

Beauty is in the eye of—oh, skip it.

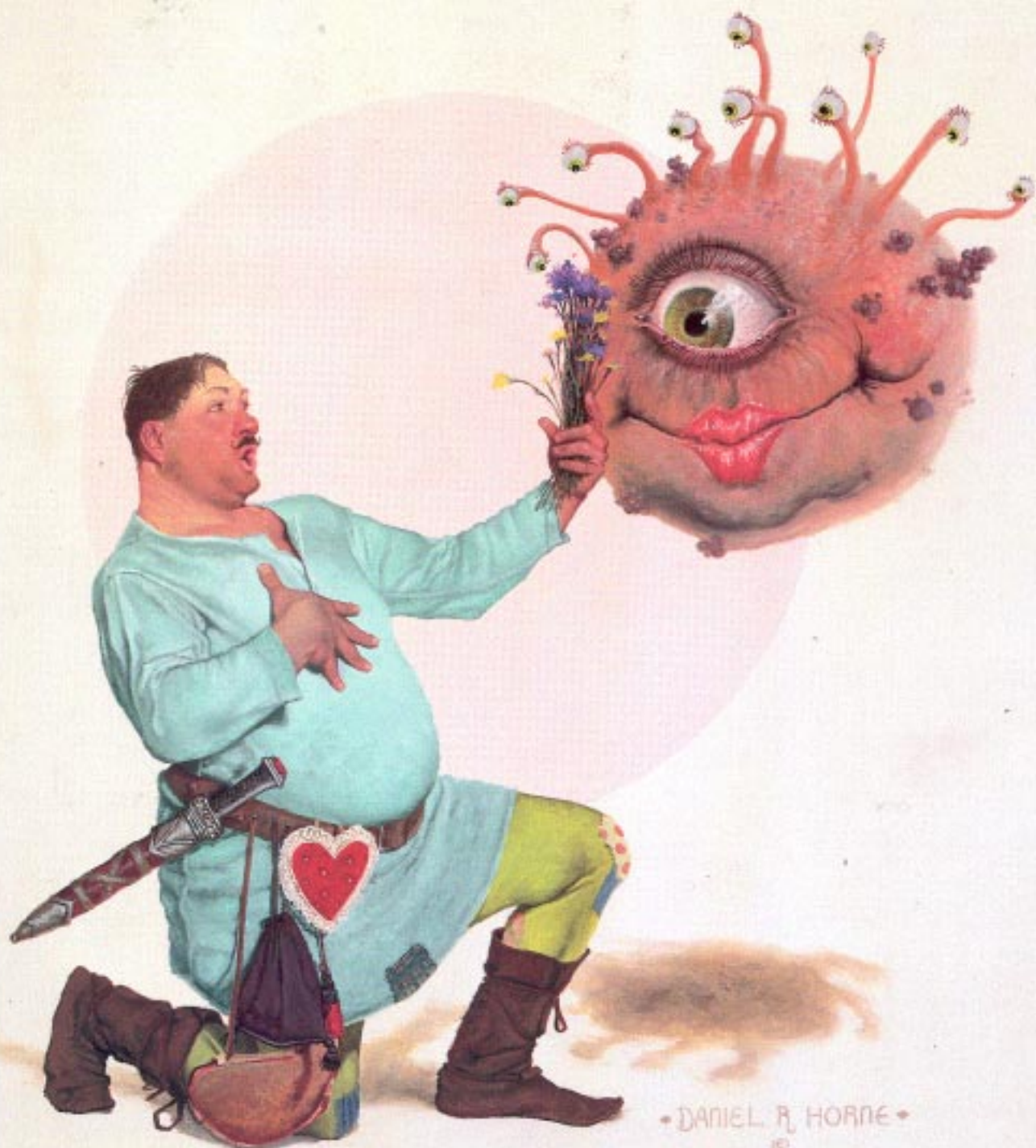
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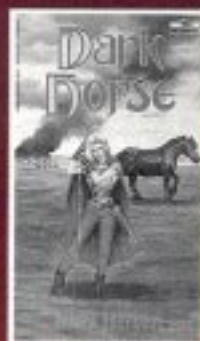
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• DANIEL R. HORNE •



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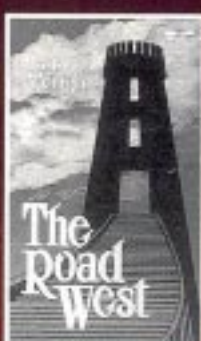
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MAGAZINE

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COVER

It's springtime, and a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of cute beholders. I know mine always do. Daniel Horne is this issue's cover artist, and we'll let his painting speak for itself. Happy April!

LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

Odd & ends III

The following letters were actually received by the editors of DRAGON Magazine and, except for minor editing, appear as they were written.

Dear Dragon:

Could you clarify something, please? Just who is this Roger Moore guy that's on every page of every issue of DRAGON Magazine? Is it Roger Moore, a.k.a. James Bond? If so, what color boxer shorts does he wear?

Sure. Me. No.

Dear Dragon:

A recent letter you printed really caught my eye. It was in the letters section of issue #144 (page 95) and said: "Want me to send you a quick and easy system for picking up girls, using the 30-sided die?" Do you have a copy of this system, and would you please send me one if it is available?

Trying to pick up girls has always been an aspect of the game we like to play whenever our party is stopped in a town or city. This sideline helps everyone in the group relax after we have endured some heavy-duty gaming.

However, our DM insists on using tables and charts for our every action. Since there is no other system for picking up girls, I think this would really help our game. Our DM tries to roll the dice and improvise, but that isn't really satisfactory to our very competitive characters. I have already been caught in too many bar-room fights over women, and if the system is good it may stop some bickering within our group.

The AD&D® 1st Edition Dungeon Masters Guide has a useful harlot encounters table on page 192. But trust us when we say that the DMG is probably the last thing you need right now. Go outside and get some fresh air.

Dear Dragon:

During our last AD&D game, my group decided to try something different. The players played characters unusual for them. One of the cleric/magic-user/fighters, Arteth, had never played a cleric or a magic-user before. In the middle of the campaign, Arteth came up with a ditty expressing how she felt about that:

*"A corpse is a corpse, of course, of course,
"And a corpse cannot talk, of course, of course,
"But I can talk to a corpse, of course,
"Cause I've got speak with dead!"*

Our DM expressed all of our feelings in a statement at the end of her poem: "This person needs help!"

A brisk walk around the block might not be a bad idea for her, either.

Dear Dragon:

I have a friend who is sort of wacky and eccentric. For instance, while walking through an orc community, he demanded we find an outhouse, and quick. Shouldn't there be a table or something to see if a character needs to go to the washroom during battle? Couldn't it cause a lack of concentration while casting spells? It turned out that my friend didn't have to go to the washroom; he just wanted to see what a *wand of fireballs* would do to the inside of an outhouse.

While you and your friend are outside, say hi to the rest of gang for us.

Dear Dragon:

I plan on getting a tattoo of a dragon, but no matter how hard I look, I can't find the right one. I know you have a lot of artists do drawings for you, and I was wondering if you could possibly look to see if you have any drawings lying around.

If you do happen to look, I'm basically looking for a full dragon (wings, body, and all) that could fit in a space of about 4½" × 3½".

Though we cannot send any art to you, we have been making a lot of guesses about the location of this tattoo-to-be. Don't spoil it for us; just let us keep guessing.

Dear Dragon:

I just love it when my players, companions, or anyone complains about sex in an AD&D campaign. I find a few points to argue, and all intermingle with other ideas which are supported by most role-players.

First, sex is [remainder of letter deleted by the editors].

Outside! Right now!

Dear Dragon:

I have found a question that has baffled me. What would happen if a werewolf called out for help, and the only wolves that heard him were being ridden by orcs? I mean, would the wolves come and help the werewolf if the orcs tried to stop them? If they did come, would the werewolf attack the orcs? Would it be possible that the orcs would even attack the werewolf's adversary out of fear of the werewolf? If the werewolf told the wolves to kill the orcs, would they kill their masters, and if not, what would they do?

We're afraid that's all the time we have for letters this month. Keep them coming!



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EDITORIAL

Fear is Good

As a DM, I have a personal philosophy that says, pure and simple, that Fear is Good. Without a certain element of fear, players eat popcorn and read comics while their player characters yawn in the face of orcish armies and necromancer Arch-Mages. A small amount of fear is present when you wonder what sort of monster is waiting for you just around the next bend in the road, or what trap lies ahead in the musty stone corridors. Fear keeps a very desirable edge to the game.

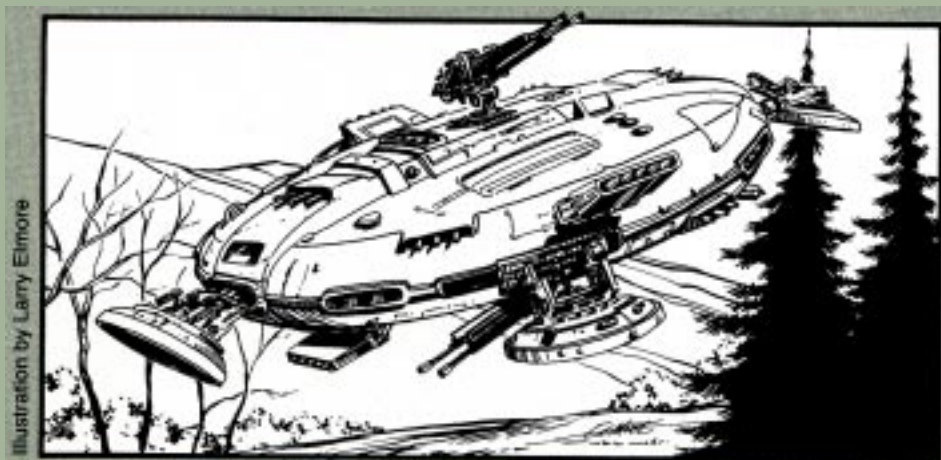
I became aware of the beneficial uses of fear shortly after I started to run role-playing games. I confess that I may have overdone it at first, but after a while, I got a fair grip on different ways to lure PCs into deathtraps and ambushes, then make them sweat for a bit. I remember the sleepy and bored looks on the faces of one group that had failed a surprise roll, and how those expressions changed when a beholder floated out from behind a rock and walloped the group at close range. Fear prevents complacency, the deadliest enemy of any game campaign.

In this column, I would like to honor some of the game designers who have helped bring fear into role-playing game adventures, making the DM's table a better place for all DMs everywhere. Bless you.

James M. Ward (TSR's GAMMA WORLD® game): I was in a GAMMA WORLD game that Jim Ward ran a few years ago. It scared me to death. Jim has a habit of rolling huge numbers of dice of damage at the snap of a laser, and his campaign was full of amusing things such as Cthulhu-size lake monsters and death-ray satellites that diced up ground targets with impunity. But his most famous creation was the subtly named Death Machine, a nice little military relic of the Social Wars of the game's background.

What's a Death Machine, some of you may ask. Here's a story: A few years ago, when I was in the Army, I told everyone in my gaming group to each pick his or her favorite deity from the AD&D® game, and prepare to role-play that deity in a special scenario I had developed. The next hour was spent in feverish excitement as a large assortment of gods and supermonsters met on a deserted plain and awaited their opponents. Suddenly a huge space-time warp opened up in front of the incredible assembly . . . and out of the alien warp came three brand-new, fully armed, fully powered Death Machines on random programming.

Two gods died in the first 10 seconds of combat, each taking over 700 hp of damage. A third god died before the minute-long fight was over, and two other gods



(including Demogorgon) fled the battlefield in utter panic. All the rest of the deities were pounded with atomic missiles, lasers, bombs, rockets, shells, bullets, force fields, and death rays. Thor bent the nose of one Death Machine with Mjolnir but took a nuke in return. If I had not used random attacks, all of the gods would have died in 30 seconds, no sweat. It was wonderful.

None of the PCs in any GAMMA WORLD games we had thereafter ever stayed within sighting distance of a Death Machine. However, I understand that Jim has run GAMMA WORLD campaigns in the past in which whole fleets of Death Machines would fly off into the wilderness and be completely destroyed by mutant strains of crab grass. Properly run, a good GAMMA WORLD game should cause Fear with a capital F in any pitiful, barbaric mutant who dares poke his head out of his cave. Thank you, Jim.

Sandy Petersen (Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® game): The CALL OF CTHULHU game is the only role-playing game I know that can inspire utter, absolute, bone-chilling fear in both players and game master. I ran a simple adventure once in an apartment during a cold snap, and when the water pipes popped and creaked in the ceiling, everyone in the room (including me) felt his heart stop.

The use of deteriorating characters who slowly go mad as they confront the awful reality of an unbelievably hostile universe is perfect for setting this game's tone. When I run one of these games, I let the players arm their characters with anything they want—land mines, machine guns, grenades, napalm, whatever. It never makes any difference. They're all doomed, and they know it. One group parked its cars outside a haunted house and sprayed it, inside and out, with machine-gun fire. When they came back to their cars, they found that something bad had come out and ripped out all of the

engine blocks and peeled off the car roofs like sardine-can tops. These were not happy campers. (One of them was Jim Ward, too.) I had lots of fun.

This game gives me a good, warm feeling inside. Thank you, Sandy.

Allen Varney (TSR's AD&D® SPELL-JAMMER™ module SJA1 *Wildspace*): I refuse to do this brand-new module a terrible injustice and spoil it for you, but any DM who happens to read the "Story Background" section from pages 2-3 will instantly grasp that this could well be the Ultimate Adventure, the El Dorado of Player Characters' Nightmares, the module that will make the most hardened and jaded Monty Haul character grow wool and bleat in terror by Chapter 3. And things only get worse from there. Not one of the survivors of this adventure (if there are any) will ever look up at the night sky and feel safe again, assuming there's even a planet left to stand on. I read this module and fell in love.

This module is what real fear is all about. Thank you, Allen. *Wildspace*—you make my heart race.

Final note: Those of you who enjoy instilling real fear into your AD&D campaigns should look for a certain boxed set called *Ravenloft* this May, from designer Bruce Nesmith and editor Andria Hayday; it encompasses the superb Tracy Hickman module, as well as many other wonderful things. And look for a WORLD OF GREYHAWK® adventure scheduled to appear in January 1991. It's the brainchild of David "Zeb" Cook, and the title says it all. It's called *Vecna Lives*.

Think about it. And enjoy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger Moore".

April 4, 1990

**Lightning flashed, thunder pealed, rain splattered the earth.
The storm broke ...**



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a dark cloud. Sometimes what's back there
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*—Quin Sebastian
Soldier of Fortune*

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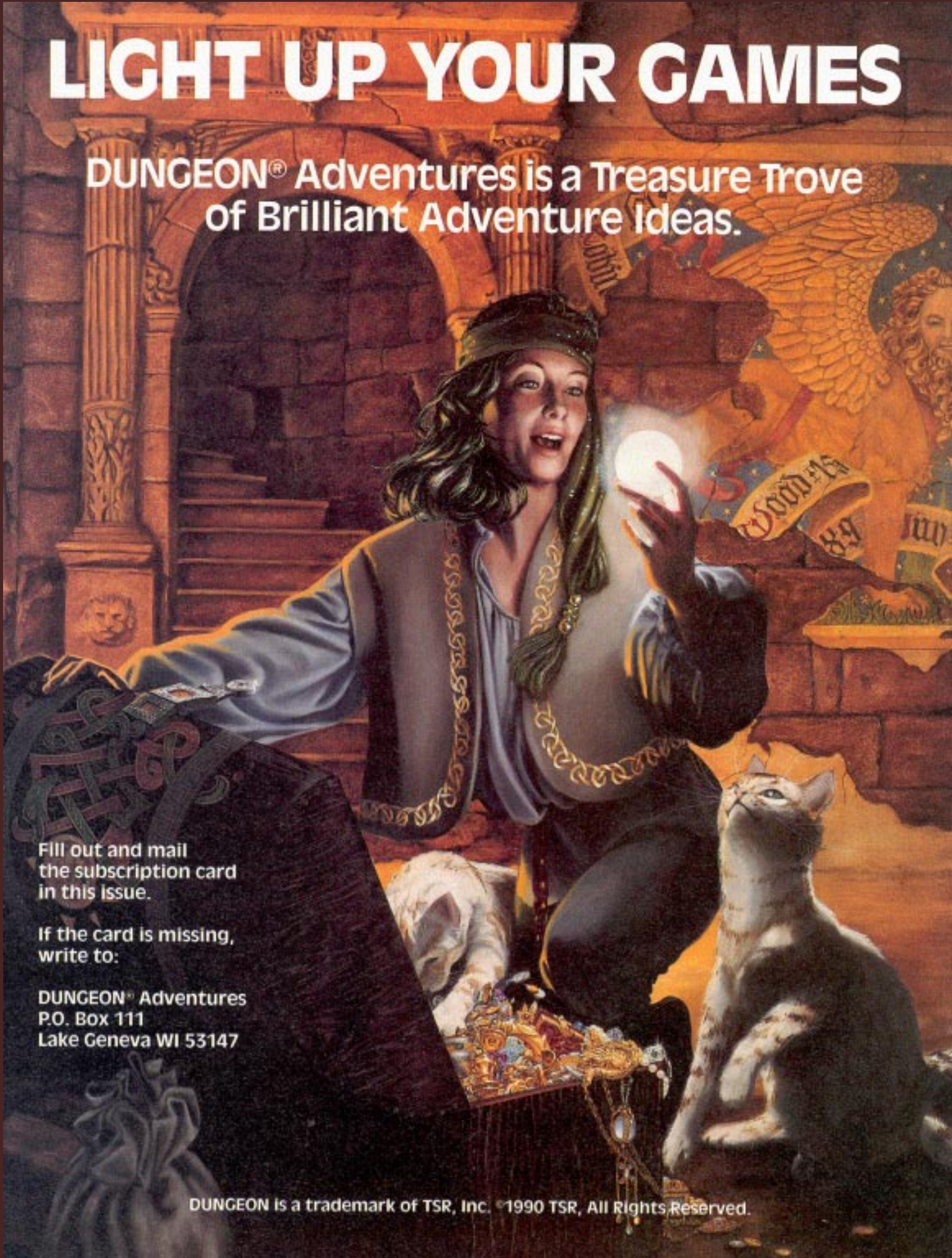


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That Time of Year Again

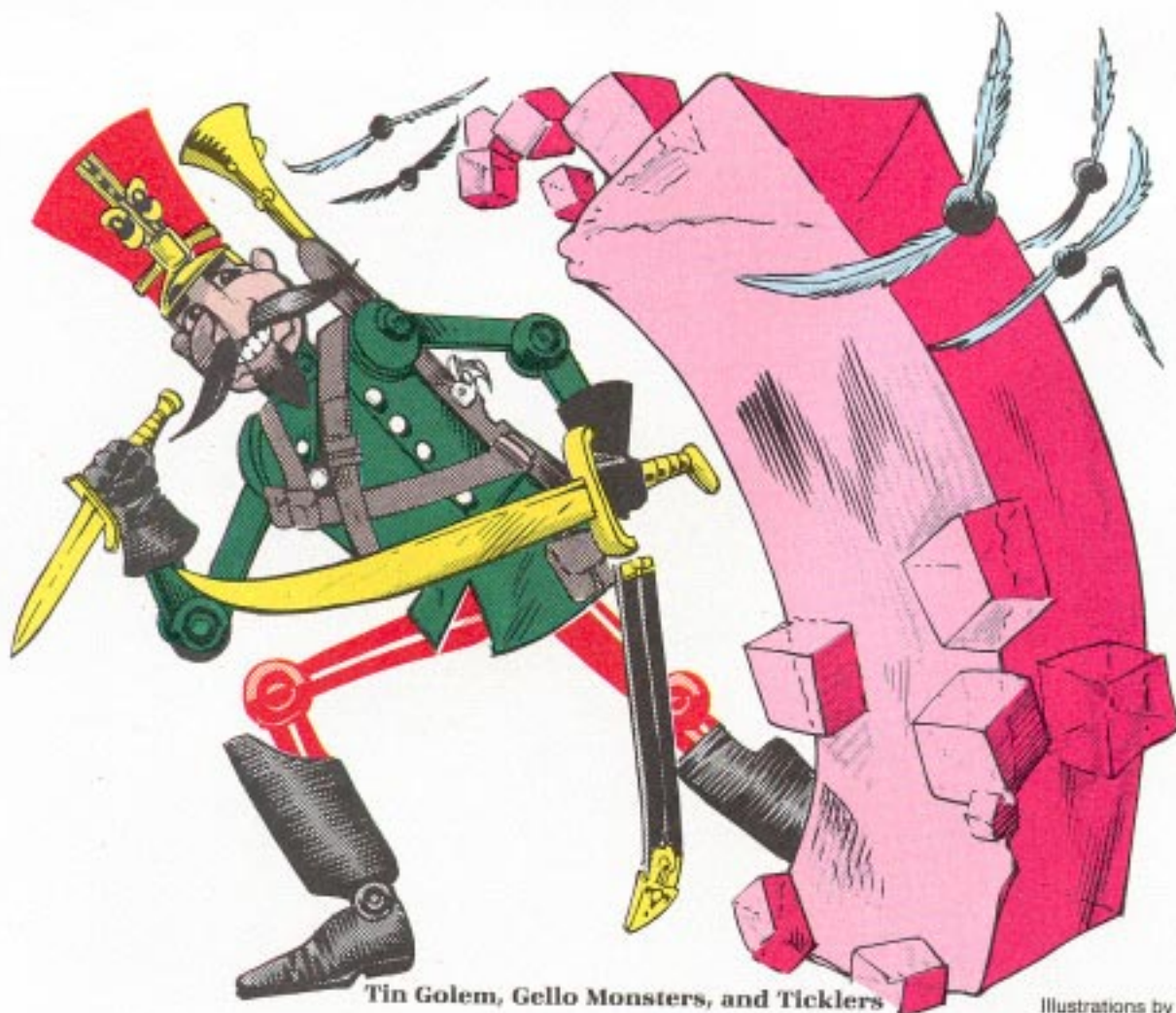
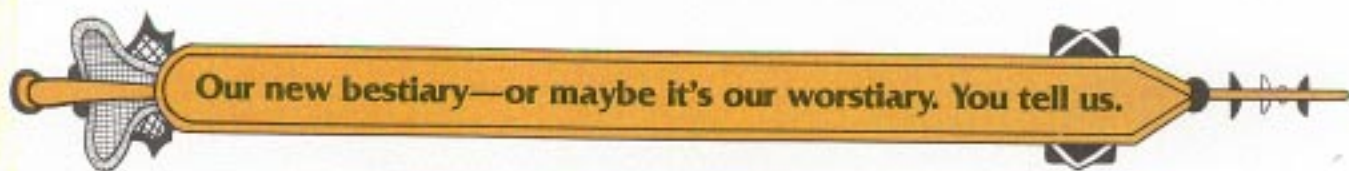


Illustration by George Barr

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Not Necessarily The ?? Edition

Monstrous Compendium



Tin Golem, Gello Monsters, and Tickers

Illustrations by Mark Nelson

Monstrous Compendium?

We've seen a lot of weird monsters here at DRAGON® Magazine. We've even published some of them, like the giant vampire frog in issue #50, but some monsters we've received were so weird that we'd read one of them and think, "Jeez, nobody will ever want to see this thing!" Fat lot we knew. There were giant evil black squirrels in the *Monster Manual II*, and there was the flumph and the cavalier, and in the SPELLJAMMER™ boxed set are giant-no, we can't say it. It's too awful. (Hint: One of them could store a 100-lb. sack of Hartz Mountain Hamster Nummies in each cheek.)

We've learned a bitter lesson. We've searched our monster files for every single weird monster that we could find, and at no small personal cost to ourselves, we've converted them into AD&D® 2nd Edition game statistics, just in case you happen to use them on your players. They'd love it. You bet. —The Editors

Blink Woolly Mammoth

Created by: Sharon Jenkins

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Subarctic plains*
 FREQUENCY: *Very rare*
 ORGANIZATION: *Herd*
 ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Day*
 DIET: *Herbivore*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Semi-*
 TREASURE: *Tusks (good luck!)*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
 NO. APPEARING: 1-12
 ARMOR CLASS: 5
 MOVEMENT: 12
 HIT DICE: 15
 THACO: 5
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 5 (2 tusks, 1 trunk constriction, 2 forefeet)
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-16/2-16/2-12/2-12-12
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Blinking*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
 SIZE: *L (14' tall at shoulder)*
 MORALE: *Elite (14)*
 XP VALUE: 12,000

These otherwise normal mammoths blink in and out at random when attacked, using a limited form of teleportation as do blink dogs (see *Monstrous Compendium*, "Dogs"). They will blink on a roll of 5 or better on 1d12, with a range of up to 60', and will reappear as per a 1d12 roll: 1 = in front of opponent; 2 = shield (or left

front flank; 3 = unshielded (or right) front flank; 4-8 = behind opponent; 9-12 = on top of opponent. If a blink mammoth appears directly above its opponent, the victim is crushed for 6-36 hp damage. All of his equipment must save vs. crushing blow, and the victim must save vs. wands to avoid being knocked unconscious for 2-12 rounds. Only one blink mammoth will "drop in on" a victim at a time. Additionally, any victim so struck must make a dexterity check on 4d6 to avoid being knocked down, thus giving the blink mammoths a +2 to-hit bonus if the victim fails to get initiative to stand up.

The heavy tusks of these mammoths have 150% of the weight and value of elephants' tusks, being worth 1d6 × 150 gp each, or about 6 gp per pound. Getting the tusks, of course, is a problem.

Death Sheep


Created by: M. W. Rodgers

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Temperate hill*
 FREQUENCY: *Bather rare*
 ORGANIZATION: *Herd*
 ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Day*



DIET: *Carnivore*
 INTELLIGENCE: *Animal*
 TREASURE: *Wool (if you can get it)*
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral evil*
 NO. APPEARING: 2-20
 ARMOR CLASS: 7
 MOVEMENT: 15
 HIT DICE: 1 + 1
 THACO: 19
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 bite
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-8
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Poisonous bite*
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Immune to fear, charm, and hold spells*
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
 SIZE: *S-M (3-4' tall at shoulder)*
 MORALE: *Fearless (19)*
 XP VALUE: 175

From some unknown source, these deadly sheep roam the verdant hillsides where they live, ravaging anything in their paths. From a distance, they seem to be nothing more than wild, somewhat dirty sheep. Up close, however, the sheep can be seen to have an evil nature. Their large mouths are filled with long, sharp black teeth that drip vile ichor.

These sheep attack any living thing that




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they can find, fearing nothing and fighting to the death. Because of their ferociousness, the sheep make all attacks at +2 to hit and damage. If a victim is bitten, he must make a save vs. poison at +2 or become as mad as the sheep are in 1-10 days. The victim's teeth gradually turn black and become sharp and pointed, and finally the victim is totally consumed with insanity and berserkly attacks any living thing that it senses, using only its teeth.

The only way to save an infected creature is to cast *remove curse*, *cure disease*, and *neutralize poison* spells upon it before half of the 1-10 day cycle is complete. Any of the above three spells cast singly only slows down the progress of the disease by one day.

Any creature consumed by the disease cannot be tamed or controlled in any fashion. Such creatures can be captured and penned up, or perhaps tied up and released later. A favorite battle tactic of one general was to capture several of these sheep, place them in boxed carts, and release them in the direction of his enemies. It worked well until one sheep turned around and looked back; then things got a little sticky.

All maddened and surviving victims of the death sheep, except other sheep, live only as many days as they have hit points. Therefore, only the death sheep are ever found, and they do not attack one another. Death sheep typically travel in flocks (woe to the unwary wolf!) and eat animal flesh, be it fresh or rotten. Birds, reptiles, and all other animals (except mammals) are immune to the poisonous bite of the death sheep. It is speculated that the death sheep are a product of some mage's experiments with rabies, and rumors hold that one particularly ambitious death sheep named Basil (9 hp) is their leader.

Gello Monster

Created by: William S. Greenway

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Subterranean*

FREQUENCY: *Quite rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Solitary*

ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*

DIET: *Omnivore*

INTELLIGENCE: *Non-*

TREASURE: *Incidental*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral, if squishy*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: 10

MOVEMENT: 9 (*and can climb flawlessly*)

HIT DICE: 1-28 (3d10 -2) *servings*

THACO: Nil; *see text*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 *smother*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See text*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Smothering*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Only harmed by snarfing (see text)*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Immune to all spells (see text)*

SIZE: 5 (1-3' square, or 1-28 cubic feet)

MORALE: *Fearless (20) until snarfed; then Average (10)*

XP VALUE: 10 *calories per serving*

The gello monster is a variant of the gelatinous cube. These dreaded monsters came into being when a convention of gelatin merchants, which had mistakenly been held in the Grotto of the Gelatinous Cubes because the organizer thought it sounded appropriate, was ambushed by a horde of gelatinous cubes. The cubes, of course, devoured all that was there, including many of the gelatin mixes that the merchants had on display. Once inside the cubes, the gelatin mixes diffused throughout their bodies, reacting with the internal juices of the cubes and radically altered their physiology.

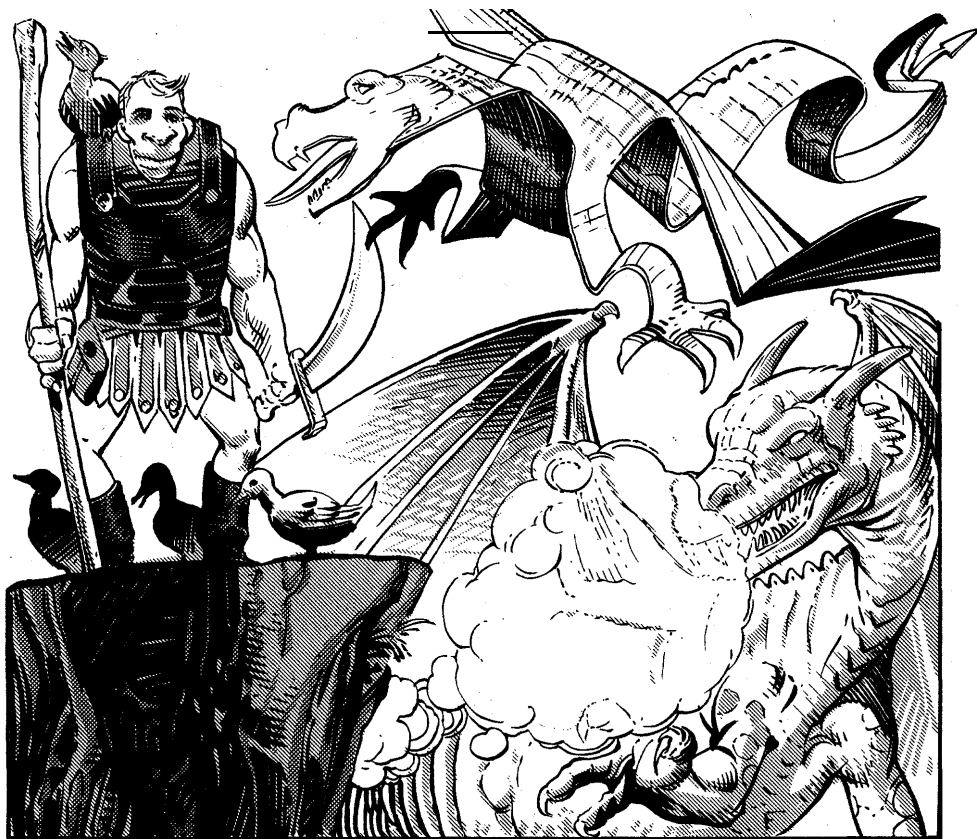
The cubes, of course, acquired the flavor and coloring of the mixes they consumed, and are now found in many colors and flavors, varying from red to puce, and from cherry to blackberry-orange. As a result of having acquired the coloring of the gelatin mixes, the silent-moving gello monsters cause victims to have a -1 on their surprise rolls (gello monsters are small, which helps, but they all smell very strongly of whatever flavor they happen to be).

When attacking, a gello monster slithers up a character's body and attempts to cover his breathing orifices, doing 2-8 hp smothering damage per round (no to-hit roll required). Once a meal is dead, a gello monster takes 2-8 days to eat it by means of weak digestive juice (also a result of the gelatin infusion).

Defensively, gello monsters are well-nigh invulnerable. Blows from edged weapons only divide them evenly into smaller monsters, and blunt weapons bounce off them harmlessly, with a 35% chance of hitting the wielder on the rebound. Magical spells affect them, but only in a limited way. Heat- and cold-based spells make them either warmer or colder but do not harm them, and all other spells have similar results. For example, a *magic missile* attack would make one only quiver, and an *ice storm* would only serve as a decorative topping.

The only way to defeat a gello monster is to snarf it — i.e., eat it as fast as possible.

Man-Drake, Paper Dragon, and Pink Dragon





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Snarfing attacks are made by rolling 4d6 vs. the snarfer's constitution. If the roll is less than the constitution of the snarfer, then he has successfully snarfed one serving of damage against the gello monster. If the roll is greater, the character is unable to snarf that round (but he can try later, as there's always room for gello). If the roll equals a snarfer's constitution, he must rest for one round but may automatically snarf on the following round. If a snarfer eats at least two servings but then fails his snarfing roll three times in a row, he may snarf no more and must excuse himself from combat. If the snarfer does not escape, he will be at the mercy of the gello monster. About one cubic foot of a gello monster equals the amount a character may snarf in one round.

Huge versions of gello monsters are whispered of, so large that only giants could snarf them. Little else is known.

Killer Spruce

Created by: Hans Persson

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Subarctic forests*
FREQUENCY: *Sorta rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Grove*
ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*
DIET: *Photosynthesis, with supplemental "organic enrichment" of the soil in which it lives*
INTELLIGENCE: *Non-*
TREASURE: *Incidental*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral evil*
NO. APPEARING: *1-4*
ARMOR CLASS: *0 (trunk)/3 (branches)*
MOVEMENT: *Nil*
HIT DICE: *8*
THACO: *13*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *6 branch strikes*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *2-12 per strike*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Dying blow, possible poison*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Camouflage, resistant to blunt weapons*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *L (30' tall)*
MORALE: *Fearless (20), as it can't run away*
XP VALUE: *5,000 (7,000 if poisonous)*

A killer spruce is an ill-tempered tree that can stand no other kinds of life near it. It attacks all creatures passing under it by hitting downward and inward with its

lowest branches, which are equipped with seemingly normal but unusually hard and strong needles. There is no way to distinguish a killer spruce from a normal spruce except to examine its needles carefully (at which point it will attack you anyway). Young killer spruce behave in all ways like normal spruces until they reach full treehood. All killer spruce show a marked preference for elven victims.

If a killer spruce has been brought to zero or fewer hit points, it makes one final attempt to destroy its opponents by falling over onto them. Anyone hit by such an attack suffers 5-30 hp damage and must make a dexterity check on 1d20 or be trapped beneath the fallen spruce. A killer spruce does not care about treasure, but there might still be some valuables lying under it, left there by past victims at the DM's discretion.

Some of these fierce conifers (15%) also have a weak poison on their needles that requires a character to save vs. poison at +3. Anyone who fails the save falls into a comatose sleep for 1-4 turns and may be attacked at +4 to hit by the spruce.

Attacking a killer spruce with blunt weapons does only one-quarter normal damage. A killer spruce is very susceptible to fire, and all such attacks are saved against at -4. Druids can only speculate as to how killer spruce originated, and they dislike the time they spend rescuing adventurers from their clutches.

Death Sheep, Pigeontoads, and Killer Spruce



Man-Drake

Created by: R. Derek Pattison

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Temperate wetlands*
FREQUENCY: *Fairly rare*
ORGANIZATION: *Solitary (bachelor)*
ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Day*
DIET: *Herbivore*
INTELLIGENCE: *Low-Average*
TREASURE: *10% chance of V per hit die*
ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic neutral*
NO. APPEARING: *1*
ARMOR CLASS: *7*
MOVEMENT: *12, Fly 12 (B), Swim 9*
HIT DICE: *1-6 (as per druid of level 1-6)*
THACO: *As per druidic level*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1 beak bite, or by weapon type in human form*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-2 or by weapon*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Spells*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Spells*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *T (1' tall as duck) to M (5-6' tall as human or elf)*
MORALE: *Average (9)*
XP VALUE: *65 to 975 (max.)*

A man-drake is a duck that has the magical ability to periodically assume the form of a very charismatic and comely (but

Monstrous Compendium?

stupid) human, elven, or half-elven male. This power is inherited by all of the man-drake's male children (born or hatched), who undergo their changes upon reaching adulthood and for 1-4 days around each full moon thereafter.

In manlike shape, all man-drakes are druids. To find the druidic level of a random man-drake, roll 1d6; their druidic levels never improve or worsen. Spell selection is completely random.

Man-drakes constantly woo swanmays, although the latter are appalled by them and always ignore them. If not encountered while doing some over-chivalrous things in the presence of a swanmay, a man-drake is usually sulking, alone except for his constant duck companions (1-6 ducks, forget the stats). A man-drake wears no armor in manlike form, but he can fight with simple weapons like a club or staff. The man-drake is not to be confused with a mandrake, which is something completely different.

Paper Dragon

Created by: Kay I. Lilley

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Any place with magical scrolls, books, etc.*

FREQUENCY: *Darn rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Solitary*

ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*

DIET: *Any paper with magical writings*

INTELLIGENCE: *Very-high*

TREASURE: *T*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic good*

NO. APPEARING: *1*

ARMOR CLASS: *6 (2 in flight)*

MOVEMENT: *6, Fly 24 (B)*

HIT DICE: *2 +2*

THAC0: *19*

NO. OF ATTACKS: *4 (claw/claw/bite/tail sting)*

DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-2/1-2/1-4/1-3*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Poisonous sting, possible spell use*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Camouflage*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

SIZE: *T (6" long)*

MORALE: *Steady (12)*

XP VALUE: *650*

Legend holds that this almost two-dimensional creature was created to resemble, or possibly is, a true dragon. The wizard responsible for its creation was a bit eccentric (obviously) and had set out to make a guardian for his library of spells. After creating the paper dragon and finding out how well the creature worked, he channeled more magical energy into making it a living thing, able to exist anywhere and to breed, therefore causing a new race of dragons to come forth. But in the process of accomplishing this, something

went wrong, and the paper dragon's purpose was altered. Instead of protecting scrolls, it now considered them a food source. By the time the wizard found this out, the dragon had gone—and left him with an empty library.

The paper dragon can now be found in scrolls, spell books, or almost any sort of magical writings. It derives nourishment from the magical inks used in such writings. Due to its two-dimensional appearance and coloration, it has a 50% chance of being mistaken in low torchlight for merely a drawing of a dragon. Closer inspection or better lighting reveals its true nature.

The paper dragon attacks by two methods. The first method is a physical attack with two claws, a bite, and a tail sting. The tail stinger injects poison that causes sleep for two turns. If a save vs. poison is made, the effect is drowsiness that also lasts for two turns. While drowsy, the character cannot engage in any activity that requires fast movement or dexterity (climbing, picking locks, dodging missiles, etc.), and he suffers a -3 penalty on to-hit and damage rolls (minimum of 1hp damage).

The paper dragon's second mode of

attack is the hurling of its most recently eaten spell. When encountered, a paper dragon has 1-4 magical scrolls in its lair that it is saving for food. Generate each scroll using Table 90 in the AD&D 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide* (pages 135-136), then generate one extra scroll to represent the last meal that the paper dragon has eaten. Randomly generate one spell from that eaten scroll, and that will be the spell the paper dragon is able to cast at the adventurers. If the scroll was a protection scroll, the dragon can create that protective effect; if the scroll was cursed, the dragon has no effective spell attack. The paper dragon casts its spell or effect by appearing to burp in the direction of its victims. If hard pressed, a paper dragon may hurriedly gulp down part or all of a scroll; it is able to eat one spell from a scroll without disturbing other spells, and it can *read magic* to determine which spell will be the most advantageous. The consumption of part or all of a scroll takes one round.

Paper dragons are good natured but destructive. How they manage to reproduce is a complete mystery. If slain, a paper dragon may be unfolded like an

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origami figure; if the unfolder passes a dexterity check on 1d20 (to keep from tearing the paper) and if the paper dragon was not damaged in any way by its cause of death, the dragon unfolds into a 1'-square sheet of paper upon which the contents of the last scroll it has eaten are written down.

A paper dragon appears to be a very small dragon made of some expensive parchment, upon which decorations appear like handwriting or illustrations.

Pigeontoad

Created by: John Hamilton

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Temperate wetlands and forests*

FREQUENCY *Mostly rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Flock*

ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Day*

DIET: *Carnivore*

INTELLIGENCE: *Animal*

TREASURE: *Nil (lizard men like their eggs, though)*

ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*

NO. APPEARING: 2-12

ARMOR CLASS: 7

MOVEMENT: 6, *Fly 12 (D)*

HIT DICE: 1

THACO: 19

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3 (*claw/claw/bite*)

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1/1/1-4

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Automatic damage with grasp, possibly poisonous bite*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Nil*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

SIZE: *S (2' long, 15 lbs.)*

MORALE: *Steady (12), or Elite (14) in a group of 10 +*

XP VALUE: 35 (*175 if poisonous*)

These awkward, oviparous crossbreeds are usually found only in swampy conditions, although they sometimes dwell in dark forests near pools of water. They have also been found underground, but again only when they have easy access to water. They are more common in warm climes but are found in less temperate zones as well. Pigeontoads have toadlike bodies with leathery wings and birdlike talons.

A pigeontoad attacks a single opponent with two grasping claws and a sharp-beaked bite. If both claws hit in the same round, the opponent has been grasped and the claw damage is automatic until the creature has been killed. Beak attacks are at +2 to hit while an opponent is grasped,

About 15% of all pigeontoad flocks are poisonous; poisonous and nonpoisonous flocks never mix. The poison is administered by a successful bite and causes damage equal to that of the bite (so if the bite does 3 hp damage, the poison damage is likewise 3 hp). If the victim fails a save vs. poison, he becomes weak, gradually losing strength and constitution points as the poison takes effect at the rate of one point (each) per turn. Once both scores have reached 1, the victim is too weak to move and will die in 13-24 hours unless the poison is neutralized.

The female pigeontoad lays a clutch of 10-100 eggs in the water every spring. At least 75% of these eggs are consumed by natural predators. The young that hatch resemble tadpoles, with vestigial wings that serve as fins. Their size is about 3" at hatching, and growth is gradual at first; but by summer's end, the tiny pigeontoads can fly short distances. By the end of fall, they have reached normal size and either join the flock or, if enough have survived, form a new flock and search for a new nesting ground. The life span of these creatures is 3-5 years,

Pigeontoad flocks can be a menace to local communities, feeding indiscriminately on pets, herd animals, and humans. The flock attacks en masse and does not fear humans except in great numbers. Their normal diet consists of snakes, liz-

ards, and other swamp creatures, but pigeontoads eat whatever they can kill, and a flock can kill quite a variety of things.

These creatures have no treasures, at least not so far as humans are concerned. Lizard men, however, eat the jellylike mass of eggs and have been known to domesticate small flocks of the creatures, using them as guards and to produce quantities of eggs for consumption. Adult pigeontoads do not seem to venture into the water except to mate; they lair in hollow trees, bushes, or stumps.

Olive-green is the predominant color of most pigeontoads, fading to a pale yellow underbelly. Their wings are gray with some greenish tint. The beak and feet are black. Pigeontoads make a croaking sound when alarmed, sounding not unlike normal toads.

Pink Dragon

Created by: Jeanne McGuire

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Any*

FREQUENCY: *Really, really rare*

ORGANIZATION: *Family group*

ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*

DIET: *Carnivore*

INTELLIGENCE: *High*

TREASURE: *E*

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic neutral*

NO. APPEARING: 1-4

ARMOR CLASS: 2

MOVEMENT: 9, *Fly 18 (B)*

HIT DICE: 6-8

THACO: 15 (6 HD) or 13 (7-8 HD)

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3 (*claw/claw/bite*)

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-6/1-6/3-18

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Breath weapon, possible spell use*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Possible spell use*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*

SIZE: *L (up to 36' long)*

MORALE: *Average (10)*

XP VALUE: 650 to 2,000

Pink dragons can be found almost anywhere, most frequently in some form of underground lair. Many hapless adventurers have been fatally fooled by the dragon's dopey appearance and delicate pink coloration. Pink dragons love to talk, but they are prone to eat those who do not laugh at their jokes.

The breath weapon of the pink dragon is highly unusual. A special stomach serves to mix fatty secretions with a fluid closely resembling lye. The resulting goop produces the breath weapon, a *bubble cloud* similar to that produced by a *horn of bubbles*. This cloud is 60' long, 50' wide, and 20' high, and it lasts 2-12 rounds. Anyone trapped in this cloud is painfully blinded for 4-16 rounds due to soap in his

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eyes, making magic virtually impossible to cast; this places a -6 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, and damage (1 hp damage minimum), and negates dexterity bonuses to armor class. Movement is random as the affected person stumbles around. A successful save vs. breath weapon indicates that the character closed his eyes before the soap affected them, in which case only the normal penalties for fighting blind apply, without the distraction caused by the pain of the soap in the eyes. If the victim's eyes are protected, as by goggles, the obscuring effects alone are operative, giving only a -2 modifier to hit for as long as the bubbles last. There is no saving throw against the obscurement effect, as the cloud also affects infravision and ultravision. When the bubble cloud is in place, the dragon merely closes his transparent protective third eyelids and, using a batlike sonar, attacks with his highly accurate claw/claw/bite routine.

Those few pink dragons able to use magic (20%) gain one first-level mage spell (as per illusionists), determined randomly, for each stage of growth. If a spell is rolled twice, the dragon is able to use that spell twice per day. Due to the somewhat silly appearance of the pink dragon, it completely lacks any sort of *fear* aura.

Tickler

Created by: Erik Freske

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Any*
FREQUENCY: *Awfully rare*
ORGANIZATION: *Flock*
ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*
DIET: *Feeds off laughter*
INTELLIGENCE: *Non-*
TREASURE: *Nil*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
NO. APPEARING: 3-12
ARMOR CLASS: -6
MOVEMENT: *Fly 18 (A)*
HIT DICE: *1 hp*
THACO: 20 (*but see text*)
NO. OF ATTACKS: *1 tickle*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Nil*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Tickling*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *+4 to surprise if in flight*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *T (2" long)*
MORALE: *Average (10)*
XP VALUE: *Be serious*

This bizarre creature appears as a tiny ball of gray flesh from which projects a pair of featherlike white wings. It is under 2" long and can fly rapidly. It can be found anywhere, both above and below ground, except in the very hottest and coldest regions.

The tickler does not attack for damage.

Instead, it attempts to slip under the clothes and armor of its victim and to tickle the character unmercifully. Victims are treated as AC 10 plus any dexterity adjustments and magical bonuses from *rings of protection* and the like. However, armor (magical or not) affords no protection against these creatures.

The victim's laughter prevents him from taking action of any sort and can also double the chances of wandering monster encounters, because of the noise. Furthermore, if the laughter is allowed to persist for more than six rounds, the victim must make a constitution check on 1d20 every subsequent round or suffer 1 hp damage.

It is theorized that these creatures feed off the laughter generated by their attacks. They will depart a dead or unconscious victim or any victim otherwise silenced, such as by a *silence 15' radius* spell.

While in flight, ticklers are difficult to see and to hit. Victims have a -6 penalty on surprise, until the ticklers enter their victim's clothing. Undetected ticklers get a +2 to hit. While in the victim's clothing, they may only be slapped at, and there is only a 10% chance of hitting and killing

one regardless of the slapper's level, class, race, abilities, or attributes. Ticklers cannot be slapped through any form of plate armor.

