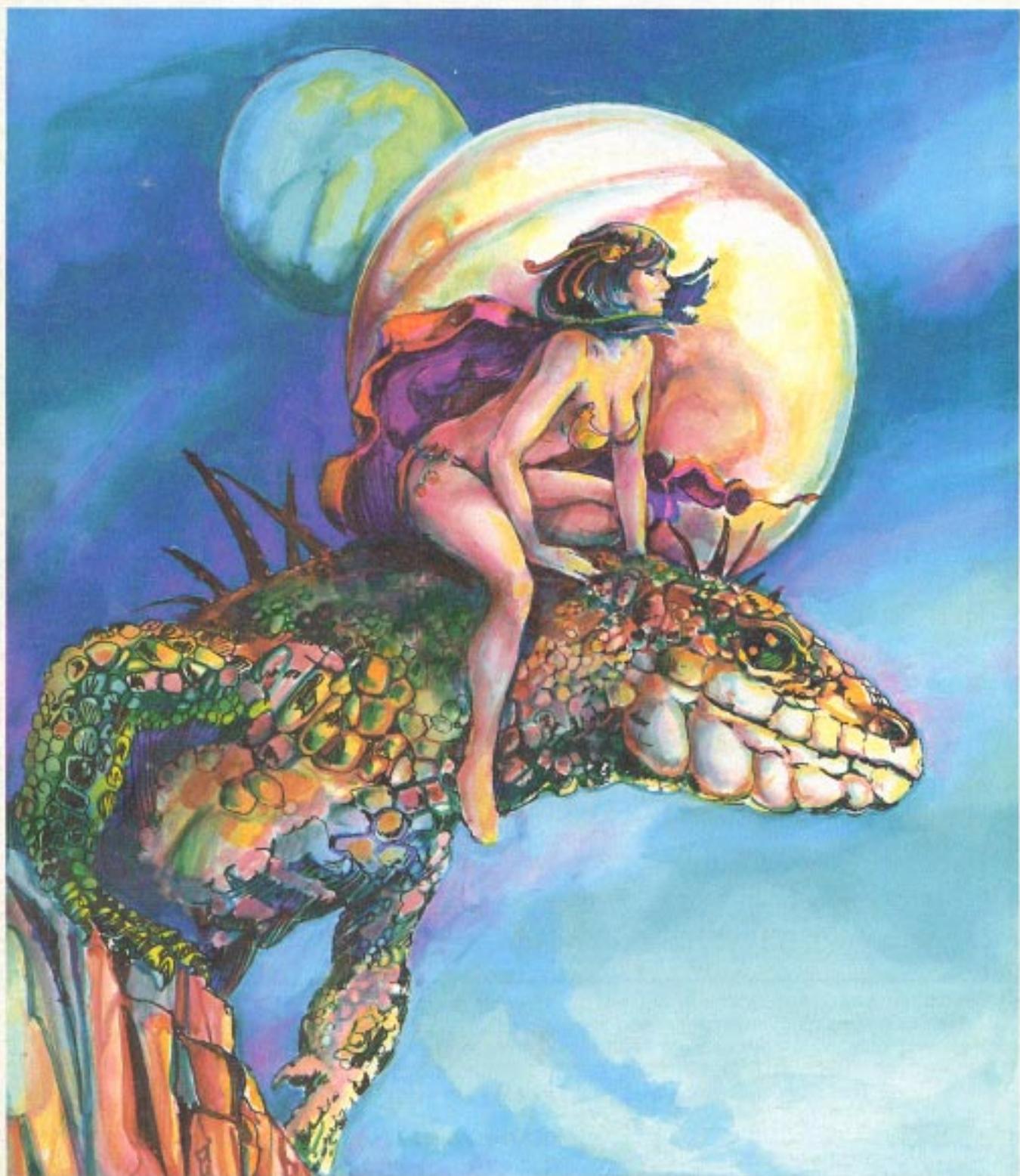


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**R**eturn with us now to those action-packed days of yesteryear, as the superhero of gaming magazines strikes another blow for life, liberty and the pursuit of experience points with *CRIMEFIGHTERS*, a set of rules for role-playing adventure in the era of the pulp heroes.

If you thought a pulp hero was some rare strain of paper golem, then the game setting might take some getting used to. But Dave Cook, a member of the design staff of TSR Hobbies, Inc., did extensive research into the subject while drawing up his rules and attempted to incorporate as many specifics as possible. Still *Crimefighters* greatly resembles the original D&D® game in the number of things left to the Game Master's discretion. "The Case of the Editor's Envelope," a sample scenario supplied by Dave, helps to illustrate how an adventure can be designed and played. And DRAGON staff member Bryce Knorr's brief essay on pulp heroes and the people who created them will flesh out the history of this segment of Americana. Good reading and good playing—and if you find yourself at the wrong end of a dark alley, you're on your own.

You're also on your own (no peeking!) with the AD&D™ exam awaiting at the front of this month's article section. As a belated followup to the Dungeon Master Evaluation Form (issue #43), we present 50 questions designed to separate the players from the page-turners.

Some of you may recognize the kindly old gent pictured on page 6. A black & white rendition of this Todd Oleck painting is used to introduce "From the Sorcerer's Scroll," the column written by E. Gary Gygax, publisher of DRAGON magazine. Artist John Blumen went right to the head of the class in his first appearance in — or rather, *on* — the magazine by supplying us with this month's cover painting.

A "Sorcerer's Scroll" column many issues ago was the inspiration for a couple of letters written by Steven Kienle to Mr. Gygax. The resulting article is the foundation of a special sec-

tion starting on page 9 which deals with adventuring on the other planes. In addition to Steven's observations, Karl Horak adds new meaning to "soul searching"; Patrick Amory postulates the existence of seven strange creatures from obscure planes; and our Bazaar of the Bizarre is stocked with magic items which travellers between the planes might find...interesting.

Appearing for the first time in this issue is *Figuratively Speaking*, a photographic and analytical look at miniature figures and accessories. Reviewer Bill Fawcett will provide ratings and general comments on figures and other items from as many different manufacturers as possible. The figures are professionally photographed to yield the best quality reproduction, so you can literally see what you're getting in a *Figuratively Speaking* review.

Creating a time frame for a world and designing a calendar to fit it might seem like an awesome task to any DM contemplating such an effort. But contributing editor Ed Greenwood presents and describes his creation, The Calendar of Harptos, in a single page. By retaining some of the aspects of our normal Gregorian calendar, Ed's calendar is familiar and unusual at the same time.

In this month's *Leomund's Tiny Hut* column, Len Lakofka takes a close look at the abilities and liabilities of the thief class. Two formidable females, Camilla and Medea, are depicted by Katharine Brahtin Kerr in *Giants in the Earth*. Merle Rasmussen, author of the TOP SECRET™ game, reveals a few more of his valuable papers in another installment of *The Rasmussen Files*, and *Sage Advice* is back with a page of questions and answers about the AD&D™ rules.

John Prados provides an in-depth look at the history of Simulations Publications, Inc., and a description of the new trends emerging at SPI, in *Simulation Corner*. Mark Herro examines electronic and computer-program sports games in *The Electric Eye*, and Bryan Beecher sets forth rules for replaying the Russian conquest of Berlin in his latest *Squad Leader* scenario.

Dragon's Augury, made up primarily of reviews by Tony Watson this month, features games based on land, in the sea, and in outer space, plus a pair of adventures designed for *Traveller*.

Our five pages of comics in this issue include the next two pages of Pinsom, which made its debut last month; a double-page spread of Wormy; and the continuing saga of Jasmine.

Now, go forth and become *Crimefighters* heroes. Here's hoping that all your contacts are sweet, honest guys, and the secret formula ends up in your hands at the end of the chase. — KM

# Contents

## SPECIAL ATTRACTION

CRIMEFIGHTERS — <i>Role-playing rules for pulp heroes</i> ...	29
The Case of the Editor's Envelope — A sample <b>Crimefighters</b> scenario .....	46
The Pulp: Paper Heroes — <i>Thoughts on the pulps</i> .....	50

## OTHER FEATURES

Take the AD&D exam — <i>To test players' knowledge</i> .....	7
Special section: The Other Planes	
Elementary ideas for elemental adventuring — <i>Letters to EGG</i> .....	9
Seek, but don't expect to find — <i>Astral &amp; ethereal searches</i> .....	11
Creatures from elsewhere — <i>Seven out-of-this-world monsters</i> .....	13
Bazaar of the Bizarre — <i>Magic involving other planes</i> ...	18
The merry month of...Mirtul? — <i>Design your own calendar</i> .....	24
Figuratively Speaking — <i>Miniatures on display</i> .....	64

## REGULAR OFFERINGS

Out on a Limb — <i>Letters from readers</i> .....	4
---	---

Leomund's Tiny Hut — <i>The Thief</i> .....	20
Giants in the Earth — <i>Two legendary women</i> .....	22
The Rasmussen Files — <i>More TOP SECRET directives</i> ....	26
Sage Advice — <i>Questions and answers</i> .....	52
Convention schedule .....	56
Dragon's Augury	
ROBOTS! .....	60
Fast Attack Boats .....	61
Starfire and Starfire II .....	62
Across the Bright Face/Mission on Mithril .....	63
Research Station Gamma .....	63
Simulation Corner — <i>New Approach at SPI</i> .....	66
Squad Leader scenario — <i>"Two eyes for an eye"</i> .....	67
Pinsom .....	68
The Electric Eye — <i>Sports games surveyed</i> .....	70
Wormy .....	74
Jasmine .....	76

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## 'The height of absurdity'

Dear Editor:

I finished reading my December issue of DRAGON magazine in a rage. I refer to the letter from the player ("Lowly Players") who says his DM won't let his group subscribe to DRAGON magazine because therein are things meant only for the DM. I'm a DM for two different groups here in Mannheim, Germany, and I would be tickled pink if all the players here subscribed to this magazine. Half of the players here have copies of the DMG anyway (they DM the group a lot, too) so as far as hiding things from the players go, that's impossible (and it hasn't hurt the games here at all; in fact, it seems to have helped them). Secondly, for anyone to dictate what a person can or cannot read is the height of absurdity and...and...what's a good word for "gross, petty, obnoxious despotism"? That'll do. If I had a DM who told me I couldn't read DRAGON magazine if I was to play in his universe, I'd tell him to kiss a succubus. Or an ottyugh, whichever is closer. I personally urge all D&D® players (and C&S, T&T, AD&D™ game, GW, etc. players) to subscribe to this magazine at the least; it's the best there is.

I will confess that I do have one tiny complaint, concerning the excellent "Super Spies" article by Allen Hammack. I didn't see Greg Morris from "Mission: Impossible", Bill Cosby and that other guy (*Robert Gulp — ed*) from "I Spy", Patrick MacGoohan from "Secret Agent Man", and Boris and Natasha from the "Rocky and Bullwinkle Show". Could someone check these characters out in a future article?

Roger E. Moore  
Mannheim, Germany  
APO, N.Y.

## Smart monsters

Dear Editor:

Gary Gygax's "Sorcerer's Scroll" in issue #42 strikes at the heart of a problem that hurts many campaigns. Monsters are frequently thrown at the players in a simple hack-and-slash suicide mission without regard to their intelligence or secondary abilities. Like player characters, monsters do not want to die and they are going to use every bit of cunning and resources available to them to prevent it.

Mr. Gygax gives many excellent ideas to make monsters more realistic. Home defenses such as escape routes, special traps, and battle deployment should always be con-

sidered. Magic items will be used by monsters if possible; even a bugbear is smart enough to use a glowing +1 sword over a normal one.

An issue in the AD&D game that is often ignored is the strange social system that must go on in a "normal" dungeon. Monsters that live within a few hundred feet of each other must have some type of interaction. Rivalries will be strong between intelligent monsters while other monsters with a common trait (i.e., alignment) will band together in some kind of a defense system. A communications system will be inherent in any defense setup, so when an orc jumps up and wails on a gong, the party can expect reinforcements (probably from the rear) soon. This type of interaction also answers the mystifying question of why monsters are almost always semi-ready for battle.

The DM is at an initial disadvantage due to his/her singular creativity compared to the combined thinking power of the players. Pre-planning how encounters might be run if the party takes some special action, such as throwing oil, can even things up. Taking time to have monsters use their own intelligence forces the players to use their own intelligence more effectively, leading to a more challenging and fun game for everyone.

Forrest C.M. Pape  
Houghton, Mich.

## Review reviews

To the editor:

The *John Carter* review (in DRAGON #42) is an excellent description of that game, or at least until Tony Watson makes two rather peculiar statements in the last paragraph. After describing the combat system as "simple" (which it is), he also declares it to be of a "highly mathematical nature." I know of few people who would describe addition and subtraction of numbers from 1 to 10 the latter way.

A more serious complaint, which has nothing to do with semantics, concerns a villain's inability to win. If a designer wishes to recreate Barsoom, he cannot permit any character with less than fully honorable intentions to triumph at the conclusion of a story. Whenever Edgar Rice Burroughs would place a hero at a seemingly inescapable loss, he would quickly ram an amendment to the Laws of Probability through Congress, and "hey presto!" we had one dead or disgraced villain plus one rescued and beautiful female. Each player of *John Carter* controls a hero and a villain for this reason. The villain is no more than a glorified roadblock in the hero's path to

success, and provides relief from the hero's sometimes saccharine goodness. Competitive gamers can get their thrills by vying with each other to complete their heroes' quests first (which is, after all, the object of the game).

Douglas Bachmann's quibbles with *Dragonquest* (in #43) are valid. The alchemy skill is indeed not classical alchemy, but what else would one call medieval chemistry mixed with magic? The experience point awards are somewhat rigid, and tend to obscure the concept behind the experience system. I recommend increasing the EP given to characters by up to a factor of two or three, while keeping the calculation by the GM as simple as described in the rules.

Eric Goldberg  
New York, N.Y.

## Retirement

Dear Editor:

I am tired of all the articles in DRAGON magazine on what to do with high-level characters. The simple solution is retirement.

The high-level player character is more a problem for the player than the DM. Once the player character becomes near invincible, the risk of injury and death is gone from the game. Without risk, the AD&D game is as exciting as stealing candy from a baby.

The solution is to retire the high-level character and start a first-level character. This brings the excitement of playing a new character. This brings the opportunity of the excitement of playing a different character class and/or a different race. Most important, this brings the excitement of risking life and limb.

Fred Cain  
Indianapolis, Ind.

## 'Tomfoolery'

Dear Editor:

I should like first of all to express my sympathies to "Rebellion" in issue #44 (Out on a Limb). I too know of a campaign in which 85th-level NPC Magic-Users shot 1-mile-radius fireballs that slew gods; a town of 5,000 population in which you could only survive if you were greater than 30th level, 75-foot mutant orcs, rings of infinite wishes, monks of AC -28, etc. etc.

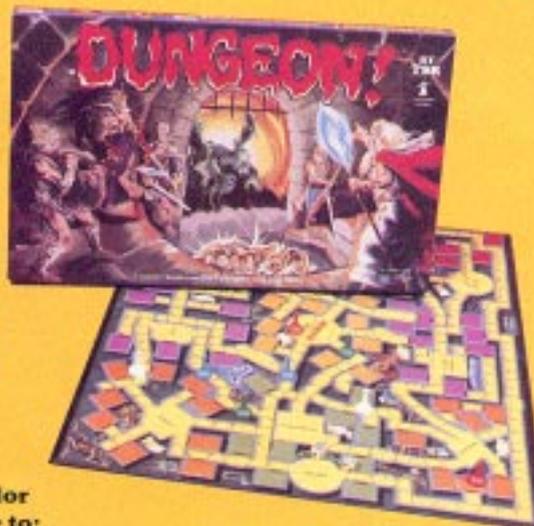
When I considered entering this campaign, after the initial disbelief, I asked if I could have a half-elven 8th-level Fighter, 5th-level Cleric, 8th-level Magic-User. For magic items I asked  
(Turn to page 54)

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# Don't just think about it



# ... take the AD&D™ exam

*Players, put those three big books aside and see how much you really know about the Advanced Dungeons & Dragons™ game system. All you need is a piece of paper, lots of AD&D™ knowledge, and a sharp pencil with a big eraser...*

by Philip Meyers

To play *AD&D™* well, one must have a firm grasp of its rules. Often a single rule decides whether a character lives or dies. The rules of *AD&D*, however, fill three volumes. It is thus a nearly hopeless task to try to learn them all, even omitting the optional sections. Fortunately, it is not necessary to have a comprehensive knowledge of the rules to play the game. Many rules, such as spell descriptions, can easily be looked up when the occasion arises if the spell is one that is not used often. On the other hand, it delays a game unnecessarily if a common spell like Sleep must be looked up each time it is used. More generally, there are some rules that every good player should know because they recur frequently and are basic to the game, and others that need only be known about, so that they can be referred to at the appropriate time.

The test below is designed to test your knowledge of *AD&D* rules. It is not intended as a mere "trivia contest," although some questions may call for certain specific facts. If you play *AD&D* but do not ever act as Dungeon Master, you should not expect to come anywhere near answering every question correctly. Unless the question states otherwise, do not refer to the rule books while taking the exam. The knowledge should come from within, from your experience as a player and DM. If you feel a question is ambiguous or is a matter of opinion, try your best to answer it anyway. You may find that the answer takes this into account.

## The AD&D Exam

### Part I: The Monster Manual

True or False?

1. Skeletons are a malicious form of undead that hate human life.
2. Despite their low hit dice, Ogre Magi make deadly foes.
3. There are five types of "true" Giants.
4. Red Dragons are the most feared

type of evil dragon because they are the most vicious, are less likely to be asleep at any given time than any other kind, and are more common than the other kinds.

5. Barbed Devils cannot be turned by Clerics.
6. Fighters prefer to fight Goblins rather than Orcs, even when they must face two or three times as many Goblins as Orcs.
7. Ki-rin and Djinni come from the Elemental Plane of Air.
8. Trolls are a lot tougher now than they used to be.
9. Werebears are the only kind of lycanthrope aligned towards Good.
10. A Mind Flayer is no longer dangerous to high-level characters once its psionic blasts have been expended.

### Part II: The Players Handbook.

True or False?

11. Elves have a special resistance to sleep and charm spells, and half-elves do also.
12. For the major character classes, a score of at least 16 in the prime requisite is required for a character to gain the 10% experience bonus.
13. Halflings never have infravision.
14. Assassins, Paladins, and Monks must be human.
15. Dwarves and halflings cannot become Magic-Users because the customs of their respective races prohibit it.

### Character Classes

Questions 16-20 pertain to the different character classes. Choose one of the four sets of questions below (A,B,C, or D) as the one that will count for purposes of scoring.

#### A. Fighters

- 16A. The first things a new first-level Fighter buys for adventuring are a weapon, a shield, and a suit of plate mail.
- 17A. A Fighter with +1 Plate, a +1 Shield, and a Dexterity of 15 has an AC of -2 versus frontal opponents against whom the shield can be used.
- 18A. Other factors being equal, Ran-

Answer list begins on page 57

gers and dwarven Fighters often prefer giant-class opponents.

19A. A Potion of Heroism always enhances the fighting ability of a Fighter.

20A. To hit Orcus, Asmodeus, or an iron Golem, a +3 weapon is required.

#### B. Clerics

16B. A first-level Cleric has no chance of turning a Wraith.

17B. The clerical wisdom bonus for spells begins at Wis 15 and can give a Cleric as many as eight additional spells.

18B. All Clerics cannot wait to reach 8th level, for it is then that they acquire the ability to raise the dead.

19B. An evil Cleric can have a *Cure Light Wounds* spell and a *Cause Light Wounds* spell at the same time.

20B. A Druid can use edged weapons of some kinds, but a normal Cleric cannot.

#### C. Thieves

16C. Overall, a human Thief is superior to Thieves of other races.

17C. A 9th-level Thief does quadruple damage with a successful backstab attack.

18C. A Thief's ability to hear noises (listen intensely) does not increase quickly compared to the other Thief abilities as the Thief advances in level.

19C. A Thief cannot be lawful in alignment because to steal something is an unlawful act.

20C. At the 9th level, Thieves acquire the ability to read magic scrolls and use *Crystal Balls* and other scrying devices.

#### D. Magic-Users

16D. There is absolutely no way for a Magic-User to retain a spell in memory once it has been cast.

17D. An Arch-Mage is a Magic-User who has reached the 18th level of ability.

18D. All Magic-User spells have at least verbal and somatic components.

19D. As is true for Clerics, illusionists have only seven different spell levels, whereas Magic-Users have nine.

20D. The spells *Magic Missile*, *Lightning Bolt*, and *Cone of Cold* gradually increase in the amount of damage they do as the caster gains experience levels.

**Part III: Miscellaneous Multiple Choice**  
Choose one answer only unless the question asks for more than one.

21. The letters "TSR" in "TSR Hobbies, inc." stand for:

- (a) Theoretical Simulations Rules
- (b) Totally Silly Rules
- (c) Tactical Studies Rules
- (d) Takers Sans Remorse
- (e) None of the above

22. Which of the following undead do not drain energy levels? (1) Wight

- (2) Shadow (3) Spectre (4) Ghost
- (5) Vampire (6) Lich

- (a) 2 and 6
- (b) 2, 5, and 6
- (c) 2 and 4
- (d) 2, 4, and 6
- (e) All of the above

23. How many rule violations are there in the following scene?

...our halfling Thief Nodgard, having had enough poison gas for one day, disappeared into the shadows where the golem could not find him, try as it might. Only barely did little Nodgard avoid the creature's grasp and hide safely. The rest of us, seeing that our friend was indeed in peril, went to the attack. In the next round Droth, our human sixth-level Fighter, fired an arrow at the towering menace, then drew his enchanted blade and damaged the creature severely on the leg. Our Wizard let fly a volley of magic missiles that blasted holes in the golem's body during the same round. The next round the golem breathed forth a cloud of poisonous gas upon Lord Droth. He rolled an abysmal 1 as his saving throw, but thanks to his many protection devices he was saved. His great strength made the 1 he rolled on his own attack a hit, and the golem, responding to instructions given it by its master, fled from us. Victory was ours!

- (a) 2
- (b) 4
- (c) 5
- (d) 6
- (e) 7

24. Which of the following treasures is most valuable?

- (a) 2200 ep
- (b) 200 pp
- (c) 203,000 cp
- (d) 10,500 sp

25. Which of the following monsters appeared originally in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and has a new name in *AD&D*?

- (a) Eye of the Deep
- (b) Ettin
- (c) Treant
- (d) Lich

**Part IV: Magic Items**

True or False?

26. *Flying Carpets* come in many sizes.

27. *Javelins of Lightning* can be reused if they can be retrieved.

28. Potion effects are additive, and several potions may be taken at the same time.

29. A retributive strike results in a more or less powerful explosion.

30. An artifact can be destroyed only in one certain way.

31. A sword with an Int of 6 or higher can speak to its wielder.

32. A *Poisonous Cloak* is indistinguishable from a *Cloak of Protection* until it is worn.

33. An *Efreet Bottle* contains an Efreet that will serve in the same fashion as the Djinni from a *Ring of Djinni Summoning* will.

34. An *Iron Flask* is a cursed item that draws its owner inside and imprisons him or her within.

35. Wands operate at the 6th level for the purposes of magic resistance.

**Part V: Short Answers on Miscellaneous Topics**

36. You are a 5th-level Magic-User casting a 1st-level spell against a creature that is 35% magic resistant. What is the percent chance that the magic resistance will spoil the spell?

37. You are a 4th-level Fighter with 17 hit points. An enemy Magic-User throws a fireball at you; the blast center is 16' from where you stand. The fireball does 30 points of basic damage. You roll an 18 as your saving throw. What is your hit point total after the blast?

38. You are an 8th-level Ranger being attacked by a band of 17 Kobolds. How many attacks per round do you get against them?

39. A huge very old Red Dragon, -11-11-77, whom you failed to rob as it slept, has just breathed on you. You are a dwarven Fighter, 3rd level. Assuming you have no magical protection from the fire, is there any chance that you will survive?

40. Which two of the following monsters are of the same alignment: Asmodeus, a Night Hag, Juiblex, a Quasit, Bahamut?

41. What are the four creatures that serve Magic-Users as special familiars?

42. What character class requires the fewest experience points to advance from 1st to 2nd level, not including Bards?

43. Rank these monsters in order of their number of hit dice, from largest to smallest: (1) Kobold, (2) Bugbear, (3) Orc, (4) Gnoll, (5) Ogre, (6) Goblin.

44. Which of the following weapons does the greatest possible damage against a large opponent: dart, arrow, mace, spear (thrust), halberd, quarter-staff?

45. Why are the Druidic elemental summoning spells so much more effective than the Magic-User spells of the same kind?

**Part VI: Some "Hard" Questions**

46. In an arena a dwarven Fighter and an Ogre are forced to fight to the death. Both the dwarf and the Ogre are average in all respects. The dwarf is 4th level and is armed with plate mail, shield, and a longsword. If the performance of both in combat is average, which will win?

47. The mad wizard Quendirl claims he can drain away the sea by means of a Single magic item. What item? (You may consult the magic item lists in the *Dungeon Masters Guide* for this question. No artifact is involved here.)

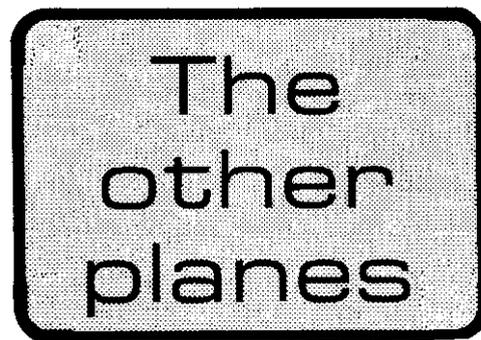
48. Enchantress Elvira has made a pet of a very young Black Dragon and desires to emplace it in the swamp near her tower to keep nosy people away. She realizes, however, that at present the dragon is too small and weak to be of much value in this regard. She is not worried, however, for she has a foolproof scheme for increasing the dragon's hit points to a respectable level in only two weeks' time. How can she possibly do this? The increase in hit points she contemplates will be permanent.

49. Lord Edward the Unfortunate was having a bad day. First, a 5th-level Magic-User threw a magic missile at him. Then he fell into a 10-foot-deep pit (plain), whereafter a huge ancient Red Dragon breathed on him. No sooner had he climbed from the pit when a Giant Rat bit him. He took the maximum possible damage from each attack form. How many points of damage did he take altogether?

50. Garigax the Tricky, a Thaumaturgist, was contemplating a means whereby he and his 2nd-level apprentices could cross a rushing river with all their equipment. The way looked difficult, for Garigax had but one *Fly* spell, and the spell would not last long enough for him to carry all his apprentices and their gear across, even if the weight should not be too great. After pondering the problem a long while Garigax shouted "Aha! Mine peerless brain hath done it again!" and proceeded to instruct his apprentices as to his plan. Thereafter they all slept for a time. Then they awoke and at once all the apprentices began studying their spell books as Garigax made lunch. After a hearty meal they lined up and all began incanting at the same time. Soon thereafter they were seen on the other side of the river. Garigax and his apprentices owned no magic items, and no creature aided them in crossing. The river was too fast-moving to swim, and Garigax and his minions had no ropes, boats, or any other kind of conventional river-crossing equipment. How did Garigax and friends accomplish such an astounding feat?

(Answer list begins on page 57)

# Elementary ideas for elemental adventuring



*(Editor's note: The article which follows is a condensed version of two letters to E. Gary Gygax, publisher of DRAGON magazine and president of TSR Hobbies, Inc. Although Mr. Gygax's introduction pertains only to the first letter that follows it, Steven Kienle's second letter was received by Mr. Gygax in time to be included in this article. Although Steven admits that some of his ideas are undeveloped, these letters offer a wealth of suggestions for playing on the other planes of existence. We look forward to receiving more articles on the other planes from writers who are motivated by agreement, or disagreement, with the ideas presented below. — KM)*

**INTRODUCTION  
BY E. GARY GYGAX**

The following letter from Steven Kienle was sent to me in response to a past article (DRAGON magazine #32) regarding play on the Elemental Planes. After reading it, I was so impressed as to wish to share his thoughts with all readers, and ask their opinions as to what is right, wrong or incomplete regarding this matter. The Elemental Planes have many possibilities for AD&D™ adventuring. I would like to share the development of these areas with all interested players. Please read Steven's comments, so that you will be able to make contributions of your own. I hope you enjoy what he has to say as much as I did and will be motivated thereafter to make such substantial contributions yourself.

**by Steven Kienle**

Dear Mr. Gygax,

In your Sorcerer's Scroll in DRAGON #32 you asked people to send in any suggestions for the other planes of existence. What follows is not a complete treatment of the outer planes nor the elemental planes, but it does cover some ideas for play on the elemental planes and a little on the outer planes.

The first point to be considered is that humans and other creatures that live on the land in the prime material rely primarily on air for their existence, whereas fish and other aquatic organisms are primarily "water-based." Our "air-based" nature is demonstrated by our ability to move through air without trouble. By the same standard, Xorn and Earth Elementals, for instance, are earth-based, because they move through the earth with the same ease we move through the air. Since we are air-based, the plane of air will be the least hostile to us of all the elemental planes — but a prolonged stay on any elemental plane will cause some damage to any foreign life form because of the plane's innate hostility to creatures from the prime material. Each character or creature visiting the planes of earth, fire or water will take 1-2 points of damage each day from this general hostility; on the plane of air, the damage is always 1 point per day. This damage is recorded regardless of any magical protection the visitors may have which enables them to withstand the elements of the plane in the first place — a *Ring of Fire Resistance* on the plane of fire, for example, or a *Helm of Underwater Action* on the plane of water. No protection created by an object or spell originating on the prime material is perfectly effective on the

elemental planes; in fact, some spells don't work at all on certain planes.

Among the spells that won't work on the elemental planes are those that employ an element not found on that plane— such as an *Earthquake* spell on the plane of water. Some spells would work, but should be outlawed anyway, such as a *Cone of Cold* on the plane of fire. The spell might do double or even triple damage if employed, but the casting would also attract every creature in that plane toward the caster, bent on his destruction.

An indication of which spells are not usable on the plane of water can be gotten from the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 57, The Adventure (Underwater adventures). A specific list of spells which would not work on the elemental plane of water is given below, along with lists for the other elemental planes. The list includes only those spells which simply will not function; other spells might actually be able to be cast, but would have no effect in any event.

Magic-User spell (level)	Unable to be cast on plane of:			
	Fire	Water	Earth	Air
Burning Hands (1)		x	x	x
Pyrotechnics (2)		x	x	x
Fireball (3)		x	x	x
Flame Arrow (3)		x	x	x
Gust of Wind (3)	x	x		
Water Breathing (3)	x		x	x
Fire Charm (4)		x	x	x
Fire Shield (4)		x	x	x
Fire Trap (4)		x	x	x
Wall of Fire (4)		x	x	x
Airy Water (5)	x		x	x
Conjure Elemental (5)	x	x	x	x
Wall of Stone (5)	x	x	x	x
Invisible Stalker (6)	x	x	x	
Lower Water (6)	x		x	x
Move Earth (6)	x	x		x
Part Water (6)	x		x	x
Delayed Blast Fireball (7)		x	x	x
Incendiary Cloud (8)		x	x	x
Meteor Swarm (9)		x	x	x

Cleric spell (level)	Unable to be cast on plane of:			
	Fire	Water	Earth	Air
Create Water (1)	x		x	x
Create Food & Water*(3)	x		x	x
Lower Water (4)	x		x	x
Flame Strike (5)		x	x	x
Aerial Servant (6)	x	x	x	
Part Water (6)	x		x	x
Stone Tell (6)	x	x		x
Earthquake (7)	x	x		x
Wind Walk (7)	x	x	x	

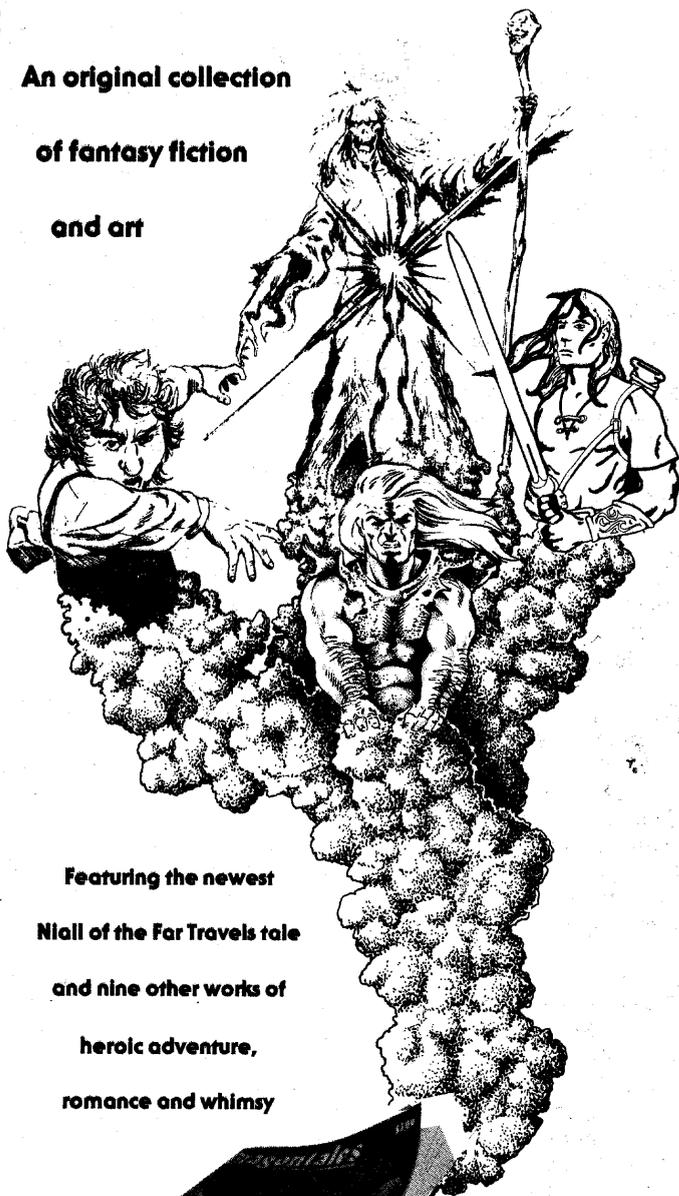
\*Water portion only

Druid spell (level)	Unable to be cast on plane of:			
	Fire	Water	Earth	Air
Faerie Fire (1)		x	x	x
Purify Water (1)	x		x	x

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four weeks for delivery.

Create Water (2)	x		x	x
Fire Trap (2)		x	x	x
Heat Metal (2)		x	x	x
Produce Flame (2)		x	x	x
Pyrotechnics (3)		x	x	x
Water Breathing (3)	x		x	x
Produce Fire (4)		x	x	x
Wall of Fire (5)		x	x	x
Conjure Fire Elemental(6)	x	x	x	x
Fire Seeds (6)		x	x	x
Conjure Earth Elemental (7)	x	x	x	x
Fire Storm (7)		x		

In addition to those spells which are simply not able to be cast and those which have no effect even if they are cast, certain other spells might have their particulars changed on one of the elemental planes. Also, for all spell-casters except Clerics, the spell(s) would become less effective the farther the caster travels from the prime material plane. Clerics are an exception to this rule; the closer a Cleric gets to the home plane of his/her deity, the more powerful and potent the Cleric's magic becomes.

The group of spells which allows communication with non-humanoid life (Speak with Animals, Speak with Plants, Animal Friendship, Animal Summoning, Monster Summoning and others) would generally still operate on the elemental planes, but in some cases the definitions of plant, animal and monster will have to be considered with respect to the plane. In rough form, these definitions are:

Plant: Any form of life native to a plane of existence that can exist on that plant away from and apart from other life on that plane.

Animal: Any form of life native to a plane that is neutral in alignment (with respect to the native plane) and will kill only in self-defense or for food.

Monster: Any form of life native to a plane which does not meet the above definitions, or any form of life not native to a plane which is residing on or visiting the plane in question.

Visitors to the plane of water and the plane of earth will be slowed to a maximum movement of one-half and one-third, respectively, of their normal rates. Exceptions to this rule for the plane of water would be fish and other creatures which normally move underwater, and creatures (such as nixies) who have specified swimming movement rates in addition to land movement. Exceptions to the movement restriction on the plane of earth would be few, but would include creatures such as the purple worm, whose normal means of locomotion is burrowing through the earth. Movement restrictions would be negated by a *Ring of Free Action* or similar magic.

Communication by speech with natives of the elemental planes would be all but impossible. Some types of elemental creatures which have visited the prime material plane (i.e., the ones in the *Monster Manual*) might know the common tongue, but creatures native to the plane and unable to travel from it would have an entirely foreign means of communicating. Unless communication is established by magical methods, it will take some time for a visitor to the plane to learn the plane's common tongue, either through study and observation of the natives or from being tutored by a creature which knows both the elemental speech and our common tongue.

Any character or creatures that travel to other planes through an interplanar or interdimensional gate would be immune to the general effects of hostility and the restriction of movement on the elemental planes — as long as they stayed within the area of the gate's effects. A gate is where two planes coexist, so the travellers would still be "connected" enough to the prime material to withstand the hostile environment of the other plane.

## Second letter

Dear Mr. Gygax,

I read through Mr. Lakofka's article "The Inner Planes" (Leonard's Tiny Hut, DRAGON issue #42) with not an uninterested eye. The article is very good for some of the me-

chanics of ethereal travel. While the encounter chart could be expanded with more monsters and intelligent creatures from every plane, the article is well designed. I will not touch on the subjects he has, but I'd like to start with some points about magic and magic items on other planes.

Special effects, special purposes, and bonuses of a magic item or weapon should be carefully reviewed by the DM if it's in a party traveling to another plane. For example, a sword which is +1, +2 against Magic-Users and enchanted monsters would only be a +1 weapon against an earth elemental on the elemental plane of earth, but the same sword would be +2 against any of the visiting party, since they were enchanted in some form to get to that plane.

Many spells must be carefully examined by the player and the DM to determine whether their characteristics and effects would change on another plane. A Phantasmal force of a monster from the prime material plane might seem totally ludicrous to a creature from another plane, unless that creature travels the prime material or the real form of the illusionary monster travels to the other plane. A creature confronted by such a ludicrous illusion might get a +1 or +2 bonus on its disbelief roll.

Play on other planes gives the DM a chance to introduce new magic items into the campaign without "overloading" the prime material world, perhaps altering their characteristics or their effects to conform with how they would operate in the alien environment.

Because of the strangeness of our appearance to natives of other planes, a character's Charisma would be reduced by from 1-3 points in attempts to communicate or deal with the creature (but never going below 3). The amount of the reduction depends on how dissimilar the two creature types are; for instance, it might be -1 on the elemental plane of earth, because both life forms have solid bodies, but it would be greater on the elemental

plane of air, where the native life form does not have a solid body.

Creatures native to other planes and of average or higher Intelligence would most likely consider themselves superior to creatures or characters from the prime, material — at least until something happens to change their minds. A creature of another plane would never underestimate a potential threat, however, and would always be wary.

If a party encounters a non-player character on the inner planes, all of the NPC trait rolls (*Dungeon Masters Guide*, page 100) are conducted as usual. On the outer planes, alignment of an encountered NPC is limited to three possibilities: The alignment of the plane itself, or the alignment one removed from that alignment in either direction (see Character Alignment Graph, *Players Handbook*, page 119, and The Known Planes of Existence, *PH*, pages 120-121). The only exception to this is absolute neutral creatures, who can be found on any of the outer planes.

Natives of the elemental planes need not be entirely alien and original; but might be adaptations of creatures found on the prime material. For example, a spider native to the plane of fire would appear as a ball of fire with eight tongues of flame sticking out of it. Most undead creatures would appear different on an elemental plane, since they would be the undead form of a creature native to that plane. For instance, a skeleton on the plane of fire would appear as a network of flames instead of a structure of bones. Demons, devils, gods and demigods can be encountered on any of the inner planes, or on any outer plane not more than one removed from their alignment.

Odds and ends: The use of a protection from good/evil spell on an evil/good plane would be easily noticed by inhabitants of that plane — and the act would probably antagonize them. It is possible for a Cleric going to a plane of opposing alignment from his deity to be endowed with more powerful spells than he would normally receive, because his god looks kindly on such a crusade. Hirelings will never go to another plane, and henchmen must make their morale throw to accompany a party willingly.

Thank you, and keep your sword high.

Steven Kienle



by Karl Horak

# Seek, but don't expect to find

The Assassin had no choice but to allow Balthrad to leave through the Gate of Rith; he had sworn an oath upon his alignment to not slay Balthrad. Surely Eroi the Kind-hearted, demigod of Elysium, was watching them, ready to destroy them should one raise his hand against the other. Armando the Cleric then suggested, "Is death for Balthrad revenge enough? Let us find him and sell him into slavery in the North. Assassin, with the power of your psionics you can place him in a trance, not to awaken until you command." So they agreed that this they would do and the Assassin told Armando to meditate and use his powers to find the fugitive Balthrad. Within 30 minutes Armando was projected astrally and seeking out his quarry.

In the past I would have simply set an arbitrary probability and rolled d%. But the serious consequences of Balthrad failing to hide from Armando's astral search deemed that I should be more objective. How long would an astral search of an area require and what

would be the chances of success? The result of a few hours of geometry and calculations provided some simple formulas that can be applied to other cases, revealed that Balthrad could evade an "exhaustive" search easily, and pointed out the limitations of large-area searches,

even when carried out astrally or ethereally.

Armando enlisted the aid of Rith in cordoning off the island that was the lower terminus of the gate. Next he quickly surveyed the surface of the island, looking for places of concealment. Fail-



ing that, he would conduct a search of the various subterranean lairs, caves, shafts, and tunnels.

One can derive a formula for the surface search by idealizing the area to be searched and the path to be covered as in figure 1. If L is the length of the side of the area to be searched (the square root of the area) and W is the width of the search path (W must be in the same units as L, usually miles), then LP is the total length of the search path. The formula is the number of sweeps times the length of each leg plus the sum of all the short (connecting) legs:

$$LP = \left(\frac{L}{W}\right) (L-W) + (L-W)$$

Since L is many times greater than W in most cases, one can substitute L for (L-W), yielding:

$$LP = \frac{L^2}{W} + L$$

Dividing LP by the speed of the searcher, V, gives the time, T, required for the total search. Dividing by the number of searchers yields the time per character.

