

Monthly adventure role-playing aid

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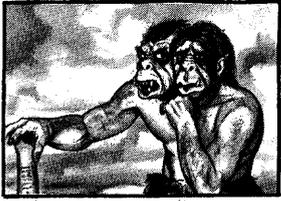
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# Monthly adventure role-playing aid Dragon

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## COVER

"Bridge of Sorrows," by Denis Beauvais, captures a classic battle at the height of its fury: Will the wizard's spell stop the dragon, or will its flaming breath claim even more victims?

## Telling the future without a crystal ball

We don't plan ahead very often, or very far, when it comes to deciding what goes in each issue of DRAGON® Magazine. That's why I got a funny feeling in my stomach the other day when the marketing department asked for a summary of the major features we were planning for the next six months. Between my stammering, I was able to get across that I *could* do such a thing, as long as no one took the predictions *too* seriously — in other words, don't expect 'em all to come true.

Now that you've received the same disclaimer, I'll use the rest of this space to tell you what I told the marketing people. Here's what we'd like to do with the next few issues, if

(Turn to page 21)

# Letters

## Equation damage

Dear Editor:

I have noticed that in "Scientific facts behind the system" (issue #88) three mistakes were made. Two which appear to be typographical errors can be found in equation #2 and a reference to this equation afterward. Equation #2 should read:

$$\bar{V}_z = 1/2 (V_z + V_0)$$

Equation #8 has a more severe mistake. It should read:

$$V_z = \sqrt{V_0^2 + 2a_g z}$$

The equation for finding the number of dice of damage would then read as follows:

$$d = \frac{\sqrt{V_0^2 + 64z}}{6.4}$$

It is true that this has no significance when the initial velocity is zero. However, when it is greater than zero (as in the example of a giant throwing a PC off a cliff) the error is evident. The example has a PC taking 17d6 + 1-2 [damage] when in reality he only takes 12d6 + 1-4.

Dan Redder  
Otsego, Mich.

We conveyed Dan's observation to Arn Ashleigh Parker, author of the article, and Arn readily agreed that his manuscript had an error in calculation — namely, the transition from equation #7 to equation #8. It's not legal to take the square root of part of a compound expression, unless that part happens to be zero. Fortunately, the equation is correct as originally printed for any simple fall, where initial velocity is zero, and that covers the great majority of cases. How often does someone get tossed around by a giant, anyway?

Arn also pointed out a detail that Dan didn't take into account. He calculated damage correctly for a fall of 90 feet, but forgot to include the giant's 12-foot height, as in example two from the article. Arn, using a distance of 102 feet instead of 90, computed the damage as 13d6 + 1-3. Is this a minor point? Well, maybe, but try to look at it from the thief's point of view.

The error in equation #2 is relatively minor, and should not hamper someone who understands the concept. The line above the V means "average" — in this case, average velocity over an interval of time z. See the intermediate equation between #2 and #3 for an example of the correct use of this symbol. — KM

## Out of sight

Dear Dragon:

The article "Bats that do more than bite" by Ed Greenwood was excellent, but there is one

thing I do not understand: five of the bats have infravision. It is a fact that bats are blind and that they screech to find objects as their screech bounces off the objects and they hear it. So if bats are blind, how can they have infravision?

Tim Evenson  
St. Louis, Mo.

We never gave this "problem" a second thought when preparing Ed's manuscript for publication. The bats he describes are obviously not native to our real world, and as such they could have attributes that normal bats don't have. Maybe these bats aren't blind, but whether they are or not makes very little difference in game terms. The important thing is that they are able to move around without bumping into things; exactly how they accomplish this is not a critical issue.

We can take another approach: Maybe infravision isn't "vision" in the true sense of that word. Creatures with infravision have the ability to detect the location of living bodies or other objects that give off heat. That doesn't mean they also must have the ability to see in what we know as the visible spectrum.

Heck, what it comes down to is this: The bats have infravision because that's the way they are. Before you take it away from them for "logical" reasons, ask yourself how "logical" it is for the sinister to throw up a wall of force, and how it's possible for the azmyth to know alignment. If you eliminate everything about these creatures that isn't logical, you'll end up with a lot of boring bats. — KM

## Plane answers

Dear Dragon,

In the article on the Plane of Gladshiem (issue #90), it is stated that magical weapons and armor are lowered by 2 of their "plusses." The article also says that weapons and items used by the Norse deities are multiplanar and are not subject to this effect; however, no mention is made as to if these items will increase in power on the Prime Material Plane.

If adventurers managed to return to the Prime Material Plane with a weapon or item used by the Norse deities (a very dangerous and probably suicidal venture to undertake indeed), would this item increase in its plusses?

Julian Rodriguez  
Los Angeles, Calif.

No; immunity to this effect means just that. Multiplanar weapons have the same "numbers" no matter what plane of existence they are taken to. — RM

Dear Dragon,

In issue #90 there seems to be a typographical error of some sort. On page 37, Odin's throne hall is called Valaskialf. However, in the map of Gladshiem on p. 55, the name is written as Valasrialf. What is the correct spelling and pro-

nunciation? Also, where is the alternate Prime Material world called Midgard?

Tim Hale  
Westland, Mich.

The correct spelling of the throne hall is the first usage on p. 37. As for pronunciation, you're on your own; we couldn't find a phonetic spelling for the word in any of our references.

The same goes for getting to Midgard — you'll have to find your own way. The usual plane-traveling methods should work for getting to an alternate Prime Material Plane as well as they work from the Prime Material to another type of plane. — KM

Dear Dragon,

In the "Aesirhamar" module, you use Dwalin as the name of Brokkir's brother. I have never known you to copy a name before, but Dwalin is the name of a dwarf in the Tolkien trilogy, Lord of the Rings. Why have you tarnished your record?

Brian E. Geppert  
Lacey, Wash.

The name Dwalin was chosen without our awareness that it was used by J.R.R. Tolkien, and the Dwalin of the adventure obviously has nothing to do with Tolkien's character. After checking with the people at Iron Crown Enterprises, we ascertained that the name "Dwalin" the dwarf is considered the exclusive property of Elan Merchandising, the company licensed to produce Tolkien's materials in game form.

We thought we were being original in the choice of Dwalin for a name. We regret the unintentional intrusion, and we hope it won't happen again. — RM

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I am sure that I am not alone when I say that Katharine Kerr's article about evil PCs (The forum, issue #89) left me both disturbed and contemplative. Her analysis truly frightened me into thinking that players who run evil characters have some serious emotional problems. I must say, however, that Ms. Kerr is not the only person to have done some studying in psychology. After a second reading of her letter I found myself in disagreement with her opinion. Although I have never played a "truly evil" character such as Katharine describes, I feel that she has overdramatized the situation a bit. Granted perhaps that a few of these people [who play evil characters] may have slight emotional difficulties, but the overwhelming majority are normal people who may now feel like psychotics after reading Ms. Kerr's letter.

There is a relatively simple explanation of why some people run evil characters in an adventure campaign. The fact is that an AD&D campaign presents an easy way for a person to free his feelings, be it anger or happiness. This to me seems a rather safe way to deal with certain negative impulses, which is far better than letting hostile emotions cause conflict in the real world. After all, evil PCs are causing harm to paper NPCs, not real human beings. Many therapists tell their patients to beat up a pillow or punching bag if they are angry at someone or something, rather than the source of their anger. Likewise, an AD&D campaign works as an excellent outlet for a player's emotions, whether the emotions are positive or negative.

There is another important reason why some people play evil characters. The fact is that doing socially unacceptable things has a forbidden appeal. The idea of "getting away with it" has a bigger appeal than the act itself. Thus, evil-oriented characters get pleasure knowing they are doing something socially prohibited and escaping punishment. They realize that they can't (and wouldn't want to) commit the same acts in the real world, so a fantasy setting provides an enjoyable substitute.

In no way am I encouraging players to commit crimes and cruelty against peaceful NPCs at the first opportunity. I am basically a good-aligned

# The forum

player, preferring the roles of sturdy rangers and beneficial wizards. But saying that players who run evil characters are emotionally insecure, or neurotic, may do more harm than anything else. Those who run evil PCs and find themselves being labeled "dark and nasty" may develop a negative attitude toward themselves. After a while this label may begin to hinder their emotional growth and they will think they are dark and nasty because of another's opinion. This is known as a self-fulfilling prophecy, in which another's label upon someone else helps to govern the labeled person's actions. And this is much more damaging than stabbing a paper NPC can ever get.

Christopher R. Kopec  
Ramsey, N. J.

\* \* \* \*

The basic premise of the game is good winning over evil and Katharine Kerr's letter in #89 details the dangers involved when we stray from this attitude. I'm glad to see her taking time to think about the philosophy of the game instead of being worried over minor inconsequential details. I feel that role playing games where players develop an individual persona are quite different from campaigns where entire armies are being controlled by one player; it's almost comparable to the difference between intuition and logic.

I am DM for a group of "oldies" but goodies. We're in it strictly for fun and socializing. I stress storytelling and role playing, especially, encouraging interaction among the players. I think the game is at its best when they are ignoring the DM and discussing things among themselves.

By acting out what you would do, in a role playing manner, in a hypothetical situation, you can learn what you might do in real life under similar circumstances. This is why the game is so intriguing. Just as adversity can bring people closer together, role playing in a good constructive manner can let you see that which people rarely get a chance to exhibit. Leadership ability, initiative, problem solving abilities, quick thinking, imagination, humor, generosity, compassion, and a whole range of other values can be tested and exhibited when the DM does his job. Role playing can bring out and strengthen your inner values. As good should always triumph over evil, it is destructive to the players to allow them to succeed while playing evil characters. The exception is if you have players of sufficient maturity and self awareness who are secure enough in their own beliefs to realize that by playing an evil character they, and the group, can learn how evil works, how it thinks, how it can be dangerous, and apply this knowledge to improving their advantage when it comes to fighting evil, in the game or in reality. Although I disapprove of evil in games coming out on top, we must realize that evil often wins in reality.

Evil characters bother my sense of propriety. I try to stress to the players that their characters be basically good, even though they may have a few weaknesses or personality flaws of minor significance. As a DM, evil makes me uncomfortable and I only feel I'm doing my job when the players recognize evil and take steps to combat it.

Greg Meier  
Bruce, Wis.

\* \* \* \*

I have no idea whether velocity is right, or if kinetic energy really is the key, but I do know that both articles on falling damage (issue #88) overlooked something important. The basis of the subject is damage — in other words, hit points. The explanation on p. 82 of the DMG basically says that hit points are made up of 1) physical ability to withstand damage, 2) combat skill, 3) "6th sense," and 4) divine protection. In falling damage probably only the physical ability and divine protection would count. Personally, I tend to think hit points would be made up more of combat skill than anything else. This is backed up by the fighter's greater amount of hit points.

My point is that a first level character should take a fall almost as well as a fifth, and a magic-user as well as a ranger. So the only answer is damage based on a percentile system. Is there a reason why this hasn't been thought of before?

Mark Herman  
Waterloo, Iowa

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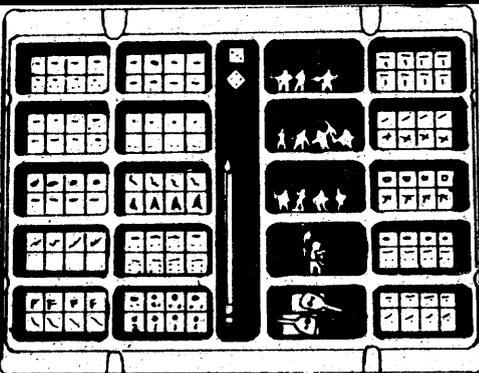
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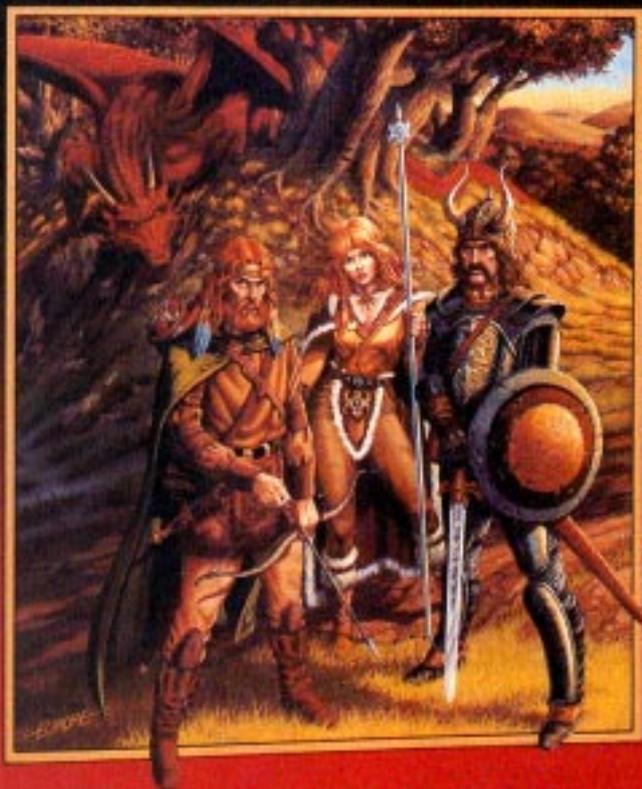
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# Clerics live by other rules

## Giving and taking away can be okay

by E. Gary Gygax

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It is written that all clerics have available to them all of the spells listed, and druids likewise have the same benefit with respect to theirs. Are these words graven on stone? Yes and no.

The rules state that the entire array is at the beck and call of the cleric/druid player character in order to make it abundantly clear to all that these character types do not need to have spell books which contain the "known" spells. Clerics and druids are granted their spells from pursuit of their calling and by the deity (or its servants) to whom they adhere. With fundamentals taken care of, we can now get down to the "no" part of the "yes and no" answer to the query "Are the rules graven on stone?"

The experienced Dungeon Master will certainly freely admit that he or she takes any and all liberties with the rules which are useful in making the campaign more interesting, challenging, exciting, imaginative, thought-provoking, or simply more coherent with respect to its overall scheme. Those Learned Readers familiar with my Greyhawk campaign will have noted that most of the clerics of the deities of that "world" (Oerth, of course!) gain various special spells or abilities from their calling. In fact, certain powers, spells, and abilities were purposely omitted from the rules manuscript because my campaign is still alive, and the "secrets" of the most cryptic sects are not "general" knowledge. With that example in mind, consider this:

If material can be added to the repertoire of the cleric (and, by default, its druidic sub-class), then why should it be forbidden to remove things from it? Within reason, there is no such prohibition — but permission is not explicitly granted, for to allow carte blanche to the inexperienced or careless is giving license to put the campaign into the proverbial toilet and pull the plunger. If there is clear justification which can be logically explained, then there is, in fact, every reason to disallow spells, materials, or other powers to clerics. This denial can be permanent or temporary, depending on the reason it exists. A few examples:

- A deity of the sun dislikes spells that cause darkness.
- A deity of cold dislikes spells that are related to flame and heat.
- A druidic cult that shuns insects.
- An order of clerics that requires new members to prove their merit before being further initiated into the mysteries of that faith.

The list could go on. The point is clear.



There are many ways to justify withholding of spells and/or powers. There are similar reasons to eventually grant them, or new ones. The important points to remember are these: 1) Do it for a reason. 2) Retain balance. 3) Make it logical. 4) Be reasonable. 5) Explain it to campaign participants, revealing information according to the schedule you have established — not necessarily when they demand it, i.e., don't let participants throw the Book in your face! Follow through this explication:

A secluded sect of the followers of the deity Ehlonna of the Forests erred grievously at some time in the past. Its clerical and druidic members misled the people, caused them to do evil things, and used fire to harm life and the beloved woodlands as well. Most of the wrongdoers were slain, but some survived and were repentant. Mercifully, Ehlonna forgave them, but each and every one of these formerly unfaithful, as well as those who came after them, would be prohibited from ever again using spells (or magic items) that cause destructive fire or things associated with it.

Furthermore, clerics are permitted only staves as weapons; druids are allowed only staves and slings, and no druid is allowed to use his *shapechange* ability to assume the form of a carnivorous beast.

There is now a small Shrine of Ehlonna, as well as a Sacred Grove nearby. Here the descendants of the transgressors reside, shepherding the neighboring farmers and woodfolk, human and demi-human alike. However, all those trained here are not permitted the following spells: cause (any sort of) *wounds*, *curse*, protection from *good* (any), *putrefy food & drink*, *cause blindness*, *cause disease*, *bestow curse*, *poison*, *dispel good*, *flame strike*, *slay living*, *harm*, *wither*, *energy drain*, *destruction*, *fire trap*, *produce flame*, *produce fire*, *wall of fire*, *conjure fire elemental*, *fire seeds*, *chariot of Sustarre*, *finger of death*, and *fire storm*. As was mentioned before, weapons are limited, and druid members of the group cannot take the form of any carnivore. These prohibitions seriously weaken both orders of followers, and no deity would

so jeopardize its followers without some counterbalance.

After faithfully serving and reaching 2nd level, clerics are granted their choice of "knowing" any permitted druid spell of 1st level, and vice versa. This continues through 4th level. At 5th level each gains a druid/cleric spell of 2nd level, and this continues through 7th level. At 8th level the granting of 3rd-level spells commences; at 11th level, 4th-level spells; and at 14th level, 5th-level spells commence and continue through 16th level. Clerics of 9th level are able to assume animal form (a non-carnivorous mammal only) once per day, just as if they were a druid. Druids of above-average wisdom are allowed bonus spells, just as if they were a cleric, i.e., 14 wisdom allows one bonus 1st level spell, 15 wisdom a second 1st level spell, etc.

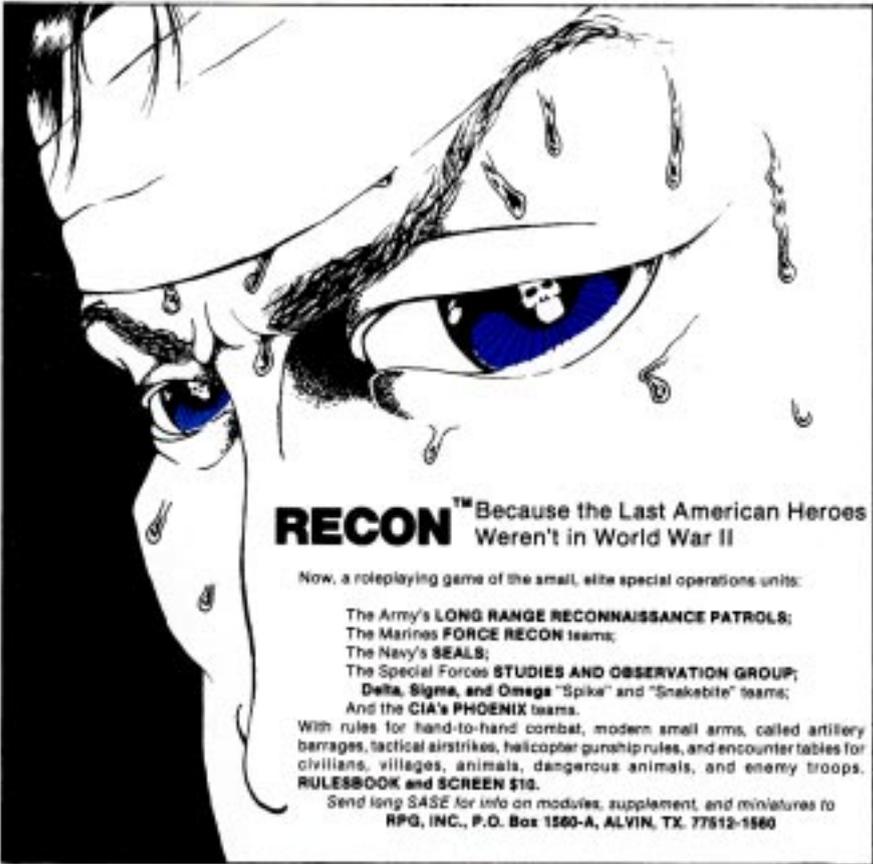
Beyond this, Ehlonna has created a special order for clerics who have been totally true to their alignment in general and to her in particular. At 3rd level, such clerics are specially granted the longsword as a usable weapon, and at 5th level they are granted the longbow. Any deviation from alignment or service causes these weapons to be permanently revoked. The animal form permitted to such special clerics includes creatures of greater mass than normally possible for a druid, including (but not limited to) buffalo, stag, and Irish deer.

A similar special order of druids also exists. These druids must remain neutral in alignment, but must always discourage that which promotes bane and encourage that which promotes weal. Faithful 3rd-level druids of this order are granted permission to wear elfin chainmail (bestowed by Ehlonna's agents in ceremonial proceedings) and to wield both hand axes and battle axes. At 5th level the use of both light and heavy crossbows is bestowed. The weight limit of creature form assumed is also far greater than that for normal druids, it being 200 pounds per level of experience. Thus, one of these special druids of 10th level could become a creature of up to one ton in weight. Furthermore, although carnivorous form cannot be assumed, omnivorous form

— a wild boar, for example — is allowed.

Taking this a step further, assume that the campaign will promote participants to begin play in this area, and the DM will encourage clerics and druids. Building upon the "history" of transgression and redemption, the DM will have a special set of circumstances and a mission for all those who serve. If, after long and arduous struggle, her faithful triumph, Ehlonna might well remove the strictures (and their offsetting benefits) upon the clerics and druids. The sin forgiven, the enemy defeated and the need for special orders gone, all returns to the natural way of things (as per the PH, DMG, etc.).

Now when you hear someone, DM or player, mentioning something about "unknown" cleric spells or similar difficulties, don't panic. It could well be a cleverly planned campaign where difference and the unexpected are desirable — and who can fault that?! Perhaps you might wish to try it in your own campaign, too. A cautionary word is necessary, however, for there is a problem with such variations. Unless the full and complete details of the differences are known to other DMs, they might well not wish to have clerics or druids of such nature participating in their games. This is their right, and skepticism on their part is justified. Players of these clerics and druids must be forewarned that such characters might be "one-campaign-only" adventurers who are not welcome elsewhere. †



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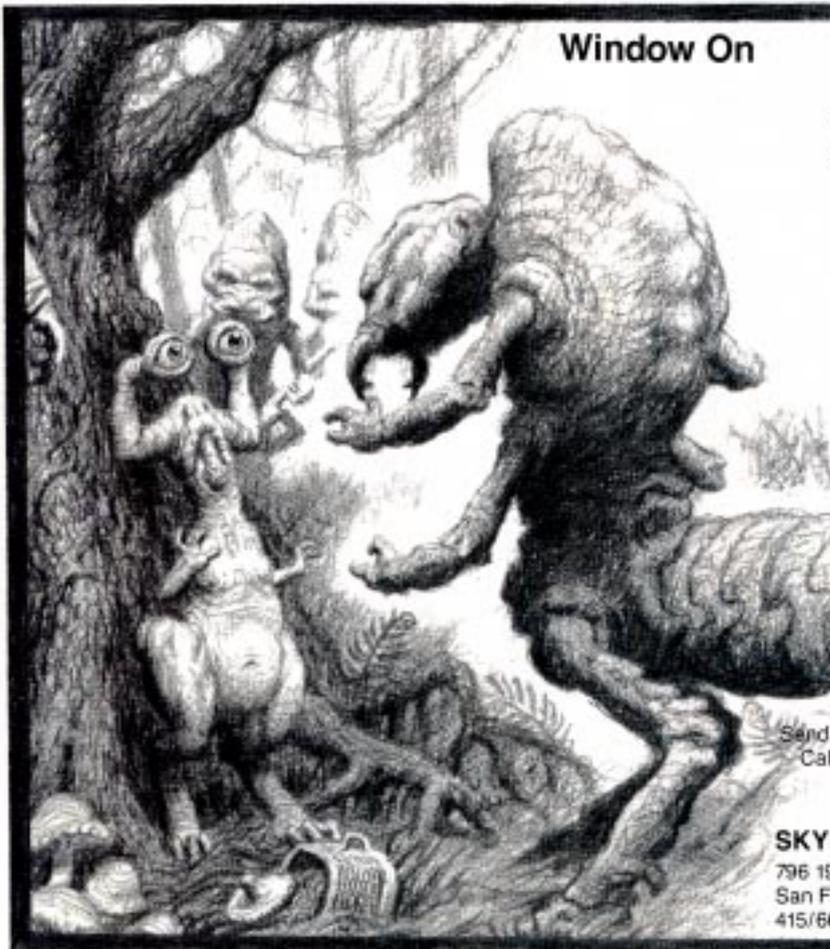
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# First, spread the faith

## Clerics need to keep their mission in mind

by Paul Vernon

Of all the AD&D® game character classes, the cleric is generally the most badly played. Clerics don't seem to fit very well into the medieval fantasy background of most AD&D game campaigns. Fighter characters can be modeled on Conan or Fafhrd, magic-users on Gandalf or Merlin, and thieves on the Grey Mouser or Bilbo Baggins, but few great characters of legend or fantasy literature exist from whom the players of clerics may draw inspiration. This makes the class particularly difficult to play.

In many adventures a cleric is taken along as a sort of walking medical kit and detection device, for it is widely recognized that in these roles a cleric adds to a party's chances of survival. Clerics often bestow their blessings on party members indiscriminately, however, with no thought to differences in alignment or outlook. This can lead to situations in which clerics actively aid the causes that they are supposed to oppose!

If merely being in the same party is enough to guarantee a cleric's aid, the cleric becomes a colorless appendage instead of a complete character in his own right. To help prevent this, a cleric's outlook, motives, and goals must be firmly outlined, preferably before any adventuring begins.

A cleric's motivation will differ greatly from that of any other character class. A fighter may prepare for the establishment of his own freehold, and a thief may look forward to the day when she can oust the local guildmaster, but a cleric's one overriding concern will be service to his deity and (thereby) the furtherance of his faith. *All* actions of the cleric will be viewed from this standpoint, and all decisions weighed in the balance. The cleric's personal needs and aspirations, and those of other party members, will always be of secondary importance. Even the cleric's life may be sacrificed, if his deity's aims would be furthered by such an act.

The gods are so powerful that direct confrontation between them would result in universal destruction. To prevent this, the gods' battles are fought on the Prime Material Plane by their servants, and clerics are their deities' standard bearers in the fray. The power of the gods is often proportional to the number of worshipers they enjoy, so a cleric's most important tasks will be to defend and nurture the faithful in areas where his deity is worshiped, and increase the number of worshipers whenever and wherever possible. A cleric must also en-



deavor to encourage and foster those values and aspects of the world that his deity finds most pleasing, to resist and crush those aspects found distasteful, and to foil the efforts of any beings working in the cause of deities opposed to his own. It can be assumed that clerics with temples and congregations in their charge will be most concerned with the former tasks, while the

other tasks will fall to the wandering cleric-adventurers, meaning the player characters.

Crusading zeal begins at home, and fellow party members will be prime targets for it. From the first, it should be made clear that under no circumstances will the cleric be a party to actions that go against the interests or teachings of his deity, nor will he stand idly by while others perform them. Those wishing his aid must first prove themselves worthy of it, and true believers will be given preference over infidels. The cleric may attempt to convert other party members to his faith at every opportunity, and should gladly expound on the tenets of his beliefs to all who seek enlightenment (as well as to those who don't). Unbelievers who seek his aid will be especially prone to this treatment, and payment or service in the deity's interest will be demanded in return. Those whom the cleric considers to be totally beyond redemption will never be aided unless the cause of the cleric's deity would be furthered greatly by doing so.

Clerics will be much less tolerant of persons whose alignments differ radically from their own than will other characters, for obvious reasons; this will be especially apparent when the clerics of opposing deities are concerned. Considerable distrust may appear even between clerics whose deities are well disposed toward one another, and it would be very rare indeed for a cleric to join a party containing the worshiper of a deity opposed to his own.

Being a cleric is a full-time occupation. As his deity's emissary on the Prime Material Plane, a cleric must exhibit behavior that is exemplary and correct according to his beliefs, even when not adventuring. Unlike other adventurers, he should not be found indulging in the delights of the bordello or ale-house between expeditions (unless religious observance demands it or is unconcerned with it). Instead, he may be seen preaching to the populace, administering to the faithful, and attempting to bring the area as a whole in line with his deity's ideals. These activities will more than likely bring the cleric into conflict with local priesthoods, which can spice things up for the other player characters, too. Having a well-played cleric in a party can often be a mixed blessing!

It is obvious that a cleric's behavior depends to a great extent on the deity he worships. By no means should all clerics be cut from the same mold, as often occurs in gaming. A set of beliefs and codes of behav-

ior must be established for each religion in a campaign, with some outline on how the various gods and their followers relate to each other.

It was hoped that the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedia would fulfill this role, but in this respect the book seems lacking. Although gods from many different pantheons are outlined in fair detail, the ultimate aims of the gods and the standards of behavior expected-of their worshipers and clerics are still left undefined. For a cleric to have purpose in life, he must worship a deity whose aims and aspirations are known and whose standards can be upheld. It is up to the DM to provide a selection of such deities from which a player may choose the one most suited to the character at hand. The DDG book is an excellent source book, though by no means exhaustive, and an inventive DM can design his own gods from scratch. A fair selection of gods, covering most spheres of influence, character types and alignment variations, can be achieved by using 20 to 30 different deities. Other deities above and beyond this total are largely redundant, though the DM may wish to include racial gods, such as the orc deity Gruumsh, especially for monster races.

Once deities have been chosen and their alignments, spheres of control, and the nature of their worshipers have been decided, it is fairly easy to provide them with motives, ambitions, and interrelationships. For purposes of this article, we will use as an example Kos, the god of dooms from the Nehwon mythos, and outline a hypothetical religious system for his clerics.

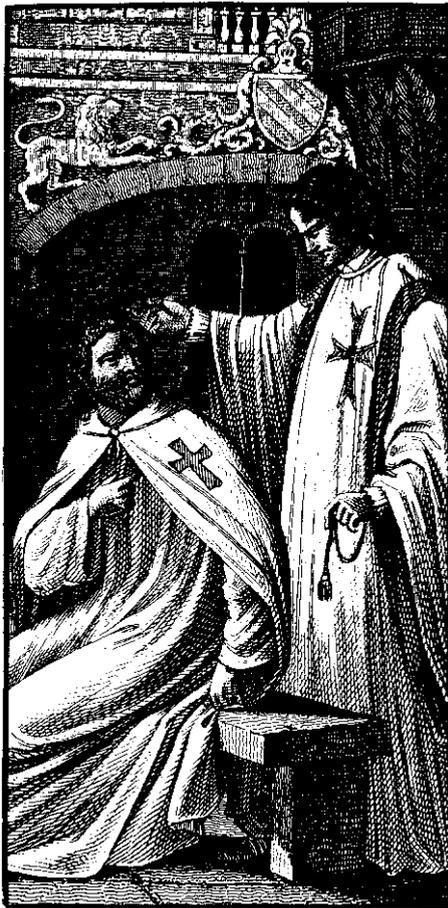
Kos is neutral in alignment, is worshiped by fighters, delights in battle, and has a highly developed sense of personal honor. We may assume from this that he tends more toward chaos than law, will wish to see as many battles as he can, prizes individual prowess and bravery over tactical excellence, and despises cowards intensely.

Cowards, in Kos's definition of the term, might make up a very broad and diverse group of beings, including all those who weigh the odds in their favor rather than fight directly one-on-one (such as magic-users, backstabbing thieves, and so forth). Those who are too "cowardly" to fight for themselves (such as peasants who depend on their lords to protect them, or rich individuals who hire others to do their fighting) will be lumped together with fighters who run away from anything less than insurmountable odds.

This outlook will obviously bring Kos into conflict with many deities — particularly gods advocating peaceful coexistence, gods of thieves and magic, gods of healing, and so forth. On the other hand, gods of music and poetry, whose practitioners praise the deeds of heroes, and those of metal-working, who oversee the making of the implements of battle, might find him well disposed towards them. The gods of natural phenomena like weather would be mutually indifferent to his actions.

Kos would make an ideal god for a barbarian hero. His followers would not allow themselves to show fear under any circumstances, and would spend much time improving their battle skills to please Kos with their prowess in combat. Their highly developed sense of honor would not allow them to fight against a much weaker enemy, and they would despise those who did, especially those who slew foes in their sleep rather than giving them the chance to die nobly in combat. Bravery and fighting skills would be highly prized even in enemies. Foes who fought bravely but did not die in battle might be made safe from having their throats cut afterwards, as long as the clerics of Kos were around.

The clerics would naturally follow the above code, but would have other obligations in addition. Their first task would be to actively encourage wars and combat wherever possible, for the more wars there are, the more warriors there will be, and thus the more potential worshipers. They would not hesitate to defend the honor of Kos with their blood, being even more eager to punish insults to him than the



clerics of most other deities.

When trying to gain converts from a party they are traveling with, the clerics of Kos will concentrate on the fighters present, and might spend a little time with the thieves (who could be honorable warriors if they'd only give up their cowardly backstabbing and sneaking about). Magic-users would generally be considered beyond the

pale, unless they only used their magic in combat to equal the odds in what would otherwise be an unequal engagement. Only fighters would be reasonably sure of receiving any aid, and even then only if they adhered to "Kosian" codes of behavior.

The code that such clerics follow would have a great effect on the spells they would use, as well as determining under what circumstances their spells would be cast. Since they are servants of a god who delights in battle, a good case could be made for allowing these clerics to use certain edged weapons, especially since Kos's holy symbol is a crossed sword and axe. As a precedent, note that the clerics of the Greyhawk deity Trithereon (DRAGON® Magazine #68) are allowed to gain the use of broadswords and spears.

Whether this sort of weaponry privilege is allowed in a campaign or not, the clerics of Kos would be eager to come to grips with their enemies to demonstrate their martial prowess and bravery, and to prove themselves worthy in their task of spreading Kos's teachings. As a result, they would be unlikely to cast spells in battle except to even up severely unbalanced odds.

After a look through the selection of cleric spells available, it becomes apparent that some spells would be unsuitable for followers of Kos to pray for or receive. *Sanctuary* would probably go unused, since it prevents the very thing that the cleric is trying to promote (confrontation). *Protection from evil* (in effect, from enchanted creatures) might be acceptable, since it would be useful against "cowardly" creatures employing magic for offense and defense, unless the cleric is powerful enough to attack such beings directly. *Detect evil* might be seen as an irrelevant spell, while *detect magic* could warn of an opponent's dishonorable methods of combat (e.g., the opponent's *girdle of giant strength*). *Remove fear* would be a good spell, but not its reverse, *cause fear*: What could be more heinous than to magically rob a warrior — even an opponent — of his bravery?

The cleric of Kos could find himself in a very interesting position with regard to dispensing cures. Healing "cowards" would be out of the question. Wounds received in single combat could be seen as honorable marks of battle, and as such their recipient might be expected to wear them with pride. However, a warrior whose wounds put him at a disadvantage against an uninjured opponent might be considered a special case. Wounds caused by magic, traps, or some other dishonorable means would be cured without question — as long as the recipient was worthy, of course.

Similar reasoning would apply where raising or resurrecting the dead is concerned. A warrior who died honorably in single combat might be seen as having died the finest death possible, and thus be refused resurrection. One who died by sorcery, or had been killed when fighting many opponents, would probably stand a much better chance of being brought back.

Service to Kos would also dictate the kinds of adventures his clerics might join. They might be unwilling to help dispose of an evil magnate whose armies were rampaging about the country, unless not doing so would harm their religious set-up in the area. They might join expeditions in relative peaceful areas, but might also be more interested in provoking monsters into attacking than in avoiding them.

The worship of Kos would be popular in barbaric regions and among barbarian mercenaries. The rulers of more civilized areas would want to further their ends without damaging their incomes, however, and "Kosites" might only be welcome at the courts of monarchs with expansionist

aims. Even here, their interest in prolonged combat would often conflict with the interests of the government (which would generally seek a quick, decisive victory). Many fighters would probably become worshipers, though, and temples of Kos might even offer inexpensive or free weapons-training to encourage converts from among those not having martial backgrounds.

Obviously, clerics of Kos would fit in very well with a party of hack-and-slayers. They would probably be a pain in the rear for a group of more subtle adventurers. Whatever their circumstances are, they make interesting characters and are (in my experience) fun to play.

This same process of creating a religious

background can be used to bring other religions in a campaign to life. Determine the aims of the gods, how they intend to fulfill them, and what relationships they have with other gods as a result. Then decide how this will affect the behavior of their worshipers and clerics, what spells would be acceptable to them, and in what situations these spells would be used. A canon in the service of Lu Yueh, the Chinese god of epidemics, would be unlikely to use *cure disease*, for example. How are clerics expected to further the aims of their god, and what kinds of adventures would they join? If your DM hasn't done all this detailing, then work out a religion for your cleric character yourself and see how things develop from there.

Having a detailed religious background adds enormously to the flavor of any fantasy campaign. Not only do clerics become more interesting and fun to play as characters, but encounters with NPC clerics become more enjoyable for the DM to handle. Conflicts between the various religions can themselves be a rich source of individual adventures.

If you find that your cleric has become colorless or that other players and characters take him for granted, give him a code to follow and send him out to spread the true faith! If he is true to his ideals (even if he doesn't survive), he will be assured a place in the afterlife at his deity's side! †



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# The more, the merrier

## How clerics can "find" new followers

by Bruce Barber

"Renounce your false gods, my friends, and I shall lead you along the path of the True Faith into the light of salvation!" pleaded the brave but verbose priest to his comrades-in-arms as they trudged wearily home from the lair of the defeated ogre.

"Blow it out your ear!" cried the party as one.

And so it goes for the poor cleric in many AD&D® games. This seems particularly true if the character is being role-played as outlined in the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedica (p. 9): "A cleric, no matter where he or she is, acts as an agent and representative of his or her deity. The cleric should miss no opportunity to explain and show to others, through both word and deed, the truth and rightness of his or her religion."

Without this fierce dedication to their deities, and concern for the souls of "heathen" compatriots, clerics tend to be little more than a variant form of fighter/magic-user. After my own much-loved cleric, Brother Demian, had once again been ridiculed by his fellow adventurers for his fiery, if pompous, evangelism (and after saving their bacon by banishing a pack of ghouls, too!), I posed a question to myself: How might a cleric go about *actively* converting others, within the AD&D game system? From this question came the method described herein, usable by clerics, druids, and paladins. (Druids, however, will in all probability not use their ability to convert someone unless the subject has first expressed an interest in their religion. The neutrality and general aloofness of druids tend to prohibit the concept of door-to-door druidic proselytizing.)

First, a few words about the "why" and "how" of conversion. Besides the megalomania which is the prerogative of divine beings, it seems reasonable to assume that the power of the gods, and perhaps their continued existence, stems from the number of worshipers that the deity can claim as his or her own. In a fantasy gaming milieu that utilizes many gods, this theory makes perfect sense. With this as a basis, it is logical that one of the prime functions of the cleric would be to bring as many "heathens" as possible into the fold of his or her deity.

Now, what forces are involved in making the mechanics of conversion function? We know from the DDG book (p. 114) that there is "an exact correspondence between alignment and the Outer Planes." It seems that the Outer Planes are permeated by a



form of energy, a spiritual force which in most cases can be harnessed only by the gods, the font of their divine abilities. However, all beings are affected by this force to the degree that it forms an aura around them; to most character classes, this aura is of no practical value, but can be perceived by a *know alignment* spell. (Note that the aura does not differ in *quality* from one alignment to another, only in *appearance*.)

But if a character enters the direct service of a deity (i.e., becomes a cleric), the aura is enhanced as follows. First of all, it may be thought of as the means of communication between the cleric and the deity — the "dial-a-prayer line," so to speak. Second, the aura also gains the property of being able to influence another being when directed by the cleric under the right circumstances, as detailed hereafter. Once the cleric has selected a prospective convert, the aura begins to work on the subject's mind, causing a sort of insanity which may be termed *religious mania*. If the cleric should then successfully convert the NPC involved (for obvious reasons, this system is *only*

usable on non-player characters), the NPC *could* suffer a radical personality alteration, shifting (for example) from lawful good to chaotic evil (in order to be acceptable to the new deity) but without passing through the intermediary stages of alignment (to LN, N, NE, then CE) and without the attendant loss of four experience levels as per the Dungeon Masters Guide (p. 25). Powerful artifacts which can induce radical alignment change apparently tap into this spiritual force, as well.

### The conversion procedure

Conversion can only be attempted upon non-player characters, and such an attempt can only be made by a player-character cleric, druid, or paladin (hereafter referred to as the "cleric"). The chance of success on any conversion attempt is determined by a combination of random chance, the cleric's dedication to the attempt, and five tangible factors that may influence the chance of success: alignment, racial preference, class, experience level, and the cleric's charisma.

To begin, the player of the cleric announces to the DM (secretly, if the player so wishes) the intention to convert a specific NPC. The process takes 5-17 (4d4+1) days of game time to complete, which subsumes long conversations, explanations, and/or arguments with the prospective convert. During this period, the DM must observe carefully how the cleric is being role-played, if the whole concept is not to degenerate into mechanical dice-rolling. The cleric should use all available time (campfire discussions, tavern bull sessions, etc.) to advance the case for his deity by whatever means the character deems suitable. If the player does not accept and carry out these role-playing responsibilities, the DM is obliged to apply a large negative modifier to the chance of success, or even overrule the dice entirely.

The cleric may attempt to convert only one NPC at a time. If the attempt is interrupted so that no conversation between the principals takes place for one day (for instance, if either one of them leaves the vicinity to go on an adventure), then the process is halted and the cleric will never be able to convert that particular NPC. If the cleric stops the process to begin an attempt upon a different NPC, then the first subject is likewise forever lost. And if an attempt is carried through but results in failure, that NPC cannot be converted by the cleric at any time in the future.