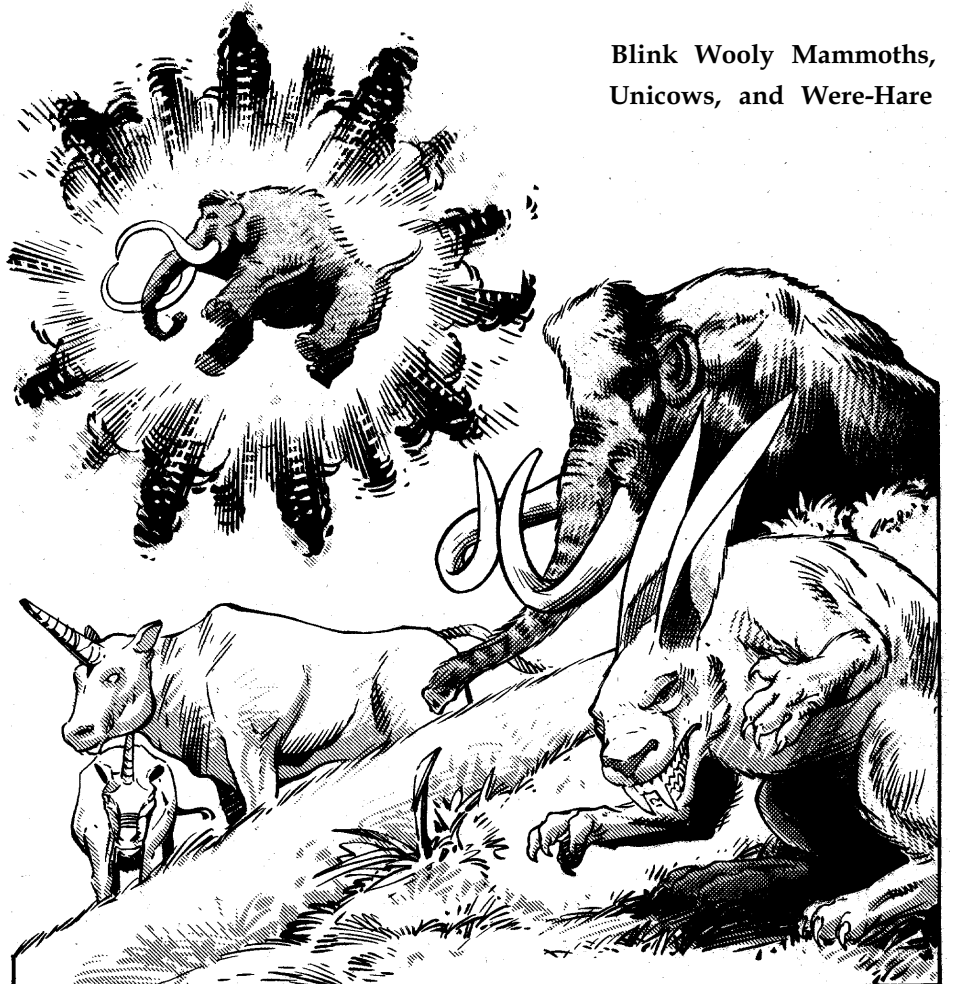
Other methods of getting rid of these creatures include stripping the clothing off a victim, which results in the tickler going to a new victim. Fire kills them instantly, doing appropriate damage to the victim. Water is the best method, rendering the tickler helpless and immobile for 2-5 rounds, during which time they may be killed at leisure.

Tin Golem

Created by: Scott Wile

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Any*
FREQUENCY: *Usually rare*
ORGANIZATION: *None*
ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*
DIET: *Pretty little, considering that it doesn't eat*
INTELLIGENCE: *Non-*
TREASURE: *Nil*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
NO. APPEARING: 1
ARMOR CLASS: 4

Blink Woolly Mammoths, Unicows, and Were-Hare



Monstrous Compendium?

MOVEMENT: 6
HIT DICE: 10 (45 hp)
THACO: 11
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 *weapon*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Nil
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Resistances and immunities to spells and weapons*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: M (6-7' tall)
MORALE: *Fearless (20)*
XP VALUE: 3,000

Construction of a tin golem requires a wizard and priest, each of at least 12th level, employing *wish*, *polymorph any object*, *geas*, *resist fire*, *resist cold*, and *protection from normal missiles* spells. The cost of construction is 1,000 gp per hit point and two months' construction time.

The tin golem remains under the control of its wizard creator. It obeys any simple commands and remains motionless indefinitely until called forth. The wizard can optionally "program" it with a command word for use by others, but the commands

of the wizard override any others.

Tin golems can be struck by any weapon, but edged or pointed weapons must save vs. crushing blow or else be bent or dulled (-2 to hit and damage); each magical "plus" gives the weapon a saving-throw bonus. In addition, all edged and pointed weapons do only half damage to a tin golem. Crushing weapons do full damage unless they are made of wood or bone, in which case they do half damage. Tin golems are immune to cold- and fire-based attacks; electricity ricochets off them, but acid does full damage. Gas and magic missiles do not affect them, nor does any spell that affects living things (e.g., *hold*, *charm*, *hypnotism*, etc.).

Tin golems appear to be toylike caricatures of mankind, dressed in red coattails and with tall blue or black hats with matching high boots. Most have white baldrics with white pants tucked into their boots. All carry huge sabres. The outfit is considered to be traditional (its origin is unknown) and does not appear to affect the performance of the golem, which is also called a tin soldier.

Unicow

Created by: Sharon Jenkins

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Temperate grasslands, like Wisconsin*
FREQUENCY: *Medium rare*
ORGANIZATION: *Herd*
ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Day*
DIET: *Herbivore*
INTELLIGENCE: *Average*
TREASURE: *X*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
NO. APPEARING: *1-10*
ARMOR CLASS: *2*
MOVEMENT: *12*
HIT DICE: *3 +2*
THACO: *27*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *3 (hoof/hoof/horn)*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-4/1-4/1-10*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Charge*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Immune to certain spells*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *L (5' tall at shoulder)*
MORALE: *Average (10)*
XP VALUE: *420*

The unicow lives in grassy plains and shuns contact with humans and humanoids. Like the unicorn, it can be tamed by a maiden pure of heart, though she must be of neutral alignment and probably not very bright. These "milkmaids" (or "cow-girls") care for their unicows with great love and diligence right up to the day they sell their unicows to the Elven Stockyards for meatloaf.

Each unicow has one blue horn in the

center of its forehead that can strike for 2-20 hp damage with a +2 bonus on to-hit rolls if the beast charges 30' or more before striking its opponent. Coloration is usually white with black patches.

This creature saves as a 7th-level wizard, cannot be *charmed* or *held* by magic, and is unaffected by death spells. Its milk gives any drinker a +2 bonus to constitution for 2-5 hours.

Unicows (unicattle?) speak their own language, though their conversations are rather narrowly restricted to discussions of grass quality. No one has any clue as to how or why these creatures exist. Your editors are not making any judgments, either.

Werelagomorph (Were-hare)

Created by: Sharon Jenkins

CLIMATE/TERRAIN: *Temperate climes, underground*
FREQUENCY: *Not rare enough*
ORGANIZATION: *Herd, if that is the right word for a bunch of rabbits*
ACTIVITY CYCLE: *Any*
DIET: *Herbivore (kills out of meanness)*
INTELLIGENCE: *Low*
TREASURE: *Nil*
ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil*
NO. APPEARING: *1-8*
ARMOR CLASS: *4 in hare form, 6 in were-hare form*
MOVEMENT: *24 in hare form, 12 in were-hare form*
HIT DICE: *3 (24 hp in were-hare form, 3 hp in hare form)*
THACO: *17*
NO. OF ATTACKS: *3 (claw/claw/nibble) or 1 (weapon) in were-hare form, nil in hare form*
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1/1/1 -4 or by weapon type (were-hare form only)*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Diseased bite (lycanthropy)*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Struck only by silver or magical weapons*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: *Standard*
SIZE: *S (2' long in hare form) to M (4½' tall in were-hare form)*
MORALE: *Unsteady (5)*
XP VALUE: *175*

This creature appears as a hare but changes to its were-form if attacked. In were-form, it can attack with a one-handed weapon for normal damage. This creature has a mean streak a mile wide, and passes up no opportunity to prove how awful it can be, though it is not particularly brave and so rarely carries out its plans.

This creature can be hit by only silver or magical weapons, including Holy Hand Grenades. Ω

Errors

We've caught a few editorial mistakes in our magazine recently (take out your red pens):

In DRAGON® issue #152, page 70, the computer-game clues for *Hillsfar* are actually for *Heroes of the Lance*.

For some reason, the editor placed a "Jr." on the end of author Craig Barrett's name every time it was mentioned in issue #153. Craig is not a "junior." Sorry, Craig.

Readers checking out "Role-playing Reviews" in issue #154 may have noticed some strange wording on page 56. The second line from the bottom of the second column was somehow repeated from earlier in the text. The complete sentence (more properly edited) should have read: "The eclipse of national governments by multinational corporations; the enhancement of human senses, reactions, memory, and processing by cybernetic hardware and software; the adventures of netridders and data-pirates in the computer analogue universe of Cyberspace and the Matrix—all will be familiar genre conventions to readers of cyberpunk novels like *Neuromancer* and *Hardwired*."

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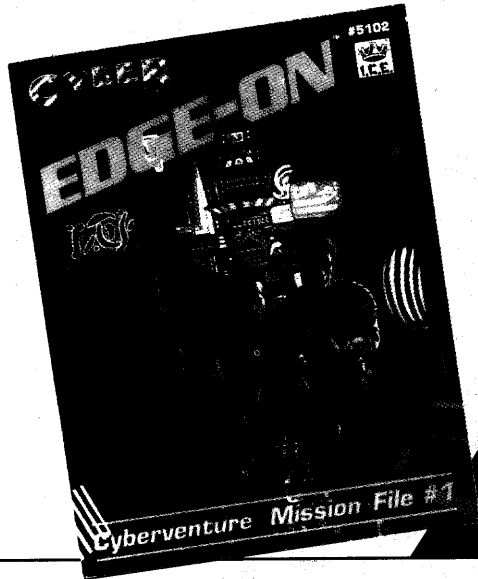
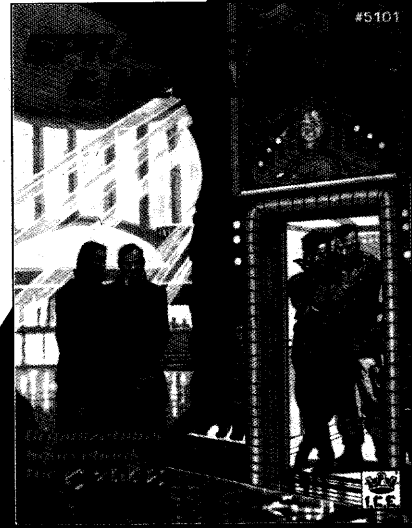
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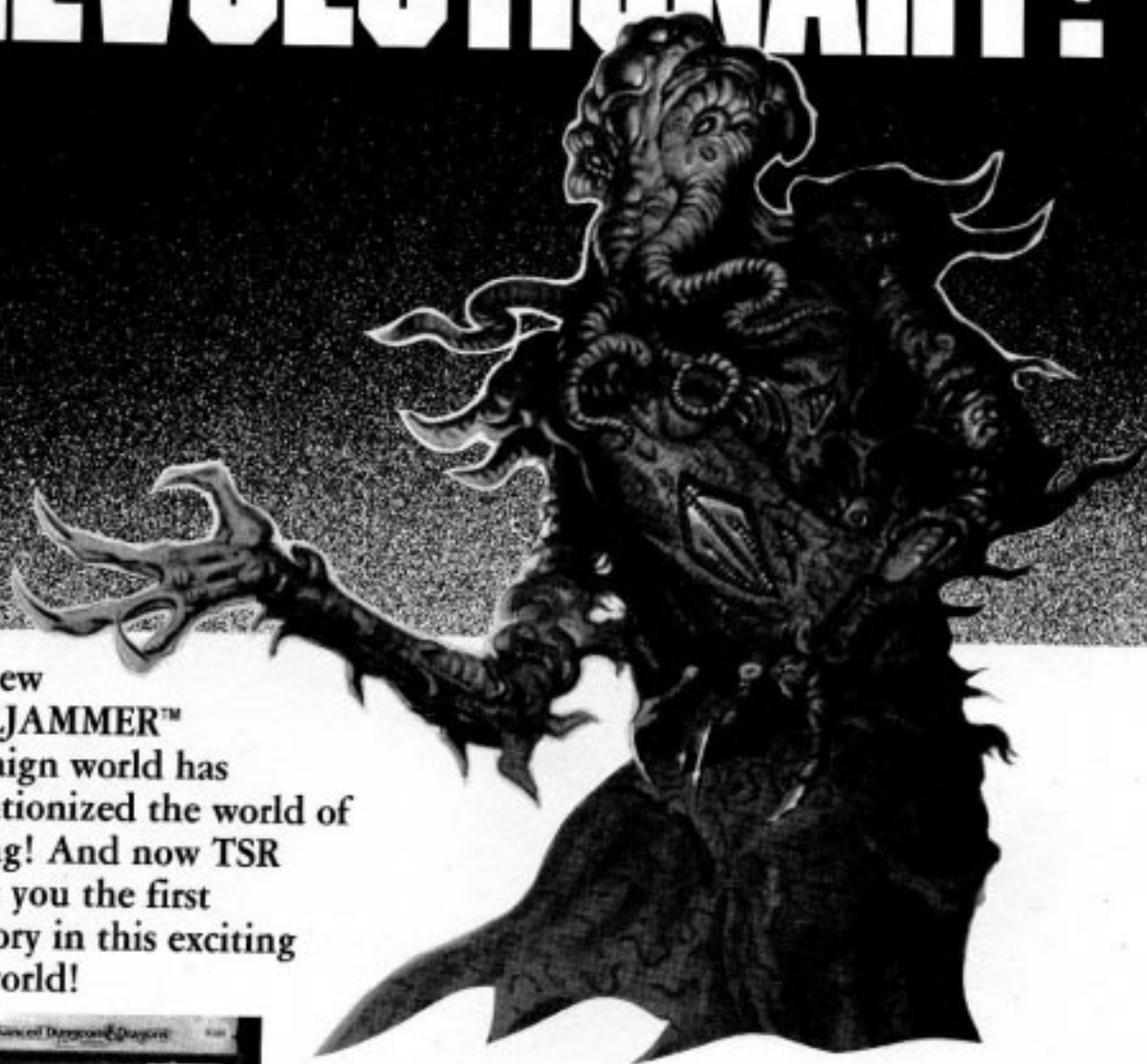
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Razznarock!

Prose by any other name would stink just as bad

by John M. Maxstadt

Many readers have complained that DRAGON® Magazine should have more adventures. The following represents your editors' attempt to remedy this situation.

"Razznarock!" is an imposture—that is, an adventure for four or more characters in the AD&D® or D&D® game. The characters may be of any level and should represent all the major classes. The Dungeon Master, on the other hand, should have no class at all.

Dungeon Master's Background

An infamous sage and half-wit, Arthur O'deModule, having perfected his latest adventure, has decided that he wants your group's party of intrepid dungeon explorers to test its mettle. As luck would have it, your players' characters are strung out over all four corners of your game world at the time, and none of them has the least knowledge of or interest in any place called Razznarock. Under the circumstances, Arthur might have left you free to drop a hint or two and let the PCs wend

their way thither in their own time and in their own way.

This, however, is not Arthur's preferred mode of operation. It wastes time on sticky old realism, and furthermore would allow the characters to arrive reasonably well prepared for the adventure. Arthur wants them there post-haste and on his own terms, and that means casting the dreaded *coercive beginning* spell.

Arthur has many magical capabilities (he belongs to all character classes, especially thief), but *coercive beginning* is a unique tenth-level mage spell that can be cast only by using that most baneful of artifacts, the *Designer's Fiat*, a device with many sinister powers. It can enable ordinary monsters to survive for hundreds of years with no food or water while waiting for a certain party of adventurers to come along. It can cause a greedy wizard to scatter his treasure around a dungeon in dribs and drabs, guarded only by a corny riddle here, a flimsy trap there, and a measly monster elsewhere, instead of putting it all in a vault and guarding it with all his combined resources as a sane

person might do. It can allow a huge dragon to spend its entire life in a cavern with no entrances or exits more than 10' across. It can do anything.

The *Designer's Fiat* has great power to create malign absurdities, but the most dread of all is the *coercive beginning* spell, which can force any numbers and levels of reasonably intelligent player characters to perform long and panoramically varied successions of perversely stupid and self-destructive actions, with no saving throws and no room for argument. Like all artifacts, however, it has its malevolent effect: Each use costs the wielder 1d4 points of credibility, and the *coercive beginning* spell drains 25 credibility points at a shot.

Arthur could see his credibility score dropping well into the negative numbers this time, but he could not resist. "And if I'm going to eat my credibility whole to produce this one *coercive beginning*," he declared, "I'm going to make it a lulu!"

Players' Background

The following players' background should be read aloud to the players. The

names of the appropriate characters should be inserted wherever the bracketed notes so indicate.

Before reading the player background to the players, the Dungeon Master may want to assemble a few useful props, such as a baseball bat, a flak jacket, and one or two large bodyguards. He may also want to place himself behind a few inches of plexiglas. He may also want to have his head examined.

You all wake out of a sound sleep, pick up your weapons and magical items, and seek each other out in the middle of the night to go on an adventure. It is not necessary to put on your armor because you were sleeping in it, being like all good adventurers unable to face life without ringworm, chronic muscle cramps, and gangrenous abrasions. In seeking each other out, you run into trouble immediately, because none of you is at home. Eventually, [cleric's name] casts *augury* and the rest of you find your way to him by following the smell.

Just as you have finished exchanging pleasantries and have begun to wonder what you think you are doing, a comet streaks through the midnight sky and causes you to forget who you are. None of you has the good sense to check his gear for heraldic symbols or general indications of profession, but you keep your heads well enough to remember that help can always be obtained in the most dangerous, godsforsaken location available. With that in mind, you immediately set off for the nearest haunted swamp.

The shamblers and swamp-wraiths sense the gravity of your mission and allow you to pass unmolested. You stop at the cottage of an infamous witch and rap on her door with a convenient thigh-bone. When she answers, [party leader's name] says, "Please, mistress, seeing as you're a total stranger, could you please tell us who we are and what it is we do for a living?"

Several minutes later, when she can keep a straight face, the witch *charms* all of you and puts you to work as household

servants. Aside from the deplorable incident in which [fighter's name] tries to sweep the floor with the witch's broom of flying, the months pass uneventfully. However, you begin to notice more and more of the witch's household effects showing up in your respective pockets. It seems that none of you can resist taking things that do not belong to you. "That's it!" cries [mage's name]. "We must be DUNGEON EXPLORERS!"

Overjoyed with the sudden and complete return of your memories, you rush out of the witch's cottage and fall directly into a sand pit (which has been placed in the middle of a swamp by the Designer's Fiat as an added touch of class at no extra charge). The pit immediately collapses, and you wake several hours later in an abandoned subterranean temple (or a coal mine—it's hard to tell which), up to your knees in soap-suds. Every few minutes, you hear a low and ominous *sklurtch* from deep underground. You know that you must move forward quickly or be bathed to death, a fate every true adventurer avoids like the worst plague.

The very first room you come to appears to be a dead end (nobody does anything clever like checking for secret doors), but it contains a table laden with flasks. Each flask is labeled "POTION," and there is one for each of you: Having skipped school on the day that common sense was explained, you scarf the potions without hesitation and fall instantly into a deep sleep. When you wake up, you are hanging by your earlobes from the tops of 100'-tall pine trees, clad only in tutus and ballet slippers.

A band of druids happens by, and they help you down from the trees. They give you the spare robes they happen to be carrying (one for each of you) and nurse your rough, dry skins back to health—it turns out that the potions you took in the temple/coal mine gave you terminal cases of psoriasis.

To show his appreciation, [fighter's name] cuts down all the trees and clears away all the plants and animals in a two-

acre area so that the druids will have a nice open space to meet. At their next meeting, the druids try to decide exactly how to execute your party. They are actually on the verge of excusing you on the grounds of invincible ignorance when [thief's name] accidentally burns down the rest of the forest while trying to give a hotfoot to a passing treant. Fed up with each and every one of you, the druids turn you into stone (using a scroll that just happened to be laying around), *stone shape* you into a section of wall, and stuff you into the nearest dungeon.

Not long thereafter, the renowned wizard Nerdbird the Great, wishing to enter said dungeon, casts *stone to flesh* on you to facilitate getting you out of the way. You are all still alive, though rather altered in shape and mixed together. Nerdbird is so disgusted that he leaves you on the floor without wasting a *meteor swarm* to clean you up.

However, Nerdbird's faithful companion cleric, Argon Ironstomach, scrapes you off the floor and spends the following week restoring you to your former selves. Unfortunately, he is unable to save any of your gear except your underwear, leaving you nothing with which to pay him. So badly is he ticked off by this that he nails all of you with a *quest* and sends you forth, in your underwear, to perform some great task which is entirely beyond your abilities, but which he, personally, could accomplish blindfolded.

The details of your quest matter not at all, because you go no more than two dozen steps before you are taken prisoner by a band of fifteen kobolds. You do not struggle or put up a fight, because that would make sense, and this is a *coercive beginning* spell, remember? The kobolds immediately draft you into their army, since they are under the influence of the same spell as you are—and besides, how smart is a kobold?

The kobolds outfit you with weapons and armor that they have stolen from travelers (yes, armed and armored travelers who couldn't take on a pack of kobolds—

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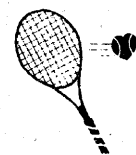
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go figure it). Amazingly enough, each suit of armor fits one of you with no adjustments, even though humans alone vary in height from 5' to 7'. The kobolds force you to rob and harass innocent passers-by, and you spend several blissful weeks that way before it occurs to someone that you could simply kill the kobolds to end your servitude; [thief's name] objects that it is more fun to rob and harass innocent passers-by, but you outvote him and slaughter all of the kobolds except one.

The last kobold begs for his life and promises to show you where to find a big, big treasure. You take him at his word, showing yourselves to be the stuff from which maple syrup is made. Whining and pleading and trying not to laugh out loud, the kobold leads you to a deep, dark cave and asks you to go in without him, explaining that he is allergic to huge piles of gold and magical items. Having left your brains in your other suits, you buy this and walk right in. You see a large, glowing, golden archway, and, mistaking it for a short-order restaurant, you charge through.

You feel yourselves falling through black, empty space. The next thing you know, you are sitting on top of a load of turnips in a wagon that is slowly making its way down a dirt road. Your weapons and armor are gone (again), but each of

you is wearing a plaid flannel shirt and has a sprig of hayseed stuck in his teeth.

You roll off the turnip wagon and wind up face-to-face with the village wise man, who is so exceedingly wise that he has nothing better to do than stand by the side of the road answering questions all day. As soon as he lays eyes on you, he reaches into his pockets and pulls out your armor, protection devices, spell books, holy symbols, and one favorite weapon for each of you. He wipes off the soap-suds (forgot the soap-suds, did you?) and hands your equipment over.

You thank him profusely, change your clothes (in public and in broad daylight, like any adventurer would), and ask him where you are. He informs you that you are on the Road of Everlasting Truth, and he points out which direction leads to wisdom. Naturally, you set out in the opposite direction, and so arrive, in due course, at Razznarock, where you are fated to meet the berserk halfling forces of King Grubb the Deplorable in a battle for control of the universe.

But Wait, There's More!

Arthur O'deModule, stripped of every vestige of credibility and totally exhausted from his efforts to create the ultimate *coercive beginning*, struggled vainly to

remember even the least detail of Razznarock and the adventure that he had intended to write, beyond what was mentioned previously.

Meanwhile, the *Designer's Fiat*, overheated through discharging too many crass stupidities and clogged with too many logical impossibilities, exploded. It blew itself, Razznarock, your player characters, and—most unfortunately—Arthur himself directly to Kingdom Come. May he rest in peace—and may he soon be joined by every designer whose favorite power phrase is "Because I said so!" and by every Dungeon Master whose standard cop-out is "I can't help it—that's what it says in the module."

And Now, The Adventure

Before his *Designer's Fiat* exploded, Arthur wrote out a first draft of his grand adventure and mailed it and his *coercive beginning* to us at DRAGON Magazine. Your editors read the accompanying adventure and decided that it made no sense, so we fed it to the No-SENSE Ogre. When the PCs arrive at Razznarock, they wake up and realize it was all a dream. There is no adventure to go with this background material. You can tell your players to breathe now.

Q

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Yet Even More [Gods Forbid] Outrages From the Mages

Milking the Misbegotten Realms for all they're worth

by John M. Maxstadt
(again, with inadequate apologies
to Ed Greenwood)

Nimrod of Nump, whose ultimately disastrous experiences with spell invention were chronicled in "Still More Outrages From the Mages" (DRAGON® issue #144), was also widely famed—or cursed, as the case may be—as the inventor of many of the Misbegotten Realms most notorious magical items. Many of them still skulk in hoards and treasure vaults across the Realms, sniggering to themselves and waiting for the day when some excited adventurer says, "Lemme try this and see what it d—AAAAAGGGHHH!!! GET IT OFF ME! AAAAAA—[choke, gasp, cough, collapse]." For brevity's sake, gold-piece and experience-point values are omitted, though you may roll 1d6 for each if you like.

Ring of Spell "Turning"

This platinum ring, figured with a "T" rune, radiates a faint dweomer (extremely faint) but displays no other capabilities under ordinary circumstances. When a spell is cast at or on its wearer by a hostile spell-caster, however, the ring reveals its true power. In a clear voice, it says "Turning. Tee-you-arr-enn-eye-enn-gee. Turning." This ring was originally planned as one of a matched pair, but the wizard was not sure how many Rs there were in "storing."

Ring of Hunan Influence

This jade ring is decorated with Oriental characters, including Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan. It affects all food eaten by the wearer; there is no noticeable change in the taste, but one round after being eaten, the food begins to burn for 1d4 hp damage per round. Water only makes the burning worse (+1 hp damage for one round). Only eating 1d6 plates of rice will ease the pain. However, no matter how much food is consumed, the wearer still feels hungry an hour later.

Staff of Striking (Local 531)

When this heavy oaken staff is swung at an opponent in combat, a large placard

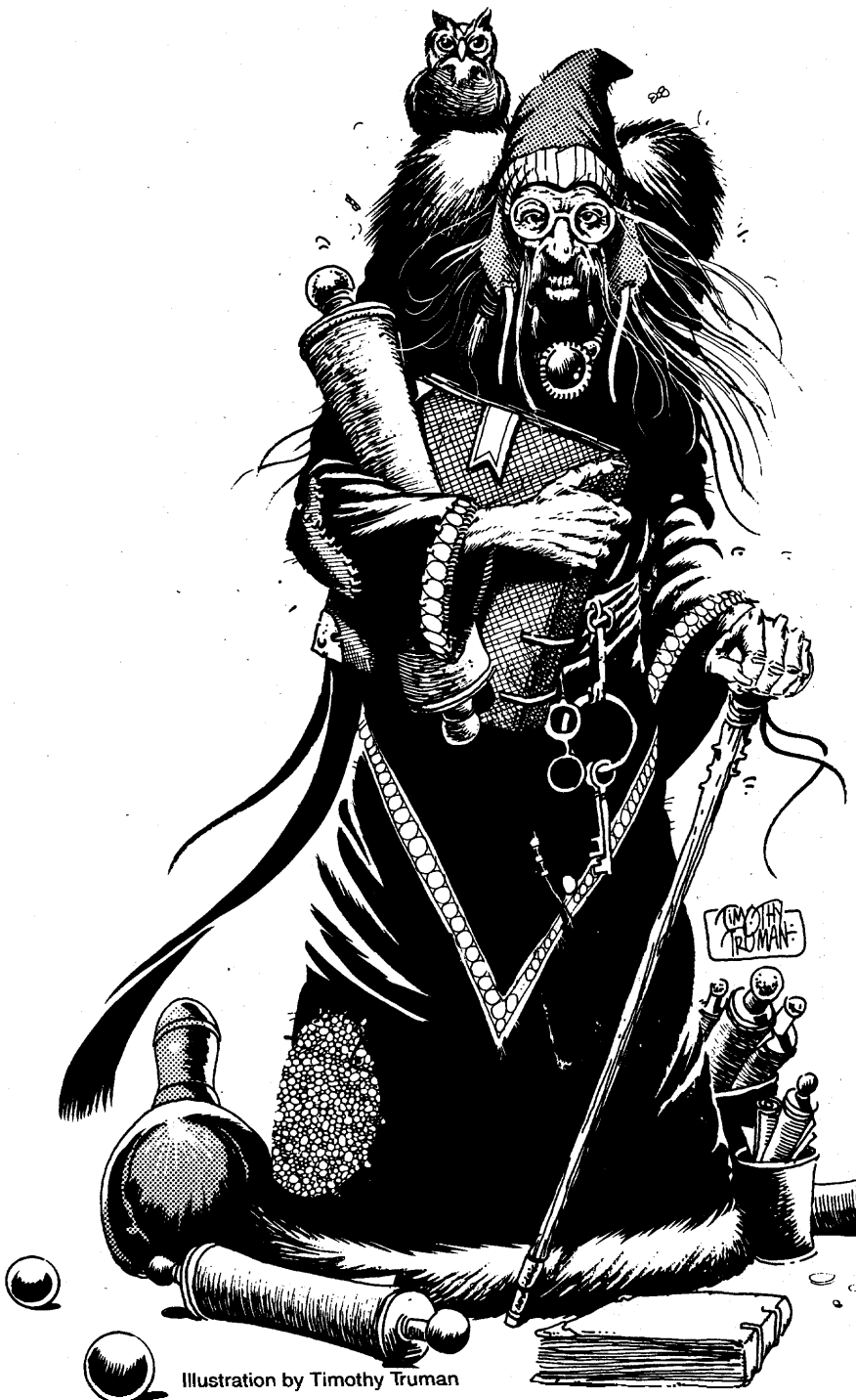


Illustration by Timothy Truman

pops out of the end, reading "ON STRIKE! PCs Unfair to Magical Items!" Thereafter, it will resist all attempts to wield it in combat, making hits impossible. If the owner persists in trying to use it, it may animate and attack him, although the PC takes no damage if he wears a *scab of protection*. The staff can be temporarily returned to normal functioning by burning at least three sticks of *incense of mediation*. These latter items are described in full on page 126 of this issue.

Candle of Convocation

These large candles can be found in all sorts of garish colors. When one is lit, the lighter and his entire party find themselves instantly *teleported* to a high school pep rally in an alternate plane of existence, where they remain stranded until the candle burns out or until they lead their section to victory in the cheering competition.

Rug of Mothering

Indistinguishable from a *rug of smothering*, this carpet forms an emotional attachment to anyone who picks it up. Thereafter, it will always be found somewhere about his person or his gear, worrying about how he eats, nagging him about how he takes care of his clothes, and fussing when he goes out in the rain without galoshes (which haven't even been invented yet). This is all the more likely to be embarrassing when one remembers that the standard *rug of smothering* is generally used only by assassins. Even a *remove curse* spell will not get rid of this item, although such an act will prompt Soliloquy 3-B, the one that begins "So this is the thanks I get. . ."

Omelet of the Planes

This white styrofoam carton is embossed with the logo of a prominent airline. When opened, it will always be found to contain an old, cold, tough, and unappetizing omelet and a wax-coated bag. If left alone, the omelet will continue to become older, colder, tougher, and *more* unappetizing as time goes by. If a character attempts to eat the omelet, he must save vs. putrefaction or discover what the paper bag is used for. If the omelet is successfully eaten, it will be replaced the next day with an identical omelet. As is universal with airline food, no matter how many omelets are eaten, they never ever get any better.

Medallion of EST

Wearing this silver-plated medallion enables a character to fully experience his inner oneness, take responsibility for his personal space, and pontificate at length to fellow party members about how they must recontextualize adverse life events (such as an arrow in the eye) so as to remove their negative energy. Coincidentally, it also lowers the wearer's charisma by six points, without affecting comeliness.

Net of Sneering

This sturdy rope net is imbued with the power of speech. Mages have searched in vain for a way to imbue it with the power of shutting up. As it is, it is impossible to get rid of the net once it is claimed, so it remains with its owner and provides a running sarcastic commentary on all his actions. ("Planning to open that door? Good idea—let me know where to send the flowers. Say, that was a pretty impressive sword thrust, but I think you'd have done more damage with a giant Q-tip.") No known form of attack can damage this net; all have been tried, and all have failed.

Graffiti Bottle

This ornate brass bottle has a lead stopper covered with special seals and sigils that are better left untranslated in a family magazine. If the stopper is removed, four air elementals armed with spray cans pop out and paint rude slogans and obscenities all over everything (and everyone) in the area. They cannot be ordered back into the bottle or restrained in any way except by a *sensor controlling air elementals* (see following).

Tensor Controlling Air Elementals

If any book containing at least one four-letter word (obscene or not) is burned in this thurible, a bald and bespectacled little man is summoned. If a *graffiti bottle* has been used, he will quickly scrub away all those filthy words, then sit those four naughty air elementals down and give them a good talking-to.

Hammer +3, Dwarf Thrower

When wielded by anyone but a dwarf, this acts as a normal war hammer. Whenever a dwarf tries to wield this hammer in combat, however, it picks him up and hurls him bodily at his opponent, at +3 to hit and for 1d12 + 3 hp damage (to the dwarf—the *opponent* takes only 1-4 hp damage); the range is 60'. If the dwarf misses his opponent, he (again the dwarf) takes double the above damage; if his opponent has time to "set" or "ground" a weapon such as a spear or military fork—well, it's not a pretty picture. Incidentally, this hammer is an unusually handsome weapon, featuring the finest work of the elvish master smiths.

Helm of Brilliance, 40 Watt

This sturdy iron helmet is topped by a crystal bulb with a metal filament inside. Its magical powers can be used only by a warrior with an intelligence score of less than six. The helm functions primarily when the DM gets fed up watching PCs with intelligence scores in the upper teens ignore the painfully obvious. For example, when the party has spent an hour and a half trying unsuccessfully to damage a monster that has made no attempt to fight back, the wearer of the helm might suddenly be inspired to say, "D-uh, hey fellas, maybe it's ah illoozhun!" Whenever the

helm is used, a dim light flickers, briefly, in the bulb on top.

Liar of Building

This small harp is fashioned entirely from solid brass. It radiates a *dweomer*, but it can be strummed until the player's fingers turn to hamburger and it will never lay a single brick on a brick. However, it incessantly brags about the edifices it constructed in the hands of other, more competent musicians ("Yeah, I'm the guy who put up the Empire Sta—the Emperor's Stables, yeah, that's the ticket").

Robe of Blending (Waring 3-speed)

To all appearances, this is a perfectly ordinary robe. If the clasp is examined closely, however, it will be revealed to be a sliding switch with four settings (including "off"). "Chop" does 2-20 hp damage to the wearer, "mix" does 4-48, and "liquefy" makes me sick just thinking about it.

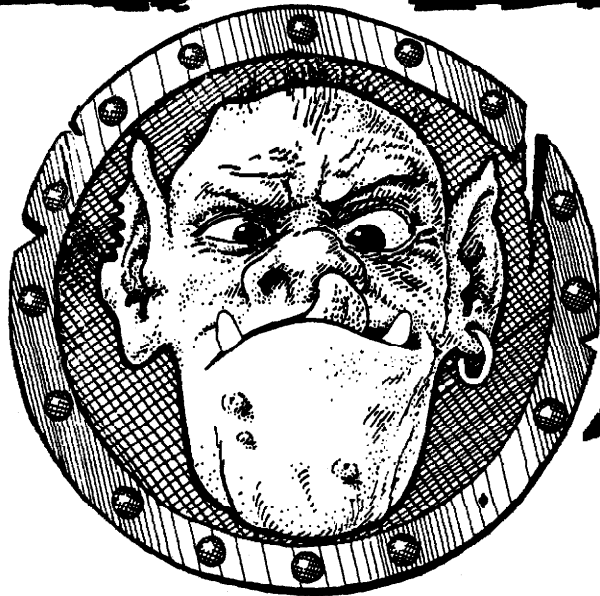
Robe of Useless Items

This robe appears to be a garment of no great value—appearances can deceive, but not in this case. The wearer will notice several odd-shaped patches on the garment, primarily because they chafe in uncomfortable places. Detaching one of these patches causes it to actually become one of the following items:

- A bag containing 1,000 lead pieces;
- A one-inch length of rope;
- One pair of high, hard boots, halfling size;
- A wooden ladder, 25' long, with three rungs;
- Half a pair of safety scissors;
- A string of electrical Christmas tree lights;
- A rubber dagger and a glass shield (matched set);
- A *book of exalted deeds*, written entirely in Thieves' Cant;
- A pint of *sovereign glue* (undiluted with *oil of slippiness*) in a tightly stoppered unbreakable bottle;
- A treasure map pinpointing the exact location of an immense hoard, relative to "the old oak tree," "the big rock," "the woodcutter's shack," and "the bend in the river" (extraneous details such as the name of the kingdom or the continent are omitted);
- A 25th-century death-ray gun, 100% accurate within 300' that kills anything it hits (batteries not included);
- A letter from Ed McMahon, telling the PCs they may already have won \$20 million;
- A normal bo stick, jo stick, awl pike, fauchard, partisan, and mancatcher (in the history of the AD&D® game, has any PC ever willingly become proficient with any of these things?); and
- Half a bucket of fresh orcish beer,

Once removed, a patch can never be replaced on the robe. When enough patches have been removed, the robe becomes very drafty, so it is wise to re-sever the patches for emergencies. Ω

ORCS



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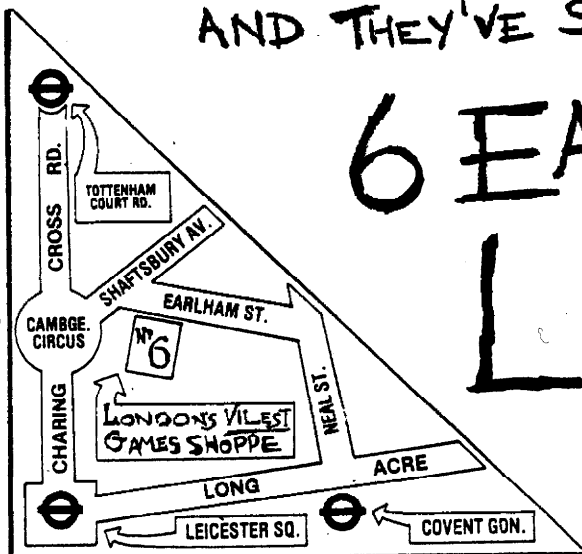
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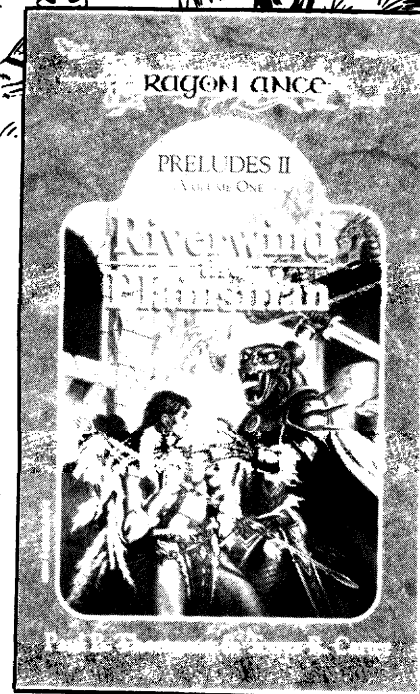
Paul B. Thompson
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*"One will go mad, one will die,
and one will find glory!"*



One Man's Quest for the Gods!

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The Game Wizards

Computers: a crime against humanity!

by James M. Ward



Everyone has certain strengths and weaknesses. That's true even at TSR, Inc. Mary Kirchoff, the head of the book department, can organize anything and make it work. Jeff Grubb, a game designer, can keep all the characters in the DC and Marvel universes in his head and knows what each one is doing at any given minute. Bruce Nesmith, also a game designer at TSR, is a computer whiz and constantly amazes us with his abilities. I pat my own back by saying that I have a wonderful imagination. But with the same hand I have to slap myself for being the worst when it comes to computers, as this causes terrible problems when it comes to dealing with SSI on a regular basis. SSI is the company that TSR has selected to make all of our licensed AD&D® and D&D® computer games. So far, the following licensed games have been released:

Champions of Krynn (Commodore, IBM);
Curse of the Azure Bonds (Apple, Commodore, IBM);
Dragons of Flame (Amiga, Atari ST, IBM);
Dungeon Masters Assistant, Vol. I (Apple, Commodore, IBM);
Dungeon Masters Assistant, Vol. II (Amiga, Apple, Commodore, IBM);
Heroes of the Lance (Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore, IBM);
Hillsfar (Amiga, Atari ST, Commodore, IBM);
Pool of Radiance (Apple, Commodore, IBM, Macintosh); and,
War of the Lance (Apple).

I have seen many of the outlines for future licensed AD&D products. I can tell you that amazing things are going to come out of the SSI warehouse. My only problem is getting the time to playtest all of SSI's material; TSR looks carefully at everything that goes into an AD&D computer game. Some of you will be pleased to know that there will be two Nintendo AD&D games out in the fall of this year. One is based on the DL1 *Dragons of Despair* module, and the other is based on the *Pool of Radiance* computer game.

In working with SSI, I have been playing more and more computer games. I have had to play all of SSI's games, both the games licensed from TSR and those that are not. I have also played computer games from other companies to make sure our licensed games are competitive in the marketplace. Now, I am not an expert in the computer-game field, but I do know games, and there are some computer simulations out there that I have greatly enjoyed, and I thought I would mention them here.

SSI has turned out some very fine games. Its non-TSR games *Wizard's Crown*, *Demon's Winter*, and *Battles of Napoleon* are great fun. SSI's *Sword of Aragon* has recently held my attention for far too many hours; this game was so good that I asked to have a similar game made into a GREYHAWK®-themed product to come out next year. Among the games licensed from TSR, *Pool of Radiance* is a work of art that has won several impressive awards for SSI. I've played it several different times on different computer formats, and I enjoyed myself each time. SSI has lately released *Champions of Krynn*, a must-have game for computer players. It's fun, visually exciting, and

captures the color and flavor of the DRAGONLANCE® saga like nothing I have ever seen before. There is nothing like facing a horde of draconians and using the kender taunt against them to make a gamer feel good.

Half the world knows I am an old fan of FASA's BATTLETECH® game. It was with a good deal of pleasure that I picked up the MechWarrior game for the IBM. Now, I want to go on record as really enjoying the simulation. But true MechWarriors are going to be a bit irritated at the things you can't do in the computer game. What you can do is drive all sorts of great 'Mechs. I smiled with glee at the chance to get into my personal favorite 'Mech, the Marauder. When I got the chance to commission an entire lance of Marauders, Activision had me hook, line, and sinker. The bottom line is that if you ever enjoyed the BATTLETECH game, you will enjoy this game.


Now, let me nitpick a bit. The computer's handling of the enemy 'Mechs is terrible; it is too easy to get behind them and just blaze away. I kept looking around for water so that I could cool down my 'Mech, but there wasn't any. If you anger one of the Successor States with repeated attacks against it, it won't hire your lance, which isn't consistent with the play of the miniatures game or with the BATTLETECH novels.

Another game I have been spending far

too much time playing is *Sword of the Samurai*, by MicroProse. While attempting to become the shogun of Japan, the player is greeted with wonderful pictures and simple but interesting arcade action. MicroProse did a good job, and the game is well worth anyone's time. Another game by MicroProse that I found really interesting is *Pirates!* Sailing around the ocean looking for Spanish treasure ships is just the thing to appeal to anyone after a long day at work.

Last night, I booted up the IBM and started running a set of characters through SSI's *Champions of Krynn* game. I had played it twice before, once on a Commodore and once on an IBM. I wanted to make sure that SSI had put in all the TSR game-mechanics points I felt were necessary.

I made two knights of Solamnia, a kender cleric, an elven wizard, a human fighter/wizard, and a dwarven cleric (a party I believe is best suited to the game). My band of brave heroes boldly went into the hobgoblin-filled town of Jekek. It did my heart good to use the kender's taunt to defeat my foes. I knew my team was powerful, and with my knowledge of the workings of the game I expected not to be defeated. Then I ran into a random encounter with rats and giant centipedes. Before I knew it, my kender and my dwarf were dead from poisoned centipede

wounds. Briefly, I thought about calling SSI and whining about how tough this game was. Then I realized that it was also TSR's game. I went back to my computer, created another wonderful party, and vowed to make it really tough for giant centipedes in the future. 

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- a 20- to 30-page writing sample that is typed, double-spaced, and proofed for grammar and typographical errors.
- a 5- to 10-page typed, double-spaced, chapter-by-chapter outline or synopsis.
- typed, double-spaced character sketches of no more than five main characters.

Submissions not meeting these requirements will be returned or reviewed at a later date under our regular submissions policy. Only the first twenty eligible submissions will be scheduled for workshop time, so don't delay! Send all submissions and questions regarding the workshops to: Book Department, TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

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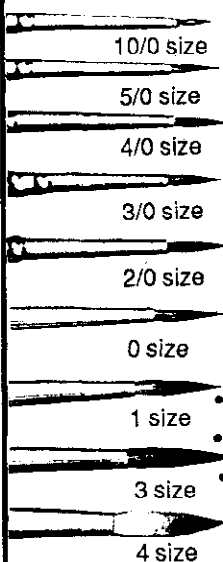
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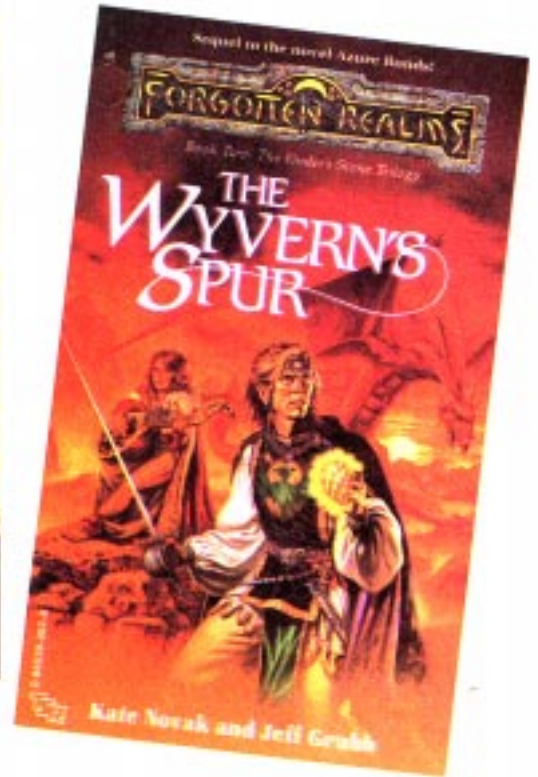
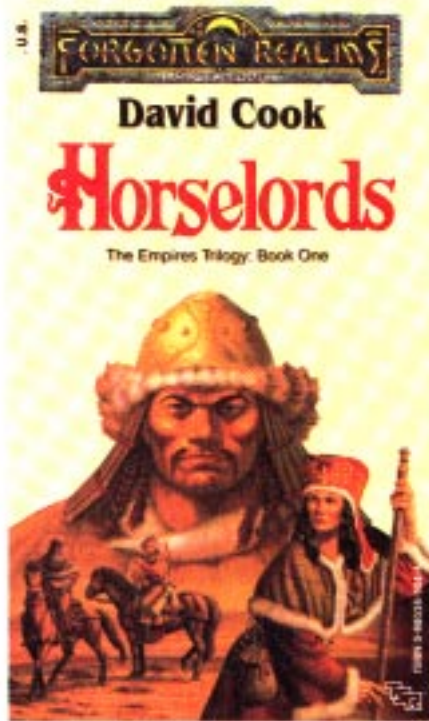
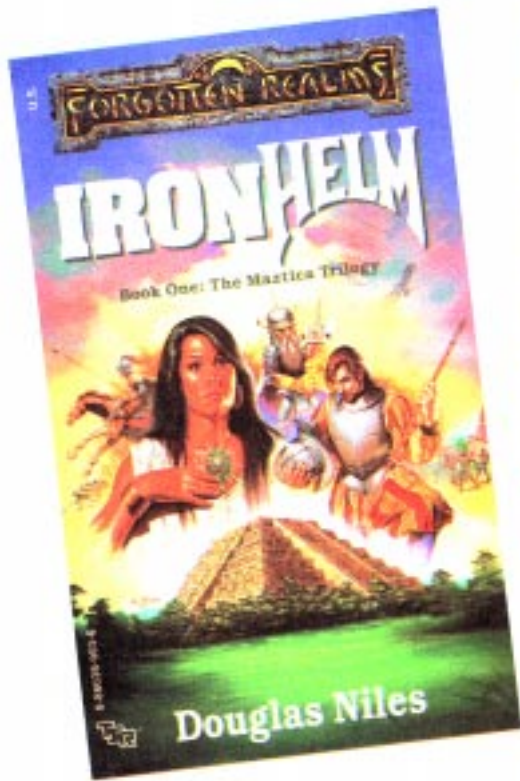
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NOVEL

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FORGOTTEN REALMS™ novels worth remembering

By J. Eric Severson

The year 1989 was, by far, the year of the gods for the millions who read FORGOTTEN REALM™ fantasy adventure novels from TSR, Inc. Ranging from the Darkwell in the Moonshae Isles to the avatars that sprang from Shadowdale, the gods rose and fell like the greatest of mortals in their quests for power.

Thanks to fantastic readership worldwide, TSR produced nine best-selling novels, including six novels set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS fantasy world: *Streams of Silver*, *Darkwell*, *Shadowdale*, *Tantras*, *Waterdeep*, and *Pool of Radiance*. According to *Locus* magazine, issue #349 (February 1990), TSR is the number-two publisher of science fiction and fantasy in Waldenbooks and Dalton's stores, based on trade paperback best-sellers—and our popularity is growing!