DM's using the formula must remember that values for L and W are to be set by the player as he or she feels fit in order to attempt the search. V and its associated probability of success fall into the domain of the DM. The simplified formula should only be used in the event that L is about 1,000 to 10,000 times larger than W, in order to keep errors under a few percent. Depending on the size of the search object (whether single man or long ship), W will affect the chances of success, as will V. For the DM to get an idea about the interrelationships of the variables, let us follow through with the example from the first paragraph.

In the case of Balhtrad versus Armando, the surface area of the island is 75 hexes, each 5 mi. across, for a total area of 1624 sq. mi., so that L=40.3. The value for W was set at 50 ft. A certain amount of subjective judgement is unavoidable in determining V. Astral travel is at the speed of thought, yet the senses would get only a confused muddle at such vast speeds. Even when speed is reduced, how much can a person sense when moving rapidly? Let us assume that at 50 mph a person can detect the search-object with a probability of 25%; at 100 mph this probability drops to 10%; and at over 200 mph the probability of recognizing a man-sized target is only 1%. These probabilities can be changed to suit the needs of any particular case. Adjust them upwards for large or poorly concealed targets and downward for small or well hidden ones. Balhtrad had taken shelter in an abandoned dwarven silver mine, which I consider about average for a place of hiding.

Plugging these values into the equations and waving my hands to explain all

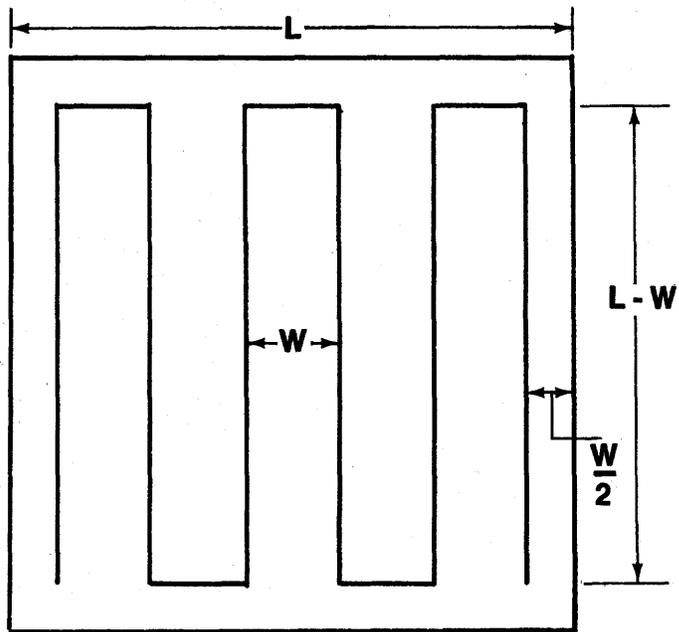


Figure 1. An idealized search path of an area L x L. The searcher would start in the lower left and finish in the lower right.

the assumptions produces a search path 171,000 mi. long. At 200 mph this would take almost 36 days to cover and only have a 1% chance of success. Slowing to 100 mph would increase the probability to 10% at a cost of an additional 36 days. It's no wonder that Armando failed to locate Balhtrad in the few days he had available for the search.

In the event that Armando was intent on pursuing the search underground, I was prepared with the following simplified formulas for a volume search:

$$LP = \left(\frac{L^2}{W} + L\right) \left(\frac{L}{W}\right) \text{ where } L \text{ is the cube root of the volume to be searched in miles}$$

$$T = \frac{LP}{V}$$

Since a traveller passing through solid rock and earth has a much more limited range of senses, the probability of success is reduced to 1% or even 0.1%. This reflects the fact that the searcher would miss the target entirely if he was off by only a few inches. Again, this value is arbitrary and should be modified to suit individual needs.

The results of this type of search are staggering. Assuming Armando tightened the pattern (W = 10 ft.) and went 500 ft. deep, LP = 6,900,000 mi. and T becomes almost 4 years. Armando's search appears to be fruitless.

Of course, intelligent searches can eliminate much of the drudgery and increase the chances of success by limiting the search area and seeking specific clues. Armando merely specified that he would search the surface of the island and then the labyrinths beneath it. If he had checked only the nearby mountains, the most likely hiding place, the area to

be searched falls off to 13.3% of the original, which would take about 5 days. By frequenting water holes in arid regions, looking for fires or magical light at night, and similar maneuvers, the chances of success will be higher.

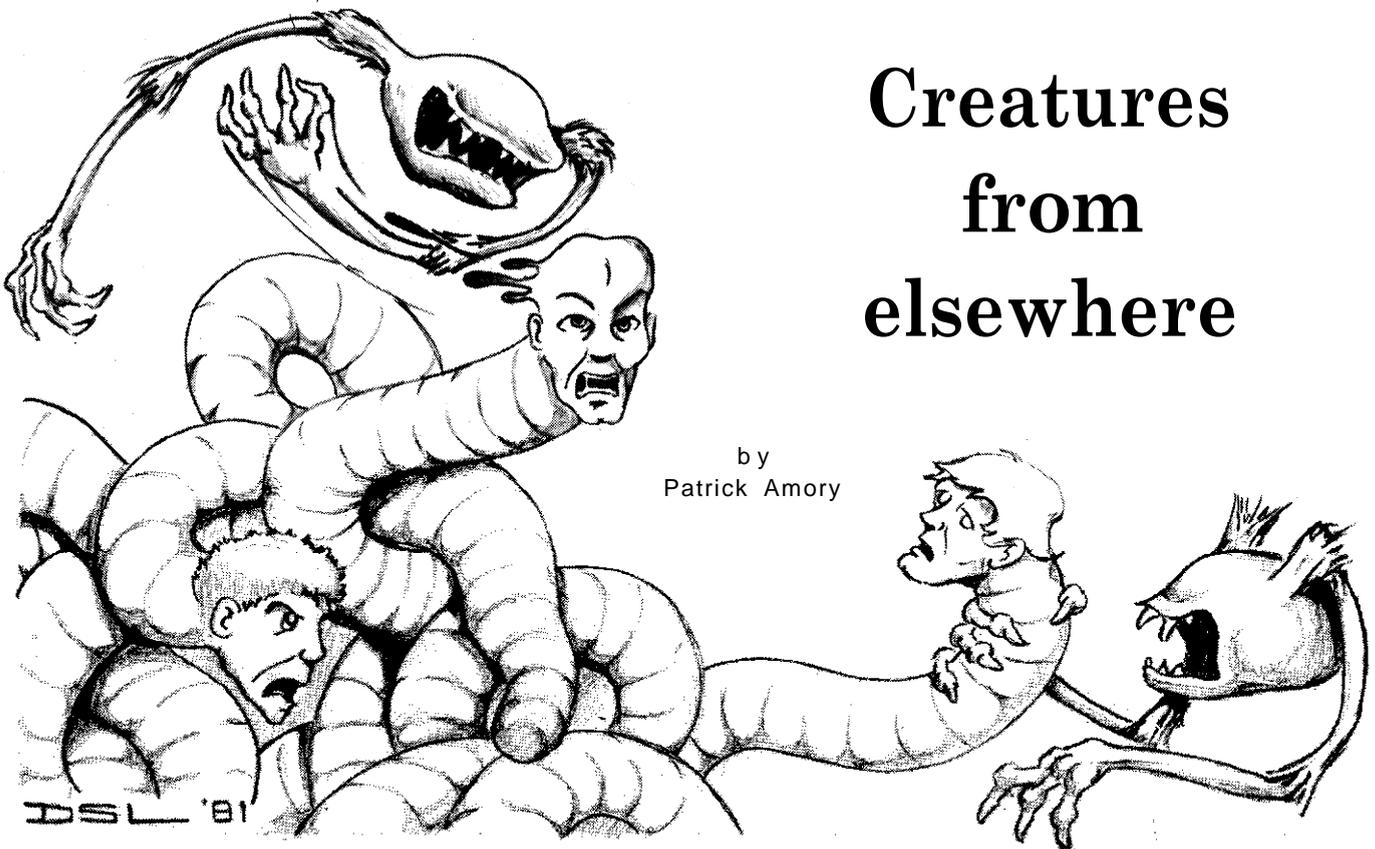
The lesson to be learned is that characters attempting to search an area of any great size by flying, astral projection, or *Oil of etherealness* will have poor luck unless they specify the details of their search behavior. For the luckless searcher on foot or horseback, the chances of successfully sighting the target are very high, but V is so low (compared to 50 or more mph) that T is prohibitively high. No attempt has been made here to account for moving targets. A quarry could easily precipitate an encounter or completely avoid it with timely movement. Another assumption of this model is perfect navigation so that no area is searched twice or overlooked. These inefficiencies could add 10-30% extra effort or reduce the probability of success.

Dungeon Masters should realize that the chances of finding a creature other than the target are very high, considering the numerous sweeps and the need for the searcher to be seen in order to see. Even astral and ethereal searchers will be subject to this hazard, since 6 basilisks are far easier to encounter than a well-hidden fugitive.

There is one type of search that appears feasible. That is the large-area search for a target that is easily visible, such as a boat at sea. In these instances W can be very large, weather permitting, and the probability of success can be very high, even approaching 100%. But for most attempts at finding a fleeing character after evasion, there is little hope for rapid success.

# Creatures from elsewhere

by  
Patrick Amory



## WIRCHLER

**ORIGIN:** *Gehenna*  
**FREQUENCY:** *Rare*  
**NO. APPEARING:** 1-10  
**ARMOR CLASS:** -6  
**MOVE:** 18"  
**HIT DICE:** 6+6  
**% IN LAIR:** 5%  
**TREASURE TYPE:** *See below*  
**NO. OF ATTACKS:** 3  
**DAMAGE/ATTACK:** 1-6/1-6/2-12  
**SPECIAL ATTACKS:** *Wirching (see below)*  
**SPECIAL DEFENSES:** *immune to fire + acid; takes double damage from cold*  
**MAGIC RESISTANCE:** *Standard*  
**INTELLIGENCE:** *Low-average*  
**ALIGNMENT:** *Lawful Evil (neutral tendencies)*  
**SIZE:** S  
**PSIONIC ABILITY:** 50  
 Attack/Defense Modes: *B/H, I*

The Wirchler originates from the plane of Gehenna, the Valley of Flame. Fire is their natural habitat, much as air is ours. They are, however, known to leave their dreadful home in groups to search for new prey. At present they pay precious *Fire-gems* to the Night Hags in Hades in return for Larvae to torture.

The Wirchler thrives on the pain of its victims. After it inflicts its special damage (see below), it sits back and enjoys their dying screams.

A Wirchler appears as a disembodied mouth with two long, scrawny, hairy arms sticking out of where its cheeks ought to be. Since it has almost no densi-

ty, it barely has to move its arms to flit about. A single Wirchler attacks with its arms and its long, protruding teeth.

When four or more Wirchlers get together, they can and will utilize their special attack. They start rubbing their teeth together, and the sound "wiiiiirrrr-ccchhhhh" results. This noise stimulates pain centers in the nervous system, and if the wirchlers are allowed to continue in this manner for one full round (i.e. no hits are scored on them), all monsters and humans (except those listed below) within a 6" radius will scream and writhe on the ground, unable to attack, defend, or do otherwise. The following effects will also beset the victims: They will lose one hit point for every hour the wirchlers wirch, one point of Intelligence every three hours, one point of Wisdom every four hours, and one point of Charisma every five hours. The ability losses are permanent unless later regained by magical means.

All Wirchlers encountered will wirch for 1-4 hours, and then some will tie the victims up while the others wirch. The victims will be devoured when the wirchlers next feel hungry again, 1-8 hours later. If there are only four wirchlers, they will all wirch until a.) their victims are dead; b.) more wirchlers arrive; or c.) they are stopped by some other creature.

The following creatures and monsters are not affected by wirching:

Gods, Demigods, Arch-Devils, Demon

Lords and Princes, Greater Devils, Type V and higher Demons, Beholders, Black Puddings, Blink Dogs, Brain Moles, Couatls, Cerebral Parasites, Djinni, Dragons, Dragon Turtles, Ear Seekers, Efreets, Violet Fungi, Gas Spores, Gelatinous Cubes, Ghosts, all Giants except Hill and Stone Giants, Golems, Gray Oozes, Green Slimes, Harpies, Hydrae, Intellect Devourers, Ki-Rin, Lammasi, Liches, Manticores, Mind Flayers, Molds, Ochre Jellies, Purple Worms, Rakshasi, Shambling Mounds, Skeletons, Spectres, Strangle Weeds, Su-Monsters, Thought Eaters, Water Weirids, Wights, Wraiths, Wyverns and Zombies.

If a Wirchler is found in its lair in Gehenna, it may have (30% chance) a *Fire-gem*. Fire-gems, worth 1,000 g.p. each, are made by Wirchlers in underground smithies. The gems have the following powers: Can shoot flames as per the *Naming Hands* spell a total of 20 times, as a 19th-level Magic-User; can shoot a *Fireball* (as per a wand) a total of 10 times; can create a Fire Trap (as a 10th-level M-U) 5 times, and can create an *Incendiary Cloud* once. The gem will also act as a *Gem of seeing* as long as any of the above abilities remains functional. Each ability (except the *seeing* power) needs a different command word to function. The Wirchler owning a *fire-gem* will certainly use it against attackers.

There are always 1-4 fire opals (the normal gem) in a Wirchler's lair.

**ARUCHAI** (alternatively *FLEISCHE KLECKSE, BLOBS OF FLESH, SEA OF FLESH*)

ORIGIN: *Limbo*  
 FREQUENCY: *Very rare*  
 NO. APPEARING: *10-1000*  
 ARMOR CLASS: *10*  
 MOVE: *¼"*  
 HIT DICE: *4+1*  
 % IN LAIR: *See below*  
 TREASURE TYPE: *See below*  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: *See below*  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *See below*  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Paralyzation + see below*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *"Weapon-sticking" + see below*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *75%*  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Semi-low*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic Neutral*  
 SIZE: *S (4') + see below*  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*

Aruchai are creatures native to the plane of Limbo — absolute Chaos. The gods there first created the Aruchai (sing. *Arucha*) for amusement, but accidentally endowed them with slight intelligence. An Arucha's one purpose in life is to get OUT of Limbo. When a group of Aruchai has killed all of its enemies, and when the number of the enemies was equal to half or more of the number of Aruchai fighting, the corpses of the enemies immediately begin corrupting into new Aruchai. Meanwhile, the Aruchai are instantly transported to the enemies' native plane, where they terrorize the inhabitants for one day. They may not be slain in the shape of Aruchai on this new plane, but after the one-day period is up the Aruchai reform into the creatures they were before they were defeated by a group of Aruchai. However, the reformed creatures will now all have Chaotic Neutral alignment.

Aruchai appear as formless blobs of rotting, yellow flesh. Their bodies may



be seen to be crawling with little red parasites, who greedily slurp up the many fluids the Aruchai excrete at odd times. The Aruchai also excrete a viscous glue which causes them to stick to the ground (thus their slow movement rate). Aruchai are *always* moving, albeit very slowly. They never stop for rest, and only slow down a little to absorb foods.

Weapons of +3 or less will stick to the Aruchai's glue-coated bodies if the modified "to hit" roll is below 18. The weapons can be pulled out of an Arucha as per a *Web* spell. Each round a weapon is stuck the Arucha's body acids will eat away at it, so it loses a "plus" each round (normal weapons will go into the negatives). If a weapon reaches -5 it will explode, not harming the Aruchai but doing 2-16 pts. damage to all others within a 6" radius.

An Arucha will reach out with shapeless "fingers" at its victim, paralyzing them as per a *Gelatinous Cube*. It will then proceed to devour its captive by engulfing it and eventually (1 round) suffocating it. The Arucha then digests the enemy and excretes it as pre-Aruchai

mess — which will become Aruchai under the conditions detailed above. Aruchai fingers can reach a maximum of 1" from the body.

When there are 100 or more live Aruchai present, they can meld and flow together into *Aruchai-Kamoit* — a sea of writhing flesh. Their fingers may then reach 2", they gain +3 "to hit", and 3 is subtracted from the enemy's saving throws vs. paralyzation.

Aruchai are invulnerable to cold-based attacks, and weapons of +1 or less do only one point of damage to them per hit. Weapons of +2 or better do as many pts. of damage as their "plus" (i.e., a +3 sword does three points of damage). Normal damage adjustments (due to high strength) do not apply to Aruchai. Damage penalties incurred because of low strength do apply, however. Fire does triple damage vs. the *Fleische Kleckse*, and so does acid.

Aruchai are treated as size "L" in "Kamoit" state.

Gods and other creatures of Chaos often utilize seas of Aruchai as treasure-guards in caverns with low roofs.

**PHOENIX**

ORIGIN: *Elysium*  
 FREQUENCY: *Very rare (see below)*  
 ARMOR CLASS: *2*  
 MOVE: *12"/24"*  
 HIT DICE: *10+ 3*  
 % IN LAIR: *33*  
 TREASURE TYPE: *See below*  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: *3*  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *1-6/1-6/1-12*  
 SPECIAL AT-TACKS: *Flame*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Complete fire*  
*resistance; fakes double damage from cold + see below; resistance to all 9th level spells*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *100%*  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Exceptional*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral Good*  
 SIZE: *M*  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *100*  
 Attack/Defense Modes: *C/F, G*

lor the human eye can detect, plus many more. It is constantly bathed in yellow flame. Any weapon penetrating the flame must make a saving throw as "soft metal" vs. "disintegrate" if it is less than a +5 weapon.

Every thousand years, Phoenixes lay an egg and proceed to burn up in their own flames, leaving only ashes. The egg hatches immediately, with the Phoenix born again from inside. The new Phoenix has all the knowledge of the old Phoenix, and is essentially the same creature. There is only one Phoenix in the entire multiverse at any time. If the Phoenix is ever destroyed, it will never be replaced. Even *Wishes* cannot bring the Phoenix back to life.

If the Phoenix is destroyed, intentionally or unintentionally, a powerful god from Elysium will ever after seek re-

venge. If the god ever catches up with the party, he will destroy half of it by slow and painful torture, and *Geas* the rest of the party to find a way to go back in time and remedy what they did.

The Phoenix can shoot fireballs as a 20th-level Magic-User.

The Phoenix's treasure is supposed to outdo any amount owned by any other creature, for all the Phoenix ever does is search for more riches. When the Phoenix encounters a party and sees that it has treasure, it will demand all of it. If the party does not hand it over immediately, the Phoenix will attack.

Evil creatures may greatly desire the Phoenix's wealth for their own, and it would not be unusual for, say, Geryon to *Geas* a party to bring back the bird's treasure. Of course, the Phoenix's treasure is kept very well guarded.

**FURY** (*Tisiphone, Alecto, Megaera*)ORIGIN: *Tartarus*FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 7-3

ARMOR CLASS: -4

MOVE: 9"/24"

HIT DICE: 15 (119, 106, and 93 hit points respectively)

% IN LAIR: 100% (unless there is an overriding factor; e.g. their plane is destroyed)

TREASURE TYPE: A, D, X, Z

NO. OF ATTACKS: 3

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-18/3-18/3-36

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Immunity to fire, non-magical weapons; half damage from all other attacks

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 79%

INTELLIGENCE: *Genius*

ALIGNMENT: See below

SIZE: L (7'+)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 300

Attack/Defense Modes: A, C, E (see below)/F, I, J



The three Furies dwell on the plane of Tartarus. In Greek mythology Tartarus is a prison (known as "The Iron Fortress") for evil souls; sort of a Greek hell. All souls went to Hades to be judged, but the especially evil ones were saved for Tartarus, where they were tortured and guarded over by the Furies.

Tartarus had "walls of adamant that even the gods could not penetrate" on three sides, and was bordered by the river Acheron (The River of Sorrows) on the fourth as it ran underground to join the River Styx in Hades. Therefore, the alignment of the plane (Evil Chaotic Neutral) results more from the evil souls imprisoned there than the permanent residents (i.e., the Furies).

The alignment of the Furies is another problem. Assuming they originate from the plane of Olympus, as the other Greek deities do, they ought to be Chaotic Good. However, what good creature would take on the job of torture and punishment? The Furies are not evil, or Zeus would not "employ" them. Thus, the Furies should be regarded as Neutral with tendencies toward both Good and Evil. That is to say, the Furies (with shaky psyches even at the best of times) commit both good and evil deeds.

Furies appear as human females with large bat-wings (something like an Eri-nyes Devil). They have long black hair, black eyes, and inch-long black fingernails which can squirt black acid (1" range) that will do 3 points of damage per round until washed off or neutralized. The nails are quite sharp, as hard as adamantite, and-worth from 2,000 to 16,000 g.p. each. The nails do 1-6 pts. damage apiece (three fingers per hand). A nail cannot be removed from a living Fury. Furthermore, the Furies have jet-

black teeth which can squirt acid as their nails do for 3-36 pts. damage. Any hit scored by a Fury upon a living creature will cause it to age 1-6 years.

The Furies can also use *Psychic Crush* against non-psionics, and they get double percentages to kill psionic characters when using it. To find a non-psionic's equivalent defense mode, add his or her Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma together. If the total is 9-17, treat as *defenseless psionic*; 18-37, treat as if the character were holding a *Mind Blank*, 38 and above, treat as if the character were holding a *Thought Shield*. On the *Defenseless Psionic Table*, treat defense strength as 10-59. Non-psionics are entitled to a saving throw vs. spells at +2 on the die on a Fury's *Psychic Crush* attack.

Each Fury has her (its?) special characteristics. The First, and strongest, Fury is Tisiphone (The Avenger of Blood). Tisiphone has a special *gaze weapon*: It causes her victims to bleed to death. Her gaze will inflict upon all who fail a saving throw vs. poison (at -4 on the die) horrible, rotting wounds in the centers of their foreheads. Victims will sustain 9 pts. damage per turn until dead. The wound may only be cured through a combination of 2 *Heal* spells (not potions), 2 *Cure Disease* spells and a *Wish*. If a dead victim is resurrected, he/she will still be vulnerable to the same effects. Tisiphone may use her weapon when she wishes, up to a total of three times a day. Tisiphone may also, once per week, command a person's heart to stop beating (she controls the flow of the blood). The character killed is not allowed a saving throw, and, if he/she is

resurrected, unless a *Wish* spell is placed on the heart prior to the resurrection, the figure will die again.

The Second Fury is Alecto (The Implacable Avenger). Once per day she may use her special power: If allowed to hum E-flat for one round she can turn one person in the party into an automaton for a year (as if the character had picked the "Void" card from a *Deck of Many Things*, except that the soul is in the possession of Alecto and may only be retrieved through killing her).

The Third, and weakest, Fury is Megaera (The Disputatious Avenger). She will engage characters in arguments which they *cannot* win (they are each allowed a saving throw vs. spells at -4) for 5 minutes, at the end of which time the victims are allowed another saving throw (this time at -6 on the die). If the second save fails, victims are put to sleep for 6 months, at the end of which time they are likely to end up as (living) basket cases floating peacefully in a little boat down the Styx toward the Hells. Megaera may use her special power once per day.

Furies know most languages (85% chance for any given language).

Furies take half damage from all attacks except fire, to which they are immune.

A party entering Tartarus from the Astral Plane will find itself on a 10-foot-wide, ledge in front of the iron gates to the Fortress. The Furies will not attack unprovoked unless the party attempts to enter.

Finally, Furies don't talk; they cackle (like the witches in *Macbeth*).

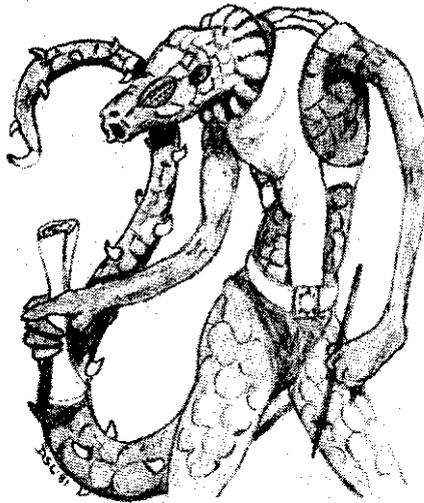
## MAPMAKER

FREQUENCY: *Uncommon*  
 NO. APPEARING: 1  
 ARMOR CLASS: 0  
 MOVE: 15"/25"  
 HIT DICE: 7+7  
 % IN LAIR: 20%  
 TREASURE TYPE: *U (but never potions, rods, staves or wands, and always maps; scrolls (1-4) 70%)*  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 3  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-10 (mouth); 1-6 (tail) and 1-4 (mapmaker's stick)  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS +1 to hit; +3 damage; paralyzation, mild insanity  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Cannot be confused; surprises on a 1-3*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: 15%  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Very*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic (tends towards evil)*  
 SIZE: *M*  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: 170/170

Attack/Defense modes: *C + Psychic Pandemonium (detailed below)IF, G, H*

A Mapmaker looks like an overgrown weasel at distances of 20 feet or more; however, up close it is obviously quite different. It has scaled skin like a lizard; it has a long tail, a humpback and it stands on two legs. It has an Elizabethan-type ruff about its neck, multi-faceted flashing eyes, a strange protruding "sucker mouth," rubbery arms and a webbed hollow in its back.

Mapmakers come from the plane of



Pandemonium, and are quite common there. They have a passion for maps, and are never encountered without one. The maps are not necessarily accurate, and often they are totally false, describing non-existent places. They are very detailed and beautiful, however, Mapmakers value their maps more than they do gold.

A mapmaker's primary attack is accomplished by spreading its wings. This causes its entire body to turn metallic and glow with darting, scintillating colors. Any creature within 12" viewing the

mapmaker in this state must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation a -2 on the die. Creatures getting a 4 or less on the die (before modification) turn *schizoid* until a *Heal, Restoration, Limited wish* or *Wish* is used. The paralyzation lasts for the number on the die plus 5 rounds. NOTE: Magical devices will *not* negate or prevent this effect.

The sucker mouth extends out 2", and the tail is barbed. The mapmaker will try to use its tail to draw prey to its mouth (it can drag prey a distance of 5 feet on a "to hit" roll of 18 or more). Hits on the mapmaker's ruff do half damage, while hits on the hump do 1½ times normal damage.

Mapmakers' ruffs scintillate harmlessly when removed from the body; they are very strong and might be worth something to a jeweler or cobbler.

Mapmakers have their own language, and all their maps are written in it. Mapmakers smell strongly of hay.

Mapmakers love to steal a party's map so the party will be lost. When stealing maps, the creatures' senses are heightened and they have 8th-level Thief abilities.

A new magic item is included with this monster: the *Mapmaker's stick* (it can mark *anything*, including human flesh; thus, the 1-4 damage pts.)

**PSYCHIC PANDEMONIUM:** This psionic attack mode attacks exactly like a *Mind Thrust*, but it may only be defended against with *Tower of Iron Will*, and then takes double pts. from the defender.

## FLARD

ORIGIN: *Nirvana*  
 FREQUENCY: *Very rare*  
 NO. APPEARING: 1  
 ARMOR CLASS: -3  
 MOVE: 0"  
 HIT DICE: 12  
 % IN LAIR: 100%  
 TREASURE TYPE: *A x 5*  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: *Nil*  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: *Nil*  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Cold, fear*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*  
 INTELLIGENCE: *See below*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Lawful Neutral*  
 SIZE: *L (infinite height)*  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: 300  
 Attack/Defense Modes: *All/all*

Flards were created by a now-extinct race of humanoids for the sole purpose of answering questions. Flards are extremely old, and spend most of their time dormant, gathering information. All attacks on an unawakened Flard will be turned back against the attacker. Flards are never discovered awake.

Each Flard has a specific name which triggers it awake when spoken. These names can only be found out through arduous research in the oldest and rarest

documents (which are certainly not available on the Prime Material Plane). Another Flard's name is the only thing a Flard is not likely to know (2% chance).

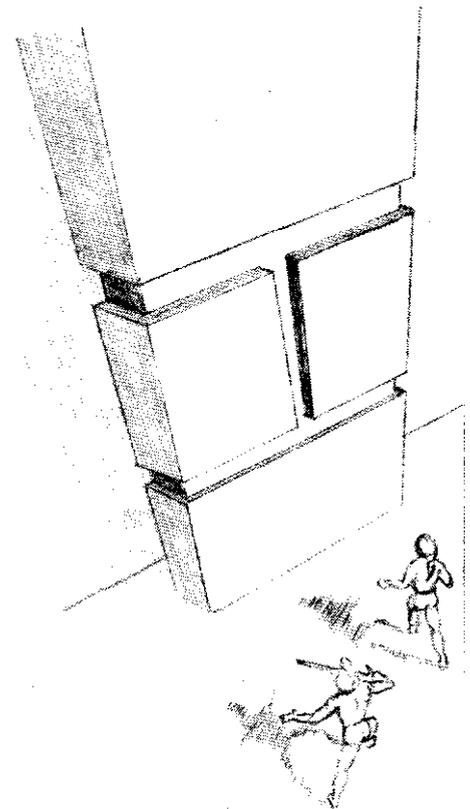
If the party speaks the Flard's name it will awaken and will answer one question with 100% accuracy. The Flard will then sleep for one thousand years.

Flards will, of course, know everything there is to know about the party, so it is never surprised in battle (it knew the party's intentions previously). Flards have two attacks: The first is a *cone of cold* (6" long with a 3" base) in any direction, and the alternate one is *fear* (as a wand) in a 6" radius, which can be used whenever the Flard desires, Fire does double damage to a Flard, and cold does half damage.

Flards cannot go to sleep once they have been awakened unless they are asked a question, so in all likelihood they will attack a party which is not quick with its query.

A Flard is considered Non-intelligent in dormant state, and of Godlike intelligence when awake.

All spells in existence higher than 3rd level did not exist when Flards were created, so only spells of 3rd level and below will affect Flards. The following lower-level spells also have no effect:



*Fireball, Burning Hands*, and all spells that were obviously created by a character (they have a name like "Bigby" or "Tensor" attached as a possessive).

A Flard's treasure is stored inside its body, and the body can only be opened (while the Flard is still living) by the Flard itself. All magic items in the treasure are

considered to be usable by the Flard if it wishes (e.g. if it had a *Wand of Fireballs* it could shoot fireballs at the party; if it had a *Ring of Invisibility* it would be invisible, etc.).

Flards are never encountered as wandering monsters, and should only be placed by the DM in hard-to-get-at places in Nirvana. A quest for a Flard would not be unusual.

*Description:* Flards appear as towering pillars of pure white marble with a veined, pink marble base. The opening to their treasure cache should be treated as a secret door (if the Flard is killed). Flards have infinite height.

## SUGO

ORIGIN: *Acheron*

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*

NO. APPEARING: 1

ARMOR CLASS: -2/-3

MOVE: 18"

HIT DICE: 14

% IN LAIR: *Nil*

TREASURE TYPE: *Nil*

NO. OF ATTACKS: 8

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-4 per attack

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Sucking (see below)*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Immune to cold and acid; takes 1½ times damage from fire*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 30%

INTELLIGENCE: *Very high*

ALIGNMENT: *Lawful Neutral (evil tendencies)*

SIZE: L (*tentacles are 7-8' long*)

PSIONIC ABILITY: 150

Attack/Defense Modes: A, C/G, I

All the marshes, bogs, swamps, slime, mud and quicksand in the world are spawned from Acheron, the Plane of



Slime. As the River of sorrows passes through the Nine Hells, it becomes gradually wider and wider, until it becomes a vast, near-impenetrable, stinking bog: Acheron.

Lurking in the mud are horrible creatures called Sugos. Juiblex himself created them, but they turned against him and all other creatures of Chaos. They greedily devour the little bugs and large worms of Acheron, but would much rather seek greater prey.

A Sugo appears as a flattish brown disc with a large red eye in the top center. Radiating from the sides of the disc

are eight slimy, brown tentacles, each equipped with a large grey sucker cup at the end. Sugos blend in perfectly with the bog, and thus surprise opponents on a 1-4.

A Sugo will attempt to attach its suckers to several adventurers (each requires a successful "to hit" roll) and suck their flesh away. The Sugo will do 1-4 pts. damage per round, and will only remove its sucker if the victim is killed or if the tentacle is chopped off.

How to chop a tentacle off: Each time a hit at a specific place on a tentacle is to be made, the player must tell the DM he is hitting at that place. Each tentacle can absorb 8 pts. of damage, regardless of the hit points of the Sugo's body. Each tentacle has an AC of -3 (because it is harder to aim at a specific point rather than the general creature). If the Sugo's body takes its full hit points in damage, the creature will die regardless of the rules in this paragraph. These rules only apply when chopping a tentacle off.

# StarMaster

*Air screams around your ships as they enter the atmosphere. Missile-launchers fire deafeningly to port and starboard while atmosphere-fighters drop in shrieking dives from their hangers below. Warriors, tightly clenching their weapons, check their pressure suits one last time and climb in grim silence into their landing shuttles. In the distance five more heavy cruisers of your empire are firing and unloading their cargo, their hulls gleaming crimson in the light of the red sun above.*

*This is not a drill. Already laser and missile fire from the mile-wide guardian fortresses below have turned the sky into an exploding nightmare of smoke, fire, and fragmented metal. Planes and shuttles twist and dodge down towards a landscape rapidly becoming an inferno of flame and radiation.*

*This is no mere raid. For years your people had explored nearby systems without violence, trading technology to the primitive civilizations there in exchange for raw materials. Some species had even thought you gods.*

*Then you met the Aeratang. Merciless, brutal, they destroyed your exploring ships and began to slaughter your colonies. But you found their home planet and launched the greatest fleet your kind ever built to carry the war to your enemy. To fight for your very survival.*

*Will it be enough?*

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StarMaster is a correspondence game of galactic exploration, diplomacy, and conquest allowing for interaction not only between each player and the worlds of the galaxy, but between the players themselves.

New players begin further out from the Galactic Center than established players allowing them to develop themselves among equals. You may lead a powerful reptilian race, carving out a vast empire of colony and subject worlds; or perhaps an insectoid species, engaged in a holy crusade to convert the galaxy to the worship of their many-legged god.

As the chosen ruler of your people, you must decide what diplomatic and military policies will be followed in order to lead your kind to dominance among the sentient beings of the galaxy.

The galaxies of StarMaster are a complete fantasy environment of solar systems, with geographies ranging from worlds near absolute zero to worlds where rivers of molten tungsten bubble, with technologies spanning from rock-throwing cave-dwellers to advanced Elder races with near-godlike abilities.

Nor is the StarMaster environment limited in terms of playing area. There are multiple galaxies allowing for extra-galactic invasions across the voids. There are both natural and constructed gateways to (and from!) other dimensions and parallel universes.

StarMaster is limitless in possibilities, bounded only by imagination! It is a game where, literally, anything is possible.

StarMaster offers these features:

- Design your species as if you could have directed evolution to this moment.
- Design your homeworld in terms of temperature, atmosphere, and mass.
- Choose your government and social order.
- You decide the production for all worlds of your empire, building colonizing ships, merchantmen, warships, warriors, and fortresses.
- Technology increases steadily, permitting faster, larger ships, deadlier weapons, and scientific breakthroughs.

The galaxies are dotted with the ruins of Elder civilizations lacking the strength to master the stars. Can you lead your world to greatness where so many others fell short?

StarMaster may be entered for \$12.00 which includes the first two turns, set up turn, a rule book and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter, turns are \$3.50 each. A rule book may be purchased separately for \$3.50.



## Flute of Dismissing

by Richard Lucas

The *Flute of Dismissing* possesses the power to disrupt the magics that bind conjured or summoned monsters in their enchanted states. Thus, such creatures will simply disappear when certain special tunes are played on the flute. The device can also send creatures from other planes back to the plane they came from. It is usable by all classes of characters.

The magic items, spells and creatures the flute can affect are as follows:

Magic items: Bag of tricks, Bowl commanding water elementals, Brazier commanding fire elementals, Censer controlling air elementals, Efreeti bottle, Horn of Valhalla, Iron flask, Pipes of the sewers, Ring of djinni summoning, Stone of controlling earth elementals, Wand of conjuration.

Monsters: Aerial servant, Demons, Devils, Djinni, Efreet, elementals, Ghost, Hell hound, Invisible stalker, Night hag, Nightmare, Salamander, Shadow, Spectre, Thought eater, Triton, Umber hulk, Vampire, Water weird, Wight, Wind walker, Wraith, Xorn.

Spells: Aerial servant, Animal summoning, Call woodland beings, Conjure animals, Creeping doom, Insect plague, Monster summoning, Mordenkainen's faithful hound, Summon insects, Summon shadow.

A different melody is required for each item, monster or spell to be affected by the flute. The first time the owner of a flute attempts to dismiss a certain object or spell, he will necessarily produce a poor rendition of the melody — even assuming that the user of the flute knows which melody to use in a given situation. Any user's first try at a certain melody will take four rounds to play and have a 25% chance of being successfully reproduced. The second try (regardless of the outcome of the first try) will take two rounds to play and have a 50% chance of

success. On the third and subsequent attempts, a fair amount of expertise is achieved, such that the melody takes one round to play and is always successful.

Even when a melody is successfully played, the object of the melody is allowed a saving throw (if applicable) vs. paralyzation. A check against magic resistance must also be made in cases where the object of the flute playing has such protection. The flute operates at 10th-level power for purposes of determining the magic resistance saving roll.

It is suggested that a side record of a character's attempts with the flute be kept. The flute can be played an unlimited number of times.

Experience point value: 4,000. Gold piece sale value: 30,000.

## Staff of Ethereal Action

by Ed Greenwood

Also known as a *Blink staff*, this item appears to be a normal wooden staff, but when a command word is spoken, it allows the holder to *Blink* (as in the spell) for a total of up to 2 turns per day. In battle or other circumstances where quick, repeated Blinks are desired, the holder of the staff can blink "in and out" at the rate of one blink (in either direction) per segment. The staff neither has nor requires charges.

The staff is also a +1 weapon, and is able to strike creatures on the ethereal plane (such as couatl, ghosts, phase spiders, and characters using *Armor* or *Oil of Ethereality*) as well as those on the prime material.

Experience point value: 7,000. Gold piece sale value: 15,000.

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# Horseshoes of Hades

by Victor Selby

These four horseshoes will be found in a group and will appear to the eye as normal iron shoes. They will emanate a dim magic if magic is detected for.

When the first of the shoes is physically moved (by means of physical contact or a spell), that shoe will turn jet black in color and will thereafter appear to be made of some foreign, unknown material. (If all four shoes are moved simultaneously, the black shoe is determined randomly.) If a sage is consulted or a *Legend Lore* or similar sort of spell is cast upon the single shoe, there is a slim chance of it being identified as an object native to a middle lower plane, specifically Hades. The black horseshoe will emit a strong aura of magic and a dim aura of evil, if those qualities are detected for, but the other three shoes remain as before.

When all four of these shoes are attached to the hooves of a normal horse of any type (war horse, riding horse, draft horse, etc. but not a mule or donkey), the horse is magically transformed into a Nightmare (see *Monster Manual*) with 33 hit points. This creature will surprise on a 1-5 (d6) and in combat will attack all material life within a 3" radius. If it slays all material life within that space it will disappear into the astral plane, horseshoes and all, presumably to return the horseshoes to Hades. If it is slain, the corpse will assume the form of the original horse, which will be wearing three normal horseshoes — and the black one will have disappeared.

If a character is sitting on the horse's back when the final shoe is attached to a hoof, he/she will be thrown by the nightmare immediately after the transformation and will suffer 3-18 points of damage from the fall. When the nightmare first appears, it will breathe smoke, with effects as outlined in the *Monster Manual*, before attempting to attack with fangs and hooves.

Experience point value: 1,500. Gold piece sale value: 3,000.

# Syrar's Silver Sword

by Ed Greenwood

This +1 silver weapon employs a combination of spells devised by the archmage Syrar. These magics allow the blade to breach the barriers between planes in much the same manner as a Cockatrice and similar creatures do. Thus, it can strike targets on the astral and ethereal planes which are susceptible to magical weapon attacks. But when so wielded (user on the prime material, target on another plane) is treated as a normal weapon "to hit." The +1 to damage applies in all cases.

Anyone holding the sword can see into either the astral or ethereal plane (one at a time) at will, viewing a spherical area with a 3" radius centered on the tip of the drawn blade. The user need not employ the sword offensively in order to be able to use the viewing power; thus, clerics and magic-users can make use of this ability of the sword. However, such viewing can only be maintained for a number of rounds equal to the holder's Intelligence, plus 1-4 additional rounds, and the viewing ability only functions once per day, regardless of the length of time each viewing is sustained.

Only the sword itself, and never any part of its wielder, any other physical object or form of attack or spell, can reach into the other planes. To creatures residing on the other planes, the weapon is clearly visible whenever drawn, and its bearer appears as a shadowy, indistinct figure which they may reach through the planes to attack, but at -2 "to hit."

The viewing ability also works for users on the astral and ethereal planes with respect to their ability to see into the prime material.

Experience point value: 1,000. Gold piece sale value: 4,000.

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## The thief: A special look

The thief character is more often abused by players than underrated, though some players miss capabilities that thieves should have. The easiest way to discuss a thief is to look at his/her special abilities.

How often does a thief **pick pockets**? I had a thief progress to 16th level over a two-year period and in that time he picked one pocket! Picking a pocket is best done just as an assassin plans a killing. The two acts have a great deal in common. If you tell a player, "A drunk is approaching and bumps into you as he passes," or some such statement, it will be obvious to all the players what has likely occurred. On the other hand if you allow the thief to pick his/her time of attack with some real forethought, it will be very difficult for the victim to realize when his/her pocket was picked.

To encourage pickpocketing, it is very wise to have many encounters for the party in a town. Mention every person the party passes on the street if the town is small. In a town with a thousand or more persons there will be a number of crowds encountered, or people will be passed almost every round of movement. Such situations are a thief's bread and butter. A good thief will not attempt to pick up something if he/she will stand out. This should be obvious from the victim's point of view as well. Allow more experienced thieves, that player characters might run into, to convey this concept (for a price) if your players have not already caught on to it.

