relevant myths is also helpful.)

Hades (the plane) is divided into the Three Glooms. The First Gloom is the "upper layer," and connects with the Astral Plane. The Second Gloom refers to that layer in which dwell other, less important (for our purposes here) deities, such as Hel and Ratri. The Third Gloom is the domain of Hades (the deity) himself and is known as Erebus, the "Covered Pit." To avoid confusion, the term "Hades" from this point on will refer only to the god,

unless otherwise indicated, and "Erebus" will indicate his "plane." It may be assumed that the other Glooms conform to the laws and conditions described herein, but information at this point is scant. It is known that the other gods of death try to avoid antagonizing Hades (as do the gods of his own pantheon), and will defer to him on important matters.

The author is indebted to Ed Greenwood and Roger E. Moore for their ground-breaking work in matters planar, and to Maud Gwynn Burnett for obscure gossip concerning Greek heroes, deities, and demigods. Other sources included Robert Graves's Greek *Mythos*; *The Golden Bough* by J. G. Frazer; *Mythology* by Edith Hamilton; *Bulfinch's Mythology*; and Joseph Campbell's *The Masks of God*.

## The First and Second Glooms

Intrepid adventurers wishing access to Erebus will always find themselves deposited on the bank of the planetwisting river Styx across from the entrance gates, no matter what means of planar travel is employed. Across the Styx can be seen the First Gloom, which appears as a seemingly infinite plain of black volcanic rock, dotted here and there with pools of bubbling lava. Here encounters may occur with

beings who are able to roam the Lower Planes at will, as well as those from the adjoining planes of Tartarus, Gehenna, Concordant Opposition, and the Astral Plane. A suggested Encounter Table follows, which DMs may adjust to their individual liking; since there is no day or night as such in the Glooms, an encounter check should be made once every 12 hours. A roll of 1 on a d8 indicates an encounter.

## Encounter Table I

Dice	Encounter
01-02	Annis
03-04	Barghest
05-08	Catoblepas
09-10	Demodand
11-12	Demon
13-14	Devil
15-25	Ettercap
26-35	Giant, Fomorian
36-37	Rakshasa
38-47	Stench Kow
48-37	Thunder Beast
58-00	Special*

\*—On a result of 58-00, refer to the table in the section on "Encounters in Erebus" (following "The house of Hades") and roll for an encounter using that table instead. If this second roll is 90-92, ignore the result and roll again.

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by **Bruce Barber**

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*Here's what life is like  
in the Land of the Dead*



Once (or if) the characters have successfully crossed the Styx into the First Gloom, there is little to be seen other than what has been described. With some exploration (2-8 "days") and a great deal of luck, a party might come upon the vast roots of the world-tree Ygdrasil thrusting from the rock— this is the entrance to Niflheim, home of the Norse goddess Hel, which comprises part of the Second Gloom, wherein also dwells Ratri. But the Second Gloom is another story. . . .

### Crossing the Styx

Should the characters travel along the bank of the Styx seeking a ford or bridge, or away from the river (for whatever reasons), it will eventually become obvious that the Styx is a dimensional as well as physical barrier — in 1-4 days, they will find themselves inexplicably back at the exact location from which they started! If, at this point, the PCs decide that venturing into Erebus is perhaps a bad idea, it will be necessary for them to retreat beyond the influence of the Styx's *anti-magic field* (see below) and employ whatever means of extra-dimensional travel available to them to escape this "moebius strip" effect.

The River Styx is wide (¼ mi.), swift, and deep, and has special properties of its own, in keeping with its status as an interplanar nexus (cf. *Bifrost*, DRAGON® Magazine issue #90, p. 36). Some of these properties are detailed under the "Charon" entry in the *Monster Manual II*, p. 28. In addition, the Styx radiates an *anti-magic field* that temporarily negates the magical powers (and items) of all beings except those native to the Lower Planes, or those of godlike status. This field is more or less tunnel-shaped, extending 50 yards on each side and above the river, as well as into its depths. Thus, the only safe passage across is via Charon, as detailed in the aforementioned *MM II* listing. It is important to note, however, that while Charon and other daemons are in general immune to *charm* or *suggestion* spells, they may be affected by the *charming* magic of a bard of at least 12th level, if both their magic resistance and saving throw fail. (Even Hades himself may fall victim to a bard, but in his case the bard must be of at least 20th level, such as Orpheus; see the Appendix to this article.)

If the characters are already aboard Charon's skiff, entering the Three Glooms from another Lower Plane, they will be deposited in the First Gloom.

Charon will also transport characters back across the Styx on their return (if they return) unless he is under specific orders from Hades or Persephone not to do so. However, he will charge triple his original fee, and under no circumstances will he ferry a shade (*q.v.*) from the Glooms. If Charon is defeated in combat (i.e., temporarily destroyed), his skiff will remain and may be utilized by mortals, but only for simple transport from one bank to the other. Any attempt to deviate

from this route will result in the skiffs capsizing 1-4 rounds from the round in which the course was altered.

One hundred yards beyond the bank are the adamantite gates to Erebus, 20 feet wide and 20 feet tall, surmounted by the sculpture of a large black ram, the symbol of Hades.

### Entering Erebus

To the right of the gates, a cave mouth is also visible. Advancing to within 100 feet of the gates will bring Cerberus (*Legends & Lore*, p. 61) out of this lair to challenge the intruders. There is a small chance (10%) that this guardian maybe distracted from his duties if food is thrown to him. However, even if this ploy is successful, and he is not attacked while eating, he will remain so occupied for only 1-6 rounds.

The gates themselves are not locked, but are heavy, and require the use of the strength percentage chance for *bend bars/lift gates* to pull or push open. As well, any character touching the enchanted adamantite for the first time (even gauntleted) must save vs. death magic prior to the *bend bars* roll — failure means instant death. (N.B.: The soul of any character or creature who dies at the gate or anywhere else in Erebus will remain there regardless of alignment, a slave to Hades, and it is doubtful if another deity will intervene.) The gates are indestructible to any being of less than lesser-god status.

A 20-foot-wide black marble stairway extends downward beyond the gates until it becomes lost in the distance. It will take 6-36 turns to descend, as this is not in reality a physical corridor, but a magical *gate* leading to the Third Gloom. The stairway cannot be damaged or blocked up by any means, magical or otherwise. It is also the sole exit from Erebus. Eventually, a columned archway opens up into what seems to be a large, underground cavern.

### The Third Gloom: Erebus

The walls and ceiling of this cavern appear to be approximately ½ mile away, but any deep enough penetration into Erebus will soon reveal that no matter how far in (or up) the characters venture, the walls will *always* be that distant. The semblance of finite space is just that — a semblance! A backward glance will reveal the archway standing alone, columns framing dead blackness, the cavern extending behind it.

The general appearance of Erebus is, to say the least, peculiar. Giant stalagmites, stalactites, outcroppings, etc., are very much in evidence, just as in a natural cave, but these have been carved and sculpted so as to resemble the architectural designs of classical Greece: Doric columns, frescoed pediments, and so on — even the many boiling lava-pools are perfectly bordered with intricate tiling. All of the above is of course executed in marblelike stone of deepest black. The overall ambience is

of wandering within some vast Hellenic palace.

As ordered as all of this may seem at first, it will soon be noticed that there is a great deal of activity everywhere, most of it consisting of the demolition and reconstruction of the "terrain," overseen by various sorts of hordlings, daemons, mephits and the like. This manual labor is representative of the many punishments which may be imposed on those spirits of the dead (or shades) who were less than perfect in life. (For example: a sculptor may be seen putting the finishing touches on a small icon, only to be informed by a nearby piscodaemon that "it isn't quite right" and will have to be done over, the point underscored with a rake of its claw. This in itself might not seem so severe, unless it is known that this has been going on for several hundred years and will continue for all eternity!)

### The house of Hades

Traveling for about three hours on foot (following a more or less straight path from the archway) will bring visitors to the only fixed and permanent structure in Erebus, the beautiful (and forbidding) Stygian marble palace wherein dwells Hades himself. Little is known of the interior of the house, as Hades allows none of the dead souls to leave Erebus, and of the few heroes who have braved Erebus, none have penetrated past the palace's foyer. Hades' underlings are, of course, much too frightened of him to reveal any of the house's secrets. However, several sparse facts have been accumulated by brave scholars and adventurers.

A meadow of asphodel, pale and ghostly lily-like flowers, surrounds the dwelling, which covers an entire acre of ground, and a long avenue leads up to the front doors, lined on the left by cypress trees, on the right by black poplars. Where the rows terminate, flanking the doors, are twin pools of clear green water. The pool on the left springs from the Lethe, river of forgetfulness, and all who drink from it must save vs. poison or be permanently *feble-minded* (a *wish*, *alter reality* or *limited wish* will cure this effect). Even if they are somehow cured, victims will still have no memory of the time preceding the cure. A drink from the right-hand pool of Memory may completely negate the effects of the first pool, but only if Hades or Persephone so wills it; otherwise, it is just water.

The front doors to the house are unguarded and unlocked (the palace is forbidden to all except by Hades' permission, and no native of the Three Glooms would violate its sanctity), and immediately inside is a large reception hall. The decor is all black marble and gold, austere but of terrible grandeur. Various types of furniture are distributed about, one of which is Hades' *chair of forgetfulness*, which will resemble an ordinary chair. Should a character for any reason sit in this chair,



the following effects will occur: the victim must first save vs. poison or be stricken as if by the pool of Lethe (*q.v.*). Regardless of whether or not this save is successful, the character will find him or herself stuck to the chair, and can be freed only by Hades' command, or pried from it by a being with godlike strength, as follows:

Strength	Chance for success
19	15%
20	25%
21	35%
22	45%
23	60%
24	75%
25	90%

Even if he is pried from the chair, part of the victim will inevitably be left behind (so to speak), resulting in 5-20 points of damage. Attempts at release may be tried as often as desired, but damage occurs on each occasion, with or without success.

If Hades is somewhere within the many rooms of the palace, which he almost invariably is (95% chance), he will appear to confront intruders in 1-4 turns. Although he is instantly aware of the presence of living beings who do not belong in the Third Gloom, he will usually leave them to his minions, but he will always personally take a hand when foolhardy adventurers muddy up his front hall! If his

queen, Persephone, is in the Lower Planes (25% chance) there is a 30% chance that she will accompany Hades. (Otherwise she will be in the Nine Hells visiting Hecate, whose company she prefers.)

Hades is treated for the most part as per the *Legends & Lore* book. It should be taken into account that, while he is fierce, terrible, and jealous of his rights, his evil is not always of the malicious variety; after all, he became Lord of the Underworld by chance, when he and his brothers (Zeus and Poseidon) divided up the Universe among them by choosing lots. However, he is subject to moods of unpredictability and cannot totally be trusted. He is also subject to fits of lust, especially in the case of attractive, non-human females (and if Persephone is away).

Statistics and information on Persephone are in the Appendix to this article.

There is also a 33% chance of the Oinodaemon (currently Anthraxus) accompanying them, in the palace on business. If Hades and Persephone are both absent, the Oinodaemon will definitely be in residence, acting as major-domo.

Hades will politely welcome his "guests," inviting them to be comfortable, and to take food and drink with him. Usually he will not even question them as to their purpose in his domain, and he has little knowledge or interest in the Upper World.

"Getting comfortable" in Hades' house could lead to entrapment in the *chair of*

*forgetfulness (q.v.)*, and lurching in Erebus is equally fraught with peril: The partaking of any food or drink (excepting the twin pools) indigenous to Erebus will result in the victim's immediate physical death, and his or her soul being bound forever to Hades. A save vs. death magic is allowed, but at -4 on the die.

Failing in these subterfuges, Hades will not act directly against characters unless attacked, but will order them out of his house, relying on his various underlings to ensure that they do not leave Erebus. Of course, if he is attacked or his hospitality blatantly violated, he will not hesitate to use all the power at his command to crush the impudent mortals.

Persephone, on the other hand, can be both gracious and merciful, if she feels that whatever quest the party is on is one of importance, and may even attempt to sway Hades in their favor. However, her first loyalty is to her husband and his kingdom, and she will act in no manner that might endanger either.

If the Oinodaemon is alone in the house, he will act as per the *MM II*, p.30, but will try to avoid combat within the sacred precincts of the palace unless he is attacked first.

It is rumored that fabulous, untold wealth is stored in the House, perhaps even an artifact or two, although none of good alignment. Hades is something of a miser, and is sometimes called Pluton, "the rich one." There is also said to be a comprehensive list of daemonic personal names, which is perhaps one of the reasons he is held in such esteem by daemonkind.

Further, the three Furies (Alecto, Tisiphone, and Megare; *L&L* p. 64) also have apartments in the house of Hades, but are not under his direct control — their use as an instrument of punishment is restricted to a full council of Olympian gods. On the roof of the palace is a stable where Hades' black-and-gold chariot is kept, along with the four nightmares that draw it.

### Encounters in Erebus

There is much seemingly mindless activity going on at all times in Erebus — constant construction, daemonic beings hurrying hither and yon on dark incomprehensible missions (well, almost incomprehensible; it's certain they're up to no good!), and thus encounter checks should be made each turn, 1-3 on a d10 indicating an encounter. DMs should also keep in mind that due to the continuous "redecorating," characters might at times find themselves venturing into walled areas (something like a roofless dungeon or labyrinth) and so surprise will become an important factor.

All living beings are considered fair game in Erebus, unless protected by Hades or Persephone, and most encounters will result in combat. More powerful beings will always send lesser minions into the fray first, if possible. Detailed notes on

encounters follow the table below. (Note: All random encounters will occur beyond a 1/2-mile radius of the house of Hades, this area around the palace being sacrosanct.)

#### Erebus encounter table

Dice	Encounter
01-03	Arcanadaemon
04-10	Derghodaemon
11-26	Diakk
27	Hero
28-40	Hordling
41-47	Hydrodaemon
48-59	Larva
60-69	Mephit
70-76	Mezzodaemon
77	Night Hag
78	Nycadaemon
79-89	Piscodaemon
90-92	Shade (Erebian)
93	Ultrodaemon
94-00	Yagnodaemon

*Arcanadaemon* — Should this encounter come up, there is a 7% chance that the characters will be in the vicinity of one of this race's red-iron forts (*MM II*). Otherwise it is with a single arcanadaemon.

*Derghodaemon* — 1-4 creatures, as per *MM II*.

*Diakk* — 2-16 diakki; see *MM II*.

*Hero* — Several exceptional adventurers of myth and legend (most commonly known are those of the Greek mythos) have entered and even harrowed Erebus, for purposes of their own. Because the Outer Planes are common to many different eras and alternate Prime Material Planes, it is possible for player characters to encounter such heroes, who may aid the party or enlist its aid in their own quests, depending on the hero's individual bent. Odysseus, Theseus, and Heracles are some examples who can be found in the *L&L* book, and statistics for Orpheus appear in this article's Appendix. The DM should research the relevant myths if using these heroes, or design other heroes and heroines with their own reasons for invading the Underworld.

*Hordling* — Packs of 2-16; due to the random nature of hordling physical types, these should be pre-rolled as per *MM II*.

*Hydrodaemon* — Although these lesser daemons are most numerous in and around the Styx, they can be found elsewhere in Erebus in groups of 2-8, as per *MM II*.

*Larva* — These damned souls (see the *Monster Manual*) will always be guarded by 1-4 diakki (q.v.) and if the larvae are endangered, their night hag "owner" (q.v.) will arrive in 1-3 rounds.

*Mephit* — 2-8 of these evil Lower Plane errand-boys will be encountered, as per the *FIEND FOLIO®* Tome; for specific type of mephit, roll d4: 1 = fire, 2 = lava, 3 = smoke, 4 = steam.

*Mezzodaemon* — 1-2, as per *FF*.

*Night Hag* — 1-2, as *MM* listing, and a 50% chance of nightmare (*MM*) steeds.

*Nycadaemon* — 1 only; see *FF*.

*Piscodaemon* — 3-12; see *MM II*.

*Shade* — These are the noncorporeal spirits of those neutral evil beings who are consigned to the eternal twilight of Erebus, or creatures of other alignments who are undergoing temporary punishment. Normally, shades are invisible to living beings, but Hades may decide to display a shade suffering his ordained penance (see below) either as an object lesson, or just to be nasty. Certain spells (such as *speak with dead*) may summon a shade. (Do not confuse these creatures with shades from the Plane of Shadow, which do not exist in the Gloom.)

*Ultradaemon* — 1 only, as per *MM II*.

*Yagnodaemon* — 1-6; see *MM II*.

#### Crime and punishment

The following examples from Greek mythology illustrate what sorts of punishments the party may witness being visited upon some of the more unfortunate residents of this realm. (DMs are encouraged to be inventive in coming up with other similar tasks.)

*Sisyphus* — This man's crime was of betraying divine secrets (further compounded by handcuffing Hades himself, through trickery), and he is condemned to roll a huge boulder to the brow of a hill in Erebus, and topple it over; however, at the last second, the weight of the stone always defeats him — it bounces back down the hill and he must repeat the entire process.

*Tantalus* — Tantalus erred unforgivably on two occasions. To begin with, he stole divine food from an Olympian banquet to share among his mortal friends; this in itself was enough to incur Zeus' wrath, but before it was even discovered, he committed his second transgression. He held another banquet, which the gods attended, and when he ran short of food served the deities his son Pelops, in a stew. Tantalus now (and for all time) hangs from the bough of a fruit tree in Erebus, a pool of water near at hand. However, the food and drink always remain just beyond his reach, and he is perennially hungry and thirsty.

*Ixion* — Not satisfied with murdering his fiancée, Dia, Ixion then attempted to seduce Hera, wife of Zeus (a bad idea from the start). Ixion was tricked by Zeus into betraying himself, and was bound to a perpetually burning wheel of fire which whirls eternally around Erebus.

Note: Any attempt, however futile, to interfere with a tormented shade's fate will result in the appearance of something to deal with the blasphemers — the DM should roll on the Erebus encounter table, disregarding results of hero, larva, and shade.

#### Daemonic society and social order

Erebus has no rigidly defined power structure such as exists among the lawful denizens of the Nine Hells, nor is it the anarchic free-for-all of the Abyss. In gen-

eral, the strong dominate the weak by whatever means, but there are recognizable patterns of organization, pecking orders, and rules of thumb to guide DMs in setting up a cohesive adventuring milieu in the Gloom.

Hades and Persephone are, obviously, the most important and powerful forces in Erebus, but may be treated more as "spiritual" leaders, in that they take little interest in the mundane affairs of the Covered Pit (almost as little as they take in Upper World activities). All "temporal" matters are handled by the incumbent Oinodaemon.

The position of Oinodaemon is always held by one of a small group of unique daemonic beings of great power, as detailed in the *MM II* as of this writing the post is occupied by Anthraxus. Chief among his duties is ensuring the continued flow of tribute — gold, gems, etc. — from the independent baronies and arcanadaemonic city-states into Hades' coffers. As well, the Oinodaemon oversees the perpetual tortures/punishments that have been ordained for specific shades (q.v.) whenever Hades is too busy brooding to do so himself. He must also be on constant guard against attacks or assassination attempts from those aforementioned daemons who covet his office.

These daemon lords reside in rich, ostentatious palaces whose locations are nonetheless cloaked in secrecy, well hidden from all except those who inhabit them. The tyrants surround themselves with personal armies made up of any creatures who will serve them (for wealth or power) regardless of the race and/or class distinctions which form, as shall be seen, the basis for the social structure of the arcanadaemons.

(Note: Charon may very well be a daemon lord of this same general type, but he is answerable only to Hades, and his charonadaemons, in turn, serve only him. Charon also has some authority over hydrodaemons, and most other daemons fear him.)

It is the arcanadaemon civilization that shows the most definition and organization. The walled forts of the arcanadaemons are in fact small cities, similar to the city-states of ancient Greece. A council of 2-8 arcanadaemons administrates each city; these councils are appointed or elected by different procedures from city to city. Not all of the inhabitants of these cities are full-fledged citizens, and the requirements for citizenship are quite specific: a citizen must be a being whose racial name contains the suffix "daemon," and (in game-statistic terms) must have greater than 11 hit dice. Intelligence is not a factor — the less intellectually gifted daemons will usually form the city-state's army/police force. Citizens will have paid servants (usually daemons of less than 11 HD), and unpaid slaves (subjugated non-daemonic creatures — mephits, hordlings, etc.). Other powerful or useful "barbari-



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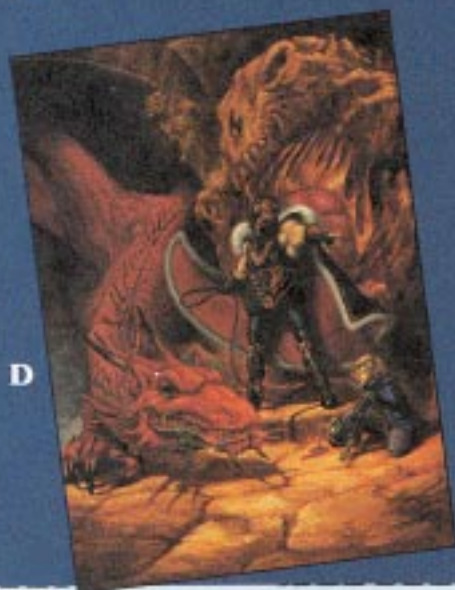
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ans" (night hags, demodands, and the like) who have or could be valuable to the city-state are tolerated and comparatively well treated socially, but will never be given citizen status. The actual privileges of a citizen differ in each city-state, each state being autonomous and self-sufficient.

At the bottom of the heap (and this applies throughout Erebus) are larvae and shades, who have no status at all; larvae are little more than commodities, while shades are "non-persons" to be either ignored or punished at Hades' command. Bored greater daemons, however, have been known to entertain themselves with such diversions as flinging fruits and vegetables at Tantalus (*q.v.*).

The city-states of the arcanadaemon race are in a constant state of flux as far as their relationships to one another are concerned: wars are fought, treaties are signed; alliances are formed and broken; espionage is planned or thwarted. Only if Erebus were to be threatened by a sizable and mighty outside force would all of the city-states band together at once. It is also not unknown for one of the daemon lords to temporarily abandon intrigues against his peers for the Oinodaemonship in favor of invading a neighboring city-state, and vice versa.

Note well, however, that none of the beings in Erebus, in any combination, will attempt to usurp Hades' position as ultimate ruler, for any reason whatsoever.

### Life in the land of the dead

From the above overview of daemonic society, and by consulting encounter information (and hints and specifics throughout this article) as well as official material in the various manuals, the DM should have little trouble envisioning a comprehensive Erebian "culture," at least as far as one exists. To further facilitate this, the following section examines in slightly more detail what Roger Moore refers to as "What night hags do all day." This general "pattern of behavior" may then serve as a guideline to handling other denizens of this plane, when such creatures are not dealt with elsewhere.

Night hags are tolerated (if not necessarily respected) by all major demons, devils and daemons throughout the Lower Planes (and, by extension, down through the pecking orders). This tolerance is, of course, due to their traffic in larvae (*q.v.*).

What has been hitherto unrevealed concerning larvae is their need to be sprayed regularly with human or demi-human blood, in order to remain hale and healthy (or rather, *un*-healthy!). At least four times daily (every six hours), each larva must be sprinkled with about one ounce of this substance, which is then absorbed by its wrinkled, wormy skin.

Thus, the night hag herself ranges the Prime Material Plane not merely working random evil, as has been assumed, but also collecting nourishment for her "cash-flock." (The blood of good-aligned beings is

held to be of superior nutritional quality to any other type, by the way.) Vials or flasks of bone are the most common vessels for collection and storage of the precious liquid; these are then usually buried near the plots of ground allotted to hags for their herds, complete with diakka guards.

When not gathering or watering her charges, a night hag will be off negotiating for the trading and/or acquisition of larvae, or perhaps bartering with others of her kind for blood, should her own supply be low or spent. (Living adventurers in the Gloom's would, of course, be considered wonderful sources.)

Hags will defend to the death the source of their livelihood, and each will come to the defense of another hag's property, especially if the benefactor can work out some deal with the beneficiary in return for the promise of such aid.

Other intelligent inhabitants of Erebus will have similarly unattractive hobbies and/or occupations.

### Special conditions

The environment of the Three Gloom's is very different from that of the Prime Material Plane; Hades has adapted the plane over countless millennia to suit his own somber and isolated personality. Despite the presence of numerous lava pools, it is always uncomfortably cold in Erebus, an eternal state of early winter.

Lighting throughout the Gloom's is consistent and, well, *gloomy* — all creatures not native, to the Lower Planes can see as well as a human at dusk, but no better. Further, since what light does exist is emitted from the atmosphere itself rather than from a single source, no shadows are ever cast — an eerie effect in so dark a place. Torches, lanterns, etc., will be "damped" as well in the Gloom's, to conform to these conditions — Hades does not want anyone to "brighten up his day." Other effects of this phenomena will be evident in the sections to come.

### Spell alterations

Magical conditions are in many cases much changed from those familiar to spellcasters from the Prime Material Plane.

For example, *necromantic* spells are the special province of Hades, and in any event he does not allow, in Erebus, the use of any spells that heal or restore life — his is, after all, a Land of the Dead. His clerics are granted curative spells on other planes, with the proviso that they be used sparingly and only on other servants of Hades.

There are a number of other factors at work in the magical framework of the Gloom's that will serve to warp or negate spell functions. A list of spells from the *Players Handbook* and *Unearthed Arcana* follows, with notes on unusual results. A letter in parentheses after the spell name indicates that the normal effect is negated or altered for a specific reason:

(P) — involves communication with or travel to a plane that does not connect with the Gloom's, and thus is ineffective.

(N) — indicates spells under Hades' direct control, and so may be altered if not negated. He allows the reverse of curative spells, even if the victims are to be his own "troops." Death is death, after all, and his horde of servants is unlimited.

(C) — indicates will-force "charm" spells which may not work, either because of exceptional wisdom scores or innate resistance (*e.g.*, all domestic life forms are immune to: *charm* and *suggestion* spells):

(I) — indicates illusion/phantasm magics that may be ineffective against beings with exceptional intelligence.

(U) — indicates that the Three Gloom's are an unnatural environment; therefore spells utilizing natural forces or affecting "natural" creatures (*i.e.*, insects or mammals) will fail, unless animals or plants on which the spell is cast were transported from the Prime Material Plane.

(L) — refers to the fact that Hades prefers his realm to remain constantly gloomy; thus, any *light* (or *darkness*) spells will fail. In addition, those spells which shed light as a byproduct (such as *fireball*) will function normally as to damage inflicted, etc., but will provide no illumination. Note that those native creatures with spell-like abilities of *light* and *darkness* will hesitate to use them for fear of displeasing Hades.

(E) — indicates that the overpowering evil that pervades the Gloom's may cause certain spells to misfire or fail.

As on other Outer Planes, clerics, druids and higher-level paladins will be unable to recover spells of the 3rd level or higher, since these are granted directly by deities and their servants, and such beings will not interfere in the affairs of another plane.

Spells are listed by class and alphabetically; an "X" indicates that the spell is useless in the domain of Hades.

### Cleric spells

*Abjure* — (E); the reverse of this spell, *implore*, will attract Hades' attention. Within 1-4 rounds, 2-8 arcanadaemons will be dispatched to investigate.

*Aerial servant* — (P); no link to Elemental Plane of Air.

*Aid* — (E); recipient suffers the effects of a *curse* and takes 1-8 points of damage.

*Air walk* — (U); X

*Animate dead* — (N); X

*Animate dead monsters* — (N); X

*Animate object* — No animated object will attack a permanent resident of the Lower Planes.

*Astral spell* — This spell can only be used to reach the First Gloom, or to travel from there to the Prime Material Plane, Tartarus, or Gehenna.

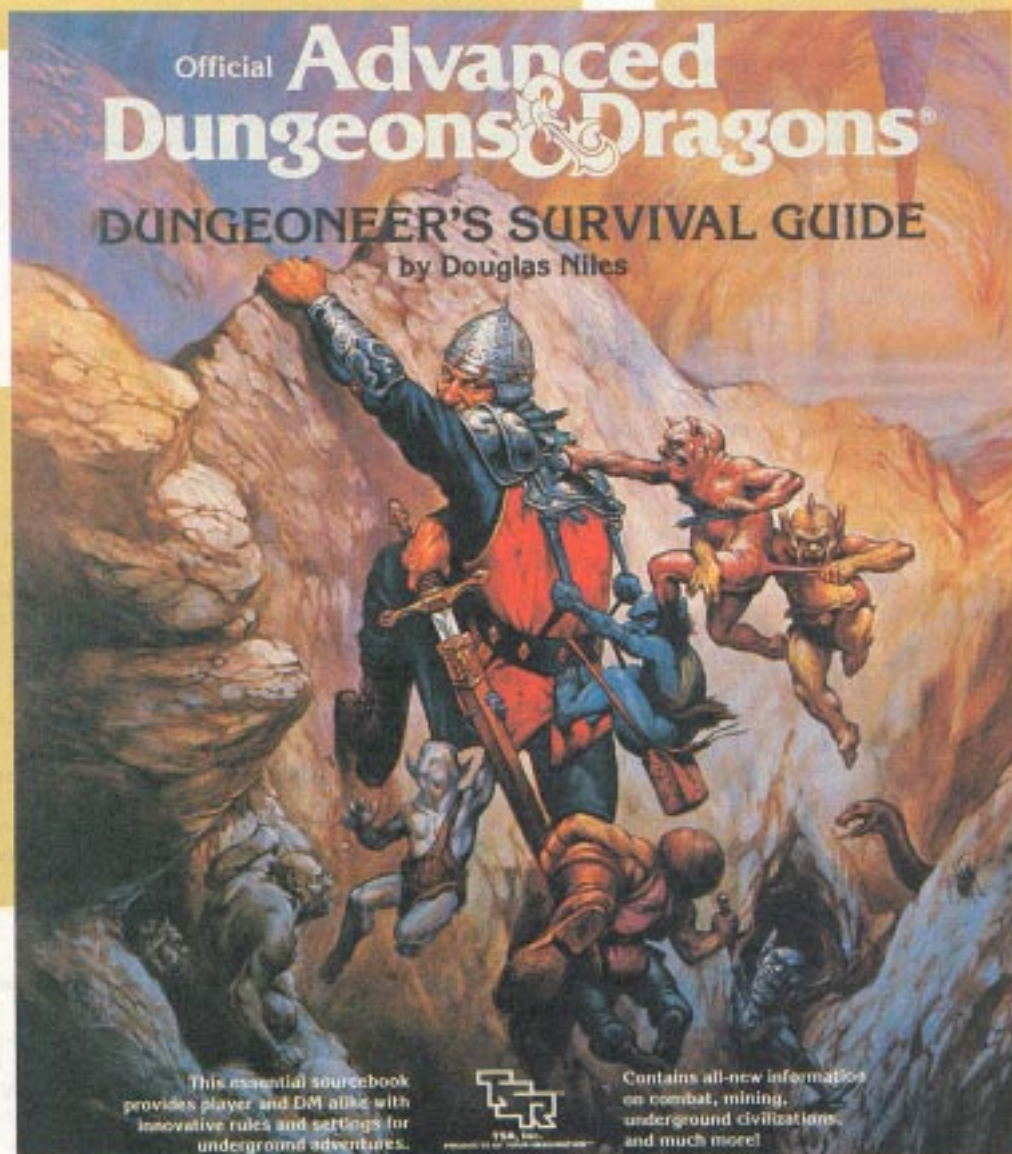
*Atonement* — (P); the cleric will know before casting the spell that it will fail unless the cleric's deity resides in one of the Gloom's of Hades.



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*Bless* — (E); the *bless* is warped into its reverse, *curse*.

*Ceremony* — (E); the various applications of this spell will react in opposition to the regular effect or simply will not function. The applications are as follows:

*Coming of age* — (E); results in *curse* on good recipient.

*Burial* — (E); corpse is protected from good rather than evil.

*Marriage* — (E); no marriage made in Hades can be saved.

*Dedication* — (E); spell makes recipient dedicated to evil.

*Investiture* — Effective only in the investiture of an aspiring first-level evil cleric.

*Consecrate item* — (E); ceremony desecrates any item useful in good-aligned religious ceremonies. Evil ceremonial items are consecrated as normal.

*Ordination* — Ceremony works only in the ordination of evil clerics.

*Special vows* — Ceremony works only in regard to evil cavaliers or anti-paladins. In this respect, special vows work as normal (with the exception that a recipient of a quest from a similarly aligned caster has a -5 on saving throw).

*Consecrate ground* — (E); ceremony works normally for evil clerics. A good cleric conducting this ceremony will *desecrate* the area in question, making it usable for evil purposes only.

*Anathematize* — Spell will work only on non-native inhabitants of the plane.

*Chant* — (E); duration is limited to one round/level of the cleric.

*Cloak of fear* — (I)

*Cloudburst* — (U); X

*Command* — (C)

*Commune* — (P); see *atonement*.

*Combine* — Ineffective when combining abilities to turn undead.

*Conjure animals* — (U); any "animal" that might be found in the Gloom is a "monster" for spell purposes.

*Continual light* (all) — (L); X

*Control weather* — (U); X

*Create water* — The reverse of this spell cannot be used to destroy any of the native waters of the Gloom.

*Cure blindness* — (E); this spell will be twisted into its reverse; no effect vs. deities, demigods or supernatural servants.

*Cure disease* — (E); see *cure blindness*.

*Cure/cause wounds* (all) — (N); only *cause* modes will function.

*Death's door* — (E); renders recipient an additional 1-9 hit points below zero.

*Detect evil/good* — (E); this spell is almost useless in both its aspects. *Detect good* will register only an absence of evil in good or neutral beings.

*Detect lie* — Ineffective against deities and demigods.

*Detect life* — Will only function if used on living creatures native to the Prime Material Plane.

*Detect magic* — All of the Gloom is

highly magical, making this spell useless except to detect non-magical items.

*Dispel evil/good* — (E); *dispel good* will function, with a -4 penalty on the creature's saving throw,

*Dispel magic* — Ineffective against the magical properties of the plane; if cast at a person or persons who have traveled to the Gloom via an *astral spell*, it will send them (if successful) back to the plane of origin.

*Divination* — (P); see *atonement*.

*Dust devil* — (P); X; will attract Charon's attention.

*Earthquake* — (U); X

*Enthrall* — (C)

*Exaction* — (P); X; this spell results only in attracting Hades' attention. Within 1-4 rounds, the Oinodaemon will appear and investigate.

*Exorcise* — No effect on items that have had powers altered by the environment of the Gloom.

*Feign death* — (N); any being not native to the Lower Planes who has this spell cast upon it must save vs. death magic or the *feigned death* will be real death.

*Find the path* — (U); X

*Flame strike* — (L)

*Forbiddance* — (E); spell works only in respect to neutral evil clerics, and has no effect on Hades himself.

*Gate* — No deity who does not live in the Three Gloom will come through a *gate* cast there, and any being summoned from another plane will recognize its surroundings and very likely depart at once. Hades will always know when a *gate* is opened into Erebus, and within 1-4 rounds will have dispatched 2-8 lesser daemons to check it out.

*Giant insect* — (U)

*Glyph of warding* — (U); ineffective if not cast by a creature native to the Lower Planes.

*Golem* — X; due to the necessity of a *prayer* spell being, used in the casting, this spell will only work in cases described above for *atonement*.

*Heal* — (N); see *cure/cause wounds*.

*Heroes' feast* — Anyone partaking of a *heroes' feast* in the domain of Hades suffers reversed effects: they are immediately affected by *cause disease* and *poison*, and take 5-8 points of damage after imbibing the beverage that is a part of the feast. The food renders a *curse* (as per the reverse of a *bless* spell) upon those who eat it. In addition, any characters or creatures partaking of the feast are extremely susceptible to *fear*, *hopelessness*, and *panic* for 12 hours afterward.

*Holy symbol* — (E); effective only in creating an unholy symbol.

*Holy/unholy word* — (E); *holy word* will fail completely, while an *unholy word* will send good creatures back to their home plane, including any good-aligned party members within the area of spell effect.

*Insect plague* — (U)

*Invisibility to undead* — (N); X

*Know alignment* — See *detect evil/good*.

*Locate object* — This cannot be used to locate deities, nor their magical weapons and devices.

*Lower water* — (U); this spell will not affect the "natural" waters of the Gloom, such as the pool of Lethe.

*Magic font* — This spell works only for evil clerics whose deities reside in one of the Gloom.

*Magical vestment* — (E); will not function for good clerics because of the absence of consecrated ground in Erebus.

*Meld into stone* — (U); X

*Messenger* — (U)

*Negative plane protection* — (P); X

*Neutralize poison* — (E); only the reverse, *poison*, functions; it does not affect deities of this plane.

*Part water* — See *lower water*

*Prayer* — See *atonement*.

*Precipitation* — (U); X

*Protection from evil/good* (all) — (E); only good may be protected against, at double strength.

*Purify food and drink* — This spell does not affect food and drink indigenous to Erebus.

*Quest* — (C)

*Rainbow* — (U); X

*Raise dead* — (N); only *slay living* functions.

*Regenerate* — (N); see *cure/cause wounds*.

*Remove curse* — (E); when cast, this spell will function as *bestow curse*, and is permanent.

*Remove paralysis* — (E); reverse of spell, *cause paralysis*, occurs.

*Remove/cause fear* — (C)

*Restoration* — (N); see *cure/cause wounds*.

*Resurrection* — (N); see *cure/cause wounds*.

*Sanctuary* — This spell is ineffective against deities and greater daemons; other creatures attacking the caster are allowed a +2 on their saving throw vs. spell.

*Slow poison* — (N); X

*Snake charm* — (U)

*Speak with animals* — (U)

*Speak with dead* — The casting of this spell will result in the summoning of a shade (*q.v.*), and differs from the *Players Handbook* description in that "time dead" is not a factor. The shade will remain for 2-7 rounds, during which time 1 question per round may be asked and answered, according to the shade's knowledge. Note that should the caster concentrate on a specific "ghost," that shade *will* appear if the person in question was indeed consigned to Erebus.

*Speak with monsters* — Note that this includes shades (*q.v.*).

*Speak with plants* — (U); *speak with monsters* is required to communicate with vegetation natural to the Gloom.

*Spike growth* — (U); X

*Spike stones* — (U); X

*Spiritual hammer* — See *atonement*.

*Sticks to snakes* — (U)

*Stone tell* — (U)







*Binding* – (P); spell will succeed only in attracting the attention of Hades, who will dispatch either the Oinodaemon (30% chance) or 2-8 arcanadaemons (70%) to investigate.

*Blink* – (P); X; no contact with the Ethereal Plane.

*Burning hands* – (L)

*Cacodemon* – (P)

*Chain lightning* – (L)

*Charm monster* – (C)

*Charm person* – See druid spell *charm person or mammal*.

*Charm plants* – (U)

*Clone* – (N); X

*Cloudburst* – (U); X

*Confusion* – See druid spell.

*Conjure elemental* – (P); X; will attract the attention of Charon.

*Contact other plane* – Careful record must be kept of how far away an other-planar power is. (e.g., a being from the Elemental Plane of Fire would be 4 planes removed, requiring the spell to cross the Astral, Prime Material, and Ethereal Planes.)

*Contingency* – This spell only functions with respect to other spells that work (normally or otherwise) on Erebus.

*Continual light* (all) – (L); X

*Control weather* – See cleric spell.

*Crystalbrittle* – (U)

*Dancing lights* – (L)

*Darkness, 15' radius* – (L); X

*Deeppockets* – Spell functions normally, except that 40% of the time, materials placed in the pockets are irretrievably gated to the First Gloom.

*Delayed blast fireball* – (L)

*Demand* – (C)

*Detect evil/good* (all) – See cleric spell.

*Detect invisibility* – No ethereal or out-of-phase objects will be seen, as the Glooms have no contact with the Ethereal Plane, and only from the First Gloom can astral objects or beings be seen.

*Detect magic* – See cleric spell.

*Dig* – (U); X; Erebus is composed of rock and marble – even the trees root in stone.

*Dimension door* – Functions only from the First Gloom.

*Disintegrate* – Deities will re-form into material shape: greater gods, 1-4 hours; lesser gods, 2-8 hours; demigods, 3-12 hours.

*Dismissal* – (P); X; neither aspect of this spell works in Erebus. An attempted reversal of the spell (*beckon*) attracts the attention of Hades, who will send 2-8 arcanadaemons to investigate.

*Dispel magic* – See cleric spell.

*Distance distortion* – (P); X

*Dolor* – (C); X

*Drawmij's instant summons* – Note trans-planar distances (see *contact other plane*).

*Duo-dimension* – Functions only on the First Gloom, as Astral Plane contact is required.

*Enchant an item* – Items enchanted on one plane may be altered on others; see the section on magic-weapon alterations.

*Enchanted weapon* – See *enchant an item*.

*Energy drain* – (N); X

*Ensnarement* – (P); the spell will not work, and if attempted it will attract the attention of Hades, who will dispatch the Oinodaemon to investigate.

*ESP* – Attempting this spell on a deity requires that the caster make a save vs. (will-force) spell (wisdom bonuses applicable) due to the force of the divine personality, or be affected as by a *symbol of persuasion* for 1-20 turns. The god's thoughts will be incomprehensible in any event.

*Evard's black tentacles* – (U); X

*Eyebite* – (C)

*Fabricate* – (C); material from the Prime Material Plane can only be *fabricated* into something else native to that plane.

*Fear* – (C); (I)

*Feeblemind* – See druid spell.

*Feign death* – See cleric spell.

*Find familiar* – If successful, this spell will only be answered for neutral evil magic-users, and will call a nalg (see DRAGON® #86).

*Fire charm* – (L); (C); see druid spell *charm person or mammal*.

*Fire shield* – (L)

*Fire trap* – (L)

*Fireball* – (L)

*Firewater* – (U), (L); spell works only on materials transported from the Prime Material Plane, and light is not emitted from the flame.

*Flame arrow* – (L)

*Flaming sphere* – (L)

*Forget* – (C); ineffective vs. daemons.

*Friends* – (C)

*Gate* – See cleric spell.

*Geas* – (C); ineffective vs. daemons.

*Guards and wards* – Note separate spell effects such as suggestion.

*Hallucinatory terrain* – (I)

*Hold monster* – (C)

*Hold portal* – A deity or demigod will negate the spell effect by touch.

*Identify* – Only vague information will be received if the spell is cast on an artifact, major weapon, or device used by a deity, such as Hades' *chair of forgetfulness*.

*Imprisonment/freedom* – (E); X

*Infravision* – (L); X

*Invisible stalker* – (P); X

*Invisibility* (all) – The DM must check all daemons' chances for detecting invisibility as per intelligence and hit dice, DMG, p.60.

*Irritation* – (U)

*Item* – (U)

*Know alignment* – (E); see cleric spell *detect evil/good*.

*Legend lore* – On vague information will be available on beings, places, or things native to the Glooms.

*Leomund's lamentable belabourment* – (C)

*Leomund's secret chest* – (P); contact with Ethereal Plane required.

*Leomund's secure shelter* – (U); the spell, however, does summon one shade, as per *unseen servant*.

*Lightning bolt* – (L)

*Limited wish* – No wish-type spell will affect a deity on its plane of origin, and attempting to use it thus will cause Hades to send 1-6 greater daemons to attack the caster. A *limited wish* will allow a being to depart for another plane, but will not summon a creature from a different plane. Shadows in Erebus cannot be affected by *wishes*.

*Locate object* – See cleric spell.

*Lower water* – See cleric spell.

*Magic jar* – (I)

*Magic mirror* – Peering from one Gloom to another is as to another plane (-25% penalty). Use of such an item will immediately alert any daemonic life forms being peered at to the user's location. If the viewer is on the same plane as the daemon, the daemon will know the viewer's direction and approximate distance after 1-4 rounds. If the viewer is on a different plane, the daemon will know these facts after 3-12 rounds.

*Magic mouth* – Cannot be set to "trigger" for "deity" without a specific description of the god involved.

*Mass charm* – (C)

*Massmorph* – (I)

*Material* – (U); X

*Maze* – See cleric spell *true seeing* for effects.

*Melf's minute meteor* – (L)

*Melt* – (U)

*Meteor swarm* – (L)

*Mirror image* – (L)

*Monster summoning* (all) – Summons only Erebian shades. (1 shade per level of the spell, i.e., I, II, III, etc.) If any attempt is made to control the shade(s), Hades may well send 1-6 hordlings to punish such impudence on the summoner's part. Shades called in this manner will remain 1-4 rounds.

*Mordenkainen's disjunction* – Ineffective against any magic items indigenous to Erebus.

*Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion* – (P); this spell will fail, and there is a 20% chance that the caster will be instantly transported to the First Gloom.

*Mordenkainen's sword* – Will attack astral beings only if cast from the First Gloom, and does not reach into the Ethereal Plane or hit out-of-phase opponents.

*Mount* – (U); X

*Move earth* – See *dig*.

*Otto's irresistible dance* – Deities, demigods, and daemons do not dance.

*Part water* – See cleric spell.

*Phantasmal force* – (I)

*Plant growth* – (U)

*Polymorph self* – Cannot be used to assume the appearance of a specific deity.

*Power word* (all) – Ineffective against deities or demigods.

*Precipitation* – (U); X

*Preserve* – See cleric spell *purify food and drink*.

*Project image* – (I); if the image is recognized as false, a being capable of negating it will do so.

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# DAGGERSPELL

Katharine Kerr

DOUBLEDAY

*Protection from evil/good* (all) — See cleric spell.

*Pyrotechnics* — See druid spell.

*Ray of enfeeblement* — (C)

*Reincarnation* — See druid spell.

*Remove curse* — See cleric spell.

*Rope trick* — There is a 20% chance that the “extra-dimensional space” will be on the First Gloom.

*Scare* — (C)

*Sending* — A failed attempt to send a message to another plane results in the message being received by Hades, who will dispatch 2-8 arcanadaemons to investigate.

*Sepia snake sigil* — (L)

*Sequester* — (I)

*Simulacrum* — (I)

*Sink* — (U)

*Sleep* — No effect on deities or demigods.

*Slow* — Will affect a deity or demigod for but one round.

*Spiritwrack* — Daemons may be affected by this spell.

*Stoneskin* — (U)

*Succor* — See cleric spell.

*Suggestion* — (C)

*Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter* — (C)

*Taunt* — (I)

*Teleport* — Cannot be used to cross planes.

*Teleport without error* — Caster can use spell to enter and exit Erebus, but will have an added 20% chance of error. Failure results in caster being teleported randomly.

*Time stop* — Deities will be able to use innate magical abilities to escape death, and will be aware of all that is occurring.

*Torment* — (C)

*Transmute rock to mud* — See druid spell.

*Transmute water to dust* — (U); X

*Trap the soul* — No effect on deities.

*Truename* — Spell effects vary as follows: (C) for *multiple suggestion* or *weakness and surrender*; (U) for *polymorph*, which works only on items brought with caster to Erebus; and *transport* is limited in power as is *teleport without error* (see above).

*Ultra vision* — Spell-inducted sight is reduced by 50%, as given in *Unearthed Arcana*.

*Unseen servant* — 1 Erebian shade, as per *monster summoning*.

*Vanish* — (P); requires contact with the Ethereal Plane.

*Ventriloquism* — (I)

*Wall of fire* — See druid spell.

*Water breathing* — See druid spell.

*Wind wall* — (U); X

*Wish* — A *wish* allows entry or exit, and shades may be affected. Deities can be contacted as per usual with spells of this type (see *atonement*). See also *limited wish*.

*Zephyr* — (U); X

## Illusionist spells

*Cantrips* — General information as given above for magic-user cantrips applies to illusionist cantrips as well. Special limitations are as follows:

*Colored lights* — (L); X

*Dim* — (L); X

*Haze* — (U); X

*Mirage* — (I)

*Noise* — (I)

*Rainbow* — (L); X

*Two-D'lusion* — (I)

*Advanced illusion* — (I)

*Alter reality* — See m-u spell *limited wish*.

*Alter self* — (I)

*Astral spell* — See cleric spell.

*Audible glamer* — See m-u spell.

*Blindness* — (I)

*Blur* — (I)

*Change self* — (I)

*Chaos* — (C)

*Chromatic orb* — The special powers of this spell are limited in a variety of manners, according to the color of the orb generated:

*Pearly* — (L); X

*Ruby* — (U)

*Flame* — (L); will only work on materials not indigenous to Erebus.

*Sapphire* — X

*Amethyst* — X

*Ashen* — (N); X

*Color spray* — (L)

*Confusion* — See druid spell.

*Conjure animals* — See cleric spell.

*Continual darkness* (all) — See m-u spell *darkness 15' radius*.