What are the Forgotten Realms? This setting is an enormous, unique, and complex fantasy world. In some respects, it parallels the real world. The known Realms (covering 28.5 million square miles) are nearly eight times the size of the United States. The Realms are like a single continent containing all of North Africa, Europe, and Asia; many of its cultural settings reflect regions on Earth. For ex-

ample, Calimshan depicts the Middle East, the Dales are like central Europe, and Kara-Tur represents East Asia.

The response to the FORGOTTEN REALMS novels has been so tremendous that TSR plans to give readers more of what they want in 1990. But how can we top the gods? By returning to the thrilling high fantasy for which we're known. The Realms are so large and diverse that they naturally hold something for everyone, from intriguing mysteries set in a nobleman's castle, to a Cortez-like conquest of an unknown continent, to sweeping battles between divergent cultures. With fantastic monsters, magic, and an unlimited cast of characters, there is plenty still to be written and read.

In addition to upcoming trilogies by Douglas Niles and R. A. Salvatore, a fantasy mystery by Kate Novak and Jeff Grubb, and a new atlas of the Realms, TSR plans to follow up its exciting *Avatar* Trilogy with the *Empires* Trilogy, an epic series linking the cultures of East and West.

Here's a preview of 1990's FORGOTTEN REALMS novels:

Fantastic adventures

In *The Halfling's Gem*, the conclusion to

the *Icwind Dale* Trilogy by R. A. Salvatore, the past catches up with Regis the halfling. Pasha Pook, thieves' guildmaster of Calimport, wants his charmed ruby pendant back, and his henchman—the assassin Entreri—finally brings the thief to "justice." Only Drizzt Do'Urden, Wulfgar, and Catti-brie know of their friend's troubles. Drizzt believes his dark-elf heritage will hinder his party's progress, so he struggles with an enchanted mask that hides his identity.

The companions must race the length of the Realms, battle pirates on the Sword Coast, brave the deserts of Calimshan, and fight monsters from other planes to save Regis in time. But then an unexpected skirmisher joins the fight.

In *The Wyvern's Spur*, Book Two in the *Finder's Stone* Trilogy and the sequel to *Azure Bonds*, the halfling bard Olive Ruskettle must solve a mystery: Who stole the noble Wyvernspur family's most prized heirloom, and why? Kate Novak and Jeff Grubb provide the answer.

Having just returned from Westgate and his encounter with the sellsword named Alias, Giogi Wyvernspur is charged with finding his clan's lost curio. But even before he can begin, his Uncle Drone dies,

Olive's companion is murdered, and Olive herself is turned into a donkey! Eventually, with Olive's help, Giogi discovers the truth about the curio, but he must learn to control it before his family falls to a mysterious force. An enchantress named Cat has her eye on the young nobleman—but for what purpose, only time will tell.

The Maztica Trilogy

In a corner of the world far removed from the known Forgotten Realms stands the exotic continent of Maztica. It is here that best-selling author Douglas Niles opens a new series of historic high fantasy: The Maztica Trilogy, beginning with *Ironhelm*. In Book One of this trilogy, Erix the slave girl learns of a great destiny laid upon her by the gods themselves. At the same time, across the sea, a great mission of exploration embarks. The explorers, a legion of skilled mercenaries, sail westward to discover a land of primitive savagery mixed with high culture, of brutal, bloodthirsty gods and brilliant, colorful art treasures. Under the banner of their vigilant god, Helm, the legion claims these lands for itself. And only as Erix sees her land invaded by these strangers, when her world itself starts to collapse, is her destiny revealed:

Erix and Halloran the legionnaire flee from the waves of catastrophe sweeping Maztica in Book Two, *Viperhand*. The God of War feasts upon chaos while the desperate lovers strive to escape from enemies on all sides. Finally, each is forced into a choice of historical proportions and deeply personal emotion. The gods themselves awaken, and the destruction of the fabulously wealthy continent of Maztica looms on the horizon. Yet Erix bears with her a desperate secret, and with that secret comes the lone hope that Maztica can survive.

The Empires Trilogy

The epic saga of the Empires Trilogy details the battles of nations between the known western Realms and the lands of Kara-Tur. Each book stands alone as it provides a different perspective of events from three cultural viewpoints. Whether they know it or not, the main characters will change the course of history in the Realms.

Horselords, by David Cook, is Book One in the series. It is into a group of mounted barbarians that Koja the lama is sent to learn more about the leader of the horde—the man called Yamun Khahan, a strong and cruel ruler who unites the once-fragmented clans of the Horse Plains. But Koja must also decide where his sympathies lie and what his own ambitions are, for the time has come for the horsemen to ride and conquer, and the fate of the Forgotten Realms hangs in the balance.

Troy Denning, in his book, *Dragonwall*, tells of how the barbarian horsemen of the Tuigan horde breached the mighty Dragonwall and now threaten the Oriental

land of Shou Lung. As powerful as they are, Shou Lung's armies seem to be no match for the brutal tactics of the Tuigan cavalry. Shou Lung's only hope lies with Batu Min Ho, a young general who is himself a third generation descendant of Tuigan barbarians.

In Book Three, *Crusade*, by James Lowder, the khahan and his mighty barbarian army have turned their sights on the civilized western nations of the Forgotten Realms. Only one man, King Azoun of Cormyr, has the courage and strength to bring the western factions together and forge a crusading army powerful enough to challenge the Tuigan horsemen. Together with the dwarves of the Earthfast Mountains, Azoun's crusaders make their stand against the rampaging horde. But Azoun had not reckoned that the price of saving the west might be as high as the life of his own daughter.

The Dark Elf Trilogy

R. A. Salvatore begins a new series called the Dark Elf Trilogy, which chronicles the early, underground life of the drow elf Drizzt Do'Urden, hero of the Icewind Dale Trilogy. Book One, *Homeland*, follows the adventures of young Drizzt as he grows to maturity in the vile world of his dark kin. Possessing a sense of honor beyond the scope offered him by his unprincipled

society, Drizzt finds himself faced with a dilemma that apparently has no solution: Can he live in a world that cannot accept his dedication to honor?

Exile, Book Two of the trilogy, follows the adventures of Drizzt and his feline companion, Guenhwyvar, as they search for a new home. Exiled from Menzoberranzan, the city of the drow, Drizzt must find acceptance with races normally at war with his kind. And all the while, the hero must look back over his shoulder for signs of deadly pursuit—for the dark elves are not a forgiving race.

The year beyond

If 1989 was the year of the gods, then 1990 will be the year of exploration, expansion, and the search for truth. But 1991 holds even more for fantasy fans, possibly including series on clerics, the Harpers, and the SPELLJAMMER™ setting, a wonderful product with a new method of traveling between the AD&D® game's fantasy worlds. If you have a favorite character, class, race, or region of the Realms that you would like to see in books—or if there is anything you do not want to see more of—we'd love to hear from you. Write to: TSR, Inc., Books Division, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A.

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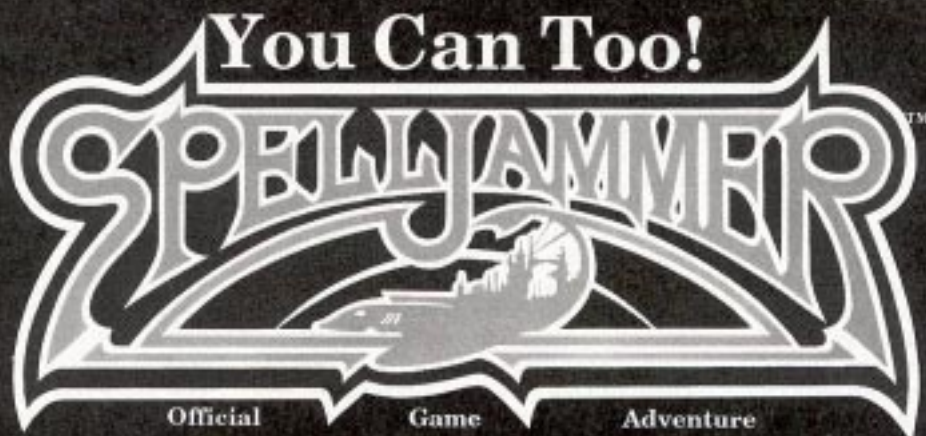
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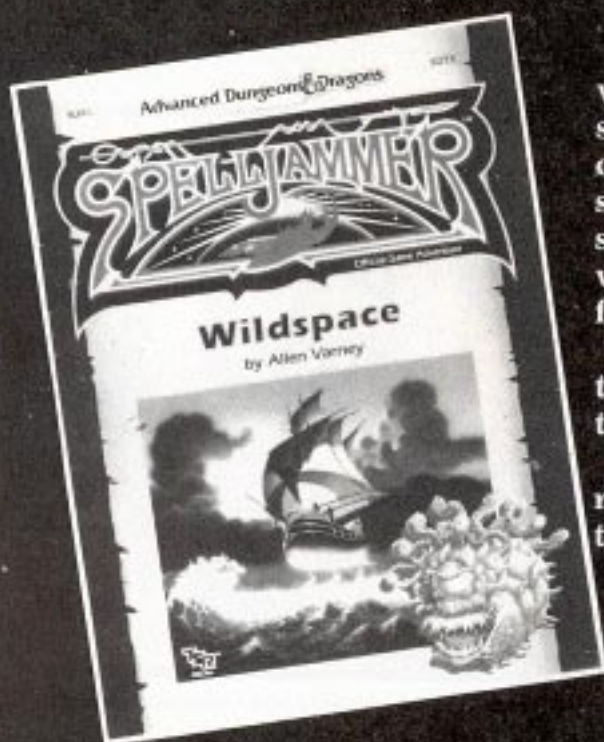
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Can You Swim? Juggle? At the Same Time?

A different skills system for the D&D® game

by Vince Garcia



Illustrations by Jim Holloway and Larry Elmore

There are times in every D&D® campaign when serious repercussions befall player characters if the DM doesn't take for granted that they can pursue certain courses of action. For instance, can all characters jump into a river and swim? Many medieval sailors couldn't! Is everyone able to scale a mountain? I've done a bit of that—it's not easy! And what about handling a horse in difficult terrain while being pursued?

What follows are some ideas for resolving the question of character skills in D&D games, with a list of talents that may be chosen for a character with the approval of the DM. This system is not necessarily compatible with the skills system in the D&D Gazetteers.

Character concept

The concept the player has of his character strongly affects which talents and abilities the character receives. Some DMs have their players write up a history for

any new characters at the first opportunity after creation. This is a good idea, and the design of a mythical past can be the basis for justifying the character's love of adventure, as well as explaining the origin of the character's personal skills and quirks.

In defining a history for the character, several factors play a significant part in shaping his past, including:

1. *Age and appearance.* How do you envision your character? Does the caricature of a hobbling magic-user, ancient in years but exuding arcane powers, come to mind? How about the debonair fighter or thief, brimming with youthful zest and daring? This is the essence of role-playing, taking a vision from your mind and portraying it within the context of your favorite game. While skills play an important part in the character's rounding-out, we shouldn't forget the very picture we have in mind of the character may limit some of his abilities. Take the example of the magic-user mentioned earlier; he becomes much more believable when I play him as though he has exceptional knowledge of various monsters and magical effects, if I also accept the consequences of having a character of advanced age, thus limiting some of his physical attributes.

On the other side of the coin is a young thief who is filled with the enthusiasm and recklessness that accompanies the tender age of 20. In this case, it is less believable

if I role-play that individual as though he possesses the same knowledge and experience of the magic-user, but we can justify his having a greater chance for exceptional physical attributes. Few of us past the age of 30 are as robust or as quick as we were at 20. If we take a look back at the magic-user, it's not difficult to see that a dexterity or constitution of 18 doesn't mesh with the caricature, whether or not the value was rolled. The refusal to apply rational penalties accompanying the vision of the character means the character is no longer played from a conceptual standpoint but rather is played from a technical one, leaving true role-playing by the way side. Table 1 is offered as a guideline for modifying ability scores according to the age of the character. Suggested limitations in ability regarding nonclass skills are also offered, based on the presumption that older characters will have had more time to master those skills than their younger acquaintances.

2. *Character class.* The chosen field of the character affects how much prior experience he is entitled to as well as shaping those skills he knows. Fighter and thief classes allow more time to pick up various talents, while the technical magic-user and cleric classes demand that most of a character's past will have been spent learning the basics of that profession.

The skills in this article should be picked with the primary class in mind. Riding II,

for example, which includes the ability to properly control a war horse in battle situations, is reasonable for a mighty fighter. Does this extend to the magic-user? Probably not, as such a character would not likely have had the opportunity to learn this skill. Thus, the typical magic-user would instead possess Riding I, which grants elementary horsemanship abilities.

Class strictures need not be engraved in stone. If your character concept is along the lines of a magic-user from an Arabian Nights setting, it becomes much more believable for him to have exceptional riding skills (although he is probably no swimmer!).

3. **Geographical home.** Just as an Arabian magic-user is unlikely to be a champion swimmer, so is an elf from the Great Forest unlikely to have sailing skills. Once again, careful thought and consideration should determine what talents truly fit within the character's past.

4. **Social class.** Finally, the status of the character's family while he was growing up also has a bearing on what skills he brings with him. Characters from poor backgrounds would likely possess few skills in comparison to those from middle-class upbringings, for most of their past lives would have been spent in learning a family trade just to stay alive. Contemporaries from upper-class families, on the other hand, would have been freed from the necessity to work for a living, and thus may have learned a great number of skills (however, these skills might be along the lines of Falconry or Calligraphy rather than more practical skills such as Tracking, Climbing, etc.).

Choosing skills

Each character making use of this system receives a base allotment of skill points, along with the opportunity to roll for additional points. Base skill points for the D&D game classes follow:

Fighters: 70 + 4d20

Thieves: 60 + 3d20

Clerics: 50 + 3d20

Magic-users: 40 + 3d20

Elves: 50 + 4d20

Dwarves: 50 + 3d20

Halfings: 40 + 4d20

Elves may select either fighter or magic-user skills. Dwarves and halfings may select from fighter skills.

Following is a list from which the player may choose his character's skills, with DM approval, along with descriptions and costs. A cost of "2% per 1" indicates that for each skill point placed in the talent, the character receives 2% in that particular skill up to the level suggested by table A (if the skill is a nonclass skill). When the character attempts to use the skill, percentile dice are rolled, and a score equal to or less than the degree of expertise reveals success. Under some circumstances, the skill level is reduced by a fraction before a skill check is made; in all such cases, round any fractions up. Some skills do not

require a dice-roll check, and these have a fixed cost.

The class skills toward the end of this article are the only talents that may be purchased up to a 99% ability regardless of any skill-level limitations normally applicable, because the character is presumed from an early age to have shown a special interest in that class. It is not recommended that the DM allow characters outside a given class to acquire that class's skills.

It should be kept in mind that these are only suggestions and guidelines. While, for instance, Read & Write is listed as an available skill, there is no reason why a DM cannot presume that any character with an average or better Intelligence score can read and write without the need to spend skill points. In some cases, there might be conflicts between this system and the D&D rules. By the game's rules, a character from any class can handle a war horse, a skill that in actuality is very specialized. The DM must decide whether to allow all classes such privileges.

Players may further research other abilities implied by these skills. For example, a furrier might know a bit about short-term survival in the wilderness, and he can probably identify animal tracks with great accuracy, though he might not be able to follow those tracks as well as a hunter.

With the DM's permission, a player may invent his own skill for his character. If the skill is relatively innocuous, the cost should be correspondingly cheap, with the cost increasing in proportion to the advantages gained by the character for possessing the skill. Basket Weaving, for example, would carry with it virtually no chance to unbalance the campaign and should therefore be relatively inexpensive. Gunpowder Manufacturing, as an extreme example, should carry with it a massive cost (and if the preparation roll should be missed . . .).

Professional skills

Acting. This skill is for those who at one time or another have developed thespian talents. Someone proficient in Acting can, through the adoption of disguises and conversation, attempt to pass himself off as someone other than who he really is. Difficult disguises, such as radical changes in age, require the character to have access to a disguise kit, which weighs 10 lbs. and costs 56 gp. Should the skill roll be failed, suspicion is cast on the performance. Cost: 2% per 3.

Animal Training. This allows the character to teach tricks to normally tame or domestic animals, such as dogs, cats, or horses, which could be trained to respond to whistled commands, etc. This skill cannot in itself domesticate a wild animal. The AD&D® game's druid spell *animal friendship* offers guidelines. Cost: 3% per 2.

Architecture. This person has the talent to design and supervise the construction of above-ground structures (or

underground structures for a dwarf). Further, if encountering an unsafe bridge or structure within the proper environment, a roll against this skill allows the character to note the danger. Someone with this skill can also act as his own construction expert when building a castle or other building, avoiding the cost of hiring such help (of course, if the roll is failed during the construction phase . . .). Cost: 1% per 1.

Armorcraft. Someone with this talent can attempt the creation of either armor or weapons if he has access to a forge and the proper materials. It should be noted that the finest plate mail requires the assistance of an engraver for detail work. Cost: 1% per 1.

Barkeeping. The character in possession of this skill is able to determine the quality of alcoholic libations and fashion mixed drinks. Successfully rolling this skill allows the character to note foreign elements—such as poisons—in drinks. Cost: 4% per 1.

Blacksmithing. A character with Blacksmithing skill is able to forge such things as horseshoes, nails, tools, hinges, etc., and can effect repairs on metal goods. In concert with a carpenter, he can fashion wagons, coaches, etc. Cost: 3% per 1.

Bowcraft. Those with this skill (frequently elves) can fashion bows and arrows at the rate of one bow or 50 arrows



per month. Under extreme circumstances, a functional bow or two arrows can be fashioned in only one day, but they would be very crude, each forcing a penalty of - 2 to hit and - 1 to damage (these penalties are cumulative if crude bows and arrows are used together). Cost 1% per 1.

Carpentry. An individual with Carpentry skill can work with wood to fashion shields, log cabins, furniture, etc. He can also note the quality and safety of wooden structures if a successful roll is made against the skill. Carpenter's tools typically cost about 100 gp and weight around 50 lbs. (which includes a wooden storage locker). Cost: 3% per 1.

Cartography. A character who knows mapmaking can draw maps of overland terrain which, at the DMs discretion, may later be sold for amounts varying with the perceived value of the information. The cartographer can also read maps and lead a group to an indicated spot, assuming he possesses an accurate map. If a map of a particular area is needed, the DM may allow a roll less than or equal to 10-20% of the character's total skill to indicate that he was able to locate such an item for a DM-determined cost. A special skill can be taken in Marine Cartography instead of Land Cartography, allowing the individual to read and create nautical charts. Note this does not include any navigational skill. Cost: 1% per 1.

Cooking. This person enjoys fashioning culinary dishes of quality from even mundane food staples. He can further create iron rations at a cost of 5 gp (five ration units per day of work). As can a bar-keeper, a cook can roll against his skill to detect such things as poison in food. Cost: 4% per 1.

Farming. A character with Farming skill is able to evaluate soil quality for plant growth, to identify the best methods of growing plants (particularly fruits, vegetables, and spices), and to identify edible plants in the wild with a chance equal to one-quarter the normal percentage in the skill. Cost: 3% per 1.

Furriery. A furrier is able to fashion articles of dress from the fur of animals, later selling the items for a value normally five times that of the pelt itself. The character can also skin fur-bearing animals and preserve the pelts until back at his base. Cost: 2% per 1.

Herbalism. Someone with Herbalism skill, who must almost certainly have come from a rural environment, can identify edible fruits, plants, and fungi in the wild. He can also locate and gather natural remedies to cure poisons or diseases, then use these materials to effect the cures. To use this skill, the herbalist first rolls 1d100 against his skill level to see if he possesses the knowledge to deal with a particular form of toxin or disease. Then a roll is made against half his skill level to see if he actually neutralizes the particular agent (of course, this assumes healing materials are at hand). If poison or disease from a

monster is involved, and if there is any nonmagical chance of curing the ailment, then the herbalist must roll against a value one-quarter of his skill level to cure it. If a poison or disease is magical in nature, no mundane cure will be useful. The components necessary to make use of this skill will take up about 100 gp of encumbrance to carry. Should the materials not be handy, they may be sought out and found if the DM allows, but unless a stricken comrade is under the effects of a slow-acting poison or disease, the herbalist generally has but three rounds to apply first aid.

An herbalist may further effect minor cures of wounds by rolling against his skill. In this event, he may cure 1-3 hp per person per 24hour period if healing materials are possessed.

As this is a very powerful skill, the DM may wish to limit its use to elves or to clerics intending to later become druids. Cost: 1% per 2.

Jewelcraft. A character with this talent may roll against his skill to note the value of jewelry and gems. He may also attempt to increase the value of uncut gems. If he is successful, the value of the gem increases by 1% for each point rolled beneath the jeweler's skill. For example, a character with 60% in Jewelcraft tries to



improve the value of an uncut ruby currently valued at 100 gp. He rolls a 40 on 1d100; as this is 20 points beneath his skill, the gem increases in value by 20% to a final value of 120 gp. However, should the roll exceed the character's skill, the gem is devalued in the same ratio. On a roll of a natural 00, the gem has shattered, losing 90% of its value. Jewelers' tools cost about 500 gp. Cost: 1% per 2.

Music. This skill allows a character to be proficient in one of two instrument categories: stringed or wind. The character is assumed to play all such instrument types within his culture at his level of proficiency. A particular instrument of his choice within the field, however, is played at one level of proficiency higher. The proficiency levels and their costs follow.

Novice. The character has only mediocre skill in musicianship. No one takes particular notice of his performances. Cost: 20.

Intermediate. The character performs basic instrument-playing competently. While no eyebrows are raised at his talent, few criticisms are leveled on his performance. Cost: 40.

Professional. People are impressed by the excellent performances of which this musician is capable. Quality inns and taverns always have an open door for someone of this caliber, who easily takes home 1 gp per night. Cost: 60.

Master. The character's skill equals a bard's. Private performances for nobles or the wealthy are quite easily obtained. A musician with this talent would surely be able to play instruments of magical power. cost: 80.

Should a character desire to play but a single instrument, he need only pick the particular category of talent desired at one-third the indicated cost. A similar system to this one can be created for someone who desires talent as a singer, painter, artist, sculptor, etc.

Navigation. A character with this skill may navigate on either land or sea by using the sun and stars. If special navigation equipment is owned, at a cost of 250 gp, the skill is used at full proficiency. If not, dead reckoning is used, at one-quarter normal effectiveness. Cost: 1% per 1.

Sailing. A sailor is familiar with the operation of either river-, lake-, or ocean-going ships or boats (player's choice). If 30 points are placed in this skill, it represents the ability of an experienced deck hand or minor officer; 60 points equals the experience of a ship's master, giving full knowledge of a ship's operations and components. No Swimming skill is implied by being a sailor! Cost: 30 or 60.

Tailoring. Someone with this skill can fashion clothing of various sorts. Twenty skill points allow the creation of simple garments or robes, while 40 points represents a professional tailor or seamstress. A skill check is unnecessary for this skill. Cost: 20 or 40.

Tanning/leatherworking. This skill allows the character to tan and prepare hides as well as fashion scabbards, backpacks, etc. No skill check is necessary. Cost: 25 (40 points includes the ability to make leather armor).

Trapping. A trapper can set and camouflage traps for normal creatures. This skill also includes the knowledge of which bait to use in order to capture a creature. It is for the DM to determine whether such creatures are in the area and

whether the trap is successful (allow a 20-80% chance of success). Cost: 30.

Winemaking. A person skilled in Winemaking can create wine from grapes, beer from hops, etc. He also notes the quality of the ingredients prior to buying them or having them planted from seedlings. Cost: 25.

General skills

Calligraphy. This skill allows the character to write in a flowing, attractive script. In the event this skill is used to create a petition to a noble or educated person, the writer's charisma bonus is added to any reaction roll (if no charisma bonus is possessed, or if a penalty exists, a bonus of +1 still applies). Note that a character must also purchase or possess the equivalent of a Read & Write skill to obtain Calligraphy. Cost: 3% per 1.

Climbing. A person with this skill can move quickly and efficiently up a hillside, tree, etc. This is not to say a person without this skill cannot climb a tree, but in a stressful situation in which the surface must be scaled quickly, someone without this skill takes longer to climb than he might like. Note that relatively rough surfaces (such as a tree with many branches or a rocky hillside) can be scaled at double the indicated percentage, while the base percentage refers to a difficult surface or an attempt to climb a rough surface in bulky armor or while encum-

bered. Cost: 2% per 1.

Falconry. This typically upper-class skill allows for the training and use of falcons in hunting, requiring about a year to fully train a bird. Similar skills can be created for taming normally wild animals. Cost: 1% per 2.

Mathematics. This character can add, subtract, multiply, divide, and perform basic accounting. He is not likely to be cheated in simple business transactions or in the division of treasure. No skill check is necessary. Cost: 10.

Monster Trivia. A character with this skill has picked up some knowledge of



various monsters from friends or family who were former adventurers. If the DM questions whether the character would

actually be aware of a certain monster's abilities that the character's player is aware of, the DM can call for a roll against this skill. Success indicates that the character may act upon the player's knowledge. *Under no circumstances does this mean the player may reference a rule book detailing a monster's powers.* It means only that the player may run his character as though the latter possessed the former's knowledge of the creature in question. If the roll is made but the player doesn't know what the monster is or does—tough. Cost: 1% per 2.

Read & Write. This skill allows a character to read and write a specified language at a competent and efficient level. Spell-casters may enter a campaign with this skill without the need of purchasing it. cost: 10.

Riding I. Anyone can ride a horse down a road. Handling the beast in difficult terrain or when the mount is panicky is another thing entirely. This skill grants the above as well as the knowledge of how to care for and feed the mount. If circumstances dictate that a skill check is needed, the DM may call for the roll of 1d6. On a score of 1-5, the character has successfully controlled his mount. Cost: 10.

Riding II. Horsemanship at this level allows the character the benefits of Riding I, as well as the ability to make use of mounted warfare in all its forms. A character with this skill gains a bonus of +1 to

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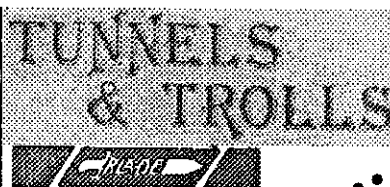
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hit if engaging in melee combat while mounted. Cost: 30.

Riding III. This skill grants the benefits of Riding I and II, as well as the ability to break and domesticate wild horses. Cost: 50.

Swimming I. Characters with this skill can dogpaddle and tread water if not heavily encumbered or in rough seas (some call this "drownproofing"). Cost: 5.

Swimming II. A character with this skill has the benefits of Swimming I, but he may also swim confidently even in rough seas. A skill check may be made on 1d6, as per Riding I, if the DM feels it is necessary. Cost: 20.

Class skills—Fighters

Detect Ambush. A fighter with this skill has the experience and perception to spot potential ambushes outdoors, thus negating any chances for being surprised. Cost: 1% per 1.

Nature Survival. The character gains one of three types of Nature Survival skills: Arctic, Desert, and Forest. Rolling against the skill allows the character to forage enough food and water to last person for one day. If this is attempted on behalf of other characters, the skill percentage is reduced by half for each additional person. For example, a fighter tries to gather enough food for himself and two others. His 50% in this skill is thus reduced twice, leaving him with a 13% chance of success. Cost: 1% per 1.

Tracking. A character with this skill may track outdoors (or in caverns or dungeons at half this regular skill). Cost: 3% per 2.

Class skills—Thieves

Disguise. This is similar to the Acting skill, with the exception that the character only *looks* the part; no extra talents to deceive by virtue of acting a particular role are granted (see "Acting"). Cost: 1% per 1.

Evaluate Goods. This skill allows the thief to determine the normal retail value of stolen goods (not including jewelry) as long as the items in question are small enough to fit in a sack or backpack. Failure of the roll indicates the thief is unsure of the value. Cost: 2% per 1.

Fence Goods. This skill allows the thief to locate a fence and dispose of his goods for 10-50% of their retail value. An initial roll is made to locate the fence; then a second roll is made, and the difference between that roll and the thief's skill maximum is added to a base of 10% up to a maximum of 50% of the normal value of the goods. As an example, a thief is selling a 100-gp item to a fence. Rolling 10 points beneath his maximum skill of 60%, he applies that to the base selling figure of 10% finally selling the item for 20% of its retail value or 20 gp. If the second roll exceeds the thief's skill, he receives the minimum figure of 10% of the goods' value. If the initial roll is failed, it is

possible-though not mandatory—that someone rats on the thief to the local authorities. Cost: 1% per 1.

Class skills—Clerics

Local Customs. A cleric with this skill will be aware of the general racial and cultural customs of an area he lives in, and he knows how not to offend the population at large and bring disrepute upon his order. Cost: 3% per 1.

Religion & Worship. With this skill, the cleric is aware of the various religions and practices of other peoples, possibly aiding his party thereby. As an example, the group has come upon a seemingly abandoned temple with a statue of a bearded Immortal. Making his roll, the cleric realizes this is the temple of Goth, a Lawful deity whose worshipers frequent his temples only at the summer solstice. Cost: 2% per 1.

Class skills—Magic-users

Magic Trivia. This skill allows the character to develop a hint as to the contents of a magical scroll, tome, or rune prior to using a read *magic* spell. The hint is vague but still useful. Further, the character may make use of knowledge possessed by the player with respect to magical effects encountered in the game, in the same manner as is done for the Monster Trivia skill. Cost: 1% per 1.

Improving skills

The question may arise as to how a character's skills may be improved once his skill points have been spent in purchasing skills. Generally, I keep skill percentages at their initial levels, though another DM might have the characters keep track of all skills that were successfully used during an adventure. At the adventure's end—not merely at the completion of a night's play—allow the players to roll against their skill percentages. If the roll exceeds the percentage in question, increase it by one point. Of course, this applies only to skills that were used out of necessity, not to skills used merely for a chance at potential betterment.

A properly worded wish will allow the player to roll a percentile dice increase in a particular skill to the maximum of 99%. No skills should have higher ratings than this, to allow for the chance (however small) of failure.

Lastly, the DM may consider allowing players to apply experience points toward skill increases. For each 1,000 xp applied toward this goal (which naturally do not count toward level advancement!), a skill may be increased by 1%. Ω

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Like everybody else who ever lived, the first thing he noticed was himself: who he was, where he was, and what he was doing. He saw that he was a tall man, blond and muscular, with penetrating blue eyes and an all-pervasive air of command. (What his eyes were supposed to be penetrating, what his air of command was supposed to be pervading, he didn't know, but he supposed he'd be given a chance to figure it all out later.) He saw that he was wearing very little except for a loincloth and cape. And finally, he saw that he was standing on the peak of an ancient ziggurat of futuristic design, that he was wielding a glowing magic sword, and that a motley band of human and inhuman warriors were camped around him, recovering from what must have been an epic battle. None of this made any sense to him.

From his stance, he was obviously a hero. That much didn't need explaining. But he didn't feel like a hero, or even much like a protagonist. He felt like an innocent bystander, or a surly palace guard, or the plebian in the crowd scene who shouts a warning to the king. He felt like the kind of person who flees in terror from a teething puppy. Just standing here, at the tip of this ziggurat, peering over the remains of what he suddenly realized was the City of the Vile Wizard Gouvin, he felt not pride, exultation, or existential weariness, but an incredible fear of heights.

For just a moment he felt an urge to climb down the rubble-strewn stairway to his right, melt into the desert, and find a tiny village where he could get a safe and unobtrusive job as a stable hand. But it was too late already, since two of his band were swiftly approaching him.

The first, a stolid but unimaginative-looking warrior clad in shiny plate mail, said, "You seem pensive, my liege."

My liege? My god, he was a king too! He closed his eyes and tried very hard to resist the temptation to faint.

The second visitor, a hunchback in robes, studied his expression and spoke in stage whispers to the first. "The battle has changed him, Sir Green. He is troubled by these changes. Attend your men, and I will see how this calamity affects us."

"Very well," Sir Green said. He looked meaningfully at the king. "Have a care, sire. Lava birds nest in out-of-the-way places." Then he intensified his meaningful look and stalked away with a combination of nobility and pretentiousness.

The hunchback peered at the sky. "You cannot fool me, my old friend. I sense it too. Aye, though we did foil his vile plans this day, the evil necromancer Gouvin yet lives and schemes anew."

The barbarian-king nodded, because that seemed to be expected of him. But he had never met this hunchback who claimed to be his old friend, and he had no memory of fighting a bad guy named Gouvin.

Then the mists of time abruptly rolled back, and he felt himself being drawn, quite against his will, into a flashback. Gouvin. The man-fiend who, in dark ages lost to history, sold his soul to the arch-fiend Sethr'eb in return for the unholy power to enslave his fellow man. Gouvin.

Confusing Sequel to a Story You Haven't Read

by Adam-Troy Castro

Illustrations by Jim Holloway

Who ruled the world of Lenroc for endless eons until, as foretold by prophecy, there rose a hero, Sabai of Hharlann, who alone of all mankind was fearless enough to wield the Godsword of J'dee. Though terrifying obstacles barred his way, Sabai raised a mighty army, fought Gouvin's underlings in great battles at Chasepuur, N'r'hsss, and Suhni, and, in one final confrontation atop Gouvin's fiendish ziggurat, broke the evil wizard's hold over his fellow man, seemingly forever.

Thinking of all this, Sabai felt a sudden stab of fear. But it wasn't Gouvin he was scared of. Gouvin appeared to be a pretty standard sword-and-sorcery villain, menacing a two-dimensional world populated by silly words masquerading as place names. No. What scared him was remembering his previous adventures in such sketchy detail. He knew that there had been battles at Chasepur, N'r'hsss, and Suhni but had no idea where those places were, or why they were chosen as battle sites. He knew he wielded the Godsword of J'dee but couldn't begin to understand what was so great about a glorified carving knife, or why fearlessness was a prerequisite for wielding it. He knew nothing except what was contained in three overwritten sentences of exposition about a man-fiend who, in dark ages lost to history, sold his soul to etc.

"How could it be?" he ventured hesitantly, asking only because that seemed to be what was expected of him.

"How could, uh, what was his name again?"

"Gouvin," the hunchback supplied.

"Yeah, right. Gouvin. How come, uh, he's still around if we killed him and everything?"

The hunchback's eyes narrowed. "Are you suffering from a concussion?"

"N-no, uh, I'm, uh, just wondering."

The little man before him, whom Sabai abruptly realized was wizened and grizzled, both at the same time, sighed and said; "Do you not remember that last battle in the center of the dark one's catacombs? When Dugg the serpent of doom, writhing in his mighty death-throes, brought down the ceiling and separated us from the fleeing form of his master? When, with the ceiling collapsing around us, only your infallible sense of direction allowed us to escape with our very lives? Perhaps you were hit in the head with a brick, my friend."

"N-no; I remember it now." But he remembered only the details the hunchback had spoken of and nothing else.

"I still sense something strange about you," the hunchback said, his brow furrowing in puzzlement. "Always before, you carried with you the air of a man who knew not the meaning of despair, among other words. Aye. Even when you and I were trapped in the fire swamps of Malor, blindfolded, with our arms tied behind our backs and surrounded by ravenous Hell Hounds as the poisonous narcotic o'rio burned its way through our systems, you did not lose faith. You fought on. Now, you seem like a different person. Quieter. More philosophical. More easily terrified."

Sabai began to stammer,

"I'm not saying you're a wimp, you understand. Just that you no longer seem stubbornly fearless. Your iron will has softened . . ."

Quite against his will, Sabai sat down and began crying.

The hunchback was naturally horrified by this. "In front of your troops, my old friend? This is not seemly!"

"Oh n-no?" Sabai blubbered. "What's not 'seemly' about it?"

"It's a show of weakness . . ."

"Like hell it is. It's a show of sanity! Th-this place is crazy!"

"Crazy? I don't understand . . ."

"Wizards," Sabai choked. "Fiends. Constant warfare. Barbarian mischief . . ."

"'Tis the world you were born into, sire."

"No it isn't!" Sabai said. "I don't know what kind of world I was born into, but it was not like this. My world made sense. There was a coherency to it, a complexity of background, characterization, and motivation, that this one sorely lacks. In my world, when a person talked to another person, he used simple phrases that human beings could feel comfortable speaking in friendly conversation. And flashbacks! My God! I haven't been here more than five minutes, and already I'm sick of flashbacks! I swear, if I never again hear my life story recited as part of an ordinary conversation in a clumsy attempt at exposition, it'll be too soon!"

The hunchback digested this solemnly, then, as swiftly as lightning itself, placed his gnarled hand on Sabai's forehead. Electricity flowed between his fingers. After a moment he withdrew his palm and stated, "You are not Sabai, my friend."

"Tell me something I don't know."

"You are Charles McAndrews, an accountant who is supposed to have a bittersweet love affair with a neurotic housewife in a college town in California."

Sabai-McAndrews stared at him. "You're right! Now that you mention it, that's exactly who I am! But who . . . how. . . ?"

"To understand your plight," the hunchback rhapsodized, unavoidably seguing into another lengthy spell of exposition, "you must view the infinite number of possible alternate universes as a collection of manuscripts sitting in the slush pile of an unimaginable cosmic being known only as 'The Editor.' These universes are all separated from each other by ethereal, multi-dimensional barriers called 'Manila Envelopes.' They rarely interact. But, on certain rare occasions, the barriers are lost and the universes are accidentally shuffled together. The protagonist of one world changes places with the protagonist of another, and the fates of a million subsidiary characters are forever altered."

The accountant-turned-barbarian king nodded in dazed astonishment. "So Sabai is loose in my story, having an affair with a neurotic housewife?"

"He might even be the neurotic housewife. Though I hope not."

"I'd say not! Umm . . . how do you know all this, anyway?"

"I know all this," the hunchback said, "because the godlike creators of these alternate universes— 'authors,' let us call them—often use their own personalities as models for subsidiary characters. Since I am such a character, I have uncanny insight into the story values of this universe. I know, for example, that if I were writing a story

such as this, I would be growing very uncomfortable at the length of time we're spending trading background information, since the readers would probably be growing unbearably bored just about now. Therefore, the lovely Alyssia, princess of Br'enorr, who swore her undying love to Sabai when he rescued her from the vile slave pits of Master Pequah, will almost certainly make an entrance within the next five seconds to provide us with some gratuitous sex."

Sabai-McAndrews' suddenly felt a soft, sensuous, very feminine hand on his shoulder. Without wanting to, he gazed sideways at it, noting with unwilling fascination that it was perfectly formed, with long red nails that awed him with their sculptured beauty. The woman attached to those hands slowly walked around to face him and awed him even more; creatures this radiant couldn't possibly exist. As he stared in frank disbelief (and more than a little terror), the sensuous lips beneath the sensuous eyes and the mane of fiery-red hair formed words in a voice that made him gasp with its musical beauty. "Milord," she breathed huskily, "it has been three hours since the defeat of the evil one, and still you have not returned to your royal bedchamber. Are you displeased with me?"

Sabai-McAndrews could only stammer "Nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh" in response.

The hunchback kicked him in the shins. Hard.

"Uhhh, no," the barbarian accountant suddenly boomed, with patently phony joviality that turned more than a few heads around the camp. "I just, uh, have a few technicalities to take care of, before we, uh, uh, huh. Just king stuff, you know, uh, that, uh."

"He'll join you in a minute," the hunchback translated.

"Very well," the princess said coquettishly. "But I wax impatient. Would one kiss for the road be too much to ask?"

"Well, uh, I . . ."

"Do it," the hunchback advised wearily.

Sabai-McAndrews did it. But he almost passed out in the middle. The woman was like a vacuum cleaner intent on sucking the very air from his lungs.

"Nuh-Nub-Nub," he remarked once it was all over.

To his surprise, the princess was equally impressed. "I have never felt like this before," she said. "There was a gentleness there, a human depth of feeling, that I have never felt from you. It's as if you're a different person, Sabai, brimming with vulnerability . . ."

"He's had his consciousness raised," the hunchback said. "To the tent, woman! All of this will be explained later—I hope."

Alyssia swiftly vanished, casting a wistful look over her fantastic shoulder.

The hunchback turned his attention back to his king. "As you can see," he said drily, "we have no time to lose. Your presence here in this manuscript is already causing uncontrollable lapses of characterization in the lesser members of the dramatis personae. We have to get you back to your own slice-of-life before these changes become permanent and Sabai's army, the only thing that stands between our world and the forces of evil, becomes too contaminated by the arty subtexts you brought with you to fight effectively."

"Y-yess," Sabai-McAndrews said, caught up with the spectacular receding tush. "I mean . . . no! I'm not a wimp, you know! I want to stay here!"

The hunchback sighed. "Your instant infatuation with the princess beclouds your reason. This is a world of constant danger, where a man needs razor-sharp reflexes and keen battle savvy to survive."

"I can pick that up. Just give me a little time."

"Time is a luxury that only sleeping lava birds can accumulate."

Sabai-McAndrews spent a few seconds digesting that.

"Look," the hunchback said while the barbarian accountant was preoccupied. "I know how you feel. You have nothing to look forward to in your own story except a bittersweet, mutually destructive affair with an unfulfilled housewife. But you can't stay here. You'll die here, and your failure to survive will give the forces of cosmic evil, as embodied by that ignoramus Gouvin, an advantage our side will never recover from."

"You just ended a sentence with a preposition," Sabai noted.

"It's permitted here. We have lower standards."

"Well, I don't care. I can light cosmic evil as well as anybody!"

"This is going to be harder than I thought," the hunchback muttered. "Still, since we've engaged in this philosophical debate for several paragraphs now without any sex or violence to sweeten the package, and since the lady Alyssia has already made an appearance to provide the sexual part of this wretched formula, it's about time we had an action scene."

At that precise moment, the clouds in the sky spontaneously rearranged themselves to form a gigantic, albeit fluffy, portrait of the vile necromancer Gouvin. Erupting thunder miraculously made sounds like a gigantic person yelling. As Sabai-McAndrews and the hunchback suddenly found themselves lifted a thousand feet into the air by a gust of ill wind, while carrion-hunting lava birds ricocheted about the sky like so many pool balls, the thunder screamed, "You thought you had defeated me, O Barbarian King! Little do you know the terrors I have planned for thee in this, the second book of the trilogy! You're really in hot water this time, and that's the truth! Here's a little preview of coming attractions!"

A monstrous, shadowy figure began to emerge from the clouds—which was kind of funny, since the clouds still looked like Gouvin, and the fiend was emerging from the cloud-Gouvin's nostril.

"He's sending a fiend after us!" shouted the hunchback over the din. "I will weave my magicks to protect the armies below, but I cannot shield either of us! You've got to light him yourself, with the Godsword!"

"The Godsword?"

"Right! The Godsword! The only weapon that can defeat this horror! Even you should be able to wield it, in a situation this dire! Remove it from your scabbard, O Impetuous One!"

"I can't! I put it down when I was kissing the princess!"

The fiend approached, giggling in the mean, nasty way that fiends have. It was a gigantic creature, thousands of times taller than either Sabai-McAndrews or, for that

matter, the futuristic ziggurat. Lightning flashed from its eyes, and fire burned in its hair. As it reached for the hapless pair, filling the sky with its sheer mass, Sabai-McAndrews winced in anticipation . . . but when he opened his eyes, it was still reaching, still approaching, not even near him yet.

"Is it an illusion?" asked Sabai-McAndrews hopefully.

"You wish!" said the hunchback. "No, in truth, the fiend is still about a hundred miles away. At this rate of flight, he won't be near us for another twenty minutes . . . but the tidal forces caused by his tremendous mass will rip us apart long before then. Only the Godsword can drive him away before he gets that close."

"That must be some sword."

"It sure is. Too bad you left it on the ground when Gouvin levitated us."

The fiend swooped low over the adjoining kingdom, accidentally grazing a small mountain range. The mountain range was totally demolished.

"Does your world have any tricks that may work in this situation?" inquired the hunchback hopefully.

"I can read a French menu."

"So can the fiend. You'll have to do better than that."

Sabai-McAndrews began to feel himself being pulled in the direction of the fiend. "I can have my lawyer draw up an injunction against him."

"Your lawyer is in another dimension, fool."

"Right."

"Any other ideas?"

"No."

"Then," the hunchback said, "we're doomed."

"I guess so."

"I'm only glad I won't live to see the charnel house Gouvin will make of this world."

"Me too."

They were both quiet for a while.

"It's you he's after," the hunchback said presently.

"When he gets here, you won't be worth the paper this is printed on."

"Uh huh."

"Makes accounting look rather interesting, doesn't it?"

"In a way," Sabai-McAndrews said thoughtfully. The fiend was now so close that its mass was pulling the armor off Sabai's well-oiled body. "Uh . . . what's your name again, wizard?"

"Mikhal, Son of Aaron."

"That's a nice name."

"My mother thought so. Is there a point to asking?"

"Not really. But I do have an idea. This is just fiction, isn't it? And not very well-written fiction, either."

"It's absolute trash," agreed Mikhal. "Why?"

"Because one of the hallmarks of incredibly bad adventure fiction, along with the one-dimensional characters and the stale dialogue, is the deus ex machina rescue that comes out of nowhere. I mean, let's face it. This is just the first chapter of the second book of a trilogy. We can't be killed now, with so much of the story still left untold. Sooner or later, we'll have to be rescued."

"A nice theory," said Mikhal. "Unfortunately, the recurring theme of this particular opus is the heroic individ-

ual's triumph over impossible odds. If you want a deus ex machina copout, you're going to have to figure out how to arrange it yourself."

"I've figured that out, too. According to you, there's only one being stronger than either that fiend or Gouvin. The being you told me about. The Editor."

Mikhal licked his lips in contemplation. "Hmmm. Now that you mention it, I might be able to summon him. You do realize that he will not allow you to stay here."

"He will if he's a bad editor. In any event, it's worth a chance ."

"Very well," said Mikhal. He spread his arms wide and began chanting: "O Mighty Editor! Ye of the dreaded blue pencil, paper clips, and rejection letters, save us from this plot development! Restore the mighty barbarian Sabai to my world, and this poor tragicomic, psychologically complex schlemiel to his! Adjust any typographical errors he may have picked up along the way, and number the manifold events of his life in the correct page order! Be just and merciful, and let all his future chapters be well-written ones!"

There was a powerful burst of lightning.

A gigantic face wearing glowing bifocals stared down at them. "What an interesting concept!" it muttered. "A three-dimensional character in a cliched pulp-fiction situation! Tell me, barbarian king (before I put you back in your self-addressed stamped envelope and hasten thy passage back to the untalented hack who created thee)—how comest thou to be here?"

"Somebody shuffled the manuscripts," Sabai said.

"Must have been Gertrude," the Editor muttered. "I should have suspected her foul hand in all this a couple of short stories back, when that sweaty barbarian showed up in President Lincoln's theater box. But I thought it was just dadaist surrealism. Oh, well. I suppose thou wantest me to pencil out the fiend now."

"If you don't mind."

"Not at all. Though I hopest thou does not mind if I also put thou back in the manuscript for which thou wert originally intended. No offense, but thou art not exactly Woolworth spinner rack material."

"If you insisteth," said Sabai, unable to avoid spitting during his attempt at Old English.

Sabai felt himself flying through a universe of erasers and blue-line pencils . . .

He was standing on a rocky crag by the edge of a storm-tossed, tempestuous ocean. Savage lightning raced across the sky like strong words from a jealous god. The jagged rocks far below looked damn inviting. He turned a soulful eye toward the distant castle of Elsinore and prepared to jump . . .

From far behind him an anguished feminine voice screamed, "No, my darling! Don't jump!"

He turned and saw passionate Laura Hobson, dressed in the sensuous white uniform of a romance-novel nurse, desperately running toward him.

It struck him, quite suddenly, that the omnipotent being called The Editor had goofed again. Ω

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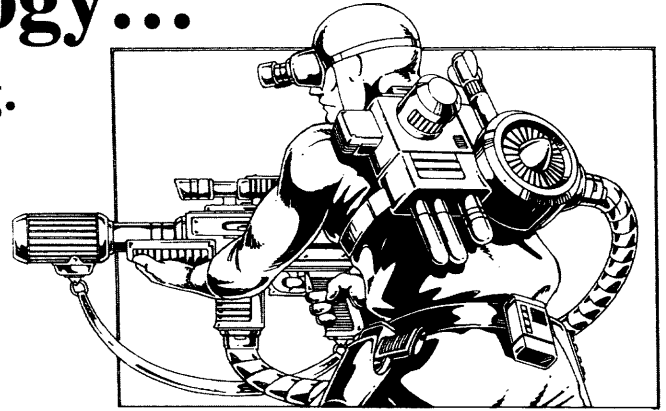
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Well, hello again. Last month I extolled the abilities of two heroes, Captain Britain and Roma, so I thought this month's column would be a good opportunity to take a look at some of Cap's villains—and in keeping with this month's light tone, I hereby present to you the Crazy Gang!

The Crazy Gang is a group of five professional (inept, but professional) criminals who all resemble characters from the storybooks most of us read when we were young. They were created by an other-dimensional madman, James Jaspers, as part of his plan to take over his world, designated as Earth 238. (Note: This is also the home dimension of Linda McQuillan, a.k.a. Captain U.K.) The Jaspers of Earth 238 possessed vast psionic powers and did succeed in dominating his home world.