Thieves also enjoy slipping in and out of camps to pick up things. A sleeping victim can add as much as 100% to a thief's chance of stealing something. A good thief will try to sneak past an outpost/lookout and get into the sleeping/drunken camp. A good thief will rarely kill the guard unless he/she has to.

One of the most important functions of a thief is not even mentioned in the *Players Handbook*. That function is **mapping!** The ability to sneak into a place and get the "lay of the land" is very important to any party. It is most valuable

when a building is the subject of the party's eventual attack. However, the DM should be sure that a thief takes the opportunity to draw a map promptly. If the thief must do it from memory after the investigation, the map will likely be inaccurate. Also, the DM must require some reasonable Intelligence on the part of the thief to make a good map. Stupid thieves (Intelligence 7 or less) might not even know how to read, much less write or draw accurately.

On the Intelligence table (*PH*, page 10) we can see that those of Intelligence 7 or less can learn only one language over and above their minimum number. Intelligence can be used — for *all* characters — to determine the chance to be able to read and write any and all languages known. Multiply Intelligence by 12 to yield a percent chance that a character of any class will know how to read and write. Optionally, Wisdom may be added to this chance (cumulative) but at a lower rate; 3% per point of Wisdom. This method ensures that most characters can read and write, but not all.

Thieves, or any other characters for that matter, who fail to map as they go, or at least to pause during the investigation to map from time to time, should be forced to draw a map later from memory. If a single player is making the map, for game purposes, allow no one else who is present to make a map. This is especially important if any player has no character on the mapping expedition. A good party will rarely send the thief on a mapping foray alone. They will send along one or two back-up characters who can help if things go wrong.

**Opening locks**, as we all know, is a matter of "cleverness, plus knowledge and study of such items" (*PH*, page 27). Again, stupid thieves could be penalized, but likely that would be going too far and players would rebel. However, real Intelligence does come into play on puzzle locks and complex closures. Nothing forbids the inclusion of "complex locks" in addition to the run-of-the-mill, crude lock the thief will run into most of

the time. "Complex locks" can subtract some set amount from the thief's percent chance to open the lock, cutting his chance by a third, half, two thirds or even more for truly unusual, challenging closures. Such complex locks should be expensive and rare. Picking a complex lock (or an ordinary one) in stress situations (practice does not count) can give a thief actual experience, if the DM chooses to award experience for such an act. An ordinary lock takes 1-4 rounds to open; a complex one can take 1-10 rounds (as suggested in the *DMG*, page 19) or perhaps even longer for unique ones.

**Finding and removing traps** are two separate acts. It is best for the DM not to go into detail on what kind of trap is found, because that might tip off the way to disarm the trap. Some traps can be obviously disarmed and thus the second act (removing) does not come into play. The DM is wise to say something like: "You find no traps," or "You think you disarmed it," as opposed to "There are no traps," or "You have disarmed it." Only if the character is absolutely sure (100% chance) should a definite announcement be made.

A new ability in this category is given below — **Setting Traps**:

Level of thief	Chance to set trap
1	26%
2	32%
3	38%
4	43%
5	48%
6	53%
7	57%
8	61%
9	65%
10	68%
11	71%
12	74%
13	76%
14	78%
15+	80%

### Adjustments for Dexterity:

9	-10%
10	- 6%
11	- 2%
12	+ 2%
13	+ 5%
14	+ 8%
15	+ 11%
16	+14%
17	+17%
18	+20%

### Adjustments for race:

Dwarf	+ 15%
Elf	- 5%
Gnome	+10%
Half-elf	0
Halfling	+ 8%
Half-orc	+ 4%

The best possible chance to set a trap is 99.9%. Let 1000 convert to 99.1%, 101% to 99.2%,..... 108% to 99.9%. Failure to set a trap successfully will cause

the trap to spring on the setting thief. His/her chance to escape from his/her own trap can be a function of Dexterity for mechanical traps, at a chance of 3% per point of Dexterity. If the thief does not jump free, he/she will suffer the full consequences of the trap.

**Moving silently** is only abused when the DM forgets that the rate of movement is only twelve feet a round (*DMG*, page 19). If the thief moves faster, reduce the chance of silence by as much as 3% per foot of movement above twelve feet per round. The actual surface being crossed will dictate the proper subtraction (ranging from ½% to 3% per foot). It should also be noted that the thief using a *Silence 15'* Radius spell will have that sphere of silence hit his/her victim while the thief is still 15 feet away; a sudden lapse into silence will often alert a victim. Circumstances must be considered in such a case. It should also be remembered that *Boots of Elvenkind* do assume some slow rate of movement — not twelve feet a round, but not running either — in order to function properly. A speed of up to half of the thief's normal walking speed would allow the boots to function as designed. A higher speed would begin to negate their effectiveness.

**Hiding in shadows** has been discussed numerous times. Shadows must be fairly deep to be effective. Do not forget that a figure hiding in shadows can still be detected by smelt, a *Wand of Enemy Detec-*

*tion, Detect Magic* (if he/she has a magic item(s)), etc.

The chance to **hear noises** assumes that the area is quiet. If the party is talking or moving about, this action will negate the chance. Hearing a sound can also involve discerning what is heard — but this ability does take thief's training. Reroll (at the same chance as to hear a noise) to see if the sound was discerned as to what a likely source or cause might have been. Discerning a noise might not only mean hearing bits of actual conversation, but might also allow a guess as to how many persons are engaged in speaking. The DM should not give away too much!

Obviously, non-thieves can hear things, but the ability of discernment should not be allowed to them. Give other characters half of a thief's chance (by level) to hear noises, but avoid a procession of one character after the other going to the door to listen! Such a procession might be heard from the other side. Note that Undeath rarely make noise.

**Climbing walls** can be aided by spikes driven in with a hammer. But this makes "Thor's own good sound" and can be heard for miles in some tunnel complexes. Such driving of one spike will take 3-18 segments, longer for very hard rock. Thieves who try to cast darts, throw daggers, and perform similar acts while clinging to a wall by their toes should fall flat on their behinds! A player will claim

great things are possible while hanging on a wall, not the least of which will be disarming traps, melee, drawing a map and other absolutely absurd things. Give this turkey a chance to hold on equal to 2% per point of dexterity on difficult acts — but any act the DM considers impossible will cause him/her to fall, period. Falling can deal out quite a bit of damage, not the least of which will be to carried items which will suffer ordinary or crushing blows as our hero hits the floor below.

**Back stabbing** can be partially negated. It does not have to be an all-or-nothing affair. Only total surprise will give the full bonus to damage. This bonus is due to the thief's skill at placing the blow exactly where he/she wants it. This can only be done on a surprised victim. A figure who catches sight of the thief, even if that sight is subsequently lost, will be on guard and might be hard to sneak up on. This cannot be quantified but must be determined on a situation-by-situation basis. For example: A figure is running away from a party at full speed. A thief takes off after him and tries to hit from behind. The figure is not really surprised, but the fleeing figure is also not looking behind him/herself at every step. Thus, a bonus of +3 to hit (instead of +2 or +4) and perhaps double damage if a hit occurs (instead of triple damage) would be quite fair.

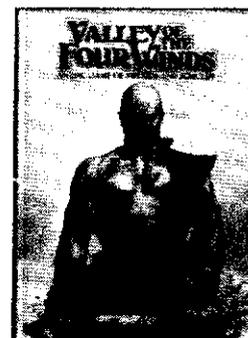
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# GIANTS IN THE EARTH

## CLASSIC HEROES FROM FICTION & LITERATURE

### P. Vergilius Maro's CAMILLA

#### 10th level Fighter

Alignment: *Chaotic Good*  
Hit Points: 64  
Armor Class: 3  
No. Attacks: 3/2  
Damage/Attack: 1-8 (+3)  
Hit Bonus: +1  
Move: 12" plus *Special*  
Psionic Ability: *Nil*  
Strength: 18/21  
Intelligence: 10  
Wisdom: 8  
Dexterity: 17  
Constitution: 17  
Charisma: 16

Camilla is a young warrior maiden, a member of the royal line of the Volscian tribe of Pre-Roman Italy. She is blonde and pretty, wearing a gold fillet around her efficiently cropped hair. Over her typical Heroic Age tunic and armor, she wears a purple cloak, a mark of honor. Since she leads a troop of cavalry, she will usually be found accompanied by

5-30 4th-level mounted fighters and one 6th-level lieutenant. (There is only a .05% probability that she will be encountered while alone). These fighters are men, not other women. She and the troop wear the same armor: a long, oval bronze shield, bronze helmet, breastplate, and greaves. They are each armed with a long spear, a myrtlewood bow and a quiver of arrows, and a stabbing-sword in a sheath. The arrows are for the first line of attack; once dismounted, they will throw the spear javeline-style, then turn to the sword.

Since people, particularly other women, stare open-mouthed at her wherever she goes, Camilla is very touchy and proud, quick to take insult if she feels her honor is being mocked. She is unusually brave, and is always in the forefront of any battle. Her men are devoted to her. Not only does she have a high natural charisma, but also she is a good speaker who can rally morale with smoothly worded wartime cliches. In her most famous battle, against Aeneas, founder of Rome, it was Camilla who shamed Turnus, her captain, into con-

tinuing to fight when he was overwhelmed by despair.

Camilla is strong, a "woman hardened for battle." Her most unusual characteristic, however, is her great speed. When she runs full tilt, even in full battle armor, she seems to go so fast that "she can fly over the tops of the grass-blades and leave them unbent," or "run over the waves of the sea without getting her feet wet." Dismounted, then, her movement rate will be exceptional, three times normal in short bursts, double over long stretches.

In the *Aeneid*, where the gods have willed that Aeneas will triumph, the only way Camilla can be killed is by treachery, when she is stalked and slain from behind by a half-mad priest. In a fantasy or parallel world, Camilla and her troop are still riding, seeking glory and a challenge where they can find it, just as they once rode to Latium on only the promise of a good fight. It is likely that she will ally herself and her troop to a party of adventurers if she feels the cause is just and sufficiently dangerous. She will be insulted by any offer of payment, preferring a share of the booty. Her virginity is a matter of religious honor to her and any attempted seducer will find himself challenged to a personal duel, where the Goddess Diana will allow Camilla an extra +2 to hit and to damage.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Aeneid*, Books VII and XI, by Vergil (P. Vergilius Maro)

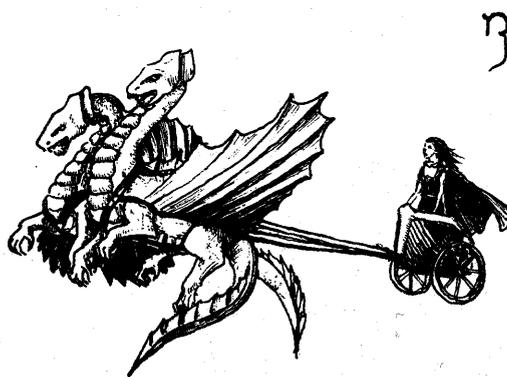
Written by Katharine Brahtin Kerr

### MEDEA, Tamer of Dragons

#### 18th-Level Magic-User with Sage abilities

Alignment: *Chaotic Neutral*  
Hit Points: 35  
Armor Class: 10  
# of Attacks: 1  
Damage/Attack: 1-4  
Move: 12"  
Hit Bonus: *none*  
Psionic Ability: 160 points  
Attack Modes: B, C, D  
Defense Modes: F, G, H, I  
Strength: 11  
Intelligence: 18  
Wisdom: 16  
Dexterity: 14  
Constitution: 11  
Charisma: 17

Medea was born the daughter of the King of Colchis, a small barbarian country near the Black Sea. By the time she was eighteen, she had a vast knowledge of herbs and the lower reaches of the magical arts: She trained a dragon to guard her father's great treasure, a fleece of gold that hung in a sacred grove. When a handsome ranger named Jason arrived in a quest for this fleece, Medea fell in love with him. Using her magical



arts, she helped Jason overcome all the trials her father set in his path. At the last, she charmed the dragon and allowed Jason to steal the fleece easily. Out of gratitude, Jason offered to marry her and take her back to Greece. When she accepted, all her troubles began.

Though at first her marriage was happy — she bore Jason two sons — Medea was feared and shunned by the other Greek women. Out of loneliness, she

pursued her magical studies even deeper, though this made the rumors about her worse. The final blow came when Jason coldly divorced her, pleading political reasons, to marry the pretty daughter of a neighboring king. In revenge, Medea sent the bride a beautiful but poisoned tunic, which stuck to her skin and burned her to death. Half-mad with grief and rage, Medea then slew her two sons. When guards rushed in to arrest her, she stared them down, then summoned a flying chariot, pulled by two dragons, and made her escape. She was assumed to have returned to Colchis, but since she had betrayed her father, this is obviously mistaken. Utterly embittered about the human world (her alignment had previously been chaotic good), Medea took refuge in a barren, arid country, there to study dragonlore and magic. No one is entirely sure where she went, so a party of adventurers may well come upon her caves, set high up on the flank of a rocky and inhospitable peak.

Medea is a passionate woman who is sometimes overpowered by the strength of her emotions so that she performs extreme actions which she later regrets.

When Medea decides on a course of action she will let nothing deter her, especially not a sense of conscience. She makes a good friend (as long as a friend remains constant and true) but a terrible, vengeful enemy.

Even in old age, Medea is still a striking woman, tall and straight of posture, with pale gray hair done up in braids above her strong, handsome face. She wears a long tunic, much-mended and stained, that shows traces of rich gold and purple embroidery. At her waist is a golden belt, the clasp in the form of a dragon's head, and a long, curved-bladed knife in a bronze sheath. Her caves are clean, but poorly furnished; she lives alone except for her dragons. Her high charisma comes from the negative fascination she can exert. Even those who are afraid of her find their attention riveted on her. Her betrayal by Jason has left her bitter about fighting men. If any such approach her, she rolls a reaction with a -20 modifier on the Encounter Reaction Table (page 63 *Dungeon Masters Guide*). Magic-Users, especially women, will receive a polite though distant greeting from her (roll reaction normally).

Although she seems physically weak, she is a dangerous person to threaten with bodily harm. Not only will her faithful dragons always rush to her defense, but she has a number of powerful spells,

These spells may be chosen by the DM to fit his or her campaign, though there are three spells which appear in all the legends about her (*Fear, Hold Person, and Confusion*). To save time, DM's may wish to use the suggested spell list given at the end of the description.

As a Sage, Medea's major areas are poisons and dragonlore, her minor ones herbs and potions. On poisons, her chance to know is exceptionally high (+10 on percentile roll). Though ordinary money means nothing to her, there is a 75% probability that she will answer a question if the reward is a golden, bejeweled bauble that would make a good present for one of her many dragon friends. In her cave will be a large number of herbs and poisons, and a good selection of potions. Though most of these can be DM's choice, there should always be one *potion of dragon control* and one vial of horrible deadly poison — in similar, unmarked vials, of course. If the DM wishes to add an *Orb of Dragonkind* to her/his campaign, Medea's cave is the logical place to put it. It is also possible (45%) that she will be raising a dragon hatchling in the cave.

Her chariot dragons serve her willingly and will come to her telepathic call. They are young brass dragons, who pull her chariot (move 24") for a fixed term in return for learning their first spell. They have the usual hit die, etc. for their spe-

cies and are able to talk but not use spells yet.

Medea has a psionic ability of 160 points. The DM may assign any psionic abilities he or she wishes, or simply give Medea the suggested psionic abilities of Animal Telepathy (18th level), Detection of Magic (16th level), Clairvoyance (14th level), and Mind Bar (12th level).

**Suggested spells usable**

*1st level:* Charm Person, Detect Magic, Feather Fall, Friends, Read Magic.

*2nd level:* Detect Invisible, ESP, Mirror Image, Scare, Web.

*3rd level:* Dispel Magic, Haste, Infravision, Phantasmal Force, Suggestion,

*4th level:* Charm Monster, Confusion, Fear, Fumble, Polymorph Other.

*5th level:* Animal Growth, Feeblemind, Hold Monster, Monster Summoning III, Wall of Force.

*6th level:* Anti-magic Shell, Legend Lore, Stone to Flesh.

*7th level:* Mass Invisibility, Monster Summoning V\*, Power Word Stun.

*8th level:* Mass Charm, Maze,

*9th level:* Monster Summoning VII\*.

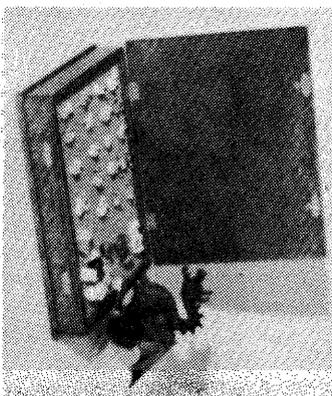
\*More dragons will appear.

Bibliography: Medea is a common figure in Graeco-Roman literature. The best sources are Euripides' tragedy, *Medea*, Apollonius of Rhodes' epic poem, *The Argonautica*, and Ovid's *Heroides*, Epistle XII.

Written by Katharine Brahtin Kerr

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# The merry month of . . . Mirtul?

by Ed Greenwood

When I first started DMing, and was laboriously putting together a fantasy world, I found myself looking for some sort of handy justification for a multitude of factors. These included how a large variety of ferocious creatures (including man) could live so close together without rising en masse to smite each other, and why trade could be at once imperiled by pirates, monsters, and greedy player characters and at the same time be so profitable as to allow everyone to wallow in gold pieces—even to the extent of leaving odd piles of loot in nasty, dirty holes in the ground.

An effective answer was to tailor the setting itself to create the conditions desired. Climate, for instance: a rich growing season to ensure prosperity, violent winters that make large-scale movement impossible in the coldest months—thus limiting wars to the busy growing season and thereby keeping them small in scale. A perfect situation for adventurers: lots of treasure about, lots of little feuds and skirmishes but no large armies or wandering hordes to avoid; everything solved. (Well, you know, *almost . . .*)

To keep track of the seasons, and of the customs which accompany them, one needs a calendar. Designing one's own time system is far too much fun to allow use of our present Gregorian calendar, with its months and holidays so familiar and jarringly incongruous in a fantasy setting. A calendar of one's own devising can also aid bookkeeping by being uniform. Aberrations such as months of differing lengths or leap years can be avoided if one wishes, since the DM can decree the exact frequency and duration of solar and lunar cycles (if, that is, your world has a sun and moon . . .)

On the other hand, keeping to the familiar aids bookkeeping, too. The fewer details the DM must keep track of, the more he or she can concentrate on what the party is doing to the surroundings—and what the surroundings are doing to the party.

The following calendar is specifically tailored for my world (the climatic and political conditions of the place should be obvious), but it may be adopted, adapted, or culled for ideas to use in other campaigns. Wars, by the way, are usually fought after the harvest is done, continuing as late as the weather permits. The bulk of the fighting takes place in the month of Uktar, and the ironic practicality of the Feast of the Moon is readily apparent.

The year consists of 365 days: 12 months of exactly 30 days each (due to the obedient moon), plus 5 days that fall between months. These days are special oc-

casions. Leap year is retained purely for social convenience (it provides a sixth special day that is used as the basis for long-term agreements and such).

Months are subdivided into 3 ten-day periods. These are known variously as "eves," "tendays," "domen," "hyrar," or "rides" throughout the Forgotten Realms. Although the months themselves are

standardized (for my convenience!), the system of dating also varies from place to place. Usually, years are numbered from an event of great political or religious significance; each world will have cultures with unique histories, and thus different reckonings. The system below is named for its inventor, the long-dead wizard Harptos of Kaalinth.

## The Calendar of Harptos

The name of each month in the Calendar of Harptos is listed below, from the beginning of a calendar year to the end. Each month's name is followed by a colloquial description of that month, plus the corresponding month of the Gregorian

calendar (in parentheses).

*Special days* are listed when they occur between months and appear in *italic* type. Each special day is described in a paragraph following the calendar itself.

### 1. Hammer; Deepwinter.

(January)

*Midwinter*

### 2. Alturiak; The Claws of Winter, or The Claws of the Cold. (February)

### 3. Ches; The Claws of the Sunsets. (March)

### 4. Tarsakh; The Claws of the Storms. (April)

*Greengrass*

### 5. Mirtul; The Melting. (May)

### 6. Kythorn; The Time of Flowers. (June)

### 7. Flamerule; Summertide.

(July)

*Midsummer*

### 8. Eleasias; Highsun. (August)

### 9. Eleint; The Fading. (September)

*Highharvestide*

### 10. Marpenoth; Leafall. (October)

### 11. Uktar; The Rotting. (November)

*The Feast of the Moon*

### 12. Nightal; The Drawing Down. (December)

#### Special days

**Midwinter** is known officially as The High Festival of Winter. It is a feast where, traditionally, the lords of the lands plan the year ahead, make and renew alliances, and send gifts of goodwill. To the commonfolk, this is Deadwinter Day, the midpoint of the worst of the cold.

**Greengrass** is the official beginning of spring, a day of relaxation. Flowers that have been carefully grown in inner rooms of the keeps and temples during the winter are blessed and cast out upon the snow, to bring rich growth in the season ahead.

**Midsummer**, called Midsummer Night or The Long Night, is a time of feasting and music and love. In a ceremony performed in some lands, unwed maidens are set free in the woods and "hunted" by their would-be suitors throughout the night. Betrothals are traditionally made upon this night. It is very rare indeed for the weather to be bad during the night—such is considered a very bad omen, usually thought to foretell famine or plague.

**Highharvestide** heralds the coming of fall and of the harvest. It is a feast that often continues for the length of the harvest, so

that there is always food for those coming in from the fields. There is much travelling about on the heels of the feast, as merchants, court emissaries, and pilgrims make speed ere the worst of the mud arrives and the rain freezes into snow.

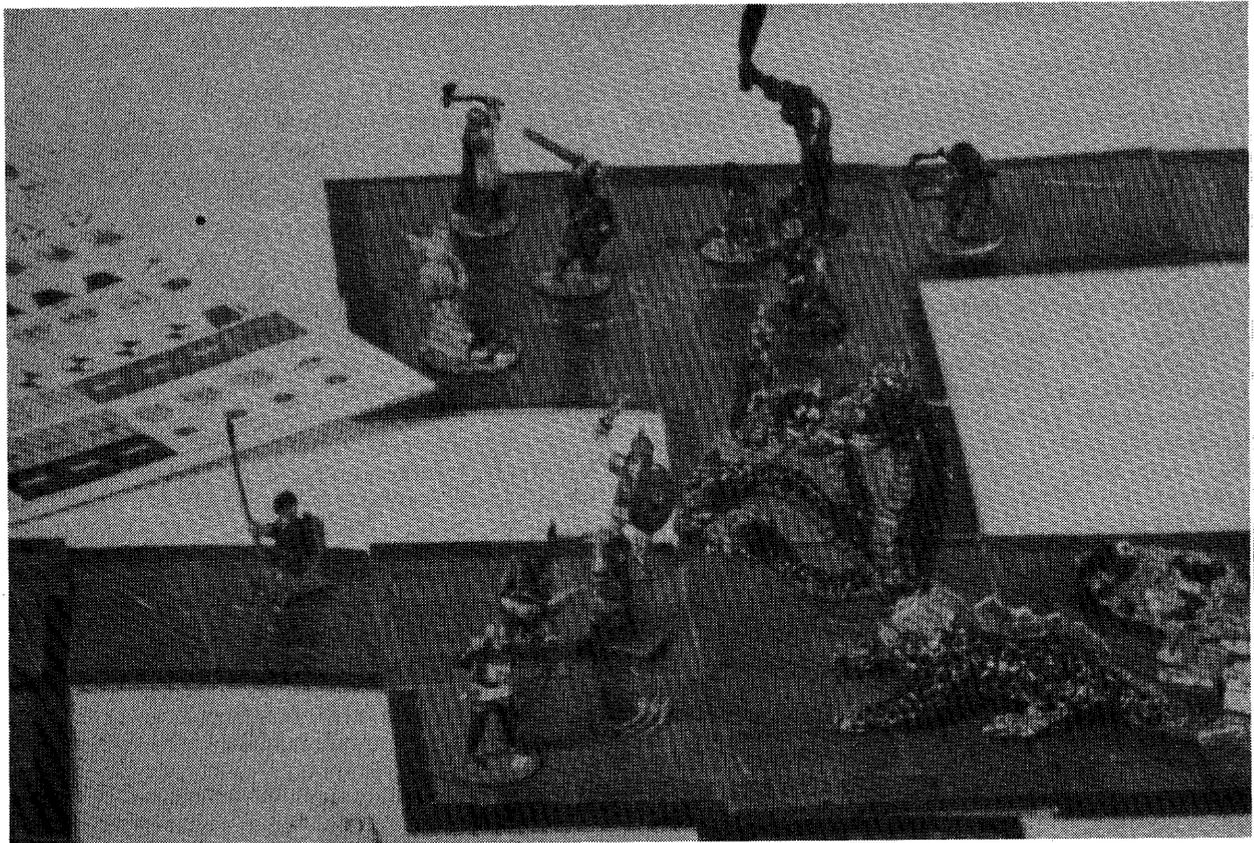
**The Feast of the Moon** is the last great festival of the year. It marks the arrival of winter, and is also the day when the dead are honored. Graves are blessed, the Ritual of Remembrance performed, and tales of the doings of those now gone are told far into the night. Much is said of heroes and treasure and lost cities underground.

Once every four years, another day is added to the year in the manner of February 29 in the Gregorian calendar. This day is part of no month, and follows Midsummer Night. It is known as **The Shieldmeet**. It is a day of open council between nobles and people; a day for the making and renewing of pacts, oaths, and agreements; tournaments, tests and trials for those wishing to advance in battle fame or clerical standing; for entertainment of all types, particularly theatrical; and for dueling.

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# The RASMUSSEN Files

## Basic bureaus and special agents

by Merle M. Rasmussen

SECURITY CLEARANCE LEVEL: One in all bureaus

BEGIN MESSAGE:

TO: Operatives and participants of *TOP SECRET*, especially the first 27,139 recruits.

BY AUTHORITY OF: Merle M. Rasmussen, Director of Administrations.

PURPOSE: To expand the rulings on Bureau Classification, to introduce and define new agent types and their specific roles, and to reveal course descriptions from the Espionage College Course Handbook.

MESSAGE: Operatives may work under one of four bureaus: Investigation, Confiscation, Assassination, or Technical. When a character is created, each player will decide which bureau his or her agent will be working under first. A character can only work under one bureau at a time and all experience gained must be applied to that bureau only. At any time between missions, a character may decide to change to another bureau. Already earned experience points apply only to the bureau they were earned under. A character may return to a bureau he or she has previously left and add any new experience points earned under that bureau to points earned earlier under that bureau. All beginning characters and characters attempting to earn experience under a bureau for the first time are considered 1st level with zero experience points in that bureau.

Characters who have earned experience points under more than one bureau are extremely valuable and talented. They are each given a special classification which defines their combination of talents. Level in the special classification is defined as the lowest level of the character in any of the bureaus they have gained experience in. Hence, if the character is a level-three Investigator and a level-two Confiscator, he or she qualifies as a second-level Magician.

### Special Classifications

**Magician** — an agent with experience in Investigation and Confiscation.

**Hunter** — an agent with experience in Investigation and Assassination.

**Sleuth** — an agent with experience in Investigation and Technical.

**Saboteur** — an agent with experience in Confiscation and Assassination.

**Wizard** — an agent with experience in Confiscation and Technical.

**Mechanic** — an agent with experience in Assassination and Technical.

**Operator** — an agent with experience in any three bureaus.

**Administrator** — an agent with experience in all four bureaus.

### Bureau member descriptions

**INVESTIGATOR:** This agent is the eyes and ears of an espionage operation. Primarily an information gatherer, an investigator observes, inquires, and examines the situation or target systematically, often using special surveillance equipment. The investigator should have a good memory, rate high in charm and knowledge, and should be proficient in electronics, languages, photography, and tailing. The irrepressible, often unarmed John Steed is a splendid Investigator — and performs his function to a tea!

**CONFISCATOR:** If the investigator is the eyes and ears of an espionage operation, then a confiscator must be the hands. A confiscator's main concern is seizing property—and that covers a lot of possessions. A confiscator should be well coordinated and familiar with all types of vehicles. Security detection, deactivation, and infiltration are a confiscator's forte, but picking pockets and gambling are done for fun. The role of Confiscator was stolen by Alexander Mundy.

**ASSASSIN:** The infamous yet regrettably necessary Assassin is primarily a cold-blooded murderer of prominent persons. Rating high in physical strength and/or willpower, this agent performs dangerous, often suicidal, tasks in the line of duty. Often an expert in explosives, poisons, and firearms, the Assassin must also know how to defend his or her party using unarmed fighting ability. Many an agent owes his or her life to an Assassin who used his body as a human shield during a mission. SPECTRE and especially SMERSH have been known to use many an Assassin against James Bond.

**TECHNICIAN:** Knowledgeable, courageous, and often highly coordinated, the Technician is usually only seen in a supportive role. When placed in the field, a Technician must perform his or her assigned function expertly even under extreme stress and adverse conditions. Usually not a weapon bearer, the Technician must rely on team members for defense as he or she operates equipment, bandages injuries, analyzes chemicals, punches a keyboard or studies a special device. Barney Collier of the IMF represents and epitomizes the Technician.

**OPERATOR:** In the field an operator literally calls the shots, leads the team, doles out payment, reprimands wrongdoers, and reports directly to the Administrator. Most Operator duties are mundane, bureaucratic functions necessary if new agents are to be recruited and trained. Many Operators, tired of the constant danger in field work, strive to become Administrators where the life is safer, but lonelier. An Operator is personally responsible for the actions of an agent and the use of expensive or valuable special equipment. Jim Phelps of the IMF is definitely an Operator.

**ADMINISTRATOR:** Not officially an agent's role. This is theoretically where agents who have worked under all other bureaus come to retire. By having survived at least four missions to get this far in designation, the agent should have plenty of ideas on

**TOP SECRET**

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how to design and moderate his or her own missions. Administrators often contact an operator to assemble a spy team and pay the operator who must then pay the agents, Alexander Waverly of U.N.C.L.E., "M" of the British Secret Service, and the Chief of C.O.N.T.R.O.L. fill this role.

**Special classification descriptions**

**MAGICIAN:** A master at sleight of hand and at conning everyone he or she meets, the Magician is a welcome agent on missions which are conducted in the public eye. The magician is an escape artist, a master of disguise, and an alluring entertainer all in one. The IMF utilizes Rollin Hand and his many faces as a Magician.

**HUNTER:** Not necessarily a killer at all, a Hunter traces the movement of prey, learns its habits, its strengths and weaknesses. The hunter is often a loner who blends in with the shadows, seeks to find the target, and often fascinates or forces the surprised target out into the open where an Assassin can get a clear shot. While investigating, James Bond is authorized to kill in the line of duty. Because of this, Bond is defined as a Hunter and hence is treated with respect and awe.

**SLEUTH:** Sherlock Holmes best typifies this agent. Brilliant, systematic, charming but never assuming, a Sleuth often solves the problems he or she poses. The Sleuth is cautious yet surprising and often fools those he or she comes in contact with. An information expert, the Sleuth is a valuable asset on highly technical missions where quick, clear thinking is a must. Wire-tapping and codebreaking are just two of the Sleuth's strong points. Derek Flint is a modern-day, Sherlock Holmes-type Sleuth.

**SABOTEUR:** Not a mad bomber or a political terrorist, a Saboteur is a dazzling, fast-acting expert with a toolbox. Not only must a Saboteur know how to stop a machine or process, but he or she must know how the mechanism should work normally. On a series of machines, a Saboteur must remove the same part from all of them so some can't be repaired by "cannibalism." Often using herself as the "tool", Modesty Blaise has sabotaged men's hearts and cut gems with equal expertise.

**WIZARD:** At one time restricted to being a safecracker, modern technology has expanded the Wizard's role. The Wizard can deactivate a security system, hot-wire a vehicle, find hidden openings, and withdraw information from computer files in seconds. The Wizard nearly always uses tools and is welcome on delicate missions requiring a short amount of time. Wizards work well with sleuths, Ilya Kuryakin of U.N.C.L.E. is believed to be an electronics wizard. (See *Dragon* #44, p.11)

**MECHANIC:** A mechanic is an agent whose role is to create "accidents," Like the Wizard reliant on tools, the Mechanic is concerned with subtlety and secrecy. Often working alone with explosives, gases, poisons and special devices, the Mechanic must rely on technical knowhow. Not all missions will be for assassination purposes, Mechanics work well with Saboteurs and Hunters. Willy Armitage of the IMF could perform the functions of a Mechanic quite naturally.

No specific role is all-encompassing, nor should it be. Each agent brings particular talents to a mission that often overlap another's talents. In the course of a mission it is best to let the most qualified individual perform any particular task. It is the operator's job to know the agents on the team and allocate them appropriately.

As an example of how the special classification works, imagine that Shadra, a new recruit, has decided to work under the Technical Bureau. She completes the ten-week Pyrotechnic Chemistry and Duplication course in nine weeks. (Where she received the \$7,000 entrance fee is still a mystery.) She earns 90 experience points credit, plus 100 bonus points for working under the Technical Bureau. She is now classified as a level-three Technician and is designated as a Tinker.

On her first field mission she decides to work under the Confiscation Bureau, and she miraculously gains 425 experience

points. She is now a level-two confiscator and is designated as a Pilferer.

Her special classification is a short description of her abilities. She is designated as a level-two Wizard (or Wizardess, if she prefers).

**Physical Differences**

The following optional rules can be used to randomly determine the gender and handedness of an agent. Depending on which sex an agent is determined to be, some primary personal traits will be modified as indicated,

Sex of agent: After an agent has rolled up all the primary personal traits, a roll to determine sex is made:

Dice roll	Result
01-49	Agent is female
50-98	Agent is male
99-00	Player's choice (see below)

The personal traits of female agents are modified as follows: The player rolls a 10-sided die twice, with the first number added to the agent's Willpower and the second number added to the agent's Coordination. Secondary and tertiary personal traits involving Willpower and Coordination are calculated using the modified scores.

The personal traits of male agents are modified as follows: The player rolls a 20-sided die and adds the number to the agent's Physical Strength. Secondary and tertiary personal traits involving Physical Strength are calculated using the modified score.

Agents with a roll of 99-00 on the table above have the additional talent of being a male/female impersonator, with a 75% to 95% chance to fool anyone, even at very close distances. (Don't laugh: The Chevalier d'Eon, a male, served as Maid of Honour to Tsarina Elizabeth of Russia quite successfully while on an espionage mission.)

To determine the handedness of an agent or individual, either a player character or a non-player character, roll percentile dice and use this chart:

Dice roll	Result
01-89	Character is right-handed
90-99	Character is left-handed
00	Character is ambidextrous

**A Technical Bureau Course Offering from the Espionage College Course Handbook**

Course: First Aid

cost: \$1,000

Time: 2 weeks

Prerequisites: Knowledge 25 or higher, Courage, Coordination and Willpower all 50 or higher.

Ability acquired: Given a standard household first-aid kit, the agent who has completed the First Aid course will be able to aid 1-4 mortally wounded characters, raising their life levels back to 1 (unconsciousness) if reached within 5 minutes after being injured. The agent will be able to revive 1-6 unconscious characters in 1-10 minutes each. Injured but conscious characters cannot have their life levels raised by first aid. The agent cannot administer aid to himself or herself,

Area of knowledge increases: The agent will gain from 1-10 points in each of these areas of knowledge (amount of gain for each is determined separately): Biology/Biochemistry; Medicine/Physiology; Physical Education; and Psychology. In addition, the skills of bandaging, artificial respiration, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, splinting, the use of pressure points, and gagging will also be acquired,

Credit: 50 experience points

**Special Weapons**

Airguns and dart guns are intended to be used as non-  
(Turn to page 57)

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*Unretouched picture of f.r.p.'s expressing dismay with local d.m. A visit to S.F.W. would have prevented this!*

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# CRIMEFIGHTERS

BY DAVID COOK



Dark Night Dan settled into the recess of the window, knowing there was not long to wait. If his informer was right, the enemy saboteur would try to destroy the secret war material tonight. Dan would be ready in the fog to meet him...

Hours later, soft footsteps drifted toward him through the muffling fog. As silently as possible, Dan loosened the scabbard of his sword cane. A match flickered below, and harsh outlines of the agent's face were briefly visible. Throwing himself out-

ward, Dan sprang from his perch and whipped his sword cane from its case. The enemy agent whirled and drew a revolver, aiming at the black, hurtling form. In mid-leap, Dan twisted his body and lashed out with his sword. There was a booming roar, and the flash of a bullet past his right side. The sword had found its mark, deflecting the thug's gun hand and sending the shot wide of its mark. Cursing, the criminal dropped the gun and clutched at his now-useless arm.

# CRIMEFIGHTERS

## PLAYING THE HEROES OF PULP FICTION

**CRIMEFIGHTERS** is a game where players take the roles of heroes, agents, detectives, and adventurers attempting to stop nefarious criminal masterminds and destroy their rackets and plans. Such characters and situations are modeled after the famous personalities of the pulp novels and comics — Doc Savage, the Shadow, Agent X-9, and others. The times depicted range roughly from the late 1920's through the 1940's. However, the actual historical conditions of this period have been played down in favor of the atmosphere presented in the pulp novels.

At least 2 people are required to play the game, and play is usually best with 4 or 5 players. Since this is a role-playing game, no board or counters are provided. All that is given are the rules needed to handle most of the situations that might arise in the course of play.

Before play can begin, one person must volunteer or be designated the Gamemaster (GM). This person must have adequate time to do the preparation required and should have several days (if not more) to create a scenario before the actual game begins. The other people (referred to as players from now on) must generate characters according to the rules. These characters will then be controlled by their respective players, reacting to and acting within the imaginary situation prepared by the GM. It is not necessary for the players to have knowledge of the rules; only the GM must be thoroughly familiar with how to do things. However, an understanding of how to play a role-playing game will help the players immensely.

To play the game it is necessary to have an assortment of dice, graph paper, note paper, and pencils or pens. Other items that are not necessary but useful include notebooks, reprints of pulp novels, and miniature figures of the characters and villains involved in the game.

### CHARACTER GENERATION

Before play can begin, it is necessary for the players to create characters. Each player will need a pencil, paper and percentile dice. On the paper the player should note the following attributes: Physical Power, Mental Aptitude, Willpower, Accuracy Left, Accuracy Right, Agility, and Presence. For each attribute, percentile dice are rolled and the number obtained is noted next to the appropriate listing. In addition, Physical Power, Mental Aptitude, Accuracy Right, and Agility are modified as follows:

Unmodified Die Roll	Addition
01-25	+25
26-50	+15
51-65	+10
65-80	+5

Each attribute is explained below.

**Physical Power:** This attribute measures the character's overall musculature and ability to perform feats of strength. A higher score will improve the character's hit points melee combat value, his or her ability to cause damage from striking, movement rate, and leaping distance, besides the obvious benefits in weight-carrying capability and lifting power.

**Mental Aptitude:** This provides a measure of the learning capacity, intelligence, and mental resources of the character. It

has a direct bearing on the number of mental skills the character may learn as well as the ease with which those skills may be employed.

**Willpower:** In stressful or crisis situations, this attribute defines how well the character is able to impose his or her will on his or her self. Hence, this attribute is useful when resisting gases, drugs, pain, and hypnotic effects. This attribute is also directly related to the number of hit points a character has.

**Accuracy Left and Right:** These numbers represent the character's base chance to hit when attacking with a gun, missile, or thrown weapon. The chance to hit may be modified up or down according to circumstances or equipment.

**Agility:** The Agility score represents the character's general quickness and ability to use his or her body in a controlled and trained manner. The attribute has a direct bearing on the number of Agility Skills the character is allowed, and on melee combat ability.

**Presence:** All heroic characters have some degree of presence, the ability to impress and command others simply through the use of voice and appearance. The greater the Presence, the greater the chance the character is striking enough (in some way) to get what he or she wants. It is important to note that Presence does not necessarily mean the character is handsome or pretty, rather that he or she is dynamic, personable, or noteworthy. The use of Presence requires an exertion of the character's Willpower, and every time the use of presence is attempted, the character's Willpower will temporarily drop by 20 points. Willpower temporarily lost will be regained at the rate of 10 points per hour of sleep.

Presence may also be used to extract information from minor thugs or defuse potentially hostile situations involving such opponents. However, once a combat has begun in earnest, the use of Presence will have little or no effect on hostile non-player characters.

### Mental Skills and Agility Skills

After determining the basic attributes of the character, each player must select skills which that character knows at the start of the game. Skills are selected in the areas of Mental Aptitude and Agility. Skills are arranged by level of difficulty, with more difficult skills costing a greater number of points. The number of points a character has to "spend" on skills is equal to the Mental Aptitude score for Mental Skills and the Agility score for Agility Skills. Players may not acquire more skills than they have points for, nor may a particular skill be chosen more than once by the same character.

### 10-Point Mental Skills

**Any Language:** Besides his or her native language, the player may select any other known language to be able to read and speak. This skill assumes that the character is fluent in the chosen language although his or her accent will not fool a native speaker 30% of the time. Certain languages do not have written components, in which case this part of the skill is forfeited.

**Driving:** This skill gives the character the ability of a professional race car driver. Although reaction times and quickness



are important to fast driving, professional racing is a learned skill that takes thinking and concentration. This skill will allow the character to use all modifiers that apply to professional drivers on the automobile tables (see Automobiles).

#### PO-Point Mental Skills

**Engine Repair.** If the character is given time and equipment, even makeshift, he or she will be able to repair any steam, coal-burning, gasoline, or diesel engine used in any kind of vehicle or device. The GM should determine the amount of time and equipment needed, based on the extent of damage to the engine. The character will also know what measures to take to stop or damage any engine.

**Lockpicking:** Given lockpicks, or something similar to these, the character has a 75% chance of opening any normal lock. This chance is reduced by 10% for every level the lock is greater than level I (i.e. 65% for a level II lock). This skill does not apply to combination locks.

**Mimicry:** Trained to control his or her voice, the character has the ability to duplicate the voices of those he or she has heard, or create the sounds of animals or things, though the volume can be no greater than the normal volume of the character's voice. When impersonating a person, the character has a 95% chance of success if he/she knows the sound of that person's voice well, a 60% chance of success when using that of a casual acquaintance, and a 40% chance of success when the character has only heard the voice a few times or has only heard it in a distorted version. These percentages will be modified up or down according to many factors the GM must decide upon, including whether it is over the phone, knowledge of the listener, etc. It is important to note that the percentile rolls do not account at all for what is said. If this is highly out of character for the person being impersonated, it is unlikely that the voice will be believed, no matter what the roll is.