After the cleric announces an attempt to

convert and the requisite amount of game time has passed, the DM first determines whether a dice roll for success or failure is warranted; as stated above, the attempt could automatically fail if the cleric has not been properly role-played during the attempt. If success is possible, the DM tabulates all modifying influences (see the following section), administers a penalty for inadequate or insufficient role-playing (if warranted), and rolls percentile dice. The DM totals all the modifiers, adjusts the result of the dice roll accordingly, and consults the Conversion Reaction Table to establish the result of the conversion attempt.

### Modifiers

*1. Alignment:* In matters of religion, alignment is of paramount importance — a change of deity may also involve a change of alignment and the accompanying penalty (see the following section on The Results of Success). Note that this applies even to NPCs who profess to be atheists or agnostics: according to p. 25 of the DMG, even a character who does not consciously worship a deity or follow a religion “will have an alignment and serve one or more deities of this general alignment indirectly and unbeknownst to the character.”

If the cleric and the subject are of the same alignment, the conversion attempt is made at no penalty in this regard. When alignments are different, one of these penalties may apply:

- 1 step difference: -10%
- 2 steps difference: -25 %
- 3 steps difference: -40%

The alignment modifier is applicable only if the subject is aware of the cleric’s alignment, whether directly or through prior knowledge of the cleric’s deity. A cleric will almost always make known the name of his deity (or, at least, a popular title or honorific used to refer to the deity) during the conversion attempt; most deities would demand that they not be relegated to anonymous status, and most subjects would demand to know the name of the god they’re being asked to serve. However, it would not always be necessary, or even advisable, for the cleric to make his alignment known during the conversion attempt; for instance, the servant of an evil deity would usually not announce his alignment before attempting to seduce an unwary subject, and especially not if the subject’s current alignment is non-evil. Only an NPC who is extremely gullible or has a decided lack of conviction concerning his alignment would put up with a conversion attempt in such circumstances; most would simply refuse to listen, or might challenge the cleric with something a lot stronger than a verbal argument.

Any NPC with access to a *know alignment* spell or some other magical or psionic means of detecting the cleric’s alignment will certainly use this power. Other subjects will have a chance to know this information from things they may have heard about the cleric’s deity during their travels and con-

## CONVERSION REACTION TABLE

### d% roll General description of result

01-05	The perspective convert has finally become fed up with listening to the cleric. If the subject is evil and has an experience level equal to or higher than the cleric’s, there is a 75% chance that he will become violently incensed at the cleric’s audacity and attack (then or soon thereafter) with intent to kill. Such are martyrs created! In any other situation, the subject will simply break off contact and desire to never have anything to do with the cleric thereafter, perhaps accompanying his departure with threatening words or insults to make his feelings clear. If the cleric persists in this lost cause, the subject may feel “forced” to express his feelings in a more violent fashion.
06-25	A hostile reaction, but usually without the intent to kill. If the subject’s alignment is more than one step removed from the cleric’s, and if the subject is of equal or higher experience level, there is a 50% chance that the subject will attack the cleric and try to provide him with a valuable object lesson by beating him senseless. If the above conditions do not hold true, the subject will simply show his disgust and attempt to leave the cleric’s presence as quickly as possible. If the cleric keeps trying to make a silk purse out of this sow’s ear, he may find himself on the receiving end of more than a glowering look or two.
26-45	The subject is doubtful but not hostile. He will request to see a sign of the cleric’s (and deity’s) power. If the cleric complies with some impressive spell or display, there is still a 60% chance that the subject will insist that it was trickery, and henceforth will refuse to associate with the cleric unless necessary.
46-55	The subject has been willing to listen to the cleric up to now, but he now decides he has listened long enough, and he still isn’t interested in changing to the cleric’s religion. If the cleric asks the subject to listen more, there is a 50% chance that the subject will consent. The conversion process can then be restarted, using different dice rolls for duration and result, and perhaps different modifiers. If the second attempt goes to completion, award a +10% modifier to reflect the subject’s willingness to keep listening.
56-75	Dubious, but still open-minded. The subject will request to see some sign of the cleric’s power, as with the above entry for 26-45. If the cleric complies, there is a 60% chance that the subject will be sufficiently impressed and agree to embrace the new religion.
76-95	Very receptive; if the cleric continues his efforts for two more days of game time, there is an 85% chance that the subject will agree to convert at the end of that period.
96-00	Complete, enthusiastic, on-the-spot conversion.

versations with other characters. This chance is 10% for fighters, thieves, assassins, and non-classed NPCs; 20% for magic-users, illusionists, rangers, and monks; or 30% for clerics and paladins. The base chance is adjusted upward by 2% for each experience level the character has attained; thus, a 10th-level magic-user has a 40% chance of knowing what he’s getting into, while the chance for a 0-level peasant is only 10%.

*Racial preference:* In cases where a deity accepts only worshipers of a specific race, any (ill-advised) conversion attempt will certainly fail; presumably, the cleric is aware of his deity’s preferences or restrictions in this regard and would not even make the attempt. However, when the deity is not choosy about race, then it is important to consider what the subject’s opinion is about the cleric’s race (which, for a player

character, must be either human, half-elf, or half-orc). Modifiers for racial preference are as follows:

Cleric’s race	Preference	+15%
viewed with:	Goodwill	+5%
	Tolerance	0%
	Neutrality	-5%
	Antipathy	-10%
	Hatred	-15%

*Class and experience level:* What a feather in the tonsure it is for a cleric to be able to win over some cleric or paladin devoted to another faith! However, it must be recognized that such characters are by their nature highly resistant to such tactics. Thus, a basic penalty of -35% is automatically applied to any attempt by a cleric, druid, or paladin to convert a member of any of those classes, plus an extra penalty of -1% per point of wisdom possessed by the subject.

For subjects of all other classes (or non-classed, 0-level NPCs), the chance of success is adjusted up or down by 2% for each experience level of difference between the cleric and the subject. A 3rd-level cleric attempting to convert a 0-level peasant does so with a bonus of +6% applied for the difference in their levels; the same cleric trying to persuade a 5th-level fighter must take a -4% penalty.

**Charisma:** Even if the subject is suspicious of the philosophies espoused by the cleric, the non-believer may yet be swayed by the charm and personal magnetism of the cleric. Conversely, even if the new religion sounds attractive, the subject may find the cleric repulsive. Therefore, the cleric's chance of success is modified by the Reaction Adjustment (if applicable) for the cleric's charisma score, as found on p. 13 of the *Players Handbook*.

#### The results of success

Successful conversion may or may not have far-reaching effects on the NPC subject. If it is necessary for the NPC's alignment to change in order for him to worship the new deity, the subject will suffer a drop in experience level. But because alignment change due to conversion is in a separate category from both magical and voluntary alignment changes, the NPC will only lose a number of experience points sufficient to bring him down to the midpoint of the next

lower level — regardless of how many steps of alignment difference were involved in the change. This reflects the phenomenon of the new deity intervening on behalf of the convert to somewhat alleviate the punishment dished out by the former deity. It is also suggested that whether an alignment change is involved or not, the NPC be required to make some kind of offering to the former deity — a sacrifice, or the relinquishing of a valuable possession or a magic item — to help avoid the possible repercussions (against all concerned) of the spurned deity. The value of this offering, or even its necessity, will vary greatly depending on the personality and/or requirements of the former deity; some deities might be furious at having a follower pulled out from under them, while others would just as soon be rid of the hopeless soul.

In some instances, a character's class may have to change after conversion because of alignment restrictions that are now being violated. Although it is *very* difficult for a chaotic evil cleric to bring a paladin NPC into the service of his foul deity, the possibility does exist. If the conversion succeeds, the paladin is reduced to the status of a mere fighter; in fact, this will happen *any* time a paladin changes alignment. A thief, assassin, ranger, or monk could likewise be affected.

Conversion is not necessarily a permanent condition. Once (and if) the NPC is away from the influence of the cleric who

performed the conversion, there is a 25% chance (non-cumulative) per week that the NPC will "come to his senses" and desire to return to his former deity (and alignment, if that was also changed). This may be accomplished by using the procedures for atonement as outlined on p. 25 of the DMG. This chance is checked for a period of four weeks, plus an additional four weeks for every step of difference (if any) between the NPC's former and present alignments, beginning one week after the cleric and the NPC part company. Thus, an NPC who was converted but did not change alignment could "come to his senses" sometime during the following four weeks, but after that point the conversion is permanent (pending another conversion attempt later by a different cleric). An NPC who was converted and changed alignment most drastically (three steps) would be checked for 16 weeks thereafter — in other words, although such an extreme change could take place, it is practically impossible to make it stick.

The effects of conversion cannot be reversed by most magical means (see the following section), but if the condition is recognized as a form of insanity, then the usual methods for curing madness will be effective. There is a 50% chance that someone who knew the NPC before his conversion and encounters him afterward will realize that the NPC is suffering from *religious mania*; this roll is made only once for any such character the NPC comes into contact with.

#### Magic and conversion

No magic of any sort, nor any psionic power, can be used to improve the chance of a successful conversion. So delicate is the interaction between the cleric's aura and the mind of the subject that any outside interference will cause the conversion attempt to fail.

If more than one cleric should try to convert the same NPC at the same time, or if a second cleric begins an attempt when another one is under way, both attempts will automatically fail, and the DM must make an intelligence check for the NPC: If a roll of d20 is greater than the NPC's intelligence score, the poor victim will suffer *confusion* (as per the 7th-level druid spell) for a number of rounds equal to 21 minus the die roll.

Any magic item that specifically affects alignment, such as a *helm of opposite alignment*, will function normally in the possession of a converted character. Thus, it may be possible for the NPC to regain the alignment he held previous to the conversion — but a magical change of this sort would require that the full level-loss penalty be paid.

#### The cleric's reward

A cleric character receives both tangible and intangible benefits from performing a successful conversion. First, the tangible:

A basic award of 300 experience points is earned by the cleric, plus or minus 25 XP for each experience level of the cleric below

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or above the level of the subject. There is a bonus of 75 XP for each step of difference between the cleric's alignment and the subject's previous alignment, and an additional 10 XP or 15 XP respectively if racial antipathy or hatred was involved. Finally, the cleric gets an additional 150 XP if the subject was a cleric, druid, or paladin.

The nature and scope of any intangible rewards will depend on how well the cleric and the deity are role-played, by the player and the DM respectively. If the deity is one who attaches great importance to this method of conversion, a cleric who performs a lot of successful conversions could be further rewarded. Conversely, if the deity is one who prefers his clerics to gain "converts" by bashing their heads in, this sort of passive persuasion might be seen as taking the easy way out, and thus would not make the cleric eligible for any significant benefits above and beyond the experience-point award.

#### How the system works

Following are examples of a successful and an unsuccessful conversion, both using deities from the Greek pantheon.

*A. Success:* Sister Alberyth is a 4th-level half-elf cleric of chaotic good alignment with a charisma score of 15; she serves the goddess Aphrodite. Alberyth wishes to convert Flyptop, a 2nd-level (3000 XP) NPC human fighter, neutral good, who professes to be an agnostic.

At the start of the process, the DM secretly makes the 4d4 roll and adds 1, arriving at a figure of 9 days, which is how long (unbeknownst to both of them) that the cleric and her subject must engage in regular and frequent discussions of the issues involved. At some point during this time, the DM determines that Flyptop has a 14% chance of being aware of Alberyth's alignment, through prior knowledge of what Aphrodite is like. The DM rolls 08 on percentile dice, meaning that whether or not Alberyth tells Flyptop her alignment, the fighter will know what it is when the process is complete.

#### Modifiers:

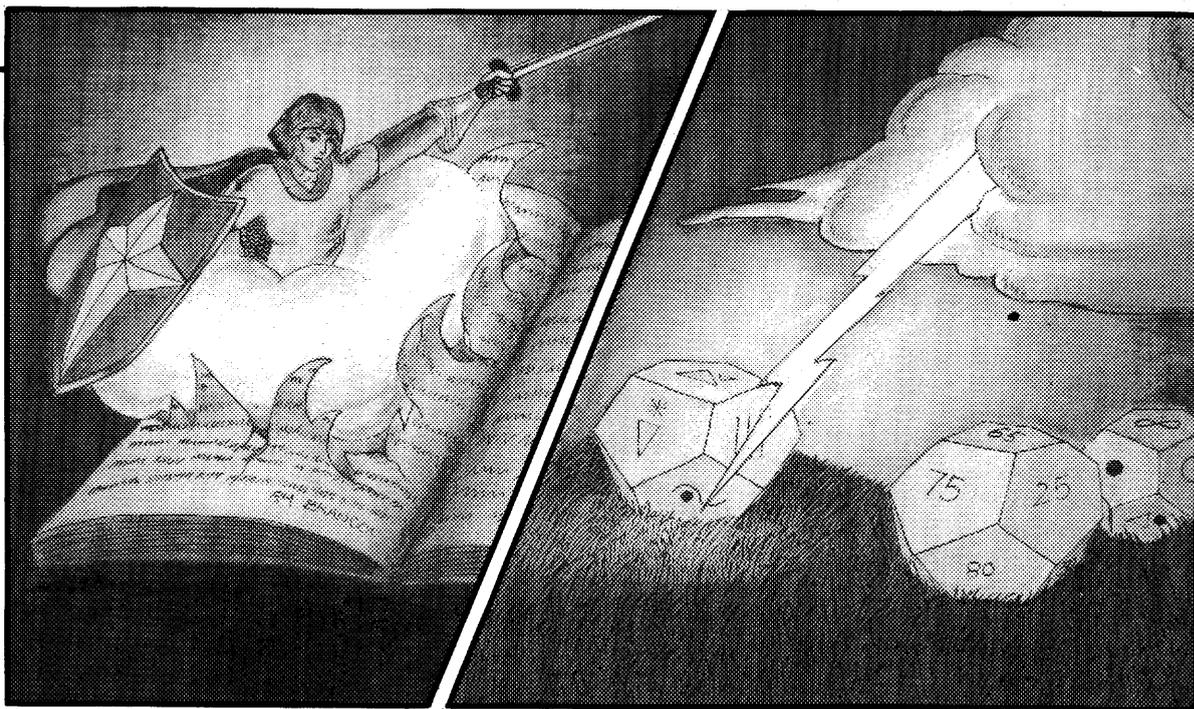
- |  |      |
|--|------|
| 1. Subject knows cleric's alignment (1 step difference): | -10% |
| 2. Humans view half-elves with tolerance:                | 0%   |
| 3. Cleric's charisma is 15:                              | +10% |
| 4. Cleric 2 levels higher than subject:                  | 4%   |
| Total of modifiers:                                      | +4%  |

When (and if) the process runs to completion, the DM rolls percentile dice. The result is 30, which becomes 34 after the modifiers are applied. According to the Conversion Reaction Table, this means that Flyptop is still pretty skeptical about the whole thing and, being from Mizoory, demands: "Show me!" Alberyth complies by taking a drop of dew in her helmet, speaking a short prayer, and passing her hand over the helm. A moment later the

helm is filled with cool, clear water! The DM rolls 61 and Flyptop, concluding that Alberyth's goddess is a mighty one, abandons his agnosticism to serve Aphrodite — causing his alignment to shift to chaotic good.

Agnostic or no, Flyptop had been watched over by Demeter up to now. Having little patience for chaotic (or lawful) ex-believers, she strips Flyptop of all but 1000 XP, returning him to the midpoint of the first experience level. The happy cleric Alberyth receives 325 XP (300-50+75) and the glow of satisfaction from a job well done. Aphrodite decides to immediately replace the *create water* spell that Alberyth used to win Flyptop over, and if she cares to, may favor the cleric with some other small gesture in the future.

*Failure:* Master Meaningwell is a lawful good 2nd-level human cleric with a charisma of 8; he worships Athena. Considering himself more of a wise man than a fighter, he decides to try to convert a newcomer to the area — Lord Gauntleroy, who seems like a nice enough old man. Lord Gauntleroy is actually not a nice guy, but is pretending to be while he hides from his enemies. He is a 13th-level chaotic evil human cleric with a wisdom score of 16. Gauntleroy uses a *know alignment* spell to make himself perfectly aware of what Meaningwell is doing. He decides it will pass the time, and might be amusing, to



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listen to the cleric's chatter for a few days.

Modifiers:

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 1. Attempt to convert a cleric:                           | -35% |
| 2. Subject knows cleric's alignment (3 steps difference): | -40% |
| 3. Cleric's charisma is 8:                                | 0%   |
| 4. Racial preference is Goodwill:                         | +15% |
| 5. Subject 11 levels higher:                              | -22% |
| with wisdom of 16:  | -16% |
| Total of modifiers:                                       | -98% |

No dice roll is necessary, since the best possible result (00) will be adjusted down to 02. Gauntleroy has heard all he can take — and he isn't taking it very well, either. He reaches for his mace, having decided to put poor Master Meaningwell out of his misery, even if it means blowing his cover. If the good cleric gets resurrected, maybe he'll think twice about trying to convert people he doesn't know very well.

#### Optional: Miraculous conversions

The following is intended to simulate the effect, upon characters and creatures of low intelligence and level, of being in the presence of a "miracle." This optional system is based on the fact that cleric spells — even a simple *bless* or *cure light wounds* — are bestowed by the gods and are thus by their very nature "miraculous." For this system, a "miracle" is defined as any cleric spell or ability the effect of which can be seen or sensed by witnesses (not just recipients of the magic) and which obviously originated

with the cleric. Examples include, but are certainly not limited to, *create water*, a paladin's laying on of hands, and the turning of undead. Cleric spells that would not constitute a "miracle" for conversion purposes under normal circumstances include *bless* (no effect that is visible or detectable by onlookers), *find traps* (it could be a trick), and *slow poison* (the victim might have recovered anyway).

This procedure should be administered entirely in secret by the DM; it is not something over which the cleric necessarily has control, and a cleric does not have to specifically attempt miraculous conversion of one or more eligible creatures in order for the event to occur. Obviously, the DM must use discretion as to when miraculous conversion can occur; it is unlikely (though not impossible) that creatures in the heat of battle would suddenly throw down their arms and convert.

Alignment restrictions are much more severe when using this options. A cleric of good alignment may not "accidentally" convert creatures of evil alignment, and vice versa; the same applies to lawful and chaotic alignments. These diametrically opposed ways of viewing reality are simply too powerfully ingrained to flip about at the drop of a *spiritual hammer*.

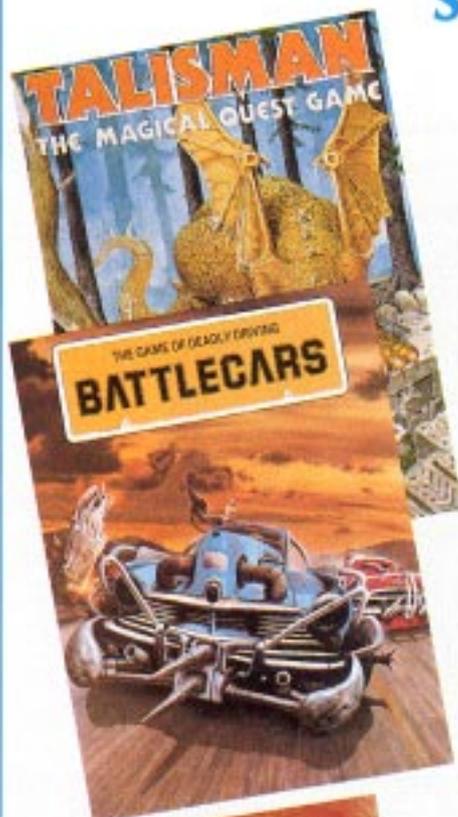
Miraculous conversion may occur when the cleric performs his "miracle" in the presence of one or more creatures which

have 3 or fewer hit dice and an intelligence rating of *low*, which corresponds to a score of 5, 6, or 7. Those of less intelligence are too dumb to be impressed, and probably don't know what religion is in the first place; those of greater intelligence are not this easily swayed.

In a situation where all of the foregoing requirements are met, and the DM decides that miraculous conversion is feasible, he rolls percentile dice for each involved creature separately. Each creature has a 15% chance of being converted by the "miracle." Monsters converted in this way might not automatically and consciously embrace the cleric's religion, but will react toward the cleric as if under the influence of a *charm* spell.

Any accidental conversion of this sort that takes place will earn the cleric 25 XP for each creature affected, regardless of what happens to the converted creature afterward. And in all likelihood, the conversion will not last for long. There is a 5% chance per day — cumulative — that a creature will "backslide" to its old ways, up to a maximum of 85% on the 17th day following the occurrence of the "miracle." If the maximum is reached, this 85% chance must be checked after each week of game time thereafter — demonstrating that, sooner or later, "followers" like these who are so easily impressed can just as easily become disenchanting! †

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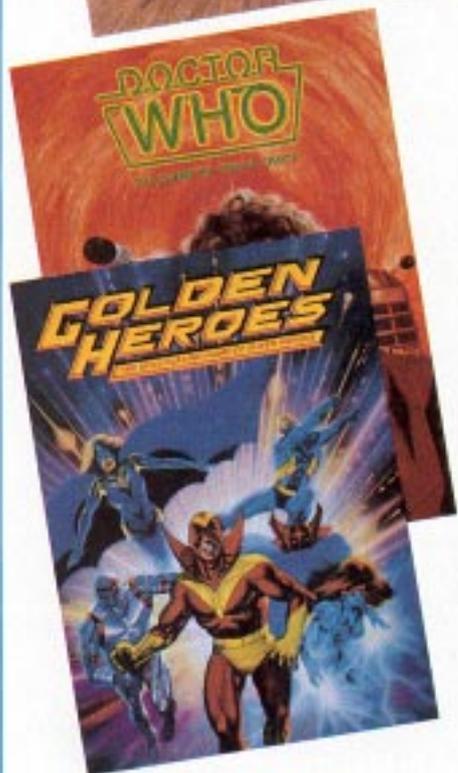
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# A better Open – it figures!

The list of winners, and a look at why they won

Text by Kim Eastland

Photos by Dan Sample



*Jim Conover's modified Dwarven Siege Machine (left) takes its base from a Ral Partha Goblin War Machine. Jim replaced the catapult with a large ballista and two dart-throwers.*

*Matthew Sturm depicted a Ral Partha Cloud Giant (below) out for a stroll in the woods. Note the shield that the giant uses for a belt buckle.*

Clearly, everything's getting better in the field of miniature figures. With an ever-increasing number of high-quality figures on the market, painters are challenged to bring out the realism of a finely sculpted figure with an equally realistic paint job. As demonstrated by the winners of the Fourth Annual Gen Con Miniature Open, the painters have indeed risen to that challenge.

The competition, held at the 1984 GEN CON® Game Fair, was overseen by Art Neckermann of TSR, Inc. I was on the panel of judges, along with Julie Guthrie of Ral Partha and Forest Brown of FASA Corporation. And Dan Sample was once again on hand with his camera to capture the prize winners for posterity. In this issue of DRAGON® Magazine, the spotlight is on the winners in the fantasy categories; some of the science-fiction prize winners will be featured in the ARES™ Section of DRAGON issue #93, and the top winners in the historical category will be featured in STRATEGY & TACTICS® Magazine.

One of the champions not pictured here is the first-place winner in the Masters competition. That diorama is so striking that it will be featured on a page by itself in issue #93 of DRAGON Magazine.

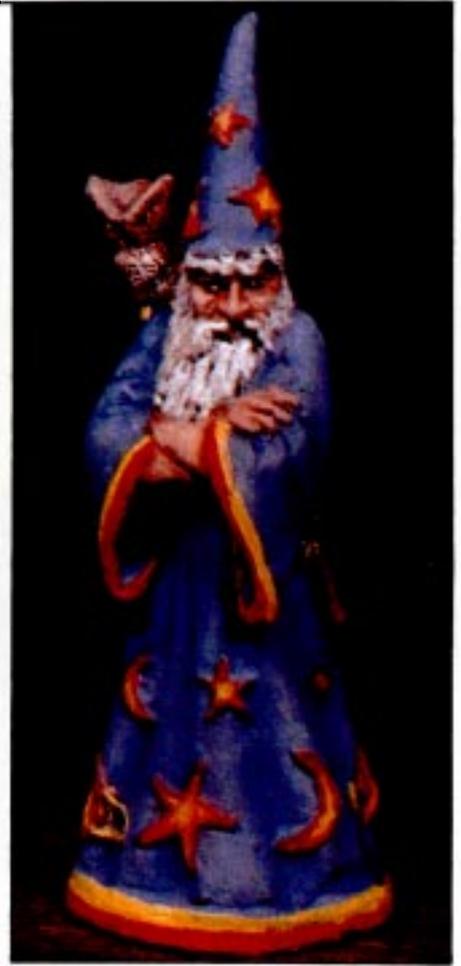
On the following two pages are listed the winners in each category of the competition, as well as the companies that contributed to the prize fund for contestants. Our congratulations to the winners, and our thanks to the sponsors that made the Open worthwhile for all participants.





Matt Sturm's Wizard (right) is all the more impressive when you consider that the photo shown here is 5 times larger than the figure itself:

This photo should illustrate why "Dwarven Party" (left), by Larry Peters, won the Best of Show award. The tree is striking, but the diorama is also full of intricate detail.



### Monsters

1st Place: A Ral Partha *Cloud Giant* pushed its way into first place thanks to Matthew Sturm of Ann Arbor, Mich.

2nd Place: John Knox's bizarre and beautiful Dragon.

3rd Place: Another colorful and weird creature, the *Jabberwock*, by Judy Brown of Des Plaines, Ill.

### Fantasy Diorama

1st Place: A really distinctive piece, *Dwarven Party*, by Larry Peters of Milwaukee, features a huge, scratch-built treant-like tree that seemed to be straight from a Disney cartoon and slightly modified Citadel figures.

2nd Place: Another Ral Partha *Jabberwock in Combat*, this one by Matt Sturm.

3rd Place: Jim Conover of Cedarburg, Wis., took a prize with a converted *Dwarven Siege Machine*.

### General Diorama

1st Place: This entry by Karl Kochvar of Chicago, built in a shadow box, was so big it couldn't fit into the room. The diorama captured a scene from the *Hoth War*.

2nd Place: Another Illinois native, Tim Yosich of Northbrook, scored with his 15mm sci-fi diorama, *Forced Landing*.

3rd Place: Steve Rota of Milwaukee did a fine job with his snowy *Chopper Pad*.

### Personality

1st Place: Matt Sturm's third prize of the competition was captured by his marvelous Superior *Wizard*.

2nd Place: A three-way tie! Judy Brown's *Guarding* features a warrior seated amongst his loot. Robert Charrette of Fairfield, Ohio, had two entries in this category that were equally good, *Female Magic User* and *Warrior*

3rd Place: An unusual *Indian Chief* by

Jeff Rodman of Gas City, Ind., captured the judges' fancy.

### Junior

1st Place: Mike Jaecks of Janesville, Wis., won with his superbly painted *Tiger Madcoil*.

2nd Place: Mike Jaecks again, with a fierce Grenadier *Demon*. Mike had a large number of great-looking pieces entered in the competition.

3rd Place: Coming all the way from Waterbury, Conn., Mike Druckenmiller captured third in this fierce category with his fine *Cleric Casting Spell*.

### Large Scale Figures

1st Place: Judy Brown won her third prize of the contest with a breathtaking 120mm *French Hussar, 1812*.

2nd Place: A radiantly colorful 65mm *Sergeant-Major of the Scots Guard* performed well for Larry Peters.

3rd Place: *Sir Francis Drake*, in all of his 54mm glory, by Larry Peters.



Judy Brown's diorama entitled "Guarding" shows a warrior who looks ready for anything but notice the trap door that's opening up behind him . . .



*Mike Jaecks, a Junior competitor who did so well in this year's Open that he was named a Master, shows the grislier side of his talent with this Demon. We didn't ask what he used for "blood" in the scene — and we don't want to know!*

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### Masters

The Masters competition is exclusively for those participants previously named "Masters" at the Open. The title this year was earned by Eric Heaps of Milwaukee for his amazing *Reptiliad Attack*. Look for photos of this winning diorama in next month's issue of *DRAGON* Magazine.

Four new members were inducted into the Master ranks: Larry Peters, Judy Brown, Matthew Sturm, and Mike Jaecks.

In addition to the merchandise certificates donated by TSR, Inc., for the category winners, many other dealers, distributors, and manufacturers contributed

to make the prize list into quite a treasure hoard. Companies that supported the Miniature Open with prize donations included:

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*Two renditions of Ral Partha's Jabberwock won prizes in the Open. This one was the third-place winner in the Monster category for Judy Brown, who tells us that her original title for the piece was "A Trivial Pursuit Loser."*



# COMING ATTRACTIONS



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The latest STAR FRONTIERS® story in the ENDLESS QUEST® book series. As a young human exchange student on the distant planet of Artule, the reader faces difficult choices when the hero becomes embroiled in a plot to disrupt intergalactic trade. Further complications arise when the student discovers that prejudice is not a phenomenon found only on Earth.

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## Telling the future

(From page 2)

everything works out right — and when was the last time *that* happened?

We're pretty close to publishing a package of programs for various home computers — a couple of player-character generators for the AD&D® game, a program that creates NPCs, and some utility programs designed to make the DM's life easier.

Another 3-D presentation is in the works, as sort of a followup to "Great Stony" in issue #86. No, it's not another castle; the next paper sculpture will be in 25mm scale, usable with miniatures.

For our other middle-of-the-book special features, we'll keep producing the best modules and games we can find. The re-

sponses to our Module Hunt had Roger Moore buried under a mound of paper for a while. but he says he's recovering nicely, and the search should yield some good adventures.

We have four more pieces of writing on hand from Gary Gygas — enough columns to carry us through April, at least — and his promise to try to produce even more material. We're accumulating articles for special packages on the ranger and the druid, we're trying to find room for a long article on AD&D adventuring in the Land of Oz, as well as an even longer article: the *Arcane Wisdom* supplement that players of the DRAGONQUEST™ game have awaited for so long. Articles on Limbo and

Elysium will probably be next in line in our continuing examination of the other planes of existence.

That's about as far as I can go, judging by the use of the word "probably" in that last sentence; anything else I might mention would be more of a pipe dream than a plan. We hope all of these predictions will come true, but keep in mind what they say about the best-laid plans of mice and men — that applies to magazines, too.



# Gods of the Suel pantheon

## Last of the series: Lydia, Bralm, and Jascar

by Lenard Lakofka

### LYDIA

Goddess of Music, Light, and Daylight

Lesser Goddess

ARMOR CLASS: 5 (but see below)

MOVE: 12"

HIT POINTS: 120

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: Variable (see below)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 60% (but see below)

SIZE: M (5'8" tall)

ALIGNMENT: Neutral good

WORSHIPERS' ALIGNMENT: Good musicians, sages, and scholars

SYMBOL: A spray of vivid colors

PLANE: Elysium

CLERIC/DRUID: Nil

FIGHTER: Nil

M-U/ILLUSIONIST: As if 20th level in each (see below)

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil

MONK/BARD: Sings as a 20th-level bard; also has sage abilities

PSIONIC ABILITY: VI

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

S: 15 I: 23 W: 23

D: 15 C: 15 Ch: 21

Lydia appears as an old but dynamic human female with long, white hair and clear blue eyes. She wears a long white gown trimmed in gold and silver. Lydia uses no weapon, but can instantly cast a *color spray* or *prismatic spray* once per round as often as desired. She wears no armor, but is constantly surrounded by a spherical *wall of force* that allows her spells to pass through it, but cannot itself be affected by anything short of a *disintegrate* spell. If her *sphere of force* is brought down, it will re-form exactly 8 segments later. Even if her protection is broken through, she is immune to any spell of less than the 5th level of power, regardless of the level of the caster.

In addition to these special magical powers, Lydia can cast a limited number of magic-user or illusionist spells each day, each at the 20th level of effectiveness. She can use any 1st-level spell as often as desired, plus a total of 10 2nd-level spells and five 3rd-level spells per day, at the maximum rate of one spell per round.

Her singing ability overrides the effects of any other sound, even *drums of panic*,



acting as a triple-strength *chant* spell that will remain in effect for one hour after she stops singing, provided that she sings for at least one round to activate the power.

Despite all of the foregoing, Lydia's main attribute is her ability as a sage. She has three major fields of knowledge: *human-kind*, *demi-human-kind*, and *supernatural & unusual*. Every category in each of those fields is treated as a category of specializa-

tion for her, and she is only 0-9% (d10-1) likely to *not* know the answer to an exacting question in any of those fields. All other fields of knowledge are considered as minor fields to her, and she has the usual chance to know the answer to a question (see DMG, pp. 31-33).

In recognition of a specific service done on her behalf, Lydia will allow a loyal and faithful follower to receive an answer to one question; however, she will only communicate in this manner with a follower (cleric or otherwise) who is neutral good. The answer she gives will generally be complete and exact, but she might withhold information that she deems it unwise for the questioner to know. Also, she does not appreciate greedy questioners whose requests for information are too broad. If she decides, upon hearing a question, that she cannot give a complete answer to it in two minutes of talking, she will offer no reply at all and will immediately break off contact with the questioner.

A *commune* spell cast by one of her clerics is special and powerful; only three questions are allowed, but if she is addressed directly, Lydia will answer all three questions fully and willingly, subject to the general restrictions described above; note that the questions are not limited to those that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no," but (as described above) only a cleric of neutral good alignment can *commune* directly with the goddess. Lydia prefers to not be *communed* with by the same cleric more often than once per week; using the spell more frequently than this will cause her to give incomplete answers or (probably) no answer at all. If the *commune* privilege is abused to the extreme (such as asking repeated questions day after day about the same subject), Lydia may become so displeased that she reduces the offender to first level and expels the character from her clergy. Of course, the *commune* spell can also be used to contact a minion or agent of the goddess instead of communicating directly with Lydia. When used in this manner, the *commune* spell can be used by a cleric of any good alignment, and the magic acts normally: one question per level of the questioner, but only questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" will be responded to.

Lydia does not come to the Prime Material Plane, but gathers information about the happenings on that plane from her clergy. When her clerics pray to her (or her minions) for replenishment of spells, they

are required to give information as well as receive it; to serve this purpose, they must spend an extra 30 minutes in prayer each day, over and above the time they would normally take to acquire spells. Lydia is worshipped by many sages, and on occasion will answer their questions as well — but note again that any character who wants to receive answers or information directly from the goddess must be neutral good. Lydia will accept praise and worship from those of other good alignments, but she will not

personally answer any questions posed to her by them.

Clerics devoted to the worship of Lydia are usually (80%) female. They wear white vestments trimmed in gold and silver. Even at the lowest of experience levels, clerics of Lydia are entitled to additional knowledge; she will permit them one or more “knowledge spells” over and above the spells they are normally allowed. These spells must be prayed for in the normal manner, and each of them can only be used once per day.

At 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level a cleric of Lydia receives *detect magic* as a bonus spell; at 4th level, *augury* is added; at 6th level, *divination*; at 8th level, *locate object*; and at 12th level, *commune*. These bonus spells are cumulative so that a cleric of 12th level can gain all five spells in addition to her usual ones.

Lydia has few churches in the Flanaess, except for five that are notable. These are located in Lo Reltarma, Niolo Dra, Gryrax, Nellix, and Pitchfield.

## BRALM

### Goddess of Insects and Industriousness

#### Lesser Goddess

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 14"/35"

HIT POINTS: 170

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 4-40 +10 strength bonus

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 60%

SIZE: M (5'2" tall)

ALIGNMENT: Neutral (lawful and evil tendencies)

WORSHIPERS' ALIGNMENT: Lawful, but seldom lawful good

SYMBOL: Giant wasp in front of a swarm of insects

PLANE: Acheron

CLERIC/DRUID: 14th-level druid

FIGHTER: 16th-level ranger

M-U/ILLUSIONIST: Nil

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil

MONK/BARD: Nil

PSIONIC ABILITY: IV (200 str. pts.)

Attack/Defense Modes: All/All

S: 22 (+4,+10) I: 19 W: 19

D: 17 C: 18 Ch: 14

Bralm appears as an ordinary human female about 50 years old. She can sprout insectlike wings in one melee round and retract them at will. She only shows her wings if she wants to fly immediately, or if she senses danger nearby.

She fights with a special *staff of striking* that is +4 to hit due to magic and +4 more because of her strength bonus. It will deal out 4-40 points of damage per hit, +10 more because of her strength. Any wooden object she touches with the staff must make a saving throw vs. disintegration or crumble into nothingness. Only Bralm can safely wield this staff; all others will take 2-20 points of damage per round whenever they touch, grasp, or carry it.

As often as three times per day, Bralm can cast a special *insect plague* (over and above her normal spell allotment) that will always contain 4-24 giant insects of some type(s). No insects will ever harm her; thus, one of her favorite tactics is to engage in combat while in the middle of an *insect plague* of this sort. She can command all of



the giant insects in such a swarm to attack a specific target within the area of effect of the *plague*, or to just defend her body from attack. If the giant insects kill a specified target, they will disappear from the swarm, leaving only the normal-sized insects that normally make up the content of an *insect plague*.

Whenever she desires, Bralm can *shape-change* to the form of an anhkheg of largest

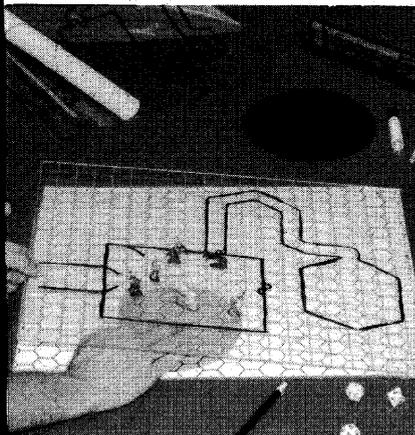
size, a giant wasp, or a giant scorpion. In any of these forms, she retains her normal hit points and armor class but otherwise has the full powers of the creature changed into. She is immune to all effects of wands, staves, and rods (even her own *staff of striking*, should it ever be used against her), and is not affected by any poison that is even partially derived from insects.

She possesses the psionic disciplines of *animal telepathy*, *precognition*, *suspend animation*, and *molecular rearrangement*, and uses each of them at the 20th level of mastery.

Bralm never uses any spell related to fire, but can freely select from all other druid spells. Some of her spells are more potent than others; the following magics operate as though she were 20th level for the purpose of duration, area of effect, and range: *summon insects*, *repel insects*, *dispel magic*, *wall of thorns*, and *creeping doom*.

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Members of Bralm's clergy dress in robes of dull brown or yellow speckled with numerous insect designs. Her clergy are never druids, but she can grant them druid spells instead of their cleric spells, up to as many substitutions per day as the level of the cleric. However, she cannot grant the use of any spell (cleric or druid) involving fire.

When they attain high levels, her clerics can employ a *limited shapechange* ability once per week for a maximum duration of one hour. As compensation for this benefit, clerics of Bralm must earn an extra 5% of the normal amount of experience points needed to rise to 9th level and each level higher than that. The *shapechange* powers

gained (cumulatively) are as follows: 9th level, giant warrior ant; 11th, giant wasp; 14th, giant scorpion; and 16th, anhkheg.

Bralm is worshiped mainly in hot regions, especially in Hepmonaland and the Vast Swamp; also, those who remain of the Suel peoples in the Sea of Dust hold her in high esteem.

## JASCAR

### God of the hills and mountains

Lesser God

ARMOR CLASS: -8

MOVE: 24"/48" (see below)

HIT POINTS: 240

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-30 +8 strength bonus

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: See below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 100% while standing on the earth, 30% otherwise

SIZE: M (6'4" tall)

ALIGNMENT: Lawful good

WORSHIPERS' ALIGNMENT: Lawful good and neutral good

SYMBOL: A snow-capped mountain peak

PLANE: Seven Heavens

CLERIC/DRUID: 20th-level cleric; also see below

FIGHTER: Nil

M-U/ILLUSIONIST: See below

THIEF/ASSASSIN: Nil

MONK/BARD: Nil

PSIONIC ABILITY: VI

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

S: 20 (+4,+8) I: 18 W: 24

D: 18 C: 18 Ch: 18

Jascar appears as a powerful man with a long, brown beard and long hair. He wears a magical breastplate made of silver that gives his entire body armor class -8. He wields a hammer that does 3-30 points of damage, plus his strength bonus, on each hit. In addition, it has the power of a *mace of disruption* when used against undead creatures — on a hit, they are automatically turned as if by a 12th-level cleric, and if not destroyed they suffer double damage from the strike. Jascar can throw the hammer up to 500 feet, with the same chance to hit a target as if he were holding the weapon. The hammer will not return to him automatically, but cannot be picked up by any other character or creature without harm. Non-good characters who touch the hammer will suffer the effects of a *death spell* in each round that it is touched or held, with a saving throw allowed. If the save is made, the offender takes 3-18 points of damage, and this amount of damage is suffered automatically by any creature immune to the effects of a *death spell*. Creatures of any good alignment who touch the hammer will take 2-12 points of damage, save for half damage. Any creature willing and able to wield the hammer will find that it does its



usual damage of 3-30 points (plus strength) bonus, if any) but does not exercise its *disruption* effect when used by anyone other than Jascar.

Jascar's body radiates a constant *protection from evil* aura in a 20-foot radius. He can dispel this aura at any time (to allow a foe to approach prior to combat) and reactivate it in 1 segment at will.

Jascar has the ability to move through the earth (including stone-formations but not lava) as if a *phase door* of unlimited length

and duration were operating. In addition to the spells he can use by virtue of his level as a cleric, he can cast *stone to flesh* or its reverse at will, and can also employ any magic-user spell or druid spell involving the earth at the 20th level of effectiveness. These spell powers can be called upon as often as once per round.

He can mold and re-form unworked earth (smoothing out or roughing up an area of terrain, making a mountain easier or more difficult to climb). However, he will not (and, in fact, cannot) employ this power against subterranean openings such as caves, caverns, or tunnels, either to collapse them or make them larger. Once he re-forms an area of land, it cannot be changed by him again.