Jaspers was eventually defeated, though, and the Crazy Gang should have ceased to exist, as it was only a construct of Jaspers'

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HE MARVEL® - PHILE

“Orf wiv its ‘ead!”

by Dale A. Donovan

(obviously) deranged mind. But the gang was transported, through unknown means, to Marvel-Earth—more specifically, to England. Once the Gang arrived, it made several abortive efforts at crime, with the Jester acting as de facto leader of this motley crew. The Jester took most of his criminal inspiration from the television, but TV didn't translate into reality very well. With almost no imagination of their own, the Gang members' criminal careers foundered (big surprise). That is, until the Jester put an advertisement in a London newspaper, announcing their need for a clever leader.

Captain Britain's foe, Slaymaster, answered their ad and masterminded a series of spectacular crimes, including robberies of the British Museum and the Royal Mint. As Slaymaster expected, this crime spree gained the attention of Captain Britain. Slaymaster and the Crazy Gang subsequently defeated Cap in battle, and Slaymaster delivered Cap to his employer, the Vixen. Having achieved his own end, Slaymaster dismissed the Gang from his employ.

The Gang has since found a new employer: the assassin Arcade. Recently, Arcade sent the Gang to abduct Courtney Ross, an influ-

ential British banker and an old flame of Cap's. Excalibur, the team of which Cap is now a member, came to Ross's aid and did battle with the Gang and Arcade's many contraptions. At one point in the battle, Tweedlelope used a device, which he had apparently invented, that switched the psyches and personalities of the following pairs of combatants: Nightcrawler and the Jester; Cap and Tweedlelope; and Meggan and the Knave. Phoenix destroyed the Executioner's robotic body but was possessed by its consciousness.

Eventually, the mind exchanges were reversed, Phoenix broke free of the Executioner's possession, Ross was rescued, and Arcade and the Gang were captured. As of this writing, the four surviving members of the Crazy Gang are in the custody of the British authorities.



EXECUTIONER™ Robot (destroyed)

F	GD(10)	Health: 54
A	PR(4)	
S	GD(10)	Karma: 34
E	RM(30)	
R	FB(2)	Resources: Feeble
I	FB(2)	
P	RM(30)	Popularity: 0

Note: At this time, the Executioner has no material body. What happened to its consciousness after Phoenix broke its hold on her is unknown. It is possible that the consciousness has ceased to exist, or that it is searching for (or has found) another body to possess. The Executioner may be working for its compatriots' freedom even now (no, please).

POWERS: The only true superpower that the Executioner had thus far displayed was the ability to possess another's body and control its actions. It did this at Amazing level.

EQUIPMENT: The Executioner wielded a great axe in combat that did 15 points of damage and attacked on the Edged Attacks column. It was made of Excellent strength material.

SKILLS: The only skills that the Executioner possessed were Excellent skill

wielding its axe, and a dogged determination in pursuing its intended target.



JESTER™ Criminal acrobat (looks scary)

F	EX(20)	Health: 66
A	RM(30)	
S	TY(6)	Karma: 20
E	GD(10)	
R	PR(4)	Resources: Feeble
I	TY(6)	
P	GD(10)	Popularity: 0

POWERS: None.

EQUIPMENT: The Jester normally carries no weapons on his person, although he is quite adept at using a sword in combat (see Skills below).

SKILLS: The Jester is by far the most talented member of the group (that's not saying much, really), in that he has Incredible skill in acrobatics, tumbling, juggling, and fencing.



KNAVE™ Inept criminal

F	GD(10)	Health: 70
A	GD(10)	
S	RM(30)	Karma: 18
E	EX(20)	
R	TY(6)	Resources: Feeble
I	TY(6)	
P	TY(6)	Popularity: 0

POWERS: Other than his exceptional strength, the Knave's only other power is his armor, which provides Good protection from physical attacks.

EQUIPMENT: None.

SKILLS: The Knave knows Martial Arts A.



RED QUEEN™ All but useless criminal

F	PR(4)	Health: 16
A	PR(4)	
S	PR(4)	Karma: 10
E	PR(4)	
R	FB(2)	Resources: Feeble
I	PR(4)	
P	PR(4)	Popularity: 0

POWERS: None.

EQUIPMENT: The Red Queen usually carries a hybrid royal scepter/rolling pin that can inflict Typical damage, plus a check for possible Stunning.

SKILLS: Beyond wielding her "scepter" in combat with Typical ability, the Red Queen's only talent (?) lies in bellowing the Gang's battle cry, "Orf wiv its 'ead!"



TWEEDLEDOPE™ Savage criminal

F	PR(4)	Health: 38
A	PR(4)	
S	GD(10)	Karma: 10
E	EX(20)	
R	FB(2)	Resources: Feeble
I	PR(4)	
P	PR(4)	Popularity: 0

POWERS: Tweedlelope is a savant, an individual with otherwise-limited faculties, but with one uncanny knack. In Tweedlelope's case, this knack is for inventing things. His Reason when inventing is Amazing. His surroundings help determine the finished product's level of technology. For example, when the Gang was holed up in an abandoned building, Tweedlelope took some wood, string, hubcaps, and a few rats, and constructed a functional rat-powered chariot for himself. On another occasion, he apparently built the dimen-

Continued on page 73



—WRESTLING WITH STYLE—

Martial-arts styles from the ancient Greeks

by Janne Järvinen

Up they stood, huge Aias Telamonius, then Odysseus the calculating and resourceful man. Wearing their belts, the two men leaned toward each other in the arena, and with oaken hands gripped one another's elbows. . . . The bones in each man's back creaked at the strain put on him by their corded thews, and sweat ran down in rills. Without pause they strove to win the tripod: neither could Odysseus throw his man and pin him, nor could Aias countered by Odysseus' brawn.

The Iliad, by Homer
translated by Robert Fitzgerald

In DRAGON® issue #122, Wayne Goldsmith and Dan Salas revealed that martial arts are not the sole property of the Orient. But many readers know that some sports practiced today are merely safer and relatively less violent forms of ancient styles of unarmed combat—or should I say, martial arts?

The martial-arts system used in this article was originally presented in the AD&D® *Oriental Adventures* tome. However, the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* and *Wilderness Survival Guide*, with their new nonweapon proficiency system that was later incorporated into the 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*, make it possible for non-Oriental characters to learn martial arts, too. If you want to introduce unarmed combat to your campaign, player characters should be able to use both weapon and nonweapon proficiencies to learn martial arts. Alternately, the initial proficiency would have to be a weapon proficiency, while both weapon and nonweapon proficiencies could be used to gain special maneuvers. Likewise, the special maneuvers of various styles included herein (especially in the case of *pankration*) are only suggestions, and the DM should feel free to change them or even invent his own special maneuvers.

Boxing

Boxing is one of the most ancient forms of unarmed combat. It was first institutionalized as a sport in ancient Greece, and it was later adopted by the Romans. *The Iliad* describes boxing both lyrically and in great detail, making it evident that boxers wore so-called fighting straps usually made of ox hide. At first, the function of the rawhide straps was to protect the boxer's fists and, to some extent, to protect the opponent's face. But in the passing of time, the fighters wore straps made of harder leather to ensure that the opponent's skin would break more easily. Later on, steel studs and rivets were added to the straps until, during the reign of the Roman emperor Nero, fighters wore brass knuckles and spiked "boxing gloves." These bloody fights often took place at the Colosseum of Rome. One poet sarcastically mentions a boxer who was so badly beaten during a fight that his own dog

didn't recognize him when he came home.

At its best, however, ancient boxing was a style of unarmed combat in which the boxer's mental qualities were as critical as his physical condition. Stories tell of boxers who won fights without giving or receiving a punch, yet left their opponents exhausted. Boxers are trained to have lightning-quick reflexes and are allowed three attacks per melee round.

Otherwise, ancient boxers were trained pretty much the same way as they are today. The Greeks had already noticed the importance of a sandbag in practice.

Pankration (classical)

Pankration (Greek for "all powers") was a combination of boxing and wrestling. In 648 B.C., it was included in the list of sports in the ancient Olympic games. The winner of each two-man fight was the one who first brought his opponent to the ground. This could be accomplished by various punches or above-waist throws. The matches were fought under the close supervision of a referee (called a *paidotrib*). Strongly grounded stances were learned. When the Hellenic culture fell into decay, classical pankration soon gave way to a wilder version of the sport.

Pankration (freestyle)

Classical pankration is about as old a sport as boxing and wrestling are, but the same cannot be said about its wilder counterpart, freestyle pankration (also known as freefight). While the rules of wrestling and boxing were much more looser than they are nowadays, pankration allowed nearly any imaginable punch, kick, throw, or hold that could harm the opponent

(biting and eye gouging were usually forbidden, though). Strikes below the belt and low-aimed kicks were common.

It was little wonder that a fight like this often resulted in the death of one of the combatants. More often, however, the paidotrib (assuming there was one) called an end to the fight after one of the fighters was completely exhausted, seriously injured, unconscious, or suffering unbearable pain. The fights were so violent that when pankration for boys was introduced to the 145th ancient Olympics in 200 B.C., the paidotribs didn't let the weaker-looking boys compete at all. Basically a hard style, freefight can include almost any maneuver. More often, however, a freefighter sought to learn maneuvers from a wide variety of combative styles rather than concentrate on one particular style, such as kicks. Of course, masters of any style can compete in a freefight, too! In its freestyle form, pankration was not a sport but a deadly martial art.

Wrestling

Wrestling is probably the most ancient of all sports. Although it requires a great deal of strength, wrestling is basically a soft style as it aims in neutralizing, rather than destroying, the opponent. There are scores of wrestling styles, and this article gives an overall view of only one of them.

Wrestling was very popular in ancient Greece. It was included in the ancient Olympics both as a sport by itself and as the culmination of the pentathlon event. Special halls, called *palaistras*, were built for wrestling practice. The philosopher Platon was a famous wrestler in his own time. In the beginning, wrestling involved

above-waist holds, as described by the poet Homer. Wrestling's rules weren't very strict. In *The Iliad*, Odysseus is said to have kicked one opponent behind the knee, knocking the man (Aias) backward; Odysseus then dropped on his chest.

In the course of centuries, Greek wrestling was influenced by Egyptians and became even more loosely regulated. Various strangleholds and finger, elbow, and knee locks were introduced to the style. Wrestlers wore leather caps to keep their opponents from grabbing their hair or tearing off their ears. Illustrations in Egyptian tombs indicate that the Egyptians mastered over 70 different throws, holds, and locks; the Greeks must have mastered even more!

Bibliography

Homer. *The Iliad*. Translated by Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1974.

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Table of Greek Martial-Arts Styles

Name	Number of attacks	Damage	AC	Principal attack	Special maneuvers	Weapons
Boxing	3/1	1-8	7	Hand	Strike 1 Move 1,6 Mental 2,5	see below
Pankration, classical	2/1	1-6	7	Body or hand	Strike 1 Throw 3,4 Move 1,3	None
Pankration, freestyle	2/1	1-8	8	None	Strike 1 Kick 1,2 Throw 3 Lock 1,3 Move 2 Vital area 1,2	None
Wrestling	1/1	1-4	6	Body	Lock 1,3,4 Throw 3,4 Move 2,3 Vital area 1	None

Boxing notes

Studded straps add +1 hp to damage, and opponents have -1 to their saves when stunning or incapacitation is considered. Brass knuckles and spiked gloves add +2 hp to damage, and opponents save at -2 against stunning or incapacitating effects.

Encounter Dread Denizens of the



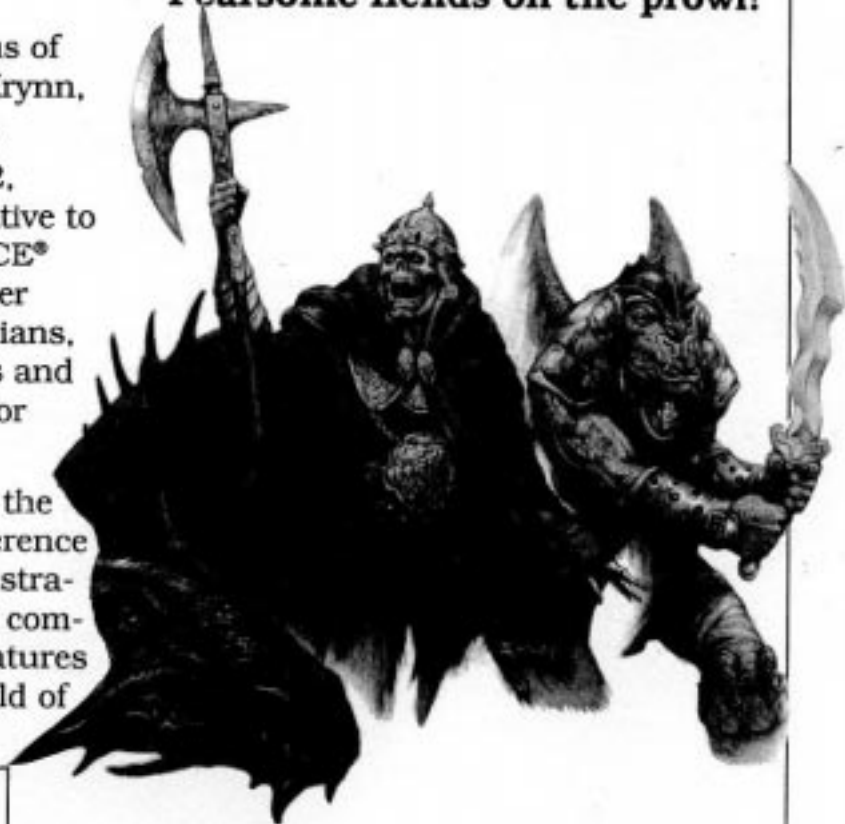
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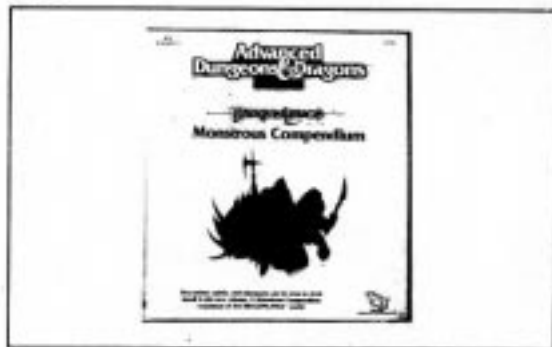
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The following are the final nominees for the ORIGINS Awards, to be awarded at ORIGINS '90 in Atlanta, June 28-July 1, 1990. The awards ceremony will be Friday, June 29th. The ORIGINS Awards are presented annually for outstanding achievement in adventure gaming. Members of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design nominate products for the awards.

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- 5th Fleet (Victory Games)
- RED STORM RISING game (TSR, Inc.)
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- WEB OF GOLD game (TSR, Inc.)

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- Family Wars (Andon Games)
- Illuminati (Flying Buffalo)
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15. Best New Play-By-Mail Game, 1989

- Beyond the Stellar Empire—The New System (Adventures By Mail)
- Orion Nebula (Orpheus Publishing Corp.)
- Space Combat (Twin Engine Gaming)
- Supremacy (Andon Games)

16. Best Fantasy or Science-Fiction Computer Game, 1989

- Curse of the Azure Bonds (Strategic Simulations)
- Dragon Wars (Interplay Productions)
- MechWarrior (Activision)
- Sword of the Samurai (MicroProse Software)
- War of the Lance (Strategic Simulations)

17. Best Military or Strategy Computer Game, 1989

- Battles of Napoleon (Strategic Simulations)
- F-15 Strike Eagle II (MicroProse Software)
- M-1 Tank Platoon (MicroProse Software)
- SimCity (Maxis Software)
- Their Finest Hour (Lucasfilm Games)

18. Best Professional Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1989

- Challenge (Game Designers' Workshop)
- Computer Gaming World (Golden Empire Publications)
- DUNGEON® Adventures (TSR, Inc.)
- GM (Croftwood Publishing)
- Strategy & Tactics (3W)
- White Wolf (White Wolf Publishing)

19. Best Amateur Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1989

- The Canadian Wargamers Journal (The Canadian Wargamers Group)
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SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

This month, "Sage Advice" considers AD&D® game queries that most readers probably haven't considered before, then reconsiders some old advice.

"Unusual stuff"

If a wizard cast an *anti-magic shell* spell on himself at the same time a beholder aimed its *anti-magic ray* at him, which effect would prevail?

My 9th-level ranger was changed into a glass of water by a powerful mage using a wish spell. After killing the rest of the party, the mage drank my character. The DM said my character is dead, but I say my character's essence has mingled with the mage's. Who is right?

Can a human be cleanly killed, *enlarged*, have *permanency* cast on him, then *be raised* or *animated* without the caster of the *permanency* losing a constitution point? How about *animating* the corpse, then *enlarging* it and making it permanent—would the caster of the *permanency* spell lose a constitution point then?

How far can three bozak draconians (which are described in the

DRAGONLANCE® *Adventures* book) be hurled from a catapult if they were bound together and had their wings amputated? What would be the range if they were launched singly? Would the ranges for other draconians be similar?

My character was recently *polymorphed* into a worm. Another character cut my character in half. If the two halves were allowed to grow into two worms, would I have two characters if the *polymorph*



party's paladin graciously carried my gnome in a jury-rigged papoose-type backpack. Could the paladin or my character engage in melee using this arrangement? How much would a legless gnome weigh?

If a *bastard sword* +6, *defender* was trampled by a triceratops, and the roll on the item saving-throw table was a 1 on 1d20, would the item fail because the roll was a 1 or would it make the save because it needs a 6 to save and its pluses make up the difference? If the sword did break, could it be remade with all its pluses? Would a *wish* completely restore the broken sword?

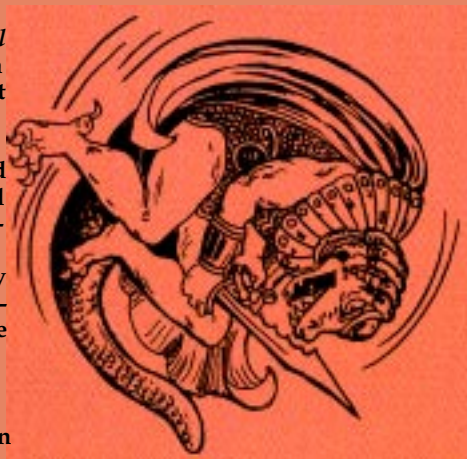
The rules say a *fireball* detonates at a point designated by the caster or when it strikes a solid object. What is the chance of an archer hitting the *fireball* with an arrow and causing it to detonate while in flight?

Can a *ring of regeneration* restore a female character's maidenhood? Could this be done well enough to fool a unicorn?

Sheesh! What kind of games do you people play, anyhow? Do you really encounter these problems in play, or do you just sit around thinking of strange questions to send me? Here we go:

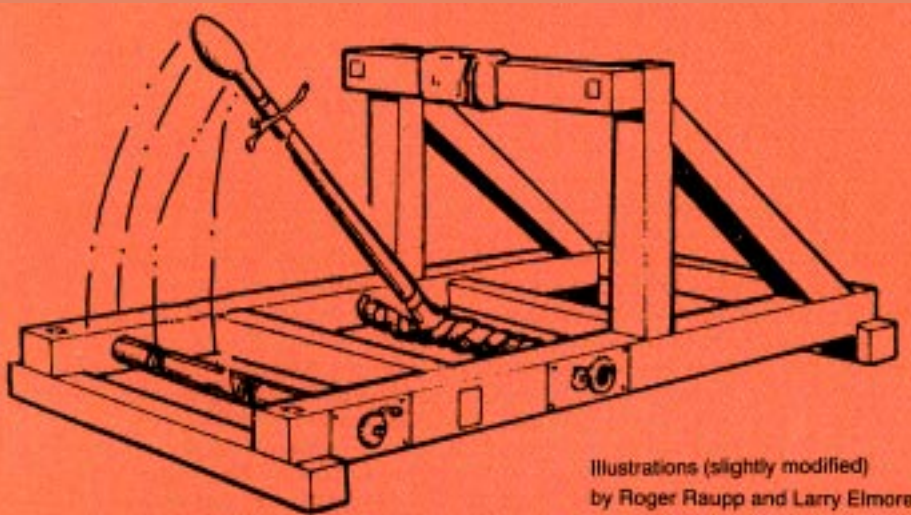
Anti-anti-magic: The question is moot since both effects produce the same results: the temporary suppression (not dispelling) of all magic. (Artifacts function, but any spell-like effects they produce are suppressed.) Both effects work normally, even in the area of overlap.

Watery ranger: I have my doubts about the validity of the wish. Since it was used against a character directly, I'd treat it as a permanent *polymorph any object*



spell was dispelled? Wouldn't the two characters be identical and friendly toward each other (not prone to kill each other as two clones would)?

My deep gnome character lost both his legs on an adventure. The



Illustrations (slightly modified)
by Roger Raupp and Larry Elmore

spell. Such a wish could be dispelled so long as the water-character stayed intact. Once the water is spilled, evaporated, or consumed, the character's "essence" is scattered or destroyed, and only another *wish* will restore the character.

Enlarged corpse: A corpse is an object. Use the rules for non-living objects when adjudicating the results of enlarge or *permanency* spells. A zombie, however, is a creature (even if it is biologically dead). In the AD&D® 1st Edition rules, a mage who *enlarged* a corpse and cast *permanency* on it would have only a 5% chance to lose point of constitution (see the 1st Edition DMG, page 46), because he was working with an object. The AD&D 2nd Edition game does not make a distinction between permanent effects on objects or creatures, but I think it's safe to assume this is an oversight. In either game, the *enlarged* corpse could be animated as a huge, 1-HD zombie.

Catapulted draconians: Light catapults hurl rocks that weigh 8-10 lbs. Heavy catapults hurl rocks that weigh 20-25 lbs. Even a single draconian of any species placed on a catapult would overload the machine so much that the catapult wouldn't fire at all. Trebuchets, however, have a much larger load capacity, hurling rocks that weigh about 500 lbs., which is probably about right for three draconians. Rocks, however, are a bit more aerodynamic than any three wingless draconians tied together, so a draconian-firing trebuchet's range should be halved, for a maximum range of 240 yards and a minimum of 120 yards.

A single draconian fired from a trebuchet is grossly underweight as well as unaerodynamic, producing an effect akin to trying to hurl a slightly underinflated beach ball. Use the scatter diagram on page 63 of the 2nd Edition DMG. Treat the point labeled "intended target" as the trebuchet; a roll of 1 indicates that the draconian is hurled straight up into the air and lands right on the trebuchet (or on top of its operators, at the DM's option). Any other roll indicates that the draconian flies wildly off in the given direction. Roll $8d4 \times 10$ for the total distance in yards that the draconian "flies."

Wormy PC: Characters retain their hit points and intellect when subjected to *polymorphing*, so your character should have been the worlds smartest and toughest worm, at least until he failed an intelligence check and assumed a worm's mentality (if a worm can be said to have a mentality). Your character would be dead if chopped in half while still mentally a "person" If the character reverted to worm mentality before being cut in half, it still would be one tough worm (having

your PC's hit points), but it might very well survive being chopped in half if anyone were persistent enough to actually do it. Many DMs, however, would rule that the *polymorph* spell could no longer be dispelled once the change in personality took place. If the magic on either or both halves of the worm were dispelled, you'd have one or two halves of a dead character. Each "new" worm still is only half a character, even if allowed to grow into a whole worm.

Legless gnome: The character carrying the gnome is going to be encumbered, even if he can handle the weight, because of the gnome's bulk. This means he'll suffer at least a -1 penalty to his to-hit rolls (see the 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*, page 79); the penalty will be worse if the gnome weighs enough to reduce the carrier's movement. The DM might also add an initiative penalty equal to the combat penalty. The gnome could fight if his arms were free. I suggest a -4 penalty to his to-hit roll and a +3 penalty to his initiative.

Human, elf, half-elf, and halfling anatomy generally follows the so-called Rule of

falling 15' onto a hard surface has a modifier of -2 (-1 for every 5' beyond the first 5'); if a 3 were rolled as a save, the save would be successful ($3 - 2 = 1$, still good). Items that have a save of 0 are immune to the listed attack form; for example, liquids are immune to blows, even if their containers are not.

A *wish* certainly could restore the sword if all its pieces were present. Whether or not the sword could simply be remade is up to the DM. I suggest that most enchanted items be rendered nonmagical if broken, though I can think of one or two classic fantasy stories in which broken magical items were remade. If the item is very powerful (with a bonus of +4 or better), it might be remade if it is simply broken—not *disintegrated* or reduced to ash or slag—and if it rolls a second save of 20. The item should get a bonus of +1 for every two magical bonuses the item has (artifacts receive a +4 bonus to their saves). If the item fails the second save, it no longer radiates magic; characters smart enough to use *detect magic* will know an attempt to repair the item is a waste of



Nines: The head takes up 9% of the body's weight, each arm 9%, the chest 18%, the abdomen 18%, and each leg 18%. The missing 1% is ignored. Gnomes and dwarves are stocky and carry less mass in their limbs. The distribution of their weight might be: head 9%; each arm 8%, chest 21%, abdomen 21%, and each leg 16%.

Dinosaur vs. magical item: In either edition of the AD&D game, a roll of 1 always fails a saving throw, weapons' bonuses notwithstanding. Someone is bound to write to me and point out that the item saving-throw table in the 1st Edition DMG, page 80, lists the numbers 1 and 0 in several places. When an item has a saving throw of 1, a roll of 1 still fails; however, if the DM assigns a circumstantial penalty, any *adjusted* roll of 1 or more is a successful save. For example, a book

time. If the save is successful, the repair should be made using the best possible materials and a master craftsman of unequalled skill; finding either of these should be an adventure in itself. If the DM really wants to prolong the player's agony, he can require the being who will repair the item to make a successful proficiency check and maybe even make a save vs. spells to be successful.

Shooting down a fireball: I repeated this question to one of my regular playing groups and got in return five bemused grins and the following straight-faced comment: "Gee, you'll also need rules for [shooting down fireballs with] *magic missiles* and things like that, too." For the record, hitting a *fireball* or similar missile with another missile, magical or not, is about as likely as every creature on a

world taking a step at the same instant, thereby creating cataclysmic vibrations that shake the planet apart. That is, it's possible in theory but gosh darn well near impossible in practice.

Regenerating maidenhood: Sorry, unicorns know their maidens too well to be fooled. Under certain circumstances, a *ring of regeneration* can restore the—ahem—physical aspects of a lady's maidenhood. A *ring of regeneration* can restore any damage or appendage loss if it occurs while the ring is worn. For example, if a character wearing a *ring of regeneration* loses a finger, the ring will eventually restore the finger. However, if the character loses the finger and then dons the ring, the finger isn't regrown. In a similar vein, a *ring of regeneration* can't be passed from character to character to provide a party with cheap healing. Damage that exists before the ring is put on is not restored. Note that a clerical *regenerate* spell can restore a lost limb at any time. In any case, maidenhood is a state of being. Once it is lost, it is lost forever, *regeneration* notwithstanding.

Re-Saging

In DRAGON issue #148, you said elven chain mail negates a ranger's ability to fight two-handed without penalty. Why is this? Armor made from elven steel has one-half the normal encumbrance value, according to the 2nd Edition DMG. So elven chain mail weighs 20 lbs., or 5 lbs. less than studded leather, which is the "heaviest" armor a ranger can wear and still avoid the penalty.

Chain mail armor isn't all metal. Chain mail is a shirt of metal links worn over a padded garment; this is necessary to keep the links from being driven into the wearer's body when a blow strikes. The padding weighs about 10 lbs., giving elven chain mail a weight of 25 lbs., the same as studded leather. Second, weight alone is not the only factor. The armor's thickness, stiffness, weight distribution, and general protective value also must be considered. While elven chain mail weighs about as much as studded leather, it is still "heavier." Generally, any armor type whose base armor class (before magical or dexterity adjustments) is AC 6 or better is "heavier" than studded leather, even if it actually weighs less than 25 lbs. due to materials or enchantments, or both.

In issue #138, you said that protection from evil effects do not keep undead at bay, except for ghouls. Come on! Since all undead are magically created, they're all enchanted monsters and all are thwarted by protection from evil. While we're at it, you also said that banshees turn as specials, if they can be turned at

all. Come on again! The rules say that clerics have power over the undead, not some undead.

The only undead that are magically created are skeletons and zombies, which are created with the *animate dead* spell. However, enchanted monsters are those brought into being with conjuration/summoning spells, and *animate dead* is necromantic. Ghouls are hedged out because their descriptions in the 1st Edition *Monster Manual* and 2nd Edition *Monstrous Compendium* say they are. Still, the DM could rule that the normal undead-creation process (in which a being killed by certain undead beings becomes an undead creature, too) is magical. Expanding the list in this fashion logically would include lycanthropes (which suffer from a quasi-magical curse), golems (which are ritually created), creatures such as owlbears and bulettes (commonly known to be magical crossbreeds), and gargoyles (which have "magical natures")—and the list goes on. It's much better to draw the line early on.

The rules don't say that clerics have power over *all* undead. Banshees were left off the clerics vs. undead table in the AD&D 1st Edition *DMG* because they couldn't be turned in those rules (see the 1st Edition *Monster Manual*, "Groaning Spirit"). Currently, banshees *can* be turned as "special" undead (see "Groaning Spirit," *Monstrous Compendium*, Volume 2).

In issue #148, you said all warrior characters are entitled to exceptional strength scores, but a footnote on page 20 of the 2nd Edition Player's Handbook says halfling fighters do not roll for exceptional strength.

You are correct. Score one for footnotes and for people who read them.

In an earlier issue, you said a paladin's detect evil ability works just like a detect evil spell, and that it could detect evil characters. Isn't there a section in the rules that says detect evil spells don't work on evil characters?

There sure is. Check out the 1st Edition *DMG*, page 60. Evil characters don't always radiate evil. Just for the record, I didn't actually say that; one of my editors did [*It was me. —Roger*]. While my editors are fine people whose timely interventions have more than once caught my errors before I embarrassed myself in print, the shoe was on the other foot this time.

Why does a paladin's immunity to disease protect him from attack by green slime, violet fungi, and other plant monsters?


In my opinion, it doesn't. My editor [*me again*] assumed that since green slime can be killed with a *cure disease* spell, paladins must be immune to its effects. However,

green slime is a monster with the ability to destroy flesh, wood, and metal. A disease is a malady caused by a pathogenic organism; a paladin's immunity to disease does not protect him or his equipment from a green slime's attack, its susceptibility to *cure disease* spells notwithstanding. Similarly, a violet fungi's flesh-destroying attack works on paladins, even though *cure disease* spells halt its effects. Furthermore, paladins can get infected wounds (if your campaign considers them), as these are not diseases per se; *cure disease* spells also remove such infections.

In issue #146, you discussed the enchant an item spell and said that a magical weapon's bonus was not a spell effect. What about the enchanted weapon spell?

As described in the AD&D 1st Edition game, the fourth-level spell *enchanted weapon* did not produce a true "plus." The spell allowed the recipient weapon to harm creatures hit only by magical weapons, but it did not bestow any bonuses whatsoever. Consequently, I tread lightly around the subject in the column. The new *enchanted weapon* spell, however, does bestow a true bonus and is useful for enchanting most weapons, as described in the 2nd Edition *PHB*, page 157.

In issue #149, you said that result shifts actually change the color of results obtained on the GAMMA WORLD® game's ACT. Doesn't the rules supplement included with the game contradict this?

It sure does. The rules supplement, page 2, is correct; the column was wrong. As one reader pointed out, changing an attacks damage multiplier, but not the ACT color, allows for hits which do no damage but that still cause special effects. For example, laser blasts might blind mutants with infravision. 



TSR PREVIEW

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Illustration by John Paul Leon

Characterization Made Easy

A little personality goes a long way for all characters

by Scott Bennie

"My character is 30th-level barbarian-cleric demigod with a *sword of the cataclysm*, plus sixteen other artifacts!"

"Yeah, well, what is he like?"

"Well, he's got a strength, constitution, dexterity, and charisma of 26, and he has more hit points than Odin!"

"I mean, what's his personality?"

"Personality? Oh, alignment! He's chaotic neutral. That way he can do anything he wants. If anyone tells him what to do—oh, man, can he ever cut him down! Heh, heh, heh."

"No, I meant *personality*."

"Well, he has a pet dragon, Gogetem, that has three heads, and it can eat Bahamut and Tiamat for breakfast. . . ."

The AD&D® and D&D® games involve the role-playing of character personalities that exist in a game world. However, there

are quite a few players who play these games as exercises in combat without the slightest idea of what a “role” is. While people are entitled to play these games in any ways that they see fit, I’ve found that these games (and all other role-playing games, for that matter) are a lot more fun when I role-play than when I am involved in nothing but search-and-salvage or combat sessions.

Some people say that role-playing is not easy and that the use of role-playing makes a game enjoyable only if you have some background in drama. I do have a bit of experience with drama (which might prejudice my remarks), but I think that it is possible to role-play effectively without much acting experience. Besides, aren’t we all natural actors inside? This article is meant to give you ways to add depth to your characters beyond the things normally found on character record sheets.

The AD&D and D&D games assume that characters come from a fantasy medieval background and get involved in adventures using that very setting. However, in both actual medieval times and in fantasy novels, not everyone became an adventurer. To leave the mundane life behind is to live a life of constant danger, to confront terrors that only the truly heroic or truly insane would think of facing. This requires a special type of individual. Take a look at your character and ask yourself: Why is he an adventurer? Why did he choose to risk his life seeking fortune and adventure, instead of settling down and being a farmer, a mason, or a blacksmith?

What kind are you?

People become adventurers for any number of different reasons. Here is a list of possible adventurer types, along with relevant motivations and examples:

Adventurer: The character cannot live without excitement in his life. This character craves the thrill that he can get only by putting his life on the line. Rumors of great danger and peril will urge him into the unknown. Prince Valiant, from the popular comic series, is a good example of this sort of character (being under a curse of lifelong restlessness and discontent with complacency).

Avenger: This character has a single goal: revenge. He wants to get back at someone or something that has wronged him, settling an old score. Rumors about the hated subject motivate this character into adventure. Batman is a prime example of this sort of adventurer, as is Conan in the movie *Conan the Barbarian*.

Comrade: This character is an adventurer because his friends are adventures. He is a follower, not a leader, and is motivated by friendship; he enjoys socializing with adventurers. When his friends embark on an adventure, he will follow. A hero’s sidekick (such as Moonglum in the Elric series) is a good example of a comrade. NPC henchmen can be comrades.

Crusader: This character is out to save or reform the world. He has a mission in life that may far exceed his reach, but he will strive for it though it may not benefit him directly. A crusader may have associated goals, such as saving damsels in distress or slaying dragons. Rumors about the existence of evil in one form or another will prod him into adventuring. Most paladins are good examples of crusaders.

Hoarder: This character believes that the love of money is the root of all fun. The hoarder wants to become as wealthy as possible. He may spend money extravagantly, wanting to live a life of luxury, or he may make Scrooge look like a spendthrift. The hoarder is motivated by new sources of wealth; rumors of vast treasure caches send him off on new quests. Dwarves are often played as hoarders, contributing their gains to clan or personal hoards.

Paragon: This character views adventuring as a personal challenge, putting himself in peril to test his abilities. A paragon wishes to improve one or more of his skills to absolute mastery (e.g., the best archer in the city of Botheringdale might wish to become the best archer in the kingdom). When a paragon learns about a possible challenge to his abilities, be it a challenger at a tournament or a monster from which no man has ever escaped, he will do his best to meet and master that challenge. A character who has specialized with a certain type of weapon (like a kensai from the AD&D *Oriental Adventures* tome) could be considered a paragon, as could a character who develops a reputation as a dragon-slayer.

Power-seeker: This character seeks power, be it political, military, spiritual, or economic. A power-seeker won’t necessarily try to get as many magical items as possible to squash potential opponents, but he will usually go after positions of power within the campaign’s social structure (e.g., a cleric would strive to become the high priest of his religion, while an ambitious yeoman would work toward a captaincy). A power-seeker might develop a goal and work toward it, or else develop his skills and look for a goal. Adventures that offer possibilities of furthering one’s goal will interest power-seekers (e.g., rescuing a noble’s kidnapped daughter might offer favors from the noble.)

Psychopath: This character adventures for the sheer joy of killing and violence, usually just to prove to himself how tough he is. This is *not* an alignment-specific role; a lawful-good character might adventure for the joy of killing orcs, giants, and demons, getting no satisfaction from an adventure unless he has killed something. It takes very little to motivate a psychopath; any victim will do (the easier to destroy, the better). A psychopath is usually seriously disturbed and has probably suffered some severe trauma that is connected to the object of his hatred (e.g., a

ranger whose family was slaughtered by orcs is now becoming feared for her fanaticism in slaying all orcs and goblins she can hunt down).

Servant: This character is in the service of either a person or an agency. Samurai, clerics, paladins, and guild-member thieves are good examples of these adventurers. He is either sworn to serve his master (as a feudal knight is pledged to his king) or is in his master’s direct service (e.g., a prince’s bodyguard). He goes adventuring because he has either received orders from his master or he has heard information that concerns his master (such as an assassination plot against one of his master’s allies).

Subsister: This character is not normally an adventurer, and he probably lived a comfortable life until (often reluctantly) he was forced into adventuring due to circumstances beyond his control. Perhaps his family was outlawed, his village was destroyed in an orc invasion, or his sister was lured into a chaotic-evil order. Subsisters may either enjoy adventuring and become full-time adventurers, or else try to settle back into a normal life as soon as possible (with frequent interruptions). Think of Bilbo Baggins in J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit*, or nearly any monster-investigating character in Chaosium’s CALL OF CTHULHU® game.

Superstar: The superstar has but a single goal in life—glory! He wants to become as famous as possible and actively seeks a good reputation. He might even have hired bards to accompany him, although this tactic can backfire (as witnessed by Sir Robin in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*). A superstar goes on an adventure when he hears about an opportunity to earn glory. Many cavaliers and knights are prone to this role.

Note that these motivations are not mutually exclusive. There is no reason why a character can’t be both a crusader and a paragon; he simply has more than one goal. People are complex, and so are characters.

Past & future

It has been said that to understand someone’s present state, you must understand where he has come from and where he is going to. Once you have established your character’s motivations, ask yourself what caused your character to have these attitudes. Why does your character act like this?

One commonly neglected area that is absolutely essential to character role-playing is a knowledge of that character’s background. Why is your character lawful good or chaotic evil? Why is he an avenger, a crusader, or a power-seeker? What forced him to go adventuring?

Finding these answers is often more difficult than you would think. But understanding your character’s background is crucial in role-playing. Here is a checklist

of questions that, when answered, will enhance your character.

1. Background

- Where was your character born?
- Who raised him?
- What was happening in the region when he was growing up?
- Does he have any relatives? If so, how did he get along with them? What are they doing now?

2. Motivation

- What are your character's immediate goals (i.e., what would he like to do in the coming year)?
- What are his long-term goals (i.e., what would he like to be doing 20 years from now)?
- What type of person would be his ideal mate?
- Who is his patron deity? Is he a devout worshiper?
- Is he a devout member of any nonreligious cause (i.e., is he a loyal servant of a king or baron)?
- Is there any race, creed, alignment, religion, or the like against which he is strongly prejudiced?
- What is his greatest fear?
- What is the one task he absolutely refuses to do?

3. Idiosyncrasies

- What is your character's motto or favorite saying?
- What is his favorite color?
- Describe what he would wear if money were no object.
- What is his favorite food? His favorite drink?
- What is his favorite animal?
- What habits of his friends annoy him most?

4. Traits

Rate these behaviors for your character on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 means he has no trace of this trait, behaving in a completely opposite manner; 10 means he has great amounts of this trait).

Courtesy	Valor
Self-sacrifice	Generosity

Sobriety	Calm temper
Optimism	Curiosity
Forgiveness	Cheerfulness
Patience	Honesty
Helpfulness	Loyalty

Name at least one other trait in which your character possesses a rating of 8 or better.

5. Miscellaneous

- What well-known media figure from sports, movies, or politics most closely resembles your character?
- What would be his theme song?
- If his friends were to write his epitaph, what would it be?
- What would his job be in modern society?

A lot of these questions are trivial; certainly, not all of them are needed to understand your character (although they can be fun to think about). Furthermore, a character's background often relies on the campaign background and can be heavily influenced by the Dungeon Master. Sometimes, too, it takes a long time to get the feel of the character's role. This list should be something to think about when you design your character, not something that must be filled out. However, if you have been playing the character for a few years and you can't really answer these questions, maybe you need to work on developing his personality.

Adding those details

Some character traits that are rarely developed are weaknesses and phobias. Most people have them. Considering the horrors that are rampant in most fantasy worlds, shouldn't each character have something that gnaws in his gut and makes him break out in a cold sweat? Perhaps a great fighter was tormented by kobolds when he was a boy; although he could now slay a hundred of them, he still fears them. Such phobias are present in fantasy and adventure literature and movies. Conan, the greatest of all barbarians, feared magic due to his superstitious upbringing. Indiana Jones hated snakes.

Fears provide dramatic moments and excellent chances to role-play. If a character overcomes his fears, then he can claim that he's really accomplished something. However, such weaknesses shouldn't be used by the DM to terrorize the character (or the player).

Likewise, a character should have some clear virtues. A character with no good points is utterly unsympathetic; would you sympathize with a petulant, greedy, cowardly fool? You might if the fool was in a comedy, but that is not the stuff of heroic fantasy.

Even evil PCs need not be totally reprehensible. One of my characters, Morgor the Maleficent (a lawful-evil fighter) was born in a town that he despised. His major goals in life are to become a rich and powerful fighter, hire an army of mercenaries, raze the town, sow its fields with salt so that nothing will grow there, then hire an evil cleric to place a curse on its ground so no creature may dwell there. He is arrogant, loves violence, and belittles the people he is with, constantly insulting them. Pretty rotten guy, huh?

Well, for all of his faults, Morgor has earned the respect of those with whom he travels. He is very brave, sometimes facing monsters single-handedly while the rest of the group hides. He is honest, courteous toward women, and despises torture and other acts of gratuitous brutality. He does not steal, nor does he try to take too great a share of treasure. He might even be redeemable, if people weren't too busy checking his alignment and writing him off as a lost cause.


While most evil characters I've seen (and a lot of chaotic-neutral characters, too) tend to be an indistinguishable line of greedy, back-stabbing, disruptive morons, Morgor has personality and strength. Morgor starts a lot of personality clashes when he enters a group, but such conflicts aren't necessarily settled by swordplay or assassination.

Escaping stereotypes

Another concern in role-playing involves the use of stereotyped roles. How many can you think of in 60 seconds? I thought of these:

- All wizards are old men with long beards and robes.
- All evil characters wear black.
- All good characters wear white.
- All half-orcs are ugly and nasty.
- All giants are stupid.
- All thieves are small and cowardly.
- Evil characters are unredeemably awful.
- Elves are flighty and carefree.
- Major bridges are guarded by trolls, who ask for a toll.
- Every dungeon has a chessboard trap.

I'm certain you thought of others. Some of these represent traditional views of archetypes in the fantasy genre, but they




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are so overused that they have become cliches. Why can't one tribe of elves and a clan of dwarves be friends? Why can't the supposedly bright evil wizard be convinced that his plan to conquer the world is unfeasible? Why can't a half-orc be lawful good? (I once played lawful-good half-orc, and it was a lot of fun, although he never understood why those dwarves were so hostile to him.)

Some people find that most fantasy games become boring and predictable in time. Perhaps this is because the players cannot break free of their stereotypes, so that everything in the game is old hat.

Another sort of stereotype is created when a player runs the same type of character over and over again—the same class, the same alignment, or the same race (or simply the same in all respects). Variety is the spice of life; if things get dull, try something new. It could be fun even if it seems uncomfortable at first. (Ignore the other players, who will look up and say, "But you only play neutral-good human clerics!")

One last note: Some players, particularly male adolescent players, are unwilling to play female characters. Some people have even walked out of tournaments when they were handed female characters to play. I've been in groups that have given me a hard time because of some of the weird characters I've played, but it is peculiar that they would let people play nonhuman creatures such as dwarves and elves, but not human females.

Adding an accent

One great thing about playing roles is that you get to be an offbeat actor. I enjoy using funny voices and accents when I play, and I am delighted when I get a chance to do something that adds to my character. It isn't easy, however; it is helpful to use models for your characterizations. My Boston professor from our CALL OF CTHULHU game had a voice based on Charles Winchester from the TV show *M*A*S*H*. One of my superheroes, the Pacifier, has a very slow drawl out of a Clint Eastwood spaghetti western, while the villainous Skeletos has a voice based on J. R. Ewing of *Dallas* (one of my female supervillains has the voice and personality of Joan Collins's Character on *Dynasty*). The mage Gilmatrix has an eloquent yet sinister voice based on British actor Clive Revell, who did Vector on the old TV fantasy series *Wizards and Warriors*. These accents can be brought over to AD&D and D&D games (and any others) quite easily. It is even possible to have a character based on Inspector Clouseau of the Pink Panther movies (I seem to recall a prominent DRAGON® Magazine editor who had a gnome thief with "an outrageous French accent"): You don't have to study dialects for 10 years to, have this sort of fun. All you need is the courage to try something different.

Dialects, accents, and so on are not the only mannerisms that you can give your character. Body language (e.g., flailing arms, constant blinking), behavior patterns (e.g., flirting, drinking, insulting), and favorite sayings (e.g., "It's clobbering time!") also add to the character—but don't let these define your character so rigidly that they become stereotypes, too.

The ultimate aim in role-playing, in creating a character and playing it out, is to have fun, of course. Sometimes, by

examining your character and finding new ways of making him interesting, you can increase the amount of fun you have.

Besides, I'd like to walk into a game store and hear people talking about their *characters*, not their characters' statistics.

(Special thanks go to Jim Deak and Chuck Huber for their suggestions on motivations, to Aaron Allston for his inspirational article on *Cinema and Justice, Inc.* in *Adventurer's Club* #7, and to Scott Ruggels for his advice on dialects.)

Ω

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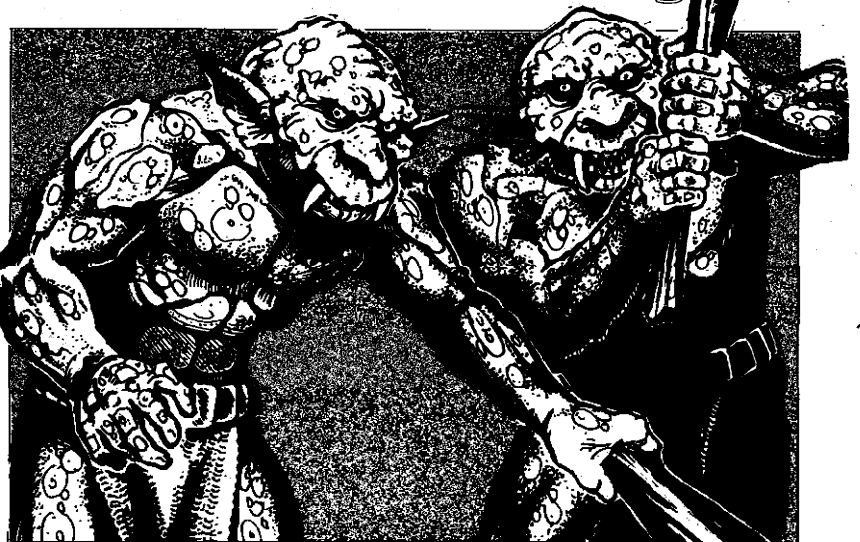
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Photograph A



Photograph B

Through the Looking Glass

Shading for detail

©1990 by Zoe Bell Hurst

Photographs by Kevin Terry

When I first began painting miniature figures, I thought the only important considerations were to use nice colors and not to slop over the lines. Gradually, I realized fine miniatures needed something more for dramatic realism, and the missing element in my own compositions was perspective. Classical perspective consists of height, width, and depth or thickness. As three-dimensional sculptures, miniatures already have these features present, but the painting should support and exploit them for fullest effect. The way to accomplish this is through shading.

Shading is the representation of light or shadow on the figure. Its purpose is to suggest the interplay of color, light, and texture that occurs in the real world. In figure painting, this means using the gradation of tones possible in a particular color, taken from the tone closest to white to the shade closest to black. The basic technique is simple: Paint a base color onto a particular area, then paint a darker tone of the base in the depressions and a lighter tone on the prominences. From this beginning, shading can become a complicated series of steps; you can do whatever is necessary to make the figure attractive and interesting.



Photograph E



Photograph F



Photograph C



Photograph D

To illustrate the importance of shading, examine the figures in photograph A. The female illusionist in the red robe was painted six years ago, the male ranger three years ago, and the female magic-user in teal six months ago. All are examples of my best efforts at a particular point in time, but the magic-user in teal is superior to the other two because of the quality of her shading.