**Piloting:** The character may fly any type of aerial craft of the period. This will include aeroplanes, autogyros, gliders, and airships (dirigibles, zeppelins, and balloons). The character's skill at flying will be extraordinarily high.

**Sailing:** As per piloting, the character is able to sail any type of water-going vessel of the period (rafts, sloops, yachts, liners, oilers, etc.) and navigate by the stars. Note that for most vessels, a crew of many skilled sailors is required.

**Ventriloquism:** The character may throw his or her voice to any place within 20', provided the desired location can be seen. If the character has the skill of mimicry, it may be combined with ventriloquism. The success of ventriloquism in diverting attention depends heavily on circumstances and must be judged on a case-by-case basis, depending on what is said, where the voice comes from, the mood of the hearer(s), and other factors. The GM must decide the result in such cases.

#### 30-Point Mental Skills

**Demolition:** This skill will allow the character to prepare and use time bombs, booby traps, satchel charges, and grenades; package and transport explosives with reasonable safety; attempt to defuse explosive devices; and blow small locks, doors or otherwise engage in demolition work. Explosives and their effects are explained in the section on combat. When transporting explosives, a demolitions expert has only a 5% chance of serious accident when the material is roughly handled or jostled. However, this percentage may be lessened or increased by the GM according to circumstances such as the power of the explosive, the care taken in packing, and the degree of rough handling it receives. It is important to note that although explosives appear in the combat section, only those skilled in demolition may effectively use these weapons. This skill may be combined with safecracking to open otherwise impregnable safes, or with engineering to engage in major demolition work (blowing bridges, bringing down buildings, etc.).

**Disguises:** Through the use of make-up, wigs, false beards, putty, and the like, the character may appear to be nearly any age and sex he or she wishes. The basic chance for successfully fooling someone is 90%, with the following (cumulative) modifiers:

Minus 10% if disguised as opposite sex.

Minus 20% if disguised as someone 5 years or more younger.

Minus 10% if disguised as someone 10 years or more older.

Minus 30% if disguised as someone of a different race.

Minus 40% if disguised as a specific person known to viewer.

**Forgery:** Given the proper forms or copies of them, equipment, and time, the character will be able to forge identification, signatures, and documents. These will automatically fool people unfamiliar with the specific item forged, although this will not guarantee that the person fooled will believe the character is what he or she claims to be. cursory examination will reveal forged documents as false 15% of the time, while an exacting examination will be successful 85% of the time. Those with forgery skill may discover other forged documents 95% of the time when making an exacting examination.

**Safecracking:** With this skill, the character may attempt to open most models of safes. When attempting to open a safe without any special aids or devices, the character has a 50% chance of opening a class I safe. For every class the safe is greater than I, the chance of success decreases by 15% therefore making it impossible to open class IV or higher safes without aids of some sort. The safecracking skill may be combined with demolition to blow open a safe.

**Stage Magic:** The character is familiar with the tricks of large-scale magic (disappearing, finger flashes, rope tricks, cutting people in half, etc.) and may use the equipment required for such tricks. Given time to work unobserved, the character may also improvise such illusions. Note that the player is still required to tell the GM what he or she is going to do if an attempt to improvise is made. When stage magic is combined with lockpicking, the character has the basic skills of an escape artist. He or she will have a base 70% chance of slipping free from ropes and other bindings. This does not include locks or handcuffs as lockpicking skill is used for these. The character also has a +50% chance of finding a secret panel or exit if the correct spot is searched.

#### 40-Point Mental Skills

**Astronomy:** The character has knowledge of the stars and planets. As such, he or she may use celestial navigation and will

not become lost so long as there is a clear sky overhead. The character may also select one extra language.

**Botany:** With this skill, the character may recognize all known plant types (and make good guesses at unknown types), describe whether the plant is edible or not, and prepare simple plant poisons or drugs from the proper plants or fungi if they are available. The character may also select one extra language.

**Cryptology:** The character has working experience with codes, cipher machines, and decoding devices. However, instead of merely receiving the solution to any code the character might find, the GM should prepare a coded message and present it along with a few clues (appropriate to the skill of the player) to the player. It is then the player's responsibility to solve the code. The GM should be able to find several books dealing with codes in his or her public library. NPC's with cryptology skill will be able to break a code 70% of the time, although this may be adjusted according to the difficulty of the code.

**Engineering:** An expert in engineering techniques, the character may use his or her skill in any standard engineering manner (the supervision of construction, design of useful structures, repair of structural damage). The character may also supervise the placement of demolition charges, which are 90% effective so long as the placement is done by a person skilled in demolition.

**Oceanography:** The character has all the skills given under sailing and also has knowledge of the oceans and seas of the world, their currents, the creatures that live in them, and the types and habits of the sailors that ply them. The character also gains 2 extra languages, one of which must be that of a sea-going people.

**Zoology:** As with botany, the character can recognize all but unknown animals or insects, describe specific habits of creatures and suggest known methods to avoid or counter creatures (these may not always be effective). The character also has a +20% chance of success in all dealings with animals that the GM resolves by a percentile roll. The character may also identify the Particular animal to have caused a death, if the victim was killed by an animal. The character may also select one extra language.

#### 60-Point Mental Skills

**Archeological:** Armed with his or her knowledge of ancient cultures, the character may identify artifacts of known civilizations, and may make sound speculation concerning "lost" cultures. The character may also read and speak the following languages: Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit. (GM note: This skill has little use in most normal situations. However, should the characters travel to or discover a lost culture in some isolated place, the skill should become very helpful. The GM may wish to caution players on the limitations of this skill, if he or she has no plans to incorporate a "lost world" setting somewhere in the campaign.)

**Chemical:** An extremely useful skill, the character can create any known (for the period) explosive, gas, acid, alkaline, poison, drug, or antidote of a chemical nature. Doing so requires space, equipment and time. For each level of difficulty of the chemical (as assigned by the GM), \$100 and 1 day (or less) is needed to create the item. Sleeping gas would be a level 1 chemical, while a sleeping gas that affects only animals might be a level 10 or greater. Nitroglycerine, for instance, is a level 3 chemical.

**Electrical:** Another highly useful skill, the character may build or repair any electrical device current to the period of the game, given the following: An expenditure of \$100 to \$10,000 (depending on the difficulty and scope of the project) and at least one day per \$500 spent. Those characters with electrical skill may also build new devices of specific and limited function, subject to the GM's approval and restrictions on the device.

**Legal:** A certified lawyer, the character is able to represent others in legal actions. His or her skills are such that there is a 75% chance of success in court, barring damning testimony, witnesses, or evidence. Likewise, the character may stall legal

proceedings with the same chance of success. The character has an 80% chance of discovering any legal or court-related information, given access to records, contacts, journals, etc. The character may also select one extra language.

**Medical:** With this skill, the character is considered an expert in one general field in medicine of his or her choice (suggestions include surgery, pathology, cardiology, etc.). He or she will have the ability to do emergency medical treatment, preventing the loss of further hit points due to combat. The character may also select one extra language.

#### 10-Point Agility Skills

**Flips:** This skill requires free use of the hands, but when used will break a character's fall, reducing damage by one die. Thus, a character might fall a short distance, using this skill to reduce damage substantially, but would not benefit relatively as much if the fall were from a great height.

**Juggling:** The character may juggle with expert skill, handling up to 5 items at a time. The character may also attempt to catch (and throw back) items thrown at him or her by making a successful melee hit to catch the item.

**Rope Swings:** The character may swing by ropes or other items of a similar nature with great accuracy and skill. If the selected landing place is wide and deep, there will be no chance that the character may also accurately judge the safety of any item used to swing upon.

**Vaults:** If given a running start, the character may high-jump any obstacle equal to or less than his or her own height, or vault over any obstacle up to one foot higher than himself or herself. Given a flexible pole, the character may pole vault up to 15 feet in the air.



**20-Point Agility Skills**

**Climbing:** Trained in most types of mountain-climbing techniques (except any obscure ones the GM wishes to limit), the character may climb nearly any surface. Only smooth or outward-hanging faces are beyond the skill of this character. When climbing is done without aids of any type, there is only a 30% chance that a character skilled in climbing will fall for every 100 yards of the climb. If a rope or other equipment is used, the chance of falling is reduced to 3%. The character may climb upward at a rate equal to half of his or her walking movement rate.

**Hand Over Hand:** Through continual practice, the character has developed the ability to swing hand over hand on a rope (or other device) or walk on his or her hands for great distances. The distance travelled in this manner may be equal to or less than the physical power of the character times three (PPx3 = number of feet travelled).

**Stealth:** The character has the ability to move with great silence and has the knowledge to use protective or concealing cover well. When so desired, the character has a 70% chance of moving unnoticed past others, provided there is cover or some distraction to prevent careful observation. This percentage may be increased or lowered by the GM according to other factors of the situation (watchfulness, bad light, how close or far away, etc.).

**30-Point Agility Skills**

**Dives:** The character is skilled in aquatic and trapeze dives. Provided the water depth is adequate, the character may safely dive into water from heights up to 200 feet. When leaping or diving to the ground, the character will suffer one less die of damage. Hence, a character with both diving and flips skills would take 2 dice less of damage from a fall.

**Giant Swings:** The character is able to do giant swings similar to those done on the high bar. This will also allow the character to grasp a bar, branch door frame, pipe, or other grip and swing up out of sight or to the upper surface of that object.

**Sleight of Hand:** The character is practiced in the small, manipulative tricks of magicians and may perform them, given the proper materials. If pre-arranged properly, the character may palm items or pass them to others without the act being noticed by onlookers. The character may also attempt to pick-pocket a person with a base 65% chance of success, plus or minus the difference between the agility score of the victim and his or her own.

**Tightrope:** The character has only a 5% chance of falling when attempting to walk a rope, narrow ledge, beam, etc. Balancing aids such as a long pole or umbrella will reduce this chance to 3%. One check should be made for every increment of the walking movement rate that the character covers.

**40-Point Agility Skills**

**Aerials:** Aerials are flips done in the air, without the use of the hands. As such, they are useful for escaping from captors in surprising ways, and to cross obstacles with style. The character may do an aerial to a height no greater than he or she is able to spring (see Movement) and may go no further forward or back than he or she is able to leap. Characters who choose aerial skill also automatically gain all the benefits of the flips skill.

**Catches:** This skill is necessary to perform trapeze-like catches, grasp items (or people) at the end of long dives, or try to make amazingly quick grabs to prevent items or people from falling. A character may catch up to 3 times his or her Physical Power in weight.

**Fencing:** The character is skilled in the use of the epee, rapier, saber, and other long-bladed weapons. When using one of these weapons, the character may add 10 points to his or her melee combat value. The character will also gain the obvious benefits of the weapon, as explained in the combat section.

**Judo:** The character is an expert in weaponless fighting, as typified by the art of judo. He or she may add ten points to his or

her melee combat value when using weaponless combat. In addition, the character may choose to pin or immobilize an opponent whenever a hit is scored, provided that opponent has no weapon or judo skill. Note that should this option be used, the character may take no other action as long as he or she is occupied in holding the opponent.

**Mysterious Powers**

Each character has a 5% chance of having a mysterious power at the start of the game. Percentile dice are rolled and if 01-05 is obtained, that character has a mysterious power. Unlike the other skills, this power is randomly selected on a d10. The possession of the power has nothing to do with the ability scores of the character, although the effectiveness of the power does.

In the descriptions of the powers, it is sometimes noted that a "focus" is required. A focus is an object or device (GM's choice) that must be displayed prominently before the power will take effect. The focus must be eyecatching and unusual in nature and of some significant value. Such items typically include amulets, rings, gems, clasps, watch fobs, and pendants. Beginning characters do not possess a focus; they must find or make one. If the GM wishes the character to find his or her focus, it is necessary that the GM place the item in some location where it can be found and then provide the character with some incentive or clues to investigate that location. When a character finds his or her focus, he or she will instinctively realize its true value. Some locations where a focus might be found (aside from the den of some criminal) include curio shops, junk dealers, museums, or the bric-a-brac shelf of the character's maiden aunt.

**Mysterious Power Table**

- 1 - Command
- 2 - Confusion
- 3 - ESP
- 4 - Fear
- 5 - Foresight
- 6 - Hypnotism
- 7 - Invisibility
- 8 - Luck
- 9 - Shadow Control
- 10 - Sight

**Command:** With this power, the character may double his or her Presence at will. When choosing to do so, all actions that can be normally attempted under Presence (see Encounter Reactions) will be figured as if the character had twice his or her normal Presence. However, the use of the power is more draining than normal Presence use, and so 30 points are temporarily lost from Willpower every time this power is used.

**Confusion:** A character possessing this power may attempt to confuse those within sight. To do so requires that the character have a focus and that he or she be within 10 yards of those being confused. The chance of success is equal to the character's Presence. If this number or less is rolled on percentile dice, the victim is confused. Confused persons may not take any actions against the character and will react as follows (roll d20):

- 1-10 = Does nothing, takes no actions
- 11-15 = Retreats if possible
- 16-17 = Attacks another person (determine randomly)
- 18-20 = Acts in an irrational manner

The confusion power requires 2 seconds to activate and will cause a temporary loss from Willpower of 20 points. Any number of people may be confused so long as they meet the previously given conditions. Those people who are familiar with the power of the character (i.e., those who know the character well) will be unaffected by the power.

**ESP:** Under certain conditions, a character with this power may attempt to discern the thoughts of others and sense hazy images of the immediate surroundings of the person so scanned. The power is sensitive to great activity or emotional distress and



so the character must first be able to relax and concentrate for 15 seconds, before indicating what person he or she would like to scan. Percentile dice are rolled and compared against the Willpower of the person scanned, plus or minus the difference of the scanning character's Willpower. If the dice roll is under the adjusted number, the attempt has been successful. If the percentile roll is 10 or less, the contacted mind could be any person within 1 mile due to uncontrollable error. (Such an error could be a good method to lead characters into new adventures.) Thoughts obtained will seldom indicate the age, sex, name, etc. of the person, and his or her true motives may often be carefully hidden or buried. ESP may at times only give a suggestion of what is sought to be learned.

**Fear:** Through the use of a focus, the character may cause unreasoning panic in those who observe him or her. The chance of success is a percentage equal to the average of the character's Presence and current Willpower. This power requires that the character stand motionless for 3 seconds in full view of his or her intended victims, concentrating on his or her focus. When this time has passed (provided the character has not been shot or otherwise had his or her concentration broken), all people in sight of the focus who either do not know the character or have some reason to fear him or her must roll percentile dice. If the number rolled is equal to or less than the character's success number as figured above, the victim will first attempt to flee, or failing that, do one of the following two things (GM's choice):

Cower or hide, attempting to avoid the gaze of the character.

Attack with either a ranging weapon or hand-to-hand (-50% on the chance to hit).

Using the fear ability is a strain on the character, both mentally and physically. Each time the use of the power is attempted, the character will lose one hit point until restored, as if it were a hit point lost due to hand-to-hand combat.

**Foresight:** Due to his or her mental training, this character is often aware of things others might not notice. A bonus of +1 is

given on first-round initiative rolls. The character may also ask 3 yes-or-no questions of the GM per adventure. These questions must deal with some action that the character plans to take, or be based upon information that character might realistically know or suspect. Hence, a question such as, "Is he the ring-leader of the smuggling ring?" would only be permissible if the character had some cause to suspect that person. The questions have a 10% chance of being answered incorrectly; this is secretly determined by the GM.

**Hypnotism:** This power may only be used in non-combat situations and requires the use of a focus. By use of the focus, the victim is placed in a light, sleep-like trance. While the victim is in this state, the character may attempt to implant suggestions or extract information. To determine the chance of success, subtract the victim's Willpower from that of the character to obtain a plus or minus-number. This number is then added to or subtracted from the victim's Willpower. If the adjusted Willpower or less is rolled on percentile dice, the attempt succeeds. Certain suggestions, particularly those that would result in the death of the victim or someone close to that person, are more difficult to plant successfully. For these, there is only a 10% chance that the suggestion will be acted on after it has been made.

**Invisibility:** Use of this power automatically renders the character invisible to most persons around him or her. No die roll is required, as the success of the power is usually automatic. However, those with a Willpower of 96 or higher will be able to see the invisible character and will be able to direct others to that character. The act of confounding the senses of others is a physical and mental strain, so much so that one hit point is lost for every minute or part of a minute that character remains invisible. Hit points lost may be regained through rest, as if they were normal hand-to-hand combat wounds.

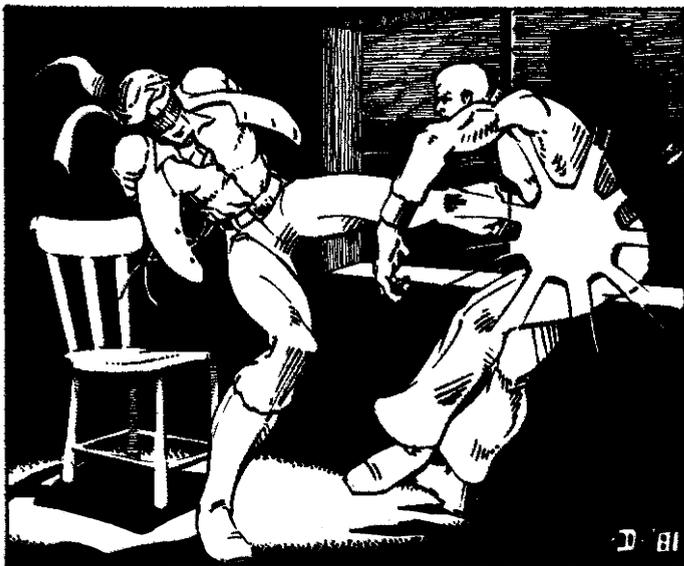
**Luck:** A character with the power of luck has certain automatic advantages, provided that character's luck is determined to be "good" for that adventure. At the start of an adventure, the

GM secretly determines what the character's luck is, with a 50% chance of it being good, 40% normal, and 10% bad. Good luck gives the character a +10 to all chances to hit, whether in gun or hand-to-hand combat. Furthermore, the character is allowed a die roll to see if he or she succeeds in doing anything that would be feasible or remotely possible, even in situations where such success would normally be considered nearly impossible. It is up to the GM to set the difficulty of the die roll. The less chance there is that something could actually happen, the harder the die roll will be to make. Hence, if a character with good luck were to fall from a plane at 5,000 feet, there might be a 2% chance that he or she could survive the fall relatively unhurt by landing in tree branches or a deep lake. All die rolls of this nature should be made secretly by the GM. The GM must also be careful to see that characters with luck do not tyrannize the game, demanding die rolls for entirely inappropriate situations. It is the responsibility of the player to suggest how such a lucky event might come to pass, and he or she cannot think of a method, the GM is not required to give any die roll.

Bad luck affects the character by reducing his or her gun and hand-to-hand chances to hit by 10. Bad or normal luck will also decrease the percentage chance of near-impossible success, perhaps (but not necessarily) all the way to zero.

**Shadow Control:** When using this power, the character will appear to be within a mass of inky shadows in which no clear features are discernable. These shadows will move with the character as flitting shapes. All attacks against a character using this form of the power will be treated as if he or she were a concealed target. The character may also use the power to create shadows of specific objects, even though the particular object may not actually be present at the time, or to alter the shadow cast by an object which is present. Both forms of the power require a source of light and shadow, hence the power will not be of use in a totally dark or shadowless area. Creating the shadows or shadow images causes a temporary loss of 5 points of Willpower. Such losses may be regained through rest, as explained in the section dealing with combat.

**Sight:** Those characters with the power of sight have developed and trained their senses to an extent that augments their vision. Such a character can see details of objects at twice the distance for a normal character, thus doubling the encounter distance (unless circumstances dictate otherwise). The character is also able to sense his or her way through areas of total darkness, smoke, or fog. Even if blindfolded, the character will be able to find the general location of all objects or people within 10 feet of him or her. Attacks made under such conditions will only suffer a -10 penalty on the chance to hit. Furthermore, characters with sight will be able to notice smaller details and will be +10 when searching for any stated thing.



## HIT POINTS

All player characters, non-player characters, and other people or creatures encountered in the course of the game will have a number of hit points. These points give a numerical value for the amount of damage or punishment a person can withstand. The effects of combat are expressed normally in terms of hit points lost. When hit points are reduced to zero, the person is unconscious; when the number is less than zero, the person is dead.

To determine the number of hit points a character has, add the character's Physical Power and Willpower together and divide the total by 10 (rounding any fractions down). To this number add the roll of d8 for the final total. For example, a character with a 57 Physical Power and a 72 Willpower would have,  $1d8+12$  hit points (57 plus 72 divided by 10 = 12.9).

Hit points may be increased during the course of the game by using experience to improve the abilities of the character. How experience is applied is explained in the following section.

## EXPERIENCE

One of the prime goals of characters in a campaign is the acquisition of experience points. These points can be used to improve the abilities and resources of the character. They are awarded for deeds accomplished, intelligent actions, and criminals thwarted.

Experience points have 3 different uses in the game. The first is the improvement of abilities. Points may be applied to ability scores on a 5-for-1 basis; every 5 points of experience earned may be converted into a 1-point increase in an ability of the player's choice. Those abilities with related skills (Mental Aptitude and Agility) or those abilities which determine hit points (Physical Power and Willpower) may be improved so that new skills or more hit points may be obtained.

Experience points may also be used to attempt to gain new mysterious powers. For every 10 points applied for this purpose, there is a 1% chance for the character to obtain such a power after study. It is necessary for the character to travel to a remote, mysterious land (such as India or the Orient) and there spend several months or years (in game time) studying for a power. At the end of the time (set by the GM), the player rolls percentile dice. If the chance of success or less is rolled, a power has been gained. This power may be randomly chosen or, if the GM wishes, selected by the player. During the time of study, the character may not adventure or gain experience in any way.

The third way of using experience points is for investment. By placing experience points in investments, a character may create a monthly stipend for him or her to receive. At the end of every game month, the character may collect 50% to 80% ( $1d4+4$ ) of the experience points applied to investments in dollars. For example, a character with 150 experience points applied to investments has a 70% return at the end of the month. He or she would therefore earn \$105 that month. Experience points applied to investments never decrease, although more experience may be added to increase the monthly stipend. Dollars earned from investments may not be re-invested, although they may be saved. Investment is the primary method of insuring adequate funds to meet expenditures.

Once experience points are applied to a specific category, they may not be changed. However, experience points do not need to be applied to any particular area as soon as they are earned, and may be "saved up" as long as the player wishes.

### Experience Types:

To reflect the different styles of various pulp-novel characters, each player must select one of the following experience types, to be used as the model for his or her character. Once an experience type has been chosen it should not be changed. If such a change does occur, that character will lose all experience points gained but not yet applied to a certain purpose. If a skill, hit point, or mysterious power has already been gained

through the application of experience points, it will not be lost.

**Defender:** This type of character attempts to uphold and protect the society he or she belongs to. Confident that the system works, he or she will never try to intentionally kill someone. Neither will he or she torture a person, although scare tactics or drugs might be used. Defender-type characters generally have good relations with the law. A defender gets no experience for criminals he or she might kill, but is given double the amount of points for those whom he or she captures without assistance. The defender also receives one extra contact in the police department.

**Avenger:** This type of character only believes in the system when it works to his or her best interests. As much, this character will usually resort to his or her own means to administer justice. An avenger usually does not work well with others and is often wanted by the law. Avengers receive no experience for criminals captured unless that person confesses (to witnesses) his or her guilt of a serious crime. Likewise, an avenger will receive no experience if he or she has notable assistance in bringing villains to justice (contacts, stoolies, back-ups, drivers, etc. provide only essential assistance and do not count against the avenger). An avenger may have only one police contact at most.

**Pragmatist:** This type of character will normally attempt to abide by the laws of society and operate within this framework. However, if needed, the character will take whatever action is necessary to protect himself or herself or others, or to ultimately bring a villain to justice. A pragmatic character receives normal experience for criminals captured and half normal experience for criminals who meet their demise. A pragmatic character has one extra underworld contact.

In addition to the 3 main experience types, the GM may decide to include the following optional modifiers. Players should ask the GM if these options are to be used.

**Technological:** This type of character improves or extends his or her abilities through the use of devices. Whenever a technological character uses a device to create a significant result, he or she will receive an extra experience point for using the device. Cars, guns, radios and other common items of the period are not considered this type of technological devices.

**Anti-technological:** Such a character believes in the abilities of the self and considers natural or trained skills to be superior to any device. The character will disdain to use unusual technology (again, as above, a gun or an airplane is not unusual), preferring to rely on his or her own abilities. The character will receive no experience for a result if such items are used to aid his or her efforts. If the character manages to destroy an opponent's technological device, he or she will receive experience points as if a criminal of similar power had been overcome.



**CONTACTS**

Prior to the start of the game, all player characters are assigned contacts by the GM. These contacts represent acquaintances or businessmen the player character had dealings with before embarking on a career of adventure. Contacts may be able to provide information, tips, equipment or introductions to other persons in their field. A clerk in the Building Commission, for instance, may be able to provide floor plans, while a small-time hood might connect the character with his boss or tip the character off to a "job." Contacts are not always instantly cooperative or obliging. Inducements such as bribes, periodic payments, favors or assistance may be required. The exact nature of the relationship with the contact will depend greatly on the contact character created by the GM.

All characters start with three contacts, not including any adjustments for experience type. To determine the business the contact is engaged in, roll on the Career Table. Each title is explained briefly as to its uses and limitations. After determining the profession of the contact, the GM should secretly roll an Effectiveness Rating from 10-40% (d4). This rating represents the contact's ability or willingness to fulfill a character's request. Whenever the player attempts to use that contact, the GM should roll percentile dice. If the roll is equal to or less than the Effectiveness Rating of the contact, he or she is able and willing to aid the character. The Effectiveness Rating of a contact may be improved if extra attention and favors are shown to that contact. The GM must determine how much the rating will improve, but the percentage can never be more than 75%.

**Career Table**

Die Roll	Career
1	Assistant Clerk of Courts
2	Assistant to the Chief of Police
3	Bookie
4	Illegal casino operator
5	Clerk, City Hall of Records
6	Clerk, police files
7	Clerk, State Division of Motor Vehicles
8-9	Criminology lab technician
10	FBI field agent
11	Fence
12-13	Nightclub owner
14-16	Police detective
17	Reporter for a major daily newspaper
18	Small-time thug
19	Stockbroker
20	Taxi driver

The above listing of possible contacts is not intended to represent the only choices available to the GM. Contacts in other fields may be created and assigned as the GM desires.

To help the GM use the listed contacts above, the following short listing of areas in which each would be useful is given below. Again, the areas listed here are not complete but may be used as an indication of the abilities and limitations of the contact.

**Assistant Clerk of courts:** Obtain transcripts of trials or other legal proceedings; evaluate current trials and judges on the bench.

**Assistant to the Chief of Police:** Tips regarding raids and major police actions; access to criminal records and personnel files; pass information to the Chief of Police.

**Bookie:** Reveal who is into whom for a lot of money; who bets heavily and on what; introduce to other bookies, bettors and gamblers; general underground information.

**Illegal casino operator:** As with bookie; also, what contracts are out; what people are in town; whom people are working for and where they get their money.

**Clerk, City Hall of Records:** Provide records concerning land deals, court cases, business deals, health and fire safety violations, marriages, divorces, city licenses.

**Clerk, police files:** Provide criminal records, previous aliases,

addresses and methods; fingerprints and pictures; possibly evidence and case notes.

**Clerk, State Division of Motor Vehicles:** Identify license plates, driver's licenses; possibly provide driver's license.

**Criminology lab technician:** Take fingerprints, blood tests, and run ballistics tests; examine possible evidence for clues.

**FBI field agent:** Provide FBI files; pass information to higher persons; provide names and addresses of suspected criminals.

**Fence:** Inform of who was involved after a crime; obtain stolen or untraceable goods; identify who might be working for others; possibly tips on upcoming jobs.

**Nightclub owner:** Tell who has been seen with whom, who has been spending money, who is and is not in town; introduce to illegal casino operators and "respectable" underworld figures.

**Police detective:** Provide records, as police records clerk; also, tip off raids; provide assistance; pass information to higher sources.

**Reporter:** Provide information from newspaper morgue; tips on graft and corruption in city government; place articles or notices in paper as desired by character; introduce to "news-worthy" people.

**Small-time thug:** Provide tips on upcoming jobs; inform who is working for whom and where they might be found; describe or detail different types of jobs or rackets; what contracts are out and on whom; who is in town and what money or items might be in town.

**Stockbroker:** Who owns what; how a company is doing; who is making money and who is losing money; unusual expenditures or trends; possible mergers or forceouts; introduce to important financial figures.

**Taxi driver:** Ready access to vehicle; where places are, locations of illegal casinos, crap games, etc.; description of type of activity or quality of an area; possible identification of fares.

**Example of a contact:** Dark Night Dan and private detective Bob Rikers have been working on the case of a missing researcher's wife. Based on clues and some rumors, they suspect that she may have been involved in some way with Billy Ree, a known blackmailer and thug. Bob Rikers knows the operator of a slightly illegal nightclub (gambling in the back room), so the two characters decide to check with the owner to see what he might know. Dark Night Dan stays out front, watching the floor show, while Bob goes back to the office for a private talk. When the contact is questioned by Bob, the GM rolls to see what the owner might know. An 11 is rolled, so the owner is determined to know something about the researcher's wife — namely, that she had been in the club several times and had been with Jackie "Kingfisher" Ramone, a particularly hot-tempered tough, no friend at all of Billy Ree.

But because he is afraid of Jackie, the owner decides to lie, saying that the woman had been in a couple of times but never with anyone else. In this case, the GM modified the Effectiveness Rating of the contact downward because of outside pressure or fears that contact had, unbeknownst to the player characters.

It is important to note that no matter what the Effectiveness Rating of the contact, the player character must still meet and deal with the contact through the GM as if it were a normal encounter.



**EQUIPMENT**

Because the period covered by these rules can be varied (from the 1930s to the 1940s) and many different locations can be used, it is difficult to fix prices in the rules for goods or services. Also, since a wide variety of items could be purchased, an exact equipment list is impossible to compile. The following list gives ranges for many common goods or services a player might want or need.

Depending on the cost of equipment and services the GM chooses, each player should start with \$50 to \$150.

- Clothes (Hats, suits, coats, shoes, etc.): \$1 to \$100.
- Doctor visit: \$5 to \$50.
- Hospital stay: \$20 to \$50 per day.
- Hotel room: \$1 to \$50 per day.
- Meals: \$1 to \$10 each.
- Pistol: \$20 to \$50.
- Rifle: \$30 to \$150.
- Submachine gun: \$100 to \$500\*.
- Taxi: 10¢ per mile.
- TNT: \$100 per case (25 to 50 sticks).
- Vehicles\*\*

\*Such weapons can only be bought on the black market and the costs (and quality) may vary widely.

\*\*Given under the appropriate section.

The GM may add any items he or she desires. Costs should be set according to what the characters can afford and the complexity or rarity of the item.

**SIGHT**

Although people can see a great distance, there is a practical range beyond which it is too difficult to make out pertinent details. The effective range for sight under normal daylight conditions (the range at which people, actions, and hand signals can be distinguished) is 50 yards. Dim light or moonlit nights reduce this range to 10 yards. Near-total darkness reduces vision to 5 feet. Total darkness renders the normal character effectively blind (special powers may alter this). Flashlights are good for 10 yards more visibility than the normal distance in nighttime conditions.

**MOVEMENT**

There are 3 different movement categories in *Crimefighters*: walking, leaping, and springing.

**Walking:** Walking includes all forms of running, jogging, trotting, etc. The following table shows the fastest possible speed a character may move, based on his or her Physical Power. Players should keep track of their Physical Power to note any adjustments to their characters' movement rates. The speeds are listed by movement per second (for short bursts) followed by movement per minute (for extended periods of time). Characters starting from a dead standstill will not be able to reach top speed immediately; three seconds are required to do so. Each second will increase speed by one-third (i.e. a character with a Physical Power of 66 would move 8 feet in the first second of movement, 16 feet in the following second, and 24 feet in the third second — the maximum speed for that character).

Physical Power	Move/sec.	Move/min.
1-30	5 yd. (15 ft.)	200 yd. (600 ft.)
31-45	6 yd. (18 ft.)	240 yd. (720 ft.)
46-60	7 yd. (21 ft.)	280 yd. (840 ft.)
61-75	8 yd. (24 ft.)	320 yd. (960 ft.)
76-85	9 yd. (27 ft.)	360 yd. (1080 ft.)
86-95	10 yd. (30 ft.)	400 yd. (1200 ft.)
95+	11 yd. (33 ft.)	440 yd. (1320 ft.)

Note that the movement rates listed above only apply to situations where the character is attempting to move at the fastest speed possible for him or her, such as during combat or a chase. In more mundane circumstances, assume a basic walking movement rate of 6 feet per second for all characters (120 yards per minute), and a basic rate of 8 feet per second for a

character (160 yards per minute) who is slowly trotting or jogging.

The "Move/sec." rate given above should only be used for a period of 15 to 30 seconds, determined by the GM, after which a character should be required to move at a slower rate for a minute or two before again being able to achieve maximum speed. The "Move/min." rate should be able to be sustained for a period of at least 3 to 5 minutes before the character would have to slow to a trot or walking pace to conserve strength.

**Leaping:** Leaping movement is a measure of how high a character may jump. When a leap is used to grasp something above the character, his or her height and reach must be taken into account. The maximum height allowed is obtained by adding the character's Physical Power and Agility and then consulting the table below.

Combined score	Maximum height
2-52	2 ft.
53-75	3 ft.
76-95	4 ft.
96-115	5 ft.
116-135	6 ft.
136-155	7 ft.
156-175	8 ft.
176-195	9 ft.
195+	10 ft.

**Springing:** Springing is used when a character must cross a large open area in a single bound. As with the leaping table, combined Physical Power and Agility scores are used. The distances given are assumed to be from a standing start. In the case of a running start, the character may cover 3 times the stated distance.

Combined score	Maximum distance
2-52	4 ft.
53-85	5 ft.
86-115	6 ft.
116-145	7 ft.
146-175	8 ft.
176-195	9 ft.
195+	10 ft.

**Wounds:** A wound to one leg will reduce all movement rates by half. If both legs are wounded, the movement rate is reduced by three-fourths.

**Weight:** A character may carry up to twice his Physical Power in pounds, plus 50. Hence, a character with a Physical Power of 47 could carry 144 pounds (2 x 47 + 50 = 144). For every 2 pounds of material being carried, the Physical Power or the combined score (depending on the movement type being used) should be reduced by one point. The resulting score may never be less than 2. For example, a character with a combined score of 155 who is carrying 115 pounds would reduce the combined score by 57, giving a score of 98 for purposes of determining Leaping and Springing movement rates.

**SEARCHING**

Characters will occasionally find it necessary to look for concealed or hidden items. In such cases, it will be necessary for the GM to assign a value to the hidden item, indicating its chance of being found (using percentile dice). This applies especially to concealed panels, secret passages, hidden safes, or secret drawers. For instance, a hidden passage behind a fireplace might be found 10% of the time, while a hidden safe might be found 20% of the time. To find the object, the character must spend one minute actively searching the proper area.

**LOCKS AND SAFES**

All locks and safes are rated in abstract classes from I to X (Roman numerals), indicating the difficulty factor of the lock or safe. These classes are used when determining the success of a lock-picking or safecracking attempt.

As noted in the sections describing lockpicking and safe-cracking, certain locks or safes will be impossible to open without the use of aids. There are many different aids available to a character, including stethoscopes, acid, extremely fine lock-picks, drills, and explosives. Using an aid will add from 10% to 50% to the character's chance of success when an attempt to open a lock or safe is made. Several items may be used together and the bonuses for all of them applied. Hence, to open a class X safe (base -100% on the chance of success) would require either explosives (+50%), drilling (+30%), stethoscope (+20%), acid (+30%) or some other special device or a combination thereof. It is important for the GM to note that there is no such thing as an unopenable safe or lock, as long as some sort of aid is used.

Characters may be forced to shoot the lock out on a door. This may only be attempted at point-blank range. If a hit against the lock is scored, 1d6 is rolled and the number subtracted from the class of the lock. When the class of the lock is reduced to zero or below, the attempt will have been successful. The effect of more than one such attempt is cumulative.

**EXPLOSIVES**

Explosives are normally available only to licensed demolitions experts, and as such are used responsibly (of course). On occasion, explosives may be available through black-market connections. Explosives purchased in this manner will be of questionable quality or force, or both.

Explosives are extremely dangerous for untrained individuals to handle. TNT has a 50% chance of exploding from a bad shock such as a bullet hit, long drop or fall, etc. unless a trained person has packed it, in which case the chance is only 5%. Nitroglycerine has an 85% chance of exploding under the same circumstances if packaged by an untrained person. A trained demolitions man may reduce this chance to 40% if he supervises the packing.

For information regarding the use of explosives in combat, see the Combat section.

**SPECIAL DEVICES**

As characters build up more resources and skills, they may wish to develop an inventory of special devices. Such devices might include anything from miniaturized anesthetic grenades to wireless phone taps. Before considering the creation of any device, the GM should decide whether such an item has a place in his or her campaign. If the GM wishes the game to be oriented towards private detectives and mysteries, he or she may not wish to have unusual items in the campaign. In such a case, simply being realistic about the cost and feasibility of the item may be enough to stop further inquiries.

However, if the GM prefers to have a somewhat more fantastic campaign, there is no reason why certain, somewhat scientific items might not be allowed. To do so, the GM should first compare the desired device to the technological capabilities typical of the period. Laser pistols and rocket belts, for instance, are completely out. Secondly, the GM should bear in mind how such an item might change the balance of the game. It may have effects that are too far-reaching or all-powerful; if so, the item should not be allowed. If the GM thinks the device might still be possible, he or she should assign a percentage chance for successfully creating the item. This number is entirely subjective and should be based on the complexity of the item and on how much the GM wants to see the item in the game. Likewise, an amount of time for development of the item and a sum of money for materials should also be assessed. It is then the player's responsibility to find a skilled character to create the item. The player character must also be able to meet the cost and time required for the item. After all this is done, the assigned chance of success may be rolled for on percentile dice. If that number or less is rolled, the device has been made successfully. It should be noted that the system given above applies to unus-

ual items only — armor-plating a car or fitting a gun with a silencer can always be done with success, for example.

**VEHICLES**

Vehicles in their various forms play an important role in many situations that occur in *Crimefighters*. After all, there are car chases, shadowing, snatches, getaways, and stakeouts to be done, and in all cases it helps to have fast transportation available.

The following table lists several different types of vehicles along with information needed to use them in the game. The table is divided into several parts:

**Make:** This names the general type of vehicle and an average cost for it.

**Max. Sp.:** The fastest possible or maximum speed for the vehicle.

**Accl.:** Acceleration is given in the number of seconds required for the vehicle to go from a standstill to 60 mph.

**Cornering:** The listed number is the highest possible speed at which a sharp corner (such as a right-angle street corner) may be safely negotiated under normal conditions.

**Dam. Mod.:** The damage modifier is the amount of plus or minus the vehicle gains on the Vehicle Damage Table. This is due to the soundness (or lack thereof) of the vehicle's construction.

**Seats:** The number of people that may normally be carried by the vehicle.

Make	Max. Sp.	Accl.	Cornering	Dam. Mod.	Seats
Limousine (\$9,000)	100	20	25	-10	8
Speedster (\$4,000-\$25,000)	140	10	35	+5	2
Motorcycle (\$200, sidecar plus \$100)	80	12	30	+20	2(3)
Panel truck (\$900-\$1,100)	70	20	25	-5	2
Pickup truck (\$800-\$1,200)	70	20	25	+5	2
Sedan (\$900-\$1,800)	90	16	25	0	4-6

**Automobile movement:** There are two methods of using automobile movement in *Crimefighters*. When travelling for long distances or when no unusual circumstances are likely to occur, normal MPH may be used to measure how far and how long a journey is. When involved in combat or dealing in some way with people on foot, the following table converting miles per hour to feet per second is used.