Jascar is immune to all *petrification* attacks and cannot be affected by attacks from stone giants, clay golems, stone golems, animated stone statues, or any creatures native to the elemental plane of earth. Any such creature with at least low intelligence will immediately realize that such attacks are pointless, and will not attempt to strike him. All creatures from the elemental plane of earth must obey him, except for the most powerful elemental bosses, who can be sent back to their home plane without a saving throw if he commands it.

Jascar can *shapechange* into any of three forms as he desires, attacking as a 20 HD monster in these forms while retaining his normal hit points and armor class. He can become a gigantic heavy warhorse (MV 24", D/Att 1-12/1-12/2-16), but in this form will seldom bear a rider. He can become a pegasus (MV 24"/48", D/Att 1-8/1-8/1-3). And, he can become a xorn (MV 9" (24"), D/Att 6-24/6-24/6-24).

Jascar is on friendly terms with Phaulkon (see DRAGON® issue #87), and the two often work in concert to foster the cause of good on Oerth.

Places of worship devoted to Jascar are always made of stone; the main chamber is often below ground, sometimes in a natural cave. Temples to Jascar are often shared with Phaulkon's clergy, and vice versa. However, a temple consecrated solely in the name of Jascar can obtain special protection. The head priest of such a temple, if of 9th level or higher, can pray for this protection. If Jascar grants the request, the temple is rendered immune to *earthquake* or *disintegration* magic — unless the temple's altar is defiled.

Members of Jascar's clergy dress in earth-tone garments, usually browns and

grays. During ceremonies, they wear head-dresses of white cloth or white-colored metal caps. Clerics of Jascar carry either a small hammer or a small pick (not usable as weapons) as a holy symbol. They are usually human, but some dwarven and gnome clerics devoted to Jascar do exist.

Beginning at the 5th level of experience, clerics of Jascar obtain special benefits. At this level, they begin receiving a cumulative +1 bonus to their saving throw vs. petrification until it reaches the point where only a roll of 1 will cause the save to fail. Thus, the save vs. petrification is 11 at 5th level; 10 at 6th level; 7 at 7th level; 6 at 8th level; 5 at 9th level; 3 at 10th level; and 2 at 11th level and higher.

Upon reaching 7th level, a cleric of Jascar gains the ability to *shapechange* into a heavy warhorse (MV 15", D/Att 1-8/1-8/1-3). The cleric retains his normal hit points and armor class, and in this form attacks as a monster of as many hit dice as the cleric has levels. The horse cannot speak or cast spells. Any gear worn or carried by the cleric that is affected by the *shapechange* is turned into tack, harness, saddle, saddlebags, etc. Magical items, except for armor, obtain a saving throw of 14 to see if they

resist the change; however, artifacts and relics will not be *shapechanged* in any event.

Upon reaching 11th level, a cleric of Jascar gains the additional ability to *shapechange* into a Pegasus that can fly at a 48" movement rate; all other particulars regarding combat are the same as for the heavy warhorse described above, and the cleric's gear changes in the same manner. The pegasus can speak in the language(s) known to the cleric, and can cast any spells known by the cleric of the 4th level of power or lower — as long as the spell has only the cleric's holy symbol as its material component, or has no material component at all.

The maximum duration for either *shapechange* is 1 hour per level of the cleric, and only one change of either sort can be made per day.

As compensation for these special benefits, clerics of Jascar must earn an extra 5% above and beyond the usual number of experience points needed to rise to 5th level and each level thereafter.

Jascar is worshipped in the mountains and hills of the Flanaess, especially in the Flinty Hills and the hills and mountains within the Iron League. †

Thus ends our ongoing presentation of the gods of the Suel pantheon. For readers who are interested in obtaining all 16 deity descriptions, other installments of the series were published in issues #86-90 of DRAGON® Magazine. Also see issue #86 or #87 for a listing of standard abilities of all deities, in addition to the powers described in the text for each individual.

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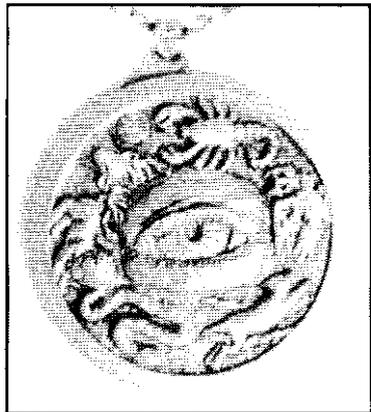
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Identity: Sheena Grey Age: 20  
Side: Evil Level: 1

- Powers:
1. Heightened Expertise: Martial arts, +4 to hit
  2. Special Weapon: Power-chuks, HTH +3 to hit, +1d6 damage, carries a Power Blast
  3. Heightened Defense: -4 to be hit

Other Weaponry:  
Katana, HTH +2 to hit, +1d6 damage  
6 Shuriken, HTH +3 to hit, +1 damage, with a 13 inch throwing range.

Weight: 130 lbs.  
Strength: 16  
Endurance: 13  
Agility: 13  
Intelligence: 12  
Charisma: 15  
Dam. Mod.: +1  
Accuracy: +1  
Hit Points: 9  
Heal: 9  
Car. Cap.: 351  
Basic HTH: 1d6  
Power: 54  
Movement: 42"  
Det. Hidden: 10%  
Det. Danger: 14%  
Invent. Pts.: 1.2  
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# Let the horse buyer beware

## Separating the stallions from the swaybacks

by Robert Harrison

In the real world, a horse buyer usually has a good idea of what kind of horse he is buying in terms of quality and training, and pays an appropriate price. In the world of the AD&D® game rules, however, this is not the case. Characters may specify the size of horse they want to buy, but after that they're at the mercy of the dice. This state of affairs seems unnecessarily oversimplified, especially since the mounts of a medium- or upper-level party (which are often considerably weaker than their riders in both hit points and armor class) can be one of the adventurers' most vulnerable points in a wilderness encounter.

The following rules are intended to alleviate this problem by providing for variable price and speed, and by linking a horse's hit points to its quality. Using this system, a DM can ask a player to specify the size and quality of horse desired by the character, and then can quickly calculate its price, hit points, and movement rate. In general, a

buyer who is willing to pay can be more certain of getting the type of horse desired; a trained warhorse of high quality developed under these rules is likely to be a better-than-average mount (and far more expensive than average, too). Conversely, a character with little money can buy a poor-quality, badly trained mount for a mere pittance. Note that the standard prices for warhorses given in the Players Handbook now become the prices for average horses of their size class with *basic* training

### I. Size

A warhorse's size determines its base price, hit dice, base movement rate, damage/attack, and encumbrance capability, just as in the Players Handbook and Monster Manual. However, its price, type of hit die rolled, and actual movement rate will all be influenced by its quality (as seen in the section following this one).

Size	Base price	HD	Base move	Dam/Att	Encum. cap.
Light	50	2	24"	4/4/-	3/5
Med.	125	2+2	18"	3/3/6	4/6.5
Heavy	200	3+3	15"	3/3/8	5/7

Prices given are in gp, and are for broken but otherwise untrained horses.

Damage/Attack figures are expressed in terms of maximum damage, from a die of the given type; for instance, a medium horse does damage of 1-3/1-3/1-6 on its hoof/hoof/bite attacks.

Encumbrance figures are in thousands of gp of weight, and represent the maximum possible load the horse could carry at normal movement/half movement. For example, the encumbrance capacity of a medium warhorse is 4,000 gp at its normal movement rate and 6,500 gp if it only moves at half its normal movement rate.

### II. Quality

Horses of five different quality ratings — *poor average, good, excellent, and superb* — can be found within each size class. A horse's quality affects its price and its movement rate, and also determines the type of hit dice rolled. When calculating a horse's selling price, the DM should start with the base price for its size class and then, based on its quality, add or subtract the percentage of this price shown in the following table.

The horse's actual hit points should then be determined by rolling the type of die or dice shown (based on the horse's quality) for each hit die the horse receives. For

example, for a heavy warhorse of good quality, roll 2d4 three times and add 3 hit points to the total; for a heavy warhorse of excellent quality, roll d6 three times, add 6 hit points to that total (for the "+2" part of the hit die type), and finally add 3 more hit points to bring the total up to the required 3+3 hit dice.

Finally, a horse's actual movement rate should be calculated by adding the amount shown (which may be negative) to its base movement rate in scale "inches."

Quality	Price	Hit die type	Move
Poor	-50%	d6	+(2d4-6)"
Average	—	d8	+(2d4-5)"
Good	+100%	2d4	+(2d4-4)"
Excellent	+200%	d6+2	+(2d4-3)"
Superb	+400%	d4+4	+(2d4-2)"

### III. Training

A horse can have any of live different levels of training — *none, broken, basic, skirmish, or combat*. Any horse can be broken, but only actual warhorses can receive basic or higher levels of training, which represent true battle training. Horses encountered in the game can generally be assumed to be broken, unless captured in the wild or bought from a character who deals in newly captured horses.

The *time required* for each type of training applies to any horse that a character already possesses and wishes to have trained, but is assumed already to have passed when a character buys a trained horse. (If the training of a previously trained horse is upgraded, the cost and time of the earlier training may be subtracted from that of the new training.)

The *panic & spell failure* column in the following table shows the percentage chance that the horse will become unmanageable in a crisis situation (as defined in the Monster Manual). I allow spellcasters specially trained in horsemanship to cast spells from horseback, so I also use this percentage as the chance that the caster will be jostled by the horse in a manner sufficient to cause spell failure (with potentially interesting consequences).

Type of training	Time required	cost (gp)	Panic & spell failure
None	—	—	100%
Broken	2d4 days	5/day	90%
Basic	2d4 wks.	20/wk.	40%
Skirmish	2d4 mos.	100/mo.	10%
Combat	5d4+12mos.	100/mo.	3%

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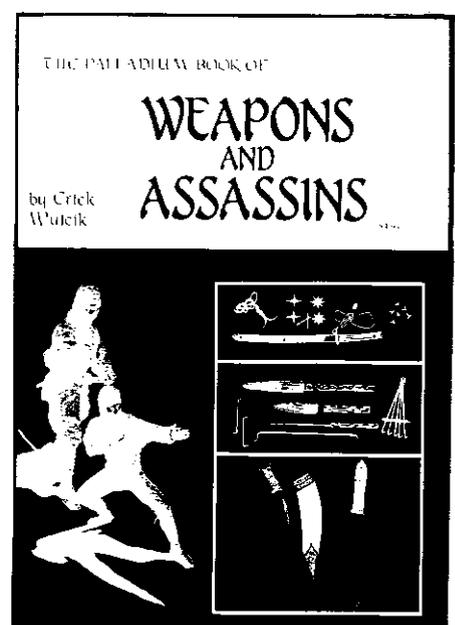
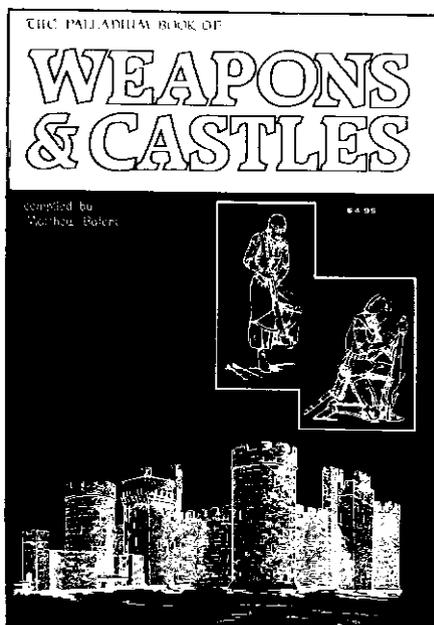
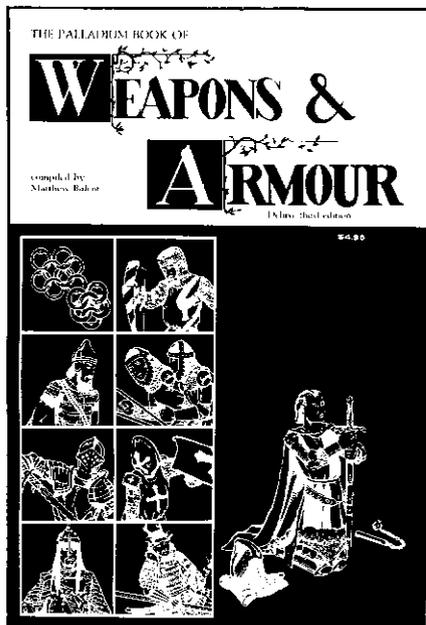
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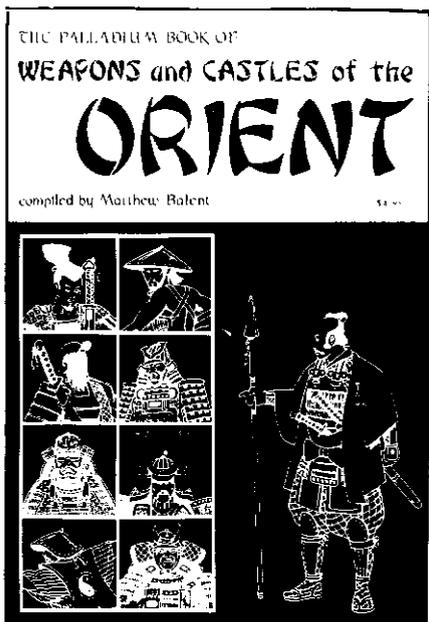
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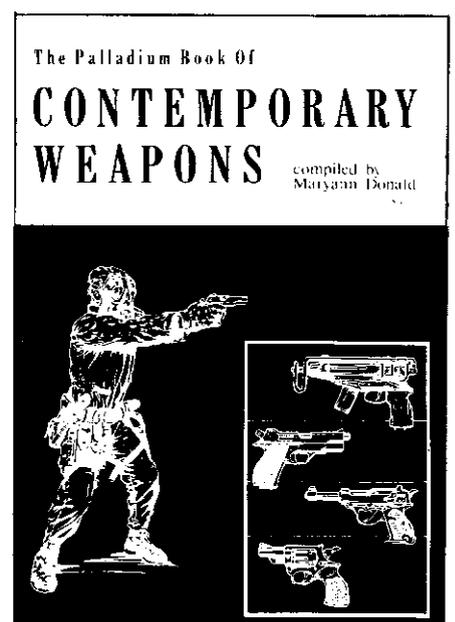
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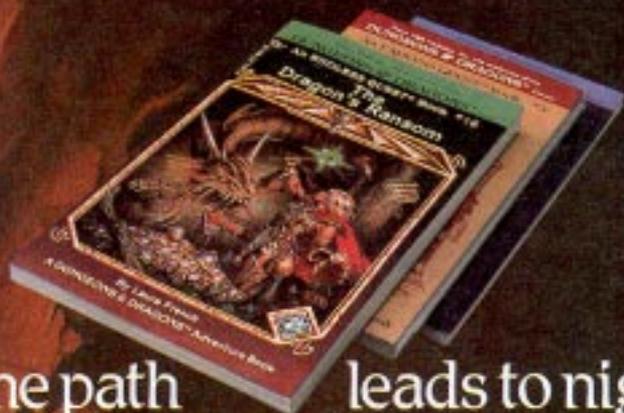


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DUH 'COLOGY OF...

DUH ETTIN!

by Ed Greenwood

From the *Trail Notes* of Raujur the Ranger:

Ettins, commonly known as the “two-headed giants,” are a brutish, aggressive race of carnivores who dwell in caverns, disused mines, and the like, emerging to raid the upper world only by night. They hunt prey well in darkness<sup>1</sup> and subsist on raw flesh of all sorts; however, only rarely do they fight among themselves, and an ettin will only eat the meat of its own kind if it is badly wounded or sorely in need of nourishment, and no other food supply is readily available. As befits their crude and cruel behavior, ettins will typically hammer their food to a pulp, either with a weapon or by flailing the carcass against rocks, before eating it.

Ettins are largely solitary; they have no particular preference for the company of any other creature type, and the feeling is apparently mutual. A mated pair will typically stay together after mating until the offspring is born and has grown to self-sufficiency. Otherwise, ettins will only seldom gather together and live in small groups, in circumstances where an individual shows itself to be more strong-willed or more intelligent than others of its kind. Members of the leader's group will cooperate with the leader, and among themselves, as long as they perceive some gain from doing so. If the leader of such a band leaves, or is killed or discredited, the group will dissolve and each member will go its own way.

Ettins are generally stupid, but can be cunning in matters of chasing, ambushing, and fighting prey. They are wary of all other creatures — even other ettins — and slow to trust.

One fact known by everyone, of course, is that ettins have two heads. This strange property affords them some obvious benefits in combat situations; fortunately, however, their low intelligence prevents them from taking full advantage of this “blessing.” The head on the right-hand side of an ettin's body is always dominant; despite folk tales and ballads to the contrary, an ettin never “argues with itself.”<sup>2</sup> Also contrary to certain legends, an ettin cannot regrow a lost head; however, a one-headed ettin is well able to survive its loss and carry on a normal life, albeit without the aforementioned combat advantages and most probably



without receiving any trust or respect from its fellow creatures, who will look upon the one-headed ettin as deformed. The former disadvantage is minimal in most cases, since even a one-headed ettin is a formidable foe in physical combat. The latter disadvantage is not considered important either, because such creatures generally do not solicit or value the trust of their fellows in any event.

Typically, these creatures are not especially fluent in any single language, but use a smattering of words and expressions from whichever tongues are most predominant in their vicinity — usually orcish, goblin, and the common speech. Most of them know at least a little of the chaotic evil dialect, and ettins often consider this their “own” language. In some areas of the world where ettin populations have established themselves and resided for a long time, the creatures have developed a debased dialect of the orcish tongue into a language that can truly be called their own.<sup>3</sup>

A female ettin will bear a single offspring seven months after mating, and such young typically grow to full size in little more than a year.<sup>4</sup> Female ettins are always long-haired, and generally more full-bodied than the males, whose frames are relatively gaunt and wiry except for the exceptionally broad shoulders which are (for two obvious reasons) a hallmark of the species. Neither the male nor the female takes any care over personal appearance, but females like to wear jewelry as a status symbol — perhaps

to display their hunting prowess and thereby prove themselves attractive to a prospective mate; females may gain their finery from prey they vanquish, or as gifts from male ettins during the crude courtship ritual they practice.

Aside from the uses described above, ettins keep treasure to bargain with and to purchase the services of others for specific tasks, such as hiring a band of orcs to build a wall or a trap near an ettin lair.

An ettin has pink to brownish flesh, with calloused hands and feet that carry a yellowish tinge. Its complexion often looks darker than it actually is, because the creatures are habitually covered with dirt and filth. The clothing of an ettin, if such a term can be used, comprises nothing more than scraggly, filthy animal-skins. The creatures care nothing for the appearance or odor of such garb, and wear it only for the warmth and comfort it affords them when sleeping on cold, rough stone. Such garments never have sleeves or other accessory parts, for ettins don't want to be hampered in a chase or a battle by mere sleeping-furs.<sup>5</sup>

Ettins have no finesse, or the desire to have any, when it comes to physical combat. They fight with crushing and battering weapons such as spiked clubs and iron bars. They have been known to throw rocks<sup>6</sup> if no other weapon is immediately at hand, and they will not hesitate to rip apart furniture or uproot small trees to fight with. Their outlook on combat is as crude as their tac-

tics; ettins know nothing of honor, fairness, or truces.

But the two-headed ones are not imprudent, and will not take on obviously superior foes if escape is possible. They will bargain with all intelligent prey if they think more food will be gained by doing so — but if the bargaining gets unpleasant or frustrating, they may abruptly decide that a snack in the hand is worth a feast in the bush. At any rate, ettins do not feel bound by agreements reached by bargaining — they seek only to get what they want, and as much of it as possible, while incurring the least risk to themselves.

Ettins worship a deity that is similar, or identical, to the one the hill giants know as Grolantor, though they usually do not call the deity by this name. They view their deity as a gigantic ettin of great intelligence and wisdom (as well as superior fighting prowess) whose two heads enable him to maintain an eternal vigilance against all who would seek to subjugate or destroy the ettins. The similarity of their deities suggests that ettins and hill giants had some common social or cultural aspects at one time, but the two species have no affinity for each other nowadays. It is possible that ettins and hill giants came from the same stock, given their common religious background and their larger-than-human size, but ettins on the average are substantially taller and thinner than hill giants. In facial appearance and body structure, ettins seem more closely related to orcs — yet that species only grows to half the size of ettins. And, of course, neither orcs nor hill giants have two heads; because of this unique anomaly, it is quite likely that the genetic background of the ettin will never be fully known.

As my friend and fellow ranger Athscar puts it: “An ettin is a nasty brute — murderous in a face-to-face fight if one is unlucky, injured, or weighed down, but easy prey to a well-armed band of three or more who keep their wits about them and meet the monster on ground of their choice.”

#### Notes

1. Ettins have keen senses, well adapted to night hunting: infravision out to a 9" range, and a sense of smell sufficiently developed to distinguish animal, unusual, and specific, known-to-be-dangerous scents from those of the surroundings within 3". They dislike sunlight or other strong light (*continual light*, but not a torch or a *light spell*) intensely, but it does not harm them or impair their fighting abilities. The dislike comes from habit and conditioning, and their self-preservation instinct; they inhabit darkened, hidden places because of their solitary nature. They greatly prefer to hunt at night so as to take full advantage of their keen senses, and to reduce the chances that they themselves will be set upon by adventurers or other adversaries. Apparently, the orcish strain in their makeup is not strong enough to require them to fight at a penalty in lighted areas.



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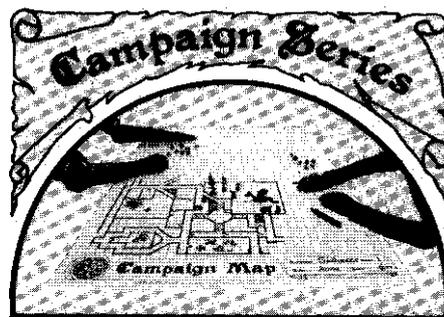
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2. The ettin derives some unusual protection from its dual brains. Spells of mental control, such as *sleep*, *fear*, and any *charms* or *hold* spells, will not completely affect an ettin unless two spells of the same type are cast upon it, either simultaneously or one after the other so that both spells are in effect at the same time. Of course, both spells must succeed; for magics of this sort against which a saving throw is allowed, each head is entitled to a save against one of the spells. If one but not both spells succeed, the unaffected head will assume control of the body without pause or internal struggle, and the affected head will be held powerless until it regains its normal state (at the expiration of the spell's duration). If the affected head is the dominant (right-hand) one, it will immediately resume "control" after returning to normal. During this time of powerlessness, the arm closest to the affected head will hang limp and useless; it will not drop anything it is holding, but cannot consciously use or wield such an object and could (under the right circumstances) be easily disarmed or disengaged from the object by the application of some force (a list or weapon blow, for instance) against either the arm or the object.

Note that *repulsion*, *mass charm*, *psionic domination*, and other "group-effect" magics and powers will affect both heads of an ettin upon a single application; if a saving throw is allowed in such a case, the creature is only entitled to one.

If the ettin's dominant head is destroyed or severely damaged in a fight, the creature will be *confused* for 1-6 rounds, after which time the single functioning head will gain control of the "opposite" arm — but that arm will only be capable of wild (empty-handed) flailing until the ettin learns to control both arms with its single head. This process takes 1-2 months to run its full course, after which time control is perfect and both arms can attack normally. Damage figures for both arms (2-16 for the left, 3-18 for the right) will not change, regardless of which head is controlling both of them.

Because of its low intelligence, an ettin saves against all types of *illusions* at -1 — but each head is entitled to a saving throw, and if one or both of them are unaffected by the illusion, the ettin will be enraged at such a trick, not bewildered at its occurrence, and will angrily seek out its perpetrator.

3. Any creature who is conversant in orcish will be able to understand 60% of what is said in this "ettintongue." Ettins often howl and slobber in bestial rage when in pain or frustrated by nimble foes.

4. The offspring of a pair of ettins has no combat ability until it attains six months of age. From that time until it reaches one year old, the young ettin is size M (5' tall) with 4 HD and does roughly half damage on an attack with either arm — 2-8 (2d4) with the left and 3-8 (1d6+2) with the right. At the age of one year, an ettin is quite able to fend for itself, and will either be aban-

doned by its parents or simply treated as another member of the group.

5. The skins worn by an ettin are uncured and rotting, and typically carry parasitic diseases; see the DMG under this heading.

6. Rocks thrown by an ettin do 2-12 points of damage per hit, with range figures of 2", 4", and 6"; each arm can throw one rock per round. Note that this is not an ettin's preferred attack mode, and the monster will always use some sort of hand-held weapon if one is available.

7. See the DEITIES & DEMIGODS™ Cyclopedia for details of Grolantor. The deity is usually known by a slightly different name, such as "Grolettinor" or "Grelinor," among the ettins that revere or worship this figure. A very few ettins rise in service to their deity to become 3rd-level shamans; see the DMG, p. 40, for details on what spells are available to them. †

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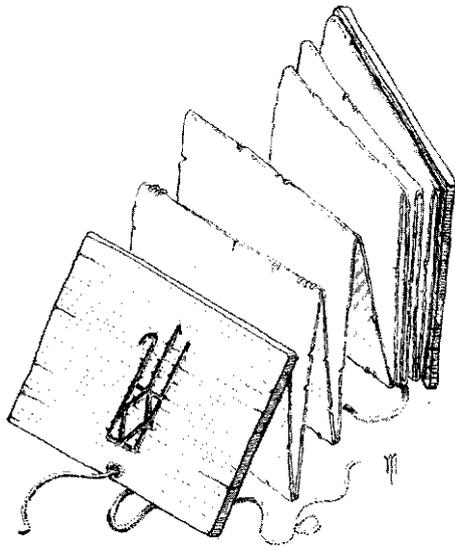


# Pages from the Mages III

## Four more magic books, courtesy of Elminster

by Ed Greenwood

It's possible to wheedle things out of Elminster — I'm learning ways and means of doing so rapidly. The old sage called me a "smooth-tongued snake" when he was in his cups during his last visit, so perhaps he's becoming reluctant to reveal more about the magic of the Realms — but I did manage to coax out of him details of another four mystic tomes, and here they are.



### Aubayreer's Workbook

#### Appearance

This book is fashioned of a long strip of green hixel bark, folded and refolded upon itself accordion-fashion. It is bound, protected, between two rectangular pieces of oiled wood held together with hempen cord. Upon one of the boards is carved a rune, thus:



and by this rune the work can be identified as that of the mage Aubayreer.

#### History and description

Aubayreer was a mage of the Dalelands in the first days of settlement, and later sailed east to what is now Aglarond, where he founded a sorcerous ruling dynasty that continues to this day. The many works Aubayreer made while High Mage of Aglarond, and later Mage-King, are kept securely in the libraries of the palace there, but the original workbook Aubayreer developed as an apprentice to the mages of the Covenant (see below) has been lost.

Early in the reign of Lurskas, grandson of

Aubayreer, thieves broke into the royal libraries. Several were slain by the guardians and protective magics of the place, and these indeed kept the more powerful tomes safe, but the workbook was stolen. It vanished into the debatable lands east and south of Aglarond, and no definite trace of it has been found since, although reports of the activities of several mages (notably Nuzar of the Seven Curses) have hinted that they have perused Aubayreer's Workbook, or at least copies of the two spells Aubayreer developed which end the work.

That the book still exists is attested to by the unceasing efforts of the royal house of Aglarond to recover it. The present ruler, the shapeshifting Mage-Queen known as "The Simbul," is known to have slain the wizard Thanatus and to have ransacked the libraries of the school of magic at Mirrorstar in her attempts to seize the workbook.

Aubayreer's lone apprentice, the now-dead mage Nytholops, set down in his *Chronicles* the contents of the workbook, for it was from this book (and no other) that Aubayreer taught him the Art.

There are (or were) 18 faces of folded bark in Aubayreer's Workbook. The foremost is usually blank; it served as a surface for various protective magics (*explosive runes, symbols, and the like*) when desired. The next 14 surfaces contain the spells *read magic, burning hands, dancing lights, enlarge, identify, light, message, write, ESP, wizard lock, dispel magic, explosive runes, fireball, and extension I*. Then follow three special spells — *hailcone* (Aubayreer's version of *ice storm*), and two unique spells, Aubayreer's *phase trap* and *thunderlance*.

#### Hailcone (Evocation)

Level: 4

Range: 1"/level

Casting Time: 6 segments

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: None

Area of Effect: 3" diameter cone

Components: V,S,M

Explanation/Description: The spellcaster, by use of a pinch of dust (a grain or two of sand will suffice) and a few drops of water, causes large (two-inch and greater diameter) hailstones to rain down in a conical area, from a focus 3" above a surface or desired target downward in a cone opening to 3" base diameter. Creatures within the area of effect suffer 3-30 hit points of damage, and exposed items must save versus a *crushing blow* to remain undamaged. If the spell is cast in midair, creatures that fly as

close as 6" below the focus and within the 3"-diameter area of effect will take 1-10 points of damage. Only fragile items within this area (from 3"+ to 6" beneath), such as glass or parchment, must make a saving throw. Creatures that fly more than 6" beneath the focus in the area of effect may be struck by hailstones and thereby made aware of the spell effect, but these stones will have no appreciable force and will do no damage.

#### Phase Trap (Alteration)

Level: 4

Range: 2"

Casting Time: 3 segments

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Neg.

Area of Effect: One creature

Components: V,S,M

Explanation/Description: With a word, a gesture, and the casting of a small transparent colorless gem of not less than 50 gp value into the air (where it is consumed), the spellcaster affects any one target creature possessing the ability to *phase-shift* (= become *astral* or *ethereal*) that is within a 2" radius. (If no such creature is present, nothing will happen, and the spell and gem are lost.) If the creature fails to save vs. spells, it is forced into its opposite phase and magically held there for the duration of the spell. An encountered phase spider, for example, that was "in phase," physically attacking, at the instant of the caster's completing the casting of a *phase trap*, would be forced "out of phase," and thereby unable to attack, until the expiration of the spell. If it was out of phase (*ethereal*) when affected, it would be forced back into phase and be vulnerable to physical attack at normal "to hit" odds, until the spell was exhausted.

This spell will affect creatures employing spells or natural powers, and is effective against *blink* and *dimension door*, halting creatures employing either completely and forcing them "into phase" on the Prime Material Plane. Creatures who can adjust the molecules of their bodies lose all such powers while *phase trapped*. These powers include the xorn's and xaren's *pass through stone* ability, plus the psionic powers of *body weaponry, etherealness, and dimension door* — but NOT *dimension walk* or abilities that affect the molecules of other things, such as *molecular agitation* and *molecular rearrangement*. After the expiration of a *phase trap* spell, such powers will return, unless their own duration had elapsed while the *phase trap* was in effect.

A target creature that is *plane shifting*, *teleporting*, or using *transport via plants*, *phase door*, or *pass plant* spells is unaffected, but a creature in an extradimensional space of lesser, limited extent (such as someone embodied in a *rope trick* spell or a *portable hole*) will be forced to appear and remain on the caster's plane for the duration of the spell.

Xorn and xaren, and any such creatures that can "phase" their way through solid matter, save versus this spell at -2. Note that the spellcaster need not know or have seen the precise location of a creature, or even be certain of its presence, to affect it. If more than one eligible target is within 2", the *phase trap* will affect one of them at random — unless the caster perceives only one such creature before or while casting, in which case that creature will be affected.

A creature possessing the potential to become *astral* or *ethereal* can be affected by a *phase trap* if in range when it is cast. The affected creature will be unable to effectively exercise such powers until the spell wears off — regardless of how far the creature might move away from the caster. If the affected creature is a spellcaster with an *astral spell*, for instance, the spell cannot be used while the victim is *phase trapped* — and any attempt to do so will ruin and waste the spell. If the affected creature tries to use *oil of etherealness* or any other phase-shifting magic item, the magic will have no effect until the duration of the *phase trap* expires.

A creature on the Astral Plane when the *phase trap* is cast saves versus this spell at +1; a creature on the Ethereal Plane or the Prime Material Plane saves at normal odds.

### Thunderlance (Evocation)

Level: 4

Range: Touch

Casting Time: 4 segments

Duration: See below

Saving Throw: None

Area of Effect: One creature

Components: V,S

Explanation/Description: Casting this spell brings into being a thin shaft of faint grey, shimmering force extending 2" from the caster's pointing finger. This "lance" is weightless and intangible, but if any creature touches or passes through any part of it, the lance vanishes with a loud clap of thunder, and the creature struck is dealt 4-24 hit points of damage. The lance may be willed out of existence by its caster at any time without any discharge or harm to the caster (although the spell is lost), and disappears in any event if the caster dies, loses consciousness, or begins to cast another spell.

The caster can employ the *thunderlance* in many ways — held steady as a barrier against some creature's passage or as a tripwire, at ankle height, to stop a pursuer. It is also highly effective when wielded as a weapon; the caster can move his arm and finger about to strike with the lance. In any combat situation against a *thunderlance*,

potential victims are regarded as having a base armor class of 10 (before any dexterity adjustments); the blow of the lance is transmitted through armor and shields, and the presence of such protection does not benefit the target of a *thunderlance* attack. However, the bonuses of magic armor and shields are not negated, and will improve a target's effective AC by the amount of the bonus.

The damage of the lance is a physical blow, as opposed to (for instance) a discharge of electricity. It is fully effective against creatures that are resistant or immune to either blunt weapons or edged weapons (since the lance is actually neither of those).

The touch of a *thunderlance* destroys a *shield spell*, *wall of force*, or *minor globe of invulnerability* but the lance itself discharges (vanishes, without damaging anyone) upon such contact. Stronger protective spells (such as *anti-magic shell*) will also cause the lance to discharge, but will themselves withstand the shock of its strike and remain in existence. A lance penetrates fire, water (including ice and snow), and electrical discharges of natural or magical (e.g., *wall of fire*, *wall of ice*) origin without discharging, and thus the caster may strike through such phenomena at an enemy.

Anyone wielding a *thunderlance* (i.e., spellcasting is complete, but the lance has not yet discharged) cannot be harmed by *magic missile* spells, regardless of what direction these strike from — their force passes harmlessly through the lance wielder to be absorbed by the lance, increasing the damage it does (by 2-5 hp per missile) when it discharges. This will not occur if the lance wielder has some other magical protection against *magic missiles*. A lance does not confer any protection against other forms of magical attack, nor can it be passed to any other creature without discharging it — an ally of the caster cannot wield the lance on the caster's behalf.

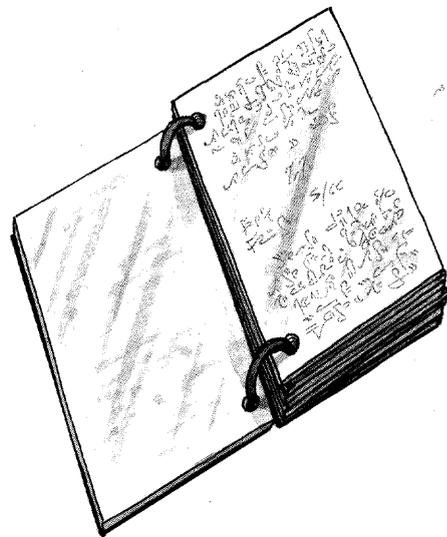
## Orjalun's Arbatel

### Appearance

This volume consists of nine plates of beaten and polished mithril, stamped by the elvish smiths of Silvermoon with letters of the High Tongue, graven on small dies that are positioned on the page and then struck sharply with a hammer so as to leave their distinct impressions. The plates are pierced at the top and bottoms of their left sides (as they are read), and fastened together with bronze rings. The work had an ornate case of stained wood and was carried wrapped in canvas, but these may well have perished.

### History and description

Orjalun, the white-haired High Mage of Silvermoon in the early days of the North (now believed dead), oversaw and took a large part in the construction of this work, designed to be a permanent repository for



the most useful defensive spells he could provide for the continued safety and security of his beloved city in the years to come. But it never served so, for when Orjalun gave his staff of office to his chosen successor, Sepur, and left the city, Sepur revealed his true nature — taking the Arbatel and staff as his own, he also left that fair city.

Sepur's fate is unknown, although the sage Alphontras recounts the finding of a broken staff atop a lonely, scorched tor in the Trollmoors. The Arbatel is first identified in the village of Longsaddle by Alphontras's colleague Eelombur the Learned, who observed it in the possession of the sorcerer Arathur Harpell. Arathur was later slain in a magical duel by the necromancer Marune, who held the Arbatel only briefly. Marune lost it somewhere in the winter snows when fleeing from the Lords of Waterdeep, and it must have changed hands several times in the following decade, for many hints of it are found in various records of the North.

It is mentioned once in this period by the sage Maerlus, who is represented in the *Letters to the Court of Elfrin* ("Collected by the King's Own Hand, being a record and discourse most fascinating upon our lands and times") by a letter he penned to the monarch, King Elfrin, wherein the sorcerer-sage described a number of items of power known to be within Elfrin's realm. In the letter, Maerlus describes several works and speculates on their locations; the Arbatel, he says, is in the hands of the reclusive wizard Lios — unless Marune has overcome him and regained it.

Elminster believes that Marune did slay Lios, but says that the activities of Marune from that time to the present reveal that he has not recovered the Arbatel, despite his repeated attempts to do so. Its recent and present whereabouts are unknown.

Orjalun was tutored by The Masked, most mysterious of the Seven Wizards of Myth Drannor, and two of the spells in the book are believed to be of his tutor's personal crafting: *encrypt* and *secure* (an improved version of *wizard lock*).

The first and last plates of the Arbatel are featureless, so as to reveal nothing of the contents within, but the seven interior plates bear one spell each (the method of scripting allows only one side of a plate to be used). These are, in order of appearance, *mending*, *charm person*, *encrypt*, *dispel magic*, *identify*, *guards and wards*, and *secure*. All of the commonly known spells in the Arbatel appear in the standard (Players Handbook) form, and the two unique spells therein are reproduced below, from the books of Vauth, another apprentice of The Masked.

#### Encrypt (Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: 4

Range: 1" plus 1"/level

Casting Time: 4 segments (plus writing time)

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Area of Effect: See below

Components: V, S, M

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell, a normal message containing up to 66 characters or letters (about fifteen words) written on parchment, stone, or the like can be made unreadable (even to magics such as *comprehend languages*, *read magic*, and *true seeing*) to all but the spellcaster, any being or beings named in the message (regardless of the caster's wishes in this regard) and a specific recipient being, who must be named aloud and pictured

mentally by the caster at the time of casting. Such a message will appear to all others as an illegible, smudged area radiating a dweomer.

A cryptic message will remain until *erased* magically, willed to disappear by the caster (who may be at any distance, but must be on the same plane to do so), or a *dispel magic* is cast so that the message is within its area of effect. Weathering and other physical effects such as burning, scrubbing, or defacing the smudged area will not destroy the message as long as the actual surface it was written on survives (*encrypt* can be safely cast on any reasonably stable surface, such as stone, wood, or paper, but not usually with success on messages scrawled in soot, dust, or snow); it will still be clearly legible to those identified above.

The message does not glow or in any way attract attention to itself — an intended recipient may well not see it if not looking for a message or not chancing to look in the right place. A message *encrypted* in a language not known to the intended recipient is not made understandable by means of this magic; nor will it magnify script too small for the recipient to read. The text of a spell may not be cryptically concealed, but writing related to magic such as spell ink formulae, magic-item-command words, and directions for magical processes such as enchanting a certain item or constructing a golem may be so concealed.

No part of any message longer than the first 66 characters will be obscured or protected by this magic — attempting to *encrypt* such an overlong message would result in wastage of the spell; the entire message could be read (or destroyed) normally. Additional writing in the same area after the spell is cast will not affect an *encrypted* message — thus, a second message can be written on top of an *encrypted* one to further conceal the former, without rendering the original message unreadable by those for whom it is intended. Moreover, adding words or characters to a message known to be *encrypted* will not cause it to appear; the additions will remain clearly visible and the original will remain concealed. Multiple *encrypt* spells cast on the same or adjacent areas will not allow messages longer than 66 characters to be concealed — rather, when a second *encrypt* spell is cast, the concealed message of the first *encrypt* spell will vanish forever, replaced by the second message. "Adjacent" in this case extends to areas of effect that are up to 10 feet distant, so that different walls in a small room cannot be used to *encrypt* multiple messages. Different sides of a wall or object cannot be used, either, unless the distance separating them is more than 10 feet. Writing used in *encrypted* messages can be very large or very small, written on walls, mountainsides, or even small bones or slivers of wood, and still be concealed so long as the maximum of 66 characters is not exceeded.

*Encrypt* may be used to conceal messages

written by others, regardless of time elapsed since the writing, and will be effective in obscuring even runes deeply graven in stone, or letters formed by patterns of colored mosaic tiles. In such a case, the surface will appear faded, stained, discolored, or even covered with a smoky, sooty deposit so that the message is concealed. As aforementioned, no amount of physical cleaning will reveal the concealed message. The figure given for range in the above text is the distance at which the caster can obscure a message with the *encrypt* spell.

A *true seeing* spell will reveal clearly the outlines of an *encrypt* spell's dweomer, but will not allow the message to be read, unless the viewer can deduce by the shape of the dweomer what is concealed. Written or graven symbols can be *encrypted*, but magical symbols or glyphs will be unaffected. And *encrypt* will conceal, but not harm, the efficacy of protective pentagrams, thaumaturgic triangles, and the like.

If the caster of *encrypt* writes the message to be concealed himself or herself, this writing must be done directly; the spell cannot cause it to be magically written from afar. The material components for this spell are a pinch of dust or grey lint "fluff," and a feather, and are consumed in the casting.