*Continual light* (all) — See cleric spell.

*Dancing lights* — See m-u spell.

*Deafness* — (I)

*Delude* — See cleric spell *detect evil/good*.

*Demi-shadow magic* — (I); victims who fail saving throws take only half damage.

*Demi-shadow monsters* — (I); all monsters have one-half the given hit points and inflict one-half the given damage against victims who make their saving throws, due to the remoteness of the Glooms in relation to the Plane of Shadow.

*Detect invisibility* — See m-u spell.

*Detect magic* — See cleric spell.

*Dispel exhaustion* — (I)

*Dispel magic* — See cleric spell.

*Dream* — Spell is limited by case as determined by these guidelines (see m-u spells *wish* and *limited wish* for helpful information).

*Emotion* — (C)

*Fascinate* — (I)

*Fear* — See m-u spell.

*Hallucinatory terrain* — See m-u spell.

*Hypnotic pattern* — (I); ineffective against deities and demigods.

*Hypnotism* — (C)

*Illusionary script* — (I); ineffective against deities and demigods.

*Improved phantasmal force* — (I)

*Invisibility* (all) — See m-u spell.

*Magic mouth* — See m-u spell.

*Massmorph* — See m-u spell.

*Mass suggestion* — (C)

*Maze* — See m-u spell.

*Mirage arcane* — (I)

*Mirror image* — See m-u spell.

*Misdirection* — (I)

*Mislead* — (I)

*Non-detection* — Will not prevent detection by deities or demigods.

*Paralyzation* — (I); does not prevent the use of spell-like abilities by deities.

*Permanent illusion* — (I)

*Phantasmagoria* — (I)

*Phantasmal force* — See m-u spell.

*Phantasmal killer* — (I); ineffective against deities and demigods.

*Phantom armor* — (I)

*Programmed Illusion* — (I)

*Projected image* — See m-u spell.

*Rainbow pattern* — (L); X

*Rope trick* — See m-u spell.

*Shades* — See *shadow monsters* (Note: do not confuse with native Erebian shades.)

*Shadow door* — (I); will not fool a deity of average or better intelligence.

*Shadow magic* — See *demi-shadow magic*.

*Shadow monsters* — See *demi-shadow monsters*.

*Shadow walk* — X

*Spectral force* — (I)

*Spook* — (I)

*Suggestion* — See m-u spell.

*Summon shadow* — (P); X; no link to Negative Material Plane.

*Tempus fugit* — (I); will not work on natives of Erebus.

*True sight* — See cleric spell *true seeing*.

*Ultra vision* — See m-u spell.

*Vacancy* — (I)

*Veil* — (I)

*Ventriloquism* — See m-u spell.

*Vision* — (P); this spell functions only from the First Gloom, and even then no contact can be made with the Elemental, Ethereal, or Positive/Negative Material Planes.

*Weird* — (I); combat will occur as normal, though it is impossible to kill any natives of Erebus.

*Wraithform* — (I)

*First-Level Magic-User Spells* — See appropriate m-u spell.

## Magic item alterations

Any power of a magic item that duplicates a spell or spell-like effect described in the above section on spell alterations (or in the description of the general properties of Erebus) will be altered in like manner.

*Scrolls*: Most *protection* scrolls function normally, except that one of *protection from traps* will not function against traps inside the house of Hades.

*Potions*: A *potion of etherealness* or *treasure finding* will not function in the Three Glooms, nor will a *potion of undead control* or a *potion of rainbow hues*. A *potion of animal control* is ineffective against indigenous animal life.

*Rings*: Neither a *ring of djinni summon-*



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ing nor one of *elemental control* will work, as no connections are available to the Elemental Planes. A *ring of animal friendship* will not affect natives of Erebus, and a *ring of blinking* is totally ineffective. A *ring of mind shielding* has the same limitations as an *ESP* spell in shielding with regard to natives of Erebus. *Rings of protection* are altered as per magic armors, below.

*Wands/Staves/Rods*: A *rod of beguiling* or *rulership*, as well as a *staff of command* and a *wand of size alteration*, will be ineffective against beings on their native planes. A *wand of metal and mineral detection* is non-functional. Weapon-like functions of devices such as a *rod of lordly might* are affected as per the following section on weapons.

*Weapons, armor and protective devices*: All magical weapons and armor (including *rings of protection*) will have "plusses" lowered by 1 on the First Gloom, 2 in any of the kingdoms of the Second Gloom, and 3 in Erebus. This applies also to cursed items, but in the reversed direction. Further, any weapons of "good" alignment will suffer a -1 penalty "to hit" due to the inherent evil of the Glooms. (Note that none of the above stipulations apply to artifacts or other items which have multi-planar existence.) *Bracers of defense* function normally.

*Miscellaneous devices*: Any device that summons creatures from the Elemental, Ethereal, or Positive/Negative Material Planes will be unable to use such powers. Artifacts, however, function normally in all respects.

*Amulet of the planes*: Useable only from the First Gloom, to connect with the bordering planes.

*Amulet versus undead* will not function. *Bag of devouring*: Will disappear as soon as the bearer enters the First Gloom.

*Book of exalted deeds*: This tome must make a saving throw vs. disintegration upon first being introduced into any of the Glooms, or crumble to dust.

*Candle of invocation (incense of meditation, necklace of prayer beads)*: Will not function unless the cleric's deity resides in one of the Three Glooms.

*Crystal ball*: Note that for purposes of scrying, peering from one Gloom to another is as to another plane (-25% penalty).

*Cubic gate (well of many worlds)*: Opens a path to any plane from any other plane.

*Deck of many things*: All plaques drawn function normally, with the exception of the *Skull*; this card in the Glooms summons a major death! (i.e., a minor death given more power due to the nature of the Glooms - AC -5, Move 24", HP 99, No. of Attacks 4, Damage/Attack (scythe) 5-20, MR 55%, engages in combat and saves as a 16th-level fighter, and is immune to mental attack forms.)

*Horn of blasting*: Will not weaken or destroy any structure in the Glooms.

*Iron flask*: Will not capture natives of the Glooms; on the other hand, a nyca-

daemon, night hag or mezzodaemon released from a flask will know where it is, and try to summon aid to destroy whoever released it, and any companions.

*Pipes of the sewers*: No rats exist in Erebus.

*Portable hole*: Functions normally, except that 20% of the time a gate will open onto the First Gloom. The same limitation applies to a *girdle of many pouches*, a *pouch of access*, and *Heward's handy haversack*.

*Sphere of annihilation*: These phenomena do not and cannot exist in the Glooms.

*Talisman of pure good*: Non-functional.

*T Trident of fish command*: Any aquatic life (i.e., in the Styx) is unaffected.

Note that any artifacts or relics extant in Erebus will be secure in Hades' house, and none would be of good alignment.

### Psionic alterations

Psionics function with only minor modifications, listed below. Combat by psionics is handled normally.

*Animal telepathy* - All natives of Erebus are classed as "monsters."

*Astral projection* - See cleric's *astral spell*.

*Body equilibrium* - Anyone using this discipline to walk upon the waters of the Styx will be subject to the effects of those waters.

*Detection of good or evil* - See cleric spell *detect evil*.

*Detection of magic* - See cleric spell *detect magic*.

*Dimension door* - See m-u spell.

*Dimension walk* - Although the character cannot cross dimensions with this talent, he might end up in another Gloom if the power "malfunctions."

*Domination* - (C)

*ESP* - See m-u spell.

*Etherealness* - (P); no contact with the Ethereal Plane.

*Hypnosis* - Note intelligence ranges; deities and demigods immune.

*Invisibility* - As this is a mind-control talent, it is not treated as illusion/phantasm; the chart on DMG p. 60 does not apply.

*Mass domination* - (C)

*Molecular agitation (manipulation, rearrangement)* - The magical weapons and tools of the gods cannot be affected by these talents.

*Object reading* - If used in Erebus, scenes from Greek mythology will be viewed.

*Probability travel* - See cleric spell *plane shift*.

*Sensitivity to psychic impressions* - See cleric spell *true seeing*.

*Shape alteration* - See m-u spell *polymorph self*.

*Telempathic projection* - (C)

*Telepathic projection* - (C)

*Teleportation* - See m-u spell *teleport*.

### Character ability alterations

Due to the innate and absolute evil of

the Three Glooms, all characters of "good" alignment will suffer a -1 penalty "to hit" while on this plane.

*Assassins* cannot successfully disguise themselves as a deity; see also the notes concerning thieves.

*Bards should consult the notes for thieves and the references to bards earlier in this article*. *Legend lore* ability is unaffected.

*Clerics* have no power against the undead in Erebus (including *Shades*, which may be classed as undead) as death is the province of Hades exclusively. See also clerical spell alterations.

*Druids* see appropriate spell alterations.

*Fighters* function normally, although magical items may be altered.

*Illusionists* see appropriate spell alterations.

*Magic-users* see appropriate spell alterations.

*Monks* cannot *speak with animals* or *plants*, and the *quivering palm* attack is useless against deities or other creatures affected only by magic weapons.

*Paladins* will find their *laying on hands* ability negated, as well as that of, undead-turning; see also clerical spell alterations, where applicable.

*Rangers* may re-learn druid spells of 1st and 2nd level, and all m-u spells (see applicable alterations); their tracking ability is unfortunately useless in Erebus.

*Thieves* will find *hide in shadows* to be ineffective in Erebus, due to the complete lack of shadows! Stealing from Hades or Persephone is punishable by death by slow torture.

## Appendix: Persephone and Orpheus

### Persephone (Queen of the Underworld) Lesser goddess

ARMOR CLASS: -3

MOVE: 12"

HIT POINTS: 199

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 30%

SIZE: M (5'4")

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful neutral*

WORSHIPER'S ALIGNMENT: *Any*

SYMBOL: *Pomegranate*

PLANE: *Hades*

CLERIC/DRUID: *9th-level druid*

FIGHTER: *10th-level ranger*

M-U/ILLUSIONIST: *12th-level illusionist*

THIEF/ASSASSIN: *9th-level thief*

MONK/BARD: *6th-level bard*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *V*

S: 19 (+3, +7) I:22 W: 19

D: 23 C: 25 CH: 25

Persephone is the daughter of Demeter





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from the Prime Material Plane, then tricked her into eating pomegranate seeds, thus condemning her to remain with him in Erebus. However, Demeter refused to allow crops to grow until her daughter was released, forcing Zeus to intervene. A compromise was reached whereby Persephone would remain in Hades for 3 months out of each year, during which time no crops would grow in the Upper World.

She will often give aid to visitors in the Underworld, if she believes their cause to be just, but will in no way betray her husband.

In combat, Persephone wields a *dagger* +3 for 2-16 points of damage. She appears as a beautiful teen-aged girl, and is always worshiped in tandem with Demeter, although devotees of Hades are also very respectful of her. She is believed to be fond of barley water.

### Orpheus (Patron of Bards) Hero

ARMOR CLASS: 4  
MOVE: 12"  
HIT POINTS: 123  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By weapon*  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

SIZE: M (6')  
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*  
CLERIC/DRUID: *Nil*  
FIGHTER: *7th fighter*  
M-U/ILLUSIONIST: *Nil*  
THIEF/ASSASSIN: *7th thief*  
MONK/BARD: *20th bard*  
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*  
S: 18/05 (+1,+3) I: 17 W: 18  
D: 18 C: 19 CH: 19

Orpheus, son of the muse Calliope, is best remembered for his descent into Erebus, where he *charmed* his way past Charon and Cerberus, to locate his lost love, Eurydice. This greatest of bards was so adept that he was able to influence Hades himself, to some extent, and almost returned Eurydice to the Upper World. The mission would have been successful had he not turned to look at her at the last minute, against all instruction.

His *instrument of the bards* was a gift from Apollo, and in addition to the standard properties of all such instruments, the Apollonian Lyre is 80% likely to cause 6-24 points of damage to all non-bards, and bards of under 14th level. Bards of 14th level or higher add 30% to their *charm* percentage when using the Lyre, and in addition the bard can cast the following spells once each, once per day, by singing and playing: 1. *charm person or mammal*, 2. *hallucinatory forest*, 3. *reincarnation*

(as the druid spell). Orpheus has no other special weapons, but is adept with all weapons useable by bards.

### Afterword

The Third Gloom of Hades — not a safe place for less than 4-8 characters, each of at least 10th level, to go gallivanting about in! Because of the life-negating quality of Erebus, clerics are of little or no value to a party, while magic-users will find themselves in unusual danger due to the unpredictable twisting and/or malfunctioning of many spells. Fighter classes should be arcanelly well-armed and protected, but not, of course, to the point of game imbalance and indiscriminate god-bashing. Properly warded thieves and assassins of high level should function almost normally as well; a brave assassin might even find that class's skills in demand among the various overlords, barons and councils. The presence of a bard of 12th level or higher can also be of great advantage, as has been indicated previously. In some cases, the DM may also feel the need for an NPC hero (see the Erebus encounter table) to act as a guide, or to provide additional muscle. (Such a hero should not be subject to use by the party as hordling-fodder, or be always counted upon to get them out of trouble.)

But why, we may ask, would any adventurer in his or her right mind, of whatever level or type, go crashing into this gods-forsaken place?

After all, the sole reason for existence for most of the intelligent creatures in this dark realm is to accumulate wealth and personal power in the most enjoyable manner possible — by the oppression and/or death of the weak and the good. True, some races have "jobs," but essentially they revel in the eternal struggle for the dominance of evil.

Still, according to myth and legend (both of the Greek and AD&D game varieties), good reasons abound for invading Erebus. (And who said adventurers were in their right minds anyway?)

There is that most noble of all purposes, close to the hearts of all paladins — the confrontation with (and with any luck, defeat of) the forces of evil on their home ground, which often goes hand-in-gauntlet with the glory and honor inherent in descending into the Hall of Death and returning to tell of it (or at least becoming the posthumous subject of a rousing saga).

Or, like Orpheus, a character (or NPC) may have lost a loved one to Hades unjustly, and may mount an expedition in hopes of bringing the victim back up into the light of day. The gods themselves might even set such a task to the proper group of heroic characters.

The above are but a few suggestions for the motivation behind a foray into the Third Gloom — inventive DMs will come up with many others. Perhaps a brave party might storm the gates of Erebus just for the Hades of it!

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# A capital idea

How player characters can be businessmen

by Vince Garcia

In a well-developed campaign, some of the most satisfying and enjoyable episodes can occur outside the dungeon, within the adventure-filled wards and winding city streets designed by the DM. Here, the characters can receive as much challenge and pleasure in the interaction of creative role-play with the crafty NPCs of the area as with a foray into the dungeon to relieve various monsters of their treasure.

The most fulfilling campaigns I have participated in have been those where well-thought-out characters have come alive and become more than mere statistics on a sheet of paper. Part of this process has involved characters purchasing land, building houses, towers, and castles, and generally putting down roots within an area to take an active interest in the world around them apart from rumors on where the new dungeon is.

One aspect of world-building that grew out of this process was the active involvement of some of the characters in starting and successfully operating a business compatible with the character's talents, interests and personality.

A school for rangers was the first such experiment, quickly followed by a magic shop, an inn, a jewelry store, and a tavern. As the campaign progressed, we became more creative with our businesses, formulating goals and plans for them the same way we did with our characters: a halfling thief with skill as a trader began organizing caravans into little-known territory, opening up new trade routes and markets for exotic and hitherto unknown items (which provided the impetus for an exciting series of outdoor adventures); a cleric opened a winery to help finance the building of a temple and a street mission to minister to the poor; and an ambitious assassin began forming a merchants' guild around her various business enterprises, with an eye toward eventually controlling the economy of the area. As a result, the emphasis of the campaign has lifted from the dungeon depths and centered on the city and area the PCs reside in.

To be sure, we have not given up adventuring in order to sit back and run our businesses, but the accent on play has shifted from killing to building.

A number of questions come to mind

regarding the subject of player-character businesses. This article attempts to answer most of them, beginning with the one that is perhaps most obvious:

*In a world of action and high adventure, why would a PC want to become involved in something as mundane as running a business?*

Well, consider this: What magic-user would sneer at the thought of a potentially steady source of income to assist in costly spell research and the acquisition of rare and valuable reference materials? What front-line fighter who's ever been energy drained by a spectre cavalierly hands over tens of thousands of gold pieces for a *restoration* without feeling the strain? The above are just two examples of how a player character can potentially benefit from the wise investment of hard-earned treasure in a modest business.

Going hand in hand with a well-conceived campaign are financial responsibilities, ranging from taxation to the lamented but often unavoidable costs of *resurrections*, *restorations*, *regenerations*, etc. A PC business owner who is short of liquid assets at least has something to fall back on in the event that he needs a spell from the local temple — land and business holdings, which the temple may hold title to in lieu of immediate payment; or at the very least, a loan obtained from some of the less unscrupulous moneylenders, since the character in question can demonstrate ownership of legitimate collateral.

The businesses of good-aligned characters can set an example in the community by offering honest goods or services at honest prices, gaining for the PC a modest profit which can be used in a number of ways to benefit society — extra tithes to good temples, jobs for the otherwise unemployed, and perhaps a small percentage of the profit given out as alms to the poor in the name of the PC's deity.

Neutral characters can enjoy the benefits of that little extra income — just in case. After all, the dungeon can't always be counted on to give more than it takes.

Evil characters can use their businesses as a power base to increase their influence and position in society, as well as to finance clandestine operations for furthering their own goals.

*How does the campaign benefit from the introduction of player character businesses?*

First and foremost, the characters will take a far greater interest in the world around them — the drought that's been plaguing a local winemaking region nearby becomes much more noticeable and important when a PC halfling's vineyard is in the affected area — and the party will be much more anxious to set off on a quest in search of the disgruntled faerie dragon responsible for the problem.

Second, the players desirous of exploring this new aspect of the campaign may find themselves fired up with a new enthusiasm for the campaign and for otherwise mediocre characters. As an example, one player in my game possessed a fighter whose highest ability score was a 14, but had the skills of a masterful jeweler. As an experiment, the fighter opened a jewelry store, where he did some custom work during the winter months, while his party sat out the bad weather in town until spring, living off treasure obtained in fair-weather months. Word got around regarding the quality of the character's work, and finally he found himself summoned before the local monarch, who commissioned him to fashion a signet ring. When the job was completed, the duke was greatly pleased with the item and ordered that henceforth all royal jewelry commissions would be handled through Rox's jewelry shop. As the duke's personal jeweler and favored visitor at court, Rox, who before had been the butt of frequent jokes because of his mediocrity, now became a valued member of the party. And his access to the duke has helped other members of his group more than once. So a character who in the dungeon had little to offer in talent became invaluable outside the dungeon and eventually became the player's favorite character.

The linking of one or more of the PCs' business projects to an adventure can provide a new spark of enthusiasm and excitement in the game. Some months back, one of the DMs in our group ran the excellent little module from DRAGON® issue #75. Our introduction to it came through the loss of one of my character's merchant ships to the pirates. Needless to say, I was very anxious to deal with the



situation and got a great amount of personal satisfaction at the completion of the quest, despite the fact that the loss of my ship cost me more than 10,000 gp that I did not recover. And as mentioned earlier, when a halfling PC in my campaign started up a caravan service, it provided an excellent opportunity for me to design (and for the players to carry out) a series of outdoor adventures. Since the purpose of the quest was for the aid and benefit of one of their own characters, the players took the game more seriously than usual and a splendid time was had by all despite the fact that the treasure and experience given out was minimal.

*What character classes may own businesses?*

Ultimately, this is up to the DM. However, some guidelines can be advanced.

The *Players Handbook* and common sense would seem to indicate that monks and paladins, neither of whom may retain more than a modest portion of wealth, would be excluded from owning a business.

Cavaliers would probably be uninterested in participating in the mundane world of business, while barbarians would lack the cultural background.

Druids, a class of character that usually avoids continuous exposure to non-natural environments, would be unlikely to be motivated toward either owning property or owning or running a business.

Clerics would have to be very careful in their motivation for opening a business. Certainly in our own world, the organized church has dabbled in business since time immemorial, and there is no reason why a cleric in the game cannot do the same as long as this will somehow further the ends of his deity. As noted previously, a cleric who had reached sufficient level to build a temple found that the several hundred thousand gold pieces the project would take were beyond his ability to acquire through "normal" means. His solution was to obtain permission from his superiors to purchase a winery to augment his income. The cleric faithfully used the proceeds from the winery to outfit his temple, and in time also a street mission, where the underprivileged could receive free meals and shelter — which resulted in a respectable number of converts to the cleric's deity.

Fighters, free of the restrictions inhibiting some of the more technical classes, make excellent prospects for investing some of their wealth in business pursuits and should not be restricted from doing so.

Rangers are a slightly different matter. It has already been noted that our first experiment in PC business was a ranger school, which provided instruction in ranger abilities and served as an outlet for rangers to obtain equipment useful to the class. And while the *Players Handbook* would seem to indicate that owning a

business in an urban environment would be anathema to a devoted ranger, it was a fact that the campaign at that time centered on an urban area and some surrounding forests. While the DM wrestled with whether or not it would be possible for a ranger to open a school (in light of the fact that a ranger can theoretically own only what he can carry on his horse), it was pointed out that rangers may construct a stronghold — certainly something the ranger's faithful mount would have a difficult time carrying. Ultimately, the favorable decision was made based on the ranger's motivations for opening the school: It was her desire to promote an understanding and appreciation of the outdoors among city-dwellers and to advance the worship of her god. This desire — not personal gain — was the motivation of the character, and the DM ruled that a small school could be opened for this purpose. In general, though, rangers would probably be excluded from the business world.

Magic-users would have much to gain by investment. The demands of the class are such that income from any source is always welcomed in a balanced campaign.

Finally, thieves and assassins can do much with a small business — they make great fronts for illegal or not-quite-legal activities. Characters of these classes can form thieves' or assassins' guilds around their inns or warehouse storage buildings (when they reach proper levels); and the knowledge surreptitiously gained by using a passkey into a sleeping caravan master's room to examine his ledgers has netted more than one successful waylay of goods on the road.

A fighter with armor skill can use the benefit of his battle experience to open an armory and fashion new types of armor or weapons; a thief can open a teamster service to ship stolen goods to fences out of town; an assassin can start up a private security service to screen the operation of a guild. All of these endeavors are examples of creative play properly using a character's skills and attributes. To achieve the same sort of success in your campaign, let several questions guide you to a decision when a player expresses a desire for his character to branch out into some sort of business enterprise:

1. Are the character's motives consistent with the character's alignment and past behavior, and with the general nature of the character class?
2. Is the character going to be putting to use skills possessed or knowledge acquired in the course of adventuring?
3. Will the character's class be reflected in some aspect of the business?
4. Does the player possess at least a rudimentary knowledge of the field of business he desires his character to participate in?

If the answer to each of these questions

is yes, then the DM should consider allowing the player to write out a description of the proposed business enterprise, afterward discussing with the player the costs, limitations and obligations the character will incur. If the answer to one or more of these questions is no, the DM should insist that the player provide reasonable justification for his character's desire to become involved with a field foreign to him (in the case of questions 1-3) or require the player to spend an afternoon or two at the local library researching the field (in the case of question 4).

*How does the business get started?*

The character must first locate a competent overseer to serve as general manager of the business, since the PC must of course be assumed to be spending the bulk of his time engaged in his primary profession — adventuring. The overseer may be obtained by the methods given in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* for the location of henchmen, though the overseer himself should be considered an expert hireling.

The salary of the overseer should be expressed as a percentage of the gross sales of the establishment, and should be in the neighborhood of 10%. In this way the overseer is encouraged to provide maximum effort in running the business, since his wages are directly tied to how well he and the operation perform.

Once the overseer has been secured, suitable grounds and buildings must be obtained for the establishment, whether through the purchase of an existing complex or the erection of a new structure. In the former case, the DM can determine the cost of the land and building(s) and then assess whatever costs are deemed reasonable for the renovation of the existing structure. In the latter case, buying a plot of land and building a tailor-made structure can be the more time-consuming method, but can be very useful in bringing the ideas of the player to reality.

In either event, the value of the land must be determined first. The list below is a suggested starting point, giving the price for a 10 × 10-foot parcel of land in a certain urban area, based on the population of the entire area:

More than 100,000 . . . . .	100 gp
50,001 to 100,000 . . . . .	.75 gp
25,001 to 50,000 . . . . .	.60 gp
10,001 to 25,000 . . . . .	.50 gp
6,001 to 10,000 . . . . .	.30 gp
3,001 to 6,000 . . . . .	.20 gp
500 to 3,000 . . . . .	.10 gp
Less than 500 . . . . .	.1 gp

The above figures are representative of the base land cost; at the DM's discretion, various modifiers may either add to or subtract from the base figure. For example, a 30 gp plot of land in a large town may be entitled to a reduction of up to 75% from the listed cost if the plot of land happens to be within a less desirable por-

tion of town, such as the thieves' quarter. Conversely, if the plot of land is located in a highly desirable area, such as on or near a major street or marketplace, the base cost could increase by 75% or more.

Once the land has been obtained, a building or buildings may be built using the guidelines for construction provided in the DMG. During this period of construction, the PC will be responsible for the room and board of the overseer, who presumably is contributing his input to the construction engineer on the requirements of the building(s).

A final word about overseers: An occasion may arise when a PC wants to open several businesses, perhaps not all in the same area. In this event a special overseer will be required, whose full-time duty will be to keep records on all holdings, travel constantly to visit his liege's various enterprises, collect profit revenues, and pay all related taxes. A good example of this type of overseer is the character of Simonides from the novel *Ben Hur*. As a normal overseer, this individual is entitled to a 10% commission on gross revenues — but this commission is taken on each and every business under his stewardship, increasing the overseer deduction to 20% for these businesses. This type of overseer should be considered a henchman and treated accordingly.

#### *How are business revenues determined?*

This is where the imagination of the DM comes into play. As a suggested method of arriving at the proper numbers, determine these facts:

1. How many sales were made during the day?
2. What was the average amount of money taken in during each sale?
3. What was the wholesale cost to the business owner?
4. What additional percentage for labor, taxes, and miscellaneous expenses must be deducted from the gross?

Once these factors are known, the result left after the necessary subtractions is the net profit to the owner.

How many sales were made is determined by assigning a number, indicating the greatest number of purchases that customers might make from the business on a good day, and then setting up a dice roll that has that number as its maximum result. For instance, if a business can have 100 customers on its best day, the range might be set up as 10-100 (1d10 × 10).

The average amount of each sale is derived from the average cost of the services or merchandise available from the business. This number, like the previous one, is ultimately determined by the DM or else it can be dictated by the prices the character wants to charge. If the character is running a weapon shop carrying high-quality and high-priced merchandise,

the average amount of each sale will be somewhat higher than the cost of a normal-quality weapon of the same sort (using the prices in the *Players Handbook* as a guide). Of course, such a shop might also have fewer customers in a day than a shop that sells lower-priced items.

The wholesale cost of materials to the business owner is set at 50% of the gross receipts — a safe figure, which includes a little extra to cover worn tools, damaged goods, etc.

The last figure is one the DM must arbitrarily assign based on his knowledge of the world he has created.

Below is a sample of deductions to the gross receipts used in my campaign:

Salary of overseer . . . . .	-10%
Salaries of additional labor . . . . .	-5%
Wholesale cost of goods . . . . .	-50%
Lawful taxation . . . . .	-10%
Total. . . . .	-75%

The 25% of the gross remaining is the profit left to the owner of the business.

#### *Should experience be awarded on earnings from investments?*

This is up to the DM. I have yet to award any experience to a PC for having a profitable business enterprise on the side, unless the business was somehow tied in with the adventure, as in the case of the outdoor quest for a safe caravan route. Generally, though, any profit the PC gains from investments on the side is reward enough.

#### *How does one determine the ultimate success or failure of a business?*

It would be a simple matter to provide a table that indicates with one dice roll whether or not the character's monetary investment and months of effort on the part of his overseer result in a successful business venture. But really, this is something the DM should determine based on his observations of the campaign. If the enterprise in question is providing the player or players (if it is a group venture) with entertainment and if the campaign is enriched by this new variant to normal play, there is no reason to spoil things by causing the business to fail just because a dice roll indicates it. On the other hand, if the player or players begin taking things for granted, the GM can always liveen things up a bit by having a merchant ship be lost to pirates, or by having some of the spirits that usually reside in the catacomb complex that just happens to lie beneath the PC's inn pop up for a visit. And if a case arises where, for some reason, the game is beginning to get out of balance by an all-too-easy flow of money, any Dungeon Master can think of a number of ways to make ownership of the business(es) in question much more of a liability than an asset.

## **The Inn of the Seven Deadly Sins**

Time and experience have shown that inns and taverns seem to be the most popular enterprises desired by the players. What follows is an example of a typical inn run by the principles shown earlier.

The proud owner of this inn is Silverdirk, a halfling thief who, upon reaching the 8th level of experience, announced to the rest of his party that he was building an inn he resolutely decided would be named Silverdirk's Inn of the Seven Deadly Sins. He chose the medium-sized city of Serpenalik to build it in, which results in a base land cost of 60 gp per 10 × 10-foot section. Since the lot the inn sits on is 100 × 60 feet in size, it contains sixty 10 × 10-foot sections, which were purchased for a grand total of 3,600 gp. Construction costs for the inn itself were fixed at about 5,000 gp (including all furnishings and a cellar), amounting to a total cost of 8,600 gp for the inn and land.

After 238 days of construction time, Silverdirk's overseer officially opened the establishment, and the character was now allowed to keep track of the income generated by the business.

## **Making money**

Theoretically, the inn is open 24 hours a day; it was decided for simplicity, however, to base all receipts on four 3-hour shifts running from dusk to dawn, and to break the inn into several sections to determine a daily gross for the establishment.

The kitchen plays no part in the figuring of the night's receipts and can be ignored for this purpose.

The dining area contains 20 tables. We must first know how many of the tables were occupied during the three shifts, so we roll 1d20 for each shift, obtaining results of 16, 13, 8, and 5 for a total of 42 times a table was occupied during the business day. Next we discover by rolling 1d4 how many people on average were sitting at the tables. The result is a 2; therefore, we know that 84 customers ordered meals that night from that section. The meals vary in price from 1 sp to 10 sp, and so we arbitrarily fix the average price of a meal at 6 sp, including beverages. Multiplying this times the 84 meals served, we end up with total gross receipts of 504 sp for that section.

The bar is 30 feet long. A bar patron enjoying a drink can be assumed to take up three feet of space. Therefore, the maximum number of people at the bar at one time is 10. We roll 1d10 four times (once for each shift), resulting in a total of 22. We next roll 1d4 to determine how many drinks on average each patron enjoyed, coming up with a 3. And so we know that 66 drinks were purchased that night. Silverdirk's inn sells libations as cheaply as 5 copper for beer up to 10 silver for good wine. Arbitrarily fixing the average beverage price at 2 silver, we do

some multiplication and find that 132 sp was grossed by the bar this night.

The other section of the inn is a gambling area containing four tables, where drinks only are served. Rolling 4d6, we find the tables were in use 14 times during the night. We now roll a d3 plus 1 to see how many gamblers on average sat at the tables, getting a result of 2. We assume the patrons in this section would tend to drink a bit less than the patrons at the bar and so we only roll a d3 to find how many drinks each patron had. The result is a 2, and so we know that this area grossed 112 sp in beverages (2 drinks times 28 patrons times 2 sp).

It remains to be determined how many of the inn's rooms were rented for the evening and what Silverdirk made from them.

One section of rooms is a flop area, where for 1 sp an individual can bunk for the night in a common room that has space for 24 sleepers. We roll 4d6, finding that a total of 12 spaces were rented and thus another 12 sp is added to the business's receipts.

The six rooms in the next best section are rather plain and rent for 10 sp per night. Rolling a 6 on 1d6, we find that six of these rooms were rented for a gross of 60 sp.

The third section has the best rooms, each of the twelve featuring locks on the doors and a large bed, closet, and dresser in each room. The price for this luxury and security is a mere 30 sp. Rolling 1d12, we find that six of these rooms were rented, grossing 180 sp.

All of this arithmetic brings the total gross receipts of the inn to exactly 1,000 silver for this evening. Subtracting 75% of the gross for normal expenses, we find that Silverdirk's net profit comes out to 250 sp, or a little more than 12 gp. If Silverdirk does at least as well as this every night, it will still take close to 3 years from the beginning of construction for Silverdirk to regain his original investment — showing that a business owned by a player character need not be a gratuitous path to instant wealth, as long as a little common sense is used by the DM. Also, tailoring the scope of the business to the size of the population and the relative usefulness of the enterprise to the community will go a long way toward keeping a reasonable balance. An inn such as Silverdirk's can reasonably fill 26 tables and 18 rooms when set in a major trading center of 50,000 people. An inn this size placed in a village of 200 inhabitants, on the other hand, will hardly ever make a dime.

The operation of a business by a player character opens up all sorts of opportunities for new aspects of role-playing as PCs deal with protection-money rackets, corrupt city officials, orcs raiding their caravans, assassination attempts by competitors — and who knows what else?

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# The role of books

*Reviews of literature gamers will go for*

by John C. Bunnell

## THE NORBY CHRONICLES

Janet and Isaac Asimov

Ace 0-441-58633-3 \$2.95

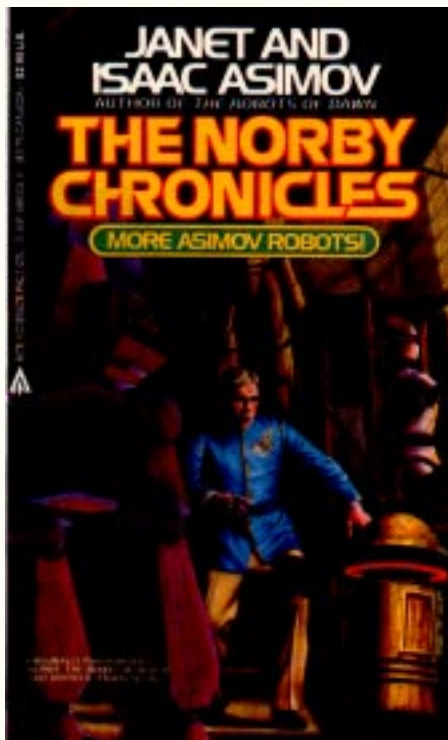
Apparently by coincidence, *The Norby Chronicles* reached paperback displays not long before Sherri Gilbert's article on developing science-fiction campaigns appeared in DRAGON® Magazine, issue #109. Appropriately enough, the two works complement each other beautifully. Janet and Isaac Asimov have created a diverse, likeable group of adventurers and a fascinating universe for them to bounce around in.

Norby is a robot of uncertain ancestry and of even more uncertain abilities. Rebuilt from several different sets of parts by a long-gone asteroid pilot, Norby is able to generate his own atmosphere, anti-gravity, and hyperspace drive. He does not, however, possess firm control over this last effect, and he tends to be unpredictable under pressure.

Norby is also in considerable demand. Jeff Wells, sometime cadet at the Space Academy, needs him so that he can learn Martian Colony Swahili in time to pass an important exam. Fargo, Jeff's older brother, could use Norby's abilities in his career as a secret agent working to stop the plans of would-be conqueror Ing the Ingrate. And Admiral Yobo, Fargo's employer and the head of the Space Academy, would be only too happy to take Norby apart to find out how his anti-grav and hyperdrive work (Earth hasn't yet developed technology this sophisticated).

In the first of the two stories that make up *The Norby Chronicles*, policewoman Albany Jones joins the group as it attempts to thwart Ing's conquest of Manhattan Island. The second tale expands Norby's horizons to include the dragon-populated planet Jamya and brings him closer to the elusive Others, a vanished race of aliens who apparently created parts of Norby as well as seeding both Earth and Jamya.

The Asimovs handle the interplay between their characters with wit and wick-edly plausible repartee; it's not hard to imagine transferring the cast intact into a role-playing campaign. And though a good deal of the scope of Norby's universe isn't revealed until the second part of this book (Ace has combined two juvenile hard-



covers to make a single paperback), that universe offers considerable scope for future adventures and quests. Even though the Norby tales were originally written for a teenaged audience, the plotting and underlying concepts are intriguing enough to satisfy older readers.

In short, *The Norby Chronicles* are solid examples of Asimov craftsmanship, perhaps the more so as a result of the husband-and-wife collaboration. The chronicles may be light in tone and execution, but the ideas and characters are as skillfully executed as the best science-fiction adventures written today.

## THE CURSE OF THE GIANT HOGWEED Charlotte MacLeod

Avon 0-380-70051-4 \$2.95

By almost any standard, Charlotte MacLeod's newest Peter Shandy novel is decidedly strange. Most of the time, Shandy's adventure falls squarely in the mystery genre, with no hints of magic whatsoever. This case, though, finds the agriculture professor's scientific mission to England abruptly sidetracked when

Shandy and his colleagues are translated into a bygone era that recalls fragments of Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Monty Python.

The element of mystery remains very much a part of the tale. Almost at once, Shandy and his fellow professors are drawn into a search for a missing griffin, plots against the life of a would-be knight, and the mysterious death of a prince. MacLeod keeps the detective work logical, lively, and reasonably free of supernatural intervention.

That's not to say, though, that there is no magic at work. In addition to the griffin, there are cackling hags, a witch with a truly bizarre anatomical structure, an enchanted boat, a temporarily transformed con artist, and assorted alchemical-sounding elixirs. The title curse hangs over all, affecting both the magical realm and the contemporary English countryside — until a cheerfully absurd counterspell resolves the situation in the final pages.

The mix of twentieth-century characters and medieval fantasy is always tricky to pull off successfully. In MacLeod's case, what makes it work is her prompt acceptance of the preposterous nature of the situation. While the humor is constantly a factor, MacLeod achieves it by juxtaposing the two sets of perceptions rather than by making the characters themselves ridiculous. Shandy and his colleagues remain firm believers in scientific methods, while Sir Torchyld and the medievals accept magic as a simple reality.

The resulting clash of philosophies makes thoroughly amusing and lively reading. It also makes *The Curse of the Giant Hogweed* valuable counsel for game masters planning to try similar scenarios on their players. While it doesn't seem likely that MacLeod will soon return to fantasy writing, this venture at least is well worth seeking out.

## DREADNOUGHT!

Diane Carey

Pocket 0-671-61873-3 \$3.50

*Dreadnought!* is anything but a typical Star Trek novel. Besides being the first such book written entirely in the first person, it puts the familiar characters of Kirk and Spock in minor supporting roles. Yet Diane Carey's tale is an excellent illus-

tration of three important techniques for players of STAR TREK®: The Role-Playing Game.

The first of these has already been noted: creating new and interesting characters around whom adventures can be built. Piper, freshly assigned to the *Enterprise* to assist in solving a terrorist riddle, makes a refreshing and assertive narrator, self-confident one moment and critically worried the next. Sarda, her Vulcan colleague, is struggling to cope with a brilliant intellect whose strength lies in designing weapons systems — a fact which makes him anathema to his culture. Several other friends and associates are equally well drawn.

Second, Carey fills in a fascinating gap in Star Trek continuity. The original technical manuals and blueprints indicated the existence of a dreadnought class of ships, yet these gigantic craft have never been mentioned in the motion-picture series or in previous novels. Now we learn about the U.S.S. *Star Empire*, first completed dreadnought and the target of mysterious thieves bent on preventing its maiden flight. Carey's novel not only explains the origins of the dreadnought class, but it also gives an eminently logical reason for its subsequent disappearance from Starfleet usage.

That ingenious attention to keeping the universe tidy extends to Carey's plotting. The scenarios in which Piper and Sarda find themselves involved in escapes, in chases within and between starships, and in face-to-face confrontations seem almost tailor-made for transformation into RPG adventures. At the very least, they should give game masters several stacks of ideas for adapting their own campaigns. *Dreadnought!* may also be one of the few Star Trek novels that would translate effectively to film, a fact that highlights its compact, tightly woven structure.

Loyal followers of Star Trek fiction may be dissatisfied with Carey's choice of protagonists, preferring tales featuring the established series characters. Judged on its own merits, however, *Dreadnought!* is not only near the top of the growing list of Star Trek novels, but solidly conceived science fiction from a general perspective.

#### HEROES IN HELL™

Created by Janet Morris

Baen 0-671-65555-8 \$3.50

This shared-world collection has "merchandising opportunity" written all over it. The title has already been trademarked, a hardcover novel spin-off has already appeared, and (according to some of the books publicity) at least eight sequels are already planned. Since a number of the authors are involved in this project, it has been associated with the Thieves' World series. So, can a role-playing game be far behind?

The obvious enthusiasm would be more understandable if the anthology repre-

sented a cohesive world. Whether it does is difficult to determine — as are a number of aspects of both the collection and the concept. Among these is the matter of the book's editorship. Janet Morris is listed as creator-in-chief on the cover and holds the book's copyright. Simple enough, but Gregory Benford, C.J. Cherryh, and David Drake are also listed as co-creators. There is no formal editing credit anywhere, and no name whatsoever on the title page.

More seriously, it's hard to tell what the ground rules for Hell are supposed to be in this first book. Most of the characters established are famous personalities —



focus on the lost souls committed to Hell — except for Chris Morris's entry, which is told from the Devil's point of view. Except for His Infernalness, no one in Hell has much access to modern technology — unless you count Napoleon and Wellington, who share a 20th-century suburb in a yarn by Nancy Asire.

Part of the obscurity seems to be deliberate — there is a recurring subplot on the issue of whether it's possible to escape from Hell, and one on whether there is anywhere else to go after doing so. No official answers or explanations are provided, and none of the major characters show signs of deserving to find them. Another reason for confusion is the peculiar war that occupies much of the collection. At least half of the most famous generals of the ancient world are involved to no discernible end, and the writers show a marked tendency to dwell on the horror and violence.

The success of any shared-world series lies in careful attention to balancing unifying factors with the diverse talents of

individual authors, and in keeping the focus of the stories from narrowing or broadening excessively. Unfortunately, *Heroes in Hell* seems to have been created more from a desire to capitalize on a publishing trend than from a solid literary base. Given the abilities of some of the writers involved, that's too bad.

#### THE DUCHESS OF KNEEDEEP

Atanielle Anyn Noel

Avon 0-380-89917-5 \$2.95

The incident that precipitates the events of *The Duchess of Kneedeep* is both traditional and unusual. Though folklore abounds with tales of mismatched nobles, modern writers have made relatively little use or marital strife as the foundation for high adventure. (Player characters in most game campaigns aren't likely to find themselves in predicaments such as the Duchess Sidonee's, but that shouldn't keep referees from milking the idea for everything it's worth.)

A quote on the novel's cover compares Noel's yarn to Piers Anthony's lighter works. It's an apt observation; Noel has a wickedly pun-laced ear for place names and acronyms, and the book's flavor isn't far removed from that of Anthony's Xanth series. (Alert DRAGON readers will recognize a name from these pages in one reference to the Jefferson Putnam Swycaffer Institute of Applied Abstractions. And, for that matter, Noel is a name from these pages herself — how many people have the issues in which her short stories have appeared?)

Noel's novel, however, is closer to science fiction than to fantasy. Fleeing a husband whose sexual preferences are apparently beyond belief, the Duchess Sidonee enlists the aid of a wonderfully versatile beach ball-shaped robot called Bret and starts a chaotic dash across the tropical seas and islands of the planet Kneedeep. Though the air of whimsy is never absent, there are also elements of political revolution and intellectual debate on the rights of robots — the latter worthy of comparison to Isaac Asimov's treatment of the subject.

While the plot is forthrightly traditional in outline, Noel manages at least two spectacular left-handed twists along the way toward Sidonee's True Love: one involves a resurrection and a religious order, and the other forms the novel's climax and explains an important matter that is shrouded in assumptions for most of the book. The author is equally adept at making her characters likeable — even the villains are thoroughly entertaining. Most impressive of all, Noel keeps people and events spinning rapidly throughout, yet stages very few scenes involving direct physical conflict.

All of which combines to make *The Duchess of Kneedeep* an intriguing novel. First glances will label it as an uncomplicated, lightweight adventure, but more

careful reading shows that Atanielle Annyn Noel has combined the comedy with a higher degree of substance than one might expect. That's not easy, and Noel deserves credit for successfully pulling off a difficult literary feat.

#### THE HOUNDS OF THE MORRIGAN

Pat O'Shea

Holiday House 0-8234-0595-8 \$15.95

It's difficult to consider, at first, the possibility of something new in the topic of Celtic fantasy. The ground has been thoroughly covered by a number of skillful writers, and by now, most readers are fairly familiar with Celtic mythology. But most of those writers have been Americans, whereas Pat O'Shea is Irish by birth — and there's little doubt that *The Hounds of the Morrigan* owes a great deal to O'Shea's Galway roots.

It's not at all inaccurate, in fact, to suggest that O'Shea's novel is written in Irish. True, the words may be English (most of them, anyway), but their arrangement aptly and expertly recreates the cheerfully musical, amused lilt of Irish speech patterns. O'Shea also includes an appropriate sprinkling of Gaelic terms and contemporary Irish expressions (city police, for instance, are known as the "garda"), adding to the authenticity. An exceptionally clear glossary at the end of the book demystifies some of the most obscure facets of Gaelic pronunciation.

The story, meanwhile, takes the form of a spectacular book-length chase across the startlingly diverse landscapes of modern Ireland and Tir-na-nOg, precipitated by ten-year-old Pidge's discovery of an ancient scroll. The old parchment, it seems, had bound Olc-Glas, a chaos-wreaking serpent capable of destroying both worlds. Now the snake is free, and the evil Morrigan is after it, but she must first capture Pidge and his younger sister Brigit.

O'Shea's narrative is by no means a children's story, however. It's a tale told with both maturity and wit, with a varied cast that recalls the Oz books, and with an air of matter-of-fact wisdom reminiscent of the *Chronicles of Narnia*. One adventure is quickly followed by another, and the pace remains swift throughout the novel's 450-odd pages — so much so that the book doesn't seem that long.

What does all this have to do with gaming? Superficially, nothing. But O'Shea accomplishes two feats in *The Hounds of the Morrigan* that are worth noting for their game applications. She successfully sustains constant tension and suspense without resorting to melee-style violence every few pages, and proves astonishingly good at sketching the personalities of supporting characters — heroes and villains alike — in just a few lines of dialogue and description. Both talents are worthy of an expert Dungeon Master.

Pat O'Shea's first novel, according to the jacket copy, took ten years to write. That

speaks well for her attention to detail, but readers should hope her next book will appear before another decade passes. *The Hounds of the Morrigan* represents literary skill of a very high order, and books of its quality don't appear nearly often enough.

#### THE DREAM PALACE

Brynne Stephens

Baen 0-671-65557-4 \$2.95

The perennial challenge of interactive fiction is to weave a story that combines well-realized characters and an original milieu which demands necessarily convoluted plotting. *The Dream Palace* is the first novel in this rather arcane category to confront the problem head-on, and while the results are on the thin side from a broader perspective, Brynne Stephens has still produced a remarkably readable book within the rules of its format.

The precise nature of that format is somewhere between the multiple-plot structure popularized in several series of children's books and the puzzle contest tale in the fashion of *Who Killed the Robins Family?* Readers are presented with a quest which leads adventurers Kym and Watkin to the Dream Palace, and invited to unravel the mystery of its enchantment (a spell almost straight out of *Sleeping Beauty*). Along the way, choices are available which will shape the pair's journey. Successfully solving the palace's riddles puts the reader in the running for \$500 in cash and a sculpted gold pendant.

Stephens has opted to simplify the variables in her plot as much as possible, a fact which causes most of the *wrong* choices she offers to be automatically fatal. Those which are not simply tend to cause readers to skip past particular encounters. It's possible, in fact, to ignore the multiple-plot aspect of the book entirely — except that the contest rules indicate that clues to the puzzle's solution are contained in the plot-directing instructions as well as the main text.

Aside from being written in the second-person style common to most of the multiple-plot series, the text is smooth and generally quite entertaining. Kym and Watkin's adventures, though hardly unique, are just mysterious enough to keep readers guessing, and their search for True Love gives them more dimension than mere puzzle pieces. Without the added attraction of the contest, *The Dream Palace* would be relatively forgettable, but the combination of the puzzle and a genuine adventure yarn is enough to make the book worth a look.

One note regarding the contest is worth mentioning. It seems reasonable for the publishers to charge fifty cents to send readers Stephens's solution to the mystery surrounding the palace. Less justified, somehow, is the requirement that contest entrants include a "processing fee" (also 50 cents) with their guesses. If Baen Books is

willing to underwrite the competition in the first place, it should allow readers to participate without charging them for the privilege.