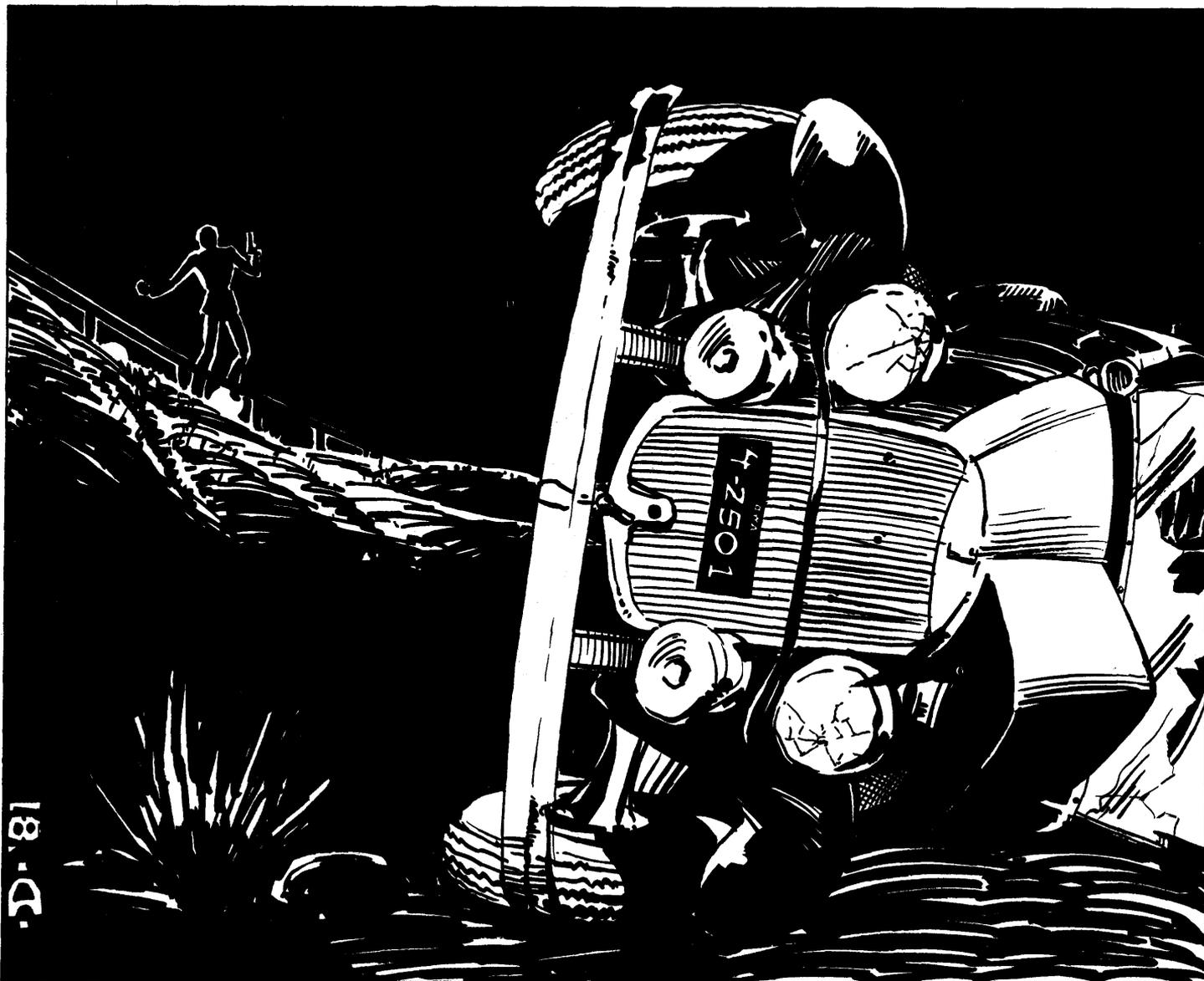
MPH	Feet/Sec.	MPH	Feet/Sec.
10	15	80	118
20	29	90	132
30	44	100	145
40	59	110	161
50	76	120	179
60	88	130	191
70	103	140	205

When starting from a dead stop, an automobile does not immediately leap to the desired speed. It must accelerate to that speed, at a rate based on the vehicle's acceleration rating. An auto may never accelerate faster than its listed acceleration.

**Braking:** For the purposes of simplicity, the time required to brake a vehicle to a full stop can be considered the same as that needed for acceleration.

**Cornering and traffic:** All vehicles are given a safe cornering speed. This speed may be exceeded at the risk of accident, a chance equal to the vehicle's speed given as a percentage. Thus, any vehicle taking a corner at 60 mph would have a 60% chance of some type of accident. If an accident occurs, the Vehicle Damage Table must be consulted.

Driving through traffic can also be somewhat risky. Depend-



ing on the density of traffic, the safe travelling speed will vary from 20 to 50 mph. The chance of accident for each block travelled in traffic is equal to double the MPH speed of the vehicle, if it exceeds the safe driving limit for the traffic. However, the chance of accident may never be more than 90%.

**Road conditions and driving skill:** The weather can affect the speeds and safety of driving. The following adjustments to the vehicle table can be used:

	Rain	Fog	Snow
Max. Sp.	-20	-	-30
Accl.	+2	-	+5
Cornering	-10	-5	-15
Braking	+4	+2	+7

Note that fog will also reduce visibility.

Driving skill can also alter driving speed and safety. Characters with driving skill are assumed to be of race-car driver quality. In addition, the GM may decide that certain non-player characters have good driving skill, making them useful as getaway drivers. The modifications are given below.

	Race-car quality	Good driving (NPC)
Accl.	-3	-1
Cornering	+15	+5

**Vehicle Damage:** Whenever an automobile is involved in an accident, it is necessary to roll on the Vehicle Damage Table for

each vehicle involved. The die roll is modified by adjustments for speed and vehicle type.

Speed	Modifier
Up to 25 MPH	-20
26-40 MPH	-5
41-60 MPH	0
61-80 MPH	+10
81+ MPH	+20

Dice Roll	Result
10 or less	Scratched and dented, no other damage
11-20	Bodywork crumpled (\$10-\$40 repair)
21-45	Serious body damage (\$20-\$120 repair)
46-60	Minor frame damage; all speeds (maximum, acceleration, cornering) reduced by 10%; occupants suffer 0-2 points of damage each. (\$100 repair)
61-70	Frame damage; all speeds reduced by 50%; occupants suffer 1-3 points of damage each (\$110-\$160 repair)
71-80	Serious collision; auto inoperative, occupants suffer 1-6 points of damage each.
81-90	Serious collision; auto inoperative; occupants suffer 2-8 points of damage each.
91 or more	Auto totalled; occupants suffer 2-20 points of damage each.

## POLICE AND THE COURTS

*Crimefighters* is a game that relies heavily on the player character's interaction with the police. For those characters acting on the side of the law, it will generally not be difficult to maintain good relations with the police. For those characters who regularly commit criminal acts, are forced to do so by circumstances, or who generally do not care, the law should be considered as a potential (perhaps actual) adversary. When a criminal act occurs (no matter for what reason), the GM must weigh the factors surrounding the act. Were there any witnesses? Would they report the crime? Was a good description obtained? What clues were left behind? After all these factors (and any others) have been judged, the GM must determine a realistic percentage chance for the character's identification or arrest by the police.

When an arrest occurs, either by police accidentally spotting the character or tracking him or her down, the police will not behave like fools. They will take reasonable precautions and will not be inclined to give the character special treatment. Bail may or may not be set (depending on the crime and the whim of the judge) and unless bail is set and can be raised, the character can expect to languish in jail for 1-3 weeks before going to court. Once in court, the guilt of the character should be given a reasonable doubt. If the GM feels the evidence could allow for other interpretations, the character should be given the benefit of the doubt. The GM may wish the player of the accused character to suggest these alternative options. If the character is convicted, a sentence could range from six months to life imprisonment, depending on the severity and cruelty of the crime.

## COMBAT

Combat occurs in any situation where the parties involved can only resolve an issue, or choose to do so, through the use of force. In *Crimefighters* there are two types of combat — missile and hand-to-hand. In general, combat is short and quick, with the side acting most decisively and quickly getting the victory.

### Sequence of combat events

Although combat is freeform, as in most role-playing games, there is a series of steps that is normally followed.

1. Determine encounter distance
2. State actions (as needed)
3. Determine initiative (first second only)
4. Conduct actions in order of occurrence

This sequence is repeated as often as necessary.

**Encounter distance:** In most situations the surrounding conditions will determine the distance at which opponents are first sighted. These conditions include light, amount of space, terrain, and disguises of the people encountered. If there are no obvious limitations, the following random encounter distances may be used:

City: 10-40 feet.

Open country: 10-100 yards.

Woods: 10-100 feet.

People scanning with binoculars will increase the sighting distance by the power of the glasses (i.e., 5x binoculars would be able to sight encounters at 5 times normal distance).

**Surprise:** The greatest modifier to encounter distance is surprise. When an encounter occurs, there is a basic 1 in 6 chance that either party will be surprised. This chance may be altered by concealment or other preparations by one party or the other. Surprise will reduce the encounter distance to 11 to 20 ft. or less unless the location proves to make this impossible or ridiculous. Surprise will also give a bonus of +1 on surprier's the first-round initiative roll.

**Time:** Once an encounter is determined and the distance calculated, play normally shifts to time used in combat. This time is calculated in seconds. A player will state his or her character's actions, and the GM will calculate the time required

for such actions. The following are times required for typical actions:

Drawing a gun: 4 seconds.

Firing: 1 second.

Swing, stab, lunge: 1-2 seconds.

Other actions such as leaping over tables, opening doors, throwing TNT, tying people up, etc. are left up to the GM to determine the amount of time required.

**Stating actions:** The actions taken by each individual in a group must be declared before initiative is rolled. These actions may be as long or as short as desired: but once an action is stated, the only change that may be made is to cancel it. Therefore, a character might declare, "I draw my gun and fire," while a different character may say, "I overturn the table, reload my revolver, and pop up to squeeze off two shots at the lantern behind them." The first action would take 5 seconds while the second would take 15 seconds. If a character should decide to withdraw or cancel an action, he or she will suffer a delay as explained below.

Whenever a character starts a new action (either after completion or cancellation of a previous action), there is a delay of 1 second before the new action can be started. Hence, players may find it advantageous to state a series of actions, rather than a single one at a time, to avoid this penalty.

**Initiative:** Once actions have been declared and their times determined, both groups should roll d4 for initiative. The side with the higher number is assumed to have gained a small advantage of time, equal in seconds to the difference of the two die rolls. If both groups were to state, for example, that they were drawing their guns and firing (5 seconds) and the initiative rolls were 3 and 1, the sequence of combat would be as follows:

First second: Group 1 starts to draw guns.

Second second: Group 1 drawing.

Third second: Group 1 drawing, Group 2 starts to draw guns.

Fourth second: Group 1 has weapons drawn, Group 2 drawing.

Fifth second: Group 1 fires, Group 2 drawing.

Sixth second: Group 1 delay (new action), Group 2 has weapons out.

Seventh second: Group 1 starts new action, Group 2 fires.

If the first round initiative is equal, then all events are assumed to occur simultaneously. If one group is in a position where it has knowledge of its opponents, that group's initiative roll is not taken, but is automatically assumed to be 5.

**Missile combat:** There are 3 steps in missile combat — 1) determining if the target has been hit, 2) finding the locations of any hits, and 3) rolling for damage.

The chance to hit a target is equal to the accuracy of the firing hand (or the best Accuracy, in the case of two-handed weapons) adjusted by the modifiers given below. If the adjusted accuracy or less is rolled on percentile dice, the target has been hit. No matter what the modifiers, if a 99 or 00 is rolled, the firer's gun has jammed. A jam may only be cleared by rolling a one or a two on d6. One such roll is allowed each second.

Missile fire modifiers to accuracy:

Range:

Pistols - Minus 5% per 10 yards of distance.

Rifles - Minus 1% per 10 yards of distance.

Cover:

25% cover - Minus 10%.

50% cover - Minus 25%.

75% cover - Minus 35%.

Movement:

Firer moving - Minus 30%.

Target moving - Minus 10%.

Concealment:

Brush, fog - Minus 10%.

Smoke, darkness - Minus 40%.

Firer prone, steadied - Plus 10%.

Using scope - Plus 5% per power of scope.

Successive shots — Minus 10% per shot.

Wounded in gun arm — Minus 30%.

If a hit is scored, the next step is to determine the location of the hit. Percentile dice are rolled and the following table consulted. This table lists the location of the hit, any extra damage done by bullets, and any extra damage done by edged weapons.

**Hit Location Table**

Die roll	Location	Edged	
		Bullet	Weapon
		Dam.	Mod.
1-20	Left Leg*	0	0
21-40	Right Leg*	0	0
41-75	Abdomen/Chest	+2	0
76-85	Right Arm/Shoulder	0	+1
86-95	Left Arm/Shoulder	0	+1
96-00	Neck/Head	+ 4	+2

\*See movement section for effects.

To determine the damage done from a missile weapon, roll the die or dice indicated on the Weapon Table, adding any modifiers from the table above. This total with equal the hit points lost by the target from that attack.

**Incapacitation:** If a character loses half or more of his or her original total of hit points in a single attack, there is a 70% chance that the character will be incapacitated. If this does occur, the character may not move or take any action until he or she receives medical attention.

**Hand-to-hand combat:** Hand-to-hand combat obviously can only occur when characters are adjacent to each other. The percentage chance of successfully hitting an opponent is the average of the character's Physical Power and Agility (rounded down), adjusted by any of the modifiers given below:

Attacker held:	-40%
Blackjack:	+5%
Brass knuckles:	+5%
Darkness, fog, smoke:	-20%
Defender held:	+50%
Fencing skill (when using sword):	+10%
Judo skill:	+10%
Knife:	+5%
Sword:	+15%
Wounded (half hit points or greater):	-10%

When an attack is made without an edged weapon, the damage done is rolled on the die nearest the character's Physical Power (rounded down). Thus, a character with a Physical Power of 95 would roll 1d8 for damage. There is no chance for incapacitation, nor is there any hit location.

**Edged weapons:** When a hit is scored with an edged weapon, the procedure reverts to that used for missile combat. First the hit location is found and then the damage is rolled, modified as required. Attacks from edged weapons can cause incapacitation.

**Wounds and recovery:** In *Crimefighters*, there are two types of wounds; both may disable a character in combat. The two types of wounds are those received from missile combat and edged weapons, and those otherwise received in hand-to-hand combat. Each should be recorded separately. Putting characters out of action from wounds occurs in 3 different ways:

1) If the wounds received from missile or edged weapons equals the character's current hit points, that character is dead.

2) If the wounds received from hand-to-hand combat equal the character's current hit points, that character is unconscious for 5-30 minutes.

3) If the combined total for both categories of wounds equals the character's hit points, the character is unconscious for a number of hours equal to the extent of the missile/edged weapon wounds.

Wand-to-hand combat wounds or losses to attributes may be recovered at the rate of 1 hit point per hour of rest. Missile/edged

weapon wounds are recovered at the rate of 1 hit point for every two days of rest.

Finally, unlike most role-playing games, missile/edged weapon wounds in *Crimefighters* can become more serious if they are not tended to. One hit point per hour will be lost until such wounds are treated by a trained medical person. Furthermore, characters who engage in strenuous activity before being totally healed from missile/edged weapon wounds will also lose one hit point per hour of activity.

**Weapons Table**

Weapon	Reload No. of Shots/			
	Rate	Rounds	sec.	Damage
BAR	1	variable	2	2-12
Beretta	1	7	1	1-8
Blackjack	—	—	—	6+ normal strike
Brass knuckles	—	—	—	2+ normal strike
Colt .45	1	7	1	2-8
Lee-Enfield rifle	½	5	1	2-12
Mauser 1912*	½	10	3	2-8
Smith & Wesson .38	1	6	1	1-8
Springfield rifle	½	5	1	2-12
Switchblade	—	—	—	2-5
Sword cane	—	—	—	2-7
Thompson SMG	½	50	3	2-9
Webley & Scott Mk. VI	1	6	1	2-8
Webley .38	1	6	1	1-6
Webley .32	1	6	1	2-5

\*This weapon jams an a roll of 95-00.

**Thrown weapons:** Certain weapons, either purchased or improvised, may be thrown by characters in combat. These include knives, rocks and other weapons or opportunity. The chance for determining a hit is the same as with other missile weapons, except that the following accuracy modifiers are used instead of those similar ones listed in that section,

Range:

Rocks, knives, etc.: Minus 10% per yard of distance.

Movement: —

Thrower moving: Minus 40%.

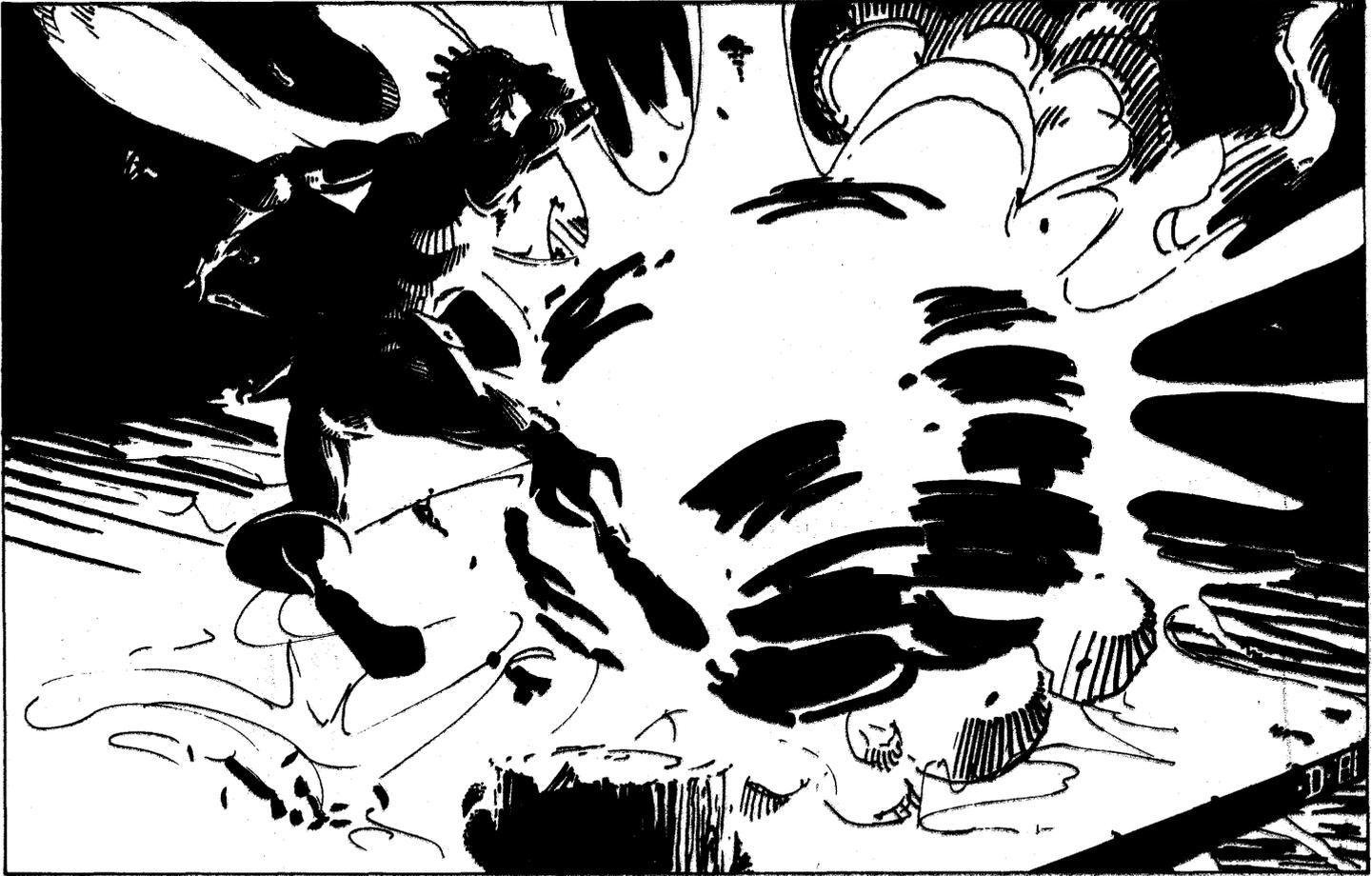
Target moving: Minus 15%.

Further determination of hit location, damage and incapacitation will depend on the type of weapon used. Edged weapons always use all systems given above, while blunt weapons (rocks or thrown clubs) use only the determination for damage.

**Grenades:** Unlike many other weapons which need to hit on target, grenades need only land in the general area of the victim to have effect. Therefore, all range modifiers to Accuracy are ignored when grenades are used (although all others apply). The maximum distance a character may throw a grenade is equal to his or her Physical Power minus 10, expressed in yards. A character with a Physical Power of 86 would be able to throw a grenade 76 yards. A "to hit" roll is still made based on the Accuracy of the throwing arm (without range modifiers), and a successful hit indicates that the grenade has fallen 1-10 feet from the desired target. A miss will mean that the target was missed by 4-9 yards in a random direction. In situations where a character is virtually certain to be able to place the grenade in the desired location, no "to hit" roll is required; the attempt is assumed to be successful unless prevented for some reason.

Grenades are assumed to have a 5-10 second delay after activating and before exploding, the exact amount of time to be decided by the GM. A fragmentation grenade will do 3-24 points of damage to all people within a five-foot radius of the blast, and 3-18 points to those who are from 5 to 15 feet away from the blast.

**Other explosives:** Throwing TNT is treated in the same manner as a grenade, except that the character must select a fuse length (given in seconds of burning time) for the stick or bundle. Characters without demolitions skill will be off on the timing of the fuse by plus or minus 1-5 seconds. If an unskilled



player selects a six-second fuse, he or she may have it explode one second after lighting it, or as long as 11 seconds later. A skilled demolitions expert will have an inaccuracy of only 1 second maximum (perhaps zero). A single stick of TNT will do 1-10 points of damage to all within a five-foot radius, and 1-6 points to those from 5 to 15 feet away,

Nitroglycerine explodes on contact when thrown and is treated as a thrown weapon for determining a hit. Nitro will do 1-10 points of concussion damage per ounce to all within five feet of the point of contact. Using larger quantities of TNT or nitroglycerine will increase the radius within which the blast will cause damage, and perhaps might also add to the damage caused. Such matters should be determined by the GM as the situations arise.

### DRUGS, POISONS AND ACIDS

Drugs may be administered by any character with medical skill, or in some cases, by any character with opportunity. There are many types of drugs available, so instead of listing specific drugs and their effects, the following general types and results are given. From these, the GM may devise any reasonable single type or combination of types to be a specific drug.

**Unconsciousness:** Drugs which produce this effect may be used by any character. If the victim fails to roll less than or equal to the average of his or her Physical Power and Willpower, he or she will be unconscious for 2-8 hours.

**Euphoria:** This type of drug will bring on a condition similar to extreme drunkenness. The victim must roll as explained under unconsciousness. Failure to make this roll will result in the character's Mental Aptitude, Willpower, Accuracy Right, Accuracy Left, and Agility being reduced by 50%. This condition will last for 1-4 hours.

**Stimulant:** When this type of drug is administered by a character with medical skill, unconscious characters may be revived. Otherwise, the drug will negate the one-second delay normally

caused in combat when a new action is declared, reduce Willpower by 10 points, and cause the loss of one hit point (treat as a hand-to-hand combat wound for recovery). A stimulant will last for 10-60 minutes.

**Hallucinogen:** This drug will cause characters to see things that are not really there, or mistake normal things for wild and fantastic visions. As such, the GM should feel free to describe any number of improbable sights, giving no indication of what might be real or false. A victim must roll less than equal to his or her Willpower to avoid the effects of this drug. Otherwise, the drug will last for 1-6 hours.

As mentioned before, drug types may be combined so as to do several different things. Euphoric stimulants or hallucinogens leading to unconsciousness are two possibilities. When drugs are combined, die rolls (if any) for the success of each particular effect must be made and the results of that type applied if the roll is failed.

**Poison:** The result of poisoning a character is simple; unless the victim resists the poison or finds an antidote, he or she will die. A character's chance to resist a poison is 30% plus another percentage point for every hit point the character has; e.g., a character with 15 hit points has a 45% chance of not dying from a poison. Should the character successfully roll to resist the poison, he or she will still lose half of his or her current hit points when the poison takes effect. The major difference in types of poison is the amount of time required to take effect. Extremely fast poisons will work in 15 seconds, while others might take hours. The GM should note the amount of time required for the poison to take effect. If the character is able to receive an antidote before that time is reached, the poison in his or her system will be rendered harmless.

**Acid:** Although seldom used, acid may sometimes come into play in combat situations, primarily from fiendish traps or mad acid throwers. An acid attack will do damage to a character of a pre-set amount according to the strength of the chemical used.

A weak acid would only do 1-3 points of damage, a moderate one 1-8 points, and a strong acid 1-12 or more. Attacks using acid should also, be checked for hit location, as hits to the head/neck area will reduce the character's Presence by the number of points of damage caused by the attack. (As an optional rule, the GM may wish to allow a 1 in 20 chance of an acid attack actually increasing the character's Presence.)

### AWARDING EXPERIENCE POINTS

Upon the completion of a mission or part of one, the GM may see fit to assign experience points to the player characters. There are three different categories for assigning experience points:

**1) Mission success:** As a subjective judgment by the GM, 1-10 points may be awarded on the basis of success and difficulty of the mission. Thus, all missions or cases would be worth at least one point; a highly dangerous but unsuccessful mission would be worth 5 points; and a moderately dangerous but highly successful case would be worth 6 or 7 points.

**2) Criminals overcome and goods recovered:** Experience points equal to half the hit points of all criminals captured or killed should be given to the players, but *only if those criminals constituted a threat to some person or thing*. Experience should also be given for cash items recovered, equal to 10% of the dollar value of the item. The GM should limit the amount of this award if the item recovered is of great value,

**3) Bonus points:** The GM may assign bonus points to those characters who used their skills in an exceptional manner or demonstrated great insight. Such bonus awards should never total more than 10 points per adventure.

#### Negative experience points

It is also possible to lose experience in *Crimefighters*, by accumulating negative experience points. Such points are automatically subtracted from any positive experience points a character has, in the following order:

- 1) Experience points not yet applied to a purpose.
- 2) Experience points applied to investments.
- 3) Experience points applied to new mysterious powers.

If none of the above situations apply, the negative points are saved until positive points are earned.

If a player wishes, he or she may choose to accumulate negative Experience points. To do so, he or she must clearly announce to the GM his or her intention. Thereafter, the player may not change his or her mind. Once the decision is made, the character may use negative points in the same manner as positive experience points. The acquisition of positive points will cause the character to suffer the losses already explained above, just as if they were negative points being applied against a positive point total.

Negative points are awarded in the same manner as previously given, except the motives of the character earning negative points are generally evil or selfish. The following categories are used for awarding negative points:

1. Missions
2. Innocents or crimefighters harmed or overcome
3. Items stolen
4. Bonus points

### DESIGNING AN ADVENTURE

Unlike many other role-playing games, *Crimefighters* does not generally center itself around a single place of adventure that may be used several times. Instead, action in the game relies on the creation of a "case," or scenario, and the characters' efforts to solve the case or perform the assigned task. Therefore, it is useful for the GM to prepare ahead of time what the sequence of events will be, what the plot of the case is, who will be involved, and what locations are likely to be used. These can be broken into a series of steps that, if followed, will reduce the difficulty of setting up.

**1) What will the case be?:** Depending on the roles players in

the campaign wish to pursue, there are many options open to the GM. If characters are hard-boiled private eyes, racketeers, adventurers seeking to destroy evil, or master villains after power and wealth, the GM should be prepared to accommodate the players' desires. The following list offers suggestions for interesting cases:

- Stop a blackmailer;
- Clear a person of a frame-up (possibly a character);
- Break up a racket;
- Uncover a corrupt city official;
- Prevent a kidnapping or rescue a kidnap victim;
- Expose a massive stock swindle;
- Guard important documents or an invention;
- Prevent the death of a crusading editor;
- Stop a ring of smugglers;
- Recover some stolen gems;
- Investigate a murder;
- Protect a foreign diplomat;
- Keep spies from sabotaging an important defense plant;
- Find a missing person;
- Infiltrate a criminal's organization.

Initially, it is suggested that only one particular case be used at a time, to allow both the GM and the players to become accustomed to the unfamiliar systems in the game and to allow the characters to get a little power and ability. As players and characters become more experienced, several cases can be intertwined to create a more challenging and exciting adventure—such as finding a missing person, who ends up dead, and then investigating the murder to clear your client who has been framed for the crime. Villainous characters may often use the reverse of many of the suggestions given above.

**2) Who is involved?:** After deciding on a case, the GM should make a short list of the important characters that will be uninvolved. Not all of the people the players will have contact with need be listed here, but those important to the case should be. Along with the name of the character should be a short description of what the person is like and what he or she has to do with the case. Statistics on the character may also be given if they are needed.

For instance:

Maggie Armbrewster: Hires players to find missing boyfriend, actually wants him because he made off with stolen stocks. Pretty redhead, appears upset and weepy, but will murder if necessary. Carries a Webley .32 in purse. Accuracy Right — 45.

**3) What will happen?:** A sequence of events is the next step in preparing the case. This is much like the plot of a story and will help the GM keep track of what is supposed to happen. This listing may be as brief or as detailed as the GM is comfortable with. The following two examples give both simple and detailed versions of a sequence of events:

1. Strange man arrives at character's door, bleeding from several wounds. Dies before saying anything. Carries scrap of rare Asian palm.

2. Man watching apartment, will follow any who leave; makes phone call from lobby.

3. Apartment broken into and body stolen. Rooms ransacked. (If character does not leave, body turns yellow-green and several thugs attempt to break in and steal body.)

The same sequence in a more detailed manner might go as follows:

1. Harold Weingould arrives at the door of character's apartment and rings the bell several times (or knocks on door). Ringing stops, and when character opens door, Harold's body falls inside. He has been shot several times, through the chest and shoulder. He is wearing a topcoat over what appear to be ragged pajamas. He attempts to speak and stand, but dies before doing so. As he dies, he thrusts out of his hand, in which is clutched a scrap of a green plant leaf.

2. Within five minutes of the death of Harold Weingould, Tommy Snip-Nose will arrive at the apartment. He will not



reveal himself, but will try to listen at the door. If the character calls the police, Tommy will use a small canister of gas to fill the room with an unconsciousness drug. He will then pick the lock and, using a gas mask to protect himself, remove the body. If Tommy hears no sound in the apartment, he will pick the lock and attempt to remove the body. If the character leaves while Tommy is around, he will tail the character, stopping only long enough to call for some thugs to get the body out of the apartment.

As can be seen, the shorter version is faster to write and design, but requires that the GM improvise more. It is suggested that until the GM is confident of his or her ability to handle the many different things characters might do, a detailed sequence of events should be designed.

**Random Encounters:** To add interest when characters are moving around or not actively engaged in an important event, random encounters may be created by the GM. Unlike wandering monsters in other role-playing games, random encounters are not normally dangerous. Typical encounters on a street might be with drunks, policemen, pickpockets, con artists, toughs or common citizens. In some situations random encounters can be dangerous, especially when a character is in a place where he or she should not be. No random encounter tables are provided, as the type of encounter will depend on the location and situation the characters find themselves in.

The chance for an encounter will also vary greatly from place to place. In heavily congested areas, the chance is 1 in 6. In a moderately crowded area, the chance is reduced to 1 in 10, and on an almost-empty street late at night, the chance becomes 1 in 20. Again, the GM must make the final determination.

How a randomly encountered person will react to a character depends on the encounter reaction, unless the GM has made some determination ahead of time. To determine the reaction, roll percentile dice and consult the table below:

**Encounter Reaction Table**

Dice roll	Attitude (possible actions)
1-5	Hostile (Attack, flee, or obviously avoid)
6-30	Unfriendly (Verbally harass, avoid, ignore)
31-70	Disinterested (Ignore, answer minor questions)
71-85	Helpful (Answers questions, gives directions)
86-95	Friendly (Answers questions, speaks to)
96-99	Actively friendly (Will do small favors, deliver messages, call the police)
00	Heroic (Will risk own safety to assist character)

**Modifiers to dice roll:**

- Person is threatened: -50
- Person is criminal: -15
- Dangerous situation: -10
- Player character's Presence is 71-85: +5

Presence is 86-95: +10

Presence is 96-00: +20

**Using Presence in place of the Reaction Table:** Any time the character has sufficient Willpower to use Presence, such an attempt may be made. The character announces the attempt and then rolls percentile dice. This is compared against the character's Presence modified by the plus or minus difference of the encounter's Willpower and the first 3 modifiers on the Encounter Reaction Table (Person threatened, criminal, dangerous situation), if they apply. If the percentile roll is equal to or under the modified score, the encounter has been affected by the character's Presence. Encountered persons so affected will automatically act on any command given by the character, provided it will not lead to their death or harm. Examples of the use of Presence are to extract information from captured criminals, quickly command innocents to get to a place of safety during a combat, or get the attention of an important official. The effect of Presence on the encounter is very short-lived and may only be used to give one command.

**Animal encounters:** Certain animals may be encountered during the course of play and some may become involved in combat. The format used for giving animal information is given below, for a sample guard dog:

- Hit Points: 5
- Hand-to-Hand Combat: 70
- Damage: 1-4
- Defense Minus: -15
- Speed: 30 ft./sec.

Other animals may be created by the GM as needed.

**AFTERWORD**

These rules are not complete, nor are they intended to be. Many sections were dropped from the original outline, including rules for airplanes, swimming, more weapons, security devices, special gadgets, exotic adventures, and more detailed contacts. As such, these (like so many other things) are left to the GM to design. The GM is encouraged to put his or her creativity into the game and mold it into the form he or she wants.

Some persons may complain that the rules are not realistic, or are not detailed enough. The intention of this game was to not create a great deal of burdensome detail. The game should be fun and not too difficult to play. The most important fact is that the GM and the players enjoy what they are doing.

The author would be interested in hearing any responses or suggestions that readers might have for *Crimefighters*. Please be aware, however, that totally negative criticism usually accomplishes little. Those who write should offer constructive suggestions for how things might be improved.

# THE CASE OF THE EDITOR'S ENVELOPE

This is a sample adventure designed for use with the *Crime-fighters* rules. The adventure will demonstrate several different ways to handle various aspects of an adventure as well as how to design an entire adventure for the game.

This adventure is best suited for 2-3 players of beginning characters, composed primarily of pragmatist and defender experience types. If more characters are involved, the GM may wish to increase the numbers and firepower of the opponents they will face. If the GM feels that the characters are weak or the players inexperienced, an off-duty policeman or private investigator may be added to the numbers as an NPC. This character should be controlled primarily by the players, the GM only taking control in crucial situations.

The adventure is divided into three sections: a description of the main NPC's, a listing of the sequence of events, and a section of maps and keys for the main events. The GM is advised to read all the sections, altering what he or she feels is necessary, before commencing with play. Furthermore, the GM may wish to place the adventure in some real location instead of the fictitious city where it is set. New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, or San Francisco are all suitable. To place the adventure in a city, the GM should obtain a street map of the city and locate the encounters on it. A ruler may be used to measure distance travelled (compared against the scale of the map), if the map is not clearly gridded. If the GM does not wish to use a real city, he or she may design an imaginary city that may be used for further adventures.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**Louis Portmander:** This man is the city editor of the *Morning Paper* and is concerned about his leading investigative reporter, Thomas Ripton. Portmander will be brusque and efficient and will want to get a story out of whatever occurs. He is bulky and strong, easily argumentative and violent if provoked.

**Thomas "Tommy the Ripper" Ripton:** Top reporter of the *Morning Paper*, he has purposely dropped out of sight because of the knowledge he has about Jack Tsein's activities. He will wish to remain undercover at all costs, but will want to have a go-between so that he may file stories with the paper. Ripton is lean and wiry, not very strong, but quick and capable. He carries a .38 Webley in his coat pocket. Accuracy Left — 39.

**Jack Tsien:** This Chinatown gang leader (commonly known as China Jack) is the head of a drug racket in the city. He has a great deal of influence on the underworld, particularly in Chinatown. He also has connections within the Golden Phoenix Tong and uses them for shadowing and assassinations. Currently, he and Albert Magnus are working together to obtain the formula for Professor Welburton's experimental drug. Tsien is tough and heartless and will kill any person who might cross him or get in his way. He also has plans to rub out Magnus once his usefulness is finished. He carries a .45 pistol in a shoulder holster and a razor in his boot. Accuracy Right — 74; Hand-to-hand — 68; Damage — 1-6.

**Professor Welburton:** This chemist, while trying to improve anesthetics for surgery, accidentally discovered a drug that will induce a zombie-like state in the user. Fearing the effects of this drug, Welburton intends to sell it to the government after he has developed a process to refine it further. He is a harsh and somewhat greedy man, little concerned for those around him. Recognizing and fearing that he could lose his fortune if he were robbed, he now carries a .32 pistol in the pocket of his lab coat. Accuracy Right — 24.

**Albert Magnus:** Magnus formerly worked as an assistant to Professor Welburton and was with him when the accidental discovery of the zombie drug was made. Seeing his opportunity

to get ahead, Magnus stole the small quantity of processed drug that, existed, but failed to get the formula. He took the drug to China Jack and proposed a business deal. He has had some misgivings about the arrangement and may be persuaded to double-cross Jack, if he can gain something in the process. Magnus is somewhat athletic and handsome, but likes to lead a dissolute and spendthrift life. Tsien recently paid him and with the money, Magnus has been doing the town. He carries a Mauser under the seat of his car. Accuracy — 54.

## SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

### Event #1

The characters will be approached at their homes or apartments or at their offices by Louis Portmander. He has an envelope to deliver to them and also wishes them to accompany him. The note in the envelope reads:

*"Mr. Portmander will be in need of assistance, possibly in the near future. I understand from friends that you can be trusted. Please accompany him to the statue of General Lee in Washbark Square. Be there at 11:00 tonight.*

*Signed: R."*

If questioned, Portmander will describe receiving a letter in the afternoon mail. The letter contained a note asking him to be at the square at 11 p.m., but to first deliver the second envelope to the characters. If questioned concerning "R", he will not be very precise. He knows several persons whose names begin with R, but none of them would be likely to send such a note. If pressed to name any of these people, the GM should make up several names and occupations, slipping in Ripton's name at some point. Ripton has not been around the office for several days, but Portmander will not consider this unusual enough to mention, unless questioned specifically about it.

If the characters agree to go with Portmander, they will be shadowed by a member of the Golden Phoenix Tong. There is a 20% chance that the characters (as a group) will notice the shadow (+10 for characters with the special ability of sight). The tong member will follow on foot unless the characters take a car (Portmander will offer the use of his), in which case the shadow will be picked up by a dark blue sedan. Should the characters attempt to lose the sedan, use the Street Map provided. Statistics of those in the car are:

	Acc.	R.	H-t-H	Dam	HP	Weapon
Shadow:	77	45	1-4	10	S&W	.38
Driver:	45	74	1-6	8	Colt	.45, Good driver
Thug#1:	66	73	1-6	12	Thompson	SMG
Thug#2:	64	92	1-8	11	Mauser	1912

### Event #2

When the characters arrive at the square, there will be no one in sight. Surrounding the square are several businesses, most of which are closed for the night. The only ones open are two restaurants, catering to the late shift trade. The entire area is gloomy and dark.

If the characters have not lost or noticed the tail by now, the car will park about a block away, out of sight. The shadow will get out of the car and move to the corner to watch the characters.

After a short period of waiting, Ripton will step out of one of the diners (from where he has been watching) and start to move across the square toward the characters. As soon as this happens, the shadow will signal the tailing car. It will start up and drive around the corner with its lights out. The distance from the corner to the square is 300 feet. On a roll of 1 or 2, Ripton will not be concerned about the approaching car, either because he does not notice it or does not care. In this case, the

driver of the car will attempt to run Ripton down, doing 3-30 hit points of damage. If the car is noticed, the occupants will begin firing, primarily at Ripton and then at those who fire back at them. The car will screech to a stop across the square and the thugs will engage in a shootout until either Ripton is killed or incapacitated or two or more of their party is killed or incapacitated. In either case, the remaining thugs will then attempt to leave the scene of the crime. If they are not followed, nothing more will happen. If pursued, they will try to lose the characters. The GM should use the Street Map for the running gun battle/car chase.

All the thugs are oriental in appearance. If searched, each will have from 1-20 dollars, ammunition, and weapons. None will have any identification. The shadow will also have a sales receipt from a tea shop (China Jack's headquarters) in Chinatown. Ripton will have notes on him revealing that some gang (unknown) is after a formula belonging to Professor Welburton. The professor's address will be on the sheet. If Ripton is alive, he will file this story with Portmender and then leave. If the characters ask him, Ripton will accompany them to the professor's home. However, Ripton will be going to get a story, not to help.

### Event #3

(Note: If characters decide to go directly to the tea shop, skip this event. In such a case, the robbery may be assumed to be successful.) If the characters go directly from Event #2 to the professor's home, they will arrive just in time to hear the sound of shots being fired from the laboratory. The GM should consult the map of the professor's home for further details concerning the layout of the grounds. The characters will be assumed to have arrived near the front gate unless they specifically state that they are going to find some other entrance,

Parked near the back gate is an empty speedster, while further down the block is a panel truck. The speedster belongs to one of the neighbors and is there to provide a distraction for the characters. In the panel truck is the getaway driver for two thieves, who are currently robbing the professor's home. (Driver: Acc. L — 47; H-t-H — 58; HP — 7; Beretta and switchblade, race car quality driver)

On the grounds are the two other thieves (#1: Acc. R. — 57; H-t-H — 48; HP — 4; #2: Acc. R. — 48; H-t-H — 58; Dam — 1-6; HP — 5; Webley .38; wounded in right shoulder). When the characters arrive, the thieves will just be leaving by the laboratory door. The will move at top speed toward the panel truck and then will leave the area unless detained by the characters.

In the laboratory, unconscious on the floor, is Professor Welburton. He will be able to describe (once revived) how, upon entering his lab, he discovered two men going through his safe. He fired at one and thinks he may have hit him. He was then knocked unconscious by the other thief.

If the characters should ask who is responsible for the crime, the professor will suspect Alfred Magnus, his former lab assistant. Magnus was dismissed after a suspicious theft occurred. The professor will be able to provide an address if requested, for Magnus.

A search of the grounds will yield the discovery of bloodstains (from the wounded man) and a curious-looking oriental pendant. If this pendant is examined by someone with archeological skill, he or she will be able to identify it as an ancient secret seal of the Golden Phoenix Tong. Characters may use contacts to attempt to learn the location of this tong's headquarters.

If the thieves are captured, each will have 1-10 dollars on his person and a pendant as described above. They will refuse to talk under normal circumstances or torture. They do know the location of the tong headquarters (the tea shop). If set free, they will attempt to lose any person following them into Chinatown.

If the thieves escape, the formula will have been stolen. The professor will reluctantly describe its effects to the players.

If the characters should decide not to go to the professor's house immediately after their encounter at event #2, they will read of a robbery at the professor's house in the newspaper the

following morning. No Glues will be available unless the characters are given permission to search the grounds, something the professor will be reluctant to grant.

### Event #4

If the characters decide to go to the apartment of Albert Magnus, they will find that he lives in a dingy brownstone flat, overlooking an alley. The apartment will have been ransacked and no indication of the formula or its location will be found. Magnus will not be present. Near the telephone will be a blank scratch pad. If any character thinks to take a rubbing of the top sheet of the pad, a telephone number will be obtained. This will be the number of the tea house in Chinatown. A bank book will also be found, if the room is searched. It will indicate that Magnus deposited a large amount of money in the last few weeks, only to withdraw it gradually over a period of several days. Stuffed in a desk drawer will be many racing sheets and betting stubs for the local horse track. Checking these will show that Magnus seemed to consistently choose losers at the track.

If the phone number is called or a character inquires of a contact such as a bookie, they will discover that Magnus had been betting heavily at both the track and the booking parlor in the back of the tea shop. Further inquiries may reveal that he was in debt to Jack Tsien, a local underworld racketeer and loan shark.