#### Secure (Alteration)

Level: 4

Range: Touch

Casting Time: 6 segments

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Area of Effect: 30 sq. ft. per level

Components: V, S, M

Explanation/Description: By means of this spell, and employing a small piece of iron (or filings) and a tiny gem (or a like amount of gem fragments or powdered remnants), the spellcaster can make a door, chest, or portal *secure*. An object or area that is *secured* cannot be opened or passed through by any means except physical destruction of the object or area, or by *dispel magic* (or a *limited wish*, *alter reality*, etc., so worded as to achieve the same effect). Unlike one affected by a *wizard lock*, a portal that is *secured* cannot be passed through by magic-users of any level (including the spellcaster), and can be passed otherwise only by avoiding it through *astral*, *ethereal*, or dimension-altering means such as *blink* and *dimension door*. The dweomer will resist fire, cold, and electrical attacks of natural or magical origin without allowing any damage to the *secured* item or area. Thus, a closed and *secured* door will deflect a magical *lightning bolt* back upon its caster, and will escape unscathed from a *fireball* blast. Physical attacks upon a *secured* area will be ineffective — totally negated — for 1 round per level of the caster (beginning with the round after casting). At the end of this time, the *secure* spell remains, but no longer affords any protection from physical attack.

When a *secured* area is touched, tested, or attacked in any way, it will flash with a

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white radiance on all sides and surfaces of the area. A knock spell is ineffective against a *secured* portal. Any spell, spell-like natural power, or magic item effect that attempts to alter the shape and nature of a *secured* area will be reflected back upon the caster/user with full effects. If the power affects an area rather than an individual, the user of the power will immediately become the central point of the area of effect. Magical powers that are "reversed" in this fashion include, but are not limited to: *enlarge*, *reduce*, *levitate*, *shatter*, *dig*, *passwall*, *stone shape*, *transmute rock to mud*, *move earth*, *stone to flesh*, *vanish*, *turn wood*, and *animate rock*. If the magic does not affect living creatures (such as *animate rock* or *move earth*), the usage of that magic is simply wasted. Powers that are directly under the control of the user (such as psionics or spell-like natural powers, but not spell casting) will have no effect on a *secured* area or object, but the power is counted as having been used. In all cases where magic can be "reversed" back upon the user, all those who could be affected are entitled to saving throws if a save is normally allowed against the type of magic in question.

Light magics, *magic mouth*, *Nystul's magic aura*, and *Leomund's trap* cannot successfully be cast within, or upon any surface of, a *secured* area. Any *glyph* (of warding), *explosive runes*, or *symbol* written upon any surface within a *secured* area

will discharge immediately upon completion, possibly harming the writer, his companions, or other nearby creatures. A *disintegrate* spell that destroys a *secured* area will have the effect of negating the *secure* spell. A *glasse* spell will have its normal effect on a *secured* area. *Find traps* will not reveal the presence of a *secure* spell, but *detect magic* will reveal the extent of its dweller. *Illusions* and other spells of concealment can be successfully cast upon a *secured* area.

## The Scalamagdrion

### Appearance

This is a large volume fashioned of parchment bound between slabs of wood and sewn to the black hide of an unknown creature, which has been stretched over the boards to form a cover. It bears no external markings of any kind. Its covers are edged with beaten copper, now discolored to a vivid green by the elements. There are 26 yellowed and curling pages within, and some owners report a binding strip of black hide which the book now apparently lacks.

The size and weight of the tome precludes its easy transportation by hand, under arm, or in satchel, and indeed it does not show the wear (scratched cover or corners, blotched or warped parchment due to wetness) typical of books that have seen much traveling out-of-doors.

### History and description

The true origin of The Scalamagdrion is not known. It is first mentioned in the writings of the mage Hethcanter, who owned the book in his youth. He does not mention how he acquired it, but does record that he gave the book to Hym Kraaven (one of the Seven Wizards of Myth Drannor) in payment for magical training. Shortly thereafter his writings end; Hethcanter is remembered today chiefly for his spectacular suicide, hurling himself to his death from the highest pinnacle of the crag now known as Hethcanter's Leap. He did this when chased by almost a score of illithids; the sage Orfidel believes that these hated creatures sought The Scalamagdrion itself — an opinion shared by Elminster,

Hym Kraaven never revealed or used the work in his teachings at the school in Myth Drannor (see "The Workbook," in "More Pages From The Mages," DRAGON® Magazine #69), possibly because of the contents of one of its pages. Of Hym Kraaven's fate or the means by which the book passed into the hands of its next known owner, nothing is recorded, but the sages Orfidel and Maerlus of the North were both present on Watcher's Tor when a hitherto unknown magic-user named Valathond used its spells to destroy the mage Gaerlammon in a formal duel.

Valathond was later slain by the Company of the Raven, but his killers did not discover the book amidst the treasure in

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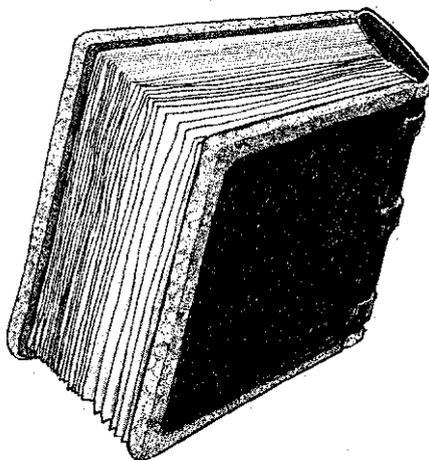
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his keep, nor does an examination of their tales of encounters and skirmishes with the mage over an entire season ere his fall suggest that he still possessed it. Auvidarus, sage of Hillsfar, and Laeral, wizardess and leader of the adventurers known as The Nine — two observers almost a world apart — have both recorded rumors ascribing ownership of the book to this or that mage. One of Laeral's collected rumors, interestingly, again mentions a group of illithids. But the veracity of these rumors is untested; the present whereabouts of the work are a matter of conjecture.

Elminster described the tome's contents, drawing upon his study of Hethcancer's careful notes, as follows:

The Scalomagdrion's first and last pages are blank. The remainder bear 23 spells, one to a page and with each page having a blank (rear) face, and one page contains only a curious illustration. The contents of the pages are as follows, in order of appearance from the front of the book: (blank), *Write, erase, tongues, message, unseen servant, wizard lock, identify, enchant an item, permanency, blink, disintegration*, (illustration), *feblemind, fly, death spell, flame arrow, delayed blast fireball, invisibility, levitate, conjure elemental, minor globe of invulnerability, wall of force, remove curse, dispel magic*, and (blank). All spells appear in the standard (Players Handbook) form. The irregular order of the spells suggests that the book was created with its



spells arranged according to the creator's wishes, and thus was not the workbook of a magic-user progressing slowly in magical ability under tutelage.

The unique feature of the work is the illustration found on the page between *disintegration* and *feblemind*. It is of "warm, velvety texture," according to Hethcancer's notes, and is a strikingly realistic painting of some unknown, seemingly endless caverns (perhaps on some other plane), in which crouches a dimly visible, winged, reptilian monster on a bed of human bones. A word or name has been spelled out clearly in Common across the bottom of the page, by the arrangement of bones: "Ningulfim." Hethcancer notes that if this word is spoken over the open page or the illustration is stared at for too long, the monster depicted therein will move.

From other sources not divulged to me, Elminster states with certainty that the page is a gate or portal to some unidentified plane or extra-dimensional space of endless caverns, and can be passed through both ways. Once the gate is activated, the monster will emerge from the page into the Prime Material Plane and attack all creatures nearby, seeking to slay and carry its prey back into the caverns to devour. Its true nature is a mystery, but what is known of it can be summarized as follows:

**Scalomagdrion** ("Guardian of the Tome," "Ningulfim")

FREQUENCY: *Very rare*  
 NO. APPEARING: 1  
 ARMOR CLASS: 6  
 MOVE: 13"/8"  
 HIT DICE: 6+6  
 % IN LAIR: 100%  
 TREASURE TYPE: S, Q Vx3 (in lair)  
 NO. OF ATTACKS: 4  
 DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12/1-6/1 -6/3-12  
 SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Nil*  
 SPECIAL DEFENSES: *See below*  
 MAGIC RESISTANCE: *See below*  
 INTELLIGENCE: *Average*  
 ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*  
 SIZE: L (20' long)  
 PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil*  
 Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*  
 LEVEL/X.P. VALUE: VI / 525 +8/HP

The scalomagdrion resembles a grey-scaled, green-eyed dragon with stubby wings and a long, bone-spiked prehensile tail. If it pounces upon a victim from above, it can rake with all four of its claws (each do 1-6 damage), or pin the victim with its great bulk and use its foreclaws to attack. The Scalomagdrion's tail does 3-12 points of damage. It is fearless, enjoys human flesh, and is cunning enough to take a victim's body, fallen items and all, back to its lair to avoid being caught eating.

The scalomagdrion radiates *silence*, 15' radius about itself, and has a natural spell turning ability (as in a *ring of spell turning*, including gaining a saving throw for spells for which there is normally none). This makes it a deadly foe for magic-users; and indeed, none have yet prevailed against it.

Several wands and rings can be seen amid the bones upon which the scalomagdrion crouches. The monster and the gate to and from its abode cannot be destroyed or harmed by tearing out or destroying the page on which it appears, although any attempt at such activities will certainly cause it to issue forth.

## The Tome of the Covenant

### Appearance

This book is large, square, and (judging from Elminster's description) approximately two feet on a side. It is fashioned of cured white elkhide stretched over finger-thick boards of black wood, and both outside covers bear a rune in the center, depicting four arrows meeting in a circle, thus:



Four white vellum pages are sewn to the hide "spine" within.

### History and description

The Tome is the creation of the four most powerful (of their time) mages of the North, who formed the Covenant, an alliance (basically neutral good) founded to enforce a peace between warring tribal kingdoms, and to build the collective power and prosperity of the Northlands against the coming confrontation with the orcs and their kin. The Covenant has long been inactive: Grimwald and Presper disappeared on a journey of exploration into other worlds than this; Agannazar is believed to have perished in the destruction of the School of Wizardry at Neverwinter by the Red Wizards of Thay; and Illykur is known to have sacrificed himself in the Green Tower of Thulnath to destroy the arch-lich Ruelve.

The Tome was made to commemorate the founding of the Covenant, and as a source of power and a worship symbol for the apprentices who were intended to follow 'in the Four Founders' footsteps and become new members of the pact (none did). Each of the Four Founders contributed one unique spell to the work, and each of these spells appears alone on its own page. The



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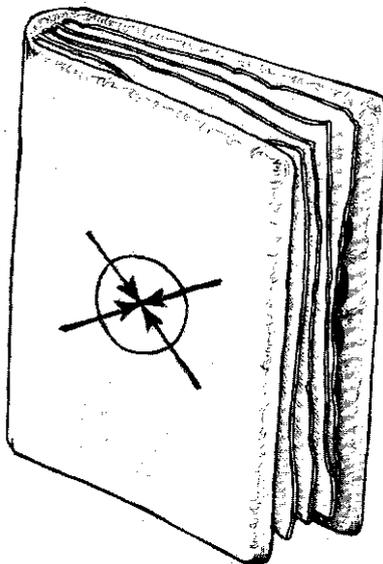
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spells appear with no names; they have acquired colloquial names through description of the book by various writers in the North, and by use of the spells by the original apprentices of the Four (and subsequently, in turn, by their apprentices). These apprentices, now themselves powerful workers of magic, are not identified by Elminster. The sage does say that they did not cooperate as their masters had, but split in dissension, one of them presumably bearing the Tome. Its present owner and whereabouts are uncertain, but Elminster knows the precise spells set down on its pages from perusing the workbooks of the Four and certain of their apprentices, and has consented to reproduce them, below:



#### Grimwald's Greymantle (Necromantic)

Level: 5

Range: *Touch*

Casting Time: 6 segments

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: *Neg.*

Area of Effect: *One creature*

Components: *V,S,M*

Explanation/Description: When a magic-user casts this spell, a silvery-grey radiance is produced about the material component. If the component (a bone or small animal skeleton) is touched to a target creature — successful "to hit" roll required, as though wielding a dagger or club — the radiance leaves the component (which vanishes harmlessly) and expands to envelop the target in an aura, or *mantle*. This shimmering radiance takes effect on the round following the touch, and lasts for 1 round per experience level of the caster. While it is in effect, curative spells, healing, and regeneration of natural or magical nature will not be effective within the confines of the mantle; thus, a troll could not regenerate, a *ring of regeneration* would not operate, a *potion of healing* or *extra-healing* would have no effect, and so forth.

The *mantle* may be magically dispelled, and will fade away without effect if magic resistance or a saving throw (only one allowed) triumphs over it. At the expiration of the spell, curative forces still active will take effect immediately — but any such powers that were expended upon the victim while the *mantle* was in effect are forever lost. A *cure wounds* or *heal* spell, for instance, will take effect upon the recipient if the *mantle* expires before the victim does; similarly, a *ring of regeneration* will resume functioning properly when the *mantle* disappears, and a creature that regenerates will retain the ability to do so. However, the victim of the *mantle* will get no benefit from a *potion of healing* drunk while the spell is in effect, and any usage of a *staff of curing* on the victim is fruitless, since those types of magic must take effect upon their application or not take effect at all. In such a case, the application of the magic (dose, charge, etc.) is wasted.

If the caster does not successfully touch a target creature in the round of casting or the round immediately thereafter, the

*mantle* spreads from the component into (and onto) the spellcaster and remains in effect upon the caster for the full duration. There is no saving throw against this "backfire," but a *dispel magic* spell may be successfully employed by the caster or a companion to bring the bad effect to a halt.

Once the spell is cast and the *mantle* has covered a target, the duration and effects of the *mantle* are not under the caster's control. Creatures of any size may be affected. Note that use of the *mantle* is not basically a good act, and the spell must be used with due consideration of the circumstances and nature of the target by magic-users of good alignment.

#### Agannazar's Scorcher (Evocation)

Level: 2

Range: 7"

Casting Time: 3 segments

Duration: 2 rounds

Saving Throw: *See below*

Area of Effect: *Special*

Components: *V,S*

Explanation/Description: With this spell a magic-user calls into existence a jet of flame which bursts from his fingertips toward a specific creature. If the target creature is within 7" of the caster, it suffers 3-18 (3d6) points of damage, with no saving throw (assuming it is not immune to the effects of heat and flame). The flame-jet assumes the form of a 2-foot diameter cylinder of fire, up to 7" long, with the caster at one end and the target at the other. This jet remains in existence for 2 rounds following casting, moving as the target or caster move, shifting so as to always point at the target, even if the target creature remains, or passes beyond, 7" distant from the caster. Any creatures touched by the jet as it leaps toward the target or moves sideways following a moving target will suffer 2-16 (2d8) points of damage (save vs. spells for half damage). The touch of the *scorcher* will set alight all readily flammable materials (such as parchment and dry clothing). It may well even damage sturdier objects.

#### Illykur's Mantle (Abjuration)

Level: 4

Range: 0"

Casting Time: 4 segments

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: *None*

Area of Effect: *Aura about caster*

Components: *V,S,M*

Explanation/Description: When *Illykur's mantle* is called into being, the caster is surrounded by a faintly luminescent aura following the contours (and conforming to the movements) of the caster's body. Spells can be cast out of this field without it having any effect, but spells impinging upon the *mantle* from without are affected as follows: the protected caster gains +3 on saving throws versus all Enchantment/Charm spells, +1 on saving throws versus all other spells for which there is normally a saving throw, and suffers only half damage when an electricity-related spell (e.g., *shocking grasp*, *lightning bolt*) does affect him. The *mantle* flares to a vivid (not blinding) white glow when the caster's mind is contacted by the psionic powers of another being, but does not protect against any psionic attacks or effects.

The material component for the spell is a natural (not cut) crystal of gemstone. Note that a small familiar or pet clinging to the spellcaster — there must be physical contact — can be protected by the *mantle*, but no creature the caster does not wish protected will be shielded by the *mantle*, and in no



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case will it protect any such creature (whether a familiar or a normal pet) larger than a pseudodragon.

**Presper's Moonbow** (Evocation)

Level: 4

Range: *Special*

Casting Time: 9 segments

Duration: *Special*

Saving Throw: *None*

Area of Effect: *Special*

Components: V,S,M

Explanation/Description: This magic is usable only under a night sky in which a moon is present and cloud conditions allow moonlight to reach the ground. *Presper's moonbow* causes from 1 to 4 (caster's choice) glowing motes, a form of *ball lightning*, to gather above the caster's outstretched hand. These grow in size and intensity, spinning slowly, during the round that casting takes place, and at this time they resemble *dancing lights*. On the following round, the caster can elect to direct one or more of the moon-motes at a target, which must be within his view. Such direction is by concentration of will, requiring no speech or gesture. Moon-motes directed at a target will shoot off after it, flying up to 26' per round, and will pursue the target around corners, through obstacles (but not closed portals or the like), and despite confusion spells such as *invisibility mirror image*, *illusions*, etc., striking at +3 "to hit" upon reaching the target.

Each striking moon-mote does 2-8 points of electrical damage (if cast as one of four), 2-12 damage (if cast as one of three), 3-18 damage (if cast as one of two), or 4-24 damage (if cast as a solitary missile), and is considered to be magical for "to hit" purposes. Moon-motes which miss an intended target or are blocked by barriers dwindle harmlessly away to nothingness.

The spellcaster can direct the motes produced by a *moonbow* at different targets in a round, and must "shoot" at least one per round (but may shoot as many as desired, time permitting) until all the motes are gone. Unused motes hang spinning in the air in front of the caster, within 1") and if struck by a *lightning bolt* or similar electrical discharge while thus waiting, will explode - doing full damage to all within 1") including the caster.

On the round after the first mote has been fired, the caster can cast another spell and direct any motes still left, and continue doing both so long as motes are left and spell casting times permit (directing's mote requires 1 segment each round, so spells that take 1 round or longer to cast cannot be used). Using this tactic, a caster with multiple *moonbow* spells could gather a waiting arsenal of many motes. If a round passes without the caster firing a mote at a target, all motes will dissipate. Note that a caster under the influence of a *hold* spell could shoot a mote at a target in his present field of vision; that act is a function of

vision and intellect, not of movement.

A mote that is deliberately struck by a creature or object will discharge, doing full damage to all within 1". The mote has AC -6 for "to hit" purposes. Metal, it must be noted, will conduct the full effects of a mote to anyone in contact with it, regardless of distance.

Although no saving throw is allowed, note that creatures immune to electrical damage or without tangible existence on the plane of casting (e.g., *ethereal*) will suffer no damage from a mote.

The material components for this spell are a wisp of cobweb, an amber, glass, or crystal rod, and a scrap of fur.

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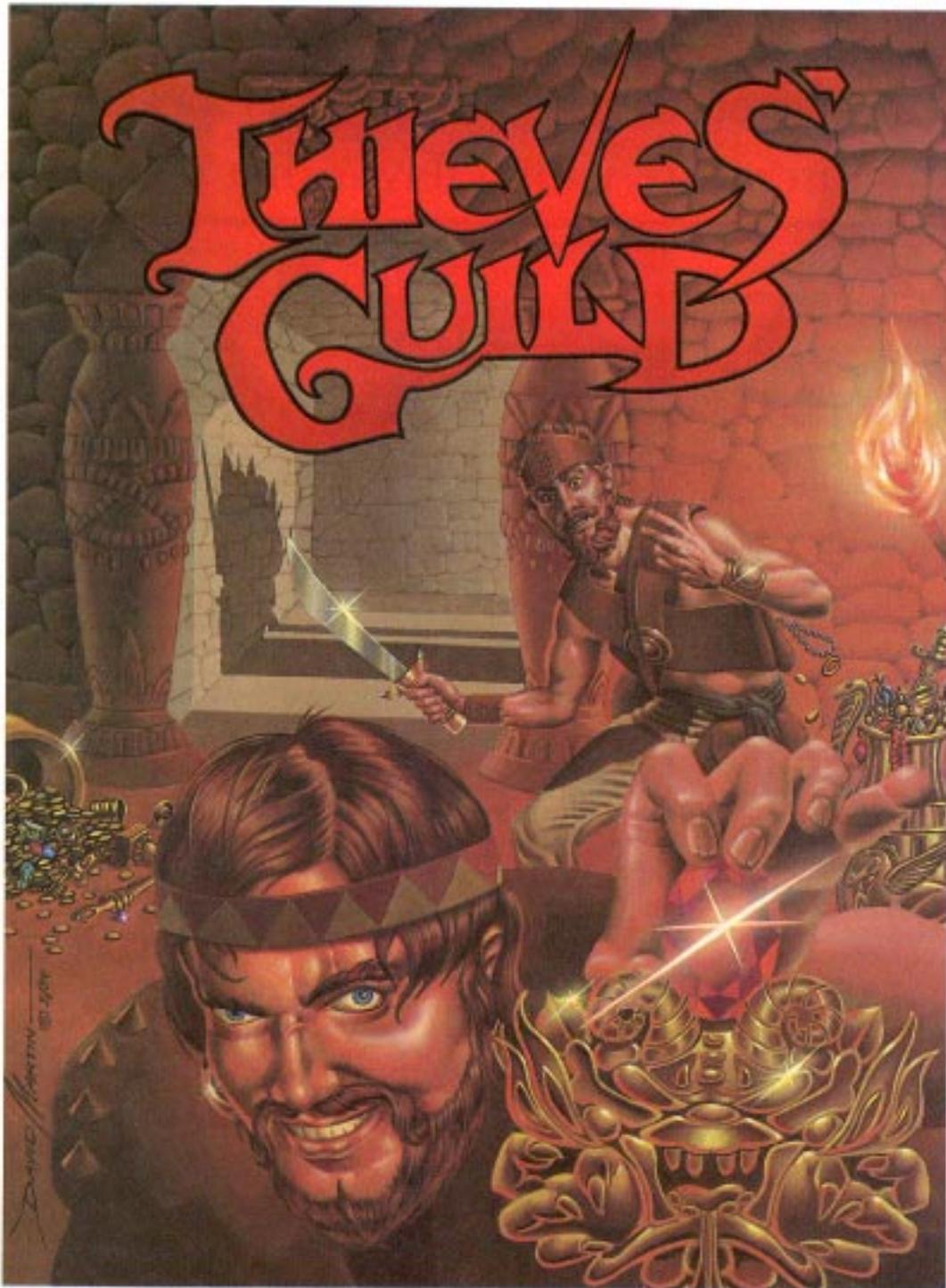
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# Book reviews

From a monastery through a quest to a castle:

Literature with a flavor that gamers will like

## THE NAME OF THE ROSE

Umberto Eco

Warner \$4.95 0-446-33218-0

At first glance, a fantasy gamer might not expect to find anything of interest in *The Name of the Rose*; it's the sort of book that looks spectacularly boring from the outside. It has been on endless bestseller lists, has been acclaimed for its literary and scholarly excellence by armies of eminent critics, and is peppered with enough Latin to keep a language class occupied for at least three weeks.

A second look, however, produces a drastically different impression. For all its erudite trappings and intimidating size, *The Name of the Rose* paints an invaluable portrait of the everyday life and routine of a medieval religious institution, not to mention being a tension-filled tale of precisely the sort that referees are so fond of weaving into gaming campaigns.

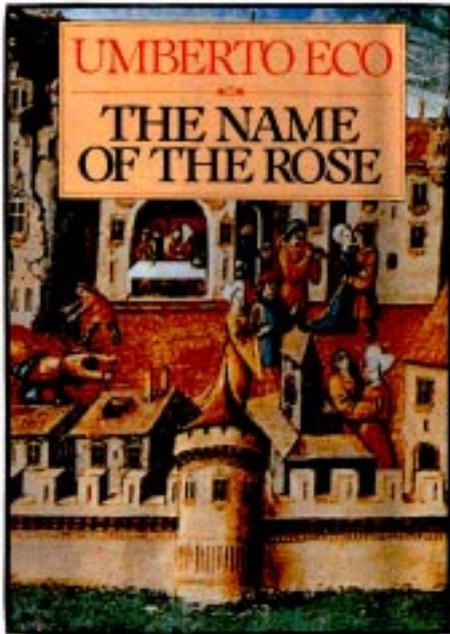
Anyone planning a scenario set in a monastery will find a wealth of useful reference detail written into Eco's novel. The variety of services available under the monastic roof is wide: we meet herbalists, philosophers, kitchen help, animal tenders, scribes, medics, librarians in some abundance, and more. Another useful inclusion is an explanation for those unfamiliar with monastic timekeeping — at last, one understands the difference between Prime, Vespers, and Compline.

Indeed, in some ways the novel resembles an account of a complex RPG adventure. Brother William of Baskerville and his secretary (the tale's narrator) arrive at an unspecified Italian monastery in search of heretical activities among the monks. The philosophical puzzle quickly becomes intertwined with a series of bizarre murders that appear to be inspired by a passage from the Book of Revelations, and William must play detective and inquisitor. The trail leads to a hunt for a long-lost book in a positively diabolical library, and riddles multiply severalfold before the answers are found.

One major note of caution is warranted: while *The Name of the Rose* is filled with valuable information and makes suspenseful reading, it's also by no means an easy book to appreciate fully. There is quite a bit of high-powered metaphysical and theological debate throughout, and some knowledge of Latin, while not really necessary, will be a major help to more serious readers.

Umberto Eco's novel is both useful and fascinating, but it's also hard work.

—Reviewed by John Bunnell



## THE RIDDLE OF THE WREN

Charles de Lint

Ace \$2.75 0-441-72229-6

Someone at Ace Books apparently decided that *The Riddle of the Wren* was destined for obscurity: I first saw a copy at a local 7-11 store, and the book still hasn't shown up at most of the bookstores in town. There was, however, one copy tucked inconspicuously in a corner of an enormous dealers' room at a major science-fiction convention this summer.

Obviously, whoever was responsible for this marketing maneuver didn't read the book.

The title refers to the novel's central character, Minda, who, after experiencing a series of curious and frightening dreams, is drawn out of her vaguely Elizabethan world toward a vaguely Celtic one. Her quest involves freeing one Jan Penalurick from magical imprisonment, but before she fulfills that goal, she has acquired friends from several races and has passed through several intervening worlds.

On that description alone, the novel sounds ordinary enough to deserve its lackluster marketing; it is, after all, a typical quest plot. But *The Riddle of the Wren* is anything but typical. Indeed, it's one of the very few novels released over the decade that genuinely calls up memories of J.R.R. Tolkien's style of writing.

Making that comparison automatically requires a qualified retreat. The tale is not an epic of the scale of the Ring trilogy, nor

is it written with the touch of scholarly intent evident in *The Silmarillion*. Rather, de Lint's style is faintly reminiscent of *The Hobbit*: both stories are really told rather than written, belonging to a distinctly oral tradition out of the legendary past. But even that resemblance is an echo at best; where Tolkien's yarn occasionally sounds like a bedtime story, de Lint's prose has a decidedly bardic undercurrent.

*The Riddle of the Wren*, in fact, is especially noteworthy for keeping its narrative voice under tight control at all times. The reader picks up descriptive details as the characters acquire them and not before, and the scenes are rendered without the omniscient intrusions of a twentieth-century narrator. De Lint's skill at this kind of communication is nowhere more evident than in his depiction of Darkruin, the world in which Minda arrives immediately after leaving her own. Too much explanation would spoil the impact of the scene as it unfolds for the reader; it's enough to observe that very few authors have done as well in hiding the familiar behind unfamiliar perspectives. (Dungeon Masters and writers of role-playing game modules could take lessons from de Lint in this regard.)

At the same time, de Lint doesn't overindulge in description at the expense of his characters or plot. The cast he assembles is both reasonable and unique; in particular, the outward form of Grimbold the Wizard is in distinct contrast with his very human personality. And surprisingly enough, there is also a perfectly logical yet devious twist to the villainy of Ildran Dream-master that sets the tale off from most yarns involving mad sorcerers.

What Charles de Lint accomplishes in telling the story of Minda Talenyn and her destiny is a remarkably skilled blending of sincerity and subtlety that is as logical as it is lyrical. *The Riddle of the Wren* is a work of expert craftsmanship, and as a result it's the very best kind of quest story: one that will be long remembered, both for its entertainment value and for the useful insights it can provide readers as they go about designing and describing their own worlds.

— Reviewed by John Bunnell

## CASTLES

art by Alan Lee, text by David Day

Bantam \$24.95 0-553-05066-4

From noted fantasy artist Alan Lee comes *Castles*, a visually stunning gift book. Captivated since his childhood by the beauty of

historic and fantastic castles, Lee has assembled a collection of his drawings and water colors which reflect his fascination with these structures.

Most of Lee's drawings — whether inspired by myth, folklore, or romances — have been accurately rendered. Lee has paid close attention to architectural design when illustrating a castle from history, and to literary detail when illustrating one from legend. Particularly interesting are his interpretations of Heorot the Golden, of Camelot, and of Minas Tirith. Each of these renditions reflects the style and feeling of the period, historical or literary.

Accompanying Lee's artwork is the prose written by David Day. The text for *Castles* is divided into three sections: the Age of Myth, the Age of Romance, and the Age of Fantasy. The legends and tales presented are supplementary material for the lavish illustrations, but DMs may find these legends useful as foundations for campaign plots.

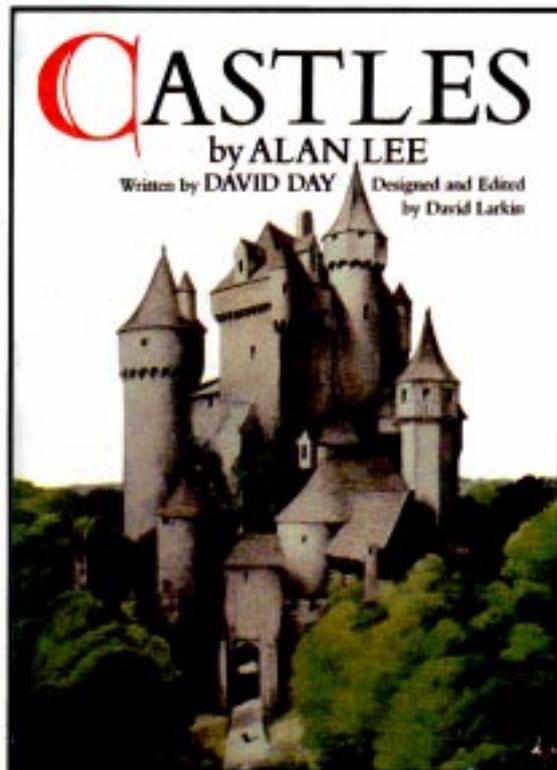
The first section presents synopses of various Norse and Celtic myths, with emphasis on the castles of gods, giants, and faery kingdoms. "The Ice Castle of Utgard-Loke" is a special favorite for its interpretation of the constant struggle between the Norse gods of Asgard and the giants of Jotunheim. Gamers who enjoyed the *Aesirhamar* module (DRAGON® Magazine, issue #90) will find the section on Norse mythology an excellent supplement.

The romance section deals with legends about Arthurian Camelot and the Knights of the Round Table, about Carolinian Aix-la-Chapelle and the mighty paladins, about the Rhine castles of the *Nibelungenlied* and their Burgundian princes. Castles of this period are sometimes viewed as allegories, often alluding to the ethos of the pure Christian Knight. In the tale "The Castle of the Maidens," for example, the knight becomes the image of Christ as he frees the souls in Purgatory. In other instances, castles are symbols of courtly love and chivalry. Sir Lancelot's devotion to Guinevere in "The Castle of Gorre" is an example of such chivalrous love.

When gunpowder and cannon brought about the decline of castles, the imagination took over, and castles became the domain of fantasy. The final section of the book describes those castles found in modern literature. The reader visits all sorts of imaginary edifices: from the fairy-tale towers of Childe Rowland and Burd Ellen to the gothic structure of the House of Usher.

Finally, at the end of *Castles* is a lengthy bibliography, useful for those who wish to do more reading or research on the subject.

As a line collection of artwork and tales,



*Castles* is highly recommended for those who have always enjoyed the magic and mystery inherent in castles, and for those who seek to introduce something new into their role-playing campaigns.

— Reviewed by Patrick L. Price

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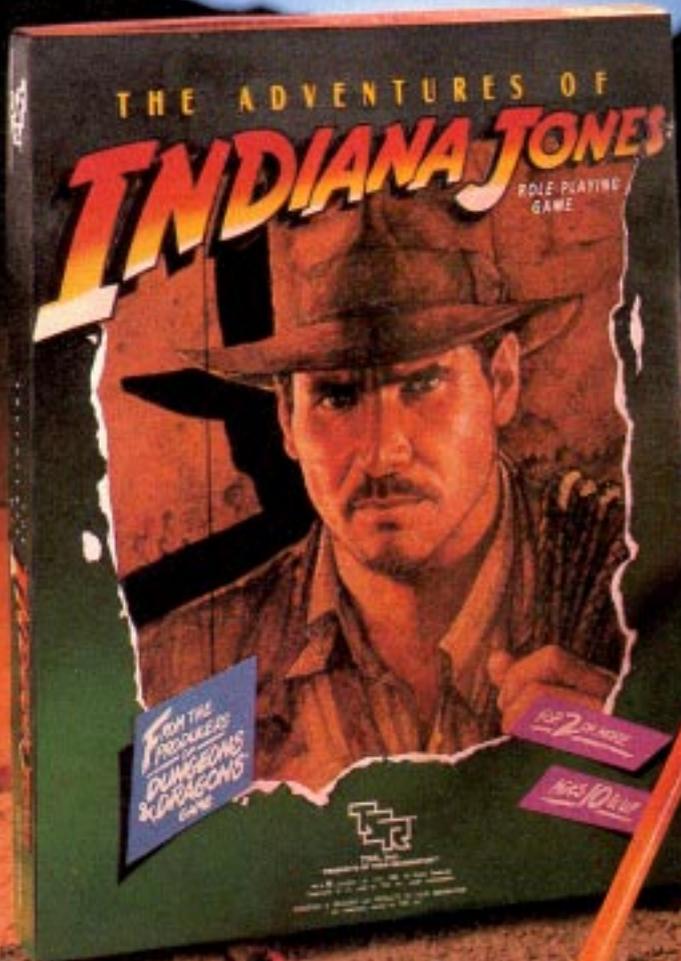
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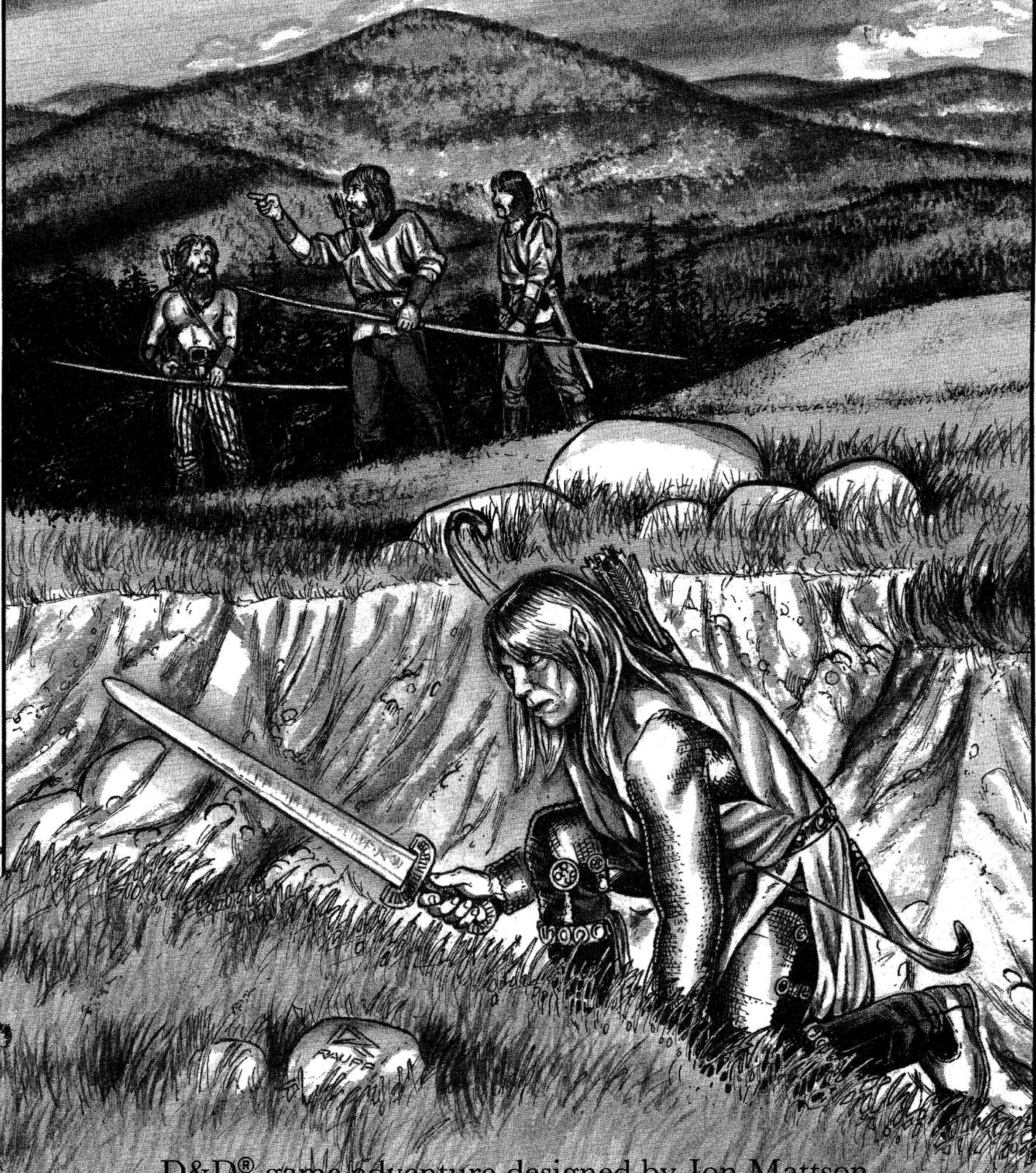
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Adventurers seek an elusive elf who holds  
The **SWORD** of **JUSTICE**



Adventurers seek an elusive elf who holds

# The SWORD of JUSTICE

D&D<sup>®</sup> game adventure designed by Jon Mattson

*The Sword of Justice* is an adventure module for use with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup> game. Although it specifies the names of certain towns, areas, and people, the DM can easily modify these to suit a particular campaign. The Basic and Expert rulebooks for the D&D<sup>®</sup> game will be required for the adventure.

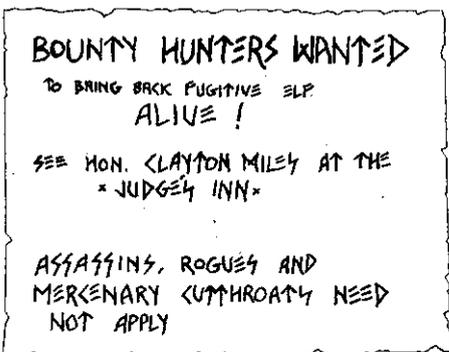
This adventure has ideally been designed for a balanced party of 4-6 characters, each of 1st or 2nd level. The fewer the characters available, the higher their levels should be. Although these characters need not be of any particular classes, it is suggested that the party be lawful in alignment (for reasons which will become obvious in the adventure background). Having at least one dwarf or elf in the group could also prove very helpful.

The Dungeon Master is advised to read the entire module thoroughly before attempting to run the adventure, as the events have been laid out in the approximate order that they would naturally occur. It is essential that the referee have a good grasp of the story line so that the adventure will flow smoothly and logically.

## INTRODUCTION FOR PLAYERS

Rather than simply reading the following information aloud to the players, the Dungeon Master is advised to play out the situation, taking the parts of the mayor and other non-player characters as they are encountered. In this way, he can also add, delete, or modify any information he deems necessary, based on his own campaign and the characters' actions.

Our brave adventurers have been seeking employment and missions worthy of their growing reputations for some time now. Their travels have brought them little for several weeks. Finally, upon entering the thriving village of Farstead, they see a curious poster plastered over several of the walls of the local shops and inns:



The Judge's Inn is owned and operated by the mayor and judge of Farstead, Clayton Miles. He is a large, burly, middle-aged man, bald except for tufts of gray hair over his ears. His heavy drawl reveals his peasant upbringing, but he has a keen mind in matters related to justice, and his wisdom in such matters is well known throughout the area.

Judge Clayton is a 4th-level fighter, AC 9, HP 23, STR 11; INT 16, WIS 18, DEX 10, CON 12, CHA 16. He carries a dagger out of habit, and rarely uses any other weapon. He is lawful, as are most of the inhabitants of Farstead.

Once the characters explain why they are here and Clayton is satisfied with their credentials, he will tell them the following story. Three weeks ago, the village magician, Eorl Flan, was found dead in his home, obviously a victim of foul play. The only suspect was Falrik Moondance, a reclusive, eccentric elf who lived at the edge of town and who had a running rivalry with Eorl. Falrik was quickly arrested and brought to trial to determine his innocence or guilt.

Mere hours into the trial, it became apparent that no decision could be quickly reached, based on the meager evidence against the elf. While Falrik might have committed the crime (he was a fair swordsman and Eorl was slain by a sword or similar weapon), this possibility clashed with Falrik's known personality and tendencies. Judge Miles wanted to find out the truth of the matter. He decided that the situation warranted the use of the village's most prized treasure: *Annacon*, the legendary Sword of Justice — a magical weapon said to be able to "determine the truth of any man's words." If a lie was told in the sword's presence, it would shine with a blue glow.

The judge had instituted the use of *Annacon* some years ago; before then, the weapon had been kept locked in the village treasury (magical weaponry was scarce in this area). *Annacon* ensured that justice prevailed, and often just the knowledge that it would be used was enough to bring out a criminal's immediate confession.