#### RECURRING ROLES

Several series have sprouted new volumes in recent months: among these is Christopher Stasheff's saga of Rod Gal-lowglass, High Warlock of Gramarye. *The Warlock Wandering* (Ace, \$3.50) avoids the slightly high-toned moralizing of its predecessor, but regrettably minimizes the roles of Rod's uniquely talented children. Still, the adventure is nonstop, and the convolutions are acceptably sneaky, though Stasheff needs to find a new direction for the sequence. Perhaps it will be revealed in a new volume announced for release in September.

Esther M. Friesner may be a relatively new writer, but her ambitions are hardly those of a neophyte. *Spells of Mortal Weaving* (Avon, \$2.95) is not only a sequel to her previous novel, *Mustapha and His Wise Dog*, but it is also the second book in what appears to be a planned sequence of twelve. So far, the saga is highly promising, with individual books standing well on their own yet neatly meshing with each other as well. Friesner is clearly a writer to be watched.

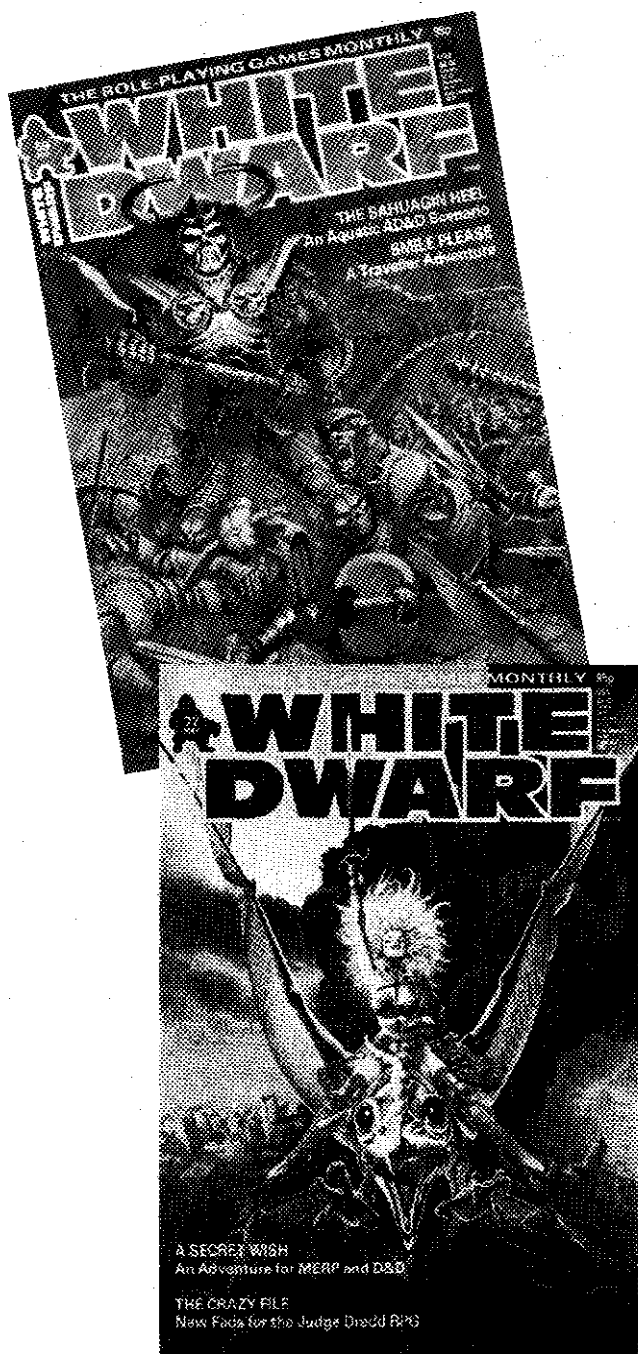
*Liavek: The Players of Luck* (Ace, \$2.95) arrived just as this column was about to be dispatched to the local post office. This second volume in the shared world of the Minnesota-based Scribbles and their colleagues matches the first for quality of vision and thoroughness of editing, and ought to establish Liavek as the one true gem in the suddenly crowded category of collaborative universe fiction. John M. Ford and Charles de Lint are among the new contributors to an already distinguished company, and co-editors Will Shetterly and Emma Bull should be encouraged in their efforts.

The newest novel from Meredith Ann Pierce is not a part of her trilogy about the Darkangel. Instead, *The Woman Who Loved Reindeer* (Atlantic Monthly Press, \$14.95) is a winterbound tale of a dangerous migration and the relationship between a lonely woman and her not-quite-human foster son. Pierce's knack for creating believable settings serves her well here, and gamers developing adventures in snowy climates will find much to draw upon.

Not quite as successful is *White Mare, Red Stallion* (Berkley, \$2.95), Diana Paxson's newest fantasy. Set in early Roman Britain, the book includes shades of romance, tribal warfare, and Druidic ritual worked together into a narrative that doesn't seem quite sure whether it's expected to be scholarly, historical, or simply entertaining. Paxson is generally a skillful writer, but this time her thorough research has apparently overshadowed her literary talents.



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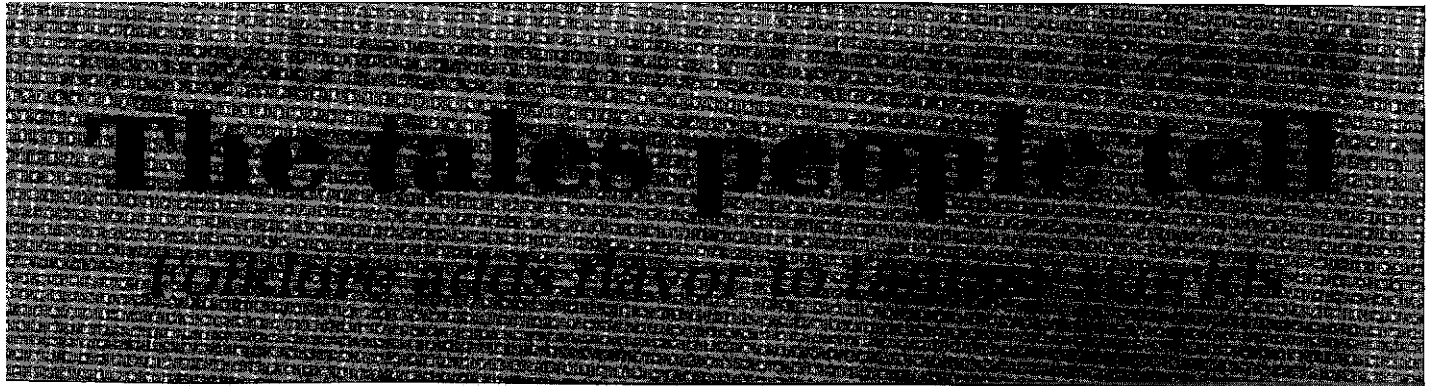


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by Thomas M. Kane

The mountain of myth produced by the people of the ancient world was gigantic. Many of today's fantasy games and novels stem from this folklore. Uncountable superstitions and stories, some of which persist to this day, were invented to explain natural events. But if the real ancient world seemed fantastic to its people, what would the world of fantasy seem like to an uneducated society? The folklore of a fantasy world, with a much greater base of myths and legends to draw from, would provide limitless possibilities.

The use of folklore can maintain campaign atmosphere and set the stage for exciting adventures. Misleading rumors and hoary beliefs have been the downfall of many, both in life and in the AD&D® game. But in fantasy, tales can lead to so much more! Ancient treasures, magical data — in fact, almost everything of interest to a character can be divined from common stories.

Folklore adds life to scenarios. A great deal may be learned about a culture or a society from the stories its members tell. While developing a scenario, it is important to cover the details of local culture, and legends help explain them to the PCs. Few PCs will ignore what another game character tells them! Thus, folklore is more than just another detail for the DM to create. It is an excellent mechanism for relating descriptions and clues to player characters.

### Folklore defined

Folklore is a set of stories that are at least somewhat believable. These stories are usually of an enduring nature and often have an ironic or supernatural twist. Folk tales describe the inner hopes, fears, or beliefs of the teller and the culture in which the teller lives.

There are four major types of folklore: the horror story, which is meant to scare people, and its opposite, which contains wishful thinking; tales that are merely amusing; and tales that are designed and told for a definite purpose. Stories in this latter group are often spread by members of a political group. Each form of folklore has its own uses in planting information (or disinformation) for game purposes.

Nothing will affect a story so much as

the people who invent and propagate it. Both the ethnic background and the personality of the author will alter the nature of a folk tale. Of course, most folklore has been passed on through many people and altered with each telling. Thus, the basic culture of a tale's origin will have more of an influence on the tale than the individual inventor of it.

This is fortunate, as it enables a DM to add flavor and depth to a land through its folklore. Rather than blatantly stating facts about an area and its history and mores, the PCs can be allowed to gather this knowledge through the tales that they hear there. Barbaric societies will feature action in their stories. Primitive, superstitious lands will be ridden by proscriptions and suggestions, each one with a brief tale to back it up. The tales of a people do much to describe their culture. As well as imparting game information, folk tales add realism and interest to fantasy cultures.

### Tales of terror

The horror story is most prevalent in modern folklore, and certainly has its place in fantasy. If well invented, horror stories are wonderful for creating atmosphere. Not only can these stories be used to scare PCs, but they also can stir interest. Most PCs will not pass up an attempt to loot a rich tomb with fell guardians, for example.

To an adventurer, horror stories can be both helpful and annoying. Valuable information about monsters, dungeons, and other adventure opportunities could well be passed on this way. But putting too much stock in fearful accounts can often lead to avoiding interesting adventures or engaging in dangerous ones. Distinguishing between truthful and false stories is very important for a player character.

Obviously, the AD&D game provides a rich source for frightening tales. Monsters and magic are scary enough! In horror stories, these elements would doubtless be exaggerated and misunderstood. The problem for the DM who is designing folklore is to determine what parts of their world the citizens find most terrifying. This, of course, depends on the milieu.

The unknown is the most frightening of all. Paradoxically, the second most terrifying things are likely to be all too well known. In a fantasy game world, monsters

that have the power to cause fear in combat probably also induce unnatural fear in stories. In a village commonly raided by orcs, but where there are few undead, there might be terrible tales about vampires, and yet the village stories might still dwell on orcs a great deal. Then, of course, some things are especially frightening, regardless of proximity or lack thereof. Certain subjects dominate many horror stories: awesome curses, the sudden discovery of corpses, and bizarre methods of dispatching foes are a few examples.

Just as modern man often feels threatened by technology, so in medieval times and in an AD&D game campaign peasants would be disturbed by magic. In ancient times magic was usually portrayed as evil; the same portrayal is probable in a world where magic is real. There will be fears that spells are being used for undesirable ends. As in the actual Middle Ages, there will be tales of magicians who improperly control their magic and come to harm. Storytellers who have had little experience with magic will almost always discuss its negative aspects.

Contamination is a common theme in horror stories and a most useful subject for gaming purposes. Tales about magical items that are imbued with some sort of curse or evil are likely to be common. These can be particularly disturbing to PCs who own items similar to those described in the account. (In extreme cases, characters can be persuaded to give up troublesomely powerful items by hearing these stories.) Most unknown items, or those from far away, will be subject to suspicion.

Taboos, found so often in legend, can be very useful for directing the course of an adventure. Characters can be given vital warnings through proscriptions (for example, there can be a prohibition against slaying beholders in an area infested by gas spores). Also, these warnings can direct characters to interesting areas and adventures, or alter their behavior in many other ways. The PCs may disregard bits of folklore; still, many hints can be given through warnings.

The fears of a fantasy people are useful for adding flavor. Some human societies might have a great terror of death, while elvish cultures might express more fear of

being bound to the petty earth for eternity. Many other facts about a race or people can be expressed by its fears. With the prevalence of horror stories in the modern world, designing them for gaming presents little difficulty.

### Wishful thinking

Tales of wishful thinking are also plentiful. In their simplest form, wishful tales are just that: stories of great treasures lying unguarded, pots of gold under the rainbow . . . PCs can be very tempted by these tales! More often heard, however, are wards and cures. They are usually based on common fears, but deal with ways of overcoming them. Wishful lore is usually based in the truth, though seldom is it entirely accurate, or truly helpful to characters.

Wards or good-luck charms are the most common sort of wishful thinking. These are details of some ritual, herb, or strategy that will prevent or cure a problem. Diseases, monster attacks, and magical problems are likely subjects. More rarely, the method accomplishes something desired, rather than forestalling a negative event. Obviously, these are important to PCs if they are effective, but even if they are not they can be interesting.

Often these methods are based on the abilities of certain specialists. For example, a few words from the verbal component of *dispel magic* might be touted as a protection from spells. This is the sort of thing that makes these tales most interesting to player characters. Magical information might be contained in ancient lore — a great boon for a researching wizard. Of course, much of it will be false. Then there are superstitions: cases in which the author used some method and got the desired results for a mundane reason, but attributed his results to the ritual. Like horror stories, these tales will serve to describe the culture of the people that invent them. The hopes of a society can be as revealing as its fears.

Tales of heroics are also common forms of wishful thinking. Such accounts are typical adventure stories. The heroes of these tales generally want nothing but good; occasionally, though, they are slick sorts, involved for money or fame. They are not always recognized for their heroism — at least not in the beginning. Sometimes they engage in their adventure in order to belie rumors of cowardice. On other occasions, they are overbearing types who master situations from the beginning of a tale.

In short, these tales describe the ideal of most player characters. PCs will be interested in these stories, and all the more so if the tale describes an area that they adventure in! Often, this sort of legend can be the basis for an adventure, or at least build interest in one. At other times, vital hints are concealed in them. But wishful-thinking stories are almost never completely accurate.

### Funny stuff

The third type of folklore is that which is merely intended to be amusing. These tales may have happy or sad endings, and any sort of personage can be described in one. The principal feature in such accounts usually involves some ludicrous or impossible event or provides some revealing information about the protagonist.

These stories are funny, if invented and told well, but they rarely directly describe items of interest to PCs. However, they can describe the personality of a prominent NPC, and characters in games where hack-and-slash adventuring has given way to intrigue may well be interested in such revelations. Humor can also be used to reveal clues in an indirect way. Tales of this sort are very useful for adding color to situations.

### Fabricated fantasies

These are not really folklore, but they are similar. They are stories that are spread with a motive and are designed with that purpose in mind. A story like this is told to support or defame some person, practice or place. Naturally, the setting and the accuracy depend on the inventor.

PCs may often be the subjects of these stories if they are active in a community. Jealous rivals, political schemers, and other foes may spread unkind rumors about a character. Likewise, the PCs may invent some of these stories themselves! These can also describe the group that invents them. What do they consider truly dishonorable (or glorious)? Whom do they particularly support (or dislike)?

### Constructing folklore

Folklore has been compared to a pot of soup, where many cooks add various ingredients, each altering the flavor of the result a little. A story begins with an idea or event; as it is retold, each teller changes it, adds parts from other stories, and passes it on in a different manner. The same story often turns up in many different formats. AD&D game characters themselves may add to or become a part of folklore. It certainly would be gratifying to a player to hear his/her character being discussed along with heroes of legend.

A few decades ago, professors Allport and Postman catalogued the ways that rumors change as they are passed from person to person. They described three processes: leveling, in which a story becomes shorter as it is retold; sharpening, in which interesting aspects of the story are emphasized and enhanced; and assimilation, in which discrepant information is altered to conform to the story so that it flows more logically. (In folk stories, extra information is often added to flesh out a tale.)

Inspiration for AD&D folklore can come from almost any source. Actual, modern stories are a good place to start. Many possibilities, for example, are recounted in

“Alligators in the Sewers and other Urban Legends,” by Jan H. Brunvand, in the June 1980 issue of *Psychology Today*. Campaign events and devices are also good starting points. A DM may wish to create a string of tales around a certain monster or adventuring area. Most folklore is designed to explain some mysterious event or fact.

Folk legends can be heard almost anywhere in an AD&D game world. The stereotypical source is old peasant women, but most NPCs will know and tell stories of some sort. Sages will know large amounts of folklore. Usually, sages can tell the accurate from the false material. Another advantage for player characters is that most NPCs will be glad to tell the legends that they know, seldom demanding a bribe or other inducement. In some areas the relating of folklore may be routine; a nightly event around the hearth or campfire. The offering of stories in a tavern or exchanging of epic songs in a royal hall should not be excluded as sources of lore either.

Folklore can add realism and interest to an AD&D game. For a DM, it is a wonderful way to give out information to characters or to mislead them into interesting problems. Folklore even helps the DM envision the situation that he is inventing. To a PC, folklore not only reveals adventures and clues: it also helps to add depth to the lands that he/she adventures in.

### Examples

#### The Catnip-Crazed Bugbears

*It was moon-dark and an old serf farmer lay in his hut. He was too old to grow grain. His lord's bailiff had vowed to get him off the estate within a moon's time. All he had left in the world was his plow, his hut, his field, a striped cat named Yonny, and some catnip to keep Yonny busy.*

*As he lay on the ground, there was a clashing of metal in the distance, followed by a scream. The old peasant paid no attention. Then Yonny began to hiss and spit. He did not know much, that old farmer, but he knew that cats have better senses than any human. And Yonny had descended from the cats of the elves. So he roused himself and built up the fire in the center of the dirt floor. But he didn't see or hear anything. Then through the door came a big, misshapen hulk. It was extremely hairy and had a broadsword as long as its arm. It was a bugbear raider. While the others raided the castle, this fellow was pillaging the peasant-folk.*

*The old man was scared out of his wits, but the bugbear paid him no mind. It grabbed Yonny's catnip and devoured a sprig. With that it fell to the ground in a stupor. The old man did not know much about bugbears, but he took the drunken monster's sword and slit its throat. He then took the rest of the catnip and threw it out of his hut. In no time a great horde of bugbears came. They scrambled desperately for the catnip, some being killed in*



the fight. After devouring it, they became quite tipsy. When the guards fell on them, not a one could still fight. Thanks to Yonny's catnip, the bugbears did not sack the castle. The old farmer is still in his hut. Because of him, all people who fight bugbears carry catnip, and when the battle rages they toss it out. When it comes to catnip, bugbears have no willpower.

Actually, some bugbears do enjoy catnip. But they do not easily become intoxicated by it, nor do they have an unnatural craving for it. Herb merchants promote this sort of tale, for obvious reasons. Clearly, here is a tale of wishful thinking. In an area frequently raided by bugbears, this sort of ward would be in great demand. Local knowledge about humanoids (or whatever the subject of the ward is) will be contained in these tales. In other such stories, adventuring possibilities will be revealed, describing the bugbear's lair or other interesting facts.

### The Teleporting Halfling

*Fredrick, a warrior, was lost in some marshes. He had been wounded in a battle with goblins and was losing blood quickly. After wandering for several days, he saw a humanoid form. It was an ugly thing, only about three feet tall. A halfling? To Fredrick, it meant rescue. He called out and ran after it. It ran away. As he pursued it, the halfling ran to the top of a mound. The mound was almost an island, surrounded on three sides by water. There was no splash, but suddenly the figure vanished. There was a hole on the top of the hill, but it was only a few inches wide. Fredrick put his hand down the hole. It seemed to go a long way and finally widened out. He withdrew his arm, peered down, and saw the halfling's head. Terrified, he ran away. Despite what sages say, halflings may become wizards.*

Fredrick actually saw a boggle (see *Monster Manual II*). Boggles have the innate ability to *dimension door* through an open hole. Often they live in caverns that are inaccessible without this ability. However, never having heard of a boggle, Fredrick assumed it was a halfling and acted appropriately. This tale is designed to explain a mysterious event. It would probably be classified as a horror tale, although it is not particularly frightening. These tales have many possibilities for gaming. For example, this one could be used to give players some hints about a boggle-infested swamp.

### The Giant Golem

*In ages past, there was a merchant ship that sailed the great seas. The crew had sailed for many a day and now were returning to port. They were running out of water and anchored on an island to look for a spring. After a search they found a clear pool. Beside it sat an old man! He claimed to have been marooned for many*

*years there, although no traces of his dwelling were visible.*

*"I do not wish to leave, but take my urn and when you are three days from any land, throw it into the sea. Thus the sharks will know that I am not dead yet."*

*At first the crew laughed. But the old man insisted, and with surprising strength he began to push and shove, keeping the sailors from the water. Finally the captain laughed and gave his word to toss the urn into the sea, three days from land. The man vanished and an urn appeared where he had sat. After the crew had filled their waterskins, they left, taking the urn with them. A member of the crew had dreams for two nights in which he was directly warned to destroy the urn, but the captain was a man of his word. When the ship was three days from the island, they tossed the urn overboard. The water hissed and ashes poured from the jar as it sank. That night there was no moon. The next day, the ship was tossed and buffeted by the waves, but there was no wind.*

*On the following day the water broke behind them. Floating up from the bottom was a huge rock or floating island. As they drew near port, the rock took another form, appearing now as a corpse. Its matted hair hung askew from its torn scalp, and it was awful in appearance. But its main terror was its size. It was huge: bigger than a storm giant — as big as a hill! It slapped the water with a huge hand and the little ship pitched over. All aboard were drowned, save one who caught the monster's ear and rode it to shore.*

*On land, the monster destroyed towns and slew men. Many mages attempted to dispel it and many great paladins perished in its wake, but none could slay the creature. An army was sent to subdue the beast. They fought for many days and spilled out their blood in the effort. The soldiers were not able to hit it above its knees — not even with war engines. The monster continued inland. They set it afire many times, but it easily doused its feet in nearby rivers. Knowing that the warriors fought the monster, the emperor's enemies besieged him. The empire fell and the army fled. The beast continued on.*

*A famed archmage declared it a work of necromancy. Within it, so he claimed, was the soul of a mortal mage — in all likelihood, the old man from the island. It was then called Glauranthion (which in the tongue of the elves means "the great lich"). Nobody knows where it is now, but rumor has it that it entered a hole taller than itself. Unable to climb out, it dug a great lair and even now preys on explorers who come thence.*

A horror story like this need have no basis in fact. However, it may depict some monster invented for a campaign. When such stories are used, the actual monster need not be as powerful as the one in the myth; folk tales tend to exaggerate facts. Obviously, these tales will interest PCs and

will lend detail to the disasters that befall a land.

### King Glorin's Table

*Glorin had no great beginnings: he was a common dwarf fighter. He walked the countryside and explored old caverns with a group of like-minded people. The baron of the kingdom often hired Glorin for his doings. The human ruler of a dwarven land, the baron was troubled by a powerful creature, possibly an ogre, who dwelt in a nearby cave. Glorin and his party were charged to destroy that bandit. After wandering futilely through the caves, a mage traveling with Glorin wove a dweomer that searched for magical wards. With this they found a vast treasure hoard containing much money and a ring that appeared of little worth. Glorin put the ring in his pouch as a trinket. From there, a voice began to wail and plead for release, promising great rewards. Intelligent and quite powerful, that ring was the richest part of the hoard. With it, Glorin defeated the bandit.*

*While Glorin was in the caves, the baron was assassinated by a thief known as Ricardo the Blade. The captain of the guards assumed the throne. Hearing of Glorin's ring, he immediately sent for him and ordered Glorin to give it up. The dwarf refused. Fearful of the dwarven population, the new king did not dare take the ring forcibly. Instead, he challenged Glorin to a duel. The captain was slain and Glorin claimed the monarchy.*

*Glorin grew rich from his travels and gave liberally to his subjects. They began to call him "the Goldhearted" (to which he had no objections at all). He named the capital for himself (it would have been too showy to name the whole kingdom Glorindion). But Ricardo the Blade took note of Glorin, robbing his palace, taking a nice statue, and leaving a note demanding money and threatening the thief's return. Glorin was furious. He sent most of his valuables to what he considered a safer place. Then he began to wander the back streets of his city. For several days he did that, living with beggars and assassins, and after many gifts and threats, found a man who claimed to know Ricardo. Following directions, Glorin went there. He fought Ricardo, and eventually triumphed. With Ricardo imprisoned, Glorin left the building. He planned to hang Ricardo, but at the pleading of a cleric he showed mercy. Instead, he sold Ricardo to a man who claimed to be a slaver. But some tell that the "slaver" was actually in Ricardo's pay.*

This is obviously a heroic, "wishful-thinking" story. Depending on the campaign, it could also be a political story, spread to encourage dwarves to revolt against human masters. As well as this, it clearly describes the events in the campaign where it was developed. PCs like stories like this, which describe areas

(Turn to page 95)

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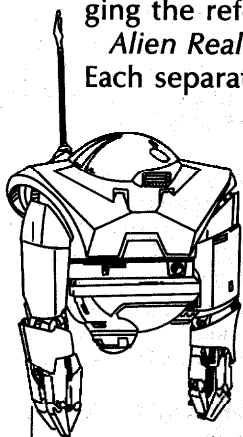
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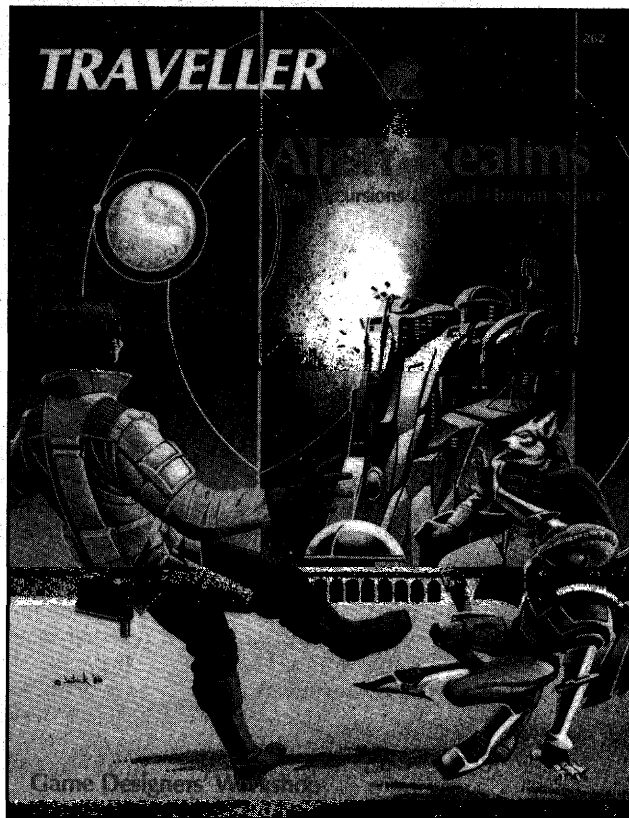
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# Magic and morality

## *Ultima IV: a fantastic computer experience*

### Review by Mike Gray

*You're all alone in the middle of a deep, dark forest. You've just fought off four packs of orcs, and you're running low on hit points and food. But you stay, waiting for the darkest moment, when you might be able to discover a small patch of nightshade. You must have this plant in order to cast some of the most powerful magic spells, and you have already scoured all the magic shops in the country to no avail. So, after following a trail of dues, here you sit — and then, both moons go dark at the same time. . . .*

I dislike rave reviews because they're hardly ever accurate. And, as a game designer and the player of hundreds of different computer games (most of them awful), I'm critical by nature. Now, having said all that, I'm going to rave about *Ultima IV Quest of the Avatar*. It's the best computer simulation of a true fantasy role-playing experience I have ever seen. If you have an Apple II or a Commodore 64 or 128, your treasure hoard of computer FRP games will not be complete unless and until you get your hands on this one.

The name of the game will be familiar to those who have played some of the earlier offerings from Lord British (the regal pseudonym of designer Richard Garriott). I've been experiencing his games for half a decade, starting with *Akalabeth* and continuing through the *Ultima* series.

Previous *Ultima* games were fun, but flawed. In *Ultima III* you had to build up your characters by paying to raise their attributes, and a seasoned player could get the required gold quickly only by repeatedly raiding a certain town treasury. This unrealistic effort was tedious and took away from the atmosphere of the game because as soon as you left town with the gold, you could go back in and all the gold would be magically replenished.

In the earlier *Ultima* games, I remember getting gold by sitting in a warship and repeatedly firing the cannons. Every few turns, some type of sea creature would come along to attack the ship, get blown away by the cannons, and leave a bit of gold on the deck before sinking beneath the waves. I confess that I would wedge two pencils into my keyboard — one to depress the "Fire" key and one to depress

the "Repeat" key — and then go away for ten minutes or so. When I came back I had less food but a lot more gold!

But *Ultima IV* is different. It has morality. The "Quest of the Avatar" is to become a perfect individual in all ways. As you travel around the continent of Britannia and walk through the many cities, castles, and villages, you must be honest, brave, and compassionate. If you lie to the people, steal their gold, run away from a fight, or ignore the cries of beggars, you will not become an avatar. You can gather characters to join you on your quest (and you must do so, in order to succeed), but some of them won't join you if you aren't brave enough, or honest enough, or whatever. Only by living an exemplary life and adhering to the virtues of an avatar will you be able to eventually enter the Stygian Abyss and put all the pieces of the puzzle together to complete the quest.

Britannia is an immense continent with dozens of special features — hidden villages and lost islands that don't appear on the map, shrines dedicated to the eight virtues, multi-level dungeons, and some tricky transportation devices known as "moon gates." Each city, village, and castle has a different layout, and each one is populated by at least a couple of dozen inhabitants — some of whom can always be found in the same spot, and others who wander and can be difficult to track down on a return visit.

Each person has a unique name and occupation, and the rules recommend that you talk to *everyone* to keep from overlooking some important fact that you can only get from a certain individual. And you have to keep notes on who lives where and what everyone knows, because later you may have to ask someone far away about something very important. If you tip him well enough, a bartender may tell you who to see about finding the rune you need to enter a shrine, or the mantra you must know in order to meditate at the shrine. If you've met the person you are seeking and you know where to find him or her, good for you. But if you haven't, there may be a lot more exploring and questioning to do before all the pieces of the puzzle fall into place.

In most of the other computer FRP games I've played, it has always been a challenge (and a hassle) to build up your

characters' hit points, weapons, and armor. In *Ultima IV*, improvements of this sort come naturally — but that doesn't mean they're easy to obtain. You can simply purchase weapons and armor, but first you have to find a city that sells what you want — and you can only use the weapons and armor that are permitted for your character's class.

You cannot play both sides of the fence. If someone in a city asks you if you are the bravest man on earth, you'd better say no. If you say yes, you will not only be lying but you will be seen as a prideful soul — and pride is *not* a virtue. If you give "wrong" answers, you will damage your standing as a prospective avatar, and if you stray too far from the path you may not ever be able to get back on it.

As with any FRP game, combat is a significant part of *Ultima IV*. It's theoretically possible to avoid most combat encounters, but in practice this is not a wise thing to do: For one thing, it's cowardly to always run away from a fight, and for another, defeating monsters is the only way to gain experience points and gold (well, the only *legal* way to get gold). When combat is about to occur, the screen display switches to a small-scale map of the area in which you're engaging the monster(s). You give commands with one keystroke (A = attack) plus, if necessary, a direction in which the attack is aimed. Missile weapons are handy for picking off nasty things before they can get close enough to hit you — but some of the monsters have missile weapons, too. And, besides, it isn't virtuous to always stand back and let your slings and arrows do the fighting.

Gaining experience points is one thing; gaining experience levels is another. To see if anyone in your party has accumulated enough points to go up a level, you should stop in at Castle Britannia once in a while and talk to Lord British; if you've done well, he'll let you know. It's also a good idea to visit the seer in the castle once in a while: he can tell you how you're doing in your progress toward avatarhood, and which areas you need the most work in.

One nice improvement over *Ultima III* is that all unused equipment is in a pool, so you don't have to access individual characters to trade weapons and armor between members of the group. The same is true of magic; anyone capable of casting a spell



can pick it from the pool and try his luck. However, certain characters are much better at spell-casting than others are, and a spell might simply fail if it's used by someone who's better off swinging a weapon.

Speaking of magic, there are 26 different spells available (one keyed to each letter of the alphabet), ranging from the fairly simple Cure, Heal, and Fireball to the very powerful and complex Energy Field, Gate, and Jinx. And yes, there's a spell to resurrect a dead comrade, but it's not something that just anyone can get hold of. Every spell must be prepared by mixing together two or more reagents (ingredients), and if a spell is prepared correctly it can be stored until it needs to be cast. The game includes a 64-page "Book of Mystic Wisdom" that describes what the spells do and gives the proper reagents for most of them (some things you have to find out for yourself). Six of the reagents are for sale in shops around Britannia, but two others (recall the nightshade episode at the start of this article) can't be had for any price and must be located specially.

Besides the book of spells, the *Ultima IV* package includes two double-sided diskettes; a 36-page book entitled "The History of Britannia" that contains lots of helpful hints sprinkled in among the colorful prose; a player reference card that lists the keyboard commands and other often-needed information; a large, full-color

cloth map depicting the continent (but not all of the area you need to explore. . .); and a small metal token that any would-be avatar should keep handy at all times.

Like I said earlier in this review, *Ultima IV* is the closest anyone has yet come to approximating a full-fledged fantasy role-playing experience in a computer game. The descriptions and details in this review really only tell a small part of what this game is all about — and even if you play for hours and hours and *think* you know what's going on, you can't be completely sure you've asked all the questions, solved all the puzzles, and found all the hidden treasures until you approach the climax and discover exactly what it takes to be an avatar. If you do get all the way through the game and want to play it again, much of the information you obtained on your travels will be accurate and useful the second time — but enough things will be different that each adventure still qualifies as a new experience.

In a word, this game is incredible. If you can find it in a store, don't pass it up — and if you can't find it, drop a line to the parent company: Origin Systems Inc., 340 Harvey Road, Manchester NH 03103. The people there can probably tell you where to find it, or how to order it by mail. Don't be discouraged if it takes you a while to find a copy — that search will be an easy one compared to what awaits you when you start the *Quest of the Avatar*.

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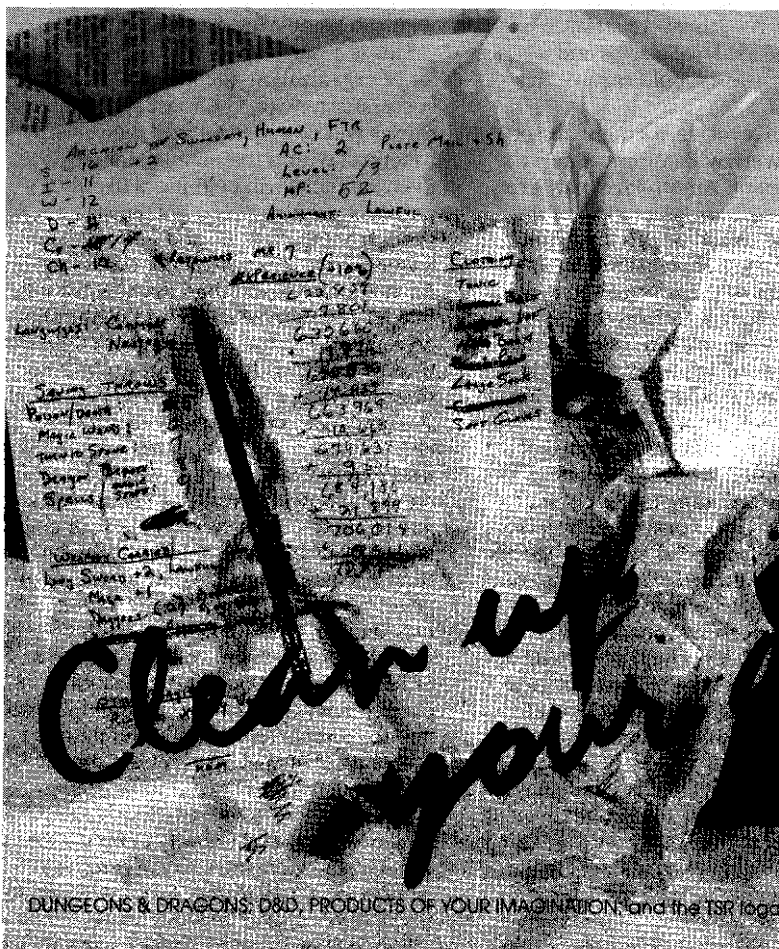
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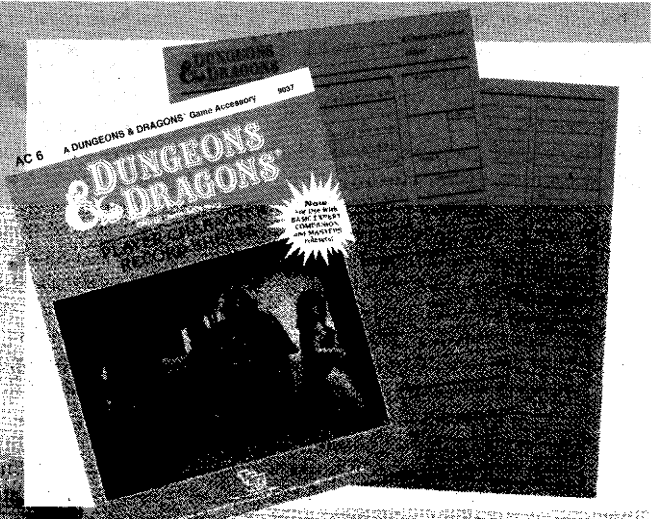
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# Clout for clerics

## *Giving them a full complement of followers*

by James A. Yates

One area of the AD&D® game which could use a bit of exposition is that concerning the followers of high-level clerics. Little solid information exists on the subject, other than a brief reference on page 20 of the *Players Handbook* and a table on page 16 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

Once a cleric player character of 8th level or above has constructed a temple or other place of worship that meets the requirements set down on page 20 of the *Players Handbook*, he should automatically attract a number of fanatically loyal followers, consisting of three types: lesser clerics, men-at-arms, and typical inhabitants. The total number of each of these three types attracted or received by the cleric is a measure of that cleric's stature and of his standing in the eyes of his deity. This can be determined by the level of the cleric in question and the results of various die rolls.

### Lesser clerics

It seems odd that a high-level cleric does not attract any lesser clerics when receiving his followers. What party of player characters has ever raided an evil temple defended by only a single high-level cleric and nothing else, save men-at-arms or monsters? Most such temples that characters sack are crawling with low-level clerics and quite a few middle-level ones as well. This deficiency is even more glaring when one considers that a ranger lord can attract several clerics (given the right-die rolls) when he receives his followers. Patriarchs and high priests need lesser clerics to assist them in the day-to-day running of their temples, and it is not unreasonable to believe that their deities would favor them with several followers of this sort.

The following rules should prove useful in determining the number of lesser clerics received by a patriarch or high priest. They are particularly helpful as the basis for determining the clerical followers of high-level NPC clerics. To determine the highest level of any lesser clerics received by a patriarch or high priest, simply divide the number of levels possessed by the patriarch or high priest by two, rounding all fractions down. The only limit on this is that the maximum level of any lesser cleric

attracted may never be higher than 7th, since an 8th-level cleric could establish his own temple. Using this system, an 8th-level patriarch would receive a 4th-level cleric as his highest lesser cleric, while a 15th-level high priest would get a 7th-level cleric.

Once the level of the highest-ranking lesser cleric has been determined, the patriarch or high priest also receives one cleric for every level between that of the highest lesser cleric and 1st level. For example, the 8th-level patriarch would receive the 4th-level cleric and one each of 3rd and 2nd level. The 15th-level high priest would attract the 7th-level cleric and one each of 6th, 5th, 4th, 3rd, and 2nd level. In addition, a patriarch or high priest would also receive one 1st-level cleric for every three levels he possesses, with fractions rounded to the nearest whole number. An 8th-level patriarch would get three 1st-level clerics and a 15th-level high priest would receive five 1st-level clerics.

Granting high-level clerics a few lesser clerics as followers will not unbalance the game to any extent. An 8th-level patriarch would receive only six lesser clerics; the highest of these would be 4th level (the highest-level cleric a ranger lord could attract), and half of them would be mere 1st-level acolytes. The 15th-level high priest would receive eleven lesser clerics, with a maximum of 7th level; slightly less than half of these would be 1st level, but then a 15th-level high priest is a very powerful character indeed. As stated earlier, this method is especially useful as the basis for determining lesser clerics for high-level NPCs. If you desire such clerics to be even more powerful, double the number of 2nd- and 3rd-level clerics, and give them one 1st-level cleric for every two levels they possess, rounding all fractions up. The 15th-level high priest would then have a total of sixteen lesser clerics: one each of 7th, 6th, 5th, and 4th level, two each of 3rd and 2nd level, and eight of 1st level.

These lesser clerics are not given to the patriarch or high priest so that he can have a horde of clerics to follow him about the countryside. Player characters who think they'll be able to strip their temples bare and take all their lesser clerics off to beat up on their rivals will be sadly disap-

pointed. These lesser clerics are only provided to assist the high-level cleric in the operation and defense of his temple. Still, if they were all confined to quarters, there would be no advancement for any of these clerics. To resolve this dilemma, I propose that no more than one-third (round to the nearest whole number) of all the clerics, not counting the patriarch or high priest, may be away from their temple at the same time. Additionally, if the patriarch or high priest is away from the temple, then the next two highest ranking clerics must remain there. Under these restrictions, the 8th-level patriarch could be accompanied on an adventure by no more than two (1/3 of six) lesser clerics, and the highest any of these could be is 2nd level. The 15th-level high priest with eleven lesser clerics could take four (1/3 of eleven, rounded up) of them with him, with the highest level being 5th.

This is a reasonable restriction. It takes a lot of organization and effort to run a successful temple, and most of these lesser clerics will be required to serve various functions within the temple hierarchy. Even so, there will be times when the patriarch or high priest will be called away from the temple and he will require lesser clerics to form part of his escort, if for no other reason than to show his status. Some of the lesser clerics might also be sent out from the temple from time to time on missions for the patriarch or high priest, to help some stricken worshiper of the temple, to assist a party of adventurers, and so on. By limiting the number of lesser clerics who can be away from the temple at any one time, we still enable the patriarch or high priest to aid the friends and allies of his temple, but we also help to insure that when the patriarch or high priest returns from a banquet with a neighboring lord, he won't come home to a smoldering ruin littered with the bodies of faithful servitors. Not that this can't happen anyway; it's just a little more difficult for temple raiders to accomplish it with a gang of spell-using clerics trying to prevent it.

Upkeep and support of these lesser clerics will depend entirely upon the DM's will and the guidelines of the campaign pantheons. Some lesser clerics will require nothing more than bed and board, while others will insist on full henchman's wages

or even more! How the patriarch or high priest fulfills these obligations can be the source of many interesting situations. If the cleric is a high priest of 9th level or higher, he may have established an ecclesiastical state, and his lesser clerics' stipends might be paid for out of tax revenues. An 8th-level patriarch might use the power to determine which lesser clerics will be allowed to leave the temple on adventures to reward his lesser clerics. High-level clerics of evil deities, especially chaotic evil ones, had best pay extra close attention to these matters. Although their lesser clerics are supposed to be fanatically loyal toward such patriarchs and high priests, it is their nature to try to get ahead. If they feel their master is in the way, they will not hesitate to plot against him.

### Men-at-arms

High-level clerics also attract a number of men-at-arms of various types. These men-at-arms are all 0-level fighters with 4-7 hit points. In addition to the men-at-arms listed on the following table, the cleric also receives the following additional fighter types for each troop category (i.e., heavy infantry, light cavalry, etc.).

- 1 sergeant for every 10 men-at-arms;
- 1 lieutenant if there are 20 or more men-at-arms; and,
- 1 captain if there are 40 or more men-at-arms.

Roll the proper dice for each of the following troop types:

- 2-8 heavy cavalry
- 2-16 medium cavalry
- 4-32 light cavalry
- 4-32 archers or crossbowmen
- 6-48 heavy infantry
- 8-64 light infantry

Each die roll made to determine the number of each troop type is modified as follows:

- + 1 if the cleric is an NPC of 11th level or higher;
- +2 if the cleric is an NPC of 14th level or higher;
- + 1 if the cleric serves a combatant deity (see below);
- 1 if the cleric is a player character of 10th level or higher; and,
- 1 if the cleric serves a noncombatant deity.

Only two modifiers, at most, will apply to any cleric: one for level plus one for the type of deity the cleric serves, when the latter is applicable.

The positive modifiers for NPCs represent additional men-at-arms acquired since the cleric established his temple.

The negative modifier for player-character clerics of 10th level or higher represents the disfavor of those clerics' deities. The primary function of all clerics is to spread the worship of their respective deities, and the best way of doing this is to establish a place of worship dedicated to the deity. Any cleric who continues to neglect this duty by not constructing a temple at 8th, or at the very latest 9th

level, is almost certain to arouse the displeasure of his deity. Note that there is no penalty for lesser clerics in this regard; a deity will be only mildly displeased with a high-level cleric, and does not expect one of lower level to build a temple.

A combatant deity is one who has dominion over war, battle, or combat, such as Anhur, Ares, Athena, Chao Kung Ming, Hachiman, Huan-Ti, Huitzilopochtli, Inanna, Ishtar, Karttikeya, Morrigan, Nuada, Sif, or Tobadzistsini from *Legends & Lore*. It is only natural that clerics of these deities would attract more fighters than those of most other deities. It should be noted that those deities who have province over archery were not included as combatant deities, because archery could be used solely for hunting or sport.


A noncombatant deity is one who has no combatant classes — i.e., fighter, paladin, ranger, thief, assassin, or monk. Thieves are combatants because they are trained to backstab, but bards are not because a deity does not have to have been a fighter or a thief to be a bard. These deities are few in number: Aphrodite, Hecate, Kishijoten, Kuan Yin, Lakshmi, Tuonetar, Tyche, and Ushas. All of these deities are female, but they are not necessarily nonviolent or even good. Simply, physical combat is totally foreign to their being. Such deities are less likely to attract as many fighters as most other deities might.


These modifiers can have a tremendous

bearing on the number of men-at-arms any cleric will receive. For instance, an 11th-level player character who is a cleric of Aphrodite would have to deduct -2 from every troop die roll made. This means that instead of receiving 2-8 heavy cavalry, he would gain only 0-4 such troops. On the other hand, a DM rolling up the men-at-arms for an NPC who is a 15th-level high priest of Hachiman would add +3 to each die roll and could receive 8-14 heavy cavalry.

Unlike fighters, who receive only one captain and possibly a lieutenant when they receive their men-at-arms, a cleric could end up with a maximum of four captains and five lieutenants! Granted, that cleric would have to be at least an 11th-level NPC who serves a combatant deity, and even then the odds of this actually happening would still be astronomical. Still, this device allows a cleric to receive the favor of his deity in the form of officers, the degree of this favor being determined by the outcome of the troop die rolls.

The determination of arms and armor for these men-at-arms and officers has been left up to the DM, although captains and lieutenants would have the standard chances of having any magical arms or armor. I am not overly fond of charts that list arms and armor for troops without any consideration of the circumstances in which those troops will be placed. I prefer





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to fit the arms and armor to the terrain and climate in which the troops will have to operate, and that cannot be done in this article.

Soldiers, even those who serve clerics, require payment for their services. The cleric will have to feed and house his officers and men-at-arms and pay them a monthly wage, but this wage could be less than the standard wage for each troop type because of their dedication to the cleric. Such ecclesiastical troops will always display above-average loyalty and their morale will be fanatical in the cause of their clerical master. The cleric who receives these men-at-arms is under no restrictions in their deployment, as with lesser clerics, but common sense will dictate that a goodly number of them will always be stationed to defend the cleric's temple.

### Typical inhabitants

A large number of typical inhabitants will also be attracted to the patriarch or high priest upon the completion of his place of worship. These people are 0-level humans with hit points and combat abilities as described on page 88 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*. Such typical inhabitants will be the lesser servants of the high-level cleric: cooks, maids, laborers, field hands, and such. The actual number of these people received is determined by rolling 2d10 and multiplying the result by 10, for a number between 20 and 200. The 2d10 die roll is modified as follows:

+1 if the cleric is an NPC of 11th level or higher;

+2 if the cleric is an NPC of 14th level or higher;

-1 if the cleric is a player character of 10th level or higher.

The rationale behind these modifiers is the same as that for the men-at-arms. Once the total number of typical inhabitants attracted has been generated, they will be divided into the following percentages: laboring males 40%, active males 20%, laboring females 15%, active females 15%, sedentary males 5%, and sedentary females 5%.

Using these percentages, a cleric who received a total of 160 typical inhabitants would get the following: 8 sedentary females, 8 sedentary males, 24 active females, 32 active males, 24 laboring females, and 64 laboring males.

Between 75%-90% (5d4 +70) of the attracted females will be married to one of the attracted males. Each of these married couples will have 0-3 (d4 - 1) children. It is also suggested that a small number, say 10% or so, of these typical inhabitants should have some specialized skills: carpenter, leatherworker, or even blacksmith or armorer. The exact number and types of these individuals is left to the DM's discretion.