I break shading down into three distinct elements: shadow, highlight, and definition. These are linked together, and if one or more of these features is ignored or handled improperly, the finished miniature suffers as a result. Learning to see where shadow, highlight, and definition are needed, and how to strike a balance between them, are the skills to be cultivated by the figure painter when at work on shading. To develop an eye for shading takes practice. To help you know what to look for, this article discusses each of these elements separately.

The shadows know

Shadow is a definite area of shade cast upon a surface by a body, intercepting the light. On a figure, this is represented by the depressions sculpted into it. Wrinkles

in clothing, engravings on a helmet, and the hollows between the brow of the forehead and the eyelids are examples. In combination with the highlight, shadow creates the three-dimensional form of the figure. The two most common mistakes I make in handling it are to use base colors which are too dark, thus losing the gradation of good shading, or to not paint on enough highlight.

In photograph B, I made both errors on the green snake. I was trying to capture the lush beauty of a jungle snake, but the base of forest green was simply too dark for the vibrancy I desired. I then compounded this mistake by not adding any highlight. The only thing that allows the viewer to see any of the body's details is the reflective coat of gloss finish. There is great variety in the swirling pattern of the scales and coils, but I failed to exploit its potential.

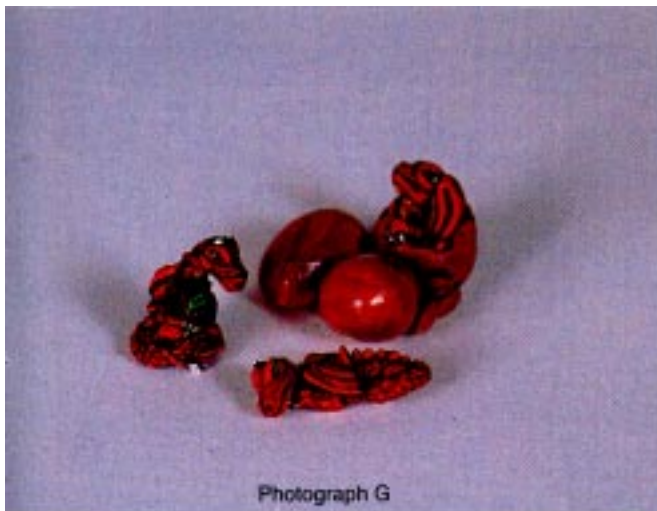
My husband decided to give the other snake the matte, almost dusty feeling of a desert snake. He wanted a dark base color, but instead of putting on black and then trying to overcome it, he used dark gray for most of the area and saved the black for the shadows of the scales. Consequently, no detail is sacrificed.

Using a light base for most of the area, then bringing it down with the shadow, is a good way to both control shadow and retain the figure's depth. The second snake's detail is also helped by swipes of a lighter gray for highlight to bring out the curves of the scales. This is most noticeable around the eye sockets.

This doesn't mean you can never use a dark base color, but such a figure needs a strong highlight to balance the shadows and bring out the details. In photograph C, the two Lovecraftian monsters have very appropriate dark tones. Their highlights seem electric against this background and somehow add to the repellent qualities of these creatures. At the same time, the brilliance of the contrast makes them otherworldly and fascinating, an impression well in keeping with their milieu. This way of handling shadow is very effective, but I wouldn't suggest it for all figures. It depends on whether or not their sculpture can support such a strong design.

Hitting the highlights

Highlight occurs on the parts of a figure where reflected light is brightest, normally the prominent areas. Some examples are the bridge of the nose, the place where



Photograph G



Photograph H

light reflects from the flat of a blade, and the billows of cloth in a robe. As the part of the painting that represents light, the highlight is extremely important in establishing both the mood and environment of your figure. I wanted the dwarf in photograph D to give the impression of a suc-

cessful adventurer, perhaps even a hero, as his equipment and jewelry seemed to suggest. Accordingly, I wanted him to look bright and clean. The shadows on him have been strictly controlled, and every thing has a careful clarity of tint. I used enamel silver paint on the highlights of his

coat, helmet, and axe, and there is no black in his beard. Instead, the shadows there are yellow-tan and the highlight is white. His pants have two highlights; the base highlight is violet on the creases of the pants, and pink is on the highest points of his pants, such as the knees. The different textures of highlight also help make the dwarf look bright; some textures are matte, and some shiny. Since the shiny ones are around his head, this directs attention to his face, and the matte highlight of his beard further points to his expression.

I also used a bright highlight on the pumpkinhead, but with a different goal in mind. The clothes of the pumpkinhead are highlighted with straight white in order to make the clothes seem worn and tattered. I did this both to affect the texture of the figure and to help the faded color scheme of his body support the bright orange of his head.

The most important goal of highlight is to make the right point dominate the area. I wanted the ghost to seem ethereal as he materializes from the floor, but to have his upper torso seem real. His shroud is shadowed with gray and watered black, and the highlights are pure white. However, the skull and hands are actually ivory. In combination with the sculpture, this heavier color pulls attention over the rest of the body.

Definition defined

Definition is the outline of a figure and its components, the net result of the partnership between shadow and highlight. Definition makes the figure clear and distinct, and its quality determines the length of time it takes the viewer to comprehend a figure's subject matter. The camels pack in photograph E is a good example of this. Every parcel and bundle can be clearly seen. The "complete adventurer" next to it is not as successful with his definition because his packages blur into his body and each other. If you study him, you can pick out the details, but some of the humor is lost because of this lapse in the understanding.

The definition on the camel takes full advantage of the shapes and detailing offered on the packages. Through use of color, surface-area texture, and shadowing, it turns the jumble of items into a unified artistic whole. One important detail is the play of lines indicating box slats or canvas wrinkles. These lines go at cross-purposes to each other and help define each bundle and its space on the camels back.

The robe color of the adventurer is too close to the shade of the packages near his face and hands, so they tend to absorb one another's impact. The same thing is true of his face and hands. They get lost in the general jumble, and thus his expression of discomfort is obscured. The texture of all the packages tend to be shiny, and this



Photograph I



Photograph JA

Photograph JB

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also adds to the blurring. Stronger highlight and variety in the finish would help the definition separate the details for the viewer and allow faster comprehension of the figure.

One important method in use on both figures is blacklining, and it deserves some special attention. With blacklining, you paint in a dark line where light would normally cause a shadow but where regular shading would be too faint—such as between fingers, around the links of a chain, or underneath the brim of a hat. This is invaluable in the defining of a figure, and it will pull together your overall design. In photograph F are three similar figures of dragonmen, but only the middle one has the benefit of this technique. On him, every detail is supported and meshed together by the blacklining. Note its effectiveness on the wings and the recesses of the facial structure. This particular dragonman looks more threatening and evil than the other two because the blacklining points up the spreading pattern of his wings, defines his muscles, and focuses the attention of his expression. He seems more alert and bigger than the others, which helps the implied threat.

Blacklining does not have to be done with just black, of course. I also use dark shades of the base color in an area if I want to keep its hue clear. However, black for the shadow looks more natural in places where two unrelated objects are near each other, such as the sleeve of a figure's shirt and his wrist.

I have already mentioned the use of brilliant contrast in connection with the Lovecraftian monsters, but it is also an effective tool of definition in other situations, such as on very small miniatures. In photograph G, the group of baby dragons is a case in point. They are part of a set that includes their mother, a figure that stands 5" high; the baby dragons are but ½" tall. The adult dragon is dark red, but I chose orange-red for the babies in an effort to emulate the "new" quality of babies and to make the structure of their bodies intelligible to the viewer, especially in the overpowering presence of the mother. Even in the photograph, you can see their wings and claws and get an idea of their expressions. In fact, I wish now I had been more daring and painted an even brighter yellow-orange on the high points.

Brilliant contrast also helps clarify detail. In photograph H, the table with the book is the more successful of the two because I used cleaner highlights. Pure white is on the skull and books, and the gemstone is royal blue highlighted with a swipe of pale blue. The flash of green is actually the tail of an iguana blocked by the skull. The other table isn't bad; it just looks a little flat. With the exception of the loaf of bread, it's easy to tell what everything is, but the items don't look as clear as I'd like them to be. If I were painting both tables

now, I would put an enamel metallic paint on the highlights of the metal objects to bring them out, and everything on the table with the lantern would be given more contrast.

The whole effect

Once you have the three elements of shadow, highlight, and definition on a figure, the way you blend them is also important for the end result of your shading. In the real world, there are always gradations in color, but not necessarily on figures. The two dogs in photograph I illustrate this. The dog in the background has no definition, and his shadow simply lies on top of the base color. You can see his form, but it seems two dimensional and harsh. The collar is too dominant because of its metallic reflection. The other dog seems much more natural because his three elements are subtly blended together. The way to get this kind of gradation is by blending the tones together in the areas where they touch while the paint is still wet.

Of course, this isn't written in stone if you are trying for a particular effect. The ghoul has no blending whatsoever. The shadows are mere lines of dark green, and the highlight is white blotted onto the light green of the muscles. My husband wanted to give the ghoul a stylized feel, similar to that of traditional Japanese theatre makeup. It's an interesting concept for a fine sculpture, and I think the end result is very successful.

Once you have the basics of shading, you can then start the fun of getting into fancy, complicated designs. The dungeon door in photograph J has a twelve-step shading pattern, intended to exploit its marvelous detail to the fullest. For the stones, there is a base of dark gray, a gray-black shadow for the areas just underneath the prominent features, and blacklining for the deepest shadow. For highlight, there is a lighter shade of the base for the ordinary prominent areas, and a high highlight of light gray for the highest points, such as the large skull's

forehead and the eye sockets.

The metal fixtures have only two colors, black and silver. They are brilliant against the matte background of the doors, yet do not overshadow the rest of it. The black is kept strictly in line so it doesn't obscure the silver fixtures' details.

The doors themselves have a base of dull brick red, a dark red shadow, and blacklining. There is a normal highlight of orange-red and a high highlight of salmon pink to bring out the warped parts that have been carved onto the sculpture. Incidentally, my favorite detail is the little rat on the backside of the door. This bit of nervous life upon its static frame brings out the dreamy, brooding quality of the figure.

Returning to photograph A, I'll now point out the flaws that inhibit the composition of the two figures. The female illusionist in red has no shadow or definition. Her bright color scheme makes her attractive, but it's almost impossible to see any of the subtle details such as her metal belt. The ranger needs more highlight. His somber clothes look a little too drab, and it's hard to make out their lines and the network of wrinkles, especially around his chest. The design of his shield has almost disappeared from sight, and it's not just from the shadow cast by his sword.

I'm happy with the magic-user because her shading supports the figure's perspective and contributes full clarity of detail. Her highlight and shadow are well balanced, and I especially like the lustrous quality of her robe which is caused by the highlight. Her definition is also good, allowing the viewer to catch an impression of her facial expression and of the markings around her hood and belt, despite the complicated series of folds in the robe which could hide these details.

At this point in my development as a miniature-figure painter, I feel I've done the best I can with her. That's the reason for developing good shading—to attempt your finest painting with each and every figure.

Ω

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In response to the two pro-cavalier letters in issue #152's "Forum," I observed that the cavalier class disappeared from the AD&D® 2nd Edition rules for a very good reason: It was both unnecessary and overly powerful.

Daniel Stephans and Jeff Cliber cited "logical" justifications for the cavalier's many special powers. I could give an equally logical refutation of each of their arguments, but that isn't the point. The point is game balance. Compare the cavalier to the traditional fighter, a time-tested and well-balanced class. What does the cavalier get that the fighter doesn't? Better armor, high social status, more starting equipment, saving-throw advantages, virtual immunity to many common spells, more hit points, improved ability scores, bonuses on attack rolls, and extra attacks per round. There's more, of course, but those are the main points. What does the cavalier sacrifice for these overwhelming advantages? He's required to adhere to a code that is pretty much the way many AD&D game fighter characters are played anyway (violent, arrogant, reckless, and suicidally stubborn). In practice, as the cavalier's proponents have suggested by their comments, most DMs won't strictly enforce this lone disadvantage.

Why play a cavalier? The most obvious reason is to have a more powerful character, something players like. But how can a DM maintain any kind of balance when one member of a PC party is so much more powerful than the others? Not only does this unbalance play, it causes resentment among the other players.

The other excuse for using the cavalier is the desire to play a noble knight. A TSR writer whose name escapes me [David "Zeb" Cook, in issue #121, pages 12-13] defined cavaliers (and barbarians) as fighters with attitude problems, and I think that sums it up quite well. A character's personality and behavior are role-playing matters and should be left in the realm of role-playing. A separate class based merely on personalities is unjustified and unnecessary.

Alan Clark
Hemdon VA

After reading the criticism in issue #152 of David Howery's article, "The Corrected Cavalier," I had to respond. It seems that most of the arguments in favor of the cavalier's powers are based on the idea that cavaliers dedicate their lives to training for battle, and that this training is the basis for their enhanced abilities. I would like to point out that the fighter class, as the name so aptly implies, is the only class that specializes solely in fighting, and it has none of the cavalier's extra abilities. The cavalier is a knight, trained in honor and horsemanship in addition to pure combat. It is hard to argue that the cavalier should have even the same combat abilities as the fighter, let alone the massive

advantages that it does.

For example, the 3 hp bonus at 1st level gives the cavalier 8.5 average hit points, far more than any class except the ranger, without the ranger's penalty of eight-sided dice thereafter. Normal fighters cannot function at negative hit points or increase their abilities through training, even though their training in these areas should not be any worse than a cavalier's. Why were these abilities not granted to the fighters originally? Perhaps the game is not meant to have so many people running around with 18/00 strengths from "training." Level advancement already simulates increased conditioning with improving attack tables and saving throws.

Even if one still believes that the cavalier should logically be superior to the fighter, there is also the consideration of game balance. *Unearthed Arcana* saw the addition of powerful new classes that threaten to make the older ones obsolete. Why bother to play a lowly fighter when cavaliers are so much more powerful? Some die-hard role-players might enjoy playing less-powerful characters, but the fact that another class can beat fighters at their own game is a serious flaw in the rules. Weapon specialization is an attempt to make fighters more competitive, but it does not go far enough, and I would suggest that it is a move in the wrong direction. Monty Haul playing is already a problem without writing it into the rules.

Cavaliers should be different from fighters, not better. They are chivalrous warriors trained for mounted combat, not superheroes who can do anything. Thus, many of the abilities granted them are unnecessary and illogical because they make the cavalier an extra-powerful fighter instead of a separate class with its own unique features. I applaud Mr. Howery's attempts to balance the cavalier's abilities.

Nicholas R. Howe
Princeton NJ

After reading about castles in issue #151, I wish to debate the incompatibility of medieval-style castles in the AD&D game setting. While I'll agree that authentic medieval-style castles are no match for the sheer magical power of thieves and mages, fantasy castles are a necessary part of an AD&D game. Below are examples of castles that are more suitable for an AD&D game assault.

The first example was suggested by a friend of mine who played a high-level, lawful-evil mage/ninja. His character required a headquarters that was well hidden, defensible, and easily accessible to him but not others. His idea involved using several *passwall* spells through a side of a mountain, then *disintegrating* the inside of the mountain. When the *passwalls* disappeared, he was left with a cave with no passageways connecting the inside from the outside. *Teleportation without error* or several *passwall* spells was the only way to enter or exit his "castle," assuming the spell-caster knew that the castle was hidden in the mountain.

The second example was suggested by a module. I was DMing an assault on a storm-giant castle. Like most storm-giant castles, this one was built on the top of a cloud. The assault was to prevent the spinning castle from crashing into a human city. After correcting the problem, the characters realized that they were the new owners of a cloud castle. This had some

strange possibilities. For one thing, this castle was mobile and could attack other cities. They soon learned that cities are too tough to attack and almost lost their new castle.

The third example was my own design. It was a "standard" castle but had a magical enchantment placed on it that imbued the castle with intelligence. Once this was done, my character (a high-level chaotic-good mage) further enchanted it to have spell storage (not unlike the ring) of 12 spells. Thereafter he stored seven *fireball*, two *wall of stone*, two *dispel magic*, and one *succor* spell therein. The *succor* spell summoned my character back to the castle and was used only as a last resort till's a very expensive spell). The castle had *infravision* as well as normal vision in case of night attackers.

The last example was the most expensive in terms of magic. One of my friends suggested putting a castle on another plane of existence. This required nothing less than the power of a demigod character (a character beyond most AD&D campaigns, but not the one he was in). This made the castle almost completely invulnerable to attack except by creatures with extradimensional traveling abilities. However, these creatures could destroy the castle effortlessly, so his demigod character created a plane of existence that was just bigger than the castle itself and a portal that was small enough that only human-size creatures could fit through. Thus, this castle was safe as long as no human size being with extradimensional abilities found the portal.

As one can see, the best defense from magic is, of course, better magic. Although these are not classic castles that just sit on top of mountains, they still function as their classic counterparts for protection and defense. Also, these castles provide great role-playing opportunities and should not be considered useless. These castles were not without their flaws, however. The ninja cave was attacked by an earth elemental and other underground creatures. The cloud castle was attacked by dragons and other flying creatures. My mage had problems arguing with an intelligent castle. The demigod's castle still had creatures that could attack through the portal without entering. But I hope these ideas help make your castles unique and stronger than the originals.

Timothy Sallume
San Diego CA

The first thing I check out when I receive my DRAGON Magazine is "Forum." In issue #151, the "Forum" letter by the anonymous person pertaining to the relative uselessness of castles in the AD&D game sparked me to write my first letter. While I found the letter very interesting and with some merit, I also found many errors.

Indeed, magic does offer a totally new system of problems in the defense of a castle—so, too, does it offer great defensive benefits. Of the benefits I will get to later.

First, a response to that 3rd-level mage trying to *knock* at your gate. The *knock* spell cannot accomplish such a feat. "It does not raise barred gates or similar impediments (such as a portcullis)"—as stated in the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*. *Knock* is useless against a castle.

What about those 3rd-level thieves trying to get into the castle under *invisibility*? Some

simple suggestions: Use some dogs or other alert animals who rely on sounds and smells as alarm triggers. A dozen bats befriended by a druid could easily detect *invisible* intruders by echolocation. If animal guards are rendered useless by an *invisibility* to animals spell (assuming the thieves had a 10th level druid—of which there aren't many—cast the spell on them), they have 20 rounds to approach the castle, climb its walls, and infiltrate a "safe" part of the castle so as not to be found. This infiltration is possible—even probable. But now the thieves have to find the correct rooms to raise portcullises or lower drawbridges. Such rooms will, of course, be guarded around the clock, especially in times of war. When the guard room door opens, the 3rd-level thieves might find themselves outmatched by a like number of 3rd-level fighters. Even if the guards are dealt with and the thieves open the castle's front door, then a precautionary lock switch could be thrown to disable the opening mechanism. In either case, the thieves are on a suicide mission, because an alert will go up and they won't live to rejoice. In short, it would take a large number of powerful thieves to cover every possible angle of opening the gates.

Then there is the point of flight over walls. What sane 10th-level mage would hover within bow distance (flaunting his 30 hp) so he could toss a spell? *Protection from normal missiles* spells would prove useful, but a well-used *dispel magic* spell can cause the mage to plummet to the ground. And there are more directly damaging spells that a floating mage will attract. The same goes for any flying creature. Whatever is in the air while attacking a castle might as well put a bulls-eye target on its head. There are a few truly awesome flying beasts (e.g., rocs and

dragons) that are extremely rare, but if the besieging army employs such beasts, then it deserves the havoc they will cause.

The use of a *disintegrate* spell not only opens up a mage to attack while he casts it, but the less than 10' square hole in the wall is hardly worth the time it takes a 12th-level mage to memorize the spell.

The fifth-level *passwall* spell must be cast within 90' of the wall, causing a 5'-wide passage to open into the castle. A hole that size won't be difficult to block or defend.

Charming an umber hulk is no easy feat, for not only are they rare, but one would have a 75% chance of breaking the *charm monster* spell each week. Personally, I believe it would be hard to communicate to a "friend" if merely looking it in the eyes will cause *confusion*. The umber hulk would become suspicious at the least. I doubt the umber hulk would take kindly to the suggestion that it must tunnel under a castle, for that seems life threatening; after all, the castle is not attacking the mage. Killing a few humans is just everyday food gathering, but infiltrating a castle is kind of stupid. In effect, I believe that *charming* an umber hulk is basically impractical, for utilization of it is thwarted by its own abilities and the restrictions of the spell.

Then there is the most destructive attack mentioned, the *earthquake* spell. Your castle must indeed stand before a formidable force for a 16th-level cleric with 18 wisdom to lead its ranks. Welcome to the world of fantasy and magic, where the whims of the most powerful people of the continent shape the outcome of history. But let me assure you that there shouldn't be many such characters. Using the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® boxed set setting as a

model, I present the fact that out of 59 of the worlds leaders mentioned therein, only one is a 16th-level cleric (Xargun, of the Caliphate of Ekbir) and one other (Hazen, the Archcleric of Veluna) is a 19th-level cleric. So if you can't seem to keep *earthquakes* from ruining your castles, I suggest a more balanced campaign world where the elite are truly elite.

I hope I have not only proven simple castle defenses do exist to overcome great obstacles effectively and at no great cost, but more importantly have disproved the suggestion that magic renders castles useless.

Darrell C. Donald
Millersville MD

I would like to present my ideas about the vulnerability of castles, which was discussed in a letter in issue #151. I agree completely with the writer's statement that normal castles would not exist in a fantasy world. No sane player would build a structure when the first random encounter could trash months of work. In order for a castle to have value, it must be cheaper than the money spent on extra guards. A medium castle can cost well over 10,000 gp. You can hire 30 light horsemen for 10 years for 10,800 gp. Since I am such a romantic, I just have to have castles in my campaigns, so I invented one way to increase the value of a castle: Give it some magic resistance.

Why magic resistance? Because many characters or monsters using magic could destroy a normal castle. If a castle is vulnerable to fire, magical fire increases this problem dramatically. A mage capable of casting third-level spells can cast *fireball* into a tower, injuring or killing the defenders and igniting the wooden roof beams.

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A cleric can cast a fifth-level *flame strike*, although ninth-level clerics are rarer than fifth-level mages. Fire-breathing monsters are not too uncommon in most campaigns.

Even low-level attackers can impair castle defenders. A good old *stinking cloud* spell could immobilize a catapult crew for quite a while. A party with a cleric casting a *silence 15' radius* spell could surprise the guards at night. Many monsters have special abilities that can overwhelm the low-level hirelings that guard the walls; for example, satyrs could *charm* the guards at the gate into lowering the draw-bridge. Low-level gangs like bandits occasionally have leaders with magical items that could affect guards. What castle owner could sleep at night knowing that a small group of bandits could destroy his expensive home?

In campaigns I ran a long time ago, some of my characters attacked a castle—and it was an easy victory. I then invented a new material to prevent my parties from demolishing every castle in my campaign. I decided that some relatively common stone had a natural magic resistance that increased per ton of weight. Large buildings like castles would then be impervious to most sorts of magical attacks. Any spell whose area of effect includes such stonework could not pass through the stone. Even spells with concentrated effects like *disintegration* would not pass, since the magic resistance of any piece of stone takes on the resistance of all pieces that are in contact with it. To allow for windows through which magic could pass, the magic resistance is given a small radius of effect (which doesn't increase with the volume of stone) of 6".

I named this stone "transpate" and described it as being similar to grayish slate. The stone was fairly common in my campaign; it cost only 10% more to build with this stone than with normal rubble fill. The stone weighed about 100 pounds per cubic foot. A medium castle used over 1,000 tons of this stone.

Castle doors, windows, and roofs were often protected with transpate. Most windows were slit windows to allow missile fire while offering protection from spell-casters. A few windows in the castle were built with shutters lined with transpate. These windows were large enough to allow spells to be cast upon attacking forces. The roof could likewise be lined with transpate; the stone was carefully drilled with holes, then pegged to the roof. This process could be quite expensive, costing 50 gp per 10' square. A similar technique could be applied to all doors opening to the outside. The transpate was

riveted to iron doors with lead rivets, and the door frames sat behind carefully placed transpate supporting walls that protected the hinges and locks from spell damage. The doors were set deep inside their entryways to protect from battering rams, through the use of the murder holes placed above the doorways.

The transpate still allows spells to work inside the castle. All of the magical defenses could be used as well. *Glyphs of warding*, traps hidden by illusion, *magic mouths*, and other protections could add to the defense of the castle. These spells would have to be placed more than 6" from the walls, of course. Glyphs would have to be placed on doors that had no transpate lining.

With the use of this material, castles are a balanced part of the game. The castles are not invulnerable, since they are susceptible to the same forms of attack found in the Middle Ages. Sapping is a great danger with so many tunneling races, but tunnels still take a long time for most creatures to dig except purple worms. Direct assault would require a large force, just like in the Middle Ages. Intrigue also would work. There are a lot of possibilities for role-playing in this setting.

I remember when dragons used to be considered pushovers by many players. DMs began to wise up and started being creative in role-playing their monsters. This is a similar situation. There are a lot of creative ways to include castles in a fantasy campaign. All it takes is for the DM to put himself in the shoes of the population of his universe.

Will Hettchen
Ellicott City MD

In response to the letter in "Forum" (issue #151) about the evolution of castles in a fantasy world, I would like to share the story of a certain campaign in which a party of adventurers, one of whom was mine, was able to construct a castle suitable for a fantasy world. This took place in the D&D® game setting.

Our party (averaging 31st level) was able to get the leader of the mountain giants to do us a favor. The leader gathered 70 of his strongest mountain giants together to go on an inter-planar quest. We traveled to the far reaches of the Astral plane and located a pentaspaces (a place where magic cannot exist). Our party's magic-user figured that any material from this plane would be totally magic resistant. After observing this plane for a while, we noticed that the pentaspaces side of the gateway shifted every three hours in a set pattern. We waited until the *gate* shifted into an area near a large

mountain range, then stepped through.

The giants, armed with giant-size chisels and hammers, chipped off a 150'-square piece of the mountain. Meeting no resistance from the inhabitants of the world we were on, we waited until the gate reappeared, stepped through (the giants carrying the mountain piece on their shoulders), and headed back to the Prime Material plane. Setting the rock down on a piece of land owned by one character, the giants set to work cutting the rock into two equal parts. The giants then carried one piece into the Ethereal plane (via a gate made by our party's magic-user) and set it down in the same respective position on the Ethereal plane as the first piece in the Prime Material plane.

Then by earning the help of the leaders of various dwarven clans (with the use of a couple of *charm person* spells) our party was able to assemble about 1,000 dwarven masons. The dwarves carved out an interior of a castle, designed by my character (a thief), from the piece of the mountain. The outer wall was perfectly round, with a 144' diameter, and perfectly smooth. It had a flat top that covered the entire structure. There were no windows and only a single door.

While the dwarves were busy creating the castle, the party's mage and elf were busy designing three new spells. The first was a spell that created a special barrier that, when crossed, *teleported* all nonmagical metallic items and nonmagical damage-causing items (such as poison, acid, bows and arrows, etc.) to a special chamber in the castle. The second spell also created a barrier, but this one *teleported* all magical objects, including spell books, to that chamber. The third spell created a barrier that caused all spells memorized by a magic-using creature to be forgotten when the spell area was crossed. It also prevented any creature with innate spell abilities (e.g., a beholder) or any creature not in its normal form (gaseous, incorporeal, etc.) from passing. The spells do not affect the party members, and they were placed in the doorway leading into the castle, which was lined with lead (to prevent the castle's anti-magic capabilities from affecting them). Directly behind these spells was placed a permanent *dispel magic* area.

Next we convinced a wizard, whose ultimate goal was to outlive all of his peers, that by *magic jarring* himself into a black pudding he could live forever. When he accomplished this task, we told him that we would keep his body perfectly preserved if he would work for us. He agreed, and we instructed the dwarves to dig a moat, 30' across and 12' deep, all the way around the castle. We filled the moat with dead trees and animal carcasses until it was full. After we poured the black pudding into the moat, he ate and ate and ate, until he filled the moat to an 8' depth. Then we constructed a bridge over the moat. The wizard's body, along with the *magic jar* device (a small figurine) was placed inside a permanent *force sphere*. As an extra precaution, a *ring of fire resistance* was tossed in.

To sum up: The anti-magic stone negates all magical attacks made against the castle. The piece of stone in the Ethereal plane prevents entrance into the castle through that plane. The design of the castle (being in one piece) gives it better protection against normal siege machinery (e.g., catapults). The smooth texture makes it hard for a thief to climb the walls, not to mention that the only way in is through the front door. The magical spells at the door prevent most dangers from entering the castle. The

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intelligent black pudding in the moat serves as additional precaution as well as a waste-disposal system.

So it is possible to create a castle fit for a fantasy world, if only you are creative.

James Regan III
Bayside NY

Among the usual "Forum" letters in issue #151 about the joys of being evil and the merits of AD&D vs. D&D games, there was a letter by "No name given" that claims castles are useless in a magical world. The letter does give some ideas on how powerful magic could overwhelm a fortress. But I disagree with the idea that castles are obsolete in fantasy.

First of all, "No Name" seems to assume that a high-level mage will be with every army and horde. The AD&D rules state clearly that the vast majority of people in the worlds are zero-level. Adventurers of any level are scarce, and high-level ones are doubly so. There just aren't enough powerful mages and clerics around to go blasting all the castles in the land, even if they were inclined to do so.

Even having a mage along doesn't guarantee the castle will fall. A mage who moves close enough to cast a spell will be open to missile attacks from the castle walls—arrows, bolts, ballista darts, etc. One hit before the spell is cast, and the mage forgets it.

And who says the high-level adventurers are limited to being attackers? A high-level mage on the walls can demolish any assaulting troops. High-level fighters with specialization and magical weapons can handle any conjured monsters. How about permanent *dispel magic*

spells on the castle walls and gates?

All this is academic, as 99% of the armies, garrisons, and hordes in the land will have no high-level adventurers. Castles will rarely be attacked by powerful magic and are still useful for defense. If there is a border to be guarded against a wasteland full of orc hordes, a chain of castles will do nicely.

However, since there is magic in AD&D games, the question arises as to just when adventurers would be involved in an assault on a castle. It is likely that this will happen only when a war is in a critical state, and one or two castles stand in the way of victory. For example, a castle blocking a mountain pass leading to the enemy's capital city must be removed. In cases like these, both sides are likely to concentrate high-level adventurers at the castle. The battles involve tremendous destruction and loss of life. This type of scenario has great potential as an adventure for PCs, but it should be rare.

We do not build castles today because artillery can destroy them, and artillery is found in most armies; it is relatively cheap and common. Powerful magic can destroy castles, but it is very scarce. Magic is not easy to use and is not commonly found, and is thus not a substitute for artillery. Castles still play the same role as in medieval times.

David Howerly
Dillon MT

I have read many an article and letter arguing the use of computers as gaming aids, and frankly I strongly disagree. The computer can be a startling benefit to role-playing games, but not in the way everyone is thinking of!

Simply put, the part about having a computer substitute for the DM is utter nonsense and will never happen. The computer should not be allowed to make rules or conclude battles of any kind; in my book, the human factor of the DM is by far too important to throw out the window. A DM can alter the situation to best fit the circumstances where a computer cannot.

I have, however, come up with a very beneficial way to use the computer using an already marketed software package. What I have done is create the specific adventure module in the usual manner, map everything out, write out the text, and stock the dungeon, towns, and so forth. Then I sit down at my computer, load a software package that allows me to draw free style using EGA or VGA graphics, and I begin drawing out dungeon rooms, landscape scenes, hallways, monsters, and such, all arranged in a specific pattern that can be shown in the order that the players need to see them. Thus my players have a 3-D scene of the current room they are in, the monsters they are battling, or whatever. As for the game's mapper, he's tickled pink; I no longer have to explain unusually shaped rooms to him, as he merely looks up at the screen and quickly maps what he sees.

In many instances, I have created two diagrams of the same room, one with creatures occupying it and one without. With the software on the market, running these drawings is child's play. I store them in the desired sequence and run each sequence as it is needed. I have found that any one dungeon can have as many as several dozen sequences, thus allowing for choices of direction on the player's part.

I do admit, however, that doing this efficiently

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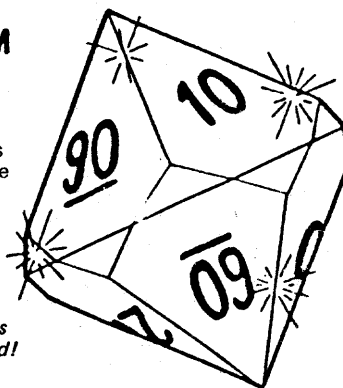
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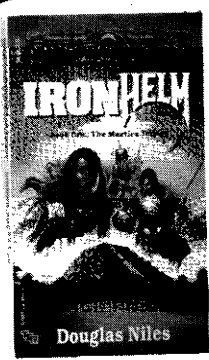
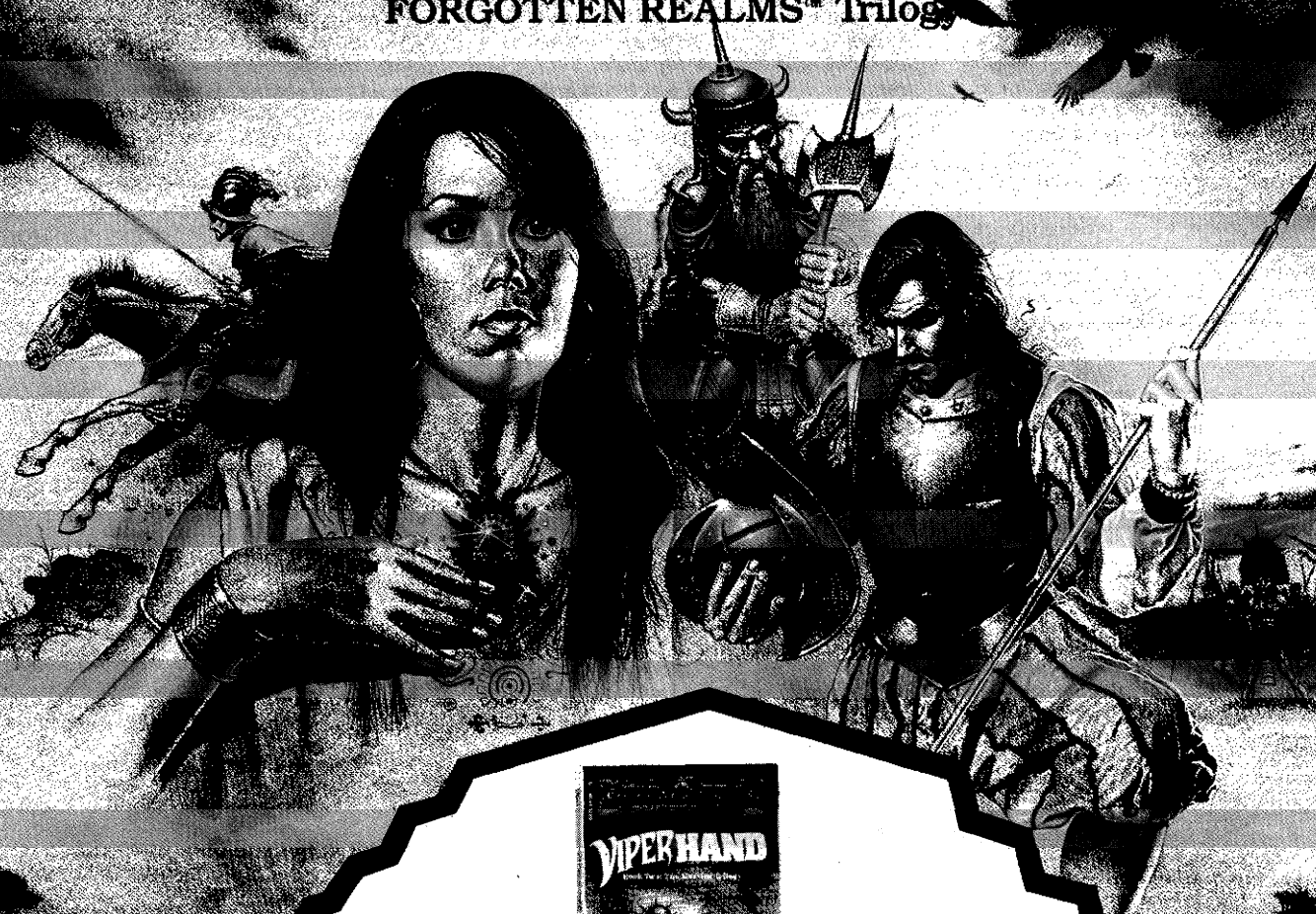
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does require certain hardware. However, most people who own and operate computers already have that hardware. I have found that a hard drive is a must for enough memory to load several sequences of drawings and to cut waiting time.

To give you an idea of how effective this method is, to date I have about five 3½" diskettes full of various drawings. I pluck out and alter the drawings as needed, so that putting together a dungeon is merely a case of plugging in the right hall or the right room. I have enclosed my address at the end of this letter; anyone who wishes more information on this system I have devised can drop me a line with a phone number enclosed, and I'll be glad to give a call and explain it in further detail. I would also be more than willing to supply anyone interested with the drawings I have created. However, writers will have to furnish their own diskettes, naturally.

R. L. Brown
4682 Westpoint
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Ω

The Marvel®-Phile

Continued from page 49

sional portal/living being known as Wid-get. If Tweedledope has access to advanced technology, look out—literally *anything* could happen!

EQUIPMENT: Tweedledope needs few tools when he is inventing; he just invents any tools he requires.

SKILLS: Beyond his *savant* ability, the only skill he possesses is an Excellent (20) ability to bite in combat. Treat this as an attempted hold on the Grappling column. If successful, this attack does Excellent damage until the hold is broken.

Now, despite appearances, this bunch of losers could be a viable (if stupid) villain team if led by a intelligent being. This group stacks up well (believe it or not) against a lone hero or a few lower-powered heroes such as Daredevil, Black Panther, or Henry Pym, the Crazy Gang's weight of numbers and unique (I'll say) abilities make them an interesting—and silly if played with the style these five deserve-addition to your campaign.

If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions for "The Marvel-Phile," mail them to: The Marvel-Phile, c/o DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147 U.S.A.

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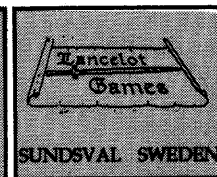
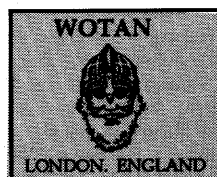
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CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short and succinct.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address(es) and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the last Monday of October. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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CONTRAPTION, April 6-8

This convention will be held at the Troy Hilton in Troy, Mich. The Guest of Honor is Barry B. Longyear. Registration: \$20 at the door. Dealers are welcome! Write to: CONTRAPTION, P.O. Box 2285, Ann Arbor MI 48106.

STELLARCON XV, April 6-8

This SF/fantasy/horror convention will be held at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Featured are guest speakers, panels, discussions, and writers' workshops. Confirmed guests are Hal Clement, Dennis and Kristina Etchison, Sam Grainger, Joe Lansdale, Frederik Pohl, Richard and Janice Preston, and Allen Wold. Other activities include a dealers' room, art and costume contests, SCA, Japanimation, schlock theater, fan clubs, model displays, a cabaret, open gaming, and films. Registration: \$10/day, or \$25 for the weekend. Inquiries are now being accepted for the dealers' room, for advertising in the convention program, and for additional sponsors. Write to: STELLARCON XV, Science Fiction Fantasy Society, P.O. Box 4, Elliot University Center, UNCG, Greensboro NC 27412.

DEF-CON II, April 7-8

"The Year After" will be held at the Howard Johnson's in Portage, Ind. Activities include AD&D® 1st and 2nd Edition, CHILL*, TWILIGHT! 2000*, MARVEL SUPER HEROES*, CYBERPUNK*, GURPS*, PARANOIA*, BATTLETECH*, CAR WARS*, and BLOODBOWL* games, with open gaming and miniatures-diorama contests. Prizes will be awarded. Registration: \$6/day, or \$11 for both days; at the door, it will be \$7/day, or \$13 for both. Write to: Dave Machin, 713 Juniper Road, Valparaiso IN 46383; or call: (219) 759-2530.

MOUNTAINTOP '90, April 7-8

The Gaming Club at Lehigh University will host its second annual convention at the University Center on Lehigh's campus in Bethlehem, Pa. Several RPGA™ events are scheduled, along with BATTLETECH*, GURPS*, AXIS AND AL LIES*, and TALISMAN* games, and a miniatures contest, a swap meet, vendors, and a fantasy artwork sale. Prizes will be awarded to tournament and contest winners. Registration: \$9/day, or \$15 for both days. Write to: Brett King, Box 286, Lehigh University Bethlehem PA 18015; or call: (215) 758-1409.

LEPRECON XVI, April 13-15

This art-oriented SF/fantasy convention will be held at the Sheraton Phoenix in Phoenix, Ariz. (phone 602-257-1525). Guests of honor are Rick Cook and Jim Fitzpatrick. Gaming events include AD&D® (Monster Mash and more), BATTLETECH*, microarmor, WARHAMMER FANTASY*, GURPS*, STAR WARS*, EMPIRE

BUILDER*, and SHADOWRUN* games, and many RPGA™ events. Other activities include workshops and panels, a miniatures-painting contest, a used-game auction, check-out games, and open gaming. Registration: \$20 until the convention. Write to: LEPRECON, P.O. Box 26665, Temple AZ 85282; or call: (602) 968-7833. For gaming information, write to: Don Harrington, 3505 E. Campbell #14, Phoenix AZ 85018; or call: (602) 952-1344, before 10 P.M. MST, please.

SYDCON, April 13-16

This convention will be held at Globe High School in Sydney, Australia. Events will include AD&D® games; two RPGA™ Network events (for the GAMMA WORLD® and JAMES BOND 007* games); and CALL OF CTHULHU*, PARANOIA*, RUNEQUEST*, TOON*, and freeform games. Write to: Diane Leithhead, GPO Box 1560, Sydney, NSW, AUSTRALIA 2001.

CYBERCON '90, April 14

The CSU Science Fiction and Fantasy club will hold this convention at the Lory Student Center of Colorado State University. Events include AD&D® 1st and 2nd Edition, CYBERPUNK*, CHAMPIONS*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, BATTLETECH*, and SHADOWRUN* games, with board and open games, a video room, and the winners of this year's Writers of the Future contest. Prizes will be awarded for the best costume, GM, and players. Admission is free. Write to: CYBERCON, Box 412 LSC, Ft. Collins CO 80523; or call: (303) 491-2436.

AMIGOCON V, April 20-22

This convention will be held at the Embassy Suites hotel in El Paso, Texas. The Guests of Honor are Poul and Karen Anderson, and the artist Guest of Honor is David Cherry. Other guests include Arlan Andrews, Gail Gerstner-Miller, Robert E. Vardeman and many more. Registration: \$12 until April 15, or \$15 at the door. Write to: AMIGOCON, P.O. Box 3177, El Paso TX 79923; or call: (915) 593-1848.

BAMACON IV, April 20-22

Held at the Econo-Lodge in Tuscaloosa, Ala., this convention's guests of honor include Dave Arneson, Keith Parkinson, and Margaret Weis. Events include AD&D® team tournaments, movies, a 24-hour computer room, workshops, panels, seminars, an art show, and a costume contest. Cash prizes will awarded for some events. Other activities include a con suite, and AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, and MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ games. Registration: \$20 until April 7, or \$25 thereafter. Dealers are welcome! Write to: BAMACON IV, University of Alabama, Box 6542, Tuscaloosa AL 35486; or call Britt at: (205) 348-3127.

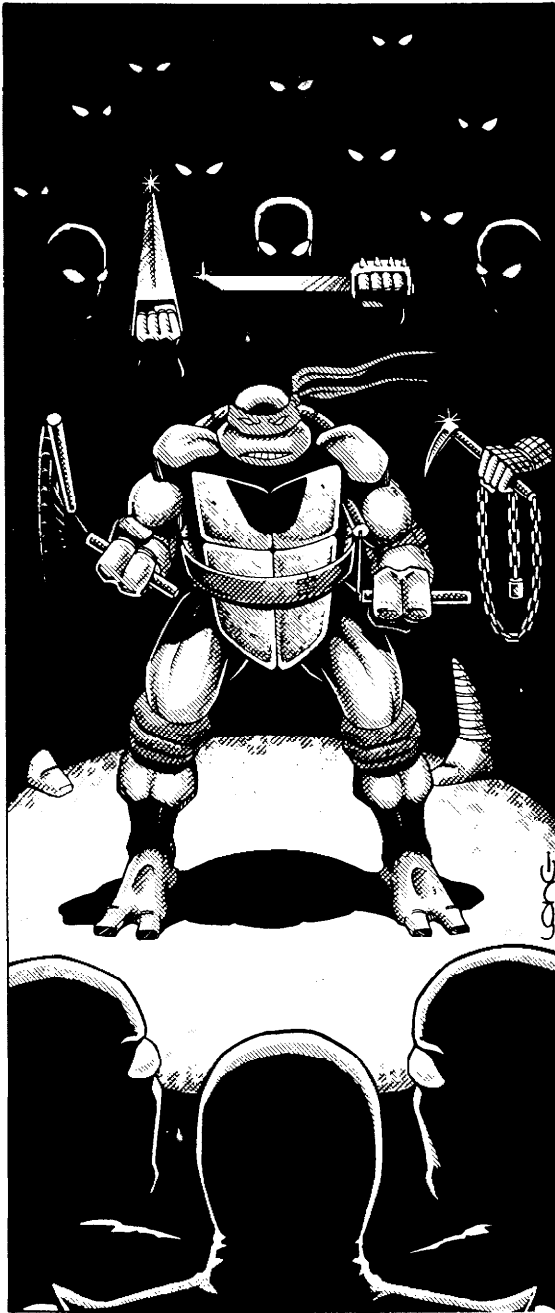
GAME FAIRE '90, April 20-22

The 11th-annual Faire will be held at the Spokane Falls Community College in Spokane, Wash. Events include tournaments, microarmor, historical miniatures, a video room, a dealers' area, RPGs, board and family games, a used-game auction, and SCA talks and demonstrations. Registration: \$10 prepaid for the weekend; at the door, \$12 for the weekend, \$5 for Friday or Sunday, or \$6 for Saturday. Proceeds will go to the Wishing Star Foundation. Write to: Merlyn's, N. 1 Browne, Spokane WA 99201; or call: (509) 624-0957.

JAXCON SOUTH '90, April 20-22

Jacksonville's Cowford Dragoons are hosting the South's oldest full-service gaming convention

- ❖ indicates an Australian convention.
- ❖ indicates a Canadian convention.
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Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles RPG

NEW!! Turtles Go Hollywood picks up where *Truckin' Turtles* leaves off...with West Coast action and adventure. Your heroes stumble across a drug ring operated by an insidious group of mutant animals who have no regard for human life.

In addition to fighting *five* new, sleazy villains, our heroes must also face *Shredder* and the *foot!* Check it out!

- Artwork by Kevin Long.
- Compatible with **Heroes Unlimited**, and **Ninjas & Superspies**
- 48 pages, **\$7.95** plus \$1.00 for postage and handling.

The inside scoop on the TMNT live action movie is found in *The Magic of Palladium Books #5*. MOP #5 contains the very first *color* and black and white photographs from the TMNT live action movie. Plus movie data, Palladium coming attractions (including more on *Rifts*), Compendium addendum, and letters. 16 pages, only 50 cents!

Truckin' Turtles! If your looking for non-stop action, this is the book for you. Your heroes are sent on a cross-country gauntlet of adventure and villainy. Ninja warriors, mutant villains, terrorists, supernatural beings, and the international desperado. Chiquita are but a few of the obstacles along the way.

- Seven super scenarios and encounter ideas spanning across states and stats for the super-truck, "The Blue Ox."
- Compatible with **Heroes Unlimited** and **Ninjas & Superspies**.
- 48 pages, **\$7.95** plus \$1.00 postage and handling.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles & Other Strangeness is all you need to create your own batch of super-hero mutant animals. This exciting rule book enables you to recreate the "Turtles" comic book action or transform any animal from canary to rhinoceros into the crime fighters of tomorrow.

Plus psionics, animal powers, martial arts, a comic strip by Eastman and Laird, stats on the Turtles, Casey Jones, Shredder, and other characters, as well as four great adventures! **\$11.95** plus \$1.50 for postage and handling. Compatible with **Heroes Unlimited**.

Transdimensional TMNT expands the world of mutant animals into a *megaverse* of dimensions and shatters the barrier of time.

Realistic rules for time travel, dimension hopping, time magic, a different strain of mutant humans, mutant dinosaurs, new powers, and several adventures round out this book. **\$11.95** plus \$1.50 for postage.

Mutants of the Yucatan is the latest in the *After the Bomb* series by Erick Wujcik. This time we explore the wilds of South America, with rules for jungle adventures, over 20 *new* mutant animals, mutant insects, and adventures. **\$7.95** plus \$1.00 for postage. Available Spring 1990.