Judge Miles thought that Falrik would be pleased with this decision; he believed in the elf's innocence and thought the sword would prove it. Surprisingly, this decision had quite the opposite effect. Falrik became nervous and panicky at the idea, and many people assumed that this reaction proved his guilt.

Clayton Miles refused to jump to conclusions, however, and insisted that the test be performed in his courtroom the next day as decreed. His decision did not sit well with many of the villagers; though they did not care much for Eorl Flan personally, they respected him for his power and for the protection that his presence gave the village. The atmosphere in the village grew increasingly tense and angry throughout the rest of the day and the night that followed.

When court was called into session the next day, Falrik seemed to be composed and took his seat without resistance or outward nervousness. Spectators began muttering among themselves that perhaps the elf was innocent after all, and everyone seemed to relax a bit now that the threat of Falrik becoming violent was not in evidence. Then the judge appeared from within his private rooms, holding the sword (in its scabbard) before him. After a short ceremony, he handed the sword over to the bailiff, who began to move closer to Falrik. Suddenly, the elf jumped from his seat with the look of a cornered animal, spoke the words of an arcane spell, and vanished into thin air. A moment later, as the courtroom was exploding in shouts and screams, the Sword of Justice leaped from its sheath as if of its own accord and flew toward the courtroom exit, shining with a bright blue light. In the ensuing confusion, the invisible Falrik escaped with the sword and fled from the mob of enraged villagers.

Posses were formed within the hour to hunt down the fugitive elf. The furious townspeople now believed that Falrik had not only stolen their most prized possession, but had also certainly killed Eorl, perhaps just so that he might get a chance to get his hands on the sword. The whole episode became a devious plot which grew no less diabolical in the re-telling. Nevertheless, for all their furor, the villagers were unable to find the elf. Only one party of hired bounty hunters spotted him and shot arrows uselessly after him before he escaped them.

Clayton Miles suspected that there was more to the elf's actions than the townspeople had guessed. The most incongruous fact was that Falrik had been able to hold and carry the sword: many legends about *Annacon* said that it could only be held by those who were pure of heart. If Falrik was indeed guilty of murder, the sword wasn't living up to its legends. Yet if he was innocent, why had he run away when the sword could have proven this beyond a shadow of a doubt?

These and other questions weighed heavily on the judge's mind. He began to question villagers and collect evidence to solve the case on his own (such procedures having gone out of fashion with the advent of *Annacon's* use). Eventually he discovered that Falrik had not killed Eorl. The culprit was found to be the brawny local watch captain, who confessed to the crime when he was confronted with Clayton's suspicions. Apparently, Eorl had cheated the captain by purposefully making him a faulty love potion with which the captain had hoped to attract the affections of a local beauty. The woman was repelled by the captain, and it was the magician (who had also had his eye on the young girl) and not the captain who became the target of her admiration. The watchman stormed over to Eorl's house in a fit of rage; in the ensuing brawl, he drew his sword and killed the crooked conjurer.

While this explained one mystery and absolved Falrik of blame, it did not explain Falrik's theft of *Annacon* and his disappearance. A peddler friend of Judge Miles told of seeing an elf matching Falrik's description in the vicinity of an old mansion a day's journey from town. Judge Miles has sworn the peddler to silence on the matter, and no one else has heard the rumor.

Judge Miles wishes the characters to go to the mansion, find Falrik, and bring him back alive if possible, since his innocence is now certain. Equally important, they must bring back the sword *Annacon*. He is also curious as to why Falrik ran off with the sword and would like this information if possible. He warns that bringing Falrik back unharmed might prove to be very difficult, since the elf has already been shot at once by bounty hunters. Should the characters find Falrik, they are to present him with an official pardon signed by Judge Miles, absolving the elf of guilt in the wizard's murder.

Clayton has dug into the village treasury and come up with a reward of 200 gp if Falrik is brought back alive and basically unharmed, plus 300 gp more if the sword is brought with him. Information as to Falrik's exact whereabouts or why he ran off is worth 25 to 50 gp (depending on the quality of the information) if the party of adventurers can do nothing to bring the elf or the sword back to town.

If the characters agree to this, Clayton will describe the location of the mansion, noting that Falrik has probably had time to fortify the place to some extent. He will be hesitant to say much more, not wanting to deter characters from the quest. If pressed, he will mention that the mansion once belonged to a mysterious magic-user named Kanos and that people now avoid the place because it is rumored to be haunted. With that, he will send the characters off and wish them good luck.

## FALRIK AND ANNACON

Falrik Moondance is a rather eccentric elf. While he is quite bright and good-natured, he is also rather impulsive. His

appearance is youthful, but he gives the impression that he is much older and wiser than he seems at first glance. He is fairly suspicious, almost paranoid, and he panics easily. Often he does things which seem quite clever (in a twisted sort of way) but are bound to be misinterpreted by others at the moment he acts. His impulsiveness and short-sightedness do not make his deeds logical in a conventional (that is, lawful) sense, but he is very cunning and has an intuitive grasp of the "smartest thing to do" in most situations.

Falrik does not like being a fugitive, but he likes the idea of being executed even less. He has certain knowledge about *Annacon* which might help to save him (see below), but he doesn't think that the villagers will believe him. He is stubborn as well as cautious and suspicious, so it will prove quite difficult to get him to believe that his pardon is not some sort of trap.

Basically a peaceable sort, Falrik will avoid combat as much as possible. He will not attempt to physically harm anyone who is not attacking him, preferring to harass, confuse, and frustrate them into leaving him alone. The DM should carefully consider what spells he and the sword have available when deciding on Falrik's tactics inside the mansion. *Charming* characters with the sword, for instance, is one possibility, as is going *invisible* and hiding if in danger of being found out.

Falrik Moondance is a lawful 3rd-level elf (9,642 xp) with silvery hair and gold-colored eyes. He stands 5' 4" tall and weighs 104 lbs.; he is 263 years old. His statistics are: STR 15, INT 17, WIS 7, DEX 17, CON 15, CHA 14, HP 18. He has AC 2 from armor, dexterity, and magical bonuses, has a +1 to hit and damage in combat, and has a +2 bonus with missiles.

Falrik speaks common, the lawful tongue, elf, orc, hobgoblin, gnoll, halfling, and pixie. He carries three spells at all times: *hold portal*, *ventriloquism*, and *invisibility*

His current possessions include: *Annacon* (see below); a *bow +1*; a chainmail suit; a *ring of protection +1*; a quiver with 20 arrows (4 of them with silver arrowheads); a pack with his rations, water, spellbook, and tinderbox; and his prize, a *wand of illusion* with 12 charges.

*Annacon* is a *longsword +2* with *charm person* ability. It has an intelligence of 8 and an ego of 6 (total Will Power: 14), and possesses two primary powers: it will *detect lies* spoken within 10' of the person holding it, and (unknown to the villagers) it will *detect elves* within a 10' radius.

Unfortunately, both abilities cause the sword blade to glow with the same blue color as brightly as a *light* spell, and therein lies the problem: Falrik, knowing from tales told among the elves in this region about the latter ability of the weapon, realized that the sword would glow in his presence because he is an elf. He feared that the villagers, not knowing this, would probably assume that he was lying or that the sword was indicating that he was the killer.

The duration of the blue glow of the sword varies from a mere 3 seconds (in the case of the *detect lies* power) to potentially infinite (for as long as an elf remains in detection range). The villagers are not aware of the latter fact, since *Annacon* has never been used as a "lie-detector" against an elf.

*Annacon* is lawful in alignment and so will damage non-lawful wielders. Falrik, in his intuitive way, hoped that his ability to carry the sword unharmed would prove his innocence, or at least plant a seed of suspicion about his guilt.

The elven legends about *Annacon* say it was forged by a dwarven weaponsmith and a human wizard ally about three centuries ago. At that time, the elves and dwarves of this region were fighting a war against each other over the damage that dwarven surface mines were doing to local forests and wildlife. The battles were settled long ago, though some slight hostility between the two races still exists.

Any player character elf or dwarf who hails from this area of the campaign lands will have a 5% chance per point of intelligence of knowing about *Annacon's* elf-detecting powers from old legends, and he may make the same deductions that Falrik did. After all, the sword can "determine the truth of any *man's* words," including dwarves and the like, but the elf-detecting power makes it useless for telling if an elf is lying or not.

## THE MANSION OF KANOS

Forty years ago, a powerful magic-user known as Kanos the Wizard built a large mansion several miles from Farstead. While he was friendly enough in his own way, he was a suspicious man with an odd sense of humor, and he planted several unusual tricks and traps his home for uninvited intruders like thieves and curio-seekers.

In time, the rich and unusual home became well known throughout the surrounding countryside — perhaps too well known, for it eventually attracted visitors of a most unfriendly sort. A band of brigands broke into the mansion one night, trying to make Kanos part with some of his wealth. They met instead his wrath. No one knows exactly what happened in the ensuing battle; only a single bandit escaped, crying to his captors that Kanos had used mighty magic that consumed himself as well as the brigands. Neither the wizard nor his uninvited guests were ever seen or heard from again, and no human dared enter the house for fear of its traps.

Since that time, several malicious creatures have taken up residence in and around the abandoned structure and occasionally raid the scattered farms in the area for food and petty amounts of loot. The mansion is slowly falling into ruin from lack of upkeep; all of the windows are broken out, though the walls and floor are still sturdy.

Popular belief also has it that the place is haunted. The local people fear it, and the

mansion is just far enough from town to be comfortably avoided by the local watch patrols and militia (who don't wish to become involved in a siege of a "haunted" building).

Falrik, not believing the "haunted house" stories, decided to use this information to his advantage. Using various devices, skills, and powers of his own, he slipped into the mansion and past its denizens to find his own little niche there. In the days after he arrived, he set up several traps and "spy posts" to protect himself.

The monsters who live in the mansion have grudgingly accepted Falrik's presence, primarily because he leaves everyone alone and because none of the intelligent monsters feel confident enough to try to kick him out; the few that did met with *Annacon's* wrath or Falrik's sorcery. Falrik's *wand of illusion* has been particularly useful in scaring off monsters and would-be explorers. Though the *wand's* charges have steadily decreased with no way to replace them, the elf feels relatively secure in his stronghold.

The mansion is a brisk one-day march from Farstead (20 miles), through terrain ranging from cultivated fields to light forest. The area within a half-mile radius around the mansion is covered with dense forest, and the vegetation has begun to encroach on the seldom-used road and property. Small groups of goblins, kobolds, and minor monsters have been spotted by hunters several times in the area, particularly during the night hours.

If characters explore the terrain around the mansion, they have a chance of encountering some of the local "wildlife" and residents of the area. Roll a d6 three times per game day, at mid-morning, sundown, and midnight; a roll of 5 or 6 on the die indicates an encounter has occurred, and the specific encounter is referenced on the following chart by a d8 roll:

#### Die roll encounter

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | 1-3 kobolds (associated with Thulin's band in the mansion (see area 26 below))   |
| 2 | 1-2 wolves   |
| 3 | 1-2 wild boars   |
| 4 | Animal herd (deer)   |
| 5 | 1-2 goblins (not associated with any other band)   |
| 6 | Insect swarm   |
| 7 | 1-2 stirges  |
| 8 | 2-5 human hunters from Farstead (fighters of levels 1-4, heavily armed, wearing leather armor and riding light horses) |

The kobolds and goblins will usually attack any parties they meet unless seriously outnumbered; even then, they may attempt an ambush or try to pick off stragglers. The hunters will be relatively friendly but cautious, sharing some general information on the region with adventurers but revealing little about themselves or any wealth they may carry. None of them will join an expedition into the mansion, as they care little

for adventuring (hunting, they'll say, is safer).

The mansion stands atop a small hill surrounded by trees growing wild from lack of care. Just to the east, a small river bordered by trees and deep banks flows swiftly by toward the south. The house itself has a barren look about it, and it looms like a dark sentinel before the characters as they approach its ruined gate.

Note that there should be no chance of the player characters discovering the secondary entrances (areas 26 and 30). Both are well hidden and difficult to reach.

A description of the mansion follows, keyed to the maps on pp. 49, 51, and 52.

#### 1. Well

This ancient well is unexceptional, but a "trick" magical spell (similar to the AD&D® game's *magic mouth*) has been placed on it. When anyone comes within 10' of the well, a voice will be heard from inside it shouting, "Help me! Help! I'm drowning!" The voice will repeat this phrase every time someone comes near the well again. The well drops thirty feet down to an eight-foot deep pool of very cold water; anyone dunked in it for more than a minute will lose 1 strength point and 1-3 dexterity points per turn for 1-3 normal turns; strength and dexterity scores will not drop below 3 in any event. Swimming and drowning rules are on p. 27 of the D&D® Expert rulebook. At the bottom of the well lie 14 sp, but nothing else is of interest here.

#### 2. Cloakroom and entrance hall

This area is basically uninteresting (see room 15, adjacent to it, however). Racks for hanging cloaks line the walls on either side, but they are all empty. One hook is tilted to one side and revolves freely, but it will do nothing if manipulated (it isn't a trap or a secret-door spring).

Falrik will begin his surveillance of the party at this point, using the peepholes from area 15. Due to the small size of the holes, only a 1% chance exists of any character noticing one, and this may only be rolled for if the character is actively searching the area for traps or secret doors.

#### 3. Servants' room

This area is actually two rooms, divided by partial walls and a moldering curtain.

A. Cook's room: This room contains a battered bed, a dresser with three drawers, a small table, and two chairs. On the north wall hangs a painting of a country fair with a large gray castle in the background. The picture is worth about 50 gp, but is quite heavy to carry around (300 cn). A crab spider lurks on the east wall above the curtain. It will not usually attack unless it can gain surprise (on a 1-4 due to its chameleon-like powers if the group enters through the west door, or on a 1-5 if they enter through the curtain). The dresser contains some old clothing and odds and ends. The bottom drawer has a purse which contains 12 sp and 3 gp. A careful search of

the room will reveal a small pile of goblin bones (a victim of the spider) in the south-east corner; hidden among them are 6 sp and 1 gp.

Crab spider: AC 7; HD 2; HP 8; THAC0 18; DAM 1-8 plus poison (save at +2 or die in 1d4 turns); MOR 7; EXP 25.

B. Butler's room: This room is similar to "A," (above); it contains a sunken bed, a small dresser, a table, a small desk, and two chairs. It is unexceptional except for one locked drawer of the desk, which contains some yellowed papers (records, inventories, etc.) and a small box with 8 sp and 4 gp.

#### 4. First guest room

This is the largest guest room, the chamber of Kanos's most favored visitors. Not surprisingly, it has now lost much of its finery; the bed is sunken and slashed, and the remainder of the furniture — a small table, a three-drawer dresser, a cabinet, and two chairs — is in little better shape. Searching the room will reveal nothing except smashed ornaments, dust, cobwebs, and similar rubbish. The drawers of the dresser have long ago been looted of anything they might have held.

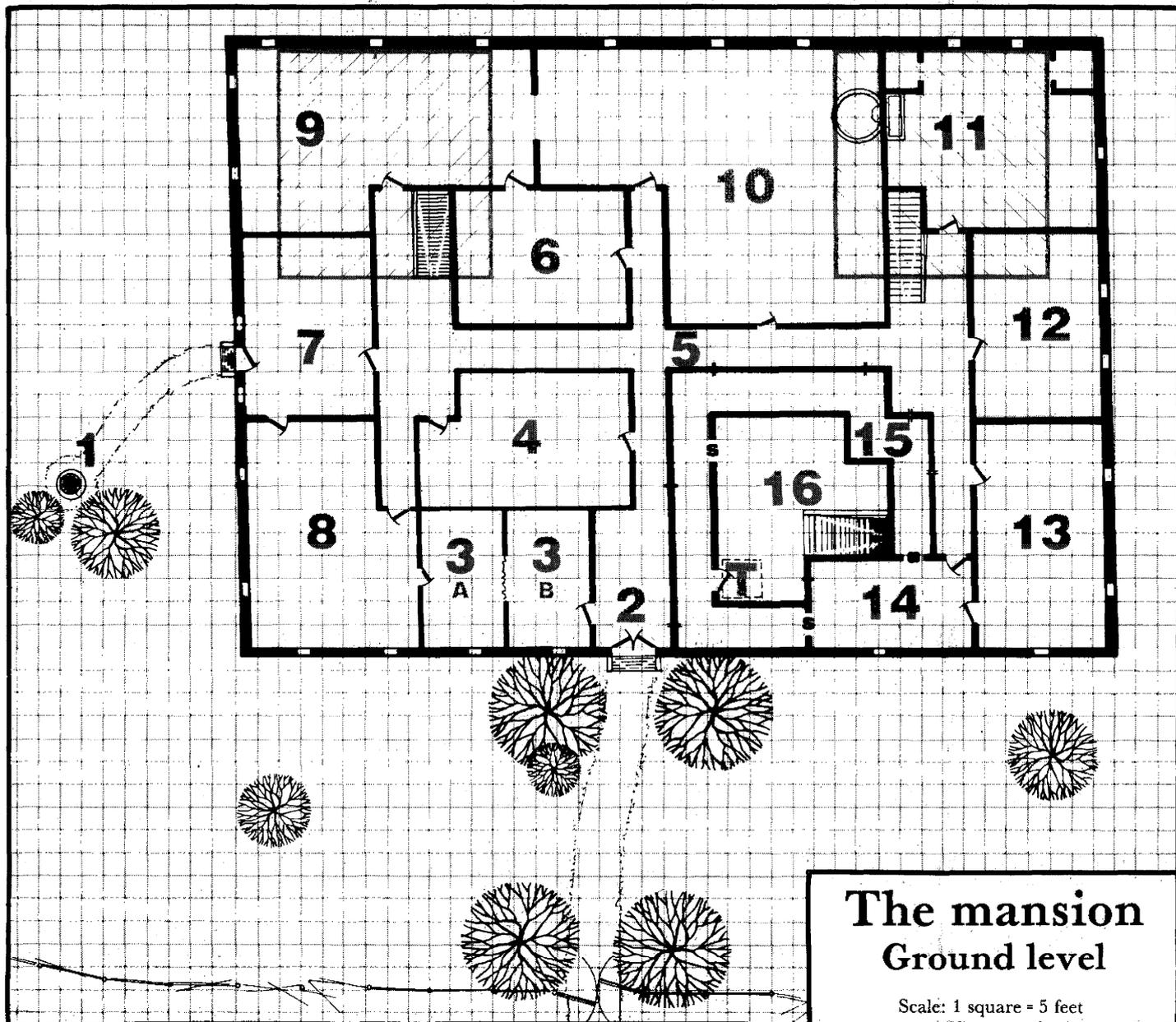
One turn after the room is entered, an eerie wailing sound will be heard emanating from the cabinet. The sound is part of a magical trap Kanos set in the cabinet to discourage intruders when he had no current guests. Should anyone open the cabinet (before or after the wailing starts), a brilliant flash of light will burst from it; anyone viewing it must save versus spells (the opener saving at -2) or be blinded for 2-8 turns. This will work any number of times that the cabinet is opened.

#### 5. Statue

In the center of the hallway intersection stands a statue of a gargoyle facing area 2. While the statue is not unusual in most ways, its eyes are of note: due to their craftsmanship, they will appear to follow any viewer as he moves in front of the statue. In addition, if Falrik is watching the characters from area 15 the first time they encounter the statue (see below), he will use his *wand of illusion* to make the statue appear to animate and attack the group. Attacks on the illusion do not, of course, affect the statue, and it will "reappear" undamaged when the illusion is dispelled. The DM should decrease the charges left in Falrik's *wand* if this tactic is used.

#### 6. Second guest room

This guest room is occupied by four hobgoblins, who are sitting around, gnawing on the remains of a stirge and loudly discussing plans to travel on to the west within a day or so. Increase the party's chances of listening and surprise by +1. Each hobgoblin has 2-8 gp and 31-50 sp, shoved in shoulder pouches with tribal symbols on them (withered trees engulfed by flames). The largest hobgoblin also has a gold ring (550 gp value) with the same symbol engraved on it. The room is similar



## The mansion Ground level

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet

to the first guest room (area 4 above): it contains a ruined bed, a smashed dresser, a table, and two comfortable, if rather old, chairs, as well as a lot of rubbish (bones, webs, sticks, dust, etc.).

Hobgoblins: AC 6; HD 1+1; HP 9, 6, 7, 6; THAC0 18; DAM 1-8 with longwords; MOR 9 (8 if the leader dies); EXP 15 each.

### 7. Kitchen

This room does not appear at all unusual at first glance. It contain tables, counters, and cupboards. A meat cleaver is lying on one table, and two chipped plates sit on another. The cupboards are mostly open and have been thoroughly looted — all that remains are a few scraps of very inedible food and some broken cooking utensils (including a large iron pot on the floor in the northwest corner). The one thing of note is in the center of the room where a large stone table sits with a seemingly wet surface. The moisture is, in fact, a grey ooze, as anyone who gets too close will quickly realize. All other inhabitants of the

mansion strictly avoid this room.

Grey ooze: AC 8; HD 3; HP 22; THAC0 17; DAM 2-16; MOR 12; Hit only by weapons and lightning; EXP 50.

### 8. Dining room

This large hall contains a very long table, surrounded by eight chairs and an especially large thronelike seat at the head of the table. All are in very good condition, although somewhat dusty. Closer inspection will reveal that the place at the head of the table is set with a gold plate (100 gp), eating utensils (80 gp total), as well as a crystal goblet (200 gp), also covered with dust.

The reason no looters have had the nerve to take these will quickly become apparent. After half a minute, a spectral man dressed in formal clothing will come in through the north door and walk over to stand beside the head of the table. The sight of the man *causes fear* (as per the cleric spell) in all viewers. No amount of talking or yelling will get the man's attention, and anyone who attempts to touch or attack him will

find that he is insubstantial and cannot be harmed. He is a minor phantom and cannot be dispelled in any way, even by a cleric. Should the party take the plate and utensils, the phantom will simply smile and vanish, his obligation to wait for his master's dinner no longer-binding.

### 9. Library and study

This room obviously once housed a magnificent collection of tomes, scrolls, journals, and similar written works, as attested by the many bookracks present, particularly in the western half of the room. However, virtually all of these treasures have been stolen, ripped to shreds and cast about, burned, or otherwise mutilated. The bookcases in the northwest corner show signs of extensive burning. A careful search of the debris scattered there will reveal a thin bone scroll tube, somewhat charred, which contains an intact scroll of *sleep*, *continual light*, and *dispel magic* spells. The furniture in the eastern half of the room has fared somewhat better. A small table is here, as

well as a desk and three chairs (toppled over, but in good shape). The desk has two drawers; one has been smashed open, but the other is not locked and opens freely. Within it is another scroll tube with a large "F" on it. This is another trap left by Falrik; inside the tube is a cursed scroll that Falrik bought from a wizard long ago. Examining the scroll will paralyze the reader for 2-12 hours (or until a *dispel magic* is used on the individual), with no saving throw.

#### 10. Living room

This room is unexceptional in most respects, except for its occupants — five stirges, which have a nest concealed in the shadowy southeast corner of the room. The stirges roost here during the day, flying out of one of the broken windows to go hunting at night.

The room contains some ruined furniture (a sofa, chairs, and a small table), several chipped and broken statuettes (a lion, a maiden riding a unicorn, a wolf, and lots of unrecognizable rubble, all worthless), and a dried-up fountain with only a couple of inches of scummy water pooled at the bottom. The fountain is the landing spot of anyone who falls through the pit trap in room 17 (east); it contains the remains of a previous human victim, complete with rusty chainmail and longsword. A pouch hangs on the skeleton's belt and contains 12 gp, 26 sp, and 3 pp.

The stirges' nest in the southeast corner contains the remains of previous victims (mostly rats, kobolds, and the like), including a human skeleton in leather armor. This one has a belt pouch which holds 16 gp and a small ruby (80 gp value), and has a quiver full of arrows. Most arrows are warped with moisture and age (including two silver-tipped ones), but four of them are in perfect condition (each is an *arrow +1*). The skeleton's bow is nowhere to be found.

Stirges: AC 7; HD 1; HP 7, 6, 5, 5, 3; THAC0 19 (17 on first roll); DAM 1-3 plus automatic 1-3/round thereafter; MOR 9; EXP 13 each.

#### 11. Lavatory

This room acts as the lavatory for the mansion and contains several toilets and wash basins; a large water-tank and a huge bathtub stand in one corner. The tank is nearly dry, holding only a few inches of stagnant water with a greenish slime floating on it. The slime is harmless.

#### 12. Third guest room

Like the other guestrooms, this one contains a ruined bed, a broken table, a dresser, and two torn and battered chairs. A skeleton is propped up against the east wall, attached to the door by a long string. Opening the door will cause the skeleton to move forward and shake menacingly, although it is not, of course, truly animated — another trick of Falrik's.

Unfortunately, the prank is a double-edged one. Hiding in the room is a large

pack of 13 giant rats. They will attack intruders who enter the room to examine the eastern skeleton, gaining +2 to surprise if no precautions have been taken. The dresser, being unusually sturdy and heavy, is still intact and locked. It contains the former occupant's possessions, including a belt pouch with 12 sp, 7 gp, and a tiger eye gem (worth about 40 gp).

Giant rats: AC 7; HD 1/2; HP 2 each; THAC0 19; DAM 1-3; MOR 6; EXP 6 each. Note the 5% chance of catching a disease from a bite if the victim's save versus poison isn't made.

#### 13. Trophy room

This large room contains a number of souvenirs from Kanos's days as an adventurer, all in good, if somewhat dusty, condition. The reason for this room's orderliness will soon become apparent to would-be looters: a minute or so after the room is entered, a silver dagger enchanted long ago by Kanos will detach itself from one wall and begin attacking intruders of its own volition! Any hit scored upon the dagger will cause it to drop to the ground and stay there for two full minutes; if the intruders are still present at the end of this time (or if they try to pick up the dagger at any time), the blade will rise and take up the attack again. Only leaving the room will cause it to cease attacking and return to its wall position; a *dispel magic* will cause it to fall to the ground for one minute for each level of the caster.

The other souvenirs include a black dragon's head, a pair of gargoyle wings, a well-crafted (and non-magical) staff, a huge ogre's club, the skull of a cave bear, the skeletons of a kobold, a goblin, an orc, a hobgoblin, and a gnoll lined up side-by-side, a small black box on a pedestal, and the battleaxe, chainmail, and *shield +1* of a powerful evil fighter whom Kanos defeated.

The "small black box" is of particular interest. Kanos kept it as a curio, having recovered it from an old tomb; apparently it was enchanted with random spell effects for some unknown reason by an ancient wizard. It is made of a glassy, mica-like substance, but cannot be chipped or removed from the pedestal, although it does not seem to be part of the pedestal or connected to it in any way. Anyone who touches it will experience some unusual effect. Roll a d6 and check the following table:

1-2: The person feels a strong chill and suddenly keels over, paralyzed for 1-4 minutes. However, for each minute spent paralyzed, the character will be healed of 2 hit points of damage.

3-4: The character feels a warm sensation flow through his or her body and gets a little dizzy. The character must save versus spells or fall asleep for 1-3 minutes.

5: The character loses the use of one sense (roll 1d6: 1-2 is sight; 3 is hearing; 5 is smell; and 6 is touch). This effect lasts for 3-30 minutes.

6: No effect.

Multiple attempts to touch the box are

possible; however, add 1 to the die roll for each additional attempt by the same person after the first try, and always consider a modified score of 6 or more as 6.

Dagger: AC 4; HD n/a; HP n/a; THAC0 14; DAM 1-4; MOR n/a; EXP 0.

#### 14. Store room

This room contains a large number of crates, casks, barrels, and so on (in which are stored various rotted, decayed, or dried-out foodstuffs), as well as a few pieces of old furniture, some broken and some almost as good as new, but very little in between. One barrel has contents which have not spoiled but are very well aged: a very potent, magical wine, which will reduce the drinker's wisdom score to 3 for 21-40 rounds thereafter (no saving throw). The drinker will behave in the most foolish and irresponsible manner possible during this time, discharging any of his magic spells and casting treasure away at a whim. All advice will be disregarded.

Falrik will be watching any characters here from his peephole in room 16 on a 75% chance — otherwise, assume that he is already in the cellar (see below). If he is present in room 16, he will use his spells, the *charm* power of *Annacon*, and his *wand of illusion* as appropriate in an attempt to ward off intruders. If this is unsuccessful and the party attempts to enter any of the secret doors in the room, he will flee into the cellar. Mark off any charges used from Falrik's *wand*.

#### 15. Secret corridor

It is uncertain why Kanos had this corridor built, but it is entirely likely that he used it for the same thing that Falrik is now doing; that is, spying on guests or intruders. The walls of this area are lined with tiny peepholes to allow sight into areas 2 and 5, as well as the corridor outside rooms 10, 11, 12, and 13. Area 15 is thickly carpeted, so Falrik's movements within here will be completely silent.

Falrik will be waiting in this room near area 2 when the adventurers arrive; he has been anticipating pursuit since his escape from the village. Any noises in the areas surrounding room 15 will draw his attention. He will keep the group in sight for as long as possible, attempting to hinder their progress with his *hold portal* or *ventriloquism* spells or, more often, his *wand of illusion*. He has a special trick for area 5 (see number 5 above), but in most other cases he will create an illusion of a monster to attack the party; the monster type is up to the referee, and need not be a "logical" one (i.e., a small dragon or chimera may be created). Of course, illusions of very large or unlikely creatures may allow the victim a bonus of +1 to +3 when saving against them. Should anyone enter area 15, Falrik will flee into the cellar if he has not already done so (see below).

#### 16. Secret stairwell

This room is essentially empty: Falrik

will likely have fled into the cellar by the time the party reaches it, and no monsters or treasure are here. The stairs lead down to the cellar (areas 21 to 29). A pit trap 10' deep is also present, doing 1d6 points of damage to anyone falling through it. Falrik is aware of the trap. The only other object present is an old chair in the southeast corner beside the peephole.

## THE TOWERS

Areas 17 through 20 comprise the eastern and western towers of the mansion and can only be reached via the appropriate staircases, as indicated on the map.

### 17. Observatory stairwells

These two rooms contain stairways leading from the ground floor up to their respective towers, as well as several large broken windows which give an excellent, if now somewhat dismal, view of the estate. The rooms are otherwise empty. The room in the eastern tower has a pit trap covered by a rug, which Kanos set long ago (see map for location). The trap empties into the fountain in room 10. At one time, the water would have cushioned some of the fall; however, the fountain has now dried up, so the damage sustained is the usual 1d6.

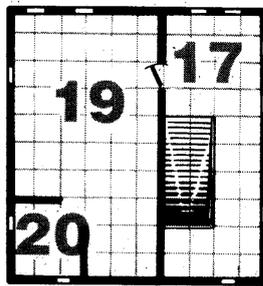
### 18. Laboratory

This room is in fairly good shape, though it is obvious that some explorers have entered the room in the past. The only signs of current occupation are a few abandoned stirge nests and droppings: the northernmost window has been smashed open, allowing the entrance of these tenants periodically. The room contains furniture and equipment typical of a lab, including two large tables (one with a large green stain on it), three chairs, a desk for writing (with parchment, a quill, and a dried-up inkwell), racks of glassware (test tubes, beakers, and flasks), a small ovenlike contraption, numerous candles and stubs, two cabinets filled with various jars of ingredients (blood, bone powder, wood chips, metal filings, chemicals, etc.), and a large empty cage.

One of the cabinets is locked and appears to be made of glass; however, it cannot be smashed open even by sword or mace blows. The lock is so complicated that two successful lockpicking rolls must be made in succession by a thief in order to open it. The cabinet contains four vials of colored liquid containing two doses each: holy water (clear), acid (pale green), a *potion of healing* (pale blue), and poison (bright red). The acid will do 1d6 damage per round to exposed flesh, or 3d6 damage if swallowed; the drinker must also save vs. poison or die. The poison is rather weak, so saving throws made against it (if it is swallowed) are at a +2 bonus, failure indicating death in 1d6 rounds.

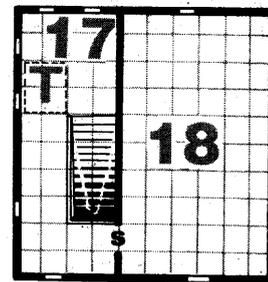
### 19. Blasted chamber

This room was originally Kanos's living chamber and study. It was also his last battlefield, as the appearance of the cham-



## The towers

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet



ber will testify. It is almost totally empty and devoid of detail now, save for a number of charred bones and two blackened stumps of wood (perhaps the broken remains of a staff). All of the northwestern corner, in particular, is taken up by a dark "blast crater." Kanos's final magic obviously took not only himself and the brigands with it, but much of the rest of the area as well. Any commotion here has a 30% chance per round of attracting the occupant of the adjacent bedroom (area 20).

### 20. Kanos's bedroom

Most creatures in the mansion avoid this area, since room 19 (above) gives them an eerie feeling; however, one creature, too stupid to be bothered by it, has proven to be the exception and has gone so far as to make this room its lair. A giant lizard, similar to a giant gecko but slightly larger (six feet long), stays here and will attack anything that dares to intrude into this room (or the adjacent living chamber, as noted above).

The room itself is a typical bedchamber, although somewhat richer than the guest-rooms found downstairs: it contains a large bed (in fairly good condition), a small nightstand, a dresser, and a footlocker. The dresser contains only old clothing and was rifled through some years ago; the locker has been broken open and has suffered a similar fate — it contains only a few more pieces of old clothing, an empty purse, and a small brass key.

The looters were not especially thorough in their search, however, and missed the trap door which the key opens on the floor in the northwest corner of the room. Characters will notice the small keyhole in the floor on a 1 in 6 chance, 2 in 6 for elves (+1 to chance if actively searching). The trap door opens into a long, thin compartment; however, opening the compartment will release a cloud of gas in a five-foot radius. All within the cloud must save versus poison or fall asleep for 2-8 normal turns.

Inside the compartment is a locked box containing 150 gp; a gold brooch (worth about 700 gp, because of its excellent craftsmanship); and a *staff of striking* with 10 charges remaining.

The only other objects in the room are the scattered remains of some of the lizard's previous victims (mostly giant rats and adventurers).

Giant lizard: AC 5; HD 4; HP 26; THAC0 16; DAM 1-8; MOR 9; EXP 75.

## THE CELLARS

Areas 21 through 29 comprise the cellars beneath the mansion and can only be reached via the staircase in room 16 or the hidden tunnel at area 30.

### 21. Central chamber

This large room is unexceptional in most respects, being more of a connecting hallway for the surrounding corridors than anything else. It contains only rubble and some old human, goblin, and animal bones — the latter accumulate more noticeably the further west one gazes. Just as the characters enter the room, they will see an elf (Falrik) flee through the west corridor over the rubble.

This is, in fact, an illusion, and it is saved against at a -2 penalty due to its logical appearance (unless the situation does not allow this). A save against the illusion means the characters in question notice that "Falrik" makes no noise at all when crossing the rough debris, and his footing is abnormally sure and steady — as if what the character was seeing was somehow unreal.

The referee should make the saving throws for the characters to avoid arousing suspicion. The real Falrik will be hiding in the east exit (assuming he hasn't been caught and is still being pursued) and will flee to area 29 if the group enters the chamber for any reason.

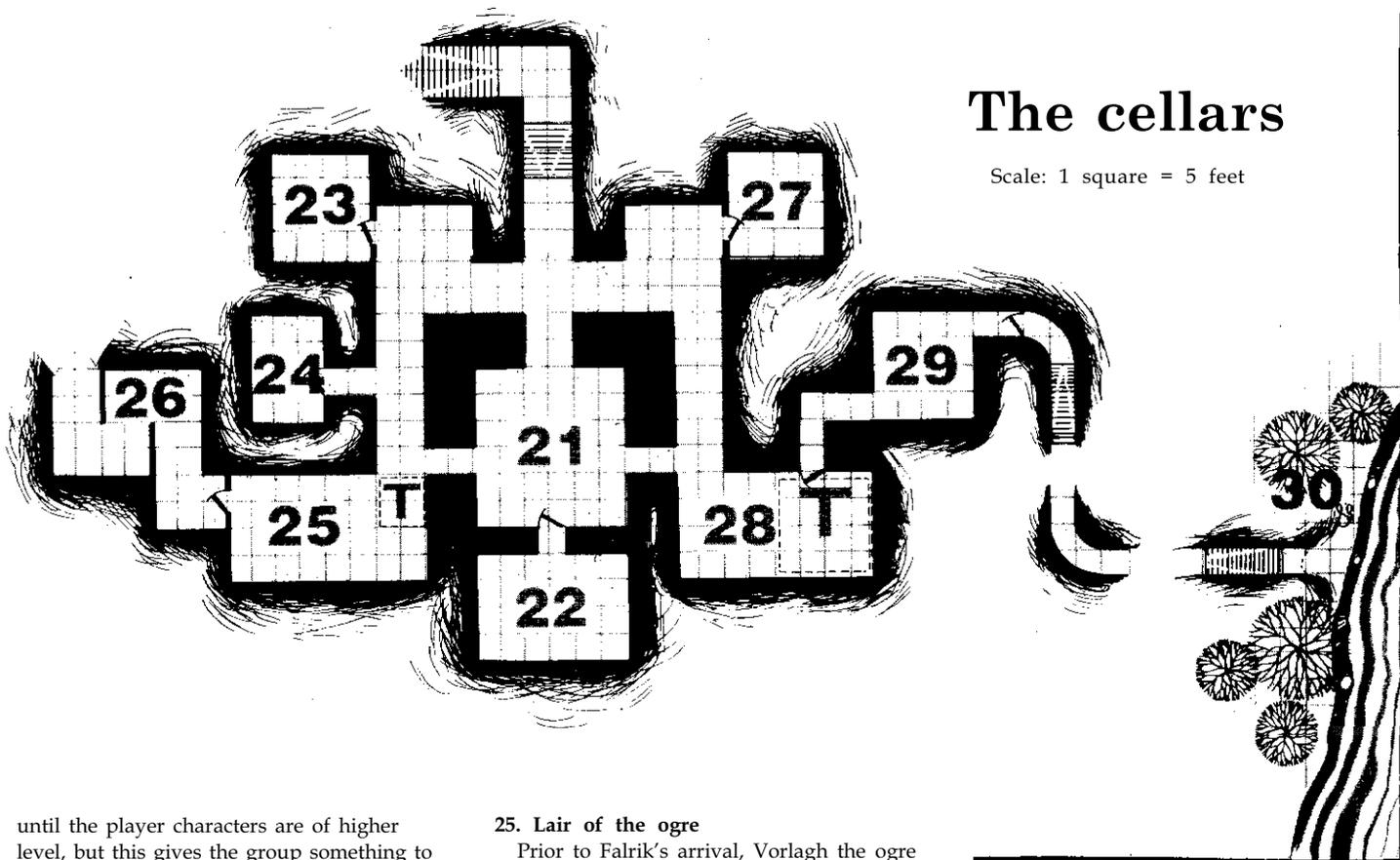
### 22. Unfinished crypt

Kanos originally planned for this chamber to be a burial crypt, but it was not finished before Kanos's death. No coffins are present, though two large biers have been constructed and an assortment of stone-cutting and finishing tools lie about on the dusty floor. The door to this chamber is partially open, and twelve giant rats have made their nest here.

One of the biers contains a secret compartment, which may be detected by someone checking for traps or secret doors. The compartment contains a thin volume of legends and tales; some of the passages have been marked by Kanos as possibly indicating the presence of sizable treasure hoards. The Dungeon Master may develop several adventures based upon the legends in this book if characters show an inclination to explore this matter further. The legends may involve lost dragon lairs, bandit hideouts, shipwrecks, and so forth. Some adventures developing from this may have to wait

# The cellars

Scale: 1 square = 5 feet



until the player characters are of higher level, but this gives the group something to look forward to.

Giant rats: AC 7; HD 1/2; HP 2 each; THAC0 19; DAM 1-3; MOR 6; EXP 6 each. Note the 5% chance of catching a disease from a bite if the victim's save versus poison isn't made.

### 23. Food storage room

This room once contained Kanos's more extravagant stores: valuable wines, rich meats and delicacies, rare intoxicants, aged spices, and other delectable items. Very little now remains, most having been spoiled or looted long ago by men and monsters. The room's only furnishings are broken barrels and crates, many with enticing labels on them. Four giant rats are sniffing about here at the moment. Unless the player characters' reaction is particularly hostile, the rats will not attack unless provoked or cornered.

Giant rats: AC 7; HD 1/2; HP 3 each; THAC0 19; DAM 1-3; MOR 6; EXP 6 each. Note the 5% chance of catching a disease from a bite if the victim's save versus poison isn't made.

### 24. Tool room

This room contains several pieces of equipment and a large number of tools, mostly for mining, excavation, and construction (picks, shovels, hammers, etc.). These are mostly intact and in good condition, but are covered with a thick layer of dust. Any particular item that the adventurers might look for is 80% likely to be present, if reasonable. (Hammers are reasonable, but lances are not, and no magical items are present.)

### 25. Lair of the ogre

Prior to Falrik's arrival, Vorlagh the ogre was the undisputed master of the lower chambers. Now the two have an uneasy truce, neither wishing to test the other's strength in mortal combat. Vorlagh is not at all pleased with the arrangement, and he will be unfavorably disposed toward other intruding "up-worlders" — i.e., -2 on reaction checks. Should he be questioned somehow, he knows that "the stinkin' elf" lives to the east. He has also gained some knowledge of the mansion's contents and environment, since he has lived here for many years, but might not offer such information willingly.