Typical inhabitants require no pay of any sort from the cleric they serve, merely

quarters and upkeep. They serve the cleric either from devotion or fear or a combination of both. If the cleric has lands of his own, an ecclesiastical state, a large estate, or whatever, these typical inhabitants will most likely be working there to increase the wealth and power of the cleric they serve. The loyalty of these inhabitants, man, woman, and child, is beyond question, and they will rally to the defense of their patriarch or high priest without hesitation. Whether they will be of any real use in the defense is another question entirely.

### Territorial development

At 9th level, a cleric can establish a religious holding, an ecclesiastical state similar to a fighter lord's freehold. To accomplish this, the cleric must construct a religious stronghold that fulfills the requirements set down on page 20 of the *Players Handbook* and clear the surrounding area of hostile creatures for a radius of 15-30 miles. Those PCs unable to clear nice, neat circles around their holding should clear away hostile creatures within an 800-2800 square mile area. Once the cleric has met these requirements, he gains the right to collect taxes from everyone living within the bounds of the religious holding.

The 15-30 mile radius was chosen because it is larger than the 10-20 mile radius required for a magic-user, yet smaller than the 20-50 mile radius required for a fighter. Clerics will usually have more time and resources to devote to territorial development than magic-users, but their temples still require a great deal of their attention, and they won't have the same amount of time that a fighter has to devote to this purpose. The actual size of the religious holding, within the parameters set down, is totally up to the cleric in question. Does he simply want enough land to support his temple or does he plan to become a power to be reckoned with in the region? These are the sort of factors which will determine the size of the religious holding.

### Clerical doctrines

Once a high priest has established the basic size of his religious holding, he must then decide upon the doctrine by which it will be ruled. Clerics, as the foremost representatives of their various religions, are expected to live by and promote the tenets of those religions, and thus do not have the same freedom that other character types have to rule as they wish. For the sake of simplicity, I have whittled the multitude of doctrines and dogmas down to three basic types: fundamentalist, orthodox, and reformationist. Admittedly, these are mere generalizations, yet they will set the tone for life within each religious holding. These doctrines will permeate every level of the ecclesiastical state, how its ruler views domestic and foreign policies, taxes, population growth, etc.

The selection of a doctrine is a very serious matter to which the cleric involved should give a good deal of thought. Once this decision is made, it can never be altered without grievous consequences — not necessarily from the cleric's deity, but from the subjects who have lived under one doctrine and might consider any change as a betrayal of the deity by the high priest. In some cases a cleric might not even have a choice, as the deity he or she worships may be so strongly associated with one doctrine so as to preclude the others. The list below identifies each doctrine and its effects on various aspects of the religious holding; "basic tax" and "population growth modifier" are defined in the section of text following this one.

Fundamentalist — basic tax 11 sp;  
population growth modifier -1

Orthodox — basic tax 9 sp;  
population growth modifier

Reformationist — basic tax 8 sp;  
population growth modifier + 1

Fundamentalist clerics are those who believe that there is only one correct way of interpreting their religion: *their way*. They generally have a very strict and narrow view of things, and expect — even demand — that all of their followers conform to this viewpoint. Fundamentalists feel that their followers should support their religion with as much fervor, dedication, and money as possible. They tend to be somewhat xenophobic and are often suspicious and mistrusting of those who don't agree with their beliefs. Fundamentalist states will not usually attract many immigrants, accounted for by the negative population growth modifier.

Fundamentalists are not necessarily bad in themselves. Within the confines of such a religious holding, all true believers can live in prosperous peace and harmony. The trouble lies with the non-believers living in such a state, who may be persecuted, openly encouraged to leave, or even forcibly expelled. Because of their very strict view of things, fundamentalist states may also have less-than-cordial relations with their neighbors, and may feel inclined to convert them by force. On the other hand, a fundamentalist holding could be a rock of sanity in the middle of a sea of chaos. It all depends on the pantheon and the deity the fundamentalist cleric worships. Examples of deities which might have fundamentalist high priests are Kuan Yin, Nike, and Set.

Orthodox high priests are those who don't want to make waves in the world. They abide by the generally accepted view of their religion and have no inclination towards any extremism. If their deity represents peace and order, they will be peaceful and orderly; if their deity craves death and destruction, they will be out there causing death and destruction. They place no undue constraints on the people in their holdings, unless that is the focus of their religion. Their relations with their

neighbors will be dictated by the same rationale. Orthodox clerics represent the vast majority of deities.

Reformationist clerics are those who believe that the old ways are not always the best and that there is always some room for latitude in all matters. Such high priests tend to be more liberal in their dealings with their subjects and neighbors, thus the lower tax rate and positive population growth modifier. Reformationists are not necessarily good in themselves, as they may also feel the need to reform their neighbors. Again, it really depends on the cleric's deity. A good example of reformationists might be clerics of the Norse gods, who are willing to put up with almost anything from their worshippers, except dealings with giants.

### Taxes and growth

The basic tax rate for each clerical doctrine is subject to some alteration. At the start of each new year, the high priest must set the tax rate for that year, which can be between 1 sp below and 1 sp above the basic tax rate. This gives the cleric a bit of leeway, so that he can react to any number of situations which might arise. However, it should be remembered that a cleric serves his deity before any subjects and in most cases, the welfare of the temple takes precedence over the welfare of the people. This doesn't mean that a cleric can gouge tax money out of his starving peasants just to buy a new tapestry for his temple, but it does mean that if the high priest has to choose between spending money to feed those starving peasants and spending it on the salaries of the temple guards, the peasants will starve.

Most "frontier" populations tend to grow, since the natural birth rate outstrips the death rate and people naturally emigrate to newly settled areas. Once you have determined the total population of the religious holding (necessary for tax purposes), you will have the base number from which you can determine population growth. Population growth is determined at the start of each new year. The basic growth rate of the population of an ecclesiastical state is 2%-5% (d4 + 1) annually. This figure is modified by the clerical doctrine of the religious holding and the following terrain modifiers: + 1 if the holding is in the mountains or on the coast (healthy climates); and -1 if the holding is in a marsh or desert (unhealthy climates). Use of these modifiers results in an annual population growth of 0%-7%, depending on doctrine and terrain.

Example 1: A fundamentalist holding with a population of 2,600 is located in a forest. There is no terrain modifier, but since the holding has a fundamentalist doctrine, there is a negative modifier of -1. Since d4 + 1 is used to determine population growth, this -1 will result in a straight d4 die roll. The die is rolled and comes up a 3, meaning a population growth of 3%, or 78 new inhabitants,

which represent either new babies, immigrants, or both.

Example 2: An orthodox religious holding with a population of 1,700 is located in a marsh. There is no modifier for doctrine, but the -1 modifier for terrain will once more result in a straight d4 roll. This time the result was 2, meaning a population growth of 2%, or 34 new inhabitants.

Example 3: A reformationist holding with a population of 3,500 is located on the coast of a large ocean. Both the clerical doctrine and the terrain grant modifiers of +1, so the final result is d4 + 3. The die is rolled and comes up 3 again, but this time + 3 is added to make 6, meaning a population growth of 6%, or 210 new inhabitants.

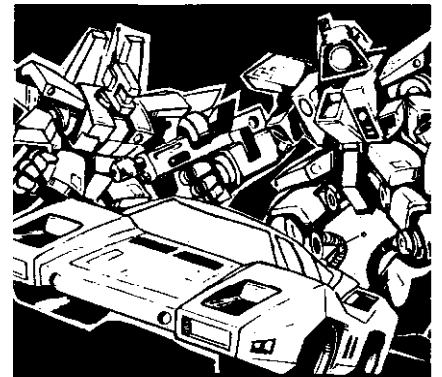
After population growth has been determined, the high priest must then figure out how many of these new inhabitants are potential men-at-arms — either boys who have come of military age and joined the priest's guards or fighters who have been attracted to the religious holding. From 10%-20% of all new inhabitants can be men-at-arms. This is determined as follows: 10% for a cleric who serves a noncombatant deity, 15% for most other clerics, and 20% for a cleric who serves a combatant deity. Under no circumstances may these new men-at-arms total more than 25% of the current total of the high priest's men-at-arms. This means that if a high priest had 120 men-at-arms, no more than 30 new ones could be added. Any excess is treated as typical inhabitants. It is up to the DM to decide which troops these new men-at-arms will be. However, if there are 10 or more such men-at-arms, the DM should attempt to apportion them among the various military arms: infantry, cavalry, and missile troops.

Finally, a cleric's temple should be allowed to grow along with the rest of his holding. At the start of each new year, when determining population growth, the high priest must also determine whether or not any of the temple's lesser servants have proven themselves worthy enough to become 1st-level clerics. There is a straight 50% chance that 1-2 new 1st-level clerics can be added each year. This gives the

high priest a good shot at increasing the number of his lesser clerics every year.

Clerics should be as diverse as the deities they worship. Use of these rules can help make them so. They also put the deities worshiped by clerics in a position to have a substantial effect upon the progress of their clerics. The clerics of peace-loving deities will now be more constrained to walk the same path as their gods because they will have fewer troops, a situation which is only right and proper. Clerics of the gods of war may now be endowed with the power to wage war, to a limited degree, as they can now end up with more men-at-arms than any lord can receive.

mp



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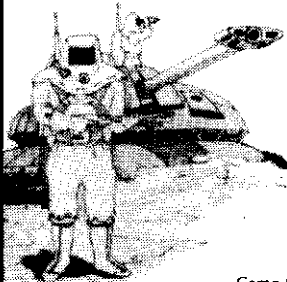
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by Mike Albers

*Two days before, Bathan had ridden out of town, his saddle bags heavy with the gold he'd won at the tournament. After a quiet journey through the forested countryside, he pitched camp in the high forest by the road. It was late, and the stars were bright and cold.*

*Just as he was pulling his blanket closer around him, huddling by the fire, he heard the sound of hooves approaching. He flipped back the blanket and snatched his sword and shield in a lightning movement. Bandits! he thought, as the cries of attacking men echoed in the forest.*

*Bathan, winner of the jousting and mounted-swordsman events only days before, vaulted onto his mighty warhorse and met the charge of the brigands head on. With desperate, powerful strokes, he hacked at the bandits as swords rang and men cursed the darkness. Though weary from lack of sleep, which caused him to miss some of the attackers wildly, Bathan soon drove the bandits before him.*

Okay, so what's wrong with this story? Among other things, the first time Bathan missed a bandit, he should have gone to the ground, sword arm first!

The reason is simple. At night, his horse would not be saddled — and more importantly, no mention was made of stirrups. Without them, it is impossible for a mounted fighter to remain mounted.

Try an experiment. Straddle a chair, pick your feet up off the floor, and imagine that you have a sword in one hand. Swing it at a point three to four feet to the side of your chair, as if attacking an orc below you. Be sure to bring your shield arm over to block the counterattack. The trip to the floor should quell any assumptions about being able to use one's knees to remain mounted. Maybe an adventurer can, but only if his strength and dexterity are both exceptional. Now, try to make the same movements while hooking your feet in the rungs of the chair or around the legs, simulating the use of stirrups. This time, you'll end up staying where you're sitting.

An AD&D® game world *must* have stirrups in order for mounted troops to exist. Of course, this does not mean that *every* society in the world needs to use stirrups. It adds an interesting flavor to a campaign

if each area of the world is at a different technological level. But, to maintain the game's balance, the society the player characters come from should be the most technologically advanced society in its area — *i.e.*, it should have stirrups.

Player characters can be made to appreciate the value of the stirrup if they happen to steal a horse while escaping from an evil wizard's castle, but forget to get saddles as well. Or, perhaps a vengeful thief who was cleaned out by one character at cards last night (or a leprechaun or other practical joker) has cut the stirrup leather on the PCs' saddles almost through; at the worst possible time — Boing! Splat!

### Historical background

The stirrup is believed to have first appeared in China some time in the 5th century. It slowly spread through India and Pakistan to Iran; finally, in the early 8th century, it reached Europe. It was here that the Frankish emperor recognized and exploited its military value, and stirrups (and knighthood) came to flower.

The stirrup-feudalism relationship stems from the fact that horses are not cheap. It requires a lot of land to raise horses. It also requires expensive, time-intensive training to become proficient at fighting on horseback. To support this new type of warrior and his costly training, the medieval kings partitioned their land and gave it to their vassals, who promised to provide their own training and equipment, and to fight for their liege if another king in the next kingdom tried anything. The king's vassals built castles, collected outrageous taxes from the poor peasants living on their land, and practiced at being good knights. This rapidly evolved into a highly structured feudal society with a small upper class, a huge lower class, and an almost nonexistent middle class.

### Attacking without stirrups

If your player character ends up in combat on a horse without stirrups, his fighting style will have to change. No shield can be used; that hand is needed to hold on to the horse by the reins, saddle, or mane. The one-handed weapon used by your character must be light, 50 gp weight or less, such as a short sword or a horseman's mace; using anything heavier

greatly increases the chance of falling off. Attacks from horseback are made at -2 to hit and at -2 on damage, with a base chance of 20% of falling off for each miss when using a light weapon. If circumstances force the use of a heavier one-handed weapon, attacks are -3 to hit and -3 on damage, with a base chance of 50% of falling per miss.

Defensively, your character does not fare much better. If hit by a light weapon, the stirrupless PC has a 30% base chance of being dismounted; a heavy weapon has a 75% base chance. Of course, the normal damage for being hit, plus damage for the fall, are assessed.

The base chance is figured for a PC with a dexterity of 15. Vary this figure by 2% down or up for each point above or below 15, respectively, and subtract 5% for every strength point below 12. These numbers are used because it is the ability to maintain balance which keeps a PC mounted. However, if he's a weakling, the weight of the weapon will help pull him off.

Magic that improves speed or dexterity (a *potion of speed* or *gauntlets of dexterity*, for instance) may help prevent falling, but they won't change the penalties to hit and to damage. Likewise, a character *slowed* by magic will fall after his first miss, regardless of other factors, but at least he had normal "to hit" penalties.

If you use some form of critical-hit tables in your role-playing game, include a broken stirrup as a possibility; a 2% chance is about right. When a stirrup breaks, there is a 70% chance of having the rider fall off at full gallop. If this seems high, remember the character will probably have most of his weight on the stirrup when it breaks. Combat with one broken stirrup becomes more difficult. Melee on the side with the broken stirrup is conducted as above. Combat on the side with the good stirrup is affected, but not as much. Attacks with a light weapon are at -1 to hit and at -1 on damage, with a base chance of 10% of falling. With a heavy weapon, attacks are the same as with a light weapon without stirrups. Chances for falling off the horse when hit are lessened by a factor of 20% over having no stirrups at all.

A lance cannot be used without two good stirrups. The rider must hold the lance firmly underarm, bracing himself



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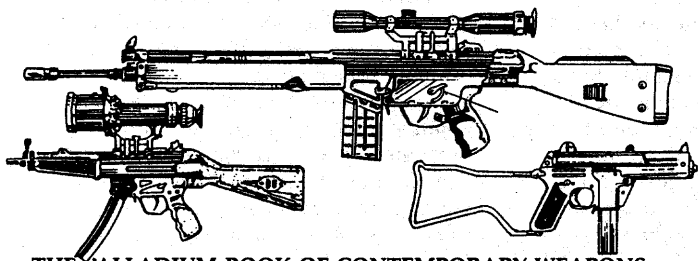
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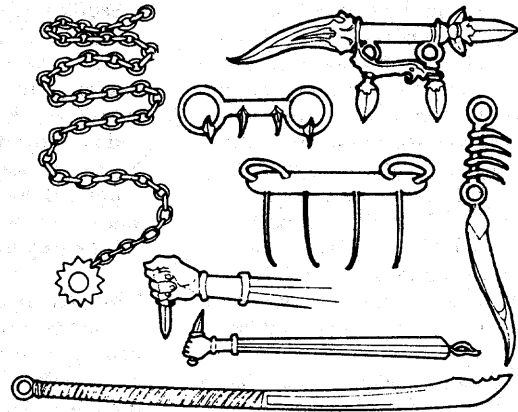
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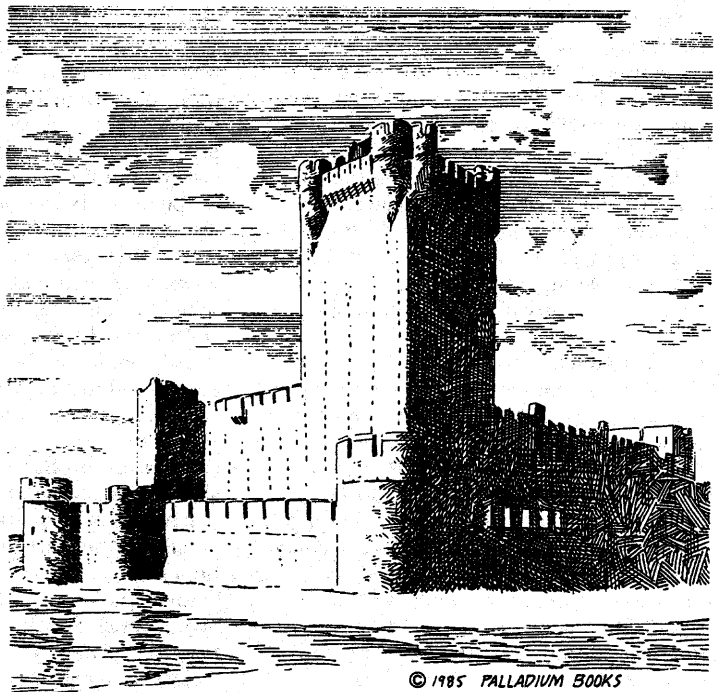
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and allowing the momentum of the horse to drive it into its target. Without stirrups, this is impossible; the shock of the attack will unseat the rider. Spears suffer the same problem if used during a charge. However, lances and spears may overpenetrate and get stuck! This will happen whenever more force is used than can be generated by the shoulder and arm of the wielder. Assume this can only occur when the spear is used during a charge; in close melee, the extra force would not be generated. The chance of the weapon becoming stuck in a target equals the amount of damage done, expressed as a percentage.

A development parallel to the introduction of the stirrup was the addition of metal crosspieces on the end of heavy spears, which would prevent them from penetrating too deeply. If a spear does get stuck and the character was not anticipating it (i.e., he planned on thrusting and leaving), he will lose the initiative on the next round because of the struggle to free the spear. It requires dismounting and pushing the spear *through the target* to free it. This action takes one round, and the character can't attack or defend during that time. In addition, larger monsters stuck with a spear or lance may still be alive and quite active. . . .

If the opponent isn't slain, things become messy. The spear is stuck, but the victim can still fight. If the character maintains his grip on the spear, 1-3 hp damage per round can be done by pushing and tugging on the spear. Assume if the character's strength is greater than 12, he can maintain his grip; otherwise, he loses it after the initial hit. Once a grip on the spear is lost, it cannot be regained. During this time, the victim fights at -3 to hit and at -3 on damage from the pain. There is also a 20% chance per round of the victim falling down, which will result in the loss of the user's grip on the spear. When the victim is killed, the spear is still stuck. Note that a spear will not get stuck in a monster lacking a hard shell or skeleton.

The lack of stirrups or the presence of a broken one will not affect missile attacks. A halfling on his pony can stand back and zing arrows all day; likewise, he can throw daggers, burning oil, and other such stuff, with a -2 penalty if the horse is moving.

### Repairs to stirrups

So, during a minor skirmish with some orcs, a stirrup broke. Presently, your character is in the middle of nowhere. Can the stirrup be fixed? It depends on what broke: the metal or the leather (50% chance for either). Let's consider the metal first. Unless one of the party has a secondary skill as an armorer or a metalsmith, the answer is no. Even if your warrior is a superb blacksmith, access to a forge is required. He might be able to patch it up to ride with, but it will break at the start of combat. When he reaches a village, any capable metalsmith will be able to fix it; the cost of repair should not exceed 10 sp

(unless the metalsmith is crooked and enjoys turning a major profit on desperate adventurers).

If the leather broke, a character with leathersmith skills and a few tools can make it as good as new. Any player can patch it up enough to ride but, again, it will break at the beginning of combat. A leathersmith charges the same as a metalsmith to fix a broken stirrup.

If your players come up with some ingenious idea to get around a broken stirrup, like making a noose in a piece of rope, it will be fine for riding, but will not work in combat (treat as one broken stirrup, regardless of which side the PC is attacking).

Saddles without stirrups can be bought for 15 gp. However, these will not be war saddles, but rather saddles made for a leisurely Sunday ride through the countryside. They resemble an English riding saddle. Any attempt to wear more than leather armor when using one of these saddles is doomed; the rider will constantly bounce around, and both hands will be required to maintain balance.

### The stirrupless kingdom

If adventures should lead the PCs to a country where the stirrup is not in use, and trouble is brewing with the next kingdom over (I'm sure the DM can arrange something), the characters may make use of their superior military knowledge by selling their services as great generals.

A stirrupless society is not necessarily primitive. You need only go back to the Roman Empire to see what can be achieved without stirrups. There may be large, well-trained legions of foot soldiers for the player characters to form into cavalry units. Their usual weapons may differ from those your characters use. Historically, the stirrup caused a metamorphosis in weapons. In the Frankish Empire, the Frankish battle axe and barbed javelin, both well suited to infantry, disappeared. The sword developed into the long sword, and the kite shield appeared (its shape offers better protection for a rider's legs than does a small round shield).

For a new general, the first thing to do is round up horses and outfit the saddles with stirrups. Then, modify the weapons so they will be suitable for horseback. This entails removing the barbs from the spears and making heavy spears with crosspieces on the end to use as lances. Also, replace the small, round shields the soldiers are probably using with kite shields. Remember, however, that the warhorses are not trained. Keep the weight of the man's armor down and use no barding.

Your character probably will not find armor much heavier than chain mail in use, as anything heavier would tire a foot soldier. In a cavalry unit, the horse carries the weight; also, heavier armor is required to withstand the powerful attacks made possible by shock cavalry.

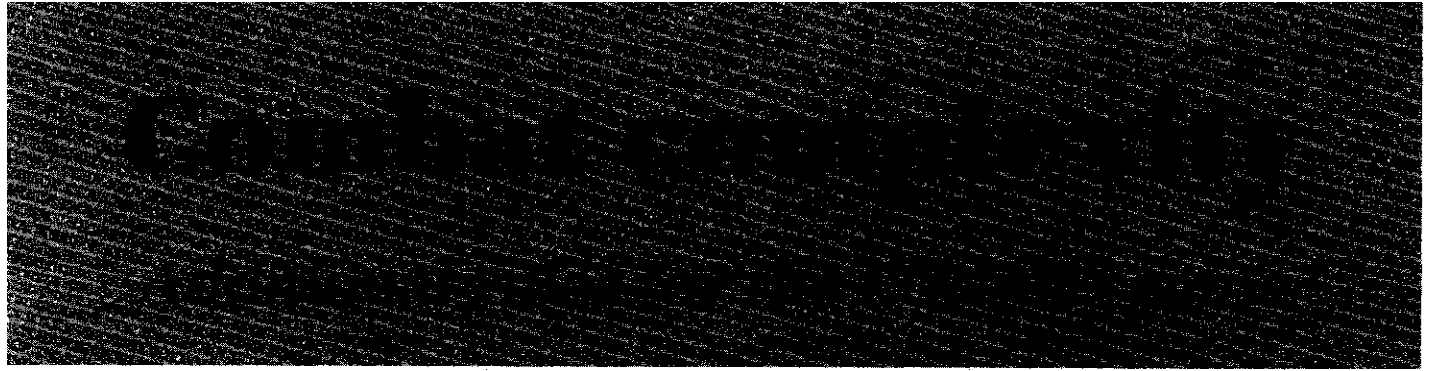
The cavalry divisions may not be overly proficient, but they will be the best the region has seen. They should fight as light cavalry regardless of their degree of training. But, even with poor training, a group of infantry will not last long against a charging mass of horses moving as a mounted phalanx. In the process, one can make a bundle of money as he overruns the evil kingdom next door. . . .

If forced to fight without stirrups (despite begging and pleading, the local king has refused to lay out the gold for such a strange idea), mounted divisions can still serve your character well. Horses can be used by archers to enable them to move around the battlefield quickly and mounted infantry can prove invaluable. They just ride up to confront the enemy, then dismount to fight on foot. These troops could be held back as reinforcements. The horses enable them to move up fast and strengthen a weak line. Of course, without stirrups, no cavalry charges can be made. The penalties to combat are doubled for these horse soldiers, because they are not experienced in mounted combat. If they attack without stirrups, they will fall off the first time they miss or get hit. Maybe your character can form a division of mounted magic-users.

These penalties do not necessarily apply to the officers. They may have always used horses and may be able to fight at their normal level with the appropriate penalties to hit and damage. It is even possible for their horses to have stirrups. Since the military advantage in stirrups has not been recognized, cavalry divisions were never formed.

This is what happened to the Anglo-Saxons. They failed to capitalize on the stirrup and never developed a feudal society. As a result, when William the Conqueror and the Normans invaded England, the Anglo-Saxons used tactics two centuries behind the Normans — and were soundly defeated.

At first glance, the stirrup appears to be a minor piece of equipment, but the lack of it causes major problems in mounted combat. In fact, until the invention of the stirrup, mounted shock combat did not exist. Your player characters will have stirrups, but there are many situations in which they may find themselves without access to them. And *that* is when the game gets unpredictable and fun. Just how imaginative can they be at overcoming this problem?



## by William Carlson

The CONAN® game, by David Cook, is a faithful simulation of Robert E. Howard's legendary Hyboria, making use of a subtle blend of simplicity and sophistication. Through the use of talents and skill levels, the game avoids the arbitrariness so often associated with character classes and allows uniquely individual characters to emerge — characters truly capable of almost anything and limited only by their own past. The game also captures all the flavor of the stories' darker aspects — the characters' debilitating weaknesses and fears, the awesomeness and scarcity of magic, and the earthy horror of Hyboria's darker regions — and makes use of a relatively new approach to role-playing in which all die rolls are compared to one table for resolution. This greatly enhances the ease with which the game may be learned and increases the speed with which it may be played, without loss of realism.

Indeed, the Resolution Table actually increases realism by allowing complex situations to be simulated without resorting to a complex system of rules. A sophistication of play is thereby encouraged without use of the strangling rules structures that so often stifle the flow of play in otherwise good role-playing games.

This article offers an expanded version of the CONAN game which takes advantage of the elegance inherent in the original game system. As the CONAN game currently stands, combat is little more than hack-n-slash, although hints of deeper possibilities abound. If used to full advantage, however, the Resolution Table would allow for the simple simulation of combat elements usually found only in highly complex role-playing games. As will be seen, realism and heightened game strategy do not necessarily involve overcomplicated formulas nor pages of esoteric tables. Use of the following new rules increases the sophistication of game play, allowing players to better target different points on enemy characters' bodies, increasing armor's effectiveness and the uniqueness of various weapons, and fully integrating the concept of Specific Wounds into game play.

### Aiming points

When in melee, a player character must announce which part of his opponent's body he is aiming at. This is called the *Aiming Point*. The seven possible Aiming Points are listed in Table 1. The referee must keep in mind, when players choose Aiming Points, that the situation determines which of a player character's opponent's Aiming Points can actually be targeted by the player character. (For example, if an opponent is behind a low wall, his legs will be concealed and cannot be chosen as an Aiming Point.) Once the Aiming Point is announced, the attack is carried out normally according to the CONAN game rules.

Here, however, the expanded rules take over. The color range of the attack result now determines whether or not the player's character hit the exact point he aimed for. The larger the Aiming Point, the easier it will be to hit. Also, the left side of an opponent's body is more likely to be hit than the right side, supposing that the attacker is right-handed. (If not, then the labels "right" and "left" should be reversed on Table 1 when a blow is made for the left-handed fighter). Table 1 shows what color result is necessary to hit the desired Aiming Point. If a color result other than

those shown is achieved (e.g., a green result when aiming at the chest), the player's character has still hit his opponent, but not at the exact point for which he aimed. As usual, a white result is always a miss.

If the character does hit the desired Aiming Point, Specific Wounds are checked for by weapon type, according to the new rules below. If the character does not hit the desired Aiming Point, but has hit his opponent somewhere else, a random roll must be made to see which Aiming Point was hit. In this case of a random hit, Specific Wounds are made only if a red result is obtained, no matter what weapon is being used, even if the random roll indicates a hit against the area originally targeted.

**Table 1: Aiming points**

Body part	Aimed *	Random
Right leg	O/R	01-09
Left leg	O/R	10-20
Gut/rear	Y/O/R	21-40
Chest/back	Y/O/R	41-70
Left arm	O/R	71-79
Right arm	O/R	80-90
Head	R	91-00

\* — One of the listed colors must be obtained in order to hit the desired aiming point. Any other color result indicates a random hit, and a roll must then be made under the Random column to see which point was hit. A white result indicates a miss (Y = Yellow, O = Orange, R = Red).

### Impact bonuses

All weapons now have a new listing called the Impact Bonus (see Table 2). The higher this bonus, the better that weapon's chance of making a Specific Wound when it hits. The Impact Bonus is applied as follows.

After the attack roll has been made and the character has hit his desired Aiming Point (not a random point), the Impact Bonus is applied. According to the original CONAN game rules, when a character achieved a red result, this indicated the possibility of a Specific Wound. This still holds true — a red result always indicates the possibility of a Specific Wound. However, the Impact Bonus modifies the result, making Specific Wounds possible when other color results are achieved. For each point of Impact Bonus, the player may achieve a Specific Wound in an additional color range. For example, a saber has an Impact Bonus of two. If the character hits his Aiming Point, he may do a Specific Wound if the attack roll was in the yellow, orange, or red range (two additional ranges of color). On the other hand, a dirk has an Impact Bonus of zero and can only do a Specific Wound if the attack roll was in the red range (zero additional ranges of color).

A character's expertise may also entitle him to an additional Impact Bonus (although this can never raise his Impact Bonus above three). For every 15 points of talent in the specific weapon he is using (or in the corresponding talent if he is Wrestling or Brawling), the character receives an additional point of Impact Bonus, extending his color range even further.

In the above example with a dirk, although the dirk itself has no



Impact Bonus, if the character using it had a Fighting Talent for Dirks with a rating of 15 or higher, he would receive one Impact Bonus and possibly do Specific Wounds on Orange or Red. If this character had a Fighting Talent for Dirks of 30, he would receive two Impact Bonuses and possibly do Specific Wounds on Yellow, Orange, or Red! He would be a deadly opponent when wielding a lowly dirk. A character with a Fighting Talent of 30 for two-handed swords would receive an awe-inspiring five Impact Bonuses, although this would have no practical effect beyond the three already attributable to the great sword. Imposing an upper limit of three is a realistic way of simulating the fact that finesse and expertise play a lesser role when a character is using large, awkward weapons.

Note that a white result always misses no matter how many Impact Bonuses the character has, and that a red result is always a Specific Wound no matter how few Impact Bonuses the character has.

**Table 2: Weapon list**

(Note that some modifications have been made to the Weapon and Initiative Bonuses.)

Weapon	Impact	Weapon	Initiative
Bastard sword	2	0(+1)*	-1
Broad sword	1	0	0
Cinequesda	1	+1	-1
Cutlass	1	-1	0
Falchion	2	+2	-2
Long sword	1	0	+1
Rapier	0	0	+2
Saber	2	0	-1
Two-handed sword	3	+2	-3
Arbalest	3	+1	0
Horse bow	1	+1	0
Long bow	2	0	0
Short bow	0	0	+1
Sling	0	-1	0
Club	0	-1	0
Flail	2	+1	-2
Holy water sprinkler	1	+1	-1
Mace	1	0	0
War hammer	2	0	-1
Dirk	0	0	-1
Francisca	1	0	0
Great axe	2	+2	-2
Katar	0	-1	+1
Halbard	3/1**	+1	+2/-2**
Javelin	0	-1	0
Lance, joust	3/1**	+3	+4/-4**
Lance, light	2/1**	0	+3/-3**
Man-catcher	***	***	+2
Pike	2/0**	0	+3/-3**
Spear	0	-1	+1
Staff	0	0	+1
Tiger claw	0	-2	-2
Whip	0	-2	+2

\* - Use the second number if used as a two-handed weapon.

\*\* - The first number applies to the first turn of combat in which this weapon is used against a new opponent. The second number applies in all subsequent turns.

\*\*\* - This weapon does no damage.

## Armor and specific wounds

As the reader may perceive from the preceding rules, the expanded CONAN game combat system results in a great many potential Specific Wounds. This adds a great deal of excitement to the game, but no normal character could possibly survive such a hail of disaster unless an additional rule was provided whereby he might protect himself. The following text describes just such a rule.

If a player's character hits the desired Aiming Point and the attack roll is in a color range indicating that a Specific Wound is possible, his opponent may try to avoid the wound. He must determine his *Avoidance Rating* for that *Aiming Point*. (These may be worked out in advance for each of the seven Aiming Points and recorded for later ease of play.) For each point of Armor Protection he is wearing on that part of his body and for each 15 points of Animal Reflexes (or General Prowess) Talent, he receives one additional color range of Avoidance.

Note that all characters may avoid Specific Wounds by rolling in the red range, even if they are wearing no armor. Armor and a high Animal Reflexes rating extend the color range of Avoidance beyond the red zone. Suppose your character hits his opponent in the right leg; his opponent is wearing no armor on that leg, so he must roll in the red range on the column of the Resolution Table corresponding to his Movement (or General Prowess) Talent to avoid the Specific Wound. The next turn, your character hits a different opponent in the right leg; he is wearing leg armor, which gives him two points of Armor Protection (i.e., two additional color ranges of Avoidance). In addition, this opponent has an Animal Reflexes rating of 23, giving him one additional color range of Avoidance. Therefore, this opponent will avoid the Specific Wound if he rolls in the red, orange, yellow, or green ranges on the column (i.e., any color but white). A result of white always indicates that the character failed to avoid the Specific Wound.

If a Specific Wound is avoided, normal damage is still checked as in the original rules, with Armor Protection being subtracted from the damage done.

## Effects of specific wounds

If the opponent's passive defenses (i.e., armor and animal reflexes) do not deflect the Specific Wound, he may still make one last roll to actively avoid the Specific Wound's affect. Different points on the body are governed by different talents. To determine if he saves vs. the specific wound, the character must roll vs. the appropriate talent and within the color range as indicated on Table 3. If he does save vs. the Specific Wound, he still takes a number of points damage corresponding to the color of the original attack roll. If, however, the opponent rolls lower than the indicated color range, the appropriate Specific Wound (from Tables 4 and 5) takes immediate effect.

## Healing

The damage done by a Specific Wound may now range from one to four points (or more if any Weapon or Strength bonuses apply), depending upon what color range inflicted the Specific Wound. As usual, these points of damage should be immediately subtracted from the character's Damage Talent. However, a separate record of these Specific Wounds and their effects should also be maintained and the effects applied to combat immediately. In addition, until the effect of an Orange or Red Specific Wound is fully healed, the character will suffer at least in part from any limitation suffered due to that wound.

All normal damage points must be healed before any Specific Wound may be healed and its debilitating effect eliminated. For example, during a fight, a character suffers a Specific Wound to his left arm for two points, as well as five normal damage points. After the fight, the character rests completely for one day. His General Endurance rating is two, enabling him to heal at the rate of three points per day of complete rest. The first day, he heals three points of normal damage. The second day, he heals the two remaining points of normal damage and may apply the remaining point of healing toward the healing of his arm. The third day, he will be completely well.

The reasoning behind this becomes apparent if a player's character has several different Specific Wounds. It is recommended that the referee allow the player to choose the order in which those wounds will be healed (after, of course, all normal damage is healed). However, the referee should not allow any Specific Wound to be completely healed until all Specific Wounds of lesser damage are healed first. Suppose the above character had also suffered a three-point Specific Wound to the head, rendering him unconscious. That character would remain unconscious all of the first day and most of the second day while his normal damage healed. At the end of the second day, the player could decide whether to apply the additional point of healing to the character's arm or head. The player chooses to heal one point of the character's head wound. The character would again be conscious, although rather groggy. The following day, the player heals one more point of the head wound and fully heals the arm. Note that the player could not choose to fully heal the head wound, since the head wound was of greater severity and the arm wound must therefore be completely healed first.

All Specific Wounds caused by a red result will leave a visible scar. Any Specific Wound to the head which results in a scar will automatically add one point to the character's Fame and Personal Magnetism ratings (even if he did not possess the latter Talent previously). This also holds true if a character suffers a red Specific Wound to the leg — he will walk with a slight limp and will add one point to both Fame and Personal Magnetism.

**Table 3: Specific wound saves**

Aiming point	Roll vs. this Talent to save
Head	Current damage (or General Endurance)
Chest	Stamina (or General Endurance)
Gut	Strength (or General Prowess)
Arm	Movement (or General Prowess)
	Movement (or General Prowess)

**Table 4: Specific wound effects for brawling**

	Color (Damage):	
	Green (1) or Yellow (2)	Orange (3) or Red (4)
Head	Stunned 1 turn; O/R save	Unconscious; O/R save
Chest	Stunned 1 turn; any color saves	Stunned 1 turn; Y/O/R save
Gut	Stunned 1 turn; any color saves	Stunned 2 turns; Y/O/R save
Arm	No specific effect	Drop object held; any color saves
Leg	No specific effect	Knocked down; Y/O/R save


**Table 5: Specific wound effects for other types of combat**

	Color (Damage):	
	Green (1) or Yellow (2)	Orange (3) or Red (4)
Head	Stunned 2 turns; Y/O/R save	Unconscious; O/R save
Chest	Stunned 1 turn; Y/O/R save	Stunned 3 turns; O/R save
Gut	Stunned 2 turns; any color saves	Unconscious; Y/O/R save
Arm	Drop object held; any color saves	Unusable; any color saves
Leg	Knocked down; Y/O/R save	Unusable; Y/O/R save

If a Specific Wound indicates that the character is to drop an object, whatever object is held in the corresponding (left or right) hand must be dropped immediately. This will usually be a weapon if the right arm is hit and a shield if the left arm is hit. If the shield is strapped on, it is not dropped, but will be unusable the following attack.

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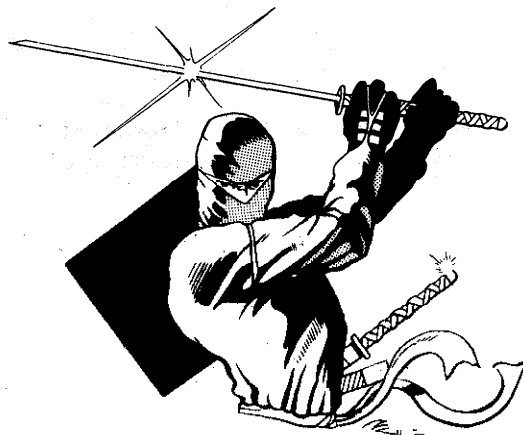
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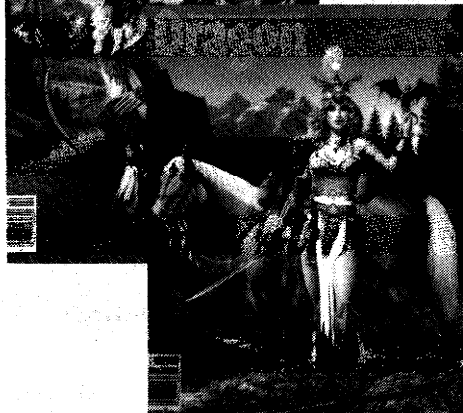
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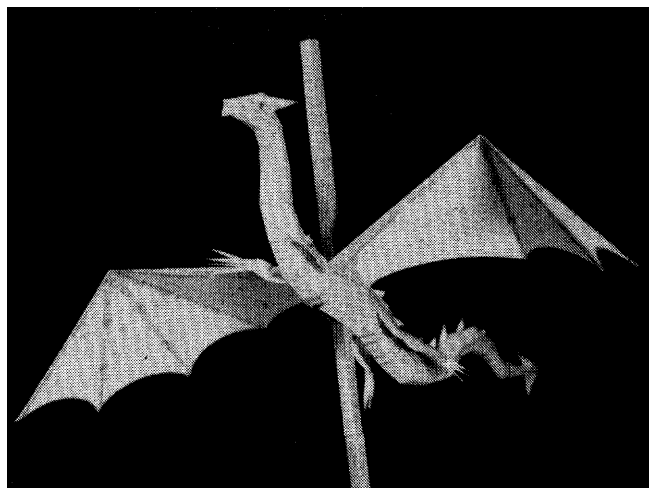
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# CARDBOARD DRAGON

*(Draco Manipartus  
Temporarius)*



*FREQUENCY: Common, all of a sudden  
NO. APPEARING: One per magazine  
ARMOR CLASS: 15 (Be careful; it crunches easily)  
MOVE: Yes, in a slight breeze  
HIT DICE: 0 (for display, not combat)  
% IN LAIR: Depends on where you put it  
TREASURE TYPE: Nil (What do you want for free?)  
NO. OF ATTACKS: 0 (see Hit Dice)  
DAMAGE/ATTACK: You know...  
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Inspires envy in friends who don't have one  
SPECIAL DEFENSES: Must be cut and glued  
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Keep it away from fireballs  
INTELLIGENCE: It doesn't need any – you do  
ALIGNMENT: Fine, if you don't put the wings on upside down  
SIZE: What you see is what you get  
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil (see Treasure Type)*

*We've managed to subdue a cardboard dragon, and now we'd like you to have it. The only problem is that the poor thing seems to have gone all to pieces over the experience, so you're going to have to put it back together.*

*The three sheets of cardboard in the center of this magazine contain all the parts you need, and the instructions on this and the following three pages explain how everything fits together. We've also thrown in a few photographs of the assembled prototype that should help clear up any confusion that may remain after you've studied the sheets and the diagrams.*

*Take it slowly, plan before you paste, and you should end up with a handsome piece of paper sculpture that you can display and even use for the playing out of an encounter.*

*Cut the parts out of the sheets as you need them. A hobby knife and a straightedge will come in handy for making crisp, clean cuts on the straight lines (of which there aren't too many). For the curved lines, a*

*sharp pair of scissors and a steady hand are the best tools. Use a type of glue, paste, or cement that works on paper without soaking through the paper, and be sure to apply it sparingly to all the surfaces that need to be joined to another surface. You may also use transparent tape for added strength on the inside of bonded surfaces that won't be visible in the finished product.*

*Included on the sheets are the parts for a base and a support post that you can use to make the dragon "fly." You can also suspend it in mid-air by punching a couple of pinholes in the fins along its spine and stringing a couple of pieces of thread through the holes. Using the support post will enable you to easily adjust how high it's flying, so that if you want to use the dragon as a "miniature" in conjunction with other figures during a game session you can raise or lower it to fit the circumstances of the encounter.*

*Turn the page, read through all the instructions before starting, and enjoy!*

*Design and artwork by Dennis Kauth*

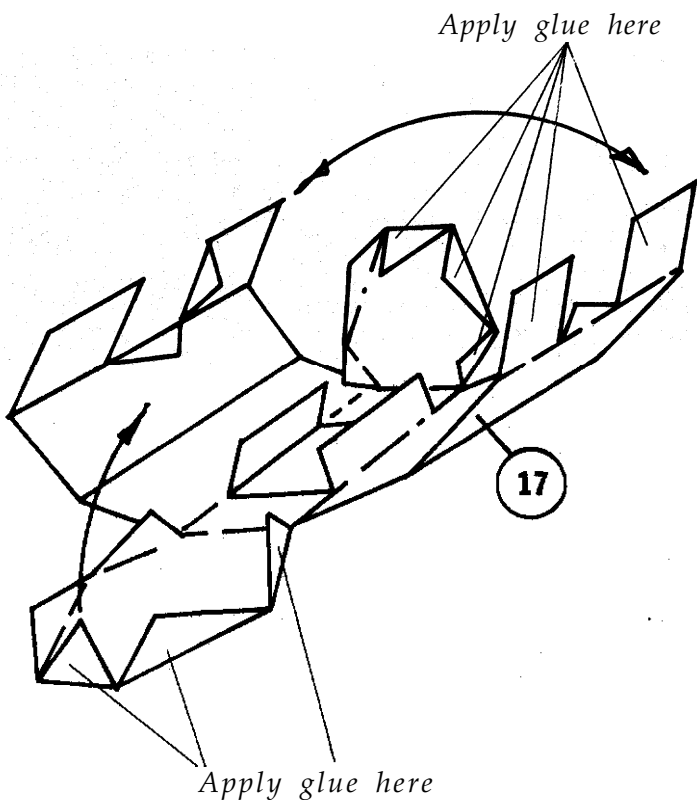
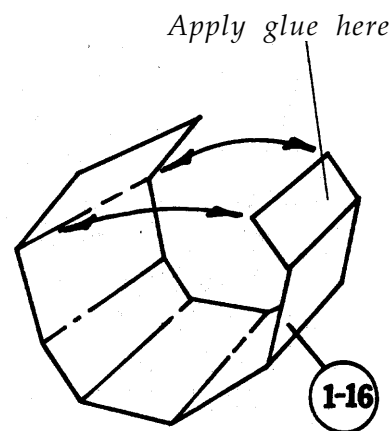
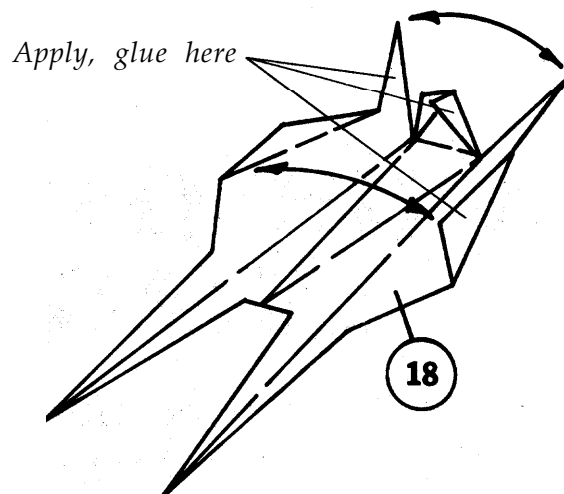
*Photography by Keith Parkinson*

## Recommended order of assembly:

1. Head (18) and tail (19)
2. Center body section (17)
3. Neck and tail sections (1-16)
4. Legs and claws (21-27)
5. Fins along spine (28-34), if desired
6. Wings (20)
7. Base and support post, if used

## Head and neck/tail segments

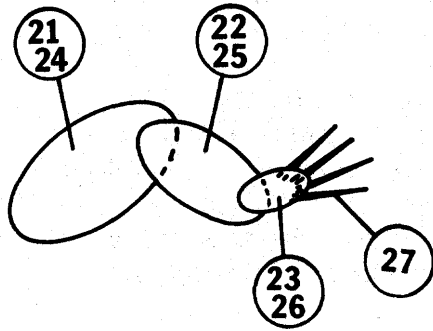
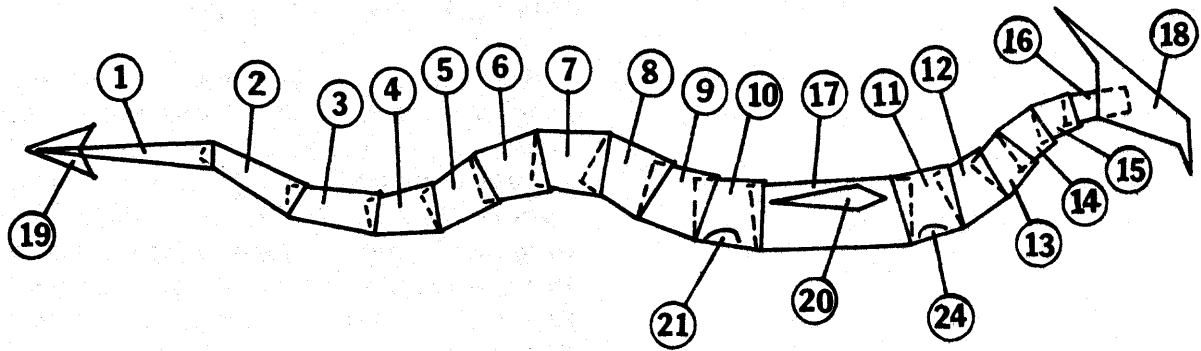
Cut out the parts carefully, then score the dashed lines on the underside of each piece and fold along the dashed lines to form the head-shape and the cylinders that make up the body. To keep the head together apply glue to the area containing the number and to the two small triangular areas on both sides of the snout. For the body segments, apply glue to the area containing the number and fasten that area to the underside of the opposite edge. Assemble the body parts one at a time as you need them, or come up with a way to organize them by number because they must be put together in the order they are numbered.