### Event #5

By now, characters should have acquired enough clues that clearly indicate the tea house as the source of all major actions. If they decide to investigate it, use the Tea Shop map. If the formula has been stolen, make no changes in the tea shop description. If the robbery was thwarted, no tong members will have the professor's experimental drug. If, for some reason, the characters call the police to raid the tea shop, the raid will prove only that the shop is a front for a bookmaking operation, and will not yield any other information.

### STREET MAP

Not all detail has been placed on the street map, so that the GM may add further streets and areas as desired. Likewise, the type of district(s) the streets pass through (industrial, residential, warehouses, etc.) has not been detailed to allow the map to be used for several different encounter situations. The following list of encounters is a typical one for characters travelling through the areas given on the map. The GM may wish to create further encounters according to how he or she wishes the campaign to develop. All encounters, with the exceptions of B and E, are keyed to occur when the characters use one of the streets around the encounter area. The GM may wish to have several of the listed encounters occur no more than once per adventure.

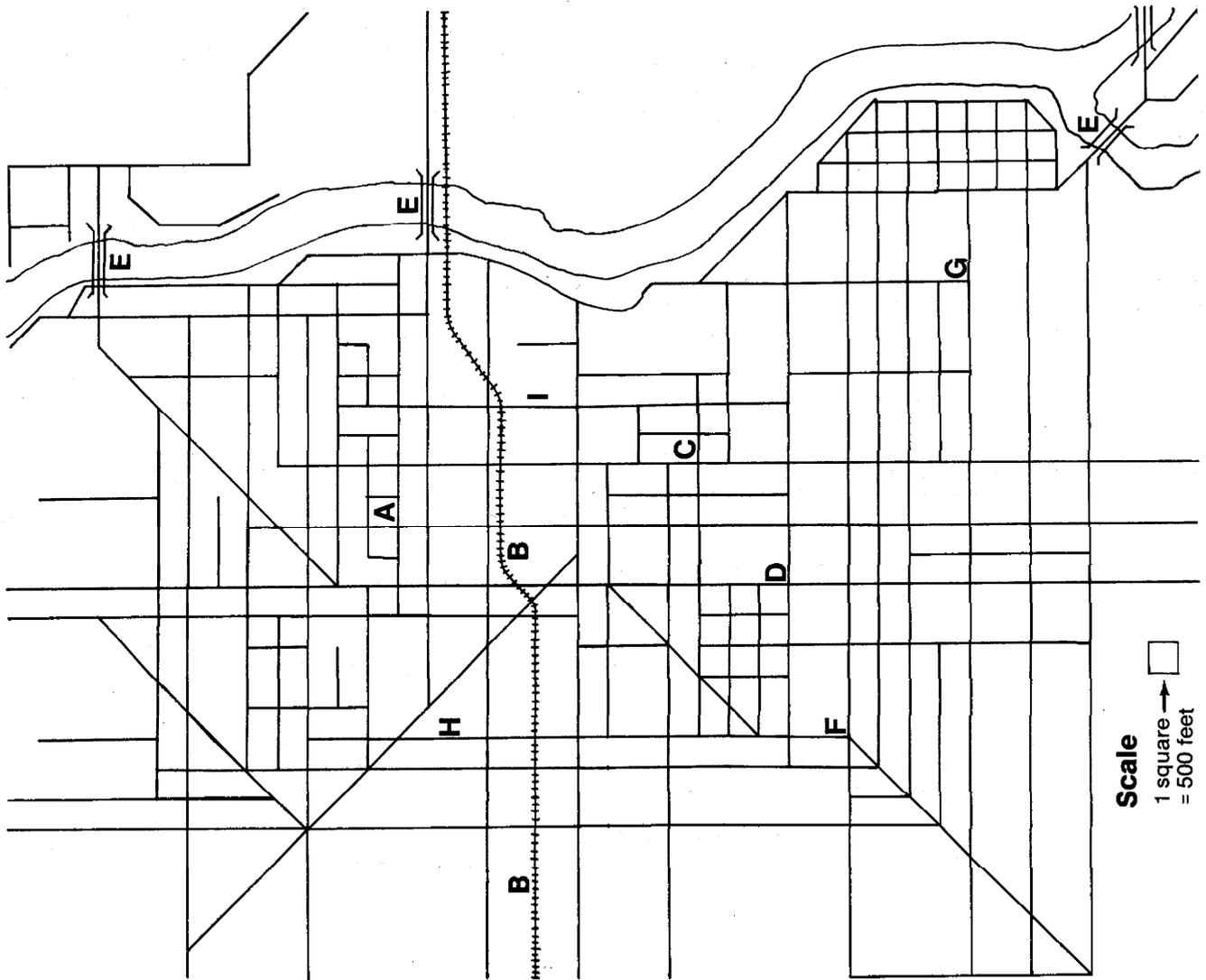
**A. Washbark Square:** See event #2.

**B. Train Tracks:** Every time the characters approach the train tracks, there is a 20% chance that a train will also be approaching them. The train moves at 40 miles per hour (58 feet per second) and will be 100 to 300 feet from the intersection. Characters will sight the train at 50-300 feet. Compare the speeds of the two vehicles (train and automobile) in the characters' try to get past the train. A train will do 10-60 points of damage to each occupant inside a vehicle it hits and will take 1-2 minutes to pass if a vehicle stops for it at a Crossing,

**C. Truck:** A truck pulls out (visible from more than 500 feet away), blocking the intersection ahead. The characters must either stop and turn around or immediately take a side street. If they choose the latter, they must turn onto one of the nearby streets at their present speed.

**D. Cop on Beat:** A policeman (not visible until encountered) is standing on the corner. If passed at a speed greater than 30 mph, there is a 40% chance that he will call in, and 1-3 police cars will pursue the offending vehicle. They will arrive and take up the chase in 1-2 minutes.

**STREET MAP**



**E. Drawbridges:** There is a 30% chance that any bridge will be positioned up, to allow a ship to pass under, when a vehicle approaches it.

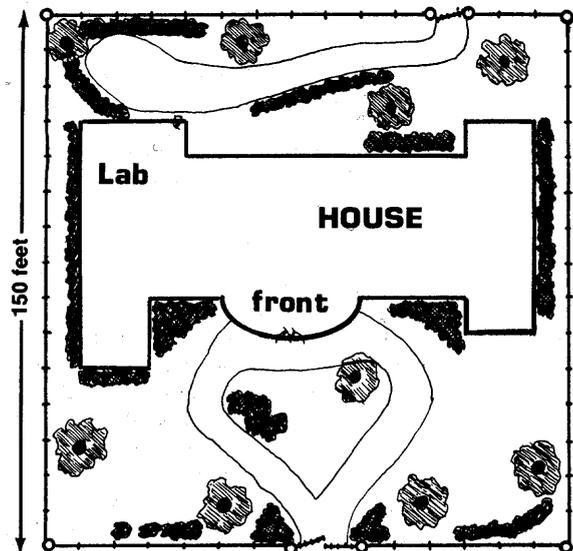
**F. Road Work:** A street crew is at work and has narrowed traffic down to a single lane. There is a 50% chance that characters will have to wait for 1-20 seconds before being allowed to pass on. Vehicles may go through the barriers around the closed lane without waiting, but must roll on the vehicle damage table (-10 on the die roll).

**G. Wet Street:** The street at this location is extremely wet, due either to recent rain or an open hydrant. Vehicles moving faster than 45 mph must roll their speed or higher on percentile dice to see if they remain in control. Failure to do so will result in a roll on the vehicle damage table. The chance of accident while turning a corner at this intersection is doubled.

**H. Drunk:** As characters come down this street, a drunk will step out of the shadows and start to cross the street. Characters must swerve to avoid him. If the vehicle is going faster than 25 mph, there is a percentage chance of rolling the car over, equal to the speed of the vehicle (in mph) minus 25. A "rollover" roll results in an automatic +20 on the vehicle damage table. If the drunk is hit, he will be killed.

**I. Hitchhiker:** A young woman is attempting to hitch a ride. If picked up, she will explain how her date got drunk and couldn't drive, so she had to walk home. If picked up but not taken to her destination (GM's choice) immediately, she will begin to scream for help as loud as she can. The GM should decide whether this will attract any attention.

**PROFESSOR'S HOME**



This map has been left very simple. None of the interior detail is given, since it is not necessary for the adventure. If the GM wishes, he or she may design floor plans to match the building. The house is two stories tall, plus an attic and basement.

**TEA SHOP MAP**

This shop is located in the center of a block in Chinatown. The street outside is quiet and deserted. In general, the area appears to be run down. Over the storefront is a weathered sign, written in both English and Chinese, announcing that this is Fat Loo's Tea House and Importer. To either side of the door are two large curtained windows.

**1. Main Room:** This room is dingy and smoky and is decorated with many gaudy-looking oriental furnishings. Along the right wall (viewed from the entrance) are two small tables with four chairs around each table. Along the back and left walls are shelves, counters and barrels, apparently filled with different types of tea. Near the left corner of the back wall is a curtained opening, apparently leading to an office. A similarly curtained opening leads to a passage going to the back of the building.

Standing behind the counter near the office is a burly oriental wearing a T-shirt, pants, and apron. He works for the tea shop and will attempt to answer questions from characters regarding the merchandise. He will inform those who ask that the two passages merely lead to a storeroom and an office, and that customers are not allowed in either place. Should the characters attempt to force their way past him, he will draw a knife and bang on the office wall with his fist, while calling loudly in Chinese.

One man is sitting at each table. Closest to the door is an old oriental, quietly sipping a cup of tea. If any commotion occurs, he will attempt to slip out the front door unnoticed. The other is a tong member, stationed there to guard the operations in the back room. Should there be any trouble, he will use his knives with great accuracy. Statistics for the two guards are as follows:

**Acc. R. H-t-H Dam HP Weapon**

Employee	75	96	1-8	13	knife
Guard	79	65	1-6	10	throwing knife (4)

**2. Office:** This is the office of the tea shop. In the room is a small wall desk and a stool. The desk is strewn with papers and small samples of teas. Altogether, it looks much like a normal small business's office. If the papers are searched, they will reveal nothing but sales and import records of teas. There is a .32 pistol in the desk drawer.

**3. Storeroom:** This room is filled with bales and bricks of tea, along with a few simple cleaning tools (broom, mop, etc.). Searching the bales will reveal nothing.

**4. Bookmaker:** The door to this room is a heavy, paneled, reinforced door with a small peephole in it. It is locked with a Class IV lock. Sitting on a stool near the door inside the room is another tong guard. He will only open the door if a secret knock is given.

Sitting at large desks in the opposite far corners are bookies. Each desk has a phone and a large number of papers on which bets have been written down. The center desk (unoccupied) is equipped with a silent buzzer that will alert the tong members in their secret rooms upstairs. If the buzzer is pushed, the tong members will arrive through the secret panel within 15 to 30 seconds. The panel is 20% detectable. Neither of the bookies are armed and they will not fight.

**Acc. L H-t-H Dam HP Weapon**

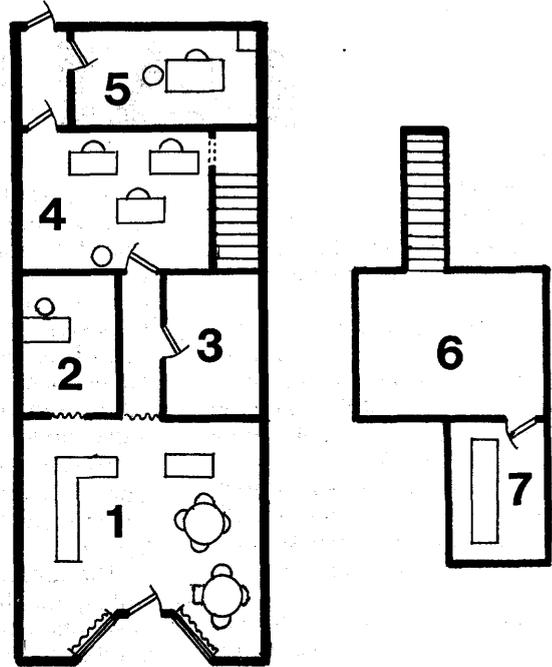
Guard	47	86	1-8	9	Colt .45
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**5. China Jack's office:** This lushly paneled office is the headquarters of China Jack. It is furnished in western style with a desk chair, side chair, etc. Sitting in a corner behind the desk is a Class VIII safe. China Jack is in the room (at or near the desk) and will not be surprised if shots have been fired or the buzzer alarm has been sounded. He will attempt to use the desk for cover if he is involved in a gun battle. For further information concerning China Jack, see the Cast of Characters.

In the safe are the following objects: A paper describing the professor's formula, other papers which are reports on book-making profits, \$500 in cash, and a single paper listing addresses of stashes of drugs.

**6. Tong quarters:** This room is where the tong holds its large gatherings. Most other business is conducted in restaurants

**TEA SHOP**



around Chinatown by the tong leaders. The room is simply furnished and poorly lit. A heavy odor of incense fills the air, emanating from a smoldering burner. Mixed with the incense is the scent of opium smoke.

In the room are three tong members. One of these is currently out of action, since he is under the effects of opium. The other two will respond to any alarms or gunshots that are sounded. Their statistics are as follows:

**Acc. R. H-t-H Dam HP Weapon**

Tong#1	74	43	1-4	7	knife*
Tong#2	26	47	1-6	6	knife*

\*Both of the knives have been dipped in the professor's drug. If the drug is not resisted successfully, the victim will fall into a zombie-like state. Any other person may then attempt to direct the affected person. In the case of conflicting orders, the victim will follow the instructions of the person with the greatest Will-power. The effect of the drug lasts for 2-12 hours.

**7. Laboratory:** Using the talents of chemists who normally process his opium for him, China Jack has been attempting to produce a large quantity of the experimental drug. The room has one long table filled with many different types of laboratory equipment. At present, the only person in the room is Albert Magnus. He was the first person China Jack tested the drug on, and he is now under orders to attack anyone, other than Jack or the chemist (presently absent) who might enter the room. This he will do, fighting at a -10 in H-t-H combat because of his semi-drugged state. He will not use guns or knives.

If the characters search, there is an 80% chance that they will find a small quantity of the experimental drug, enough to spread on two knives.

**COMPENSATION**

Depending on the actions of the characters and their degree of success, the GM may wish to have the characters rewarded, by either Louis Portmender or Professor Welburton. Such a reward should be about \$100 to \$200. The characters may also ask that any expenses be paid for, but the chance of getting these will depend on the mood of the payer. Likewise, the characters may choose to keep anything they find during the course of the adventure, as all or part of their reward, instead of an additional gift.

# THE PULPS: PAPER HEROES

by Bryce Knorr

"The Case of the Editor's Envelope"? Secret formulas? Cardboard-hero good guys battling villains straight out of Saturday morning cartoons?

If *CRIMEFIGHTERS* sounds too corny to be true, remember this: The pulp heroes weren't life-sized characters when they were created in the 1930s, and the decades have done little to make them appear any more realistic.

Dave Cook's rules and his wonderfully two-dimensional scenario capture both the style and the spirit of these wonderfully two-dimensional protagonists and their genre.

The pulp heroes were the last hurrah of those mass-produced, formula-fiction factories known as the pulp magazines. Born about the turn of the century, the pulps — they took their name from the inexpensive paper on which they originally were printed — were usually of suspect literary quality. But besides inflaming the imaginations of millions of readers, the magazines provided a financial foothold for numerous writers who went on to create stories and books that are the great works that the pulps were (for the most part) not.

Ray Bradbury, Max Brand, Jack London, Sinclair Lewis, Stephen Crane, H.P. Lovecraft — the list of authors whose works appeared in the pulps is long. Long also is the list of styles that flourished between those covers that promised fantastic fantasy and thrilling thrillers: From the whodunit to the horror story, from the Wild West to the the moons of Mars, the pulps helped establish science fiction and fantasy in the literary experience of the 20th Century.

The pulp publishers were in it, of course, for the money (some things never change). Fortunes flowed from the promises of the sensational and the sleazy. With literally hundreds of competitors on the newsstands, the publishers constantly searched for the type of story that would sell. And, in the 1930s, they struck gold with tales of modern knights battling evil — the tales that provided the fodder for "Crimefighters."

The publishers could hardly help but notice that their largest-selling issues were ones featuring heroes — or villains — familiar to their audience, main characters developed in earlier editions. From that formula, it was a short alley-vault to continuing series based upon the daring exploits of a modern hero.

The first of these pulp heroes was The Shadow, the nemesis of the night born from the runaway typewriter of Walter Gibson in the early 1930s. The pulp business was no more imaginative than television or Hollywood is today; soon, a host of heroes was spawned to capitalize on the success of The Shadow, from The Spider and The Octopus to Doc Savage and countless others.

"They'd do anything to sell," says Fred Cook (no relation to Dave), an Ohio-based collector and authority on pulp fiction.

"The authors realized they were not writing deathless prose (some things never change). I spoke to one who told me, 'I write for the people who move their lips when they read.'"

"The writers would be told, 'We need 80 pages on such and such,' and then they'd lock themselves in their rooms and knock out that number of pages on their typewriters."

Perhaps the pulp heroes were too successful. Within a few years comic books appeared, copying their hero-based formula, and the competition, coupled with World War II paper shortages, sent the periodical fiction business plummeting. A few of the pulps survived, mostly in name only, or in a different medium, like radio. But the pulps' skyrocket was locked in a tailspin from which it never really recovered.

Yet here we are, March 1981, stuffed with 20-pages plus of *Crimefighters*. The day of the pulp heroes was short-lived, but their impact remains.

"Doc Savage" is soon to be a movie; reprints of that series and The Shadow are still selling, and a first issue of The Shadow Magazine can fetch \$600, \$700 or more. That's not as much as an original Superman, but it's enough to make the pulps in Fred Cook's basement more an investment than a fire hazard.

The relative cost of pulps compared to other collectibles has sparked interest in the genre, says Cook, who runs FAX Collectors Editions as a sidelight. Although still a specialty, 150 to 200 pulp aficionados gather at their own convention each year, and the number is growing.

"I like to read them," Cook says, "I'm not that old — I was born in the early 30s — so I never got a chance to read the magazines when they first came out."

Cook believes the public — whether it knows it or not — has a strong appetite

for the type of hero mold cast by the pulp heroes of the 1930s.

"Look at the James Bond Movies," he says, "He's a fantasy hero, with flying cars and evil villains. People love that stuff — it's nothing but a pulp magazine brought onto the screen."

Looking deeper, into the American character, Cook sees similarities between the social climate of today and that of the 1930s, parallels that may account for some of the renewed interest in pulps, as well as illustrate some good — and not so good — points about our society.

Besides a distressed economy, the U.S. spirit in the 1930s felt isolated in a world of fascism and foreign ideologies. There were villains aplenty, both abroad and at home.

"We're back to the same place," says Cook. "No one trusts THE GOVERNMENT, in capital letters, and everybody is looking for Ronnie Reagan to put on his robe and kiss his ring and to fly into the air and solve all the problems."

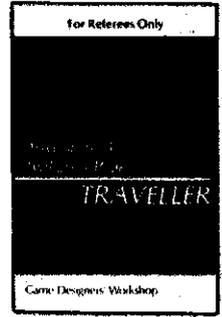
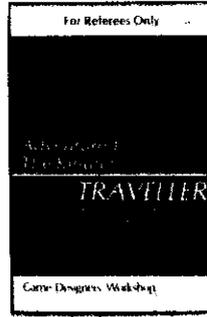
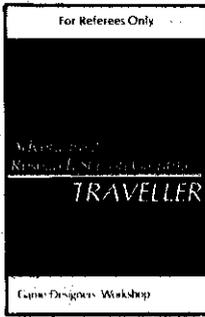
"In the early 1930s, everything was going to Hell," says Cook. "There were gangsters in Chicago and New York, and the police couldn't handle it. People were looking for the "hero" and then The Shadow came along. He took the law into his own hands and did what a lot of citizens wished they could do."

The country wanted heroes, he says, and heroes it got, not unlike the adulation that greeted the hostages upon their return to the U.S.

The Iranian tragedy has brought cries of "filthy Arabs" and "Nuke Iran," and the pulps here, too, may say something about our collective mentality — something not quite so nice as the good guys winning. Those pulp magazines and novels were filled with demeaning racial stereotypes, and not a little sadistic violence.

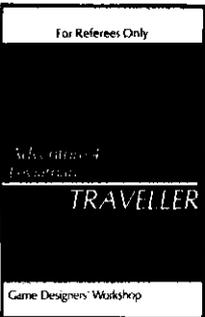
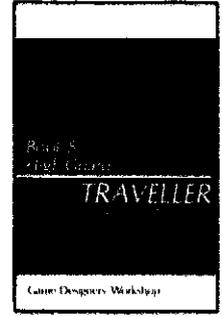
"The Spider," says Cook, "when he caught up with a villain on the top of a skyscraper, instead of knocking him out and coming down the 47 stories and giving him to the cops, he pushed him off the edge — after sticking him with a ring that left an impression to show that 'The Spider' did it."

The pulps didn't make it past World War II — because of paper shortages and comic books, sure. And maybe the fact that the war turned a lot of real, everyday people into heroes — heroes who were more than two-dimensional creations from a typewriter.

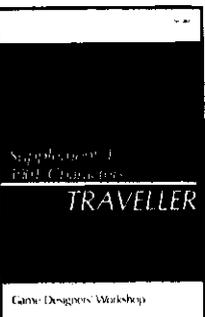


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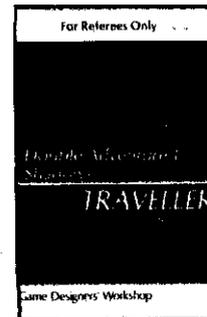
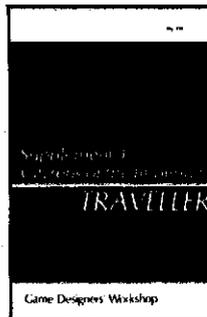


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**Question:** My friend and I had a dispute about whether or not a Paladin will go on an adventure with neutral good characters. I say no, because on page 24 of the *Players Handbook* it says "...they (Paladins) will associate only with characters and creatures of good alignment." I would like to know who is right.

**Answer:** Your friend is right. Neutral good is a "good alignment," just as lawful good and chaotic good are. Although a Paladin greatly prefers to associate with none other than lawful good characters and creatures, it also notes on page 24 of the *Players Handbook* that "paladins can join a company of adventurers which contains non-evil neutrals only on a single-expedition basis."

\* \* \*

**Question:** I am very confused about the range of spells. Look in the *Players Handbook* (page 78) at *Wall of Fire* or *Wall of Ice* spells. 6"? Also, look at the area of effect. The book says "radius of the ring-shaped wall of fire is 1"+1/4" per level of experience of the magic-user casting it." What is this in reality?

**Answer:** Under "Distance" on page 39 of the *Players Handbook*, it is stated that the scale of distance is 1" = 10 feet, or 1" = 10 yards, depending on whether the adventure is taking place underground or aboveground. Thus, the range of a *Wall of fire* is 60 feet underground, 60 yards (180 feet) aboveground. However, a spell's area of effect should almost always be translated using the 1" = 10 feet scale, whether underground or not; the wall of fire created by the spell has a radius of 10 feet plus another 2 1/2 feet for each level of the caster, no matter where it is cast.

\* \* \*

**Question:** The *Speak with Animals* spell allows communication only with "basically normal, non-fantastic creatures such as apes, bears, cats, dogs, elephants and so on." (*Players Handbook*, page 46) Does this mean that anything in the *Monster Manual* cannot be spoken to?

**Answer:** The *Monster Manual* includes

many examples of "non-fantastic creatures." Generally, they include all monsters whose AD&D™ attributes correspond to the abilities and characteristics of the actual animals, and who do not have any magical or unnatural abilities — such as (to name just a few) elephant, jaguar, herd animals, flightless birds, whales and camels. Generally, *Speak with Animals* cannot be employed against creatures which are altered versions of "real" animals, such as the Giant Skunk or Giant Beetles, because these are not "basically normal" creatures with regard to the natural animals of those types.

\* \* \*

**Question:** Do player character gnomes have constitutional poison resistance? This is mentioned in the *Monster Manual* but not in the *Players Handbook*.

**Answer:** The concept of a player character is built around the idea that such figures are generally above average, compared to the norm for their race. Using that reasoning, it is permissible to award the gnome's special poison resistance to player character gnomes as well as NPC gnomes. For player characters, assign the poison saving-throw bonus according to constitution (as per the *Players Handbook*), instead of simply allowing a save at 4 levels higher (as noted in the *Monster Manual*). — J. Ward, W. Niebling

\* \* \*

**Question:** With regard to weapon type "to hit" adjustments, does the table on page 38 of the *Players Handbook* refer to armor types without shields? If the opponent was wearing chain and shield should we refer to column 5 (scale mail + shield/chain mail) or column 4 (chain mail + shield/splint mail/banded mail)?

**Answer:** Chain mail by itself is AC 5; with shield it is AC 4. The problem lies with determining what the "f" marks on the Armor Class Table (*PH*, page 36) mean. Each mark separates a specific type of combination of armor which shares the same AC rating with the others grouped with it. A shield, when one is

listed, should be considered in conjunction with the type of armor which precedes it, not the type which comes after the "f". — J. Ward, W. Niebling

\* \* \*

**Question:** Are player characters allowed to be drawn from Grey Elf stock or Drow stock?

**Answer:** Each DM must decide whether such unusual player-character types will be allowed in his/her campaign. In the case of unusual elf types, there should be a possibility for a player character to become any of the elf subspecies, including aquatic elves and wood elves. However, it should be apparent that life as a player character under such conditions would be hard — for the character, the player, and most of all the DM, who must be prepared to cope with the added responsibility of trying to incorporate such a "rare" character into the campaign without sacrificing its balance and flexibility. — J. Ward, W. Niebling

\* \* \*

**Question:** is it okay for a chaotic good character to torture others? To slay helpless opponents? To back stab?

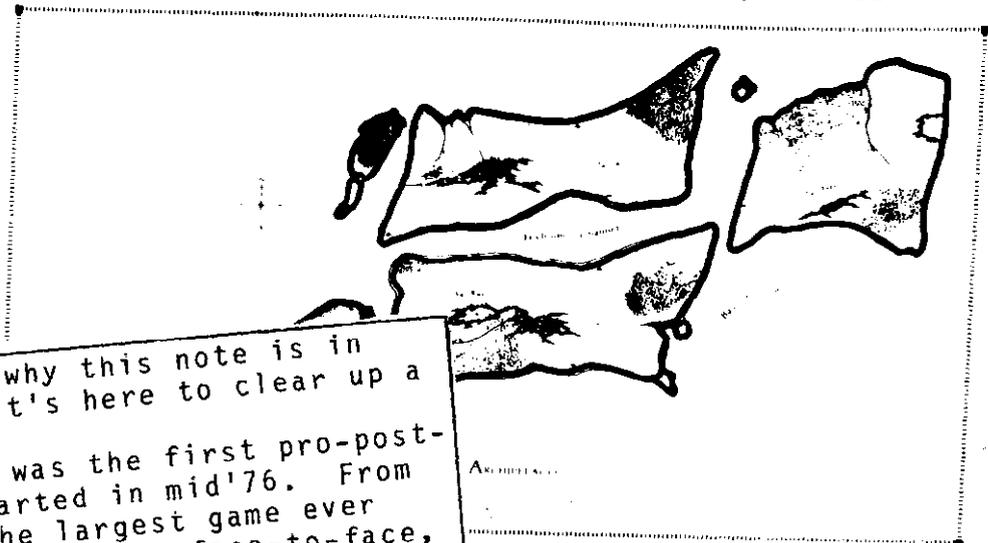
**Answer:** The act of torturing is basically "ungood," and even in the case of extreme hatred for another race or creature type a good character will not perform such an act. But there might be times when it is justified, if the end result is good and it cannot be achieved any other way. A character who can justify his actions (to the DM) in such a manner might expect to be able to torture an enemy without changing his alignment status. The "clean" slaying of helpless opponents is acceptable, if those opponents had previously presented a challenge to the character and his party and had attempted to harm the chaotic good character. The act of back stabbing by a chaotic good character is acceptable when it is performed on an enemy of the character and his party — but turning on other party members in the middle of an adventure is *not* a good act. — J. Ward, W. Niebling

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(From page 4)

for a +5 plate, +5 shield, gauntlets of ogre power, girdle of storm giant strength, ring of regeneration, a ring of elemental command and a Stormbringer, just to see the reaction of the DM. I was flabbergasted to hear him tell me that I could not have such a character, as it would not be powerful enough to survive in his campaign,

As a result, I have not played in an AD&D game for over six months, as this is the only DM in my area. I miss playing the game, but I would much rather not play the AD&D game than play such a corrupted version of what can be an excellent and very enjoyable game.

I would hope to see this letter printed so that other players will not think that sort of thing happens only to them, and also to encourage them to boycott such "liberties" taken by the DM until they find an acceptable campaign. The only reason that DM's can go off the deep end like this is because they have players who will accept it. If we all refuse to participate in such tomfoolery, it is just possible that we can erase such "Monty Haul"

campaigns from the realm of all role-playing games, not just the AD&D game.

Bill de Haan  
Oakville, Ontario, Canada

## Up with Helm

Allen Hammack  
c/o Dragon magazine

Dear Mr. Hammack:

Your article about the "Super Spies" in issue #44 of DRAGON magazine is very informative for avid TOP SECRET™ fans like myself. It is unfortunate, however, that you dichotomized the characters presented in the article by mixing an unhealthy blend of writing and film. I understand what you tried to do, but let's face it: Matt Helm is no more the alcoholic "private detective" portrayed by Dean Martin than James Bond could be an ignorant hillbilly.

Putting the "Bond" aspect of espionage (i.e., super-duper adventures, weapons and exotic women) into the TOP SECRET game is a necessary evil, in my opinion, but let's not stray away from the find of the personal traits. While I find it hard to accept that Emma Peel can be nearly as strong as Helm, the hardest things to swallow are the "willpower" and "knowledge" aspects you have assigned to him. Being the Donald Hamilton fan I am, familiarity with the character of Matt Helm gives me, I feel, an insight into his strengths and weaknesses.

If there is one thing Helm possesses, above all else, it is willpower. No matter what the cost,

how tough the assignment or amount of ruthlessness needed to see it through, Helm (with the help of the author, of course) finishes the job. To rate him less than Peel, Phelps and Blaise is just plain ignorance: You may have seen those astoundingly stupid Martin movies too often.

On a lesser note, however, is Helm's intelligence and knowledge. A well-educated man, Helm (according to Hamilton) is no youngster and possesses quite an amount of book and practical abilities. Helm's natural abilities in the woods, cities and sleazy bars make him stand out from many higher-rated agents.

Helm's most coveted ability is his use of a rifle. A pinpoint-accurate shot, Helm is unmatched by any of the people mentioned in your article. Put a rifle, from an off-the-shelf Winchester Model 70 to a custom .300 Magnum, in his hands, and the target is as good as dead. The Matt Helm of literature would be shamed, disgraced and laughed at with the sappy weapons you list in your article. I don't know, maybe it's just my prejudice against the Martin movies, but I can't see Helm in the same light as you.

James Bond, too, has been slighted somewhat. From the Ian Fleming novels to the movies (take the opening sequence of "Diamonds Are Forever" when Bond is asked about the precious stones) Bond's intelligence and knowledge are unsurpassed. Yet, I must say, you rate him lower than Steed (though I'm not familiar in any way with the character), Dancer and Flint.

Alexander Mundy has been given much less charm than the thief would have in real (I must be raving! Real life!) life situations.

# CLUSTER

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Mundy's charm was one of his prime assets and should so reflect in your chart. I also notice that you call him a "Government Thief." You also said that Matt Helm had turned private eye...hmmmm. Mundy, in later episodes of "It Takes A Thief," was on his own (take the case where he befriends Bette Davis and his conversation with Wally Whateverhisname was indicates his separation from the SIA), and I can't think of anything more repulsive than Helm as a private eye (unless I've missed something in a later book.

Well, so much for my ravings. The article, even though I've been critical, presented an aspect which will certainly be included in my campaigns. If I could suggest: MATT HELM ps 100c SAME w 132c SAME k 124c SAME. The others are just a matter of taste. Helm, however, seems to have been a lack of information. To rate the human side of great literary characters by the films they are portrayed in can be erroneous...and takes away from their best strengths.

Chuck Curry  
Naples, Fla.

## Hammack's reply

To the editor:

In issue #46 of DRAGON magazine, Chris Tisone writes that Susan Hilton was just an alias of Agent 99. A source close to the creators of the show (Buck Henry and Mel Brooks) informs me that although Susan Hilton was the name of that character from the beginning, it was decided to refer to her just by her

number when production started. When the episode where she was to be "married" to the KAOS agent came on, her real name had to be revealed because of the thorough background search that her fiancée made. Although at the end of the episode she claimed her name was an alias, she simply wanted Max to keep calling her "99" for two reasons — because she liked that name and to protect her family. My source informs me that on at least two subsequent episodes she was addressed as "Susan" (but not by Max).

Chuck Curry (see preceding letter) claims that I "dichotomized" the characters by mixing the traits from fiction and film. Exactly! That was the point of the article. Perhaps I erred in not emphasizing, like I and the other authors did in the "Fastest Guns That Never Lived" articles, that the ratings are subjective — what else could they be? Any Admin is certainly free to change anything anywhere in the article to satisfy personal favoritism. Remember, nothing that appears in DRAGON magazine is a cut and dried, OFFICIAL, you'd-better-not-change-a-word-of-this-rule-change-unless-it-says-so-right-there-in-the-article! Oh, yes — I don't think anyone that has ever seen a Flint movie will argue about his knowledge rating being the highest. Right folks?!?

Allen Hammack  
Lake Geneva, Wis.

## 'Pleasant jolt'

To the editor:

I would like to add a word or two to Kim Mohan's response to Patrick Amory's Letter in TD 45.

I think that the criticisms of "The Mansion of Mad Professor Ludlow" were somewhat off-point. Even going beyond the artistic obligation of DRAGON magazine to publish a variety of material to satisfy a variety of tastes, I consider "The Mansion of Mad Professor Ludlow" to have been quite a successful simulation. In addition to giving me a pleasant jolt of nostalgia for all of the old science fiction and boys-adventure books I used to read in the golden days of my youth, I found it quite a challenge to yield up a normal, hard-bitten, cynical, prepared-for-the-worst gamer's persona and adopt that of a Boy Scout who is trying to cope with something completely outside of his experience. It was not easy. It generated a lot of very interesting arguments between myself and my fellow gamers concerning what a Boy Scout would do in certain fantastic situations that tend to become ordinary and unsurprising to experienced gamers, and brought home to us just how insensitive we've all become to the bizarre things that are sprung upon us in FRP games.

Additionally, I think any defensiveness about the amount of advertisement in the magazine is misplaced. One of the major advantages of a magazine like DRAGON magazine, equal in my mind to any prose contained therein, is access to the games and playing aids that are, after all, the basis of this hobby. What's the use of a magazine telling you about something if you don't know where to get one? I regard the advertising in DRAGON magazine as a valuable contribution to the hobby, and hope that it's never reduced much below 20%.

Tim of Angle  
Bloomington, Ind.



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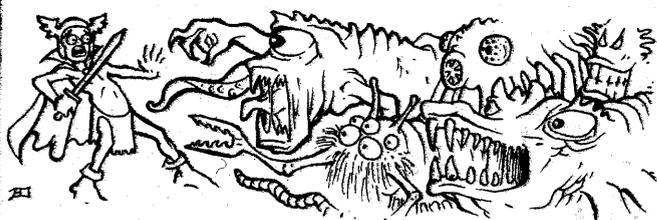
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# Convention schedule

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**MARCON 16, March 13-15** — A science fiction convention to be held at the Columbus Hilton Inn, 3110 Olentangy River Road, Columbus, Ohio. Guest of Honor Andrew Offutt. Registration \$10 until Jan. 1. For more information, contact Mark Evans, P.O. Box 2583, Columbus OH 43216 or phone 614-497-9953.

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## Top Secret

(From page 27)

lethal projectile weapons. All damage should be calculated as if they were regular weapons, and then halved to reflect the non-lethal nature of the attack. It is possible for a victim to receive a half-point of damage; persons with 1 point of life level may be unconscious, persons with ½ point are always unconscious, and persons with a life level of zero or less are mortally wounded and usually die within 5 minutes if left unaided.

Weapon statistics for an airgun are the same as for a dart gun, except that ammunition varies from 1-100 (pellets only). The

effect of a substance contained within a dart should be considered when determining the damage done from a dart gun, Darts (like hypodermic needles) may be filled with just about any fluid, in the arbitrary amount of 1 dose. This substance may be poison, alcohol, truth serum, sleeping gas, or any other more exotic drugs.

Non-lethal weapons such as rubber bullets, stun guns, brass knuckles, saps, nets, whips, cattle prods, ball bearings, lubricants and adhesives are still being investigated. Airborne chemical weapons such as mace, nausea gas, mustard gas, nerve gas, tear gas, phosphorescent dye, sneezing powder and itching dust may be considered in later reports.

## Exam answers

1. False. Skeletons are mindless and thus not capable of malice.

2. True. Their ray of cold and other magic powers make them powerful in spite of their 5+2 hit dice.

3. False. There are six: Hill, Stone, Frost, Fire, Cloud and Storm.

4. False. All three reasons given are either wrong or irrelevant to the question. Nothing in the *Monster Manual* says that Red Dragons are more vicious than any other kind of dragon. They are not more common than the other kinds — see the *Monster Manual* at pp.31-34. The likelihood that a Red Dragon will be asleep is irrelevant to the degree to which it is feared when awake. Any of the following are acceptable reasons for fearing Red Dragons more than other kinds: larger size, larger breath weapon,

greater likelihood of spell use, 1st-4th level spells usable, lowest armor class. If you answered "false" because you thought Tiamat was the most feared type of evil dragon, give yourself credit for answering the question correctly.

5. False. See DMG, pp.75-76.

6. True. The reason is that they get multiple attacks against Goblins but not against Orcs. If you were hung up on the fact that this does not hold true for 1st-level fighters, give yourself credit for the question,

7. True. See the appropriate *Monster Manual* descriptions.

6. True. Damage/attack for trolls was changed from 2-5/2-5/2-8 to 5-8/5-8/2-12 in the *Monster Manual* errata (*Dragon* #35) and in later editions of the Manual, making them much more powerful.

9. True. See the *Monster Manual* under lycanthrope.

10. False. The Mind Flayer's physical attack is deadly.

11. True. See *Players Handbook*, p.16.

12. True. See *Players Handbook* under the various major character classes.

13. False. *PH*, p.17.

14. False. *PH*, p.14.

15. False. The real reason is the anti-magical nature of these races; see *PH*, p.15.

16A. False. A new character cannot afford plate mail with the gold pieces given at start; see *PH*, p.35.

17A. False. The Fighter is AC -1.

18A. True as stated. Rangers get a damage bonus versus these creatures, and dwarves get an armor class bonus against giant-class creatures of Ogre size or larger. The latter are also +1 to hit against certain giant-class opponents.

19A. False. Fighters of 10th level or higher do not benefit: see *DMG*, p. 126.



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20A. True. See the appropriate descriptions in the *Monster Manual*.

16B. True. See *DMG*, p.75.

17B. False. See *PH*, p.11.

18B. False. This happens at 9th level, not 8th.

19B. True. See generally *PH*, p.43; there is no rule against it.

20B. True. See *PH*, p.19.

16C. False. The other races get net bonuses in most of the thieving abilities that humans do not get. In fact, there is no good reason at all for a Thief to be human.

17C. True. See *PH*, p.27.

18C. True. See *PH*, p.28, Thief Function Table.

19C. Strange to say, the answer is false (see *PH*, p.27), though one can certainly argue that it ought not to be this way.

20C. False. Rangers acquire the ability to use *Crystal Balls*, not Thieves, and Thieves do not learn to read scrolls until 10th level; *PH*, p.27.

16D. False. *Rary's Mnemonic Enhancer* allows a Magic-User to do this.

17D. True. See *PH*, p.26.

18D. False. A number of spells require only a verbal component, most notably the Power Word spells.

19D. True. See *PH*, pp.40-42.

20D. True. See the appropriate spell descriptions in the *Players Handbook*.

21 E. Originally, "TSR" represented the initials of Tactical Studies Rules (answer C), the predecessor of TSR Hobbies, Inc. When the new corporation was formed, the initials "TSR" were retained from the name of the former company, but they were not designed to stand for anything.

22. D. See the appropriate *Monster Manual* descriptions.

23. This is a difficult question. The answer is either C (5 violations) or D (6 violations), as explained below. The violations are: (1) The Thief cannot hide in shadows while a monster is pursuing him; (2) A 6th-level Fighter cannot fire an arrow and attack with his sword in the same melee round; (3) *Magic missiles* cannot harm an Iron Golem; (4) A saving throw of 1 is always failure; (5) There is no way for a 6th-level Fighter to hit on a roll of 1, assuming that no magic weapon exceeds +5; and (6) Droth the Fighter could not be a Lord if he is only 6th level. If you thought that Lord Droth was referred to as a Lord because he held a title of nobility, give yourself credit for the question if you were otherwise correct.

24. A.  $2,200ep = 1,100gp$ ;  $200pp = 1,000gp$ ;  $203,000cp = 1,015gp$ ;  $10,500sp = 525gp$ .

25. C. Treant is an adaptation of Tolkien's Ent.

26. True. See *DMG*, p.140.

27. False. See *DMG*, p.149.

28. False. The relationship is far more complex; see *DMG*, p.119.

29. True. See *DMG*, p.134.

30. True. See *DMG*, p.164.

31. False. Int must be at least 14; see *DMG*, p.166.

32. True. See *DMG*, p. 141

33. False. The Efreet that appears is at best an unwilling servant, unlike the Djinni, who will serve in good faith.

34. False. See *DMG*, p.148.

35. True. See *DMG*, p.135.

36.  $35\% + (11-5) \times 5\% = 65\%$ .