The room has furnishings befitting its occupant: a crude pallet-bed of straw, an old footlocker, some scraps of unidentifiable ogre-food, and a lot of rubbish and old bones. The footlocker is locked and has a poison needle trap on it. A 50% chance exists of hitting it if a small catch isn't released when the lock is opened (save versus poison or die in 1 round). It contains 800 sp, 200 gp, and two pieces of jewelry, a silver ring (350 gp) and a platinum bracelet (800 gp), wrapped in a dirty *cloak of the elvenkind*.

Vorlagh prefers to enter and leave his chamber using the tunnel to area 26; he is aware of the exit at area 30 and has debated about trying to set a trap for Falrik there, but hasn't gotten around to it yet. He will only divulge this information if *charmed*.

A pit trap that Vorlagh easily avoids sits in the entryway to the room, and characters have the normal chances to detect it as any other trap. The 10' deep pit (1d6 damage) contains a few minor pieces of rusted armor, some small broken weapons, and a lot of

dirt and debris. A pouch may be found under some of the dirt which contains 35 gp, a sapphire (500 gp), and a *ring of protection +1*.

Vorlagh: AC 6; HD 4+1; HP 26; THAC0 15; DAM 1-10; MOR 10; EXP 125.

### 26. Ogre's escape tunnel

Kanos had several escape tunnels from his mansion planned, but only two were fully excavated by hired miners prior to his death. This tunnel extends for 1200 feet to the northwest of the mansion, exiting in a densely forested region. No chance exists of the adventuring party finding the tunnel exit without first having gone through the tunnel itself. The tunnel is littered with trash and debris, and is at most 10' wide and 12' high.

A small chamber at the end of the tunnel forms the lair of a small group of bandits who work for Vorlagh: a large goblin and live kobolds. Thulin the goblin is large and exceptionally cunning; under his direction, the little group of raiders has prospered, looting and pillaging nearby homesteads and passersby. Vorlagh lets the bandits stay here unmolested and backs them up on bigger raids, and they give him a few choice items of the booty. The bandits are 25% likely to be away on a raid if anyone checks the end of the tunnel. If present, two of the kobolds will always be on guard while the others rest. The small chamber contains some straw pallets, two chairs, a small table, and a locked chest containing the group treasure of 176 sp, 33 ep, and 1 gp.

In addition, each kobold has 7-10 cp, and Thulin has 5 sp and 1 gp.

Thulin will use some of his loot to bargain for his life if it comes to that, but he will always try to save some and gain the upper hand.

Thulin: AC 6; HD 1-1; HP 7; THAC0 19; DAM 1-6 with shortsword; MOR 9; EXP 10.

Kobolds: AC 7; HD 1/2; HP 4,2,4,3,3; THAC0 19; DAM 1-4 with daggers; MOR 7 (or 9 while Thulin leads); EXP 5 each.

## 27. Storage room

Kanos deposited much of his unwanted furniture and the less spectacular of his accumulated souvenirs in this room. Because the door is particularly thick and is locked in three places, this area has withstood even the ogre's heavy tamperings. The DM may draw up a long list of large items that fill this room, making some of them mundane (an overstuffed sofa that needs mending) and some bizarre (a lamp made from a stuffed constrictor snake) and some both magical and bizarre (a wyvern's skull that quotes elven poetry, or a cursed sword that causes the user to see illusions constantly after a certain period of time). Keep in mind that Kanos, as noted above, had an odd sense of humor and liked collecting strange and unusual artifacts.

## 28. The cage room

This room is Falrik's last line of defense before fleeing to his "lair." It is basically empty, containing only a bit of rubble and a chain connected to the north wall with a loop on it, rather like a leash. It is possible that Kanos may have used it to keep vicious animals as guards, pets, or specimens. When characters enter the room, they will see Falrik standing on the eastern side with *Annacoon* in hand, ready to defend himself. This is another of Falrik's illusions. The elf is peeking through a peephole from area 29 into area 28. The DM may roll the characters' saving throws versus the illusion to avoid arousing suspicion.

Unbeknownst to the player characters, a huge cage hangs over the area to the east (as indicated on the map), which Falrik will drop on them if the characters advance toward the illusion or into the correct area. The cage will allow a 3' wide space around it when it falls, so anyone not caught in it may move around it toward area 29. A character near the edges of the cage when it falls is allowed a saving throw versus wands to avoid being struck by the cage; failure to save indicates the character takes 2-12 points of damage. Each character who must save also has a 50% chance of ending up trapped inside the cage itself. The group has a collective 1 in 6 chance of noticing the cage in its hiding spot on the roof before it is dropped.

If the group is caught, Falrik will then walk out from his hiding place in area 29, apologize to the characters ("I'm truly sorry, but I will not face the executioner just to save a motley group of bounty hunters"),

and then go back to his room in the north and prepare to leave the mansion for good. Should some of the characters manage to get past the trap, he will flee into area 29 casting *hold portal* on the door behind him if he still has the spell memorized. Should the characters be trapped, they will begin to starve one day after their rations run out, losing 1 hit point per day until dead, unless the DM brings in someone or something to rescue them. Falrik will have fled the area by then, and the mission will be a write-off.

The characters may attempt to lift the cage or bend its bars enough to get out. The chance of success, rolled on 1d6, is equal to the combined strength scores of all characters making the attempt divided by 18 (round fractions off to the lowest whole number) — i.e. a combined strength total of 65 would allow a 3 in 6 chance of success.

## 29. Falrik's haven

This room has been Falrik's home for the past few weeks and contains a rough straw bed, a small table, a chair, and a small sack with clothing, rations, and water. A purse may be found under the bed with 3 pp and 5 gp. When the group enters the room, Falrik will have heard them coming and will have cast *invisibility* (if available) on himself. He will then flee out the eastern door. The door leads to a tunnel which travels south and a little east to area 30 (below). If the group has some means to catch him quickly, they may do so here, but Falrik will not listen to reason or promises of freedom. Otherwise, the party will have to follow him to area 30.

## 30. The hidden tunnel

The tunnel from room 29 eventually comes up and out of a huge, hollowed-out boulder surrounded by dense forestation (as noted on the map); the rock rests 10' over the river below. The exit is covered by a permanent illusion placed there by Kanos.

If not being chased, Falrik will be careful to remove his chainmail suit and all heavy items and lower them to the riverbank from the rock with his rope before he himself dives into the water. He will then automatically be able to escape the mansion, a process which should take only 20 minutes.

If hard pressed and desperate, Falrik will overlook the fact that he is wearing chainmail when he jumps into the river. Because of his armor and his general panic, he will quickly begin to flail about in the water, trying to stay afloat while he is carried downstream to the south.

Falrik will then be washed ashore about a hundred feet downstream and will survive the ordeal, though he will be exhausted and unable to escape further until he has rested for 1-4 hours. If the party catches him at this time, he will finally be subdued (rather like a drowned rat) and will go with them back to Farstead, resigned to his fate. The pardon will not lift his spirits; he will still be suspicious and suspect that he is being led to his doom.

## Epilogue

Should the characters get Falrik and *Annacoon* back to Farstead safely, the mayor will officially apologize to the elf and absolve him of all blame in Eorl Flan's murder. Falrik will finally accept the truth of his pardon, and he will haltingly explain his reasons for taking *Annacoon*, demonstrating the sword's elf-detection and lie-detection powers to everyone's satisfaction. Though it will be a while before the local people fully trust him, he will grudgingly be taken back into the community.

Finally, of course, the player characters will receive their rewards. A bonus of 500 gp will be given to the party if they managed to slay the ogre and his bandits at the mansion and offer proof of this; the reward will be devalued accordingly if some bandits or the ogre still live. Additional offers for the characters to remain in town, join the local militia or watch, or even for a strong fighter-type to replace the watch captain (now safely jailed in another city). Other rewards or offers may be made as the Dungeon Master desires.

All characters should get normal experience for this adventure, plus experience for the reward money, if applicable. In addition, each surviving player character should receive the following bonuses:

Entering cellar area: +50 xp.

Returning Falrik alive: +150 xp.

Returning *Annacoon* to villagers: +100 xp.

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# New heights(?) in silliness

## For *TOON* players, failure is half the fun

*TOON*<sup>TM</sup>, *The Cartoon Roleplaying Game*, appears at first glance to be just an elaborate joke. A role-playing game based on Saturday morning cartoons? Is this the stuff that epic fantasy role-playing adventure is all about?

Well, no. But *TOON* is a genuine good idea — an original (if unlikely) concept in role-playing — that is enjoyable, fast-moving, and incredibly silly.

The game was designed by Greg Costikyan and developed by Warren Spector for Steve Jackson Games. Costikyan has already demonstrated a flair for the unusual (and silly) with designs such as *Bug-Eyed Monsters* and the *Creature That Ate Shboygan* game. Spector is writing his doctoral dissertation on animation, and knows the classic Warner Brothers cartoons well.

*TOON* is “beer & pretzels” role-playing. It’s hard to conceive of playing a *TOON* campaign, but it seems ideally suited for single-session adventures and pick-up games. It works well at parties, and would be a good introduction to role-playing for children and adults.

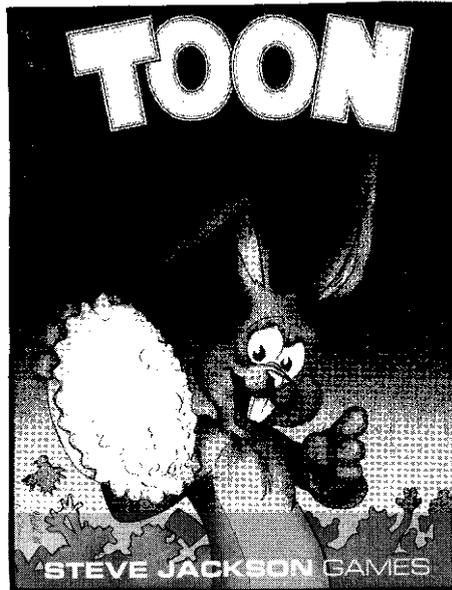
One of the remarkable elements of this game is the simplicity of the mechanics. *TOON* uses only two 6-sided dice, both for conventional rolls and for “tens-and-ones” rolls, which use two dice to generate a number between 11 and 66.

The shortness of the rules is made possible by the simplicity of the system. For example, the designers provide the “Fifty Percent Rule” to resolve all problems: Roll one die. On a 1, 2, or 3, the answer is “Yes”; on a 4, 5, or 6, the answer is “No.” You can solve a great many problems that way. Want something bizarre to happen? Roll a die. On 1, 2, or 3, the expected happens; on 4, 5, or 6, something completely illogical happens.

The characters in *TOON* are traditional cartoon types, ranging from rabbits to little green men from outer space. There are only four Attributes: Muscle, Zip, Smarts, and Chutzpah, each generated by rolling 1d6. Each Attribute controls a number of Skills, ranging from Fight (a Muscle Skill) to Fast-Talk (a Chutzpah Skill). In addition to Attributes and Skills, characters have Shticks. These are the special abilities of the cartoon world, such as incredible speed, teleportation, flying, and disguise.

Characters start off carrying eight items, four of which must be “normal.” The other four can be as eccentric as the gamesmaster (called the Animator) will allow. The *TOON* rulebook suggests such items as a President Nixon mask, an alarm clock, or a butterfly net, but imagination is the only real limit.

A character also starts the game with



1d6+6 hit points, which work like hit points in most role-playing games. There is one important difference, however. Since cartoon characters never die, when your character loses all his hit points he just “Falls Down.” The player sits out the game for three minutes (real time), and then his character comes back into play with all hit points restored!

Since your character can’t die, there is no reason for the caution and common sense that experienced role-players frequently invest in their games. The authors provide this advice for experienced gamers: “Forget everything you know, and act before you think.” Good advice indeed.

During play, Plot Points (which can be used to purchase improved Skills and temporary Shticks) are awarded. Plot Points are given for making another character Fall Down, and taken away whenever your character Falls Down. A player receives Plot Points whenever his character gets hurt doing something that is consistent with his Beliefs & Goals (“I hate mice” or “I love carrots,” for example). And a player receives Plot Points whenever he reduces the Animator to hysterical laughter.

In a *TOON* demonstration given by Warren Spector, he also awarded Plot Points for Boggling the Animator (i.e., doing something entirely unexpected that stops the Animator or a player dead in his tracks). That’s much more in the spirit of *TOON* than giving Plot Points for making someone Fall Down. Mindless mayhem should be its own reward, especially since no one ever dies. The spirit of Saturday morning cartoons would be better served if Plot Points were awarded only for inspired silliness — not for trashing another char-

acter. (Unless, of course, it’s done in a particularly silly way.)

In fact, the use of Plot Points is a hold-over from traditional role-playing games that doesn’t quite fit the *TOON* spirit. In a straight adventure game, a character’s potential to improve may be important as a tool to motivate the player and to keep a campaign going. In *TOON*, this approach doesn’t make sense. Cartoon characters never get “better.”

The character-creation system tries hard to be “balanced” (making all characters of similar power), but many times cartoon characters have wildly different abilities. Some characters always win, and others always lose. Since the object of *TOON* is to have fun and be silly in character (rather than to “win”), traditional character balance isn’t needed. The creators themselves say that “It doesn’t matter how stupid, weak, or inept your character is . . . Half the fun of *TOON* is *failing* . . . because of the silly things that happen when you fail! So ‘bad’ characters are just as much fun — maybe more fun — than ‘good’ characters.” They should have taken their own advice more seriously.

*TOON* currently consists of one book and no supplementary materials. (More is planned for future release.) Although the current rule book is only 64 pages long, the game covers most of the topics a *TOON* referee needs to know. Cartoon coincidences, cause and effect (and how it doesn’t apply), and the illogical logic of a cartoon are treated in enough detail so that a reasonably experienced gamer can “wing it.” It may be a little skimpy for the inexperienced referee, however.

The *TOON* book contains five adventures in addition to all the rules. Most of them take an hour or two to play, and the longest should take only three or four hours. All the adventures are thinly disguised Warner Brothers classics that any fan of the genre will immediately recognize. In play, however, the adventures take off into all sorts of zany directions.

In Warren Spector’s demonstration of *Spaced Out Saps* at the 1984 GEN CON<sup>®</sup> Game Fair, one character jumped out of a spaceship to try to “swim” down to the moon. Spector said, “Well, that’s impossible, so roll your Smarts or less on two dice . . . Oh, you failed! Well, it’s impossible, but your character is too stupid to realize that, so you succeed!” Inspired silliness — the very heart of this game.

*TOON* is available at retail hobby shops for \$7.95, or by mail for \$8.50 from Steve Jackson Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin TX 78760.

— Reviewed by Michael Dobson

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## meets

Ral Partha Enterprises, long recognized as the premier manufacturer of adventure gaming miniatures in the world, has acquired the license to produce metal figures for Avalon Hill's RUNEQUEST role-playing game. At last — two new boxed sets of figures, sculpted in 25mm scale by Bob Charrette and loaded with realistic detail, permit your adventures in the fantastic worlds of RUNEQUEST to take on a new realism. See your heroes as well as imagine them as you take part in this increasingly popular role-playing experience!

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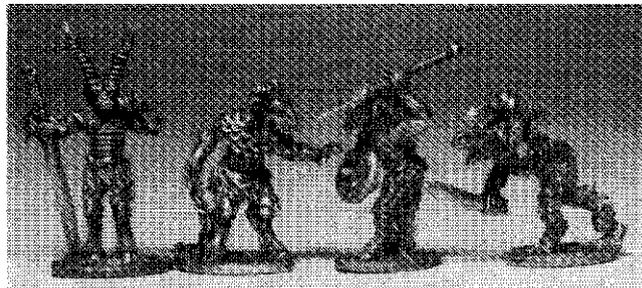
### AND THE WINNERS ARE...

The winners in this month's installment of the RAL'S RICHES prize giveaway have been officially drawn, with Ral himself supervising the selection. Ral's lucky winners this month are:

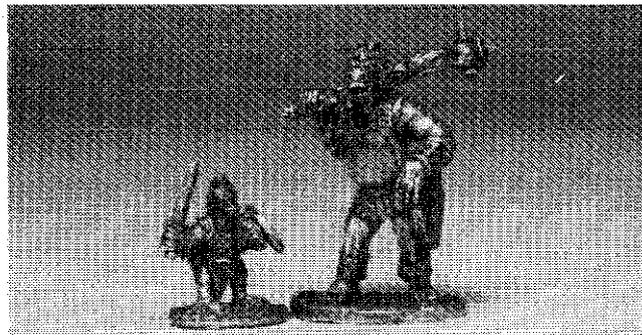
**FIRST PRIZE: Robin D. Barnhart**, Trinway, Ohio  
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(Kathryn buys her Ral Partha products at The Hobby Company in neighboring Aiea, Hawaii. She will receive a gift certificate good for \$50.00 worth of Ral Partha merchandise.)

Remember, there are five more drawings left in the Ral's Riches contest, and plenty of opportunity for you to get your share of the riches! Ral is clearly bent on distributing the wealth, and you can hardly deny him. Ask your local hobby dealer for details!



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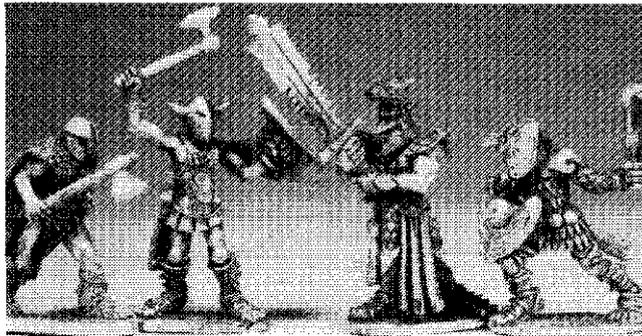
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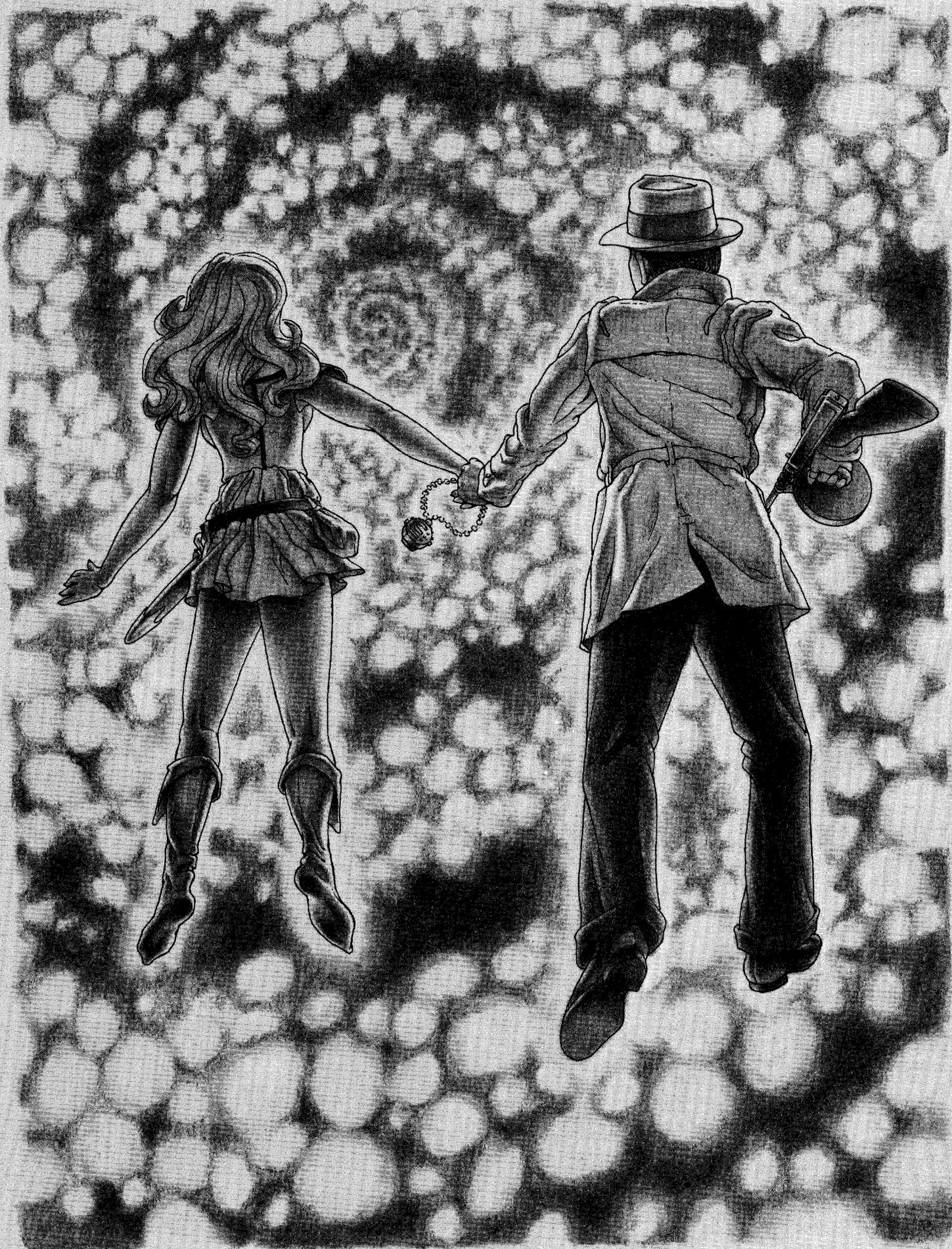
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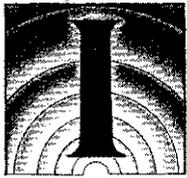


01-125 Champion of Chaos 01-126 Lord of Chaos



01-124 Warriors of Chaos





SOLVED THE MEANING OF LIFE — at least, my life — in four hours flat. Not bad, if you consider it was only my second case. Of course, I'm the first to admit I couldn't have done it without the dame. By the way, my name's White, Nick White.

The sign on my door reads *Investigations*.

I was sitting at my desk on a drizzly day in late July, counting my pennies and wondering how much longer they'd leave the lights turned on, when the dame popped in. From the way she was dressed, I figured her for a psycho case and reached for the phone to call the men in the white coats. She spoke before I could dial the number.

"You are White? The one with the Private Eye which sees into mysteries?"

"Sure, kid. That's me." I felt myself softening toward her and knew I was in trouble. Her voice had a muscial lilt to it that could have charmed the toughest goons in the city. Even if she did look like a runaway from a costume party, I no longer had the heart to give her the boot. "Why don't you sit down and tell me what you need?"

"My name is Shushulana. I have by sheer force of will kept myself going for three days now without slumber. I seek the group which killed my companions and attempted to kill me. If you will gaze into your Private Eye and find these villains for me, you will be handsomely rewarded."

It didn't surprise me that she fell dead asleep in the chair as she mumbled that last sentence. I had never heard of anyone able to go for three days without fading out. I took advantage of the time to check her out.

Her costume wasn't rented; that was for sure. The party shops didn't stock anything that was as light and sturdy as the material her little green outfit was made from. She had some type of tough polished leather around the upper half of her body; it showed signs of fine workmanship. I figured she must have picked it up out west from one of those Indian craftsmen. The sword she was carrying wasn't fake. I poked around in her bag — not a purse, just a bag — and found the weirdest collection of cosmetics I'd ever seen. She had everything in there from dried-up insects to ground-up gems. She was also carrying a small bag of gold coins — real gold, all right. I couldn't figure it.

"Forgive me. I must have fallen asleep for a while," she said as she awoke. "What are you doing with my coin bag?"

"Don't worry, sister. I'm on the up and up. Suppose you tell me whether this is a gag or whether you really are a nut case. And where did you get all these gold coins?"

"I do not wonder at your surprise and puzzlement. It is as difficult for me to believe in your existence as it is for you to believe in mine. But as you can see, I am here. I am from another world — a world which probably exists in a time or a dimension different from your own. I seek your aid. The gold is yours if you will give

# The Multi- dimensional Caper

by Mark Acres

Illustrations by John L. Gilmore

it to me; or, if necessary, name your own price."

"How did you find out about me? I'm probably not in the Yellow Pages in this other world you're talking about."

"I have sought help from many in this strange city, including those called coppers or flatfoots. None would help. But one of the flatfoots informed me as to how I locate you and your business."

I thought I'd seen every kind of weirdo there was, but this was a new routine to me. I just sat there and stared for a while into those beautiful, frightened eyes, determined that I'd have to turn her over to the headshrinkers before she really hurt herself. But as I watched her sit there and look back at me, mumbling something in some kind of foreign talk, I knew I couldn't do it. I didn't know what she was, but somehow I suddenly knew down in my gut that this was no nut-case floozie. And I knew that, no matter how much I was going to regret getting involved in this, I was going to help her.

"Look, kid, you're still all tuckered out. Why don't you lie down on the couch over there. I've got a few things to do, some things I gotta check out. I'll be back before long, and we can see what can be done about this case."

"That will be fine, Mr. White," she said. I noticed she had a kind of strange, satisfied smile on her face as she pulled my ratty old blanket over herself and nodded off.

I knew she'd be okay at the office. Shirley, my secretary, could look after her. I went to my place and grabbed a little shut-eye myself; I'd been up for almost three hours, which was a long time for me. When I got up, I thought through everything she'd told me and drove out to the university campus.

I found old Dr. Wittgenstein asleep in his office. He'd taught math, logic, and linguistics for more years than I had been alive. If there was anything to this other-dimensional stuff in her story, he'd be the guy who could tell me. I also figured he could give me a line on where a name like Shushulana could have come from.

The old boy was hard to rouse, but once he understood what it was that I wanted to know about he was off and running. He talked for about an hour and a half, and I hardly understood a word he said. Finally I got the general idea that, mathematically, at least, it was possible that there were all kinds of dimensions. That didn't make the little doll's story true, but it did make it possible. Doc couldn't give me a make on the name. It was time to grill my client some more.

I found her where I'd left her, but Shirley was gone. There was a note on my desk reminding me to send Shirley her salary and wishing me luck if I was going to be dealing with weirdos in the future. Somehow, it didn't seem to matter that Shirley was gone. That's when I knew the little dame really had me under her spell. I woke her up gently.

"Okay. At least part of your story seems to check out. Now, what's this about a murder?"

"As I have told you. A strong group — a very strong

group — killed my companions and tried to kill me. I want to find them."

"Why not go to the cops?"

"Do you think your sheriffs or court officers would believe me? I have already tried them. They were of no help."

She had me there. There probably wasn't one other sap in town who would believe a single word of her story.

"Where, when, and how did these murders take place? Did you see the goons who did it? Would you recognize them if you saw them again?"

"The where and when are parts of my world, my dimension, Mr. White. The how is hard to describe. I have fought many battles in what to you would seem a very long life. But never have I seen fighting men such as these. Their blows were very hard, and my companions fell before them quickly. Our blows seemed faint compared to theirs. My surest strokes, enough to fell any normal man, seemed barely to slow them. And yes, I am sure that I would know these men if I were to see them again. Will you now use your magic crystal ball, your Private Eye? Will you now help me? If this gold is not enough, I assure you I can get you more."

She tossed the bag of gold coins on my desk and searched my face with her baby blues. I stifled the romantic notions that crossed my mind and tried to explain to her what a private eye really was. I'd never been mistaken for a round hunk of glass before, and besides, I wanted her to know I was going to earn my pay the hard way.

It would be the hard way, too, if what I was thinking turned out to be near the truth. Those goons she'd described reminded me uncomfortably of a couple of Al Tolino's boys I'd run into on my first case. Seems I'd broken up a little plan of Al's to fix the May Day races at Aqueduct Park. Al didn't take kindly to that. He sent over a couple of his associates to straighten me out on the matter. When it was all over I identified them for Lt. O'Malley at the morgue, and Al hadn't bothered me much since then. But it took five shots in the chest to get both of them. I didn't think much about it at the time, but now I realized that one shot should have been enough to have at least dropped them to the ground. There was something strange going on here. Super-tough killers showing up in two different worlds, two different dimensions? It seemed too bizarre to be true, but that's the way it added up.

It was time to find out if her set of goons were any relation to the goons in my own world. We grabbed a cab and went straight to police headquarters. O'Malley owed me and I didn't take any guff from him. I snatched the mug books out of his hands and showed them to Shushulana. It took her less than fifteen minutes to finger five of Tolino's boys as the heavies who'd wiped out her friends. Two of them were the unfortunates I'd already sent to their reward. And I knew where to find the other three.

Those three would have plenty of questions to answer. How did they manage to pop back and forth between two different dimensions? What kind of racket

was Tolino running in Shushulana's world? Or were they free-lancing in her dimension, cutting Big Al out of the action? Or was this all part of something a lot bigger? I figured it had to be. Tolino's goons were tough, but they were pretty dim bulbs; and any big plans would have to be coming from someone smarter.

I didn't want to take her with me to Little Augie's, but she insisted. I tried to tell her what this speakeasy was like: a stinking dive full of the worst type of vermin in society. I tried to tell her these goons played hardball, but she just smiled that special smile of hers and said she could take care of herself. I was in no position to argue; she had the money.

The bouncer at Augie's went out like a light when I introduced his head to the butt end of my .45. Tolino's three little pigs nearly choked on their bootleg beer when I came in with the little lady and pointed my cannon their way.

"Alright. I want some answers and I want them now. If anybody gives me lip or a run-around, they'll get what the bouncer got, but this time from the other end. Understand?"

They understood okay, but they still thought they could take me. One bolted for the door of the manager's office. My first slug tore into the wood just above his head. The other two went for their guns, but they hadn't counted on Shushulana. Her first swing with that sword was really something: she clipped the guy behind the head with a backswing while she was still in the air leaping over his table. I felt hot lead whiz past my ear and dove behind the bar while the third hood squeezed off a second shot. After that the action got pretty hot and heavy. I was afraid to shoot at Tolino's boys for fear of hitting Shushulana. She was all over them with that sword of hers, but I figured sooner or later they were going to take her out with a lucky shot.

That's when the clown who ran into the office came running back out again with the Thompson. The Thompson submachine gun is a marvelous weapon: it can rip off ten slugs a second and carries fifty in its drum. I pumped five quick ones into him before he turned to face me. I was the last person he ever saw.

Then I jumped over the bar, grabbed the tommy gun, and shouted to Shushulana, "Get down. I'm gonna open up!"

She dove, and Tolino's boys headed for the door. I cut 'em down with three quick bursts.

By then the place had pretty well emptied out; the bartender was attending to some urgent business in the back room, and I figured he wouldn't be any problem. I strolled over to the bodies by the door. Shushulana and I caught the last words of one of the goons.

"I didn't know damage worked like this in this variant —" he croaked.

Strange last words. But what really hit me in the face like a wet dishrag was the voice I heard answering this corpse.

"Well, it's always more fun when there are a few surprises. Roll up another one while I work out the rest of this . . ."

The voice came from the gray sky outside the door. I figured pretty quick that it had to be one of the goons' buddies from another dimension. And from the way the voice seemed to be in charge of things, I decided it must belong to the Big Guy himself — someone even bigger and meaner than Tolino. Sure, it all made sense, now. This Big Guy had a multidimensional racket going. He probably had hoods in a dozen different worlds. He was a big fish, all right, and I couldn't wait to get my hooks in him.



"Shushulana, how did you get to my dimension? Is there any way you know of to get back to yours, or to another one?"

"I have powerful spells, White. Where do you wish to go? How do you know where to go now that the ones you sought are dead?"

"I want to go to wherever that voice is coming from. Come on, sweetheart, you're supposed to be the one who's experienced in this dimension-hopping business. How does it work?"

"It is dangerous, more dangerous than you could possibly know. But there is one way. If the life force of this dead one is heading toward that voice, we might be able to follow the life force through the astral plane."

"Yeah, sure," I muttered. It sounded like mumbo-jumbo to me, but there was no backing out now. I gave her the okay. She pulled out some kind of funny necklace-like thing, grabbed my hand, muttered something weird, and away we went.

I couldn't make any sense at all out of where I was

for a while. It seemed like we were nowhere at all, except I could just make out some dim forms that looked like Tolino's boys far away, ahead of me. Shushulana told me to just think about them so we'd stay on their track. Didn't know I was gonna be the first P.I. to work a trail in the astral plane. Finally, they seemed to disappear behind some kind of membrane up ahead.

"There, White. There is the dimension of the voice."

"Great. Let's go in." I set the Thompson on full automatic again just to be on the safe side. I didn't know who we were about to meet, but I figured they'd be plenty tough. I plunged headfirst through the membrane, with Shushulana right behind me. Next thing I knew, I was standing in somebody's kitchen.

The first thing I saw was the Big Guy — the man I was after. I knew him as soon as I saw him; that innocent fourteen-year-old disguise didn't fool me for a minute. He was sitting at a table with a bunch of guys who looked just like Tolino's hoods, just like the goons who'd killed Shushulana's friends. There were books, papers, and funny little plastic shapes, like dice, all over the place. The Big Guy looked at me like he'd just seen a ghost. For all I know, maybe he thought he had. I didn't waste any time; something in my gut told me those dice were loaded and dangerous.

"Alright, now, you meatball, lay those dice on that table, real gently. I said lay 'em on it, don't roll 'em. And don't look at the numbers that come up when you put 'em down."

He did as I said. It's amazing how looking at the wrong end of a Thompson will make people very accommodating. I lined him and his five friends up against the wall. I had Shushulana watch them while I went through the books and papers on the table.

It was a lot worse than I had suspected. The whole deal was a game, a big stupid game, someone's idea of a good time. It took me a while to piece together the details, but after a half-hour or so I was able to spell it out for Shushulana.

"These people are playing a game, sweetheart, a game about elves and magic and monsters and who knows what else. Sometimes they play other games: games about gangsters, games about the Wild West, games about all kinds of things. Problem is, when they play these games, they need extra people — just like the thousands who always get killed in a good war story while the audience is enchanted with the actions of a few heroes. These guys play the heroes. Seems like we're the extras.

"See, we only really exist when their main guy — that one, the one they call the DM, or the judge — is thinking about us. Only he don't care nothing about

us, oh no. We're just extras, just cannon fodder for his hero friends. He even stacks things against us, so his friends have a lot better chance to put us in the ground without getting scratched themselves.

"These other five, they're players. When they play like big warlords, they come into your world. That's where they killed your friends. When they play bigshot gangsters, they come into my world. It's a real cozy set-up for them. It doesn't even matter if we kill them; they just pretend they're someone else and come back again.

"Only this time, something went a little wrong. The Big Guy created us, but he made us too powerful. He gave us so much will, he couldn't control us anymore. In fact, he made us so tough that after a while we started to keep right on living even when he wasn't thinking about us. It drains us to do that; that's why we seem to sleep so much. But we're luckier than the others in our worlds: they only wake up when he thinks about them or when we need them for some special reason!"

There were a few other things I didn't go into; for example, the game they'd just been playing was some wild variant where characters from all their games came together in one horrific adventure, and one of the players had blown his Luck check and that was the only reason we were still alive. These were details I figured she didn't need to know.

They didn't matter. Their Big Guy — I think he said his name was Fred — brought back her friends, alive and well. Then we made a deal. He and his players promised to think about us a lot — that would cut down on my sleeping time, making it possible for me to get a lot done in my own world, more than anybody else could. In return, Shushulana and I agreed to stay out of his world, and I promised not to shoot up his kitchen before I left.

That pretty much wrapped it up. Shushulana got us back to our respective worlds. After a while, Fred and I actually became friends of a sort. Now, I'm the biggest detective in Lakefront City; there's even talk of running me for mayor. I hear from Fred that the little lady is now something they call an Elven Queen. I don't know exactly what that is, but it sounds okay.

Who knows? Maybe someday I'll have Fred play that variant again just so I can find out if an Elven Queen and a gumshoe-made-good can have any kind of real relationship in this crazy, mixed-up, multidimensional world.

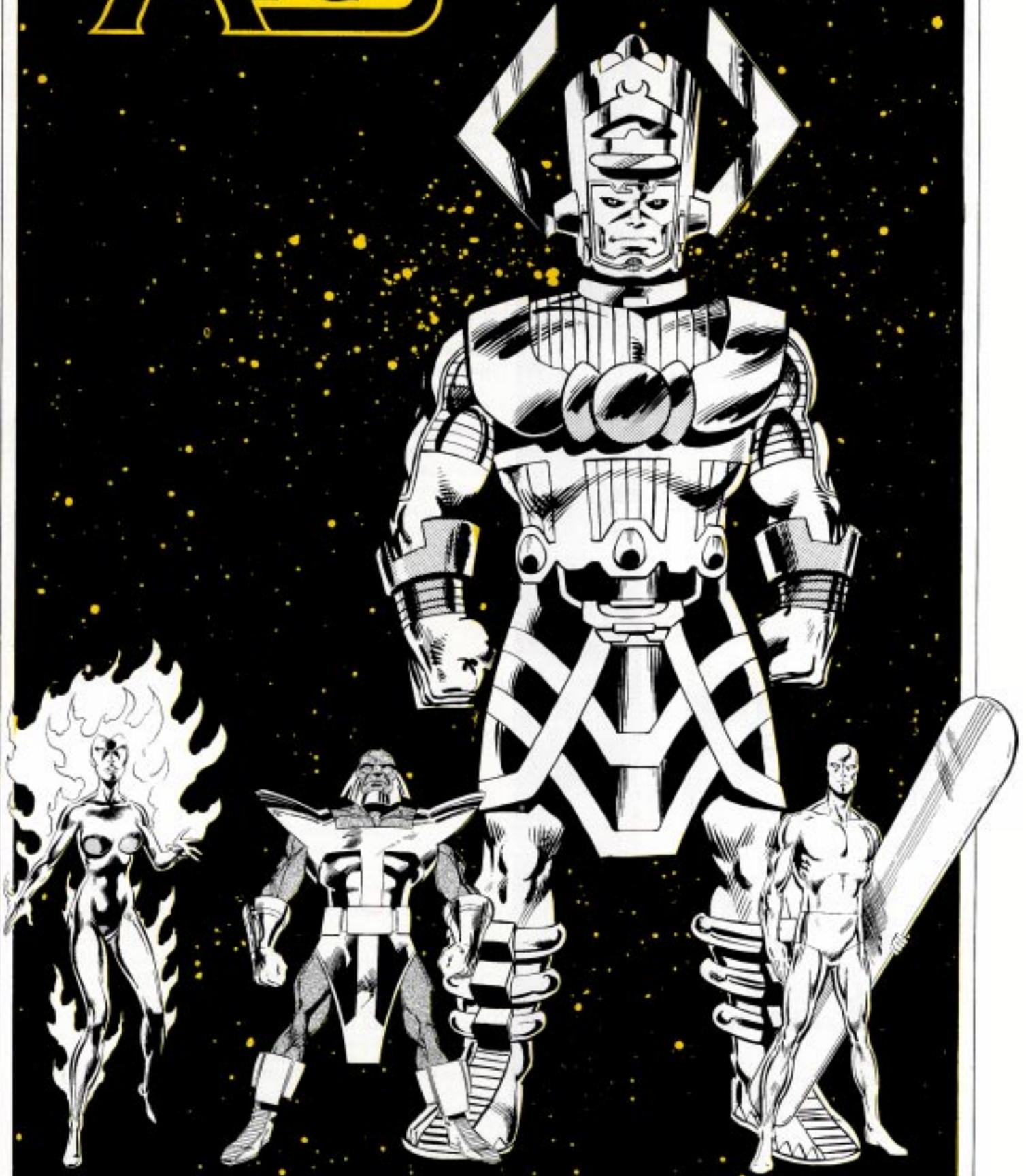
Meanwhile, if you're one of those DMs or judges or whatever Fred is, better play it safe. The NPCs you have to deal with may not be as reasonable as I am.

7



# Aiēs™

## SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION



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First, some amazing news. AMAZING® Science Fiction Stories, one of the sister publications of DRAGON® Magazine, will soon be a TV series! Steven Spielberg (that's STEVEN SPIELBERG, as in *E.T.*, *Jaws*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, and *Gremlins*) will be the executive producer, and the show will appear in the fall season of 1985. If you wondered when anyone was ever going to make a show like the old "Twilight Zone" series, your prayers have been answered!

If the above news whets your appetite to see more of what makes AMAZING Stories an amazing magazine, look for the ad for it in this section. You won't regret it.

The First Annual ARESTM Awards are over. The results have been tallied and are ready to appear in the next issue (#93). A few pleasant surprises appeared, but the "Big Three" of the science-fiction gaming world came through as expected. Who were the big three? Check back next month. . . .

All of the letters we receive on the MARVEL®-Phile are turned over to Jeff Grubb, in case you were wondering. Any questions you send in stand a good chance of being answered in his Phile in the introduction; we might also do a StarQuestions column on the game in the near future.

Speaking of marvelous things, the centerpiece for this section illustrates the Heralds of Galactus™, surely the most powerful superheroes we've printed in the magazine yet. Move over, Thor™ and Hulk™!

Also in this issue are some comments on building your own cyborg in GAMMA WORLD® gaming, and the usual assortment of StarQuestions, this time on the STAR FRONTIERS® game (including a few questions on the Zethra, the NPC race that appeared here in issue #84).

Good reading, and good gaming.

*The editors*



### ON THE COVER

Galactus™, Eater of Worlds, has had many Heralds; their coming means unlimited destruction is right behind them. The MARVEL®-Phile has details on three of the toughest Heralds that ever existed. Cover art by the Marvel Bullpen.

ARESTM Section 92  
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# The Six-Million Dollar Mutant



*Cyborgs in the GAMMA WORLD® game*

by Bruce Humphrey

One of the areas that the GAMMA WORLD game has never fully explored is that of bionics. Bionics is the study of living systems to find solutions for engineering problems. One of the results of such study is the creation of bionic parts and prostheses, artificial replacements for lost body parts. This brings up the question of how to turn a player character into a cyborg.

Forget the reruns of "The Six-Million Dollar Man" — that stuff wasn't very accurate. Your character won't be running sixty miles per hour or lifting tons, but he'll have vast potential. Of course, he'd be well advised to make friends with a good mechanic and a vat of rustoleum.