## Center body section

You must decide whether or not to use the support post before cutting out this piece. If you do **not** intend to use it, do not cut out the triangular areas on the sides, so that the part is shaped like a rectangle with two protrusions (which will form the ends of a closed cylinder when it is assembled). If you do intend to use it, cut out the piece along all of the solid lines and then also cut along the solid lines on the interior of the part.

To form the closed cylinder, glue the tabs on the protrusions to the inside of the body one at a time, starting with the tabs nearest to the fold line. When this process is almost complete, apply glue to the flap along the edge of the body and tuck this in to finish off the cylinder.



### Neck and tail

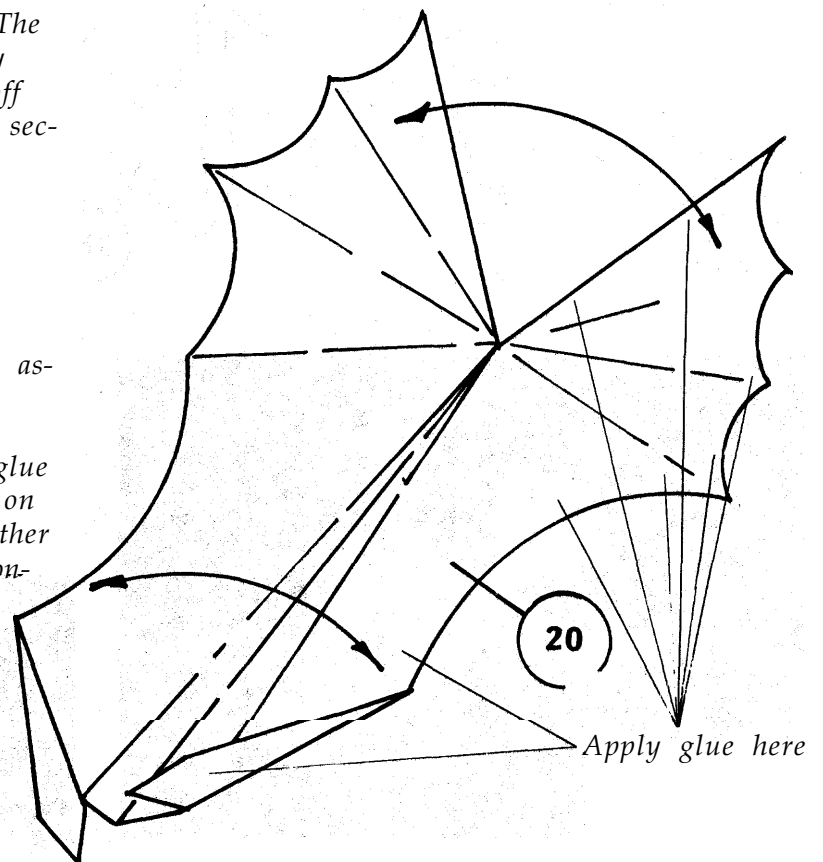
The dragon's neck and tail are made up of telescoping cylinders that will easily fit into each other — as long as parts 2 through 16 are assembled in the exact order shown in this diagram. The sections can be glued together in any pose desired; your dragon can be built with its head bent downward (instead of upward, as in our prototype) if you want to show him in a diving posture. The head and tail should be fastened to the body when all the sections have been put together. The fins along the dragon's spine (parts 28-34) can be used or left off, as desired.

### Legs and claws

The "legs" are not three-dimensional pieces, merely flat ovals that are glued together to form extensions off the body. See the "Neck and tail" diagram for where to place parts 21 and 24, which are the upperparts of the legs. Then attach other parts as shown in this diagram. The parts of each leg may be put together in any pose desired, and the legs can be finished off with either opened or closed claws (pick one section of part 27 as desired).

### Wings

These are the largest and simplest parts to assemble. Score and fold along all the dashed lines, then bring the two opposite edges together to form a double-sided wing. Apply glue along the entire inside edge of one side and on the two end flaps, then press the wing together and put it under an object that will apply constant, even pressure to the edge until the glue dries. (Do not completely flatten the wing; the leading edge is supposed to have some thickness to it, and should not be flat like the trailing edge is.) When the body is completely assembled, glue the wings onto the two non-scaly areas on part 17.

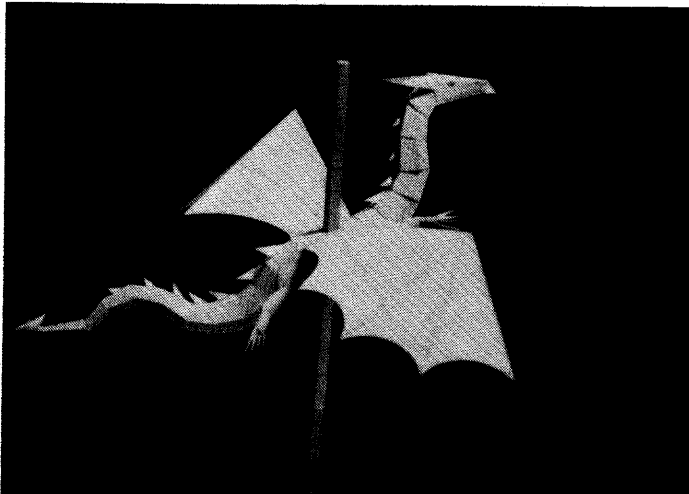
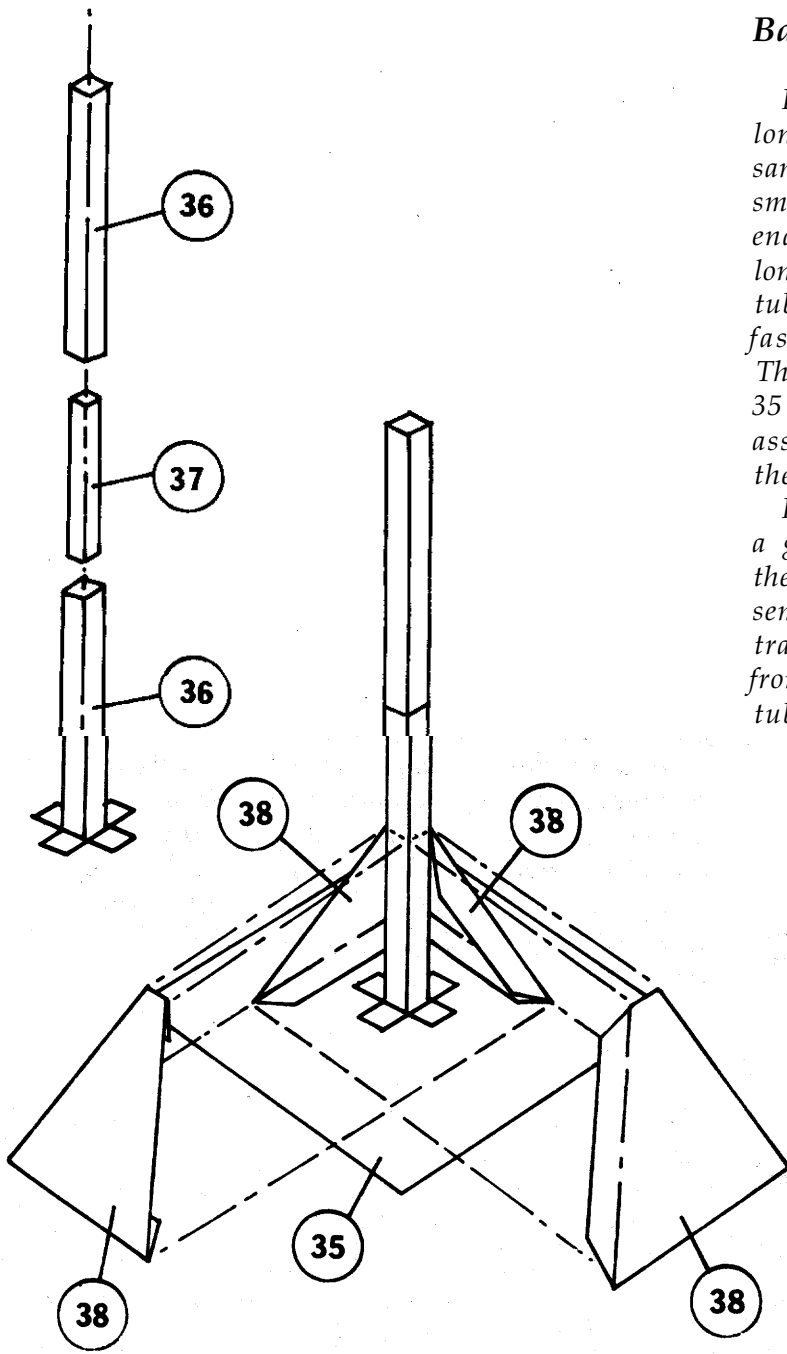




## Base and support post

Fold and glue both parts 36 to make a pair of long, thin square tubes. Construct part 37 in the same way, to make a shorter and slightly smaller tube, and then glue part 37 inside the ends of the other two parts to make one very long tube. Fold the flaps on the end of the long tube outward (as shown in the diagram) and fasten them to part 35 on the cross-shaped area. The support panels (part 38) are glued to parts 35 and 36 and to each other giving the entire assembly enough structural integrity to support the dragon.

For extra strength and durability it would be a good idea to glue pieces of scrap cardboard to the underside of parts 35, 36, and 38 before assembling them. Be careful, though, that the extra thickness on part 36 doesn't prevent part 37 from sliding inside it when you form the long tube.



Bubba the Barbarian says:

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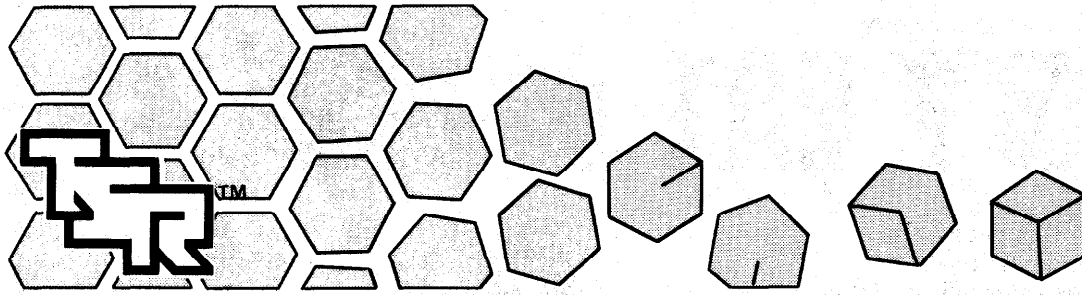
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# P R E V I E W S

## NEW PRODUCTS FOR NOVEMBER

### AD&D® WILDERNESS SURVIVAL GUIDE

by Kim Mohan

The impeccable editor of DRAGON® Magazine turns his able hand to the AD&D rules system with the companion to the DUNGEONER'S SURVIVAL GUIDE. Now, the environment becomes the deadliest opponent of all-blazing deserts, the freezing arctic wastes, the lonely crags of a high mountain. New official rules and systems for every wilderness environment, a comprehensive weather system, foraging, shelter, and much more, make this an indispensable addition to your library.

**Suggested Retail Price: \$15.00**

**Product No.: 2020**

### REF3 The Book of Lairs AD&D Game Accessory

by Jim Ward and Mike Breault

A great accessory for Dungeon Masters of all levels!

The Book of Lairs is a compendium of short adventures involving various monsters and their lairs. These adventures are ideal for livening up a cross-country trek, or providing a challenging test for new players. Each adventure is easy to set up and integrate into an existing campaign.

**Suggested Retail Price: \$12.00**

**Product No.: 9177**

### AC9 Creature Catalog D&D® Game Accessory

by the TSR UK Design Team

The Creature Catalog provides new monsters for the dungeons and catacombs of the D&D game world... with an assortment of brand-new creatures, appearing for the first time anywhere!

**Suggested Retail Price: \$10.00**

**Product No.: 9173**

### OA2 Night of Seven Swords AD&D Oriental Adventures Module

by Divers Hands

Three adventures, each playable in a single session, set in the mysterious East! Celebrate the Night of Seven Swords, when the

powers of the spirit world are unleashed and silent figures haunt the shadows...

**Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00**

**Product No.: 9186**

### Fuel's Gold

#### CAR WARS™ Gamebook #2 by Steve Jackson

An old, miraculously intact, reserve of that most precious fluid—gasoline—has been found near Boston. But the terrorists who discovered it would like to turn your truckstop into a giant Molotov cocktail... unless YOU can fight them off!

**Suggested Retail Price: \$2.95**

**Product No.: 8015**

CAR WARS™ & ©1986 Steve Jackson Games.

### SNIPER!™ Game

#### SPI™ Simulations Game

Man-to-man combat in World War II comes alive in this classic simulation game. Over twenty scenarios cover all the theatres of the war.

The SNIPER game is a true classic...and watch this space for a special announcement about the game!

**Suggested Retail Price: \$16.00**

**Product No.: 3019**

### REBEL SABRES™ Game

#### SPI™ Simulations Game

by Richard Berg

From the GREAT BATTLES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR™ Game System comes this set of three important cavalry actions, including an expansion battle, for the TERRIBLE SWIFT SWORD™ Game.

**Suggested Retail Price: \$20.00**

**Product No.: 3020**

## NEW PRODUCTS FOR OCTOBER

### DA1 ADVENTURES IN BLACKMOOR™ D&D® Game Adventure

by Dave Arneson

The co-creator of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game returns to his roots with the first of a series of adventures set in the strange country of Blackmoor.

**Product No. 9172**

**Suggested Retail Price: \$10.00**

## 110 RAVENLOFT II: GRYPHON HILL

### AD&D Game Adventure

by Tracy and Laura Hickman

In this thrilling sequel to 16, *Ravenloft*, Count Strad von Zarovitch has moved to a far country in search of new blood to quench his undying thirst...and to pave the way for rulership of the world. Who will stop him this time?

**Product No. 9181**

**Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00**

## MH9 GATES OF WHAT IF?

### MARVEL SUPER HEROES™

#### Game Adventure

by Roger Moore

Venture into an alternate dimension with the Fantastic Four™ and Spider Man™... where the greatest hero is a man known as Victor™, ruler of Latveria™.

**Product No. 6867**

**Suggested Retail Price: \$8.00**

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## LORDS OF DOOM:

### A DRAGONLANCE® Adventure

#### AD&D® Adventure Gamebook #10

by Douglas Niles

Join Silvara and Gilthanas as they penetrate to the heart of the Dragon Highlord's realm... the forbidden city of Sanction.

**Product No. 8960**

**Suggested Retail Price: \$2.95**

## AGENT 13™ AND THE ACOLYTES OF DARKNESS

### AGENT 13™ Book #3

by Flint Dille and David Marconi

Continuing the thrilling action saga of AGENT 13™!

**Product No. 8402**

**Suggested Retail Price: \$2.95**

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# Convention Calendar

## **EARTHCON VI, Sept. 19-21**

This science fiction convention will be held at the Holiday Inn at Rockside Road and I-77 in Cleveland, Ohio. Guests of honor will include Gordon R. Dickson and C. J. Cherryh. Videos, a masquerade, an art show, and an auction will also be offered. For more details, contact: Earthcon, P.O. Box 5641, Cleveland OH 44101.

## **INTERCON, Sept. 25-28**

The 1st International Science Fiction Festival is being sponsored by the Polish Fantasy and Science Fiction Association, and will be held in Warsaw, Poland. A full program of different and exciting events are scheduled for this festival. For further information on this festival, contact: Andrzej Szatkowski, 00-973 Warsaw 22, P.O. Box 77, Warsaw, Poland.

## **DUNGEONQUEST, Sept. 27**

This one-day AD&D® tournament will be held at Portland Community College, Sylvania Campus, in Portland, Ore. Pre-registration is \$5, and \$7 at the door. For further information, contact: Errol Farstad, 2295 S.W. 219th, Aloha OR 97006 or call (503) 649-2616 between 5 and 9 p.m.

## **NOWSCON '86, Sept. 27-28**

Sponsored by the Northern Ohio Wargaming Society, this convention will take place at the Brookpark National Guard Armory in Brookpark, Ohio. Miniatures and role-playing tournaments will be offered. For further details, contact: Nowsccon '86, P.O. Box 29116, Parma OH 44129.

## **SUNCOAST SKIRMISHES '86, Oct. 3-5**

This wargaming tournament will be held at the Asheley Plaza Hotel. A variety of wargames and role-playing games will be featured. For more information, contact: Suncoast Skirmishes, 2550 34th Ave. N., St. Petersburg FL 33713.

## **ENCOUNTER 10, Oct. 4-6**

This science fiction and fantasy convention will be held at the Wichita Hilton Inn East. Guests of honor include Fritz Leiber and Gene Roddenberry. The registration fee is \$15. For more details, contact: FANdom, P.O. Box 1675, Wichita KS 67201.

## **MILWAUKEE'S EIGHTH HISTORICAL WARGAME WEEKEND, Oct. 4-5**

This two-day event will feature over 30 military miniatures wargames covering a variety of land and naval historical periods. Also, several hobby merchants will display and sell materials throughout the

show. Admission is payable at the door, and costs \$5 per day or \$7 for both days. This event will be held at the Milwaukee War Memorial Art Museum, 750 N. Lincoln Memorial Drive, Milwaukee, Wis. For further information, send a SASE to: Joe Gepfert, 3440 S. Monterey Dr., New Berlin WI 53151, or to Mark Van Groll, 4502 N. 56th St., Milwaukee WI 53218.

## **FRONTIER WAR 2.5, Oct. 4-5**

This gaming convention will be held at the Miller Park Pavilion in Bloomington, Ill. Registration fees are \$5 until Sept. 20 and \$6 thereafter. For details: Steven Miller, 511 W. Mulberry, Apt. 2, Bloomington IL 61701, or phone (309)827-7817.

## **TOLEDO GAMING CONVENTION 4, Oct. 4-5**

This gaming convention will be held at Toledo University's Scott Park Campus in Toledo, Ohio. Over 125 events are scheduled, featuring role-playing games, boardgames, and a number of miniatures events. For more information, address a SASE to: Mind Games, 3001 N. Reynolds Road, Toledo OH 43615.

## **U-CON 4, Oct. 10-12**

Hosted by the Conflict Simulation Association, this convention will be staged at the Coffman Union, Minneapolis Campus, at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Admission fees are \$5 until Sept. 30, and \$7.50 at the door. For details, contact: Conflict Simulation Association, U-Con 4, University of Minnesota, 235 Coffman Union, 300 Washington Ave., Minneapolis MN 55455.

## **NIANTICON, Oct. 11- 12**

This gaming convention will be held at the Howard Johnson's in Niantic, Conn. Role-playing games, boardgames, and miniatures games will be featured, and dealers' displays will be available. Registration fees are \$3 a day and \$5 for the weekend, if paid before Oct. 7; \$4 a day and \$7 for the weekend at the door. For more details, send a SASE to: NIANTICON, c/o Robbins, 20 Red Oak Rd., Groton CT 06340.

## **ADVACon, Oct. 12**

This gaming convention will be held at the Polish Falcon Hall in Depew, N.Y. Fantasy and science fiction role-playing games, board games, and miniatures tournaments will be among the featured events. Preregistration fees are \$3, and \$3.50 at the door. For details, contact: The

Advacon Fellowship, 101 Floss Ave., Buffalo NY 14211.

## **CONTACT '86, Oct. 17-19**

This science fiction and gaming extravaganza will be held at the Ramada Inn in Evansville, Ind. Guests include David R. Palmer, Stanley Schmidt, Frank Mentzer, and Penny Petticord. Other events will include RPGA tournaments, a miniatures contest, and an art show. Registration fees are \$12 until Oct. 1, and \$15 thereafter. For further information, contact: RCSFA, P.O. Box 3894, Evansville IN 47737.

## **RUDICON '86, Oct. 17-19**

This gaming convention will take place on the RIT campus in Rochester, N.Y. Featured at this convention will be a variety of events, including wargames, role-playing games, a dealers' room, movies, and tournaments. Registration is \$7, and \$5 for students with ID. For more details, write to: The Rochester Wargamers Association and Guild, c/o Student Directorate, One Lomb Memorial Drive, Rochester NY 14623, Attn: William Trainor.

## **FALL CON 3, Oct. 25**

This one-day convention will take place at the Athenia Room in the Greencroft Center, 500 S. Main St., in Elkhart, Ind. Featured events include an RPGA tournament, a WWI naval miniature battle (1:2400 scale), a Civil War naval miniatures battle (1:2400 or 1:1200 scale), and much more. Registration is \$5, and is payable at the door. For more information, send a SASE to: Brigade Gaming Group, P.O. Box 252, Elkhart IN 46515, or call (219) 294-7019.

## **OCTOBER FANTASY II, Oct. 25-26**

This second annual gaming event will take place at the downtown Ramada Inn in Milwaukee, Wis. Featured tournaments will be a three-round RPGA™ AD&D® game tourney, a two-round AD&D masters' tourney, a two-round CHILL™ tourney, and many other events. Guests of honor include Frank Mentzer and Penny Petticord. Friday evening will feature the second annual Halloween party, complete with a raw liver toss. Pre-registration is \$8 for the convention and \$8 for the party, and \$10 each at the door. For more information on the convention or on judging, send a SASE to: Keith Polster, 1812 Morgan Drive, Apt. #6, West Bend WI 53095, or call (414) 338-8498.

## **NECRONOMICON '86, Oct. 31 -Nov. 2**

Sponsored by the Stonehill Science Fiction Association, this convention will feature Piers Anthony and Frederik Pohl as guests of honor. Events will include a fan cabaret, a costume contest, a vampire pageant, and an art show. Preregistration is \$10 until Oct. 1. For more information, write to: Stonehill S.F. Association, P.O. Box 2076, Riverview FL 33569, or call J. David Bennett at (813)973-0038.



## KEITH PARKINSON

This characteristic photograph of Keith Parkinson, TSR Staff Artist, shows him in his secret identity as the mysterious Lake Geneva Monster, menacing the hordes of tourists that descend on this usually quiet resort town each summer. "Flatlanders go home!" he shouts, brandishing his huge sword.

Activating the size control on belt, the man-mountain reduces height from six hundred feet to six feet, and agrees to talk with TSR PROFILES.

"I was born in West Covina, California, on October 22, 1958," Keith began, "but moved around a lot.

## PARKINSON

My father was working his way up the corporate ladder with GMAC, so we moved to San Diego, New York, Miami, and Lansing, Michigan, all before I graduated high school.

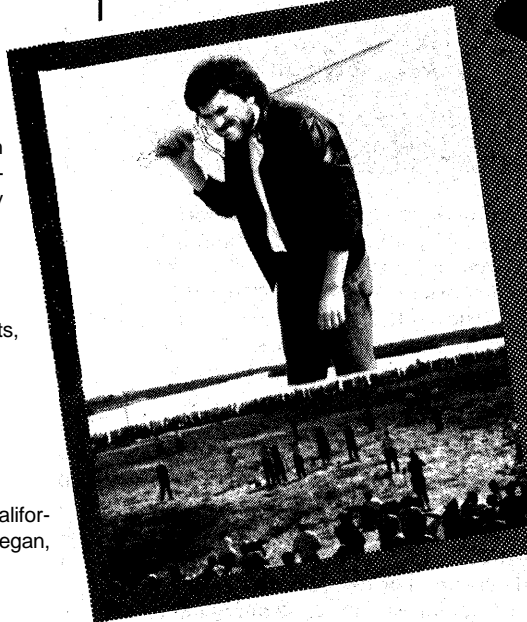
"As a kid, I was in love with spaceships. I collected posters and did lots of spaceship drawings. But when I was twelve years old, my interest in art took a back seat to music. Much to my parents' chagrin, I bought a drum set with hard-earned money from mowing lawns, and took several years of drum lessons.

"I got involved with a rock & roll band in high school, and played semi-professionally all the way through high school and into college. For several years, my band toured on weekends. We were into heavy metal, and played stuff by Blue Oyster Cult, Rush, Led Zeppelin, and other heavy metal monster groups.

"On one weekend gig, I met my future wife, Mary, who is now the DRAGON Magazine Advertising Coordinator. We have a son, Nicholas, who is 21 months old, and a dog, named Sluggo."

Keith was also a dyed-in-the-wool science fiction fan. "I guess I've read everything by Heinlein and Frank Herbert, and most other mainstream SF authors. I didn't ever read much fantasy, though, except for *Lord of the Rings*, which I loved."

During his last year in high school, he was invited by an art teacher to join a college credit art course. "I had just discovered Frank Frazetta, and was already a big fan of Roger Dean from his Yes album covers. Frazetta in particular is a big influence on my work. . . but I guess he is for every fantasy artist."



Keith went to Michigan State University for a year, studying art. "I thought their act curriculum was the pits, so I left to study commercial art at the Kendall School of Design in Grand Rapids. I personally recommend commercial art schools over university study if you want to be an illustrator. And I wanted to be an illustrator rather than a 'fine artist.'

"I was torn between art and music as a career, and didn't make up my mind until my last year in school. The band wasn't great by any means, but we were nearing the adequate mark. But I felt some responsibility to my father, who had paid for my education, which I appreciated (and still do), and they worked hard to persuade me that art was a better choice. The real consideration, however, was that as a drummer I wasn't in control musically, and as an illustrator, I was much more in control of my work. So I went with art, and in hindsight, I'm very glad.

"I did freelance work in Chicago for nine months while looking for a job. I also sold stereos — there's a lot of money in sales! But one day I got a response to a blind newspaper ad, and got a job as a fantasy illustrator with a company that did artwork for pinball machines and video games. Some of the games I worked on were *Jungle King*, *Tron*, *Iron Maiden*, *Viper*, and *Krull*.

"One of the guys in the camera room was a D&D player, and got me into the game. The first night I played a ranger in *B1, Keep on the Borderlands*, and I was hooked. We played every week.

"I didn't like a lot of the art I saw on D&D game products, and the company was in Lake Geneva, just over the border, so I drove up one day to see if I could do some

freelance work.

Elmore, Jeff Easley, and Tim Truman had all just joined the company, and the art they were working on was fantastic. It really blew my mind. Jim Roslof, who was the Art Director, hinted that I could join the staff full-time, but I missed the hint. A few days later, I called him about a job, and he had just hired somebody else the day before, but he'd keep me in mind. The next day, he called back, and had an opening. I joined the TSR staff in November 1982."

Keith's advice to would-be illustrators is: "If you don't love it, don't get into it. It's hard, constant work, and you don't get a lot of sleep. Don't be frustrated by what people tell you about your work, but also listen to serious criticism. One other thing: dress the part. If you want to be taken seriously as a professional, dress like one. It's easier to get in wearing a suit than blue jeans.

"Once you're in, though, it's a different story. . ."

# Profile

German," he said.

He returned to Nice for his education, and graduated from the *Lycee* (high school) in 1977. "I got passionately interested in wargames when I was attending the Lycee," Bruce said, "primarily in Avalon Hill games like *Kriegspiel*, *Luftwaffe*, *Third Reich*, and *Panzer Leader* — the classics. There were, of course, no French editions of these games at the time, so we all had to learn the American versions.

"I loved to travel," Bruce continued, "so when I graduated, I decided to study hotel management at the *Ecole Hoteliere de Nice*, where I earned my *Brevet de Technicien d'Hotelierie*. My first job was as a Concierge with Loewe's Hotel in Monte Carlo, and after a year I became Concierge at the Embarcadero Center in San Francisco. After that, I returned to France, and became Managing Coordinator of Catering for Air France at Orly Airport.

"While I was living in San Francisco, I discovered the 'blue box' edition of the D&D Basic Set. I was mildly interested, but I was still a wargamer at heart. On my return to Paris, I was desperately looking for a group of gamers to play with, and accidentally encountered a D&D



## BRUCE HEARD

"When I first moved from Paris to Lake Geneva, I was prepared for all the French jokes," says Bruce Heard, our Games Acquisitions Coordinator. "On my first day, I hung a picture of a frog outside my cubicle door, and captioned it 'FROGGYLANCE™'."

Bruce was born in Nice, France, on March 9, 1957. His father was a U. S. Navy officer, and his mother French, and so Bruce is a citizen of both France and the United States. "I grew up in France, England, Morocco, Washington, DC, and Dallas, all before I started school. I speak French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, and a little

beginning of my long slide into role-playing. . . .

"I started writing articles on D&D and AD&D for a French gaming magazine, and there I learned that TSR was looking for a translator to translate the games into French. Well, I spoke and wrote both languages, and I knew the games, so I wrote a letter to Gary Gygax. By a coincidence, he was just about to come to Paris on business, and so we set up a meeting. I must have done OK, because he offered me the job."

At first, Bruce did his translation work in

Nice. There, he met his future wife, Beatrice, on a hiking trip with a group of D&D players. "She wasn't a player at first, but she became one real fast," Bruce said.

After a few months, TSR decided to move the translating job to the home office in Lake Geneva, and Bruce packed up to come back to the U. S. "I moved from a mild Mediterranean climate to a frigid Wisconsin February," Bruce said, "but oddly enough, I liked it a lot, and immediately became an inveterate snowmobiler." Six months after he moved to Lake Geneva, Beatrice joined him, and they were married.

For two years, Bruce worked as a translator. The French editions of D&D Basic and Expert, B1 through B7, X1 through X5, STAR FRONTIERS, and SF0 through SF4 are all Bruce's work. He also coordinated outside translators who turned the games into German, Italian, and Spanish.

Bruce then transferred to the Games Division in July 1985 as an Acquisitions Editor, working with Jon Pickens. At first, he bought D&D and AD&D modules from various outside designers, then expanded into the full line. When Jon was promoted to Editor of STRATEGY & TACTICS® Magazine, Bruce became Games Acquisitions Coordinator, and is now in charge of buying all game products.

"Please don't deluge me with manuscripts," he begged. "We have very strict requirements and standards, and we can't review everything

that people want to send us.

If you want to design games or modules for TSR, you must have been professionally published somewhere else first. Non-game material, fiction, articles, etc., can qualify. So can selling articles to DRAGON Magazine and DUNGEON Adventures Magazine. If you qualify, write for a Submissions Package and our Disclosure Forms first. If you send us something without a Disclosure Form, it will be returned unopened and unread. I wish we could take the time to read and comment on everybody's work, but we can't. We used to get 800 manuscripts a year, and that took up a huge amount of time."

In the meantime, Bruce has been doing some game design, including CM7, *Tree of Life*; M1, *into the Maelstrom*; and co-authorship of DL12, *Dragons of Faith*.

"The rumors about me sadistically destroying game designers with a battleaxe is totally untrue," he adds. "Well, mostly untrue. . . ."





Ulrur Raska's son stood in the topmost chamber of the tall watchtower, staring out to sea. Like most Halogai, he was tall and fair. His shining hair hung in a neat braid that reached the small of his back, but there was nothing effeminate about him. His face,

hard-featured to begin with, had been battered further by close to half a century of carousing and war. His shoulders were wide as a bear's. Until a few weeks ago, his belly had bulged over his belt. It did not bulge any more. No one inside the fortress of Sotevag was fat any more.

Staring out to sea kept Ulror from thinking about the Videssian army that sat outside the walls of the fortress. The sea ran east forever from Sotevag. Looking at it, Ulror could feel free for a while, even if these southern waters were warm and blue, not like the chill, whitecap-flecked Bay of Haloga he had watched so often from the battlements of his own keep.

Of course, in the north the harvest failed one year in three. Even when it did not, there was never enough; nor was there enough land, not with every family running to three, five, seven sons. And so the Halogai hired on as mercenaries in Videssos and the lesser kingdoms, manned ships, and raided when they saw the chance.

Ulror smacked a big fist into his open palm in frustrated rage. By the gods, this chance had looked so good! With Videssos convulsed as two rival emperors battled, the island of Kalavria, far from the empire's heartland, should have been easy to seize, to make a place where Halogai could settle freely, could live without fear of starving. Kalavria even reminded Ulror of his own district of Namdalen, if one could imagine Namdalen without snow. Chieftains whose clans had hated each other for generations joined in building and crewing the fleet.

The really agonizing thing was that, over much of the island, the men from the far north had managed to establish themselves. And here sat Ulror, under siege. He would not have admitted it to any of his warriors, but he expected Sotevag to fall. If it did, the Videssians would probably mop up the rest of the Halogai, one band at a time.

Damn Kypros Zigabenos anyway!

Kypros Zigabenos stood staring up at the walls of Sotevag, wondering how he was ever going to take the stronghold. His agile mind leapt from one stratagem to another and unflinching found flaws in each. From where he stood, the fortress looked impregnable. That was unfortunate, for he was all too likely to lose his head if it held.

An eyebrow quirked in wry amusement. Zigabenos had a long, narrow, mobile face, the kind that made him look younger than his forty-five years. Hardly any gray showed in the dark hair or in the aristocratic fringe of beard tracing the angle of his jaw.

He brushed a speck of lint from the sleeve of his brocaded robe. To wear the rich samite in the field was the mark of a fop, but he did not care. What was the point of civilization, if not the luxuries it made possible?

That they destroyed the opportunity to create such

# A Difficult Undertaking

by Harry Turtledove

*Illustrations by Hank Jankus*



things was to him reason enough to oppose the Halogai. As individuals, he valued highly many of the northerners, Ulror not least among them. Certainly Ulror was a better man than the fool and the butcher who each claimed to be rightful Avtokrator of the Videssians.

Both those men had called on him for aid. In a way, he thanked the good god Phos for the arrival of the Halogai. Their attack gave him the perfect excuse to refuse to move men from Kalavria to take part in internecine strife. He would have done the same, though, if the invaders had not come.

But either the butcher or the fool would be able to rule Videssos, once the internal foe was vanquished. The empire had survived for close to a thousand years; it had seen bad emperors before. The eternal bureaucracy, of which Zigabenos was proud to be a part, held Videssos together when leadership faltered.

And that the Halogai, were their chieftains the best leaders in the world (and some came close), could never do. They knew nothing of the fine art of shearing a flock without flaying it. Like any barbarians, if they wanted something, they took it, never caring whether the taking ruined in a moment years of patient labor.

For that Zigabenos would light them, all the while recognizing and admiring their courage, their steadiness, aye, even their wit. When Ulror had sensibly decided to stand siege at Sotevag rather than risk his outnumbered, harried troops in a last desperate battle, Zigabenos had shouted to him up there on the battlements: "If you are so great a general, come out and fight!"

Ulror had laughed like one of his heathen gods. "If you're so great a general, Videssian, make me!"

The taunt still rankled. Zigabenos had surrounded the fortress, had even succeeded in cutting it off from the sea. The Halogai would not escape that way, or gain fresh supplies. But the storerooms and cisterns of Sotevag were full, thanks in no small measure to Zigabenos's own exertions the year before. Now he could not afford to wait and starve Ulror out. While he sat in front of Sotevag with forces he had scraped together from all over Kalavria, the northerners could do as they would through the rest of the island. Yet trying to storm the fortress would be hellishly expensive in men and materiel.

Damn Ulror Raska's son, anyway!

"They're stirring around down there," said Flosi Wolfs-Pelt, brushing back from his eyes the thick locks of gray hair that gave him his sobriquet.

"Aye." Ulror's eyes narrowed in suspicion. Till now, Zigabenos had been content to let hunger do his work for him. Like many Videssian generals, he played at war as if it were a game where the object was to win while losing as few pieces as possible. Ulror despised that style of fighting; he craved the hot, clean certainty of battle.

But there was no denying that what Zigabenos did, he did very well. He had chivvied Ulror's Halogai halfway across Kalavria, never offering combat unless the odds were all in his favor. He had even forced Ulror to dance to his tune and go to earth here like a hunted fox.

So why was he changing his way of doing things, when it had worked so well for him up to now?

Ulror pondered that as he watched the Videssians deploy. They moved smartly and in unison, as if they were puppets animated by Zigabenos's will alone. The Halogai lacked that kind of discipline. Even as the horns called them to their places on the battlements of Sotevag castle, they came out of the great hall in straggling groups of different sizes, getting in each other's way as they went to their assigned sections of the wall.

A single man rode past the palisade the Videssians had thrown up around Sotevag. He came within easy bowshot of the walls, his head bare so the defenders could recognize him. Ulror's lip twisted. Zigabenos might favor a spineless kind of warfare, but he was no coward.

"Your last chance, northerners," the Videssian general called, speaking the Haloga tongue badly but understandably. He did not bellow, as Ulror would have; still, his voice carried. "Surrender the fortress and yield up your commander, and you common soldiers will not be harmed. By Phos I swear it." Zigabenos drew a circle over his breast —the sun sign, symbol of the Videssian god of good. "May Skotos drag me down to hell's ice if I lie."

Ulror and Flosi looked at each other. Zigabenos had offered those same terms at the start of the siege and had been answered with jeers. No commander, though, could be sure how his troops would stand up under privation. . . .

An arrow buried itself in the ground a couple of strides in front of Zigabenos's horse. The beast snorted and side-stepped. The Videssian general, a fine rider, brought it back under control. Even then, he did not retreat. Instead, he asked, "Is that your final reply?"

"Aye!" the Halogai yelled, shaking their fists and brandishing weapons in defiance.

"No!" Ulror's great shout overrode the cries of his men. "I have another."

Zigabenos looked his way, suddenly alert. The northern chieftain understood that look and knew the Videssian thought he was about to turn his coat. Rage ripped through him. "The gods curse you, Zigabenos!" he roared. "The only way you'll get me out of Sotevag is stinking in my coffin!"

His men raised a cheer; the more bravado a Haloga showed in the face of danger, the more his fellows esteemed him. Zigabenos sat impassive until quiet returned. He gave Ulror the Videssian salute, his clenched fist over his heart. "That can be arranged," he said. He wheeled his horse, showing the northerners his back.

Ulror bit his lip. In his own cold-blooded way, Zigabenos had style.

The palisade drew near. The space between Zigabenos's shoulder blades stopped itching. If that had been he in the fortress, no enemy commander who exposed himself would have lived to return to his troops. The Haloga notion of honor struck him as singularly naive.

Yet the trip up to the walls had been worth making. When the northerners once fell into corruption, they wallowed in it. They reminded the Videssian general of a man never exposed to some childhood illness, who would die if he caught it as an adult. His own troops, no more brave or honorable than they had to be, would never sink

to the depths of a Haloga who abandoned his code of conduct.

No time for such reverie now, he told himself reproachfully. The trumpeters and fifers were waiting for his signal. He nodded. As the martial music rang out, his command echoed it: "Forward the palisade!"

Half the Videssian soldiers picked up the stakes and brush surrounding the castle of Sotevag and moved ahead, toward the fortress's walls. The rest of the men — the better archers in the army — followed close behind, their bows drawn.

The Halogai began shooting to harass the advance. The range was long, and the stuff of the palisade gave some protection. Nevertheless, here and there a man dropped. The dead lay where they had fallen; the wounded were dragged to the rear, where the priests would tend to them with healing magic.

Zigabenos gave a quiet order. The musicians sent it to the troops, who halted and began emplacing the palisade once more. "Give them a volley!" the general said. "From now on, they keep their heads down!"

The thrum of hundreds of bowstrings released together was the only pleasant note in the cacophony of war. Arrows hissed toward Sotevag. The Halogai dove for cover. Shouts of fury and screams showed that not all reached it.

One by one, the northerners reappeared, some standing tall and proud, others peering over the top of the battlements. Zigabenos gauged the moment. "Another!" he shouted.

The Halogai vanished again. "Marksmen only, from now on," the general commanded. "If you see a good target, shoot at it. Try not to waste arrows, though."

He had expected a furious answering fire from the besieged warriors, but it did not come. They were shooting back, but picking their marks as carefully as their foes. That made him want to grind his teeth. Ulror had learned too much, lighting against Videssians. Most of his countrymen would never have thought about saving arrows for a later need.

Zigabenos shook his head in reluctant admiration. He sighed, regretting the need to kill such a man. A race with the restless energy of the Halogai might go far, allied to Videssian canniness. Unfortunately, he knew the first place it would head for: Videssos the city, the great imperial capital. No lesser goal could sate such a folk. And so he would do his duty and try to make sure it never came into being.

He waved. An aide appeared at his elbow. "Sir?"

"Muster the woodworkers. The time has come to build engines."

"I grow to hate the sounds of carpentry," Ulror said. The Videssian artisans were a quarter-mile away, out of reach of any weapon from inside Sotevag. Yet there were so many of them, and they were chewing up so much timber that the noise of saw, hammer, axe, and adze was always present in the fortress.

"Not I," Flosi Wolfs-Pelt said.

"Eh? Why not?" Ulror looked at his companion in surprise.

"When the building noises stop, they'll be finished. Then they'll start using their toys."

"Oh. Aye." Ulror managed a laugh, as any northerner should in the face of danger, but even he could hear how grim it sounded. Frustrated, he shook his head until his braid switched like a horse's tail. "By the gods, I'd give three lingers off my sword hand for a way to strike at those accursed siege engines."

"A sally?" Flosi's eyes lit at the prospect. His hand went to the hilt of his sword.

"No," Ulror said reluctantly. "Look how openly the carpenters are working out there. See the cover off to the flanks? Zigabenos wants to tempt us into the open so he can slaughter us at his leisure. I'll not give him his triumph so cheap."

Flosi grunted. "There's no honor in such tricks."

"True, but they work all the same." Ulror had lost too many men to ambushes to doubt that. Such tactics were of a piece with the rest of the way the Videssians made war, seeking victory at the least cost to themselves. To counter them, a man had to fight the same way, regardless of how much it went against his grain.

Flosi, though, still wanted to strike a blow at the enemy. "What of using sorcery on their engines?"

That had not occurred to Ulror. Battle-magic almost always failed; in the heat of combat, men's emotions flamed strong enough to weaken the bite of spells. Only the most powerful wizards went to war, save as healers or diviners. And the one Haloga with Ulror who knew something of magic, Kolskegg Cheese-Curd, had a better reputation as tosspot than sorcerer.

When Ulror said as much to Flosi, his comrade snorted in disgust. "What do we lose by trying? If you don't aim to fight; why not throw yourself off the wall and have done?"

"I aim to fight," Ulror growled, pointing down into the outer ward, where men chopped logs and filled barrels with earth to build makeshift barriers if the walls should be breached.

"Defense," Flosi said scornfully.

Nettled, Ulror opened his mouth to snarl back, but stopped with his angry words still unspoken. How could he blame Flosi for wanting to hurt the Videssians? He wanted to himself. And who could say? Maybe Kolskegg could take the imperials by surprise. Ulror made for the stairwell, to track down the wizard. Behind him, Flosi nodded in satisfaction.

Kolskegg Cheese-Curd was a big, pockmarked man who, like Ulror, had been fat before the siege of Sotevag began. Now his skin was limp and saggy, like a deflated bladder. Something seemed to have gone out of his spirit, too, when the castle's ale casks ran dry. Living on well water was torment to him.

His eyes widened in alarm as Ulror explained what he required. "You must be mad!" he burst out. "A hundredth part of such a magic would burn out my brain!"

"No great loss, that," Ulror growled. "How do you have the nerve to call yourself a wizard? What *are* you good for, anyway?"

"My skill at divination is not of the worst." Kolskegg eyed Ulror warily, as if wondering how much trouble that

admission would get him into.

"The very thing!" the Haloga chieftain said, slapping him on the back. Kolskegg beamed, until Ulror went on, "Divine me a way to slip out of Zigabenos's clutches."

"But — my art is tyromancy" — Kolskegg quavered — "reading the future in the patterns curds make as they separate out in new cheese. Where can I get milk?"

"One of the last two jennies foaled the other day. The colt went into the stewpot, of course, but we still need the mother for hauling wood and earth. She may not have dried up yet."

"Ass's milk?" Kolskegg's lip curled. Even poor sorcerers had standards.

"What better, for you?" Ulror said brutally. Losing patience, he grabbed Kolskegg by the arm and half-led, half-dragged him down to the ward, where the donkey was dragging a log up to the wall. The beast's ribs showed through its mangy coat; it was plainly on its last legs. It gave a sad bray as Kolskegg squeezed a few squirts of milk into a bowl.

"Butcher it," Ulror told his men. If they waited any longer, no meat would be left on those sad bones.

Seeming more confident once he had sniffed and tasted the milk, Kolskegg took Ulror back to his pack, which lay on top of his straw pallet. He rummaged in it until he found a small packet of whitish powder. "Rennet," he explained, "made from the stomach lining of young calves."

"Just get on with it," Ulror said, faintly revolted.

Kolskegg sat cross-legged in the dry rushes on the floor. He began a low, whining chant, repeating the same phrase over and over. Ulror had seen other wizards act thus, to heighten their concentration. His regard for Kolskegg went up a notch.

He noticed Kolskegg was not blinking. All the sorcerer's attention focused on the chipped earthenware bowl in front of him, Ulror tried to find meaning in the swirling pattern of emerging curds as the rennet coagulated the milk, but saw nothing there he could read.

Kolskegg stiffened. White showed around the irises of his staring blue eyes. "A coffin!" he said hoarsely. "A coffin and the stench of the grave. Only through a death is there escape." His eyes rolled up altogether, and he slumped over in a faint.

Ulror's lips skinned back from his teeth in a humorless grin. Too well he remembered his roar of defiance to Zigabenos. The gods had a habit of listening to a man when he least wanted them to.

"I wish Skotos would drag that heathen down to the ice of hell now, instead of waiting for him to live out his span of days," Kypros Zigabenos said furiously, watching from the Videssian lines as Ulror dashed along the battlements of Sotevag, his blond braid flapping behind him. The barbarian ignored the hail of stones and darts with which the imperials were pounding the fortress. Buoyed by his spirit, the defenders stayed on the walls, shooting back with what they had and rushing to repair the damage from the bombardment.

Then, because he was an honest man — not always an advantage in Videssian service — Zigabenos felt he had to add, "But oh, he is a brave one."

"Sir?" said the servant who fetched him a cup of wine.

"Eh? Nothing." Zigabenos was irritated that anyone should have heard his mumblings. Still, he wished with all his heart for one of the Videssians missiles to dash out Ulror's brains.

Quite simply, the man was too good. Aye, he had let himself be penned here, but only as an alternative to worse. If ever he escaped, he might yet find a way to rally the Halogai and rape Kalavria away from the empire. He was worth an army to the northerners, just as Zigabenos, without false modesty, assessed his own similar value to Videssos.

He snapped his fingers in happy inspiration. At his shout, a runner came trotting up. He sent the man over to the stone-throwers and ballistae. One by one, the siege engines stopped. Zigabenos took up a white-painted shield — a badge of truce or parley — and walked toward Sotevag's battered walls.

"Ulror!" he called. "Ulror, will you speak with me?"

After a minute or so, the northern chieftain shouted back, "Aye, if you'll talk so my men understand us."

"As you wish," Zigabenos said in the Haloga tongue. Another ploy wasted; he had deliberately used Videssian before to try to make Ulror's warriors doubt their leader. Very well, let them hear: "Come out of the fortress, and I will still guarantee all your lives. And I pledge better for you, Ulror: a fine mansion, with a stipend to support a large band of retainers."

"And where will this fine mansion be? Here on the island?"

"You deserve better than this backwater, Ulror. What do you say to a residence at the capital, Videssos the city?"

Ulror was silent so long, Zigabenos's hopes began to rise. At last the northerner asked, "Will you give me a day's leave to think on it?"

"No," Zigabenos said at once. "You'll only use it to strengthen your defenses. Give me your answer."

Ulror boomed laughter. "Oh, how I wish you were a fool. I think I will decline your gracious invitation. With a civil war in the empire, even if by some mischance I reached the capital alive, I'd last about as long there as a lobster's green shell when you throw him in the boiling pot."

The Videssian general felt like snarling, but his face never showed it. "You have my personal guarantee of your safety," he said.

"Aye, and that's good as silver so long as I'm on the island, and worth nothing soon as I sail west, since both emperors hate you for not sending 'em men."

Too good by half, Zigabenos thought. Without another word, he turned and walked away. But Ulror was still in the lobster pot. It remained only to bring him to the boil.

The cat crawled forward, its timber sides and roof covered with green hides to keep them from being burnt. Fire arrows streaked from the Videssian archers toward bales of straw the Halogai had hung on the side of the wall to deaden the impact of the battering ram the cat protected. The northerners dumped pails of water and sewage, snuffing out the flames before they took hold.

Then the imperials manhandled their shed up to the base of the wall. The Halogai pelted it with boulders and spears, trying to create rifts in the hide covering through which boiling water and red-hot sand might find their way.

"There!" Ulror cried, pointing, and another stone thudded home. The din was indescribable. Through it all, though, Ulror heard the commands of the Videssian underofficer in the cat, each order delivered as calmly as if on parade.

He could not fathom that kind of courage. The hazards of the field — aye, he had their measure. This siege was harder, but here he had no good choice. But how men could hold their wits about them advancing turtle-fashion into danger, knowing they would die if their shell was broken, was beyond him.