Mutants in Avalon, the *After the Bomb* England of the future, where mutant animals are the knights of the Round Table. Written by Paul Jaquays. **\$7.95**, available late Spring 1990.

TMNT Adventures provides five different adventures that will send your characters around the world. Includes the infamous "Death Trials" scenario. **\$7.95**. Please add \$1.00 for postage.

TMNT Guide to the Universe gives you never before revealed data on the Triceratons, and dozens of other aliens which have appeared in the TMNT comic book. Plus rules for space and aerial combat, four adventures and comic strip. **\$6.95**. Plus \$1.00 for postage.

TMNT Sourcebook: After the Bomb™! A science fiction extrapolation of our world decades after nuclear holocaust and where mutant animals are the new order of life. Plus six adventures, maps and world description. Great Stuff! **\$7.95**. Plus \$1.00 for postage.

TMNT Sourcebook: Road Hogs™! An "After the Bomb" companion of post-holocaust mayhem on the highways of the shattered West Coast. Vehicle combat rules, 20 new animal mutations and four adventures complete this package. **\$7.95**. Plus \$1.00 for postage.

TMNT Sourcebook: Mutants Down Under™! An "After the Bomb" companion of post holocaust adventure in Australia. Over 20 new mutant animals, man-eating plants, the Dream Time Sorcerer, adventures and more. **\$7.95**. Plus \$1.00 for postage.

Ninjas & Superspies™, a complete new role-playing game that is *interchangeable* with **Heroes Unlimited** and **Ninja Turtles**. Play superspies with high-tech gimmicks and cybernetic implants. Or play martial art masters with unusual powers. Includes 39 forms of martial arts, secret organizations, secret identities, cyborgs and more. **\$14.95**. Please add \$1.50 for postage.

The Revised Heroes Unlimited RPG enables you to create any type of comic book super character; robots, cyborgs, aliens, martial arts masters, super spies, psionics, mutants, magic and more! Heroes Unlimited is still the **only** game that covers every aspect of the comic book hero! 248 pages, Compatible with TMNT. **\$19.95**. Please add \$2.00 for postage.

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at Jacksonville Florida's Civic Auditorium. Featured are: RPGA™ AD&D® adventures, with AD&D®, SNIPER™, CIVILIZATION*, GHOST-BUSTERS*, SEEKRIEG*, Napoleonics, BATTLETECH*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, WRG*, ILLUMINATI*, SPACE: 1889*, TRAVELLER*, ELEMENT MASTERS*, WARHAMMER*, ROBOTTECH*, STAR WARS*, and microarmor games. There will also be computer and board gaming, a swap meet/flea market, a dealers' area, and movies. Write to: JAXCON SOUTH '90, P.O. Box 4423, Jacksonville FL 32201.

OURCON II, April 20-22

This year's convention will be held on the campus of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. There will be three RPGA™ AD&D® tournaments, as well as open gaming, board games, miniatures, and CLAY-0-RAMA. Write to: OURCON II, 605 Jonesberry Road, Box SS-7, Carrboro NC 27510.

UBCON '90, April 20-22

UBCON '90 will be held on the the State University of New York Buffalo, Amherst (North) campus, and is sponsored by the UB Strategic and Role-Playing Assoc. Events include an AD&D® tournament, with many other strategy and role-playing games. Other activities include a movie room and an auction. Registration: \$5, not including entry fees for cash-prize tournaments. Write to: Martin Szinger, UB/SaRPA Convention Director, 210 Curtis Pkwy., Buffalo NY 14233; or call: (716) 833-4610.

WERECON XII, April 20-22

This year's convention will be sponsored by the Detroit Gaming Center and the City of Detroit Recreation Dept., and will be held at the Lighthouse Center in Detroit, Mich. The Guest of Honor is Ramon Moore. Other guests include Erick Wujcik and some of Detroit's best game masters. Events include a complete schedule of RPGs and tournaments (sorry, no dealers' room). Registration: free, game fees from \$1 to \$4. Write to: Erick Wujcik, P.O. Box 1623, Detroit MI 48231; or call: (313) 833-3016.

What's a SASE?

A SASE is a self-addressed, stamped envelope. If you send a submission to DRAGON® Magazine and hope for a response, include a SASE with your letter, gaming article, short story, or artwork. Make sure the SASE is large enough (and has enough postage) to allow the return of your material if necessary. Canadians and residents of other countries should enclose international postal coupons, available at their local post offices. We are not responsible for unsolicited submissions; be sure to enclose that SASE.

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SPRINGCON '90, April 21

This gaming convention will be held at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Lebanon, Pa., and is sponsored by the Lebanon Area Gaming Association. Events include AD&D®, CYBERPUNK*, and CHAMPIONS* games, with BATTLETECH*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, and AD&D® tournaments. The tournaments will offer cash prizes. GMs are welcome and will receive a discount. Registration: \$5 before the convention, or \$7.50 at the door. Write to: Lebanon Area Gaming Assoc., 806 Cumberland St., Lebanon PA 17042, ATTN: Convention; or call: (717)272-8706.

CUBICON '90, April 21-22

The University of Michigan-Dearborn chapter of the Science Fact, Fiction, and Fantasy club (SF3) will host this gaming convention in the Pagoda Room of the Student Center Building on the Henry Ford Community College Campus. Events include D&D®, AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, PALLADIUM*, CAR WARS*, STALKING THE NIGHT FANTASTIC*, CHAMPIONS*, and MACHO WOMEN WITH GUNS* games, with CHAMPIONS*, BATTLETECH*, and STAR FLEET BATTLES* tournaments. Registration: \$5 for the weekend, or \$3/day at the door. Write to: CUBICON, C/O SF3, 4901 Evergreen, ROC Building, Room 212, Dearborn MI 48128; or call: (313)593-5390.

LITTLE WARS '90, April 27-29

The Historical Miniatures Gaming Society (HMGS) is proud to announce that this year's convention will be held at the Zion Leisure Center in Zion, Ill. This is a miniatures-oriented convention with games spanning history and beyond. Registration: \$6/day, or \$8 for the weekend, with a \$2 discount for HMGS members. There will be event fees. Judges are welcome. Write to: Robert Bigelow, c/o Friends' Hobby Shop, 1411 Washington St., Waukegan IL 60085; or call: (708) 336-0790.

NAME THAT CON III, April 27-29

Sponsored by the St. Charles SF/Fantasy Society, "III" will be held at the Holiday Inn St. Louis-Downtown. Guests of honor are George Alec Effinger, Todd Hamilton, Wilson (Bob) Tucker, and Laura LeHew. Events include programming, a masquerade, filking, a play, workshops, an art show, a hucksters' room, videos, and a charity auction. Registration is \$20. Write to: NAME THAT CON III, P.O. Box 575, St. Charles MO 63301; or call either Marie at: (314) 724-0808; or Cheryl at: (314) 946-9147; no collect calls, please. For hotel reservations, call: (314) 421-4000 or (800) 465-4329.

PLATTECON GAMMA, April 28-29

Sponsored by the Platteville Gaming Assoc., this convention will be held in the Student Center of the University of Wisconsin at Platteville, Wis. The featured guest is Barbara Young, editor of DUNGEON® Adventures. Events include an RPGA® AD&D® tournament, a game auction, a miniatures contest, and door prizes to be awarded between gaming sessions. There will also be a dealers' area. Registration: \$5 preregistered, or \$7 at the door. Write to: Platteville Gaming Assoc., Box 109, Platteville WI 53818; or to: Keith May, 155 N. Hickory, Platteville WI 53818.

GAMECON II, May 4-5

The Game Master presents this convention at the Village Mall Auditorium, Lower Level Bergen Mall, Paramus, N.J. Events include RPG and war-game tournaments, board games, and

open gaming, with RPGA™ tournaments, a games auction, and a miniatures contest, with AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, WARHAMMER 40,000*, STAR WARS™, and CAR WARS* games. Registration: \$1 at the door. Write to: GAMECON II, c/o The Game Master, Bergen Mall, Paramus NJ 07652; or call: (201) 843-3308.

NASHCON '90, May 4-6

This second annual convention will be held at the Music City Rodeway Inn, Nashville, Tenn. Sponsored by the Historical Miniatures Gaming Society-Midsouth and Games Extraordinaire, this convention will feature miniatures tournaments, alternative gaming, a dealers' room, and an auction. Scheduled events include American Civil War, Napoleonics, armor, naval, science-fiction, and alternative-history scenarios. Registration: \$10 before April 4, \$15 thereafter. Write to: Games Extraordinaire, 2713 Lebanon Pike, Nashville TN 37214; or call: (800)777-GAME.

WIZARD'S CHALLENGE VIII, May 4-6 *

This convention will be held at the Victoria Inn in Regina, Saskatchewan. Tournaments include AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, SUPREMACY*, CAR WARS*, and RISK* games, with board games, miniatures, demonstration games, movies, a games auction, and a closing-night Medieval Feast. Registration: \$5 for the weekend, plus varying tournament costs. Write to: Ken McGovern, c/o The Wizard's Corner II, 2124B Broad St., Regina, Sask., CANADA S4P 1Y5; or call: (306) 757-8544.

UMF-CON '90, May 5-6

This role-playing and war-gaming convention will be held at the Student Center of the University of Maine at Farmington. Events include miniatures, AD&D®, TOP SECRET®, DIPLOMACY*, and board games, with contests and a murder-mystery game. Registration: \$5/day, and \$2/game. Write to: Table Gaming Club, c/o Student Life Office, Student Center, 5 South St., Farmington ME 04938.

GAMESCAUCUS II, May 26-28

Sponsored by TriGaming Associates, this convention will be held at the Concord Hilton in Concord, Calif. This year's guest of honor is Dave Arneson, co-creator of the D&D® game. Special events include world-wide DIPLOMACY* and "Live" AWFUL GREEN THINGS* games, as well as AD&D®, D&D®, CHAMPIONS*, RUMQUEST*, CALL OF CTHULHU*, UPFRONT*, AXIS AND ALLIES*, ENEMY IN SIGHT*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, and other board and miniatures games. Registration: \$15 for the weekend before May 11, or \$20 at the door. Write to: Mike Wilson, P.O. Box 4867, Walnut Creek CA 94596-0867.

GAMEX '90, May 25-28

This will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt where all types of family, strategy and adventure board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming will take place. Events include flea markets, auctions, an exhibitor area, seminars and demonstrations, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA; or call: (213) 420-3675.

TWIN CON I, May 26-27

This gaming extravaganza will be held at the Hilton in Bloomington/Minneapolis, Minn. Events include AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU*, and WARHAMMER* tournaments, with open gaming, a gamers' breakfast, and guests. The guest of honor is Mark Acres. Write to: Louis Mengsol, 3376 Upper 149th St. West, Rosemount

MN 55068; or call: (612) 423-7368. Include an SASE with any mail inquiries.

SPRING FANTASY REVEL, June 1-3

Held at the College of Lake County campus in Greyslake, Ill., this convention will feature several RPGA™ events including AD&D® Feature, Masters, and Grand Masters games. Other activities include miniatures and strategy games, a movie room, an art show, a painting contest, demonstrations, panels, and a large dealers' area. Guests include James Ward, Jean Rabe, Skip Williams, and Frank and Penny Mentzer. Registration: \$10 for the weekend before May 15, or \$12 at the door (ask about discounts). GMs and dealers are welcome! Write to: Keith Polster, 155 N. Milwaukee Ave., #101, Lake Villa IL 60046; or call Keith at: (708) 356-4472.

DEEPSOUTHCON XXVIII, June 7-10

"XXVIII" will be held at the Quality Inn-East Ridge in Chattanooga, Tenn. Scheduled guests include Bob Shaw, Raymond Feist, Darrell K. Sweet, Forest Ackerman, and Bryan Webb. Registration: \$25. Write to: DEEPSOUTHCON, Box 23908, Chattanooga TN 37422; or call (404) 578-8461 (no collect calls, please).

GLATHRICON '90, June 8-10

Sponsored by the Evansville Gaming Guild, this 7th annual convention will be held in Evansville, Ind. Steve Jackson will be the guest of honor, Skip Williams will be the DM guest of honor, and Jean Rabe, the RPGA™ Network Coordinator, will represent the Network. The artist guest of honor will be Lucy Synk. RPGA™ tournaments include AD&D® Feature, Masters, Grandmasters and Joe Martin Benefit games, with GURPS®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Feature and Masters, JAMES BOND®, PARANOIA®, PARANOIA* Masters, CHILL®, DC HEROES®, CHAMPIONS®, and STAR TREK® games. Other activities include a dealers' room, a large art show and print shop, an art auction, a masquerade, a miniatures-painting contest, seminars, and panels. Registration: \$15 until April 15, or \$20 thereafter. Write to: Evansville Gaming Guild, P.O. Box 15414, Evansville IN 47716; or call: (812) 477-9508.

ARTYCON II, June 9-10

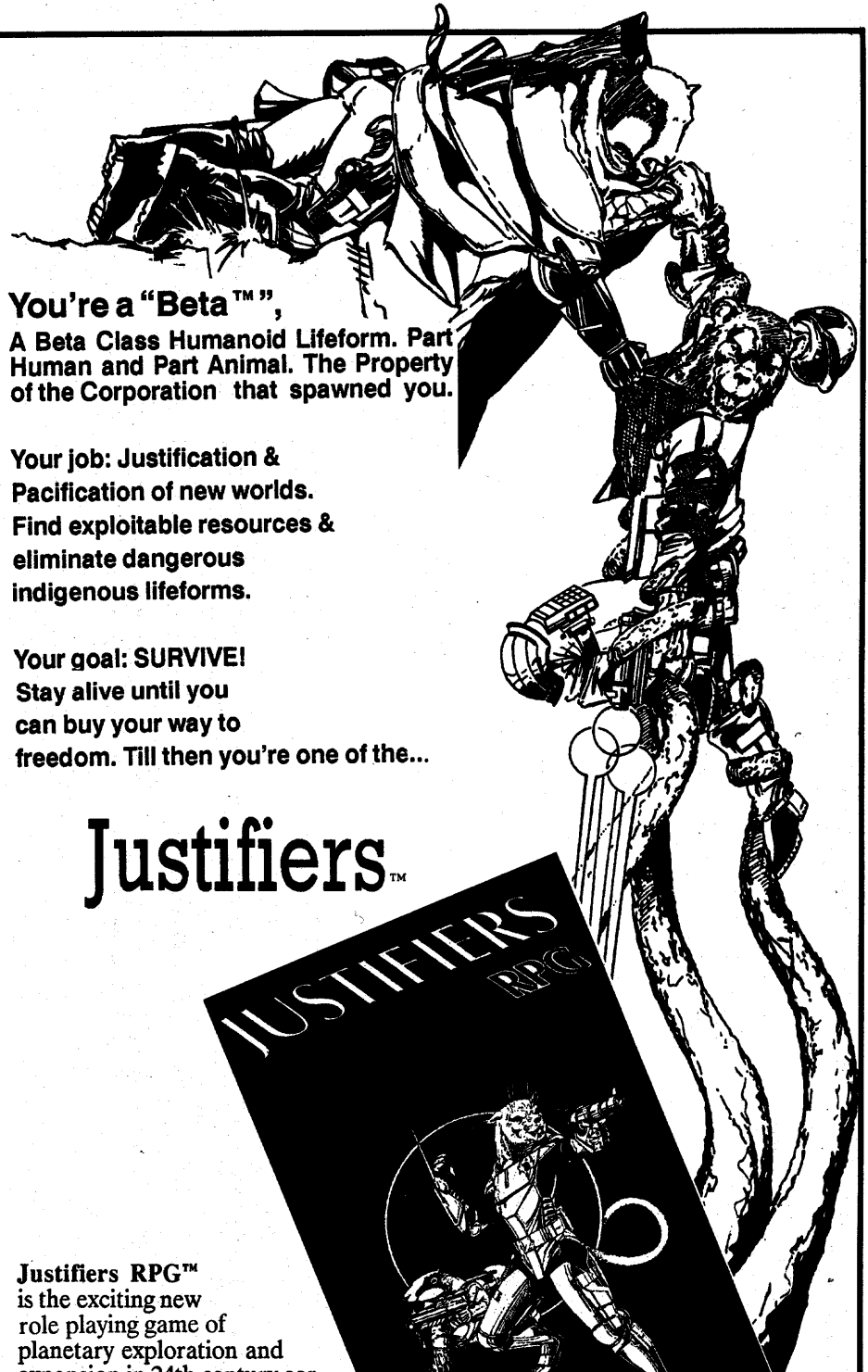
This convention will held at the Community Activity Center, 3281 Sheridan Rd., Fort Sill OK. Events include AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, CHAMPIONS®, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™, ROLEMASTER®, SHADOWRUN®, STAR TREK®, and STAR WARS® games, with a miniatures-painting contest and Japanimation. Registration: \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door for both days, or \$4 for one day. Write to: ARTYCON II, ITR Office, 1721 Gruber Rd., Ft. Sill OK 73503.

SAGA '90, June 9-11

This year, SAGA is moving to Globe High School in Sydney, Australia. Events include AD&D®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, and other role-playing, board, miniatures, and freeform games. Write to: SAGA, P.O. Box 71, Kingsway, NSW, AUSTRALIA 2208.

MADISON GAME DAY '90, June 10

This convention will be held at the Ramada Inn, 3841 E. Washington Ave., in Madison, Wis. Events include role-playing, historical, miniatures, and board games. Registration: \$5, no game fees. Judges are welcome. Write to: MADISON GAME DAY, c/o Nick Klapper, 1909 Heath Ave., Madison WI 53704; or call (608) 249-3264.

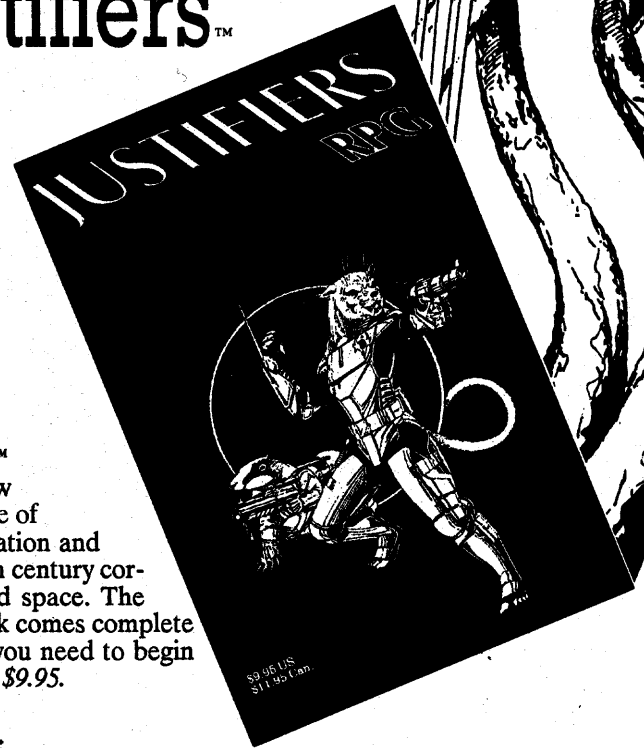


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MICHICON GAMEFEST '90, June 22-24

This convention will be held in the Southfield Civic Center in Southfield, a suburb of Detroit, Mich. Events include 50 RPG, 60 board, and 60 miniatures games. Other activities include three used-games auctions, and open gaming. Registration: \$12 for the weekend, or \$7/day preregistered. Write to: Metro Detroit Gamers, Box 656, Wyandotte MI 48192; or call (days) Barry Jensen at: (313) 591-2300 ext. 325; or call (evenings) Mike Bartnikowski at (313) 928-7744.

NEW ORLEANS SF/FANTASY FESTIVAL June 15-17

The "Festival" will be held at the Bayou Plaza, in New Orleans, La. The Guest of Honor is Roger Zelazny, and the artist guest of honor is Dell Harris. Other guests include George R. R. Martin, George Alec Effinger, Greg Costikyan, Denny O'Neil, and many more. Other activities include programming, an art show and auction, a hospitality suite, a dance, a meet-the-guest party, movies and videos, a dealers' room, and a charity event for the Battered Womens' Center and the Chinchuba Institute. Registration: \$15 until April 1, \$20 until June 1, or \$25 at the door. No preregistration after June 1. Write to: NEW ORLEANS SF/FANTASY FESTIVAL, P.O. Box 791089, New Orleans LA 70179-1089.

ORGANIZED KAHN-FUSION II, June 16-17

This gaming convention will be held at the Central Penn Business School in Summerdale, Pa. Activities include a dealers' area, a miniatures-painting contest, videos, and over 60 role-playing, war, miniatures, science-fiction, and other games. The guest of honor is Tom Wham. Registration: \$4-6/day and \$8-12 for both days, depending on the date of registration. Membership is limited. Write to: M. Foner's Games Only Emporium, 200 Third St., New Cumberland PA 17070; or call: (717) 774-6676.

POLYGON VIII, June 22-24

The Simulation and Adventure Gaming Assoc. of CalPoly is sponsoring "VIII." Events include stories and illustrations, movies, Liventures, speakers, games, and a dealers' area. Registration: \$15 by April 13, \$18 by May 18, or \$22 for weekend passes and \$12 for one-day passes at the door (GMs have special prices). Write to: POLYGON VIII, c/o SAGA, Activities Planning Center, Box 168, San Luis Obispo CA 93401, and ask about special room rates; or call Stacey Fetters at: (805) 545-9858.

WORLD DIPCON '90, June 22-24

The 1990 International DIPLOMACY* Championships will be held at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C. The tournament will consist of four rounds of DIPLOMACY* games, as well as a DIPLOMACY* team competition and tournaments in CIVILIZATION*, TITAN*, and RAILWAY RIVALS* games. The tournament winner will be named the 1990 International DIPLOMACY* Champion. Registration: \$20 with tournament housing for \$15/night double or \$30/night single. Write to: David Hood, 15-F Estes Park, Carrboro NC 27510.

DEMICON II, June 23-25

The Harford Adventure Society presents "II", to be held at the Holiday Inn-Aberdeen House, in Aberdeen, Md. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, PARANOIA*, CHAMPIONS*, SHADOWRUN*, CAR WARS*, and WAR-HAMMER 40,000* games. Registration: \$17.50 before May 31, or \$20 at the door. Write to: DEMICON II, c/o Harford Adventure Society, P.O. Box 1063, Aberdeen MD 21001.

ORIGINS/DRAGON CON '90, June 28-July 1

The 1990 National Gaming Exposition and Trade Show will be held at the Atlanta Hilton and Towers, Atlanta, Ga. Guests of honor are Tom Clancy and Doug Niles, with more guests to be announced. Role-playing, strategic, miniatures, and computer game tournaments will be held around the clock. Other activities include panels and workshops, game and consignment auctions, a masquerade, an art show and print shop, and video rooms! Write to: ORIGINS '90, Box 47696, Atlanta GA 30362.

ECONOMYCON III, July 6-8

This convention will be held at Alma School in Mesa, Ariz. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, BATTLE FOR MOSCOW*, CIVILIZATION*, and SUPREMACY* games, with open gaming, Japanimation, World War II micro-armor, and the LOST WORLDS* fantasy-book game. Write to: ECONOMYCON, 2740 S. Alma School, Mesa AZ 85202.

ATLANTICON '90, July 13-15

This convention will be held at the Baltimore Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel and the Baltimore Convention Center. Activities include gaming and free game demonstrations, game auctions, a flea market, 24-hour open gaming areas, and discount coupons for all preregistrants. Registration: \$14 for the weekend prepaid, or \$18 at the door. One-day passes will also be available at the door. Write to: ATLANTICON, P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore MD 21220; or call: (301) 574-5066.

COSCON '90, July 13-16

Sponsored by the Circle of Swords, this gaming convention will be held at Slippery Rock University in Slippery Rock, Pa. Events include first-run RPGA™ tournaments and events, board games, a dealers' area, a flea market, and a miniatures-painting contest. On-site housing is available. Registration: \$10 until June 30, or \$15 thereafter. Write to: Circle of Swords, P.O. Box 2126, Butler PA 16003; or call Dave Schnur at: (412) 283-1159.

DOVERCON VI, July 14-16

It will be held this year at the University of New Hampshire's Memorial Union Building (MUB) in Durham, NH. Activities include an RPGA™ AD&D® tournament and many other gaming events, a film festival, and miniatures and art competitions. Registration: \$10 by May 5, \$15 at the door, or \$10 for one day. Dealers and judges are welcome. Write to: DOVERCON VI, P.O. Box 753, Dover NH 03820.

CONJUNCTION, July 27-29

UPDATE: This convention will take place at New Hall College, Cambridge, England. The guest of honor will be Gregory Stafford. Events include no game tournaments, but there will be panels, a masquerade, films, and a dealers' area. There will also be combat demonstrations, live-action role-playing, PBMs, workshops, and a real ale bar. Membership is £ 12 for those over 18. Write to: CONJUNCTION, 27 Terront Road, London N15 3AA, UNITED KINGDOM; or call John Dallman at: 01-802-8723.

FAMILYCON I, August 3-5

This family-oriented convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Timonium, Md. Activities include a dealers' room, hands-on science programming, and SF and fantasy panels for all ages. Write to: FAMILYCON, 3309 Taney Rd., Baltimore MD 21215.

OMACON X, August 3-5

This pro-space, gaming and comic convention will be held at the Holiday Inn Central in Omaha, Neb., and is sponsored by Nebraskans for the Advancement of Space Development. Guests of honor include Rick Sternbach, John Ford, Bjo Trimble, and Art Bozlee. Write to: OMACON, P.O. Box 37851, Omaha NE 68137.

1990 GEN CON® Game Fair, August 9-12

Make your plans now to attend the biggest and best game convention of them all, at the MECCA Convention Center, Milwaukee, Wis. We've pulled in over 10,000 people for two years running! Write to: 1990 GEN CON® Game Fair, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

BATTLETECH*: OPERATION GREEN FLAG, August 11-12

This mid-Atlantic regional BATTLETECH* convention is the first official FASA-sanctioned tournament to be held at the Central Penn Business School in Summerdale, Pa. Featured will be a vigorous round-robin and four-person lance competitions. Open gaming will also be available both days. Registration: \$8-12, depending on the date of registration. Attendance is limited. Write to: M. Foner's Games Only Emporium, 200 Third St., New Cumberland PA 17070; or call: (717) 774-6676.

ELTANNCON '90, August 18-19

This convention will be held at the Henderson Convention Center in Henderson, Nevada. Events include AD&D®, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, BATTLETECH*, CAR WARS*, and CHAMPIONS* games. Registration: \$10, which allows the attendee to participate in all events on a first-come, first-served basis. Write to: ELTANNCON '90, 860 E. Twain #128, Dept. 456, Las Vegas NV 89109; or call: (702) 733-8626.

CAMALOT II, August 24-26

This will be held at the Sheraton Inn in Huntsville, Ala. Sponsored by the Huntsville Area Gamers and Role-players (H.A.G.A.R.), this convention's events include a wide variety of RPGs and war games, a video room, an art show, and a costume dance. Registration: \$15 until July 10, or \$20 at the door. Write to: CAMALOT II, 4931 B Cotton Row Apts., Huntsville AL 35810; or call Bryan Jones at: (205) 837-9036.

GATEWAY X, August 31-September 3

This convention will be held at the Los Angeles Airport Hyatt Hotel. Events include all types of family, strategy, adventure, board, role-playing, miniatures, and computer gaming. Activities include flea markets, auctions, a dealers' area, seminars, demos, and special guests. Write to: STRATEGICON, P.O. Box 8399, Long Beach CA 90808; or call: (213)420-3675.

How effective was your convention listing? If you are a convention organizer, please write to the editors and let us know if our "Convention Calendar" served your needs. Your comments are always welcome.



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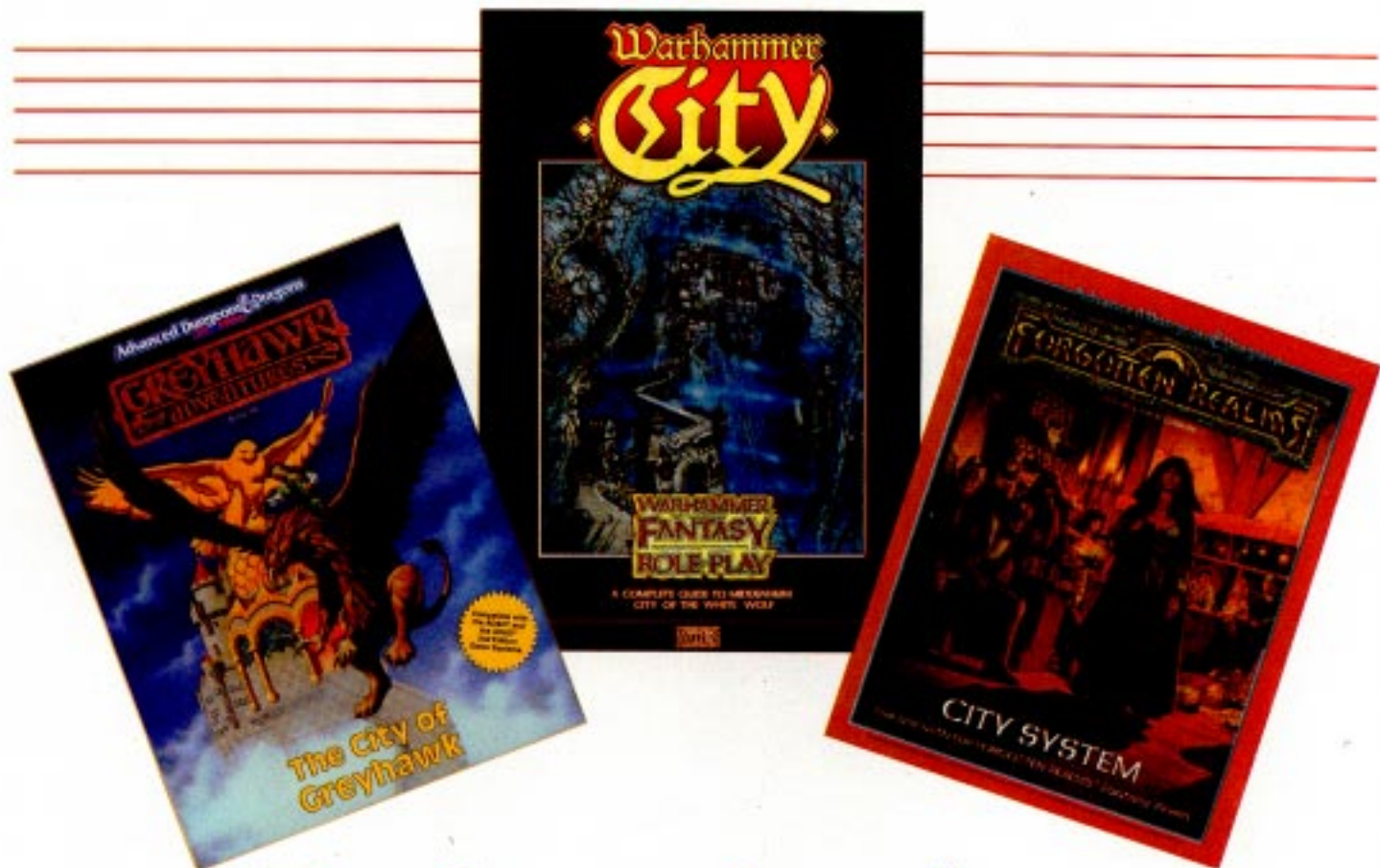
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Role-playing reviews

Back to the big city lights

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Here are the features I look for in a high-quality urban fantasy role-playing game supplement. Following each feature are one or more classic FRPG supplements that illustrate the virtues in question. (For those unfamiliar with these supplements, see the bibliographical notes in the next section.)

Cartography: The supplement should have detailed, realistic maps of local neighborhoods, the entire city, and regions around the city. Maps should be colorful and exciting, rendered in a style suggestive of the fantasy setting. They must serve as easy references for GM and players, clearly indicating important locations mentioned in the text. Titles and labels should be keyed on the maps, except when it would give away information to

the players. (*Pavis*, *LANKHMAR™: City of Adventure*)

Illustration: There should be appropriate scenes of urban life in particular, scenes commonly encountered by PCs, like taverns and jail cells), typical architectural features, and character-revealing portraits of various NPCs. (*Citybook 1*)

Diagrams: Floor plans of buildings for citizens of all vocations should be present, with on-map labels and concise, evocative keys. Details should be relevant to role-play, not given merely to fill empty space. GMs should be able to conduct scenarios primarily by brief glances at the detailed diagrams. One diagram should be worth a thousand words of descriptive text. (*Thieves' World*)

Encounters: Encounters should be

menus of urban interactions to stimulate GMs' imaginations and serve as examples of day-to-day FRPG urban life. Each encounter should concisely suggest one or more scenario, narrative, or character hooks, out of which might develop an incidental role-playing encounter or a full-scale scenario. Bland listings on random tables are seldom worthwhile. (*Midkemia Cities*, *The Free City of Haven*)

Characters: Potential NPC informants, patrons, and villains should be developed in relevant detail, including statistics, tactics, and scenario hooks. Aimless characterization and space-fillers are right out. NPC walk-ons developing setting color and atmosphere are nice touches. (*Citybook 1*)

Narrative threads: A city setting should include implied or explicit scenario

and campaign hooks in its background materials. (*Carse, Tulan of the Isles*)

Setting: A sense of the city's time, place, and culture can be derived from three main sources:

History —Deft and appropriate theft from real life, especially in architecture, economics, government, law, and customs. (*Harn Cities, Midkemia Cities*)

Imagination —Original, nonhistorical fantasy elements, especially the smooth and logical integration of magic and gods with historical elements. (*Pavis*)

Literature —Respectful, intelligent exploitation of fantasy cities in literature. (*Lankhmar*)

Presentation: Writing, editing, development, layout, and graphics should pay special attention to the following elements:

GM's needs — For swift and easy reference before and during play, preserving the narrative flow as much as possible to make reading pleasant (encyclopedias are well designed for reference but are no fun for cover-to-cover reading). (*Pavis*)

Player reference —For special in-character reference materials for players. (*Pavis, Thieves' World*)

Artifact value —For realistic or evocative props and hand-outs. (*Pavis*)

Mechanics support — For all the character stats and other mechanics you need, with game-specific tactics for villains and police. (*Pavis, Citybook 1*)

Detailed location key —For maps and diagrams keyed to concise but specific descriptive text. (*Harn Cities*)

Scenarios: Sample adventures and scenario hooks should illustrate and support the unique role-playing styles of urban adventuring. (*Pavis*)

Urban classics

This collection of all-time-great urban FRPG supplements could serve as a shopping list for students of the urban FRPG environment, though one citation is out of print and available only from collectors and specialists, while others may be obscure and found only in the dusty corners of old game stores. The list is not meant to be exclusive; let me know if you think some other great urban FRPG work ought to have been included here. Write to: Ken Rolston, Box 28, Tabor NJ 07878, U.S.A.

Pavis: Chaosium's RUNEQUEST® Glorantha boxed supplement by Chaosium, out of print and hard to find.

LANKHMAR™: City of Adventure: For the AD&D® game, by TSR, Inc.; based on Fritz Leiber's Lankhmar of the Fafhrd and Gray Mouser books (see DRAGON® issue #136 for a review).

Citybook 1: Award-winning generic FRPG supplement of the Catalyst series from Flying Buffalo.

Thieves' World: Award-winning multisystem FRPG supplement from Chaosium, with design assistance from Midkemia Press, based on the setting of the Thieves' World anthologies and novels.

Midkemia Cities: Generic FRPG supplement for creating villages and towns, designed and originally published by Midkemia Press, now published by Chaosium.

Carse and Tulan of the Isles: Generic FRPG city settings, designed and originally published by Midkemia Press, now published by Chaosium (see DRAGON issue #136 for reviews).

Harn Cities: Cities supplement for the Harn campaign world, by Columbia Games.

The Free City of Haven: City supplement for the now-defunct Thieves' Guild system, published by Gamelords, Ltd.

No single urban supplement is likely to boast superior achievement in all the features I listed above. In fact, a supplement with notable strengths in several features might be exceptional in spite of serious defects in other areas. As we review the following examples of recent FRPG city materials, consider how they shape up according to the checklist above.

Minas Tirith

MIDDLE-EARTH ROLE PLAYING™ and ROLEMASTER™ supplement
160-page hardback book
Iron Crown Enterprises \$18.00
Design: Graham Staplehurst

Graham Staplehurst is a writer with a solid historical grounding and a good feel for Tolkienesque and medieval settings, and he's the best of the free-lance writer-designers working with Iron Crown. His ROBIN HOOD role-playing campaign from I.C.E. is highly recommended as a standard reference for medieval historical role-playing, and for its fine encounters and adventures. In *Minas Tirith*, Staplehurst has skillfully exploited both his historical and literary sources to produce a fantasy city setting with the necessary realistic and plausible foundations. He also has maintained the coherent and dignified tone appropriate to his Tolkien sources.

The blend of history and fantasy is not quite seamless. Some of the notable buildings and associated social institutions he describes are apparently based on historical models—in particular the guilds—here the detail and coherence is exceptional, featuring floor diagrams in the style of serious history texts and persuasive explanations of the personalities and workings of the guilds. Other buildings of a fantastic conception contrast sharply with this historical texture, like Myall's Vitrine, a building made of an 8'-diameter glass tube wrapped around an iron framework several stories high. The contrast between the solidly historical and the exuberantly fantastic is a bit jarring, though in many cases the fault lies in the illustration and diagrams more than with Staplehurst's text. In particular, the illustrations and floor plans of the great buildings of Tolkien, like the White Tower of the Cita-

del, are crude and unconvincing by comparison to the illustrations and floor plans of buildings based on historical models. Despite this, the conception, description, and renderings of the buildings are excellent, far better than I've seen elsewhere.

Narrative threads and characterizations are smoothly blended into the life and history of the city and its Tolkien context. Notable figures are concisely presented, often illustrated with one of Liz Danforth's excellent character portraits, and linked to the fantasy setting with one or two subtle plot hooks. In general, the focus is on the lives and themes of the nobles and the upper and upper-middle classes, and the tone is genteel and dignified in keeping with the Tolkien sources, with little indication of the low-life taverns, criminal syndicates, and sordid action-adventure found in most FRPG urban adventuring.

Minas Tirith is of most value to those with heroic high-fantasy campaigns like Tolkien's setting. Of course, *Minas Tirith's* success ultimately depends on its appeal to Tolkien fans and collectors, and in this regard, Staplehurst's respectful and appropriate treatment of Tolkien is a great virtue. Staplehurst's *Minas Tirith* might not be what Tolkien would have envisioned—possibly it is *more* than he could have envisioned—but most important, it does not offend by contrast, and it ably supports the tone and style of Tolkien's high fantasy.

The fold-out color map is colorful and detailed, though not so suggestive of a high-fantasy artifact as the excellent large-scale Tolkien map on the reverse of the city map. There are no small-scale neighborhood maps, but such are more essential in low-fantasy settings where the streets are an important element of session play. In general, the quality of interior maps, diagrams, and illustration is quite good (with the exception of some of the illustrations of monumental fantasy structures, which are only fair). However, the digitized or half-tone photos of historical buildings with Moorish-style decoration seem a bit odd in this context, especially since the Moorish motifs are not integrated into the illustrations elsewhere.

The adventures are satisfactory but only modestly successful in exploiting the greater virtues of the supplement. One of the four adventures, which takes place in Wooden-Town, the outside-the-walls slum of Minas Tirith, exhibits a familiar low-life FRPG style out of keeping with the rest of the supplement; Wooden-Town is scarcely mentioned throughout the rest of the text. The other three adventures are more appropriate to the rest of the book, but only one, an introduction to the city's benign secret order of magicians, is linked to major themes or narrative elements developed elsewhere in the book. This lack of integration between the background materials and the adventures makes me suspicious that *Minas Tirith* is



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more a pleasant read and reference source than a setting for FRPG adventure.

Evaluation: In reference to our checklist above, *Minas Tirith* earns top honors in sense of time, place, and culture, with strong conceptions for its historical, imaginative, and literary sources. In other areas, it merits above-average scores with few objectionable flaws. *Minas Tirith* was readable and appealing, and it goes on my long-term reference shelf for its treatment of guilds and other civic institutions. It is most useful for GMs with high-fantasy campaigns, and less useful for more common low-fantasy and action-adventure FRPG campaigns. *Minas Tirith* is available from Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc., Box 1605, Charlottesville VA 22902, U.S.A.

Tredroy

GURPS® Fantasy supplement
64-page paperback book
Steve Jackson Games \$7.95
Design: Alexander von Thorn

Tredroy has few of the flashy graphic features of the other supplements reviewed here. In fact, it is distinctly weak in its cartography. Perhaps for that reason, at first glance I underestimated *Tredroy*. After a careful reading, however, I am most impressed, and I highly recommend it, despite its notable flaws.

Its flaws are primarily in its graphics and in obscure references to the GURPS campaign world of Yrth. The map of the city of Tredroy itself is schematic and adequate, though uninspiring. There are no neighborhood maps and (more seriously) no map of the surrounding region. The history of the city makes numerous references to nations, cities, and geographical features that are not represented on any map nor explained in the text. The book doesn't explain that you must use the GURPS Fantasy game to track these references to the GURPS fantasy campaign world of Yrth, which is even more unfortunate since the GURPS Fantasy game is currently out of print, superseded by the GURPS Magic game and presumably to be replaced in the future by a GURPS Yrth campaign supplement. This is all the more annoying since the city's history is jammed into a cryptic timeline with a variety of unexplained references. But I do have a copy of the GURPS Fantasy game, and after a bit of frustration I figured out what was going on. And what was going on was very interesting and unusual.

The name "Tredroy" is a corruption of *tres droits*, French for "three laws." Tredroy is composed of three different cities separated from one another by a confluence of wide rivers. Combined in a loose confederation, each of the cities represents a different fantasy-historical culture. North Tredroy is ruled by a tolerant, cosmopolitan, chivalric Moslem society. West Tredroy has a devout fundamentalist Moslem culture. East Tredroy is a sort of medi-

eval Roman Christian chivalric culture dominated by the Catholic Church and Roman law. The historical model for this collision of cultures is the period of the Crusades in Palestine, and a very interesting and alien campaign setting it is.

The selection of two contrasting Moslem cultures—one narrow and fundamentalist, and the other all-embracing and cosmopolitan—is an inspired choice for fantasy role-playing. Moslem cultures are, for most of us, alien and exotic, but their roles in current world affairs gives us a dramatic context for them, and historical and literary treatments of medieval Moslem culture are readily accessible to the dedicated reader. Moslem cultures appear to us as passionate in ideals and violence and as noble and romantic in narrative and character as chivalric medieval Europe. Learning respect for and mastering the customs of an alien culture is one of the great challenges of fantasy role-playing, and the customs of Tredroy's Moslem cultures are certainly alien to the Dark Ages European cultures that provide the basis of most FRPG campaigns.

Alexander von Thorn does a wonderful job of processing and presenting the historical elements for role-playing adventure in *Tredroy*. The text is lean, readable, and relevant, well structured for reading and reference. The background text on the government, cultures, and customs of Tredroy are concrete, detailed, and concise, and the descriptions of buildings, institutions, and significant personalities in the locations key are short but full of role-playing potential. The absence of neighborhood maps and building floor plans is unfortunate, though I can see that many readers will savor the characterization and role-play without ever noticing the absence of detailed tactical maps.

The design of Tredroy fortunately emphasizes those elements important for role-playing and avoids lavishing detail on buildings, institutions, and personalities with little or no relevance to role-playing adventure. The only guilds extensively developed are those which have the most significance for the role-playing adventurer—e.g., the Company of Merchants (which hires guards), the Mercenaries' Guild (a large and powerful organization of adventurers), the Thieves' Guild, the Assassins' Guild, the College of Arms (heraldry and aristocratic family records), and the Harpers' Guild. These guilds are intelligently and plausibly integrated into the fantasy culture of the town. In particular, the Mercenaries' Guild has a category of guildsmen called "practicals," specialists in spying skills—a perfect classification for sophisticated characters who might otherwise be classified as "thieves" in other settings. Tredroy also credibly portrays the Thieves' Guild as a form of family crime syndicate tacitly tolerated by a city that could never hope to control crime through law enforce-

ment; at least the guild exercises some restraint over its members.

Tredroy also offers a variety of interesting themes to explore. For example, slavery is legal in North and West Tredroy, but illegal in East Tredroy. Player characters could become involved in the underground railway, or become bounty hunters specializing in capturing escaped slaves. The scenario included is nice, but it only peripherally exploits the Tredroy urban adventuring setting—again triggering my suspicions that *Tredroy* was developed more as a set-piece than a genuine adventuring setting. The presentation is up to the high standard of most GURPS supplements (with the above-mentioned exception of the maps and references to Yrth history). It is well written, cleanly edited, well organized for reference, effectively uses sidebars as peripheral essays, and provides the necessary mechanics for a broad cross-section of the character types that might be encountered. The scenario is the only section of the book explicitly prohibited from player reading—an odd choice, since many of the elements of city intrigue would be revealed by reading the rest of the text.

Evaluation: Once past the flaws of the maps and ambiguous Yrth references, *Tredroy* is a fine example of an FRPG urban setting. It reads well, offers interesting scenario opportunities, and presents exotic, alien, but accessible historical cultures as the backdrop for urban adventure. As a sample of what a GURPS Yrth FRPG campaign supplement might offer, it is very promising. For general students of urban FRPG gaming, it is in pleasing and stimulating model and reference. *Tredroy* is available from Steve Jackson Games, Box 18957, Austin TX 78760, U.S.A.

Warhammer City

WARHAMMER™ FANTASY ROLEPLAY
supplement
96-page hardback book with full-color
14" × 22" map
Games Workshop \$22.95
Design: Carl Sargent

Warhammer City is a supplement describing Middenheim, the City of the White Wolf, the second largest city in the vast Empire of the WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY campaign setting. In conception and graphics presentation, *Warhammer City* is an exceptional setting for heroic fantasy role-playing, but the uneven and occasionally unsophisticated quality of design and written presentation sometimes make it frustrating and disappointing reading. To some degree, the less sophisticated presentation is appropriate to its more cheap-and-cheerful FRPG tone, but as often it seems a problem of weak design and editing.

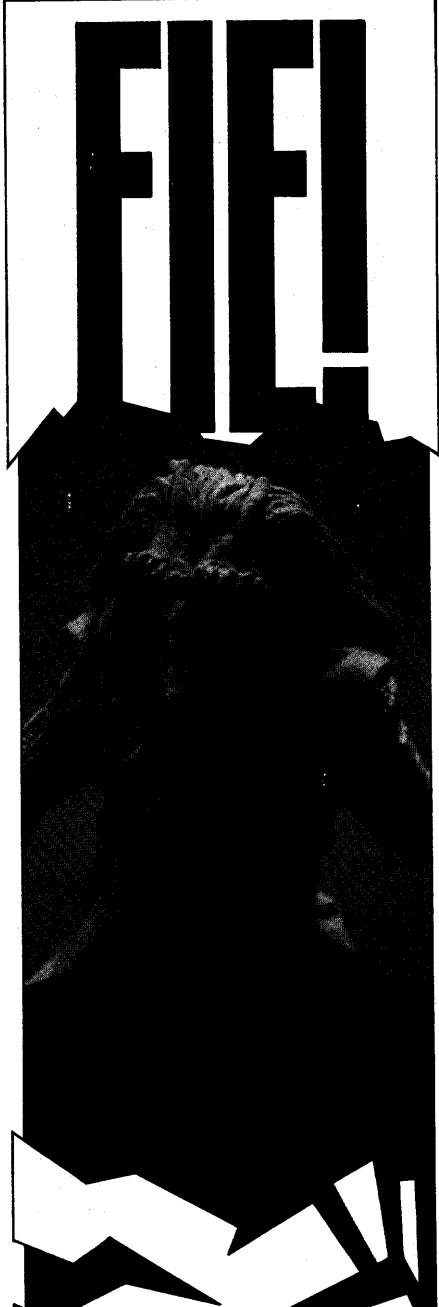
As usual, Games Workshop's graphic presentation is stunning, with lavish, well-rendered, and appropriate illustration.

The character portraits are full of personality. The scenes of everyday life in the city, rendered in the style of the prints and drawings of Albrecht Dürer—the 15th-century German artist—are detailed and evocative of the WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY game's late medieval setting. The maps and diagrams are appealing, colorful, and realistic. The campaign setting, based on a Holy Roman Empire transfigured by sorcery and rampant Chaos cults and monstrosities, provides a distinctive backdrop for standard wizards-and-heroes fantasy adventuring.

In general, the design is solid enough. All the elements for a gritty, low-life fantasy campaign are present—details of religion, law, and customs; impossibly remote wealthy and influential personalities; all-too-accessible sordid and criminal elements; abundant criminal conspiracies; scheming power figures; and demented Chaos cultists. An earnest effort is made to offer practical advice in running city adventures for inexperienced GMs. In this sense, *Warhammer City* is clearly more of a complete city adventuring kit, with staging tips, than are *Tredroy* or *Minas Tirith*. The advice is occasionally shrewd and substantial; however, sometimes it's little more than vague cheerleading.