For game purposes, a bionic part may be classified as any inorganic item which is surgically attached to a living being. This would include a simple metal club used in place of a missing hand or a high-technology arm controlled by thought and as functional as the original (or more so). Bionic replacements essentially become part of the person "wearing" them. In the GAMMA WORLD game, bionic parts can be used to strengthen a weak character or compen-

sate for a permanent wound or weakness. Bionic parts are also useful to even up character abilities and to provide the basis for quests centered around their location, upkeep, and augmentation.

## Problems and more problems

The first goal in the quest for bionic parts is to find a way to get them implanted or attached. Depending on the campaign, it could prove difficult to locate a surgeon who can do such work. Healer-type mutants might be able to effect bionic "repairs," and they are usually easier to find than doctors are in the GAMMA WORLD game. It might be possible to program a med-kit to do this sort of thing, but one is usually better off finding a medical facility (such as an intact automated medical complex containing medical robots, or possibly a "rejuv chamber").

Unfortunately, an aversion often exists among medics (living and robotic) to implanting bionic parts unless absolutely necessary. If "natural" replacements for missing limbs or organs are available, a character may have quite a job convincing medics that the bionic parts are the

most desirable option.

Suppose, too, that a character wants to have his perfectly functional hand replaced by a bionic hand. Few doctors would consent to such an operation unless bribed or otherwise convinced to perform the operation; the same holds true for robotic surgeons, which would seldom be programmed to perform unnecessary surgery. If your character wants a bionic hand, he may have to get his own hand removed first — and probably not by surgical means. The removal of the body part could result in death or a permanent loss of hit points even after the attachment of bionic parts. If the bionic implant is unsuccessful, the character will have a permanent disability. A lot can go wrong if one purposefully goes questing for bionic parts.

If the character is lucky, the physician will have bionic prostheses around for his use, but this is not something one can count on. Often one will have to take second-best parts. Second best in this case includes new or used bionic parts which were not quite what your character wanted or needed, such as a three-fingered "experimental" hand when he wanted a "regular" one. Beg-

gers can't be choosers. Some rewiring and reconstruction are to be expected when one takes on a bionic project. A skilled technician will be needed for complex reworking, though a hammer and luck might work as well.

There's also the question of paying for these services. This may entail compensating the doctor or robot in terms of money, artifacts, work, or spare parts. The medical bill can be painful to pay; some things never change.

The last resort would be to adapt non-bionic mechanical and electronic parts for the job. While these are not reliable as a rule, they can be the most innovative and powerful of bionic parts. Android and robot parts are best for such scavenging, but guns, vehicles, and other simple and complex mechanisms will do in a pinch. The power of scavenged bionic parts should be somewhat less than that of the standard equipment, if only because of the minor alterations made on it during installation. The size of such weapons and equipment should also be a factor, since the more powerful equipment found in such things as Death Machines and engineering robots could be difficult for the average character to lug around.

Energy cells, batteries, or other reserves of power may need to be placed within the bionic part or implanted on the character and connected to the equipment. This can become important in the case of deeply implanted bionic parts which may have limited power reserves. How will the cell be replaced? Who will do it? This problem is solved if the power supply is in an accessible place and wired to the equipment, but the power cell could accidentally be removed or accessed. The wiring could be damaged in combat or sabotaged by an irate character. Security may be sacrificed for some utility, but both are considerations.

Once the bionic parts are implanted and the character is using them, the parts' upkeep and limitations should become important. Most bionic parts will fall apart sooner or later; the more work and punishment a part receives, the more it will need maintenance. While routine oiling, inspection, or cleaning could be done by the wearer, some maintenance must be done by a skilled technician. Such folk may be hard to come by. The search for a skilled technician could form an adventure; the party could also embark on a quest for information which would make one of

the adventurers such an expert.

In any case, bionic parts must be inspected at least once a month by a knowledgeable technician or robot, and they should be cleaned at least once a week. This frequency can be adjusted up or down, depending on the complexity of the equipment and the damage taken by the owner in combat. If the periodic cleanings or inspections are not made, or if the owner loses more than 75% of his hit points in battle (excluding non-physical damage from mental attacks), there should be a 30% chance of bionic failure. For each additional week (or 5% damage taken in combat), add a 10% (cumulative) chance for failure. Any bionic part which fails will not work again until an equipped technician spends 6-36 hours working on it.

Other problems with bionic parts should not be overlooked. A major consideration is the source of power for the equipment. Usually this will consist of atomic or chemical energy cells, but the bionic parts may also be geared to the character's own biological energy reserves. For a mutant, this could mean using mutational energy to charge the bionic parts; a mutation such as *electrical generation* could be harnessed in this way. A Pure Strain Human or mutant could also have bionic parts that drain hit points temporarily when these parts operate, lowering hit points by a certain amount with each use of the bionic part (such as one attack from a laser or one scan from a sensor). Whatever hit points are lost would then be regained within a few minutes or hours.

Other problems must be considered. Damage to bionic equipment could cause power supplies to explode, for instance. Malfunctions could range from simple shutdowns (usually at the most inopportune times) to bizarre actions such as twitching, uncontrolled firing, piercing whistles, and electrical shorts which do up to 3d6 damage to the wearer. Some of the more unusual things that can happen to bionic parts include being taken over by mutant powers (*energy negation* and *magnetic control* are possibilities). Bionic parts can also be removed or misplaced by accident or on purpose, particularly in combat or by someone else looking for bionic parts. Of course, some bionic parts can rust unless they are protected.

### Types of bionic parts

The possible uses of bionic parts are far too varied to completely list here.

Instead, what follows are guidelines and suggestions which might spark your own ideas.

**ARMS:** While bionic arms will not give fantastic strength (they are, after all, still attached to a normal body), gripping and elbow strength could be great (up to +2 PS lifting, +6 PS for gripping or braced elbow actions). Sensors could be implanted in a bionic arm, with possibilities as described in "sensors" below. Spikes mounted along a bionic arm would be very useful in combat (for up to 1d8 of damage, when applicable), as would retractable claws (adding up to 3 points of damage per melee attack).

**HANDS:** Bionic hands could range from simple hooks to sophisticated robotic mechanisms. One can have a variety of artificial bionic hands, each with a particular function; one simply disconnects one hand and affixes a new one with (hopefully) little trouble and effort. A sword-hand or pistol are two obvious bionic options, and these would do damage the same as standard weapons. Tools and electronic implements for repairing equipment could be built into other bionic hands. A communicator or sensor could be added as well. One example of a bionic hand appears on the cover of the revised GAMMA WORLD® game box (see the mutant in the lower right-hand corner).

**TEETH AND THROAT:** A well-known application of this possibility is "Jaws" from the recent James Bond films. Steel teeth could do 1d6 damage per bite, or more if mounted in a mutant animal's mouth. Sensors could be implanted in the mouth to give special taste senses. Artificial gills or a permanent oxygen mask for protection from gas attacks could be implanted. One's voice could be amplified, acting as the mutation *sonic blast* or altered to mimic other voices or sounds.

**EYES:** Bionic eyes could have camera-like, telescopic, or microscopic powers, or could allow infrared or ultraviolet vision. A ray weapon could be incorporated in a non-seeing artificial eye (damage ranging from 1-2 d6, with a range up to 10 meters). Such a weapon would have to be recharged after no more than 3 uses. The eye could also be made immune to blinding illumination or even be made unaffected by certain illusions.

**EARS:** Obviously, bionic ears could hear well into supersonic ranges or be made extremely sensitive to sounds (with the problem of filtering out unwanted noise like crickets, birds, and

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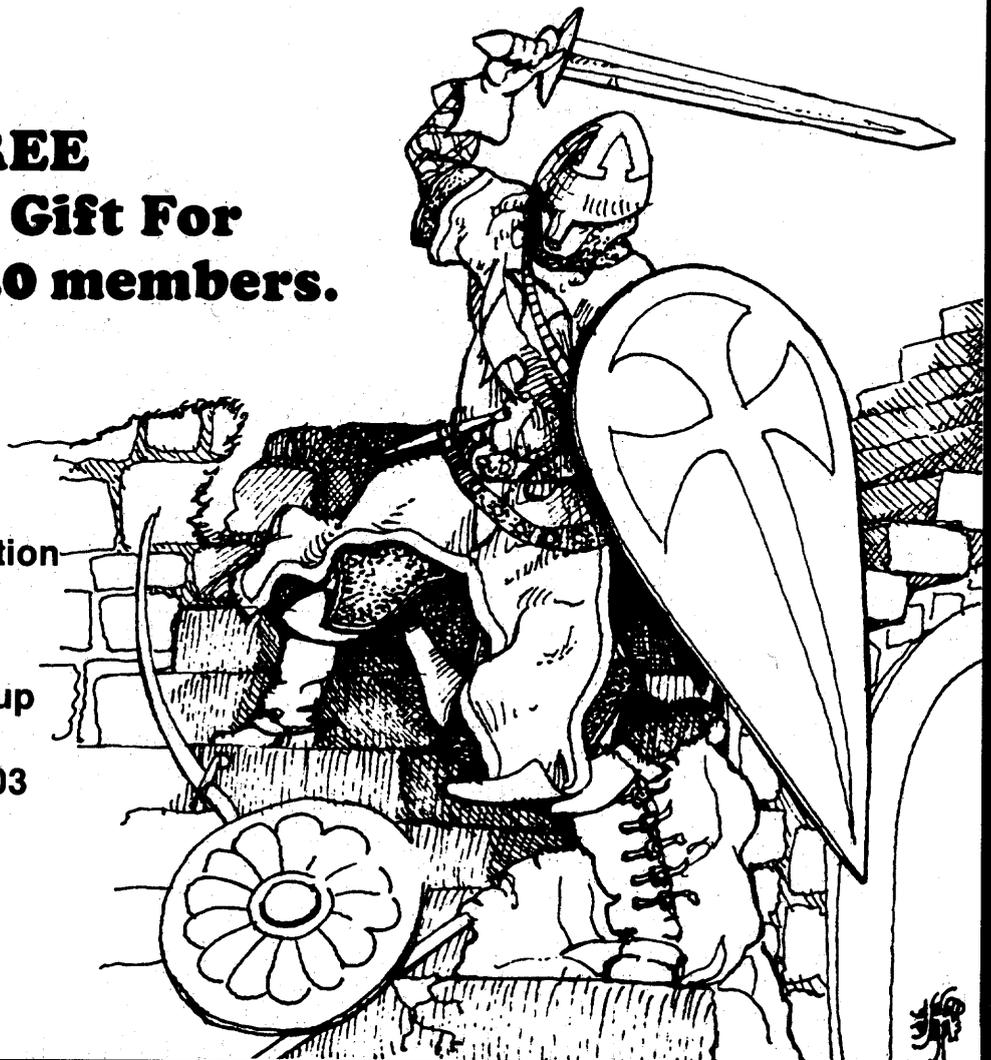
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wind). They could also protect the wearer from sound attacks (halving sonic damage and preventing deafness).

**BONES:** A bionic skeleton could give extra strength (up to +2 PS, due to a stronger muscle platform) and act as the mutation *skeletal enhancement*. Bionic parts connected to or contained within the skeleton might grant special powers, such as added dexterity (no more than +3 to the original score).

**LEGS:** While they would be useful for jumping (distance figured at up to 2/3 DEX in meters, height at 1/4 DEX in meters), running (no more than +1/3 increase in speed), and kicking (+1d6 damage), bionic legs would not allow extreme additions to existing abilities in these areas, since the rest of the owner is still mortal flesh. As with arms, sensors could be placed in bionic legs, and they would probably aid in balance so that the owner would take less damage from falls (allowing one to fall up to 9 meters without damage). More exotic attachments could be jets (allowing the wearer to fly) or other vehicle parts to enhance movement capabilities. The equipment available will determine the limits of these latter bionic parts.

**SKIN:** The obvious use for bionic skin is as armor. This could mean anything

from a shell-like surface (AC 2) to a flexible metal skin (AC 6). Such armor would also give added resistance to damage from acids, fire, or cold (effects to be determined by the referee). Sensors could be included in the skin. The bionic skin could also act as the *no nerve endings* mutation.

**ARTIFICIAL GLANDS:** Special implants, possibly controlled by the character, could put chemicals into the owner's bloodstream. These could include any of the standard chemicals (such as "accelera" or "cur-in"), but could be stimulants or anti-toxins as well. Another possibility is to implant an injector which could be used like a poison sting in combat, giving a poisonous or acid touch attack (that might harm the wearer if he isn't careful).

#### Other bionic additions

The following equipment could also be added to a cyborg character:

**ROBOTIC PARTS:** Practically any equipment found on a robot could be used as bionic parts. Weapons are an obvious example, but small tentacles, tractor/pressor beams, sensors, and movement modules may also be used.

**SENSORS:** Detection equipment can be found in most robots, but other types of

sensors may be improvised or created by someone with the right training and/or mutations, using materials from various sources. Sensors include infrared, UV, telescopic, microscopic, and metal-detecting sorts; other sensors that might be developed or found include mutation detectors, mental energy detectors, gas analyzers, radiation sensors, movement detectors, atomic or electrical energy sensors, force field detectors, or even simple watches. Most sensors should have a range maximum of 100 meters. Depending on their function and the GM's rulings, sensors can range in size from ring-sized or smaller to camera-sized devices about 3" square.

**EXTRAS:** Cyborg building does not necessarily entail the replacement of a lost organ or the addition of some compensatory equipment. It can be used to increase a normal character's abilities as well. Robotic tentacles can be implanted for increased manipulative and combat abilities. A permanent helm can be added to give continuous protection to the head. Antennae can be fitted with sensors or can function as communications mechanisms. The possibilities are limited only by the imagination and daring of the players and the equipment at the characters' command.

A

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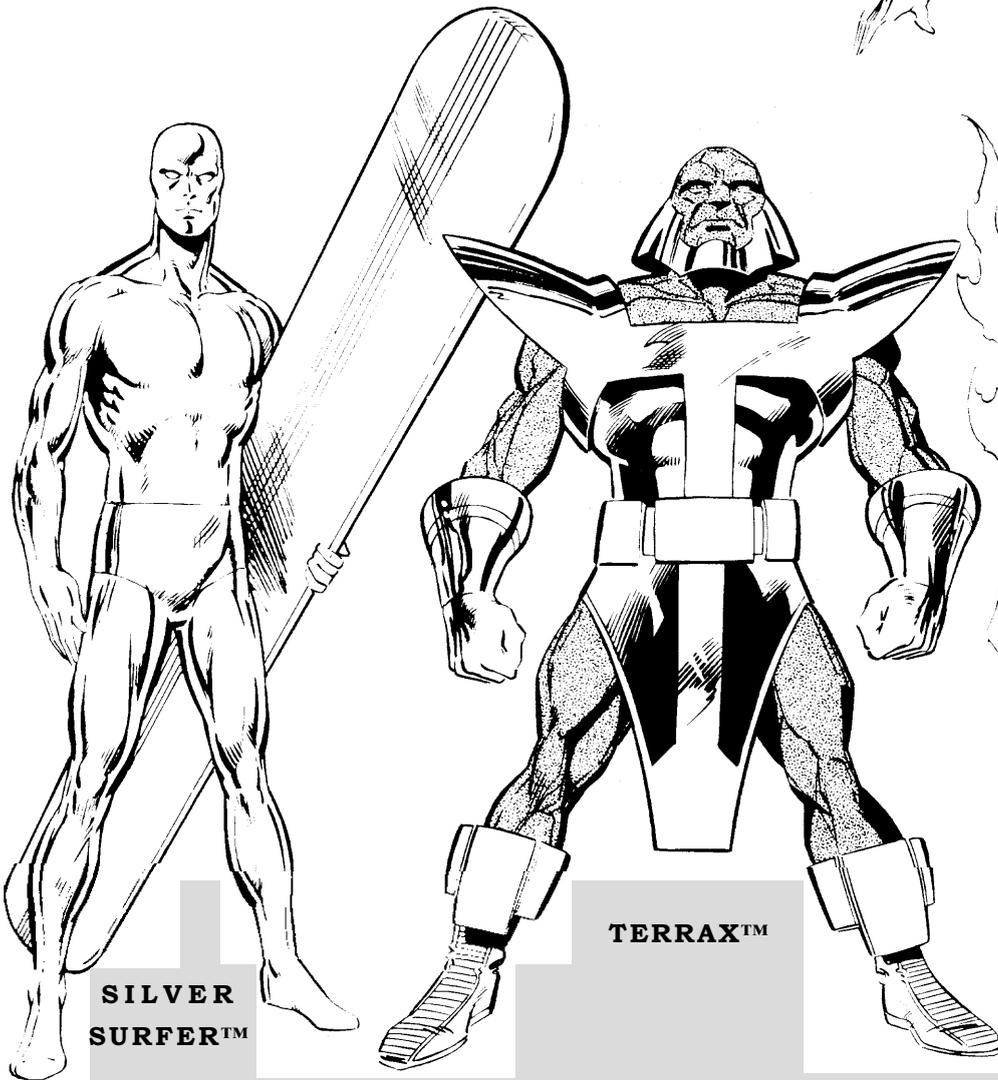
# The MARVEL<sup>®</sup> -Phile

*The Heralds of GALACTUS<sup>™</sup>!*

by Jeff Grubb



NOVA<sup>™</sup>



SILVER  
SURFER<sup>™</sup>

TERRAX<sup>™</sup>

First, thanks to everyone for the response to the early Marvel®-Philes. We've gotten a lot of letters on the series, and a few true believers have sent in requests for enough heroes to keep me here in the ARES™ Section of DRAGON® Magazine for some time.

A few of the letters brought up the matter of Thor's™ Intuition. The Thunder God was listed here (and in *Avengers™ Assembled*) as having an Intuition of Excellent. This is pretty nice for a Norse deity, but it was listed in the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Campaign Book as merely Good.

What happened is that in the time between last November (when the Campaign Book was penned) and June (when the first Marvel-Phile appeared), Thor's actions in his comic series merited a higher Intuition rank. He's literally more on the ball now than he was then.

The members of the Marvel® Universe are not fixed and unchanging like flies in amber, but develop and grow as do normal people. The Hulk™ has gone from raging beast to green-skinned scientist and back. Professor X™ can walk and now leads his team into battle. Even Spider-Man™ altered his powers with his new suit for a short time. Just as the Marvel Universe is changing, so too will characters in the game change. I've had players inform me that a particular hero was faster, stronger, or smarter than I had rated them; and, on a few occasions (after checking recent appearances in their books), I have agreed.

The upshot of all this is that we are making every attempt to be current with the Marvel Universe. Sometimes this involves modifying the listed abilities of a character in the campaign book. Either version is correct; the only difference is that material presented here and in future products will be current with the Marvel Universe at time of release. If there are minor changes in a character, they will be recorded. If there are major changes, we will again report them and the reason for the change.

Alright, then, this month's request comes from a Mr. B. Grimm of the Baxter Building (well, the letter was post-marked El Paso, Texas, but he could have had stationery in the Fantastinar™ for that sentinel of the skyways, the Silver Surfer™. Not wanting to disappoint a fan with Monstrous strength, here is not only Norrin Radd but also Galactus's™ present Herald, Nova™, and his previous one, the late Terrax™. (The "Big G" himself and a roster of other

Marvel Superstars appear in the new module *The Secret Wars*, based on the hit comic book series!)

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## SILVER SURFER™

Norrin Radd, native of Zenn-la altered alien

Fighting: AMAZING (50)  
Agility: MONSTROUS (75)  
Strength: UNEARTHLY (100)  
Endurance: UNEARTHLY (100)  
Reason: EXCELLENT (20)  
Intuition: MONSTROUS (75)  
Psyche: INCREDIBLE (40)

Health: 325  
Karma: 135  
Resources: POOR  
Popularity: 17

### Powers:

**POWER COSMIC.** Galactus has granted Norrin Radd the ability to channel ambient cosmic energy at will. This gives Norrin Radd the ability to fire cosmic bolts of Unearthly power and damage from his hands. Instead of firing bolts, Norrin may channel his power into his Agility (raising it to Unearthly) or Strength (raising it to Shift X). Finally, his power allows him to heal up to Unearthly damage in a single round. This healing is subtracted directly from the Silver Surfer's own Health, but may be regained in 1-10 rounds.

**BODY ARMOR.** The Surfer has Monstrous body armor against physical damage and Unearthly body armor against all forms of Energy attack. He is unaffected by the rigors of space travel and has no need to eat or breath. He can still be Slammed by lesser beings while he is airborne.

**FLIGHT.** The Surfer uses a device shaped like an earthly surfboard in order to fly. The "surfboard" is made of Class 1000 material and responds to Norrin's mental commands at an unlimited range. This device flies with Class 1000 speed, but it is restricted to Monstrous speed in the Earth's atmosphere.

**The Silver Surfer's story:** Norrin Radd was a member of a humanoid race of the planet Zenn-la. Zenn-la was a utopia, with most social ills fully removed and its people leading peaceful lives. Norrin

didn't care for this kind of existence, preferring a life of quest, adventure, and exploration.

So it was when Galactus's ship arrived at Zenn-la. While the others of his race prepared to meet their end (they had no space navy that could challenge the mighty Galactus), Norrin took a hastily-constructed spacecraft to meet with the Eater of Worlds.

Galactus granted an audience to Norrin Radd and explained that, had he a scout who would find more suitable worlds for him, he would not be forced to consume planets which were home to sentient life. Norrin volunteered to become such a scout if Galactus would spare Zenn-la. Galactus accepted the offer and used his powers to restructure Norrin Radd's body into a form suitable for his new task. So was created the Silver Surfer, first Herald of Galactus.

The Surfer, acting as Herald, discovered Earth at a time that Galactus's hunger was great. The Surfer penetrated the Watcher's™ attempt to cloak the planet from his detection abilities, and he soon came into conflict with the Fantastic Four™. During this confrontation, the Surfer met blind sculptress Alicia Masters, who showed him the courage and beauty of the human spirit and convinced him to turn against his master.

The Surfer, with the help of the Fantastic Four and the Ultimate Nullifier™, turned Galactus away from the Earth. Before departing, however, Galactus erected a barrier around the Earth keyed to prevent the Silver Surfer from escaping into space. Since that time, the Silver Surfer has been exiled on Earth and has aided several super-powered groups in their times of need, including the Fantastic Four, Avengers™, and Defenders™.

---

## NOVA™

Frankie Raye, native of Earth altered human

Fighting: AMAZING (50)  
Agility: UNEARTHLY (100)  
Strength: AMAZING (50)  
Endurance: UNEARTHLY (100)  
Reason: GOOD (10)  
Intuition: AMAZING (50)  
Psyche: AMAZING (50)

Health: 300  
Karma: 110  
Resources: UNEARTHLY  
Popularity: 0

## Powers:

**GENERATE/CONTROL FLAME.** Nova can generate a huge amount of flame, doing up to 150 points damage in a single round to one area with a range of several hundred miles. By properly channeling her cosmic energy (requiring an Endurance FEAT), she can raise this to 500 points damage. This flame has no effect on Galactus.

**BODY ARMOR.** Nova has Uearthly body armor and is immune (Class 1000 resistance) to heat and cold. Items with less than Amazing material strength will melt on contact with her body, and individuals who attack her will suffer Amazing damage unless protected from heat. Nova requires neither air nor food, nor is she subject to disease. She can still be Slammed when in flight.

**FLIGHT.** Nova can fly at up to Class 1000 speeds, and she travels faster than light when using self-created stargates. When confined to earthlike planets, she moves no faster than Monstrous speed.

**Nova's story:** Frankie Raye's stepfather was Thomas Raye, alias Phineas T. Horton. Horton was the creator of the original Human Torch™, a synthetic android that fought criminals and Nazis in the '40s and '50s. (This Human Torch was deactivated and revived years later, becoming the Vision™). With the debut of the Fantastic Four, Horton became angry at the idea of another individual taking on the name and abilities of his Human Torch. He resolved to create another android Torch, and he enlisted the aid of his stepdaughter Frankie. During their work, Frankie was engulfed in an accidental chemical explosion. Rather than killing her, the chemicals reacted mutagenically with the cells of her body, giving her the abilities of the original Human Torch.

Horton was frightened by this change, and hypnotized Frankie Raye to forget the experience. He also provided her with a costume to inhibit her new abilities and instilled in her a deep-seated fear of flame. This fear lasted until Frankie began dating Johnny Storm, the second Human Torch, when the hypnotic block

finally gave way. Frankie gained full use of her powers, which were similar to Johnny's, and served with Fantastic Four as the Third Human Torch.

This situation was changed by the arrival of Galactus, the Eater of Worlds. Galactus was pursuing his errant Herald Terrax to Earth, and was intent on consuming Earth to recharge his dwindling reserves. Frankie Raye, motivated by a desire for adventure and exploration, volunteered to be Galactus's new Herald in exchange for the safety of Earth, much as Norrin Radd had done many years previously. The Eater of Worlds augmented Frankie's powers to their present state, and she left Earth with him, breaking Johnny Storm's heart in the process. Since that time, Nova has become very attached to Galactus and has served him well. Unlike the Surfer, she has fewer qualms about the destruction of alien life and has in the recent past led Galactus to the throneworld of the Skrulls™.

## TERRAX™

**Tyros of Birj, tyrant (now deceased)  
altered alien**

Fighting: UNEARTHLY (100)  
Agility: AMAZING (50)  
Strength: MONSTROUS (75)  
Endurance: MONSTROUS (75)  
Reason: GOOD (10)  
Intuition: MONSTROUS (75)  
Psyche: AMAZING (50)

Health: 300  
Karma: 135  
Reason: POOR  
Psyche: 50

## Powers:

**CONTROL OVER EARTH.** Terrax had Uearthly control over rock and earth, and was able to affect an area over 100 miles in diameter, shifting tectonic plates, creating earthquakes, and using rocks as missiles and transportation (all with Uearthly damage and effect). Once he took the entire island of Manhattan from Earth into outer space.

**FLIGHT.** Terrax flew by riding on a piece of earth that he controlled by levitation, using it as a flying platform much as the Silver Surfer flies using his "surfboard." He could fly in this manner at Class 1000 and could enter hyperwarps for interplanetary travel. On planets, Terrax could fly at Monstrous speed.

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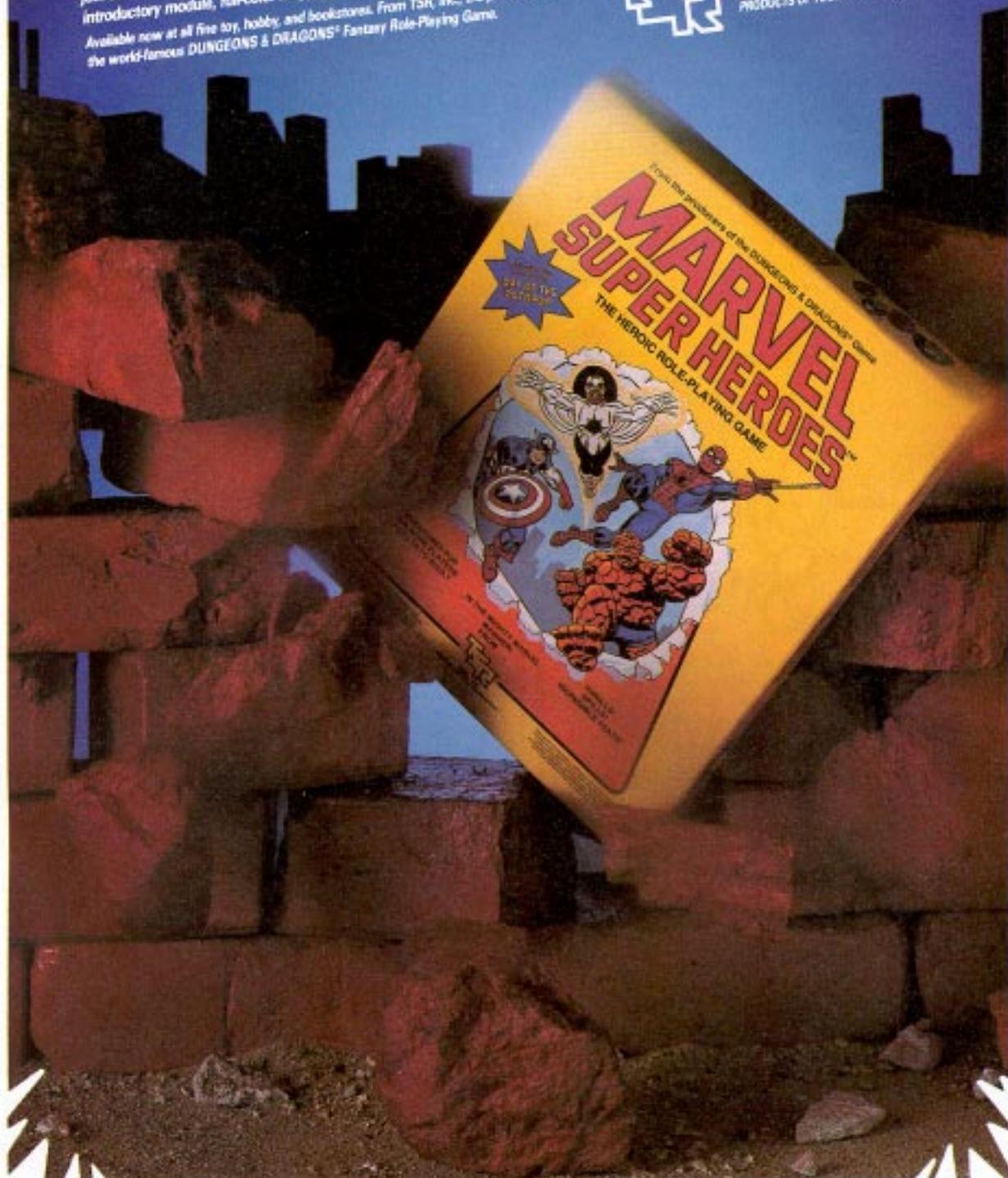
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**BODY ARMOR.** Terrax had Unearthly body armor and had Class 1000 protection from the effects of heat and cold. He could be Slammed while flying unless he was riding one of his earth-bases for transportation.

**COSMIC AXE.** A gift from Galactus, Terrax's Axe could do Unearthly damage on the Slugfest column (due to the concussive nature of the blow), and he could also project a Monstrous strength force field. Terrax wielded his axe in the Shift X column.

**Terrax's story:** Terrax was originally Tyros, the petty dictator of the city of Lanlak on the planet Birj, a satellite of the gas giant Marman. Tyros had the mutant ability to control stone and rock, and he used it to enslave the local populace. He was a violent man and a ruthless ruler.

Tyros's very amoral nature brought him to the attention of Galactus, the Eater of Worlds. Galactus had twice been betrayed by Heralds who let their moral compunctions get in the way of their duties, and he sought a Herald who would have no qualms in seeking out inhabited worlds for Galactus to consume. To that end, Galactus dispatched the Fantastic Four, who needed Galactus's

help to defeat a menace to Earth, to bring Tyros to him. This the super-powered group did.

Galactus augmented Tyros's mutant ability and renamed him Terrax the Tamer. Given great power, this Herald created nothing but problems for his master. Terrax sought to defeat Galactus, hid from him, and attempted to set up his own empire. Finally, Terrax held the island of Manhattan hostage to force the FF to fight the Eater of Worlds. This plan ended in defeat as Galactus drained all of Terrax's power from him, sending him to certain death as he plummeted off one of the World Trade Center towers.

Terrax, robbed of his powers, still managed to survive the fall. A passerby discovered him, and the former Herald of Galactus, having lost his memory, was taken to a local hospital.

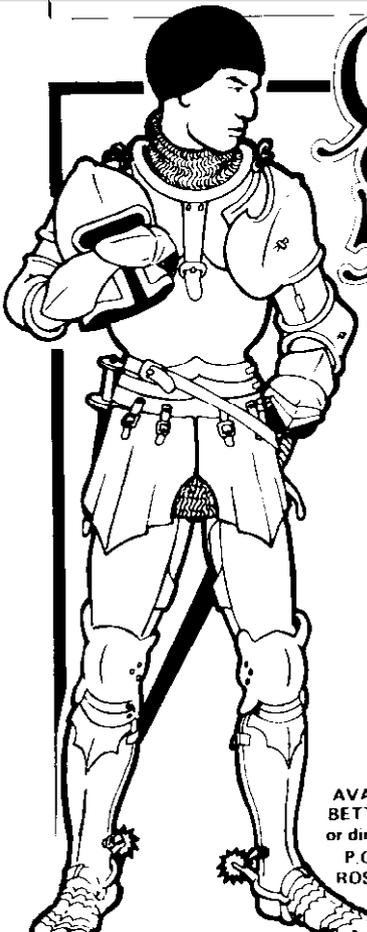
Terrax was taken from the hospital by Dr. Doom™, monarch of Latveria and long-time foe of the Fantastic Four. Doom used Terrax as a pawn in his scheme to destroy the FF, and to that end he returned to Terrax a portion of his former Power Cosmic. Doom had once stolen the power of the Silver Surfer himself, and he endowed Terrax with a synthetic version of these powers. The artificial powers were short-lived, however, a fact Doom

kept from his "ally."

Terrax performed admirably, dispatching three of the Fantastic Four. He then turned on Doom, immobilizing Latveria's ruler in his own armor. In his moment of triumph, Terrax was attacked by the Silver Surfer, coming to aid the FF. Terrax pushed his artificial limits to the maximum, but was no match for a true possessor of the Power Cosmic. Terrax was completely consumed by his own energies in a fireball that engulfed Surfer and the immobilized Doom. The Surfer walked away from the explosion. All that remained of Doom was his mask. Terrax perished in the blast.

A final note: All the Heralds of Galactus have the ability to detect energy at the Class 1000 level. This is how they search out planets for consumption by their master. In addition, as they have been granted powers by Galactus, so too may they be deprived of them if Galactus so desires. This requires a Psyche FEAT by Galactus; if successful, the Herald is returned to his original abilities (such as Terrax was), and the difference in Health between the two states is added to Galactus's Health.

A



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# StarQuestions

*Questions, answers, and advice on STAR FRONTIERS® gaming*

**by Penny Petticord and Ed Greenwood**

This time this column takes another look at the STAR FRONTIERS science-fiction game. In addition, a number of readers wrote to ask questions about the Zethra, an alien NPC race detailed in DRAGON® Magazine issue #84 (p. 76-80); these questions are answered at the end of this article. If you need some answers to help your science-fiction gaming campaign, write down your questions and mail them to StarQuestions, Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

**Q:** In the STAR FRONTIERS Campaign Book, the prices listed for shipping cargo (p. 451) are unclear. Are they the costs to buy the cargo outright and to sell it, or are they the prices to ship it?

**A:** The chart assumes that the hauler (probably an independent one) will buy the cargo outright, haul it to another planet, and resell it. Haulers who work under a company charter do not have to use this chart, as they are paid for their services only. The "Price per Unit at Source" column tells you how much it will cost to purchase a load of a given cargo.

The character then loads the cargo on his ship, carries it to another planet where there is a good market for the item, and resells it at the price given in the "Price per Unit at Destination" column. (Cargo cannot be resold at the source.) The hauler must then pay his operating expenses (crew salaries, supplies, fuel, maintenance, etc.) out of the money taken in from the sale.

Prices given assume that the cargo has been hauled a moderate distance at a moderate risk. If the run is shorter and less dangerous than an average one, the referee should adjust the resale value accordingly to keep the campaign economics in balance. After all, if an independent hauler is making too large a profit margin on a given run, another hauler or company will certainly undercut the character's prices and take his business away.

**Q:** The players in my campaign want to start a planetary or interstellar business. How would they go about doing this?

**A:** Passenger transport, freight transport, and mining businesses are detailed in the Campaign Book, as is obtaining a charter from a large

corporation. Players who wish to start some other type of business should design a detailed plan for its initial set-up and operation, then present it to the referee for approval. The referee is responsible for making sure the enterprise does not disrupt campaign balance, and may impose whatever legal restrictions, taxes, tariffs, and other external controls he deems necessary. The player may have to revise the plan if problems appear with the set-up he envisions.

**Q:** Will a timeline history for the STAR FRONTIERS game ever be made, as was done for the GAMMA WORLD® game in DRAGON® Magazine, issue #88?

**A:** An article on that topic has, in fact, been done and should appear in these pages within the next few issues.

**Q:** What are the statistics for the Zebulon and K'tsa-Kar systems and their inhabited planets? The Expanded Game Rules did not describe them.

**A:** The statistics for these systems were accidentally dropped from the rules. An article will appear soon in the ARESTM Section in which these

systems, as well as other inhabited systems of the Frontier, are described.

Q: What were the original homeworlds of the Dralasites, Vrusk, Yazirians, and Humans of the STAR FRONTIERS game?

A: Placement and description of the homeworlds of the four races were slated for inclusion in a future product. As of this time, only rough development has been done, and the information is not ready for release.

Q: What are the game statistics for a flamethrower?

A: A hand flamer appeared in the original rules, but was dropped in editing. It was similar in size and weight to a small needler, and it operated on a replaceable fuel cartridge. Statistics are as follows: Damage - 6d10; Ammo - 1 shot cartridge; Rate - 1; Defense - inertia; Range - no medium, long, or extreme, with statistics as per a sonic disruptor for point blank and short.

Q: In "The Battle at Ebony Eyes" in issue #88, the SAV *Apocalypse* and *Disease* are in the same hex (4116). Is this correct?

A: Yes. The duplicates that would appear of each ship might initially confuse the UPF player into believing that only one ship (or more than two) are in that hex.

Q: Can player characters be pirates, robots, or cybots?

A: Player characters can become pirates, although no special provisions are made for starting out as one. Pirate characters run extreme risks and may become the target of all law enforcement agencies in the Frontier (particularly Star Law).

Robots and cybots cannot be player characters; they have personalities but have no free will. Freedom of choice puts excitement into the game. No one would want to run a character that could only do what someone else told him to do.

Q: What would be the cost, mass, and combat statistics for crossbows, nunchucks, and Chinese throwing stars?

A: For mass and combat statistics, treat a crossbow as a musket, nunchucks as a nightstick, and a throwing star as a knife. These are very rare and archaic weapons, so their cost will vary with availability; prices will be similar to the comparison weapons listed above, but could rise to extreme levels.

Q: Are there mutants in the STAR FRONTIERS universe?

A: Perhaps, although none have been reported or detailed for game use as of yet. The referee is free to create mutants for use as NPCs, but he is on his own for specific designs and game balancing. The game system is not designed to handle mutant PCs who have exceptional powers, so use caution in this area.

Q: In the Knight Hawks rules, the decks of a starship are arranged perpendicular to the ship's main axis so that the ship's nose is "up." This provides for a sense of gravity for the crew when the vessel is accelerating through sect internal gravity when the ship is on a planet's surface? (Note: see illustration of the *Osprey's* orientation on the "Warriors of White Light" module, which indicates that the interior of the ship is lying on its side.)

A: The illustration in question is not quite accurate. Ships capable of landing on planets (such as shuttles, system ships of hull size 5 or less, assault scouts, and other scout-class starships) always land *nose up* so that the interior of the ship is oriented normally. Larger ships cannot land on planets, so they would have no orientation problems. The orientation of a ship does not matter when it is docked at a space station, since docked ships would be subject to the same artificial gravity as the docking bay of the space station.

Q: Can stargates exist in the STAR FRONTIERS game?

A: It isn't clear what you mean by "stargates." Certainly, a referee may add extra features like "stargates" (however you conceive of them) to his campaign if desired. If by "stargate" you mean a teleportation device capable of transporting spacecraft instantly from one star system to another, you should be aware that this may undo a large portion of game's inherent balance, and may cause serious problems unless you alter other parts of the game rules at the same time.

The game mechanic for quick intersystem travel is "jumping through the void," which accomplishes the same thing as a "stargate" would.

Q: How many different native races exist in the Frontier?

A: Seventeen. However, you may make up as many as you want. Some unofficial races may be presented in the ARES™ Section from time to time, such as the Zethra (see below). You may expand them as you see fit.

Q: Can ships be made with hull sizes larger than 20?

A: Yes, but they would have to be custom-designed and built from scratch by experts, an expensive process since the hulls would be non-standard. Maintenance would also be far more expensive than usual, since such hulls might not use any standard parts. You can extrapolate statistics from the information in the Campaign Book to get base figures for building costs and the like. Note that the SAV Juggernaut (from last month's ARES™ Section) was built around a hull vastly larger than size 20. Building it was a tremendous financial drain on the Sathar, and they never tried it again.

### The Zethra

Q: If they lack the ability to see or appreciate colors, how are Zethra able to match all color hues exactly by altering the pigmentation of their skin cells?

A: Zethra distinguish different colors only as differences in wavelengths of light reflected by all surfaces, in the same way that they sense other radiations (such as heat, light, and electrical energy). They are thus able to alter their coloration to match that of surroundings perfectly — without seeing colors as we do. This is somewhat akin to seeing all colors as varying shades of gray (as Dralasites do); with practice, one can readily tell one hue from another without being able to view or appreciate colors as others do.

The "seeing" of a Zethra is performed only through its tentacle-like "see-feelers" or "seeferers," and thus it can only match hues within 5 meters of (or touching) its seeferers. A Zethra who has learned the names of various colors could describe patterns, contrasting or complimentary colors, and so forth perfectly to others, but would fail to appreciate the aesthetics of colors, or "see" them as others can.

Q: Why is the damage done by Zethra discharges only modified by -2 per meter between a Zethra and target when conducted through metal,

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whereas water (which "transmits Zethra jolts poorly") only causes a modifier of -3 per 10 meters separating Zethra and target?