Like so many Halogai, he scorned the discipline Videsos imposed on her troops; no free man would let himself be used so. Now he saw what such training was worth. His own men, he knew, would have broken under the punishment the imperials were taking. Yet they stolidly labored on.

Rather than hearing the ram strike the wall, Ulror felt it through the soles of his feet. Chains rattled in the cat below as the Videssians drew their great iron-faced log back for another stroke. The wall shook again. Ulror could see the spirit oozing out of his warriors. They had gaily faced the chance of arrow or flying stone, but this methodical pounding stole the manhood from them. He wondered if he could make them fight in the breach. He had no great hope of it.

Just when he was telling himself he should have made what terms he could with Zigabenos, shrieks replaced the stream of orders coming from the cat. One of the smoking cauldrons the Halogai tipped down on it had found a breach of its own.

When the ram's rhythm missed a beat, the northerners above seemed to realize their doom was not inevitable after all. Ulror bellowed encouragement to them. They redoubled their efforts, working like men possessed.

Three soldiers grunted to lift a huge stone to a crenellation, then shoved it out and down onto the cat. The shed's sloping roof and thick sides had sent other boulders bouncing aside, but this one struck square on the midline. Along with the crash, Ulror heard a metallic snap as a chain holding the ram to the roof of the cat broke. Shouts of pain from the imperials it injured in its fall and curses from the rest were as sweet music in his ears.

Like a wounded animal, the shed began to limp away. Videssian shieldsmen stood at its open front, where the ram had swung. They protected their comrades from the missiles the Halogai rained on them. Whenever one was shot, another took his place. That was bravery Ulror could grasp. Even as he let fly at them, he hoped they would safely reach their own line. Zigabenos, he thought, would want them to fall to the arrows like so many quail. That was sensible, but he did not have the stomach for it.

The Halogai danced with joy as the cat withdrew, their heavy boots clumping on the stone walkways and stairs. "A victory," Flosi Wolfs-Pelt said.

"Aye, or so the lads think, anyway," Ulror answered

quietly. "Well, that's worth something of itself, I suppose. It'll take their minds off the stale donkey tripes — the last of them left — and the handful of barley meal they'll be eating tonight."

"We hurt the cat," Flosi protested.

"So we did, and they hurt the wall. Which do you think the easier to repair?"

Flosi grimaced and turned away.

High overhead, a sea gull screeched. Ulror envied the bird its freedom. Not too many gulls came near Sotevag any more. If they did, the Halogai shot them and ate them. Their flesh was tough and salty and tasted strongly of fish, but hungry men did not care. Ulror had stopped asking about the meat that went into the stewpots. He did know that he had seen fewer rats lately.

Watching the gull wheel in the sky and glide away was suddenly more than Ulror could bear. He slammed his fist against the stone of the battlement, cursed at the pain. Ignoring Flosi's startled look, he rushed down the stairs and into the outer ward.

Kolskegg Cheese-Curd had been making what looked like a mousetrap out of sticks and leather thongs. He put the contraption aside as his chieftain bore down on him, asked warily, "Is there something I might do for you?"

"Aye, there is." Ulror hauled his reluctant wizard to his feet; his belly might be gone, but he still kept his bull strength. Paying no attention to the protests Kolskegg yammered, he dragged him through the gatehouse into the keep, and on into the chamber he had taken for himself.

The goosefeather mattress had belonged to the Videssian who once commanded here. So did the silk coverlet atop it, now sadly stained. Ulror flopped down on the bed with a sigh of relief, waved Kolskegg to a chair whose delicacy proclaimed it also to be imperial work.

Once Kolskegg had made himself comfortable, Ulror came to the point with his usual directness. "That was a true divination you gave me — that the only way I would leave Sotevag would be in my coffin?"

The wizard licked his lips, but had to answer. "Aye, it was."

To his surprise, his chieftain grunted in satisfaction. "Good. If Zigabenos's priests read the omens, they should learn the same, not so?"

"Aye." Kolskegg had been a warrior long enough to know not to volunteer more than he was asked.

"All right, then," Ulror said. "Give me a spell to turn me to the seeming of a corpse, stench and all, to let me get away. Then when I'm outside, you can take it off, or arrange in the first place for it to last only so long, or whatever you think best." He nodded, pleased at his own ingenuity.

The wizard's face, though, went chalky white. "Have mercy!" he cried. "I am nothing but a miserable diviner. Why do you set me tasks to strain the powers of the greatest adepts? I cannot do this: he who trifles with death in magic courts it."

"You are the only sorcerer I have," Ulror said implacably. "And you will do it."

"I cannot." As a weak man will, Kolskegg sounded querulous in his insistence.



"You will," Ulror told him. "If you do not, Sotevag will surely fall. And if the Videssians take me alive, I will tell them you worked your charms through their dark god Skotos. Once they believe that, you will wish you died fighting. No demon could serve you worse than their inquisitors."

Kolskegg shivered, for Ulror was right. As dualists, the imperials hated their deity's evil rival and dealt with legendary savagery with anyone who dared revere him. "You would not —" the wizard began, and stopped in despair. Ulror would.

The Haloga commander said nothing more. He waited, bending Kolskegg to his will with silence. Under his unwinking stare, the wizard's resolve melted like snow in springtime. "I will try," he said at last, very low. "Maybe at midnight, a spell I know might serve. It is, after all, only a seeming you seek."

He spoke more to reassure himself than for any other reason, Ulror judged. That was all right. "Midnight it is," Ulror said briskly. "I'll see you here then." He did not put any special warning in his voice. He had done his job properly, and did not need to.

The wizard returned at the hour he had set, stumbling in the darkness as he approached Ulror's door. Inside, the chieftain had a tallow dip lit. Not many lights burned in Sotevag at night; tallow and olive oil could be eaten, if a man was hungry enough.

Even in the red, flickering light, Kolskegg looked pale. "I wish I had a beaker of ale," he muttered under his breath. He fumbled in his pouch, finally digging out chain that held a black stone with white veins. "An onyx," he said, hanging it round Ulror's neck. "The stone for stirring up terrible fantasies."

"Get on with it," Ulror said. He spoke more harshly than he had intended; Kolskegg's nervousness was catching.

The wizard cast a powder into the flame of the tallow dip, which flared a ghastly green. Kolskegg began a slow, rhymeless chant full of assonances. The stone he had set on Ulror's breast grew cold, so he could feel its chill through his tunic. He could also feel the little hairs at the nape of his neck prickling upright.

The chant droned on. Kolskegg began singing faster and faster, as if he wanted to get through the incantation as quickly as he could. In the end, his own fear of what he was doing undid him. His tongue slipped, so that when he meant to intone "thee," "me" came out instead.

Had he been wearing the onyx, the spell might have possessed him as he intended it to possess Ulror: as an unpleasant but impermanent illusion. But the Haloga chieftain had the magical focus, not his wizard. Before Kolskegg could do more than gasp in horror at his blunder, the transformation struck him.

Ulror gagged on the stench that filled his chamber. He staggered outside and was sick against the wall of the keep. Several of his warriors rushed over, asking if he was all right.

One had the wit to offer a bucket of water. He rinsed his mouth, spat, rinsed again. The sour taste remained. His men began exclaiming over the graveyard reek that followed him into the inner ward.

"You will find a lich — not a fresh one — inside," he told them. "Treat poor Kolskegg with respect; he showed more courage dying at my order than ever he did in life."

As was his privilege, even after midnight, the blue-robed priest burst past Zigabenos's bodyguard and into the tent of the Videssian general. "Sorcery!" he cried, the firelight gleaming from his shaved pate. "Sorcery most foul!"

"Huh?" Zigabenos sat up with a start. He was glad he'd sent the kitchen wench back to her tavern instead of keeping her for the night. He enjoyed his vices, but had learned long since not to flaunt them.

His wits returned with their usual rapidity. "Say what you mean, Bonosos. Are the Halogai assailing us with magic?"

"Eh? No, your illustriousness. But they play at wizardry even so, a wizardry that stinks of Skotos." The priest spat on the ground in rejection of the wicked god, his faith's eternal enemy.

"The conjuration was not aimed at us? You are certain of that?"

"I am," Bonosos said reluctantly. "Yet it was strong, and of a malefic nature. It was not undertaken to curry favor with us."

"I hardly expected it would be," Zigabenos said; he had no intention of letting a priest out-irony him. "Still, so long as they do not send a blast our way, the Halogai are welcome to play at whatever they wish. Maybe it will go awry and eat them up, and save us the trouble."

"May the lord of the great and good mind hear and heed your prayer," Bonosos said, drawing Phos's sun sign on his breast.

Zigabenos did the same; his own piety, though he did



not let it interfere with whatever he had to do, ran deep. After a moment he said, "Bonosos, I hope you had a reason for disturbing my rest, other than merely to tell me the Halogai have some fribbling spell afoot."

"Hardly fribbling." Bonosos's glare was wasted; to Zigabenos, he was only a silhouette in the doorway. But there was no mistaking the abhorrence in the priest's voice as he went on, "The conjuration smacked of necromancy."

"Necromancy!" Zigabenos exclaimed, startled. "You must be mistaken."

Bonosos bowed. "Good evening, sir. I tell the truth. If you do not care to hear it, that is none of my affair." He spun on his heel and stalked away.

Stiff-necked old bastard, the Videssian general thought as he settled back under his silk coverlet, and mad as a loon besides. The Halogai inside Sotevag had too many other things to worry about to bother with corpse-raising or anything like it.

Or did they? Zigabenos suddenly remembered Ulror's howl of defiance from the battlement. The northerner must have taken that for prophecy as well as brag. Zigabenos laughed out loud, admiring Ulror's ingenuity in trying to get around his own oath. Unfortunately for the Haloga, he thought, there was not way around it. The northerners fought bravely and, under Ulror's command, resourcefully. Against siege-engines, however, bravery and resource only counted for so much. In a week, maybe less, maybe a day or two more, he would be inside Sotevag. And then Ulror's boast would be fulfilled in the most literal way imaginable.

Still chuckling, Zigabenos rolled over and went back to sleep.

After a sleepless night, Ulror stared out to sea, watching the rising sun turn the water to a flaming sheet of molten gold and silver. He regretted Kolskegg's death, and he regretted even more that it had been in vain. Now, impaled on his own rash words, he found nothing else to do but face the prospect of dying.

He did not fear death. Few Halogai did; they lived too close to it, both at home and in battle on distant shores. But he bitterly regretted the waste. If only he could get free, rally the Halogai all across Kalavria. In pursuing him, Zigabenos really had concentrated his own forces too much — provided the northerners moved against him in unison. If not, he would go on dealing with them piecemeal, methodical as a cordwainer turning out boots.

Ulror ground his teeth. All he, all any of the Halogai, wanted was a steading big enough for a free man to live on and to pass down to his sons, a good northern woman to wife, with perhaps two or three of these island wenches to keep a bed warm of nights, and a chance to enjoy the luxuries the imperials took for granted: wine grown on a man's own holding, a bathtub, wheat bread instead of loaves of rye or oats. If the empire's god would grant him so much, he might even give worship to Phos along with his own somber deities.

Unless Zigabenos made a mistake, though, none of that would happen. And Zigabenos was not in the habit of making mistakes.

As had happened a few days before, a gull gave its raucous call high over Sotevag. This time the frustration was more than the Haloga chieftain could bear. Without conscious thought, in one smooth motion he reached over his shoulder for an arrow, set it to his bow, and let fly. His rage lent power to the shot. The bird's cry abruptly cut off. It fell with a thud to the dirt of the outer ward. Ulror stared malevolently at the dead gull. Miserable, stinking thing, he thought.

"Good shooting," one of his warriors called, ambling over to pick up the bird and carry it off to be cooked.

"Hold!" Ulror shouted suddenly, rushing for a stairway. "That sea gull's mine!" The warrior gaped at him, certain he had lost his mind.

An orderly came dashing into the tent, interrupting Zigabenos's breakfast. Paying no attention to the Videssian general's glare, he said breathlessly, "Sir, there's sign of truce over the main gatehouse of Sotevag!"

Zigabenos stood up so quickly that he upset the folding table in front of him. He ignored his valet's squawk of distress and hurried out after the orderly to see this wonder for himself.

It was true. Above the gate, a white shield hung on a spear. "They turned coward at the end," the orderly said, "when they saw what our engines were about to do to them."

"I wonder," Zigabenos said. It was not like Ulror to give in so tamely. What sort of scheme could the Haloga chieftain have come up with? No one had spied him on the walls for several days now. Was he planning a last desperate sally, hoping to slay Zigabenos and throw the Videssian army into confusion?

To forestall that, the general approached the fortress in the midst of a squadron of shieldsmen, enough to get him out of danger no matter what the Halogai tried. When he was within hailing distance, he called, "Well Ulror? What have you to say to me?"

But it was not Ulror who came to stand by the northerners' truce shield. A rawboned Haloga with gray hair took that place instead. He stared down at Zigabenos in silence for a long moment, then asked, "Have you honor, imperial?"

Zigabenos shrugged. "If you need the question, would you trust the answer?"

A harsh chuckle. "Summat to that. All right, be it so. You'll do what you promised before, let the rest of us go if we yield you Sotevag and bring out Ulror?"

The Videssian general had all he could do not to cry out for joy. In exchange for Ulror, he was willing, nay eager, to let a few hundred barbarians of no special importance keep their lives. He was too old a hand, however, to let his excitement show. After a suitable pause, he demanded, "Show me Ulror now, so I may see you have him prisoner."

"I cannot," the Haloga said.

Zigabenos turned to leave. "I am not a child, for you to play tricks on."

"He is dead," the northerner replied, and Zigabenos stopped. The northerner went on. "He took a fever a week ago, but fought on with it, as any true man would.

He died four nights past. Now that he is gone, we ask ourselves why we must sell our lives dear, and find no answer."

"You need not, of course," Zigabenos said at once. No wonder the Halogai had tried necromancy, he thought. But Ulror was tricky, and who knew how far he would go to lend verisimilitude to a ploy? The Videssian general declared, "I will abide by my terms, save that I add one condition: as each man of yours leaves Sotevag, my wizards will examine him, to be sure that he is not Ulror in sorcerous disguise."

The Haloga spokesman spat. "Do what you please. Victors always do. But I have told you you will not find him among them."

The haggled over details for the next hour. Zigabenos was lenient. Why not, with the one great northern chieftain gone and Sotevag about to return to imperial hands?

When noon came, the long-shut fortress gates swung open. As had been agreed, the Halogai came out two by two, in armor and carrying their weapons. They were all skinny, and many wounded. They could not help looking out toward the imperial lines; if Zigabenos wanted to betray them, he could. He did not want to. He expected to fight their countrymen again, and fear of a broken truce would only lead the Halogai to fight to the end from then on.

The Videssian general stood outside the gates with a pair of priests. The blue-robes had anointed their eyes with a paste made from the gall of a male cat and the fat of a pure white hen, an ointment that let them pierce illusion. They examined each emerging northerner, ready to cry out if they spied Ulror behind a veil of magic.

The gray-haired Haloga with whom Zigabenos had dickered came limping out. The general gave him a formal salute. He had developed some respect for this Flosi Wolfs-Pelt, for his spirit, his courage, and his blunt honesty. What sprang from those, though, was easy to anticipate. When the time came, he knew he would beat Flosi. With Ulror he had never been sure.

Flosi looked through him, as if he did not exist.

The moment Zigabenos had been waiting for finally came. A dozen Halogai dragged a roughly built coffin behind them on a sledge. "Ulror is inside?" the general asked one of them.

"Aye," the man said.

"Check it," Zigabenos snapped to the priests who flanked him.

They peered at the coffin with their sorcerously enhanced vision. "That is truly Ulror Raska's son within," Bonosos declared.

So Ulror had been a prophet after all, Zigabenos thought, and look what it gained him. Something else occurred to the Videssian general. "Is the rascal dead?"

Bonosos frowned. "A spell to ascertain that will take some time to prepare, and in any case I dislike touching on death with my sorcery — see how such an unholy effort profited the northerner here. I suggest you make your own examination to satisfy yourself. If he is four days dead, you will know it."

"Something in the air, you mean. Yes, I take your point," Zigabenos chuckled. He added, "Who would



expect such plain sense from a priest?" Bonosos's frown turned to scowl. The Videssian general approached the coffin. "Pry up the top of the lid, you," he told one of the northerners.

Shrugging, the Haloga drew his sword and used it to lever up the coffin lid; nails squealed in protest. Through the narrow opening Zigabenos saw Ulror's face, pale and thin and still. The death smell welled out, almost thick enough to slice. "Shut it," Zigabenos said, coughing. He drew Phos's sun circle on his breast, then saluted the coffin with the same formality he had offered Flosi.

Seeing how exhausted the pallbearers were, Zigabenos said kindly, "If you like, we will bury him for you here."

The Halogai drew themselves up; even in privation, they were proud men. One said, "I thank you, but we care for our own."

"As you wish." Zigabenos waved them on.

When the last northerner had left Sotevag castle, the general sent in a crack platoon to search it from top to bottom. No matter what the priests said, no matter what he had seen and smelled, maybe Ulror had found a way to stay behind and then drop over the walls and escape. Zigabenos did not see how, but he took no chances where Ulror was concerned.

Only when the platoon's lieutenant reported back to him that Sotevag was empty of life did he truly begin to believe he had won.

Hungry, worn, and battered as they were, the Halogai traveled slowly. Still, Kalavria was not a large island. By the end of the second day after they left Sotevag, they were at the end of the central uplands. They camped next to a swift, cool stream.

As the warriors shared the half-ripe fruits and nuts they had gathered on their march and as hunters went into the undergrowth after rabbits, Flosi went up to Ulror's coffin. Wrinkling his nose at the stench emanating from it, he pried up the ends of a couple of boards with his dagger.

The coffin shook, as with some internal paroxysm. The boards Flosi had loosened flew up. Ulror scrambled out. The first thing he did was to dive into the water and scrub himself from head to foot with sand from the streambank. When he came splashing out, streaks of the mixture of chalk and grease with which he had smeared his face remained on it, but his natural ruddy color dominated once more.

One of his warriors threw a ragged cloak around him. "Food!" he boomed. "After two days with nothing but three stinking sea gulls for company, even the rubbish we were eating back at Sotevag would taste good."

Flosi brought him some of their meager fare. Ulror wolfed it down. One by one, the hunters returned. Fresh meat, even a couple of bites' worth, roasted over an open fire was the most delicious thing he had ever eaten.

His belly was still growling after all the food was gone, but he had grown used to that in Sotevag. He looked around again and again, admiring the stream, the trees, the little clearing in which the Halogai were camped. "Free," he breathed.

"Aye." Flosi still did not seem to believe it. "I thought we were ruined when your magicking with Kolskegg failed."

"And I." Ulror longed for wine, but after a moment he realized triumph was a sweeter, headier brew. He laughed. "We get so used to using sorcery for our ends, we forget what we can do without it. Once I thought of the scheme, my biggest worry was that Zigabenos would attack before the birds got ripe enough to use."

"A good thing you whitened your face, even so."

"Oh, indeed. Zigabenos is too canny for me to dare miss a trick against him," Ulror said. A swirl of the breeze brought the carrion reek his way. He grimaced. "I was afraid of one other thing, too. He might have noticed something wrong if he'd heard my 'corpse' puking its guts out."

"So he might." Flosi allowed himself a rare smile. He rose and started over to the opened coffin. "The birds have served their purpose. I'll toss them in the creek."

"Eh? Don't do that," Ulror exclaimed.

"Why not? What do you want them for? I wouldn't eat the smelly things if I'd stood siege for years, not a couple of months. Throw 'em away and have done."

"I have a better plan," Ulror said.

"What's that?"

"I'm going to send one back to Zigabenos behind a shield of truce." Ulror's eyes glowed with mischief. "I wish I could be there to see his face when he finds out how" — he grinned a huge grin; it felt monstrous good to be able to joke again — "how he's been gulled."

"Gulled, eh?" Kypros Zigabenos nodded at the noisome pile of feathers the smirking Haloga herald set before him. He would not give the barbarian the satisfaction of showing he felt anything at all at finding Ulror alive and free. Never in his life, though, had he come so close to dishonoring a truce shield. The northerner would never know by how little he had missed the lash, the thumbscrews, the red-hot bronze needles, and the rest of the ingenious torments the Videssians had devised over the centuries.

But only a vicious fool struck the bearer of bad news. And so Zigabenos, his heart a cold stone in his breast, poured wine for the Haloga and laughed politely to hear how Ulror had duped him.

"Wait here a moment, if you will," he said to the warrior, and stepped out of his tent to speak to one of his guards. The man blinked in surprise, then saluted and hurried away, stringing his bow as he trotted.

Zigabenos returned to his unwelcome guest, refilled the fellow's cup, and went on with the urbane conversation he had briefly interrupted. Behind his smiling mask, he felt desperation building. He had staked too great a part of the imperial forces on Kalavria to finishing Ulror here. The Videssians scattered over the rest of the island were ragtag and bobtail. With his victorious army as a core, they would have sufficed. Now the Halogai would mop up, not he.

And they would come for him. He wondered how fast his artisans could repair the damage his own engines had done to Sotevag and what sort of supplies he could bring in. The Halogai were impetuous, impatient. They might not have the staying power to conduct a siege of their own.

But with Ulror leading them, they might.

The sentry with whom Zigabenos had spoken stuck his head into the tent. "I have one, your excellency."

"Very good. Bring it in." The general drew himself up straighter in his chair. Sometimes one won, sometimes one lost; no sane man expected nothing but triumph in his life. But win or lose, style mattered. He prayed the day might never come when he failed to meet misfortune with aplomb.

The bird the Videssian soldier brought in was smaller than the one Ulror had sent, with a deeply forked tail and a black cap. It was still warm. Zigabenos picked it up and ceremoniously offered it to the Haloga. "I hope you will be so kind as to present this to your master, with my compliments."

The northerner looked at Zigabenos, as if the general had gone mad. "Just the bird, or shall I say something?"

"The latter." Zigabenos was an imperial, a man of an anciently civilized race, and of high blood as well. This grinning blond lout here would never understand, but somehow he felt Ulror might appreciate the spirit in which he sent his message. "Tell him one good tern deserves another."



# Easy as 1, 2, 3

## Follow these steps for interesting NPCs

by Rick Swan

When it comes to role-playing non-player characters, most DMs are about as comfortable as an elf at an orc party. And that's hardly surprising. The DM's job is tough enough as it is; since he's already loaded down with all other sorts of responsibilities to keep an adventure on course, he may just decide that creating interesting personalities for his NPCs is one task too many. Besides, with a general idea of the various NPC types, he can always improvise as the need arises.

Unfortunately, this approach can make the game a real drag for the players, especially ones who've gone to the trouble of creating three-dimensional personalities for their player characters. Who can blame them for rolling their eyes as they encounter yet another wise old wizard or swooning damsel in distress? Who wants to interact with cliches?

Like all aspects of being a good DM, breathing life into NPCs requires advance planning. The tried-and-true method of tackling the problem is by creating a sort of "personality profile" for each character, a summary of the NPC's personality that the DM can use as a quick reference when role-playing the character in an adventure. The profile usually consists of a series of descriptive words or phrases that may be written on an index card along with statistics or jotted down in the margin of the module next to the NPC's name.

The *Dungeon Masters Guide* stresses the importance of well-developed NPCs and provides guidelines on pages 100-102 for creating profiles from a series of tables listing possible traits for appearance, disposition, intellect, and other general categories. Traits for each NPC may be specifically chosen from these tables or arrived at randomly by rolling dice.

These guidelines provide a good basis for creating profiles, but there are some problems in leaning on them too heavily. Although the tables are reasonably comprehensive, it's unrealistic to expect them to generate the virtually limitless range of all possible human (and non-human) personality traits. You can come close, but you can't specifically get characters who are "sarcastic," "paranoid," "preoccupied," "alcoholic," or "prone to have psychosomatic pains" by using the tables. Some of

the choices are too similar; there's no great difference between "foppish" and "dandyish" from the Appearance Table, or "lusty" and "lustful" from the Morals Table. Other entries aren't particularly precise. "Insane," for instance, covers a lot of territory; we have no way of knowing from the table if that character is "schizoid," "manic depressive," or just plain "psychotic." Is an NPC "dirty" because he's a hard worker in need of a bath, or is he just a slob? And relying on the tables to generate traits completely at random tends to produce results that are not only unrealistic but unsatisfying, too.

There is, however, an alternate method for creating personality profiles that uses the DMG tables as a starting point. By following a systematic procedure of (1) brainstorming, (2) refining, and (3) testing, you can develop profiles that are easy to use and right on target.

The first step is brainstorming: creating a master list of adjectives and descriptive phrases that will be the basis of your profile. Don't edit yourself when brainstorming. You'll want to list all of the traits that seem obvious as well as any implied ones. Feel free to add any unusual or just plain weird ideas, too. Make your list as long as you like, but ten or twelve possibilities is a good number to shoot for.

To begin your master list, write down any characteristics given in the NPC description or suggested by the statistics, then add any related ideas that occur to you. For instance, if Angela the servant girl is described in a scenario as being 16 years old, weighing 95 pounds, attractive, and having a charisma of 17, you might start your list with "young," "slight," "pretty," and "charming." As you brainstorm for related ideas, you might add "fragile," "gorgeous," and "flirtatious."

Pay attention also to the physical appearance of the NPC and any personality traits it might suggest. If you're unable to visualize the NPC, now might be a good time to refer to the Appearance Table in the DMG and make a selection or a die roll. Don't forget possible traits associated with the character class.

When you've covered the basics, it's time to unleash your imagination and flavor your list with an oddball choice or two. Write down "asthmatic," "sneaky," or "near-sighted" or anything else that appeals to

you on a whim. Check the DMG lists and pick a couple of traits, Chinese-restaurant style (one from column A, one from column B).

If the scenario description of the NPC is sketchy or if you're making your NPC up from scratch, you may have trouble getting off the ground. One good way to get started is to randomly determine one or two fundamental characteristics from the DMG tables and then select complementary, non-conflicting traits. Once the NPC begins to come into focus, you can proceed with brainstorming. Another good method is to pick a friend, celebrity, or fictional character and imagine that person as the NPC. Visualizing your non-descript halfling as Joan Rivers or Miss Piggy ought to inspire some vivid possibilities.

The sources for ideas are endless. In addition to the DMG, you might try looking for descriptive phrases in a thesaurus or dictionary. NPCs from other modules (or even from other games) can be good sources. If you come up with an especially good trait, you might want to add it to the appropriate table in the DMG or start a new list for future reference.

Once you've finished your master list, the next step is refining it. Your finished profile should be as concise as possible; not only does a concise profile make the DM's job easier, it also allows for an ongoing character to develop and change according to circumstances of the campaign. For most NPCs, shoot for a profile of about three adjectives and descriptive phrases. If three elements aren't enough to create a clear mental picture, add a couple more, though it's not necessary to go into a lot of detail. Remember that the profile is a form of shorthand, and one well-chosen descriptive element can suggest many others. ("Feeble," for instance, could remind you that your NPC is also "weak," "old," and "slow-moving.")

Begin refining your master list by taking a look at any elements that pertain to appearance or physical traits and eliminate those that seem unlikely to affect the NPC's personality. Knowing a fighter is "hideous" could conceivably be important in role-playing him; knowing he's "blue-eyed" probably won't be of much help.

Next, combine or eliminate all similar terms, such as "sad" and "unhappy," or "quiet" and "silent." Get rid of all phrases

that strike you as uninteresting or vague. As you go over your list, feel free to add new phrases or substitute better ones. Make the final revisions and refinements by using the following guidelines:

1. Be precise. Like an image in a camera, your profile should be focused for the sharpest and clearest picture. If you want your character to have a pleasant personality, be more specific than "happy." "Cheery" means one thing, while "exhilarated" suggests something entirely different.

2. Choose phrases that are evocative for you, and use your own system of shorthand wherever you want. Don't be inhibited — your players will never know what you've written. Why use "dull" to describe a slow-witted NPC if "airhead" helps you nail him down? Make up your own words if necessary. Don't settle for "cunning" if "J. R. Ewinglike" is more vivid for you. If you've got an NPC with a sense of humor, try phrases like "Lettermanesque" or "Pryorlike" to bring him to life.

3. Use common sense to avoid contradictions or opposites. Unless he's a mental case, an NPC can't be both "perky" and "depressed."

4. Go for extremes. NPCs with extreme traits are not only easier to role-play, they're more fun for the PCs, too. "Miserable" is stronger than "sad," and "suicidal" might be better yet. "Faithful" is vague. "Religious" is better, but why not consider

going all the way and make him a "religious fanatic"?

5. Go for an interesting mix. Chances are, your PCs have had their fill of warriors who are "brave" and "mighty." How about one who's "whining" or "prissy"? (He can still be dangerous.) Or how about a "wise guy"?

When you've finished-refining your profile, you're ready to test it; Using the profile as a guide, imagine how your NPC would respond to a variety of hypothetical questions and statements. Some should be friendly, some hostile, and some just curious. You can select examples from the following list or use the same general ideas to come up with your own.

"Greetings! What's your name, friend?"

"Ready your weapon and prepare to die!"

"That's a nice cloak you have there. Would you consider a trade?"

"Will you join us on our quest for the red dragon?"

"Enemy troops ahead! We've got to do something!"

"Will you allow some weary travelers to rest here for a bit?"

"Do you know where Ramus the Healer resides?" (Assume your NPC doesn't know.)

"Where can we find Princess Marcella?" (Assume your NPC knows that she lives in the next castle.)

"May I borrow your horse?"

"Have you ever heard of Grendar the Mighty?" (Assume he killed the brother of your NPC.)

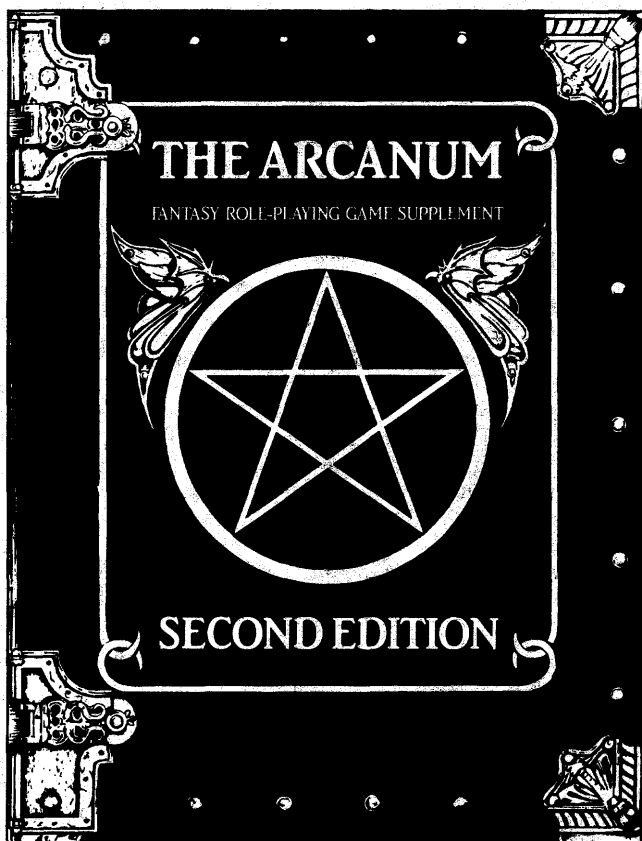
"We need to hide this map. Will you help us?"

It's also important to test your NPCs in situations that seem likely to occur in a given adventure. If you know your PCs will be searching the city for hirelings, make sure your testing session includes some appropriate questions. Testing may reveal unexpected strengths and weaknesses in your profile. If so, modify your profile and test it again.

Remember to use restraint during the actual game. It isn't necessary or advisable to prepare speeches or responses in advance. Just because your NPC warrior is a "wise guy," don't go out of your way to force in a joke. A good profile will allow you to role-play your NPCs naturally and spontaneously, and vivid profiles provided by you are sure to trigger vivid responses from the characters.

Once you get the hang of it, you'll find this three-phase system of brainstorming, refining, and testing to be an indispensable tool for role-playing NPCs. Before you know it, you'll be dazzling your players with NPCs that are so lifelike, they'll think you brought them in off the street. You don't have to tell them it's easy — in fact, as easy as 1, 2, 3.

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# One roll, to go

## Tables reduce a handful of dice to just two

by Larry Church

You're running a game in which the party is ambushed by 45 archers. Arrows begin flying; you resign yourself to rolling your 20-sided die over and over (and over and over and . . .). Anxious players drum their fingers as they await their turn. Is there a quicker way? Obviously there is, or you wouldn't be reading this article.

Included are three tables that will greatly expedite the die-rolling process. They emulate, respectively, 5 rolls, 10 rolls, and 20 rolls of a 20-sided die. The numbers across the top indicate the "to hit" number (1 is left off since there is always a 100 percent chance of rolling a 1 or better). The left-hand side shows the number of hits. The numbers in the table itself give percentages for successful hits.

To use the tables, determine what the "to hit" value is. Look up that value on the column heading of the appropriate table; this is the column you will be using. Roll percentile dice. Find the largest value in the column that is less than or equal to the number just rolled, and consult the leftmost number in that row. This represents the amount of successful hits.

*Example:* In the above scenario, the DM determines that 10 arrows are being aimed at Francis the Cleric. The DM consults the 10-Roll Binomial Table. The archers need, say, a 12 to hit, and the DM rolls a 39 on percentile dice. The largest number less than or equal to 39 in the "12" column is 27. This corresponds to 4 hits tread across to the leftmost column) out of the 10 attempts.

It should be noted that the tables are not limited to just combat rolls; they can be used anytime a 20-sided die is rolled to determine success or failure.

*Example:* On his turn, Francis decides to run for help, and casts a *sanctuary* spell. The DM must now roll saving throws for all 45 archers, so he makes two rolls on the 20-Roll Binomial Table and one roll on the 5-Roll Binomial Table. Each archer's saving throw is 15, so that is the number of the column referred to on both of the Binomial Tables. For the first use of the 20-Roll Table, the DM gets a 77 on percentile dice. Reading down the "15" column, he finds that a result of 77 corresponds to

eight successful saves out of the first 20 attempts. For the next use of the 20-Roll Table, he gets a 34 on percentile dice. Again referring to the "15" column, the DM finds that 24 is the closest number to 34 that is also lower than 34. Reading back across that row to the leftmost column, he sees that only five archers out of the second group of 20 were able to save. For the single roll on the 5-Roll Table the DM gets a 21 on percentile dice, indicating that one archer out of the final group of five made his save. Thus, a total of 14 (8 + 5 + 1) archers are free to shoot at poor Francis as he flees.

### Special cases

Some of the columns have more than one entry of 99 or 00 in them. Special procedures must be taken if these numbers are rolled. Each case is handled differently. Normally, if the percentile dice roll is lower than the lowest number in the column, it indicates no hits. However, if 00 is rolled (a 00 indicates zero rather than the usual one hundred) and at least one 00 entry appears in the column being referred to, then the DM must add an extra number of 20-sided die rolls to the number that still remained to be determined and continue the process. The number of extra rolls is equal to the number of 00 entries in the column being used.

*Example:* The sharp-eyed archers who made their saving throws notice Francis running away. Each of the 14 archers now needs a 10 to hit (because Francis' back is turned). The DM consults the 10-Roll Binomial Table for the first 10 attempts, and rolls a 00. There are two entries of 00 in the "10" column, which means that all but two of the first 10 archers have certainly missed, but there is still a chance that two of them will hit. The DM adds two 20-sided die rolls to the four that remained to be made, for a total of six. Then, using the 5-Roll Binomial Table to handle five of those rolls, he gets a 01. This is less than the lowest number in the "10" column, so none of those five shots were successful. For the final archer, the DM rolls a 20-sided die and gets a result of 7 — another miss! Francis manages to escape.

In the case of a 99, the procedure is similar — but the number of extra rolls equals one less than the number of 99's. If

there is only one 99 in the column being used, then all hits are automatically successful and no extra rolls are granted.

*Example:* After Francis escapes, 20 archers are sent after him, and sure enough they find him (this is just not Francis's day). Each of them needs a 12 to hit, and the DM rolls a 99 on percentile dice. The bottom 99 in the "12" column of the 20-Roll Binomial Table corresponds to 15 hits, so at least this many hit. There are six 99's in the column; six minus one is five, so this is the number of extra attempts that must still be determined. To deal with these five, the DM consults the 5-Roll Binomial Table and rolls a 92, indicating four more hits for a total of 19. Drilled with arrows, Francis hires himself out as a hatrack.

### How the system works

Where did all these numbers come from? From calculating probabilities. A probability is nothing more than a number between 0 and 1, inclusive. If something has a probability of 0, there is no chance that it will happen, while a probability of 1 means the event is certain to happen. Numbers' in between indicate percentage chances; thus, .75 means an event will have a 75% chance of occurring. If two events are independent (such as two rolls of a die), the chance that both will occur is the product of the two probabilities.

Now let's consider a concrete example: The "10" column on the 5-Roll Binomial Table. There is an 11 in 20 chance of rolling a 10 or better on a 20-sided die, which corresponds to a .55 probability. Since the five rolls are independent, the probability of them all being 10 or higher is found by multiplying them together: .55 multiplied by itself five times equals .0503, or about 5%. Subtracting 5 from 100 yields 95; this is the number that must be rolled on percentile dice to simulate rolling 10 or higher five consecutive times on a 20-sided die. This checks with the table, where 95 is the entry that corresponds to five hits when the "to hit" number (or saving throw, or whatever) is 10.

Since there is a 55% chance of a hit, there is a 45% chance of a miss. So, the chance of missing the first hit and succeeding on the other four is  $.45 \times .55 \times .55 \times .55 \times .55$ , which is .0412. Because the single miss is equally likely to

happen on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th try, the total chance for four successful hits is  $5 \times .0412$ , or about 21%. Subtracting this from 95 gives 74.

There are ten ways to hit three times and miss twice; this corresponds to a 34%

chance, and  $74 - 34 = 40$ , which is one off the listed value. The reason for the discrepancy is round-off error; we have been rounding during the calculations, while the tables were computed first and then rounded.

*DM: Boy these binomial tables are great! Now, I can run encounters with entire armies!*

Francis Jr: (a new 1st-level cleric): *Oh, goody.*

mq

### 5-ROLL BINOMIAL TABLE

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
5	23	41	56	67	76	83	88	92	95	97	98	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
4	02	08	16	26	37	47	57	66	74	81	87	91	95	97	98	99	99	99	99
3	00	01	03	06	10	16	24	32	41	50	59	68	76	84	90	94	97	99	99
2	00	00	00	01	02	03	05	09	13	19	26	34	43	53	63	74	84	92	98
1	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	01	02	03	05	08	12	17	24	33	44	59	77

### 10-ROLL BINOMIAL TABLE

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
10	40	65	80	89	94	97	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
9	09	26	46	62	76	85	91	95	98	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
8	01	07	18	32	47	62	74	83	90	95	97	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
7	00	01	05	12	22	35	49	62	73	83	90	95	97	99	99	99	99	99	99
6	00	00	01	03	08	15	25	37	50	62	74	83	91	95	98	99	99	99	99
5	00	00	00	01	02	05	09	17	26	38	50	63	75	85	92	97	99	99	99
4	00	00	00	00	00	01	03	05	10	17	27	38	51	65	78	88	95	99	99
3	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	03	05	10	17	26	38	53	68	82	93	99
2	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	02	05	09	15	24	38	54	74	91
1	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	01	03	06	11	20	35	60

### 20-ROLL BINOMIAL TABLE

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
20	64	88	96	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
19	26	61	82	93	98	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
18	08	32	60	79	91	96	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
17	02	13	35	59	77	89	96	98	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
16	00	04	17	37	59	76	88	95	98	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
15	00	01	07	20	38	58	75	87	94	98	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
14	00	00	02	09	21	39	58	75	87	94	98	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
13	00	00	01	03	10	23	40	58	75	87	94	98	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
12	00	00	00	01	04	11	24	40	59	75	87	94	98	99	99	99	99	99	99
11	00	00	00	00	01	05	12	24	41	59	75	87	95	98	99	99	99	99	99
10	00	00	00	00	00	02	05	13	25	41	59	76	88	95	99	99	99	99	99
9	00	00	00	00	00	01	02	06	13	25	41	60	76	89	96	99	99	99	99
8	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	02	06	13	25	42	60	77	90	97	99	99	99
7	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	02	06	13	25	42	61	79	91	98	99	99
6	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	02	06	13	25	42	62	80	93	99	99
5	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	02	05	12	24	41	63	83	96	99
4	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	02	04	11	23	41	65	87
3	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	03	09	21	40	68
2	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	02	07	18	39	74
1	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	04	12	36



# TOP (SECRET) GUNS

## *Military aircraft in TOP SECRET® gaming*

by Patrick Rice

In TOP SECRET® module TS003, *Lady in Distress*, the agents are assigned to raid an enemy villa in the Spanish highlands. Their transportation is by twin-engined aircraft, which is to take them outside of Barcelona for a parachute drop. What if the Spanish government found out about the mission? It would have sent military aircraft to intercept the agents' plane — and the Administrator would have searched for information about the topic of aviation to no avail. Below is some TOP SECRET information about military aircraft, flying skills, military reactions to enemy aircraft, and typical aircraft weapons.

### Flying skills

Any player character may elect to become a pilot, as long as he or she meets the following AOK scores — Aeronautical Engineering (80), Computer Science (65), and Military Science/Weaponry (65). If the character fits the requirements, training must be received in flight tactics, the principles of flight, aerodynamics, navigation, and jet propulsion. Such skills are taught at flight school or at a military base; in the latter case, the player character would be assumed to have enlisted in the armed forces prior to training (and prior to the current campaign), and must have served at least four years in the military branch chosen. The cost for private flight school is about \$5,000 total.

A major concern in flying is the weather. If characters are using aircraft, the Administrator should keep careful notes on the weather conditions in that area. It might be worthwhile to check the daily newspaper to find the weather conditions in the part of the world the party is occupying. Different weather conditions have an effect on flight quality, as shown in the following table. Note that the results given apply particularly to low-level flight over rough terrain; turbulence at higher altitudes can result in instability of flight, but not necessarily a crash.

### Aerial combat

Aerial combat is carried out in a way similar to that made with projectile

weapons, with the exception of missile combat. Whenever a pilot elects to hunch a missile at an enemy aircraft, the Administrator finds the maneuverability score for the aircraft and locates the result of the attack on the table below.

### Maneuverability

score	Effect
1-2	Plane automatically hit
3-4	Plane 90% likely to be hit
5-6	Plane 75% likely to be hit
7-8	Plane 50% likely to be hit
9	Plane 40% likely to be hit

The chances of being hit do not take into account any electronic jamming, but they do account for evasive actions made by the pilot to evade the missile. Jamming, if applicable, reduces the chances of being hit by a variable percentile score determined by the referee, depending upon the reliability of the jamming equipment and the susceptibility of the missile to being jammed. Note that some missile types have a chance of being duds — *i.e.*, they won't explode on impact.

If an airplane is hit by an exploding missile, consult the Explosive Use Against Vehicles Table (page 37, TOP SECRET rule book) for the results. The crewmen each have a chance of surviving, though any survivors take 0-18 (2d10 -2) Life Level points of damage. However, if the aircraft outmaneuvers the missile, the missile flies out of its effective range and explodes on impact with the ground. An aircraft hit by a dud missile has a better chance of

### Weather

conditions	Effect
Very high winds . . . . . (71+ mph)	Forces aircraft to crash into terrain (90% chance)
High winds . . . . . (10-70 mph)	Hard to keep craft stable (10% chance of crash)
Gentle winds . . . . . (up to 10 mph)	No effect
Heavy rain . . . . .	Impossible to see, computer guidance only
Light rain . . . . .	Blurred vision (25% chance of computer guidance required)

survival (use Bullet Use Against Vehicles Table, page 36, with -10% penalty); injuries sustained by the crew are 0-5 (1d20 - 5) Life Level points of damage.

### Enemy reactions

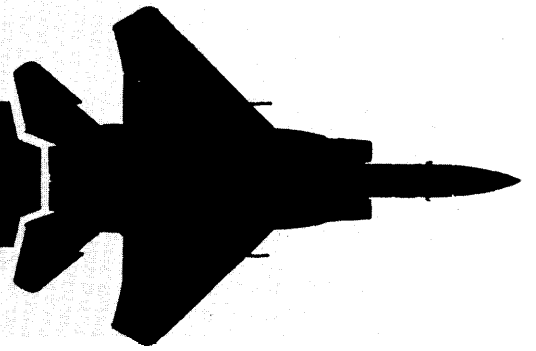
Whenever an aircraft enters an enemy's airspace, it is usually picked up on radar, and aircraft from a nearby air base are launched. The number of aircraft varies (2d10), but all will be fully armed. Any aircraft can contact another aircraft or ground unit through an all-wave radio mounted in the cockpit of the plane. If contact is not made, the intercepting aircraft will usually attack until they are destroyed. The intercepting aircraft arrive in 4-40 minutes after the intruding aircraft is picked up.

Aircraft may be attacked from the ground by anti-aircraft guns and ground-to-air missiles. Anti-aircraft guns should be treated as having a PWV 65, with no modifiers whatsoever. The large anti-aircraft guns are not easily seen, but they become easy targets once spotted because they are not very mobile. On the other hand, ground-to-air are highly mobile when mounted on a truck. Most ground-to-air missiles have an effective range of five miles and should be treated as air-to-air missiles for hit determination and damage.

Attacks from aircraft to targets on the ground can be attempted by equating 40 ounces of plastic explosive with an air-to-ground missile. Cannon fire on ground targets should be treated as typical projectile combat, with a few exceptions:

1. Damage to people on the ground is always serious;
2. Treat missiles as armor-piercing against vehicles; and,
3. Missiles can never be used for called shots.

Bombs may be dropped, each having a variable chance of hitting a target and causing a variable amount of damage. The quality of bomb attacks depends on many factors (weather, target quality, local terrain, presence of night, ground fire, bomb type, electronic guidance from plane, onboard bomb guidance, etc.) — so many factors that they cannot all be listed. Assume a flat 20% chance of a successful strike, modified up or down as seems appropriate. Bomb sizes and effects also



vary widely; the referee should use his discretion here, remembering that aerial dogfights and bombing runs may lie outside the scope of the TOP SECRET game itself.

#### Military aircraft roster

The following is a list of aircraft being flown by various national air forces and navies. The information is presented in the following order:

1. Aircraft classification and maker;
2. Top speed of the aircraft (in parentheses, in miles per hour);

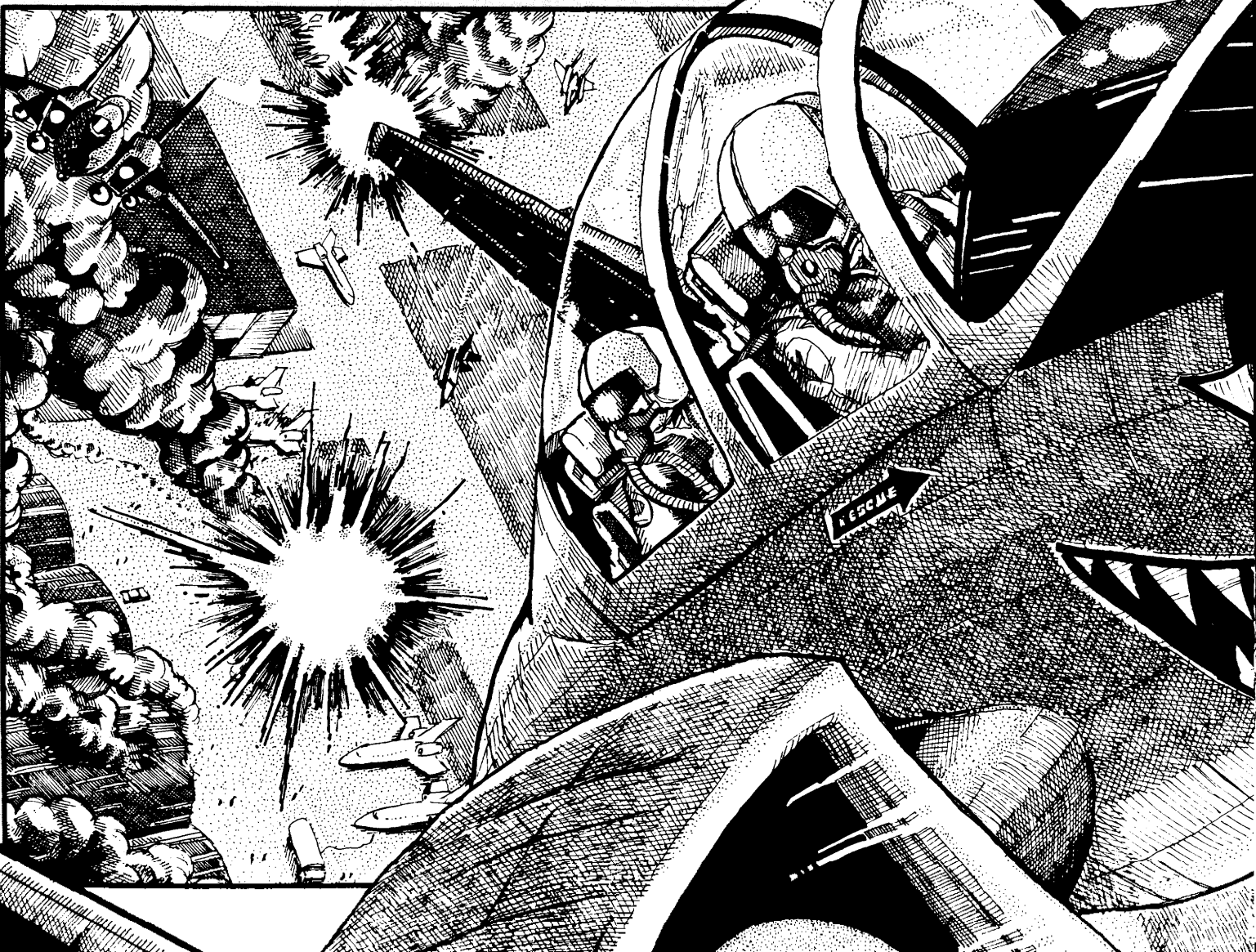
3. Type of mission for which the aircraft is used, and countries that use that particular plane;

4. Fuel capacity (in Imperial gallons);
5. Combat ceiling (in feet);
6. Range (in statute miles);
7. Maneuverability score (used above; from 1-9);
8. Armament; and,
9. Cost (in U.S. currency).