37.  $17 - \frac{1}{2} \times 30 = 2$  hit points

38. 8 attacks. One could argue that it might be 12, or 8 one round and 16 the next, but there is nothing in the rules that suggests that such a multiplicative process be used,

39. Yes. With a Constitution of 17 or more, the dwarf could have as many as  $(10 \times 3) + (3 \times 3) = 39$  hit points, which is more than the  $\frac{1}{2} \times 77 = 38\frac{1}{2}$  points of damage done by the dragon's breath.

40. Juiblex and a Quasit are both chaotic evil.

41. Brownies, Pseudo-Dragons, Quasits, Imps

42. Thieves

43. 5, 2, 4, 3, 6, 1

44. Halberd

45. The special relationship Druids have with Nature means they do not have to worry about controlling conjured elements.

46. Since both creatures are average in all respects, the dwarf has 22 h.p. and the Ogre has 19. The dwarf is AC -2 and the Ogre is AC 5; the Ogre needs 17 to hit while the dwarf needs 13. The average damage done per round is then  $.4 \times 6.5 = 2.6$  for the dwarf and only  $.2 \times 5.5 = 1.1$  for the Ogre. This means that the Ogre will die on the 8th melee round, and the dwarf wins easily, having taken only about 9 points of damage. It should be possible to estimate this outcome without knowing exactly what the Ogre and dwarf needed to hit each other.

47. A *Sphere of Annihilation*. Water is matter, and when the sphere is submerged into the sea all of the water will eventually be sucked into the sphere.

48. Elvira, a 7th-level Magic-User, can cast as many as three *Haste* spells in a single day. Using just two per day, she transforms the dragon into a young adult with 4 h.p./hit die in two weeks' time.

49.  $15 + 6 + 88 + 3 = 112$  points of damage.

50. Garigax cast a *Fly* and a *Tenser's Floating Disc* spell, while each of his apprentices cast a *Tenser's Floating Disc* spell. Then they formed a procession, with Garigax leading and each apprentice sitting on the disc of the man in front of him, along with each man's equipment. In this way they all flew across the river. Other less plausible solutions include the following: Each man jumped across with a *Jump* spell, assuming the river was only 30' wide, a questionable assumption in view of the facts given, or as above except that each apprentice cast *Feather Fall* on himself, assuming they could form a line and cross in 2 segments, a very questionable assumption indeed.

## Scoring

Number	Correct	Score
49-50	Godlike Intelligence!	
46-48	Superior (Supra-Genius)	
43-45	Excellent (*Gold Dragon Award*)	
39-42	Very Good (A wily Bugbear)	
35-38	Good (An Imaginative Imp)	
29-34	Fair (A slow but steady spearman)	
23-28	Poor (Orcish blood in your veins)	
22	Novice (or Ochre Jelly brain)	
	Less	

How well did you do? If you scored poorly; you would profit from another reading of the pertinent sections of the *Monster Manual*, *Players Handbook*, and *Dungeon Masters Guide*, concentrating on the topics that gave you the most trouble. If you scored well there is no question that you are well qualified to play in AD&D convention events, at the very least.

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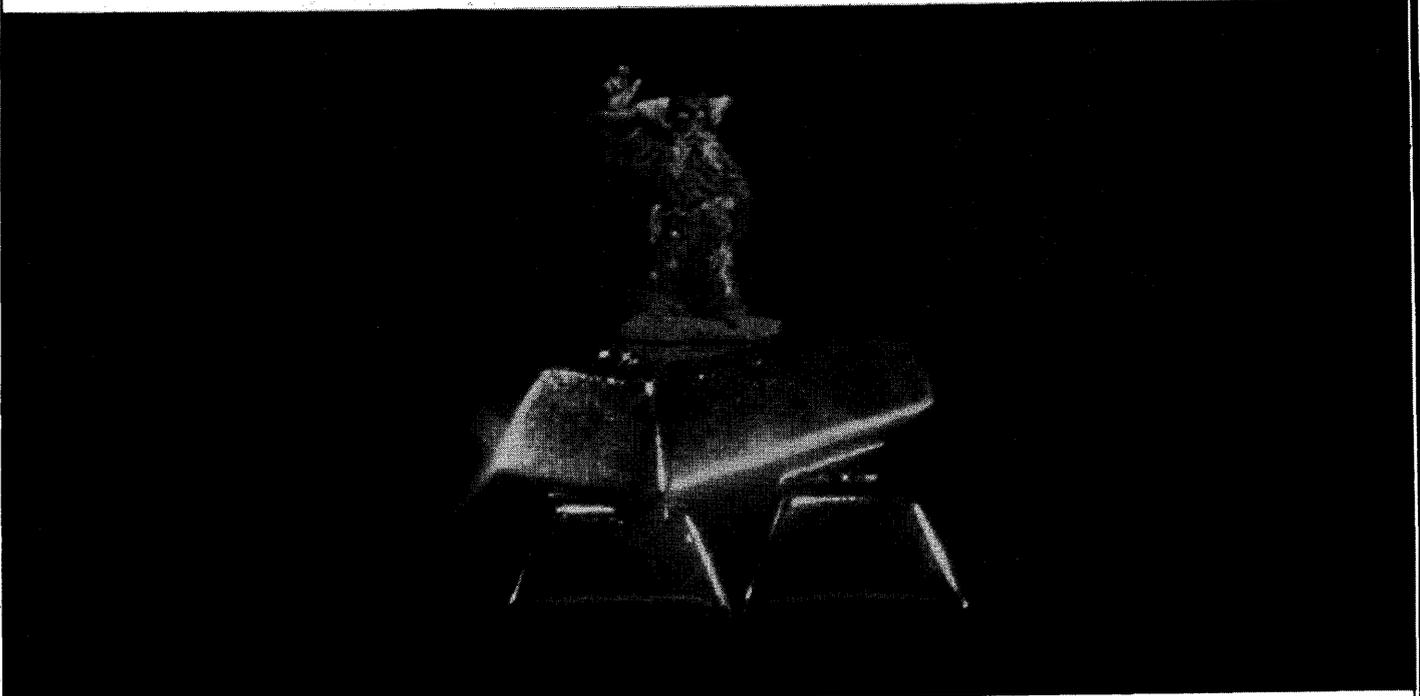
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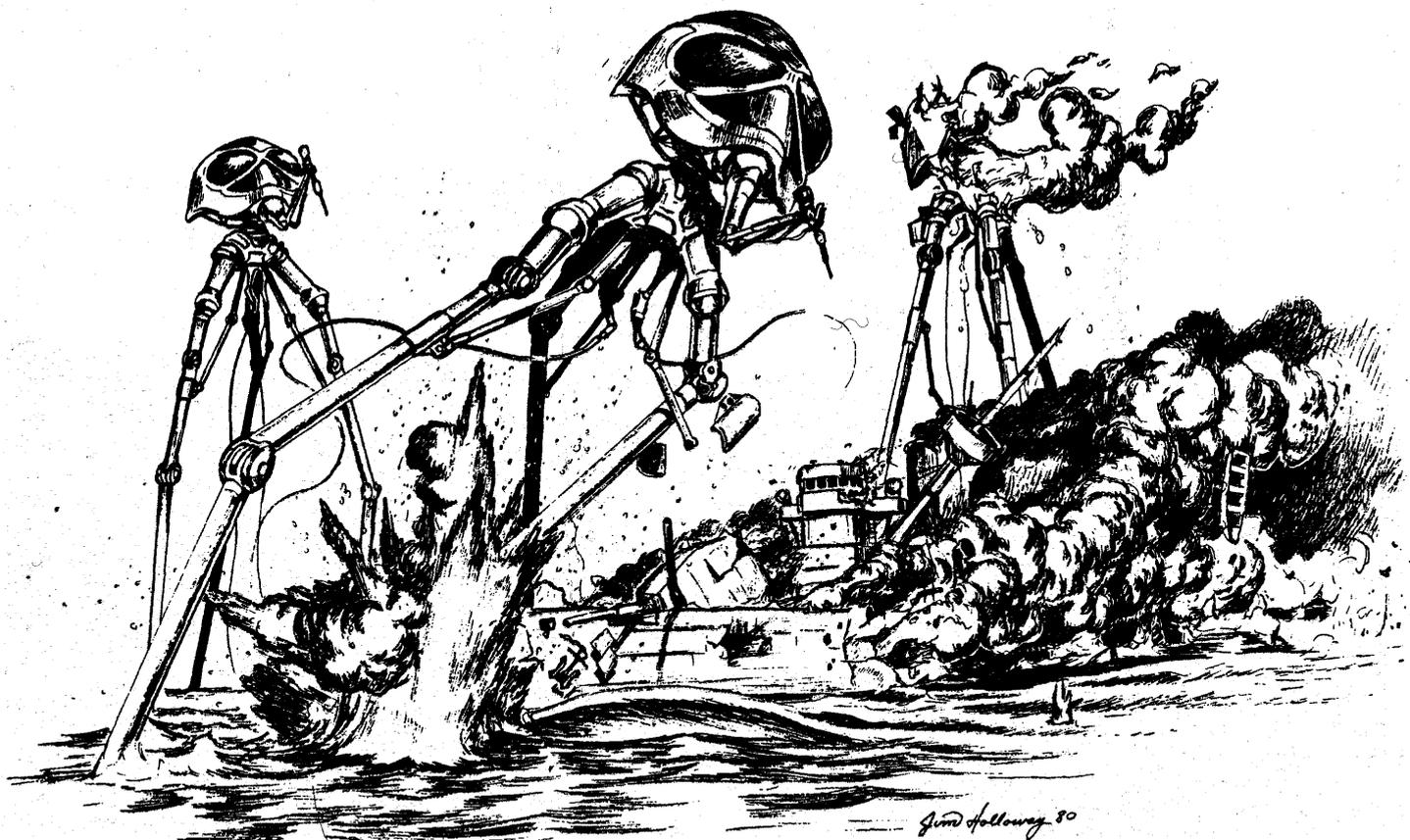
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# ROBOTS! The excitement is building...

by Tony Watson

Imagine an Earth devastated by five successive world wars, a planet made barren by nerve gas, thermonuclear weapons, and bacteriological agents. Rendered totally uninhabitable, the world lies lifeless, but the human race has managed to survive in colonies on Mars, Titan and the Moon. Though dead, Terra still offers considerable resources in the junk to be salvaged from her ruined civilization. So, the corporations who had colonized the rest of the system return home to gather what remains. But non-Terrestrial man was no longer fit to survive in the heavy gravity and non-sterile environment on Earth. Thus the salvaging, and the subsequent conflict over the few lucrative sites, is conducted by robots.

This is the setting for Task Force Games' new offering, **ROBOTS!** If it seems a touch ludicrous, don't let that bother you; it's a fine game, and lots of fun.

The most unusual aspect of **ROBOTS!** and by far its most enjoyable feature is the fact that the players can construct their own robot units choosing the combination of prime movers and weapons modules that they feel to be optimum. A

robot consists of a chassis for locomotion and one or more weapon modules. Each of the various components is represented by a separate counter; the modules are paid for out of resource points and the resultant stack comprises the robot.

Chassis modules determine movement speed and what column of the terrain effects chart the machine uses. Tracks are cheap to build and fairly fast, though inhibited by many types of terrain. Droids (humanoid shells with legs) are slower, but better able to negotiate difficult terrain. Hovercraft chassis are the most expensive and by far the fastest, but can't take advantage of terrain features for defense and thus can be easily killed while flitting through the air. There is also an optional drill module which allows underground movement, or "vertical envelopment," as the designer puts it.

Weapons modules include guns, which are cheap, low-powered and short-ranged; lasers, powerful and expensive short-range weapons; and rockets, which while longer-ranged than either of the other weapons, have only a moderate attack strength. The combat values and ranges for the three direct-fire weapons turrets nicely complement one another,

and players can create some interesting mixes. A robot armed with several laser turrets would be extremely nasty at close range, but wouldn't be able to touch a hovercraft armed with a pair of rocket modules and standing off out of laser range. The number of weapons modules a given robot can have is dependent on chassis type; droid and tracks can carry three, hovercraft only two.

Additional weapons-related modules include electronic warfare components which give the firing robot a combat add to the die roll and allow it to combine fire with friendly adjacent robots; and nukes, suicide weapons used for destroying enemy factories.

As mentioned, **ROBOTS!** is a game about resource collection. The 16" x 20" mapsheet depicts a barren stretch of Earth terrain. There are four significant types of terrain: mountains, deserts, lakes and rivers, all having varying effects on movement and combat. Dotted across the map are three sets of resource hexes, eight for each group, represented by different symbols. The exact set to be used is determined by a die roll at game start; this keeps the game from getting repetitive or stagnating and discourages "perfect" set-ups. Control of resource hexes is the whole point of the game.

The last player to have a robot pass over or end its move on a resource hex controls it and may count it for production purposes. Each turn the number of held resource hexes is multiplied by the number of factory ships to equal the number of resource points that can be used to build new robots, repair damaged modules, or saved for later use.

As the above implied, resource hexes are the key to the game. To be able to exploit them, however, a player must have a functioning factory. These are gigantic ships landed to process salvaged material; for game purposes, they serve as production bases and fortresses. factory ships are extremely well armed and very difficult to destroy, since they can absorb a large amount of damage. Each player begins with two real factories, capable of resource collection and production, and a third decoy factory that only has weapons. Factories are the focal point of the game, since their destruction cripples the side that loses them and the victory conditions state that the player who first loses both of his real factories loses the game.

*ROBOTS!*'s mechanics are very simple. In fact, the only real trick is the phasing, which can get complicated if drill modules are used. Basically, the first player moves, the second player fires and then moves, and then the first player fires. This sequence means that players must first set up their shots, and are then exposed to enemy attack before conducting their own fire. A couple of my opponents have pointed out that the sequence of play tends to favor the second player, and I agree that this is somewhat the case, though hardly a major factor unbalancing the game.

Movement is very simple (the rules text is only two short paragraphs!) with units expending movement points to enter certain hex types, the exact amount depending on the prime mover.

Combat uses a clever little chart that figures in terrain factors and attack strengths. Generally, the better the cover the target is in, the more attack factors needed to gain good results. Combat results are given in terms of damage to modules: W's affect weapons, P's damage propulsion modules, and a result of EX destroys the entire target. The first hit on a module damages it, but leaves it repairable, while a second hit completely destroys that module. Hovercrafts in the air and units equipped with EW modules may add one to their combat die roll, making them very effective.

I was very impressed with *ROBOTS!* It has a good, clean game system with lots of action and a fair amount of room for developing tactics. The rules allowing each player to design his own robots are the real core of the game and its major appeal. Players can test new strategies each game by literally creating their own

units, deciding on strengths and weaknesses and the balance between quantity and quality.

The physical components are excellent. The map is printed in four colors, the die-cut counters feature silhouettes

of the module depicted and all relevant factors, and the rulebook is well organized and virtually free of typos. At \$3.95, *ROBOTS!* is a great buy and should be a welcome addition to most SF gamers' collections.



## This is no long-playing album

by Roberto Camino

**FAST ATTACK BOATS** is one of Yaquinto's album games. It is packaged much like a double record album, with the playing map on the inside of the jacket, and two pockets where the components are stored. There is a small disclaimer on the cover that reads, "Game only, not a phonograph record album." With its vivid cover of a Komar missile boat being blown apart, and considering the game's title, perhaps Yaquinto was apprehensive that prospective buyers would mistake it for a punk rock offering, or something along the lines of Blue Oyster Cult's *Me 262* album.

The subtitle describes *FAST ATTACK BOATS* as "a game of the Arab-Israeli Naval War — 1973." Throughout the rules, designer Neil Zimmerer is careful to divorce this wargame from any claim of being a simulation, thereby escaping the harsher scrutiny that usually accompanies such an effort. This is a bit unfortunate for the hobby, since most modern naval games are lacking more in simulation than in game. Still, as a game, this effort does stand up well. A game, as opposed to a simulation, should stress three facets: ease of play, completeness of rules, and physical attractiveness.

The game plays very fast. Since ships close to combat range extremely rapidly and there is basically no place to run, the actions are over in about half an hour. The game system is straightforward enough so that reference to the rules during play is rarely necessary.

The rules are quite complete, somewhat long for this sort of game, but

stocked with numerous illustrations and examples of play. The only glaring slip is in the explanation of missile counters' range and movement factors. It is a crucial point in the play of the game. However, later sections of the rules clearly correct it. All the same, it may cause confusion for the inexperienced wargamer that this product is obviously aimed at.

A game depends heavily on graphics to seduce gamers into playing it, to fire the imagination, and to prevent visual fatigue. Here the game falls short of its potential. The map is a utilitarian, but bland, field of blue hexes. And while the counter stock is nice and thick, and the missile counters are respectable, the ship counters are disappointing. Though they are elongated and sport good detail, they are rather drab. Part of the problem is that they have top views of the boats, always less appealing than side views.

This dullness may be appropriate for the ungainly Soviet made Osa and Komar boats. But the counters simply do not do justice to the sleek Israeli boats, probably the most attractive missile boats on the seas. Not only are they beautiful ships, but their seaworthiness and endurance are exemplary. Five of the Saar class sneaked out of a French arms embargo and made the dash from Cherbourg, France to Haifa, Israel. A pair of the Reshef class sailed around Africa. Regrettably, their counters do not convey the grace and elegance of these rakish boats.

Notwithstanding that *FAST ATTACK BOATS* is intended primarily as a game, it manages to embody most of the quali-

ties of a simulation. All the fast attack boats used by the three powers are included: Israeli Saar and Rashef classes; the Egyptian-manned Komar and Osa boats; and finally the Syrian flotilla of Osa, Komar, and P4 torpedo boats, plus a stout T43 minesweeper. The mainstay of the offensive punch of the Arab ships is the SSN-2 Styx, which outranges the Israeli Gabriel Mk 1&2 missiles. This is compensated for by the greater lethality of the Gabriel (though this probably represents the lack of Arab electronic countermeasures, rather than a comparison of the massive warhead of the Styx to the more modest payload of the Gabriel). One disturbing aspect of the game is that the Israelis do not have anywhere near the commanding edge in gunnery that accounts of the war would indicate. Both the Syrians and the Israelis have recourse to torpedos, though for the Syrians it is often a choice born of necessity. The torpedo mechanics are quite faithful to the nature of the boats involved. Achieving a torpedo hit on a small, agile, fast attack boat is extremely difficult, but obliterates the target if it is successful.

The salient flaw in the game's realism is the map. Since it is not composed of geomorphic sections that can be moved to keep pace with the flow of the battle, but instead is a plain hex board, the combatants are imprisoned. (It is true that with geomorphic boards there is the danger of one side running to avoid action, and hence a boring game results; a geographic objective, such as controlling a shipping lane, could prevent that.) While this makes for an enjoyable, wild, free-for-all that is certainly consistent with the intent of the design, it practically precludes the "realistic" hit-and-run tactics that are so dear to small craft commanders. This sort of action typically features one side getting the "drop" on the other, and then racing for safe waters. Of course, if the game was completely true to the facts of the war, only masochists would take the Arab side.

In the basic battle game there are no historical scenarios; each player has an equal amount of points with which to build a force. The strategic game is essentially a series of basic battle game engagements linked together; the players decide which of the historically available forces to allocate to each battle. Because *FAST ATTACK BOATS* deliberately avoids considering the Israeli superiority in tactics, leadership, morale, and electronic warfare, all the game scenarios are balanced.

However, as a result, much of the promise of the design is lost. The basic lesson the game teaches is that the Israeli boats were bigger, possessed a slight advantage in gun firepower (which is not really strong enough to account for the degree of their success), and

were blessed with better missiles. Just as much could be gleaned from leafing through *Jane's Fighting Ships*.

So, while *FAST ATTACK BOATS* is undeniably fun and fulfills its intent of being a good game, those looking for extensive insight into small craft tactics had better look in another direction.

## Starfire and Starfire II

Produced by:

Task Force Games

Retail price: \$3.95 each

by Tony Watson

Task Force Games is a relatively new game company as such things are measured; its first group of games appeared in 1979. Since the company's inception, TFG has placed a fair amount of emphasis on science-fiction games, something aficionados of that gaming genre should appreciate. Their SF titles have combined innovative design with excellent physical quality and inexpensive prices.

One of TFG's first games was *STARFIRE*, which has recently been followed up by a sequel, appropriately entitled *STARFIRE II*. The two games share a basic system, so it seems logical to review them as a set.

The *STARFIRE* game system is both simple and flexible, and herein lies the games' real appeal. The movement and combat rules are easy to learn, while still retaining some degree of realism (a difficult term to apply to SF games sometimes). This allows the players to concentrate on the centerpiece of the game: the starships themselves.

*STARFIRE* is a tactical-level game. Each counter represents a single ship from dreadnoughts and battleships through three types of cruisers down to corvettes, destroyers and freighters. The basis of differentiation is hull size; the larger the ship, the more component systems, such as weaponry or defenses, it can carry. Each starship must have a control sheet drawn up for it before the game begins. This will list the codes for the various systems in the order (generally, this has some exceptions) they will be lost. Ships in *STARFIRE* are the sum of their various component parts, or systems in the game's terminology. This modular approach is the core of the game and certainly its best feature.

The available systems fall into three broad categories. Weapons systems consist of guns, a derivative of modern era naval guns, missiles, and four types of beams: laser, force, energy and primary. Defensive systems include the ubiquitous energy shield, armor, overload dampeners, and point defense mounts for use against incoming missiles. The third category is a catch-all miscellaneous grouping such as cargo holds, bulkheads, tractor beams, shearing planes, multiplex targeting and scientific instruments.

*STARFIRE* comes with a number of scenarios, and these provide the systems code for each vessel. For those who wish to create their own situations or play *STARFIRE* in a

campaign mode, rules are given for designing your own ships. Cost in megacredits (drawn from a sum given at play start) for each system, as well as its space requirements, are listed. Constructing ships is a matter of combining the desired systems in the space available. Players can opt for massive armament at the expense of defense or speed or a try for more careful balance. The ship-design process is fascinating and fun; it's not often that gamers can have such control over the nature of the units they'll be using.

*STARFIRE* utilizes a simple move/fight sequence of play. Players dice for initiative, with the winner moving second and firing first. Movement has some qualities of simultaneity, since during this phase all ships of one side expend one movement point and then the other side moves all its ships one movement point. This alternates until all ships have had an opportunity to expend their movement allowance. Maneuverability is taken into account by each ship having a turn mode, which indicates the number of movement points it must expend before it can change its facing, and hence its direction of movement, 60°.

Combat is equally simple. The type of weapon is indexed with the range to the target to yield a number or less that must be thrown on two dice to obtain a hit. Most hits only destroy one ship system, usually the first undestroyed system on the left on a ship's system control sheet. However, beam weapons vary in their potency according to range and some weapons have unique characteristics. For example, lasers ignore all shields and strike systems further to the right on the system control sheet. The player who wins the initiative can fire one ship's weapons first, then the second player fires one ship and so on, continuing until all ships have fired. Having the initiative is significant, since damage is not taken simultaneously; a ship that has some of its weapons systems damaged before it can fire them in a turn can not use those systems that turn.

As the above description might suggest, *STARFIRE* is analogous to WWII naval combat: players use similar ship types, play is two-dimensional, and many of the same tactics pertain. If *STARFIRE* resembles the surface engagements of the Atlantic and Mediterranean, then *STARFIRE II* takes its cue from the Pacific theater. *STARFIRE II* builds directly on its predecessor, a nice gesture towards continuity. For the most part, the rules have been reused verbatim. The only real additions are rules applying to fighters and carriers, the game's innovation over its forerunner. Ship fields of fire are restricted by 60° to allow fighters a "blind spot" to make close attacks from.

The concept of assault movement is also introduced. This is a special type of movement that comes after regular combat and is aimed at giving fighters more mobility. The effect is perfect. Fighters move normally and undergo anti-fighter attacks in the combat phase; then they are allowed to move again, the exact allowance depending on weaponry they are carrying, and make their attacks, usually at very close range. Fighters are very effective. Though they are destroyed by a single hit, they are more difficult to hit than starships. Further, they can pack quite a wallop, carrying up to three lethal, short-range weapons.

The scenarios in these two games are

grouped together into a future history. *STARFIRE* chronicles the First and Second Interstellar Wars; the former pitting the Terrans against the Khanate of Orion and the latter setting up three-way battles between the aforementioned empires and the Ophiuchi. *STARFIRE II* describes the Third interstellar War and introduces the Rigelian, the innovators of the carrier. Despite the somewhat shallow background (the Rigelian ships all have German names, the Ophiuchian Arabic) and the bad puns (one scenario is entitled "The Paul Harbor Raid"), the scenarios are fast-paced and well balanced. They are ordered according to difficulty, which is generally a factor of the number of ships involved. Some of the battles are truly gigantic, with both sides maneuvering large fleets of dreadnoughts and accompanying smaller ships. The game system bears this well; even the bigger scenarios can be played in two hours or less, and smaller games in much less time. Physically, the games are very nicely done. The rule books are well laid out and feature some attractive cover paintings by A.J. Belflower. All counters feature ship silhouettes, and though those in the first game are a bit thin, the playing pieces for the second are better.

In my opinion, the *STARFIRE* system is a real winner. The scenarios provided are interesting and moreover, the game has some very real possibilities. The versatility of the ship systems and the options for ship design can allow the players to use *STARFIRE* as a tactical module for many strategic spacegames or as the basis for player-designed campaign games. Priced at \$3.95 each, the games are a real bargain; it would be difficult to find a better gaming investment.

*STARFIRE*, designed by Stephen Cole, and *STARFIRE II*, designed by Barry Jacobs, are available only through retail outlets. Both include 104 die-cut counters, a 16"-by-22" mapsheet, and a 26- or 30-page rulebook.

## Across the Bright Face/ Mission on Mithril

Produced by:  
Game Designers' Workshop  
Retail price: \$5

by Tony Watson

This volume is the second in a series of paired adventures for the SF role-playing game *Traveller*. Both adventures fit into the universe described in Supplement 3, *The Spinward Marches*, taking place on planets first described in that volume. Referees who, like myself, have their own strategic maps may have to adjust some of the specifics to conform to one of their existing worlds, but this should not be too much trouble. In any case, the information contained in the adventures should be very useful to any existing campaign.

The first adventure, *ACROSS THE BRIGHT*

*FACE*, sets up a situation in which the players, either characters from an ongoing campaign or the pre-generated party provided in the booklet, have contracted to provide bodyguard service to a wealthy industrialist visiting his mining holdings on the planet Dinom. The client is suddenly killed by members of a worker's revolution and the group is faced with the problem of returning to the starport over the planet's difficult terrain.

Many of the problems facing the group stem from geographic and weather conditions, Dinom's north pole faces the world's star, thus putting the northern hemisphere in a state of perpetual day, hence the name Bright Face. Because the planet is without an atmosphere, the temperature changes along the lines of latitude are abrupt, from burning hot in the northern polar regions to extreme cold on the side facing away from the sun. A hex-grid map of the planet's surface areas is provided, showing the locations of mines, cities, mountains and rough terrain. A terrain key is provided for the referee giving the amount of time, in hours, to traverse the hex type as well as a table of special events possible in that terrain type. The listing of events is quite varied and detailed and serves as the core of the adventure.

Special notes for the referee include descriptions and uses for some new equipment that the players have the option to purchase, and detail about the revolution. Three pages of material is devoted to rules for ATVs (since the players are assumed to be traveling in one) and this section should be useful in any campaign.

*MISSION ON MITHRIL* is a module for a player group equipped with a scout ship; once again, pre-generated characters, one being the owner of a scout craft, are given. As in the first adventure, some new equipment is provided and explained, including an item that many *Traveller* players have wondered about: the laser pistol.

The adventure centers on the planet Mithril and its exploration by the player party. A geodesic map of the planet, divided once again into hexes, is provided and considerable attention is paid to terrain, events, animal encounters and especially weather. Mithril has a wintry, violent climate; rules are given to determine temperature and subsequent changes in weather and its effects. For the referee who doesn't wish to go through the determination process, a weather table for 141 days is included.

As the scenario background explains, the character group has been contracted by the warden of Mithril, a planet belonging to the Sword Worlds Confederation, to make a detailed survey of the world in exchange for the repair of the drive unit on the party's scout ship. Three points scattered in locations about the planet are unknown anomalies and must be investigated to complete the survey. The party is tent an ATV by the warden and sent on their way; the adventures stem from the event tables and the quite clever mysteries provided by the three survey points.

Both of the adventures in this book are well-thought out and interesting, and should give the referee and players an interesting session. Equally important, they give useful information about animals, events, and equipment that should be useful to any continuing campaign. If the referee does not desire to use the situations provided verbatim, he can certainly modify them to fit into his ongoing campaign.

Double Adventure 2 is available in many game and hobby stores, or direct from Game Designers' Workshop, for \$4.98. Both of the modules were designed by the inestimable Marc Miller.

## Research Station Gamma

Produced by:  
Game Designers' Workshop  
Retail price: \$5

by Tony Watson

*RESEARCH STATION GAMMA* is the second in the series of *Travel* - adventure supplements. It is a 44-page booklet devoted to adventures dealing with the mysterious underwater research base on the planet Vanejen. Like the other adventures GDW has produced for *Traveller*, this is a booklet for referees only, providing the background and details for using the situation as either part of an ongoing campaign or as a one time role-playing session.

The book starts off with a bang. The characters are in an inn, worrying about how they are going to raise the money to get off the planet, when they are approached by an alien. The creature is a chirper, a semi-intelligent race that inhabits Vanejen, which tells a story of how it and its two siblings were kidnapped and held in a strange prison. This chirper, Chiree, managed to escape and now sought aid in freeing its brethren, offering as payment a strange and unknown coin.

From this attention-getting beginning, *Research Station Gamma* then turns to background material. The planet Vanejen is described and its history enumerated in fair detail. The next rules section deals with submersibles, a major form of transportation on this world. Vanejen is only tech level five, so the sub described is roughly of WWII technology, but the information given should provide *Traveller* refs with guidelines for using this type of vehicle.

To help set up the situation, and guide the characters along the adventures, a section on rumors is included. Some rumors provide vital clues and bits of information to help the characters figure out the mystery concerning the research station. Some are of such general nature as to be worthless.

The majority of the book is devoted to describing the station and its contents. The station is of a unique physical structure, jutting out of the sea and surrounded by a ring of containment globes. Floor plans are included, with numbered keys for specific locations. Also described are the contents of the globes which spiral around the central shaft of the station, though it would not be proper to discuss them here.

*Research Station Gamma*, designed by Marc Miller, is a very interesting supplement for *Traveller*. The concept of the station is fascinating and well handled. The mystery that faces the adventurers is, in my opinion, the best of all the adventure supplements published to date. The booklet should serve as a useful source of ideas for any *Traveller* ref.



# Figuratively Speaking

**Figuratively Speaking** is a column devoted to photographs and evaluations of miniature figures, particularly new releases. Each photograph or set of photographs is accompanied by personal ratings in four categories and usually some other opinions or information.

Ratings are given for Proportion, Detail, Animation and Technical quality, on a scale of 1 to 10, with "1" being totally unacceptable and a "10" rating reserved only for the truly exceptional figure. As with any rating system, these results will include a good deal of personal judgement. As much as possible, the values given will be reached by quantitative comparison with other similar figures, but the bottom line will still be opinion and it should be taken as such.

**Proportion** is a judgment of how well the sizes of the parts of the figure

conform to scale. Are the heads, hands, weapons, etc. in good balance with each other? Also considered here will be how well the different components of a set of figures fit into the relative scale. This will evaluate, for example, whether the ship's boats or star fighters are too large in relation to a galactic dreadnought.

**Detail** is rated according to the degree to which detail is attempted and the crispness and clearness which that detail does or does not possess. How finely described are the eyes, mouth and hands of a figure? Are the turrets, cabins or scales cleanly cut, and how finely are they shown? The greater the amount of well sculpted detail, the higher the rating.

**Animation** is a very subjective evaluation of how well a figure conveys movement, or strength, or whatever quality is appropriate. This judgment reflects on the sculptor's skill in designing a figure which, when cast, captures the "aliveness" necessary to make it more than just a shaped piece of metal.

**Technical quality** is the easiest rating to make on a quantitative basis. This rating indicates the quality of the production of the figure; it is judged as a metal product for cleanness, alignment of the molds, mold lines, flash and the other physical aspects that can add to or detract from the overall quality of a figure. Because the judgment is usually based on just one sample of a given figure, it is not implied that this technical quality is consistent in all figures of the type; technical quality can vary greatly between different castings of the same piece.

In addition to the figures themselves, *Figuratively Speaking* is also a place for review of the diverse accessories now available for use with miniatures — castles, simulated terrain, dungeon floors, furniture, and virtually anything else of that nature.

Anyone with questions or comments is invited to contact the reviewer by writing to *Figuratively Speaking*, c/o DRAGON magazine, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, Wis. 53147. — *Bill Fawcett*

## DRAGONSLAYERS Martian Metals 25mm \$1.50 (two different figures)



**Axeman —**  
Proportion: 7 Detail: 7  
Animation: 7 Technical: 6

This figure is deeply sculpted, which should allow for easy painting of the detail. The figure is carrying an assortment of dungeoning equipment, including sacks, blankets and a pouch.



**Adventurer Holding Helmet—**  
Proportion: 4 Detail: 5  
Animation: 6 Technical: 6



**Adventurer Wearing Robe —**  
Proportion: 6 Detail: 7  
Animation: 7 Technical: 6

This is a good figure for an adventurer of any class that can use a sword.



**Adventurer Removing Helm—**  
Proportion: 7 Detail: 6  
Animation: 7 Technical: 6

This figure is also shown with a diversity of packs, pouches, etc. Realistically, it is endowed with a beer belly and a quizzical pose. A slight misalignment in the eyes of the sample lowered what otherwise would have been a higher Detail score. As with all the Dragonslayers, the sags and folds in the clothing are very well done.



**UNICORN**  
Ta-Hr, Inc. 25mm  
Proportion: 7 Detail: 6  
Animation: 7 Technical: 5

An animated pose and narwhal-like horn make this a good unicorn figure. However, because of the long mane and rearing position, it would be difficult to use a riding figure with it.

Photography by  
Kathy O'Donnell



King Arthur

**WIZARDS AND LIZARDS**  
**Superior Models 25mm WL07 \$4.50**

**King Arthur —**  
**Proportion: 7** **Detail: 9**  
**Animation: 6** **Technical: 6**

You have to see the detail on this figure to believe it. Would you believe pupils in the eyes — and each link of the chain around Arthur's neck is clearly shown.

**Knight —**  
**Proportion: 7** **Detail: 9**  
**Animation: 8** **Technical: 7**

This figure also offers a large amount of detail and is cast in a dynamic pose. The fingers on the shield arm are shown, and there are clearly cast spurs on the boots.

**Morgan Le Fey —**  
**Proportion: 6** **Detail: 8**  
**Animation: 5** **Technical: 7**

Again, a figure with excellent detail. The pose is a bit artificial, but easily modified. The distinct facial expression and fine features are impressive.



Knight

**Merlin —**  
**Proportion: 6** **Detail: 7**  
**Animation: 7** **Technical: 7**

The facial features and subtle detail make this figure good. The symbols that cover the robe and hat are rather deeply etched, but this aids in painting. The owl familiar looks amazingly lifelike for the small scale.

The entire Wizards and Lizards line is sculpted by Ray Lamb, a former major league baseball pitcher who first gained a following for his 90mm sculptures. He seems to have brought the same high standards and attention to minute detail to his 25mm efforts. The price for the package is more than competitive for figures of the quality offered by Superior's sets WL05 to WL09. The earlier-numbered

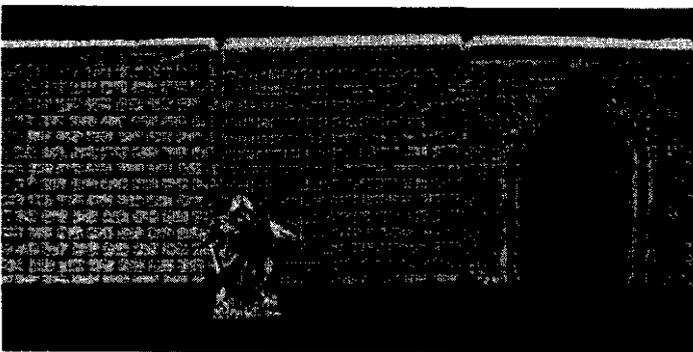
"Lizard" figures will be of less interest to most gamers. A minor drawback is that these sets are packaged in small plastic bags, affording them little protection from handling and jostling. Be sure to look carefully at a set before opening the package; it would be a shame to have the high quality of these figures marred by shipping damage. Further expansion of the line is planned, but at a slow pace.



Merlin

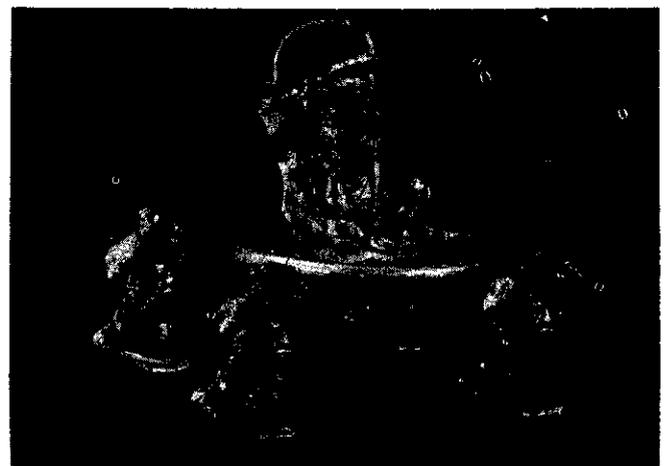


Morgan Le Fey



**DUNGEON BUILDERS**  
**Heritage Models \$7.95 (set of four walls)**

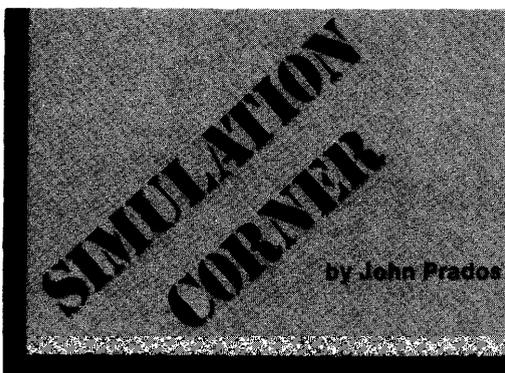
The ratings for metal figures do not apply to this product, which is made of molded plastic. Shown is one wall from set #9729, stone walls. Other sets include cavern walls, timbered rooms, a mosaic room, and dungeon floors. The sets have a high degree of detail and deeply etched features. They are probably too expensive for use as a play aid, but would be excellent for dioramas and modeling use. They lack a means to interlock the sections or to stand them solidly upright, which hampers their use during an adventure. Still, their realistic details make them hard to resist in situations where you want to create a strong visual image.



**EVIL WIZARD ON LITTER**  
**Ral Partha 15mm 01-084 \$7.95 (6 pcs.)**

**Proportion. 6** **Technical: 6**  
**Animation: 7**

This set features what would be an impressive amount of detail, even for larger figures. Small details of the items on the litter, such as coins, are in good scale, and the litter-bearing trolls' feet even have toenails.



## Change of pace at SPI

It was not long ago that the corridors of Simulations Publications' Park Avenue offices perennially resounded with the noises of *Strato-matic Baseball*, a game the whole staff loved and which everyone formed leagues to play. There were full seasons, complete with playoffs and a World Series. That sort of thing, in addition, to games of hearts, poker, and in Bob Champer's day, chess, was what the staff did to let off steam. There was plenty of that. With the pressures of producing games on a schedule and those of running a company, SPI's staff appreciated a good change of pace. This was especially true within the Research and Development (R&D) staff.

Over the years the pressures continued. Simulations Publications expanded into a major game publisher, and as it did so it spun off additional components, opened up new game areas, or started new additions to the SPI line of publications. In each instance the pace quickened. At first there was only the "Simulations Series Games" (SSG) and the magazine *Strategy & Tactics*, with a game in each issue. In 1972 Simulations began another magazine, called *Moves*, to cover games the way *S&T* did history. Then came the quad-game formula. After that were two books called "SPI Staff Studies," with a newsletter on educational use of games along the way. There were also the "monster games," the "micro games," and the move into science fiction and fantasy gaming in the mid- and late- 1970's.

Things reached a point where the pace was tremendous — the 1979 SPI game year, for example, included more than fifty separate titles. In 1980 alone, Simulations Publications has started three new organs: *Ares*, a science-fiction magazine with a game in each issue; *Richard Berg's Review of Games*, a game-review newsletter; and *FYEO*, a newsletter adaptation of what had been a popular feature of *S&T* magazine.

Amid all the activity were some signs of difficulties. Most noticeable were a rapid turnover in the R&D staff, mail-order and customer service problems, and a certain backlog of completed but unpublished games in the Production Department. Of the 1972 generation of

R&R staffers, few were still at SPI in 1975. Many of this group still consider that early period to be the halcyon days of SPI. The same thing is true of 1976-era R&Ders speaking in 1980. Mailing problems had a lot to do with a computer that repeatedly malfunctioned and several times "ate" the mailing list when a game or magazine had to go out. Production delays were inevitable, given the large number of games on the schedule. There were also less visible marketing and warehousing difficulties. The whole was a fair-sized headache for the monthly Board of Directors meetings and for the main management people, Jim Dunnigan, Redmond Simonsen, and Brad Hessel.

The last few months of 1980 brought considerable change to SPI as a result of this combination of circumstances. Early last summer the company changed to a triumvirate style of leadership with Dunnigan, Simonsen and Hessel jointly managing operations. In the first half of September, Jim Dunnigan decided to retire from his post as chief operating officer of SPI, which took the game community by surprise. A new manager was then brought on board — Christopher R. Wagner — whose accession was announced in a brief press release from Simulations Publications.

Chris Wagner is the founder of *Strategy and Tactics* magazine, which was begun while Wagner was serving with the Air Force in Japan in 1966. Three years later he sold the concern to Dunnigan and Simonsen, who had formed a firm called Poultron Press. The company was incorporated as Simulations Publications in 1970. Thus the appearance of Wagner among SPI management in 1980 is in some ways like a return to SPI's roots. It should also be good for operations. Not only is an occasional change of management personnel refreshing, but Chris is by trade actually a management consultant, having built up a practice in this trade that included several *Fortune 500* firms during the intervening years.