A: A Zethra's discharges are believed to serve only secondarily as weapons (one Zethra, after all, cannot harm another Zethra by such means), and are not offensive "bolts" or lightning strikes. They are strongly affected by the nature of the conducting medium through which they pass. In the case of metals, which conduct electrical currents by means of electron flows, a Zethra discharge is lessened in both directional accuracy and force more than in water. It is thought by a number of scientists that Zethra discharges contain many sub-atomic particles that react readily with free electrons and that this makes metal of any type a poorer conductor of Zethra discharges than of artificially-generated electrical currents.

It must be emphasized that these creatures are still poorly understood and that studies continue only slowly due to the difficult nature of Zethra. Recent filings by the scientist Arlume of Cassidine (not yet verified by Pan-Galactic Information Central's own agents), indicate that a Zethra's discharges do have a limited range even in still waters — the cumulative modifier of -3 per 10 meters rising to -1 per additional meter after a distance of fifty-two meters is exceeded.

Q: A creature that directly converts matter to energy seems impossible. If one existed, it would probably be most efficient in such conversions, and thus eat very seldom — perhaps, to most observers, seemingly never. A "direct converter" would prefer non-organic matter to organic; while there may be (slightly) more energy in organic substances, such substances are also more resistant to conversion and produce many more by-products, a number of which would likely be poisonous. How exactly do Zethra consume matter?

A: Zethra matter-to-energy conversion is done by some natural process which remains a mystery to Frontier scientists of all races, even after exhaustive physical and field examinations. Classified computer files exist on this creature, and the information therein is considered sensitive for good reasons. Scientific study continues, and some further, as-yet-unverified results have been

filed by various scientists in the "Active & Ongoing" computer banks of Pan-Galactic Information Central (PGIC).

Oversee of such files by PGIC personnel reveals several key entries:

1) Duthin of Prenglar has not yet positively identified any instance of a Zethra converting inorganic matter to energy, and has found few suggestions of such occurrences in existing Pan-Galactic files, but reminds inquisitors that the tendency of Zethra to convert organic matter has been established by observation.

2) The frequency of Zethra matter-energy conversion was deemed "seldom" (as compared to human frequencies of eating) in separate reports by scientists Marakson of Dramune, Orlag of Duane's Star, and Niuu of Cassidine. Detailed observations of such conversion are contained in all three reports; none seem likely to alter the present file's measurements of 220-440 SEU storage in Zethra bodies, and approximate common daily requirements of 20 SEU.

Orlag's report, however, raises the question of conversion by-products.

Some, he asserts, are used as "raw material" for Zethra body repair or growth and expansion; others may be eliminated, in subatomic form, in Zethra electrical discharges. Other methods of by-product elimination are possible — expulsion in fluid form through the skin, for example, is thought to occur automatically when Zethra are immersed in moving water. Possible by-products poisonous to Zethra are rumored to exist, PGIC personnel admit, because the last two tapes of Orlag's researches dealing with by-products were designated "classified" in the initial scan, and Pan-Galactic Security refuses to discuss the issue. Inquiries have led professionally curious individuals to ask (or even attempt to test) the Zethra on this issue, but no verifiable information has yet been uncovered.

Niuu of Cassidine warns that these creatures should not be judged or analyzed purely by Frontier standards and science. All unclassified material entries on the Zethra, both verified and tabled awaiting verification, bear the closing note "VRC" (meaning, "various researches continue").

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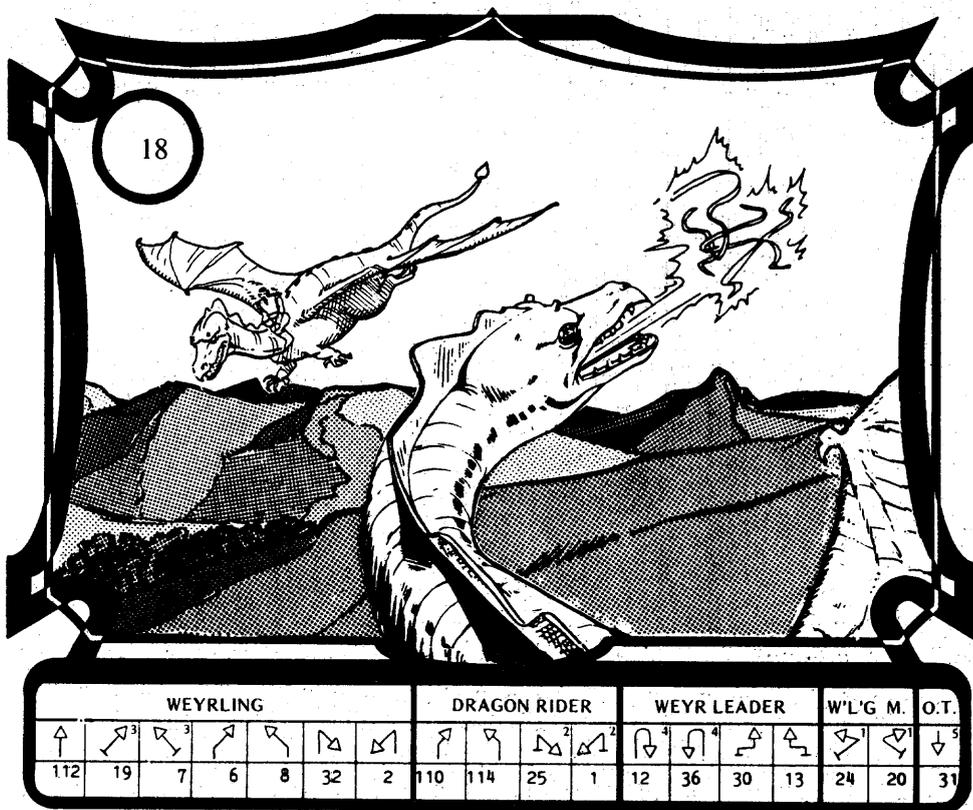
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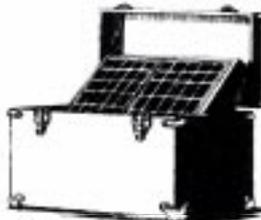
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# Convention Calendar

## **EVECON II, Dec. 28-30**

This convention will be staged at the Tysons Westpark Hotel in McLean, Va. Attendance will be limited to 1,200 people. Admission fees are \$15 at the door. For more details, contact: EveCon, P.O. Box 128, Aberdeen MD 21001.

## **SHURI-CON, Dec. 28-29**

This gaming convention will be staged at the First Unitarian Church of Youngstown, Ohio. Registration will run from 9:30 to 10:30 A.M. on both days. Admission fees are \$5 for Friday, \$4 for Saturday, or \$8 for both days. AD&D® and TOP SECRET® tournaments will be featured. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Brian Anderson, 4724 Logansway, Hubbard OH 44425.

## **RUSTYCON II, Jan. 18-20**

This convention will be held at the Sea-Tac Hyatt in Seattle, Wash. Registration fees are \$15 until December 31, and \$18 at the door. Contact: Michael Scanlon, P.O. Box 47132, Seattle WA 98146.

## **SON OF PANDEMONIUM, Jan. 19**

This one-day gaming event will take place in downtown Toronto, Ontario. Features will include tournaments, an auction, demonstrations, and a miniatures painting contest. Preregistration is essential; registration fees are \$5, plus \$1 per tournament entered. For additional information, contact: Dungeon Parties, Inc., P.O. Box 67, Stn. F, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2L4, or telephone (416)924-1989.

## **GAME CONVENTION, Feb. 9-10**

This event will be held at the Gateway Auditorium in Lincoln, Neb. Role-playing and board games, as well as miniatures, will be featured events. For more details, contact: Merl Hayes, c/o Hobby Town, 130 North 13th Street, Lincoln NE 68508.

## **WARCON '85, Feb. 9-10**

Sponsored by MSC Nova, the convention will be held at Texas A&M University. For further details, contact: MSC Nova, Box J-1, Texas A&M University, College Station TX 77844, or telephone (409)845-1515.

## **DUN DRA CON IX, Feb. 15-18**

To be staged at the Oakland Airport Hyatt hotel, this gaming convention will include games, seminars, a painting contest, and a flea market. Admission fees are \$15 until February 10, \$20 at the door, or \$10 for a special one-day membership. For more information about this convention, contact:

T.O. Green, 386 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland CA 94618.

## **WAMCON '85, Feb. 15-17**

This convention will be held at the Chamberlain Hotel near Hampton, Va. Events will include a writer's seminar, panel discussions, and NASA displays. A. C. Crispin will be guest of honor. Admission fees are \$15 until December 31, and \$20 at the door. A special gaming fee of \$10 exists for those participating in gaming only. Contact: WamCon, P.O. Box 2223, Poquoson VA 23662.

## **ORCCON 1985, Feb. 16-18**

This gaming convention will be staged at the Pasadena Hilton hotel at Grosvenor Plaza in Pasadena, Cal. All sorts of gaming activities are being planned for the event, as is an exhibitor area. For more details, contact: Orcon 1985, P.O. Box 758, Bellflower CA 90706, or telephone (213)867-4140.

## **WISCON 9, Feb. 22-24**

This annual science-fiction convention will be staged at the Concourse Hotel in Madison, Wis. Guests of honor will be writer Lisa Tuttle and artist Alicia Austin. Admission fees are \$13 until January 31, and \$18 at the door. Contact: SF3, P.O. Box 1624, Madison WI 53701, or call (608)251-6226 (days) or (608)233-0326 (evenings).

## **COASTCON '85, Mar. 8-10**

This annual convention will be staged at the Royal d'Iberville Hotel in Biloxi, Miss. Toastmaster for the convention will be Vonda McIntyre, and Alan Dean Foster will be among the guests of honor. Gaming activities, an art show, a costume party, and an auction will be some of the features available at the convention. For more details, contact: Coastcon, P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39535.

## **MIDSOUTHCON 4, Mar. 22-24**

This event will take place at the Airport Quality Inn in Memphis, Tenn. Fred Pohl will be guest of honor, and Keith Bardek will be artist guest of honor; other guests will include Sharon Webb and Suzette Haden Elgin. Admission fees are \$10 until December 31, \$12 until February 1, and \$15 at the door. For more information, contact: Midsouthcon 4, c/o Richard Moore, 1229 Pallwood, Memphis TN 38122.

## **STELLARCON 10, Mar. 22-24**

For more details about this gaming convention, contact: Stellarcon 10, Box 4, Elliott University Center, UNC-Greensboro, Greensboro NC 27412.

## **CONTEST II, Mar. 29-31**

This gaming convention will occur in Tulsa, Okla. Features will include science-fiction and fantasy role-playing games, war games, and miniatures tournaments. For additional information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Contest II, Tactical Simulation Society, P.O. Box 4726, Tulsa OK 74159.

## **I-CON IV, Mar. 29-31**

This annual convention of science fiction, and fantasy will be staged at the campus of SUNY in Stony Brook, NY. For details, contact: I-Con IV, P.O. Box 550, Stony Brook NY 11790.

## **POINTCON VIII, Mar. 30-31**

Sponsored by the Military Affairs Wargames Committee, this convention will be staged at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. Board and role-playing games, tournaments, and demonstrations will be some of the activities featured at the convention. Admission to this event is free. Contact: Cadet John Surdu, P.O. Box 3206, West Point NY 10997.

## **GOLD CON III, Apr. 27-28**

To be held at Omni Auditorium in Pompano Beach, Fla., events for this convention will include historical, fantasy, and science-fiction games, various movies, and a dealers' area. Participants of U.S. Armed Forces are welcome. Registration fees are \$6. For further details, contact: John Dunn, Omni Box Office, B.C.C.-North, 1000 Coconut Creek Blvd., Pompano Beach FL 33066, or telephone (305)973-2249.

## **CONJURATION 2, May 10-12**

This event will be held at the Camelot Hotel in Tulsa, Ok. Toastmaster will be Ed Bryant, and guest of honor will be Mike Resnick. For more details, contact: Con-Juration 2, P.O. Box 690064, Tulsa OK 74169, or call (918)438-3336.

## **TALLY CON 4, May 24-26**

This gaming convention will be held at the Hilton in Tallahassee, Fla. Guests of honor will be L. Sprague and Catherine Crook de Camp. Activities will include an art show and sale, panel discussions, a game room, and "filksinging." Registration fees are \$10 until January 1, \$12 until March 1, and \$15 thereafter. For more information, contact: The Grinning Gremlin, 824-C W. Tharpe St., Tallahassee FL 32303, or telephone (904)385-1518.

## **HATCON 3, June 6-7**

To be held at the Ramada Inn, this convention will include a hat masquerade, a pool party, a champagne Sunday brunch, and various games. Guests of honor will be Ian and Betty Ballantine and Fred Haskell. Registration fees are \$25 until April 1, \$30 until June 1, and \$35 at the door. For additional information, contact: Kennedy Poyser, CT SF Society, 108 Park Ave., Danbury CT 06810, or telephone (203)743-1872.

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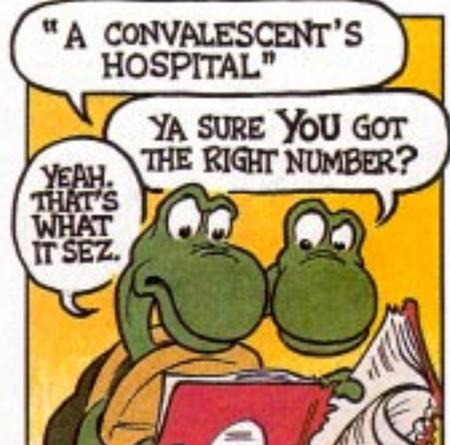
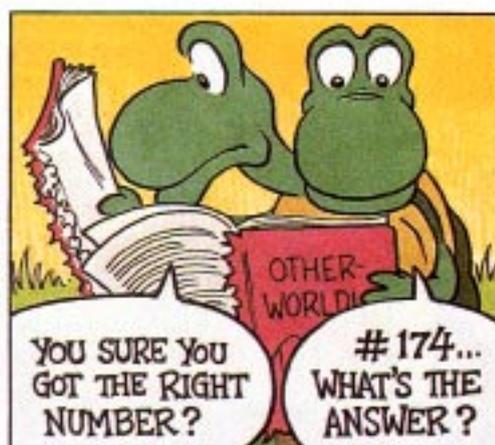
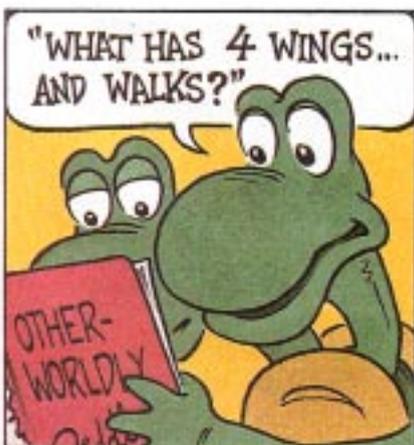
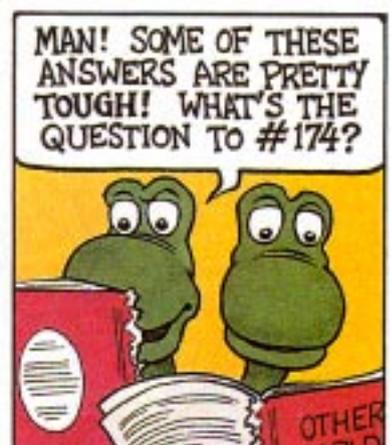
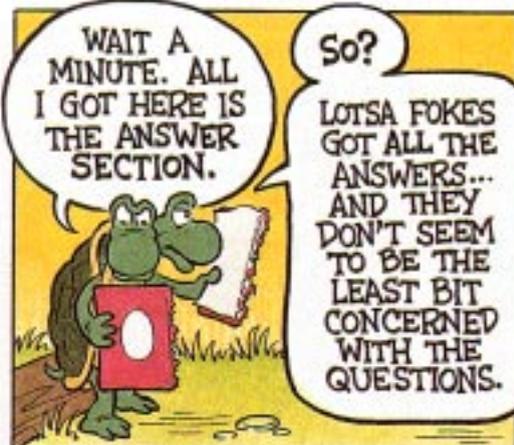
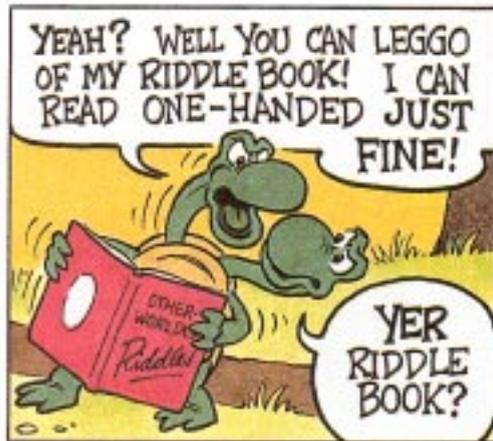
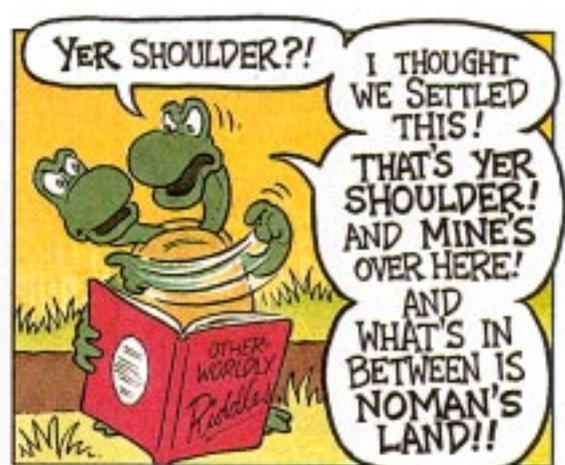
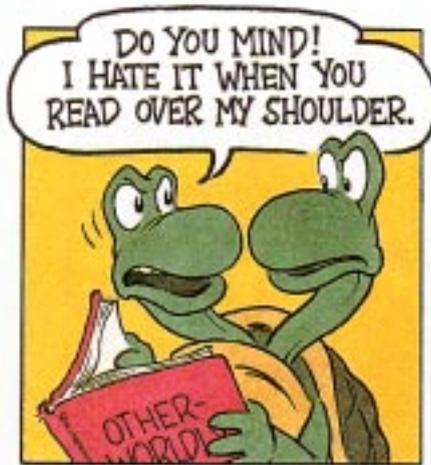
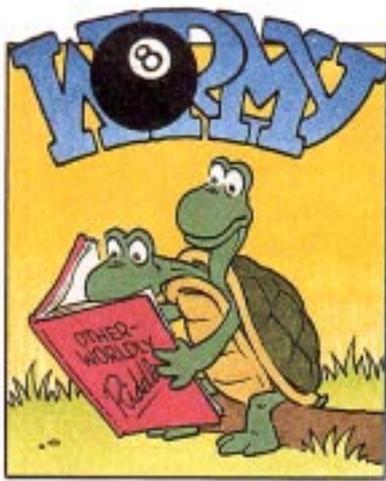
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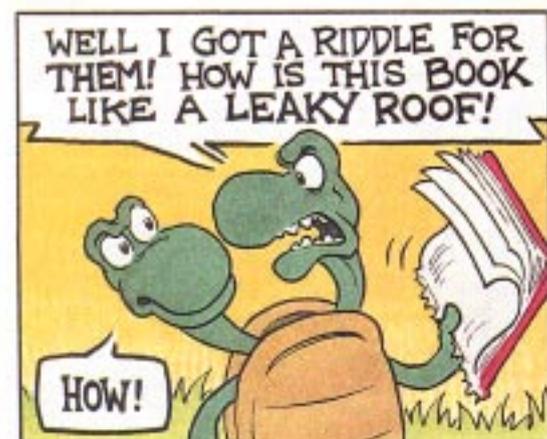
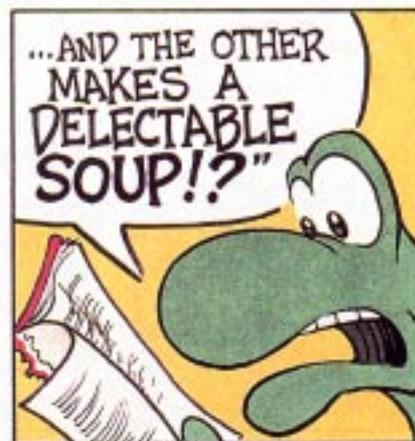
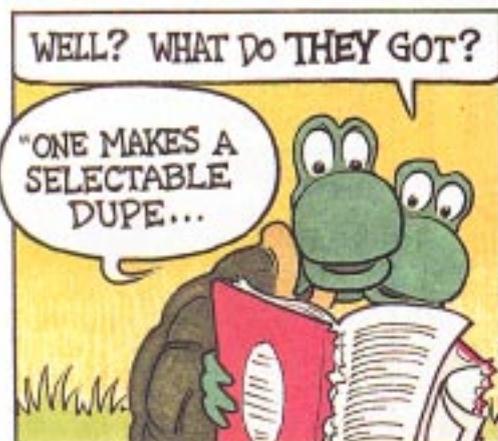
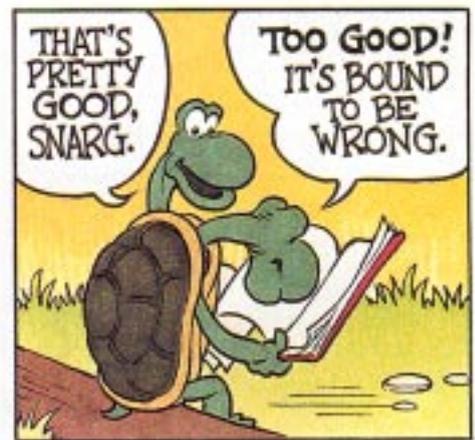
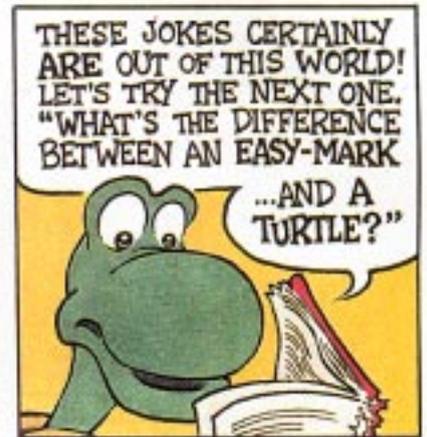
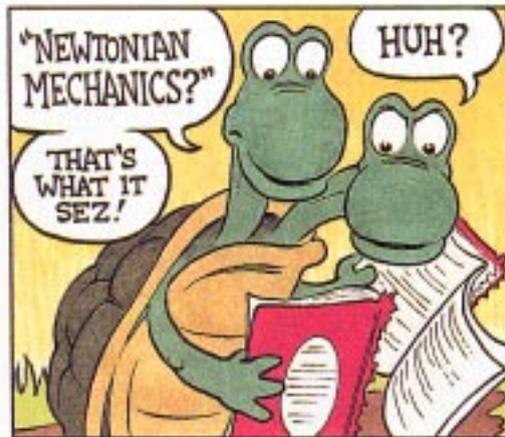
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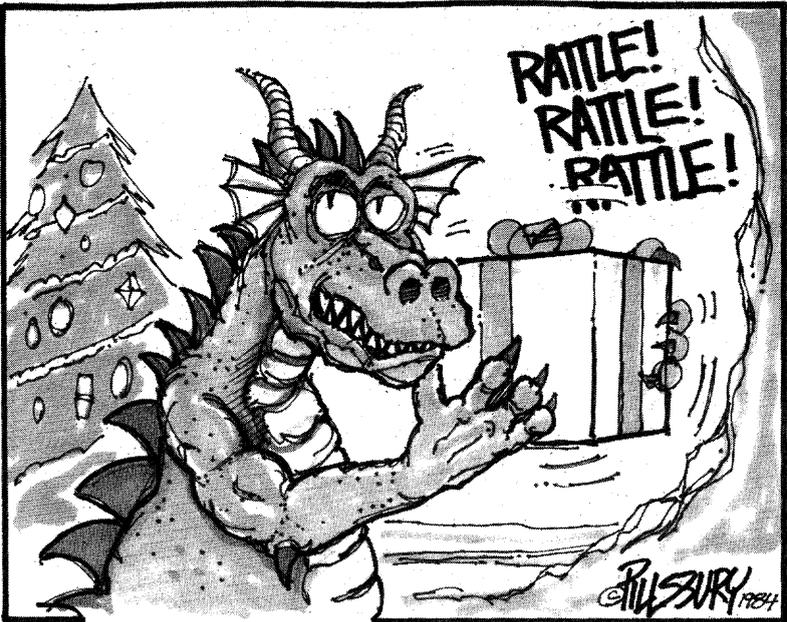




# Dragonmirth

Upon drinking a philtre of love  
An elf suffered effects thereof.  
As his head started reeling,  
He looked to the ceiling.  
Now he's wedded a lurker above.

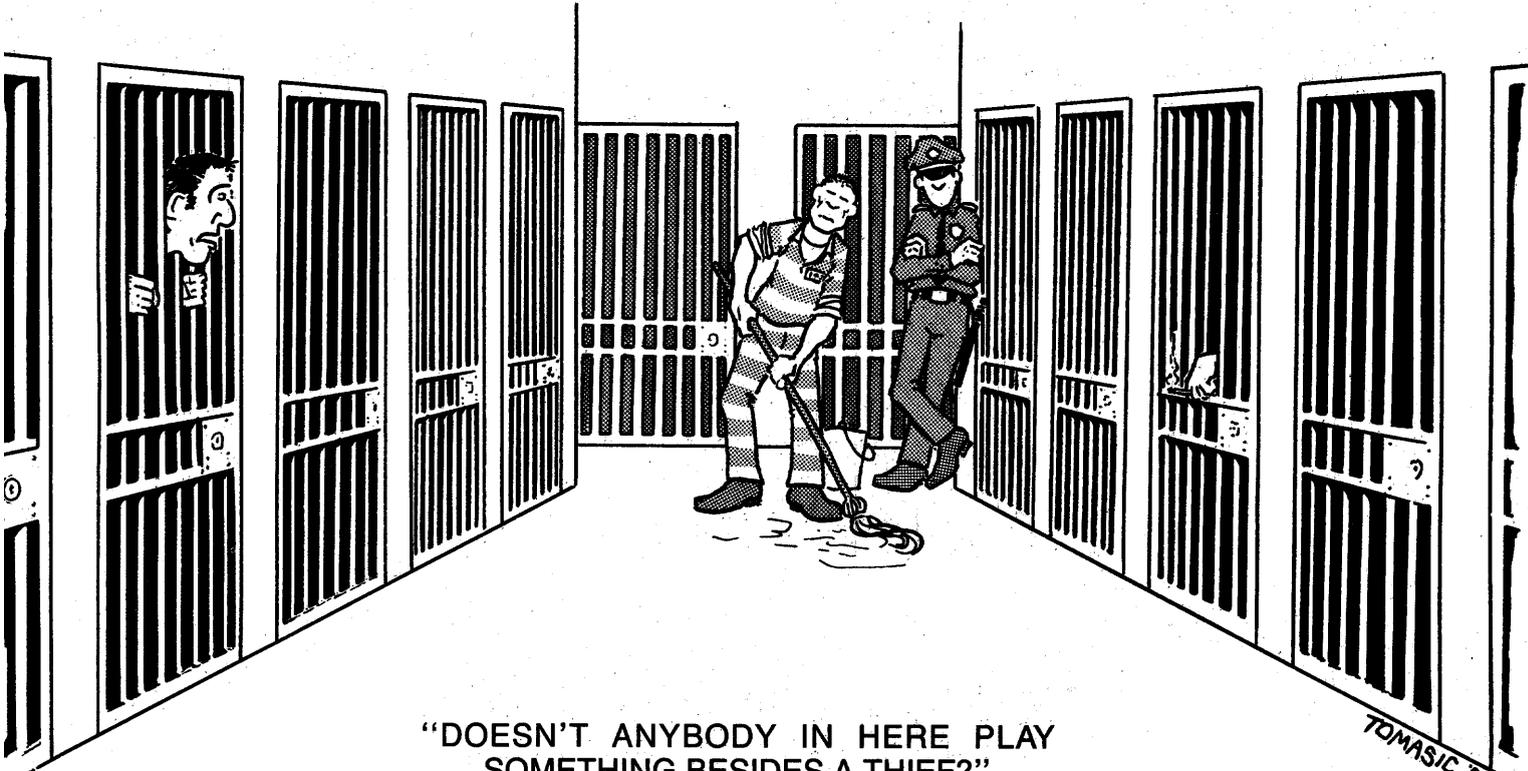
— Toni Leigh Perry



“... SMELLS LIKE A DWARF ... BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE A KNIGHT!”



“UH — THANKS FOR THE PRESENTS, SANTA ORC!”



“DOESN'T ANYBODY IN HERE PLAY SOMETHING BESIDES A THIEF?”

# SNARFQUEST

# 17 BY ELMORE

SO YA WANT FAST AND CHEAP TRANSPORTATION?... WELL, WHAT YA NEED IS A CART PULLED BY A GAGGLEZOOMER... FOLLOW ME.



GAGGLEZOOMER?

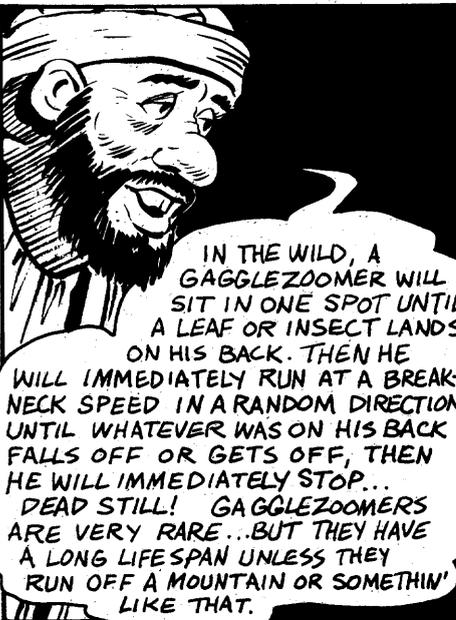
NOW LET ME TELL YA 'BOUT A GAGGLEZOOMER, THEY ARE THE FASTEST AN' DUMBEST LAND ANIMAL ALIVE... THEY WILL NEVER MOVE FROM ONE SPOT UNLESS SOMETHIN' JUST BARELY TOUCHES HIS BACK, THAT IS THE MOST SENSITIVE PART OF HIS BODY. THE REST OF HIS BODY IS HARDAS A ROCK. HE CAN EXIST FOR DAYS WITHOUT FOOD OR WATER.



HI!

LOOKS (HIC) PRETTY GOOD.

HUMMM.



IN THE WILD, A GAGGLEZOOMER WILL SIT IN ONE SPOT UNTIL A LEAF OR INSECT LANDS ON HIS BACK. THEN HE WILL IMMEDIATELY RUN AT A BREAK-NECK SPEED IN A RANDOM DIRECTION UNTIL WHATEVER WAS ON HIS BACK FALLS OFF OR GETS OFF, THEN HE WILL IMMEDIATELY STOP... DEAD STILL! GAGGLEZOOMERS ARE VERY RARE... BUT THEY HAVE A LONG LIFESPAN UNLESS THEY RUN OFF A MOUNTAIN OR SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT.



SO, HE RUNS AS LONG (HIC)... AS SOMETHIN' IS TOUCHIN' HIS BACK, AN' (HIC) STOP WHEN DER AINT NOthin' TOUCHIN' (HIC) HIS BACK...

RIGHT.

HOW LONG CAN HE RUN (HIC)... NONSTOP?

I THINK THE RECORD IS 'BOUT THREE WEEKS.



THE NEXT THING IS GUIDING HIM. WHEN YA WANT TO TURN, ...LET'S SAY, RIGHT... YOU HIT HIM ON THE LEFT SIDE OF HIS HEAD - REAL HARD... YA CAN'T HURT HIM. THE MORE YOU HIT HIM ON THE SAME SIDE - THE SHARPER HE WILL TURN. GOT THAT?

I THINK SO. (HIC)...



SNARF, THIS SOUNDS DANGEROUS.

HEY SON, IT TAKES A BRAVE MAN TO DRIVE A 'ZOOMER, ONLY A FEW PEOPLE EVER MASTER THE ART. I THINK SNARF CAN DO IT.

YEAH... I GOT DA (HIC) RIGHT STUFF.



HOW MUCH? (HIC)

WELL, YOU SEEM TO BE A NICE GUY... TELLYA WHAT, I'LL GIVE YOU MY SPECIAL DISCOUNT SALE PRICE OF 200 GOLD PIECES.

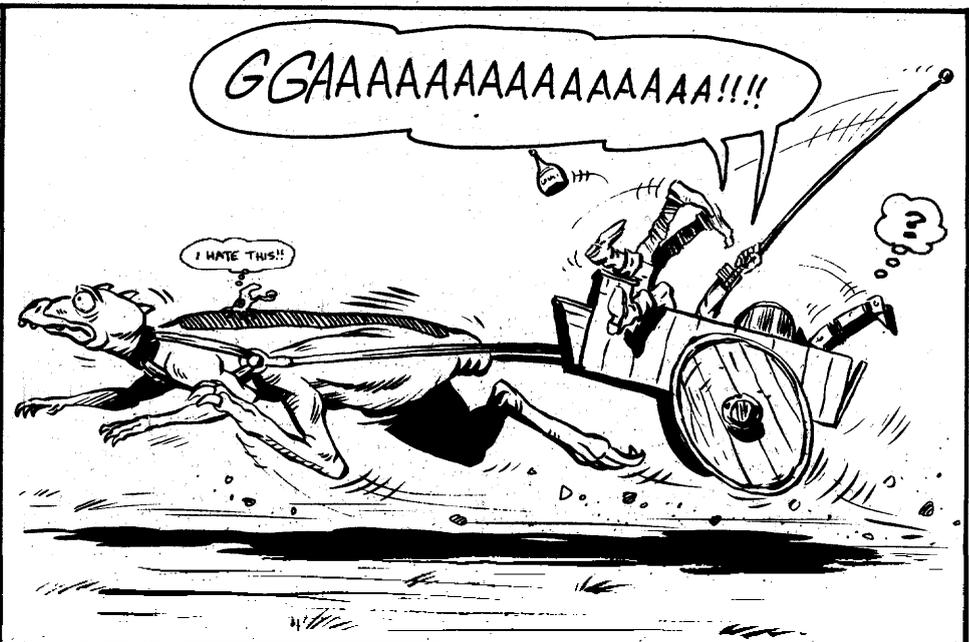
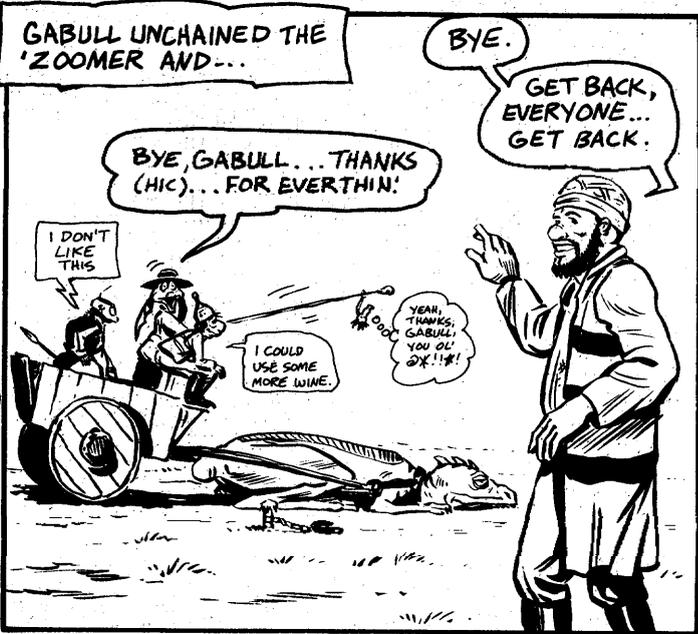
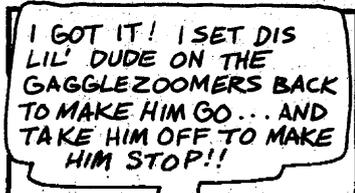
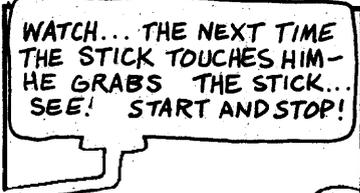
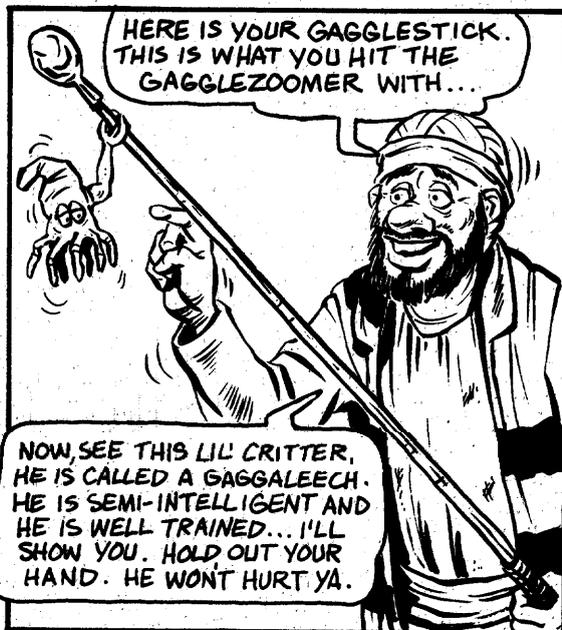
A DEAL!

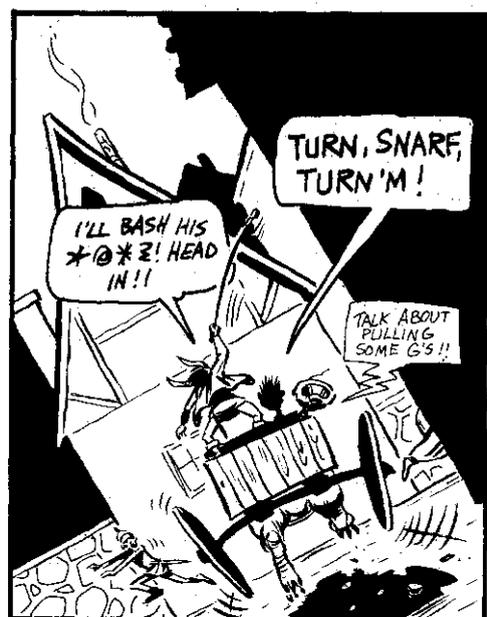


LATER

WE GOT EVERTHIN' LOADED...

WE ARE READY TO GO, SNARF.





...STAY ALERT!... TRUST NO ONE!...  
...KEEP YOUR LASER HANDY!...

# PARANOIA

## PARANOIA

A ROLE-PLAYING GAME OF A DARKLY HUMOROUS FUTURE

### SERVE THE COMPUTER.

The Computer wants you to be happy. If you are not happy, you may be used as reactor shielding.

The Computer is crazy. The Computer is happy. The Computer will help you become happy. This will drive you crazy.

Being a citizen of Alpha Complex is fun. The Computer says so, and The Computer is your friend.

Rooting out traitors will make you happy. The Computer tells you so. Can you doubt The Computer?

Being a Troubleshooter is fun. The Computer tells you so. Of course The Computer is right.

Troubleshooters get shot at, stabbed, incinerated, stapled, mangled, poisoned, blown to bits, and occasionally accidentally executed. This is so much fun that many Troubleshooters go crazy. You will be working with many Troubleshooters. All of them carry lasers.

Aren't you glad you have a laser? Won't this be fun?

There are many traitors in Alpha Complex. There are many happy citizens in Alpha Complex. Most of the happy citizens are crazy. It is hard to say which is more dangerous — traitors or happy citizens. Watch out for both of them.

The life of a Troubleshooter is full of surprises.  
**Stay alert!** **Trust no one!** **Keep your laser handy!**

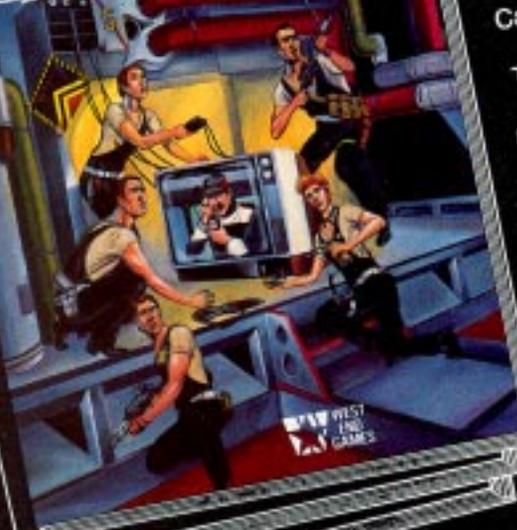
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You will play the part of one of The Computer's elite agents. Your job is to search out, reveal and destroy the enemies of The Computer. Your worst fear is that The Computer will discover that you are one of these enemies.

PLAYER HANDBOOK

# PARANOIA

## PARANOIA



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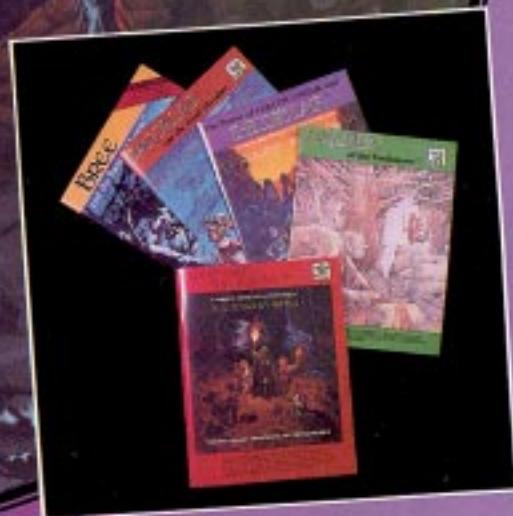
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