Each aircraft is structurally stable, and consumes one gallon of aviation fuel per mile (three gallons at top speed).

**Dassault-Brebuert Mirage III** (1,460 mph) Single-seat, all-weather, long-range fighter serving in Switzerland, Israel, South Africa, Lebanon, Australia, Pakistan, Spain, Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, and Abu Dhabi. Fuel 733; Ceiling 55,775; Range 745; MS 4; two 30mm cannons, one MATRA 530 missile, and two AIM-54 Sidewinder missiles; \$167,900.

**Saab-37 Viggen** (1,320 mph) Single-seat, multi-mission combat aircraft.



Fuel 945; Ceiling 36,900; Range 659; MS 4; four AIM-SD Sidewinder missiles and two AGM-12B Bullpup A missiles; \$179,200.

**BAE Lightning** (1,386 mph) Single-seat interceptor of the Royal Air Force. Fuel 735; Ceiling 57,000; Range 640; MS 5; two Aden cannons and two Red Top missiles; \$149,725.

**British Aerospace Harrier** (720 mph) Single-seat vertical take-off fighter used by the Royal Air Force and the United States Marine Corps. Fuel 630; Ceiling 35,000; Range 604; MS 1; two Aden cannons and two AIM-SD Sidewinder missiles; \$122,000.

**Panavia Tornado** (1,450 mph) Single-seat, multi-role aircraft flown in the U.K., Germany, and Italy. Fuel 1,600; Ceiling 63,000; Range 1,650; MS 4; one IWKA-Mausers cannon, two AIM-SD Sidewinder missiles, and four BAE Skyflash missiles; \$165,900.

**Mig-21/NATO codename: Fishbed/Mongol** (1,358 mph) Single-seat, light-weight fighter used in India, China, and Czechoslovakia. Fuel 572; Ceiling 51,200; Range 683; MS 5; one 23mm cannon and four Atoll missiles; \$188,199.

**Mig23/NATO codename: Flogger** (1,520 mph) Single-seat, variable-geometry, tactical fighter used in Soviet-bloc nations. Fuel 775; Ceiling 60,000; Range 725; MS6; one 23mm cannon and four ANAB missiles; \$130,000.

**Mig-25/NATO codename: Foxbat** (2,110 mph) Single-seat, supersonic fighter used in Soviet-bloc nations. Fuel 1,050; Ceiling 60,000; Range 895; MS 6; four ANAB missiles; \$199,250.

**McDonnell Douglas A-4 Skyhawk** (645 mph) Single-seat, naval aircraft used by the Blue Angels demonstration team. Fuel 1,002; Ceiling 58,400; Range 1,613; MS 9; four AIM-54A Phoenix missiles and two 20mm cannons; \$165,720.

**Grumman A-6 Intruder** (685 mph) Two-seat, strike aircraft used by the U.S. Navy. Fuel 559; Ceiling 53,800; Range 294; MS 2; two AIM-7E2 Sparrow missiles and four AIM-SD Sidewinder missiles; \$107,910.

**Aerospace C-7 Corsair II** (698 mph) Single-seat, light attack aircraft of the U.S.A.F. Fuel 1,122; Ceiling 40,958; Range 427; MS 3; one M61A1 cannon, two AIM-26A Heatseeker missiles, and four AIM-SD Sidewinder missiles; \$127,000.

**McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II** (1,434 mph) Two-seat, ship-based interceptor or shore-based fighter. Fuel 1,545; Ceiling 38,400; Range 1,427; MS 5; one M61A1 cannon and four AIM-9B Sidewinder missiles; \$179,050.

**Grumman F-14 Tomcat** (1,584) Two-seat, U.S.N. shipboard fighter. Fuel 1,969; Ceiling 60,000; Range 725; MS 7; one M61A1 cannon, six AIM-54A Phoenix missiles, and four AIM-SD Sidewinder missiles; \$186,000.

**McDonnell Douglas F-15 Eagle** (1,676 mph) Single-seat, multi-role fighter

used in Japan, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. Fuel 1,724; Ceiling 56,000; Range 1,950; MS 8; one M61A1 cannon, four AIM-7G Sparrows and two AIM-SD Sidewinder missiles; \$192,000.

**General Dynamics F-16 Fighting Falcon** (1,333 mph) Single-seat fighter used in Israel and Belgium. Fuel 893; Ceiling 50,000; Range 1,200; MS 9; one M61A1 cannon and six AIM-SD Sidewinder missiles; \$189,000.

**McDonnell Douglas F-18 Hornet** (1,190 mph) Single-seat, air-support aircraft. Fuel 1,390; Ceiling 65,100; Range 1,740; MS 7; one M61A1 cannon and two AIM-SD Sidewinder missiles; \$176,500.

All aircraft have built-in, onboard computers which target enemy aircraft, monitor flight operations, record any

conversations between pilot and ground crews, and have the capability of flying the plane for short periods of time. The aircraft also have radar systems which monitor ground movement, an electronic warfare pod which jams any nearby radar systems, and an infra-red camera (except on interceptors) located in the electronic warfare pod.

#### Weapon systems

Cannons are to be treated as projectile weapons for purposes of combat, and damage should be determined on the Bullet Use Against Vehicles Table. All of the cannons listed have two sets of numbers for PWV; the first is used for air-to-ground combat while the second is used for air-to-air combat.

### Aircraft Cannon Types Table

Cannons	PWV	S/M/L	Ammo	A/F/P/R	Rate*
20mm	100/50	+15/-15/-75	125	30/6/2/5	10
23mm	98/48	+17/-13/-67	1000	29/6/2/5	15
30mm	115/55	+25/-05/-65	125	30/6/4/5	20
M61A1 20mm	94/50	+07/-23/-83	1028	27/6/2/5	25
M-39 20mm	100/48	+00/-30/-90	280	30/6/2/5	12
IWKA-Mausers 27mm	110/50	+02/-28/-88	210	30/6/3/5	12
DEFA 553 30mm	120/50	+00/-30/-90	125	30/6/4/5	12
Oerliken KCA 30mm	120/50	+09/-21/-81	150	30/6/4/5	12
Aden m/55	120/59	+10/-20/-70	100	30/6/4/5	10

\* - Rate has been halved for game purposes.

Any of the cannons on the Aircraft Cannon Types Table can be stripped from the aircraft and mounted on a tripod (for \$100) to be used as an anti-vehicle weapon, but they may have a severe kick disadvantage.

Missiles are very powerful weapons which should be dealt with by the

Administrator, who may elect not to have missiles in a specific adventure. Players need to keep track of the number of missiles their characters have and how many they have used. Replacement missiles can only be bought through the government, and they are very expensive.

### Aircraft Missile Types Table

Missile type	Range	Cost	Plastique Equivalent
MATRA-530 Air-to-Air	3 miles	\$5,000	2 lbs.
AGM-12B Bullpup A Air-to-Ground	6 miles	\$7,500	40 ozs.
Rb28 Falcon Air-to-Air	2.5 miles	\$4,500	26 ozs.
Nord AS.30 Air-to-Air	3 miles	\$8,000	3 lbs.
BAE Skyflash Air-to-Air	3 miles	\$7,500	36 ozs.
AIM-7E2/7G Sparrow Air-to-Air	4 miles	\$9,000	50 ozs.
AIM-SD Sidewinder Air-to-Air	2 miles	\$8,500	3 lbs.
AIM-26A Heatseeker Air-to-Air	2 miles	\$8,500	40 ozs.
AIM-54A Phoenix Air-to-Air	5 miles	\$7,500	3 lbs.
Red Top	5 miles	\$7,500	2 lbs.
Anab	4 miles	\$10,000	3 lbs.
Atoll	3 miles	\$7,500	3 lbs.

Note: The plastique equivalent is given for any missile which explodes on the ground, having missed its original target in the air.

These ideas may be adopted into regular TOP SECRET play if the Administrator okays it. Agents should note that cannons,

but not missiles, can also be mounted on private aircraft.





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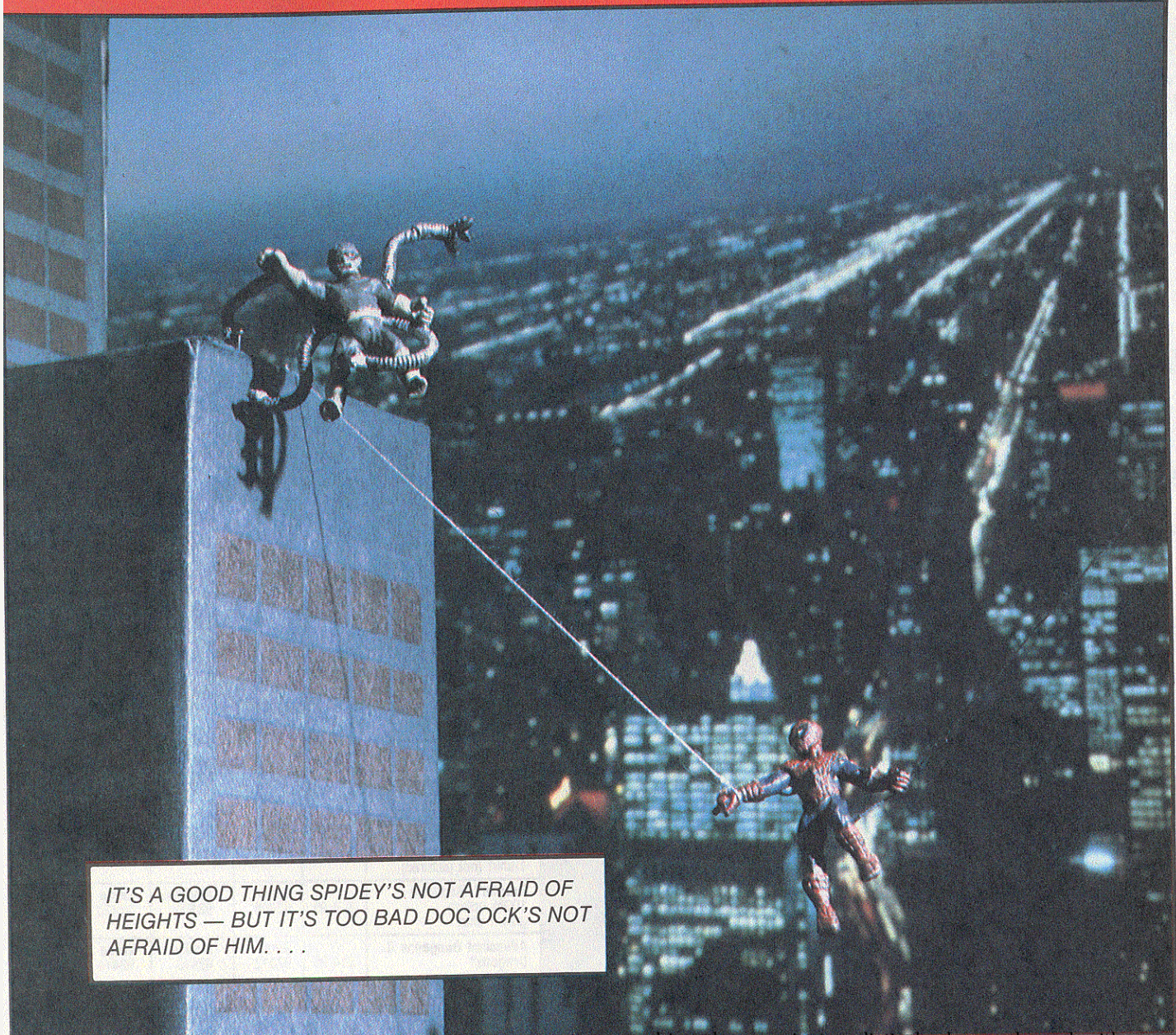


# MINIMAGIC

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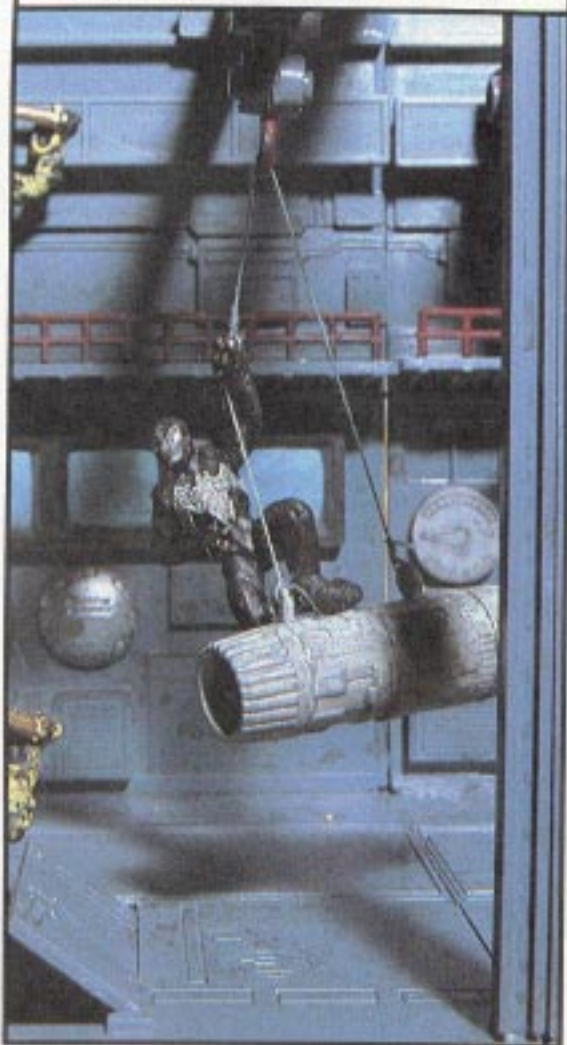
*IT'S A GOOD THING SPIDEY'S NOT AFRAID OF HEIGHTS — BUT IT'S TOO BAD DOC OCK'S NOT AFRAID OF HIM. . . .*

If you read this page from top to bottom, you already know that Mike Sitkiewicz had a lot to do with these pictures. We've featured his work on these pages before, but this is the first time Mike has put his skills to use on photography of MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ figures in action. By painting up some of TSR's metal miniatures and photo-

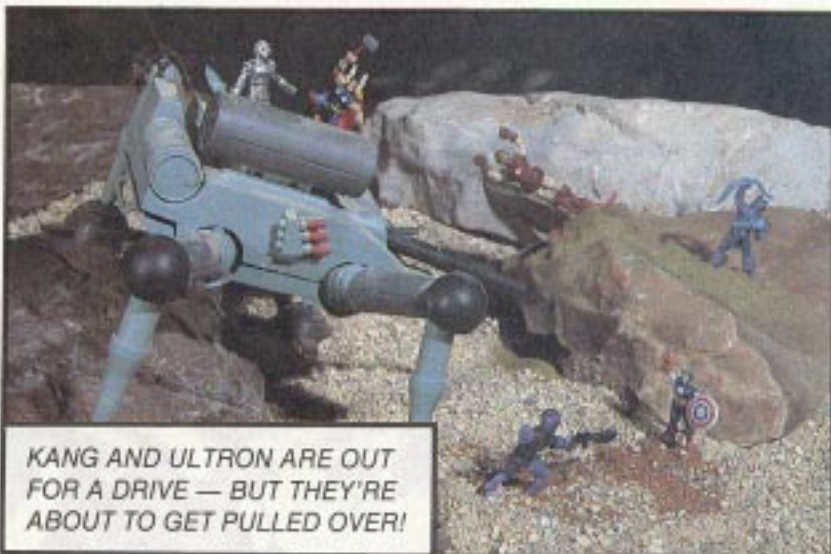
graphing them against realistic backgrounds and with props scavenged from a variety of sources, he has created some scenes that entire comic-book stories could be built around. On these two pages are the scenes, along with some captions that help bring them to life — as if they needed that kind of help.



FOR A WEB-SLINGER, THE SHORTEST  
DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO POINTS IS  
NOT NECESSARILY A STRAIGHT LINE!



KANG AND ULTRON ARE OUT  
FOR A DRIVE — BUT THEY'RE  
ABOUT TO GET PULLED OVER!



ONLY MR. FANTASTIC COULD  
TAKE SOMETHING BORING  
AND MAKE IT EXCITING!



DOCTOR STRANGE AND HIS ASSISTANT  
FIND OUT THAT FACING DEATH IS ONE  
THING, AND DEFEATING IT IS ANOTHER!





# COLD STEEL

*Hunter-class robots for  
GAMMA WORLD® gaming*

by **Scott A. Hutcheon**

*[This article is useful with the second-edition GAMMA WORLD® game rules. Some adaptation is required if used with the third edition, which will appear shortly. — Editor]*

Many Game Masters find it difficult to challenge a powerful GAMMA WORLD character party. Advanced-tech characters can smash through many settings originally designed to be nearly impregnable.

What can you do about it? You could have the party retire and start over with a whole new low-level gallery of adventurers. However, this is unfair to your players and is often seen as a weakness on your part as Game Master, for not being able to provide dangerous odds.

Another option would be to design robots, artifacts, and installations of ancient design that leave your party feeling that it has been tested to the maximum. Of course, there's a limit to escalation of this sort — but a carefully designed foe can make parties paranoid in the extreme,

giving them a gnawing fear of what might be lurking around the corner, behind that tree, or within the dried-up fountain before them. . . .

Take, for example, the Hunter series of combat robots, which was founded on one basic concept: The bigger they are, the harder they hit. Although not as powerful overall as Death Machines or Warbots, these devices provide much more challenge to an overconfident adventuring group than Security Robots.

Note that some specimens of these devices have been modified in the post-holocaust years to take into account mutational powers possessed by animals, plants, and humans. Numerous variations on these basic designs may also exist.

---

## Cybohunter

**TYPE:** Cybernetic Hunter/Tracker

**NUMBER:** 1

**ARMOR:** 1

**HIT DICE:** 30d10

**CONTROL:** D/G

**SENSORS:** A/B/D/E/F (Scent)

**POWER:** A/D200

**MS:** 1d4 + 12

**IN:** 1d10 + 11

**DX:** 1d10 + 11

**PS:** 5d10 + 30

**SPEED:** FEET = 24/1800/72

**STATUS:** Rank

**DESCRIPTION:** Cybohunters are the weakest and most common of all known Hunter robots. They were used to track down dangerous enemies, such as escaped prisoners and fugitives during the Social Wars. They track fleeing characters using special sensors, and kill with all of the special weapons and functions at their command. Once a mission has been detailed by a character with a Stage IV I.D. or a cybernetic installation (or some other ancient command area), the Cybohunter tracks immediately, ignoring any further attempts by any force to command it, until itself or the objective is destroyed. A Cybohunter only destroys its objective (and any creature or being that tries to interfere or stop its function in any way), not harming those that do not cross the Hunter's path.

The Cybohunter appears as a massive 5-meter tall humanoid. It is silver and constructed out of a very thick duralloy compound. The head contains a horizontal band of black glass, through which shines a moving, glowing red light — its eye. The tracker has various antennae on the outside of the helmet that constantly move and act as the sensors. The remaining shape of the body is basically human in appearance, in larger proportions, with various indentations and protrusions used for holding and storing equipment and weaponry.

This unit is equipped with a great variety of powerful offensive and defensive

features. Any and all of these features may be used at the same time, as with any Hunter-class robot.

The Cybohunter generates an electrical damage field that does 3d10 hp damage to anyone who touches it. This includes those who hit it with metal of any sort, but no damage occurs to characters protected by a force field of any sort (the force field takes 5d10 hp damage per contact).

The Cybohunter is capable of commanding all nearby robots as if it were carrying a Stage V I.D. It can control any of the robots listed in the GAMMA WORLD game that were not made for offensive purposes up to a distance of 200 meters away; robots that are no longer controlled or that leave the 200-meter area revert to their former instructions and command. Offensive robots (Death Machines, Warbots, and Security Robots) stay out of the Cybohunter's way but do not obey its directions. The robot is equipped with a force field that can absorb up to 100 hp damage per action turn.

The Cybohunter has been partially fitted with powered assault armor that covers areas not needed for combat. This armor gives the unit the structural capability to lift and support enormous weights (depending on each individual unit's strength). Jumps of up to 30 meters are possible and can be made once every action turn.

The Cybohunter generates an electronic-disruptor field that overloads all energy circuits not within a 5-meter diameter surrounding the unit itself. This field affects equipment and energy-using weapons up to a distance of 50 meters; there is a 25% chance that the item is able to withstand the effects of this field. These devices become overloaded and their circuits fuse, totally destroying them.

As combat is the Cybohunter's main reason for existence, a great deal of its equipment is devoted to the task of destroying opponents. One of the Cybohunter's main modes for accomplishing this is hand-to-hand combat. The powered fists do 9d6 hp damage. All attacks made in non-weapon combat are made at an additional 1d6 hp damage to the damage listed, due to its microscopic sensors. The forearms of the Cybohunter have slots on the outsides that allow large blades to be extended or contracted. These arm blades do 5d6 hp damage and may possibly hit the character if the powered fist attack misses (roll twice during the same action turn for each fist; the first roll is to hit with the fist and the second roll is to determine if the blades hit). Attached to the back of the wrists of each hand are duralloy claws which can be used much as the natural attacks of mutated animals are performed, causing 4d8 hp damage. The claws can be retracted or used in conjunction with the arm blades (as explained above).

The legs of this unit are capable of discharging an adhesive paste compound

along a ridge on the outer surface of the leg. This paste does not effect the Cybohunter's attack ability but may be used to hamper a character's movement. Characters that come near or in contact with the legs have an attack made on them using the Cybohunter's normal roll to hit. If this attack roll is successful, then the victim is stuck to the duralloy leg and can be automatically hit by any weapon. The character can escape only by the greatest effort (roll Physical Strength  $\times$  4 or less on percentile dice), which causes 2d4 hp damage to the victim whether successful or not. There are a total of 10 doses of adhesive paste that can be used for this attack. The paste is automatically removed when the character is freed or dead, using another chemical stored in the legs that causes 2d6 hp damage (acid burn) to characters that again come in contact with the robot. This acidic chemical evaporates in two action turns, and the adhesive attack is again possible afterwards.

For ranged combat, the Cybohunter has a large selection of highly efficient attacks. Fitted into the index finger of each hand are independently powered laser pistols. The laser pistols do 5d8 hp damage and have a range of 90 meters. Each is powered by two hydrogen energy cells that allow each pistol to make 20 shots before needing to be recharged.

Attached to the right arm of the Cybohunter is an independently powered laser rifle. This rifle does 6d6 hp damage and has a range of 300 meters, and is powered by one hydrogen energy cell that allows six shots. Equipped to the right arm of the unit is a powered crossbow. The powered crossbow has a range of 100 meters and is powered by two chemical energy cells that are good for firing 30 bolts. The bolts consist of two types: an explosive-wrapped tip that does 6d6 hp damage on impact, and a chemical exploding tip that has the effects of a negation bomb, but confined to only a 3-meter area. The unit is equipped with a full case of 30 bolts (15 of each type).

The helmet of the Cybohunter has a built-in micro-missile launcher with a 20-missile clip. The micro-missiles have a range of 500 meters and do 7d6 hp damage. The robot is also constructed with a grenade launcher fitted into the back. The launcher has a range of 90 meters and carries up to 15 grenades of any type.

The chest of the Cybohunter has been modified to give the unit a specially designed weapon. A net constructed of duralloy fibers is stored in the hidden compartment. Characters that are standing in front of the robot are subject to a special mode of assault. The net can be fired up to 20 meters, spreading out and spinning to its greatest area with the weights pulling it out. The magnetic weights on the net drop around the captured victims and magnetically seal to each other and to the net fibers. Characters must roll their dexterity or under on a

d20, with a -4 penalty on the roll, to avoid this entrapment.

The magnetic seal is very powerful and only a strength of 21 or greater is able to free the character(s). Strength may be combined from several characters to open the net. The net covers a 5-meter square area and can wrap up to three characters. As soon as victims are trapped by the net, they can be attacked again by a needler fitted into the robot's chest (this weapon can only be fired after the net has been thrown). The needler is coated with an Intensity Level 3d6 poison and is equipped with a chemical energy cell for 30 shots at up to 60 meters.

A communications sender is also included on the robot. The entire Cybohunter has its weapons and functions powered by three atomic energy cells that last for 200 hours. These cells can be recharged by a special energy-cell charger attached to the large solar energy cell, fitted into the shoulders and helmet of the robot. It requires 10 hours of exposure to direct sunlight for the atomic energy cells to be recharged.

The Cybohunter is fitted with an organic brain and always acts and fights intelligently. This brain has a 25% chance of containing 1d4 mental mutations caused by the massive amounts of radiation let loose during the Shadow Years. The Cybohunter never has physical or defective mental mutations (such units are destroyed by these defects over time). Attacks using mental powers can be made normally on the Cybohunter.

---

## Robohunter

**TYPE:** Robotic Hunter/Tracker

**NUMBER:** 1

**ARMOR:** 1

**HIT DICE:** 40d10

**CONTROL:** D/E/G

**SENSORS:** A/B/D/E/F (Scent)

**POWER:** A/D400

**MS:** 1d6 + 12

**IN:** 1d10 + 11

**DX:** 1d10 + 11

**PS:** 5d10 + 50

**SPEED:** FEET = 24/1800/72;

PODS = 80/3600/60

**STATUS:** Rank

**DESCRIPTION:** The Robohunter was specifically constructed for several tracking purposes, including the ability to follow escaping creatures over any type of terrain. The Robohunter was designed for use with the tracking of creatures during the Pre-Shadow era, but is now normally controlled and responsive to the pursuit of mutated animals (making them very treasured by the Knights of Genetic Purity), as well as the few remaining resistant animal population (those creatures that were not affected by the radiation). It was used to



either capture or destroy prey, depending on the needed function. Gamma World sages speculate that this type of unit has been much modified by post-holocaust humans because of the robot's extreme deadliness, far beyond what would logically be required of an animal hunter.

The Robohunter can never harm creatures of Pure Strain Human appearance (including humanoids with non-obvious physical mutations), but always tries to kill or capture any creatures of mutated stock, as well as all characters that have mutations which obviously separate them from "pure" stock. The Robohunter only destroys its objective and anything that attacks it (including PSH characters), ignoring all other life forms. Due to its programming, the Robohunter cannot be commanded for other purposes until whatever current mission it possesses is completed.

The Robohunter appears as a massive, large-proportioned humanoid. It has a height of 4 meters and is actively hidden by a holographic projector. This device allows the robot to have environmental coloring as if it had the *chameleon powers* mutation. Various equipment and housings cover the outside of the Robohunter. The surface of the body is covered in sharp duralloy shards that do not affect any of its functions.

As with all of the other units in the Hunter robot class, the Robohunter is capable of utilizing all of its weaponry simultaneously. Included in its vast arsenal are several weapons not detailed in the GAMMA WORLD game booklets. Unless detailed elsewhere, these weapons and their functions should only be used in conjunction with the Hunter-class robots.

Placed in the robot's upper chest is a taser rifle with a range of 100 meters, charged by an atomic energy cell that allows 20 shots; a supply of 20 cables is also provided for use with this weapon. The weapon's damage is variable; a taser cable can be charged to do from 1d8 to 4d8 hp damage to a victim, once the duralloy cable is fired at an opponent and delivers its electrical damage directly to the victim's skin. The cable is also equipped with magnetic seals that enable the cable to wrap around a victim. These cables require a combined or singular strength of 21 or greater to pry apart. If a cable is destroyed (each takes 10 hp damage), another replaces it. Cable-wrapped characters can be hit by other weapons automatically. The weapon class of the taser rifle is 16.

Built into the hands of the Robohunter are separately powered razor pistols. These devices have a weapon class of 16 and a range of 80 meters. A razor pistol fires a stream of duralloy shards at creatures. These shards do 8d8 hp damage per hit; victims take 1d4 hp damage from bleeding per action turn until the shards are removed and the damaged area is treated. The razor pistol has enough am-

munition for 15 shots and is powered by two solar energy cells that allow for 15 shots to be fired per charge.

The head of the Robohunter has been made with several offensive purposes in mind. Attached to one side is a flamethrowing device with a weapon class of 16. It does 8d10 hp damage and has enough flammable gas for six shots. The possibility of the fire spreading to flammable materials is up to the Game Master's discretion. The helmet also has an optical weapon built in; this "eye" is capable of firing radioactive energy in any direction the Robohunter is facing. This weapon has the same effect as the mutation *radiation eyes*, and fires a beam of Intensity Level 3d6 radiation like the mutation. This attack can only be used 10 times, until the atomic energy cell source is drained and must be recharged.

Two robotic tentacles spring from the back of the Robohunter, allowing it to attack in all directions at once in hand-to-hand combat. These tentacles do 1d8 hp damage and are capable of lifting and throwing up to 200 kilograms 10 meters away, causing 2d6 hp damage. Stored in the lower chest area of the Robohunter are three magnetic seal nets that are the same in detail as those of the Cybohunter. The Robohunter also has a needler pistol that contains needles coated in a powerful sleeping serum. This serum will cause the victim to fall asleep for 4d10 action turns unless he rolls under his individual constitution score on a d20. The pistol is built into the robot's chest.

The Robohunter is also armed with an automatic rifle. This rifle is capable of firing a steady stream of duralloy bullets that do 10d10 hp damage per burst. Only one burst can be fired per action turn, and the weapon has a range of 200 meters and a class of 16. It is powered by three hydrogen energy cells and has enough ammo for five bursts. This weapon is built into the left arm of the robotic unit.

For underwater hunting, the Robohunter can utilize a modern spear gun. This spear gun has a range of 20 meters and does 3d8 hp damage. The device has a weapon class of 12 and is attached to a strong line that allows the Robohunter to automatically retrieve its spears, as well as dead creatures. The Robohunter is equipped with two spears and one hydrogen energy cell that allows 10 shots. This weapon can only be used in underwater environments and is part of the right arm of the robot.

The Robohunter has numerous unusual defenses. A magnetic field can be created that can either be used to repel or attract small metallic objects near the robot (like guns). If held by living beings, these small objects may be retained only if the being holding them has a strength of 18 or greater. If this field is activated when the robot is near large metal-constructed buildings, then the robot itself is drawn to the building and takes 2d6 hp damage

unless braced against the building beforehand (a Robohunter scans its area automatically to make sure this won't happen, but the unit can be tricked). This field also allows the bot to climb vertical surfaces made of duralloy or other materials that can be magnetically charged, moving at the rate of 20 meters per action turn. This field has a range of 50 meters.

A paralysis field that has a range of 10 meters can also be activated. This field causes effects much the same as the paralysis rod. The field also causes its victim(s) to fall into unconsciousness and not be awakened for 4d4 hours. Plants are not affected by this field, but beings with organic brains are.

An energy field that surrounds the Robohunter's surface at a 2-centimeter-wide layer does 3d10 hp damage to characters coming into contact with it. The entire duralloy surface of the Robohunter is covered in sharp metallic protrusions, similar to a shark's rough skin (only magnified in effect). Individuals pressed against this surface or held there by the robot suffer 2d4 hp damage. The Robohunter may also attempt to bear-hug any creature. This hug requires two consecutive successful fist attacks. Trapped characters take 6d4 hp damage per action turn until dead or rescued.

Various equipment and items used for other purposes of tracking and hunting are also present in the Robohunter's construction. Although not originally planned for offensive use, some of the devices can cause damage. Acid spray was used to destroy the remains of a hunted animal; it can be fired up to 10 meters away and causes 1d8 hp damage per turn until washed away or neutralized. The Robohunter has enough acid for 20 spray attacks. Two vibro saws used for cutting through dense underbrush can be used to attack and have abilities similar to the vibro blade. Each vibro saw does 8d6 hp damage.

The Robohunter is also equipped with herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides (as detailed in the GAMMA WORLD game), used in sprayers to help in the pursuit of deadly game. A sonic torch used for destroying structures and large obstructions does 8d6 hp damage per action turn and is capable of cutting through duralloy walls in 10 action turns (allowing enough space for the Robohunter to pass through). The sonic torch has enough power for one hour of use. A tractor/pressor beam capable of moving up to 1000 kilograms at a 30-meter range is also included.

The Robohunter has radar/sonar functions that are capable of detecting creatures up to 100 meters away, allowing the robot to never be surprised, save by teleporting beings. There is also a medi-kit for use on captured animals (which works as a normal medi-kit on mutated animals). The bot is sealed for underwater use and is able to move 50 meters per turn in this environment. The Robohunter is also able

to skim across the surface of land with the aid of anti-grav pods. The Robohunter can obtain only a maximum altitude of 2 meters, but can use all weapons and defenses normally while in the air.

Oddly enough, some Robohunters are capable of changing their structure to avoid recognition by animal prey. Such a Robohunter can resemble the following robots: Engineering Bot — Light, General Household Robot, Medical Robot, Security Robot, or Supervisory Borg. This change requires two action turns of inactivity, and all attacks and defenses are kept while in the changed appearance. The Robohunter has radio-controlling circuits which allow it to control other robots as if it had a Stage IV I.D., which further enhances the deceptive “changing” ability described above. These functions appear to be recent additions made by Knights of Genetic Purity or other groups.

The arms of this unit are capable of sustaining 40 hp damage before being destroyed, and the tentacles take 30 hp damage before being useless. A fist strike from a Robohunter does 4d6 hp damage.

---

## Manhunter

**TYPE:** Robotic Hunter

**NUMBER:** 1

**ARMOR:** 1

**HIT DICE:** 50d10

**CONTROL:** G

**SENSORS:** A/B/C/D/E (Scent)

**POWER:** B

**MS:** 1d8 + 13

**IN:** 1d8 + 13

**DX:** 1d4 + 17

**PS:** 6d10 + 60

**SPEED:** PODS = 480/20400/360

**STATUS:** Rank

**DESCRIPTION:** This incredibly fast tracking and killing machine was designed for unknown purposes about which Gamma World sages can only speculate. Its abilities and functions make it a perfect construct for following and killing opponents, but the original need for the heavy armor and weaponry of the Manhunter is unknown. The unit may possibly have been used to defeat rogue Defense Borgs and Warbots, in conjunction with several others of its kind. Other uses may have included assaults on advanced-tech guerrilla squads, but this is not known for sure.

The Manhunter is an exceptionally powerful robot, but is extremely rare and found only in the surrounding areas of the Cybernetic Installations they were commanded to guard. Others can possibly be found patrolling vast regions, still following ancient, outdated programs. They ignore all beings that are not directly affected by their missions, unless foolish characters attack them. As with other units of the Hunter class, the Manhunter

continues to follow its mission until completed, ignoring all other commands from any source.

This 16-meter-long, 8-meter-wide, 2-meter-high hunting and tracking machine is covered in weapons and sensors. On each side of the unit are 2-meter-long, 1-meter-wide, and 1-meter-high ovoids stored in depressions (these are the cyber robots detailed below). Near the back of the Manhunter are four smaller ovoids (only .5 meters long) stacked in a row, their front ends aimed forward. On the bottom of the robot is a faint outline of a hatch (leading to the stasis chamber) and many projections surrounding it (the pressor/tractor beam). On the upper side are the main batteries of weapons and most of the tracking equipment. The sides of the unit are fitted with all of its close-range weaponry.

The Manhunter is capable of using all weapons and defenses (including screens and fields) simultaneously. For long-range and immediate killing purposes, the Manhunter has several effective weapons. The unit has a battery of two lasers attached to each of twelve optical scanners; each has a range of 500 meters and does 10d6 hp damage per battery. A photon rifle that delivers 18-intensity radiation has a range of 300 meters and a weapon class of 5. Four automatic rifles that have a range of 200 meters and do 10d10 hp damage per burst are included, each equipped with enough ammunition for five bursts. Two micro-missile launchers with 2d10 missiles are on the sides, each with a range of 1000 meters. One top-mounted mini-missile launcher with 1d10 missiles has a range of 3000 meters and can be fired individually or simultaneously with the micro-missile launcher.

Two black ray guns (front- and rear-mounted) have a range of 200 meters, and a laser cannon (front-mounted) does 20d6 hp damage and has a range of 1000 meters. A fusion cannon that does the same damage as a fusion bomb but only has a range of 50 meters is centered on the top. A molecular disruptor that has the same effects as the mutation *molecular disruption*, but has a range of 150 meters and twice the normal chances of disruption, is also top-mounted (on the robot's front). A fission gun occupies an upper-rear platform, having a ray with the same effect as a dirty fission bomb, with a range of 4000 meters and a weapon class of 16. A top-mounted bomb launcher that has a range of 750 meters is able to fire the following bombs: matter bombs (up to four Alpha, two Beta, or one Delta), fusion bombs (only two), clean fission bombs (only two), mutation bombs (up to four), and negation bombs (up to four). Only one type of bomb load may be carried.

The Manhunter also has a grenade launcher (with capacity for up to 100 grenades of any type) that has a range of 150 meters and is used to ferret out hid-

den individuals and destroy buildings. The unit has a stun-missile launcher equipped with six stun missiles; each missile has a range of 500 meters and has the effect of stunning everyone within a 30-meter range of the impact for 2d4 search turns. Both weapons are side-mounted on opposite sides of the robot — left for the grenade launcher and right for the stun-missile rack.

Two forward-mounted Mark VI rifles and a battery of four stun-ray rifles (two front, two rear, all bottom-mounted) round out most of the long-range offensive weaponry. The unit is fitted with a forward-underside taser rifle that has a range of 1000 meters and does 4d8 hp damage, wrapping a cable around the character; only a combined or individual strength of 21 or greater can free a trapped victim (see the Robohunter for details on this weapon). Fifty spare cables are included.

A battery of four razor rifles is mounted on the forward underside of the robot. They have a range of 90 meters and each do 8d6 hp damage per hit (causing an additional 1d4 hp damage of bleeding per action turn until blades are removed and wounds are healed). For close-range combat, there is a needler rifle with needles coated in a sleep-inducing serum. This serum causes characters to fall asleep for 4d10 action turns. The needler is another front-underside weapon.

The Manhunter has several weapon devices not described elsewhere. The unit can spray a heavy nerve-affecting gas. This heavy gas flows down to the lowest level possible (draining into holes) and causes creatures caught in the cloud to save against the effects by rolling under their constitution on d20. Characters who fail this roll are totally unable to perform any movement voluntarily (involuntary muscles such as the heart and lungs still function normally) for 4d20 action turns. Twelve vents (six per side) spread the gas in a 20-meter radius around the robot. Enough gas for six uses is provided.

Another gas that can be sprayed up to 20 meters away affects only metallic objects. This gas coats such objects with a chemical that, in two action turns, turns the metal into a frail glasslike substance. Any object coated with this gas is destroyed if struck against any hard surface and melts if it is a heat-using device (such as a laser pistol). The chemical must be washed off as soon as it comes into contact with metal to counter the damage. The Manhunter is coated with a substance that makes it immune to the gas itself, unless the covering of the robot is cracked to admit the gas into its interior.

The Manhunter can also drop a canister that explodes on impact, sending special particles raining down on the ground below. These particles cover a 50-meter-radius area and only affect organic material (characters totally covered in metallic or plastic armor are unaffected). The

robot has only four of these cannisters. Attacked creatures suffer 1d6 damage per action turn for 1d4 turns (while particles are still in the air). Unless affected victims made a CON × 2 check on percentile dice, they lose 1d10 points of strength, dexterity, and constitution as well for 2d8 hours (no score can drop below 1).

The Manhunter also has a force-field destroyer that inflicts 100 hp of damage to all force fields within a 100-meter range, but it won't affect unprotected characters. A force field that can sustain up to 200 hp of damage per action turn is part of the Manhunter's protection. The hull of the robot is covered in a thick duralloy shielding that allows the unit to operate under-sea or in near vacuum conditions. A reflective hull causes laser attacks to do up to half damage on hits (the robot can take 200 hp of damage from lasers until the reflective ability is destroyed and laser attacks are then made at normal damage).

The robot is surrounded by a paralysis field that has a range of 20 meters. This field stuns characters as the paralysis rod can, and it allows the Manhunter to make attacks that automatically hit the paralyzed victims. This field has enough power for 30 action turns of use.

The Manhunter itself is equipped with a holographic projector, which it can use to make itself appear invisible or camouflaged in the surrounding vegetation. There is a 1% chance per action turn that the projection will flicker, allowing onlookers to realize the deception and make attacks as normal until the Manhunter leaves the area. While hunting or tracking, the robot is totally soundless and surprises characters on a roll of 1-5 on d6.

A robotic deactivation/activation field can be used up to 200 meters away. The robots can also be controlled by special circuits as if the Manhunter had Stage IV I.D.

Herbicides and fungicides can be sprayed over an area of 100-meters radius per use (10 such uses possible) to destroy ground cover for hiding fugitives. The unit can immerse its entire self in water, but is incapable of combat while in this environment. It has special remote-controlled drone units which are described below.

---

**TYPE:** Underwater tracking drone (cyber)  
**NUMBER:** 1  
**ARMOR:** 4  
**HIT DICE:** 6d10  
**CONTROL:** By the Manhunter only  
**SENSORS:** A/B/C/F (Underwater vision)  
**POWER:** A/C100  
**MS:** 1d4 + 4  
**IN:** 1d4 + 4  
**DX:** 1d4 + 17  
**PS:** 1d20 + 20  
**SPEED:** PODS = 240/10200/180;  
WATER PROPULSION = 60/3000/60  
**STATUS:** 5000

**DESCRIPTION:** This ovoid is sent by the Manhunter to track and hunt down creatures that attempt to escape by fleeing into a watery environment. Some versions of this cyber have camouflage detectors that cause fish and creatures using camouflaging mutations to appear normally for attack purposes.

This cyber is covered in a plastic waterproof covering. It is also equipped with two spear rifles that have a range of 50 meters and have two spears each, coated with a substance that causes sleep for 4d10 action turns (characters drown in 2d4 action turns unless rescued or taken by the cyber). The underwater drone is also capable of leaving a thick black fog of chemical for 10 meters around itself in the water. This allows escape and obscures the vision of creatures in the area for 2d8 action turns. The cyber has sonar sensors that detect creatures up to 200 meters away.

Four small, high-explosive, heat-seeking torpedoes (weapon class 16) can be launched, each having a range of 200 meters and do 4d6 hp damage each. The cyber is also equipped with an ultra-powerful light that blinds characters looking directly at it for 1d6 action turns out to 30 meters. The cyber has a tractor/pressor beam capable of lifting and carrying up to 200 kilograms.

---

**TYPE:** Underground tracking drone (cyber)  
**NUMBER:** 1  
**ARMOR:** 4  
**HIT DICE:** 6d10  
**CONTROL:** By the Manhunter only  
**SENSORS:** A/B/D/E (Hearing)/F (Scent)  
**POWER:** A/C100  
**MS:** 1d4 + 4  
**IN:** 1d4 + 4  
**DX:** 1d4 + 17  
**PS:** 1d20 + 20  
**SPEED:** TRACKED = 60/3000/60;  
PODS = 240/10200/180  
**STATUS:** 5000

**DESCRIPTION:** This cyber is also covered in plastic armor, but has tracked rollers that can be lowered for ground movement. It is equipped with radar capabilities (up to 200 meters) and armed with two Mark V pistols as well as two stun rifles on a top mount. A flamethrower that has four charges and does 8d10 damage out to 10 meters (weapon class 16) is attached to one end of the robot. The cyber is also capable of spraying a kinetic nullifier fluid (effects are detailed in the GAMMA WORLD game rules) over a 10-meter-square area (six uses possible).

Like the underwater model, this underground model is equipped with a tractor/pressor beam capable of lifting up to 200 kilograms for the purpose of transporting the character or object it was assigned to

find back to the Manhunter.

The cyber units are used for retrieving or killing characters that flee into areas the Manhunter is not suited for traversing. Once a character is caught by a cyber tracker, he brought back and captured by the Manhunter's own tractor/pressor beam (which can lift 500 kilograms). Once in this field, the individual is taken up into the unit and stored in a very special facility on its underside.

The Manhunter contains one entire stasis chamber that works as the one described in the GAMMA WORLD game. The character is kept in the state of sleep-like suspended animation until brought back to the commanding Cybernetic Installation for whatever purpose the CI has in mind. Individuals in this chamber can be healed by a robotic medi-kit if necessary, but the stasis chamber can also work as a rejuv chamber for characters who are nearly dead. Up to four man-sized beings (500 kilograms) may be kept in the chamber.

The upper surface of the Manhunter also carries a number of special probes, described below.

---

**TYPE:** Information transmitting drone  
**NUMBER:** 1d4  
**ARMOR:** 3 (6)  
**HIT DICE:** 3d6  
**CONTROL:** By the Manhunter only  
**SENSORS:** A/B/C/D/F (Scent)  
**POWER:** A/C200  
**MS:** 1d4  
**IN:** 1d4  
**DX:** 1d4 + 17  
**PS:** 1d10 + 10  
**SPEED:** PODS = 480/20400/360  
**STATUS:** 1000

**DESCRIPTION:** These data-probes are used to send televised pictures of areas that the robot is investigating, for general tracking and surveying missions. They are used to scout areas before alerting the Manhunter to send out the cybers or have the Manhunter come itself. The probes are equipped and fitted for underwater use. The armor given combines the probes' speed and size, and the number given in parentheses indicates the armor class while the probes are stationary (hovering). The probes can be controlled by the Manhunter up to a distance of 10 kilometers, and they automatically return if a distance greater than this is indicated. The probes have radar- and infravision-jamming screens (which even affect mutations) that allow them to pass by unnoticed.

The probes are also equipped with an electrical defense shield that does 1d10 hp damage to characters touching them. The probes themselves cannot attack, and flee as soon as they have registered the position of the desired hiding group.