However, there's a nagging sense of insubstantiality in portions of the text. The framework is adequate, but the frequent shortage of character, place, and circumstance is disturbing. The text is often flabby and expansive, with abundant gratuitous exclamation points, and is sometimes careless in the quality of motivation, narrative, setting, and tone. For example, the cute puns in the telling of the history of Middenheim (e.g., "Tale of Artur and the Holy Gale," "Middenheim's Rise, Fall, and Stumble," and "The War of the Poses") are inconsistent with the generally grim and monumental tone of the city setting. Middenheim's Chaos cults have suitably lurid, evil FRPG villains, but they're short on personality and motivation. The link to the epic *The Enemy Within* campaign is distressingly clumsy in conception and motivation. Two fantasy elements of Middenheim particularly suited to hack-and-slash adventuring (a precious commodity in FRPG city supplements)—the Skaven's ratman culture and the Underworld dwarven tunnels beneath Middenheim—are only sketchily developed.

I note in passing that Middenheim is the setting of Carl Sargent's impressive *Power Behind the Throne* adventure supplement, the fourth in the epic *The Enemy Within* campaign series. *Power Behind the Throne* is an exceptional example of the diplomatic style of FRPG gaming (a style singularly suited for sophisticated urban adventuring) with complex plotting, impenetrable intrigues, and cleverly drawn NPC characterizations. The link between the previous adventure in the series, *Death on the Reik*, and *Power Behind the*



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Throne, and the pretext for the PCs becoming involved in Middenheim's webs of intrigue are a bit thin, but as a companion volume to *Power Behind the Throne*, *Warhammer City* is a valuable resource.

Evaluation: All the elements of an excellent urban adventure setting are present in *Warhammer City*, but the execution is at times disappointing. The graphics are singularly effective in conveying the sense of time and place of a fantasy medieval city, and the characters, plots, themes, and institutions needed for urban role-playing are all provided, but irksome lapses in the quality of design, writing, and editing diminish *Warhammer City's* appeal. *Warhammer City* is available from Games Workshop, 3431 Benson Avenue, Baltimore MD 21227, U.S.A., or from Games Workshop Ltd., Chewton Street, Hilltop, Eastwood, Notts, NG16 3HY, United Kingdom.

The City of Greyhawk

AD&D game supplement

Two 96-page paperback books, four full-color 22" x 34" maps, and 24 one-page adventures on card stock, in box

TSR, Inc. \$18.00
Design: Doug Niles, Carl Sargent, and Rik Rose

TSR's AD&D game has three official campaign settings: the DRAGONLANCE® saga setting based on the world of Krynn; the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting, Gary Gygax's original campaign world; and the FORGOTTEN REALM™ setting, Ed Greenwood's vast creation. The city of Waterdeep is the urban showpiece of the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign; see *City System* below. The Free City of Greyhawk, Gem of the Flanaess, is the adventuring town that gives the WORLD OF GREYHAWK setting its name. *The City of Greyhawk* is the most pleasing and playable of the city supplements reviewed here; it scores high in most of the checklist features, and it has that comfortable, played-in feeling that warms the heart of the experienced AD&D game DM.

First, the maps combine the virtues of easy reference, graphic detail, sense of place, and pleasing appearance better than any other city supplement I've seen. The fold-out bird's-eye-view of the town shows its gypsy camp, halfling burrows, thatched-roofed huts, half-timbered buildings, shrub-lined boulevards, and monumental temples in such detail that you can tell if a thief could reach a given balcony by climbing a nearby tree, or where you might steal a horse if you needed to make a fast getaway. The bird's-eye-view matches the diagrammatic, keyed location and street map, which cross-references with one of the booklets to describe the major features of the city. (A summary table of the locations for quick reference is absent, however, and sorely missed.) Also included are large maps of the sewers and under-

ground passages, and a map of the surrounding region.

The illustrations are much less finely rendered than those in *Warhammer City*, but they are appropriate in tone and content to the supplement, portraying scenes of daily life in the city along the Flanaess. This set does not offer portraits of selected NPCs, and the diagrams are crude and schematic, without details of furnishings or other features. The encounter charts are lovably primitive, hearkening back to the feel of the original D&D® game. These are perhaps the least distinctive features of this set, but they are so familiar from generations of D&D and AD&D supplements that it seems undignified to complain.

It is in the area of characterization, narrative threads, and sense of place that the city comes to life. A wide variety of NPCs and their fellowships and conspiracies are fleshed out with mechanics, personalities, tactics, and a lovely confusion of loose narrative threads. *The City of Greyhawk* is an organism of systems within systems, with each system driven by its own motivations and personalities. Potential allies, patrons, informants, and nemeses are available for any mix of characters from 1st to 20th level. External politics are intertwined in the city's internal affairs. Rival guilds compete for power and influence, and dark conspiracies fester beneath the streets, while less-weighty adventures may arise from the lighter aspects of civilized personal and commercial rivalries.

The four scenarios included in one of the booklets develop themes and elements already presented in the city background, and are simple, complete, appropriate, and admirable examples of city FRPG adventuring. But the real treasures are the 23 short adventures, each printed on the front and back of a single piece of card stock, and the 24th sheet of card stock which summarizes the monster stats for these short adventures. Each of the adventures develops at least some element of plot, character, or theme presented in the city background material. Some are dungeon crawls, some wilderness expeditions, some city adventures, and some diplomatic intrigues. The scenarios themselves are priceless, many touched with humor and irony, with interesting plot twists; they challenge role-playing and problem-solving. All are eminently practical and playable, and presented with rare charm and simplicity. A special favorite of mine is the scenario entitled "The Born-Again Ogres of the Blinding Light," a clever, light piece with a half-ironic, half-pathetic touch that I can't wait to spring on my local gaming squad.

And finally, what player familiar with the AD&D game's spell names can remain unmoved by the resonances of these names from the Circle of Eight, a powerful and influential local organization of wiz-

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ards: Mordenkainen, Tenser, Bigby, Otto, Drawmij, Nystul, Rary, and Otiluke? One of the best things about *The City of Greyhawk* is that it ably exploits all the venerable virtues of the AD&D game. This is the campaign pack that TSR should have produced a decade ago, back when AD&D games were young and fresh. Now it is perhaps a certain nostalgia I indulge in my enjoyment of *The City of Greyhawk*; this is a package out of the golden age of the AD&D game, before I learned about realism, epic scale, and complicated game systems. Oh, to be young, simple, naive, and playful again—that's the yearning that *The City of Greyhawk* awakens in me.

Evaluation: *The City of Greyhawk* is a very good urban FRPG pack, but more than that, it's really a complete campaign setting for the AD&D game, the best I've seen—coherent, playable, well-developed, and entertaining. I especially recommend this pack to AD&D game GMs just graduating from dungeon delving into wilderness and urban adventuring; *The City of Greyhawk* is built on a more manageable scale and offers more solid playability and real adventuring charm than either the DRAGONLANCE or FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign settings. *Tredroy* and *Minas Tirith* have many features to appeal to the sophisticated FRPG gamer, but *The City of Greyhawk*, in addition to its appealing features, feels like it would be fun to play as a GM or player. Of the six urban FRPG supplements reviewed here, this is the one that made me want to use it in gaming rather than read and admire it.

City System

AD&D game supplement

One 32-page paperback book and 12 full-color 22" x 34" maps, in box

TSR, Inc.

\$15.00

Design: Jeff Grubb and Ed Greenwood

It's impossible to do a proper review of *City System* without also reviewing FR1 *Waterdeep and the North* (another 64-page AD&D FORGOTTEN REALMS supplement), and that's my biggest complaint about this. This is not a system for designing or presenting fantasy role-playing cities, despite the misleading title. This is a boxed supplement to the earlier 64-page city supplement—a supplement with a ton of lovely fold-out maps, a booklet with some useful essays (that would have been more appropriately included in the earlier supplement), and a lot of charts and tables of dubious utility.

I will not offer a review of *Waterdeep and the North* here, other than to say that it presents a FORGOTTEN REALMS city on a vast scale—too vast a scale for my liking. *The City of Greyhawk* presents, in large type and in 340 pages, a much smaller city with numerous structures of character, plot, and theme that give Greyhawk a manageable unity as a campaign setting. Moreover, *The City of Greyhawk* devotes

more than 60 of those 340 pages to scenarios that develop those unifying elements. On the other hand, both *Waterdeep and the North* and *City System* combined use only 96 pages (admittedly often filled with very tiny type) to present a much larger city through numerous tables and charts, less skillfully focused background material, and only five pages of scenarios. As such, the *Waterdeep* urban setting is more sprawling and less cohesive than the *Greyhawk* setting, and is somewhat less persuasive as a theater for real role-playing action.

Nonetheless, the sheer expanse of *Waterdeep* is impressive, and the 12 full-color fold-out maps in *City System* are equally impressive. Ten of these maps fit together to depict a vast, undifferentiated maze of streets, alleys, and rooftops, with a sprinkling of over 200 numbered-keyed locations. (Note the ironic use of "sprinkling" in this context; in a town the size of *Waterdeep*, 200 buildings is only a small portion of the total number.) The floor diagrams shown on the maps for some of the more notable locations are not given room-by-room descriptions for contents, inhabitants, or significance; instead, they are filled with schematic icons for tables, fireplaces, beds, trunks, barrels (full of what, I wonder), lumber, and other standard, nondescript features. These maps are big and colorful, all right, but not particularly interesting, useful, or expressive of the setting. Another of the big colorful maps shows lots of undifferentiated floor plans of *Castle Waterdeep*, with no indication of what or who is in any of the little rooms and numberless tower landings. The remaining large map is a birds-eye view of *Waterdeep*, similar to but less effective than the *Greyhawk* version; the *Waterdeep* birds-eye view hasn't got very much personality and isn't so readily cross-referenced to keyed locations.

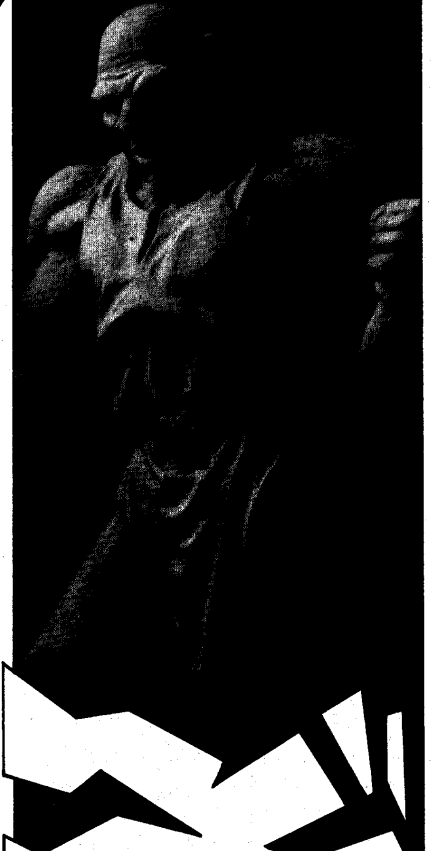
Evaluation: The title *City System* is misleading. If you're looking for guidance and support in designing and developing your own FRPG city settings, or for a stand-alone FRPG urban adventuring supplement, this is of no use to you. If you own and enjoyed *Waterdeep and the North*, you ought to have this set; it's not an inspirational model of game design, but the maps are big and colorful, and might be useful for *Waterdeep* campaigning. If you'd like to run urban adventures in the *Forgotten Realms*, and you must choose between the \$7.95 *Waterdeep and the North* and the \$15.00 *City System*, by all means the former is the better deal, and all you really need; *City System* is only a big, colorful, and unnecessary secondary accessory to *Waterdeep and the North*.

Cities of Mystery

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Design: Jean Rabe (buildings by Dennis
Kauth)

This AD&D FORGOTTEN REALMS supplement is in fact a system for designing FRPG urban adventure settings. However, it hasn't any specific link to the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign world that I can see, other than as a marketing feature, and the FRPG city-building system presented is pedestrian and unenlightening. Nonetheless, *Cities of Mystery* does possess a singular virtue—the beautiful and cleverly designed 25mm-scale, three-dimensional, full-color, glue-together buildings and full-color, fold-out street and building layouts included in the box.

The booklet is sensibly organized and addresses the essential elements of FRPG city design, but the tone and content seems unnecessarily juvenile and obvious for most AD&D game players. The narrative introductions to the various sections are embarrassingly weak and barely relevant. It is possible that as a veteran gamer and designer I can't appreciate the value of the booklet's pronouncements; admittedly I can't think of a basic and complete treatment of FRPG city building better than this one.

Sauter, *City on the Sea*—the example designed to illustrate the basic principles of city building—is unremarkable and not accompanied by even a vague map or diagram of the city, an indefensible omission. The scenarios included are appropriate to urban settings, but none of them exploit any of the essential elements of the FRPG city design so laboriously explained in the rest of the book. These scenarios do employ the 3-D buildings and street layouts, but not in particularly intriguing or appropriate ways; each scenario could probably be run better with detailed flat diagrams and maps than with the buildings and street layouts provided.

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And what a pity, because the buildings and street layouts are remarkable. For those who love to dress up FRPG sessions with props and miniatures, these game accessories would be priceless for a very limited style of 3-D problem solving and tactical movement. How can they be used? Set up a street ambush of a group of low-level PCs by a gang of toughs with these buildings, street layouts, and painted miniatures. Here the players can see that their characters are walking down the street past doors, windows, and alleys; they know how high the roofs of nearby buildings are, and whether a rooftop escape might be practical, or whether a mage on a roof could dramatically improve their tactical options. Designing such an elaborate 3-D layout is time consuming, not to mention the hassle of assembling the buildings; the pace of 3-D role-playing is slow and not to everyone's taste, but the final product can be a memorable night of gaming. And for folks who play fantasy miniatures games like TSR's BATTLESYSTEM™ or GWs WARHAMMER FANTASY BATTLE games, these buildings and layouts are great elements to dress up tabletop fantasy battles.

These are the best designed cut-and-assemble buildings I've ever seen. The WARHAMMER system's Townscape cardboard buildings are lovely but a nightmare to cut out and assemble. The Viking village that comes with the D&D game's GAZ7 *The Northern Reaches* is very nice and much easier to assemble than the Townscape buildings, but is nowhere as simple and well conceived as the *Cities of Mystery* material. The elements are die cut, so you don't have to labor with the scissors; just separate the bits with a sharp knife. The buildings themselves boast several charming details—chimneys, dormers, overhanging eaves, and even little roof-ridgeline stands for character miniatures that must perch on peaked roofs. Assembly is time consuming but simple, and the buildings can even be folded flat for storage. The directions for assembly are sparse but adequate; I only found one glitch in production—the omission of slots for chimneys in buildings 1 and 2 (cut your own before assembly). The street and building layout maps are detailed, handsome, and quite useful themselves, even without the buildings, though I wouldn't buy the box just to get two fold-out maps.

Evaluation: I can't recommend the city-design system for any but the compleat tyro, and even then I'd rather recommend the study of a good model of an FRPG city (like *The City of Greyhawk*) than the *Cities of Mystery* booklet. And the overwhelming majority of AD&D game players will enjoy only limited use of the street and building layouts, and have no business whatsoever going to the trouble of assembling the buildings. However, for 3-D role-playing in a town or city environ-

ment, or for sharp-looking cardboard buildings for your fantasy miniatures battles, *Cities of Mystery* is a unique and superbly designed find. [See "Through the Looking Glass," DRAGON issue #152, for another review of this product.]

Short and sweet

The Stormrider: ARS MAGICA Jump Start Kit, by Mark ReinHagen and Jonathan Tweet. Lion Rampant, \$7.95. Another original and innovative design idea from Lion Rampant, this one-session scenario is presented in a 16-page booklet and 24 front-and-back half-page reference sheets that efficiently package all the information that a first-time ARS MAGICA game GM and players need to play the scenario. The well-implemented staging hints and skilled storytelling mechanics provided make reading this as instructive as watching a brilliant GM and players at work. Even FRPG players who would never play the ARS MAGICA game should appreciate the unique presentation and shrewd practical wisdom represented in this pack. This is available from Lion Rampant, Box 621, Northfield MN 55057, U.S.A.

Dreamchipper, by James D. Long. FASA Corporation, \$8.00. This SHADOWRUN™ game adventure is for the most part cyberpunk (except for the access to ork PCs and elf PCs with spells), but it's good, gritty cyberpunk, well organized and entertaining, with a solid action-adventure story line. The adventure is broken down into short, easy-to-present episodic set-pieces; the story is fairly linear, but there's enough room for characterization and divergent problem solving. The SHADOWRUN game is one of the hottest role-playing settings at present, and *Dreamchipper* is a good example of how that setting can translate into dramatic action-adventure role-playing. This is available from FASA Corporation, Box 6930, Chicago IL 60680, U.S.A.

GURPS Riverworld game, by J. M. Caparula. Steve Jackson Games, \$16.95. For old-time fans of the Riverworld novels, this is a fun read just for the overview of the Riverworld setting, the motivations of its creators, and the mechanics of its maintenance. But much to my surprise, I found it an interesting and plausible setting for role-playing adventure, and the GURPS game is the perfect system to support it. The access to PC and NPC personalities and cultures from all the historical periods of Earth, the problem-solving challenges of adapting and improvising in the lower technological level of Riverworld society, the opportunities for empire-building in the style of Clemens and King John, and the epic upriver quest to the Tower of the Ethicals—there's some great stuff here for a role-playing campaign. This is available from Steve Jackson Games, Box 18957, Austin TX 78760, U.S.A.

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Champions of Krynn (SSI)



Champions of Krynn (SSI)

Peaches and lemons among Apples and oranges



Populous: The Promised Lands (Electronic Arts)

Before we delve into this month's reviews, we have a comment regarding our ratings for computer games. Please consider the computer system on which each rated game is played; all systems are not equal in quality. In our opinion, a four-star game on a Commodore 64/128 doesn't equal a four-star game on a Commodore Amiga; the same holds true for an Apple II game and an Apple IIGS game. Going beyond that, an Apple IIGS game doesn't equal a Macintosh game. A PC/MS-DOS game in CGA mode doesn't equal that game in EGA mode, which doesn't equal a VGA game, and so on. So, when comparing games that we've rated, be certain that the systems are of like quality. A three-star game on an Atari ST, for example, will probably have far better graphics and sound than a five-star game on an Atari 8-bit computer. Nor is a regular Sega cartridge carrying a five-star rating the same as a five-star Sega Genesis 16-bit game. And there are some systems, such as the highly portable and superbly designed Atari Lynx, that have no competitors to date. Plus, it is unfair to compare video entertainment systems such as the Sega, Nintendo, Turbographic16, Atari, and others to personal computer games. Personal computers usually pack more memory and use faster processors than video-game systems, meaning they can manage more on-screen graphics and sound variances. We must admit, however, that some of the latest video-game sys-

tems, such as the Sega Genesis and Atari Lynx, are certainly coming up to par with computer systems.

There is a world of difference between the systems on which games are played. Please bear these differences in mind when reading our reviews.

Reviews

Computer games ratings

X	Not recommended
*	Poor
**	Fair
***	Good
****	Excellent
*****	Superb

Strategic Simulations, Inc.

675 Almanor Avenue
Sunnyvale CA 94086
(408)737-6800

Champions of Krynn

PC/MS-DOS version \$49.95

Champions of Krynn is one of SSI's DRAGONLANCE® role-playing epics, licensed from TSR, Inc. It is worth purchasing immediately at your local software retailer. Being DRAGONLANCE saga enthusiasts, we found that this fantasy role-playing game brought new realism to the

marvelous adventures we've been reading for the past few years. Caramon, Solamnic knights, Takhisis the Dark Queen—they are all here in the best AD&D® computer adventure to date.

A number of enhancements have been made to previous AD&D computer games from SSI. You'll immediately notice that combat is much faster. Also, there is a "Yell" option for your kender to use during combat, so he can taunt the enemy. Foes can become so distraught by the kender's insults that they focus upon the kender's demise and neglect others in the party. This option saved our party a number of times. By placing the kender in the rear of the party and arming him with a hoopak (with which he became quite proficient as the game progressed), we ensured that the opposition would only run into our deadly front row of fighters and back row of spell-casters. In the early rounds of play, considering that most of the opposition is equal to the adventurers in strength, this slight advantage saved many an encounter from game-ending disaster!

Champions of Krynn takes place in the environments of the DRAGONLANCE saga. You'll be adventuring in and around Sanction, Neraka, Jelek, Gargath, Kernon, and Throthl. If you are an avid reader of the DRAGONLANCE books, you'll recognize that this area is composed of those territories overrun by the evil armies during the War of the Lance. You'll start your adventure in an outpost southeast of Throthl, and from that point on, it's nonstop action.

If you have played any of SSI's other AD&D games, you'll feel right at home with the player-computer interface. You can use the mouse or the keyboard; even though our computer is equipped with both, we like the keyboard and directional arrows for character commands.

We stress that the party composition that you use should match one of the two suggested parties found in the Adventurer's Journal that comes with the game. We played both sets and found the second, listed as follows, offered more advantages despite the slow character-level advancement: one human knight, one Silvanesti elf cleric of Mishakal/fighter/White Robe mage, one half-elf ranger/cleric of Majere, one Qualinesti elf cleric of Shinare/fighter/Red Robe mage, one kender cleric of Kiri-Jolith/thief, and one Qualinesti elf fighter/Red Robe mage. These folks' powers, especially the Heal Light Wounds spells at the early levels, are all that separate the successful adventuring party from the rest. Other character combinations may be a bit more powerful initially, but in the long haul they won't possess the skills needed to master this adventure.

You can create your party from the following characters: hill dwarves, mountain dwarves, Silvanesti elves, Qualinesti elves, half-elves, kender, or humans. Character classes include clerics, fighters, rangers, Solamnic knights, mages, and

thieves, with multiclass options for nonhumans. Your characters must follow either good or neutral deities and be good or neutral themselves. Considering that you really should have a least one knight in your party, evil members would destroy the game before it even started.

Solamnic knights have three orders: the Knights of the Crown, Knights of the Rose, and Knights of the Sword. A knight starts the game with plate mail armor, a shield, and a long sword, but very little money. As a matter of fact, whenever your knight gains money during the game, he'll usually tithe it away when he enters a town. When your knight has gained enough experience as a Knight of the Crown or as a Knight of the Sword, he can petition to become a Knight of the Rose. As the latter, he'll be able to cast clerical spells when he reaches 6th level.

Mages use powerful spells, but little armor or weapons. As DRAGONLANCE saga readers know, Krynn has three moons, and their different cycles affect the magic of mages. Solinari, the white moon, affects mages of the White Robes; Lunitari, the red moon, affects mages of the Red Robes; and the black moon, Nunitari, affects mages of the Black Robes.

These effects produce bonuses or penalties on the saving throws cast by mages depending on the phases of the relevant moon. Mages can also possess additional spells during the proper lunar phase.

The multiclass option offers additional skills for each character, though your characters' level progression will be at far slower rates. Our multiclassed characters could not only cast mage or clerical spells, but could fight quite effectively as well. Had our characters not been multiclassed, we doubt that we would have progressed as far as we have in the game.

Your opposition is at times quite fierce. Even the lowly centipede can kill, so don't think that just because a single swipe of a long sword slays the creature that it shouldn't be considered a worthy opponent. When a swarm of rats and centipedes is attracted to your party in the early stages, we advise knocking off the centipedes first.

On more dangerous assignments, you'll encounter nasties such as draconians, the offspring of corrupted good dragon eggs. Other beasties inhabiting your adventures include a wide assortment of dragons, from the black to the skeletal variety, with all colors and metals between. Be certain

your party is up to strength before taking these critters on. You'll also meet skeletons, zombies, penanggalans (female vampires who are quite attractive during the day, but at night—yeech!), ogres, trolls, wights, and wraiths. You'll never run into a more unfriendly bunch of foes than in *Champions of Krynn*.

Fortunately, there are some goodies lying about that can assist you. These include magical wands, potions, scrolls, plus enchanted armor and shields. For the knight in your group, rescuing the spirit of Sir Dargaard will result in a great new weapon and some appropriate armor!

The available mage and clerical spells are extremely effective. Just make certain your spell-casters restore depleted spells after vicious combats. Spells range in strength from the first-level Bless to the fourth-level Cure Serious Wounds for clerics, and from the first-level Charm Person to the fourth-level Minor Globe of Invulnerability for mages. Don't try to learn everything; consider your quest and learn spells that will be effective in that environment.

We caution you against attempting to complete the ogre's compound quest until your group can successfully take on every



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sort of draconian with magic and weaponry. It's all well and good to annihilate most of the ogre opposition within the manor house in the first rooms, but that last room is full of draconians!

When you wish to save your game, you simply Encamp. You can Fix (heal) your entire party at once and then start memorizing your magics immediately. We found that upon completion of most battles, it was safe to Encamp. If you happen to Encamp in a hallway, don't expect the entire six to eight hours you'll need for spell memorization to be free of wandering monsters.

In the outposts, where the commandant will give your assignments, you'll also find a vault for storing your money, a temple where healing is available for cash, a bar where you can listen for rumors, a hall where you can view your characters as well as get them trained to new levels (if they have garnered enough experience), an inn which (as with the Encamp selection) allows you to Fix and Memorize spells for your adventurers, and an armory where basic armor and weapons can be found. A word of advice—be certain to buy bows and as many arrows as possible for your clerics, mages, and thieves. While your front rank of battlers takes the opposition head-on, you'd be surprised at how effective your missile weapons can be from the rear ranks.

In combat, always go for the enemy spell-casters first. Cast any spell that will shut them up, hold them, or put them to sleep. Utilize your archers effectively, having everyone attack one enemy at a time. This way you maximize the effect, and even a strong opponent will quickly succumb to the damage it takes.

You will receive messages every now and then referring you to the Adventurer's Journal, where 88 journal entries and 57 tavern tales are found. Be certain to write this information down. Few tales lead nowhere; most have some important fact needed to help you complete a quest.

Remember that your adventuring party is basically good. Do not succumb to temptation, and do not kill without need. Remember the knight's oath: "My honor is my life." And do buy this AD&D computer game, which is SSI's best yet!

Three-Sixty
2105 South Bascom Avenue
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Harpoon *****
PC/MS-DOS version \$59.95

We have just spent several hours totally engrossed with this naval simulator. There are no preset battle algorithms that dictate combat outcomes, and there is no play

balance between NATO or Soviet forces (of which you can command either side). This is a true simulation with data reflecting real-world equipment and weaponry. You must meet each situation's challenges knowing you are going up against "the real thing." You command ships and aircraft, select from over 100 different weapon systems, and take responsibility for judgment calls. We haven't felt so much "in command" since the release of *GATO*.

The miniatures game on which the computer version is based was designed by Larry Bond in 1980, and he has contributed a wealth of information to this offering. Everything from modern naval strategies for antisubmarine warfare to appropriate ship tactics are included in the game itself and in an extremely well-written user's guide, which also contains an appendix on superpower politics and maritime strategies in modern warfare. Read this appendix, the included Harpoon Tactical Guide by Larry Bond, and the booklet by the extraordinary author Tom Clancy that deals with Russian destroyers, and you'll be well on your way to holding your own in these scenarios. Gordon Walton and his crew of superb programmers at Digital Illusions have created a graphic masterpiece as well as a realistic simulation, ensuring the dedicated war gamer thousands of hours of true-to-life naval warfare.

Join the Search!

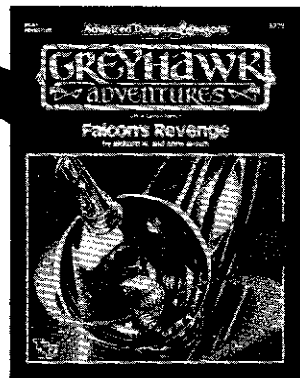
Falcon's Revenge is the first in a series of modules set in the established **WORLD OF GREYHAWK®** fantasy setting.

This adventure takes player characters through the streets, inns, and shops in the city of Greyhawk as you search for clues to stop a perviously extinct cult from resurfacing.

The second module in the series, *Falconmaster*, will be on sale in July; the third module, *Flames of the Falcon*, goes on sale in November.

FALCON'S REVENGE contains 3-D cardboard buildings and street plans compatible with Cities of Mystery!

Don't miss the first in a series of great adventures! *Falcon's Revenge* is on sale now at your favorite toy, book, or hobby store. Get your copy today!



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Harpoon will eventually be composed of many different BattleSets. The first Battle-Set, entitled GIUK (for the part of the North Atlantic bordered by Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom) deals mainly with scenarios in which Soviet and NATO forces are engaged in battles from minor skirmishes all the way up to nuclear exchanges.

The on-screen maps are fantastically accurate and, once through the manual's tutorial, war gamers should have a feel for *Harpoon's* basic features. However, don't feel that after playing the introductory scenario once or twice that you know all there is to learn. *Harpoon* requires hours of dedicated gaming before you can even start to hold your own against well-trained enemy forces.

Harpoon is a credit to its programmers, the game designer, and to Three-Sixty for releasing a simulation that is far more than a game-it's war!

Electronic Arts

1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

Populous: The Promised Lands

Atari ST and Commodore Amiga versions \$14.95

Populous is a smashing game, one of the best released late last year. Now Bullfrog Productions, which developed and programmed this hit, has released a data disk that offers various new worlds for the main game. These worlds include the lands of the Wild West, the French Revolution, Blockland, Silly World, and the Bit Plains. If you enjoyed your Lego set, then Blockland is for you; it's fun to build up worlds made of interlocking blocks. The Wild West and French Revolution lands were enormously enjoyable worlds within which to play god. However, the Bit Plains were stretched a bit too far, and the landscape became confusing at some points. Over all, this data disk is well worth the price to further enhance your *Populous* activities.

As an aside, we have also managed to connect our Atari ST and Commodore Amiga together with a null modem and have enjoyed rousing two-player, head-to-head campaigns. Kirk usually runs the Amiga, and Hartley is on the Atari ST. It's really quite exciting to compete in this manner, not knowing what in the world your human enemy might do.

Virgin Mastertronic International
18001 Cowan
Irvine CA 92714
(714)833-8710

Risk: The World Conquest

PC/MS-DOS version \$39.99
We have always enjoyed the board-game

version of this game. Now Mastertronic has successfully brought this game to the computer in an admirable fashion. In fact, the computer game is far better than the board version. You don't have to wait to find at least one other friend to play the game with you; you can select as many as five computer opponents and have a war of your own. We played the EGA graphics mode, and the colors are stunning. The only drawback might be the small size of the world map upon which the game is played, but the computer manages each turn nicely and you never have to wonder about where your armies are located. You can play either the British or American version of the game, including the extra armies cards. Dice rolls are fair, and the fun is tremendous. If you are looking for one of the best board-game conversions, look at Risk.

Capcom USA

3303 Scott Boulevard
Santa Clara CA 95054
(408)727-0400

Tiger Road

Atari ST version \$19.95

It may seem as though we've been ignoring games on the Atari ST of late. We try to get our reviews out in good time, but the Atari ST versions are usually produced later than versions for other computer systems. In this case, we're glad Capcom decided to produce an ST version of his game, because *Tiger Road* is a good arcade game, not just another entry into the now-swamped world of martial-arts games. You've got all kinds of weapons with which to combat the warlord's nasty assassins to rescue the captive children. When you go up against the rotten Ogres, it's wise to keep an eye on their arm positions. Strike open a jar, and you can never tell what might be of some assistance to you. The graphics and sound are good, with non-stop action from start to finish. *Tiger Road* is a good addition to an Atari ST library. Versions for the C64/128 and Commodore Amiga are also available.

Sierra

P.O. Box 485
Coarsegold CA 93614
(209) 683-4468


Manhunter 2: San Francisco

Macintosh IIx version \$49.95

Manhunter 2 has been receiving rave reviews from many game magazines. These reviews must be for versions other than the Macintosh, as Sierra has not ported the game very well to this system. The screens are colorful but poorly drawn. Curves are jagged, and if there are a number of animation sequences or other objects on-screen, your orb's movement slows down greatly. Also, there is no way to change the difficulty of the arcade sequences. The owner's manual was not specifically written for the Macintosh version, and the included command card does not describe how one can alter the difficulty level. For the novice adventurer, remaining at the default hard level for the arcade sequences is distressing, to say the least. Add to this the fact that the install program as described in the owner's manual doesn't work, and you have an overall disappointment for Mac gamers. Stick with the PC/MS-DOS version, and you'll be far happier!

News and new products

Absolute Entertainment (201-652-1227) has released David Crane's first Nintendo Entertainment System game, *A Boy and His Blob*. This is the only video game to be honored with two awards by Video Games & Computer Entertainment as well as honored by *Games* magazine. When the Boy feeds his Blob different flavors of jelly beans, the friendly alien creature magically transforms into completely different objects. Feed him a root beer jelly bean, and you can rocket to Blobolonia, his home world, where an evil emperor is forcing everyone to eat nothing but marshmallows and chocolate. Feed the Blob a vanilla jelly bean, and he turns into an umbrella that can be used either as a



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parachute or as a shield against falling objects.

Broderbund Software (415-492-3299) is now publishing *Centauri Alliance*. The game's author is none other than Michael Cranford of *The Bard's Tale* and *The Bard's Tale II* fame. The game's initial release will be for the Apple II computer for \$49.95. As the game begins, the Centauri Alliance faces the threat of intergalactic conflict. The player is commissioned to lead a secret expedition to deal with unknown forces that threaten to plunge the galaxy into chaos. A task force must be created, and then it's a race from planet to planet. The game includes 3-D combat displays, a first-person point of view, an optional map view, and realistic, smoothly scrolling backgrounds.

Capcom USA (408-727-0400) introduced a variety of action-oriented video games for the Nintendo Entertainment System, including original and nonarcade games licensed through the Walt Disney Company. Capcom will also release its first Game Boy title, as well as three new arcade hits for PC/MS-DOS, C64/128, and Commodore Amiga computers. The first new offering is *Rescue Rangers*, which highlights the antics of Walt Disney's Chip and Dale characters. Another Disney release is *Adventures in the Magic Kingdom*, which features Mickey Mouse and other popular Disney characters in an action-adventure game set in the Disney-style theme park. Each of these games costs \$49.95. The first Game Boy title is *Gargoyle's Quest*, which has incredible sound and graphics and will be released in the second quarter of this year. For the microcomputer gamer, *Ghouls and Ghosts*, *Strider*, and *Black Tiger* will be released. The price for each is \$19.95 for PC/MS-DOS and Amiga versions, and \$14.95 for C64/128 versions.

Data East (408-286-7080) has introduced *Battle Chess* for the Nintendo Entertainment System. It combines the strategic challenges of traditional chess with 3-D graphics, for \$44.95.

Electronic Arts (415-571-7171) is shipping *Starflight 2: Trade Routes to the*

Cloud Nebula. You'll talk to and trade with 29 unique alien species, explore over 500 new worlds, and solve mysteries. You don't have to have experienced *Starflight* to enjoy *Starflight 2*, and there is no correct way to finish this grand space adventure. The price for PC/MS-DOS computers is \$49.95.

Strategic Simulations, Inc. (408-737-6814) has produced *War of the Lance* for the Apple II computer. Priced at \$39.95, this strategic war game is based on TSR's AD&D DRAGONLANCE saga. One or two players get to make alliances, conquer nations, and destroy enemy troops to win the War of the Lance. You can command either the Whitestone forces of good or the evil Highlord Dragonarmies. The full campaign lasts for six game years (30 turns). A version for the C64/128 will be released this year.

Strategic Studies Group (P.O. Box 261, Drummoyne, 2047, Australia) has released *Panzer Battles* for both the Apple II and PC/MS-DOS computers. This strategic war game recreates six battles of the Russian Front using the company's award-winning land-combat system. The price is \$39.95. Another release is *Gold* for the Americas, released for PC/MS-DOS computers and the Commodore Amiga. This game is a recreation of the colonization and conquest of the New World from A.D. 1500 to 1800. You play one of the four great powers of the time—England, France, Spain, or Portugal—and you must carve out an empire. The price is \$39.95.

Media Technology Ltd. (301-926-8300) has announced the release of *Dragon's Lair: Escape from Singe's Castle*, in cooperation with Visionary Design Technologies. This is the latest in the continuing adventures of Dirk the Daring, with whom millions of gamers have become familiar from his first appearance in Don Bluth's amazing and original *Dragon's Lair*. In this sequel, Princess Daphne has been captured by Singe the Dragon and spirited away to the innermost recesses of the Castle. As Dirk, you must save her from the Evil Shapeshifter who lurks deep within the Castle's catacombs. The game is

being released for the Commodore Amiga for \$69.95. Versions are planned for Apple and Atari ST computers.

MicroProse (301-771-1151), through its Medalist International entertainments, has announced *Rick Dangerous*. This is a fast-moving, challenging, yet light-hearted action/adventure game for all ages. You control Rick as he battles hostile tribesman in an Amazon temple, dodges persistent assassins in an Egyptian pyramid, liberates prisoners from a fortified castle, and destroys a Nazi missile base. It's for PC/MS-DOS computers at \$39.95.

Origin (603-644-3360) has released *Ultima VI: The False Prophet* for PC/MS-DOS computers. This sequel in the award-winning Ultima series initiates immediate action when the Avatar is summoned back to the realm of Britannia by Lord British to stop a devastating attack by an evil race of gargoyles. There is superbly crafted animation and special effects with full support for 256-color VGA/MCGA graphics. All game play is menu and icon controlled and features a full-length musical soundtrack supporting all major sound boards.

Virgin Mastertronic (714-833-8710) has released *Double Dragon II: The Revenge*, the sequel to the original smash *Double Dragon*. This is a further adventure in the lives of heroes Billy and Jimmy Lee. The game features several new weapons, more baddies to fight against, and a new offensive maneuver: the hurricane kick. The game is shipping for the C64/128 at \$29.99 and for PC/MS-DOS computers at \$39.99.

Clue corner

Wizardry V (Sir-Tech)

When speaking to Yog (Level 6, beyond the quicksand), know that the mannequin is the ice ferry. You must take the ice-ferry and have the Ice Key to be able to get to Level 7, which is the level of the Triaxial Gate. On Level 7, you will need what the Duck of Sparks gave you as payment for his lost property. Also on Level 7, beware the shafts to Hades, as a pack of Nether and Greater Demons can rapidly wipe out even a powerful party. On Level 777, do not use Dumapic and Malor to return to the castle. Instead, try to find a stairway. It will lead directly to the castle, bypassing all levels between. On Level 777 is the Ghost's Nest; it seems to be filled with the ghosts of thieves and program designers. To wake the Loon, you'll need the Gold Key, the Skeleton Key, and the Pocket-watch. Once you have spoken to him, he will return your group to the castle. Once you start going through the Triaxial Gate (you'll be carded at each door) you may not return to the castle until Sorn is dealt with. Two of the four cards (Queen of Hearts, King of Diamonds) are found on Level 6; the ice ferry will show you one location, and the other lies at the bottom of a very deep well. Stealing from the ghosts in the Ghost's Nest can be quite

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profitable. Also, bartering with them can gain a few very useful items—but they'll steal from you if given the chance. One of the most frustrating things about *Wizardry V* is that the thieves attacking your party invariably grab items you need to complete your quest. Rokdo slows this down somewhat. Once through the Hall of Mirrors avoid the first door, as it is strictly one-way. There is more than one door to the Thieves Guild.

Gregg Sharp
Buckeye AZ

Ultima V (Origin)

When just starting out, sell all of your weapons and armor. Buy two bows, one crossbow, the ammunition necessary for each, and a horse. Position your horse on the left side of the dock by Britannia. Go to the right section and hold down the space bar until the sun sets and then rises.

When the sun rises, you'll have your choice of monsters. Ettins, trolls, and orcs are the best. Don't bother with the skeletons now, as they are far too hardy and too numerous. Snakes, spiders, rats, bats, and insects aren't worth the arrows you use to kill them, as they offer little XP and less treasure.

Wisps, dragons, and daemons tend to spell certain death for at least one fledgling member of your party. Avoid these creatures! When a pirate comes near, let yourself be attacked by him, then commandeer his boat. Proceed to blow away the above-mentioned untouchables from the safety of the water.

After you've gained a significant amount of loot, go to Yew. Arm your whole party with Magic Axes. Do not search any of the boxes, beds, or dressers in the cities. If you do, and you take what you find, that's considered stealing, and that's a no-no.

Now, go back to the horse-laden dock and complete a few more days of the horse-monster-space bar trick. When you again have a sizeable inventory and number of gold pieces, go to the Buccaneer's Den. To get there from the dock by Lord British's castle, row east until you hear the disk drive access three times. After the third access, row south for two drive accesses. Peer into a gem, and you'll see the isle where the Buccaneer's Den is located.

At the Buccaneer's Den, sell your entire inventory but save your Boomer-axes. Now, buy as many Rings of Invisibility as you can, then find the Dungeon of Shame. That can be found northwest of Lord British's castle (WoP: Infama). Find your way into the dungeon and go past the first room. Now, peer into the gem again. There are three passages going left; you want to go into the middle passage.

You'll come to a ladder that says DEEPER. (K)limb down four levels. Follow the one-way passage. (K)limb down once more. You should now see four caved-in passages, one on each side of you. Arm all of your characters with the Rings of Invisi-

bility and (K)limb down once more. You will see four dragons and a room filled with treasure. Have all but one of your characters go back up the ladder. Have the character that stays behind kill three of the four dragons, open all of the chests, and get all of the treasure. Don't worry about the chest traps; poison doesn't work in a room, and acid damage can easily be healed with a few mani spells or one *vas mani* spell.

If you kill only three of the four dragons, get the treasure and go back up the ladder. (K)limb down again and you'll see the treasure and the four dragons—and you suddenly realize that this trick is repeatable. In fact, at 111 XP gained per round, levels can be added very quickly to your character. In no time at all, you'll have the cash to buy what you need, namely food and reagents (up to 9,999 and 99 each, respectively). You'll now have an easier time solving *Ultima V*.

Three items from Lord British are very helpful. The crown lies atop Blackthorne's palace, east of Serpent's Hold. But be prepared to lose at least one character permanently to get it. When (U)sed, it negates all magic of your opponents; this is a great way to wipe out daemons, reapers, and mages without trouble. I recommend getting the crown as soon as possible. The

amulet lies in the underworld; carefully following the path of Lord British's expedition (as described in the record included with the game) will find it. Lastly, the scepter lies in the fortress of the Shadowlords, in the mountains below the southernmost tip of Lost Hope Bay. But don't go there until at least one Shadowlord is destroyed—without using the crown. When (U)sed, the scepter destroys magical fields.

The letters of the scrolls indicate what spells to cast. The potions are not so easy. Yellow is usually healing, red a poison antidote, white an x-ray potion, green a poison, and black invisibility.

The words to open the dungeons are: Despise—VILLIS; Destard—INOPIA; Covetous—AVIDUS; Deceit—FALLAX; Hythloth—IGNAVUS; Wrong—MALUM; and Shame—INFAMA.

Rick Davis
Fullerton CA

That's all for this issue. A backlog of game hints will be offered in our next column, as well as a review of *Accolade's* latest action adventure, *Day of the Viper*. Don't forget, your hints keep thousands alive! Mail your letters to: The Lessers, 179 Pebble Place, San Ramon CA 94583, U.S.A. Until next time, game on! Ω

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The VOYAGE of the PRINCESS ARK

Part 4: Capture, surrender, and—death?

by Bruce A. Heard

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**From the Journals of
Prince Haldemar of Haaken
Lord Admiral of the Mightiest Empire
Captain of the Ever-Victorious
Princess Ark
Imperial Explorer, etc., etc.**

Andrumir 12, 1965: Our flight over the kingdom of Manakara was uneventful. The high plateaus of Tulear eventually passed, and we reached the northern border of Androkia, near the coast. We then continued southwest over the sea to avoid direct confrontation with the Androkians, xenophobes about whom we were warned by King Mananjary himself. The decision was made more to please Lady Abovombe than to avoid difficulties with the natives. (I neglected to mention that the lady has stayed aboard the *Princess Ark* to join our voyage of discovery. Upon our return to Sundsvall, she will be King Mananjary's ambassador. Lady Abovombe has a refreshing personality, and the crew is becoming fond of her.)

As night fell, I heard a noise against my

window, at the *Princess's* stern. A small bat was there, apparently terrified by my presence but too exhausted by its flight above the sea to flutter away. I pitied the poor thing and put it in a cage in my room. It will be yet another witness to my long journey.

Andrumir 24, 1966: The journey across the southern edge of the Cestian Pass was quite an endeavor. The quasi-permanent storms that prevail in this region dropped so much rain on the *Princess's* deck that she almost alighted on the roaring sea—a fate that would have destroyed her since she was built to fly, not to float. The princess's hulk is much too light to withstand even normal sea navigation, much less a violent storm. Fortunately, the crew performed splendidly in bailing out the water. Any navigation of these waters by a seagoing vessel would be excessively dangerous and thus should be avoided.

Andrumir 26, 1965: We reached the continental coast after sundown. I would have ordered a southerly course if one of the crewmen had not discovered some lights in the distance, perhaps a native village. I've decided to investigate, using the clouds for cover. We shall see what we shall see.

Andrumir 28, 1966: Our approach toward what we thought be a native vil-

lage became a very serious situation. We are fortunate to have survived. Indeed, there were lights, but not from a village—they came from a large, gloomy castle perched atop an incredible cliff overlooking the Gulf of Mar. All seemed to be fine as we observed the fortress from our position in the clouds, until I noticed that the princess was getting dangerously close to the cliff, despite my orders to stand off. Our strenuous attempts to pull away inexplicably failed. It was then I detected a powerful magical force that had locked onto the *Princess's* bow. Nothing could break that grip—neither my powers, nor those of Talasar, nor those of the dispel wardens.

As we slowly drifted down to the black fortress, knights in armor could be seen standing motionless in the rain and the wind. All of them bore the coat of arms of the Heldannic Order. How such an insignificant clerical order built a mighty fortress so far from the Heldann Freeholds was at first inconceivable; later events would explain all, as we learned.

As soon as the range permitted it, the battle started. The boltmen and their Cestian squires did their best. But when the *Princess* reached the main Heldannic bastion, the heavily armored knights boarded the ship en masse and overwhelmed the crew. There was no alterna-

tive but to surrender in hopes of saving the ship.

Of course, for a wizard of my status, being "captured" is a relative term. I had copiously prepared myself, then allowed these knights to believe I was their prisoner. I followed their commander, planning to learn the Order's reasons for this act of war against a ship of Her Imperial Majesty.

As the commander of the *Princess Ark*, I was predictably and forcibly taken to the fortress's high priestess. Her welcome was very cold. These knights knew about wizardry and had made all the right moves to ensure I would not cast spells. I had a short conversation with the high priestess, which did not amount to much since she had protected her thoughts against any sort of magical *empathy*. Soon enough I tired of her charades, and I played my trump card.

Years ago, when I dabbled in spell research, I stumbled upon an interesting spell of *delaying*—a rather difficult spell, but if used successfully it confers the ability to delay a number of spells until a certain condition occurs. It will not work for more than an hour for me, but that was sufficient. A few blinks of my right eye and a casual sniff were all it took to *time stop* this fine company.

My, what an interesting discovery I then made. A little *invisibility* here and a bit of *teleport* there, and before long I had

found a temple at the center of fortress. A stairway spiraled down into the rock, leading to a crypt—a regular sort of crypt, mind you, like the ones that invariably contain someone's grave. After blasting away a few creatures that did not expect my impromptu appearance, I read the inscriptions carved just about everywhere. Crafty sculptors, these knights.

The Heldannic Knights have been on a quest for decades to find the mortal remains of their Spiritual Patron. One of their heroes had made it this far and had actually found the grave. The knights managed to create a permanent gate to this place, then built their fortress above the ancient crypt. So far, they had succeeded in keeping it secret, which leads me to believe they murdered the wizard hired to create the *gate*, as well as all those who built the castle. This explains why they might desire the destruction of the *Princess*.

It took some sophisticated magical doing on my part to remove the corpse and take it away into the planes, to a place of my knowledge alone. Just as I returned from my journey, knights poured into the crypt and captured me again—this time for sure. Their anger was as palpable as the many sharp blades they laid at my throat. It would have been over for me, but the high priestess arrived in time.