It is not yet certain what new directions SPI may take. Jim Dunnigan remains as a vice-president with a functional area loosely defined as "creative

input." Simonsen and Hessel remain as senior associates. Wagner's own role is not wholly defined. As an organizational expert he has no doubt drawn up a series of "wiring diagrams" that alternatively structure the functional areas within Simulations Publications. The leading candidate for implementation currently seems to be an arrangement that will structure SPI into several mega-departments. Under this arrangement R&D, editing, typesetting, and artwork will be folded into a large Production Department. In addition there would be departments for operations and for marketing.

What does this portend for simulation games? For the R&D department that is central to SPI's creative output? For one thing, the R&D staff will have to be strengthened. With Brad Hessel's increasing commitment to operations problems in 1979-1980, the R&D staff came to center upon his deputy David Ritchie. With attrition, notably that of Eric Goldberg and Joe Balkowski, virtually the only staffer working full-time on games alone has been John Butterfield. Butterfield is already responsible for development of all games for *Ares* issues, six games a year not counting any others he may be assigned. Hessel will probably keep his hand in game design. He is currently most interested in SPI's role-playing adventure game follow-ons to *Dragon-slayer*. No doubt Redmond will continue to design some science-fiction games. Balkowski may yet go back to full-time work on R&D. But the staff needs "reinforcements," so to speak.

One thing that will definitely help is that SPI will be taking a step back on the number of titles it produces annually. The most recent word is that the titles will be roughly halved, down to twenty-six titles for 1981. This will relieve a good deal of the pressure on research and development. Hopefully it will also allow for more extensive playtesting and development of games already in the production cycle. The change in the number of titles may also mean a change in the SPI marketing approach — the company may now aim to sell more copies of each given title.

Another aspect of the research and development approach is that SPI may

turn increasingly to freelance designers for innovative new products. This will further reduce strains on the R&D staff and may encourage the use of ideas that were not popular with the in-house design staff the publishing house has always maintained. It is also another step in the increasing industry trend toward the utilization of freelance design talent. If the trend means that hobbyists once again can get SPI games done by such designers as Dave Isby, Jay Nelson, Mark

Herman, Al Nofi, Arnold Hendricks, or Eric Goldberg, it would be all to the good. Consequently, the new approach to R&D may mean the beginning of a new era of quality games for hobbyists.

One other feature of recent developments at Simulations Publications is its broadened repertoire of game genres. Historical simulation games were first supplanted by science-fiction titles and then by fantasy ones. In 1980 SPI moved into the fantasy role-playing area and is

also making a stab at the general gaming market with Jim Dunnigan's *Dallas* game, based on the TV series of that name. Chris Wagner feels that the general games are a type that SPI must have in its line and wants to encourage the company to publish several titles in this area annually. If SPI can move forward on all these fronts with quality material, then one day the period beginning with 1980 may well be recalled as another golden age of the game hobby.



**'Two eyes for an eye'**

# Squad Leader

**April 1945: The Russians reach Berlin**

SQUAD LEADER™ IS AVALON HILL'S TRADEMARK NAME FOR ITS WORLD WAR II INFANTRY COMBAT GAME.

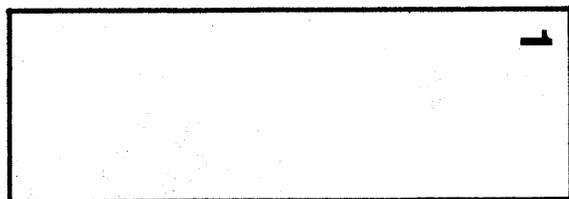
by Bryan Beecher

**BERLIN, April 29, 1945:** "Two eyes for an eye" was the Russian's motto as the drive for Berlin had begun. Four Russian armies, 4,000 tanks, 22,000 guns and mortars, and over 4,000 aircraft began the drive on the German capital on the night of April 15th/16th. By the 25th, the defenders had erected barricades of masonry, cars, trucks or anything they could find. Households were converted into bunkers, roads into minefields. By the 2nd of May, the day the *Reichstag* fell, over 300,000 Berliners had surrendered, and 150,000 lay dead in the street and in burning buildings. Germany had fallen.

**Victory Conditions**

The Russians must take Berlin Town Hall. Any other result is a German victory. Berlin Town Hall is building X4.

**Map Configuration**



**Special Rules**

1. All German units in the town hall benefit from fanaticism (26).
2. Buildings V4 and V5 are considered to be clear terrain.
3. The mines and wire must be put in hexes adjacent to the town hall.
4. Buildings S4, S7, T6, V7, W1, X7, Z1, and AA9 are consi-

dered to be afire, and fire counters should be placed in these buildings,

5. Game length: 8 turns.
6. German sets up first; Russian moves first.
7. The German sniper sets up last in any non-Russian occupied building hex.
8. Taking Berlin Town Hall is defined as removing all non-broken German units from it, and occupying it with at least one squad or crew.

**German Player Set-Up**

*Remnant elements of the Wehrmacht, Hitler Youth and Volkstrumm*, set up anywhere in buildings: T2, T4, T7, X4, Y8 and AA4.

50 Mines	1 1-8-8 (-4)	1 HMG
6 Wire	1 9-2	2 MMG
9 4-3-6	1 8-1	4 LMG
3 4-6-7	2 8-0	1 Psk.

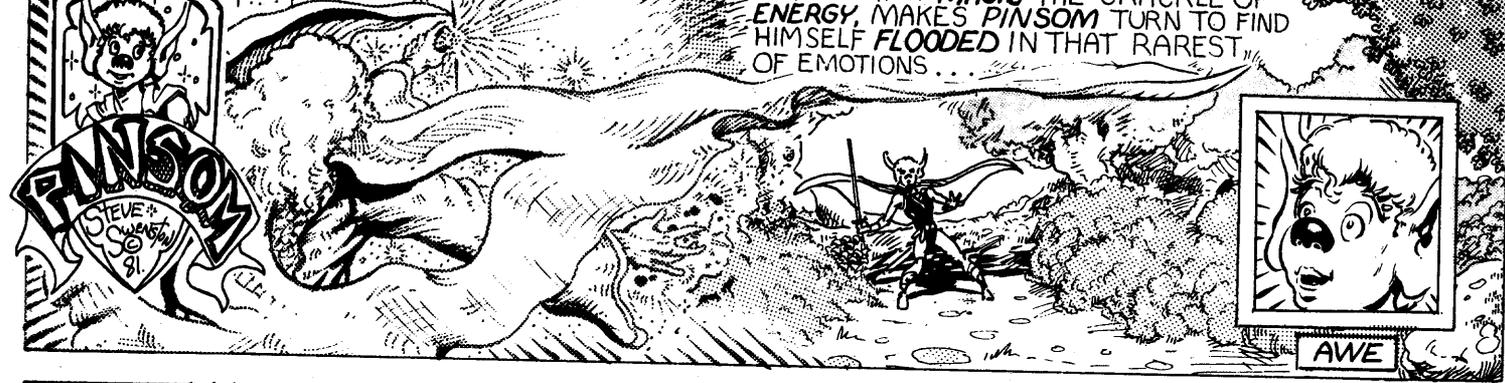
**Russian Player Set-Up**

*Elements of the 1008th and 1010th regiments of the 266th Infantry*, set up in buildings: Q4, Q5, Q6, R1, R7, W9, CC3, CC7 and EE6. The Stalin Organs and crews may set up adjacent to any of the above buildings.

18 4-4-7	6 LMG	1 9-1
9 6-2-8	1 HMG (.50 cal.)	3 8-0
2 2-3-7	2 Demo charges	2 300* Rct

**Aftermath**

The Russian superiority in manpower bludgeoned the German defenders back into the Town Hall itself. Katyusha rockets fired at point-blank range and Soviet demo teams dynamited the walls. The German defenders, fanatic and terrified of Russian retribution, fought to the last man and boy. Yet, the Russians were also strongly motivated (by the Gestapo atrocities), and it was only a matter of time before Berlin Town Hall fell.



LITTLE ELF YOUR INNOCENCE AND JOYS ARE TO BE TESTED SEVERELY FOR AT THIS VERY TIME MANY ARE THE ACTIONS OCCURRING WHICH MUST CHANGE THE COURSE OF YOUR LIFE'S PATH AND PERHAPS THE DESTINY OF OUR WORLD!



GENERAL NARANZU STALKS QUIETLY THROUGH HALLS...



MYSTERIOUSLY LACKING THEIR NORMALLY POSTED GUARDS.

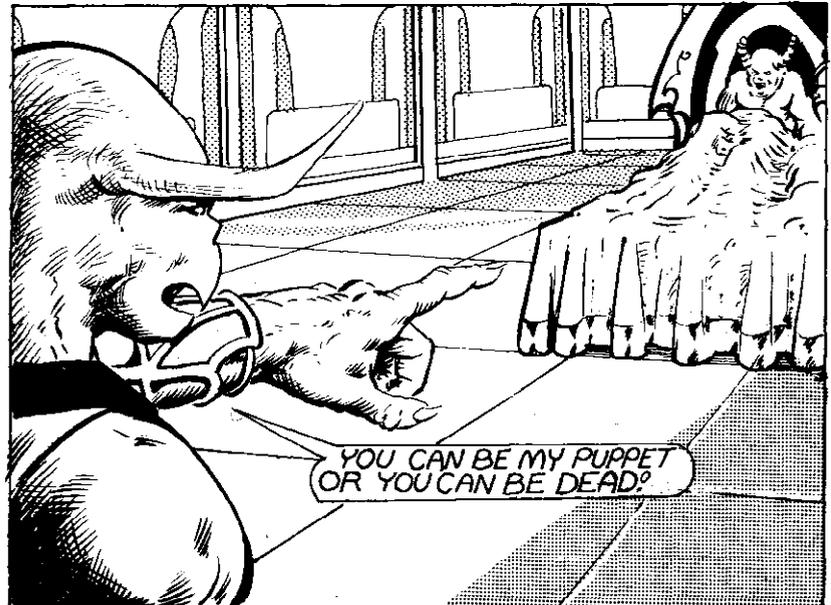
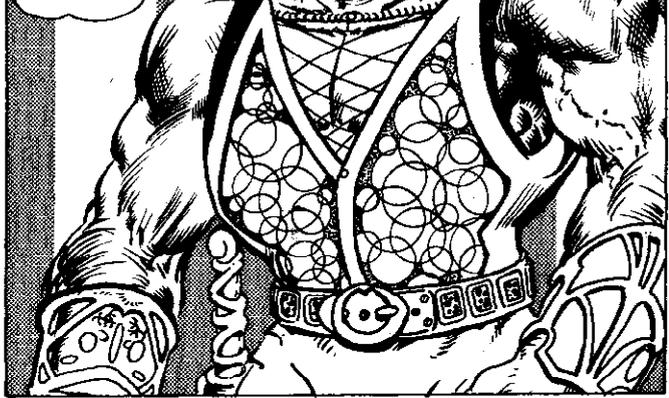
HE STANDS GATHERING HIS POWER THE ACTION HE IS ABOUT TO TAKE IS NOT ONLY AGAINST HIS KING BUT MONTHS AHEAD OF HIS ORIGINAL PLAN.



ALL THIS TIME OF ALLOWING HIM LEADERSHIP SO I COULD STUDY THE WORKINGS OF THE COUNCIL FROM THIS HIGHER POSITION CURSE HIM? HE HAS LOST THE RESPECT OF THE SOLDIERS



I NEVER EXPECTED TAFU TO SUBMIT SO QUICKLY OR TOTALLY TO THE WEAKNESS OF PLEASURE. WITH RUMORS OF REBELLION; I NOW HAVE NO CHOICE!



# THE ELECTRIC EYE

## COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

# SPORTING PROPOSITIONS

by Mark Herro

This month's column devotes itself to the various electronic versions of sports games floating around: hand-held types, video game versions, and computer programs.

### Sports: Hand-helds

Blame Mattel for starting the whole thing a couple of years ago with their hand-held Football game. A simple version by today's standards, Mattel's Football can only play a running game and kick — no passes or special plays. But it is also very simple to operate: three directional buttons, a kick button, and a score button. Two players alternately assume the offense, while the game's programming plays defense. Defense is rudimentary; a good player can consistently run for long yardage. However, the game gets so addicting that it's still fun to play.

At any rate, Football was such a success when it came out that the industry sort of "went nuts" on it. Other companies hopped on the bandwagon (and Mattel expanded its line), and now you can buy not only football games, but also baseball, basketball, soccer, and even boxing (shades of Ringside) and tennis games. There are a LOT of these games around. If you don't have one, odds are you have a friend who does. Or at least you have seen the TV commercials! The newer games are much more sophisticated, in terms of programming, com-

pared to their predecessors. The newer football games, for example, can run pass plays and score safeties.

By the way, these games are still selling very, very well. Toy stores report that this type of game was one of the hottest items on the market this past Christmas. Prices range from about \$20 to \$60.

### Sports: Video games

If you're a visually oriented person, these games should really appeal to you. Instead of chasing dots of light around a painted-on field, video games show little figures running (yes, their little legs scurry about) around on a playing field on your (preferably color) TV. Most video sports games allow either simultaneous offensive/defensive players, or a computer-controlled opponent. Team movement is done through "joystick" controllers or some other kind of game paddle. The three major suppliers for this type of game are Atari's VGS (\$150), Magnavox's Odyssey 2 (\$200), and Mattel's Intellivision (\$250). Game cartridges run about \$30, but you have to get the control unit first.

Of the above systems, I think Intellivision has the best quality display. Another case of "you get what you pay for." They're all fun to play, though.

### Sports: Computer programs

There's sort of a "give and take" here. Computer programs of sports usually don't have very good graphics, compared with video games, or high speed and fast

game-playing time like hand-helds, but are much more flexible in terms of the actual characteristics of the sport. The program is more a simulation than a game. Here are reviews of two programs that illustrate this.

### Comrec's football and baseball programs

The average computer sports program is a two-player game that asks for an offensive play and a defensive play. The program cross-indexes the responses to determine a given offensive play's chance of success against a defensive play. After running through a slight randomizing factor (for fumbles, interceptions, penalties, etc.), the program spits out the results, updates the game accordingly, and begins the whole process over.

While even this type of game is more true to life than the hand-held or video games, it's still not quite a "true" simulation. Of all the sports programs I've seen, Comrec System Corp.'s programs are the best, because not only they theoretically analyze offensive play versus defensive play, but also take into account *each individual team player's ability* in determining a play's outcome. Comrec sells a Football Simulator System and a Baseball Simulator System, both for 16K TRS-80's.

The football program is excellent — very complicated but surprisingly easy to play. Actually, there are two programs: one analyzes two team data tapes and comes up with an analysis tape, which the game program uses. The game pro-

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gram comes with one analysis tape pre-generated. The two imaginary teams (the "Greys" and the "Blacks") are fairly evenly matched in abilities.

There are ten offensive plays and ten defensive plays to choose from in a game. Plays are called by entering a four-letter abbreviation: POPM for a pop pass over the middle, SWPL for a sweep to the left, DBLT for a double cover of the tight end, etc. There are also commands for the special teams: You can kick and recover field goals, punts, and kickoffs, and try for an onside kick. There are also program commands for calling time-outs and throwing out-of-bounds passes, re-drawing the scoreboard (in case something gets screwed up), summarizing game commands, and displaying team statistics (more on that later). The game also has provisions for interceptions, fumbles, and penalties, and even a two-minute warning time-out.

A game can be a real kick to watch. A little playing field and scoreboard are drawn on the video display. As plays are entered, the program determines the results and graphically shows what happened to the pigskin. The scoreboard is updated to reflect the new position, and another playing cycle starts. I got used to the abbreviations very quickly, and the game pace is not unduly slow. At the end of each quarter, or when the appropriate command is called, the program

will display the current statistics for each team. The stats list score, first downs, offensive plays, rushing yardage, passing yardage, percentage of completed passes, yards per attempt, yards per completion, interceptions, fumbles lost, punts, return yardage, and total offensive yardage. Quite a summary.

As I said, I think this is an excellent game. At \$19.95, it's also a very reasonable buy for the true football fanatic. You can also get two imaginary conferences for a variety of games, and you can even get the 1978 NFL!

Comrec's baseball game is built along the same lines as their football program. The baseball program has two improvements over the football game, though. In the baseball program, you can have the computer play one team (or both!), and you can make player substitutions.

Pitcher players have three basic throws: straight, curve, and junk. However, you can control the ball's speed and whether it goes high or low, in or out. The game provides an option for introducing player fatigue — the longer a pitcher is in the game, the less accurate are his pitches.

Batters (or rather, the first-base coach) have more commands at their disposal. You can have a batter try to hit to a specific place in a specific way, "look" for a certain pitch, swing at anything, bunt, take, or some combinations of the above.

The playing cycle starts by displaying the batter's statistics. This gives an indication of a batter's strengths and weaknesses to the players. A pitch type is requested. Signs are given to the batter. The ball is thrown and the rest is up to the computer. The defensive player can place his fielders in specific places, or let the program handle it. Like the football program, its price is \$19.95.

The documentation provided with these programs is the best I have ever seen in a home computer program. Period. The play manuals are simple, concise, and VERY thorough. Explanations go into great detail, but the reader doesn't get bogged down. Both the baseball and football manuals have one-page command summaries for playing convenience.

Maybe I shouldn't be so surprised at the quality of the product. After all, Comrec Systems Corp. is a mainframe computer consulting firm. Their programs and documentation *have* to be good for them to stay in business. But this is the first time I've see that type of philosophy extended to the home-computing world.

I hope it catches on.

Anyway, I highly recommend both of these programs, especially the football simulator. For more information, write: Comrec Systems Corp., P.O. Box 34008, Houston TX 77034.

If you have an Apple, Pet or TRS-80 microcomputer,\* you can have fantasy at your fingertips with Epyx computer games from Automated Simulations.

Like me, you're probably really into games, all sorts of games. But an Epyx game is more than a game — it's an experience, and it's a chance to use your computer for something other than work. The great thing about Epyx games is that you have a choice. Whether you're a beginner or an expert, you can find games that are easy to learn. Challenging. Fun to play for twenty minutes or

hours at a time. You can play these games over and over, because you're constantly trying new tactics and strategies.

I've already entered and re-entered a world of monsters and misfits, demons and dwarves, trials, tribulations and treasures with a game called "Temple of Apshai." Now it's my chance to have fun with three more games from Automated Simulations... and I can save money, too!

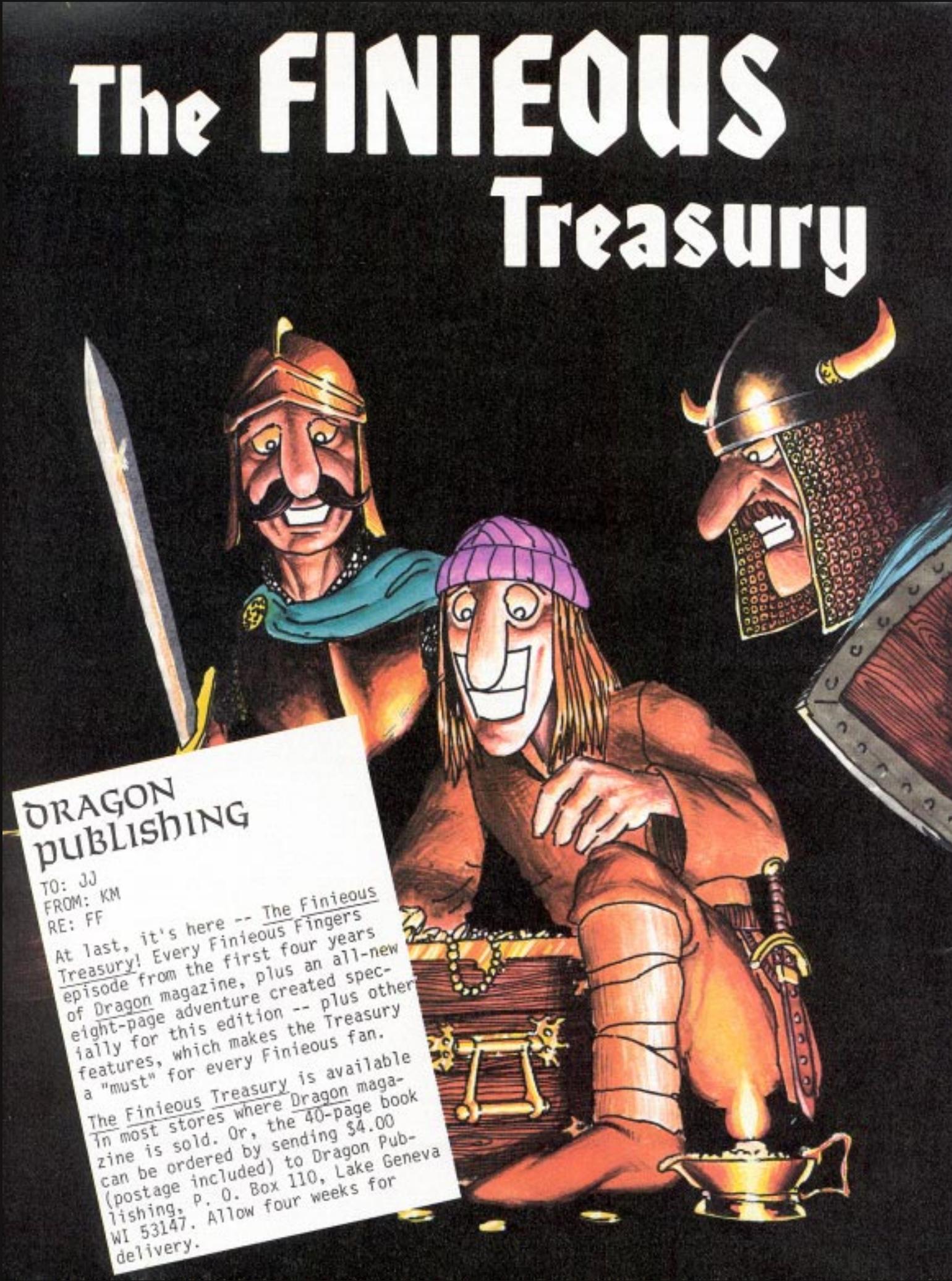
With "Dalestones of Ryn" and "Morloc's Tower," I get to escape from booby-trapped mazes, find more treasures and zap more monsters. And with "Rescue at Rigel," I get to outwit the nasty High Tollah and free 10 prisoners.

Automated Simulations has a special offer on "Dalestones of Ryn," "Morloc's Tower" and "Rescue at Rigel." Buy all three for just \$49.95, a \$70.00 value. This offer is available for a limited time only, so don't wait to be a hero. See your local dealer today. Or you can order these games by phone. Dial (800) 824-7888, operator 861. In California, (800) 852-7777, operator 861.

**"I can rescue ten prisoners slay a mad wizard, retrieve stolen treasure and save money. So can you!"**

\*Available on disk for 48K Apple with AppleSoft, 32K TRS-80, and 32K Pet/IBM.

# The FINIEOUS Treasury



**DRAGON  
PUBLISHING**

TO: JJ  
FROM: KM  
RE: FF

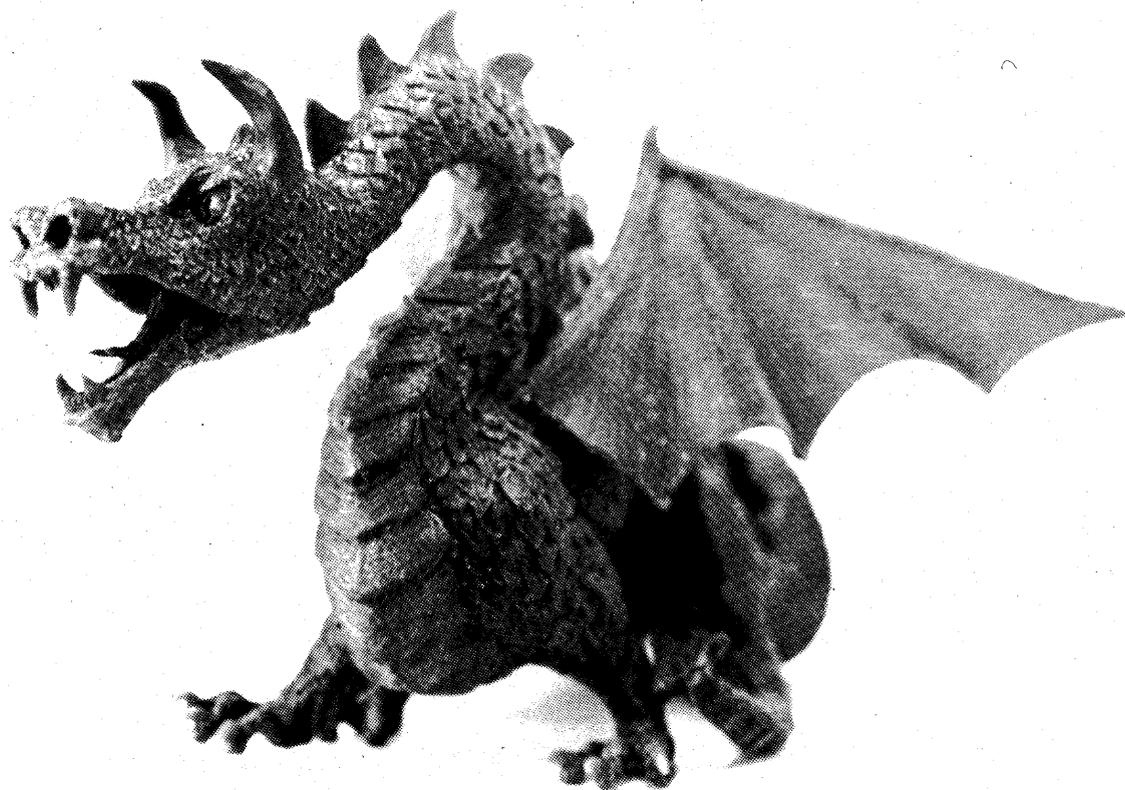
At last, it's here -- The Finieous Treasury! Every Finieous Fingers episode from the first four years of Dragon magazine, plus an all-new eight-page adventure created specially for this edition -- plus other features, which makes the Treasury a "must" for every Finieous fan.

The Finieous Treasury is available in most stores where Dragon magazine is sold. Or, the 40-page book can be ordered by sending \$4.00 (postage included) to Dragon Publishing, P. O. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147. Allow four weeks for delivery.

# ENCOUNTER

the

# BRONZE DRAGON



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BRRR!!

VORMY

OH!

BOOSH!

GOTCHYA

POO

WAIT

DON'T GO!

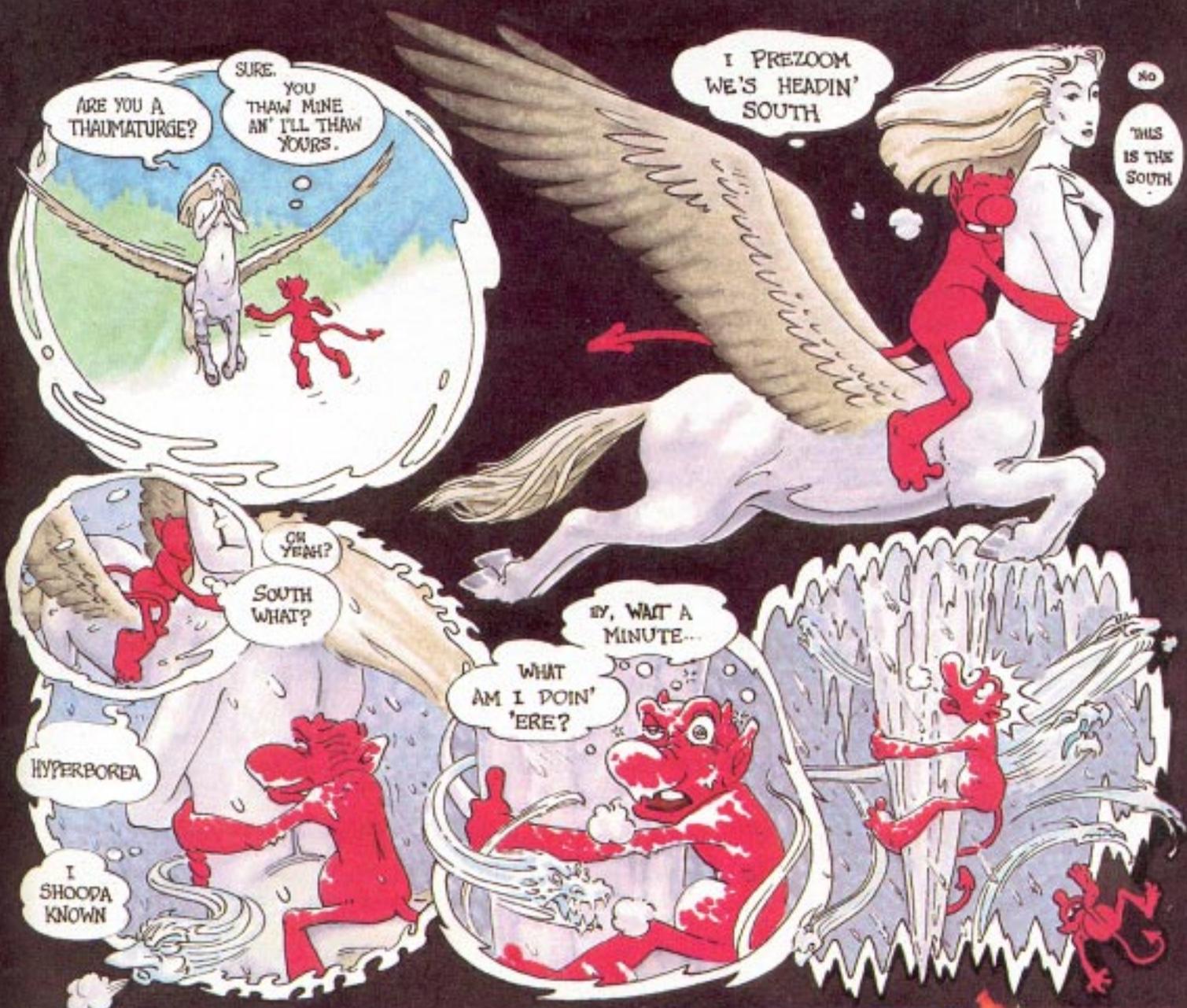
?

COME BACK!

EH!

EH!

EH!



I PREZOOM WE'S HEADIN' SOUTH

NO THIS IS THE SOUTH

ARE YOU A THAUMATURGE?  
SURE. YOU THAW MINE AN' I'LL THAW YOURS.

OH YEAH?

SOUTH WHAT?

HYPERBOREA

I SHOOPA KNOW

BY, WAIT A MINUTE...

WHAT AM I DOIN' 'ERE?

AHHHHH MUCH BETTER.

NOW LEMME SEE...  
WHERE WAS I?  
...Mmm...  
...Z...

NO WONDUH I WAS FREEZIN'

TRAMP



The journey north was not as trying as Glynn had anticipated. The girl who called herself Jasmine is quick in following his example and they make it to the door of Oxted's only inn by late afternoon. Glynn begins to enjoy her company and looks forward to her joining him for a drink. He is surprised to learn that her only interest is in climbing to the ancient temple. With slight agitation, he points the way, saying the climb will take HER well into the evening. Even though he offers to take her there himself the following day, her singleness of mind is not deterred. The black ring gleams as she hands him the bundle of coins and valuables they had inherited from the cutthroats. Silently she wraps her blood-stained cloak around her body and heads in the direction of the mountain shrine. Watching her, the dwarf does not allow himself to



feel remorse at this abrupt parting. He conceals the bag under his cloak and enters the inn. Several hours later he is laughing and enjoying the company of many folks — dwarves and men alike. Glynn makes the acquaintance of a hardy red-haired man who tells him that Oxted has had some very unusual visitors.

"Soldiers from the south," he reports, "looking for a princess. Though only God knows what she'd be doing on 'The Great White Throne!'"

Glynn looks up from his drink, "What'd you say?" "Yes, they had reason to believe that this girl — Flavier? — would go to an old temple which rests in the seat of the

Throne."

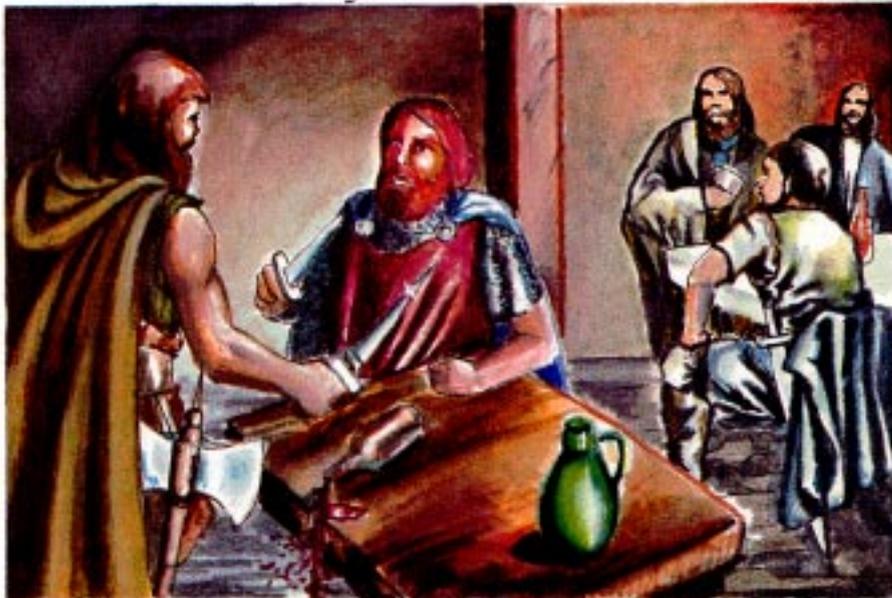
"Fool's Hope, you mean!" Glynn snarls.

"Folks 'round here called it that — but these men specified 'The Great White Throne.' They'll surely be disappointed when no beautiful blonde-princess shows up."

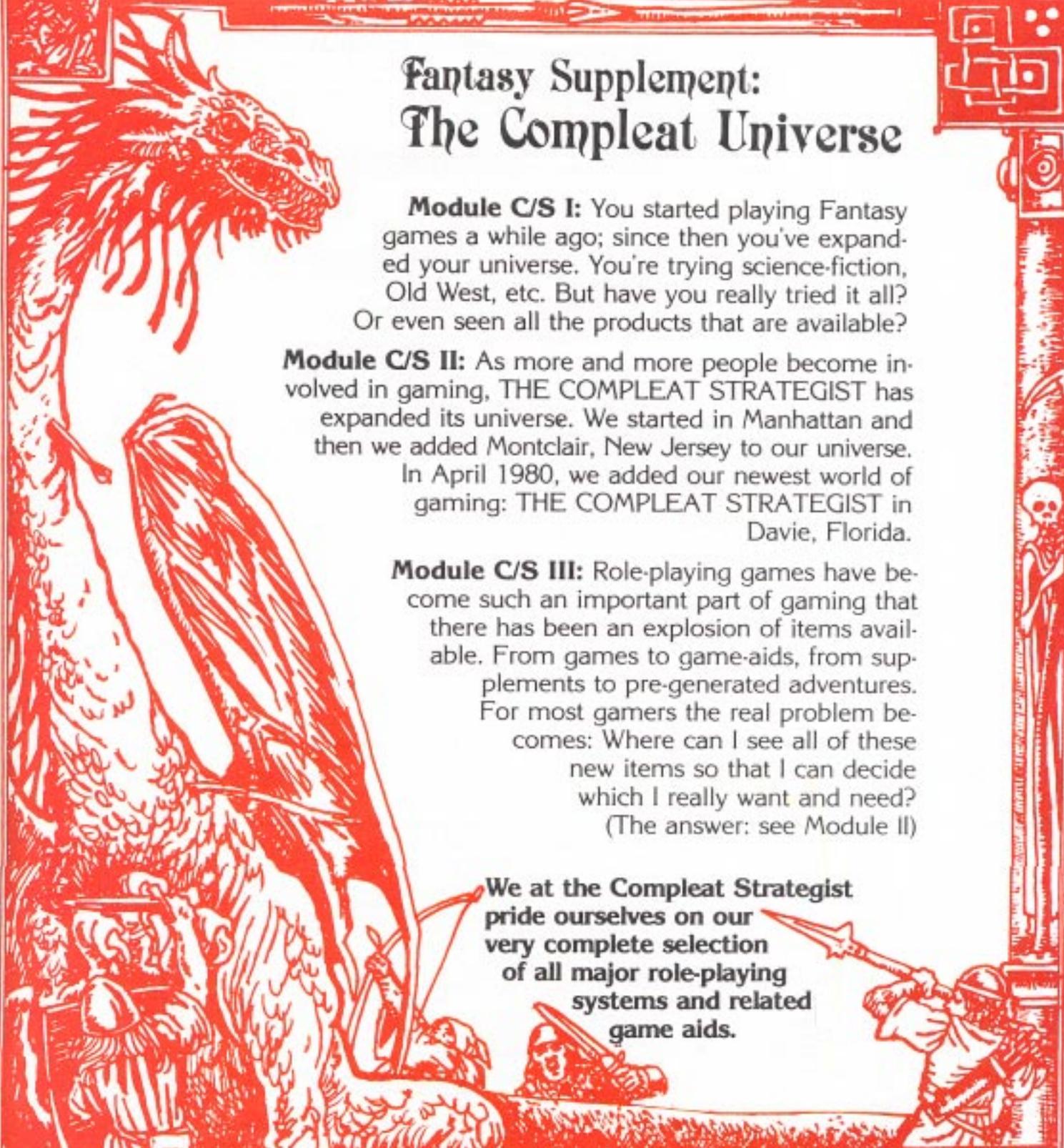
Instinctively, Glynn's hand finds his weapon. The stranger answers by pulling a knife. "The fight is not with you," Glynn replies gravely. "Today I brought a girl — a blonde — to Oxted. Her only wish was to go to an old temple on that mountain." His eyes widen "... in the shrine where the white rocks rise, this is where your Destiny lies..."

"I must go!" he mumbles, making his way to the door.

Glynn hopes her progress up the mountain path has been cumbersome. The other man follows, saying



"There were seven of them — I will help you even the odds — is she really beautiful?" **NEXT: The Confrontation**



## Fantasy Supplement: The Compleat Universe

**Module C/S I:** You started playing Fantasy games a while ago; since then you've expanded your universe. You're trying science-fiction, Old West, etc. But have you really tried it all? Or even seen all the products that are available?

**Module C/S II:** As more and more people become involved in gaming, THE COMPLEAT STRATEGIST has expanded its universe. We started in Manhattan and then we added Montclair, New Jersey to our universe. In April 1980, we added our newest world of gaming: THE COMPLEAT STRATEGIST in Davie, Florida.

**Module C/S III:** Role-playing games have become such an important part of gaming that there has been an explosion of items available. From games to game-aids, from supplements to pre-generated adventures. For most gamers the real problem becomes: Where can I see all of these new items so that I can decide which I really want and need? (The answer: see Module II)

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# THE MARTIAN CHRONICLE

## Venusian Plots Erupt on Earth

### VENUSIAN ATTEMPT MISFIRES

The report states, "Enough evidence has been uncovered to keep us busy for years just sitting through it." How Venus wished to break the ties being established by the Earthlings and the Martians. The plan was designed to make the Earthmen believe the explosion was just something natural, while we were supposed to think that Earth had launched an attack on their leaders, the engineering crews forgot to bore out the barrel of the tallatory strike which would appear to the Earthlings as an unprovoked attack by gun crew, needless to say the cannon. It is quite simple to see the rest, a war would ensue - Venus would offer to come to the aid of the Earthmen, who would accept, thus giving Venus a foothold with which to begin an invasion. This method of conquest seems to be their cup of zorp as it is identical to the method used in subjugation of the Mercurians.

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### "THEY'RE ONLY METAL"

CDAR PARK (MP)-In a report released about the Martian Metals lines this month, a statement by the Martian engineer admitted that "they (the figures) forms, as shown by the photo," concluded the report. "While the line is assessed as inanimate, it is only wise not to form conclusions at the drop of a tenticle. Our studies in a laboratory environment show that they do at times appear life-like, and often seem to move but extensive visual evidence disproves the rumors. At the time the disappearance seemed coincidental, but as the number of missing climbed, they became linked to the missing line. In response to industry wide question- ing, Lester Schoonover, assistant engineer, called for an indepth study of the line.

The controversy began last summer when a reviewer and a noted gaming personality disappeared in conjunction with a figure sent to be reviewed. At the time the disappearance seemed coincidental, but as the number of missing climbed, they became linked to the missing line. In response to industry wide question- ing, Lester Schoonover, assistant engineer, called for an indepth study of the line.



This figure, as shown by time lapse photography, is not moving, however it does have an uncanny life-like appearance. This particular figure can be found in a "World of Fantasy", BOX #9904 GIANT (LITAN) for only \$4.95

### MARTIAN METALS

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### Titanian Embassy Not Responsible

The earth based firm of Martian Metals was apparently the recipient of his endorsement on the telegram, Emperor Thration-al-ten was quoted as saying "I did not sign that telegram, and bearing Emperor Thration-al-ten's signature, the telegram and any way, who cares?" The emperor's press secretary did indicate that the possibility did exist that the leftist organization "The Sons of Venus", could be responsible. Mahoney responded by sending a detach- ment of I-suited Marines to patrol, Illinois in the American sector. It was here, under a pile of potato peelings, beer cans, and fish heads a Venusian Retch Class Courier Ship was discovered.

**WEATHER**

**Local forecasts:**

ZUNNIZE.....628  
 ZUNNBT.....19231  
 Phobos Demos  
 MOONUP.....6259  
 1022  
 2212  
 1624  
 MOONDOWN.....11230  
 22217  
 Skies clear in early morning turning to clouds and mild winds. Amonia showers 40% in late aftermid.

TEMP.....High 63, Low -152  
 WINDS.....Norperly 120H  
 HUMIDITY.....0.0009788

**Index**

AMUSEMENT.....A2-A4  
 COMIKS.....B1 B5  
 DECLASSIFIEDS.....E1-E12  
 PREDITORIAL.....A4  
 GOSTAKS ADVICE.....C1  
 SOCIETY.....D1-D4  
 SPORTS.....C2-C8  
 ZOORAH DRANK.....B8