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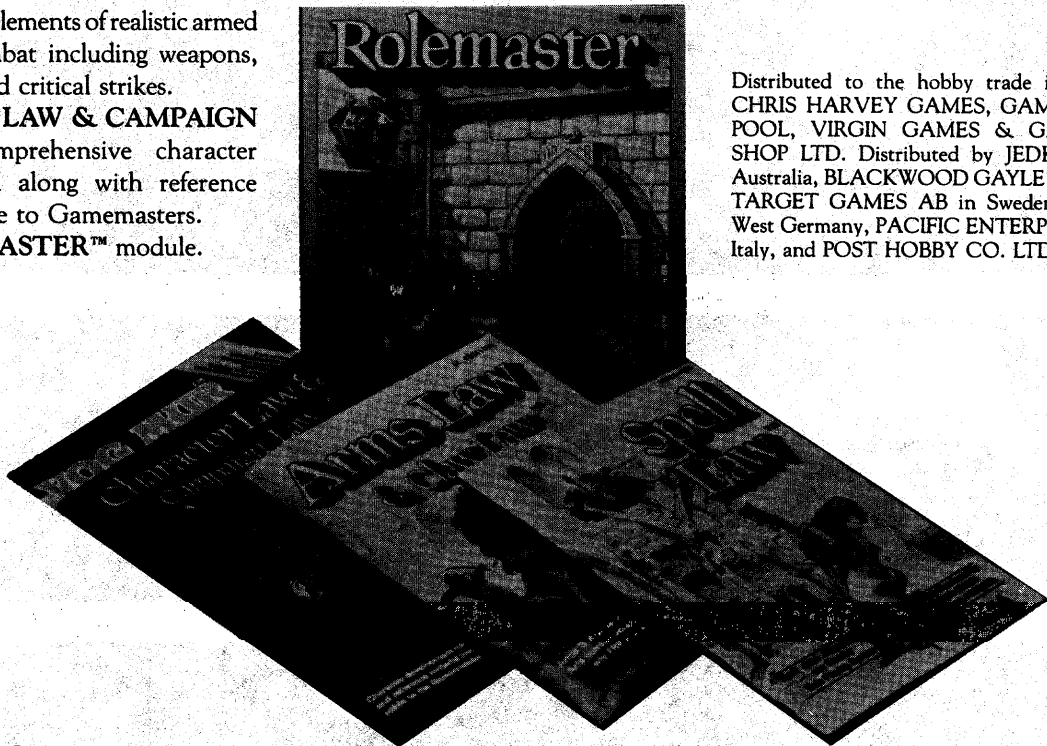
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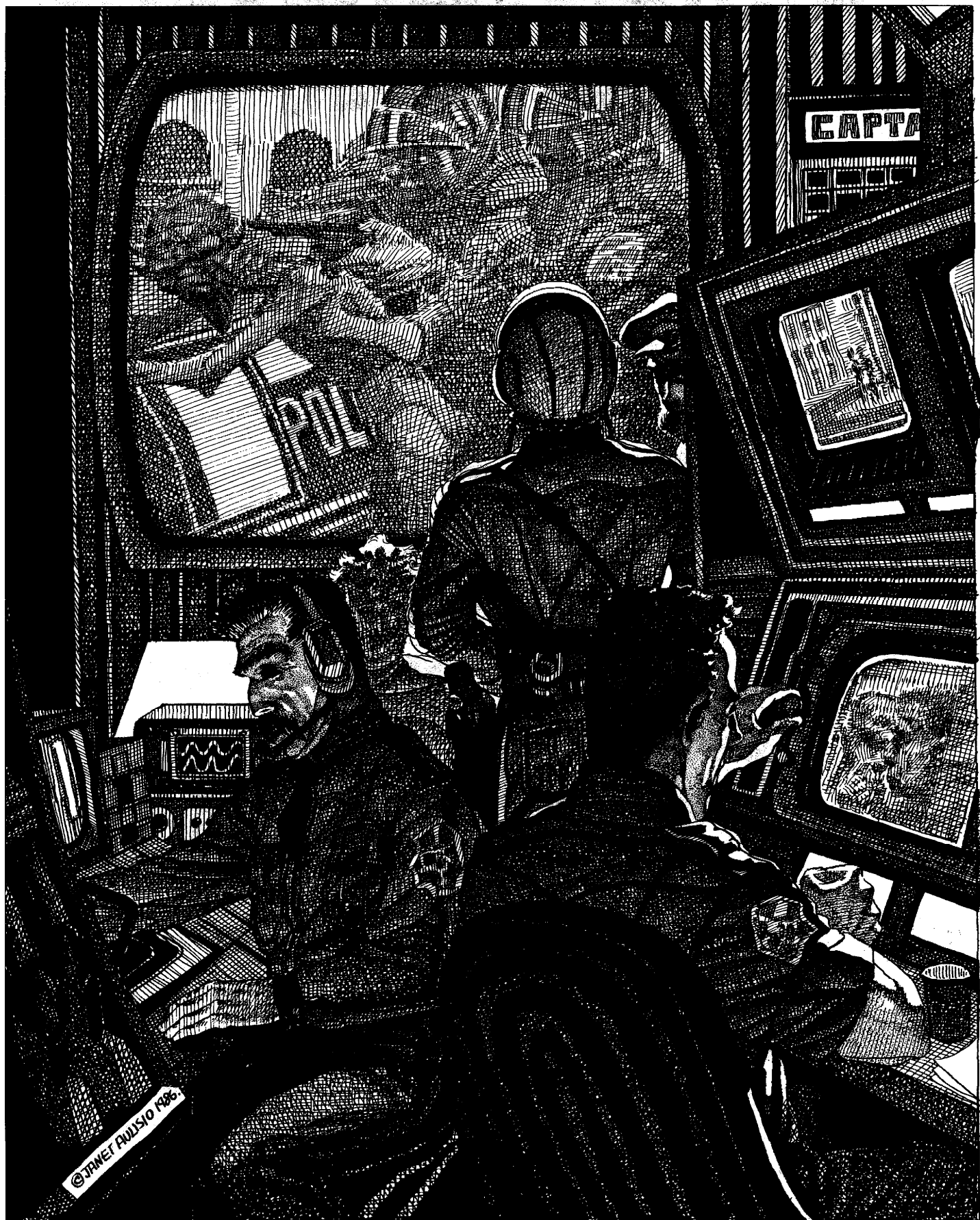
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# Joining the TRAVELLER<sup>®</sup> interstellar police



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# Star Cops!

The marshal walked down the hot, dusty street with one hand on the butt of his laser pistol. He paused a moment outside the corrugated aluminum saloon, then pushed open the doors and strode inside. The tired, dusty miners turned as he entered, a mixture of fear and respect on their faces.

One of them stared hard — first at his face, then at the badge on his shirt, finally at the holstered laser.

"Jensen," the marshal said, "Your time's up. Come on quietly."

He prayed Jensen *would* come quietly. He was the only deputy marshal within 200 kilometers, and it would take two hours for help to reach him by air raft.

Jensen arose slowly, a smirk on his face as his hand moved toward his own holster. . . .

Police are one of the major forces citizens encounter in modern life. They are around us every day, and they have the power of life and death over every citizen. On many worlds of the future, they are even a greater factor in citizens' lives than they are today. (For a detailed treatment of police as found in the TRAVELLER® game universe, see Loren Wiseman's article "Police Forces in TRAVELLER," in issue #14 of *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*®.)

Although police are frequently encountered in TRAVELLER adventures, they are seldom played as more than one-dimensional NPCs. To give players a chance to encounter a police officer with a background of service and experience, or to give players a chance to develop an experienced police character they could role-play in their own campaigns, here is a police character generation system designed to create a character with law-enforcement skills that would be useful in many campaign situations.

Players can also use this system — which is similar to the *Mercenary* and *High Guard* systems, with new skills added — so their characters can take on law-enforcement or investigation jobs during an ad-

venture. This might include working as a private eye for hire, a frontier marshal on a backwater planet, or the organizer of a small police force for justice or profit.

Note that this system accommodates planetary police forces within a tech-level range of 5 on up. Police forces in particularly violent and war-torn regions should be generated using the armed forces generation systems of the TRAVELLER game.

Die rolls are resolved with six-sided dice, as per the normal TRAVELLER rules.

Unless otherwise stated, assume a 2D roll is required. The numbers of dice required are indicated with a D (1D, 2D, etc.). Die-roll modifiers (DMs) are applied as noted. A term of service generally refers to a period of four years.

## The police academy

The police officer begins his or her career at the police academy, where intensive physical, academic, and practical training is received. All police characters must be admitted to and graduate from the local academy. In the TRAVELLER universe, the police academy takes up the first year of the character's career (at age 18). After graduation, the officer begins an (abbreviated) three-year term in the patrol division of the police force the character has joined.

The police candidate must pass the academy entrance exam, requiring a roll of 7 + on 2D. Die-roll modifiers include + 1 if the candidate's strength is 9 +, and + 2 if the candidate's intelligence is 8 +.

The new police cadet succeeds at the academy if a 5 + on 2D is rolled, with the following modifiers: + 2 if intelligence is 8 +; + 1 if endurance is 9 +. The cadet will graduate with honors if he or she rolls 9 + with a DM of + 1 if intelligence is 8 +. Honors graduates may choose to immediately enter the investigative division of the police force.

Cadets earn the following skills at the police academy, with a roll of 5 + for each on one die: 1D - 3 additional strength points, Admin, Legal, Brawling, Shotgun,

Tactics. All cadets automatically earn Handgun-1 and Cudgel-1 at the academy.

## Police assignments

Except for honors graduates from the academy who enter the investigative division, all police officers are assigned to the patrol division after they complete their schooling. Here, they undergo additional training under senior officers and serve in a variety of specific assignments. At the end of the second year of their second term, they may elect to transfer for one time only to the traffic division or the constabulary division of the local police force. Officers may also transfer to the constabulary division if they roll "constabulary training" on the Police Special Assignment Table at any time during their careers. Members of the investigative division are drawn either from honors graduates from the academy or from officers who have undergone special investigative training while working on a special assignment.

## Police divisions

There are five basic divisions in a police department. These include the following:

*Patrol division* — This is the basic patrol and law-enforcement division of a police department that is the primary contact with citizens and criminals in urban and suburban areas. Officers in this division patrol their assigned areas (beats) on foot or in vehicles. Their job is to be on the lookout for suspicious characters and criminal activities, to make arrests in crime situations, to conduct minor investigations, to aid citizens in distress, and to maintain civil order. Patrol division officers may also serve as plainclothes undercover agents on stakeouts or to infiltrate criminal organizations.

*Traffic division* — The traffic division is responsible for patrolling the major highways and airways of the police department's area of jurisdiction, and apprehending traffic-law violators. It also aids the victims of traffic accidents and investigates accidents and vehicle thefts.

## Police Specific Assignments Table

Die Roll	Patrol	Traffic	Investigative	Constabulary	Admin
2	Undercover	Undercover	Undercover	Rescue	Undercover
3	Undercover	Desk	Undercover	Rescue	Undercover
4	Desk	Desk	Undercover	Beat	Legal
5	Beat	Beat	Detective	Beat	Legal
6	Beat	Beat	Detective	Beat	Legal
7	Beat	Beat	Detective	Beat	Desk
8	Desk	Desk	Admin	Barracks	Desk
9	Beat	Desk	Admin	Barracks	Desk
10	Training	Training	Training	Training	Training
11	SWAT	SWAT	Undercover	SWAT	Training
12	Special	Special	Special	Special	Special

## Police Special Assignments Table

### Die roll Assignment

1	Riot Training
2	SWAT Training
3	Constabulary Training
4	Air Patrol
5	Legal Training
6	Investigative Training
7	Advanced Administration Training

+ 1 DM to rolls if Intelligence 8 + .

In addition, division members are often called upon to assist other officers in the apprehension of criminals and the suppression of civil disorder.

*Constabulary division* — The constabulary division is the branch of a police force that specializes in patrol, law enforcement, and search-and-rescue duties in rural areas. In the case of a planet with a relatively low population level and one world government, the constabulary would be part of the planetary police or military force. On a world where there are numerous police organizations, the constabulary would be a separate force. For game purposes, however, the constabulary is treated here as a branch of the planetary police. Separate constabulary forces require a job candidate to have at least one year of police experience before they would accept a candidate into their organization, a fact reflected abstractly in this generation system.

*Investigative division* — The investigative division is the elite division on the force. Instead of performing mundane patrol duties, this division of plainclothes officers spends its time inspecting the scenes of crime for physical evidence, interrogating witnesses, tracking down leads to criminals provided by a network of informants, staking out the probable location of criminals, and identifying and arresting criminals when sufficient evidence has been accumulated. Officers of the detective division also cooperate closely with the prosecuting attorney's office and testify in court against criminal suspects.

*Administrative division* — The administrative division provides command and

control over the police force and works closely with the local prosecuting attorney's office to prepare cases against criminals. Policies for personnel, training, and police methods are also set by this division, although the policies are actually executed by the field division. The officer must be at least a sergeant before he or she can be considered for duty in the administrative division. All police officers with the rank of captain or above are automatically transferred from field duties to the administrative division.

### Duty assignment resolution

Duty assignments are made and resolved annually during a four-year term. The specific assignment should be rolled on the Police Specific Assignments Table with 2D. If a Special Assignment is rolled, it should be determined with an additional 1D roll on the Police Special Assignment Table. Add a + 1 DM if the character's intelligence is 8 + .

Other assignments should be resolved on the appropriate Branch Assignment Resolution Tables with 2D rolls for Survival, Decorations, Promotion, and Skills that must meet or exceed the indicated number. Note and apply the DMs listed beneath each table.

If the listed number is rolled exactly on the survival throw, the character has been wounded, is automatically retired, and receives full monthly pay for the rest of his or her life. If the survival number is not met or exceeded, the character has been killed on duty. The nearest surviving family member would receive a CR 100,000 life insurance death benefit.

If the decoration throw is met, the character has performed meritoriously and receives a meritorious conduct citation. If the decoration throw is exceeded by three, the character has been awarded a departmental medal for gallantry. If the decoration roll is a 12, the character receives a medal for bravery.

The character is promoted one rank if the promotion number is met or exceeded. The character may only be promoted one rank per four-year term.

If the character meets or exceeds the skill roll, he or she then may roll once for a skill either on the Police Division Skills Table in their current division column or on the Police Service Skills Table. All characters may also choose to roll on the Police Life column of the latter table. Only those serving on undercover, SWAT, or desk assignments may roll on the tables with these names. A character must have the rank of Sergeant or higher to roll on the command column.

### Special assignments

Police officers may be assigned to a variety of special assignments during their careers. Roll 1D on the Special Assignment Table if the character receives such an assignment during a term. A + 1 DM is granted if the character has an intelligence rating of 8 + .

*Riot training* — The character is assigned to learn how to control mobs and suppress civil disorder. He or she receives the following skills on a 1D roll of 5 + for each skill: Shotgun, Cudgel, Tactics, Gas Weapons, Brawling.

*SWAT training* — The character is assigned to Special Weapons and Tactics school, where he or she learns how to use the high-powered weapons and infantry tactics needed to deal with snipers and barricaded criminals. Skills received on a 1D roll of 5 + for each skill include: Rifle, Shotgun, Gas Weapons, Autorifle, Tactics, Leader. Characters who have completed SWAT training also receive a + 1 DM on their survival roll when serving on a SWAT assignment.

*Constabulary training* — The character receives training in wilderness patrol and search-and-rescue tactics. The character may transfer to the constabulary division after training is complete. Skills received on a 5 + 1D roll for each skill include: Recon, Survival, Small Watercraft, Rifle, Medic, Commo, ATV.

*Air patrol* — The character is assigned to flight training and then to police-patrol aircraft. These aircraft would include light fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, or grav vehicles, depending on tech level. The character receives 1D - 3 (at least one) levels in Aircraft skill.

*Legal training* — The character is sent to an intensive study course at law school and receives 1D - 3 Legal skill.

*Investigative training* — The character receives training as a criminal investigator.

After this training is completed, whether or not skills are received on die rolls, the character is eligible to transfer to the investigative division. This is the only way a character can enter the investigative division unless he or she is a Police Academy honors graduate. Skills awarded on a 1D roll of 5 + for each skill include: Forensics, Liaison, Legal, Streetwise, Interrogation, Computer.

**Advanced administration** — This officer has been singled out as having high career potential and has been selected for advanced administration and leadership training. He or she is promoted one rank after completing training and is awarded the following skills on a 1D roll of 5 + for each skill: Admin, Tactics, Leader, Legal, Computer.

**Re-enlistment and mustering out**

Characters must throw 5 + on 2D in order to re-enlist on the police force after completing four one-year assignments (one term). If the character rolls a 12, he or she is then required to re-enlist. Re-enlistment in a different branch is not allowed.

Branch changes occur after one year in the patrol division, after the completion of special training assignments or upon promotion into the Administrative Division.

At the conclusion of the character's last term of service, he or she is eligible for mustering out benefits. These should be determined by rolling on the Cash and Material Benefits Tables. One roll is allowed for each term of service. A DM of + 1 is allowed if the character musters out with a rank of Captain or higher. No more than three rolls are allowed on the Cash Benefits Table. Characters mustering after five or more terms are eligible for retirement pay, which consists of half the normal monthly pay. Aging is handled in accordance with TRAVELLER Book 1.

**Police skills**

Here is a set of new skills earned by police characters as well as some additional abilities given to them by skills previously described in other TRAVELLER material. Other skills earned through the police character generation system are identical to those described in Book 1

(*Characters and Combat*), Book 4 (*Mercenary*), Book 5, (*High Guard*), and Supplement 4 (*Citizens of the Imperium*).

**Forensics** — This skill is the ability to find and examine physical evidence, and to determine the identity of a suspect from this evidence. This skill would be used to locate and lift fingerprints, examine footprints, tire tracks, and other physical evidence at the crime scene, and to analyze tissue samples, hair samples, and other biological evidence at the scene and in the police crime laboratory. Forensics also includes the ability to examine weapons and spent ammunition from slug throwers, to determine the identity of a suspect. The referee should throw 10 + for the character to successfully determine the identity of a criminal from the evidence examined. A DM of +2 is applied for each level of Forensics skill.

**Gas weapons** — This skill reflects the knowledge and ability of the character to effectively use riot-control gas weapons and to use protective gas-projectile launchers and gas projectors such as "pepper foggers." Throw 8 + for the character to effectively use a riot-control weapon to disperse a hostile mob or to incapacitate and capture a suspect; grant a DM of + 1 for each Gas Weapon skill level. Characters using riot-control gases without experience may disable themselves on a secondary throw of 7 + .

**Branch Assignment Resolution Tables**

**Patrol/Traffic:**

	Training	Beat	Undercover	SWAT	Desk
Survival	auto	3+	6+	5+	auto
Decoration	none	12+	6+	7+	none
Promotion	none	11+	7+	8+	12+
Skills	7+	9+	5+	7+	none

DMs: + 1 for survival if police skills at level 2 or greater; + 1 on SWAT assignment if officer has had SWAT training; + 1 for promotion if education 9 +

**Investigative:**

	Training	Detective	Undercover	Admin
Survival	auto	5+	6+	auto
Decoration	none	9+	6+	none
Promotion	none	10+	7+	11+
Skills	6+	8+	5+	12+

DMs: + 1 for survival if police skills at level 2 or greater; + 1 DM for promotion if intelligence 8+ .

**Constabulary:**

	Training	Beat	Rescue	SWAT	Barracks
Survival	auto	4+	6+	5+	auto
Decoration	none	10+	6+	7+	none
Promotion	none	11+	8+	8+	12+
Skills	6+	8+	5+	7+	none

DMs: + 2 for survival if police skill level is 2 or greater; + 1 for survival if endurance 10 +; + 1 for promotion if intelligence 8 + .

**Admin:**

	Training	Legal	Desk	Undercover
Survival	auto	auto	auto	6+
Decoration	none	none	none	6+
Promotion	none	12+	12 +	10+
Skills	7+	10+	none	5+


DMs: Promotion + 1 if intelligence 10 +

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## Police Division Skills Table

	Patrol	Traffic	Investigation	Constabulary	Admin
1	Liaison	Gun Combat	Streetwise	Gun Combat	Legal
2	Interrogation	Vehicle	Surveillance	ATV	Legal
3	Streetwise	Vehicle	Interrogation	Survival	Admin
4	Surveillance	Streetwise	Legal	Recon	Admin
5	Vehicle	Liaison	Forensics	Liaison	Liaison
6	Gun Combat	Air Raft	Computer	Vehicle	Commo
7	Computer	Computer	Computer	Computer	Computer

Add +1 DM to rolls if world is TL 9 + .

For Gun Combat skill, choose Handgun, Shotgun, or SMG.

Character must have Sgt. or higher to enter Admin Division.

All with rank of Lieutenant must throw 6 + to avoid posting to Admin Division.

Captains and above are automatically posted to Admin Division.

## Police Service Skills Tables

	Police Life	Undercover	SWAT	Desk	Command
1	Brawling	Brawling	Brawling	Commo	Leader
2	+1 Strength	Gambling	+1 Strength	Admin	Tactics
3	+1 Handgun	Carousing	+1 Endur	Admin	Commo
4	+1 Shotgun	+1 SMG	+1 SMG	Computer	Admin
5	Liaison	+1 Body Pistol	+1 Rifle	Liaison	Legal
6	+1 Endur	+1 Social	Tactics	-1 Strength	Computer
7					+1 Social

Command skills are only open to those of Sergeant rank or higher; +1 DM on command rolls if of Captain rank or higher.

## Police Ranks Table

	Patrol/Traffic/Admin	Investigation	Constabulary	Monthly Pay
-	Patrol/Traffic Officer	Detective	Trooper	CR 500
-	Sr. Patrol/Traffic Off.	Inspector	Corporal	CR 700
1	Sergeant	Detective Sgt.	Sergeant	CR 1,000
2	Lieutenant	Detective Lt.	Lieutenant	CR 1,200
3	Captain	-	Captain	CR 1,500
4	Deputy Chief	-	Deputy Marshal	CR 2,000
5	Chief	-	Marshal	CR 3,000
6	Commissioner	-	Interior Minister	CR 4,000

## Mustering Out Tables

### Material Benefits Table

#### Die Roll Benefit

1	Low Passage
2	+1 Intel
3	+2 Educ
4	Handgun
5	Body Pistol
6	High Passage
7	+1 Social

Characters with rank 5 or 6 may add +1 to their rolls on this table. Handgun may be chosen from auto pistol, revolver, gauss pistol, or laser pistol, depending on the tech level of the character's home world. The handgun benefit must be declared immediately; additional handgun benefits may be an additional handgun type or an increase in skill level of a previously chosen weapon.

### Cash Benefits Table

Die roll	Amount
1	CR 2,000
2	CR 5,000
3	CR 5,000
4	CR 10,000
5	CR 20,000
6	CR 20,000
7	CR 50,000

No more than three rolls may be made on this table. Individuals with Gambling skill or rank 5 or 6 receive a DM of +1.

*Handgun* — This includes skill in the use of a variety of handguns employed by police officers as a positive DM on the "to hit" die roll. Depending on the tech level of the officer's world, handgun skill could be applied to a revolver, automatic pistol, gauss pistol, or laser pistol. The latter two weapons are described in *Striker* Book 3. The gauss pistol is fully discussed in issue #13 of *The Journal*, page 43. Body Pistol skill is *not* included as part of Handgun skill; rather, it is a separately acquired skill.

*Interrogation* — Similar to the skill described in Book 4, *Mercenary*, this skill enables the character to extract truthful information from suspects in custody and from non-player characters encountered during police investigations. Police characters should throw 8 + to receive a truthful answer from someone they are questioning; apply a DM of +2 for each level of interrogation skill.

*Legal* — This skill demonstrates the character's education in law and the effectiveness of his or her testimony in court. This skill level can be added to that of the prosecuting attorney when the officer is testifying in a criminal case. The total attorney/officer admin/legal skill level is then used as negative modifier in the acquittal throw as described in the article "High Justice" in issue #14 of *The Journal*. If the officer has a legal skill level of 3 +, this indicates he or she has passed the local bar association examination and is a qualified attorney. This gives the character the option of quitting the police force and setting up a private criminal law practice.

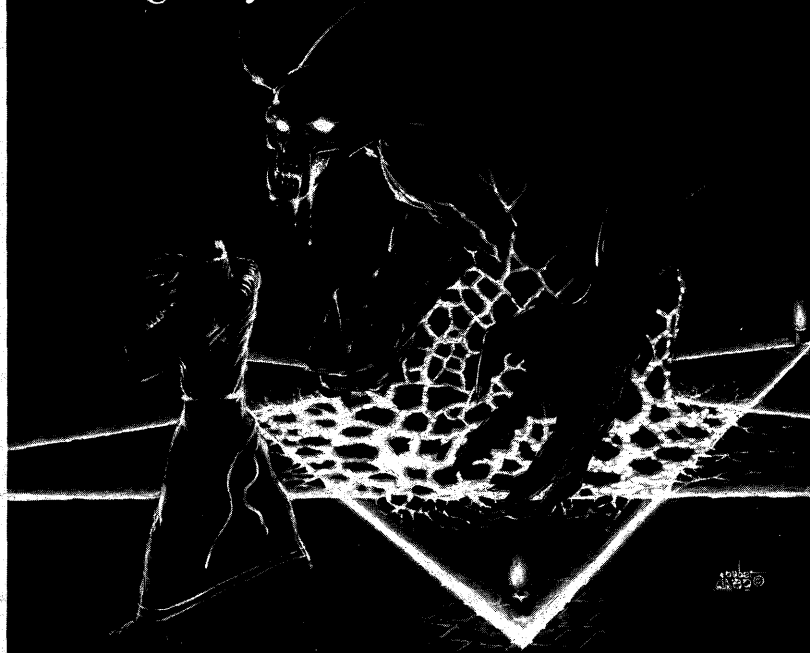
*Streetwise* — This skill is identical to the skill described in *TRAVELLER* Book 1, with one added feature: It enables a police character to determine if he or she is being given truthful and valuable information about a crime or suspect under investigation from an informant. Informants are often keys to the identity or the location of a criminal. A police officer can determine if such information is reliable on a roll of 8 +, with a positive DM for each level of Streetwise skill.

*Surveillance* — This skill demonstrates the character's ability to detect suspicious activity by observation, either on patrol or undercover stakeout. Suspicious activity will be detected on a roll of 7 +, with each surveillance skill level applied as a positive die roll modification.

*Vehicle* — This skill applies to wheeled vehicles or grav vehicles, depending on the tech level of the character's world. It also includes skill in operating two-wheeled cycles or grav cycles in addition to wheeled ground cars and air rafts. Wheeled and grav cycle design is described in the article "Civilian Striker Vehicles," on page 31 of issue #14 of *The Journal*, along with design procedures for creating ground cars.

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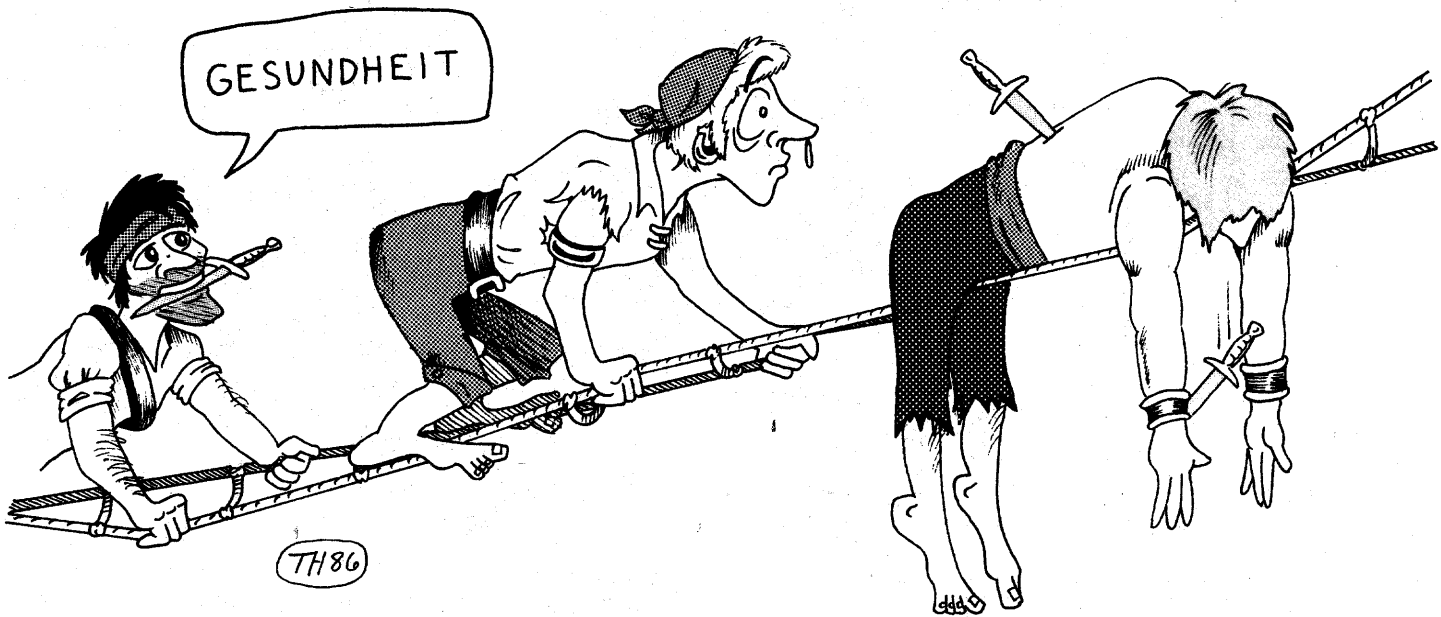








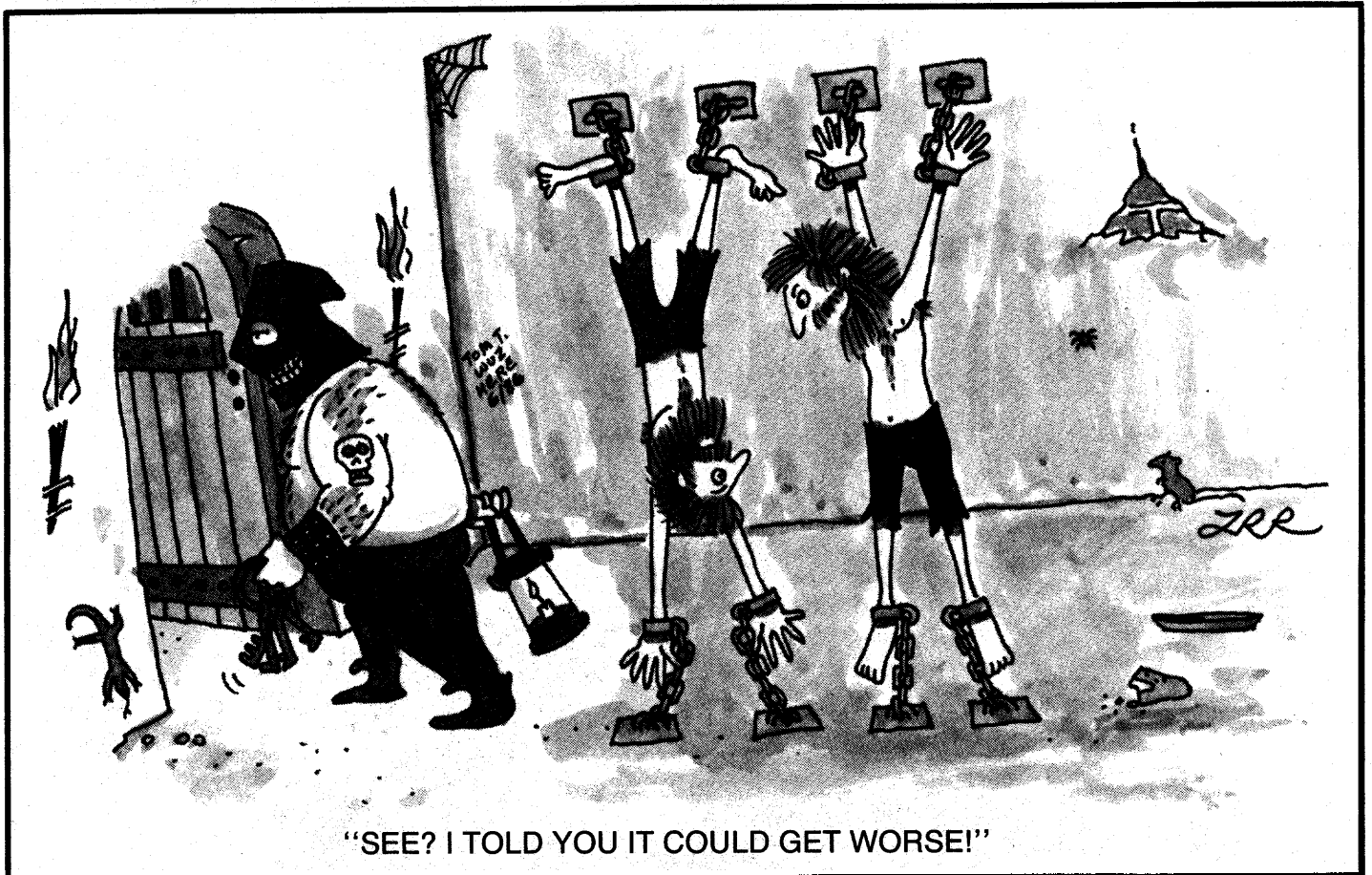
# Dragonmirth







"LET ME GUESS . . . YOU'RE DOING THIS BY THE TRIAL-AND-ERROR METHOD, RIGHT?"



"SEE? I TOLD YOU IT COULD GET WORSE!"

# SNARFQUEST

# 38

BY ELMORE

© ELMORE '86

WHERE IS FRED?

? HUH!?

THE MAN THAT I WAS TALKING TO... THE MAN FROM THE SHIP!

AREN'T YOU DEAD!? WE MEAN, WE THINK YOU ARE - WERE DEAD!

??

DIDN'T FRED KILL YOU?

NO, SILLY, HE DIDN'T KILL ME, BLEEP... HE WAS GOING TO REMOVE A HOMING SIGNAL DEVICE.

I THINK WE SCREWED UP.

EVERY @\*% THING ABOUT AVEEARE IS A @\*% MYSTERY... HE DONT MAKE ANY SENSE!!

WHERE IS FRED?

HE LEFT.

HE... HE WENT TO SEE A MAN ABOUT A DRAGON!? AN' HE SAID FOR US TO TAKE CARE OF YOU...

SNARF, FRED DOESN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT A DRAGON IS... TELL ME THE TRUTH!

OKAY, DA TRUTH... TELL HIM TELERIE...

SURE... WELL... HE WAS TWISTIN' YER HEAD AROUND BACKWARDS AND THEN... HE... UM...

HE, UHH... LOOKED AROUND AN' HE SAW... DA... DA MOUNTAINS AN' DA TREES...

AND THEN HE JUMPED UP... AN... EH... SCREAMED, YEAH, HE SCREAMED A LOT... AN'... PULLED HIS HAIR...

YEAH, DAT'S IT, AN' HE STARTED SLOBBERIN'! YEAH, AN'... AND RAN AWAY.

YEAH, HE DID THAT, AN' WE TRIED TO STOP HIM!

YEP, DAT'S WHAT HAPPENED... WE SWEAR!

OH MY, SPACE MADNESS, SOME MEN THAT TRAVEL FOR MANY YEARS IN SPACE GO CRAZY! WHEN THEY SET FOOT ON A BEAUTIFUL GREEN PLANET, THEY JUST SNAP!

WE WILL NEVER GET HIM TO GO BACK UP. WE MUST FORGET HIM.

OH, WHAT A PITY. TOO BAD.

MOMENTS LATER

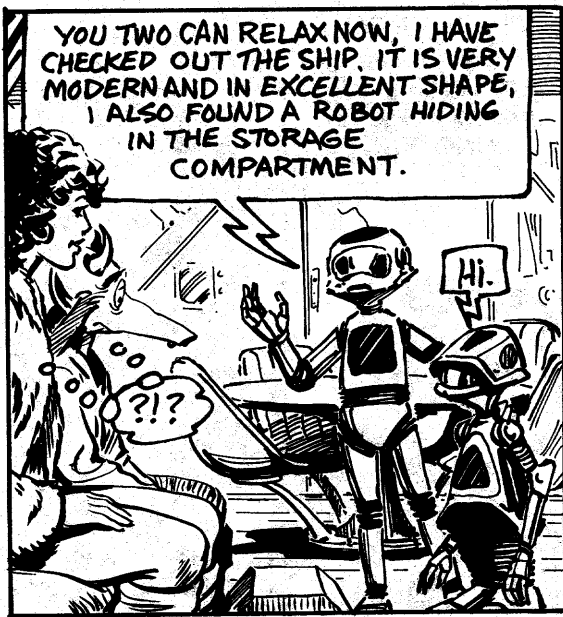
WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE, LET'S GO CHECK OUT THE SHIP.

LATER, IN THE SHIP...

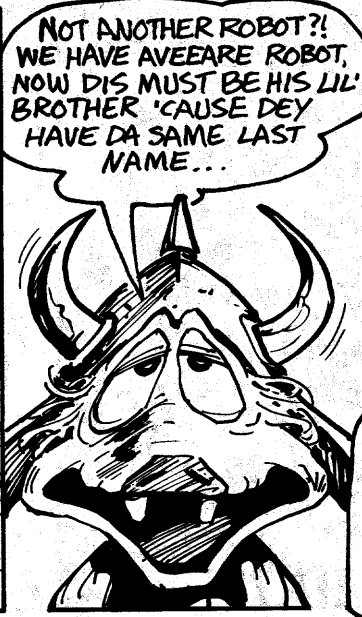
THIS IS NO SHIP, THIS IS A SMALL CASTLE...

I HOPE AVEEARE IS OK, HE'S BEEN GONE A LONG TIME... YA KNOW WE LOST DA LEECH AN' DA LIZARD.

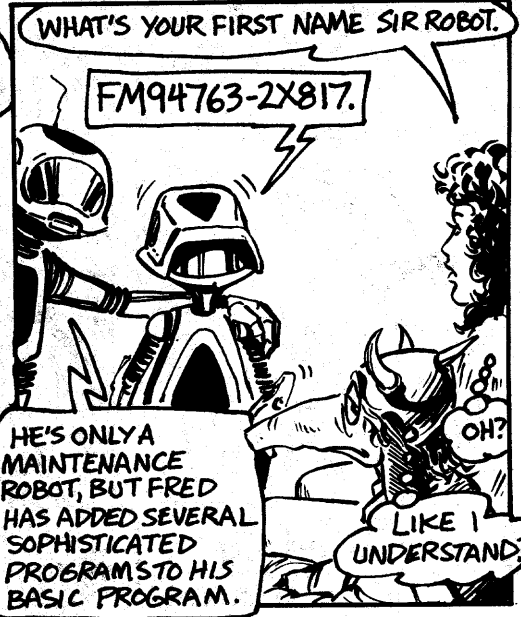
HE'LL BE OK. HE TOLD US TO WAIT RIGHT HERE SO DONT PANIC.



YOU TWO CAN RELAX NOW, I HAVE CHECKED OUT THE SHIP. IT IS VERY MODERN AND IN EXCELLENT SHAPE, I ALSO FOUND A ROBOT HIDING IN THE STORAGE COMPARTMENT.



NOT ANOTHER ROBOT?! WE HAVE AVEEARE ROBOT, NOW DIS MUST BE HIS LIL' BROTHER 'CAUSE DEY HAVE DA SAME LAST NAME...



WHAT'S YOUR FIRST NAME SIR ROBOT.  
FM94763-2X817.

HE'S ONLY A MAINTENANCE ROBOT, BUT FRED HAS ADDED SEVERAL SOPHISTICATED PROGRAMS TO HIS BASIC PROGRAM.

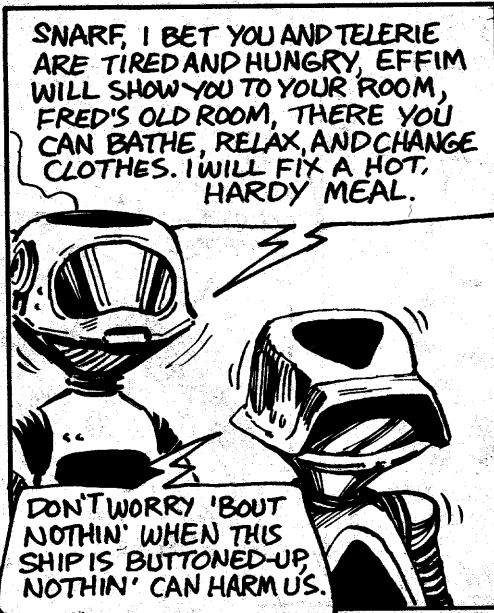
OH?  
LIKE I UNDERSTAND?



WHAT A NAME, ALL I CAUGHT WAS EFFIM.

AVEEARE HAS A NAME LIKE DAT... A MILE LONG...

SO I JUS' CALL HIM AVEEARE, FOR SHORT.



SNARF, I BET YOU AND TELERIE ARE TIRED AND HUNGRY, EFFIM WILL SHOW YOU TO YOUR ROOM, FRED'S OLD ROOM, THERE YOU CAN BATHE, RELAX, AND CHANGE CLOTHES. I WILL FIX A HOT, HARDY MEAL.

DON'T WORRY 'BOUT NOTHIN' WHEN THIS SHIP IS BUTTONED-UP, NOTHIN' CAN HARM US.



LATER IN FRED'S ROOM...

HERE IS A LARGE SELECTION OF CLOTHES THAT FRED COLLECTED FROM EXOTIC PLANETS WE VISITED. AFTER YOU CLEAN UP, FEEL FREE TO WEAR ANYTHING YOU WANT.

WOW!



TELERIE, WHAT IS TODAY'S DATE?

WHY DO YOU WANT TO KNOW THAT?

WHEN I LEFT MY HOME VILLAGE, I HAD ONE YEAR TO GO OUT AN' DO GREAT HEROIC DEEDS...

ALSO, ACCUMULATE RICHES SEVERAL OF US LEFT... BECAUSE DA ONE DAT RETURNS WITH DA MOST RICHES AN' DA GREATEST REPUTATION GETS TO BE DA NEW KING!!



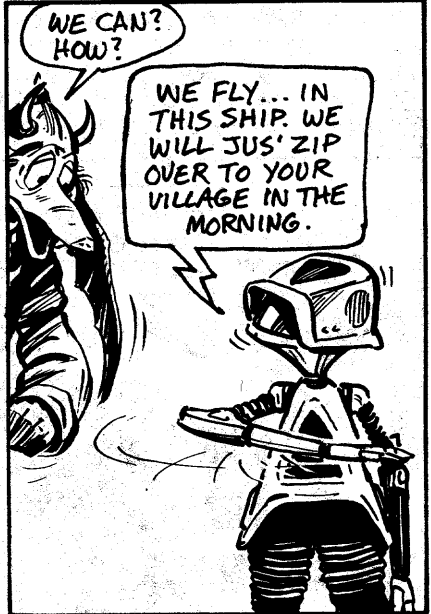
I THINK TODAY IS THE TENTH DAY OF THE SEVENTH MONTH OF THE YEAR OF THE FROG.

OH NO, MY YEAR IS UP TOMORROW... IT WOULD TAKE ME MONTHS TO GET BACK HOME!!

NO SWEAT, MAN!

HUH?

WE CAN GO TO ANY PLACE ON THIS PLANET IN TWENTY MINUTES OR LESS.



WE CAN? HOW?

WE FLY... IN THIS SHIP. WE WILL JUS' ZIP OVER TO YOUR VILLAGE IN THE MORNING.



LATER.

MAN, DIS MEAL LOOKS GREAT, HEY EFFIM, HOW DO YA LIKE MY NEW CLOTHES?

VERY GOOD, SIR, BUT TELERIE HAS SELECTED A GOWN THAT IS ONLY WORN WHEN YA GO TO BED... MAYBE I BETTER EXPLAIN IT TO HER IN A POLITE WAY.



HOLDON, LIL' BUDDY, SHE LOOKS REAL FINE TO ME, SO DON'T SAY A WORD TO HER... UNDERSTAND!

Y-YES SIR, MR. SNARF



I FEEL SOOO REFRESHED, I EVEN GOT TO WASH MY HAIR...

SNARF, I LOVE ALL THE CLOTHES, HOW DO YOU LIKE MY OUTFIT?

UH? OH, WELL YES, IT'S MODEST.

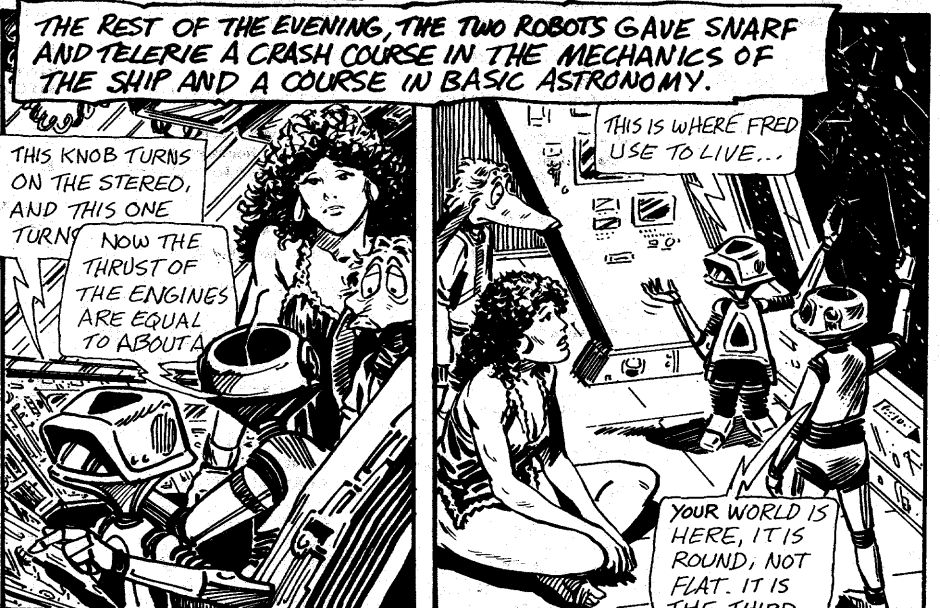


DIS FOOD IS GREAT.

A VEEARE, DON'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT THE NIGHTGOWN TELERIE IS WEARING, SNARF'S ORDERS.

UUMM.

OKAY.



THE REST OF THE EVENING, THE TWO ROBOTS GAVE SNARF AND TELERIE A CRASH COURSE IN THE MECHANICS OF THE SHIP AND A COURSE IN BASIC ASTRONOMY.

THIS KNOB TURNS ON THE STERED, AND THIS ONE TURNS NOW THE THRUST OF THE ENGINES ARE EQUAL TO ABOUT

THIS IS WHERE FRED USE TO LIVE...

YOUR WORLD IS HERE, IT IS ROUND, NOT FLAT. IT IS THE THIRD



THAT NIGHT, IN THEIR ROOM...

SNARF, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT ALL OF THAT STUFF THEY TOLD US? IT'S ALL SO AMAZING.

I THINK MAYBE WE KINDA KNOW THINGS DAT WE SHOULDN'T... KNOW WHAT I MEAN?



NEXT MORNING

WELL BOYS, HOW DO WE LOOK? THINK WE'LL KNOCK 'EM DEAD AT MY VILLAGE?

GREAT.

wow!



SO OFF THEY GO-TO SNARF'S HOME.

LOOK SNARF, WE ARE REALLY FLYING!

I THINK DAT I'M GONNA BE SICK!

NEXT ISSUE: "THE HOMECOMING"



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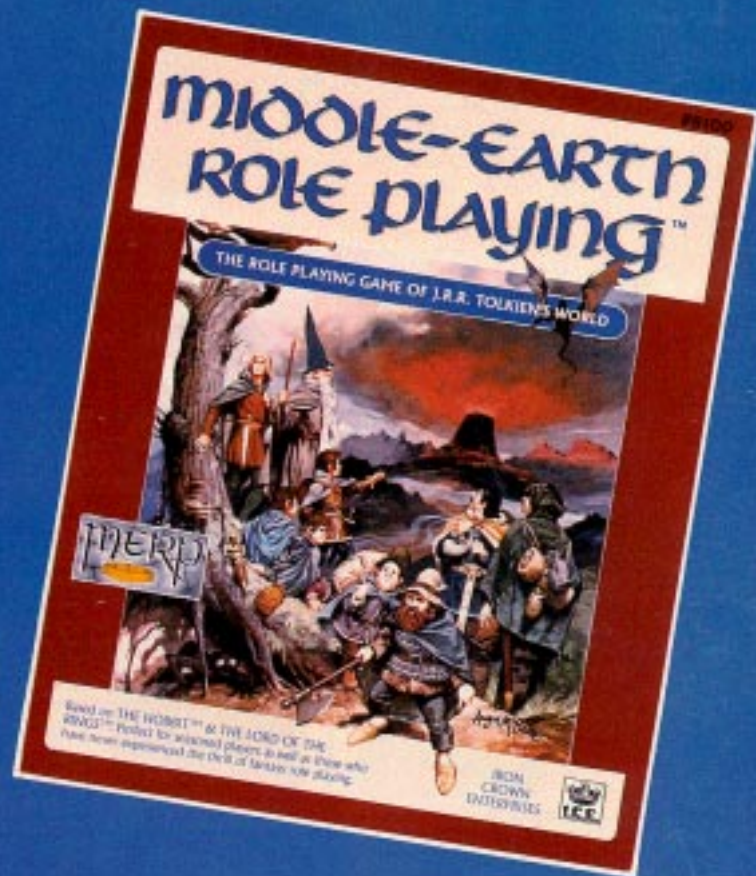
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