And she *knew* what I had done. It took some very careful discussing to sort things

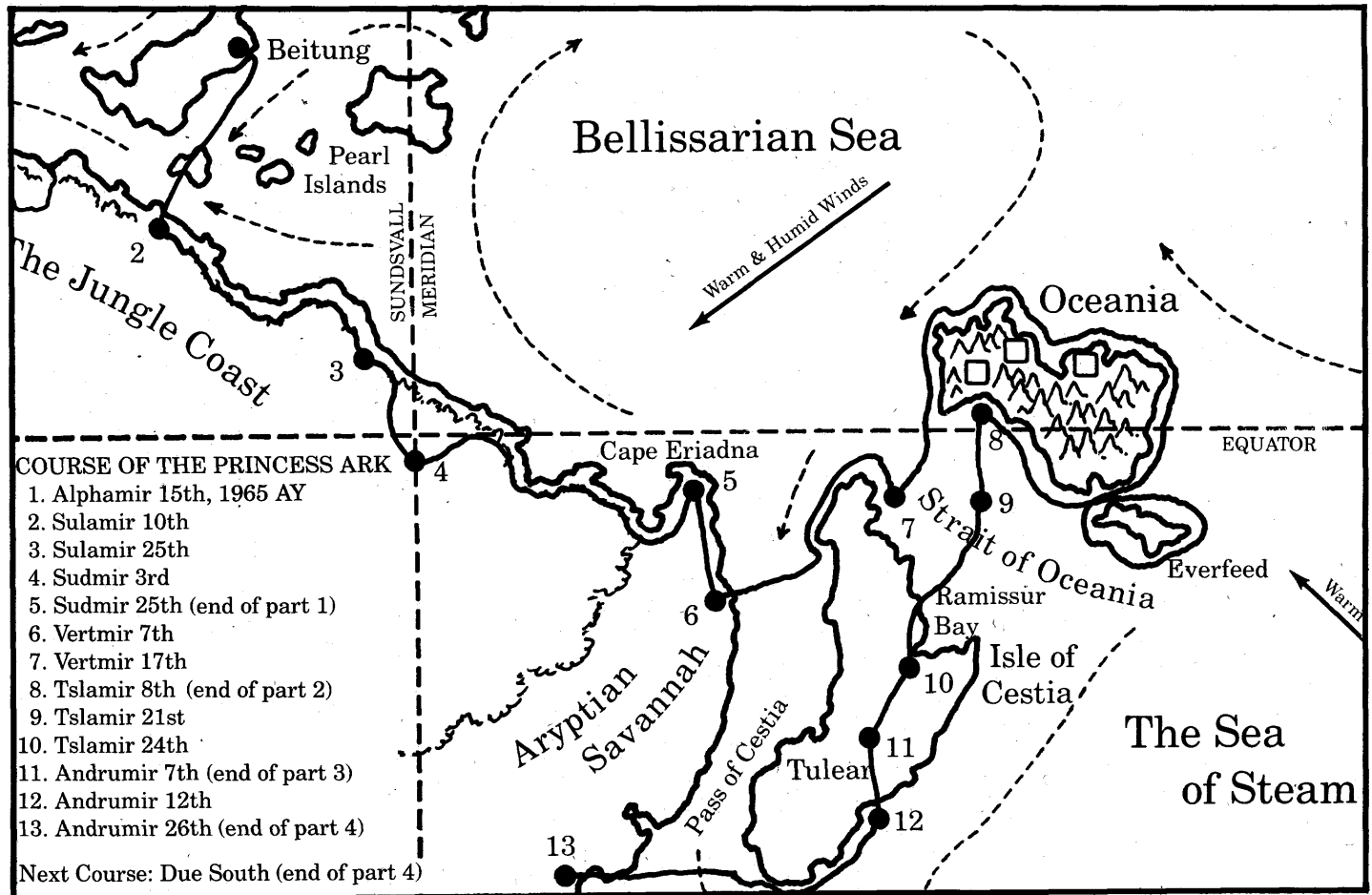
out. A shrewd negotiator, that lady; I grant her that. Eventually, she ordered the release of both ship and crew, in exchange for which she and I went into the planes the next day and recovered the body of the order's Spiritual Patron.

I must admit that I had a very tough time breaking away from the priestess. Her intention, of course, was to never let me go—I was too dangerous, now—but neither was my intention to stay. The priestess had what she wanted—the "holy relic"—and my ship was free and far enough from the fortress to avoid being pulled back. We left immediately; the empire has no interest in the clerical matters of petty knighthoods. My personal interest in this whole episode lies now in discovering the nature of the force that pulled the *Princess* down—and this I am intent upon unveiling one day. It will have to wait for now.

Cyprimir 1, 1965: After returning to the *Princess*, I ordered a new course, away from the fortress. These knights will probably be looking for us, but I care no more about them. We are now sailing south over the coast. The land has become an extremely rocky, uninviting region. Despite some rainfall, it seems the vegetation is getting sparser.

To be continued...

If you have already designed the areas covered by the flight of the *Princess Ark*,



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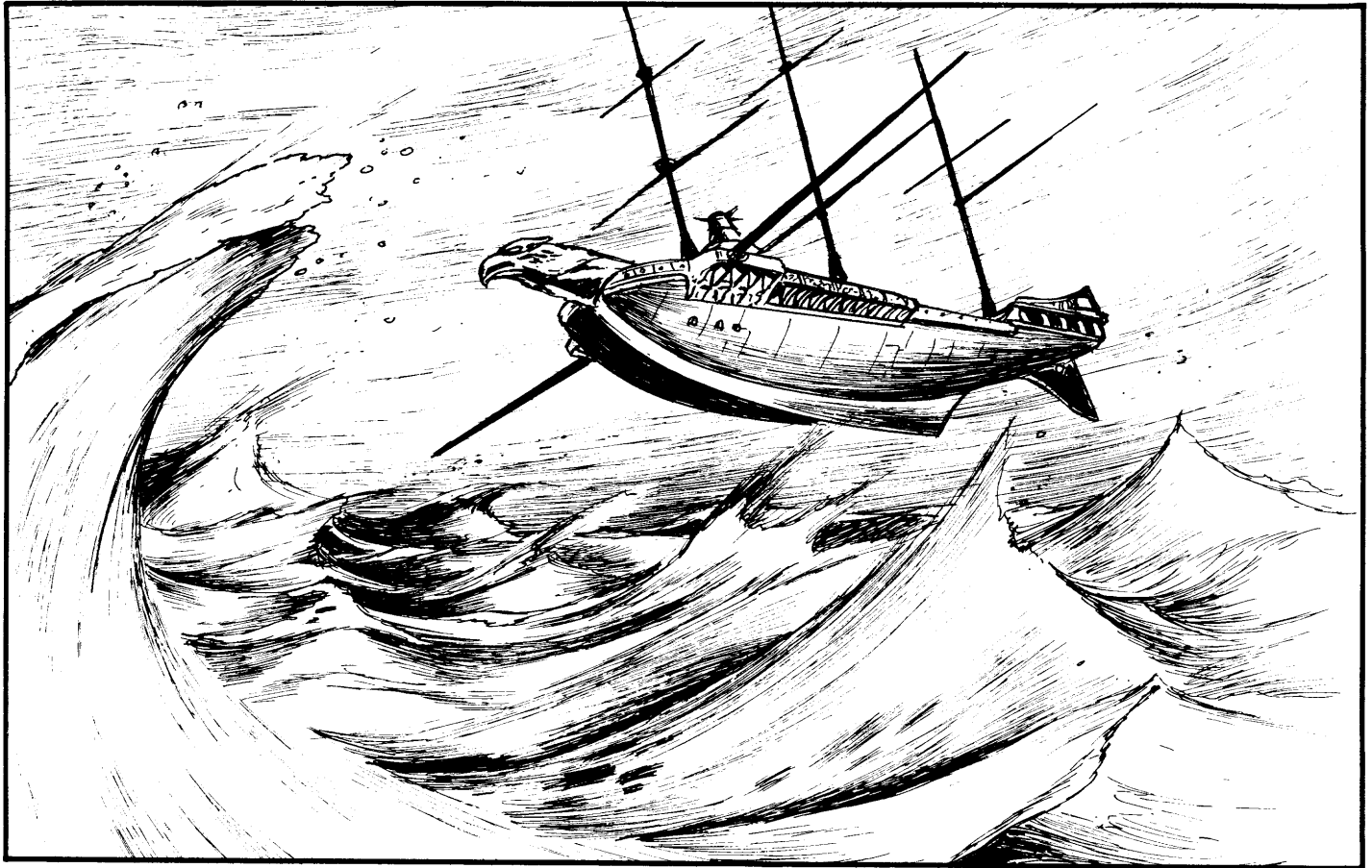
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simply ignore the information given here (the skyship simply went by, assuming that these areas were already well known to the Alphasians). If you have any comments regarding this column or the D&D game's Known World as designed in the Gazetteers, please send your inquiries to: Bruce Heard, D&D Column, TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. We cannot guarantee that all letters will get answers, but they will certainly have our attention. Your input into the development of the D&D Known World is welcome.

Heldannic Knights

The Heldannic Order is a grim brotherhood of warlike knights whose quest and devotion is the unification of the barbarian freeholds north of the Kingdom of Vestland. The Heldannic Knights, most of them powerful in the magic of clerics, are brutal and bloodthirsty. They exterminated countless barbarian clans during the centuries of Heldannic terror. The knights are extremely loyal to their order and are the embodiment of the concept "rule by the strong." They have no mercy for the weak. These enigmatic knights have no known allies and have systematically rejected all diplomatic ties with either Thyatis or Alphatia.

A Heldannic Knight is recognizable for his dark, dull-gray plate armor; for his long white tabard with its black,

upright lion; and for his full-face great helm topped with the ominous upright lion to make him appear much taller than he really is. These are heavy cavalry knights with fully barded war-horses. They normally travel and march to battle brandishing dozens of very large banners, standards, and pennants bearing the order's coat of arms. When a great cavalry charge is possible, Heldannic Knights are likely to use heavy cavalry lances. Otherwise, half of them use large shields and bastard swords, and the remainder use two-handed swords.

A Banner of Heldannic Knights (2-12 men) typically casts *protection from evil* before combat. Their officer, the Knight Banneret, is likely to also cast a *blight* spell and remain at the center of his troops. The officer's two remaining

spells are often *cure light wounds* and *hold person*.

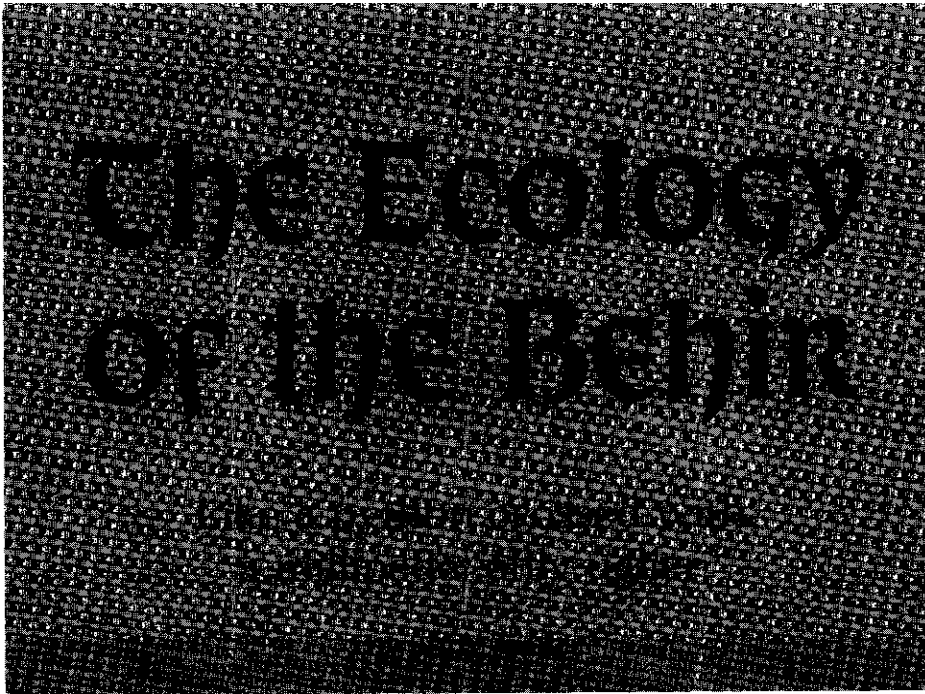
Lower-level clerics of the order are students who reside at the various strongholds of the order, or else act as squires or men-at-arms during conflicts. The Heldannic Order as a whole is said to have up to 2,000 knights and officers (Knights Banneret, Lieutenants, and Captains), and 5,000 students. Twelve High Priests (C12) under the authority of the Great Knight of the Order (C25) rule the knighthood from the Fortress of Freiburg in the Heldann Freeholds.

Countless other troops and armies exist in the Heldann Freeholds. These include barbarian hordes, town militias, and mercenaries opposed to the Heldannic Order.

Ω

Heldannic Knights Table

	Knight	Officer
Armor Class	3 (plate armor)	2 (field armor)
Class and Level	C2	C5
Move	90'(30')	90'(30')
Mounted	120'(40')	120'(40')
Attacks	1 sword or lance	1 weapon or spell
Damage	By weapon type	By weapon or spell type
No. Appearing	1 Banner (2d6 + 6)	1 per Banner
Save as	C2	C5
Morale	11	11
Alignment	chaotic	Chaotic
XP Value	30	425



*An excerpt from the tome **Creatures of the Wilderlands**, by the sage and explorer Radamust:*

One of the most malevolent creatures I have ever encountered is the behir. Having nearly fallen victim to its depredations on two separate occasions, I have endeavored to learn more about this wild and curious beast, which is occasionally mistaken for a wingless dragon by the uneducated.

A behir is unmistakable to the learned, once you have seen it. It is a twelve-legged serpent, with each foot bearing three toes that end in razor-sharp talons. These talons are hooked like a raptor's but are designed for slashing, not grasping, prey. The body is covered in bandlike scales from light to dark blue in color with grayish tints along the edges. The underside is also light blue and composed of a vertical row of banded scales. The upper scales are very hard and tough and, if treated correctly, can be made into serviceable armor.¹ The head is long, and the narrow mouth is filled with many sharp teeth. Two backward-curving horns project from the rear of the skull, each black in color and 3-4' in length.

Upon beginning my investigation, I discovered there was more than one species, each with its own special abilities and wildly divergent habitats. However, thankfully, these two other species are much rarer than the common (or lightning) behir, and are rarely encountered by anyone who is not an explorer or a savage, for they inhabit the fringes of the world: humid jungles, deserts, and volcanic plains. Because of their rarity, I was unable to discover much beyond their habitats and have named them accordingly: desert behir and jungle behir. Numerous tales have been told of them, each giving various descriptions of these beasts. Most

are too fanciful to believe. I will assume their natures are much like that of the common behir until more is known.²

The common behir is a violent, destructive creature that frequents mountainous and hilly terrain as well as open plains and temperate forests. It never remains in one area very long, even if prey is plentiful, and thus never accumulates much in the way of spoils. Its den is usually a cave or well-hidden thicket where it rests while it is not hunting. It never brings prey back to its lair, preferring for the lair to remain unnoticed by scavengers and thus unlikely to draw attention to the behir there.³

Behir are active during the day, though not exclusively, and they sleep during the moonlit hours. They prey on all creatures smaller than they, particularly medium and larger mammals such as boars, though they will also attack humans, ogres, and elves. Being reptilian in nature, behir

several days recovering from their gluttony. Common behir hibernate during the winter and spend much of their time fattening up before its onset.⁴

Though massive and bulky creatures, behir are surprisingly quick and nimble, capable of overtaking human prey though not horses. They also climb remarkably well and can move straight up the face of a mountainous cliff. When full grown, behir often measure as much as 40' in length, though being reptilian they never stop growing. Enormous shed scales have been found that indicate some ancient specimens might be 60' long.

Although only dimly intelligent when compared to humans, behir have a terrible natural cunning and are quite adept at acquiring prey by simple means. They prefer to attack from ambush, and openly confront only small groups of creatures. A pair occasionally works in concert to obtain prey, one flushing prey into the waiting claws and jaws of the other, but this working together seems to be unintentional, as behir are unsociable as a rule and will fight over a large kill.

A behir can attack in numerous ways, most commonly by biting and, by rearing up on the hindmost eight legs, clawing with the four foremost legs. The behir can also wrap its upper body around a large victim to crush it, a tactic that also allows it to make two to six talon attacks on the victim (depending on the latter's size) until the victim dies or manages to break free. Having witnessed a mercifully brief battle between an ogre and a behir, I can attest that even ogres find this a daunting task and are unlikely to win such a struggle. Less commonly, a behir will ram an opponent with its forehead or trample it underfoot. Both of these attacks can be fatal to smaller creatures, although they are fairly easy to avoid.⁵

On account of their size, behir can swal-

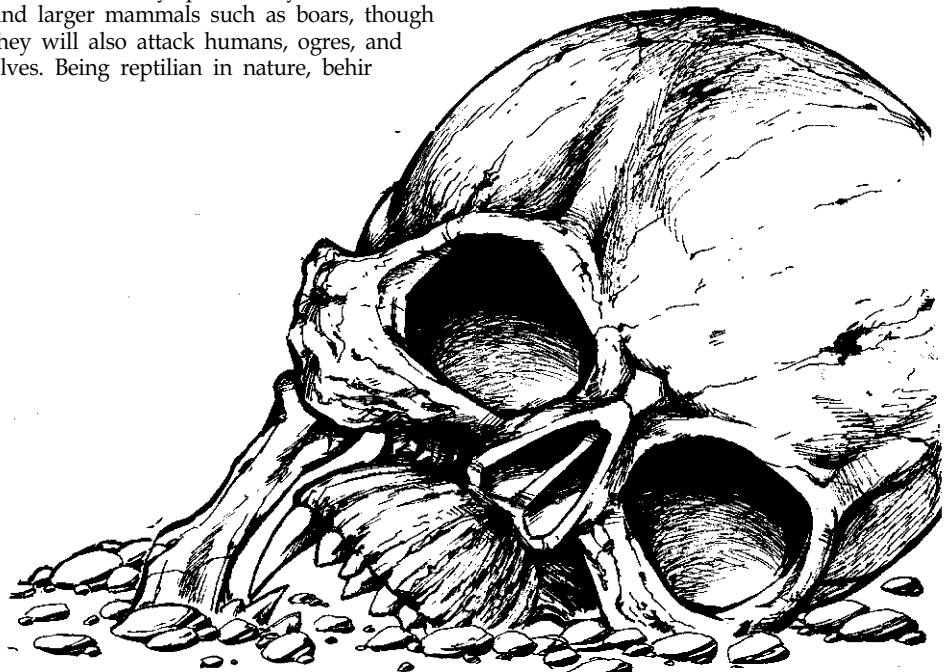




ILLUSTRATION BY WOLFGANG SCHWARTZ

SCHWARTZ

low man-size or smaller creatures whole. The chance of this occurring is not very large, but once swallowed, there is almost no chance of its prey escaping alive. The digestive juices are strong enough to corrode and dissolve metal in a few days, flesh in a considerably shorter time. Needless to say, I have seen no one survive being swallowed. However, the acid is not strong enough to dissolve gems or glass and these sometimes will be found inside the stomach of a behir, the only treasure they will possess.⁶

Before I could continue my study of the beast, I needed a dead one for dissection. Rather than risk life and limb in this pursuit, I employed cunning that I thought even a behir would be proud of. Knowing from my studies that behir are not averse to adding carrion to their diet, I poisoned the body of a dead ox and left it for a behir to find. However, the ploy was a failure, for no matter what poison I used, the behir walked away unscathed. Apparently the strength of its digestive juices somehow destroyed the poison before it could take effect. Poisoned missiles also had no effect, and I was at a loss to explain why until I found that the behir has a thick layer of fat under its scales, like a pig. This explains why poison from arrows never gets to its bloodstream.

The most dangerous aspect of a behir, however, is its ability to generate a bolt of lightning, perhaps in the same manner as a blue dragon. This bolt is roughly seven yards long and is directed from its mouth. Upon studying the remains of the behir I finally managed to obtain, I have discovered a few clues to how this might be done, but nothing conclusive. A large organ with an unusually high concentration of metals lies adjacent to the stomach. This organ is connected by a system of nerve structures to another, smaller organ in the back of the mouth. Again, the smaller organ has a high concentration of metals. I hypothesize that an electrical current is produced in the larger gland by some as yet unknown method, then stored in the smaller gland until discharged. The behir seems to have complete control over this ability and is able to fire this bolt as often as five or six times per hour.

Perhaps to supply these organs, behir ingest fairly large quantities of metal, preferring copper and silver over all others. Few items of metallic nature are found after a behir has slain a victim. Occasionally, a behir can be distracted by great amounts of copper or silver coins, allowing passage or not attacking, but only if the behir is well fed beforehand. The high metal content in the behir's bodily systems seems to have an added advantage in that they are themselves unaffected by electrical discharges in any form. Exactly how the behir uses the metal it eats or how it is involved in the generation of and resistance to the lightning is unknown, but I plan to continue my research into this

interesting phenomena.

At this point I would also like to hypothesize on the natures of the other species of behir. Although unable to examine one close at hand, I have heard stories that lead me to suspect each species has its own ranged magical attack, probably working on the same general principles as those of the common behir. From this and other aspects of its nature, I believe that behir are magical in nature and are the result of some ancient magical experiment of wizards or godlings—as so many beasts we know seem to be. Perhaps time and further research will tell.

Behir grow steadily and are able to mate by their tenth year, the point at which they can be considered adults, Behir can live as long as 50-60 years in the wild, but few actually reach that age as most are killed by predators before then. Mating takes place in early spring, with the pair choosing a secluded cave in which to live during this time. The female lays 1-4 eggs, blue-green in color and about 2' in length. The eggs are leathery like a snake's, and they are buried under a light layer of sand or dirt. During the time it takes the eggs to hatch—three to four weeks, normally—the female remains on guard at the nest. The male forages for both.⁷

But parental attitudes do not last long, as the young are quickly driven from the lair after hatching and must fend for themselves. Few survive to adulthood, as any number of other monsters and foes—not the least of them being adventurers—will slay the young at any opportunity. It is possible to train behir if captured while only months old. Such behir can be taught to understand simple commands and even to speak a few words of Common, but they are capricious and wicked by nature, respecting only power, and this loyalty usually lasts from one meal to the next or until a more powerful master comes along. Thus, ownership of a behir can be a double-edged sword. A behir that is much larger than its owner is certain to strike out and become unmanageable.⁸

The behir, surprisingly for its size, actually does not upset its environment beyond its tendency to lay waste to civilized dwellings in search of two-legged prey. Granted, it is hated by all intelligent beings, which it in turn hates, but it eats relatively little. However, being so well armored, so large, and so well equipped with weapons as it is, one cannot imagine what possible good it serves except to torment humanity. Certainly nature would not miss this beast, and it may be that extinction at the hands of warriors and wizards will someday be the fate of this species. Would that it were gone tomorrow!

Footnotes

1. A trained armorer or smith can construct armor from a behir's hide. Such armor takes two to four weeks and 2,000 gp to construct. Equivalent to chain mail in

encumbrance, such armor provides protection equal to banded mail. Up to three man-size armors can be constructed from a single slain behir. Some armorers or smiths pay 500-1,000 gp for a behir's hide in good condition.

2. The other species of behir are detailed later. Both the desert behir and jungle behir are like the common behir in most respects, particularly in their destructive habits, general life cycles, etc.

3. There is a 5% chance of encountering a behir in its lair. If an encounter is indicated, there is a 75% chance that the behir is sleeping. Any undue noise, as well as any attacks, will bring the behir instantly awake.

4. Because of their reptilian nature, behir become extremely sluggish when temperatures fall below the freezing point, especially if the weather is cloudy. Thus, cold-producing spells, such as *cone of cold* and ice storm, reduce a behir's movement by half for 2-8 rounds. If the low temperatures can somehow be maintained, the behir will go nearly dormant, seeking only to defend itself from attack and escape the cold by whatever means possible.

5. It seems unlikely that a behir will constrict prey that is only of human size. If confronted with a human-size opponent, it will bite (2-8 hp damage) and rear back

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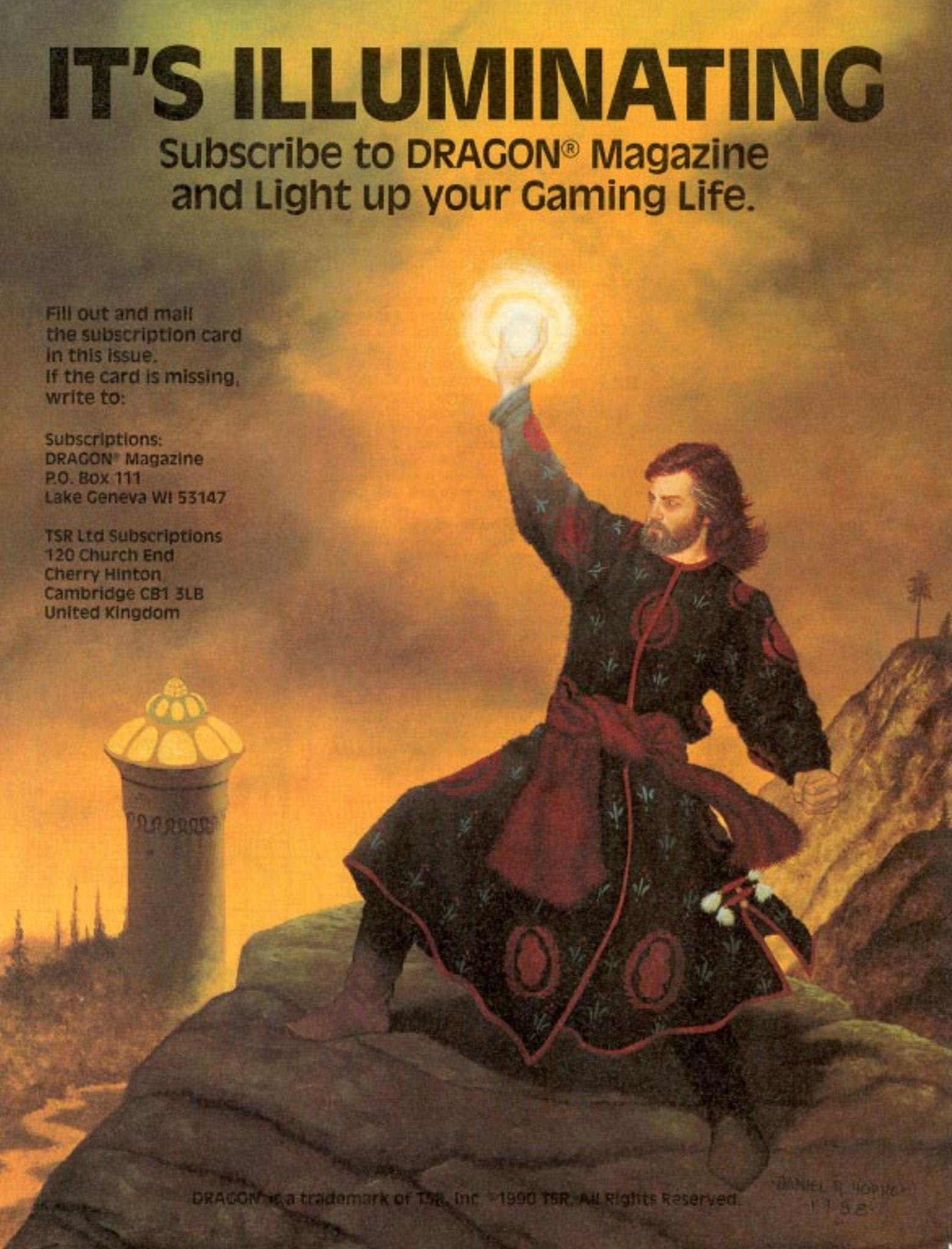
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to get four claw attacks (each doing 1-6 hp damage). If it meets an ogre, hill giant, bull, or similar large animal, it will bite (2-8 hp damage) and simultaneously wrap its body around the victim (doing 2-5 hp damage from crushing and abrasion). On the following round, the behir gives a slight roll to its body to bring its "interior" talons to bear on the entrapped prey, and it can bite (2-8 hp damage) and attempt six separate strikes with those talons (each strike doing 1-6 hp if it hits), though no damage from constriction will be done, as the body will have pulled back far enough to allow the talon attacks. If fighting a dragon, a behir could even wrap itself around the dragon an attempt to bring all of its claws to bear, biting and constricting as well, and perhaps using its electrical attack, too. The lightning strike is primarily used against spell-casting adventurers, dragons, and other dangerous foes.

A behir may also choose to butt an opponent (1-10 hp damage) or trample an opponent (4-16 hp damage). Both attacks are at -2 to hit against man-size or small creatures, but if successful such attacks stun victims for 1-4 rounds, not allowing them to attack, defend, or escape.

6. It should be noted that the strength of the acid is necessary to dissolve the metal items the behir eats. For this reason, no items of metallic origin are found in a behir's stomach. Only gems and glass objects are safe from the corroding effect of the acid. It takes a full day for the digestive acids to dissipate enough for safe removal of any gems or objects that might be in the stomach. If the behir is cut open before then, anyone who touches the stomach liquids will take 1-4 hp damage and, if a hand was used, be unable to grasp anything for 2-8 rounds from pain.

7. A behir grows according to the statistics in the Behir Growth Table. Rapid growth takes place during the first five years of a behir's life before it slows considerably. Young behir must fend for themselves while still quite young and, as noted by Radamust, few survive to adulthood. Those that do are extremely cunning and dangerous for beasts with simple minds.

For the three to four weeks it takes for the eggs to hatch, the female is always found in the lair, and the male is never far away. Although the male brings prey back to the lair for the female, they meticulously clean the area of remains to avoid drawing the attention of any predators. Both male and female fight ferociously to protect the eggs, gaining a +2 bonus to hit and damage when doing so.

8. Behir can be trained if caught within a year of their hatching. For this reason, young behir and behir eggs can be sold on the open market for 500-750 gp. Such training takes about two months for a skilled animal trainer, after which the behir can understand and speak Common as well as a five-year-old child. However, its natural tendency toward treachery can

never be removed; there is a 50% chance the behir will abandon its current master for a new one if approached properly. (This chance should be adjusted either up

or down by the DM depending on the circumstances.) By its tenth year, a behir will attempt to free itself and will become unmanageable in all respects.

Behir, variant

	Desert	Jungle
CLIMATE/TERRAIN	Dry, deserts	Wet, rain forests
FREQUENCY	Very rare	Very rare
ORGANIZATION	Solitary	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE	Day	Day
DIET	Carnivore	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE	Low	Low
TREASURE	Incidental	Incidental
ALIGNMENT	Neutral evil	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING	1-2	1-2
ARMOR CLASS	3	4
MOVEMENT	15	15
HIT DICE	10	14
THACO	11	7
NO. OF ATTACKS	See below	See below
DAMAGE/ATTACK	See below	See below
SPECIAL ATTACKS	See below	See below
SPECIAL DEFENSES	Immune to poison and heat	Immune to poison and acid
MAGIC RESISTANCE	Standard	Standard
SIZE	L (35' long)	L (45' long)
MORALE	Champion (15)	Champion (15)
X P V A L U E	8,000	12,000

Desert Behir: These creatures are found in deserts as well as volcanic plains. Their platelike upper scales range in color from yellow to orange, while the belly scales are fiery red. When attacking, the desert behir has available all the physical attacks of a normal behir. The desert behir's breath weapon, however, is a jet of flame, 20' long, that does 30 hp damage unless a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon is made, success indicating half damage is sustained. This jet can be used once every 12 rounds.

Jungle behir: As the name implies, the jungle behir is found in tropical jungles and rain forests. The large scales that cover the upper half of the body are emerald green in color, while the scales covering the lower half are a lighter coppery green. The jungle behir possess the same attack routines as the other behir types, but its breath weapon is a jet of acid that does 20 hp damage unless a successful saving throw is made. Half damage is applicable if the save is made. The jet can be used once every eight rounds.

Behir Growth Table

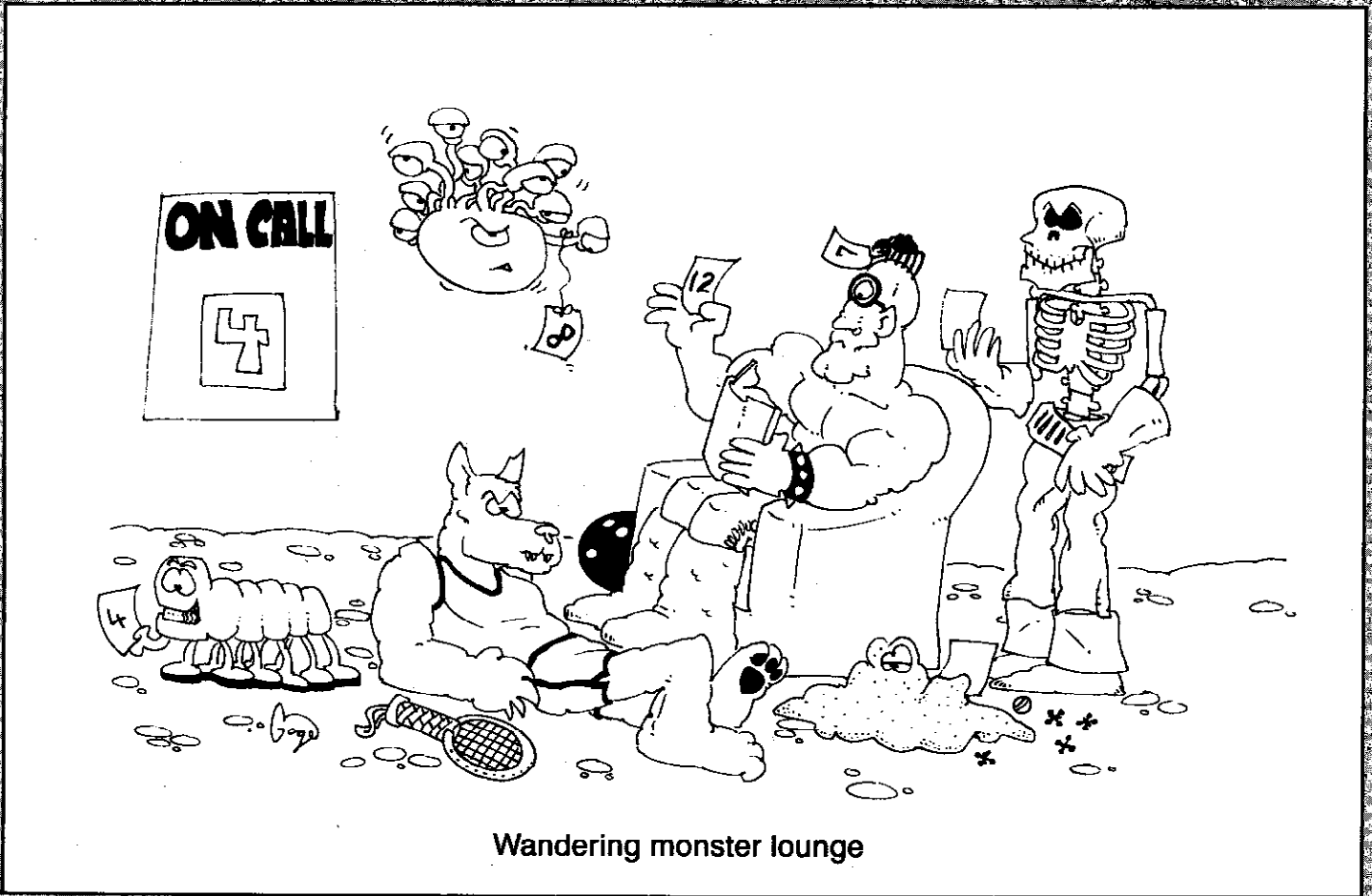
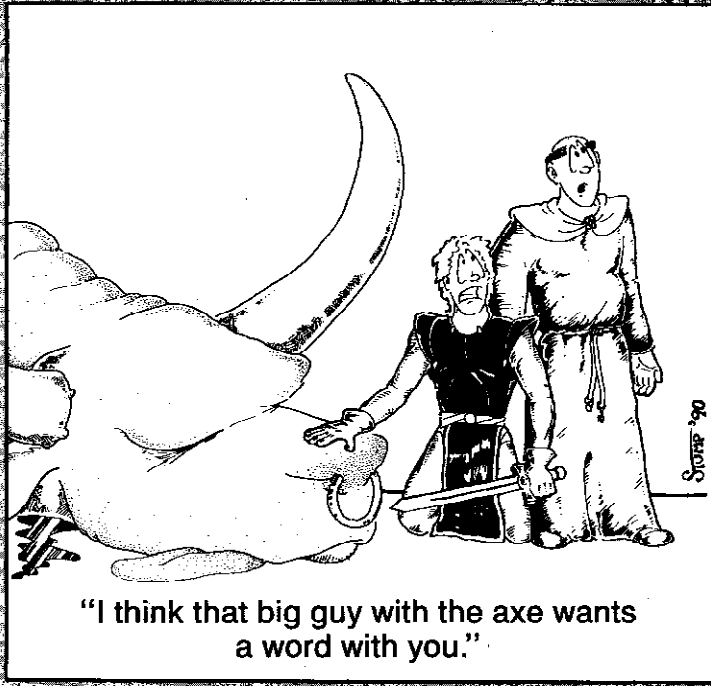
Age	HD	Size	Damage
0 year	3	6' long	1-4/1-2x4
1 year	4	12' long	2-5/1-4x4
2-3 years	6	20' long	1-6/1-4X4
4-5 years	8	28' long	2-8/1-6x4*
6-10 years	9	34' long	2-8/1-6x4**
11-15 years	10	36' long	2-8/1-6x4***
16-22 years	11	38' long	2-8/1-6X4
23+ years	12	40' long	2-8/1-6X4

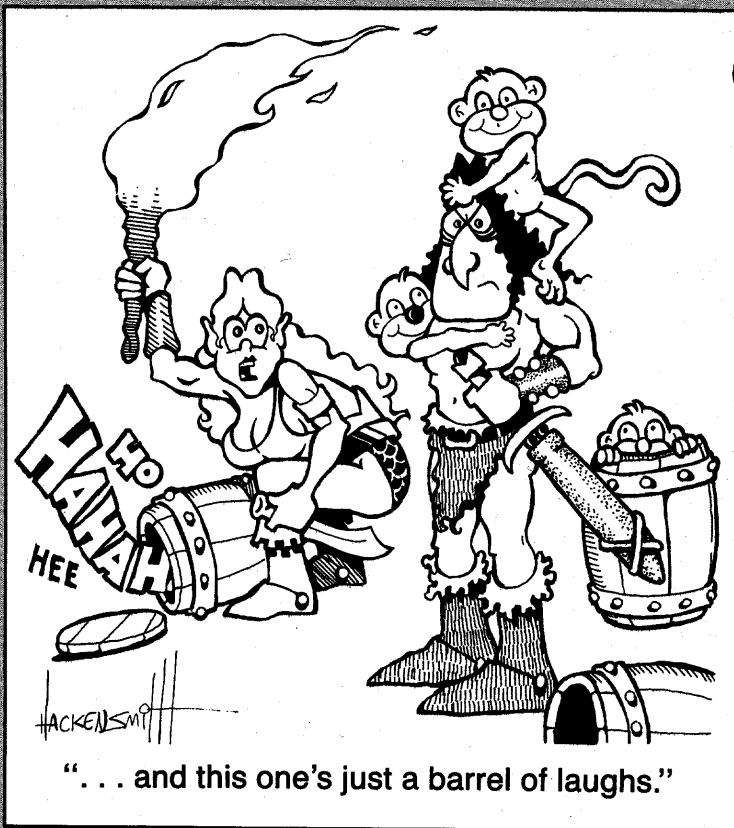
* The behir gains its constriction attack during its fifth year (1-2 hp damage) as well as six claw attacks, regardless of the victim's size.

** The behir becomes an adult at age 10 and does 1-4 hp damage with its constriction attack.

*** At age 15, the behir gains its trampling and butting attacks. The behir also does 2-5 hp damage with its constriction attack.

DRAGONMIRTH





"... and this one's just a barrel of laughs."

Yamara THE GOD.



GOOD MORNING, MISTRESS!

EEEN

POOPSIE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!

WELL, I FIGURED SINCE YOU'RE EVIL NOW, I SHOULD BE TOO! SO I RAN DOWN TO MALPHEGOR'S AND BOUGHT THESE TEETH AND STUFF— MAKES ME LOOK REAL SLAAD— WHADDAYA THINK?



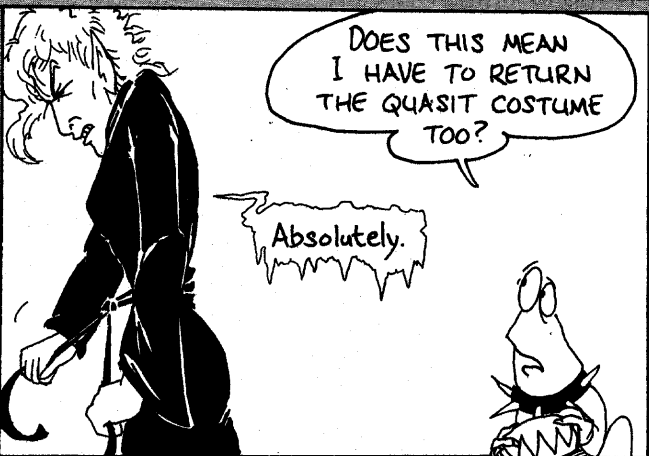
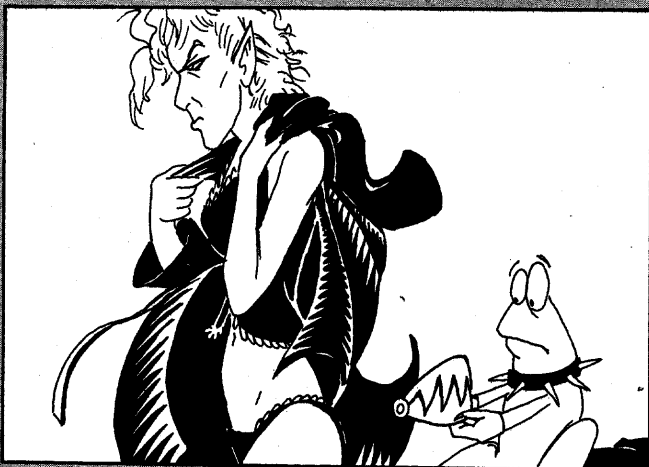
I THINK IT'S PUERILE AND YOU'RE GOING TO BE PUNISHED.



HERE KITTY, KITTY

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"My son?!?! ... You were the one who gave him that stupid wand."



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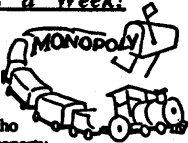


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STOMP



YOU DON'T SUPPORT 'IS LORDSHIP? IS THAT IT?

MEBBE I CAN CHANGE YOUR VIEW..



OW DO THINGS LOOK NOW?

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Stephen D. Sullivan

ART
John M. Hebert

LETTERING
David McDowell

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UM...LOOK, CAN WE TALK ABOUT THIS?

ARI! I KNEW YOU WANTED TO VOLUNTEER!



WOT'S THE NEW CONSCRIPT GOT TO OFFER 'IS LORDSHIP'S ARMY, BOYS?



OR FLY!

CAN YOU FLY, LITTLE BIRD?



HEY! LEAVE THAT STUFF ALONE!

JUST JUNK!

NOT EVEN ANY MONEY!



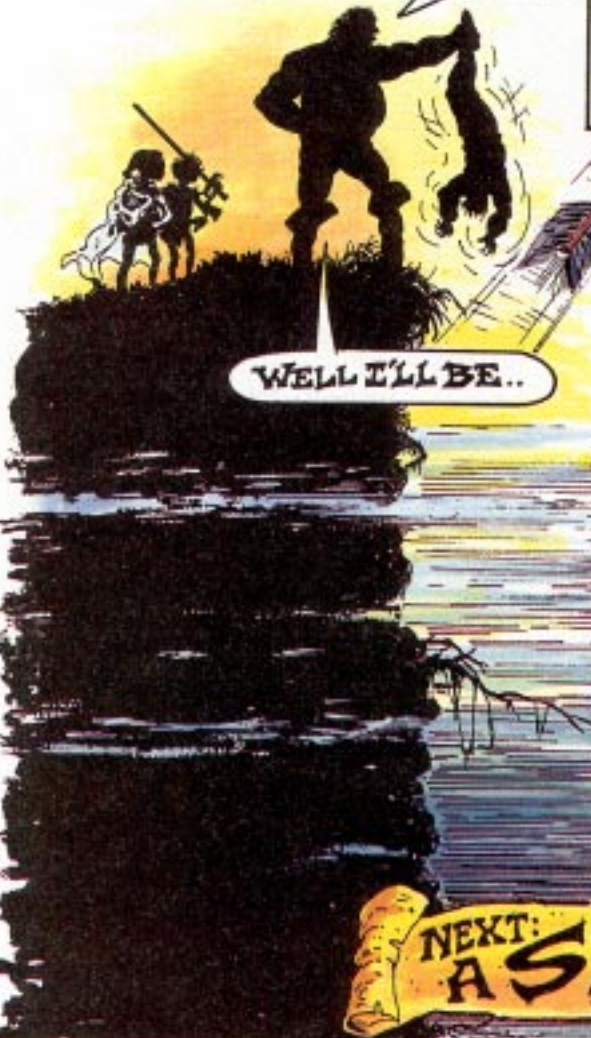
'LESS OF COURSE YOU CAN FIGHT..

DON'T LOOK LIKE YOU'LL BE MUCH USE AGAINST THE WITCHQUEEN AFTER ALL..

ROBINSON'S WAR PART 1



SO--MAYBE YOU ARE A WARRIOR AFTER ALL...



WE'LL BE...

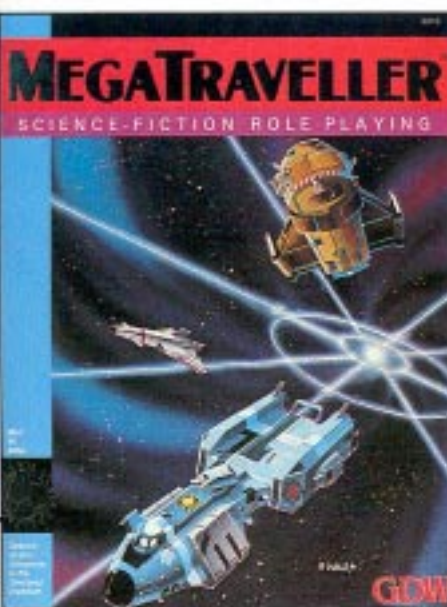


AAAAARRGH!



OH SPIT!

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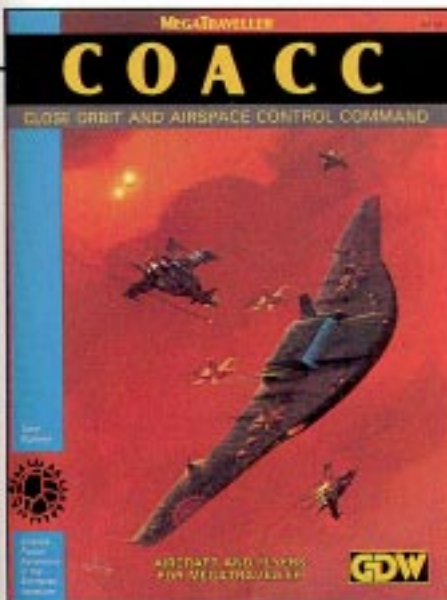
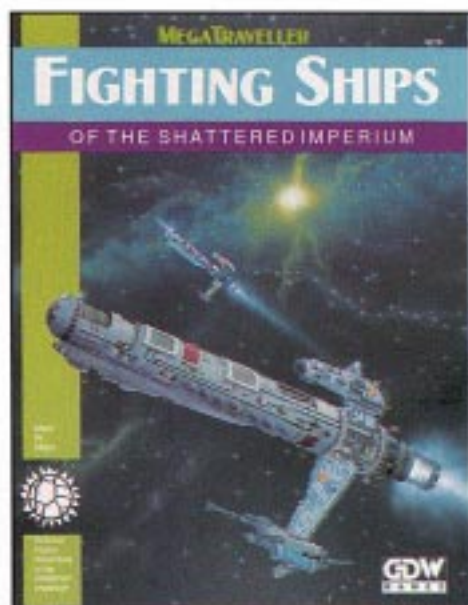
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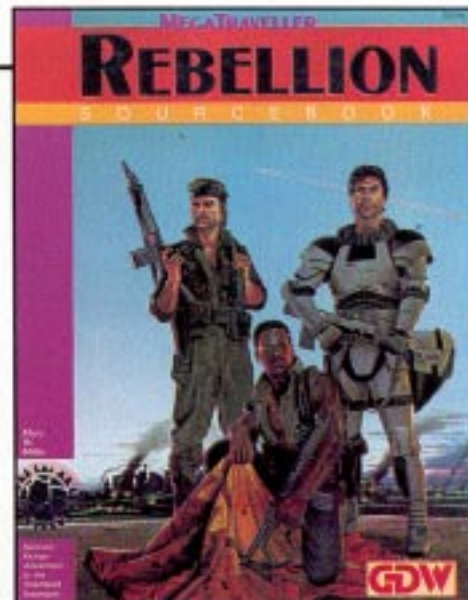
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